

The Gunslinger

By

John Hlavin

Jill McElroy
Benderspink
110 S. Fairfax Ave. Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Direct: 323 904 1820
Fax: 323 904 1802

EXT. TRACK HOUSING - WEST TEXAS - NIGHT

A dusty hot night, wind kicking up dirt and loose trash. RED and BLUE flashes reveal several POLICE CRUISERS surrounding a small hovel of a house. NEIGHBORS gawk as POLICE unspool YELLOW caution tape.

A WHITE 4x4, Texas Ranger logo proudly displayed on the door, pulls to a stop. PHIL ELCO (54), steps out of the truck and adjusts his hat. A strong man who could crush or console, his tired eyes survey the scene, spots who he's looking for.

PHIL
Hey there, Roy.

SHERIFF ROY FENTON (48), nods off a DEPUTY as he heads over.

ROY
Jesus, Phil, I hate to be the one
who makes this call.

PHIL
Appreciate you call'n me first.

ROY
I'm just gonna tell you right out,
it's ugly in there. Real ugly.

Roy clears the tape as he walks Phil to the door of the house. A FORENSICS OFFICER comes out.

ROY (CONT'D)
You fellas about finished?

FORENSICS
Mostly. Do me a favor and don't
touch anything. We're not done
pulling all the prints.

Roy nods, stops at the door, turns to Phil.

ROY
You tell Sam Lee yet?

PHIL
I wanted to confirm it.

ROY
Yeah, well...

He steps out of the way and let's Phil enter.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

POLICE TYPES mill about, but no one talks. The front door leads to a small room, old crusty furniture and a cheap coffee table. Some USED SYRINGES and a PLASTIC LIGHTER lay among small amounts of spilled dark powder.

A MAN has been DUCT TAPED to an overturned chair. He has CLEARLY been tortured, with CIGARETTE BURNS on his face and hands. His RIGHT HAND BLOODY. A TOURNIQUET wraps his arm and several FRESH needle holes line his forearm.

His pants have been yanked down and blood covers his lap. His throat has been cut so deeply his head is almost decapitated. A few PLAYING CARDS are spilled out by his body.

Phil says nothing, absorbs the scene like a horror movie. Roy steps up behind him, quietly.

ROY

M.E. says the syringes were B-12
and Amoxicillin. They even found
some adrenaline.

PHIL

They were keeping him alive.

ROY

Looks like three of four days.
Lord only knows how he survived
that long. You got any idea what
he was doing down here?

PHIL

He asked for a transfer three
months ago. Thought he was in
Victoria. I was gonna call him,
but...

Phil lets it hang.

ROY

Why he'd want the transfer?

PHIL

Family stuff. You know how it
gets.

ROY

That I do.

Phil takes a hard look at the corpse - hard to imagine someone suffering through that.

PHIL
Danny wasn't exactly battle tested.

ROY
Rangers ain't no charm school.
Either way, he saw a bitter end in
this shit hole.

TWO CORONERS enter. One looks at Roy, he nods. They begin removing the body from the chair. Phil takes one last look, turns and walks out.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Phil takes out a small half smoked cigar, relights it. Roy walks him to his truck.

ROY
I don't want to but I got to ask--

PHIL
Drugs weren't Danny's thing. Not even close. That boy ironed his creases and spit shined his boots. He loved the job.

ROY
Then what do you make of it?

PHIL
Judging from that cut to the neck I'd say the Mexi brownburners are making a point. Maybe they think they can scare us off.
(beat)
I'll ask around but he and Sam Lee weren't talking.

ROY
Brothers. Man, what a mess. You tell Sam Lee I'll keep a good thought for him. Gonna be a rough patch, that's for sure.

They shake, Roy walks off. Phil takes one more look at the house, watches as the coroners bring out the body, wrapped in a BLUE SHEET.

PHIL
Rough.

EXT. RANGER STATION - NIGHT

Another TEXAS RANGER 4x4 pulls in to the station and parks. Phil waits, still chewing on the same cigar, now burnt out.

Out of the truck comes SAM LEE HENSLEY (33), pressed white work shirt and a white cowboy hat. Ranger issue SIG.45 strapped to his hip.

SAM LEE
Captain, what's the emergency?

Sam Lee notices two other RANGERS leaning on the hood of a police sedan.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
What're Ben and Hagel doin' here?
We haven' an academy reunion?

PHIL
You talk to your brother lately?

SAM LEE
What that damn fool get into now?

Phil draws a breath, not wanting to say the words.

PHIL
Goddamn, Sam Lee, I am truly sorry.

As Sam Lee realizes what has happened...

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Hundreds of mourners, almost all POLICE, RANGERS and FEDERAL AGENTS, spill out respectfully as a casket is lowered into the ground.

DEBORAH HENSLEY (28), Daniel's wife, sits, face blank, tired from crying. Sam Lee stands behind her, watches the casket being lowered. His sunglasses hide his eyes. His mouth drawn tight.

TIME CUT:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Sam Lee waits as Deborah is hugged by the final MOURNER. She turns to find Sam Lee, arms crossed.

DEBORAH
Don't seem real.

Sam Lee nods, knowing the feeling.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Can't believe he's in that casket.
I want to tear it open to prove
he's not.

SAM LEE
I wish it weren't true.

DEBORAH
Why'd this happen, Sam Lee?

SAM LEE
I don't know. I intend on finding
out, though.

Deborah takes him in, sees the grief he doesn't want anyone
else to see.

DEBORAH
It ain't gonna bring him back.

EXT. CEMETERY ROAD - LIMOUSINES

A everyone quietly walks to the cars, Phil catches up to Sam
Lee, pulls him aside.

PHIL
It goes without saying, you take
some time, we'll cover.

SAM LEE
I don't need no damn time.

PHIL
Son, some days grief runs thick and
we'd do anything to not drown in
it. But, I'm telling you, it ain't
gonna last forever.

SAM LEE
Really, Captain? You have a
brother been tortured by having
cigarettes put out in his eyes?

Phil steps towards Sam Lee.

PHIL
Don't act like Danny wasn't family
to me and don't talk about him like
he's a punch line.

SAM LEE
I got a job to do.

Sam Lee turns to move off. Phil stops him, steps in close.

PHIL

Got an intel share from the DEA.
That house on 17 was owned by Billy
Flip. He's a piece of shit but he
might be a start. He drinks at
Snows out past Darnell.

Sam Lee gets it. Turns again.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Sam Lee, don't let your anger be
your true north. You got something
you need to do, know why you're
doing it.

Sam Lee indicates the fresh grave that his brother was just
buried in.

SAM LEE

I know why I'm doin' it.

EXT. SNOW'S BAR - NIGHT

Cheap highway roadhouse favored by serious drinkers, its
gravel lot is empty tonight save for one motorcycle and one
beat up old sedan.

A FORD BRONCO pulls into the lot and parks. Sam Lee gets
out, his face a mask of seriousness and discipline. No
longer sporting his Ranger .45, instead he's got TWO COLT
PEACEMAKERS (LONG BARREL) strapped one on each hip.

Dry Texas lightening crackles across the night sky. Thunder
rumbles in the distance.

INT. SNOW'S BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sam Lee enters, his eyes scan the room. There's only one guy
drinking and the bartender.

The bartender sees Sam Lee, sees his guns.

BARTENDER

Hey buddy? We're closed. And,
even if we weren't, you can't have
those cannons in here.

Sam Lee ignores him, heads right for a scrawny man wearing
glasses at the corner of the bar -- BILLY FLIP (25).

SAM LEE

Your name Flip.

FLIP

You asking or telling?

He laughs to himself, raises his glass of beer - Sam Lee bats it out of his hand, it smashes all over the bar.

BARTENDER

Goddamn it, you got broken glass all in my ice.

Sam Lee ignores him, keeps his eyes glued on Flip.

SAM LEE

You own a shit shack on route 17?

Flip screws up his face, thinking.

FLIP

Let me see, I got a mansion and racing boat and a Rolls Royce, but no shack on route 17. Too many beaners for my liking-

Sam Lee kicks Flip's bar stool out, sending Flip down to the ground. Sam Lee drops a knee on his chest, restricting his breathing.

SAM LEE

A Texas Ranger was murdered there a week ago, is that ringing any bells.

FLIP

(scared)

Mister, I don't know what you're talking about.

Behind Sam Lee, the bartender approaches quietly with a baseball bat. Without turning around but with blinding speed, Sam Lee pulls one of his Colt Peacemakers and aims it dead at the bartender.

SAM LEE

Stop.

BARTENDER

You got eyes in the back of your head?

Sam Lee stares at Flip. He's using the REFLECTION in Flip's GLASSES to see the Bartender. He adjusts his aim, FIRES.

The ROAR of the Colt is deafening. Half the BASEBALL BAT disintegrates. The bartender stands, holding a splintered piece of wood. A WET STAIN grows in his pants.

Sam Lee aims the gun at Flip.

SAM LEE

The house on Route 17.

FLIP

(beyond scared)

Some dude named Diego Dela put that house in my name. He gives me crystal every month and I make sure the lawn's cut. I swear, I never even been inside...

Sam Lee takes a beat, processing. Retrains the gun on Flip.

SAM LEE

Where do I find Diego Dela?

FLIP

Hell, I don't know. Sometimes he and his buddies mattress up at a whorehouse on Selengo Canyon. C'mon, man, please...

Sam Lee cocks the Colt.

SAM LEE

You best forget you ever seen me or the last thing you'll see is the flash of my iron. That goes for Diego or anyone else. Got me.

Flips nods vigorously. Sam Lee turns to the bartender who raises his hands.

BARTENDER

Far as I'm concerned we closed half an hour ago.

Sam Lee pauses, deciding. Then spins the gun around, butt first, and brings it down across Flips face as THUNDER CRASHES.

EXT. TRACK HOUSE - SELENGO CANYON - NIGHT - HEAVY RAIN

Sam Lee's truck sits parked in the woods by the road.

INT. TRUCK

Rain like honey covers the windshield as Sam Lee opens the chamber of one of the Colt's, dumps out the shells and reloads it. He does this without ever taking his eyes off the track house.

Finally he sees TWO HISPANIC GIRLS exit the house, laughing. AN HISPANIC VOICE calls out.

HISPANIC VOICE
And don't forget the cigarettes,
puta.

One of the girls flips off the house, the other covering herself from the rain with her hoodie. They get into the car and pull off. Sam Lee gets out of his truck.

INT. TRACK HOUSE - SAME

A mixture of smoke and HIP HOP, FIVE young HISPANIC men, heads shaved, in various spots around the room. One of them plays a video game, two play cards and the other two pass a BONG -- one of them with a "DD" tattooed on his bicep.

SAM LEE enters quietly, rain dripping off his hat. The sound of the screen door closing causes Diego (DD) to call out.

DIEGO
No way you could have gone that
fast--

His eyes finally settle on Sam Lee. The others notices him as well.

DIEGO (CONT'D)
You lost?

SAM LEE
You Diego Dela?

DIEGO
The fuck you care?

The two playing cards have stopped. One has removed a gun from his back, he holds it barrel down. Sam Lee quickly surveys the room, looks back to Diego.

SAM LEE
Double D? Guess you're him.

The CARD PLAYER raises his gun, in a FLASH: Sam Lee's right HOLSTER, the COLT OUT and POW -- He fires one shot - right through the card player's CHEEK - the back of his head sprayed out on the wall.

DIEGO
WHOA! Stop!

Sam Lee swings the Colt to Diego.

SAM LEE
You killed a Texas Ranger.

Diego can't stop looking at Sam Lee's guns--

DIEGO
I don't know what you're--

The other card player reaches for the dead player's .45. Sam Lee flicks his wrist and the COLT FIRES again - the BULLET knocks the card player over the table, DEAD -- a red stain in his chest.

Diego's eyes are flicking around wildly. He looks at his buddy holding the bong.

DIEGO (CONT'D)
(Spanish)
Do something.

The man examines the bong, unsure. The VIDEO GAME PLAYER is inching towards a window. Rain splatters against the panes.

SAM LEE
You tortured him for three days.
Did he tell you anything?

Sam Lee SHOOTS Diego in the KNEE, dropping him.

The video game player makes a run for it. Sam Lee draws with his LEFT and SHOOTS the man twice, in rapid succession. His crumpled body strikes the wall and sags to the floor, blood oozing from his chest and neck.

DIEGO
The man I work for will do ten
times to you what you do to me.

That stops Sam Lee.

SAM LEE
The man you work for got a name?

Diego spits at Sam Lee.

DIEGO
Death. And he's gonna visit you
soon.

SAM LEE
You're gonna tell me his name, now.

Sam Lee shoots him in the other KNEE. Diego screams out, a mixture of rage/pain/adrenaline.

DIEGO
I'm not telling you shit. I'm going
to fucking kill your whole family!

Sam Lee cocks both the Colts. Fuck it.

SAM LEE
You already did.

He raises the guns and FIRES -- TWO ROUNDS in the chest as Diego raises his hand to block - a THIRD bullet travels through his palm and into his right eye - spraying blood all over the BONG SMOKER.

For a moment, the only noise is the hip hop.

BONG SMOKER
Please don't kill me.

Sam Lee finally examines him.

SAM LEE
How many times did my brother say
that?

The bong smoker has only a moment to put it together before Sam Lee fires a round into the center of his chest. He crashes over a chair to the floor.

Sam Lee re-holsters his Colt. Takes a final look around and turns and walks out...

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. ELCO HOUSE - 5AM

The RINGING of the house phone wakes Phil. His wife stirs next to him. Phil answers it.

PHIL
Elco.

MALE VOICE
Captain Phil Elco?

PHIL
Yeah, who's this?

MALE VOICE
You need to come down to the
morgue. Now.

Phil puts on his reading glasses, holds up his watch.

PHIL
What the hell is so important at
the morgue that won't keep until--

CLICK -- The caller hangs up. Phil swings his feet over to
the floor, sits for a minute. His wife stirs again, sleepy.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Don't get up, honey.

He stands. His wife turns on her light. Much of her hair is
gone from chemotherapy. She reaches for her wig, getting
up...

PHIL (CONT'D)
You need the sleep. I'll get
coffee on the way in.

He lumbers off...

INT. CITY MORGUE - 30 MINUTES LATER

Phil holds his coffee while standing in a cold room with five
bodies wrapped in body bags laying on gurneys. The only
sound is the buzz of the fluorescent lights.

The door to the body room kicks open and STEVE KENNEDY (40)
enters - the suit and tie a dead giveaway for his job.

KENNEDY
Captain Elco?

PHIL
Uh-huh.

KENNEDY
Special Agent Kennedy, DEA.

PHIL
You the fella who hung up on me?

KENNEDY
No.
(beat)
(MORE)

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

What do you know about the Tarto Cartel?

PHIL

Nothing that wouldn't a held until a decent hour.

KENNEDY

We don't know a lot. Narco trafficking, guns, launders money through strip malls and cell phone companies. They're big, mucho big if you get my drift. Wanna know who runs it?

Phil says nothing, staring at Kennedy.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

So do we.

Kennedy unzips a bag, revealing Diego Dela with an EIGHT BALL WOUND where his right eye used to be. Phil notices the double D tatoo, sees the two chest wounds.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Diego Dela, rising superstar within Tarto. Big player and enforcer for these parts.

Phil glances at Diego, saying nothing.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Double tap to the chest and one to the head. I would have figured it was a pro, but his knees are all shot to hell.

PHIL

With all due respect, Special Agent Kennedy, I had a man on a slab in this room last week, so apologies if I don't go all soft for a bunch of dead gangbangers who shot themselves up.

Kennedy unzips another bag, revealing the VIDEO GAME PLAYER who tried to run.

KENNEDY

This was Luis Ola, he was a CI for the DEA and the closest we've ever come to getting a man inside Tarto. All these fellas got all shot up a few hours ago up on Selengo Caynon.

PHIL

Looks like a mess. If you don't mind, I got a sick wife at--

KENNEDY

Diego Dela used a house on Route 17 for...business. Ever been there?

Phil says nothing. Kennedy studies him...

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

I understand Sam Lee Hensley is a helluva a shot.

Phil now knows why he was called at 5am.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Only Ranger ever to be in the O-ring ten out of ten from a hundred yards with his sidearm.

PHIL

Sam Lee's gift is shooting.

KENNEDY

Looks like Christmas came early for these boys.

(beat)

I got two years in this case. Hundreds of man hours. Reams of paperwork all under my signature. And, now I got five bodies and bureaucratic firing squad about to hand me a blindfold and a cigarette.

PHIL

Life's hard. These assholes did that to Danny, I say they got what they deserved. Fuck your investigation.

KENNEDY

I don't think you're hearing me, Captain. If I spent two years trying to figure out who runs the Tarto Cartel. Imagine how much time I'll spend trying to figure out who hijacked my career?

PHIL

What do you want from me?

KENNEDY
Sam Lee Hensley.

PHIL
You prove Sam Lee did this, I'll
cuff him myself.

KENNEDY
How much you want to bet I am never
gonna find the gun that fired those
bullets?

Phil sips his coffee, again

KENNEDY (CONT'D)
Did you get access to a classified
DEA report containing the name
William Flip?

Phil swallows, works on his poker face.

PHIL
I don't remember, I see a lot of
reports.

KENNEDY
It's only a matter of time,
Captain. I'm gonna get Sam Lee.
You could make it easier on him,
get him to come in on his own.

PHIL
That ain't never gonna happen.

KENNEDY
(beat)
You think I'm just gonna let this
wash? Call it Texas justice?

Phil stares at Kennedy...waiting for it.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)
Hopefully, they'll let you keep
your pension.

He turns and walks out. Off Phil, absorbing the news...

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: 7 YEARS LATER

FADE IN:

EXT. WEST TEXAS - VARIOUS

--Dry, dirty and brown, West Texas rolls out like a old blanket.

--The only intersection in Adellene, Texas, a single light blinking red on all sides. Late model SEDANS intermixed with many 4x4's and Pick Up Trucks parked along the streets.

--Mexican-American kids play in a leaking fire hydrant while their mothers keep a weary eye on them from the shade of the town's only laundromat.

EXT. TEXAS STATE PENITENTIARY - MORNING

A lone set of BUILDINGS surrounded by two FENCES, barbed wire and not much else. Acres of empty landscape on all sides save a single road.

The heavy steel door open slowly, wide enough for a man to walk through. Sam Lee, now older, some grey around his temples, pressed jeans and clean shirt exits the jail.

A GUARD comes out behind him. Sam Lee notices his BRONCO sitting in the parking lot.

GUARD

Phil Elco thought you'd want that.
Couple of the guys went down to his
place last night and got it. He
tuned it. Runs a gas station in
town now.

Sam Lee suppresses his gratitude.

SAM LEE

You tell the guys I said thanks. I
owe them anything, they know where
to find me...

The guard heads back into the penitentiary. Sam Lee heads to his truck.

EXT. ELCO'S 76 GARAGE - DAY

A relic from another time, Elco's 76 doesn't have much by way of flash -- but they still fix cars here, evidenced by the three junkers in the lot and one on the lift.

Phil Elco, long out of his Texas Ranger uniform and a little softer, stands with his foot on the rear bumper of an old faded GREEN PICK UP TRUCK. FRANK PISO (60), cowboy from hat to boots, pumps his own gas.

FRANK

It don't start raining soon I'm gonna have a crop of sand out there.

PHIL

You ain't seen any of that government money?

FRANK

Seen it come and go. You'll die of thirst by the time you get through all them damned extension forms.

PHIL

Got plenty of money for them Wall Street folks, though, don't they?

FRANK

You can say that again. Shoulda stayed at Harvard, I'd be sit'n pretty.

Both men chuckle at the absurdity of that. Frank tops it off. Places the nozzle in the fueling station. Digs around in his jeans and finds some crumpled MONEY.

PHIL

Come down next week, I think I found a carburetor for this old girl.

Frank slaps the truck.

FRANK

Gotta keep her running.

PHIL

Hell, she already lasted longer then your second marriage.

FRANK

Better in bed, too.

They laugh again as Frank gets in his truck and pulls off.

Phil, picks up a piece of trash and heads inside. Turns in time to see Sam Lee's FORD BRONCO blaze past without slowing down.

Phil takes a moment to register it, heads inside.

EXT. WEST TEXAS - TWO LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

The Bronco steams down the two lane black top. Finally finds a dirt turn off, a long since ignored MAILBOX the only indicator of life - the name HENSLEY is still stenciled on the side.

The Bronco turns and hammers up the dirt road, kicking up dirt as it goes.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Coming to a stop in front of closed up ranch house. Sam Lee gets out of his truck, surveys the house.

INT. RANCH HOUSE

Drops the bag, opens a window. The local vermin have been living here since Sam Lee left. He kicks a pile of shredded paper on the kitchen floor. He passes a PHOTO of him and DANNY, both in UNIFORM.

HALLWAY

Sam Lee walks around, feeling walls and checking angles. The second bedroom, located near the center/back of the house, is completely empty - a small bathroom off the side. Sam Lee surveys the view, feeling around the window pane.

SAM LEE

It'll have to do.

He turns and walks out...

EXT. ELCO'S 76 GARAGE - DAY

Phil is under the hood when the GAS BELL pulls him out. He sees DEBORAH HENSLEY, now 35, hair cut short, getting out of her AUDI.

PHIL

I told you them German cars weren't worth a damn.

Deb smiles and gives Phil a quick hug.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'm gonna get you dirty.

DEBORAH

I don't care.

She steps back, smiles again, sort of awkward.

PHIL
Something I can help you with?

DEBORAH
You hear?

PHIL
Hear what?

DEBORAH
That Sam Lee's back?

PHIL
Yup. Been back a couple of weeks now. Fixing up his place, last I checked.

DEBORAH
You talk to him?

PHIL
No. I figure he'll find me when he's ready.

Deborah accepts that.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Give him time, Deb.

DEBORAH
I don't know why he has to make this so hard. Its been seven years, let's have some beers and laugh again.

PHIL
Sam Lee never much was one for laughing.

DEBORAH
What's he doin' on that ranch anyway?

PHIL
Who knows. Maybe he's taking up farming.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH - NIGHT

Sam Lee pulls another piece of SHEET METAL from the back of an OLD PICK UP. It's a sturdy piece and it's heavy.

He sets it down, looks around slowly. In order to preserve his night vision, he works in the dark.

Satisfied he's alone, he drags the sheet metal inside.

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH

The house, now clean, save for some tools, sits dark. Sam Lee drags the sheet metal in, closes the door and sets a COMPLICATED TRAP - a SHOTGUN aimed at the door.

CENTER ROOM - LATER

Using an ARC WELDER, Sam Lee welds two pieces of SHEET METAL together. He lifts his welder's mask, inspects the work. Continues...

KITCHEN - LATER

Sam Lee washes his hands after a night of work. He dries himself off, picks up a SNIPER RIFLE, chambers a round and sits in a chair which faces out the front window. His face a mask of complete concentration as he stares out into the darkness.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH - FIELD - DAY

Sam Lee finishes mounting a MOTION DETECTOR LIGHT on a TREE. On his right hip, a NICKEL PLATED .45 sits snug.

Sam Lee hears the sound of GEARS GRINDING. Looks across his ranch to see a car MOVING FAST down the blacktop road.

He grabs his things and hustles away.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH - MOMENTS LATER

The car comes to a stop, dirt and dust covering the windows. Finally the driver side door opens and ESTELLA DOMINGUEZ (30) steps out. Her simple clothes hide a quiet beauty. She looks around, unsure.

SAM LEE (O.S.)
Nice necklace.

Estella reflexively touches her neck, running her fingers over a silver locket.

SAM LEE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
My mother had one just like it.

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH - SAME

Through the dirty screen door, Estella tries to see him. Sam Lee's sets down his M40A3 sniper rifle, letting it rest on the interior door frame. He opens the screen door.

SAM LEE
Somethin' I can help you with?

Estella takes him in. He's thinner than she thought he'd be, good looking but not exactly welcoming.

ESTELLA
They took my son.

Sam Lee says nothing, waits.

ESTELLA (CONT'D)
Carlito.

A beat.

ESTELLA (CONT'D)
Your brother's son.

After a moment, Sam Lee nods, opens the door wider to let her in...

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Estella sits in the small kitchen. Sam Lee stands. There's only one chair.

Estella looks around, sees a simple home with no clutter at all. Single set of dishes, washed and stacked. Food purchased in bulk. Small TV on mute in the adjoining living room.

ESTELLA
They said if I go to the policia
they will kill Carlito. Please.
They want ten thousand dollars.
Your brother told me you are a...I
do not know what else to do.

Sam Lee sets a glass of water down. Estella drinks, spilling some on her blouse. She blots her top, moving the locket to do so.

SAM LEE
Danny give you that?

Estella stops.

ESTELLA
He didn't like being called that.
Yes, he gave this to me. Will you
help me?

Sam Lee studies Estella.

ESTELLA (CONT'D)
The man who took my son is called
Emilio, he is a very bad man.

Sam Lee reaches over and Estella jerks back in surprise. He gently lifts the locket and opens it revealing a small picture of an infant.

SAM LEE
Charlie?

ESTELLA
Si. Carlito.
(beat)
Daniel insisted on the name.

SAM LEE
He would. It was Daddy's name.

Sam Lee closes the locket, gently sets it back on Estella's neck. He steps back, takes her in.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
How old?

ESTELLA
What?

SAM LEE
The boy.

ESTELLA
(breaking down)
Seven. He just turned seven.

Sam Lee lets her cry, he makes no effort to console her. Finally...

ESTELLA (CONT'D)
Will you help me?

SAM LEE
(long beat)
No.

INT. ELCO'S 76 STATION - EVENING

Phil works under FRANK PISO'S TRUCK on a LIFT.

PHIL

Henry?

HENRY LOTIMISO (17), Hispanic, leans back from the register, his jaw working double time on some gum.

HENRY

Boss?

PHIL

You pay for that gum?

Henry smiles, busted.

HENRY

I brought it.

PHIL

Uh huh. You done mopping the floor in the office?

HENRY

Si.

PHIL

Take off, then. See you tomorrow.

Henry grabs his backpack and heads out.

BAY DOORS

Phil shuts off the shop lights. Shuts off the gas pumps and finally shuts down the big neon sign that announces his station.

OFFICE

Opening a fresh Ginger Ale, Phil enters his private office, freezes.

REVEAL: Sam Lee standing, back to the wall, his hand behind his back.

SAM LEE

How you doin', Captain?

PHIL

Fine, and it's just Phil, now.

Sam Lee steps to Phil's left, gently closes the door. A single window provides a panoramic view of the garage bays. Sam Lee keeps his back to the wall and his eyes on the window.

SAM LEE
You know a Sinaloa cowboy called
Emilio?

PHIL
There's about a hunner' of them
named Emilio.

SAM LEE
This guy specializes in snatching
kids.

Phil takes a sip of his soda, sizes up Sam Lee.

PHIL
You been back a couple weeks and
this is the first thing you ask me?

Sam Lee turns to face Phil.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I own this gas station. My poker
game is still shitty. I get up to
piss six times a night but I'm
fine, thanks for asking.

SAM LEE
Why would I ask how many times you
need to piss?

PHIL
You wouldn't. You'd ask about Mexi
scumbags who snatch children. I
don't know any Emilios or anyone
else you'd like to kill.

Sam Lee shifts gears.

SAM LEE
Who said I want to kill him?

PHIL
Let me guess, you want to ask his
sister to the prom?

Sam Lee shakes his head.

SAM LEE
You got ornery while I was away.

PHIL

Maybe I'm pissed at you for keeping
my name off the visitors list.

SAM LEE

Wasn't nobody's name on that list.
You think I wanted to get you
greenlit?

Sam Lee takes a beat, let's the tension settle.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)

I got a target painted on me,
Captain. I gotta spend my days
looking over my shoulder, that's
fine. But, it don't mean I gotta
drag anyone else down with me.

(beat)

Did you know Danny was banging
around with some Mexican girl?

PHIL

What he did on his own time was his
business.

SAM LEE

Did you know he had a kid with her?

Phil looks at his soda can, considering, finally sets it
down.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)

You think it's a coincidence that I
tell you my dead brother had a kid
and I'm looking for a kid snatcher
named Emilio?

PHIL

I guess it's also not a coincidence
you're talking to me and not a cop.

SAM LEE

You are a cop.

PHIL

Not anymore.

Sam Lee turns his eyes back to the garage bays.

PHIL (CONT'D)

If Danny's kid got snatched up we
both know who done it. And it
ain't no brownback on his day off
from tree trimm'n.

SAM LEE
I didn't even know he had a kid
till a few hours ago...

PHIL
But, she knew to find you, didn't
she?

SAM LEE
I ain't hiding.

PHIL
Then what are you doing?

Silence between the men.

PHIL (CONT'D)
When's this gonna end?

Sam Lee nods, heads for the door. Turns.

SAM LEE
I was sorry to hear about your
wife.

Sam Lee opens the door and walks out.

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - NIGHT

A simple two level motel under the hum of blue neon. Sam
Lee's Bronco pulls in.

ROOM 111

Sam Lee raps once and the door opens, revealing Estella.

SAM LEE
Be at my place tomorrow morning.
First thing. We'll make the call.
Get your boy back.

He turns and walks off.

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Estella sits, pushes food around her plate. Sam Lee sips his
coffee by the sink, staring out the window.

ESTELLA
It's been too long.

SAM LEE
He wants the money, he'll call.

Estella's CELL PHONE vibrates. She drops her fork.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
Easy girl. Agree to everything,
set the meet. We'll work it out
from there.

Estella carefully picks up the phone, answers it.

ESTELLA
(Spanish)
Hello
(beat)
Yes.
(beat)
I have the money. Carlito?
(beat)
Yes. Ten thousand.
(beat)
Revolution Bar, yes I know it.
Nine. Yes.

She holds the phone a beat longer, even though the other
person already hung up.

ESTELLA (CONT'D)
He says Carlito is okay.

SAM LEE
Let's keep it that way.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - EVENING

Magic hour as the late Texas sun sets and Sam Lee and Estella
come to a stop before pulling out onto the highway.

INT. SAM LEE'S TRUCK - SAME

Sam Lee spots a familiar PICK UP parked on the shoulder. He
reaches for the door.

SAM LEE
Be right back.

Estella reaches out to stop him.

ESTELLA
He said nine pm.

SAM LEE
I know.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sam Lee approaches the passenger window. Phil Elco leans over and rolls the window down.

SAM LEE
Just pulling out.

PHIL
So I see. Made a few calls.
Emilio Rivera, 29, three kidnapping
pinches, two years in a Mexico
jail. Been out a couple of months.

SAM LEE
Looks like he's back in business.

PHIL
He don't work alone, Sam Lee. And
you know this ain't dumb luck.

SAM LEE
In those three kidnapping beefs,
everybody go home happy?

Phil looks out to the highway. Finally speaks.

PHIL
Two out of three.

Sam Lee taps the door, turns and walks back to his truck.

INT. SAM LEE'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Estella watches as Phil's pick up does a U turn and drives away.

ESTELLA
Who was that?

SAM LEE
No one. Guy looking for
directions.

Sam Lee puts the Bronco in gear and pulls out, heading the opposite direction...

EXT. HIGHWAY

As Sam Lee's truck pulls out of his long driveway and onto the road...

EXT. VARIOUS ROADS - TEXAS / MEXICO

Evening turns to night as Sam Lee and Estella make their way to Mexico. The drive in silence. Sam Lee's concentration is so complete he might as well be meditating.

EXT. ROAD - MEXICO - NIGHT

Sam Lee's Bronco pulls off the cracked asphalt road by a shanty bar. Broken NEON reveals the name: "REVOLUCION."

INT. TRUCK

Sam Lee removes a .45 Nickel plated semi automatic from under his seat. He pops the clip, inspecting. Estella stares at the gun like it's a talisman.

ESTELLA

He said no guns.

SAM LEE

We ain't taking orders from him anymore. Soon as we get the kid, we walk out, no problemo. I'd be happy not to need it.

Estella nods.

ESTELLA

You have the money.

Sam Lee reveals a bundled stack of bills inside his jeans jacket.

SAM LEE

Ten grand, like you said.

ESTELLA

You keep that kind of money at your house?

Sam Lee closes his jacket, opens the door.

SAM LEE

Let's go.

INT. REVOLUCION BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sam Lee and Estella enter the bar. Dingy lighting illuminates SEVEN men and a TIRED COCKTAIL WAITRESS tapping her feet to the Spanish music playing over cheap speakers.

Sam Lee stands by the bar. The BARTENDER approaches...

SAM LEE

Emilio?

The bartender gives Sam Lee the once over. Let's his eyes drift to Estella.

The bartender walks down the bar, whispers in the ear of one of the patron's. Sam Lee quickly accesses the threats:

--The POOL PLAYER has a GUN stuffed into his jeans, every time he bends over, he reveals it.

--A SHOTGUN is hidden behind a row of pool cues.

--One of the seated PATRONS keeps one hand in his lap.

EMILIO RIVERA (29) comes over. Sporting a light moustache and goatee, he wears a straw cowboy hat.

EMILIO

I told the bitch to come alone.

SAM LEE

Where's the boy?

EMILIO

Where's the money?

Sam Lee opens his jacket, revealing the bundled bills.

SAM LEE

The boy.

Emilio nods at the tired cocktail waitress. She goes into the back. He turns back to Sam Lee.

EMILIO

Everything nice and easy.

From out of the back, the waitress walks the boy into the room. He moves slowly. Sam Lee examines him from a distance.

SAM LEE

You gave him something.

EMILIO

He was cry'n a lot.

ESTELLA

Goddamn you, Emilio. We agreed--

Sam Lee turns to Estella, whose eyes go wide at the admission. Things happen fast now. Sam Lee reaches for his gun--

ESTELLA (CONT'D)
He's got a gun!

Within moments there are three guns pointed at Sam Lee. Emilio smiles, a few of his brown teeth missing.

EMILIO
I'll take that gun, smart side
first.

Sam Lee removes the .45, flips it around and hands it to Emilio.

EMILIO (CONT'D)
And the money.

He reaches into Sam Lee's jacket and removes the bundled bills. Estella looks on, greedy.

ESTELLA
You said half. Give it over...

Emilio fans the bills, frowns. Rips off the paper tie and drops the stack on the bar. The top bill is a real \$100. The rest is newspaper. Estella spits on Sam Lee.

ESTELLA (CONT'D)
You fucking asshole.

Emilio takes Sam Lee's .45, racks the slide, chambering a bullet. Sam Lee does nothing, waits. Emilio points the gun at Sam Lee. Long beat before he swings his arm over and points the gun at Estella.

ESTELLA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

EMILIO
You owe me five grand.

ESTELLA
I did my part. Emilio, he's got a--

Emilio FIRES the gun, hitting Estella square in the chest, knocking her down. Sam Lee keeps his eyes on the boy, who doesn't seem aware of what just happened. Emilio puts the gun in his pocket.

EMILIO

Never trust someone who fucks for money. She only got pregnant to blackmail your brother.

Emilio nods at the waitress who takes the boy into the back room.

SAM LEE

What about the boy?

EMILIO

He's coming with us. Turn around.

Sam Lee does as he's told. The bartender hands Emilio some duct tape. He begins wrapping Sam Lee's hands together.

EMILIO (CONT'D)

There's someone who would like to meet you.

EXT. REVOLUCION BAR

As Sam Lee, hands taped together behind his back, gets into the back seat of a beat up sedan. Another MAN from the bar takes Sam Lee's truck. Sam Lee watches as the BOY is pushed into a third vehicle. All move out. Within moments the parking lot is empty.

INT. SEDAN - DRIVING - NIGHT

Sam Lee's eyes take in everything.

--A passing road sign.

--A broken wire fence.

--A stripped RUSTED RED pick up truck.

The car reaches a side road, turns left. Sam Lee glances at the speedometer, then back out at the country side. Notes a rock outcropping as the car's headlights rake it.

EXT. MEXICO - NIGHT

Finally arriving at a desert HACIENDA, far from anything. A few GUARDS at the gate wave the caravan through.

INT. SPANISH HACIENDA - CELLAR - NIGHT

Sam Lee is seated roughly, the tape cut from his hands. He flexes them and rubs them together to get his circulation flowing again.

A MAN holds him while ANOTHER wraps him in fresh duct tape, around his upper body, tying his upper arms to his sides but leaving him free from the elbows down.

Another man tapes his legs to the chair. Moments later they step away. Sam Lee and the chair are bound together. Everyone leaves. Sam Lee sits in silence.

A long moment. A door opens. A single man enters the room. He sets a cloth wrap on a separate table, unrolls it revealing SILVER TOOLS - a large hammer, a curved knife, a screwdriver, etc.

The man finds the only other chair in the room, sets it in front of Sam Lee. Sam Lee looks at him. He's a fine looking man, around 45, clean shaven, his dark hair falls naturally away from his face. He wears a cotton shirt, sleeves rolled up.

MAN

My name is Francisco Moreles. Do you know me?

SAM LEE

No.

MAN/MORELES

I killed your brother.

Sam Lee says nothing.

MORELES

You were recently released from the West Texas State Penitentiary for killing five of my men. One was my nephew.

Sam Lee continues to stare at the man, his face betrays nothing.

MORELES (CONT'D)

There is no shame in it. And, there is no longer anything to hide. You can confess all your sins to me. You will not leave this room alive.

SAM LEE

Where's the boy?

MORELES

The boy is no longer your concern.
But, given that he's the son of a
Texas Ranger and a whore, I don't
think he has a bright future.

(beat)

I understand you are something of a
gunslinger? A crack shot. Did you
get any information out of Diego
before you killed him?

SAM LEE

I wasn't there for information.

Moreles gets up abruptly and pulls the table with his tools
over to Sam Lee. He sits back down again, removing a DECK OF
CARDS from his shirt pocket. He shuffles and reshuffle while
talking...

MORELES

I was trained as a doctor. Studied
in Mexico City. Worked nights at a
clinic sewing up farm boys who were
... unsuccessful trying to cross
the border. Do you know what a
doctor in Mexico earns?

Sam Lee says nothing, his eyes locked on Moreles.

MORELES (CONT'D)

About twenty eight thousand,
American. One day I get this
campesino who's complaining of
stomach pains. He won't tell me
what he ate and the clinic is poor
so I can't even order him the
proper x-rays. Naturally, he died
and when I opened him up for the
autopsy I found a burst condom
filled with heroin. There were
three others which had not burst.
I removed them, closed him up and
made a decision to change careers.

SAM LEE

Touching story.

Moreles smiles, stops shuffling, fans the cards out so Sam
Lee can see them. Moreles pulls out a SINGLE CARD. Gathers
the cards, leaving it out. Shuffles again, quickly.

MORELES

I am a man who went from three condoms filled with heroin to running the largest drug cartel in Northern Mexico. You can't sell a frat boy a single ecstasy pill in Tijuana without my permission. I did not get this much power by being compassionate. In my business, you are only as strong as the fear you instill. And, men will only show loyalty if they feel protected.

(beat)

Did you ever wonder how you survived in prison for seven years without being touched?

SAM LEE

No, I didn't.

MORELES

I protected you. I wanted the pleasure of killing you myself. I also want my men to know I never forget.

Moreles nods at a door behind Sam Lee. It opens and TWO BULKY MEN enter. One of them is carrying an ORANGE. They stand respectfully back.

Moreles holds up the ACE OF SPADES.

MORELES (CONT'D)

Next time you see this card, you die.

He slides the card into the deck, shuffles a few times, sets the deck down in front of Sam Lee.

MORELES (CONT'D)

Cut?

Sam Lee maintains his gaze on Moreles, never looking at the cards. Moreles shrugs, flips over a card: TWO OF CLUBS.

He pulls the chair back.

MORELES (CONT'D)

Right or left?

Sam Lee ignores. Moreles takes the orange from the man, turns and tosses it at Sam Lee quickly. Sam catches it with his right.

He nods at the men, who grab Sam Lee's right forearm, forcing his hand down on the table. Sam Lee struggles against them. Moreles picks up the hammer and approaches Sam Lee.

MORELES (CONT'D)

And just so we're clear, the boy is going to be my number one mule. He's an American, with papers. He's going to swallow so much heroin he's going to crave the taste of the rubber. At least until one of them bursts.

(beat)

Two of clubs...

He SLAMS the HAMMER down on Sam Lee's right hand. Sam Lee SCREAMS in pain. Moreles brings it down again, HARD. Sam Lee screams again. A small amount of blood has sprayed out on the table. Sam Lee's knuckles are flattened and his index finger is bent in an awkward direction.

Moreles wipes the hammer off with a cloth. Sets it back with the tools.

MORELES (CONT'D)

Your brother went almost 40 cards before drawing the unlucky one.

Sam Lee breathes in heaves. The pain almost unbearable. Moreles walks over to the table, flips over another card. The ONE EYED JACK.

Moreles nods at the men, who hold Sam Lee's head in a locked position. Moreles grabs the short curved knife, the silver of the blade catches the sole overhead light.

With a quick flick of his wrist, Moreles runs the blade over Sam Lee's LEFT EYE, cutting his cheek and forehead as he SLICES.

Sam Lee tries to CONTAIN his PAIN with a SCREAM through GRITTED TEETH. He leans forward over the table, the blood pooling up.

Moreles picks up the Orange before it gets any blood on it, tosses it back to the man. Nods them back. They take up positions in front of Sam Lee.

He wipes the blade, sets it back with the other tools. Opens a small case, a row of filled syringes and two small bottles. He removes a syringe. Grabs Sam Lee's arm and plunges the syringe in, pushing the fluid into Sam Lee's vein.

MORELES (CONT'D)

This is an antibiotic. I'm going to have my man here wrap your eye so it doesn't get infected. He's going to clean it first with alcohol. There will be no painkillers.

Sam Lee sits up, blood completely closing his left eye. He uses his good eye to look around the room. He SEES the MAN using a knife to slice the ORANGE open. It's a BUTTERFLY KNIFE, which the man closes and slides into his back pocket. Sam Lee looks at Moreles.

SAM LEE

I'm going to kill you.

MORELES

I would be more convinced if I didn't just wipe your blood off my hands.

Off that, Moreles leaves. One of the men approaches, unscrewing a bottle of medical alcohol. He POURS it over Sam Lee's eye. The screams can be heard all the way to the desert.

EXT. CANYON - TEXAS - DAY - FLASHBACK

SAM LEE (14) and his brother, DANNY (10), shoot at tin cans with a 22 rifle. Sam Lee SHOTS can after can. Even at 14 he is quick, efficient and has excellent aim.

YOUNG DANNY

Lemme. My turn, Sam Lee.

Young Sam Lee knocks the last can over. Looks on, impressed with his work. Hands the gun his brother.

YOUNG SAM LEE

Ten out of ten.

Danny begins reloading the rifle.

YOUNG DANNY

Ten out of ten. All right, already. Geez.

Sam Lee spots a SQUIRREL. Motions to Danny.

YOUNG SAM LEE

Let's see what ya' got. Hit that squirrel.

Danny looks at the squirrel, his face recoils.

YOUNG DANNY
I'm not shooting that.

YOUNG SAM LEE
Quick, before he takes off.

Danny won't even raise the rifle to sight it.

YOUNG DANNY
I'm not shooting him, Sam Lee. He
probably has kids. Forget it.

Sam Lee rolls his eyes.

YOUNG SAM LEE
Shoot already, the sun's gonna go
down.

Danny won't shoot, his frustration leads to tears.

YOUNG DANNY
I'm not shooting Sam Lee. I'm not.
Wake up already. Wake up!

Young Sam Lee looks at his brother, confused. Danny's left eye is bleeding--

INT. CELLAR

Sam Lee JERKS awake. His left eye, covered with gauze, shows blood has seeped through.

His upper body still duct taped to the chair, his right hand is a mangled mess. He tries to move a finger, wincing in pain. His head swivels around the room, most of it's in darkness and what he can see doesn't look very helpful.

He hears the HEAVY CLICK of a bolt being thrown and he's no longer alone. The ORANGE EATING MAN enters, goes to a side table and readies a syringe. Sam Lee gazes at him dumbly, his head heavy.

The man approaches, syringe in one hand. He bends slightly to find a vein and Sam Lee REACTS with SURPRISING SPEED, grabbing the man's arm with his free left hand and pulling it back - pulling him over as Sam Lee SMASHES his head into the man's.

The Man trips and falls, dazed. Sam Lee leans forward, pushing the table over onto the man. Giving himself some force, Sam Lee comes down hard on the table, a SICKENING CRACK as the table edge breaks the Man's neck.

The whole action takes less then three seconds. Sam Lee gets the BUTTERFLY KNIFE out of the dead man's back pocket, cuts his way free, finds a GUN on the man, takes that and all the SYRINGES with the antibiotics...

INT. HACIENDA - HALLWAY

Sam Lee opens the door gently, quietly stepping out of the interrogation room. The basement area is empty. He moves down the hall carefully, gun out and in his left hand, the knife wrapped into his grip.

STAIRS

Sam Lee finds an open door which leads to a set of outdoor stairs leading up.

EXT. HACIENDA

Sam Lee slowly makes his way up, peeking over the edge of the stairwell. The sun is just rising, giving Sam Lee enough light to see the back yard is empty. He runs to the high wall and follows it back into the grove.

With much pain, he goes over an 8 foot chain link fence and runs off into the morning desert...

EXT. MODEST HOUSE - SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Deborah gets out of her car and exits the garage, using the remote to close it. As she gets to her front door, she hears a noise in the bushes...

In a flash she has mace out, pointing in the general direction of the noise.

DEBORAH

I've got mace.

SAM LEE

I've only got one good eye, so aim careful...

Sam Lee stumbles out of the bushes. Sunburnt, dirty and generally fucked up, he looks like a hundred miles of bad road. Deborah rushes to him.

DEBORAH

Sam Lee, what happened...

SAM LEE

Help me.

INT. DEBORAH'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM

As Deborah cuts Sam Lee's shirt off. She takes in his mashed right hand.

DEBORAH
Jesus, did a tank run that over?

SAM LEE
Do the best you can.

DEBORAH
What happened?

Sam Lee says nothing, tries to work the hand, winces in pain. Deborah looks at the dirty loose gauze around Sam Lee's head, covering his left eye. She notices the track marks on his arm.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
We get junkies in the ER with less track marks.

She begins to remove the gauze from his head.

SAM LEE
Antibiotics.

DEBORAH
Someone kicked your ass and gave you antibiotics?

SAM LEE
He was thoughtful.

Deborah gets the gauze off, gasps.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
That bad, huh?

DEBORAH
Sam Lee, we need to get you to a hospital.

SAM LEE
Damage is done. Can you clean it?

DEBORAH
Looks like it was cleaned with steel wool. Let me see.

She gets in close. The moment would almost be sexual if Sam Lee didn't look like death warmed over.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
I'm calling 9-1-1.

SAM LEE
Hospitals ask questions I can't
answer. And, they write things
down. You got any pain pills?

Deborah takes a long look at Sam Lee before she exits.

Sam Lee pulls the 9mm out, sets it on the table. Deborah
returns, sees the gun, stops.

DEBORAH
I have a rule about guns, Sam Lee.

SAM LEE
I do too.

DEBORAH
You can't escape who you are, huh?

He takes the pills, eats them, washing them down. The effect
is almost immediate. He nods to his mashed hand.

SAM LEE
Can you work on this if I pass out?

DEBORAH
I guess.

SAM LEE
Good. Cause I'm about ten seconds
from being gone. Call Elco. Tell
him I'm here. Tell him I need him.
Tell him...

Sam Lee passes out.

EXT. DEBORAH'S HOUSE - MORNING

Phil's truck pulls to a stop. Deborah is sitting on her
front steps, smoking. Phil gets out...

PHIL
Thought you quit that?

DEBORAH
Thought I quit a lot of things.

Phil looks around the neighborhood, partly out of habit to
make sure no one is watching.

PHIL
How bad is he?

DEBORAH
His right hand is broken in more places than I can remember from medical school. I set it as best I could. Even if we were at the hospital, it would have been damn near impossible.

She flicks her cigarette away.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
His left cornea has been severed. Whoever did that must have been lucky or good. A little more pressure and he would have lost the eye, not that it's going to do him much good from now on.
(beat)
I found some antibiotics on him, that's probably the only thing that saved his life. He wouldn't tell me what happened.

PHIL
Yeah, well...

DEBORAH
I'm guessing it has something to do with Daniel.

Phil works on his poker face, Deborah studies him, finally gets up and goes inside, Phil eventually follows.

INT. SAM LEE'S ROOM - DEBORAH'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Deborah's done a decent job cleaning up Sam Lee. The bandage on his eye is fresh and clean. His right hand is wrapped in a sloppy cast. Phil pulls a chair up and sits down. Sam Lee opens his good eye.

PHIL
Sure hope you left 'em in worse condition.

SAM LEE
'Fraid not.

PHIL
Where's the woman and the boy?

SAM LEE
Woman's dead. I never got the boy.
It was an ambush. They wanted me.

Phil examines the room, not surprised.

PHIL
You should have seen ambush coming
from Waco. You're smarter than
that, Sam Lee.

Sam Lee adjusts himself, a mix of grogginess and pain.

SAM LEE
Knew it was an trap. Didn't have a
choice.

PHIL
(misunderstanding)
You really think you were gonna get
that kid back?

SAM LEE
Didn't do it for the boy. I needed
to know where he lived.

It finally dawns on Phil.

PHIL
You let him ambush you? Who?

SAM LEE
Some guy named Moreles. He killed
Danny.

Phil sits back like he's been slapped.

PHIL
Moreles? He runs Tarto cartel.
Half the state is hunting him.
Jesus man, he could have killed
you.

SAM LEE
That's why I wanted Deb to call
you.

Off Phil, not quite sure what Sam Lee is asking.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Phil finds Deborah in the kitchen.

DEBORAH
I made coffee.

PHIL
I gotta run.

DEBORAH
Tell you anything useful?

PHIL
He wants me to have a funeral,
declare him dead.

DEBORAH
You think whoever did this will
come for him?

PHIL
Doesn't matter what I think, but
yeah.

DEBORAH
That infection gets any worse, he's
gonna be dead for real.

Phil takes a moment, the whole situation overwhelming him.

PHIL
Shit, Deb, he's been dead for seven
years...

With that, he leaves.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

A much smaller affair than Danny's funeral. Eight people, including Phil and Deborah and TWO UNIFORMED RANGERS stand around a casket as a PRIEST speaks.

Sam Lee's PLAIN CASKET is lowered into the ground.

INT. DEBORAH'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Deborah comes home alone, enters her kitchen to find Sam Lee sitting at her table, sipping coffee, staring out the back window at the brown grass.

DEBORAH
You ought to be in bed.

He ignores her, continues staring. She shakes her head, turns to leave.

SAM LEE
I always hated seeing you in that dress.

She stops.

DEBORAH
I don't blame you-

SAM LEE
Danny always wanted children. A son, mainly. He was so eager to pass along whatever wisdom he thought he had.

DEBORAH
Sam Lee, don't...

SAM LEE
I didn't want him following me. Even as a kid it felt like a target on my back. Hard enough in this world looking out for yourself. Can't tell you how many scrapes I got into just to lay some salt down in front of Danny. I just couldn't stand the idea of someone hurting him. Not even a little.

Deborah faces Sam Lee. He's still looking out the window.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
I didn't want him joining up. Made sure he didn't want to stay near me. So, he ended up somewhere else. Somewhere I couldn't protect him.

(beat)
I was happy. Thought I was free of it. He wanted to be a super cop. That's why we stopped speaking. I was mad at him. I resented him for making me...look after him. Except I didn't. And he got himself killed.

Deborah starts crying.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
Danny had a kid. A son. I'm sorry to be tell'n you this way. The man who killed him has the boy. I can't make it right, Deb. I can't protect my brother.

(MORE)

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
But, I can punch this fucker's
ticket. And, I can get his boy. I
can protect Danny's son. I need
your help.

INT. RANGE ROVER - MEXICO - DAY

Moreles sits in the back seat of his JET BLACK SUV. The windows, tinted dark, hide him from the streets.

His driver and his bodyguard, BENITO, sit in front. Moreles sets down a NEWSPAPER.

Reveal: The front page of the paper contains the story of Sam Lee's death and funeral under the headline, "RETIRED TEXAS RANGER FOUND DEAD IN MEXICO." Smaller type beneath reads, "Drug deal gone bad, suspected in death." A PHOTO clearly showing Phil and Deb at the funeral.

BENITO
(Spanish)
What about the boy?

MORELES
(Spanish)
I'll deal with it later. Let's go.

The driver pulls into traffic...

EXT. WEST TEXAS - DAY

Deborah leans on the hood of her dirty Audi, drinking a bottle of Coke. It's hot, Texas hot.

Sam Lee stands away from her a bit, the 9mm in his good hand. FOUR BOTTLES are set up roughly fifty yards away on a fallen tree. Behind it, the ground rises to form a natural bullet catch. A fresh, smaller cast on his right hand. A PATCH over his left eye, the scar above and below clearly visible.

Sam Lee aims, slow, squeezes - BANG - Deborah winces at the noise. Sam Lee squeezes off three more. He missed all four.

DEBORAH
We almost done? I gotta pee.

SAM LEE
I told you not to drink all them
sodas.

DEBORAH
I didn't want to waste them.
(beat)
(MORE)

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Not to be insensitive, but aren't
you trying to hit those.

SAM LEE
I'm having a hard time with the
distance.

DEBORAH
Move closer.

SAM LEE
That ain't the point. I can't
judge the distance. Only got one
good eye. 9mm is a small caliber
bullet with a lot of force, less
trajectory at smaller distances - I
just can't tell.

DEBORAH
You wanna speak English?

SAM LEE
Gravity works on bullets the same
as anything else. Doesn't matter
how fast they're moving...the
bullet drops over distance same as
if you dropped it out of your hand.
The farther the target the more
drop.

DEBORAH
I thought you flunked high school
math.

Sam Lee smiles, despite himself.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Maybe you could get the bad guys to
yell out how far they are from ya.

SAM LEE
Maybe.

DEBORAH
I'm gonna pee behind the car, don't
look.

She hops off the hood. Sam Lee raises the 9mm - BANG - he
HITS the GROUND TWO FEET IN FRONT OF THE BOTTLES. He makes a
quick adjustment - BANG BANG BANG BANG! All FOUR bottles
EXPLODE.

Deborah pops her head up from behind the car.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Hey, you fixed it.

SAM LEE
Guessed the distance and hit the
ground. Adjusted off my guess.

Deborah stands up, pulling up her jeans.

DEBORAH
What's that mean?

SAM LEE
Means at any real distance the
first shot might as well be a
tracer. Means I'll alert them to
my position while I am trying to
figure out how far they are.

Deborah comes around the car.

DEBORAH
Sam Lee, you're the best shot in
Texas. So what if they know where
you are?

SAM LEE
I ain't bullet proof. I'm fast but
if they're spread out and I got to
keep firing for distance, one of
them might get lucky.

DEBORAH
I guess you're just gonna have to
get closer.

Off Sam Lee, considering that...

INT. DEBORAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Deb redresses Sam Lee's hand. She cuts the cast off with
surgical scissors. His right hand is badly deformed, still
swollen.

DEBORAH
You ain't gonna be giving any one
the finger anytime soon.

Sam Lee tries to close it, winces in pain.

SAM LEE
Looks like my hand swallowed a
baseball.

DEBORAH

It's clotting. The primary damage is the lower two fingers - that's the power part of the hand. The grip.

SAM LEE

What's the upper part?

DEBORAH

Precision. But, one's no good without the other. Three months of professional rehabilitation and you might be able to use a pair of scissors.

SAM LEE

Can you cut the clot out?

DEBORAH

Not in this environment. I don't have the tools--

Sam Lee taps the scissors.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

No way. Not even on a dare.

SAM LEE

Deb, I got to be able to use this hand. Even a little. At the very least I have to be able to get it into a pocket.

DEBORAH

I can't even numb the area.

Sam Lee pulls off his LEATHER BELT. He folds it a few times, puts it in his mouth.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

You must be crazy.

Sam Lee indicates she can get started. Deb picks up the scalpel.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

This is gonna hurt you a lot more than it's gonna hurt me.

As she leans in to slice, Sam Lee bites down hard...

PRE-LAP: LAUGHTER

EXT. DEBORAH'S HOUSE - BACK PATIO

Nighttime dinner, lit by candles and lubricated by two empty bottles of wine, Deborah and Phil LAUGH.

PHIL

I think the guy actually shit himself.

Deborah sips her wine.

DEBORAH

Did Danny even try to run after him?

PHIL

Oh shit, you remember Danny. He was running like he was on TV or something.

Phil laughs harder, choking a bit on his cigar.

DEBORAH

What was Sam Lee doing?

PHIL

Hell if I know, probably polishing his badge. Sam Lee never ran after anyone in his damn life. I think he scared criminals stiff.

(beat)

So, this guy is running, full bore. He's got a box of silverware under one arm and the small TV under the other. Except, the box has a hole in it and he's dropping fine silver all over West 3rd St...

DEBORAH

Made him easy to find. What were you doing?

PHIL

I'm sitting in the truck. I ain't running after some high school kid. Running's a young man's game. Besides, I figured Sam Lee was gonna shoot him anyway.

Suddenly, Sam Lee comments from the back door, surprising Deb and Phil.

SAM LEE

Not true. I never shot anyone
running away.

Phil chuckles.

PHIL

No, you'd call them a name and get
them to turn around.

DEBORAH

Sam Lee, come on, have a beer.

She kicks a chair out for him. Sam Lee doesn't move. It's
an awkward moment, but Phil is too drunk to notice.

PHIL

Anyway, this little turd, he's down
to about one place setting of
silverware and the TV ain't worth
shit even when it was brand new.
Danny is four blocks away, puking
his guts out from all that running.
I figured, screw it, I'll drive
around and scoop him up on the far
side. No where to go over there
but the drain runoff and it only
leads to one spot.

(beat)

Then, about two football fields
away, Sam Lee appears out of
nowhere, calling "stop or I'll
shoot."

DEBORAH

What's the kid do?

PHIL

The kid turns and flips him off.

DEBORAH

Uh oh.

PHIL

And, just like that, Sam Lee pulls
his .45 and shoots. The TV
explodes like it was loaded with
fireworks. The kid stares at Sam
Lee for a second and then faints.

Deborah and Phil burst out laughing.

PHIL (CONT'D)

There weren't three guys in all of Texas who would have even *thought* about taking that shot, much less actually *make* it.

SAM LEE

I was aiming at his leg.

PHIL

Bullshit. You ain't never missed anything you were aiming at, not as long as I have known you.

Phil takes a look at Sam Lee's eye and hand.

PHIL (CONT'D)

At least you used to.

An awkward silence. Deborah stands.

DEBORAH

You boys want some dessert?

She moves past Sam Lee who waits until she's out of ear shot and addresses Phil.

SAM LEE

You gonna bring me one of them junkers down at your garage?

PHIL

Relax, he ain't going anywhere.

SAM LEE

It's important.

PHIL

More important than friends?

Sam Lee says nothing.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You know Sam Lee, she served her time. So did you.

SAM LEE

It ain't done yet.

INT. DEBORAH'S HOUSE - DEBORAH'S BEDROOM

Deborah wakes to the sound of a heavy THUD. She gets up to investigate.

INT. DEBORAH'S HOUSE - SAM LEE'S BEDROOM

DEBORAH (O.S.)

Sam Lee?

She opens the door slowly, sees Sam Lee standing. He's shirtless and gently rubbing his wounded hand. Deborah enters, pulling her robe shut.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I thought I heard something.

SAM LEE

Oh, it was just me. Sorry about that. I dropped something.

She picks up a HEAVY BOOK off the floor.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)

I was..testing my grip.

She inspects the bandage on his hand - some fresh blood has found it's way through.

DEBORAH

You're bleeding. Let me re-dress that.

She quickly exits, Sam Lee wipes his eyes, shaking his head. Deborah comes back with some fresh gauze and some rubbing alcohol. She sits and Sam Lee sits next to her.

SAM LEE

I can do it.

DEBORAH

No you can not. Does it hurt?

She cuts off the old gauze and redresses the hand.

Sam Lee says nothing, examines his exposed hand. Still VERY BRUISED and with two JAGGED CUTS, stitched up...

SAM LEE

Swelling's gone down.

She holds it up.

DEBORAH

Not my best work.

SAM LEE

It's great.

She smiles to herself, wipes the drying blood off his hand. Sam Lee winces when she uses the rubbing alcohol.

DEBORAH

Sorry.

She rewraps his hand, gently. He studies her. She continues staring at his hand, even though she's finished wrapping it.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Let me see your eye.

She holds Sam Lee's face, the knife scar clearly seen on his cheek and forehead, the eye itself slightly clouded.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Can you see much?

SAM LEE

It's blurry, I got to shut it to focus.

DEBORAH

(beat)

You don't have to do it, you know.
He thinks you're dead.

SAM LEE

The boy.

She releases his face. She looks at Sam Lee. He holds her gaze.

DEBORAH

I don't want to lose you again.

SAM LEE

You won't.

For a moment, there is nothing to do. Sam Lee is never gonna make that move first. Neither is Deborah.

DEBORAH

You mind if I lay with you a bit?

They lean back together, Deborah curls into him, careful not to apply any pressure to Sam Lee's hand. They lay in silence, both wide awake.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I knew Danny was mess'n around.

Sam Lee says nothing, letting her get through it.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

When I found out I couldn't have kids I pulled back from him. He would have done anything for me. Even said we could adopt.

Tears well up in Deborah's eyes...

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

But, I said no. I always figure he'd look at that kid and know it wasn't his. I felt like he'd resent me. Fall out of love with me. So I pushed him away. Stopped sleeping with him. Stopped talking to him. I'm not saying he was right to take up with that woman, but I opened the door.

SAM LEE

Danny made his choices, Deb.

DEBORAH

I know. But, some days I feel like I'm still bleeding from that wound.

For a moment they lay in silence.

SAM LEE

I know what you mean.

DEBORAH

I'm glad you came back, Sam Lee.

With that, she finally closes her eyes. Sam Lee lays awake in the dark. He watches the curtain gently swing in the breeze, feeling the warm Texas breeze blow through. His mind is somewhere else...

INT. OFFICE PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

Sam Lee, YOUNGER and dressed in his TEXAS RANGER white shirt and .45 in his hand, crosses through the SHOT UP GLASS entrance of ELLOY MACHINE PARTS.

Sam Lee steps on broken glass, stops, hoping no one heard the crunching of the glass. He looks around, assesses the area. Sees no one. Off in the distance, he HEARS a LOW MURMER of VOICES. He crouches, setting his HAT on the floor, stealthily moving down the --

HALLWAY

Sam Lee peers around the corner, sees DANNY, gun aimed at someone OFF SCREEN. However, his finger's not firmly on the trigger. He actually seems calm, trying to control the already out of control situation.

Sam Lee notices several PEOPLE, mostly HISPANIC, sit on their hands - panic in their eyes.

DANNY

Ramon, clock's ticking...

Although we can't see him, we can hear the stress in Ramon's voice.

RAMON (O.C.)

I need to think.

DANNY

It's gonna be easier to think with these people out of here.

RAMON (O.C.)

It's this bitch's fault! I should kill her now.

Sam Lee moves very slowly. Edges into the nearest cube, uses the reflection in the glass to see what's happening.

CENTER OFFICE

Ramon (30) has an SUBMACHINE GUN (SMG). He's holding a LITTLE GIRL (5) in his free arm. A YOUNG WOMAN sits close by, her pleading eyes pinned on the girl.

DANNY

I know you and your wife got some things to work out, but your child...she don't deserve this.

RAMON

I'd rather see her with her grandmothers than this whore.

The finality in his voice is frightening. Sam looks at the lay-out of this place. Not much to help him get this over --

DANNY

Ramon, you don't want this to be the last thing your daughter remembers.

That throws Ramon. He gets back on script --

RAMON

No more talk! I want a plane. And money. Or I start with you then I do everybody else....

DANNY

You seem like a smart guy. You know how this works. You want something, we want something--

Ramon, losing it quickly --

RAMON

I have the gun.

Ramon swings the SMG toward his wife. Danny steps forward.

DANNY

I hear that. But whatever else you say won't mean a damn thing while you have all of these people, your wife, and your kid.

CUBE

Sam Lee quietly checks his .45 to make sure he's got a bullet chambered.

CENTER OFFICE

Danny raises his hands.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Ramon, tell you what? I'm gonna toss my gun. How's that? You hand your little girl there to her momma and you take me.

RAMON

That's not happening.

Danny makes a half-an-inch of a move. Ramon tenses. Danny takes one hand off the gun, then tosses it aside - hands back up. He stands, completely vulnerable.

DANNY

No one needs to die here, Ramon.

CUBE

Sam Lee wants to scream out when Danny does that. He doesn't have a shot and he can't really move without alerting Ramon to his presence. He quietly moves back to the hallway.

CENTER OFFICE

Danny, backing up, indicates the SIX people sitting on their hands.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Now, Ramon, you got yourself a Texas Ranger - that's gotta be worth a hundred people and'll get you a plane and money faster than your wife and daughter. Let's cut these good folks free and you and me are gonna fly outta here.

Danny glances down the hallway, sees Sam Lee. And sees how pissed he is. Sam Lee shakes him off - no shot. Danny turns back to Ramon, thinks for a second.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Ramon, just let your daughter walk to me and we'll walk out of here.

(off Ramon's look)

I don't have my gun. And the one you've got gets tricky. A wrong move, you might hurt her.

Ramon's processes what Danny is saying. We see the SMALL TRANSMITTER in Danny's ear for the first time.

EXT. OFFICE PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

On a ROOFTOP across the street sits a SNIPER. Next time him is another SWAT MEMBER and CAPTAIN PHIL ELCO.

SNIPER

The second Danny and the girl gets clear, I'll have a shot.

PHIL

You sure of that?

SNIPER POV: The view is obstructed.

INT. OFFICE PARK - HALLWAY - FLASHBACK

Ramon starts to let his daughter go to Danny. He puts her down, but when he bends over he can see the top of the building across the street. And the SNIPER.

RAMON

The police are out there waiting!

DANNY

And that's all they're gonna do.

Ramon lifts his gun, aims it at Danny's face --

DANNY (CONT'D)
Ramon, put that gun...

BLAM! Danny drops to the floor. SCREAMS soon replace the sound of the gun shot.

Only Ramon's confused because he hasn't pulled the trigger.

RAMON
What the hell?

EXT. OFFICE PARK - FLASHBACK

Phil watches through binoculars.

PHIL
That was a gun shot. Do you have
Danny?

The Sniper shakes his head, searching...

INT. OFFICE PARK - FLASHBACK

Ramon can only see Danny's feet, since he's been blown away, landing out of view from the doorway.

Ramon drops his daughter and gets out of the sniper's view and crawls along the ground toward Danny --

RAMON
I never fired. I never fired.

He sticks his head out of the door, sees Danny, eyes open and waiting.

RAMON (CONT'D)
What the fuck?

SAM LEE (O.S.)
Set the gun down.

Ramon slowly turns to see Sam Lee, most of his body hidden behind a cube wall, arm outstretched - .45 pointing--

Ramon considers, quickly swings his SMG around to shoot--

DANNY
No!

As Sam Lee FIRES--

EXT. OFFICE PARK - LATER - FLASHBACK

Sam Lee watches as the Little Girl and her Mother are placed in the back of an ambulance. The crowd is dispersing and NEWS CREWS are packing up.

Danny limps over from an ambulance.

DANNY

You didn't have to shoot me in the
ass.

SAM LEE

You didn't leave me much of a
choice, did you? A Ranger never
gives up his weapon, Danny. Shit,
that's rule number one.

DANNY

I needed him to trust me. He was
gonna kill that little girl.

SAM LEE

No excuses.

Sam Lee looks away. Danny shakes his head.

DANNY

Must be nice to see the world so
black and white.

Sam Lee turns, suddenly very angry.

SAM LEE

It ain't gonna be black and white
when I'm standing in front Deb with
my hat in my hand trying to explain
why her husband is dead.

(beat)

I ain't always going to have the
shot, Danny.

Danny sees the emotion in Sam Lee.

DANNY

I couldn't let him hurt that kid.

INT. DEBORAH'S HOUSE - SAM LEE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam Lee snaps awake, Deborah still asleep next to him. He quietly gets up.

INT. ELCO'S 76 GARAGE - NIGHT

Sam Lee works his LEATHER HOLSTERS, one good hand doing most of the work. Phil Elco enters the garage through the door to the house.

PHIL
Need a hand?

SAM LEE
Very funny.

Phil comes over, watches as Sam Lee cuts the holsters and re-connects them with a staple gun.

PHIL
That ought to be a crime.

SAM LEE
No good to me the old way.

Phil reaches in to hold two pieces together, Sam Lee drives a staple through them.

PHIL
Why you got me up before the sun?

SAM LEE
I need one more favor. Need you to bring some fresh supplies to my ranch later. Leave them by the steel door next to the living room.

PHIL
You got a steel door in your living room?

SAM LEE
Been working on it since I been back, mostly at night. Sort of a safe room. You'll find a spare house key three rocks over from the front steps. It'll be under some dirt.

PHIL
Okay.

SAM LEE
This is the important part. Turn the key twice counter clockwise, quarter turns each, before turning it clockwise to throw the bolt.

PHIL
Why's that?

SAM LEE
Because if you don't the ten gauge
I got rigged will give you a hair
cut.

PHIL
Jesus, Sam Lee.

SAM LEE
I got a "no trespassing" sign.

Sam Lee finishes the holster, swings it around his hip and over his shoulder, attaches it with his left hand.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
That outta do it.

Phil inspects the new holster - LEFT GUN in the same place, the RIGHT GUN holster now sits over the chest, grip side pointed to the left.

PHIL
Well, it ain't pretty.

SAM LEE
Ain't supposed to be. Need to get
to both guns in a hurry. Only got
twelve chances, want to make sure I
can use them all.

PHIL
This one of those things, going
down there, that you can't be
talked out of?

Sam Lee gives Phil a quick look and fishes inside his jacket and removes a piece of PAPER. Hands it to Phil.

SAM LEE
There's a floor safe under the
kitchen table at my place. There'll
be money. When I come back, I'm
coming back hard - there ain't
gonna be time for chit chat. And,
I suspect they'll be some dirt
kick'n up behind me. Best you get
Deb and get out of dodge for a bit.
There'll be plenty of cash to cover
that. Take her to the Blue Star
out on Ranchford Rd. I'll call you
when it's done.

PHIL
What makes you think she'll go?

SAM LEE
You're just gonna need to convince her.

Phil stuffs the note in his pocket, looks around the garage, then finally back at Sam Lee.

PHIL
I don't mean to be blunt and it's just us talking here, but why don't you just shoot the fucker, grab the kid and end it?

SAM LEE
I would, but he's got a shit load of men around him and when he moves, they move. I might get him, but they'll get me - especially since I only got one good hand and one good eye. No tell'n what they'd do to that kid if I don't take him out of there.

PHIL
What makes you think that snatching that kid ain't gonna make Moreles wanna come up here and get him back?

SAM LEE
I'm counting on it.

INT. DEBORAH'S HOUSE - SAM LEE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Deborah wakes up, rolls over looking for Sam Lee.

DEBORAH
Sam Lee?

A SMALL ENVELOPE sits on the pillow next to Deborah. She opens it.

SAM LEE (V.O.)
Deb. Sorry to do it this way, but I've never been good at this part.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH - EARLY MORNING

--Sam Lee walks across his ranch, his small house sits in distance, dark. He approaches a small tree, faces EAST and walks off twenty paces.

SAM LEE (V.O.)

On the back of this letter is an account number. If I don't come around in a few days, go to Texas First National and empty it. All the paperwork is in order. You're the only family I have.

--Gets down on his hands and knees and uses his good hand to move a medium sized rock. Brushes away the dry dirt until he uncovers a plain, hand made pine box.

SAM LEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When Phil shows up, go with him. I know you're stubborn. Knew it the first day I met you. But, you're just gonna have to trust me.

--He opens the box. Dry lightening fires off in the distance. Inside, moist OIL CLOTH. Sam Lee removes it, sets it on the ground and slowly unrolls it.

REVEAL: TWO COLT PEACEMAKER LONG BARRELS - the two guns Sam Lee used to kill Diego Dela and his crew.

SAM LEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You told me that I would never be able to escape who I am. You're right. I won't.

The lightening crackles again. Sam Lee stuffs the guns into his homemade holsters.

SAM LEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm a gunslinger. And, it's time I reminded a few people.

EXT. MEXICO - DAY - DRIVING

Driving a dirty VERY OLD PICK UP, Sam Lee wears his hat pulled down low. He passes the SAME ROAD SIGN as when he was a hostage.

He passes the same WIRE FENCE.

Finally, he sees the broken down RUSTED RED TRUCK. He approaches the SIDE ROAD which will eventually lead to Moreles' Hacienda - he keeps driving straight.

EXT. MEXICO - LATER

Now on foot, Sam Lee, back pack slung over his shoulder, sunglasses on his face. Gets to a ridge, drops his pack and sits.

RIDGE

Using a SNIPER SCOPE - Sam Lee scouts Moreles Hacienda from roughly 1000 yards away. He can see a FEW MEN, making no effort to hide their weapons. He does not see Moreles.

Sam Lee makes camp for the night. No fire.

NEXT DAY

Using TAN CANVAS, Sam Lee has fashioned himself some shade as well as some camouflage. The sniper scope is now mounted and locked on the Hacienda. Every few moments Sam Lee checks it. No change. No one comes or goes.

He peels an ORANGE.

EVENING

Blowing into his hands, before he checks the sight again. Now, finally, some movement. Sam Lee spots a man starting a BLACK RANGE ROVER. TWO MEN in dark suits wait by the rear door.

Moreles appears, he's talking to someone. He gets in the Range Rover, the men get in the front. Another car joins the procession and they exit. Sam Lee scouts the upper level of the Hacienda, spots a room with a light on.

It's time.

EXT. HACIENDA - DRIVEWAY GATE - NIGHT

Deathly quiet, TWO MEN smoke, M16s pointed down. Not a care in the world.

SOUND OF A FAST MOVING VEHICLE gets their attention. They see a SET OF HEADLIGHTS coming down the road fast.

They CALL OUT, flick away their butts, switch the safety off on their weapons.

A THIRD MAN appears out of the house. The truck speeds closer.

GUARD
(Spanish)
Stop. Stop or die.

The truck continues, now heading directly for them. Both men aim and begin firing. The WINDSHIELD splinters, the vehicle continues but doesn't turn.

They SHOOT OUT THE front wheels. The RIGHT wheel breaks off, the truck FLIPS over and rolls to a dead stop twenty feet in front of the gate, a small fire burning on it's under carriage.

Silence.

A FOURTH MAN comes rushing out of the house. All FOUR of them, guns out and pointing make their way towards the truck.

One of the men gets down to peer inside. NO DRIVER, the wheel was tied off with some rope. A STICK has been wedged in to keep the accelerator pressed.

He stands up, turns to the other men.

MAN
(Spanish)
Empty.

It happens fast now. The first shot STRIKES the man in the SHIN, dropping him. Three more QUICK SHOTS -- all head shots. Out of the night comes Sam Lee, Colt Peacemaker in his left hand.

The Man shot in the shin gropes around for his gun.

MAN (CONT'D)
(Spanish)
Who the fuck are you?

Sam Lee, all business, points his revolver and SHOOTS the man in the face. Opens the CYLINDER and RELOADS with his BAD HAND. His eyes empty. He heads to the house.

INT. HACIENDA - BEDROOM

A Man watches as Sam Lee heads towards the house. The flipped over truck burning, the four men dead. The man looks at his hand gun, almost puny compared to Sam Lee's Peacemaker. A second man enters the room.

SECOND MAN
(Spanish)
Who is it?

FIRST MAN
(Spanish)
Where is the boy?

SECOND MAN
(Spanish)
In his room.

FIRST MAN
(Spanish)
Get him. And call El Jefe.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Sam Lee waits a beat, kicks the door open. Enters, gun first.

INT. HACIENDA

Besides the sound of the burning truck, not a peep. Sam Lee takes a tentative step, sees the staircase and the second floor landing. Hears FEET moving.

SECOND MAN
(Spanish)
We'll kill the boy.

The second man slowly makes his way out onto the balcony overlooking the foyer - he holds a gun to the head of Carlito.

SAM LEE
Speak English.

SECOND MAN
Put down your gun.

Sam Lee's eyes trail over to the stairs, he counts them with his eyes. Counts the wood columns in the banister on the hallway.

SAM LEE
You think those columns are about
eight inches apart?

SECOND MAN
What?

Sam Lee FIRES his hand cannon, the Second Man rocks back away from the boy, collapsing. Carlito is frozen with terror.

BALCONY

Sam Lee re-holsters his gun, as he steps onto the balcony. Carlito has not moved. Behind him, the SECOND MAN's head lays in a pool of blood.

SAM LEE
Habla Ingles?

Carlito nods, quickly. Sam Lee comes around him and squats down, his back to the open door.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
I'm your daddy's brother. I'm
gonna give you a choice, but you
gotta decide fast.
(beat)
You want to come with me?

Carlito says nothing. Behind Sam Lee, the First Man slowly peers out of the door, gun in hand. Carlito's eyes glance up, Sam Lee sees him looking.

Sam Lee quickly draws his weapon, let's the weight of the gun flip it around so the barrel is aiming behind him. He FIRES, striking the First Man in the STOMACH. He turns, fires a second time knocking him down.

Sam Lee re-holsters the gun. Carlito's shock is all over his face.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
With my life, I promise you, you'll
be safe. Do you want to come with
me?

The boy nods.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
Then let's get the hell out of
here...

Sam Lee takes the boy's hand and leads him back down the stairs.

EXT. HACIENDA - NIGHT

As they exit, Sam Lee stops.

SAM LEE
Give me one sec...

He releases the boy and runs back in the house. A moment later he returns.

CARLITO
What'd you do?

SAM LEE
Left a note. Let's go.

And with that, they both move past the burned out truck and into the night....

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Deborah rubs her neck and fishes her keys from her purse.

MALE VOICE

Hey, Deb.

She looks up, sees Phil standing by his idling truck.

PHIL

We need to go.

DEBORAH

Go where? Is it Sam Lee?

PHIL

Sort of. We got to take a vacation for a few days.

DEBORAH

Phil I can't take a vacation, I'm a double again tomorrow.

PHIL

No you're not. I fixed it with your super.

DEBORAH

I only got the clothes I'm wearing.

Phil opens the back door of his truck, a packed bag sits on the seat.

PHIL

I packed you a bag.

DEBORAH

You were at my house?

PHIL

I used to be a cop, remember?
C'mon, we're in sort of a hurry.

EXT. HACIENDA - MEXICO - DAY

The Black Range Rover and THREE other dark cars pull in past the now burnt PICK UP TRUCK and DEAD BODIES.

Guards exit the cars quickly and take up positions. Moreles gets out, surveys the damage. Nods to Benito and another man, they head in, guns drawn.

Moments later one comes out.

BENITO
(Spanish)
You might want to see this.

Moreles enters, two other men behind him.

INT. HACIENDA

Moreles looks around, the door is splintered. There is a body on the balcony. Another lays dead in a bedroom.

GUARD
(Spanish)
The boy is gone.

Moreles looks down and then he sees it: A LOOSE DECK OF CARDS, spilled out all over the floor of the foyer. Each card is an ACE OF SPADES.

One of the guard speaks to Benito. Benito turns to Moreles.

BENITO
(Spanish)
They're all dead. Six men. No one even got a shot off.

Moreles nods, the anger building.

MORELES
(Spanish)
Call everyone. Offer a reward, I don't care what it costs.

BENITO
(Spanish)
Jefe, I doubt this man will let his face be seen.

MORELES
(Spanish)
Not him.

Moreles removes the front page of the newspaper from his jacket, holds up the news photo of PHIL and DEBORAH at Sam Lee's funeral.

MORELES (CONT'D)
(Spanish)
Them.

INT. TRUCK - DRIVING - DAY

Sam Lee driving a STOLEN TRUCK with Carlito in the passenger seat. The resemblance to Young Danny is incredible.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - MORNING

Sam Lee parks the truck, hops out. Carlito opens his door jumps down. Sam Lee's eyes scan the house, the ranch and the road - empty.

CARLITO
This where you live?

SAM LEE
Uh-huh.

Sam Lee and Carlito head for the house.

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Carlito closes the bathroom door. Sam Lee opens the fridge and inspects what Phil bought. He starts moving supplies into the safe room.

Carlito stands at the door, watching.

CARLITO
What are you doing?

SAM LEE
Getting ready.

CARLITO
For what?

SAM LEE
I ain't gonna lie, Charlie. We got a fight coming. The men that killed your momma and your daddy are coming to get you.

CARLITO
We gonna hide from them?

SAM LEE
Sort of. You're gonna stay in here. I built this room and there ain't nothing, I mean nothing, that's getting in here without your say so.

Sam Lee calls Carlito to the edge of the safe room. We see the room for the first time - STEEL WALLS, SLITS cut in to see, WATER, CANNED FOOD, A PHONE.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
You see all this? You got a bed,
food, toilet back there if you need
it. And, most of all, you got a
lock.

Sam Lee pulls the door partially closed. It scares Carlito who jumps. Sam Lee squats down so he's at the same eye level as Carlito.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
Boy, you've had some kind of rotten
luck. But, those days are behind
you. Ain't no one gonna hurt you
any more. I guarantee it.

CARLITO
How can you?

Sam Lee pulls his PEACEMAKER with blinding speed, flips it around, spins it back and re-holsters it.

SAM LEE
Because I'm El Fucking Diablo and
anyone that messes with you is
gonna draw my fire. You got me?

Carlito, still amazed at Sam Lee's speed and skill with the gun--

CARLITO
I got you.

SAM LEE
Good, let's go over how this door
locks and then we'll see if we have
time to get you a hot meal...

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - EVENING

Phil, carrying a bag of groceries from his truck, sees the DINER attached to the motel and heads in.

INT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - DINER - EVENING

Phil calls to the WAITRESS.

PHIL
Two cups of coffee to go, please.

KITCHEN AREA

Working the grill is BILLY FLIP. The seven years since Sam Lee questioned Flip have not been good. A patchy grey beard covers his face. He still wears glasses. He spots Phil at the counter, something clicking in his head.

COUNTER

Flip comes out wiping his hands on his dirty apron. He approaches Phil.

FLIP
Can I help you?

PHIL
The girl is getting me coffee,
thanks.

Flip continues to stare.

FLIP
Ain't you with the Rangers?

PHIL
(oh fuck)
No. Played a little ball in high
school but wasn't good--

FLIP
Not the baseball team. The Texas
Rangers. Cops.

PHIL
Sorry, not me.

FLIP
You sure?

The waitress sets down Phil's coffees, he pays and picks up the coffee and his groceries.

PHIL
Sorry.

He leaves the diner, heading towards the motel. Flip watches for moment, heads to the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Flip hits the pay phone, feeds it, dials.

FLIP
Hey, it's Billy Flip--

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - EVENING

Phil tosses the two coffees in the trash and uses his motel key to enter his room.

INT. ROOM 109

He quickly sets down the food and coffee, calls out.

PHIL

Deb?

The CONNECTING DOOR is open. Phil enters Deb's room. Hears the shower.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Deb?

DEBORAH

I'm in the shower, give me five minutes.

Phil gets by the bathroom door.

PHIL

We don't have five minutes.

SHOWER

Deb, rinsing off, freezes.

DEBORAH

What?

ROOM 109

Phil pulls his gun, checks the clips, slaps it back. Picks up the room phone, dials as he pulls another clip from his luggage stuffs it in his jacket.

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - EVENING

Sam Lee's house phone rings. That phone should not be ringing. Carlito plays with a GAMEBOY.

SAM LEE

Charlie, turn that off, would ya?

Sam Lee turns the lights off, darkening the house. He casually looks out front window, the ranch is empty. He picks up the phone.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)

Yeah?

INT. ROOM 109

INTERCUT

PHIL
Sam Lee? We're made.

SAM LEE
What? How?

PHIL
Goddamn Billy Flip. Deb and I are
on the move--

Phil peers through the curtains, sees TWO BLACK SUVS rolling
into the motel parking lot, hard.

SAM LEE
Head over to Austin, see if--

PHIL
Shit.

Sam Lee's grip on the phone tightens.

SAM LEE
Phil?

PHIL
They're here.

SAM LEE
You listen to me. Hang up and call
the police.

Phil is already hanging up, his mind working double time.

END INTERCUT

Deborah comes in, simple jeans and a t-shirt. Her hair still
wet.

DEBORAH
We got time to eat?

Phil turns to her, his face deadly serious.

PHIL
No. You pay attention now, Deb.
Get in my bathroom, lock the door
and you don't do anything until the
police get here.

Off Deb, the seriousness of the situation now real.

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - EVENING

Sam Lee rushes Carlito to the safe room.

SAM LEE

When I close the door, you swing the red bar over the latch. That means no one is getting in. The only way you open this door is for me. What's the code word?

CARLITO

El Fucking Diablo.

SAM LEE

Good enough. You hear me say that, you open the lock.

(beat)

You're gonna be scared. You're gonna hear shooting and men screaming and all kinds of bad news. You just remember, these boys are looking to hurt you and that's why I'm hurting them. We're clear, partner?

CARLITO

Clear.

SAM LEE

You're a brave little cowboy, Charlie. Way braver than I was when I was your age. You ready?

Carlito nods. Sam Lee closes the door.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)

See you soon.

The door seals.

INT. SAFE ROOM - SAME

Carlito swings the RED STEEL ARM which in turn closes SIX THICK BOLTS. He backs away and sits in the bed, staring at the door.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Sam Lee, hauling ass to get to the Blue Star--

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - NIGHT

The SUVS park and TWO MEXICAN MEN get out of each. They look around, one heading towards the diner.

ROOM 109

Phil watches as Billy Flip comes out of the diner and converses with one of the Mexican men.

DEBORAH

Phil, I'm calling the police.

PHIL

Police are gonna be here soon enough. The shooting is going to draw them a lot faster than me explaining...

Phil turns to Deborah.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You get in that bathroom, Deb.
Stay out of sight.

DEBORAH

What are you going to do?

Phil heads through the connecting door into Deb's room.

ROOM 108

Phil opens the connecting door in Deb's room, finds another door closed and locked leading to 107.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Phil, don't.

Phil ignores her, kicks the door. Kicks it again, splintering the frame and opening to an empty room. He walks through, pulling the remaining connecting door closed. Deb stands there alone.

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The Mexican Man stands with Flip, the others quietly and efficiently take up positions, AUTOMATIC WEAPONS not exactly hidden.

FLIP

They're in there somewhere. Word I got is there's some sort of reward--

The thought is cut off when Phil fires his first shot - SHATTERING the picture window of ROOM 107 and striking Flip right in the chest. He goes down like a bag of rocks.

Everyone hits the deck, the Mexicans begin FIRING, in a matter of two seconds it's complete chaos.

INT. TRUCK - SPEEDING - NIGHT

Sam Lee, only slowing down at intersections, races to get to the Blue Star.

INT. ROOM 107 - SAME

Phil, having propped the coffee table up as a cheap shield, AIMS and FIRES carefully. The WINDSHIELD of the SUV SPLINTERS.

The Mexican shooters fire indiscriminately - what seems like hundreds of rounds SHATTER what's left of Phil's window, PUNCHING holes in the wall.

ROOM 109

Deborah flattens herself against the floor, willing herself into invisibility.

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - NIGHT

Phil gets TWO more shots off, WINGING one of the Mexicans Shooters, who in turn empties his whole clip into Phil's motel room - turning the face of the motel into swiss cheese and STRIKING a motel GUEST as they try to run.

ROOM 107

Phil, BLEEDING but not shot, let's his adrenaline get the best of him as he fires the rest of his first clip into the SUVs. He hits ONE Mexican, luck mostly, right in the face - killing him.

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - NIGHT

For a moment, the death of one of their own stops the Mexican's from shooting. They trade looks, strategizing.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

An immaculate open office, quiet. Sheriff Roy Fenton (we met him at Danny's crime scene) and DEPUTY PETE WILLIS (31) play cards.

SHERIFF FENTON

You ain't never gonna convince that girl to let you fish on your honeymoon.

DEPUTY WILLIS

We're going to Balmorhea, what's she think we're gonna do?

SHERIFF FENTON

Well, it is her honeymoon...

DEPUTY WILLIS

Aw, Sheriff, come on now. It's the 21st century--

The phone rings, Willis picks it up.

DEPUTY WILLIS (CONT'D)

Willis.

(stands)

Uh-huh. Right.

Sets the phone.

DEPUTY WILLIS (CONT'D)

That was Nix from the Blue Star. He says a pack of Mexis are shooting the place up.

Sheriff Fenton is up quickly.

SHERIFF FENTON

Looks like Mexico's drug war is spilling over. Call everyone, tell them to make sure they got their vests on.

As Willis picks up the microphone--

ROOM 107

Deborah peeks out the window, sees the Mexicans flanking Phil's location. She quietly moves to room 108.

ROOM 109

Phil reloads, checking the parking lot. He sees one Mexican by an SUV. He doesn't see the others. He calls out.

PHIL

Fellas, I think we got off on the wrong foot.

He fires a few rounds at the SUV, the Mexican moves behind it to hide further.

The CONNECTING DOOR opens, Phil turns, sees Deb.

DEBORAH
They're coming!

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Sam Lee's truck SCREECHES to a halt. He jumps--

ROOM 109

--The front door is KICKED OPEN. SHOTS fire all over the room. Deborah drops and covers her head, Phil fires in the general direction of the door but he's totally exposed.

He takes TWO SHOTS right in the chest. He looks down at his bleeding chest, his gun lost to the room.

The two FLANKING Mexicans enter. They scan the room. One of them sees Deborah, taps the other to notify. He smiles and his FACE EXPLODES - falling onto the bed.

The other turns in time to be SHOT TWICE in the chest. He tumbles backward.

PARKING LOT

Sam Lee, standing by the door of his truck - the gun still at his hip.

The LONE Mexican behind his SUV exposes himself a bit and raises his M16.

As luck would have it, he's on Sam Lee's good side. Sam Lee swings his arm over and fires - the bullet actually hitting the M16. The gun ricochets out of the Mexican's hands. He stares at Sam Lee, his face a mixture of pain and surprise. Sam Lee's second shot kills him.

ROOM 107

Sam Lee enters, cautious. Sees the dead Mexicans. Sees Deborah standing, completely freaked out.

SAM LEE
You hit?

DEBORAH
What?

She can't hear due to the gun shots. Sam Lee gives her the once over. No blood. He turns to Phil, blood everywhere.

SAM LEE
Captain, you saved the day. You
did real good.

PHIL
Mary?

SAM LEE
She's gonna be there, old buddy.
Time to go home.

Phil coughs, some blood spills out of his mouth. He looks at Sam Lee one final time and the light in his eyes goes out.

Sam Lee sets him down, closes his eyes. Turns to Deborah.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)
We gotta go.

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - NIGHT

Deborah is getting into Sam Lee's truck when Sam Lee spots Billy Flip, still alive - barely. Sam Lee goes to him.

SAM LEE
Should have put you down a long
time ago.

Flip's whole apron is covered in his blood. He can barely talk through his gasps.

FLIP
Ambulance. Please.

SAM LEE
No.

Sam Lee draws and FIRES right into Flip's head -- instantly killing him. He turns, re-holsters, Deborah staring right at him, shocked. Sam Lee says nothing, gets in the truck.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Moreles' Black Range Rover and TWO OTHER SUVs pull to a stop. The porch light is on.

INT. MORELES' RANGE ROVER - SAME

Moreles looks at the simple run down ranch. The lights are on inside, but he can see no one.

MORELES
(Spanish)
Send Aquila and Diaz.

The driver nods, speaking quickly into a radio.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

There are TEN men, plus Moreles.

The two men make their way to the front door. Automatic weapons out, they move carefully. They check the window, ducking in case Sam Lee has a gun pointed at them. They get to the door.

Diaz tries the knob, it turns slightly.

DIAZ
(Spanish)
Not locked.

Aquila turns back to the cars, calling.

AQUILLA
(Spanish)
Looks like he left in a hurry.

Diaz stands, turns the knob to enter and a 10 GAUGE SHOTGUN BLAST (BOTH BARRELS) HITS him right in the FACE, almost decapitating him. Aquila turns and starts firing.

Three other men get out of their cars and take up positions, also firing.

INT. SAFE ROOM - SAME

Carlito hears the gunshots. Instinctively gets under the bed..

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

The front of the house looks like it's been in a warzone. The men stop firing. The front door has been ALMOST shot off it's hinges.

Moreles gets out of his car.

MORELES
(Spanish)
Good thing we're in the middle of
nowhere, huh?

Sam Lee's door collapses to the ground.

MORELES (CONT'D)
(Spanish)
Don't worry, he's not here.

INT. TRUCK - SPEEDING

Deborah sits away from Sam Lee.

SAM LEE
You got a phone?

DEBORAH
It's back in the room. Why?

Sam Lee kills the lights and drops the truck in NEUTRAL, shutting the engine off.

EXT. ROAD BY SAM LEE'S RANCH

Sam Lee's truck rolls to a stop at the crest of a small hill. Sam Lee jumps out, grabs his bag from the bed, pulls his SNIPER RIFLE out. Deborah comes around. Sam Lee holds his finger to his lips, nods her up the small hill.

EXT. FAR SIDE OF RANCH - SAME

Brings the sniper rifle up, using his right FOREARM to hold it (versus his hand, which is wrapped). He eyeballs the last of the men entering his house. From this distance he can't see any person, just shapes.

SAM LEE
Shit.

DEBORAH
What?

SAM LEE
He's smarter than I figured. Had me out chasing him while he was right here.

DEBORAH
Where's the boy?

SAM LEE
He's safe. I gotta distract these guys while you call in the calvary.

DEBORAH
I told you I ain't got my phone.

SAM LEE

Go find the Sheriff. My guess is
he's at the Blue Star trying to
figure out what the hell happened.

Deborah considers.

DEBORAH

Do me a favor, don't get killed.

Sam Lee straps the Sniper Rifle over his shoulder and begins moving towards his house. Deborah heads to the truck.

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE

The place can barely hold Moreles and three of his men. The kitchen has been shot to hell, all broken glass and chipped dry wall.

One of the MEN comes through the small hallway, shakes his head -- the place is empty.

Moreles takes in the mess. Spots a glint of silver through some chipped dry wall. Walks over to it and pulls back the wall, exposing a SOLID STEEL wall behind.

BY SAFE ROOM DOOR

Moreles works his way around the room until he finds the door. Turns to his men, smiles.

The men start tearing dry wall away, exposing more of the steel wall.

MORELES

(Spanish)

Tell Benito...

(gestures for an explosion
without saying it)

And tell them to keep their eyes
open. He's coming back.

MAN

(Spanish)

How do you know, Jefe?

MORELES

(Spanish)

Because he left something
important.

Moreles looks up, directly into the small SECURITY CAMERA which points down at him from inside a ceiling vent - a small RED LIGHT BLINKS.

INSIDE SAFE ROOM

Carlito, still hiding, sees Moreles' face on the small monitor by the door. He pulls back, scared.

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL

Many ONLOOKERS survey the police scene. FOUR Sheriff Squad cars, red and blue lights spinning. Sheriff Fenton stands by the door to room 107.

As they bring Phil's body out, Fenton takes off his hat. He says to no one in particular:

SHERIFF FENTON

Phil Elco, what are you doing here?

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

About 100 yards away from his house, Sam Lee uses the sniper rifle again. It's too dark to see any detail or identify precisely where the shooters are.

Thinks for a beat. Picks up a stone, eyeballing a tree couple of hundred feet away. He chucks the stone, activating the MOTION DETECTOR on the tree. It lights up.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE

Benito has the back of his truck opened as he removes items. Two other men stand, guns ready, facing out into the darkness.

They see a LIGHT. Benito hits the deck. Both MEN starting firing in that direction.

A third MAN comes to the door of the house, his M16 in firing position. Before he even steps foot on the front porch HE IS SHOT through the HEAD, blood and brains spraying all over the kitchen.

INT. BY SAFE ROOM DOOR

Seeing his man's head explode, Moreles drops to the ground as does another man, protecting themselves from possible SNIPER FIRE. Moreles hears TWO MORE quick shots and his own men stop SHOOTING.

He gets the attention of TWO of his MEN, points outside through the back. They MOVE off in SILENCE.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - BY BENITO

The TWO SHOOTERS are dead - head shots. Benito is not hit, but he does not move.

EXT. RANCH - SAME

Sam Lee is fifty yards away laterally from the MOTION DETECTOR light. It clicks off. He scans his front yard with the sniper scope, looking for another target.

INT. SAFE ROOM

Carlito sees Moreles hit the deck and slither away. He puts it together...

CARLITO

He's back.

INT. BY SAFE ROOM DOOR

Moreles has crawled to one of his men.

MORELES

(Spanish)

Find the power box, kill the lights.

The Man begins to move, staying low. Two other men are squatted down in the kitchen, one wipes blood and brains off his face.

MORELES (CONT'D)

(Spanish, quiet)

Benito?

The man shrugs. The room FALLS INTO DARKNESS.

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

Sam Lee is still scouting for targets when the image goes dark. He peers over his sniper scope - the lights in the house have gone black.

INT. SAFE ROOM

A small battery powered light is all that's left to illuminate the room. Carlito crawls out from under the bed and moves to the sink, finds a CUTTING KNIFE near some FRUIT. Clutches it like a talisman.

KITCHEN

Benito, BLACK DUFFEL BAG over his shoulder, crawls into the kitchen. Another one of Moreles men, DOMINGO, almost shoots him.

BEN
(Spanish)
Hey, it's me. Benito.

Domingo lowers his weapon. A SHOT is fired, hitting the door frame. Everyone drops, Domingo randomly shoots out the window.

MORELES
(Spanish)
Stop!

Domingo does. Benito shoves the duffel bag towards Moreles, moves behind it.

DOMINGO
(Spanish)
He's shooting at us.

MORELES
(Spanish)
He can't see you.

DOMINGO
(Spanish)
How do you know?

MORELES
(Spanish)
Because he doesn't miss.
(to Benito, Spanish)
Set the charge, small. I want the
boy alive.

EXT. BLUE STAR MOTEL - NIGHT

As POLICE take statements and bodies are loaded into a MORGUE truck,

Deborah parks Sam Lee's truck and hops out. Heads right to Sheriff Fenton. Deputy Willis moves to intercept.

DEPUTY WILLIS
Easy there, young lady.

DEBORAH
You the Sheriff?

DEPUTY WILLIS

We're sort of tied up here, Miss.
You want to hold back and I'll get
to you in a second.

DEBORAH

I ain't got a second. This is only
a side show, the main event's
happening at Sam Lee Hensley's
ranch, right now.

Sheriff Fenton comes over, having heard...

SHERIFF FENTON

Deb Hensley? You talking about Sam
Lee? Ain't he dead?

DEBORAH

He's gonna be if you don't come
with me.

Off that urgency...

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE

Sam Lee sees a dark house and nothing more. He uses his
sniper scope to scout -- windows are dark, zero movement that
he can see.

He scouts the perimeter -- he could shoot vehicles.

He scouts the other side of the house - something obstructs
his view, pulls back to see TWO OF MORELES' MEN ALMOST ON TOP
OF HIM.

MEXICAN HEAVY #1

(Spanish)

Hands up.

Sam Lee accesses the situation, two men, M16s, safeties off -
the men keep a smart distance between themselves. Sam Lee
stands slowly, hands up.

MEXICAN HEAVY #1 (CONT'D)

(Spanish)

Guns.

Sam Lee acts like he doesn't understand.

MEXICAN HEAVY #2

Guns, now.

Sam Lee nods. The men are each roughly six feet apart on either side. Sam Lee slowly, using his BAD HAND, removes one of the Peacemakers from his CHEST HOLSTER--

MEXICAN HEAVY #1
Grab the barrel, not the grip.

SAM LEE
Smart.

Sam Lee flips the gun over in his hand quickly, catching the barrel, leans forward to hand it to #1. As #1 reaches for it, REMOVING HIS HAND FROM THE TRIGGER OF HIS M16--

-- Sam Lee quickly DRAWS with his good hand, FIRES WITHOUT LOOKING and shoots #2 in the CHEST. He flies back like he's been PUNCHED.

-- While #1 is distracted with the change of events, Sam Lee flips the first Peacemaker back around (re-grabbing the grip) and FIRES - killing him.

-- Sam Lee quickly reholsters both guns, moving into the darkness.

INT. BY SAFE ROOM DOOR

Moreles and his man hear the shots. For a moment they do nothing, waiting. Moreles finally nods at Benito to finish what he is doing.

INT. SAFE ROOM

Carlito strains to hear. Someone is doing something to the door.

INT. BY SAFE ROOM DOOR

Benito has finishes placing the last of the C4 - a THIN ROLLED LINE OF CLAYLIKE MATERIAL running part of the length of the DOOR SEAM. He places a detonator stick. Crawls away to the back of the house.

BACK ROOM

--Moreles and the other men wait. Benito activates the radio control - looks to Moreles.

SAFE ROOM

--Carlito thinks, knife in hand he jumps back under the bed.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE

--Sam Lee has worked his way all the way to the side of the house, he presses himself against the wall and sneaks a peek through a window.

BACK ROOM

--Moreles nods. Benito squeezes the detonator. All HELL BREAKS LOOSE.

The safe room door EXPLODES.

SAFE ROOM

Like a large BELL, the interior of the safe room is rocked, the resulting concussive wave sweeps through the small room, wreaking havoc.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE

The WINDOW BLOWS OUT - sending shards of broken glass everywhere. Sam Lee is knocked off his feet.

BACK ROOM

Moreles waves away smoke, coughing. He debates shooting Benito.

MORELES
(Spanish)
I said small charge.

BENITO
(Spanish)
That was small.

SAFE ROOM

Carlito, totally dazed, tries to shove the bed off of him. He's stuck...

BACK ROOM

Moreles cautiously approaches the safe house door. It's only slightly off it's hinge -- the door is still effectively closed, BUT THE BLAST CREATED A SMALL OPENING ON THE DOOR SEAM.

MORELES
(Spanish)
It's open.

SAFE ROOM

Carlito's eye goes wide. He understands Spanish. He fights with the bed, rocking it back and forth to get it off him.

OUTSIDE SAFE ROOM DOOR

Moreles calls to Domingo, the smallest of the men, quietly.

MORELES (CONT'D)
(Spanish)
Can you reach an arm in there?

Domingo crawls over from the back room, standing by the door he PEERS into the crack, sizing it up.

He SCREAMS, pulling back, Carlito's cutting knife JAMMED in his CHEEK. Domingo's hand inadvertently squeezes the trigger of his gun, FIRING in all directions. Moreles grabs Benito's rifle and SHOOTS Domingo.

SAFE ROOM

Carlito, hearing the shot, drops flat against the floor in front of the door.

OUTSIDE SAFE ROOM DOOR

Moreles angrily shoves the barrel of the M16 into the opening and fires the remaining clip into the safe room.

SAFE ROOM

Carlito screams, trying to protect himself from the MUZZLE flash and fire.

OUTSIDE SAFE ROOM DOOR

Moreles tosses the empty gun aside. Turns to Benito.

MORELES (CONT'D)
(Spanish)
Get the rest of the C4.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE

Sam Lee hears the shots and jumps up, shakes off the broken glass.

SAM LEE
Fuck this.

Draws the Peacemaker from his chest holster, heads towards the house.

OUTSIDE SAFE HOUSE DOOR

Benito slaps the rest of the C4 (twice as much as the first time) to the door. Jams a detonator stick into it. Tosses the radio control to Moreles.

MORELES
(Spanish)
How far away?

BENITO
(Spanish)
Far.

Moreles indicates they should head out the front door.

SAFE ROOM

Carlito looks around the room, trying to figure out where he can hide to protect himself. There is no where to go. He considers opening the door, doesn't know what to do.

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE

--Benito & Moreles trail the two MEN as they approach the door, darkness outside.

--One pauses, nods to the other -- the door can only fit one at a time.

--The man advances, sweeping his M16 left and right. Gets into the door frame, Sam Lee's PEACEMAKER appears from the edge of the door frame - FIRES!

--The man's head explodes like a cantaloupe. Benito and Moreles drop, Benito firing through the wall in the general area where Sam Lee would be standing.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sam Lee has already rolled away. He stands up and fires THREE TIMES through a BROKEN WINDOW, striking the final man and killing him. He also (accidently) shoots Benito's M16, rendering it useless.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - SAME

Moreles presses himself against an interior wall.

MORELES
I'll kill him. He won't survive
another blast.

--Footsteps, then silence. Moreles can't move without exposing himself to a window or door. Benito eyes one of the dead man's M16 around the corner.

--Benito slowly moves for the gun. Still nothing.

--He strains to see the window, no Sam Lee.

--Moves again around the corner away from where Sam Lee was standing, out of sight of Moreles.

--Gets his hand on the weapon, looks up and sees Sam Lee standing almost on top of him, COLT cocked and ready.

SAM LEE
Welcome.

BY MORELES

Moreles hears a single EXPLOSIVE gunshot and then more silence.

MORELES
(Spanish)
Benito, tell me you got him?

Sam Lee comes around the corner, one gun in his hip holster, the other missing. The two men stare at each other, ten feet apart. In the darkness, they can barely see.

Moreles holds up the radio detonator, puts it behind his back.

MORELES (CONT'D)
I squeeze this, we all die.

SAM LEE
Then don't squeeze it.

SAFE ROOM

Carlito strains to hear.

OUTSIDE SAFE ROOM

MORELES
Give me your gun.

Sam Lee says nothing.

MORELES (CONT'D)
You don't have a choice.

SAM LEE
I'm ready to die.

MORELES
I know you are. But, you're not
ready to kill that little boy.

He nods in the direction of the safe room.

MORELES (CONT'D)
You even flinch and it's over. Use
the bad hand, toss the gun to me.

Sam Lee considers his options.

MORELES (CONT'D)
Look at it this way, you don't have
a choice.

Using his bad hand, Sam Lee awkwardly removes the pistol from
it's holster. Tosses it under hand to Moreles who catches
it.

Moreles smiles, removes the detonator from behind his back.

SAM LEE
How about we let the kid go, then
you can finish me?

SIRENS are clearly heard in the distance and approaching.
Moreles keeps his eyes locked on Sam Lee.

MORELES
That kid is my ticket out of here.
He's coming with me.

REVEAL: SAM LEE'S OTHER COLT IS STUFFED IN HIS JEANS BY HIS
BACK.

MORELES (CONT'D)
You couldn't save your brother and
you're not going to save this kid.

SAM LEE
(mutters)
El Fucking Diablo.

MORELES

What?

SAM LEE

(loud)

El Fucking Diablo.

INSIDE SAFE ROOM

Carlito hears the magic words, throws the RED BAR, lifting the BOLTS with a LOUD CLANG.

OUTSIDE SAFE ROOM

It's just a flicker, but Moreles' attention turns to the safe room door long enough for Sam Lee to pull the Peacemaker from his back, firing once as he jumps away--

--Moreles returns fires as well, throwing himself to the ground. He gets off one more shot before the gun registers empty.

MORELES

Fuck it.

Tries to squeeze the detonator, realizing too late that SAM LEE SHOT HIS THUMB OFF. He can't activate the C4--

--He turns to look at Sam Lee, shock overriding the pain. Sam Lee stands over him like Death himself.

SAM LEE

Remember when I told you I was
going to kill you?

Moreles eyes are wide, staring at Sam Lee's Colt.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)

Are you convinced now?

Sam Lee aims the Colt -- FIRES, hitting Moreles right between the eyes. His lifeless body falls back, the radio detonator falling out of his bloody hand.

Sam Lee approaches the safe room door, pulls the detonator stick out of the C4, pockets it.

SAM LEE (CONT'D)

(calling into room)

Good job, little man. I'm gonna
open the door.

Two strong yanks and the door opens wide enough for Carlito to get out. He HUGS Sam Lee furiously. Sam Lee hugs him back, as best he can.

Carlito pulls away, his shirt covered in blood. He looks at Sam Lee, blood dripping from his chest.

CARLITO
You're hurt.

SAM LEE
Yeah, but you ain't.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE

MANY POLICE and SHERIFF cruisers, lights and sirens blazing pull in front of Sam Lee's ranch house. Police take up positions.

Sheriff Fenton lets Deborah out of his cruiser. Willis checks the bodies of the dead Mexican shooters.

DEPUTY WILLIS
Head shots, one each.

Another Deputy, CLAY PHILLIPS (40), makes a gruesome discovery a few yards away.

DEPUTY PHILLIPS
Got two more dead ones over here.

SHERIFF FENTON
Looks like Sam Lee is alive.

Willis makes his way towards the house, sees another body in the door frame.

DEPUTY WILLIS
There's another one, maybe a fourth in the kitchen.

SHERIFF FENTON
All right, let's hold up a sec.

He calls out.

SHERIFF FENTON (CONT'D)
Sam Lee, you in there?

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE

Sam Lee's turns to the front of the house.

SAM LEE

Time to go, cowboy. There's a woman out there named Deb. She's gonna look after you now.

Sam Lee drops to his knees, Carlito tries to hold him up.

CARLITO

Come on, they can help you.

SAM LEE

I ain't hurt that bad.

SHERIFF FENTON

(calling from outside)

Sam Lee, we're come'n. If you're in there, don't shoot anyone.

SAM LEE

Go on, now. Scoot. I got some cleaning up to do.

Carlito desperately wants to leave but doesn't want to leave Sam Lee. Sam Lee gives him a little shove and he starts to move to the door.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE

Willis and TWO other DEPUTIES make their way towards the front door. Carlito begins to appear through the darkness.

WILLIS

Hands up!

Deborah sees Carlito, breaks from Sheriff Fenton and runs towards him.

DEBORAH

It's a boy. Put your guns down.

Carlito comes out of the door, still petrified. Deborah slows, gets down to his level. Carlito's resemblance to Young Danny shocks her.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

You must be the little boy I've been hearing so much about.

CARLITO

Are you, Deb?

DEBORAH

I am.

Carlito runs into her arms. Willis pulls them both back.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Where's Sam Lee?

Carlito points to the house.

INT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE

Sam Lee places the detonator stick back in the C4, cups the detonator and leans against the wall.

In the wreckage of his house he spots the FRAMED PHOTO of him and Danny as YOUNG RANGERS. He admires it for a moment, thinking back to better times. Takes a long moment.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE

SHERIFF FENTON
Let's get in there and see what's--

The EXPLOSION, totally unexpected, rocks everyone off their feet. Glass and wood fly--

--Deb instinctively covers Carlito as she falls.

--Deputies and Sheriff Fenton duck behind police cruisers as fire PLUMES out of the ranch house.

--Whatever is left of Sam Lee's house is burning.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - TIME CUT

FIRE TRUCKS hose off the last of Sam Lee's house. Carlito sits on the fender of an AMBULANCE, a little banged up but nothing permanent. Deborah sits next to him.

Sheriff Fenton walks up.

SHERIFF FENTON
How you doing there, little man?

Carlito doesn't answer.

SHERIFF FENTON (CONT'D)
You mind if I borrow Deb?

Deborah leans into Carlito.

DEBORAH
I'm just gonna be right over there.

EXT. SAM LEE'S RANCH HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

SHERIFF FENTON

Willis tells me this was your
husband's son. That right? And
his momma passed?

DEBORAH

That's right, Sheriff.

SHERIFF FENTON

Guess that makes you his next of
kin. Take him home, you two seen
enough for one night.

DEBORAH

Any word on Sam Lee?

SHERIFF FENTON

We got a big mess in there so it
might take a while. But, no. No
sign of him yet...

(re: Carlito)

I'll get someone to drop you.

(beat)

And, Deb, I'm real sorry.

DEBORAH

Thanks Sheriff. Appreciate...you
know.

She puts her hand out to Carlito, he takes it. They make
their way to the police cruiser.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Carlito, you hungry?

CARLITO

You can call me Charlie.

She squeezes his hand extra tight. They keep walking.

EXT. RANCH - SAME

At the edge of the property, Sam Lee watches as Deb and
Carlito get into a cruiser and pull off. He draws one of his
Colts, examines for a moment, flips it around, flips it back
the other way, finally re-holsters it.

Takes one final glance at the police cruiser pulling off.
Tips his hat down and walks off...

THE END