

THE BAKER

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DRAFT SIX - MARCH 2026

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EXT. LEBANON. PORT OF BYBLOS - PREDAWN

1

A FISHING CAIQUE - THE 'ELEFThERIA'

SURGES through WHITE PEAKS leaving behind the ancient PORT of BYBLOS.

LOUD MUSIC OVER --

Muted ripple of gunfire. Dull sound of an explosion. Black smoke from a building. Sirens - The ugly scar of the LEBANESE CIVIL WAR.

A Dassault Mirage sears the edges of a cloud. Too fast to see. Maybe a glimpse. In the far distance, majestic snow-capped mountains.

IN THE BOAT

A mother grieves. Consoles her children. Looking back at her husband's lifeless body abandoned

ON THE PIER.

Her sorrow-stricken eyes fleetingly meet those of

FREDRIC BARAKAT.

Young, robust, in a dishevelled bridegroom's suit, similarly drowning in an eddy of unfathomable despair.

ON THE PIER another body near the first - A WOMAN.

Bereaved FREDRIC LOOKS BACK. Hope lost. His future receding in the mist.

Next to the Old Greek at the helm, Fredric's friend

RAYMOND KARAM LOOKS AHEAD. Hope gained. Towards freedom as the Eleftheria cuts through the waves and the sun breaks over the horizon.

From Fredric's BLOODED hand

A 'CRUCIFIX PENDANT' SLIPS into the sea. He reaches out --

2

EXT. BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE SEA - DAWN

2

The ocean claims the prize.

FOLLOW its graceful path as it threads its way into the DARK GREEN DEPTHS --

FADE TO BLACK.

THE BAKER

3

INT. SYDNEY. AUSTRALIA. BARAKAT ESTATE - DAY

3

Seated in a Louis XIV red velvet chair. Hand resting on a bejewelled walking cane wearing the same GOLD RING we may have seen on his hand

HALF A CENTURY AGO.

FREDRIC BARAKAT. Older, frailer, weighed down by acts that raised him from peasantry to wealth

swaps an efficient gesture of appreciation with

STEVEN KHALIL, haute couture designer, privately fitting his granddaughter

ISABELLA TANNOUS for her first communion. This is

THE BARAKAT ESTATE. LIVING ROOM.

MAGDA BARAKAT --

Fredric's wife, and daughter NANCY fuss over their progeny parading the lavish garment to her grandfather's sneer of approval.

In hushed tones, Khalil instructs the seamstress to tuck and pin the dress to fit the young novice.

Fredric's austerity dissolves as Isabella runs to him and throws her arms around his neck. His eyes moisten with pride.

4

INT. A MERCEDES KLASSEN PEOPLE CARRIER - DAY

4

Isabella sits up front with her mother, Nancy, and father JOSEPH 'JOEY' TANNOUS. The child glows angelic in her crown of flowers and diaphanous veil.

Behind them --

Magda studies the Lebanese newspaper An-Nahar. Fredric on a call speaks barely above a whisper.

(Note: Italics in Arabic)

FREDRIC
Miki, tell them no - forget what
William wants. That's it. I'm done.
We're finished.

He ends the call as Magda slaps the newspaper with a backhand and discards it on the seat between them.

Splashed across the front page a photo of the leading presidential candidate in the coming Lebanese elections --

FADI 'THE GENERAL' MELHEM.

Fredric dismisses it with a gesture of disgust --

FREDRIC
Pphff...

Then --

FREDRIC
*That was Miki. All they ever talk
 about is loyalty. What do they want us
 to christen their grandchildren?!*

Magda shrugs.

FREDRIC
We gotta be ready.

MAGDA
We are.

FREDRIC
We are, yeah, but...

She searches for resolve. Finds enough. Takes his hand and presses it to her cheek.

FREDRIC
*When the snow melts, the shit will
 show.*

FREDRIC turns his attention to --

THE STREET.

Diegetic sound drops out. The blur of passing traffic. In the glass shifting mosaic of chiaroscuro patterns wash across his face.

5 INT. KARAM HOUSE - DAY

5

A BLITZ OF IMAGES SPASM ACROSS THE SCREEN --

Tablecloth dragged away. Pills scattering. Plates crashing to the floor. Shards of glass scattering. Man punching. Clothing ripped --

Woman struggling. Door ajar at the end of a corridor. A shaft of light shutting on a child cowering from violence.

The MUFFLED sound of a GUNSHOT morphing into the words --

MAGDA (O.S.)
Are you alright?

6 INT. MERCEDES KLASSEN - DAY

6

BEADS OF SWEAT ON FREDRIC'S TEMPLES --

Pressing a handkerchief to his brow he grunts...

FREDRIC

Nmmggh...

The Klassen pulls up in a leafy well-appointed street at the steps of

SAINT CHARBEL MARONITE CHURCH.

SMASH CUT TO:

7 INT. BILLY'S NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT 7

A PULSATING SEA OF SHIMMERING BODIES.

A TRANCE-LIKE TECHNO GROOVE.

The line between elegance and underground dance culture blurs as --

CLUBBERS

effortlessly garmented, chic, sartorially impeccable, glowing with vitality though not all with youth surrender to the rhythm. A single organic organism with singular intent --

PLEASURE.

8 EXT. BILLY'S NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT 8

THE SAME MUSIC -- MUTED.

A BLACK CADILLAC ESCALADE glides to a stop...

OUTSIDE THE CLUB --

A door with a naked neon hanging overhead. No signage. Blackened windows. From the outside, innocuous.

Fourteen-year-old KHALID 'CASH' KASHKAYAN gets out of the Escalade with

ALASKA and RUSH

two gaudily dressed, maquillaged, and tragically wasted teenage goths, several years older than him.

Around the corner from the entrance to the club the service entrance opens just a crack. A sliver of light spills into the alley as

A RAT scurries into DARKNESS.

9

INT. BILLY'S NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

9

QUINTESSENTIAL BOILER ROOM.

The DJ's fingers read the grooves. Gliding, twisting, sliding. Holding the vinyl, coaxing a dynamic break. Shifting the rhythm up a notch.

Individuals dance alone. In pairs. In multiple combination. Unrestrained. Hands raised high. Flesh exposed traced with sweat.

THE INCONGRUOUS TRIO --

Slips through the crowd, vanishing amid bodies brushing against each other with unfiltered self-expression.

BILLY'S NIGHTCLUB --

But who and where is BILLY?

We carve through the oceanic drift of human bodies ascend a scarlet-carpeted staircase to the mezzanine. And

A PRIVATE ROOM --

Entry contingent on the black-suited SAMOAN GENTLEMAN with shades and monaural headset knowing you personally. Otherwise, you won't get in.

And some don't. A bunch of fawning interlopers remonstrate to no avail.

The TECHNO MUSIC crossfades into the HAUNTING SOUND of a CHURCH ORGAN --

CUT TO:

10

INT. BILLY'S NIGHTCLUB. PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

10

WILLIAM 'BILLY' BARAKAT

The fifty-year-old club proprietor hosts a gathering of the elect. The elite. Luminaries of fashion, finance, politics and the dark arts.

MONSIGNOR (V.O.)

On this solemn occasion, we are gathered in this sacred place to celebrate a milestone in a spiritual journey for the purpose of completing a relationship with the divine.

POP!

Champagne flows freely from the neck of another bottle of Billy's private collection of Krug.

His escort, CHANELLE, tops up the glasses of the rich and famous while NICHOLAS 'NICKY' REXHEPI, his consigliere, busts open a

brick of WHITE.

Beverages and drugs of the highest quality proliferate in extravagant abundance.

A mound of Peruvian Coca, the WHITE TRUFFLE of illegal substances...

...vanishes up BILLY'S SNOOT.

CUT TO:

11

INT. SAINT CHARBEL MARONITE CHURCH - DAY

11

A MARBLED PULPIT. A CEDAR ETCHING ON THE FRONT.

The MONSIGNOR drones through a sermon at the First Communion of ISABELLA TANNOUS

sitting to one side with a small group of noviciates. The only girl.

The church is at capacity.

CAMERA MOVES PAST --

MONSIGNOR

As Isabella approaches her First Communion, we honour her parents, Nancy and Joseph...

Nancy and Joey beaming with pride.

Joey's phone vibrates. He dares a furtive look. Nancy eyeballs him. A withering reprimand. Don't.

PAST --

The venerable figure of MAGDA, elegantly attired and charismatic to

SETTLE ON --

MONSIGNOR (O.S.)

And grandparents Fredrick and Magda Barakat. Pillars of her spiritual upbringing...

The ageing patriarch --

MONSIGNOR (O.S.)
 Through dedication and love,
 they nurtured Isabella to embrace this
 moment of commitment to her faith.

Church music swells. Choral voices overtake the organ.

FREDRIC --

His rheumy eyes in a permanent state of lachrymose reflect
 the fragility brought on by the onslaught of his years --

Fredric's heart swells.

God's ubiquitous gaze shines through the stained-glass
 windows endowing His luminosity on his beloved grandchild --

Now approaching the lectern in white communion dress, white
 gloves, floral tiara and veil --

ISABELLA

gazes over the heads of the congregation to a future filled
 with hope.

A GOLDEN GLOW from the back of the church washes over her.
 Fredric turns to see - but there's nothing. No transcendent
 emanation.

Magda resets her husband with a reassuring touch on the arm.

ISABELLA

adjusts her shoulder strap and brushes a rogue strand of her
 frizzy, long black hair from her face.

She speaks quietly directly to us. Her audience.

ISABELLA
 We pray for peace in the world
 and especially for the people of the
 Middle East...

SMASH CUT TO:

12

INT. BILLY'S NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

12

THE DANCE FLOOR throbs with cool hypnotic vibes.

Two burly BOUNCERS have snared the teenage CASH plying his
 synthetic drugs in the corridor outside the restrooms.

BILLY --

Glides into view. He tastes the synthetic powder and spits it out sharply in disgust.

He screws a SUPPRESSOR to the muzzle of a PISTOL with remote indifference and

points the weapon at this vermin that's infested his establishment.

The bag of drugs is emptied on the floor. Cash forced to his knees and with his boot in the kid's back Billy pushes his face into the mound of white...

GUN TO THE HEAD...

...prodding him to Hoover it up --

CONGREGATION (V.O.)
Lord have mercy.

15

INT. SAINT CHARBEL MARONITE CHURCH - DAY

15

PUSH IN ON --

ISABELLA delivering her acceptance prayer.

ISABELLA
We pray for all those traumatised
sinners to turn back to you, O Lord,
and find the righteous way.

Many in the congregation are snivelling in tears.

PUSHING IN ON --

FREDRIC as he and the congregation respond.

FREDRIC
Lord have mercy.

CONGREGATION (O.S.)
Lord have mercy.

16

INT. BILLY'S NIGHTCLUB. BASEMENT - NIGHT

16

THE CHURCH ORGAN MUSIC CRESCENDOS --

NIGHTCLUB BASEMENT.

CAMERA PUSHES down the corridor through the doorway into the dimly lit room closing in on

THE KID --

His face smeared with white powder. His eyes popping, dilated and bouncing in their sockets like billiard balls. Froth seeping from the corners of his mouth --

His body judders and convulses as if plugged into an electric socket. Brain zap.

ISABELLA (V.O.)
 Forgive us for our sins and faults,
 and hold us in your warm embrace. We
 pray to you, oh Lord.

BILLY shoves him with his boot to get the kid to stop. He gestures to the bouncers.

Do something. They back off. This is outside their job description. Now --

A violent seizure. The kid drowning in his vomit. Revulsed and perplexed...

...BILLY SHOOTs.

PHUUUIT.

CONGREGATION (V.O.)
 Lord have mercy.

The music STOPS --

SMASH CUT TO:

THE FAMILY

17 EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. FORECOURT - DAY

17

A CAR DOOR SLAMMING SHUT.

FREDRIC BARAKAT --

STORMS from the vehicle toward the house. His fixer, the formidable

FRANCIS 'UNCLE FRANK' MORELLO close on his heels.

Around them at a leisurely pace a cavalcade of vehicles are at different stages of arrival.

EXTENDED FAMILY --

Fumbling with keys. Car doors slamming. Juggling gifts. Bags. Coats. Children and the elderly. Ushering each other through the garden entrance.

CAMERA goes airborne to reveal

THE BARAKAT ESTATE.

A cloistered garden and manicured lawn around a two-storey mansion bathed in sunshine and colour.

Tables with crisp white tablecloths and floral arrangements under the shade of dogwood trees to celebrate

ISABELLA'S FIRST COMMUNION.

18

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. ENTRANCE - DAY

18

As he reaches the top of the grand staircase

FREDRIC

throws Frank final instructions...

FREDRIC

...Everyone, Frank. Upstairs. Now!

FRANK

Boss.

...and continues striding down the corridor with grim resolve.

CAMERA tracks ahead of him to --

19

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. THE VATICAN ROOM - DAY

19

FREDRIC'S LAIR.

THE FURNISHINGS VENETIAN PALAZZO and BAROQUE.

TAKE A MOMENT. Study the DETAIL.

The room heavy with CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY.

On the walls --

A gilt-framed PAINTING

of a cedar forest in the mist. snow-covered mountains in the distance.

On the polished mahogany credenza --

FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS --

Fredric's father in a National Army uniform.

The teenage bomber and the girl on the aqua-lounge, her headphones, book and all

end up in a cauldron of bubbles before they swim back up --

TO THE SURFACE WHERE --

Rowdy teenage antics greet them. Lots of push and shove, shrieks and laughter. Until in a tangled knot of limbs they all fall in together.

AN IMAGE FLASHES --

THE 'CRUCIFIX PENDANT' SINKING.

CUT TO:

22

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. VATICAN ROOM - DAY

22

A HAND ON FREDRIC'S SHOULDER --

FRANK'S.

IN THE VATICAN ROOM --

FREDRIC shakes off the MEMORY. Still gazing down at

THE TEENAGERS BY THE POOL.

His attention momentarily drawn to a young bikini-clad women's physical attributes.

He TURNS away. Self-reproachful --

Plants himself in a hardback chair. Frank, next to him in a leather club chair.

MIKHAEL 'MIKI' LAHOUD

actuary and adviser, sits in a matching leather button armchair on the other side --

FREDRIC'S WINGMEN.

Coat slung over the back of the chair. Tie off. Collar loosened. FREDRIC leans back. Glowers at

HIS SON BILLY

who lumbers into the room, trailed by his consiglieri NICKY REXHEPI.

BILLY strolls past his rivals and jurors

VINCENT KARAM, younger than Billy, tertiary educated, entrepreneurial real estate developer

and brother-in-law JOEY.

The room has a TRIBAL COURTROOM atmosphere.

Billy drops into one corner of the Chesterfield sofa as a nervous Nicky eases himself into the other.

Billy spreads his arms across the back of the lounge defying censure...

FREDRIC

A kid! A teenager. How old?!
A child --

...which is quick to come --

FREDRIC

Who let him in?!

BILLY

A fucken cockroach that
crawled out of the gutter --

FREDRIC

No swearing in this house.
Y'hear.

BILLY

Okay, okay.

A RAP on the door. The ATTENTION turns to

MAGDA and her youngest daughter, AIDA, bringing trays of drink and mezze.

A juvenile German Shepherd, MALIK, bounds in between their legs.

Sniffs Vincent. Licks his face. Growls at Joey settling at Fredric's feet.

The old man ruffles the canine's fur --

FREDRIC

Drop.

Malik drops.

Magda leaves the mezze on a coffee table - Joey promptly digs in. She takes Billy's face gently between her hands and kisses him on both cheeks.

MAGDA

*Oh, Billy. I think about my own
children. That poor mother.*

It's a reprimand. Billy puffs out his chest taking in the room brazenly impenitent.

She makes the sign of the cross while muttering a cursory prayer.

Then to Fredric --

MAGDA
Yalla! Everyone is asking...

Fredric reassures her with a glance --

Aida gives Vincent a glass of Arak. Their hands brush. The hint of a BLUSH. Her veiled gaze smouldering with yearning.

A frisson of interest back from Vincent. His gaze lingering too long. She's the boss's daughter. He's like a brother! Another generation.

MAGDA (V.O.)
MALIK!

The dog SNAPS to attention. So does VINCENT. Malik follows the women out --

FREDRIC
Aida, please, stay.

She does.

Fredric. Slow to his feet. Crosses to the lounge. Hovers over Billy.

With relaxed authority --

FREDRIC
William. You, too, Nicky. The Netherlands shipment -- We're not going anywhere near it...

Nicky flicks an anxious look to Billy. Billy reassures him. Turns to Fredric --

BILLY
You're not serious?!

FREDRIC
...Not interested.

BILLY
It's Columbian. Primo. Fish scale...

FREDRIC
I don't care...

Fredric amps up. Animated --

FREDRIC	BILLY
You're not touching it. It's a duck --	...Being handed to us on a fucken platter.

FREDRIC
If it walks like a duck and quacks
like a duck -- it's a duck.

JOEY
(amused)
-- a duck.

Joey makes a hand gesture taunting Billy -- Quack, quack,
quack.

Fredric draws MIKHAEL LAHOUD into the conversation.

FREDRIC
You hear me, Miki?

MIKHAEL
Boss.

Miki nods. Billy is confused --

Fredric eases himself into the lounge between Billy and Nicky
placing a settling hand on his son's knee --

FREDRIC
From now on Miki's running the
business.

BILLY
Y'bullshitting...

MIKHAEL
Be assured, Billy. No dramatic
changes...

BILLY
...The fuck he is.

FREDRIC
I'm finished. Done with it.

MIKHAEL
...We just keep doing what we're
doing right --

FREDRIC
Initially. Yes.

Pauses. Then --

FREDRIC
Until we sort things out in
Lebanon.

MIKHAEL
We just keep doing what we're
doing.

Billy's on his feet --

BILLY
Fuuuck'n!

FREDRIC
We're out. Permanently.

BILLY
You've lost your fucken mind --

FREDRIC
Don't give me attitude.

BILLY
Okay. Okay.

FREDRIC
This is not the first time we've
discussed it --

Beat --

FREDRIC
Aida's brought in the supermarkets.

BILLY
Bread?!!

Fredric nods to Aida. Billy is dumbstruck --

BILLY
Y'fucken kidding!

FREDRIC
Everybody eats bread...

BILLY
What the...

FREDRIC
We're negotiating acquisitions.
Abbas. Maybe Yalla.

BILLY
...fuck!

FREDRIC
 You did this. What you did to the kid -
 -

BILLY
 -- He crossed the line.

FREDRIC
You crossed the line. You cross the
 line, they cross the line...

BILLY
 Okay. Okay.

FREDRIC
 And before you know you're zipped up
 in a body bag.

BILLY
 Don't do this?

FREDRIC
 It's done. And --

Fredric defers to Vincent --

FREDRIC
 Vincent...

BILLY
 -- Oh, fuck no! Fuck.

FREDRIC
 Language!

VINCENT
 C'mon, brother. We've been through
 this. We own the block.

BILLY
 Not the club you don't --

FREDRIC
 I own the club. Not you. Not
 Vincent. The club is part of the
 block. Always has been.

VINCENT
 We flip it now, we make - What? Three,
 four hundred mil, max. We build. We'll
 make - who knows how much we'll make.

Billy cracks it. Had a gut full.

BILLY

Who are you fucken Triguboff,
you dumb shit! Yeah? Sure.
And how long's that gonna
take? Right now, there's a
whole fucken city out there
wants our shit. Our cocaine.

FREDRIC

William! Stop. William, I
don't want to hear it. No one
wants to hear --

BILLY

Listen to me, Dad. The Netherlands
deal is on its way. Some big-time
Magyar went down in Rotterdam -- Like
dead. Like, heart attack or some dumb
shit like that. He left a shipping
container. A whole shipping container.
Get that? A whole fucken container...

FREDRIC

Enough!

BILLY

Our people in Lebanon. The
General. Fadi. They're
tracking it.

FREDRIC

I don't wanna hear that name!

BILLY

We! We're tracking it. It's on a
boat. Now. Coming here. I just need
the cash.

Appealing to Lahoud --

BILLY

Miki?!

FREDRIC

Don't look at Miki...

FREDRIC

Who's the idiot here? You think the
fed don't have the tracking number.
Khallas!

BILLY

You're gonna let some cashed-up
Westie piece o'shit get their hands
on it?

FREDRIC

Listen to you...

BILLY

Dad. Dad, please. It's fucken gold.
Gold!

FREDRIC
Listen to yourself! Your wife won't
let your son, your own son, be part
of this family. Why?

BILLY
...the fuck!

FREDRIC
Ask yourself why --

BILLY
You! That's why.

FREDRIC
He's your son --

BILLY
-- And she's his mother.

FREDRIC
She's not welcome. I don't want her
here.

Billy gestures to the SOUND of the festivities FILTERING through
from outside.

BILLY
Well, she's here now with your
grandson.

FREDRIC
God help that little boy! She --
She will never never be part of
this family.

BILLY
Even if you got down on your knees
and begged she wouldn't want to be.

To the room --

FREDRIC
Get out of here. Please. Everyone.
Please. Go and eat. Enjoy yourselves.
Don't keep the others waiting...

They leave.

FREDRIC
William! You stay.

Fredric gestures for Frank to stay.

FREDRIC

That beautiful little boy, William.
He's going to grow up - without
knowing anything - about his Lebanese
heritage.

Fredric goes to the window.

BILLY

Because of you.

FREDRIC

Not me. That Anglo *sharmouta*.

Looks down --

CUT TO:

23 **EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY**

23

THE FAMILY GATHERED.

ANGELIQUE "ANGEL" HAMMOND --

Miss Sunshine Coast 2002. Dressed in black. Drugs and
prostitution in the past she carries the experience with a quiet
dignity.

NOAH, Billy's son, sits next to her in a highchair, clutching
his soft toy --

GRUFFALO.

Abundant food. Clinking glasses. Laughter. Casual conversation.
Children coming and going. Playing on the lawn. Teenagers taking
munchies from the table back to the pool.

Mikhael, Vincent, Joey and Nicky rejoin the gathering.

A stream of dishes is shunted to and from the kitchen. The
caterers try to stay ahead of the family but for them it's a
hangover from less affluent times.

ANGEL's gaze is momentarily drawn to

THE VATICAN ROOM WINDOW.

The SHADOWY OUTLINE of FREDRIC TURNS AWAY.

24 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. VATICAN ROOM - DAY**

24

Fredric turns to Billy --

FREDRIC

William. I made a terrible mistake,
son - You wanna talk about The
General?! - Thirty years ago, we
listened to that - that --

He stops himself swearing --

FREDRIC

We were doing well. We had the
bakery - The shish was harmless. No
one cared. No one bothered us. Then
we started to import this...

He snarls --

FREDRIC

... this shit.

BILLY

Yeah that's right! - And look
around you. That shit has made you
rich and --

FREDRIC

-- It's been nothing but trouble.

BILLY

So give it to me. The business.
Give it to me. I'm your son. Let me
run the business.

FREDRIC

Hmmr...

Fredric growls. It's a familiar 'no' that cuts Billy to the
heart.

BILLY

Why not --

FREDRIC

Do not mistake my hesitancy for
lack of love -- I love you, son.

BILLY

Then?

Beat --

FREDRIC

The kid at the club. Who was he?

BILLY

Ohh... It's done. Don't go there. No
one's gonna know. No one fucken cares -

-

FREDRIC
-- Someone knows.

BILLY
...the fuck!

FREDRIC
The girls?

BILLY
Skanks.

FREDRIC
This is serious, William.

BILLY
Okay. Okay.

FREDRIC
Well?

BILLY
He's a westie. Probably Syrian.

FREDRIC
How do you know?

BILLY
Gang tats. All over his body. Even his
fucken face.

FREDRIC
Osman's boy?

BILLY
I guess.

FREDRIC
What do you mean, you guess?

Billy hesitates --

BILLY
Osman's a *mule* --

Beat --

BILLY
There's gotta be someone further
up.

FREDRIC
You sure?

Billy shrugs.

FREDRIC
Who further up?

BILLY
I dunno. I dunno, but...

Silence.

Fredric recalibrates --

FREDRIC
We give them something...

Billy winces. More compromises.

BILLY
No. Shit. What...

FREDRIC
Even then who knows --

BILLY
Give them what?

But we give them something...

FREDRIC
An olive branch.

Fuck! Fuck! Fuck --

BILLY
They're crack-heads! You giv'em
something, they'll just come back for
more -- We know where they're cooking
up that shit. I say we blow their
fucking houses up.

FREDRIC
William!

BILLY
What!!

FREDRIC
We're getting out. Clean.

Billy chuckles --

BILLY
Clean?...

FREDRIC
I'm not starting a fight with the
cartels.

BILLY
They're here to stay, Dad --

FREDRIC

Drive byes. Abductions. Gunfights
in the street -- These people are
lunatics. I can't protect you
anymore. I can't protect the
family!

For the first time --

Billy sees his father's frailty. The infirmity of age. The
exhaustion. Weakness --

It worries him.

BILLY

Dad, listen...

FREDRIC

You killed a boy. A child -- Someone
out there knows.

Fredric droops. Thinks. Rubs his temples with his fingertips.
Without looking up --

FREDRIC

Get out of here.

Billy retreats. Split between duty and rebellion. FRANK'S there
with a glass of water.

Fredric sips --

FREDRIC

Tell Vincent to come back up, will
you, Frank? Please?

FRANK

Boss.

Frank leaves closing the door behind. FREDRIC goes to the window
--

25

EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. SWIMMING POOL AREA - AFTERNOON

25

HIS ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO --

A CLOSE-KNIT GROUP of youngsters in their late teens lounging in
the shade of a flowering gum on the lawn nearby the pool.

A FOIL unfurled. A block of HASHISH. Crumbled and spread
generously into a cone. Someone lights a match --

26

INT. KARAM HOUSE - NIGHT

26

A BOWL OF HASHISH GLOWS.

FLASHBACK TO --

Swirls of smoke. A dimly lit room. Figures at a table. Faces shielded from the light. Heads turn listlessly to pass the shish from one person to the next. Words dropped into a void. Slurred. Incoherent.

A man. Could be RAYMOND. Roughly grabs a woman by the hair and raises her head. Could be --

IS...

NADINE KARAM. RAYMOND'S WIFE.

She SLAPS away his hand.

Takes the pipe. Her bruised lips blow a plume of smoke at him. Dead eyes float up lost behind their lids. She passes the pipe to --

Another man. Could be FREDRIC. He declines. Skols a glass of arak. The pipe goes from one stoner to the next. Ends up in the hands of a swarthy bearded male --

WASSIM 'WASS' AL SHAMI.

WASS inhales deeply. His steely gaze unaffected by the drugs. His fingers caressing the barrel of --

A GOLD-PLATED BERETTA with a PEARL-INLAID handle resting in front of him.

TWO WOMEN hover. The taller insufflates one of several rails of white lined up on the table.

The other FLIRTS OPENLY with RAYMOND. Grazing his ear with her breath. Guiding his hand underneath her dress to touch her ample breasts.

Nadine's head floats back as she observes his infidelities. She's indifferent. No. Anaesthetised.

A KILO of HASHISH is passed across the table pushing aside the clutter of glasses and bottles of booze. WASS pushes back a WAD of rolled-up MONEY. And

THE GUN.

END FLASHBACK.

27

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. VATICAN ROOM - AFTERNOON

27

NUMBERS KEYED INTO A WALL SAFE.

It snaps open revealing a customised

WOODEN CASE.

FREDRIC places it on the credenza. Then --

Goes to the window. The SUN hits his FACE. He shies away from the light.

Steps back into the SHADOWS.

28

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

28

MAGDA tends a grazed knee. A YOUNG BOY flinches from the sting of antiseptic.

WOMEN prepare food. Lots of women. Lots of food. Lots of chatter.

A latticework of chatter about --

Food. Money and inflation. Children and how life changes after having them. Houses, refrigerators, bra sizes and men.

HANDS TOSSING SALAD --

The hands belong to RENEE KARAM. Vincent's younger sister. Ethereal. She has a ballet dancer's grace.

The GLINT of RENEE'S ENGAGEMENT RING --

Catches NANCY by surprise. She shrieks.

NANCY

Really?!

Proudly, Renee thrusts her hand into the air for everyone to see.

Squeals of delight.

MAGDA

He's a doctor.

A cluster forms around Renee. Hugs and kisses. Shared joy. Genuine excitement. Voices overlap.

WOMEN

Congratulations! Let's see. Ooh!
Nice. Lucky. Lucky you. Free health
care. Not an ob-gyn, is he...

FREDRIC

Hmmm...

VINCENT

Sixty-thousand dollars per square metre. You believe it?!

FREDRIC

Eh...

Fredric shrugs --

FREDRIC

It's criminal, in truth, is what it is.

VINCENT

It's what people want. They want the best. They want quality. They'll pay anything for quality.

FREDRIC

Okay, that's what they want. And you? What do you want?

VINCENT

It's a honey pot.

FREDRIC

Sure, but...

Chipping away at the younger man's brazenness.

FREDRIC

Where I come from, you leave some honey for the bees.

Vincent doesn't get metaphor.

VINCENT

People gotta live somewhere.

FREDRIC

So -- What's holding it up?

VINCENT

Council.

FREDRIC

Uh-huh.

VINCENT

Dragging their heels. Stalling...

FREDRIC

Ah...

VINCENT

And -- Local council. You know what they're like...

Vincent fishing --

VINCENT

I'm waiting. Waiting --

FREDRIC

You want me to make some calls?

A rhetorical question. Vincent shrugs. Sure.

31 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. BAROQUE BATHROOM - AFTERNOON** 31

BILLY in the mirror. Cold, dark-hooded eyes stare coldly back. His face. Rough. A permanent stubble beard. Troubled. Angry. Agitated --

He chops a line and snorts it. And another. Slowly, for maximum effect.

A functioning drug addict.

32 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. THE VATICAN ROOM - AFTERNOON** 32

A PHOTOGRAPH of Fredric and Raymond in their youth.

Vincent's father in a hard hat and a worker's singlet. Fredric in a baker's apron.

FREDRIC

Your father shovelled concrete into swimming pools all day, and me -- I shovelled dough into an oven all night.

Fredric shows Vincent another photo:

The same two men in suits. Leaning against the bonnet of a black Mercedes S600 --

Fledgling gangsters.

FREDRIC

But he had big ideas. And...

Faint chortle.

FREDRIC

...I went along for the ride.

Not true! It was the other way around. Fredric had the big ideas.

VINCENT is immersed in the photo of HIS FATHER --

BEHIND HIM

FREDRIC LAPSES --

33

INT. KARAM HOUSE - DAY

33

A RAPID-FIRE BLITZ OF IMAGES. EACH SHORTER THAN A HEARTBEAT.

A darkened hallway. A violent physical struggle. Light reflecting on the pearl handle of --

A GUN. ITS BARREL SPITTING FLAMES --

A background SOUND of Fredric stumbling and knocking into a table...

34

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. VATICAN ROOM - AFTERNOON

34

THE NEXT THING FREDRIC KNOWS --

He is in a chair. A glass of water in his hand. VINCENT at his side.

VINCENT

Uncle? Uncle, are you okay?

FREDRIC

Still rattles me -- He was family. We accepted him. We accepted him as family

VINCENT

Wassim Al Shami, yeah, I know but you know...

FREDRIC

In Stockholm --

VINCENT

...It was thirty-five years ago.

FREDRIC

We lost him. My God, we --

VINCENT

It doesn't matter.

FREDRIC
We had him. And then the Turk got wind
and disappeared --

VINCENT
Please. You don't have to --

FREDRIC
-- He killed your father!

VINCENT
I don't think about it anymore.
It's in the past, it's over --

A beat --

VINCENT
Are you okay?

Fredric nods.

VINCENT
I'm just grateful, you know --
Grateful to you and aunty Magda.

With Vincent's help, Fredric gets to his feet and leads him to
THE WOODEN CASE.

FREDRIC
Open it.

Inside --

THE BERETTA. A TWENTY-FOUR KARAT GOLD-PLATED SEMI-AUTOMATIC with
PEARL INLAID HANDLE.

FREDRIC
Your father would've wanted you to
have it.

Vincent baulks.

FREDRIC
Take it.

Vincent removes the Beretta from its velvet casing. Palms it.
Folds his fingers around the handle --

A perfectly balanced weapon. Vincent slips in the magazine.
Holds it up with two hands.

FREDRIC
That's live ammunition.

Vincent stops.

He removes the magazine. Places the gun back into its case and gives it back.

Fredric withdraws --

FREDRIC
It's a gift.

VINCENT
I don't want it. No disrespect but -
-

FREDRIC
What're you saying, my boy?...
That's a lot of power. Right there.

VINCENT
I prefer money.

Fredric chuckles and...

FREDRIC
Fair enough -- Keep it anyway. A
memento.

...forcing Vincent to accept.

35 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. THE KITCHEN - AFTERNOON**

35

MAGDA holds a pillbox of prescription drugs.

MAGDA
You have to pay attention. He's
tricky.

ISABELLA fidgets with anticipation. She bounces up and down. Clapping her hands with enthusiasm. The challenge.

MAGDA
Every last pill. Make sure he takes
every last one. Here...

She hands them over. Steadies her --

FOLLOW ISABELLA OUT INTO --

36 **EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - AFTERNOON**

36

A CHEER goes up. Glasses raised for the arrival of the host.

FREDRIC --

Acknowledges the different family groups and takes a seat at the Barakat table.

Isabella pounces.

ISABELLA

Teta says I have to watch you take them.

Fredric takes the pillbox. Puts it down. Wiggles his fingers. Threatening to tickle her.

ISABELLA

Don't, Jedor. Don't. Teta said...

He reaches for her. She backs off --

Laughs, turns, and runs back towards the house. Triumphant. As far as she is concerned --

Mission accomplished.

Fredric empties the pillbox. Pockets the pills. He wears his protest against doctors like a badge of honour.

A plate of food lands in front of him. From Magda. Heavy on vegetables. He sets it aside --

He reaches for the spicy chargrilled meats from the barbecue, his eyes roving the crisscrossing conversations --

Angel congratulating Renee and her fiancé, the doctor ZAHER BOUSTANY --

Billy trying to draw Noah's attention away from Gruffalo.

Nicky's wife, SAMRA, failing to persuade their daughter LILYANA to join the other children.

JOEY on his phone to a bookie. Hand over his mouth. Mumbling inaudible instructions.

NANCY SLAPS the table hard accidentally toppling Joey's wine glass --

JOEY

Hey! Wha...

Nancy soaking up the spill --

NANCY

Can you be here for one moment, just one moment without that phone?

JOEY

Huh? Why...

NANCY
 Jesus Joey! It's your daughter's Holy
 Communion!

JOEY
 Yeah, and...

Next to him, BILLY doesn't hide his loathing for his sister's
 husband --

BILLY
 You're a gronk.

NANCY
 Billy!

Joey flips him off. Leaves the table to complete the call.

FREDRIC gets involved.

FREDRIC
 What's the matter with you people? Be
 nice to one another.

He glances at ANGEL. A rare moment of mutual accord despite
 entrenched hostilities.

BILLY reaches across the table --

BILLY
 Hey, little man. Daddy. Come to Daddy.

Angel hands him over.

A storm of resistance. Noah flails, kicks, clinging to his
 mother.

He becomes distressed and starts to cry. Billy resigns. Hands
 him back.

Angel makes polite excuses. For Billy's sake --

ANGEL
 He's tired. He usually has a nap...

Fredric watches Noah settle in his mother's arms. Cradling
 the child she leaves the table to walk him around the garden.

Billy sensing his father's disapproval...

BILLY
 Bella? Come here, Bella!

...seizes the opportunity to reclaim some pride.

Isabella runs and leaps into her uncle's arms. Billy twirls her
 around

placing her down, facing Lilyana --

BILLY
You know Lilyana?! You wanna
take her to play with the other kids?

JOEY SLIDES back into a chair with his phone screen on the table facing up.

Isabella leads Lilyana by the hand to play with the other children --

Samra nods her thanks.

Fredric chuckles --

NANCY
What's funny, Dad?

FREDRIC
Your brother.

Billy takes it as a criticism. Glares at his father.

FREDRIC
Not laughing at you son. You're a good
boy. You have a kind heart.

JOEY'S PHONE goes off. He quickly answers --

The intensity of the conversation suggests he's on a losing streak.

NANCY
(exasperated)
Jesus, Joey! How many times do I
have to ask --

FREDRIC
Joey. Put down the phone. Be here.
Sit. Talk to us, will ya?

Joey does. Puts down the phone. And sits. But doesn't talk. Instead, he hoes into the food.

AROUND THE TABLE --

Nancy tops up everybody's glasses as an excuse to fill her own.

The limerent couple, Renee and Zaher cosy up. Paroles d'amour exchanged.

Aida throws a smile the way of Vincent. Hoping he will notice her --

He does.

So does FREDRIC...

...who turns his attention to RENEE and ZAHER.

FREDRIC
Welcome to the family, Hakim.

They toast.

NANCY. Gazeboed on champagne --

NANCY
Hey Zaher! Whaddaya reckon? Huh?

Sorry...

NANCY
This family. You ready for
it?

FREDRIC
Ah, Zaher, my daughter's about to give
you a grilling.

Eyebrows raised, Zaher faces his inquisitor.

ZAHER
Family. I'm all in. Cool. Yeah, yeah,
yeah...

NANCY
Yeeeaah?!...

ZAHER
Well yes, you know. Absolutely.
Yes, of course!

NANCY
Awwgh -- You're just being nice.
Whaddaya really think?

ZAHER
Family's everything.

Nancy shoots a look to Joey using the distraction to get back
on his phone.

NANCY
What? Whatever family does is cool?

Joey downs the phone --

JOEY
Shuddup, Nancy.

Arm around Renee, Zaher pulls her closer. She nestles in. Kisses
him on the neck.

NANCY
Whatever family does?

Looking at his future bride --

ZAHER
It's family. Sure, it's cool. You bet.
They're all we have.

NANCY
Cool?

Joey sends off a quick message on his phone.

Nancy NOTICES. So does FREDRIC. So does BILLY. Nancy flushed with anger eyeballs Joey.

NANCY
Cool, huh --

BILLY
(to Joey)
You're such a fucken Gronk.

Nancy turns on her brother --

NANCY
My brother getting around at his
niece's Holy Communion with a pistol
stuck in the back of his pants. That's
cool?

BILLY
Fuck off, Sis.

Billy on his feet so fast his chair falls backwards, raises his shirt and swivels around to show he's not carrying.

NANCY
And her degenerate father gambling
away his daughter's future? That's
cool?

Joey slams down his phone. Raises his arms in protest.

JOEY
Ugh!

FREDRIC
Well, Joey! How many times do you have
to be asked?!

NANCY
Cool, huh?

ZAHER
No. Well, maybe that's not so cool.
But you know --

NANCY
What? He's family, huh?

AIDA
Nancy!

ZAHER
Yeah. Why not. I mean --

NANCY
Loyalty. Even when it's wrong?

JOEY
Bingo!... Nancy-full-of-shit.

FREDRIC
You people...!

Before he can weigh in --

ISABELLA and her new friend Lilyana appear at his side.

NANCY
Albi!

Nancy swaddles her up and gives her a kiss as Isabella wriggles out of her embrace.

ISABELLA
Teta says Jede has to come inside.
Now.

Fredric playful --

FREDRIC
She does, huh?

ISABELLA
She says you've had enough.

FREDRIC
Ooh. Enough what?

Isabella tugs at one hand as Lilyana gingerly tugs at the other.

FREDRIC
Okay. Okay...

Fredric acknowledges the table before turning the tug-of-war into a game he loses.

37

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. BEDROOM SUITE - DUSK

37

Modern Rococo. A canopied bed with a quilted headboard. Pastel furnishings with gold edging. Gilded mirror.

MAGDA pulls the drapes on the party down below. Still the wax and wane of voices.

An OPEN SUITCASE on the bed.

She's packing for her husband. Hers is open on a luggage rack. Items folded neatly as they would be in her dresser.

The HUM is coming from --

A DIALYSIS MACHINE.

FREDRIC. In an armchair. Tubes snaking underneath a blanket loosely covering his lower body.

FREDRIC

That woman has turned the boy against his father.

MAGDA

I see a good mother.

FREDRIC

Hmph.

Silence.

He moans softly. Studying his BARE FEET peeping from underneath the blanket.

FREDRIC

I can't even cut my own toenails anymore.

MAGDA

Yes, you can.

Fredric grunts. He studies her, packing. Curious --

FREDRIC

Where are you going?

MAGDA

We. We are going. To Lebanon. On Wednesday evening. How many times have I told you?

FREDRIC

Oh, yeah. I know...

Searching through Fredric's clothes, she finds the MEDICATION he snuck into his pocket --

MAGDA
If you don't take your health seriously, I'll get a nurse to care for you.

FREDRIC
All right. All right.

NOW --

MAGDA enters from THE ENSUITE with a glass of water and his medication.

He turns his head away.

MAGDA
Take them, or I'll force'm down your throat. You ever think how your health affects your family? Do you care?

FREDRIC
Agh!

MAGDA
Then take them.

He does. One by one --

FREDRIC
 (curious)
When are you leaving?

MAGDA
We. We are going on Wednesday.

FREDRIC
I have business.

MAGDA
Today is Sunday. Your business is tomorrow. Aida has your schedule.

FREDRIC
My beautiful Aida but for William I worry. And also -- you know for -- for...

MAGDA
Nancy?!

FREDRIC
And -- and her husband...

MAGDA

Joey?!

FREDRIC

Yeah, yeah, Nancy and Joey. I don't need you to remind me of their names. I worry. I worry.

MAGDA

When you're on the machine be quiet.

FREDRIC

Hmph.

Moans. Groans --

FREDRIC

Who's going to look after them...

MAGDA

What?

FREDRIC

When I'm gone?

MAGDA

We're only going for a few weeks --

FREDRIC

-- No. When I'm -- gone. Gone!

MAGDA

My God, stop with the gloom.

FREDRIC

I'm trying to fix my mess so afterwards you don't have to live in it.

Magda can't resist a subdued laugh.

MAGDA

Don't worry about us. We're adults -- But if you really want to fix your mess --

Her expression hardens --

MAGDA

You know what you have to do.

Fredric...

FREDRIC

I'm doing it. I'm doing it...

...retreating into a bubble of thought.

CUT TO BLACK.

38

INT/EXT. ALI BABA. LEBANESE PATISSERIE AND BAKERY - DAY 38

THE FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA.

The same Black Cadillac Escalade we saw pull up outside the club stops --

In front of --

THREE MEN step out. Met by UNCLE FRANK. He leads them through the shop. Past

a long glass showcase of Lebanese and Middle Eastern sweets. Rows of golden pastries soaked in fragrant syrup and studded with nuts.

Through the kitchen. Past a storeroom and across a narrow laneway.

Into the adjacent BOULANGERIE.

Bakers in flour-dusted aprons move with precision and efficiency. An apprentice kneads a large, elastic mound of dough in an industrial mixer.

Baker's hands section off pieces into perfect balls of pita. The SOFT THUD of rolling pins. The CLINK of metal trays. A batch of perfectly baked bread comes out of the oven.

AT THE BACK OF THE WORKROOM.

There we find --

A table set up to receive the guests.

FREDRIC and --

AIDA by his side.

Cautious handshakes. OSMAN THE SYRIAN sits in silence as coffee, iced water and knafeh are served.

Fredric waits for him to taste the offering. Osman waves it away.

The older and portlier of his enforcers. A whale of a man. Leans in --

He takes a piece of knafeh. He munches on it slowly and deliberately...

...and approves.

Fredric indicates the knafeh. It's a ritual. Osman would like to, but rejects the offer once again.

Instead --

OSMAN
Where's my boy, Barakat?

FREDRIC
Where you sent him.

Silence.

AIDA.

A woman at the table?! Osman disapproves.

OSMAN
Your nurse?

FREDRIC
My daughter. She speaks for me.

And Aida does --

AIDA
Mr Osman, let's get straight to the point. We understand your reason for sending a minor to offload illegal drugs to my father's club was a provocation designed to sabotage my brother's business interests. Is that true?

Osman scoffs. He doesn't do business with women. He turns to his two enforcer --

ARMAN.

A lawyer. Young. Smartly dressed. Expensive eyeglasses. Osman's proxy. Takes a half step forward.

AIDA
Okay. Fine.

She addresses Arman.

AIDA
We are willing to overlook that infringement. And we would like to offer Mr Osman an incentive to abandon any aspiration he may have in further pursuing that dangerous line of intent.

ARMAN exchanges brief words in Kurdish with Osman. Then turns to Aida --

ARMAN

Go on.

Aida moves her chair back leaving the details to her father. Fredric leans into the deal. Fixes Osman with stern countenance.

FREDRIC

I'll supply you with our superior product at a good price -- Under one condition. You stay west of the bridge.

Osman takes a moment to absorb what's been offered.

OSMAN

And my boy?

Fredric stabs the table with his finger. Then points it accusingly at his adversary.

FREDRIC

Your boy?! Listen. You sent that boy. You, yourself. You did that. What sort of person are you? You send a child to do your grubby business? That's on you. Understand?!...

Aida steps in to mediate --

AIDA

Dad?

Fredric waves her aside. He's on a roll --

FREDRIC

It's a legitimate offer. Generous. Something you've been slobbering over to get your teeth into. Circling like a hungry shark. Well here it is. Take it. Don't make me rethink it.

Osman draws Arman into a discreet exchange in their Kurdish dialect. Then --

ARMAN

We accept.

Osman stands. Thanks his host with a perfunctory nod as Frank shows them out.

Leaving Fredric guarded.

CUT TO:

39

INT. ROCKPOOL BRASSERIE - DAY

39

THE SECOND ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA.

Looking effortlessly cool in a tailored rust-coloured herringbone suit, shirt, no necktie, to announce his status

SENATOR LACHLAN HOLMES

follows the Head Waiter through an exclusive RESTAURANT.

A private table partitioned from the other diners.

AIDA stands. Greets him. Offers him a seat --

FREDRIC remains seated.

Once settled, Holmes reach across the table for a handshake as --

The waiter cracks a bottle of vintage red. Pours three glasses.

LATER.

Halfway through their meal and another bottle of red. The Senator drains his glass to punctuate a stalemate in the conversation.

Aida tops him up.

HOLMES

Freddy. I mean, This whole zoning thing is giving me a bellyache. What do you want me to do?

Aida jumps in --

AIDA

Senator, we want the same as you. What Vincent Karam - Alpine Crossing is his company, not ours - What he's proposing, will transform the area. Forever. Culturally, socially, and economically...

HOLMES

You don't have to convince me. Freddy, it's the minister. And -- With respect. There are legitimate concerns about how this looks -- The optics, Freddy. Optics.

FREDRIC

What optics?

HOLMES

It's politics. C'mon. The press. We've been through this...

Aida taps something into her PHONE and presses SEND.

Holmes. A little exasperated. A touch embarrassed. You don't bite the hand that feeds you.

HOLMES

Freddy. Freddy, it's -- It's the Barakat Brand. Your name. Your fucking name. I shouldn't have to be the one who says it but -- but they don't want to be associated with --

He raises his eyebrows. Raises his glass. Drinks. He's not going to say it --

HIS PHONE LIGHTS up with an ALERT. He ignores it.

HOLMES

The ministry is skittish.

A SECOND ALERT.

HOLMES

They don't want to be seen to --

AIDA

-- Senator. Senator, I think you have a message.

Holmes checks his phone. Looks up at Aida. Fredric. Breathes a sigh of relief. He chuckles.

HOLMES

Ahhh... Okayee touché. This is good. This is really good.

On his PHONE SCREEN is a copy of THE DEED giving Vincent Karam and Alpine Crossing ownership of the entire retail and residential block.

AIDA

Not a Barakat in sight, Senator. Vincent Karam has exclusive legal rights to the property. 'No encumbrances, liens, or restrictions under the law to impede their full and sole ownership.'

FREDRIC

There you go, Lachy. You can kick the winning goal, and we can all enjoy the benefits.

42 INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. BATHROOM - DAY

42

Fredric is grumbling unintelligibly. Clumsily changing a protective pad for his incontinence. He puts a spare in his pocket when we hear --

BILLY YELLING...

BILLY (O.S.)
Fuck off. Vaffanculo, Morello...

43 INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. HALLWAY - DAY

43

Billy warns Frank off. Fancy footwork. Fists up like a boxer ready to fight.

BILLY
Fuck off!

Frank ignores him placing his hands over Billy's fists and calmly eases them down --

FRANK
Hey. Hey. C'mon...

No one messes with Frank.

FRANK
...C'mon, Billy. Be cool.

The COMMOTION has brought everyone together. Billy whips around to face --

HIS FATHER.

FREDRIC
What's this?

BILLY
The club. I made that club what it is. Not Karam - It was me. And you! You signed it over to him.

FREDRIC
It's not your club.

MAGDA
Billy. Not now. Please...

AIDA
It's just a document, Billy.
Nothing's changed...

BILLY
 (to Magda)
 When those fucking ass-lickers came to his door with a knife behind their backs...

MAGDA
 Billy, please. Please...

MAGDA
 ...Please.

BILLY
 It was me - I was the one who protected him. Me...

FREDRIC
 Arghh!

BILLY
 ...I did that.

FREDRIC
 You're behaving like those junkies you sell to.

BILLY
 (offended)
 I don't sell to junkies!

FREDRIC
 Then don't behave like one...

BILLY
 Are you calling me a junkie?

Defusing the situation --

MAGDA
 He's not calling you anything.

BILLY
 I'm not a fucking junkie -- Lawyers but that shit. Bankers. Politicians! Judges even...

FREDRIC
 God help that little boy of yours.

MAGDA
 Fredric!

FREDRIC
 (to Magda)
 He knows the area is changing. The clubs are moving to the CBD. He's the only one still there.

FREDRIC (CONT'D)

Everything is changing. Sixty thousand dollars a square metre.

AIDA

Billy. Billy listen to Dad. He wants to help you --

BILLY

-- By giving everything to Karam!

MAGDA

We're a family, Billy. Family.

BILLY

(to Magda)

I'm not a junky...

Fredric stops. Breathes. Resets --

FREDRIC

Look, I don't know. I'm sorry. I don't know, son -- All I see is your anger. Your moods. You're scaring us. What am I supposed to think? I'm trying to do what's best for everyone. You're putting everything at risk. That's why...

BILLY

I'm your family. Not him.

FREDRIC

Of course you are. But do you understand what's happening here? The club's become a liability.

MAGDA.

Khallas! Both of you. Billy, he's doing what's best for you. For you. He loves you --

BILLY

-- Fuck his love!

44

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. HALLWAY - DAY

44

ON HIS WAY OUT followed closely by NANCY, BILLY eyeballs JOEY who deliberately mouths --

JOEY

Junky!

NANCY

Shut up, Joey!

BILLY
 What the fuck did you call
 me? Go on. Go on -- Say it to
 my face...

JOEY
 (to Nancy)
 He's never gonna get his
 father's approval, because...

NANCY
 Joey. Drop it!

JOEY
 (to Billy)
 ...You're a selfish prick.

Billy ignites. Swings at Joey. Catches him off balance.

Joey careers into an antique china cabinet, BREAKING the glass doors, dislodging shelves, and sending its contents crashing to the floor.

FRANK STEPS IN --

Steers Billy away from further trouble.

BILLY
 Okay. Okay...
 (to Joey)
 Piece of shit.

The noise brings FREDRIC and MAGDA rushing from the kitchen.

BILLY STORMS OUT --

MAGDA
 Billy! Please...

FREDRIC
 No. No. No. Leave him.

Fredric taking in deep breaths sits to regain composure.

FRANK
 Boss...?

FREDRIC
 He'll cool down once he -- Once he
 think it through.

Magda crosses herself and mutters a prayer as

WE HEAR --

Billy's engine REVVING. The SQUEAL of tyres.

Joey clambers to his feet.

On from there. The outside blurs. He goes into a FUGUE STATE --

47 **EXT. INTERNATIONAL DEPARTURES - DAY**

47

From outside the vehicle, looking in

FREDRIC

is ghosted by REFLECTIONS on the TINTED GLASS as

The car door opens.

MAGDA on the passenger's side can be seen on a call reassuring Billy. We don't hear the specifics of their conversation.

FRANK offers Fredric an arm for stability --

FRANK

Are you okay? You're pale.

FREDRIC

Yeah. Yeah, I'm okay.

He hands Fredric a bottle of water...

FRANK

Drink.

MAGDA ends the call --

FREDRIC

Well?

She shrugs.

MAGDA

Are you all right?...

FREDRIC

(nodding)

Hmmh.

FRANK

(hesitant)

I'll park the car - Are you sure?

Fredric waves away concern.

Frank gets behind the wheel as a PORTER opens the door for Magda.

Before getting out

MAGDA LEANS FORWARD and TAPS FRANK on the SHOULDER.

MAGDA
 Frank, find out who let that kid into
 the club.

Frank NODS.

MAGDA follows the Porter with the luggage trolley watching Frank
 drive off...

FADE TO BLACK.

LEBANON

48

EXT. LEBANON. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - DAY

48

Nestled on the slopes of a plateau overlooking a breathtaking
 valley.

PERCHED HIGH UP ON AN ESCARPMENT --

THE CHURCH.

In the FORECOURT.

A CEREMONY. The CONSECRATION of a BELL.

A HUMAN-SIZED BELL.

A philanthropic gesture by the Barakats, who commissioned the
 restoration of the church.

PRIEST

*In the name of the Most High God.
 I anoint this bell. Like so many
 broken souls now restored.*

Holding umbrellas to protect them from the sun, MAGDA and NANCY,
 FREDRIC, ISABELLA, and a sullen JOEY, are honoured guests.

The BELL is being raised on a MASSIVE CRANE.

INSIDE THE TOWER --

Workers bolt the BELL into its housing.

The restored BELL RINGS for the very first time.

B-BONG. B-BONG...

The congregation cheers.

CLOSE ON FREDRIC.

FREDRIC

An oracle warned the man his plants were to blame but he told himself he was only giving people what they wanted, what they craved...

Fredric draws the blankets around Isabella.

Sleepily --

ISABELLA

Finish it Jeda...

FREDRIC

One day...

ANIMATION --

FREDRIC (V.O.)

He stood in his magnificent castle, built on the riches of his trade as the vines of the plants crept into his home, wrapping around his walls, his furniture, and finally, his limbs.

Fredric lowers his voice --

FREDRIC (V.O.)

The garden that had brought him everything had now taken him prisoner. As the vines tightened their grip the man realised...

BACK TO FREDRIC --

FREDRIC

His own heart had long since been poisoned by the very beauty he thought that he controlled.

Isabella yawns. Her eyes flutter under the weight of sleep.

ISABELLA

Is there a moral, Jeda?

FREDRIC

There's always a moral, sweetheart.

Well?

FREDRIC

Almost all great men are bad men.

ISABELLA

Heh...

She doesn't understand but smiles, shuts her eyes. And is already asleep.

Fredrick draws the blanket around the sleeping girl and as he leaves the room

he switches off the light.

CUT TO BLACK:

51

INT/EXT. SYDNEY. THE REXHEPI APARTMENT - NIGHT

51

LIGHT SWITCHES ON

THROUGH BINOCULARS we see into a second-storey window.

NICKY REXHEPI on a call --

A HARBOURSIDE APARTMENT.

-- Being observed from a rental vehicle across the road.

Inside the vehicle --

FRANK --

Stubs out another cigarette. With the butt hanging from his mouth, he raises the binoculars again.

THROUGH THEM, WE SEE --

Nicky kissing his wife and daughter - both in pyjamas - goodnight. Lilyana cradled in Samra's arms.

Nicky ends the call. Peers out through the window --

FROM NICKY'S POINT OF VIEW --

We see a row of darkened cars parked up and down the street.

FROM FRANK'S --

Nicky pulls the curtains. The house plunged into darkness. Nothing stirring. A dog barking.

Frank lowers the binoculars. Relights his cigarette, sucks in a lungful of smoke, then stubs it out in an unfinished takeaway coffee cup.

He's about to start the engine when --

The familiar BLACK CADILLAC ESCALADE glides into view pulling up outside Nicky's place. The passenger door opens.

Nicky emerges from the house and gets in. The Escalade moves off.

UNCLE FRANK FOLLOWS.

CUT TO:

52

INT. SYDNEY. VINCENT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

52

AIDA BARAKAT

Watches the LIGHTED CONSOLE of an ELEVATOR speeding to the top floor of an apartment block.

She walks down the corridor checking her reflection in the wall of windows that look out to a city backdrop.

She checks up and down the hallway.

Slips off her underwear from beneath her dress and shoves it in her bag.

An apartment door opens.

A nervous VINCENT KARAM greets her. He stumbles over language. He is no poet. Klutzy with words. Emotional intimacy is awkward for him.

Not for her. She initiates --

They fall upon each other hungrily. Against the wall. In the hallway. Through a door. Over furniture. You'd think they were on a ship pitching in a storm.

They don't make it to the bedroom.

CUT TO:

53

EXT. SYDNEY. SUBURBAN SPORTING COMPLEX - NIGHT

53

THROUGH BINOCULARS WE SEE --

THE BLACK ESCALADE parked at a SPORTS OVAL under floodlights. A junior football training session ending.

Further off --

NICKY standing in the spectator pavilion in an animated dialogue with

WASSIM 'WASS' AL SHAMI

that ends in a solidarity handshake.

WASS crouches to embrace his son and unlace his footy boots.

NOW --

FRANK WATCHES --

Nicky cross the field towards the waiting Escalade.

When Frank looks back --

WASS is NOWHERE to be seen.

CUT TO:

54

EXT. LEBANON. MOUNTAINS - PREDAWN

54

THE CREPUSCULE OF THE APPROACHING DAY --

LEBANON.

Beyond, the sleeping village the mountains rise like sentinels. Snowy peaks pierce the clouds like weathered wrinkled spires.

Stony ridges hung with tapestries of verdant green. Specked with the colours of an array of herbs and wildflowers.

An eerie silence.

Silhouetted against a leaden sky, a cabal of HUNTERS creeps across the semi-arid landscape. Here and there, tracts of thick white snow.

The men exhale plumes of vapour breaths. They carry hunting rifles. Their boots crunch on the coarse ground underfoot.

FREDRIC and MIKHAEL are being hosted by their Lebanese syndicate partners who move the cocaine from South America to Australia --

The elders GEORGE AYOUB and ALI YAHYA. George's son ANTON is flanked by two partisans --

One of them is Anton's son, YOUSSEF, shouldering a Kalashnikov. The other, GEBRAN, an M16 --

Both high on drugs. They start messing with a faulty electronic bird caller. Trying to make it work.

55

EXT. LEBANON. MOUNTAINS - DAYBREAK

55

A sprawling hedge of wild rose geranium catches the first rays of sun.

The men crouch in waiting...

YAHYA has partnered up into MIKHAEL who responds to something said --

MIKHAEL
C'mon, Ali. I'm not saying shit. Not now...

YAHYA
When then?

MIKHAEL
...not ever. Talk to the Boss.

YAHYA
It was sitting on the docks! And --

MIKHAEL
Without consulting us?!

YAHYA
We assumed --

MIKHAEL
A fucking container! Too risky -- And for what?

YAHYA
Money.

MIKHAEL
Jesus Ali. You've forgotten where you come from...

YAHYA
C'mon. Miki...

MIKHAEL
...Is this you talking? Am I hearing you talking?

YAHYA
What do you want me to say, Miki?

MIKHAEL
Who's talking, Ali?

A beat --

MIKHAEL
The General?

YAHYA shrugs --

MIKHAEL

Of course. The General. So why isn't he here?

YAHYA

He's a presidential fucking candidate.

MIKHAEL

That makes him better than us?!

YAHYA

He's not here. We are.

MIKHAEL

You got shish, Ali. It's a decent living.

YAHYA

Fuck Miki, just this once. Then we can talk about the shish --

MIKHAEL

Agh! What is it? Money? The General? You getting greedy? Is that it --

YAHYA

What's wrong with money --

MIKHAEL

Speak to the Boss.

YAHYA

He's getting old, Miki. He should step down. Hand over to his son?

MIKHAEL

Do not get involved in his family affairs.

YAHYA

No. Of course. No. No...

MIKHAEL

You're a liar, Ali. And a fool...

YAHYA

Your loyalties are misplaced, my friend --

MIKHAEL

-- And you've forgotten who you are.

A mustering of migratory birds approaches.

WHITE STORKS.

THUD.

BOOM... BOOM... BOOM...

Erratic flapping of wings. Birds. Helpless spiralling.
Plummeting ungainly in an eruption of feathers under the weight
of gravity.

Raining birds.

YOUSSEF and GEBRAN scuttle through the undergrowth to collect
the bounty --

Wearing earphones. Listening to ARAB RAP.

WE HEAR IT TOO.

Fredric watches the carnage carrying the shame of what he sees
around him.

59

EXT. LEBANON. MOUNTAINS - DAY

59

A PAUSE IN THE SLAUGHTER --

The older men have paused to rest on fold-out chairs. A small
table is unfolded.

ANTON pours sweet black coffee from a thermos. He takes out a
bottle of L'Arack De Musar. Five small glasses.

GEORGE pours and hands a glass to each of his companions. Then
to --

MIKHAEL and --

YAHYA

What's the matter Fredric? You
haven't raised your gun -- not
once...

FREDRIC. Feeling the chill. With a trace of ennui he waves away
the Arack --

FREDRIC

Just water.

Anton is already there with a bottle.

FREDRIC

*We're sitting in this fucking cold
shooting at these poor creatures --*

He drinks --

FREDRIC
They've flown thousands of kilometres. They're not even gonna end up on your table. What a fucking waste --

GEORGE
Think it over, Freddy. C'mon. Please. Freddy...

FREDRIC
-- Thousands of kilometres. For what? For this...

He indicates Youssef and Gebran --

FREDRIC
...running around like idiots.

GEORGE
Freddy...?!

FREDRIC
Why aren't you at home with your family, George? With your wife and kids?

GEORGE
We can't do it without you. Freddy...

FREDRIC
Listen to me. Fifty years ago, I made a deal with the devil.

GEORGE
Better the devil you know than the one across the border --

FREDRIC
What are you talking about?

GEORGE
He's a strong leader to lead the country --

FREDRIC
It's the same devil, George -- He chased us out of our homes and took what was ours...

GEORGE
We need this, Freddy.

Pointing the weapon skyward, he sprays the sky with automatic fire, missing everything. As --

The MIGRATION VEERS in another direction.

The old men unleash a torrent of abuse --

YAHYA

You stupid fucking moron!...

ANTON

Hey! Y'fucking donkeys!...

The young men laugh and BRAY.

Anton smacks his son across the ears, takes the gun, and pushes him hard in a humiliating heap on the ground.

63

EXT. LEBANON. MOUNTAINS - CONTINUOUS

63

FURTHER OFF --

GEORGE

We're family. We've known each other since...

FREDRIC

Who's we, Georgie? You mean The General. No, no, no...he's not family...

GEORGE

Families look out for each other.

FREDRIC

We should've stayed with the shish. We had some control, not like this fucking white powder. We were dragged into it, Georgie. Karam was weak. I was greedy --

GEORGE

What you've done has helped our village. Freddy. It's earned you a place forever in our hearts.

Fredric laughs.

FREDRIC

Not me, George. The money. Not your hearts. Your pockets. People with money can do whatever they want and those fools without it will betray everything they believe in to help them get whatever they want...

George takes it personally --

FREDRIC
*That's not family looking out for
 each other!*

George shrugs.

GEORGE
*Sorry you feel like that, but he's
 The General -- and the Netherlands
 deal is not up for discussion.*

FREDRIC
Are you threatening me?!

George raises his hands. Stalemate.

FREDRIC
*You know, I see what he's done to you.
 This village. That stupid grandson of
 yours.*

GEORGE
You're blaming the wrong person.

FREDRIC
*I know who to blame, George. Lucky
 it's not you.*

64

EXT. LEBANON. MOUNTAINS - DAY

64

PIANO MUSIC --

FÜNF KLAVIERSTÜCKE. OPUS 3. ANDANTE. BY RICHARD STRAUSS.

The two partisans, high on drugs, engage in buffoonery around
 the obscene number of avian carcasses.

GEBRAN, with M16 slung over his shoulder, PRESSES --

RECORD.

On his SMARTPHONE. We see the video --

YOUSSEF fooling around with a dead bird, animating its wings,
 pretending to fly --

CUT TO:

65

INT. LEBANON. BARAKAT VILLA - LATE AFTERNOON

65

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER --

A LARGE ELEGANT ROOM. The MOUNTAINS FRAMED by a wall of glass.

FREDRIC sits with...

ISABELLA, playing the SAME PIANO PIECE. She's good but occasionally, aiming for perfection, she stumbles and repeats the notes.

Through the door in Fredric's bedroom workmen are installing his dialysis machine.

Fredric kisses Isabella on top of her head and goes out --

66 **EXT. LEBANON. BARAKAT VILLA - LATE AFTERNOON**

66

-- ONTO THE VERANDAH.

He gazes across the valley. His beloved MOUNTAINS.

MIKHAEL is leaning against the balustrade. On a call --

MIKHAEL

Listen. George -- What? Are you kidding me! George, listen...

FREDRIC flicks his fingers to steer the conversation elsewhere. Without missing a beat, Mikhael moves inside --

Lose the phone conversation.

In the streets below CHILDREN PLAY and ADULTS go about their daily routines.

CLOSE ON FREDRIC.

67 **INT. KARAM HOUSE - DAY**

67

A JUMBLE OF BRIEF DARK FRAGMENTED IMAGES

Flashes before Fredric's eyes --

A man's BODY. Maybe Raymond. BLOOD. FREDRIC with a GUN dangling by his side. At the end of the corridor, a DOOR ajar.

The image fractures --

68 **EXT. LEBANON. BARAKAT VILLA - LATE AFTERNOON**

68

A HAND STIRS FREDRIC FROM HIS REVERIE --

MAGDA --

With his medication. She sits next to him and doles it out. One at a time...

MAGDA
We knew...

Fredric pops a capsule. Sips water from a glass...

MAGDA
...We knew this would not be easy.

FREDRIC
Hmmp.

MIKHAEL comes back out as Magda takes the glass. Fredric grumbles...

But takes another tablet...

MAGDA
So --

MIKHAEL
-- He's threatening.

FREDRIC
Hmph!...

MIKHAEL
Apparently, it's up to us - the future of this village.

MAGDA
What do you mean --

FREDRIC
Pphff...

MIKHAEL
He can hurt them financially -- even without winning...

MAGDA
Fredric, my sister's life was cut too short. By him --

A beat --

FREDRIC
This village. Those mountains. I grew here. They're part of me. Who I am. This was my home... I left it. I left it. Do I miss it? Yes...

MIKHAEL

There was a war --

FREDRIC

*-- Not the war. Layla was right.
We should have stayed. I chose to run.
I should have stayed --*

At the mention of Layla, MAGDA crosses herself. Mutters a prayer. Blinks away tears.

FREDRIC

*Everything I've done has been --
because of that criminal and I'm the
one in prison dragging a ball and
chain behind me. What do I do --*

MAGDA

You pick it up, Fredric. Own it.

A DECISIVE MOMENT.

69

EXT. LEBANON. MOUNTAINS - LATE AFTERNOON

69

THE MOUNTAINS SHIMMER

in the dying light.

THE LOWER EDGES of the SNOWY PEAKS begin to MELT, revealing what looks like SHIT...

BROWN SHIT.

DISSOLVE TO:

70

INT/EXT. BEIRUT. OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT LIMOUSINE - DAY

70

A Police Motorcycle Escort moves through --

THE STREETS OF BEIRUT.

FADI 'THE GENERAL' MELHEM

The PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE is on his phone screen browsing through the polls as the radio announces the coming victory.

RADIO COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*The race to the Baabda intensifies
as presidential candidate General
Melhem leads by...*

He looks at his driver in the rearview mirror --

UPSTAIRS a CLOSET DOOR roughly OPENED --

Strong hands DRAG a WOMAN and a CHILD by the HAIR AND CLOTHES.

BUNDLED AND PUSHED down the STAIRS. It's BRUTAL. Hard to watch but that's the point --

TO THE LIVING ROOM.

THE FOLLOWING ACTION IS EXECUTED QUICKLY AS THE OPERA MUSIC DAMPENS DIEGETIC SOUND.

The DEAD BOY is DUMPED at the GENERAL'S FEET.

The GENERAL'S WIFE and DAUGHTER SHOT in front of him.

THEN --

He, too, is SHOT. From BEHIND.

CUT TO BLACK:

78

INT. LEBANON. BARAKAT VILLA - DAY

78

BLACK --

PATCHES of LIGHT LEACH through a DARKENED SCREEN.

The IMAGE CLEARS a little.

CLOSE ON Fredric's chest. Hands performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation --

On the edges of a TILTED FRAME the blurred figure of a second paramedic bringing oxygen.

FROM ABOVE --

FREDRIC is on a stretcher. The dialysis machine lies next to him. Dragged down in the fall.

MAGDA is on the phone --

MAGDA
He's alright, Frank...

CUT TO:

79

INT. LEBANON. AMBULANCE - DAY

79

MAGDA and MIKHAEL watch FREDRIC wired to an electrocardiogram. He's conscious. They're relieved.

Magda still on the phone --

MAGDA
We opened our home to him. Does Billy
know...

FRANK (V.O.)
No.

Fredric in a stable condition, breathes oxygen through a nasal
cannula.

MAGDA
...Do it.

FREDRIC
Let me speak with him...

Fredric reaches for the phone --

FREDRIC
...William.

Magda ends the call --

MAGDA
*That was Frank. Billy's fine. We're in
Lebanon.*

FREDRIC
*I know. I know where we are -- We're
in Lebanon -- and we're going home.
Book a flight...*

The PARAMEDIC shakes his head, implying that flying is a bad
idea.

Sitting up Fredric begins detaching himself from the medical
paraphernalia --

The NURSE RESCUING the situation...

CUT TO:

80

INT. CHARTERED FLIGHT - DAY

80

AN IN-FLIGHT SCREEN --

MUSIC OVER.

THE LEBANESE NEWS. INAUDIBLE COMMENTARY.

HELICOPTER VIEW of THE GENERAL'S VILLA swarming with police.
Ambulances standing by with FLASHING LIGHTS.

Fredric looks across to Aida.

MAGDA
Where is Billy?

AIDA
Angel says - We've tried - but she's
the only one he'll pick up for...

Aida trails off. Then --

AIDA
Yeah, apparently, he's not making much
sense -- He's angry...

Lose the conversation as --

Their vehicle enters the gates of the Barakat Estate.

CUT TO BLACK.

86

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. KITCHEN - MORNING

86

Cartoons on television in background. The TANNOUS FAMILY in the kitchen. JOEY takes the coffee off the stove. Pours himself a cup.

NANCY is on the phone. Ringtone. Phone rings out...

NANCY
Nope...

...while packing lunch into her daughter's schoolbag.

ISABELLA

slings the bag over her shoulder. Heads for the door. Nancy calls after her...

...and hands over her cello case. Before redialling --

NANCY
Pick up, will you Billy. Please...

87

EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - MORNING

87

FREDRIC and FRANK are finishing breakfast. Fredric is in a suit. Veils of mist are lifting.

THE LIVE-IN NURSE makes Fredric take his medication --

She's young. She wears all white. White uniform and hat. White stockings and white shoes.

ISABELLA hugs Fredric as Joey calls out for her to hurry, leaving --

88

EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

88

THE TWO MEN ALONE.

The sounds of birdsong --

FREDRIC

I swear, Frank, that girl is my heart.
If you could bottle innocence...

But you never can, Frank gestures.

MAGDA appears. Formally dressed for church.

MAGDA

Billy's not answering. Nancy can't
get through to him. I'm worried...

She holds rosaries and wears an elaborate crucifix around her neck. Admires Fredric in his suit --

MAGDA

Finally, I convinced him to go to
church before we carry him in there in
a casket.

Fredric gestures surrender.

89

INT. SAINT CHARBEL MARONITE CHURCH - DAY

89

ACOLYTES practice the ritual of Jesus washing the disciples' feet as --

CHORISTERS REHEARSE AN EASTER HYMN.

MAGDA watches the enactment with a group of women --

MONSIGNOR'S attention is drawn to --

FREDRIC

sitting in the farthest corner of the nave.

Monsignor joins him.

An uncomfortable SILENCE.

Then --

MONSIGNOR
What are you doing here, Fredric?

FREDRIC
You're a harsh man, Father.

MONSIGNOR
I serve a harsh master.

FREDRIC
All these years, not one day passes
without my thinking about Layla.

Fredric makes eye contact with --

MAGDA.

FREDRIC
Magda has never forgiven me -- For her
sister -- For what happened. Nor have
I...

MONSIGNOR
Jesus said, "You will have suffering
in this world." Not might. But will.

FREDRIC
I'm here to tell you that I'm sorry.
Deeply sorry.

MONSIGNOR
You do whatever you want. And
Then, approaching death's door, you ask
forgiveness?!

We see --

The altarpiece on the wall of Jesus in the arms of the Madonna.
The lead-light windows of the Twelve Stations of the Cross.

Monsignor makes the sign of the cross and mutters a prayer
beneath his breath.

Then --

MONSIGNOR
Earlier this morning I buried
another young man. A child. I wish you'd seen his mother's
anguish.

FREDRIC
Father, please --

MONSIGNOR
Tell the families you destroyed. Ask
their forgiveness -- Ask the child
forgiveness.

Fredric takes the blow. He expected no less.

In the background. The rehearsal. The choristers continue singing.

MONSIGNOR

The beauty of our faith is that God forgives. But let me tell you what I think. It disgusts me that our church falls prey to your dirty money.

FREDRIC

Not the church, Father. You.

MONSIGNOR

Amen. Pray to God those who receive it do not find out from where it came.

Fredric is chastened. They both make the sign of the cross.

FREDRIC

My son is a drug addict. My daughter's an alcoholic. She suffers from depression. Her husband's a gambler --

MONSIGNOR

Lord have mercy.

Fredric bows his head. Everything hurts. Body and mind.

MONSIGNOR

And you?

HYMN ENDS.

FREDRIC

Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned.

MONSIGNOR

"The soul who sins shall die."

FREDRIC

Yes, yes... And my son?

MONSIGNOR

"The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father."

FREDRIC

I, too, was a son. Where was he for me, this God you pray to?

Again, the sign of the cross.

MONSIGNOR

Get out of my house.

92

EXT. LEBANON. VALLEY - DAWN

92

THE VILLAGE IN THE DISTANCE.

A large GOAT. A BUCK with corkscrew horns chomps on the buds of a flowering crop of HASHISH.

A young RAYMOND KARAM chases it away.

B-BONG... B-BONG...

Finally. The distant sound of the church bell.

ADOLESCENT BOYS with sticks brush through the sturdy plants, flushing out another goat. And another.

Skipping up the track leading from the village. A LITTLE GIRL in ribbons and white tulle. Gestures for Raymond to come home.

The BELLS. Now LOUDER. VIBRANT --

CUT TO:

93

EXT. LEBANON. VILLAGE CHURCH - DAY

93

THE BELL TOWER OF THE VILLAGE CHURCH

B-BONG... B-BONG...

Newlyweds Fredric Barakat, THE BAKER, and LAYLA CHALHOUB spill out through the church doors.

Wild cheers. Rice thrown by the handful.

Best Man and Maid of Honour on their heels. RAYMOND and NADINE HASHEM.

Close behind

MAGDA CHALHOUB --

Layla's YOUNGEST SISTER.

A loose scrum of celebrants. The WEDDING PARTY sashays down the village street as

Families peer from windows. A cat skitters into the shadows. Dogs bark. Children run into the street sucking in the festive air.

MILITIAMEN jump from the vehicle spreading out securing the area. As their leader

A YOUNG GENERAL FADI MELHEM

alights flanked by his heavily armed lieutenants.

EYES DART from one villager to another.

LAYLA and FREDRIC weave a path to the front of the crowd. RAYMOND follows.

MAGDA tries to join them but her MOTHER holds her back. Nadine's father, too, restrains his daughter.

Mothers gather up the children.

The General's lieutenants FIRE SHOTS into the air --

SILENCE.

His eyes scan the ELDERS in the crowd --

THE GENERAL

*When you vote for me -- Security
and prosperity -- The promise that
I give you...*

LAYLA STEPS FORWARD and

SPITS

onto the earth in front of The General. Defiant. It's her wedding.

RAYMOND and FREDRIC are quick to form a scrum around her.

The following action happens very quickly:

THE GENERAL points them out ordering their arrest. MILITIAMEN caution the YOUNG MALE VILLAGERS to lay down their arms and back off.

The CROWD SURGES. The rival parties CLASH as --

THE NEWLYWEDS and RAYMOND are spirited away by sympathisers led by MAGDA.

CUT TO:

Shots can be heard. Distant cries and screams. Intermittent gunfire.

The lights inside the house are dimmed.

The drapes are drawn. Layla's sister MAGDA is pressed against the window KEEPING WATCH.

ON MAGDA as she glances at --

Layla's other sisters helping the bride change into practical clothing as she pleads with her mother --

LAYLA
I'm not leaving my family.

MOTHER
Your husband is your family now.

Her MOTHER has her by the shoulders. Forces MONEY into her hand.

Frantic with fear for her daughter's life she whispers a prayer and fastens an HEIRLOOM CRUCIFIX PENDANT around the young woman's neck.

Their FATHER slips a LOADED PISTOL and TWO EXTRA CLIPS of ammunition to Raymond.

MAGDA gives the ALARM.

99 **EXT. LEBANON. VILLAGE - NIGHT**

99

Militiamen approach as the FUGITIVES MELT UNSEEN into the NIGHT.

Raymond, Fredric, and Layla scramble down the steep terrain of a karstic landscape to...

A waiting RED CROSS VAN.

CUT TO:

100 **EXT. LEBANON. PORT OF BYBLOS - NIGHT**

100

THE OLDEST PORT IN THE WORLD

At the end of THE PIER, a small half-cabin FISHING CAIQUE awaits.

In the distance, the sky lights up from mortar shell explosions. Sporadic gunfire can be heard.

A band of armed Phalanges disappear into a bombed out building.

In the dark, engine turned off, the Red Cross van rolls silently the last few hundred meters to a BREAKWATER.

RAYMOND

Go!!

RAYMOND leaves the safety of the wall. FIRES in the direction of the SNIPER

prompting Fredric and Layla to leave the safety of the wall.

No time to debate. Even less to think. The NEWLYWEDS scramble onto the breakwater and run toward the pier.

The Boatman revs the motor.

Fredric and Layla sprint along the levee, passing the BODY of a VICTIM cut down by the sniper's bullet.

KER-CHUNK. Raymond RELOADS.

Then, moving backwards toward the others, he FIRES a continuous stream of shots.

104 **EXT. LEBANON. PORT OF BYBLOS - PREDAWN** 104

THE CHILD SNIPER --

His eye are glued to the rifle scope.

IN THE SIGHTS

he centres RAYMOND in the CROSSHAIRS, then --

ADJUSTING the reticle, he SHIFTS his AIM further up the levee to focus on FREDRIC and LAYLA...

105 **EXT. LEBANON. PORT OF BYBLOS - PREDAWN** 105

FREDRIC AND LAYLA NEAR THE PIER --

A SHOT rings out. The bullet THUDS into the earth beneath their feet.

ANOTHER SHOT.

LOUDER than the rest --

LAYLA'S LEGS GIVE WAY. ARMS GO LIMP. HER RED HAIR FLAILS. She SMACKS HARD into the ground.

FREDRIC drops to her aid.

RAYMOND reloads the final clip and rapid-fires in the direction of the Sniper.

The NEXT SHOT from the Sniper's rifle SLAMS into Layla.

In disbelief, Fredric CLUTCHES his bride. Lifts her. Willing her to live. To run. But --

LAYLA IS

GONE.

Raymond FORCIBLY WRESTS him from the LIFELESS BODY.

As he does, FREDRIC comes away with the CRUCIFIX PENDANT she wore around her neck.

A third SHOT whistles past. A fourth. Fredric struggles free. Runs back to Layla. But --

A FINAL BULLET SHATTERS HOPE --

LAYLA IS DEAD.

Raymond BUNDLES a distraught Fredric forcibly along the pier into the strong arms of the Boatman who rushes them aboard.

106

EXT. LEBANON. PORT OF BYBLOS - DAWN

106

MOMENTS LATER --

The 'ELEFThERIA' surges through white peaks, leaving behind the pier.

The mother of the family, whose father's body lies near Layla's, grieves as she consoles her children. Her eyes and Fredric's meet in an eddy of unfathomable grief.

RAYMOND LOOKS steadfastly AHEAD towards the dawning light.

FREDRIC, BEREAVED BY LOSS, LOOKS BACK at his future receding in the MIST.

From his BLOODED HAND, the CRUCIFIX meant to protect Layla SLIPS into the sea. He REACHES for it. But --

IT'S GONE.

CUT TO:

SYDNEY - PRESENT

107

INT. MERCEDES KLASSEN - DAY

107

TORRENTIAL RAIN.

CLOSE ON --

FREDRIC SITTING ALONE in the back of the Klassen. In the background --

FRANK wait under the portico at the top of the stairs of the entrance to the church.

A worried MAGDA emerges.

Frank unfurls an UMBRELLA for her as they step into the rain.

Thunder. Lightning.

108

EXT. ROOKWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

108

RAIN FALLS STEADILY.

Among the headstones --

A small gathering. A handful of mourners with umbrellas surround

LILYANA caressing a FRAMED PHOTO of HER FATHER.

Family members restrain Nicky's grief-stricken wife SAMRA when she glimpses --

BILLY Barakat standing further off.

Flushed with grief and anger Samra is restrained from confronting him.

ON MEMORIAL DRIVE

The ESCALADE glides to a halt. The back passenger's window slides open to reveal --

WASSIM AL SHAMI.

The mourners leave --

The two titans scrutinise each other, each wary of the other but recognising this convergence as a chance to further their mutual interests.

CUT TO BLACK:

109

EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY

109

FREDRIC

in a cane armchair with MALIK vying for attention, quietly observes his family --

Magda bring him a refreshment as the NURSE slips a blanket around his legs.

NANCY and JOEY set mezze on the outdoor table where AIDA and VINCENT are gathered --

Nancy pops a bottle of champagne and pours a glass for everyone. As she hands around the drinks, AIDA presents a document --

THE ZONING APPROVAL

AIDA
Congratulations!

For Vincent, relief. A gesture of gratitude to Fredric and acknowledgement that carries veiled intimacy for Aida.

Aida produces a pen and Vincent SIGNS to validate the agreement.

A TOAST --

NANCY
Kadisha!

FREDRIC
Have they signed off on the development?!

AIDA
Dad...

VINCENT
But they will --

AIDA
They wouldn't approve the zoning permit if they didn't want it to go ahead.

Fredric condones.

Glasses raised. They drink.

JOEY
Vincent Karam!

AS --

BILLY shows up.

BILLY
...Karam!

He brandishes

A GUN.

Frank reaches for his --

FREDRIC GESTURES him to BACK OFF.

MAGDA
Billy! Thank god...

Nancy goes to throw her arms around her brother but he warns her off.

NANCY
Billy...?!

Billy crosses to the table, takes Vincent's glass, and skols the contents.

He waves the gun around as an extension of his hand.

BILLY
Nicky?! The one person --

MAGDA
Billy. Son. Sit down. Celebrate with us --

BILLY
He tried to help!

FREDRIC
Nicky undermined your club. He let the kid in...

IN A SUDDEN MOVE --

BILLY aims the GUN at VINCENT.

MAGDA
BILLY!

FREDRIC
William, put the gun away.

FREDRIC gets to his feet.

FREDRIC
Show respect. Put it away --

BILLY presses the BARREL to VINCENT'S HEAD.

FREDRIC
William. Please. William!

Nancy smothers a scream --

With one hand warning the others away BILLY puts PRESSURE on the TRIGGER. THEN --

CLICK.

A MOCK EXECUTION.

Fredric SLAPS Billy across the face --

Then --

STAGGERS backwards CLUTCHING his chest. BLOOD DRAINS from his face.

Quick hands move to get him to a chair. Someone loosens his collar. Someone else has already fetched a glass of water.

Fredric struggles to speak. With laboured breath --

BILLY tucks the gun into his belt, leans down, places hands on Fredric's shoulders and

STARES COLDLY at his father.

For Fredric, every breath is a stabbing pain --

BILLY
Look at you. 'The Boss.'

Billy releases his father. Stands. Magda reaches for him.

MAGDA
Please, soul of my soul...

With gentle hands, he moves her aside. Takes in everyone with an icy glare.

Then, taps Vincent on the chest. Speaks softly --

BILLY
You fuck me. I fuck you.

He points the gun at Frank. Makes a plosive sound with his lips -
-

BILLY
Puh!

Then addresses everyone --

BILLY
You've forgotten where we've come from. Who we are.

He raises the gun in the air --

BILLY
This. This is who we are!

He leaves.

JOEY
The ambulance is on the way.

FREDRIC has gone into cardiogenic shock drifting out of consciousness.

CUT TO BLACK.

110 **EXT. PORT BOTANY. CONTAINER WHARF - NIGHT** 110

A Norwegian super-freighter berthed at Hutchinson's wharf next to Sydney Airport.

A shipping container Legoland.

An AIRBUS drops in low for landing. Revealing --

Two figures. Silhouetted against a string of lights across the Bay --

BILLY and WASS watch --

A SHIPPING CONTAINER loaded onto a semi-trailer.

Surrounded by security, a man in workwear, steel-toe boots and a hard hat approaches with two dockworkers.

The DOCKWORKERS open the container.

111 **EXT. PORT BOTANY. CONTAINER WHARF - CONTINUOUS** 111

CONTENTS APPROVED --

A BAG of MONEY placed on the tailgate of a utility.

We hear --

SOUNDS of a PARTY.

A PASSING PLEASURE CRUISER --

REVELLERS call out to the men standing on the docks. Hanging over the side. Holding up glasses of champagne. Very drunk.

The cruiser's WAKE LAPS against the wharf.

WASS hands Billy a small bag of WHITE ROCK HEROIN --

WASS
 La Buena. Pure H. There's more of
 this. Where it came from. A lot more --
 You and me now.

They shake. Call in the troops.

In separate vehicles, both Wass and Billy fold in behind the semi-trailer.

112 **EXT. SOUTHERN CROSS DRIVE - NIGHT** 112

TRAVELLING AERIAL VIEW --

The CAVALCADE moves on a main artery from the airport towards --
 CITY LIGHTS GLOWING in the distance.

We lose them. Swing onto a DIFFERENT ROUTE to --

A GROUP OF BUILDINGS with a big RED CROSS and a HELIPAD on the roof of --

113 **INT. ROYAL PRINCE ALFRED HOSPITAL - NIGHT** 113

PRIVATE SUITE

FREDRIC is sitting on the edge of the bed, being dressed. NANCY putting on his socks and shoes. MAGDA buttoning his shirt.

The SURGEON hands Magda a prescription...

SURGEON
 First thing Tuesday morning. After
 Easter.

...and a zip-top bag with medication.

SURGEON
 Make sure he takes them.

FRANK holds open the door for the doctor to leave.

Nancy takes her father's hand. She's been weeping.

NANCY
Dad. He's our Billy --

Fredric's voice is thin. Broken.

FREDRIC
 -- *He's my son...*

NANCY
The club meant a lot to him.

FREDRIC
...of course, I love him --

NANCY
Then show him.

Magda turns to Frank --

MAGDA
 Frank, find Billy...

Then eyeballing Fredric --

MAGDA
 Tell him his father wants him to bring
 home to us -- his wife and son.

A beat --

MAGDA
Isn't that right, old man?

He purses his lips. Nods. Surrender brings relief.

CUT TO:

114 **EXT. BRIGIDINE GIRL'S COLLEGE - DAY**

114

JOEY IN HIS CAR --

Across the road from ISABELLA'S SCHOOL. Watching a horse race
 on the PHONE.

He taps the dashboard anxiously. In the background, we hear
 the SCHOOL BELL.

RACE COMMENTATOR (V.O.) JOEY
 Dark Night is coming down the straight. One hundred to
 go... Go!... C'mon!...

THE FRONT OF SCHOOL

ISABELLA

And her friend, HAIFA, exchange Pokémon cards, surrounded by
 children pouring out of the school gate.

NOW --

From across the street

CLOSE ON --

Joey, in a frenzy, bashing the dashboard with his fist as his horse is being overtaken.

IN THE BACKGROUND

Isabella farewelling Haifa as --

A VEHICLE pulls up

OBSTRUCTING our VIEW.

115 INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. KITCHEN - DAY

115

In the cold light of a kitchen neon, NANCY is furious. Inconsolable.

Screaming at JOEY --

NANCY

I told you to be there! To get there early! Before the bell! And why didn't you ring me?

JOEY

I was there -- I didn't want to upset anyone -- And I swear to God, I wasn't at the TAB.

She throws open-handed punches at him.

NANCY

You! Fucking liar! You're a fucking liar, Joey!

Nancy collapses into a chair.

Joey tries to reassure her. She smacks him away and shouts in frustration --

NANCY

Ahrrgh!

Meltdown. Gripped by terror --

NANCY

Oh my God... Oh my God...

Magda wheels Fredric into the kitchen in a wheelchair.

NANCY

Mum?!

Magda embraces her.

Fredric stands. Magda cautions him. He ignores her.

FREDRIC

Where's Isabella --

JOEY

Haifa said someone picked her up. A car -- I thought --

FREDRIC

Who is Haifa?

JOEY

Colette's daughter. You know, Colette.

FREDRIC

What car?

JOEY

She said -- Uh -- big. I dunno. Big white car.

FREDRIC

You didn't see it? Weren't you there? Where the hell were you --

Fredric's PHONE LIGHTS up.

UNKNOWN CALLER.

MAGDA

Fredric...

JOEY

I thought, you know, maybe one of the other parents...

MAGDA

Answer that...

JOEY

...I called everyone I knew.

MAGDA

...Answer that.

FREDRIC does.

116

EXT. SYDNEY. WASS AL SHAMI'S HOUSE - DAY

116

FACETIME

We see ISABELLA playing by a swimming pool with other children. She seems content as she glances briefly towards camera.

The voice on speaker at the other end.

WASS (V.O.)
Your granddaughter is a clever child,
Barakat. Polite...

THE FACETIME ENDS.

117 INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. KITCHEN - DAY 117

NANCY CRUMBLES. JOEY PUNCHES THE WALL.

Silence.

MAGDA crosses herself simultaneously terrified and simmering with rage.

FREDRIC CAUTIONS her. He knows how this plays out.

They wait --

WASS (V.O.)
You still there?

FREDRIC
What do you want?

CUT TO:

118 INT. LAKEMBA MOSQUE - DAY 118

SUNLIGHT THROUGH THE BLUE DOME --

Geometric patterns. Arabesque calligraphy. Purple carpet. Worshipers in prayer position.

One of them is --

WASS.

Bearded. Wearing a taqqiyah, a kameez, and loose trousers. He gets up and walks with purpose.

OSMAN follows closely.

119 EXT. LAKEMBA MOSQUE. COURTYARD - DAY 119

A COURTYARD OUTSIDE THE MOSQUE --

A serene garden with a fountain and a seating area.

FREDRIC and WASS arrive simultaneously. Neither wants to be seen waiting for the other.

FRANK and MIKHAEL stand back to one side. OSMAN and ARMAN, on the other.

The two leaders sit neither greeting the other.

FREDRIC
What do you want?

A beat --

FREDRIC
You were never very bright, Wass.
Otherwise you would've stayed and, you
know, maybe we could have worked out
something mutually beneficial...

WASS
You think?

FREDRIC
Yes, I do. After you knocked my
partner - well, don't forget, he was
your partner too - you took off --

A cynical laugh from Wass.

FREDRIC
Proof of guilt.

WASS
You needed someone to dump on,
Barakat. You should be thanking me.

FREDRIC
All right, thank you -- So what do you
want, Wass?

WASS
What we all want. Peace --

FREDRIC
Then give me the girl.

Silence.

FREDRIC
I know what you've got. You got what
you wanted. You and my son -- But now,
you see, you need distribution.

WASS
I can do that without you.

FREDRIC
Don't waste my time, Wass --

Fredric calls Mikhael over.

FREDRIC
For a fee to be agreed on, Miki here will introduce you to my 'bakers'. You do it honourably, quietly, and without drawing attention to yourself. And you have my blessing.

Wass doesn't answer. He didn't expect it to be so easy.

FREDRIC
But -- You stay away from my son. You have no business with him.

Fredric scowls. With a fiery gaze. A blow torch.

FREDRIC
Pull a stunt like this again...
Not even your prophet Mohammed will save you from *Hell*.

WASS
Hmmp.

FREDRIC
The girl.

CUT TO:

120 INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. KITCHEN - DAY

120

Hugs, tears and kisses showered on Isabella from Nancy and a sheepish Joey.

For Magda, nothing is resolved. She is furious.

MAGDA
It has to be done...

Frank quietly agrees.

Fredric quietly appeals. In his mind, so close to success.

FREDRIC
No, Magda. Listen to me carefully.
This moment -- Here. Now. Defines us.
What we do now -- makes us who we are...

Magda remains unconvinced.

Isabella rushes to her grandfather, folding her arms around him.

NANCY
It's time for a bath and bed,
sweetheart.

ISABELLA
Read me a story, Jede...

Isabella drags Fredric away --

MAGDA
My husband -- won't make the call,
Frank. But I will.

Frank and Magda hold each other's gaze.

YES --

A DEFINING MOMENT.

MAGDA
I'm making the call, Frank.

CUT TO:

121 **EXT. BILLY'S NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT**

121

FLAMES LICK THE SKY --

Crackling. Groaning. Spitting. Exploding.

CLOSE SLOWLY ON BILLY

Watching from his car. ON HIS FACE, we see the SHIFTING LIGHT
of

THE CONFLAGRATION --

The arsonists move swiftly from the scene. Kickstart their
bikes. And speed away.

Distant sound of multiple SIRENS.

CUT TO:

122 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

122

GLIMPSES of the NURSE'S BODY as she fusses over --

FREDRIC.

MAGDA observes her as well but with a completely different agenda.

MAGDA
Thank you.

The Nurse quietly leaves. An argument is brewing.

FREDRIC
Isabella's safe. Nothing else matters...

MAGDA
And Billy.

FREDRIC
...Leave it alone.

MAGDA
The Turk? Will he leave it alone?

FREDRIC
Look at me. Hooked up to a fucking machine --

MAGDA
Will he? Will he leave it alone?

FREDRIC
All around me, trouble. Trouble everywhere. Worrying. Always worrying. And for what? Tfh!

Wealth. Power --

FREDRIC
*In the end... For nothing...
Not even the memory of nothing.*

MAGDA
*My God, where's your faith?!
This constant talk of death! It's in your head...*

FREDRIC
Perhaps.

MAGDA
...I don't know, the medication --

FREDRIC
Maybe.

MAGDA
Right now you're alive. Look at what you've done. All this! Be proud. Have faith --

Fredric rants. Caught in an eddy of despair --

FREDRIC

Faith?! I don't believe in faith, I don't believe in God. And heaven. As for hell, we're living it. There's no heaven. Only black. Not even black. Nothing. Not even nothing. Not even the memory --

MAGDA

Stop!

Long pause. Then --

FREDRIC

Don't do it.

MAGDA

It's already done.

Another surrender.

MAGDA looks him in the eye. She takes his hand. Brings it to her lips --

KISSES it.

CUT TO:

123

INT/EXT. BELLA VISTA ESTATE. WASS'S HOUSE - PRE-DAWN.

123

A family-home. An oasis. A white Range Rover Evoque sits out the front. A yellow bicycle leans against the garage door.

INSIDE

WASS and his son ISHMAEL in pyjamas nestled into him, sit on the lounge immersed in --

The EUROPEAN CUP FINALS playing out on television.

COMMENTATOR

He drives. Ohhh, Goal!.. Where was the defence?

Wass sees --

A REFLECTION on the screen of glass doors sliding open.

He turns.

UNCLE FRANK MORELLO

GUN dangling by his side

takes a seat.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
Coach Mourinho is a worried man.

Ishmael. Confused.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
Another goal! Two nil. A massive headache for Mourinho...

Wass turns off the TV.

Sensing threat, the BOY buries his head in his father's chest.

WASS
Please, son. Go and watch the game upstairs.

In Kurdish, Wass cajoles him into leaving.

WASS
Go on... go on, I'll be up... soon...

FRANK
What's your name, son?

The boy hesitates.

WASS
His name is Ishmael.

FRANK
You love your father, Ishmael?

The boy nods.

FRANK
Do what he tells you, boy.

Ishmael clocks the gun.

ISHMAEL
Are you going to kill my dad...

WASS
I'll be up soon, son. Please, go upstairs to your mother...

FOLLOW Ishmael to the top of the stairs.

HOLD ON THE BOY.

WE HEAR --

A brief scuffle. Then --

PHUUUIT.

What Ishmael sees --

His father on the floor. A pool of blood forming around his head.

Frank looks up at the boy.

A BABY can be heard CRYING.

AMIRAH

Wass's Asian wife with an INFANT in her arms

comes from the bedroom to find ISHMAEL standing on the upstairs landing FROZEN --

CUT TO BLACK.

124

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

124

BILLY'S APARTMENT. LOUNGE ROOM.

Strewn across the chabudai --

A REVOLVER. BULLETS.

Yellowish chunks of waxy translucent solids. Gravel. FREEBASE. The haute couture of crack.

A lighter. A water-pipe.

An alabaster jewellery box. Inside. A SYRINGE. The bag of HEROIN Wass gave

BILLY --

We see his ritual in granular detail --

The SPOON. WATER. FLAME. FILTER. DRAWING UP the YELLOW LIQUID.

THE SOUND OF --

A TOILET FLUSHING.

FOLLOW CHANELLE from the bathroom as she straddles

BILLY --

He puts down the PREPARED SYRINGE.

She takes the GUN and points the barrel at his head --

127 INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

127

CHANELLE

tripping on the corner of the lounge. She lets out a string of profanities.

ANGEL (V.O.)
Who's there?

BILLY
No one, I'm on my own...

Angel HANGS UP on the call.

BILLY
Fuck!!

BILLY THROWS the PHONE. It sails past Chanelle and hits the wall.

Unfazed, she finishes dressing.

128 INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

128

MOMENTS LATER --

CHANELLE is lying on the couch with the water pipe. Getting high on freebase.

BILLY stumbles across the room and puts a vinyl record on a vintage turntable. Hisses. Crackles.

BHEBBAK YA LEBNAN. FAIRUZ.

BILLY
This fucken song! -- He drove me
fucken mad listening to this shit.

He does some clumsy dance steps.

CHANELLE
Yeah, babe, chill...

Billy DETONATES.

BILLY
FUCK HIM!

He picks up the TURNTABLE and HURLS it on the floor. It shatters.

CHANELLE
Jesus...

He kicks and stomps on the broken pieces and keeps kicking and stomping until he ends up woozy --

He staggers to the lounge and the table with the drugs.

CUT TO:

129

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT BLOCK. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

129

VINCENT. IN THE ELEVATOR --

GOING UP.

Arms outstretched, BERETTA in one hand, head drooped, he leans into the elevator's mirrored wall --

Looks up at his reflection.

As the doors open he SHATTERS the MIRROR with the butt of his revolver.

NOW --

130

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

130

He CRASHES through the door of Billy's apartment.

Strapping a BELT just above his elbow

BILLY looks up to see --

THE BERETTA STARING AT HIM.

VINCENT

It's fucking loaded. Not like you,
you prick!

BILLY

Go on, then. Go on brother -- You got
the guts?! Do it. Pull the fucken
trigger.

He holds his arms wide obligingly, chest out, belt hanging down --

An easy target.

BILLY

Go on, pull the trigger...

He screams at Vincent. He bashes the lounge with his fists --

BILLY
 FUCKEN DO IT! Gutless piece of shit!

With that --

He LUNGES at his rival.

They WRESTLE. Each other. For the gun. Vincent momentarily has the upper hand. Then --

THE GUN FIRES.

The shot, muffled by their entanglement, leaves BILLY coming out on top --

HOLDING the GUN.

He backs away from Vincent staggering backwards to the couch. Checks himself for wounds.

HOLDING his SIDE Vincent plonks down into the closest chair.

Billy indicates the BLEEDING.

Vincent panics --

VINCENT
 Fuck! Fuck! Fuck --

BILLY
 -- Just a graze. Don't worry, Bro...

Vincent breathing heavily. Pressing on the wound --

BILLY

STUDIES the BERETTA. Holds it up.

BILLY
 Nice piece.

VINCENT
 Fuck!...

BILLY
 Your father's, huh? Nice.

Billy speaks in one continuous drawl --

BILLY
 Where'd you get it? Such a nice piece...

VINCENT
 Huh?...

BILLY
Fredric?!...

Silence.

BILLY
Your father's, right? The weapon!
And, and -- So where did Fredric
get it?!...

Vincent is rattled.

BILLY
You know, that's the gun that
killed him, yeah? You know that,
right?...

VINCENT
Fuck! You!

Billy SLIDES the GUN along the floor TO VINCENT --

BILLY
I was there, bro, I was there. We
cleaned up -- You know, after. Morello
and me...

Billy slumps back into the lounge.

BILLY
No gun. That gun...

Billy points --

BILLY
Wasn't there. Nowhere. We stripped the
place. Stripped it.

A beat --

BILLY
We assumed the Turk took it. Maybe
he liked it, I dunno -- After he
shot your father with it --

VINCENT
Fuck you --

VINCENT picks up the GUN. Raises it at BILLY.

Instinctively, BILLY picks HIS GUN off the table. Levels it at
Vincent.

A STANDOFF.

Then --

Billy LAUGHS. He puts down his gun...

BILLY
I can't be fucked with this.

The chamber was empty anyway.

He takes the end of the BELT. TIGHTENS it around his UPPER ARM.
Picks up the ALREADY-LOADED SYRINGE --

Billy injects THE HEROIN.

THE FLICK. THE VEIN. THE CURL OF BLOOD. LOOSENING THE PRESSURE.

BILLY
Oh, man...

As the RUSH comes on.

Billy rolls his head around. Sighs. More of a moan. Maybe
pleasure. Maybe not.

He croaks the words --

BILLY
How did he get the gun?

Vincent notices BLOOD seeping through his fingers. RINGING in
his head.

He ignores Billy. Stumbles to --

131 **INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS** 131

Rummages through the cabinet. Grabs a roll of dressing for
the wound and begins stuffing the lot roughly under his shirt
to stop the bleeding.

He rifles through the draws looking for a bandage...

132 **INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 132

WHILE --

BILLY SLUMPS into the lounge with a LONG GROAN. His eyes roll in
their sockets like pinballs.

CHANELLE who has been sitting there the whole time stoned --

Finally moves --

Slow and languid, she edges over to Billy. Shakes him. Weakly.

134 **INT. VINCENT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

134

AN HOUR LATER --

DOCTOR KHOURY finishes dressing Vincent's wound.

KHOURY

It's more than a graze, but -- You'll
recover. Get some rest. I'll see you
tomorrow...

Vincent hands him a wad.

KHOURY

Here.

Khoury hands over a blister pack of painkillers. Aida takes
them. Khoury leaves.

CUT TO:

135 **EXT. SYDNEY. AERIAL VIEW - NIGHT/MORNING**

135

TIME LAPSE --

From NIGHT to the FIRST RAYS OF SUN.

From POTTS POINT to the CITY. From the HARBOUR to BAYVIEW and
the BARAKAT ESTATE overlooking PITTWATER --

136 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

136

FREDRIC in the WHEELCHAIR. AIDA tucks in close to him. Her arm
inside his.

AIDA

Baba.

She strokes him with a soothing hand.

A pale VINCENT shows little sign of injury except for a nasty
facial BRUISE --

Silence as --

MAGDA still in her dressing gown makes a call. Tries again.
Shakes her head.

No answer.

FREDRIC

What did he say?

Vincent hesitates.

He throws a brief look at Fredric who gestures for him to speak openly.

FREDRIC
What's on your mind?

Vincent looks at Magda. And --

Slides the BERETTA on the glass-topped COFFEE TABLE.

VINCENT
How did you get this?

FREDRIC
Ah-ha...

Fredric knows where this is going --

VINCENT
Billy said you sent them to -- to clean up. He said he and Frank - That they searched the house -- There was no gun...

He points to the gun --

VINCENT
H-How did you get my father's gun?

Fredric's expression hardens. He folds Magda into his response, circumnavigating the question --

FREDRIC
We cleaned up because we didn't want the police involved --

VINCENT
But they were there, weren't they?

FREDRIC
Yes they were there. We called them. After --

MAGDA
How else could we protect you? Your mother. When she became ill we brought you up as our own children. You. And Renee.

VINCENT
Why would Wass go to do a job without a gun? His own gun. And how come you had the gun no one else could find...

MAGDA
 (to Aida)
 We should leave them.

Aida gently detaches from her father.

AIDA
 I love you, Baba --

VINCENT
 -- Makes no sense.

Magda leads her out into --

137 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS** 137

OUT OF EARSHOT --

MAGDA
*I know you've been fooling around with
 him.*

Eventually --

Tears roll from Aida's eyes. She nods. Magda pulls her into an embrace.

138 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS** 138

FREDRIC gets out of the wheelchair. Opens the drawer of the dresser...

FREDRIC
 You never ask about your mother. Why?

...He takes out a pen and paper.

VINCENT
 I...

Fredric writes something on the piece of paper and...

FREDRIC
 She's your mother.

...leaves it sitting on the table.

VINCENT
 She wasn't a mother. I hardly knew
 her. She -- She left us...

Vincent shrugs --

VINCENT

I don't know. I don't care. She left us, right? For a fucking monastery. Nine years old. Renee. Just a baby...

FREDRIC

Can you recall your father? You must remember something. He didn't just argue with her -- he beat your mother senseless.

VINCENT

Fuck you...

FREDRIC

Alright. You're angry --

VINCENT

Yeah, I'm angry. Billy fucked me. He torched the club? He's ruined everything I worked for. Of course, I'm angry. And he tells me --

FREDRIC

-- I'm asking about your mother.

VINCENT

He tells me -- He says they couldn't find a gun. He says, he says ask him if that's the gun that killed your dad. Ask him how he got it...

Vincent runs out of words.

FREDRIC

And you?! Huh? With your big dreams. Nothing allowed to get in your way -- Except Billy loved the club. He loved it. You have your dreams. Did his ever occur to you?

Silence --

Vincent indicates the gun on the table.

VINCENT

Just -- Just answer me. How did you get my father's gun?

FREDRIC

You don't remember? You were there...

VINCENT

What?

A HIGHWAY PATROL CAR speeding up behind him.

THE NOTE with the address and THE GUN are on the seat next to him.

The SIREN YELPS.

Vincent slides the gun under his seat and slows onto the shoulder of the road.

The patrol car PASSES on the outside and SPEEDS into the distance.

Vincent turns down a low embankment and screeches to a stop.

MORNING SUN FLARES FLOOD THE SCREEN.

140 INT. KARAM HOUSE - NIGHT

140

FLASHBACK.

Baby Renee is sitting in the cot. Sobbing uncontrollably. Beyond her --

YOUNG VINCENT peers through the door of his room.

FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW

At the end of the hallway. RAYMOND is sprawled out on the floor. In a POOL of BLOOD

A WOMAN slumped in a chair. Her head in her hands.

FREDRIC IS STANDING NEXT TO HER HOLDING THE GUN.

END FLASHBACK.

141 INT/EXT. VEHICLE. REMOTE ROAD - DAY

141

THE CAR DOOR FLIES OPEN.

VINCENT falls out of the vehicle and staggers to the closest tree for stability. He doubles over with an attack of nausea.

AFTER A MOMENT --

He gets back in the car. Drives. His face strobed by sunlight filtering through the trees.

CUT TO:

142 **EXT/INT. SAINT BENEDICT CONVENT - DAY**

142

LARGE IRON GATES OPEN.

Vincent drives through --

Vincent waiting in reception --

A RASSOPHORE leads Vincent down a long, austere corridor. They stop outside a room.

The nun KNOCKS. We hear a murmur from within. She indicates for him to enter.

RASSOPHORE
She knows you're here. She hasn't
spoken for years. Only prayer.

The Rassophore leaves.

Vincent hesitates. Then steps into --

143 **INT. SAINT BENEDICT CONVENT. NADINE'S ROOM - DAY**

143

Every inch of wall is covered in religious iconography. Paintings of the Virgin Mary. The Saints.

A diamond-leaded stained glass window with a view of the garden.

A bed. A chest of drawers and small table with a vase of wild flowering herbs. Votive candles. Frankincense burning in a small brass vessel.

A chair. The seated WOMAN has her back to us. She holds a string of rosary beads, coaxing each one through her fingers.

The woman's eyes are crystal clear. The same blue as Vincent's. She mutters a prayer in a continuous murmur. Her skin is soft, wrinkled, transparent. This is --

Vincent's mother --

NADINE.

VINCENT steps into her view. Pulls up another chair.

She doesn't look at him. Her eyes are fixed beyond him on an effigy of the Holy Mother with Baby Jesus in her arms.

A beat --

The curve of his body is sculpted in shame.

VINCENT
...Mum...

SHE LOOKS AT HIM. Her gaze soft. Forgiving. She reaches out. Takes his hand.

A QUIETUS.

Tears well in Vincent's eyes.

CUT TO:

144

INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. NURSE'S STATION - DAY

144

The NURSE is in a huddle with MAGDA. Preparing Fredric's medication.

Speaking in hushed tones. MALIK skittering around their feet.

MAGDA
Was this the first time?

NURSE
No...

MAGDA
His hand where?

The Nurse demonstrates. Running her hand from her knee towards her thigh.

Magda reaches out and stops her from being literal. Malik gets in on the act. Circling. Sniffing. Pawing.

MAGDA
Malik!

Malik shies away.

MAGDA
Did he say anything?

NURSE
No.

MAGDA
Anything else?

The Nurse evades --

MAGDA
What?

NURSE
He touches himself sometimes.
It's...

MAGDA

Oh.

NURSE

...the Alzheimers.

Magda sighs. She struggles to accept. To know the one you love is losing their dignity.

MAGDA

And you?

The Nurse reassures --

NURSE

I'm fine Mrs Barakat. His behaviour --
it's natural...

A beat --

MAGDA

He's an old man.

The Nurse smiles and nods.

Malik barks.

Magda CLAPS her HANDS at the dog and makes a SHOOING GESTURE.

145

INT/EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE - DAY

145

FOLLOW MALIK --

He GALLOPS down the hallway.

SLIDES across the kitchen tiles. Out across the patio. Scoops up a tennis ball.

BOUNDS up to --

FREDRIC in his wheelchair. The ball between his teeth.

Fredric LIGHTS UP. Takes the ball. Throws it...

Malik gives chase --

Overruns the moving ball. Doubles back. Retrieves it in his jaws. Trots back to Fredric and lays it in his lap.

AGAIN.

Fredric raises the ball. Rolls it in his fingers --

CUT TO:

146 INT. SAINT BENEDICT CONVENT. NADINE'S ROOM - DAY

146

NADINE --

SHUFFLING the ROSARIES while she speaks.

THE CONVENT.

NADINE

God as my witness, I knew this day
would come -- that you would be my
confessor.

CAMERA drifts from her across the iconography in the room and
lands on...

NADINE (O.S.)

What I've done, God cannot
absolve.

...VINCENT. Not sure he wants to hear.

147 EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY

147

FREDRIC throws the ball. MALIK chases. A midair catch. Then,
back to Fredric's side.

FREDRIC

Good boy. Good boy.

He strokes the dog's head.

Malik gleams with anticipation. Coiled like a spring. Tongue
lolling slick with saliva --

AGAIN.

Fredric throws the ball. Malik chases.

NADINE (V.O.)

I had hoped prayer would cleanse the
lies. But nothing will.

Fredric's blanket has fallen to the ground.

THE NURSE runs out. Picks it up and covers Fredric's legs. He
mutters without looking up --

FREDRIC

Thank you.

He reaches for her --

BUT --

She's gone. Instead, MALIK presents him with a wet ball.

NADINE (V.O.)
 The man you call your father. I
 loved him. But then he became
 distracted. Troubled.
 Unpredictable. Given to changes in
 mood -- I feared him. Fredric...

Fredric wipes off the saliva with the blanket, ruffles the dog's fur and throws the ball again.

Malik chases.

NADINE (V.O.)
 Fredric showed me kindness. In
 desperation I -- I took advantage of
 his goodwill...

Malik stops. Growls.

A RABBIT --

Skips into the bushes.

MALIK whines...

BEHIND THE BUSHES. THE RABBIT STANDS. FROZEN.

148

INT. SAINT BENEDICT CONVENT. NADINE'S ROOM - DAY

148

VINCENT listens for the TRUTHS to come --

NADINE
 Yes... At the first sign of the
 pregnancy, I made sure to let Raymond
 think you were his son...

And they do. The truths. They come.

NADINE speaks with unerring clarity. No nostalgia.
 Emotionally detached. Resigned --

NADINE
 I kept the secret. Not only from
 Raymond. But from Fredric. There was
 no other way to keep you safe.

Vincent struggles to process the information.

CUT TO:

149 **EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY**

149

THE STARTLED RABBIT FLEES --

Follow the rabbit into the BLACKNESS of its burrow --

CUT TO:

150 **INT. KARAM HOUSE - NIGHT**

150

THE OBSCURITY OF A DARKENED CORRIDOR.

FLASHBACK --

A SLIVER of SUNLIGHT spills from a door opening --

NADINE (V.O.)

I withdrew from Raymond. We lived
separate lives. I had no love to give.
I denied him. Despite his
infidelities, he wanted to punish me.

The doorknob turns. The door eases open. LITTLE VINCENT'S face
appears --

Looking down the hallway at a figure --

NADINE (V.O.)

I could not take any more from
Raymond. He threatened to kill me.
And my children. I could not let
him do that...

NADINE --

SITTING at a table. Speaking on the LANDLINE. SUITCASES
PACKED. For her and the children.

RAYMOND STORMS IN --

Slaps a gun and money on the table. Wrenches the phone from her.
Rips it from the wall.

Roughly grabs the suitcases. Tears them open. Throws them --
Their contents strewn across the floor --

Soft toys. Nadine's clothes and the children's.

He STRIKES Nadine. Again and again with an OPEN FIST while
TEARING at her CLOTHING.

She STRUGGLES. He TIGHTENS HIS GRIP around her waist. His free
hand CLAWS at the underwear BENEATH her dress.

NADINE STARES beyond him. Terrified. Straight at --

LITTLE VINCENT --

NADINE (V.O.)
Perhaps you do not wish to
remember.

PLEADING with her EYES for him to avert his gaze. THE BOY. RIGID WITH FEAR.

END FLASHBACK.

CUT TO:

151 **EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY** 151

FREDRIC. MALIK at his feet. Tongue dangling loose and long. Panting. The ball discarded.

THE GAME IS OVER.

CUT TO:

152 **INT. SAINT BENEDICT CONVENT. NADINE'S ROOM - DAY** 152

THE RASSOFORE and another NUN comfort

NADINE.

She ROCKS gently back and forth CLUTCHING her ROSARIES and PRAYING.

153 **EXT. SAINT BENEDICT CONVENT. CAR PARK - DAY** 153

CLOSE SLOWLY IN ON --

VINCENT

Sitting in his car. The motor running.

CUT TO:

154 **INT. KARAM HOUSE - NIGHT** 154

RAYMOND IN A POOL OF BLOOD.

FLASHBACK.

WE HEAR knocking at the front door. FREDRIC calling out. The sound is distant. Dissociated from the brutality of --

THE IMAGE OF NADINE --

Her clothing ripped. Slumped in a chair. Face bruised and bleeding. In shock. Eyes riveted to the BODY on the floor in front of her --

Her arms hanging by her side.

The FOREFINGER of her hand CURLED around the TRIGGER GUARD --

THE TIP OF THE GUN BARREL

RESTING ON THE FLOOR.

WE HEAR the front door being FORCED open. Urgent footfall.

FREDRIC --

SLOWS when he sees the grisly scene.

HE EASES THE GUN FROM HER FINGERTIPS.

He walks down the HALLWAY toward the LIGHT SEEPING through the crack in the door. He stops halfway.

BEHIND THE DOOR --

LITTLE VINCENT slowly pulls the door shut. He crouches next to a crib. BABY RENEE CRYING.

HER CRIES AND WHIMPERS MUTATE INTO --

FLASHBACK ENDS.

CUT TO:

155

EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY

155

CRIES AND WAILING COMING FROM --

The two-storey Barakat mansion behind

FRANK

as he --

WALKS TOWARDS THE FIGURE OF

FREDRIC

in the garden. With...

THE NEWS OF BILLY'S DEATH.

CUT TO:

156 **EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE - DAY**

156

VINCENT DRIVES INTO FORECOURT.

A SHIT-COLOURED MIASMA hangs in the air.

The manicured lawn and pristine gardens have a PATINA of DECAY. No bird song. Only the MUFFLED CRIES and LAMENTATION from inside the house.

VINCENT walks toward the main entrance. His steps are slow. Crunching on the gravel driveway.

FRANK leans against a colonnade on the front porch, chain-smoking cigarettes.

He looks up at the house. Shakes his head and MUTTERS --

FRANK
A house full of women grieving the
men who were meant to protect them.

He DROPS the lit CIGARETTE, STAMPS it out. SITS on the steps and lights another.

157 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. VATICAN ROOM - DAY**

157

A framed PHOTOGRAPH is on display, surrounded by votive candles -
-

WILLIAM 'BILLY' BARAKAT.

Magda and Nancy sob inconsolably. Monsignor echoes their keening with his prayer.

ANGEL appears at the door. The women embrace her.

Holding his GRUFFALO, NOAH sits in front of the photograph of his father. He touches the image with his finger --

NOAH
Daddy...

158 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. KITCHEN - DAY**

158

AUNTIE COLETTE and COUSIN DELORES, prepare tea and coffee for the mourners.

They speak in whispers --

DELORES
I don't want to say it but --

COLETTE
Then don't --

DELORES
I know, I know, but -- he was
always a burden on the family --

COLETTE
Shhh --

DELORES
I know, I know, I shouldn't --

COLETTE
Then don't, even if it's true. Not
now.

DELORES
Poor Magda.

COLETTE
Shush.

159 INT/EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. KITCHEN. GARDEN - DAY

159

AIDA. EYES RED FROM GRIEVING --

Walks through the kitchen and stands in the doorway to the
garden --

SHE CATCHES SIGHT of

VINCENT at the SIDE ENTRANCE to the GARDEN.

THEIR EYES CONNECT.

ONE SECRET WAITING to be EXCHANGED for ANOTHER.

WAITING but not shared --

CUT TO:

160 EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY

160

FREDRIC.

In the garden. Hunched over. Blankets covering his legs. A catheter in his arm. A nasal cannula --

OXYGEN to help him BREATHE.

The NURSE checks his blood pressure.

A HEART MONITOR attached to electrodes beneath the cardigan he wears to keep him warm.

WE HEAR --

THE SOUND of FREDRIC'S breathing thinning and the soft sporadic whimpers of Malik filtering through.

THEN --

THE SOUNDS of nature begin DROWNING OUT the grief.

VAPOROUS CLOUDS of MIST envelop Fredric. He becomes --

A SPECTRE.

CUT TO:

161 **EXT/INT. BARAKAT ESTATE - DAY**

161

THE NURSE RUNNING. URGENT.

FOLLOW HER --

From the garden. Across the patio. Into the house.

The living room. The hallway.

Up the stairs.

Along the endless corridor --

SHE SLOWS. Catches her breath.

ENTERS --

162 **INT. BARAKAT ESTATE. VATICAN ROOM - DAY**

162

THE OUD PLAYS.

The mood is sombre. SOUNDS of gentle sobbing.

THE NURSE succumbs to tears.

MONSIGNOR LOOKS UP.

She has his attention. She bows her head. He turns towards the WINDOW.

HE peers down --

163 **EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY** 163

THROUGH LIFTING VEILS OF MIST --

FREDRIC.

Malik at his side. Raises his paws onto the arms of the wheelchair...

Whimpers.

THE MONITOR connected by tubes to the electrodes shows FREDRIC'S HEART is in ASYSTOLE.

The faint SOUND of FLATLINING.

164 **EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY** 164

IN SHOCK VINCENT WATCHES FROM AFAR.

A distressed MAGDA RUNS from the kitchen to her husband. AIDA is already at her father's side.

Magda slumps at her Fredric's feet. Aida comforts her in an embrace --

SHE briefly looks at VINCENT.

BOTH --

In the SILENT grips of raw INEXPRESSIBLE GRIEF.

165 **EXT. BARAKAT ESTATE. GARDEN - DAY** 165

IN THE WINDOW ABOVE

MONSIGNOR --

Makes the sign of the cross. He turns away. Melts into --

THE REFLECTIONS on the WINDOW PANE of CLOUDS moving rapidly across the sky.

FADE TO BLACK.

166 INT. BAMBINI TRUST RESTAURANT - EARLY MORNING

166

AT HIS FAVOURITE RESTAURANT --

SENATOR LACHY HOLMES hangs his coat on the back of his chair as the Waiter brings him the morning newspapers.

The headlines read:

MIDDLE EASTERN CRIME BOSS AND HIS FAMILY SLAIN IN VENGEANCE KILLING.

Beneath it --

A photograph of WASSIM AL SHAMI.

CUT TO:

CODA

167 EXT. LEBANON. THE SLOPES OF THE VALLEY - DAY

167

Fifty years ago, these fields harvested hashish. Now the dead.

A CEMETERY.

AT THE HEAD OF THE MOURNERS --

MAGDA. THE MATRIARCH.

Cloaked in stoic sorrow. Veiled and garbed in black brocade silk --

The WHITE STREAK in her hair giving her the unmistakable demeanour of regality. Elegance and strength --

Flanked by NANCY, ISABELLA and JOEY TANNOUS --

Accepts condolences from GEORGE AYOUB and ALI YAHYA for her loss --

A HAND-KISS and BRIEF WORDS carry the hope of a future enterprise --

A practiced UPWARD CURVE of MAGDA'S LIPS indicates their contractual agreement will proceed as usual.

The TWO MEN shake hands warmly with FRANK and MIKHAEL --

VINCENT. And AIDA --

now showing visible signs of PREGNANCY gather around TWO ELABORATE CASKETS --

A FATHER and his SON.

The BISHOP of the Northern District gives the blessing while the Village PRIEST throws holy water on the caskets as they descend into the earth.

The same prayer we heard at the beginning in a different context.

BISHOP

*On this solemn occasion, we are
gathered in this sacred place to
celebrate a milestone in a spiritual
journey for the purposes of completing
a relationship with the divine.*

BENEATH the BELL TOWER

THE VILLAGE BAKER. Wearing his toque and apron. Pulls on the bell rope.

Watched by CHILDREN feasting on a basket of beignets and clamouring with sticky fingers for a turn.

THE BELL TOLLS.

Above

An Israeli FIGHTER JET sweeps across the sky. In the distance we hear the ROLLING THUNDER of a never-ending war.

END