

TEASER

INT. DAY. SCHMIDT HOUSE -- SAN DIEGO

TODD FISCHER, 30s, a BODYGUARD who doubles as a nanny (such things exist), dresses as he calls to the next room.

TODD

Guys, are you ready? We're going to be late.

(beat)

It's twenty to eight.

He finds a GLOCK 9MM PISTOL in his top drawer. Holsters it. Pulls on a windbreaker. Checks his hair and exits in a rush.

CUT TO:

INT. SAME TIME. SCHMIDT HOUSE -- KITCHEN

Two boys, eleven years old, watch TV and eat cereal. One is dark, the other blond. They wear identical school uniforms -- a white button-down shirt, khakis, a navy-blue sweater with a crest -- though the dark boy has his sweater on inside-out.

TODD

Do I still have to dress you?

As Todd pulls off the sweater and reverses it,

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. BODEGA

Having waited in line, Todd moves to the counter.

TODD

Two egg-and-cheese burritos and one El Jefe.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAY. DOWNTOWN -- SAN DIEGO

Todd drives carpool in a new Ford Expedition. The dark boy sits in front, the blond boy in back. With both his EL JEFE BURRITO and FLASH CARDS in his lap, Todd quizzes the boys, who both half-listen while they eat a second breakfast and scroll through their Snapchat...

TODD
...Babylonian temple.

DARK BOY
Ziggurat.

TODD
Land between two rivers.
(looks in rear-view)
Hey! Wake up back there. Your turn.

BLOND BOY
Mesopotamia.

TODD
Fertile crescent.

DARK BOY
Birthplace of civilization.

A BMW cuts Todd off. He leans angrily on his horn.

TODD
I'll tell you who invented
civilization. It was a white guy on
his stomach in the mud with a gun.
Don't believe any of this crap.

The Dark Boy turns to the Blond Boy and they laugh. Suddenly the BMW in front of Todd brakes hard -- so does Todd -- but he screeches into the BMW and crunches into its bumper.

DARK BOY
Todd.

TODD
Relax.

DARK BOY
I can't be late again. She'll lower
my grade.

TODD
We're not going to be late.

Two MEN emerge from the BMW...Todd moves to exit -- a JOLT as a second BMW crunches his bumper from behind...Todd looks in the rear-view as two MEN emerge from that car...The first two pull out GUNS... He shoves the Dark Boy's head down...

TODD (CONT'D)
Get down!

The Blond Boy scrambles to the floor...Todd pulls his gun -- jumps out and FIRES at the men...A GUNFIGHT...The Dark Boy panics -- jumps out of the car -- gets hit by a bullet...Then Todd spins around and falls to the ground, wounded...

The men shove the Blond Boy in the first car...Todd scrambles for his gun -- but the assailants escape with the Blond Boy -- *kidnaped* -- leaving the Expedition riddled with bullets...

In pain, Todd crawls to the Dark Boy, who is bleeding and unconscious. Off Todd,

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. YOGA CLASS

A middle-aged man, short and unprepossessing, amidst the great-looking women who are as much a signature of the city as Balboa Park. This is BUDDY SCHMIDT, JR., 30s. His clothes, like everything about Buddy, seem to be trying too hard.

Buddy keeps his phone next to his mat...As he goes into Downward Dog, his phone vibrates, buzzing on the wood floor...Not a phone number he recognizes...He ignores it...The YOGA TEACHER shoots him an annoyed look...

YOGA TEACHER

...Warrior Two -- hold for five
breaths...Then hands on the floor
and do the Vinyasa...

Puffing, Buddy does his Warrior...Again the phone rings. The same number. Again, Buddy ignores it. The phone buzzes on the floor...Annoyed looks from the women on the mats nearby...

YOGA TEACHER (CONT'D)

Did someone forget to turn off his
phone?

The phone stops buzzing. Buddy does his Vinyasa...Winds up in Downward Dog. Glances over at his phone and sees a TEXT:

WE HAVE YOUR SON

What? Buddy grabs his phone and scrambles to his feet. The phone rings again -- same number. As he exits the class...

BUDDY

Who is this?

INT. CONTINUOUS. YOGA STUDIO -- HALLWAY

On the phone, the KIDNAPER talks through a VOCAL TRANSFORMER that bends his voice to make it unrecognizable.

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
We have your son.

BUDDY
These scams. You prey on old people. You should be ashamed.

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
The ransom is twenty million dollars.

BUDDY
Okay, then. Let me talk to him.

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
Do not involve the police or we will kill your son. You have 72 hours to come up with the money.

BUDDY
You won't let me talk to him because you don't have him. Shame on you.

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
Just do what you're told and you'll see your son again.

BUDDY
Shameful. I'm hanging up.

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
Don't joke with me.

CLICK! Then another text -- this one a photo of Buddy's son with a HOOD on his face, in his school uniform, hands tied and hanging upside down from his ankles. Off Buddy,

CUT TO:

EXT. DAY. CRIME SCENE

A fleet of POLICE CARS with their flashers on, blocking off the street...The crime scene is tied off with yellow tape...A black Crown Victoria pulls up and two DETECTIVES emerge:

VERONICA "VEE" MEDINA, 30s, tough and demanding, takes charge of the crime scene.

Following her is her partner, ASHLEY MILLER, also 30s, known as "Ash," stocky and butch. Vee approaches OFFICER DUCKETT, 50s, tall, broad-shouldered and erect, like Daryl Gates.

OFFICER

We counted sixty-eight shell casings.

VEE

We?

OFFICER

Excuse me, ma'am?

VEE

Sergeant.

OFFICER

Sergeant.

VEE

Counting past ten, that's a group effort?

The Officer clears his throat.

OFFICER

The, uh --

VEE

How many uniformed officers does it take to count past ten?

Officer Duckett burps.

OFFICER

-- the car, uh, the --

VEE

"Ma'am." That's like, "Calm down, ma'am." Am I your Granny? Am I your *Meemaw*?

(baby talk)

Did I hold your tiny hand for a little while but your heart forever?

He burps again.

OFFICER

The assailant's car appears to be stolen.

VEE
 So that's why we have fifty
 officers standing here.

OFFICER
 (burping)
 Procedures.

VEE
 To make sure it's not stolen again.

OFFICER
 To protect the evidence.

VEE
 How about *finding* some evidence?
 Otherwise known as police work.
 Surveillance cameras in a five mile
 radius -- look for the car. Or
 better yet, the scum driving it.

Officer Duckett hurries away to take his ass-kicking out on
 his subordinates. Vee makes a note. Ash approaches.

ASH
 You're in a good mood.

VEE
 You met someone?

ASH
 Who said I met someone?

VEE
 You're in *too* good a mood.

Ash smiles to herself. Vee reads emails on her phone...

ASH
 The kidnapings I worked before, it
 was a family member or a custody
 fight.

VEE
 A deadbeat Dad leaves a loud
 voicemail. Not 68 shell casings.

ASH
 Did the Chief call yet?

VEE
 He's in hair and makeup till the
 news crews get here.

ASH
I like your Dad.

VEE
You didn't grow up with him.

As Vee goes to talk to the uniforms, off Ash,

OMITTED

INT. MORNING. CADILLAC ESCALADE -- "EL JEFE EDITION"

A customized SUV with a SCANNER, a SHOTGUN RACK, and a SATELLITE DISH on the roof. On the rear, an enameled plate reads in cursive, "El Jefe Edition."

In the back: RAFI MEDINA, 50s, "El Jefe," a strong face framed by reading glasses, pores over briefing books as he's driven from the second of two breakfasts. His UNIFORM bears a GOLD BADGE that reads "Chief San Diego Police," four stars on his collar and epaulettes, and four chevrons on the sleeve.

Driving is LT. STEVE BYRNES, "Byrnsie," also 50s, an immigrant from Dublin and thirty-year police veteran, now enjoying the sinecure of chauffeuring the Chief. On the scanner, continuing news of the kidnaping.

BYRNSIE
...They just got to the hospital.

EL JEFE
Who?

BYRNSIE
The dark boy. The Mexican boy. He was in the carpool when the Schmidt kid got snatched. A bullet hit him.

EL JEFE
Balboa?

BYRNSIE
And the bodyguard.

EL JEFE
What about the parents?

BYRNSIE
Vee and Ash are on their way to the house.

El Jefe chews pensively on the stem of his reading glasses.

EL JEFE

I can't believe Vee caught this case.

He finds a number to "Facetime" on his IPAD...

BYRNSIE

She's a good cop.

EL JEFE

She's not exactly the most diplomatic.

BYRNSIE

There's lots of folks who need an ass-kicking, and Vee was put on earth to give it to them.

(beat)

Like yourself.

TWIN BROTHERS appear on the Facetime...

CROSSCUTTING -- TIJUANA

BEMBE MEDINA, 30s, beaming with energy and mischief, a Tijuana detective, partnered with his twin brother, RAFAEL MEDINA, JR., known as "YUNI," saturnine and Eeyorish, also a Tijuana detective. Bembe drives a beat-up unmarked cop car. Yuni has El Jefe on Facetime on his phone.

BEMBE

(teasing him)

That's a nice ride you've got, *Jefe*. Is it custom?

EL JEFE

This is serious. There was a kidnaping.

YUNI

We got it on the radio.

EL JEFE

They might be headed your way.

BEMBE

The food is better.

YUNI

The food *is* better.

EL JEFE

It's your sister's case. Help her out.

BEMBE

Are you calling because the *gringo* kid got kidnaped or the *chicano* kid got shot?

EL JEFE

Don't give me that crap. Get on it.

El Jefe hangs up. Bembe turns to Yuni.

BEMBE

Sensitive.

YUNI

It's Vee. He's always the hardest on her.

As Bembe puts the cherrytop on top of the car,

BACK ON -- EL JEFE

Brooding in the back seat...

BYRNSIE

...Mexico's a violent country.

EL JEFE

What's *not* a violent country?

BYRNSIE

Kidnaping's a trend there. Like cupcakes.

EL JEFE

Cupcakes?

BYRNSIE

Sooner or later it'll come north.

EL JEFE

You're a cop. Think like a cop. Start with the facts.

BYRNSIE

New Zealand -- that's a country that ain't violent.

EL JEFE

Why did this kid need a bodyguard?

CUT TO:

EXT. MORNING. SCHMIDT HOUSE

As Buddy pulls up, the vultures have already arrived -- REPORTERS and CAMERA CREWS -- with NEWS COPTERS overhead... The gate opens automatically and a HOUSEKEEPER in uniform bustles out, shoving to make way for her boss...Like the rest of the household staff, she is Latina...As Buddy's car pushes through the mob, a CAMERAMAN topples backwards into the camellias...Nearby, a REPORTER does a standup...

REPORTER

...The victim is believed to be the son of car dealer Buddy Schmidt -- that's him behind me -- well-known in the San Diego area for his TV ads and on the charity circuit...

As the gate closes behind him, Buddy emerges and notices a black CROWN VICTORIA, searchlight and antenna cluster, riding on steelies. Off Buddy, not happy to see the cops here,

CUT TO:

INT. SAME TIME. SCHMIDT HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM

LAURA SCHMIDT, née Lindberg, 30s, a brittle, polished blonde who was once Miss California, sips coffee on the couch beside Vee, who has her notebook out. Ash talks nearby on her cell.

LAURA

...He lives with us.

VEE

The Mexican boy.

LAURA

"Quique." Enrique. His grandfather worked for Buddy's father -- he lives here too. Eddie. He manages the property. Eddie Sanchez.

ANGLE ON -- ASH

She admires a framed pen-and-ink DRAWING on the wall...The New York skyline, in intricate detail, as you'd see it from a helicopter...Laura notices Ash admiring the drawing...

LAURA (CONT'D)

My son Jake made that drawing.

ASH

Eleven years old?

Ash finishes her call, joins them at the couch.

VEE
 (resuming)
 Tell me about the bodyguard.

LAURA
 Todd. He came to work for us -- was it six years ago? seven? -- they wanted to unionize Buddy's dealerships, and there were threats.

VEE
 But recently?

LAURA
 These people become part of the family.
 (rueful)
 Which I can tell you is not so easy.

VEE
 What do you mean?

LAURA
 I mean it's all a bit of a closed circle with the Schmidts.
 (off her look)
 Buddy Senior was a malignant narcissist. So was Jesus Christ. That's what cults are. When Jake was diagnosed with autism, Buddy's mother told me it came from *my* side of the family. Does that give you the picture?

Buddy enters and Laura stiffens. Vee stands.

BUDDY
 Laura, it's going to be all right.

LAURA
 These are the police, they --

BUDDY
 Let's take a minute before we talk to the police.

VEE
 Mr. Schmidt, I want to respect your privacy, but every minute counts --

BUDDY
 You people should have asked me
 before you came barging in the
 house like this.

A look between Buddy and Vee. Then Buddy takes his wife's
 hand and leads her toward his study...Ash turns to Vee.

ASH
 You get anything?

VEE
 Jesus Christ was a malignant
 narcissist.

A beat.

ASH
 You don't insult God. He doesn't
 like that.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTINUOUS. BUDDY'S STUDY

Buddy ushers Laura into his barnlike man cave, filled with
 memorabilia from his father's career as a Formula One racer
 during the '60s and '70s, including a giant Leroy Neiman
 portrait of Buddy Sr., and an actual Formula One race car
 that hangs from the ceiling. Buddy closes the door.

LAURA
 ...You never listen to me.

BUDDY
 I don't trust these people --

LAURA
 I let them in the house. I did.

BUDDY
 -- not that I don't trust them, but
 I don't think they know what
 they're doing.

LAURA
 I can't do anything right.

BUDDY
 Dickless Tracy making eighty grand
 a year. That's what we pay Eddie. I
 barely trust Eddie to cut the
 grass.

LAURA

She was just saying that it's important -- when we get the ransom call --

BUDDY

I already got the ransom call.

She looks at him.

LAURA

Then we'll pay it, right? We'll pay it and Jake will come home. Tell them we'll pay it.

BUDDY

It's a lot of money. It's --

LAURA

Promise me you'll pay it.

BUDDY

It's twenty million dollars.

LAURA

If you don't tell the police, I will.

(off his look)

I don't care how much it is -- I don't want to know. What's money compared to our son's life?

Off Buddy, helpless,

CUT TO:

INT. SAME TIME. SCHMIDT HOUSE -- KITCHEN

A renovation underway, extension cords and plastic shrouds...Vee rinses her mug in the sink...Through the window, she watches EDDIE SANCHEZ, 50s, short and suntanned, rake clippings in the backyard. Buddy crosses the lawn to him...Eddie leans on his rake as he listens to his boss...

Then entering the kitchen in a wheelchair: Buddy's mother, BARB, 60s, her gnarled fingers barnacled with giant stones that on a *dame* less *grande* might be thought to be paste. A former Las Vegas showgirl, Buddy Sr.'s third wife, and the one who got all the money.

BARB

They're always renovating. Putting in a new kitchen when they just put in a new kitchen. Do you think either one of them cooks?

VEE

Are you Buddy's mother?

BARB

I'm Junior's mother. There was only one Buddy.

(looks her over)

I wish I could carry a gun. Maybe someone would listen to me.

(beat)

I brought you a photo of my grandson so you can identify him.

VEE

I think Border Control is using a yearbook photo.

BARB

Don't use that picture. They made him look like an Indian. Use this one. He looks like my husband. Tall, dark and handsome.

Barb hands her a photo of Jake...

CLOSE ON -- VEE

As she puts it together...Jake is the dark boy. But if the dark boy is the one in the hospital...

VEE

Mrs. Schmidt --

BARB

Call me Barb.

VEE

They said there were two boys. A dark one and a blond one.

BARB

That's Quique. Eddie's grandson. Two parents dark as dirt. What we used to call "brown tractors." And the boy comes out blond and blue-eyed. Hell's bells.

Vee watches through the window as Eddie gets the news and weeps...Buddy comforts him -- a real hug, for a man who gave him more love and attention than his own father did. Off Vee,

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. SCHMIDT HOUSE -- QUIQUE'S ROOM

A small bedroom in the staff quarters. On a shelf, Vee finds a photo of Quique with Eddie at a Lakers game. Ash enters. Vee shows her the photo of Jake and the photo of Quique.

VEE

I think they took the wrong kid.

A look between Vee and Ash. Off a closeup on Vee,

FADE TO BLACK.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. DAY. U.S. GRANT HOTEL -- NEAR BALLROOM

El Jefe has stepped out of a charity luncheon to talk to Vee on his cell.

EL JEFE

...What's the public reaction going to be when they realize the Schmidt boy was worth twenty million dollars but the Sanchez boy isn't?

CROSSCUTTING -- TO VEE

Riding in the Crown Victoria, as Ash drives.

VEE

...Even though the bodyguard changed his route every day, the kidnapers knew where they were. They knew where Buddy was. They had his cell phone number.

EL JEFE

So you think there was someone inside.

VEE

It feels personal to me.

EL JEFE

That's not a lead, it's a theory.

VEE

Twenty million dollars isn't a number a professional would put out there. It's someone who wants to hurt Buddy -- to make a point -- to get revenge --

El Jefe takes a beat.

EL JEFE

Well, go with your gut.

VEE

I know everyone's watching on this one.

EL JEFE

Just do your job.

VEE

Okay.

EL JEFE

But keep me posted.

She hangs up. Says nothing. Pensive, she looks out the open window. Ash looks at her.

VEE

He doesn't trust me with this case.

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER -- WAITING ROOM

Buddy and Laura wait to see their son. Other families, aware of the unfolding drama, stare and whisper.

NEWSCASTER #1

...Our top story: they missed the son of the millionaire car dealer and grabbed the gardener's grandson instead...

The attention chafes Laura. Buddy reads the paper, pretending to ignore it. A hospital DEVELOPMENT OFFICER dotes on them.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Mr. Schmidt, are you sure you wouldn't like to wait in a private room?

LAURA

Maybe that --

BUDDY

I don't want any special treatment.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Are you sure?

LAURA

Never mind.

The Development Officer hands Laura a card.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Please call me if you need anything.

She exits.

LAURA

He only got shot because he's your son but I can't have a private room because I'm your wife.

Buddy grits his teeth and loudly turns the page on his paper. Just as DR. ED DAVIS, 30s, arrives in his scrubs.

DR. DAVIS

I'm Ed Davis, one of your son's surgeons. He did great. We know a lot about gunshots here, being a naval hospital. The bullet hit an artery -- he lost a lot of blood -- but once we got that stopped it was all under control. I do some racing, by the way. Big fan of your Dad's.

BUDDY

Can we see him?

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. RECOVERY ROOM

Jake lies asleep and intubated, hooked up to monitors that beep periodically. A NURSE tends to his IV.

LAURA

He looks so small.

Buddy puts his arm around her and she stiffens. Then the starch goes out of her. And she weeps. Off Jake, asleep,

CUT TO:

EXT. DAY. UNDERPASS -- TIJUANA

A WHITE FORD F-150 TRUCK has been abandoned beneath a busy freeway and discovered by uniformed Tijuana POLICE OFFICERS...Bembe and Yuni arrive to inspect it...

ANGLE -- INSIDE THE CAR

As Bembe climbs in...The DASHBOARD has been removed...As he checks inside with his flashlight, REVEAL that a HIDDEN COMPARTMENT has been created there...

BEMBE

...So they ditched the car in San Diego. Got in this truck.

(MORE)

BEMBE (CONT'D)
Probably drugged him and hid him
here in the dashboard to cross the
border. Ditched the truck.

YUNI
Do you think they figured out yet
they grabbed the wrong kid?

BEMBE
And then what?

OMITTED

INT. DAY. HOSPITAL -- WAITING ROOM

Vee and Ash meet with DOCTOR AARAV KAPOOR, 30s, scrubs, a
trauma surgeon.

DR. KAPOOR
...There's no way you can talk to
him now.

VEE
Our best chance to find this kid is
within the first 48 hours.

VEE (CONT'D)
Todd Fischer was the bodyguard.

DR. KAPOOR
It's not like the movies. We had to
open him all the way just to find
the bleeding. Removed his spleen. A
section of intestine. Bone
vaporized into a hundred
microscopic pieces. You don't know
what it is to be shot.

VEE
Yeah, I do.

An awkward beat. On the TV behind them, one of Buddy's TV
commercials comes on...

BUDDY (O.C.)
...My Dad made this the number one
dealership in San Diego, and I'm
keeping up that tradition. If you
want a great car for a great price,
"buy it with Buddy..."

DR. KAPOOR

I misspoke. We all respect your service.

(beat)

But my responsibility is to my patient.

VEE

As soon as possible.

Dr. Kapoor exits. Vee and Ash exchange a look. Then Vee heads inside. Off Ash, hurrying after her partner,

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. HOSPITAL -- TODD'S ROOM

Todd lies asleep, bandaged and intubated. The BLEEP of the monitors reporting on his vital signs...

VEE

...We're looking for someone inside, right? Who knew Buddy's cell phone. Who knew the route...

ASH

Right.

VEE

If he wasn't shot, he'd be our first suspect.

Ash gestures to Todd, motionless in bed.

ASH

Yeah, but Vee, he, aaah, was, aaah...

VEE

What?

ASH

You're right. Let's take him downtown and sweat him.

An ugly cough from Todd. Vee snoops by looking at his chart. A NURSE enters to check his IV.

VEE

Why does he have a prescription for vodka?

NURSE

A shot of vodka every four hours.

(beat)

If we don't, he'll go into withdrawal. Seizures. DTs.

(beat)

He's an alcoholic.

A look between Ash and Vee. The Nurse exits.

VEE

The manny is an alcoholic. With a gun.

ASH

"Practically perfect in every way."

A look between them. Off Todd, asleep,

CUT TO:

EXT. EVENING. SCHMIDT HOUSE

Laura beside him, Buddy drives up to his gate again, but this time, the media keep to a court-ordered 50 feet from the property, there are two police cars parked in front, and six SECURITY GUARDS in suit and tie coordinate by walkie-talkie.

CUT TO:

INT. EVENING. SCHMIDT HOUSE -- FAMILY ROOM

Several more SECURITY GUARDS inside...Buddy heads for the bar in the family room. Fills a bucket from the ice maker...

LAURA

Is it five o'clock?

BUDDY

It's five o'clock somewhere.

(beat)

Does anyone know where Eddie is?

The question, addressed to no one in particular, goes unanswered. Buddy pours a vodka -- flips the channels -- finds ESPN. Then his CELL rings. A NEW NUMBER. He considers not answering. It rings again...Finally, he picks up. The same voice as before, distorted by the vocal transformer...

KIDNAPER (O.C.)

So my colleagues assumed that the rich boy was the blond boy.

(MORE)

KIDNAPER (O.C.) (CONT'D)
The cops made the same assumption.
Interesting, isn't it?

BUDDY
I see you can watch the news,
wherever you are.

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
How are we ever going to make any
progress as a society?

BUDDY
If you know, why are you calling
me? It's not my kid. I have no
interest in this anymore.

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
It changes nothing.

BUDDY
What?

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
The ransom is twenty million
dollars. You have 48 hours.

BUDDY
You're delusional.

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
Pay it or the boy dies.

Buddy jumps up in a rage, spilling his drink...

BUDDY
I'm *not* paying. I'm *not* paying.

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
Kill the boy. You don't have the
balls.

BUDDY
...Not one penny...

KIDNAPER (O.C.)
You were told not to involve the
police.

BUDDY
Get it through your fricking --

Suddenly the sound of a GUNSHOT -- Buddy drops the phone in
fright -- and the line goes dead. Buddy picks up his phone
and finds on it a TEXT MESSAGE -- a PHOTO -- he opens it...

A PHOTO OF LAURA AND VEE

When they had coffee together on the couch...Taken from inside the house...Then Laura enters. Buddy paces, agitated.

LAURA

Buddy, what's wrong?

BUDDY

I want everyone out of the house.
All the staff. The security.
Everyone. Out now.

As the Security Guards move to comply, hustling Buddy's housekeeper and others out...Buddy looks up -- sees a SECURITY GUARD escort Eddie out. A long look between them, across the distance. Off Buddy,

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT. EL JEFE'S HOUSE -- FAMILY ROOM

A cozy house near the beach that they bought together as a wedding present for each other. In his favorite chair, in his bulky cardigan, El Jefe reads history. His wife, JULIE HOBBS MEDINA, 30s, a professional chef and food entrepreneur, snuggles on the couch under a blanket, reading cookbooks.

JULIE

...Do you mind if I buy a grain mill?

EL JEFE

That's fine.

JULIE

You can't make authentic tacos without a grain mill.

EL JEFE

Get a grain mill.

JULIE

You can find fresh *masa*, but even that is not the same as doing it yourself.

EL JEFE

You make more money than I do.

JULIE

That's not true. Anyway it's not the point.

EL JEFE

What if I get you a grain mill for Christmas?

(beat)

Uh-oh. What did I say?

The doorbell rings.

JULIE

We're still in the honeymoon year.

She kisses him as she gets up. El Jefe smiles, watches her as she moves to answer the door...

CUT TO:

EXT. CONTINUOUS. EL JEFE'S HOUSE

Julie opens the door. It's MAYOR FRANK WHITE, 60s, a canny if uncharismatic political survivor. A patron who accounts the chit for every favor, to whom El Jefe owes his career.

JULIE

Mister Mayor.

WHITE

Mrs. Medina. Are you wishing you didn't buy the house next door to me?

El Jefe appears behind his wife. Holds her affectionately.

EL JEFE

Nice night. Let's sit outside.

JULIE

I'll make some coffee.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT. EL JEFE'S HOUSE -- PORCH

El Jefe and the Mayor sit on rocking chairs on the porch, enjoying the sea breeze and the sound of the nearby surf.

WHITE

...I've known Buddy since they called him Junior. The Old Man had that one dealership in Miramar, with potholes in the lot that he was too cheap to fix. Buddy built it into four. Gets no credit.

(MORE)

WHITE (CONT'D)

It's still the Old Man's name up there. The mother still talks about him like he walked on water, even though he cheated on her with every girl at the car show. She won't give Buddy the time of day. And she owns 51 per cent of the company. He can't change a wiper blade unless she says so. And she never says so.

EL JEFE

So you're wondering if Vee can handle this case.

(beat)

The media. The Mayor watching. One of the town's leading citizens...

WHITE

I know she can handle it. Vee's a war hero. That Navy Cross counts around here.

EL JEFE

And if this child dies, then we're the city where a Mexican kid's life doesn't count as much as an Anglo kid's life.

WHITE

Imagine Vee was sitting here. What would she say?

EL JEFE

(beat)

Did she just give me the finger?

White laughs.

WHITE

She was waving to you.

They share a warm laugh. El Jefe takes out a pack of NICORETTE GUM. Pops out a piece...

EL JEFE

I've always been harder on Vee. I think she reminds me of that time when my wife was dying -- with six kids -- I expected Vee somehow to take over and fill her shoes.

(beat)

I never felt helpless like that -- before or since.

(with gum)

(MORE)

EL JEFE (CONT'D)

I quit smoking cigars. My wedding present to Julie.

WHITE

You're happy, Rafi. It's good to see you happy.

The Mayor squeezes his knee. El Jefe takes a thoughtful beat as he opens the package and selects his gum...

EL JEFE

You know, Buddy's wife said the bodyguard was hired because of problems with unions. But he was hired in 2008, at the height of the financial crisis. No union was trying to organize Buddy's dealerships -- or anything -- back then. So either she lied. Or Buddy lied to her.

WHITE

Wait a minute -- are we investigating Buddy now?

EL JEFE

I thought we were trying to save this kid's life, Frank.

(beat)

I mean, who the heck sends his son to school with a bodyguard?

The Mayor takes a beat.

WHITE

I understand you want to stand up for your daughter. Family comes first. But that goes for the Schmidts, too -- they're part of things around here. If you go after Buddy, it better be airtight.

Off their looks,

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. DAY. SCHMIDT HOUSE

Vee sits in the living room, scrolling through emails, as the door opens and SHANE TARBER, 30s, the ruggedly handsome contractor, enters with his tool box.

SHANE

Can I help you with something?

VEE

I'm just waiting for Laura.

SHANE

She's probably still at church.

(beat)

I'm Shane.

He smiles and shakes her hand.

VEE

Do you always work on Sundays?

SHANE

Only on jobs where I'm six months behind.

VEE

Mind if I ask you some questions?

Shane looks at her...Realizes...

SHANE

You're a cop.

(beat)

Sure. Why not?

VEE

Anybody around here have it in for Buddy?

SHANE

His mother. His wife. Everybody who ever worked for him.

Shane laughs. Heads into the kitchen. She follows him as he prepares to go to work...

VEE

Then why did Buddy hire a bodyguard
for Jake?

SHANE

Ego. He'd rather think people have
it in for him, when the truth is,
people hardly notice him.

(beat)

I don't know how much of a
bodyguard Todd was.

(beat)

Did you serve?

VEE

The Corps.

SHANE

Semper fi. Todd's idea of a great
naval hero is Captain Morgan.

Shane lifts thumb and pinky and makes a tippling
gesture...Then gets down to assemble his equipment...

VEE

But there must be some reason Buddy
hired a bodyguard to protect his
son.

SHANE

San Diego's turning into Mexico.
Last year, there were more murders
in Mexico than in the U.S. -- a
country one third of the size. And
one hundred *thousand* kidnapings.
The Mexicans lost California in
1848 -- now they'll get it back --
with babies instead of bullets.
They call it the *reconquista*. This
is all well-documented.

VEE

I'm sure it is.

He looks her over.

SHANE

I like a sturdy woman. You want to
go out sometime?

Vee ignores that. Hands him her card.

VEE

Keep your eyes open. Okay?

SHANE

I'll deny I ever said this. But I
wouldn't trust Buddy as far as I
can spit.

Shane returns to his cabinets. Off Vee,

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. EL JEFE'S HOUSE -- DINING ROOM

Family dinner, to which all in El Jefe's sprawling family are called every Sunday, and at which attendance is non-negotiable. The entire family (all fifteen of them) crowds around a large table, kids included, so El Jefe can see his many grandchildren. PANNING among the family we pick out:

Bembe and Yuni have driven up from Tijuana. Bembe sits beside his wife, LUPITA, 30s, a native Mexican. They have five children. Yuni sits across from them, recently escaped from a tortured marriage that produced no children.

GUSTAVO "TAVO" MEDINA, 30s, the middle child and the "brain," who Vee largely raised after their mother died, a computer and technology expert with the SDPD. Beside him, his longtime partner, REFUGIO "CUCO" LOPEZ, also 30s, ebullient and irresistible, an SDPD forensics investigator.

LOURDES "LULÚ" MEDINA, 20s, the "beauty," is the only one who doesn't work in law enforcement, though she is dating TROY LINGLER, 20s, gym-built and crew-cut, a SWAT team officer. Everything about Lulú is too much: too much makeup, too much cleavage, too loud, too needy.

Vee's seat at the table is conspicuously empty. Julie has prepared a "decolonized" Mexican feast, which gets passed on heaping platters, family-style. Bembe digs in.

JULIE

...Shouldn't we wait for Vee before
we say grace?

Bembe takes a big bite.

BEMBE

(with his mouth full)
Vee's always late.

EL JEFE

Find out how long she'll be.

YUNI

The over-under is 35 minutes.

Tavo reaches for his wallet and puts a FIVE on the table...

TAVO
I'll take the over.

...So does Cuco...

CUCO
I'll take the over.

LULÚ
I don't want to wait.

Yuni jumps in and starts to load up his plate...

EL JEFE
Animals.

BEMBE
Drama queen.

Notwithstanding his protests, El Jefe can't resist loading his plate as well...

EL JEFE
She does have kind of a high-profile case she's working on.

LULÚ
Anyway I have news.

YUNI
In TJ we have these cases all the time.

EL JEFE
Are you on it?

BEMBE
Who wants to wait for Vee? Raise your hand.

Nobody raises his hand. A look between Julie and El Jefe. El Jefe smiles at Bembe's youngest son, ARMANDO, 3 and adorable.

EL JEFE
Mando, you say grace.

MANDO
Bless us, O Lord! and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Everyone digs in...

LULÚ
Who wants to hear my news?

BEMBE
What kind of food is this?

Julie freezes.

JULIE
It's Mexican food.

EL JEFE
Based on mesoamerican biodiversity
pre-colonization. Healthier.

Yuni looks to Bembe, who stifles a smile. Tavo and Cuco pick up on it. Disgusted, Yuni throws his napkin at Bembe.

YUNI
He's messing with you.
(to Bembe)
Pendejo.

LULÚ
I have news. Hello?

BEMBE
It's delicious, Julie.

LULÚ
What'd'I gotta do, take my top off?

Suddenly Vee hurries in, followed by Ash.

VEE
We got a break in the case.

EL JEFE
Ash, pull up a chair. There's
plenty of food.

VEE
(with phone)
We got video of the kidnapers from
the morning of -- from a gas
station.

Bembe and Yuni exchange a look.

BEMBE
Can we see it?

TAVO

Let's put it on a monitor.

"Family comes first," but police work is family. Suddenly Bembe, Yuni, Tavo, Cuco, Vee, and Ash clear out and head down the hall to El Jefe's study. El Jefe looks to Julie. She smiles and shakes her head.

JULIE

Go ahead. That's what the warming drawer is for.

El Jefe folds his napkin and hurries to join the others...

LUPITA

So what's your news?

Troy and Lulú exchange a look.

LULÚ

Troy and I got engaged.

Screams and squeals...

JULIE

I was hoping that's what it was.
That's so exciting!

LUPITA

Show me the ring!

Lupita and Julie crowd to the ring and ooh and aah... Lulú models it...Then she glances at the EMPTY CHAIR at the head of the table...El Jefe's chair...Off Lulú,

CUT TO:

INT. SAME TIME. MEDINA HOUSE -- EL JEFE'S STUDY

Tavo logs into El Jefe's computer and plugs Vee's phone into a USB cable...

VEE

...How'd you know Dad's password?

CUCO

That's Tavo.

VEE

Dad told you?

TAVO

I'm the brain in the family.

VEE
Then what am I?

CUCO
The bitch in the family?

Laughter from Tavo and Cuco.

VEE
You can only say that when you're
in the family. Boyfriends don't
count.

Bembe puts his arm around Cuco.

BEMBE
Cuco is family.

El Jefe enters.

EL JEFE
How'd you know my password?

ON THE MONITOR

Tavo plays the video...The BMW approaches the pump and two men emerge -- the Rodriguez brothers...In his "Xolos de Tijuana" T-shirt, Paco fills up the tank...

CUCO
Xolos de Tijuana. What is that?

BEMBE
What kind of nerd are you?

VEE
Soccer club.

Another SQUEAL from inside...

EL JEFE
What's going on in there?

VEE
Lulú and Troy got engaged. I was
the first one she told.
(to Tavo)
Can you get that picture good
enough to get an ID?

El Jefe looks at his daughter...No boyfriend in years, and now her kid sister is marrying, and she's feeling sorry for herself...He puts his arm around her and instantly she's his little girl again -- she can't help it -- her eyes well up...

ON THE MONITOR

Tavo works to enhance the image...

BEMBE

We'll go back home tonight -- drive around and shake the trees.

(beat)

Yuni, you mind changing your plans?

YUNI

Sure. I can go.

A furtive look between Yuni and Ash...

EL JEFE

I don't like the way that sounds, "shake the trees."

BEMBE

You know, *Jefe*, the idea that the police in Tijuana aren't as professional as the police up north -- that's just an old racist cliché.

YUNI

It's pretty ethical, you know.

(beat)

Except for us.

El Jefe isn't sure if they're joking or not.

EL JEFE

Just don't kill anyone.

Tavo continues to work on enhancing the image as the rest file out...Off another fraught look between Yuni and Ash,

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. HALLWAY

As everyone exits the study, Julie intercepts El Jefe as he grabs his coat from a hook in the front hallway.

JULIE

Lulú and Troy got engaged.

EL JEFE

Vee told me.

(beat)

Wow.

JULIE

Wow good or wow bad?

El Jefe doesn't answer. He moves to grab his coat...

EL JEFE

I have to see Buddy. If he's making a 20 million dollar decision, he needs to know where we stand.

JULIE

Before you leave, can you open a bottle of wine?

EL JEFE

Sure.

JULIE

And leave it next to my bathtub?

He looks at her. Smiles. Hugs her.

EL JEFE

You wanted a big Mexican family.

JULIE

Go congratulate them.

A look between them.

EL JEFE

This isn't going to last.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTINUOUS. DINING ROOM

El Jefe enters with his arms open.

EL JEFE

I'm so happy for you, baby.

El Jefe and Lulú embrace.

LULÚ

Oh, Daddy.

Then he turns to Troy.

EL JEFE

I was hoping for a doctor, but I'll settle for another cop.

(MORE)

EL JEFE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Welcome to the family.

TROY

Thank you, sir. I have a lot of ideas about policing that I'd like to discuss with you sometime.

EL JEFE

Let us say sometime.

As they shake hands, off El Jefe,

CUT TO:

INT. EVENING. LIQUOR STORE

Vee stands at the counter, opening her wallet.

CLERK

...The blue is expensive.

VEE

Don't I look expensive?

CLERK

You look blue.

VEE

My favorite color.

CLERK

Times we live in.

As the CLERK, 20s, tats and piercings, pulls a bottle of Johnnie Walker Blue, Vee goes to the BULLETIN BOARD...Removes the notices -- dog walking and Reiki massage and piano lessons -- to reveal a "MISSING" poster, faded and curling with age...She takes the poster down and looks at it...

MISSING: CAN YOU HELP?

With a photo of her kid brother, ISAAC MEDINA, 20s and handsome, in his Navy dress uniform, and another informal shot of him in a swimsuit, rippling with lean muscle, just after he completed his SEAL training. The Clerk watches her.

VEE

That's my brother.

She tacks it back on top, so it's visible again.

CLERK

My sister went missing. But I keep looking for her.

VEE

We let him go.

(beat)

We worked every angle. Called in every favor. Fought about it -- why weren't we on it? -- why didn't we do more?

(beat)

And then we just stopped talking about it.

CLERK

Sometimes there's nothing you can do.

VEE

Keep it on top where people can see it.

She puts a twenty in the tip jar. Exits with her package. Off the Clerk,

CUT TO:

INT. EVENING. SCHMIDT HOUSE

MYERS, an ex-cop and now a SECURITY GUARD, 40s, suit and tie, answers the door. It's El Jefe.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh, hi, Chief. Myers. I was on the job for twenty years. Motorcycle.

EL JEFE

Lower back?

SECURITY GUARD

At least I don't have to wear the belt.

(beat)

I'll get the boss.

EL JEFE

(after him)

Try yoga for that back.

The Guard exits. El Jefe wanders into the kitchen...Admires the new cabinetry that is being installed, with its richly-figured grain... Buddy finds him there.

BUDDY

Our contractor makes his own cabinets.

EL JEFE

I have a shop in my garage.

(beat)

What is this, rosewood?

BUDDY

Koa.

EL JEFE

Hawaiian?

BUDDY

Does it all himself. The last ones were rosewood. Laura wanted to change them.

EL JEFE

To do something right, do it yourself.

BUDDY

(rueful)

The kidnaper would say that.

(beat)

Can I get you a drink?

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. FAMILY ROOM

Buddy and El Jefe sit over a drink. Buddy looks at the video of the Rodriguez brothers on El Jefe's phone.

BUDDY

...Can you identify them?

EL JEFE

My twins are detectives on the Tijuana side. They're working on it now.

Buddy takes a beat.

BUDDY

The irony is, I have the money -- I literally have the cash -- I just borrowed 20 million dollars from the bank to buy my mother out of the business.

(MORE)

BUDDY (CONT'D)

I put everything I own against it --
my share of the dealerships, my
house.

EL JEFE

So you borrowed exactly the ransom
amount?

BUDDY

A month ago. If I pay the ransom,
I'd have nothing left.

EL JEFE

And who knows this?

BUDDY

Nobody. I mean, Laura.

(rueful)

Some family, huh? I'd rather have
the bank as a partner than my own
mother.

El Jefe takes a beat.

EL JEFE

Buddy, I promise you that we will
bring these kidnapers to justice
and get your money back. But can we
find them before the deadline? No.
I don't think we can.

BUDDY

So is that why you came -- to tell
me to pay the ransom?

EL JEFE

I can't tell you what to do with
your money.

BUDDY

It's not the money. It's my life.
Wake up in the morning and do what?
Mow the lawn?

(beat)

My marriage. Laura's gotten used to
all this.

EL JEFE

San Diego is the kind of town where
you might find you have a lot of
friends.

BUDDY

Would you just give up your badge
and never be a cop again?

A look between them.

EL JEFE

I don't know that I could.

Buddy takes a beat.

BUDDY

The kid is great. He lives here. I
treat him like my own son. Because
that's how Eddie treated me -- my
Dad was never around -- Eddie
taught me how to fish and shoot --
he taught me how to shake hands and
keep my word -- how to stand on my
own two feet.

EL JEFE

I never knew my father.

BUDDY

That's a blessing.

EL JEFE

In some ways.

BUDDY

I borrowed that money so I could
have something that was mine.

EL JEFE

This is yours.

(beat)

This tragedy is an opportunity to
tell the world who you are.

A look between them. Off El Jefe,

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

-- CAMERA CREWS and REPORTERS hustle into position and
SUNGUNS banish the night as Buddy and Laura emerge through
their front gate. Buddy reads from a prepared statement.

BUDDY

...This decision did not come
easily...

-- In a San Diego BAR, PATRONS watch the press conference on the TV over the bar...

BUDDY (CONT'D)

...In the end, for Laura and myself, there is no price that can be placed on a human life...

-- In a Tijuana restaurant, PATRONS watch the press conference, but on a Spanish-language station, with a CHYRON translating it from English...

BUDDY (CONT'D)

...We require real, concrete assurance that no harm has come to Enrique, and that he will be returned unharmed to our family and to his grandfather, Eduardo...

-- CLOSE ON BUDDY as he addresses the media, in the glare of photographic flashes and sunguns...

BUDDY (CONT'D)

...In exchange, we are prepared to pay the full ransom...

-- At the waiting room in Naval Medical Center, Vee crosses as the news conference plays on the TV...

BUDDY (CONT'D)

...To the media, please respect our family's privacy. Thank you very much.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT. HOSPITAL -- JAKE'S ROOM

Jake, the "Dark Boy" we met earlier, sits up in bed and DRAWS...A high-functioning autistic savant who can draw from memory anything he has seen once...What he is drawing now are two men who look remarkably like the Rodriguez brothers, down to Paco's Xolos de Tijuana T-shirt...

VEE

...How'd you learn to draw like that?

JAKE

I just could.

VEE

Always?

JAKE

The teachers wanted me to talk. But
I like to draw.

VEE

You can just see something once and
draw it like that?

JAKE

I saw them before.

VEE

Is this them?

Vee matches a SCREEN GRAB of the Rodriguez brothers to Jake's
drawing...

JAKE

Yeah.

VEE

I know you saw them before -- for
like five seconds -- plus they were
shooting at you. That's an amazing
talent.

JAKE

I saw them *before*.

A long beat as Vee takes this in, while Jake draws...

VEE

Before when?

JAKE

I went with my Dad. To pick up his
new car.

(beat)

At the car factory. In Mexico.

Vee takes this in as Jake continues to draw...On a SLOW PUSH
IN on Vee,

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. NIGHT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR -- TIJUANA

The twins sit with an INFORMANT who fidgets in the back seat.

YUNI

...You can't be smarter than me.

BEMBE

I didn't say I was smarter than you.

YUNI

Genetically we have the same intelligence.

BEMBE

What I said was, "Be smart."

INFORMANT

Hola. Qué tal?

Suddenly Bembe erupts, his face purpling...

BEMBE

Shut up.

The Informant cowers. And as soon as the violence erupts, it's over. Is it an act? Yuni pays no mind to it.

YUNI

The implication is that you're smarter than me. I reject that.

BEMBE

I live in a house on the beach. You live in a basement apartment. I have five kids. You have no kids. I have three businesses I run on the side. You have three credit cards that are overdrawn.

YUNI

Why did you have to give her a hard time about the food?

BEMBE

Your greatest achievement in life is divorcing that screech owl you should never have married in the first place.

INFORMANT

Can you tell me what we're doing?

BEMBE

Sure. We're going to sit here till someone sees you in the car talking to the police. And then we're going to let you go.

The Informant starts to squirm...

YUNI

Why do you have it in for Julie?
That makes you smart?

Bembe takes a beat.

BEMBE

A tortilla is not a thing. It's a moment. It's the "aah"-ness of being there. It's the willow that shivers in the sun. It's the happiness you can't hold onto. A tortilla has that one moment when it's warm -- when it's perfect -- and then that moment is gone. A tortilla is loss.

YUNI

What do you mean, "loss"? You mean Mom?

BEMBE

Julie's had an easy life.

YUNI

You mean Isaac?

The Informant looks up the block...Sees a group of MEN approaching from far away...

INFORMANT

Perdone.

Bembe takes a sheet with a SCREEN GRAB from the surveillance camera -- the image of the Rodriguez brothers.

BEMBE

Los conoces?

The Informant considers his options a beat...

INFORMANT

The Rodriguez brothers. Paco and Chuy.

YUNI

Where are they now?

INFORMANT

I don't know.

YUNI

Do you know who we are? We're the Medina brothers. Do you know what that means?

The Informant trembles as he blesses himself.

INFORMANT

Santa Madre de Dios.

BEMBE

That means you are going to find the Rodriguez brothers. Or we're going to come find you.

YUNI

(with a nod)

Get out of the car before they see you.

The Informant gallops away. Bembe starts the car.

BEMBE

Jefe wants to hold onto something that's gone -- so we drive two hours up and back every Sunday for family dinner -- like he can marry Julie and we can all be a happy family again.

(beat)

But the beauty of life is that you can't hold onto it.

(beat)

Stop worrying about them. Live your life.

As they drive away, off Yuni, thinking about what Bembe said,

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT. TAVO AND CUCO'S APARTMENT

Vee rings the doorbell. Rings it again. Finally, Tavo answers in his sweatpants, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

VEE

The twins ID'd the guys from the surveillance video.

This is not the first time she has woken him up on a case.

TAVO

Cuánto tiempo. Entra, Mama.

As he smiles and nods her inside,

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT. TAVO AND CUCO'S APARTMENT

Vee leans over Tavo at the computer, Cuco sitting alongside, eating a bowl of Froot Loops.

ON THE SCREEN

Everything that can be known about the Rodriguez brothers by hacking into their phones, their computers, their social media and email...Photos of gold-plated guns...Strippers who wear bullet belts as bikinis...

TAVO

...A lot of gold-plated guns.

CUCO

Strippers.

TAVO

Strippers with gold-plated guns.

VEE

Jake remembers seeing them at the car factory in Mexico when he visited with his Dad.

TAVO

Kids are suggestible.

VEE

He's an autistic savant with a photographic memory.

CUCO
(nods to screen)
That one looks like Lulú.

TAVO
Which factory did Jake see them at?

CUCO
The one with the gold plating.

TAVO
We could trace the VIN number to
the factory.

Vee goes through her notebook. Finds the VIN number. Shows it
to Tavo. He glances at it and types it in from memory...

VEE
You want me to read it to you?

TAVO
No.

VEE
A VIN number is seventeen digits.

TAVO
I got it.

CUCO
Did you notice how pale Jefe got
when he heard Lulú was engaged?

TAVO
I'm giving cash.

CUCO
If the marriage doesn't last three
months, you return the gifts.

TAVO
That's the rules.

CUCO
That's the *etiquette*.

TAVO
Don't give me back used dishes.

VEE
Are *you* getting engaged?

CUCO
 You'll be the last man standing,
 Vee.

...Tavo's smile drops as he sees something on the computer...

TAVO
 You're not going to believe this.
 It's a fake VIN number.

CUCO
 A fake VIN number means it's a
 stolen car. Why would a car dealer
 have a stolen car?

Off Vee,

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. YOGA CLASS

Buddy takes his yoga class, moving through the vinyasa...

INSTRUCTOR
 ...Upward facing dog...Then
 downward facing dog...

Upside down, Buddy glances and sees a sexy LATINA WOMAN on the mat in front of him, watching him between her legs... Pedaling her feet, she sways her delicious bottom as she blows a kiss to him...Off Buddy,

CUT TO:

EXT. DAY. SAN DIEGO

Buddy drives home. As he stops at a red light, a car pulls up and some TEENAGERS recognize him. They honk the horn, give him thumbs up and shout out the windows...

TEENAGERS
 You're my hero, Buddy!

Buddy looks away, embarrassed, but also enjoying it. A Teenager takes a PHOTO of him and posts it on social media...

The light changes...As Buddy drives, more people recognize him...Alerted by social media, they cheer him on..Take his photo...Women pull up their tops and flash him...At the next red light, PEDESTRIANS pump their fists and chant...His press conference has made him a folk hero...

PEDESTRIANS
Bud-dy! Bud-dy! Bud-dy!

Off Buddy, smiling gamely and giving a thumbs up,

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. EL JEFE EDITION

Vee rides in front alongside Byrnsie. In the back, Ash alongside him, El Jefe, wearing his reading glasses, reviews the MUG SHOTS and RAP SHEETS of the Rodriguez brothers.

EL JEFE
...So the bodyguard was driving a stolen car -- stolen right off the factory floor -- Jake remembers seeing the kidnapers at that factory -- and you're wondering how this all fits together.

VEE
To steal a car from a factory in Sonora -- put a fake VIN number on it -- then put it on a truck with the legitimate cars --

ASH
-- You'd need one or two guys at the factory -- at the border -- at least a manager at the dealership --

EL JEFE
A lot of moving parts.

ASH
-- If it worked, you could steal the cars right out of inventory in Mexico -- sell them in plain sight at the dealership -- and nobody would ever know they were stolen.

BYRNSIE
NAFTA for thieves.

EL JEFE
What this doesn't tell me is that Buddy knew about it. Or why it would be worth it to him.

BYRNSIE

(quoting)

"This is a story about love and death in the golden land..."

EL JEFE

If I wanted my driver to butt in, I'd take an Uber.

BYRNSIE

(cheerfully)

Duly noted.

VEE

Buddy got in trouble during the financial crisis -- long on inventory, short on cash --

ASH

-- three or four stolen cars a week would float the whole business --

VEE

-- then he's involved with people like the Rodriguez brothers and his son needs a bodyguard.

EL JEFE

And after the financial crisis?

VEE

You get used to the money. Isn't that how it works?

El Jefe considers a beat.

EL JEFE

Maybe Buddy *did* get himself into trouble during the financial crisis.

(beat)

Keep working. You don't have it.

VEE

You want to protect him. Because you're more like Buddy than you're like the Rodriguez brothers.

Ash looks at her thumbs. Byrnsie shoots Vee a look.

EL JEFE

(quietly)

I understand why you're emotionalizing this case.

(MORE)

EL JEFE (CONT'D)

(beat)

So I'm going to forget you said that.

Byrnsie turns to her.

BYRNSIE

(sotto)

You can't talk to El Jefe like that inside his customized Escalade. It's not done.

Off Vee,

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. SCHMIDT HOUSE

Vee, Ash and El Jefe sit with Buddy and Laura. Eddie sits slightly apart, in his dark green Dickies, uncomfortable on the silk-upholstered furniture, in the big house.

VEE

...The exchange will take place at night in Tijuana -- in *la zona norte* -- the red light district --

ASH

On a busy night they'll be hard to track.

EL JEFE

We're in touch with the bank. Two million dollars in hundreds -- unmarked, unsequenced, no dye packs -- two briefcases -- with the rest wired to an account in the Cook Islands.

VEE

The cash lets them run for a year. The Cook Islands money they can transfer digitally until we can't trace it anymore. Then they pick it up at a time and place that they determine.

BUDDY

They really thought this through.

EL JEFE

We're coordinating with the police in Tijuana.

LAURA

But the rules say "no police."

VEE

Our best chance to catch them is at the exchange.

BUDDY

I don't want to do anything to jeopardize Quique's life. I want to be clear about that.

EL JEFE

Understood.

Buddy turns to Eddie.

BUDDY

Is this okay with you?

EDDIE

I trust you, Buddy. I know you love Quique.

(looks at El Jefe)

Y tengo fe en ti.

Off their looks,

CUT TO:

EXT. DAY. SCHMIDT HOUSE

Buddy walks El Jefe out to his car. Vee climbs inside and Byrnsie starts it. Buddy stops El Jefe.

BUDDY

I want to thank you for taking such a personal interest in the case.

EL JEFE

Police work. Makes me feel young again.

BUDDY

It's given me and Laura a real sense of security.

EL JEFE

You're welcome.

They shake hands. El Jefe turns to move toward the car. Stops. Turns back to Buddy.

BUDDY

Did you forget something?

El Jefe takes a beat. Then puts his arm around Buddy and walks him away from the car. With his arm still around him --

EL JEFE

Why did Jake need a bodyguard?

A beat. Then Buddy almost visibly relaxes. Relieved to finally tell someone...

BUDDY

It was during the financial crisis. I was short on cash and long on inventory -- like a lot of people -- trying to save my business and not home a lot. Jake had just been diagnosed with autism. Laura was really angry at me. I was sure she was having an affair. I hired Todd to watch her.

EL JEFE

And was she having an affair?

BUDDY

No. I'm ashamed I even thought she was. Todd never found anything.

(beat)

Meantime he really bonded with Jake. So we kept him on.

EL JEFE

One more question. Who has access to your computer?

BUDDY

Nobody. I mean, Laura.

A look between them. Off El Jefe,

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT. ZONA NORTE -- TIJUANA

Tijuana's "red light" district -- bars, restaurants, dance clubs, strip clubs, whorehouses -- CROWDS of TOURISTS and LOCALS. Safe for locals who go in groups, but also a place to see addicts shooting up in public, or even human trafficking in plain view. TRAFFIC piles up and hardly moves.

Vee, Ash, Bembe and Yuni coordinate with undercover Tijuana POLICE DETECTIVES. Tavo and Cuco work inside a SURVEILLANCE VAN with a bank of MONITORS from CAMERAS placed at the exchange site, as well as DRONES flying overhead.

The money is inside two BRIEFCASES -- twenty pounds each -- Vee hands them to Buddy...Eddie nods to him: you can do this. And then Buddy, carrying two million dollars, walks through a festive melée full of thieves and pickpockets...

Tavo and Cuco watch on monitors as Buddy leaves the money in a crowded plaza and exits. After a watchful moment, a man arrives to collect it. We recognize him as Paco, one of the Rodriguez brothers. As he exits with the money, a boy stumbles into view at the edge of the plaza, instantly out of place in this childless bacchanal. It is Quique -- *el güero*, "the blondie" -- the place where all this started...Chuy, the other Rodriguez brother, slips into the shadows...

Just after Quique is noticed on the monitors, Buddy notices him, too. Shoving his way through the crowd, Buddy runs to the boy and holds him, soon joined by Eddie. The tension of the last several days breaks in a cloudburst of tears.

Led by Vee, the cops search for the brothers through the dizzying crowd...The Rodriguez brothers disappear and the trail is lost...But Bembe and Yuni know every inch of Tijuana, and the seedier the inch, the better they know it...They spot the Rodriguez brothers and give chase...

The Rodriguez brothers disappear again...Guns drawn, Vee and Ash descend into a basement...No sign of them...Then Vee discovers a TUNNEL...Vee, Ash, Bembe and Yuni give pursuit through a dark tunnel that seems to run forever...

The tunnel ends at a narrow ladder...Vee is the first one through the door...She goes up the ladder and emerges into another dark basement...Across the basement there is an OPEN DOOR leading to a set of stairs...Cautious, her gun drawn, Vee goes through the door and up the stairs, arriving at an ALLEY...The beam of her flashlight REVEALS the Rodriguez brothers, DEAD -- shot point-blank, execution-style -- and the money GONE...Ash and the twins catch up with her...With Quique safe but the trail gone cold, off their looks,

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. NIGHT. ALLEY -- TIJUANA

Two dead bodies makes for excitement, even in *la zona norte*. The alley tied off from the CROWD at either end. The Rodriguez brothers lie on the pavement. Cuco takes charge of forensics. Vee, Bembe and Yuni consider the dead bodies.

YUNI

Tough boss.

BEMBE

They picked up the wrong kid.

YUNI

He still got the money.

BEMBE

Now it's all his.

VEE

And we lost our best lead.

YUNI

There is no alimony among thieves.

Cuco gets off his phone as he approaches them.

CUCO

The guns still had their serial numbers. The Urgent Trace Group at ATF got me to the wholesaler, who sent me the 4473. They were purchased in the States --

BEMBE

-- like most of them --

CUCO

-- by Todd Fischer.

VEE

Todd the bodyguard bought the guns we found on the Rodriguez brothers.

CUCO

Yes.

VEE

That they used in the kidnaping.

CUCO

He owned the guns he was shot with.

As Vee reaches for the phone, a MARIACHI BAND arrives at the foot of the alley and people start to dance...

YUNI

Can we sell tickets?

BEMBE

(grinning)

That's my city.

Off Vee, thinking,

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. HOSPITAL -- TODD'S ROOM

A bottle of Polish VODKA, denominated "Pravda," as the NURSE pours it into a hospital paper cup. Hands it to Todd, who drinks it up...Still bandaged and on an IV, with a leg in a cast...Vee and Ash stand opposite him.

TODD

...Am I under arrest?

ASH

Because you're a flight risk?

TODD

Funny.

VEE

How did those brothers wind up with your guns?

TODD

I'm not talking without a lawyer.

VEE

The FBI are all lawyers.

ASH

Like a twofer.

Todd looks at his empty Dixie cup.

TODD

That nurse short pours.

VEE

Guns that you purchased and smuggled into Mexico were used in the U.S. in the commission of a capital felony.

(beat)

If you cooperate, we'll help you.

ASH

That offer lasts five seconds.

Ash looks at her watch. Todd considers a beat.

TODD

We stole cars from the factory. Then sold them right off the floor. The Rodriguez brothers kept the Mexicans in line. Real skulls, but. We didn't hire them to tat handkerchiefs.

He says it, "hankercheeves."

VEE

And Buddy organized this?

TODD

We sold Buddy a stolen car -- the car I was driving -- right out of his own dealership! Buddy was clueless.

ASH

Someone had to give the approvals at the dealership.

Vee starts to put it together...

VEE

Or have access to his computer.

ASH

I thought only Buddy and Laura had access to his computer.

VEE

But who had access to Laura?

(beat)

Who renovates their house three times in eight years -- a brand-new house?

TODD

Do you see the position I was in?

ASH

You mean, stealing from your boss while you living in his house and taking care of his disabled son?

TODD

Shane told me if I said anything about him and Laura, he'd tell them I had a drinking problem. Which -- you know -- I don't know if it's a *problem*, but --

(beat)

He didn't want me to mess things up for him with Laura. That was his blind spot. He really loved her.

Off their looks,

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. EL JEFE'S HOUSE -- GARAGE

In his board shorts and flip flops, El Jefe sketches in his wood shop...Looks up the driveway and sees Laura approach...

EL JEFE

Come on in. I'm getting started on a wedding present for my daughter. They just got engaged.

LAURA

Congratulations.

EL JEFE

Rocking chairs. They come in handy once you have babies.

(beat)

Chairs are hard. All a table has to do is look nice. A chair has to be comfortable.

El Jefe gestures to the Adirondack chairs on the driveway where he sits with visitors...They sit together...

LAURA

I wish we'd had more children.

EL JEFE

You're both still young.

LAURA

After Jake was born -- it all seemed so overwhelming --

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

(beat)
I've made so many mistakes.

EL JEFE

Welcome to the human race.

LAURA

But this one might affect the case.
(beat)
I had an affair with Shane Tarber --
our contractor -- I can't even say
it was impulsive -- it went on for
years. I said I'd leave Buddy --
run away with him. Stupid stuff.

EL JEFE

Is it still going on?

Laura shakes her head.

LAURA

I found out that Shane had gotten
into Buddy's computer and was
stealing cars. I broke it off.
Shane didn't accept it. He even
insisted on finishing the kitchen.
I couldn't tell Buddy -- I just
couldn't -- what would I tell him?

(beat)

That Shane's not the person I
thought he was?

(beat)

That I'm not the person I thought I
was?

EL JEFE

Do you think Shane was behind the
kidnaping?

LAURA

Do you?

El Jefe takes a beat.

EL JEFE

Laura, you did the right thing in
telling me about this.

(beat)

But marriage is about trust.

(beat)

I know you're scared to lose your
marriage. But you need to tell your
husband.

LAURA

I know.

She starts to well up...El Jefe squeezes her hand.

EL JEFE

There's a quote from Maya Angelou that I like. "You did then what you knew how to do, and when you knew better, you did better."

(beat)

Do better.

Off their looks,

CUT TO:

EXT. LATER. EL JEFE'S HOUSE -- FRONT LAWN

El Jefe waves goodbye to Laura as she climbs in her car and drives away. Julie, who has been gardening, sidles up to him.

JULIE

What was that about?

EL JEFE

Crazy gringos.

She looks at him. Then punches him -- hard -- in the arm. As she goes back to her flower beds and El Jefe dials Vee,

CUT TO:

INT. EVENING. SHANE'S HOUSE

A BRIEFCASE filled with bundled HUNDREDS, as it's shut...PAN UP TO REVEAL Shane, pleased with himself, as he turns off the lights, and leaves his house for the last time...

CUT TO:

EXT. SAME TIME. SHANE'S HOUSE

Shane unlocks his truck and moves to load the money in the cab...Suddenly SEARCHLIGHTS blind him and POLICE CARS roar up to the driveway...POLICE OFFICERS surround him, guns drawn and shouting...Shane puts his hands behind his head -- kneels -- a detective HANDCUFFS him...PAN UP TO REVEAL it's Vee...

VEE

I guess we had that date after all.

She grabs him by the collar and lifts him to his feet...Other OFFICERS hustle him into a black-and-white...

SHANE

She told me she'd get a divorce and
half the money and we'd run away
together -- she promised me. That
money is mine!

Vee watches Shane disappear in the back of a car. Ash joins her. Off Vee,

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT. SCHMIDT HOUSE -- JAKE'S BEDROOM

Jake is home from the hospital. Laura and Jake tuck him in.

JAKE

Why do I have to go to bed?

BUDDY

Because you had a long day.

JAKE

Can't I watch TV?

LAURA

It's bedtime, Jake.

Then Quique appears in the doorway, in his pajamas. The two friends exchange a smile. Buddy looks at the two of them.

BUDDY

Okay, you two can watch TV. But
just a half hour.

Another smile between the friends. They climb into bed together and turn on the TV.

LAURA

Good night, Jake.

JAKE

Good night, *mamasita*.

QUIQUE

Mamasita?

The boys giggle. Laura smiles as she closes the door. Turns as Buddy heads down the hallway. She screws her courage to the sticking place.

LAURA

Buddy?

As he turns, off their looks,

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT. APARTMENT -- SAN DIEGO

Tangled in the sheets, in the afterglow of sex, Yuni muses as he talks to his unseen lover...

YUNI

...I could move here, you know. Bembe was the one who wanted to move to TJ. He said the cases are more interesting -- I don't know -- maybe they are. It's the Wild West down there. Not that the drive's that big a deal. I can make it in a half hour, without traffic. Maybe forty five minutes. I like driving. An hour tops. Driving you can hear yourself think. But at some point, you know -- I'm not getting any younger -- it's like, live your life. That's what Bembe says. He's right. You gotta live your life. Live your life. This is where I want to be -- with you.

(beat)

I love you.

Yuni looks up as his lover returns...

REVERSE ANGLE

It's Ash. She sits on the bed.

ASH

Baby, I'm not ready to say that.

YUNI

I know.

ASH

I can't say that. I don't feel comfortable saying that.

YUNI

It's okay.

She kisses him.

ASH
Let's take it one step at a time.

A look between them.

YUNI
Don't call me "baby," though.

ASH
What do you want me to call you?

Yuni thinks a beat.

YUNI
Killer.

She laughs.

ASH
Okay, "Killer."

As she climbs under the covers with him, off Yuni,

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT. SAN DIEGO -- DOWNTOWN

Vee drives to unwind -- a creature of the streets, of the night, at home among other such creatures -- the busker with his accordion, the surfer heading with his board toward the full moon, the man urinating on the wall, the girls getting into a fistfight, the couple having their first kiss...

She glances and sees a HOMELESS MAN pushing a shopping cart the opposite way -- is it him? Her heart pounding, she spins a U-turn across four lanes of traffic...

In silhouette, the Homeless Man pushes his cart...Vee's car pulls up and she runs to him, breathless and agitated...

VEE
Isaac!

The Homeless Man turns into the light and we see him for the first time: ISAAC MEDINA, 29, unclean and unshaven, no longer the lean and fearless warrior, but a haunted young man who has seen the worst in life, and in himself.

ISAAC
What?

VEE
It's Vee.

ISAAC

I know.

Vee works hard to control her emotions...Not wanting to scare him off...

VEE

Do you want to come home with me?

ISAAC

I'm okay.

VEE

I'm glad you're okay.

Isaac takes a beat.

ISAAC

Are you okay?

VEE

I'm okay.

Isaac takes a beat.

ISAAC

I was away.

VEE

Let me at least do your laundry.

Off their looks,

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT. VEE'S HOUSE

A small and extremely tidy house. Vee does a load of Isaac's filthy laundry. FOLLOW VEE into the kitchen, where Isaac's sandwich sits untouched, and Isaac stands nearby.

VEE

Is something wrong with the sandwich?

ISAAC

I was waiting for you.

VEE

I ate already.

ISAAC

So did I.

A beat. She tears the sandwich and gives him half. Sits.

VEE

I forgot. You never liked to eat
alone. Even when you were two.

A long beat while neither one says anything.

ISAAC

How's Dad?

VEE

He's good.
(beat)
He got married again.
(beat)
He'll want to see you.

Isaac takes this in.

ISAAC

I don't think I'm ready for that.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. MORNING. VEE'S APARTMENT

Vee gets up. Passes her extra bedroom and the door is open -- the bed is made in strict military style -- and Isaac is GONE...His laundry is gone...The coffee is made, but his mug is washed, in the drying rack...No sign of Isaac...

Then she glances in the backyard and sees Isaac filling the hummingbird feeder with sugar water...He stands back and watches the hummingbirds come to feed...Vee joins him...

VEE

I see the hummingbirds are here.

ISAAC

Here for now.

Isaac goes inside. Vee looks at the hummingbirds. Off Vee,

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END