

THICK AS THIEVES

FADE IN:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO -- DAY

San Fran. Frisco. The City by the Bay. Bright. Welcoming.

CONDOMINIUM.

The condominium is 20 stories high and very luxurious - sumptuous - posh. The unobtrusive entrance to the underground parking garage is beside the condo building.

STREET.

A car - an Audi TT convertible - cruises along topless. A portly 40-ish-year-old man, OWEN WHITNEY, is driving the car that he's wedged inside - uncomfortable in some very expensive clothes.

OUTSIDE CONDO.

The car pulls into the half-round driveway that flows past the condo entrance. VALET 1 trots up to Owen as he exits the TT.

VALET 1  
Good afternoon, sir.

OWEN  
'Afternoon.

The valet rips the stub from the parking ticket and hands it to Owen.

As Valet 1 gets behind the wheel, Owen leans against the back fender of the car, his hand sliding along the trunk's lid.

VALET 1  
(noticing Owen)  
Is there anything wrong?

Owen steps away, shaking his head -

OWEN  
No, no. Just love this car. Gonna'  
miss her ... while we're apart.

The valet sort of smiles, pretending to understand. Owen strides towards the building as the car gets moving.

CONDO ENTRANCE - REVOLVING DOOR.

Owen enters the revolving door and exits back outside. He watches the TT -

PARKING GARAGE.

- go into the parking garage.

OUTSIDE CONDO ENTRANCE.

Owen walks away from the condo.

INSIDE PARKING GARAGE.

Valet 1 backs the TT into a spot, shuts down the engine, hops out, and runs off.

OUTSIDE CONDO.

Valet 1 reaches his post outside the building.

FADE TO:

EXT. CONDOMINIUM -- NIGHT

Night has surrounded the condo.

INSIDE PARKING GARAGE.

The Audi TT is wedged between a Porsche and a H2 Hummer.

A muffled sound can be heard coming from the TT's trunk - someone moving about inside.

The trunk lid cracks open. A black-gloved hand gripping a small mirror slides through the gap. An eye, reflected in the mirror, checks the area surrounding the car. The coast is clear.

The hand pushes the trunk lid wide open.

CONDO LOBBY.

The clock on the wall reads 8:42. Two guards, GUARD 1 and GUARD 2 are on duty, leaning against the reception desk. Total boredom.

Guard 1 is working on the newspaper crossword puzzle. He scratches his head with his pencil.

ON CROSSWORD - The pencil fills in 31 down - P R O W L E R.

Guard 1 smiles.

GUARD 1

Our city's very own cat burglar has made the Chronicle's crossword.

GUARD 2

Who's that?

GUARD 1  
The Prowler.

GUARD 2  
Oh, yeah. Him.

GUARD 1  
Way to keep up with the news, pal.

Guard 1 goes back to his crossword puzzle.

CONDO CELLAR.

The cellar is dark and houses the building's humming heating and cooling units, the electrical and main alarm boxes, and the substructure of two elevator shafts. Nobody's around.

A new sound is mixed with the basement humming, not much louder than the cellar machinery. From the outside, a high-speed blade slices a thin line through one of the concrete walls. The four-foot wide chunk of cement falls inside - a loud thud.

LAMB O.S.  
Dammit.

The same gloved hand we saw sticking from the TT's trunk reaches through this hole.

CONDO LOBBY.

The two guards shift, dismissing the muffled thud.

CONDO CELLAR.

STEVEN LAMB, a.k.a. THE PROWLER, steps through the hole in the cellar wall - dressed in black, his bright eyes prominent in the thin mask that covers his lower face and head. The 35-ish thief moves expertly - a climbing belt and series of pouches secured around his waist.

At the main alarm panel, Lamb gets the cover off with a screwdriver and just as fast cuts two of the exposed alarm wires. He glances at the panel's display screen and is satisfied.

Next, Lamb crouches next to the elevator shaft access doors.

LAMB  
The right side.

He opens the shaft access door to his right. Lamb slithers inside -

ELEVATOR SHAFT.

- and up next to the elevator car, stopped at the first floor. Lamb shimmies up along the elevator car, staying close to the shaft wall.

CONDO LOBBY.

It's quiet. Still total boredom.

ELEVATOR SHAFT.

The Prowler hoists himself onto the roof of the elevator car and takes a seat, plopping down next to elevator cable. Lamb cracks the trap door in the elevator roof and takes a look inside.

He looks at his watch - 8:56.

CONDO LOBBY.

The two guards slowly come out of their bored stupor.

GUARD 1  
You want it, or me?

GUARD 2  
Want what?

GUARD 1  
Feed the dog. It's nine o'clock.

GUARD 2  
You do it.

GUARD 1  
Hell no, man. I took the damn thing  
out a couple of hours ago.

Guard 2 twirls his long, Maglite flashlight as he walks towards the penthouse express elevator. He inserts a card key into the elevator lock, opens the doors and enters.

ELEVATOR SHAFT.

From the elevator roof, Lamb looks through the barely-open trap door at the guard.

INSIDE ELEVATOR.

Guard 2 - none-the-wiser - hits the buttons on the control panel. The elevator doors close.

ELEVATOR SHAFT.

The elevator ascends with a very relaxed Lamb along for the ride. As it reaches the top of the shaft, Lamb latches onto the girder above his head.

PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM.

The elevator doors slide open and Guard 2, still spinning his flashlight, enters the semi-dark penthouse apartment. It's nice, rich, neat, fab - a dream apartment.

Guard 2 heads towards the kitchen -

GUARD 2  
Watson? Time to eat, crap breath.

PENTHOUSE KITCHEN.

Guard 2 pours some food into a bowl.

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)  
Maybe I'll spit in it, stupid mutt.

A considerable growl can be heard.

PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM.

Guard 2 exits the kitchen and gets back on the elevator. The doors close.

ELEVATOR SHAFT.

The elevator descends, leaving Lamb standing on the shaft's girder.

Lamb gets to work just above the penthouse elevator doors. He knocks on the wall as he takes out a small, rechargeable saw. The battery-powered saw makes very little noise as it works on the wall of the elevator shaft.

CONDO LOBBY.

The elevator opens and Guard 2 walks back into the lobby. Guard 1 is behind the reception desk.

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)  
The animal is fed.

ELEVATOR SHAFT.

Lamb's feet disappear into the newly-cut hole.

PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM.

The penthouse is still semi-dark. All's quiet, until -

- the blade from the rechargeable saw pops through the ceiling, rapidly making a three-foot circular cut. The chunk of ceiling falls to the penthouse floor.

Lamb drops through the hole, into the penthouse. He takes out a small flashlight and looks around the place.

A baby grand piano and a set of French doors that lead out onto the balcony are of interest.

As he rolls his mask off his young-looking face, he hears a dog's deep growl come from his left. Lamb slowly turns -

- and is face to face with a Jack Russell Terrier. This is WATSON - he's not exactly Cujo, but he's loud. The dog's mouth quivers as another surprisingly deep growl comes from his small frame.

Watson barks. Then growls. Barks. Growls.

LAMB

Hey, my friend. How you doin'?

Lamb reaches into one of his many pouches -

LAMB (CONT'D)

I may be a cat burglar, but -

- and produces a large Slim Jim Meat Snack. Watson stops his growling and barking - his short, stubby tail wagging.

LAMB (CONT'D)

- I love dogs.

Lamb opens the package and hands the Slim Jim to Watson - Lamb's new best friend. As Watson eats the meat stuff, Lamb rubs the dog's stomach.

LAMB (CONT'D)

Nice place you got here, boy.

With plenty of time, Lamb ambles around the penthouse, stopping next to the big screen t.v. and audio equipment. Watson watches him, eating and tail wagging.

Lamb runs his fingers across the massive DVD collection - it's like Blockbuster - in the very expensive DVD rack. The beam from his flashlight dances across the DVD "To Catch a Thief." He snags this DVD, examines it, then stashes it in one of his pouches.

LAMB (CONT'D)

Love that movie.

PENTHOUSE KITCHEN.

Lamb looks over some fruit on the counter as he moves the flashlight's ball of light around the lavish kitchen. He opens the refrigerator door - not impressed with the poorly-stocked fridge. He closes the door and looks at the dog.

LAMB (CONT'D)

You eat better than she does, my man.

PENTHOUSE BEDROOM.

Lamb enters, the tail-waggin' Watson on his heels. He settles his flashlight on a full-length mirror on one of the walls. Holding the flashlight in his teeth, Lamb runs his hands around the edges of the mirror.

With a slight tug, the mirror swings open on a hinge - revealing a smaller, not-so-impressive wall safe behind it. Lamb pulls the light from his mouth and scrutinizes the safe.

LAMB (CONT'D)

(to Watson)

Five million DVDs and she has a piece  
of shit safe in the wall.

He presses his ear against the metal door. Lamb turns the combination wheel exactly three times, then pulls the safe's door open.

LAMB (CONT'D)

(to Watson)

Took me longer to open the  
refrigerator.

The Prowler removes a pair of velvet cases from the prone safe - in one case is a diamond necklace - the other has a set of diamond earrings. He dumps the contents into one of his belt pouches.

Lamb grabs at another smaller box in the safe and gets it open. This box holds a large ruby brooch. The ruby glows in the beam of his flashlight.

LAMB (CONT'D)

The ruby. The jewel of jewels.

He pockets the ruby brooch just as *he hears the elevator ascending the shaft!* Lamb, as he masks his face again, quickly and efficiently leaves the bedroom.

PENTHOUSE.

He ducks behind the piano just as the elevator doors open.

Out steps 24-year-old DEIDRE, a tall, long-legged woman, with a face that would keep anyone from noticing any jewelry she's wearing.

Lamb, hidden, steals some looks at Deidre as she drops her bags, checks her mail, etc.

DEIDRE

Hello, Watson. I'm home.

Watson the dog runs to her and she pets him.

Lamb silently takes a high-tension cord from around his waist and secures it to one of the legs of the piano.

DEIDRE (CONT'D)

I'll get you a cookie, baby. Come on.

Deidre heads into the kitchen.

Watson sits right next to the piano. He tilts his head and wags his tail, eyes on Lamb.

LAMB

(whisper)

She's getting a cookie for ya', boy. Go. Go!

DEIDRE O.S.

Watson? Come on.

Watson doesn't budge - liking his new friend. Deidre pokes her head from the kitchen and sees Watson sitting near the piano.

DEIDRE

It's just the piano, baby-dog.

It's here that Deidre finally spots the huge hole in her ceiling. She pauses, confused, then runs over to the penthouse alarm control panel next to the elevator door. She punches the panic button, triggering a loud siren that pierces the night and -

CONDO LOBBY.

- wakes up the guards.

GUARD 1

Penthouse! It's the penthouse.

Guard 2 gets to the express elevator and inserts his keycard.

PENTHOUSE.

Deidre, her back to the piano, looks at the hole in the ceiling, the alarm screaming -

- Lamb clips the end of the cord to his climbing belt hook -

- he runs past her, without her hearing, and gets to the French doors, the cord trailing behind.

PENTHOUSE BALCONY.

The doors whip open and Lamb steps up to the balcony railing. He takes a header over the railing - almost into a swan dive.

The cord unravels as Lamb plummets.

PENTHOUSE.

Deidre still hasn't seen the cord or heard the Prowler's Errol Flynn-type escape.

OUTSIDE CONDO.

Lamb falls five floors until - thunk - the cord, with the slack gone, jerks him to stop. He's at the 15th floor.

PENTHOUSE.

The cord tightens around the piano leg as Guard 2 enters from the elevator. Watson barks at him.

GUARD 2

What is it? What is it?

Deidre points at the hole in her ceiling - they stare at it.

OUTSIDE CONDO.

Hanging, Lamb begins to pull on the cord.

PENTHOUSE.

The piano begins to roll on its casters across the floor. The noise of the alarm masks the rolling piano as it slides behind Deidre and Guard 2 - Watson is the only one watching it.

OUTSIDE CONDO.

Lamb is lowered on the cord.

PENTHOUSE.

Guard 2 goes to the alarm panel and shuts off the alarm. He turns back to see the piano rolling across the floor. Deidre looks -

DEIDRE

What the hell's going on?

Guard 2 runs to the piano and wedges his flashlight against its wheel, stopping it.

OUTSIDE CONDO.

Lamb is halted halfway down the building.

PENTHOUSE BALCONY.

Guard 2 looks over the railing.

OUTSIDE CONDO.

The Prowler swings, kicking his legs towards the balcony on the tenth floor.

PENTHOUSE BALCONY.

Guard 2 raises his radio.

GUARD 2  
(into radio)  
Tommy, he's on the north side of the  
building. Uh ... tenth floor.

He turns back to the penthouse.

TENTH FLOOR CONDO BALCONY.

Lamb reaches the railing of the balcony and unhooks the cord from his belt.

He kneels in front of this balcony door, ready to pick the lock, but something hits him and he turns the knob. It's unlocked. He quietly enters.

TENTH FLOOR CONDO BEDROOM.

BEDROOM MAN and BEDROOM WOMAN are rolling about on the bed, messing around. Lamb watches them, impressed, as he walks past the bed - the man and the woman don't notice him. He continues out of the room.

TENTH FLOOR CONDO.

Lamb cuts through the condominium's living room to the front door. He exits -

TENTH FLOOR HALLWAY.

- out into the hallway and runs to the stairwell.

CONDO STAIRWELL.

Lamb holds the door open to check the stairs. He spots Guard 2 sprinting down the stairs from the penthouse and Guard 1 coming up from the Lobby. The Prowler steps back onto the tenth floor.

TENTH FLOOR HALLWAY.

As he hears the elevator in the main shaft descending, Lamb hightails it to the lift doors and presses the call button. Too late. The elevator, headed down, has passed.

Lamb wedges his screwdriver between the elevator doors. He pries them open and stands on the edge of the shaft.

MAIN ELEVATOR SHAFT.

Lamb watches the elevator car drop ... ninth floor ... eighth floor. He leaps feet first into the shaft, the tenth-floor doors closing behind him.

With Isaac Newton's help, the Prowler falls and lands hard on the roof of the moving elevator car at the sixth floor. Loud thud.

INSIDE MAIN ELEVATOR.

JUDY, 41 and attractive, is the only passenger in the still-descending elevator. She looks at the roof as Lamb's rough landing echoes through the car.

TENTH FLOOR HALLWAY.

Guard 1 and 2 enter the floor from the stairwell. The Prowler is gone.

MAIN ELEVATOR SHAFT.

In some pain from his jump, Lamb reaches for the trap door in the elevator roof.

INSIDE MAIN ELEVATOR.

The trap door opens and Lamb, still masked, drops inside. He lands next to the startled - but not scared - Judy. They look each other over -

LAMB  
How's it going?

JUDY  
(it hits her)  
I know you! The Prowler! The jewel thief. Right?

- and stand a little closer. Judy notices Lamb's bright eyes in his mask - they shine, full of life.

LAMB  
You know me?

JUDY  
You're in the newspapers all the time. Everyone in San Francisco knows the Prowler.

LAMB  
(disgusted)  
That name.

JUDY  
Yeah, not sexy enough. Doesn't fit.

Lamb shakes his head.

JUDY (CONT'D)

What are you "prowling" for tonight?

LAMB

Whatever I can get. Lobby?

JUDY

I'm getting off on two.

The elevator stops at the second floor and the doors open. Lamb holds the doors open for her and she brushes past him.

LAMB

Enjoy getting off.

JUDY

We should get off together sometime.

LAMB

Good thing I know where you live.  
This between you and me?

Judy winks and smiles. Lamb releases the doors and presses the lobby button.

Once the doors close, Lamb begins to peel his outer gear off, including his mask. He has a thin jacket, t-shirt and jeans on underneath his jumpsuit. He tosses the jumpsuit in the corner of the elevator.

Lamb picks up his full pouches and clips the belt under his jacket just before the elevator opens out into the lobby.

LOBBY.

As Lamb walks, he reaches inside his mask. From inside he removes the TT's valet parking stub given to Owen earlier. He stashes the mask in his jacket pocket as he goes through the revolving doors.

OUTSIDE CONDO.

Police sirens can be heard as Lamb hands over the ticket to a new valet, VALET 2.

VALET 2

Thank you, sir.

LAMB

No, no - thank you.

The valet runs to fetch the car.

The sirens grow louder and louder. The police cruisers pull into the lot, leaving room as Valet 2 drives the TT up to curb. Lamb tips the valet as they exchange places.

VALET 2

Sorry about all the commotion, sir.

LAMB

Hope they catch him.

VALET 2

Catch who?

LAMB

The Prowler.

Confused, but always polite, the valet closes the door. Lamb puts the car in gear and drives off, passing a few more police cruisers in the street.

EXT. OWEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The small, well-kept house sits in the middle of the street - a street that is on one of those great San Francisco hills.

The TT turns into the house's driveway as the garage door is on its way up.

OWEN'S GARAGE.

The car stops in front of Owen. He presses the garage door button, sending it back down.

Lamb is none too happy as he gets out of the car.

OWEN

Without a hitch.

LAMB

Yeah, peaches and cream.

OWEN

Did you get the stuff?

Lamb tosses his belt of pouches to his partner. Owen removes the jewelry and begins to examine them.

LAMB

Vacation?

Owen checks out the swiped DVD.

OWEN

What?

LAMB

The woman. Wasn't she supposed to be on vacation?

OWEN

Right. Hawaii.

LAMB

You'll be happy to know she made it home safe and sound. She walked in when I was in the safe.

OWEN

Was she hot? She's supposed to be a dancer or model or something.

Lamb doesn't answer. Owen walks over to the car, passing Lamb. He hands Lamb the DVD.

OWEN (CONT'D)

This yours?

LAMB

Who cares how hot she was? I had to jump off the balcony.

OWEN

You got away. No harm, no foul.

LAMB

I don't like jumping off balconies. Too much work. I hate work.

Owen opens the trunk to the car. He runs his finger over the small pre-cut slot in the trunk's lid that he slid the parking ticket through to Lamb.

OWEN

My parking-ticket-trunk idea was prime.

LAMB

Know what wasn't prime? Me diving off a balcony, 20 floors up.

OWEN

Does everything have to be perfect with you?

Lamb walks away, headed into the house.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Let's go get a drink and drop these off at Wock's.

Owen closes the trunk and follows.

EXT. CONDOMINIUM -- NIGHT

Police cars have surrounded the condo - lights flashing. Some police officers are holding onto the cord that is still dangling off the side of the building. There is an air of calmness about the whole situation.

A beat-up Firebird pulls into the mess. S.F. POLICE LIEUTENANT BOB CHAPIN, a tall, lean 53-year-old man with a bushy mustache gets out and surveys the area. He slowly walks towards the condo, ignoring all of the police officers.

PENTHOUSE.

The laid-back crime scene. A few officers are standing around the now-bright penthouse as Chapin enters.

A uniformed COP sits with Watson the dog and Deidre, basically trying to pick her up. She loves the attention.

DETECTIVE DENNIS TUDER, a shorter 50-year-old man with cropped hair, walks up to Chapin.

CHAPIN

Why did you call me?

TUDER

All roads lead to "The Prowler,"  
Lieutenant.

CHAPIN

Waste of time.

Chapin and Tuder walk over to the cop and Deidre.

CHAPIN (CONT'D)

Officer. Why don't you take the  
damsel in distress downstairs?

COP

Sure thing, Lieutenant.

He leads Deidre and her pet to the elevator.

CHAPIN

How'd he get in this time? Window?  
Through the mail slot?

TUDER

Parking garage, basement, then  
elevator shaft.

CHAPIN

At least he's creative.

They continue through the condo.

CHAPIN (CONT'D)  
And the safe's in the bedroom.

TUDER  
Wanna' look at it?

CHAPIN  
(laughs)  
That's funny.

Chapin and Tuder walk past the piano, outside and -  
BALCONY.

- onto the balcony. The cord is still there.

CHAPIN (CONT'D)  
The big exit.

TUDER  
The condo guards don't know how he  
got away.

CHAPIN  
He probably just strolled right out  
the front door.

TUDER  
Why do we even look for him anymore?

CHAPIN  
Because he keeps breaking the law.  
Have all the evidence you're not  
going to find on my desk in the  
morning.

Chapin leaves Tuder standing on the balcony.

EXT. WOCK'S BAR - NIGHT

A saloon housed in a classic, old building, "Wock's" is a  
very popular bar and restaurant.

INSIDE WOCK'S BAR.

The bar area is packed - people surrounding the u-shaped  
bar.

Lamb and Owen are sitting at the far end of the bar - the  
open end of the "u." Behind the bar, apron and tie on, is  
JEREMY "WOCK" WOCKENFUSS. Forty-five years old, Wock owns  
the joint and isn't exactly a choir boy.

Wock places two beers on the bar and Owen lays a small, velvet  
bag next to the beers. Wock opens the bag and looks inside.

INSIDE BAG - The stolen jewelry.

WOCK  
 (pleased)  
 Always the best from you guys.

OWEN  
 We aim to please.

WOCK  
 The money will be wired to your  
 account.

OWEN  
 As quick as possible.

WOCK  
 Of course.

Wock packs up the velvet bag and stashes it in the safe behind  
 the bar. He goes back to pouring drinks.

LAMB  
 As quick as possible?

OWEN  
 It's needed.

LAMB  
 Goddammit, Owen.

OWEN  
 The track. The Giants. The fuckin'  
 Super Bowl. All screwed me.

LAMB  
 Tonight was the third job in two  
 months.

OWEN  
 This is what we do, my friend. We're  
 thieves.

LAMB  
 We shouldn't be working so hard,  
 especially after six years.

Lamb stares across the bar, noticing a young, beautiful red-  
 headed woman. This is RUBY YOUNG - all of 30 and terminally  
 pretty. Bored to be with the group of people she's with,  
 she catches Lamb's stare.

OWEN  
 What the hell else are we going to  
 do?

LAMB  
 Retire.

Owen, all of a sudden, is very interested - not liking this kind of talk. Lamb and Ruby are still sharing "looks."

OWEN

Retire? If you haven't noticed, we don't exactly qualify for AARP cards. We should concentrate on the next task.

LAMB

Jewel thieves have a short shelf life. Especially ones who are wealthy.

OWEN

And their partners?

LAMB

I'm tired of carrying you.

OWEN

Screw you, man. You'd be no one without me.

LAMB

Yeah, a no one who's retired.

Lamb grabs his beer, stands, and heads in Ruby's direction. Ruby, seeing this, gets up to meet Lamb away from the group she's with. They meet at the bottom of the "u" of the bar, grabbing seats.

RUBY

You looked like you were in the middle of a very serious conversation with your friend.

LAMB

Owen is serious. Too serious sometimes. Steven.

They shake hands.

RUBY

I'm Ruby, Steven.

LAMB

Ruby? Cool.

RUBY

Let me guess - it's your mother's name?

LAMB

Just a favorite. Will your friends mind that you've ditched them?

RUBY  
Just people I work with.

LAMB  
What do you all do?

RUBY  
Teachers.

LAMB  
Teachers?

RUBY  
I'm a high school English teacher.  
Surprised to see teachers in a bar,  
huh?

LAMB  
My high school teachers played bingo  
and knitted.

RUBY  
You'd be surprised what teachers do  
outside of school. And what do you  
do for a living?

LAMB  
I'm into home security.

Back at the other end of the bar, Owen and Wock are speaking.

WOCK  
Seems he found a better looking  
drinking partner.

OWEN  
Bet you a fifty that he doesn't leave  
with her.

WOCK  
You already owe me 500 bucks.

OWEN  
One hundred?

Wock raps his knuckles on the bar in agreement. The two  
watch Lamb and Ruby get along.

OWEN (CONT'D)  
Dump him, lady. He's a thief. He'll  
steal your heart and stomp on it.

WOCK  
He's rich. Lives on a great boat.  
Nice Mustang. The women love him.