

BLACK SWARM

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EXT. BERLIN - AERIAL SHOT - NIGHT

OPENING CREDITS

The lights of the Western Sector are in clear contrast with the Eastern Sector, much less illuminated. The Wall runs through the city like a shining river. Its route is lit up by a series of reflectors, while two parallel barricades of concrete define the DEATH STRIP, the space between the walled areas.

SUPERIMPOSE:

BERLIN, 1984

EXT. THE WALL - BERLIN - NIGHT

The sky is perfectly blue while the moon, in its waning phase, is darkened by some clouds.

A GUARD (VOPOS #1) with a German shepherd on a leash is conducting his security sweep on the paved path which passes through the death strip. He waves to an OBSERVATION TOWER. The gesture is returned by a GUARD, armed with a precision rifle, who's standing inside.

A third GUARD (VOPOS #2) comes down and awaits his colleague by the ladder.

VOPOS #2

Quite a night.

VOPOS #1

(joining him)

Yeah, far too calm.

The second Vopos bends down, petting the dog.

VOPOS #1 (CONTINUED)

What's the situation around here?

VOPOS #2

No big deal, sometimes we got some action. Three nights ago, Herbert got a student who was climbing up the wall. He almost made it...

VOPOS #1

And the result?

VOPOS #2

(gets up)

Well, in the end only one part of the young man, the frontal lobe to be more specific, reached the American Sector.

VOPOS #1

Shit. On the other side?

VOPOS #2

They just witnessed... As always.

The first Vopos nods. He lowers his head and caresses the abdomen of the dog, who gladly accepts.

VOPOS #1

It's always the same old story.  
Sometimes I wonder when it will  
end.

VOPOS #2

When our people will stop escaping.

The second Vopos lights up a cigarette and offers one to his partner, who cordially refuses.

VOPOS #1

(looking around)  
Maybe it will be quiet for some  
days.

VOPOS #2

Could be.  
(exhales smoke)  
But keep your eyes open. You never  
know.

The first Vopos resumes his security sweep on the paved path. The second Vopos finishes his cigarette and climbs back up the tower.

EXT. PARK, EAST BERLIN - NIGHT

The park, deserted and poorly lit, is flanked by a footpath which borders directly on the Wall. The trees are few near the footpath, but more thick near the street, on the other side.

EXT. TREE TOP - NIGHT

HANS REMHER (25-30), a young man with a black sweatshirt, black pants and a black backpack, is sitting on a branch. He has medium-length blonde hair and a slender figure. He's very carefully observing the two sentries.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE SAME TREE - NIGHT

Crouched down behind a big bush, there are two other figures dressed with dark clothing. One is DIETER HALATA (35-40), a good-looking man with thin black moustaches. His gaze is fixed upward, towards Hans. Beside him there is KURT (16-18), a boy with a suffering face.

Dieter lowers his gaze on Kurt.

DIETER

You're not going to give up now,  
right?

KURT

No, I can make it... I can make it.

Dieter holds him fondly in his arms.

DIETER

Good boy. We're almost there.

HANS

Watches the K9 guard as he crosses the area adjacent to the park, heading north. He gets out of the tree very carefully. He positions himself beside Dieter and Kurt.

HANS

(quietly)

It's time, the guard has just passed. Remember: mouths shut, fast pace and, most importantly, keep your eyes on my arms. You already know the meanings of the gestures. I'll go in lead, Kurt, you're behind me. Dieter, back us up. All clear?

Dieter and Kurt nod like good soldiers.

HANS (CONTINUED)

Good.

The group prepares to move. Hans notices Kurt's pained expression.

HANS

Is everything OK?

KURT

Yes... I'm just a bit concerned.

HANS

Don't worry, you're gonna make it.

Hans pats the boy on the back. He moves next to Dieter.

HANS

(soothingly)

Stay behind me and everything will be fine.

DIETER

Thanks for the help... My son is very frightened.

HANS

Don't thank me in advance. We'll talk about it when we'll be on the other side, deal?

DIETER  
(smiling)

Deal.

The group leaves the bush in single file. The three figures move quickly from one tree to another. As they proceed, each member stops behind a trunk so that no one remains exposed.

EXT. ROOF, OBSERVATION TOWER - NIGHT

The second Vopos moves the reflector along the perimeter of the Wall, looking for strange movements.

The beam of light inspects the area adjacent to the park. Nothing. No one's around.

The guard shifts the beam of the reflector north.

INT. OBSERVATION TOWER - NIGHT

The sniper seen before is relaxing near the radio. He yawns as he sips a cup of coffee while keeping his legs on a shelf covered with registers.

EXT. PARK, EAST BERLIN - NIGHT

Hans stops behind a big oak marked with white paint. He monitors the perimeter of the Wall with his gaze. He rapidly raises his left arm, keeping his fist closed. Turns back to check the position of his comrades.

Kurt and Dieter have seen the signal and are awaiting instructions while staying hidden behind a big bush a few feet away from him.

Hans returns his gaze in front of himself. The LIGHT of the reflector is getting closer to his position. The young man draws back, keeping his shoulders against the trunk.

The light moves away from the park and goes back to the walking path that flanks the Wall. Once there, it begins a return journey headed south, to its origin, which is about 100 meters away from the green zone.

Hans knows it's time to move. He puts on the hood of his sweatshirt and starts to climb the branches of the oak with some agility, taking care to not make a sound.

Dieter and Kurt watch Hans's silhouette disappear inside the big oak. The boy, still suffering, looks at Dieter.

KURT  
Do you really think that we're  
gonna make it?

DIETER  
He already helped many people  
escape.

KURT

Once on the otherside-

DIETER

(interrupts him)

All in good time.

Kurt's face is a mixture of hope and resignation.

EXT. TREE TOP - NIGHT

Hans suddenly stops his climb. He spots a CROSSBOW hanging from a nail. He sits on a big orizzontal branch. He opens his backpack, pulls out an arrow with a long metallic wire attached to its end; he inserts the arrow in the crossbow and puts it back in its place. He also takes a rope out of his backpack and secures it on the branch he's sitting on. He starts to rappel down, keeping his feet on the trunk.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE SAME TREE - NIGHT

Hans lands on the ground. The young man immediately checks the perimeter of the Wall: green light. He signals Kurt and Dieter to move.

The two fugitives quickly reach the oak, running with their backs hunched up.

Hans signals Kurt to go first. The boy takes the rope in his hands and looks above, hesitant.

HANS

(reassuring him)

It's easier than you think.

Kurt begins to climb.

HANS (CONTINUED)

(quietly, to Dieter)

Drag up the rope a little bit when you reach the top, then release it.

Dieter nods. Hans gives him the go-ahead.

EXT. TREE TOP - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Dieter finishes to coil up the rope. Hans pulls out a NIGHT VISION scope from his backpack; he applies it on the crossbow and takes it up. Dieter puts the rope in the backpack.

HANS POV - NIGHT VISION

A line of BUILDINGS lies right beyond the Wall: it's the Western Sector. Hans' eyes linger on one in particular, a structure with a roof terrace.

HANS

takes aim and clicks the trigger; the ARROW flies. It drives deeply into the wall of the far-distant rail of the building.

Hans, helped by Dieter, anchors the metallic wire around the large trunk of the oak, putting it in tension. The route is slightly sloping because the building is at a lower altitude than the position of the three fugitives.

Hans starts going through his backpack.

KURT  
(quietly, a bit worried)  
They're gonna spot us, aren't they?

Hans gives a little HANDLEBAR to each fugitive.

HANS  
(quietly)  
They won't, if you stick to the plan.

The boy nods forcibly. Dieter puts a hand over his son's shoulder.

DIETER  
(quietly)  
We can do this.

HANS  
(quietly, to Kurt)  
Get ready, you go first. Make sure your grip is firm and watch the rail.

KURT  
OK.

Kurt puts the handlebar on the wire. His face reflects concern and pain.

Hans gives the go-ahead to Kurt who, after a little hesitation, lets himself go.

SIDESHOT: Kurt's SILHOUETTE flies over the Wall, fast and quiet.

EXT. ROOF TERRACE, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

Kurt grimaces in pain as he raises his legs to avoid the rail, then lowers them again, landing successfully.

He immediately goes to squat down behind the rail that looks down to the Wall.

EXT. TREE TOP - NIGHT

Dieter is visibly happy.

DIETER  
(quietly)  
He made it!

Hans, emotionless and still very focused, nods. He takes a look to the observation tower.

The reflector is busy inspecting the area to the south of the tower.

Hans signals Dieter to go.

EXT. ROOF TERRACE, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT - FEW SECONDS LATER

Dieter lands without any problems. He goes hiding beside his son. The man smiles at him, the boy smiles back weakly.

EXT. ROOF, OBSERVATION TOWER - NIGHT

The sniper has taken over for the vopos #2 at the control of the reflector. The beam of light retraces the perimeter of the Wall heading north, towards the park.

SIDESHOT: on the SNIPER. A tiny FIGURE quickly passes in the background, undetectable like a dark, falling star. It's a split second. The sniper, focused on maneuvering the reflector, doesn't notice.

EXT. ROOF TERRACE, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

Hans reunites with Kurt and Dieter behind the rail of the terrace.

HANS  
(removes his hood)  
Let's move, it won't take too long  
before they spot the wire.

EXT. STREET OF WEST BERLIN - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The traffic is moderately busy. The three fugitives proceed on the sidewalk at good pace, passing some BYSTANDERS. Dieter now leads the group.

Hans notices that Kurt's having some difficulty walking. He approaches Dieter.

HANS  
Your son-

DIETER  
(interrupts him)  
I know, he's not doing well. We're  
almost there.

After passing a crosswalk, Dieter leads the group in a narrow and dimly lit alley. He stops and points to a small BAR on the other side of the street.



DIETER

There it is.

The sound of a SIREN rises in the distance. Kurt suddenly turns back, while Hans and Dieter exchange a glance.

INT. BAR - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

"Here Come Cowboys" by The Psychedelic Furs is playing loud inside the bar.

Dieter enters, followed by the rest of the group. The place is small and populated by a dozen of PATRONS, mainly men, who are spending the evening scattered between the tables and the long counter. Nobody considers the newcomers: everyone's too busy talking with each other.

DIETER

Just wait here, I'll be right back.

The man walks up to the counter, where a bearded BARTENDER (45) is awaiting him. The two men greet each other with a hearty handshake. Dieter leans over the counter.

DIETER

Bernard?

BARTENDER

He's waiting for you in the back.  
Third door on the right... You know  
the way.

The barman puts a set of KEYS on the counter. The man takes it.

DIETER

Thank you.

Dieter leaves.

BARTENDER

Hey!

The man turns back to the counter.

BARTENDER (CONTINUED)

Welcome back.

Dieter nods, then waves his hand to Kurt and Hans; they join him. Dieter leads them to a door bearing the words "PRIVATE", situated on a corner of the room. The man inserts the key and opens the door: the group enters. Hans notices that the door is SOUNDPROOF.

INT. HALLWAY, BACK - NIGHT

Dieter locks the door.

DIETER

Follow me.

The three fugitives walk down a poorly lit hallway in a straight line. Kurt, still suffering, walks holding his right hand on his belly. They go past two doors, then Dieter stops in front of the third. He opens it and enters. Hans and Kurt follow him.

INT. ROOM, BACK - NIGHT

The room is lit with neon lights. Every wall has iron shelves that contains boxed beverages.

BERNARD (30), a young man with brown hair and bright eyes, is leaning against the table at center of the room. He smiles upon seeing Dieter, who smiles back while approaching him. They warmly embrace.

BERNARD

You finally made it.

DIETER

It's good to see you again.

Dieter and Bernard detach themselves.

DIETER (CONTINUED)

(nods his head)

Look who I brought with me.

Kurt shyly greets Bernard, who steps forward and hugs him. The boy grimaces with pain.

BERNARD

Hi Kurt. Still on the ball?

Kurt nods, giving an artificial smile. Bernard looks at Hans.

BERNARD

You're a man of your word... I wouldn't tell.

Bernard offers his hand, Hans shakes it. Hard.

HANS

One does what one can.

The two young men exchange an unfriendly look. Dieter stands by, laughing at the scene.

DIETER

(pats him on the back)

Come on Bernard, give a seat to our savior.

Bernard takes Hans to the table, while Dieter comes up to Kurt.

DIETER  
(pointing a chair near  
the entrance)  
Sit there, it'll only take a few  
minutes.

Dieter caresses the head of the boy, who goes to sit. There are beads of SWEAT on his forehead.

Hans takes off his backpack and sits down at the table, back to the door. Dieter reaches out to Bernard who's standing by the table.

DIETER  
Please, could you find a painkiller  
for my son?

BERNARD  
I should've something.

Bernard goes for the door.

DIETER  
Hey Bernard, I would say Hans well  
deserves a beer, what do you say?

The young man nods.

DIETER  
(to Hans)  
Is it okay for you?

HANS  
As long as is blond, thank you.

Bernard exits the room, the door closes. Dieter sits right in front of Hans. Kurt silently watches them.

DIETER  
See, when expectations are pretty  
high, one may be disappointed...  
But that was not the case. You had  
planned everything precisely,  
minimizing the probability of  
failure.  
(pause)  
Me and my son owe you a lot.

HANS  
Thank you, but this is part of my  
job. If I didn't work like this, I  
wouldn't be here now, talking to  
you.

DIETER  
It makes complete sense.  
(MORE)

DIETER (cont'd)

(pause)

Don't mind my friend Bernard, he's suspicious by nature. I think you immediately noticed when you met him for this job.

HANS

It's not a problem. My older brother always told me that you can't make everyone like you.

DIETER

That's very true.

Someone knocks the door. Kurt opens it; Bernard stands before him with a glass of water in one hand and a beer in the other. He hands him the water along with a sachet.

BERNARD

This should help.

The boy, anxious, doesn't waste a minute; he opens the sachet and pours the content in the glass. Bernard goes to the table and puts the beer on it.

HANS

Thank you.

Bernard sits down beside Dieter without saying anything.

DIETER

(looks at Bernard)

I was expressing to Hans my admiration for his way of working.

Hans carefully sips his beer.

BERNARD

Maybe that's why he's so expensive...

DIETER

(looks at Hans)

I don't think it's just a question of money.

(pauses)

The commitment to your job makes me think that you really believe in what you do.

HANS

The Wall brings me money, but it doesn't mean that I like it.

(takes a drink from his beer)

Let's say I strongly support the free movement of citizens.

Dieter laughs, Bernard sneers while slowly shaking his head.

Kurt finishes his drink and puts the glass on the floor, by the chair.

DIETER

So, I think I owe you 3.000 marks.

Bernard rises again from his seat and goes to the shelf situated on the far wall of the room.

HANS

That's correct.

Bernard returns to the table with a small briefcase which he puts down on the table. He opens it and rotates it toward Hans.

DIETER

Here is the other half of your fee.  
A total of 6.000 marks, as per our agreement.

Hans takes a wad of cash, observes it for a moment, then puts it back in its palce.

Kurt puts both hands on his stomach, bending over. The pain has became unbearable.

BERNARD

Do you want to count them?

HANS

No.

(nods at Dieter)

I trust him.

Kurt leans out of the chair a bit too much and falls to the floor, THUD.

Dieter comes to his aid, kneeling down beside him. Hans stands up as he turns his attention on the young boy.

Kurt is on the floor in fetal position, his face ravaged by pain. Dieter thoughtfully puts a hand on the boy's shoulder.

KURT

Help me... Please help me, I can't take it anymore!

DIETER

(looking up to Bernard)

I need something stronger.

BERNARD

There's a pharmacy right out there, I'll see what I can get.

DIETER

Hurry.

Bernard rapidly exits the room, slamming the door.

Kurt keeps moaning; the pain doesn't go away. Dieter puts a hand on his son's forehead.

DIETER

Hold on, you'll see it'll pass.

Hans moves closer.

HANS

Maybe you should take him to the Hospital. He's been having stomach pains since I took you.

DIETER

I know what to do. He's always had them, they came back once in a while. Now, please, leave us alone.

HANS

Are you sure you don't need any help?

DIETER

Don't worry, there is Bernard, thank you. Go now.

HANS

All right.

Hans returns to the table and puts on his backpack. He closes the briefcase and goes to the exit.

HANS

Good luck.

DIETER

(looks at Hans)

Goodbye.

The cries of the boy are constantly increasing. He suddenly grabs his father by his collars.

KURT

(whispered)

Please... Take out that stuff, it hurts too much... I can't take it anymore!

Hans has partially opened the door, but stops.

CLOSE UP: on HANS. He slowly turns.

HANS  
(to Dieter)  
What stuff?

DIETER  
He always do this... Pain makes him  
allucinate.

A few seconds of silence. Hans looks at Kurt, then returns his gaze to Dieter, fixing him with more intensity than before.

HANS  
Don't mess with me. He's not your  
son, right?

Dieter gets up. His loving father-like expression has disappeared. He goes face-to-face with Hans.

DIETER  
(quietly, almost  
whispered)  
You've been paid, now get out. I'll  
take care of the boy.

Hans stares right back at him, without even batting an eye.

HANS  
What do you smuggle? Drugs?

Dieter pulls out a 50-inch switchblade which he places between his face and Hans'. The blade shines under the neon lights.

DIETER  
Quite successfully.

Kurt, still suffering, grabs Dieter's leg; the man distracts for a moment.

With a sudden move, Hans throws the breifcase at the man's head, knocking him unconscious. The briefcase falls open and the money spreads all over the floor.

HANS  
I wouldn't say so.

The young man stares at the money for a moment; the temptation to pick it up is very strong. He turns and opens the door, then lifts Kurt from the floor. The boy screams in pain.

HANS  
Lean on me.

INT. CORRIDOR, BACK - NIGHT

Hans helps Kurt to walk supporting him on one side. The boy can hardly move.

HANS  
Why did you accept?

KURT  
(suffering)  
He paid me 500 marks... I just  
wanted to get out.

Hans stops before the first door on the left.

INT. ROOM, BACK - NIGHT

Hans and Kurt enter the room. Placed in line on the floor there are many kegs of beer. On the rear wall there is a WINDOW.

Hans helps Kurt to seat on one of the kegs near the entrance. He goes to the window, opens it and pulls out the safety locks of the shutters. He looks out: there is a STREET.

KURT  
Why didn't you kill him?

Hans turn towards him to answer the question and BANG, Kurt's face EXPLODES with blood. SHREDS of teeth and brain almost reach Hans' feet.

The body of the boy falls to the floor. Bernard, guns out, stands behind him, ready to fire once again; but there's no one to shoot at.

EXT. STREET OF WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

The street's not very busy, but the few cars are driven at decent speed.

Hans crosses the road running. Dodges a car, but he doesn't see that another one's about to hit him. The driver, a bearded MAN (50's), firmly honks the horn, braking. The car stops dead. The man rolls down the passenger side window and yells unrepeatable things to Hans, who keeps running without turning back.

INT. ROOM, BACK - NIGHT

Bernard reaches the window. He locates Hans and takes aim with both hands.

BERNARD POV

The scope of the gun is locked on Hans's figure and sticks to it as he's running towards the other side of the street.

Bernard's about to pull the trigger; Hans is doomed.

DIETER (O.S.)  
Hold on!



Bernard hesitates for a moment, then takes his finger off the trigger and lowers the weapon. He helplessly watches Hans disappear around a corner.

BERNARD  
(staring at the street)  
It was a clear shot.

Dieter is now standing beside him, eyes on the street. He's got blood on the left side of his face.

DIETER  
No.  
(pauses)  
It was wrong from the start.

Dieter closes the shutters, then the window. He turns to Bernard and places a hand on his shoulder.

DIETER (CONTINUED)  
We need your bar.

Bernard gently shifts Dieter's face. He studies the wound on his temple for a few seconds.

BERNARD  
I'm gonna kill him.

Dieter moves away, shifting his gaze on Kurt's lifeless body.

DIETER  
All in good time.  
(pauses, looks back at  
Bernard)  
Now let's clean up this mess.

FADE TO BLACK: on Kurt's BODY.

SUPERIMPOSE:

2 WEEKS LATER

INT. NIGHTCLUB "CORELLES" - WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

Background music: "Images of Haven" by Peter Godwin.

The club consists of a central DANCEFLOOR which has a long COUNTER on one side and a RAISED FLOOR with about twenty tables on the other. The latter can be reached using two small separated staircases located on the opposite sides of the elevated area.

The place is packed with PEOPLE aged between mid-20's and late 30's: some of them show off far-fetched HAIRSTYLES and excessive dresses, while some male customers have MAKE UP on their faces, making it hard to tell them apart.

PAN-SHOT: the BAR. The counter is crowded by many customers asking for drinks or taking them away. The three BARTENDERS (20-30), two males and a woman, can't catch a break.

Hans, dressed with black shirt and trousers, stands by the counter, careless of the revolving door of people around him. He takes a sip of his Negroni as he reluctantly gazes at the dancefloor full of dancing people. A few inches from him are two other guys, dressed in black as well: ROLF (27), a tall young man with a sympathetic face, and FRANZISKA (29), a pretty girl with long dark hair. They're talking loudly over the music.

FRANZISKA

(slightly dancing)

This place doesn't miss a beat,  
it's packed even if it's only  
Thursday!

ROLF

No contest here, one of the best  
clubs in the city. What you say,  
Hans?

Hans averts his eyes from the dancefloor and looks at Rolf.

HANS

I think music makes a difference.

Franziska, a bit judgemental, watches Hans as he sips his drink.

ROLF

That's for sure.

FRANZISKA

Could you tell me why you always  
drink that Italian cocktail? I've  
never liked it... Tastes too strong  
and gets you drunk in no time!

Hans pretends to think about it for a moment.

HANS

What's better than that?

Rolf bursts out laughing and places a hand over Hans' shoulder, who's now giving an evil smile. Franziska shakes her head in despair.

FRANZISKA

(to Hans)

Yeah, you're hopeless.

(to Rolf, faking a  
serious tone)

But I think I can halt your  
decline...

Rolf plays the game. His expression becomes serious as he kneels before her in devotion.

ROLF  
Show me the way, my muse!

Franziska takes him by the hand, inviting him to get up. The near CUSTOMERS watch them perplexed, while Hans is enjoying their show.

FRANZISKA  
(with an alluring tone)  
Come with me...

The girl gets Rolf up and starts to drag him to the dancefloor.

ROLF  
(turns to Hans)  
We'll go get a shake, you coming?

HANS  
I'll finish my drink and meet you there.

ROLF  
(walking away)  
Ok... See you on the dancefloor!

FRANZISKA  
If you can find us!

Rolf and Franziska head for the dancefloor, dodging the colourful humanity on their way.

Hans finishes his drink in one draught and starts making his way to the bathroom, which is located at end of the counter, on the left.

ROLF AND FRANZISKA

are standing in the middle of the dancefloor, surrounded by a dancing CROWD. The two youngsters are dancing with slow and sinuous movements. Rolf is a bit embarrassed by the liveliness of the girl.

INT. BATHROOM, NIGHTCLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Hans, sitting on the bowl, snorts a hefty line of COCAINE he placed on the back of his left hand.

The CRIES of ECSTASY of some girl having sex resound from the near stall.

Hans exits the stall and goes to wash his face. His image reflects in the washbowl mirror; presently he's wide-eyed and has a strained expression on his face.

A YOUNG MAN (27), clearly drunk, stumbles out from another stall and goes right next to Hans' washbowl.

The girl continues to express her satisfaction with louder moans.

The young man turns on the tap with some difficulty, then suddenly stops. He turns toward Hans and starts staring at him. Hans takes some paper to dry himself.

YOUNG MAN  
(with dissonant voice)  
Hey man, you got something for me?

HANS  
(without looking)  
No.

He throws the paper into the trash can. The young man ungracefully places a hand on his shoulder. Hans can feel the breath on his cheek.

YOUNG MAN  
(with dissonant voice)  
Come on, you know what I mean..

HANS  
(turning towards him)  
The only meaningful thing here is  
your bad breath.

Hans frees himself from the hug with a quick movement. He turns his back on him, heading for the door.

YOUNG MAN  
(with dissonant voice)  
Asshole!

Hans exits, ignoring him.

INT. NIGHTCLUB

Hans comes out of the bathroom very briskly. First he collides with another YOUNG MAN who pretends it's nothing, then crashes with a PUNK GIRL, nearly making her fall to the ground.

PUNK GIRL  
Watch where you're going!

Hans turns to apologize, but comes face to face with a 6 feet, 2 inches male PUNK. The expression on his face tells he's not very friendly.

HANS  
Who the fu-

Hans cannot even finish his sentence that THUD, he's knocked out with a right hook by the punk; it looks like he just got

started.

A well built Hungarian MAN (45) with dirty blond hair, small green eyes and a moustache comes between the punk and Hans.

MAN

(firmly)

I guess you guys are even now..

The punk is about to attack once again, but then changes his mind; the man in front of him doesn't look like someone to be messed with. He takes the girl by the hand and walks away, disappearing in the crowd.

The man helps Hans get back on his feet. The young man has a small abrasion under his left eye.

HANS

Thank you.

Hans walks away from with a shaky step, stumbling along the way. The man follows him.

MAN

(walking next to him)

You're welcome. My name's Pochath.  
You don't look too good, why don't  
we sit down for a while, what do  
you say?

HANS

I'm not gay.

POCHATH

(smiles)

Me neither.

HANS

Then give me a break!

Hans stumbles and almost falls to the floor. Pochath suppresses another smile.

POCHATH

You won't go too far in this state.  
(pauses)  
Please, Hans. I'd like you to meet  
someone.

The young man stops.

HANS

How do you know my name?

Pochath stares at him with the same intensity as when he saved him, just a few moments before.

POCHATH

It's about work, I know what you do.

(pauses, with disarming kindness)

Don't make me do this the hard way.

Hans touches his left cheekbone and grimaces with pain.

HANS

You have ten minutes.

INT. RAISED FLOOR, NIGHTCLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Background music: "Someone Somewhere In Summertime" by Simple Minds.

Sitting comfortably at one of the tables overlooking the dancefloor there is an extremely dashing MAN (50-55), dressed in a bordeaux suit, a black shirt and a tie which matches his outfit. He's sipping a glass of scotch.

Pochath comes to the table followed by Hans; he makes him sit in front of the dapper man, then he takes a seat between them, face to the railing.

POCHATH

Hans, I'd like you to meet Helmut Sitakos.

HELMUT

(offers his hand)

Good evening.

Hans selflessly shakes his hand, half nodding in an uneducated manner. The eyes of the young man are bulging, his breath is a bit shallow.

HANS

(upset)

So, who you're trying to break out?

Pochath leans forward to Helmut and whispers something inaudible into his ear. The dapper man slowly nods, then takes another sip of whisky.

HELMUT

A girl... As quickly as possible.

HANS

Sure, sure... And who tells me this isn't about something else?

HELMUT

(smiles)

I think you should go easy on cocaine. Among the side effects there are anxiety, paranoia-

Hans interrupts him by slamming down his fist on the table.

HANS  
(loudly)  
This is none of your business!

A young COUPLE sitting at the near table turn for a moment, then restart their conversation. Pochath stares at Hans with unfriendly eyes.

HELMUT  
And irritability.

Hans shifts his gaze to the dancefloor, wheezing after his outburst.

180° PAN-SHOT: the BAR. Dieter and Bernard stand together by the counter. They are sipping their drinks with their backs turned on the dancefloor.

Dieter wears a black suit together with a white shirt and a black tie, while Bernard has a grey suit without any tie. The young man checks the time on his Rolex, then leans forward to Dieter.

BERNARD  
Frederic should be here any second.

Dieter says nothing. Drink in hand, he turns to the dancefloor, watching people passing by.

A beautiful blonde GIRL (20-25) meets his gaze for a second, but the man does not consider her. He looks up at the raised floor. He suddenly squint his eyes to see better. He turns back to the counter, sneering, and brings his mouth close to Bernard's ear.

DIETER  
You remember Hans, the guy who brought me back to the right side of the city?

BERNARD  
(takes a sip from his drink)  
How could I forget him?

The young man dwells on the question for a moment, then slowly turns his head towards Dieter.

BERNARD (CONTINUED)  
Please, don't tell me he's here.

Dieter nods just once, half-closing his eyes.

Bernard turns around, thrilled, and starts scanning the dancefloor.

BERNARD (CONTINUED)

Where's he?

DIETER

(places a hand on his  
shoulder)

Keep cool.

Dieter takes a little sip from his drink, then turns to the counter.

DIETER

(to Bernard's ear)

Did you bring the gun?

The young man shakes his head.

DIETER (CONTINUED)

This complicates things.

Bernard frowns.

DIETER (CONTINUED)

But I don't think it'll stop us.

(pause)

Am I wrong?

The young man's disdain dissolves in a smirk.

INT. RAISED FLOOR, NIGHTCLUB

Helmut patiently observes Hans as he absently stares at the dancefloor, his breathing now back to normal. The elegant man leans forward to him.

HELMUT

My offer is 8.000 marks. Given your  
current state, I don't pretend an  
immediate answer. Mr. Pochath,  
here, will call you tomorrow.

Pochath takes out a pen and a little NOTE from the pocket of his jacket and starts writing something on it. Helmut gets up. Hans shifts his attention back to him.

HELMUT (CONTINUED)

So don't forget to pick up the  
phone... You could miss out on a  
great opportunity. Thanks for your  
time.

The elegant man heads toward the stairs. Pochath stands up and puts the note on the table, right before Hans.

POCHATH

(gently)

I hope you'll accept.



The man joins Helmut; their silhouettes disappear beyond the stairs.

Hans looks down on the note; it's blank. Turns it the other side. It says: "8.000 marks".

DIETER and BERNARD

are still leaning against the counter. The man keeps a close watch on Hans with furtive glances.

A YOUNG MAN with a triple ear piercing approaches Bernard.

PIERCED YOUNG MAN

Hey Bernard!

BERNARD

Frederic, how you doin'?

The two amicably hug.

FREDERIC

As usual.

(sees Dieter, smiles at  
him)

Hi Dieter.

The man raises his glass to greet him, but his attention is focused elsewhere.

FREDERIC

Why don't we get out?

DIETER

Unfortunately something came up,  
we're gonna have to postpone our  
conversation.

Frederic is deeply disappointed. Dieter spots Hans leaving the table and heading for the stairs leading to the exit.

FREDERIC

C'mon, I've got clients waiting,  
you can't-

DIETER

(putting his glass on the  
counter)

I'm sorry.

Dieter glances at Bernard and nods his head toward the exit.

BERNARD

(pats Frederic on the  
shoulder)

Don't worry, we'll call you  
tomorrow.

(smiling)

You know you can trust us.

Dieter and Bernard leave the bar, heading for the exit. The pierced young man watches them walking away with the expression of a child whose toy has just been taken away.

HANS

meets Rolf and Franziska while coming down the stairs; they're going upstairs with drinks in their hands. He stops right before them. There's still tension on his face.

FRANZISKA

(a bit annoyed)

Where have you been? We waited for you 'til five minutes ago.

(notices the abrasion)

God, what happened to your cheekbone?

HANS

I've been busy.

ROLF

Yeah, you were busy getting beaten up.

(places a hand above his shoulder)

I told you, never start a brawl on your own... Come and sit with us.

HANS

No, I'm fed up with this place, I'm going home.

FRANZISKA

Come on, why don't you stay a little longer?

Hans shakes his head.

ROLF

Are you going to be all right?

HANS

Yeah... See you guys.

Rolf and Franziska watch Hans going down the stairs very briskly.

FRANZISKA

Same old story. Why doesn't he just quit?

ROLF

I don't know... but I hope someday he will.

EXT. STREET, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT - LATER

The street's not very busy. Hans's waiting for the green light at a crosswalk. The traffic light changes color; Hans crosses the street and enters the SUBWAY.

INT. SUBWAY, WEST BERLIN - MOMENTS LATER

Hans is sitting on a bench, smoking a cigarette.

Two LIGHTS illuminate the subway tunnel; a moment later, the first wagon appears on the tracks. Hans gets up, his hair get blown by the passage of the train. The trainset stops, doors open; the young man throws away the cigarette and enters one of the first subway cars.

INT. SUBWAY CAR

Hans takes a look around; the car is empty. He sits down on one seat facing the entrance doors and puts his head on the window. He's got an empty, blank look in his eyes.

The doors start to close. Hans sees out the corner of his eye that someone has walked in at the last minute using the entrance at the end of the car. Intrigued, the young man turns to see.

FULL SHOT: DIETER is at the end of the car, staring down Hans.

INT. SUBWAY

Bernard stands in front of the doors from which Dieter entered; he didn't get there in time. He slams his fist on the window in anger.

Dieter looks at him for a moment, then turns his attention back in front of himself. Bernard helplessly watches the trainset leave and disappear in the subway tunnel.

INT. SUBWAY CAR

Dieter walks briskly toward Hans wielding his 50-inch switchblade.

Hans stands up. He awaits him in silence, showing no signs of retreating.

Dieter strikes first, but his slice is short because Hans backs away, throwing a jab which almost hit the target.

Dieter attacks him a second time; Hans dodges the claw once again and kicks Dieter in the ribs, but the man soften the blow with his left arm.

The interior LIGHTING flickers.

Dieter attempts a lethal blow for the third time; Hans blocks his hands and slams him against the windows. The two

duellists are now face-to-face, angry and panting. Hans improvises a knee to the groin which hits the mark. Dieter, feeling the blow, pushes Hans away and moves from the window.

Hans tries to grab him again, but Dieter quickly ducks sideways and cuts the right side of his abdomen, ripping off his jacket. The suffering young man backs away; now he's bleeding.

Dieter's leaning against a pole; genital pain keeps him from fighting.

Hans moves away from his opponent and goes up to the doors, wheezing. He keeps his eyes on Dieter who, still sore, doesn't lose sight of him.

The train exits the tunnel and proceeds through the station. Hans takes out a tissue from his pocket and presses it hard on the wound. The trainset slows down, then stops. The doors open: the young man runs away.

Dieter hides the knife in his jacket and stumbles out of the car.

INT. SUBWAY

Dieter climbs the stairs which leads to the surface leaning on the handrails. A drunk HOMELESS GUY (60) is lying down on a carton on top of the ramp; he gives Dieter a curious look as he watches him get closer.

HOMELESS GUY

(rambling)

Hey man.. Do you need help?

Dieter looks down at him contemptuously.

DIETER

Not yet... In case I'll give you a call.

Dieter passes him and proceeds on the next ramp. He's walking at normal pace now.

HOMELESS GUY

(giggling)

Eh eh.. I talked like you.. Long time ago.. Eh eh.. A long time ago..

EXT. STREET OF WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

Dieter emerges from the stairs of the metro station. He looks around with a 360° view; Hans is nowhere to be seen. The silence of the night is broken only by the few cars which are driving through the street.

A DROP of water falls on his forehead. The man slowly looks up to the sky. The drops multiply and rapidly turn into a thunderstorm. Dieter, heedless of the rain and emotionless, goes back in the metro at a slow pace.

INT. BEDROOM, EAST BERLIN HOUSE - NIGHT

The room has a parquet floor and a low ceiling with wooden beams.

DANIKA (20-25), a girl with medium-length blond hair, stands in front of a window; she's absently looking at the rain pounding against the glass. A flash of LIGHTNING illuminates her face, followed by a rumble of thunder.

The girl goes to a desk, sits down on a chair. Her movements are slow, almost robotic. She puts her elbows on the desktop, holding her face between the hands. She allows her head to go down until his forehead is on the wooden top. After a few seconds the girl raises her head and starts to ransack the drawers, scattering their contents and leaving them open in the process.

A moment later she rises from her seat and heads for the white wardrobe situated near the entrance. Opens the doors and starts to rummage through her stuff.

The bedroom is filled with light following the FLASH of a second lightning, succeeded by the rumble of another thunder.

INT. CORRIDOR, EAST BERLIN HOUSE - NIGHT

MRS. KELLER (50-60), a sturdy woman with her hair tucked up in a bun, comes out of her bedroom dressed in a beige robe. She goes down the stairs, enters the kitchen and turns on the lights. After a few seconds, the woman exits the room, yawning, with a BOTTLE of WATER in her hand. She climbs the stairs, goes past her room and stops in front of another door; puts her ear on it for a moment, then takes out a key from the pocket of her robe. The LOCK pops two times, the woman opens the door.

INT. BEDROOM, EAST BERLIN HOUSE - NIGHT

Mrs. Keller sees Danika' SILHOUETTE a few feet in front of her, hanging by the neck from a rope tied to a roof beam. The desk chair lies reversed at her feet.

The woman is shocked. The water bottle falls to the floor, breaking into a thousand PIECES.

MRS. KELLER

Danika!

Mrs. Keller rushes ahead, slipping in the process; she turns the chair and places it beside the girl. She grabs her legs strongly, then steps up the chair. The woman holds her up with her left arm; at this stage she removes the noose, the

belt of a robe, from her neck.

The woman lays Danika down on the bed and turns on the bedside light: the girl is cyanotic. She puts her ear next to the girl's mouth; a moment later she backs away, breathing a sigh of relief.

MRS. KELLER

Thank God...

The woman runs a hand over the girl's forehead. She notices that the armchair behind her back is upside down; all the clothes have been dumped on the floor. She places the chair near the bed, sits down and takes Danika's right hand. As the girl's face starts to recover, the woman's worried expression slowly disappears.

EXT. ALLEY, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

Hans struggles in the rain, keeping his right hand pressed on the wound, his expression a mixture of pain and determination.

The young man reaches the end of the alley and stops; in front of him there is a major street that flanks the WALL. A few hundred meters across the street, to his left, there are some buildings which border on the walled area.

Hans breathes out; turns on the left, resuming his path on the sidewalk.

INT. BEDROOM, OVERATH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The room is decorated in classic style, with closet, nightstand and double bed all made out of inlaid walnut.

ISAAC OVERATH (50-60), grey hair and beard, a bit overweight and with a natural tendency to snore, is sleeping on the bed. The sound of the doorbell fills the room, DRIIN. The man awakens and rises in a seated position. Checks the time: the clock on the nightstand reads 3:48 a.m. He turns; the other half of the bed is EMPTY. The HISS of the rain on the roof echoes through the bedroom. The doorbell rings once again, DRIIN.

OVERATH

(rubbing his eyes)

What the hell...

The man gets out of the bed, slips into a robe and heads for the bedroom door.

INT. LOBBY, OVERATH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The man reaches the front door; the doorbell rings for the third time, DRIIN.

OVERATH  
 (annoyed)  
 Who is it?

HANS (O.S.)  
 Hans.

Overath's eyes burst all of a sudden. The man puts the key in the lock, turns it twice and opens the door.

AMERICAN SHOT: HANS, soaking wet, standing on the threshold with his hand pressed on the wound. A hard rain keeps falling on the street right behind him.

HANS  
 (hesitant)  
 I need your help, Isaac...

Overath notices the bloodstained HANDKERCHIEF.

OVERATH  
 (a bit worried)  
 What happened?

Overath helps the young man entering by holding him up, then closes the door using one foot. His soaken clothes are dripping on the floor.

HANS  
 I'm gonna tell you...  
 (grimaces with pain)  
 But, right now, I need you to fix me up.

INT. STUDY, OVERATH'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

The study is a large room furnished with a desk and a big table at the center. Two sides of the room are occupied by elegant mahogany libraries, each one filled with books. There is a series of certificates hanging from the wall, among which there is a DEGREE in Medicine and Surgery.

Hans, shirtless, is laying down on the table which has been covered with a white sheet, while his head rests on a folded towel.

Overath sits right beside him and has almost finished stitching the wound on his abdomen.

OVERATH  
 You've been lucky. The blade didn't reach deep enough.

Hans' looking up at the ceiling with a pained expression. Overath cuts the suture with a small pair of scissors.

OVERATH (CONTINUED)  
 (rising up)  
 You better duck next time.

HANS

I will keep that in mind.

Overath helps the young man to stand up, sustaining him. The two carefully head for the door.

INT. LOBBY, OVERATH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hans climbs the stairs leading to the sleeping quarters helped by Overath, who's sustaining his left side.

OVERATH

Come on, you try a little bit harder than that.

Hans glances uneasily at him for a moment.

INT. GUEST ROOM, OVERATH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The room is small and furnished with a single bed and a dresser, while the closet is placed on the walls in front of the bed.

The door opens, Hans and Overath enter the room. The young man sits on the bed, takes off his pants and shoes. Overath turns on the lights and starts reaching into the wardrobe.

OVERATH

Let's see what I can find...

He takes some grey pyjamas out of a drawer.

OVERATH (CONTINUED)

Here it is.

Overath hands it to Hans, who wears it with some difficulties. The man helps him onto the bed, then covers him up. He takes a seat beside the bed.

OVERATH

Who did this?

HANS

A guy who I helped to escape.

Overath looks at him for a few moments, perplexed.

OVERATH

Was this your reward?

HANS

Come on Isaac, I'm not in the mood.

(pause)

I didn't know he was a drug smuggler. He made me think he was trying to flee with his son... Truth is he was using the boy as a drug mule. He got sick, so...



OVERATH

So you intervened.

HANS

(breathes out)

Yeah. But if I were to tell you why I did it, well... I don't know.

(shakes his head slowly)

I only know that I really wanted to take those 3.000 marks.

(looking at Overath)

In spite of being used and deceived.

OVERATH

Everyone hesitates. But what really matters is to make the right decision... And I think you picked a good one.

HANS

It amounted to nothing... The boy got killed anyway. I had the chance to kill this guy, but I couldn't make it.

(pauses)

A real masterpiece.

OVERATH

(leans forward)

Einstein said the world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it.

Overath places a hand upon his shoulder, then rises and puts back the chair near the closet.

OVERATH (CONTINUED)

(about to close the door)

Goodnight.

HANS

I'm no hero, Isaac.

OVERATH

Heroes do not exist.

(pauses)

Rest now, and in the morning I'll check your wound.

The man turns off the lights and closes the door.

Hans puts his hands behind his head while looking up to the ceiling; his mind is full of thoughts.

INT. "SITAKOS GMBH" OFFICE - MORNING

The office, big and full of light, is rectangular. Lined up on one side of the room there is a series of statues representing ancient GREEK GODS, while on the other one a large WINDOW offers a bird's-eye view of Berlin.

ALGER SITAKOS (60), an elegant balding man, is sitting cross-armed behind a large desk at the back of the room. On the corners behind his back there are an areca palm and a well furnished mobile-bar.

KARL (35), a disappointed man with eyeglasses, is sitting in front of him.

KARL

I spoke with Van Heten a little while ago, he told me that our offer is inadequate. He said that Max Schafer is on his way up and will become a household name very soon... I tried to negotiate a deal, but he wouldn't hear it. He added that if we're interested in his works, that's the price we have to pay.

A few moments of silence.

ALGER

"Will become a household name very soon". So much foresight. But one has to deal with the difficult relationship between present and future. The problem with the latter is that it is uncertain and full of surprises. In short: unpredictable.  
(pauses)

What did you tell him?

KARL

I told him that we'd have taken some time to decide. I got the impression he's not going to sell those paintings very easily.

ALGER

How long have you known Van Heten?

KARL

(thinks about it for a minute)

I don't know... Maybe 5 years. And to be honest, I've never seen him this-

ALGER

(interrupts him)

I've known him for 30 years, and I also know for a fact that his gallery has not been able to sell a single painting for 3 months.

Karl's expression is a mixture of foolishness and stupidity.

ALGER (CONTINUED)

Our offer is reasonable. He's just trying to raise the price.

(pulls out a file from a drawer)

I want you to call him back and offer him the same figure, 10% minus. Just tell him that we lowered the offer because he's been wasting our time.

KARL

Wouldn't it affect our relationship with him?

ALGER

You're right.

(leans forward)

In case he'd take offense, you can tell him that I can find promising new painters like Schafer whenever I want. I'll just have to take the metro.

Karl is wordless; eyebrows are raised, mouth hanging open. In a few moments, surprise leaves room for foolishness.

ALGER

Do I make myself clear?

KARL

(quickly recovering)

Quite clear.

He rises from his seat, goes to leave.

ALGER

Karl, one thing.

The man with the eyeglasses stops and turns towards Alger.

ALGER (CONTINUED)

(coldly)

The reason why me and my brother hired you is that we needed a buyer, so that we could attend to other business. If I have to solve every unforeseen situation you may encounter, you'll understand that

(MORE)

ALGER (CONTINUED) (cont'd)  
your figure may become useless.  
This is precisely why, for the next  
time, I'd like to see you produce a  
solution, not another problem.

KARL  
(swallows)  
You're absolutely right.

ALGER  
Call me when the deal's closed. You  
can go now.

Karl heads for the exit like a dog with his tail between his  
legs. The door opens, Helmut enters.

KARL  
Good morning.

HELMUT  
'Morning, Karl.

They shake hands. Helmut notices the gloomy face of his  
employee.

HELMUT  
Is everything OK?

KARL  
It's all right.  
(quietly)  
Sorry, but I got to go, I'm  
negotiating with Van Heten.

Karl exits and closes the door. Helmut is taken aback for a  
few seconds, then heads for Alger's desk.

HELMUT  
I've a feeling that our miserable  
intermediary just received one of  
your famous parent drills.

Alger raises his gaze from the documents.

ALGER  
Here's my talent scout!  
(pauses)  
I had to remind Karl of the reason  
why he's earning a salary.

Helmut sits in front of his brother, sporting a mocking  
smirk.

HELMUT  
The term "staff motivation without  
humiliation" ring a bell?

Alger throws the file he was reading on the desk.

ALGER

The term "balance" ring a bell?

Helmut takes the documents and starts combing through them. His expression has now become serious. Alger puts his elbows on the desk.

ALGER (CONTINUED)

If you check the figures of the last quarter, you'll notice that our profits are down.

HELMUT

Such are the hazards of any company, and who trades in modern art makes no exception.

ALGER

We're buying at higher prices, our income is therefore bound to remain low at the time of the sale.

HELMUT

You know better than me that ups and downs always occur in the market. There's been a downturn, admittedly, but if you compare the current revenues with those from last year, you'll see that we have a surplus of 100.000 marks.

Helmut puts the file back on the desk. Alger looks at him for a few seconds.

ALGER

This doesn't mean we can relax. We got to work harder on up and coming young painters. Unknowns represent our future.

HELMUT

Our past, also. Everything started from there, if you remember.

(pauses)

I'm planning to meet two promising painters, both Berliners, in this respect. I want to see if there is any possibility of having some kind of fast-track. First come, first served.

Alger sits back in his chair. The expression on his face now is more relaxed.

ALGER

You have carte blanche, as always, just be careful with the budget. These people have to see us as a

(MORE)

ALGER (cont'd)  
stepping stone, not as an  
opportunity to make money.

HELMUT  
Well... That's always been what we  
do best.

ALGER  
Then we are on the same frequency.

Alger gets up and goes to the mobile-bar. He prepares two  
glasses of Jack Daniel's straight, offers one to his  
brother. He leans on the desk.

ALGER  
I regret the times when we were  
just the two of us.

HELMUT  
Maybe we sould've been less  
effective.

The brothers exchange a smirk, then sip their drinks.

The phone on the desk RINGS; Alger puts it on SPEAKER.

ALGER  
Yeah.

SECRETARY (O.S.)  
Sir, I have Mrs. Keller on the  
line.

Alger puts the glass down on the desk. Helmut leans over to  
the speaker.

ALGER  
(sitting down)  
Put her on.

SECRETARY (O.S.)  
Right away.

There's a CLICK.

MRS. KELLER (O.S.)  
Mr. Sitakos, I'm sorry to bother  
you but I've to tell you what  
happened a few hours ago.

ALGER  
Go ahead.

MRS. KELLER  
Well... Danika tried to kill  
herself.

Alger's eyes are widened, Helmut is petrified.

ALGER

What?

MRS. KELLER (O.S.)

She tried to hang herself... but  
thank God, I saved her.

Alger's face has now become a mask of anger.

HELMUT

Mrs. Keller, this is Helmut, how is  
she now?

MRS. KELLER (O.S.)

Hello... She's fine, she's resting  
now. Luckily, it was not necessary  
to call a doctor...

ALGER

(holding back his anger)

Luckily...

(loudly)

And could you tell me where the  
hell were you?

MRS. KELLER (O.S.)

(intimidated)

I was sleeping, how could I imagine  
that-

ALGER

(loudly)

If you watched over her properly,  
maybe you'd have seen it, not only  
imagined!

Helmut asks his brother to calm down with wide hand  
gestures. Alger sighs.

MRS. KELLER (O.S.)

(humbly)

I'm really sorry, but she's never  
done anything like this before...  
I'm constantly keeping an eye on  
her, as soon as-

HELMUT

(interrupting her, with a  
reassuring tone)

This is exactly what we expect from  
you right now. Don't leave her  
alone, she might try again. Now we  
got to go. Mrs. Keller, remember.

(pauses)

We're counting on you.

MRS. KELLER (O.S.)

Have no doubt, Mr. Sitakos. I  
promise.

Helmut closes the conversation with a CLICK. Alger shakes his head firmly; anger has passed, now he's worried.

ALGER

I don't trust her, we've got to take action as soon as possible.

(pauses)

What about the kid?

HELMUT

I gave him some time to think about it. We'll get an answer this afternoon.

ALGER

We offered him more money than he can ever afford, what's there to consider?

HELMUT

A cocaine addiction.

(gets up)

I gotta go, I'll keep you informed.

Helmut exits the office. Alger picks up his whisky; he examines it against the light for a few seconds, then drinks it in a single sip.

INT. LOBBY, OVERATH'S HOUSE - MORNING

Hans descends the stairs leading to the lobby at a good pace. Overath follows him at close range.

OVERATH

Hope you don't have any outings lined up.

HANS

Where do you want me to go? I'll be out of action for the rest of the day, thanks to your breakfast.

OVERATH

(shrugs)

They say it's the most important meal of the day.

The young man reaches the end of the stairwell.

HANS

Sure, but everytime I have breakfast at your home, it becomes the last one of the day.

OVERATH

I'll take it as a compliment.

Hans takes his jacket from the coatrack and puts it on. He turns to Overath; the man's expression has become serious.



OVERATH

Are you going to leave well enough alone or not?

HANS

Maybe.

OVERATH

Be straight.

HANS

I don't know, thing is... Yesterday I was offered another job.

The man is visibly disappointed.

OVERATH

What are you going to do?

HANS

I would tell you if I knew... They want an answer by this afternoon.

(pauses)

It's a lot of money... No one had ever offered me so much.

Overath remains silent for a few seconds.

OVERATH

I know it's none of my business, but think about it. The wound has been medicated and stitched, but you're not in your best physical condition.

HANS

I know.

(pauses)

I'll just have to figure out something... as always.

Overath opens the front door; it's a beautiful day outside.

OVERATH

Take care.

HANS

Thank you, Isaac.

OVERATH

Get out, before I hand you over to the vopos back here.

Overath winks at him, Hans half smiles and exits. The man watches him walking away on the sidewalk for a few seconds, then closes the door.

INT. HANS' ONE-ROOM APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

The place, a little narrow but well lit, is decorated in a modern style. Hans's watching TV lying on a red couch.

Someone rings the bell, DRIIN. Hans raises up and goes to the intercom.

HANS  
Who is it?

ROLF (O.S.)  
Your only friend.

HANS  
I don't have any.

ROLF (O.S.)  
C'mon, open the door!

Hans presses a button on the intercom with a smile, then opens the door, leaving it half-closed. He goes to sit on an armchair near the sofa.

Rolf enters after a few seconds and closes the front door.

HANS  
Hey partner.

ROLF  
Hi H.

Rolf unceremoniously sits down on the sofa.

HANS  
Feel like you're at my home.

ROLF  
(smiles)  
Done.

Rolf picks up the remote and starts zapping channels wildly.

ROLF (CONTINUED)  
What were you doing?

HANS  
Nothing special, I was watching the TV.

ROLF  
Uh-huh. I've got another question.

HANS  
Shoot.

ROLF  
(inquisitive)  
Why do you bailed on us so early  
last night?

HANS  
I was dead tired... That's it.

ROLF  
Go tell somebody else.  
(pauses)  
Truth is you were gacked out on  
coke.  
(turns to him)  
Again.

HANS  
You came here to give me a lecture?

ROLF  
No... But I'm working on it. I  
might give up if, in the meantime,  
you decided to quit.

HANS  
(sighs)  
OK, I'll think about it... Did you  
have fun?

ROLF  
(resumes watching TV)  
In that place is almost inevitable.

HANS  
Better that way.

Rolf suddenly turns off the TV.

ROLF  
(looking at him)  
Listen, we've known each other for  
about a year, I'm not stupid and  
I'd like you don't treat me as  
such. It didn't take me long to  
realize that you don't work at a  
supermarket. What's with all the  
mystery here?

HANS  
I can't tell you.

ROLF  
C'mon, what the hell are you, a  
superhero?

HANS  
Not even remotely.

ROLF  
 You know I wouldn't tell anything  
 to anyone.

HANS  
 Believe me, this is not about  
 trust...

ROLF  
 Then I really don't understand you.

HANS  
 There's nothing to understand.  
 (kindly)  
 But please, as a friend, don't ask  
 me that again.

Rolf rests his head on the sofa and raises up his hands in a  
 gesture of surrender.

ROLF  
 Enough, OK, I give up.  
 (lowering his arms)  
 It's like in the comics.

A phone placed on a little pedestal a few yards from the  
 sofa suddenly RINGS.

HANS  
 (ironic)  
 At least you tried.

Hans gets up, pats him on the back and goes to answer.

ROLF  
 (without looking at him)  
 Get lost.

Hans picks up the phone, smiling. Rolf cannot hear the  
 conversation from his position.

HANS  
 Hello?

POCHATH (O.S.)  
 Good afternoon, Hans.

Hans' smile vanishes.

POCHATH (O.S., CONTINUED)  
 This is Pochath.

HANS  
 I recognized you instantly.

POCHATH (O.S.)  
 So, what's your decision?

Hans, still on the fence, lowers his gaze on the floor.  
There are a few moments of silence.

POCHATH (O.S.)

Hans?

HANS

I'll do it.

POCHATH (O.S.)

Great. I can pick you up in... 30  
minutes, if that's OK with you.

HANS

(looks at Rolf)

Fine.

POCHATH (O.S.)

See you later.

HANS

The address-

POCHATH (O.S.)

(interrupts him)

I've got it, thank you.

The phone cuts out. Hans lowers the handset and comes back  
to Rolf with a brooding face.

ROLF

Who was it?

HANS

Isaac, a friend of mine. I told you  
about him, remember?

ROLF

Yeah, the medic. Why did he call  
you?

HANS

He just wanted to have a word.

ROLF

Good, because that's what the two  
of us got to do. I heard that  
Depeche Mode will be playing at  
Deutschlandhalle at the beginning  
of December. Nothing more needs to  
be said, right?

HANS

No... We'll be there.

ROLF

(widening his arms)

Some gravitas, at last!

HANS  
 Sorry, but now I have to go. I'll  
 give you a call, OK?

ROLF  
 (gets up)  
 OK, OK... It's time to get out of  
 your hair.  
 (pointing his right hand  
 at Hans)  
 I'll expect your call.

HANS  
 Deal.

Hans opens the door. Rolf heads for it, then stops.

ROLF  
 And don't forget about the concert.

HANS  
 (absent-minded)  
 Sorry?

ROLF  
 (dejected)  
 Oh God... Depeche Mode!

HANS  
 Oh yeah, sure... Guaranteed.

ROLF  
 (muttered as he exits)  
 Yeah, that I'm going alone.

Hans doesn't hear the last sentence, closes the door and  
 leans back on it. After a few seconds, he does the same with  
 his head, exhaling.

EXT. STREET OF WEST BERLIN - LATE AFTERNOON

The street has a decent amount of traffic, while the  
 sidewalks are filled with PEOPLE busy talking or  
 window-shopping.

Dieter, dressed in suit, walks on the curb whistling. His  
 eyes don't stay put; they carefully scan the visual field in  
 front of him.

The man leans against a lamp post and lights a cigarette.  
 His gaze sweeps over the crowd, then suddenly stops. He  
 resumes walking after a few seconds. He crosses the street;  
 once on the other side, a young Turk, OZCAN (32), approaches  
 him.

OZCAN  
 (whispered)  
 Hey man, coke? Heroin? Hashish?

Dieter nods, Ozcan nods back to follow him. The two men take a much less busy secondary road. After a few meters, the Turk stops walking and starts looking around. Nobody's watching.

OZCAN  
What you need?

DIETER  
Coke.

OZCAN  
How much?

DIETER  
Half a pound should be enough.

The pusher bursts out laughing.

OZCAN  
You trying to be funny?

Dieter takes out a stack of money from the inside pocket of his jacket.

DIETER  
No.  
(pauses)  
Me and my friends are looking to  
have fun for long.

Ozcan is dumbfounded.

OZCAN  
(looking around)  
We gotta go somewhere else, it's  
not far from here. Follow me.

The Turk resumes walking, closely followed by Dieter. The two men go around a corner and take an alley filled with small shops, bazars and groceries. There are plenty of Turkish EMIGRANTS. Ozcan veers right into a big, open gate.

EXT. LOT, WEST BERLIN - LATE AFTERNOON

The two men walk through the lot towards a disused FACTORY; the front glasses of the building are broken, the walls are smudgerd with graffiti.

Ozcan stops in front of the entrance and knocks FOUR times. The door opens.

INT. DISUSED FACTORY, WEST BERLIN - LATE AFTERNOON

Ozcan and Dieter enter a large empty room. The low light spilling in from the big, dirty windows clearly reveals the weeds protruding from the floor.

The door is closed by an enormous BEARDED MAN (35), Turkish himself, who walks up to Dieter and starts searching him ungraciously. Ozcan keeps a watchful eye on them.

BEARDED MAN  
(in Turkish)  
He's clean.

OZCAN  
(to Dieter)  
Let's go.

Ozcan leads Dieter on a staircase going to the next floor.

INT. OFFICE, DISUSED FACTORY - LATE AFTERNOON

At the center of the room there's a long TABLE with upside-down chairs on top, while empty shelves lie on the rear wall.

Sitting at the head of the table there's a man with thick, black moustaches, BEHCET (30); he's inserting cash, very carefully, into a MONEY-COUNTING MACHINE.

Dieter enters first, followed by Ozcan. Behcet sees them out of the corner of his eye. He puts a rubber band on the wad of cash he just counted and stands up.

BEHCET  
(in Turkish)  
Who's this?

OZCAN  
(in Turkish)  
A customer.

Behcet comes up to Ozcan.

BEHCET  
(in Turkish, worried)  
Are you out of your fucking mind?  
Why did you bring him in here?

OZCAN  
(in Turkish)  
He's loaded... We're gonna fleece him.

Ozcan winks at him, Behcet calms down.

OZCAN (CONTINUED)  
(in Turkish)  
Just keep an eye on him, I'll be right back.

Behcet looks at Dieter from head to foot.



BEHCET  
(in Turkish)  
Alright, but hurry up.

OZCAN  
(in Turkish, smiling)  
Tonight we're going to party.

Behcet returns to the table and leans on it.

DIETER  
(politely)  
Is there any problem?

OZCAN  
(reassuring him)  
No, wait here. Behcet will keep you  
company.

Ozcan exits the room. Dieter gives Behcet a kind smile, the mustachioed man fixes him in an unfriendly manner in return.

DIETER  
How's the business going around  
here?

Behcet keeps staring at him, without saying anything.

DIETER (CONTINUED)  
(under his breath)  
Maybe this is none of my business.

Ozcan gets back in the room with a BRICK of cocaine and a scale which he puts on the table. He signals Dieter to join him, the elegant man goes right next to him. Ozcan places the brick on the scale.

OZCAN  
(pointing the scale)  
Half a kilo.

DIETER  
Perfect. So... how much this is  
going to cost me?

OZCAN  
You'll get away with 40.000 marks.

Dieter's eyes widen in surprise.

DIETER  
It seems a bit too much. I don't  
think you've met any customers like  
me...

OZCAN  
(resentful)  
I'm treating you well, man! If you go to the city center, it will cost you 82.000 marks a kilo... Basically, you're buying in bulk here!

DIETER  
(shrugging)  
I never bought it there... Too little privacy.

OZCAN  
Then you've come to the right place!

Dieter stares at the brick of cocaine with brooding eyes for a few moments.

DIETER  
Alright. But next time you'll give me a special discount, OK?

Ozcan pats him on the back.

OZCAN  
(smirking)  
That's for sure.

Dieter starts putting wads of cash on the table; Ozcan's eyes sparkle with happiness. Behcet watches him in stunned disbelief from the other side of the table.

BEHCET  
(in Turkish)  
Holy shit...

OZCAN  
(in Turkish)  
I told you.

Dieter extracts the last wad of cash.

DIETER  
There should be all of it.

BEHCET  
I'm gonna count them... Don't you want to try it in the meantime?

DIETER  
Sure.

OZCAN  
Let me handle this.

The pusher produces a small knife from his back pocket. Behcet takes the cash to the head of the table and begins

the money count. Ozcan cuts the brick.

DIETER

Just out of curiosity, the pushers from whom I used to buy around here, they told me that they had a specific supplier, but I can't recall the name...

The Turk carefully hands the knife to Dieter, who snorts the coke. The elegant man raises his thumb as a sign of appreciation.

OZCAN

I heard of this guy... I think his name was Dieter. They say he was in the big business.

Ozcan places the knife back in his pocket.

DIETER

What happened to him?

BEHCET (O.S.)

Nobody knows.

Dieter and Ozcan shift their gaze on Behcet.

BEHCET (CONTINUED)

A few months ago, he went to East Berlin for a deal, and nobody has heard from him ever since.

OZCAN

(to Behcet)

His loss... This is our territory now.

DIETER

Aren't you afraid that he may return?

Ozcan looks at Behcet and bursts out laughing; the moustachioed Turk chuckles. Ozcan puts an arm around Dieter's shoulder.

OZCAN

Afraid of who? Some asshole who's history?

Dieter stiffens, a ruthless look appears in his eyes.

DIETER

What if that asshole is back?

Behcet's hit in the chest by three SHOTS coming from a silenced pistol. Blood splatters end up on the cash he was counting.

Bernard stands on the threshold; his gun is now pointed on Ozcan.

BERNARD

Good evening.

Ozcan is bewildered. Dieter quickly breaks loose from his embrace and grabs him by the hair. He puts his mouth near the Turk's ear.

DIETER

(whispered)

Ubi abundantia, ibi incuria.  
(I.e.: "Where there is abundance,  
there is negligence".)

Dieter violently slams Ozcan's face on the table, THUD; the Turk loses consciousness. Bernard joins him, puts a BAG on the table.

DIETER

The doorman?

BERNARD

He didn't make it.

DIETER

Tie him to a chair, please.

Bernard takes one of the chairs and places it a couple of meters from the table. He lifts the now semiconscious Ozcan up; he notices three bloody TEETH. He takes him to the chair, then restrains both his wrists and ankles with zip ties. Pulls out of his pocket a white muzzle and shoves it inside Ozcan's mouth.

CLOSE UP: on OZCAN. Now he's fully recovered. The white muzzle inside his mouth has partially become red.

DIETER

Spare clothes?

BERNARD

They're in the bag.

Dieter begins to pull off his clothes, first his jacket, then his tie; he carefully tosses them on the table. He rolls up the sleeves of his shirt and turns to Ozcan who, unable to speak, begins to shake his head, scared of what's next.

Bernard takes a seat onto the table and, legs dangling, pulls out a chewing gum which he puts inside his mouth.

DIETER

Did you call Frederic?

BERNARD

Not yet.

DIETER

Don't forget to. There's a lot of  
money riding on this.

Bernard nods.

AMERICAN SHOT: DIETER, standing in front of the chair on  
which Ozcan has been tied up.

He pulls out his knife; Ozcan looks at him in terror. The  
man sticks the blade into the lower abdomen of his victim.  
The floor gets wet with URINE.

Bernard witnesses the scene without looking the other way,  
chewing very slowly.

Ozcan utters a series of deep, smothered groans. Dieter  
grabs him by his left shoulder and, with his right hand,  
draws the blade up to his throat. The moaning suddenly  
stops. Ozcan's entrails fall at Dieter's feet, spraying  
blood on his expensive shoes.

CLOSE UP: DIETER. His face is covered with tiny BLOOD SPOTS.

INT. ENTRANCE, "SITAKOS GMBH" - LATE AFTERNOON

The entrance consists of a big HALL with white walls  
decorated by modern art PAINTINGS. There is an elevator down  
the hall, flanked by a marble staircase.

The hall is filled by a dozen MEN and WOMEN elegantly  
dressed; some of them are sitting on booths, the rest are  
busy talking with each other while standing on their feet.

Pochath and Hans emerge from the big sliding door. The two  
men stop by a counter placed on the left, behind which sits  
a good-looking SECRETARY (35).

SECRETARY

Good afternoon, Messrs Sitakos are  
awaiting you in the conference  
hall.

POCHATH

(kindly)

Thank you.

(to Hans)

This way.

Pochath heads for the elevator with Hans by his side.

HANS

Is there a Mrs. Sitakos?

POCHATH

(smiles)

No. The secretary was referring to  
Helmut's older brother, Alger.

Hans realizes he just asked a messy question.

HANS  
(looking at the walls)  
They must like modern art.

POCHATH  
Not just that.

The two men arrive in front of the elevator. Pochath pushes the call button.

HANS  
Do they have an art gallery or what?

POCHATH  
No... they restock them.

HANS  
Art dealers?

POCHATH  
Let's just say they're good at spotting talent.

The elevator's doors open.

POCHATH (CONTINUED)  
You must be talented, otherwise you wouldn't be here.  
(invites him to enter)  
I can guarantee.

Hans gets on the elevator, followed by Pochath.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL, "SITAKOS GMBH" - MOMENTS LATER

The hall has a long, rectangular table which can seat a dozen people.

Alger is sitting on the longer side of the table, focused on examining a documentation package. Helmut stands over behind him, staring out a window.

Someone knocks on the door. Alger raises his head, Helmut turns towards the door.

ALGER  
Come in.

The door opens, Hans enters the hall. Pochath closes the door and waits outside. Helmut goes to shake hands with Hans.

HELMUT  
I'm glad to see you again, Hans.

HANS

Glad to see you, too. I'm sorry  
that when we first met-

HELMUT

(smiles)

Don't worry, everyone amuses  
themselves the way they want.

(turns to Alger)

I'd like you to meet my brother,  
Alger.

Hans approaches the table. Alger closes his documents, gets  
on his feet and shakes hands with Hans from his seat.

ALGER

Hello, Mr. Remher. Take a seat.

Helmut goes and sits next to his brother.

HANS

Thank you.

Hans sits in front of Alger.

ALGER

Would you like anything to drink?

HANS

I'm fine, thank you.

ALGER

Well, then we can talk a little  
business. As my brother told you,  
we contacted you because it's our  
intention to flee a girl from East  
Berlin. I'd like to point out that  
we do not intend to divulge the  
reasons behind this operation. Do  
you have a problem with any of  
this?

HANS

(after a hesitant moment)

Not at all.

ALGER

This is a good starting point.

HELMUT

It's just a question of privacy.  
See, we already knew what was your  
fee... The second reason why we  
offered you more than double the  
salary you usually earn for your  
"services" is the secrecy that this  
operation requires.

HANS

May I ask you the first?

ALGER

Efficiency.

(looking down on his  
documents)

Up to now, you successfully carried  
out 23 extractions from East  
Berlin, for a total of 31 people.

(looks at Helmut for a  
moment)

This is a fact.

(eyes back on Hans)

Thing is we are quite pragmatic  
here, Mr. Remher.

HANS

Who gave you all this informations?

Helmut does a half smile. Alger remains unmoved.

HELMUT

We have our sources.

ALGER

Back to what we were discussing,  
the girl, Danika, currently resides  
in a house near Bernauer Strasse.  
Pochath will provide you with a  
street map containing all the  
informations you need. Read them  
carefully.

HANS

I will.

HELMUT

How you plan to get her out?

HANS

(takes a few moments to  
reflect)

There are not too many options, to  
be honest. That part of the city  
became famous for the escapes from  
the windows of the apartment blocks  
of East Berlin, down to the street,  
in the French sector.

ALGER

So?

HANS

I could therefore go underground,  
through the sewers. They are less  
controlled lately. I'm gonna need a  
couple of days to study the sewer  
maps, just to make sure-



ALGER  
(interrupts him)  
The escape has to take place  
tomorrow night.

Hans raises his eyebrows, dumbfounded.

ALGER (CONTINUED)  
Between 1.00 A.M. and 2.00 A.M.

HANS  
The schedule is very tight.

HELMUT  
We are aware of that... But this is  
the third reason to justify a such  
generous fee.

ALGER  
(leans forward)  
If you can't handle that, you just  
tell us now.

Hans looks away, brooding.

ALGER (CONTINUED)  
We'll find someone else.

HANS  
(raises his gaze)  
I can do it... Unless there are any  
more surprises.

HELMUT  
There are none.

ALGER  
The collection point, the place  
where you're gonna bring the girl,  
has been set out in the documents  
you'll be given shortly.

HELMUT  
Pochath will be there, waiting for  
you. You'll leave her in his care.

ALGER  
Regarding your fee, you'll be  
immediately given 40% of the total  
amount upfront. You shall receive  
the rest on delivery.

Alger whispers something inaudible in his borther's ear.

HELMUT  
(getting on his feet)  
Excuse us, but we have to take care  
of some job commitments.

Helmut offers his hand to Hans, who gets up and shakes it. Alger does the same from his seated position.

ALGER  
(while shaking hands)  
Now it's your turn.

Hans heads for the exit.

HELMUT (O.S.)  
Hans?

The young man stops and turns round towards the Sitakos.

HELMUT (CONTINUED)  
If you have any other questions,  
you can ask Pochath.

HANS  
OK.

ALGER  
There's a car outside which will  
drive you home.

HANS  
That won't be necessary. I'd like  
to take a walk.

HELMUT  
As you wish.

Hans exits, closing the door.

EXT. STREET, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Hans comes out of the "Sitakos GmbH" building with a BLACK BRIEFCASE in his hand. He stops in front of the entrance; turns back to watch the place he came just came from, then focuses on the street before him. A dozen thoughts are buzzing around in his head. BYSTANDERS don't even notice him, like he's transparent. He pops the collar of his jacket and starts walking with decisive steps down the sidewalk. After a dozen meters, he enters a PHONE BOOTH.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL, "SITAKOS GMBH" - NIGHT

The Sitakos brothers stands on their feet near the table. Helmut's showing pictures of some paintings to his brother.

Someone knocks the door.

HELMUT  
Who is it?

POCHATH (O.S.)  
It's Pochath.

ALGER

Come in.

The man enters the hall. The expression on his face is more intense than before.

ALGER (CONTINUA)  
(keeps looking at the  
pictures)

Well?

POCHATH

I need to talk to you immediately.

ALGER

About what?

POCHATH

You asked me to collect  
informations on Hans Remher.

HELMUT

You already have.

POCHATH

There's more. The young man's at  
risk.

ALGER

(turns his attention to  
him)

Go ahead.

Helmut leans on the table.

POCHATH

I just got word from trusted people  
that Hans has unfinished business  
with a dangerous drug smuggler.

HELMUT

Define "unfinished business"?

POCHATH

He wants him dead.

ALGER

We are heading into the final  
stretch, you'll just have to watch  
over him until tomorrow night.

POCHATH

Thing is, Mr. Alger, that we're  
talking about Dieter Halata.

Pochath takes out some black and white pictures of Dieter from the pocket of his jacket and puts them on the table. The Sitakos looks at them for a few seconds. Helmut shakes his head.

HELMUT

Who we're dealing with?

POCHATH

You could call him one of a kind. Graduated in Classics at the Freie Univerisitat of Berlin in '73, after a one year rehab program, Halata realised that it would've been less dangerous selling drugs than doing them. In a few years, following a string of selected assassinations, he was able to lure clients in high places all across the city. He was stuck in East Berlin over the last few months, but it looks like it was Hans himself who brought him back.

ALGER

Then why he wants to kill him?

POCHATH

That's still a mystery. But I've been told he can count his time in hours.

HELMUT

Just what we need.

POCHATH

We're not talking about a simple pusher, here. Halata has a spotless criminal record, this thus means he did good job of covering his tracks so far.

(pauses, his face  
darkens)

This man knows how to kill and doesn't have a problem with it... His resume says so.

ALGER

How reliable are these informations?

POCHATH

Very much.

Alger sits down and puts his chin on the palm of his hand, brooding.

HELMUT

(to Alger)

We got to do something. The young man is very important to us.

The two brothers exchange a knowing glance.

ALGER  
(to Pochath)  
Take him out.

Pochath nods. He picks up the pictures from the table.

HELMUT  
Do you know where to find him?

POCHATH  
I have an address.

ALGER  
Do it tonight.

HELMUT  
Call us when the job is done.

Pochath nods once again.

ALGER  
You can go now.

Helmut watches him leaving with a troubled expression. The door closes.

HELMUT  
What you're thinking?

ALGER  
(smirking)  
I think the police owes us one.

Alger gets on his feet and starts to reunite the pictures of the paintings. He darts a glance at his brother.

ALGER (CONTINUED)  
You don't look relaxed.

Helmut goes back to the window.

HELMUT  
I'd never seen him this concerned before.

ALGER  
Killing someone is no easy thing, even for someone who served in the Hungarian army for five years.

HELMUT  
(turns to him)  
We could give him back up.

ALGER  
There's no need for that, he's gonna finish the job. Hell, if only he had more commercial sensitivity,  
(MORE)

ALGER (cont'd)  
I'd already put him into Karl's  
place.

Helmut gives him a half smile. Alger puts pictures and documents in a binder, which he places inside a briefcase made of alligator.

ALGER (CONTINUED)  
I'm going, you not coming?

HELMUT  
I have to pass by the office.

ALGER  
See you tomorrow.

Alger exits the conference hall with the briefcase in his hand.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: HELMUT. He stares blankly out the window. The LIGHTS of Berlin at night are reflecting in his eyes.

INT. BISTROT, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT - LATER

The place is fairly crowded, customers' chatter fills the room.

Hans' sitting alone at one of the tables. He's looking up toward the television placed a few yards from him.

ON THE TV

A news CORRESPONDENT is reporting from Beirut.

NEWS CORRESPONDENT  
According to unconfirmed reports coming from sources close to U.S. authorities, yesterday's bombing attack on the American Embassy here in Beirut would have been organised by Hezbollah, with Iran's support. At least twenty four people were killed...

HANS

Shakes his head, looks at the time.

ON THE TV

Images of the half-destroyed facade of the U.S. embassy are shown on screen.

CORRISPONDENTE  
... and almost ninety six injured, among these U.S. Ambassador Reginald Batholomew and visiting British Ambassador David Miers...

HANS

feels a hand on his shoulder.

OVERATH (O.S.)

That's a place I wouldn't want to  
live in.

Overath takes a seat in front of Hans, turning his back to  
the TV.

HANS

Coming from a guy with a house on  
the Berlin Wall...

OVERATH

Paradoxically enough, the "balance  
of terror" makes me sleep good at  
night.

HANS

(jokingly)  
You're a bit late.

OVERATH

That happens when you give such  
short notice.

(takes the menu and  
begins to read it)

I'm so starved... Have you ordered  
anything yet?

HANS

No, but I think I'll have the hash  
browns.

OVERATH

An enjoyable choice, but a bit  
unimaginative.

(pauses)

We need something more original,  
something that leaves a mark...

HANS

... on your liver?

OVERATH

(keeps reading)

Ah ah, so funny. Do not disturb,  
please.

Overath is very focused on his reading. Hans' watching him,  
amused.

OVERATH (CONTINUED)

Hold it: we got a winner. "Big  
dumplings with breadcrumbs and  
diced lard".

HANS  
Recommended for the diet.

A WAITRESS(25) with a notebook in his hand approaches their table.

OVERATH  
(winks)  
Mine, for sure.

WAITRESS  
What can I get you?

OVERATH  
(closes the menu)  
Hash browns for my friend here and  
big dumplings with breadcrumbs and  
diced lard for me.

WAITRESS  
(taking note)  
OK... To drink?

HANS  
(looking at Overath)  
Two blonde beers?

OVERATH  
I do not ask for more.

WAITRESS  
(picking up the menu)  
Alright, thank you.

OVERATH  
Thanks to you.

The waitress disappears in a moment.

OVERATH  
So, what's with the last minute  
dinner?

Hans' face reveals he's embarrassed.

HANS  
I do have a favor to ask.  
(pauses)  
Another one.

OVERATH  
I'm listening.

HANS  
(leans forward)  
I told you I had another job on the  
line, if you remember.



OVERATH

Yeah, a good-paying one, if I'm not mistaken.

HANS

Right, well... I decided to take it. Problem is I'm on a tight schedule and I need your help to carry it out.

Hans tries to speak, then looks away. He doesn't have the words.

OVERATH

(leans forward)

Come on, don't stand on ceremony... You know that I don't like it.

(pauses)

And it doesn't suit you.

Hans gives him a shy smile, then looks him in the eyes.

HANS

(quietly)

I need your house to break into East Berlin.

Overath leans back.

HANS (CONTINUED)

You know me better than anyone, I usually plan everything to the last detail, but this time I accepted conditions which I would generally refuse. I promised myself that I would never ask you this, and I've even looked at other options, but I'm in a delicate situation and... I have no choice at all.

OVERATH

What you're asking could get me into trouble... Real trouble.

HANS

I'm aware of that.

The man's watching Hans closely. A few moments of silence, people's chat takes over.

OVERATH

I'm gonna help you... But you have to do something for me.

HANS

What is it?

OVERATH

Listen, I know I'm not your father  
nor one of your relatives, but  
you're the closest thing I've ever  
had to a son.

(his gaze grows more  
intense)

For this very reason, once you cash  
that money, I want you to leave  
Berlin.

Hans is caught off guard.

HANS

(bitter)

You're asking me to radically  
change my life.

OVERATH

That's correct.

HANS

You know that this is not just  
about money.

OVERATH

Maybe in the past... but not  
anymore. You're becoming a  
mercenary. You make a good living,  
no one denies that, but you can't  
live on the edge forever. You're  
going nowhere.

HANS

Taking some risks is part of the  
job. You know it.

OVERATH

You don't care about risks. You're  
too busy chasing money.

HANS

(annoyed)

Someone who's after the money  
wouldn't have left 3.000 marks on  
the floor of a back room!

OVERATH

Sure.

(pauses)

But a sensible person, after almost  
been killed, would have stayed put.  
You think that trafficker gave up  
on killing you? You really think  
that he's not gonna track you down?

Hans says nothing. Once again, his gaze drops to the floor.  
His mind, a whirlwind.

The waitress comes back with a tray. She places the dishes they ordered on the table, then the beers.

WAITRESS

Enjoy your meal!

OVERATH

Thank you.

The waitress walks away.

OVERATH

Everybody wants the money, but it can blow your mind... and get you killed.

HANS

I don't wanna do this forever, I'm just trying to save up something.

OVERATH

And I'm giving you the opportunity to leave on a high note.

(shaking his head slowly)

You can't even imagine what it's costing me.

(pauses)

And I'm not talking about using my place to break into East Berlin.

Hans runs a hand through his hair. His eyes have become teary.

HANS

(looks at him in the eye)

You won.

The two men remain silent for a few moments. Customers' chatter takes centre stage again.

OVERATH

Relax, I'm not gonna ask you to sign anything.

Hans gives him a smile, Overath does the same.

OVERATH (CONTINUED)

I'll take your word.

Overath offers his hand. Hans hesitates, then takes it.

OVERATH

Let's just eat, we'll talk about the details later.

HANS

(ironic)

Priority goes to the important things, right?

The man looks down at his plate, then looks back at Hans, delighted.

OVERATH

(sighs)

Always.

INT. BEDROOM, DIETER'S HOUSE - WEST BERLIN'S SUBURBS - NIGHT

Dieter and Bernard are making love on a double bed. The young man's lying on his stomach, the right side of his face rests on the sheet. Dieter lies on top of him, his hands are placed near the young man's shoulders; his movements are rhythmic. Dieter gently kisses Bernard on the neck. A drop of sweat falls from the man's brow on the young man's shoulder, but he doesn't feel it; he's in total ecstasy. A few moments later Dieter reaches orgasm. The man moves away from his partner, catching his breath. Bernard turns back around, kisses him on the forehead and finally lies flat on his back. The two men stare silently into each other's eyes for a few seconds. Dieter starts to kiss Bernard's chest, then his lips slowly go down.

EXT. DIETER'S HOUSE - WEST BERLIN'S SUBURBS - NIGHT

The street is empty. Pochath is standing near a tree placed in a flower bed right in front of Dieter's house. He takes a look around, then enters the driveway flanking the building. He passes a parked car, disappearing behind the house.

INT. BEDROOM, DIETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bernard lies sideways on the bed, smoking a cigarette while resting his head on Dieter's chest.

BERNARD

Now that we've taken our turf back,  
we only have to find Hans.

(exhaling smoke)

Tomorrow I'll make a few calls. If  
he's still in town, we're gonna  
track him down.

DIETER

I don't think he ran off.

Bernard takes one last drag, then hands the cigarette to his lover.

BERNARD

What makes you think?

DIETER

(inhaling smoke)

There's something about him. When  
we faced each other in the metro he  
was unarmed... yet there was no  
hesitation.

(MORE)

DIETER (cont'd)  
 (exhaling smoke)  
 It seemed like he wasn't afraid of  
 dying.

Bernard turns his head around to look him in the eyes.

BERNARD  
 Do you like him?

DIETER  
 Yeah... But not in that way.

BERNARD  
 Which way, then?

Dieter taps the cigarette over the ashtray placed by the  
 pillow.

DIETER  
 His eyes... they were glassy. There  
 was no light in them.  
 (shifts his gaze to  
 Bernard)  
 The look of somebody who got lost.

BERNARD  
 What's so interesting about that?

DIETER  
 I know what it means...  
 (pauses, softly touches  
 Bernard)  
 But you make me forget about it.

The two men kiss.

BERNARD  
 I'm gonna take a shower.

Bernard gets up, takes two steps then stops and turns,  
 displeased.

BERNARD  
 Damn... I forgot to call Frederic.

DIETER  
 We'll call him tomorrow.

Dieter puts the cigarette out in the ashtray. Bernard enters  
 into the bathroom located right in front of the bed. A  
 little bit of LIGHT comes in from behind the door. The sound  
 of water falling on the bottom of the shower spreads through  
 the bedroom.

Dieter stands up; he's NAKED. He opens one of the drawers of  
 the wardrobe placed beside the entrance, looking for  
 underwear. The front door of the bedroom is wide open. The  
 man sees out of the corner of his eye a FIGURE moving almost

imperceptibly on the corridor. He closes the drawer without making any noise and leans his back against the closet. Presently, his eyes are staring at the entrance.

A HAND holding a gun slowly pops up on the entrance, the barrel of the firearm is leveled up. Dieter stands just a few inches away; a little more light and he could read the wordings of the gun.

The ARM of the killer is now fully visible. Dieter quickly grabs the MAN, who's wearing a ski mask, and slams him against the wall. The killer responds by hitting Dieter with a series of knees to the hip. Dieter grunts like a boxer and grabs his assailant by the neck using his right hand.

The two men end up on the double bed. The killer's now on top of Dieter, struggling to point the gun at him. Dieter's hand is still on the neck of his assailant, while the other one prevents him from taking aim. During the fight, the gun FIRES two SHOTS - BLAM, BLAM - into the bathroom door.

DIETER  
(worried)  
Bernard!

The hitman gets head-butted in the face and loosens the grip. Dieter grabs the ABAT-JOUR placed on the nightstand, crashes it on the assailant's head, knocking him to the ground with both feet. He heads for the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom is a cloud of VAPOR. Dieter, with a limited vision, carefully proceeds towards the shower stall. He sees two bullet HOLES on the sliding door. He opens it very slowly. Bernard's body is on his knees, head on the wall and eyes wide open. He's got two gunshot WOUNDS to the back. As the water keeps falling, BLOOD is drained away in a gruesome red river.

Dieter's face hardens, his eyes squint; now he has the same expressivity of a statue. He closes the faucet, slowly turning his head toward the bedroom. The steam has vanished; now he can clearly see his assailant lying next to the double-bed.

INT. HANS' ONE-ROOM APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is almost completely shrouded in darkness. Hans is sitting at the table dimly lit by a small lamp. Right beside it, a taper recorder is playing "Disorder" by Joy Division.

Hans' studying a big SEWER MAP which occupies almost all of the available space. He's focused on drawing up some routes with a pencil.

He shifts his gaze to the clock hanging from the wall in front of him: it reads 2.00 A.M. He scratches his head, then

rubs his eyes. Gets up from the table and disappears into the darkness. He returns a few moments later with a dime bag filled with white powder in his hand. He takes his seat again and carefully prepares a line of coke on the sewer map. Stares at it for a moment. He produces an inhaler and lowers his face over the table top.

INT. BASEMENT - DIETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The basement is illuminated by the cold light of a neon lamp. Pochath, now unmasked, slowly regains consciousness. He realizes he's lying on a table, wrists and ankles have been tied up; he cannot move. A big nylon sheet has been put under the table.

DIETER (O.S.)

I've seen you before.

Dieter suddenly appears at Pochath's feet. He's wearing white latex gloves.

DIETER (CONTINUED)

At Corelles.

Dieter goes to a shelf and takes out of it a little JUG containing a transparent liquid. He places it on a sideboard, then opens it with extreme caution, keeping a safe distance. He plunges the tip of a dropper into it, draws up the liquid, then closes up the jug. He goes next to Pochath.

DIETER

These walls are soundproof.

Dieter places the dropper a few inches above the Hungarian's forehead and spills one drop. After a few moments, Pochath begins to grind his teeth; a chemical burn appears on his forehead. Dieter squeezes the dropper again, and a second drop falls down. The Hungarian starts to flail.

POCHATH

(screaming)

Stop!

Dieter, cool as a cucumber, administers with Olympian calm a third drop in the same spot. Pochath's face is ravaged by pain as the burn expands.

POCHATH

(screaming)

What you want from me?

The man puts his mouth close to the Hungarian's ear.

DIETER

(a whisper)

Why?

Dieter watches Pochath twitching and groaning for a few moments. But he doesn't speak. The man raises his arm, ready to spill one more drop.

POCHATH  
(screaming)  
No, nooo!

The fourth drop falls down on the same spot of the previous ones. The burn on Pochath's forehead is now the size of a strawberry, his screaming becomes deafening.

Dieter's not showing any sign of emotion. Pochath is beside himself, the pain is too intense to remain silent.

POCHATH  
(shouting at him)  
Because you want to kill Hans  
Remher!

Dieter's expression has a wince of interest. He retracts the dropper.

DIETER  
Explain yourself.

Pain has reduced, but Pochath's still suffering.

POCHATH  
(wearily)  
The Sitakos brothers... They sent  
me because they were afraid you  
would screw up their operation.

DIETER  
One of them was at the club, right?

Pochath nods, Dieter leans forward.

DIETER  
(looking him straight in  
the eyes)  
I want details.

POCHATH  
All I know is that they hired him  
to break a girl out. I was supposed  
to pick her up at the corner of  
Lutzowstrasse and  
Derfflingerstrasse.

DIETER  
When?

POCHATH  
Tomorrow night... The delivery will  
be made between 1 A.M. and 2 A.M.



The two men look into each other's eyes for a few seconds. Pochath, physically and mentally destroyed, looks away.

POCHATH (CONTINUED)

Please, kill me now.

Dieter pushes himself back from the table, puts the dropper and the jug back where they came from.

POCHATH

Can I ask you who's Bernard?

Dieter returns to the table.

DIETER

(a whisper)

He was the one I love.

A few moments of silence.

POCHATH

(with disarming  
sincerity)

For what it's worth... I'm sorry.

Dieter nods once, then heads for the door.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: on DIETER. His eyes are filled with tears.

EXT. PARK, EAST BERLIN - MORNING

The park is populated by a handful of mainly OLDER PEOPLE. Mrs. Keller and Danika are sitting on a bench near a big tree. The woman is watching the girl lovingly; the latter has her gaze fixed on the horizon, her neck bears the marks of the hanging attempt.

MRS. KELLER

It's such a beautiful day.

Danika slowly nods.

MRS. KELLER (CONTINUED)

Does it still hurt?

DANIKA

No.

(a beat)

I'm fine.

A WOMAN (30) pushing a stroller walks past their bench. Danika watches the LITTLE GIRL sleeping inside.

MRS. KELLER

You had me worried last night.

DANIKA

Don't torment me.

Danika appears to be absent. Mrs. Keller gently takes the girl's right hand in hers.

MRS. KELLER

Once you're in West Berlin, they'll help you solve your problems... It's like being in another world. You'll finally find a little peace of mind, I'm sure.

DANIKA

(looks at her)

What if the problem's not East Berlin?

(a beat)

What if it's me?

MRS. KELLER

Don't say that, you know that's not true.

Danika returns to look in front of her. The sun is darkened by some clouds.

DANIKA

(retracts his hand)

The only thing I know is that I can't control myself.

MRS. KELLER

But I'm right here. I'll stand by you, I'm gonna protect you from yourself.

(pauses)

I want you to understand that your crises can be controlled. You know you're not well, and this awareness is very important. It's a starting point.

DANIKA

It's like somebody turned off the light... And when it comes back, I can't even remember what I did during the blackout.

MRS. KELLER

(stroking Danika's hair)

I can only imagine how upsetting can be not being in control of yourself.

(taking the girl's face in her hands)

Just promise me you won't give up.

DANIKA

(barely audible)

I'll try.

Mrs. Keller softly touches her face. Danika looks up to the sky; the sun has come out of the clouds, now it's shining down on her.

EXT. "SITAKOS GMBH" BUILDING - MORNING

A black LIMOUSINE with tinted windows parks in front of the main entrance to the Sitakos GMBH building. A CHAFFEUR (40) leaps out of the car and stops next to the back door, on the sidewalk.

Helmut, in a suit, comes out of the sliding door with a black briefcase in hand and reaches the limousine after dodging some bystanders.

The chaffeur opens the door, bowing his head in reverence; Helmut smiles at him and gets inside the car.

INT. LIMOUSINE - MORNING

Alger, sharply dressed, is reading a copy of the Franfurter Allgemeine newspaper.

Helmut, looking tense, takes a seat next to him. The car door closes.

ALGER

Good morning.

HELMUT

(sitting down)

Good morning, Alger.

ALGER

Any news from Pochath?

HELMUT

(shaking his head)

Nothing.

Alger closes the newspaper and looks outside the window. The limousine pulls away.

HELMUT (CONTINUED)

Something happened.

ALGER

Very likely. Seems like your fears were well-founded.

HELMUT

I should have preferred not. This could jeopardize our operation.

ALGER

(looks at Helmut)

We must act, and we must act quickly.

HELMUT  
The risk is high.

ALGER  
Right now, the biggest risk is not taking any risk. You heard the woman.

A few moments of silence.

HELMUT  
Fine, but we got to find someone we can put on Vogt's hip.

ALGER  
I'll take care of it.

Helmut's face relaxes a bit.

HELMUT  
Have you got someone in mind?

ALGER  
Possibly.

HELMUT  
I'm gonna give Remher the heads up about the schedule change.

ALGER  
Good.

HELMUT  
(to the chauffeur)  
Please, pull over.

The limousine stops after a few seconds.

ALGER  
(surprised)  
Where you going?

HELMUT  
I've arranged a meeting in a bar around here. Let me know if there are complications.

ALGER  
There won't be any.

The car's door opens. Helmut pats his brother on the shoulder and gets out.

HELMUT  
See you at the club.

The car's door closes. Alger watches his brother walking down the sidewalk for a few seconds. He takes a small AGENDA from a compartment of the car door.

The chauffeur gets back in the driving seat and rolls down the glass partition behind his back.

CHAUFFEUR

Where do you want me to go, Mr. Sitakos?

ALGER

Deutsche Bank.

CHAUFFEUR

Right away, sir.

The glass partition starts to move up.

ALGER

One thing.

The chauffeur stops the glass. Alger begins to dial a number on the MOBILE PHONE placed in front of his seat.

CHAUFFEUR

Yes, sir.

ALGER

I don't want to be disturbed in the next few minutes.

CHAUFFEUR

As you wish, sir.

The glass partition closes up.

EXT. STREET, WEST BERLIN - EARLY AFTERNOON

Rolf comes out of the front door of a building. He gets into a CAR parked by the sidewalk, with its engine running.

INT. CAR - EARLY AFTERNOON

Hans is in the driving seat, Rolf in the passenger side.

ROLF

(serious)

To the city centre, Alfred.

Hans keeps himself from laughing.

HANS

(austerely)

As you wish, Mr. Wayne.

The car pulls away. Rolf doesn't make it and bursts out laughing, immediately followed by Hans.

INT. LIVING ROOM, EAST BERLIN HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON

The light of the day fills the room. Danika sits on a chair in jeans and bare shoulder long sleeve t-shirt; she is

painting a picture of a woman's face.

The picture has been carried out with a black stroke on blank canvas.

A TELEPHONE rings in the distance, RIING RIING.

INT. LOBBY, EAST BERLIN HOUSE

CLOSE UP: on the TELEPHONE, which keeps ringing.

Mrs. Keller picks up the handset.

MRS. KELLER

Hello?

INT. LIVING ROOM, EAST BERLIN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Danika has risen. She's watching her painting; something about isn't right. She takes the brush out of a CUP of water and throws it on the floor. Eyes fixed ahead, she suddenly grabs the cup and throws water on the painting. She sits down; she seems to be in a state of trance.

MRS. KELLER (O.S.)

Danika!

The girl slowly turns around to Mrs. Keller, who's standing a few feet away from her with a smile on her face.

DANIKA

What?

MRS. KELLER

It's for tonight! I've just had word.

Danika remains impassive. She gets up and goes to the window, focusing his gaze on the horizon.

DANIKA

(coldly)

When?

MRS. KELLER

They told me someone will pick you up after midnight.

The woman gets closer and hugs her. Danika stands with her back turned.

MRS. KELLER (CONTINUED)

I'm happy for you, dear.

The woman's gaze falls upon the painting. Her smile slowly fades away as she lets the girl go.

SIG.RA KELLER

What happened to your painting?

Danika turns around and looks at her work. She finally looks at Mrs. Keller.

DANIKA  
(confused)  
I-I don't know.

Mrs. Keller pulls her near a second time.

CLOSE UP: on the PAINTING. Color is smudged; water has ruined it forever.

INT. BAR, WEST BERLIN - AFTERNOON

The place is populated by a dozen PATRONS sitting at the tables. The sound of chatter and laughter fills the bar.

Hans and Rolf are standing by the counter, drinking beer.

ROLF  
So, you finally showed up.

HANS  
Work kept me busy quite a bit.

ROLF  
Which one?

HANS  
(scowling at him)  
You pulling this again?

ROLF  
(pats his shoulder)  
You're adorable when you act  
offended...

Hans sips his beer.

HANS  
Any plans for tonight?

ROLF  
I think I'll go to the DNC with  
Franziska.

Hans looks at him maliciously, narrowing his eyes.

HANS  
Is there something I should know  
about?

ROLF  
Still no news... work in progress.  
However, you're invited to grace us  
with your presence.

HANS

I don't know if I can. Is it okay  
if--

ROLF

"I let you know?"

Rolf pulls a cigarette pack out of his jacket pocket and offers one to Hans.

ROLF (CONTINUED)

Right?

HANS

(takes the cigarette)

Right.

Rolf puts one in his mouth. He lights up Hans' cigarette first, then his.

ROLF

Do whatever you want. We're gonna  
have a good time, if you come.

HANS

I think you're gonna enjoy  
yourselves much more without me.

Hans takes a good drag on the cigarette and exhales smoke.

HANS

(laying his head on his  
right hand)

I was thinking... If Berlin had not  
been divided, do you think there'd  
be more chances for people like us?

ROLF

(scratches his head)

You mean that you could've been a  
lawyer instead of a fake salesman  
and I could've been a banker  
instead of a real delivery boy?

HANS

Something like that.

ROLF

I like to think yes, it could.

Rolf finishes his beer. He signals the bartender for another one.

ROLF (CONTINUED)

But the real question is: how can  
anyone live in a place where if you  
want to go visit a relative, the  
latter is required to submit an

(MORE)



ROLF (CONTINUED) (cont'd)  
 application at least six months in  
 advance to the Tourism Bureau?

HANS  
 They think they can keep this city  
 divided for ever.

ROLF  
 Let them dream. In the end,  
 passions and natural instincts will  
 prevail, and this havoc will end.  
 At that point, the lives of Berlin  
 people will change, while East and  
 West will go back to being what  
 they used to be.

HANS  
 Which is?

ROLF  
 Points of the compass.

Rolf exhales smoke. Hans looks at him funny.

HANS  
 You're in the mood, today.

ROLF  
 Saturdays brings out the storm and  
 the momentum lying within me.

Hans chuckles as the patron puts the beer on the counter.

ROLF (CONTINUED)  
 (raising his mug)  
 To the Sturm Und Drang!

Hans raises his glass into Rolf's.

HANS  
 Cheer!

EXT. STREET, WEST BERLIN - AFTERNOON - LATER

SOUNDTRACK: "Ceremony" by New Order.

Hans' car pulls over with its flashers on.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

Hans puts it in park, keeping the car running.

HANS  
 Here we go, Mr. Wayne.

ROLF  
 I noticed, Alfred.  
 (MORE)

ROLF (cont'd)  
 (a beat, then he gets  
 serious)  
 Let me know about tonight.

HANS  
 OK.

Hans offers his hand, palm up, to Rolf, who gives him a high five. The young man gets out but, before closing the car door, he turns toward the cockpit, lowering his head.

ROLF  
 (looking him right in the  
 eyes)  
 Stay out of trouble.

HANS  
 You know I'm not good at it.

ROLF  
 (nodding)  
 It's a dumb request... Just try,  
 for once.

Hans watches Rolf closing the car door and crossing the street. The young man disappears behind the front door of the building seen before.

EXT. STREET OF WEST BERLIN - AFTERNOON

Hans gets out of the car, which is still running. He rapidly crosses the street and stops before the front door which Rolf entered.

He takes a LETTER out of his jacket pocket and puts it in one of the mailboxes. He looks up, toward the upper floors.

HANS  
 (a whisper)  
 See you, pal.

LONG SHOT: Hans crosses the street once again, gets back in the car. The vehicle moves away in the traffic.

INT. GOLF CLUB, WEST BERLIN - LATE AFTERNOON

The salon has about fifteen tables, half of which are taken by CLIENTS in golf clothes.

Helmut is sitting at a small, round table near a window; he's busy going through a series of pictures of modern art paintings. On the back of each photograph it is written the name of the author and a telephone number. He's got a notebook by his side on which he makes notes on every painting.

Amongst the indistinct chatter reaching his ear, Alger's VOICE is suddenly clearly audible.

Helmut turns around and sees his brother talking on the telephone placed near the entrance.

ALGER  
(loudly)  
I want a definitive answer by tomorrow. Don't leave it any longer, we've wasted enough time on these people!

Alger, wearing a polo shirt and a pair of chinos, hangs up the phone in a decisive manner. He has an annoyed look on his face.

Helmut raises his arm to make his presence known. Alger joins him.

ALGER  
When did you arrive?

HELMUT  
Fifteen minutes ago. Are there any problems?

ALGER  
(sits down)  
No.  
(sighs)  
Instructions.

He leans forward and starts looking at the photographs.

ALGER (CONTINUED)  
And solutions.

HELMUT  
Did you find a replacement?

ALGER  
(without looking at him)  
Yes, we're back on track.

HELMUT  
Great. Who is he?

ALGER  
An ex-cop. I was told that he's pretty smart.

HELMUT  
I wish him.  
(pauses, pointing to the photographs)  
What do you think?

Alger stops watching, leans back.

ALGER

Well, if this is the future of art,  
I think it's time to take up  
antiquities.

HELMUT

How optimistic of you. Did you at  
least played a few holes?

ALGER

(crossing his legs)

Yeah.

HELMUT

But?

ALGER

But I got bored quickly.

HELMUT

It seems like you can't enjoy  
yourself anymore.

ALGER

Maybe.

HELMUT

Remember, you're the one who wanted  
to buy this place.

A young CADDIE (20) timidly approaches their table.

CADDIE

I'm sorry to interrupt, but Mr.  
Schmidt is asking for you, Mr.  
Alger.

ALGER

OK, OK, I'm coming.

CADDIE

Thanks, sir.

The caddie takes his leave.

HELMUT

Do you have an unfinished game with  
that shipowner you've been telling  
me about?

Alger gets on his feet, staring out the window, at the golf  
course.

ALGER

Uh-huh... His wife is in despair  
because she doesn't know how to  
decorate a 278 square feet mansion  
he just bought in Cornwall.

HELMUT

(smirking)

Poor thing... I guess you might want to loose this one.

ALGER

(looks down on him)

I think I'm gonna make this sacrifice, too.

The look on Helmut's face becomes serious as Alger leaves the table.

INT. LIVING ROOM, OVERATH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE SHOT: a GLASS of brandy in one hand.

Hans and Overath are sipping brandy seated on black leather chairs. The room is decorated with a wooden furniture which stands out against the white walls.

HANS

I'm ready to hibernate.

OVERATH

This means I've done my duty.

The young man looks at the glass against the light.

OVERATH (CONTINUED)

I couldn't banish you from Berlin without one proper dinner. It would've been unfair.

HANS

As my final wish, it wasn't too bad.

Overath smiles and they both take a sip of their drinks. The man's face becomes thoughtful.

OVERATH

You OK?

HANS

(looking at him  
hesitantly)

Pretty much.

(a beat)

It's not like you to ask such questions.

OVERATH

It's not like you to answer "pretty much".

HANS

(sips his brandy)

I can't tell... Perhaps it's the excitement of leaving the city. Right now I'm wondering what's gonna happen after tonight... And what would've been like without this fucking wall.

Overath raises up and takes a PICTURE FRAME from the library. There is an image of a WOMAN (20-25) on it.

OVERATH

Change always lead to a shock. It's perfectly human.

Hans looks at Overath for few seconds.

HANS

"Every river, however slow, will keep flowing".

Overath places down the picture frame, closing his eyes.

OVERATH

"Every life, however painful, will move forward".

HANS

Whose words were these?

OVERATH

I can't remember.

(a beat, turns to Hans)

But I think that guy was right.

Overath finishes his brandy. Hans takes a look at the wall timer and gets on his feet.

HANS

I have to prepare myself.

Overath puts the glass down on a small table placed in front of the chairs.

OVERATH

I'll show you the passage when you're ready.

INT. BATHROOM, OVERATH'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Overath opens the door and enters, followed by Hans. The young man, backpack on, is dressed in black again.

OVERATH

(leading him over to the  
back wall)

The window was coercively walled up  
in Semptember of '61. Starting from  
the beginning of the construction  
work of the Wall in August of the  
same year, I was able to break out  
at least fifty people... but things  
were different back then, there was  
no death strip yet.

The two men stops in front of a WINDOW. Hans notices some  
kind of panel behind the glass. On the left side of the  
PANEL there are two LOCKS, while two HINGES have been fitted  
on the right side.

HANS

You never told me why you decided  
to reopen it.

OVERATH

Well, I thought I could help all  
the people I left on the other  
side.

(his face hardens)

But when they asked for help, I  
looked the other way.

(slowly shaking his head)

I abandoned them. I just couldn't  
deal with the prospect of losing  
someone else... Someone I love.

HANS

You did what you thought was right.  
You told me yourself, remember?

OVERATH

(with a bitter smile)

No... I acted cowardly.

(pauses)

But perhaps now I have the chance  
to put that right.

Overath opens the window.

OVERATH

(pointing to the panel)

On the other side of the panel I  
had a reproduction of the back of  
this building made by an artist  
friend of mine.

(pauses)

The vopos always thought there was  
a walled window... Truth is they've  
been watching a masterpiece for  
about twenty years.

HANS  
 (impressed)  
 Unbelievable...

The man goes back to the entrance and closes the door.

OVERATH  
 I'm gonna take a look around. Once  
 I remove this, you'll have to get  
 out very quickly.

Hans nods and pulls out a pair of SNOWSHOES from his  
 backpack.

OVERATH  
 (perplexed)  
 Think you can run with those things  
 on your feet?

HANS  
 (putting them on)  
 No, I need these for less evident  
 footprints.

OVERATH  
 Turn off the light when you're  
 ready.

The young man turns the light off and gets back near  
 Overath. The man gently removes a small portion of the panel  
 and starts looking out.

OVERATH POV

The death strip is alternately lit by a series of lamp  
 posts. The paved path is empty.

OVERATH (O.S.)  
 Surveillance has been lowered in  
 this area because it's been a few  
 months since the last escape.

His gaze shifts to the nearest OBSERVATION TOWER, which is  
 about 150 meters north of their current position. The LIGHT  
 of the reflector is busy searching on the other side.

OVERATH  
 (unlocking the panel)  
 Green light, you have to go.  
 (grabs him by the neck)  
 Good luck.

HANS  
 (hugs him)  
 Thanks for everything.

Overath opens the panel, Hans gets out in the blink of an  
 eye.



EXT. HIGH SHOT - DEATH STRIP - NIGHT

Hans walks quickly through the GRAVEL-COVERED strip. He crosses the paved path, then a line of ANTI-TANK BARRIERS, reaching the other side of the strip. He stops right in front of the second wall where he removes his snowshoes, putting them in his backpack. He pulls out a grappling hook and starts to climb.

EXT. STREET ADJACENT TO THE WALL, EAST BERLIN - NIGHT

Hans is standing with his back to the Wall. He looks around; he's alone. He goes down an alley, walking fast. He takes a few steps, then stops by a building. He looks up to read the name of the street, then pulls a MAP out of his pants pocket. He studies it for a short while, then puts it back in its place.

HANS  
(under his breath)  
Let's do this.

Hans looks right, then left. All is quiet, no one's around. He resumes his walk down the alley, staying close to the buildings' walls.

INT. LIVING ROOM, EAST BERLIN HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

Mrs. Keller and Danika are sitting at a table placed right in the middle of the room.

The girl, dressed in dark clothing, is sipping a herbal tea. The woman, concerned, looks at her wrist watch: it reads 00.17 A.M.

MRS. KELLER  
Do you want me to--

Someone KNOCKS on the door. Danika puts down the cup, Mrs. Keller gets up and walks out the room.

INT. LOBBY, EAST BERLIN HOUSE - NIGHT

A second KNOCK on the door. The woman turns on the lights and comes up to the door.

MRS. KELLER  
Who is it?

HANS (O.S.)  
Danika.

The expression on her face relaxes.

INT. LIVING ROOM, EAST BERLIN HOUSE - NIGHT

Mrs. Keller appears on the threshold with Hans at her side.

MRS. KELLER  
Danika, this is Hans.

The girl gets on her feet, remaining close to the table.  
Hans reaches out for her.

HANS  
(offering his hand)  
Nice to meet you.

Danika hesitates for a moment, then shakes Hans' hand.

HANS (CONTINUED)  
Sorry, but we'll have to skip the  
small talk.

Mrs. Keller enters the living room, while Hans takes off his  
backpack.

MRS. KELLER  
We understand that, don't worry. Is  
there anything you need?

HANS  
(pointing at Danika)  
Ten minutes of her attention. Then  
we move out, OK?

The girl nods almost imperceptibly.

INT. LOBBY, EAST BERLIN HOUSE - NIGHT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Hans, Danika and Mrs. Keller are standing in front of the  
entrance door.

MRS. KELLER  
Be careful, honey.

DANIKA  
Don't worry.

The woman gives her a big hug.

MRS. KELLER  
(to Hans)  
Take care of her.

Hans nods.

HANS  
We gotta go now.

Mrs. Keller opens the door. Hans leans over, looks to the  
right, then to the left. He beckons Danika to follow him;  
they go out on the street. Mrs. Keller quickly closes the  
door behind them.

EXT. STREET, EAST BERLIN - NIGHT

Hans and Danika move fast down the sidewalk, completely undetected. After a few yards, the young man catches sight of FLASHING LIGHTS approaching. He signals her to stop. He takes her by the hand and steps into the BREEZEWAY of a building not too far. The young couple hide behind one big PILLAR.

The car passes them at decent speed, Hans watches as it disappears. He pulls out a sewer map and a small flashlight, giving the latter to Danika.

HANS  
(quietly)  
Hold the light, please.

The girl does it. Hans studies the map for a few seconds, then puts it back. Danika switches off the flashlight as he gives it back to his guide.

HANS  
(quietly)  
Let's go.

Hans and Danika resume walking down the sidewalk. They reach an intersection; the young man turns right, followed by the girl. After about thirty yards, Hans stops before a large MANHOLE in the middle of the street. He takes a CROWBAR out of his backpack, which he uses to raise up the cover, shifting it enough to get in. He signals Danika to go down.

INT. SEWER, EAST BERLIN - NIGHT

The tunnel is a little narrow, a river of malodorous sewage flows through it.

Danika reaches the bottom of the ladder and pinches her nose right away. Hans puts the manhole cover back on its place with some difficulty, CLANK, and gets on the floor, right next to Danika. He hands her the flashlight, the girl turns it on.

HANS  
(pulling out the sewer  
map)  
You're doing good. Here comes the  
stinky part.

The young man studies the map for a few seconds.

DANIKA  
I-I think I can make it.

HANS  
(refolding the sewer map)  
Watch your step.

Hans pulls out a second flashlight from his backpack and resumes walking. Danika follows him at close range.

EXT. STREET, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

A black BMW parks on one side of the road. A MAN (45), shaved grey hair and three-day stubble, emerges from the passenger side. He takes a look around, then lowers his head to talk with the driver, HORST (40), a well-built man with black, slicked back hair.

MAN

Here is fine.

The man starts to raise his head.

HORST

Vogt.

VOGT stops, getting down again on eye level.

HORST (CONTINUED)

You wouldn't have a cigarette, would you?

Vogt pulls out a pack of cigarettes. He looks at it for a moment; takes one and throws the pack to the driver.

VOGT

Keep it.

Horst chuckles as Vogt raises up.

HORST (O.S.)

Thanks.

VOGT

(lights up his cigarette)  
You're welcome.

HORST (O.S.)

Do you have a lighter, by any chance?

Vogt sighs and reaches out with his right arm inside the cabin, without looking.

VOGT

(with sarcasm)  
Anything else?

HORST

(smirking)  
You just can't quit, huh?

VOGT

(exhaling smoke)  
Yep.

260° PAN-SHOT: the OTHER SIDE of the STREET. Parked along the sidewalk there is a grey CAR.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Dieter is in the driver seat, plunged into darkness. His eyes are focused on the black BMW.

DIETER POV

Vogt is smoking in total relax with his elbows on the car top.

INT. SEWER, EAST BERLIN - NIGHT

Hans and Danika are walking down the sewer tunnel. The girl hears a noise on her right. She points the flashlight in that direction without stopping to walk. The light beam illuminates two big RATS busy chewing a piece of leather.

DANIKA

Is there something those things cannot eat?

HANS

(looking at them for a second)

Rats? No, they eat just about anything.

Danika, a bit disgusted, shifts the beam away.

DANIKA

They are repellent.

HANS

True. But they also have some curious characteristics.

DANIKA

(skeptic)

Like?

HANS

According to some scientific studies, they developed a cognitive thinking method closely similar to ours.

DANIKA

Explain yourself.

HANS

Apparently they're metacognitive. In other words, they'd be able to analyse the consequences of their own actions.

Danika's eyebrows go up; she's surprised.

DANIKA  
(unconvinced)  
If they can really think very  
similarly to us, why would they eat  
garbage?

HANS  
Well, the way I see it, thinking  
like a human being is not  
necessarily positive.  
(turns to her)  
It's quite the contrary.

The girl half smiles. The couple keeps walking in silence  
for a few moments.

Hans suddenly stops. He puts the backpack close to his chest  
and starts searching it. Danika catches up with him.

DANIKA  
What's going on?

HANS  
We're under the Wall.

DANIKA  
How do you know?

HANS  
(pointing ahead)  
Because there's a grate.

Danika points the flashlight in front of her: the artificial  
light illuminates a big iron GRATE.

Hans pulls out a portable BLOWTORCH and a pair of WELDING  
GOGGLES from his backpack.

HANS  
Wait here, please. And don't watch  
the light.

Danika turns back. Hans walks up to the grate. He puts the  
flashlight on the ground, then wears the goggles and fires  
up the blowtorch.

FULL SHOT: HANS standing in front of the grate with his back  
turned. The LIGHT of the blowtorch illuminates the sewer  
tunnel. SPARKS begin to fly around the young man's figure.

EXT. STREET, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT - LATER

A few CARS are circling in both directions. A MANHOLE COVER  
on the side of the road is lifted up and moved on the  
asphalt, CLANK.

Hans emerges from the sewer and helps Danika doing the same  
thing. After closing the manhole, the couple goes down a  
back road a few feet away from their position.

AERIAL SHOT: the BACK ROAD. Hans and Danika walk down the sidewalk. A row of buildings defines the other side of the street they just left. Beyond the buildings there's another stretch of road which runs parallel to the WALL.

EXT. PARKING LOT, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

Hans and Danika enter an open parking lot where there are about 30 VEHICLES put on 3 rows. Hans heads for the first row from the left; he pulls out a set of KEYS and enters in a dark blue GOLF. Danika gets into the passenger side. The engine is started and the car exits the parking lot.

EXT. BOULEVARD, WEST BERLIN - HIGH SHOT - NIGHT - LATER

"Not in Love" by Platinum Blonde is being played on the radio as the Golf drives through moderate traffic. The HEADLIGHTS of the other cars, along with the lights of the bars and the surrounding buildings, draw the picture of an happening city.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Hans is very focused on driving, while Danika is curled up on the passenger seat.

DANIKA

Do you know who's gonna pick me up?

The young man hesitates before answering.

HANS

They just told me where they want me to drop you.

A few moments of silence pervade the car, music continues playing in the background. The girl takes a melancholy look out the window at the PEOPLE spending their Saturday night.

DANIKA

Do you like your job?

Hans looks at her for a second, then turns his attention back to the road.

HANS

Sometimes, yes.

(pauses)

But after tonight, nothing will ever be the same.

DANIKA

Why?

HANS

You're way too curious.

DANIKA

You're way too mysterious.

HANS

Touché.

DANIKA

I've been told that my life would change for the better... But I don't believe it.

A few moments of silence; Hans doesn't know what to say. He activates the turn signal and takes a left.

EXT. STREET, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

The Golf drives forward into a parking space on the side of the road.

Hans gets out of the car; the street is empty. He starts walking down the sidewalk, heading for the intersection he just passed. He stops at the top of the street and looks at the traffic on the boulevard.

VOGT (O.S.)

Excuse me.

The young man turns around. Vogt is standing right in front of him.

VOGT

I was looking for Danika.

Hans studies the man for a few seconds.

HANS

(walking past him)

You found her.

Hans beckons Vogt to follow him, the man begins walking right next to him.

HANS

How long you've been waiting?

VOGT

Just enough time to smoke a few cigarettes.

Hans comes up to the passenger side door of his Golf and opens it.

HANS

Now you can step out.

VOGT

Good evening.

DANIKA

(a bit intimidated)

H-hi.



Danika gets out of the car. Horst is now standing behind Vogt.

VOGT

Don't worry, I know it looks like we're the bad guys... But that's not the case. My associate will get you into the car.

Vogt urges Danika to follow his colleague. The girl hesitantly starts for the black BMW.

Hans watches her go away, escorted by Horst. He then shifts his gaze to Vogt.

VOGT

Regarding your fee...

Danika turns around for a second. Hans turns away from his interlocutor and meets her eye; a wordless goodbye.

Vogt inserts a SYRINGE into Hans' neck in one fast move.

VOGT (CONTINUED)

... All has been rescheduled.

Danika witnesses the scene. She's about to scream, but she can't because Horst has already sedated her.

DANIKA POV: HANS collapses to the ground. The vision becomes BLURRED, then everything goes black.

INT. DIETER'S CAR - NIGHT

Dieter is sitting motionless in the driver's seat, hands on the wheel. He witnessed the whole scene.

DIETER POV

Horst carefully lays Danika down on the backseat of the BMW, then helps Vogt putting Hans in the trunk. The two men get back on the vehicle. The car leaves the parking space and moves past his position.

HIGH SHOT: Dieter's CAR is turned on and makes a u-turn.

EXT. ONE-WAY STREET, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT - LATER

The black BMW stops short before an ELECTRIC GATE which begins to open. The car gets inside, the gate closes a few seconds later. The gate is the only entrance along the wall, which is flanked by a sidewalk. On the other side of the street there is a tree line, behind which stands a pedestrian walkaway which flanks the back wall of a large building.

EXT. GARDEN, WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

The BMW continues down a gravel driveway which runs through a large GARDEN with small scattered groups of ancient trees. The car reaches a parking lot placed near a small, windowless WAREHOUSE.

LONG SHOT: Beyond the small building, a wide GOLF FIELD extends up to a larger structure; it's the GOLF CLUB seen before.

The car stops, the two men get out. Vogt opens the door of the small structure. Horst pulls out the previously received pack of cigarettes and lights up one.

VOGT  
(getting back to the car)  
Commence with her.

The two gorillas bring Danika, still unconscious, out of the car and inside the structure.

DIETER

Is watching them from behind a TREE about fifty feet away from the parking lot.

DIETER POV

The two men come out of the warehouse, approaching the car once again. They pull Hans out of the trunk and transport him inside, too. The door is closed.

INT. SMALL WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The interior is lit up by neon lights. There are gardening tools - SHEARS, SCYTHES, SAWS, RAKES, etc. - hanging on the walls, and two parallel iron shelves displayed in the center of the room.

The bodies of Hans and Danika are lying on the floor, in front of the entrance. Vogt gets near a wooden PIECE OF FURNITURE placed on the rear wall. He studies it for a few seconds. Horst is right behind him.

HORST  
(watching him, confused)  
What are you doing?

Vogt grabs the left side of the furniture with both hands, pulling it toward himself. The shelf opens, CLACK, just like the door of a closet, revealing a STAIR WELL leading deep underground. The tunnel in front of them is lit by some WALL TORCHES.

VOGT  
Just my job.

HORST  
(dumbfounded)

Ah...

VOGT

You must never speak to anyone  
about what you have seen, or going  
to see.

(pauses)

Got it?

HORST

Got it.

VOGT

Good, because these people have no  
sense of humour. Now drop my  
cigarette and help me out. We gotta  
take them down.

Vogt picks Danika up and enters the tunnel. Horst stubs out  
the CIGARETTE in front of the PASSAGGE.

HORST

You want me to close it?

VOGT (O.S.)

No, I'll do it. We bring them down  
first.

The man loads Hans on his back with some difficulty, then  
begins his descent.

INT. TEMPLE - NIGHT - LATER

Hans opens his eyes. He notices he's been tied up to a stone  
COUNTER vertically erected in the central AISLE of a big  
TEMPLE. Now he's wearing a white knee length TUNIC.

The place is lit by a few torches displayed on two large  
PILLARS.

A few yards in front of him there's a narrow STAIRCASE  
leading to a raised ALTAR. Danika, still unconscious, is  
lying on it, immobilized with ropes. She's wearing a white  
tunic, too.

An enormous STATUE of Zeus soars beyond the altar.

ALGER (O.S.)

Good evening, Mr. Remher.

Hans instantly recognizes the voice. Alger pops out on his  
right side. He's wearing a long black TUNIC and has his face  
covered in black spray paint going from under his eyes to  
the top of his eyebrows, except for the nose, creating some  
sort of black mask, blurred on the edges.

HELMUT (O.S.)

Happy to see you.

Hans turns to his left; Helmut stands beside him. He's wearing the exact same outfit of his older brother.

HANS

(a little woozy)

W-What am I doing here?

ALGER

Sheer necessity.

HELMUT

Let's just say that your presence represents a key feature in the ritual we're about to celebrate... you're going to be the star of it.

HANS

What are you talking about? Why the girl has been tied up, too?

ALGER

There's no point in asking questions.

HANS

(sarcastic)

You want me to stay put and quietly satisfy your "needs"?

ALGER

You're starting to understand.

HELMUT

If we revealed why you're here tonight, there would be no chance for you to survive. Do you remember when we were talking about privacy?

HANS

Yeah, but to the best of my recollection, nobody told me there would be a costume party.

ALGER

(grabbing his face)

Pay attention to what you say... I might be offended.

HANS

(not intimidated)

I quit being sensitive a long time ago. It could be liberating.

Helmut gently puts his hand over his brother's shoulder, who releases Hans.

HELMUT  
Sarcasm won't save you.

Alger walks away.

SOUNDTRACK: "Black Celebration" by Depeche Mode.

HELMUT (CONTINUED)  
Don't struggle. Just open your  
mind.

Hans looks at Helmut, confused.

ALGER  
(to Helmut)  
It's time to begin.

HELMUT  
You can't fight what you don't  
understand.

HANS  
Why did you bring us here?

Helmut turns around and walks away.

HANS  
(raising his voice)  
Helmut! What's gonna happen to the  
girl?

Helmut stops and shifts his gaze to Hans.

HELMUT  
You do what I say, she's gonna be  
fine.

Helmut joins his brother at the foot of the staircase.

ALGER  
You were always a weaver of words.

HELMUT  
Why deprive him of hope?

ALGER  
(smirking)  
It wasn't a criticism.  
(pauses)  
You ready?

HELMUT  
Totally.

AMERICAN SHOT: ALGER and HELMUT start walking up the stairs  
in perfect synch. They are focused. Ruthless. Soulless.

The two men reach the top of the staircase. They go behind  
the altar on which lies Danika. They slowly reach out their

arms directly in front of them, palms facing down, closing their eyes.

CLOSE SHOT: HANS. His eyelids grow heavy.

INT. SMALL WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Dieter is meticulously inspecting one of the walls. He moves to the wooden furniture seen before, but there's nothing to find. The man looks down, shaking his head, disgruntled. All of a sudden, his face lights up. He kneels down before the furniture, reaching out with his right hand to take something.

CLOSE SHOT: a cigarette BUTT.

Dieter looks up and subtly nods twice.

EXT. ALTERNATE DIMENSION

CLOSE SHOT: HANS. His eyes suddenly open.

There is nothing around him: no floor, no ceiling, no walls. There's just DARKNESS and ABSOLUTE SILENCE. Hans realizes that he's not bound anymore. After some hesitation, he slowly starts to walk. After a few steps in the darkness, the young man finds himself surrounded by a SWARM of BLACK BUTTERFLIES. There are THOUSANDS of them; they are flying around him continuously without any harm. Their shapes can be distinguished only because they contrast with his tunic. Hans keeps moving. After a few steps, he sees two WHITE SPOTS in the far distance, the only trace of color amidst that black swarm. He heads for them.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

The ENTRANCE of the temple is illuminated by two big pedestal torches placed at the top of a staircase.

Horst is pacing back and forth in front of the temple door, smoking his umpteenth cigarette. Vogt is sitting on the steps.

HORST

What do you think they're doing now?

VOGT

I don't know... and I don't care.

HORST

(muttering to himself)  
An orgy, perhaps...

Vogt shakes his head, dejected.

HORST

We're gonna be struck here all night.

VOGT  
(without looking)  
Could be.

HORST  
I can think of the stakeouts I did  
when I was in the Police.

VOGT  
I imagine.

Horst sits down beside Vogt.

HORST  
Aren't you tired of waiting?

Vogt sighs; his patience has come to an end.

VOGT  
(looking him in the eye)  
No.  
(gets on his feet)  
I'm gonna take a piss.

HORST  
OK.

Vogt disappears in the darkness.

Horst gets back in front of the entrance. He resumes walking back and forth, this time giving sideways glances on the doors. After a few seconds he stops and looks around; his curiosity is too strong to resist. He drops the cigarette and opens the door.

INT. TEMPLE - NIGHT

The man closes the door with extreme caution, then turns around; he stands astonished by the beauty of the interior.

HORST POV: the three aisles are separated by two rows of PILLARS decorated with IONIC CAPITALS. Several yards ahead, the LIGHT of some torches illuminates the final part of the central aisle.

The man rolls to the right aisle, skulking from pillar to pillar. As he walks down the aisle, he notices large statues of GREEK GODS on the walls of the temple.

Upon reaching the lit area, the man leans over from behind one pillar and sees Hans tied to the stone counter. The young man's eyes are closed, but he's not sleeping; he seems to be in a state of trance.

The man, confused, looks up to the altar; his jaw drops.

A HAND comes out right behind him, covering his mouth, while another one, holding a knife, slits his throat in one quick motion. Horst watches his own BLOOD landing on the floor

with eyes wide open.

Vogt drags his partner behind the pillar, putting him in a seated position. Streams of blood keeps spilling from the throat wound.

VOGT

Idiot.

Vogt gets blown to the back of his head and falls to the ground, THUD, unconscious.

AMERICAN SHOT: on DIETER, standing with a GUN in his hand.

EXT. ALTERNATE DIMENSION

Hans is approaching the white spots, which turns out to be two WHITE SMOKE VORTEXES. He gets to about four feet away and stops, noticing that there is one HUMAN FIGURE inside each of the two vortexes, covered with fog.

CLOSE UP: HELMUT and ALGER, standing still with their EYES closed. All of a sudden, they open in perfect synch.

Hans takes a step back, wincing. The butterflies disappear. The Sitakos, surrounded by smoke, start moving towards him, floating.

Hans turns around and starts to run. The Sitakos chase after him, managing to reach him in no time. They grab his arms, stopping his escape. Alger is holding Hans tight on his right arm, Helmut is doing the same with the left one. The young man, distressed, can't seem to break free.

The Sitakos lift him up, then make a U-turn. Presently, Hans is being transported in the darkness at an increasing speed. He tries to wiggle free, but in vain. Starting from the face, his body begins changing color, fading to GREY.

HANS POV

A small white DOT, brighter than the previous ones, shines in the far distance. It looks like a star, growing bigger as the two priests head straight for it. As they move closer, the star reveals itself as an halo of light containing a HUMAN FIGURE. It's a blonde girl in a white tunic: Danika.

Hans' skin is now charcoal grey. The closer they get to Danika, the more his skin turns dark. Presently, Hans is just a few meters away from crashing on her. The young man gapes his mouth open in a desperate, but INAUDIBLE, SCREAM.

INT. TEMPLE - NIGHT

CLOSE UP: on HELMUT. His eyes open with a little stutter, looking down.

Helmut leans on the altar. Within a few seconds he sees Danika still lying on it, while his borther Alger is on the



floor, on his left, with a BULLET HOLE in his forehead. A POOL of BLOOD is forming around his head.

Helmut looks up; Dieter, standing right in front of him, is raising his gun toward his face.

DIETER

Bernard says hi.

Helmut, astounded and devastated at the same time, jumps out at him with one quick movement.

The two men fall out of the raised altar, taking a 30 feet swan dive.

Dieter lands on Helmut's body, the bones of the priest break, CRACK.

Dieter loses consciousness for a few seconds, then opens his eyes again. He raises himself from Helmut and starts walking away, limping a bit.

HELMUT (O.S.)

(moaning)

You...

Dieter stops, walks back to Helmut. He's surprised he's still alive.

DIETER

(coldly)

Now I want to see you die.

HELMUT

You just killed her... she's as good as dead.

DIETER

(wearing a frown)

What are you talking about?

HELMUT

My niece-

(coughs blood)

This rite would've saved her... The brain tumor is gonna kill her in less than two months... Thanks to you.

DIETER

(coldly)

I don't believe in magic.

HELMUT

I wonder if you'll be able to live with that...

DIETER  
 (kneels beside him)  
 What makes you think I give a shit  
 about your niece?

Helmut stares at him with a creepy, blood-stained smile. He stops breathing after a few seconds, his eyes unblinking.

Dieter goes to Hans. The young man has regained consciousness, but he's bleeding out his nose and ears, while his skin is almost as white as the tunic he's wearing.

Dieter pulls out his knife.

HANS  
 (whispering)  
 I-I think you're a bit late.

DIETER  
 (cutting the ropes)  
 To save you?

He makes him seat in front of the stone he was tied up to, crouching down before him.

HANS  
 No... to kill me.

Dieter half smiles.

HANS (CONTINUED)  
 Did you change your mind?

DIETER  
 What did they do to you?

HANS  
 I can't explain... It was like going into space... but the stars had vanished, swallowed up by darkness. I can only remember a swarm of butterflies... they were black.

Dieter looks confused. He shifts his gaze to the altar, then back to Hans.

DIETER  
 I'll help you up.

HANS  
 No. The girl.  
 (coughs)  
 Help her first.

Dieter nods. He gets up and starts walking toward the stairs. After taking a few steps, he stops, turning to Hans.

DIETER

(bitter)

Me, in one sense, you, on the other... I don't think we were made for this world.

HANS

But maybe we finally found common ground.

The two men exchange a sympathetic look.

Dieter climbs up the stairs, reaching the altar once again. Danika is still lying there in her white clothing, looking like a nymph. The man gently takes her in his arms and begins his descent. He gets back to Hans, but the young man's eyes are closed. The man lays Danika on the floor, then crouches down next to Hans once more. He tries to wake him up, but he's not responding. He takes his arm, feels the pulse; there isn't any.

The expression on Dieter's face darkens. He lowers his gaze, running his hand through his hair. He gets on his feet.

FULL SHOT: on Hans' lifeless BODY, sitting at the foot of the big stone.

LONG SHOT: Dieter, back turned, walking down the central aisle with Danika in his arms.

INT. CT SCANNING ROOM, HOSPITAL - WEST BERLIN - NIGHT - LATER

Danika is lying awake in the patient bed of a CT machine which is performing a full body scan.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

DOCTORS and NURSES are going up and down the hallway. Dieter, arms crossed, is sitting on a chair along the corridor. Beside him, there are three waiting VISITORS.

A DOCTOR (40) comes out of an office.

DOCTOR

(addressing him)

Mr. Schroeder?

DIETER

(getting on his feet)

Yes.

DOCTOR

Come in.

Dieter enters the office.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The doctor points to the chair, Dieter sits down in front of the desk.

DOCTOR

(sitting behind his desk)  
Tell me, what's your connection  
with Danika?

DIETER

As I told to your colleagues at the  
E.R., I found her unconscious on a  
street corner. Since she won't come  
to, not knowing what really  
happened to her, I decided to bring  
her here.

DOCTOR

I see. Well, tox screens show a  
massive dose of Triazolam, a  
sedative hypnotic drug. But there's  
no sign of other drugs in her  
system, as it was originally  
suspected. I decided to subject her  
to a full body scan to rule out  
internal injuries... but I'm afraid  
I don't have good news.

DIETER

I'm listening.

DOCTOR

The scan revealed a malignant brain  
tumor... the size of a tennis ball.

Dieter loses his breath for a few seconds. The news knocked  
him down.

DIETER

Is there something you can do?

DOCTOR

(shaking his head)  
The cancer has advanced to the  
point that it's no longer possible  
to operate.

DIETER

You're telling me she cannot be  
saved... at all?

DOCTOR

She's terminal.

DIETER

How long does she have to live?

DOCTOR  
That's hard to say, maybe-

DIETER  
(interrupts him)  
A couple of months?

DOCTOR  
Probably, but we need to carry out  
some deeper analysis-

DIETER  
(raising up)  
Thank you.

Dieter now has a blank look on his face. He goes for the door.

DOCTOR  
(surprised)  
Where you're going?

Dieter stops and turns around.

DIETER  
I'd like to see her, if that's  
possible.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Dieter is standing next to Danika's bed; she is sleeping.  
The doctor is on the other side of the bed.

DOCTOR  
When we woke her up, I asked her  
what she remembered about tonight.  
She mentioned a "Hans" and some  
dark place, but she was unable to  
go into detail. She was completely  
disoriented.  
(pauses)  
I don't know what happened to her,  
but she seems to have suffered a  
big shock.

Dieter is looking at her, silent. The doctor feels he's  
intruding on them.

DOCTOR (CONTINUED)  
I'll leave you alone with her.

DIETER  
(looks up at him)  
Goodbye.

SOUNDTRACK: "Blasphemous Rumours" by Depeche Mode.

CLOSE UP: DIETER now has a guilty look on his face.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM ENTRANCE - WEST BERLIN - DAWN

SOUNDTRACK: "Blasphemous Rumours" by Depeche Mode keeps playing in the background.

Dieter comes out of the automatic doors. He leans against the wall next to the entrance; his face goes blank again.

Dieter's attention is drawn by the wail of an incoming AMBULANCE. The vehicle stops in front of the E.R. entrance, the back doors open up. Two male NURSES take out a stretcher on which lies a YOUNG MAN (20-30) with an oxygen mask.

Dieter recognizes HANS on the stretcher.

NURSE #1 (O.S.)  
Hurry up! He's overdosing!

Dieter squeezes his eyes, looks again; he's not him. The nurses roll the stretcher inside the Emergency Room.

Dieter casts his gaze ahead. The sun is about to rise, the horizon turns orange. He pulls out a cigarette, lights it up. The first rays of the sun shine down on his face.

DISSOLVE TO BLACK

SUPERIMPOSE:

1 WEEK LATER

INT. NIGHTCLUB "CORELLES" - WEST BERLIN - NIGHT

Background music: "Dazzle" by Siouxsie and the Banshees.

The place is packed with CUSTOMERS aged between 20 and 35.

Dieter is sitting on a bar stool while having a drink face to the dancefloor. He doesn't seem like he's having too much fun. He finishes his drink and gets up. He crosses the dancefloor, getting unwittingly shoved by the diverse humanity floundering around him, but he doesn't care.

He suddenly stops. A few meters on his right he sees BERNARD and DANIKA dancing together. They look happy; they wave their hands to him, signaling to come over. Dieter is blown away. He starts moving towards them as they turn their backs on him. Dieter is about one meter away from them when they turn around again; they are two perfect STRANGERS. Dieter stops, wrinkling his forehead.

FREDERIC (O.S.)  
Hey, Dieter!

Dieter turns around.

DIETER  
(recognizing him)  
Hey.

Dieter resumes moving through the dancing crowd. The young man follows him.

FREDERIC

Wait!

The young man's demand gets lost in the confusion of the club. Dieter gets out of the dancefloor, heading for the exit.

FREDERIC

Dieter! Wait a minute!

Dieter turns around again. Frederic breaks through the dancing customers, joining him.

FREDERIC

(concerned)

I need to talk to you.

DIETER

About what?

FREDERIC

Business... It's very important.

Dieter nods imperceptibly.

DIETER

(pointing to the raised floor)

Let's sit down.

INT. RAISED FLOOR, NIGHTCLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Background music: "Revenge" by Ministry.

Dieter and Frederic are sitting on a little sofa which has its backrest attached to the wall. There's one drink on the small table right in front of them.

FREDERIC

I stopped by the bar many times,  
but no one knew where you were...  
I've been trying to reach you for  
ten days!

DIETER

I had something really important to  
do.

FREDERIC

Shit, I hope you settled it,  
because we've fallen behind.

DIETER

Yeah, I know.

FREDERIC  
Is Bernard here with you?

DIETER  
(coldly)  
He's dead.

FREDERIC  
(shocked)  
What? How?

A few moments of silence.

DIETER  
Because of me.

FREDERIC  
Shit... I'm sorry. I didn't know  
that.  
(pauses)  
I never heard from you, we had  
business to-

DIETER  
(interrupts him)  
I'm out.

FREDERIC  
What do you mean?

DIETER  
I'm telling you that it's all in  
your hands, now.

FREDERIC  
I'm honored... But that's not gonna  
happen.  
(pause)  
Does this has anything to do with  
Bernard's death?

DIETER  
Partly... But not solely.

FREDERIC  
What are you gonna do?

DIETER  
I think I'm gonna head out.

FREDERIC  
(sipping his drink)  
It could be risky.  
(caressing his upper leg)  
We could stay in touch, if you  
want.  
(gets closer to him)  
I've never forgotten the days we  
spent together.



DIETER  
 (looking down)  
 You shouldn't tell me this.

Frederic puts down his drink.

FREDERIC  
 (at a loss)  
 Why?

Using his left hand, Dieter grabs Frederic's right wrist, raising it up to the table level. There's a SYRINGE in the young man's hand.

DIETER  
 (looking him in the eye)  
 Amicus certus in re incerta  
 cernitur. (I.e.: "True friends  
 reveal themselves when fate is  
 uncertain".)

Dieter twists Frederic's wrist, who grinds his teeth in pain. The syringe drops on the table, but Dieter doesn't let him go.

DIETER (CONTINUA)  
 (whispering)  
 Don't scream, or I'll break it.  
 (pauses)  
 So, what you got in there?

FREDERIC  
 (suffering)  
 Hemlock.

DIETER  
 Like Socrates... An honourable  
 death.

FREDERIC  
 (suffering)  
 You displeased quite a few people,  
 what did you expect?

DIETER  
 A little patience.

FREDERIC  
 (suffering)  
 I can tell you who wants you dead.

DIETER  
 (coldly)  
 I don't care.

In the blink of an eye, Dieter takes the syringe with his right hand and casually sticks it in Frederic's thigh, injecting the venom. The young man can only watch.

DIETER (CONTINUED)

I gave you half a dose, for old's time sake. Who knows, maybe you'll survive.

(putting the syringe in his jacket pocket)

In any case, we're never going to see each other again.

FREDERIC

(angrily)

They are gonna find you, bastard!

Dieter lets him go as he gets up.

DIETER

That's fine with me.

The man walks away from the table at a good pace.

Frederic tries to get on his feet, but he can't. His face has turned white, he's got nausea. Starts puking on the table. The dry heaves are so violent he falls to the ground.

Some CUSTOMERS sitting at the near tables raise up to see what's going on.

CUSTOMER #1

(yelling)

Hey, look at it!

CUSTOMER #2

(yelling, amused by the scene)

He's not gonna stop!

Two YOUNG MEN (20-30) come up to the table. They lean over Frederic; presently, he's convulsing.

YOUNG MAN #1

Shit, he's not gonna make it!

YOUNG MAN #2

Hold him down, I'll call an ambulance!

The second young man rushes to the stairs, running through the tables.

EXT. STREET, WEST BERLIN SUBURBS - NIGHT - LATER

LONG SHOT: A series of TOWNHOUSES. The only LIGHT SOURCE comes from the second floor window of Dieter's house.

INT. BEDROOM, DIETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The light coming from the bathroom illuminates Dieter, who's busy zipping up a big SUITCASE placed on the double-bed; there are other two on the floor, ready to be taken away.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dieter goes to the sink and turns on the tap. He wets his face very slowly, then turns his head towards the shower. He pulls out the syringe from his pocket and puts it on the sink top.

AMERICAN SHOT: DIETER. He's staring down at his own reflection in the mirror, leaning his hands on the sink. Shifts his gaze down and to the right, on the syringe. Picks it up.

CLOSE SHOT: DIETER. Staring down again at his own face, still wet. Narrows his eyes.

SOUNDTRACK: "Total Recall" by The Sound.

DISSOLVE TO BLACK

END CREDITS