

Out of Time

Written by
Joe Calabria

Copyright (c) 2025

A former five-star athlete turned mob enforcer is pulled into a psychological interrogation by a detective with a hidden personal connection, forcing him to confront loyalty, guilt, and the cost of staying.

BLACK SCREEN:

"Like a fool I am and I'll always be... I've got a dream."

- Jim Croce

FADE IN:

EXT. CHICAGO SUBURB - SECLUDED AREA - NIGHT (JULY 4)

A blue moon burns in a star-studded sky.

Clouds drift, thin as cigarette smoke.

A lone streetlight burns.

Reflections glow on damp asphalt.

Puddles ripple. Insects CHIRP.

In the distance... an ENGINE ROARS.

Then...

A sports car SLIDES INTO FRAME.

The doors open.

Two FIGURES, unseen, run to the trunk.

A black canvas shoe steps into view.

The trunk pops.

A muffled struggle.

A bloodied BODY, in transparent plastic, emerges.

They move swiftly across the street.

A championship ring glints.

They push the body DOWNHILL.

Silence.

Then...

Glass SHATTERS!

They sprint back.

Doors SLAM.

Engine ROARS. Tires SCREECH.

The car SPEEDS into the night.

TITLE:

"Out of Time"

FADE TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - MORNING (JULY 6)

A cinder block room under harsh fluorescent lights.

A table. Four cheap chairs.

A faded cabinet and old radio.

A clock TICKS.

DANNY ROMANO (26) athletic, handsome, a faint facial scar.

The door opens.

JOHN DEANGELO (38) expensive suit, gray at the temples, enters.

He ignores Danny.

Stops at the radio.

Pushes a button.

The "The Letter" by The Box Tops plays.

John tosses a pack of cigarettes.

Smack, slides across table.

Danny watches it slide.

John leans against the cabinet.

JOHN

This song... My dad played this stuff every weekend. In that garage. Same routine. Friends stopped inviting me out.

Danny leans back.

DANNY
Got coffee?

John smirks. Exits.

Danny waits.

The door opens.

John enters. Two coffees and ashtray.

Sets one coffee in front of Danny.

The music fades.

Danny sips. Grimace.

John drinks. Satisfaction.

DANNY (cont'd)
Too early for this John.

John holds a Zippo.

Opens the cigarettes.

JOHN
You like movies?

Danny looks up. Grins.

DANNY
What, did you want to be an actor or something?

John laughs.

JOHN
God, no. Na... this was always it.

Lights his cigarette.

DANNY
Why am I here John?

John stares at him.

JOHN
You asked the right question.
Former five-star recruit. State
champ. Full ride to Bama.

Danny sits stoic.

JOHN (cont'd)
But... you're here.

Danny rolls his eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)
You gotta have a favorite movie?

Danny shrugs, unimpressed.

JOHN (cont'd)
Me? On the Waterfront.

Danny leans forward. Takes a cigarette.

John leans slightly.

Tosses the Zippo.

Danny lights up.

DANNY
Black and white right? Nope, knocks
me out.

Danny crosses his legs.

JOHN
You'd love it. Got the mob. Murder. A
town nobody leaves.

John smirks.

JOHN (cont'd)
Familiar yeah?

Danny looks past John.

Confused.

John smiles, with no warmth behind it.

JOHN (cont'd)
There's two brothers. A boxer,
Brando, not too smart. Mob pull his
strings.

Danny exhales smoke.

DANNY
Okay, you gave it five stars. What's
your point?

John bends slightly.

Coffee trembles.

JOHN
Gigi Cielo.

Danny freezes.

DANNY
What's she got to do with anything?

John reclines. Casual.

JOHN
There it is.

Stands. Moves, relaxed.

JOHN (cont'd)
Halfway through, Brando falls for the
vics sister. Now he's conflicted.

Cracks his neck.

JOHN (cont'd)
Does he talk? Or stay quiet?

Danny rolls his eyes. Stands. Moves to the mirror.

JOHN (cont'd)
Everyone's waiting. What's his move.

Danny turns. Sits.

DANNY
Ask your questions or make a fucking
point already.

John leans through smoke.

Slides the pack.

JOHN
How long were you with her?

A beat.

JOHN (cont'd)
I remember her. Pool... Park...

Danny tenses.

JOHN (cont'd)
Don't know what she saw in you. You
had a shot but the town swallowed
you...

Danny explodes up.

Chair SLAMS back.

DANNY
Town swallowed me? Look around...

Danny points to the mirror.

DANNY (cont'd)
Got you too. This room, this piss
coffee... don't make you better than
me!

John unimpressed.

JOHN
Sit down.

Danny breathes hard.

JOHN (cont'd)
Do I think I'm better than you? I'll
answer that later.

John raises an eyebrow.

JOHN (cont'd)
I did get out.

Danny looks confused.

DANNY
Where are we John? Same town, same
people, so spare me the "I got out
bullshit." We're at the same table.

Danny smirks.

DANNY (cont'd)
You just flipped sides.

John smirks. Cocky.

JOHN
Same town, same people... but I'm not
handcuffed to it.

Danny sits.

John smiles.

JOHN (cont'd)
And for the record. They do piss in
that coffee.

Danny spits in the cup.

Pushes it away.

JOHN (cont'd)
You never hear from her, do you?

Danny looks down.

DANNY
No.

Danny mutters under his breath.

DANNY (cont'd)
Asshole.

John moves to the radio.

JOHN
She moved on. Smart and beautiful.

Looks back to Danny.

JOHN (cont'd)
Thought she'd end up in movies or
modeling. Had the looks for it.

Danny bites his tongue.

JOHN (cont'd)
Nobody gets outta town.

Nothing.

JOHN (cont'd)
Except her.

Danny's jaw tightens.

JOHN (cont'd)
I'll give you this... you tried.
Didn't work out.

Danny taps a cigarette.

DANNY
The fuck you want?

John sits.

JOHN
I knew your parents. Great people.
Too bad you're not them.

Danny smolders.

DANNY
Don't talk about them.

Points.

DANNY (cont'd)
You don't know shit.

John snaps.

Fast.

SLAMS the table.

Aggressive.

His coffee spills.

JOHN
I don't know shit!?

John breaths slow.

Steadies himself.

Back in control.

JOHN (cont'd)
I'm grabbing more coffee.

He exits.

Danny stares at his reflection.

Looks down.

Slowly nods.

Breathes hard.

Looks up.

Moves to the radio.

Taps it.

Nothing.

Sits.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTICO CONTE - (SIMULTANEOUS)

Quiet street.

A CHILD walks a dog.

Traffic HUMS in the distance.

Italian and American flags ripple.

A silver Mercedes turns in.

The door opens.

Black Prada loafers hit pavement.

ALDO MENETTI (48) sharp, controlled. Adjusts his hair.

He enters.

Bell RINGS.

Inside: warmth, noise, life.

Italian music plays.

Photos of Italy. Soccer legends.

Aisles and shelves of imported goods.

Aldo moves like he owns the place.

Nods to regulars. Passes the counter.

Down the hallway.

Two large men guard a door.

Aldo knocks.

Enters.

INT. BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MARIO ALIOTO (50s) sits behind a desk.

Doesn't look up.

ALDO
Car's there. He's not.

MARIO
Probably with a broad. Relax, he'll
show.

Aldo sits.

ALDO
He knew you wanted him here today.

Clears his throat.

ALDO (cont'd)
He's been off.

Mario looks up now.

MARIO
Something on your mind?

Aldo hesitates.

ALDO
Maybe we slow things down. Just feels
off, distant, ya know.

Mario smirks.

MARIO
Stick your feelings up your ass. Go
find my boy, bring him here.

Aldo nods. Exits.

BACK TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - (SIMULTANEOUS)

Door opens.

John enters with coffee.

DANNY
More piss?

John smiles. Shakes head.

Danny sips.

Relief.

DANNY (cont'd)
What's this about?

John leans against the wall.

JOHN
Radio goes out sometimes.

Snaps fingers.

JOHN (cont'd)
One second... here. Next... gone.

Taps his leg.

JOHN (cont'd)
Just like people.

John loosens his tie.

JOHN (cont'd)
On the Waterfront, guy works with the
cops, ends up dead.

Raises an eyebrow.

Lowers his voice.

JOHN (cont'd)
You do that? The right thing... even
if it kills you?

Danny thinks.

DANNY
Depends I guess.

John nods.

JOHN
Yeah, I thought so.

John paces slowly.

JOHN (cont'd)
See, Brando didn't kill him, but...
he did set him up.

Danny locks eyes.

DANNY
You gonna make a point, or talk in
riddles all day, Yoda?

JOHN
Why Mario?

Danny turns sharp.

JOHN (cont'd)
You were on your way out.

Danny rolls his eyes.

DANNY
Mario was there. He kept us in the
house. That's life. You ended up
there, me here. That's that.

John steps in.

JOHN
He was there to make you a criminal.

Danny laughs.

DANNY
Good thing you're a cop, cause you
can't act for shit. You know that?

John smiles, then cuts it.

JOHN
You did have a way out.

Holds arms open.

JOHN (cont'd)
You walked away from it all...
Football. Your mother. Gigi. Gone and
now... a murder suspect.

Danny flushes.

DANNY
What?

John twirls a cigarette.

JOHN
Your parents did a great job, Mario
burned it all down. Gigi was the last
good thing you had.

Danny turns to the mirror.

They stare at each other in reflection.

Smoke hangs.

JOHN (cont'd)
Linebacker at Alabama.

Sips coffee.

JOHN (cont'd)
You stayed for a guy that needed you
more than you needed him.

Danny sits.

JOHN (cont'd)
For your mom.

His voice softens.

JOHN (cont'd)
Still broke her heart.

Danny closes his eyes.

FLASH MEMORY (SOUND OVER)

Crowd ROARS.

His name ECHOES.

CHEERS.

Slight smile.

Gone.

DANNY
My mom lost it when my dad died.

Rubs his mouth.

DANNY (cont'd)
I was a kid. I grew up fast.

Danny stands.

Looks down, black canvas shoes.

DANNY (cont'd)
Mario's a lot of things.

Danny sips.

DANNY (cont'd)
He never put a gun in my hand. Okay.

Wipes his mouth.

DANNY (cont'd)
Gigi leaving...

Shakes it off.

DANNY (cont'd)
Don't talk about shit you don't
understand.

Rubs his eyes.

DANNY (cont'd)
I never killed anyone. So, if you're
gonna tune me up, let's dance.

Cracks neck.

DANNY (cont'd)
I got plans.

John studies him.

Steps closer.

JOHN
I am sorry about your dad. That
accident...

He shakes his head.

JOHN (cont'd)
Oh... look at me.

Danny turns.

JOHN (cont'd)
I hope to God it's not you.

John's eyes sharpen.

JOHN (cont'd)
But if it is...

Glares. Serious.

Leans in. Voice low.

JOHN (cont'd)
I'll fucking bury you.

John stares through Danny.

JOHN (cont'd)
So now's the time you tell me
everything I need to know about the
last few days.

Danny tilts his head.

DANNY
What are you talking about?

John cracks his knuckles.

Danny stretches.

Then...

DANNY (cont'd)
Oh shit!

Claps once.

DANNY (cont'd)
Won \$100 on a scratch off.

Smirks.

INTERCUT TO:

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Aldo pulls up.

Kids play football nearby. Waves.

He nods.

Enters.

Bell RINGS.

Grease. Heat. NOISE.

DINO VOLPE (40s), in a suit, sips coffee.

Aldo walks straight to him.

ALDO
We need to talk.

DINO
What? Here, you gotta be kiddin'?

Aldo stares, dead serious.

ALDO
Do I look like I'm kiddin'?

Dino exhales.

Dino leads Aldo to the door.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Hidden behind a dumpster.

DINO
What's up?

SLAP!

Dino stumbles back.

Surprised.

DINO (cont'd)
I'm a cop!

Aldo grabs him tight.

ALDO
You're MY cop motherfucker!

A switchblade SNAPS open.

He brings it close, too close.

ALDO (cont'd)
Why am I hearin' Flash got picked...
and you didn't call?

Dino's eyes dart.

DINO
That's all I know.

Blade close to Dino's eye.

Aldo smirks malevolently.

ALDO
Save the bullshit, or I'm takin' a
fuckin' eye!

DINO
I figured he called you!

Aldo glares.

Presses knife into Dino's groin.

ALDO
Find out who has him and why?

Aldo presses the knife harder.

Understand?

Dino nods quickly.

BACK TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

John exhales smoke.

Danny watches in the mirror.

JOHN
Picked up a homicide.

John fidgets with coffee cup.

JOHN (cont'd)
West side.

DANNY
Yeah... uh... happens.

Concerned.

JOHN
Tommy Stefano.

Danny freezes.

Sinks into his chair.

DANNY
Tommy... He's dead... when?

JOHN
Yeah. A real shit sack, but still
gotta job to do. You know?

Danny folds arms.

DANNY
And you think what?

John shrugs.

JOHN
You tell me.

Danny processes.

DANNY
Yeah...uh... okay. Makes sense now.
Flat Tops, right?

Disgusted, aggravated.

DANNY (cont'd)
Your little rats must be singing.

John doesn't react.

Danny nods.

DANNY (cont'd)
Yeah, I saw him. We had a beef. I
shut him up.

Doesn't blink.

He leans in.

DANNY (cont'd)
Didn't kill him. Could've. Didn't.

JOHN
Start from the beginning.

Danny closes his eyes...

DISSOLVE TO:

DANNY'S THOUGHT - EXT. BEACH - DAY (SLOW MOTION)

A woman in the distance.

Wind in her hair.

Waves roll in and out.

Sunlight.

BACK TO:

JOHN (O.S.)
Oh! Flash...

Danny opens his eyes.

Cracks his neck.

DANNY
We had words.

Danny cracks his knuckles.

DANNY (cont'd)
I kicked his ass.

Inhales.

DANNY (cont'd)
He said something about someone I
care about.

Exhales.

Barely above a whisper.

DANNY (cont'd)
That's it.

John SNAPS the ZIPPO shut.

Stares Danny down.

JOHN
Everything.

Danny picks at his finger.

MEMORY FLASH:

FLASHBACK - EXT. FLAT TOPS - NIGHT (JULY 4)

80s freestyle music.

A shiny black Mustang pulls in.

Danny steps out.

Scans.

Crosses the crowded parking lot.

Moves to the door.

Danny pulls the door open.

A sea of bodies.

Danny moves controlled.

He notices everything.

Drug deals in corners.

The watching eyes.

Decadence.

He sits at the bar.

A bartender, TINA (25) locks eyes with him.

TINA
What can I get you?

DANNY
Tequila. Ice. Lime.

Tina leans in. Locks eyes.

TINA
I'm Tina, and...

Flirtatious.

TINA (cont'd)
I'm here all night.

She brushes his hand, walks off.

Danny winks. Eyes sparkle.

A sudden shift.

His mood changes, darkens.

Eyes harden.

The door swings open.

TOMMY STEFANO (30) enters.

Scans the packed bar.

Spots Danny.

Smiles, nods and moves to him.

He leaves a seat between them.

Sits.

Tina places Danny's drink down.

Tommy watches.

TOMMY

Who I gotta know ta get a vodka
cranberry?

Tina ignores him, but makes his drink.

Tommy leans toward Danny.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Oh, man you got that broad wantin'
your tip.

Tommy laughs.

Danny's eyes never leave Tina.

DANNY

Why don't you take off, man. I'm not
in the mood.

Tommy laughs.

TOMMY

Me neither man.

Tommy bops to the music.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Mario's bustin' my fat ass about
cash.

DANNY

Don't know what to tell you.

Danny smiles.

DANNY (cont'd)

Pay him... or you could eat less.

Tommy stiffens.

TOMMY

See, I'm tryin' to be friendly... ya
know cool.

Sits up. Proud.

TOMMY (cont'd)
We got the same friends.

Danny finally faces him.

Cold.

DANNY
I pay my debts. We ain't friends.

Tommy glares.

Danny glares.

They match body language.

Music blares.

Strobe lights flash.

They sit.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. ANTICO CONTE - PRESENT DAY

The bell RINGS

Aldo strides in.

A packed dining room. Families.

Noise.

Utensils CLANG.

His pace quickens.

Past the counter. Down the hall. Straight to Mario's office.

He KNOCKS sharp.

Steps inside.

Mario looks up from the TV. Wide eyes.

Espresso in hand.

MARIO
Where is he?

Aldo hesitates. Sweat beads.

ALDO
This isn't good.

MARIO
What? What is it?

ALDO
He got brought in, this mornin'.

Mario freezes momentarily.

MARIO
Where?

Mario stands.

ALDO
Here. In town.

Mario lets out a sharp laugh.

MARIO
Oh, get the fuck outta here!

Aldo doesn't smile. Only nods.

ALDO
I'm serious, DeAngelo likes him for
Stefano.

That hits Mario.

MARIO
John DeAngelo...

Processes.

Talking about that little jagoff?

Aldo serious. Nods.

MARIO (cont'd)
How long?

ALDO
All mornin'.

Mario checks his watch.

MARIO
Dino know anything?

ALDO
He will. He's properly motivated.

Mario leans forward, concerned yet controlled.

MARIO
Have that degenerate find out what
the fuck's going on.

Aldo nods. Leaves.

INTERCUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Smoke clings to the yellow ceiling tiles.

John watches Danny. Patient. Predatory.

Danny yawns.

Back to John.

The chair CREAKS as John reclines.

Danny checks the clock.

JOHN
Flat Tops, really?

Scoffs.

JOHN (cont'd)
Dump keeps us busy.

Danny stretches. Cracks his neck.

DANNY
Fourth of July... she left.

A beat.

DANNY (cont'd)
Flat Tops wasn't a plan. Just
happened. Had a drink. Took a ride.

John squints slightly.

JOHN
Ride? What ride?

Danny eyes the clock.

DANNY
We used to drive to big money burbs.
Then shoot downtown... lakefront.

A faint smile appears.

It disappears.

DANNY (cont'd)
The skyline still hits me. She loved
the reflections, said it looked like
the light danced on the water.

Looks off.

DANNY (cont'd)
Never noticed til she pointed that
out.

Danny drifts.

Quick blink.

He snaps back.

John taps the table.

JOHN
Not giving me anything, Flash. Tell
me about the ride, and don't skip the
part where it goes bad.

Danny sits up. Tucks a cigarette behind his ear.

DANNY
Told him to fuck off. He kept
talking. Prick owes money all over.

Looks off, shrugs.

DANNY (cont'd)
Same song and dance.

John watches close.

JUMP CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. FLAT TOPS - NIGHT (JULY 4)

Tina drops off Tommy's drink. Smiles at Danny.

Tommy raises his glass.

TOMMY
Maybe one day we both get outta here.
"Salute".

Danny ignores.

TOMMY (cont'd)
What... you think you're the only one
with a way out?

Tommy's eyes widen.

TOMMY (cont'd)
Makin' moves. Real money comin'. A
beach, drinks... a girl that stays.

That lands.

Danny exhales. Slides off the stool.

Lowers his voice.

DANNY
Walk away.

Tina approaches. Nervous.

TINA
You guys good?

TOMMY
Talkin' business.

Tommy turns to Tina.

TOMMY (cont'd)
But he don't get it.

Danny cracks his neck.

DANNY
You don't know how to take a hint, do
you?

Tommy leans into Tina. Disrespectful.

Danny steps in. Puts himself between them.

Eyes locked on Tommy. Ice cold.

DANNY (cont'd)
Get the fuck away from her.

Points.

DANNY (cont'd)
Now!

Tommy SLAMS his glass. Laughs.

TOMMY
Nobody cares about you anymore.
You're nothin', we all know it.

Danny smiles... dangerous.

DANNY
Don't give a shit what you or anyone
else thinks.

Tommy laughs.

Danny doesn't blink. Lethally calm.

DANNY (cont'd)
Good luck paying Mario.

Tina drops three shots.

Her and Danny drink.

Tommy waits.

Watches.

TOMMY
No wonder she left.

Danny's smile disappears.

He stands.

TINA
Leave! Now!

Tommy fumes.

TOMMY
Shut the fuck up!

Tommy squares up with Danny.

TOMMY (cont'd)
I hope I run into your "putana."

Snaps.

Danny grabs him. SLAMS him into the wall.

PUNCH. Another.

Tommy gasps.

Forearm to throat.

DANNY
I'll kill you!

Body shots. Brutal.

Danny LIFTS him... THROWS him through a TABLE.

CRASH.

The crowd goes silent.

Tommy bleeds... doesn't move.

Danny looks at Tina. Regret.

A small nod.

He turns.

The crowd parts, he walks out.

END FLASHBACK:

BACK TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Danny stares at his hands.

Clock TICKS.

JOHN
He really was a piece of shit. But,
we're running outta time, Flash.

Danny doesn't react.

He stares at his hands.

DANNY
You think I killed him?

Danny glares.

DANNY (cont'd)
If I wanted him dead, he wouldn't
have made it out of Flat Tops.

John leans back. Smirks.

JOHN
He owes Mario, insults your girl and
threatens you.

John drums a quick beat.

JOHN (cont'd)
That's what we call motive.

Danny glances at the clock.

DANNY
That's circumstantial.

John laughs.

JOHN
Look at Johnnie Cochran. Then help us
both out "Counselor" and tell me
where'd you go after... before Tommy
got killed?

John settles in.

Danny watches himself in the mirror.

Breathes in... out.

Composes.

DANNY
Every Fourth... I drink a little.
Then I take a ride. Downtown. Lake
Shore. The lake front. I watch the
reflections.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. FLAT TOPS PARKING LOT - NIGHT (JULY 4)

Danny exits. Nods to bouncers.

Gravel CRUNCHES underfoot.

Couples linger in the shadows.

He pauses at the car.

Scans the lot.

Nothing.

Gets in.

Engine ROARS.
Blue dashboard lights glow.
Red brake lights flare.
Car in gear.
Gravel POPS and PINGS off metal.
Tires SQUEAL, then grip.
Streetlights streak.
Reflections slide off the black paint.
Chrome wheels glint.
Chicago's skyline rises ahead.
He pulls to a stop.
Engine off.
Leans forward.
Fireworks EXPLODE.
Color washes over him.
He steps out.
Leans on the car.
Stares at the water.
Reflections ripple across black water.
He sits on the hood.
Scans.
His world slows.
CAMERA PULLS BACK -
City. Fireworks. Lake. The night.
Swallows him.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Danny sits. Arms crossed. Jaw clenched.

John twirls a pen.

JOHN
Where'd you go after?

DANNY
Home.

Danny eyes glaze over.

DANNY (cont'd)
Wanted to be alone.

John sips coffee.

Slight tap.

JOHN
Convenient.

Rolls his eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)
What time?

Danny rubs his eyes.

DANNY
Around 11:30. That's the point of
going home.

John watches him.

Calm.

Pulls out a grainy still.

Slides it across the table.

Danny looks.

Leans his head back.

Red light camera ticket.

His car.

DANNY (cont'd)
That's my car.

JOHN
11:08... You said you left Flat Tops,
took a ride then went home.

DANNY
I did.

JOHN
Yeah... uh... this way?

Danny shifts.

DANNY
I cut through.

JOHN
The west side? Must be one hell of a
shortcut.

John glares.

JOHN (cont'd)
We found Tommy five minutes from
there.

CLICKS Zippo.

JOHN (cont'd)
Passing through...

Danny recoils.

Defensive

DANNY
Don't mean shit.

JOHN
No... But it does mean you're not
telling me everything.

Crosses legs.

JOHN (cont'd)
See, the ME's got a window, not an
exact TOD. Tommy sat in the elements.
Heat, bugs... animals do a number.

John shrugs.

JOHN (cont'd)
Timeline gets loose, understand?

INTERCUT TO:

INT. ANTICO CONTE - BACK OFFICE - (SIMULTANEOUS)

Aldo enters.

Mario glares.

MARIO

Talk to me.

ALDO

Flash and Tommy had beef. He beat Tommy's ass.

MARIO

Fucking Tommy.

ALDO

DeAngelo's pressin' hard.

Mario exhales.

ALDO (cont'd)

What if he flips?

Mario glares.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

John shifts.

Drums his lap.

JOHN

You beat his ass. He ends up dead.
Oh... and no alibi either.

John's chair creaks.

JOHN (cont'd)

See the problem?

DANNY

He was alive when I left. No clue
what happened to him after.

John sits calm.

JOHN

Tommy was beaten to death. Pretty
personal way to clip someone. Don't
you think?

DANNY
Don't watch Criminal Minds, so I
don't know.

Danny closes his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

DANNY'S THOUGHT - EXT. BEACH - DAY (SLOW MOTION)

A woman slightly closer.

Hair flows.

Waves roll.

Sunlight.

END THOUGHT:

BACK TO:

Danny opens his eyes.

Reality hits.

John exhales.

Drums a rhythm.

JOHN
Let's say, you didn't do it.
Mario signs off on that, his town...
right?

Danny tosses his hands up.

Lights a cigarette.

A KNOCK.

John smiles.

JOHN (cont'd)
Don't go anywhere.

He exits.

SLAMS door.

Danny alone.

Grabs Zippo.

Reads it.

DANNY
(in Italian)
Non sei solo, la verità è nostra...
You're not alone... the truth is
ours.

Door opens.

John enters.

JOHN
You better be telling the truth.

Danny agitated.

DANNY
I am.

JOHN
What do you think happened?

John lights up.

DANNY
I have no clue. Nobody liked him,
owed money.

JOHN
Lemme give you some advice. Think
about yourself and what you owe
yourself not other people. Holding
shit over people you call friends.
That's not loyalty.

Blows a smoke ring.

JOHN (cont'd)
It's control.

DANNY
I'd never do that.

JOHN
But isn't that what Mario did to you?
He kept you here, now whatcha got?

Danny tracks the smoke.

DANNY

Wow. Good thing you're not working a suicide hotline. Me and Mario, it was different. Gigi never liked that we got close.

Danny thinks out loud.

DANNY (cont'd)

Never thought she'd leave, not without me.

He trails off.

JOHN

If you could leave today. Start over, would you?

Danny laughs.

DANNY

What? You Willie Wonka now? Get outta here.

John steps closer.

JOHN

I'm serious.

Danny leans forward.

DANNY

Nothing's free. And something like that ain't cheap... is it?

John smirks.

JOHN

Maybe not, might be worth it though. Palm trees, a clean slate. Sounds pretty nice, right?

John circles.

JOHN (cont'd)

So tell me. If you didn't kill him, who did?

Danny arches his back.

DANNY

No idea.

John SLAMS the chair forward.

Leans across the table.

JOHN
Don't do that, don't bullshit me! Not
now...

John calmly straightens.

JOHN (cont'd)
You have no idea what's at stake.
None!

Danny stiffens.

JOHN (cont'd)
Your head's been up your ass so long
all you see is bullshit.

Danny rolls his eyes.

DANNY
Now you're Tony Robbins...

John smirks.

JOHN
No. People actually want his help and
I'm curious, what did he offer that
made you stay?

Danny lights a cigarette.

DANNY
After my dad, I got all the "anything
you need" but that dried up fast.
Mario stuck around. Helped my mom.
Kept her in the house. Kept us
moving.

Danny's voice cracks slightly.

DANNY (cont'd)
She was still breathing but she died
with him. I stayed more for her.
Mario and me kinda fell into place.
So, I grew up fast.

The room grows silent.

Clock TICKS.

Danny wipes his face.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. ANTICO CONTE - BACK OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Mario stares blank at the TV.

ALDO

We gotta make a move, call someone.
The longer he sits there...

Mario interrupts.

MARIO

Oh! What move you making? Who you
calling?

Mario points.

I'm who gets fucking called.

Aldo backs off.

ALDO

You know what I mean. Flash knows
things. Things he don't realize.

Mario eases into his chair.

ALDO (cont'd)

What if he cracks?

Mario takes a breath. Thinks.

MARIO

We don't even know if there's a
problem yet. Where's Dino?

Aldo doesn't answer.

MARIO (cont'd)

Get that jagoff on the phone. Now!

Aldo pulls his phone.

BACK TO:

JOHN

clears his throat.

Danny blinks out of a day dream.

John watches him close.

Clears his throat.

JOHN
Like I said, he helped when nobody
else did.

Danny shrugs.

JOHN (cont'd)
I know, and that matters. But be that
as it may... you know what he is. And
Aldo? Forget it... psychotic little
prick.

John smiles.

JOHN (cont'd)
You grew up here, you know all the
stories.

Danny silently listens.

John nods, bounces leg.

Chair SQUEAKS.

JOHN (cont'd)
You ever hear of Teddy Provo?

Danny's brow tightens. Foggy recognition.

DANNY
Didn't he disappear or something like
that?

John slightly squints.

JOHN
That's one way to put it.

DANNY
Town's been talking about that for
years.

JOHN
There's a part they won't say in
public.

John leans in, whispers.

JOHN (cont'd)
Everybody knows what happened.

Danny shifts slightly.

John notices.

JOHN (cont'd)
Not the how or the why... But, who he
was with. Everyone knows and they all
stay quiet.

A short beat.

Danny locks in.

John spins the Zippo.

JOHN (cont'd)
Teddy was an up-and-coming
politician. Did some good but loved
the attention too much.

John shrugs slightly.

JOHN (cont'd)
Didn't matter. Politicians, kids,
little old ladies, and especially mob
guys. Just had to feel important.

Danny exhales.

DANNY
And what, he got in over his head?

John gives a faint smile.

Hook set.

JOHN
He owed a bit of money, didn't think
he needed to pay back. Gets him
noticed by the wrong people and the
FBI.

Danny bounces his leg.

John watches.

Danny processes.

JOHN (cont'd)
What happens when those worlds
collide?

Danny doesn't answer.

John nods.

JOHN (cont'd)
That's not a slow burn kid. It's
nuclear.

John snaps his fingers.

Danny shifts.

DANNY
What's that got to do with me?

John scoffs.

JOHN
Nothing. Unless you don't see
patterns.

John controlled and precise.

JOHN (cont'd)
Guy's got a future. Gets in with the
wrong people... owes money. Gets
pulled in for questions.

Taps the table.

JOHN (cont'd)
Then... disappears.

John's eyes widen.

JOHN (cont'd)
Tell me... does that sound familiar?

Danny shakes his head.

DANNY
Reaching a bit.

John nods immediately.

JOHN
Maybe. Or maybe I'm giving you the
chance Teddy didn't get to get ahead
of it.

Danny studies John. Cautious.

John resets pressure.

JOHN (cont'd)
Teddy didn't think anything was gonna
happen. Why?

Danny stares.

JOHN (cont'd)
He thought he was protected. Just
like you do.

John lets that land.

No follow up.

Watches.

Danny stretches his legs.

DANNY
So what, let me guess, Mario had
something to do with it.

John pauses.

He lights a cigarette.

Inhales.

Exhales.

JOHN
I didn't say that.

Smiles.

JOHN (cont'd)
You did.

Danny freezes.

That lands hard.

JOHN (cont'd)
Teddy and Mario were tight. Grew up
together. Like brothers.

John crosses his legs.

JOHN (cont'd)
Mario wasn't made yet. He was muscle
back then. Collections and breaking
legs. I know, real classy guy.

Danny rolls his eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)
One night the FBI grabs Teddy. Made
his friends nervous.

Danny carefully listens.

JOHN (cont'd)
He comes back like nothing happened.
Cold as ice.

Spins Zippo.

JOHN (cont'd)
He gets called for a "sit down."

DANNY
Then what?

JOHN
Kisses his wife goodbye, rubs her
pregnant stomach and leaves. He
thought he was protected.

Taps the table.

JOHN (cont'd)
He wasn't.
(deliberate)
You guys don't see that til it's too
late.

John snaps his fingers.

JOHN (cont'd)
Gone. No noise. No body, no nothing.
(calm)
Just gone.

Danny's jaw tightens.

DANNY
Don't prove shit.

JOHN
No, it doesn't. Yet.

John taps the table.

Studies Danny.

Danny stands and stretches.

Locked in.

DANNY
So what happened to him.

They lock eyes.

Doesn't blink.

JOHN
Dinner that night with Mario. Lake
St. Place called Nostro Posto. Gianni
Cafaro owned it.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. NOSTRO POSTO - NIGHT - 1993

Elegant. Warm. Bustling.

A black Cadillac Allante pulls in.

Young Mario Alioto steps out. Dressed sharp. Hair slick.
Calm.

A Lincoln Mark Eight Sport Coupe pulls in.

TEDDY PROVO smiles confidently, joins Mario. They hug.

JOHN (V.O.)
Place was a big deal back then.
Packed every night. Celebs, athletes.
That kinda crowd. That night Teddy
walks in with Mario, hugging like
brothers... Never walks out.

END FLASHBACK:

DANNY

stares at the table.

No words.

John remains still.

He studies.

Holds Zippo.

JOHN
You can see it, right?

No response.

JOHN (cont'd)
You're a smart kid. Don't play dumb
now. Guy walks in thinking he's
protected, but, is he?

Danny yawns.

Uncomfortable.

DANNY
That's not me.

John nods.

No resistance.

JOHN
I know, you're different.

Danny cracks knuckles.

JOHN (cont'd)
You didn't go into politics. You
played football... but, you're with
the same guy, playing the same game.

Clock TICKS.

Danny's jaw tightens.

DANNY
You don't really know him. He really
did help us.

JOHN
Yeah... he did.

John lets that sit.

JOHN (cont'd)
He helped Teddy too.

Danny glares.

That lands.

INTERCUT FLASH:

NOSTRO POSTO - 1993

Teddy laughs. Relaxed.

Mario. Tense.

Champagne pours.

BACK TO:

INTERVIEW ROOM

JOHN
He was a friend when he was useful.
Until he wasn't.

Danny folds his arms.

DANNY
You're twisting shit.

JOHN
Am I?

Eyes harden.

JOHN (cont'd)
When things go bad, when money's
tight, or the fucking heat shows
up... what do those guys do?

Danny doesn't answer.

John squints.

JOHN (cont'd)
Do they go down with you?

John points.

JOHN (cont'd)
Or do they run through you?

Danny swallows.

JOHN (cont'd)
You think if Teddy had a chance to do
it over... you think he still walks
in with Mario?

Danny looks away.

JOHN (cont'd)
Me neither.

John leans back.

Gives space.

Drums on his chest.

Lets that breath.

JOHN (cont'd)
You asked me what it cost to get out.

Danny's curious.

DANNY
You never answered.

John nods.

JOHN
I did. You didn't wanna hear it.

John, calm, controlled.

No theatrics.

JOHN (cont'd)
I want Mario.

It lands heavier now.

Not aggressive.

Inevitable.

Danny shakes his head.

Almost laughs.

DANNY
You're out of your fucking mind.

John doesn't react.

Was expected.

JOHN
Maybe, I've heard that before. Or...
maybe I'm the one telling you the
truth.

Danny's frustrated.

DANNY
I told you. I don't know shit.

JOHN
I know. That's not why I'm asking.

JOHN (cont'd)
I'm not asking you what you know.

The room falls still.

JOHN (cont'd)
I'm asking you to open your eyes. Are
you willing to see what's right in
front of you?

Danny stares.

A chair CREEKS.

JOHN (cont'd)
I don't need you to build a case.
Just get the hell out of the way of
it.

Danny shakes his head.

DANNY
He took care of us. To me... he's
been like... a father.

John nods.

No argument.

JOHN
Maybe that was the case, but ask
yourself... who was it for? You or
him?

Danny's expression tightens.

JOHN (cont'd)
They don't do anything for free.

John sighs.

JOHN (cont'd)
Always an angle or a score.

That hits hard.

JOHN (cont'd)
You said it yourself. You had a way
out.

Danny's head slumps forward.

INTERCUT FLASH:

BEACH (DANNY'S THOUGHT)

A woman faces away.

Closer.

Hair in the wind.

Bright sunlight.

BACK TO:

JOHN

rocks back and forth.

Drums his chest.

JOHN

Now look at you. This room. Same
fucking people, same damn town.

Danny clenches his jaw.

John checks the clock.

JOHN (cont'd)

Is it bad luck? Or design?

Danny's eyes sharpen.

He thinks.

JOHN (cont'd)

I can't make you do anything.
Wouldn't try to, but I can tell you
this.

John takes a deep breath.

Exhales slow.

JOHN (cont'd)

Keep playing games, you end up like
Teddy, like Tommy.

Nothing.

Clock TICKS.

Danny sits still.

No comeback.

No deflection.

He processes.

JOHN (cont'd)
So... I'll ask again.

Serious.

JOHN (cont'd)
Do you want out?

Danny clears his throat.

Speaks slow.

DANNY
What happened to his wife?

John hesitates.

John blows a smoke ring. Watches it drift.

JOHN
Stuck around six maybe seven months.
Had the baby then moved out of town
to her parents house.

John crosses legs.

Studies Danny.

JOHN (cont'd)
She was devastated.

John looks off.

JOHN (cont'd)
Poor kid never knew his father.

Danny shifts.

Uncomfortable.

DANNY
What happened to the kid?

JOHN
Don't know.

John nods. Casual, almost too casual.

A short beat.

JOHN (cont'd)
Mario and Teddy were close. Like
brothers. But he never checked on
Teddy's wife or son. Not once.

Danny frowns.

DANNY
That don't mean...

John interrupts.

JOHN
Never said it did.

John drums on his lap.

JOHN (cont'd)
If your friend disappears... leaves a
pregnant wife, a baby... You're not
gonna make a fuckin call?

Shakes his head.

JOHN (cont'd)
Come on!

Danny bounces his leg.

DANNY
Maybe he couldn't.

JOHN
Couldn't... or wouldn't?

John lets it hang.

Doesn't push.

JOHN (cont'd)
(quiet)
Guilt does funny things, don't it?

That lands deeper.

Danny avoids eye contact.

FOOTSTEPS approach.

A KNOCK.

The door opens.

The detective signals John.

John stands.

Smooth, like he expected it.

He pauses at the door.

JOHN (cont'd)
Think about that.

He exits.

The door closes.

The clock TICKS.

Danny processes.

Reaches for a cigarette.

No lighter.

Frustration.

Scans the room.

Stares at his hands.

Something crakes.

He stands...

Slowly walks.

His eyes gloss over.

The door opens.

Danny wipes his face...

John's already inside.

Large envelope in hand.

Like he never left.

Danny exhales.

Concerned.

DANNY
What?

John hesitates.

Leans against the wall.

Danny settles.

JOHN
What happened after this ride?

Danny rolls his eyes.

DANNY
Fuck... really?

John snores.

Danny scoffs.

DANNY (cont'd)
Listened to a song, went upstairs...
fuck!

Danny SLAMS his hand down.

JOHN
No witnesses, just you?

John. Calm. Firm.

DANNY
What are we waiting for?

John inhales.

JOHN
Time my man.

Honesty.

JOHN (cont'd)
The one thing nobody thinks about,
til there's none left.

Danny absorbs.

JOHN (cont'd)
You asked about second chances.

They lock eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)
It's not free and you know what I
want.

Sits heavier now.

Danny rubs his eyes.

John circles.

JOHN (cont'd)
You think you got nothing... like
you're going nowhere. You're wrong.

Shakes his head.

JOHN (cont'd)
This is nothing. This room. This
town.

Points.

JOHN (cont'd)
Before Gigi took off, she ever talk
about her parents?

John clears his throat.

Danny shakes his head.

Indifferent.

JOHN (cont'd)
Yeah... I didn't think so.

A beat.

JOHN (cont'd)
Just her aunt right? Real sweetheart
there.

John scoffs.

JOHN (cont'd)
Her mother, a nice lady. Not too
bright. Got burned by a few guys...
died in a car wreck.

Leans head back.

JOHN (cont'd)
Her father, a low level thief. Found
in a trunk. His throat cut, beaten to
hell, both hands broken.

Danny stiffens.

JOHN (cont'd)
Stole something somebody else wanted.
Cops made an arrest.

Puts his hands behind his head.

JOHN (cont'd)
Aldo Menetti.

That lands.

JOHN (cont'd)
But a funny thing happened. The
witness just forgot everything.

John snaps his fingers.

JOHN (cont'd)
Just like that. What were the odds
right?

Danny stares.

JOHN (cont'd)
So you see why she didn't want you
anywhere near them?

Blunt.

DANNY
What the fuck do you know about me or
her?

Danny glares.

DANNY (cont'd)
You don't know shit.

John moves fast...

Leans across the table.

Dangerous.

JOHN
Listen to me you little prick!

John regains control.

JOHN (cont'd)
I know a hell of a lot more than you
think.

Holds his glare.

Slowly pulls back.

Moves to the wall.

Rubs his hands together.

Danny shrugs it off.

Shakes his head.

John circles. Slow. Predatory.

Stops behind Danny.

Hands rest on chair back.

Danny's nostrils flare.

DANNY

I'm done with this fucking game.
You're not gonna find shit digging
here.

John raises an eyebrow.

Doesn't move.

Stares.

Danny almost whispers to himself.

DANNY (cont'd)

I should've...

Danny catches himself.

Too late.

John leans forward.

JOHN

You should've what?

Danny waves him off.

DANNY

Nothing.

Looks in the mirror.

Disgusted.

DANNY (cont'd)

I'm done.

John exhales.

Smirks.

Reclines.

Takes note.

INTERCUT TO:

INT./EXT. ALDO'S MERCEDES - PARK - SIMULTANEOUS

Aldo and Mario sit.

In the b.g. lawn mowers RUMBLE.

Kids laugh and scream on swings.

Mario watches groundskeepers.

The car doors open.

They step out.

Cross the blacktop track.

The slightest nod.

Groundskeeper adjusts route, the others follow.

They converge, slow and casual.

Mario and Aldo sit.

Lean in, hands over mouths.

ALDO
Dino's dry. Only knows they're
squeezin' hard.

MARIO
Not like him.

ALDO
DeAngelo and Halverson got him boxed
in. Timin' is fuckin' bad.

Mario scans the field.

ALDO (cont'd)
DeBartolo askin'?

Mario nods.

MARIO
Cafaro's making that move.

Mario scans the parking lot.

Mower passes. LOUDER.

ALDO
You return his call?

ALDO (cont'd)
Not yet.

ALDO (cont'd)
There's another way.

Mario doesn't look at him.

MARIO
Always is.

Tightens his jaw.

ALDO
This one carries weight.

Mario turns.

Locks eyes.

MARIO
Call Donny, put it together.
Something clean.

Aldo nods.

They wait.

The mowers circle.

Mario stands.

Aldo follows.

BACK TO:

DANNY

locks eyes with John.

DANNY
You want me to give you Mario Alioto?
You're outta your fucking mind. You
know I barely do anything and nothing
heavy.

JOHN
I know.

John nods.

JOHN (cont'd)
And that does matter.

Softer.

Danny notices.

JOHN (cont'd)
But you know my man, help... isn't
always help. Sometimes it's dressed
up as insurance.

Danny frowns.

JOHN (cont'd)
You ever wonder, why you?

Danny doesn't respond.

JOHN (cont'd)
Guys like Mario, don't do charity and
they don't help. The invest and...

CLICKS Zippo.

JOHN (cont'd)
They collect.

Danny shifts.

That hits.

Danny avoids eye contact.

Softens.

John pivots.

Slower.

JOHN (cont'd)
Hear me out. I got a story.

Danny rolls his eyes.

Small hand wave.

JOHN (cont'd)
There's this guy from town. Wannabe.
Like a lot of guys here.

Looks almost ashamed.

JOHN (cont'd)
A real Don Juan.

John paces.

JOHN (cont'd)
Married. Kid. Didn't matter. Still
out there... chasin skirt.

DANNY
Sounds familiar.

John ignores it.

JOHN
Wife probably knew, but nothing ever
followed him home so...

Looks off, almost dazed.

JOHN (cont'd)
She played along. Kept the peace
until one night that walked through
the front door.

JUMP CUT TO:

FLASHBACK -INT. LIVING ROOM - 1997

A preteen boy holds a die-cast Ferrari.

Drops to the floor.

Opens a sketchpad.

Draws.

The house is clean.

Quiet.

Too quiet.

Ceiling fan rotates overhead.

Family photos line the mantle.

Perfect.

Frames.

JOHN (V.O.)
Guy thought he had it all figured
out.

John scoffs.

JOHN (V.O.) (cont'd)
Yeah, he didn't.

Two WOMEN enter FRAME.

Walk to the kitchen.

Tension rises.

The boy looks up.

Watches.

Confused.

JOHN (V.O.) (cont'd)
His side life caught up with him. In
his own house in front of his kid.

They talk.

JOHN (V.O.) (cont'd)
Side piece was pregnant. Guy had
everything. A great wife. A kid who
worshipped him.

One woman leaves.

JOHN (V.O.) (cont'd)
Wasn't enough.

A beat.

JOHN (V.O.) (cont'd)
Wanted something more... a different
life. Same mistake Teddy Provo made.

END FLASHBACK:

JOHN

looks off.

JOHN
Cost them both... everything.

Clears his throat.

JOHN (cont'd)
You ever sit alone...

Genuine.

JOHN (cont'd)
Seems like it all catches up.

Danny looks up, caught off guard.

JOHN (cont'd)
People you lost. Chances you didn't
take. All the... Everything you
didn't fix. We lie to ourselves
but... that don't go away.

Danny doesn't answer.

No push back.

JOHN (cont'd)
Yeah me too.

They share a real moment.

John sits.

Doesn't loom.

JOHN (cont'd)
I used to think the job was
everything.

John smiles.

JOHN (cont'd)
But, it's just where I hid.

Danny silently stares.

JOHN (cont'd)
No wife. No kids.

A faint sad chuckle.

JOHN (cont'd)
I don't even have a dog.

Danny relates.

DANNY
I get that.

The first real connection.

John lets that breathe.

Then...

Reaches for the envelope.

Doesn't open it.

JOHN
You ever take one of those DNA tests?

Danny frowns.

DANNY
What?

JOHN
You know, family tree, ancestors...
all that shit?

Danny shrugs.

JOHN (cont'd)
I did one.

Flips Zippo.

JOHN (cont'd)
Wish I didn't.

John taps the envelope.

Doesn't open it.

JOHN (cont'd)
You spend your whole life thinking
you know where you come from...

Voice slightly lowers.

JOHN (cont'd)
Who your family is...

CLICKS Zippo.

JOHN (cont'd)
Then one day...

Stretches his neck.

JOHN (cont'd)
You don't know shit.

Danny leans forward slightly.

Hooked.

John opens the envelope slowly.

Removes a letter.

Angles it away.

JOHN (cont'd)
A name popped up.

They lock eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)
Never expected it.

Fans himself.

JOHN (cont'd)
Didn't want it either.

Danny narrows his eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)
Cielo.

Danny freezes.

JOHN (cont'd)
Gigi Cielo.

That lands.

Danny blinks rapidly.

Processes.

Confused.

DANNY
What are you saying?

They lock eyes.

Neither blink.

JOHN
I'm saying... she's my sister.

Tilts his head.

JOHN (cont'd)
Half sister, if you're that guy.

Danny processes.

He's shaken.

Astonished.

DANNY
What!?

Softer.

John notices.

JOHN
She reached me through the
department.

Smiles.

JOHN (cont'd)
Been talking, she sent me the Zippo.

Danny nods.

The engraving.

John grabs a second envelope.

Scans it.

Holds it.

JOHN (cont'd)
This is yours.

Danny tenses.

DANNY
What is it?

John steps closer.

Places it on the table.

Gently.

JOHN
Like I said...

John inhales deep.

JOHN (cont'd)
Time and timing matters.

John sips coffee.

JOHN (cont'd)
Right now, you're where you need to
be.

Danny stares at the envelope.

Doesn't touch it.

John watches him.

Like a chess player.

Waits.

Doesn't force a move.

Danny eyes the envelope.

Arms folded.

Refuses to touch it.

John slides the Zippo.

Danny unfolds his arms.

Catches it.

John nods.

Then...

DROPS the envelope on the table.

Deliberate.

Not aggressive.

JOHN (cont'd)
That's her.

Danny eyes it, then back to John.

DANNY
What? What are you doing?

John leans back. Calm.

JOHN

No games.

John points.

JOHN (cont'd)

She wrote it.

Danny's jaw tightens.

DANNY

Where is she?

John doesn't answer.

Pushes the envelope closer.

Stops it short.

JOHN

You wanna know?

Points to envelope.

JOHN (cont'd)

Read it.

Danny doesn't move.

JOHN (cont'd)

I can tell you or you can hear it...
from her.

Clears throat.

Smiles.

Drums table.

JOHN (cont'd)

Your call Flash.

Danny scans.

Avoids John.

DANNY

How long you had this?

JOHN

Few weeks.

Danny looks up, sharp.

DANNY

Few weeks?

Leans forward.

DANNY (cont'd)

What the fuck man!

JOHN

Yeah. I needed the right moment.

That lands.

Danny leans back to process.

DANNY

Dude you don't get to fucking decide that!

John nods.

I know, you're right. But ahh... I did it any way.

No apology. Just truth.

That disarms.

Danny exhales hard.

His frustration turns.

John picks up the envelope... holds it.

JOHN

She asked me... to get you this.
So here we are.

He sets it down.

Closer.

JOHN (cont'd)

I won't drag you. You take it or you don't.

John stays controlled.

Danny hesitates... reaches.

Hand trembles.

Stops short.

Pulls back.

Shakes his head.

DANNY
(to himself)
Fuck it.

Snatches envelope.

John stands.

Gives him space.

Steps out.

SERIES OF SHOTS -

Danny opens it carefully.

Sees the handwriting.

Eyes widen.

His lips move as he reads.

His eyes glass over.

Fights emotions.

He losses.

The clock TICKS.

A tear falls.

Then another.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. ANTICO CONTE - BACK OFFICE

Aldo sits, phone on his chest.

Low music plays.

He rubs his head.

Eyes the ceiling.

Jaw tight.

Across from him...

Mario reclines.

The TV flickers.

He stares. Blank.

He's elsewhere.

A beat.

Mario leans forward.

Elbows on knees. Clasps hands.

Jaw tightens.

His eyes scan.

Shakes his head slow.

MEMORY FLASH:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY 9 YEARS EARLIER

SERIES OF SHOTS

Black suits. Quiet grief.

Teenage Danny, holds it together.

His MOTHER, broken.

Behind them... Mario.

Hand on Danny's shoulder.

A tear falls.

The crowd disperses.

Danny turns...

Mario pulls him in.

Danny collapses into him.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY - 9 YEARS AGO

Danny... ecstatic.

Jersey 24. Alive.

Arms raised.

A girl hugs him...

Crowd jumps and cheers.

Mario hugs them...

Proud.

Almost parental.

Girl slips away.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. NOSTRO POSTO - NIGHT - 30 YEARS AGO

Young Mario at the table.

Behind the waiter...

A MAN IN A GRAY SUIT locks eyes with him.

Calm.

Dead eyes.

Looks to Teddy.

Shakes head.

Not a threat.

A fact.

Mario freezes...

Jaw tightens.

Nods.

Looks at Teddy.

Teddy smiles wide.

Mario smiles.

Looks away upset.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - EARLIER THAT DAY

A breeze blows.

Mario crouches...

Wipes debris away.

Slowly reaches out.

Grasps Teddy Provo's head stone.

Eyes well.

END SEQUENCE.

BACK TO:

INT. MARIO'S OFFICE -

Mario sits frozen.

Then...

Spins away from Aldo.

His mask cracks.

Tears well.

His jaw tightens...

A fist under his nose.

He wipes his mouth.

Aggressive.

Breathing shifts.

In.

Out.

Deep.

Controlled.

Closes his eyes.

Takes a breath.

Opens his eyes.

They're different now.

Flat.

Resolve.

Turns to Aldo.

Aldo leans forward slightly.

Watches.

Waits.

Mario looks up.

They lock eyes.

Nothing soft is left.

Mario slowly nods.

Hardens.

Small.

Final.

Aldo understands.

Exhales long.

Stands.

Moves to the door.

Wipes his face.

Doesn't look back.

The door closes.

Mario sits still.

Slowly reclines.

Eyes drift up.

Wet.

Empty.

Doesn't blink.

This is how it ends.

Accepts it.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - INTERVIEW ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

The door opens.

John enters. Quiet.

Doesn't interrupt.

Sits.

Waits.

Danny lowers the letter.

Hands tremble.

He folds the letter.

Tries to speak. Nothing.

John watches him.

JOHN
I know that look.

Danny nods. Understands.

Whispers to his reflection.

DANNY
She left because of me...

John silently watches.

The clock TICKS.

DANNY (cont'd)
Not just because of Mario... me.

Eye's well.

DANNY (cont'd)
I stayed.

Danny's jaw tightens.

DANNY (cont'd)
I knew what it was doing to her, but
I stayed anyway.

That lands hard.

John reclines.

Something's different.

Danny shakes his head. Disgusted with himself.

DANNY (cont'd)
That's on me.

A long beat.

Danny turns to John.

DANNY (cont'd)
But I didn't kill Tommy.

It's not defensive.

Different.

Certain.

DANNY (cont'd)
I'm all over the place.

Danny clears his throat.

DANNY (cont'd)
I'm pissed off and confused.

JOHN
Good.

Danny frowns.

JOHN (cont'd)
You're finally awake. Better than
being numb.

Danny exhales.

Slight nod.

DANNY
Four years...

JOHN
Yeah, four years.

John sits up. Firm. Stern.

JOHN (cont'd)
What'd you do with them?

That hits harder than yelling.

Danny looks down.

No answer.

JOHN (cont'd)
That's what I thought.

Rolls his eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)
You didn't lose four years... you
gave them away.

Silence.

Danny absorbs it.

Doesn't fight it.

John shifts his tone.

Direct and controlled.

JOHN (cont'd)
Here's where you're at.

John holds up two fingers.

Danny watches him closely.

JOHN (cont'd)
Two moves. You stay and play this
out. We both know how that ends...
not good.

Danny swallows.

JOHN (cont'd)
Or...

Points to letter.

JOHN (cont'd)
You take that and you go.

Danny shakes his head slightly.

DANNY
Go where?

JOHN
Where she is.

That lands heavy.

Danny looks at the letter again.

JOHN (cont'd)
She didn't disappear on you. She
walked away from this, from them and
this town. It was survival.

Danny's breathing shifts.

JOHN (cont'd)
One thing stayed with her... you.

The hook.

Danny stands. Paces.

DANNY
You think it's that easy?

JOHN
Fuck no.

Danny laughs. Hollow.

DANNY
You don't get it...

John firmly interrupts.

JOHN
No. You don't get it. You think you
owe Mario?

Danny turns.

JOHN (cont'd)
You think he saved you, he didn't
save you.

John motions to the floor.

JOHN (cont'd)
He fucking parked you.

That hits.

Danny freezes.

JOHN (cont'd)
Kept you close. Kept you useful, but
a time's gonna come when you're not
so special anymore.

Danny looks shaken.

JOHN (cont'd)
You'll just be... next.

Silence.

John backs off. Softer again.

Balanced.

JOHN (cont'd)
I'm not saying he doesn't care about
you.
(louder)
I'm saying, it doesn't matter.

Danny sinks back into the chair.

He processes.

DANNY
Why you doing this? You told me you
don't give a shit.

Danny looks down.

John smiles.

Then...

Honesty.

JOHN
I didn't.

Smirks.

JOHN (cont'd)
Not before.

Danny stretches his neck.

JOHN (cont'd)
Then I read the DNA report.

Leans against the wall.

JOHN (cont'd)
I have a sister. Found out she's tied
to you.

That connection lands.

JOHN (cont'd)
That meant I had a choice to make
too.

Points to Danny.

JOHN (cont'd)
Just like you do.

Danny nods slowly.

More emotional.

DANNY
I didn't want Mario's life, I never
did. I wanted out.

John nods.

JOHN
Then leave.

No speech.

Danny looks up.

DANNY
If I don't?

John holds his gaze.

JOHN
Then you've already decided.

The clock TICKS.

Danny looks at the Zippo.

Back at John.

John doesn't move.

Doesn't push.

Waits.

Lightly drums his chest.

Stares.

Danny stares at the table.

John checks the clock.

Then...

Danny looks in the mirror.

Looks around.

DANNY

You think this is how I wanted to end up? I wanted out, but things changed... I did what I had to do. Alright?

Danny SLAMS the table.

Frustrated.

DANNY (cont'd)

FUCK!

Stands... breathes.

Looks at his reflection.

He rubs his head.

Turns. Sits.

DANNY (cont'd)

I don't even like football anymore... Just say I do

A beat.

DANNY (cont'd)

You ever look in the mirror and hate who you see?

Cracks neck.

DANNY (cont'd)

I don't think I would know who I am without all this bullshit.

Rubs his face.

DANNY (cont'd)
You ever think about that, or do you
wake up everyday and know who you
belong to?

Closes his eyes.

DANNY (cont'd)
Mario's dog grabbed a rabbit. I got
her off but it was too late. Mar took
her inside.

Looks off.

DANNY (cont'd)
I stay back, watching it. Heart
racing. Struggle for every breath...
I couldn't do anything. Not a damn
thing.

Danny looks up at John.

DANNY (cont'd)
Thought about my mom getting pulled
off the machines. I watched her fade
the same way. Some guy in a mask
listen to her chest...

Shakes his head.

DANNY (cont'd)
Til she was... gone.

Danny leans forward.

Eyes glazed over.

DANNY (cont'd)
I stood at her window in the ICU.
hoping I was a good son. Thinking
about all the things I never said to
her, everything she'll never hear or
see...

Danny looks up.

Raw.

Eyes water.

DANNY (cont'd)
Asking if she was proud of me... or
ashamed.

Danny looks down.

Hides his eyes.

John nods slowly.

JOHN

I wish I could tell you that I don't
but... I know exactly how you feel.
You know you can change some that if
you want.

John stands.

Leans on the wall.

John's cell phone VIBRATES.

He reads a text.

Fights a smile.

JOHN (cont'd)

It's your time Flash.

DANNY

What's that even mean?

John smirks.

JOHN

I know you didn't kill Tommy.

A short beat.

Danny sits up.

JOHN (cont'd)

The bartender, Tina, came in and gave
a statement.

Clears his throat.

JOHN (cont'd)

Saw Tommy get into a black Camaro at
gun point around 11:45. Said he was
scared shitless. Oh, and your
landlord installed security cameras.
They clock you getting home at 11:33,
you don't leave until we picked you
up this morning.

Danny smiles.

DANNY

So what, that's it? This is over? I can go?

John smirks.

JOHN

Not yet. Gimme a few minutes.

Nods.

JOHN (cont'd)

This is important. Right now, two cars are waiting for you. One is Mario and Aldo waiting to congratulate you for taking this like a man and all that bullshit.

Danny crosses his legs.

DANNY

You said two cars. What about the second?

JOHN

The second I set up. Takes you to the airport, to Gigi. I'll get your shit to you.

John pushes off the cabinet.

Danny watches.

DANNY

I have to choose now, like right now? How the hell do I do that? I mean come on, I got...

John slams his hand on the table.

JOHN

You got "ugatz", you fucking goof! This offer's got a shot clock and time's almost out.

Points.

JOHN (cont'd)

You get in Mario's car, best case is deep shit. Worst case... I find your bloated body wrapped in plastic on the west side of town by a factory.

Steps back from table.

JOHN (cont'd)
Or you get in the other car. The guy
calls me, I text him the terminal.
Once you get there I text you the
ticket. You're gone. Clean.

Danny grabs a cigarette.

Spins it. Tucks it behind ear.

DANNY
I'm going in a thousand directions
right now .

John interrupts.

JOHN
Only two matter, Mario or Gigi.
Listen to me Flash. Your parents
wanted you out of this place. They
wanted you to live your life.

Holds up two fingers.

JOHN (cont'd)
And your mom... she was proud of you.
She didn't like Mario, but you? She
loved you, don't ever forget that.

John points to the letter.

JOHN (cont'd)
Your choice.

Danny shifts. Uncomfortable.

Rubs face.

He closes his eyes.

John stands.

Paces.

Stops under TICKING clock.

Clears his throat.

JOHN (cont'd)
It's time to live your life. You
didn't think you had a choice then,
but now you do. You got answers. You
can get out. You can have Gigi or
Mario. It's your choice.

Danny hold hi hand over his mouth.

DANNY
I don't know what to say.

JOHN
Neither do I, but, from here on out
no more excuses. "Capito?"

They exchange nods.

JOHN (cont'd)
You're getting something most people
wish they got. A second chance to
play it the way you want.

Danny wipes his face.

Stares forward.

His jaw tightens.

John shifts.

Cabinet CREEKS.

He looks at the clock.

DANNY
I hated looking at myself because of
what I am. Everybody sees it. It's
all over their faces.

Places hands on his knees.

DANNY (cont'd)
Part of me doesn't care but another
does.

John nods.

DANNY (cont'd)
I wanted to kill Tommy that night.

John looks down.

Understands.

JOHN
You could've. You didn't, that time,
but the next...

Danny checks the mirror

DANNY

Staying for my mom was easy, but
after she died, all the bullshit...

He grabs the cigarette behind his ear.

Spins it. Stares off.

John clears his throat.

Danny snaps back.

Puts it back behind his ear.

JOHN

Whatever you do next, wherever you
go... it's on you.

John looks up.

JOHN (cont'd)

We're out of time.

Danny stands.

His glassy eyes scan the room.

DANNY

Thank you, for everything John. For
listening... for this.

Lifts letter.

DANNY (cont'd)

I don't know what to do.

John smirks with a slight nod.

JOHN

You don't have to thank me.

Danny stands.

His shoulders sink.

JOHN (cont'd)

Come on.

They shake hands... it turns to a quick hug.

John turns. Opens the door.

Danny steps into the hallway and pauses.

John scans the room...

Then to the clock. 11:33.

The door closes behind them.

The clock TICKS.

The radio turns on.

"Then You Can Tell Me Goodbye" by Bettye Swann plays.

INTERCUT TO:

TRACKING SHOT - SLOW MOTION

JOHN

leads.

Danny follows a step behind in the hallway.

Gray walls.

Framed photos and badges.

Industrial carpet underfoot.

An elevator opens.

They step in. doors close.

Across the hall, a heavy wood door.

Narrow window. A scarred kick plate.

JOHN

leads Danny down two flights.

They push through another door.

JOHN

holds the door.

Danny steps into the main lobby.

DANNY

leads John through the empty lobby.

Department seal centered on polished floor..

Blue tinted sunlight shines through.

The flag basks in it.

They stop.

Danny extends his hand.

They shake, longer than necessary.

John CLICKS Zippo.

Lights up.

They share a nod.

John rests his hand on Danny's shoulder.

He turns and opens the door.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Sunlight floods in. Harsh and blinding.

Danny steps out.

Heat shimmers off asphalt.

A faint hum of TRAFFIC.

Birds CHIRP.

Across the street, a restaurant owner SWEEPS.

A bus stop crowd waits.

Danny exhales smoke.

Looks around.

ON THE RIGHT: a white Ford Explorer. Engine runs.

ON THE LEFT: a black Mercedes gleams.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

Aldo sits alone up front.

Mario in back.

Next to him a DONNY DEMONTE (50's).

He pulls a Smith & Wesson .38.

Slides it into the seat pocket.

Then...

A garrote. Wire tight between wood handles.

Mario taps Aldo.

Aldo nods.

ALDO

steps out.

Smiles. He breaths like he owns the air.

He circles the car.

Opens the passenger door.

With arms wide open.

ALDO

Oh, Bello! Let's go.

Mario swings his door open.

Smiles wide.

MARIO

There's my boy! Come on Son!

DANNY

glances at John.

John doesn't blink. He's locked on Mario.

Predatory.

Danny turns back.

Aldo waves.

Mario beams.

The world softens.

Danny tilts his head back...

Closes his eyes.

QUICK CUT TO:

DANNY'S THOUGHT - EXT. BEACH - EARLY EVENING

SLOW MOTION

Just out of reach.

Near the shoreline.

Wind pushes her hair across her face.

She pulls her hair away.

GIGI CIELO (26) striking. Effortless.

Blinks slowly.

Smiles wide.

END THOUGHT:

DANNY

opens his eyes.

Turns to John.

For the first time, John looks at him.

A small nod. Barely a smile.

Danny returns it.

Then...

He looks left.

Mario and Aldo wait.

MARIO
Come on Son!

Danny takes a drag.

Walks.

Slow.

Every step measured.

To the sidewalk.

Sound fades to a low hum.

He reaches the split.

Stops.

Inhales deep.

Closes his eyes.

Another drag...

The ember burns bright.

He exhales.

Looks down.

Cigarette falls.

It tumbles...

Sparks explode out.

Black canvas shoe steps on it.

Still.

At the crossroads.

He looks up.

Raises an eyebrow.

A faint smirk pulls at the corner of his mouth...

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END