NATIONAL TREASURE

FADE IN ON:

1 EXT. GEORGETOWN STREETS, 1832 - NIGHT

Wet cobblestones are beaten by a heavy rain. A CARRIAGE WHEEL splashes through huge puddles.

MAN'S VOICE

It was 1832...

2 EXT. CARRIAGE, MOVING - NIGHT

The carriage races through the darkened streets. A flash of lightning illuminates the coachman. It's a drenched boy, THOMAS GATES.

MAN'S VOICE

...Thomas Gates was ten years old.

Thomas whips the wild-eyed horse and turns a sharp corner.

3 INT. CARRIAGE, MOVING - NIGHT

Riding inside is CHARLES CARROLL. He's 96 years old. His weak body wracks with coughs, death closing in.

MAN'S VOICE

Mr. Charles Carroll, the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence had asked Thomas to take him to see President Andrew Jackson. He said it was urgent.

4 EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

Through the White House windows, we can see finely dressed GENTLEMEN and WOMEN partying, old-school. Thomas pulls the carriage to a stop, jumps down, and sprints to a DOORMAN.

THOMAS

The President must come quickly!

5 INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Thomas opens the carriage door, but Carroll sits motionless.

THOMAS

Mr. Carroll?

Carroll peeks open an eye, coughs weakly.

CARROLL

(off Thomas' look)

He's not coming, is he?
THOMAS
They told me he was busy.

CARROLL
But the treasure! The treasure!

Carroll breaks into a fit of coughs. Thomas looks down and sees that Carroll's handkerchief is stained with blood.

THOMAS
We should've gone to see the doctor.

Carroll suddenly pulls the boy close.

CARROLL
Listen now, or the secret dies with me!

Carroll stares at Thomas, dead serious. Carroll's face is ashen. A desperate look in his eyes. Thomas listens.

MAN'S VOICE
That night, Mr. Carroll told Thomas about a great treasure, the greatest treasure of them all...

FLASH TO:

6 A PYRAMID, EGYPT 2000 B.C. NIGHT. The surrounding city is on fire.

7 INT. PYRAMID - NIGHT

Carrying torches, SLAVES bust down a stone wall, revealing a DARK ROOM. A slave holds up his torch to see...

A ROOM MADE OF SOLID GOLD, filled with items made of gold and precious stones.

MAN'S VOICE
...a treasure amassed throughout all time...

As the slaves loot the Pharaoh's tomb, we PUSH IN on the golden tomb walls which are decorated with MASONIC SYMBOLS: the ALL-SEEING EYE and the UNFINISHED PYRAMID.

8 EXT. JERUSALEM, 70 A.D. - NIGHT

ROMAN SOLDIERS carry treasure out of the burning Temple of Solomon. We recognize the treasure as the same treasure from Egypt, only now it includes more...

COPPER SCROLLS. A GOLD MENORAH. A GOLD BAS RELIEF.

MAN'S VOICE
...a treasure amassed over all continents...
CONTINUED:

As the soldiers cart out the treasure, we see the same Masonic symbols on the temple columns, then CUT TO...

A TREMENDOUS POUNDING. CLOSE ON men's hands wearing armored gloves. They draw straws. One hand pulls the SHORT STRAW. We WIDEN to reveal we're in...

INT. CHURCH, 14TH CENTURY FRANCE - NIGHT

A group of KNIGHTS wearing Masonic insignia on their armor look to their brother with the short straw. The POUNDING INTENSIFIES. SOLDIERS are banging down the church doors.

MAN'S VOICE
...a treasure the Knights of the Templar found and swore to protect...

The Knight with the short straw surrenders his armor, dons a MONK’S ROBE, and slips out just as SOLDIERS burst through the church doors. The outnumbered KNIGHTS fight bravely.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The knight who got away leads a small caravan through the forest. In the carriages, hidden under tarps...the TREASURE.

EXT. CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY

KING PHILIP OF FRANCE watches emotionless as the Knights who didn't escape are BURNED AT THE STAKE.

MAN'S VOICE
...even when faced with death. For the Knights believed that a treasure so great was not meant for any one man, king or not.

The knights' screams are drowned out by the sound of the ocean as we CUT TO...

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN, 1492 - DAY

A ship laden with the treasure crosses the stormy sea. The ship's name...the SANTA MARIA.

MAN'S VOICE
...The Templar Knights who escaped execution took the treasure to the New World...

At the ship's helm is CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. We PUSH IN on a medallion hanging around his neck. On it, the PYRAMID and ALL-SEEING EYE.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
...The Knights were fugitives and developed secret passwords and signs of their order...
CONTINUED:

We KEEP PUSHING IN on the medallion until the PYRAMID fills the screen. We then transition to...

EXT.  THE PYRAMID OF THE SUN, 1521 - DAY

AZTECS hurriedly unload the TREASURE from the pyramid as Hernando Cortes and his army attack the city.

MAN'S VOICE
...The treasure survived many more wars and was moved many times...

INT.  CRYPT, 1779 - NIGHT

Carrying a lantern, a MAN wearing a tricorn hat closes the stone door on the treasure. The man is COUNT CASIMIR PULASKI, general of the Continental Army.

MAN'S VOICE
...Some believe it was buried in Nova Scotia, but Mr. Carroll told Thomas the treasure had been hidden by the Freemasons, the descendants of the Templar Knights. These descendants included such men as Patrick Henry, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington...

EXT.  BATTLEFIELD, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 1779 - DAY

Rallying his troops against the Red Coats, PULASKI takes a musket ball in the chest and falls from his horse.

MAN'S VOICE
...and other soldiers who fought bravely for the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. Men like Count Casimir Pulaski who died in the Siege of Savannah...

CUT TO LATER.  SOLDIERS comb through the battlefield carnage. They find Pulaski's dead body and roll him over. On his finger, we now see he's wearing a silver ring bearing the ALL-SEEING EYE and PYRAMID symbols.

MAN'S VOICE
...and took the secret to the whereabouts of the treasure to his grave...

The soldiers search Pulaski but find only a piece of paper with one word written on it: "CHARLOTTE."

FLASH BACK TO:

INT.  CARRIAGE - NIGHT

With his last breath of life...
...The secret lies with Charlotte. Find her, and you will find the treasure. Tell the President. Tell no one else.

With that, Carroll dies. We now notice that Carroll is also wearing a MASONIC RING.

Suddenly, the carriage door opens to reveal PRESIDENT ANDREW JACKSON, a tall man with flowing grey hair. He looks to Mr. Carroll, but he's...too late.

PRESIDENT JACKSON
Poor old fool. Coming all the way here in the pouring rain.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

President Jackson starts back. Thomas hurries after him.

THOMAS
Wait! Mr. Carroll wanted me to tell you something.

PRESIDENT JACKSON
If this is about that damned treasure--

THOMAS
--You know of it?

PRESIDENT JACKSON
He's spoken of it no less than a hundred times.

THOMAS
He said Charlotte has it.

PRESIDENT JACKSON
We've been looking for Charlotte for years. She doesn't exist.

The president stops and looks at Thomas.

PRESIDENT JACKSON (CONT'D)
Who are you, young man?

THOMAS
Thomas Gates.

PRESIDENT JACKSON
Well, you'd best forget anything Mr. Carroll told you. The treasure is a legend. Nothing more.

With that, President Jackson turns back to the White House. We PUSH IN ON Thomas' face, watching the President go.
19 CONTINUED:

MAN'S VOICE
Well, Thomas never forgot...

DISSOLVE TO:

20 INT. RETIREMENT HOME, REC ROOM, 1983 - DAY

ELDERLY FOLKS watch current President Ronald Reagan on T.V. while JOHN ADAMS GATES (75) finishes regaling his wide-eyed, 10-year-old grandson BEN FRANKLIN GATES with his tale. (We realize now that the MAN'S VOICE belongs to John.)

JOHN

John Gates' face reflects a long life spent challenging the elements. He turns a page in a tattered OLD SCRAPBOOK.

CLOSE ON a black and white photo. A grown-up Thomas Gates stands at an excavation site, Aztec ruins in the background. The caption: "Thomas Gates, Teotihuacan, Mexico 1856"

JOHN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...As did his son, George Washington Gates...

John turns the page to another photo of another GATES. All the Gates men bear a strong family resemblance.

JOHN (CONT'D)
...Generation after generation, our ancestors have tried to find Charlotte and failed.

BEN

Maybe Charlotte is an anagram. You know, you rearrange the letters, and it means something else.

John stops. He's never thought of that before.

JOHN

Like "hotel crate."

BEN

That's too many e's. It'd have to be the "hotel cart," or "tear cloth" or "teal torch" or "Rachel Ott."

Ben quickly rattles off the anagrams. John is impressed.

JOHN

Maybe you'll be the one who finally finds her.

BEN

How will I know it's the right Charlotte when I do?
John pulls out a $1-bill and presses it on his T.V. tray.

JOHN
Because she'll be marked with these.

CLOSE ON the $1-bill. John's craggy finger points to the UNFINISHED PYRAMID and ALL-SEEING EYE on the back.

JOHN (CONT'D)
The unfinished pyramid and the all-seeing eye. The marks of the Knights of the Templar.

Ben studies the dollar-bill with newfound curious awe.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Our founding fathers, the Freemasons, designed our nation's Great Seal and left us all the clues. These symbols are telling us something. I just don't know what.

BEN
Don't worry, grandpa. I'll figure it out, and I'll find her. I swear.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
You swear what?

They turn to find Ben's father PATRICK HENRY GATES (40s). Patrick looks just like his father, albeit decades younger.

BEN
That I'll find Charlotte.

Patrick shoots a baleful look to his dad.

PATRICK
Dammit, dad. How many times have I told you? Ben's not going to waste his time chasing a treasure that doesn't exist.

JOHN
He's a Gates. It's in his blood. Ben's gonna look for it, just like you did and I did.

PATRICK
He's smarter than us. Ben's going to Harvard. He's going to be a lawyer or a doctor. Right, Ben?

Ben looks to his dad, then to his grandpa, then back to his dad as we DISSOLVE TO...WHITE. All we can hear is...

BEEP...BEEP...BEEP. A heart monitor? The beeping fades.
CONTINUED: (2)

GROWN-UP BEN'S VOICE
We're losing her...

We WIDEN to reveal we're in...

EXT. SNOWCAT, MOVING - DAY

Dressed in heavy arctic gear, intrepid explorer BEN GATES (late 20s, strong family resemblance) monitors a laptop.

ON THE SCREEN, red and blue dots signifying amplitudes make random patterns on a subsurface trace of BEEPING GPR pulses.

BEN
...Go left.

The driver, RILEY POOLE (25, unkempt), cranks the wheel.

EXT. BARREN ARCTIC LANDSCAPE - DAY

The SNOWCAT (The Endeavor) trundles left, its tractor treads clawing through the ice. The Endeavor also has giant screw-shaped pontoons to propel over water.

EXT. THE ENDEAVOR, MOVING - DAY

Riley wipes the frost from the window.

RILEY
Maybe she's not here.

BEN
She's here.

RILEY
We've been looking for weeks. You're going on data that's 200 years old.

BEN
200-year-old data is usually the kind of data you go on when you're looking for something that's been lost for 200 years.

RILEY
Sailors have a way of exaggerating you know. What if the storm wasn't as big as they said it was? We could be hundreds of miles off.

Ben scans the landscape ahead where the ice ends in a SHEER GLACIAL CLIFF.

BEN
The Inuits said they could still see the masts poking up through the ice just three generations ago.
RILEY
Weren't they smoking anything at the time?

BEN
Only for medicinal purposes.

Just then, the GPR Bleeps loudly. They both look to...

THE COMPUTER SCREEN. We now see that the red and blue dots have taken an unmistakable shape...A BLOB WITH SPLATTERS.

Ben and Riley exchange a look. Hopeful but wary.

RILEY
Could be a frozen whale.

CUT TO AN ICE AX. It swings hard, shattering the ice, revealing a WOMAN'S FROZEN FACE. We PULL BACK to reveal...

EXT. ARCTIC LANDSCAPE - DAY

Ben chips away the ice. AS THE ICE is chipped away, we see the face is CARVED OUT OF WOOD.

BEN
Isn't she beautiful?

Ben grins. When Riley sees the face, he is stunned.

RILEY
I'll radio base camp.

EXT. ARCTIC LANDSCAPE - DAY - LATER

Holding a pole (used for measuring snow depth) Ben and Riley watch as three SNOWMOBILES approach and pull to stops.

RILEY
I'd hate to be you right now. A lot of people relying on you. A lot of money riding on this.

BEN
I'd hate to be you right now. All that cholesterol and hair where it's not supposed to be.

A man wearing expensive high-tech gear hops out of a snowcat. This is IAN HOWE (40s, British). A rich adventurer.

IAN
Gates! Where is she?

Ben gestures to the figurehead in the snow. When Ian sees the woman's face, he grins like a kid on Christmas morning.
IAN (CONT'D)
Bloody hell, you found it. You really found it! You're a genius!

RILEY
I told you if you underwrote this expedition, you wouldn't be sorry.

IAN
(calls to his crew)
Shaw! Get the champagne.

Ian drops to his knees and studies the figurehead's face, almost disbelieving.

IAN (CONT'D)
You know how many expeditions I've financed that've turned up nothing?

RILEY
Well now, we're all about to be rich, and it's a beautiful thing.

A solidly built man (SHAW) approaches, without the champagne. Shaw is the type of man who'd do anything for hire.

IAN
Shaw? The champagne?

SHAW
I thought we were looking for a 100-foot frigate.

BEN
We were. She is.

SHAW
Then how come GPR indicates this ship's only 81-feet long?

Shaw hands Ben a GPR printout. Ben reads it.

BEN
Because this is a 2-dimensional rendering of a 3-dimensional object. The image is only 81-feet long because the ship's canted.

SHAW
Canted?

BEN
Tipped. Tilted. Lying at an angle.

IAN
How canted?
RILEY
By our calculations, about 35°. Which means the stern's about 57 feet down.

SHAW
57 feet down?! Christ! We'll be digging for a week.

BEN
No, we won't.

Ben slams the POLE DOWN INTO the ice, puncturing a small hole. WHOOSH of wind blows up on them. Ben shrugs.

BEN (CONT'D)
Air pocket.

EXT. ARCTIC LANDSCAPE - DAY - LATER

The Endeavor is now parked next to a newly bored hole into the ice. Shaw mans a winch while...

Two more workers direct a steel cable which plays out from the Endeavor's front end. These men are SHIPPEN intense, ex-Army, and POWELL, brawny, ex-con.

We follow the steel cable down which disappears down into...

INT. HOLE IN THE ICE - DAY

Daylight illuminates the cylindrical blue walls of this narrow opening. Wearing a helmet and headlamp, Riley rides down on the cable which is lowering a heavy generator...

INT. ICE CAVE - DAY

Riley joins Ben and Ian who are staring at something we don't immediately see. We REVERSE to reveal...

A nearly perfectly preserved SHIP, tipped 35°, its hull and stern frozen in a wall of this vast ice cave.

The ship is wooden with three masts. Its ancient sails are wrapped in its frozen casings. Icicles hang from frozen ropes. One of the ship's masts is broken. The other two tower up until they are swallowed by the cave's ice ceiling.

They all stare at the ship in its ghostlike beauty.

IAN
The frigate Charlotte. Last seen leaving port from Maine in 1779.

RILEY
Looks like she ran into some bad weather.
We FOLLOW Ben who trudges up the icy incline to the bow. With his glove, he wipes away the snow.

Through a thick layer of ice, we can make out the ship's name..."CHARLOTTE."

BEN
Hello, sweetheart.

CUT TO ARC LIGHTS BEING LIT. We PULL BACK to reveal...

INT. ICE CAVE - DAY - LATER

The cave is now illuminated by intense lights powered by generators. A nylon rope ladder and cables dangle down from the hole in the cave's ceiling.

Shaw, Powell, and Shippen finish securing the ship with ropes and spikes while Ben, Riley, and Ian don climbing harnesses and snap ice crampons to their boots.

BEN
Riley, you take the berthing quarters. Ian, check the Captain's cabin. I'll take the cargo hold.

IAN
I'll take the cargo hold.

BEN
Suit yourself.

Ian rises. Moves to the ship. Riley shoots Ben a look.

RILEY
You dog. You wanted the Captain's Cabin.

BEN
Hey, we're all just looking for the same thing.

RILEY
Fine. Then, I want the Captain's Cabin.

BEN
Sure. Whatever you want.

Riley studies Ben. Now completely mind-fucked.

RILEY
OK, forget it. You're trying to trick me, I know it. I got the berthing quarters. You take the crappy Captain's Cabin.
Ian, Ben, and Riley move across the steeply angled deck. Each wears a helmet-lamp and carries a metal detector. The old ship GROANS as the timbers shift under their weight. They cross the deck then move in different directions.

Riley ducks his head under frozen hammocks as he moves through the cramped crew's quarters. He sweeps his metal detector over the debris. Nothing.

Ian moves through the gun deck. The heavy iron cannons have all slid across the floor and lie piled at the stern.

Ben edges down a tilted staircase.

Riley's headlamp light plays over the broken shelves, ropes, boxes, then stops on...THREE MEN'S HEADS. Riley lets out a startled GASP.

Ben overhears Riley gasp on his radio headset.

BEN
Riley...?

Warily, Riley comes around to find a trio of SEAMEN, bundled in blankets, eerily frozen.

RILEY
Uh-huh?

BEN (VIA MIC)
Find something?

RILEY
Uh-huh.

Ben. By the sound of Riley's voice, he knows...

BEN
Dead people?

RILEY (VIA MIC)
(voice cracking)
Uh-huh.
CONTINUED:

BEN

(laughs to himself)
What'd you expect? You're in the berthing quarters.

Ben wrenches open a closed door. Its frozen hinges SQUEAL.

INT. SHIP, CAPTAIN'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Ben finds an old oil lantern and lights it with a lighter. We then see the Captain's Cabin. Plush furniture. An ornate desk. Everything covered in a thin layer of ice.

Ben moves to the desk and quickly rifles through it. He finds nothing of value except for an antique POCKET WATCH which he pockets. He then looks down and notices...

DEEP SCRATCHES in the floor by the desk.

INT. SHIP, LOWER CARGO HOLD - CONTINUOUS

Ian gets a reading on his metal detector. He pushes aside some netting. Finds a TRUNK. He pries it open...DISHES.

INT. SHIP, CAPTAIN'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Ben pushes the desk aside, revealing a TRAP DOOR underneath. He pulls it open. Peers down to find a dark, hidden room.

INT. SHIP, HIDDEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben jumps down, looks around. The room is crowded with large BARRELS. He pulls one of the plugs, and...

BLACK GUNPOWDER spills out into a pile onto the icy floor.

Ben turns to go then notices...

TWO BOOTS poking out from between a row of barrels. Ben moves to the row and finds...

THE CAPTAIN. Frozen dead. Gun in his lap. Leaning up against one of the barrels.

INT. SHIP, CAPTAIN'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Riley enters to find Ben nowhere in sight.

BEN (O.S.)
Down here!

He hurries to the trap door and peers down to see Ben struggling with the barrel of gunpowder.

RILEY
You found it!
Riley jumps down into the room as Ben pries open the barrel.

RILEY
There's gold in there. I can smell it.

Excited, Riley watches as Ben lifts the lid to reveal...more gunpowder. But Riley is undaunted.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Maybe it's in another barrel.

But Ben sticks both arms into the barrel he opened.

BEN
The Captain was guarding this barrel for a reason.

As Ben roots around, gunpowder SPILLS ALL OVER THE FLOOR.

After a beat, Ben finally stops. He's found something. He exchanges a look with Riley, then pulls out a SMALL BOX. It's labeled "Little Hunting Creek, Virginia."

Ben carefully opens it, revealing...AN IVORY PIPE.

BEN (CONT'D)
Riley. Do you know what this is?

Riley eyes it, disappointed.

RILEY
I'm hoping a billion-dollar pipe?

Ian enters as Ben and Riley emerge from the trap door.

BEN
Ian! Look at this!

Ben shows him the pipe. Ian glances at it, unimpressed.

IAN
A Meerschaum pipe. 18th Century. I have three.

BEN
This box is marked Little Hunting Creek. That's what Mt. Vernon was called before George Washington's family renamed it.

IAN
George Washington's pipe. And?
BEN
And it's gonna lead us to the treasure.

IAN
"Lead us?" You said the treasure would be on Charlotte.

BEN
No, I said "the secret lies with Charlotte." This pipe has to be that secret.

Ben strains to make out something on the pipe.

BEN (CONT'D)
There're markings on here. I need some ink.

IAN
I didn't spend a quarter of a million dollars to find a pipe.

Ben finds a quill and a bottle of ink, but the ink is frozen.

BEN
Come on, Ian. This is a treasure hunt. You can't just find it in the first place you look.

IAN
It only took me three weeks to find the Panamanian Galleon wreck with my last so-called expert. I've been funding you for six months.

BEN
Seven.

Ben takes the quill and suddenly stabs his finger with the tip. Riley sees this and winces.

RILEY
What the hell're you doing?

Ben rubs his blood on the pipe, then rolls the pipe over the desktop, revealing...AN IMPRINT IN BLOOD. We recognize the symbols: THE ALL-SEEING EYE and UNFINISHED PYRAMID.

IAN
The Templar symbols.

RILEY
Does it say where the treasure is?

Ben reads from the bloody imprint on the desk.
"The legend writ, the stain effected
The key in Silence undetected
Fifty-five in iron pen
Mr. Matlack can't offend."

I didn't hear the part about "X" marks the spot.

What does it mean?

It's a riddle. "Key" and "legend."
It's referring to a map.

What map?

"Undetected" and "in silence" means the map is hidden.

Of course. A hidden map. Where?

Ian picks up the pipe. Studies it.

"Iron pen" could mean iron manacles, iron bars... 55 men in prison! Or, no, wait. Perhaps 55 refers to the year 1755. Who's "Mr. Matlack"?

Timothy Matlack. The official scribe of the Continental Congress.
(Realizes)
"Iron" because they used iron-based inks back then.

Scribe. A writer?

No, a calligrapher. He transcribed documents for the Continental Congress.

So, Mr. Matlack made a map. Where would he hide it?

"Mr. Matlack can't offend." Why can't he offend it?
BEN
It means he didn't write over the map. It's probably on the back of something he transcribed.

RILEY
What'd he transcribe?

BEN
Lots of things. The most famous document being...

His voice trails off.

RILEY
Being what? The Constitution? The Bill of Rights?

BEN
No.

RILEY
(relieved)
Thank God.

BEN
The Declaration of Independence.

A beat of incredulity, then Riley scoffs...

RILEY
There's no map on the back of the Declaration of Independence.

Ben gives him a look, like yes there is.

RILEY (CONT'D)
There's a map on the back of the Declaration of Independence?!

IAN
It's brilliant if you think about it. Such an important document insured the map's survival.

BEN
Too bad we'll never see it.

IAN
Nonsense. We get a viewing.

BEN
Nobody gets a viewing. Not even the President.
RILEY
What kind of sick person would put a treasure map on the back of the Declaration of Independence!?

BEN
Could've been a number of people. Nine of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were known to be Freemasons. Ben Franklin, Robert Treat Paine, John Hancock to name a few. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were suspected members of the order. George Washington wasn't a signer, but he had access. He was a 1st Master Mason. He was also a surveyor and map-maker before he was commander of the Continental Army. He's got my vote.

IAN
Well, there is one way to see the Declaration of Independence in person.

RILEY
Really? How?

IAN
We "borrow" it.

Ben laughs, incredulous. Ian pockets the pipe.

IAN (CONT'D)
Come on, Ben. The Lost Treasure of the Knights of the Templar is the treasure of all treasures. Gold from the Temple of Solomon, King Alaric II's ransom of the Athenians, the entire wealth of 5th century Rome, the Sword of Alexander the Great. You've been looking for this treasure all your life. You're not going to let a piece of paper stand in your way, are you?

BEN
You can't be serious.

IAN
What else are you going to do? Go back to working on salvage crews? Comb beaches with a metal detector looking for doubloons? Oh, that's right. You have your PhD in History. Maybe you can teach high school history.
BEN
Forget it, Ian. I won't steal the Declaration of Independence.

IAN
Don't get soft now. You begged me to finance your expedition when everyone else thought you were crazy.

BEN
You financed this expedition because you knew this treasure would make you famous.

IAN
And, it will.

BEN
I won't let you.

IAN PULLS OUT HIS GUN from his belt. Trains it on Ben who is STUNNED.

IAN
Oh, you didn't bring one of these?

BEN
You're not going to shoot me, Ian. Not until you know all that I know about the riddle.

Ian studies Ben. Is he bluffing?

IAN
Such as?

BEN
Put the gun away.

Ian turns his gun on Riley instead.

IAN
Tell me, or I shoot Riley.

RILEY
Wait! How do you know I don't know something else about the riddle?!

Ben and Ian can't help but just give Riley a look, then Ian pulls the trigger...BLAM!

Riley flinches as the glass porthole in the wall just behind him shatters. The old ship GROANS.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Shit. Come on, Ben. Tell him what he doesn't know.
Ben comes up with HIS LIGHTER and flicks it on.

...for one thing, the whole room below us is full of gunpowder.

Ben holds the flame over the trap door in the floor.

You shoot anyone, I drop this, and none of us gets out of here alive.

Ian eyes the flame. Ben eyes the gun. A tense stand-off.

Whoa-whoa-whoa! How did we all go from wildly rich to dead in a matter of minutes? Let's think here.

Just then, the FLAME FLICKERS AND GOES OUT. Ian shrugs.

On reflex, Ben tackles Riley and hurls them both to the ground behind the desk as...

Ian OPENS fire on them...BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM!

Bullets CHEW UP the desk and walls.

One bullet takes out the GAS LANTERN. It explodes with an OIL FIRE, instantly setting the desk ablaze.

Ian hurries out of the cabin and battens the door shut.

Flames spill down from the desk and creep across the floor. Ben tries the cabin door. It's locked.

We gotta put this fire out.

Riley tries to smother the fire. It's hopeless. Ben grabs his ax and slams it into the door. Riley joins him.

We PAN DOWN to the burning floor and PUSH through it into...

BURNING EMBERS fall from the ceiling, float to the floor, catching a POWDER trail spilled on the ground. It ignites and BURNS A PATH toward...the BARRELS OF GUNPOWDER.
50 INT. ICE CAVE, SHIP'S DECK - CONTINUOUS
Ian hurries across the tilted deck, calling to his men...

    IAN
Get the hell out of here. It's gonna blow!

Ian leaps off the deck, then runs with Shaw to the rope ladders.

    SHAW
I heard gunshots.

    IAN
Gates and Riley tried to kill me.

51 INT. SHIP, HIDDEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS
The burning trail of gunpowder reaches the first barrel, and the wood barrel CATCHES FIRE.

52 EXT. ARCTIC LANDSCAPE - CONTINUOUS
Shaw, Powell, and Shippen run like hell to their snowcats. Ian is the last man out of the hole in the ice, and he PULLS UP THE ROPE LADDERS.

Shaw climbs into a snowcat.

    SHAW
Come on!

Ian jumps in with Shaw, and they all take off.

53 INT. SHIP, CAPTAIN'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS
An inferno. Portholes SHATTER as their panes shift. Ben and Riley finally bust through the door and scramble out.

54 INT. SHIP, HIDDEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS
The BARREL OF GUNPOWDER burns, fully engulfed.

55 INT. ICE CAVE, SHIP'S DECK - CONTINUOUS
Ben and Riley emerge from below and look across the way to find that THE ROPE LADDERS are gone! They're trapped.

    BEN
They pulled up the ladders.

Riley regards his surroundings, resigned.

    RILEY
Why do I ever listen to you? I was two credits away from graduation.
That was seven years ago.

Ben spots a SWIVEL CROSS-BOW HARPOON mounted on the deck and hurries to it.

Intel offered me a job with my own cubicle.

Ben ties a rope to a spear and loads it into the harpoon.

Do we have to go over this every expedition?

Until I get rich, yes.

Ben wheels the harpoon around and aims it at Riley's head.

Fine. Now, duck!

Ben releases the harpoon...WHOOSH! The spear ROCKETS over a ducking Riley up to the CAVE's ceiling. THUNK!

Ben grabs the ROPE. Pulls hard. The ice ceiling caves in, opening a hole just above the ship's bow.

Ben and Riley clamber out of the ground just where the lady figurehead pokes through the ice. They race to the Endeavor.

The barrel of GUNPOWDER. It BLOWS...KA-BOOM! The arctic landscape. The ground shakes violently. Ben and Riley dive into THE ENDEAVOR just as... The other barrels BLOW in a chain-reaction series of explosions...BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM!

A FIREBALL ERUPTS from the snow and ice. The CONCUSSION launches THE ENDEAVOR forward off...

THE GLACIAL CLIFF! The Endeavor plummets down to...

The Endeavor HITS THE WATER AND SINKS LIKE A ROCK as a FIREBALL rolls skyward in the background.

Burning SHARDS of WOOD rain down onto the icy waters. A long beat, then...
WHOOSH! The Endeavor POPS BACK UP, floating on its pontoons.

INT. THE ENDEAVOR, FLOATING - CONTINUOUS

Riley laughs, incredulous.

RILEY
It drives! It flies! It floats!
(looks around)
It needs a toilet.

Ben looks at the smoke and fire, solemn.

BEN
Ian's going to steal it.

RILEY
Why do you always have to focus on the negative? You found Charlotte. That was your life's quest. Be happy. I'm the one who should be upset. I'm not wildly rich, which is my life's quest.

BEN
Riley, it's the Declaration of Independence.

RILEY
Do you see an American flag planted in my ass? I didn't even vote in the last election. I'm in this for the money.

BEN
Well, if Ian gets the Declaration of Independence, he gets the treasure. All of it.

Riley considers that a beat, then...

RILEY
Suddenly I'm feeling very patriotic.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE MALL, WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

The famous green thoroughfare. There's the Lincoln Monument, the Washington Monument, the White House. We TRAVEL down Pennsylvania Avenue, finally coming to...

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES. A beautiful neoclassical building.

CLOSE ON THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. We are tight on the autograph of JOHN HANCOCK.

We PULL BACK to reveal...
INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - DAY

TOURISTS crowd around the Declaration of Independence exhibit. Riley finishes counting the signatures.

RILEY
54...55...56.
(looks up, confused)
I don't get it. There are 56 signatures. The riddle said "55 in iron pen."

BEN
The 56th signature, Thomas McKean's, wasn't added until 1781, two years after the Charlotte disappeared.

Riley looks to the document again, then shrugs...

RILEY
Well, it's still here. Looks like Ian came to his senses.

GUARD (O.S.)
What're you doing?

They turn to find a GUARD standing behind them. He gestures to the line of TOURISTS which snakes through the Rotunda.

GUARD (CONT'D)
You're holding up the line.

EXT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES - DAY

Ben and Riley exit the building.

RILEY
So, we're back. Let's go say "hi" to your dad. Tell him that your treasure hunting days are over.

Just then, Ben grabs Riley and pulls him behind a column.

RILEY (CONT'D)
All right. I'm sorry. I know I'm not supposed to talk about your dad.

Ben motions with his head, and Riley follows his gaze to...

ACROSS THE STREET where Ian and Shaw climb into a SEDAN and drive away. Riley watches them go, incredulous.

RILEY (CONT'D)
No way. They can't be doing this. This isn't some liquor store. It's the National Archives. It's impossible to break in.
67 CONTINUED:

BEN
Nothing's impossible. Ian will hire an expert. Or pay off somebody on the inside. Or both.

68 CLOSE ON the remains of a SHIPWRECK submerged in murky water. A giant fish darts into frame. A goldfish. We WIDEN to see we're in...

69 INT. BEN'S LOFT APARTMENT - DAY

A studio loft crowded with books, maps, a computer, SCUBA gear, and many historical items, like a "Don't Tread on Me Flag" which is framed but not hanging on the wall.

Keys jingle at the door, and it opens to Ben and Riley.

RILEY
I don't think we're safe here.

BEN
Ian thinks we're dead.

Suddenly, there's a noise outside the door. Ben grabs a spear gun, and Riley whips open the door to reveal...

...a LADY. Actually, it's the LANDLADY (mid 50's) who greets the spear gun pointed at her with a bored smile.

LANDLADY
This is why you can't keep a girlfriend.

They sigh, relieved. Ben lowers the spear gun.

RILEY
Hello, Mrs. Doyle.

LANDLADY
Did you find it?

BEN
Yes.

RILEY
No.

She looks at Ben.

LANDLADY
You know when you talk about Charlotte all the time, it scares the girls away. That last girlfriend you had was really nice too.

BEN
Don't worry. I won't be talking about Charlotte ever again.
LANDLADY
Does that mean you're settling down now?

RILEY
Yes.

BEN
No.

Ben digs into his pocket and comes up with the antique pocket watch he found on the Charlotte.

BEN (CONT'D)
Here. I got something for you...

The Landlady inspects the watch, amazed.

BEN (CONT'D)
...It's 18th Century. French. 14K gold key. Very rare.

LANDLADY
It's beautiful. Thank you.

Ben kneels down and starts rifling through his stacks of books and maps and charts. She watches him.

LANDLADY (CONT'D)
You know, Ben, what you need to do is stop reading so much, and go out and have some fun.

BEN
You're right. We will.

Ben stands, holding a stack of books, and we CUT TO...

CUT TO CLOSE ON the books, which are now strewn across a cherry wood desk. We WIDEN to reveal we're in...

INT. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, READING ROOM - DAY

This 19th Century building is the grandest library in all America. Ben and Riley study a SCHEMATIC at a table.

BEN
Every night, the Declaration of Independence is lowered down into the vault room which is directly below the Rotunda...

CLOSE ON A BLUEPRINT of the National Archives. We FOLLOW Ben's finger as it traces the path down through the Rotunda floor and to the Vault Room right below.

BEN (CONT'D)
...where it's locked up in a specially designed, impenetrable, (MORE)
50-ton, steel vault where it's protected from heat, cold, even a thousand years of nuclear winter. The entire process takes just two minutes, but during those two minutes, the Declaration of Independence is vulnerable.

RILEY
So that's when Ian's going to do it?

BEN
Doubt it. A better time would be to create a situation wherein the Declaration would be automatically lowered into its vault when the guards aren't there.

RILEY
Well, Ian'd have to create some external chaos because there's no way he can hack in.

BEN
Why not?

RILEY
Because most of these old government facilities use the old Data-Link encryption-based security system. Once you're in, you can do whatever you want, but only a handful of people know how to get in.

BEN
And would one of those people happen to be someone who gave up a good life at Intel to help save his country?

RILEY
Could be.

BEN
Then, it looks like we have the edge.

RILEY
--Whoa-wait-whoa! Holy shit!

Riley's "holy shit" ECHOES LOUDLY through the room. ALL HEADS turn to glare at them. Riley lowers his voice.

RILEY (CONT'D)
You just said "we."
CONTINUED: (2)

BEN
Yeah. As in me and you.

RILEY

BEN
What's bad? We take it first so Ian can't steal it.

RILEY
You're right. That's not a bad idea. It's an extremely-horrible-get-your-ass-reamed-for-life-in-prison idea.

BEN
It's the only way to protect it.

RILEY
How did we go from "let's stop Ian" to "let's take it ourselves"?

BEN
You got a better idea?

RILEY
As a matter of fact, I do.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Ben and Riley wait. "DR. ABIGAIL CHASE, CHARTERS OF FREEDOM CUSTODIAN" is stenciled on the office door.

BEN
You want me to do the talking?

RILEY
No, this is my idea. You'll try to make it sound crazy.

Just then, a bookishly beautiful DR. ABIGAIL CHASE (26) opens her office door. She sees Ben and Riley.

ABIGAIL
Good afternoon, gentlemen. Please come in.

Ben and Riley exchange a look. She's prettier than they expected her to be.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, OFFICE - DAY

Abigail moves to her desk as Ben and Riley enter her office which is decorated with colonial art and Revolutionary War era artifacts.
RILEY
Thanks for seeing us on such short notice, Dr. Chase.

ABIGAIL
So, what can I do for you today?

Ben eyes Riley like, "go on."

RILEY
Okay. This is going to sound crazy, but somebody's going to steal the Declaration of Independence.

She regards them disdainfully. She gets this all the time.

ABIGAIL
All terrorist threats must be reported directly to the FBI. Let me get you their number.

She goes to get the number but is stopped by...

RILEY
This isn't a terrorist threat. The people behind it are treasure hunters.

ABIGAIL
And they want to steal the Declaration of Independence because...?

Riley looks to Ben, but Ben looks away to a framed antique button collection hanging on the wall.

RILEY
(reluctantly)
Because there's a treasure map on the back.

ABIGAIL
Is this a joke?

RILEY
We just found proof in a ship that was wrecked over 200 years ago.

ABIGAIL
I see. Well, I've seen the back of the Declaration of Independence, and I assure you, there is no map.

RILEY
Really? You sure?

ABIGAIL
Absolutely. I've seen it many times.
BEN
Have you ever touched it?

ABIGAIL
Of course not. No one touches it. It's hermetically sealed in a bulletproof, thermopane case.

BEN
That must frustrate you. Seeing something everyday and not being able to touch it.

There's an undeniable charm about Ben, but Abigail does her best to shrug it off.

ABIGAIL
I touch the case every day, which is closer than most people will ever get to it. Which makes me the expert in this room about there being or not being a map on the back. Which there is not.

BEN
That's because it's invisible.

RILEY
It is?

BEN
Invisible inks were common back then. They were used by both the British and American armies to send secret spy letters during the Revolutionary War.

Abigail studies Ben, interest piqued.

BEN (CONT'D)
Or, the parchment could have been palimpsest. Animal skin paper wasn't exactly easy to make and was--

ABIGAIL
--often cleaned and reused. I know what palimpsest is.

BEN
Of course, you do.

ABIGAIL
So, do you have any proof? About this "invisible map"?

RILEY
It was in a riddle on an old pipe.
ABIGAIL
May I see the pipe?

Ben and Riley exchange a look, then grudgingly...

RILEY
We don't have it.

ABIGAIL
Did Bigfoot take it?

RILEY
I told you it would sound crazy.

Ben straightens the framed collection.

ABIGAIL
Don't touch that, please.

Ben refers to an empty space in the button collection.

BEN
1789 George Washington Campaign Buttons. All you need is the silver-plated Inaugural Button to complete the set. I found one of those once, digging in a back yard in Maryland. You know, they're worth about five thousand dollars.

ABIGAIL
(realizes)
You're treasure hunters as well.

BEN
Formerly. Now, we're more like treasure protectors.

ABIGAIL
Well, Mr...?

Ben reaches out and shakes her hand.

BEN
Brown. Paul Brown. And this is my friend, Tom Jeffries.

She shakes his hand.

ABIGAIL
Well, Mr. Brown and Mr. Jeffries, let me assure you that the Declaration of Independence is safe. We have a very sophisticated security system designed to stop crazy people like yourselves from getting near it.
INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, CORRIDOR - DAY

Ben and Riley move down the corridor.

RILEY
Paul Brown and Tom Jeffries?

BEN
When the Declaration of Independence turns up missing, the Feds'll go after anyone who reported it was about to be stolen. Those are common names. They should keep them busy for a while. Buy us some time.

RILEY
So, we're really going to do it?

BEN
I am. I could use your help.

Ben pulls out a handkerchief and starts wiping his hand.

RILEY
Once we get it, what are we going to do with it?

BEN
Look at the back.

RILEY
We would?

BEN
Of course. If we don't look at the back, we'll never find the treasure. If we don't find the treasure, someone will always come looking for the map, which means the Declaration of Independence will always be in danger until we find the treasure.

Riley nods, liking Ben's reasoning.

RILEY
Then, we have to look at the back. It's our duty. As Americans.

Now, Riley notices Ben wiping his hand.

RILEY (CONT'D)
What's on your hand?

BEN
Ultra-violet ink. Dr. Chase has daily access to the vault. I shook her hand.
CONTINUED:

RILEY
You knew we were going to do this all along, didn't you?

BEN
I was hoping she would believe us so we wouldn't have to.

RILEY
Yeah. Me too.

CLOSE ON a woman's fingers as they quickly punch in a passcode into a keyboard. A beat, then CLUNK. The solenoid lock releases. We WIDEN to reveal...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, CORRIDOR - DAY

Abigail stands at the security entrance to the VAULT ROOM with DR. STANLEY HERBERT (40s, suave intellectual).

DR. HERBERT
So, you need a ride tomorrow night? I could swing by. Pick you up.

He pushes through the heavy security door leading into...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, VAULT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A high-tech room of concrete and steel.

In the middle of the room, a 50-ton Mosler vault stands open. A scissor-jack extends out of it and up to a steel SLOT in the ceiling. Abigail and Dr. Herbert enter.

ABIGAIL
Dr. Herbert, if you came by to pick me up, and we went to the gala together, that would be like you and me going on a date.

DR. HERBERT
It's more like car-pooling.

ABIGAIL
It's more like a date. And I don't date co-workers.

DR. HERBERT
I'm not a co-worker. I'm your boss.

GRAINY SURVEILLANCE VIDEO OF THE SAME. We WIDEN to reveal we're in...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION - DAY

GUARDS study a bay of monitors which flip through a rotation of surveillance images covering every inch of the archives.
CONTINUED:
The head guard JOE WOODRUFF (50s, career government employee) ZOOMS IN on the VAULT ROOM, then leans into a microphone.

WOODRUFF
Good evening, Dr. Chase. Dr. Herbert.

ABIGAIL
Hi, Joe.

She opens a drawer, grabs a hand-held GAS CHROMATOGRAPHER.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Ready whenever you are.

WOODRUFF
This is why they pay me the big bucks.

He turns the key, and...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, VAULT ROOM - CONTINUOUS
The scissor-jack springs to life and starts to retract...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - DAY
Two GUARD patrolling the empty Rotunda watch as...

THE SCISSOR-JACK retracts, pulling the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE through a steel slot in the FLOOR and into...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, VAULT ROOM - CONTINUOUS
As the scissor-jack retracts, the Declaration of Independence descends in its case from the slot in the ceiling.

Abigail steps up to the document and waves the gas chromatographer along the thermopane case's edges. The instrument whizzes and hums, all apparently normal noises.

ABIGAIL
You ever wonder if there was something on the Declaration of Independence that might have been overlooked?

DR. HERBERT
That document's been examined more than a corn farmer on an alien space ship.
ABIGAIL
Everything we know of early
Archimedes came from palimpsest
overlooked for centuries.

The Declaration reaches the vault, then tips backwards.

DR. HERBERT
If you're angling for a grant, you're
going to have to come up with some-
thing better than that. You don't
want people to think you're crazy.

The Declaration lies back in the vault, then the 5-TON STEEL
VAULT DOORS slide closed with a LOUD THUNK as we CUT TO...

EXT. GREEN LINE SUBWAY STATION - DAY
Directly across the street from the National Archives.

INT. GREEN LINE SUBWAY STATION - DAY
Carrying a briefcase, Ben and Riley descend on an ESCALATOR
into this modern, spacious station.

The platforms are crowded with COMMUTERS.

Ben and Riley step off the escalator and move through the
throng to the far end of the platform. Ben waits for the
train to pull away, then...

JUMPS DOWN ONTO THE TRACKS. Riley reluctantly follows.

INT. GREEN LINE SUBWAY TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS
Ben and Riley hurry along the tracks. The dim glow of a
flashlight lights only a few yards ahead of them.

They finally come to a door bolted closed with a heavy lock
and stop. Ben pulls some bolt cutters out of the briefcase.

INT. GREEN LINE SUBWAY, UTILITY ROOM - LATER
Ben and Riley work in this cramped public works substation.

Using a HAND-HELD ELECTRICAL SAW with a 2" circular blade,
Ben finishes cutting a hole in one of the many PVC pipes
that run along the ceiling of the substation.

Riley opens the briefcase and pulls out...

A TOY TRACTOR TRUCK, actually a sophisticated remote-operated-
vehicle (ROV) with a camera taped to the hood. We CUT TO...

GOD'S EYE VIEW OF PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. EVENING.
People, Cars. Buses. The National Archives on one side of
the street. The Green Line Subway Station on the other.
We PUSH down toward the pavement. Closer, closer, until we butt up to it, then SEAMLESSLY MOVE through the pavement...

UNDERGROUND. We TRAVEL vertically through the layers of concrete, rocks, dirt, concrete again. It opens up into...

A LABYRINTH OF PIPES, FIBER-OPTICS, GAS, ELECTRIC. We PUSH INTO one pipe and MOVE seamlessly inside...

THE PIPE. We're moving in the direction of the National Archives, finally catching up to the ROV. Its motor whirs. Its headlights play on a turn in the pipe ahead.

Riley navigates the ROV with a JOYSTICK and a LAPTOP which plays back what the ROV is seeing.

RILEY
What time is it?

BEN
Around five. Why?

RILEY
I'd be getting off work about now. At Intel.

ON THE SCREEN, the ROV arrives at an intimidating MATRIX OF CONDUIT wrapped in a bunch.

RILEY (CONT'D)
There it is.

He punches a key on the laptop. Maneuvers the joystick.

IN THE PIPE. The ROV stops, extends a MECHANICAL ARM, finds a red wire, and CLIPS ON TIGHT. With a WHOOSH...

We RUSH into the wire and TRAVEL, light-speed to...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

GUARDS monitor the surveillance bay. ON ONE MONITOR, we see video of the VAULT ROOM.

INTERCUT THE LAPTOP SCREEN on which the same surveillance video plays. We're back in...

INT. GREEN LINE SUBWAY, UTILITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Riley study the surveillance feed of the vault room on the laptop screen. The vault stares back at them.

EXT. GREEN LINE SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Ben and Riley exit the station.
RILEY
So, when are we doing this?

BEN
If we're going to beat Ian, we've
got to do it tomorrow night during
the gala.

Ben gestures across the street to the National Archives.
Red-white-and-blue Banners hang between the fluted columns,
announcing its 75th Anniversary Gala tomorrow night.

RILEY
There'll be hundreds of people there.

BEN
Hundreds of very important people.
Any glitch in the system, and the
guards will have their hands full
protecting the dignitaries.

Riley considers that, then...

RILEY
I suppose while I'm hacking into
the Archives Security System, you'll
be needing me to get you on their
guest list as well.

BEN
You're talents would've been wasted
at Intel.

EXT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES - NIGHT
Pennsylvania Avenue is lined with limos and luxury sedans
as tuxedo'd MEN and WOMEN in designer gowns arrive.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, NORTH FOYER - NIGHT
GUESTS pass through metal detectors at the check-in.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - CONTINUOUS
A small STRING ORCHESTRA plays while hundreds of GUESTS
mingle in the Rotunda. Looking stunning in her sparkly
formal gown, Abigail stands with Dr. Herbert.

ABIGAIL
What do you think Thomas Jefferson
would say if he were here?

DR. HERBERT
He'd say, "Abigail, you need to
find a man of whom you are as
passionate about as you are of me...
who's not dead."
CONTINUED:

We TRAVEL through the throng and come to a HEAVY-SET SENATOR sipping wine. We CUT TO...

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE OF THE SAME. We WIDEN to reveal...

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Riley sits in the back of this van, sipping coffee and watching surveillance feeds on his laptop.

ON THE SCREEN, he ZOOMS IN ON the FAT SENATOR.

RILEY (sings to the tune of Santa Claus is coming to Town)

"He sees you when you're drinking..."

He pans to a smarmy MAN flirting with a pretty LADY.

RILEY (CONT'D)

"He knows when you are cheating..."

He ZOOMS in until the pretty lady's butt fills the screen.

RILEY (CONT'D)

"...He knows when you left your panties at home..."

As Riley zooms in on the butt, we transition to...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - NIGHT

The same LADY live in the Rotunda with the smarmy man. We PAN across the crowd and finally find...

BEN, wearing a tuxedo and staring at the Declaration of Independence.

MAN (O.S.)

Sir?

Ben turns to find a WAITER with a tray of champagne.

WAITER

Champagne?

Ben smiles and takes a glass of champagne. He then looks to a SURVEILLANCE CAMERA mounted on the wall...

INT. VAN - NIGHT

ON THE LAPTOP SCREEN, Ben is looking right at Riley. He tips his glass to him as he talks under his breath...

BEN (ON SCREEN)

Here's to freedom.
Riley holds up his coffee cup and leans into a microphone.

RILEY
Our last night of it.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - NIGHT

They toast. Ben looks to the Declaration of Independence.

BEN
Maybe this is a bad idea.

RILEY (VIA MIC)
No, it's a good idea.

INTERCUT Riley. He studies the laptop screen.

BEN (VIA MIC)
We don't know about Ian. Not for sure.

Riley spots something on the screen. Not good news.

RILEY
Yes, we do. He's here.

ON THE LAPTOP SCREEN, we now see Ian and his men unloading a catering truck near the back entrance to the Archives.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - NIGHT

Ben moves purposefully across the Rotunda.

ABIGAIL (O.S.)
What are you doing here?

Ben turns and sees Abigail. Tonight, she's simply captivating. She takes Ben's breath away.

BEN
Dr. Chase...

ABIGAIL
Mr. Brown, I don't remember seeing your name on the guest list.

BEN
I made a last minute donation.

INTERCUT Riley in the van, watching Ben and Abigail.

ABIGAIL (VIA MIC)
Shouldn't you be out robbing graves or desecrating something?

RILEY
No time for mingling.
112 ON Ben and Abigail.

BEN
The night's still young.

Abigail can't help but smile at that. She eyes him.

ABIGAIL
So, I've been wondering...what did the riddle say?

BEN
The riddle?

ABIGAIL
On the pipe that Bigfoot took. Your friend said there was a riddle. What did it say?

Just then, Dr. Herbert arrives with two glasses of champagne.

DR. HERBERT
Abigail, your drink.

Dr. Herbert hands Abigail a glass, not happy she's already hooked up with somebody at the party.

DR. HERBERT (CONT'D)
Who's your friend?

Ben reaches to shake his hand.

BEN
Paul Brown. And you must be Dr. Herbert.

DR. HERBERT
You know me?

BEN
I referenced your paper on Feudalistic Influence in the Southern Colonies in my thesis.

DR. HERBERT
Oh, you're an academic?

BEN
Was.

113 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

Woodruff and the GUARDS watch the surveillance bay.

We PUSH IN ON A MONITOR with a feed of the back service entrance where the catering workers unload foodstuffs from a truck. The POV pans back and forth as we CUT TO...
114 AN ARMOR DOME CAMERA doing its sweep. We WIDEN to see...

115 EXT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SERVICE ENTRANCE – NIGHT

Shaw waits for the camera to pan away, then aims a tricked-out HV TASER GUN and FIRES...

BOOOSH! Two electrodes attached to insulated wires shoot out of the gun at 100mph, latch onto the camera dome, then pump 100,000 volts into the camera.

The camera sputters and sparks, shorted out.

116 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION – NIGHT

The monitor CUTS TO SNOW. Woodruff gets on his radio.

WOODRUFF

Ferguson?

117 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SERVICE CORRIDOR – NIGHT

A GUARD patrolling the service corridor gets on his radio.

GUARD FERGUSON

Yeah?

WOODRUFF (VIA MIC)

We lost perimeter camera seven. Go check it out.

118 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA – NIGHT

Ben stands with Abigail and Dr. Herbert. Ben looks around, anxious.

DR. HERBERT

So, Mr. Brown, what brings you here tonight?

BEN

High treason.

They regard Ben, curious.

BEN (CONT'D)

That's what the 56 men, by signing the Declaration of Independence, were committing. Had we lost the war, they'd have been hanged, beheaded, drawn and quartered, or my personal favorite, had their entrails cut out and burned while they were still alive.

Ben grabs a drink off a passing tray and holds it up.
BEN (CONT'D)
In fact, let's toast them. To the brave men who did what was considered wrong in order to do what they knew was right.

Dr. Herbert toasts enthusiastically. So does Abigail, although more guardedly.

BEN (CONT'D)
Now, if you'll excuse me.

Ben leaves. Abigail watches him go, suspicious.

DR. HERBERT
Charming man. I liked him.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SERVICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT
Guard Ferguson arrives at the back service entrance, stops, and keys in his passcode.

EXT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SERVICE ENTRANCE - NIGHT
Guard Ferguson pushes open the door and is greeted by...

BOOOSH! The probes hit him square in his chest, and then a surge of high voltage knocks him on his ass.

IAN and HIS MEN enter, stepping over the unconscious guard.

Ian shuts the service entrance. Shaw opens a BLACK DUFFEL BAG. Grabs some duct tape and nylon rope.

INT. VAN - NIGHT
The same snowy surveillance feed plays on Riley's laptop.

RILEY
Ian took out the service entrance camera. Ten-to-one he's inside already. We should've done this last night.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, RECORD OF AMERICA - NIGHT
Ben heads down the museum walkway, which is crowded with gala guests. He talks sotto into his hidden mic.

BEN
Last night, the building was locked down, like it is every night. That's why we're doing it tonight.

RILEY (VIA MIC)
That's why Ian's doing it tonight too.
CONTINUED:

BEN

It's OK. I can beat him there.

Ben stops. Around the corner is a set of elevators. A surveillance camera monitors the elevator foyer.

INTERCUT RILEY watching the feed of the elevator foyer.

BEN (VIA MIC)

Go.

On cue, Riley presses a key, and ON THE SCREEN, a new window opens, so that there are two windows on the screen. Both show an EMPTY elevator foyer.

RILEY

Zap! You're the Invisible Man.

He types a command and presses ENTER.

We RUSH in on the ENTER key. Move light-speed, through the computer, out the USB cable, up the antenna and into...

The tiny ANTENNA on the ROV which is still parked inside the PIPE and patched into the security system...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

GUARDS monitor the surveillance bay. There is a tiny hiccup, barely noticeable, as the video of switches over.

WOODRUFF

Has Ferguson checked back in yet?

We PUSH IN on the empty foyer video and TRANSITION to...

INT. VAN - NIGHT

RILEY'S LAPTOP SCREEN, the same video plays in one of the windows. It's a previously recorded loop of the EMPTY foyer. In the window, the loop is labeled "PLAYBACK."

In the other window, the real surveillance feed of Ben in the foyer plays. This feed is labeled "LIVE."

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Ben steps onto the elevator, punches the "B" for basement call button, and the elevator starts to descend.

BEN

You see Ian anywhere?

INTERCUT Riley checking surveillance feeds on his laptop.

RILEY

No.
CONTINUED:

BEN (VIA MIC)
Let's do this.

Riley keys in a command on his keyboard.

RILEY
OK. On my go, you have exactly--

INTERCUT Ben, setting the timer on his wristwatch.

BEN
--Two minutes. I know.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, STAIRWELL ACCESS - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Ian, Shaw, Powell, and Shippen move down a corridor to a stairwell access door. On it, a sign reads, "ALARMED ENTRY. AUTHORIZED ACCESS ONLY." Ian looks to his men.

IAN
Time to take history.

He pulls out a REMOTE. Presses a button. A red light FLASHES as we CUT TO...

INT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - NIGHT

A STEEL TRANSFORMER BOX across the street from the National Archives EXPLODES, showering the street in SPARKS and FIRE.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - NIGHT

In the Rotunda, the lights flicker and go out. The PARTY GUESTS all react to the power outage.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The elevator lights also flicker and go out, and the elevator suddenly...JERKS TO A STOP!

INTERCUT RILEY in the van. ON HIS LAPTOP, the video feeds all cut to snow.

RILEY
Shit-shit-shit! That wasn't me.

INTERCUT BEN in the elevator. He punches all of the call buttons, but the elevator is stuck.

BEN
Ian blew a transformer.

INTERCUT Riley, realizing...

RILEY
A power outage will trigger the emergency protocol.
138 INTERCUT Ben. He starts his stopwatch.

BEN
That means the Declaration is on its way down already.

He tries to pull open the elevator doors to no avail. He looks around, mind ticking.

BEN (CONT'D)
Trigger the alarms. We gotta stop Ian.

139 INTERCUT Riley. He stares at his laptop screen filled with flashing security messages.

RILEY
The power outage already tripped all the alarms. Everything's going off. Guards won't know what's Ian and what's not.

140 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

ON THE SURVEILLANCE BAY, every light is indeed blinking.

GUARD #1
Sir, we've lost surveillance and main power.

GUARD #2
Emergency protocol's been initiated.

WOODRUFF
Switch to auxiliary, then reboot and run a systems check.

141 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - NIGHT

Murmurs sweep across the crowd of politicians as the Declaration of Independence exhibit is automatically lowered into the Rotunda flooring.

142 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

The guards frantically try to get their systems back up.

WOODRUFF
I want every available body on the floor. Let's make sure our party guests are safe.

143 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - NIGHT

Auxiliary power kicks in, and the lights come back on. A GUARD steps in to calm the crowd.
GUARD
We just had a little power outage,
but everything's under control.
You'll notice the documents are
being lowered into their vaults,
but this is just standard procedure.
They will be back shortly...

Abigail and Dr. Herbert exchange concerned looks.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Ben slides a ceiling tile aside, but just then, the elevator
powers back up and starts descending again.

INTERCUT Riley in the van. He checks the stopwatch.

RILEY
96 seconds.

CUT TO CLOSE ON a THERMIC LANCE burning at 7000°F, cutting
through solid steel. We WIDEN to reveal...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, STAIRWELL ACCESS - NIGHT

Shaw cuts through the SECURITY DOOR with the thermic lance.
Ian checks his watch. A beat, Shaw finishes cutting through
the steel dead bolts, and the DOOR RELEASES...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - NIGHT

The orchestra starts playing again, and the waiters start
serving drinks, quelling the crowd.

Abigail watches the Declaration of Independence disappear
from its exhibit. Her spider-senses are tingling.

INTERCUT THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, moving by scissor
jack into the sub-flooring.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Ian and his men charge down the stairs.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, INNER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The elevator DINGS open, and Ben slips into this long
corridor. Ben moves quickly to...

The huge steel VAULT ROOM DOOR at the end of the hall.
There is a keyboard pad here, the same one Abigail punched
her passcode in earlier.

INTERCUT Riley in the van, watching the time tick down.

RILEY
57 seconds...
INTERCUT BEN. He pulls what looks like a THIN SLIDE VIEWER out of his jacket pocket. He holds it over the keypad and switches on its blue light...

THROUGH THE VIEWER GLASS, certain letters on the keypad GLOW with ULTRAVIOLET FINGERPRINTS. Ben reads them...

BEN
A-E-F-G-L-O-R-V-Y.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Riley keys the letters into an ANAGRAM GENERATOR on his computer. The results scroll across the screen: A GLOVE FRY, A VERY GOLF, A GROVE FRY, FARGO LEVY, GRAVY FLOWE.

RILEY
(reads from the screen)
"A glove fry, a very golf, Fargo levy, gravy flowe, valey frog." Any of these make any sense?

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, INNER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ben stares at the letters, realizes...

BEN
It's Valley Forge. She pressed "L" and "E" twice.

He dons a WHITE GLOVE, then punches in the code, "Valley Forge." A beat, then the VAULT ROOM DOOR unlocks with a series of CLUNKS.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Sweating, Shaw is now cutting through a second security door with the thermic lance.

SHAW
How much time?

Ian checks his watch.

IAN
We're right on schedule.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, VAULT ROOM - NIGHT

Ben jumps up on the vault. The scissor jack has completely retracted, and the vault doors are starting to close. No time to hesitate...

Ben lifts the Declaration of Independence (in its thermopane case) out of the vault just as the steel doors close with a loud THUNK.
158 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

The surveillance bay is aglow with flashing lights as the system runs through its automatic checks. All the surveillance screens are still snow.

159 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Shaw finishes cutting through.

160 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, INNER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Carrying the Declaration in its case, Ben races back to the elevator. He pushes the call button just as...

The stairwell access door OPENS, and through it emerge IAN, SHAW, POWELL, and SHIPPEN. They surprised to see Ben's not only alive, but he's got their quarry.

IAN
He's alive.

SHAW
Not for long.

SHAW OPENS FIRE on Ben with an automatic gun and silencer...

Ben whips the Declaration of Independence around, and USES IT AS A SHIELD to protect himself.

The Declaration of Independence is ABSOLUTELY RIDDLED WITH BULLETS! BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM!

But the bullets BOUNCE OFF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE'S THERMOPANE CASE which is made of bullet-proof glass.

The force of the bullets knocks Ben into the ELEVATOR as it DINGS OPEN...

Ian suddenly grabs Shaw's arm. His shots go astray, raking the metal elevator doors which finally close.

IAN
What's the matter with you?! You'll damage the map!

161 INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Ben falls inside, then bangs on the call-button panel.

162 INTERCUT Riley in the van. He's heard the commotion.

RILEY
Ben?  Ben?!

BEN (VIA MIC)
I got it.
We can now hear SIRENS approaching.

RILEY
You'd better hurry.

INTERCUT BEN IN THE ELEVATOR. He sets the case down and pulls two DROPPERS OF VISINE out of his pants pocket.

BEN
You'd better not leave.

Ben takes one of the droppers and carefully drops a single DROP on each of the four bolts in the corners of the Declaration of Independence's case.

Ben then grabs the second DROPPER OF VISINE and drops a second set of drops on the bolts. When the two drops of liquid combine, the BOLTS BEGIN TO SMOKE AND SMOLDER.

Ben checks the elevator panel. The elevator ascends...

BEN (CONT'D)
(to the chemicals)
Come on...come on...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Ian and his men charge back up the stairs...

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

...and burst into the empty corridor.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The SMOLDERING dissipates, and Ben pulls the case apart. The argon gas vents from the interior with a HISS-WHOOSH!

Ben gingerly lifts the precious document out, quickly rolls it up, then pulls a HEAVY-DUTY, CLEAR PLASTIC CYLINDRICAL BAGGIE out of his jacket pocket...

...and carefully SLIPS THE DOCUMENT INTO THE BAGGIE.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

Woodruff watches as one-by-one, the monitors on the surveillance bay start coming back up online.

WOODRUFF
Dammit. What happened to Ferguson?

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ELEVATOR FOYER - NIGHT

The ELEVATOR DINGS open, and Ben steps out.
Ben rounds the corner and casually melts into the crowd. He heads for the exit, but just a few yards ahead is...

ABIGAIL. Ben ducks into...

GALA GUESTS peruse the souvenirs. Head down, Ben watches as Abigail passes by outside the gift shop window. He waits a beat, then moves to exit. But he's stopped by...

WOMAN (O.S.)
Hey, sir!

Ben looks up. The CLERK working the register regards him.

CLERK
You trying to steal that?

Ben looks down and realizes the Declaration of Independence is poking out of his jacket. He's busted. Then...

He notices he's standing next to a bin filled with "ACTUAL SIZE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE Reproductions." Each one wrapped in heavy plastic just like the real one.

CLERK (CONT'D)
It's $35.00.

BEN
$35?! It's just a piece of paper.

He digs into his pockets and comes up with several rumpled bills and coins. He quickly counts them out, but...

BEN (CONT'D)
I only have $32.57.

CLERK
We take ATM and credit cards.

GUARDS search the corridor but find no sign of Ferguson.

WOODRUFF is distressed by the news.

WOODRUFF
This isn't good.
CONTINUED:

CUT TO QUICK SHOTS, RAPID FIRE:

We FOLLOW GUARDS' FEET sprinting down the inner corridor.

A GUARD PUNCHES HIS PASSCODE INTO THE VAULT KEYPAD.

THE GUARDS PUSH OPEN THE VAULT DOOR...

IN THE FOYER, Ben pushes by guests, almost to the exit...

IN THE SECURITY STATION, Woodruff turns the key on the console and prays...

WOODRUFF
Please be there...please God, let it be there...

EXT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES - NIGHT

Carrying the "souvenir," Ben hurries down the sidewalk in front of the National Archives.

ABIGAIL (O.S.)
Hey!

Abigail catches up to him, but Ben keeps moving.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
What's that?

BEN
What's what?

EXT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SERVICE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Ian and his men burst out the back service exit.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, VAULT ROOM - NIGHT

The vault's steel doors slide open, revealing the bad news... THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IS GONE!

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SECURITY STATION - NIGHT

Woodruff sees the empty vault on the surveillance screen. He hits the ALARM and gets on his radio.

WOODRUFF
Code Red. Code Red. We have a break in! Lock it down. Nobody leaves the building.

Woodruff looks around. He can't believe this is happening.

WOODRUFF (CONT'D)
Somebody get the FBI on the phone! Now!
182 EXT. CONSTITUTION AVENUE - NIGHT

Abigail follows Ben as he hurries across the street.

    ABIGAIL
    What's that? That in your hand.

    BEN
    A souvenir. Got it at the gift shop.

They reach the van, where Riley waits, engine running.

    RILEY
    Let's go!

Just then, the National Archives ALARMS SOUND! Abigail's face falls. She knows what Ben has done.

    ABIGAIL
    You didn't.

    BEN
    You wouldn't understand.

Ben reaches for the van door, but Abigail SCREAMS...

    ABIGAIL
    POLICE!

Ben panics, grabs her, covers her mouth, but she BITES him and...COMES UP WITH THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

183 EXT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SERVICE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

As Ian and his men climb into their catering truck, Ian sees...

    Ben standing across the street with Abigail who is holding the Declaration of Independence.

184 EXT. CONSTITUTION AVENUE - NIGHT

Abigail looks at the rolled up parchment, incredulous.

    BEN
    Careful with that!

    ABIGAIL
    Oh. My. God.

Riley sees she has IT now and puts his head in his hands.

    RILEY
    (sotto)
    Oh my God.
BEN
(to Abigail)
You're making a big mistake--

ABIGAIL
--You weren't protecting it. You're stealing it.

BEN
Listen. There are some very bad people, people who don't care about the Declaration of Independence, people who only see it as a map.

ABIGAIL
You're pathetic.

With that, she turns and starts crossing the street, the Declaration of Independence in her hand.

Ben hurries to get into the van.

BEN
Come on. Let's go.

Riley watches Abigail leaving with the Declaration.

RILEY
But. You can't just let her go.

BEN
Yes, we can.

Suddenly, the CATERING TRUCK barrels down on Abigail in the middle of the street. She side-steps out of its way, but it SCREECHES TO A STOP in front of her, blocking her path.

Ben sees the truck's driver...it's Shippen.

BEN (CONT'D)
Oh no.

The truck's back doors burst open, and Ian, Shaw, and Powell jump out and swarm Abigail. She struggles like a wild cat.

Ben moves to help her, but Powell opens fire on him, sending Ben diving for cover behind the van.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Riley ducks as the van is raked with bullets. The van's windows shatter. Glass shards pepper the interior.

EXT. CONSTITUTION AVENUE - NIGHT

Ian and Shaw throw Abigail into the back of the truck. Powell jumps into the cab, and the truck peels out.
187 INT. VAN - NIGHT
Ben jumps in, and Riley slams it into gear.

188 EXT. CONSTITUTION AVENUE - NIGHT
The catering truck wheels through traffic. A beat behind, the van blows through a red light and flies after it.

189 INT. CATERING TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT
Abigail holds the Declaration of Independence. Ian holds out his hand.

IAN
Give it to me.

ABIGAIL
Over my dead body.

190 EXT. CONSTITUTION AVENUE - NIGHT
The catering truck turns hard and slews onto 3rd Street.
A dozen POLICE CARS speed by them, going the other way, toward the National Archives.

191 INT. CATERING TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT
The truck veers suddenly, sending Abigail on her ass. Ian snatches the Declaration of Independence out of her hand as she stumbles.

192 EXT. 3RD STREET - NIGHT
A scenic street if anyone had time to look. The U.S. Capitol on one side, the Washington Monument on the other.
The van gains on the catering truck, but Powell leans out the passenger side window and OPENS FIRE.

193 INT. VAN, MOVING - NIGHT
Ben and Riley duck as the front windshield EXPLODES.

194 EXT. 3RD STREET - NIGHT
The van falls back.

195 INT. CATERING TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT
Abigail watches helplessly as Ian holds the Declaration of Independence.

ABIGAIL
Please. Be careful with it.
Ian ignores her. Slips the document from its cover.

**SHAW**

What do we do with her?

Ian starts unrolling the document. Doesn't look up.

**IAN**

No witnesses.

Shaw turns his gun on Abigail. Abigail's eyes search the truck. Looking for a way out...

**INT. VAN, MOVING - NIGHT**

Riley pulls alongside the driver's side of the catering truck, then he YANKS the wheel hard...

**EXT. FREEWAY ON-RAMP - NIGHT**

The van SLAMS into the catering truck just as...

**INT. CATERING TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT**

Shaw cocks his gun, squeezes the trigger, but the truck shakes violently ON IMPACT, sending Shaw on his ass.

Abigail scrabbles to the truck's back doors, but they're latched shut.

Irrked, Shaw moves to finish her off. But just then, Ian notices something about the document that makes him go...

**IAN**

Wait.

Ian looks up, then turns the document to Abigail.

**IAN (CONT'D)**

What the hell is this?

Abigail looks at the document, and is just as surprised as Ian. Stamped on the document is a PRICE TAG. She grins.

**ABIGAIL**

A souvenir.

**EXT. INTERSTATE 395 - NIGHT**

The van slaloms traffic and pulls alongside the truck.

**INT. CATERING TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT**

Ian looks to Abigail, who stands by the truck's back doors.

**IAN**

Who are you?
Abigail talks, she reaches behind her back and surreptitiously unlatches the door latch...

ABIGAIL
(stalling)
I'm Dr. Abigail Chase, Executive Custodian of the Charters of Freedom for the National Archives.

INT. VAN, MOVING - NIGHT
Ben moves to the back of the van and slides open the van's side door.

INT. CATERING TRUCK CAB, MOVING - NIGHT
Shippen sees Ben in the van and whips the steering wheel...

EXT. INTERSTATE 395 - NIGHT
The catering truck YAWS into the van.

INT. CATERING TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT
Abigail finally manages to unlatch the latch.

ABIGAIL
Who are you--

Just then, the truck is rocked as it SLAMS into the van. Ian and Shaw are buried by a cascade of chafing dishes.

The truck's back doors to SWING OPEN WILDLY. Abigail just manages to grab the latch, and she ARCS OUT INTO traffic.

EXT. INTERSTATE 395 - NIGHT
A TOUR BUS motors along in the heavy D.C. traffic, passing the Jefferson Memorial, beautifully lit at night.

INT. TOUR BUS, MOVING - NIGHT
A GROUP OF TOURISTS crane their necks out their windows as a TOUR GUIDE zealously describes the sights.

TOUR GUIDE
...And over to your right, you can see the Jefferson Memorial. Who can tell me what important document Thomas Jefferson authored?

Nobody answers. Instead, they're all glued to the action...

EXT. INTERSTATE 395 - NIGHT
Abigail dangles off the door, both hands gripping the latch.
Riley maneuvers the van up to the back of the catering truck. Ben holds onto the door frame and reaches out to Abigail.

**BEN**
Grab my hand!

Holding on for dear life, she looks to Ben like he's crazy.

**ABIGAIL**
With what?!

Riley fights the wheel, holding steady. Looks ahead to see a traffic jam. Total gridlock. A sea of red brake lights.

**RILEY**
Uh...hurry!

Ben reaches for Abigail.

**BEN**
Come on!

Abigail summons up her courage, lets go of one hand, and swings toward Ben. Their fingers almost touch...

But there's no more room to go. Riley brakes...

The van and Ben suddenly decelerate away from Abigail who almost falls.

The van falls back, and Shippen looks ahead and sees why... parked cars locked in traffic. Shippen slams on the brakes.

The catering truck tires burn rubber.

The sudden stop sends Ian and Shaw asses over elbows.

The truck's doors swing Abigail back inside, then close behind her. Abigail's now back in the truck in front of an angry firing squad. Shaw turns his gun on her...
216 EXT. INTERSTATE 395 - NIGHT

Ben hurries to the back of the catering truck and yanks the handle just as...

217 INT. CATERING TRUCK - NIGHT

Shaw SHOOTS! But Abigail disappears as the truck door swings open again.

The errant bullets blow out the windshield of AN ONCOMING TANKER TRUCK.

The tanker truck driver yanks the wheel hard and slams on his brakes.

218 EXT. INTERSTATE 395 - NIGHT

The tanker truck JACK-KNIFES...

219 INT. CATERING TRUCK - NIGHT

Ian and Shaw watch in horror as the jack-knifed tanker truck slews uncontrollably toward them.

They dive out of the truck.

220 INT. CATERING TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

Shippen lays on his HORN, not seeing what Powell sees in his rearview mirror....the runaway juggernaut.

221 EXT. INTERSTATE 395 - NIGHT

POWELL and other MOTORISTS SCRAMBLE out of their cars, DUCKING and DIVING out of the way of the TANKER TRUCK...

...which SHIPPEN finally sees. Too late.

THE TANKER TRUCK CRASHES INTO THE BACK OF THE CATERING TRUCK...WHAM-SMASH-CRUNCH!

EACH CAR IN FRONT OF THE CATERING TRUCK PLOWS INTO THE CAR in front of it. Metal crumples, glass shatters, tires POP.

IAN, SHAW, and POWELL come up from the smoking mayhem. Ian looks down the shoulder where he sees...

BEN and RILEY'S VAN blow past the pile-up. The van pulls off an off-ramp and disappears.

IAN
Piss!

222 INT. VAN, MOVING - NIGHT

Riley drives, pedal to the metal. Ben sits in the back with a flustered Abigail.
BEN
You all right?

ABIGAIL
No, I'm not all right! Where's the Declaration of Independence?

She immediately starts searching the van. Riley glances in the rearview mirror and sees her searching the van.

RILEY
What do you mean "where is it"?
You had it!

ABIGAIL
I didn't have it. He gave me a fake.

Riley looks to Ben, surprised.

RILEY
You did?
(between his teeth)
Then, why'd we go after her, Ben?

ABIGAIL
Ben? I thought your name was Paul.

BEN
I had to lie. My real name is Ben Gates. Benjamin Franklin Gates.

ABIGAIL
I'm supposed to believe that?

BEN
Being named after one of America's founding fathers is sort of like a tradition in my family.

RILEY
An obsession, actually.

ABIGAIL
Where is the real the Declaration of Independence?

BEN
Don't worry. It's safe.

Abigail stops searching. Eyes him.

ABIGAIL
So you did steal it.

BEN
If I hadn't, those men would have.
ABIGAIL
Give it to me. I have to return it.

BEN
I can't let you do that. That guy who tried to kill you will just come after it again.

ABIGAIL
We'll warn the authorities. They'll protect it.

BEN
Like they did tonight?

EXT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES - NIGHT
The building is now cordoned off and swarming with POLICE.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, NORTH FOYER - NIGHT
MEN and WOMEN in FBI blazers enter with Woodruff. Leading the group is SADUSKY (40s), solidly built, a complete pro.

SADUSKY
What're we dealing with?

WOODRUFF
A break-in.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - NIGHT
The detained guests wait impatiently in the Rotunda. Sadusky and his team enters and take charge of the room.

SADUSKY
All right, my name is Sadusky. I am Agent In Charge. I want this building cleared and sealed off. Security clearance only.

Sadusky turns to a female agent, AGENT DAWES.

SADUSKY (CONT'D)
A complete list of names of everyone on tonight's guest list and their dates. Find out who's NOT here.

Agent Dawes peels off, and Sadusky turns to AGENT JOHNSON.

SADUSKY (CONT'D)
The vault and lobby security logs and all the surveillance tapes for the last 30 days.

Agent Johnson nods and peels off, and Sadusky turns to two more agents, AGENT COLFAX and AGENT HENDRICKS.
SADUSKY (CONT'D)
The cars in the underground parking garage. Find any not accounted for.

Colfax and Hendricks leave, and Sadusky turns to Woodruff.

SADUSKY (CONT'D)
I want the names and shift schedules of everybody with access to the building. From the janitors to the curator.

WOODRUFF
Yes, sir.

SADUSKY
Now, Mr. Woodruff, if you can please tell me what exactly was taken?

Woodruff gulps, can barely choke out the words...

INT. VAN, MOVING - NIGHT

Riley pulls onto a highway.

ABIGAIL
There's no map on the back of the Declaration of Independence.

BEN
Ever heard of the Templar Knights?

ABIGAIL
They were a military order of the Catholic Church dissolved by the Pope in the 14th century.

BEN
After King Philip of France had them all burned at the stake.

ABIGAIL
That's only a legend.

BEN
The Templar Knights are what legends are made of. Noble men with no allegiance to any state or ruler. Their cause was to protect innocent people from tyrannical rulers and oppression. In 1307, they broke into a Visigothic stronghold in Languedoc, France and found a treasure so massive it took six days to exhume. They had taken a vow of poverty and swore to protect the treasure, using it only for the (MORE)
BEN (CONT'D)
noblest purpose. King Philip wanted the treasure...if he could only find it. He had the Knights arrested and tortured, but none ever confessed to the treasure's whereabouts. The few Knights who'd evaded capture hid the treasure for almost 200 years, then finally brought it to the one place where there were no kings and no religious persecution, the New World. Christopher Columbus, not so coincidentally, was a descendant of the Knights.

ABIGAIL
What do the Templar Knights have to do with the Declaration?

Ben pulls a one-dollar bill out of his pocket and points to the symbols on the back.

BEN
The all-seeing eye. The unfinished pyramid. These are the marks of the Templar. Our founding fathers were descendants of the Knights. They put the map on the back.

Abigail just looks at Ben. An incredulous beat, then...

ABIGAIL
This is crazy. I'm calling the police. Stop the car.

Riley doesn't slow down.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
You wish to add kidnapping to your list of federal offenses?

RILEY
You can get out whenever you want.

Abigail glances out the window. They're going about 70mph.

ABIGAIL
Fine. I will!

She reaches for the door handle.

BEN
Do you still want to hear the riddle from the pipe?

That stops Abigail. She turns him, listening.
BEN (CONT'D)
"The legend writ, the stain effected
The key in Silence undetected
Fifty-five in iron pen
Mr. Matlack can't offend."

ABIGAIL
Timothy Matlack? The calligrapher
of the Declaration of Independence?

BEN
The pipe came from Mt. Vernon.

Abigail digests this, incredulous.

ABIGAIL
If that's true, the pipe is a major
American historical find.

BEN
Yeah well, Ian already has it, and
he'll take the Declaration too if
we don't protect it.

ABIGAIL
How do I know you're not lying?

BEN
We look at the back.

Abigail considers that, then looks Ben square in the eye.

ABIGAIL
All right. But if there's nothing
on the back, you're turning
yourselves in.

BEN
Deal. Because if there's nothing
on the back, the Declaration's safe.

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, SERVICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Two EMTs work on Guard Ferguson who is conscious now. He
sits propped up against a wall, talking to Agent Dawes.

GUARD FERGUSON
The only thing I remember is the
smell of my hair burning.

ON SADUSKY who approaches. Agent Dawes nods to Guard
Ferguson, then joins Sadusky down the hall.

AGENT DAWES
They got him with a taser gun at
the service entrance.
CONTINUED:

SADUSKY

Did he see the shooter? Anything?

Agent Dawes shakes her head, no.

FBI forensics TECHNICIANS work the crime scene, studying bullet casings and dusting for fingerprints. Sadusky moves down the corridor with Dr. Herbert and Woodruff.

SADUSKY

Rounds were fired, and nobody heard anything?

WOODRUFF

The vault corridor is lined with three feet of steel and concrete.

Sadusky studies the walls pocked with bullet holes.

SADUSKY

We get a description from the guards?

WOODRUFF

Which guards?

SADUSKY

The guards that were fired upon.

WOODRUFF

There were no guards on patrol down here.

Sadusky moves to the elevator which is also bullet-riddled.

SADUSKY

Then, who were the thieves shooting at?

Just then, Agent Colfax calls from the stalled elevator.

AGENT COLFAX (O.S.)

Found it!

Sadusky, Woodruff and Dr. Herbert move to...

THE ELEVATOR. Agent Hendricks stands above the elevator car in the shaft. He hands THE EMPTY THERMOPANE DISPLAY CASE down to Agent Colfax from its hiding place.

AGENT HENDRICKS

Looks like they used a dibasic acid to dissolve the bolts.

Dr. Herbert looks so broken up, he just might cry.
SADUSKY
Get a copy of the Declaration in place before opening tomorrow.

DR. HERBERT
Yes, absolutely.

SADUSKY
No word goes to the public. Everything is to appear normal.

Dr. Herbert does his best to compose himself.

DR. HERBERT
Who would do such a thing?

AGENT HENDRICKS
Anti-government terrorists.

Just then, Agent Johnson steps up.

AGENT JOHNSON
Computerized security records indicate that a Dr. Abigail Chase accessed the vault at 9:32pm tonight.

DR. HERBERT
Dr. Chase? Impossible. I was with her at that time.

Agent Johnson shows Sadusky a copy of Abigail's ID photo.

SADUSKY
Who is she?

DR. HERBERT
The Charters of Freedom Custodian.

AGENT JOHNSON
The one in charge of the Declaration of Independence.

SADUSKY
Where is she? Let's talk to her.

AGENT JOHNSON
Unaccounted for, sir.

Dr. Herbert is upset by the news. Now, Agent Dawes approaches, carrying a computer printout.

AGENT DAWES
A man named Benjamin Gates used his credit card in the gift shop at 9:39pm. He wasn't on the guest list. We got an address from the credit card company.
CONTINUED: (2)

SADUSKY
* Gift shop? What the hell did this guy buy?
* 

INT. VAN, MOVING - NIGHT

Ben roots around under the seat. Comes up with a Big-Gulp cup. Tosses it aside. Finally comes up with a cardboard mailing tube. He peels off an old cheeseburger wrapper stuck to it, then hands it to Abigail.

BEN
Here.

Abigail opens the tube and partially pulls out the document. The aged parchment is clearly visible through the plastic. She's awe-struck.

ABIGAIL
You are not to touch this ever again!

She slips the document back inside the tube.

BEN
Fine by me. I never wanted to touch it in the first place.

ABIGAIL
You don't deserve to touch it.

RILEY
Let's just look at the map. That way nobody will ever have to touch it again.

ABIGAIL
Not here.

RILEY
What do you mean "not here"?

ABIGAIL
Not in the back of a van. We'll need chemicals. A controlled environment. A clean room with particulate air filtration. ESD attire. I hope you have all that.

CUT TO - A DOOR BURSTS OPEN, and a SWAT TEAM swarms in, all in black, bullet-proof gear, helmets, lights, guns. We WIDEN to reveal that we're in...

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shrouds of plastic hang over the windows. Beams of light cut through the darkness as the team moves swiftly through the room. A beat, then a SWAT team member calls out...
231 CONTINUED:

SWAT COP
Interior secure!

232 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Sadusky and his team move down the hallway. Agent Dawes reads from a printout.

AGENT DAWES
Ben Franklin Gates used his Visa on a one-way plane ticket from Toronto to D.C. two days ago after spending seven months unaccounted for. Before that, his paper trail's got him all over the place. Boston, France, Boston, Greenland.

AGENT COLFAX
The landlady didn't want to say much about him. Only that he's rarely here, that he's very nice, and that he always pays his rent, sometimes months in advance.

They come to a room cordoned off and guarded by police.

AGENT COLFAX (CONT'D)
Wait 'til you see this.

233 INT. BEN'S LOFT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sadusky and his team enter the room and stop suddenly at what they see. We REVERSE and find...

We're in Ben's apartment, and everything is now all lined in plastic. Every square inch of the room. The windows, walls, carpet, television, and all of the furniture.

A CHEMISTRY SET sits on the dresser. A box of BLUE ESD BOOTIES sit near the door. The only other thing not covered is a Xerox copied collection of old handwritten letters.

Agent Dawes dons a pair of gloves, picks them up, and studies the letters.

AGENT DAWES
Letters to the editor of The New-England Courant. Written in 1722.

She flips through the other letters.

AGENT DAWES (CONT'D)
They're all from the same person. (reads a letter)
"Your humble servant, Silence Dogood."

Agent Hendricks studies the blue booties by the door.
AGENT HENDRICKS
What's this guy up to?

AGENT JOHNSON
Profilers say we're looking at an adult male, a loner, has a high IQ but has never been able to hold down a job, is socially inept, has probably written numerous letters to the White House expressing anti-government sentiments. We're expecting him to contact us shortly with ransom demands.

Sadusky eyes the "Don't Tread on Me" Flag which is covered in clear plastic.

SADUSKY
I don't think he's going to be calling with any ransom demands.

CUT TO - A BOTTLE OF SAMUEL ADAMS beer is slammed down onto a table. We WIDEN to reveal...

INT. HAWK AND DOVE RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Powell and Shaw sit with Ian who studies the pipe.

SHAW
Where do you think they went?

No response. Ian turns the pipe over, then looks to a cocktail napkin on which he's written the riddle.

ON THE NAPKIN, the words "legend" and "key" are underlined along with "undetected" and "Silence."

IAN
That bastard. He did know something he wasn't telling me. Look at this.
(points to a line)
"Legend" and "key" are not the same thing. "Legend" means map. "Key means key.

POWELL
The key to the treasure?

IAN
During the war, generals used secret codes and ciphers to disguise their communications. To decode the cipher, the recipient needed the "key," like a book or an old letter. "The key in Silence undetected." You know why Silence is capitalized?

Powell and Shaw exchange a look, then hazard a guess...
235 CONTINUED:

SHAW
Because...it's important?

IAN
Because it's a name.

236 INT. VAN, MOVING - NIGHT

Ben and Abigail look ahead to see a SEA OF POLICE AND FBI in the parking lot of Ben's apartment building.

RILEY
What do we do now?

ABIGAIL
Turn yourselves in.

BEN
Go to Hillcrest.

RILEY
(scoffs, incredulous)
We can't go there!

ABIGAIL
Where?

BEN
We need the key to the cipher. I had copies. He has the originals.

ABIGAIL
Who?

RILEY
He hates you. He'll turn you in.

ABIGAIL
Whoever it is, he sounds like a good man.

237 EXT. HILLCREST NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Oak trees line the street colonial and Queen Anne homes.

238 EXT. COLONIAL HOME - NIGHT

Ben knocks on the door and waits with Riley and Abigail. A beat, then a 60-year-old, graying MAN opens the door. He takes one look at Ben, then slams the door. Riley shrugs.

BEN
I don't think he recognized me.

RILEY
I think he's still mad at you for not going to Medical School.
BEN
(pounds on the door)
Dad! Open the door! I need your help.

The man opens the door again. We realize now he's PATRICK GATES, Ben's father. He looks to his son, then to Abigail...

PATRICK
Don't tell me. You got her pregnant.

BEN
No!

Abigail looks down at her stomach, suddenly self conscious.

ABIGAIL
(disappointed)
I look pregnant?

BEN
(to his dad)
I need the Silence Dogood letters.

ABIGAIL
(incredulous)
You have Silence Dogood letters?

BEN
Our great-great-great-great-grandfather George Washington Gates found a few hidden in an old desk he bought at an auction. No one ever understood their meaning until we found the pipe.

PATRICK
This better not involve Charlotte.

BEN
My days of looking for Charlotte are over. I swear.

RILEY
He's telling the truth, Mr. Gates.

Patrick smiles smug as he opens the door to let them in.

PATRICK
I knew it. I knew there was no Charlotte. I told you so.

BEN
Dad, let's not do the "I told you so" thing.
PATRICK
I think after all these years I'm entitled to a little "I told you so." I told you, I told your grandpa, I told your mother. You people wasting your lives chasing something that doesn't exist--

BEN
--All right, dad, you asked for it. Do you really want to know? I. found. Charlotte. That's right. I really found her.

That stops Patrick. He looks to Abigail.

ABIGAIL
I'm not Charlotte. My name is Abigail. Dr. Abigail Chase.

BEN
Charlotte was a ship.

PATRICK
I know. She left port from Maine 1779. I wasted seven years searching the coast of France.

BEN
She never made it to France. I found the ship's log of the HMS Erebus, a ship that left port two days before the Charlotte. The captain wrote that his ship barely survived a bad southeaster which I figured must have blown the Charlotte off course.

That stops Patrick. His eyes flash with excitement.

PATRICK
How far off course?

239 INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT
Ian works on his laptop while Powell and Shaw eat room service food. His computer BEEPS.

IAN
(triumphantly)
Silence Dogood. Here she is.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN are the search results for "Silence" and "Declaration of Independence." We notice the name "SILENCE DOGOOD" many times.

SHAW (O.S.)
Who is it?
We PUSH IN on the screen, then PULL OUT and as we hear Agent Johnson's voice take over the explanation...

AGENT JOHNSON (O.S.)
Silence Dogood, a.k.a., Benjamin Franklin.

We PULL BACK and realize that we have transitioned to...

240 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Sadusky stands with his team at a make-shift command post. The FBI has just run the same Google Search.

Agent Johnson reads from his laptop screen.

AGENT JOHNSON
Ben Franklin was 15 years old, apprenticing for his brother James' newspaper when he secretly wrote 14 letters to the Editor of The Courant using the pen name, Silence Dogood, a middle-aged widowed wife of a minister. She wrote about colonial life, gained quite a following, and even obtained proposals of marriage.

Sadusky regards the copied letters from Ben's apartment.

SADUSKY
These letters were written by Benjamin Franklin?

Now, Agent Colfax steps up with a sheet of paper.

AGENT COLFAX
The gift shop clerk ID'd Gates on the surveillance tapes from earlier in the evening.

Sadusky studies Ben's photo.

CLOSE ON THE PICTURE, a grainy surveillance image of Ben in his tuxedo as he passes through the security checkpoint upon entering the National Archives gala.

Sadusky hands the photo back to Agent Colfax.

SADUSKY
Release his picture to the press. Dr. Chase's too. Someone's bound to spot them.

241 INT. COLONIAL HOME, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ben clears the dining room table. Abigail helps, but her eyes search the room and stop on...A PHONE. But it's too close to Ben to get to.
ABIGAIL
Where's the bathroom?

BEN
Down the hall. First door on the right.

Abigail disappears into the hall.

INT. COLONIAL HOME, HALL - NIGHT
Abigail moves down the hall and finds to the bathroom. Directly across the hall is a study. Abigail glances back toward the living room, then ducks into the study.

INT. COLONIAL HOME, STUDY - NIGHT
Packed with books on shelves and in piles. Abigail moves to a desk and finds a phone cradle...but no phone. She notices a collection of FRAMED BUTTONS hanging on the wall. *

CLOSE ON one of the framed buttons. It's a silver-plated George Washington Inaugural button. There is a note, "Dad, Found this in a backyard in Maryland. Love, Ben."

BEN (O.S.)
Looking for this?

Abigail turns, startled. She sees the phone in Ben's hand.

BEN (CONT'D)
I thought we had a deal.

ABIGAIL
(covers)
Dr. Herbert will be worried about me.

BEN
You guys dating?

ABIGAIL
Yes, and he's going to kill you.

BEN
I figured. He looked like your type.

ABIGAIL
You have no idea what my type is.

BEN
I know you don't like treasure hunters.

ABIGAIL
I like men I can trust.
Ben considers that, then hands her the phone and leaves. Abigail looks at the phone in her hand, surprised.

INT. COLONIAL HOME, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Abigail emerges from the hallway with the phone to find Ben standing there.

ABIGAIL
Why did you come after me? You had the Declaration of Independence. You could've just gotten away.

BEN
Why didn't you call your boyfriend?

ABIGAIL
He's not my boyfriend.

They look at each other for a moment, then Riley enters.

RILEY
I parked the van around back.

Ben hands Abigail the gloves. She dons them, then opens the tube. They all look at each other for a beat, then...

Abigail carefully slips the Declaration of Independence out of the tube. The document practically glows with history. She catches her breath, mesmerized by its power, then gingerly unrolls the document. They are all awe-struck.

Now, Patrick enters with a TRAY OF TEA. He goes to set it on the table, right on the Declaration of Independence...

...but Ben quickly intercepts the tray.

BEN
Whoa! Not there.

Ben grabs the tray from his dad and sets it on the buffet. Now, Patrick notices the ancient parchment on the table.

PATRICK
Where'd you get that? It looks old.

BEN
A little over 200 years.

PATRICK
Wow. You sure?

Ben and Riley exchange knowing looks. Riley nods...

RILEY
Pretty sure.
PATRICK
What is it?

RILEY
Just a map.

PATRICK
I don't see anything.

He reaches to turn the parchment over, but Ben stops him.

BEN
This side. It's invisible ink.

PATRICK
So, put it in the oven.

ABIGAIL
No!

PATRICK
Why not? Ferrous sulfate inks can only be brought out with heat.

ABIGAIL
But it will damage the--

BEN
--parchment.
   (to his dad)
She's right. It's very old. We can't risk compromising the map.

PATRICK
You need a reagent.

BEN
I know.

Ben grabs a slice of LEMON off the tea tray.

PATRICK
Just the upper right-hand corner.

BEN
   (peeved)
I know.

ABIGAIL
If there is indeed a secret message, it will be marked with a symbol there first.

BEN
I know.
He brushes the lemon over the corner of the parchment. They all eagerly...wait...for it to reveal...anything.

ABIGAIL
Nothing.

Riley looks hard at the parchment, ready to jump off the highest building.

RILEY
Nothing?

PATRICK
You sure it's this side?

BEN
It needs heat.

With that, Ben leans in and BREATHES on the parchment. As if by magic, the puff of warm breath reveals...

A SERIES OF NUMBERS. They appear briefly, flicker, then disappear. But everyone in the room sees them. A wash of silence overcomes them, then...

ABIGAIL
We need more heat.

CUT TO CLOSE ON a hairdryer blowing on a low setting on the parchment. As it does, a LONG SERIES OF FADED NUMBERS slowly emerge: 6.14.7, 4.54.4, 10.1.9...

ABIGAIL
Oh. My. God.

PATRICK
A series of numbers. 3 per set.

BEN
It's an Ottendorf cipher.

PATRICK
George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette used them to pass secret messages from the front lines.

RILEY
(covering)
Duh.

BEN
The first number indicates the page in the key, in this case, the set of Silence Dogood letters. The second number in the cipher is the line on that page. And the third is the word on that line.
RILEY
Where is the map with the "X"? *

BEN
There's never a map with an "X."

RILEY
Then, who started that legend?

Abigail studies the numbers, tears welling in her eyes.

ABIGAIL
This is amazing.

BEN
Dad, where're the letters? We need the letters.

PATRICK
(suddenly guilty)
When you left, I got rid of everything.

As they talk, Abigail picks up the document and holds it up to the chandelier light for closer inspection.

BEN
Dad, where are they?!

PATRICK
I donated them.

Riley hangs his head.

RILEY
I hope you got a big tax write-off.

BEN
Who'd you give them to?

PATRICK
There's only one place for them.

BEN
You gave them to the Ben Franklin Museum?

PATRICK
It completed their collection.

Abigail excitedly scrutinizes the writing on the Declaration of Independence.

ABIGAIL
This is a tremendous discovery!
All this time. No one knew there was something on the back.
PATRICK
On the back of what?

Patrick peeks at the front of the document, and his face falls as he now SEES WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PARCHMENT. It starts with, "In CONGRESS, July 4th 1776."

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Holy shit!

BEN
I know.

PATRICK
That's the--

BEN
--I know.

Patrick digests that, about to blow a gasket, then...

PATRICK
(excited)
It's brilliant! Putting the map on the back of an important document guaranteed the map's survival.

BEN
I know.

RILEY
Um, guys...

Riley's attention is drawn to the television in the den. On the screen is the grainy surveillance picture of Ben captioned with his name.

Ben goes to the television and turns it up.

REPORTER (ON SCREEN)
...for questioning in connection with an attempted robbery at the National Archives tonight. Authorities are also looking for this woman...

ON THE SCREEN, a picture of Abigail also appears. Abigail gasps.

REPORTER (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D)
...Dr. Abigail Chase, a museum employee who has been reported as missing. Police did not say whether Dr. Chase is a suspect or a witness, only that she is the only National Archives employee not currently accounted for...
The thought of her being wanted almost makes Abigail faint.

**ABIGAIL**
We should turn ourselves in. We have evidence now.

**BEN**
The FBI will just think I put those numbers on the back. They'll put me in jail, the Declaration back on display, and Ian will just come after it again.

**PATRICK**
He's right. The Declaration of Independence will never be safe.

**RILEY**
So, now what?

**PATRICK**
Find that treasure.

Ben looks to his dad, surprised. It's first time he's seen a glimmer of approval in his dad's face in a long time.

**ABIGAIL**
We need to change our clothes.

**EXT. HILLCREST NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT**
A swarm of POLICE CARS and government sedans sit parked on the driveway and street outside Patrick's home.

**INT. COLONIAL HOME, DINING ROOM - NIGHT**
Sadusky's team sweeps the house. Patrick sits calmly at the table as Sadusky scrutinizes the tea service.

**PATRICK**
My son told me to call you. Said otherwise I'd be aiding and abetting.

Sadusky looks to Agent Dawes who reads from a dossier.

**AGENT DAWES**
Benjamin Franklin Gates. Graduated with honors from Dartmouth with a PhD in American History. Spent his summers working on a deep sea salvage expeditions.

**PATRICK**
He was looking for Charlotte.

**AGENT HENDRICKS**
A girl?
PATRICK
(dramatically)
A quest.

The agents exchange eye-rolling looks, like "another whacko."

SADUSKY
Sir, did your son say where he was going?

PATRICK
(thinks)
No, he never actually said.

SADUSKY
Your son's in a lot of trouble, Mr. Gates. He's stolen a National Treasure.

PATRICK
Sometimes a man has to do something wrong in order to do something right.

SADUSKY
And what would that right thing be?

Patrick reaches for something in his pocket and, IN AN INSTANT, every FED (except Sadusky) has their gun out and trained on Patrick who freezes. Sadusky sighs.

SADUSKY (CONT'D)
Guys. He's going for his wallet.

The agents holster their sidearms, and Patrick pulls out his wallet, takes out a $1-bill, and lays it on the table.

PATRICK
Have you ever heard of the Lost Treasure of the Templar Knights?

Sadusky and his team of agents exit the house. As they walk, Sadusky studies the one-dollar bill.

AGENT JOHNSON
A map on the back of the Declaration of Independence? Insanity obviously runs in the family.

AGENT COLFAX
Let's hope we recover the Declaration before he goes into endgame.

SADUSKY
Whether or not there's a treasure map, Gates isn't the only one after it.
CONTINUED:

Agent Dawes looks to her boss, realizing...

AGENT DAWES
The gunfire outside the vault room...

SADUSKY
...Someone was shooting at Gates.
Someone else who knew about the map.

Sadusky finally pockets the dollar bill.

SADUSKY (CONT'D)
Ben Gates had copies of the Silence
Dogood letters at his apartment.
He needed them for something. Let's
find out where the originals are.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK - DAY

REVOLUTIONARY WAR SOLDIERS armed with muskets fire a volley
of shots at a line of RED COATS. BOOM-BOOM-BOOM! Several
British fall. We WIDEN to reveal...

We're watching a re-enactment of a revolutionary battle.
Horses, cannons, drums, gunfire. We MOVE through a CROWD
OF TOURISTS which stands on the sidelines and come to...

WASHINGTON SQUARE, where a mock-up of a Continental Army
encampment has been set up for the show. Standing between
the tents, Ben and Abigail survey the scene.

ABIGAIL
He's taking too long. He's been
captured.

BEN
They're not looking for Riley, just
us. He's fine.

INT. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN MUSEUM - DAY

The BOY is looking through exhibit glass at a collection of
Franklin inventions and artifacts: a glass armonica, a
Franklin stove, and many hand-written LETTERS.

As the boy studies the letters, we notice some of Sadusky's
TEAM are here, eyeing the crowd.

INT. BEN FRANKLIN MUSEUM, OFFICE - DAY

The museum CURATOR stands with Sadusky and Agent Dawes. He
studies a photocopy of Ben Gates drivers license picture.

SADUSKY
We're expecting him to come here--
CURATOR
--I'm afraid you must be mistaken.

The curator hands the photo back to Sadusky.

CURATOR (CONT'D)
The Gates Family donated many of the Silence Dogood letters to us.

Sadusky and Agent Dawes exchange a curious look.

CURATOR (CONT'D)
Fascinating story how they came to have them, in fact. Goes all the way back to President Jackson...

INT. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN MUSEUM - DAY

The boy finally finishes reading the letters and exits.

EXT. 4TH STREET - DAY

The boy exits the museum, passing an ACTOR dressed like BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, spouting aphorisms to PASSERSBY. The boy crosses the cobblestone street and goes to...

RILEY. Sitting at a bus stop and working on a Gettysburg Times crossword puzzle. He looks up.

BOY
And.

RILEY
You sure? 4th letter, 22nd line--

BOY
--third word, "and."

RILEY
Good. Thanks.

Riley hands him $5, then jots down "and" under the numbers "4.22.3."

ON HIS CROSSWORD, we see Riley's written words under the corresponding codes from the Declaration. So far, it reads:

"The trove unfolds for He who tolls pass and..."

EXT. INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK - DAY

Another line of RED COATS falls to cannon fire...BOOM-BOOM! The crowd CHEERS, while Abigail grows increasingly anxious.

ABIGAIL
I can't take this anymore.
Ben watches the re-enactment.

BEN
I know. It's all wrong. We lost this battle and every other in Philadelphia...

Abigail regards him. That's not what she meant, but he continues on his tangent.

BEN (CONT'D)
...Most people don't realize that George Washington was a rather poor military tactician, and that it was really Benedict Arnold who won the war for us with his victory in the Battle of Saratoga which finally earned the Continental Army the support of France.

Abigail just stares at Ben.

BEN (CONT'D)
What?

ABIGAIL
Nothing. I just thought I was the only one obsessed with meaningless historical trivia.

BEN
There's no such thing. Sometimes...

As he talks, Abigail spots something over his shoulder...

IAN and SHAW moving through the crowd toward them.

BEN (CONT'D)
...the littlest things matter the mos--

Without warning, Abigail grabs Ben and...PULLS him IN FOR A PASSIONATE KISS.

Ben's surprised but goes with it until Abigail just as suddenly pulls out of the kiss.

ABIGAIL
Ian's here.

She motions with her eyes, and Ben follows them to see IAN and SHAW pushing through the crowd.

BEN
He must've figured out what "Silence" meant. Which means he's going to the museum.
Ben moves to go, but Abigail grabs him.

ABIGAIL
I just want you to know that kiss meant nothing. I was only doing it to hide us.

BEN
History remembers what it wants to remember.

With that, Ben and Abigail follow Ian and Shaw.

Crowded with TOURISTS. Ian and Shaw move through the throng. They come to the corner. Up ahead is the Ben Franklin Museum. In front, there are several FEDERAL AGENTS.

Ian stops, looks around, to across the street to where Riley is waiting.

Just then, however, a bus pulls up and stops right in front of Riley, blocking Ian's view.

As people climb on and off the bus, Riley stares at something on the side of the bus. He smiles to himself...

RILEY
I'm a genius.

We REVERSE to see what he was seeing...

CLOSE ON THE WORD "PASS" inscribed in iron. We PULL BACK A little to see "PASS AND STOW." Then, a little more to see the words are inscribed on the Liberty Bell in an ad...

...on the side of the bus which now pulls away. A beat, then Ian steps up with Shaw, but RILEY'S GONE. Ian looks around. See the trash can. On top, the crossword puzzle.

Sadusky and Agent Dawes exit the office. The other agents all signal him with, "Nothing yet."

Sadusky notices a WOMAN who looks like a prostitute reading the Dogood letters.

AGENT DAWES
I don't get it. Why would Gates want to steal something the family donated?

But Sadusky isn't listening. He pulls away from his team to follow the prostitute who is now leaving.
259 EXT. 4TH STREET - DAY

The prostitute crosses the street to the bus stop, but Riley's long gone. The prostitute looks around.

SADUSKY (O.S.)
Who're you looking for?

The prostitute sees the suit and immediately looks to run, but she's surrounded by the rest of Sadusky's team.

SADUSKY (CONT'D)
Whoa, you're not in trouble. We're just looking for the same person you are.

260 EXT. INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK - DAY

SOLDIERS march to the beat of drums and fife commands. Smoke rises over the field from cannon and musket fire. Riley moves down a line of Continental Army tents, oblivious to the "melee" in the background.

RILEY
I'm a genius. I'm a genius!

Suddenly, someone grabs him and pulls him BETWEEN THE TENTS. Riley almost screams, then sees it's just Ben and Abigail.

BEN
Ian's here.

RILEY
Doesn't matter. I got it. "The trove unfolds for he who tolls pass and..." I didn't get the last word, but I figured it ou--

BEN
--The Liberty Bell.

RILEY
How'd you know?

ABIGAIL
"Tolls Pass and Stow." It's obvious.

RILEY
Not that obvious.

261 EXT. 4TH STREET - DAY

The prostitute sits on the bench, surrounded by FBI.

PROSTITUTE
All I know is the guy didn't want nothing for his money. Just a word.
CONTINUED:

SADUSKY
What word?

EXT. INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK - DAY

Soldiers march forward, then stop. An actor playing GEORGE WASHINGTON rides a horse, commanding his troops...

GEORGE WASHINGTON
Fire!

The soldiers fire synchronized volleys. BOOM-BOOM-BOOM! The British ranks thin. The crowd goes wild.

EXT. 4TH STREET - DAY

Agent Johnson sits in a parked sedan. Sadusky and the others wait by the open car door as Agent Johnson works on a laptop.

AGENT JOHNSON
6,903 search hits for the words "stow" and "Declaration of Independence." The top results being the Fourth of July and the Liberty Bell.

SADUSKY
The Liberty Bell?

AGENT JOHNSON
Two foundry workers named John Pass and John Stow cast the bell.

SADUSKY
That's it. Let's go.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK - DAY

Ian and Shaw move through the park.

SHAW
You're kidding, right?

IAN
I wish I were.

SHAW
You mean, we have to ring the Liberty Bell?!

INT. LIBERTY BELL PAVILION - DAY

Crowded with TOURISTS. A TOUR GUIDE stands next to the famous bell (which is enclosed in a glass display case).

TOUR GUIDE
...which hasn't been rung in over 150 years. It was in 1846 on George (MORE)
TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)
Washington's birthday that the final expansion of the crack occurred, retiring the Liberty Bell permanently.

EXT. LIBERTY BELL PAVILION - DAY
A long line of TOURISTS snakes across the park plaza. Sadusky and his team move through the crowded plaza.

SADUSKY
I want agents posted in the pavilion and surrounding plaza. As of right now, the Liberty Bell in under around-the-clock guard.

AGENT COLFAX
What exactly do we think Gates is planning?

SADUSKY
I don't know, but we already lost one national treasure, I'll be damned if we're going to lose another.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE HALL - DAY
Across the park from the new Liberty Bell Pavilion.

INT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, BELFRY - DAY
BOOM-BOOM-BOOM! A trap door in the belfry floor is smashed open with the butt of the rifle, and Ben, Abigail, and Riley climb up onto the belfry's platform.

From here, there is a panoramic view of Independence Park and Liberty Pavilion.

RILEY
The Liberty Bell is not here. It's over there.

ABIGAIL
But the bell was here when the map was written.

BEN
So, it must be rung from here.

Riley considers that, then...

RILEY
OK, then we simulate it. We get the bell's exact size and metallurgic composition and determine the tone it made--
ABIGAIL
--E-flat.

RILEY
Perfect. We generate a church bell e-flat note digital wave file, we get a couple high excursion, low-distortion speakers up here, and plug our ears.

BEN
But what could ringing the bell possibly do?

RILEY
Maybe some stone will magically crumble away, finally revealing the "X" that marks the spot.

Abigail looks to the street below, swarming with POLICE.

ABIGAIL
One thing's for certain, it'll definitely alert everyone to our presence.

Ben looks at her, realizing...

BEN
The man who rang the Liberty Bell when the Declaration of Independence was signed...who was he?

ABIGAIL
Andrew McNair. There used to be a plaque commemorating him up here.

BEN
Find it.

They all three immediately get on their hands and knees and search the old belfry floor. A beat, then...

ABIGAIL
Here it is!

Ben hurries to her. Finds an old bronze plaque under layers of dirt. Ben rubs away the dirt with his hand.

CLOSE ON the plaque which is dedicated to:

"Andrew McNair
For tolling the bell on July 8, 1776
Proclaiming the signing of
The Declaration of Independence
--Member Lodge 43, Lancaster Pennsylvania--"
Ben reads the last line of the plaque.

BEN
"Member Lodge 43"
(looks up)
McNair was a Freemason.

Ben grabs the rifle and pries up the plaque with the bayonet.

ABIGAIL
What are you doing?!

BEN
"The trove unfolds for he who tolls
Pass and Stow." The cipher was
talking about McNair.

The plaque finally pops off. Underneath...a SMALL HOLE in
the floorboards. Ben looks to them. They both see it.

RILEY
Jesus...

Ben sticks his hand into the hole. A beat, then Ben pulls
out his hand. Turns it over. Opens his fist, revealing...A *
PAIR OF OLD BIFOCALS.*

Riley claps his hands together, happily.

RILEY (CONT'D)
OK! Super! It's been so worth it.
Can we talk about shares now? 'Cause
I really need a PAIR OF GLASSES!

BEN
Bifocals.

Abigail studies Ben, realizing...

ABIGAIL
Ben Franklin invented them.

RILEY
And I'm sure he's been looking for
this pair! Those Founding Fathers
and their fraternity pranks!

Riley mimics an old man's voice.

RILEY (CONT'D)
"Let's hide old Ben's
bifocals!"
(feigns laughter)
BEN
"HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!"

ABIGAIL
Here.

Abigail slips the Declaration out of the musket barrel, and
they quickly unroll it as Riley continues his rant.
RILEY
"And then, because we have NOTHING BETTER TO DO, let's put a secret message on the back of the Declaration of Independence!"

BEN
The trove unfolds...

ABIGAIL
...means the treasure can be seen...

Ben dons the bifocals and looks at the Declaration.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Well?

Ben takes off the glasses. Hands them to Abigail. She slips them on as Riley rattles on.

RILEY
"And let's crack the Liberty Bell too!" "Hey, good idea! And FUNNY!"

Abigail looks at the Declaration. What she sees takes her breath away. Now, Riley notices the look on her face.

RILEY (CONT'D)
What?

Abigail stares at the Declaration as if in a trance.

RILEY (CONT'D)
What?

Abigail slowly looks to Ben in disbelief. He smiles big. Riley looks at them both, impatient...

RILEY (CONT'D)
What? Another riddle? What do we have to do now? T.P. the White House?!

Ben takes the glasses off of Abigail's face and hands them to Riley, who puts them on, and we go to his POV.

CLOSE ON THE BACK OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. As the lenses come into view...

The blank parchment comes alive! A 3-D image magically appears, rising out of the various shades of parchment colors, beiges and tans, in a prism, Magic-Eye effect...

An 18th CENTURY CHURCH and CEMETERY. An "X" marks a spot in the field of graves. The map is dated "August 17, 1776."

RILEY (CONT'D)
(laughs excited)
I knew it! There it is! "X" marks the spot! That's what I've been talking about!
Ben takes the bifocals from Riley. Studies the map again.

BEN
That's Trinity Church.

ABIGAIL
The original Trinity Church burned down just two months after the Declaration of Independence was signed.

BEN
I don't think that was a coincidence.

269  EXT. LIBERTY BELL PAVILION - DAY
Powell exits the pavilion and rejoins Ian and Shaw in the plaza. Right behind them is Independence Hall.

POWELL
They're not inside.

IAN
They're here somewhere.

Ian looks around, then realizes. He looks up to...

270  INT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, BELFRY - DAY
Abigail rolls up the Declaration and slips it into its cover. Just then, we hear someone coming up the steps.

RILEY
Someone's coming.

BEN looks down from the belfry just as IAN looks up from the plaza below. THEIR EYES CONNECT.

BEN
Ian.

Riley pulls open the trap door and sees Powell sprinting up the stairs. Riley slams the trap door shut.

271  INT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, STAIRWELL - DAY
Powell tries to push open the belfry's trap door, but...

272  INT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, BELFRY - DAY
Riley's standing on the trap door. He yells to Ben...

RILEY
Go!

Ben and Abigail climb out of the belfry. Riley shoves the musket barrel through an iron ring latch on the trap door.
INT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, STAIRWELL - DAY

Powell shoots up at the trap door...BLAM-BLAM-BLAM!

INT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, BELFRY - DAY

Riley tap-dances as gunfire chews up the floorboards at his feet. WOOD SPLINTERs and POPS.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, CLOCK TOWER PARAPET - DAY

Ben and Abigail peer over the edge. It's a 20-foot drop to the roof. Ben looks around for other options. Abigail hands him the Declaration of Independence.

BEN
What're you doing?

ABIGAIL
I don't want to be responsible for bending it!

With that, she turns and...JUMPS! She LANDS HARD on the rock and tarpaper roof below, then looks up to Ben, who's a little awe-struck by her.

He tosses the Declaration down to her, then jumps too.

CLOSE ON the iron latch as BOOM! Gunfire blows it out.

INT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, BELFRY - DAY

Powell bursts up through the trap door into the belfry, hurries to the edge, and sees Ben and Abigail below.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, ROOF - DAY

Ben grabs Abigail and lunges out of the way as the roof is raked with gunfire. They land hard on a slanted part of the roof. The force knocks the Declaration of Independence from Abigail's grip.

Bullets POCK the shingles in their wake, barely missing the Declaration as it ROLLS...DOWN...THE...INCLINE.

INT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, BELFRY - DAY

Powell chases them with gunfire, when suddenly Riley KIPS DOWN from the outside the belfry's archway and...

KICKS POWELL in the FACE! Powell staggers back, then charges Riley, slamming him into the wall.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, ROOF - DAY

Ben and Abigail slide out of control down the incline. Ben gets a foothold. Throws out his hand, just catching THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE inches from the edge.
But Abigail isn't so lucky. She's out of his reach. She tumbles OFF THE LEDGE! She SCREAMS!

INT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, BELFRY - DAY

Powell whip-kicks Riley in the chin. He stumbles backwards. Falls through trap door, grabbing the lip with one hand. Powell scrambles out of the belfry.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, ROOF - DAY

Abigail's fingers grip the rain gutter. A three-story drop below her. Ben scrambles to the edge and peers over. From his vantage point, we have a nice, clear view of...

Abigail's cleavage. It's impossible not to notice. And it gives Ben pause. The rain gutter CREAKS, ready to give.

ABIGAIL
Um, how about a little help?

Ben looks back to see POWELL jump down from the clock tower.

BEN
No time.

Ben takes the Declaration of Independence...

BEN (CONT'D)
Hold this.

...And SHOVES it down into Abigail's bosom. She's aghast.

ABIGAIL
You can't--

BEN
--Whatever you do, don't bend it.

With that, Ben stands and SLAMS his foot down hard on the rain gutter which TEARS AWAY FROM THE BUILDING! Rivet by rivet, POP-POP-POP!

We FOLLOW ABIGAIL as she falls, jerking sharply each time a rivet tears away from the plaster. She holds on tight as the rain gutter swings down like a stiff copper vine...

TO INDEPENDENCE SQUARE. To her surprise, she lands softly.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, ROOF - DAY

Powell goes to the edge and sees Abigail getting away. He hurries to a roof access ladder, but BEN TACKLES him from behind and pins him to the ground.

Just then, we hear ABIGAIL SCREAM! Ben looks down to see Ian and Shaw throw ABIGAIL into a Corvette, then peel out.
Ben takes off sprinting, running the length of the roof in the direction of the Corvette.

POWELL gets up and takes off running after Ben.

RILEY clambers down from the clock tower and joins the chase.

BEN gets to the end of the roof. There is a gap between Independence Hall and Congress Hall. A big one. No time to debate it. Ben LAUNCHES HIMSELF across the gap...

EXT. CONGRESS HALL, ROOF - DAY

Ben lands hard, shoulder-rolls to his feet.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE HALL, ROOF - DAY

Powell follows suit. He LEAPS across the chasm...

...But lands short, his body slamming against the bricks, then falling to the plaza below.

Riley sees him fall, looks away, decides to take the stairs.

EXT. CONGRESS HALL, ROOF - DAY

Ben sprints across the roof. Looks down to see the CORVETTE in traffic. A TRUCK a few cars behind.

Ben FLINGS HIMSELF off the roof...and into a TREE. Lands on a branch. Which instantly BREAKS. Ben tumbles onto...

EXT. TRUCK, MOVING - DAY

The roof of the truck. THUNK!

INT. CORVETTE, MOVING - DAY

Ian drives. Abigail sits stiffly in the front passenger seat, Shaw's gun to the back of her head.

IAN
Where's the map?

ABIGAIL
It's called the Declaration of Independence. And it's the reason we kicked your ass in the war.

Ian sees the plastic sticking up from Abigail's blouse and reaches for it, but Abigail GRABS HIS WRIST.

IAN
Ah-ah-ah! Mustn't wrinkle it.

She relents, and Ian slips the document out of her bosom.
IAN (CONT'D)
Consider this reparation.

EXT. TRUCK, MOVING - DAY
Ben crouches like a rodeo rider as the truck pulls alongside the Corvette. Ben lunges...

EXT. CORVETTE, MOVING - DAY
Ben lands on top of the Corvette...THUNK!

INT. CORVETTE, MOVING - DAY
Ian and Shaw hear the clatter overhead. Ian pulls a gun from under his seat and FIRES up into the car's roof!

EXT. CORVETTE, MOVING - DAY
Ben rolls aside as the car's roof is ripped up by gunfire.

INT. CORVETTE, MOVING - DAY
Abigail grabs Ian's arm and struggles with him. Ian can't drive, shoot Ben, and fight her at the same time.

EXT. CORVETTE, MOVING - DAY
Ben barely manages to hang on as the car spins sideways across traffic, then CRASHES into the side of another car.

EXT. LIBERTY BELL PLAZA - DAY
Sadusky hears, then sees the mayhem in the adjacent street.

SADUSKY
Get people over there now!

Agent Dawes gets on her radio as they all start sprinting toward 5th Street.

EXT. 5TH STREET - DAY
SADUSKY and AGENT DAWES push through panicked TOURISTS, see the Corvette speeding through traffic with Ben clinging to the roof. Is it him? Sadusky calls out...

SADUSKY
GATES!

Ben turns. Their eyes meet. Sadusky gets a good look; it's his man. Sadusky pulls out his gun, has a clean shot...

As the Corvette slaloms traffic, Sadusky follows him with his gun. An easy target. His finger tightens on the trigger...but...he...just...can't...do...it.
The Corvette disappears around a building. Sadusky lowers his gun, mad at himself.

SADUSKY (CONT'D)

Shit.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK - DAY

The Corvette SLAMS over the curb, sending screaming PEOPLE ducking and diving out of the way. The Corvette speeds toward...

A LINE OF RED COATS. Soldiers scatter, parting like the Red Sea. HORSES buck and BOLT!

INT. CORVETTE, MOVING - DAY

Ian navigates through the battle. Suddenly, Ben reaches in through the open window and grabs the Declaration of Independence from him.

Ian fights it, but Abigail BITES HIS ARM! Ian smacks her, then whips the wheel...

...Sending Ben flying off the top of the Corvette.

We FOLLOW BEN who SLAMS onto the grass. Losing the Declaration of Independence which...

...ROLLS AWAY down a grassy hill.

Ben gets to his feet, stunned. Realizes he's lost the document which...

...ROLLS into the path of...

A GROUP OF OFFICERS ON HORSEBACK.

We FOLLOW the DECLARATION as it rolls through the sea of hooves...SLAMMING...DOWN...ALL...AROUND...IT!

It finally stops rolling right in front of a BRITISH OFFICER ON HORSEBACK who tries to calm his panicked horse.

Ben charges into the stampede.

INT. CORVETTE, MOVING - DAY

Ian sees the Ben going for the Declaration of Independence, and he GUNS the Corvette right toward Ben and the horse.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK - DAY

The Corvette's ENGINE SCREAMS. Ben DIVES one way. The horse rears back the other way, launching the BRITISH OFFICER skyward.
The Corvette skids up between Ben and the Declaration of Independence. The driver's side door pops open, and Ian scoops up the Declaration of Independence.

**INT. CORVETTE - DAY**

Ian closes his door and turns back to drive but is greeted by Abigail's elbow, which she SLAMS INTO HIS FACE.

Ian's nose crunches, spurts blood. Pissed off as all hell, Ian reels around with his gun...

**IAN**

You little bitc--

He goes to shoot, but just then, the passenger side door pops open, and BEN PULLS ABIGAIL OUT THE OTHER SIDE.

**EXT. INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK - DAY**

Ben and Abigail roll away from the Corvette in the grass.

**INT. CORVETTE - DAY**

Ian goes to shoot them but is stopped by...

**SHAW**

Forget 'em. Look!

Ian looks through the windshield to see dozens of FEDS sprinting onto the field of battle. Ian GUNS IT.

**EXT. INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK - DAY**

The Corvette peels out. Abigail watches it go.

**ABIGAIL**

He's got the Declaration!

**BEN**

I know.

The British Officer staggers to his feet. Goes to his horse, but the horse is...

...COMMANDEERED by Ben who leaps into his horse's saddle, whips it around to find his path is blocked by...

**SADUSKY AND A LINE OF FEDERAL AGENTS.** Guns drawn.

**SADUSKY**

Freeze, Gates!

Ben looks the Corvette which disappears into traffic.

**BEN**

You're letting him get away!
SADUSKY
Get off the horse, and get on your knees!

The FBI AGENTS move in as we PULL UP above the mayhem to...

A GOD'S EYE VIEW of the FEDS swarming in on Abigail and Ben who drops to his knees, defeated as we DISSOLVE TO...

CLOSE ON the bifocals which sit on top of an otherwise bare metal table. We WIDEN to reveal we're in...

INT. FBI, INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Ben sits across from Sadusky, Agents Johnson and Dawes, who finishes the last dregs of her coffee from a styrofoam cup.

AGENT DAWES
They don't look like magic glasses.

BEN
There's nothing magic about it. It's an ancient optical effect. The Egyptians encoded all their major art works with it. It's believed humans used to be able to see the 3D images with the naked eye, but the human eye evolved.

SADUSKY
Evolved?

BEN
In the Bible, the oceans are described as being the "color of wine." That's because the human eye couldn't see the color blue back then. Now, it can. Benjamin Franklin was a genius and inventor. He designed these special lenses and used this optical effect to hide the map on the back of the Declaration of Independence.

SADUSKY
You sure you don't want a lawyer?

BEN
Haven't you ever wondered why all those symbols are on the back of our one-dollar bill? The All-Seeing Eye? The pyramid? Our Founding Fathers were Freemasons, descendants of the Templar Knights who go all the way back to Ancient Egypt.

Sadusky and his team all exchange dubious looks, then...
SADUSKY
Anyone want more coffee?

No takers. Sadusky moves to go, but Ben stops him with... *

BEN
You didn't shoot me. Why?

SADUSKY
What?

BEN
On the car. You had a clear bead on me. Why didn't you take it?

SADUSKY
Because you don't fire into a crowd.

BEN
Because you knew there was something else going on here.

Sadusky studies Ben. Says nothing.

BEN (CONT'D)
Let me get the Declaration back. Ian Howe can't find the treasure without the glasses. I'll cut a deal with him. Tell him I'll give him the treasure if he gives us the Declaration of Independence.

SADUSKY
Why don't you just tell us what the map said, and we'll go make the trade with Mr. Howe?

BEN
Ian's too smart for that.

Sadusky considers that, nodding his head, then...

AGENT JOHNSON
You wanna know what I believe?

Everyone looks to Agent Johnson.

AGENT JOHNSON (CONT'D)
That you'd do anything to get your hands on that treasure. That you and Ian Howe made a deal. But once you got close to it, you both got greedy and you each decided you'd get more of the treasure without the other. Am I right?

Before Ben can answer, a KNOCK at the door interrupts.
Sadusky opens it to find Agents Colfax and Hendricks.

SADUSKY
You find Howe?

Colfax and Hendricks exchange a solemn look, then...

AGENT COLFAX
He just called.

SADUSKY
Great. Where--

AGENT HENDRICKS
--With his ransom demands. He wants Ben Gates. He's requested that we release him...

AGENT COLFAX
...And that no police or federal agents follow him.

SADUSKY
Absolutely not. Out of the question.

AGENT COLFAX
He said that if we don't comply with his demands by midnight tonight, he'll... Agent Colfax's voice trails off.

SADUSKY
He'll what?

AGENT HENDRICKS
He'll...
(chokes out the words)
...cut off a piece of the Declaration of Independence every hour and send it to us in a box.

The agents are all horrified by the prospect.

BEN
He's not bluffing.

Agent Johnson loses it and charges Ben, grabbing him by the collar and throwing him up against the wall.

AGENT JOHNSON
You little prick. How do we know that you and Howe didn't plan this whole thing?!

BEN
You don't.
Agent Johnson stares daggers at Ben who looks to Sadusky.

BEN (CONT'D)
    But I'm all you got.

Sadusky escorts a handcuffed Ben toward a glass walled conference room. Inside, agents huddle around Agent Hendricks who talks on the phone.

Hendricks sees Sadusky and pokes his head out of the room.

AGENT HENDRICKS
    It's Howe! He wants to talk to Gates.

Wearing handcuffs, Ben takes the phone from Agent Hendricks.

BEN
    (into the phone)
    Hello, Ian.

A long beat as Ben listens. A digital recorder records the conversation in the background while Agent Colfax monitors it on headphones. Finally....

BEN (CONT'D)
    Yes, I understand.

With that, he hangs up and looks to Sadusky.

BEN (CONT'D)

SADUSKY
    New York?

BEN
    In three hours.

AGENT DAWES
    We'd better hurry.

AGENT JOHNSON
    He say anything else?

BEN
    No feds. No wires. Or no deal.

Islands crammed with high rises.
312 EXT. USS INTREPID - DAY
Retired combat aircraft sit idle on the deck. Flags and pennants flap in the breeze.

313 EXT. HARBOR PARKING LOT - DAY
A high-tech van sits in the parking lot. Several antennas protrude from the van's roof.

314 INT. FBI VAN - DAY
This surveillance vehicle is packed with equipment. Shirt off, Ben is wired by Sadusky's team while Sadusky watches. Sitting at a computer bay, Agent Colfax wears headphones.

AGENT COLFAX
Say something.

BEN
Can I put my shirt back on?

AGENT COLFAX
All right. He's good.

315 EXT. HARBOR PARKING LOT - DAY
Ben climbs out of the van. Turns back.

BEN
I need the bifocals.

Agent Dawes gives them to him, and Ben pockets them.

SADUSKY
As soon as he shows you the Declaration, we'll move in. Don't try anything.

316 EXT. USS INTREPID, BRIDGE - DAY
Hidden here is an FBI SNIPER. Through his scope, we FOLLOW Ben as he climbs the gangway and steps onto the deck.

317 EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - DAY
Across the street, more FEDS watch and wait. Agent Hendricks searches the skies with binoculars for the chopper.

318 EXT. USS INTREPID, DECK - DAY
Ben crosses the deck to the port side.

319 EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - DAY
Finally, Agent Hendricks sees something in the distance.
CONTINUED:

AGENT HENDRICKS
I got a visual.

We see it now. A TINY SPECK in the sky. A chopper?

INT. FBI VAN - DAY
Sadusky sits with Agents Dawes and Colfax.

AGENT DAWES
Think it's Howe?

Sadusky leans into a microphone.

SADUSKY
Get ready, Gates.

EXT. USS INTREPID, DECK - DAY
Ben moves to the edge of the deck. Nothing but river below. He checks his watch, then...

BEN
(into his mic)
Sadusky?

INTERCUT Sadusky in the van.

SADUSKY
(into his mic)
Yeah?

BEN (VIA MIC)
I want you to know that Abigail had nothing to do with this. I know you believe me.

INTERCUT Sadusky and Dawes, exchanging worried looks.

AGENT Dawes
What the hell is he talking about?!

SADUSKY
Shit! He set us up!

INTERCUT BEN on the deck. He JUMPS! A 60-foot drop...

SPLASH! Ben knifes into the East River.

INT. FBI VAN - DAY
There's a loud POP! As the wires on Ben's body short out. Agent Colfax whips off his headset.

AGENT COLFAX
Sonofabitch!
Calling orders into a radio, Sadusky and Dawes jump out of the van and sprint across the parking lot.

**SADUSKY**
Gates jumped! He's in the river! Move in! Move in!

The FBI SNIPER scrambles, searches the water below, can't see shit. The flight deck blocks his view.

Ben surfaces a few feet from the hull. A beat, then BUBBLES appear next to him and...

A DIVER'S HEAD pops out of the water. The diver slips back his mask...it's RILEY.

**BEN**
Ransom demand?

Riley grins, affects a British accent.

**RILEY**
I rather liked that part too.

He hands Ben a TANK, REGULATOR, and set of FINS. Grins.

**BEN**
Just like diving for that wreck off the coast of France.

Ben jams the regulator into his mouth, and they disappear from the surface.

FEDS lean over the flight deck, searching the murky water.

More FEDS scour the shore. No sign of Ben.

Sadusky moves purposefully down a line of holding cells, stops at one. Inside, sits Abigail.

**SADUSKY**
We know you're not involved. You're free to go.

Abigail looks at him, surprised.
EXT. TRINITY CHURCH - EVENING

On the corner of Wall Street and Broadway, this medieval gothic church is dwarfed by modern skyscrapers all around.

INT. TRINITY CHURCH - EVENING

We FOLLOW a man's legs, walking up the aisle. He stops a pew. Sits. We WIDEN to reveal that it's IAN.

BEN (O.S.)
You're late.

We WIDEN MORE to reveal BEN in the pew in front of Ian.

IAN
I took a look around. Waited. Made sure you weren't working with the FBI.

BEN
Satisfied?

IAN
Not until I get that treasure.

BEN
Do you have the Declaration of Independence?

IAN
If I give it to you now, how do I know you won't just walk off with it and forget about the treasure?

BEN
How do I know you'll give me the Declaration of Independence after I show you where the treasure is?

IAN
I guess we're just going to have to trust each other.

BEN
That's easy for you to say. I never tried to kill you.

IAN
Come on, Ben. This is a treasure hunt. It's just the way it is. I actually quite like you. If we weren't such enemies, I do believe we'd be great friends.

BEN
Forget it, Ian. Deal's off.
Ben stands and starts down the aisle. Ian calls after him...

IAN
All right!

Ian pulls out his cell phone. Punches in a number.

IAN (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Bring it.

BEN
I want the pipe too.

IAN
What pipe?

BEN
The Meerschaum pipe. From the Charlotte. I found it. You took it.

Ian rolls his eyes, then talks into the phone...

IAN
And bring the bloody pipe.

With that, Ian hangs up. A beat, then the church doors open, and SHAW enters with Declaration of Independence in a mailing tube.

Shaw approaches and hands Ben the tube. He opens it, verifies that the Declaration of Independence is inside, then hands it back.

Ben then reaches into his pocket and pulls out THE BIFOCALS. Ian regards them, realizing...

IAN (CONT'D)
The All Seeing Eye.

BEN
(excitedly)
We found them in the Independence Hall belfry. There really is a map on the back of the Declaration of Independence. It's the most fantastic thing you'll ever see!

Ian is caught up in the moment. He reaches for the bifocals, but Ben "accidentally" drops them.

We watch as THE BIFOCALS FALL TO THE FLOOR IN SLO-MO and then land on the tiled floor...CRACK!

And if that isn't bad enough, Ben finishes them off by STOMPING ON THEM WITH HIS SHOE...CRUNCH!
CONTINUED: (2)

The bifocals lie on the floor in a million crystal pieces.

BEN (CONT'D)
Whoops! I guess you'll just have
to take my word for it.

Enraged, Ian lunges at Ben and tackles him to the church
floor. PARISHIONERS crane their necks to see the commotion.

Ian pins Ben and shoves a gun into Ben's stomach.

IAN
I'll kill you for that!

BEN
You do, and the secret to the
treasure dies with me.

Ian stares at Ben. Knows he's not bluffing.

BEN (CONT'D)
I give you the treasure; you give
me the Declaration of Independence.

IAN
That's it?

BEN
That's it.

Ian stands, then holds out his hand for Ben.

IAN
I guess that makes us partners again.

Ben ignores him. Gets to his feet.

BEN
Oh yeah. And no guns.

INT. TRINITY CHURCH, FOYER - NIGHT

The REVEREND enters the foyer just as Ben, Ian, and Shaw
exit. The Reverend moves to the collection dish and finds...

...Two GUNS. He looks around, where did these come from?

EXT. TRINITY CHURCH - NIGHT

Ben, Ian, and Shaw exit the church, passing AN OLD LADY IN
A BLACK SHAWL who reaches out and GRABS BEN'S WRIST!

Startled, Ben looks to the woman, realizes it's...ABIGAIL. She pushes back her shroud.

BEN
What're you doing here?!
CONTINUED:

ABIGAIL
I saw the map, remember?

Ben and Ian exchange a knowing look.

IAN
Bloody hell!

ABIGAIL
Don't worry. Nobody followed me.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Sadusky, Agent Dawes, and Agent Johnson enter. Agents Hendricks and Colfax stand outside the ladies restroom, tails between their legs.

AGENT COLFAX
She asked to go to the bathroom.

AGENT HENDRICKS
She was only in there for 30 seconds. I swear.

Sadusky looks around, moving forward.

SADUSKY
All right. Both Gates and Dr. Chase came here, to Manhattan. What for?

AGENT JOHNSON
The treasure.

AGENT HENDRICKS
There's no way any treasure's still buried here. Everything's changed, ground's been dug up for subways and underground parking lots, high rises.

SADUSKY
So what in Manhattan hasn't changed in over 200 years?

EXT. TRINITY CHURCH GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Worn tombstones and crypts going all the way back to the 17th century are enclosed in this ancient churchyard by an old wrought iron fence.

Ben, Abigail, Ian, and Shaw come around the corner.

IAN
Normally I find graveyards rather depressing, but in this case, I find it uplifting and full of promise. Where do we start?
Riley approaches, carrying a shovel.

RILEY
Uh, bad news. There's no "X."

BEN
Yes, there is.

RILEY
I've looked all over.

BEN
You're not looking right.

IAN
Problem, partner?

BEN
No.

Ben and Abigail look around. Then, Ben looks to the sky.

BEN (CONT'D)
In the map, there was a crescent moon in the sky.

ABIGAIL
Maybe the "X" can only be seen at night.

Realizing, Ben starts walking back toward the church. Riley calls after him.

RILEY
Well, it's night now, and I don't see it!

With that, Ben pulls open the heavy church doors, and...

LIGHT SPILLS OUT OF THE CHAPEL, cutting a swath through the graveyard, casting EERIE TOMBSTONE SHADOWS everywhere.

None of which look like an "X." Except maybe...

Ben moves to where the shadow of a plant is cast onto the wall of A LONG STONE CRYPT.

Ben backtracks, following the source of the shadow to...

A GRAVESTONE. Covered in ivy. As Ben starts pulling away the ivy, Ian and the others approach.

Ben clears the ivy, revealing the gravestone. We see now that a TEMPLAR CROSS has been hewn out of the ancient stone.

They all exchange knowing looks.
RILEY (CONT'D)
"X" marks the spot.

IAN
Here? Under this grave?

Ian grabs Riley's shovel, goes to start digging, but Ben stops him with...

BEN
No.

Ben points across the cemetery.

BEN (CONT'D)
There.

They all follow his finger and finally see it. The "X" in the gravestone casts a giant shadow of an "X" on the side of the stone crypt. Ben smiles.

BEN (CONT'D)
"X" marks the spot.

He moves to the crypt. The shadow falls in the direct center. Riley laughs excitedly.

RILEY
Can you believe that?

IAN
I will when I see the treasure.

Ben kneels beside the worn crypt. Feels carefully along the surface as if reading Braille. He stops. Digs out some soft dirt, revealing what looks to be...

A SMALL KEYHOLE.

BEN
Ian, give me the pipe.

Shaw digs the pipe out of his pocket and hands it to Ben. * Abigail eyes the pipe.

ABIGAIL
My God, that's an amazing piece!
What craftsmanship!

BEN
I know. That's why I hate this part.

ABIGAIL
What part?

Ben SLAMS the pipe against the stone. It SHATTERS, revealing a THIN SKELETON KEY that was hidden inside.
Ben scoops up the key and slips it into the key hole. A perfect fit. He looks to the others who all stand by anxiously, then turns the key.

Suddenly, there is a loud scraping sound as a two-foot thick section of the crypt's lid slides open on an ancient pulley system. As it opens we can see...

A narrow passage. Barely wide enough for one person to squeeze through. A very dark.

They all exchange a look. And can't help but smile at their sudden success. Ian looks to Riley.

IAN
You first.

RILEY
No way. The guy who goes first always gets killed.

ABIGAIL
That's silly.

RILEY
Hey, I don't make the rules. There's always a map with an "X," and there's always a trap. Maps and traps. That's just what guys who hide treasures do.

BEN
I'll go first.

Ben flicks on a flashlight and ducks down inside.

INT. UNDERGROUND STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Old moss covered steps descend at a steep angle into darkness. Ben waves his flashlight around. The passageway below takes a sharp turn. He calls up to the others.

BEN
Looks OK!

EXT. TRINITY CHURCH GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Riley steps down next, but just then, the lid begins to Rumble closed! Ian pushes Abigail harshly aside.

INT. UNDERGROUND STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Ben hears the rumbling, looks back, sees Ian and Shaw coming down the stairs, pushing by Riley.

BEN
Where's Abigail?!
Ben pushes by them and charges back to the stairs to see that the crypt entrance is CLOSING...CLOSING...

**342 EXT. TRINITY CHURCH GRAVEYARD - NIGHT**

Abigail looks to the crypt. It's almost closed. She scrambles to her feet, lunges for the crypt, and...

TUMBLES through the door...

**343 INT. UNDERGROUND STAIRWAY - NIGHT**

...and ROLLS RIGHT INTO Ben's arms just as the crypt door seals behind her, inches from crushing her. Ben holds her, their faces almost touching. The chemistry...electric.

ABIGAIL
How'd I know if I hung out with you long enough, I'd eventually be robbing graves?

Ben grins, cocky. Just then, Riley pokes his head into the stairwell, carrying a lantern.

**RILEY**
You guys coming down the creepy stairway or what?

**344 INT. UNDERGROUND CATACOMBS, PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT**

Ben, Abigail, and Riley join Ian and Shaw, and they move down this long, stone-walled tunnel.

**IAN**
I know you all think I'm the "bad guy," but were it not for me making the hard choices, we wouldn't be here now, would we?

**BEN**
If you don't want to be the "bad guy," Ian, all you have to do is give me the Declaration of Independence.

**IAN**
Even if I gave it to you, you wouldn't leave. You're too close.

**BEN**
Try me.

Ian studies Ben for a beat, then...

**IAN**
Sorry. I need you to find the treasure.
Abigail holds her lantern up to the walls which are intermittently coffered with lions' heads, solar-crosses, and snakes. She looks to Ben who explains...

**BEN**
Masonic symbols.

**ABIGAIL**
What do they mean?

**BEN**
That we're getting close.

**RILEY**
But watch out for the trap. Because it's coming up.

---

**INT. UNDERGROUND CATACOMBS, OSSUARY - NIGHT**

Ben, Abigail, Riley, Ian, and Shaw enter this dark, dank, dirt-walled room. They shine the lights about, but there's nothing here.

**IAN**
Dead end.

Suddenly, a SKELETON'S TORSO falls out of the ceiling, right in front of Riley's face. He SCREAMS!

Ben shines his flashlight upwards to see...

**HUNDREDS OF GRINNING SKULLS**, half buried in the dirt ceiling, peering down at them. The remnants of uniforms, boots, and brass buttons can be seen.

**ABIGAIL**
Hessians.
(off Riley's look) *
German soldiers who fought for the British during the Revolution. They were buried in a common grave.

Shaw looks up. Just above him, there is a gun and flintlock powder horn in a dead soldier's belt.

**IAN**
There must be another outlet. Something we missed. Come on.

They all turn to go, but Shaw hangs back. He reaches up to the gun and tries to take it, but it's stuck.

As Shaw yanks harder, bits of dirt and dust rain down on him. Suddenly...

A BAYONETED RIFLE SWINGS out of the ceiling like a pendulum attached to a skeleton's arm, and...
...STABS SHAW in the chest!

The group turns and sees Shaw as he staggers back with the rifle stuck in his chest. Ben goes to help him, but Shaw crashes into...

The dirt wall behind him which caves in under his weight. Shaw falls through the hole in the wall, screaming all the way down. Which sounds like a long way down.

The group rushes to the hole in the wall and shine their lights into it, revealing...

A DEEP, NARROW SHAFT in the wall. In the shaft, there hangs two heavy chains with weights attached.

IAN (CONT'D)
Well, that was fortunate, now wasn't it?

Ben reaches into the shaft and adjusts the weights on the chains. The chains CREAK as an ancient WOODEN BOX descends into view from higher in the shaft.

Ben and Abigail exchange a look.

ABIGAIL
It looks like an elevator.

Ben and Riley pry open the door on the box, and a MILLION RATS and COCKROACHES pour out from the elevator cab! They all gulp, staring at the vermin. A beat, then...

RILEY
I hate elevators.

Ben steps inside. The elevator CREAKS and GROANS but holds.

BEN
Come on.

They all step in. MORE CREAKING. Ben adjusts the weights again and the cab descends.

346  EXT./INT.  TRINITY CHURCH, VARIOUS – NIGHT
Sadusky's team sweep the church and surrounding grounds.

347  EXT.  TRINITY CHURCH GRAVEYARD – NIGHT
Sadusky is here, kneeling in the dirt next to the crypt. He picks up a piece of the broken Meerschaum pipe and examines them. Agent Dawes approaches.

AGENT DAWES
Got a positive ID from the Reverend.
They were here.
CONTINUED:

But Sadusky isn't listening. He looks to the crypt and notices that the edges of the stone have recently been disturbed. The ivy overgrowth has also been torn away.

AGENT DAWES (CONT'D)
What is it?

Sadusky tries to lift the crypt's stone lid to no avail.

AGENT DAWES (CONT'D)
There's no moving that. It's got to weigh a ton.

Sadusky looks at Agent Dawes and realizes she's right.

SADUSKY
I want sonar here on the double.
And bring in a jackhammer!

INT. UNDERGROUND ELEVATOR CAGE - NIGHT

All eyes look around, warily as the cab descends creakily into depths unknown. Deeper...deeper still...

RILEY
I just want to point our that there are no buttons on the panel. In fact, there is no panel. How's this thing going to take us back up?

BEN
It's a one-way elevator.

RILEY
Then, it's not an elevator, is it?
Because it doesn't elevate.

Suddenly, the cab STOPS. They've hit something. WATER rushes in at their feet, filling the cab up to their ankles.

Riley and Ian pull open the wooden elevator door, and more water RUSHES IN...

INT. UNDERGROUND CATACOMBS, ANTECHAMBER - NIGHT

They shine their lights into the room. The chamber is circular, and there is a STONE PLATFORM in the center. Three 14th Century SWORDS jut out of the stone platform in a crisscross formation.

BEN
Templar Swords.

Ian moves to the platform, followed by Ben and Abigail.

Riley slogs out last. He steps something which CRUNCHES under his foot. Riley looks down to find...
...a SKELETON.

RILEY
I knew it.
(sing-song)
It's a trap.

Riley starts searching the walls for a way out while Ian, Ben, and Abigail study the swords.

ABIGAIL
What do they mean?

Ian reaches for one of the swords.

BEN
Ian, I wouldn't--

But Ian does anyway. He pulls out the center sword. We immediately hear the RUSHING SOUND OF WATER. Everyone looks around. The sound is all around them.

RILEY
What's that?

But Ian doesn't care. He just studies the sword. Riley continues feeling the walls but can find no exit.

RILEY (CONT'D)
How're we supposed to get out of here?

BEN
Look at this.

Ben shines his light on the side of the platform to see a bas relief a SNAKE CUT INTO PIECES carved into the stone. Abigail immediately recognizes the severed snake symbol.

ABIGAIL
"Join or die."

RILEY
I say we join.

Ben kneels down to study a STONE SLOT in a CIRCULAR STONE at a vertex of a triangle etched into the floor.

BEN
When we were at war with France, Ben Franklin drew a political cartoon of a snake cut into eight pieces, representing the eight colonies at the time. The cartoon called the colonies to "Join or Die."
The sound of the rushing water intensifies as Ben notices two more slots in the floor at the triangle's other vertices.

RILEY
But what does that mean?

Now, the sound of the RUSHING WATER builds to a CRESCEndo, and suddenly, WATER VOMITS into the chamber from several ancient drains in the walls near the ceiling.

The force of the thundering cascade knocks all of them off their feet, Ian drops his sword, but more importantly...

...HE DROPS THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE INTO THE WATER!

Water also pours into the chamber from the elevator shaft. Before anyone can react, the chamber is already filled up to their chests.

Abigail and Ben both see the Declaration of Independence in its tube bobbing around in the churning water.

Ben frantically swims to it, but it slips away...just out of his reach.

ABIGAIL
I got it!

The tube floats to Abigail. She scoops it out of the water, then holds it over her head as the water swirls around her.

The chamber is filling quickly, and it's now mostly dark, except for the faint glow of the submerged flashlights.

Everyone claws at the walls, finding no purchase in the smooth stone. Ben calls over the din of the rushing water.

BEN
Listen! We have to work together! "Join or die."

RILEY
How?!

BEN
There is a triangle carved into the floor! At each vertex, there is a slot! We must get the swords, then each of us must stick them in the slots and turn the swords! All of us, together!

Riley regards Ben for a long beat, then...

RILEY
Are you out of your mind?!

Ben answers by disappearing under the water's surface.
Riley and Abigail exchange a look. Then, Riley looks up. The flat stone ceiling is only a few feet overhead now. They'll soon be drowned. Riley takes a deep breath, then dives down.

UNDERWATER. Ben dives down to the platform. The two remaining SWORDS are still sticking up out of it. He grabs one. Riley swims up behind him and grabs the other. They both then kick back toward the surface.

IN THE CHAMBER. Ben and Riley resurface with the swords, gasping for breath. Ben hands Ian the sword.

BEN
Find the slot! At the triangle's vertex.

The stone walls suddenly GROAN under the tons of pressure.

BEN (CONT'D)
Go!

All three disappear underwater, leaving Abigail, holding the Declaration up high, but the water is rising rapidly.

EXT. TRINITY CHURCH GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

WORKERS finally jackhammer through the crypt wall, and Sadusky peers inside.

INT. UNDERGROUND CATACOMBS, ANTECHAMBER - NIGHT

Abigail still holds the Declaration of Independence above her head, but there is less than a foot of space left now.

UNDERWATER. Riley and Ian dive down, feel the floor, find edges of the triangle, and follow them. BEN also feels the floor, searching for the sword...

IN THE CHAMBER. Only inches of space left now. Abigail presses the Declaration of Independence and her face against the ceiling in the cramped pocket of air.

UNDERWATER. Ian follows his edge. Finds the vertex slot. Shoves his sword into it. Turns it.

RILEY finds his vertex and does the same.

BEN finally finds the sword.

IN THE CHAMBER. Abigail and the Declaration of Independence are now completely submerged. There is no air pocket anymore.

UNDERWATER. Ben finds the third vertex, plunges the sword into the slot and...

...TURNS IT.
359 ON ABIGAIL. Suddenly, the chamber ceiling RUMBLES as the heavy stone ceiling slabs START SLIDING APART!

360 CUT TO - PITCH BACK. We hear the SCRAPING SOUND of the stone floor rolling open. As it does, the faintest glimmer of light peeks up from the submerged flashlights below.

A beat, then Abigail's hand POKES UP THROUGH THE CRACK in the floor, holding the Declaration of Independence.

She tosses it aside onto the dry floor, then pulls herself up through the opening.

Ian pulls himself up through the floor next, then rolls aside, gasping for air in a soggy heap.

361 INT. UNDERGROUND CATACOMBS, OSSUARY - NIGHT

Sadusky and his team sprint down the passageway and come to the grave room. Only now, the elevator shaft is COMPLETELY FLOODED.

The elevator chains disappear into a pool of water which spills into the ossuary.

SADUSKY
There's got to be another way down. Find it!

362 INT. UNDERGROUND TREASURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

The water gurgles up through the widening crack in the floor. Abigail waits by it. A beat, then Riley surfaces, coughing.

ABIGAIL
Where's Ben?

Ian catches his breath, then peers into the darkness. In the near distance, we can see something...GLIMMERING.

Suddenly, the floor starts rumbling closed again. Panicked, Abigail calls out...

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Ben! Ben!

Ian picks up the Declaration of Independence which lies on the stone floor near him.

Just then, Ben comes up, gasping for air, choking on swallowed water, but...holding a flashlight.

BEN
(between coughs)
I thought we might need this.

The flashlight beam cuts through the darkness. We catch glimpses of pillars, statues, stone steps...
RILEY
Is that...?

The beam of light stops on something very shiny... It's a three-tiered bronze-gilded altar. The very sight of it makes Abigail gasp. Ian stares at it, mesmerized...

IAN
"...An altar of bronze, twenty cubits long and twenty cubits wide..."
Second Book of Chronicles.

Ian and Ben exchange knowing looks.

BEN
Stolen from the Temple of Solomon in the 5th Century B.C.

The group moves to the altar where they find candles and torches. They quickly light them, then turn to see...

THE TREASURE CHAMBER.

Dozens of marble Doric and Corinthian columns line the walls of the cavernous chamber filled with ancient treasures...

Crown jewels, gold and silver plates and chalices, gilded cherubim, olivewood furniture, carriages, loot from the Oracle of Delphi, and countless sacred artifacts.

ABIGAIL
This is what it must have been like to find King Tut's Tomb.

RILEY
Don't say that. Those guys were cursed.

Ian starts moving through the chamber, in awe of its treasures. But Ben doesn't move. He just stands there.

BEN
We'll be taking the Declaration of Independence now, Ian.

Ian finds a chest, opens it...it's filled with ancient Greek and Roman coins.

IAN
Oh come on, Ben. Have some fun.

Ian moves past the chest, and Riley can't help himself. He goes to it, sticks his hand in it, and comes up with a handful of coins. He laughs, incredulous.

BEN
A deal's a deal, Ian.
But Ian isn't listening. He's found another ANCIENT SWORD, only this one is different...special.

Its silver handle is decorated with images of scythed chariots engaged in battle and the famous Macedonian King.

Riley steps up behind Ian. He sees the sword.

RILEY
Cool gothic sword.

IAN
It's not just any sword...

Ian picks it up. It's heavy. Weighs more than 30 pounds.

IAN (CONT'D)
...It's the sword of Alexander the Great...

As Ian holds up the sword, we notice that it almost GLISTENS with an ethereal power.

IAN (CONT'D)
...It was used to conquer the world.

Without warning, Ian swings the sword backwards under his arm in a rowing motion and...

...Plunges it into RILEY'S STOMACH!

Riley staggers back, stunned. Then, he collapses.

Shocked and horrified, Ben and Abigail rush to Riley. He's bleeding. Badly.

BEN
Riley. Oh, Jesus...

Ben takes off his shirt. Balls it up. Presses it on Riley's wound. Abigail helps Ben hold it there. Riley looks up to Ben. He knows it's bad. He grimaces in agony.

RILEY
At least I was rich before I died.

With that, Ian swings his sword at Ben who just barely rolls out of the way it time. The sword hits the stone floor with a loud CLANK, taking out divot of stone.

IAN
You couldn't just want the treasure now, could you, Ben?

Ian swings again, but Ben grabs a bronze plate and blocks the blow. SPARKS fly as the plate shatters.
IAN (CONT'D)
You couldn't just be reasonable and argue with me over shares. I say, "How about 70-30?" And then you say, "How about 60-40?" And then I say, "What about 80-20?"

Ben scrambles to his feet, and Ian chases him.

IAN (CONT'D)
No, you have to go and be all noble.

He swings the sword at Ben again, but Ben dives behind a suit of armor which Ian SMASHES with his sword.

Ben goes down with the medieval suit which clatters to the ground. Ben shoulder-rolls to his feet and comes up with a sword of his own.

They face off. En Guard! They circle each other.

IAN (CONT'D)
I don't trust honest men.

Ian strikes. Ben parries. Their swords cross with a loud CLANK. They push off each other, and then the duel begins in earnest.

Actually, it's more like two guys fighting a bar fight with heavy swords. Neither is trained in fencing, but neither is about to give up first.

They exchange blows in an exhausting Rob Roy-esque sword fight. Ian attacks. Ben parries and simultaneously delivers a brutal kick to Ian's ribs, staggering Ian.

The Declaration of Independence falls to the ground and rolls away, down some stone steps...

Angered, Ian winds up. Strikes a vicious blow. Ben deflects it with his sword which breaks in half. The other half clanks to the ground.

ON ABIGAIL. She's applying pressure to Riley's wound. She sees the Declaration of Independence rolling toward a slatted drain in the floor...

She grabs Riley's hands and puts them on the now bloody, balled up shirt.

ABIGAIL
Apply pressure.

Riley weakly holds onto the field dressing as...

Abigail hurries to the still rolling Declaration of Independence which is almost to the drain.
Abigail DIVES FOR IT...but just misses it. The Declaration of Independence slips through the slats and DISAPPEARS DOWN THE DRAIN!!!

ON IAN and BEN. Ian swings. Ben ducks and dodges, but Ian's sword catches pieces of him. Slices into Ben's shoulder. And his chest.

ON ABIGAIL. She sticks her hand into the drain...

INSIDE THE DRAIN. The Declaration of Independence is stuck way down deep in the drain where the drain narrows.

Abigail's hand reaches down for the tube, but it's...just...out...of...reach.

ON BEN and IAN. Bloodied, Ben hurls the broken sword at Ian who deflects it and charges Ben.

Ben scrambles over the treasure pile, improvising, grabbing whatever he can to parry Ian's blows. A chalice...CLANK! An urn...which shatters!

Ben grabs an alabaster cherubim. He holds it up to deflect a blow, but notices that it's just too beautiful to ruin. Ben sets it back down, then dives behind a PILLAR just as...

Ian swings again, striking the pillar instead...WHAM! Chunks of marble fly.

Ian circles around the pillar, chasing the wounded Ben with his sword. Ian swings, and Ben ducks. This time, Ian's sword gets STUCK in the pillar.

As Ian tries to extricate it...

Ben pushes a Greek limestone statue. But it's heavy. It teeters...finally tips.

Ian turns just in time to see the statue about to crush him. CRASH!

But it doesn't crush Ian. The statue instead crashes into the pillar, leaving just enough space to save Ian.

Ian grabs the sword, yanks it out...

Bad idea. The pillar gives way, and the statue finishes its fall, smashing down on Ian. Killing him instantly.

And tearing a hole in the stone wall behind him. Water GUSHES IN from the hole. It's the elevator shaft.

As the water rushes in, the whole treasure chamber begins to rumble. Pieces of the stone ceiling start to fall, crashing down all around.

Ben looks to see Abigail still struggling with the drain.
ON ABIGAIL. She's got her whole arm in the drain but she still can't reach the Declaration of Independence. Rocks and debris rains down all around her.

BEN (O.S.)
Look out!

Abigail pulls her hand out of the drain. Turns to see Ben holding the Sword of Alexander up high. He swings it down, SMASHING the drain open.

Abigail quickly reaches in and pulls out the Declaration of Independence.

They hurry to Riley. Everything is shaking, falling apart.

RILEY
(weakly)
The treasure room's caving in.

BEN
We know.

RILEY
That always happens.

Ben and Abigail grab Riley under his arms and help him to the pillar that's crashed through the wall. The water has leveled off in the shaft.

INT. UNDERGROUND CATACOMBS, SHAFT - NIGHT

Ben and Abigail peer into the shaft. The two chains disappear into the water below.

BEN
We have to get in the water.

ABIGAIL
(to Riley)
Can you swim?

RILEY
Do I have a choice?

As everything in the treasure chamber collapses behind them, Ben pushes Riley into the water and jumps in after him. Abigail follows, then Ben swings the sword and cuts one of the chains. The elevator shoots out of the depths, catching Ben, Abigail and Riley and carrying them up the shaft!

INT. UNDERGROUND CATACOMBS, OSSUARY - NIGHT

The three roll off the roof of the charging elevator and spill out onto the ossuary floor as the elevator disappears up into the shaft with the sword.
CONTINUED:

Abigail lands on Ben. They regard each other. Surprised to be alive. Dust and debris settle in the room. *

Riley lies in the dirt, staring up at the hundreds of grinning skulls looking down on him.

RILEY
Are we dead?

EXT. TRINITY CHURCH GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Sadusky, his team, and dozens of POLICE are here.

BEN (O.S.)
Hey, can we get a little help over here?

Sadusky turns to see Ben and Abigail helping Riley out of the crypt stairwell. In an instant, a swarm of federal agents and police are on them.

EXT. TRINITY CHURCH, BROADWAY - NIGHT

Sadusky hands the Declaration of Independence over to an armored transport, which pulls away with an escort of a dozen police cars.

Sadusky's team, Ben, and Abigail stand nearby with two EMTs who load Riley onto an ambulance.

EMT
(to Ben)
He lost a lot of blood, but he's going to be fine.

Now, Sadusky approaches.

SADUSKY
OK, guys let's go.

The federal agents all start to leave. Ben and Abigail look at each other, confused.

BEN
Aren't you going to arrest us?

SADUSKY
What for? You do something wrong?

Ben and Abigail exchange a look like, no...okay...go...bye! Sadusky grins at them, then heads to his sedan.

SADUSKY (CONT'D)
You kids need a ride?

Ben and Abigail smile at each other.
CLOSE ON Sadusky's hand as he climbs into his car. On his finger, we now see that he wears a SILVER MASONIC RING, just like the one Charles Carroll and Count Pulaski wore.

As Sadusky drives away, Ben and Abigail look back to the Trinity Church graveyard.

BEN
Too bad no one will ever know.

ABIGAIL
We'll know.

With that, she kisses Ben. A long, deep kiss. Then, suddenly, Ben pulls away.

BEN
Just tell me one thing. Does this kiss mean anything?

Abigail considers that, then...

ABIGAIL
Only time will tell.

With that, they kiss some more as we PULL BACK as the federal agents all get in their cars and leave...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, ROTUNDA - MORNING

Ben, Abigail, Riley (all better now), Ben's dad Patrick, Sadusky, his whole team, Dr. Herbert, Woodruff, and all the National Archives GUARDS stand proud, watching as...

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE is raised back up in its display case to its wall exhibit.

Dr. Herbert crosses himself. Thank God. Woodruff sheds a tear. Ben, Abigail, and Riley exchange cocky smiles. Dr. Herbert checks his watch.

DR. HERBERT
Opening time.

And with that, the "ceremony" is over. Everybody scatters, back to their regular routine. Woodruff takes one more look at the precious document, then shrugs...

WOODRUFF
No one will ever know.
EXT. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, NORTH FOYER - MORNING

The GUARDS open the front doors, and museum PATRONS and TOURISTS start filing in. Ben and Riley cross the traffic and head down the front steps.

It's another beautiful day on Pennsylvania Avenue. Riley takes it all in...and then sighs.

RILEY
So, any other family quests, treasures that you might know about, something else I can waste seven years of my life with?

BEN
Nope. That was the only one.

SADUSKY (O.S.)
Gates! Poole!

They turn to find the Sadusky and his team approaching.

RILEY
What now?

SADUSKY
It seems that, well, the President's been looking for, uh, something else for a very long time, and he would very much appreciate your help in finding it.

Ben and Riley look at each other and GRIN BIG as we start SLOWLY PULLING UP for a overhead view of the National Archives...

RILEY
I don't know, Sadusky. How much he paying? 'Cause the last expedition I went on was sort of a bust.

SADUSKY
How much do you want?

As they talk, we continue PULLING UP until we have a glorious, sky-high, panoramic view of our great nation's capital, and we..

FADE OUT.

The End.