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Kingdom Come

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Kingdom Come

By

Kirk B. Young

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of
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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

A dog barks somewhere in the dark. Crickets are chirping. Downtown Kansas City glows in the distance.

Headlights round the bend, brightening as a HONDA CIVIC comes closer and pulls into a driveway.

INT. MATT'S CAR - NIGHT

MATT PEREZ (30s) settles back into his seat, turns the volume down as the SPORTS RADIO ANNOUNCER describes an impressive double play.

Then he takes a breath and gets out of the car, revealing his passenger.

Pizza boxes.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

EVA PEREZ (30s) waits at the dinner table with HARPER PEREZ (3).

Harper hunches over a coloring book, spinning her hands wildly as she pushes a crayon into the page.

The front door opens -- Matt steps in with the food.

MATT PEREZ

Hey ladies.

EVA PEREZ

Breaking news! Daddy doesn't cook again.

He's all smiles as he joins them at the table.

HARPER PEREZ

Hi Daddy. You want to color?

MATT PEREZ

I would love to.

He notices his wife's expectant gaze, but quickly leans in to exchange a kiss with her. She's not entertained by being kept waiting.

They spread out the pizzas, flip them open. Harper coughs a bit as they start to dig in.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
Whoa, you okay there kid?

She nods. He kisses her on the head.

EVA PEREZ
So?...

With a grin, he finally turns to Eva:

MATT PEREZ
I nailed it. Got the gig tomorrow.

EVA PEREZ
Congratulations! I'm happy for you,
babe.

MATT PEREZ
Yeah, and it's as big as I thought.
It's the Cook campaign.

EVA PEREZ
What...

He moves his chair closer to his daughter, colors with her as they eat.

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)
Richard Cook, huh? So you're going
to work for that-

He stops her with a look, and a nod toward the little one.

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)
-man...

He sighs, they've had this conversation before:

MATT PEREZ
I protect people, Eva. The job is
bigger than just who it's for. You
know that.

Harper lifts a crayon from the pile for him.

HARPER PEREZ
You like blue?

MATT PEREZ
How'd you know? Blue's my favorite.

Harper grins as he takes it.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

There's a good chance I could get on with the campaign if it goes well.

EVA PEREZ

His local office needs security too? I guess if you piss-
(catches herself, glances at Harper)
-upset that many people, somebody's gunning for you...

MATT PEREZ

No, the detail itself.

She stiffens.

He ignores her now furrowed brow.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eva cleans up at the sink. Matt shoves the pizza boxes into the recycling bin.

EVA PEREZ

What about the sheriff's office?

MATT PEREZ

I tried that already, remember?
Budget cuts.

She glances over her shoulder at him as he leaves the room.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Matt kneels next to the tub, giving Harper a bath.

Eva watches, leaning against the vanity.

MATT PEREZ

This is a really great gig honey.
Good experience, chance to work with a lot of high profile people.

Stops, turns to meet her gaze.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Honestly. This could set me up for life.

EVA PEREZ

And what about us?

MATT PEREZ

It would only be three or four months away.

(beat)

Then I maybe could get a permanent spot on the team in Washington.

EVA PEREZ

D.C.?!

MATT PEREZ

Yeah.

Eva stares into the back of his head, her look of astonishment building.

EVA PEREZ

Except we live in Kansas City.

MATT PEREZ

Look, I'm out of options here, alright?

EVA PEREZ

But you're a cop, Matt. A good one.

MATT PEREZ

(sighs)

Budgets aren't going back up at city or county anytime soon, you know that.

EVA PEREZ

So you want to jump right to the *secret service*?...

She shuffles out of the room, he glances after her.

Harper coughs a bit as she plays in the water.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Matt tosses a towel aside as he emerges from the ensuite bathroom.

MATT PEREZ

You're always talking about the next step, bigger and better. And I'm taking it.

He slides into bed next to her.

Eva's eyes rise from her phone in incredulity.

EVA PEREZ

I meant, you know, a promotion.
Another child. A dog.

He spins over, invades her space, teasing for a kiss.

She does not reciprocate.

He frowns.

MATT PEREZ

This is better than a promotion. I
thought you'd be proud.

EVA PEREZ

I *am* proud of you. But I meant
here. Our life is here, Matt. I've
put decades into the Tribune, and
if I get just one more article
picked up nationally, I know George
is going to name me managing
editor. I'm right there. Finally.
This is my shot.

MATT PEREZ

And this is mine.

She doesn't answer, but she doesn't soften either.

He pulls back, clearly not getting any tonight.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Eva, I'm wired to protect. You know
that. This is what I'm supposed to
do.

She doesn't respond, just lifts her phone and thumbs the
screen.

He slips back under the covers, settling in for the night.

EVA PEREZ

AP's reporting there've already
been bomb threats.

MATT PEREZ

I know...

Her eyes are glued to her phone, reading as she chews her
lip.

INT. HOTEL BANQUET HALL - DAY

Decked out in the standard dark suit with earpiece, Matt stands watch, scanning the sea of ritzy guests, expensive hor d'oeuvres, and seemingly endless hands filled with beer and wine.

TONY (50s), similarly dressed, approaches. They don't look at each other, just the crowd.

TONY

Couple of threats came in online.
Probably noise, but keep your eyes
open.

MATT PEREZ

Yes, sir. Only thing people seem to
be taking out of their coats today
are checks, as far as I can tell.

The edge of Tony's mouth nearly curls into a grin at that.

TONY

Let's hope it stays that way.
(beat)
We have an open spot on the detail,
you know.

MATT PEREZ

I know.

TONY

This job's not for everyone..

MATT PEREZ

Suits me just fine.

Now he briefly meets Tony's gaze. A shared understanding.

TONY

Do well.

Tony moves off into the crowd, and Matt resumes his watch without missing a beat.

Eva appears beside him. He doesn't visibly react.

EVA PEREZ

Hey.

His stoic stare does not waver.

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)
Isabelle's on vacation.
(beat)
Works out well for me. I get the
raging combover, and I get my
promotion...once whatever this
lunatic says today horrifies the
nation.

Matt still doesn't visibly react. A pro's pro. He just keeps scanning the room.

MATT PEREZ
I'm working.

EVA PEREZ
Sorry.

She glances at him again, but gives up. So she preps her phone to record audio.

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)
Give me some clickbait, Dick.

We follow her gaze to find RICHARD COOK (50s), a bloated man in an expensive suit, waving his arms for the crowd's attention.

RICHARD COOK
Alright, yes, thank you, yes, let's
please welcome my very special
guest, a good friend, you know a
friend of mine for a long time,
he's a good friend and a good, good
person. Mr. Ted Ramsey.

He claps and steps back.

A white haired old man takes the spotlight, glasses sinking down his nose. He wears a plain black tie, a plain white dress shirt, and plain black slacks -- but the combination of so much plainness actually stands out from the rest of the crowd. This is TED RAMSEY (60s).

TED RAMSEY
I know you're afraid. It's natural
to be afraid at this hour.

Matt notices a YOUNG PROTESTER (20s) slowly weaving through the crowd, approaching the podium..

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
Brothers and sisters, we need a
light. The first time I met this
man, he told me that he wanted to
save this country.

The protester stops, shifts his weight at Ted's last remark.

The crowd listens intently as the speech continues.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
He will make this country faithful
again.

Matt's eyes narrow.

The protester slips one hand beneath his jacket...

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
He knows what we need as a people.

Matt stiffens.

The protester relaxes his arm, pulls back -- revealing that
there is nothing in his hand.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
He will guide us to true salvation,
no matter the cost.

The crowd erupts with applause.

Matt slips his right hand to his waist, eyes still locked on
to the protester.

Richard and Ted step away from the podium, head for the door,
escorted by Tony-

The protester pushes his way through the crowd toward them,
reaching back into his jacket again-

Matt lunges forward, drawing his weapon-

MATT PEREZ
Stop!! Slowly get your hands up!
Up!

The protester freezes, holds his free hand out in caution-

PROTESTER
Wait-wait-wait-

MATT PEREZ
Hands where I can see them! Now!!

PROTESTER

Wait-

RICHARD COOK

Get that thug!

PROTESTER

It's just a-

But before the young man can get his hand back into view, Matt shoots -- and the TASER burns electricity into him.

A small protest flag jolts out of the young man's grip as he spasms with shock, collapsing to the ground.

MATT PEREZ

Damn...

Cameras begin to swarm around Matt. Others circle around his victim.

Matt grimaces at the frenzy surrounding the young man on the ground.

Richard Cook appears at his side, nodding repeatedly for the cameras and crowd.

RICHARD COOK

Now that is good work, right? Am I right? This guy knows how to do his job, how to protect Americans, I bet he has military training. Were you in the military? This guy is the guy for the job. This guy will protect me from all of the bad people that want to hurt me and this country.

Eva sees opportunity, springs forward.

EVA PEREZ

Mr. Cook, Kansas City Tribune. Will you take a stand against the violence associated with your campaign?

RICHARD COOK

You're cute, but no.

He looks at Matt.

RICHARD COOK (CONT'D)

Show her out.

Matt looks from him to Eva.

Eva has refused to break her gaze, her eyes still locked on to Richard.

MATT PEREZ
Mr. Cook, I think-

EVA PEREZ
I have a right to be here.

RICHARD COOK
No you don't.
(points)
Her. Out.

MATT PEREZ
Can we just-

EVA PEREZ
Freedom of the press, Mr.-

TED RAMSEY
(pressing forward)
What has the Tribune done but
corrupt this city's soul with lies
and darkness? We've all read your
paper's editorials. You don't
belong here among the chosen. Your
time will come. Even the Tribune
will be saved.

Matt frowns, steps in front of him - and appeals directly to Richard again.

MATT PEREZ
Sir, I think-

RICHARD COOK
Ted's right, miss. He's right, you
know.
(looks at Matt)
He's right. Get her out of here.

Richard's stare is unwavering.

Matt turns, meets Eva's gaze. She looks back at him for a moment, waiting, then her shoulders drop as she realizes he's not giving in.

EVA PEREZ
Wow.

She turns. Heads for the door, Matt by her side.

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)
I cannot believe this.

MATT PEREZ
I'm sorry honey...

EVA PEREZ
You kidding me? This is perfect.
That promotion is mine.

And she's out the door and gone.

Surprised by her parting words, Matt watches her go, then turns back to see Richard and his posse gesturing approvingly.

RICHARD COOK
(to Tony)
I like that guy. He's a good one,
let's get him on my permanent
detail, okay? Get rid of the donut
guy, I don't like the donut guy.
Too much powdered sugar.

Matt chews his lip, watches as the protester is helped to his feet...

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt and Eva lean against the wall in uncomfortable chairs. Harper sits near them, flipping through some books, coughing every so often.

After a moment, Eva shakes her head and sighs.

MATT PEREZ
He's up in the polls, isn't he?

EVA PEREZ
I'm worried.

MATT PEREZ
He won't win.

EVA PEREZ
That's not what I mean.

He gives her some side eye, waits a moment. Then goes ahead because he knows what she means.

MATT PEREZ
Eva. We've been over this.

EVA PEREZ

You really aren't bothered by the thought of leaving us both for months on end, are you?

MATT PEREZ

How could you think that?

EVA PEREZ

You keep talking about D.C. afterward, so...

He shakes his head in frustration, shifts his weight in his seat.

MATT PEREZ

Babe, you do what you're supposed to do. Every day. You live and breathe what you were made for. I just want to be able to do that too.

EVA PEREZ

Tazing protestors is really living the dream, huh?

MATT PEREZ

I thought-
(pauses, gathers himself)
Either way, I protected him. And that's my job. And now I have a job again. That's a great thing for us.

She watches him a moment, then nods. Looks down at her feet.

EVA PEREZ

I know.
(beat)
You're going to miss her birthday.

Now it's his turn to soften.

MATT PEREZ

I know.

His eyes wander over to Harper. He watches her play.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

It'll be the last one I miss. The only one. Trust me.

EVA PEREZ

Assuming we move.

MATT PEREZ
 (renewed frustration)
 Seriously, honey? Do we have to go
 over this over and-

He stops as the door opens -- Matt and Eva look up, relieved to have had their conversation interrupted.

The DOCTOR (60s) steps into the room, papers in hand. He glances at Harper, and then gives Matt and Eva a long, solemn look.

A shadow slowly creeps across Matt and Eva's faces. They stiffen, look from the doctor to their daughter..

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

Matt and Eva sitting side by side again, still somber, staring straight ahead. They are surrounded by empty chairs from a service long since finished.

A DARK BLUE URN sits front and center, flanked by picture collages and several bouquets of flowers. Memory and loss.

Harper is gone.

MATT PEREZ
 Let's take her to the ocean.
 (beat)
 Or the mountains. No, the Grand
 Canyon. She'd like that.

EVA PEREZ
 I'm not ready for that yet. She's
 going home.

Matt nods.

After a moment:

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)
 There's no coming back from this.
 We can't come back from this.

MATT PEREZ
 We can. We will.
 (beat)
 Together.

EVA PEREZ
 (dismissive)
 When? After you get back?

He doesn't answer. He doesn't have one.

FADE TO:

TITLE SCREEN

FADE IN:

INT. TAXI - MORNING

TITLE: 1 YEAR LATER

Rain falls softly against the window, though few clouds appear across the skyline outside. Matt watches the water droplets snake down the glass, the suburbs passing by.

A familiar voice on the radio:

TED RAMSEY (O.S.)

Yes, the time has come, we'll soon have the resources to really activate across the globe.

RADIO INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

"Clavigers" is not a very common term. Why use such an unfamiliar name for your organization?

TED RAMSEY (O.S.)

We're the custodians of God's people, we hold the key to their salvation. That's what a claviger is.

RADIO INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

So what comes next for the clavigers? Some say you are an extremist group.

TED RAMSEY (O.S.)

(chuckles)

That we are. It's going to scare a lot of people.

(beat)

But then, the truth has always been frightening, and so many have run from it over the centuries-

The TAXI DRIVER spins the dial silent, muttering to himself.

Matt frowns, eyes the back of the driver's head.

MATT PEREZ

You mind? I was listening to that.

TAXI DRIVER

To that? Hate to break it to you,
my friend, but that guy's full of
shit.

MATT PEREZ

Oh, you think?

TAXI DRIVER

For sure. He just wants attention.
I've driven enough people like that
to know that they just don't know
when to stop talking.

(changing the subject, and
without any irony)

So what do you do for a living?

MATT PEREZ

Security.

TAXI DRIVER

Right on. First time in KC?

MATT PEREZ

No, I'm from here. Just been gone
awhile, on the job.

TAXI DRIVER

And you're back in town because...

MATT PEREZ

Work.

TAXI DRIVER

Anything exciting?

MATT PEREZ

Hope not. Gotta pay somebody a
visit.

(beat)

And make sure he's full of shit.

TAXI DRIVER

What kind of security are you in,
exactly?

MATT PEREZ

Protection.

(beat)

Proactive protection.

The driver eyes him in the rear view mirror.

TAXI DRIVER

Damn. You the muscle, then?

MATT PEREZ

Only if I'm right about this guy.

INT. EVA'S OFFICE - MORNING

Sleek and minimal, cluttered papers on Eva's desk are the only sign of disorganization in an otherwise immaculate room.

One paper in particular sits front and center, but she's not looking at it -- instead she's leaning back in her chair and looking out the window, watching the city.

ISABELLE (O.S.)

Well he's definitely a piece of shit.

Eva spins to find ISABELLE (30s) standing in her doorway, folder tucked under one arm.

ISABELLE

His rhetoric is dangerous, but is he an extremist? I don't know. Seems pretty impotent to me.

She steps forward, hands the material over.

Eva opens it, flips through the papers.

EVA PEREZ

He's amped it up lately. All that potential energy's gotta go kinetic sometime.

ISABELLE

(dryly)

Do you not know the definition of "impotent"?

Eva doesn't quite smile, setting the folder aside.

Isabelle frowns.

ISABELLE (CONT'D)

You ready for this?

EVA PEREZ

(shrugs)

Video interview *and* a feature story? I think the clicks are going to bait themselves, to be honest.

ISABELLE

No, that's not what I meant...

She gestures toward the prominent paper on Eva's desk.

EVA PEREZ

Oh. Yes.

(drops the act)

No.

CHUCK (40s) enters now, two coffees in hand, stopping once he senses the moment.

ISABELLE

You still going to go through with it?

EVA PEREZ

Today's the day.

Chuck's eyes are moving from Isabelle, to Eva, to the paper...

CHUCK

(handing her a coffee)

Here you go.

EVA PEREZ

Thanks.

A beat as Isabelle and Chuck don't move, both of them just watching Eva and waiting.

Finally, she sighs:

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)

Okay.

She leans forward, grabs a pen. Signs the paper.

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)

There. What time is it?

CHUCK

Seven.

EVA PEREZ

His flight's in by now.

(beat)

This is going to be ugly.

Isabelle shrugs acknowledgement of the fact, while Chuck does his best to mix sympathy and support in his expression.

ISABELLE

Matt, or your interview?

That makes Eva smile.

EXT. PEREZ HOME - MORNING

The cab pulls up to a COZY TWO-STORY SUBURBAN HOUSE, bricks and siding and American flags. The quintessential Kansas City family home.

INT. TAXI - MORNING

The driver looks out the window, impressed.

TAXI DRIVER

You live here?

MATT PEREZ

As long as the locks haven't been changed.

TAXI DRIVER

Not exactly on the best of terms, huh?

Matt shoots him a shitty look that goes unseen. Then he notices the butt of a HANDGUN poking out of the console up front.

MATT PEREZ

You always pack heat before winter?

The driver meets his gaze in the rearview.

TAXI DRIVER

Don't worry, it's just for show. To make sure people pay.

Matt nods. Moves in his seat, reaching into his pocket for cash -- the motion reveals his own PISTOL holstered beneath his jacket.

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)

(spotting it)

Were you serious? About your job?

Matt doesn't respond, just hands him the money.

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)

You good at it?

Matt gets out of the car, pauses by the driver's window. But all he offers is:

MATT PEREZ

Take care.

The driver nods, watches Matt head up the walkway.

INT. ENTRYWAY - MORNING

Matt steps into the house, takes a quick scan of the place as he kicks the door shut behind him.

The silence is lonely.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

Matt dries his face with a towel -- he stops when his gaze settles on a bedroom door at the end of the hall. His stare lingers a moment.

SCREAMS outside pull him away to the nearest window, where he searches for the source-

A couple of NEIGHBOR KIDS are having the time of their life on their playset, a LITTLE GIRL and a LITTLE BOY. Shouting and shrieking as children do.

Almost smiling, but not quite, Matt shakes his head, slips his jacket back on.

He passes by that bedroom door, hesitates briefly.

Then makes his way downstairs...

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

The garage door slides up. Matt slips into his Honda Civic, coffee mug in hand.

INT. MATT'S CAR - DAY

Matt backs out, pausing in the driveway while the garage door goes down.

He guzzles coffee and flips the radio dial -- immediately a panicked voice begins sputtering through the speakers:

AM RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
-coming down in funnel clouds or
something stirred up from the
atmosphere-

Matt's eyes dart to the console, listening intently-

MORE SCREAMS catch his attention -- it's the neighbor kids again.

Matt watches the LITTLE GIRL standing on the playset, neck craned up toward the sky as she witnesses something up above, her head cocked with inquisition-

The LITTLE BOY stares with glee at the ground below him while he arcs high above the grass on a SWING-

Then a VORTEX descends with a WHOOSH onto the girl -- gray and swirling, its texture and consistency hard to really make out -- then just as quickly it RIPS UP and AWAY.

Leaving an empty playset behind.

Before the first vortex has fully departed, a second suddenly WHIPS DOWN and SWALLOWS the boy, ripping away with a WHOOMP-

The empty swing loses some force, but keeps swinging.

Matt BOLTS from his car.

EXT. NEIGHBOR BACKYARD - DAY

Matt bounds over the chain link fence and onto the playset, his eyes darting between the sky and the spots the two kids had just been in...

MATT PEREZ

What the hell!?

Innocent cumulous clouds hang sparsely amongst the piercing blue. The rain has long passed. There's nothing else in the sky above him.

Matt rips out his phone, frantically thumbs 911 as he combs the playset for clues.

The call rings.

Squinting at the wood, he finds a fine layer of gray dust -- it's spread out in ripples from where the girl was sucked away.

The call rings.

Now he spots sunlight glinting off of the same dust layered on the seat of the swing.

The call rings.

Matt runs his finger to inspect, easily collects some of the gray material -- it looks like he just wiped the back of a TV that hasn't been cleaned in awhile. The residue just as easily wipes away from his fingers, leaving no trace or streaks behind.

The call rings.

With a final look of confusion, he looks from the empty playset back up to the sky -- before he glances at his phone, realizing that *the call is still ringing*.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

That's not good.

And then it happens -- he sees another VORTEX in the distance.

And another.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Holy shit...

They begin appearing across his entire scope of vision -- all the more frequently near the cluster of downtown skyscrapers on the horizon.

His eyes widen with recognition.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Eva.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

The CAFE bustles with activity - several people chat over coffee, some working on their laptops, others reading their daily paper. Others come and go via the SKYWALK to the building across the street.

Nestled into their own little area, Isabelle monitors her VIDEO CAMERA as it records Eva and her interview subject -- Ted Ramsey.

A small posse of his clavigers watch nearby.

EVA PEREZ

You recently made a series of threatening statements about President Cook, whom you campaigned for last year. What changed your relationship?

Ted looks calm and collected, a smug grin on his face. He's eating this media attention with a spoon.

TED RAMSEY

Mr. Cook has proven himself to be just another tool of a corrupt system.

(MORE)

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

For all of his bluster before the election, he has not lived up to a single promise he made, and has put man's law and man's country before the true Alpha and Omega.

EVA PEREZ

Are you worried that your fanbase-

TED RAMSEY

(correcting)
Congregation.

EVA PEREZ

(not missing a beat)
Are you worried that your congregation may misunderstand your recent comments and take action?

TED RAMSEY

I hope they do.

EVA PEREZ

(baffled)
Excuse...excuse me?

TED RAMSEY

Clavigers hold the keys to salvation, and there are times when showing others the way requires extreme measures.

(beat)

Save a soul, whatever it takes.

Eva hesitates, brow furrowed with uncertainty as to how to respond.

She doesn't have the chance to -- SHOUTS erupt as a VORTEX lashes down from the sky and into the street outside-

Then another vortex appears.

And another.

The atrium empties in a scramble, tables and chairs knocked over, coffee and computers left behind-

Eva and Isabelle stare at the window, wide-eyed. Confused.

Isabelle adjusts the camera, captures the phenomena outside.

Ted slowly stands.

Then he beams.

His entourage rises as well, gathering around him.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
The time has come.

INT. MATT'S CAR - DAY

Speeding along, Matt plugs his phone into the console, activates hands-free mode.

MATT PEREZ
Call Eva's cell.

The call clicks and dials, starts ringing.

Matt drives by a JOGGER running with her GOLDEN RETRIEVER -- but once the car moves past them and we view them through the rear windshield, the Jogger is gone -- gray wisps curl and billow in the air in her place while the dog continues its run.

Alone now.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

We see Eva's phone buzzing on a table, but nobody notices -- because vortexes continue to storm the street outside.

The last of the atrium's crowd disappears into stairwells and hallways.

Freeing herself from her awe, Eva turns to Isabelle.

EVA PEREZ
Izzy, pack it up, let's go.

TED RAMSEY
You're not going anywhere.

Something about his tone is sinister -- it stops them.

EVA PEREZ
What? Why?

TED RAMSEY
I'm going to save you.
(a thought strikes him)
All of you, in fact.

Eva and Isabelle exchange worried looks.

INT. MATT'S CAR - DAY

Flustered as the call goes to voicemail, Matt's message is brief.

MATT PEREZ

Eva, I'm on my way, just stay put!

He tears through the streets, spins the radio volume frantically -- static now building around the announcer's voice.

AM RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

-know the damage so far but it
looks like it's spread all across
the country-

We see Matt's eyes in the rear-view, darting here and there, widening more and more each moment.

The engine ROARS as he lowers his foot, shifts his weight, leans forward in his seat.

The console BUZZES with interference as the report continues:

AM RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I don't know-kind of like tornadoes
or something-but they aren't-

Matt flinches as another vehicle zooms past him, horn blaring an extended HONK of panic.

Now that eerie WHOOSH sound sails out of the radio, audio peaking.

Muffled voices follow:

PRODUCER (O.S.)

He's gone! Oh my-*he's gone!*!

STATION MANAGER (O.S.)

Larry!! What the hell?!

Matt looks up as another vortex whips down onto an oncoming convertible, then rips up and away as the now empty vehicle sails past.

He swerves a bit, watches in the rearview as the convertible continues to tear down the street -- where it soon wrecks, resulting in a violent EXPLOSION.

When Matt's eyes return to the road, he gasps:

MATT PEREZ

Shit!

A vortex laces down from the sky to swallow someone on the sidewalk -- the cloud rips away just as Matt's car would hit it, RESIDUAL WISPS dancing across his windshield.

He grips the wheel tightly, swerves again, navigates through the chaos.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

The whole country?...

Glances at his phone. Makes the decision.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Call Tony.

EXT. KANSAS CITY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

We PULL BACK for an expansive view of the landscape -- where multiple VORTEXES appear and disappear chaotically across our field of vision, spiking down in an inconsistent web all across the entirety of the city.

This has not slowed down.

If anything, they're more frequent and more widespread.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Ted's entourage gathers around him as Isabelle and Eva look on.

He first turns to SCOTT:

TED RAMSEY

Go upstairs, get the other Tribune workers together. Wait for the signal.

Scott nods, rushes off toward the stairs.

Ted turns to PETE.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

Go get the others. Bring them here so we can begin, together.

Pete rushes off.

Now it's JEFF's turn to take orders.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
 Take the building. Floor by floor.
 Lock them all in.

And Jeff's off.

Finally Ted turns to EDDIE and ELLIOT, the last two.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
 The garage. Let anyone who wants
 in, in. And then keep them in.
 (beat)
 We're going to keep them *all* in.

The pair nod at him, set off on their assignment.

The delegation process has taken mere moments, as if they'd anticipated this situation.

Ted turns back to Eva and Isabelle -- just the three of them left alone.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
 Sit down. Make yourselves
 comfortable.

They don't.

He stares at them, vortexes swirling outside the windows.
 Framing him.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
 The cleansing is coming.

EVA PEREZ
 What are you doing?

TED RAMSEY
 Luke chapter 25, verse 27. "At that
 time they will see the Son of Man
 coming in a *cloud* with power and
 great glory."
 (glances back at the
 phenomena behind him)
 And verse 26. "People will faint
 from terror, apprehensive of what
 is coming on the world."

His face creeps into a confident, satisfied look.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
 I know you're afraid. It's natural
 to be afraid at this hour.

INT. MATT'S CAR - DAY

Matt drives through the chaos as he talks to Tony back in DC -- who breathes heavily while running during the call.

MATT PEREZ

You got eyes on Eagle yet, boss?

TONY (O.S.)

I'm working on it, alright? He's in the SITROOM, I'm on my way over there now.

MATT PEREZ

Tony, this is...this is unbelievable.

Reflections of vortexes stream across his windshield...

TONY (O.S.)

Hell, this is DEFCON 1 is what this shit is-

MATT PEREZ

Anybody have intel yet?

TONY (O.S.)

Nah, problem is he's in there with a couple suits that don't know a pistol from the tip of their dick.

MATT PEREZ

Where are the careers?

TONY (O.S.)

Gone, Matt. There's no cavalry left but us-

MATT PEREZ

Did you ask John to-

TONY (O.S.)

Our team too, Matt. Half of 'em in the first thirty seconds. Whoever is doing this knew their targets ahead of time-

MATT PEREZ

Hey, local dispatch didn't pick up, you think I should try a walkie?-

TONY (O.S.)

No, Matt, you're not getting it, they're blown, anybody with a badge or rank is gone already except us-

MATT PEREZ

Okay, I'm heading back as soon as I get-

TONY (O.S.)

No, you're a thousand miles away, Matt, you can't do any good for us right now. We don't know who's behind this yet, stick to your assignment, make sure Ramsey gets the message. He needs to be a cat without claws. Can't have him tossing out threats right and left with a national security crisis underw-

The eerie WHOOSH overtakes his voice on the line, sends it to static for a moment.

We hear his phone SKITTER onto the ground, then there's nothing left to hear but the wind. And even stronger winds in the distance.

MATT PEREZ

Tony? Tony?

(beat)

Tony!!

He smacks the console in anger, shadows pass over him as-

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Matt drives into the city, swerves here and there to avoid several of the abandoned cars littering the streets. Some have doors left hanging open, others simply sit empty and idling.

And still others wrap around light poles and poke out of demolished storefronts -- though none offering the slightest sign of blood or bodies.

Whatever it is, it hit this area already.

Matt forges ahead into the circulatory system of concrete and steel towers before him, all offices and skywalks and parking garages and hotels -- the lot of it clotted by chaos and the remnants thereof.

Though less frequent now, more funnels WHOOSH down and then RIP back up, dotting the streets ahead, sporadically carrying people off.

The herd has been thinned.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Fluorescent lights HUM, casting harsh shadows across the concrete pillars.

Matt pulls into an open space. He glances at the rear view mirror and out the windows, retrieves his pistol from his jacket. Checks the cartridge.

MATT PEREZ

Yeah, quick trip home, it'll be easy...

He slowly gets out of the car, scans the area.

No movement, no one else around.

Satisfied, Matt holsters his weapon, cracks his knuckles. He heads toward the main stairs and elevator.

Suddenly he comes across Eddie and Elliot crouched next to a car, stabbing at the tires with POCKET KNIVES-

Matt notices the deflated tires on the other vehicles nearby. He acts instinctively-

Before they can get to their feet, Matt quickly dishes out a few moves that render Eddie unconscious on the pavement.

He turns immediately to Elliot -- who is on his feet now and able to land a few blows, but then Matt also quickly and efficiently overtakes him.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

(frowning at his KO'ed
assailants)

No offense to the swiss army there,
but you two definitely didn't come
prepared.

He lifts his phone, thinks a moment.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Worth a shot.

He thumbs 911, presses it to his ear. The call rings.

Rings.

And rings.

His shoulders sink.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

I hope you're wrong, Tony.

He pockets his cell, looks over his quarry.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Can't trust you two on your own.

He thinks.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Matt steps back, satisfied with his work. He turns and heads for the elevator.

Eddie and Elliot's heads hang limp over their shoulders, still unconscious -- but now seated on the pavement tied to a concrete pillar.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Ted watches a NEWS REPORT on a wall-mounted television while Eva and Isabelle sit behind him, watching him with narrowed eyes.

EVA PEREZ

(to Ted)

I remember the last time we met.

He does not answer. She probes.

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)

Why did you agree to this interview?

He looks over his shoulder at her, scoffs.

TED RAMSEY

I told you. Even the Tribune will be saved.

ISABELLE

Can we consult a dictionary? I'm not thinking that word means what you think it means.

Ted doesn't answer her -- his phone rings, and he answers it instead.

TED RAMSEY

Yes.

(beat)

What?! Why didn't you get him first?

(beat)

Do you know where he went?

Ted paces back and forth, continuing his tense conversation.

ISABELLE

(quietly, to Eva)

It doesn't make sense.

EVA PEREZ

Yeah, I don't think I want to be saved right now.

Isabelle shakes her head, sorting through her thought.

ISABELLE

Luke chapter 25, verse 28. "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Eva looks over at her. Waits.

ISABELLE (CONT'D)

He said verse 27, then 26. He went backward, not forward.

She meets Eva's gaze now. And then, perplexed at the fact that anyone would even need to state it:

ISABELLE (CONT'D)

You always go forward.

Eva cocks her head, thinks -- then looks at Ted again.

TED RAMSEY

Doesn't matter now. I don't care what you use, just find something.

He freezes when his eyes land on Isabelle's video camera. His gaze drifts back up to the TV again, and his face brightens.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

KC15.

He looks across the street. Sees the logo on the building.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Finish up, then get back up here.
It's nearly time.

He hangs up, glances back at the ladies with a devilish grin before returning his attention to the television, which shifts from the news desk to eyewitness footage-

EXT. VARIOUS - DAY/NIGHT

HANDHELD FOOTAGE of varying qualities and different locations spread out across the world:

SWARMS of VORTEXES strike down at a coastline, interspersed between the boats and docks of a marina-

HORSES gallop across a rural landscape as a VORTEX pops down near the horizon, and then another, the CAMERAPERSON crying out in shock-

VATICAN CITY is packed elbow to elbow as the faithful listen to the POPE speak from his balcony -- all the while a storm of VORTEXES rage inside and outside the courtyard-

INT. NEWS STUDIO - DAY

ANCHORWOMAN GINGER thumbs an IPAD on the news desk, proceeds through her report:

ANCHORWOMAN GINGER
As you can see, the weather weapon attacks are widespread across the globe. The mayor's office and the attorney general are urging everyone to stay indoors, away from possible exposure, as the funnel clouds seem to attack only from the open air. The United Nations has summoned an emergency meeting in New York City to discuss the weapons.

EXT. VARIOUS - DAY

B-ROLL FOOTAGE of a row of NAVY WARSHIPS just off the coast, then GROUNDED AIRPLANES at an eerily still airstrip, then TRAFFIC backed up at border patrol and only getting worse.

ANCHORWOMAN GINGER (V.O.)
 Shortly after the UN began to meet,
 President Cook ordered the closure
 of all borders by air, sea, and
 land until retaliatory actions have
 been carried out.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

B-ROLL of PRESIDENT RICHARD COOK giving a speech from his
 desk:

PRESIDENT RICHARD COOK
 America is strong, stronger than
 you could ever imagine, and we will
 not allow terrorists to hurt us
 like this. I have asked Congress
 for resources and a declaration of
 war. It's shameful, these attacks,
 shameful. But we'll get people on
 this, the best people, and we'll
 declare war and fight back.

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

B-ROLL FOOTAGE of POLITICIANS approaching the steps-

ANCHORWOMAN GINGER (V.O.)
 Meanwhile, nearly every senator and
 representative remains safe and
 secure. The President has also
 called upon Congress to discuss
 options for providing emergency
 services throughout the country, as
 healthcare and law enforcement have
 been completely wiped out at the
 local and federal levels.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CUBICLE SEA - DAY

Matt slips by row after row of cubicles, no one else in sight
 along the way, no sounds but white noise from the HVAC
 system.

He turns a corner, comes to a row of OFFICES.

INT. EVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt scans the room. Spots Eva's purse by the wall, but
 nothing else of note except the papers on her desk.

He moves closer, his eyes beginning to settle on the prominent one on top of the pile-

SHOUTS from the hall catch his attention -- he immediately spins, rushes toward the source.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MEETING ROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

A long and elegant meeting table stretches the length of the floor, two 60" televisions hang on the walls at each end, and the outer wall is composed entirely of WINDOWS overlooking the city below. It's a flashy space. Even the chairs are the expensive kind.

A crowd of TRIBUNE EMPLOYEES cower here, huddling together as Scott waves a KITCHEN KNIFE in the air at them.

Chuck and RICHARD (30s) stand a little closer to their intruder, arms out as they attempt to talk him down.

SCOTT
I said *sit down!*

CHUCK
Hold on, put the knife down and we'll-

Scott points the knife at him, jabs it threateningly.

SCOTT
Shut up! Sit down, and wait your turn!

RICHARD
Our turn for what?

SCOTT
I'll show you the door-

Matt appears behind him, and with one sweeping kick and a few swift movements of the arm he takes the knife away and drops Scott to the ground-

SCOTT (CONT'D)
What are you doing?!

Matt tosses the weapon aside, scoops Scott up and SLAMS his head against the table.

MATT PEREZ
I don't think you should be playing with sharp objects, buddy.

Dazed, Scott slumps back onto the floor, cradles his head in his hands. Blood seeps from his nose.

Richard grabs a wooden chair from the corner, offers it up for the incapacitated Scott -- Matt declines it.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
Physics, man. That'll snap with
enough force on it.

Richard gives him a puzzled look.

Matt gestures toward one of the more expensive wheeled chairs. He picks up Scott and plops him into it.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
I need rope. Something to tie him
down.

A few employees nod and disappear into the office, quickly returning with some rope.

Scott's head sags as he sits crumpled in the chair, struggling to come out of his daze.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
(to Scott)
I hope this isn't your day job.

RICHARD
(in awe)
Bro! You're like, his worst
nightmare.

Matt turns to him.

MATT PEREZ
Finish that for me.

Richard nods, turns his attention to the rope.

CHUCK
(to Matt, standoffish)
Why are you here?

Matt scans the room, frowns.

MATT PEREZ
Where's Eva?

CHUCK
She doesn't want you here.

MATT PEREZ
 (dryly, dismissively)
 Have you seen what's going on
 outside? I kind of think she'll be
 okay with it.

Chuck fumes.

CHUCK
 She's divorcing you. She's got the
 paperwork signed, it's on her desk.

He stares down Matt -- who stares right back, then shrugs,
 bemused.

MATT PEREZ
 Hasn't happened yet.

Looks past him toward Scott, who is blinking repeatedly in
 his captivity.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
 You trying to pick a fight, Chuck?

Chuck follows his gaze. Shifts his weight, demurs.

After a moment, sheepishly:

CHUCK
 She was downstairs for an
 interview, but hasn't come back
 yet.
 (glancing outside)
 It was supposed to be Ted Ramsey
 day.

Matt's face goes white -- then his eyes dart back to Scott.

MATT PEREZ
 My job to make sure it isn't.

JOY (O.S.)
 Oh my-look!! The livestream!

Matt spins, finds JOY (late 20's) in front of the television
 -- watching a live feed from Isabelle's camera.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Ted stares into the camera with a piercing gaze. Unsettling,
 though it isn't clear why until the words start coming.

TED RAMSEY

Brothers and sisters! The clavigers
are here to show you the door. To
show you the light, and the way.

(beat)

You need the key to salvation, and
we bear it.

He steps backward, begins to pace in circles -- revealing
Isabelle tied down in a chair behind him.

She shakes a bit as her eyes follow Ted -- because he's now
carrying a LARGE CARVING KNIFE, turning the handle over and
over in his hand.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

We are the blessed servants of the
Alpha and Omega, here to usher in
everlasting life to all who seek
redemption for their worthless
ways.

He stops, looks at Isabelle.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

Do you? Seek redemption?

(off her silence)

The ultimate sacrifice was made in
your name-

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Matt clenches his fists in anger.

The others stare in horror.

MATT PEREZ

You said they're on the second
floor?

CHUCK

Yeah...

Matt starts for the door -- Scott's voice stops him.

SCOTT

You can't stop it.

Matt spins toward him, follows his gaze back to the TV.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

The time has come.

Matt knows it's true. He can't get down there fast enough.

But then his eyes narrow, and he stalks toward Scott.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Ted leans in close to Isabelle, almost growling at her:

TED RAMSEY

But you did not deserve it. You *do*
not deserve it.

He looks toward us again, raises the knife.

Isabelle's eyes lock on to it.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

So humble yourselves, and beg for
forgiveness. You must be saved.

ISABELLE

Please...

TED RAMSEY

That's more like it.

In a swift motion he swings it into her gut -- her scream
echoes off the walls as he twists the weapon, then pulls
back.

After a moment, her head falls limply forward. Blood oozes
out of her.

Ted straightens, retrieves a handkerchief from his pocket,
wipes the blade clean. Steps up next to the camera, adjusting
it.

The view shifts slightly -- revealing a horrified Eva tied to
a chair right next to Isabelle's.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

Your turn.

He raises the knife again-

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Kneeling on the floor, Matt finishes tying a knot around the
table leg -- and seeing what's happening on screen, he rolls
onto his back, drawing his pistol-

Points it past Scott -- BLAM BLAM BLAM -- the bullets tear
through the glass!

RICHARD

You've got a *fucking* gun?!

Matt rolls once more, this time to his feet, then charges at Scott -- shoving him through the weakened window!

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Scott screams as his chair sails down through the air -- until the rope tying it up to the table runs taut.

Scott swings up against the side of the building-

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Loud THUDS against the glass distract Ted from his next sacrifice -- long enough for Eva to HEADBUTT him-

The force sends Ted backward onto his ass, still staring dumbfounded at the sight of Scott hanging in a chair outside the building.

Eva pushes up off the floor, launches herself -- chair and all -- right onto Ted, who groans under the weight-

She rolls to the side, gets her hands on the knife and starts to free herself-

Ted rolls the other way, the wind knocked out of him and struggling to recover-

TED RAMSEY

What in the name of-

On her feet, Eva quickly turns to the incapacitated Ted and gives him a good kick across the chest.

EVA PEREZ

Freedom rings, asshole!

She backs away, rushes out of the room.

Ted winces, groans on the ground.

Isabelle's camera is still fixed on him.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Matt watches Eva's escape on the TV, smiles as it plays out.

CHUCK

(to Matt)

What the hell is wrong with you?!

Richard steps toward the ledge, peers down at Scott below.

Chuck yanks him back, shoves him toward the door.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Everybody out! We have to get out
of here and shut the door-

MATT PEREZ
Why?

CHUCK
The clouds can only reach us from
the outside, they've been saying it
all morning on the news.

Chuck turns toward the window, fearful.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
You just exposed us.

He turns back -- but Matt's gone.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
(fuming)
Where did...?

Shakes his head, motions to the others.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's go, let's go...

They retreat into the cubicle sea, pulling the meeting room
door shut behind them.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - STAIRWELL - DAY

Eva rushes up the stairs, two at a time as she goes -- until
she turns onto a landing and freezes.

Her husband stands right in front of her, just a few steps
up.

EVA PEREZ
Matt?

MATT PEREZ
Nice getaway, hun.

EVA PEREZ
What are you doing here?

MATT PEREZ
Came to join the party.

She frowns at him, appalled.

EVA PEREZ
Isabelle is dead, Matt.

He steps down onto the landing with her.

MATT PEREZ
You should never have sat down with
that guy, I've been telling you for
months that he's dangerous and you
just wouldn't listen-

She moves up onto the next step above him.

EVA PEREZ
(indignant)
I thought it was all talk, and I
have a job to do-

MATT PEREZ
Yeah well so do I-

His trails off suddenly as he remembers Ted is alone
downstairs -- and then he takes off.

EVA PEREZ
(baffled and pissed)
Matt?! Matt!!

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Matt charges out of the stairwell, gun raised and ready -- he
moves into the room, but it's empty.

Ted's gone.

Frowning, Matt sweeps the room quickly, finds nothing of
note.

SCOTT
(muffled)
Help! Someone help me!

Matt watches Scott hanging there a moment, cocks his head.

Scott glares, then breaks into a devilish grin. His eyes
flash past Matt for just a second.

It's enough to tip Matt off -- he ducks quickly, barely
dodges Jeff's punch-

Jeff's fist CRACKS against the window and he yelps before
kicking Matt to the side -- Matt recovers, smacks his
attacker right on the wounded hand-

As Jeff reacts to the pain, Matt sweeps his legs out from under him, corrals him in a headlock.

MATT PEREZ
Where'd you come from, little fella?

JEFF
You are unworthy.

MATT PEREZ
You're not the first person to tell me that, you know? I'm starting to think there may be something to it.

JEFF
My master will show you the way, even if I can't. He's the chosen one.

MATT PEREZ
Speaking of Teddy bear, where is he? I've got a message for him.

JEFF
He'll return soon. And when he does...

Matt surveys the room, swings Jeff around -- Jeff chokes a bit in his grip.

MATT PEREZ
(eyes landing on
Isabelle's camera)
I'd rather give it to him now.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CUBICLE SEA - DAY

The office workers congregate in a set of cubicles, anxiously murmuring amongst themselves -- until Eva rounds the corner to join them.

Chuck and Joy rush to her side.

JOY
Eva! Oh my-

CHUCK
Are you okay?!

EVA PEREZ
Yes, yes-

JOY

We saw the feed, the livestream-

EVA PEREZ

Did that go out of the building? Or was it just live internally?

RICHARD

That was live for the world to see. Four hundred thousand views and climbing...

Horrified, Eva sits down a moment.

CHUCK

You sure you're okay?

EVA PEREZ

Yes, I'm fine...just glad that's over-

The TVs throughout the room flicker with noise and movement on screen.

The feed from downstairs is still active: Matt stands front and center holding Jeff in his grip while Scott dangles outside behind them.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Matt stares at us. Icy, and firm.

MATT PEREZ

Hi.

(beat)

So Ted. I've been meaning to give you a call.

(smirks slightly)

Thought I'd pay you a visit instead.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CUBICLE SEA - DAY

Eva's shoulders sink as she watches the screen.

EVA PEREZ

Oh no.

The others look from her to the television, confused and alarmed.

CHUCK

What the hell is he doing?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Jeff struggles. Matt sharply elbows him in the abdomen.

Scott begins SMACKING the window as attempted distraction, throwing in a few muffled shouts for good measure.

MATT PEREZ

(talking over the noise)

Seems like you're trying to take hostages so you can finally be the murderer you've always wanted.

(beat)

Well, your guys are pretty fresh, so while I'm here I thought I'd provide some mentoring.

He squeezes Jeff deeper into his headlock, smiles.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

I've got a lesson for you too, if you're in a mood to be shown the way.

Raises his gun into view.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Come get your boys, before I save *them*.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CUBICLE SEA - DAY

Eva closes her eyes -- because dammit, he went there.

The others panic:

JOY

Is he going to murder that man?!

CHUCK

That asshole's going to get us all killed!

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Matt's eyes dart up from the camera as dozens of ARMED CLAVIGERS swarm into the atrium from the main stairwell-

JEFF

I am saved.

Several guns are raised and pointed in Matt and Jeff's direction-

MATT PEREZ

Oh shit.

He releases Jeff and leaps aside just as the bullets begin to fly at them -- Jeff takes several of them, flying backward in a bloodied mess.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CUBICLE SEA - DAY

The feed suddenly goes dead.

Eva and the others stiffen.

RICHARD

Well that's not good.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Matt crawls across the floor as the large window behind him SHATTERS.

The hail of bullets cuts Scott's anguished cries short -- his body is shoved forcefully back into the air by the impacts, swinging dead weight.

Matt climbs to his feet, streaks toward the cafe counter and leaps over it.

More shots hit the glass displays, broken shards fall all over him.

Peering through the chaos a moment, Matt spots Ted amidst his army -- now wearing a WHITE ROBE, clearly distinguishing his status from the more banal clothing of his flock.

Out of options, Matt retreats, crawling through a doorway into the CAFE KITCHEN in back.

Ted signals for three of his clavigers to close in.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CAFE KITCHEN - DAY

Matt surveys the space as he passes through, spots two GAS STOVES.

MATT PEREZ

(baffled)

Who cooks with gas in a high rise?

Then he stops. Turns back to them as a thought hits him.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Hell, this guy does.

He spins the dials on as far as they'll go. Opens the oven doors, leaves them that way as he slips into the back stairwell.

Standing in the threshold there, he holsters his weapon.

Waiting.

Moments later, the three clavigers stalk into the room, guns drawn, turning the corner and pausing right in front of the opened ovens -- which they don't see, because they're all staring at Matt.

He grins just as the three pull their triggers and their gunshots ignite the gas -- ENGULFING them in flames and sending an EXPLOSION rocking through the kitchen-

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - BACK STAIRWELL - DAY

Matt shoves the door closed as the explosion takes place -- but the force rips it off of its hinges and into the stairwell, sending Matt reeling.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

The BOOM from the explosion shakes the room, the wall to the cafe CRACKS as fire and smoke begin to spew out of the doorway.

Ted watches. Smiles.

After a moment, he turns to the rest of his men.

TED RAMSEY
Gather round, gather round.
(beat)
There is work to be done.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CUBICLE SEA - DAY

Eva and her coworkers hear the RUMBLE of the explosion downstairs.

EVA PEREZ
He's good at blowing shit up, I'll
give him that.

CHUCK
Great. Now they're taking the
building, thanks to your husband.

The last word comes with particular disdain. Eva notices the sentiment, frowns as she dials Matt's number on her phone, presses it to her ear.

EVA PEREZ

They would have anyway. Ted sent
for them before Matt even got here.

Her call goes straight to voicemail.

JOY

So now what?

Chuck thumbs through the news on his phone, gasps.

CHUCK

New York just had another wave. The
UN's gone.

(to Joy)

Now? We pray.

EVA PEREZ

No, we need to get everyone out of
the building.

RICHARD

How the hell are we gonna do that?

EVA PEREZ

I don't know, but all those floors
above us have people just like us
up there.

JOY

So you're saying we go floor by
floor and warn them?

EVA PEREZ

(nodding)

And band together. There are more
offices in this building than any
other downtown.

(beat)

He's got an entire building of
targets above him, with no way out,
and no help coming.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - BACK STAIRWELL - DAY

Coughing on the concrete, Matt groans, rolls onto his back.
Winces.

After staring at the ceiling for a moment, he pulls himself
up.

MATT PEREZ

Gonna need more explosions...

He pulls his cell phone from his pocket -- it's totally smashed.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
Shatterproof, my ass.

Glances at the black smoke still billowing out of the kitchen, then turns, and heads down the stairs.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - FIRST FLOOR LOBBY - DAY

Pete, one of Ted's initial clavigers, paces back and forth in front of a long bank of entry doors with a large REVOLVING DOOR in the center. The street outside is eerily still.

Matt peeks into the lobby -- spots Pete there and starts to move toward him, but stops when a DISTRAUGHT COUPLE appears outside.

Pete lets them in.

DISTRAUGHT MAN
Thank you so much-

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN
Are you the only one left?

PETE
No, no, we have hundreds in the building still.
(gestures skyward)
Upstairs. Go on up, there's a group waiting in the second floor coffee place.

They nod, turn to go -- but Matt sprints past them and slams Pete against the glass doors, stunning him briefly before a few blows are exchanged -- then Matt overtakes him and sends him to the floor, unconscious.

Now the couple is distraught again.

DISTRAUGHT MAN
What the-?!

MATT PEREZ
You guys gotta get out of here, there are terrorists in the building.

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN
What?!

MATT PEREZ
Find someplace else, you'll be
safer on another street. Go!

He opens a door, points outside -- they hesitate, so he
flashes his pistol -- that gets them moving.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
Go!

DISTRAUGHT MAN
We're calling the cops!

MATT PEREZ
(dryly)
Please, yes, cops would be great!
Let me know how that goes!

As he watches them disappear down the street, he drags Pete
into the central revolving door, blocks him inside it.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
Stay.

Scanning the lobby, he spots something -- the building's
SECURITY OFFICE.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY

Ted addresses his army of clavigers.

TED RAMSEY
Split up. Take the building, floor
by floor. They should be contained
already, but now make it certain.
Secure them. All of them.
(beat)
Our moment comes at five o'clock.
This is what we've trained for.
This is what we've waited for. This
is what we've prayed for.
(beat)
Prepare the harvest.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Matt surveys a dozen or so video monitors hanging above a
large desk -- each shows a different SECURITY CAMERA FEED
from somewhere in the building. He's just witnessed Ted's
speech.

MATT PEREZ
Five o'clock?

His eyes dance from one screen to the next.

It's clear from most of them: there are tons of people still hiding in this building on the higher floors.

On one screen: Scott still hangs outside the empty second floor atrium.

On others: The clavigers start to flood the passageways from the second floor on up.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Where are you going, Teddy, you son
of a bitch?...

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CUBICLE SEA - DAY

Eva addresses her coworkers, laying out a plan.

EVA PEREZ

Everybody good? We'll split up. And
if we hurry we might be able to-

Everyone jumps as GUNSHOTS sound from somewhere in the lobby. Approaching footsteps quickly follow.

CHUCK

Oh shit...

Eddie appears, points his HANDGUN at the group.

EDDIE

Down on your knees, all of you!

Some of the group proceeds to kneel, others hesitate -- including Eva.

EVA PEREZ

Why?

Eddie trains his weapon on her.

EDDIE

What?

EVA PEREZ

Why should we do what you say? Why
get down on our knees?

EDDIE

To pray, because you're about to be
saved.

He cocks his gun--

Chuck charges at him first, pushes the weapon to the side as a single SHOT tears into desks and wall.

Richard joins the fray, the two of them ganging up on Eddie to restrain him-

He puts up a fight though, manages to knock Chuck back against a copier and Richard to the floor-

Eddie jumps onto Richard, crouches over him and shoves the barrel of the weapon into his neck.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Give thanks. It's not five yet, but you're about to get your turn early.

MATT PEREZ (O.S.)

After you, I insist.

Confused, Eddie turns just in time to take two bullets to the chest as Matt fires the last rounds from his gun-

Eddie screams, drops his weapon, stares at the blood running over his hands.

As Matt approaches, Eddie rallies and lunges forward -- but Matt swings and pistolwhips his enemy in the back of the head.

Eddie goes down for good.

Matt catches his breath, considers his empty weapon before tossing it aside.

Chuck helps Richard to his feet, but everyone is silent, staring at Matt as he leans down and takes Eddie's gun.

MATT PEREZ

(dryly, off their silence)
Oh don't worry, you're welcome.
Just doing my job.
(to Eva)
You okay?

CHUCK

Yeah, she's okay, Matt. Leave us alone.

MATT PEREZ

Excuse me?

CHUCK

Just give us some space.

MATT PEREZ

Is there a problem here? I thought we covered this-

CHUCK

Yes, the problem is you showing up here and shooting up the place, getting people killed-

EVA PEREZ

Chuck-

MATT PEREZ

I'm trying to help-

CHUCK

Isabelle's dead because of you, and now they're after us because you keep murdering them.

MATT PEREZ

They do just keep on coming, gotta give them that.

Chuck's fuming now.

CHUCK

They might have left the building and left us all alone if it hadn't been for you-

EVA PEREZ

Chuck! That's not true, I was there-

He ignores her, stares down Matt.

MATT PEREZ

Don't kid yourself, Chuck-

CHUCK

If we die today, it's going to be your fault.

MATT PEREZ

We'll see about that.

He gestures toward Eddie's body.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Far as I can tell, I'm the only thing standing between you and a premature meeting with your maker.

(MORE)

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

(beat)

For now.

That shuts Chuck up.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Don't you see what's happening?

(beat)

Look around you, Chuck. It's the
end of the world.

Matt brushes past him, heads toward the meeting room.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

We need to move.

Chuck hesitates, frowns a moment as the others follow Matt.

CHUCK

It's the...what?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MEETING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The group bunches near the door, eying the broken window suspiciously. Matt leans out of it, seemingly unaffected, looking out at the street below.

EVA PEREZ

What about the others?

MATT PEREZ

Not now.

His firmness, his brevity -- it results in sudden silence.

After a moment, stepping forward into the room:

EVA PEREZ

You want us to just leave them here
with these guys?

MATT PEREZ

Yes.

EVA PEREZ

Matt...

MATT PEREZ

How many people are in this
building?

JOY

Hell, I don't know. Hundreds.

MATT PEREZ

Right. Plenty of targets, and no cops.

JOY

Okay...

MATT PEREZ

Sheep for the wolves. Not everyone makes it.

(beat)

But you still can.

EVA PEREZ

Where do we go?

He points. They look.

The SKYWALK.

RICHARD

Great. How do we get down there without those guys noticing?

MATT PEREZ

Same way I just got up here unnoticed.

JOY

How *did* you get up here?

Matt glances down at the rope draped across the floor holding Scott and the chair outside, then grimly looks at them all again.

MATT PEREZ

You're not gonna like it.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MEETING ROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Matt leans out of the broken window on the second floor, one foot on the rope.

Chuck and Eva stand by, watching and waiting their turn.

Below them, the rest of Eva's coworkers hang outside the building, shimmying down the line to the broken window in the atrium.

It's slow going.

MATT PEREZ

(as Eva gets ready to
descend)

Be careful. Hurry once you're in
the skywalk.

EVA PEREZ

(puzzled)

Aren't you coming with us?

MATT PEREZ

(shakes his head)

I'm going to get the others, on the
higher floors.

EVA PEREZ

You just said we had to leave
them!?

MATT PEREZ

And I'm going to take care of Ted.

EVA PEREZ

Really? You made your point to him.
This isn't about your job anymore.

MATT PEREZ

I know that. It's about the people
he'll kill if I don't stop him.

EVA PEREZ

Well then we'll come with you, we
can help.

MATT PEREZ

No, I want you out of here. *I'll*
take care of this.

EVA PEREZ

Always protecting everybody else.
Some things never change.

(beat)

You know, I almost thought you came
back for me...

MATT PEREZ

I did.

EVA PEREZ

And now you're leaving me again.

MATT PEREZ

You're the one signing papers.

She shakes her head, exasperated.

EVA PEREZ
When did we lose this?

MATT PEREZ
Eva, I told you I wanted to do something more, something bigger. I thought the secret service was it. But I think *this* is. Right now.

She softens.

EVA PEREZ
Right now, in the middle of all of this, I was actually kind of hoping you'd choose me.

She gives him a sad smile, then starts her climb.

Chuck steps up next to him.

CHUCK
(sheepish)
I'll keep an eye on her.

Matt raises an eyebrow.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
But not, not like that. You were right. I kind of lost my shit before.
(shrugs)
Besides, she's clearly not through with you.

Matt gives him the same look, but with a little less eyebrow. More curiosity.

Chuck points toward the skywalk below.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
It'll be safe to cross, right?

BLAM BLAM BLAM -- gunshots ring out and zip by them as they both instinctively duck-

Chuck scrambles onto the floor, grabs the rope and lunges over the edge to start climbing down.

Matt helps him get out, then straightens as he watches Elliot rush through the room at him-

ELLIOT
What are you doing?!

MATT PEREZ
It's, uh, a rope test. You know-

Elliot lunges. Matt dodges, evades the hit-

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
Physics!

He rushes Elliot, knocks the pistol away. Their combat eventually leads to the floor, with Elliot on top of Matt and his hands around his throat.

Struggling to stay conscious, Matt catches movement in his peripheral vision -- a vortex suddenly SWOOPS in from the sky and Joy is sucked away in an instant, disappearing in a swirling wind of gray flecks as screams sound below-

Elliot watches in awe, his grip still held fast around Matt's neck-

Desperate, Matt does the only thing he can -- he rolls, pulling Elliot with him.

They tumble freely out the window-

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Matt and Elliot each grab onto the rope in different spots -- Eva is the only one remaining on the line below them.

She clings to the rope as it suddenly spins, swinging out from the building.

MATT PEREZ
Eva!

Eva loses her grip, slips down onto Scott and the chair-

EVA PEREZ
Oh no!

MATT PEREZ
Hold on!

Elliot slides down onto Matt, landing hard blows against him.

Matt flails backward, swings himself back up to latch onto Elliot, quickly jabbing him in the gut before scrambling up to overtake him on the line.

Looking down, Matt meets Eva's gaze -- he exchanges a knowing look with her.

She anxiously scurries down the rope, starts to sway her body back and forth, setting off a swinging motion.

ELLIOT

Hey! Stop it! Hey!!

Elliot reaches for Matt, pulls at his feet -- but Matt fends him off, the line twirling in the air as the three swing back and forth, away and toward the building, over and over-

And then Eva leaps.

The jump seems like an eternity, but finally she lands safely inside the atrium.

Matt yanks a POCKETKNIFE out of his pants, saws at the rope with it -- the cords quickly fray from the weight and strain, giving way with a SNAP-

He hangs on to the remaining line, but Elliot tumbles to the pavement below with a CRUNCH.

MATT PEREZ

I take back what I said about the
swiss army.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As Richard, Chuck, and the other coworkers catch their breath, Eva approaches the window, peers outside.

EVA PEREZ

He's really going.

Richard follows her gaze.

And then we see it -- Matt has climbed back up the rope, disappearing into the building above them.

RICHARD

That dude's my hero.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - UPPER FLOOR HALLWAY/LOBBY - DAY

Matt slips into the hall, moves stealthily from one doorway to another, constantly seeking cover.

At the far end, Ted Ramsey stares at a set of ORNATE GLASS DOORS -- intricate font reveals it's some kind of INVESTMENT FIRM'S OFFICE inside.

Now the claviger from the first floor doors, Pete, comes out of the office and approaches Ted.

Matt huddles a moment, watching. Assessing.

PETE

Secured.

(beat, then disappointed)

I had to save a few to make sure
the others knew the gift they will
be given...

TED RAMSEY

Good. Better to ensure cooperation.
"The harvest is plentiful, but the
workers are few."

PETE

Yes, sir.

TED RAMSEY

The time is coming soon.

At that, Matt can't help but spring to his feet and rush down the corridor-

Pete sees him coming, anger overtaking his face as he raises a PISTOL -- but Matt's there too quickly, smacking the weapon aside and spinning Pete around to slam his head against the wall-

Drywall crumbles underneath the force, and Pete falls to the floor unconscious.

Ted smiles as Matt lifts his own weapon, gently presses the muzzle into the creep's neck.

MATT PEREZ

(off Pete)

Second time I've done that to him
today. You give these guys hazard
pay?

TED RAMSEY

Feel free to shoot.

MATT PEREZ

Why exactly shouldn't I? You
murdered Isabelle.

(baffled)

And that was *after* you threatened
the President.

TED RAMSEY

He doesn't matter. She didn't matter. Salvation matters. I'm here til the end.

Matt lowers the gun slightly, irritated more than anything.

MATT PEREZ

You really think broadcasting murder is going to convert people?

TED RAMSEY

I saved her.

MATT PEREZ

You killed her.

TED RAMSEY

I nudged. But she wasn't worthy.

MATT PEREZ

Excuse me?

TED RAMSEY

That's why she wasn't taken. If I hadn't saved her, she would be lost.

MATT PEREZ

(disgusted)

Seriously? We have to do this dance?

TED RAMSEY

(shrugs)

A servant's work is never done.

MATT PEREZ

Hey, I hear ya.

TED RAMSEY

(off the weapon)

Go ahead. Shoot me with it.

MATT PEREZ

No, see, you misunderstand. I'm going to *hit* you with it.

That's what gets Ted's malevolent smile to falter a bit.

Matt THWACKS him across the face-

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - INVESTMENT FIRM'S OFFICE - DAY -
MOMENTS LATER

Matt pushes Ted through a cushy office, poking the gun into his back as they go.

They pass by a large conference room filled with INVESTMENT WORKERS huddled together.

INVESTMENT WORKER #1
We're about to launch nukes at
China, he thinks they did it, they
have the most people left-

INVESTMENT WORKER #2
Well of course we do, 20% of the
world's population lives in China,
that fucking idiot's going to get
the rest of us killed!

INVESTMENT WORKER #1
(spotting Matt and Ted)
Hey, what are you doing?!

MATT PEREZ
It's alright, it's alright-

He shoves Ted into an ARMCHAIR in front of a large window --
with Ted's back to the glass.

The office workers file out of the conference room, swarm
around them.

Matt keeps his gun trained on Ted, calmly lifts the other
hand.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
(to the crowd)
Give me a minute.

The looks being exchanged make it clear not everyone wants
to, but nobody approaches him.

So he turns his attention to Ted.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
How many men do you have in the
building?

TED RAMSEY
"I will give you shepherds after my
own heart, who will feed you on
knowledge and understanding."

Matt decks him across the face.

MATT PEREZ
Where are they?! Every floor?!
(punches Ted again)
Every hallway?!

TED RAMSEY
The sheep have seen the wolf.

He smiles through the blood running from his nose.

Matt glances around them, feels the tension rise as he makes eye contact with several of the people watching.

When he returns his gaze to Ted, it's with renewed ferocity -- and it comes with another fist to the face.

INT. SKYWALK - DAY

With a grating SCREECH, Eva and Richard pry open the fire doors and peek into the walkway, Chuck and the other Tribune workers waiting behind them.

EVA PEREZ
Be quick, and stay low.

The group hesitates in the threshold, staring out at the street below -- the cars and wreckage are still there, but no movement or activity.

They scurry into the skywalk.

As they move through the passage, Eva notices that one of her coworkers, MICHELLE (40s), looks especially nervous.

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)
(matching her pace)
You okay?

MICHELLE
Yeah, just-
(her eyes land on
something outside we
don't see)
Oh shit.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - INVESTMENT FIRM'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt yanks a bloodied Ted upright, grasping Ted's shirt with one hand and working the bruised knuckles of his free one.

TED RAMSEY

(chortling)

You've already lost. Everything is happening as willed. Five o'clock is nearly here.

MATT PEREZ

You keep talking about that. What happens then? What's your plan?!

Ted's malevolent chuckling ceases, his expression turns deadly serious.

TED RAMSEY

"I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing."

Matt glares -- but his anger turns to shock as an EXPLOSION rumbles outside.

INT. SKYWALK - DAY

The Tribune group spins wildly in the wake of the first blast, shaken and struggling to keep their balance-

We see clavigers now lining the street on either side of the skywalk -- they throw small HOMEMADE BOMBS up at the structure.

There are several more THUDS on the roof, and then:

EVA PEREZ

Brace yourselves!

The series of ensuing BOOMS is deafening, sending several people to the floor and destroying a few spots along the walkway.

CHUCK

Where did they come from?! *Where the hell did they come from?!*

Eva pushes him, points toward the building on the other side.

EVA PEREZ

Move! Move!

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - INVESTMENT FIRM'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt rushes past Ted, presses against the window, straining to see down into the street below.

THROUGH MATT'S POV we watch another set of BOOMS knock a section of the walkway loose -- then the platform is swinging to the side as gravity tears it off of the larger structure-

Matt watches in horror as it crumbles, the broken piece swinging and smashing into cars below, a few CAR ALARMS sounding as dust billows into the air-

INT. SKYWALK - DAY

On the floor, Richard looks up -- where he sees Eva get knocked off her feet up ahead.

RICHARD

Eva!

Michelle appears at her side, taking Eva's hand and helping her up-

Everyone ducks as gunshots ring out, a few bullets lacing holes through the windows-

Enough of an opening so that a lone VORTEX can burst through, scattering bits of glass across the floor as it scoops in, taking hold of Michelle -- and then RIPPING OUT and AWAY-

EVA PEREZ

Michelle!

Nearly to her feet, Eva stumbles at the sudden loss of support.

Richard squints, tries to make sense of what he's just seen -- but there's no time, and Chuck's suddenly at his side, pulling him to his feet before they both charge toward Eva and the others up ahead-

RICHARD

I owe you one, bro!

CHUCK

Let's just make it, okay?

Another BOOM sounds, shaking the platform and throwing shrapnel and debris all over them -- Chuck lands on top of Richard as a huge crack forms next to them...

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - INVESTMENT FIRM'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt pounds against the glass, helpless as he watches the skywalk being torn apart, the clavigers swarming around it in the street.

MATT PEREZ
Please, please, make it!
(willing it)
Make it.

INT. SKYWALK - DAY

Even after a moment has passed, Chuck stays motionless on top of Richard, a pained look on his face, their eyes inches apart.

RICHARD
Chuck?...

Uncertain, he pushes Chuck up off of him -- Chuck yelps, Richard notices the gashes across his body -- and the glass shards sticking out of his back and neck.

Gently, Richard attempts to push him to the side, but Chuck's cries of pain stop him from doing so.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
It's okay, Chuck, you're gonna be
okay-

Chuck makes eye contact with him for a split second-

CHUCK
I know-

Richard watches in terror as a vortex suddenly WHOOSHES down out of the sky and envelopes Chuck before RIPPING UP and AWAY in an instant-

Richard recoils, crying out, wiping himself off as bits of gray matter wisp across his arms-

RICHARD
No, no!!!

He flails as the walkway cracks further -- the far end falls to the ground -- forming a RAMP of sorts from the street up to the skywalk.

EVA PEREZ
Richard!

Clavigers swarm up it, the onslaught leaping at Richard first-

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - INVESTMENT FIRM'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt stares breathlessly as Ted's men rush into what remains of the skywalk -- then his shoulders slump, and his forehead falls forward to rest against the window.

MATT PEREZ

So close.

TED RAMSEY

They will cross the threshold.

We see a reflection in the window next to Matt -- Pete has quietly approached him.

Ted smiles.

Matt sees it, his eyes widen -- he spins just in time to take a nasty hit across the face and head and we-

SMASH TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - SMALL STUDIO - DAY

Matt wakes in an eerie still and silence. He blinks as two lights come into focus, both shining harshly into his face from a close range.

When he attempts to shield his eyes, he can't -- he realizes he can't move at all.

He's tied down to a wooden chair, and there's nothing helpful within reach. He's all alone in a bare room with the spotlights beating down on him.

MATT PEREZ

Damn.

TED RAMSEY (O.S.)

You will be free!

Matt looks up, finds Ted stepping out of the darkness and into view.

TED RAMSEY

But first you must give glory and admit your powerlessness. Embrace the healing power of submission. Let go, and be taken over.

MATT PEREZ

Maybe you missed it, but I wasn't quite done threatening you yet.

TED RAMSEY

Cook sent his servants to do his dirty work?

MATT PEREZ

I offered, as a matter of fact.

TED RAMSEY

Will you ask for forgiveness?

MATT PEREZ

I still feel pretty good about it, actually.

(off Ted's raised eyebrow)

Yeah, this isn't gonna end well for you.

Ted doesn't flinch. Instead, he actually smirks.

TED RAMSEY

I must admit, it was odd that you walked right into my hands.

MATT PEREZ

I...what?

TED RAMSEY

You should know that your help was greatly appreciated by my clavigers.

(off Matt's confusion)

Your wife's stroll across the skywalk.

MATT PEREZ

Where is she?

TED RAMSEY

I couldn't have asked for anything more perfect. A show of deadly force - right in plain view of every office, on every floor, up to the top of that building? The sheep were watching, and they were terrified.

(beat)

And we are now having no trouble keeping them safely in their pens until their time comes.

MATT PEREZ

You *wanted* them to take the skywalk?

TED RAMSEY

Well no, that was just providence. I *wanted* cameras. Lots and lots of cameras.

Now Matt blinks, looks past Ted, sees that there are two shadows next to each of the lights -- two large STUDIO CAMERAS.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

(shaking his head in disdain)

You are weak, and feeble, and blind.

MATT PEREZ

Doesn't help that you only gave me the two lights to work with.

TED RAMSEY

(sneering)

You do not deserve salvation, and yet - you shall be shown the way. Just as the rest.

MATT PEREZ

Where *are* the others? Where's Eva?

TED RAMSEY

The hour is at hand. The eyes of every nation will be on us, so we must tend to the entire field.

He turns, takes a few steps into the darkness. A door opens and Ted hesitates in the threshold, silhouetted by the light spilling in from the hallway.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

You will be made example of, and we'll let the world decide the truth of it. You will be last.

(beat)

Before the next city.

The door slams shut.

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

Ted nods at two GUARD CLAVIGERS on either side of the door.

TED RAMSEY

If he gets out, take him down, but
don't save him. He's mine.

They reply in the affirmative as he stalks down the hall.

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - MORNING NEWS STUDIO - DAY

Ted marches into the room, takes his place at a makeshift PULPIT on the studio stage -- the windows to the destroyed street outside serving as his background in a bastardized version of a typical morning news show.

Near him SEVERAL DOZEN CAPTIVES are huddled together, some shivering, some weeping, others staring forward numbly.

Eva and Richard sit among them.

The hostages are surrounded by a human ring of clavigers, each armed with some form of a handheld blade.

Several STUDIO CAMERAS are pointed at the captives, with another one trained on Ted.

Ted stares into his, arms spread wide in welcome:

TED RAMSEY

Whoever has ears, let them hear.
"Do not be afraid, little flock,
for your Father has chosen gladly
to give you the kingdom."

He pauses, closes his eyes briefly before giving a malevolent smile.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

Welcome to your five o'clock good
news.

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - SMALL STUDIO - DAY

Light flickers in a corner of the room as Ted's image and voice fills the space -- Matt glares at the monitor as Ted's broadcast proceeds.

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - MORNING NEWS STUDIO - DAY

Ted continues his sermon.

TED RAMSEY

I know you're afraid. It's natural
to be afraid at this hour.

(MORE)

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

(beat)

You're wondering why others are gone, and why you remain.

(beat)

Why are you not worthy?

His pause is longer this time, giving his last remark room to linger.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

Today is the same as yesterday. You are lost. You are broken. You are nothing. But now, the clavigers are here to help.

(beat)

You will be cleansed. You will be pure. You will be free.

He steps to the side, beckons for his men to bring forward a hostage.

They oblige, shoving LISA (30s) front and center for the cameras.

Ted draws a KNIFE, approaches her.

LISA

This isn't fair! Please, don't do this!

TED RAMSEY

You, sister. You will be brave. You will be first.

Ted raises the weapon, presses the tip of the blade gently to Lisa's sternum, at the ready-

LISA

No!

TED RAMSEY

You will show the world the love that awaits you all.

Ted plunges the knife into Lisa's chest with a strikingly smooth motion, eliciting ANGUISHED SCREAMS from his victim, blood spilling out...

At last, silence comes -- Lisa is gone.

Her body crumples to the ground as Ted withdraws his weapon.

And that's it. Nothing left. Nothing more to it.

Lisa's body just lies there, lifeless.

Ted stares, squinting at the scene and shifting his weight with slight unease. His brow furrows momentarily before he turns back to his men.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
Bless us brothers, for our holy
work.

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - SMALL STUDIO - DAY

Enraged, Matt shakes in his seat.

MATT PEREZ
I'm going to break every bone in
his body, one by one!

Then a thought hits him -- he glances down at his chair, and in a swift movement he LIFTS himself up and forcefully comes back down -- SMASHING the legs of the wooden chair beneath him!

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

The guards haven't moved, but now they stare at a monitor in the hallway, watching Ted's sacrificial broadcast.

When the door opens it startles them -- Matt darts out, punches one in the throat and the other in the gut, then takes one of them down completely. The other barely has time to react:

GUARD CLAVIGER
How did you-?!

Then he's beaten down as well.

Matt stands over them, stretching.

MATT PEREZ
Physics, asshole.

He glances up at the monitor, takes off down the hall.

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - MORNING NEWS STUDIO - DAY

The ritual is not over. Ted turns to the terrified hostages.

TED RAMSEY
Who next seeks the road to
salvation?

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The wall full of screens is dazzling, every camera view from the studio available -- and one BUSINESS SUIT CLAVIGER stands over the central keyboard, clicking and clacking the keys every so often to change the angle featured on the live broadcast.

BUSINESS SUIT CLAVIGER
Our feed is being picked up by
stations all across the country.

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - MORNING NEWS STUDIO - DAY

Ted hears the news, finger to his earpiece. He nods.

He spots Eva.

And he smiles.

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Matt storms into the room, wraps the business suit claviger in a headlock, slamming his head into the control console repeatedly, plastic and sparks flying around them-

After a few more bashes, Matt tosses the claviger aside, starts flipping switches on the keyboard.

MATT PEREZ
Come on, come on, go dark. Go dark!

BUSINESS SUIT CLAVIGER
(chortling)
You really think you can stop this?

Matt stares at the keyboard, pounds his fist against it in frustration.

BUSINESS SUIT CLAVIGER (CONT'D)
The show must go on.

MATT PEREZ
Guess they'll get to watch this too
then.

Fuming, Matt spins just in time to see the claviger pull a PISTOL out of his jacket -- Matt rushes toward him and TACKLES him-

Both men crash through the window behind them, the glass SHATTERING-

INT. KC15 TELEVISION STATION - MORNING NEWS STUDIO - DAY

Matt and the suit claviger tumble onto the floor as the other clavigers and hostages gasp in surprise.

Ted sneers, pulls Eva close to him and holds her against his chest, knife out in front of her face.

TED RAMSEY

Get the others!

His clavigers each grab a hostage from the group, hold their weapons threateningly to their throats and chests and guts.

Richard's eyes dart cautiously between Eva and Matt.

Now Matt breaks free, KICKS the suit claviger across the face, takes his pistol.

MATT PEREZ

Your show's cancelled.

Quickly getting to his feet, Matt realizes Ted is holding his wife hostage in front of the windows.

He levels the pistol at them.

TED RAMSEY

You can't save them all. Her, or the others? Who will it be?

MATT PEREZ

Let her go.

TED RAMSEY

(to Eva)

I know you're afraid.

MATT PEREZ

Stop.

TED RAMSEY

(to Eva)

It's natural to be afraid at this hour.

Ted presses the blade against Eva's neck.

EVA PEREZ

Please...

MATT PEREZ

(through clenched teeth)

Let. Her. Go.

Sneering, Ted glares at Matt.

TED RAMSEY
Why? She'll be saved. Isn't that
what you want?

He presses the knife tighter against her skin, drawing blood.

MATT PEREZ
Not on your terms. On hers.
(beat)
It's her life, not yours.

TED RAMSEY
Not yours, either.

Matt holds Eva's gaze, nods.

MATT PEREZ
I know.

Then he raises the gun ever so slightly, pointing it just
above and past Ted and Eva and BLAM -- fires a single shot!

We follow the BULLET as it tears straight through the glass,
and mid-air outside it trades spaces with a VORTEX -- and now
we follow the cloud back in through the bullet hole-

Matt steps backward as the window BURSTS into the building
under the force of the single vortex -- and as the glass
gives way several more vortexes PUSH into the studio.

Everyone's eyes widen -- for different reasons.

Ted's face morphs into utter elation and awe at the
breathtaking sight before him-

TED RAMSEY
Our work bears fruit! Fruit for the
worthy!

The VORTEX SWARM wraps the hostages in a membranous gray
cloud, bodies disappearing in a flurry as each vortex RIPS UP
and AWAY one after another, like a natural automatic weapon-

DEBRIS shakes loose from the walls and ceiling, raining down
onto some of the clavigers, pummeling them to the floor-

We see a CAMERA'S VIEW of the action -- the whole world is
seeing this happen!

Eva seizes the moment, KICKS Ted in the knees, sends him
reeling as she scrambles away.

As the vortexes disappear and wisps of gray matter are left floating in the air around them, Matt gets to his feet and finds Eva.

MATT PEREZ

You okay?

Eva nods, shaking -- then her eyes widen, and she points.

Matt turns, finds Ted Ramsey standing at the pulpit again and staring out into the sky, arms stretched out, tears of joy streaming down his cheeks.

He's unarmed now, but when he turns and looks at them his smile is more terrifying than any weapon.

Matt and Eva back away slowly as Ted approaches.

TED RAMSEY

"He who sows bountifully will also
reap bountifully."

(beat)

Our good deeds are recognized. Our
harvest has been sown.

He leans over, picks up a knife from the rubble.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

You bore witness to a miracle here.
The crossing of the threshold.

Ted's happiness does not wane, but it does narrow and focus -- he lowers his head, stares at Matt and Eva with hunger in his eyes.

MATT PEREZ

(shaking his head)

You didn't do that.

TED RAMSEY

What else could it have been? We
hold the key to your salvation,
just like the others.

MATT PEREZ

It was me. I opened the window.

TED RAMSEY

We unlocked the door. You merely
knocked on it.

MATT PEREZ

And somebody answered.

Now Ted's elation wanes, and he starts to get pissed.

TED RAMSEY

You did not do this. We did. *I* did.

MATT PEREZ

You're sick, Teddy. Don't you get it?! They weren't taken *because of* you, it was *in spite of* you! You've perverted the-

Ted loses it.

TED RAMSEY

Do not speak to me of perversion!
Not you!

MATT PEREZ

I did my job. Protect them from people like you. Protect them all.

TED RAMSEY

Unworthy! They were unworthy until they met us. And you, you are the most unworthy of all.

(collects himself)

But I will forgive you.

Matt and Eva are backed up against the open air. Eva glances outside, gently puts her hand on Matt's shoulder.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)

It's your turn now. I will show you the door.

MATT PEREZ

We'll just show ourselves out.

Ted rushes forward -- but Richard appears behind him, THWACKING him in the back of the head with a piece of broken concrete as Matt and Eva fall backward onto the sidewalk.

INT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Matt and Eva look first at Richard, then down at Ted -- crumpled in a heap.

EVA PEREZ

Thank you.

Richard nods.

MATT PEREZ

Nice job.

Now Richard beams.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
(glancing around them)
I see your problem, Ted. You been
talking about doors all day.
(beat)
It was a window, actually.

He lifts his gun, aims it at Ted's head.

EVA PEREZ
Matt.

She steps forward, almost rests a hand on his arm, but
doesn't. Lets him own the moment.

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)
He's gone.

He looks at her. She gestures toward her office building, and
the countless people still waiting in there.

Then he looks at Ted.

Sure, it'd be overkill. But the bastard deserves it. Doesn't
he?

The trigger is waiting...

EVA PEREZ (CONT'D)
Matt.

Several tense moments pass -- before he finally lowers the
pistol and turns to her.

MATT PEREZ
Yeah. Okay.

Vindicated, she smiles at him.

He manages to smile back.

RICHARD
Let's go.

MATT PEREZ
In a hurry or-

He looks up, follows Richard's gaze -- Pete and a group of
WOUNDED CLAVIGERS stand in the heart of the studio, staring
at them and their fallen leader.

And they're angry.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Secoded.

They take off across the street, the clavigers in tow.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - FIRST FLOOR LOBBY - DAY

Matt, Eva, and Richard scramble inside the building.

MATT PEREZ

Lock'em up! All of them!

The trio rush along the bank of doors, locking each one -- just in time for the clavigers to arrive outside, banging against the glass.

Stepping back to catch their breath, Matt and Eva exchange uneasy glances.

EVA PEREZ

That's not going to hold them...

MATT PEREZ

It'll do at least until they remember they had guns over there.

Gestures toward the inside of the building.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

How do we get the people out of here?

A light bulb goes off for Richard.

RICHARD

The roof!

EVA PEREZ

What?! They'll get taken!

RICHARD

Yeah. Look!

He points at the clavigers ramming their shoulders against the doors.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

They're outside, but they're still here.

Matt starts nodding, following the train of thought.

MATT PEREZ
The clouds are good. That's why
they took Joy.

RICHARD
And Chuck.

MATT PEREZ
(gesturing across the
street)
And the others...

The skepticism drains from Eva's face. Then, to Matt:

EVA PEREZ
You didn't do that on purpose?

MATT PEREZ
Well yeah.
(shrugs)
But I wasn't sure if it was going
to work out...

He grins. She's not as amused.

RICHARD
Let's send the people out on the
roof, and out of reach of these
bastards.

MATT PEREZ
(nods)
Fuck Ted. *We'll* show them the door.

They take off into the building.

Just as they disappear from sight, the clavigers slam against
a single door with coordinated effort.

It creaks. Bends. Gives way, and just as it would burst open
we-

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - ROOF ACCESS - DAY

The door slams open -- Matt and Eva storm out, waving along a
steady stream of OFFICE WORKERS behind them.

As if on cue, a flurry of vortexes begins WHOOSHING down and
taking people away. Gray wispy funnels, one after another,
dancing across the rooftop.

Awestruck, Eva meets Matt's gaze. He smiles at her a moment before returning his attention to the people pouring out of the stairwell and onto the roof.

MATT PEREZ

Come on! It's okay, keep going!

They do. The exodus continues on and on.

Eva pulls out her phone, starts recording -- until the Perez's are the only ones left outside.

EVA PEREZ

There.

(thumbs the screen)

It's on the Tribune page.

Everyone's gonna know before long.

Richard appears in the doorway, anxiously shifts his weight as he glances back down the stairwell.

RICHARD

We've got company.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - ROOF ACCESS - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Pete and the wounded clavigers spill out onto the roof, immediately spreading out to cover it corner to corner.

PETE

Find them!

But the place is empty.

Then, quickly and stealthily -- Matt, Eva, and Richard spin around from their hiding spot behind the open door and slip back into the stairwell-

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - ROOF STAIRWELL - DAY

The door swings in toward them -- but Pete lunges forward, gets a hand on it before they can close it-

It's a tug of war, and he's winning the battle, holding it open as he raises a GUN and points it right at Matt's chest-

Richard sees this happening -- he leaps in front of Matt to take the shot and he falls onto Pete as he goes down, the two of them tumbling to the ground just outside the door-

A vortex SWOOPS down and takes Richard, leaving Pete sneering at Matt and Eva through a wispy gray curtain, the barrel of the gun coming back up -- but Matt reaches out, yanks the door shut, and locks it.

He and Eva lean against it in the darkness, facing one another, catching their breath.

MATT PEREZ
Never had anybody protect *me*
before...

She nods. Acknowledges Richard's sacrifice before looking down the stairwell.

EVA PEREZ
So now what? Wait for the clouds to
take us?

MATT PEREZ
Not exactly what I had in mind.

EVA PEREZ
Well. We're together again.

MATT PEREZ
(shaking his head)
Not all of us.

She looks at him, cocks her head.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
(off her furrowed brow)
Let's get our girl.

She breaks into a sad smile. Nods.

INT. CHEVY EQUINOX - DAY

Matt yanks open the door, scans the seats and console --
finds keys above the visor.

MATT PEREZ
Time to go.

He starts the car, pulls away from the curb as Eva leans forward, peering out the windshield, scanning the sky.

As they navigate the abandoned vehicles littering the streets, Matt spins the radio dial until a voice breaks through the static.

FM RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 Even as videos have surfaced online showing the supposedly good intent of the funnel clouds, Congress still claims them to be terrorist weapons and repeated its warnings to stay indoors and away from any outside exposure whatsoever. With law enforcement gone, the timetable for a solution...

EVA PEREZ
 All your friends are gone.
 (beat)
 So why do you think you're still here?

Matt shoots her a quick glance, uncertain how to take the question.

MATT PEREZ
 Unfinished business.
 (off Eva)
 I never should have left. You were right. I'm sorry.

EVA PEREZ
 I was ready to leave you.

MATT PEREZ
 I know.

EVA PEREZ
 Why did you come back? Really.

He contemplates the question for a moment.

MATT PEREZ
 I thought I wanted something more than anything else in the world, and I hurt the ones I love most figuring out that I was wrong. And that you were right. About who I am, and our life together. I'm sorry. I should have known all along.
 (beat)
 Home is wherever you are.

She meets his gaze again, and they join hands over the console.

Suddenly they JOLT forward as the Equinox is RAMMED from behind by a PICKUP TRUCK.

Matt looks in the rearview, sees it rushing back toward them for another hit-

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Hold on!!

He puts both hands on the wheel, focused, and swerves to avoid hitting some abandoned cars-

The Equinox tears into BACKYARDS in a residential neighborhood, the truck still in pursuit though losing ground fast.

The Chevy plows through fences and playsets until the tires slip on a small decorative pond -- the vehicle spins, comes to rest perpendicular to the rapidly approaching truck.

As the pickup rushes toward them, Matt jerks the key in the ignition, struggling to get the engine to turn-

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)

Come on! Come on!

EVA PEREZ

Let's go-let's go-let's go!!!

The engine ROARS to life-

Matt slams on the gas and throws the vehicle into reverse -- they back out of the way just as the truck arrives and ZIPS by them, SMASHING into an old TREE and flying through another PRIVACY FENCE before finally coming to rest.

Matt doesn't wait to see what happens next -- he floors it, spinning up grass and dirt until the Equinox finally lurches forward through the yard and back out onto the road.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DUSK

The Equinox pulls to a stop. Matt and Eva step out and head for the house.

The neighborhood has turned to a ghost town.

INT. ENTRYWAY - DUSK

Matt and Eva step inside, peering upstairs before joining hands to ascend the steps.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DUSK

They stop in front of the closed bedroom door.

MATT PEREZ
You go in very often?

EVA PEREZ
No. Never.
(off Matt)
Didn't feel right without you.

He softens -- but the ROAR of an engine outside draws their attention.

Matt leans down, low enough to watch the pickup truck SQUEAL across the yard and RAM into the Equinox, coming to a violent stop as metal SCREECHES on metal.

Ted Ramsey stumbles out of the truck, knife in hand. He looks up -- meets Matt's gaze.

TED RAMSEY
Do not be afraid! The end is near!

He rushes toward the house.

MATT PEREZ
(to Eva)
Hide.

INT. HARPER'S ROOM - DUSK

Matt grabs a BASEBALL BAT from the linen closet in the hallway, then he and Eva rush into the room, push the door closed behind them.

MATT PEREZ
(off the bat)
You still never moved this, huh?

Eva shrugs, heads for the closet.

Holding the door shut, Matt nods at her decision.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
Yeah.

As Eva hides, Matt glances back over his shoulder -- he freezes at the sight of the DARK BLUE URN on the dresser.

The door suddenly edges open, forcing Matt back a few steps, Ted peering in through the opening.

TED RAMSEY
Did you think I wouldn't find you?
Did you think I would stray from
the path?

Matt tightens his grip on the baseball bat, lets go of the door -- Ted stumbles into the room just as Matt SWINGS, missing barely and SMASHING into the doorframe.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
Save a soul, whatever it takes!

Ted lunges forward, headbutts Matt in the gut, knocks him back against the wall so hard the drywall CRACKS from the force.

Matt collapses in a heap, groaning with the wind knocked out of him.

Ted straightens, wields the knife.

TED RAMSEY (CONT'D)
"Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven..."

MATT PEREZ
You're crazy. You can't save the people who have already been saved.

TED RAMSEY
"And those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

He raises the knife -- but Eva slides open the closet door and TACKLES Ted, knocking him into the toddler bed.

She wraps him in the blanket there, begins WAILING on him with punch after punch, mercilessly beating him down-

Matt pulls her back, nudges her toward the window, opening it and gesturing for her to climb out.

MATT PEREZ
Go!

Ted's knife CUTS through the blanket -- he swings it wildly at Matt, who has to leap out of the way as Ted takes another swing, SMASHING against the windowsill just as Eva clears it-

Matt then knocks Ted out of the way and scrambles out the window to join his wife.

EXT. ROOF OVERHANG - DUSK

Matt crawls out onto the shingles, scurrying away from the window, struggling to keep his balance.

Ted JUTS the knife through the open window, SPEARING it out a few times as he climbs out onto the roof.

TED RAMSEY

Do you not understand? Do you not see?

Ted attacks, they trade swings of their weapons, Matt parrying back with the baseball bat as best he can.

Eva jumps in after a few of Ted's swings, kicking him in the shins and sending him stumbling to regain his footing.

Enraged, Ted rushes at Eva's torso, driving her up against the house.

Matt grabs his back, yanks him off of her and tosses him across the shingles.

MATT PEREZ

Stop it! Just stop it. That's enough.

Ted stands, sneering at them as he wipes blood from his nose.

TED RAMSEY

Stop? I'll never stop. I'm showing others the light. My work will not be done until I am the last person alive on this Earth.

(beat)

Until kingdom come.

(off Matt and Eva)

"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," as they say.

Matt exchanges looks of finality with Eva, gestures for her to stay put.

MATT PEREZ

I promise, babe, this is the last job.

Matt shifts his weight, adjusts his grip on the bat's handle, readying for the final confrontation.

Ted smirks. Glances to the sky, then back at his target.

TED RAMSEY

(sneering)

Forgive him. He knows not what he does.

MATT PEREZ
(eyes narrowing)
I know *exactly* what I'm doing.

Ted rushes, striking out at Matt with the knife-

Matt successfully dodges a few swipes, but then swings the bat and misses-

Ted DARTS into the open space, STABBING Matt in the gut.
Blood oozes out around the blade.

TED RAMSEY
It won't be long now. You'll see.
You'll be free.

Matt cringes at the searing pain in his belly, then summons all his strength to rally:

MATT PEREZ
I've got that message for you now.

He quickly STOMPS on Ted's ankles, breaking his attacker's legs and sending him to his knees.

Enraged, Ted shoves the knife deeper into Matt's gut, gasping in pain as he grabs at his broken limbs with his free hand.

He meets Matt's gaze -- but now Ted's eyes fill with fear.

MATT
I know you're afraid. It's natural
to be afraid at this hour.
(beat)
Embrace it.

Matt pulls his body back, withdrawing himself from the blade so he can rear back with the baseball bat-

He swings it like he's about to win the home run derby -- it SLAMS against Ted's head so hard that the wood SPLINTERS apart in the air!

The force of the hit sends Ted flying off the edge of the roof-

Matt tumbles against the house, coming to rest below the window to Harper's room.

Eva crouches down next to him.

EVA PEREZ
You still with me?

MATT PEREZ
No place I'd rather be.

Her eyes drift past him into the bedroom. She rises, disappears inside for a moment.

Matt leans, peers over the roof to see Ted Ramsey on the ground below. Not moving.

The body just lays there, forsaken.

Then Matt's gaze drifts upward, to the darkening blue sky above.

He nods.

Eva returns from the house, Harper's urn in hand.

She kneels down next to Matt, gives him a long and longing look. Then she puts her hand on his, holding the urn with him.

MATT PEREZ (CONT'D)
Happy birthday, kid.

He looks from their child to his wife.

Together, they open the urn -- ashes begin to BILLOW up into the air around them, forming a SPIRAL in the wind -- until a single vortex WHOOSHES down and overtakes them both at once.

It RIPS UP and AWAY in an instant, leaving a new mist of gray matter swirling in the twilight-

SMASH TO GRAY