

NOW YOU SEE ME

by

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MAY 2009

DREAMLIKE IMAGES OF LAS VEGAS

Float past our eyes: Replicas of Coney Island and the Brooklyn Bridge... the kitschy oversized roman ruins at Caesars Place... the Eiffel Tower and Arc de Triomphe...

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Back in the day, magic used to be downright disreputable. It was practiced in dives and on streets by tricksters who were regarded as scarcely better than vagrants and thieves... which they often were. Then sometime during the nineteenth century all that changed, and magic became the favorite entertainment in high society parlors all across Europe and America. And magic became, of all things- safe. And so it remains, to this day. But tonight... all that's about to change.

MOVE IN on a dazzling marquee that reads- "**THE FOUR HORSEMEN**"- the sound of APPLAUSE grows on the SOUNDTRACK, and

CUT TO BLACK.

NOW YOU SEE ME

A SPOTLIGHT ILLUMINATES MICHAEL ATLAS

A handsome young man wearing jeans and a T-shirt. Though he radiates confidence his tone is humble; but it's hard to tell if it's genuine or a put-on:

MICHAEL ATLAS

Ladies and gentlemen, we're delighted to have provided you with an hour's divertissement tonight, in this first of our three special shows. But I can't in good conscience leave the stage without acknowledging that we are living in troubled times...

REVERSE ON A HUGE VEGAS AUDIENCE: people of all ages and classes pack the auditorium, many nodding in agreement as Michael continues:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Jobs are harder to come by.
Mortgage payments are harder to make.

(MORE)

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 Life is harder than ever, while the
 crooks- sorry, I mean, businessmen
 and bankers- who *made* it harder
 live high off the hog and laugh it
 up at our expense. So I think it's
 high time we cut into our share of
 the pie...

Michael gestures and lights come up on the stage behind him,
 illuminating THREE MORE YOUNG MEN:

RODERIGO SANTAYANA; Latino, splashy bright clothes, a magnet
 for attention, and

LONDON OSBORNE; actually from London. Scowl of a football
 hooligan, always ready to pick a fight, and

ALEX HERO; nineteen years old, a bright eyed all-American
 boy. He looks innocent and uses it to his advantage. He
 scopes out the crowd for pretty girls while Michael steps
 closer to the audience:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 -- Tonight the Four Horsemen are
 going to make magic *dangerous*
 again. We're going to do something
 no one has ever seen on a Vegas
 Stage before. Or on a stage
 anywhere else, for that matter.
 (smiles)
 Tonight we're going to *rob a bank*,
 and you are going to help us do it.

A SERIES OF LARGE-SCREEN MONITORS lower into place behind the
 four magicians, as two leggy ASSISTANTS run in from the wings
 holding a billowing silken sheet between them.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 I don't want to be accused of,
 well, *faking* this, so I want
 someone from the audience to
 volunteer his bank for me. Someone
 out there have an axe to grind with
 their bank?

The crowd explodes -- everyone yelling out the names of their
 banks- "*Omaha Trust!*" "*Kansas National!*" "*B of A!*" "*First
 Savings!*"

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 (over the crowd)
 Remember, your money is insured by
 the government.
 (MORE)

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 It's completely safe. Or so they
 tell us. Why don't we put them to
 the test..?

Michael zeros on one person in particular- we'll call him the
 MAN FROM PARIS; middle-aged, mustache, natty jacket.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 You, sir. Where are you from?

MAN FROM PARIS
 From Paris. My bank is the --

LONDON calls out from behind Michael in his Cockney accent:

LONDON
 Credit Lyonnais.

MAN FROM PARIS
 That is correct. But all of Paris
 goes to this bank...

MICHAEL ATLAS
 Which is exactly why we're going to
 teach them a lesson they're never
 going to forget.
 (smiles)
 Want to give the French something
 else to blame us for?

The crowd CHEERS.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 All right then. Credit Lyonnais it
 is. Tough one, too. It's about
 7:30 in the morning Paris time,
 isn't it?
 (to the Man from Paris)
 Why don't you come on up and give
 us a hand, Pierre?

The four magicians confer on stage as the MONITORS flicker
 on, displaying the FOUR HORSEMEN graphic as the man from
 Paris steps up onto the stage. Michael steps over to him and
 shakes his hand, leading him toward the monitors:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 (to the Man from Paris)
 Now, I want you to close your eyes
 and focus for me, Pierre...

MAN FROM PARIS
 Etienne.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Excuse me?

MAN FROM PARIS

My name is Etienne.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Right. Now focus a minute, will you, Pierre..?

(laughter from the audience)

Concentrate. Think about your bank. The branch you go to. Imagine the teller. The vault. The vault doors. *Especiallly* the vault doors...

The Man from Paris closes his eyes, as does Michael.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Do you see the bank?

MAN FROM PARIS

I see it.

The LOGO vanishes off the screen... which starts to blink... AN IMAGE takes shape: It's video surveillance footage of the bank, and on cue, MELODRAMATIC music begins PLAYING. The audience is enraptured, save for

THADDEUS BRADLEY

A grey haired man wearing a beat up old suit that once had style. He snorts derisively at the onstage antics, and is about to take a sip of his WHISKEY AND SODA, when:

USHER

Excuse me, sir, you can't drink in here.

THADDEUS

What do you mean I can't drink? We're in Las Vegas, aren't we?

USHER

Yes sir, but you can't drink in the theater. You can finish your drink outside, if you...

THADDEUS

Oh, for crissakes, take it will you?

The usher takes the drink from Thaddeus's hand and heads up the aisle -- Thaddeus sees the OLD WOMAN next to him giving him an irritated look; he leans over, reaches behind her head, and comes out with an IDENTICAL WHISKEY AND SODA. He allows himself a grin:

THADDEUS (CONT'D)
Abracadabra. Cheers, you old cow.

And he downs the alcohol, while

ON STAGE

Michael Atlas has positioned the Man from Paris in front of the big screen:

MICHAEL ATLAS
Open your eyes. Is that your bank?

MAN FROM PARIS
I... I can't be sure.

MICHAEL ATLAS
Maybe you should take a look around it, then. Don't forget to bring me back a few euros.

Roderigo and Alex Hero step up, holding a bright red space-age JUMPSUIT.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
You'll be passing through dimensions, which can be dangerous for the uninitiated. This special suit Roderigo designed will protect you from harm.

Before the guy knows it he is clad in the red jumpsuit, and Michael leads him to the SHIMMERING VEIL the two leggy assistants are holding up beside the MONITOR SCREEN.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
Take a small step for mankind.

The man stands there, hesitating... then he steps forward and walks into the veil. Michael grabs it from the assistants, whirls it around the man's shape, then lets it drop, and

The Man from Paris is gone. Michael looks confused. Roderigo Santayana steps toward the audience and smiles:

RODERIGO

Please, do not worry. There's no problem... not one we can't fix.

Michael stands in front of the MONITOR, as if dumbfounded.

MICHAEL ATLAS

My God... ladies and... where did he... Pierre!?!... can you hear me?

MAN FROM PARIS (O.S.)

Allo?

MICHAEL ATLAS

Hello?! Pierre, where are you?

ON THE MONITOR, the Man from Paris walks into frame; he looks around, confused... a little scared.

MAN FROM PARIS (ON MONITOR)

It's Etienne. And I'm... in my bank, I believe. I'm... in Paris.

The crowd strains forward in their seats, totally locked in watching as on the MONITOR the Man from Paris looks around helplessly.

MAN FROM PARIS (ON MONITOR) (CONT'D)

What do I do?

MICHAEL ATLAS

I want you to enter the safe.

The Man from Paris walks across the bank -- And Michael lays his hands on the screen as if he is maneuvering the camera, sliding the image so we stay with the Man from Paris. He stops at the SAFE.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Now press your hands against the safe. Concentrate, Pierre.

The man does it. A moment passes, then the vault door clicks.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Now push, *mon ami*. Push!

ON THE MONITOR: The Man from Paris pushes the safe door open, then he walks inside -- There is MONEY everywhere.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
Oh la la...

Michael steps back from the monitor, turns to the crowd:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 All zat money just... *sitting*
there. Does that seem right to
 you?
 (the AUDIENCE roars "NO!")
 Does that seem fair?!
 ("NO!" again)
 Well, I'm nothing if not a fair
 man. Don't you think we deserve
 some of that cash right here?

The crowd roars in approval. The leggy assistants pick up the silken veil and begin running around Michael...

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 Faster, faster... *vite, vite!*

Faster they go, until Michael is shrouded by the veil, and

The assistants stop running. They pull on the veil and then let it drop, and

Michael is gone.

ON THE MONITOR: The Man from Paris turns, looking outside the safe door -- Then backs away as Michael walks in.

Michael turns and looks to camera, talking to the crowd watching him in the Las Vegas theater.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 I believe we all deserve a little
 something tonight... or is it this
 morning?

Michael grabs a fistful of EUROS and throws it up in the air, and

IN THE THEATER

MONEY starts to rain down like confetti from the ceiling onto the crowd, many of whom leap up and snatch bills from the air, scramble for the money that has fallen to the floor...

THE OLD LADY next to Thaddeus Brady turns to him, holding a few BILLS in her hand:

OLD LADY
Is... is it *real*?

Thaddeus takes the EUROS from her hand and hands her his drink -- He studies the bills for a moment, then sticks them in his pocket, rises and heads up the aisle, obscured by a shower of falling money...

INT. GUARD OFFICE - CREDIT LYONNAIS - 8:50 AM PARIS TIME

THE PHONE RINGS, and THE GUARD CAPTAIN answers in French:

GUARD CAPTAIN
<Hallo? No we haven't opened yet.>
(listens)
<From Las Vegas? In America? That's ridiculous...>
(listens again)
<Of course. I understand. Right away...>

INT. CORRIDOR - CREDIT LYONNAIS - MOMENTS LATER

TWO GUARDS hurry down the hallway toward the VAULT DOOR. They put in dual keys, press a code, and wait a moment -- Then the door swings open

EXPELLING A TREMENDOUS GUST OF GASEOUS FUMES, causing the guards to cough and gag, and we MATCH CUT TO

EXT. MGM GRAND HOTEL - LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

A ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM bursts through the SMOKE rising from an underground heating vent. It rolls out of the parking exit and turns onto the strip, mixing in with the heavy Vegas traffic.

INT. ROLLS ROYCE - CONTINUOUS

Michael Atlas dabs at his forehead with a handkerchief; Roderigo sits beside him, facing Alex and London. Tension is in the air. A silent beat, then:

ALEX
Did you check out that mad honey in the third row? Aisle seat? The shizzle. She was giving me the eye the whole show, too.

MICHAEL ATLAS
Which explains why you were late on half your cues. Don't let it happen next time.

LONDON

Easy, tiger. Didn't you see that audience? We killed tonight.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Not quite. *Everyone* was slow on their cues. Like doing a show with the cast of Dawn of the Dead- and not that new fast-zombie remake crap, either. I'm talking classic slow-ass shambling old-school zombie shit. Lights were a disaster. Were we all in the same theater?

A moment of tense silence between the four men, then:

RODERIGO

Still, we pulled it off, didn't we?

Michael allows himself to nod, then smile slightly, easing the tension. He looks down at his watch:

MICHAEL ATLAS

Nine a.m. in Paris.

QUICK CUT TO THE VAULT IN THE PARISIAN BANK: THE GUARDS rush in, waving away the fumes, and see that whatever money was there is GONE.

BACK IN THE ROLLS ROYCE

Michael Atlas leans back, finally allowing himself to relax.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Tomorrow's gonna be an interesting day.

EXT. SUBURBS/OUTER VEGAS - MORNING

The flat desert landscape stretches away beyond the row of townhouses lining the street. The wind blows. A TOYOTA CAMRY is parked outside a modest house, engine running...

INSIDE THE CAR

DYLAN HOBBS, mid-thirties, eyes more tired than his years would suggest, looks out at

THE FRONT WINDOW OF THE HOUSE: behind which a WOMAN is visible moving around the kitchen, serving breakfast to a downcast looking LITTLE GIRL.

Dylan takes in the tableau for a moment, face tensing with self-recrimination.

DYLAN

Damn.

He reaches for the car door, and we cut to:

THE FRONT DOOR OF THE HOUSE SWINGING OPEN

To reveal CATHERINE HOBBS, glaring at Dylan furiously.

CATHERINE

You were supposed to be here at seven o'clock. Last night.

DYLAN

I'm sorry Catherine. Something came up at work, and...

CATHERINE

And you call last minute, so I can't make any contingency plans, and I miss my meeting with practically the only clients I have left?

(almost exploding)

You're not taking her for the weekend. You don't deserve her.

DYLAN

It was an *emergency*, damnit. I don't work delivering goddamn pizza! If something happens I...

Then Dylan catches himself, seeing the LITTLE GIRL sitting at the table beyond Catherine; her eyes are on her plate, trying to ignore her parents' fight.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

You're not keeping me from my daughter.

INT. KITCHEN - A MOMENT LATER

Dylan steps into the sunny space and sits down across from his morose daughter, whose name is HANNA. He smiles tightly:

DYLAN

Hey, baby. Sorry I couldn't make it last night. But I got us all hooked up for the weekend, and-

HANNA

You're never getting back together
with Mom, are you?

Dylan is silent, caught off guard.

HANNA (CONT'D)

What did you do to make her so mad
at you?

DYLAN

It's not what I did. It's what I
didn't do.

Hanna gives no evidence of understanding that.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

It's like school. You know how you
have responsibilities? Get to
class on time, do your homework,
talk nice to your teachers... You
don't do those things, you get
expelled.

HANNA

Mom threw you out because you
didn't do your homework?

DYLAN

Something like that. But I think
this weekend I'm going to earn a
little extra credit.

(smiles)

We're going to go to that new water-
park, out on 66. Then...

Then DYLAN'S CEL-PHONE BUZZES. Despite looks from both
Hannah and Catherine, who is now in the kitchen doorway,
Dylan looks down at the number -- His shoulders slump, and he
looks back up at his daughter:

DYLAN (CONT'D)

It's an emergency. When it's over,
I'll make it up to you... That's a
promise.

INT. OPERATIONS CENTER - FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

FBI AGENTS are seated around the room. The last to enter is
Dylan Hobbes -- still wearing the frustration of his morning
on his face. TITLE:

FBI Headquarters - Nevada Field Office

The air is filled with early morning banter. Standing in front of a MONITOR is SAC LOUIS HERNANDEZ.

HERNANDEZ

Nice of you to join us, Agent Hobbes. Alright, ladies, now that our star player is here, let's cut the chatter- we got work to do.

(the room quiets down)

Got one for the X-Files, people. Our office in Paris called last night. There was a bank robbery there that took place about 7:30 a.m., Paris time. Approximately one and a half million euros disappeared out of the vault of Rue Rivoli branch of the Credit Lyonnais. The reason we are talking about it here, is this video taken from the vault.

THE IMAGE OF MICHAEL ATLAS and the MAN FROM PARIS comes up on the screen.

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

This is world famous magician Michael Atlas. The man with him is, as far as we know, a member of the audience from his show. When this image was captured, Atlas was on stage with the Four Horsemen, in the middle of their act at the MGM Grand.

AGENT FULLER, a big bear of a man, mumbles from the back:

AGENT FULLER

You're saying these guys robbed a Paris bank -- *from Vegas?*

HERNANDEZ

I'm saying that's what it looks like.

ON THE MONITOR the audience in the theatre leap and scramble for the MONEY fluttering down from above:

DYLAN

Was it real?

HERNANDEZ

Was *what* real?

DYLAN

The money. Falling from the ceiling. Was it real or funny money?

HERNANDEZ

From the little we were able to recover- real as a heart attack.

AGENT FULLER

So they pull this thing off, and don't even keep the score? Who are these guys?

DYLAN

More pertinently- *where* are they?

HERNANDEZ

They're staying in the Excelsior Hotel. Got the entire top floor rented out. We called, and they're there. So they don't appear to be particularly worried about all this.

Another AGENT stands:

AGENT

Well, what are we waiting for?

HERNANDEZ

For Inspector Alma Vargas, of the Las Vegas Special Investigation Unit, to brief us so we know exactly what we're dealing with. She'll be liaising with us on this case. Inspector..?

ALMA VARGAS, a beautiful young detective with a caustic attitude stands, aware of the instant attention she commands from all the men in the room; not necessarily for the things she wants to be noticed for. She's used to it. Alma presses a remote, and an image of THE FOUR HORSEMEN appears on the MONITOR:

ALMA VARGAS

The Four Horsemen are like a magic superhero team. Each one of them was an established magician in his own right before they joined forces, for what they're billing as three special shows over the span of ten days.

(MORE)

ALMA VARGAS (CONT'D)
 Last night being the first. Friday
 they're in Atlantic City, Wednesday
 next, in Los Angeles...

DYLAN
 -Wow. You read the brochure. How
 did you manage to do all this
 "research," Inspector?

ALMA VARGAS
 Police officers in Vegas are used
 to working late hours. Unlike FBI
 agents, apparently.

Alma weathers the chorus of boos and jeers that greet her,
 enjoying it, then continues:

ALMA VARGAS (CONT'D)
 I'm not done yet. Allow me to drop
 a little more wisdom on you. We'll
 start with Santayana...

A MONTAGE of IMAGES BEGINS as she talks; starting on a SMALL
 LATINO BOY wandering wide eyed through a small town traveling
 carnival:

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Roderigo Santayana was born in
 Culiacán, Mexico. Ran away from
 home to join a traveling show, just
 like in the stories...*

IMAGES OF RODERIGO, various ages, working on all kind of
 MAGICAL DEVICES; robot fortune tellers, clockwork
 contraptions, floating crystal balls, coffins with secret
 compartments, etc.

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*He's apparently a genius at
 designing mechanical devices and
 illusions. Got his own show on
 Telemundo a few years back...*

RODERIGO floats over an awed studio audience.

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*His special, "Ole Roderigo", was
 highest rated broadcast behind the
 Mexico vs. Brazil soccer game. Guy
 moves to LA, gets himself a William
 Morris agent...*

RODERIGO holds court at the VIP table surrounded by silicone
 filled groupies.

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Spends his money on coke and strip clubs. He's considered a disgrace in the magic community, but the boys all wish they were him. Next, we have Alex Hero...

IMAGE OF ALEX as a young boy in a baseball uniform, repeatedly throwing a ball into his own glove:

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Real name, Alexander Hess. All American boy. Little League all star. Only this boy could care less about baseball. What he's into is magic. Sleight of hand, to be specific...

Alex throws the ball into the glove again; then smiles and opens the glove- the ball has disappeared. We widen out to see ALEX IS ON STAGE in a television studio: a neon logo behind him reads "AMERICA'S GOT SKILLZ."

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Wins a talent competition on the tube and becomes an overnight sensation. He immediately gets emancipated from his family and moves to Vegas, where he hooks up with the Horsemen. The third member of which is a Brit actually named London...

LONDON OSBORNE reaches a hand out toward the camera, his eyes gleaming with intensity.

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
London Osborne. He's a mentalist, hypnotist. Messes with your head, basically. Jedi mind-tricks. Supposed to be the best there ever was...

IMAGES of people lying like planks across two chairs while others jump up and down on their stomachs, an OLD WOMAN impossibly holding a huge FAT MAN over her head, etc.

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Performed on the West End for years. Repeat command performances for the Queen. But it all went to hell one night...

London is at a posh club, surrounded by an adoring crowd. A DRUNKEN CLUBBER pushes through, stands in front of London and splashes a drink in his face.

CLUBBER

If you're so bloody smart, why didn't you see *that* coming? Aren't you the great mentalist? Seventy pounds a seat- You're not worth the piss I just took in the back bloody alley, mate.

London looks icy calm:

LONDON

Excuse me gentlemen, ladies...
(turns to the clubber)
So you want your money's worth?

IMAGE OF THE CLUBBER in an emergency room, with his broken glass sticking out of his mouth, as the doctors struggle to remove it without killing him.

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.)

Weird thing is, no one there could remember if Osborne did it, or the guy did to himself. In any case, Osborne served three years for aggravated assault. It's toward the end of that time that the Four Horsemen came together...

LONDON sits in front the protective glass in a PRISON VISITING ROOM.

LONDON

What are *you* doing this side of the pond?

REVERSE SHOWS MICHAEL ATLAS on the other side of the glass.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Came here to make you an offer.

LONDON

If you think I'm gonna hold your bloody tails for you or do filler bits you can sod off. I'm my own man.

MICHAEL ATLAS

I'm not asking you to do filler,
and I don't wear tails, bloody or
otherwise. I'm putting together a
group- a super-group, if you will.

LONDON

Like Asia, or something? Remember
that song, how did it go..? Was
shite, really.

MICHAEL ATLAS

More like Cream, or Led Zeppelin,
or the Dream Team. Three shows,
that'll open up a new life for you,
with more fame and fortune than you
can imagine.

LONDON

I have a pretty big imagination.

MICHAEL ATLAS

(smiles)
Mine's bigger.

HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

What about this Michael Atlas guy?

BACK IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM

Alma turns to SAC HERNANDEZ:

ALMA VARGAS

Not much. Born Menachem Joachim
Murphy in the Bronx. Work out the
genetics yourselves. First came on
the radar as a street performer in
New York. Youtube videos of his
performances had over twenty
million hits. He was recently made
several offers to headline his own
show in Vegas, but formed the Four
Horsemen instead.

(pauses)

And there you have it.

HERNANDEZ

Thank you, officer Vargas. Good
work. Now...

DYLAN

Yeah, wow, none of us know how to
access Wikipedia.

(MORE)

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Thank you *so* much.

(looks up from his I-
PHONE)

In the meantime, while you were regaling us with that informative yet banal information, I tracked down the credit card number of the guy from the audience who was in the vault with Atlas... Remember *him*? His name is Etienne Glickman, and he used the same card to rent a room at the Hard Rock for six nights. Tonight being his last.

(smiles)

Think it might be a good idea to talk to him before he splits town?

EXT. HARD ROCK HOTEL/CASINO - DAY - AN HOUR LATER

A phalanx of UNMARKED POLICE cars pull into the driveway, and POLICE OFFICERS and FBI AGENTS fling the doors open and rush out...

INT. UNMARKED CAR - CONTINUOUS

Dylan Hobbes sits in the driver's seat, Detective Alma Vargas beside him, Agent Fuller in the back. Alma starts to get out, sees neither Dylan or Fuller is moving:

ALMA VARGAS

Aren't you coming?

DYLAN

What for? Got an army going in there to pick up a little French dude.

ALMA VARGAS

You don't want a piece of the collar?

DYLAN

We got a saying here in the bureau, inspector. Collars are for do...

(stops himself)

Not an applicable saying in this instance. Anyway, cops make collars, we solve cases. Knock yourself out, though.

Alma gives Dylan a disgusted look, then gets out of the car and heads toward the hotel entrance. Dylan watches her back admiringly, as:

AGENT FULLER
Collars are for dogs? Did you
actually *say* that?

DYLAN
I caught myself.

AGENT
Like that shit you followed up with
was any better?

DYLAN
She's into me.

EXT. VILLA - OUTER VEGAS - DAY

A CADILLAC SEVILLE pulls into a driveway, and THADDEUS BRADLEY- the acerbic older man we last saw at the magic show- gets out of the car. He sees the arm on his mailbox is up, so he reaches for the latch, then

FIREWORKS EXPLODE OUT OF THE MAILBOX with a BANG, causing him to jump backward. RECORDED LAUGHTER comes from within the mailbox, like the laughter at the end of Michael Jackson's "Thriller." Thaddeus sighs. Clearly this kind of thing happens to him often...

INT. LIVING ROOM - THADDEUS'S VILLA - LATER

Thaddeus at the bar, mixing himself a MARTINI, while in f.g. the TELEVISION IS ON; we hear the NEWS-REPORT:

NEWSCASTER (T.V.)
-- Authorities are responding to reports that the French bank purportedly robbed during the Four Horsemen's performance at the MGM grand was in fact, actually robbed...

Thaddeus steps into the room, sipping his drink. The place is a shrine to himself, posters and pictures of him everywhere; most prominent being a FOX TV SHOW poster of Thaddeus standing beneath a logo that reads: "MAGIC'S GREATEST SECRETS EXPOSED."

NEWSCASTER (T.V.) (CONT'D)
-- Which, if true, has many experts saying is the most daring feat of magic since the heyday of Harry Houdini himself...

ON THE TV we see images the FOUR HORSEMEN exiting their hotel surrounded by a phalanx of COPS, FBI AGENTS, and NEWS-MEDIA.

NEWSCASTER (T.V.) (CONT'D)
 -- *The media firestorm has made the
 Horsemen, at least for today, the
 most famous act in show business...*

CLOSE ON THADDEUS: his features tightening with agitation as he watches the tube:

NEWSCASTER (T.V.) (CONT'D)
 -- *The question on everyone's mind,
 now: are they going to enjoy their
 fame as free men, or behind bars..?*

CUT TO:

A ROW OF VIDEO MONITORS

Each one showing a separate INTERROGATION ROOM in which one of the Four Horsemen is being held; The images turn from blue to red, measuring temperature... Blood pressure... Pulse. There are all kinds of fluctuations happening on the screen for ROOM #1, where young ALEX HERO, hands cuffed, is being shoved into a seat by AGENT FULLER:

ALEX (ON MONITOR)
*Yo, Pooh Bear, why you got to be
 like that? None of the others got
 cuffed and shit...*

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM #1 - CONTINUOUS

Agent Fuller steps away from Alex, watched by Dylan and Alma.

AGENT FULLER
 That's cause none of the others
 called me cute nicknames, Vanilla
 Ice. Besides, you're supposed to
 be the sleight of hand artist,
 aren't you..?
 (grins)
 So why don't you work your way out
 of those cuffs yourself? Be a nice
 trick.

ALEX
 I'm not giving you any excuses to
 mess my ass up.

AGENT FULLER

Agent Hobbes and detective Vargas are right here; no one's gonna do anything to you. You want those off, do it yourself.

Alex takes a moment, then:

ALEX

Okay. But I'd like to give them back to you. Would you put your hands on the table for me, please?

Agent Fuller takes a beat, then he leans over and puts his hands on the table.

AGENT FULLER

This better be...

Alex snatches Agent Fuller's hands, then slams them back down on the table in a single dizzyingly quick motion, and

Dylan and Alma reflexively step forward, then stop as they see that

Agent Fuller is now wearing the handcuffs on his own wrists.

Agent Fuller glares at Alex; then reaches his cuffed hands to his pocket, fishing around in there, but:

ALEX

Lost something? Kind of sloppy for an FBI agent, aren't you, Pooh Bear?

(turns to Alma)

You started on that soda yet, miss..?

ALMA

Vargas. *Detective* Vargas, to you.

(raises the unopened CAN OF DIET COKE in her hand)

Nope.

ALEX

Feels a little heavy for a diet beverage, doesn't it?

Alma's eyes narrow. She shakes the diet coke can- there is a clinking sound from inside it. She peels the cap off, then walks over to the table and turns it over, letting the soda spill onto the interrogation table, until a SINGLE KEY drops out of the hole and clinks onto the table top.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Hookers do tricks. Next time you
 want to see magic, buy a ticket to
 the show.

The three law enforcement officers look at Alex with newfound respect in their eyes. He's young, but clearly a formidable opponent.

ALMA VARGAS
 Don't plan on leaving town any time
 soon, Mr. Hero.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM #2 - LATER

Roderigo Santayana shakes his head:

RODERIGO
 -- Of course we're going to leave
 town. We have a show in Atlantic
 City Friday night. If we had
 reason to run we would have already
 been gone, no? On what grounds do
 think you can keep us here?

Dylan and Vargas sit in front of Roderigo, Agent Fuller in the b.g.

DYLAN
 You know very well on what grounds.
 This is some serious shit you're in
 Mr. Santayana. You're not on stage
 anymore.

RODERIGO
 No? Then what is this little
 "interrogation room" of yours?
 Lights, gadgets. Lie detectors,
 heat sensors. You even have a two-
 way mirror. A room that conveys a
 sense of privacy, yet there's at
 least a dozen people listening to
 our every word. You put on your
 shows, too, Mr. FBI, I'll put on
 mine.

DYLAN
 You crossed the line into my show
 when you robbed a bank-

RODERIGO
 In Paris? While we were in *Las
 Vegas?*

Alma Vargas is holding another can of diet coke. She shakes it, hears nothing, so she peels off the cap and takes a sip.

DYLAN

Just 'cause you were in Vegas
doesn't mean you didn't have
confederates over there in Paris
while-

RODERIGO

Confederates? You have the bank
video. You saw what everyone else
saw.

DYLAN

Which was Michael Atlas and a
member- *purported*- member of your
audience, in the vault. In Paris.

RODERIGO

Which is *impossible*, of course.
(smiles)
You think I built a transporter,
like in a science fiction movie?
I'm good, but no one is *that* good.

ALMA VARGAS

Right, Mr. Santayana. Which is why
we're here. And why we're gonna
stay here, until you give us an
explanation.

Roderigo takes a moment, then shrugs his shoulders:

RODERIGO

Coincidence?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM #3 - LATER

Dylan is looking a little more pissed off now, as he snaps:

DYLAN

-- *That's* your story, after the
shit you pulled? *Coincidence?*

London Osborne is sitting across table from Dylan and Alma
Vargas. His dark eyes burn, his temper always in check.

LONDON

Good a story as any, oi? Has the
benefit of being the truth, as
well.

DYLAN

And you expect me to buy that?

LONDON

Yes.

DYLAN

That's it? The whole great
mentalist shtick- Just look someone
in the eye and lie to them? You
expect that bullshit to work on me?

LONDON

Why not? You expect it to work on
your wife, don't you?

Dylan freezes. The tension in the air is suddenly palpable.

LONDON (CONT'D)

What's her name?

DYLAN

I'm not telling you my wife's name.

LONDON

Not your wife. The name of the
bird you were out with the other
night, when you told your wife you
were working late so you couldn't
make it on time to pick up your own
kid -- What was *her* name?

(eyes gleaming)

Or don't you even remember it?

There've been so many, haven't...

Dylan snaps across the table, grabbing London by the collar.
London just stares into Dylan's eyes, not moving a muscle,
and

Dylan relents, stepping back, aware of the eyes of Alma and
Agent Fuller on him. London sits back down in his chair.

LONDON (CONT'D)

Coincidence. I'd leave it at that,
if I were you. But because I know
you won't, I'll simply remind you-

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM #4 - LATER

Michael Atlas sits comfortably in his chair, in his t-shirt
and jeans:

MICHAEL ATLAS

-- My lawyers are better than your lawyers. Better paid, better dressed and better prepared. Which is what it's all about, isn't it? Preparation. We're prepared. You're not. Which is why, despite your tiresome threats to the contrary, we are going to walk out of here free of charges.

Dylan, Alma and Agent Fuller glare at Michael. All looking they've had it up to here with these guys.

DYLAN

You are one cocky son of a bitch, aren't you? In fact you are a quartet of cocky sons of bitches.

MICHAEL ATLAS

That's why we get paid the big bucks.

ALMA VARGAS

So what did you need the money for? Why risk everything on a stunt like this?

MICHAEL ATLAS

You seem to be forgetting we don't have the money.

ALMA VARGAS

Not all of it. But hardly any of the cash that fell on that audience in your little Robin Hood bit was recovered. You could have kept the lion's share for yourselves, for all we know.

Michael turns his eyes on Alma, studies her carefully.

MICHAEL ATLAS

It's clear, detective Vargas, that all you know does not amount to very much. There's no way to tie the money we- *donated*- with the money from the bank. Unless you can put me in that vault, you've got nothing.

ALMA VARGAS

We have Etienne Glickman.

Michael raises his eyebrows, as if to ask- "Who?"

ALMA VARGAS (CONT'D)

The "audience member" you brought up onto the stage. Your plant.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Plant? The little French guy? You don't know the first thing about magic, do you? What good could he possibly have been to me as plant?
(smiles)

Obviously you haven't questioned him yet. I wish I could be there for that one. I haven't had a good laugh in a while.

AGENT FULLER

You should check out Jerry at the Sands. It's a goddam laugh riot.

MICHAEL ATLAS

So I've heard. But I'm a compulsive workaholic. It's a failing of mine. So unless you have a better hand than the one you've been showing, I'd like to get out of here and start rehearsals for our next show.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM - FBI HEADQUARTERS - HOURS LATER

Dylan, Alma, Agent Fuller and several others are sitting around, surrounded by empty fast food containers, looking beat. A RE-RUN of Michael Atlas's interrogation is playing on a monitor. One of the agents groans:

FBI AGENT

I can't watch this again. What a prick.

DYLAN

They were all pricks. Like they were trying to piss us off on purpose.

AGENT FULLER

Nothing like rock stars, though. Remember when we had to bring in U2? Now *those* guys took it to a whole other level of prickness.

ALMA VARGAS
Prickishness.

AGENT FULLER
What?

ALMA VARGAS
You said "prickness." That's not a word. The word is "prickishness."

AGENT FULLER
Whoa. Sorry to have blundered into your area of expertise.

ON THE MONITOR: Michael Atlas grins and says:

MICHAEL ATLAS (ON MONITOR)
-- You don't know the first thing about magic, do you?

VOICE (O.S.)
He's right, of course. You people really don't know the first thing about magic...

Every head in the room turns, to see

THADDEUS BRADLEY

Standing in the doorway of the operations room:

THADDEUS
-- But I do. I trust you'll excuse me for letting myself in unannounced.

AGENT FULLER
Who the hell are you?

ALMA VARGAS
Thaddeus Bradley. Probably the most hated magician on the planet.

THADDEUS
My reputation precedes me. Still, "Hate" might be too strong a word.

ALMA VARGAS
Actually, considering how many sneaky, vindictive weirdos *do* hate you, I'm amazed you're still alive.

DYLAN

Am I missing something here? You know this guy?

ALMA VARGAS

Only from T.V. -- And Wikipedia.

(turns to Dylan)

I work entertainment in Las Vegas, agent Hobbes. It's my job to know who's who in town, so that when something like this goes down, not *everyone* is playing catch up.

(then)

-Even if it *is* at the expense of a less exciting social life.

Agent Fuller winces for Dylan, as Alma rises and walks to the coffee machine.

ALMA VARGAS (CONT'D)

Thaddeus Bradley has been exposing other magicians' secrets for years. Embarrassed them, really. Nickname is the career killer. He even had a low rated Fox Show for short spell, where he...

THADDEUS

The ratings were fine. The network simply didn't know where to place it. Not to mention my books, two of which sat on the New York Times non-fiction best seller list for months.

AGENT FULLER

Whatever. What I want to know is- what the hell are you doing here?

THADDEUS

Isn't it obvious?

(then)

I've seen countless people try to figure out the mechanisms of countless tricks -- Your faces are not exactly flushed with the thrill of success.

Dylan shakes off his anger at Alma's jibe, and faces Thaddeus.

DYLAN

We'll figure it out.

THADDEUS

It'll take time. Time you don't have. The clock is on. Three shows in ten days- what you saw was merely the warm up act.

AGENT FULLER

And you know this because-?

THADDEUS

I know show business. The magic business, in particular. And because I know Michael Atlas.

(pauses)

He was my student. Perhaps my brightest. But everything he knows, he learned from me.

DYLAN

And what's in this for you?

THADDEUS

Isn't that obvious, as well?

(no answer)

Relevance.

(gathers himself)

I want my name mentioned in every press conference you give about this case; and when it's solved, and the Four Horsemen are behind bars, I want to be given the credit for breaking it. That's what's in it for me.

AGENT FULLER

The FBI doesn't work with circus freaks.

THADDEUS

When in Rome...

DYLAN

I'll run it by brass. Leave your information and we'll contact you. But before you do that, given the day I've had, I want you to know one thing...

(pauses)

If you point your finger at my pocket, and I reach in there and find your card, I swear on my mother I will shoot you where you stand.

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC - NIGHT

A LEAR JET THUNDERS OVERHEAD -- Touching down on the tarmac;
and we cut to:

THE FOUR HORSEMEN exiting their private jet, luggage in hand.
They walk toward a BLACK LIMOUSINE waiting for them nearby...

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

THE LIMOUSINE glides toward the lights of **ATLANTIC CITY**
glittering in the near distance; we hear on the SOUNDTRACK:

RADIO D.J. (V.O.)
-- *Let's cut to the chase: I know
you're never gonna tell us how you
did it, or even if you did it...*

INT. RADIO STATION BOOTH - MORNING

The FOUR HORSEMEN are seated around an interview table,
facing the excitable young D.J., who continues:

RADIO D.J.
-- So the question I have to ask
you is- *Are you gonna do it again?*

London Osborne leans toward his mic and smiles:

LONDON
Come see our show Friday night and
find out.

ALEX
Word. I'll be doing my song, too,
from my new album- "Alex Hero
steals your Heart"- so bum rush it,
ladies.

WE SEE A MONTAGE OF IMAGES, AS THE INTERVIEW CONTINUES ON THE
SOUNDTRACK -- Dozens of RADIO STATION PHONE OPERATORS taking
CALLS, typing in names and addresses into their computers...

RADIO D.J. (V.O.)
*The tickets to this show are being
picked by random lottery, and are
completely free, isn't that right?*

LONDON (V.O.)
*That's right. Gift to our fans,
from the Horsemen and our sponsors,
the good people at Stonebridge
Life.*

LOTTERY BALLS WITH NAMES ON THEM FLY around inside an AIR CHAMBER, on a local MORNING SHOW -- Alex Hero reaches in and snatches out ball after ball, watched by the show's HOSTS...

RADIO D.J. (V.O.)

We have two hundred seats available for our listeners right here, so call in if you want to see this incredible -- event. I'm not sure you can even call it just a "magic show" anymore...

A COMPUTER IMAGE OF A THEATER SEATING PLAN fills the screen, as SEAT AFTER SEAT IS FILLED UP, turning from blue to red...

RADIO D.J. (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Some call you illusionists, some call you magicians; now some are calling you criminals. What do you have to say about that?

THE COMPUTER IMAGE DISSOLVES into a HIGH ANGLE of the ACTUAL AUDITORIUM, filled with empty red seats -- A LONE FIGURE steps onto the dark stage, becoming recognizable as MICHAEL ATLAS.

MICHAEL ATLAS (V.O.)

A man was nailed to a cross once. Killed in broad daylight by the powers that be. He was laid to rest inside of a dark cave, and the entrance was covered over with a rock. Three days later, he was gone...

DOLLY IN ON MICHAEL as he takes in the dark theater:

MICHAEL ATLAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It took Jesus three days to get out of an escape proof vault, and they said he was the son of God. I can do it three minutes -- So what does that make me?

EXT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - LAS VEGAS - DAY

CAMERA MOVES TOWARD an upper floor WINDOW, as we hear DYLAN'S VOICE:

DYLAN (V.O.)

Son of a bitch...

INT. SECTION CHIEF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dylan, Alma Vargas, and Agent Fuller are standing in front of SAC Hernandez; Dylan fumes:

DYLAN

-- I've never seen a guiltier bunch of perps in my life, and we let them fly off to Atlantic city just like that.

HERNANDEZ

Then make the case. Right now all they're guilty of is being a bunch of cocky bastards.

(angry)

They don't have to prove they didn't do it. We have to prove they *did*. Our job is harder, and it pays less. Way of the world.

(then)

What about their staff?
Stagehands? Employees?

DYLAN

We have whatever personnel we can spare on it, but-

ALMA VARGAS

Cogs in a machine. The Horsemen employ dozens of people at any given show; each person seems to know just enough to allow them to do their job. Maybe somebody's wise to something, but I doubt it. And magic people are a tight lipped bunch, as it is. I doubt we'll get far. Certainly not in three days.

HERNANDEZ

So that's it? That's all you got?

AGENT FULLER

We still got the French guy.

HERNANDEZ

Not for long. Got a call from the State Department. Either you pin something on him that can stick, or he's on tonight's flight back to the land of frog legs and cheese.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

ETIENNE GLICKMAN, exhausted and irate, is sitting opposite the table from Alma, who is alone in the room with him.

ETIENNE GLICKMAN

I told you once, I told you twice, I'll tell you an 'undred times: I was in the theater, here in Las Vegas, yes? They call me to the stage, they wrap me in a fabric, and suddenly I am in a small room with a nice couch, where I am served coffee and cakes by a pretty girl. Not as pretty as you, but pretty enough-

ALMA VARGAS

I'm sure she was. Go on, Mr. Glickman.

ETIENNE GLICKMAN

After a few minutes the lights are turned off and I find myself back on the stage next to Mr. Atlas. Money is falling everywhere, everyone is going mad, and no one cares about me anymore. *Finis.*

Alma turns to a MONITOR on which video from the Parisian bank vault is playing:

ALMA VARGAS

Are you saying that is not you?

ETIENNE GLICKMAN

Yes. I mean, it *looks* like me, but it is not me. I don't even remember the last time I went *into* the bloody bank, I only use the ATM...

ALMA VARGAS

We ran a scan on your voice from the tape, Mr. Glickman, and it matches up as well.

INT. OBERSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dylan and Agent Fuller and several others are watching on a monitor outside the interrogation room:

ETIENNE GLICKMAN (ON MONITOR)
It's a trick, no? Do you think I really traveled through dimensions? That is what these people do- magic tricks. I'm a law abiding man, it's not my job to know how they do these things. If you are too stupid to figure it out, it's not my problem...

Dylan and Agent Fuller turn away from the monitor, look at each other. They know what they have to do.

AGENT FULLER
 Shit.

INT. THEATER - MGM GRAND - NIGHT

THADDEUS BRADLEY walks into the auditorium where Dylan, Agent Fuller and Alma are waiting, standing near the empty stage.

THADDEUS
 My name. Correctly pronounced, every time a press conference is given. Correctly spelled in every press release. And credit for...

DYLAN
 For "breaking the case." Done. But the case has to get broken first.

THADDEUS
 And the reason for meeting in such theatrical environs?

AGENT FULLER
 You're going to show us how they pulled it off, right?

THADDEUS
 And you think anything on this stage or auditorium had anything to do with it?
 (sighs)
 You really are an organization of rubes, aren't you? I'm surprised anyone ever gets caught at all...

DYLAN
 Are you breaking some kind of magician's code if you aren't acting like a complete asshole?

(MORE)

DYLAN (CONT'D)

(steps close to Thaddeus)

You don't start coming up with the goods, right now, I'm gonna call the IRS and have them back audit you for every fiscal year of your goddamn pathetic life. How's that for a trick?

Thaddeus locks eyes with Dylan -- Not someone to be trifled with, either. Then:

THADDEUS

The first mistake one could make would be to assume that the robbery actually occurred on the night of the performance -- when it happened some seventy six hours earlier. With the preparations for it taking up at least the better part of the week, on the streets of Paris.

IMAGE OF MICHAEL ATLAS, RODERIGO AND LONDON OSBORNE walking through the crowded throng on the CHAMPS ELYSEES, blending in with minimal disguises; a baseball hat, sunglasses, etc.

AGENT FULLER (V.O.)

We might be rubes, but we're not stupid. That's the first thing we checked. The Horsemen haven't left the country in months. And-

THADDEUS (V.O.)

And fake passports are so hard to pull off?

BACK TO DYLAN: Shaking his head:

DYLAN

They are, these days.

THADDEUS

Well, that would be *your* area of expertise more than mine, wouldn't it, Agent Hobbes? I am simply here to tell you that somehow it was accomplished, and-

DYLAN

Uh uh. They've been here in Vegas rehearsing their show for the past few weeks. There are plenty of witnesses who saw them every day...

IMAGES OF MEMBERS OF THE HORSEMEN in various locations, seen from the POV's OF NEARBY SPECTATORS: RODERIGO, rehearsing the gears of a gimmick on-stage; LONDON OSBORNE, walking purposefully through a casino mall; MICHAEL ATLAS, getting takeout at a restaurant, waving to a fan...

THADDEUS (V.O.)

Talk to the those witnesses again. Ask them if they saw more than one of the Horsemen at a time, and how close they got to them.

AGENT FULLER (V.O.)

You're saying one of these guys stayed behind and disguised himself as the other guys for an alibi?

THADDEUS (V.O.)

Is that so difficult to conceive? Speaking of which, did you enjoy your interrogation of that poor French fellow? What was his name?

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.)

Glickman. Etienne Glickman.

IMAGES OF ETIENNE GLICKMAN walking blithely through the street in PARIS -- RODERIGO is following him, snapping photos with a powerful POCKET CAMERA; ALSO SNAPPING PHOTOS OF SEVERAL OTHER MEN HE IS SHADOWING...

THADDEUS (V.O.)

Tickets for the Horsemen's shows are sold long in advance. In August there are plenty of French tourists in Vegas. I imagine they advertised heavily on the streets of Paris all of July...

IT'S TRUE: As Roderigo follows a man in the metro, he passes a large BILLBOARD for the FOUR HORSEMEN on the wall of the station.

THADDEUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

-- They checked the names on the credit card reservations from Paris; then followed those men, photographed several of them to be safe in case of a cancellation, and created make-up for each one...

THE PHOTOS OF FIVE FRENCH MEN- ETIENNE GLICKMAN AMONG THEM- ADORN A WALL, below which a pair of dextrous HANDS prepares rubber molds and fake hair for disguises.

THADDEUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 -- *The make-up would only need to be minimally suggestive, given the quality of the security camera image. On the night of the robbery they repeated their little act for the camera three or four times with several different make-ups, and used the tape of Mr. Glickman only when they saw he was at the show...*

AGENT FULLER (V.O.)
Wait a minute. That doesn't wash. Even with make-up, how would they know what he'd be wearing on the night of the show?

THADDEUS (V.O.)
They couldn't, of course. Why do you think they put him in that ridiculous red jumpsuit before "transporting" him? You didn't think it was actually for-

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.)
Traveling through dimensions? No we did not, Mr. Bradley. Please continue.

IMAGES OF ETIENNE GLICKMAN BEING WRAPPED IN THE JUMPSUIT -- then of SOMEONE DISGUISED AS HIM in the security camera footage, wearing the red jumpsuit -- then the same thing repeated with several different "disguises."

THADDEUS (V.O.)
The first thing to look for in any illusion is, what is essential and what is not? Anything that isn't, disguised as showmanship, is there for a very specific purpose. In this case the red jumpsuit was put on to cover the clothing, its garishness to draw attention from the face and the hastily applied make-up.

DYLAN (V.O.)
Why bother with the whole French guy schtick, in the first place?

THADDEUS (V.O.)

To make the illusion real. To make the audience, and you, think what they were seeing was taking place then and there.

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.)

What about the voice match?

IMAGE OF MICHAEL ATLAS standing next to ETIENNE GLICKMAN at a bistro, as he orders a coffee -- IN MICHAEL'S SHOULDER BAG is a RECORDING DEVICE.

DYLAN (V.O.)

That wouldn't be much of a problem. If they were tailing these guys, they could've easily recorded their voices and cut something together later...

AGENT FULLER (V.O.)

What I want to know is, how did they get him to vanish off the stage like that?

BACK IN THE THEATER: Dylan and Alma turn and look at Fuller with raised eyebrows:

AGENT FULLER (CONT'D)

(defensive)

What?

THADDEUS

For questions like that I refer you to the box set of the first season of my show-

ALMA VARGAS

There only *was* one season.

THADDEUS

-Available for thirty nine ninety five on Amazon, or on my website. Am I here to teach you parlor tricks or help you solve a crime?

DYLAN

Which you said happened seventy two hours earlier. How did you come up with that number?

IMAGE OF THE FRENCH GUARDS opening the vault door, running inside, only to cough and gag at the FUMES in the air...

THADDEUS (V.O.)

If you examine the vault with those scientific instruments you people are so proud of, I believe you'll find traces of dioxide hydrosulfate. Known colloquially in my circles as "Vanishing Juice."

IMAGES OF HUGE WADS OF EUROS being doused in a chemical bath.

THADDEUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When paper of a certain make is treated with it, it instigates a chemical reaction that causes complete disintegration, accompanied by rather noxious fumes, exactly eighty hours later. Like milk curdling on a dime. Illusionists have been using it for centuries. The thing is, you have to time your gag just right, or you might miss the moment...

IN THE VAULT, WE SEE MICHAEL ATLAS and the disguised MAN FROM PARIS replacing the EUROS that are there with different Euros from their own bags.

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

They made counterfeit cash out of this paper- and I'll thank you not to ask me how counterfeit cash is made. They treated it several hours before entering the vault, then switched it with the real money, so that no one would notice anything was missing. In the minimum time remaining they escaped with the real cash, made it to Vegas and on-stage in time for the show. They do their bit, the guards in Paris fling open the vault door and on cue- pffff. There must have been a lot of Credit Lyonnais customers wondering what was happening in their wallets that morning...

IMAGES of FUMES POURING FROM PARISIANS' POCKETS -- WALLETS SMOKING in people's hands, CASH DISSOLVING IN FRONT OF THEIR EYES...

DYLAN (V.O.)

They still had to rob that bank.

BACK TO THADDEUS: He turns to Dylan and sighs:

THADDEUS

Which is, again, *your* area of expertise. You are going to earn *some* of your meager salary, aren't you, Agent Hobbes?

ALMA VARGAS

You say the Horsemen didn't know *which* guy from the audience they would use until the last minute. Yet the bank's tape showed Michael Atlas and Etienne Glickman in the vault. That means someone *had* to be there, at the time of the performance, to put that tape in their system. Which means they had an accomplice on the inside.

DYLAN

The French cops ran polygraphs on the bank guards. They all passed with flying colors.

THADDEUS

(to Alma)

Not bad, detective. I believe you to be correct. But it was not necessarily a willing accomplice. Or should I say, a *conscious* one...

IMAGE OF THE BANK GUARD CAPTAIN, receiving a phone call; the scene we saw earlier, right after the performance:

GUARD CAPTAIN

<Hallo? No we haven't opened yet.>

(listens)

<From Las Vegas? In America? That's ridiculous...>

CUT TO LONDON OSBORNE, on his cel-phone, walking toward the LIMOUSINE in the MGM GRAND PARKING AREA where the other Horsemen are waiting for him:

LONDON (INTO PHONE)

(In French)

<Pineapple. You understand?>

GUARD CAPTAIN (ON PHONE)

<Of course. I understand. Right away.>

IN THE BANK SECURITY OFFICE: The GUARD CAPTAIN, now looking somewhat dazed, hangs up the phone. Walks to a drawer nearby, opens it, and finds a TAPE waiting for him. He picks it up, moves to the BANK OF MONITORS, and pops out the OLD TAPE.

DYLAN (V.O.)

Okay. Here's where I draw the line...

BACK IN THE MGM THEATER: Dylan is shaking his head, he's heard enough:

DYLAN (CONT'D)

-- You want me to believe that some guy could be hypnotized days in advance to respond to a code word, like something out of "The Manchurian Candidate?" I thought you *exposed* tricks, man.

THADDEUS

Mentalism- guessing the future and the card in your hand and all that- depends on tricks. *Hypnotism* is the real deal...

IMAGE OF LONDON OSBORNE, disguised as a repair-man, talking earnestly to the GUARD CAPTAIN OF THE BANK; behind them we SEE ALEX HERO, slipping past unseen, sliding a TAPE INTO A DRAWER in the back.

THADDEUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

-- Practiced by an expert it's an extremely potent method of inducing its subject to action. Especially action which falls within the scope of the subject's usual patterns...

BACK TO THADDEUS: We move in his darkly intelligent eyes, his voice soft:

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

You referred to us as "circus freaks," as I recall. So I will tell you this-

(pauses)

London Osborne is the best at what he does. Much as I dislike these boys, they *all* are. Their next show is in less than forty eight hours.

(MORE)

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

Were I in your shoes, I would not make the mistake of underestimating them.

CUT TO:

A CROWD OF EXCITED FANS

Mostly women, holding signs adorned with images of the FOUR HORSEMEN, chanting their names; seen through the glass doors of a hotel lobby -- SUPERIMPOSE TITLE:

Trump Hotel - Atlantic City - Friday

DOLLY OVER to find DYLAN HOBBS, standing at a PAY-PHONE:

DYLAN

-- I'm sorry Hanna... I am so sorry I can't be there this weekend. I'm working... I have to catch some bad men, and-

(listens)

Yeah, I know you're not a child. Yeah, yeah, I know you're not a retard... I don't mean to talk to you like one. I'm trying to catch those guys, the ones on the news...

(beat)

No, they are *not* f-ing cool. Don't use that kind of language. They're criminals, and I'm gonna catch them. And- Hanna? *Hanna*...

A beat. Dylan hangs up the phone; looks like he's thinking of dialing again... but doesn't. He walks over to where ALMA VARGAS is waiting.

ALMA VARGAS

Payphone?

DYLAN

My wife- ex-wife- hangs up when she sees my number. If I catch her off-guard I can usually talk my way into a conversation with my little girl.

Alma studies Dylan, then looks out at the crowd, shaking her head:

ALMA VARGAS

It's like Beatlemania or something.

(then)

(MORE)

ALMA VARGAS (CONT'D)
 You think Thaddeus is right? That
 they're going to try it again?

DYLAN
 That's why we're here, isn't it?

THADDEUS BRADLEY is visible across the hotel lobby, talking
 to the concierge.

ALMA VARGAS
 Do you trust him?

DYLAN
 Not sure. Which is why we brought
 him here, but didn't give him
 anything to do. I'm gonna shadow
 him- see if he leads us to water.
 You wait for the Horsemen to come
 down, stay on them from the minute
 they leave the hotel -- Got Fuller
 and the others situated between
 here and the theater...

Alma nods, but Dylan doesn't leave; there is some
 electricity in the air between them:

DYLAN (CONT'D)
 Listen, detective Varg... Alma.
 Since joining the bureau I haven't,
 well, interfaced with LVPD, not
 since I was a cop myself. I just
 want you to know, that, well-

ALMA VARGAS
 Do you really need it, Agent
 Hobbes?

DYLAN
 Need what?

ALMA VARGAS
 Another excuse not to spend time
 with your daughter.

Dylan is stung silent. Then his eyes shift, as he sees:

THADDEUS BRADLEY buttoning up his jacket and exiting the
 hotel through a side door, heading out into the street.

Dylan turns without another word and follows after Bradley.

HOLD ON ALMA

Feeling she might have gone too far, and we cut to:

EXT. PARADISE THEATER - ATLANTIC CITY - EVENING

A HUGE CROWD is gathered beneath the marquee, which reads:
STONEBRIDGE LIFE presents THE FOUR HORSEMEN -- AGENT FULLER
 scans the area, and speaks into his CEL-PHONE:

AGENT FULLER

Yo, Dylan. Hours before showtime,
 and there's already a huge freakin'
 crowd here. We're in the wrong
 business. You on the old freak?

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY MALL - CONTINUOUS

Dylan is moving through the densely crowded space, keeping
 distance between himself and Thaddeus; he whispers into his
 ear-piece:

DYLAN (ON PHONE)

Yeah- But this guy has eyes in the
 back of his head. Try not to...

(then)

Hold on, I've got a text. Damn.
 Cathy, busting my balls for calling
 Hanna, and-

Dylan looks up- he was just distracted for an instant- but
 his face fills with concern:

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Shit. I've lost him. Shit.

AGENT FULLER (ON PHONE)

What do you mean lost him?

DYLAN

I mean he's gone. I will call you
 back. Shit.. Shit...

Dylan hurries into the crowd, looking in every direction,
 trying at the same time not to make himself too conspicuous,
 the sound of the crowd growing louder and louder, and we make
 a hard cut to:

INT. LOBBY BAR - TRUMP HOTEL - AN HOUR LATER

Silence. Alma sits on a stool at the bar, nursing a half-
 finished DIET-COKE. Sips at it. Calls to the BARTENDER:

ALMA VARGAS

Excuse me- this soda is kinda flat.

BARTENDER

You been working on it for a while.

She starts to answer, when the SWEATY BUSINESSMAN next to her gets his courage up enough to make conversation:

BUSINESSMAN

In town for the show, right?

ALMA VARGAS

Excuse me?

BUSINESSMAN

For the magic show. Or just here to try your luck?

ALMA VARGAS

Little bit of both.

BUSINESSMAN

Robin Hoods, right?

(Alma raises an eyebrow)

Steal from the rich, right? Why should those scumbags have it all, right? Spread the goods. Socialism my ass. Spread it around, right?

Alma doesn't know what to answer- then there is a TREMENDOUS SHOUT from outside, and she turns to see

THE FOUR HORSEMEN exiting the elevator into the lobby, flanked by a PHALANX OF SECURITY; they move toward the front doors, as the excited crowd outside presses in towards them.

ALMA VARGAS

(into her ear-piece)

In case anyone was wondering what that earthquake was -- They're on the move.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

ALMA pushes her way out into the crowd, as the magicians sign autographs, making their way toward the limousine waiting for them; there is media everywhere. NEWSCASTER'S VOICE OVER THE CHAOS:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

-- The Four Horsemen, getting a reception usually reserved for rock stars, prepare to head to the historic Paradise Theater, and every bank, everywhere, is on high alert -- Whatever these self-styled maverick magicians have planned, this time it will certainly have to be done without the benefit of the element of surprise...

EXT. SKYSCRAPER - DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN - EVENING

CAMERA LOOKS up at the towering building, and THE FIGURE OF A MAN steps into frame, stopping to let the traffic pass in front of him. Hold on his back, as we SUPERIMPOSE THE TITLE:

New York City - That Very Moment

The figure steps forward, crosses the street, and enters the front doors of the massive building.

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The walks up to the security desk, and stops in front of the GUARD:

SECURITY GUARD

Can I help you?

REVERSE ON THE MAN -- Glasses, mustache, nondescript. We know we've seen him before; in fact, that he is someone we know, but in disguise. We just can't tell who. He speaks with a strange off-kilter accent:

DISGUISED MAN

I'm going up to my office.

SECURITY GUARD

And you are-?

DISGUISED MAN

(showing ID)

Kaplan. George Kaplan.

The Security Guard processes the ID; then:

SECURITY GUARD

Nice to finally meet you, Mr. Kaplan.

INT. 27TH FLOOR - BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

"Mr. Kaplan" exits the elevator, putting on a pair of FLESH COLORED LATEX GLOVES, as he walks across the hallway toward a glass door on which the logo is printed: **KAPLAN INC.**

INT. RECEPTION AREA - KAPLAN INC. - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Kaplan enters, and the YOUNG WOMAN behind the reception desk, A TEMP, looks up, almost surprised:

YOUNG TEMP
Hello? Can I help you, Mr..?

MR. KAPLAN
Kaplan. You can call me George.

YOUNG TEMP
Oh, Mr. Kaplan. I was wondering if anyone ever came to work here. I don't even think I've gotten a phone call since I-

MR. KAPLAN
Slow times. You can go home now, I won't be needing you anymore.

YOUNG TEMP
Should I come in tomorrow? Because I should tell the agency my...

MR. KAPLAN
That won't be necessary. I'll make sure to tell the temp agency you did a bang up job.

The temp rises, gathering her things, then:

YOUNG TEMP
If you don't mind my asking, what is it you *do* around here, anyway?

MR. KAPLAN
Oh, you know. A little of this, a little of that.
(smiles)
Good night.

INT. OFFICE - KAPLAN INC. - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Kaplan steps into the spacious, but almost bare office. There is a single desk in the middle of the room, with a laptop computer and a telephone on it -- Mr. Kaplan sits at the desk, looks up a phone number, then picks up the phone, dials, and:

INT. STONEBRIDGE LIFE OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

AN OFFICE ASSISTANT picks up the phone; behind her we can see the logo for **STONEBRIDGE LIFE**:

ASSISTANT
Arthur Tressler's office.

INT. OFFICE - KAPLAN INC. - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Kaplan speaks into the phone with a completely different accent:

MR. KAPLAN
Hi Julie, this is Stewart, from Four Horsemen management. I just wanted to check if Mr. Tressler will be at the show tonight, and see if there's anything further we can do for him?

ASSISTANT (ON PHONE)
Mr. Tressler's already in Atlantic City. Thanks for calling- if he needs anything, we'll let you know.

MR. KAPLAN
My pleasure.

He hangs up the phone. Then he opens up a drawer, where we see a number of KEYS, ACCESS CARDS, AND MINI-HARD DRIVES.

INT. BUILDING CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Kaplan turns the corner and stops in front of the SERVICE ELEVATOR. He takes out a key, and turns it in the elevator's lock...

INT. UPPER FLOOR CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Kaplan comes out of the service elevator and into the corridor. He stops in front of a back door, swipes the electronic LOCK with an ACCESS CARD, and enters

INT. OFFICE SPACE - CONTINUOUS

-- a hallway in a modern, corporate space. He walks casually down the hall, then stops at the corner, cautiously peering around it, to see

THE OFFICE ASSISTANT he was just speaking to at her desk in front of the STONEBRIDGE LIFE logo -- The two offices are in the same building.

Mr. Kaplan looks to the side, where he see a FIRE ALARM on the wall beside him; he contemplates it for a second, then shakes his head at the vulgarity of the idea. He turns back toward the assistant's desk -- sees there is a MAN working late in another office. So Mr. Kaplan clears his throat, gauges the angle, and speaks at a volume ("throwing his voice") that makes it seem like his voice is coming from the MAN'S OFFICE:

MR. KAPLAN

Hey, Julie- can you come here for a minute?

The assistant gets up and walks to the far office; and like a wisp of smoke Mr. Kaplan glides by behind her and walks to the door of Tressler's office -- It's locked. He quickly takes out a SKELETON KEY, slides it into the lock, opens the door and slips into the office, quickly closing the door behind himself with hardly a sound...

INT. PARADISE THEATER - LOBBY - ATLANTIC CITY - EVENING

THE CROWD filing in is subjected to metal-detector searches by SECURITY GUARDS at the doors; THADDEUS BRADLEY allows himself to be searched, then strolls into the lobby, and we RACK FOCUS TO

ALMA VARGAS, holding her ever-present diet Coke; she notices Thaddeus entering, then she turns as DYLAN steps up beside her:

DYLAN

Anything interesting?

ALMA VARGAS

Not unless you count the magical way the bubbles seem to disappear from the diet Coke around here. Our boys went backstage as soon as they arrived -- You?

DYLAN

I... lost Bradley. Just spotted him outside the theater ten minutes ago. He could have been anywhere.

EXT. HELIPAD - ATLANTIC CITY - NIGHT

A HELICOPTER TOUCHES DOWN on the tarmac. A FIGURE hops out, and we see that it is "GEORGE KAPLAN"- who hurries into a waiting CAR, and

EXT. BACK ALLEY ENTRANCE - PARADISE THEATER - NIGHT

AGENT FULLER speaks into his cel-phone, bored as hell:

AGENT FULLER

-- Nothing doing. No backstage traffic since the Horsemen came in. What the hell are we doing here, anyway? So maybe these guys robbed some French bank- who the hell cares? Let the goddam French deal with it.

INT. PARADISE THEATER - LOBBY - NIGHT

THE STAND-BY TICKET HOLDERS are being herded in by USHERS who are doing their best to keep order:

USHERS

Stand-by tickets... Stand by ticket holders only.

Dylan has his phone to his ear, Alma standing beside him:

DYLAN (INTO PHONE)

It's not just what they *did* -- It's what they might do. Just chow down on some freedom fries and keep your eyes open.

ANGLE BEHIND DYLAN: filing in unnoticed with the last of the crowd, is "GEORGE KAPLAN"-- or at least he's unnoticed by Dylan and Alma; for as he saunters into the theater, the CAMERA STOPS ON

THADDEUS BRADLEY

Sitting in a corner seat. As "George Kaplan" passes, Thaddeus allows himself a smile.

BACK TO DYLAN AND ALMA

Dylan looks at his watch, mutters:

DYLAN (CONT'D)
 Showtime. Either this is a big
 wank, or they're so far ahead of us
 it isn't funny.

ALMA VARGAS
 Oh, come on... Admit it.

DYLAN
 Admit what?

ALMA VARGAS
 Part of you wants to see what these
 guys are going try to pull off,
 just like everyone else in here.
 (smiles)
 And we've got front row seats.

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

DOLLY BEHIND "GEORGE KAPLAN" as he hurries through the narrow
 corridor- he reaches up as he goes, pulling at his face, and
 though we are behind him we see he is taking off his
 glasses... his mustache... strips of latex "skin"...

INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

START CLOSE ON ALEX HERO- making a deck of cards leap from
 one hand to the other- like an athlete warming up; says:

ALEX
 This is bullshit. He could *call*.
 Doesn't have to keep us in suspense
 and whatnot, like we're a bunch of
 rubes. People wait on Alex Hero,
 not the other way around.

CAMERA MOVES to RODERIGO, fixing his gaudy shirt in the
 mirror:

RODERIGO
 Talk about yourself in third person
 again, cabrone, you'll be pulling
 those cards out of your ass. We
 did our jobs. He'll do his.
 Either way, we have a show to do.

CAMERA MOVES TO LONDON OSBORNE, sitting in his chair like a
 zen-master:

LONDON

Oh, we're going full guns tonight.
No doubt about that.

ALEX (O.S.)

Yeah? Why are you so sure about it?

LONDON

'Cause I can see the bloody future.

LONDON LOOKS UP and the CAMERA FOLLOWS HIS LOOK TO THE DOOR which SWINGS OPEN AS IF ON CUE, revealing:

MICHAEL ATLAS -- wiping off the last of his "George Kaplan" make-up.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Game on.

INT. PARADISE THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

A SPECTACULAR LIGHTSHOW splits the darkness -- ACCOMPANIED by the sounds of HEAVY METAL ROCK AND ROLL, and the FOUR HORSEMEN appear onstage looking out at the cheering crowd...

ANGLE ON THADDEUS

Winching at the music, disgusted, he wads up some toilet paper and sticks it into his ears, as MICHAEL ATLAS steps to the foot of the stage:

MICHAEL ATLAS

Audiences for magic can be a tricky bunch. Some are happy to suspend their disbelief. Others are constantly looking for the rabbit under the hat, the trap door, the trick wire. *You know who you are...*

(laughter from the crowd)

As you all know, tonight is the second of our three shows, and we're lucky to have some special guests with us. There in back, sticking toilet paper in his ears, is none other than Thaddeus Bradley. He'll be happy to tell you how he thinks we pulled off tonight's show... if you can find his DVD's buried in the back of the discount rack at your local video store.

SOME BOOS mixed with a few CHEERS. Thaddeus gives a wave to the crowd.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

We also have a contingent from the police and FBI with us. A pair of them right there in the front row; and a handsome couple they are, too. Wave to the nice officers...

(the CROWD waves at ALMA
AND DYLAN)

They will seek, but they shall not find. For tonight we inhabit the theater of mystery, where we are all once again wide-eyed children, awed by magic and wonder. Tonight --
The Four Horsemen ride.

AND WE GO INTO A MONTAGE OF THE FANTASTIC SHOW:

RODERIGO "flies" above the audience, sailing over their delighted upturned faces...

LONDON looks on as an obese man walks across the stage on his hands, like a gymnast...

A MERCIFULLY SHORT CLIP OF ALEX HERO singing the single *most annoying song* in the history of show business...

MICHAEL ATLAS moves in front of a display of mirrors with an audience member, their reflections behaving differently than their real-life counterparts onstage, and

DYLAN AND ALMA

Look at each other; there is a brief moment of tenderness between them. Almost like a date. Alma's face tightens as she remembers something, and she whispers:

ALMA VARGAS

Hey. What I said to you before, about your daughter. I was out of line. I'm...

DYLAN

You were right. But thanks.

Then the final illusion ends with a flash and the theater is PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS -- OVER BLACK, WE HEAR:

MICHAEL ATLAS (V.O.)
*Ladies and gentlemen, we're glad to
 have been able to take your mind
 off your troubles with an hour's
 divertissement...*

THE LIGHTS COME BACK UP illuminating MICHAEL, in his T-shirt and jeans, standing at the foot of the now bare stage.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 But I can't leave this stage in
 good conscience without
 acknowledging that we are living in
 troubled times...

THE AUDIENCE ROARS IN ANTICIPATION at the sound of these words -- This is the moment they have been waiting for.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 At this point I'd like to introduce
 our generous sponsor, Mr. Arthur
 Tressler, president of Stonebridge
 Life. The tickets tonight were
 free, but someone had to foot the
 bill. Where are you, Arthur?

ARTHUR TRESSLER, sixties, slick white hair, kisses his TROPHY GIRLFRIEND and stands, waving to the crowd.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 Don't sit down just yet, Arthur.
 We're going to put you to work.
 (to the crowd)
 Our final number is called "The
 Case of the Vanishing Money"-
 Prosaic, I admit, but accurate.
 How many of you out there have your
 ATM cards with you?
 (hands go up)
 How many of you know your account
 balances?
 (many hands stay up)
 Arthur, would you be so good as to
 pick a volunteer from our audience?

Everyone's waving their bank cards -- Arthur Tressler spots and points at a middle aged, AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 Bring her on up, Arthur.

Tressler somewhat reluctantly moves into the aisle and escorts the woman up to the stage.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 I can see Arthur has an eye for
 good looking ladies -- what's your
 name, ma'am?

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN
 Gloria.

MICHAEL ATLAS
 Lovely name for a lovely lady.
 (to Tressler)
 And would you mind staying up here
 on stage with us for a bit, Arthur?
 (to the crowd)
 A big hand for Mr. Tressler!

Tressler stays put, starting to chafe. Michael turns back to
 Gloria:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 How about that bank card?

Gloria takes it out of her bag, and moves to hand it to
 Michael; but:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 No, you hold on to that, Gloria.
 You know how much you have in your
 account?

GLORIA
 Unfortunately I do. It's only-

MICHAEL ATLAS
 -Hold on to that thought, Gloria.
 In the meantime, we're going to
 bring out our own specially
 designed ATM machine -- Roderigo?

RODERIGO SANTAYANA wheels out an old fashioned BLACKBOARD
 into the middle of the stage, to the laughter of the
 audience:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 That's it?

RODERIGO
 I'm on a budget, hombre.

Michael turns to the other side of the stage:

MICHAEL ATLAS

Alright, I'm gonna need a little extra help with this one. London?

LONDON OSBORNE strolls over to the blackboard, as Michael turns back to the audience:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Remember, I did not pick Gloria. Our assistant for the evening, Mr. Arthur Tressler did. If you think he's *in* on this... *stick around*.

(then)

Gloria, I want you to think of your password.

LONDON takes out a piece of chalk, scribbles on the reverse-side of the blackboard.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Okay, you got it?

(Gloria nods)

London?

London flips the blackboard over- he's written "SNUFFLES" on it with the chalk. Gloria's eyes widen:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Sounds like a cutie. And your account balance is...

LONDON SCRIBBLES on the other side, flips the board over, and it shows: **\$19.46**

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

(winces)

Okay. That's a modest sum. Don't you think so, Arthur?

ARTHUR TRESSLER

I... guess it is.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Actually it's a crime, that's what it is.

(to Tressler)

Would you like to hold up your ATM card for us, Arthur?

ARTHUR TRESSLER

No. I don't suppose I would.

THE CROWD ERUPTS IN BOOS. Tressler grits his teeth, reaches into his pocket, and takes out his ATM card, keeping it tightly gripped in his hand.

MICHAEL ATLAS

London, what is Mr. Tressler's password?

London scribbles on the back of the blackboard- flips it over to reveal the word: **ASSHOLE**

THE CROWD ERUPTS IN LAUGHTER -- Michael quiets them down, turns to London again:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

And his current bank balance?

London scribbles on the board, flips it over, and we see- **258,800,045**. The crowd gasps. Michael smiles at Tressler:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Look about right? Minus the tip you gave the limo driver on the way over. Actually, I hear you're a pretty lousy tipper...

(Tressler is now glaring at Michael in open fury)

Ladies and gentlemen, our sponsor knows a little bit about magic as well. You see, Arthur Tressler likes to buy insurance companies at discounted prices, and then make their assets disappear. Well, they don't *really* disappear: he takes those assets which are to be kept safe for payouts to his customers, and deposits them into his own accounts. And they call us crooks.

London erases **800,000** from Tressler's account on the board; then flips the board around, and shows that GLORIA'S ACCOUNT is now showing **\$800,019.50**. The crowd laughs; but:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

I know... it's just numbers on a blackboard. Mr. Tressler, would you care to check your bank balance?

Tressler takes out his CELL-PHONE, presses a few numbers on the screen; and suddenly

SCREENS ALL AROUND THE STAGE COME TO LIFE; replicating the IMAGE OF TRESSLER'S CELL-PHONE SCREEN. His account shows 258,000,045 -- Eight hundred thousand dollars are missing.

ARTHUR TRESSLER

This better be a joke, Atlas.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Or what? You'll call the cops? They're already here, remember? I'm sure they'll have plenty of questions for you on the way out. But before that...

(to the audience)

Everyone's heard about all the money raining down at our last show- Due to circumstances beyond our control, that won't be happening tonight.

THE CROWD BOOS LOUDLY; Michael raises his hands:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

But cash is so old school, don't you think? Never let it be said the Four Horsemen don't move with the times.

(smiles)

How many of you have these new-fangled phones with high speed internet and whatnot?

A scattering of HANDS GO UP.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Allow me to bring the rest of you into the 21st Century. Would you all check you pockets... your handbags?

ANGLES ON THE AUDIENCE: all finding NEW PHONES nestled in their pockets and personal belongings.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

The X-Phone, made by Nakano- our new sponsor- which we're gonna need, considering what's about to happen to our old one. Now, if you turn those on, you'll find all your information has been transferred to your new phones. Addresses, phone numbers and everything.

HIGH ANGLE ON THE AUDIENCE

As the phones are turned on, the darkness illuminated by the blue screens like the sky being filled with a thousand stars.

MICHAEL ATLAS (V.O.)

Tonight's audience was supposed to be chosen by a random drawing. But I have to admit, we cheated. Everyone here has one thing in common -- You're all customers of companies Arthur Tressler has purchased. You believed yourselves to be in good hands- but if you need a large payout there will be nothing in the bank....

ANGLES ON THE AUDIENCE: Distraught faces lit blue by the phones.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

He's been hustling you like a street-corner shell-game artist. When audited he moves the money from one account to another. He has robbed each and every one of you.

(pauses)

But fear not. Tonight this theater is a true house of magic...

ANGLE ON DYLAN AND ALMA: looking around themselves, as the air is filled with glittering confetti that risers from the floor upwards -- the entire space filling with pixie dust.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Let it surround you. And now access your accounts, and check your brand new bank balances.

FINGERS PUNCH KEYBOARDS -- THE SCREENS ON STAGE SHOW ACCOUNTS FILLING UP WITH LARGE NUMBERS -- WHILE THE SCREEN that holds TRESSLER'S ACCOUNT shows his number STEADILY DIMINISHING, and

CUT TO:

ARTHUR TRESSLER HIDING HIS FACE FROM A HUNDRED CAMERA FLASHES

As he tries to get to his limo in the parking lot behind the theater; being shouted from all directions... THE CAMERA BOOMS UP on the hectic scene, as Tressler is swallowed up in the mass of cameras, reporters and surging onlookers; on the SOUNDTRACK:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

-- In a theatrical twist, Arthur Tressler, president of Stonebridge Life Insurance, was exposed as a criminal by the Four Horsemen, whose show was sponsored by his own company...

TELEVISED IMAGE SHOWS A HUGE CROWD shouting at Tressler and holding up "FOUR HORSEMEN" banners:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

-- Meanwhile Horsemen fever is growing; once mere entertainers, they're quickly becoming folk heroes -- And with their third, and reportedly final show coming up in three days, the question on everyone's mind is- can they top themselves?

REVERSE SHOWS DYLAN AND ALMA at the BAR IN THE TRUMP HOTEL: watching the television with mixed emotions. Alma clicks off her phone:

ALMA VARGAS

The Horsemen are in the air.

DYLAN

Yeah.

ALMA VARGAS

On their way to LA.

DYLAN

Yeah.

ALMA VARGAS

Our flight leaves in three hours.

Dylan finishes his drink- turns to Alma.

DYLAN

That leaves us with two hours.

Alma hesitates, considering, then:

ALMA VARGAS

I know what it's like, when things go bad in a marriage. When mine ended, well, let's just say I was no girl scout. I know this could be something more...

(MORE)

ALMA VARGAS (CONT'D)

(pauses)

But I've spent the last five years of my life busting underage movie stars for doing coke and over the hill singers for doing underage girls, and all of them for driving under the influence afterwards. This is my first real case, and I won't mess up because I'm being distracted by... personal matters.
(meaningfully)

Like you did.

Alma leans close to Dylan, their lips almost touching.

ALMA VARGAS (CONT'D)

See you on the plane, Agent Hobbes.

HOLD ON DYLAN'S FACE, as Alma walks away.

AGENT FULLER (V.O.)

Talk about preparation...

INT. KAPLAN INC. OFFICES - DAY

QUICK IMAGES: FBI AGENTS milling around the space, dusting for fingerprints on the furniture, on the phones, while we hear AGENT FULLER ON THE SOUNDTRACK:

AGENT FULLER (V.O.)

-- Some dummy company, Kaplan Inc., leased out office space in the Stonebridge Life building months before last night's show. They had access to the building; blueprints the entire space. They stole access cards, keys, you name it, and from internal phone records and security files, gained access to Stonebridge's entire database as well...

IMAGES OF AGENTS questioning a NUMBER OF YOUNG TEMPS, the one we saw in the scene with "George Kaplan" among them:

AGENT FULLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

-- They hired temps, never for more than three days at a time, none of whom ever saw anyone who worked at the company.

(MORE)

AGENT FULLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
On the night of the show, a Mr. George Kaplan finally put in an appearance, and apparently broke into Arthur Tressler's office, accessed his private computer and account...

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - OPERATIONS CENTER - DAY

Agent Fuller finishes filling in Dylan, SAC Hernandez and Thaddeus Bradley:

AGENT FULLER
 -- and the rest is history.

HERNANDEZ
 The money for the office rent came out of Stonebridge Life's own coffers. These guys are real good, and they're making us look real bad.

(hard)
 Three days to their last show. We get caught with our pants down again, heads are gonna roll.

Thaddeus Bradley is chuckling; the others turn to him:

AGENT FULLER
 What's so goddamn funny?

THADDEUS
 "George Kaplan."

HERNANDEZ
 What about him?

THADDEUS
 I made Michael Atlas in disguise, slipping into the theater at the last minute before the show. Clearly, he got past your eagle-eyes without much of an effort.

DYLAN
 Atlas was with the others from the moment they left the hotel. Inspector Vargas saw him with her own eyes.

THADDEUS

She saw someone *disguised* as Michael Atlas, while Atlas himself was in New York City, disguised as "George Kaplan."

(smiles)

He always did have an unhealthy fascination with Cary Grant.

DYLAN

Alright. Maybe there is a Fifth Horseman. Probably the same one who was in disguise as the others in Vegas, while they were in Paris, pulling off the bank job, but-

AGENT FULLER

Five Horsemen, six Horsemen... How do we know there aren't ten of them? How do we know they're not a front for a whole bunch of guys-?

THADDEUS

Unlikely. I wouldn't waste precious time contemplating it.

DYLAN

What *would* you do, Bradley? I'm sick of you telling us what we don't know, without giving us anything we can actually use -- For all we know you're the Fifth Horseman.

THADDEUS

Which is why you had me followed all day in Atlantic City. Were you my shadow, Agent Hobbes? Whoever it was, I must admit he was rather good, I couldn't make head or tail of him...

Dylan's face is tight. He says nothing, biting down his embarrassment, as Thaddeus continues:

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

In any case, it's *your* job to make the case stick. I'm here to tell you what I know, which at present is a hell of a lot more than you do.

(turns to Agent Fuller)

(MORE)

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

-And to spare you the price of a discount DVD: the new phones were simply slipped into the audience's bags and pockets when they passed through "security"; an illusionist might employ a dozen such sleight of hand artists and cutpurses at any given show.

AGENT FULLER

I might be a rube, but even I kinda figured that. In fact this whole Tressler thing wasn't all that much of a trick, you ask me.

THADDEUS

It wasn't meant to be. It's called the "Mezzo"-a kind of entre-acte. Not particularly impressive on its own, but designed to get the audience on your side- which they certainly have succeeded in doing- while laying the groundwork for a final denouement.

AGENT FULLER

What I don't get is why they're doing all this and not keeping any of the money.

THADDEUS

The Four Horsemen's methods might be mysterious, but their motives are not. They're not after wealth. They're after fame, immortality. To be mentioned in the same breath as Robert-Houdin, Hermann, Houdini.
(pauses)

But who would risk life in prison only to remain anonymous in success? This fifth Horseman- and there is a fifth, without a doubt- his motives are as mysterious as his methods.

DYLAN

You know what I don't buy? Your motives. You told us you want to be relevant- but what you are is *hated*. You break the code of your own kind every day, and for what? A few bucks, fifteen minutes of fame? Don't you have any sense of honor?

THADDEUS

Is there something you love, Agent Hobbes? That you would protect even at the expense of your own happiness or reputation?

Dylan gives no answer. Thaddeus continues:

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

There is a legend- nothing we magic types love more than a good legend- of a secret sect of magicians that existed at the beginnings of our order's inception. Perhaps as long ago as ancient Mesopotamia. This sect was known as "The Eye"-

(smiles)

-Where did you *think* the Masons got it from? "The Eye" was a cult within a cult; a secret society whose task it was to uphold the honor of the craft- something like your own Internal Affairs Department, yes? And when a rogue magician overstepped his bounds, or misused his craft, it was the task of The Eye to bring him down in a manner that would restore the honor of the order.

Thaddeus's voice is low, but his emotions are boiling:

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

Most of my "kind" as you put it, have devolved into a shameful lot of showboating Hollywood wannabes and Las Vegas whores. They have turned magic into vulgar pornography. Unfortunately, there is no secret order to protect my beloved art, so I have taken that onerous task upon my own shoulders.

DYLAN

For a six figure television deal.

THADDEUS

Fire with fire, Agent Hobbes.

Alma has entered the doorway, a sheaf of papers in her hands:

ALMA VARGAS

How about we protect our reputation as law enforcement officers, before these guys make us look like a bunch of rank amateurs again?

(then)

While you've been killing valuable time giving each other the macho stare-down, I found something you should see.

INT. DATA CENTER - FBI OFFICES - MOMENTS LATER

Alma is standing in front of several COMPUTERS, sheaves of paper scattered all around her, as the others look on:

ALMA VARGAS

I used the bureau's codes to trace every account Tressler had stashed his ill gotten gains in... *amazing*, the access you guys have, by the way.

DYLAN

Yeah, thanks to Osama. We got in there after 9-11, and never left.

AGENT FULLER

Why we vote Republican.

ALMA VARGAS

Right. In any case, among many other banks around the world, Arthur Tressler has a fairly significant account with Credit Lyonnais.

DYLAN

Among many other banks.

ALMA VARGAS

But he only has a secure safety deposit box in one.

AGENT FULLER

Arthur Tressler has a safety deposit box in Paris? In the bank branch the Four Horsemen robbed?

ALMA VARGAS

I, of course, do not have the authority to have it searched. You, on the other hand...

Dylan smiles admiringly at Alma:

DYLAN

-Are about to turn the lights up on
the Four Horsemen's little party.

INT. BAR/DISCOTHEQUE - NIGHT

RODERIGO SANTAYANA is surrounded by silicon BLONDES, doing
body shots. ALEX HERO is next to him, chatting up a pretty
girl; TITLE READS:

Skybar - Los Angeles - California

ALEX

Girl, I am not *talking* about hip
hop. I'm talking about
R&B- *romance* . I steal your heart,
baby. Album cover is like, got one
hand like this-

(covers the girl's breast
with his hand)

The other is holding the Ace of
Hearts, you know, like that shit
was your heart, and I stole it.

Alex feels another body, turns to find himself facing an
attractive BRITISH WOMAN; a CAMERAMAN with a small CAMERA
behind her:

BRITISH WOMAN

Alex- I'm Thelma Jones, from Sky
News. Would you-

ALEX

Sorry ma'am, this is a business-
free zone, know what I mean? You
want an interview, call-

BRITISH WOMAN

Oh, come on, do you know what I had
to do to get the bouncer to let us
in here? Show us a little magic,
won't you, love?

Alex holds his fingers to his head, squeezes his eyes shut:

ALEX

My powers tell me... you're wearing
red underwear with pink lace.

BRITISH WOMAN

I didn't know you were a mentalist,
too.

ALEX

I'm not.

He HOLDS UP the pair of RED PANTIES -- The British Woman's eyes open wide; she checks under her dress, then gasps in disbelief, and:

LONDON

That'll be enough of that.

London takes the underwear from Alex's hand and gives it back to the British Woman; turns back to Alex:

LONDON (CONT'D)

It's time.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

MICHAEL ATLAS is standing at the pay-phone, speaking as cars whizz by on Sunset Boulevard:

MICHAEL ATLAS

Just give me the word, and we're
on.

(listens; and)

Alright. Fired up, ready to go.

INT. LOBBY - ST. JAMES HOTEL - NIGHT

Michael signs a few AUTOGRAPHS as he makes his way toward the elevators; hands a KID an extra napkin and says-

MICHAEL ATLAS

Hey, see that guy over there, at
the bar? Can you give this to him?

THE KID nods, hurries to a MAN sitting at the bar, sipping a martini, and hands him the napkin; the man unfolds it, sees there's a TWENTY DOLLAR BILL in there, and written on the napkin: **HAVE ONE ON ME, Mr. G-MAN - NIGHTY NIGHT.**

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Michael steps inside, then stops in the foyer as he sees:

LONDON OSBORNE, RODERIGO and ALEX HERO all are there waiting for him.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Let yourself in, why don't you?

(no answer)

I detect an Ides of March vibe in here. Are you hiding daggers under your sleeves?

LONDON

Who is he?

Michael knew this was coming; he sighs, shaking his head:

MICHAEL ATLAS

We've been through this. I don't know.

RODERIGO

When I was a young apprentice touring with Reynaldino, he found out his daughter was slipping into my room. One morning in Las Carnes I went to the outhouse to do what you do in an outhouse. When I opened the door I found myself in Carboneras, two hundred kilometers away. Took me three years to figure out how he did that. I swore from that day on I would be the one pulling the strings. I don't like this.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Don't like what? Being the talk of the entire world? Famous beyond your wildest dreams?

(real emotion seeping in)

You know what I remember about my youth? TV dinners. Reruns. Volume turned up to drown out my parents' squabble du jour. Trying to make myself be small, to disappear. To be nothing. That's what I swore I'd never go back to.

(pauses)

No one will ever forget what we're doing, as long as magic is talked about.

The others watch Michael simmer down. They've never seen him like this; then:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

The Horsemen was his idea. He brought me in, and I came to you. He's done everything he said he would, to a T. And his only stipulation was anonymity.

LONDON

That's a *big* bloody stipulation.

MICHAEL ATLAS

He was right there with you in Atlantic City, wearing my face. If you're so concerned, you should have asked him yourself.

LONDON

I did. He told me to sod off.

ALEX

London tried to put the stare on him, too... guy laughed in his face. Some funny shit, homes.

LONDON

Whoever this bloke is, he's good. And plugged in as hell. Everything he told us to say to provoke those Feds was spot on. Got them hot to trot like greyhounds on a hare.

MICHAEL ATLAS

So what's the problem?

ALEX

It's all been good so far, but we're about to get into the big money. How do we know he's not setting us up to eat it this time.

MICHAEL ATLAS

We don't.

LONDON

Makes it bloody dangerous, mate.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Bloody dangerous. And bloody fun.
(then)
Are the Four Horsemen going out on a cute credit scam trick -- or are we going out on top of the world?

The others consider Michael's words, then:

LONDON
Top o' the world, Ma.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - FBI HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

IMAGES OF A SECURITY BOX- shot from every angle- appear in various sizes on a SERIES OF MONITORS; a forensic agent's VOICE SPEAKS:

FORENSICS AGENT (V.O.)
Magnified images show the lock was jimmed. Hardly a scratch. Good work. They definitely got in there.

Dylan, Alma Vargas, Agent Fuller, Thaddeus Bradley and a handful of FBI AGENTS are studying the images on the screens.

AGENT FULLER
And what the hell was in there?

Alma reads from a printed out list:

ALMA VARGAS
A couple of diamond rings- the kind you give a girl you want to convince of your intentions. Or a couple of girls. A watch with his father's inscription on it. A letter from an ex-wife. And that, as they say, is all she wrote.

THADDEUS
They did not break into that box only to leave everything in it intact. There has to be something you're missing.

DYLAN
You're right about that. In fact, I had them go over the base of the box with one of those "scientific instruments we're so proud of"- an infra-blue scanner.

IMAGES OF THE BOTTOM OF THE BOX appear on the MONITOR; there is an IMPRINT VISIBLE -- LINES THAT LOOK LIKE A CORNER FROM AN ARCHITECTURAL BLUEPRINT, AS WELL AS SEVERAL NUMBERS, CUT OFF IN THE MIDDLE.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Residue from blueprints of some kind. Printed on good old fashioned carbon paper.

(to Thaddeus)

See, around here, we do *real* magic.

ALMA VARGAS

Blueprints for what?

DYLAN

Impossible to tell, with the little we've got. What about the numbers?

A YOUNG AGENT turns from the screen he is studying:

AGENT

Last ID numbers of every Federal Building in California. Where's their..?

DYLAN

Their next show is in LA- tomorrow night. But that doesn't mean much. They pulled off their robberies a good distance away from their shows both times, and-

THADDEUS

Actually, the second location was a good deal closer than the first. Their preparation time for this one will be even less, and wherever they're planning to...

YOUNG AGENT

The money factory.

DYLAN

The what?

YOUNG AGENT

The Federal Reserve Printing House, in Salinas. It's about twenty miles East of Downtown LA. Last number before the code is cut off matches...

He types a few keys, and all the screens show "**THE MONEY FACTORY**"- **A SQUAT, INDUSTRIAL BUILDING** situated in the middle of a humdrum neighborhood.

AGENT FULLER
How much money does a place like
that print?

The Young Agent types again, and:

YOUNG AGENT
Eight. Hundred. Million. Cash.
Every day. No such facility has
ever been compromised -- Ever.

The agents fall silent. Then:

AGENT FULLER
These guys got some balls on 'em.

EXT. ARTHUR TRESSLER'S MANSION - DAY

There are several UNMARKED CARS in the driveway, the occupant
of the mansion being under house arrest; on the SOUNDTRACK:

DYLAN (V.O.)
Tell us about the money factory.

INT. LIVING ROOM - TRESSLER'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Arthur Tressler is seated in front of a lavish fireplace,
seething, as he faces Dylan and Alma Vargas:

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

ALMA VARGAS
We followed your money, found your
account at the Credit Lyonnais in
Paris. We also found your security
deposit box there, and what was in
it.

ARTHUR TRESSLER
You went into my *private box*? There
are laws that-

DYLAN
We didn't go into it. The *French*
did, under the blanket of financial
terrorism laws too complicated for
me to-

ARTHUR TRESSLER
-So what? So you found my father's
watch...

ALMA VARGAS

-And two rings.

ARTHUR TRESSLER

There's more than one pretty girl
in Paris.

DYLAN

And the blueprints for the Money
Factory.

ARTHUR TRESSLER

I swear to Christ, I do not know
what that is.

DYLAN

The Federal Reserve Printing House,
in Salinas. We also traced payments
to employees who work at that
facility, cleverly funneled so as
not to compromise their identities.

(then)

Were you siphoning freshly printed
money from the US government, Mr.
Tressler?

ARTHUR TRESSLER

I was not. I am being set up by
those four goddamn magicians, you
morons.

ALMA VARGAS

Maybe, maybe not. If you'll excuse
me for saying so, you're a hard man
to trust, Mr. Tressler.

DYLAN

There is, however, one thing we *do*
know with certainty -- The only way
to breach a facility like that is
with someone on the inside. We
want the names of the employees you
sent money to, and we want them
now.

ARTHUR TRESSLER

I told you, I have no idea what
you're talking about. The Horsemen
were able to access my account --
they could be paying whoever they
want to with my money.

(hard)

(MORE)

ARTHUR TRESSLER (CONT'D)
 You want to find these guys, you're
 gonna have to do it yourselves.

EXT. BAR - EAST LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

MUSIC BLASTS through the windows -- MOTORCYCLES are parked in a row in front; this is as openly bad-ass a bar as can be imagined, and

LONDON OSBORNE steps into FRAME: walking toward the bar, listening to the voice in his ear-piece:

VOICE (ON PHONE)
You find it?

LONDON
 Yeah, I bloody found it, mate.
 Someday, when I found out who you
 are, I'll return the favor. Cheers.

INT. BAR - A MOMENT LATER - NIGHT

London walks into the raucous space; he's wearing glasses, a hat, nothing major, just enough to keep him from being easily recognizable. He pushes his way to the bar, jostling a BIG BRUISER and leans toward the BARTENDER, who's shoulder we are over:

LONDON
 I'll have a Guinness.

BARTENDER
 Don't have Guinness.

LONDON
 Then how about a bloody mojito? Not
 too leafy.

The Bartender steps out of frame, and London takes in his surroundings, until the Bartender slams some kind of DRINK down in front of him.

BARTENDER
 Mojitos are eight bucks. Ten for
 you.

LONDON
 Make it twenty, for all I care.
 This bloke here with the rancid
 breath is paying for it, innat
 right?

THE BIG BRUISER can hardly believe his ears:

BIG BRUISER

I'm buyin' a plot for your grave,
asshole.

LONDON

And I thought the *English* had bad
teeth. Tell you what, why don't
you give him thirty and we'll call
it a day.

BIG BRUISER

I am about to end your life.

LONDON

No you're not. You're weak. You're
weak as a baby. You're so bloody
weak I can bring you to your knees
with my little finger-

London reaches out, presses the Big Bruiser's shoulder with a
finger, and to the shock of everyone around the bar, the guy
slowly sinks down to his knees.

London looks around, smiles:

LONDON (CONT'D)

Next round is on me.

EXT. ST. JAMES HOTEL - DAY

CAMERA BOOMS down the white deco exterior, as we hear an
AGENT'S VOICE ON THE SOUNDTRACK:

AGENT'S VOICE (V.O.)

*We lost Osborne somewhere on the
East Side. Guy is a really tough
follow.*

STOP ON A CAR sitting across the street from the hotel;
AGENT FULLER, eating a ham sandwich, within:

AGENT FULLER (IN PHONE)

Roger that. The others are still
in the hotel- least we didn't make
any of 'em leaving -- isn't that
right?

PAN OVER to THADDEUS BRADLEY, sitting beside Fuller, looking
very put out:

THADDEUS

Not that I've noticed.

AGENT FULLER

Keep your eyes peeled, in case one of 'em tries something funny. The rest of us might miss it -- being such a big bunch of rubes and all.

THADDEUS

I'll do my best- That is, if I can make anything out through the haze of onion wafting from that thing you're shoving into your maw. Crack open a window, will you?

Agent Fuller glares at Thaddeus, then reaches for the window-release... as the window goes down we see, at the crosswalk

A HOMELESS MAN in a HOODIE trying to wipe the windshields of irate driver's windows, moving further and further away with each consecutive car, and we

DOLLY IN ON THADDEUS

As a smile of recognition spreads across his face.

EXT. STREET - BUREAU OF ENGRAVING & PRINTING - DAY

Dylan and Alma step out of an unmarked car. They take in the area: the security cameras hidden in the street-lights, the guards perched at the top of the building; TITLE CARD READS:

Bureau of Engraving and Printing - City of Salinas

ALMA VARGAS

Damn. I could leave my wallet on the ground, catch a movie, and nobody would steal it. Not on this block.

Dylan shoots Alma a look and heads for the doors; we hear on the SOUNDTRACK:

LT. THOMAS (V.O.)

-- *You think these hocus pocus guys are going to try to rob this facility..?*

INT. MONEY FACTORY - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Dylan and Alma stand across from LT. THOMAS and OFFICER SIEGEL.

LT. THOMAS

-- Next thing Siegfried and Roy are gonna knock over the US Mint.

DYLAN

Hadn't heard about that, but thanks for the tip.

LT. THOMAS

Let me give you a little history lesson. The BEP has been around since 1861, and in that time, in all our facilities, do you know how many successful robberies there've been? Zero. Not one.

OFFICER SIEGEL

We're not some we're not some ragtag rent-a-cops. We are the BEP police force. No one's getting in here.

LT. THOMAS

There have been attempts before, sure. But they've always been inside jobs, and they've always been caught.

DYLAN

I didn't say it *wasn't* going to be an inside job -- in part.

(then)

We have indications that they have blueprints to this facility. They know the exact location of every nail and screw drilled into this place, and-

OFFICER SIEGEL

And it won't make a difference.

DYLAN

Show me why not.

INT. MAIN FLOOR - MONEY FACTORY - MOMENTS LATER

Alma and Dylan are at the X-RAY MACHINES. They dump their money and change into bins, as Officer Siegel and Lt. Thomas watch on.

OFFICER SIEGEL

No money enters the Money Factory,
or leaves the Money Factory.
Except the money we print.

They step into the bustling space. HEAVY MACHINERY HUMS all around. A WORKER pushes a large pallet of glass-encased BILLS across the floor.

DYLAN

How much cash just rolled by?

Lt. Thomas shrugs, used to this:

LT. THOMAS

A lot.

WORKERS swipe their cards to move from one area of the gated area to another. ARMED GUARDS watch the floor from a catwalk high above them.

LT. THOMAS (CONT'D)

These men are the best in the business. Everyone in this room has SSBI, SCI and SAP level security clearance. They could care less about money.

ALMA VARGAS

Except for the ones receiving anonymous payments from the man who had somehow gained possession of the blueprints to this facility.

LT. THOMAS

Want to tell me who they are?

ALMA VARGAS

Sure I want to. We just don't know.

LT. THOMAS

Yeah. Be sure to let us know when you find out.

They stop in front of a CAGED IN HOLDING AREA where the PALLET OF BILLS has been wheeled into; the gate shut behind it.

LT. THOMAS (CONT'D)

The new printed money stays here. It's collected by armored truck in the morning, and delivered to banks all over the Southland.

DYLAN

And there's how many dollars in here on a given night?

LT. THOMAS

Eight hundred and fifty million.

Dylan and Alma share an awed look; and

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MONEY FACTORY - MOMENTS LATER

The BEP cops show Dylan and Alma the small space, surrounded by MONITORS:

ALMA VARGAS

Let's assume our boys are going to hit this place. Tonight. If you were them, knowing what you know about this facility, how would you get in?

LT. THOMAS

I wouldn't. There are cameras in every corner of the building. Every employee uses a scan card to move from one section to another. Anyone goes where they don't belong, the gates come down. We got our guy. We got our money.

ALMA VARGAS

Except for you.

LT. THOMAS

What?

ALMA VARGAS

You just opened three doors in a row to allow us in here; clearly you have a master pass that allows you access to the entire building.

LT. THOMAS

(countenance darkening)

What are you saying?

ALMA VARGAS

Just that if someone wanted to rob this place... it would help if they knew you.

LT. THOMAS

Except for one thing, detective. Everyone would *know* it was me.

(hard)

I spend enough time behind bars during the day. I don't have any desire to spend my nights the same way.

OFFICER SIEGEL

Everyone here's given the strictest background check. You're free to run another, anytime.

DYLAN

Time's the one thing we don't have.

LT. THOMAS

You got the jump on these guys. You know they're gonna try and hit this place, and they don't know you know it. You're so worried, cordon us off, no one gets in, no one gets out.

(smiles)

Show never happens.

EXT. UNMARKED CAR - OUTSIDE MONEY FACTORY - LATER

Dylan and Alma sit side by side, silent. Then:

ALMA VARGAS

He's right.

DYLAN

Yeah. Cordon it off. Like the Green Zone in Baghdad. No robbery...

ALMA VARGAS

No arrest.

(beat)

Fuck that.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ST. JAMES HOTEL - LOS ANGELES - DAY

THE "HOMELESS MAN" is shuffling down a side-street; WE RACK FOCUS to reveal that we are looking at him from

INSIDE THE UNMARKED CAR which AGENT FULLER driving, THADDEUS beside him:

THADDEUS
Keep on him. It's the boy, Alex
Hero. No doubt about it.

ZOOM IN TO THE "HOMELESS MAN"- and we see there is an EAR-PIECE hidden under his hair. His lips are moving.

BACK TO AGENT FULLER: who speaks to the CAR-PHONE:

AGENT FULLER
You guys have him on audio?

INT. FBI VAN - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

SEVERAL AGENTS occupy the van, driving on a parallel street; listening to high-sensitivity audio devices:

FBI AGENT
Yeah, we got him. He's on right
now.

HOMELESS MAN (ON AUDIO)
*-- Yo, I've been made. I'm sure of
it. They're on me. I'm aborting.*

ANSWERING VOICE (ON AUDIO)
*No way. We're committed and we're
on the clock. Lose them. Whatever
it takes.*

INT. AGENT FULLER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Through the window Agent Fuller sees "Homeless Man" make a sudden turn into a ONE WAY ALLEY, hurrying in the other direction, and:

AGENT FULLER
Damn.

He spins the wheel, and tears up the street in order to catch up with the "Homeless Man" at the other end of the block; Thaddeus holds on tightly, as they round the corner and see

The "Homeless Man" opening the door of a PARKED AUDI; he slips into the vehicle -- We can see his hands reach under the dash, and the ENGINE HUMS TO LIFE.

AGENT FULLER (CONT'D)
 I don't believe it. This little
 bastard is gonna make me chase his
 ass. This is gonna get-

VOOM! "HOMELESS MAN" tears out of the parking spot and roars
 right past the Agent Fuller's car, racing in the opposite
 direction; and

AGENT FULLER makes a hard U-Turn, burning rubber, and gives
 chase; Thaddeus shouts:

THADDEUS
 Let me out. I didn't sign up for
 this.

AGENT FULLER
 You want credit for breaking the
 case, you gotta be there when it
 gets broke!
 (grins)
 Maybe you'll get a new TV show.

AND THEY TEAR DOWN THE STREET AFTER THE AUDI, as:

INT. AUDI - CONTINUOUS

The sweating "Homeless Man" shouts into his ear-piece:

HOMELESS MAN
 They're on my *ass*, yo. This is not
 what I do, do you hear me? *This is*
not what I do.

INT. FBI VAN - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

The AGENT driving does his best to keep up on the parallel
 street, as they hear from their equipment:

ANSWERING VOICE (ON AUDIO)
If they can see you, they can hear
you. No more communication. You're
on your own.

HOMELESS MAN (ON AUDIO)
Hey..!

But the line's gone dead; nothing but static, and:

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - CONTINUOUS

The "Homeless Man" drives the Audi toward the freeway, followed closely by Agent Fuller, who is clearly a more experienced and steady driver...

There are a few breathtakingly dangerous lane changes between them... then the Audi veers right toward the 101 FREEWAY, only

He is heading toward the OFF-RAMP -- The "Homeless Man" jerks sharply on his wheel to avoid ONCOMING TRAFFIC, and

THE AUDI JUMPS THE MEDIAN, falls a short ways and smashes onto its roof on the pavement below, as TRAFFIC SCREECHES to a stop all around him...

ANGLE ON FULLER'S CAR: as Agent Fuller throws open the door and runs down the median toward the upturned AUDI, where

THE HOMELESS MAN IS VISIBLE -- Upside down, blood pouring down his face, eyes blood-shot, trying to pull himself free, but he's stuck, and:

AGENT FULLER

Don't move, boy. Stay where you are, and I'll have an ambulance here in a-

BOOM! The rear gas-tank of the AUDI EXPLODES -- FIRE INSTANTANEOUSLY spreads across the car, enveloping the HOMELESS MAN, who reaches out, screaming, and **WHOOM!**

AGENT FULLER ducks, covering his head as the AUDI is torn apart by the terrible explosion. When he looks up, all he can see is a burning wreck, the burning body silhouetted in the midst of the RAGING INFERNO; and

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - LOS ANGELES - DAY

SAC Hernandez snaps at Agent Fuller, Dylan, Alma and Thaddeus Bradley, as well as a handful of FBI agents:

HERNANDEZ

Let me get this straight. These guys are the Beatles, and you just toasted Ringo.

DYLAN

Actually, he was more like George, if you ask-

AGENT FULLER

Jesus, Dylan. It's not funny. He might have been a prick, but he was just a kid. Just a goddamn kid...

HERNANDEZ

And *you* wasted him. You were supposed to be shadowing him, not engaging in high speed chases. When the world gets wind of this, we are good and screwed.

(pauses)

This was our last chance to nail these bastards, and you blew it.

THADDEUS

Not necessarily.

Every head turns toward Thaddeus:

HERNANDEZ

You seriously think they're gonna go on with their plans without him?

THADDEUS

Atlas still doesn't know we know where he's planning to strike. He is motivated by ego. He shuffles around in a T-shirt, but ego is what drives him.

(then)

Challenge him there, and you'll have your show. You just better start running yours as well as he's been running his.

EXT. LOS ANGELES SPORTS ARENA - AFTERNOON

SEVERAL UNMARKED CARS screech to a halt in the parking lot; the doors fly open, and Dylan, Alma Vargas, Agent Fuller and Thaddeus Bradley step out, accompanied by a few more AGENTS, and head toward the arena entrance...

INT. ARENA STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

MICHAEL ATLAS is giving directions to the electricians, when he turns to see Thaddeus and the officers striding towards him:

MICHAEL ATLAS

This is a closed rehearsal. Unless you have a warrant, I'm going to have to ask you to get the hell out of here.

DYLAN

He's dead.

Michael stops in his tracks. Says nothing, waiting:

DYLAN (CONT'D)

The kid. Alex Hero. Dead.

Michael motions to the electricians, who leave the area. He stands alone on the stage.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

He died trying to slip us, because of this stupid game you've been playing.

MICHAEL ATLAS

I'd like to see him. His body.

ALMA VARGAS

There's not much left to see, Mr. Atlas. The remains are being examined by our forensic specialists. We'll have results within the next few hours. But he was identified before the acci-

MICHAEL ATLAS

By whom?

(turns to Thaddeus)

By this bitter old bastard, who can hardly see past the tip of his own nose?

THADDEUS

If I'm bitter, it's about the farce you and your ilk have made of what was an honorable vocation.

MICHAEL ATLAS

Honorable? Magic is supposed to fun. You better get off your high horse- especially since it's a Trojan one. You don't know what honor is...

(MORE)

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

You're just hoping to hang around long enough to get material for some bullshit book or show, so you can say you were a part of this, make a few dollars off the backs of *real* magicians.

THADDEUS

There's nothing you know that I didn't teach you, boy.

MICHAEL ATLAS

That so? Then tell them, Thaddeus. Tell them what I'm going to do next, if you're so damn wise.

Thaddeus glares as Michael; but he has no answer, so:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

No revelations? Then let *me* tell you: I'm going to call my lawyers. Because I don't think there's anything wrong with Alex. I think you're holding him, to prevent him from performing tonight; and I'm gonna put you through a legal hell the likes of which-

DYLAN

He's dead, Atlas. You can put that in whatever bank you're planning to knock over. But we came to offer you a deal.

(pauses)

Stop what you're doing, and we'll stop our investigation. Slow it down, bit by bit, 'till this whole thing is just a footnote in the history books. Gone and forgotten.

Michael's eyes narrow; then:

MICHAEL ATLAS

The public has no idea about this yet, do they? Alex is a rock star, and you morons killed him. Gonna make Waco look like a public relations coup for you people.

(hard smile)

This isn't a game, Agent Hobbes. This is a business. And in this business, the show always goes on.

Michael reaches into his jacket... and a couple of the AGENTS instinctively reach for their guns. Michael's hand comes out holding a SHEAVE OF TICKETS. He hands them to Dylan and Alma.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
Third row, center aisle. Curtain at nine o'clock sharp. And this time -- feel free to hold hands.

CUT TO:

CAMERAS FLASHING -- LIGHTS GLARING

REPORTERS surrounding MICHAEL ATLAS, LONDON OSBORNE and RODERIGO as they give a hastily assembled PRESS CONFERENCE:

REPORTER #1
-- In light of today's tragedy, are you still going through with tonight's performance?

RODERIGO
Of course. We're dedicating it to the memory of Alex.

REPORTER #2
How will it feel to go up there so soon after-

LONDON
Feel? He was just a boy, and the bloody Feds chased him to his death, how do you think it's gonna feel?

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

THE AGENTS listen to a number of televisions that are on in the b.g. while they prepare for their night's mission:

DYLAN
Christ, look at this prick. Kid gets killed, and he calls a press conference.

ALMA VARGAS
That's show business, right?

SOME OF TV'S SHOW THE BURNING CAR ON THE FREEWAY as captured on VIDEO:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
*-- This burning wreck on the 101
 Freeway was the fiery tomb of Alex
 Hero, the youngest and perhaps
 brashest of the Four Horsemen...*

ON OTHER TV'S the PRESS CONFERENCE IS PLAYING:

REPORTER #3 (ON MONITOR)
*Can we expect the kind of surprise
 finale we've seen at your previous
 shows?*

MICHAEL ATLAS (ON MONITOR)
*If I told you, it wouldn't be a
 surprise.*

Agent Fuller punches the TV off, simmering with anger; slams
 a clip into his .45.

AGENT FULLER
 These guys are so in love with
 surprises. Let's give 'em one.

SAC HERNANDEZ steps up in front of the agents, commanding
 instant attention:

HERNANDEZ
 One more time. We don't want to
 prevent this robbery, we want to
 catch these bastards in the act...

EXT. STREETS OUTSIDE OF THE MONEY FACTORY - DUSK

IMAGES OF THE FBI AGENTS situating themselves around the
 premises -- in nearby stores -- in cars -- on rooftops, as
 SAC HERNANDEZ'S VOICE CONTINUES on the SOUNDTRACK:

HERNANDEZ (V.O.)
*-- Which means you are to remain
 invisible, and until the moment
 arrives, not to interfere...*

INT. CATWALKS - CORRIDORS - MONEY FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

ANGLES of UNIFORMED SECURITY GUARDS at their posts around the
 interior of the facility, separated by wire mesh and gates.

HERNANDEZ (V.O.)
*-- There is the usual after hours
 security detail of ten armed guards
 inside the Money Factory...*

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MONEY FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Alma Vargas is in the small space with Lt. Thomas and Officer Siegel; surrounded by monitors with black and white images.

HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

-- The only ones officially aware of our presence are Lt. Thomas and Officer Siegel of the BEP. We make the arrest, but the collar is theirs. All right...

EXT. THE MONEY FACTORY - HIGH ANGLE - NIGHT

NIGHT STREETLIGHTS come on all around the area, illuminating it as if were a set on a stage:

HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

-- Let's get this party started.

EXT. REAR OF MONEY FACTORY - NIGHT

Dylan, Agent Fuller and Thaddeus Bradley sit low in a car parked behind the building, where they have a view of the closed gates of the LOADING DOCK. It's awfully quiet. Dylan's phone vibrates; he talks into his ear-piece:

DYLAN

Hobbes here.

EXT. STREET - OTHER SIDE OF THE MONEY FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

SAC HERNANDEZ hisses into his phone:

HERNANDEZ

Just got the call the Horsemen are about to go onstage. You sure we're in the right place?

DYLAN (ON PHONE)

We're in the right place.

HERNANDEZ

It goddamn well better be.

EXT. REAR OF MONEY FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Dylan presses his phone off. Exchanges a less than confident look with Fuller.

DYLAN

It's the right place.

THADDEUS

You're sure of that, are you?

DYLAN

You can shut up, Merlin. The only reason you're *here* is I don't trust you out of my sight for more than-

THEN BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS sweep past them, and they look around to see:

AN ARMORED TRUCK

Turning the corner, passing through the open gateway, and rolling to a halt outside the rear loading dock GATE...

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MONEY FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Alma's phone buzzes; she raises it to her ear:

ALMA VARGAS

What's up, G-Man?

DYLAN (ON PHONE)

Tell me there's no pickup scheduled for tonight.

Alma turns to Lt. Thomas.

ALMA VARGAS

Tell him there's no pickup scheduled for tonight.

LT. THOMAS

No way. Not 'till six a.m.

ALMA VARGAS

(into phone)

Not until tomorrow morning.

EXT. REAR OF MONEY FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Dylan's face widens into a grin:

DYLAN

Then it's on.

Agent Fuller whispers into his WALKIE:

AGENT FULLER

It's on.

INT. LOST ANGELES SPORTS CENTER - NIGHT

LIGHTS FLASH ON, illuminating the stage in the middle of the huge arena, where MICHAEL ATLAS is standing, flanked by LONDON and RODERIGO. Michael raises his hands, quieting down the crowd:

MICHAEL ATLAS

I remember my first wand, when I was a kid. I'd aim it at things and try to lift them off the ground. The piano. The dog. My mother. It never worked...

LAUGHTER FROM THE AUDIENCE; and

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SPORTS ARENA - CONTINUOUS

A LARGE CROWD is gathered outside, watching Michael on MONITORS PLACED ALL AROUND THE EXTERIOR OF THE ARENA:

MICHAEL ATLAS (ON MONITORS)

-- *My father died when I was ten. At the wake, I saw everyone crying; so I stepped into the living room with my wand, and did my first show. Simple tricks. You know. Kid stuff- Abracadabra- But I looked at the faces around me, and they were smiling and laughing. That's when I found my magic. My mother passed a year later, and when she was cremated I put that wand into the fire to keep her company in Heaven.*

INT. STAGE - SPORTS ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Michael takes a moment, then:

MICHAEL ATLAS

Today, as you know, we suffered another loss. Alex Hero is gone. But we're going to honor him the best way we know how... the way he would have wanted us to-

Michael points his finger and FIREWORKS GO OFF -- HEAVY METAL STARTS POUNDING. The crowd rises to their feet, CHEERING; and

INT. ROOFTOP - OUTSIDE MONEY FACTORY

FBI SNIPERS peer through the scopes of high-powered rifles. Their angle is bad, but they can get a glimpse of the ARMORED TRUCK by the loading dock, as

EXT. REAR OF MONEY FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Dylan and Agent Fuller watch silently, waiting, then:

TWO UNIFORMED MEN step outside of the armored truck. One of them walks to the rear gate, takes out a SWIPE CARD, and runs it past the electronic lock, causing the gate to start opening...

THEN A THIRD UNIFORMED MAN opens the doors from inside the back of the truck, revealing a CACHE OF HEAVY WEAPONS.

DYLAN

Oh hell. Not good. Not good at all.

(to Thaddeus)

You stay put. Do not leave the car.

He quietly opens the car door and steps outside, followed by Fuller, both of them drawing their weapons.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Easy... easy does it.

Then they see that a SECURITY GUARD from inside the Money Factory is approaching the opening gate; the THIRD UNIFORMED MAN is picking up a SHOTGUN from the back of the truck, and suddenly-

BOOM! Dylan winces as Agent Fuller's gun goes off right next to his ear.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Jeezus!

Agent Fuller looks shocked; shaking his head in dismay- as the THREE UNIFORMED MEN turn in surprise, looking extremely confused, and:

AGENT FULLER

I didn't mean it, man. I swear to christ I-

But Dylan is already running forward, gun leveled, shouting:

DYLAN
Get your hands in the air. Get them
up in the air.

THE UNIFORMED MEN look around, still in confusion; and:

DYLAN (CONT'D)
 (into his ear-piece)
Give them warning shots. Nothing
fatal.

A COUPLE OF SNIPER BULLETS hit the ground near the uniformed men, who drop their weapons and throw their hands up -- Then Dylan is on them, kicking their legs out from under them, shouting:

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Spread eagle. Arms wide. Do it.

They do it. Dylan kneels down and pulls their caps off-- looks at their faces-- JUST THREE TOUGH LOOKING GUYS WE'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

Agent Fuller rushes over, breathing hard:

AGENT FULLER
 Who the hell are they?

DYLAN
 I have no goddamn idea.

INT. STAGE - SPORTS ARENA

London Osborne stands in front of a row of VOLUNTEERS like a conductor, watching them each expertly juggle a HALF-DOZEN EGGS in the air, as if they were expert jugglers...

London turns and gives the audience a cheeky look; SNAPS HIS FINGERS, and suddenly the volunteers are fumbling and surprised, the EGGS LANDING EVERYWHERE, splattering on their heads, on the floor, as the audience is convulsed with LAUGHTER...

EXT. REAR OF MONEY FACTORY - NIGHT

THE THREE UNIFORMED MEN ARE sitting on the ground beside the gathered forces of the FBI and BEP; hands cuffed behind their backs -- A YOUNG AGENT looks up from his lap-top:

YOUNG AGENT
 These characters aren't on any of
 the security clearance databases.
 (MORE)

YOUNG AGENT (CONT'D)
They aren't registered armored guards, either. Not from any known company.

HERNANDEZ
(to the uniformed men)
You want to tell me who you are?

UNIFORMED MAN #1
We have a nine o'clock pickup. We have to pick up our payload at nine.

Dylan steps over, holding their SWIPE CARDS:

DYLAN
They had cards with access to every room in the facility.

The Agents all look up at Lt. Thomas and Officer Siegel:

LT. THOMAS
I'm the only one with that kind of access. But I sure as shit didn't give it to these jokers.
(to the uniformed men)
Where did you get these cards?

UNIFORMED MAN #2
We were following procedure. We didn't do anything wrong...

THEN A CELL PHONE BUZZES from the back pocket of UNIFORMED GUY #1

DYLAN removes it, looks at the screen: a TEXT MESSAGE THAT READS: **MY COUSIN HAS A SWEATER LIKE THAT. IS IT WOOL?**

DYLAN
"My cousin has a sweater like that? Is it wool?"
(then)
What the hell is that supposed to-

THADDEUS
It's code.

Everyone turns and looks at Thaddeus, who strides over:

THADDEUS (CONT'D)
Old magician's code. Houdini's favorite, for its utter banality.
(MORE)

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

During his act, he would ask it of an accomplice, in order to let him know if he was set to go on with a trick.

(then)

"Cotton," was the response given, when the answer was "yes."

UNINORMED MAN #2

This is bullshit. We had a nine o'clock pickup. We were here on time. We were following procedure.

DYLAN

We're not gonna get anything from these guys like this. Give me two hours with them back at HQ and I'll-

HERNANDEZ

You will do nothing, Agent Hobbes.

Dylan falls silent. SAC HERNANDEZ waves to his men:

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

Clear the area. Lt. Thomas, this is your collar. You are coming with me to interrogate these men. I have one or two little questions for you to answer, as well.

(turns to ALMA)

Detective Vargas, your work on this case has been exemplary- but after you file your report with the BEP, you better catch the first flight back to Vegas.

Alma bites her lip. Keeps her feelings down. Hernandez glares at Dylan:

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

You are done for tonight, Hobbes. You and Agent Fuller, the both of you. Done.

Dylan takes that in. Nods. Types into the cell phone he's holding: C-O-T-T-O-N- then puts the phone into Hernandez's hand, and

INT. STAGE - SPORTS ARENA - NIGHT

THE CROWD CHEERS as RODERIGO stands underneath TWO BEAUTIFUL GIRLS, spinning them overhead with his fingers;

only the girls are split into TWO as they spin, their legs and torsos interchanging in the air above the magicians' head...

EXT. REAR OF MONEY FACTORY - NIGHT

Dylan and Alma stand by Agent Fuller, who is still shaken:

AGENT FULLER

Sorry I let you down. I don't know... I saw the weapons, and I overreacted... I screwed up...

ALMA VARGAS

We all screwed up. Nothing to do about it now.

DYLAN

Yeah, there is.

(pauses)

We might not be able to arrest him, but as far Michael Atlas knows, things went off just the way he planned. We're fifteen minutes from Downtown. I don't know about you...

Reaches into his jacket, comes out holding the TICKETS
MICHAEL GAVE HIM:

DYLAN (CONT'D)

But I'm gonna be there to see his face when he realizes he's wrong.

INT. SPORTS ARENA - NIGHT

CLOSE ON MICHAEL -- FACE ILLUMINATED BY A HARSH SPOTLIGHT:

MICHAEL ATLAS

Ladies and gentlemen, we're glad to have been able to take your mind off your troubles with a few hours' divertissement...

WIDE ANGLE ON THE HUGE ARENA

THE AUDIENCE rises to its collective feet, giving a standing ovation in anticipation of the Horsemen's newest finale:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

-- But I can't leave this stage without acknowledging that we are living in hard times.

CAMERA CLOSES IN ON DYLAN, ALMA VARGAS, AGENT FULLER AND THADDEUS BRADLEY making their way toward the front of arena, and

ANGLE ON MICHAEL, spotting them; a smile spreads across his face:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

We know you're all suffering. But this is the biggest audience we've had... there's a lot of you out there. That means we have to come up with our biggest score yet. And money doesn't grow on trees...

(pauses)

But it is printed in factories.

Michael turns to RODERIGO, who pulls a lever, and a DOZEN HUGE SCREENS descend around Michael, seeming to hover in the air -- RODERIGO takes out a HANDHELD VIDEO CAMERA, points it at the screens, and

THE SCREENS SUDDENLY FILL with an IMAGE OF THE MONEY FACTORY; moving through it, as if filmed by RODERIGO'S CAMERA as he paces the stage.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Some of these places- like this one- can hold nearly a billion dollars at any given time. Can you believe that?

ANGLE ON DYLAN AND ALMA -- Looking at each other; how do these guys do this?

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

And here it is, the room where all that money is held. And there it is, in that glass covered pallet. Newly printed. Almost One. Billion. Dollars.

THE AUDIENCE falls into a hush, hardly breathing, at the image of the CAGED ROOM HOLDING THE MONEY on the SCREENS.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

The government prints it, just like that, whenever they want to. But I think, for once, someone else should decide where it goes, don't you?

THE CROWD ANSWERS WITH AN UPROARIOUS AFFIRMATIVE.

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 Alright, then. So, with a single
 snap of the fingers-

Michael turns to the screens- SNAPS. Nothing happens. A
 beat.

Michael turns and shoots a look at Roderigo- who shakes his
 head, with a look that says: "*I don't know what the hell is
 going on.*"

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 This is a really hard one.

SNAPS his finger again. Again nothing. Michael waits
 another moment. Then, recomposing himself, turns back to the
 audience:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 Ladies and gentlemen, it looks like
 you're not going to get the finale
 you were expecting tonight.

THE BIGGEST BOO YOU'VE EVER HEARD IN YOUR LIFE.

DURING THE CACOPHONY EYE-CONTACT passes between MICHAEL AND
 DYLAN, MICHAEL AND ALMA, MICHAEL AND THADDEUS... various
 degrees of gloating in their eyes, a tinge of defeat in his,
 then

MICHAEL raises his hands, trying to quiet down the crowd:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 Is this really why you're here?
 For the money? Are you becoming
 the very people you disdain? The
 people you come to see us
 humiliate? Aren't there more
 important things in life- like
 Love..?

IF YOU THOUGHT THE FIRST ROUND OF BOOING WAS BAD -- MICHAEL
 HAS TO SHOUT TO BE HEARD ABOVE THE CROWD:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 -- Like happiness? Like friends?
 Didn't Jesus himself say it was
 easier for a camel to pass through
 the eye of a needle than for a rich
 man to get into heaven?

AS MICHAEL SPEAKS THE LIGHTS subtly change from WHITE TO YELLOW... TO ORANGE... TO RED... A STRANGE ROARING SOUND is beginning to fill the AUDITORIUM:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

-- The same Jesus who, when a good man called Lazarus died, reached forth and brought him back to life. They said Jesus was the son of God when he did it. If I can do the same thing... what does that make me?

Suddenly there is a tremendous EXPLOSION from behind Michael, and

A FLAMING AUTOMOBILE comes flying through the air, sailing over his head, and crash lands right at the foot of the stage, and

A BURNING MAN comes flailing out of the car, covered in flames like the human torch, and

RODERIGO AND LONDON OSBORNE run in from the sides with FIRE EXTINGUISHERS and douse the flames, revealing the man to be

ALEX HERO -- Looking as if he has just been through the wringer. He stands shakily at the foot of the stage for an instant, then raises his hands above his head, and

THE AUDIENCE GASPS, THEN RISES TO THEIR FEET, laughing and applauding.

ANGLES ON DYLAN -- ALMA -- THADDEUS -- AGENT FULLER -- They can't believe their eyes, as:

LONDON

Boyo, you gave us all the scare of our bloody lives. Where the hell have you been?

ALEX

Not Hell, yo. I was worried Michael might lose his magic tonight, so I went to the *other* side... to bring him back this.

He holds up a simple MAGIC WAND.

MICHAEL ATLAS

My wand. The one I had as a boy.
But-

ALEX

It's alright, homes. Your Moms wanted you to have it. Please. I might not have gone though Hell to get it... but I passed awful close.

Michael reaches out, as the crowd cheers its encouragement, and takes the wand. He hugs Alex, and the crowd explodes; then Michael turns back to the audience:

MICHAEL ATLAS

You know, the real magic this wand had was the ability to make people smile. And this being our last show, you know we want to leave you smiling, so...

Michael suddenly turns to the SCREENS behind him, on which the IMAGE OF THE CAGE-ROOM IN THE MONEY FACTORY is still showing, and:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

Abracadabra.

And- WHOOMP- The IMAGE CHANGES to that of the same room, but with the **PALLET OF MONEY NOW SUDDENLY GONE**. A gasp from the audience:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)

If you still don't know us very well and think this is just a trick- do yourself a favor and pick up the papers tomorrow morning.

DYLAN'S PHONE is vibrating; he raises it to his ear, struggling to hear above the din, as SAC HERNANDEZ'S VOICE COMES IN:

HERNANDEZ (ON PHONE)

Hobbes, are you there? The goddamn Money Factory has just been robbed. Can you hear me..?

DYLAN

What? How? By who? How the-

MICHAEL ATLAS (O.S.)

As for the rest of you- want to see where all that money went?

THE ROAR drowns out any chance of Dylan being able to hear anything else on the phone; he grimaces, looking back at the stage, as

MICHAEL reaches down near the bottom of the closest SCREEN and comes up with a single TWENTY DOLLAR BILL. He throws it upward, and

THE TWENTY DOLLAR BILL shoots up high into the air of the cavernous stadium, which suddenly seems to EXPLODE WITH MONEY, CASH FLYING ALL OVER THE PLACE FROM EVERY DIRECTION, and

THE CROWD GOES MAD -- PEOPLE JUMP IN THE AIR, REACHING FOR THE BILLS, DIVING TO THE FLOOR, SCOOPING IT UP BY THE HANDFUL...

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SPORTS ARENA - CONTINUOUS

MONEY IS BLOWING OUT OF VENTS from the exterior of the arena as well, raining down on the CROWD gathered outside, which turns into instant pandemonium, like a WINDBLOWN TICKER TAPE PARADE, and

INT. SPORTS ARENA - CONTINUOUS

DYLAN, ALMA, AGENT FULLER and THADDEUS catch a last look at THE FOUR HORSEMEN

Who hold hands at the foot of the stage, raising them in the air in a salute, before backing away and vanishing under the paper rain of swirling, falling cash...

THADDEUS nods slightly, as if impressed despite himself. Then he turns walks away, heading back up the aisle, disappearing into the maelstrom...

EXT. FBI HEADQUARTERS BUILDING - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

AN UNMARKED CAR screeches to a stop in the parking lot; Dylan, Alma and Agent Fuller get out and head toward the front doors; we hear on the SOUNDTRACK:

DYLAN (V.O.)
What the hell happened?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FBI HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

SAC HERNANDEZ, backed by a room bustling with activity, faces our agents; Lt. Thomas, Officer Siegel and a GUARD CAPTAIN FROM THE MONEY FACTORY are beside him:

OFFICER SIEGEL
As soon as you cleared out, I
headed back to the control center.
I'm not sure what happened next...

GUARD CAPTAIN

What happened next was some of the guys saw Lt. Thomas making his way toward the cage.

Dylan, Alma and Agent Fuller turn toward Lt. Thomas, who snarls:

LT. THOMAS

I have been with SAC Hernandez the entire time.

IMAGE FROM THE MONEY FACTORY: P.O.V. THROUGH THE GRATED ROOM DIVIDERS -- AS "LT. THOMAS" swipes his card across the lock to CAGE-ROOM, then steps inside, grabs the handles for the DOLLY that the PALLET OF MONEY is sitting on, and wheels it out of the room... stops, facing the room for a moment, and

CLOSE ON "LT. THOMAS" HAND HOLDING UP A CELL PHONE -- TAKING A PHOTOGRAPH of the now EMPTY CAGE-ROOM, before turning and wheeling the PALLET down the corridor.

GUARD CAPTAIN (V.O.)

-- He was moving the money toward the loading dock, when we finally got our shit together, and moved in on him, but...

A TERRIBLE SONIC WHINE CUTS THROUGH THE AIR -- And the ARMED GUARDS drop their weapons, clutching their ears and sinking to their knees in pain...

TIGHT SHOTS -- SEVERAL HIGH-TECH ULTRASOUND TRANSMITTERS have been magnetically attached to the grated walls in strategic places along the corridor, red lights indicating activity...

CLOSE ON "LT. THOMAS'S" EAR -- BLOCKED BY A SPECIAL PLUG emitting a counter-frequency, as he hustles the PALLET toward the loading dock; and

BACK TO THE CONFERENCE ROOM

Where the Guard Captain is shaking his head:

GUARD CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

My ears are still ringing like crazy. Only reason I can hear you at all is I was up on the second level when it happened.

ALMA VARGAS

So now these guys have access to high-tech military equipment?

AGENT FULLER

Ain't that hard, if you know the right people and grease the right palms.

IMAGE OF THE LOADING AREA BEHIND THE MONEY FACTORY: "Lt. THOMAS" rolls the PALLET OF MONEY into the back of the ARMORED TRUCK that is still there, slams the doors shut, runs into the driver's seat and starts it up...

A FEW GUARDS come out, blasting at the armored truck, but the bullets bounce off, and the truck pulls out into the street.

OFFICER SIEGEL (V.O.)

Every police car in the area was put on instant notice... had at least a dozen heading toward the scene...

IMAGES OF POLICE CARS RACING THROUGH THE STREETS, SIRENS BLARING; and

HERNANDEZ (V.O.)

We were notified as well, turned right around. But it didn't make a damn bit of difference...

THE ARMORED TRUCK turns a corner onto a deserted street, then drives into an UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT filled with, among other vehicles, a row of BODEGA-STYLE FOOD TRUCKS...

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT: "Lt. THOMAS" pulls a lever under the dashboard, activating

THE OUTSIDE PANELS OF THE TRUCK to COLLAPSE INWARD AND FLIP OVER -- A remarkable feat of mechanical trickery that within seconds has what was once an "armored truck" looking almost exactly like a BODEGA-STYLE FOOD TRUCK.

OUTSIDE THE PARKING LOT: "Lt. THOMAS" steps out into the street, pulling off his toupee. He sends the image of the EMPTY CAGE ROOM on his cell phone as he walks past, and we pan around to see

THE LA SPORTS ARENA

Only several blocks away, THE LARGE CROWD OUTSIDE watching the show taking place within on the MONITORS placed outside the arena.

AGENT FULLER (V.O.)

It was the kid, Alex Hero...

BACK TO THE CONFERENCE ROOM

The officers turn to Fuller:

AGENT FULLER (CONT'D)
 -- He was off-radar all day, and
 only popped up at the end of the
 show.

HERNANDEZ
 Of *course* it was the kid. Now try
 proving it in a court of law, Agent
 Fuller.

IMAGE: "THE HOMELESS MAN" in the burning car: A STEEL PANEL
 SHOWING HIS REFLECTION drops in front of him, right before
 the explosion, and

AGENT FULLER SHIELDS his face from the blast, and

"THE HOMELESS MAN" uses the cover of the flames and chaos to
 roll behind the freeway median and into a prepared HIDING
 SPOT, pulling a rusted grating over himself.

ALMA VARGAS (V.O.)
Then who was the body in the car?

BACK TO THE CONFERENCE ROOM:

A YOUNG AGENT addresses the group:

YOUNG AGENT
 John Doe. Probably taken from a
 local hospital...

IMAGE: ALEX HERO AND RODERIGO, disguised as ORDERLIES,
 wheeling a BODY on a gurney through a hospital corridor:

YOUNG AGENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 -- *Medical profession's dirty
 little secret. Fresh bodies are
 stolen from area hospitals all the
 time. Nine just in the last month.
 Parts are auctioned off on the
 black market. The Horsemen could
 have had him on ice for weeks.
 We'll never be able to tie it to
 them.*

BACK TO THE CONFERENCE ROOM:

DYLAN walks to where MONITORS show the THREE UNIFORMED MEN
 taken in the aborted sting operation being held in a CELL:

DYLAN
And these guys?

ANOTHER FBI AGENT speaks:

FBI AGENT
Ran their photos through the
database. Two of them have
records, affiliated with a local
biker gang. One of them used to do
security work, now he's a bartender
at some place called El Carmen
Rosa...

IMAGE: LONDON OSBORNE AT THE "BADASS BAR" -- Forcing the
TOUGH GUY he provoked to the floor with his finger:

LONDON
(smiling)
Drinks are on me.

PAN AROUND TO SEE- for the first time- THE BARTENDER, who is
indeed one of our uniformed men, looking on in awe -- RACK
FOCUS TO THE ROUGH CROWD and see that the OTHER TWO MEN are
there as well, and

BACK TO THE CONFERENCE ROOM:

SAC HERNANDEZ steps up to the monitors:

HERNANDEZ
They're sticking to their story
like glue. Following procedure.
Had a pick up to make. Yadayada.
But one of them will break,
eventually. Take a deal, and name
who-

A PHONE RINGS. It's ALMA'S CELL PHONE. She looks at the
number, doesn't recognize it -- raises the phone to her ear:

ALMA VARGAS
Detective Vargas.

VOICE (ON PHONE)
*Those poor fellows you have locked
up in there must be getting hungry
about now. Ask them if they'd like
some pineapple for their breakfast.*

ALMA VARGAS
Excuse me?

BEEP. Hung up. Alma looks around at the others, a sinking feeling overtaking her, and

INT. HOLDING CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Alma is admitted to the area outside the cell by an AGENT; she faces the THREE UNIFORMED MEN:

ALMA VARGAS
Hey. How you holding up in there?

UNIFORMED MAN #1
This is bullshit. We had a pickup.
We were following procedure. You
got no right to treat us like this.

ALMA VARGAS
You... ah... hungry?

THE UNIFORMED MEN stare at her, not understanding.

ALMA VARGAS (CONT'D)
You want some pineapple?

THE UNIFORMED MENS' HEADS DROP like puppets with their strings cut; two of them slump back against the wall, the other falls flat on his face on the ground...

He slowly rises, looking completely baffled... confused... then frightened:

UNIFORMED MAN #2
Who are you?
(looks around)
Where the hell am I?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FBI HEADQUARTERS - LATER

THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS are sitting around, looking completely defeated.

DYLAN
What about the money?

Holds up SEVERAL BILLS he collected during the show's finale:

DYLAN (CONT'D)
We can still tie them in to the
stolen money. There's just so much
explaining they can do as to how
they got hold of it this time.
That's something that'll stick in
court.

LT. THOMAS

My people have already run the serial numbers on as many of the bills as we could collect. None of them match the stolen money. Most of them aren't even all that new.

DYLAN

You mean..?

LT. THOMAS

The Four Horsemen rained millions of dollars of their own money all over that crowd. Nothing near what they stole, but it still had to be a lot. No law against throwing away your own money, though.

A beat, then:

DYLAN

Then the stolen money is still out there.

ANOTHER FBI AGENT turns from his computer screen:

FBI AGENT

And we might know where to find it.
(to Dylan)
More research results from the Atlantic City job have been coming in. I think we have what you want.

EXT. VILLA - DESERT - DAY

A TAXI pulls up in front of the curb, and THADDEUS BRADLEY gets out. TITLE READS:

Las Vegas - Nevada

Thaddeus sees the arm on his mailbox is up. Hesitates for a second, then opens it:

THERE IS A SINGLE LETTER inside the mailbox. Thaddeus reaches in, takes it out, and

INT. LIVING ROOM/THADDEUS'S VILLA - MOMENTS LATER

Thaddeus is mixing a MARTINI for himself, when he finally notices the print on the letter lying on the bar: READ ME.

Thaddeus's eyes narrow. He picks up a knife and opens the envelope, takes out a single slip of paper, on which is written: IN THE BASEMENT.

INT. BASEMENT - THADDEUS'S VILLA - MOMENTS LATER

The lights come on, illuminating a space crammed to the ceiling with magical bric-a-brac and memorabilia. Thaddeus enters, then stops, as he sees

THE PALLET OF CASH FROM THE MONEY FACTORY

Sitting there, at the far end of the room.

Thaddeus takes it in for a moment -- then he hears the SOUND OF CAR ENGINES AND BRAKES SQUEALING TO A HALT UPSTAIRS. Sound of the door crashing in, the thumping of booted feet, and

INT. LIVING ROOM - THADDEUS'S VILLA

Thaddeus steps back into the living room, where

A DOZEN FBI AGENTS ARE WAITING FOR HIM, GUNS DRAWN.

THADDEUS

I've been framed, of course. The first evidence which will attest to that fact is the note sitting over-

But where the note on the bar was now remains only a HISSING SULFUROUS VAPOR.

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

Right.

EXT. THADDEUS'S VILLA - LATER

Thaddeus is led into a black sedan by a phalanx of AGENTS, as we hear on the SOUNDTRACK:

AGENT FULLER (V.O.)

We have fingerprint matches in the Kaplan offices in New York, and on Arthur Tressler's computer, in his office...

IMAGES: Thaddeus being taken into the Las Vegas Police Headquarters, booked, fingerprinted, processed:

THADDEUS (V.O.)

I hardly even know how to use a computer;

(MORE)

THADDEUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*and I was in Atlantic City the
 whole time. I am not "George
 Kaplan..."*

DYLAN (V.O.)
*It helps if you say it in a funny
 Cary Grant voice.*

IMAGES: THADDEUS in court in front of a JUDGE -- LAWYERS making arguments, Dylan and Alma Vargas watching from the sidelines:

DYLAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*In the time you lost me, you could
 have made the trip there and back.
 We also have partials on the sonic-
 discs used in the Money Factory
 heist, and-*

THADDEUS (V.O.)
*If I'm such mastermind why would I
 be the only one to have left
 fingerprints lying around? Why
 would I have all that money in my
 basement? Why would I be so damned
 sloppy?*

IMAGE: Thaddeus in ORANGE JAIL GARB, being led toward LAS VEGAS COUNTY JAIL by TWO LARGE DEPUTIES.

DYLAN (V.O.)
*Age. Ego. Who the hell knows? You
 led us on a hell of a run-around to
 make your boys look good, at our
 expense. Brass wants at least one
 arrest, and you're it. You want to
 turn State's on the others, I'm
 authorized to get down on my knees
 and beg you to do so.*

THADDEUS (V.O.)
*I've got nothing on them that would
 stick, and it would only serve to
 further implicate me. You know
 that.*

IMAGE: Thaddeus being led down a long corridor toward the cell-block:

DYLAN (V.O.)
*Sure I do. I also know the judge
 decided you're a flight risk, on
 account of your self proclaimed
 mastery of disguise, and set bail
 at three million dollars. Have any
 friends willing to pay that?*

INT. CELL - LAS VEGAS COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Thaddeus and Dylan sit facing each other across the cell:

THADDEUS
 I will beat these charges.

DYLAN
 Maybe. But by the time the lawyers
 are through with you, you'll be
 living out of a cardboard box,
 playing three card monty on a
 corner ten blocks from the strip.

Dylan stands, picking his jacket up -- Thaddeus's shoulders slump, his eyes suddenly fragile.

THADDEUS
 Agent Hobbes... please. You know I
 didn't do this..

Dylan takes a moment; then leans over to Thaddeus, and whispers ever so softly in his ear:

DYLAN
I know.

Thaddeus looks confused for a moment, then his eyes widen, as he begins to understand -- and as it comes together in his mind we see

A FLOW OF IMAGES SHOWING DYLAN AT KEY MOMENTS:

THE FIRST SHOW: The "USHER" takes the DRINK from Thaddeus -- as he walks away we see that it is Dylan in disguise, and

DYLAN uses an INFRA-BLUE CAMERA to photograph THADDEUS'S FINGERPRINTS from the glass -- then using a LASER ENGRAVER to imprint the prints into the fingertips of a pair of LATEX GLOVES, then to

MICHAEL ATLAS- disguised as "George Kaplan"- putting on the gloves as he walks toward the KAPLAN INC. OFFICES -- See him turning the doorknob... picking up the phone...

in ARTHUR TRESSLER'S OFFICE typing on Tressler's computer, accessing his bank codes...

DYLAN USING THE FBI COMPUTER SYSTEM to manufacture FAKE PASSPORTS FOR THE FOUR HORSEMEN, and

IMAGES OF MICHAEL, LONDON OSBORNE, RODERIGO and ALEX using the passports at CHARLES DeGAULLE AIRPORT, and

DYLAN sits in front of a BRIEFCASE with a MIRROR on the top flap, putting on make-up, and we see

DYLAN DISGUISED AS RODERIGO, rehearsing a gimmick on-stage... DYLAN DISGUISED AS LONDON OSBORNE, walking purposefully through a mall... DYLAN DISGUISED AS MICHAEL, getting take-out, waving to a fan... DYLAN DISGUISED AS ALEX, driving a corvette, smiling to a couple of girls at a stop-light; and

DYLAN ON A COMPUTER, sending information to:

RODERIGO, IN PARIS, who uses it to jack into the CREDIT LYONNAIS BANK'S security system, and

HANDS OPEN TRESSLER'S SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX -- IMPRINT it with the partial CARBON of the BLUEPRINT of the MONEY FACTORY.

DYLAN ON THE PAY-PHONE IN ATLANTIC CITY- "Talking to Hanna" watched by Alma Vargas; and we see

MICHAEL ATLAS is on the other end of the line; he turns to the other HORSEMEN, waiting in their hotel room, and nods:

MICHAEL ATLAS

Showtime.

DYLAN FOLLOWING THADDEUS in the mall, talking to Agent Fuller on his ear-piece; he gets a TEXT ON HIS PHONE: "Need you here in ten." Looks around, as if he has "lost" Thaddeus, and starts hurrying in the opposite direction:

DYLAN (INTO PHONE)

-- Shit. I've lost him. Shit...

IN A STAIRWELL: DYLAN opens a SUITCASE, revealing his MAKE-UP KIT INSIDE, and

THE FOUR HORSEMEN- with DYLAN DISGUISED AS MICHAEL ATLAS- exit the Trump Hotel into a crush of fans, watched by ALMA VARGAS, and

IN THE "MONEY FACTORY": As DYLAN and ALMA are shown around we ZOOM IN TO HIS BELT-BUCKLE, in which a CAMERA IS HIDDEN; and we see

THE P.O.V. OF THE MONEY FACTORY- The same one RODERIGO used during the show, and

CLOSE SHOTS of DYLAN SUBTLY- like a master magician- PLACING THE SONIC-TRANSMITTERS in discreet locations as they walk through the space, and

IN THE CONTROL ROOM: Dylan brushes against Lt. THOMAS in the tight space -- PICKING THE SWIPE CARD OUT OF HIS POCKET, placing it in his own POCKET- where, in an X-RAY STYLE ZOOM we see

A FLAT ELECTRONIC COPIER- THE SIZE OF A CALCULATOR, against which the swipe card is pressed, and

As DYLAN AND ALMA exit the control room he slides the SWIPE CARD back into LT. THOMAS'S PANTS POCKET; and

OUTSIDE THE MONEY FACTORY: Dylan discretely slides the little ELECTRONIC COPIER into a mailbox as they walk to their car --

ANOTHER CUT: ALEX HERO walks by the mailbox, lifting out the COPIER, and

IN A GARAGE: Roderigo programs several SWIPE CARDS from the COPIER, and hands them to

LONDON OSBORNE, who walks to the "ARMORED CAR" where the THREE UNIFORMED MEN he has hypnotized are waiting; he hands them the cards, and

IN THE FBI STATION BEFORE THE RAID: As SAC Hernandez speaks, DYLAN discretely places a new MAG near Agent Fuller's .45 AUTOMATIC, and

OUTSIDE THE MONEY FACTORY: The UNIFORMED MEN open the back doors of the armored truck, revealing the cache of weapons, causing

DYLAN AND AGENT FULLER to get out of the car, holding their GUNS, and we ZOOM INTO

DYLAN'S HAND, pressing a TINY REMOTE, and

AGENT FULLER'S GUN GOES OFF WITH A **BOOM!**

INT. CELL - LAS VEGAS COUNTY JAIL

Thaddeus blinks his eyes, as if awakened from a dream- or nightmare. He looks up to see that Dylan is already on the other side of the gate, and musters his voice to ask:

THADDEUS

But... why?

Thaddeus stands, walks toward the gate:

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

You never kept any of the money.
The Horsemen are rich, famous
beyond measure, but you... why?

DYLAN

You once asked me if there is
anything I love. That I would
protect even at the expense of my
own happiness or reputation. Now
you know the answer...

Dylan turns to face Thaddeus:

DYLAN (CONT'D)

See, the thing about *legends*, is-
sometimes they're *true*.

Dylan raises his fist, then opens his hand, revealing:

A TATTOO OF **AN EYE INSIDE A TRIANGLE** imprinted on his palm.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Now you see me.

Dylan closes his hand, opens it again, and the tattoo is gone.

THADDEUS

The Eye? But that's *insane*. It's a
myth... There's no *Secret Order*...
It's a bedtime story...

But Dylan is already walking away, leaving Thaddeus behind in
his cell; and

CLOSE ON THADDEUS

His face trembling with fury and disbelief:

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

It's just a goddamn story.

EXT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL - NIGHT

A HUGE CROWD is gathered below; and we TILT UP to see
SHIMMERING LOGO at the top of the building. IN V.O.

ALEX (V.O.)
We really breaking this thing up?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ALEX HERO turns from the window to face the OTHER THREE HORSEMEN:

ALEX
 -- That's one big crowd down there,
 just for a press conference to hear
 us say we're done. In that crowd
 is a lot of 'tang.

RODERIGO
 Don't worry, cabrone. You'll be
 riding high off this for a good
 long time.
 (raises his GLASS)
 Here's to the Fifth Horseman-
 Whoever the hell he was. *Salut.*

LONDON
 I feel like those bloody tarts from
 the telly, you know, waiting for
 that bloke you never see to call
 them on the speaker and
 congratulate them for a job well
 done.

ALEX
 Wish you looked like 'em, cue-ball.

MICHAEL ATLAS
 Actually, he did leave a message.

All turn to Michael, who takes a moment, then:

MICHAEL ATLAS (CONT'D)
 But it wasn't exactly to
 congratulate us.

Michael raises his CELL-PHONE, and puts it on SPEAKER; an electronically disguised VOICE SPEAKS:

VOICE (ON PHONE)
*You got what you wanted. We got
 what we wanted. We're done. If
 you ever break the law for personal
 gain, you'll be facing us from the
 other side. We're watching you.*

Click. The four magicians exchange looks; all of which end on

MICHAEL ATLAS

Eyes gleaming, expression impossible to read; and

EXT. SUBURBS - OUTER VEGAS - DAY

ALMA VARGAS looks out from behind a car window, in which are reflected the approaching figures of

DYLAN and his daughter HANNA -- Alma rolls the window down:

DYLAN

Hanna, this is Detective Vargas.

ALMA VARGAS

Call me Alma. How you doing, Hanna?

HANNA

Fine.

Dylan takes a look over his shoulder toward the house where his ex-wife CATHERINE is visible, watching them from the window.

Dylan gives her a grateful nod, then turns and opens the back door of the car, lifting Hanna inside and jumping in after her.

DYLAN

She's gonna be our chauffeur to the water park.

ALMA VARGAS

In your dreams, G-Man. One of you better get over here in front, if you want to go anywhere today.

Hanna climbs into the passenger seat, and Dylan grins:

DYLAN

You psyched to get soaked?

HANNA

I guess.

DYLAN

Personally, I'm psyched to see Alma in a bikini.

ALMA VARGAS

It's Detective Vargas to you. And I'm wearing a one-piece.

DYLAN
Shit.

HANNA
Dad.

Alma steps on the gas, and

WIDE ON THE STREET

As the car takes off down the road, heading toward the open, sunny horizon. For a long moment. Then:

DYLAN (V.O.)
A one-piece? Really?

CUT TO BLACK

A FEW CREDITS ROLL, THEN WE SEE:

MICHAEL ATLAS -- lit with the gauzy lighting of a BARBARA WALTERS SPECIAL, which is what he is on; Barbara asking him:

BARBARA WALTERS
-- Michael. You haven't performed in over a year. You're still so young. Do you feel pressure to top yourself?

MICHAEL ATLAS
I wouldn't call it pressure. I'm just- preparing- for the next act of my life.

BARBARA WALTERS
Rumors are swirling that you're reforming the Four Horsemen for a surprise show. Is there any truth in that?

Michael allows himself a slight smile:

MICHAEL ATLAS
If I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise.

BLACKOUT.