

THE DEVIL PREFERS LIVESTOCK

Pilot Episode Script

"The Stop"

Written by Edward Jamison

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for reading the pilot episode of "The Devil Prefers Livestock." This script is based on my true story of surviving fifteen years of targeted attacks by the Macau Triads. Every scene is grounded in lived experience and backed by documented evidence, including audio, video, and images. Many of these materials are available for review.

This pilot is just the beginning. The entire story has been fully rewritten and expanded through a professional adaptation process. The original book, published in 2021, has been completely overhauled. The new canon, with additional events and material that go beyond 2021, is available exclusively at www.thedevilpreferslivestock.com. If you want to see the full scope and potential of this project as a prestige TV series, I encourage you to explore the rewritten story and supporting evidence on the website.

Based on the depth and breadth of the material, this story can easily sustain three or four full seasons, each grounded in real events and documented proof.

I am actively seeking representation and production partners who recognize the value of a true crime story that is as cinematic as it is authentic. Please contact me directly at edward@jamisonlawgroup.com or through the website if you are interested in discussing adaptation, representation, or partnership.

Thank you for considering this project.

Edward Jamison
Attorney, Author, and Survivor

FADE IN:

INT. SGN AIRPORT - CURB - EARLY MORNING

Edward and his young son step out of a taxi. Edward checks the taxi's license plate and the driver's ID before collecting their bags. He glances behind the taxi, scanning for tailing vehicles.

Edward's son bolts from the taxi and runs up to the airport entrance, not looking back or saying goodbye to his mother. Hong stands outside, visible through the glass, scanning the crowd. Edward clocks her, registers the threat.

Edward pauses at the curb, gives Hong a dirty look, but says nothing. He turns away and heads inside with his son.

Humidity clings to their skin. Edward's shirt sticks to his back. He notes the temperature shift as they pass from the muggy curb into the artificially cool airport.

Edward's hand never leaves his son's. He scans the order of security layers ahead: curb, entrance, check-in, immigration, gate.

EDWARD (V.O.)

The system is always polite until it isn't.

You never argue. You just inventory.

CUT TO:

INT. SGN AIRPORT - DELTA COUNTER / GATE - CONTINUOUS

Edward and his son approach the Delta counter. Edward notes the time on the overhead clock as he hands over their passports.

To the right, a Japanese couple argues with another agent. The man insists, in accented English, that they had confirmed seats. The agent, clearly confused, apologizes and says she doesn't know what happened, but their seats are already taken by other passengers. The couple grows louder, frustration mixing with disbelief.

The agent at Edward's counter maintains a friendly but rehearsed tone. Edward listens for any hesitation in her voice. He watches her fingers on the keyboard, counting each keystroke. The agent's eyes flick to a supervisor before she speaks.

Edward notes the agent's badge number, files it away. He counts the number of people in line ahead and behind.

The boarding passes scan and are accepted. Edward starts to move forward, but the system reverses and calls them back.

AGENT

Sir, one moment. I'm seeing a hold on the child's record.

A staffer applies a sticker to Edward's documents without looking at him. Edward goes still. He does not argue or volunteer narrative. He simply waits.

Tension builds. Edward senses the system is ready to reclassify him at any moment.

CUT TO:

INT. SGN AIRPORT - DELTA COUNTER / GATE - MOMENTS LATER

The agent refreshes the screen, confusion on her face.

AGENT

Okay... it's gone. You're cleared. Go ahead.

Edward and his son move quickly, controlled. At the immigration desk, Edward keeps everything public, calm, procedural. He is asked to move to a side room. Once inside, he hands over his phone and opens his bag when asked.

Edward's resistance is calm and procedural.

EDWARD

(quiet, to his son)

Hold my hand. Don't talk to anyone.

A staffer repeats, in the same cadence:

STAFFER

It's just a system check.

The staffer hands his phone back to him.

ANOTHER STAFFER

Do not use your phone.

The airport lighting is too bright, too clean, too early. Edward inventories colors, exits, odds. He notes the sticker motif: a small colored sticker with three narrow bars or a tri-color dot on his passport or boarding document. He registers it as a threat signal, not a clue. No explanation is given.

Edward watches for secondary eyes, not just uniformed staff. He notes the cadence of staff chatter, filing any change. His heart rate stays steady, but his grip on his son's hand tightens. He tracks the location of every security camera and notices a plainclothes observer with a radio, filing the face.

Edward reviews exit routes in his head while waiting. He notes the location of the nearest restroom and emergency exit.

EXT. SGN AIRPORT - CURB - SAME TIME

Hong stands at the curb, phone pressed to her ear, pacing anxiously. Her voice is urgent, almost frantic.

HONG

(in Vietnamese, rapid-fire, subtitled)

Why haven't you sent the SMS? I told you, he's inside now.

The arrest warrant, you need to send the image. I'm watching him.

He's at immigration.

She glances through the glass, eyes locked on the entrance. Her hand shakes as she waits for a reply.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. POLICE CAR - EARLY MORNING - STUCK IN TRAFFIC

A uniformed Vietnamese police officer sits behind the wheel, phone in hand. Horns blare outside. Through the windshield, a mass of vehicles is gridlocked; an accident up ahead.

The officer types on his phone, frustration on his face.

POLICE OFFICER

(in Vietnamese, subtitled)

I'm trying. Traffic is blocked. I will send it soon; internet is bad, but don't worry,

he's on the no-fly list, they will never let him board the flight.

He won't make it through immigration.

He glances at his screen, trying to upload the warrant image, but the signal is weak. The phone chimes with an error. He curses under his breath and tries again.

EXT. SGN AIRPORT - CURB

Hong's anxiety spikes as she watches the doors, waiting for the police to appear.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SGN AIRPORT - IMMIGRATION SIDE ROOM

Edward, still waiting, senses the tension but remains procedural, calm, and alert.

INT. SGN AIRPORT - BOARDING AREA / JETWAY - MINUTES LATER

Edward and his son are cleared. They move fast, controlled, toward the gate.

Edward waits for the second beep at the scanner before moving. He counts the steps from the scanner to the jetway entry. He checks the faces of other passengers for signs of recognition or avoidance.

Edward listens for the cadence of footsteps behind them as they walk to the jetway. He checks for mirrored glass, noting reflections. He looks for the same faces reappearing at multiple checkpoints. Edward keeps his boarding pass in his shirt pocket, not his bag.

His son is silent, watching his father. Post-clearance, Edward counts the steps to the next checkpoint, keeping his son's hand in a tight grip.

Edward inventories every detail: colors, exits, staff movements, and the location of every security camera. He keeps a mental tally of odds and possible outcomes.

Cliffhanger cut: Hard cut before the next checkpoint, not a full resolution.

EDWARD (V.O.)

The sticker wasn't for me. It was for the next set of eyes.

INT. AIRPORT GATE AREA - DAY

A gate agent stands at the microphone.

GATE AGENT

(over PA)

Attention, all passengers on Delta Flight 182. We will begin boarding early.

Please proceed to the gate now for immediate boarding.

Passengers gather their bags and line up. Edward, holding his son's hand, glances at the clock, surprised by the early call. He joins the line, eyes scanning the crowd for any sign of trouble.

INT. JETWAY / AIRPLANE - DAY

Edward and his son board ahead of schedule. Edward keeps his head down, moving quickly. They find their seats. Edward stows his bag, buckles in, and pulls his son close.

Edward exhales, watching the last of the passengers file in.

EXT. SGN AIRPORT - CURB - CONTINUOUS

Hong stands at the curb as a police car finally arrives. She runs to the officers, waving her phone.

HONG

(in Vietnamese, frantic, subtitled)

You are too late! He is boarding now! Why did you not send the image sooner?

The officer grabs his phone, showing her the screen and how it wouldn't send.

POLICE OFFICER

We have the warrant. Where is he?

Hong points to the terminal.

HONG

Inside, Delta counter! Hurry!

INT. AIRPORT - DELTA COUNTER

Hong and the police rush inside, breathless. Hong slams her hand on the counter.

HONG

Edward Jamison. My son. Are they on the flight?

The gate agent checks the manifest, scrolling.

GATE AGENT

I'm sorry, I don't see an Edward Jamison or his son on the passenger list.

Hong's face twists with frustration. The police officer leans in, insistent.

POLICE OFFICER

He is on the flight. We must go to the gate now.

Hong shouts at the agent as they all break into a run.

INT. AIRPLANE - TAXIING

Edward sits quietly as the plane backs out from the gate. He looks out the window, watching the airport recede.

INT. AIRPORT - GATE AREA

Hong, the police, and the gate agent arrive just as the jet bridge is retracting. The agent points through the glass.

GATE AGENT

It's too late. That's your flight, taking off now.

Through the window, Edward's plane gains speed on the runway, lifting off into the sky.

SMASH CUT / TRANSITION - TITLE CARD

The sound of the scanner beep lingers, morphing into the click of a seatbelt or a car's turn signal. Harsh fluorescent airport light dissolves into the warm glow of a dashboard at night.

ON SCREEN:

2009 - LOS ANGELES

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, NIGHT

Edward enters his house, briefcase in hand. He sets it down on the table, unlocks the clasps, and pulls out a stack of mail. Legal notices, bills, and envelopes brought home from the office.

He listens for the sound of mail sliding out, separating legal envelopes from junk by touch and habit.

The living room is dimly lit. Stacks of legal documents and unopened bills crowd the table. The air feels heavy with the residue of a marriage that collapsed alongside the 2008 financial crash.

He pours himself a rum and Coke. He begins to scan and file every document, not out of paranoia, but as a survival procedure. Inventorying becomes his lifeline.

He keeps a backup of all scanned documents on an encrypted drive. He keeps a running tally of what's lost on a notepad, with a column for "unknowns," things he can't explain yet.

Edward's routines: rum and Coke, inventory, scan, file, repeat.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, LATER THAT NIGHT

Edward sits at the table, staring at a pile of legal forms and unopened bills. He sips his rum and Coke, eyes tracing the edges of each document before scanning and labeling them.

He flips through his notepad. One column lists assets lost, another lists "unknowns," the things that still don't add up. He pauses, adds a new entry, then closes the pad with a sigh.

His phone sits silent on the table. The house is quiet except for the faint hum of the refrigerator and the distant sound of traffic outside.

Edward leans back, looking at the ceiling. His routines have become ritual. Inventory, scan, file, sip. Repeat.

He glances at a framed photo on the mantel. The faces are turned away from the camera, the past just out of reach.

Edward stands, gathers the documents, and files them in a locked cabinet. He pours the last of his drink, turns out the light, and heads upstairs.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, MORNING

Edward sits at the kitchen table with a fresh stack of paperwork. Sunlight filters in through half-closed blinds. He pours another rum and Coke, ignoring the clock.

He reviews divorce documents, court filings, and financial statements. Each signature feels like a small amputation. He inventories the losses: house equity, savings, trust.

His phone buzzes. A new message from Faith.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Edward and Faith sit across from each other. The mood is clinical, businesslike. Faith opens her purse and slides several credit card bills across the table.

FAITH

These are all of them. The total is eighty-seven thousand.

Edward glances at the statements, his face unreadable. He nods once.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, LATER

Edward sits at his desk. He writes a check for eighty-seven thousand dollars, careful and precise. He places it in an envelope and sets it aside.

He marks another line in his notepad, under "Losses."

He stares at the wall, numb, methodical. The phone rings less and less. Inventory, scan, file, sip, repeat.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, NIGHT

Edward sits at his desk, reviewing fertility clinic brochures and medical paperwork. The lights are sharp, the air feels sterile. Faith stands in the doorway, arms crossed.

FAITH

If you're not going to try, what's the point?

Edward closes the brochure and looks up at her.

EDWARD

I don't want to have a kid with you. I think we should break up.

Faith's face hardens. She pulls the three-carat engagement ring off her finger and throws it at him. The ring lands on the desk with a sharp clink.

FAITH

Fine.

She storms out, slamming the door behind her.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, DAY (A FEW DAYS LATER)

Edward is getting dressed, adjusting his tie and jacket. His phone rings. He answers, distracted, as he gathers notes for a seminar.

FAITH (on phone)

Can I come by and grab my stuff? I've been staying at my friend's.

EDWARD

Yes, that's fine. The maid will let you in.

He hangs up, glances at the time, and heads out the door, seminar notes in hand.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, LATER

Faith storms through the house, her anger erupting. She tears open every suit jacket, rummages through drawers, searching for the fifty-five thousand dollar engagement ring.

Documents go missing. The ring, hidden in an old computer, is never found.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, NIGHT (LATER)

Edward sits alone. He inventories what remains: a few suits, a dwindling bank balance, and a sense of emotional exhaustion that borders on numbness.

He scans and files every document, every receipt, every letter. Inventorying is no longer just a habit, it is survival.

He pours another rum and Coke. The phone sits silent. The house is quiet, except for the faint clink of ice in his glass.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, DAY

Edward sits at the kitchen table, a stack of scanned documents and legal forms beside him. He flips through his notepad, eyes lingering on the "unknowns" column.

The phone rings. Edward glances at the caller ID, then answers.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Jeff, upbeat and persistent, sits across from Edward in a dimly lit restaurant. The conversation is procedural, not emotional.

JEFF

You should come to Macau. New opportunities, legal work, a fresh start. Just think about it.

Edward listens, noncommittal. Jeff's optimism is steady, not a hard sell.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, DAY

Edward hangs up. The house is quiet. He pours another drink, sits back, and stares at the ceiling, weighing his options.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jeff and Keith, both attorneys, invite Edward out for dinner. The table is crowded with plates and glasses. Jeff's pitch about

Macau is casual, dismissible at first, but becomes oxygen as Edward's life in LA collapses.

Keith sits mostly silent, arms crossed, watching Edward. His phone is face-down on the table. His fork never touches his plate. Jeff's son texts under the table, unnoticed.

Jeff waits until after dessert before raising Macau again.

JEFF

Just a week. Business class. You need a break.

Edward resists at first, but the collapse of his old life makes the offer feel less like a risk and more like inevitability.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, NIGHT

Edward finally relents, not out of excitement, but because resistance feels pointless. He dials Jeff, confirming the trip. The decision is procedural, not hopeful.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, NIGHT

Edward sits at his computer, the glow of the screen lighting his face. He opens a browser, types in the travel site address, and begins the booking process.

He wires funds through ff-depot.com. The confirmation screen lists Cathay Pacific, business class, LAX to Hong Kong, ferry to Macau, round trip, ten days.

Edward prints out the itinerary and tucks it into a folder with his passport and other travel documents.

He calls Jeff to confirm the dates. The conversation is brief, procedural.

EDWARD

Travel dates are set. I'll see you there.

He hangs up, double-checks every document, and locks them in his briefcase.

INT. LOS ANGELES FREEWAY - DAY

Edward drives, traffic crawling. He rehearses the steps in his head: what to pack, what to leave behind, who to notify. He calls Jeff again to confirm the details, the call short and matter-of-fact.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, BEL AIR, NIGHT

Edward stands in his closet, inventorying each item. Suits, shirts, shoes. He makes a list, checks it twice, and lays everything out with military precision.

He pours a final rum and Coke, sits on the edge of his bed, and stares at the packed bags. The house is silent.

Edward glances at his notepad. One last entry: "Departure: tomorrow."

He closes the pad, turns out the light, and prepares for the next chapter.

INT. WYNN HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Jeff greets Edward at the entrance, looking upbeat and a little distracted.

JEFF

Glad you made it. I've already got a girl coming over to my room tonight.

But my friend Freddie is happy to take you out, show you a few hotspots.

EDWARD

Sounds good.

INT. WYNN HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Edward enters his room, drops his bag, and takes a quick shower. He lays out a clean shirt, changes, and checks his watch. He feels the energy of Macau and the freedom of a new city.

INT. WYNN HOTEL LOBBY - NEAR MIDNIGHT

Edward steps into the lobby about thirty minutes later. The place is quieter, lights reflecting off the marble floor. Freddie is waiting, casual and confident.

FREDDIE

Ready to see Macau?

Edward nods, feeling ready for anything. They head out into the night.

INT. WYNN HOTEL LOBBY, NEAR MIDNIGHT

Edward meets Freddie in the lobby. Freddie's vibe is confident, relaxed. They exchange a quick handshake and head out.

EXT. GRAND LISBOA, RACETRACK AREA, NIGHT

The streets around the Lisboa are alive with neon, movement, and the hum of late-night Macau. Freddie leads Edward through the Racetrack. Long public hallways, about a hundred women circling, waiting for men to approach and negotiate a price.

FREDDIE

This is the Racetrack. Walk, look, talk. If you want to say hello, just go for it.

Edward watches the scene, curious, not cautious. He approaches a Chinese girl. She looks at him like he is the Night Stalker. Her eyes wide, face tense. She says no, fast, almost like fear, and quickly walks away.

Edward glances at Freddie.

EDWARD

What was that?

FREDDIE

Never seen that before.

Two minutes later, Freddie tries his luck. A girl does the same thing to him. Quick rejection, a look of alarm, and she is gone.

They both laugh, a little thrown.

EDWARD

Screw this place.

FREDDIE

Let's try somewhere else.

They leave the Racetrack together, the energy of the place lingering.

INT. MGM PICKUP BAR, NIGHT

Freddie and Edward enter the MGM, expecting a lively scene. Instead, the bar is nearly empty. A few scattered patrons, bored bartenders, and no real action.

Freddie looks around, shrugs.

FREDDIE

Usually this place is packed.

Edward orders a drink. They stand at the bar, making small talk, watching the door. The energy is flat, the room feels dead.

They almost call it a night.

FREDDIE

You want to check out the Eighteen Sauna? It's inside the Golden Dragon Casino. Pretty famous.

Edward nods.

EDWARD

Sure, why not.

They finish their drinks and head out, leaving the empty bar behind.

INT. EIGHTEEN SAUNA, SHOWROOM, NIGHT

Freddie and Edward are led into a large, brightly lit room. The music is blasting, the bass thumping through the floor. Nearly a hundred women stand in formation, each in an evening gown, each with a number pinned to her dress. The air is thick with perfume and nerves.

Edward scans the lineup. He spots Hong right away. Her number is 608. Confident posture, striking features, steady gaze. He feels a pull but hesitates for a moment, almost second-guessing his choice as Freddie stands next to him, taking his time.

Freddie studies the lineup, indecisive. Ten minutes pass. Edward considers changing his mind, but in the end, he sticks with Hong. He points.

EDWARD

Her. Number 608.

Hong steps forward. The attendant nods, marking the choice on a clipboard. Freddie finally makes his selection, relieved to be done.

INT. SAUNA PRIVATE ROOM, LATER

Edward sits on the edge of the bed. Hong is nearby, composed and quiet. The conversation is minimal. A few questions, a few answers, nothing forced. The encounter is transactional, but there is something about Hong's presence that feels different.

At the end, as Edward gets dressed, Hong hands him a slip of paper with her phone number. No words, just a look. He takes it and puts it in his wallet.

INT. HALLWAY, LATER

Edward meets Freddie in the hallway. Freddie looks exhausted.

FREDDIE

Took me forever. Worth it, though.

They exchange a nod and head back into the noise of the casino.

EXT. MACAU STREETS, EARLY MORNING

Freddie and Edward walk toward the hotel. The city is winding down. The sky is just starting to lighten.

FREDDIE

Welcome to Macau.

Edward nods, the night's events settling in, already replaying the moment he saw Hong and the number now tucked in his wallet.

INT. WYNN HOTEL ROOM, MORNING

Edward wakes late, sunlight filtering through blackout curtains. He lies still for a moment, replaying the previous night: the Racetrack, the MGM, the Eighteen Sauna, and Hong's number in his wallet.

He sits up, checks his phone, and finds a message from Jeff.

JEFF (TEXT)

Breakfast downstairs if you're up. Noon. No rush.

Edward showers, dresses, and heads down to the hotel restaurant.

INT. WYNN HOTEL RESTAURANT, LATE MORNING

Jeff is already at a table, halfway through a coffee. He looks relaxed, more at home here than anywhere else.

JEFF

Rough night?

EDWARD

Not bad. Macau's different.

They swap a few stories about the previous night, both laughing about the Racetrack rejections. Jeff asks if Edward got any numbers.

EDWARD

Yeah. One.

Jeff grins.

JEFF

That's a good start.

INT. WYNN HOTEL ROOM, AFTERNOON

Back in his room, Edward pulls Hong's number from his wallet. He considers whether to call or text. After a moment, he decides to send a message.

EDWARD (TEXT)

Hi, this is Edward. From last night.

He sets the phone down, not expecting a quick reply. He looks out over the city, feeling the mix of anticipation and uncertainty that comes with a new place and a new connection.

He waits. No reply.

MONTAGE, DAYS 2 TO 5, MACAU

INT. WYNN HOTEL ROOM, MORNING

Edward wakes up and checks his phone. Still no reply from Hong. He sends another text, then tries calling. No answer.

INT. MACAU, VARIOUS OFFICES, DAY

During the day, Edward moves through a series of business meetings. He meets with local attorneys in glass-walled conference rooms, discussing legal structures and paperwork for opening a Macau corporation. He visits banks, sitting across from managers in crisp suits, reviewing documents, signing forms, and opening a new account. The process is formal, efficient, and always accompanied by a fresh stack of business cards.

INT. DARLINGS 1, EVENING, DAY 2

After business hours, Edward visits Darlings 1. He scans the lineup and notices a striking Vietnamese girl with #301 on her dress. Edward later finds out that her name is Hanna. Edward immediately asks the manager if he can have Hanna alone.

MANAGER

She's busy with another customer right now.

Edward hesitates, disappointed. He scans the lineup again, having a hard time choosing between three second-best options. He turns to Jeff.

EDWARD

Can I pick more than one?

JEFF

Yeah, if you want. You just need to pay for all of them.

Edward nods, deciding.

EDWARD

I'll take all three.

The manager calls their numbers. The three women step forward, and Edward is led to the backroom with them. The experience is surreal, more spectacle than intimacy, and Hanna stays on his mind the entire time.

INT. WYNN HOTEL ROOM, NIGHT, DAY 2

Back at the hotel, Edward calls Darlings 1 and specifically requests Hanna by name and number for the next day. The manager confirms she can be sent to his hotel room.

INT. WYNN HOTEL ROOM, EVENING, DAY 3

Hanna arrives at Edward's room, composed and direct. Their conversation is brief but memorable, her wit and guarded warmth standing out. The encounter is transactional, but Edward senses there is more beneath the surface.

MONTAGE, EVENINGS, DAYS 3 TO 5

Edward continues exploring Macau with Jeff and Freddie. They visit new saunas and clubs, some forgettable, some strange, none quite like Hong and Hanna. Hanna's sharp confidence and quick humor linger after she leaves. Still, it is Hong he thinks about most, replaying their brief meeting at the Eighteen Sauna and wondering if she will ever reply.

INT. WYNN HOTEL ROOM, NIGHT, END OF DAY 5

Edward checks his phone one last time before bed. Still nothing from Hong. He tosses the phone on the nightstand, frustration and curiosity mixing as he drifts off to sleep.

A faint buzz. Edward sits up, checks the screen.

ON PHONE - A new message from Hong:
"Tomorrow 8pm, 18 Sauna. I'll be there."

Edward exhales—relief, anticipation, a surge of adrenaline.

He sets the phone down, a small smile breaking through as he finally settles in for the night.

INT. 18 SAUNA, NIGHT

Edward arrives at the 18 Sauna a little before 8 pm. The music is loud, the energy high. He waits in the lounge, scanning the crowd.

Hong appears, dressed in an evening gown, posture steady and confident. She greets Edward with a small, knowing smile.

They talk quietly, sharing stories about Macau, her work, and Edward's impressions of the city. There is a sense of urgency; both know this is his last night in Macau.

Before leaving, Hong writes her Yahoo Messenger nickname on a slip of paper and hands it to Edward.

HONG

Message me when you get home.

Edward nods, tucking the paper safely into his wallet.

EXT. 18 SAUNA, NIGHT

Edward steps outside, the city lights buzzing. He hails a taxi, climbs in, and gives the driver his hotel address. The ride is quiet, the city rushing past the window.

INT. WYNN HOTEL ROOM, LATE NIGHT

Edward enters his room, sits on the bed, and takes out the slip of paper with Hong's Yahoo Messenger nickname. He stares at it for a moment, feeling the weight of the night and the end of his first Macau trip.

He sets an early alarm, knowing he will be leaving Macau in the morning.

INT. WYNN HOTEL ROOM, EARLY MORNING

Edward wakes to the sound of his alarm. The city is still dark outside. He packs his bags, double-checks his documents, and makes sure the slip of paper with Hong's Yahoo Messenger nickname is secure in his wallet.

He takes one last look around the room, then heads downstairs to check out.

INT. WYNN HOTEL LOBBY, MORNING

The lobby is quiet. Edward settles his bill at the front desk, then steps outside into the humid Macau air, his suitcase in hand.

EXT. MACAU STREETS, MORNING

Edward hails a taxi and loads his bag into the trunk. The city is just waking up as the taxi weaves through traffic toward the ferry terminal.

INT. FERRY TERMINAL, LATER

Edward moves through the terminal, passport in hand. He boards the ferry for Hong Kong, the city receding behind him.

INT. AIRPORT, DAY

Edward waits at his gate, flipping through emails on his phone, the slip of paper with Hong's nickname folded neatly in his wallet.

INT. AIRPLANE, DAY

Edward sits by the window, watching the clouds drift by. He thinks about his time in Macau, the people he met, and the unfinished business with Hong and Hanna.

INT. LOS ANGELES, EDWARD'S HOUSE, EVENING

Edward arrives home, drops his bags, and sits at his desk. He opens his laptop, logs into Yahoo Messenger, and searches for Hong's nickname.

He types a short message.

EDWARD (TEXT TO HONG)

Hi, it's Edward. I made it home.

EDWARD (TEXT TO HANNA)

Hi Hanna, this is Edward from Macau. Hope you're well.

He refreshes the app and checks his phone, not expecting much. Within three hours, both women reply.

HONG (TEXT)

Hi Edward. Glad you got home safe. How are you?

HANNA (TEXT)

Hi Edward. Nice to hear from you. Macau is quiet without you.

Edward smiles, surprised and relieved. He replies to both, and the conversations pick up quickly.

MONTAGE, DAYS AND NIGHTS

Edward settles back into his Los Angeles routine. Legal work, meetings, bills. His nights are different now. Hong and Hanna both chat with him daily, messaging whenever they are not at work. The conversations are lively, sometimes flirtatious, sometimes just sharing stories about their days.

Edward finds himself looking forward to their messages, juggling two conversations, sometimes late into the night because of the time difference.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, EVENING

Edward's phone rings. It is Jeff.

EDWARD

Hey, man. I've been thinking about going back to Macau. Maybe in three weeks.

JEFF

If you're gonna go, don't just see one girl. Split your time between both Hong and Hanna. Trust me, you don't want to get too attached to either.

Edward laughs, but Jeff's tone is serious.

JEFF (CONT'D)

These are not the kind of girls you want to fall in love with. They're damaged beyond repair. Their families run their lives. Most of them probably have a husband and kids back in Vietnam. You're not going to change anything for them.

Edward is quiet for a moment, taking it in.

EDWARD

I hear you. Still, I want to see them both.

JEFF

Just keep your eyes open, all right? Don't let the fantasy take over.

Edward promises he will be careful, but he is already planning his return.

INT. EDWARD'S HOUSE, LATE NIGHT

Edward continues chatting with Hong and Hanna, both women open and attentive as long as they are not working. The connection grows, and the pull of Macau gets stronger with every message.

INT. MACAU, HONG AND NHAN'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Hong sits at the kitchen table with her phone. She shows Nhan a message from Edward.

HONG

What does this mean? He says, "You keep me up at night." Is that good?

Nhan laughs, translates, and helps Hong compose a reply.

INT. MACAU, HANNA'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Hanna sits on her bed, phone in hand. She copies and pastes a message from Edward and sends it to Nhan.

HANNA (TEXT TO NHAN)

Can you help me translate this? He writes strange things sometimes.

Nhan, in her own apartment, receives the message and translates it for Hanna, not realizing at first that it is the same phrase she just translated for Hong.

INT. MACAU, NHAN'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Nhan starts to notice the repetition. She scrolls through her chat history and sees that both Hong and Hanna are asking about messages from a guy named Edward, with nearly identical wording.

Nhan pauses, realizing what's happening.

INT. MACAU, HANNA'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Nhan, piecing it together, looks back at her messages. She realizes Hong and Hanna are talking to the same man. She messages Hanna again.

NHAN (TEXT TO HANNA)

Wait, I think Hong is talking to Edward too?

INT. MACAU, NHAN'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Nhan tells her younger sister, 7, about the situation. She explains that both Hong and Hanna are talking to the same Western guy, and both are asking her to translate his messages.

INT. MACAU, TRIAD APARTMENT, NIGHT

7 sits with her boyfriend, John Lam, a Triad operator. She explains the opportunity.

7

There's a Western lawyer talking to both Hong and Hanna. He thinks nobody knows.

John Lam grins.

JOHN LAM

If he likes both, he'll come back. We can use this. Make him feel special, set up a real play.

7

Exactly. Tell them to keep him talking. When he comes back, we'll have a plan.

INT. MACAU, HONG AND HANNA'S APARTMENTS, NIGHT

John Lam calls both Hong and Hanna, instructing them to keep messaging Edward, make him feel wanted, and encourage him to return to Macau soon.

MONTAGE

Nhan continues translating messages for both women, now fully aware of the setup. Hanna and Hong both become more attentive online, and 7 and John Lam start planning the next steps, seeing Edward as a valuable mark.

INT. CATHAY PACIFIC BUSINESS CLASS, NIGHT

Edward settles into his business class seat, stows his bag, and pulls out a small pill case. He takes two Xanax with a quick sip of water. As soon as the flight attendant comes by, he orders three Jack and Cokes, drinking them in quick succession.

The flight attendant stops by to offer a menu. Edward shakes his head.

EDWARD

Please don't wake me for dinner. I just want to sleep.

She nods, understanding.

Edward reclines his seat, pulls the blanket up, and closes his eyes. The hum of the engines and the warmth of the drinks hit him fast.

INT. CATHAY PACIFIC BUSINESS CLASS, TWELVE HOURS LATER

Edward wakes up, groggy but rested. He glances at the in-flight map. The plane is just twenty minutes outside of Hong Kong. He stretches, runs a hand over his face, and takes a deep breath, feeling the anticipation of what is waiting for him in Macau.

He sits up, gathers his things, and prepares for landing.

INT. MACAU, VARIOUS LOCATIONS, DAYS 1 TO 4

Edward and Hong spend their days walking Macau, exploring markets, casinos, and side streets. They eat street food, take photos, and enjoy each other's company. The mood is light and easy.

INT. RESTAURANT, NIGHT, DAY 4

On the fourth night, Hong tells Edward they are invited to 7's birthday party at a local restaurant. The place is lively, filled with music and laughter. Edward and Hong sit together, sharing food and drinks with 7 and her friends.

Unbeknownst to Edward, Hanna is at the restaurant too, sitting at a different table with her own friends. She watches Edward and Hong throughout the night, quietly observing their chemistry and interactions.

INT. 7'S CONDO, LATE NIGHT

After the party, Edward and Hong join 7 and several other women at 7's condo for an afterparty. The condo is crowded, the atmosphere relaxed but charged.

At some point, a pipe is passed around. The women encourage Edward to try ice. He hesitates, but the group is persistent, smiling and urging him on. Surrounded by ten women, Edward finally gives in and tries it.

The night becomes a blur of music, laughter, and new sensations. Edward and Hong stay at 7's condo, falling asleep as the city starts to wake.

INT. CASA REAL HOTEL, DAY 5, MORNING

Edward and Hong return to the hotel from 7's condo. Edward feels the weight of the day, knowing tonight will be his last night with Hong. He is already falling for her and tries to hide his sadness, but it lingers in the air.

Hong notices his mood.

HONG

What's wrong? You're so quiet today.

Edward hesitates, then finally tells her the truth.

EDWARD

I came to Macau for ten days. I was planning to see another girl for the second half of my trip.

I didn't expect this. You live too far away for me to fall in love and have a real relationship.

Hong listens, her face unreadable. Edward remembers what she told him before, about being in Macau to pay off a debt for her brother, who killed someone in a motorcycle accident while drinking and driving. She said she owed \$4,600 US to be free, and that the sauna operators had taken her passport. She could not leave unless the debt was paid.

Edward looks at her, feeling a mix of guilt and affection.

EDWARD

Today is the last time we'll see each other. But I want to do something for you.

I want to pay your debt so you can go back to Vietnam.

He takes out \$4,600 in cash and a brand new iPhone 3GS, placing them in her hands.

EDWARD

I'll miss you so much, but we need to say goodbye.

Hong looks at the money and the phone, her hands shaking. Without a word, she goes into the bathroom.

Edward sits on the bed, confused and anxious. He pulls out his phone and calls his Vietnamese interpreter, the man he hired two weeks ago to help him communicate with the girls. He explains the situation while Hong is in the bathroom, speaking quietly and trying to make sense of what is happening.

Fifteen minutes pass. Hong finally walks out of the bathroom, tears streaming down her face. She throws the money and the iPhone onto the bed.

HONG

I don't want anything from you.

She storms out of the room, leaving Edward stunned and speechless.

Edward sits in silence, the gifts untouched on the bed, replaying the moment over and over in his mind.

INT. CASA REAL HOTEL ROOM, DAY 5, AFTERNOON

Edward sits alone on the bed, the cash and iPhone untouched where Hong left them. The room feels empty. He tries to make sense of what just happened, replaying every word and gesture in his mind.

He calls his Vietnamese interpreter again, explaining what happened. The interpreter listens, then says quietly,

INTERPRETER

Sometimes it's not about the money. Maybe she was hoping for something different.

Edward nods, but the answer does not satisfy him. He packs his bags slowly, feeling the loss.

INT. GRAND LISBOA HOTEL, EVENING

Edward checks in at the Grand Lisboa for the second half of his trip. The hotel is bigger, brighter, and more chaotic than Casa Real. He tries to reset, pushing thoughts of Hong aside as best he can.

INT. GRAND LISBOA HOTEL ROOM, NIGHT

Edward messages Hanna, letting her know he has arrived and is ready to see her. She responds quickly.

HANNA (TEXT)

Come downstairs. I'm here.

Edward heads down to the lobby, where Hanna is waiting. She greets him with a smile, more confident and playful than Hong.

They spend the evening together, talking, laughing, and exploring the casino. Hanna is attentive, sharp, and knows how to keep the mood light.

INT. GRAND LISBOA HOTEL ROOM, MORNING

Edward wakes up next to Hanna. The room is quiet, morning light filtering through the curtains. He sits up, feeling the weight of everything that has happened.

He decides to tell Hanna the truth. He turns to her, choosing his words carefully.

EDWARD

I want to be honest with you. I was already here for five days before we met up.

I was seeing another girl. I'm sorry if I led you on. I like you and Hong both,

but I think it's best if we don't see each other after this trip.

Hanna listens, her expression calm, almost amused. She shakes her head and smiles a little.

HANNA

You're the first guy I ever took off work for.

Edward is surprised by her reaction. He expected anger or at least disappointment, but instead Hanna seems to take it in stride.

Suddenly, Edward's phone lights up. Message after message comes in, all from Hong. The notifications keep coming; each one a variation of the same desperate question.

HONG (TEXT)

Why? Why? Why?

Edward ignores the phone, trying to focus on Hanna. She glances at the screen, then back at him.

HANNA

I think that's Hong. She knows.

Edward nods, feeling a mix of guilt and confusion. Hanna does not seem upset. If anything, she seems to know more than she lets on.

He puts the phone face down, unsure what to say next.

INT. GRAND LISBOA HOTEL ROOM, LATE MORNING

Edward gets dressed, glancing at his phone as it buzzes nonstop with messages from Hong.

EDWARD

I need to go to the bank. I'll be back soon.

Hanna nods quietly, staying behind as Edward leaves.

INT. GRAND LISBOA HOTEL ROOM, MOMENTS AFTER EDWARD LEAVES

Hanna sits on the bed, watching the door close. She immediately calls 7, her voice low and tense.

HANNA

He's still here with me. He's not replying to Hong.

7 (V.O.)

You need to persuade him to reply to Hong and go see her. If this is going to work, it has to be Hong.

Hanna listens, sadness in her eyes, and hangs up.

INT. GRAND LISBOA HOTEL ROOM, AFTERNOON

Edward returns from the bank. Hanna is sitting on the bed, quiet. His phone is still buzzing with messages and missed calls from Hong.

Hanna glances at the phone, then at Edward.

HANNA

You should go see her. I think she loves you.

Edward shakes his head.

EDWARD

No, I want to stay with you.

The messages keep coming. Hanna looks at him, gentle but insistent.

HANNA

She's not going to stop. You should go see her.

Edward hesitates, but Hanna keeps suggesting, her voice calm but sad. The phone buzzes again, and finally Edward relents.

EDWARD

Okay. If you really think I should.

Hanna nods, her voice barely above a whisper.

HANNA

We should say goodbye now.

Edward looks at her, searching her face.

EDWARD

Are you sure?

She nods, not meeting his eyes.

Edward opens his bag, takes out \$1,200 US dollars and the new iPhone 3GS he bought for her.

EDWARD

This is for you. I want you to have it.

Hanna accepts both, her hands trembling slightly. They hug for a long moment, neither wanting to let go.

EDWARD

I'm gonna miss you, bad girl.

Hanna looks down, sadness etched on her face. She picks up her things and walks out of the room, leaving Edward standing alone.

EXT. MACAU STREET, DAY

Edward steps out of a taxi near Hong's neighborhood. He spots Hong walking toward him, her expression heartbroken. The sight of her hits him hard. In that moment, he knows he is in love.

Edward quickly takes inventory in his mind. He thinks about his business, his life in the States, and the fact that it could take years to get a visa for Hong since she is from Vietnam. He realizes he can run his business from Asia if needed.

He walks up to Hong and holds her for several minutes. The city noise fades away.

EDWARD

I want to make this work. I want to be with you.

Hong looks up at him, hope and disbelief in her eyes.

EDWARD

Let's go see 7 right away. I want to pay your debt so you can leave Macau.

I'll come visit you in Vietnam in six weeks and stay for seven weeks.

We'll find a place to live and figure out how to build a life together.

Hong nods, tears in her eyes.

INT. 7'S APARTMENT, DAY

Edward and Hong arrive at 7's place. Edward hands 7 an envelope with \$4,600 in cash.

EDWARD

Will this set Hong free and get her passport returned?

7 counts the money, then nods.

7

Yes. She's free to go.

Hong looks at Edward, overwhelmed with relief.

INT. CASA REAL HOTEL, EVENING

Edward checks out of the Grand Lisboa, luggage in hand, and returns to the Casa Real with Hong. They settle into a room together, grateful and exhausted.

CASA REAL HOTEL, NEXT FOUR DAYS

Edward and Hong spend the next four days together at the Casa Real. They walk the city, talk about the future, and begin to plan their new life together. The mood is hopeful. The connection is deeper than before.

Edward feels a sense of purpose and commitment, ready to take the next steps with Hong, no matter how complicated life becomes.

EXT. MACAU FERRY TERMINAL, DAY

Edward and Hong stand together just outside the terminal entrance, surrounded by travelers and the buzz of departing ferries. Edward's suitcase sits by his feet.

They hold each other for a long moment, neither wanting to let go.

EDWARD

I'll message you as soon as I land. Six weeks, and I'll be in Vietnam.

Hong nods, her eyes shining with hope and worry.

HONG

I'll be waiting. Be careful, okay?

Edward brushes a strand of hair from her face.

EDWARD

I promise. We'll make this work.

They share one last embrace. Edward picks up his bag and walks toward the terminal, glancing back one more time. Hong stands watching, holding herself tightly as he disappears into the crowd.

CUT TO:

INT. MACAU, 7'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

7 sits at a table, counting the stack of cash Edward gave her. She glances at her phone, scrolling through messages from Hong and Hanna.

John Lam enters, closing the door quietly behind him. He sits across from 7, watching her count.

JOHN LAM

He paid?

7 nods, sliding the money into a drawer.

7

He's in love. He thinks she's free now.

John smirks, lighting a cigarette.

JOHN LAM

He'll be back. They always come back for more.

7

Hong thinks she's out. She's not out.

John stands, looking out the window at the city lights.

JOHN LAM

Nobody gets out. Not really.

The camera lingers on 7, her face unreadable, as she closes the drawer on the cash. The sense of threat hangs in the air.

FADE OUT.