

## AGENTS EXTRAORDINARY 5: SPARE THE ROD

By Nathan Alderman

### PAGE ONE

1.1

The Palace of Westminster, on the banks of the Thames. Night.

NO DIALOGUE

1.2

In an office inside, staring out the window at the lights of the city, a fat, bald, middle-aged MAN stands naked in front of a large wooden desk. His back is covered in crisscrossing scars, some fresh, some healed.

MAN (delirious): Ruined... absolutely ruined.

1.3

His chubby fingers grope about on the desk, next to photos of himself (as we'll see in the next panel) with with lovely, respectably dressed wife and two grown children, and a tiny British flag, to rest on a particularly long, sharp letter opener.

MAN (delirious, o/p): Naughty boy... I've been a naughty boy.

MAN (delirious, o/p): And what must naughty boys do?

1.4

We see the MAN's face now, glassy-eyed, distant. His suit and trousers can be seen carelessly draped on a visitor's chair in the well-appointed office behind him. He is placing the point of the letter opener against his neck with a blissful smile.

MAN (delirious): Yes.

MAN (delirious): Naughty boys must **take their punishment**.

1.5

Blood splashes across the nameplate on the desk: HARRY CROKER-JAMES,  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

MAN (o/p): Hggggkk--!

## PAGE TWO

Four horizontal panels. The CAPTION appears in a blank margin on the left side of the page, next to each panel. An ICON appears beneath each caption.

### 2.1

The ICON is a bull's head. A slightly younger PARRY LORD, dressed in the traditional white-tunic-and-pants, red-scarf uniform of the Pamplonan running of the bulls, is getting hauled over the wooden barricades by spectators, just inches ahead of the sharp horns of a charging bull. LORD wears white gloves that completely cover his hands. He's looking back at the bull, and seems almost disappointed.

CAPTION: Three years ago.

LORD (small): Damn.

### 2.2

The ICON is a Formula One race car. LORD sits woozily on the asphalt, in front of the smoking ruins of a race car. He wears a fireproof suit and gloves and clutches his scratched-up helmet to his chest. He's bleeding from a cut on his head. In the background, medics and race crew are running toward him. Again, LORD looks disappointed.

CAPTION: Two years ago.

LORD (small): Damn.

### 2.3

The ICON is a jet plane. LORD, in a flight suit and gloves, dangles limply from a parachute that has become tangled in the branches of a large tree. In a field in the background, a sleek, one-person custom-built jet (with the LORD MEDIA logo painted on its tail) has crashed into a green, hilly field. Once again, LORD looks disappointed.

CAPTION: Fifteen months ago.

LORD (small): Damn.

### 2.4

The ICON is a hot-air balloon. In the tiny cabin of a specially built high-altitude hot air balloon (in the midst of an attempt to circle the Earth), PARRY stares out a tiny porthole at the point where the sky darkens into space. There is an almost crazed expression of delight and defiance on his face, as if he's laughing in the face of God. He's grown the beginnings of a beard, which is caked with bits of frost; he wears a thick parka, gloves, and an oxygen mask, which is unclipped and dangling away from his mouth and nose. Voices are crackling through the cabin over a radio.

CAPTION: Nine months ago.

RADIO: -- everything **all right**, Parry? Parry?

LORD: ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

## PAGE THREE

PARRY LORD owns a building in Clerkenwell, a former business district of London turned up-and-coming residential neighborhood. The bottom floor is a closed-down chip shop; PARRY keeps it that way to help ensure his privacy. The first floor above houses the living room and kitchen; we saw it in issue 2. The second floor is PARRY's bedroom and bath. The third is his private training gym and dojo. The spiral staircase we saw in issue 2 connects all three floors; to get into the apartment itself, PARRY uses stairs around the back of the building. He's constructed a private garage in what would otherwise be the building's basement.

### 3.1

Large panel, taking up the top half of the page. PARRY LORD stands in the middle of the training gym, having completed his usual strenuous morning workout. He's covered in sweat, wearing baggy running pants, a skintight long-sleeved workout shirt and-- of course-- black gloves. The wrecked remains of several training dummies lie scattered on the floor around him in the otherwise white, bright and nearly empty space. Behind him, spare training dummies and racks of various padded mock-weapons hang on the walls; a spiral staircase in the corner leads down.

CAPTION: Today.

LORD (out of breath): \*hunh\* \*hunh\* \*hunh\*

TITLE AND CREDITS

### 3.2

Four skinny, equal-sized panels make up the bottom of the page. The first shows LORD, a towel draped around his neck, descending the spiral stairs to his second-floor living quarters. The bedroom is white-glove spotless and modernist; the only elaborate touches are occasional Hindu statues in spotlight niches around the room and an elaborate Indian wall hanging above his bed. The bath is directly off the bedroom. Stereo speakers are mounted on the walls in the corners of the room. (Needless to say, we don't need to see this in every panel.) The RADIO plays over the panels on the rest of the page.

RADIO (elec.): -- top story today, the **mysterious suicide** of **Harry Croker-James**, the powerful **Dorchester MP**--

### 3.3

Steam rolls out of the open door to the bathroom; LORD is showering. A neatly pressed suit, socks, shoes, his bowler hat and umbrella are laid out with Swiss precision on the bed.

RADIO (elec): -- found **naked** in his **offices**, having **stabbed himself** --

### 3.4

LORD's hand and forearm as, with a gloved right hand, he pulls a matching black glove over his left hand. In the gap between the cuff of his shirt and the edge of the glove, we just barely see shiny, irregular marks on the skin of his wrist.

RADIO (elec): -- ranking MP, tested positive for **hallucinogens**, according to--

### 3.5

LORD's gloved hands button up his starched, high-collared white dress shirt; we can see enough of his chest to notice a modest gold chain draped around his neck. Something

seems to be attached to the lower end of the chain, but we can't see what.

RADIO (elec.) -- denying reports that police discovered **incriminating files** on **Croker-James'** computer--

## PAGE FOUR

4.1

As a fully dressed LORD descends the stairs into his living room, a voice from the center room (CHANCE) catches him by surprise.

CHANCE (o/p): **There** you are.

CHANCE (o/p): Just in time to **make me breakfast**.

4.2

Everything is much the same as we saw it in issue 2, including the statue of Satyanarayana on the coffee table. But DR. CELIA CHANCE lounges on LORD's couch, grinning, her combat boots off, her stocking feet resting on LORD's glass coffee table as she casually types on a laptop. Books and papers are scattered messily on the couch, table and surrounding floor. CHANCE wears an old MY BLOODY VALENTINE t-shirt and jeans; an army surplus jacket is draped loosely over the back of the couch. LORD looks as much amused as annoyed.

LORD: To what do I owe this **unexpected visit**, Dr. Chance?

CHANCE: Your highly inadequate **keypad lock**, Mr. Lord.

CHANCE: And my **doctorate in higher maths**.

LORD: Ah. Anything else?

4.3

LORD begins to pick up papers and stack them into neat piles as he and CHANCE banter.

CHANCE: I've caught a **rather nasty virus**.

LORD: I thought we **weren't discussing** your **personal life**.

CHANCE: On my **computer**, thank you. And I've a **paper** to present **Wednesday**.

4.4

LORD sighs, impressed by CHANCE's gall. CHANCE is spotting something on the computer screen that delights her.

LORD: So you're using **my laptop**?

CHANCE: I believe we've forged a certain professional **OH MY GOD** you like **ABBA**.

4.5

LORD, slightly embarrassed, leans over to peer at the screen as CHANCE looks up at him grinning.

LORD: I do not.

CHANCE: You've **all their albums**.

LORD: It was a **gift**.

CHANCE: In **English** and **Hindi**.

LORD: ... Work on your **paper**.

## PAGE FIVE

5.1

CHANCE hands the laptop over to LORD, who's studying it a bit more seriously now. CHANCE looks a bit graver herself.

CHANCE: We've **e-mail** from **Mrs. King**, too. This **Croker-James** business.

LORD: Ah. Those "incriminating files" ...?

CHANCE: It seems they... involved **children**.

5.2

LORD sits down on the couch next to CHANCE, still studying the laptop screen.

LORD: Not the sort of thing they want to hear at **Downing Street**, is it?

CHANCE: Yes, but **Mal** thinks the files are a bit **fishy**.

LORD: I should **hope so**.

5.3

CHANCE points to the screen as she explains something to LORD.

CHANCE: Here's the list of **dirty files**-- notice the **creation dates**?

LORD: I see. Different **days, hours and minutes**...

CHANCE: But all the **second** counts are **zeroes**.

LORD: Meaning **someone** didn't have time to **fake** that last bit.

5.4

LORD's fingers type on the keyboard. Onscreen, **autopsy photos** of Croker-James' back appear-- crisscrossed with scars and welts-- along with what looks like a scanned official document.

CHANCE (o/p): Then there are the **marks** on his back.

CHANCE (o/p): **Danny** and **Donny** say most of them are **fresh-- twenty-four hours**, at **most**.

5.5

LORD leans back from the laptop screen as CHANCE asks him a question.

CHANCE: You're the one with all the **superspy experience**. Does this ring any **bells**?

LORD: Like **Westminster**.

## PAGE SIX

LORD and CHANCE's discussion plays out in CAPTIONS over the action.

### 6.1

The clean, professional lobby of LASHWELL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. A cheerful, bubbly and entirely attractive receptionist, MARLA, is reaching out to take a business card from LORD's gloved hand. Behind her are a fancy wall hanging with the company's sleek and modern logo and a pair of frosted glass doors.

LORD/CAPTION: Last year **another** MP stepped in front of a **tube** car.

LORD/CAPTION: His **computer** showed records of **political kickbacks**.

MARLA: Right through those doors, Mr. Lord.

### 6.2

Like something out of a '50s corporate promotional film, the offices of Lashwell Professional Services contain row after row of employees (all young, female and attractive) typing away at computer keyboards, answering phones or filing through Rolodexes. Each woman's shirt is buttoned all the way up to her collar; many wear glasses; and all keep their hair tightly pulled back in buns or ponytails. There's a creepy, if not exactly obvious, uniformity about all of them. None of them look at LORD as he passes through the office.

LORD/CAPTION: Before that, it was a **top man** at **Defence**, a **walk** off a **high-rise balcony**, and the **mysterious leak** of **radar plans** to **China**.

CHANCE/CAPTION: Any **connections**?

### 6.3

LORD stands in the open doorway of a private office; behind him, we can see the main room he's just crossed through. The walls are covered with grip-and-grin photographs of a beautiful woman and various important-looking people; framed letters of thanks and commendation, and the occasional plaque or professional award. LORD is removing his hat courteously (umbrella tucked under one arm) and smiling politely at someone who's greeting him from offscreen.

LORD/CAPTION: **Two**. Each man bore **similar scars**.

LORD/CAPTION: And **each** used the same **temp agency**.

VOICE (o/p): The famous **Parry Lord**. What a pleasure.

### 6.4

Flashing back to LORD's apartment; LORD's making ready to leave, while CHANCE is sprawled on the couch, resuming work on her paper.

CHANCE: Think you can handle this one **solo**?

LORD: Finish your **paper**, Doctor.

LORD: It's not as if I don't know where to **reach** you.

### 6.5

Back to Lashwell's. VIVIAN LASHWELL, a striking and severely dressed woman in her late twenties, leans forward from across her wooden desk to greet LORD. A nameplate on the desk helpfully identifies her. On the wall behind her are framed engravings of medieval torture devices.

LASHWELL: **Tell me**, Mr. Lord...

LASHWELL: What sort of **services** can we provide for you?



## PAGE SEVEN

7.1

LASHWELL pushes an intercom button on her desk. LORD leans forward in his chair.

LASHWELL: **Marla**-- some tea. **Oolong**, please.

LORD: I'm looking to fill a rather **sensitive position**.

LASHWELL: So you'd need an employee with a **delicate touch?**

7.2

LASHWELL toys with a long, sharp-looking letter opener on her desk and she talks with LORD.

LORD: There would be a certain degree of **confidential information** involved.

LASHWELL: Of course. We're renowned for **discretion**.

7.3

In FG, we see the metal tray of tea (in a shiny modernist kettle) and cups that MARLA is carrying into LASHWELL's office. In BG, we see LORD sitting with his back to us, and LASHWELL flashing a meaningful glance over his shoulder in MARLA's direction. An ominous-looking SYRINGE sits on the tray, hidden behind the kettle.

LORD: Do you charge a **flat rate**, or will **additional duties** cost **extra?**

7.4

LORD sits calmly and obliviously in his chair as MARLA stands behind him, the cheery smile never leaving her face, preparing to jab the syringe into his neck!

LASHWELL (o/p): That depends **entirely** on what you **need**.

7.5

At the last possible moment, LORD twists around in his chair and calmly grabs MARLA by the wrist, stopping her from driving home the syringe! LORD's eyes are on MARLA for the moment.

LORD: I do believe I've gotten your **point**.

7.6

LORD looks down in surprise and, to be honest, annoyance, as a small dart thuds itself into his neck (from LASHWELL's direction)!

SFX: FWIP!

LORD (small): Ah.

7.7

LASHWELL holds a tranquilizer pistol calmly, smiling. LORD is already losing consciousness, loosening his grip on MARLA's arm.

LASHWELL: I think you **have**.

## PAGE EIGHT

8.1

LORD sits in a folding chair on a beach in Kerala, India. The sun is shining through a blue sky behind him, and his bare feet are halfway buried in the sand. He wears a white shirt, partly unbuttoned, and casual khaki trousers. His shirtsleeves are rolled up and his hands are bare (and unmarked.) A '50s style transistor radio sits in the sand next to his chair. PARRY looks vaguely mystified as to how he got here. Music is playing from the radio.

RADIO: (music)

8.2

LORD looks down curiously at the radio-- it's an EMPIRE brand, with the M particularly large in the word "EMPIRE," and it seems to be playing an ABBA song:

RADIO (singing): **Waterloo!** ...

8.3

LORD turns to look over his shoulder as a voice calls to him. He squints in the glare of the sun.

VOICE (o/p): **Parry!**

8.4

A WOMAN in flowing green-and-yellow robes is walking across the beach toward LORD. The sun is directly behind her, leaving her features in shadow, but we can see enough to know she resembles the woman whose picture we saw in LORD's homemade shrine in issue 2.

WOMAN: I've been looking **everywhere** for you.

LORD (o/p): ... **Chaaya?**

8.5

LORD leans back in his chair and closes his eyes, content, as CHAAYA's arms lovingly encircle his neck. We don't see her head or face-- just the ends of her hair, her robe and her hands and arms

CHAAYA (o/p): Who **else** would I be, mm?

LORD (small): Am I dreaming?

CHAAYA (o/p): Of **course** not, silly.

8.6

Same angle. Suddenly CHAAYA has FOUR arms wrapped around LORD, pinning him to the chair. His eyes have gone wide with alarm.

CHAAYA (o/p): But they **are** going to **kill** you.

8.7

The real world. In a dark room, a bucketful of water is thrown violently across LORD's face, bringing him back to consciousness.

SFX: SPLOOSH!

LORD: \* -- pfaaaah!

## PAGE NINE

9.1

BETTINA MORRIS has had worse jobs than this, on the whole. The money's putting her through med school, and her coworkers are nice, and it's only rarely that she has to break any laws. Big laws, at any rate.

She sits silhouetted in the dark in front of a bank of closed circuit TV monitors. Each screen shows a different room – some in private residences, some dark and secluded enough to be on the premises – where the women of Lashwell Professional Services are plying their trade upon the firm's many powerful and well-connected clients. LASHWELL, off-panel, has just come in the room behind her and is speaking.

LASHWELL (o/p): Is he awake?

BETTINA: **Dora** just brought him round.

9.2

Reverse angle to see BETTINA's face illuminated by the glow of the monitors. She's got a thick anatomy book open on the console in front of her, and looks as bored as if she were watching daytime TV. LASHWELL leans over her shoulder, half in shadow, studying something clinically on one of the monitors. With one hand, she's distractedly unbuttoning her blouse.

LASHWELL: Good, good. Is that the **shadow chancellor** Polly's got?

BETTINA: **Defence minister**. Shadow chancellor's her **three o'clock**.

LASHWELL: Bring up the audio, would you?

9.3

In FG, we see LASHWELL undressing in silhouette-- more suggestion than anything else. BETTINA keeps her eyes on the monitors as sound from one particular screen begins to play over unseen speakers.

SFX/SPEAKER: -- aaaaah! Oh yes, thank you!

SFX/SPEAKER: Shut up.

SFX/SPEAKER: SNAPP! Aaah!

LASHWELL: Mm. Bit too much **wrist action**. She'll give herself **carpal tunnel**.

9.4

BETTINA in FG, reading. She has this totally covered. LASHWELL in BG, her back to us, in shadow, shrugging into something black, full-body and extremely form-fitting.

LASHWELL: Has the minister-- *this bloody zipper* -- said anything good?

BETTINA: Nothing **verbal**.

LASHWELL: Be ready to **cross-reference** all the same. And **Lord**?

9.5

In FG, LASHWELL-- still mostly in shadow-- is doing up a very long zipper on the front of whatever she's now wearing (a black latex bodysuit, but we don't see it clearly here) over an attention-getting expanse of bare skin. In BG, BETTINA is turned away from the monitors, speaking in LASHWELL's direction.

SFX/ZIPPER: zzzzzzip!

BETTINA: Lifted his **biometrics** while he was out. **Sandy** and **Prabha** have them.

LASHWELL: **Splendid.**

LASHWELL: I'm off to apply the **personal touch.**

## PAGE TEN

10.1

In a private, soundproof dungeon somewhere in LASHWELL's offices, LORD is strapped spread-eagled in a complex restraint that looks a bit like the Marquis de Sade designing for NASA. His hat, jacket and shoes are gone; he's in his shirtsleeves, trousers, bare feet and black gloves. His head and shirtfront are still sopping wet from the water tossed on him. He seems to be having an entirely splendid time, all things considered.

Opposite him, DORA, a charming young lady done up in full S&M gear (complete with mask) chats cordially with him, still holding the empty bucket she used to splash him.

LORD (impressed): ... **hundred and sixty** words per minute?

DORA: **And** I know databases.

LORD: Not bad, not bad.

10.2

In FG, we see the outline of LASHWELL as she enters the room. In BG, DORA is backing away, deferential to the boss, and LORD smiles as if things have just gotten interesting.

LASHWELL (o/p): That'll **do**, Dora, **thank you**.

LORD: Ah, **there** you are. I've been **tyed up** in **meetings** before, but...

10.3

We finally see LASHWELL full-on. Her hair is down, she's dressed in a skintight black latex bodysuit with a zipper that starts at her throat and seems to have no lower limit, and she carries some kind of remote control device with her. Her smile is stern and faintly creepy. Behind her DORA is leaving the room, looking back with unforced sympathy in LORD's direction.

LASHWELL: **Charm**, Mr. Lord, will do you absolutely **no good** here.

LORD: Do you honestly expect me to be **frightened**?

LASHWELL: Honestly?

10.4

LASHWELL, clicks the button on the remote as LORD stares defiantly at her.

SFX/REMOTE: beep.

10.5

Electricity jolts through LORD's body suddenly, making him convulse against his restraints.

LASHWELL watches with icy professionalism.

SFX/ELECTRICITY: FZZZZZZZZZZZZT!

LORD: Ghaaaaaaaaaaaah!

LASHWELL: ... I rather do.

## PAGE ELEVEN

11.1

The shock has passed. LORD hangs a bit more limply from the restraints, looking the worse for wear. His eyes are bloodshot, and a trickle of blood comes from his lower lip, which he bit while convulsing from the shock. LASHWELL isn't looking at him, coolly adjusting the fit of her suit around her wrist.

LASHWELL: My **regular** clients pay **handsomely** for the things you're going to experience.

LORD (weak): Lucky me-- I get the **discount**.

11.2

With one hand, LASHWELL tilts the restraint holding LORD backward, leaving him at about a 45 degree angle. Her motions are seductive, catlike, but more for her own benefit than LORD's.

LASHWELL: On the **contrary**, Parry-- may I **call** you **Parry**?

LASHWELL: You'll pay more **dearly** than most.

LORD (strengthening): As dearly as **Harry Croker-James**?

11.3

Now standing behind LORD, LASHWELL leans close to whisper in his ear.

LASHWELL: Poor Harry. You wouldn't **believe** the things he'd let slip.

LASHWELL (small): After we took the **gag** out, anyway.

LORD: And then he found out you'd been **profiting** from his **indiscretions**.

11.4

LASHWELL rests her hand gently on the top of a wheeled metal cart next to her. It's lined with nasty-looking quasi-surgical instruments, all of them clean and sharp. There's a butane hand torch and a bowl of clean water on the tray with them.

LASHWELL: I hoped the **blackmail** would work on **Harry**-- it usually does-- but he had to acquire **principles** on me.

LASHWELL: Shame, really. I rather **liked** him.

11.5

LORD looks alarmed as LASHWELL takes one of his bound wrists and begins to slowly pull one of LORD's black gloves off. Again, we can see shiny, scarred skin underneath.

LASHWELL: But enough about **me**.

LORD: What are you--?

LASHWELL: Let's talk about **you**.

## PAGE TWELVE

12.1

There's a reason LORD keeps his gloves on all the time. And now, as LASHWELL has peeled off the glove to reveal his shiny, scarred hand we can see just how much of a blow this is to him. He's not smiling anymore, not joking – he's coldly furious.

LASHWELL: Oh, my. I'd seen the **doctor's bills**, but...

LORD (small, icy): Get your hands off me.

LASHWELL: Microsurgery... nerve grafts... some quasi-legal **stem cell** procedures. You're a medical **marvel**.

12.2

LORD spits a retort at LASHWELL, who seems to be enjoying herself immensely.

LORD: And how do you **presume** to **know** all this?

LASHWELL: What, your "**car accident**" five years back? The one that claimed your **mum, dad** and poor little **bride**?

LASHWELL: What sort of **accident** goes "**tick tick tick**," anyway?

12.3

LASHWELL turns to the tray of nasty-looking tools behind her and begins to fiddle with the butane torch idly.

LASHWELL: Oh, Parry, don't look so **cross**. It's not **my** fault that your **VP of marketing** has certain **needs**.

LASHWELL: Or that your **chief solicitor** is overly fond of **latex**.

12.4

LORD steels himself, defiant. LASHWELL, her back turned, fiddling with something from the Tray of Nastiness.

LORD: I think you'll find me **considerably** less receptive to **pain**.

LASHWELL: **Really**, Parry. If I wanted your **secrets**, I wouldn't **hurt** you for them.

12.5

LASHWELL turns around. She's running the butane flame from the torch over the blade of a scalpel-- it's beginning to glow white-hot. Her smile, and the look she's giving LORD from under her eyelids, are chilling.

LASHWELL: I know **most** of your secrets already.

LASHWELL: No, Parry, I'm going to hurt you for the **fun** of it.



## PAGE THIRTEEN

13.1

LORD's living room. A framed diploma on the wall, announcing Parvatinandan Edwin Lord's graduation from Oxford, reflects the curious, peering face of DR. CHANCE.

CHANCE (o/p): **Heavens.**

13.2

Pull back to show CHANCE, still shoeless, taking a stretch break. She's up on her tiptoes, arms over her head, back arched luxuriantly. She's got a few crumpled papers clutched in one hand. The couch and surrounding tables are messier than ever, papers scattered willy-nilly. The laptop is open on the table. Make sure this panel or a subsequent one includes the cricket bat hanging on the wall, the same one we saw in issue two.

CHANCE: It's a wonder they could **fit** that on a **birth certificate.**

13.3

In FG, the laptop pings. A window reading REMOTE ACCESS GRANTED appears on its screen. In BG, CHANCE looks up from reading over her papers to note the noise from the computer. With her free hand, she's pushing her hair back from her eyes.

CHANCE: Now **which** notes are these again?

CHANCE (small): Is this even my **handwriting?**

SFX/LAPTOP: **Ping!**

CHANCE: ?

13.4

CHANCE bends over the coffee table, turning the computer to face her. A look of keen suspicion has come over her face.

CHANCE: Someone's... copying files?

CHANCE: Someone's copying a **lot** of files.

13.5

CHANCE is sitting on the couch, one eye on the cricket bat mounted up on the wall. She cradles her cellphone to her ear with her shoulder; she's using her hands to lace up her combat boots.

CHANCE: Hello, **Mal?** ... I think someone's accessing **Mr. Lord's** computer.

CHANCE: Yes, **besides** me.

CHANCE: Do you think you can run a **trace...?**

## PAGE FOURTEEN

14.1

LASHWELL's dungeon. The clear bowl of water we saw earlier on the Tray of Nastiness is now stained with swirling, dark-red blood, and full of used scalpels and other instruments.

NO DIALOGUE

14.2

LASHWELL casually lights a cigarette between her lips with the butane lighter.

LASHWELL: Was it good for **you**, Parry?

LASHWELL: ... Parry?

14.3

Yikes. LASHWELL has LORD's restraint tilted back parallel to the floor. She's straddling LORD; the Tray of Nastiness is within easy reach for her. LORD's shirt has been cut open, and his chest is now crisscrossed with ugly cuts, some bleeding, some red and cauterized. There's something dull and gold on a the chain around LORD's neck we saw earlier. LORD's head lolls back, barely conscious. LASHWELL looks disappointed.

LASHWELL: Just like a **man**.

LASHWELL: You **just** start to **enjoy** yourself, and they **pass out** on you.

LORD (weak): I'm just... **thinking of England**...

14.4

LASHWELL picks up the weird, object on the chain around LORD's neck. She's grinning as if in disbelief.

LASHWELL: **This**... I've been **wondering** about this.

LASHWELL: It can't possibly be-- **no**. That's simply **too good**.

14.5

In FG, we see that the object on the chain around LORD's neck is a gold ring with a diamond set in it-- scuffed and slightly blackened, even a little warped around the edges as if by tremendous heat. LASHWELL holds it in her open palm. In BG, LORD looks at LASHWELL with equal parts fury and absolute despair.

LASHWELL: The **inquest report** did mention they'd found her **arm**...

LASHWELL: Why, you hopeless **romantic**. You're wearing **her ring**.

## PAGE FIFTEEN

15.1

LASHWELL stubs out her cigarette in the bloodstained bowl of used tools on the Tray of Nastiness. We see there's one blade left on the tray, next to the butane lighter she's set down-- a particularly nasty, curvy one.

LASHWELL: Most people have lots of **tiny** secrets scattered about, like **constellations**.  
LASHWELL: Far as we can tell, Parry, you've got one **big** one.

15.3

LASHWELL picks up the Curvy Knife and tests the point of it against one gloved finger, satisfied.

LASHWELL: All those **payments** from the Ministry of Defence, regular as clockwork, to **Lord Foundation** charities? **Very** mysterious.

LASHWELL: There's a **term** our more **rarified** clients keep **dropping**. It makes my **buyers** practically **salivate**.

15.4

LASHWELL leans down and digs the curvy knife into LORD's chest, making a shallow, slow incision as she speaks. LORD grits his teeth, in serious pain.

LASHWELL: I must admit, I **lied** earlier about not wanting your **secrets**.

LORD (pain): Gnnnnnngh!

LASHWELL: But keeping in mind I've done **nothing** to your **fingers** as yet...

LASHWELL: What have you heard about "**The Branch**"?

## PAGE SIXTEEN

16.1

The offices of LASHWELL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, as we saw them earlier when LORD came in. Row after row of buttoned-up women working dutifully at desks. The sounds of workplace chatter float over the scene.

CHATTER: ... yes, we take **credit cards**, but there's a 10 percent **flogging surcharge**...

CHATTER: ... move your 2 p.m. Wednesday to 4 p.m. Friday? **Absolutely**...

CHATTER: ... oh, **caning?** Let me transfer you to **Leslie**...

16.2

Conversation stops instantly as MARLA, the receptionist, is flung bodily from the lobby, through the glass doors, into the middle of the office!

SFX/glass: KRASH!

16.3

As MARLA whimpers, semiconscious, on the floor in front of her, CHANCE-- wearing the jacket we saw earlier and wielding the cricket bat like some barbarian weapon-- steps through the broken hole in the glass door. She's clearly ready for trouble.

MARLA (weak): owww...

CHANCE: I'm here for a **pain in the arse**. He's well-dressed, about two meters tall, answers to **Lord**.

CHANCE: Anyone **seen** him?

16.4

The office has suddenly become a lot less hospitable, as every woman in the room-- more than a dozen, easily-- rises from her desk. Some are taking whips or cudgels out of their filing drawers; others are readying phone cords as impromptu garottes or brandishing letter openers like throwing knives. Yikes.

NO DIALOGUE

16.5

Close on CHANCE's face. There's the faintest shadow of a smile on her lips. This is a woman who's about to wreak some serious havoc.

CHANCE: **Right**.

CHANCE: I'd say I'm going to **enjoy** this more than **you** will, but, well...

## PAGE SEVENTEEN

17.1

DR. CHANCE tears into the crowd of attacking LASHWELL GIRLS, doubling one over as she drives the narrow end of the cricket bat into her stomach, and ducking another who takes a swing at her with a club. Over these scenes we “hear” LASHWELL in captions.

CAPTION/LASHWELL: You’ve been very **brave**. **Heroic**, even.

CAPTION/LASHWELL: But this isn’t about **courage**.

17.2

LASHWELL’s face, looking down out of frame. Her hands are down in front of her (wrapped around LORD’s throat.) She looks like she’s lecturing a disobedient dog. Choking noises emerge from the bottom of the panel, in the direction she’s looking.

LASHWELL: This is about my **two thumbs** closing off your **windpipe**.

LORD (o/p, weak): hhggk

LORD (o/p, weak): gggkk

17.3

CHANCE, in the office, kicking one LASHWELL GIRL in the gut while using the cricket bat to deflect a whip-lash from another.

CAPTION/LASHWELL: It’s not that I don’t **enjoy** causing pain. I do.

CAPTION/LASHWELL: But ultimately it’s just a **tool**. A means to an end.

17.4

The dungeon. LASHWELL’s thumbs are letting up on LORD’s throat. He gasps for air, semiconscious.

LORD: hhhhhaaaaah! \*koff koff koff\*

LASHWELL (o/p): Tell me about **The Branch**, and I stop **hurting** you.

LORD: (inaudible wheezing)

17.5

CHANCE smashes the cricket bat to splinters against the head of one of the girls. There are letter-openers stuck like throwing knives in the pillar behind her, having just missed her.

CAPTION/LASHWELL: Everything has its **breaking point**, Parry.

CAPTION/LASHWELL: How **badly** do you want to **find** yours?

17.6

LASHWELL brings her face right down to LORD’s, unnervingly intimate, smiling. She thinks she’s won. LORD is muttering something we can’t make out?

LORD: (inaudible)

LASHWELL: That’s a good boy. Now speak up.

LASHWELL: I didn’t quite--

## PAGE EIGHTEEN

18.1

LORD brings his head up as hard as he can into the bridge of LASHWELL's nose. It breaks with an audible

SFX: KRUNCH.

LASHWELL: Aaaaaaaah!

18.2

LASHWELL has tumbled sideways off LORD, her hands up to staunch the flow of blood from her ruined nose. She's shocked. LORD is speaking to her.

LASHWELL: You-- you--

LORD (o/p, weak): Didn't know **that** about **pain**, did you?

18.3

LORD's craning his neck to look down off the table at LASHWELL. Even though he's strapped down, he gives the impression of being entirely in control of the situation. He's smiling contemptuously, and there's something dark and almost terrible in his eyes.

LORD (weak): You sorry little **amateur**.

LORD (weak): **Pain** isn't a **whip**, or a **knife**, or a **needle**.

18.4

The outer office. CHANCE, hearing an all-too-distinctive noise, is frozen midway through pummeling a hapless LASHWELL GIRL with the heavy black receiver of a nearby desk telephone. The splintered remains of LORD's cricket bat sit on the desk next to the phone. If possible, try to work a desk calendar into this shot.

CAPTION/LORD: It's looking at the next **hour**, the next **day**, the whole **rest of your life--**  
SFX: ka-CLICK.

18.5

A somewhat disheveled LASHWELL GIRL -- let's call her TAMMY -- has leveled a Dirty Harry-sized revolver at DR. CHANCE. Her hands are shaking slightly, but she looks fully prepared to pull the trigger.

CAPTION/LORD: And seeing nothing but a **long, black tunnel**.

18.6

Close on LORD's face as he continues to speak. The look in his eyes is similar to his look from the balloon on page 2.

LORD (weak): Everything else is just a way to **pass the time**.

## PAGE NINETEEN

19.1

Looking down the barrel of TAMMY's gun at CHANCE, who is gripping the phone receiver tightly with one hand and slipping another cautiously under its base. The other LASHWELL GIRL, the one CHANCE had been pummeling, is slumping to the floor.

CHANCE: You **do** know the **safety's** on, right?

19.2

TAMMY falters, looks down. Bad move, TAMMY.

NO DIALOGUE

19.3

TAMMY suddenly fumbles the gun, jerking back reflexively as the black desk phone flies through the air toward her head.

CHANCE (o/p): Made you look.

19.4

Having fallen to the floor, TAMMY reaches for the fallen gun-- but CHANCE's hand is reaching down into panel to grab her by the ponytail and yank her backwards, hard.

TAMMY: Aowww!

19.5

CHANCE hauls TAMMY up by the ponytail and stares her down. CHANCE looks as if she's had just about enough of this inconvenience. TAMMY, unused to hitting people who can actually hit back, looks like she's about to dissolve into a puddle.

CHANCE: Now, **as** I was saying...

19.6

Moments later, in the same darkened room where we earlier saw BETTINA MORRIS, CHANCE stands in front of the console, her face lit by the glow of the monitors. She's thumping a familiar anatomy textbook against the heel of her hand. A door behind her is ajar, admitting a crack of light. A faint voice is coming from beneath the console.

CHANCE: ... ah, **there** he is.

CHANCE (small): God, it's a **perversity smorgasbord**.

BETTINA (weak, from beneath the console): You're... **standing**... on me...

CHANCE: Funny about that. Where's the **erase** button, again?

## PAGE TWENTY

20.1

LASHWELL's hand, holding a large, dripping knife (plucked fresh from the stained water bowl on the Tray of Nastiness) looms in foreground. LORD stares back, defiant, and again, kind of a bit insane.

LORD (weak): Go on, do your **worst**, **Viv--** may I **call** you **Viv**?

LORD (weak): It won't change the fact that **Daddy never loved you**.

LORD (weak): Or that I'm going to **buy** this place and **raze it to dust**.

20.2

LASHWELL, disheveled, bleeding, looking more than a bit crazy-eyed herself, advances on LORD with the knife. CHANCE's voice comes from off-panel.

LASHWELL: You fuggig liddle prig!

LASHWELL: You **bwoke** by **dode**!

CHANCE (o/p): Well, **damn**.

20.3

As LASHWELL turns to see the source of the noise, CHANCE absolutely lays her out with one punch.

CHANCE: Guess **I'll** have to settle for your **jaw**.

SFX: SWAK!

20.4

CHANCE begins to undo LORD's restraints. He looks up at her, smiling. He's once more calm and charming, though it's a bit strained. CHANCE's fingers hover over his face as if she's afraid to touch his wounds.

CHANCE (small): Oh.

CHANCE: Oh, **Christ**, you look a **fright**.

LORD (weak): You should... see... the **other chap**.



## PAGE TWENTY-ONE

21.1

LORD leans heavily on CHANCE as they make their way slowly out of the utter wreckage of the front office. LORD is looking around, mildly amazed.

LORD (weak): You've... been **busy**.

CHANCE: **Hardly**. They fight like **girls**.

LORD (weak): Is... that my **father's... championship bat?**

CHANCE: Er... let me get **back** to you on that.

21.2

Time passes. We're in a hospital room now, sunny, late morning, watching BBC News on a wall-mounted television. It's displaying a photo of LASHWELL at some publicity event. LORD's voice enters the panel from below.

TV: --will face charges of **espionage, murder and high treason** in connection with the **death** of MP --

LORD (o/p): ... gone by **end of day**, yes.

LORD (o/p): He's not going to **ask**. He'll **know** why.

21.3

LORD is staring up at the TV from a hospital bed. His pajamas are open to reveal bandages on his chest, covering the healing cuts and scars. He's wearing gloves again, black leather, and talking on his mobile phone.

LORD: And phone the **solicitors**. Tell **Roger** we need to **talk**.

LORD: ... Right, that. You've gotten the **deed** for it?

21.4

LORD studies his free hand, flexing it, testing its motion, as he continues to talk on the phone.

LORD: Courier me the **transfer forms**. I'll get them back to you **tonight**.

LORD: I want the **wreckers** at work by **morning**.

LORD: Right. **Cheerio**.

21.5

LORD looks up, folding his mobile shut, as CHANCE (wearing the same jacket, different jeans and a black tank top) enters the room holding something behind her back.

CHANCE: That doesn't **look** like **bed rest**.

LORD: Just... clearing up a **real estate** deal.

CHANCE: I've a **surprise** for you.

## PAGE TWENTY-TWO

22.1

CHANCE hands LORD the restored cricket bat-- we can see it's been painstakingly glued back together. LORD looks touched.

CHANCE: All the King's horses, and all the King's men...

LORD: I see the **Doctors'** experience in building **model spaceships** paid off.

22.2

CHANCE pulls up a chair by LORD's bedside. He's talking to her, but looking down at his hands. The cricket bat rests on top of the sheets.

LORD: I... suppose you want to know about my **hands...**

CHANCE: After **lecturing** you about my right to **privacy?** Not a bit.

CHANCE: Your **Swedish pop fetish** is blackmail enough, I think.

22.3

LORD, brightening, is proposing something that CHANCE is gently refusing.

LORD: We can discuss that **tomorrow**, once I'm back at **work--**

CHANCE: **Oh**, no. **Mrs. King** can **grumble** about **hospital costs** all she likes. You're staying **put**.

22.4

LORD looks concerned now, a little desperate; but CHANCE is already standing up to leave.

LORD: No-- no, I need to be **up and about--**

CHANCE: You need to **rest**. When's the last time you just **did nothing?**

CHANCE: It's not like it's the **end of the world**.

LORD: No, Dr. Chance, you don't--

22.5

CHANCE says a few last words to LORD as she leaves his hospital room.

CHANCE: I'll be by **tomorrow** for **further harrassment**.

CHANCE: I trust you'll be **all right** without me.

22.6

LORD sits alone in his hospital bed, staring after her, looking oddly lost. He doesn't believe what he's saying. This? Definitely not a happy ending.

LORD (quiet): ... yes.

LORD (quiet): I'll be **fine**.