

ARMED: STAY

by
Art D'Alessandro

Copyright:PAu 3-778-933

NightFire Films
Artdaless@gmail.com
407.252.6749

"ARMED:STAY"

FADE IN:

INT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

BLACK. WE HEAR MOVEMENT. A cell phone FLASHLIGHT kills the darkness.

CLOSE ON A DRESSER, drawers being pulled open. Under the light, a gloved hand riffling through socks, underwear, and V-neck T's, all items neatly folded.

THE LIGHT FINDS a NIGHT TABLE. Its drawer pulls open. The light reveals condoms, a box of K-Y lubricant, nail gloss, dental floss. The gloved hands reach deeper to something shiny, pull out a semi-auto .22 pistol.

INTRUDER (O.S.)
Dangerous, Howard.

INT. BATCH'S SQUAD CAR, MOVING - NIGHT

Black, bald, 45, veteran deputy sheriff EARL BATCH eyes a convenience store, slows... nothing out of the ordinary. Drives on. His radio SQUAWKS.

DISPATCH VOICE
Alpha 18, see the lady re a
possible 459 at 1718 Commodore
Lane.

Earl fingers his GPS tracker, keys his mic.

BATCH
(into mic)
Alpha 18. Show me responding.
How's Charlie today, Peg?

DISPATCH VOICE
Out of the woods, Earl.
Platelets back up to near normal.
Thanks for asking.

BATCH
Great news. Tell him I'm
expecting us to get some ducks
here soon.

DISPATCH VOICE
Thanks, hon. Will do.

Batch clicks off, turns his cruiser down a side street. He whistles a show tune.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - JOY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT/SAME

JOY, 37, long T-shirt, barely discernible in the darkness, squats in a corner in a fetal crouch, arms wrapped around her knees, and rocks forward and back slowly, muttering, songlike.

But the sound is agonized, not musical and the words repeating and indistinguishable. On the bed, a tray of untouched food.

INT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The cell FLASHLIGHT moves through darkness, lands on a medicine cabinet; its door flips open. The beam races across after shave, pack of disposable razors, cologne, and a few prescription bottles.

WE'RE QUICKLY ON THE BOTTLES in the gloved hand, labels. Nothing more than cholesterol meds, Zetia, Niaspan.

Bottles are discarded one by one into a sink below. The cabinet door closes, and we catch a flash glimpse in the mirror of a face. White. Dark hair. VOLT, 29. He aims the light down at the toilet bowl and its blue water.

EXT. 1718 COMMODORE LANE - NIGHT

Batch stands at the front door with ALENA BAZAROV, 55, a squatty Russian import with a blanket over her shoulders and a snarly, long white-haired Maltese cradled in her arms. The dog wears a small red bow headband.

ALENA

Mr. Howard go away a lot. I watch for him. The dog and the house, too. He ask me, and I do. Not big deal.

BATCH

Which one, Ma'am?

ALENA

Two more over. Not just across.

She points. Batch's eyes follow.

BATCH

And what'd you see again?

ALENA

Like the molniya... em...
lightning.

BATCH

Inside?
(she nods)
Okay. I'll check it out.

ALENA

Maybe he leave the TV on when he
go. I don't know. He's a funny
one. With the boyfriends. Still
nice.

BATCH

Would you have a number for him?

She looks confused. Batch mimes making a call, points to
the house in question, she nods.

MOMENTS LATER

Batch strides to his patrol car, retrieves his Maglite
and heads for the Neighbor's house. He keys his dmic.

BATCH (CONT'D)

(into mic)
Show me at the 20, Peg. Entry
permission secured, if needed.

DISPATCH VOICE

10-4, Earl. Be safe now.

EXT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Batch aims his light at the front door. No signs of
forced entry. He finds the address number. 1731. He
aims his light at the front door.

On the street, a beat to shit black Toyota lights up and
takes off in a hurry, blowing smoke. Batch watches a
moment, then moves on around the side. Clear.

At the back, he notices a screen door. He checks its
lock. Secure. He aims his Mag around the screened-in
lanai. Nothing.

He starts off, notices a flap of screen that's been cut
away, kicking in a mild breeze. Batch tabs his mic, then
backs off it. He aims the light and ducks inside.

INT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

BATHROOM

A doggie-face night light on, Volt wipes himself. His cell phone vibrates on the counter beside him, lights up. He snatches it, fingers it open.

A TEXT: "GET OUT NOW!"

LANAI

Batch's hand on the sliding glass door. It glides open, nearly soundless. Batch knocks on the glass door.

BATCH
Sheriff's department.

Batch draws his weapon, mounts his Mag on top of it, slides the door open far enough to allow easy entry.

BATCH (CONT'D)
(authoritative voice)
I am a deputy and am entering the premises. I have my weapon drawn. Make yourself known.

LIVING ROOM

Batch steps into the dark room, looks for a light, switches one on by a sofa. POP. POP. Two flashes from the darkness of a hallway. Batch gets off one shot into the hallway, then crashes down onto a glass coffee table.

Batch keys his mic, as he tries to sit up.

BATCH (CONT'D)
Shit. I'm down, 10-24, at 1-7-3-1 Commodore Lane. Repeat 1-7-3-1. Uh... 459... in progress.

DISPATCH VOICE
Hang tight, Earl. Help on the way.

Batch wipes blood away from his neck, reaches around for his service revolver, looks up. Volt steps into the light. He moves with some labor; he's caught a round.

VOLT
(stammering)
I... I saw the light... it just went off.

He tucks his .22 under his belt and aims Batch's own gun at him, his hand trembling. He's lean, and sports a two-week beard that's not as dark as his scruffy hair.

BATCH

It's okay, son. Get rid of the guns and I can work with you.

Volt seems stunned, scratches his neck with Batch's gun.

VOLT

I never shot anyone before.

BATCH

Me neither.

Volt reaches for his wound.

VOLT

You're a cop.

Batch notices blood oozing at Volt's waistband. Volt's all over the place, his hand trembling.

BATCH

You're bleeding. We'll patch you up...

VOLT

Shut up, huh?!

BATCH

We... can find you help, too.

Volt steps closer, raises both arms in frustration, winces in pain.

Batch is struggling to get up. Volt paces frantically.

VOLT

Stay down!

BATCH

All right, all right...

Batch falls back to where he was.

BATCH (CONT'D)

Just go on... Take off.

VOLT

What?! Roll over.

BATCH

Don't, son. You just nicked me, don't make it worse.

VOLT
Roll over. Do it.

Earl groans as he rolls over on his stomach.

Volt rips Batch's shoulder mic off, tosses it.

He aims the gun at Batch's head.

BATCH
Please... don't...

Earl begins mumbling a prayer lowly.

Volt shifts nervously, can't do it. He pulls Batch's cuffs out from behind him and cuffs his left ankle to right wrist, a half hog-tie behind his body.

Volt GRUMBLES, throws Batch's revolver across the room, knocking over the light.

DARK again, except for a beam left on the floor from Batch's flashlight. Volt crosses through the beam.

BATCH (CONT'D)
Shit!

SIRENS SCREAM in the distance.

EXT. HOWARD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Volt exits the lanai, looks around. Lights flicking on everywhere. He runs around to the front. No Toyota.

VOLT
Shit!

He pulls out his cell phone, tabs one button; it goes to auto Voicemail.

AUTO VOICEMAIL
"Please leave a message."

VOLT
(into phone)
Where are you?!

EXT. A NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Volt, holding his waist, runs with a noticeable limp through yards. He scales fences, fend off barking dogs.

Lights switch on throughout the neighborhood, as police units, light bars flashing, fill Commodore Lane.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - JOY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Joy, eagle emblazoned T-shirt and sweatpants, lies awake, staring at the ceiling but fixed on nothing. In bed with her pillow pressed into her chest and a framed photo of a soldier in dress uniform.

A KNOCK at her door startles her.

JAVIER (O.S.)

Joyful. Making a good breakfast.

Joy rolls over, pulls her pillow and the picture tighter.

JOY

No, Javier. No.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

EVE, 15, and OSCAR, 12, sit at the small kitchen table, as JAVIER, 70, enters. He walks with a noticeable limp. His close-cropped hair is white and his skin dark.

OSCAR

(speaks loudly)

Will she ever come out again?

Oscar's left hand pats the table repetitively. He looks down at his plate, not making eye contact.

JAVIER

Softer, Oscar. Yes, she will.
But not today.

Eve pushes her plate of scrambled eggs away.

EVE

Why would she?

JAVIER

Give her time.

OSCAR

How much time does she need?

(Javier shrugs)

I heard her again last night.
That noise. It almost killed my
ears.

Eve tromps off toward her room.

JAVIER

Walk off without saying
something?

Eve, a very mature 15, turns, throws back her hair.

EVE

Thank you for breakfast, Abi.

JAVIER

That's better. You are welcome.

Eve marches on toward her room.

Javier tends to the stove.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

All your school work ready?

OSCAR

Yes, sir.

(he finishes)

Thank you for breakfast, Abi.

But, I mean it.

Javier gestures for the boy to come to him. Oscar, glasses, slightly chunky, joins his grandfather at the sink. Javier pulls him close, nearly smothers him.

JAVIER

You are a great boy, Oscar.

Worthy --

OSCAR

Worthy of a great award. I know, Lito.

He kisses Javier's leathery cheek, grabs his backpack.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Still think it's a stupid name.

Javier hands Oscar a brown lunch bag.

JAVIER

Look at me, Oscar.

Oscar looks away. Can't do it.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

It's an award-winning name. Tell everyone on the bus that for me!

Oscar walks to the front door and out. Javier follows, locks the door and heads back to the kitchen, leans on the counter to catch his breath.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Ready, Eve?

Eve walks back into the kitchen. She's now wearing red lipstick, eye shadow, and a short black mini. A black, leather and tassel handbag hangs from her shoulder.

Javier pushes away from the counter, eyeballs her, pulls a paper towel off the rack, hands it to her. Eve grumbles, wipes away some lipstick.

EVE

Happy?

JAVIER

Almost.

Eve rubs the remaining lipstick off, tosses the towel.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Don't rush, Eve-ita. It will come, and when it does it will stay the rest of your life. Then, someday, a long time from now, you will wish it never came. And this time, right now, is what you will wish for.

EVE

I'll be in the car.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Javier KNOCKS at Joy's door.

JAVIER

Taking Eve to school, then doctor.

JOY (O.S.)

Okay. Thank you, Javier.

JAVIER

You could come. It's a beautiful day. The sun is very nice right now. Not so hot.

Javier waits. Nothing. He pats the door softly, mumbles a short prayer and blesses himself.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - UTILITY ROOM - DAY

Javier stands at the home alarm pad. He tabs in the security code and arms the alarm.

ALARM PAD VOICE

"Armed:Stay."

Javier walks out into the garage, but we CLOSE ON the alarm pad, which is counting down from 45.

EXT. HERRERA HOUSE - DAY

A typical 3/2 home in a typical lower middle-class neighborhood. Houses on both sides marked by "For Sale" signs.

The Herrera garage door glides up, and the family SUV backs out onto the street, Javier at the wheel, and Eve in the visor makeup mirror.

As the door begins to descend, the car pulls away.

The garage door lowers slowly to near midway down...

Volt leans around the corner from behind a hedge of Podocarpus. He looks around cautiously, then, holding his stomach, slips into the open garage.

The door begins rising again.

INT. HERRERA GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Volt looks back at the rising garage door, then over to a wall and the garage door button. He lunges for the button, and the garage door stops. He presses it again, and the garage door's descent resumes.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - UTILITY ROOM - DAY

Volt walks past the alarm pad. It's now at 18 seconds... and counting. He eyes the pad.

VOLT

Dammit.

Volt begins tabbing numbers, to no avail; the countdown continues. He looks up at the phone line that leads into the main panel, considers.

He pulls open the panel door, spots the battery that reads; "Universal 1250 12 **Volt**", disconnects it, begins yanking out wires.

The pad display is still ticking down: 7-6-5-4... then "fault."

Volt waits. Nothing.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The .22 in his trembling hand, Volt pokes around, grabs some leftover food, shoves it down, guzzles water from the tap.

He unrolls a wad of paper towels, tucks them under his sweatshirt. He cringes in pain, walks out into the living room.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Volt looks into two smallish bedrooms. One with bunk beds and stacks of books. Oscar's room. Empty.

The other one is Eve's. Posters, laptop, jewelry trees, clothes strewn about. No one.

One more room at the end of the hall, its door closed. Joy's room. He's moving that way, but he passes the bathroom, and its medicine cabinet catches his eye.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Volt's pulling everything out of the medicine chest. Nothing worth bothering with. Aspirin. Cold remedies. Thermometer.

He throws a towel in the sink and drops what he discards onto the towel.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - HALLWAY/JOY'S ROOM - DAY

Volt's at Joy's door. His hand on the knob. He turns it. The door opens.

Joy is now asleep, still clutching her pillow. The drapes are drawn, and the room is dark for daytime.

Volt moves around the bed to get a better look. Joy was once a handsome woman, but now she looks beaten. Even in sleep her countenance is tortured. She clutches the picture.

Volt eyes more framed pictures on the wall over her bed:

A Soldier in parachute gear, the same man but younger in a baseball cap with bat and a trophy, the same man holding two tiny children in his arms. Finally, a hook with no picture. That one's in bed with Joy.

Volt begins to exit, when the cordless PHONE RINGS beside Joy's bed.

Joy's eye opens; she pulls the pillow over her head.

ANOTHER RING. ANOTHER RING. ANOTHER RING. Joy GROANS.

The answer-machine in the kitchen CLICKS ON.

ANSWER MACHINE

This is Jacob with Home Guard Security. We are showing a breach in your connection. Please respond immediately before we dispatch your local police to render assistance.

Volt listens. He points the gun at Joy and pulls the pillow away from her head. She GASPS, can't scream.

ANSWER MACHINE (CONT'D)

Again, this is Jacob...

VOLT

Pick up the phone! Tell him you're okay and someone accidentally cut your line. Now.

Jacob continues talking in the bg.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Pick up! Do what I say.

JOY

No.

VOLT

What?

JOY

No.

VOLT

Do it! Or-I-will-shoot-you.

JOY

I-don't-care.

She rolls over with her husband's picture.

VOLT

(speech slurring)

I got that hot little teenybopper out there, tied up. Should I make her pick up?

Joy reaches over and lifts the phone, never removing her eyes from Volt.

JOY

Hello.

The conversation's still recording on the answer machine and playing out loud. Volt, his gun still trained on Joy, leans into the hallway to hear better.

ANSWER MACHINE

Mrs. Herrera?

JOY

Uh-huh. Yes.

She looks up at Volt. He gestures menacingly with his .22.

ANSWER MACHINE

We're showing a security breach in your alarm system, Mrs. Herrera, possibly a battery failure.

JOY

Um, no. We accidentally pulled out a line. I'm, uh, sorry.

ANSWER MACHINE

Should we send out a technician?

Joy eyes Volt, who won't stop shaking his head, "no."

JOY

No. Um. We'll take care of it.

ANSWER MACHINE

Okay. Mrs. Herrera. I just need your password to verify.

JOY

My password?

Volt moves closer, aiming the gun right at her head.

ANSWER MACHINE

Yes, ma'am. Four numbers.

JOY

Oh. Right. 1-9-9-9.

ANSWER MACHINE

Thank you, Mrs. Herrera. If you do need our assistance, please call the number on your keypad. Now, would you like to stay on the line to complete a short customer survey.

Volt shakes his head. Joy hangs up. Volt takes the phone from her, SMASHES it to bits on the edge of the dresser, drops it on the bed.

VOLT

That was very good. Very good.
Perfect. Thank you, um. What's
your name?

Joy pulls the covers over her. Volt spots her purse. He digs through it, pulls out her wallet, flips through it and finds her license.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Joy. Okay.

JOY

What do you want? Money? I
don't have any.

He removes cash from her wallet, stuffs it in his pocket.

VOLT

Things pretty tight, hon?

JOY

Don't call me that.

Joy grabs what's left of the phone and hurls it at Volt, who ducks, which stabs pain into his side.

VOLT

Stop! Tape and bandages. Where
are they?

Joy eyes the bloody sweatshirt.

JOY

Bleed to death. Improve the
world.

VOLT

Okay. You don't want me here,
and I don't want to be here.

Volt sits down beside her on the bed, picks up the framed photo. Joy snatches it away.

JOY

GET OFF THIS BED!

Volt stands. He notices himself in her dresser mirror, grabs some tissues off the dresser and wipes dirt from his face. He pulls his bloody sweatshirt off with one hand, tosses it aside.

VOLT
Okay, let's go.

JOY
I'm not going anywhere with you.

VOLT
Look, you find me some bandages,
let me hang out here 'til dark,
I'm gone.

Joy stares him down. Volt's twitching, aggravated.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Last time.
(louder)
C'mon, help me, lady! Okay?!

Volt walks to the doorway.

VOLT (CONT'D)
LET'S GO, I SAID!

Joy climbs out of bed, steps toward him, stops.

JOY
No, I... can't.

VOLT
What? You can and you will.
C'mon.

Joy steps back. Volt moves toward her, gun aimed.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Let's go, lady. Now!

He steps behind her and pushes her toward the door. She fights him all the way to the portal. He's firm with her, but not too. She stands there a beat, then steps out into the hallway.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Okay. Was that so hard?

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE/HALLWAY - DAY

ON THE DOOR: "Cancer Specialists and Research Institute"

The door opens. Javier steps out, pauses, walks down the hallway.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Volt is shirtless and sitting on a kitchen chair. Joy places a square bandage over the wound, criss-crossing it several times with adhesive tape. She doesn't hesitate to apply pressure.

JOY

This really needs sutures and a full exploratory laparotomy.

VOLT

You a doctor or something?

JOY

Nurse. Was. Anything left in there causes an infection, you could die. Pretty quick, too.

VOLT

Anything? Anything like what?

JOY

You know what.

VOLT

Didn't land. Just took a bite.

Joy tosses him his shirt. As he pulls it over his head, he notices her eyeing his gun.

VOLT (CONT'D)

I wouldn't if I were you.

A beat.

JOY

Look, you go at dark, like you said. Wherever it is someone like you goes. And I'll go back to my normal life.

VOLT

Normal? Really, Joy?

She pulls a long breath.

JOY

Where's Eve?

VOLT

Who?

JOY

My daughter.

VOLT
 (rummages through the
 fridge)
 She's out in the garage. Tied
 up, but comfortable.

Joy heads for the utility room.

VOLT (CONT'D)
 Whoa, whoa. Where you going?

JOY
 Look, I'm doing what you want, so
 let me bring her in here.

Volt throws down some OJ.

VOLT
 Here's the thing. Eve?
 (Joy nods)
 She's not really tied up out
 there. She split with the old
 man already.

Joy blows out a long breath.

VOLT (CONT'D)
 My partner's keepin' an eye on
 her and the old man. So, no
 mouthing off, screaming and shit.
 I call my partner.
 (pulls out a cell phone)
 Which is not what you want. I'm
 the nice one.

Volt eyes her, wanders out into the living room, pulls
 back the drape with the barrel of his .22, looks out.

JOY
 What'd you do?

VOLT
 Nothing. Wrong place wrong time
 deal. Looking for something I
 didn't find.

JOY
 You broke into someone else's
 house. You got caught.

VOLT
 Almost.

She watches Volt move about the living room. He finds
 framed family photos on the mantel.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Nice family. Boy's a little on the chunky side.

JOY

Don't talk about my family.

Volt moves to an American Flag in a mahogany, triangle-shaped display case. He's about to lift it off the mantel.

JOY (CONT'D)

If you even touch that flag, I will run out the first door I can get to and you will have to unload your weapon to stop me. And because you had to stop me, you will be caught. The flag is off-limits. Understand?

VOLT

Don't touch the flag. Got it. Some kinda super American, Joy?

JOY

Don't talk to me like you know me. You don't.

VOLT

And you don't know me.

JOY

I know that you're worthless, despicable. Probably don't even have a name.

Volt shivers, scratches his shoulder, looks around nervously. Joy notices.

VOLT

Volt. Call me that.

JOY

I won't call you anything.

Volt shrugs, pulls an afghan from the couch and wraps himself in it, uses it to dab sweat from his forehead.

VOLT

Listen, listen, listen. I'm in need of something and I'm guessing you might have it.

JOY

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

VOLT

Sure you do.

JOY

You're cold but you're sweating.
Pupils dilated. Speech slurring.

VOLT

What?

JOY

Keep scratching.
(a beat)
Oxycodone.

Volt shakes his head, scratches his arm.

JOY (CONT'D)

That's what you do? Break into
strangers' homes looking for
drugs?

VOLT

Sometimes.

JOY

Well, that makes you, what? A
piece of shit.

VOLT

You perfect, hon?

JOY

Do not call me that. I told you
before, and I mean it.

VOLT

Look, I don't want to piss you
off. I want this all to go nice
and smooth, for us both. One
day. That's it. Let's take a
walk.

He walks back into the kitchen, grabs the other cordless
phone by the answer machine, takes Joy by the arm, and
leads her down the hall.

WE PUSH IN on the American Flag box on the mantel.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

Oscar, backpack on, stands at the sink, washing his
hands, over and over again.

Two BIGGER BOYS, mohawk cuts, walk up behind him, look around. All clear.

They drag Oscar to the floor, pull off his shoes, yank down his pants and run out with them, yukking it up.

Oscar, in his underpants, pulls himself up, stares at his reflection in the mirror. He heaves a long sigh.

He looks down, nonchalantly removes his backpack. He opens the flap, reaches inside and pulls out a neatly folded pair of pants. He pulls them on, slips on his shoes, throws his backpack on, and heads out.

EXT. TORRANCE HIGH STADIUM - DAY

A flag whips on a pole high above the stadium seats.

Eve, full-bore lipstick again, and TYSON, 17, black, all-star good looks, are going at it hot and heavy under the bleachers. He's pulling up her skirt and feeling his way around.

EVE

You love me, Tyson?

TYSON

You know I do, babe.

EVE

You my man?

TYSON

None other.

EVE

And I'm your woman, no matter what?

TYSON

No matter.

EVE

Can we just talk right now?

TYSON

Uh-uh. I'm goin' into the no talking zone...

Tyson's head disappears under her skirt. Eve frowns.

IN THE DISTANCE, THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS

Tyson comes to the surface.

TYSON (CONT'D)

No way. Shit.

He helps Eve up. She straightens her skirt and blouse and grabs her bag. Tyson starts to head back toward the school.

EVE

Tyson. Stay a minute.

TYSON

Can't, baby. I miss my chem test and my pops'll squeeze my carbon life form into a little charcoal rock. His boy's gonna be a doctor, come whatever.

EVE

That's right. You'll just be goin' off to college after here.

TYSON

Hell, yes. Last year and done.

EVE

Better go on, then. Take your stupid test.

Tyson hesitates.

EVE (CONT'D)

Just go.

Tyson jogs off.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Volt sits on a chair checking through a slit in the front window drape, a few pill bottles in his lap. He moves the cordless to another pocket.

VOLT

I'll need your cell phone, too.

Joy sits stiffly on a sofa across from him.

JOY

Don't have one.

VOLT

C'mon.

JOY

My daughter took it. They're probably out looking for you.

VOLT
 Came a ways before I found your
 welcoming back yard.

JOY
 Welcoming?

VOLT
 Broken swing set. Overgrown
 plants. No damn barking dogs.
 Plus... I passed out here.

JOY
 Lucky us.
 (a beat)
 Take a couple of those Ambien.
 You'll feel better.

VOLT
 C'mon, Joy. Don't play me. I
 take two Z's you'll have to check
 my pulse, see if I still have
 one. I'm not stupid.

JOY
 Whatever you say.

Volt goes back to his pills, sniffs, scratches.

VOLT
 So, you sleep while your kids
 head off to school. What kinda
 moms is that? You sick or
 somethin'?

JOY
 Screw you.

Volt throws the prescription bottles, pills scattering
 about the room.

He walks directly up to Joy, threateningly, then directly
 to the mantel. He lifts the flag display case.

VOLT
 That is one heavy-ass flag!

He hoists it high over his head, like a trophy.

Joy breaks for the front door. Rather than open the
 door, though, she stops short of it and stands there,
 tries to scream, but can't. She falls back onto her
 elbows.

Volt tucks the flag case under his arm, aims the .22 at
 her, his hands shaking wildly.

She begins pulling in long and scary breaths, her body twisting in agitation, violently, toward him.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Stop! What's wrong with you?!

Volt jams the gun back into his belt and latches his arm around her to constrain her, still gripping the flag box.

She tries to break away from him, sucking in deep breaths, but he holds on. Finally, her breathing begins to settle. She lets out an agonized ROAR and jabs him in his bandaged side with her fist. He drops to his knees.

Volt grunts and releases his grip on the flag box. It falls safely to the floor. Joy eyes Volt's gun.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Wanna shoot me?

Joy elbows him once more in the bandaged area. Volt groans, gasps for air.

JOY

Put it back!

VOLT

Okay. Shit. Jesus.

He drags himself up and totes the flag case back to the mantel, while Joy watches, her breathing deep but measured.

EXT. ANOTHER NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

A Sheriff's Cruiser drives to the end of a cul-de-sac and parks. Two Police Officers climb out and walk up to separate houses.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - JOY'S ROOM - DAY

Joy watches while Volt goes through Eve's dresser drawers. He finds a pair of thong underwear, holds it up for Joy.

VOLT

How old is she again?

JOY

You don't have any partner.

VOLT

Okay. I'll call and see where your daughter's at right now.

JOY

Why didn't you just go with your partner.

VOLT

We split up.

JOY

Why hasn't her school called me?

VOLT

All the kids they keep track of.

JOY

And your partner's following both my daughter and my father-in-law? At the same time.

That stumps Volt.

JAVIER (O.S.)

Joyful. Who broke the alarm?

VOLT

Guess not.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Javier's at the refrigerator, filling a glass with water. He turns around, sees Volt standing behind Joy with a gun. He drops the plastic glass.

JAVIER

What is this?

JOY.

It's okay, Javier. Don't worry. Esta bien.

JAVIER

¿Bien? ¿Cómo puede estar bien con una pistola?

Javier wipes up the water he's spilled.

VOLT

I'm going to have to go all Donald Trump on you ask you both to speak English only. Please.

JOY

I told him it's okay, but he wonders how it can be... when he sees your gun.

VOLT

It's okay because I'm just visiting 'til dark, then I'm leaving and if you're good, both of you, then everything will go back to normal. Sit, ol' man.

Javier complies.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Okay. So, maybe the partner thing's not working out like I thought.

JAVIER

(confused)

What does he mean, Joyful?

JOY

I don't know, Javier. Y por favor no me llame eso.

(to Volt)

Personal. Not about you.

Volt eyes her skeptically.

JOY (CONT'D)

(to Javier)

We talked about it, right?

JAVIER

And we talked about you call me Papa.

JOY

What did your doctor say?

JAVIER

Huh? Oh, same. Good.

Volt leans against the counter.

VOLT

What was wrong with you?

JOY

Don't talk to him.

JAVIER

I won't.

JOY

No.

(points at Volt)

Don't you talk to him.

JAVIER
The cancer. Now it's all gone.
I'm ship's shape.

JOY
Javier.

JAVIER
You said I could talk.

VOLT
I like you, Javier.

JAVIER
Thank you. But I don't like you
so much right now.

Volt grabs his side, grimaces. He doubles over in pain,
eyes still on Joy and Javier.

VOLT
DAMN!

JAVIER
(to Joy)
What's wrong?

JOY
Someone shot him.

JAVIER
It hurts?

VOLT
Like hell.

JAVIER
I have the pain pills.

VOLT
You do?

JOY
Javier!

EXT. ANOTHER NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Police continue canvassing homes.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Joy and Javier sit at one end of the table and watch as
Volt places a pill between two spoons and tries to crush
it.

VOLT

Thirty mill maxis. Not the big, bad 80s but reliable. Upside, solid dosage. Downside, they're a bitch to crush. So, I'm gonna need some aluminum foil, Joy.

JAVIER

That drawer.

Joy eyes Javier.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Sorry.

VOLT

(throws Joy a shrug)

Thank you, kind señor.

Volt retrieves a roll of foil and grabs a ball point pen from a cupful of pens on the counter by the phone base.

Volt carefully folds the aluminum foil so one end tips up and the other becomes a kind of handle.

JOY

You know you can just swallow them, right?

VOLT

(without looking up)

Who's got time for time release?

He twists the ball point pen open, removes the guts and keeps the long end of the pen. He pulls a lighter from his pocket and flicks it on.

JOY

Maybe if you put as much work into being a human being as you do getting high you wouldn't have to break into people's houses.

VOLT

This from sleep-in mom. And the human being thing. Overrated.

JOY

Like you'd know.

Joy pushes away from the table, rises.

VOLT

Where you goin'?

JOY

Bathroom.

VOLT

Stay. I'll walk you in a sec.

He drops a pill onto the foil where it catches in the turned up basket end, flicks his lighter on, aims the flame onto the underside of the foil until the pill begins to smoke.

Volt waits as the smoke builds, sets the gun on the table right in front of him, then sucks the smoke into his mouth through the shaft of pen. He peers up at Joy.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Oscar sits alone against a chain-link fence. He opens his lunch bag and pulls out a tuna sandwich in a baggie. He unzips and chomps down, his left hand flapping constantly on the stone bench, and rocks slightly.

Other kids, in pairs and groups, sit at tables out in a courtyard.

He focuses on one Girl in particular, who sits alone at a table and opens a "Hello Kitty" lunch box.

Oscar sets his sandwich aside, pulls out his notebook and pencil and begins to draw.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - HALLWAY BATHROOM - DAY

Joy gathers all the meds that are in the sink and stuffs them back into the medicine cabinet. She closes the cabinet door and confronts her own image.

Joy throws anything she can reach, kicks the trash can over, slumps to the floor, sobbing.

She slowly gathers up the trash and finds a crushed and empty pregnancy test kit package amidst wads of tissue, stuffed inside a used toilet paper roll.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Oscar finishes up his sketch of the Girl. It's good. Some boys approach. He quickly packs up his gear and walks off.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Volt leans back in his chair, a smile on his face. Joy stands nearby. Volt gestures with his gun for her to sit. She complies.

JOY

So, we're just supposed to sit here and watch you?

VOLT

Yes.

JOY

It'll eventually kill you.

VOLT

Something will eventually kill all of us. Right? Game's rigged.

Volt rolls his drug pen between his fingers, hits it, kicks back.

JOY

And you want nothing more out of life? Getting high. That's it?

After a long moment...

VOLT

Before, when you stopped at the door. What happened to you?

JOY

I don't know what you're talking about. And I don't care.

VOLT

You were gonna book, but you didn't. You actually could have, but it was like something... stopped you.

THUNDER RUMBLES OUTSIDE

JAVIER

She don't go out no more.

JOY

Javier, don't talk to him. Please.

VOLT

Why don't you go out?

JAVIER

She's depressed since my son
died. She don't leave her room.

JOY

Javier.

She stands. Volt lifts the gun.

He gestures with the .22 for her to sit.

VOLT

C'mon, man. We're just talking.

JOY

(sits)

O-kay. We're just talking. How
did you get this way?

VOLT

What way?

JOY

Sub-human.

VOLT

Ouch.

(beat)

You really wanna know?

JOY

No. Yes.

JAVIER

Joyfu --

JOY

It's okay. Let's hear his
excuses. What are they? Your
momma was a crack whore who loved
her needle more than you? Your
father? What father, right?
Your big brother tortured you
with jumper cables so you slept
in the gutter on the mean streets
of who-the-hell-cares-where and
had to cheat and steal just to
get by. You never got your fair
shot. Everybody else did, but
not you. Right? Boo-hoo. Poor
you. People like you always have
a suitcase full of excuses ready
to dump out whenever something
comes along that you can't hack.

A long moment as Volt sizes her up.

VOLT
And you're perfect.

JOY
I didn't say that.

VOLT
You thought it.
(a beat)
Let's do this. I'll tell you how
I got so fucked up, you tell me
how you did.

JAVIER
Use good language here.

VOLT
We've got time to kill, right,
Joy? Maybe help us both.

Joy glares at him.

VOLT (CONT'D)
I like you, Joy. I do. She's
something, right, Javier?

JAVIER
Yes, very much something.

Joy rolls her eyes.

JOY
Forget it. Whatever crap you
went through. Whoever you were
or weren't. I really don't give
a shit. I hope your wound gets
infected and it all ends for you
in an agonizingly slow and
painful death. It makes me sick
that good men are out there
sacrificing their... and you...
It's wrong.

VOLT
Man. Something crawled up your
ass, obviously.

JAVIER
Too much bad words. Quiet now.

JOY
If he's quiet he won't have a
chance to lie.

VOLT
Why would I lie?

JOY
That's what you do, isn't it,
"Volt?" You get off on it...
like the oxy.

VOLT
And what about you, Joy? What
do you get off on?

A staredown between them.

JAVIER
How about I heat my chili for
later, huh? We eat, then you go,
when the dark comes.

Volt lights another pill and draws in the smoke.

JOY
How much do you need?

VOLT
Whatever it takes.

JOY
For what?

VOLT
(exhales a cloud)
Really? You of all people.

JOY
You know, I'd actually would like
to know what makes someone like
you tick.

VOLT
Just trying to make it through
another day, lady. That's all.

Volt finishes up his smoke, leans back, his chair against
the counter, his gun on his chest. His eyes start to
close.

Javier eyes Joy, draws her eyes to the .22. Joy shakes
her head. Volt's eyes pop open.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Tick, tick, tick...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Rows of cars line the lot that is bordered by a low hedge
that parallels the main street. WE MOVE OVER THE CARS TO
A BLUE PT CRUISER.

Eve sits in the back of the car with her friend TORI, who's sparking a joint.

INT. PT CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Tori spots a woman approaching, toting a book bag.

TORI

Down!

They both duck.

TORI (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Noticed who's not in school no more these days?

EVE

Obviously, you.

Tori checks. Woman's past them and heading for the bus stop beyond the hedge line. The girls slide back up.

TORI

Sorry I ain't all smarts like you. Carmen Trujillo. C'mon. That's her mom.

(takes long, exhales)

Girl didn't use protection. Knocked all the way up. 16 yo . So stupid. Right?

She passes the joint to Eve, who stares out at a plane flying overhead. A long white contrail blows sideways.

EVE

God, I so wanna get out of this sorry-ass town.

TORI

And you done with him? For reals?

EVE

Hell, yes.

TORI

That like sucks. I mean you treated him right.

(mimes a blow job)

Right?

EVE

Shut up. Asshole. God.

TORI
He is hot, though. Like
Hollywood, Michael B. Jordan
kinda hot.

EVE
I hate him so much.

Eve pulls a long toke.

TORI
So, you don't care if...

EVE
I will so kill your whore ass.

TORI
Okay. Okay. Just checking.
(looks around)
Whose car is this, anyways?

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Javier heats a cup of coffee in the microwave.

Volt and Joy sit across from each other. The .22 on the table in front of him, Volt has his leg up on another chair, his pants pulled back revealing a long scar across his knee.

VOLT
That's my lifeline. My old life
stopped, right there.

Volt points to the bottom of the scar, slowly rolls down his pants. Javier sits back down.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Did you see it, Javier?

JAVIER
I saw.

JOY
So you had knee surgery. Big
deal.

Volt fingers the .22, spins it. The barrel points at him.

VOLT
You know anything about luck,
Joy?

JOY

Not a thing.

VOLT

It really is something when you think about it. Like the flip of a coin. Heads, things go one way, tails, the other. You win, you lose. You don't control. Life is just one moment of luck... or no luck after another. Like you, Javier. You had cancer, right?

JAVIER

Yes.

VOLT

And now you don't.

JOY

He had a good doctor and treatments.

VOLT

People go through chemo and die all the time, but his coin came up heads. He was lucky. Right?

Javier hesitates, finally nods.

VOLT (CONT'D)

I had a good doctor, too, and I came up tails.

JOY

Your knee is healed. You walk fine. So what's the problem?

VOLT

The problem. Right. Okay, I was on track to be a top high school prospect, early round draft pick. Shortstop. And I was a damn good hitter.

Joy laughs, loudly and too much.

VOLT (CONT'D)

STOP!

JAVIER

Joy...

Joy collects herself. First time she's laughed in ages.

JOY
 Good hitter. You look like you
 can barely pick up that spoon let
 alone a baseball bat.

Volt lights up another chunk of oxy, hits it.

VOLT
 I am ignoring you, lady.

Joy goes to the refrigerator and fills a glass from the
 door water dispenser. She plops back down in her chair.

VOLT (CONT'D)
 And I was fast, too. Steal
 bases, no problem.

JAVIER
 Like Omar Vizquel.

VOLT
 (clueless)
 Hell, yes. Just like his ass.
 Coach started calling me Volt. I
 was a stick of pure energy.

JOY
 (sotto)
 Pure shit, maybe.

Volt sets his makeshift pipe aside.

His eyes steer Joy's to the .22 again, which is still on
 the table, but now with Volt's finger at the trigger.

VOLT
 Busted it up in the championship
 game.

JOY
 You had knee surgery. Now you're
 a criminal?

VOLT
 I had two reconstructions over
 the course of eighteen months.

JAVIER
 Who won?

VOLT
 What?

JAVIER
 The game.

VOLT

Oh, we did.

JOY

Yeah, what year was that?

VOLT

(glares at her)

Don't remember.

JOY

People still play ball after knee reconstructions.

VOLT

(rage building)

The ones who don't get hooked on painkillers. What's that saying, "First the man takes the drug, then the drug takes the man..."

JOY

So, it's the drug's fault.

A long moment as Volt glares back at her.

VOLT

You're up, lady.

EXT. HERRERA NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

A cruiser glides by.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Joy sips from a cup of coffee, while Volt sits across from her at the table. He seems sleepy now. Javier, head down, sits with them and stares at his coffee cup.

JOY

He'd just called me, said he was about to hit the rack. They'd been out half the night on a medevac assist -- two Afghani kids found an undetonated Taliban bomb. Detonated it. First light he'd be hopping on a C5 for Rota and finally saying kiss my ass to that horrible sandbox. Coming home.

(a long beat)

Just before dawn his quarters were hit. Indirect fire. Those...

(MORE)

JOY (CONT'D)

animals were launching rockets,
just hoping to hit something,
anything. Kill anyone. He died
in bed, alone.

JAVIER

That was my Joey's job. Not to
kill. Rescue. Soldiers, not
soldiers. Fired his gun at
nobody. He was a good man.

Volt eyes them both. They're back, months ago,
remembering.

VOLT

(gestures off)
And that's the flag they gave
you?

JOY

Yeah.

VOLT

No T-shirt? You know, "My
husband died in Afghanistan and
all I got was this T-shirt."

Joy slaps him, hard, on the cheek, sits back, arms across
her chest.

Javier rises, goes to the stove and a pot there, removes
the top, turns up the heat, begins to stir.

Volt's shaking with anger, as he touches his cheek with
his free hand. He seems more awake suddenly. He walks
out into the living room, under Joy's watchful eye, pulls
out his cell phone.

EXT. HERRERA NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Oscar walks along, eyes down, as his bus chugs away.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Volt sits on the sofa, holds up a piece of mail, sets it
aside, tabs his cell phone buttons. Runs his thumb
across the phone, tabs one more time. He pulls the cell
phone close to his mouth. He waits.

VOLT

(into phone)
Now you answer. You bailed,
bitch. You left me.

(...)

(MORE)

VOLT (CONT'D)

Why didn't pick up before?

(listens, eyes Joy)

What'd I tell you about being scared, huh? It's weak. An excuse. That's what you --

(...)

No, I didn't. Not intentionally.

(...)

I can't. Because I'm already on paper. And I'm not going back.

(...)

Never-going-back. Got it?

(...)

Just listen to me.

He eyes Joy, pulls the phone from his ear, wants to throw it, but doesn't. He draws a deep breath, lifts the phone close again, listens...

VOLT (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Look, I just need you to come get me, babe. I texted you the --

(...)

Hey. Stop. That doesn't matter.

Do you love me, or not? Huh?

(...)

Yes, you can. Yes. Yes. Just come get me. Dark. Before.

Wait outside for me. I'll watch for you.

(...)

NO! Don't hang up! Shit!

Volt growls, jams it into his pants pocket, walks back into the kitchen, sits across from Joy again, gun out.

JOY

Bad news?

VOLT

Shut the FUCK UP!

Javier, at the stove now, stops stirring his chili, and slams the wooden spoon against the pot.

JAVIER

Enough!

A DOOR CLOSES OS.

Oscar walks by and down the hallway, straight for his bedroom without looking up.

JOY

Oscar?

Oscar wheels, heads back to the kitchen, eyeballs down.
He spots his mother's legs at the table.

OSCAR

You're out.

JOY

I'm out. Will you look at me?

Oscar frowns, looks up slowly. Volt hides his gun under his arm.

OSCAR

Who's he?

Volt grumbles.

JOY

That's Volt.

OSCAR

Volt? Sounds a superhero name.
(to Joy)
Why does he have a gun?

JOY

Because he did something wrong
and he's staying here until it
gets dark, so he can... go
someplace else.

OSCAR

Can I go to my room?

JOY

Okay, Oscar.

Oscar turns to go.

VOLT

Wait, kid. Leave your cell phone
here.

OSCAR

Don't have a cell phone.

VOLT

Good. No cell phone. Smart,
Joy.

JOY

Gee, thanks.

Oscar turns to go, but...

VOLT

Oscar. Badass name, bro.

OSCAR

(looking down again)
I didn't pick it.

VOLT

I need you to stay out here so I
can watch you?

OSCAR

Why do you wanna watch me?

VOLT

So I know where you are.

OSCAR

Said I'd be in my room.

VOLT

I know, but your room has a
window. And people can yell and
scream out a window, if they
want, or even climb out.

JAVIER

Oscar won't do any of that, will
you, Oscar?

OSCAR

Why would I?

JAVIER

How was the school today?

OSCAR

Typical.

JAVIER

I'm sorry.

With that, Oscar heads down the hall.

VOLT

Oscar, can you leave your door
open?

OSCAR (O.S.)

I can and I will.

After a moment.

VOLT

You hit me, Joy. Are you a
violent person?

Joy glares at him.

INT. OSCAR'S ROOM - DAY

Oscar sits on his bed and sketches with a pencil. He draws a hand and a gun and a beautiful lightning bolt extending from the gun's barrel. The proportions are drawn in such a way that it almost looks 3-D.

THUNDER CRACKS outside, and Oscar goes to the window. He looks out. His left hand tapping on the window sill. A Sheriff's cruiser glides by, lights on.

EXT. WOMEN'S CLINIC - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A glass storefront, windows painted over dark with green and rose flower border. Two women Picketers pacing outside with signs: "We are Praying for You" and "We Can Help."

INT. WOMEN'S CLINIC - LOBBY - DAY

Eve walks up to the reception window, eyeing the brochure display nearby. The heavy-set, black RECEPTIONIST, 25, slides the window open.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help you?

Eve looks around at the other women seated in folding chairs, some reading magazines, others their phones. She leans closer to the window.

EVE

Guess I need to talk to someone.

RECEPTIONIST

About?

Eve simply stares at her, can't get the words out, her hand tapping nervously by the sign-in clipboard. The Receptionist reaches her hand out, lays it on top of Eve's, smiles compassionately.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rain POUNDS on the roof.

Joy sits at the table, mesmerized by Volt, as he slumps in his chair, and gets back to work on Javier's last pain pill.

JOY

You're just a pathetic addict,
aren't you?

VOLT

I am what life made me Joy. Like
you.

JOY

No, we're nothing alike.

(beat)

So, little problem with your
partner?

Volt ignores her. THUNDER BOOMS again.

JAVIER

Eve is late. And the rain.

Joy glances over at the clock on the microwave. 4:38.

JOY

I'll call her.

VOLT

What? No, Joy. No calls.

JOY

It's my daughter. It's storming
out, and she's late. Give me the
god-damned phone.

VOLT

I said, "no."

JOY

We've put up with this crap all
day now. Do we have an
understanding or not? I'm
calling my daughter.

Volt throws both arms out.

VOLT

Fine. Yeah. We're practically
family, right, Javier?

JAVIER

No. We're not family.

(gestures with his
ladle)

Us, but not you.

VOLT

Joy, make your call, but do it
right.

JOY

We're putting up with you. But
don't tell me how to do anything.
Got it?

VOLT

Can I trust you?

Joy nods. Volt digs the cordless out of his pocket,
hands it to her.

Oscar walks in with his sketch pad, sits in Javier's
seat. Joy tabs the phone.

OSCAR

(focused on his pad)
I saw a cop drive by.

VOLT

(sits up)
When?

OSCAR

(with a shrug)
While ago.

VOLT

Were you looking out the window?

OSCAR

Yes.

VOLT

I thought you promised you
wouldn't do that.

OSCAR

You said not to scream or jump
out. I just looked. Are you on
drugs?

Joy tabs off the cordless, tabs it on again.

JOY

C'mon, Eve.

INT. WOMEN'S CLINIC - LOBBY - DAY

Thunder outside. Eve sits in a hard chair and looks
around at the other women nervously.

Eve's phone rings out an abrasive rap, "Your Mother's on
the Phone." Eve kills the sound, pulls her phone close.

INSERT PHONE: "Incoming Call. Home"

Eve slides the "reject" phone icon left and dismisses the call.

BACK TO SCENE:

Eve's leg taps a million beats per minute.

A bulging, Pregnant Women steps out from a side door and into the lobby. Eve watches her waddle to the reception window.

A NURSE stands in the doorway the Pregnant Woman just exited. She holds a clipboard.

NURSE

Ms. Herrera?

Eve wheels to her, rises slowly, glances around at the others, bolts for the exit door, yanks it open, and is gone.

The Nurse nonchalantly glances down at her clipboard.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Ms. Jackson?

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Volt and Oscar sit on the sofa. Javier preps the kitchen table. Joy paces in the kitchen, the phone to her ear.

Volt studies Oscar's sketch. Without looking up Oscar tears out a page moves it toward Volt.

VOLT

What? It's for me?

OSCAR

I mean, it's more of a lightning bolt than an actual volt which is difficult to draw since it's just a measurement of electric potential.

VOLT

Right.

OSCAR

Anyway...

VOLT

Man, you are good. This is the real deal.

Oscar shrugs. His left hand goes a tapping.

VOLT (CONT'D)

It's a talent, little man. Most people go their whole life and never develop a skill like this. You're what, 11 years old?

OSCAR

Just turned 12.

VOLT

Man. Wow. Man.

Oscar allows himself a half-smile.

VOLT (CONT'D)

You could go to work for Marvel or Disney or somebody and make big bucks when you finish school. And the ladies. They dig a dude with full pockets.

He holds out his fist for Oscar to knuckle-bump. Oscar just stares at Volt's fist, looks away.

Joy watches from behind a corner.

OSCAR

(too loudly)

I'm different, you know.

VOLT

Oh, yeah.

Oscar nods quickly, still looking away.

VOLT (CONT'D)

I'm different, too.

OSCAR

Are you on the spectrum?

VOLT

Um, no. Don't think I am. What is it?

This is breaking Joy's heart, and she covers her mouth.

OSCAR

It's just some Autism thing.

Volt notices Joy watching them. He hands back the sketch to Oscar.

VOLT

Sign it.

OSCAR

What?

Joy hides a smile.

VOLT

Autograph. Makes it worth mucho more.

OSCAR

What should I put?

VOLT

Both names. Your autograph, right?

OSCAR

Guess.

Oscar signs the sketch, hands it back to Volt, who sets it on the end table.

VOLT

Do not let me forget that when I book later. Okay?

OSCAR

Yeah.

(opens his pad)

I have more.

Oscar shoves the sketch pad toward Volt who goes through it page by page:

A BOY BEING ATTACKED BY A DINOSAUR -- looks like one of the Mohawk boys from the bathroom episode.

OSCAR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

That's a kid at school. Thinks he's so bad-ass.

Oscar grunts loudly.

JOY (O.S.)

Language and sound, Oscar.

VOLT

Gives you a hard time?

Oscar shrugs.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Here's what you tell'm.

He leans close, whispers in Oscar's ear.

Joy watches from the kitchen.

OSCAR
I can't say that.

VOLT
Yeah. You can.

OSCAR (O.S.)
(shrugs, continues)
Tyrannosaurus Rex, king of the
tyrant lizards.

VOLT (O.S.)
You?

Oscar shrugs, his hand flapping on the sofa.

Another page: A DARK-HAIRED GIRL SITTING AT A TABLE --
school courtyard.

VOLT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What's her name?

OSCAR (O.S.)
(loudly)
Renee. Which is French for
"reborn."

VOLT (O.S.)
How do you know all this stuff?

OSCAR (O.S.)
I read.

A SOLDIER, A GIANT IN FULL GEAR, CAMO, SUNGLASSES -- a
helicopter in the near background. His family hugging
him.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
That's my dad. And us.

VOLT
Talk about a superhero.
(a beat)
You know what you are?
(Oscar shakes his head)
You are like a little God, man.
You create this whole new...
world. Better world. That's not
different, man, that's Godly.

Javier harrumphs, O.S.

VOLT (CONT'D)

(ignores)

Wish I could do this kinda stuff.

Joy walks in. Volt hands the picture to her.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Kid's got real talent, Joy.

The sketch brings a tear to Joy's eye. She smudges it away.

JOY

This is so... beautiful. Why didn't you show this to me, Oscar?

She runs two fingers delicately around the sketch, tracing the figure's outline.

OSCAR

I didn't want to make you cry more. You cry too much.

With that, Oscar walks off.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Rain still falling. THUNDER MUTTERS. Eve stands on a corner as a city bus CHUGS AWAY. She holds her purse over her head and hustles down the street.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Volt sits at the kitchen table, his gun in front of him. He's spinning it with the end of his finger.

Javier carries the pot of chili to the kitchen table. He sets it down on a hot plate, spills a little out toward Volt and snatches the gun off the table. He aims it at Volt, two-handed, both hands trembling violently.

JAVIER

Get down on that floor!

VOLT

No, man, no. Put it back on the table.

JAVIER

Get down now, I tol' you!

Joy and Oscar step closer to the kitchen, Joy with Oscar's sketch pad in hand. She lets it fall to the floor.

JOY
Javier, careful, okay.

JAVIER
I told him to get down. He won't do it.

VOLT
No, I'm not getting down, old man.

With that, Volt steps closer, leans his head so the tip of the gun barrel is pushed into the place between his nose and the corner of his left eye.

JAVIER
I'm not pissing around, man. I mean it!

VOLT
You're right there, old man. Cops call it the T-box, guaranteed to put me down and keep me down. One shot. Mess me all the way up.

JAVIER
Maybe I will mess you up. Huh?

Joy eyes Volt, pushing his face harder into the gun's tip.

VOLT
Do it. Can you? Do it! Your son never fired his weapon in anger. Good man, you said. Are you a good man, like him? Are you? Huh?

OSCAR
(covering his ears)
Too loud, people!

JAVIER
(with difficulty)
Joy?

VOLT
Don't ask her. Good or not?!

Javier's hand trembles, he slowly lowers the weapon inch by inch, until Volt snatches it away from him.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Guess so.

Javier staggers back and collapses to the floor with a THUD. He's passed out against the cabinets.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Why'd he have to do that? Huh?

JOY

Javier!

Oscar snatches his sketch pad.

Volt heads for the front window, pulls the drape back slightly, looks out.

VOLT

What was that about?! We had a deal!

Oscar and Joy try to lift Javier up into a chair, but he slips.

JOY

Help us!

VOLT

Help you?!

JOY

Yes! Now!

Volt tucks the gun in his waist, hustles back into the kitchen, and they get the old man upright and into a chair.

Joy runs cold water on a wash towel and presses it to Javier's forehead. She checks his pulse.

Javier's eyes flutter open. He pushes the compress away.

JAVIER

I'm okay. I got dizzy. That's all.

JOY

Your pulse is coming back.

VOLT

That was stupid, Javier. Very stupid.

He grabs the cordless off the table.

JAVIER
 Don't you call me Javier. I am
 Mr. Herrera. Understand?

OSCAR
 Okay, Lito?

Javier pats Oscar's head.

JAVIER
 Sure. Sure. Not worry about
 Abi.
 (to Volt)
 You disappoint God.

VOLT
 Oh? Which God is that? The one
 who let your son die in some
 hellhole half way around the
 world or the one who gave you
 cancer?

Javier glares. Oscar slides to the floor, holds both
 sides of his head and talks loudly, but difficult to make
 out what he's saying. The words, "God" and "cancer"
 mixed in.

JAVIER
 Both. The same. He knows you.
 Inside. Everything. He knows.

JOY
 Oscar, please go to your room.

Oscar makes a dash for the hallway.

Volt rubs his arms, frantically.

Joy notices, moves close to him, whispers...

JOY (CONT'D)
 In my bedroom, under the pillow.
 Trade. For the phone.

VOLT
 Same rules?

She nods. Volt thinks a beat, hands her the cordless.

VOLT (CONT'D)
 I'm trusting you. Swear. On
 your husband.

JOY
 I swear.

VOLT
Gotta watch him.

JOY
I know.

Volt starts down the hallway, stops.

VOLT
Those kids.

JOY
What?

VOLT
In Afghanistan. The kids your
husband saved. Did they make it?

JOY
Yeah. They did.

Volt considers that a beat, walks off.

Joy heads back to tend to Javier, takes his wrist to check his pulse again. She pushes a clump of white hair off his forehead. Joy retrieves a finger clip oximeter and sticks it on Javier's index finger.

JAVIER
Where is he going?

JOY
To get something.

JAVIER
Something? Something what?

JOY
(checks the oximeter)
It's okay, Javier.

She sets the cordless on the table.

JAVIER
You took the phone. Good. You
call the police. I go for help.

He starts to get up, but Joy stops him.

JOY
No. I promised. If he wanted to
hurt us he would have by now.
Joey would want to help him,
right?

Javier sighs, looks away.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - JOY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Volt flips Joy's pillow over. A pill bottle. He picks it up.

INSERT BOTTLE: Xanax alprazolam tablets. 1 mg. 100 tablets. RX only.

BACK TO SCENE:

Volt quickly opens the bottle, dumps several in his hand, pops two into his mouth, and pockets the rest.

He tucks the half-full pill bottle back under the pillow.

He stands at Joy's bureau, flips through a photo album. Family photos.

He stops at one photo in particular:

JOY AND JOEY AT A SHOOTING RANGE, JOY, ALL SMILES, HOLDING A TARGET WITH SEVERAL HOLES CLUSTERED NEAR THE BULLSEYE, JOEY POINTING TO HER PROUDLY.

Volt flips to the next page:

OSCAR, EVE AND THEIR DAD IN CIVVIES AT A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION. A HUGE "11" ON THE CAKE. Oscar looks thinner, but not much younger. Eve looks more natural, innocent.

Volt closes the album, turns to the bed, picks up the framed photo of Joey Herrera, stares into THE SOLDIER'S DARK EYES which seem to scold him.

While he stares at the photo, he grabs his phone, tabs it once...

VOLT
Pick up, pick up...

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Eve runs through the rain and puddles. Her CELL PHONE RINGS AGAIN. Same RAP RIFF. Distracted by it, she trips and goes flying into a yard, her purse and its contents scattering everywhere.

She picks herself up, rubs her bruised knees, and starts gathering it all up, including her phone's battery.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN/HALLWAY - DAY

Joy tabs off the cordless.

JAVIER

Nothing?

Joy shakes her head and joins Oscar and Javier at the small table. They're already eating chili and salad.

Volt lingers in the hallway, listening.

After a long moment.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Maybe with the girlfriends.

OSCAR

More like boyfriend.

JOY

What? Boyfriend?

OSCAR

That black dude Tyson. He's 17, too. Drives a red Dodge Dart with spinners.

JOY

(to Javier)

Did you know about...

Javier shrugs. She touches Javier's wrist and checks his pulse again.

JAVIER

Enough.

JOY

(to Oscar)

How do you know this?

OSCAR

He drops, her off at the bus stop. Down the street.

Volt closes his eyes, still listening.

JAVIER

This is how happens...

Joy looks over at Javier, who's not looking back, and takes a bite of chili. They eat and say nothing for a few long moments.

OSCAR

(loudly)

We're ALL eating out here now.

JAVIER
 (matching loudness)
 Yes. Every day.

He shoots a quick glance over at Joy, who nods once in agreement.

OSCAR
 Can you go outside now, too.

Joy starts to answer, but Volt walks in. He extends his hand. Joy lays the cordless in it. Volt eyes Javier.

VOLT
 (to Joy)
 Thank you. So, why don't you go outside?

JOY
 What?

VOLT
 You don't go out. Stay inside all the time. Like a prison.

JAVIER
 (mutters)
 Donde debe estar.

OSCAR
 She gets panic attacks.

JOY
 Oscar, enough.

Volt eyes Javier, who eyes him right back with some dark, new attitude.

Volt heads over to the living room window, peeks outside, walks back to the kitchen.

OSCAR
 Chillin' with chili, chili, chili, right, Abi.

JAVIER
 Talk less, eat more.

OSCAR
 Want any, Volt?

Volt ignores. Seems like the pills killed the edge, at least for now.

Joy sets a bowl down in front of an empty chair.

JOY
Rain stopped?

VOLT
Drizzling. Dark soon.

JAVIER
Sooner with the rain.

Volt sits, throws a sideways glance at Javier.

VOLT
Maybe.

JAVIER
Not maybe.

Volt eats a spoonful of chili.

VOLT
What's it like, Joy? Those panic attacks.

Joy shoots a look at Oscar, who's looking down.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Fight or flight kind of thing?

JOY
Don't want to talk about it.

A few, long silent moments, then...

JOY (CONT'D)
You think you're this strong, solid thing... but this feeling sweeps over you and grabs you and you realize you're not that at all, you're weak and you've lost control. Your mind's split by this, I don't know... conspiracy. It's all closing in on you and is about to squeeze all the breath out of you, crush you. I...

Oscar reaches over and pats his mother's hand. His left hand flapping. She offers a weak smile.

VOLT
I get it.
(she eyes him)
When things pile up on me --

JOY
You take drugs.

VOLT

Just like you.

Joy pushes her plate away.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

A Cruiser glides along.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Volt watches Javier closely.

VOLT

(to Javier)

So, you feeling better?

JAVIER

Don't worry about me. Only eat.

VOLT

Still wanna shoot me?

Joy eyes Javier, who gets up, goes to the cabinet, retrieves a bottle of wine, brings it back to the table, and pours himself a full glass.

He takes a long sip, offers some to Joy, she declines with a shake of her head. Javier sips again.

OSCAR

What about me, Abi?

JAVIER

(between sips)

Nothing about you, Oscar, for grown ups.

Oscar groans too loudly.

VOLT

(to Javier)

Your cancer is gone, right?

JAVIER

(under his breath)

¿Qué importa?

(then)

Not your care.

VOLT

No. I know.

(beat)

(MORE)

VOLT (CONT'D)

I mean I knew this guy who had it
and he went through all this
chemo and everything and they
told him --

Javier SLAMS his glass down. Wine flies out, bloodies
the table cloth.

JAVIER

Stop!

JOY

Javier?

Joy dabs napkins at the wine spill.

JAVIER

Just eat. When dark comes, go.
Like you said. That's all. Go.

VOLT

Tomorrow I'll just be a memory,
Javier. Don't worry.

JAVIER

Don't worry... You come into
someone's house, without the
welcome. Talk so much like you
know people. You don't know
people. Who does this? Tell
me.

Volt pushes his bowl away, walks back into the living
room, flops down on the sofa, and lays his .22 on his
lap. He lifts up his shirt to check his wound.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Big man with his cap gun.

VOLT

What'd you say, old man?

Javier waves him off.

OSCAR

He's not an old man! Wrong!

JOY

(quietly)

Javier, are you okay?

JAVIER

Soon...

Volt and Javier in a two-room dagger-staring contest.

Car door SLAMS outside.

Volt quickly pulls the drape back. A BLUE LIGHT FLASHES.

VOLT

Shit...

Volt runs to the kitchen, his gun drawn. He stands in the corner by the sink, gestures for Joy to go to the door.

DOORBELL CHIMES.

Oscar rises from the table.

OSCAR

I'm going in my bedroom.

Volt reaches out and pushes him back into his seat.

VOLT

No. Stay here. Joy.

Joy rises slowly. THE DOORBELL CHIMES again.

Joy moves to the door, looks back at Volt, his weapon trained at the back of Oscar's head.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Do it right.

Joy has her hand on the door.

Volt looks over at Javier, who SCREAMS OUT WEAKLY...

JAVIER

HELP!! HELP US!

Volt rushes over to stifle the screams, stuffs a dish towel in Javier's mouth, but he continues, muffled.

Joy watches Volt drag Javier over to Oscar. He has them both under his control now.

Joy pulls open the door slightly, steps back, away from it.

There stands Eve, sopping wet.

EVE

God, what took you so long?
What's with all the shouting?

She turns back and waves, and the Cruiser drives off.

JOY

Police?

EVE

Yeah. Dude felt sorry for me, I guess.

JOY

Why? What happened?

EVE

Nothing. I missed my bus. Had to take the city damn bus and walk from like two miles away in the rain. I tripped, dropped everything, tore my favorite Charlotte Russe skirt, broke my stupid phone, lost my freaking house key... What're you doing up?

Eve pushes the door open, steps inside.

Volt releases Javier, smiles wide.

VOLT

Hi, Eve!

Joy closes the door behind Eve, who spots Volt and the smile and the gun.

EVE

What the hell?

Eve goes for the door...

VOLT

No, no, no, no, no!

Volt goes after her, but she's out.

JOY

Eve!

VOLT

Go get her!

Joy stares at the door, shakes her head. Can't do it.

VOLT (CONT'D)

(grabs the cordless)

Everybody on the couch. Now!!
Do it right, Joy! I mean it.

EXT. HERRERA HOUSE - DUSK

Eve dashes across the rain-slicked lawn, slips, falls on her ass, groans.

EVE

Shit!

She gets up, spots the tail lights of the cruiser, turning.

EVE (CONT'D)

Hey! Come back!

Volt strides up right behind her, startling her, taking her by the elbow.

VOLT

C'mon, Eve. You spoiled the surprise.

She turns to him.

EVE

What surprise? Let go of me.

VOLT

I knew your father... in Afghanistan.

EVE

No you didn't. Let go.

VOLT

Yeah, yeah I did. I was a P-J, too.

EVE

You were a P-J?

VOLT

Ooh-rah. Bagram to the max. I'm Volt. He never told you about me? I shipped out the week before he...

He releases her arm.

EVE

For real? You knew my dad?

Volt crosses his heart.

MRS. STENSRUD, 70s, in a housecoat, stands on her front porch across the street.

MRS. STENSRUD
Everything all right, dear?

Eve eyes Volt, who cants his head, offers a lopsided grin. She turns to the Woman with a wave.

EVE
Yes, Missus Stensrud.
(under her breath)
Ogre.
(then, with sarcasm)
How are you?

MRS. STENSRUD
Well, the rain makes my hip replacement ache worse than the old one, if you wanna know.

EVE
(sotto)
I don't.

Volt giggles.

MRS. STENSRUD
Haven't seen your mother in quite a while. She okay?

EVE
Um... Yup. Just fine.

MRS. STENSRUD
All right then...

They watch Stensrud waves and amble back inside.

EVE
(quickly, to Volt)
Why do you have a gun?

VOLT
What? Self-defense. I'm no dummy. These days, c'mon. I was showing it to Oscar and Javier. Your Pops gave it to me, going home gift. Wanna see it?

She shakes her head.

EVE
Is that why Mom got up?

VOLT
Yes, ma'am. Making me feel right at home, too. Javier's chili.
(MORE)

VOLT (CONT'D)

So good. Let's get inside out of this wet, huh?

EVE

Yeah. God, I'm so sorry I went all lunatic on you. I had a really weird day.

VOLT

Wanna talk about it?

She shakes her head, and they walk toward the house.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Joey never told me you were so beautiful.

Eve, mascara tear trails down both cheeks, pushes her matted hair away from her face.

EVE

I must look like one of Oscar's monsters.

VOLT

Are you kidding?

Volt glances over to a helicopter circling blocks away. He helps Eve up the steps.

VOLT (CONT'D)

Okay, the T-Rex maybe, just a little.

EVE

Thanks!

She gives him a playful jab, and Volt pushes the front door open. The cordless phone's tucked in his back pocket.

He follows Eve inside, looks back across at the Stensrud house, the helicopter, before he closes the door.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Volt leans against the door. Oscar, rocking, and Javier sit on the couch. Joy stands beside them. Eve walks down the hall, quickly returns with a bath towel which she uses to dry off. She stoops to kiss Javier.

EVE

You okay?

JAVIER
 (grim-faced)
 Soon.

Eve looks confused.

EVE
 What's going on? For real.

VOLT
 Sit down with them.

EVE
 Why?

VOLT
 Because I told you to.

Eve eyes her mother.

JOY
 Do it, Eve.

EVE
 No.

Volt blows out a breath, pulls out his .22.

EVE (CONT'D)
 So, you didn't know my father,
 did you?

VOLT
 No.

EVE
 Mom?

JOY
 (sits on a chair)
 He did something bad last night.
 He's staying here until it gets
 dark.

EVE
 So you're the one they're looking
 for. You killed that cop over on
 Commodore.

VOLT
 NO! Not killed. Damn. We shot
 each other! By mistake, too.

EVE
 Well, sorry, but he died.

VOLT

What?!

EVE

My cop told me your cop had a heart attack in the ambulance. Died before they got him to the hospital.

Volt falls back into a chair, rubs his hands through his hair. He lets out an AGONIZED MOAN. Oscar imitates.

VOLT

SHIT! They can't pin that on me. I could have hurt him, more. I didn't. I didn't. He had a bad heart. That's on them. Not me.

A long moment.

EVE

He's what, like hiding out here? Why?

VOLT

Because your mother said I could. So, shut the hell up!

EVE

What?!

JOY

Let it go, Eve, huh?

VOLT

I just want to finish this out. Don't want to hurt anyone.

EVE

Oh, but you will if you have to? Like the dead cop.

VOLT

Shut her up, Joy. I mean it.

JOY

Just sit, hon. When he's gone you and I will have a long talk. Okay?

EVE

No, not okay. Don't think we have anything to talk about.

JOY

Yes. We do.

EVE

Why didn't you just call 9-1-1?
He's not going to shoot anybody,
unless it's "by mistake." Right,
Volt? He's a goddamn pussy.
Look at him.

OSCAR

Shouldn't judge by looks.

EVE

Oh, thank you, Mr. P-C. How
about I judge him by his looks
AND the fact that he killed a
cop. That work for you?! God.

Oscar shrugs, his hands covering his ears.

EVE (CONT'D)

Are there even any bullets in
your stupid gun?

Volt simply stares at her.

EVE (CONT'D)

Didn't think so.

She heads for the kitchen phone, but it RINGS in Volt's
pocket.

He reaches behind him, grabs it, shows it to Joy.

JOY

It's my mother.

EVE

You should take it. Tell her!

PHONE RINGING.

VOLT

Take it. You know what to do.

He eyes Eve, who glowers back at him.

Joy tabs the phone, presses a "quiet" finger against her
lips for Eve.

EVE

Ridiculous. Fucking ridiculous.
I came home to a crazy house...

JAVIER

Bad words, Evie.

JOY
 (into phone)
 Hi, Mom.
 (...)
 Well, you got me.
 (...)
 All day.
 (...)
 Right. Better. How are you?

EVE
 Help, Grandma!!

Joy quickly covers the phone. Volt wraps his arm around Eve's mouth, and she promptly bites it. He winces and stifles her harder.

JOY
 (into phone)
 She said, Hello.

She listens a long while. Oscar hides a smile. Eve paces short laps.

JOY (CONT'D)
 They're fine. They're heading
 out right now.

EVE
 (bites, yells out)
 Am not! Mass murderer in the
 house!

Volt walks her down the hall. Joy goes in the other direction, looks back at Volt, who nods.

JOY
 (into phone)
 Eve. Yes. Very dramatic. Too
 much Netflix.

Joy covers the mouthpiece, listens, steers a look Javier's way.

JOY (CONT'D)
 Yes, of course he's still living
 with us. Why wouldn't he be?
 (...)
 I'd... we'd look forward to that.
 Let me write down the dates.
 (writes nothing)
 Perfect.
 (...)
 You, too. Love you, Momma.

She tabs the phone off quickly, hands it back to Volt.

VOLT

Thank you, Joy. I appreciate the way you handled that.

Eve flops down on the sofa.

EVE

Ugh.

Volt reaches into his pocket and throws down another pill, as he goes to the window and peeks out.

EVE (CONT'D)

So, you're a drug addict and a by mistake murderer?

Volt turns to face her. Nods grimly.

She looks away.

JAVIER

There's chili, nieta.

EVE

Not hungry.

All are sitting now, and Volt joins them. No one says a word for several long moments, until...

EVE (CONT'D)

(to Joy)

When did you get up?

JOY

Right after you left this morning.

EVE

So, you've been out all day?

Joy nods.

EVE (CONT'D)

Outside?

Joy shakes her head.

EVE (CONT'D)

Better than nothing. What brought this on?

Joy tosses a glance Volt's way.

EVE (CONT'D)

Oh...

Volt rises, walks over, pulls the clip out of his .22 and shows it to Eve. Nearly full.

EVE (CONT'D)

What, is that a threat?

Volt pushes the clip back in place, heads back to his chair, settles into it.

VOLT

Just answering your question.

EXT. HERRERA NEIGHBORHOOD - DUSK

Darkness settling in. The rain has stopped. Lights filling windows. Streets glisten as pole lamps click on.

A Cruiser drives along slowly.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY, NEAR DARK

Joy, Oscar and Javier sit in the kitchen finishing their dinner.

Eve sits across from Volt.

EVE

Is Volt your real name?

Volt shakes his head slowly, moves to the chair closest to Eve.

VOLT

(whispers)
Made it up.

EVE

When?

VOLT

This morning.

EVE

(whisper back)
What's your real name?

VOLT

Gerald.
(Eve stifles a grin)
I know, right?

EVE

So, what's this about being some great baseball player?

Volt leans closer, pulls a face, leans back, looks out the window.

EVE (CONT'D)

Almost dark.

VOLT

Yep.

EVE

Where will you go, when you leave here?

VOLT

I don't know. Mexico maybe.

EVE

For real? My grampa used to live there. You should talk to him. He can tell you places to go.

(calls out)

Abi.

Volt pats her knee.

JAVIER

Yes, Eve.

VOLT

Don't bug him.

Eve glances down at Volt's hand on her knee.

EVE

(to Javier)

Never mind, Lito.

JAVIER

Don't talk to him, Evie. He's un hombre muy malo.

EVE

Mom, where will you spend tomorrow? Out here or in your bedroom?

JOY

Out here... I think.

EVE

See, Abi. He's not so bad.

Joy frowns. Oscar walks into the living room and sits near Eve and Volt with his sketch pad. He pulls a pencil out of the wire spiral.

EVE (CONT'D)
Go in your room and do that.

OSCAR
Why?

EVE
Because I'm talking to... Volt.

OSCAR
Should I, Volt?

VOLT
That'd be cool, man.

Oscar looks disappointed, rises.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Same rules as before?

OSCAR
(too loudly)
Whatever.

VOLT
Thanks, bud.

Oscar mutters, heads off. Eve leans closer to Volt.

EVE
Do you have any money?

VOLT
A little.

EVE
I probably can get you some.

VOLT
What? Where?

EVE
This guy I know. His old man's
like loaded. And he owes me,
bigtime.

VOLT
Who? The Dodge Dart guy?

Eve eyes Joy, then back to Volt.

EVE
Who told you that?

VOLT

Your brother is a very smart kid,
Eve. Shouldn't underestimate
him.

EVE

Does she know?
(he lifts his brows)
Shit.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - OSCAR'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Oscar lies on the upper bunk, putting the finishing
touches on a simple sketch of Volt's face.

He glances over at the window.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joy's keeping an eye on Volt and Eve, as they talk to
each other quietly. Volt continues to check outside.

JOY

Everything okay out there, Eve?

EVE

Yes, mom. Just talking.

JOY

Almost time, Volt. Right?

VOLT

Almost.

JAVIER

When?

VOLT

Soon. Joy, do you have a dark
coat or jacket I could borrow?

JOY

No.

EVE

Mom, you've got all of Daddy's
clothes in there.

JOY

Daddy's clothes.

EVE

What are you gonna do with them?

JOY

I... don't know. Maybe Oscar would want them.

EVE

What, in ten years? You could spare one thing, right?

VOLT

Never mind.

Joy pushes away from the table.

JAVIER

Don't, Joy.

Joy walks out of the kitchen and down the hallway.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Pretty dark right now, mister.

VOLT

Yup.

Javier dismisses him with a wave.

Eve puts her hand on Volt's knee, leans close, whispers...

EVE

Take me with you.

VOLT

What? No. No.

Volt gets up and looks out the window, mutters under his breath.

EVE

Look, I can help you, get you money. I speak Spanish. Do you?
 (Volt shakes his head)
 Tell them you'll let me go in an hour, then they can call the police. Something like that.
 C'mon, Jerome. Help me out here, huh?

VOLT

Gerald. You want me to kidnap you?

EVE

Yes. Please. I... can't stay here.

VOLT

Why not? I'm bad news, Eve. You don't need someone like me in your life. You got a good thing goin' here, you just don't see that yet. But you will.

EVE

Please.

Volt looks into Eve's desperate eyes.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - JOY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joy stands at her closet looking at the third of the rack which is pressed together with her husband's clothing. She separates a section and pulls out a long, dark blue raincoat.

She carries it over to her bed and sits, the raincoat in her lap. She glances over at Joey Herrera's framed photo and sighs.

OSCAR (O.S.)

MOM, HELP!

Joy bolts out of the room, raincoat in hand.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - HALLWAY/OSCAR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Volt, Eve and Joy converge on Oscar's door at the same time. Eve covers a smile with her hand.

EVE

Oh-my-God.

Oscar hangs from the window, his torso in the room, his lower half out the window, a sketch of Volt in his hand.

OSCAR

You gonna help me?

Joy rushes to his assistance, unhooks his belt, which is caught, twists and pulls Oscar's torso, until he's free. She holds him until he's safely back inside, then closes the window.

EVE

So freaking embarrassing.

Joy reprimands her with a look, and Eve tromps off.

Oscar lifts eye contact long enough to glare at Volt, as he holds up the sketch.

OSCAR
I made it for the police.

VOLT
It's okay, Oscar. I understand.

Volt heads back down the hallway, passing Javier along the way.

JAVIER
Dark enough now. Right now!

Volt eyes him, nods.

IN OSCAR'S ROOM. Joy sits with Oscar on Javier's lower bunk.

JOY
What happened, Oscar?

OSCAR
I got stuck.

JOY
We promised him we wouldn't do that.

OSCAR
Because I'm too fat.

JOY
No. The windows are set to only open so far, to make it harder for someone to break in.

OSCAR
Lotta good that did.

Joy smiles.

JOY
Your dad wanted to keep us safe.

OSCAR
I'm still fat.

JOY
You're a clone of your dad when he was your age.

OSCAR
(hand flapping wildly)
That's crap.

JOY

Ask Abi to show you his old albums. You haven't looked at them in awhile.

OSCAR

Daddy... was like me?

JOY

And you know how he turned out. Right?

Oscar nods.

JOY (CONT'D)

It's not about what you look like, anyway, Oscar. You're a good, smart, caring person. That's what matters. I'm very proud to be your mom.

OSCAR

No, you're not.

JOY

(tears up)

Yes, I am. And I'm so so sorry I haven't been, you know, here for you for awhile. To help you more.

OSCAR

We knew where you were.

Joy chokes up, kisses the top of his head.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Volt's an... asswipe.

JOY

I know, baby.

(a beat)

What'd he tell you to say to those boys at school?

OSCAR

Can't tell you.

JOY

Why not?

OSCAR

Used a foul word.

He whispers in his mother's ear. She stifles a grin, hugs Oscar tighter.

INT. HERRERA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Volt pulls on Joey's rain coat. He checks the front window yet again.

OSCAR
When you get caught, give it
back.

Joy, Oscar, and Javier sit on the couch. Javier's dozing.

VOLT
Works, Joy. Thanks.

Oscar snatches the "Volt Superhero" sketch from the coffee table.

VOLT (CONT'D)
I still think you're super-
talented and smart. Stick with
it. You're gonna be a big
success and make your mom proud
someday.

OSCAR
I know.

Javier wakes with a start.

JAVIER
What?!

He looks around, bewildered. Joy comforts him.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
(to Volt)
You...

JOY
It's okay, Javier. He's leaving.
Right, Volt?

VOLT
Yep.

Eve, changed, now wearing jeans and a jacket, strolls in, carrying a backpack.

EVE
Ready?

JOY
What?!

EVE
I'm going with him.

Joy leaps up. Volt stands right in front of her.

JOY
What's going on, Volt? Huh?

EVE
His name's Gerald.

OSCAR
No, it's not.

VOLT
Sit, Joy. Everybody just sit
down and relax. Now. Please.

Joy sits. Oscar grabs her hand and holds it.

Volt gestures for Eve to sit, too. She looks at him quizzically but sits in the nearest armchair, right on the edge.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Thank you. Everything's cool,
Joy.

JOY
No, it's not. She's fifteen,
Volt or Gerald, whatever your
name is. There is no way she's
leaving this house with you.

EVE
Why would you care?

JOY
I'm your mother.

EVE
Right. Since when?

JOY
(after a beat)
Since right now. You're not
going anywhere! I will take a
bullet before I let that happen.

That momentarily stuns Eve.

EVE
Look, it's okay, Mom. I'll come
right back once he gets away.
Like in an hour or something,
right, Gerald?

JOY
NO, YOU WILL NOT!

VOLT
You're right.

JOY
Who is?

A moment. Volt looks over at Eve.

VOLT
Sorry, Eve. Not gonna happen.

EVE
What?! You promised.

VOLT
No. I didn't. I let you talk.

Eve moves closer to Volt, lays her hand on his chest, kisses his ear.

EVE
C'mon.

JOY
Eve? Stop that right now.

OSCAR
(loudly)
Gross, Eve.

EVE
(whispers)
Got some killer spice we can share on the road.

VOLT
(sternly)
Get rid of it. You see what's going here? What I am? Huh?

EVE
But I wanna help you get away.

Volt pushes her away, gestures for her to sit, pulls back the window drape, checks outside.

VOLT
Help me? I don't know why you need to get out so bad. Maybe that's something you and your mom need to work out. But I'm not your guy, Eve. I'm just... not.

Eve pushes all the way back into the chair, snaps her arms across her chest.

EVE
You're a piece of shit, Gerald.

OSCAR
Not his name.

VOLT
I know, Eve. Sorry.

A beat.

Oscar, eyes down, reaches out and offers Volt the signed sketch.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Sure?

Oscar nods. Volt takes the sketch, folds it longwise in half, and tucks it inside his raincoat.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Thanks, man.

Volt checks the window again.

VOLT (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Shit.
(leaves the window)
Okay, then. This is it. I have two things to say. First, thank you for letting me hang out here. I know it wasn't easy. You have your own problems, tough problems, and I showed up and added to them.

JAVIER
Second thing. Then go.

VOLT
Second thing. Looks like my partner's not coming to get me. So, I need a ride... a driver.

JOY
What?

VOLT
All these cops. We go through a checkpoint or something, I get pulled. I need Javi--, Mr. Herrera at the wheel.

JOY
 Javier? No. No way.

EVE
 (to Volt)
 I hate you.

VOLT
 Keys, Joy.

Joy levels a stern glance Javier's way, but he's already dug the car key out of his pocket.

VOLT (CONT'D)
 Good man. Now go pull the car out. Meet you out there.

JOY
 ABSOLUTELY NOT! Don't do it, Javier.
 (to Volt)
 He's not going with you.

VOLT
 What, you'll drive me, Joy?
 (a beat)
 Look, he'll drive 20 miles or so, drop me off, and come back home. Back in less than an hour, then you can call the cops, do whatever you need to do.

EVE
 That isn't what you told me.

JAVIER
 (rises)
 It's okay. I'll do it. I'm not afraid of him. He can't hurt me.

Javier walks slowly toward the utility room. He grabs his jacket in the kitchen.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
 Lo voy a dejar en la estación de policía.

JOY
 What?! No, Javier! No te vas.

VOLT
 Stop with the freaking Spanish!

JAVIER
 Una hora, Joyful.

Javier exits through the utility room door.

VOLT

Okay, then.

He shows them the cordless phone.

VOLT (CONT'D)

I'll give this back to him when I get out.

He pockets it.

JOY

I can walk across the street and make a call.

VOLT

If I see Police coming after us...

OSCAR

Give my sketch back.

Volt reaches inside his jacket, hands the paper back to Oscar.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Asswipe. Just let him go, Mom. Get it over with.

Joy thinks about it a long moment. A HORN toots outside.

Volt goes to the window, pulls back the drape with the barrel of the .22.

VOLT

Time.

JOY

No.

VOLT

Let this play out, Joy. Huh? Then you can go back to bed.

Joy stands before him, frozen.

EVE

Mom...

Volt pulls his raincoat up over his head.

EVE (CONT'D)

It's all a lie. He wants gramps to take him to Mexico.

VOLT

Eve, what the hell would I do in Mexico?

Volt knocks off a little salute, opens the front door. He looks back at them for a long beat.

VOLT (CONT'D)

You're a nice family. Lucky.

He walks out into the night.

EVE

Do something, Mom.

Joy turns to her, then quickly strides the few steps to the mantel, grabs the flag box, slides open a clasp on the back, drops the flag out onto the sofa.

She unwraps the flag, one fold. There lies Joey's service revolver, never fired in anger. She lifts it, yanks out the clip, drives it back in hard.

JOY

Stay inside, both of you.

Joy hesitates at the open door, the outside. She begins to sweat, and struggles to breathe. Her hand trembles.

She fights for control over the panic attack, the room squeezing in on her. She draws in some long, agonized, scary-sounding breaths.

EVE

Mom?

Joy looks back at her children -- Eve, wrapping her arms protectively around Oscar.

EVE (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Joy shakes her head slowly, glances down at the weapon in her hand.

JOY

(sotto)

Help me...

(to the kids)

Yes, I'm...

Joy, still fighting it, blows out a long breath, flips a light switch, and opens the front door. She stands there frozen. Oscar walks over and hugs her leg tightly.

EXT. HERRERA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Volt's nearly at the street, where the SUV waits. He turns to the explosion of light provided by floods on both corners of the house.

INSERT SHOT: The light in Howard's house being switched on by Batch. TWO GUNSHOTS!

BACK TO SCENE:

Joy steps out onto the landing, raises Joey's service revolver to shoulder level. She has the look now of someone who can handle a weapon.

She draws in several quick breaths, mumbles to herself, then...

JOY
Stop. Now!

Volt turns to her.

VOLT
Can't do it.

JOY
Yes, you can. You will.

VOLT
Gotta go.

JOY
You can't keep hiding out, Volt.
That's not a life.

VOLT
Listen to you...

Volt pulls out his .22, aims it at her.

JOY
Don't make me, Volt!

Volt lifts his face skyward, an unheard passenger plane glides over, lights cutting through rain clouds.

Lower, a helicopter searchlight scans a nearby neighborhood, gliding closer.

INSERT SHOT: Batch gets off one shot into the hallway, then crashes in SLO-MO down onto a glass coffee table.

BACK TO SCENE:

A breeze kicks through Volt's hair. He turns back toward Joy and her normal home and her nice neighborhood. He shakes his head slowly, lowers his pistol, closes his eyes.

VOLT
(softly)
Done.

Joy blows out a breath.

But Volt opens his eyes, lifts and steers the gun barrel, slowly tracking it toward the SUV and Javier.

VOLT (CONT'D)
Don't want to do it, Joy. I
swear.

JOY
Papa!

Javier looks out the open driver's side window to Joy, waves, then back to Volt.

JAVIER
(lowly)
You can't hurt me, boy. I'm
already dead.

JOY
Volt!

Volt eyes Javier curiously.

JAVIER
The cancer.

Javier scrutinizes Volt, eyes narrowing. Volt lifts his chin, grins, the gun still on Javier.

VOLT
(eyes swivel to Joy)
Better stop me, Joy! Do it.

Joy sights the gun on Volt's chest, lowers it slightly, squeezes off one round. CRACK!

Volt turns his torso to her, drops the pistol and falls to his knees.

Javier hustles out of the SUV.

JOY
Stay back, Papa. Back!

Javier complies. Joy approaches Volt cautiously. He's agonizing in pain and reaches out desperately for the .22, just a finger's length away.

JOY (CONT'D)

Don't.

Too weak, he gives up on the gun.

Her weapon still on him, she kicks the .22 farther from his reach and grabs her cordless phone from his pocket. She tosses it toward Javier.

JOY (CONT'D)

Call 9-1-1. Quick!

Javier gathers up both the phone and the .22, carries them closer to the house and the garage lights, sets the gun down and tabs the cordless.

Volt looks up at Joy, who kneels beside him. She tosses Joey's gun aside, well out of anyone's reach, and applies pressure to the wound.

JOY (CONT'D)

That was just stupid. It's like you wanted me to...

A beat, as their eyes meet.

VOLT

Help me out. No one will know.

JOY

What?

VOLT

Finish it. Improve the world, right?

JOY

Shut up.

VOLT

(crying softly)
I killed that cop...

JOY

No.

VOLT

I did. I did.

Volt MOANS LOUDLY through a flash of pain.

VOLT (CONT'D)

You nailed it, though, man. You did. My whole life. Fucked it all up. Everything.

J

The knee injury. That's what messed you --

VOLT

(laughs, chokes)

Lady, I blew out my knee jumping off the roof of a freaking Walgreen's I was trying to jack.

JOY

Who can I call for you? You must have someone... What about the girl on the phone? Your partner.

She starts digging for his phone, one handed, still applying pressure.

Volt chokes. Blood oozes out of the side his mouth.

Joy finds the phone, starts to tab to the last outgoing. Volt summons strength to knock the phone away from her.

VOLT

No.

Joy snatches the phone off the grass. Hand trembling, she tabs to outgoing calls and tabs again, holds the phone to her ear, then slowly pulls it away and turns to the street.

HER POV: The black Toyota is stopped in the middle of the street several houses down. The driver, ANDY, 27, climbs out and watches from behind the car door, his phone RINGING, a "funny laugh" tone.

WHIP BACK TO VOLT AND JOY

Volt reaches for her, but his arm drops, drawing her attention back to him. She tosses the phone.

VOLT (CONT'D)

(speech slowing)

Trying to make it through the day. Huh, Joy?

JOY

Yeah. Now breathe. Come on, in and out. Nice and easy. Stay with me.

(checks his carotid)

(MORE)

JOY (CONT'D)

Shit.

(to Javier)

Gimme your jacket! Hurry!

Javier runs over, pulling off his jacket. Joy lays it over Volt's torso. Javier hustles back toward the house, struggling on the phone and frustrated with whoever's on the other end.

JOY (CONT'D)

Do not go to sleep. Hang on,
dammit!

Volt's choking worsens. His eyes blink open.

VOLT

Help...

JOY

We're getting help. Soon.

Volt shakes his head in frustration. He struggles to look at her and get the words out.

VOLT

No. Him... help Mr. Herrera.

JOY

What?!

Joy turns to Javier, the phone still to his ear, as he gestures wildly to whomever's he's talking to.

Joy turns back to the house to see Oscar and Eve on the landing, Eve, both arms around her brother's shoulders.

Andy, frail, runs up onto to lawn, closer to Joy and Volt. Stops. He puts his hand to his mouth.

ANDY

(sotto)

Gerald... I'm so sorry.

JOY

Are you his friend?

ANDY

(nods)

What happened to him?

JOY

He made me shoot him.

ANDY

What?!

Volt reaches weakly for Andy, but his arm drops. Andy stands there, numb. SIRENS IN THE DISTANCE.

JOY
(To Andy)
What's your name?

ANDY
Andy.

Joy checks Volt's pulse again. Nearly gone. She removes the pressure she's been applying. Not helping.

JOY
Gerald, Andy's here now. Hear me? He made it. He came for you. You're not alone.

Volt's eyes are closed, but his lids jitter, as though he's fighting through a bad dream.

ANDY
Is he... ?

JOY
Be strong now. Can you do that?

ANDY
(stifling tears)
I don't know.

Joy turns to Eve and Oscar, who are still holding each other, then back to Andy.

JOY
You have to. You will.

Andy kneels beside Volt. Joy rises. Andy speaks lowly to Volt, rubs his hand, holds it to his cheek.

SIRENS SCREAM, CLOSER.

Joy walks slowly backward, eyes still on Volt. She meets Eve and Oscar mid-yard and hugs the life out of them. Javier moves closer to them. Joy pulls him into their hug.

WE PULL BACK to take in the scene FROM OVERHEAD. ALL IN THE BEAM OF THE HELICOPTER'S SWIRLING SEARCHLIGHT:

Joy and her family. Volt on his back, Joey's raincoat spreading out like wings behind him, and Andy kneeling over him, holding his hand still and talking.

Mrs. Stensrud stands on her porch, phone at her ear.

The Helicopter drops closer, hovers, BLADES THWAPPING.

A FD truck pulls up onto the sidewalk, lights flashing. TWO PARAMEDICS climb out, grab equipment, rush to Volt's side, gently moving Andy aside. As Joy, Javier and the kids watch, we slowly

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CANCER TREATMENT CENTER - DAY (MOS)

Javier, head wrapped in a red bandana, eyes closed, sits in a comfortable padded chair. A steady drip of chemicals courses through a hose and into a port.

Beside him sits Joy, one hand on Javier's other arm. Beside her sits Oscar, who finishes a sketch of Javier, as a superhero: the chemo chair appears to be a great throne, with a healthy and happy Javier presiding.

He shows it to Joy, sets the sketch book back on his lap and scrawls his signature in the lower right hand corner.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LOBBY - DAY (MOS)

Eve sits in a chair against one wall, 2 empty chairs beside her. She nervously flips through a magazine. A black Pregnant Woman enters the lobby, signs in, and is about to sit down beside her. Eve's look says, "don't."

The Pregnant Woman takes another chair, just as Joy steps out of the Ladies Restroom, grabs a couple of fliers near the reception desk, and sits beside Eve.

She draws a long sigh, reaches over and pats Eve's leg. She hands Eve one of the fliers.

WE PUSH IN ON THEM, AS THEY LOOK UP AT US, and we slowly...

FADE OUT.