

# Bangkok Redemption

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A child's bedroom furnished with a Disney Princess theme.

A WOMAN, late 20s, long black hair expensively cut, reads to her four-year-old.

The crack! of a door kicked in. Heavy footsteps thump through the house. Men yelling in Thai.

The woman sits bolt upright, lifting and shoving the daughter toward the master bathroom.

WOMAN  
Quick! Hide, baby!

The woman dives for the phone and the girl races into the master bathroom.

OPERATOR  
(ON PHONE)  
What is the nature of your  
emergency?

The door of the bedroom slams open.

A man in all black, a balaclava covering his face, steps in and raises the barrel of his shotgun.

POV MOM.

The shotgun comes level to reveal the black hole of its muzzle. There is a flash and boom!

CUT TO: BLACK  
SCREEN

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

POV ASSASSIN.

A well-lit bathroom. Whimpering from the shower. A gloved hand reaches for the shower door. It pulls open with a click.

CUT TO: BLACK  
SCREEN.

A flash and a boom!

INT. HOUSE - DAY

MAX, late forties. Gray hair, rugged. Dressed casually, but well.

A hard life has left its mark: crows feet, thick-looking skin.

He is bent over with grief.

A DETECTIVE, with ruffled suit and hair waits for Max, his eyes hard and suspicious.

The home shows obvious signs of crime scene investigation.

The Detective leads Max into the bedroom.

Scrawled in blood on the wall above the bed is the Thai word for REVENGE.

Max's eyes widen then narrow as his face tightens.

MAX

Pichai.

EXT. BANGKOK - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

AN ALLEY BEHIND PATPONG 1.

Trash litters the alley from overflowing dumpsters. The alley itself looks greasy.

A single gunshot.

A door slams open and two men in black suits drag the body of a young woman wearing jeans and a black blouse into the alley and toss her into a dumpster.

INT. GO-GO BAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The Go-Go bar is nearly deserted. A younger version of Max in a T-shirt with a bar logo, jeans and flip-flops leans against the bar.

Waiters clear glassware, bottles, and ashtrays.

At the sound of the gunshot, Max starts for the curtains separating the bar from the area behind.

The curtains part to reveal PICHAI.

Pichai wears a tailored Armani suit. He is in his late 30s, Thai, and debonair in a gangster way. He has an oily look and his face is asymmetrical. He exudes the sense of a powerful, dangerous man.

PICHAI

Max.

Pichai blinks a few times, clearing his head from the business he has just concluded and focuses on Max.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

You are on the 6:00AM to Hong Kong.

Pichai motions to a man in a black suit carrying a briefcase.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

You will carry this.

INT. JET LAVATORY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Max draws a document pouch from under his waistband.

He is sweating and looks ill.

He pulls out the contents of the pouch: Three American passports with his picture in different names. Plane tickets.

One reads: Hong Kong - LAX. Departure: 10:11AM. Gate 4.

Max's hands shake slightly and he looks at himself in the mirror.

MAX

You can do this, mate.

He stares into his own eyes.

MAX (CONT'D)

This is your ticket out. A new life.

INT. HONG KONG AIRPORT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Passengers deboarding. Max walks quickly with a group of similarly dressed tourists.

He spots his welcoming committee, a couple of hard-looking Asian men in suits and sunglasses.

Max bends as if to tie a shoe; the men's gaze pass over him and back to the exit ramp as Max in a half-crouch, using the tourists for cover, scuttles round a corner.

Out of sight of the men, he sprints down the concourse.

INT. HONG KONG AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Max is in line to board at gate four. He hands his passport and boarding pass to the ticket agent.

TICKET AGENT  
Peter Blackburn.

The agent looks up to match the photo to the face.

Have a nice flight, Mr. Blackburn.

Max nods and steps through the gate quickly without looking back.

EXT. LAX - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Max sits inside a rental car in the lot at LAX. He flips the latches on the briefcase and raises the lid to reveal its contents: Gold bullion.

MAX  
Fuck you, Pichai.

EXT. PATTAYA CITY, THAILAND - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Max walks purposefully along the uneven sidewalks.

Hundreds crowd the sidewalks, slow-moving traffic (baht buses, rental jeeps, motorcycles, cars, tourist buses, etc.) crawls along the street.

Stalls selling cheap clothing, trinkets, food, etc. line the sidewalk.

Open-air bars overflowing with girls and lit by naked red, green, and yellow neon bulbs fill the side streets.

Various rock songs intermix. Girls croon and beckon passerby.

Max snakes his way through the river of humanity and down a side alley, where he spots his target:

A round sign reads "Lucy's Video Den."

INT. LUCY'S VIDEO DEN - NIGHT

The room is small. A fifteen-foot bar with stools and a foot rail on the right. Six or seven small circular tables sit in front of a long cushioned bench which runs the length of the left wall.

The bar is well-stocked, with an inordinate number of bottles of Johnny Walker Black Label.

A large flat screen above the bar plays a video.

A couple of Thai server girls lounge listlessly, waiting for one of the few expats in the bar to raise his glass for another.

LUCY stands behind the bar. She is a well-kept 40 or so with a figure that hints at the go-go dancer she once was. Gold bracelets line her wrists, and three gold chains adorn her neck, each with a little Buddha icon.

All eyes turn to look at Max as he enters.

The expats turn their attention back to the video. Lucy stiffens and draws a hand to her cheek, eyes widening.

LUCY

Max!

Max walks to the bar and takes a stool.

MAX

Hello, Lucy. Long time.

LUCY

Why did you come back? You want to die?

MAX

Not right now. How about a drink?

Lucy pours Max a drink and sets it in front of him.

The two share a long look, then Max raises his glass.

MAX (CONT'D)

Choke-dee, tee-rak.

LUCY

Yes. Good luck, Max. I think you will need it.

Max sips his drink.

MAX

Pichai still hanging around these parts, Luce?

LUCY

(In Thai now, frustrated with Max.)

You're a very stupid man, Max. You know how dangerous he is. He'll kill you if he hears you're in town.

MAX

(In Thai)

Maybe.

LUCY

You should not have run off with Pichai's gold, Max.

Max looks down at the bar. His eyes tear up, but he pulls himself together.

MAX

I know, Luce. I know. I just...

He looks into Lucy's eyes, the tears thick in his own, but not yet rolling down his cheeks.

Lucy reaches out and puts a hand on his.

MAX (CONT'D)

He killed my girlfriend. And I'd had enough. I wanted out.

LUCY

Stealing Pichai's gold was not a smart way out. And Som? Your "girlfriend?" She was a whore, Max.

Max sighs.

MAX

I know that, Luce. But I loved her.

LUCY

Stupid farang. Never learn.

She lifts a hand and caresses Max's cheek.

LUCY (CONT'D)

You should have come to me.

MAX

I know.

Max leans forward, brings his face close to Lucy's.

MAX (CONT'D)

He killed my family, Luce. He  
killed my wife and my little girl.  
Used their blood to leave a  
message.

Max sits back and downs his drink in a single gulp.

MAX (CONT'D)

All because I stole a couple grand  
worth of gold from him.

Lucy's hands fall to the bar.

LUCY

I'm so sorry, Max. But go home.  
Before Pichai finds you.

MAX

I was thinking of finding him  
first. Your sister still own those  
bungalows over Jom Tien way?

LUCY

Yes.

MAX

Same crowd at the bar out back?

LUCY

More bad men.

MAX

That's what I was hoping for.

Max leans forward and takes Lucy's hands in his. Looks into her eyes.

MAX (CONT'D)

Real good to see you again, Luce.  
Real good.

Max stands and pulls a hundred-baht note out of his pocket and tucks it into the cup on the bar holding his bill.

Lucy stands with her hands on the bar. Her smile is sad.

MAX (CONT'D)  
See you around, Luce. Choke-dee,  
nah?

LUCY  
Choke-dee, Khun Max. You be  
careful. OK?

Max grins and turns and walks for the door.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
Come back and see me, soon, Max.

Max pauses, nods, then steps out without looking back.

Lucy watches the door swing shut behind him and then slumps  
onto the bar, head in her hands.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
(Softly in Thai)  
You're a fool, Max. A crazy, dead,  
fool.

EXT. OPEN-AIR BAR - NIGHT

The One Eyed Jack sits on the street that runs along Jom Tien  
Beach.

Max sits with an elbow on the bar eyeing the crowd, a mixed  
group of tough-looking expats.

ANNIE, a sultry Thai woman of indeterminate age slides onto  
the stool next to him.

MAX  
Annie.

ANNIE  
Max. Lucy said to expect you.

MAX  
My old room open?

ANNIE  
Corner room, back side.

MAX  
(nods)  
Awut still around?

ANNIE  
He's around. You sure?

MAX

Sure as shit.

ANNIE

Speaking of shit, Lucy says you're about to step in it.

MAX

I'm diving in, Annie. Head first. Awut?

ANNIE

I'll let him know. You hit town. He'll find you. Stay away from the south end of the strip, Max. Pichai...

MAX

...can go fuck himself. But don't worry darling. I ain't aiming on dying just yet.

Annie gives Max a long look, rests her hand on his for a moment, then walks away.

Max watches her go.

EXT. OPEN-AIR BAR - NIGHT

The bar is one of a string lining the strip. A motley mix of night life parades past. Max chats in Thai with the girls as he sips his beer and watches the crowd.

A street kid, NOK, tugs at the leg of his shorts and catches his attention. She is a gorgeous young girl of about twelve, with large eyes and beautiful long hair.

She has a tray strapped to her neck, something like the ones cigarette girls used to wear. It is filled with trinkets and candy.

NOK

You buy nice watch?

MAX

(in Thai)

I have a nice watch. I don't want any candy, either.

NOK

Oh! You speak Thai very well! Please, sir, buy some candy! I give you special. Three bar, 100 Baht.

Max smiles at her, shakes his head, and turns back to the bar, ignoring her.

NOK (CONT'D)

OK, mister! I make you deal: four bar, 100 baht. Please, sir? Very good deal! I promise you . .

MAX'S DAUGHTER (O.S.)

Please, daddy? Please? Pretty please?

Max stiffens, turns to face Nok. His face is strained, wounded-looking.

MAX

What's your name, little one?

NOK

Nok. You want to buy?

Max reaches into a pocket and pulls out a wad of cash. He peels off 1000 Baht.

MAX

Nok. "Little Bird." Nice. Here.

Hands her the money.

MAX (CONT'D)

That enough for everything on your tray?

NOK

Fifteen hundred baht.

Max's smile is strained. With every word from Nok, he hears the echo of his dead daughter's voice.

He peels off another five-hundred baht bill and hands it to her.

MAX

Go home, little bird. Go home now. It's late and you've sold the lot. Time to rest.

Nok carefully places all the items from her tray onto the bar in front of Max, wais him, grins, and darts up the sidewalk.

Max watches her disappear into the crowd, his face a mix of loss and love.

EXT. OPEN-AIR BAR - NIGHT

A boxing ring dominates the center of the bar. Two Thai boxers are putting on a good show for the tourists and a few locals.

Thai-boxing music winds around all the conversation.

Max is seated at a table a few rows back from the ring. He stares blankly into the glass of whiskey cradled in his hands.

A hard-looking Thai, AWUT, enters, scans the crowd, then sits deliberately next to Max.

AWUT  
Sawadee, Khun Max.

MAX  
Awut.

AWUT  
Heard you were looking for me.

MAX  
Need some stuff. Info. Maybe a guy or two.

AWUT  
You have cash?

MAX  
Plenty.

AWUT  
All up front. People are laying odds on how long you've got.

MAX  
Maybe I can get in on that.

AWUT  
What do you need, Max?

MAX  
Glock? 9mm?

AWUT  
Easy. 50,000 Baht.

MAX  
Bastard. Who do you know works for Pichai?

AWUT  
No one who will talk.

MAX  
I said I've got cash.

AWUT  
Dead men don't need cash, Max.

MAX  
Whatever. When can I get the Glock?

AWUT  
Annie's. Tomorrow afternoon.

MAX  
I'll be there.

AWUT  
Fifty up front, Max.

MAX  
Now? Fuck that. I'll give it to  
your man tomorrow.

AWUT  
You're pushing it Max.

MAX  
What can I say? It's my nature.

AWUT  
You have the nature of a lemming,  
Max. Fifty up front.

MAX  
I don't have fifty with me.

AWUT  
Then I don't have a Glock.

Awut gets up from the table.

MAX  
Fuck it. OK then, look . . . I've  
got twenty with me. I'll give the  
other thirty to your man tomorrow.

AWUT  
Thirty-five tomorrow.

MAX  
You're a bastard.

AWUT  
Forty tomorrow. You're wasting my  
time, Max.

MAX  
Gah. Here.

Max pulls a wad out from a front pocket and slips it to Awut.

AWUT  
A pleasure, Max.

Max grimaces and downs the rest of his whiskey.

Awut smiles, turns on his heel and slips out of the bar.

EXT. MUAY THAI CAMP - DAY

Muay Thai music plays as fighters spar in several boxing rings, others kick posts, work heavy bags, etc. A giant of a man, ONG, is working with a fighter repeatedly kicking a wooden post. Although in his forties, Ong is toned and fit, handsome with salt-and-pepper hair.

ONG  
Again!

The fighter loosens a high-kick at the wooden post. His shins are bleeding, but his face is placid.

ONG (CONT'D)  
Again!

Max stands watching. Ong senses he's being watched and turns.

ONG (CONT'D)  
Max!

The men embrace.

MAX  
You're looking fit. Any of your  
fighters any good?

ONG  
The one kicking the post over  
there. Hit him with a truck and he  
just blinks. What are you doing  
back, Max?

MAX  
Long story.

Ong whistles and all the fighters stop and turn to face him.

ONG  
(in Thai)  
Finish your morning workout. Then  
run the moon trail.

All fighters wai Ong, and action resumes.

INT. OPEN-AIR SHELTER - DAY

A ceiling fan squeaks as Max and Ong recline on chairs, each with a drink.

Max wipes tears from his cheeks.

ONG  
Killing Pichai won't redeem you,  
Max. Some burdens we must carry for  
life.

MAX  
Maybe. Maybe not. The one thing I  
can NOT do is let him live.

Ong sips from his drink and turns his eyes away.

ONG  
So, you want two men.

MAX  
I'll pay them well.

ONG  
I don't' like putting my fighters  
in that kind of danger, Max.

MAX  
Great risk for great gain, all  
that.

ONG  
I'll talk to a couple guys. Older,  
not up to competition, not great at  
coaching.

MAX  
I appreciate it, Ong.

Ong looks at Max. A long moment. Then he shakes his head, letting go of whatever it was he was about to say.

ONG  
Have you been training?

MAX  
It's been a couple of years.

ONG  
Time to put the gloves on, then.

MAX  
Yeah. I could use a touch up. Get my reflexes back.

ONG  
What reflexes? The only thing that made you good was you're too stubborn to quit when you should.

MAX  
Story of my life, my friend. Story of my life.

EXT. THE STRIP - DAY

Max surveys the crowd on the strip. His face is lightly bruised and fresh scabs adorn his shins.

Nok is working the afternoon bar crowd and spots Max. She rushes up to him.

NOK  
Khun Max! Sawadee Kha! Look, I bring you more!

MAX  
Hello little one. Working early today.

NOK  
Nok is always working. I have special price for you!

MAX  
Not interested, sweetheart.

Max hears the echo of his daughter in Nok's voice. He grimaces as if struck by a migraine. His face softens.

NOK  
I give you whole tray. Special price. Only 1000 baht!

MAX  
 No deal. Tell you what, though.  
 Follow me.

Max shoves money in the cup that holds his bills and strolls down the sidewalk.

Nok follows.

EXT. OPEN-AIR RESTAURANT - DAY

Max and Nok sit at a table by the railing, an umbrella shading them from the open sun. The ocean laps at the pilings supporting the restaurant.

Nok glances around, nervously. A variety of seafood dishes cover the table.

MAX  
 Eat, you could use a good meal.

NOK  
 But Khun Max, I should be working.

MAX  
 Not on an empty stomach. Come on, eat up.

Nok tentatively picks up a prawn, bites off its head and chews. She relaxes and begins to eat rapidly. This is a treat.

NOK  
 Aroy! Very delicious, Khun Max.

MAX  
 Glad you like it. Was hungry myself.

Nok bolts to her feet and picks up her tray of trinkets and candy.

MAX (CONT'D)  
 Woah. Hey. Djai-yen. Relax. It's OK.

Nok's eyes are wide. A greasy-looking Thai, MU, with a big belly and a hard face has locked eyes with Nok. He looks ready to kill, and is on the table in three steps.

MU  
 Meung! Chaat maa!

Nok wais and bows, completely subservient.

NOK

(in Thai)

Khun Mu! I'm very sorry. I'm going back to work right now! I will make you a lot of money today. I promise.

Nok moves to leave, but Max is on his feet.

MAX

Just who the fuck you think you are? Get the fuck out of here.

MU

Stay out of this, farang.

MAX

The fuck I will. Back off, or I'll rip your arms off.

MU

You are a very stupid man. Sit down and eat. Mind your own business.

MAX

This is my business.

Max moves to grab the Thai by the throat, but Nok rushes between them.

NOK

Khun Max! No problem! No problem. I go work now. You sit, eat. Relax.

Nok tugs on Max's hand, her face pale with fear.

Max's face smooths out as he controls himself.

MAX

I'm going to remember you, you fat bastard.

MU

And I you.

Mu stalks off the pier with Nok trailing behind him. She gives one last despairing glance at Max as he watches them leave.

MAX

Just made my list, motherfucker.

EXT. OPEN-AIR BAR - NIGHT

Max sits with his back to the bar, his eyes on the entrance to the Thai Queen A Go-Go bar down the street. Two tough-looking Thais flank him.

MAX

What I need is for you to go in there and scout the bar. How many doormen? They got guns? What's it like security-wise?

THAI 1

You buying the drinks?

MAX

Yeah. Here's five hundred each. Look, Pichai's office is in the back. Keep an eye on it. I need to know how many guys he's got back there, that kind of thing.

THAI 1

No problem.

MAX

Tonight's just getting the layout down. Tomorrow or the next night, I'm going in. Got some things to take care of first.

THAI 1

No guns.

MAX

Don't worry. I just need you to clear a path for me, that's all.

INT. THE STRIP - NIGHT

Max sits in a restaurant with his back to the wall, a cup filled with drink receipts in front of him, the remnants of a good meal on dishes scattered across the table.

He drains his glass and raises it for another just as DAMRONG, a Thai man in the uniform of a high-ranking policeman sits next to him.

DAMRONG

Good evening Max. I heard you were back.

MAX

Damrong. Shit. Look at you.  
Climbing the ranks.

DAMRONG

Ten years is a long time, Max. I  
must confess I never expected to  
see you again.

MAX

Word gets around fast.

DAMRONG

You know how we Thais are, Max.

Damrong leans in close to Max.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

Max, tell me you are not here for  
foolish reasons.

MAX

Are there any sane reasons to be  
here?

DAMRONG

Not for you.

MAX

Just reliving the glory days,  
Damrong. Recapturing the youth a  
bit.

DAMRONG

There was nothing glorious about  
your days here, Max. Aside from  
your teaching.

MAX

Sure taught you good. Your English  
is better than mine.

DAMRONG

Thank you.

Max raises his glass in acknowledgment.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

Max. I was very sorry to hear of  
your loss.

Caught in mid-draught, Max swallows hard and bangs his glass  
down on the bar.

MAX

What?

DAMRONG

I am sorry, Max.

Max raises his glass for another drink.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

Killing Picha will bring you no  
peace, Max.

Max shrugs.

MAX

No idea what you're talking about,  
mate.

DAMRONG

I offer you another path, Max. One  
on which you can build considerable  
karma.

MAX

Ever the good Buddhist. Fuck that  
shit.

DAMRONG

There are other ways to find what  
you seek.

MAX

"Find what I seek?" Who are you?  
Kung Fucking Fu? How would you know  
what I seek?

Damrong meets Max's gaze evenly.

DAMRONG

You seek peace. To assuage your  
guilt.

Grief contorts Max's face. He fights for control.

MAX

He killed my whole family, Damrong.  
It took him ten years, but he  
finally tracked me down, and he  
took everything.

His hand tightens on his glass and he raises it again, the  
last few drops slowly sliding down the glass to his mouth.

MAX (CONT'D)

They had done nothing, Damrong. My little girl was only four years old.

Max raises his glass, catching the eye of a waitress.

Damrong slides a card from his shirt pocket onto Max's table.

DAMRONG

When you are ready to abandon this foolishness, call me, Max.

Damrong stands and wais Max, a gesture which turns the heads of the Thais in the restaurant.

Max picks up the card and flicks it back and forth across his knuckles.

MAX

And if I don't?

DAMRONG

You have a better idea than most of what can happen in Thailand, Max. If one is not prudent.

Max shakes his head, returns Damrong's wai from his chair.

Damrong nods, then turns and steps to the sidewalk.

A car pulls up immediately and Damrong gets into the back without turning.

Max watches the car disappear into traffic, his face slack.

EXT. THE STRIP - NIGHT

Max weaves his way up the sidewalk, head swiveling as he scans the crowd.

He stops in his tracks.

Mu herds Nok and a crowd of street kids into a van on the corner.

MAX

Ah.

Max's hand reaches around to the small of his back to find the butt of a 9mm Glock.

Mu loads the last of the kids into the van and climbs into the driver's seat.

Max looks left and right, spots a line of parked motorcycles. He moves to the closest and rips the wires from the ignition, makes a few deft moves, hops on and kick starts the bike.

The van pulls into the flow of traffic and Max follows.

EXT. OUTER EDGE OF PATTAYA CITY - NIGHT

The van moves through a neighborhood filled with gray and dirty-looking apartments and townhouses, solid blocks of concrete construction.

It pulls up in front of a townhouse and parks next to a sleek new van.

Max passes by and pulls over a few blocks ahead. He kills the engine and watches the van in the his mirror, fiddling with a phone as he does.

A FAT THAI WITH A POCKMARKED FACE face pops out of the new-looking van and shouts something to Mu.

MU  
(in Thai)  
What?

POXFACE  
(in Thai)  
I said, Let's see what you've got.

MU  
These are some of my best workers.  
Come inside, I've got some others.  
Better ones.

POXFACE  
I said let's see what you've got,  
dog! Now!

Mu is visibly angered by the insult but restrains himself.

MU  
Out of the van, you dogs! Line up!

As the children pile out of the van, the sliding door of the other grates open. From within the van a man croons in an unmistakably sexual way:

## MAN IN VAN

Oooh! Look at the little one! Turn around sweetheart, show me some tail!

Nok stands uncomprehending.

Mu jabs her hard enough to make her wince and she obligingly turns in a circle.

She begins to shake with fear.

Max watches from the shadows.

## MAN IN VAN (CONT'D)

She is perfect! Come here, little one. We're going to play some nice games tonight.

Nok stands rooted to the spot, shaking.

Poxface grabs her by the arm and hauls/tosses her into the van.

She cries out.

Max touches his pistol again, then returns his hand to the handlebars.

The van moves up the street and rounds the corner, passing Max.

Max lets it get a head start then kickstarts the motorcycle and follows.

The van leaves the village and is soon driving on a nearly empty road bordered by rice paddies and palm trees with occasional wood shacks.

## EXT. SUKHUMVIT ROAD - NIGHT

The van turns off the highway down a narrow dirt road the size of a driveway. Max kills the bike and glides to a stop. He listens as the van crunches down the dirt road and watches as the red tail lights dwindle, then swing off to one side, brighten and go out.

Max rolls the bike to the side of the road and dismounts, then walks down the dirt road.

EXT. WOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

A wooden house sits in a clearing, the van in front.

Satellite dishes crowd the ceiling.

Light and music leak out between the wooden slats.

A roar of cruel laughter. A cry of a child in anguish splits the night.

Max stiffens, then creeps quietly toward a back door.

The door opens abruptly and smacks him in the forehead.

An OLD THAI WOMAN exits the building with a bucket of bloody garbage and walks down a path.

Max pads silently after her, gun in hand. When the woman takes the bucket in two hands to fling its contents into the jungle, Max moves in and clamps a hand over her mouth and digs the barrel of his Glock into her temple.

MAX

(in Thai)

Don't move. Don't make a sound. And maybe you'll live.

The Old Woman nods.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm going to take my hand off of your mouth. If you scream, I'll shoot you in the face.

The Old Woman nods again.

Max moves his hand off the woman's mouth and clamps on to her shoulder.

The barrel of the gun dimples the woman's temple.

MAX (CONT'D)

How many men are in there?

OLD WOMAN

Three.

MAX

Are there any girls in there besides the one they just brought?

OLD WOMAN

Two.

MAX

Guns?

The Old Woman snorts in amusement.

OLD WOMAN

Many.

MAX

Here's the deal. You're going to walk across this field to the road and into town. I'm going to watch you until you're out of sight. If you turn around or make a sound, I'm going to put a bullet in your spine. Do you understand?

The Old Woman nods several times.

Max digs the barrel of the Glock into the old woman's shoulder and nudges her in the direction he wants her to go.

She obliges.

Max moves quickly to the porch, but just as he reaches it:

OLD WOMAN

Help! Farang! Robber! Help!

MAX

You old bitch. I should've killed you.

Poxface comes tearing out of the back door, gun in hand.

Max clocks him with the butt of the Glock and he goes down in a heap.

Max takes Poxface's gun and slips it into his holster, peers into the kitchen and moves in.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A Thai man in his underwear enters the kitchen with an AK-47 held at arms.

His eyes widen as he sees Max and he quickly brings the AK to bear.

Max puts a bullet through the man's forehead.

As the man drops, his gun lets loose a burst of automatic machine gun fire. Max is in the hallway, moving like a trained soldier, sweeping the hall with his pistol.

He comes to a door, peers inside.

Two very young Thai girls loll in a stained and filthy bed. They are wearing only thin T-shirts and their eyes are glazed.

A professional quality video camera sits on a tripod.

Film lights are arrayed around the bed.

A creak behind Max, and he dives as a gun fires.

Blood spurts from his shoulder and he rolls and comes up firing.

Wood splinters around him as he squeezes off three shots.

A MUSCULAR THAI MAN in military trousers and boots drops his weapon and goes to his knees, blood pouring out of the wounds in his chest.

Max is on him in a flash, fingers of his left hand dug into the notches on each side of the man's Adam's apple.

MAX

What the fuck are you people doing here? What is this?

MUSCULAR THAI MAN

You're a dead man.

The man attempts to spit at Max, but blood pours out of his mouth and he slumps.

MAX

Fuck.

It's useless. The man is drowning in his own blood, but stares at Max with hate-filled eyes even as the life drains out of them.

Max lets the man drop to the floor.

Out of nowhere, a THAI MAN hits him with a flying tackle.

The men tumble to the floor.

After a sustained struggle, Max subdues the man with a rear-naked choke.

Gun in hand, Max clears the house room by room.

The house is a chamber of horrors: One room is painted entirely black and outfitted as a torture chamber. Dark stains spatter the equipment and walls.

INT. WOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

In the last room, he finds Nok, tied spread-eagle to the four corners of a bed, naked.

MAX

Oh, God. Nok. I'm here little bird.

Max pulls a butterfly knife from a pocket, whips it open one-handed and cuts Nok free.

Nok curls up into a ball and begins weeping.

Max finds a sheet to cover her, then cradles her.

MAX (CONT'D)

It's going to be OK, little bird.  
I'm here, I'm here now. Shh-shh.

Nok's weeping subsides.

MAX (CONT'D)

I've got to take care of a few things. You hold tight. I'll be right back, promise.

Nok startles, clutches Max to her.

He gently disengages and stands, raises a finger to his lips.

MAX (CONT'D)

Shh. It's OK. I promise. I've got you now. I'll just be ten minutes.

INT. WOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

Max pours a pitcher of water over the face of the Thai Man he choked out. The man sputters and begins to sit.

Max steps over him, and drops to his knees, mounting him.

He pushes the barrel of the Glock into the man's forehead hard enough to dimple it.

MAX  
(in Thai)  
What. The fuck. Is going on here?

The Thai man spits at Max.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Wrong answer.

Max backhands the Thai man with his Glock, splitting his eyebrow. Blood rolls down the man temple into his hair.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Let's try that again. What's going on here?

THAI MAN  
You are a dead man.

Max bitch slaps the Thai man with his Glock.

Nok steps into the hallway, wrapped in a sheet, eyes wide.

NOK  
Khun Max!

Max deliberates a second, tossing the gun from hand to hand, then reverses it and slams the butt into the man's temple. He stands.

MAX  
Fuck it.

INT. WOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

In the back room, Nok has found her clothes and dressed.

MAX  
Let's get moving, sweetheart.

Nok trails Max to the room with the other two girls.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Help me get them dressed. Hurry!

The two dress the girls rapidly.

Max carries them one at a time to the van out front, cradling each as gently as a baby.

Smoke is beginning to pour out the back windows of the house.

The shirt of Max's right shoulder is soaked in blood, but the bleeding has stopped.

Max and Nok climb into the front seats of the van.

Max has a pistol in his lap and the AK-47's barrel rests against the console. Loaded clips litter the dash.

Max guns the van and they head down the dirt road. Halfway to the road, the lights of another van flash as it turns onto the road to meet them head on.

MAX

Fuck. Nok! In the back and on the floor! Now!!

As Nok dives into the back, Max accelerates straight at the other van, pulls the AK up and out the driver's side window, and aims one-handed.

He empties a clip into the windshield of the approaching van. The windshield goes opaque as bullets slam through it.

The van veers wildly and plunges off the road into the rice paddies where it bogs and rolls onto its side.

Max's van hits the road, tires screeching.

The taillights of the van recede and dwindle as it speeds away.

EXT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max brings the battered van to a screeching stop in front of the black bars of the security gate at Lucy's house.

Motion-triggered floodlights flare and Max winces against the glare.

MAX

Nok!

Nok is slumped listlessly against the passenger's side door. She is non-responsive.

MAX (CONT'D)

Damn it.

Max leaps out of the van and approaches the black metal door set into the cement wall next to the security gate.

As he arrives, a flap at eye-level is drawn back and a pair of brown eyes peer out. It is KIET, Lucy's house boy.

KIET

Pen alai?

MAX

Tell Lucy it's Khun Max. I need in.

Kiet stares for a moment, blinks, then the flap slides shut. An electronic click and the whir of a small motor as the gate slides on its tracks and opens.

Max leaps back into the van and drives up the circle drive to the entrance of a nicely kept two story middle-class home.

Lucy walks out as Max climbs out of the truck.

LUCY

Max? What are you doing here?

Lucy's eyes widen as she spots the blood on Max's shoulder.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Max! You're hurt!

Her eyes turn to the truck and she sees Nok.

LUCY (CONT'D)

What the hell is going on, Max?  
What have you been doing?

MAX

Just another night on the town,  
Luce, you know how it is. Help me  
out here.

Max opens the passenger door and gently takes Nok into his arms. Her head lolls.

Max looks at Lucy, who is still standing in the doorway, blocking it.

He raises an eyebrow at her, and she turns aside and allows him in.

INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max carries Nok to an ornately carved Teak couch and lays her down gently.

The room is sparsely decorated with beautiful wood floors and immaculate white walls.

The walls are bare save a picture of the King and Queen of Thailand, and a shrine to Buddha, with garlands draped over its edges, a small plate of food offerings and an incense burner on its platform.

Two Teak chairs flank the couch. An entertainment center sits across from the couch. A Thai soap opera plays on the TV screen.

LUCY

Max. What happened? Is Pichai...

MAX

Alive and well, darling. Alive and well. This has nothing to do with him. Hold on a minute, would ya? There are two other girls in the van.

Max turns to Nok, leans down, gently brushes the hair from her sweaty brow.

Lucy calls out, and Kiet reappears.

He accompanies Max back to the van, and each man carries a limp girl back into Lucy's house.

Lucy approaches Max and inspects the girl he is carrying. She lifts an eyelid and peers into the girl's eye.

LUCY

Yaa.

MAX

No shit. Drugged to the gills.

LUCY

What's going on, Max?

MAX

I have no idea. Something... evil. They had these girls out in a house out in the boonies... film cameras, torture shit, blood...

Max looks at her sharply.

MAX

Do you know what's out there, Lucy?  
Do you know what kind of low-life  
shit is going on in this town?  
Kiddie porn? Shit like that?

LUCY

Amnaat meuut.

MAX

Thai mafia.

NOK

Put the girl down in my bedroom,  
Max. Then let me look at your  
shoulder.

Max and Kiet carry the girls into Lucy's bedroom and lay them on her bed.

Max pauses a moment and raises a hand as if to stroke the girl's face, then lets his hand drop.

He returns to the living room and sits.

Lucy comes to him and begins gently opening Max's shirt to reveal a bullet wound.

LUCY

(in Thai)

I need some hot water, towels, and  
the first aid kit. And a shirt.

Kiet leaves.

Max is watching Nok, who looks to have fallen asleep. His hand reaches out for her, and he brushes the hair gently from her forehead.

MAX

Damn it.

Kiet reenters the room with everything Lucy had asked for.

Lucy takes a pair of scissors from the First Aid Kit and cuts Max's shirt away, then begins cleaning the wound.

LUCY

Sit forward, Max.

Max leans forward. The bullet has passed all the way through.

Lucy cleans the exit wound.

MAX  
Fucking wonderful country you've  
got here, Luce.

Lucy applies a dark brown solution to a wad of gauze, swabs Max's wounds.

Max winces.

LUCY  
Bad people everywhere, Max.

MAX  
Luce. They were getting ready to...  
to...

LUCY  
I understand, Max. Believe me.

Lucy finishes dressing Max's wound. Hands Max the shirt Kiet brought.

MAX  
They'll be coming for me.

LUCY  
Yes.

Max stands, works his way into the shirt, wincing at the pain.

MAX  
I didn't want any of this, Luce. I  
came here for one reason. One. To  
kill that low-life motherfucker  
that killed my family.

Max walks to the couch, gazes down at Nok. His expression is grim, but soft at the same time.

Lucy stands and goes to him. She takes his shoulders and gently turns him to face her. Her eyes look into his.

LUCY  
Killing Pichai isn't going to fix  
anything, Max.

MAX  
It'll make me feel better.

LUCY  
Maybe.

She reaches a hand to his face.

Max falters, tough-guy facade cracking, and reaches up to cover her hand with his own. He closes his eyes.

MAX

We were good together, once, Luce.

LUCY

A long time ago.

MAX

Why did I leave you, again.

Lucy smiles.

LUCY

A younger woman.

Max cocks his head, picturing it.

MAX

She was a beauty.

LUCY

A beauty who dragged you into the  
shit. A whore and a mule.

Max lowers his hands and pushes Lucy gently away, his face hardening.

MAX

Maybe I could leave these girls  
with you . . . ?

LUCY

They're property of the Thai Mafia,  
Max.

The two share a long gaze into one another's eyes. There is a back and forth there, just under the surface.

MAX

And?

Their stare lingers.

Lucy looks away.

LUCY

And nothing. I cannot help you with  
this, Max.

MAX

Fuck.

LUCY

If the girls are found here, the Thai mafia will kill me. AND these girls! Is that what you want?

Max's shoulder's slump.

MAX

No.

He leans into the door, his hand still on the handle.

MAX (CONT'D)

Shit.

LUCY

You've got to get out of here, Max. WITH these girls.

MAX

Where? Bangkok's out. Phuket. Chaing Mai. Shit. They'll have people at the airports, won't they?

LUCY

And the train stations, bus stations, taxi stands, car rental places, bars... there'll be policemen looking for you, Max.

MAX

I get it.

Lucy's hands are trembling. She says something to Kiet in Thai and he leaves the room.

LUCY

Ubon ...

MAX

Ubon Ratchathani? Your hometown?

Lucy nods.

LUCY

If you could get to Ubon... the river...

MAX

Laos. Yes. No way they'll be expecting me to head for Vientiane.

Kiet returns with a bag.

LUCY

You've got to get moving, Max.  
They'll be looking for you.

Lucy hands him the bag.

LUCY (CONT'D)

There are clothes there, food.  
Bandages.

Lucy leans up on tiptoe and kisses Max on the lips.

LUCY (CONT'D)

You have a good heart, Max.

Max looks at her, poised to return the kiss.

He blinks, then roots around in the bag. Looks at Nok, then Lucy. He pulls out a blouse, roughly Nok's size.

MAX

That's right. Your daughter must be  
about twelve by now. Nok's age. She  
still living with you?

Lucy averts her eyes. The trembling in her hands becomes momentarily more pronounced.

An alarm sounds. It is very loud. The lights at the gate flare on. Over the alarm, truck engines rev, men shout in Thai.

Lucy leaps to her feet, as does Max.

LUCY

You must go! Now!

Max shoulders the bag, lifts Nok as gently as he can, and allows Lucy to push him through the house to the door in the back.

The shouting is louder, more urgent.

EXT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucy's Jeep sits in the darkness of the backyard. Max hustles to the jeep, lays Nok in the backseat, throws the bag into the passenger seat, and heads back for the house.

The alarm cuts off.

The click and whir of the electric motor driving the security gate out front, then the clatter of the gate rolling back on its tracks.

Engines rev, tears squeal, and two vans tear into the driveway.

INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max lifts a girl from the bed, throws her over his shoulder, then lifts the other into his arms. He shuffles through the bedroom to the back door.

EXT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bullets splinter through the door Max just exited. One smashes through the head of the girl in Max's arms, splattering him with blood, bone fragments, and brain matter.

MAX

Fuck! MOTHERFUCKER! You fucking bastards!!!

Max lets the dead girl drop.

He sprints to the jeep, tosses the girl over his shoulder onto the floor, and leaps into the driver's seat.

He starts the jeep and guns it, bursting out the back gate recklessly, scraping the side of the jeep, bending the driver's side mirror back. As he speeds away, Max adjusts the mirror to reveal men pouring into the back yard.

Muzzles flash and the gunfire crackles.

A few rounds zing over Max's head and knock sparks off the body of the jeep.

Max speeds away.

EXT. SUKHUMVIT ROAD - NIGHT

Baht buses, taxis, private cars, motorcycles with female passengers riding side saddle, Thai trucks with their ornate designs, etc. fill the road. Max weaves in and out of traffic, moving fast, an eye on his mirrors.

MAX

Motherfucker. God damn it.

In the backseat, Nok cries out and sits with a start.

NOK  
(in Thai)  
Where am I? What's happening?

MAX  
(in Thai)  
It's OK, little bird. I've got you.  
You're safe.

Nok leans forward and pokes The Girl on the floor.

NOK  
(in Thai)  
Get up, little sister.

The Girl stirs and moans.

Nok pulls on the girl's shoulders and finally succeeds in getting her onto the seat next to her.

EXT. SUKHUMVIT ROAD - NIGHT

Red flashing lights mark a police blockade.

MAX  
Shit.

Max grabs the first dirt lane off to the left. The jeep bounces hard, Max, Nok, and The Girl jostling in their seats.

NOK  
What is it?

MAX  
Cops. Probably looking for us.

The Girl scrambles like a cat for the side of the jeep.

Nok gets a hand on her.

NOK  
Khun Max!

Max hits the brakes and the jeep slides to a halt, dirt rising in the night air, visible in the headlights.

He's out of the jeep and has The Girl in his arms as she struggles and cries out.

MAX  
 (in Thai)  
 I'm not going to let them get you,  
 little sister. You're safe. Max's  
 got you.

Max and Nok embrace The Girl.

Her struggling lessens, then stops.

The headlights reveal the berm bordering a series of rice paddies. The jeep has reached a dead end.

Max leans into the jeep and kills the lights. The three are in darkness, sounds of cars on Sukhumvit like waves breaking on the beach.

MAX (CONT'D)  
 Shit.

INT. DAMRONG'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Damrong's phone rings and vibrates on the night table next to his bed.

The screen is bright enough to illuminate the table with its lamp and a stack of books in Thai.

The vibrations have the phone slowly spinning in circles.

Damrong fumbles for the phone as he swings his legs over the side of the bed and sits up.

Wearing only boxers, his hairlessness highlights a startling level of muscularity for a man in his late 40s.

DAMRONG  
 Hello.

MAX (ON PHONE)  
 Damrong.

Damrong sits up straight, wide awake now.

DAMRONG  
 Max? What's happening?

MAX (ON PHONE)  
 All kinds of shit, mate.

Damrong sits quietly.

MAX (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
I'm in it deep, Damrong.

DAMRONG  
What's happening, Max?

MAX (ON PHONE)  
Ran across some serious nastiness  
out in the boonies tonight,  
Damrong. Serious. Nastiness. Now  
I've got the Amnaat Meut after my  
ass, and a pile of your buddies  
manning road blocks to help.

Damrong rises to his feet and pads athletically to the window, looks out into the moonlit night.

MAX (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
You still with me, mate?

DAMRONG  
Yes. Where are you, Max?

MAX (ON PHONE)  
Look, Damrong. You can not tell any  
of your buddies. You understand?

DAMRONG  
I understand you are in trouble.

MAX (ON PHONE)  
It's like this. I...uh. I've got  
two little kids with me, Damrong.  
They "belong" to the Thai Mafia.  
They...

DAMRONG  
Max. I have a place. A safe house.  
But you're going to have to trust  
me, Max.

MAX (ON PHONE)  
Trust?

DAMRONG  
Trust. Meet me at the backside of  
the big Buddha on the hill. Can you  
do that, Max?

Silence. Then the sound of Max taking a heavy breath.

MAX (ON PHONE)  
I can do that. I think.

A click as Max hangs up.

Damrong looks out the window a while longer, then sets the phone down and turns to dress.

EXT. SUKHUMVIT ROAD - NIGHT

Max is hunched over the wheel, tension radiating from every pore. He's driving right back into the belly of the beast, and he knows it.

Nok and The Girl share a corner of the back seat with their arms around one another.

MAX

There it is. Thep Prasit Road. Off ramp. Swings us right by the mall.

Traffic is dense, even at this hour of night.

Food stands line the sidewalks amidst the crowds.

There are police at every corner, and Max cringes every time he sees them. His hands are tight on the wheel, shoulders hunched as if expecting a blow.

Soon the crowds and traffic are behind them and Max spots the turn he's looking for.

A dirt parking lot pulls into view. Max drives slowly through it, takes a left and skirts an area of brush and trees, heading for the backside of a big hill.

As he drives by the path that leads to the top, he stops and looks up at the giant golden Buddha at the top of the hill.

It is well-lit and gleams, seemingly ready to rise to its feet.

Max puts the jeep in gear, and as he rounds the corner a pair of headlights flash.

MAX (CONT'D)

Get your heads down, girls. This is it.

The girls slide down below window level.

Max slows and sits upright, all nerves alert.

He scans the area, worried about a trap.

As he heads to the car, a man emerges from the driver's seat and stands: Damrong.

EXT. A DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Max slouches in the passenger seat of Damrong's sedan.

Nok and The Girl clasp one another in the back seat.

A lazy right turn dead ends in front of a wooden shack on stilts.

Damrong stops, headlights bringing every crack and grain of the wood into sharp relief though the settling dust the car has stirred up.

The shack stands dark and quiet; the wooden shutters are down and the door is closed and padlocked.

Damrong's boots scritch across the dirt to clump up the steps to the door.

He fits a key into the padlock, opens it, then hangs it though the loop of the clasp and pulls the door open.

He reaches back for the flashlight hanging off his belt and flicks it on, holding it at shoulder height, baton-style, as he peers into the shack from the doorway.

He steps inside, flicks the beam to the four corners of the building, light shining through the cracks between the wooden planks, then turns and waves Max and the girls on.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

The safe house is spartan: bare, untreated wooden floors and walls, a mattress on a raised platform. A water basin with a plastic dipping bowl.

The two girls go straight to the bed and lie down, holding one another. Within seconds, they are asleep.

Max and Damrong sit on the floor, backs against the wall. A gas lantern hisses from a hook in the ceiling, casting shadows that are grotesque and gigantic.

DAMRONG

So. Child pornography.

Damrong seems deflated, literally as if someone had let the air out of him.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)  
Rumors I'd hoped to be urban  
legend. I thought never to see such  
an abomination.

MAX  
You and me both, mate.

DAMRONG  
Lucy is correct. Only the Amnaat  
Meut would be able to pull off  
such an operation as this.

Max snorts.

MAX  
The mafia plus the cops plus the  
politicians plus a bunch of parents  
willing to sell their kids for a  
bag of heroin plus ...

DAMRONG  
I understand, Max.

Max and Damrong lock gazes, but it is not a power struggle.  
It is a meeting of minds. Max looks away.

MAX  
The girls are safe with you, right?

DAMRONG  
For now.

MAX  
That's it, then.

DAMRONG  
It?

MAX  
I'm out.

Damrong raises an eyebrow, but says nothing. Max fidgets  
under Damrong's gaze.

MAX (CONT'D)  
I came here to do one thing. One.

Damrong folds his arms, stares at Max. Max avoids his gaze.

MAX (CONT'D)  
I mean, it's not like I owe these  
kids anything. I saved their lives!  
They owe me!

Nok moans in her sleep. Max startles, moves to get up, relaxes.

MAX (CONT'D)  
It's not like they're family. Not  
like they're my daughters...

Max's face convulses in grief. He almost breaks down, but gets a hold of himself.

Damrong stands.

DAMRONG  
Stand up, Max.

Max stands. He meets Damrong's gaze with fire in his eyes.

Damrong puts an arm around Max's shoulders, leads him to the bed.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)  
Wake her up and tell her.

MAX  
Tell her?

DAMRONG  
That you are leaving her.

The two men gaze down at the sleeping girls.

MAX  
You tell her.

DAMRONG  
That is not for me to do, Max. It  
is your karma. You've earned it.

MAX  
Karma my ass.

DAMRONG  
Karma. Everything you have done  
with your life has led to this  
moment, Max.

Max tries to pull away, but Damrong's arm is solid.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)  
This is opportunity, Max.

MAX  
Opportunity.

DAMRONG

Yes. To make merit.

MAX

If I wanted to "make merit," I could just give a hundred thousand dollars to a temple.

DAMRONG

No. That is not how it works.

MAX

That's what you Thais do.

DAMRONG

Only the uninformed, the unenlightened, and the corrupt. Motive is key. No, a deed is called for.

MAX

A deed.

Nok stretches in her sleep. She looks very young. Innocent.

DAMRONG

Karma, Max. Another way.

MAX

I want to kill Pichai, Damrong. I need to kill him. To watch him burn, to suffer, and to die.

DAMRONG

Of course you do. That is only human. But to do so is to sink to his level, Max. You need to take responsibility for your actions. All those years ago, you set this in play. Karma.

Max shrugs out of Damrong's grasp, retreats to the wall, slumps to the floor with his head in his hands.

Damrong follows, squats down so his mouth is level with Max's ear.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

The total sum of your actions has led to this moment, Max. This is where you choose: life, or death. Redemption, or revenge.

MAX

Oh hell, Damrong. My baby is dead.  
My wife is dead. It's all my  
fault...

Max can take it no longer. Sobs wrack his body. Damrong sits, wraps his arms around Max, lets him cry it out.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

The girls are dressed and freshly showered. Max has changed clothes and looks fresh. Damrong is in plain clothes. Bags stuffed with clothing and supplies are on the floor.

DAMRONG

When you get to Ubon, call me. I  
will arrange transport over the  
border.

The two men stand close to one another. At ease. Their relationship is on a new level.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

This is a worthy thing you are  
doing, Max.

MAX

I'd still rather just kill Pichai.  
This is suicide.

DAMRONG

Maybe, but I think not. I think  
this is the opposite of suicide,  
Max.

MAX

Fucking Kwai Chang Caine again.

Damrong raises an eyebrow.

MAX (CONT'D)

Kung Fu. The show. Remember?

Damrong shakes his head.

MAX (CONT'D)

I owe you, Damrong. Thank you.

DAMRONG

You can thank me once you are safe  
and out of the country.

EXT. SUKHUMVIT ROAD - NIGHT

Max, Nok, and The Girl are in a sedan. The girls sit in the backseat listening to Thai Pop, sharing a set of headphones on an MP3 player.

All three look rested and clean. The Girl is smiling for the first time, and there is a light in her eyes as she and Nok chatter in Thai and listen to music.

An Uzi and a pistol-grip shotgun lie on the passenger's seat beside Max. He is grim and focused, his eyes sweeping the road ahead of them, checking every side road and hiding place.

A road sign reads "Chon Buri" in English and Thai. Traffic slows and builds up as it works its way through the little town.

MAX

Chon Buri. Dark fucking heart of the Thai mafia. I'm loving this.

Nok looks up, startled.

NOK

Alai wa?

MAX

Nothing, little bird.

He extends an arm towards the girls, motioning them down.

MAX (CONT'D)

You two stay low, now.

Max seems to fold in on himself and condense as if expecting a blow. It's bad mojo driving through this town, and he knows it.

EXT. CHON BURI - NIGHT

Max slows the car to a halt at a red light near the town center. THREE POLICEMEN in brown uniforms man the light, looking unusually alert for such an hour.

One of the cops looks straight at Max, nudges the cop next to him, says something, and all three turn to stare.

MAX

Shit.

Nok and The Girl have gone still and rigid--alarm evident in their posture. They know something bad is about to happen.

The Three Cops split up, one heading for the driver's side, another for the passenger's, the third moving to block the car. All three men's hands are moving for their guns.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Fucking Thai cops.

Max turns his head to the side.

MAX (CONT'D)  
(in Thai)  
Get down! Now!

He guns it, tires squealing as he pegs the cop in front with the driver's side fender and slides the rear end of the car to fit into the flow of traffic.

His car slams into a car on the right and rebounds into another on the left before it's up to speed.

Nok and The Girl cry out and drop to the floor in the rear, just as the back window shatters and bullets poke holes in the windshield.

Max is moving fast, and though we hear gunshots, no more bullets hit the car.

MAX (CONT'D)  
(in Thai)  
You two OK back there?

Silence.

MAX (CONT'D)  
(in Thai)  
Shit! I SAID are you two OK back there?

NOK  
OK, Khun Max.

MAX  
Stay down. We're not out of this yet.

A police truck comes out of nowhere and slams into the passenger side of the sedan. Both passenger side windows shatter.

The girls scream and clutch one another.

The sedan is pushed all the way across the street and bent around a telephone pole.

Max's head rebounds off of the driver's side window.

Max sees blurry colored neon lights of the food stalls and bars. Music loud and predominate.

Max's hand reaches for and finds the Uzi.

He lets loose ten-fifteen shots through the shattered window into the windshield of the Thai Police truck.

It frosts.

Max worms his way out the window, shoving his body between the telephone pole and the door frame.

He's got the Uzi in one hand and the shotgun in the other.

He drops the Uzi and begins pulling frantically on the rear door. It is stuck shut.

Nok is up against the window crying and screaming.

A cop stands up behind the open door of the Thai Police truck, raises his pistol and takes careful aim with a two-handed grip.

At this distance, he can't miss.

The hole in the barrel looks like a cannon. The hammer of the pistol pulls back...

The Cop's face explodes in a mist of blood with the simultaneous roar of Max's shotgun.

The Cop disappears, but another pops up behind the other door. The shotgun roars again, and the window in front of the cop shatters.

The cop staggers as his pistol fires, to no seeming effect.

Sirens approach rapidly.

The crowd of people on the street yell in confusion and stress.

The gut-shot cop raises his gun shakily, clearly putting every ounce of his dying will into firing it.

The click of the firing pin of Max's shotgun striking a dead round.

MAX (CONT'D)

Fuck me.

Max drops the shotgun and bends for the Uzi.

Before he can get the Uzi up, bullets shatter the window Nok was pounding on moments before.

Cops run up the sidewalk from the left with drawn weapons. Some fire their weapons.

Sparks and metal erupt near Max's head.

He winces in pain and looks to the right: more cops. In seconds, he'll be trapped--dead.

Max turns and leaps over a food stall, and races into the roadside market just off the sidewalk where his destroyed car is still wrapped up against the telephone pole, Thai Police truck wedged against it.

Cops are pouring into the area as Max runs through tents and stalls, overturning tables of clothes, watches, pots and pans, bedding, etc.

QUICK FLASHBACK

Nok pounding against the window,  
crying and calling his name.

BACK TO SCENE

Max stops, and turns back.

The sedan and road are out of sight. The noise of pursuit is close, and the walls of tent stalls thrash as Police pour into the market.

Max grips the Uzi for a moment, as if considering taking his stand and dying.

A vase on the table next to him shatters as a bullet smashes into it and Max finds himself running.

A confused and blurry collage of colors and items and brown faces as Max races through the market, finds his way into the alleys that border it, and disappears into the dark.

The shouts of Thai police degenerate into confusion and anger as it becomes apparent they have lost Max.

## EXT. WALKING STREET - NIGHT

The neon nearly overwhelms the crowds: Happy a Go-Go, Hot Girls, Teazers, The Best Bar, Ristorante, Gigi's Fashion, Istanbul Kebab, Jasmine Hotel in red, green, blue, yellow and pink.

The crowd a half/half mix of mostly white men aged from 20 - 70 and Thai girls, 17 - 35.

Max studies the crowd carefully, his back against the wall of a narrow concrete alley, Pattaya 15.

Mu moves down the sidewalk, his eye on a young girl about 10 years old holding a tray of candy and trinkets and working the tourists on the street.

As Mu draws even with Max, Max reaches into a pocket and comes out with a sap, expertly popping Mu in a swift and fluid strike to the back of the head.

The move is so quickly and skillfully done, no one gives Mu a second glance as he slumps into Max's arms--just another drunk on the street.

Max staggers with Mu back to the alley where a small pick up truck with a canopy waits. He edges Mu up to the rear and heaves him into the bed of the truck, then follows.

## EXT. PATTAYA 15 - NIGHT

Max works quickly and hog-ties Mu in seconds using duct tape. A final strip over Mu's mouth completes the job. Max holds a finger under Mu's nose to check for breathing.

MAX

'at's it. Keep breathing, Mate.  
Least 'til I'm done with you.

## EXT. A DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Max cuts the tape binding Mu's hands and feet, then uses rope to spread eagle Mu in the back of the truck and rips the tape from his mouth. He rises to a crouch, hampered by the canopy, unzips and begins pissing on Mu.

MAX

Wakey, wakey.

Mu moans and shifts under the tension of his bonds.

Max finishes up on Mu's face.

Mu sputters and his eyes open. Confusion rapidly gives way to anger and he thrashes against his bonds.

MU

Alai wa? Meung tam alai?

MAX

It'll all come clear right quick, mate.

Mu thrashes a while longer, testing his bonds. Finding them secure, he stops. He frowns in thought.

MU

It's you, isn't it. The farang. The one with Nok.

Max seats himself on the wheel well of the truck.

MAX

Rightee, right. 100%.

MU

You are a dead man.

MAX

Been hearing that one a lot lately.

Max lashes out with the heel of his right foot: an expert kick. We hear something crack.

Mu gasps, then reddens and looks as if he's about to spit, but catches himself.

MU

I know what you want. Let me go. I can help you.

Max has his duffel in his lap. He rummages through it and comes up with a propane torch.

MAX

Damn straight. You're going to help me, all right.

MU

You want Nok, right? Nok? Little girl? The one...

MAX

That's right, motherfucker. Go ahead. Finish that sentence, why don't' you?

Max fishes a lighter out of his pocket, twists the knob on the propane torch, lights it.

MAX (CONT'D)

So. You were saying?

MU

You want Nok, right? I can help you.

MAX

You trying to take all the fun out of this?

Max waves the torch, holds it to the side of Mu's face just long enough for a crackle and Mu to wrench his head aside.

MU

You don't need to do this! I will help you!

MAX

Now why would you go and do that? Somehow, I'm not buying...

Max applies the torch to Mu's underarm long enough that Mu can not contain himself. He writhes and unleashes a frighteningly loud and woman-like scream.

MU

PLEASE! PLEASE! I beg you. Please stop. Please. No more. I tell you truth, I will help.

Max sits back, gazes at the blue/red flame.

MAX

I'm listening. Talk to me, fat man.

INT. DAMRONG'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Damrong lies sleeping in the dark.

Everything is as it was before.

A creak.

Damrong's eyes pop open. He reaches a hand over his head to the shelf on the headboard of his bed, comes down with his pistol.

Another creak. Closer.

Damrong is on his feet and to the door of the bedroom just as it begins to open.

A man begins to ease himself carefully through the narrow opening. Left arm, shoulder. Chest.

As the man's head comes through, Damrong throws all his weight against the door. The man cries out.

MAX

Ah! Fuck! That's my fucking shoulder!

DAMRONG

Max?

Damrong steps back and lets Max into the room. He holds his gun at the ready, by his side.

MAX

Should have known I couldn't sneak up on you. Shit.

DAMRONG

Why would you want to, Max? What are you doing here?

MAX

Three guesses.

Damrong turns his back on Max and walks to his closet. He pulls out a pair of trousers and a shirt. Facing Max, he begins to dress.

DAMRONG

I should not have underestimated you.

MAX

What's that supposed to mean?

DAMRONG

Don't overread, Max. The whole country heard of the shoot out in Chon Buri. That you are even alive is amazing, much less that you are back in Pattaya.

MAX

That's me. Marvelous fucking Mad Max.

DAMRONG

Mad Max. Indeed. You are well named. And so?

MAX

So.

DAMRONG

Why are you here?

MAX

Ah. Yes. This is where it gets a little tricky, mate.

Damrong stares at Max.

DAMRONG

A little?

EXT. A STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

Max and Damrong stand in front of the metal door of a storage unit, facing one another.

The sun is blistering, heat waves rise off of the concrete base of the unit.

DAMRONG

One more time, Max.

MAX

They've got Nok up in Bangkok. Apparently they've got multiple locations going.

Damrong nods.

He turns to the unit, unlocks it and rolls up the door.

Inside, wooden crates mix with typical household storage items, crowding the space.

Damrong grabs a crowbar leaning against the wall and steps to a crate, pries a board off the top. Straw peeks out.

Damrong clears it away to reveal the black metallic gleam of weapons.

Max whistles.

MAX (CONT'D)

Where did you get all this, mate?

DAMRONG

Seized a year ago. Muslim ring down south were trying to gear up for something.

MAX

And you took it?

DAMRONG

No. Another. I merely...redirected it. I wanted to make sure the weapons did not find their way to their intended target--or anyone else who might use them.

MAX

Ever the good Buddhist, yeah?

Damrong does not reply, but begins digging through the crate, then pulls out an AK-47, several clips, boxes of ammunition, and a green duffel.

DAMRONG

You cannot do this alone, Max.

MAX

You coming along?

DAMRONG

Even with two, it would be suicide.

MAX

Maybe. More certain if you tell any of your buddies, though, I'll bet.

DAMRONG

Corruption is not total, Max. There are good men who care about what is right and wrong, still.

Max snorts.

MAX

Right. Ran into a few of them in Chon Buri the other day.

DAMRONG

So. You still refuse to tell me the precise location?

MAX

Yep.

DAMRONG

Some of these good men are in Bangkok, Max.

MAX

I'm sure. You going to let me take the weapons, or not?

Damrong goes absolutely still. An internal battle is raging, but there is a line he cannot allow himself to cross.

DAMRONG

Max. To save these girls. That is worthy.

MAX

Excellent. Then I'll just grab the guns and get out of your way.

Damrong stops Max with an arm.

DAMRONG

No. Not this way. I cannot allow you to die pointlessly.

MAX

It's my life, damn it. I can do whatever the hell I want with it.

DAMRONG

What kind of a friend would I be if I allowed you to do this?

MAX

Who said we were friends?

DAMRONG

(smiles)

Indeed. All the same. You want my weapons, you will play by my rules.

MAX

Just you and me.

Damrong's gaze is iron: he is not giving in.

MAX (CONT'D)

God damn it, Damrong! You tell one other person and then we WILL die.

DAMRONG

You will have to trust me on this, Khun Max.

Max spins away, walks to the wall of the storage unit and slams a fist into it.

MAX

Fuck! Fuckfuckfuckfuckfuck.

Damrong waits.

Max storms back to Damrong and stands in front of him at an angle, like a boxer.

Damrong senses this and we see a subtle shift in his posture as he prepares for combat.

The two meet eyes. Max tenses, begins to raise his hands, then slumps.

MAX (CONT'D)

God damn it. You win. But I swear--  
if this goes south 'cause one of  
your "honorable men" sells us out,  
I'm going to shoot you in the head  
before I die.

INT. A WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Damrong and Max are leaning over a table with two Thai men in military dress, complete with boots and rolled up khaki shirts.

On the table we see a map, some enlarged photographs of a building, a grease pencil.

ECK, a tall and thin Thai man with a nasty scar that runs from left eyebrow to his mouth holds a grease pencil in his hand.

ECK

Chamoi bars on every window. Metal,  
reinforced security doors. The  
whole building behind an steel  
security fence. Two guards at the  
gate. Video security.

DAMRONG

Impenetrable.

MAX

I'll get in.

Eck gives Damrong a hard look, mutters something in Thai.

MAX (CONT'D)

I never asked for you guys to come along in the first place. You don't like me, get the fuck out.

DAMRONG

Max.

MAX

Shit.

SOMCHAI, the other Thai man in military-looking gear, steps forward. He is shorter, but stocky and moves like the professional-level Thai boxer he once was.

SOMCHAI

The compound is impregnable. But there is more than one way to catch a snake.

Max and the others look at him.

SOMCHAI (CONT'D)

We can smoke them out.

ECK

(grins)

Lek?

SOMCHAI

(grins back)

Lek.

MAX

Who the hell is Lek?

ECK

Lek is a police captain in this district. Has his hand in everything.

MAX

So?

SOMCHAI

So. We pass word to Lek, at a critical moment. Big raid. Somebody high up is pissed.

MAX

A critical moment?

SOMCHAI

After we've set up.

MAX

Ah. I get it. We're set up, and they come tearing out.

ECK

And we've got them.

EXT. KHLONG TOEI, BANGKOK - DAWN

The break of day--light has just begun to push back the darkness of the night.

Max and Damrong sit in a sedan with black tinted windows.

They are parked within view of the front gate of the compound in the photos.

A similar sedan, also with darkened windows, sits on the other side of the gate.

Darmong's cell rings.

DAMRONG

Chi. OK.

Damrong closes his phone and looks at Max.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

Word's in to Lek. He tore out of the station house in a hurry.

MAX

You think he'll come personally?

DAMRONG

And risk being caught up in this? No. I think he is distancing himself. Or attempting to. For the money these people are paying him, he is expected to keep them safe.

MAX

In other words, his ass is in a sling.

DAMRONG

Precisely.

The upper fourth of the sun appears above the haze which covers the horizon--it's a sunrise above the smog, a full sun's width higher than the actual horizon line.

Damrong and Max wait.

Max fidgets with his gun.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)  
Don't play with your gun, Max.

MAX  
Sorry.

From the compound, men yell in Thai, and car engines rev.

Tires squeal and several cars burst out of the underground garage of the building.

The security gate rolls back on its tracks as the two guards move to flank the gate, each of them holding a rifle of some kind at arms.

MAX (CONT'D)  
We're on.

Four black Mercedes bolt through the gate and hit the one-way street.

Eck guns the sedan in front of them, slams on the brakes and blockades the street.

He and Somchai leap out, and using the car for cover, bring their guns to bear on the line of Mercedes.

Damrong puts his sedan in gear and races after the Mercedes.

As the four Mercedes squeal to a halt, Damrong slides his car sideways and seals in the four cars.

He and Max take up their position, also using the car for cover.

As men leap out of the four trapped Mercedes, guns in hands, Somchai pulls up a megaphone.

SOMCHAI  
This is General Somchai Siriwongse  
of the Thai Army. Drop your guns  
and put your hands in the air!

Two men from the Mercedes raise pistols to aim at Somchai.

Eck fires four quick shots from his rifle, dropping both men in their tracks.

Some of the men from the Mercedes return fire as Somchai drops the megaphone and brings his own rifle to bear. Shots zip by Max and Damrong's heads, others strike the car spattering paint and metal chips--poking pinpoint holes in Max's face, raising drops of blood.

Max and Damrong drop behind the car for cover.

MAX

Damrong! The compound! It's on fire!

Thick black smoke pours from the second floor of the compound. Glass shatters and rains down onto the tarmac below a window.

Bullets frost the car window above Damrong, and he stands quickly, bringing his gun to bear as he does.

Two patterns of three shots issue from his gun and there is a momentary lapse in gunfire.

Small brown hands reach out through the shattered second-story window of the compound to grip the chamoi bars and shake them, desperately trying to clear an exit to safety.

MAX (CONT'D)

Damrong! There are kids in there!  
I'm going in.

Damrong turns his head slightly, looks at the compound. Nods.

DAMRONG

Go.

Damrong fires several shots at the cars as Max races through the gate toward the compound.

Max spots one of the guard's rifles abandoned at the gate and scoops it up as he runs.

INT. THE COMPOUND - DAY

Max runs down the ramp, through the parking garage, to the stairs, and up to the first floor. Black smoke hovers three feet thick from the ceiling down. Max coughs.

MAX

Hello! Anyone here? Hello!

Barely audible above the crackling of the fire, someone is screaming from the floor above.

Max heads for the stairs at the end of the hall, kicking doors open as he passes them.

Room after room of mattresses. Some with film equipment and lights. Some with bondage gear and dark stains on the mattresses.

In a room near the end of the hallway, something dark is curled up on a mattress in the middle of an enormous maroon black stain.

Flames curl up the walls, a mattress next to the one the dark form lies on is ablaze, another dark form barely visible within the flames.

Max leaps into the room and grabs the dark form with a hand.

The body rolls over without losing its position: it is The Girl.

Through the burned flesh, her face and body show nasty wounds.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Fuck! God damn it! Shit.

Max reaches a hand out, touches The Girl's face gently.

The sound of screaming above. Faint above the crackle of the fire.

Max bolts up the stairs to the second floor.

The smoke is thicker here. He gags, coughs and spits.

Crouched very low beneath the smoke, Max repeats the sequence on this floor: kicking in doors, yelling, trying to raise any survivors he can.

Several rooms on the second floor resemble the one downstairs with the two dead girls.

In one, the two girls are fresh. Bullet holes in their foreheads, rooms ablaze.

The room at the end of the hall is padlocked shut. Max slams his shoulder into the door, but is unable to break the lock.

A girl screams within.

Max uses the barrel of his rifle to pry the padlock off of the door.

Inside, he finds Nok at the window.

Her hands are bleeding.

She's wearing a miniature teddy with fishnet stockings and garters.

A camera sits on a tripod in the corner. The ceiling sports track lights. A black marble table sits in the center of the room, with restraints at its four corners.

Nok is at the window pushing and pulling at the chamoi bars, with grunts and the occasional scream of fury and fear.

MAX (CONT'D)

Nok!

Nok spins around and looks at Max blankly. Blinks.

MAX (CONT'D)

Come here, little bird.

Max holds out his hand. Nok rears back, looks to the window, then back again at Max.

NOK

Khun Max?

MAX

It's me, little one.

Max gestures with his hand for Nok to approach.

Slowly, like a frightened dog that's wary of being tricked yet again, Nok inches forward.

Max looks at the flames licking up the walls. The whole building is approaching flash point, and he knows it.

MAX (CONT'D)

Come on, honey. It's OK.

Inch by agonizing inch, Nok approaches Max.

Max glances again at the flames. The smoke is thickening and heat waves fill the air like translucent snakes.

The tension is sharply drawn in the sweat and grime on Max's face.

Max looks at Nok. His heartbeat is loud. Another look at the approaching flames.

Max makes eye contact with Nok. His heartbeat slows. It seems as if time is slowing down, but it is not.

Max's heart is a steady 60 BPM. He has fully accepted his fate.

Nok sees the tension drop from Max's face. It encourages her, and she steps forward and takes his extended hand.

Max sweeps her off her feet into his arms and turns and races back the way he came.

MAX (CONT'D)

Put your face into my shirt, little one!

The entire compound is an inferno. Max runs in a low crouch, coughing, stumbling, but moving fast all the same.

As he reaches the first floor there is a crash and an explosion of sparks and flames as a portion of the ceiling comes down. Nok clings to Max with all her strength, her face buried in his chest.

MAX (CONT'D)

That's it. Hold tight!

They are almost out. Through a triangle of flame where the ceiling has collapsed, the tarmac outside beckons.

Max goes to his knees and turns his back to the flames, shielding Nok. His back brushes against the flames as he works through into the clear.

MAX (CONT'D)

Ahh! Damn it!

The smoked glass doors at the front have shattered from the fire, and Max steps through them, still cradling Nok against his chest.

EXT. THE COMPOUND - DAY

Damrong is approaching.

MAX

Damrong! I've got her! She's OK!

Damrong stops and looks at Max. His expression conveys a mixture of incredulity and approval.

DAMRONG

Quickly, Max.

MAX

Somchai? Eck?

DAMRONG

We have been victorious, Max. But we must go, now. While we can.

As Max and Damrong move to the street, three Thai Police motorcycles arrive at the scene.

Damrong removes his jacket and covers Nok, hiding the teddy and fishnet stockings as best he can.

The policemen dismount, unholstering their weapons as they move toward Eck and Somchai who are standing by their bullet-riddled sedan, rifles slung across their chests, barrels pointing down.

Neither man moves.

All three Thai policemen bring their weapons to bear on Eck and Somchai.

THAI POLICEMAN 1

(in Thai)

Drop your weapons! Now!

SOMCHAI

(in Thai)

I am General Somchai Suriwongse.  
You will address me with respect!

Thai Policeman 1 hesitates, looks to the other two, looks back, hard, at Somchai and Eck.

THAI POLICEMAN 1

(in Thai)

General Suriwongse? Truly?

The three policemen exchange worried looks and holster their weapons.

Max and Damrong advance toward the group of men.

The bodies of three men lie face down in the street, blood streaming from them to the gutter.

People are beginning to crowd the street, drawn by the gunfire and smoke.

THAI POLICEMAN 1 (CONT'D)

(in Thai)

What is going on here, General?

SOMCHAI

(in Thai)

This is a Thai military operation.  
(MORE)

SOMCHAI (CONT'D)

These men are smugglers and weapons dealers.

The three policemen chatter quietly amongst themselves, unsure of what to do.

SOMCHAI (CONT'D)

(in Thai)

You may assist us in preserving the scene.

Sirens in the background.

SOMCHAI (CONT'D)

My team is on its way. Please keep the crowd back.

Somchai gestures at the building crowd.

Max and Damrong exchange glances.

The policemen have their backs to the two men, but stand between them and their car.

Eck steps forward. His face, passionless throughout the exchange, twitches with barely suppressed anger.

ECK

Now! Keep the crowd back! Get moving!

The policemen split and move towards the crowd, each taking approximately a third of the crowd.

All three move with arms extended, barking at the crowd to move back.

Somchai nods at Max and Damrong, then he and Eck join the policemen working crowd control.

With dead men on the street, and a building full of dead girls ablaze, this is now a Thai Army operation.

Damrong sits in the driver's seat as Max eases into the backseat of their car.

Damrong starts the car. He has to drive the car half up onto the sidewalk in order to get around the four Mercedes.

At one point, Damrong nudges a Mercedes out of the way. Then they are clear and the car disappears up the street.

INT. A WAREHOUSE - DAY

Max and Damrong are seated in chairs. They show signs of wear. Max is filthy with soot. His shirt is charred where he brushed against the collapsed ceiling.

Nok lies carefully tucked in on a cot, a sheet up to her chin. She is sleeping soundly.

DAMRONG

So. Max. Things have escalated.

Max looks at Damrong.

MAX

All I came here for was Pichai, Damrong. That was all I cared about. I didn't want any of this.

DAMRONG

I know. Up to this point, you have behaved well, Max.

Max shrugs, uncomfortable.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

You realize, of course, this is a Thai Army operation now. We have bodies on the street. Corrupt policemen involved.

MAX

What's going to happen to Nok?

Damrong shrugs.

DAMRONG

An orphanage. Most likely she will be placed in one near Pattaya.

MAX

But she'd never last there! The Amnaat Meut...

Damrong looks at the ground.

DAMRONG

We have started a war, Max. Now is not the time to...

MAX

Fuck that! Nok...

Max gets up and walks over to the cot, looks down.

DAMRONG

Max, I believe there is another way.

Max turns.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

Perhaps, if you were to take charge of Nok....

Damrong looks at Max searchingly. He is trying to alter Max's karma--his fate.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

Perhaps, Max, you could find her a safe haven.

Max paces.

MAX

I came here for a reason, damn it. I came here to....

Nok sighs, and rolls on the cot. Her eyes flutter, open. She sits upright.

NOK

Khun Max!

Max stares. His eyes are blank.

NOK (CONT'D)

Khun Max!

Max's eyes refocus, and he drops to a knee and reaches out for Nok, who embraces him.

MAX

I'm here, little bird. I'm here.

EXT. SUKHUMVIT - DAY

Max is at the wheel of a gray SUV. The windows are tinted. Nok lounges on the seat next to him, snacking on a package of dried squid. Damrong leans against the driver's door.

DAMRONG

No time to get you passports, Max. They'll be waiting for you in Ubon.

Max nods.

MAX

You'll go after Pichai?

DAMRONG

Through proper channels. General Somchai thinks he can build momentum with the move on the child pornography ring.

MAX

Amnaat Meut ain't going down that easy, mate.

DAMRONG

No, but even they recognize when it's time to lay low.

MAX

In other words, they might cough up Pichai, buy some good will?

DAMRONG

Possibly. We'll see.

Max sighs.

MAX

All I wanted to do was to kill him, Damrong. That's all I wanted.

DAMRONG

This is the far better path, Max. And you know that.

MAX

Maybe. So. Lucy's? Ubon?

DAMRONG

Passports will be waiting, Max.

The two men share a long look. Max reaches out a hand, and Damrong takes it. They shake.

MAX

I owe you, mate.

DAMRONG

You owe me nothing, Max. Just stay on the righteous path.

Max nods. His eyes glisten with a film of tears. He hits a button and the tinted window slides up to obscure his face.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Max leans against the driver's side window as Nok plays with the radio. She settles on a Thai pop station.

NOK  
Khun Max?

MAX  
Yes?

NOK  
We go to Ubon, yes?

MAX  
Yes.

NOK  
Then you take me to America?

Max's smile does not reach his eyes.

MAX  
That's the plan, darling.

NOK  
I will work for you very hard in America, Max! I will be number one worker!

MAX  
Worker? It's that what you think?

NOK  
You will see, Khun Max. I am a very hard worker!

Max glances in the rearview mirror, then at Nok.

MAX  
Nok. How old are you darling?

NOK  
I will be twelve in August.

MAX  
In America, eleven-year-old girls don't work, Nok. They go to school.

NOK  
School?

Nok stares out the window, confused.

MAX

School. Friends. Be a kid. Have a life.

Nok looks at Max, then back out the window. It is too much to process. She watches the countryside flash by.

EXT. UBON - EVENING

The sun is setting, rendering the brown muddy water of Moon River golden.

The river is just visible from the road which turns in to Lucy's house, a typical wooden structure on stilts with a corrugated tin roof.

As Max pulls in to the driveway, Lucy comes out the front door to greet them.

MAX

Lucy! Didn't expect her to be here herself.

NOK

What, Khun Max?

MAX

Nothing, dear.

Max's brow furrows. There's something not right about this. Max parks the car and gets out, stretches.

MAX (CONT'D)

Sawadee, Luce. What are you doing here? Damrong said he'd send someone.

LUCY

He did. Me. Nice to see you, too, Max.

Max walks to Lucy and gives her a hug. She stiffens, then relaxes and hugs him back.

MAX

Sorry, Luce. Just didn't expect you. It's been a crazy week.

LUCY

Never mind, Max. Come in, please.

INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucy, Max, and Nok sit cross legged on the floor, the remains of a Thai meal on dishes scattered about on the mat they are eating on.

MAX

I thought the passports were coming up with you, Lucy.

LUCY

No. Damrong arranged them through his contacts in Ubon. I collect them tomorrow.

MAX

He really thinks it's safe to keep the same car? All the way up to Vientiane?

LUCY

Damrong thinks quicker you get out of Thailand the better.

MAX

Him and me both.

LUCY

It's a short drive to border at Chong Mek.

MAX

And drive all the way up to Vientiane? Laotian roads are murder!

Lucy snorts.

LUCY

Roads are much better since you were here.

MAX

That's true. The drive up was a breeze. The roads are that good in Laos as well?

LUCY

Not that good. But better.

Max stares out toward the river beyond, lights from boats and houses reflecting in the black of the night.

MAX  
Ah, well. The sooner this is over,  
the better.

A look of concern crosses Lucy's face. She moves as if to speak, then stops herself.

MAX (CONT'D)  
What?

LUCY  
Nothing.

She gives Max a troubled look, then rises, begins to gather the dishes.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
I think best you get some sleep  
now, Max. You two have a long day  
ahead of you.

She leaves the room with the dishes. Max watches her carefully, a "V" forming on his brow.

INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max lies on his back, arms behind his head, staring at the wooden slats of the ceiling.

A movement at the door.

He looks over and Lucy pads silently to him, squats down and slides under the sheet beside him.

MAX  
Luce?

LUCY  
Shh.

She gestures towards Nok, sleeping on a mat on the other side of the room.

Lucy props herself up on an elbow and studies Max, then leans down and kisses him on the lips.

He pulls back.

MAX  
You sure about this?

LUCY  
Shut up, Max.

She straddles him and leans down for another kiss.

Max reaches up for her face.

Tears glisten on her cheeks?

MAX

Luce?

Lucy places a gentle hand over his mouth.

LUCY

Shh. Be quiet, Max.

She kisses him again.

INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max starts awake with a snort and rises up on his elbows.

Nok lies on a sleeping mat on the other side of the room, a dark shape under a sheet, the sheet rising rhythmically with her breathing.

The sound of tires over gravel outside as a car leaves.

MAX

What the hell?

Max is on his feet, moving through the house silently.

Aside from the creaks and groans of the wooden house, there is absolutely no noise.

Lucy's room is empty.

There is a sleeping mat on the floor, a wardrobe, and a cheap wooden vanity, nothing else in the room.

Without turning on any lights, Max searches the room quickly.

The top middle drawer of the vanity sticks as Max slides it open. Something is catching underneath. Max pulls the entire drawer out and finds an envelope taped to the underside of the drawer.

Max rips the envelope off the drawer and opens it to reveal two passports: A blue US one, and a brown Thai one. Inside, he sees his own face staring back at him.

MAX (CONT'D)

Fuck me.

Max races back to the room he and Nok were sleeping in.

MAX (CONT'D)

Nok! Up! Now! Move it, darling!

In seconds, Max has gathered up Nok and their bags into his arms and is moving back through the house for the door.

EXT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Max races out the front door with Nok, headlights sweep the driveway revealing it empty.

Max's car is gone.

Nok is wide-eyed. She has begun to shake with fear, but makes no sound.

Max leaps into the brush around the house as a van slides quietly into the driveway.

As the van rolls to a stop, four men in black step out.

Each is carrying a small gun with a long, curved magazine: Uzis.

The men spread out, two aim for the front, the other two each to a side of the house as they head for the back.

Max looks to the van, but as he does, a lighter flares as the driver lights a cigarette.

MAX

Shit. The river, then.

Max sets Nok on her feet, holds a finger to her lips.

MAX (CONT'D)

We've got to move, little one. Be quiet, stay close to me. We'll make it, love.

Nok reaches out a hand and Max takes it. Together, they disappear into the brush, moving for the river.

EXT. MOON RIVER - NIGHT

Max and Nok emerge from the brush and onto the shore of Moon River.

A smattering of the local style of boats are pulled up on shore, and Max drags one to the water and motions for Nok to climb aboard.

MAX

Quickly now, little one. Let's move.

Nok slips aboard and Max launches the small boat into the river, reaches for the paddle and sets out.

NOK

Khun Max?

MAX

Mmm?

NOK

Why do these people keep chasing us?

MAX

They want you back.

NOK

But WHY, Khun Max?

MAX

Because they think you belong to them.

NOK

I do.

MAX

No! You do NOT.

NOK

Do I belong to you, now, Khun Max?

MAX

You do not belong to anyone. You are FREE.

NOK

Then why do they keep coming for me?

A complicated series of emotions pass over Max's face: rage, sorrow, despair, determination.

As they round a bend in the river, a series of straw shelters on floating platforms come into view.

They are tethered to an island, Had Bungsapang, which juts into the river.

Max holds up a hand to silence Nok.

Each of the platforms holds tables and chairs: it is a restaurant. Candles glow at one of the structures as the staff work at clearing the remnants of a late-night dinner.

MAX

Hold on.

MAX (CONT'D)

(in Thai)

Hey, you!

The workers on the platform startle.

WORKER 1

(in Thai)

What? Who! You scared me.

WORKER 2

(in Thai)

You came in as quiet as a ghost.

MAX

(in Thai)

You guys got rooms to go with this restaurant?

WORKER 1

(in Thai)

Yes, of course. You need a room?

Max takes a long look at Nok, thinking.

MAX

Yes.

Max paddles the boat up to the platform and grabs it with a hand.

WORKER 2

(in Thai)

You can tie your boat up over there.

MAX

(in Thai)

Much obliged to you.

INT. A BUNGALOW - DAWN

Max and Nok are in a one-room wooden bungalow. Nok sits on the edge of a double bed while Max fiddles with his bag.

MAX

I should be back by tomorrow. If I'm not, you know what to do.

NOK

Get to the refugee camp near the border crossing.

MAX

Yes. Find a foreigner. An aid worker. Tell them your parents were killed and you're all alone.

NOK

Khun Max?

MAX

Yeah?

NOK

You are coming back, right Khun Max?

Max gives Nok a long look, then reaches back and pulls a pouch from his back pocket and hands it to Nok.

MAX

Take this. It's got my passport and most of the money I have left.

Nok receives the pouch with both hands, and looks up into Max's eyes.

NOK

You need these things.

MAX

I'll be back for them, Nok. I swear it.

Max shoulders his bag and stands. His eyes lock with Nok's.

Nok leaps forward to crush Max in a hug. Max hesitates a minute, then embraces her fully, eyes glistening.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'll be back, sweetheart. You'll see.

EXT. MOON RIVER - DAY

Max glides the boat up on to the river shore, about a half-mile downriver from where he took it.

He shoulders his bag and pulls on a large straw hat like many Thai peasants wear, then starts walking up the beach.

EXT. LUCY'S HOUSE - DAY

Max eases his way through the brush on the back side of the house. Just short of the clearing, he crouches down and peers through the leaves to the house.

The house appears abandoned.

Birds chirp. Geckos climb the walls.

Sweat drips down Max's face.

Max slips carefully from the brush and moves to the back of the house.

Back to the wall, he pulls the Glock from a holster in the small of his back, gently opens the door with his other hand.

He enters the house in a shooter's stance. Papers rustle as a breeze sweeps through the house from the open door.

Max sweeps into the next room, looks left, and as he turns to the right, a THAI MAN with a pistol in his hand swings the butt of the pistol at Max's head.

Max rolls away from the blow and uses his legs to sweep the Thai man's legs from under him.

Max is on him in a second and brings the butt of his pistol down on the Thai man's head.

Booted feet clomp toward the door and Max is there just in time meet a SECOND THAI MAN as he enters, pistol ready.

The second Thai man fires as Max drives the gun up and away.

Max drops the second man with a short elbow to the chin, but is disoriented from noise of the gun.

A red crease appears on the left side of his forehead where the bullet passed.

Max staggers and shakes his head. He sweeps through the rest of the house and clears it, then returns to the room with the two Thai men.

A quick search of the room turns up empty, so Max pulls a knife out of the holster of one of the men and uses it to cut strips off the pants of one of the men which he uses to bind them.

The man hit with the pistol is rag doll limp. The other moans as Max tightens his binds. His eyes flicker open.

SECOND THAI MAN

(in Thai)

What?

MAX

(in Thai)

Exactly, you piece of dog's afterbirth. What?

The man looks at Max through wondrous and confused eyes.

SECOND THAI MAN

(in Thai)

What? Farang?

MAX

(in Thai)

You're surprised?

The man's eyes swim into focus.

SECOND THAI MAN

You!

MAX

Nice to meet you. Time to get better acquainted.

Max eyes the room, looks up and sees rafters.

With quick movements, he cuts the first Thai man's shirt into a series of rag strips and creates a rope which he tosses over one of the rafters.

Max lifts the second Thai man to his feet and ties one end of the rope around the man's wrists, bound behind his back.

SECOND THAI MAN

No! What do you want?

MAX

We're getting there, mate. Any minute now. Be patient.

Max hauls on the rope and lifts the Thai off his feet. The man screams in pain.

Max secures his end of the rope to the door knob. The Thai twists slowly and moans. Max walks to the man.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Who are you?

SECOND THAI MAN  
Nu.

MAX  
Little mouse. Appropriate.

Max reaches out and grabs the man's face.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Why are you here?

NU  
We're here for you.

MAX  
Who do you think I am?

NU  
Max.

Max thinks for a second, then lets loose a kick to the solar plexus that lifts the dangling man a few inches and sets him to spinning anew.

Max gives the man a few moments, then reaches out and stops him from spinning.

MAX  
Glad we're clear on things. Who do you work for?

Nu flinches, looks away, braces himself for the coming blow.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Ah. You're more scared of them than you are of me. Bad decision.

Max delivers another devastating kick to the Nu's midsection, then pinches Nu's nose and clamps his hand hard over his mouth.

Nu begin struggling violently. Max holds tight. Nu's eyes widen, then glaze, and he slumps.

Max steps back and begins slapping Nu's face rhythmically until his eyes flutter and he comes to.

MAX (CONT'D)

Where were we? Ah. Who do you work for?

Nu looks at the floor and braces himself.

MAX (CONT'D)

This is getting tiresome.

As Max reaches for Nu, the man jerks away.

NU

No! Please! Don't kill me! I don't know who!

MAX

Bullshit.

Max pulls out the knife he's taken from Nu and stabs him in the face, hard, just below the eye. Nu screams and writhes.

NU

Please! I'm telling you the truth!

Max tosses the knife from hand to hand, considering.

MAX

You know my name. You're here for me. What were you supposed to do if you got me?

NU

Dam and I were to call a number. Then we would receive instructions where to bring you.

MAX

Just me?

Nu blanches and looks away.

NU

No. We were told there would be a girl with you.

MAX

'Fraid not.

Max circles Nu. With a flash of the knife, he severs the cord suspending Nu.

Nu drops to the floor with a crash and lies there moaning. Blood seeps from the wound in his face and puddles on the floor.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Where's your phone?

NU  
Dam's pocket.

Max searches Dam and finds his phone. It's unclear if Dam is dead or alive.

MAX  
Here's what we're going to do,  
little mouse. We're going to make  
this call, then you and I are going  
to take a drive.

Nu looks up from the floor, watches Max advance toward him, knife in one hand, phone in the other.

EXT. UBON RATCHATHANI - DAY

Nu is at the wheel of a jeep. His face is battered, one eye swollen shut, a gouge under the other.

Max is slumped in the passenger seat, floppy straw hat covering most of his face, a jacket covering his front.

MAX  
You even look like you're crossing  
me and I'm putting a bullet in your  
spine.

Nu nods.

The jeep moves up a six-lane road toward a busy intersection where a brown-uniformed policeman assists the light, directing traffic.

Nu crosses against oncoming traffic to pull up a block short of a large complex: a semi-circular facade overhangs a driveway.

NU  
There.

Max watches the car and foot traffic carefully.

MAX  
Seems kind of public for this kind  
of thing.

Nu shrugs. Max sits up and rummages through his bag, comes up with a grenade.

MAX (CONT'D)

You try taking off on me, I'll shoot you. You signal anyone, I'll pull the pin on this and we all die.

Nu shrugs, looks away.

Max gives Nu a last hard look, then slaps the side of the Jeep, and Nu rolls forward toward the hotel.

As the Jeep enters the circle drive, men in black suits converge.

One of them waves at Nu, directing him toward the parking garage.

The Jeep rolls down the ramp and a metal garage door comes down behind it.

Max's breathing is loud.

Another MAN IN A BLACK SUIT stands in a parking spot by the elevator.

Nu drives toward him.

As the jeep approaches the man, Max clocks Nu on the temple with the butt of his gun, leans over, stomps on the accelerator and rams the man in the black suit.

The man spins and goes down.

The Jeep crashes into a concrete pillar and dies.

Max is out and sprinting for the man in the suit before the Jeep has fully impacted.

The man has gained his knees and is reaching into his suit jacket as Max jumps into the air and comes down with both feet on the man's back.

MAX (CONT'D)

Thatta boy. Lie down.

The man in the black suit grunts and twists into a position allowing him to get his hand into his suit.

He's pulling out a gun as Max comes down with a hard right elbow and plucks the gun from the man's hand with his left.

As the man rolls, Max shoves the pistol of the man's gun forcefully into his mouth, chipping teeth. The man gags.

MAX (CONT'D)  
(in Thai)  
Who do you work for, dog?

The man struggles in rage. Max pins him to the concrete by ramming the gun hard.

MAX (CONT'D)  
I said who do you work for?

Max rips the gun out of the man's mouth, takes a quick look around the empty garage.

The man continues to gag and writhe on the floor.

Max turns at the sound of a metal door bursting open and slamming into the concrete wall behind him.

Three men in suits are through the door and spread out, triangulating Max in seconds. All hold guns trained on Max.

Max doesn't hesitate, but charges the men, firing pistols from each hand, quickly dropping each man on the side.

The man in the center fires and the bullet creases Max's head an inch from the previous wound.

Max drops to the floor of the garage on hands and knees.

He fights to clear his head and bring a gun to bear, but a shiny black dress shoe clips him on the chin and he is out.

INT. A VAN - DAY

Heavy metal music. Men speaking in Thai and laughing.

Max is gagged, blindfolded and duct taped. He lies on his side on the corrugated metal floor of the van.

The van swerves sharply, and he rolls to one side and impacts against the wall.

EXT. MANSION - DUSK

A dusty white van pulls up in front of a palatial mansion of marble, polished teak, and black tinted windows.

Two GUARDS with Uzis flank the entryway.

Two men in black suits hop out of the van.

One opens the cargo door and reaches in and dumps Max on the drive. Max's blood stains the white marble walkway.

One man lifts Max to his feet and with a hand on Max's hair steers him toward the entryway.

The door opens and TWO MORE GUARDS come out to take charge of Max, one to an arm. The two propel Max into the mansion.

The door shuts behind him.

INT. THE MANSION - NIGHT

The two guards guide Max into a dungeon of black marble.

Shackles hang from the walls. Implements of torture crowd the room: an Iron Maiden, a Rack, a pole with shackles, a table with a drain and shackles.

A stainless steel silver dolly with tools laid out neatly: pliers, clamps, a battery charger, etc.

There are drains in the floor and a hose is neatly coiled over a faucet.

The guards guide Max to a stainless steel chair over a drain, cut the duct tape loose and clamp him into the chair.

Max is still gagged and blindfolded.

They turn and leave.

The door shuts with a solid whump.

Max yells through the gag; his words are indecipherable.

INT. THE MANSION - NIGHT

The door to the dungeon opens with an audible movement of air.

THE TORTURER, a thick, heavy Thai in black jeans and a black T-shirt, walks slowly to Max, heavy boots clumping and echoing through the chamber.

Max turns his head to face him.

The Torturer stands in front of Max and waits.

Max attempts to speak, but he is still gagged.

The Torturer waits. Then he turns and slowly walks away.

The door closes.

INT. THE MANSION - DAY

The Torturer walks slowly to Max.

He waits. Max's head is cocked, listening.

The Torturer brutally rips the gag from Max's mouth.

MAX

Fuck you!

The Torturer walks slowly to the silver dolly and wheels it next to the chair.

His hands play over the array of tools lovingly.

He selects a pair of pliers.

He walks in front of Max and the pliers disappear from view. Max screams.

Max screams again.

The torturer has a deep bass chuckle.

INT. THE DUNGEON - INDETERMINATE

Max is alone in the room and a bloody mess.

The blindfold has been changed and looks fresh.

Max's clothes are ripped and charred in many places, exposing wounds and burn marks.

The door opens and a well-dressed Thai male, PICHAJ, heads an entourage including FOUR GUARDS, an ASSISTANT, and The Torturer.

PICHAJ

Welcome back, Khun Max.

Max's head jerks up. His body tenses.

MAX

Pichai!

Pichai laughs.

PICHAJ

Nice to see you again, old friend.

Max's face registers surprise, horror, and then the light of understanding.

MAX

It's been you all along.

Pichai strolls urbanely around Max, hands behind his back, jewels flashing on his rings, thick golden bracelets gleaming.

PICHAI

I've been looking for you for a long time, Khun Max.

Pichai comes to a stop in front of Max.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

Thought you got away with it, didn't you?

Pichai nods at The Torturer who rips the blindfold from Max's head.

Max stares at Pichai.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

Thought you were safe, didn't you?  
Thought you'd made a nice new life.  
With MY money!

Pichai delivers vicious roundhouse kick to Max's torso. If the chair to which he is bound weren't bolted to the floor, it'd tip over.

Max absorbs the pain with an eye blink.

MAX

I'm going to kill you. I'm going to rip you apart with my own hands.

Pichai laughs.

PICHAI

You never have been a master of reading your situation accurately, Max.

MAX

Read it well enough to get out from under you.

Rage surfaces, briefly, on Pichai's face. A flicker.

PICHAJ

Out from under me? Whatever do you mean, Max? You were a mule.

MAX

I was trapped.

PICHAJ

By your own greed and weakness. You were free to go at any time.

Max snorts.

MAX

Free to die, you mean.

Pichai leans down, hands on knees, to bring him eye-to-eye with Max.

PICHAJ

You misread the situation, Max. You were always free.

MAX

Bullshit.

Pichai stands and spreads open his arms.

PICHAJ

Why would I kill you? Or hold you captive? What purpose would that have served?

MAX

You were worried I would talk. You had to keep me silent.

Pichai shakes his head, genuinely upset. He pats Max on the cheek.

PICHAJ

To whom, Max? The police? Customs? Hong Kong?

He shakes his head again.

PICHAJ (CONT'D)

All bought and paid for, Max. You were never a threat to me. Only a mule. One of many.

He pauses.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

But then you stole from me. Took the money from your theft and built a business.

MAX

It was my only way out...

Pichai shakes his head.

PICHAI

No. Only the most foolish way. And look where that choice has landed you.

Pichai gestures to take in the room.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

I found you! I found your city, your house, and your family! Your family is dead because of your choice to steal from me.

MAX

But I...

Max hangs his head.

PICHAI

You understand nothing. You left me no choice.

Pichai meets Max's eyes with genuine pity. Then turns and walks to the dolly, lets his fingers play over the tools.

Max opens his mouth to speak, then closes it.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

(in Thai)

Where are my tongs?

The Assistant and the Torturer look at one another.

THE TORTURER

(in Thai)

I haven't prepared them, Khun Pichai.

PICHAI

(in Thai)

Get them, please. I want them red hot.

The Torturer scuttles from the room.

Pichai selects a cat-o-nine tail with a stainless steel silver handle.

He flicks it at Max's face expertly, drawing a light line of blood across his cheek.

Max stares.

MAX

You didn't have to kill them.

PICHAI

How else would I have gotten you back to Thailand?

MAX

You're going to die, Pichai. I swear that to you.

Pichai sighs.

PICHAI

Ever misreading the situation. No, Max. You are going to die.

Pichai steps back and rakes Max's chest with the cat o nine.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

But not today.

Pichai delivers another stroke. More blood.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

Not tomorrow.

Another stroke.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

Not this week.

Pichai circles behind Max, leans in and whispers into his ear.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

I have long-term plans for you, Khun Max. I'm truly sorry, but you have left me no choice.

INT. A CELL - INDETERMINATE

Max lies on a bed with blood-stained linen which is otherwise hospital clean.

Gauze covers a large portion of his body, an IV bag hangs from a trolley, dripping nutrients into Max's system.

The door to the cell opens, and Lucy slips in, bearing a tray of food.

Max's eyes blink open. They widen at the sight of Lucy, and Max attempts to sit up.

MAX

Lucy!

Lucy ducks her head in shame, refuses to meet Max's eyes.

MAX (CONT'D)

You bitch! Working for Pichai all along!

Lucy's head hangs as she sets the tray on a chair near Max's bed.

MAX (CONT'D)

Why? Why did you do it, Luce?

Lucy briefly meets Max's gaze, her eyes spilling over with tears.

Her lips tremble and move to form words, but her voice will not come.

A violent banging on the door startles Lucy, and she turns and flees the room, tears pouring down her cheeks.

Max watches the door slam closed. With effort, he forces himself into a sitting position, picks up a spoon, and begins to dig into the food.

Something black is buried in the rice.

Max pokes at it with the spoon to uncover it: a cellphone.

Max glances at the door, then maneuvers himself into a position so that his back is to the door.

Hunched over, he pulls the cell out and snaps it open. It lights up.

Max closes his eyes, his brow furrows.

QUICK FLASHBACK

Damrong with a phone in his hand.

BACK TO SCENE

Max's eyes snap open and he thumbs in a telephone number without hesitating.

The phone rings as Max holds the cell to his ear.

A click.

DAMRONG (ON PHONE)

Hello?

MAX

Damrong! It's Max.

DAMRONG (ON PHONE)

Max! Where are you? What happened?

MAX

It's Pichai, Damrong. He's...

The door bursts open and four of Pichai's Suits pour into the room.

Max turns halfway to the door and they are on him.

One man snatches his phone and smashes it into the wall.

Max has a man on each arm and the fourth delivers a devastating kick to the groin.

Max slumps, drawing his feet off the floor as he is held by the men.

The fourth continues with his vicious beating of Max.

FADE TO BLACK.

The noise of the beating continues.

FADE IN:

INT. THE DUNGEON - INDETERMINATE

Max is stripped to the waist with his hands shackled to a pole above his head.

Pichai circles Max with a pair of red glowing tongs in his hand.

Burn marks and freshly healed scars dot Max's torso. The days of torture have thinned him, but resolve still burns in his eyes as he watches Pichai.

PICHAI  
Who did you call, Max?

Max's eyes have a predatory look as they track Pichai's movements.

MAX  
Your mother. She thinks you're a piece of shit, too.

Pichai reaches out with the glowing tongs and pinches Max's inner thigh.

Smoke wafts up from his pants with the sizzle of burning flesh.

Max's entire body tenses, his eyes close, and a moan escapes.

PICHAI  
My mother was a whore, Max. But you knew that, didn't you?

Max is momentarily lost in his pain. Pichai steps close to Max, holds the tongs between them.

PICHAI (CONT'D)  
A Pat Pong hooker, Max. I was lucky I wasn't aborted.

Max's eyes swim back into focus and he meets Pichai's stare.

PICHAI (CONT'D)  
Last saw my mother when I was five. Six. I've forgotten. Raised myself in Khlong Toei.

MAX  
Like a rat.

PICHAI  
The rats were constant companions, that is true.

MAX  
One of those rats must've fucked your mother. That would explain a lot.

Pichai touches the tongs to Max's cheek almost as an afterthought.

Max stiffens but doesn't break his gaze with Pichai.

Pichai examines the tongs like a smoker checking his cigarette making sure it is still lit.

He turns away from Max and places the tongs into a charcoal brazier under a vent in the corner of the room, his back to Max.

PICHAI

One thing I learned early on, Max,  
was to brook no disrespect.

MAX

Save your breath, you piece of  
shit. I know the story. Took over  
the meth racket when you were 13,  
killed everybody, yadda-yadda-  
yadda.

Pichai smiles. He pauses at the silver dolly to select a pair of clamps attached to a battery charger and strolls up to Max.

Max meets his gaze with a strength that gives Pichai pause.

Pichai attaches the clamps to Max's nipples.

PICHAI

You WILL break, Max. They all do.  
Now, who did you call?

MAX

Fuck you, Pichai.

Pichai returns to the dolly, flicks on the battery charger.

Max writhes and moans.

Pichai flicks off the charger and steps in close to Max.

PICHAI

Your ignorance is only outshone by  
your arrogance, Max.

Pichai lights a cigarette, blows smoke urbanely to one side, away from Max.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

Tell me, Khun Max. What made you  
think you would get away with  
stealing that gold from me?

Max's eyes narrow. He seems ready to ignore the question, then something in him lets loose, and it all comes rolling out:

MAX

I didn't even think about it. All I wanted was to get AWAY from everything I'd done, the life I'd made here. I wanted to get AWAY from YOU, from THAILAND, from the DRUGS. And after I saw you kill that poor girl and you wanted me to make that gold run ....

PICHAI

"Kill that poor girl?" Som? The whore you loved?

Max's face tightens with memory.

MAX

Som! Behind the bar in Pat Pong! Just before I left! You shot her in the head and left her for your thugs to clean up.

PICHAI

Som chose her fate. She stole almost an ounce of heroin from me.

MAX

Heroin?

Pichai cocks his head, remembering.

PICHAI

I thought she was smarter than that. Som was a runner, Max. She was never visiting her parents upcountry. She was running drugs. For me. And she was an ounce short.

Pichai stands, calm and composed.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

I cannot have that kind of disrespect. Allow my workers to steal from me with impunity. Surely, you, of all people, now understand that.

Pichai returns to the dolly, selects a short wooden club. He spins and strikes Max with such fury Max's side dents and his breath is expelled with an audible oof!

Max's eyes close. Open.

MAX  
You're lying.

PICHAI  
Why would I lie? Do you still  
understand nothing? Truly?

MAX  
You killed my baby!

Max finally breaks. Sobs wrack him and tears pour down his cheeks.

PICHAI  
No. You killed your family. When  
you skipped out with MY gold.

Max fights to regain control.

MAX  
You're the killer. Not me. You're  
the piece of shit. Not me.

Pichai tosses the club back onto the dolly.

He puts a hand on Max's shoulder.

PICHAI  
You truly left me no choice, Max.

Max hangs his head, unable to meet Pichai's gaze.

PICHAI (CONT'D)  
Oh, by the way. That little girl  
you stole from me and left behind  
in Ubon? Nok?

Max attempts to hide his alarm, but it shows in his eyes.

PICHAI (CONT'D)  
Max. Did you really think a white  
man would go unnoticed that far  
upcountry?

Pichai smiles.

PICHAI (CONT'D)  
Had Bunsaprong? Little island  
downriver from Ubon? Restaurant on  
the water with private tables?  
Bungalows up on the hill?

Dread shows on Max's face. Pichai smiles sadly.

PICHAI (CONT'D)  
That's right, Max. Again, you stole  
from me.

MAX  
You're a monster...

Pichai looks at his watch.

PICHAI  
I'm going to make her a star.

Max's mouth opens, closes.

PICHAI (CONT'D)  
In fact, I have business to attend  
to related to that project.  
Goodbye, Max. For now.

Pichai walks to the door of the dungeon, opens the door, then  
pauses at the threshold.

PICHAI (CONT'D)  
I'll bring you the final cut.

Pichai exits. The door clumps shut behind him.

INT. A CELL - INDETERMINATE

Max is hunched over on his bed in the grip of a powerful  
constellation of emotions.

Once again, he has been cleaned up.

QUICK FLASHBACK  
Max's wife with their daughter in  
her lap, both giggling.

BACK TO SCENE

Max gets up and limps back and forth.

QUICK FLASHBACK (CONT'D)  
Max holding a bar of gold bullion.

BACK TO SCENE

Max's hands come up to his face. His look is deranged.

## QUICK FLASHBACK (CONT'D)

The bloody bed and brain-splattered wall of his master bedroom. The message in blood.

## BACK TO SCENE

Max drops to his knees and slowly folds over himself in a near-fetal position. He begins to sob.

The door bangs open, smashing against the wall.

A SUIT and TWO THUGS enter, walk to Max.

The Suit reaches down to grab him by the hair.

In an instant, Max has a hand on the man's wrist and has twisted it behind his back, driving the man to the floor.

Max delivers a blow to the back of the man's head before the Thugs can react.

He spins and gains his feet as the Thugs rush him.

Max uses their momentum to slam their heads together, stunning each.

He grabs one of the men by the hair and pulls the head down as he drives up with a knee.

It catches the Thug perfectly on the chin and he slumps to the floor.

The other recovers and renews his attack, catching Max a nasty blow to the temple, dropping him to a knee.

The Thug kicks, aiming for Max's chin, but Max leans back to avoid the blow, then catches the man's leg as it passes his face, stands, and kicks the man's other leg out from underneath him.

The back of the Thug's head slams into the concrete floor.

Max grabs him by the hair and pounds his head into the concrete floor until he stops moving.

Max moves to the Suit, relieves him of a shoulder holster with its weapon and ammo clips.

Slipping the holster on and adjusting it, Max slides the gun out, checks the ammo load, then glides to the door with a trace of a limp.

He flattens himself at the door, gun in both hands, peers out cautiously, then disappears into the hallway.

INT. THE MANSION - DAY

Max works his way down a beautiful hallway with marble floors, statuary, teak end tables with flower arrangements, Thai art on the walls: Gangster chic.

Max comes to a door and gently tries the latch.

He inches the door open, peers inside.

A woman's boudoir: a dressing room gives way to a bedroom done in a heavy-handed and very red way.

INT. BOUDOIR - DAY

Max eases the door shut behind him with a gentle click.

Someone is in the bed in the next room, visible only as a lump under the red silk coverlet.

Max moves cautiously toward the bedroom, gun in both hands.

He peeks in.

MAX

Lucy.

Lucy lies on the bed.

Gauze covers much of her face, and an I.V. drip bag hangs from a medical-grade stainless steel stand next to her bed, its cord taped to her wrist.

Max moves to her side and stares down at her for a long moment.

MAX (CONT'D)

Luce. Lucy!

He nudges her, gently.

MAX (CONT'D)

Luce. It's me, Max. Talk to me,  
Luce.

Lucy stirs restlessly, moans.

MAX (CONT'D)  
That's a girl. Come on, Luce. Talk  
to me.

Lucy shudders, moves abruptly.

LUCY  
Alai?

MAX  
(in Thai)  
It's me, Luce. Max.

LUCY  
Max?

MAX  
What happened, Lucy?

LUCY  
Pichai. Cell phone. I...

Max reaches a hand out and rests it on Lucy's shoulder.

MAX  
This is payback for getting that  
phone to me?

LUCY  
Yes.

MAX  
What the hell are you doing with  
Pichai, Lucy?

LUCY  
My daughter.

Max waits for Lucy to gather her strength.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
Pichai. Has. My Daughter. Max.

Understanding floods Max's face.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, Max. So. Sorry.

Max raises his hand to brush Lucy's cheek with the back of  
his fingers.

She flinches. Max withdraws his hand.

MAX

Easy, Luce. It's OK. I'm not going to hurt you.

LUCY

So sorry, Max.

Tears manage to make their way past the gauze, leaving trails down the sides of Lucy's face to the pillow beneath.

MAX

I get it, Luce. Where's your daughter?

LUCY

I don't know. Pichai said. Only reason he didn't kill me. He wants me to watch my daughter die.

Max's raises his pistol as if to ready himself. His knuckles whiten as he grips it.

MAX

He's got a real thing for that.

LUCY

Crazy man.

Max lifts the sheet, looks at Lucy, gauging the level of her injuries.

MAX

I'm going to fix this, Luce.

LUCY

How?

MAX

If nothing else, I'm going to put a bullet right through his evil heart.

LUCY

My daughter. Max. My daughter ...

MAX

I know. I know.

Max leans down and kisses Lucy very gently on her exposed cheek.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'll be back, Luce. I swear it.

He caresses her cheek gently. She does not flinch.

Max turns and heads for the door.

INT. THE MANSION - DAY

Max glides down the hallway with his pistol in both hands.

As he comes to each door, he peers in carefully.

All rooms are furnished in decadent luxury.

Max comes to a bend in the hallway revealing an atrium with dual marble stairs and balustrade leading to the ground floor.

An enormous double-door of teak with gold fixtures dominates the second-floor landing.

As Max edges forward, the doors open.

Two Suits lead an entourage of Pichai, The Torturer, Pichai's assistant, and two other suits who hold a squirming Nok between them.

Max fires and takes down the first two suits.

Pichai looks up in alarm, his face rippling with anger and surprise as he spots Max.

The two Suits holding Nok let go of her as each reaches under his jacket for a weapon.

Nok sprints for the nearest stairway, but Pichai reaches out and grabs her, swinging her in front of him as a shield.

Max sights in on Pichai, but the distance is too great for a sure shot.

One of the suits lets loose a burst of automatic gunfire and little puffs of dust appear where the bullets hit the wall to one side and high of Max.

Max dives back into the hallway out of sight as bullets stitch the floor behind him.

Lots of men yelling in Thai.

Footsteps running nearer.

An alarm sounds.

Max rolls to face the atrium as a Suit edges cautiously into the hallway.

A single bullet punches a hole dead center in the Suit's forehead and he drops motionless to the floor, squirting blood.

Max is on the dead man in a second.

He tucks the Suit's weapon into his pants in the small of his back, pats him down, finds a full clip of ammo.

As Max edges back into the atrium, automatic fire raises clouds of plaster dust again, obscuring his vision.

Max rolls to one side, using the plaster cloud for cover, his movements fast and precise.

He rounds the corner, spots the gunner across the landing and lets loose a burst of three shots.

The gunner cries out and his gun flops out between the columns of the railing to fall to the floor below.

Max moves toward the stairwell, but is tackled from behind.

His gun goes spinning across the landing.

The Torturer leaps in from nowhere and has Max's back, landing devastating blows to the back of Max's head.

Max sags momentarily, then gets his arms and knees under him.

He lifts himself to his feet, but the Torturer sinks a deep choke.

Max arches back with the choke and drives the top of his head into the Torturer's nose.

The Torturer's grip loosens and Max breaks free.

He scrambles on his hands and knees for the gun, gets it, and rolls to face the Torturer.

The Torturer is advancing fast.

Max takes deliberate aim and shoots the Torturer in the knee.

The man screams and falls to the ground holding his shattered knee.

Max is on his feet and at the Torturer's side. He shoots the Torturer in the other knee.

As the man screams, Max leans down.

MAX

I'll be back to finish this later.

The torturer braces himself on an arm, eyes filled with hatred.

Max takes aim and shoots out his elbow, then dashes down the stairwell as four men in black suits storm through the entryway in military formation, spreading out quickly to cover the atrium.

Max takes out the two nearest him with quick bursts from his gun.

A final click. Max is out of ammo.

Max screams and throws his weapon at the face of the closest remaining man, and gets a hand on the collar of one of the men he has just shot before the man collapses.

Max pulls the man in front of him as a shield.

The remaining men open fire.

Bullets tear chunks out of the body in front of Max, and a bloody spot appears on Max's shoulder, though he appears not to notice.

Max reaches behind to draw his remaining weapon and fires it under the arm of the body to take out one of the remaining two men.

He is now close enough to the last man to shove the body into the man, cramping his shooting arm, but in doing this, drops his gun.

Max lets go of the body and seizes the gun hand of the man.

They struggle for control of the gun.

With an abrupt redirection of force, Max throws the man over his shoulder and has him down on the ground.

Max knocks the man unconscious.

More shouting from upstairs and feet pounding closer.

Max grabs the man's gun and races to the front door and exits the building.

EXT. THE MANSION - DAY

Max exits the mansion running.

Bullets raise stone chips off the facade of the mansion as he runs.

A black van is speeding down the driveway to exit the compound, rocking as it goes.

Max spots the gunman shooting at him and drops him effortlessly with a burst from the hip as he sprints after the van.

MAX

Pichai!

Max is running flat out.

He gains ground as the van slows to navigate the turn out of the compound to the road beyond.

Gunmen emerge from the mansion behind Max firing their weapons.

Max cries out and falls to the ground as a splot of red shows on his pant leg.

The van disappears through the gate into the street.

Max rolls and empties the clip in his gun back at the gunmen emerging from the house.

He crawls to cover behind an ornate stone bounding the driveway, gets his back to it, and pulls a clip from his pocket and reloads the gun.

Bullets are ping-pong off of the stone and raising spires of dust from the ground next to him.

Two black sedans screech into the driveway.

MAX (CONT'D)

Shit.

Max brings his weapon to bear on the first sedan, but it speeds past him as bullets from the mansion splatter off its bullet-proof windshield.

The second sedan squeals to a broadside stop next to Max and the back door pops open.

Damrong leaps out and runs to Max.

DAMRONG

Max!

A spatter of automatic gunfire near the entrance to the mansion.

A man's voice sputters over a walkie talkie on Damrong's hip.

Damrong reaches for the mic clipped to his shoulder, unclips it, and raises it to his mouth, his eyes never leaving Max.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

The entrance is cleared.

Max staggers to his feet, favoring his wounded leg.

MAX

Damrong! Pichai! He got away. Out the front, black van. He has Nok!

Damrong and Max share a look, then move to the sedan.

Damrong presses the button on the mic again and speaks into it in Thai, then turns to Max.

DAMRONG

Let's go.

As the sedan's door closes behind them, the car is already backing up for a sliding turnaround.

Black smoke rises from the wheels as the driver guns the car for the road outside the compound.

INT. THE SEDAN - DAY

Max and Damrong share the backseat of the sedan.

A Thai man in military khakis drives; another fiddles with a weapon as he sits in the passenger seat.

Both are wearing shooter's sunglasses.

DAMRONG

Here, take this.

Damrong tosses Max a First Aid kit.

Max opens the kit and digs out some gauze and medical tape.

MAX  
How'd you find me?

DAMRONG  
Wasn't too hard, once I got the  
cell call.

MAX  
I wasn't on the line for more than  
fifteen seconds.

Damrong grins.

DAMRONG  
Well, whatever happened to cut you  
off didn't stop the phone from  
transmitting for a couple more  
minutes. Once we realized it went  
through a cell tower in Pattaya....

MAX  
We're in Pattaya?!!

Damrong gestures out the window.

The sedan has finished passing a series of rice paddies and  
is pulling out onto a highway: Sukhumvit.

DAMRONG  
You mentioned Pichai, call's coming  
from a cell tower in Pattaya, so I  
put some eyes on Pichai's place...

Damrong shrugs.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)  
Then there's gunfire...

MAX  
Ah.

DAMRONG  
Ah.

The walkie talkie on Damrong's hip barks again. Damrong  
raises the mic to his lips and responds.

MAX  
Your men lost the van?

DAMRONG

Not to worry. We're pretty sure  
where he's going.

Max looks at Damrong.

MAX

Pretty sure?

DAMRONG

Pichai has a beach complex. Under  
one of his shell companies. Just  
south of Rayong.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DUSK

Max and Damrong sit in the back seat of the sedan.

The Driver and Passenger are in their seats.

The sedan is parked at a pull-off near a long, narrow road  
with the ocean on each side.

The road leads to a walled and gated complex on the tip of a  
peninsula.

MAX

That's it?

DAMRONG

Pichai's stronghold.

MAX

You're sure he's there?

DAMRONG

He's there.

Pichai's walkie talkie squawks. He replies in Thai.

MAX

You've got boats?

Damrong gives Max a long look.

DAMRONG

We have everything we need, Max.  
Everything.

Max thinks for a minute, then grins.

MAX

The compound in Bangkok! You rallied support, didn't you?

DAMRONG

Let's say the evidence was sufficient and heinous enough that all protection has been, uh, 'held in abeyance,' is the correct phrase I believe.

MAX

Damn. A vacation from corruption.

Damrong's smile is pained.

DAMRONG

There are good people here, Max.

Max grunts.

EXT. PICHAI'S STRONGHOLD - NIGHT

Lights from boats anchored offshore twinkle across the placid water.

Waves lap quietly against the shore.

Pichai's stronghold is lit by a series of security lights: it is a bright white compound in the midst of the dark sea.

Max, Damrong, the Driver, and Passenger sit waiting in the sedan, parked as before in the pull-off area.

Two jeeps filled with THAI MEN IN MILITARY DRESS sit as dark silhouettes on either side of the sedan.

A flash of brilliant white light, followed by the whump! of concussion grenades on the water side of Pichai's compound.

DAMRONG

That's it! Go!

Headlights blaze, engines roar, and with a squeal of tires all three vehicles race to the compound.

EXT. PICHAI'S STRONGHOLD - NIGHT

Sounds of gunfire from the back of the compound on the water.

Damrong's sedan leads the convoy, and smashes through the black iron gates into the compound without incurring so much as a dent.

MAX

One hell of a car, you got here,  
Damrong!

The driver guides the sedan into a controlled slide which leaves the passenger side of the car broadside to the entrance to Pichai's stronghold.

DAMRONG

Go, go, go!

Everyone piles out of the car on the driver's side as the jeeps slide into position on either side of the sedan.

Men pour out of the entrance to the stronghold.

Bullets ping off of the sedan and divot the sides of the jeeps.

Damrong and the soldiers return fire, making quick work of the men in front.

Desultory gunfire from within the house.

As the last man at the door drops, Max sprints into the house.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

Max! Wait!

Max disappears into the bowels of the mansion.

INT. PICHAI'S STRONGHOLD - NIGHT

Gunfire sounds from the back of the house.

Max is standing in the atrium.

It is startlingly similar to the mansion from which Max just escaped.

THAI MEN IN MILITARY DRESS swarm into the atrium from the second floor and sweep down both stairways, Eck in the lead.

MORE MEN IN MILITARY DRESS enter the atrium from the ground floor hallway, Somchai at their head.

Damrong, Driver, Passenger, and MEN IN MILITARY DRESS enter behind Max.

Somchai gives Max a hard look, then turns to Damrong.

SOMCHAI  
All are either dead or detained.

DAMRONG  
Pichai?

Somchai looks at Eck.

ECK  
We didn't find him.

MAX  
Are you shitting me? Pichai's not here?

DAMRONG  
He is here. We have video of him arriving.

The men look at one another.

MAX  
The dungeon. I'll bet he's got a dungeon in here.

Somchai nods.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Did you check it for a safe room?  
An exit?

Somchai glances at his men.

SOLDIER  
We swept the room. It was clear.

Max looks at Somchai, then Eck.

MAX  
He'll have a safe room. Or an exit.  
I know it.

Max shoulders his way through the crowd of men and heads into the ground floor hallway.

Somchai and Eck exchange glances with Damrong.

Damrong barks orders in Thai and then he, Somchai, Eck, and two additional men follow Max.

The rest of the men split into groups and spread out to search the house.

INT. PICHAÏ'S STRONGHOLD - NIGHT

Max grabs the stainless steel lever of the door handle to the dungeon and wrenches open the door.

The room is a replica of the torture chamber of the other house.

Max stands in the entryway, sweeping the room with his gaze.

His eyes come to rest in the far corner of the room, where a charcoal brazier sits under a hood for a vent.

Max jogs to the corner and puts his gun down.

Damrong and the others spread out across the room, tapping on walls, tugging at bolts, peering at cracks.

Max stands in front of the vent, hands on his hips.

A breeze rustles his hair.

Max raises a hand to brush his hair, then freezes.

MAX

Here!

Max begins turning the knobs which control the fan to the vent.

The fan flares on, then off.

The final knob clicks and an electric hum issues from the corner.

The entire assembly--tile over raised concrete pedestal for the brazier, wall, hood, and vent--slides forward revealing a dark recess behind.

Max grabs his gun and dives into the recess without hesitation.

DAMRONG

Max!

A muffled shot from within.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

MAX!

Damrong enters the recess with his gun in both hands.

The recess is a narrow passageway which quickly opens into a room that is outfitted comfortably: a leather couch, kitchenette, shower, full entertainment center.

Max is struggling to his feet as Damrong enters. A trickle of blood escapes from under the hand he has clasped to his temple.

MAX

That motherfucker. Pichai was here!

Damrong looks confusedly about the room.

Max staggers to the entertainment center and begins pressing on tiles with the toe of his shoe.

MAX (CONT'D)

Here. He pressed something here.  
Damn it.

A click.

Now it is the entertainment center which raises an inch and glides forward.

A breeze rips through the room, rustling pages on magazines laid out on a coffee table in front of the couch.

Max shakes his head, seemingly recovered, and steps out the door.

EXT. RAYONG BEACH - NIGHT

The tide is low.

Seaweed and rock dot the beach.

The ocean is still, reflecting the red, green and white lights of the boats at anchor.

Pichai is forty yards down the beach, dragging a struggling figure at his side.

Max is in pursuit and gaining fast.

Damrong sprints after Max, followed by Somchai, Eck, and the two men in military dress.

MAX

Pichai! You son of a bitch! Stop!

Pichai skids to a stop, swings the struggling figure in front of him and confronts Max.

PICHAI  
Meung! Ai Chat Maa!

Pichai grinds the barrel of his gun into the temple of the figure struggling in his grasp.

It is Nok.

MAX  
You're going to die!

Max takes aim.

Damrong, Somchai, Eck and the two men splash to a stop behind Max. The men begin to fan out, taking up positions.

PICHAI  
Stop! Nobody move or she dies!

Nok cries out in pain as Pichai jabs the barrel into her temple.

Blood begins to trickle down the side of her face.

NOK  
Khun Max!

Max leaps forward.

Pichai instinctively swings the gun toward Max, but he is too slow.

Max gets a hand on the gun and shoves the barrel upward as Pichai squeezes the trigger.

The gun empties itself in a burst of automatic fire which flies harmlessly into the sky.

Max drives a vicious elbow over the top of Nok's head and lands directly on Pichai's nose.

Pichai's nose flattens and begins to pour blood.

He raises a hand to defend, and Nok breaks free.

Max rips Pichai's gun from his hand and tosses it into the ocean.

Max levels his gun at Pichai as Damrong and the others move to flank Pichai, cutting off his escape.

MAX  
Finally! Now, you die!

PICHAI

You've always been weak, Max. A  
coward.

Max advances toward Pichai, gun aimed at Pichai's forehead.

PICHAI (CONT'D)

A thief. No balls.

Max stands resolute.

His fist tightens on the gun.

His finger squeezes...

Abruptly, Max flings the gun over his shoulder.

It splashes into the shallow water behind him.

Pichai opens his mouth in a scream that issues from the  
depths of his soul and charges Max.

Max steps to one side and lands a shin deep into Pichai's  
belly.

Pichai doubles over and Max lands a left hook to spin him to  
one side.

Pichai steps back and recovers his stance.

He and Max begin to circle one another.

Damrong, Somchai, Eck, and the two men form a circle around  
the duo as they fight.

Nok nestles under Damrong's arm.

The two men struggle, evenly matched.

The ocean laps at the shore.

Max and Pichai labor for breath.

The only other sounds are those of blows.

Pichai comes up with a fistful of sand which he flings into  
Max's eyes.

The moonlight gleams on a knife in Pichai's hand and before  
anyone on the beach can react, he has sunk his hand in Max's  
gut and ripped upwards with the blade.

Max gags, coughs blood, and falls to his knees.

Nok breaks free from Damrong's grasp and runs to him.

NOK

Khun Max!

Max falls backwards into her arms, his eyes gazing up toward the stars above.

His eyes dim, and he smiles.

MAX

Baby girl!

Nok hugs him to her, sobbing.

MAX (CONT'D)

Daddy's coming, sweetie. Daddy's...

Max's eyes glaze and he slumps.

Damrong and the others swarm downn the beach and subdue Pichai.

Nok leans over Max, her tears falling onto his face.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE HILLS ABOVE CHAINGMAI - DAY

SUPER: "CHAING MAI, THAILAND. FIVE YEARS LATER."

A series of small brown bungalows dot the lush green countryside.

Butterflies dance among flowers in full bloom.

A larger structure in traditional Thai style is centered amongst the bungalows and flowers.

A sign posted by the walking path leading to it reads:

LITTLE BIRD SANCTUARY, SCHOOL, AND HOME FOR THE HOMELESS AND FORGOTTEN.

And in smaller print, below:

IN MEMORIAM: MAX SINCLAIR

Small children run by screaming in joy as they play tag with one another.

Larger kids play Thai volleyball off to one side of the lawn.

Lucy relaxes in a chaise lounge as she watches the children play.

Nok--now a lovely 17-year-old woman--tends the flowers, humming to herself happily.

Another lovely 17ish girl, LUCY'S DAUGHTER, arrives bearing a tray with two Thai coffees.

Damrong, dressed in civvies, follows her.

The girl smiles as she places the tray on a table next to Lucy.

LUCY'S DAUGHTER

Here you go, Ma. Uncle Damrong's here.

Lucy smiles.

LUCY

So, it's finally over?

Damrong seats himself in a chair, reaches for the Thai coffee, sips it.

DAMRONG

It's over.

LUCY

Pichai?

DAMRONG

Death. Remanded to Bangkwang until his time.

Lucy whistles.

LUCY

Leg irons welded on until his sentence is carried out?

Damrong nods.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I thought with his money and his turning over the girls still captive . . .

DAMRONG

No. His crimes were too large. Only narcissism gave him hope.

LUCY

And there are still those who want  
him dead.

DAMRONG

That is likely, too.

Lucy's gaze turns inward.

LUCY

Does it ever end, Damrong?

Damrong shrugs.

DAMRONG

The wheel of life turns. Karma  
accrues. Good people do what they  
can to improve the world.

LUCY

Max was a good man.

DAMRONG

In the end. And you. What you have  
built here is a good thing. The  
life you lead, the children...

Damrong looks away to watch the children playing tag. His  
face softens.

DAMRONG (CONT'D)

Part of him lives on. Here.  
Building karma...

A SMALL CHILD calls from off-screen.

SMALL CHILD

Mama?

Lucy sits up as a gorgeous four-year-old girl comes running  
to her. She leaps into her arms, and Lucy embraces her,  
leaning her head over and nuzzling the girl's ear.

They giggle.

The camera tightens in on the two of them.

FADE TO BLACK.