

Troubleshooting

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EXT. VISTA HEIGHTS - NIGHT

A cool night encumbers a normally mid-populated street corner.

In front of a shoddy apartment complex that displays "Vista Heights" in war torn paint, stands a side-show band ready for action.

Virtually no pedestrians are willing to resist the temptation of this street magic, and maybe that's how it's supposed to be.

The band finalizes, ready.

A DRUMMER with a wooden box and two drumsticks makes a few silent counts, nodding his head simultaneously. He rolls through a beat, uninhibited.

Suddenly, a VIOLINIST **sends** a note like a bullet, as a SAXOPHONIST joins in the melodic symphony.

A RAPPER takes the mic and steps in.

RAPPER

*Collaboratin', creatin', that's the
mark of Satan hatin'; I don't even
judge the ones who out here
procreatin'; that's cause I don't
like to fish for stuff without a
bait--and detonatin's--*

EXT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DAY - EST.

The exact same corner in front of the apartments, and yet the band is no longer there. It's the next morning.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DOOLITTLE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Inside one of the bigger apartments on the top floor. The apartment is in mild disarray, but yet weirdly still kempt.

In front of the television set that hums at low volume, sits a woman, CATHERINE DOOLITTLE, 48, happy, yet disheveled, who opens up a package she just got in the mail. Inside the package is a KIT.

On the kit, it reads, "Self-Inventor. Tell The World What You're Thinking. As Seen on TV!"

She glares up at the TV and back at her kit. She unboxes the kit and it opens up like she knows exactly what it comes with. It's virtually, some might say, her own TOOLBOX.

She takes a few papers and specialty pens/gadgets wrapped in bubble and sets them aside, followed by a quick swig from her vodka bottle sitting cautiously at the edge.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DOOLITTLE BEDROOM - SAME

Typing away against his computer is MARK DOOLITTLE, 18, gruff and desolate.

His room is completely bare besides a mattress in the corner with a shit blanket, and a desk with his computer, seemingly operating at hyper-speed.

He stands up and takes a look out of his windows that shines a glare into his eyes. He nervously gulps and glances back at his closed door.

Mark reaches under the desk and takes out an actual TOOLBOX.

The BOX is clean, with a crystal-blue matte finish. The actual tools inside are dirty. Some of the plugs and cables inside are bare, dusty; the thumb drives and microchips are paint-scraped, chiseled and a winter iron color.

INT. REGGIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SAME

Near the door of a very tidy room, TITUS WALKER, 24, casually, but fashionably dressed, toys with the door's handle, debating.

Outside the door, an indecipherable rap song vibrates in the living room.

Titus opens the door and tries to sneak away.

INT. REGGIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

REGGIE WALKER, 32, in a black V-Neck, thin gold chain, and a needle edge-up, turns around from the couch, taking a drag from his cigarillo.

REGGIE
(joking)
Where the fuck you goin' man?

TITUS
I got a job interview.

REGGIE

Swear.

Reggie dabs his cigarillo on a porcelain plate.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Lemme give you a ride.

TITUS

I'll take the bus.

Reggie gives him a variant look.

REGGIE

What'd you need in my room?

TITUS

(agitated)

Nothin'. I just got some shoes--

REGGIE

--Hah! Bro if you don't tell me where you're really going--

TITUS

--An interview, Reggie. Fuck, bro.

Titus grabs his SACHEL and opens the door to exit...

REGGIE

Did you make your bed--

The door slams.

Reggie glances at the other couch, a sleeping bag on top of it, lazily slouched over.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DOOLITTLE LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mark comes into the living room and curiously wanders over to Catherine, who has all the parts of her self-inventor kit splayed out across the room.

MARK

What's this?

CATHERINE

Oh my God, Mark, it's the greatest thing. I ordered this self-inventor kit in the mail. I really think it'll be life-changing for me.

(MORE)

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

They have monthly competitions that you can enter and if you come up with the best invention you get an internship.

Mark takes the empty vodka bottle to the trash can.

MARK

Mom, I... Why?

CATHERINE

What do you mean?

Catherine tinkers away.

MARK

What--I mean how is this going to help you cope?

CATHERINE

That's the best part about life, sweetie.

(shifting)

When Albert and I were first dating he used to take me to his local gym and swim laps in the pool. And I'd sit there in the chair and pretend to read my books, but really I was always so interested in why, after a big fight with his mom or his brother or whoever, he'd come here just to do... laps.

Catherine senses Mark's displeasure as he peers out the side window, barely listening.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I guess at the time I unknowingly thought he was depressed, but really I think he was just finding an outlet.

Catherine plugs away.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

What's so interesting out there anyway? You've been so jumpy since you came back for break.

MARK

Well, it's not exactly break when you drop out.

CATHERINE

I was under the impression you'd go
back to college. I feel like you
can get your Associates in a year,
anyway, you're so smart.

MARK

I've got a gig now, so that's all
that we should be concerned about.

Mark puts away his nervous gestures and turns back to his
mom.

MARK (CONT'D)

Maybe one day, though.

EXT. VISTA HEIGHTS - MOMENTS LATER

Titus, satchel on, hops off the bus and gathers himself
before entering the complex.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Titus knocks on the door that's already wide open.

Across from him is KARLA MENDOZA, 40, frizzled, upbeat, sorta
looks like a cop or social worker, but also just a regular
person at the same time.

The office looks like an elementary school principal's at 7AM
before the bell rings.

KARLA

Oh Gosh. You're Titus!

Karla goes over to shake his hand.

TITUS

Am I in the right place?

KARLA

You *are* Titus, right?

TITUS

Guess I am then.

KARLA

Either you're sure or you're not,
there's no time for guessin' here.

Titus nods.

KARLA (CONT'D)
I'm Karla. Have a seat.

Karla sits back down at her desk, as Titus sits at the unwelcoming chair across from her.

KARLA (CONT'D)
So you saw the ad and you weren't confused by the phrasing?

TITUS
Yeah, well I saw troubleshooter, and figured you meant what I thought you meant. Plus I've been looking for an apprenticeship for a while.

Titus gets out his SACHEL and puts it on top of the large wooden desk in front of them.

The satchel is disgusting, filthy even, but he takes out his restored, clean-finished laptop with a highlighted emerald-green key pad, powering it up extremely fast.

He unpacks a few other things such as a brand new PCI adapter, a spare emergency modem, and a diagnostics reader.

KARLA
What the hell are you doing? What exactly did you think I meant?

TITUS
Troubleshooting. Like, you got shitty wifi or--

KARLA
--No. We. I mean yes, we have shitty wifi, but that's not what it actually is. See, troubleshooting goes beyond just a computer fix or IT maintenance. It's looking into a bevy of things for people that might go beyond a normal person's capability to fix the problem.

TITUS
Vague.

KARLA
Let me finish. For example, clearly...
(motions around)
I work in an apartment complex.
(MORE)

KARLA (CONT'D)

So currently, the issues that I have to troubleshoot are tenant and building-related. And as a troubleshooter you have to investigate problems that people don't have the time to do. It's a service.

TITUS

So like a janitor? Or like a PI?

KARLA

No, not a PI! I mean maybe like a custodian but more like a...

TITUS

I'm sorry, I just don't think I'm the right person. I thought this was a software or tech maintenance kind of position.

KARLA

God dammit.
(beat)
Follow me.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Karla and Titus walk down the long hallway, a couple of kids running around.

KARLA

Hey Chelsea.

CHELSEA, a resident, waves.

CHELSEA

Buenos Dias.

A middle aged woman, BRENDA, approaches from the far staircase.

BRENDA

Hey Karla!

KARLA

(to Titus)
Oh this should perfect.
(to Brenda)
Mrs. Calle. What can I do for you?

BRENDA

Karla, can you come check out my room? I think someone stole mi chaqueta. And it's brand new, like I don't own clothes like that. Pero mi hijo bought it for me and sometimes I question where he gets me these things--

KARLA

--Okay okay, I'll come check it out, it's probably somewhere around your apartment. But first, Mrs. Calle meet Titus, he's... shadowing me for the day.

Brenda looks at Titus with a smile, then back at Karla curiously. Karla catches her.

KARLA (CONT'D)

What?

BRENDA

Shadows, you have all these shadows. I never know what you mean.

Karla rolls her eyes, gesturing for them to move.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DOOLITTLE LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mark and Catherine are head to head, pacing throughout the room.

CATHERINE

All I want to know is if you know what you're getting into.

MARK

Why are you caught up in what I'm doing at all? Look at what you're doing! A fucking... what is this? It looks like they sent you all the paperwork to pretend you're an architect for LEGO.

CATHERINE

Why do you talk to me like that? You don't think I know what you do in there?

MARK

What? What do I do? I got a goddamn mattress in the corner and a computer, and I make enough money for the both of us. So does it matter?

CATHERINE

That's what I've been saying. I try not to question it because I know I don't bring in enough for us.

MARK

You bring in nothing.

CATHERINE

But I know you're not doing "online patchwork" whatever that bullshit is. You get these unmarked things in the mail. A... a... Kali Limits Machine.

MARK

(defeated)
Linux.

CATHERINE

People around the complex are always complaining about their stuff getting stolen and shady people coming in and out, and their computers getting taken over.

MARK

Mom...

CATHERINE

What? I'm just saying, why hasn't it happened to us yet?

MARK

What, do you think I'm working with fuckin' Russia or something?

CATHERINE

Of course not.

Catherine's simmer turns off. She faces out to the window.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I just want you to be safe.

Mark nods, giving in. He walks over to his room.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DOOLITTLE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mark peers out of his window and sees a black car parked across the street with a MAN getting out. The man gives an obvious signal as he stands there for a moment. After the sign, he crosses the street.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DOOLITTLE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Catherine observes the man cross.

CATHERINE

Oh my God...
 (to herself)
 Albert. You're back...

Catherine struggles to open up the window all the way.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - CALLE APARTMENT - SAME

Karla, Titus, and Brenda stand around, searching.

KARLA

Honestly, I bet you just misplaced
 it, Brenda.

BRENDA

I don't know how that could be.
 I...

Titus notices her desktop, a red light flashing on and off from her camera at the top of her computer.

Titus' eyes widen, as if the light is reflecting his own blinking.

KARLA

(piercing)
 Titus?

Titus comes to.

KARLA (CONT'D)

We should head back down to the
 office.

Titus verbally agrees, smiling at Brenda.

TITUS

Um, ma'am, have you had any
 problems with your software on your
 computer lately?

Brenda stares at Karla, then finally racking back to Titus.

BRENDA

Mande?

TITUS

Um...

(beat)

Nothing. Hope you find your jacket.

They exchange smiles as Karla stares awkwardly at Titus, shaking her head and proceeding out the door.

EXT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Titus and Karla walk out of the door and meander for a moment.

KARLA

Most of the people in the building have some thing or another that's always gonna need some troubleshooting. I think we all do, really.

MARABETH, 24, quirky, rides her moped to the front.

MARABETH

Hi Ms. Karla.

KARLA

Marabeth, meet Titus. He's gonna be our new troubleshooter for the building.

TITUS

I'm what?

MARABETH

Hey. You can call me Mara.

Mara takes off her helmet.

TITUS

Cool. Yeah.

(to Karla)

You're saying I'm hired or--

CRASH!

A body SLAMS into Mara's parked moped.

All three parties are in complete shock. Mara screams.

Titus looks at Mara, freaking out.

Karla takes a brutal gulp, staring at the body. She immediately looks up, seeing a window open.

Karla SPRINTS away, back into the building without saying anything.

Titus takes a breath and stares, still in shock. He chases after her, bolting.

MARABETH
What the ACTUAL shit!

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS HALLWAY - STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Titus, right behind Karla. They're both panting.

TITUS
Where the hell are you going?
Shouldn't we be calling 9-1-1?

KARLA
Up.

TITUS
I hate this job already and I
haven't even accepted it.

KARLA
No one said you had to follow me.

TITUS
Why are you taking the stairs,
there's an elevator.

KARLA
Yeah but it sucks.

Titus takes a moment, slowing down.

TITUS
(to himself)
Who is this woman?

I/E. VISTA HEIGHTS - DOOLITTLE APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Karla quick fumbles her keys until she finds the right one.

She unlocks the apartment and goes inside.

The room is very uneasy, but clean. To the side, Karla notices the crashed window, open. She goes over to it and sees two guys rushing into a car, which speeds off.

Karla rushes to Mark's room, taking mental note of everything on her way, and--

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DOOLITTLE APARTMENT BEDROOM - SAME

--as she gets into the room, she sees the window is open and the car is now completely out of site.

She fixes upon the bare mattress in the almost empty room for a moment.

Titus now enters the room and Karla is already in the process of running back out.

Titus leaves his mouth slightly ajar, nodding to himself like a fuckin' asshole as Karla continues non-communication.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - DOOLITTLE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Karla slips on Catherine's self-inventor kit and falls.

She's face first in the carpet as Titus comes out to join her.

TITUS

Oh shit. You good?

KARLA

Now we can call 9-1-1.

EXT. VISTA HEIGHTS - EVENING

The sun is setting, nearly dusk, as an EMS, a couple cop cars, and a firetruck all lie staggered in the open areas outside the building, with the respective passengers working the scene.

Titus and Karla are in blankets, wrapped up, sitting on the curb, observing the blown-out-of-proportion chaos.

TITUS

Why are we in blankets?

KARLA

I'm not actually sure. It's summer...

They take their blankets off as OFFICER JAMES, 31, male, a bit of calm and carefree grace to his walk, approaches with OFFICER MARTINDALE, 28, female, standoffish, yet intrigued.

JAMES

Hey Karla.

KARLA

Oh. Hey. Didn't see you guys.

JAMES

No big. Just wanted to come by and give you the rundown.

James side-eyes Titus, who returns the favor.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Looks like for now we don't see any evidence of foul play, might've been an accident or suicide. We'll obviously follow up if the investigation stays current or in the event it closes, we'll inform you as well.

KARLA

That's a shame.

JAMES

It is.

Awkward pause.

JAMES (CONT'D)

So, this a new guy? You both training to...

KARLA

Oh, no. It's not that. I think I might actually be working on starting up my own firm.

JAMES

Private?

KARLA

(forced smile)

Yeah.

JAMES

Well, awesome. Hey if you're ever around the shop, you're always welcome to come grab a drink with us. I know Martindale's been waiting for you.

MARTINDALE

(genuine)

Yeah, and if you ever want to pick up an application again... there's no shame. I think it's only a matter of time.

(to Titus)

Him too.

TITUS

(to Karla)

You were a cop?

Karla glances at him, squinting.

JAMES

Um, anyways. We'll catch ya around Karla.

KARLA

Absolutely. Bye James. Martindale.

The officers saunter back to their vehicles.

TITUS

Yo, honestly. Think I'm underqualified for this job anyway.

Titus gets up, reaching over to shake her hand.

KARLA

Well shit if we ever need an IT guy...

TITUS

At this place?

Titus looks around at the scene.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Think I'll have to pass. Unless one of those residents is a therapist who can't remember their password and you can pay me 50 a minute.

Titus holds on Karla, waiting for her to laugh. He realizes that's definitely not happening, checking his watch and rounding his satchel around his shoulder to brush it off.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Anyways.

KARLA

Anyways.

Titus nods, heading out.

Karla sighs, peering around at the few people outside the caution tape. One WOMAN catches her eye. It's REBECCA CHOW, 42, dressed formally, observing with defiance, and shaking her head at the scene.

Rebecca crosses the street after a momentary look.

Karla squints, nervous again.

INT. REGGIE'S CAR - LATER

Titus sits, exhausted, against the window.

Reggie leans over.

REGGIE

So a suicide? Or?

TITUS

That's what they said.

REGGIE

Okay, I was just double checking I got it right.

Titus lets out a sigh.

TITUS

How far are we with this traffic?

REGGIE

You know mom and I worry bout you sometimes. Well at least she does. I know you don't hit her up or whatever anymore. I feel that. I been there. You know, but... At this point, man. Might not be such a bad idea to head back. This, what?

(MORE)

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Third time this week some bullshit happenin' at your job interviews. Might not be meant to be?

TITUS

You're gonna charge me rent? I haven't even been here for a month. It's just a string of bad luck.

REGGIE

Well whatever it is, I told you my place is open. But you in the house a lot.

Beat.

TITUS

I need the wifi.

REGGIE

Well shit, if that's it at least front me the bill.

Reggie laughs by himself.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Look man, know I had to tell mom about this whole thing right?

Titus can't bear to turn to him, but forces it anyway.

TITUS

What'd you do that for, Reg?

REGGIE

I don't want her to be callin me all worried and shit. You know how she can get.

TITUS

Bro that's the dumbest excuse you've ever given me. Like, honestly. No that's just...

REGGIE

I don't like ultimatums, but. It's either you gotta be Destiny's Child with the bills. Or it's mom's.

Titus squints, distraught.

EXT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - DAY

Karla makes her stride over to Rebecca Chow's place.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - SAME

Karla sidesteps her way up to the counter. Rebecca stands across from her, but inside her office that has a perfect view of the front.

Rebecca approaches.

REBECCA

Karla.

KARLA

Ms. Chow.

Rebecca shows her engagement ring.

REBECCA

Misses. Soon.

KARLA

Again or?

REBECCA

(brushing it off)

What can I do for you?

KARLA

Saw you last night over at our place. Nice little scene for you I'm sure. You don't have anyone working after hours here?

REBECCA

Hmm. I don't suppose your mom *also* works after hours?

KARLA

No, that's why I do it.

Rebecca gives a side-eye to the front desk associate BRADLEY, well kempt, to go away.

REBECCA

Heard you had a murder at your building. Just went to double check to see if everything was okay.

KARLA

It was technically ruled a suicide.

REBECCA

People don't want to live at your
place anymore?

Rebecca gets semi-frustrated after some clicks on the nearby
computer - as if it isn't working.

Karla drags a smile back and forth across her face.

KARLA

What makes you think it was a
murder?

REBECCA

Doesn't matter what I think. I was
actually hoping the building had
burned down so I could buy the lot
and start on my new set of
residencies. Course, with no one
being hurt and all. I mean... how
many people even live there?

Karla is stunned.

Rebecca stares at her with a literal expression, seeming
serious in her intent, yet unapologetic.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Seven?

Karla snaps out of it.

KARLA

You've been nothing but a bully to
my mother and I for years. Yet
every time I come and talk to you,
I get more and more surprised at
your audacity.

Rebecca sends a confused look Karla's way.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I would never plant a death on
someone else's place of business
just so I could uproot it and take
it away.

REBECCA

Now. I would *never* do such a thing.
I have other shit that's way more
important.

Rebecca taps on the keys of the nearby computer
frustratingly.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Like how my wifi keeps cutting out.
For the last three fucking weeks.

Rebecca goes behind the desk to her office and quickly pulls out a large, well-organized BINDER. This is her toolbox.

She follies through pages and calls Bradley back.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Bradley. Have we hired a new IT person?

BRADLEY

Not yet. But our current one seems to be on a breakthrough.

REBECCA

What kind of breakthrough?

Bradley shrugs, unable to come up with literally anything.

BRADLEY

That's just what they said on the phone.

REBECCA

You mean they haven't even come by? Why do we keep hiring them if they won't diagnose the problem in person? How many times have you answered the question, 'is the fucking wifi plugged in'?

Bradley looks around to see if indeed she is talking to him.

BRADLEY

Oh um. At least three I think.

Rebecca visibly tries to keep it together.

KARLA

Sorry, don't mean to interrupt the conversation that interrupted our conversation, but it sounds like you're looking for a tech guy?

Bradley nods while Rebecca stares sarcastically at Karla.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I know someone. I can lend him to you. For free.

REBECCA
Why would you do that?

KARLA
Stay the fuck away from our
property and I'll do anything.

Bradley motions if he needs to leave again.

REBECCA
Is he even any good?

KARLA
I'll scan you his resume.

REBECCA
Nah. No need. If he can be here in
person and fix it in a week, I
won't go near the other side of the
street.

Karla winks at her.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
He starts tomorrow.

Karla steps, turns, and struts away.

EXT. REGGIE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The same band that frequents the street corners appears yet
again. This time, against a lamp post that stands a little
too close to the curb. If anything it's an aesthetic to them.

TAP. TAP. TAP.

Horns. Drums. Sax. Etc.

RAPPER
*I got the ya, I got the ya, roll it
up fast, 'cause I'm a god, pull up
and blast, licorice thots, I'm on
probash, sit on my glock. I got
the, I got the, I got the, I got
the, I got the ya ya ya ya--*

INT. REGGIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Titus, nodding his head ruthlessly to the band outside, still
angry.

He's putting together his last bit of packing.

Titus reaches over to grab his phone.

There's a text from Karla: "Still need a job?"

Contemplating, Titus responds: "Obviously. Obviously. I need a job. But like I said, I don't think I'm a right fit at 'troubleshooting'."

Karla: "Not for me. Fixing some internet troubles across the street."

Titus takes a second, fumbling around, playing back and forth battles in his head.

Titus: "How much?"

Titus holds his phone back from his face, not wanting to see it. We stay on him as his eyes widen, then focus. He reads:

TITUS
(mumbling)
Told them you could do it in a
week.
(adjusting)
Now how the fuck you know that?

Suddenly the phone rings and he picks it up.

TITUS (CONT'D)
What's the catch?

Titus peers into Reggie's room. He's vibin' to the music outside, staring out of his window.

TITUS (CONT'D)
I'm not investigating anybody,
alright? Wasn't that the point of
me not taking the original job? So
if I'm working for free, what's
that number you just sent me?
(beat)
I can't do that Karla. If that lady
had anything to do with that
woman's death, why the hell would I
want to be around her? That makes
no sense. And where did you get
that I'd be able to fix it in a
week?
(pause)
I mean probably like a day or two,
but still. Look the whole thing
from yesterday is still fresh. I
wish you the best of luck.

Reggie comes out of his room.

REGGIE
You ready for me to call mom?

Titus stares at him, and Reggie peers back curiously.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Who's that?

Titus hesitates for just a moment as a bit of frustration fades, but he calmly switches up his expression to a more pleasant tone.

TITUS
I'm... not movin' to mom's.

Reggie, as if he's had to say it a million times.

REGGIE
Well, all I can give you is the couch, but even then man, like I said--

TITUS
--I got a job.

Titus hands up the phone, and tosses it on the couch.

TITUS (CONT'D)
And it pays for housing. At that hotel. The one I was telling you about with the...

REGGIE
(taken aback)
The one Stevie was stayin' at? From three weeks ago? They hit you back? Nigga, what? That's incredible. You gon' be fixin' old white people's cable boxes and shit.

Reggie struts over to dap and hug.

Titus returns it with just slightly below his energy.

They both take a seat on the couch.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Whatchu sittin' down for? You still gotta pack and get the fuck out my crib.

Titus nods.

TITUS
Yeah, you right.

REGGIE
Been right.

Titus continues to fold some clothes.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - DAY

Titus sits across from Karla. There seems to be a filament in the air, or a dust, much like an elementary school class room.

Titus can barely keep still as Karla looks through her supplies around the office.

She picks out a LARGE BIN with MANILA FOLDERS inside and plops it onto her desk.

She shuffles through a few...

TITUS
So what exactly--

KARLA
--Just a sec.

Karla scans through several documents at a quick pace.

KARLA (CONT'D)
So I've found the file I need on Catherine. Large public record database is extremely useful--

TITUS
--Before we get into it, actually. I wanted to mention something to you.

Karla perks up, putting the files down.

TITUS (CONT'D)
I need a place to stay. For this job.

KARLA
Well...

TITUS
For the month actually. Not the rest of it. Just a whole month.

KARLA

I'm sure we can make an arrangement. But I have kinda limited knowledge of your skill base. Who's to say you can actually fix the wifi in a week and get us our intel in that time.

TITUS

Not sure what you mean on that last part. Are you asking me to hack into the mainframe or some shit?

KARLA

Yeah, can you do that?

Titus scoffs.

TITUS

Also, if you don't think I can fix it in a week, why did you set all this up? Wouldn't it backfire if you didn't believe me?

KARLA

Negotiating is all about buying yourself more time.

TITUS

Well, everything on my resume is true.

Karla nods, not quite buying it, however. She gestures to her computer. It's a deathly, old, sad desktop. Ne'er been conquered.

Titus shimmies over.

He pulls out his laptop from his satchel and plugs in his hard drive. He death stares the desktop, then returns to his own computer.

Titus runs his Kali Linux and opens search.

TITUS (CONT'D)

What's your last name?

TITUS (CONT'D)

Mendoza.

KARLA

Mendoza.

Typing. Clicking. Speed reading.

TITUS (CONT'D)

What do you have at 3pm today?

KARLA
 (nervous)
 Um. 3 or 5?

Titus looks back at her, understanding what she's getting at.

TITUS
 5.

TITUS (CONT'D) KARLA
 Car wash. Car wash.

A few more clicks and spatters on the keys.

TITUS (CONT'D)
 License plate number?

KARLA
 Oh c'mon that's easy. You've
 probably seen my car.

TITUS
 I haven't, but, a Subaru does get
 the job done.

Karla waves him off.

TITUS (CONT'D)
 Your most used credit card number.

Karla ponders, nodding, but then shoots him a confused look.

TITUS (CONT'D)
 The only one you've actually made
 any payments on...

KARLA
 Got it.

TITUS	KARLA (CONT'D)
1-6-7-7, 8-9-9-2, 3-6-0-6, 2- 1-5-8.	1-6-7-7, 8-9-9-2, 3-6-0-6, 2- 1-5-8.

KARLA (CONT'D)
 (to herself)
 Or is it 2-1-6-8?

Titus folds his arms, turning back to her.

KARLA (CONT'D)
 Hmm. Okay. That's weird. I guess
 maybe that's somewhat useful?

TITUS

Somewhat?

KARLA

What about the wifi?

TITUS

You think fixing their wifi will somehow be *more* difficult for me?

KARLA

It's not all credit cards and daily planners out there.

TITUS

(cheeky)

It's up to you.

Karla sighs, looking at his resume, seeing: "2015-2016, Internet Connection Expert; 2016-2017, Wifi Installation and Repair; March 2018-December 2019, Network Integrator (Telecommunications Lead); January 2020, "Wifi God" Competition (Runner-Up).

Titus sighs and glances around, discovering a disheveled non-descript file casing with TROUBLESHOOTING written in black sharpie.

It's small, notebook-like, but somehow organized like an 80s accountant's planner. He acts like he dropped something and palms it into his bag.

Karla sets it down on the desk, her head looking straight at it with her arms bracing her.

Beat.

KARLA

Okay you get a month.

Titus single claps.

KARLA (CONT'D)

At a reduced rate for the job.

TITUS

What's the reduction?

KARLA

I'll get back to you. Give me a week.

TITUS
I... can't accept that.
(beat)
It's gotta be at least \$5k.

KARLA
3.

TITUS
Deal, and I get to pick the room.

Karla looks up finally.

KARLA
With what we have available? Have
fun.

Titus nods as Karla takes a seat, leaning back.

TITUS
So intel.

KARLA
Right. Intel. Recon, intel.

TITUS
No, no recon.

KARLA
Some recon.

TITUS
What the fuck are you talking
about? I'm not recon.

KARLA
Fine, I'll do recon.

TITUS
Wait, why do we need to do recon if
I'm already getting intel?

Karla taps her head, smirking.

KARLA
Look, Rebecca Chow? Our main
target?

TITUS
Target?

KARLA
Target...

Titus squints.

KARLA (CONT'D)
 ...has to be working with someone.
 She's squeaky clean on the outside.

TITUS
 (confident)
 But on the inside she's dirty.
 Dirty girl. Got it.

KARLA
 Nope. That's not what I was going
 for. But for the premise of this
 conversation, yes. She has an image
 to maintain, and the first thing we
 need to do is identify her
 associate.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Mark sits down on a steel chair in a large empty warehouse,
 several lights on, several off. He's extremely distraught.

Behind him, pacing, is KAZIMIR, 43, bomber jacket on, jeans,
 boots, slavic-Russian face.

KAZIMIR
 Let's just go over it again, what
 exactly, what, what was the last
 thing?

MARK
 I obviously wasn't in the room. She
 just fell. I... I don't know what
 she could've possible been doing.
 How is this going to help us? She's
 gone.

KAZIMIR
 She's dead. Dead body. We don't
 need anyone tracking you. Because
 then, they will track us. You know
 what will happen if they find me?

MARK
 You get arrested?

Kazimir stops pacing to look at Mark with disgust.

KAZIMIR
 No.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

I don't become a boss. My jobs get pinched, I go into hiding and I don't make money.

MARK

Isn't that what's happening right now?

KAZIMIR

I'm so tired of you being smart with me.

Kazimir murmurs a few Russian swear words.

MARK

You're talking about being made into some kind of boss or however it works, and you barely have control over your own business. Like, do you know how any of this works? You've been in the wifi game for over three years and it took you this long to find me?

Kazimir crosses his arms, shifting to a more calm demeanor.

MARK (CONT'D)

Your cut can't even be that much overall. Plus, you're stealing from wealthy foreign exchange students who get sent money, monthly. No one actually does anything worth a shit in that building. If you would've listened to me I could've told you that.

Mark follows with a long pause, hoping the daggers really sink in.

KAZIMIR

(smiling)

I'm stealing? We're stealing. You're. Stealing. I know what you're going through. Seeing dead person, someone you love. You know I know this. So, I'll let it slide just this once. But if I hear it again from you, your wish to be dead will not be silent and quick. And I'm not talking about your depression.

Kazimir takes a deep breath, beckoning for Mark to get ready to go with him, despite threatening his life.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

We will fix this problem one way or another. But first we have to meet.

MARK

Meet?

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING

A ray of sunshine cuts through the window onto the side of Titus' face. The air particles dance in the light like dust on a sword.

The room looks like a shitty Janitor's closet mixed with an overpriced urban studio apartment--could maybe be one in the same.

Titus puts on his clothes, checking his watch. He stumbles around to find his satchel.

VIBRATION.

Titus locates his satchel, swinging it over. He glances at his phone just to see MOM calling. He swipes it away.

EXT. VISTA HEIGHTS - MOMENTS LATER

Titus walks across the street, his feet feel heavy but his pace feels light and agile. He looks overconfident, but there's still a chip on his shoulder.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS

Titus enters the ornate complex, reporting to the front with a childish smile, pretending to look innocent.

Rebecca searches from around her desk and proceeds out of her office to the front.

REBECCA

You're the guy?

TITUS

Titus.

He extends a hand.

Rebecca scans him, making a few wincing and nods to herself, conceding.

She turns to the IT GUY at the end of the front desk, who's explaining something to an employee.

REBECCA

Sir.

He ignores.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Sir...

He looks up, finally.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

We appreciate you lending us a hand here at Moderna, but I'm afraid we will be parting ways from you and your services. If you could gather your things and speak to Anne at our Human Resources office--

(gesturing)

--We will proceed with your dismissal paperwork. In the meantime, feel free to grab a coffee in the employee lodge. Today is also donut day, so have whatever you'd like.

The IT guy, a bare look rather than upset, points to Titus.

IT GUY

Is this the guy I'm training to replace me?

REBECCA

No.

The IT guy accepts his fate, raising his eyebrows at Titus who returns a concerned look to him, giving the same one to Rebecca.

Rebecca motions for Titus to come around to her office.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca's office is precision-clean, organized, with a few personal touches that still seem to match the overall aesthetic.

Titus sits across, feeling the power that he didn't feel at Vista Heights.

REBECCA

(genuine)

We are SO glad to have you here.
Karla told me all about how amazing
you are and I can't wait to see it.
Because as you know--

Rebecca slams her fingers back and forth on some keys and waves at her computer frustratingly.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

--This shit sucks. Our wifi is really our main problem, anything else that comes up seems to be easier with a google search on my phone instead of calling an overpriced IT guy who can't plug in my computer for less than 2 hours of paid labor.

TITUS

I should be able to fix it in a week.

REBECCA

So I've heard.

TITUS

Realistically, a day.

Titus and Rebecca gauge each other's reactions.

TITUS (CONT'D)

But sometimes situations arise where I need more hardware, so a week tops.

REBECCA

Great well we've fired our last six IT guys, but as far as you're concerned, you've got free range around this place. I'm about as useless as it can possibly get when it comes to this stuff, so whatever you need. Oh, and coffee, donuts.

Titus observes where she pointed last, near the employee lounge, and sees the old IT guy stuffing his face. The powder painting his veneer like a sad clown.

Titus looks down at his pocket, taking out his phone. An influx of texts from MOM pop up, but the exact messages are hidden.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - PATRICIA'S OFFICE - LATER

Karla knocks on the door before entering.

PATRICIA MENDOZA, 58, reads over a few papers. She's on the phone, but the other person is talking at the moment.

Her reading glasses scan the text like a magnifying glass. She's modestly dressed, comfortable. But now, her demeanor has shifted to defensive as Karla careens in.

PATRICIA

Uh huh. Like I told you before it was a suicide, nothing. No, nobody got hurt. Well, yeah besides Catherine, of course. You wanna be that way with me? Look, at worst it was a targeted hit. I--

Patricia holds the phone out, to confirm that they hung up.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Ay. The realtors are impossible in these kinds of situations. It's like we have to wait til everything "dies down".

Karla takes a seat in front of her.

KARLA

Mom I need to dip into the emergency fund.

PATRICIA

You really couldn't have picked a worse time, Karla. We're gonna have to pay for the damages and I'm not talking about just the physical ones. Is it for actual fixing?

KARLA

Si. Sabes que no lo haria--

PATRICIA

--Don't give me the same thing you always say. I have to be sure this isn't for one of your private detective applications or, or another one of your training exercises.

KARLA

No, this is for actual troubleshooting.

PATRICIA

I don't believe you. What else is there that you don't already have? Is there something new?

Karla leans back in her chair.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

I can do three-hundred.

KARLA

Pero, I need three-thousand.

Patricia scoffs at the gall.

PATRICIA

You've got no proven record for me to trust you with that kind of money.

Karla maintains, leaning towards her mom. Patricia isn't buckling.

Patricia reaches under her desk, scrolling through a lock, before taking it apart and reaching into an envelope.

She pulls out three-hundred in cash and hands it to Karla.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

I can't do it.

Karla, with much chagrin, accepts it.

INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - LATER

Kazimir and Mark, try to blend in to a mid-sized office, navigating around to a personal one - much fancier in nature.

Kazimir waves through the small window crease and SACHA, 41, balding, on the phone, waves him through.

INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - SACHA'S - SAME

Kazimir and Mark waltz in as Sacha prepares to hang up.

SACHA

Okay, I call you back and we have more discussion on the big house. Great.

He slams the phone down in it's designated position.

SACHA (CONT'D)
Kazimir! Why here?

KAZIMIR
Uh...

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

The same three are back at the warehouse, standing around a table in the middle of it.

KAZIMIR
So.

SACHA
So?

KAZIMIR
Well?

SACHA
Look, I don't know why you needed to call me. I know you're capable of figuring this out on your own.

Kazimir takes out his BRIEFCASE, with premium indents left for various devices, mainly one with a pistol and silencer, to which he currently sets up.

MARK
Is it safe to ask how I can get out of this? I mean, clearly, Sacha?

Sacha nods.

MARK (CONT'D)
Sacha doesn't think this is a big deal, Kaz. It'll be better for you guys if you let me go anyway.

SACHA
I agree. Less heat. Plus you can kill him. Make it look like he misses mom.

Mark switches up.

KAZIMIR
I don't have the resources to start over. But I can assure you that if I did have the time at the beginning, I wouldn't need you, Mark.

Sacha coughs, unimpressed by Kazimir setting up.

SACHA

What I want to know is, how you got involved with this boy in the first place, Kaz.

KAZIMIR

Ah yes. Boring story, really. I was finishing up on a restaurant, err cafe, can't remember. The owner was just about to settle with me for protection. Since his wife at his establishment was now shit--I was working with some limited knowledge on how to shut connection down. My old friend let me operate on a private wifi that he set up within range.

MARK

You're telling it wrong.

KAZIMIR

(giving up)
Sure. Go ahead.

MARK

I did a basic wifi search and found his wife he was using literally from his phone.

SACHA

And you got in?

MARK

Boomers still use password as their password.

SACHA

I believe he's Gen X--

KAZIMIR

--Yes I'm Gen X.

MARK

Either way. Once I captured all the packets I could get, it was password as the password from there on out. Probably couldn't get his phone from playing Smash Mouth for weeks.

SACHA
(amused)
But why?

MARK
I used to go to that shop every day
when I was in college. It didn't
take much either, and I liked the
owner.

SACHA
Back when you were in college? You
graduate?

MARK
I'm eighteen.

SACHA
Makes sense.

KAZIMIR
Well, because he is loser, not
because he is smart.

Mark grimaces sarcastically.

SACHA
Well you did good by partnering.
Lucky Kazimir did not kill you.

Sacha and Kaz snicker at each other then stare at Mark.
Mark's overconfident demeanor shrinks extraordinarily.

KAZIMIR
Well it might seem good at the
time, but now look at where we are.

MARK
Like I said--

KAZIMIR
--I'm keeping you here. We need to
hide you as long as possible.
There's still a chance nothing is
wrong and perhaps we can operate
here?

Kazimir and Sacha stare at Mark who doesn't notice at first.

MARK
Oh, you're being fuckin' serious?

SACHA

I think it is pretty terrible idea to keep the business running right now, Kaz.

MARK

Yeah. I mean, look at this place. I thought you were joking.

Kazimir slams his fist on the table.

KAZIMIR

Can you operate here!

MARK

Well, I... it depends on who we're going after--

KAZIMIR

Answer my question!

Kazimir is visibly upset at this point.

SACHA

If you operate, you need to tell Leonid.

KAZIMIR

No!

(back to Mark)

What is it?

MARK

I... I'm sure I can figure it out, yeah. I still have my stuff.

KAZIMIR

Good.

SACHA

You're insane. Check all of your ins and outs before you make such a wild decision. We don't need a trial or even worse an indictment.

KAZIMIR

You let me worry about my business.

SACHA

It's my business too. Maybe you forget I am your boss?

Kazimir lowers his head.

KAZIMIR
Leonid is boss too.

SACHA
So fucking tell him.

KAZIMIR
(calm)
No.

Sacha is in bitter disgust.

SACHA
You've made your decision then. I
will make mine.

Sacha turns around, spitting to the side, before shoving the exit door out like the world's strongest man.

INT. GUN RANGE - MORNING

Karla, geared up, lazily makes her way to her lane. Before she approaches, she sees Officer Martindale and Officer James, both in as casual clothes as you would see for off-duty cops.

Karla can't avoid it. She tries to be subtle. Martindale reloads, and in doing so makes Karla.

MARTINDALE
Hey. Mendoza!

KARLA
Oh. Oh! Hey you guys.

James stops firing.

JAMES
Karla, hey.

They all nod. James pretends to reload as the silence nears awkward territory.

KARLA
So, look I've been doing my best to help the department on the... you know.

JAMES
Oh that's. That's great, really?

KARLA

Yeah. And I can do a little reconnaissance if necessary.

JAMES

Uh... no I think that'll be fine, to be honest. We'll just let the department handle it. Really simple at this point anyway. Notifying next of kin. You know... paperwork.

James cocks his gun. He turns, aims, and fires repeatedly.

Same with Martindale.

Karla nods to herself, collecting. She aims. Fires.

As she does so, James reels his target sheet back. He takes it off the hinges, barely looks at it and leaves.

Karla stops firing, just looking down, trying to compose herself.

Martindale ceases too. Glancing over at Karla.

MARTINDALE

You send in your reapplication, yet?

KARLA

(to herself)

I'm forty fuckin' years old.

MARTINDALE

What?

KARLA

Uh. No, not yet. But I'm hopeful I'll get some time soon.

MARTINDALE

Great!

Martindale stares at the direction James left.

MARTINDALE (CONT'D)

Some of us still miss you.

KARLA

Heh. Sheesh. I mean. That's kinda weird right?

Martindale is taken aback, shooting Karla a cringy look.

Martindale cocks, aims, fires; obliterating her target in half-dollar grouping, center mass.

Karla takes her shots, missing HORRIBLY. Some don't even hit the sheet. One somehow is a perfect headshot, which gives her mild false hope.

Martindale gets her sheet and leaves. Karla reels hers back in and crumbles it.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - ROUTER ROOM - DAY

Titus organizes his set up in the router room. It's pretty messy overall, likely from the previous IT workers.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - ROUTER ROOM - LATER

Titus testing shit over and over. His satchel is completely empty. He's used every last tool he can find.

Rebecca walks up to the open door.

REBECCA
Thoughts? News? Updates?

TITUS
Yeah, have you guys just tried replacing it?

REBECCA
Yes. Eleven times.

Titus stares blankly at it all.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
You're really gonna have it done in a couple days?

Titus looks back, grumpy. He gets up and speed walks off, heading to the restroom.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Just finishing up zipping, Titus looks at his phone. He's getting a call from Karla.

TITUS
(short)
Hi.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - SAME

Karla leans up against her desk.

KARLA
(sarcastic)
Shit, is this a bad time? You need
me to call back?

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

TITUS
You told me this would be easy.

KARLA
No, you told me this would be easy.

TITUS
Well it's fuckin' not.

KARLA
Look if you got an attitude on day
one, I don't know what to tell you.

TITUS
I think there's something else
wrong with it. Something's going on
here. Like the wifi just goes down
so randomly. Almost like it's on a
schedule. Nothing I do does
anything to affect it.

KARLA
To be honest Titus I could give a
shit less about you fixing the
wifi.

TITUS
Well I do!

KARLA
Remember why we're here.

TITUS
You mean me.

KARLA
Yes. You. Me.

TITUS
Why is this--why do we? What's this
game thing we keep playing?

KARLA

Investigate. Look around. You said Chow gave you free range. I'd be all over that bitch if she said that to me.

TITUS

Oh wow. There it is. We found it. The very first difference between me and you.

Karla sighs, composing herself.

KARLA

There has to be another connection.

TITUS

Like hacking or something. But where, what for? Who? And like, what the hell does this have to do with the suicide?

KARLA

Eh!

TITUS

Murder. Maybe.

KARLA

Holy shit.

TITUS

(going insane)
Do I dare ask?

KARLA

The department. They still have to notify next of kin. Mark.

TITUS

Mark?

A KNOCK on the restroom door.

Titus puts down the phone, figuring.

TITUS (CONT'D)

(trailing)
Yeah, one sec, just talking to myself.

END INTERCUT

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - DAY

Karla opens up a database on her computer and searches through her manila folder with Mark's file on both.

She clicks, refreshes. Stunned at nothing.

Karla flips through the pages, highlighted, marked, scuffed, ruffled, folded. She's been doing this for a while now.

She casually tosses it on top of her desk and leans back in her chair.

Suddenly, the wifi cuts out. She smashes her mouse button over and over to refresh, but everything is completely cut out.

She screen flashes over and over on her face as if she's opening up multiple commands, but all she can do is shake her head.

KARLA
Fuckin' Rebecca Chow.

Karla leans her head over, facing the door out of her office.

KARLA (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Ma. I'm going to Arturo's. Better
wifi. I'll be back soon.

Long pause as Karla gets ready.

PATRICIA
(yelling back)
Okay.

Karla glances back, confused at the awkwardly late response.

INT. ARTURO'S RESTAURANT AND CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Karla sits in the corner, still trying to find more on her information on her laptop as she's on the phone.

KARLA
Hi is this Ma--oh disconnected.
Well, that was the last one.

ARTURO, 53, looks that exact age as well, semi-casually dressed, approaches.

ARTURO
Can I get you another coffee?

KARLA
 (cold)
 No thanks.

Arturo wants to walk away but clearly wants to pry.

ARTURO
 Something wrong, Karla? Is it the
 suicide?

KARLA
 You know too?

ARTURO
 Of course.

KARLA
 Why does everybody know about it?

ARTURO
 The papers?

KARLA
 Who still reads print?

Arturo looks around at the several old people reading the
 paper at their booths/tables.

KARLA (CONT'D)
 At this point I don't know what's
 wrong with me. Maybe I'm out of
 touch.

ARTURO
 I said the same thing a few years
 ago. But it was just a rough patch,
 we all go through it. You're one of
 the most optimistic people I know.
 (beat)
 God, this place was a shitter back
 then.

KARLA
 You mean that?

ARTURO
 Yeah, literally. No one came in to
 buy anything. They just ask to used
 the bathroom. That's why we had to
 put a lock with a code on it--

KARLA
 --No, I mean. Nevermind.

Karla closes her laptop.

KARLA (CONT'D)

You know, if it's between you and me.

Arturo perks up and takes a seat across from her, leaning in.

Karla bats her eyes, not expecting him to catch on so easily, but she leans in too.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I think there's more to this suicide than what meets the eye. I've been trying to figure it out for days now.

ARTURO

Hey, I support it. It's your resident. Your friend. And whatever helps Mark at this point.

They both nod, thankful for each other's presence.

KARLA

Is it okay if I do my research at your place?

ARTURO

Take as much time as you need. And honestly, I couldn't do much even if I *didn't* want you to research. That's most of my business at this point ever since I got this elite ass wifi installed.

KARLA

Literally the reason I came.

Arturo stares, unimpressed.

KARLA (CONT'D)

(trying to save)

I mean the coffee too, though? Shiiit.

ARTURO

No one comes in for the food anymore. And it makes sense. A bunch of fuckin' nerds writing their screenplays and shit want my horchata latte's. They don't want refried beans all over their labcoats.

Karla stares at her manila folder documents, then stares above Arturo's head, almost like an epiphany is coming to her.

ARTURO (CONT'D)

They want to write their term papers. They want to play modern warfare and day trade and shit. They don't want fresh tortillas that you have to eat with your HANDS--

KARLA

--Arturo wait, how do you know Mark?

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

Mark sits at a desk, alone, in the corner, a single light from that side of the warehouse on him.

He types patiently on his laptop.

As he finds a break in his work, he halts, glancing down at his phone.

He clicks on it, revealing the background of him and his mom. It's as quirky, embarrassing, and bittersweet of a picture as you can imagine.

Crippling.

Mark finds it somewhere to get it together. He grabs a piece of paper and starts writing.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Mark makes his way over to Kaz who sits on the table from the previous meeting with Sacha.

MARK

Hey.

KAZIMIR

This is it?

Mark hands him the paper.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

Great.

Kaz reaches over into his briefcase and grabs his pistol with his silencer and places it in his pants under his jacket.

MARK

Figured you've been itching to find a reason to get out and get some vodka, anyway.

KAZIMIR

I don't drink.

MARK

I never knew that.

KAZIMIR

Why would you?

MARK

You at least know how to get this shit?

Kazimir shoots him a devious look.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm being serious. I'm not talking shit.

KAZIMIR

I know exactly where.

Mark stares at Kaz, then curiously around--near the exits.

Kaz follows his stare for a moment.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

Make sure not to leave.

Kaz cups Mark's cheek and lightly taps it a couple times.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

That would be fucking dumb, da?

EXT. TECH SHOP - LATER

Kaz strides up to the front of the tech shop, gathering himself. He opens the door like a gate to a new frontier.

INT. TECH SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Kaz trodges to the check out desk at the back.

VOICE (O.C.)

One moment!

The shop is simple. Hand built rails with equipment, cables.

Two display cases against the two side walls with routers, remotes, replacement hardware boxes. Every price tag individually printed.

KAZIMIR

(impudent)

This how you treat your only customer?

A man emerges from the opened doorway displaying storage equipment. It's OTTO, 41, in about as business casual as a an American dad/tech store owner can get--polo, khakis, etc.

OTTO

(pretending)

My God. I didn't--Hah. Um. What's goin' on, Kazimir?

KAZIMIR

Just thought I'd drop in.

Otto checks his watch.

OTTO

Well we close up in about ten minutes, but I've always got room to chat.

Otto loosens up a bit in his demeanor. Clearly he's been here before.

OTTO (CONT'D)

How's the tech business coming? You start that up yet?

KAZIMIR

Dreaming big, working a lot.

OTTO

Sick. That's. That's real cool, man. Whaddaya mean, actually?

KAZIMIR

Just what I said.

OTTO

Dreaming big though?

KAZIMIR

Oh that. Hah. You see I have this plan. Really early on, so it's just an elevator pitch.

OTTO

Well I'm probably the best person for this then. I got my bachelor's in communication and, as a small business owner, let me tell you, the first stages of investment were NOT easy--

KAZIMIR

--My plan... is to monopolize an underground network.

Otto is taken aback, waiting.

OTTO

Is that it?

KAZIMIR

Isn't that enough to get you interested?

OTTO

Well. Not quite.

KAZIMIR

It should. I mean you'll be providing the upfront costs anyway.

OTTO

Hmm. How do you figure that?

KAZIMIR

You forget about your debts that quickly? Truly you are an optimist.

OTTO

Wait, we cleared that.

KAZIMIR

I must've suffered a concussion. Ah yes, you're... now it's coming back to me. Uh, fuck. No. No. It's not.

OTTO

But Leonid.

KAZIMIR

Leonid?

OTTO

Yeah I cleared it with Big Leo.

KAZIMIR

Big Leo? Leonid? You went to Leonid? How could you not discuss this with me.

OTTO

I, I thought he did discuss it with you? He even gave me his certificate.

Otto reaches underneath his desk and pulls out a piece of paper with a seal and hands it to Kaz.

Kaz eyes it back and forth, his expression teetering between disgust and unsurprised acceptance.

KAZIMIR

I need new shit anyway.

Otto nods it off.

OTTO

Well great I can get you whatever you need.

Kaz hands him the same list Mark gave him.

OTTO (CONT'D)

This'll probably be like five or six hundred. Just want to double check if you have that on you.

Kazimir blinks at him auspiciously. He cups his hand to his ear, his other hand reaching under his coat under the desk.

KAZIMIR

What?

OTTO

Oh c'mon. I can maybe give you a discount or something if you'd like, but we're cleared.

KAZIMIR

We're what? I'm sorry there must be a draft, I just didn't hear what you said.

OTTO

It's five--

Kazimir SHOOTS several times at the side wall with his gun, destroying half a rail and dumps multiple holes in the wall.

KAZIMIR

--What??

Otto freaks out, looking around. He spots the security camera.

Kazimir brings up the gun and shoots at both security cameras, obliterating them.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

Kazimir walks over the hole in the wall. He leans over the display counter near that side to get a special look. As he leans over, he points the gun near the storefront windows and FIRES, shattering them.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

Ow. Ooo. I'm so scared. Your store must be in the ghetto. Sounds like you'll need to hire some security around here.

OTTO

What the fuck? Leo--

KAZIMIR

--I'm sure Leo will be happy to know you'll need to hire his insurance company as well. One of the few in the city that covers damage like this. Especially in such a *beautiful* neighborhood.

Kazimir places his gun back in his pocket, letting his jacket cover.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

Might be a good investment to put that money you make from this transaction into new security measures, yes?

OTTO

(defeated)

Let me check our inventory.

Otto sullenly meanders to the back door room.

Kaz wipes his face, sweating.

KAZIMIR

Too fucking hot to wear a coat in
the summer.

No answer.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

I'd wear a track suit but damn,
isn't that fucking cliché.

Kazimir cracks himself up.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Mark, bored, sees his burner phone vibrate.

He lets it go.

After the vibration ends, it lights up. It's a newer-end
burner.

Mark, curious, reaches lazily towards it. He sees a voicemail
from a random number. Mark squints, hesitant.

After clicking on the voicemail, he pulls it up to listen.

VOICEMAIL

*Hi is this Mark? This is Karla!
From Vista Heights. How you holdin'
up? I'm sure you're...you know,
with school. And, and uh. Well. I
just wanted to reach out to see if
you were okay. We're all very
saddened by Catherine here. I know,
and I'm sure, err, I mean by what I
mean by I'm sure is I know that the
cops have reached out to you to let
you in on everything. And so
anyways, I'd love to chat with you
in person to get a few things
sorted out here, but mostly just so
we can catch up. Um, let me know
how that first semester went too!
I'm sure that was real exciting.
SO, yeah. This is my number. Just
hit me back on this line. Kay
thanks. Adios.*

Mark is horrified.

A moment of brief ponderance poisons his face.

He mouths out a few decrees, concluding.

Mark stands up, winds, and LAUNCHES the burner into the wall, smashing it to bits.

In the midst of the smash a door closes and Kaz strolls in with the bag of tech items.

Kaz sees the burner smashed on the ground.

KAZIMIR

What now?

Mark sniffs. There seems to be an understanding between both of them that they have a problem to deal with.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - MORNING

Titus gets into work relatively early.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - ROUTER ROOM - SAME

He situates himself, taking deep breaths to try and conquer this beast.

Titus rewires the cables with new ones. He opens up code try and reprogram the device.

Titus attempts to troubleshoot the normal network again, and again, and again.

Suddenly, on Titus' laptop, he finds a signal destination. But he can't seem to track where.

TITUS

Where the fuck are you...

Titus clicks rapidly, nothing doing.

He leans back, almost fetal, against the wall.

KARLA (V.O)

Investigate... investigate...
investigate...

TITUS

Okay... okay.

Titus grabs his laptop and satchel, heading subtly out of the closet room.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - HALLWAYS

Titus casually passes the occasional employee or resident as he sneaks around.

Doors left ajar, semi-dusty footprints on the ground.

Titus, hoodie all the way up like a medieval wizard, mumbles to himself.

TITUS

If the signal could reach... but that would mean that there's some... Fuck. Okay. One more day. Or is it two? No, three you got a whole week. Okay good. Okay. We got something to work with here. Okay back to the signal. If it's relocated, it must have something more to work with.

Titus clicks. He sees one of the CUSTODIANS on their lunch break near a table. Titus spies around as he approaches him, looking scattered.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Excuse me do you know...

Titus spots the door that says "Basement". He immediately walks off.

CUSTODIAN

You one of the new IT guys? I got a question--

Titus slams the door to the basement.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Hums buzz throughout the space as Titus comes down the stairs. He opens another door once he sifts through the boxes of storage, the buzzing getting louder.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - SERVER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Titus forces his way through the door that seems to barely open.

He sees two massive servers, humming like two air conditioners making love to a Franciscan chant.

Titus drops his satchel.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Karla twirls a pen in her hands as she feels her phone vibrate, bringing it up to her ear.

KARLA

Yeah.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Titus walks around the room. It's very bare besides the servers. Pretty dusty as well.

TITUS

It's Rebecca Chow.

KARLA

It's what?

TITUS

Rebecca Chow. She's withholding information from us. From me. From you, too. But. I found something that explains it.

KARLA

My hunch was right. For once.

TITUS

Is this really the first time you've been right?

KARLA

No, my hunch.

TITUS

You're willing to admit that? Like out loud? How long have you been doing this?

KARLA

What did you find Titus...

TITUS

Well I found out that she's been losing residents every other month. But that was only because we've been using the same hot spot for the past couple days.

KARLA

Wait but you've fixed the wifi,
right? You're just using the hot
spot to stall?

TITUS

No. I haven't yet.
(confident)
But I will.

KARLA

She's really been losing residents?
Because the wifi cuts out?

TITUS

No. The internet rarely cuts out. I
think she's probably working with
someone--

KARLA

--Why are they leaving?

TITUS

Good question. Look I found a
server room and I'm gonna get to
the bottom of this.

KARLA

Shit, really? Okay well don't tell
Rebecca anything, yet.

Titus stops in his tracks, offended.

TITUS

I've seen all seven seasons of
Elementary. I think I know exactly
what I need to do.

Karla, about to say something, holds back, hanging up.

END INTERCUT

EXT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - STREET - EVENING

Kazimir parks at a nearby curb as he sees Karla, dressed
well, approaching a side entrance, suspiciously, to Moderna
Apartments.

INT. KAZ'S CAR - SAME

Kaz, flustered, checks his watch, putting it off. He leans back in his car seat, content with just closing his eyes for now.

INT. KAZ'S CAR - NIGHT

Kaz's snore wakes himself up.

He reaches for his briefcase and pulls it up to the passenger seat.

A radiant sound lingers in the distance.

Kaz opens up the briefcase, peering up just to check.

Suddenly, *Karla* comes out of the main entrance, very late.

Kaz panics, and instead of putting the gun together, he searches for his knife in its slot. No avail. He checks his pockets, but time is running out.

Kaz grabs a linen cloth from the briefcase and wraps it quickly around his knuckles, fiercely exiting the car.

EXT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS

Kaz takes several calculated steps as he approaches her. The distracting darkness of the side alleyway to the parking lot ruins his pace to keep up.

As he hastens, the jingling from his keys get loud.

KAZIMIR
(whisper)
Fuck.

He takes his keys out and discovers a POCKET KNIFE. He gently and strategically places his keys near a corner, looking around to see if he'll remember them.

Kaz wields the knife as he makes his final advance.

Kaz's footsteps speak coarsely against the now concrete as he leaves the grass. The edge of darkness giving him a small window to execute as the light is just a few feet away.

He's so close, he doesn't care.

She turns, obviously feeling his presence.

Kaz STABS her in the leg, not getting a clean angle. But... he holds it as he makes eye contact for just a moment. It's... Rebecca Chow.

Kaz's expression sinks, but he keeps stabbing her.

To an even more surprise and throw-off, Rebecca fights back. She manages to hurl the knife out of Kaz's hand in the tussle, but it lands on a sewer grate, spinning, dropping into it.

Kaz pulls his shirt over his face in attempt to hide.

He layers down a few more punches, subduing Rebecca, feeling her weak body aggressions slow down.

A car light shines for a couple of seconds as it passes on the other side. Kaz freaks out and runs back to the car.

He stops briefly at the corner to grab his keys, which are still there.

INT. KAZ'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sweat shines on Kaz's face, illuminated by the fluorescent street lamp.

He eyes the top of the steering wheel, despondent.

EXT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - DAY

Several police scatter around. Detectives, indiscernible crime-scene tape, evidence markers abound.

Titus, planted on the sidewalk like a steel pole, struggles to process what's occurring.

He scans, finding Karla in the outskirts, seeking her out.

TITUS

Why'd I get a call from the
secretary not to come in today? I
thought they found out. Something.

KARLA

Rebecca Chow.

TITUS

What? She died or something?

KARLA

Hospitalized.

TITUS

What, and--

KARLA

--Critical condition. Just spoke to one of the detectives a few minutes ago. Said she couldn't see her assailant. He covered his face.

Titus pushes up his GLASSES, monitoring the crime scene investigation.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I still can't figure out why she would've been marked. Did you do anything yesterday?

TITUS

No. Nothing yet.

Titus, barely responsive, likely contemplating how he got into this mess.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Who the fuck is behind this...

KARLA

Even when I was here last night, nothing seemed suspicious.

Titus finally turns towards Karla.

TITUS

You were here last night? What the fuck, why? You guys hanging out now or something?

KARLA

No.

TITUS

Then what the f--I... thought I was taking point here. What's the need for me to investigate, when I literally told you the next day I'm gonna to have an entire plan of action ready to go?

KARLA

Did you get new glasses?

TITUS

Are you... Yes I got glasses.
Trying to look a little less
suspicious. More nerdy and shit.

KARLA

But you are a nerd...

TITUS

Dude you could've been killed.
Let's talk about that. We can't be
out here makin' business decisions
like that.

KARLA

Well I wasn't. I can hold my own.
Plus, knowing the ins and outs of
night operation could be critical.

Titus stomps away, done with the conversation. He finds
Bradley, texting.

TITUS

Hey Brad. I'm taking today off.

BRADLEY

We already gave you the day off.

TITUS

Fuckin' tight then.

Titus makes his way out, but gets near Karla on his exit.

TITUS (CONT'D)

(to Karla)

I'm not tryin' to get killed.

EXT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - NIGHT

The Band sets up. Different set of instruments, same usual
people, give or take a few.

This time, they play. Without lyrics. Instead, just a few
hums. The soft sounds of smooth bass, horn, and harmony act
like an ascension hymn.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - STUDIO APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Titus lies down in his bed. The band very faintly audible
across the street. But, Titus is listening to his own music.

Titus brings his phone to his face, seeing "Mom" calling.

He answers, begrudgingly.

TITUS

Hey. Yeah, I've just been busy.
 What's up? Are you in trouble?
 Well, then... I mean yeah, but it's
 usually like 20 or 30 minutes, not
 5. I'm not 12, we're not hanging
 out anymore. If you're worried you
 can text me, is all--what?? Yeah, I
 got a place near my job. I'm living
 with a friend. No you can't meet
 them, you'll probably never see
 them it's a work friend.

Titus meanders around the room.

TITUS (CONT'D)

You'll prolly never meet them. I've
 got work tomorrow, so... yeah.

Titus scoffs at the rambling.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Yeah no I'm still here. Anyway--
 yeah. Yeah. I gotta get to sleep. I
 gotta go to work early. Right.
 Okay. Luhyoubye.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

TITUS (CONT'D)

What's up?

Brenda opens the door.

BRENDA

You coming to the potluck, mijo?

TITUS

The what? Oh. Nah. Not feeling
 great.

BRENDA

C'mon. There's gonna be food out in
 the back. We're grilling.

TITUS

Like wings and stuff?

BRENDA

(pretending)
 Si si. Wings.

TITUS
I didn't bring anything though.

BRENDA
Oh. Mira.

Brenda pulls up a cart of food.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
You wanna bring the tamales or the
cupcakes?

Titus sits up, intrigued.

EXT. VISTA HEIGHTS - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

A couple dozen residents scatter about. It looks just like a community gathering. Solo cups, paper plates abound. But most importantly, trays upon trays of food.

Karla serves up Marabeth as Titus drinks by himself near the main table of food.

MARABETH
How you holdin' up?

TITUS
Me? How are you holdin' up?

MARABETH
Heh. Yeah, thought I saw a ghost.

They both think about it for a second, realizing.

Marabeth walks away in the awkwardness.

Karla takes a loud bite out of a cupcake as she stares at the rest of the residents, all served up.

KARLA
Shit, you made this?

TITUS
Yeah, I'm a master baker...

KARLA
Ugh, nevermind I can taste the
sarcasm.

Titus rolls his eyes, finishing his drink.

KARLA (CONT'D)
 Can't take a joke or what? Here
 have some of the punch.

Karla pours him up a drink.

KARLA (CONT'D)
 It's got an assload of tequila in
 it.

Karla sips from her own, bubbly. Titus sips from it, followed
 by a generous chug.

KARLA (CONT'D)
 I feel like I'm talking to myself
 over here. If you're still bummed
 about what happened I get it. But
 if you can get over this--

TITUS
 --I'll be a troubleshooting
 spokesperson, or fuckin', the next
 'you'?

A football flies over to Titus. He annoyingly picks it up and
 tosses it back, Marabeth making a Randy Moss-like grab.

Everyone cheers. Laughs abound. A moment of serenity sets in.

Titus is transfixed, leaving his cup alone for a moment.

MARABETH
 (calling out)
 Titus come be on my team. We're the
 ghosts.

Marabeth offers a wink and thumbs up, hoping for approval. It
 gets Titus to break in a pathetic laugh.

Karla, laughing too, leans over the table.

KARLA
 At the end of the day it's what you
 make it.

Karla scarfs down another cupcake, mumbling surprises to
 herself as she scoots around the table to join everyone else.

Titus comfortably leans back against a chair, observing.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Mark, working by himself, strung out. He taps on his mouse, leaning back.

From across the warehouse, Kazimir sips from his coffee mug... in the dark. He sits up, seeing Mark taking a break.

KAZIMIR
Must be done?

MARK
For now.

Kazimir, exuberant, makes his way over to check the set up.

It seems actually fairly simple. A couple of USB's plugged in to a Kali Linux desktop. The fan hums a little louder than a person who forgets to close some tabs every now and again.

It seems the equipment has leveled up a bit. Next to them on the desk stands a fresh router that looks like a PS5.

A light peers across the back of them. An outside source.

The loud BANG of the warehouse door opening causes Mark to shuffle and Kaz to draw his gun.

In comes LEONID KUSHMINOVSKY, 55, bulking, with a confident stride. Next to him: Sacha.

Sacha turns on a few more lights before joining Leonid who lands at a spot near Kaz.

KAZIMIR
(surprised)
Would you like a seat?

LEONID
No thanks. Don't anticipate being here very long. But I think you should sit.

Kaz agrees, but notices that Mark has the only seat, with very little desk space. He attempts to move a few things around.

MARK
Oh shit, watch out. Wait.

KAZIMIR
Well I can't--

Kaz finds a spot to half lean/sit.

LEONID

Okay first off. Why so dark in here? Your eyes don't hurt? You building evil weapon or something? I don't understand. I don't like the dramatic effect.

KAZIMIR

Perhaps I have too much of a penchant for drama.

SACHA

Clearly.

LEONID

Seriously. I need you to fix the situation with the investigation.

KAZIMIR

What happened?

LEONID

I paid off our mole. It's official. Ruled a suicide.

Mark lets the news hit him like a bullet to the face that still won't kill him.

LEONID (CONT'D)

My inside guy though. He's worried. Could be a nuisance. Ex-cop I think. She's reinvestigating the situation on her own.

Mark's eyes widen. Sacha catches him, but Mark plays it off.

LEONID (CONT'D)

Just get rid of her. We don't need something so low stakes ruining a business operation. Especially since I can't have you fall behind again.

KAZIMIR

How shall I do it?

Leonid gives him a doubtful look, then locks his eyes in on Mark, suddenly a charm to him.

LEONID

You are the boy?

Mark studies Leonid.

LEONID (CONT'D)

Leo. Don't think we've met, no?

Leo extends a hand, to which Mark obliges.

MARK

No we haven't. I'm Mark.

The awkward pauses and nervousness in between the interaction cause Leo to laugh.

LEONID

It's like you've never had anyone greet you before. I'm sure this fucker hasn't.

Leonid indicates towards Kaz.

Mark stares at the ground, conceding.

Leo stops laughing, returning his attention to Kaz.

LEONID (CONT'D)

Make it subtle. Clean.

Kaz exchanges glances with Mark.

KAZIMIR

I'll work on getting that done as quickly as possible.

Leonid nods, gesturing to Sacha to leave.

SACHA

(to Kaz)

Are you still working on the bullshit business?

Leonid turns back around, intrigued.

SACHA (CONT'D)

I see new technology on the table. You haven't pulled the plug like I recommended? Why do you never listen?

LEONID

You told me you start new operation back in May.

Kaz murmurs, sticking to his gut.

KAZIMIR

It is new. I have the kid now.

Sacha, smiling sarcastically, stares down Kaz.

Leonid assesses. He shrugs, waving it off.

LEONID

I don't see problem if it makes money again like before. Looks good. New equipment?

KAZIMIR

Yes. Heh. Called in favor. He wants new security too.

Leonid bellows, Kaz joining him in laughter after seeing his reaction. Sacha stands stagnantly.

LEONID

I commend you for at least trying to keep your business operating. Especially under the circumstance such as this one.

Leonid takes one more glance at Mark.

LEONID (CONT'D)

First time you've stepped up like this since your Batya passed.

Leonid offers a nod of approval, turning. He walks away.

In a very long follow, Sacha feeds Kaz a look of disgust.

Right before exiting, Sacha turns all the lights off, way more than were on at the start. It's nearly pitch.

MARK

Batya?

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - SERVER ROOM - LATER

Titus uses his Kali Linux to hack into the surge point and disable the host. He's in full troubleshooting mode.

Titus finishes collecting files from a USB drive onto his laptop.

After opening up Rebecca's files, he notices a host name attached to it: Turgenev.

Titus, taken aback. How is it possible?

Titus looks around, thinking.

He gets up, playing around with the space in between the two servers.

TITUS
Just a couple more fuckin' days...

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - ROUTER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Titus looks out the door, situating all the equipment properly inside. It looks spotless now.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - MOMENTS LATER

Titus turns the corner and pats on the front desk at Bradley, awkwardly walking away like he just got out of the gym.

TITUS
Shit's fixed.

Bradley eyes him curiously as the light ignites him when he walks out the front door.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - LATER

Karla picks up her phone, dialing. She scans her computer while it waits.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - SAME

Officer James, at his desk, watching baseball on his monitor, eating a taco.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

JAMES
Karla. What can I do for you?

KARLA
Hey can I ask you a favor?

JAMES
Sure. Anything.

James sits up, grabbing a pen.

KARLA
You were able to track down Mark right? Mark Doolittle?

James swallows, tossing his pen to the side.

JAMES

Karla.

KARLA

Before you go any further. I know you haven't gotten ahold of him.

JAMES

We've reached out to next of kin. It's been ruled a suicide by Detective Bruce Ashby. If you want his number, I'd be happy to give it to you.

KARLA

I have his number. I have the whole departments number James.

JAMES

Well then--

KARLA

--How were you guys not able to track down an 18 year old kid?

JAMES

He's 18.

KARLA

So?

JAMES

Do you remember what kind of... you know. Things, you were getting into at 18?

KARLA

Hah. Good point.

Karla stops to think about it, laughing as she searches through her memory.

James joins her, only imagining what she could've been doing.

KARLA (CONT'D)

No, you don't get to laugh at that.

James ceases.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I know that the detectives might've ruled it a suicide, but don't you find it odd that her son just disappears as soon as she dies?

(MORE)

KARLA (CONT'D)

Does that not point to something else here? Help me out, what am I missing?

JAMES

Murder you think?

KARLA

We might be on the same page.

JAMES

Might be on to something.

KARLA

Yes!

James catches a home run at the corner of his eye.

JAMES

Son of a bitch.

KARLA

What's up, what do you need?

JAMES

You watching this game right now?
Wildcard?

Karla's attention strays, leading her to hang up the phone.

END INTERCUT

Karla sends a text to Titus: "I feel like we're being watched."

Titus: "Pff".

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Titus, scarfing down hot wings, or a burger, fuck it.

He gets a call and answers it with an un-sauced pinky, on speaker.

BRADLEY (V.O.)

Hey.

TITUS

Sup.

BRADLEY

Wifi's shitty again.

TITUS
Impossible.

BRADLEY
Well mission accomplished then.

Titus winces at the reference, putting his food down and wiping his hands with a nearby napkin.

TITUS
What's wrong with it? Does it keep going out?

BRADLEY
No, I feel like it switched networks or something, I don't know.

TITUS
Yeah I switched the networks. I sent you the new information. Did you put in the password?

BRADLEY
Yes.

TITUS
Is your computer...on--

BRADLEY
Titus this is serious. It's an emergency.

TITUS
Oh okay. Fine, I'll be right over.

EXT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Titus casually struts across the street, no tools with him at all.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - ROUTER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Titus checks to see if everything is fine, then double checks to see if the coast is clear outside.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - ROUTER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A different router sits where Titus installed the new one.

This one looks just like the old one.

Titus blinks at it, looking around for the one he installed.
Nothing.

INT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - MOMENTS LATER

Titus, extremely calm, but clearly fuming inside, approaches the front desk.

TITUS
Bradley.

BRADLEY
Fixed?

TITUS
Try the old network for me.

Bradley, confused, logs in the credentials to the old wifi.

BRADLEY
Oh sweet. Nicccccce.

TITUS
It's up?

Bradley nods.

Titus, barely movable, blank gaze.

EXT. MODERNA APARTMENTS - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Titus paces around the sidewalk, arms folded, phone up to his ear.

TITUS
Hey! What's up. Yeah we're being tracked.

He hangs up.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - LATER

Karla stares at her computer. Mark's file, frozen, stares back.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Titus, still in his IT clothes, hits an old punching bag that's tied up in the corner.

He throws a few kicks at it, mixing in some awkward punches, almost like he's trying to remember.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Karla, distraught, slowly paces down the hallway. She can hear a few grunts from the half-opened BASEMENT door.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Karla enters and notices Titus from the top of the stairs. She stands there, almost waiting for him to notice her.

Titus holds the bag after a few punches. He hears a step on the creaky wooden stairs, looks up, and finds Karla.

KARLA

Is this your idea of--

TITUS

--Look, if I'm gonna have to fight for my fuckin' life at some point... I took kickboxing for a year, hopefully it helps me before I have to leave the city.

Karla comes down the stairs with haste.

She feeds Titus a TIRED look... before destroying the bag with a beautiful mix of kicks, punches, elbow checks, etc.

KARLA

You got this.

TITUS

(pretending)

No, I know I got it. Yeah.

Karla shakes her head.

KARLA

You're very capable. You don't need a punching bag to tell you that.

TITUS

(frustrated)

I know I'm capable.

KARLA

So why won't you help me hack this file? Don't you want all this to be over?

TITUS

Oh. You fuckin' serious? God damn. Why didn't you tell me? Yeah let me just hack into this kid's file and find his location and track him down and open all his docs and see what he's looking at. You really want to see what a 15 year old boy is hiding?

KARLA

Well no I just needed the first part. You got weird at the end.

TITUS

Not doing it.

KARLA

Why? Why why why--

TITUS

--Because I fixed the wifi and I'm still not paid. If you need a reason.

KARLA

But you just told me the wifi isn't fixed...

TITUS

No I said it's fucky.

Karla, losing patience, branches out into the room.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Why do you need this kid's profile anyway?

KARLA

It's troubleshooting.

Titus laughs it off, punching the bag.

TITUS

Troubleshooting.

KARLA

You still consider this a joke.

Titus emotes sarcastically.

KARLA (CONT'D)

You saw a woman die didn't you? If you still don't believe in what I do, why did you run after me that day? You could've stayed with Marabeth, called the police.

TITUS

I panicked.

KARLA

You didn't. You made a decision and followed your gut. Now it's time to find a solution.

Titus stares dead at the walls.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I know he's just 18. But he's smart. He's like you, Titus. He's good with computers. Technology. All the nerd shit I'm never good at. But he's gone, and I'm worried about him because his mom, is dead.

Karla sits at the foot of the stairs.

KARLA (CONT'D)

Can you imagine what that's like?

Titus, blank, numb, for just a moment.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I mean... that's why I **do**--

TITUS

--You said he's good with computers?

Titus turns back around.

KARLA

He is.

TITUS

Like how good? Specifically.

KARLA

I... he's done some tech support for local businesses on his own, he's, he's been--

TITUS

--Tech support?

Titus engages closer to Karla, forcing her hand, but she has none.

TITUS (CONT'D)

I wonder if Mark's the one fucking with the wifi.

KARLA

Why is that the conclusion?

TITUS

Well when I was 18 I got into some rough situations. Do you know if he can hack?

KARLA

I, I mean maybe? I don't see why he wouldn't be able to do that. I'm pretty sure he's set up wifi before. Does that mean he can hack it?

TITUS

If he can, he's gotta be working with someone.

KARLA

You said you've been in these situations before? What does that...

TITUS

Shady situations. Internet hacking is common, but it's precisely selected, nonetheless. Who's targeting Rebecca Chow has always been our question. But wh--

KARLA

--Why!

TITUS (CONT'D)

Why...

TITUS (CONT'D)

Why, yeah that's what I was getting at.

Titus meanders over to the basement window and looks across the street, demonstrating to Karla the Moderna Apartments from afar.

TITUS (CONT'D)

It's money.

KARLA

One thing about money is that there's gotta be multiple parties involved in this.

TITUS

Yes. But not necessarily parties.

KARLA

People then.

TITUS

Right. And I'm sure there's a few people in Mark's ear convincing him to hack away. I mean, think of the benefits: banking info, day planners, extortion, creative ideas, passwords.

KARLA

And that's if they use the public wifi that's available?

TITUS

Well why wouldn't they? Two big daddies in a server room and it's completely free to use. That expensive of an apartment complex? I'm sure the free wifi that comes with rent is fuckin' cash. But how they kept communicating with Mark couldn't have been easy. At least in my experience all those operations fail. Bad organization.

KARLA

You think there's an inside man?

TITUS

In this place?

Titus raises his arms to articulate his point, accidentally clamoring a random metal object that was sitting on a shelf, causing a loud and absurd crash. Karla, in awe over it, shrieks faintly.

KARLA

Wait... the day Catherine died I went up to their apartment.

TITUS

Well we both did.

KARLA

I caught up to see Mark for a brief moment. Or so I thought. I know I got up there pretty fast.

TITUS

Yeah you ran, leaving me in trauma. I don't know if you remember this?

KARLA

I do remember. I went to his room and he was getting in a car across the street with some man.

TITUS

WHAT?

KARLA

Wow. How am I just now putting this together? That was definitely Mark... It had to have been--

TITUS

--Karla do you have security cameras!?

KARLA

What?

Titus blinks at her. He takes off running, Karla-esque.

EXT. VISTA HEIGHTS - MOMENTS LATER

Titus, winded, shuffles around the outside near the street.

Karla catches up to him, not a single breath out of place.

Titus' eye gets caught like a jewel. There it is. A video security camera. Old, dusty. But clearly working as the red light dimly shines.

TITUS

Fuck yes!

KARLA

Ah, yeah, that piece of sh--

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

Kaz COCKS his gun. He organizes his briefcase, preparing himself for battle it seems. It looks cool. He looks cool. Even Mark is kind of impressed by it.

Kaz buckles himself up, looking ready to go.

He SLAMS the briefcase shut, checking his watch.

Kaz exchanges a nod with Mark, who is a little less enthused by this process, but engrossed nonetheless.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Titus and Karla sit and observe the tape over and over again.

Kaz's distinct features and attire along with a few clear frames of Mark have Titus and Karla in shock.

KARLA

So Rebecca Chow is...

TITUS

I don't think Rebecca Chow is our connection anymore.

KARLA

But why would she be at Catherine's crime scene?

TITUS

She's got too much to lose if her residents start leaving because they're getting robbed, threaten, or stolen from ever since they move in.

KARLA

You sure it's Mark and one other person?

TITUS

I think that it might be.

KARLA

What else do you remember from the server room? Anything significant in those files? Names?

TITUS

Yeah. Turgenev. Or however you say it. Middle eastern or eastern block or something.

KARLA

Turgenev?

TITUS

Yeah. It's a name.

KARLA

What the fuck, why didn't you tell me this?

TITUS

It's probably the host name. Maybe one of the guys who installed it. It could be Rebecca Chow's ex boyfriend or something, who knows. I doubt it's linked to anyone here.

KARLA

Well it could be!

TITUS

I know you think that there's a ton at stake here. But there isn't.

KARLA

How can you say that? This whole thing is a fucking mess.

TITUS

Yes! Thank you! And you're the one who put me dead center of it.

KARLA

Well we're here now!

TITUS

My boss is basically dead.

KARLA

I'm your boss.

TITUS

A woman is dead, Karla! Two! Two women. And probably soon a kid. Whoever he's with right now I know for a fact doesn't give a shit about him. This guy?

Titus points to Kaz on the screen.

KARLA

I know. Which is exactly why we can't give up, Titus.

TITUS

This isn't cops and robbers, this isn't a game. You're not a superhero.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Karla's mom comes in with fresh, homemade taquitos in a tray.

PATRICIA

Hey sorry to interrupt. Sounds like you guys are getting kinda worked up in here and I thought I'd bring in some food.

Karla, not mad, but not enthused, welcomes her in.

KARLA

Titus this is my mom.

PATRICIA

Hi, Patricia Mendoza. Pleased to meet you.

TITUS

Um. Yeah. Hi. I'm Titus.

KARLA

Mom, I don't know if right now is the best time to socialize.

PATRICIA

I think it's a great time. I've got some good news.

Titus inspects the food. Lookin' kinda bomb.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Rebecca Chow has turned a new leaf. I think it had to do with the accident, but--

Patricia makes the sign of the cross.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

--she's agreed to expand on a completely different part of town!

KARLA

Really?

PATRICIA
 She said she couldn't imagine
 buying anymore property in this
 stupidass area.

Karla takes that one to the chin, unsure how to handle that
 as a compliment.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)
 (mumbling)
 Gracias a Dios la bruja se va.

KARLA
 Well mom is she doing okay?

Patricia opens her eyes, coming to. After a brief hesitation,
 she insists on the tray of taquitos.

PATRICIA
 Yeah she's fine. Please, eat.

Titus nods, grabbing a couple in his palm.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

They all sit around, munching.

KARLA
 So you think that that guy might
 be...

Karla tilts her head, hoping Titus catches her drift.

TITUS
 The KGB? Really? Hmm, I think you
 could b--

KARLA
 --No...

TITUS
 Nope. In fact...

Titus dusts off his hands after a final bite.

TITUS (CONT'D)
 I can't express how much I wish it
 wasn't the mob. Another fact: I
 think I quit.

Titus stands up. Karla tries to get him to stop.

KARLA

Quit? Why?

TITUS

I can't work in this toxic environment anymore. I don't want to be manipulated with food that slaps harder than my grandma, and nice ass Hispanic ladies who sometimes I wish were my grandma. And on top of that, I'm in no shape or form to track down the mob.

PATRICIA

This is a serious conversation?

KARLA

No, he's just joking.

TITUS

No. I'm dead fucking serious. I'm not putting my life in danger and neither should you. This investigation is done.

PATRICIA

Investigation?

Patricia's demeanor is no longer jovial.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

What investigation Karla? Are you troubleshooting again?

TITUS

Wait what? You know about troubleshooting too?

PATRICIA

Unfortunately, yes.

TITUS

And you're okay with it?

PATRICIA

Absolutely not.

TITUS

Then--

PATRICIA

--I used to be a troubleshooter.

KARLA

Mom even came up with the name.

TITUS

Makes total sense that this is a family thing.

PATRICIA

Hey!

Patricia gets up, measuring up to Titus.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

It's a noble thing to trouble shoot. I gave up on it quickly, a long time ago. Karla's always been interested in it. And for the longest time I've been busy getting this residence to stand on its own two feet. If I can get it to support itself, I can support my daughter.

TITUS

How can you be proud of blindly pursuing something you know nothing about?

PATRICIA

That's what moms do. I'm sure your mother is concerned with what you're doing, maybe even worried sick. But I bet you she's proud.

TITUS

My mom doesn't know I'm doing this.

Patricia backs off for a moment, collecting herself.

PATRICIA

You're really smart Karla tells me.

TITUS

Uh huh.

PATRICIA

I can tell. You got something special.

KARLA

Hispanic mother. She's not lying.

TITUS

Money's always been tight with us, ma'am. I feel like it's always been my job to help provide for that. And I know that if I keep getting better at what I do... I don't know. I can't resolve everything with her unless I have that.

PATRICIA

I doubt that's true.

Titus shrugs, unsure of what to come back with.

Patricia holds up a finger to tell him to hold on. She exits the room.

After a few seconds she comes back with an envelope and hands it to him.

Titus opens it up and shows the money that's in it, confused.

TITUS

Why?

PATRICIA

I'm not gonna get robbed by a thief in the night who lives across the street anymore.

KARLA

Mom!

PATRICIA

But mostly because I think if I had to do it all over again, I'd do what you guys are doing. That's the truth. So... go track down a gangster.

TITUS

Are we... are we sure it's a gangster?

KARLA

Probably, right?

TITUS

I mean, I don't think that's a foregone conclusion yet.

PATRICIA

Well if it is, they're probably looking for you.

TITUS

OH SHIT!

KARLA

Oh shit... how'd we forget about that?

TITUS

Fuck we gotta get out of here. I gotta locate the IP address.

KARLA

You can do that?

TITUS

Well now that they re-located. Plus, now we know there's people behind this.

Titus goes to the computer and plugs in the USB, typing and clicking away. Meanwhile, Karla quickly organizes some of her files. Both of them fire off a few curse words as Patricia grabs one last taquito before walking out the door.

PATRICIA

(half-hearted)

Watch the language? I don't know...

INT. KAZ'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Kaz, determined, but sweating, deadeyes the road. The trees looking like green swaths on an abstract painting as he speeds by.

You can tell his mind is racing despite his concentration.

KAZIMIR

(mumbling)

No, no it's okay. I know. That's not what you meant.

Kaz loses his focus for a moment. He can't seem to bring any words past a few sputters.

Signs seem illegible.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

Carry me. Carry me with you. I'm lost. Please. Please. I'm lost.

Kaz sees a familiar street sign approaching.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)
 (eyes opening)
 Papa!

Kaz SLAMS on the breaks and pulls a U-Turn in front of traffic.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER

Kaz's car swerves onto a street and finds a crest to park at in front of a house, obliterating a trash can in the process.

He quickly gets out.

EXT. SACHA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

From all the noise and seeming commotion of Kaz's landing, Sacha exits his own house. He's dressed down quite a bit, very small bottle of vodka in hand.

They both walk to each other like soldiers in battle.

SACHA
 Does this need to happen here?

As they meet, Kaz launches a rocket of a right hook, hitting Sacha, although not quite square.

SACHA (CONT'D)
 Ohhh. Okay. Okay.

He takes off his jacket, leaving the bare t-shirt with grizzled fur sticking out of its orifices.

Kaz has his hands up, ready to box. But Sacha has other ideas, as he takes his chance and tackles Kaz to the ground.

Kaz maintains a good position, eating haymakers against his forearms that guard his head. He rolls out of it.

KAZIMIR
 (breathy)
 How could you let my father die?

SACHA
 Don't tell me what this is about.
 We know what it's about.

They engage again, exchanging a few elbows that never hit square.

SACHA (CONT'D)

He was underachiever. But yet he do so much. And just for no success? I didn't let him die. It was fate.

KAZIMIR

Bullshit.

Kaz tackles Sacha, this time on top position, shoving his face with his hands.

They engage and disengage a few more times, each with exponentially less energy. These aren't the young brawlers they used to be. It's kind of sad, actually.

Before long they're both panting, a few feet apart, completely tapped out of combat.

Bloody, bruised, winded, exhausted, dirty. Sacha pulls out a cigarette and offers it out to Kaz.

Kaz waves his hands away from it.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

That's last thing I want.

SACHA

No I'm not giving it to you, I want you to light it. Then we share, catch breath.

Kaz nods, reaching into his pocket. He pulls out a lighter and lights it, having a puff or two before handing it off to Sacha.

Sacha gets up and meanders over to his front porch. He takes his sketchy, unmarked bottle of vodka and brings it to the part of the lawn they were just at, settling it.

Sacha takes a fat swig and then hands the bottle to Kaz, who is extremely reluctant.

KAZIMIR

I don't...

Sacha wiggles the bottle, insisting.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

Okay. Give it to me.

Kaz shares a fat swig.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

Oh yes. Okay the good shit.

SACHA

What did you think it was?

They share a mild laugh. But only a few seconds pass before Kaz stares with his ice-cold, slavish eyes at Sacha with disdain.

SACHA (CONT'D)

(noticing)

Hm. So you've heard what I have said before and before and before, yes?

KAZIMIR

Of course.

SACHA

You know I was much younger then. I can't remember that long ago.

KAZIMIR

Yes but you are also dumb.

Sacha eats the comment, drinking through it.

SACHA

Your father may have been overambitious. But we loved him for it. Unfortunately love never saved anybody. He dug his own grave in his business. He was killed for it. Nothing else we could do.

Sacha spits, handing the bottle to Kaz who takes a swig.

KAZIMIR

Was it really... the government?

Kaz hands the vodka back. Sacha takes a heaping gulp.

SACHA

I did it.

Sacha takes a drag out of his cigarette, peering away from Kaz for a moment before returning his gaze back to him.

SACHA (CONT'D)

If it wasn't for me.

(nodding)

The government would have. Strange how crazy they came down on him for having... a shoe parlor.

Kazimir lies down after hearing the news, bearing with it.

SACHA (CONT'D)

Shut down the business. Or don't. I can't stop you. I'm past those days. So shall we go inside, finish bottle? You fixed what you needed to fix already?

Kaz comes to. His eyes widen as he gets up.

KAZIMIR

Shit!

Kaz shuffles for his keys. His urgency sends Sacha upright as well. Sacha grabs a jacket and his gun from his porch and follows Kaz to his car. They start it, tailing off, out of control.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - HALLWAY - LATER

Kaz and Sacha, still looking awful, manage to tiptoe down the hallway leading to Karla's office.

They look like a perfect two man military unit. Checking each others sides, navigating the area to find the exact place they need.

They slide past Patricia's office door, which is barely ajar. She doesn't flinch.

Finally, as Kaz and Sacha near the corner to Karla's office, they make a few signals to each other.

After a brief moment to check the hallway, they enter the office, Sacha with his gun up, Kaz with his knife out.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

It's empty. Suspiciously empty. Blank papers on the ground, the space looks untidy, yet not a whole lot in it. Strange.

Kaz angrily mutters.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - PATRICIA'S OFFICE - SAME

Patricia, alerted, gets up quickly after peering at her door.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - OFFICE - SAME

Kaz and Sacha give each other a communicative look before departing into the hallway.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - HALLWAY - SAME

As Kaz and Sacha turn the corner, Patricia exits her office into the hallway. She curiously meanders through, skeptical.

She peers into Karla's office, but as there's no evidence for her to gather, she calmly returns back down the hallway to her own office.

INT. KAZ'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Kazimir and Sacha, still scratched from earlier, prepare themselves as they speed down the highway.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Mark, subdued against the wall, struggles to get out.

Karla, gun at her hip, making sure he can't do anything.

Titus sits at Mark's chair, disabling his computer. He's got his own laptop out, Kali Linux installed.

Clearly Titus is shutting things down in a formidable pattern, as quickly as he can.

KARLA

Mark. Why didn't you just come to me?

MARK

Dude, is it that hard to figure out?

KARLA

Bro if you don't stop calling me dude--

TITUS

--Hey, please. I need to concentrate.

MARK

Oh you can't do this in your sleep?

TITUS

I'm literally almost done. But like--

Titus mouths "who the fuck is this guy?" to Karla.

KARLA

Dude, that's what I'm saying.

TITUS

Enough with the dude, we're not doing the dude anymore.

KARLA

Mark, we're gonna get to the bottom of your mom's murder. We know this isn't you.

MARK

My mom's what?

A brief moment...

MARK (CONT'D)

Dude.

TITUS

I'M DONE--

A loud CLASH interrupts, as the doors open and Sacha and Kaz come out, aiming their guns as they see what's going on.

Karla, semi-surprised, also figuring around the exact same time. She draws her weapon. Neither side wants to fire.

Titus, panicked, finishes shutting down Mark's system. He grabs his laptop and satchel and ducks behind the desk.

This action prompts Sacha to fire.

Which causes Karla to fire, missing terribly.

Which causes Kaz to fire, who also misses so horribly it causes a small prompted structure to fall in front of Karla.

She uses this to take cover.

Meanwhile, Titus shimmies over to grab Mark and pull him down in back of the desk to take cover.

Gunfire ensues.

Mark tries to break away, as his binds come undone from Titus grabbing him fiercely into cover.

TITUS (CONT'D)

I wouldn't do it.

Titus grabs his forearm.

Mark sees several chunks of drywall and shitty cement go flying from the bullet smashes and thinks otherwise.

KARLA
(yelling)
Shootout?!

Karla fires, missing fucking horribly, holy shit.

KARLA (CONT'D)
(still yelling)
Guess I'm having a little trouble
shooti--Nope. Nevermind.

Titus frowns.

Sacha rushes over after a few cover fire shots from Kaz to lock up the warehouse doors.

Karla catches this and fires, missing. Badly. Yet again.

Titus and Mark both rest against the back of the desk, in opposite positions of alertness.

Mark, shaking, attempts to hold it together.

The bullets fly rarely at this point - this isn't a heavy artillery fight.

MARK
(to Titus)
So are we gonna die?

TITUS
I hope so.

Mark, frightened, turns to Titus who stares straight ahead with a cheeky smirk.

MARK
What do you think happens? Like,
when we die.

TITUS
Well I assume some kind of warm
light greets you followed by either
some sharp pain or some, I don't
know, motherfuckin' silky smooth
hugs or--

MARK
--Yeah but do you think you see
anyone else you know?

TITUS
Like your mom?

MARK
Yeah.

TITUS
Man I don't know, I hate talkin'
about death. This is a fucked up
situation. And personally, I blame
most of this on you. And Karla.

Karla fires. The return fire hits a rafter at the top of the warehouse right in front of Titus and Mark. They both peer up in dismay at the miss.

MARK
My mom gave me everything I wanted.
To a degree. But she never actually
asked me what I wanted. She just
assumed. And I accepted it as if it
was something I wanted.

TITUS
I know what you mean.

MARK
Really? Because I feel like I
didn't actually say what I meant
there.

TITUS
My mom's kind of the same way.

MARK
How'd she die?

TITUS
You know that's not what I meant--

Titus glances over to see Mark with a smile.

TITUS (CONT'D)
How old are you, like 15?

MARK
If I was 15 and in college, I don't
think I'd be involved with the
Russian mob.

TITUS
You don't watch enough movies.

Another shot fires, shooting into the far corner.

TITUS (CONT'D)

At least it's the mob and not
Spetsnaz.

Mark laughs, but it's a pathetic laugh.

MARK

I guess at this point we'll never
die.

TITUS

Best part of being young.

Mark agrees in silence, shuffling around, even taking a few
looks back to see how the fight is going.

MARK

Never thought I'd spend my youth
dead or in jail.

TITUS

Have you seen your neighborhood?

MARK

I mean yeah. It's no Boyz N The
Hood, though.

TITUS

Like I said, watch more movies,
man.

MARK

Can't even get my mom to bail me
out. That's some dumb shit she'd
do, knowing it's probably my fault.

TITUS

Yeah. Moms do dumb shit a lot.
Makes no sense.

MARK

It does though.

Titus looks rejuvenated. He sees Karla struggling,
disappointed in herself.

TITUS

(hard whisper)
Karla!

Karla spots him.

TITUS (CONT'D)

I'm gonna try something.

KARLA
Oh shit, finally.

TITUS
Yeah, you get the fuck out while I
do it.

KARLA
You sure? That seems like a
terrible idea. I'm the one with the
gun.

TITUS
Yeah, it's the best idea we've had
all week.

Titus spin moves like a Madden running back around the edge
of the desk.

Kaz and Sacha are mid-laugh, reloading as it's happening.

Titus types in a few times on the laptop.

Mark, eyes closed, preparing.

Titus presses dramatically down on the enter key as a bullet
zooms past him. It's remarkably close.

Suddenly, the lights shut down. The power from the air
conditioning shuts off as well.

Titus jukes through the dark to the back of the desk. Mark is
gone.

Titus looks over and spots Mark in the hands of Karla, who's
got him wrapped up.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Squad cars arrive on scene. Police approach, guns drawn,
against their vehicles, waiting for action.

A pair of cops approach the back door of the building,
twisting the handle, but realizing quickly it's locked.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Karla and Mark, now in compliance, sneak over to the backdoor
of the warehouse.

Sacha catches sight of this and moves in accordance with them
from the opposite flank.

Meanwhile, Titus opens up his satchel and grabs a few cords, wrapping them around his fists. He stretches down to a prone stance to see any foot movement from the other side of the warehouse.

After hearing a few yells in Russian, Titus simultaneously spots footsteps jumping up and down. He sprints over to it.

Titus slides down and sees Kaz above him. Kaz turns to fire but not before Titus jab kicks the direct center of Kaz's shin.

It's not a clean kick, but it causes enough pain and pressure to drop Kaz to the ground, resulting in Kaz losing hold of his weapon.

They wrestle, exchanging several blows on the ground.

Karla and Mark near the back door until they're finally met with Sacha who fires a few times, striking the side of Karla's leg once.

KARLA

Ah fuck, good shot.

SACHA

Rare sight to see?

Sacha clicks again, no shot. Out of ammo. He backs up to reload, but at this point, Karla and Mark are so close to Sacha, that they simply overwhelm him within the thinned gap of distance.

Karla does the majority of clenching against Sacha for a moment or two. She's quickly outmatched.

Mark sees the thin light from the door outside. It flickers red and blue the closer Mark inches to it.

Once he sees this, he panics, and folds back.

As the adrenaline pulses through Mark, he instinctively pounces on Sacha, striking him multiple times, giving a bit of room for Karla to operate and escape.

SACHA (CONT'D)

Fuck off, kid.

Karla wiggles out beneath them, drawing her gun. She presses it against his back, firing. He collapses almost immediately.

KARLA

Found my distance.

Karla and Mark watch Sacha for a moment, who lies down, gathering himself, breathing hard.

They make their way to the door, unlocking it.

As they thrust it open...

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...They're met with more guns to their face and a locked-in defensive front of vehicles and armed police.

After a moment of yelling and apprehension, realization sets in as the police make their way to Mark and Karla who have their hands up.

They quickly place Mark in custody.

The remaining bit of the cops on the opposite side have finally pried open the last chain and lock to the garage door that opens up.

After a few moments of positioning, the police open up the garage and aim their weapons.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A few officers take several steps inside and as the light from the outside illuminates half the distance into the warehouse, they see Titus and Kaz, both incredibly bloodied.

Kaz, FUCKED up, kneels behind Titus, who is directly in front of him, dripping from the side of his face, legs sprawled out. Kaz finishes cocking his gun, pointing it to Titus' temple.

The cops in the best position signal for more backup.

KAZIMIR

(whispering to Titus)

It's crazy how willing I am to die
for something like ambition.

TITUS

I'm not okay with dying.

A rush of a couple more cops get in position. They slowly approach. Their commands are inaudible to Titus and Kazimir, who are deaf with shock.

KAZIMIR

Not your choice to make.

TITUS

My job's not complete. I've got people to live for, man.

Karla comes over, barely peering behind the police who are in a straight line.

KAZIMIR

Who?

As Titus spots Karla, his eyes widen. Her eyes, warm, encouraging, yet scared.

TITUS

People close to home.

As Kaz keeps his eyes on all the cops to see any sudden moves, Titus reaches into his pocket to grab something.

Titus mouths to Karla: "Ten" followed by a slow pause, then "Nine."

KAZIMIR

Exactly, buddy.

Karla, catching on, looks at the line of cops. She finds Officer Martindale, standing at the edge. Karla whispers in her ear very briefly.

Martindale, confused for just a moment, notices Titus' mouth moving.

TITUS

Will anyone be around for your funeral?

Titus, now at "Four", beads of sweat dripping. Officers still on their move of approach.

KAZIMIR

No one is around but police. We're both dead. Or at least I am dead. Which, unfortunately for you, matters in my decision.

Titus, finally gets to "One". He clicks a button from his pocket, causing a flash to the side of them, easily catching Kaz's peripheral, distracting him.

As this happens, Titus goes completely deadweight/limp in Kaz's grasp, separating him just enough from Kaz.

Martindale BANGS a shot from inside 20 yards, right through the skull of Kaz.

Kaz and Titus both drop. But only one is moving.

INT. VISTA HEIGHTS - STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Titus, dressed very respectable, packs items and clothes into bags and a suitcase. He's on the phone.

TITUS
(glowing)
Of course. Nah okay, stop playin'.
You are not that funny.

Karla, also dressed well, appears at the edge of the door. She meets Titus' look before walking in.

TITUS (CONT'D)
Alright, well I gotta go... yeah.
Later mom.

KARLA
That your sister?

Titus stuffs his phone in his pocket, confused.

KARLA (CONT'D)
Joking.

Titus shakes his head, still getting used to it.

TITUS
How'd it go?

KARLA
Mark's only getting three years.
Conspiracy and obstructing justice.
Might even get out for good
conduct, who knows.

TITUS
Yeah they be sayin' that shit.

Titus zips up the last of his packing. Him and Karla share a brief moment before embracing.

It's kind of an awkward embrace, but they figure it out to make it smooth by the end of it.

TITUS (CONT'D)
Thanks for everything, mama.

KARLA

Hell yeah, dude. We just gotta work on our signals and communication more for next time.

TITUS

Won't be a next time. Won't be a next time. Don't play. I just want a nice cozy office.

Karla, happy and understanding, watches Titus as he turns the corner out of the door. A mumbled pair of salutations sound off from the hallway.

Karla's mom enters the room. As she walks inside, the brilliant light from outside glows into the room.

EXT. VISTA HEIGHTS - MOMENTS LATER

Titus closes the backdoor to a van with his MOM inside. He comes around the edge to get in.

INT. TITUS' MOM'S PLACE - NIGHT

Titus and his mom share a space on the couch, watching TV.

Titus grabs a handful of popcorn, taking a bite out of it like it's a cheeseball. The remaining kernels that don't make it tumble over his hands. He doesn't care.

A BUZZ from Titus' pocket. He pulls out his phone and sees a text from Karla. It's a picture of his old room, completely decked out, very professional looking.

Titus calls her up.

TITUS

That shit looks nice, Karla. What'd you do that for? You couldn't make that shit while I was there? What you tryin' to do, make me come back?

Titus pops in a few more kernels into his mouth.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Yeah it looks just like an office.

He perches up more, his demeanor changing.

TITUS (CONT'D)

For what?

(realizing)

Really? You had to look that up
didn't you. Oh you're notes? Damn,
I shouldn't have given you those
notes.

Titus shakes his head, hanging up.

He murmurs to himself under his breath. "Motherfuckin'
notes", "tryna squad up", "no way I'm goin back", "whole
lotta bullshit".

Something hilarious happens on TV, causing him and his mom to
laugh.

She reaches over and punches him as she's laughing.

TITUS (CONT'D)

Swear... you better square up,
then.

EXT. TITUS' MOM'S PLACE - STREET - SAME

The band is back. The moon gleaming on them and against the
pavement near the corner.

An electric guitarist, electric pianist, bassist, and person
with two symbols and a brush.

Their rhythm starts off silky, as the symbols and electric
guitarist come in later, providing a vibrant lo-fi tone.

FADE OUT.