

RONIN

by

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FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

A BLOOD RED SCREEN - A JAPANESE DRUM starts to play, softly, but tinged with a desperate edge, growing louder, joined by other DRUMS as a BLACK LEGEND scrolls up: In feudal Japan, the warrior class of Samurai were sworn to protect their liege lords with their lives. Those Samurai whose liege was killed suffered a great shame, and they were forced to wander the land, looking for work as hired swords or bandits. These masterless warriors were no longer referred to as Samurai, they were known by another name: Such men were called Ronin. The words hang on the screen and we hold for a BEAT, and then the DRUMS are cut off by - A SILENCED GUN SHOT: Thwppfft...

FADE IN ON:

INT. A MEDIEVAL CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

It's dark, and so it takes us a minute to realize we're MOVING UP STONE SPIRALING STAIRS, up up up in what we now see is a medieval cathedral. And as we continue MOVING UP something TRICKLES DOWN INTO FRAME - BLOOD. Running thin, then thicker, as we CONTINUE TO MOVE UP the stairs and find - A BODY, sprawled awkwardly across the stones, arms and legs akimbo, not so much Christ-like as victim-like. In one hand the Body holds a GUN he never had a chance to use. In the other - A DARK SHAPE, we can't quite tell what it is. FOOTSTEPS sound from above and - THE KILLER walks into frame, silenced pistol dangling at his side. We don't know him, and it's going to be a while before we see him again, but mark his face because we'll see him again. The Killer now picks up the dark shape in the Body's hand, and we see it's - A BRIEFCASE. The Killer cuffs the Briefcase to his wrist and turns to - TWO MEN standing behind him: subordinates. The Killer shows them the Briefcase.

KILLER

God loves me.

THE BODY suddenly twitches -- this guy is not quite dead.

The Killer raises his silenced pistol.

KILLER

(to his victim)

But I don't think he's too fond of you...

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. A BACK STREET - PARIS - NIGHT

A PHONE RINGS, replacing the sound of the silenced gun shot we expected to hear.

Rain-slicked cobblestones gleam in a twinkling of streetlight.

EXT. A PHONE BOOTH AT THE END OF THE STREET

The source of the ringing. We start to PUSH SLOWLY IN one the phone booth, and as we do we hear the VOICE of an UGLY AMERICAN.

UGLY AMERICAN (V.O.)
What is this?

CUT TO:

INT. A DRIVE BAR IN PARIS - NIGHT

A SOCCER MATCH is in progress on a TV which sits above the bar in this smokey, dim dive.

UGLY AMERICAN (O.S.)
This is not football...

And now we're PULLING BACK DOWN THE LENGTH OF THE BAR. We see THREE MEN sitting seperately at the bar, paying no attention to each other. One of these men watches the game with real interest. The Ugly American talks on from off screen.

UGLY AMERICAN (O.S.)
(continuing)
...Football is three hundred pound guys, they run way too fucking fast, they got helmets made of kevlar they use to spear the quarterback into the next life.

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE

The phone is still ringing, louder now, and we're MOVING TOWARDS it while looking THROUGH AN UNSEEN PAIR OF EYES, and even as we drink this in we're back in -

INT. THE BAR

AT THE END OF THE BAR - LARRY, the Ugly American. He's got an obvious attitude, all of it bad. But there's something about the guy -- he's not all bluster, and he has the look of a seasoned tough guy who knows how to get rough and tumble.

He's big, and yeah he's got a gut, but the rest of him looks solid.

LARRY
(talking to the air)
You wanna know what football is?

LARRY

It's hitting the other guy dirty and then spitting in his face when he's down. Football is all things American, and American is A-Number-One the absolute fucking best there is. That's what football is...
(he points to the TV)
...And that's not football.

The one man at the bar who's been watching the gam turns slowly and gives Larry a long look. This is VINCENT: French, hard boiled and solid. Charming when he wants to be, which isn't all that often. He gives Larry a long look and then speaks -

VINCENT

(to Larry in perfect English)
Football -- American football -- is a game for faggots.

A BEAT. The other two men at the bar, who seem like tough customers themselves, pretend not to watch too closely, but they're interested: what's Larry going to say? For a moment it seems as if he's pissed, but then suddenly a smile breaks out on his face and he laughs heartily at Vincent's remark.

Vincent joins in, as do the others. In particular - THE BARTENDER looks relieved -- he's tough enough to toss a bar drunk, but these guys are in a different league. The Bartender laughs with the others, happy to have avoided a confrontation as we go back to -

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE

We're almost ON TOP OF the phone booth, the phone is still ringing as a HAND reaches INTO FRAME and snatches the phone from its cradle.

A WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

(a touch Irish accent)
Yes?

ANOTHER ANGLE - And we see a woman named DEIRDRE on the phone: striking, dark-haired, Irish. She carries herself with the same professional edge as the men inside the bar. Deirdre listens for a moment to the voice on the other end, and before she speaks she sense something - A SILHOUETTE stands in the shadows of the bar, watching Deirdre. She gives this silhouette a measure glance before speaking, her hand creeping ever so slightly towards her coat.

DEIRDRE

Can I help you?

The silhouette steps into a POOL OF LIGHT. This is SAM.

Tough, lean, enigmatic. Somebody you might trust, but whom you'd never cross. Sam returns her look before he speaks.

SAM

No...

Sam moves towards the bar, and Deirdre returns to her phone conversation.

DEIRDRE

I'm here...

(a beat, responding
to a question)

No, it was nothing.

INT. THE BAR - A MINUTE LATER

Sam enters and by now the men inside have all come together at the bar, talking casually, recognizing they're somehow all here for a reason. With Larry and Vincent we see - GREGOR, a man from Eastern Europe. His accent is hard to pin down, but he most definitely has one. Gregor has the air of an ex-spook, and that's exactly what he is. Lastly we see SWEDE -- blonde, muscular, and somehow blank in the face. No, he's not stupid -- he's a sociopath. Now - Sam looks at the group, which grows quiet as he enters. Finally, Sam speaks.

SAM

Sorry I'm late...

VINCENT

(a challenge)

What makes you think we're here to meet you?

SAM

(meeting Vincent's
gaze)

Who else would you be?

Vincent turns towards the others, including them in an expansive gesture.

VINCENT

Perhaps the police?

SAM

I know cops -- and you're no cop.

Vincent smiles at Sam's answer, satisfied, and makes room for Sam to join them. Vincent takes a pack of cigarettes, shakes them so that one sticks out, and offers it to Sam.

VINCENT

Cigarette?

SAM

No thanks.

Vincent looks a little disappointed at this as we go -

EXT. BACK OUTSIDE - SAME TIME

THE PAY PHONE makes a sharp noise as it's cracked back into the cradle. Deirdre stands at the phone booth, lost in thought. Then, without warning - Deirdre spins around, pulling TWO GUNS from inside her coat. The move is fast, performed with the grace of a professional killer, as Deirdre scans the horizon, but nobody seems to be watching. Deirdre pockets her guns and steps into the shadows of the street, the better to watch -

THE BAR - And as Deirdre watches the bar we watch her.

PULLING BACK from Deirdre, UP INTO THE AIR and then MOVING THROUGH TO -

INT. A CHEAP APARTMENT - SAME TIME

LOOKING THROUGH A WINDOW, down onto the street below. Barely visible we can see Deirdre. And staring at Deirdre - THE WATCHER. Somebody we're going to see periodically through the movie. Right now he's only a SILHOUETTE with a well-defined PAIR OF HANDS. And in those hands - A KNIFE. As the Watcher watches he slowly cleans his nail with the knife, methodically, perfectly. And he watches. First Deirdre, and then turning his attention to THE BAR. He's especially interested in the bar.

A TIME CUT TO:

INT. THE BAR - LATER

The BARTENDER is wiping out a last glass. When this is finished he looks up at -

TABLE IN THE BACK -

Where our five guys have relocated. Now the Bartender and Vincent exchange a look, and then the Bartender takes out a set of keys and tosses them - THROUGH THE AIR and they SMWACK into Vincent's hand. The Bartender and Vincent speak in rapid-fire French, and then the Bartender is gone. Sam turns to Vincent.

SAM

He trusts you to lock up?

VINCENT

Let's just say he knows who I am.

Vincent takes out his pack of cigarettes and offer them around the table -- again, nobody takes on. Vincent seems really disappointed by this.

LARRY

Anybody wanna tell me what we're waiting for?

VINCENT

(lighting his cigarette)

The question isn't what we're waiting for... it's who.

LARRY

And who the fuck is that?

GREGOR

Whoever hired us.

SAM

I got this gig through a contractor. And he most definitely didn't know who was doing the hiring, only that they were paying a lot of money...

There's a kind of general look around the table -- a nod or grunt of acknowledgement, indicating that all of these men were hired the same way.

SAM

(continuing his thought)

So none of us knows who's paying the freight, this is just some anonymous job. For all we know, we're working for different people.

GREGOR

Now that is an interesting proposition.

SWEDE

How so?

GREGOR

Because if there's more than one party involved, if we really are working for different people, then perhaps some of us are on different sides.

(with great meaning)

Your orders might be different from mine.

LARRY
 What're you talking about, man? I
 don't understand.

SWEDE
 (quietly, but loud
 enough to be heard)
 What a surprise...

LARRY
 I got a surprise for you, blondie...

GREGOR
 (sharply, as if he's
 used to giving orders)
 Why don't both of you shut up?

LARRY & SWEDE
 (to Gregor at the
 same time)
 Fuck you!

SAM
 Knock it off!

There is a BEAT. Gregor, Swede and Larry look at Sam, who glares them all down. Lastly, Sam turns and looks at Vincent. The two men nod at one another, acknowledging a kind of mutual respect.

SAM
 The point remains: we could be working
 for different people. There's a
 chance for one of us...
 (looks around the
 table)
 Maybe more than one of us -- has
 been paid to cross the others. I
 don't know about you guys, but I
 like to know who I'm working for.
 It can help prevent a great deal
 of...
 (finding the right
 word)
 ...unpleasantness.

LARRY
 (patting the gun inside
 his cheap suit)
 Anybody tries to unpleasant me I'll
 put two between his eyes -- one to
 do the job and the other to make
 sure it takes.

From OFF SCREEN we hear a new sound: LAUGHTER.

ANOTHER ANGLE - Deirdre has entered the bar, and she's amused by this last exchange.

DEIRDRE

It's good to see you've all got such faith in our little undertaking.

LARRY

Who the fuck are you?

DEIRDRE

(staring at Larry)

The name is Deirdre, and I'm running this show.

GREGOR

Who are you? IRA?

DEIRDRE

(with a brittle laugh)

Not likely. Once, yeah, I was -- but there wasn't an inch of profit in it, and I'm a cash oriented girl, if you take my meaning. I'm a hired gun, same as the rest of you, and that's all any of us needs to know about the other.

Deirdre hands out several thick envelopes. Larry and Swede open theirs and stare at the wads of Franc Notes stuffed inside. Even Gregor cracks his envelope and peaks at his money. But neither Vincent nor Sam takes a look.

DEIRDRE

From here on in you want something you pay cash for it: no credit cards, no bank accounts are in place: ten percent up front, the rest when the job is done.

(a quick beat, then

she looks at Gregor)

You. What do you do and what should we call you?

GREGOR

These days they they call me Gregor -- and I'm a tech. I do electronic work, surveillance, computer runs.

Deirdre turns to Sam.

SAM

Sam. I'm a weapons guy.

DEIRDRE
You were a soldier, were you?

SAM
Once.

Deirdre gives Sam a look -- and he returns it. Finally, Deirdre turns to Larry.

LARRY
I drive -- and my name is Larry.
Larry from the States.

DEIRDRE
(she turns to Vincent)
And who are you?

VINCENT
I'm Vincent. And I coordinate.

SAM
(sharply)
Coordinate what?

VINCENT
Things. This is my country, you know.

The two men exchange another look. A pecking order is developing among the group: Vincent and Sam are both natural leaders, and now they're feeling one another out.

DEIRDRE
(to Vincent)
Coordinate all you want, but make sure whatever you do gets cleared through me.
(Vincent doesn't respond for a moment)
Are we in sync on this, Vincent?

VINCENT
Of course.

Deirdre waits a BEAT, letting Vincent know what she isn't any more intimidated by him than he is by her. Finally, she turns to Swede.

SWEDE
They call me Swede.

LARRY
Who's they?

SWEDE
Everybody.

VINCENT
And what is it you do?

SWEDE
Me?
(with a smile)
I kill.

CUT TO:

INT. A WAREHOUSE - DAY

A PAPER TARGET, in the shape of a human being, dances in place as it is riddled with GUNSHOTS, each shot hitting the target in the belly, each shot fired by - Larry, whose been shooting a sleek automatic pistol from which he's just discharged an entire clip. The gun is empty, Larry turns to Sam, who stands next in line.

SAM
(looking at the target)
You shoot alright.

LARRY
Gets the job done.

SAM
All in the stomach, though. Your
man might live.

LARRY
Not for long.

SAM
Long enough to shoot back.

LARRY
Is that right?

SAM
It's been known to happen.

LARRY
(a challenge)
Why don't you go do better, then...

Without a word, Sam pops a new clip into the gun and SHOOTs THE LIGHTS out of several other human targets, hitting each target in a different place.

One he clips between the eyes, the next in the heart, one in the groin, and then the last target - He SPLITS DOWN THE MIDDLE, firing shot after shot from the head to the groin until the target is sheared in half. Larry is impressed in spite of himself.

LARRY

Yeah, well... My way works too.

SAM

My way is better.

IN A CORNER OF THE WAREHOUSE -

Gregor has set up a table loaded with computers and electronic whizmos. Right now Gregor is holding a particularly high-tech type CELL PHONE in his hands, looking at it almost lovingly.

DEIRDRE (O.S.)

Is it alright?

ANOTHER ANGLE - Deirdre sits nearby, looking at the cell phone.

GREGOR

It's quite satisfactory.

DEIRDRE

Good, because it cost enough. There's cheaper phones by far than that one, man: you better fucking use it.

GREGOR

(almost caressing the phone)

I intend to. This phone is wired like no other: it's got an encryption chip and instant sat-a-link recognition, it can talk to any computer in any language and make it understand. With my custom hardware and this phone I can trace the target's cell phone signature and follow him anywhere he goes...

DEIRDRE

You sure about this?

GREGOR

I'd stake my reputation.

DEIRDRE

But would you stake your life, that's the question...

GREGOR

In this business, your life and your reputation are more often than not one and the same.

From off screen we hear MUNCHING. It's - Larry inhaling a sandwich. A malicious look comes over Swede's face, who's cleaning a pistol and sitting near Larry.

SWEDE

You should watch what you eat.

LARRY

Who the fuck died and appointed you food czar?

SWEDE

I'm just worried about your health, Larry. You could stand to shed a few pounds.

LARRY

(sensitive about his weight)
And you could stand to get a little smarter, ain't that right you dumb blonde fuck?

SWEDE

(sensitive about the dumb blonde thing)
Who you calling dumb, dickless?

Both men eyeball one another, and then suddenly Larry reaches for his piece, and as soon as he does this Swede does the same thing, but before they can do anything - DEIRDRE'S GUN swings INTO FRAME, smashing Swede in the face and dropping him to the floor. Larry's mouth drops open in surprise, but it's too late: Deirdre kicks him in the stomach and then rabbit punches him in the back of the neck, driving him to the ground.

DEIRDRE

(standing above them)
Next one of you fuckers plays this game I'm going to do for you myself. I won't say it again: we don't have time for this shit! There's a clock running on this job, gentlemen, and I mean to be on schedule.

A TENSE MOMENT as Deirdre stares down at these tough guys --

letting them know who's in charge. A SOUND from OFF SCREEN interrupts this moment: a DOOR opening, as we see - Vincent, who stands in the door, wearing his coat and hat.

He's been out somewhere, and he looks first at the squabbling men, and then at - Deirdre. She gives Vincent a little nod -- a silent command that makes Vincent turn to Sam.

VINCENT
Let's go for a ride.

Vincent and Sam start off, moving towards the door, while Swede and Larry slowly pick themselves up off the ground.

SAM
Where to?

VINCENT
To see a man about a thing.

SAM
I can do that.

EXT. THE WAREHOUSE - SUNSET

A DESOLATE URBAN LANDSCAPE - Sam and Vincent walking away from the warehouse, which is housed in what looks to be the toughest neighborhood in the city, filled with CHEAP CONCRETE PUBLIC HOUSING and INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS.

THE SETTING SUN throws a red glow on the street, giving the raw concrete buildings a blood-colored tint, as Sam and Vincent approach a FIAT, a car neither too old nor too new.

Before they can reach the car, the two men are intercepted by FOUR TOUGHS, young guys in their early twenties. The LEADER of the Toughs approaches Vincent.

LEADER
(subtitled French)
Who gave you permission to park here?

SAM
(to Vincent)
What's he saying?

VINCENT
Pretty much what you'd expect.

SAM
(with a sigh)
That's what I thought.

LEADER

(in French)

There's a charge for parking on our block.

The other Toughs add lib a few tough guy remarks (in French, of course).

VINCENT

(to Sam)

He says this is their block.

SAM

As in, they own it?

VINCENT

Something like that...

SAM

And I suppose he's saying that we oughta give them something for using it, huh?

VINCENT

I didn't know that you spoke French.

SAM

I don't. But the language he's speaking is universal.

ANGLE ON THE LEADER - Who's smirking at Vincent and Sam.

Sam's words make a great deal of sense: the Leader is speaking the universal language of "give me some money or I'll kick your ass."

SAM (O.S.)

I guess we oughta give them something...

CUT BACK TO: Vincent and Sam.

VINCENT

If you think we should.

Vincent backfists the Leader in the nose -- hitting him so hard that the Leader skitters back on unsteady feet and then sits down on his ass. This blow hurt, but the real damage is to the Leader's pride. Now - One of the Toughs rushes at Sam, only to have Sam perform what looks like a jujitsu throw which savagely jerks the Tough off his feet and flattens him.

SAM
 (as if it were an
 accident)
 Oh man, I am sorry about that...
 (he sticks his hand
 out)
 Let me give you a hand.

Sam reaches down as if to help the Tough, who ignores the hand and totters to his feet. As soon as he's up he turns and runs away, followed by the other Toughs. Now only the leader is left behind. He looks for a second at Vincent and Sam, and then turns and runs after his friends. Vincent calls after him in French, but whatever he says isn't translated. Vincent turns to unlock the car.

SAM
 What'd you say to him?

VINCENT
 I asked if we could give him anything
 else.

By now the two men are in the car, which starts up and drives off, as it does we -

CUT TO:

INT. THE FIAT - SAME TIME

VINCENT
 That was a nice move you did on our
 young friend. Judo?

SAM
 Jujitsu.

VINCENT
 Same thing, isn't it?

SAM
 Not at all. Similar, but not the
 same.

VINCENT
 What's the difference?

SAM
 One's a lot more painful than the
 other.

Vincent laughs, and Sam looks out the window at the city of Paris as we MOVE THROUGH to the outside world of -

EXT. PARIS DRIVING MONTAGE - TWILIGHT

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS of the car driving through Paris at night. We don't see familiar sights like the Eiffel Tower or the Arc de Triomphe, but instead - We travel through the LEFT BANK, down a series of Mazy Alleys which twist and turn, filled with bistros, bars and falafel joints. NEON SIGNS line the streets for as far as the eye can see. Near the end of this trip we hear the SOUND OF A MATCH FLARING, followed by -

SAM (V.O.)
 Could I get one of those?

INT. THE CAR - STILL DRIVING - SAME TIME

Vincent is driving and smoking a cigarette. He tosses his pack to Sam, but he seems a little surprised at Sam's request.

VINCENT
 Help yourself.
 (quick beat)
 Since when do you smoke?

SAM
 (lighting up)
 I have, I don't know, maybe a
 cigarette a week.

VINCENT
 A cigarette? As in one?
 (exasperated, almost
 to himself)
 One cigarette a week, who smokes
 like that?

SAM
 I do.

VINCENT
 Christ, I smoke a pack-and-a-half a
 day, and I tell myself I could be
 worse.
 (takes a satisfying
 drag)
 It's just so damned pleasurable.

SAM
 (blowing a smoke ring
 with great skill)
 It has its moments.
 (stubs out cigarette)
 Course, you get cancer and die, that's
 the downside.

VINCENT
(with a sigh)
There is that.

Vincent stamps his cigarette out, looking vaguely unhappy that Sam has spoiled his smoke.

SAM
So, Vincent: why bring me along for the ride? Job like this calls for a warm body, somebody who can stand around and look threatening. A tough guy.

VINCENT
Like Larry or Swede.

SAM
Exactly. Why not bring them?

VINCENT
Let's just say I thought the conversational possibilities were limited. Of course, I might have brought Gregor, but he didn't seem like the right candidate -- for this.

SAM
Watch that one, he's an ex-spook for sure, maybe Stasi, maybe KGB. He's smart, Gregor is.

VINCENT
So is the woman.

SAM
Deirdre? Smart, yeah, and seriously goddamned dangerous.

VINCENT
I wonder if she truly left the IRA.

SAM
I've wondered that myself. None of this answers my question, though...
(suddenly direct)
Why bring me?

VINCENT
I wanted to see who you were.

SAM
Who am I?

Vincent, driving all the while, gives Sam a sideways glance before speaking.

VINCENT

You were once some kind of special forces. Airborne Ranger, maybe a Navy SEAL. After that you rode shotgun for the CIA in some place like El Salvador or Afghanistan, a real mercenary.

(beat)

Only now -- now you're like the rest of us, it's a very competitive market since the end of the cold war. There's a lot of hired guns out here, and not nearly enough work to go around.

SAM

That's right: there's not hardly enough work these days, nothing that pays the big money, anyhow. Then along comes this job, paying so much goddamned money I couldn't afford not to take it. Somebody's paying through the nose for this.

VINCENT

They certainly are. Whatever it is we're going to steal, it must be quite something.

SAM

Whatever it is it must be goddamned priceless.

And on that thought we -

CUT TO:

EXT. A SIDE STREET - NIGHT

The Fiat pulls up to the curb and Vincent and Sam get out.

Vincent leads Sam around a corner and they come to -

AN EXQUISITE PARK, a small, perfectly manicured place -- a kind of mini-Luxembourg Gardens in the middle of nowhere.

When Sam sees the park, he draws an involuntary breath.

VINCENT

Lovely, isn't it?

SAM

They'd have to keep something like
this under lock and key in New York,
and it would still get fucked up.

The two men enter the park, which is, indeed, open to the public. Inside, sitting on a bench in the back, almost invisible from the street, we see - FRANCOIS, a stubble-faced tough with a stained shirt and bad teeth. Vincent and Sam draw near. This next conversation between Francois and Vincent is in FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

FRANCOIS

That's good right where you are,
Vincent.

Vincent signals for Sam to stop. Both Vincent and Sam are still several feet away from Francois.

VINCENT

Do you have it?

FRANCOIS

Not so fast.
(nods slightly to Sam)
Who's that?

VINCENT

He's company.

FRANCOIS

(as if he recognizes
Sam)
Bad company...

VINCENT

What do you mean?

FRANCOIS

He's a cop, Vincent, he's French and
he's a cop and you better shoot him
in the fucking head right now!

Sam hasn't said a word -- he doesn't seem to understand what's been said, but he has noted the urgency with which Francois spoke. Now - We HOLD FOR A BEAT. Neither Vincent nor Francois pulls out a piece to shoot Sam. Instead they wait to see if Sam will respond in any way to what Francois said. The conversation now switches to ENGLISH, which (it turns out) Francois speaks fairly well.

SAM

(to Vincent)
What's going on?

VINCENT
I just wanted to see something.

SAM
(that edge creeping
into his voice)
See what?

Vincent isn't going to answer, but the overbearing Francois chimes in.

FRANCOIS
He wanted to see how you reacted
when I said that you were a cop.

SAM
(he can't believe
this)
You told him I was a cop?

FRANCOIS
He asked me to say it.

SAM
(looking at Vincent,
truly pissed)
He asked you to?

VINCENT
I needed to know.

SAM
You need to know a lot of shit,
Vincent.

FRANCOIS
(to Vincent, in
subtitled French)
Are you ready?

Francois's French words give Sam pause -- he's wondering what's being said, as - Vincent moves towards Francois, leaving Sam several steps away. The conversation is again in SUBTITLED FRENCH.

VINCENT
(taking out an envelope)
Here's yours.

FRANCOIS
There's been a slight problem.

VINCENT
(immediately tensing)
What's that?

Francois gives the slightest of nods, indicating that Vincent should look towards a place perhaps thirty yards away -

A COPSE OF TREES, where we see a SNIPER pointed a telescopic rifle at Vincent.

FRANCOIS
(still in subtitled
French)

If you say a word in English, Vincent, my friend with the high powered sporting rifle will shoot you in the throat. Sorry to screw you over like this, but the information you want might get me killed if I give it to you, and that's a price I'm not willing to pay.

VINCENT
(in French)
I take it you still want the money...

FRANCOIS
(in English, with a
grin)
Of course.

SAM'S POV: Looking at Vincent and Francois.

The men are talking, and from here we can't really hear them speak. All Sam can see is an earnest Vincent listening to Francois talk, almost as if Francois is giving Vincent instructions. Now - Vincent reaches into his pocket, reaching for the envelope of cash he's carrying. As he hands the money to Francois, Vincent uses his free hand to pull out his gun while - Sam already has his gun out -- somehow he figured out what was going on -- and now Francois looks on in stunned disbelief as -

Sam fires a single shot, hitting Francois in the shoulder, driving him away from - Vincent, who now squeezes off several rapid fire shots at the sniper, while - Francois, bleeding but still very much alive, now has his piece free just as - The Sniper, his gun firing wildly into the air, falls to the ground, shot dead by Vincent, and now - Francois is drawing a bead on Vincent when - Sam hits Francois with a fusillade of bullets in the chest and now - A SINGLE SPENT BULLETT CASING flies through the air in SLOW MOTION and lands on the ground, spinning around until it comes to a halt and - A HEAVY SILENCE FALLS, as the last echo of the last gunshot finally dies. Vincent and Sam look at one another, see that they're still alive, and then look back at - The two men they've shot. Francois isn't quite dead. Blood bubbles from his lips as Vincent leans over him. Again, they speak in SUBTITLED FRENCH

VINCENT
Where's my information?

FRANCOIS
(with a grim smile,
pointing to his head)
In here...

VINCENT
Then you better find it in your heart
to tell me, Francois, because while
your death is inevitable, it still
isn't decided how painful it's going
to be.

A LONG ANGLE - Vincent whispers in Francois's ear, whose grin blanches as he realizes Vincent means to hurt him. Francois whispers something back and then - BANG. Vincent shoots Francois in the head, killing him instantly. Then Vincent bends down and retrieves the envelope of money which Francois had tucked inside his shirt. As Vincent does this, Sam comes up from behind.

SAM
Now would be a good time to get the
fuck out of here.

INT. THE FIAT - LATER/NIGHT

The two men drive in silence for a moment. Vincent lights a cigarette and offers one to Sam, who refuses. Finally, Sam speaks.

SAM
You know, what you pulled back there,
that was bullshit.

VINCENT
I needed to see if you were a cop.
(defensively)
I'm a popular man with the police,
Sam, and whenever they try to catch
me they always do it with an inside
guy -- some man on some job who seems
more trustworthy than all the others
put together. And that's the guy
you have to watch out for.
(beat)
I hate cops...

SAM
(insulted that Vincent
would even consider
it)
Well I ain't a cop.

A BEAT, the two men driving in silence.

VINCENT
How did you know?

SAM
Know what?

VINCENT
That there was a gun pointed at me.

SAM
I saw you look off when Francois
nodded his head. I figured he wasn't
pointing out a particularly rare
shrub, and the rest was easy.

VINCENT
But how did you know I would have
the presence of mind to pull my weapon
when I did?

SAM
(as if it's obvious)
Because that's what I would have
done...

CUT TO:

EXT. AN APARTMENT HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER/NIGHT

Vincent's Fiat is parked at the curb in front of this apartment house. Vincent and Sam exit the car and move towards the house -- a silence hanging between them. Right before they go into the house, Vincent takes out the envelope full of cash that was supposed to have been for Francois. He thinks for a moment and then hands the whole envelope to Sam.

VINCENT
You saved my life back there in the
park. I know this doesn't begin to
make it right between us...

Vincent's voice trails off -- he doesn't know what to say. Sam takes the money out of the envelope -- half he keeps for himself, the other he gives to Vincent.

SAM
What I did back in the park I did
because we're working together --
we're on the same team.
(holding up the money)
This is business -- this is work.

SAM
 We did it together, we share the
 spoils, even split.

Sam opens the door to the house, but Vincent has one last
 thing to say to him.

VINCENT
 I owe you a heavy debt.

Sam almost smiles cynically at this: debts of honor don't
 seem to be something he believes in.

SAM
 Whatever you say.

They enter the house and the door closes behind them. A
 second later we hear -

DEIRDRE (V.O.)
 What'd you do with the money?

INT. THE HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

Vincent and Sam sit with Deirdre in a room, alone. They've
 told her about the park, and she seems a little pissed about
 all of this.

VINCENT
 We kept it...

DEIRDRE
 (a little annoyed)
 Is that right?

SAM
 Hazard pay...

DEIRDRE
 (with an exhalation
 of disgust)
 The two of you were supposed to go
 to a simple meet and come back with
 a simple piece of information, and
 instead you went to fucking war...

SAM
 We weren't real thrilled about it
 either...

Deirdre shakes her head in disgust and rises. We FOLLOW HER
 INTO -

AN ADJOINING ROOM -

Where Larry, Swede and Gregor are waiting. They look up expectantly at Deirdre, who crosses through the room without stopping -- she's really pissed about this turn of events.

LARRY
So what's the deal?

DEIRDRE
(barely stopping,
very snappish)
The deal? The deal is we leave for
Nice at first light.

And she exits, leaving these three men behind along with Sam and Vincent, who have entered from the other room. Larry looks at the two of them.

LARRY
What'd you guys do?

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

A CAR sits, cloaked in shadows. Inside sits our friend, the WATCHER. Once again we see the Watcher's knife -- once again he manicures his nails with it, almost delicately, as he watches the House. It's dark -- a single light glows behind a window on the third floor. Sam's room.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Sam has pushed all the furniture aside to make enough room to do a martial arts form. Right now he's frozen, one leg extended in a kick, balancing on the other leg. Now - A KNOCK at his door -- seconds later, it opens. Deirdre stands there, watching as Sam holds his position for a BEAT more, and then retracts his leg.

DEIRDRE
I feel as if I've wandered onto the
set of Enter The Dragon. Could you
teach me to do that?

SAM
I didn't think to see you again
tonight. You were pretty pissed.

DEIRDRE
I still am.

SAM
Is that right?

DEIRDRE

That's right.

Deirdre spings at Sam, throwing martial arts combinations at him: punch followed by kick, elbow strike followed by palm thrust. Sam parries her blows as she drives him across the floor until he's got his back to the wall. Their movements are controlled, but powerful, and there's something almost flirtatious about the whole thing. Now -

Deirdre throws one last punch which Sam ducks. He slips behind her and suddenly they square off in earnest. The previous martial arts stuff was a kind of choreographed exercise, but now - They spar for real -- they never hit one another, but they come awfully close, hands and feet whizzing through the air, throwing rapid-fire combinations and techniques. They're not angry, but they're not kidding, either. Finally - Deirdre feints a punch that distracts Sam's attention from - The KICK she throws right behind her punch, and she smiles as - WHUMP! Sam wasn't distracted at all -- he drops to the ground beneath her kick and catches her standing leg with a sweep which takes her to the ground and now - She's trapped beneath him. The two of them are breathing hard from the exertion, their faces close to one another, shining with sweat and excitement and - We've gone from flirting to an almost primal seduction, and with their faces only inches apart Deirdre leans in to kiss Sam, and he's about to meet her half way when he pulls back.

SAM

Part of me says I should just look at this as a perk. You know, a bonus. But then I remember you're you -- Deirdre who used to belong to the IRA -- and it occurs to me that deceit and subterfuge come very naturally to you.

DEIRDRE

(kissing him very
lightly)
Nobody's saying they don't.

SAM

(returning the kiss,
just as lightly)
And when I consider that, I have to wonder if you don't have some ulterior motive for being here, with me, right now.

DEIRDRE

I probably do.

DEIRDRE
 (pulling him close)
 But for the time being, I'm willing
 to forget about it...

They finally kiss, slowly and then building in intensity,
 and as they start to make love the

CAMERA MOVES UP - THROUGH THE BUILDING, floor by floor, until
 we've reached -

EXT. A ROOFTOP GARDEN - MEANWHILE

Deirdre and Sam are not the only ones indulging in
 extracurricular activities. Up here in this rooftop garden
 we find Swede and Gregor talking in hushed tones.

GREGOR
 I would imagine that the great
 satisfaction in all of this will be
 killing the American.

SWEDE
 (we know this isn't
 true)
 I hadn't thought about it. Understand
 me, Gregor -- I take no pleasure in
 killing. It doesn't bother me one
 bit, but I don't get off on it.

GREGOR
 A means to an end, is that it?

SWEDE
 That's it.

GREGOR
 (he rises to leave)
 Then I guess we're set.

SWEDE
 There is one other thing...

GREGOR
 What's that?

Suddenly Swede pulls Gregor down to the rooftop with a harsh
 THUD. Within seconds he has his gun pressed to Gregor's
 head.

GREGOR
 What are you doing?

SWEDE
 Don't cross me...

GREGOR
Nobody's going to do that!

SWEDE
Really?

GREGOR
(truly frightened)
I need you, Swede, I can't do this
without you!

SWEDE
(beat, then he puts
his gun away)
I just wanted to make sure you knew
who you were dealing with.

GREGOR
I do, I do...

Swede is now on his feet, walking away, back into the
apartment house.

SWEDE
(this is almost to
himself)
Just remember it, then.

And he's gone. And as soon as he is, we notice something
strange about Gregor: he's not the least bit scared -- he
laughs a little low laugh as we -

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAWN

GRAY LIGHT seeps in from the horizon, while inside in -

INT. SAM'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Deirdre is pulling her dress over her head. Sam seems to be
sleeping in his bed as she moves like a cat towards the door
when -

Sam's HAND reaches out, gently yet firmly, and takes her by
the arm.

SAM (O.S.)
No goodbye?

ANOTHER ANGLE - Sam is somehow sitting up, wide awake --
looking at Deirdre with a penetrating glance.

DEIRDRE

Look, Sam, don't take it the wrong way when I tell you we won't be doing this again.

SAM

You don't have to explain yourself to me, Deirdre.

DEIRDRE

(almost surprised by this)

I know I don't have to, Sam, it's just that, for once, I want to. when I was a -

(almost with a sneer)

Patriot, it was a given I'd sleep with any man it was deemed necessary for me to sleep with. You know: any man who needed setting up. Sometimes so we might blackmail him, sometimes so he could be killed.

(a quick beat)

Sometimes so I could kill him myself. IRA isn't exactly an enlightened feminist organization, Sam. To most of the men I with I was always the girl. "Send the girl to do it." "Tell The girl to take care of it." "Have the girl fuck him."

(a quick beat)

But I look at you and I get this feeling you take me for what I am: no more, no less.

SAM

You're a hired gun, Deirdre -- just like me.

DEIRDRE

Exactly. And last night I wanted to be with someone who was just like me.

Somewhere in all of this Deirdre has sat back down on the bed, and somehow now she's only inches away from Sam. They're lips brush and -

A MUTED PHONE RINGS in a nearby room, breaking the moment. A QUICK BEAT, then -

DEIRDRE

I better be getting that.

SAM
Duty calls?

DEIRDRE
(with a trace of a
sigh)
Just business.

Deirdre gives Sam a light kiss on the lips and then she opens his door. The muted phone is a little louder now. Deirdre closes Sam's door as she exits, but - Sam reaches out a hand and catches the door right before it snaps shut. He watches THROUGH THE DOOR CRACK as - Deirdre cross the hall and opens the door to her room, and now the phone rings loudly until the door shuts, muting the sound once again, shutting Sam out. The phone stops ringing as Deirdre answers and as this happens Sam shuts his door and as the door closes we go to - BLACK. Just for a second. And then - BLINDING SUN hits us in the eyes as we find ourselves above -

EXT. NICE - DAY

A DAZZLING OVERHEAD MOVING SHOT, establishing that we've changed locales, moved to a place filled with sun and blue water and reflective surfaces: the Cote d'Azure. We start to MOVE DOWN TOWARDS -

EXT. A PRIVATE BEACH - NICE - MEANWHILE

A TOPLESS GRANDMA reclines on a beach chair, soaking up rays, sipping a drink just delivered by a young stud of a WAITER. Nearby -

AT A ROUND TABLE -

A nice distance from anyone who might try to listen in, we find our group: Deirdre, Sam, Vincent, Gregor, Swede, and Larry. Food and drink surround them. Larry is, of course, still eating.

DEIRDRE
Now then, let's run through it one more time, shall we?
(to Gregor)
What's your job?

GREGOR
I use my cell phone to get computer access to the telecommunications satellite used by our target. I trace his cell phone signature and use it to pin point his location as he moves through Nice, relaying that information to you.

DEIRDRE

(to Larry)

Next.

LARRY

(a sigh, he's done
this too many times)

You call me with the target's route,
I follow along until we've reached
the attack point and then I run his
squad ass off the road.

DEIRDRE

(to Swede)

Which leads us to...

SWEDE

I ride with fat-boy...

LARRY

(under his breath)

Eat shit and die slowly...

SWEDE

After we stop the target car I get
out and use the heavy artillery to
kill the driver and his bodyguard.

LARRY

I blast the lead car into oblivion...

VINCENT

(picking up)

While Sam and I take out the back
two cars...

DEIRDRE

Leaving...

SWEDE

(picking it up)

...Leaving me to step in, drop the
target in the back seat, and get the
package...

DEIRDRE

(with a quick look at
Sam)

While...

SAM

(returning her look)

...While I back him up, making sure
to get the package if something goes
wrong and somebody takes Swede down.

Nobody else seems to notice this look between them, but we should -- if only to note that there's something about the way Deirdre queries Sam about his role, and something about the way Sam answers her without overly reacting -- they're not flirting, but there's a kind of acknowledgment of the history they now have between them. But -- nobody else notices, and Swede's line follows Sam's without breaking the flow of the dialogue.

SWEDE

Nobody's taking me anywhere...

DEIRDRE

And then...

LARRY

Then Swede and I split with the package and meet you back at the rendezvous.

DEIRDRE

And then...

VINCENT

And then Sam, you and I clean up whatever's left to be cleaned.

DEIRDRE

Very good. Now all we have to do is live long enough to get paid.

EXT. A POSH HOTEL - LATER - NIGHT

A ROW OF ROOMS, each one with a light behind a shade. Even as we watch the light in each room goes off: one two three four five six lights -- one for each member of the team. The night before the big event nobody breaks curfew.

ACROSS THE STREET -

BAR -

Through the bar window we see the Watcher's silhouette. A match flares as the Watcher lights a cigarette, REVEALING his face for the first time: weathered, sharp, treacherous. THE MATCH goes out, and the Watcher's face FADES TO BLACK, and so do we.

FADE IN ON:

EXT. THE HILLS OF NICE - MORNING

PRIVATE ESTATE IN THE HILLS -

A CARAVAN OF BLACK ARMOR PLATED CARS, all idling, ready to pull out, filled with muscular men in suits with bluges under their jackets, all of them waiting for - THE TARGET. Except we've seen him before and he wasn't called the Target: he was the Killer from the first scene of the film: the gunman in the cathedral who made off with - THE BRIEFCASE. Which the briefcase is still handcuffed to his side. Now the Target gets into his car, a BLACK MERCEDES, and as soon as he's in the caravan pulls out and - The Target takes out his cell phone, punches in a number and starts to talk, and as he does we - PULL BACK, INTO THE AIR, leaving the Caravan behind as we MOVE TOWARDS THE WATER and -

THE PROMENADE DES ANGLAIS, the long roadway that runs the length of the town adjacent to the beach. It's a special place, a huge road for cars, along with a promenade for tourists. Here we come upon -

AN OUTDOOR CAFE -

Where we find Deirdre, a laptop in front of her, wearing a HEADSET. And, lest we think she looks out of place, we get a look at -

THE REST OF THE CAFE -

Where many of the other PATRONS are typing away on laptops, or chattering like crazy on their cell phone. She types a sentence on her keyboard, and as she types she says it out loud.

DEIRDRE

Alright, Gregor, I'm...

CUT TO:

INT. A CRAMPED COMPTUER CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME

GREGOR

(finishing her sentence)

Ready when you are...

Gregor is sitting behind a console, looking at Deirdre's message, which we can read on his laptop. Gregor also has a much bigger COMPUTER with him as well, and on this screen we see - A COMPUTER GRAPHIC MAP OF NICE. This is a map of incredible detail, a high-tech graphic rendering of Nice. Now - THE MAP starts to shift, randomly moving about the city as it searches for the proper signal. The computer isolates an entire district of the city, enlarges a part of the district, and then locates and enlarges a single street.

Now - On screen a FLASHING CURSOR appears on the map, the TARGET. The Cursor starts to move down one of the streets of Nice and as we follow the Curson it TURNS INTO - THE TARGET CAR, driving home the point that Gregor is now locked onto the Target. THE JAPANESE DRUMS we heard in the opening sequence start to play again -- softly, ominously, and we're on -

EXT. A SIDE STREET

Where VINCENT'S FIAT is parked at a curb, Sam and Vincent sitting inside.

INT. THE FIAT

Vincent sits behind the wheel, while Sam sits next to him, loading a small arsenal of weapons.

The DRUMS grow, a little louder now, a little more urgent.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET

A VOLVO idles, waiting for something, Larry behind the wheel of this car, and sitting next to him Swede. The DRUMS continue to play, and their volume is still low, but they're jarring, setting our nerves on edge.

INT. THE VOLVO

LARRY

Where is this broad?

SWEDE

You should learn a little patience.

LARRY

Is that right?

SWEDE

It's consider a virtue in some corners of the world.

LARRY

Not in mine.

THE CAR PHONE rings, and Swede pushes a button. Deirdre's Voice is heard on the speaker phone.

DEIRDRE (V.O.)

Hello gentlemen, are we ready?

EXT. THE CAFE

Deirdre looks at her laptop and relays Gregor's instructions.

She speaks over her headset as if she's conducting ordinary business -- as if she's giving someone traffic directs over the phone. The JAPANESE DRUMS continue, quiet and yet intense.

DEIRDRE

You want to take a left, then, so
that you're going west.

During this next sequence, the DRUMS will continue to play, building with the action as we do -

THE CHASE MONTAGE: A SERIES OF CUTS AS -

The Volvo takes a flying left turn -

Gregor watches the Target on his computer as it moves towards the Promenade des Anglais, typing the results on his keyboard as - The Volvo careens down a steep hill, hits a bump, and flies through the air a good fifteen feet, even as -

The Fiat follows close behind and hits the same bump, does the same flight through the air and lands with a thud -

THE CARAVAN of cars -

THE TARGET CAR -

THE TARGET, still talking away on his cell phone - THE COMPUTER MAP tracking the Target's movements, as the Map shifts and moves as it keeps pace with the target, and now -

The Promenade des Anglais is right ahead and the DRUMS build to a crescendo as -

The Volvo SMASHES into the Target Car and they grind together, as -

CARS 3 & 4 in the Caravan are cut off by Vincent's Fiat, which forces them to slam to a halt, as -

Larry runs the Target Car to a halt and the JAPANESE DRUMS stop.

Larry and Swede hop out of the Volvo, and Swede brandishes a MONSTER of a MACHINE GUN, with which he opens fire, a blast of huge gauge shells spitting a trail of fire, smashing against THE WINDSHIELD of the Target Car, which is bullet-proof. The windshield doesn't break right away -- but the heavy blast of firepower causes the windshield to buckle.

Sam and Vincent are now out of the Fiat, guns drawn, blazing away at BODYGUARDS, and Christ, there's an army of them, pouring out of Cars 3 & 4. These guys are armed and returning fire as -

Larry gets out of the driver's seat of the Volvo, and he's got some kind of sumbitch weapons himself, a ROCKET LAUNCHER, which he points and fires - And now we TRACK THE MISSILE as it scorches the air, traveling towards -

The LEAD CAR of the caravan which has only now realized what's going on behind it, and as frantic Bodyguards drive back towards the carnage - The Missile IMPACTS, blowing the Car sideways.

Meanwhile - Sam and Vincent are taking out the Other Bodyguards, and these guys are warriors -- they moves as a team, each man with a gun in both hands, using a weapon until it's out of bullets and then discarding it in favor of a new one.

And even as this is going on - Deirdre has joined the fray, firing both of her pistols, taking Sam's place at Vincent's side so that Sam can run towards -

The Target Car, where the Target is seated in the backseat, pulling out his own piece, ready to fight to the death himself as -

Swede continues blasting away at the windshield with his monster gun, and now - The Windshield has started to crack and splinter, and abruptly, it shatters, instantly bursting a bright red as Swede's bullets tear up the body of the Driver.

Now Sam has reaches the Target Car, just as the Target, who is armed and, as we know, not exactly helpless, steps out of the car and sights in on Swede and - ZING! Sam fires, winging the Target, knocking the gun out of his hand and still the Target won't give up without a struggle, he hits Swede with the Briefcase.

THE TARGET

Fuck you!

SWEDE

Not today.

BANG. Swede puts one shot between the Target's eyes, ending his life. Now - Swede takes out a DAI-SHO, the smaller of the two traditional Japanese Samurai swords. With one slashing blow he hacks off the Target's HAND AT THE WRIST and grabs the briefcase. The SEVERED HAND is still caught in the handcuffs, so that it is carried along for the ride. Now - DISTANT SIRENS sound from OFF SCREEN as Swede moves back towards Larry and the Volvo, and as he goes he raises the briefcase (with its severed hand) in a kind of mock salute to Sam, who starts to move back towards Deirdre and Vincent, who have taken care of the remaining Bodyguards, and now the SIRENS are growing closer as we -

START TO MOVE IN SLOW MOTION as Swede approaches the Volvo and - Deirdre and Vincent are already at Vincent's Fiat, waiting for Sam, and so they don't notice that - A VAN has been parked nearby this entire time, and now the van's side door slides open, and unseen by any of the others - Gregor steps out of the Van, a gun at his side, and a predatory look on his face as - Swede reaches Larry and the Volvo just as - Sam has reaches the Fiat, and now he looks back and sees - Gregor, crossing the street, and now - Sam screams a warning to Larry, but it's way too late because - Swede shoots Larry in the neck, hitting him above the protective covering of his bullet proof vest. Now we're MOVING IN REAL TIME as - Larry manages to get his backup piece drawn, a snub-nosed .38, and he fires all six shots into - Swede, hitting him in the stomach -- it's the same way Larry shot the target in the warehouse. Swede is sent flying backwards, where he crashes to the pavement. For a second we think he's dead, but then he gets up, in pain but alive, just as Sam predicted. Swede claws at his shirt to reveal that he too wears a bullet proof vest. By now - Larry has rolled out of the Volvo, crawling away but too weak to go far, and now - Swede has Larry in his sights, he's going to kill him.

SWEDE

I don't particularly like killing, tubby, but I want you to know that this one I'm going to enjoy.

LARRY

(sees something over Swede's shoulder)

I don't think so.

Swede turns to follow Larry's gaze, and as he does - Gregor walks INTO FRAME and puts his gun right beneath Swede's chin.

Before Swede can even compute this, Gregor pulls the trigger, firing straight up into Swede's brain. Then, without even looking at Larry, who is lying helpless on the ground -

Gregor takes the briefcase and gets into the Volvo, driving off just as - Sam arrives, kneeling down by Larry. The SIRENS get louder.

LARRY

(in shock)

He just...I don't believe that son-of-a...

Vincent's Fiat comes peeling to a halt in front of them, Vincent and Deirdre inside it as Sam manages to get Larry into the back seat. Sam doesn't get in the car yet as Larry says -

LARRY
 (still having trouble
 believing it)
 We've been crossed...

The SIRENS reach a crescendo as a group of GENDARMES arrive, charging with automatic weapons drawn. Between the French cops and our heroes lies the shot up wreck of the Target Car, and now - Sam takes out a GRENADE, pulls the pin, and rolls it across the ground, beneath the Mercedes, which the cops have just reached. Seconds later - The Car EXPLODES, cutting off the cops, and as this happens, Vincents puts the pedal to the floor and gets the fuck out of Dodge. We start to SLOWLY PULL BACK on the remains of this battle: the dead bodies, the shot up cars, the broken glass, and that flaming, smoking hulk of a Mercedes in the middle of the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE OLD CITY/NICE - SUNSET

The FIREBALL of the car turns into a BLOOD RED SUN as it sets in the Western sky, tinting the stone buildings of the Old City a coppery red.

We're MOVING THROUGH the Old City, through the twists and turns of what an American would call back alleys but that pass for streets in this place. It is quiet almost deserted, then - A TESTOSTERONE CRAZED PLAYBOY whips his sports car through one of these streets, engine whining, as we - MOVE DOWN yet another side street, and this sucker really is a back alley, you couldn't get a car down here if you tried. Finally, we come to - A RAT TRAP OF AN OLD BUILDING, and we PUSH TIGHT on this building as we hear -

LARRY (V.O.)
 What is this?

INT. A BACK APARTMENT - SAME TIME

A SYRINGE is plunged into Larry's arm. Sam is tending to Larry's wound. Sam seems to know what he's doing, as Larry is also hooked up to a bottle of plasma hanging on a makeshift stand.

SAM
 (answering Larry's
 question)
 It's a cocktail. Mostly demerol,
 cut with a little crank because we
 might need you awake in the real
 near future.

LARRY

Fine with fucking me, we got work to do. I don't care what it takes, we are getting our property back and putting it into the hands of the people who are gonna pay us a great deal of money when we do. I don't know about the rest of you guys, but I'm not the kind of guy to just sit back and take it in the ass.

(a quick beat)

I don't mean that in, like, a literal way...

DEIRDRE

Of course.

VINCENT

Finding this package is a thing easier said than done. We don't even know what it is.

(he looks at Deirdre,
and suddenly he's
deadly earnest)

What did we steal?

DEIRDRE

(suddenly defensive)

I don't know.

VINCENT

When this whole thing started you made it clear: you're running the show. And I don't believe you'd be running this show if you didn't know what was going on.

DEIRDRE

Well I don't!

VINCENT

And I don't believe you...

Vincent's gun is out in the blink of an eye, at Deirdre's head, but she's as fast as he is and her gun is drawn as well, jammed into his stomach.

DEIRDRE

(suddenly feral)

You go shoot me if you want, Vincent, but you'll be dead before I hit the ground.

VINCENT

(matching her intensity)
I don't want you dead, woman, I want
the the truth!

SAM (O.S.)

(with a dead cool in
his voice)
Both of you...

ANOTHER ANGLE - Sam has the two of them covered with his gun - an interesting moment, because he can shoot either Deirdre or Vincent, but not both at the same time. The question is: whose side is he on?

SAM

(continuing without
missing a beat)
...put your guns down and chill out.

A BEAT. And then Vincent and Deirdre lower their weapons, followed by Sam.

SAM

Like it or now, we're on the same
side: we're here and the package
isn't.
(looks at Deirdre)
You're not the boss any more, you're
our partner. So tell us what you
know, so we can figure a way out of
this mess.

Sam's look isn't romantic, but it implies a level of trust based upon their physical intimacy.

SAM

Now, what did we steal?

DEIRDRE

(she hates to admit
this)
I don't know...
(defensively, off
Vincent's look)
Well I don't! It's a goddamned
mystery to me just like it is to
you.
(quick beat, then
reluctantly continuing)
But I do know who we're working for.
My people, and the Russian mob.

LARRY

Your people?

LARRY

Who the fuck is your people?

VINCENT

Who do you think, Larry? The IRA.

DEIRDRE

And you believed me?

(passionately)

But it wasn't my people who did it.

LARRY

How do we know that?

SAM

Because if they had she'd be gone along with the package, instead of sitting here with us.

DEIRDRE

Exactly. Gregor, he was the Russian's man. It was my people came up with the idea for this run, but the Russians who had the capital to finance it. Gregor, he was their insurance, and I was ours. Everybody else was supposed to be neutral. Gregor must've got to Swede...

LARRY

I never did trust that blonde fuck...

DEIRDRE

That's why you were riding with him.

VINCENT

The question still remains: what do we do now?

SAM

(he figures something out)

Gregor's cell phone...

LARRY

(to himself)

What are you gonna do, call him up and ask him to give us back our shit?

SAM

(ignoring Larry, to Deirdre)

Did he bring that with him?

DEIRDRE

I bought it for him -- all the stuff he was using, it was in his contract. Cost a nice penny, too, especially that goddamned phone: Gregor had expensive tastes.

SAM

Check this out.

(he's thinking on his feet)

Gregor's a spook, or he was one until recently. When he was a spy he lived the life -- you know, a prince in some Eastern Bloc country where nobody had shit and Gregor had everything. Then the wall goes down. No more Cold War. And Gregor is out of a job. No apartment, no special stores with Western food and video tapes. I would bet dollars against shit that Gregor liked that phone and he doesn't want to give it up. And I wouldn't be surprised if he's arrogant enough to think...

DEIRDRE

(finishing his sentence)

That we're too stupid to trace his calls.

Deirdre and Sam share the slightest of conspiratorial smiles as they realize they're both thinking the same thought: they might still win this one.

EXT. AIX EN PROVENCE - TWILIGHT

We're on perhaps the MOST BEAUTIFUL STREET in all of France: the Cours Mirabeau in the town of Aix.

Outdoor cafes line the sides of the street, while a canopy of interlocking trees covers everything. Now we're - MOVING, DOWN THE STREET, towards a CAFE, where a DAPPER GENT sits, sipping a mineral water. The Gent has a SATCHEL at his feet.

Now - A JEEP pulls up to a nearby corner and idles in neutral. The Dapper Gent throws some bills on the table and gets up, crossing to - The Jeep. A door opens, and the Dapper Gent, carrying his satchel, gets into the jeep, which drives off as we -

CUT TO:

INT. JEEP - SAME TIME

Gregor and the Dapper Gent drive in silence for minute, down the length of the Cours Mirabeau.

GREGOR
(breaking the silence)
It's a beautiful street, no?

The Dapper Gent also has an accent, a much thicker one than Gregor's; it's an accent that places the Gent as a resident of what used to be called the Soviet Union.

DAPPER GENT
(he can't wait any
longer)
Do you have it?

GREGOR
Always in a rush, you are. All these
years I've known you, you could never
wait for anything.

DAPPER GENT
This is important.

GREGOR
Do you really think so?

DAPPER GENT
You know it is.

Gregor, still driving, takes out a SILENCED PISTOL, and the Dapper Gent reaches for his own piece.

GREGOR
Relax!

The Dapper Gent lowers his hand, leaving his gun in his coat.

Gregor pulls the van to a curb.

GREGOR
Look over there.

GREGOR & THE GENT'S POV: THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD - A GROUP OF CHILDREN are playing.

GREGOR (O.S.)
Do you see that one? The girl in
the light blue dress?

We find one particular LITTLE GIRL, around eight, holding the end of a jump rope, wearing a light blue dress.

She's breathtakingly beautiful, and now - Gregor raises his silenced pistol, as if to shoot her.

DAPPER GENT

What are you doing, have you lost your mind?!?

Gregor pulls the trigger, as he does so the Dapper Gent jogs his arm, and we hear the soft thwppfft of the silenced shot just as the shot goes off - Missing its mark, harmlessly shooting into a tree, causing a SINGLE LEAF to float to the ground behind the playing children. Nobody notices a thing.

BEAT. The Dapper Gent is visibly shaken, because there is no doubt that Gregor would have killed the Girl if the Gent hadn't ruined his aim.

DAPPER GENT

Why did you do that?

GREGOR

To make a point. I don't know her, and I was ready to splatter her brains all over the sidewalk.

(giving the Gent a look)

I don't particularly like you, so imagine what I'll do if you try anything...

Gregor leaves his gun dangling in the air a moment longer than necessary and then starts the jeep as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD OUTSIDE OF AIX - NIGHT

A FULL MOON casts a silver light over a field of wild grass.

A soft wind blows, and the grass moves gently from side to side. Now - Gregor's JEEP glides down this road as we MOVE THROUGH TO -

INT. THE JEEP - SAME TIME

DAPPER GENT

(squirming)

Enough! We've been driving for an hour, where is my package?

Gregor smiles -- he's been waiting for this. He pulls the jeep over and looks at the Dapper Gent.

GREGOR

It's under your seat.

DAPPER GENT
 (incredulous)
 What?

GREGOR
 As my American friend Larry would
 say: are you fucking deaf? It's
 under your seat.

The Dapper Gent looks down, and sure enough, the edge of the Briefcase sticks out beneath the seat.

DAPPER GENT
 I can't believe you'd do that, Gregor.
 I thought I trained you better than
 that.

With a laugh the Dapper Gent hands his satchel to Gregor, whose eyes literally dance with the prospect of his reward.

He can't help himself, he opens the satchel and there it is - COLD HARD CASH in large bills, enough for Gregor to live like a prince for quite some time. Gregor sucks in an involuntary breath and then looks back up to see - The Dapper Gent hasn't reached for the Briefcase. Instead he's taken out his gun, and it's only inches from Gregor's head.

DAPPER GENT
 I've never particularly liked you
 either, Gregor.

The Dapper Gent yanks out the Briefcase, and as he does -

THE SEVERED HAND comes whipping out along with it, still attached by the handcuff chain. The Hand flies up in the Dapper Gent's face, and we notice that the Hand is starting to rot -- it's bloated and swelling and horrific and it scares the shit out of the Dapper Gent, who drops his gun and fumbles with the Briefcase as - THWPFFT...we hear the sound of another silenced shot as we -

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE JEEP - SAME TIME

A DARK STAIN splashes against the passenger side window of the jeep. Seconds later - The door swings open, and the Dapper Gent's body plunks out onto the ground. A moment later, something wet and viscous plops down on the face of the Gent as the jeep drives off. Now - We HOLD FOR A BEAT on the Dapper Gent's dead body, which lies in the silver moonlight, blood running out from beneath him, while the Severed Hand palms the Gent's face, fingers splayed out around his head. Now - We HEAR the sound of PHONE TONES. And not just any phone...

INT. THE JEEP - SAME TIME

Gregor finishes punching a number into his CELL PHONE. We hear a single ring on the other end of the phone before it is picked up.

PHONE VOICE (V.O.)
 (in Russian, English
 subtitles)
 Is it done?

GREGOR
 (in English)
 It's done.

BEAT. The Phone Voice doesn't respond for a moment -- whoever this is they didn't expect to hear from Gregor. The Voice switches to English.

PHONE VOICE (V.O.)
 Gregor, is that you?

GREGOR
 (with a low chuckle)
 Much to your disappointment, no doubt.

PHONE VOICE (V.O.)
 It was a mistake, it shouldn't have happened.

GREGOR
 (suddenly cold, furious)
 I'm in the middle of saving you people a great deal of money -- the least you could do is have the decency to pay me!

BEAT.

PHONE VOICE (V.O.)
 So what do we do?

GREGOR
 What I do is none of your concern. What you should do is wait for my next phone call. I'm going to find a place where I can tilt the field in my favor. When I'm ready, I'll call you and tell you what I want you to do.

The Phone Voice says something unintelligible in Russian, cut off by Gregor as he angrily snaps off his cell phone and we -

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHEAP APARTMENT - DAWN

Larry snores on the couch, while Deirdre sleeps in a sleeping bag on the floor. Vincent sits in a ratty easy chair, feet propped on an overturned crate, dozing lightly. Suddenly - Vincent's eyes open, warily, as if something has changed in the room. He looks around - No Sam. Vincent gets up, takes out his gun, and silently gets to his feet. He moves down a long hall and - No Sam. Now, like a cat, Vincent moves into -

THE BATHROOM: pitch black. He moves in, swipes the string of the overhead light and - nothing. Nobody's here. The only place left is the front door, and now Vincent approaches. He opens the door, gun still at ready, and moves out into -

INT. THE LANDING OUTSIDE - SAME TIME

This is a small building. There is no other apartment on the floor. At the far end of the landing, there is a small ladder which leads up to -

THE ROOF. And the door which leads to the roof is flapping in a light wind.

EXT. THE ROOF - SAME TIME

Vincent bursts onto the roof, gun straight out, finger on the trigger, only to find - Sam is there, his gun pointed at Vincent. A BEAT, then both men give little laughs and put their weapons away, like Samurai so trained in combat that they know when it's safe to relax.

SAM

What's going on?

VINCENT

You weren't around when I woke up, I thought maybe something had happened.

(off Sam's look)

This has been one very fucked up job, Sam, and I'm not taking any more chances on anybody...

(a quick beat)

Including you...

In answer Sam takes out Vincent's pack of cigarettes and tosses them back to him. Vincent looks almost delighted at this.

SAM
I came up here to sneak a smoke.

VINCENT
You were smoking?

SAM
I hope you don't mind I took your
pack. It was on the table.

VINCENT
(very sincere, offering
the pack)
Please, help yourself. Smoke as
many you'd like.

Sam considers for a minute, and then takes one. Vincent does so as well, and he searches for his lighter, which he can't seem to find, because - Sam has it, and he lights their cigarettes, and then hands the lighter back to Vincent.

SAM
(a shrug of the
shoulders)
I borrowed that, too...

VINCENT
(puffing contentedly)
Of course...whenever you feel like
it just help yourself.

SAM
I have a feeling I'm about to start
buying my own.

BEAT. The two men smoke in silence, looking out at -

THE CURVED SHORELINE OF NICE -

Which glitters with thousands of lights from the apartment buildings, and a thousand more from the cars that travel on the road that leads into town: the Promenade des Anglais.

VINCENT (O.S.)
That was a bad bit of business, today.

BACK ON Sam and Vincent.

SAM
It was at that.

VINCENT
A lot of people died.

SAM
I've seen a lot of people die before.

VINCENT
I haven't. Not like that. How do you get used to it?

SAM
You don't. You just learn to live with it.

VINCENT
I won't lie -- there have been times when I had to do it, times when the only way to get out alive was to see that the other man didn't.

SAM
We live in a singular world, my friend.

VINCENT
I never really thought I was part of the world you move in, Sam, to tell you the truth.
(off his look)
I'm a hood, a thief. Big time in a small time king of way. To the local police I'm a prize, to the local hoods I'm a legend. But to a guy like you I'm just another two bit hired gun.

SAM
You might be a hired gun, Vincent, but I got a feeling you cost more than two bits.

This conversation might have gone further, but it is interrupted when Deirdre pokes her head up onto the roof.

DEIRDRE
Christ, I was starting to think that the two of you had thrown it in and walked away.
(to Vincent)
There's someone on the phone downstairs asking for you, and my somewhat limited French leads me to believe that he might have something to tell us about Gregor.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - LATER - NIGHT

A car we haven't seen before, a CITROEN, hums up the French highway in the night, along on the road. It's a postcard moment, but only for a moment.

LARRY (V.O.)
I'm telling you...

INT. THE CITROEN - SAME TIME

LARRY
(continuing)
That I could be dead and I'd drive
better than you.

Deirdre is driving, and Larry -- much to his chagrin -- is in the passenger seat, watching her every move.

DEIRDRE
(very curt)
Oh shut up...

IN THE BACK SEAT -

Sam and Vincent have a MAP spread out. Vincent is tracing Gregor's route so far, and we follow his RED MAGIC MARKER as it traces a line up the highway.

VINCENT
He's going north.
(circles something on
map)
That's Aix en Provence, where he
used the phone.

Sam runs his finger along the length of the highway on the map. Destination: Paris.

SAM
(making up his mind)
He's going back.

VINCENT
Not necessarily. He could go off
road at any number of places. He
might not even be in the country
anymore.

SAM
It's Paris. The route's too indirect
for anything else. A guy like Gregor,
he doesn't waste time on this road
unless he has to be on it in the
first place.

SAM

Otherwise, he'd be out of the country
by now. He's going to Paris.

(beat)

Now I just hope we can find him before
he gets there.

DEIRDRE

If somebody else doesn't find him
first.

EXT. THE TOWN OF ORANGE - DAY

Orange, pronounced "Au-Ronge", is a mid-sized town of fifty thousand souls. It is small, charming, quaint, and it has one particular thing that no other town in France can claim -

AN ANCIENT ROMAN THEATER that has been painstakingly restored. We see this Roman Theater from the outside, as we MOVE THROUGH the streets of the town, to the TOWN SQUARE. It's packed -- every seat in every outdoor cafe is filled with a tourist having breakfast. This normally quiet place explodes one month out of the year, when an internationally famous music festival is held in the Roman Theater. We come upon -A TABLE OF AMERICAN TOURISTS: a Family. Dad is angry at Mom.

DAD

Opera? This is an opera festival?

MOM

I told you that, Henry.

DAD

I thought you meant Phantom of the
Opera. You know, Andrew Lloyd Weber,
Cats, that kind of thing.

Mom and Dad continue their discussion, but we've left them behind, MOVING THROUGH the seats and cafes until we get to a cafe on the outskirts of the Town Square. Here, in the most removed table in the entire Square, we find Gregor sitting in the shadow of the trellis. Unless you're on top of him you can't see him, but he can see everything perfectly. His cell phone sits on the table in front of him -- he picks it up and starts to punch in a number.

CUT TO:

EXT. A REST STOP ON THE HIGHWAY - MEANWHILE

THE CITROEN is parked among a number of other cars. Sam is sleeping in the back seat, while Vincent is seen on an outdoor pay phone at the other end of the parking lot.

Deirdre and Larry sit at a nearby picnic table, eating French fast food, which we get a good look at as we - PAN THE LENGTH OF THE TABLE, which is covered with pasta, grilled sausages with dijon mustard, really good fried potatoes.

In fact, everything that's on this table is so far beyond the imagination of your average American truck driver that Larry can't contain himself. He's stuffing himself, washing everything down with the wine which is also sold at these road-side rest stops. Deirdre drinks coffee.

LARRY

(mouth full)

This...this is incredible. Is the rest of Europe like this?

DEIRDRE

(with a laugh)

Some places, not all. Italy, for instance, they're serious about their food. But try bloody Britain, anywhere in the U.K., you don't get much fancier than a deep-fried bar egg. Food's not our thing, you see.

LARRY

What is?

DEIRDRE

(everybody knows this)

Best beer in the world known to man or God.

LARRY

(with a snort)

Best beer in the world? Budweiser for me, thanks.

DEIRDRE

(with unconcealed scorn)

Budweiser? You talk to me of beer and you've the unbridled gall to mention Budweiser in the same sentence? That's not beer! Christ, it's not even a poor excuse for rabbit piss.

LARRY

Oh yeah? Whatta you drink, then?

DEIRDRE

I drink what every civilized man, woman and child in the world drinks: Guinness.

VINCENT (O.S.)
I hate to interrupt a conversation
of such cultural depth...

CUT AWAY TO REVEAL: Vincent -

Who has finished his phone call and returned to join them.

VINCENT
...but we've got to get back on the
road.

Vincent raps lightly on the car window next to Sam's head --

Sam's eyes shoot open: a light sleeper. All eyes are on
Vincent, who waits for a BEAT before he reveals his news.

VINCENT
We've got him.

LARRY
I'm driving.

EXT. THE TOWN SQUARE - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

Gregor is seated where we saw him last -- at the little table
in the corner cafe. He's been here for hours, observing the
Town Square, and now, he finally sees what he's been looking
for - TWO MEN, definitely not tourists here for the music,
have entered the Square -- everything about these guys screams
GUNMEN. Now, as Gregor watches - A PUNKED-OUT TEEN comes up
to the men and hands them a small envelope. The Gunmen look
around the Square, trying to see where Gregor is, but he's
too far back in the shadows. The Gunmen ask the Teen a
question, to which the Teen can only shrug his shoulders.
Now - The Teen walks away, leaving the Gunmen to open the
envelope and look at its contents, which are quickly read.
From OFF SCREEN we hear the sound of Gregor punching in a
number on his cell phone. Simultaneously, the Gunmen finish
reading the instructions Gregor has sent them, and turn around
to face - A PAY PHONE. The phone rings, and one of the Gunmen
goes to pick it up.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - MEANWHILE

The Citroen pulls into town and slows to a crawl, cruising
the streets, looking for Gregor.

INT. THE CITROEN - SAME TIME

Vincent stares out of the window and sees something that
causes him to swear under his breath in French. It's -

The Gunmen walking down the street.

VINCENT

I know those men.

Sam frowns: he also seems to recognize at least one of the gunmen. None of the others in the car notice Sam's reaction, but we do. The Gunmen are heading straight for -

EXT. THE ANCIENT ROMAN THEATER - MEANWHILE

THE MID-AFTERNOON SUN shines down on the open air Roman Theater. The theater itself is almost two thousand year old. A semi-circle of seats surrounds a huge Stage Wall, a massive structure which is one of the best preserved of its kind in the world. THE GUNMEN enter at the bottom of the theater, holding ticket stubs. They are with a Tour Group led by an ANCIENT GEEZER who speaks in rapid-fire French. As the tour moves off to see the Stage Wall, the Gunmen hang back and then separate from the crowd.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE THEATER - SAME TIME

THE CITROEN sits at a curb. Larry sits behind the wheel of the car, the getaway driver with the motor running. Vincent and Deirdre are already walking towards the Theater. Sam stays behind for a second to say something to Larry.

SAM

Whatever you hear, whatever happens,
when your partners come back out,
you make sure you're here with the
motor running.

And on that note Sam follows after Vincent and Deirdre. Larry doesn't notice it, but - THE WATCHER has found them. He's a block or so away, wearing a two-day stubble of beard and hugging the shadows of back alley. Cradled in one hand, barely visible but ominously present: his knife, which for one moment catches a glint of sun that hits our eyes as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. INSIDE THE ROMAN THEATER - MEANWHILE

The Gunmen have reached a point about midway up the coliseum-like staircase. Behind them we can see the Tour Group, standing on the stage, being lectured to by the Ancient Geezer. In front of them the Gunmen find -

AN EXIT which leads to an interior hall. Inside the exit it's dark, while a bright sun falls down on the Gunmen. They look into the dark, unable to see a thing, while a voice come at them from out of the dark.

GREGOR (V.O.)
Thank you, gentleman, that will do
nicely.

IN THE HALL -

ON GREGOR. It's dark in here. There are no lights, no torches. From the dark in here, he can look out and see - THE GUNMEN, who make plain targets, backlit as they are by the sun. Now we CUT BACK AND FORTH between these two ANGLES, and it becomes clear that Gregor has chosen wisely -- he can see his quarry, but they can't see him.

GREGOR
Edvard, is that you?

EDVARD, the more dangerous looking of the two Gunmen responds.

EDVARD
Yes, Gregor, they sent me.

GREGOR
I'm touched, really, that they'd send someone of your caliber. It's nice to know that they didn't make the mistake of underestimating me twice.

EDVARD
That was a mistake, trying to kill you. Mikhi did it without consulting me, I'd have never allowed it.

GREGOR
I'm sure. But I'm sorry to say that it's too late for trust: we have a serious problem.

EDVARD
We'll double your price.

GREGOR
(now that's interesting)
Really? Do you have the money with you?

EDVARD
Do you have the material?

GREGOR
You first, Edvard.

EDVARD
Perhaps we could both go at the same time...

GREGOR
 (a short laugh)
 I think not.
 (with a flourish)
 After you...

A GUN COMES INTO FRAME, trigger cocked, the barrel placed to Gregor's temple.

SAM (O.S.)
 After you, asshole.

Gregor stiffens, as we PULL BACK ON Sam, who has snuck up on Gregor and gotten the drop on him.

SAM
 You might have been one mean technical spook, Gregor, but you wouldn't have lasted a week in the field.

CUT TO THE GUNMEN'S POV: Looking into the Tunnel - It's dark, they can't see a thing, but they've heard Sam's voice and they know something's wrong.

EDVARD
 Gregor, are you alright?

DEIRDRE (O.S.)
 Gregor's fine...

CUT AWAY TO REVEAL: DEIRDRE -

She's snuck up on the Gunmen, weapon drawn.

DEIDRE
 (continuing)
 ...but I think you're in a bit of trouble.

The Gunmen reach for their pieces and as they do -

VINCENT (O.S.)
 Don't even think it.

CUT AWAY TO REVEAL: Vincent - And his piece is also out -- the Gunmen are trapped, and they know it. Now we notice that - The Ancient Geezer and his Tour Group are coming towards us. Meanwhile, back in -

THE TUNNEL -

Sam is grilling Gregor furiously, his gun still to Gregor's head.

SAM

Don't talk to me unless you tell me what I want to hear, understand?!? You have no choice in this, don't think about winning, think about staying alive. I want the item, and if you don't give it to me, I'm gonna kill you.

GREGOR

(a panicky hiss)
I don't have it with me...

SAM

Bullshit!

GREGOR

I swear...

SAM

Then where is it?

GREGOR

I sent it to myself in Paris.

SAM

Sent it where?

GREGOR

A post office box.

Suddenly Gregor runs forward, towards the exit. Sam runs after him, tackling him just as they reach - THE OUTSIDE, where the two men roll into plain sight of - The Gunmen, who are still covered by Vincent and Deirdre. Now we notice - That the Ancient Geezer and his Tour Group are really close, no more than ten yards away, as - Sam has Gregor pinned face first on the ancient stone of the theater. He looks up at the others, and that's when it happens - Edvard looks at Sam and recognizes him.

EDVARD

(stunned, announcing
to the group)
Do you know who he is? He's with Interpol, the Internation Police. He's a cop.

A SLOW MOTION BEAT.

Vincent and Deirdre don't know what to make of this, their heads turn to look at Sam, and in this instant - The Tour Group walks into their midst and - The 2nd Gunman reaches for his piece and -

Sam FIRES his gun at the 2nd Gunman, and with the sharp report of the pistol we move back to REAL TIME, as -

The Crowd panics, screaming, and now Edvard is reaching for his weapon, as - Sam shoots again, killing the 2nd Gunman, and now - The Crowd is still screaming and running as - Gregor shoves through the crowd into the exit, as - Deirdre pushes through the crowd, and now she's made it into the tunnel. Now we go -

OUTSIDE THE THEATER -

Where Larry has heard the shot -- his piece is drawn, but he's been ordered to stay in the car. In frustration he slams on the steering wheel, as we see that - Behind Larry, the Watcher is slowly closing in, knife poised to strike as we go back -

INTO THE THEATER -

Edvard tries to get to the exit, but there are too many Tourists in his way, and he proceeds to shoot several of them, including the Dad we saw earlier. Seconds later, Edvard has vanished into the tunnels, and now - Vincent and Sam meet in the middle of the crowd. There is time for a QUICK BEAT, while Vincent glares at Sam.

VINCENT

You're a cop...you're a fucking
cop...I should kill you.

SAM

But you can't.

And now Sam runs into the tunnel, after the others, leaving Vincent for a fraction of a second to sigh, and then follow Sam into -

THE TUNNELS -

It's like being in the tunnels and ramps of a sporting arena. Except that everything here is made of stone and the only light comes from the sun which streams in through the exit openings which are spaced far enough apart that they provide just barely enough light for us to see. Now we do a SERIES OF QUICK CUTS - Sam running, followed by - Vincent, while - Edvard takes a wrong turn down a dark hall and comes to a dead end. He turns around, looking for a way out as - Gregor sees the final exit ahead of him as we go -

OUT IN THE STREET - Larry is still behind the wheel of the Citroen, anxiously looking at the exit, not realizing that - The Watches is almost on him, and now we're back -

IN THE TUNNELS -

Deirdre comes running around a corner, and now she's almost reached the exit as -

OUT IN THE STREET -

Gregor hits the street running. He doesn't notice the Citroen parked ahead, because he's never seen it before, but as he runs by -

The car door swings open and Gregor runs straight into it. He smashes into the door and falls to the ground, injured. Strong Hands reach out of the car and pull him in. It's the Watcher, and let's give him a name now because he needs one: SEAMUS REILLY. Seated in the front seat is - A very dead Larry. Seamus has cut his throat from ear to ear.

SEAMUS

(to Gregor, with an
Irish accent)

If you want to live you'll do exactly
as I tell you.

THROUGH THE BACK WINDOW - Deirdre appears, exiting the theater and running towards the Citroen as we go back to -

INT. THE TUNNELS - SAME TIME

Vincent, gun drawn, moves warily down one of the tunnels. Outside we can hear the dim sound of an approaching siren. Vincent turns a corner and - A GUN jams itself into his face. It's Edvard.

EDVARD

Where do I know you from?

VINCENT

Vienna.

EDVARD

Of course...I remember. I quite
liked you, I'm sorry to have to do
this.

Edvard's finger tightens around the trigger, when -

SAM (O.S.)

Hey...

Edvard is startled by the sound of Sam's voice. Even as he squeezes off the shot, Edvard turns to look at Sam, and as he does so, Vincent strikes out at the gun, sending the shot awry, causing it to - RICOCHET wildly, whining around the room, until it -

Rips through Sam's side, a nasty wound but not fatal, as - Edvard tries to fire another shot but it's too late, because - Vincent fires a single shot to the head that kills Edvard.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE THEATER - MEANWHILE

Deirdre has reached the Citroen. She looks in and sees Seamus and Gregor. Lastly she looks at the dead Larry. She sighs in disgust, but otherwise doesn't react as if surprised.

DEIRDRE

Cold cocking the poor son-of-a-bitch
would have sufficed, Seamus, don't
you think?

SCANT SECOND LATER -

Larry's body hits the street as the Citroen drives off, Deirdre behind the wheel just as - Sam and Vincent run out of the theater, with Vincent helping a wounded Sam who bleeds from the wound in his side. They arrive at the street only to see - Larry, lying dead in the street, even as the Citroen speeds away from them, turning the corner before they can even think to raise their guns.

VINCENT

That double-crossing bitch.

Sam isn't even capable of saying that much -- he just stares after the departed Citroen with a look on his face unlike any we've seen in the film: "how the hell did that happen?" But there's no time to ponder this because they've been joined by - A COP. He's a local guy, he directs traffic and busts drunks in the town square -- and he's scared shitless, holding his gun in both hands, trying not to tremble, as he stares back at - TWO GUNS, Sam's and Vincent's, and they're both pointed at the Cop. LONG BEAT. In the way off distance, another siren can just be heard. Sam and Vincent glare at the Cop, who strains with all his might to control himself, but he can't because Sam and Vincent are death waiting to be served. The cop knows he has three seconds to make up his mind. Two. One. The Cop puts his gun on the ground and steps back, raising his hands in the air. Now - Sam and Vincent stumble into the street, and are instantly almost hit by - A CAR speeding around the corner, its Driver oblivious to what's going on. The car screeches to a halt, and the Driver curses loudly in French. And then the next thing the Driver knows - A Gun is in his face. The door is yanked open and the Driver is yanked out, as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. A BACK ROAD - LATER/EARLY EVENING

The town of Orange is just visible below us as the commandeered Car drives up into the hills. Vincent is behind the wheel, while the wounded Sam sits in the passenger seat. Gritting his teeth, Sam peels back his shirt to get a look at - THE WOUND, and it's small but bad -- the ricochet ripped a small raw hole in Sam's side. The wound bleeds, but moderately so -- no major organs or arteries have been hit.

VINCENT

That makes twice now you've saved my life.

SAM

I didn't save your life back there. Risked it, maybe -- but I didn't save shit.

VINCENT

You see it your way, I'll see it mine. You need a doctor.

SAM

(hopeful)
You know one around here? Somebody you trust?

VINCENT

No...I thought I'd take you to the hospital.

SAM

(sharply)
No hospitals. I'll fix this myself if I have to.

VINCENT

(he can't believe this)
Fix it yourself?
(a thought comes to him)
Why are we even doing this? There's no need to run, Christ...
(he can't disguise his disgust)
You're a cop.

SAM

Not exactly.

VINCENT

You're with Interpol -- you're a cop.

SAM

If I was a cop, a real cop, I'd have busted you a long time ago. This isn't about you, it's about the job I have to do.

VINCENT

And what job is that?

SAM

My job, Vincent, a job you don't need to know about. I can't go to the local cops -- they'd never be able to get close enough at this point. It's me or nobody, and I've been on this job too goddamned long not to finish.

BEAT. Sam takes out his own pack of cigarettes, offers one to Vincent and takes another for himself. They smoke for a second, before Vincent speaks.

VINCENT

It looks to me like we're all that's left of our group.

SAM

We? There is no we in my world now, Vincent, just me.

VINCENT

I'm going with you.

SAM

This doesn't involve you, don't you understand? I can't even guarantee you any money out of all this.

VINCENT

It isn't about money for me, not anymore.

SAM

You don't have to do this.

VINCENT

(with great finality)
Yes I do.

Sam gives Vincent a look and shakes his head in disbelief --

Vincent's loyalty and sense of honor is something he's never seen before, and Sam can only smoke in silence and consider this as we -

CUT TO:

INT. A CHEAP BACK ROOM - NIGHT

PEEPHOLE slides open, and we look through it into -

INT. AN ADJOINING ROOM

where Gregor sits, bound and gagged in a chair, his eyes wide with fright. Now - The Peephole snicks shut, and Deirdre turns to face Seamus Reilly.

DEIRDRE

When we're done with this, I want to do for that one myself.

SEAMUS

Now there's the Deirdre I know.

DEIRDRE

And what's that supposed to mean, Seamus Reilly?

SEAMUS

It means I was worried that all the time you spent away from the fold might have affected you. You've been living the life of the hired gun -- the well paid hired gun, I might note. There's no glory to it, but there are those that like it.

DEIRDRE

So you thought that maybe I'd grown too attached to this charade I've been playing, is that it?

SEAMUS

It's been known to happen.

DEIRDRE

Not to me, you know that.

SEAMUS

(goads her)
I thought I did.

Seamus's taunt works: Deirdre whips out her gun and puts it to his head.

DEIRDRE

I guess you don't know me, then, if
you think I won't kill you for an
insult like that!

Seamus glares at Deirdre for a moment, and she glares back
at him until he starts to laugh.

SEAMUS

Just testing, lass. Forgive me, but
I had to do it.

Deirdre glares a moment more and then puts away her gun.

DEIRDRE

Remember what we agreed on, Seamus:
when we get home, I don't play "the
girl" again.

Deirdre gives Seamus a look to make sure this last point is
clear and we -

CUT TO:

EXT. A FARMHOUSE - THE COUNTRY - NIGHT

The Stolen Car parks behind a BARN, and Sam and Vincent get
out. Waiting for them is a friend of Vincent's - JEAN-
PIERRE, a Frenchman in his forties, hearty, burly, friendly.

VINCENT

Hello, Jean-Pierre.

JEAN-PIERRE

Hello, my friend.

(with a look at Sam)

He doesn't look French to me, Vincent.

SAM

American.

JEAN-PIERRE

Well, Vincent's American friend,
shall we see what we can do for you?

INT. THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - LATER/NIGHT

SURGICAL IMPLEMENTS - Are laid out on a clean cloth. Scalpel,
forceps, a clamp, a sponge, medical thread and needles. We
PULL BACK TO REVEAL: Sam, stretched out on the kitchen table.
Around him we see - Vincent and Jean-Pierre, who are wearing
rubber gloves and examining Sam's wound. Jean-Pierre holds
a mirror up so that Sam can see what's going on. Sam, with
his medical training, is treating himself.

VINCENT

(to Sam)

It's right there, beneath the surface.
I can just make it out.

Sam is in terrible pain, but necessity dictates that he focus on what's going on so that he can talk Vincent through this next procedure.

JEAN-PIERRE

Are you sure you won't have a drink?

SAM

(sharply)

No booze...Pain's in the mind, and
the mind I can control.

(quick beat)

Alright, let's do it.

During this next sequence, we CUT BACK AND FORTH between Sam's reactions to the surgery, and the mirror itself where he's watching.

SAM

Douse the wound with alcohol.

Vincent pours a healthy splash of rubbing alcohol onto the wound and - Sam grits his teeth as the pain explodes up his central nervous system.

SAM

(to Jean-Pierre)

Take that sponge and wipe away as
much of the blood as you can, keep
it clean so I can see.

Jean-Pierre does as Sam says, wiping away the blood that keeps filling the wound. Throughout the procedure Jean-Pierre will do this; every time the sponge is saturated he squeezes the excess blood into - A BUCKET which sits on the floor, slowly filling up with drippings from the sponge.

SAM

(to Vincent)

Take the clamp...

Vincent picks up the clamp.

SAM

Peel back the skin and attach the
clamp.

Vincent attaches the clamp to Sam's wound. It takes perhaps fifteen seconds, and everyone of those seconds is agonizing for Sam.

He sweats, he grits his teeth, he grunts the smallest of grunts. But he doesn't move. Finally Vincent is done.

VINCENT
Alright, it's done.

SAM
You see the bullet?

VINCENT
Clearly.

SAM
Good. Now take the forceps, and remember, Vincent, what we're doing here is routine. I've done stuff like this at least twenty times in the field. There are no vital organs where you're working, no major muscles or arteries -- you can't kill me. Just make sure you've got the bullet before you try to pull it out.

Vincent probes the wound with the forceps. This takes probably thirty seconds, and it hurts even more than when the clamp was attached.

Several times - Vincent seems to have the bullet in his grasp, but it slips, and each time it slips - Sam makes the smallest of noises, as if to indicate the level of the pain. Finally - The forceps firmly grasp the bullet, and with a single tug, Vincent extracts it.

VINCENT
(holding the bullet
aloft)
A souvenir...

He tosses the bullet through the air, and we FOLLOW IT IN SLOW MOTION as it lands in - A SAUCER, which sits on the kitchen counter. We're back in REAL TIME, as the bullet rolls around the plate for a second before coming to a halt. Now - Sam breathes the hugest of sighs, and his face relaxes. Instantly, Vincent puts a lighted cigarette in Sam's mouth, and he drags deeply on it.

SAM
(to Vincent)
You think you can stitch me up on
you own?

JEAN-PIERRE
Don't worry, we'll take care of it.

SAM
Then if you don't mind...
(he hands the cigarette
back to Vincent)
I'm gonna pass out.

And that's exactly what he does.

A TIME CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Vincent and Jean-Pierre sit on easy chairs. An open bottle of wine sits between them, a FIRE burns in the fireplace, and they smoke in a contented silence for a moment. When they speak, it is in FRENCH, with ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

JEAN-PIERRE
He's tough, your American friend.

VINCENT
Yes, Sam's tough alright.

JEAN-PIERRE
And you respect him.

VINCENT
Of course. Don't you?

JEAN-PIERRE
I've never seen a man who could have
taken what he just went through.
(beat)
He's a cop?

VINCENT
(beat, trying to find
a way to say it)
Not exactly.

JEAN-PIERRE
Not exactly? But close enough, eh?
(beat)
So he saved your life, then?

VINCENT
How did you know?

JEAN-PIERRE
If he hadn't you'd have put a bullet
in his head a long time ago.

Both men stare back into the fireplace and we HOLD FOR A BEAT before we -

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE FARM - KITCHEN - DAWN

Sam is awake. Pale from the loss of blood, he moves softly around the kitchen, searching professionally for something, giving the moment a slightly dangerous feel because he seems so intent on what he's doing and then he finds it - THE COFFEE.

TEN MINUTES LATER -

A stream of Hot Coffee mingles with a stream of Steamed Milk.

EXT. THE FARMHOUSE PORCH - SUNRISE

A STEAMING CUT OF COFFEE sits in Sam's hands as he lights a cigarette to go with the coffee. He sits on an ancient chair, smoking in silence, looking out at - THE WOODS around the house, and this place is postcard-beautiful, the French Farmhouse you see only in pictures. But Sam's mind is elsewhere, he's staring into space, lost in thought.

JEAN-PIERRE (O.S.)

You're feeling better?

ANOTHER ANGLE - Jean-Pierre stands in the open front door of the farmhouse, with a cup of coffee. Now, Jean-Pierre moves out to join Sam, sitting down on another chair opposite him.

SAM

(responding to the question)

Some, thanks. Enough to move on, for now.

JEAN-PIERRE

(pointing at Sam's wounded side)

You should really let a doctor look at that.

SAM

Soon.

JEAN-PIERRE

But first you have something to take care of?

SAM

Yeah.

JEAN-PIERRE

Something important? A thing that cannot wait?

SAM

It gets done now or not at all. Another couple of days and the parties concerned are gone where I can't get them.

JEAN-PIERRE

Forgive my intrusion into your affairs, but I am the one who connected Vincent to this job, his agent, if you will. He is one of my oldest friends and I owe him a great debt, much like the debt I suspect he owes you.

A QUICK CUT TO:

INSIDE THE FARMHOUSE

Where Vincent has just poured himself a cup of coffee and lit a very satisfying cigarette when he hears the voices from outside.

SAM (O.S.)

Vincent doesn't owe me a thing.

Vincent looks up when he hears his name and he moves towards the sound of the voices.

JEAN-PIERRE (O.S.)

He sees this differently, as you well know.

SAM (O.S.)

I didn't expect that he would.

BACK ON THE PORCH -

JEAN-PIERRE

You suffered through an agonizing pain last night, pain you could have avoided by declaring yourself an agent of the law.

SAM

Vincent told you that I'm a cop?

JEAN-PIERRE

Not a word. But no ordinary criminal would have the extensive military and medical expertise you do.

JEAN-PIERRE

And so I place the pieces of the puzzle together in a way that makes sense to me. You work for some government agency and you carry a gun, and in my world, that makes you a cop.

And now Jean-Pierre produces a LONG BARRELED REVOLVER which he places loosely in his lap -- a gesture which seems to say, "you'd better explain things to my satisfaction or we're gonna have a problem." Sam notices the weapon, but he doesn't react overtly.

SAM

So this is what, a test?

JEAN-PIERRE

Call it a reckoning of character.

BEAT. Sam looks at the Revolver again.

SAM

If I was healthy, I could take that away from you.

JEAN-PIERRE

Perhaps. But you are not healthy, and if you try I'll kill you.

QUICK CUT TO: Vincent - Who stands inside the house, out of sight, but not out of ear shot. He's listening to everything, and we notice that Vincent has taken out his own gun.

BACK ON Jean-Pierre and Sam. By now Jean-Pierre has raised the pistol. He doesn't point it at Sam, but his finger cocks the hammer.

SAM

So what is it you want to know?

JEAN-PIERRE

I suppose I want to know how a man like you is created.

SAM

Created?

JEAN-PIERRE

Perhaps forged is a better word. Like steel. Like a sword. You're a modern Samurai. I've spent my life around extraordinary men -- men like Vincent. But I've never seen anyone like you.

JEAN-PIERRE

(beat)
I'm afraid Vincent will die if he goes with you.

SAM

Vincent's life is his own burden; he'll have to carry it for himself. And I'm not any kind of Samurai.

JEAN-PIERRE

You seem one to me.

SAM

A Samurai has honor, a Samurai live by the code of Bushido, the way of the warrior. I'm just a killer for hire.

(beat)
The world isn't about honor, anymore. It's about survival.

LONG BEAT. Something in Sam's speech touches Jean-Pierre. He relaxes his finger on the hammer.

JEAN-PIERRE

Survival. I suppose that's as good a cause as any.

BACK ON Vincent - Who relaxes his grip on his gun. BACK ON Sam and Jean-Pierre - And we're PULLING BACK, AWAY from the Farmhouse, which glows in the morning sun as we -

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A PARIS STREET - DAY

A BLACK COMPACT CAR sits in front of a Parisian Post Office. Inside the car, behind the wheel, we see Deirdre. Now, coming out of the Post Office, we see - Gregor and Seamus Reilly. Seamus has a coat slung over his arm, hiding the gun which he keeps pressed to Gregor's side. There's no sign of the Briefcase as Seamus and Gregor get into -

INT. THE CAR - SAM TIME

THUNK! The door slams shut. Gregor and Seamus are in the back seat. Almost instantly Seamus angrily snaps a pair of handcuffs on Gregor. Immediately, Deirdre pulls out.

DEIRDRE

Where's the case?

GREGOR
 (nervous)
 There's a problem...

SEAMUS
 (jumping all over him)
 Problem my ass! I think you're lying
 to me, and if you are you're a dead
 man!

DEIRDRE
 Would somebody tell me what fucking
 well happened in there?

SEAMUS
 (disgusted)
 Nothing.

GREGOR
 (eager to explain)
 The package didn't come. I'm sure
 it will tomorrow.

Suddenly Seamus seems to lose it. He grabs Gregor and slams
 a gun against his head.

SEAMUS
 (he's almost foaming
 at the mouth)
 If you're lying to me you poor excuse
 for a human being, I'm gonna blow
 your brains all over this car.

GREGOR
 (beyond desperate)
 I swear, it has to come here! It
 has to...

BEAT. For one tension-filled moment, we think Seamus is
 going to splash Gregor's brains all over the place. But
 then he smiles, puts his weapon away, and pats Gregor gently
 on the face.

SEAMUS
 Ease up, man...I'm just checking to
 make sure you're on the level.

Gregor is beyond speech -- he can only whimper.

SEAMUS
 And it seems to me I saw a sign in
 there that says they got a late
 afternoon delivery. Why don't we
 come back later today and do this
 all over again, huh?

Seamus smiles a smile that is more than a little bit sadistic. Neither Gregor nor Deirdre smiles in return as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - PARIS - DAY

THE EIFFEL TOWER fills our eyes. And then we PULL BACK TO REVEAL that it's a tacky, flyblown poster on a dingy street. And now we're -

MOVING DOWN the Street, until we come to a store whose sign advertises in English - HONG KONG MOVIES. The windows of the store are filled with posters. We MOVE THROUGH TO

INT. THE STORE - SAME TIME

TONY SIMON, an expatriate black American, runs this place and lives above it. His shelves are lined with action films made in the Far East. Tony knows everything there is to know about the films he sells -- but he also knows quite a bit about what's going on in the Parisian Underworld. he's a professional information broker. Right now he's talking to a CUSTOMER in perfect French, with English Subtitles.

TONY

Hey, man, they're both great movies. One is more of a character study, the other is more of a straight action thing, but they're great movies, and he's an amazing fucking filmmaker.

Tony looks up and sees something that catches his attention.

TONY

Excuse me...

Vincent and Sam have entered the store. Sam's ability to be back on his feet in such a short time is amazing -- but we can see that he's not the same guy he was at the start of the film. what he does from here on in he does by sheer force of will. Now - Tony moves to join them, and the conversation immediately turns to English.

TONY

(to Vincent)
My man, how you doing?

VINCENT

I'm alright. And you?

TONY

Doing well.
(with a look at Sam)
This is?

VINCENT

A friend. I was telling him about
how you always have the latest tapes.

TONY

Why don't we step into my office...

Tony's office, it turns out, is the area behind the COUNTER. Tony raises a section of the counter that allows him to get to the other side, and then he closes it behind him.

TONY

So what can I do for you?

Vincent checks out the store before he starts speaking. The place is empty except for - The single Customer Tony was just talking to. The Customer is still considering the two films Tony was showing him.

VINCENT

I was wondering if you had any movies
that were particularly new.

TONY

Matter of fact there's this flick
I've been hearing about. I haven't
seen it, but from what I hear it's
pretty cool.

SAM

What's the story?

TONY

It's an international thing. Several
different peoples involved, criminals
from all over the world, experts
brought together to do a job. But
maybe the most interesting thing
about it is that preeminent in the
plot we find the Russian Mob and the
IRA in bed together. An unlikely
group of partners.

VINCENT

Do you have the tape?

TONY

I might know where you could get a
copy.

The Customer approaches the counter. He has both tapes with him.

TONY

(to Vincent and Sam)

Let me do some business with my boy here, and I'll meet you across the street in five. I gotta make homes here feel like he's getting a good deal while I give him the pleasure of overpaying me for a couple of second generation pirates.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The Customer exits, smiling and carrying his tapes -- what a great fucking deal he just got! A few seconds later, Tony comes out and locks up the store front. He crosses the street towards -

INT. A FALAFEL JOINT - A FEW MINUTES AFTER THAT

A HUGE FALAFEL drips lettuce and tahini sauce from its end.

We PULL BACK ON - Tony, who's just taken a bite out of the falafel. He sits at a table in the back with Vincent and Sam.

TONY

(his mouth full)

What I've heard so far, it's all a lot of talk. I wasn't so sure what to make of it at first, cause, like I said, the Irish and the Russians are an unlikely mix.

VINCENT

You said you might know where we can get a copy of this tape?

TONY

All depends on whether you want the Russian or the Gaelic language version.

SAM

(instantly)

Gaelic.

TONY

You sure?

SAM

I'm sure.

VINCENT

(to Tony)

Can you get it?

TONY
The Russian would be easier.

SAM
Why's that?

TONY
Cause the Russian production company
would be easier to find.

SAM
It's the Irish tape we want.

TONY
(with a sigh)
Gonna be tough.

Tony scribbles something on a piece of paper.

TONY
Last I heard there was a film rep
for the Irish players staying at
this address, name of Seamus Reilly.

SAM
(repeating it, he
knows this name)
Seamus Reilly.

VINCENT
(to Sam)
You know him?

SAM
I know of him.

TONY
Seamus Reilly, boy's a serious Irish
Auteur -- a real firebrand. Thinks
his more moderate filmmaking brethren
have turned to making movies for
peace-loving pussies, if you see
what I'm saying.

VINCENT
I get the picture.

Sam reaches for the piece of paper, but Vincent puts his
hand on top of it.

VINCENT
Tony and I have to talk some business,
first.

TONY

I gotta try and overcharge him, he has to moan about the price, we settle somewhere in the middle.

VINCENT

It's a matter of respect.

(to Sam)

Why don't you wait outside, this won't take long.

Sam smiles slightly and rises from the table, moving towards the exit. Behind him in rapid-fire French, Tony and Vincent are now discussing the price of the information. They are both loud and abusive, and obviously they're enjoying themselves immensely.

EXT. THE FALAFEL SHOP - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

Vincent exits the shop and gets into -

INT. THE PEUGEOT

Where Sam sits in the passenger seat as Vincent slides behind the wheel. Vincent tosses Sam a piece of paper.

SAM

The Irish representative?

VINCENT

Yes.

Vincent gives Sam another piece of paper.

SAM

What's this?

VINCENT

The address of the Russian production company. Just in case we need to find them.

SAM

Thorough man.

Vincent starts the car and we -

CUT TO:

EXT. A PARIS STREET - LATER - AFTERNOON

The Peugeot sits, parked at a curb, a discreet distance from - AN APARTMENT HOUSE: 35 Rue de Glacon. We PUSH IN on the -

INT. THE PEUGEOT - LATE AFTERNOON

A PIECE OF PAPER scarwled with the same address: 35 de Glacon.
We PULL BACK TO REVEAL -

Sam, holding this paper and looking out at the apartment complex.

SAM
You sure your friend got the right place?

VINCENT
If Tony says this is it, then it's it.

BEAT. Vincent wants to know something important.

VINCENT
Tell me, Sam: why do you do this?

SAM
Do what?

VINCENT
Continue when it would be so much easier to give it up.

SAM
It's my job.

VINCENT
Then quit.
(beat)
You don't work for Interpol, Sam.

SAM
Sure I do. You heard him, you heard the guy -- that's what he said, what Edvard said.

VINCENT
It's a cover, then. A cover within a cover, a feint within a feint.
(quick beat)
You work for the CIA, it's the only possible answer.

LONG BEAT. Sam considers what to say, and then decides he owes Vincent the truth.

SAM
I'm a field agent -- last of an already extinct breed. I do dark ops.

VINCENT

Dark ops?

SAM

Dark operations. Wet work.
Kidnaping. Assassination.

VINCENT

Very ugly.

SAM

It is at that.

VINCENT

Not very zen of you, huh? Not so
much the modern Samurai after all.

SAM

I never made that claim.

VINCENT

I know. Jean-Pierre did.

SAM

You were behind the door?

VINCENT

I was waiting to see what would
happen. I didn't want to kill him
if I didn't have to.

SAM

You would have done that?

VINCENT

I would have tried not to. But yes,
if it would have kept him from
shooting you, I would have.

SAM

(almost to himself)
How could you have done that?

VINCENT

Because I owe you.
(he sees something)
Look at that...

THEIR POV: Through the Windsheild - Deirdre exits the
apartment building.

SAM (O.S.)

(quietly exultant)
All things come to those who wait.

Now Deirdre is followed by Seamus and Gregor.

VINCENT (O.S.)
 (really surprised by
 this)
 He's not dead.

BACK ON Sam and Vincent.

SAM
 (figuring it out)
 They don't have the package.

VINCENT
 You think?

SAM
 You said it yourself: Gregor's not
 dead. If they had the package, they'd
 have killed him.

Vincent and Sam exchange a look -- now they both figure it out.

VINCENT & SAM
 (simultaneously)
 They're going to get it.

CUT TO:

INT. THE POST OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

A HAND signs a receipt, and we PULL BACK TO REVEAL Gregor at a counter, signing for his package, which slides across the counter. It's the Briefcase, although it's been wrapped in BROWN PAPER for its journey through the French Postal System.

Now we see that - Seamus is still right beside Gregor; is, in face, almost on top of him, with a hand in his coat pocket which lets us know where his gun is. Now - The two men start to move towards the exit as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE - A MINUTE LATER/LATE AFTERNOON

The Black Compact Car idles at a nearby curb, with Deirdre behind the wheel. She's staring so intently at the front of the post office, that she's surprised when a SHADOW falls across her. She looks up to see - Sam, standing next to the car. Deirdre starts to reach for her weapon, but Sam cuts her off with a word.

SAM
 Don't do it...

Something in his voice conveys enough of a threat that she backs off. Now she and Sam exchange a long look.

DEIRDRE

Well, if it isn't Mr. Interpol himself.

(she really sounds betrayed)

I can't believe I misjudged you like I did.

SAM

Oh please..you're on some sort of holy mission?

DEIRDRE

I'm a patriate.

SAM

Don't even think that I'm buying that.

DEIRDRE

Where do you get off saying word one? All the time pretending to be one of us, it's the same thing we were doing, Seamus and myself. And here you are so high and mighty, like you're so different from the rest of us.

SAM

I didn't say I was.

DEIRDRE

(she sees something)

Bloody fucking hell...

CUT AWAY TO: Gregor and Seamus are leaving the post office. By now, Seamus has taken the package away from Gregor. Unseen by these two men - Vincent is approaching from the side, on an intercept course, his hand inside a bag which he carries with him. Now - Deirdre turns and shoots Sam a look.

He's still watching her keenly, and we can see that she's aching to reach for her piece, but she can't because Sam is still on her like a hawk.

SAM

Don't even think it.

He pulls back the folds of his suit jacket, revealing his gun, putting his hand comfortably on the pistol grip.

SAM

I'd kill you before you had it halfway out.

Vincent is closing on Gregor and Seamus, another ten seconds and he'll have them.

Now - Deirdre looks back at Sam, then back at the situation developing in front of her, and then suddenly - She slams the car into gear and drives off, tires squealing while - Sam pulls his piece, sighting down the barrel and - He can't do it, can't shoot Deirdre. Now - The sound of the car alerts Seamus, who turns in time to see - Vincent, who is raising the bag wrapped around his hand as - The car flies directly at - Vincent, who if forced to jump out of the way even as he pulls the trigger of the gun hidden within the bag. The end of the bag explodes in a burst of fire, but the shots are off the mark - Missing Seamus and Gregor as - Vincent rolls out of the way, just in time, while - Deirdre brakes the car to a screaming halt, as Seamus pushes Gregor in ahead of him and then gets in. Seconds later, the car pulls out, even as - Sam drives up in the Peugeot to Vincent, who picks himself up off the ground and leaps into the car. The last thing we hear is the sound of Sam's Voice as the Peugeot drives off.

SAM (V.O.)

Put your seatbelt on.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. - CAR CHASE MONTAGE

During this SEQUENCE, we'll JUMP CUT BETWEEN the two cars and the streets they travel through. Now - The Black Compact Car flies down a small street, followed closely by - The Peugeot, where Sam is driving as Vincent tries to steady his gun to get a clear shot at the other Car.

INSIDE THE PEUGEOT -

VINCENT

What the fuck happened?

SAM

I don't know...

VINCENT

You don't know? Bullshit, you had her, there was no way out.

IN THE COMPACT CAR -

Where Deirdre is driving for dear life, while Seamus is freaking out.

SEAMUS
What in bloody hell is going on?

DEIRDRE
They're part of the team. One of
them's the guy I told you about.

SEAMUS
From Interpol?

DEIRDRE
That's him.

IN THE PEUGEOT -

VINCENT
Why didn't you kill her?

IN THE COMPACT -

SEAMUS
Why didn't you kill him?

OUT IN THE STREET -

The two cars SLAM through the traffic, heading for a HIGHWAY
RAMP which appears now perhaps two blocks away.

IN THE PEUGEOT -

VINCENT
(figuring it out)
You slept with her!

IN THE COMPACT -

SEAMUS
How is it these fellahs managed to
get the drop on us?

DEIRDRE
I told you: they're good...

OUT IN THE STREET -

THE TWO CARS have reached the highway ramp, and as first
one, and then the other pulls onto the highway, we PULL BACK
AND UP TO REVEAL:

THE PERIFERIQUE -

The massive and confusing highway system which encircles the
city of Paris.

Right away we notice that this entrance ramp leads to a traffic circle, filled with various off ramps which lead to no less than four different sections of the Periferique.

IN THE PEUGEOT -

VINCENT
 (slamming the dashboard
 in disgust)
 You slept with her!

IN THE COMPACT -

SEAMUS
 (lecturing Deridre)
 You should have kill him when you
 had the chance. But no...

IN THE PEUGEOT -

VINCENT
 You put everything on the line because
 you...

IN THE COMPACT

SEAMUS
 (as if finishing
 Vincent's sentence)
 You slept with the fucker!!

ON THE PERIFERIQUE -

THE PEUGEOT cruising on an upper part of the traffic circle, while down below them - THE COMPACT turns towards one of the roadways.

VINCENT (O.S.)
 Fuck...

IN THE PEUGEOT -

VINCENT
 Left left left!!!

Sam looks up and sees - Three possible ramps: one to the right, one to the center, and one to the - Left. At the last second he takes the left turn as we go back to -

IN THE COMPACT CAR -

Where Seamus has turned from lecturing Deirdre to threatening Gregor. Seamus holds the package in one hand and his gun in the other.

SEAMUS
 (waving the package)
 This better be the real thing or
 you're a dead man!

GREGOR
 It is, I'm telling you it is!!

SEAMUS
 You've told me a lot of things,
 boyo...

ZING-SHATTER! A BULLET blows a hole in their back windshield
 as - The Peugeot is catching up, and Vincent is leaning out
 of his window, firing away. Now - Seamus turns to Deirdre.

SEAMUS
 Lose them!

DEIRDRE
 You lose them!

Deirdre swings the wheel wildly, and the Compact takes a
 screaming turn, followed by - The Peugeot, and now they're
 both speeding towards another junction, where several other
 roadways of the Periferique run together. Now we see that -
 Seamus is returning Vincent's fire, even as - The Junction
 approaches, and now - Seamus screams at Deirdre.

SEAMUS
 To the right!!!

Deirdre swerves to the right only to discover that she's now
 on an -

EXIT RAMP, going against heavy traffic. Now -

Deirdre swerves her car around, side-swiping several cars,
 but avoiding a major crash while - The Peugeot follows along,
 and now -

One of the cars that Deirdre side-swiped careens wildly down
 the ramp, crashing into - The Peugeot, which grinds to a
 halt as Vincent and Sam bounce forward in their seats,
 restrained by their seatbelts. The car has stalled, and Sam
 has to start her up again and slam it into gear before
 following after - The Compact, which now has a lead of perhaps
 fifty yards -- but at least it's possible for the Peugeot to
 follow after the Compact, because it's the only car on the
 highway ahead of them that's GOING THE WRONG WAY, and now we -
 PULL BACK, LOOKING DOWN FROM ABOVE, and the two cars are
 flying through the rush-hour traffic, going the wrong way,
 and now - The Peugeot is gaining ground as Sam turns to
 Vincent.

SAM
Give me a cigarette.

VINCENT
Right now?

SAM
Gimme a goddamn cigarette!!!!

VINCENT
(fumbling with a
cigarette)
Why are you driving?
(rapid fire)
You're not French, you don't live
here, you don't know these roads.
Why are you driving?

He puts the cigarette in Sam's mouth and as he does - The Peugeot weaves in and out of the traffic, gaining ground on the Compact, and now - SCREEEEECCHHH!!!! About fifteen cars pile up, crashing into one another, and yet somehow - The Compact Car emerges from the pile up unscathed, and Seamus breathes a hugh sigh of relief.

SEAMUS
About time!

DEIRDRE
(glancing in her mirror)
Not yet...

The Peugeot has also managed to avoid the pile-up, and it's back on their tail.

SEAMUS
(practically tearing
his hair)
Good Christ! Can't you lose these
jokers?

DEIRDRE
(through clenched
teeth)
They're good!

And now the Peugeot SLAMS into the side of the Compact Car, and as it does - Seamus opens fire with his gun, even as - Vincent unloads the better part of a clip as - Glass shatters in both cars, and now Deirdre looks up to see -

FORK IN THE ROAD, and the left side of the fork is closed off, blocked by - A SERIOUS CONCRETE BARRICADE, and the Compact Car is headed right for it, and now -

Sam has the Peugeot pinned right to the side of the Compact Car, metal against metal, a scream of steel as the Barricade rushes straight at them and at the last second - Deirdre slams on the brakes as -

Seamus fires one last shot that - blows out the window in front of Sam's eyes, causing Sam to - Jerk the wheel of the Peugeot wildly, spinning out of control onto the exit ramp as Gregor reaches over and unbuckles Seamus's seatbelt right as - The Compact Car slams into the Barricade and CRASHES, and we're in SLOW MOTION as -

Deirdre is driven forward by the force of the impact, but there's a driver's side air bag, and it explodes, cushioning her, even as -

Seamus is hurled from the car, crashing through the windshield and flying through the air as -

The Compact Car flips over and over and over while -

Gregor, who is wearing his seatbelt, hangs on for dear life to the Briefcase, which he grabbed back from Seamus before the crash, and now -

Seamus hits the ground with a terrible thud, his face sliced to ribbons by the windshield, but somehow still alive as -

Sam tries to control the Peugeot, which is in a spin on the exit ramp as -

Gregor kicks open the back door and slides out of the Car, carrying the Briefcase with him, as -

Deirdre struggles to free herself from the wreck, which is now - On fire, and now -

Sam has managed to stop the Peugeot, but it's too late to go back, because -

VERITABLE FLEET OF COP CARS is now closing on the accident, and it's too late to turn around, and even as -

Deirdre manages to pull herself out of the wreck, it - EXPLODES into a ball of fire, and the blast wave of fire - Hits Seamus, knocking him down, covering him for a second, even as - Deirdre hurls herself through the flames and comes out - Rolling away with Seamus, who is now not only cut to pieces, but his face is covered with some hideous burns.

Now Deirdre pulls Seamus over the side of the embankment, right before the cops arrive, and the two of them roll/fall almost thirty down a steep incline, even as -

Sam catches a quick glimpse of -

Gregor, scurrying away from the highway, carrying the Briefcase, and now Sam has to gun his car and get gone, because the Cops have reached -

The Wreck, which is quickly burning itself out, and as the Cops look into the debris they see that -

THERE'S NOBODY LEFT. Everybody's gone.

FADE OUT.

VINCENT (V.O.)
We don't have much time.

FADE IN ON:

INT. VINCENT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A FRONT DOOR, guarded by about five heavy locks, opens and Vincent and Sam enter. Sam looks around and surveys the apartment.

SAM
Nice place.

ANOTHER ANGLE - And we see the rest of the apartment: there's practically nothing here. A table with a couple of chairs, a fridge. An open door leads to a bedroom with a small, spare bed and a nightstand with a cheap lamp.

VINCENT
(by way of explaining)
I'm not here very much.

SAM
Business keeps you on the road?

VINCENT
Something like that.

The two men crass the room towards - A METAL CABINET which is tucked into a nook in the wall - VINCENT'S HAND turns a heavy-duty COMBINATION LOCK and then: Click, the cabinet opens and we see -- WEAPONS. An endless cache of guns, knives, explosives, surveillance devices, gun scopes -- you name it, it's here. Now Vincent's Hands reach into the cabinet and start taking out weapons. We PULL BACK ON -

Vincent, who gives the weapons to Sam. Sam checks to make sure the weapons are loaded and/or ready for use, and then piles them, one on top of the other.

SAM
I know I don't need to say this to you, but I need to say it to you.

SAM

(beat)

This is my job, I have to do it.

VINCENT

So I do it.

SAM

No you don't, and you know it.

VINCENT

If our positions were reversed, would you leave me?

SAM

(he says this too quickly)

In a minute.

VINCENT

I think not.

BEAT. Sam can't say anything, because he knows that what Vincent is saying is true.

VINCENT

(considering the weapons)

Do we need anything else?

SAM

Yeah. We need out fucking heads examined.

Vincent thinks about this for a second -- and then bursts out laughing as we -

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CAR - MEANWHILE/NIGHT

Deirdre once behind the wheel. The passenger seat next to her is empty, but as she drives we can see her eyes as they flick from the road in front of her, to the rearview mirror, which reveals -

A glimpse of the HIDEOUS FACE of Seamus Reilly. Crashing through the windshield and the blast of fire have forever changed the way he looks: his face is now a mass of oozing wounds and burn tissue. In his eyes we see the light of a sick, twisted man who's gone over the edge.

DEIRDRE

You better be careful, Seamus, before something happens a plastic surgeon can't fix.

SEAMUS

(a hideous laugh)
Plastic fucking surgeon?
(indicates his face)
You think I'm going to fix this, Deirdre lass? It's the mark of the patriot, and I'll wear it like a badge. As for those who done it to me, I'll take my pound of flesh before this is all over.

DEIRDRE

You're thinking with your gun, Seamus, and not your head...

SEAMUS

(losing it)
Shut up!!!
(he puts a gun to her head)
Shut up and drive! I'm your superior officer and you will do as I goddamn well say, is that understood?!?

BEAT. Deirdre bristles at Seamus's words but says nothing.

SEAMUS

Do I need to repeat myself?

DEIRDRE

No, Seamus. I heard you the first time.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAR - SAME TIME

THE CAR zooms off into the night and as it does -

LIGHT RAIN starts to fall and we -

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A CHATEAU OUTSIDE OF PARIS - NIGHT

THE SAME RAIN falls, more of a steady mist than a rain. The mist GLEAMS electrically in the THOUSAND WATT LIGHTS which shine from - THE CHATEAU. Hundreds of years old, it sits far back from its own MAIN GATE. In front of the Chateau - ARMED MEN. Lots of them. Whatever this place is, it's not one that invites company.

Now we're - MOVING TOWARDS the Chateau, and as we MOVE we get a glimpse of the surrounding environment: ancient statues, sitting benches in private gardens, small pools of fish -- you name it, this place has it. We hear VOICES, and they're talking in - RUSSIAN. Heavy, thick Russian, punctuated with words like "Da!" and "Nyet!" -- making it clear that we've reached the address of the Russian Production Company. BEHIND THE CHATEAU - MORE GARDENS, more everything. It's well-patrolled, but there aren't quite as many guards back here as there are out front, because bordering the chateau is a natural fortress -

A WOODS -

A forest, really. Filled with ancient trees, almost mythic in appearance, and for all the light of the chateau this place is darkness visible -- light comes here and dies. And in this woods, looking out, we find - Vincent and Sam. Heavily armed, they've just humped God knows how many miles through the woods to get here. Both men exhausted from the walk -- Sam from his wound, Vincent from his smoking habit. They collapse and Vincent takes out his cigarettes. Even though they're screened from the chateau back here, Sam reaches over and takes the cigarettes out of Vincent's hands.

SAM

Not here. They might see it.

VINCENT

If I'm going to die for the CIA, I'm going to go out smoking.

(takes the cigarettes
back and lights one)

Besides, there's half a forest between us and them, they can't see a goddamned thing.

Vincent offers one to Sam, who declines with a shake of his head.

SAM

Time to quit.

VINCENT

Just like that?

SAM

Not just like that... Just before I turn around and it's six months from now and the first thing I do when I wake up in the morning is light a cigarette.

VINCENT
(obviously he does
this)
What of it?
(almost to himself)
Samurai pain in the ass.

SAM
(he hates this)
Would you stop with that...

VINCENT
Why? You've got more force of will
than anyone I've ever seen. You
handle a gun like it's a part of
you, you perform surgery on yourself
without anesthesia...
(quick beat)
And most amazing of all, you quit
smoking, just like that.

SAM
(with a cynical laugh)
The mark of a true Samurai.
(seriously)
What I do for the Company, Vincent,
is no different than what you do.
We're both hired guns, and this is a
job -- like any other job.

VINCENT
Why then, Sam, don't you act like
this is a job like any other? Surely,
if you are a hired gun, you realize
that some times you just have to
walk away without getting what you
came for.

SAM
Because I don't walk away.

VINCENT
Why not?

SAM
It's the one thing I've got left to
hold onto.
(beat)
Jean-Pierre is one of your closest
friends, is he not?

VINCENT
Closest and oldest.

SAM

And yet you would have killed him to save my life.

(quick beat)

You have a sense of honor, Vincent, that I can't even remember anymore. I don't know that I ever even had it to begin with. All I know to do, Vincent, is to finish my job.

VINCENT

And when you finish? What then? This package, whatever it is, do you give it to the CIA? Do you really think they deserve it?

SAM

That's a good question.

VINCENT

Do you have a good answer?

SAM

(he's really just considering this)

No, I don't.

INT. THE CHATEAU - MEANWHILE

ARMED RUSSIAN MOBSTERS everywhere -- a convention of the goon squad.

MOVING THROUGH the Chateau itself, and from in here we see the side of France we haven't yet seen in this film: culture. Each room could be a museum, as we move through -

GALLERY, filled with paintings by Renaissance Masters -

A PARLOR, with antique furniture, the youngest piece of which is two hundred years old -

A BALLROOM, empty and barren, but lit by the dazzling light of an exquisite chandelier -

A KITCHEN, where a cigarette smoking CHEF is putting the finishing touches on what is perhaps the most amazing meal you've ever seen. Now - A SERVANT takes the tray and carries it out to -

A DINING ROOM, and the table is set for a formal dinner for twenty, with crystal and china at every place setting, and yet the table is occupied by only one man -

MIKHAEL RACHEV, Russian Gangster Supreme, called Mikhi. Now -

The Servant sets the food down in front of Mikhi, and as this chief hood starts to eat a lonely and solitary dinner we PULL BACK, MOVING DOWN the length of the way-too-long table.

EXT. THE CHATEAU WALLS - NIGHT

TAXI pulls up to the Main Gate and Gregor gets out. Attached to his wrist, by that same handcuff: the Briefcase. Gregor is admitted by a Guard as we -

CUT TO:

INT. THE DINING ROOM/CHATEAU - A LITTLE LATER

Mikhi the Gangster is eating his dinner as Gregor is ushered into the room. THREE THUGS hang back behind Gregor, watching to see what Mikhi wants. Now -

Mikhi waves the Thugs out of the room, leaving Gregor alone with the gangster. Mikhi takes a last few bites of dinner as he motions for Gregor to sit.

MIKHI

(in Russian, English subtitles)

Sit, sit...

(offering a cigarette)

Would you like one?

GREGOR

(in English)

No, Mikhi, I wouldn't.

(letting that sink in for a minute)

Since I won't speak your language, and you can't speak mine, English will do nicely.

MIKHI

(makes no never mind to him)

Whatever you wish...

(lights his own cigarette)

This has all been a terrible mistake, Gregor. I wanted to play straight with you, but Edvard insisted we try and kill you.

GREGOR

Edvard said the same thing about you before he died.

MIKHI

I'm shocked, shocked to think that
you'd believe him.

GREGOR

(suddenly sharp)
Enough!

Gregor raises the Briefcase which is still attached to his wrist via the handcuff. Gregor rests the Briefcase on the table.

MIKHI

Ahh...

The moment of truth. Before this scene can develop any further, a VOICE comes from Off Screen, and as the Voice speaks, Gregor blanches.

SEAMUS (O.S.)

The moment of truth, is it?

ANOTHER ANGLE - Deirdre and Seamus have entered the room. And we notice something unusual: nobody is alarmed (except for Gregor, that is). It's as if they were expected.

GREGOR

What is he doing here?

As Seamus speaks he walks through the room, examining the valuable china and crystal, all the while moving inexorably closer to Gregor. His face is, if anything, even more horrific than it was a short while ago, as his formerly fresh wounds have started to scab over.

SEAMUS

What am I doing here? Why, I'm here to see my partners, Gregor, the boys in the Russian Mafia. See, your bosses had hoped to screw me by hiring you to pull your thieving double cross. But they only just found out that what's in the briefcase is completely useless without me. I can't fight them, and they can't kill me -- that means we're gonna have to do business together.

GREGOR

But you hate each other!

SEAMUS

What's a little hate between business partners?

EXT. THE WOODS - MEANWHILE

Vincent's CIGARETTE is stubbed into a rock and the two men rise with a slow purpose. They exchange a look and then Sam steps forward, leading the way.

SAM

I'm on point, Vincent.

WIDE ANGLE - THE BACK LAWN OF THE CHATEAU -

Pure Kurosawa. The JAPANESE DRUM we've heard before starts to play again as -

THE LONG SHADOWS of Sam and Vincent come out of the woods and into the brilliant light of the back lawn. For one minute they stand still, and among the many weapons that Sam carries is a long automatic rifle, strung over his back, and in the SILHOUETTE for one minute it looks like a Samurai sword. Now the two men start to move across the lawn, hugging the shadows of the various statues and hedges, trying to keep from being discovered for as long as possible.

BACK IN THE DINING ROOM -

GREGOR

(to Seamus)

So, you've got it all figured, do you?

SEAMUS

Figured enough to know there's an odd man out and I'm looking at him.

GREGOR

I think not.

(holds up the Briefcase)

I have, of course, taken the precaution of wiring the briefcase to explode five seconds after it opens. Unless, of course, I deactivate it before it goes off.

DEIRDRE

(under her breath)

That fucking figures...

GREGOR

Should any of you decide to rush me, I'll kill myself and whoever happens to be near me at the time.

MIKHI

And more importantly --

GREGOR

I'll destroy whatever's in the case.

BEAT. Nobody moves. Nobody speaks. Until finally -

SEAMUS

It looks, Gentlemen, as if we're gonna have to sit down to table and work out an agreement.

Before this entirely too-weird scenario can play itself we go back to -

THE BACK LAWN OF THE CHATEAU -

Sam and Vincent are closer to the Chateau, moving in stealth, avoiding any entanglements and then Sam turns a corner and comes face to face with - A GUARD, and his gun is aimed at Sam's head: Sam's a dead man as we go -

BACK TO THE DINING ROOM

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE splits the night, and everyone in the room looks at one another, before Mikhi speaks.

MIKHI

What was that?

BACK OUTSIDE THE CHATEAU -

The Guard who had Sam in his sights falls down, dead, shot by - Vincent, whose smoking weapon is cradled in his arms. Vincent smiles at Sam.

VINCENT

That's one less I owe you...

Sam smiles, but it's no time to get satisfied. their presence revealed, there's no point in moving quietly. Sam draws his weapons and as he and Vincent charge across the lawn towards the Chateau while -

BACK IN THE DINING ROOM -

MORE GUNSHOTS from outside -- not a war, but enough to cause serious alarm. Deirdre, ever the soldier, draws her two automatic pistols.

DEIRDRE

(to Seamus and Mikhi)

You two stay here and watch our mutual interest.

She nods at Gregor and his Briefcase, indicating what this mutual interest is.

Then she turns and bolts the room, and as she does we're -

BACK OUTSIDE THE CHATEAU -

Sam and Vincent are running along, hugging the ground and whatever darkness they can find, while blind weapons fire rips into the ground around them, Russian thugs not even sure what they're shooting at, but shooting all the same as Sam and Vincent hurtle towards -

A BACK ENTRANCE TO THE CHATEAU -

Some kind of kitchen storage area, and as Sam and Vincent burst in from outside - FIVE RUSSIAN HOODS come flying in from an interior entrance, and this is it, Sam and Vincent are outnumbered, outgunned, they're going to die and then - They take out the entire room - Sam holds an automatic pistol in his left hand, and a submachine gun in his right, and when he fires, he does so in short controlled bursts, firing only when he has the target in his sights, while - Vincent fights with a kind of sheer force, a shotgun in one hand, an Uzi in the other, he fires at anything and everything that moves, and he hits almost all of it - And suddenly the room is quiet. Everybody's dead except for Sam and Vincent. They drop their spent weapons and take out fresh ones even as they move towards - THE DOOR - It leads to two passages, each one leading to a separate wing of the chateau.

SAM

Let's work our way through the building. I'll take one wing, you take the other.

Vincent and Sam split up, moving into separate WINGS of the Chateau, and as they move off Sam speaks a word of warning.

SAM

Watch your back, Vincent.

And then they're gone, and we're with -

Deirdre, who's running through the house, going from room to room, and we're with her for a minute, the JAPANESE DRUM starts to play again, and now it's joined by more and more drums, and they continue for the rest of this sequence and suddenly - A HUGE BURST OF GUNFIRE is heard, dragging Deirdre's attention towards -

THE BALLROOM -

And Sam's in the middle of a pitched battle with three Gunmen. He kills the first, and then the second, and then -

No third. The Third Gunman rolls out of the way as Sam fires, the Third Gunman fires back and - Their shots go wide, ripping

into mirrors and chandeliers, littering the floor with glass.
And now we're -

ON DEIRDRE -

Running through the halls as we hear one last burst of gunfire: somebody in the ballroom is dead. Deirdre has almost reached the ballroom when - Sam comes flying out, and the two of them CRASH TOGETHER, sending the two of them sprawling into - The shot-up mess that used to be the Ballroom - And as they crash to the ground, Sam loses his weapon in the fall, but Deirdre manages to hold onto one of her two guns. Now the two of them roll to their feet, and as they do we're back in -

THE DINING ROOM -

Seamus the Madman is pacing the floor, his face even worse than before: with each minute the mask of flesh that is now his face is becoming more grotesque. Little pustules have started to form all over its surface, oozing a whitish viscous liquid. A NEW BURST OF FIGHTING SOUNDS can be heard, and Seamus, who is no longer capable of thinking straight, loses it.

SEAMUS

I can't take it anymore.

(to Mikhi)

Watch him, man, I'm going out and finish what needs finishing!

And Seamus is gone, and so are we -- back to -

THE BALLROOM -

Where Deirdre has her two guns pointed at Sam and - Does nothing. BEAT.

SAM

Go on, them...

But Deirdre can't do it. There's something between these two, and now - Sam looks around and sees Deirdre's other pistol lying on a broken chair, and now he -

Kicks out with his foot and hits the chair leg, causing it to function as a lever, sending the gun - THROUGH THE AIR in a graceful SLOW-MO arc until it - THWACKS into Sam's Hand. Now he's armed and he looks back at - Deirdre. Her FINGER tightens on the trigger, she's almost ready to shoot -- if Sam raises his piece, he's a dead man.

DEIRDRE

Let it go, Sam, walk away.

In response Sam stares at Deirdre for a BEAT and then he smiles an enigmatic smile and - He steps sideways, into a nearby corridor, vanishing.

DEIRDRE

God damn it!

She runs after him but she's too late -- The corridor outside is empty. Now we're back in -

THE DINING ROOM -

With Gregor and Mikhi, and the tension is unbearable, because they can hear the sounds of the fighting as it starts and then stops, but they don't have the least idea of what's going on. Still, Mikhi won't let Gregor leave without giving up the Briefcase. Mikhi has a gun on Gregor, who in turn holds the Briefcase close, ready to open it and set off the 5 Second Timer that will blow it up.

GREGOR

(a feral hiss)

We'll die if we stay here!

MIKHI

(threatening with the
gun)

You'll die if you leave here.

Gregor sits back down, fairly close to Mikhi. Then, in a manner so deft that Mikhi never even notices, Gregor extracts a wickedly thin stiletto blade from the leather lining of the Briefcase. Before Mikhi can even react, Gregor stabs his arm forward in a savage arc - JAMMING THE BLADE into Mikhi's throat. Mikhi drops his gun and reaches for the blade, already gagging on the blood spray which shoots from the slashed artery. Within seconds - Mikhi falls to the ground, jerking viciously in his death throes as - Gregor picks up the pistol and runs to leave the room, and as he does we move to -

THE GALLERY -

Filled with Paintings and Sculptures, nothing less than 200 years old. This place is a maze, what with it's walls of paintings that jut out here and there, the various corridors which lead from room to room, and the sculptures which block sight lines. Now we find - Vincent, pressed against a wall, a gun in each hand, while - FIVE RUSSIAN MAFIA GUYS are hunting him down. We do a SERIES OF QUICK CUTS as the Five Guys split up and look for Vincent, all the while speaking in low Russian voices. Suddenly one of the Guys turns a corner and sees - Nothing. No Vincent. Now he turns back and - A FIST CRASHES through a painting which hangs on a makeshift wall. It's Vincent.

His hand wraps around Mafia Guy's neck, pinning him in place. Seconds later - Two quick shots rip through the painting, hitting Mafia Guy in the head. Now - The other men are alerted by the shots, they come running and - Vincent steps out firing -And now it's a bullet-fest, as he gets the drop on them, using the maze of the Gallery to his fullest advantage, gunning them down - First one - Then two - Three, and then - No four. Vincent turns, surprised that his man wasn't where he expected him to be when - A SHOT RINGS OUT, hitting Vincent, a flesh wound that disarms him. The Last Guy has the drop on Vincent. Now - The Last Guy smiles a nasty little smile at Vincent and - A PISTOL spits fire and - A BULLET bursts out of the Last Guy's chest. It's Sam. Now Sam and Vincent exchange a look: Sam has, once again, saved Vincent's life.

VINCENT

You have to stop doing that!

SAM

I'll work on it...

The two men don't have time for any more words, they move from the Gallery and find themselves in -

THE DINING ROOM -

Where they find nothing but the bloody remains of Mikhi the Gangster. Sam and Vincent are surveying the room when a VOICE comes from BEHIND them -

SEAMUS (O.S.)

Turn around real slow, and try hard
not to breathe when you do it.

ANOTHER ANGLE - Seamus Reilly has come in behind them, and he's got his gun pointed straight at Sam's heart. If Seamus is enraged at discovering Gregor's absence, he's overjoyed to find Sam in his place.

SEAMUS

It's you...
(touches his face)
You're the one did this to my face,
are you?

SAM

That's me.

SEAMUS

Have a nice afterlife.

Seamus pulls the trigger and his BULLET spins out towards Sam, ready to blow a hole through him except that - Vincent leaps forward and takes the bullet --

it rips into his side, a huge splash of red against his white shirt. He falls to the ground, horribly wounded, but he's given Sam enough time, and now - Sam and Seamus open fire on one another - BULLETS RIPPING into the table, chewing up the china and crystal, taking glass shattering bites out of the CHANDELIER above the table, turning the Dining Room from a primo Louis XIV showpiece into shit as the two men move about and then suddenly - They're face to face, each with a gun to the other - Mexican Standoff. Suddenly, from Off Screen -

DEIRDRE (O.S.)

Seamus!

ANOTHER ANGLE - Deirdre has appeared, her gun leveled at the two men.

SEAMUS

Deirdre, do for him, woman, put a fucking bullet in his head!

Deirdre hesitates, uncertain.

SEAMUS

Do it, for Christ's sake, do it so we can find that stinking Gregor, he's got the bloody package! For God's sake, you're a soldier...

These last words sink into Deirdre: she is a soldier. Her gun swivels towards Sam.

SEAMUS

(sensing he's getting to her)

You're one of us...You been born and bred with your own people, you can't go against your nature. C'mon, girl, I'm your people.

Deirdre makes up her mind.

DEIRDRE

I'm no girl, Seamus...

She fires a shot - Blowing Seamus off his feet and through a huge PLATE GLASS WINDOW.

DEIRDRE

And you ain't nobody's people.

She moves with Sam to Vincent, who is seriously wounded -- perhaps life-threateningly so.

SAM
 (to Deirdre)
 Let's get him out of here...

VINCENT
 Finish the job...

SAM
 And now...

VINCENT
 (a commanding whisper)
 Finish it!

Sam considers, but before he can make up his mind, Deirdre sees something through the wreck of the Dining Room Window -

OUT ON THE BACK LAWN - We've already seen that it's bordered on one side by the woods, for the first time we notice - A LAKE, which laps against a PRIVATE DOCK, where a row boat is tethered. Now - BENEATH A VERY FULL MOON, the stark figure of Gregor makes its way toward the Dock.

DEIRDRE
 (calling out)
 Sam...

Sam turns at the sound of her voice and sees Gregor making his escape. Sam looks back at Vincent, who is almost passed out from blood loss.

VINCENT
 I'm really sick of you saving my
 life. Go out and get the bastard.

Sam makes up his mind, and as Vincent passes out, Sam runs out after Deirdre and towards -

THE PRIVATE DOCK -

And as the two of them run we MOVE WITH THEM.

DEIRDRE
 He's got the briefcase rigged to
 explode five seconds after anybody
 other than himself tries to open it.

And now they reach the Dock and they find - Nothing -- no Gregor. And the Boat is still there. Before Sam can restrain her - Deirdre steps out towards the Boat.

SAM
 Deirdre, wait up --

But it's too late: Gregor steps out from behind -

A BOATHOUSE, and before Deirdre can even figure out what happened, Gregor has her in an arm lock, a gun to her head.

His free hand sticks out and we see the Briefcase, which is still handcuffed to his wrist.

GREGOR

You might have made a good field agent you arrogant American prick, but you're not smart enough to go up against me.

Gregor and Deirdre are poised at the edge of the lake. This Private Dock is made completely of stone, and the drop to the water is nearly five feet. Sam has reached a position where there is no right answer. Still, he points his gun at Gregor, who in turn shields himself with Deirdre's body.

GREGOR

Go ahead, shoot... Shoot and kill the bitch, I don't care.
(beat)
And yet you don't shoot. Interesting. Put down your weapon and walk away.

DEIRDRE

Don't do it, Sam!

GREGOR

Shut up!

DEIRDRE

He'll kill me anyway, Sam, shoot though me and kill this fucker.

SEAMUS (O.S.)

(a horrible croak)
If you don't, I will...

ANOTHER ANGLE - Seamus is somehow still barely alive -- he's not long for this world, but the will for revenge has driven him this far.

SEAMUS

(to Sam, in a cold pale rage)
Shoot that traitorous bitch and I'll let you live.

THE TOP OF SEAMUS'S HEAD explodes, finishing him off once and for all, killed by -

Vincent, who has staggered out to make this one necessary shot.

But he can go no further, and he collapses in his own blood, near death, just as - Gregor takes a step towards the boat and - Sam makes up his mind and shoots - THE BULLET FLIES ACROSS THE SCREEN -

IMPACT - The Briefcase bursts, shot open by Sam and now we're in SLOW MOTION as -

Gregor relaxes his grip on Deirdre as he struggles to close the case and - Deirdre takes the opportunity to dive the other, into the lake, while -

BABOOM! The case EXPLODES, a flash of phosphorescent white light that incinerates Gregor and the case and whatever was inside it with an explosion that knocks Sam to the ground and when the light clears - Gregor and the case are gone, while - THE EXPLOSION ECHOES out over the lake, booming again and again until finally there is - SILENCE. Sam looks out over the lake for any sign of Deirdre - But there is none. And then, after we've held for a BEAT longer than it should be possible for her to have survived - her head splits the surface and she emerges, coughing. Sam reaches down to help her out.

SAM

Are you alright?

DEIRDRE

Alright? It's bloody fucking freezing in here!

Sam pulls Deirdre out of the water and then the two of them immediately turn and move towards Vincent, and as they do we start to PULL BACK on them, and now the SOUNDS of SIRENS can be heard, one, then two more, and then a symphony of noise. And we're STILL PULLING BACK ON -

THE CHATEAU - Or what's left of it, because it's started to burn, and quickly the flames start to rise into the night, like something out of medieval times as we -

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - NIGHT

Sam waits outside a hospital room, inside of which we get a glimpse of - A DOCTOR tending to a heavily bandaged and sedated Vincent. As Sam waits - TWO GENDARMES and a PLAINCLOTHES DETECTIVE approach. The Detective looks at Sam for a BEAT, and then goes to push past him. Sam blocks his way.

DETECTIVE

I need to speak with that man.

SAM
I'm sorry, I can't allow that.

Sam reaches into his coat, and for a moment everybody thinks he's going for his gun, but instead he comes out with - A PIECE OF PAPER. He hands it to the Detective.

SAM
Call that number and ask them what you should do.

The Detective eyeballs the number suspiciously.

FIVE MINUTES LATER -

The Detective hangs up a nearby wall phone and then looks over at Sam in disgust. Without another word, the Detective signals to the two Gendarmes, and all three men exit. Now -

The DOCTOR, a beautiful French Woman, comes up and speaks to him in FRENCH -- and the amazing thing is that Sam speaks back. Everything in SUBTITLED.

DOCTOR
You can see your friend, now.

SAM
Thank you very much.

DOCTOR
The field dressing you put on saved his life.
(giving him a look)
Where di you learn to do that?

SAM
Here and there, I guess.

The Doctor isn't entirely satisfied with this answer, but it's the only one she's going to get, because Sam moves past into -

INT. VINCENT'S ROOM

He's barely alive -- but alive nonetheless. And he's heard Sam speak in French to the Doctor.

VINCENT
You son-of-a-bitch...

SAM
What?

VINCENT
You speak French.

SAM
What of it?

VINCENT
(in mock exasperation)
Nothing...

He lies back on his pillow, pissed and yet amused.

VINCENT
(repeating the Doctor's
words in English)
"Your field dressing saved his life."
That's three I owe you.

SAM
You don't owe me a goddamned thing,
Vincent, and you know it. You stepped
in front of a bullet for me.
(very seriously, he
now believes this)
I owe you a heavy debt.

VINCENT
(relishing this)
I know.

SAM
(rising to leave)
You better get some sleep, alright?

VINCENT
Tell me something first.
(a quick beat)
The package: what was it?

SAM
I don't know. Nobody knows, except
a bunch of people who are too dead
to tell us. There's probably a couple
of guys back at the Company who know,
but I don't think they plan to tell
me anytime soon.

VINCENT
What happened to it?

SAM
Gone. Destroyed.

VINCENT
(sighs, then a beat)
I guess that's for the best.

Sam turns for the door but Vincent has one last thing to say.

VINCENT

Sam, when Gregor had Deirdre by the lake, you could have killed the two of them with one shot. You could have had the package, finished the job. But you didn't, you sacrificed the job to save her life. Why?

Sam has to think about this for a second, and his answer reveals just how full circle he's come.

SAM

It's what you would have done.

And on that note Sam exits the room, leaving a bemused Vincent behind.

EXT. THE BANK OF THE RIVER SEINE - EARLY MORNING

A WISPY FOG atmospherically rises off the river -- not too thick, not too thin.

A TITLE: One month later...

We're MOVING along the cobble-stone walk next to the river as a VOICE cuts through the fog.

VINCENT (V.O.)

Would you just smoke already...

A RIVERSIDE CAFE - Where Sam, Vincent and Deirdre are having morning coffee. A mostly-healed Vincent is smoking a cigarette, trying to get Sam to light up.

SAM

I told you, I quit.

VINCENT

Just to keep me company, Sam -- I hate smoking alone.

(turning to Deirdre)

How about you? I thought all you IRA types smoked.

DEIRDRE

Only the stupid ones. Cigarettes kill more patriots than bullets.

(a quick beat)

Besides, I'm not IRA no more.

VINCENT

So where do you go from here?

DEIRDRE

I don't know. I was thinking...Maybe the three of us might partner up -- guns for hire, that sort of thing.

VINCENT

I'm up for that...

The two of them turn to Sam, but he shakes his head.

SAM

Not me. You work too often with the same people and you become friends -- clouds your judgement.

DEIRDRE

Come off it, Sam -- if we weren't friends already we wouldn't be here now, would we?

VINCENT

She's got a point.
(playing a trump card)
Besides, I know of a job that's available.

Sam can't help it -- he's interested.

SAM

How much does it pay?

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. OUT ON THE RIVER SEINE - MEANWHILE

SILENCE AND FOG. A RIVER FERRY does a slow ghostly glide down the river, and in seconds it approaches -

THE RIVERSIDE CAFE, which appears through the mist, looked at by --

A SLEEK PAIR OF SUN GLASSES attached to a young PUNK in a leather coat, and the Punk is looking at - Sam, Vincent, and especially: Deirdre. Sam looks up and shouts a warning as - The Punk pulls a shotgun from beneath his leather coat, pumps the gun and screams out at Deirdre with an Irish accent -

PUNK

This is for Seamus!

BOOM! The Punk pulls the trigger, a blast of fire as - Sam's gun is already out, TWO QUICK SHOTS squeezed off and - The Punk is capped twice in the head, dead, sailing away on the Ferry which never stops as -

THE CAFE goes wild, CUSTOMERS running, screaming, WAITERS dropping their trays. But - Sam doesn't run, and neither does Vincent. Sam stands, stunned by what he sees - Deirdre lies on the ground, hit full on in the chest: she's dead. A BEAT OF PURE SILENCE - Broken by SIRENS in the distance, but quickly growing closer. Now - Vincent looks at Deirdre's corpse, then at Sam, who is unable to move. For maybe the first time in his professional career, Sam is staggered by the loss of a life. Vincent gently takes Sam's arm.

VINCENT
 (soft yet urgent)
 We have to go, Sam, we can't be here.

Sam looks at Vincent, and for a moment Sam struggles to find something to say, but he can't find a goddamned thing. The SIRENS are getting louder -

VINCENT
 (a little louder,
 bordering desperation)
 Let's go!!

Vincent literally drags Sam away and now the SIRENS have arrived, followed quickly by - THE GENDARMES, who come running into the Cafe but - It's empty except for Deirdre's body. Now -

THE STREET ABOVE THE RIVER -

Sam and Vincent are running through patchy fog, Vincent leading the way, and now -

We're CLOSER ON Vincent as he runs and runs and runs until he feels he's far enough away from the scene of the crime to relax. He collapses against a stone wall, chest heaving, shaking out two cigarettes, one for himself and one for Sam.

VINCENT
 (thrusting the
 cigarettes out to
 Sam)
 Doctor's orders...

But Sam isn't there to take the cigarette -- Vincent looks around, trying to see what happened to his friend, but the fog has covered any sign of Sam. Vincent stands there, stunned, alone, the cigarettes in an outstretched hand that slowly falls back to Vincent's side as he realizes that Sam has left him on purpose. Then - Vincent lights both cigarettes at the same time and throws one of them over the stone wall - THE GLOWING CIGARETTE arcs through the air until it lands in the river where it extinguishes with a hiss.

VINCENT (O.S.)
Goodbye, Sam...

BACK AT THE CAFE -

The Gendarmes have secured the scene (there isn't much to secure since everyone has run away). A majority of cops surround Deirdre's dead body, but - One GENDARME wanders around the cafe, looking about, and then he sees something -

ON THE STREET ABOVE -

A SHAPE IN THE FOG. The wind blows and the fog clears for a second, and we see that it's - Sam. Getting one last look at Deirdre. Quickly - The Gendarme points Sam out but as he does the wind continues to blow and - THE FOG swallows Sam. Seconds later the fog clears again, and when it does - Sam is gone.

FADE OUT.