EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

Moonlit and silent... except for the SOUND OF HEAVY BREATHING --

JOHN AND KIRK VIRGIL --

Both in their 20’s, clean-shaven, All-American, sprint and stumble through a narrow path in the dense fauna...

FLEETING POV -- BEHIND THEM --

FLASHLIGHTS rip through the trees -- bounce off wet leaves --
-- rapidfire murmurs in Malaysian, then the occasional SHOUT...

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

JOHN and KIRK hit a small clearing -- with no apparent path out. The voices getting closer...

John looks to Kirk for guidance briefly; seeing uncertainty but slow process in his eyes... then...

MACHINE GUN FIRE

Bursts through the foliage -- leaves ripping, vines snapping all around them --

KIRK

Let’s go!

Kirk SHOVES John forward -- just a few steps ahead of him, but enough to kick John into even higher gear, plunging into...

EXT. DENSE JUNGLE - CONTINUOUS

... MORE GUNFIRE rips around John and Kirk, pushing them to wend their way through vine... out onto

ANOTHER PATH --

TIGHT ON JOHN --

Running for his life as MORE GUNFIRE echoes behind him, MORE VOICES...
... his BREATHING getting louder and louder as he runs, until it fills his ears, blotting out all other sounds...

... then he stumbles... falls to the ground...

... and, picking himself up, catching his breath a little...

... aware of a sudden SILENCE. No guns... no voices...

No Kirk.

John wheels around -- searching the darkness --

JOHN

Kirk!

Silence.

JOHN (CONT’D)

(more panicked)

Kirk!

More silence... John turns around -- doubling back -- to --

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Empty now, silent... and pitch black. John pauses, spinning around -- suddenly lost and alone ---

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HOSTEL, ROOM - NIGHT

And JOHN... six months later, now sporting a traveler’s beard... lying in bed, eyes wide open. Staring at the clock, as WORLD MUSIC thumps through paper thin walls.

Slowly, he swings out of bed, flicks a roach off of half a warm beer sitting on the floor, and throws on a T-shirt and pants.

INT. HOSTEL, HALL - NIGHT

A narrow hall is crowded with two dozen college-age kids from all over the world. LOUD MUSIC competes with five or six conversations, kids make out in doorways, etc.

JOHN rolls out of his room, into the party. Wanders down the hall -- a GUY hands him a... well, let’s call it a hand-rolled clove cigarette...

GUY

John -- John -- what I was saying about Dylan and Schopenhauer --
JOHN
-- Faust and “In Rainbows”...

GUY
... whatever... dude... it was deep, right?

GIRL
Seriously? Seriously, you’re comparing Goethe and Radiohead?

JOHN
Same story...

GUY
Right? Goethe told it first, but Thom Yorke plays drums, bass, guitar, piano...

John drags on the cigarette, hands it off to a RASTA HAIR DUDE, keeps moving...

... and a HOT GERMAN CHICK grabs him from behind, slams him against the wall, and shoves her tongue down his throat. They make out for a beat, then she pauses, pulls back --

GERMAN CHICK
Oh, sorry... I thought you were someone else.

JOHN
Not a problem.

GERMAN CHICK
(checks him out)
He doesn’t show up --

JOHN
Yeah... I gotta’ go out for a few hours... but maybe when I get back --

GERMAN CHICK
Oh, I’m not going to wait a few hours.

John smiles, shrugs, heads down the stairs...

EXT. HOSTEL, DOORWAY - NIGHT

... and steps out onto KHAO SAN ROAD... Our first realization that we are, in fact, in another country...
... on a short street, dense with bars, gaudy neon signs, pirate DVD stalls, suspect food stands... and more backpacker tourists per square inch than anywhere else in the world.

JOHN pauses in the doorway -- checks a

BULLETIN BOARD --

Among flyers for pretty much everything tourist related, there is a TATTERED MISSING POSTER -- “HAVE YOU SEEN HIM” -- with a PHOTO OF KIRK. He looks pretty much how we left him, posed in front of a Buddhist temple.

John ruminates on the poster for a beat -- takes it down... replaces it with an IDENTICAL, CLEANER COPY...

CUT TO:

TIGHT ON A COMPUTER --

SNAKEFARM.COM -- a travel website littered with banner ads for Thailand travel, backpacker tips, etc.

We are...

INT. INTERNET CAFE - NIGHT

A narrow room with a few rows of computers. JOHN sits at one, clicks through a few bulletin boards... arrives at a page that reads:

HAVE YOU SEEN HIM?

Pretty much identical to the flyer we saw earlier -- same PHOTO OF KIRK -- some text beneath it, nothing we pause to read...

... as John clicks on a “7 MESSAGES” icon...

... deletes some junk mail... pauses on a message titled “I KNOW YOUR BROTHER”

ON JOHN --

expression tightening as he opens the email... we read only a few scattered words... Khunying... beach... drugs...

Picasso...

John makes some notes in a small, weathered spiral notepad...

...then makes a
SKYPE CALL --

His own image appearing on the screen in jagged pixels, then dropping into the corner as

STEVE VIRGIL --

Appears on screen... 50’s, weathered, working-class face...

JOHN

Hey, Dad.

STEVE VIRGIL

These videophone calls... feel like I’m living in the future.

JOHN

Yeah, well... cheap.

STEVE VIRGIL

Yeah. So.

John pauses a beat, doesn’t want to ask, then dives in...

JOHN

I could use a little more money.

STEVE VIRGIL

You cashed in your plane ticket.

JOHN

I told you I would.

STEVE VIRGIL

You want to come back home, get back in school, I’ll buy you another.

JOHN

Dad, no one else is looking for him --

STEVE VIRGIL

Because it’s been six months. Sooner or later, you have to accept things.

JOHN

You passed that insight on to Mom?

STEVE VIRGIL

She’s on the verge of having two sons disappear into that damned country.

JOHN

I have some new leads...
Steve’s hard face fights back tears... gets even tougher.

    STEVE VIRGIL
    Next ticket I buy you will be non-refundable. Let me know.

Steve hangs up on John. His image fizzing away, leaving John looking at his own pixellated image again.

EXT. KHAOSAN ROAD - NIGHT

As JOHN steps out of the cafe --

    ZACK
    Party on Sukhumvit Road. Starts at 1.

... turns to see ZACK MORGAN, a shaggy blonde 20’s Aussie surfer dude with the good nature (and sex drive) of a Labrador Retriever...

... and NADIA CAVLOVIC, Eastern European; young, beautiful, eyes wearing the dark humor of an old soul without hardening.

    NADIA
    You will come. Someone has to keep him from getting beaten up, and it’s starting to bore me.

    ZACK
    I’m supposed to just know who’s got a boyfriend --

    JOHN
    I’ll see... maybe...

    NADIA
    A real maybe or a John maybe.

    JOHN
    Hard to say. On my way over to Patpong 1 --

    NADIA
    (slyly)
    Really.

    JOHN
    Not what you think...

    ZACK
    Too bad. Need a lift anyway?

Off John...
EXT. BANGKOK ROAD - TRAVELING -- NIGHT

ZACK --

threads a MOTORCYCLE through crowded streets at stupid speeds, grinning... as...

NADIA --

surges up alongside him on her own bike, riding just as fast and crazy, but with a calm grace... JOHN riding bitch seat, holding on as they pull parallel, yelling to each other over the honking and din of the street --

ZACK
I am dangerously close to bored...

NADIA
We were talking about going south -- maybe into Malaysia.

JOHN
Malaysia? To get killed?

ZACK
To say we didn’t get killed --

Zack speeds up ahead of Nadia, who opens the throttle and heads after him...

... and we follow them on an insane, exhilarating

RACE

through the streets of Bangkok -- weaving around tuk-tuks, grazing taxicabs, near-missing pedestrians... on their way to...

EXT. GO-GO PICASSO BAR - NIGHT

Bangkok’s red light district -- even rowdier and raunchier...

... as NADIA lets JOHN off her bike in front of a narrow staircase that leads up to a second floor bar -- BIKINI-CLAD BAR GIRLS visible in the windows...

ZACK
(to Nadia)
Want to go in for one?

NADIA
Zack, even if what you want to happen was going to happen, I’d never let you watch.
With an “oh well” grin, Zack pops a wheelie and speeds off...

Nadia looks at John --

NADIA (CONT’D)
Now I sort of want to go in -- just to tell him I did --

JOHN
(thanks but no thanks)
This is a Kirk thing.

NADIA
Then you were wrong -- it was exactly what I thought.

She gives him a quick kiss, then takes off.

INT. GO-GO PICASSO - NIGHT

Some of the hottest women in Thailand -- the world -- bikini-clad and dancing on stage; sleeker women working the bar. The clientele are almost all American and European, older than what we’ve seen -- 30’s to 50’s --

We follow KHUNYING... young and slightly girlish beneath a long, silky dress... as she wends her way through the club to the BAR --

Where JOHN waits for her.

KHUNYING
You look like your brother, you know that?

JOHN
The email said... you saw him last month?

KHUNYING
Yeah... Kho Tao. Buy me a drink.

John nods at the BARTENDER -- then takes a PHOTO OF KIRK out of his pocket --

JOHN
You’re sure it was him --

KHUNYING
Has a beard now. He was selling drugs, liked girls...
John is stunned by this -- the Bartender brings over a beer and a glass of champagne...

   BARTENDER
   2000.

   JOHN
   2000 -- no... no bar fine, just the drinks.

   KHUNYING
   Pay the fine -- it’s cheaper -- we can go upstairs and talk...

   JOHN
   Where did he say he was going...

Khunying slides her arm under his...

   KHUNYING
   1800, okay?
   (nods to bartender)
   1800.

Impatiently, John takes some money out of his pockets... slaps it on the bar...

   JOHN
   I’ve got... 950 baht, okay?

   KHUNYING
   950? No way...

   JOHN
   I don’t want to -- that’s just to tell me where he said he was going --

She starts talking to the bartender in Thai -- turns back to John --

   KHUNYING
   He says 1500 is okay. Go out, get the rest --

John looks at Khunying -- a moment of clarity --

   JOHN
   You don’t know my brother.

   KHUNYING
   (feebley)
   Sure -- I know your brother --
But John knows he’s been lied to. Again. Disgusted, he reaches for his money... but the Bartender puts a BEER GLASS down on top of it.

**A BOUNCER --**

Materializes out of the din of the bar -- not huge, but formidable looking --

-- John’s expression registering a moment of almost bemused, resigned realization...

**JOHN**

My fault... I walked right into this--

And John punches the Bartender in the face. It’s a fast, hard shot, just enough to rock him back...

... grabs the money -- heads for the door -- weaving past the bouncer with the grace of a running back --

-- running straight into a DOORMAN -- bigger than the bouncer -- who grabs his shirt with a beefy paw and SLAMS HIM into a booth --

-- spraying beer and broken glass and cash everywhere. John grapples with the doorman as the bouncer moves in as well --

-- John reaching for a beer bottle -- cocking it back to take his best swing at getting out of there --

-- when a STRONG HAND grabs his wrist --

-- RYKER. 40’s, well-dressed, perfectly average to the edge of bland looking... but with hard, authoritative eyes.

**RYKER**

(calmly)
You don’t want to do that.

(IN THAI)
We’re okay... everything is okay...

Ryker reaches into his coat -- the bouncers take a step back--

-- but Ryker comes out with a WAD OF CASH.

**RYKER (CONT’D)**
I’ll cover these guys and the broken glass. Throw three hundred to your girlfriend and the guy you moused.

**JOHN**
Dude, the whole thing was a ripoff --
Ryker peels off some hundred baht notes — hands them off to the bouncers —

RYKER
That’s why you come here; to get ripped off. The trick is to do it at the going rate.

(beat)
Cops’re going to be here in five minutes. Jail’ll cost you a lot more... me, personally? I’d rather get something to eat.

Off John --

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOD STALL - NIGHT

An open garage-style food stall. JOHN and RYKER eat pad thai standing up...

JOHN
So look...

RYKER
You can’t pay me back.

JOHN
Down to fumes -- any other situation, I’m not that guy who punches the bartender --

RYKER
No worries -- what we do, right? Farangs got to help each other figure it out...

JOHN
Seems like you’ve got it figured out already.

RYKER
(vaguely)
Yeah, well... I travel a lot. Telcom -- everyone needs cell phone towers and internet, right?

JOHN
Sure...

RYKER
Thinking about going back in there, huh.
JOHN
Stupid, right? Just one more lie --

RYKER
How long have you been looking?

JOHN
Six months. Pick a story, I’ve heard it... he’s in prison, he’s fighting with Myanmar guerillas, he’s a tour guide...
   (beat)
... but a bar girl using him to scam me for -- what -- fifty bucks? That’s a first.

RYKER
She comes from some rice field down south, where she’s supporting parents, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, maybe a kid or two. She thinks about your problems about as much as you think about hers.

John nods; good point.

RYKER (CONT’D)
Can I tell you something?

JOHN
Something else?

Ryker smiles --

RYKER
Take a look around...

THEIR POV --

of Khao San; a torrent of backpackers, sex tourists, obvious tourists --

RYKER (CONT’D)
Ninety percent of them come for a few weeks, go home with some pictures and souvenirs. Let’s say the next eight percent spend a few months, see the “real Thailand” -- go home pretty much the same way.
   (beat)
That other two percent? The you and me two percent?
   (MORE)
RYKER (CONT’D)
Stay here long enough, you don’t get to decide how you leave -- if you leave. Thailand decides for us.

JOHN
No offense? You don’t know me well enough to make it an “us” --

RYKER
I don’t know you at all, John. But I know this country.
(beat)
It’s on the verge of swallowing you whole. Which isn’t necessarily a bad thing...
(enigmatic)
... but it’s a whole other thing.

Ryker polishes off his noodles and leaves. John watches him disappearing into the neon glare of the Khao San Road.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

EXT. BANGKOK ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A huge rooftop party -- techno music thumping from giant amps, light show, stunning night view of the city. A few hundred PARTYERS, tranced out on dope and sex...

... as ZACK brings plastic cups to JOHN and NADIA.

    JOHN
    What’s in it?

    ZACK
    Tastes like lime juice, but it’s doing something interesting to my neurotransmitters...

Nadia takes one, downs it.

    NADIA
    Prvo skoci pa reci “hop.”
    (beat)
    Croatian proverb -- first leap, then say “jump.”

John takes the other, hesitates...

    ZACK
    Dude, I’ve never seen anyone enjoy Bangkok less.
    (then)
    Hey... over there, blonde ponytail talking to Andres...

POV -- DONNA --

Pretty in an accessible way -- talking to a GRUNGY ARGENTINIAN KID, who is pointing at them... she starts over...

    ZACK (CONT’D)
    Quick -- tell me if I already --

    NADIA
    Don’t think so... not slutty enough...

    DONNA
    You’re John?

Nadia smiles at a surprised Zack -- John’s surprised too --
JOHN
Yeah --

DONNA
The one with the posters? Kirk Virgil?

JOHN
(veiled)
My brother.

DONNA
I was in Koh Tao --

... the mention of which gets John’s attention... Donna takes the cup out of his hand and drinks it down...

DONNA (CONT’D)
-- met up with these Israelis... anyway, we went out with the sea gypsies for a week... there was an American living on one of the other ships. He had a big tattoo on his chest, though... you don’t have anything about a tattoo --

JOHN
What kind?

DONNA
A devil ---

JOHN
ASU Sun Devils... Koh Tao... how long ago?

DONNA
(into a talking jag)
I don’t know... maybe a month, a little more... Only talking to him for maybe fifteen minutes, but he looked kind of like the picture -- sounded kind of midwest, of course he didn’t talk a lot... skinnier, than the picture, I mean... seemed really in tune, you know? I mean, these are beautiful people, but day three smelling those fish --

Then Donna runs out of steam, stops short --
DONNA (CONT’D)
John, did you dose me?

CUT TO:

EXT. BANGKOK TRAIN STATION - MORNING

JOHN buys a ticket -- he’s loaded up with his backpack now, ready to travel...

... turns to see RYKER behind him. Wearing a sport coat and slacks.

RYKER
Taking my advice or the bar girl’s?

JOHN
Neither.

Pretty presumptuously, Ryker takes the ticket out of John’s hand, checks it out...

RYKER
Never been to Koh Tao -- hear it’s beautiful.
(beat)
I’m headed the other way -- Rangoon.

JOHN
Well... cool.

A WHISTLE draws their attention to --

ZACK AND NADIA --

Who are getting on the train --

ZACK
Let’s go!

JOHN
Right there --

RYKER
Your friends?

JOHN
Met them two days ago.

RYKER
Two days out here... like two months back in the real world.
(MORE)
Hell, I know more about you from twenty minutes than guys I shared an office with for two years.

Ryker takes a card out of his pocket --

My email, and a sat phone -- perks of working in telcom --

Um...

Ryker smiles -- weird and disarming knowing at the same time.

Yeah, probably not. But you never know.

But probably not. Thanks for saving my ass, though.

Some day you’ll save someone else’s ass -- maybe they’ll save mine some other time. Travel karma.

Well... okay.

JOHN walks through the train...

... finding ZACK and NADIA in their berth -- already spread out and making themselves at home. Zack is listening to an IPOD.

The good news is, Koh Tao has a sick Full Moon party. If you’re still there when we double back up...

Of RYKER, standing on the platform, finishing his cigarette.

Who’s your friend?

Guy from the club last night... kind of a weird dude...
ZACK
Personally? I’d’ve opted for the inadvertently stoned chick. It might make you feel slightly less foolish about travelling half the length of the country on her very questionable story....

JOHN
Is it going to be that kind of a train ride?

NADIA
Oh, I imagine it’ll probably get worse.

John looks out the window again -- Ryker is gone. And the train slowly rolls out...

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

As the train rolls at a leisurely tempo out of the crowded urban chaos of Bangkok... the scenery giving way to trees and small villages that roll by in a brief strobe of shacks and stores...

BOOM UP -- TO THE ROOF OF THE TRAIN --

Where ZACK and NADIA sunbathe on the roof, Zack listening to his Ipod, while JOHN looks out over the country, his legs dangling over the side.

NADIA
I miss Zagreb in the winter. Oppressive cold, snow, heavy clothes... this world has no weight.

ZACK
Kind of the point.

JOHN
No, I get it... you end up feeling guilty about enjoying yourself this much.

NADIA
I gave up on guilt some time ago. It’s more of a sense of... incompleteness.
JOHN
You could go home... even for a few months...

NADIA
That would have its own complications. Besides, I have numerous things still to check off the list.

ZACK
Me, for instance.

Without looking over, Nadia punches Zack in the balls. Zack doubles over in laughing pain.

ZACK (CONT’D)
Gently next time.

NADIA
(to John)
What about? What’s at home?

JOHN
Grad school, eventually, I guess. I was supposed to go back to MIT...
(thinks about it)
Eight days ago.

ZACK
Yeah? What are you going to be when you grow up?

JOHN
Computer engineer. Next generation communications.

ZACK
Wow... that’s pretty...
(beat)
... boring.

John waves at a

POV -- PASSING VILLAGE --

JOHN
People in that shack right there? Hundred years ago, all they’d know about Australia is you, wandering in out of the jungle.

NADIA
A tragedy of misinformation.
JOHN
Books, radio, TV -- they start to get a bigger picture. Still incomplete. The internet -- now the world becomes larger, more detailed -- and a smaller, less scary place.
(beat)
There’s a next step right around the corner... I’d like to be a part of that. That’s how Kirk got me down here in the first place -- said I should meet some of the people I want to pull together.

NADIA
Wow.

ZACK
Yeah... that’s even more boring than I thought.

John laughs politely, but Nadia makes eye contact with him -- reads his feelings --

NADIA
Does it ever occur to you that he could have been making the opposite point?

JOHN
Which is?

NADIA
Some people should never be brought together... some people should be kept apart always and forever.

JOHN
When I find him, I’ll ask.

John lies back on the train -- his head next to Nadia’s and Zack’s. The three of them looking up, into the sky...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHUMPHON TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

The TRAIN pulling into a medium-sized train station in a sleepy gateway town --

-- JOHN, NADIA, and ZACK pile out with their backpacks, among a crowd of Thais and the odd other backpackers...
... Zack takes the Ipod buds out of his ears, stuffs the Ipod into Nadia’s backpack --

NADIA
Why am I carrying your things?

ZACK
Four ounces. You’re not going to make me take off my pack and unzip it, are you?

NADIA
Four ounces, plus your book, plus your second pair of sunglasses... I’m going to buy you a purse.

JOHN
You sure you guys aren’t together?

NADIA
One of us couldn’t handle the other one...

ZACK
We can’t agree on which is which.

JOHN
Well, look, I’ve got to make the ferry...

ZACK
Yeah -- we figured we’d catch a bus over with you, spend a night on Thung Wua Laen Beach --

NADIA SCREAMS -- the other two wheel around --

-- to see a THIEF knocking her to the ground -- grabbing her bag --

-- and taking off into the crowd.

NADIA
Son of a bitch!

John and Zack start to help her...

... but she’s already on her feet -- sprinting into the crowd after the thief. Zack looks at John --

ZACK
It’s going to be really embarrassing if we don’t help out, right?
John half-smiling -- then he turns and sprints after her -- Zack a step behind him as they run, hampered by their backpacks...

EXT. NIGHT MARKET - CONTINUOUS

A quaint, scaled-down version of Khao San -- just a short run of food stalls and bookstands --

NADIA searches for the thief among a crowd of people -- not having much luck -- as JOHN and ZACK catch up --

JOHN
Anything in there you care about?

ZACK
My sunglasses...

NADIA
Clothes and books -- it's the principle of the damned thing --

ZACK
My Ipod...

Nadia throws him a look...

JOHN’S POV -- THE END OF THE STREET

And the THIEF, still hauling the backpack, disappearing between two buildings --

JOHN
There!

They take off after him...

EXT. ESTUARY - CONTINUOUS

A riverside mooring -- gaudy-colorful fishing boats moored for the night. Moonlit and eerie...

... JOHN, ZACK, and NADIA coming up, slowly now...

POV -- THE THIEF --

a silhouette, weaving in and out of the maze of masts and bobbing skiffs...

JOHN AND ZACK --

Unshoulder their packs...
ZACK
(whispering)
Who watches the packs?

NADIA
Don’t even think about looking at me--

John looks around -- doesn’t see anyone else -- and tosses his pack on the deck of a boat. Zack shrugs, tosses his over as well...

... and they creep through the docks.

JOHN
There!

They see the THIEF climbing from one boat to another -- the pack keeping him slow and awkward --

-- enough so that they corner him at the end of a dock...

... and the thief drops Nadia’s pack at his feet. Pulls a butterfly knife.

ZACK
Okay... this just took a turn...

JOHN
(to the thief)
English?

The thief responds by moving toward them -- a lethal look in his eyes --

ZACK (CONT'D)
I move around, you can grab him...

NADIA
Not worth it --

John takes out his WALLET -- takes some CASH OUT --

JOHN
No hassles, my man... we just want her bag back, ok?

But the thief now has a cold thug’s eyes -- and moves farther forward... forcing the three travelers to retreat...

ZACK
At some point we either fight or run -
GUNSHOTS --

Rip through the night... and through the thief’s chest. He spasms and drops, face first, onto the walkway.

THE KILLER --

A hard faced and scarred Malaysian -- as many light years away in badness from the thief as the thief was from John, Zack, and Nadia. He steps off of a boat, a SMOKING PISTOL held casually by his side.

JOHN, ZACK, AND NADIA --

Stand there -- frozen -- as

THE KILLER --

Kicks the thief’s corpse into the water, then walks over and picks up NADIA’S BACKPACK...

... and tosses it to her. Nadia catches it with astonished fear...

... as the Killer puts his finger to his lips in a “be quiet” gesture...

... and steps backward into the shadows. Disappearing into the night.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

EXT. BEACHFRONT BUNGALOW - NIGHT

A no-frills bungalow on Thung Wua Laen Beach. JOHN, NADIA, and ZACK sit outside, passing around a large bottle of beer and a joint.

JOHN
... and we’re not calling the cops because...

ZACK
We don’t know what happened.

JOHN
I’m pretty sure we do.

NADIA
He saved our lives.

JOHN
He killed someone.

ZACK
Who was trying to kill us. Who let us go and gave Nadia back her bag.

JOHN
Then the cops --

NADIA
Maybe in America the police only punish the guilty and serve only the truth...

ZACK
We don’t know the rules, we don’t know the values. Get tangled up in someone else’s feud -- can’t even know whose side we’re taking.

JOHN
And the acceptable alternative is what? Close our eyes, walk away.

NADIA
It’s just a traveler story... we keep it close and be happy we survived it.

Zack hands off the beer, takes the joint and stands up.
ZACK
All right... off to celebrate the absence of punctures in my vital organs.

With a weird explosion of energy, Zack sprints into the night. John looks at Nadia.

JOHN
A man dies in front of you... you’re supposed to do something.

NADIA
You’re right... we go inside.

A frank sexual look on her face... John startled by this...

NADIA (CONT’D)
We’ve looked at death tonight -- we’re alive. There’s really only the one thing to do.

JOHN
Zack --

NADIA
I told you we aren’t together that way.

JOHN
I didn’t believe you.

NADIA
I know you didn’t.

She takes him inside.

CROSS CUT --

EXT. CLIFF - NIGHT

ZACK, standing alone, framed by the moonlight, draws on the joint and takes off his clothes...

INT. BEACHFRONT BUNGALOW - NIGHT

JOHN and NADIA, on a futon, take off each other’s clothes...

EXT. CLIFF - CONTINUOUS

Zack, naked, sprints toward the edge of the cliff... HOWLING AT THE MOON... exuberant... as he LEAPS...
INT. BEACHFRONT BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

John and Nadia make love...

EXT. CLIFF - CONTINUOUS

Zack freefalls through the air... and SPLASHES INTO THE WATER.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. CHUMPHON TRAIN STATION, PLATFORM - MORNING

A TRAIN loading passengers... JOHN sees off ZACK and NADIA...

JOHN

So...

ZACK

Been fun, Johnny.

Nadia hugs John -- not a whiff of the sexual dynamic there --

NADIA (IN CROATIAN)

(whispers in his ear)

Travel safely.

She turns to get on the train -- Zack grabs her backpack --

NADIA (CONT’D)

What. Now.

ZACK

The tunes...

(unzips her bag)

There’s a dive shop in Jansom Bay --
guy who owns it... this South African
dude, Bobcat...

JOHN

If I get there, I’ll say hello...

ZACK

(takes out the Ipod)

I owed him some money for some
stick... he told me he’d take music
in trade... loaded this bad boy up...

He stuffs the Ipod in John’s shirt pocket --

JOHN

Don’t know if I’m going to get down there --
ZACK
This way, you know you will.
(beat)
Enjoy the party.

John smiles -- gets it --

JOHN
Looking out for my best interests...

ZACK
Someone has to.

Nadia and John look at each other --

NADIA
(double meaning)
What happened last night...

JOHN
... a traveler’s story. I’ll keep it close.

With that, Zack and Nadia get on the train. John turns and walks out of the station...

... bumping through TWO THAI MEN, 20’s, casual wear and not all that hard looking, lingering by the door.

EXT. CHUMPHON, DAY MARKET - DAY

JOHN walks through the market...

... notices the TWO MEN in the crowd behind him... then they stop to haggle with a VENDOR...

His radar fires up a little... he stops and checks his WALLET, his PASSPORT... still there...

... takes Zack’s IPOD out of his pocket...

POV -- THE TWO MEN --

Who try not to pay attention to this -- but clearly tense up at the sight of the IPOD --

-- time slowing down as John makes the connection -- his eyes to their eyes, still on the Ipod for a beat before they meet his; then the men quickly turn away --

BACK ON JOHN --

rolling the thumbwheel thoughtfully...
ON THE IPOD SCREEN --

He rolls through the menu -- to "MUSIC" --

-- finding an empty screen.

And then John has a --

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

Our signature storytelling device -- a flashback plus; as we revisit vital information -- often out of sequence, but always constructing a story -- the perspective shifts, illuminating detail(e.g., the backpack, the Ipod) with highlights of supersaturated color; speedramps underline critical moments, sometimes viewing them from a new angle --

AT THE CHUMPHON STATION... as Zack gives the Ipod to John--

    ZACK
    ... he told me he'd take music in
    trade... loaded this bad boy up...

AT THE ESTUARY... as the KILLER tosses Nadia her backpack --

AT THE CHUMPHON TRAIN STATION... as the THIEF steals the pack --

AT THE CHUMPHON STATION, MOMENTS BEFORE... as ZACK puts the IPOD in the pack --

    NADIA
    Why am I carrying your things?

AT THE NIGHT MARKET...

    ZACK
    My Ipod.

and Nadia's look to him -- what seemed at the moment like irritation... but now looks like something else --

BACK TO SCENE --

John looking at the empty Ipod -- and the TWO MEN, watching him carefully. He stuffs the Ipod in his backpack, zips it up...

    HARD CUT TO:

INT. INTERNET CAFE - DAY

Smaller than the one in Bangkok -- John sits at a computer, plugging in the IPOD -- tensely looking back at...
POV THROUGH THE WINDOW -- THE TWO MEN

Still across the street -- making no effort to move --

ON THE COMPUTER --

A warning sign comes up -- "RISKWARE ALERT -- HIDDEN FILES IDENTIFIED"

John’s fingers fly across the keyboard --

-- and a SERIES OF FILES OPEN UP... times and a series of numbers, meaningless to the casual observer...

ON JOHN --

Wondering what the hell he’s stepped into. He types another command into the computer...

EXT. INTERNET CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

As JOHN walks out... sees the TWO MEN across the street. As he starts to walk -- they start to follow --

-- he stops by a waiting TAXI -- leans in to the DRIVER --

JOHN
Police station?

DRIVER
Sala Daeng -- you need police?

JOHN
Yes --

DRIVER
Right there --

The driver points back --

-- at the two men following him. John stunned for a moment -- looks around, thinks about running -- but where the hell to...

... dives into the back of the taxi...

THE TWO COPS --

See him see them -- break into a sprint toward the car -- guns coming out --

JOHN
Go! Go!
DRIVER
Police right there --

And they are... right outside the cab... the smaller one
SHATTERING THE REAR WINDOW with the butt of his gun --

COP 1 (IN THAI)
Police! Get out!

-- the bigger one reaching through the broken glass and
dragging John out, through the window --

-- he tries to fight, but they wrestle him to the ground --

-- the Driver jumps out -- yelling at the cops --

DRIVER (IN THAI)
What the hell?

-- the smaller cop backing him off with his gun --

COP 1 (IN THAI)
Police matter! Give me his bag!

-- the bigger cop handcuffs John as the Driver hesitates...
then takes John's backpack out of the back seat and hands it
to the cop.

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

A simple room, barred windows and cold cement. JOHN, still in
handcuffs, sits in a chair, watching the TWO COPS unzip his
backpack... go through his things...

... while a third man -- THE COLONEL -- stands in the far
corner, watching silently. Older, poker-faced, wearing a
vaguely military shirt. He thumbs the wheel of the IPOD, back
and forth, its click the only sound in the room...

OUT OF THE BACKPACK --

they pull a BAGGIE FULL OF BRIGHT ORANGE TABLETS. Look at
each other knowingly.

COP 1
Ya ba.

JOHN
That's not mine.

COLONEL
Very serious. There are farangs in
jail the rest of their lives for
this.
JOHN
(re: cops)
They planted it--

The Colonel nods at Cop 2, who SLAPS John.

COLONEL
Accusing a police officer of misconduct. Also serious... and a breach of good manners.

JOHN
If you want money, you’ve got the wrong guy... my family doesn’t --

The Colonel nods again -- Cop 2 punches John in the face. Hard. Taking John and the chair over...

... then stands on John’s head -- keeping him on the floor, the chair forcing his feet up in the air.

COLONEL
Accusing me of corruption -- perhaps the most serious breach of all.
(beat)
You’ve been here for six months, and still ignorant. Travel with other farangs, sleep in farang hotels... we’re just scenery to you.

JOHN
I’m sorry... I’ve never had to deal with the police before...

COLONEL
You’ve never been caught before.

JOHN
Those pills are not...
(pauses)
I don’t know how those pills got in my pack.

COLONEL
A man was killed last night... his body washed up at the mouth of the river.
(beat)
One of my soldiers.

John stumbles over this for a moment, then --
JOHN
I’m a tourist, a traveler. I don’t
know anything about --

He clicks the wheel on the

IPOD --

Whose screen now reads: “NO FILES FOUND.”

COLONEL
A tourist who carries an empty music
player. Why is it empty?

John realizes that this is what it’s all about. He hesitates, then, starting to crack --

JOHN
I don’t know this game. I don’t know
how to play it -- what to say, what
not to say --

The Colonel nods, and Cop 1 PULLS HIS SANDALS OFF.

COLONEL
You could die in this room. Alone,
unanswered for.

Another nod... Cop 1 produces a small TASER...

COLONEL (CONT’D)
You should say whatever it is you
believe will make that not happen.

... and ZAPS THE SOLE OF JOHN’S FOOT. John SCREAMS in pain --

JOHN
Zack Morgan!

A pause -- the Colonel waiting -- and John spews, on the edge
of tears --

JOHN (CONT’D)
Zack Morgan did this to me. He gave
me the Ipod... he must’ve put the
pills in my bag... I don’t know why
he’s doing this to me...

The Colonel moves forward now --

COLONEL
No, we put the ya ba in your bag...

-- sets the IPOD on the table --
COLONEL (CONT’D)
... and I don’t believe that he gave
you this -- because this is nothing.

-- takes the taser from Cop 1 --

JOHN
I don’t know what you want to hear...
I don’t know how to keep myself
alive...

COLONEL
Maybe you don’t. Maybe I’ve been
misinformed... or maybe you’re an
exceptional liar.

-- and sets it on the table as well.

COLONEL (CONT’D)
I need to think about that. So do
you.

He speaks to the cops in Thai for a beat, then leaves.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

JOHN sits in a cell at the end of a narrow hallway --
thinking, getting more scared as he does --

-- and then COP 1 comes down the hallway -- someone behind
him -- and unlocks the cell door --

-- allowing DONNA -- from Act One -- to enter. John is
stunned for a beat --

-- as Donna rushes to him -- hugs and kisses him before he
can say anything --

DONNA
(in his ear)
I’m your girlfriend, Donna, and I
just bailed you out -- and by bailed,
I mean paid a very serious bribe.
(beat)
I also told them I’ve alerted the
consulate that you’re here -- which I
haven’t -- so we need to walk out
right now, and discuss this later.

EXT. CHUMPHON JAIL - DAY

JOHN and DONNA walk out of the station -- John carrying his
backpack...
... as COP 1 and 2, standing outside, watch silently. Donna leads John into a waiting

JEEP --

Driven by NADIA... ZACK riding shotgun.

As Donna and John get in the back seat, Zack looks down, refuses to make eye contact; Nadia gives John a dim, apologetic smile, then throws the jeep into gear and SPEEDS AWAY from the police station.

INT. JEEP (TRAVELING) - DAY

The four of them ride silently for a long beat, as the town gives way to orchards and smaller villages...

... John waiting for someone to say something... drawing a slow boil...

... and then he LUNGES across the back seat at Zack. Catching him across the side of the head with a decent punch, grappling for him --

DONNA

Hey!

-- Donna grabs John -- surprisingly strong, and John still weak from his beating --

DONNA (CONT’D)

John! Hey!

They make eye contact -- John just as fierce and accusing --

DONNA (CONT’D)

It’s all going to make sense. I promise you that.

JOHN

You promise me? Because after lying to me about Kirk, getting me arrested for muling your -- whatever the hell was on that Ipod -- I’m supposed to --

He turns to Nadia --

JOHN (CONT’D)

“Some people should be kept apart always and forever.” Were you warning me, or playing with me?
NADIA
I was talking to you. The one thing has nothing to do with the other --

JOHN
(pressing; bitterly)
Sure -- we made a real connection. How long have you been setting me up? Had to be before the party -- had to be since we met...

Nadia shakes her head, exasperated...

NADIA
Fine, John... it’s a dangerous, treacherous world, filled with liars and disappointment. If you get comfortable with that, you may stand a chance of enjoying yourself.

John tries to figure out how to respond to that as --

EXT. MANGROVE FOREST - DAY

-- the JEEP parks beside

A SECOND JEEP --

Driven by the KILLER who saved their lives...

... RYKER climbing out of the passenger seat.

RYKER
So... right about now, you’re really wondering what the hell is going on.

Off John -- wondering exactly that --

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

EXT. MANGROVE FOREST - DAY

JOHN and RYKER walk and talk...

RYKER
Brace yourself for this -- I’m not a telcom engineer.
(beat)
It’s like this... in Bangkok, Shanghai, Singapore... no one looks at me twice. But I turn up in Chumphon, Koh Samui, some fishing village in Malaysia... give it ten minutes, and everyone knows the CIA is there. Hell, they think the real businessmen are spies.
(beat)
So every now and again, I need someone to do something for me. Take a picture, deliver a message --

JOHN
-- or an Ipod --

RYKER
Dumb, fearless backpackers joyriding through sketchy neighborhoods -- you’re the next most indigenous thing to locals, and a lot easier to get to.

JOHN
Zack, Nadia, Donna -- spies?

RYKER
More like subcontractors. I throw them a low risk job every now and again, put cash in their pockets, they keep on surfing, screwing... living your endless summer.
(beat)
There were data files hidden on the Ipod --

JOHN
Some kind of timetables.
(Off Ryker, surprised)
Two guys followed me from the train station, I put two and two together.

RYKER
And broke CIA-encryption?
JOHN
I’m good with computers.

RYKER
They’re schedules for southern border patrols. Extremely valuable if you’re a heroin smuggler working out of Myanmar.

JOHN
That’s who was trying to steal them?

RYKER
No -- that’s who we’re trading them to. Dog -- guy who saved your life?

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

AT THE BANGKOK TRAIN STATION... as John leaves Ryker, gets on -- SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE to see RYKER nod to DOG... who gets on the train after John...

RYKER (V.O.) (CONT’D)
He’s with the smugglers. Followed you from Bangkok to make sure you didn’t get hurt...

AT THE ESTUARY... as Dog shoots the thief...

RYKER (V.O.) (CONT’D)
... and the guy he shot? He worked for Colonel Somsak Than...

AT THE JAIL... and the Colonel...

RYKER (V.O.) (CONT’D)
... who’s gone rogue... thrown in with Muslim insurgents. He’s been stealing rockets and guns from his own armory and sending them south.

BACK TO SCENE --

RYKER (CONT’D)
His problem is that the border patrols don’t trust the Army with their schedules --

JOHN
(let me guess)
-- because of guys like Colonel Than.
RYKER
After Dog shot his man and got hot, he had to scoot out of Chumphon -- which is how you slipped through the cracks --

JOHN
-- and into jail.

RYKER
If the insurgency drives out the Buddhists, we’re looking at a breakaway Muslim state... and The Colonel becomes The General... Hero of the Revolution.

(beat)
Dog’s people don’t want fundamentalists controlling the Malay border any more than we do.

JOHN
So you do business with the heroin dealers --

RYKER
-- to fight terrorists. That is the world I live in.

JOHN
But why the hell didn’t you just give the timetables to Dog in the first place?

RYKER
I might trust him with your life -- but not with a deal.

(beat)
Bobcat -- guy you’re supposed to meet in Koh Tao? A serious and seriously respected go-between.

(beat)
I give Bobcat the timetables... he decrypts and verifies them, tells Dog’s people they’re for real... they terminate the Colonel for us.

JOHN
(realizes)
Koh Tao -- you were in the bar to set me up --

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

AT THE GO-GO PICASSO BAR... Khunying walks through the bar...
RYKER (V.O.)
Yeah... pretty impressive the way you read her...

... takes money from Ryker -- already there as John walks in...

RYKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... of course, it meant I had to push again to get you moving in the right direction...

AT THE ROOFTOP PARTY... DONNA walks past RYKER, who fades into the crowd as she approaches John...

BACK TO SCENE --

JOHN
Had Donna tell me that story about my brother...

RYKER
If that was the worst thing I ever did, I wouldn’t drink or go to church.

(beat)
Most people don’t get into this way of life through the front door, John. Best way to recruit is have you do the first job without knowing it. Then, once you see how easy it is --

JOHN
(dry)
Real easy -- except the Colonel knew what I was carrying --

RYKER
The timetables passed through three sets of hands to get to me -- or maybe someone in Dog’s organization leaked intel -- there’s no hard science here.

(beat)
And if you hacked the files, Colonel Than has them now --

JOHN
No.

(off Ryker)
I put four and two together -- figured I didn’t want to get caught with whatever it was I was looking at.
PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

AT THE CHUMPHON INTERNET CAFE... John has the Ipod jacked into the computer --

JOHN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So I uploaded the files to a secure web site and wiped the Ipod's drive.

ON THE IPOD --
The code DISAPPEARS...

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN --
The same code reappears... then vanishes behind a window that reads: DATA SECURED.

BACK TO SCENE --
Ryker stops and smiles...

RYKER
Nadia clocked you as a natural from the jump.

JOHN
She picked me out? Or did you send her after me?

RYKER
That's a longer conversation -- one we can have after you finish the job.

JOHN
There is no job. I don’t want anything to do with heroin smugglers, or crooked cops... or you.

RYKER
How about two thousand dollars?

John stops cold at that --

JOHN
For what?

Ryker takes a NEW, RED IPOD out of his pocket and tosses it to John.

RYKER
Start with downloading my timetables again.

(beat)

(MORE)
I don’t like the internet. You can’t look into anyone’s eyes on the internet.

HARD CUT TO:

INT/EXT. JEEP AND MANGROVE FOREST, TRAVELING – LATER

NADIA driving, JOHN riding shotgun; ZACK and very subdued DONNA in back...

NADIA
We don’t do it for free...

ZACK
Well, you did --

John turns and PUNCHES Zack, bouncing his head off the back seat.

ZACK (CONT’D)
That’s two... are we done yet?

JOHN
(beat)
I don’t know.

ZACK
Two g’s to take a ferry ride to Koh Tao, hand a thing to a guy...

JOHN
He pays you like that every time?

NADIA
Usually five hundred, sometimes a thousand.

JOHN
So how much risk is two thousand worth?

ZACK
Part of the juice, Johnny.

John looks at Donna --

JOHN
You too?

DONNA
(tersely)
I don’t do it for the money.
NADIA
And yet, you take it.
(to John)
Of course there’s risk -- there’s
risk being here. Think about how long
that money will keep you traveling --
let you look for your brother --

ZACK
Some serious truth there -- what
you’ve already been through, you
really want to leave empty handed?

Off John...

EXT. CHUMPHON PIER - DAY

JOHN and DONNA stand in line to get on a FERRY BOAT. THREE
SOLDIERS, manning a checkpoint, wave on PASSENGERS --
backpackers, locals, tourists...

JOHN
Nothing in the Lonely Planet about
checkpoints...

DONNA
Because it wasn’t here yesterday.

She nods back at --

THE TWO BAD COPS --

Standing at the end of the pier. Watching... signalling to
the lead soldier...

LEAD SOLDIER
You two.

The soldier pulls John and Donna aside...

A LONG, EXCRUCIATING MINUTE...

... as the soldiers pore through their backpacks
meticulously. Check the pockets of their clothes, open their
guidebooks and examine the spines, etc.

Nothing there but clothes and books. The lead soldier shoots
an inquisitive look back at

THE BAD COPS --

The smaller of whom shrugs and turns... and they walk off.
The lead soldier waves John and Donna onto the ferry.
EXT. KOH TAO FERRY - LATER

As the ferry pulls away from the Chumphon pier...

JOHN AND DONNA --

Lean at the rail, silently staring out to sea...

DONNA
Going to be a long trip with us not talking to each other.

JOHN
You lied to me. About my brother.

DONNA
You dosed me.

Which breaks the tension a little...

JOHN
I was a gentleman.

DONNA
Which was slightly insulting.
(beat)
Look, we’re fighting for the security of our country... I don’t expect Zack and Nadia to get that --

JOHN
I don’t get helping drug dealers --

DONNA
-- in order to stop Muslim terrorists? Really?

JOHN
The whole “lesser evil” thing -- seems to historically bite us in the ass.

DONNA
So does the whole “tying one hand behind our backs” thing.

From behind the ferry --

A JETSKI --

Whips out from the Chumphon Pier -- more thrillseeking tourists pulling stuntary moves --
-- buzzes past the ferry, then circles around -- typically obnoxious tourists until we realize that it’s

**ZACK AND NADIA --**

Zack driving, Nadia holding on tight... and, as they buzz the ferry a second time...

Nadia HURLS a daypack... which sails over the rails...

... and lands at Donna’s feet. She picks up the daypack and unzips it...

... revealing the **SAME RED IPOD** Ryker gave to John to reload the files.

**JOHN**

Any idea what he has against the internet... or why he needs me, when he’s got you...

**THEIR POV -- THE JETSKI --**

Speeding off ahead of the ferry... farther into the Gulf of Thailand. The vistas are quickly becoming prettier.

**DONNA**

Senior year I applied for the Clandestine Service... and the CIA offered me an analyst slot. Sit at a desk in DC... read about what someone else is doing.

**JOHN**

You want to see the world.

**DONNA**

(no)

My dad’s a Sergeant Major -- 86th Airborne. I grew up in Korea, Okinawa, Germany... there’s no such thing as travel in my family, just a change of scenery.

**JOHN**

You want to **save** the world.

**DONNA**

Meanwhile, my dad’s sure I’m some kind of burnout, down here hiding from duty and responsibility...

(MORE)
DONNA (CONT'D)
and I can’t tell him any different, because I’m hoping that sooner or later Ryker’s going to realize that I’m not just one more backpacker looking for beer money.
(beat)
So no... I don’t get why he needs you when he’s got me.

She smiles dimly. John looks at her; realizing now where’s she’s coming from, sympathetic for the first time...

JOHN
They... my parents... think I should go home. I’m the second person in my family to graduate college. Ever.
(beat)
Kirk was the first. They think he’s already dead.

DONNA
What do you think?

JOHN
That if I’d been the slower runner, he’d still be out here looking for me.
(beat)
But now... there’s the reason I’m still here, and there’s why I’m still here... and I’m not sure they’re the same thing. Know what I mean?

DONNA
Yeah...

Donna wants to ask more, but it’s clear that John doesn’t want to say more. They look out at

POV -- KOH TAO --

Coming into view... a stunningly beautiful island...

EXT. JANSOM BAY, BEACH - EVENING

Pure tropical paradise. A scattering of thatched stilt bungalows, pristine beach, and beautiful young travelers coming out of the water, starting fires in the sand, firing up.

JOHN AND DONNA...

Hike along the sand...
JOHN  
And this guy, Bobcat...

DONNA  
Brokers deals for half the dirty stuff in South Thailand.

JOHN  
Spy stuff...

DONNA  
Drug stuff, gun stuff... it’s all one thing made up of a lot of other smaller things.  
(beat)  
Ryker sends us south, it’s usually to Bobcat. Bobcat deals with the scary people.

... arriving at

EXT. BOBCAT’S DIVE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

More of a shack, really... gear and a few kayaks haphazardly stacked outside, alongside a few t-shirts, a cooler full of beer and soda...

... and BOBCAT, lying in a hammock, listening to MOLLY HATCHET. He is in his 40’s, deeply tan and sun leathered, eyes hidden behind old-school Ray-Bans.

JOHN and DONNA approach...

BOBCAT  
(without moving)  
Hey.

JOHN  
Bobcat?

BOBCAT  
Yep. Anything you can’t find...  
(beat)  
... well, we probably don’t have it. Chicago?

JOHN  
You got that from one word?

BOBCAT  
The one word I hear more than any other word. “

(MORE)
Hey Bobcat, you know where I can rent a boat," "Bobcat, hook me up," "Bobcat, I’m light, can you front me."

“Bobcat, remember me?”

Bobcat turns slowly at that... looks at Donna... seems to tense up...

Yeah...

John reaches into his bag --

I ran into this guy Zack, in Bangkok--

(quickly)

Donna, right?

Donna and John exchange a look -- something’s clearly not right --

Yeah...

Before you guys take anything out of that bag, I’ve got something in back you ought to check out.

You know what we’re --

But Bobcat is up, leading them around the side of the shack --

Yeah, yeah -- in back...

INT. BOBCAT’S DIVE SHOP, STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BOBCAT opens the door, leads JOHN and DONNA into a small, cramped storage room -- COMPUTER EQUIPMENT stacked to one side --

-- and ZACK, lying on a cot -- semiconscious, dirty, face bloody...

He belongs to you, right?
ZACK
(weakly)
Sonsabitches were waiting -- jumped us when we got to the beach...
(beat)
They took Nadia.

Off John and Donna --

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

INT. BOBCAT’S DIVE SHOP, BACK ROOM - NIGHT

ZACK cleans blood off his face in a small sink... with JOHN and DONNA...

ZACK
That Colonel is waiting for you on Nangyuan Island.

JOHN
Me.

ZACK
Said you specifically. He’s sure you have the timetables, even if he can’t figure out where.

Silence for a long beat...

DONNA
The way it works is, I contact Ryker for guidance.

JOHN
And he tells us to give Bobcat the timetables, and Nadia gets killed.

DONNA
You don’t know that --

JOHN
I know he left me in jail for twelve hours --

ZACK
(softly)
Doesn’t matter what Ryker would do... he’s not here to do it.

Which stops the argument. John gets up, walks out of the room... Donna follows...

EXT. DIVE SHOP - NIGHT

BOBCAT lies in the hammock, talking to JOHN and DONNA. The SUN is peering over the horizon now.

BOBCAT
Well, on the one hand, killing a tourist is not done lightly --
(beat)
(MORE)
BOBCAT (CONT'D)
On the other hand, I’d like your friend’s chances better if she were American. English, even.

DONNA
We could use some help --

BOBCAT
Bad timing -- I burned through my quota of “getting involved” mistakes just ten, fifteen years ago.

DONNA
You work for Ryker --

BOBCAT
I work for myself. I’m a go-between; you give me timetables, I activate an encryption key, I close a deal between two parties who need each other, but don’t trust each other.

(beat)
Staying neutral is how I stay in business.

JOHN
What if we don’t give you the timetables?

BOBCAT
(shrugs)
Then that’s what I tell Ryker -- you didn’t give them to me.

DONNA
You’re really going turn your back on us?

Bobcat looks at Donna coolly, but age and regret crease his eyes --

BOBCAT
Ryker didn’t throw you in the deep end... you waded over here, with your eyes wide open. Your friend, too.

(I’m not getting involved)
You want help? I’ll rent you a boat for 500 baht. That’s half the going rate.

John looks at Donna --

JOHN
We’re not leaving her behind.
Donna considers a moment --

DONNA
No... we’re not.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAUNCH - DAWN

As JOHN, DONNA, and ZACK drag a MOTORIZED SKIFF into the water, past FISHERMEN getting ready to go out, a TOUR BOAT loading up...

ZACK
Trying to handle this ourselves... could be, all we're doing is adding three more bodies to the pile.

JOHN
Could be.

ZACK
On the other hand... one bitching traveler story.

They look at Donna, who smiles dimly. They climb into the boat, start it up, and set off...

CUT TO:

EXT. NANGYUAN ISLAND - MORNING

As the SKIFF comes into view...

... piloted by ZACK. JOHN and DONNA, wearing snorkeling gear, drop off the sides of the boat...

AN UNDERWATER SHOT --

Takes them swimming along a stunning underwater vista -- reef and sea life...

EXT. RUINED JAIL - MORNING

The vestiges of an old penal colony -- crumbling walls being reclaimed by the jungle.

JOHN and DONNA come out of the water... walk across a long sloping beach... toward...

THE COLONEL --

who sits on a crumbled stone wall... smoking a cigarette. Behind him --
NADIA --

Sits on the ground, hands cuffed behind her back, framed by the TWO SOLDIERS from the ferry.

COLONEL
So... have you learned how to play the game yet?

EXT. SKIFF - CONTINUOUS

ZACK holding the boat in open water -- watching the small figures on the shore --

-- and suddenly BOBCAT, wearing a scuba tank, pulls himself out of the water, over the side of the boat. He is wearing scuba gear --

ZACK
What the hell are you doing here --

BOBCAT
Getting involved...

He ditches the aqualung. Zack relaxes a little, figuring that Bobcat has decided to help them out...

... as Bobcat opens a SMUGGLER’S COMPARTMENT in the roof of the skiff --

BOBCAT (CONT’D)
... so just relax and let the grownups settle this.

-- and TAKES OUT A PISTOL...

EXT. RUINS - CONTINUOUS

Back on John and Donna and the Colonel...

JOHN
We didn’t bring it with us.

COLONEL
It’s on the boat, with your friend.

JOHN
Shoot us, it goes in the water.

The Colonel considers this for a beat...

COLONEL
And you’re proposing to control the negotiation how?
JOHN
We take our friend and go, leave the timetables wherever you want them.

COLONEL
Because I should trust you.

JOHN
Because I don’t care about the timetables -- or your guns, or your insurgency -- or someone else’s drugs.

The Colonel is quiet for a long beat. Draws on his cigarette, then looks at Donna:

COLONEL
And you? You don’t care either?

DONNA
I care... I care more about my friend.

JOHN
What’s your choice here? Kill us, you don’t get what you want.

COLONEL
No... I think I can have everything.

He nods out at

POV -- THE SKIFF

Which runs onto the beach. ZACK gets out...

... followed by BOBCAT. Who has the gun at Zack’s back...

... and the IPOD in his other hand. His body language, his nod to the Colonel...

... it tells us everything we need to know. Zack figured wrong; Bobcat is clearly on the Colonel’s side.

The Colonel nods to the

SOLDIERS --

Who pull a trembling Nadia to her feet -- coralling her over to John and Donna...

JOHN
What happened to neutrality --
BOBCAT
I am buyer agnostic... the Colonel bought me.

Bobcat prods Zack toward the others -- keeping his gun trained on them as he moves nearer to the Colonel --

JOHN
You told him how the timetables were coming in...

BOBCAT
(to the Colonel)
... and he screwed up on stealing them -- twice. Forces me to get hands-on, in spite of my better judgement --

DONNA
But we were going to give them to you --

RYKER (O.S.)
-- which is the one thing he’s been trying to avoid all along.

RYKER AND DOG AND THREE MORE HEROIN SMUGGLERS --

materialize out of the jungle. Machine guns aimed at the Colonel... at the Colonel’s soldiers... at Bobcat.

RYKER (CONT’D)
Let me guess -- he made this “rescue” seem like your idea, arranged the boat, and had you take off from the most public launch site on Koh Tao.

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT --

AT THE LAUNCH SITE... John, Zack, and Donna dragging the boat into the water... past fishermen... past a tour dive boat loading up.

BACK TO SCENE --

RYKER (CONT’D)
Couple dozen people see the four of you disappear off the face of the earth....

JOHN
(realizes)
... Bobcat can tell you we never delivered the timetables.
RYKER
He couldn’t leave you alive -- and he wasn’t about to kill you in his own backyard. Which brings us here.
(to Bobcat)
Something like that?

Bobcat shrugs, acknowledging his double dealing, yet oddly calm...

BOBCAT
Something like that.

RYKER
Of course, you weren’t giving me a whole lot of credit in the brains department. Or John, for that matter.

JOHN
Just because a man hates the internet doesn’t mean he won’t check his email.

RYKER
(to Bobcat)
Dog didn’t want to use you; he’d heard rumors you’d been doing business with the Muslims, figured we’d get outbid.
(beat)
But I figured, if we played it right, you’d draw the Colonel out for us.

DONNA
(softly)
You used us as bait.

RYKER
I let Bobcat and the Colonel pick the killing ground.

Bobcat and Ryker look at each other coolly... then Bobcat smiles thinly...

... making a split-second decision to change sides one more time...

... as he raises his pistol -- and shoots the Colonel.

Then Bobcat quickly drops the gun, throwing his hands in the air --

-- as the Colonel’s soldiers swing their rifles up --
-- John and Donna hitting the ground --
-- Zack grabbing Nadia, pushing her to the ground as well --
-- as a RIPPLE OF GUNFIRE from DOG AND THE HEROIN SMUGGLERS takes down the soldiers.

Dog swings his rifle toward Bobcat --

RYKER (IN THAI) (CONT’D)
No, no... he’s all right.

Dog looks at Ryker dubiously -- then barks orders to his men. He pries THE IPOD from the Colonel’s dead hands as his men drag the bodies into the jungle.

Then he looks at Bobcat -- who hasn’t moved --

RYKER (CONT’D)
Man. When it comes to switching sides, you’ve got your timing down.

Bobcat smiles and shrugs --

BOBCAT
So...

-- as John, Donna, Zack, Nadia -- all scared speechless -- slowy pull themselves to their feet --

RYKER
(nods at Dog)
So, the only thing that keeps him from killing you from now on is me. (beat) Leave the gun.

Grateful for the reprieve, Bobcat nods, turns and heads back to his boat -- as Ryker walks over and picks up Bobcat’s gun.

RYKER (CONT’D)
(to John, et al)
Walk the beach north half a click, you’ll find a fishing boat in a cove. Have a beer, enjoy being alive... we’ll leave in half an hour or so.

John starts to say something -- Nadia grabs him by the arm --

NADIA
(quickly)
As always, a pleasure doing business with you.
That, and Nadia’s even look, defusing John. They move off, with Zack --

-- Donna lingering behind -- watches as

POV -- BOBCAT --

Already piloting the skiff away from the island...

DONNA
Just like that?

RYKER
The man’s too useful to burn. And now I have something on him.

DONNA
He sold out to terrorists. You can’t trust him.

RYKER
I never did.

Ryker walks off, leaving her to contemplate this uneasily...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL VERANDA - EVENING

JOHN finds RYKER, in a sport jacket and slacks, drinking a coke and watching the sun set.

RYKER
Who else gets paid to sit on the beach and watch the sun set? I think I do this job for evenings like this.

JOHN
After mornings like this, where you have three men killed.

RYKER
Yeah... it’s been a pretty full day.

Ryker slides an envelope across the table to John.

John opens the

ENVELOPE --

Stuffed with cash... and a FILE MARKED: STATE DEPARTMENT -- CLASSIFIED.
John opens the file -- it’s a MISSING PERSONS REPORT on KIRK, his PASSPORT PHOTO stapled to the upper right corner.

He flips through it...

      RYKER (CONT’D)
      Not much there you don’t already know; rumors, false alarms, a few uninvestigated reports.  
      (beat)
      I believe I owe you a “why me” conversation.

      JOHN
      (re: file)
      Got my answer right here, don’t I.  
      You picked me because of Kirk.  
      (beat)
      What was he into?

      RYKER
      I don’t know you well enough to answer that question yet.

      JOHN
      Or you don’t have an answer, and you’re stringing me along.

      RYKER
      On the one hand, you’ve got a good eye, think on your feet, and don’t scare too easy. Plus, clean motivation is pretty rare in my line of work.  
      (beat)
      On the other hand, I can already tell you’re going to be a pain in the ass. So why would I bust my ass drawing you in -- unless I have an angle?

As John chews on that, Ryker stands up...

      RYKER (CONT’D)
      Stay in touch.

Ryker walks away.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

ZACK stokes a fire as NADIA and DONNA sit and stare into it. A COOLER sits in the sand nearby.
JOHN AND DONNA --

join them at the fire, dumping their packs down...

Nadia looks at Zack, who pauses a beat, then digs into his pocket, takes out some cash, and hands it over to her.

JOHN
Someone lose a bet?

NADIA
Someone won.

ZACK
(to John)
I was sure you’d swing on me again.

The four of them exchange slow smiles.

NADIA
We’re thinking about Ko Panyi next.
See the stilt village, watch the sun set on the other side.

DONNA
Cool if I travel with you?

Zack and Nadia look a little surprised --

DONNA (CONT’D)
Got money in my pocket and time on my hands...

ZACK
Good feeling, isn’t it...

Zack opens the cooler --

-- revealing BEER and LOBSTERS. He cracks the beers, tosses them around...

DONNA
(to John)
What do you say?

John hesitates, as they settle around the fire...

NADIA
Zivili...
(off the others)
Croatian toast.
DONNA
Feels like we need something...
bigger...

NADIA
Okay... how about a toast to the
bullets that didn’t hit us...

ZACK
... which will grow larger in size
and number in the retelling...

DONNA
How about... to the night in front of
us. And the morning after that.

They exchange looks, smiles...

NADIA
I’ll go with that one.

ZACK
Sure.

John looks down at his
BACKPACK --
The ENVELOPE fallen halfway out of the front pocket...
... and, with his foot, he pushes the envelope back inside...
out of sight...

JOHN
Ko Panyi. Why the hell not.

As we leave the four of them -- drinking and talking --

END OF SHOW