FALSE FLAG

written by

Jesse Alexander

based on his novel

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE ARABIAN GULF - NIGHT

Black water. On the horizon, Dubai in a long smear of gold.

SUPER: AUGUR // ARABIAN GULF, 11 MI OFF DUBAI // TUE 05 JAN 2027 // 05:20 GST

The SAHRA, three hundred feet of white yacht, lit to the mast. Somebody has more money than places to put it.

INT. SAHRA - ENGINE ROOM - NIGHT

A dented kettle RATTLES to the boil. A hand spoons NESCAFÉ into a chipped mug and stirs it with a SCREWDRIVER.

LUC MALONE (38), borrowed coveralls. A leather bracelet on his right wrist, rubbed smooth at the knot.

A voice in the bone conductor behind his ear. Virginia, by way of somewhere colder.

BENNETT (V.O.)
Give me a head count.

LUC
One on her door. Four at cards.
Captain and a mate on the bridge.

BENNETT (V.O.)
Palace says they're her kidnappers.

LUC
Those are men on a boat. Nobody's walked the rail since eleven.
They're not worried.

INT. SAHRA - CREW STAIRS - NIGHT

A service door stands open on the wind. Luc listens.

Waves SLAP the hull. A card SNAPS down two decks up. And from somewhere forward and high, a man HUMMING. Slow, off-key, the same few bars over and over.

Luc's shoulders come back. His chin comes up. Nineteen again, on a parade ground in Calvi.

LUC
(barely a breath)
Le Boudin.

The Legion's march. Luc's scared. He doesn't care for it. On his watch, 05:40.

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EXT. S STREET NW, SHAW, WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

SUPER: AUGUR // SHAW, D.C. // MON 04 JAN 2027 // 20:40 EST

The same minute, the other side of the world. Christmas lights still up. The sleet's coming.

SKYE MONTGOMERY (31) walks the block talking low into her phone. Long charcoal Max Mara coat, five winters old, money dressed down on purpose. She files everything out loud.

SKYE
(into her phone)
Source has never asked to meet.
Source picked a sleet night.

A green door with a brass knocker in the shape of a fist. Subtle. She knocks once. It opens before the second.

BRUCE MALONE (74). Cardigan, corduroys, house slippers. Huge hands, the right knuckles healed crooked, eyes so pale they're almost no color.

BRUCE
You're late.

SKYE
I'm four minutes early.

BRUCE
That's late.

He checks the street both ways and lets her in.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Shoes.

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Skye in her socks. On the table a LEGAL PAD and a square THINKPAD cabled to a gray box: UNCLASSIFIED TO SECRET // ONE WAY. A progress bar at 87%.

BRUCE
Picked you. You're the only reporter in this town who already knows what Augur is.

SKYE
What's Augur?

Bruce smiles. It takes ten years off him.

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BRUCE
Your father would be proud. That was very smooth.

He writes on the pad in square capitals and turns it to her.

INSERT - THE LEGAL PAD

YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE KEEPS EVERYTHING.

BACK TO SCENE

SKYE
Keeps everything? That's a fortune cookie.

BRUCE
It's a direction.

He sets a KEY RING on the table. CLINK. Two old brass keys and a small steel one on a brass tag stamped C S.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Put them on your own ring. Loose keys get looked at.

She does. She thumbs the volume button on the phone face up on the table. It buzzes. A photo of the ceiling, probably.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Do that again, and point it at the screen this time.

She shoots the screen properly: the long string, the date. 100%. TRANSFER COMPLETE. HOLD STATUS: QUARANTINE (7D).

He holds her coat open, and she finds her arms going into the sleeves. He buttons the top button for her.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Back door. Don't go home tonight.

SKYE
Your son. Does he know?

He squares the legal pad to the table's edge.

BRUCE
Do you know what my son does?

SKYE
No.

BRUCE
Good.

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INT. SAHRA - OWNER'S DECK CORRIDOR - NIGHT

In a chair by a teak door, KHALID (20s), a Glock on his hip, his boots off and lined up beside him.

A towel over his arm, a carafe on a silver tray. Luc walks up with his eyes down.

LUC
(in Arabic, subtitled)
Water for the lady. The captain sent it.

Khalid sighs and stands. Both his hands close on the tray.

Luc steps in under his elbows. Two fingers into the notch above the collarbone, HARD. The knees go. Luc catches the carafe an inch off the carpet and rides him down, a forearm on his throat. Heels DRUM twice.

On Khalid's lock screen a girl squints in a pink swimsuit. Luc puts the phone back in the sleeping hand and KNOCKS.

LUC (CONT'D)
Your Highness. Your father sent me.

PRINCESS AMIRA (26) opens the door herself. Small and composed, gray cashmere tracksuit, barefoot. A laptop with a Soho House sticker closes under her fingers.

AMIRA
Is he dead?

LUC
He's taking a nap.

AMIRA
Good. Khalid is a decent man. He has a daughter.
(pulling on sneakers)
Rescue boat, starboard davit, outside the crew mess. The keys are always in it.

INT. SAHRA - CREW MESS - NIGHT

A MAN steps out with a sandwich. Shaved head, earpiece, a white skull on his T-shirt over a word we can't make out.

He sees Amira. Nobody told this one. The sandwich DROPS. His hand goes for his hip.

SHOULDER to the chest. CRASH. They go back through the door, and a tray of cutlery goes over.

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A fist in Luc's hair. YANK. The man throws him. WHAM. Into the bulkhead, across an extinguisher bracket.

The pistol's out. Luc gets the wrist in both hands and TURNS it in. BANG. The round WHINES off the deck.

A headbutt. CRACK. Copper in his mouth. Luc pulls the head down. KNEE. KNEE. The man sags.

Luc holds him up by a fistful of T-shirt. The man's heel lands on a fork and skates out from under him, and now only Luc's fist keeps him off the crew stairs.

Luc looks at the stairs. At the fork.

His free thumb finds the leather BRACELET on his right wrist. The worn place at the knot.

He opens his fist.

The man goes backward, all the way down, and the sounds he makes stop before he reaches the bottom. A fork on the floor. A wet steel stair.

AMIRA
That was not Khalid. Good.

EXT. S STREET NW - NIGHT

The first sleet. Skye comes out of the alley. A fortune cookie and the back door. She's angry. She turns back.

Across from Bruce's, on the stoop of a flipped gray townhouse, a DOORBELL CAMERA. Its ring glows blue.

She walks the block counting doors with her lips. Six. Five. Through Bruce's bay window the lamp is on and his cardigan hangs on the recliner. There's no Bruce.

Four. A MAN IN A PARKA gets out of a car, hood up, and walks away fast toward Ninth. He's the only one on the street who doesn't look up at the sleet.

Three doors. She lifts her phone.

EXT. SAHRA - STARBOARD SIDE DECK - NIGHT

The gray RHIB hangs on its davit over black water, the key in the switch. She was right.

The davit WHINES them down. A FLASHLIGHT beam swings over the water from above.

TEXAS VOICE (O.S.)
Shut up and get the captain!

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SPLASH. Luc turns the key, and both engines HOWL. Behind them the chase boat comes out running dark.

In the bow Amira holds the grab line, and the laptop zipped inside her top. She holds the laptop harder. Luc notices.

A MUZZLE FLASH behind. BRRAP. White spurts thirty meters left. Thirty right. Across the wake. Out ahead, where they'll be in two seconds.

LUC
He's boxing me. Every round misses.

BENNETT (V.O.)
Then quit bitching and drive.

Being let off bothers him. In the bow, Amira doesn't duck.

He rounds the Jebel Ali breakwater so tight the sponson LIFTS. And a ship is coming in.

EXT. JEBEL ALI PORT - CHANNEL - CONTINUOUS

The container ship POLARIS fills the channel, a quarter mile of her, boxes ten high, her bow shoving up a hill of white water. To the right, a concrete berth. The gap is closing.

Luc kills the lights and goes for it. The HORN sounds danger. Five short blasts. He feels them in his fillings.

ONE. Black steel CLIMBS past his shoulder.

TWO. The bow wave picks up the RHIB. HURLS it at the berth.

THREE. Fender. BOUNCE. Concrete close enough to take paint.

FOUR. The draft marks go by in a column, 10M over 8M over 6M, close enough to read.

The bow wave lifts them to its peak. FIVE.

Same second, the other side of the world:

EXT. S STREET NW - CONTINUOUS

Bruce's bay window turns WHITE.

The horn becomes the BLAST. A wall of air picks Skye up and puts her down on her back.

Silence. One high WHINE. Glass comes down out of the orange sky from every window on the block, RINGING on car roofs.

The front of Bruce's house is down in the street. The front room stands open, a dollhouse with its face off. The books

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are burning. Pages lift on the heat and sail up into the sleet, alight at the edges, and go out.

SKYE
Bruce.

She can't hear her own voice. There's nothing back there that could be a man.

Then the screaming. Next door the shared wall's cracked roof to ground. An old woman, high and thin and on and on.

Skye's already running.

SHOULDER into the door. Nothing. She grabs the brass knob, and her palm comes off it with a small wet tearing sound. Scarf around the hand. She PULLS. The door GIVES six inches. She goes in sideways.

INT. ODETTE'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Black smoke rolling on the ceiling. Skye crawls under it.

Beside an overturned walker with yellow tennis balls on its feet lies ODETTE FLEMING (81). Tiny, a pink housecoat, one leg at an angle that turns Skye's stomach.

ODETTE
I can't get up. Baby, I can't get up.

SKYE
I've got you. What's your name?

ODETTE
Odette.

SKYE
Odette. I'm Skye. I'm going to pull you, and it's going to hurt.

ODETTE
Everything hurts. Pull.

Skye likes her already. Hands under the arms, backward on her knees through the smoke. Odette SCREAMS. The housecoat RIPS on the frame, and Odette comes through all at once.

EXT. S STREET NW - CONTINUOUS

They go down the stoop in a pile, THUD, into the ice. SIRENS, far off. Odette holds Skye's coat in both fists.

ODETTE
You came in. You came in.

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Across the street, the doorbell camera's patient BLUE RING takes in all of it.

EXT. JEBEL ALI - MARINE SERVICES JETTY - DAWN

Two black Land Cruisers, engines running. Amira turns back and looks Luc over. The split lip. Blood in his hairline.

AMIRA
Thank you.
(London English, with money under it)
Which agency are you with?

LUC
I'm a relief engineer. Monaco.

She smiles. It doesn't change her eyes at all.

AMIRA
Of course you are.

The Land Cruisers pull away. Luc takes his own phone out of a waterproof pouch, the one Bennett doesn't own.

INSERT - THE PHONE

WASHINGTON POST: Explosion destroys rowhouse in D.C.'s Shaw neighborhood; at least one dead

BACK TO SCENE

His father lives in Shaw. Luc hasn't been through that green door in nine years.

The phone rings in his hand: BENNETT.

BENNETT (V.O.)
Luc. It's Mike.
(a breath)
I'm sorry. It's your father.

We stay on Luc. Black water behind him, a lit city beyond.

MAIN TITLE: FALSE FLAG

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

A caisson behind six gray horses, wheels CRUNCHING slush.

SUPER: AUGUR // ARLINGTON, VA // FRI 08 JAN

Luc at the grave in a black suit. He decided on the plane that he'd feel nothing. So far it's holding.

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CALVIN ASHBY (63), Director of the CIA, takes Luc's hand in both of his. Luc looks at the hands. West Point ring, filed nails, no calluses at all. A politician's hands.

ASHBY
The old man trained me. Anything you need, Luc. Anything, son.

Behind him MICHAEL BENNETT (45), lean, navy overcoat, hair cut Marine-short. We know that voice. He nods once. Later.

Under a bare oak, the people Bruce left behind. FRANK CALLAHAN (71), the size of a refrigerator, a Hawaiian shirt collar under his overcoat, crying openly on a blackthorn cane. MARIA VASQUEZ (60s), buttoned to the throat, perfectly still. TERRY WALSH (68), English, a camel coat that was expensive twenty years ago, touching his tie, his collar, his scarf. A Toblerone corner shows in his pocket.

AGENCY LIAISON
The M.E. went by the gold partial. No X-rays on file to compare.

LUC
The bridge. Saigon, 1972.

Three volleys CRACK. A soldier kneels and hands Luc the folded flag, warm from the soldier's hands. Something gives way in him. His hands dent the flag.

Range breathing, from Calvi. It goes back down.

LATER. Frank pulls Luc into a hug. Cigars and wet wool.

FRANK
Jesus Christ, kid. He talked about you all the goddamn time. Murphy's, tonight. You come. You hear me?
(leaning in, low)
You want to talk about how he went, you talk to us. Not to them.

His eyes go to the black car where Ashby's getting in.

LUC
Them.

FRANK
The seventh floor.

EXT. ARLINGTON - BRUCE'S GRAVE - LATER

The cars are gone. A yellow backhoe waits. Luc stays, the flag under his arm.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE (O.S.)
He said you were the only person who ever beat him at cards.

Skye, three graves over, her hands in her coat pockets. He didn't hear her come up.

LUC
Who sent you?

SKYE
Skye. I knew your father. A little. He was a source of mine.

LUC
My father didn't talk to reporters.

SKYE
He talked to this one. Blackjack at twelve, in a bar in Beirut. An old Armenian bartender.

LUC
Cover Story.

SKYE
Cover what?

LUC
The bar. It was called Cover Story.

SKYE
His words. "The proudest I've ever been." He never told you that?

Luc didn't know his father remembered. He's jealous of a stranger at his father's grave.

Her left hand comes out with her keys, three old ones on a brass tag stamped C S. She puts them back. Her right hand is wrapped in GAUZE, knuckles to wrist. Luc stares at it.

LUC
That hand. You were there.

SKYE
In his kitchen, minutes before. He sent me out the back.
(the hand)
The woman next door was trapped. Odette. Eighty-one. She'll be fine.
(beat)
I think he was a good man who did a lot of bad things.

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LUC
He'd have said it in fewer words.

She almost smiles, and walks off between the headstones. He still doesn't have her last name.

INT. MURPHY'S, WILSON BOULEVARD, ARLINGTON - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Guinness and wet coats steaming on hooks. Spooks, mostly. You can tell by who's taken the chairs facing the door.

FRANK
Bruce's boy came!

A cheer. Then the room goes quiet, from the bar outward.

ON TV: FBI NAMES PERSON OF INTEREST IN D.C. ROWHOUSE BOMBING. Doorbell footage: a woman counting doors with her lips, and the bay window beside her turns white.

ON TV: SKYE MONTGOMERY, 31, DAUGHTER OF DEFENSE BILLIONAIRE WILLIAM MONTGOMERY. FBI: "LINKED TO ACTIVIST GROUP SUNLIGHT"

Now he has her last name.

At the bar a glass goes down on the wood. Only we catch who put it there. Terry, staring up at the screen, one hand frozen on the knot of his scarf.

INT. SKYE'S APARTMENT, MOUNT PLEASANT - EVENING

Skye at her window, coat still on, FUGAZI leaking from the earbuds round her neck. On the phone, DANA OKAFOR (40s), her editor at the Interlock.

DANA (V.O.)
Skye, the FBI names you tonight.
Person of interest in Malone.
They've got doorbell footage. And
Sunlight's claiming the bomb.

A pause on the line. Too long.

SKYE
Who's in the room, Dana?

Skye hangs up and sets the phone on the windowsill very gently. Then she picks it up and finds the Post.

SKYE
(a memo)
For the file. The Post ran three
stills and cut eighteen minutes.
(MORE)

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE (CONT'D)
Everything after the flash. Who cut Odette?

Down on the street, two gray sedans pull in nose to tail.

She puts her laptop in the OVEN and SLAMS the door. She opens the photo of Bruce's screen, drags her left sleeve up with her teeth, and copies the string onto her forearm.

BOOTS on the stairs. She deletes the photo, kills the phone, lays it face up on the radiator, where they'll find it, and goes out the window.

INT. UNION STATION - NIGHT

CNN: FBI SEEKS SKY MONTGOMERY IN CIA OFFICER'S DEATH.

SKYE
(to nobody)
With an E.

In a bathroom stall, in a gray knit hat, she tears a CVS burner out of its clamshell with her teeth. A number from memory. One word, for the worst day: Daybreak. It rings.

LENA (V.O.)
You're on television. You look tired. Did you do it?

Low, an Estonian lilt, keys clattering under it. LENA KASK. Two years of texts, and Skye's never heard her voice.

SKYE
No. Quote me.

LENA (V.O.)
I know. I just wanted to hear how you said it. Sunlight's post quotes the two leaks you passed them as ashgrove.

SKYE
Who knows ashgrove is me?

LENA (V.O.)
Nobody. Me. And my cat.

Skye reads the string off her arm. KEYS, fast.

LENA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Skye. Read the prefix again.

Smeared ballpoint. The first three characters: MSI.

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LENA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Montgomery Systems. The CIA's cloud. Two levels under your father's garage in Tysons.

Skye puts her bandaged hand flat on the stall door.

LENA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Unscheduled mail sits in quarantine seven days. If he wrote what I think he wrote, Langley deletes it, and you're the woman on CNN who blew up a CIA officer. Forever.

SKYE
Can you get it without me?

LENA (V.O.)
Somebody has to go in with a cable and a drive. Past a badge reader on every door, and a facial recognition system called Augur.

INSERT - THE BADGE

A girl of nineteen with long fair hair, practicing a smile. MONTGOMERY SYSTEMS. SKYE A. MONTGOMERY. SUMMER ASSOCIATE. In the corner: 0417.

BACK TO SCENE

SKYE
My summer badge. Zero four one seven, Montgomery Systems. I was nineteen. Does it still open doors?

LENA (V.O.)
Why would it?

SKYE
Because I think my father kept the light on.

EXT. ROUTE 7, TYSONS - NIGHT

SUPER: AUGUR // TYSONS, VA // FRI 08 JAN

Skye in the gray hat. Across Route 7, MONTGOMERY TOWER, twenty-two stories of blue glass floodlit from the base.

LENA (V.O.)
0417 is live. It's on a list the account owner flagged do-not-expire. Your father. Your
(MORE)

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LENA (CONT'D)
brother Thomas. And a Catherine Montgomery, deactivated in 2019.

Her mother's, switched off the year she died. He left Skye's on. Her throat goes tight.

INT. MONTGOMERY TOWER - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

A BADGE READER by the vehicle ramp, a black dome above it. Chin down. Skye holds up the BADGE. RED. A second. Two.

CHIRP. GREEN. Down the ramps, a steel door: S LEVELS. GREEN.

It keeps going green. Too easy.

INT. MONTGOMERY TOWER - S2 DATA HALL - CONTINUOUS

The ROAR of ten thousand fans. Black server racks glittering off into the distance on a floor of raised white tiles. Her father's house, keeping everything.

Row nineteen, a chain-link cage: QUARANTINE ARRAY. She badges. GREEN.

A RASPBERRY PI into a port on the rack, a cable to the DRIVE. A row of tiny lights goes from red to green.

LENA (V.O.)
I'm in. He's in here. One object, January fourth. Six minutes.

Outside the cage a black DOME WHIRS, turning toward her. She looks up before she can stop herself.

INSERT - AUGUR EVENT QUEUE

CAM S2-14 // 23:26:41 // 91% MATCH // MONTGOMERY, SKYE A. // FBI POI 18:40

BACK TO SCENE

LENA (V.O.)
It says your name. Three men in the freight elevator, coming down. They were already in Tysons, waiting for Augur to see you.

48%. The doors SLIDE open. Skye steps back behind the rack.

Two men in FBI windbreakers, pistols along their legs. With them THE TEXAN (40s), big, ball cap, a suppressed rifle on a sling. On his shoulder a white skull patch, and this time we can read the word under it: REAPER.

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Nobody's here to arrest her.

SKYE
(a whisper)
Skull patch. There's a word under it. Reaper.

LENA (V.O.)
Reaper Global Solutions. A subcontractor to your father on Warrant. Skye, leave now.

SKYE
Not without the file, Lena.

The Texan comes down the center aisle, rifle up. 67%.

The cage opens onto his aisle. Skye looks down. White tiles on steel legs. A SUCTION LIFTER clipped to the rack.

INT. S2 DATA HALL - UNDER THE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The tile comes up with a gasp of cold air. Knee-high dark, steel legs and black cable. If she unplugs, she has nothing.

She slides in on her back, the drive on her chest, its cable running up to the Pi, and pulls the tile down over herself. It won't sit flush over the cable.

BOOTS on the tile over her face. It flexes. A FLASHLIGHT blade sweeps the cables an inch from her eyes.

THE TEXAN (O.S.)
Cage is empty. Rig's still here. Cable runs down behind the rack.

The drive on her chest has a little BLUE LIGHT. She cups her bandaged hand over it.

The cable goes TAUT. He's pulling. She closes both hands on it and holds.

A harder TUG. It slides through her fingers. Under the gauze the burn TEARS open, and her eyes fill, and she holds on.

LENA (V.O.)
(a whisper)
Eighty-nine. Ninety-three.

The cable goes SLACK.

THE TEXAN (O.S.)
Snagged on something. Screw it.

God bless a lazy man. The boots go away.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LENA (V.O.)
Hundred. It's on the drive.

The blue light on her chest goes out.

INT. MONTGOMERY HOUSE, GEORGETOWN - WILLIAM'S STUDY - NIGHT

A green-shaded lamp. On the blotter a typed speech, DAVOS at the top, its margins full of a slanting blue-black hand. A MONTBLANC lies across it, uncapped.

WILLIAM THAYER MONTGOMERY (76). White hair, gray cashmere, perfectly still.

On his monitor, the Augur alert: a frozen frame of his daughter's face, looking up into a dome camera. 91% MATCH. Beside it the live feed from S2. The cage. Her rig on the rack. No Skye.

He watches it for a while. The phone at his elbow stays where it is.

Another window. BADGE 0417 // MONTGOMERY, SKYE A. // DO NOT EXPIRE. He clicks once.

INSERT - THE SCREEN

BADGE 0417 // STATUS: INACTIVE // 23:30:04

BACK TO SCENE

He caps the pen.

INT. S2 DATA HALL - UNDER THE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

LENA (V.O.)
The tower's gone into lockdown. Skye. Your badge is dead. Somebody switched it off by hand.

SKYE
Only my family can touch that badge.

LENA (V.O.)
Their manual. Fire alarm unlocks every exit. Thirty seconds later, inert gas, for the servers. It takes the air out of the room, and anybody in it. East wall, twenty meters.

East under the floor. Elbows. Stomach. The DRIVE dragged ahead of her in the roaring dark.

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At the east wall she lifts a tile. A steel door marked EXIT, and beside it a red box: EXTINGUISHING AGENT RELEASE.

She climbs out, zips the drive inside her coat, flips the cover with her bleeding hand, and PULLS.

WHOOP. WHOOP. Strobes go WHITE down the whole hall. The exit lock CLUNKS open beside her.

Down the hall a windbreaker spins and sees her. His pistol comes up, and stops. He looks at the strobes. At her door. He runs for her door.

She's through. She CATCHES the door with her boot and JAMS the suction lifter in it, open a forearm wide.

For him.

INT. MONTGOMERY TOWER - EAST STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Yellow concrete, emergency lights, the horn coming up the well behind her. Up, two at a time.

At the P2 landing a door BANGS open above her. The Texan. Eight steps up. The rifle SNAPS onto her.

On the back of his left hand, on the handguard, the same white SKULL as the patch. Inked.

A wall extinguisher. She swings it up with both arms. It HITS the steps below his boots. BOUNCES. Goes CLANGING away down the stairs, pin still in.

The Texan LAUGHS. A short, surprised BARK.

THE TEXAN
Pin's in, lady.

He lets that sit.

THE TEXAN (CONT'D)
Hands. Let me see your hands.

She raises them. The gauze on the burned one is soaked red.

Far below, through the door she propped, a long enormous HISS. The GAS. His head turns toward it. One second.

She goes for the rail. Good hand on the yellow pipe, and her hips go over before the rest of her has voted. She lets go.

WHAM. Feet. Knees. Left shoulder. Something goes bright.

She rolls and comes up and goes down. He'll expect up.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT. MONTGOMERY TOWER - GARAGE P3 - CONTINUOUS

Three women in blue smocks push canvas carts toward a white van. Skye RUNS. Her shoulder SCREAMS.

The one in front turns. ROSA CALDERÓN (60s), small, glasses on a beaded chain.

ROSA
¿Niña?

SKYE
Rosa. Can you hide me?

The stairwell door BANGS open behind them. The Texan.

Rosa looks at him. At the bloody gauze. At the girl she used to feed. She lifts the lid off her cart.

ROSA
Adentro. Ándale.

INT. ROSA'S CART / CLEANING VAN - CONTINUOUS

Garbage bags CRACKLE. Skye curls round the drive.

THE TEXAN (O.S.)
Dark hair, gray hat. Which way?

ROSA (O.S.)
No sé, señor. No English. Fire. Fire alarm. We go.

His footsteps go. The van pulls out past the SIRENS.

SKYE
Got it. Front page, Lena.

LENA (V.O.)
Did you? It's encrypted. It's a one-time pad. Without the key it's noise. Somebody needs the pad. And he's dead.

Her fingers find the brass tag in her pocket. C S. Then the burner BUZZES. A text, to a phone she paid cash for.

INSERT - THE BURNER

Come home, sweetheart. Love, Dad.

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INT. TYSONS GALLERIA - PARKING LEVEL P3 - BENNETT'S EXPLORER - MORNING

SUPER: AUGUR // TYSONS, VA // SAT 09 JAN

A gray Ford Explorer with government plates. A cup holder full of Altoids tins. Every tin is peppermint. In six years, Bennett has never offered Luc one.

Through a gap in the decks: a blue glass tower, cruisers, yellow tape. Two black Suburbans, engines running.

Luc gets in. Bennett's tie is coiled on the Altoids. He hands Luc a tablet.

The doorbell clip from CNN. Snow. The bay window turns white. Luc runs it back at quarter speed, his thumb walking the flash, frame by frame.

BENNETT
What do you see?

LUC
One white frame, no smoke. Military charge. Under the front room, away from the door. Somebody learned that somewhere expensive.

BENNETT
Concur.
(takes the tablet back)
Now this. Last night.

INSERT - BENNETT'S TABLET

Ceiling camera. Black racks. A woman in a gray knit hat inside a chain-link cage looks up, straight into the lens.

A yellow box draws itself around her face: MATCH 91.3% | MONTGOMERY, SKYE A. | FBI POI 18:40

BACK TO SCENE

BENNETT (CONT'D)
That's Augur. Montgomery Systems' own face software, on their own building. She pulled the fire suppression, with two Bureau agents inside. One's at Inova Fairfax on oxygen.

LUC
She took something.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

BENNETT
Twenty gigabytes. It came into the Agency's classified enclave on January fourth. The night your father died. I'm not cleared to know what it is. Neither are you.

Hazel eyes. Calm.

BENNETT (CONT'D)
She'll be on 60 Minutes in a month. The seventh floor can't have that.
(beat)
Close her out.

Luc knew it was coming.

BENNETT (CONT'D)
Natural. Worst week of her life. Source dead, job gone, face on every screen in America. Run a bath, open a bottle of wine, don't wake up. Her father buries her in the family plot in Middleburg. In a year nobody remembers her name.

It's a good plan. Luc has run it himself.

LUC
Don't you have people for this?

BENNETT
She'll come to you. She already did, at the grave. I had two people at Arlington. They watched you talk to her.

LUC
Mike. She couldn't build that charge.

BENNETT
Nobody's paying either of us to think, Luc.

His phone buzzes. He holds it out. Luc puts it on speaker.

ASHBY (V.O.)
(soft Tidewater)
Luc. Cal Ashby. I took your allowance at gin rummy in '99, son. There are names on that drive. Assets. Families. If they land on some Sunlight channel next week,
(MORE)

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

ASHBY (CONT'D)
those people are dead in a month.
(beat)
I'd take it kindly if this ended quietly. Done by somebody who loved the old man as much as I did.

The line goes dead.

BENNETT
Clock's running, Luc. Your call.

Luc looks at the tower. The tape. The two idling Suburbans.

If he says no, somebody else runs her a bath. And Luc never learns what his father mailed on the last night of his life.

LUC
Her file. Augur access. Nobody else on her. Not the Bureau. Not a second team. Just me.

BENNETT
She's yours.
(then)
Car's at the BWI Marriott tonight. Keys on the tire.

INT. MOTEL ROOM, LEE HIGHWAY, FALLS CHURCH - NIGHT

Burned dust from the heater. Cold pho on the TV. Luc on the bed with Bennett's laptop.

ON THE LAPTOP: AUGUR. BALTIMORE PENN STATION // 09 JAN 03:12 // 62%. A gray knit hat on the platform, looking at her feet. Then nothing. She learned.

Her file. A 2022 story on the port of Baltimore, and a photo of a huge white-bearded man behind a bar. Her line under it: "He's the only honest man in this story. I checked."

He picks up the motel phone, because it's cleaner than his.

LUC
Odette Fleming. Her nephew. Monaco.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Sixth floor. She's out of surgery. Shall I put you through?

He hangs up. So that much was true.

His own phone buzzes. A text from a Maryland number: This is Maria. Call me when you've found the book. Don't bring them.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

He turns it face down. His thumb finds the LEATHER BRACELET on his right wrist.

EXT. BWI MARRIOTT - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A gray Toyota Camry under a sodium light. Keys on the tire. In the trunk, a scoped REMINGTON 700, a LASER MICROPHONE, lock picks, banded cash.

He photographs the rental agreement with his own phone, a little crooked: GRAY TOYOTA CAMRY. BWI AIRPORT. 01/09 22:40. BILLED TO: HARROW POINT LOGISTICS LLC. VISA ENDING 6620. He's photographed every one for six years.

Insurance.

SKYE (PRELAP)
Ow. Ow. Ow.

INT. GUTTED CONDO, ANN STREET, FELLS POINT - NIGHT

SUPER: AUGUR // BALTIMORE, MD // SUN 10 JAN

Blue tarps, bare studs. Luc on his belly with the Remington and the laser mic, earbuds in.

THROUGH THE SCOPE: across Ann Street, KEARNEY'S ANCHOR. Red brick, a green awning, a Natty Boh sign. A light upstairs.

Out front in an apron, DANNY KEARNEY (68), white beard, enormous, a mermaid on one forearm, looks up and down the street. Sentry duty nobody asked him for.

SKYE (V.O.)
(through the mic)
Ow, ow, ow, ow. Son of a bitch.

Luc catches himself smiling.

INTERCUT - THE HIDE / KEARNEY'S ANCHOR - UPSTAIRS ROOM

A narrow iron bed. Crab soup going cold. SKYE, barefoot, a fresh dressing half on her right hand, on a burner. We hear only her.

SKYE
The channel was made on the second. Two days before. So they wrote the claim before the bomb.
(listens)
The post said Bruce killed thirty-one people in a hospital in 2002. I've been through every public record on him. None of them is a hospital.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Luc's hand tightens on the stock.

SKYE (CONT'D)
And there's the books. He kept a front room full of paper. He was in the kitchen, in the back. You want the man, you bomb the kitchen. Who bombs the paper?

Luc closes his eyes. One white frame. A charge in the floor.

SKYE (CONT'D)
He works for them, Lena. He looked at my hands before he looked at my face.
(listens)
Because if they send somebody after me, who do they send? The one person I already went to. The one person I'd open the door for.
(then)
Read me that header again.

END INTERCUT

Luc's on his feet. The rifle stays on the tarp.

INT. KEARNEY'S ANCHOR - UPSTAIRS ROOM - NIGHT

A rake in a cheap Kwikset. CLICK. The door opens. Luc comes in low and to the left.

Nobody's aiming at the door.

Skye stands barefoot, the bandaged hand against her chest. In her left hand, a black DRIVE the size of a paperback, over a bucket of water.

SKYE
Close the door.

He closes the door.

SKYE (CONT'D)
If you come closer, I drop it.

Her voice is calm. Her hand shakes. The drive RATTLES in it.

Two steps, and he has the drive before her fingers open.

He turns her. Her back to his chest. His forearm across her collarbones. The KNIFE from his boot, flat under her jaw.

LUC
No label. Read it to me.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
Twenty gigabytes of random numbers. Encrypted with a one-time pad. Nobody on earth reads it without the key. Including the people who sent you.
(beat)
Did they tell you about Odette? She was screaming. I burned my palm off on her doorknob, and a doorbell camera saw all of it. Ask them where those eighteen minutes went.

LUC
I called the hospital.

She stops breathing.

LUC (CONT'D)
She's out of surgery. Sixth floor.

SKYE
Then why... is there a knife at my throat?

He doesn't have an answer.

LUC
You said there's a header on the file. What does it say?

SKYE
Take the knife off my throat, and I'll read it to you.

Down on Thames Street, four car doors THUNK shut at once.

Luc's at the window, two fingers between the slats. A black Tahoe, crooked on the curb. Four men in black jackets. A shoulder patch under the streetlight: a white skull, and the word REAPER.

SKYE (CONT'D)
Who are they?

LUC
Reaper Global. Private military. I put one of theirs down a stairwell in Dubai on Tuesday.

He drove them here. He's angry.

LUC (CONT'D)
We're leaving.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
We?

LUC
Unless you want to stay.

INT. KEARNEY'S ANCHOR - FRONT STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Danny fills the stairwell, a bar towel on his shoulder, a round NATTY BOH tray in his fist.

DANNY
Rooms are by the week, fellas! You ain't on the list!

The first Reaper comes up with a hand out. Danny SWINGS.

BANG. The tray takes him flat in the face. He goes backward down the stairs, through a table of glasses. CRASH.

A rifle butt SLAMS his belly. Danny sits down hard, ROARING.

Skye picked her honest man well.

INT. KEARNEY'S ANCHOR - CLOSET / ROOF HATCH - CONTINUOUS

Skye, boots on, the drive in her coat, goes up a STEPLADDER one-handed and shoves the hatch with her bad shoulder.

Boots POUND up the stairs. Luc follows and hauls the ladder up after him.

EXT. KEARNEY'S ANCHOR - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Tar, gravel, harbor wind. Luc DROPS the hatch, kneels on it.

THE TEXAN (O.S.)
Room's empty. Window's shut.

A chair SCRAPES into the closet below. Boots climb onto it.

The hatch HEAVES three inches. Luc SLAMS his weight down.

Four fingers curl over the rim. A big pale left hand, a white SKULL inked on the back.

We recognize that hand from Tysons.

Skye stands Danny's folded ladder on end over the hatch. Looks at the skull. Lets it fall.

CRACK. The rail comes down edge first across the knuckles.

A SCREAM below, high and surprised. The hand is gone. A body HITS the closet floor.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
Pin's out.

He doesn't know what that means. She runs.

EXT. ROOFTOPS, FELLS POINT - CONTINUOUS

East across flat roofs, chimneys, dead dishes. Over the black harbor, the red DOMINO SUGARS sign glows.

BANG. The hatch flies open. A flashlight finds Luc's back. A suppressed rifle COUGHS. Brick dust stings his face.

They go flat. A second round SPRAYS gravel over them.

SKYE
You were holding a knife to my throat four minutes ago. Whose side are you on, Mr. Malone?

LUC
Mine.

He picks up a loose chunk of BRICK and weighs it.

LUC
When I throw this, you run. Drop into the alley and wait for me.

SKYE
And if you don't? Who do I quote?

LUC
Then go to Lena.

He throws the brick high and sideways, out over the edge. Down on Thames Street it goes CRUNCH through the windshield of a parked BMW.

WHOOP. WHOOP. Then the plumber's van behind it, out of step.

The rifleman's head turns toward the noise. One second.

LUC (CONT'D)
Go.

They go. The rifle COUGHS. Wide. COUGHS again.

The last roof ends in a parapet. Fifteen feet below, a DUMPSTER. Skye hangs by her good hand. Drops. BANG. Rolls off onto the cobbles.

Luc drops. His ankle ROLLS on the lid's edge. WHUMP. On his side on the cobbles.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Skye's good hand is in his collar, hauling.

SKYE
Up. You're heavy. Get up.

EXT. WOLFE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Out of the alley at a limp and a run. He catches her sleeve.

LUC
They're on a roof. Nobody runs.
Pocket the hand.

A Honda Civic idles at the curb, hazards on, outside a carryout with a neon crab in the window. Luc gets in behind the wheel. Skye takes the other side. No lights.

Somebody's walking out with a bag of crab cakes and no car.

INT. STOLEN CIVIC - NORTH AVENUE - RED LIGHT - NIGHT

His ankle swells in the boot. Her gauze is red again.

SKYE
Your people sent you to kill me.
Then they sent those men to kill
you.
(he drives)
What do you do? What's the job?

He drives another block.

LUC
If I do it right... nothing
happened.

SKYE
What's your name? Your first name.
I don't even know your first name.

LUC
Luc.

SKYE
Luke?

LUC
Luc. L-U-C. My mother was French.

SKYE
What's the difference?

LUC
The C.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
Nobody can hear a C.

LUC
I can.

She looks at him a long moment in the dash light. Then she takes the black drive out of her coat.

SKYE
The header. The only part that isn't encrypted.
(from memory)
"For Luc. The pad is where you learned to count cards."

He keeps his eyes on the road.

SKYE (CONT'D)
I told you that story at the grave. Before I knew who you were.
(holds out the drive)
Your father mailed you a letter, Luc.

INT. SILVER FORK DINER, WILMINGTON - DAWN

SUPER: AUGUR // WILMINGTON, DE // MON 11 JAN

The neon lost its F years ago. SILVER ORK. A back booth. Luc with his back to the wall and his eyes on the door. Two phones on the table, batteries out.

LUC
Beirut. The pad's in my father's bar. A man I know flies medical freight out of the airport across the road at three.
(looks at her for the first time)
That's if you're coming.

SKYE
I have conditions. I hold the drive, and you hold the pad when we find it. Neither of us reads it without the other. You can't finish the job you were sent to do. I can't publish without you. Mutually assured decryption.

LUC
Fine. Next.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
When we read it, I print it.

LUC
And if it gets people buried?

SKYE
Nothing's true till everybody knows it.

LUC
Everybody at Arlington knew my father was a hero.
(drinks his coffee)
My turn. My name never goes in your story. Not my name. Not my face. Not one thing I've done.

SKYE
That depends on what you've done.

He holds her eyes. The WAITRESS fills both cups and goes.

LUC
No. It doesn't.
(a twenty and a ten on the check)
Do you want to come or not?

SKYE
Yes.

He's already limping for the door.

MONTAGE - WILMINGTON TO BEIRUT

A Challenger jet over the Atlantic, stacked with crated dialysis machines. Skye wedged between them. Luc asleep sitting up, ankle on a crate.

Dusk. A wooden fishing boat out of Larnaca. ANDREAS (50s), a Karelia burning down to his knuckles, asks no questions at all. Skye likes him enormously.

Luc asleep on a pile of nets, mouth slightly open. Skye talks low into a cheap new phone:

SKYE
Luke Malone sleeps sitting up with his mouth open. He was sent to kill me. He hasn't brought it up.

LUC
(eyes shut)
L-U-C.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
That's what I said.

LUC
You said Luke.

Rain on a quay under the corniche. Andreas puts them ashore:

ANDREAS
I wait till two. After two, I go to Cyprus. With you, without you.

END MONTAGE

EXT. RUE GOURAUD, GEMMAYZEH - NIGHT

SUPER: AUGUR // BEIRUT // TUE 12 JAN

Rain runs down the steep street. On the corner, a van-sized diesel generator hammers in a chain-link cage.

A narrow green door, a faded red sign in French and Arabic. COVER STORY.

SKYE
Cover Story's still open?

LUC
Yes. Hagop doesn't close for explosions.

INT. COVER STORY - NIGHT

A dark wood bar, old men at backgammon. Against the back wall, a WURLITZER jukebox lit red and gold. It's the only thing in the room that looks loved.

HAGOP (60), heavy, a gold chain, a Liverpool tea towel washed nearly white on his shoulder, looks up.

HAGOP
Loulou?

He comes around the bar, takes Luc's face in both hands, kisses him three times. Pours arak. It clouds white.

HAGOP (CONT'D)
Your father was here. October. Three days, right there on the end stool. He went downstairs a lot.
(his eyes go to Luc and away)
He said, Hagop, if my son ever comes, play him B7.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

He feeds the Wurlitzer a coin and presses B and 7. The needle comes down with a soft CRACKLE.

Charles Trenet. "La Mer." Warm, French, far away.

Luc doesn't move. His throat moves once.

LUC
My mother sang that. In the kitchen. With the radio.

Skye puts her good hand flat on the bar, an inch from his. It stays there. He drinks off the arak.

LUC (CONT'D)
Hagop. We need to go downstairs.

SKYE
(her key ring out)
C S. Cover Story. That's what his keys open.

INT. COVER STORY - CELLAR / BRUCE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The first brass key turns with a rusty GRIND.

HAGOP
(handing down a flashlight)
I don't go down there. That was his.

He doesn't come down.

A vaulted cellar. A big green generator rattling in the corner. Luc walks the old barrels, counting, and shoulders the fourth from the end. It swings out on a hinge. Behind it, a gray STEEL DOOR. The second key opens it.

A concrete room. A cot. A filing cabinet. And the wall: a floor-to-ceiling CORKBOARD of photographs, clippings, cards in Bruce's square capitals, and red string.

Who actually uses red string? Bruce Malone, apparently.

Skye puts the flashlight on the map at the center.

SKYE
New York. London. Zurich. Hong Kong. Panama City. Cities with money in them.
(reads a card)
"Panama. Miraflores. Twenty-one January." "Sunlight," underlined three times.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Where all the strings meet, one card. One word.

SKYE (CONT'D)
"Augur."

A cash box in the cabinet's bottom drawer. The third key opens it.

Gray foam. One matte black USB DRIVE. A strip of white tape on the back, two letters in square capitals: L.M.

SKYE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
The pad.

He zips it into his inside pocket. Skye's at the wall with the Larnaca phone. FLASH. FLASH. Every card, every face.

LUC
That phone talks to somebody. Who?

SKYE
Lena. If we get killed walking out of here, this wall dies with us.

INT. COVER STORY - BAR / KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The top of the stairs. Two bars of signal. She sends all forty-one photos.

No Hagop. A voice in the kitchen, low and fast, in Arabic. Luc comes up behind her and goes past.

Hagop at a steel sink, phone to his ear, other hand in his apron. His face is gray.

LUC
Hang up. How long?

HAGOP
Since the blast. They pay. Every month. My daughter's school. My wife's insulin. They said, Hagop, just tell us if anyone goes downstairs. Just a phone call.

LUC
C'est qui, "ils"? Who?

HAGOP
I swear on my mother, I don't know. A voice. Lebanese, but not from here. The money comes from a company in Cyprus.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Hagop's hand comes out of the apron. A small black AUTOMATIC, the bluing worn to silver. It shakes.

LUC
(very quietly)
Pose-le, Hagop. Put it down.

HAGOP
I'm sorry, Loulou. They said if I didn't, they'd...

Luc's thumb goes to the BRACELET on his right wrist. Just touches it.

Only Skye sees it.

One step. His left hand turns the pistol out and away. His right takes the back of Hagop's head and drives it sideways into the steel lip of the sink.

CLANG. Hagop's knees BUCKLE. Luc catches him and lowers him to the tile, gently.

A long ragged SNORE with a gap in the middle. Then the gap doesn't end.

SKYE
You killed him.

LUC
He had a gun on us. Finger inside the guard.

SKYE
What was the company in Cyprus called, Luc? Who signs the checks? Who's the voice that isn't from here?
(beat)
Which of those can he answer now?

LUC
He'd already told them we're here.

SKYE
You can't source that.

CLUNK. The lights go out.

Under their feet the generator gives a long, dying RATTLE. Out on the corner the cage stops HAMMERING, and Rue Gouraud dies in one breath.

Skye drops to the tile. The phone lights her face. COMPLETE. 41 OF 41. Then Lena: YOUR UPLOAD WAS FLAGGED. SOMEBODY'S

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

WATCHING THAT NETWORK. GET OUT NOW.

Hagop's call and her photos. They both did it. She looks at Luc in the glow. He's already worked it out. She's ashamed.

LUC
Screen off.

The dark comes down complete.

BANG. The front door flies open. SHOUTS in Arabic. A chair CRASHES over. Pistol lights sweep the ceiling.

He was twelve in this bar. He walked from this kitchen to that jukebox a thousand times, eyes on a deck of cards.

LUC (CONT'D)
I know this room. Stay. When I say your name, come straight through to the front door. Fourteen steps. Don't stop.

SKYE
Luc...

He's gone.

INT. COVER STORY - BAR - CONTINUOUS

We stay with Skye. Three lights, jerking and sweeping. Every man stares down his own tunnel of white.

One light jerks UP. Into the ceiling. A grunt. THUD.

The flashlight CLATTERS and spins. For half a second: Luc, on one knee beside a man on the floor. The beam goes past. He's gone.

GUNMAN TWO
Shou? Shou fi?

The old brass foot rail RINGS, softly, where a shoe touched it. The second light WHIPS toward the sound.

An arm comes out of the black and takes him across the throat. He goes down on top of his own light. CRUNCH. Out.

GUNMAN THREE in the front doorway, his beam raking the room. He heard two men go down and never saw it happen.

INT. COVER STORY - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Cold air on the back of Skye's neck. The alley door is open. A fourth man in it, a shape against the rain. His pistol light comes up off the floor to find her.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

She doesn't think. She wakes the phone. Camera. FLASH.

POP. White, straight into his eyes. POP. POP. A strobe.

In the third flash: Luc, a step from her shoulder, his forearm thrown up across his eyes.

The man fires blind. BLAM. Plaster sifts into her hair. Luc goes under the gun. WHAM. They both go out the back door.

BLAM. BLAM. Gunman Three fires at the flash. Both rounds SPLINTER the frame by Skye's head. Then he runs. Tires SCREAM away.

Luc comes back in alone. Blood from his hairline over one eye. He blinks hard, again and again. He has the fourth man's pistol now, as well as Hagop's.

LUC
You lit me up too.
(then)
Fourteen steps. Skye. Now.

She goes. Through the black bar, a hand on the wood, her lips moving. To the door.

EXT. RUE GOURAUD - NIGHT

Black from end to end, and full of people. Beirut doesn't stop drinking for a blackout. Hundreds spill into the rain, phone lights on. A whole street of little white stars.

At the bottom of the street, a black Range Rover, headlights on. Two men in the light, looking at faces.

Augur, the old way. By hand.

Luc stops in the doorway. He measures it. Where you'd run.

SKYE
Don't run.
(pulls on her gray hat, hair up under it)
People notice running. Phones off. Walk. Don't look at them. Look at your feet, like your night's over.

He pockets both pistols and takes her arm, close and slow. One more boyfriend walking his girl home.

Ten yards from the Range Rover, a flashlight crosses her back. Pauses. Moves on. Luc's hand on her arm stays easy.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

EXT. FISHERMEN'S HARBOR, AIN EL-MREISSEH - NIGHT

A concrete quay. One light at the end, on Andreas's wheelhouse, the diesel already CHUGGING.

Luc hands Skye over the gunwale and goes back for the line.

Headlights swing onto the ramp and go to HIGH BEAM. The quay goes white. A black Range Rover. The flashlight on her back didn't move on after all.

The rope comes free. A yard of black water opens between hull and stone. Luc runs for it on the bad ankle. JUMPS. THUD. One boot and one knee on the deck. Skye's fist in his jacket, hauling him in.

Men run down the ramp into their own headlights, pistols out. Luc comes up on one knee with Hagop's pistol, aimed into the white. He doesn't fire. One muzzle flash, and they'd know where the boat is.

Skye sees him not do it.

A muzzle flash on the quay. CRACK. The boat clears the breakwater into the dark.

Then there's only the engine. And black water at night.

INT. ANDREAS'S BOAT - WHEELHOUSE - NIGHT

A mile out. Andreas lights a Karelia off the last one.

Skye on the nets, the burned hand unwrapped in her lap. Luc on a crate, blood dried in one eyebrow, a laptop on his knees. Her father's drive in one side, L.M. in the other. A progress bar crawls.

Skye plays the crossing memo low against her ear.

SKYE (RECORDED)
Luke Malone sleeps sitting up with his mouth open.

She trims that line.

LUC (RECORDED)
L-U-C.

She keeps that.

SKYE
You knew Hagop was going to do that, didn't you? Before you went in the kitchen.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
Oui. He sent you downstairs and didn't come down. Nobody who loved my father would've stayed up.

He rubs his eyes. He's been doing it since the bar.

LUC (CONT'D)
Next time, wait for your name, then light them up.

SKYE
He had a gun on me.

LUC
He had a gun on the ceiling. You put it there.

SKYE
He had a daughter. In school.

LUC
He taught me backgammon.

SKYE
Doesn't that...

LUC
(eyes on the screen)
Yes. It does.

The laptop CHIMES. Hundreds of files, 2002 to last October. At the top: README.

LUC (CONT'D)
README. "Son. If you're reading this, you found the bar. Start with Baghdad. The embassy. January sixteenth. They're going to do it in Sunlight's name, and they're going to blame her."

He looks up at Skye across the swaying wheelhouse.

SKYE
He means me.

We stay on Skye. Behind her, through the salt on the glass, Beirut lies along the black water. Gemmayzeh, at the foot of the hill, still dark.

EXT. ANDREAS'S BOAT / LARNACA BAY - SUNRISE

SUPER: AUGUR // LARNACA, CYPRUS // WED 13 JAN

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

The engine that THUDDED all night drops to a mutter. Past the low white town, the SALT LAKE lies pink and still. Knee-deep in it, feeding, stand FLAMINGOS in their hundreds.

Skye at the rail. Gauze on her burned right hand. Gemmayzeh plaster in her hair.

SKYE
Look. Luc. Look.

LUC
I've been to Larnaca four times.

SKYE
And?

LUC
I never looked.

He looks now, at her. He looks away before she catches him.

INT. FLAT OVER A BAKERY - BATHROOM - DAY: THE ICE BATH

Two sacks of fish-market ice. RIP. The ice CLATTERS into a tub of cold water.

On the sink, a pharmacy bag: pale foundation, gray-blue eyeshadow, and a tube of stage blood he won't need. He bought the blood so the girl at the till wouldn't wonder about all that gray.

Skye sits on the tub's edge. Luc kneels on the tile and does her face. Close. She watches him the whole time.

SKYE
Who taught you? Got a name?

LUC
A woman in Marseilles. She did the opera, and people who needed to leave the country older. Or dead.
(working)
She said you don't paint death on. You take life off.

SKYE
And then?

LUC
There's a woman in the basement at Larnaca General. She came out of the sea this morning. Nobody's claimed her. Your age, your height. I pay somebody to put your name on her form.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
She has a name. That woman. She had a mother. Somebody's waiting for a phone call that's never coming, and you'll put my name on her so the CIA leaves me alone for a week?

LUC
Yes.

SKYE
Doesn't that...

She stops. She's heard herself.

LUC
Yes. It does. Every time.

He sits back. A dead woman's face.

LUC (CONT'D)
Get in.

She goes into the ice in her clothes, up to the collarbones. A GASP that turns into a long, shuddering HISS.

SKYE
Oh God. Oh God, Luc.

LUC
Breathe. It gets better.

SKYE
Correction. It does not get better.

LUC
No. But you stop caring.

He lays her wet hair across her face. He lifts her bandaged right hand onto the rim of the tub.

LUC (CONT'D)
The burn's been on every channel. Bennett will look for the hand.

He climbs up onto the rim with his phone. She's shaking so hard the water rings around her.

LUC (CONT'D)
Ten seconds. Breathe out. Don't breathe in.

Gray-green eyes in a dead gray face. She breathes out, all the way. Her body goes still.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. Twelve photographs.

LUC (CONT'D)
Done.

She comes up GASPING. He hauls her out, wraps her in every towel in the flat and rubs her arms hard. Watching her go still in that water scared him. He keeps rubbing.

They sit on the bathroom floor, her wet head on his shoulder. She stops on the close one.

SKYE
I look like her. Don't I.
(then)
What's her name?

LUC
Nobody knows.

SKYE
Somebody knows. Somebody always knows.

INT. CHRISTOS'S TOYOTA - LARNACA GENERAL HOSPITAL LOT - DUSK

CHRISTOS (50s), morgue attendant, counts three thousand euros twice. Amber worry beads CLICK in his other hand. Skye leans between the seats with her phone up, recording.

CHRISTOS
A blue dress. One gold earring, a little hand. A boat from Tartus. Forty people. Six they found.
(eyes the phone)
She's a journalist? Five. For a journalist, five.

Luc counts out two thousand more. Skye doesn't apologize.

EXT. FLAT - BALCONY - MIDNIGHT

A fresh Cypriot SIM. Below, a cat jumps between car hoods.

BENNETT (V.O.)
Jesus. I thought you were dead.

Relief in it. Real or very good.

LUC
(flat, tired)
She went out on the breakwater last night. Lot of wind. Lot of sea.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

BENNETT (V.O.)
Send me something for upstairs.

He sends the photographs. _Read._ Somewhere in Virginia, Bennett is scrolling them with his thumb. Luc minds that.

BENNETT (V.O.)
Closed out? I can write it up?

LUC
It's closed.

BENNETT (V.O.)
Good work, Luc. Come home.
(a pause)
One thing. Send me the body.

EXT. FLAT - BALCONY - DAY: TWO CALLS

SUPER: AUGUR // LARNACA, CYPRUS // THU 14 JAN

A red geranium on the rail. Skye in the sun with a burner. On the gray laptop, a silver-haired man in a polka-dot bow tie, his face circled in red. Luc in the doorway.

SKYE
Graham Pell. Forty years with my father. Now he's leading the delegation, and your father circled his face in red.

LUC
He'll tell your father. Your father keeps his promises?

SKYE
To me? Always. That's the worst thing about him.

She dials. Luc steps inside, out of her sight.

GRAHAM (V.O.)
Pell.

SKYE
Uncle Graham?

Her voice cracks on "Graham." She didn't plan that.

GRAHAM (V.O.)
Skye? Oh my dear God. Where are you? Are you hurt?

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
I'm safe. I didn't do it. Take me to Baghdad on Saturday. As Catherine Ashcroft. Mom's name.

GRAHAM (V.O.)
(a pen scratches)
Catherine Ashcroft. K-A-T...

SKYE
C. With a C. You gave the toast at their wedding.
(then)
Don't tell Dad. Please. I want to tell him myself.

GRAHAM (V.O.)
I won't tell. Cross my heart.

She hangs up. She's just picked a nice old man's pocket.

The burner BUZZES. _(703) area code. 11:17._

WILLIAM (V.O.)
Sweetheart.

SKYE
Hi, Dad.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
Graham called me. Don't be angry with him. He was crying. He cries at christenings. I haven't been frightened since 1971.

SKYE
Don't tell anyone I'm alive. Not the FBI. Not Calvin Ashby.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
Nobody. You have my word. Have I ever broken my word to you?

SKYE
No.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
One thing, for me. When it flies, stay inside with Graham. You used to put your hands over your ears at the Fourth of July.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

FLASH - DOCK, LAKE HOUSE, MAINE - NIGHT (2001)

Fireworks over black water. A little girl with her feet in the lake SCREAMS with joy at every BOOM. At the end of the dock, a small boy has both hands clamped over his ears. That's THOMAS.

BACK TO SCENE

SKYE
I'll stay inside, Dad.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
Good girl. I love you, Skye.

Her mouth opens. Nothing comes.

SKYE
I know.

She SNAPS the SIM in half and drops the halves in the geranium pot. Luc's in the doorway.

LUC
He called in eleven minutes. Your father's on a payroll.

SKYE
Nobody pays my father.

LUC
Somebody does. When his promise to you runs into an older one, he keeps the older one.

SKYE
And the Fourth of July was Thomas. I loved the noise.

LUC
Then he wants you behind a wall.

GRAHAM (V.O.)
(PRELAP)
Isn't it something?

EXT. SKY OVER BAGHDAD - EMBASSY HELICOPTER - DAY

SUPER: AUGUR // BAGHDAD, IRAQ // SAT 16 JAN

Rotors THUDDING. Below, by the Tigris, a hundred acres of green lawn and twelve-foot T-barriers. The biggest American embassy on earth.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Beside Skye in a headset, GRAHAM PELL (68). Camel coat. A red bow tie with tiny white anchors. A twinkle he can switch on for a room.

GRAHAM
Oh, Catherine. You've got your mother's chin.

He presses a WERTHER'S into her palm, low, out of habit. Then a white badge on a red lanyard: EMBASSY ESCORT.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
It opens the gates between the zones. I signed for it. Don't lose it.

She'll be glad of it before dark.

Across from her, RAY DUTTON (60), ex-Diplomatic Security, folds each used Nicorette back into its foil.

In the back, two young TECHNICIANS asleep on crates stenciled WARRANT. A third sits apart. Late forties, short gray beard, a tan ball cap, sunglasses. He whistles softly. The same slow bars, over and over. We've heard it before.

INT. EMBASSY HANGAR - DAY

Two WARRANT DRONES on cradles. Matte gray, the length of a car. A black SENSOR POD under the nose, beer-keg sized.

The bearded technician stands behind a rugged LAPTOP, past the light. A cable runs from it to an antenna on a tripod. We never get closer to him than Skye does.

The two young techs are closing the left drone's pod. One holds something inside it steady with both hands.

Nobody holds a camera with both hands.

BEARDED TECH
Don't touch the left one. It's calibrated.

An accent with corners in it. The bigger tech wipes his palms down his cargo pants. Sweating, in January.

Graham crouches with a grunt under the other drone. A panel near the tail. A keyhole. A keypad.

GRAHAM
My knees. Maintenance override, I'm told. Key, code, and the motors stop dead. Different code on every
(MORE)

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
unit.
(beaming up at her)
Your father insisted. He said a machine you can't turn off isn't a machine. It's a god.

SKYE
Could I see how they fly it?

GRAHAM
Oh, come on, Pieter. Be a sport.

PIETER turns the laptop a few degrees her way and stays put.

INSERT - THE CONTROLLER SCREEN

The flight log. The last line:

AUTH OVERRIDE PKG LOADED // SIGNED: ashgrove

BACK TO SCENE

Skye reads it upside down. Her face doesn't move. She gives him the dinner-party smile. Her father's.

EXT. EMBASSY - BEHIND THE T-WALL - DAY

Around the corner her legs go. She sits down hard on a curb.

SKYE
(into phone)
Lena. They signed it with my handle. Ashgrove. They're flying it into the chancery tonight, and the last thing on that laptop is me.

LENA (V.O.)
Then you need the laptop. Override code's on it. Luc needs every guard and every camera looking somewhere else. He comes in at Gate 7.

On a tower over the chancery, a white dome turns, searching. A six-barreled gun hangs under it.

SKYE
What if the rockets come at sunset, with the drone in the air? Everybody's in the bunkers. Nobody's watching the lawn.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LENA (V.O.)
A militia channel. "A gift for the Americans at sunset on Saturday." The admin got paid Wednesday. From a wallet in Cyprus.

SKYE
They didn't wait for the militia. They bought it. Tell Luc when the siren goes, that's his wall. And tell him I'll get him the code.

INT. RESIDENCE - RECEPTION ROOM - SUNSET

Skye at the back in a BLACK DRESS, Lena's cellular DONGLE zipped into her clutch. Dutton by the hall door.

Graham beside her at the window. Through the glass, Pieter sets up a tripod and a folding table on the lawn.

SKYE
Uncle Graham. What's in the sensor pod?

GRAHAM
Cameras, my dear. Very expensive cameras.

SKYE
Then why were the men who closed it sweating?

GRAHAM
Contractors. They eat terribly. I never ask questions.

SKYE
Graham.

His bow tie is crooked. He looks older than she remembers.

GRAHAM
Go home, Catherine. After tonight. Go home to your father and never leave again. Cross your heart.

She opens her mouth. The SIREN.

INT. RESIDENCE - INNER HALL - CONTINUOUS

A rising electronic WAIL. Glasses RING on the trays.

RECORDED VOICE
Incoming. Incoming. Incoming.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Trays CRASH. At the end of the hall, the SAFE HAVEN stands open: eight inches of cream-painted steel, a wheel on the back. A young AGENT holds it. Graham's inside already, by the water cooler.

AGENT
I count five and I seal it! Then it doesn't open till all clear!

A big hand CLAMPS Skye's arm above the elbow.

DUTTON
Mr. Montgomery's instructions, Miss Ashcroft.

AGENT
Five.

Dutton steers her at the sill.

AGENT (CONT'D)
Four. Three.

Skye plants her left foot on the sill. STAMPS her right heel down into the top of his foot with all her weight.

Dutton GRUNTS. His grip opens. She TEARS out backward into the hall.

AGENT (CONT'D)
Two.

Dutton LUNGES. The agent grabs his jacket and HAULS him in.

AGENT (CONT'D)
One. Sealing.

At the back of the room, Graham's on his feet.

GRAHAM
Catherine.

Once. He doesn't tell the agent to hold the door. He doesn't send Dutton after her. The steel SWINGS shut between them. CHUNK. CHUNK. CHUNK.

Ray Dutton will sit out the rocket attack on one foot.

EXT. RESIDENCE LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Skye steps out of her shoes. Heels in one hand, her phone in the other.

The white dome SPINS. The gun OPENS UP. A long ripping BUZZ. Red TRACERS climb into the brown dusk.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

The drone hangs thirty feet over the empty lawn, rock steady. Pieter alone at the table below it.

A dark streak drops out of the dust. The big dinner tent at the chancery end JUMPS off its poles. WHUMP. It comes down burning. Nobody's in it.

The drone turns on its own axis. Toward the chancery.

INT. EMBASSY SUPPORT COMPOUND - DISH PIT - CONTINUOUS

Steam. Every man in the dish pit goes flat on the wet tile. Luc too, in an apron, badge MARC DELORME. Then he gets up.

MOSES (40s), Ugandan, grabs at his apron from the floor.

MOSES
Marc! Get down, man!

LUC
Toilet.

EXT. SUPPORT COMPOUND - GATE 7 - CONTINUOUS

BRRRRRRT. The C-RAM is a pressure in his teeth. He runs along the T-wall on the bad ankle.

GATE 7. A steel door, a badge reader. It's open.

Skye's in it. Barefoot, hair whipping. One hand holds the door against the wind. The other holds up the white badge.

SKYE
I badged it!

He's through. The door SLAMS behind them.

EXT. RESIDENCE LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Beyond the west wall, the HABOOB: a brown wall standing up out of the city, taller than the palms.

The drone stops turning. Nose on the chancery. Then it LURCHES right. Back. Dips. Recovers.

SKYE
It's pretending. It wobbles so it looks hacked, and then it dives. That's what I'd do.

She'd have made a decent terrorist.

Nobody at the table. A tan cap walks away into the dust. On a lull in the wind, WHISTLING. The same slow bars.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Luc goes still.

LUC
Le Boudin. A Legion march. I heard it in the Gulf.

The two young techs come out of the hangar. The bigger one has a pistol down along his leg. The smaller one carries a TIRE IRON.

LUC (CONT'D)
I'll get them off the table. You get on it.

SKYE
Luc, the big one has a fucking gun.

LUC
Then he'll be shooting at me.

His thumb finds the leather BRACELET on his right wrist. Rubs the knot once.

Skye sees it.

He goes.

We go with Luc. Straight at them. Low, in the dust.

CRACK. Air TUGS past his ear. CRACK. Luc drops onto his hip and slides into second on the wet grass. The shot goes high.

He comes up inside the big man's arms. The pistol SPINS away into the grass. Elbow to the jaw. WHAM. Does the big man go down? Nope.

He drives Luc into the table. CRASH. The LAPTOP flies.

Luc's on his back. Two hundred and twenty pounds on top of him. Hands on his throat.

Past them, Skye runs barefoot for the laptop.

Luc digs a thumb under the man's ear. The man SCREAMS. The grip gives.

He SHOVES. ROLLS. The small one's tire iron comes down across the big man's back. WHACK.

Luc YANKS the small one down by the ankle, takes the iron and hits him once across the side of the head. CLONK. The small one lies still.

The big one finds his pistol. It comes up. Toward Skye, on her knees ten yards off, the laptop open, Lena's dongle

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

blinking in its side.

Luc THROWS the tire iron. It takes the big man across the forearm. BANG. The shot goes into the ground.

Luc's on him from behind. An arm around the neck. A hand on the back of the head. TURN. An old corporal taught him that, in a muddy yard twenty years ago.

The big man goes down. He doesn't get up.

His lanyard reads H. BRANDT. The sleeve has ridden up. Inside the forearm, inked blue, a pair of parachute wings over the words _2e REP._

Luc's regiment. He feels sick. He picks up the pistol.

The rotors change pitch. A rising WHINE. The drone moves, gathering speed, toward the low wall.

SKYE
It's in his notes. Unit SN-0442 has a radio override. Same code, over the link.

She types six digits. ENTER.

Two flat KNOCKS, metal on metal. The tripod JUMPS and goes over sideways in the grass.

Sixty yards out, a tan cap walks away into the brown curtain. He might have stopped to tie a shoe.

SKYE (CONT'D)
It didn't take. He shot the antenna.

LUC
At sixty yards, in this? He could've had you.
(then)
Stay down.

She doesn't. She runs barefoot into the open, KICKS the folded leg straight and JAMS it into the turf. Runs back.

Luc's hands want to shake. He holds the pistol still. The third shot doesn't come.

SKYE (CONT'D)
Link's back!

Over the wall the drone's nose DROPS. It comes down through the black smoke at the chancery's long wall of slit windows.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
Skye, it's diving!

ENTER.

The rotors STOP. All four at once.

It glides on for a long moment. Then the wind takes it. It ROLLS sideways and FALLS out of the sky.

CRUNCH. Onto a gravel strip by a row of oleanders. Rotor arms SNAP off. Twenty yards short of the chancery.

Does it blow? Not yet.

Skye makes a sound on her knees in the grass. Half a laugh, half a sob.

EXT. GRAVEL STRIP BY THE CHANCERY - CONTINUOUS: THE DETONATOR

The sensor pod's split along a seam. No cameras. A gray block the size of two bricks in black tape. A slim SILVER DETONATOR pressed into the block.

A red LED. Blinking faster.

LUC
Crash timer. If it misses, it goes off anyway. Get behind the wall.

Skye doesn't move. He kneels in the gravel and goes calm.

We stay tight on two fingers going in through the split. They find the silver tube.

He pulls. Slowly. Straight back.

An inch.

Free.

The LED goes solid red. He FLICKS the tube away underhand.

CRACK. Stones STING his face. A hot sliver of casing goes into the back of his hand.

The gray block lies in the pod. Inert. Luc looks at his hand. All his fingers.

Overhead the C-RAM STOPS. The silence is ENORMOUS. Skye kneels beside him.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
You pulled it out with your fingers?

LUC
Slowly.

She puts her hand on his wrist. Just for a second. Her fingers are ice cold.

SKYE
Lena's got the drive. The package with my name on it, and the money. Reaper's invoices come from an LLC called Laramie Range Holdings.

Her bare feet bleed on the gravel.

LUC
Skye.

She waits. He hunts for the words.

LUC (CONT'D)
Merci.

She holds his eyes. She nods. Once.

SHOUTING across the compound. Skye's phone is up.

LUC
Skye. The guards.

SKYE
Twenty seconds. By morning somebody brings a truck, and there was never anything in that pod but very expensive cameras.

SNAP. The drone, the chancery behind it. SNAP. The split pod. SNAP. The gray block, the steady red light. SNAP. SN-0442 on the broken flank.

SENT TO L.K.

The first gust of the haboob HITS them. A wall of sand. The light goes out.

INT. FLAT OVER A LIQUOR STORE, ANKAWA, ERBIL - NIGHT

SUPER: AUGUR // ERBIL, IRAQ // SUN 17 JAN

A kerosene heater HISSES. Skye on the couch in a sweater with a reindeer on it, cut feet wrapped and propped toward the heat. On Luc's throat, two purple handprints.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
(reading her phone, flat)
"A commercial unmanned aircraft experienced a malfunction in high winds. There were no casualties."
(lowers it)
That's where you bury the line you need on the record. Nobody reads the last paragraph.
(then)
Where do you want to be?

LUC
The last paragraph.

She laughs before she can stop it.

SKYE
Thank you. For my feet.

LUC
Next time, put shoes on.

SKYE
The wings on the big one's arm. Whose are they?

LUC
My regiment's. So's Price. He was my corporal in Mali. He tried to hire me in a bar in this town. Same wings.

SKYE
And the bracelet. You touched it before you went at them. And in Beirut, before Hagop. It's what you do before. Isn't it?

LUC
It was my mother's. Céline Aubert. From Lyon. She sang in the kitchen all day, badly, to the radio.

SKYE
How did she die?

LUC
A blue Peugeot. October 2003, raining. Down an embankment into a creek. The police said she was going too fast.

SKYE
Was she?

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
She drove like an old lady.
(then)
My father came home at three in the morning, wet through. He sat at the kitchen table in the dark in his wet coat.

SKYE
Was the radio on?

He hasn't thought about that in twenty-three years.

LUC
No. It was always on. That night it was off, and I knew before he said a word.

SKYE
Is that why you're doing this? To find out what he knew about her?

He doesn't answer.

LUC
Your turn. Nineteen. You left your father's company. What did you see?

SKYE
A video in a shared folder. AUGUR_FIELD_EVAL_04.

INSERT - A MONITOR, ENGINEERING FLOOR (2015)

A village market seen from straight above. A box rides a man buying vegetables. A boy holds his hand.

The box goes from yellow to red.

WHITE. Then the box comes back over the smoke: _CONFIRMED._

BACK TO SCENE

SKYE
My father built the thing that drew the box. Then he came home and asked about my day. Nine years later I wrote about a different boy, in the Sahel. Idrissa Maïga. He had four kids. He died that November. His heart.

Luc has been the box. Somebody he never met drew a box around a face, and he got on a plane.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

He doesn't say it. Skye watches him not say it.

INT. ANKAWA FLAT - LATER: THE LIE

A burner on speaker, on the floor.

MARIA (V.O.)
Laramie Range Holdings owns a lodge in Wyoming. A private hunting preserve called the Medicine Bow Sporting Club. Does that mean something to you, young lady?

Skye's bandaged right hand closes around her left wrist. Luc sees it.

SKYE
It's my brother's place. Thomas's. If there's money moving through it, it's Thomas.
(lets go)
It has to be Thomas.

MARIA (V.O.)
Ah.

Click.

She knew that lodge the second she heard Medicine Bow. She's earned one lie. Maybe two.

SKYE
Thomas will let me in the front door. He always has.

LUC
He'll let you in.
(then)
Who lets me in?

SKYE
I do.

Her hand finds her wrist again. Luc watches the hand.

INT. LITTLE AMERICA TRAVEL CENTER, CHEYENNE - NIGHT

Skye waits by the beef jerky in a reindeer sweater and somebody's canvas sneakers, her cut feet taped inside them.

Luc comes back from the work-wear racks and puts a pair of SORELS in her hands. Felt-lined, big as buckets.

LUC
Shoes.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

He goes to pay. Cash. She stands there holding them.

EXT. MEDICINE BOW SPORTING CLUB, LARAMIE RANGE, WYOMING - NIGHT

SUPER: LARAMIE RANGE, WY // NO COVERAGE

Twenty below. The lodge: three stories of logs and river stone dug into the pines, bleached elk antlers over the door. The Montgomerys have never met a wall they couldn't hang something dead on.

Below, on a frozen lake, a little yellow SUPER CUB sits on skis with frost on its wings.

The front door BANGS open.

THOMAS
Holy shit. Holy shit. Skye.

THOMAS MONTGOMERY (34, looks forty) takes the porch steps two at a time in untied Sorels, a Scotch in his hand that he doesn't spill. The golden boy, gone soft and red.

Same boots. He hugs her so hard her boots leave the snow.

THOMAS
You're on CNN. What the actual hell?
(looks past her)
Who's that?

Luc stands by the rented Tahoe with a calm, slightly stupid face. A big friendly man, paid to stand behind somebody and look bigger.

SKYE
That's Marc. He's with me.

THOMAS
Mark. From where?

SKYE
Marc. With a C.

THOMAS
Who can hear a C?

SKYE
I can.

Behind her back, Luc's fingers close once on hers.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
(thick accent, heavy on the R's)
Brussels. Pleased to meet you.

Thomas shakes, and SQUEEZES. He's done it to every boy she's brought home since she was fourteen.

Luc doesn't squeeze back. He lets Thomas squeeze.

Thomas flexes his fingers. Advantage, Brussels.

THOMAS
Brussels. Sure. Come in before your faces fall off. Want to see the best thing on this whole mountain?

INT. CAT HOUSE - NIGHT

Concrete stairs into the hill. Warm and rank with meat and musk. A long corridor, and down one side of it, a wall of heated GLASS.

Two LEOPARDS on a fake-rock ledge, tails hanging. At the end, behind the biggest glass of all: TSAR. An Amur tiger, longer than a horse.

The pale eyes go to the strangers. A long COUGH, lower than a roar, through four inches of glass. Skye steps back.

THOMAS
He likes you.

SKYE
Tommy. Are any of them legal?

THOMAS
Not one. The state sent a guy in 2023. Dad made a call. The guy went home.

Luc's eyes travel the corridor. A ceiling camera. Low in the leopards' wall, a service HATCH with a steel BOLT on the corridor side.

Only Skye sees Luc counting.

INT. LODGE - SKYE'S OLD ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas sways in the hall outside her door with most of a bottle of red, and points it at Luc.

THOMAS
Marc. There's a couch in her room. It's a very nice couch.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

He goes. Dark. Luc lies on the very nice couch with his boots on and his eyes open. Skye talks to the ceiling.

SKYE
There's a room under the great room. At the back of the wine cellar. My father kept it locked. I told myself it was more wine.
(then)
Lena says she'll have the house in an hour. Doors, cameras. The lights.

LUC
This is next time. When I say your name, light it. I'll have my eyes shut. Every light it's got, all at once. Then cut it when I tell you.

SKYE
You mostly say my name to give me an order.

LUC
Then you'll know it when you hear it.

She laughs, one dry breath at the ceiling.

INT. LODGE - WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

We go with Luc. Locks CLICK green ahead of him all the way down. Racks to the ceiling. At the far end, a gray steel door flush with the stone. No handle. A KEYPAD.

His PENLIGHT rakes the keys at a low angle. Four shine with finger oil. Zero. One. Four. Seven.

He knows the order before he's done thinking it. CLUNK. The door swings in on cold air and a HUM.

SKYE (V.O.)
What was the code?

He doesn't want to tell her.

LUC
Zero four one seven.

SKYE (V.O.)
That's my badge. Whatever's in there, he locked it with me.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT. LODGE - THE WHITE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Small, white, cold. Server racks. In the middle, a black glass table the size of a pool table wakes with a CHIME, and a gold GLOBE rises out of the black and turns.

This is a sales room. You bring a man with money down here and show him the world he's buying.

INSERT - THE GLOBE

Gold type turns with the world: NEW YORK // LONDON // LUXEMBOURG // HONG KONG // PHASE 2 // T+0
PANAMA CITY // MIRAFLORES // PHASE 1 // 21 JAN 06:00 EST
T- 49:49:12

BACK TO SCENE

LENA (V.O.)
I'm blind. What is it?

LUC
A map. Panama's on Thursday. Six in the morning. Fifty hours. Then four cities at once. New York's one.

He plugs a Raspberry Pi into the server. A light on the drive starts to BLINK.

LUC
Lena. How long?

LENA (V.O.)
(crunching toast)
I'm in. Off. Not you, Luc. The cat. For the important things, half an hour.

SKYE (V.O.)
Luc. Thomas is awake. Something woke his phone.

The desk monitors WAKE on their own: the open cellar door, the kennels, the animal corridor. William's cameras sent the open door to Thomas. Professionally, Luc admires it.

The middle monitor holds two pictures with no labels. A power SUBSTATION behind chain-link. A squat brick building with steel louvers and a PATH sign. He photographs them.

LUC
Lena. Two pictures on his desk. A substation. Brick box, steel louvers, a PATH sign. No guards.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE (V.O.)
He's got a rifle.

LUC
Which way?

SKYE (V.O.)
To the leopards. Oh, Tommy.

On William's screen, Thomas crouches at the leopard hatch and draws the bolt.

Two gold shapes POUR out low past his knees.

SKYE (V.O.)
He's not shooting them. He's shooing them. Toward the house.

INT. LODGE - GREAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Luc comes up the cellar stairs at a RUN. Red coals. Glass eyes on every wall. A MOOSE head over the granite mantel, eight feet up.

Behind the shut west hall door, a low RASP, a saw drawn once across a log.

THOMAS (O.S.)
Get out of my house. Get out of my house.

Luc takes the POKER from the fire tools. He looks at the kitchen door.

LUC
Skye. You open the west hall door. Then the kitchen door. You pick the moment.

In the kitchen, Luc YANKS the fridge open. Five pounds of raw elk tenderloin. Half SLAPS onto the slate. He BANGS the porch bolt back and DROPS the rest outside.

Thomas is going to be upset about the tenderloin.

Back at the hearth. A foot on the stone. A hand on the slab. A knee onto the granite. He crouches under the moose's chin, the poker across his knees.

LUC
I'm up.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE (V.O.)
Wait.
(then)
Now.

CLICK. The door SWINGS in. The first LEOPARD comes through low, belly near the floor, much bigger than it looked behind glass. The second comes in at its shoulder.

The first one looks up. It looks at Luc without any expression at all, the way you'd look at a shelf.

SKYE (V.O.)
(a whisper)
Kitchen.

The kitchen door CLICKS open in the draft. Cold air. BLOOD.

The leopard GOES, and the second one follows. Claws SKITTER on slate. A copper pot RINGS across the floor, then THUMPS on the porch boards.

Thomas comes through the west hall door with a WEATHERBY, his face red and wet. He heads for the cellar stairs.

Luc SLIDES off the mantel. His shoulder takes Thomas in the small of the back. DOWN onto the Navajo rug.

CRACK. The Weatherby goes off into the ceiling. Plaster RAINS on them both.

Half a mile off, every bunkhouse light SNAPS on.

LUC
Skye. The drive.

INT. LODGE - THE WHITE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The globe turns. It's beautiful.

LENA (V.O.)
Skye. Before you pull anything. Two files. I'm sorry.

INSERT - THE MEMO

From: W.M. To: C.A. October 30, 2026. Re: Sunlight.

On the handle: use hers. It's the most credible signature they have. She will be cleared. I will see to it that it takes time, and that when it is over she has nowhere else to go but home. She will not be harmed.

The old man is a problem. Handle him. W.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

BACK TO SCENE

We hold on Skye's face. Clipped behind the memo, a note in a looping slant she knows from twenty years of birthday cards.

INSERT - A SCANNED NOTE

November 2. William, I won't carry a Harrow Point card for ASHGROVE. Find somebody else. G.P.

Under it, a page from Calvin's own folder, in his hand: Card 6620 for ASHGROVE only.

BACK TO SCENE

Her eyes go back up the memo. To: C.A.

FLASH: the rug upstairs, the fire. Skye at sixteen with The Hunger Games. Slippers stop beside her. We tilt up. Silver hair, a kind face: CALVIN ASHBY, fifteen years younger.

ASHBY
Best book about power since Thucydides.

BACK TO SCENE

SKYE
(level, very precise)
He wrote it to Calvin Ashby. Use hers. He used my name to sign a bomb, Lena. Graham wouldn't carry a Harrow Point card for ASHGROVE. The company card that pays for all of it.

LENA (V.O.)
They named the job after your handle.
(then)
The second file.

A spreadsheet. CONTRACTOR: MALONE, L. (DELORME / VAN AKEN / BAUER). HANDLER: BENNETT, M. Her eyes run down twenty-two rows, too fast. Closed, closed, closed. One row stops her.

INSERT - ROW TWENTY-ONE

2024 (NOV). Niamey. MAÏGA, I. Cardiac. Closed. Requesting: WM via CA.

BACK TO SCENE

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LENA (V.O.)
Niamey. November. Cardiac.
Requesting party, your father.
Contractor...

She stops.

SKYE
Say it.

LENA (V.O.)
Malone.
(then)
Luc Malone.

SKYE
(barely)
I sent money for the funeral. I never asked.

She looks at the ceiling. Up there, the man who closed out Idrissa Maïga is kneeling on her brother.

LENA (V.O.)
I've got all of it. Pull it. Go.

She PULLS the drive and stands. Her legs work.

INT. LODGE - GREAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Thomas on his knees on the rug, zip-tied, plaster in his hair. Luc stands over him with the Weatherby, and sees her face as she comes up out of the cellar.

LUC
What did you find?

SKYE
Nothing.

Her voice is perfectly steady. His eyes go to her hands. They're pressed flat over the laptop, white at the knuckles.

He doesn't ask again.

SKYE
You let leopards into the house?

THOMAS
I wanted him treed! Not eaten!
(cracking)
I thought your boyfriend was robbing Dad. I was going to do something right for once.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
I'm sorry, Tommy.

THOMAS
For what?

SKYE
For everything I said about you.

She kisses the top of his head, in the plaster dust.

HEADLIGHTS sweep the windows.

EXT. LODGE - PORCH AND DRIVE - NIGHT

Two PICKUPS climb the drive, high beams on, throwing snow. Luc steps out onto the porch with the Weatherby.

LUC
Cut the house.

Porch light, OFF. Yard lights, OFF. In the dark, Luc shuts his eyes.

The lead truck tops the last rise.

LUC
Skye.

THUMP. Every flood and roof light on the lodge FIRES at once, straight down the drive into the windshields.

The lead truck SLEWS. CRUNCH, nose-first into the drift below the woodpile, wipers SLAPPING.

LUC
Dark.

BLACK. Luc's eyes are open now.

On top of the woodpile, in the trucks' headlights, two gold shapes crouch and watch. The ranch hands stay in their cabs.

Nobody in Albany County is paid enough for leopards.

A SKI-DOO comes SCREAMING out of the garage, Skye driving. Luc swings on behind her and his arms go around her waist. The laptop is inside her coat, with the name in it.

She lets him hold on anyway.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT

Flat out down the slope and across the ice. She SKIDS up by the Cub.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
The frost has to come off or we don't fly.

SKYE
And the engine?

LUC
At thirty below? I'll pray.

She YANKS a heater cord out of the warm cowling.

They strip off their coats and SCRAPE. The top of the wing is out of her reach, so she goes up the lift strut.

A boot on the ski. A boot on the strut. The Tysons shoulder SCREAMS. She HAULS herself up, belly-down on the wing, the coat in her fists, and drags the frost off in sheets.

Light HITS the wing. A pickup has come down onto the ice. It stops broadside across the long run. DALE (50s), frozen mustache, gets out and lays a rifle across the hood.

Then a voice comes across the ice, enormous. Thomas, on the porch steps, hands still tied behind him.

THOMAS
THAT'S MY SISTER! DON'T YOU FUCKING SHOOT! DALE! THAT'S MY SISTER!

Dale lifts his cheek off the stock. Looks up the slope. LOWERS the rifle.

DALE
(shouting uphill)
Your call, Tom.

He stays put. Nobody fires. Bless Dale.

Skye SLIDES off the wing. Her legs nearly go on the ice.

She puts both hands on his face. She can't feel it. She can see her hands on him, and that's all.

He takes her wrists, pulls his shirt open, and puts her palms flat on his bare chest. Under her right palm, his heart is going hard.

LUC
Get in.

INT. SUPER CUB - FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT

He leans out the door and shouts at the empty ice.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
Clear!

The prop turns over once and CATCHES. The ROAR fills the little cabin.

LUC
(over his shoulder)
Your brother is my favorite Montgomery.

He swings onto the short run and shoves the throttle. The skis HISS. The pines come at them. The tail LIFTS.

She shuts her eyes. Pine tops SCRAPE the belly, and then there's nothing.

Below, the lodge with every window gold. On the porch, very small, a man with his hands tied behind him, looking up.

She waves. His hands are tied.

INT. SUPER CUB - IN FLIGHT - NIGHT

In the back seat, Skye opens a folder she didn't open in the white room.

INSERT - A SCANNED REPORT, HALF BLACKED OUT

OPERATION LANTERN. 14 MARCH 2002. Team leader (MALONE, B.) confirmed target VIPER at [redacted] Provincial Hospital. Target confirmed killed. Collateral: 31 KIA, hospital staff and patients. Team leader's request that the collateral figure be entered as stated is noted.

Signed B. Malone. Under it, smaller: C. Ashby, Deputy Chief of Station.

BACK TO SCENE

She opens PHASE1: MIRAFLORES_EXEC_2027-01-21_0600EST.

LENA (V.O.)
Panama in forty-eight hours.

She shuts the laptop and holds it against her chest.

In the side window, a last blue ghost of the screen. Luc's eyes go to the glass and stay there a second.

He banks them east without turning around.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT./EXT. FRANK'S FIELD STATION, GAMBOA, PANAMA - SCREENED PORCH - DAY

SUPER: AUGUR // GAMBOA, PANAMA // WED 20 JAN

A ROAR rolls out of the rainforest across the river. Something enormous is dying in the trees. A second ROAR answers it.

Frank Callahan has his bad leg up on a cooler, a cigar going and a glass of Abuelo, no ice. Hawaiian shirt, hibiscus flowers, red on blue. Somebody ironed it.

FRANK
Howlers. Bruce used to say they were the only honest politicians in Panama.

Skye sits on the swing with the laptop. Past the end of the lawn, through the jungle, slides a red container ship stacked twelve high.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Five percent of everything that floats on God's earth goes past my lawn. Miter gates. Two steel leaves in a V, and the water holds them shut.

SKYE
Unless you blow them?

FRANK
Blow the seam and the top chamber comes down all at once. A hundred thousand tons, on whatever ship's underneath.

Luc comes up the steps with a duffel. Behind him, Terry Walsh, narrow and English, linen jacket gone soft from travel, turning a straw hat in his hands.

TERRY
Via Madrid. Never fly direct. Bruce taught me that.

He holds out a TOBLERONE. Luc takes it.

LUC
Thank you, Terry.

FRANK
I called him. Bruce's old crew. What's left of it.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Skye watches Luc's face. We get as much from it as she does, which is nothing.

MARIA (PRELAP)
You're in the news.

INT. FIELD STATION - MAP TABLE - LATER

Luc's burner lies on the map table, on speaker. At the stove Frank smashes plantains flat with a rum bottle.

MARIA (V.O.)
Well. Not you. An airplane. A Super Cub stolen from a preserve in the Laramie Range, by a Belgian and a woman the owner calls his sister. A Belgian named Mark. With a K. Your brother was very definite about the K.

SKYE
(under her breath)
C.
(to Luc)
Marc, the rice is burning.

LUC
Luc.

SKYE
I'm your sister now. Sisters get it wrong on purpose.

Luc LAUGHS out loud, once. Skye laughs too, her forehead down on the laptop lid. She stops first. He sees that.

MARIA (V.O.)
I've read the Lantern report. Your father asked them to write the number down. Thirty-one. They buried it anyway. Viper was the man Lantern was sent to kill.

Skye turns the laptop so Luc can see the scan. At the foot of the page: C. ASHBY, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STATION.

MARIA (V.O.)
There's one more folder. October 2003. He locked it twice.

LUC
We haven't found the book.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

MARIA (V.O.)
Then you called early.
(softer)
Luc. What did she read you?

He closes his eyes. Nothing comes. That scares him.

LUC
I can hear her voice. I can't hear the words.

SKYE
Your father came home at three in the morning and sat at the kitchen table in his wet coat. What was in front of him?

FLASHBACK - KITCHEN, MCLEAN, VIRGINIA - NIGHT (OCTOBER 2003)

Rain on the window. YOUNG LUC (15) in the doorway in his socks. BRUCE MALONE (51) at the table in a wet coat, big hands flat on graph paper half full of square capitals in groups of five. Beside them, a paperback face down, spine cracked white. Cream cover, a biplane low over the dunes.

INT. FIELD STATION - MAP TABLE - DUSK

LUC
Terre des hommes. She read it to me twice.

MARIA (V.O.)
Saint-Exupéry? It's the pilot. Oh, Bruce.

Lena finds a French library's scan. Skye works the square on graph paper, pencil in the fingers that stick out of the gauze. Page. Line. Word. Small square capitals, his father's kind. She pushes the page across.

INSERT - THE 2003 FOLDER

FROM: ASHBY, C., DEP. CHIEF NE. TO: MALONE, B. 29 OCT 2003. RE: AUBERT-MALONE, C. / DEATH OF

The Virginia State Police finding of accidental death stands. VIPER successor elements are now a priority asset. Continuity outweighs. You will not pursue this matter.

With sympathy for your loss.

INSERT - GRAPH PAPER, BRUCE'S HAND

FOR LUC. WHEN HE IS OLD ENOUGH TO HATE ME PROPERLY.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

THEY KILLED YOUR MOTHER BECAUSE OF A HOSPITAL I CHOSE TO BURN. AND THEY WERE ALREADY OURS WHEN THEY DID IT.

CAL ASHBY TOLD ME TO BURY HER AND I DID. I TOLD MYSELF IT WAS FOR THE WORK.

IT WAS NOT FOR THE WORK.

I DID NOT HAVE THE COURAGE TO KILL HIM.

I AM WRITING THIS AT THE KITCHEN TABLE. YOU ARE STANDING IN THE DOORWAY AGAIN. YOU THINK I DO NOT SEE YOU.

I SEE YOU. B.

BACK TO SCENE

LUC
(reading, barely)
"They murdered your mother because of a hospital I chose to burn."

Luc reads the rest on his feet. He puts it face down on the table, carefully, and goes out the screen door.

EXT. FIELD STATION - SCREENED PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Across the river the howlers ROAR, one troop answering another in the dark. Luc grips the porch rail. Something comes up from the bottom of his chest. This time he lets it come. He cries with both hands on the rail. The howlers cover it.

Through the screen, Skye at the table. She doesn't get up. She lets him.

INT. BENNETT'S EXPLORER - CIA HEADQUARTERS, LANGLEY - NIGHT

SUPER: AUGUR // LANGLEY, VA // WED 20 JAN

The gray Explorer in the far corner of an empty lot. Bennett behind the wheel, turning an Altoids tin over and over. In the passenger seat, in his overcoat, Ashby files his nails with an emery board. He takes his time with the thumb.

ASHBY
Who washes the dishes in our embassy in Baghdad, Mike?

BENNETT
Third-country nationals, sir. Nepalese, mostly.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

ASHBY
And a Belgian gentleman. Marc Delorme. One of yours, I'd imagine?

The tin stops.

BENNETT
He sent me a body. Twelve photos.

ASHBY
He sent you somebody else's daughter. And you wrote it up, and I initialed it.
(blows on his nails)
They've been keeping company since Baghdad, haven't they? There's a new order. Both names.

BENNETT
Who gets it? Not my shop?

ASHBY
Reaper, bless their hearts. You're off it.

He holds out his palm. Bennett opens the tin and shakes a peppermint into it. Ashby hands him a business card in trade. A number on the back, in his own fountain pen.

ASHBY (CONT'D)
Much obliged. Frank Callahan's landline. Gamboa, Panama.

BENNETT
Is that sourced, sir? Or a hunch?

ASHBY
Christmas cards. Bruce's people always end up at Frank's.

Bennett takes the card. Ashby keeps two fingers on it. The West Point ring catches the dome light.

ASHBY (CONT'D)
You've had Luc six years, Michael. If he comes in, you come in with him.

BENNETT
And if he doesn't?

ASHBY
Then you don't come in at all.

He lets go of the card, buttons his coat and gets out.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

We stay on Bennett. He looks at the card a long time. Then he dials it on his own phone.

INT. FIELD STATION - MAP TABLE - NIGHT

Frank dishes arroz con pollo out of a dented pot. The old black landline on the wall RINGS. Frank stares at it.

FRANK
Nobody's called that thing since 2019.

He answers. Listens. Hands it to Luc, who hits SPEAKER.

BENNETT (V.O.)
Luc. I know you're on the line.
(beat)
The body you sent me from Larnaca has a name. Rania Haddad. Twenty-nine. Latakia. Her sister ID'd the earring off a photo. A little gold hand.

Skye's hand finds the edge of the table.

BENNETT (V.O.)
Your name's on it now. With hers. The Director gave me this number. I'm not the one they're sending.

LUC
Who are they sending?

BENNETT (V.O.)
You were very good, Luc. You were very, very good.

CLICK. Outside, a million frogs start up at once.

Luc pops the back off his phone, SNAPS the SIM in half and drops the halves in Frank's rum.

FRANK
Well. That's my rum.

LUC
Sorry, Frank.

FRANK
No. That's a fair use of the rum.

SKYE
(turning away, into the earbud)
Send it, Lena. All of it.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Keys CLICK. A progress bar fills. SENT 23:02.

LUC
What did Lena send?

SKYE
A dead man's switch. The hospital, your mother, Ashby's name on both. If Lena and I stop checking in for seventy-two hours, it goes to Dana and four more newsrooms.

LUC
And my name. Malone, L.

Skye's hands go still.

LUC (CONT'D)
You read it in the cellar. That was the nothing?

SKYE
Twenty-two rows. They put Rania Haddad in a drawer under my name, Luc. You made that happen.

LUC
Print it, and my father goes in the same story, under thirty-one dead.
(then)
You sent it before you told me.

SKYE
You'd have asked me to wait. Wouldn't you?

LUC
Like a story you'd already filed.
(low, in French)
Tu l'as déjà fait.

She understands him perfectly well. You already did it.

LUC (CONT'D)
Then don't print any of it till Panama's stopped. Help me stop it. After that, you do what you have to do.

SKYE
Forty hours, Luc. Then I file.

She looks past him, out through the screen. At the end of Frank's little dock, a small low light swings once in the dark. A flashlight, or a phone. Then it goes out.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT. FRANK'S PICKUP - CANAL ROAD - NIGHT

Jimmy Buffett low on the cassette deck. Frank drives with the cigar unlit. Skye in the middle with the laptop, Luc against the door.

FRANK
My goddaughter Inés works nights in the Miraflores control house. She signs you in at two, Skye. You go under the tarp at the gate, kid.

Nobody answers. Frank turns Jimmy Buffett up.

Skye opens the laptop to the lodge ledger, row twenty-one. MAÏGA, I. She hasn't told him. She shuts the lid.

FRANK (PRELAP)
Buenas noches, Chepe.

EXT. MIRAFLORES LOCKS - CENTER WALL - NIGHT

SUPER: AUGUR // MIRAFLORES LOCKS, PANAMA // THU 21 JAN // 03:48 EST

A GUARD waves Frank's pickup on. In the bed, Luc slides out from under a tarp onto the center wall of the Panama Canal.

Fifty feet down in the east lane sits the PACIFIC CONCORD, a white windowless car carrier ten stories high. A parking garage that learned to float. Six MULES hold her on cables.

Ahead of her bow, the upper gates, closed in a V. Behind her stern, the lower gates, where LOCK CREW in orange vests smoke on the walkway across the top.

SKYE (V.O.)
I'm in. Your ship's a little gray rectangle on a screen.

At the bow, Luc lies flat at the lip of the wall and looks down at the foot of the gate seam. A dark round shape bobs on the surface, no bigger than a coffee can. A thin line runs from it into the water.

LUC
Frank.

FRANK
What am I looking at?

LUC
A float. You can't radio a detonator through forty feet of
(MORE)

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC (CONT'D)
water. So you leave an antenna on top.

FRANK
Son of a bitch. They've been and gone.

SKYE (V.O.)
Luc, something just went in. A package, on the gate controls for the lower chamber. Lena, read it.

LENA (V.O.)
It's signed ashgrove. And it's set for 04:30. Not 06:00. Four-thirty.

Luc checks his watch. 03:58. Ninety minutes early. Somebody told them.

SKYE (V.O.)
I know what you're thinking. Luc, listen to me...

LUC
Later.

FRANK
That crew on the lower gates. When the top gates go, the whole chamber comes down on that walkway. I'm getting 'em off.

LUC
Frank. You can't run on that.

FRANK
I'm not going to run. I'm going to walk very fast and yell.
(already going)
You do something about that float.

He goes. A big old man in a hibiscus shirt limps fast down the center wall with his cane swinging. A thousand feet to the lower gates.

INT. MIRAFLORES LOCK CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Luc goes over the edge and down the iron rungs. His watch reads 04:22. He puts the knife in his teeth and lets go.

SPLASH. Black water. Warm. Diesel. He comes up GASPING and swims. His fingers SMACK plastic. A cable runs down from the float's belly into the dark. He sets the serrated back of

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

the knife on it and saws. Steel braid inside. Somebody paid for the good cable.

He saws harder. The old wound on his hand opens. The braid PARTS. The float goes dead in his fist.

LUC
I cut it. Skye. The line's cut.

LENA (V.O.)
I can't touch the package. At four-thirty it opens the filling valves, so every log in that building says Sunlight did it. The bang comes from somebody's radio.

Twenty feet off, against the other leaf: a SECOND FLOAT. His watch reads 04:29. He swims.

INT. MIRAFLORES CONTROL HOUSE - SAME TIME

Salsa low on a radio. INÉS CARRASCO (30s), small, hair in a bun, radio in hand, works the senior console by the big windows. In the back, Skye watches the gray rectangle.

INTERCUT - LOCK CHAMBER / CONTROL HOUSE

Halfway to the second float, Luc hooks an arm over a steel rib on the gate to breathe, his left cheek on the wet iron.

The water in front of him goes flat. The gate moves. An inch. A GROAN comes through the rib into his skull.

THUD. Forty feet down. Deep and short.

The water JUMPS. His ears go to a high clean WHINE. Something warm runs out of his LEFT ear and down his neck. The shock tears him off the rib and shoves him under.

In the control house every east-lane screen goes RED. A two-tone ALARM. On Skye's screen the gray rectangle starts to slide backward.

Inés SHOUTS into her radio in fast Spanish. Nobody answers. Skye goes to the glass.

The seam of the upper gates SPLITS. A white column of water as wide as a road comes through. The ROAR fills everything.

On a mast across the lane, the canal's public webcam takes the spray full in the lens. On Skye's laptop, the live stream goes WHITE.

Luc comes up choking into white water. The current SLAMS him into the corner. He grabs for the wall and misses. Grabs

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

again. A RUNG. He holds.

The Pacific Concord moves. Sixty thousand tons slide backward. Slow. Then faster. The hull GRINDS along the wall.

The mule cables SING. Then they SNAP. CRACK. CRACK. CRACK. One cable knocks a silver mule off its rack, and it falls end over end into the gap below. CRASH.

Through the glass, a thousand feet off: the walkway on the lower gates. Orange vests run along it for the walls.

In the middle of the walkway stands a big man with a cane. Skye knows him by the shirt.

Frank has one arm up, waving the last man off. The last orange vest is frozen at the rail.

The man runs.

Frank turns to follow, too fast on the bad leg. It goes out from under him. He drops to one knee on the steel.

The stern SLAMS into the lower gates. A long grinding SHRIEK of steel. The gates bow outward, folding under the weight of the ship.

Spray comes up over the top in a white sheet. It hides the whole walkway.

The spray comes down. The walkway is still there, twisted, hanging off one wall, its far end dropped toward the water.

It's empty.

SKYE
Frank.

Inés has stopped shouting.

INÉS
Padrino.

She goes back to her console and types fast with her mouth set. Tears run down her face.

At the foot of the upper gate, Luc hangs off the rung with blood running out of his ear.

LUC
FRANK!

He can't hear himself. On the left there's nothing at all.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Skye turns to her terminal. The package is still open. There's a second line.

INSERT - THE PACKAGE

B2 // SEND 06:00 // BOTA-E2-P4

BACK TO SCENE

SKYE
(under her breath)
Bota. Bota?
(she has it)
Bridge Of The Americas.
(into the earbud)
Luc. There's a backup. The bridge. It goes at six.

Luc looks down the lower approach. Five miles off, the lit truss of the bridge stands over the Pacific entrance. He climbs. SIRENS all over the locks. He runs for Frank's pickup. The keys are in it, where Frank always leaves them. The engine catches, and Jimmy Buffett comes on mid-chorus. Luc's gutted. He thumbs the tape out, puts it in his shirt pocket and drives for the bridge with the lights off.

END INTERCUT

INT. MIRAFLORES CONTROL HOUSE - LATER

05:09 on the wall clock. The DUTY ENGINEER (50s), canal authority polo, has a phone at each ear.

SKYE
Sir. I need a drawing number. The Bridge of the Americas. I'm the least qualified person in this building, and I'm the only one asking.

DUTY ENGINEER
That's probably true.

He lays both phones face down and types with two fingers. A drawing: approach spans E1 to E7 on the Balboa side. He taps E2, where it meets the main truss. P4.

DUTY ENGINEER (CONT'D)
Fracture-critical. Nothing else carries the load at that point.

SKYE
(into the earbud)
Luc. The Balboa end. Second span,
(MORE)

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE (CONT'D)
where it meets the main truss.
There's a catwalk under the road.

Inés throws her a set of keys.

INÉS
Blue Hilux. Staff lot. Go.

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS - EAST APPROACH - PRE-DAWN

Frank's pickup on the shoulder where the span meets the truss, hazards flashing, driver's door open. Skye pulls the Hilux in behind it. Trucks ROAR past. Her watch reads 05:41.

She looks over the rail. Two hundred feet down to the black channel. Her legs go weak. Downstream, a low black boat with no lights holds its place on the water. Under the road hangs a catwalk with a single rail. Twenty feet below her, at the joint, is Luc.

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS - CATWALK - CONTINUOUS

An inspection platform the size of a kitchen table. Girder on one side, one rail on the other. Past the rail, air.

Clamped to the girder: a gray plastic case the size of a carry-on. Orange ratchet straps. A stub antenna. A light blinking GREEN.

Luc kneels with one arm around the girder, sawing at a strap, shaking in the wind.

One strap SNAPS. The case DROPS an inch. It hangs by one. The light goes from green to AMBER.

SKYE
Luc! There's a boat!

LUC
It can't talk to this in here. Too much steel. Clear of the steel, it can.
(sawing)
Straight down's the pier footing. It has to go out. Into the channel.

Skye climbs over the rail onto an iron ladder. A truck THUNDERS over. The ladder HUMS in her hands.

Halfway down a gust swings her out. Her feet hang in the air. She SLAMS back against the steel. Rung. Rung. The grating comes up under her shoes.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
Get back up.

SKYE
Who holds it, then?

LUC
Hold it to the steel. When I say.

She pins the case to the girder with her shoulder and hip. The amber light blinks on her cheek. His hands come in under hers on the last strap. They shake too hard to cut. He gives her the knife and holds the case to the steel.

LUC (CONT'D)
Now.

She saws with her bandaged hand. The strap PARTS. The case DROPS onto the girder's bottom flange and stops against her. Forty pounds of gray plastic over two hundred feet of air. She can feel him shaking through it. She's shaking too. Her watch reads 05:56.

Headlights swing across the underside of the deck. Up top a white Hilux pulls in, its windshield cracked in one long silver line. A man comes down the ladder, fast and easy, a pistol in one hand with a light under the barrel. On the last rungs his sleeve rides up. Inside the forearm, parachute wings inked blue, and under them, 2e REP.

LUC
Price.

PRICE (40s) steps onto the platform. Lean, a dark Kathmandu windbreaker, hair cut down to the skull. New Zealand vowels pressed flat.

PRICE
Malone. Three times your rate.
Still on the table. Leave it on the
steel and walk up the ladder.

Luc lets go of the case and stands up between them with his hands empty.

PRICE (CONT'D)
Section's back together, Malone.

He reaches past Luc for the case handle.

Luc goes into him. FAST. Inside the gun. Both hands on the arm. Drives it up. The light whips across the girders.

They hit the rail. It RINGS. A truck goes over and the platform BUCKS.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Price is good. He turns out of the grip and steps round. To Luc's LEFT.

SKYE
Luc! Left!

The wind eats it.

CRACK. The pistol butt, short and hard, behind his left ear.

He never turns his head. He drops. One knee slides off the edge, under the rail, into nothing. He hangs by an arm hooked through the rail.

The light swings into Skye's eyes, white and flat.

PRICE
Hands off it, Miss Montgomery.

LUC
Skye.

Her phone is already in her hand. She hits the STROBE.

WHITE. BLACK. WHITE. BLACK. Ten times a second, a foot from Price's face.

Price throws an arm over his eyes. He comes for the case anyway, blind. He finds the handle and PULLS. The case comes off the flange, and her shoes SKID toward the rail.

Luc comes up off the grating with his eyes shut. He's had this platform by heart since he got here. Rail, girder, bolts, edge.

In the strobe the fight comes to her in frames. Luc's hand on Price's wrist. The wrist laid across the top of the rail. Luc's weight coming down.

SNAP. Through the wind and trucks, she hears the bone go.

The pistol goes over the rail, its light turning over and over all the way down to the channel.

Price lets go. The case swings back into Skye. She pins it to the girder with her whole body.

Price backs onto the ladder with his right hand clutched to his chest. His radio lies by her shoe. A voice comes out of it, flat and unhurried. One word, in Dutch.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
Weg.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Price goes up the ladder one-handed. Above them a door SLAMS. Tires SPIT grit.

Luc stays on his knees, eyes shut, his head turned toward the handset. Her watch reads 05:58.

LUC
Skye. Open your hands.

Her arms won't open. He puts his cold wet hands over hers and opens them one at a time.

He takes the case against his chest and stands. He turns at the waist and THROWS it.

We go with the case. It turns over once, small against the lit water, and hits. Silence. Two seconds. Three.

A white column of water stands up out of the channel a hundred feet high. It hangs there, then falls in on itself.

BOOM. The sound reaches them a second late and rattles the rail under them.

Luc sits down very slowly with his back against the girder. He closes his eyes.

SKYE'S POV: two hundred feet down, a black RHIB runs into the floodlight at the foot of the pier. One man at the wheel. One standing in the bow with a stubby radio, looking up at the catwalk. At her. Gray beard, tan ball cap, sunglasses pushed up on it. She's seen that face across the hangar in Baghdad.

SKYE
Pieter.

Beside her, Luc's eyes stay shut.

The man in the bow touches two fingers to the brim of his cap. A little salute. Almost friendly. The RHIB turns in a long white curve and runs for the anchorage. It's gone among the ships.

EXT. BALBOA YACHT CLUB - PARKING LOT - DAWN

The sky over Panama City goes from black to gray. Pelicans work the water off the causeway, folding up and dropping into the bay one after another. Somewhere a rooster. Sirens behind everything.

Luc stands beside Frank's truck. Wet clothes, cut hands, a bleeding scrape down the side of his face.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Skye gets out of the Hilux. Ten feet of cracked asphalt between them.

Her phone has buzzed all the way down off the bridge. She turns it around and holds it up so he can see.

INSERT - SKYE'S PHONE, 06:10

TELEMETRO // AP // REUTERS

EXPLOSION AT PANAMA CANAL'S MIRAFLORES LOCKS. AT LEAST 9 DEAD. OFFICIALS: "CYBERATTACK" ON GATE CONTROLS. ACTIVIST HACKER NETWORK "SUNLIGHT" CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY.

BACK TO SCENE

SKYE
Nine dead. Frank. Five crew on the ship. Two linesmen on the wall. A tug pilot.
(beat)
They found the package inside half an hour, just like they were supposed to. The bridge is still up, and nobody's said a word about it. The world thinks I did it.

LUC
They moved it up ninety minutes. Somebody told them we were coming.

SKYE
Somebody did. Who do you think, Luc? Say it.

LUC
You sent twenty gigabytes to five newsrooms at eleven. At three fifty-eight I looked at my watch, and they were ninety minutes early.

SKYE
You don't know that's how...

LUC
Beirut. Forty-one photos. A generator. You remember?

He looks at her across the asphalt.

LUC (CONT'D)
Nine dead, and the dead man's switch already sent. Now all you have to do is wait till Friday.
(MORE)

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC (CONT'D)
(beat)
You got your story.

She says it before she's decided to.

SKYE
Idrissa Maïga.

Nothing in his face.

SKYE (CONT'D)
Niamey. November 2024. Cardiac. Requesting: WM via CA. Row twenty-one of your spreadsheet, Luc.

His hands hang at his sides.

SKYE (CONT'D)
A man at his desk at home, in the evening, with a glass of tea. He was my fixer in Niger. He found the village. He found the widow, and the boy.

Luc doesn't move.

SKYE (CONT'D)
He had four children. He called me ma sœur. I kept his name out of my story to keep him safe.

We watch him remember the tea.

His face goes gray.

LUC
I didn't know who he was.

SKYE
I know you didn't. That's the point, Luc. Nobody ever does. Somebody draws a box, and you get on a plane.

The pelicans work the water behind him. A siren goes up the road toward the locks.

He looks at her one second more. Then he gets into Frank's truck, backs out and drives up the ramp toward the city.

She watches the truck till it's lost in the morning traffic.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Then she sits down on the curb in the red dawn with the alert still glowing in her hand. Her own name, and Frank's, and nine.

INT. INÉS'S FLAT, ANCÓN, PANAMA CITY - DAY

SUPER: AUGUR // ANCÓN, PANAMA // THU 21 JAN

A ceiling fan TICKS on every turn. Across the water, the long green truss of the Bridge of the Americas.

Skye sits on the couch under a blanket. Inés sits across from her, crying without a sound.

On the TV, white water pours through the split gates of Miraflores. Then gray-green eyes, straight into the lens. SKYE MONTGOMERY. SUNLIGHT. BUSCADA.

Then William Montgomery at a podium in his own lobby, with Graham half a step behind him in a polka-dot bow tie.

WILLIAM (ON TV)
Montgomery Systems will make Augur available to the Panama Canal Authority. Free of charge. For the first year.

Skye laughs. It comes out of her as a cough and she can't stop it. Then it isn't laughing.

SKYE
I brought it to him. If we hadn't come...

INÉS
Then what? He'd be on his porch with his rum when the gates went. And in the morning he'd know. For the rest of his life.

INT. FONDA, CHITRÉ BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

The same broadcast, over the steam trays. Luc sits under it with one side of his face scraped raw and salt dried white on his shirt.

On the screen, her face. Then a big white-haired man in a Hawaiian shirt, grinning, holding up his fish.

At the ticket window, a CLERK with a ledger doesn't look up.

CLERK
¿Nombre?

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
Claes.

The clerk's pen stops. Luc turns his right ear to the glass, the good one.

LUC (CONT'D)
C... L. A. E. S.

INT. FRANK'S FIELD STATION - NIGHT

SUPER: AUGUR // GAMBOA, PANAMA // FRI 22 JAN

Police tape on the door. Skye's phone light held low against her leg. Inés at the window.

Upstairs, Luc's room. The pillow still dented. She stays in that door longer than she means to.

Downstairs, the black Panasonic on the kitchen wall. REDIAL: a Panamanian mobile, dialed the day Terry flew in. She photographs it.

Frank's address book on its nail. W. WALSH, T. In newer ink: CHALET ALPENROSE, KLOSTERS, CH.

She tears the page out of Frank's book.

The router. CONNECTED DEVICES: TERRY'S IPHONE, and a nameless string, joined 23:10, gone 23:14. SCREENSHOT.

INÉS
Ya. The policeman is walking.

The torn page and her phone go into one of Frank's specimen bags, with a yellow toucan feather in the corner. ZIP.

EXT. UNDER FRANK'S DOCK - CONTINUOUS

BLACK water. WARM. Mud and diesel.

Skye hangs from a crossbeam by one hand, the BAG held up out of the river in the other. Inés hangs beside her.

A police SPOTLIGHT comes UNDER the dock. It finds the whites of Inés's eyes. The yellow feather.

It HOLDS. Skye's arm SHAKES.

The light MOVES ON. Across the water the howlers start up, ROARING. Frank loved those monkeys.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

EXT. PEDASÍ - THE SEA - NIGHT

SUPER: PEDASÍ, PANAMA // NO COVERAGE

The end of the road. Fishing boats pulled up on gray sand. After midnight, Luc stands knee-deep in warm black water. Every wave lights up green as it breaks. PHOSPHORESCENCE.

He looks down at his hands in it.

FLASHBACK - BENNETT'S GRAY EXPLORER, ROUTE 7, VIRGINIA - NIGHT (2024)

Parked behind a Wegmans. Bennett turns an Altoids tin over and over. He doesn't offer one.

BENNETT
A smuggler. Runs weapons north into Mali. Uses a press card.
(then)
They asked for natural.

A street. A description. No name. There never is, and Luc never wanted one.

EXT. A QUIET STREET, PLATEAU, NIAMEY - NIGHT

SUPER: NIAMEY // NOV 2024

A two-story house. One front window open to the heat. Inside, a man works at a desk with his back to the street. A small glass of green tea. Pinned over the desk, a child's crayon drawing: a house, a sun, six people holding hands. RFI on a radio.

We stay across the street, where Luc stood four nights.

A SHAPE comes up behind the man. We don't go in.

A hand reaches past his shoulder and turns off the radio.

The street goes SILENT. The window stays lit. The man is still bent over his laptop. He doesn't move again.

FLASHBACK - AMETETTAI VALLEY, MALI - DAY (2013)

SUPER: AMETETTAI VALLEY, MALI // FEB 2013 // NO COVERAGE

Black rock, red rock, sand the color of rust. A section of the 2e REP works up a dry riverbed. LUC, twenty-four, sweat running into his eyes.

SERGEANT DEKKER walks point. We never get his face, only his back: a sun-bleached cap, lean shoulders, a rifle carried easy. He HUMS under his breath. LE BOUDIN, at half tempo.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

CORPORAL PRICE, rangy, sunburned, cheerful. KOVAČ (22), Croatian, big and gentle, always the last to finish eating because he talks so much.

CRACK-CRACK-CRACK. A burst off the ridge.

Luc's behind a boulder before he knows he moved. Rounds SMACK the rock.

Somebody's SCREAMING. Kovač. In the open, thirty meters back, both hands clamped on his thigh. Bright red SPURTS between his fingers. FEMORAL.

Luc goes back for him. Dust KICKS up around his boots. He DRAGS Kovač behind a rock by the webbing.

The TOURNIQUET off Kovač's own chest rig. High on the leg. He CRANKS the windlass. Kovač SCREAMS.

Dekker crawls back along the riverbed with Price behind him. The cap. The shoulders. Never the face. He looks at Luc's hands, red to the elbows.

DEKKER
Tighter.

Luc CRANKS. Kovač's back ARCHES up off the sand.

LUC
It won't go tighter.

It's too high to get all of it. The blood keeps coming. More FIRE off the ridge, from two places now.

DEKKER
There's no helicopter. Not for two hours. He's got ten minutes, Malone. We've got five. You want to die here holding his leg?

KOVAČ
Ne ostavljajte me.

DEKKER
Section moves in thirty seconds. You're in it or you're not.

PRICE
Come on, Malone. Leave it.

Luc looks at Kovač. At the ridge. At his own red hands.

He takes his hands away.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

He RUNS up the riverbed after the cap and the hum. Behind him, getting smaller, Kovač CALLS out in Croatian, once.

Then nothing.

INSERT - A LEGION CASUALTY REPORT

KOVAČ. LÉGIONNAIRE. 24.02.2013. MORT SUR LE COUP. Three signatures across the bottom: J. DEKKER. L. MALONE. PRICE.

EXT. PEDASÍ - THE SEA - NIGHT

Luc's hands in the water. The green breaks around them and goes out. He hears it now. LE BOUDIN, hummed on a bridge deck in the Gulf. A whistle out of the Baghdad dust. And under the bridge at Balboa, Price's dropped radio, one word in Dutch from a voice with corners in it: WEG.

He stands in the sea until the sky goes gray.

LENA (V.O.)
(PRELAP)
One text.

INT. INÉS'S FLAT - SATURDAY - DAWN

Skye hasn't slept. Frank's torn page and the router screenshot on the table, the Baghdad delegation sheet on her laptop, Lena on speaker.

SKYE
From the phone with no name? The light on Frank's dock. Terry brought two phones to a house with one landline.

LENA (V.O.)
Plain SMS. Twenty-three twelve.

SKYE
To whom?

LENA (V.O.)
A Dutch number. Prepaid.

Lena starts reading the digits. Skye's finger runs down the Baghdad sheet and stops before Lena gets to the last one. PIETER. TECHNICAL LEAD.

SKYE
Pieter.

Nineteen minutes later, somebody moved the attack up to four-thirty. Skye puts her hand over her mouth. She's so angry her fingers shake against her lips.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE (CONT'D)
It wasn't my upload.

LENA (V.O.)
Not that I can find.

SKYE
Luc thinks it was.

LENA (V.O.)
Then he's hunting the wrong person.
I have the log.

A KNOCK at the door. Two, then one. Skye's hand is on the bolt before she understands it can't be Luc.

A young COURIER, white shirt pressed, holds out a slim leather folder.

COURIER
Para la señora Catherine Ashcroft.

Catherine Ashcroft. Who knows that name? Luc. Lena. Graham. And anybody Graham told.

Inside the folder, a WHITE BADGE on a blue lanyard. WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM. SKYE A. MONTGOMERY. PARTICIPANT. A boarding pass to Zurich. And a card in her father's blue-black fountain pen.

INSERT - THE CARD

Sweetheart, come to Davos. Stand next to me on Thursday and tell the world you have nothing to do with Sunlight. By Friday this will all be over. Love, Dad

BACK TO SCENE

She slides down the door to the floor with the white badge in her lap.

SKYE
Participant.

LENA (V.O.)
Is that a white badge?

SKYE
The top. Heads of state, and the men who own them.

It's the front door. The one door she can walk through that Luc never could.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
My father sent a plane. I'm going to Davos.

INT. HARDWARE STORE, PEDASÍ - DAY

An old computer between the rope and the machetes. Luc logs into an account he gave one man, for one emergency that never came. It's always empty.

It isn't empty.

INSERT - THE EMAIL

You know who this is. I know she's alone in Panama City, and I know you left her there. Bring her and the drive, and we both walk away with clean names. Saturday, 6 p.m., Plaza de Francia, under the obelisk. Come alone. Nobody else knows I'm offering this. M.

BACK TO SCENE

Bennett. Luc's angry. His hands lie very still on the counter. He types one word: SATURDAY.

EXT. PLAZA DE FRANCIA, CASCO VIEJO - DUSK

SUPER: AUGUR // CASCO VIEJO, PANAMA CITY // SAT 23 JAN

A long square at the tip of the old town, open to the sea. Above the old Spanish vaults, a promenade under bougainvillea. In the middle, a white obelisk with a bronze rooster on top.

On the obelisk steps, gray suit, jacket folded beside him: Michael Bennett. Turning an Altoids tin over and over.

Luc watches from the shade of a tamarind. A straw hat. A folding knife. The BRACELET. His thumb goes to the knot. He takes it away.

He reads the plaza. A couple on a bench, kissing. Nobody kisses for ten minutes in this heat.

A RASPADO MAN under a striped umbrella hasn't sold a thing.

Up on the promenade, a white guayabera leans on the rail with his back to the view.

Four. Maybe five. He takes off the hat and walks out into the open.

BENNETT
You came alone.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
You knew I would.

Bennett thumbs the tin open and holds it out. Peppermint. The first one he's ever offered Luc. He doesn't take it.

LUC (CONT'D)
Niamey.

Bennett's face empties.

LUC (CONT'D)
You parked behind a Wegmans and gave me a street. A smuggler.
(then)
Mike. Did you know what he was?

BENNETT
Of course I knew.
(quietly)
That's the arrangement. I carry the names and you carry the...

A small gesture with one hand.

BENNETT (CONT'D)
The rest of it.

LUC
You wrote nobody knew. Your raspado man's sold nothing.

BENNETT
My email said what it had to say to get you here.
(then)
You think they gave me a choice? The seventh floor wanted both of you, and the drive. When you came alone, they said you'd do.

He lifts one hand an inch.

The raspado man LETS GO of his cart. The couple STOP kissing. Up on the rail the guayabera straightens, and something LONG comes up.

Luc's already moving. Left, at the cart man. He SLAMS the man's arm at the elbow as the pistol clears the apron.

CRACK. The round goes into the paving. PIGEONS EXPLODE off the obelisk.

Luc TURNS the wrist. The pistol is his. He DRIVES the cart man into the obelisk and goes round behind it.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Stone between Luc and the rail. The long gun has nothing. The bench man comes round the other side, gun UP.

BANG. BANG. Luc fires twice. The bench man DROPS.

Up on the rail, the rifleman leans out for an angle. His eye goes to the scope.

His head SNAPS sideways. No sound, or nobody hears it under the screaming. He goes OVER the rail, slack, twenty feet DOWN into the bougainvillea.

Bennett stares at the empty rail, then up at the iron balconies behind the plaza. He never finds out.

A small DARK MARK appears on his white shirt, just under the left side of his chest. He looks down at it, mildly surprised, and puts his hand over it.

Then he sits down on the steps of the obelisk, slowly, the way you'd sit on the steps of your own front porch at the end of a long day. He looks across at Luc.

BENNETT
Ah.

He TIPS over sideways against the stone, under the bronze rooster, and is still.

Luc looks up at the houses. On the third floor of a blue one the balcony doors stand open, the curtains moving in the breeze off the bay. Nobody's there.

Bennett's hand rests on the folded jacket. A PHONE has slid half out of the breast pocket, screen lit.

INSERT - BENNETT'S PHONE

A red dot. REC 16:37. 16:38.

BACK TO SCENE

Sixteen minutes of the plaza. OF COURSE I KNEW. And under it, Luc's own voice, handing Niamey back.

He stops it at 16:38. Airplane mode. Pocket. The pistol CLATTERS into the gutter, and he RUNS.

EXT. CASCO VIEJO - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Under laundry, SIRENS behind him, his thumb goes to the bracelet. It finds the knot and stops.

He fired twice on the plaza. He never touched it.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Beside him, a heavy old door in the wall opens six inches. Painted blue, iron studs.

BRUCE (O.S.)
In. Now. Before they get the bird up.

Low, hoarse, impatient. He hasn't heard it in nine years.

He goes in. A BOLT SLAMS across.

INT. BLUE HOUSE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

An old man stands three steps up in the dark, a long rifle case on his shoulder. He turns. White stubble. Pale gray eyes with almost no color in them.

LUC
You're alive.

BRUCE
Mostly.

LUC
Bennett. Was that you?

He props the case under the stairs and leaves it.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Won't fit on the bike.

EXT. BLUE HOUSE - COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Under a mango tree, a red delivery moto with an insulated box on the back. On the lid, a cartoon CHICKEN.

LUC
Bennett was taping. All of it.

Bruce climbs on behind and takes hold of Luc's belt. Luc forgot the size of those hands.

BRUCE
Go.

EXT. AMADOR CAUSEWAY - NIGHT

The moto WHINES out along the causeway, palms down the middle. Bruce leans in to Luc's good ear.

BRUCE
Throw it in the bay. Never carry your own voice.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
Her proof. His name. One phone.

He keeps it.

Headlights FLARE in his mirror. A white Hilux, windshield cracked in one long line. Price drives one-handed, his right forearm in a white splint.

At the causeway gate a camera on a gray pole swings round to follow them.

The Hilux CLOSES. Fifty yards. Twenty. Grille HEAT.

Beside the road, the bike path, fenced off by steel bollards set a moto's width apart. Luc swings for the bollards.

THROUGH. A post at each knee and nothing to spare. Bruce's shoe RINGS off the steel. CLANG.

Price sees it too late, and with one hand. The Hilux SLAMS the end bollard. SPINS on it. Through the seaward rail and OFF the edge.

NOSE FIRST down the riprap. The rear wheels still SPINNING. Water POURS in through the cracked windshield, and the taillights light it RED.

EXT. AMADOR CAUSEWAY - THE ROCKS - CONTINUOUS

BRUCE
Leave him. Camera.

Luc puts Bennett's phone in his father's hand.

LUC
Hold this.

OVER the rail. Down the big squared blocks, wet and slick. Waist-deep. COLD.

The cab is FILLING. Price hangs in his belt, face on the glass, the splint floating.

A rock the size of a loaf. SMASH. The window goes in. The belt. The folding knife. He CUTS.

Price goes UNDER. Luc GRABS him by the collar.

FLASH: a riverbed in Mali. Red hands coming off a windlass.

He keeps them on.

He HAULS. Price's shoulders JAM in the frame, then come through. Up onto a flat rock, where Price COUGHS up half the

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

bay and breathes. His eyes find Luc's face.

PRICE
Should've left me, Malone.

Luc looks up. The camera on its gray pole is looking down the rocks at them.

AUGUR FEED - AMADOR GATE CAMERA

Three faces in three white boxes.

MALONE, L. // MATCH 96.8%

NO MATCH

MALONE, B. // DECEASED 04 JAN 2027 // MATCH 94.1%

BACK TO SCENE

Blue lights at the gate. SIRENS. Luc climbs.

INT. OLD LAUNCH - CABIN - NIGHT

An old wooden launch off Flamenco, engine cut, drifting dark. Two bunks, a chart table, a brass lamp.

Bruce hands Bennett's phone back and draws the curtains across every port. In the light, Luc sees the gap. Upper jaw, left side, where something gold always was.

LUC
How'd the medical examiner get your bridge?

BRUCE
A partial plate. Saigon work. Never cemented. It came out in my hand.
(then)
There was a man in the D.C. morgue. Nobody's. My height, no prints on file. Frank knew the undertaker. So I gave him my plate. And my name.

They sit.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Since September. I told Cal I'd stop it. Cal looked at me and said, "The old man is a problem."
(then)
William wrote it. Cal said it to my face. So I picked a sleet night. Sleet empties a street.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
You picked her too. You brought her to the house the one night you knew they were coming. So she'd be on the doorbell camera. So she'd run.

BRUCE
Every step of it.
(then)
The minute they framed her, they'd send somebody deniable for the wet work.
(holds his eyes)
Who else was Cal going to send?

LUC
You knew they'd send me?

BRUCE
I counted on it.

LUC
To close her out?

BRUCE
To find her.
(leans in)
Knew she'd ask you a question with your knife at her throat. Then there'd be two of you. Her with the front door, you with the back.
(sits back)
Terry's theirs. Turned a year back.
(his voice goes rough)
Frank's on me.

Bruce takes a PASSPORT out of a drawer and lays it on the chart table. Luc opens it. His own face, a year younger. A name he's never used. DATE OF ISSUE: 08 JAN 2027.

LUC
The eighth. The day they buried you.

He puts it in his shirt pocket, with the phone.

BRUCE
She was pushed, Luc. And they were already ours.

He stands, stooped under the cabin roof, and puts one big crooked hand on Luc's shoulder. The last time he touched him, Luc was nineteen, in a kitchen doorway in McLean, leaving for the Legion.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

BRUCE (CONT'D)
You were always going to be the one they sent.
(beat)
Son.

EXT. LANDWASSER VALLEY - DAY

SUPER: AUGUR // DAVOS, GR // MON 25 JAN

WHITE. Dazzling. At a barrier in the mountains a young SOLDIER with frost in his eyebrows looks at the white badge around Skye's neck, then her face, and SALUTES. He's saluting the badge.

Her fingers find the hem of her coat, where the lining runs stiff along the seam.

FLASH: Ancón. Inés with BLACK THREAD, sewing a tiny earbud and a phone no bigger than a matchbox into the lining.

INT. BELVEDERE - FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

The elevator opens. Her father stands in the doorway of the Presidential Suite himself. Gray cashmere, slippers, reading glasses pushed up on his head, a MONTBLANC in one hand.

His face does something she's never seen it do. It comes apart, a little, at the edges.

WILLIAM
Skye.

He puts his arms around her. Thinner than she remembers. The same soap. Ink.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
You came. I told Graham you would.

She puts her arms around him. She holds on.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Inside the door a SWEEP MAN waits with a wand. Big, square, black leather gloves. Two fingers of the left glove are stiff and thick, splinted underneath.

We linger on that glove a beat longer than she does.

Graham gets to her first. Tweed, a green bow tie with tiny foxes on it. He hangs her coat on the hook by the door himself and stands between it and the wand.

Her father sits across from her and sees the bandage.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

WILLIAM
Who did that to your hand?

SKYE
Odette Fleming's doorknob. In Washington, the night Bruce Malone died.

WILLIAM
I had all eighteen minutes before the Bureau did.
(softly)
I've never been so proud of anyone in my life.

SKYE
Then you know I didn't do it.

WILLIAM
I've always known.

SKYE
Do you know who did?

He looks at her a long moment with pale, steady eyes.

WILLIAM
Yes.

Plainly. He filled the room with her mother's white roses.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I want you next to me on Thursday telling the truth. That it wasn't you. I can switch all of it off. You get your name back.
(simply)
I keep my promises to you, Skye. Name one I've broken.

She can't. That's the worst thing about him.

SKYE
I'll do it.

By the fireplace, Graham makes a very small sound. Her father lays a white plastic card on the coffee table. A girl of nineteen with long fair hair.

INSERT - THE BADGE

MONTGOMERY SYSTEMS. SKYE A. MONTGOMERY. 0417.

BACK TO SCENE

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

WILLIAM
Your old badge. Oh-four-one-seven. I switched it off myself, the night you went down into the data hall at Tysons. I thought if it stopped working, you'd stop.
(slides it across)
This morning I had them turn it back on. It opens every door I own, Skye.

She picks it up. It's warm from his pocket.

A bedroom door opens. Amira steps out in a cream wool suit and a single strand of pearls.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Skye, Her Highness is my guest for Thursday.

Amira holds on to Skye's hand one second too long.

AMIRA
I believe I've met a friend of yours. On a boat, in the Gulf. He had a bracelet.

At the hook by the door, Amira stops. Her hand goes down Skye's coat, idly, a woman admiring good wool, and stops where the lining runs stiff along the seam.

One second.

She goes out. Graham is looking at the floor.

Out in the corridor, a man LAUGHS. A short, surprised bark.

We've heard that laugh before.

The skin on Skye's arms goes COLD before she knows why. A door SHUTS down the hall.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lit cable cars crawl up the black mountain. Her father watches every bite.

WILLIAM
(buttering a roll she didn't ask for; fondly)
Ray Dutton says you put a heel through his foot.

SKYE
He was holding my arm.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

WILLIAM
He was holding it for me.

He goes to the window, hands in his trouser pockets.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Your friend. The Belgian. Marc.
(then)
Luc Malone.

Skye puts down her fork.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
He's alive. You know that, don't you? He landed in Zurich this morning with his father, who is also alive, which surprised a great many people.

She's so relieved her eyes sting. She keeps her face still for him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Terry Walsh has a chalet in Klosters. My cameras say your friend is going tonight. So is the man you met in Baghdad as Pieter. The people he works for call him Osiris. His name is Joost Dekker.

SKYE
Why leak it to me, Dad?

He turns around.

WILLIAM
Stay with me tonight, sweetheart. Please.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Alone at the window. Over the hill, Klosters. BADGE 0417 still warm in her hand.

A train HORN sounds down the valley, on the Klosters line.

She takes her coat.

In the hall, Graham is already in his camel coat, car keys in his hand. He doesn't ask where.

EXT. CHALET ALPENROSE, KLOSTERS - WOODPILE WINDOW - NIGHT

SUPER: AUGUR // KLOSTERS, GR // MON 25 JAN

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Knee-deep powder. It SQUEAKS under every step. Old larch gone black, hearts cut in the shutters, firewood stacked along the south wall higher than a man.

Down the lane, lights off, a black VW Touareg with no snow on it. Three sets of tracks go to the door. None come back.

Luc at a gap in the woodpile. Bruce behind him on one knee, breathing hard through his nose, a rifle across his back in a cheap RED SKI BAG.

Through the glass: low beams, a green tile stove, a bookcase crammed to the ceiling. Over the door a cuckoo clock ticks.

Terry Walsh duct-taped to a straight-backed chair. Cardigan, corduroys, one slipper off. His face is a mess. A man in a black fleece stands over him with a pistol. A second man pulls books off the shelf, shakes them, drops them.

At the stove, back to the window, a third man. Tall. Lean. Gray wool cap. He warms his hands behind his back and rocks on his heels, humming. Le Boudin, half tempo.

Luc's shoulders come back and his chin comes up. A legionnaire, nineteen, on a parade ground in Calvi.

LUC
(barely)
Dekker.

Bruce UNZIPS the bag. A Swiss straight-pull, walnut stock.

BRUCE
K31.

He feeds it a round and lies down behind the woodpile corner, eye to the scope.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
I take the window. You take the boot room.

Luc's thumb goes to the LEATHER BRACELET on his right wrist. To the worn place where the knot is.

INT. CHALET ALPENROSE - BOOT ROOM / HALL - NIGHT

Ski wax and wet wool. Luc eases toward the stove light, the SIG P210 out.

DEKKER (O.S.)
Terry. Tell me where the laptop is, and we'll have some tea.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

TERRY (O.S.)
I sold it. In Zurich. I swear to God, Joost.

DEKKER (O.S.)
You've never sold anything in your life without telling everybody what you got for it.

CRACK.

INT. CHALET ALPENROSE - BIG ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The window by the stove BLOWS IN. The book-shaker drops, clutching his shoulder, SCREAMING in Dutch.

The chair guard swings toward the window. He never sees Luc. BANG. BANG. The guard goes over the dining table. CRASH.

Luc swings to the stove. Nobody. The cuckoo clock TICKS.

The book-shaker comes up with a KNIFE. Luc gets his left forearm up late. The blade SLICES in at the wrist and runs along the bone to the elbow.

They go back into the bookcase. All of it comes down. A brass BAROMETER CLANGS off Luc's head. The shelves RIP the firebox door off the stove, and burning logs roll out across the books. The SIG CLATTERS away.

The man's on top. The knife point hangs over Luc's eye. On the inside of the wrist, a tiny white skull.

Luc's hand finds the barometer. THOCK. Once, to the temple, with everything he has.

Luc rolls him off and finds the SIG under a shelf.

The books are burning. Terry starts to SCREAM.

In the open front door, a pistol down at his side: JOOST DEKKER (late 40s). Tall, lean, a gray beard cropped close, skin tight over the bones. Older than Luc remembers.

We recognize him. Sunglasses across a hangar in Baghdad. A man in the bow of a boat under a bridge. Pieter.

Blood pumps bright red out of Terry's thigh, high on the inside, through the corduroy. Dekker already fired. Luc never heard it over the bookcase.

DEKKER
Malone. Hello. Three more men, four minutes.
(MORE)

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

DEKKER (CONT'D)
(a nod at Terry)
Terry will be dead in two. So.
(almost a smile)
You're in it or you're not.

FLASH: A RIVERBED IN MALI. Rocks too hot to touch. Luc at twenty-four, red to the elbows.

BACK TO SCENE

Luc crawls through the burning books, cuts the tape with the dead man's knife, rolls Terry onto the boards and leans the heel of his hand into the crease of the groin.

Terry HOWLS. The spurting slows. It doesn't stop.

LUC
I'm not in it.

The doorway's empty. An engine starts down the lane. CRACK. CRACK. Metal TEARS. The engine ROARS off toward the village.

Bruce comes in with the rifle, his face gray.

BRUCE
Two in his engine block.
(a look at Terry)
That's a femoral, son. He's done.
Find the laptop.

LUC
Get me a belt.

BRUCE
Terry killed Frank. And eight more.
Understand?

LUC
I know what he did.

BRUCE
Then leave him.

Luc leans harder.

Headlights sweep the ceiling. A silver Audi THUMPS into the snowbank. Bruce brings the rifle round.

LUC
No. Wait.

He knows how she gets out of a car.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Skye comes through the door in a long black coat with snow in her hair. The fire. The bodies. The old man with the rifle. Then Luc on the floor. Her eyes stop on him and stay.

SKYE
I've had Terry's address since Panama. A page out of Frank's address book.

She's already pulling her belt. Black leather, a silver buckle. She kneels in the blood in her two-thousand-dollar coat and passes it under the thigh above his hands.

He threads it and hauls, his knee on the leg. Terry SCREAMS, then stops screaming.

SKYE (CONT'D)
Tighter.

LUC
It won't go tighter.

SKYE
Then hold it.

He holds it.

Skye puts Terry's glasses on him, crooked, one lens cracked.

TERRY
Oh. It's you. So sorry about the mess.

SKYE
Terry. Where's the laptop?

TERRY
Woodpile. Third row from the bottom. A biscuit tin.
(almost a laugh)
Fortnum's. My mother's.

Bruce goes out. The paneling over the stove catches. WHOOMP.

TERRY (CONT'D)
(to Luc, lips going blue)
It was me, old boy. Of course it was. A text, twelve minutes past eleven, to a Dutch number. I owe money in Cyprus. They said nobody would get hurt.
(to Skye)
He thought it was you. Didn't he?

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
Yes.

TERRY
Tell him I'm sorry. Tell Frank.

The pulse stutters. Catches. Stops.

We stay on Luc. His knee on the belt. The clock ticking. Ash coming down onto Terry Walsh's cardigan.

Then he takes his hands away. He looks at them, red to the wrist, and then at her. He's ashamed, and lets her see it.

LUC
I said it was you. At Balboa. I was wrong. I'm sorry.

There's ash in her hair. She stands and holds out her hand. He takes it. They go out bent double under the smoke. Behind them the beams catch with a long TEARING sound.

INT. THE AUDI - BOTTOM OF THE LANE - NIGHT

Graham Pell at the wheel, camel coat buttoned to the throat. Bruce in the back with the rifle and a FORTNUM & MASON TIN on his knees. The chalet burns in the mirror.

GRAHAM
Oh, Bruce. I sent lilies. You're dead.

BRUCE
Not yet.

SKYE
Graham. Your knife.

He takes out a little red penknife without asking which knife and turns in his seat. His fingers run once along the stiff seam in her lining. He doesn't hunt for the end of it.

He cuts Inés's black thread, stitch by stitch. The MATCHBOX PHONE drops into her palm.

SKYE (CONT'D)
(to the bud in her ear)
Lena.

INT. BRUCE'S FLAT OVER A BAKERY, KLOSTERS DORF - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Luc on the floor, his left arm across the edge of the tub. Bruce kneels on the bath mat in his undershirt and reading

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

glasses, stitching the forearm with a needle from the kitchen drawer. A bottle of Kirsch on the tile.

LUC
She came.

Bruce cuts the thread with his teeth. On the right side. There are no teeth on the left.

BRUCE
Most send lilies, Luc. The ones who come back for you, I count on one hand.

INT. BRUCE'S FLAT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Skye at Terry's ThinkPad. Luc slides his phone across.

LUC
My photo roll. Six years of receipts.

SKYE
You kept the paper trail?

LUC
Insurance.

She stops on a crooked shot of a glovebox: a Camry rental agreement, BWI, billed to HARROW POINT LOGISTICS LLC.

SKYE
Harrow Point. The card Graham wouldn't carry.

She sends it to Lena. He sets down a second phone. Locked.

LUC
Bennett's phone. Sixteen minutes of the plaza, and my voice in the middle.

She seals it in the freezer bag from Terry's tin and pushes it down her RIGHT BOOT, between liner and shell.

Bruce comes out of the bathroom drying his hands. Skye stands in his way.

SKYE
You put me on a doorbell camera. On purpose.

BRUCE
Every frame of it.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
When they sent him. Did you think he'd close me out?

BRUCE
I counted on him finding you.

SKYE
That isn't what I asked.

He goes past her without answering.

On the ThinkPad, Terry's files. NEW YORK. LONDON. LUXEMBOURG. HONG KONG. THU 28 JAN 05:00 EST. A gray HARD-SHELL CASE, lid open on a flat white panel: SAT TERMINAL, OSIRIS, NEEDS SKY TO THE SOUTH.

SKYE
Osiris. Joost Dekker, Dad says. What is he to you?

LUC
My sergeant in Mali.

SKYE
He whistled on the helicopter into Baghdad. The whole way.
(reading)
Eleven here. My father's speech. If Dad says the line, the bombs go, and the log says Sunlight.

LUC
He might not.

SKYE
Dekker sends them by hand, and the log says Dekker. Either way they go. Unless the box on the mountain goes dead.

LUC
What's the line?

SKYE
It's in his speech. And my badge opens every door he owns. You kill the box. I kill the line.

INT. BRUCE'S FLAT - KITCHEN - LATER

03:00. Bruce is asleep. Cold tea. Snow past the streetlight.

LUC
Idrissa Maïga.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Skye's hands stop on the keys.

LUC (CONT'D)
He was at his desk. RFI on the radio. A glass of mint tea. I came in from behind.
(then)
When it was done, I reached past him and turned off the radio. I never did that before or after. You can't print half. So print that. With my name next to it.

SKYE
You think that's what I want? Your name?

LUC
His name first. That's what he's owed.

SKYE
He's owed his life. He's owed watching his kids get on the bus. I'm going to write it, Luc. With your name. And I'm never going to forgive you for it.

LUC
I'm not asking you to.

04:30. Headlights under the window. Skye lays the matchbox phone flat against her ankle and pulls her left sock over it. The coat's stiff down one side with Terry Walsh's blood.

SKYE
Wednesday you come over the mountain. Bottom of the Schatzalp funicular. Ten o'clock.

Her hand on the door. She turns, crosses the kitchen in two steps, takes his face in both cold hands and kisses him. Short and hard.

SKYE (CONT'D)
That's for later.

LUC
When's later?

SKYE
After you come over the mountain.

She's gone. Luc stands in the kitchen with his stitched arm and the cold tea. He's happy.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

From the dark bedroom doorway, Bruce clears his throat.

BRUCE
I didn't count on that.

EXT. LANDQUART RIVER - FOOTBRIDGE, KLOSTERS - WEDNESDAY - DAWN

In Luc's hand, a page torn from an oilcloth notebook: GOTSCHNA 0800. SOLDIERS WATCH THE ROAD, NOT THE HILL. / B.

No "son." Bruce is gone, and so are the rifle and the tin. Luc drops the SIG into the gray water.

EXT. THE DORFTÄLI, ABOVE DAVOS - DAY

SUPER: AUGUR // DAVOS, GR // WED 27 JAN

Over the mountain. Blue ice. Luc in a red rental jacket plants the left pole. The stitches PULL. The skis SKID out and he SLAMS into the orange netting on the bad arm. The inside of his sleeve goes warm and wet.

EXT. DAVOS PROMENADE - SCHATZALP FUNICULAR - DAY

Forum week. Soldiers in white camouflage watch the road. Luc comes down off the hill behind them with skis on his shoulder, his left cuff stiff with blood. 10:04. Skye steps into the queue behind him. Dark glasses, a WHITE WEF BADGE.

SKYE
You came over the mountain.

LUC
You said to.

Something warm passes from her bare hand to his: a blue badge, R. HALLER, MONTGOMERY SYSTEMS. A long face, glasses.

SKYE
Dekker's at the Congress Centre.
One of his men carries a gray case.

Pharmacy glasses, gray fleece, hair combed flat with tap water. Skye takes his arm and hands him her bag. It weighs nothing at all.

LUC
What's in it?

SKYE
Air. Heiresses travel light.

Luc LAUGHS, under a borrowed face, in a street of soldiers.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT. CONGRESS CENTRE - BOOTH CORRIDOR - DAY

Glass booths over the plenary hall. The last one: MONTGOMERY SYSTEMS / LIVE CAPTIONING. Outside it, THE GRAY CASE, and a tall lean man in a gray suit, back to Luc. Humming.

Forty feet. Luc starts walking.

From his left, his deaf side, Princess Amira and a man with a wire in his ear. Luc sees her at ten feet. Too late.

AMIRA
Mr. Dekker. I think you'll find this is the relief engineer.

Dekker turns, and smiles. He takes Luc's left forearm, right on the stitches, and SQUEEZES. Luc's face doesn't move.

A BIG MAN on his other side. A muzzle through the fleece, just above the belt.

INT. CONGRESS CENTRE - LOADING BAY - DAY

A white Montgomery van at the dock. Amira follows them down, her perfume first. Oud, a lot of it.

The Big Man takes his phone, the glasses, the badge. He turns Luc's right wrist to the light. The bracelet, dark with twenty-four years of skin.

DEKKER
You still wear that?
(to Amira)
His mother's. He touched it before he did his work. Every time.
(to the Big Man)
Take it off.

A BOX CUTTER. The leather parts with a small soft sound.

Amira holds out her palm. Dekker shrugs and gives it to her.

AMIRA
You saved my life once. In a manner of speaking.

LUC
You weren't in any danger.

AMIRA
No. I hired the boat. My father paid forty million to get me back. You didn't know that. You came anyway.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

We linger on Luc's wrist. A pale band of skin. It's been under there since he was fourteen.

INT. MONTGOMERY HOUSE, DAVOS PROMENADE - NIGHT

A string quartet under SEE WHAT MATTERS. William in a dinner jacket goes to meet men in white thobes. Skye sets down her champagne and slips through a door marked PRIVAT.

Downstairs, a new steel door. BADGE 0417, warm from her skin. Green. CLICK. Server racks ROARING. Augur: every camera in Davos at once, in her father's basement.

She types MALONE, LUC. 11:19, the loading bay, a box cutter at his wrist. 12:06, the Jakobshorn summit, going in under the station beside a tall man with a gray case.

She types THURSDAY.

INSERT - THE TRIGGER FILE: CUE: "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants." WTM / THU 28 JAN / 11:06. ON MATCH: OSIRIS (JAKOBSHORN). WINDOW 15 MIN. Four live tiles: a substation, a PATH sign, a hut on a shingle beach, and a kitchen in Queens, men at a lemon-print tablecloth, one asleep with his arms folded, a KETTLE on the stove.

BACK TO SCENE

She deletes one word. RED: EDIT REQUIRES WTM AUTHORIZATION.

The door CLICKS. She knows the step. Slow. Never in a hurry.

WILLIAM
(mildly)
I gave it to you so you'd use it, sweetheart.

He rolls a chair over and sits beside her. He used to sit like this for her long division.

SKYE
You're going to say it tomorrow. And four cities are going to burn.

WILLIAM
Nobody's going to burn. That's a word for television. Fewer people will be hurt than die on the roads in America in an afternoon.

SKYE
And Sunlight takes the blame? And me with it?

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

WILLIAM
Not you. Calvin gave me his word. In writing.

SKYE
How did you know ashgrove was me?

WILLIAM
Augur reads everything, sweetheart. Your commas. Your hours. It told me the week your drone story ran. I told it to keep quiet.
(typing)
Shall I tell you about your friend?

Row nine of the ledger, under his finger: 2021. C. America. FUENTES MOLINA, R. Cardiac. Closed. Requesting: MS via CA.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Read me row nine.

SKYE
A man.

WILLIAM
A man who counted votes. A heart attack at his desk, before the recount. Your friend did that for my money. Four times.
(then)
And you kissed him in a lit window in Klosters. Graham tells me everything, in the end.

She looks at row nine. A radio, turned off.

SKYE
Have I ever lied to you, Daddy?

He doesn't answer. He stands.

WILLIAM
You're tired.

EXT. THE BELVEDERE - FRONT STEPS - NIGHT

Arm in arm with her father up the iced steps, two Montgomery men behind. Her heel slides.

THE TEXAN (O.S.)
Watch your step there, ma'am.

She knows the voice. He pulls off his left glove with his teeth: a WHITE SKULL on the back of the hand, two fingers splinted with tape. He sees her knowing him.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT. THE BELVEDERE - PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - NIGHT

Graham takes her coat without looking at her. William goes through every seam of the lining himself. He never looks at her boots, not since she needed help with the laces.

WILLIAM
The badge. And the white one.

She gives him 0417, and he pockets it. She lifts the white one over her head. He hands it to Graham.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
(his palm on her cheek)
There'll be a man outside your door. I chose him myself.

SKYE
Then unlock the door.

She goes into her bedroom. A key TURNS, and is taken out. He does everything gently.

INT. JAKOBSHORN SUMMIT STATION - MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

A concrete box under the summit platform: a twenty-foot yellow BULL WHEEL, haul ropes through slots in the wall, a narrow window high up.

Luc zip-tied to an upright on a steel gantry under a diesel-stinking furniture blanket. Behind his back his thumb keeps reaching for his right wrist, and finding skin.

The wheel TURNS for one cabin, and stops. Boots on the iron stairs: two MONTGOMERY MEN, then WILLIAM in his dinner jacket, snow on the shoulders, a flute of champagne in his hand. Dekker gets up off the grating.

WILLIAM
Give us the room, Mr. Dekker.

Dekker takes his YOUNG REAPER (20s) out. He doesn't hum.

Luc reads his hands first. No gun. The champagne. A brass Belvedere room key on a red tassel, turning over in the long fingers. Blue-black ink on the second finger.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Are you cold, Mr. Malone?

LUC
Yes.

William drinks his champagne.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I've paid for you for years. I've never seen your face.
(then)
Niamey was mine. Did you know?

LUC
I read it on a spreadsheet.

WILLIAM
Shall I tell you why?

LUC
No.

William's disappointed. He came up a mountain in a dinner jacket to be asked.

WILLIAM
You kissed my daughter.

LUC
She kissed me.

William thinks about it. It's worse.

LUC (CONT'D)
Whose key?

WILLIAM
Hers. She hasn't slept in three weeks.

LUC
Did she ask you to unlock it?

WILLIAM
Yes.

William looks at him a long time.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Is there anything you want?

LUC
Your glass.

William finishes the champagne.

WILLIAM
It's Krug, Mr. Malone. You'd only cut yourself.

He sets the empty flute on the rail a foot past Luc's reach and goes, the key shut in his fist.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

DEKKER (V.O.)
(PRELAP)
You remember Calvi?

INT. MACHINE ROOM - LATER

Midnight. Dekker sits on the grating and holds a steaming cup to Luc's mouth.

Hot, sweet, condensed milk. Legion tea. The best thing that's happened to Luc all day.

DEKKER
The first winter you cried in the showers. I thought, this one won't last a month.
(then)
You know what the Legion gives you? A new name. And nobody ever asks who you were.

LUC
Kovač.

DEKKER
Kovač. You always kept the names, Malone. That was your trouble.

LUC
Et après, t'as écrit qu'il était mort sur le coup.

DEKKER
Killed instantly gets his mother the full pension. You signed it because it was kind.
(then)
Six years of clean work, Malone. Nobody's name on any of it. At ten past eleven a boy from Chur shoots you beside my box. They find a Belgian passport on you. Marc Delorme.
(almost kindly)
Nobody will know your name. That's what you always wanted, isn't it?

He stands with the empty cup.

DEKKER (CONT'D)
Another at six. Like Mali.

He goes. Luc loved that man once.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT. THE BELVEDERE - SKYE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

00:40. Outside the door the guard's chair CREAKS. Her father hired a guard with a squeaky chair. Small mercies.

On the next balcony a MAN IN A HOTEL BATHROBE finishes a cigarette and goes in, leaving his door wedged open on a WHITE HOTEL SLIPPER. The matchbox phone at her ear, she watches that slipper.

LENA (V.O.)
Missed check-in. The switch doesn't ask why. If it opens, Bruce Malone goes out alive, to five newsrooms.

SKYE
Take out every line with his name.

LENA (V.O.)
He put you on a doorbell camera.

SKYE
I know. I'm in the footage. Cut him anyway.

She dials a number she's known by heart since she was nine.

GRAHAM (V.O.)
(thick with sleep)
Pell. Who's died?

SKYE
You cut my lining open and never asked me one question. And then you told him. He gave you my white badge. I need it under my door before seven.

GRAHAM (V.O.)
My dear girl. He'll know it was me.

SKYE
He'll know. So will you.

She's never known which way Graham will jump.

INT. MACHINE ROOM - DAWN

06:00. Dekker comes in with the gray case and the second cup. At the south window he stands a flat white PANEL against the glass and cables it to the case. AMBER. GREEN.

YOUNG REAPER
Thought it needed open sky.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

DEKKER
Glass, at a pinch, jongen.

He holds the cup to Luc's mouth. At the door, he turns.

DEKKER (CONT'D)
Check his hands.

Behind the post, Luc's right fist closes on a BOOTLACE.

FLASH: 04:00. The kid asleep. Luc works the lace out of his right boot by feel and saws it through the zip tie between his wrists. Nylon on nylon. Nothing gives but the skin.

BACK TO SCENE

The kid CLIMBS the gantry, boots RINGING on the steel, and YANKS the tie. It BITES the raw place. Luc keeps the fist shut tight.

YOUNG REAPER
You're rubbing yourself raw, man.

He wipes it on his parka. Blood, and nothing under it.

INTERCUT - THE MACHINE ROOM / SKYE'S BEDROOM

THE MACHINE ROOM. 06:10. A KLAXON. The yellow wheel turns. The haul rope SINGS in its slot. Through the high window, two lit cabins on the span. In the operator's booth a man in a red jacket presses something with the flat of his hand.

The wheel STOPS DEAD. Both cabins JOLT at once, and swing. Luc's lips count. Eleven, before the rope hangs still.

YOUNG REAPER
Brake test. Guy up top hits the e-stop if a bird lands on a cabin.

One rope. Two cabins. They stop together.

SKYE'S BEDROOM. A whisper of paper on carpet. Inside the door, THE WHITE BADGE, its blue lanyard wound tight. Folded round it, Belvedere notepaper and one WERTHER'S. Three words in fountain pen: Go home, Catherine.

Her Baghdad name. She loves Graham again, a little.

She puts the lanyard over her head and laces her boots tight, the right one heavier than the left. Down the hall, slippers going slowly away.

END INTERCUT

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT. THE BELVEDERE - SKYE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

SUPER: AUGUR // BELVEDERE, DAVOS // THU 28 JAN // 10:21 CET

LENA (V.O.)
Now. The smoker next door's gone down to breakfast.

Skye hangs her boots round her neck by the laces. The right one swings heavier: Bennett's phone.

EXT. THE BELVEDERE - THIRD-FLOOR LEDGE - CONTINUOUS

Minus ten. Socks and a black sweater. Three stories down, the Promenade: black cars, soldiers, lanyards going to work.

Nine feet to the next balcony, along a stone cornice as wide as her foot is long. Face to the wall. Her bandaged hand finds the iron hook of a shutter. She shuffles.

Halfway, her right foot hits ice. It GOES. Her whole weight HANGS on the hook.

SKYE
(a whisper)
Shitshitshit.

The hook HOLDS. She gets the foot back, finds the far rail, and goes over it onto her knees in the smoker's snow.

INT. CONGRESS HALL - TOP TIER - DAY

The white badge on its blue lanyard, on her black sweater.

Sixteen hundred seats fall away below her into the light. A clear acrylic lectern. A twelve-foot screen either side of it, each with a caption bar, blue and empty.

At the end of the glass booths, booth six: MONTGOMERY SYSTEMS / LIVE CAPTIONING. A gray rack HUMS inside.

LENA (V.O.)
Page four's six minutes in. Line or no line, at six past, Dekker's clock starts. Fifteen minutes. Pull that rack and the captions die.

On a folding chair at the booth door: THE TEXAN. A lip full of Copenhagen at the World Economic Forum.

His left hand rests on his knee. The white skull. Two fingers splinted and taped.

She's sick of being scared of that hand.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

He sees her. A short BARK of a laugh. He fills the doorway.

THE TEXAN
Hands. Let me see your hands.

She shows him. Empty. One bandaged.

He gets a fist in her collar and SWINGS her.

BOOM. Her back HITS the glass of booth three.

The skull hand PINS her breastbone. Wintergreen breath. Along the tier, an AISLE CAMERAMAN swings toward the noise.

The same fingers she dropped a ladder on in Fells Point. She takes them in both hands and BENDS them back. All the way.

CRACK.

On both screens: the skull hand, fingers bent the wrong way, his face above it SCREAMING. The whole hall hears it.

She goes over the rail. Tysons again: she hangs from the brass at the end of her arms, and lets go.

WHAM. Both boots, one knee. Her hand goes wet in the gauze.

INT. JAKOBSHORN SUMMIT STATION - MACHINE ROOM - DAY

SNAP. A small dry sound under the ROAR of the bull wheel.

The zip tie parts. Luc's hands come round, white and swollen. His left thumb goes to his right wrist. Bare skin.

By the door the KID watches a livestream on his phone, rifle across his knees. 10:59.

Luc is across the room before the rifle comes up. BANG. The round SCREAMS off the bull wheel. Luc CHOPS him across the throat, and the stock goes once above the ear. The kid goes down, breathing.

Luc zips the kid's parka to the chin, slings the carbine, and goes up the stairs into the light.

INT. CONGRESS HALL - AISLE STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Skye goes down fast, one hand on the rail.

WILLIAM (O.S.)
I want to begin with a confession. Because I'm a father before I'm anything else.

Faces turn as she passes.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

AMERICAN WOMAN
That's her. Oh my God. That's the Sunlight woman.

SKYE
Hi.

The nearest rows laugh, high and startled, not sure yet if they're allowed to.

An aisle camera finds her. On both screens, where the skull hand was: her own face. White. Frightened.

TWO FORUM SECURITY MEN come up the stairs and take her arms.

INT. CONGRESS HALL - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

William looks up the long bright aisle at his daughter between two men. Her face is twelve feet high on both sides of him.

For one second his face does the thing at the edges. Then eyes down, and he goes on.

WILLIAM
We will be watched. Every one of us. The only question in front of this room is by whom, and for what.

He turns to page four.

INSERT - THE MARGIN NOTE

His blue-black Montblanc, slanting forward: Slow here. Look up. Let them hear it.

BACK TO SCENE

He looks up, straight at his daughter.

WILLIAM
Justice Brandeis said it better. I own his first edition.

INT. CONGRESS HALL - AISLE STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

One breath before he says it. She can't shout. A shout is the clip they'd loop tonight.

SKYE
Daddy.

Breakfast-table volume. The voice from the top of the stairs in Georgetown when she was six.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

The hall's so quiet it carries. Fifty rows down, her father looks up from the page.

The caption bar stays empty.

EXT. JAKOBSHORN SUMMIT STATION - DAY

WHITE. Sun off snow, straight into Luc's eyes. He throws a hand up, blind.

When he can see: DEKKER, walking fast and easy to the platform, the gray hard-shell case in his left hand, a REAPER at his shoulder. A red cabin waits in its bay.

By the station door, two more REAPERS, smoking. They see a Reaper parka. Then the taller one sees the face.

Both rifles SNAP up.

Luc drops to a knee and drags the carbine off his back.

BAM. The taller one sits down in the snow.

The other one has him cold. Luc's muzzle is a foot short.

CRACK. Flat and far. A K31, from the east.

The other one goes over backward and lies still.

Three hundred meters along the ridge, in the black rocks, once, a wink of light. Then nothing.

Who's up there with a Swiss rifle? Luc doesn't need to look.

The cabin doors SLAM. It JERKS, and slides out over the edge of the mountain.

Luc RUNS. Over the railing at the end of the platform. Four feet down, sliding away: the cabin roof.

EXT. CABLE CAR - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

THUD. He lands on his chest. The cabin SWINGS. He SLIDES.

His hands CATCH the roof railing. His legs go over the edge. Below him, two hundred meters of air and a white couloir.

He's scared. He drags himself onto the grating.

BANG. BANG. Two rounds PUNCH up through the roof a foot from his hip.

The hatch. A T-handle rimed with frost. He SLAMS it with the heel of his hand. It turns.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT. CONGRESS HALL - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

William doesn't say the line. He takes his glasses off.

WILLIAM
(into the microphone)
Let her come down. Please. She's my daughter.

The captions print it. Her guards trade a look. They let go.

LENA (V.O.)
Your receipt's loaded. It's on his phone in thirty seconds.

She walks down. Every head in the hall turns to follow her, the way heads follow a bride. She looks only at him.

Up three steps, into the light. Hot. White. There's nothing in front of her but white.

INT. CABLE CAR - CONTINUOUS

The noon sun drops straight through the open hatch into the eyes of the REAPER under it, pistol up.

Luc DROPS through the white, forearm across his eyes.

Both boots SLAM into the man's chest. The pistol FIRES wild. BANG BANG. The side window goes white edge to edge. Laminated, it holds.

Luc's knees come down on him. Something in the chest GIVES.

Dekker kneels over the open case: a lit laptop, and a flat white panel the size of a pizza box on a black cable.

INSERT - THE LAPTOP

A caption window, white on blue, empty. A row of tiny live tiles: a room, a parked car, a kitchen. And a red clock, starting: WINDOW 15:00. 14:59. 14:58.

BACK TO SCENE

A gust SLAMS the cabin broadside. The crazed window bows in, and GOES, out of its frame in one sheet.

The wind comes in SCREAMING.

INT. SUMMIT STATION - OPERATOR'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

The OPERATOR saw a man go over his railing. He SLAPS the red E-STOP with the flat of his hand.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

INT. CABLE CAR - CONTINUOUS

The cabin stops DEAD.

Everything SLIDES. Case, Reaper, carbine, Luc. The cabin swings out over the rocks, and back, and out. Luc's lips count. Eleven.

One rope. Two cabins. They stop together.

The other cabin hangs across the gap, a body length away, full of skiers on their way up. A CHILD IN A PINK HAT. And phones. Eighty of them, flat to the glass.

Dekker sets the white panel flat against the south window. Glass, at a pinch. A green light comes on.

INT. CONGRESS HALL - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

She stands beside him at the lectern, where he always wanted her. Up close he's old. Camera powder in the lines by his mouth. His hand on the acrylic is shaking.

WILLIAM
(very quiet)
Sweetheart. Why aren't you in your room?

The microphone is six inches from his mouth, its little green light on. She doesn't touch it.

SKYE
Because Calvin Ashby sent a man to kill me.

Kitchen-table volume. To him alone. Half a second later, the screens print it for sixteen hundred people.

In the wings a SOUND WOMAN reaches for the cutoff. William lifts two fingers off the acrylic. The hand stops.

INT. CABLE CAR - CONTINUOUS

In the caption window: Because Calvin Ashby sent a man to kill me.

The line isn't coming.

DEKKER
Godverdomme.

CLICK. One keystroke clears the screen.

INSERT - THE LAPTOP

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

MANUAL AUTHORIZATION. ENTER CODE. Six empty spaces. The red clock: 13:41.

BACK TO SCENE

He types one digit. The screen asks. He types it again.

DEKKER
(not looking up)
You've made me sign it. Six years of clean work, Malone. The system sends. Nobody's name on any of it. Now it's my code on the log.

Luc reads her sentence in the caption window. Every digit Dekker types is a second Luc can use. He grins, blood in his teeth. Proud of her.

INT. CONGRESS HALL - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

WILLIAM
Calvin gave me his word.

The screens print it.

SKYE
"She will not be harmed." You wrote it into every document. Calvin signed under it. Then he sent another man to cut my throat. Look at your phone. The car with the rifle in it. Calvin's card paid for it.

BZZT. His breast pocket.

She's never seen him look at a phone on a stage. He looks at this one.

INSERT - WILLIAM'S PHONE

A crooked photo of a rental agreement in a glovebox: TOYOTA CAMRY. BWI AIRPORT. JAN 9. HARROW POINT LOGISTICS LLC. VISA ENDING 6620. Under it, a page from his own folder, in Calvin's hand: Card 6620 for ASHGROVE only.

BACK TO SCENE

SKYE
Have I ever lied to you, Daddy?

WILLIAM
No.

On the screens: No.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
You promised me. In your own ink. Stand next to you on Thursday, and by Friday it'd be over. It's Thursday. I'm standing next to you.
(beat)
Name one you've broken.

INT. CABLE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Four digits in. The red clock: 13:05.

Luc goes downhill with the tilt and SLAMS a shoulder into Dekker's ribs. They go over together. The panel peels off the glass.

Dekker comes up FIGHTING. Nearly fifty. The best soldier Luc ever saw.

An elbow. CRUNCH. Luc's nose goes. His eyes fill.

Blind, by feel: the laptop, the thick black cable. He PULLS. The plug comes free in his fist.

WHAM. The carbine barrel across the back of his head. The floor HITS him in the face.

When he can see again, Dekker is fitting the plug back in. Steady fingers. He's HUMMING. Le Boudin, half tempo.

Luc gets both hands on the white panel. He turns toward the empty window, where the wind screams.

Dekker stops humming.

Luc THROWS it.

The cable SNAPS taut, RIPS out of the laptop, and whips out the window after it. The panel tumbles away, white, over and over, into the rocks.

INSERT - THE LAPTOP

Under four digits, in red: NO LINK. The red clock keeps running: 12:48.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. CONGRESS HALL - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

On both screens, enormous: Name one you've broken.

William looks past her at the feed. Her first line still hangs near the top. He reads it twice. Contract speed.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

She watches him do the arithmetic. Forty years of Calvin. Thirty-one of her.

WILLIAM
(to himself)
He gave me his word.

He looks at the margin note. He folds the page in half. Both hands on the lectern, he looks up into the dark.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
My daughter had nothing to do with what happened in Washington. Or in Baghdad. Or in Panama. Neither did the people who call themselves Sunlight. I know it because I paid for them. All three.

The hall doesn't make a sound.

He looks down at her. His voice breaks.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I promised her that by Friday it would all be over. I've never broken a promise to her in her life.
(to the hall)
It's over.

INT. CABLE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Dekker types the fifth digit. NO LINK. He types it again.

In the caption window: I paid for them. All three.

His hands stop on the keys. For a second he doesn't move.

Then he grabs the carbine by the barrel and SWINGS.

Luc takes it on the stitched forearm. Every stitch RIPS. His good hand finds Dekker's collar, and they slide together with the swing into the empty frame.

The cabin swings back and takes the floor from under Dekker's boots. He goes OUT the window.

Luc's hand CLAMPS on his wrist.

EXT. CABLE CAR - WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Luc flat on his belly, his arm out the window to the shoulder. Dekker hangs from his hand over two hundred meters of nothing.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Across the gap, the phones. The child in the pink hat, held back by an arm.

The cabin SWINGS. Luc's shoulder starts out of its socket. Blood from the opened arm runs down into Dekker's hand. The grip slides.

Luc gets his other hand onto the wrist. Both hands. "Tighter." "It won't go tighter." Nobody says it. He holds.

DEKKER
(over the wind)
Malone. Let go.

LUC
No.

DEKKER
You'll go out holding my arm.

LUC
Then I go.

DEKKER
You're in it.
(beat)
Or you're not.

One hard twist of the wrist, the grip-break they both learned in the mud at Castelnaudary. It turns in Luc's slick red hands, and comes free.

Dekker FALLS without a sound, past the other cabin's window.

The child in the pink hat watches him go by.

The couloir takes him. A small white cloud of powder rises, and settles.

INT. CABLE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Luc's hands are empty. Red and shaking. Across the gap the phones are still up.

He puts the guns out the window, one at a time.

The kid's phone, cracked across one corner. The livestream: the old man who came up the mountain last night, at a clear lectern, head bowed, men in gray coming at him from both wings. Beside him, very straight, in a black sweater and a white badge: Skye.

Nose broken, arm open, shoulder out, Luc sits on the floor of a cable car swinging over the Alps and looks at her.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

He's very glad to see her.

INSERT - THE LAPTOP

The red clock runs out. 00:02. 00:01. It CHIMES once.

11:21. CONFIRM WINDOW CLOSED. NO CONFIRM. STAND DOWN.

BACK TO SCENE

In one of the tiny tiles, a kitchen. We push into it.

INT. KITCHEN, QUEENS - NIGHT

A lemon-print tablecloth. A box of donuts. FOUR MEN at the table in their coats, a laptop open between them. On its screen, in red: STAND DOWN.

Nobody moves for a while. The microwave clock reads 5:21.

One of them gets up, fills the kettle at the sink, and puts it on. Outside, a 7 train RATTLES past on the el.

INT. DAVOS HOSPITAL - LUC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Luc in bed: arm in a sling, nose taped, both eyes black, a gown with little blue flowers. Skye in the chair by the bed.

In the doorway, ANNA WYSS (50s), tall, gray-haired, FEDPOL on her parka, with a half-knitted gray sock on four needles. Six hours of questions, and she's turned the heel.

WYSS
Ten minutes, then the prosecutor. At Landquart they took a man off the Zurich train with a skull on his broken hand. On the summit, one man by your carbine. And the other?

She looks at the bed. Luc says nothing.

WYSS (CONT'D)
The east ridge. A rifle we cannot find. Panama has a New Zealander who's started talking. Eighty people watched the Dutchman open his own hand. That helps you. You threw their panel out of the cabin, so the confirm never went. New York. London. Luxembourg. Hong Kong. They were sitting in their kitchens, waiting, when the police came through the door.

She knits a stitch, and goes.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Luc reaches across himself for the water glass, wrong arm. The new stitches let go. A red line comes through the bandage and spreads.

Skye's hands get there first, flat over the bandage.

LUC
Tighter.

SKYE
It won't go tighter.

LUC
Then hold it.

She holds it. Under her palms the warm wet spreads, slows, and stops. Skye puts her forehead against his. Once.

LUC
I came over the mountain.

SKYE
(she grins)
Later's still later.

The grin goes. She looks at the door.

SKYE (CONT'D)
What name are you giving him?

LUC
Delorme's dead. Van Aken's dead. Bauer's dead.

SKYE
If you do it right... nothing happened.

LUC
Nothing's true till everybody knows it.

The door opens: a tired young PROSECUTOR from Bern with a digital recorder, Wyss behind him.

Skye unlaces her right boot. Out of the shaft: Bennett's phone, in Terry's freezer bag. She puts it in his good hand.

LUC
Michael Bennett's phone. Panama City. Sixteen minutes of the plaza. Nobody's played it.

The recorder's small red light comes on.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

PROSECUTOR
For the record. Your name.

Luc looks at the small red light a long time.

LUC
Luc Malone.

PROSECUTOR
L-U-K-E?

LUC
Luc. L-U-C. My mother was French.

Skye's hand finds the edge of his blanket and stays.

LUC (CONT'D)
I want to begin with a man in Niamey. November 2024. His name was Idrissa Maïga. I didn't know it then.
(he looks at Skye)
I know it now.

INT. THE BELVEDERE - LIBRARY - SUNDAY MORNING

ASHBY in the leather chair by the fire, cold hotel coffee beside him. Skye takes the chair across from him.

ASHBY
I'm a private citizen, my dear. Since yesterday. I read your story twice. One sentence three times. Who taught you to write a sentence that careful?

SKYE
You did.

He turns his cup a quarter turn on its saucer.

ASHBY
I took that medical examiner's call. I told her she could close it by noon. So I know whose teeth are in that grave, and whose aren't. Leave my initials out of Tuesday, and the extradition requests for your friend go away. Run them, and I make one call. They open that grave, and Bruce Malone is the most wanted man alive.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE
Open that grave, Cal, and your signature comes up with it. Your initials run Tuesday.

His hand stops on the cup.

Ashby laughs, almost fond. He stands, buttons his overcoat, and turns for the door. Luc's in it, arm in a sling.

ASHBY (CONT'D)
Son.

LUC
Luc.

EXT. DAVOS HELIPORT - FROZEN LAKE - DAY

A white helicopter at the water's edge, rotors turning. AMIRA walks to it in dark glasses, a man with a wire in his ear carrying her bag.

At the door she stops, walks back to Luc and Skye alone, and takes off her glasses.

AMIRA
You look terrible.

From her coat pocket, the bracelet. Cut through, and tied back together with a small neat knot.

Luc takes it with his good hand. He doesn't put it on.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
Which agency are you with?

LUC
None. My name's Luc Malone.

Amira smiles a little. It doesn't change her eyes at all.

AMIRA
Of course it is.

She goes back to the helicopter. Skye takes off her glove and holds out a folded page in her backward-leaning hand.

SKYE
Lena found it in Bruce's card payments. Every three months, to a harbor office. A mooring fee.

He unfolds it one-handed. An address. A river. A name. We don't get to read it. He pockets it with the bracelet.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

SKYE (CONT'D)
I'll see you, Luc Malone.

She walks away into the falling snow and doesn't look back. A MAN IN A VERY GOOD COAT steps aside to let her pass.

The helicopter lifts over the frozen lake.

MONTAGE - THE SUNLIGHT FRAME

A phone, SAT 30 JAN, 6:00 AM EST: THE SUNLIGHT FRAME. By Skye Montgomery. At the top, before any other name, a photo: IDRISSA MAÏGA at a desk in Niamey, a glass of tea beside him. Fourteen paragraphs down, one sentence: On January sixth, the District's medical examiner identified Bruce Malone's remains by his dental work.

NIAMEY. A front room, the radio on. MARIAMA MAÏGA (40s) with two reporters, notebooks closed.

MARIAMA
(in French; subtitled)
Did he say my husband's name first?

The older reporter nods.

TARTU. Over a bakery, LENA KASK, about nineteen, watches the numbers climb. A cat walks across her keyboard. On her second screen, Skye's face, over a new word: JOURNALIST.

A LOADING BAY. William, between two policemen, stops at the car and looks back at a steel door. He can't see her behind it. He looks anyway.

END MONTAGE

EXT. SAÔNE TOWPATH, LYON - NIGHT

SUPER: LYON // NO COVERAGE

Black water, running fast and high with snowmelt. Across it the whole city is lit, Fourvière floodlit white on its hill.

Luc comes down the wet steps, arm strapped. He's nervous.

The last barge on the towpath: black steel, a Dutch bow, freshly painted LA MER. In the wheelhouse, on end: a long red ski bag.

On the stern, BRUCE on an upturned crate. Watch cap and pea coat. A rod on the rail, wine and one glass.

BRUCE
You're late.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

Luc sits on the other crate. Bruce is thinner. His hand shakes on the glass, and Luc watches him make it stop.

Luc sets Frank's Jimmy Buffett tape on the crate.

BRUCE
There's no deck on this boat.

LUC
I know.

BRUCE
She kept me dead.

LUC
She never wrote that you were dead.

BRUCE
I read it. Twice. One sentence. Every word of it true. Fifty years in the business, and I never told a lie that good.

LUC
It cost her.

BRUCE
What did?

LUC
The man in your grave. She can't give him his name without digging you up.

Bruce takes a black oilcloth notebook from his pea coat, tears out a page, and holds it out.

BRUCE
Case twenty-seven, zero zero three one. Off the tag on his toe. Always keep the receipt.

Luc pockets the page. He takes out the bracelet and holds it on his palm. Cut and tied. Bruce touches it with one finger.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
The market on the Quai Saint-Antoine. 1986. She wanted it, and I didn't have any francs, and she laughed at me and paid for it herself. Forty years I told people I gave it to her.

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

LUC
She gave it to me. Summer of 2002. I wanted a watch.

BRUCE
I know. I was there. You sulked eight days. Then never took it off.

LUC
Dekker took it off me in Davos. I keep it in my pocket.

BRUCE
Good.

LUC
You said "son." In the README. And in the launch, with your hand on my shoulder. Maman told me once. When your father calls you son, check your pockets.

Bruce's thumb stops on the reel.

LUC (CONT'D)
You didn't know who Cal would send. You said you counted on it. You never counted on anything in your life you couldn't see.
(beat)
You hoped.

Bruce looks across the water at the basilica a long time.

BRUCE
I hoped you'd say no.
(beat)
In the car. With Mike. I hoped you'd get out of the car. Then you went to Baltimore. And I thought, well. That's that. He's me.
(he checks the line)
So. What are you going to do with me?

An old man with a fishing rod, on a barge called La Mer in his dead wife's city, under a dead man's name. Luc doesn't answer. He doesn't know yet. He finds he doesn't mind it.

Later. The stern line in his good hand, hard with the river. His phone buzzes: a new one, in his own name. Four people have the number.

INSERT - LUC'S PHONE

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS

A Washington number. No name.

Where are you?

BACK TO SCENE

He looks at it a long while. His father fishing behind him.

Black water. The lit city.

FADE OUT.

THE END

ORBITAL RANCH STUDIOS