A READER SAMPLE

MIAMI HUSTLE

A CRIME THRILLER

M. TORRES

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Bilingual Language and Authenticity Notice

This novel is written primarily in English and includes Spanish dialogue to preserve voice, place, and cultural authenticity. Essential meaning follows in a brief English echo woven into the surrounding prose or action; familiar expressions may remain untranslated when the scene already makes them clear.

Prologue: The Hustle

“If you want the truth, ask the last man standing. That’s me. I watched every move these fools made, even when they didn’t know I was there.” — A.O.T.

Don Carlos

The Chevy N300 rattled through the dark, its thin metal walls humming with an old Colombian cumbia. Gasoline and stale smoke thickened the air.

In the back, a man groaned.

His wrists were bound tight. A hood slipped over half his face. He tried to lift his head and failed.

Ernesto leaned forward, cigarette glowing. “Eh… mírenlo,” he said with a crooked smile. “La bella durmiente despertó.” Their Sleeping Beauty was finally awake.

Caliche watched without blinking. “Tranquilo, parcero. Ya casi.” The almost-friendly reassurance made their approaching destination sound like a threat.

The van rolled through iron gates and onto a stone driveway lined with palms. A white mansion waited at the end, glowing against the night.

Money lived here. So did death.

They dragged the man inside and taped him to a heavy chair. Marble floors. Crystal light. The smell of rum and expensive cologne.

Don Carlos Torres stood waiting.

Beside him stood Guatemala’s aging rum billionaire, Oliver Velasquez, his hand shaking as he gripped a glass of his own rum.

Carlos nodded toward the captive.

“Es el Indio,” he said calmly. “El que dejó morir a tu hija al lado de la carretera.” The name settled it: Carlos had brought them the man who abandoned Velasquez’s daughter beside the road.

Velasquez’s face twisted with rage.

Carlos placed a machete in his hand.

Velasquez stepped forward. “¿Sabes lo que hiciste?” He needed to know whether the man understood what he had done.

The man tried to speak.

Velasquez smashed the machete’s handle into his jaw. Bone cracked. Blood sprayed. The chair slammed to the marble floor.

Velasquez climbed on top of him, blade pressed to his throat, breathing wild.

For a moment, everyone thought he would do it.

He didn’t. Whatever else Oliver Velasquez was, he wasn’t a killer.

Carlos smiled.

He slid on black gloves, slow and deliberate, then took the machete from Velasquez.

“Levántalo,” he ordered.

Ernesto dragged the man upright.

Carlos stepped behind him and drew the blade across his throat in one practiced stroke.

Blood sheeted over the captive’s shirt.

The body dropped.

Carlos didn’t even look at it.

“Déjenlo desangrarse. Después llamen a Cuca.” Carlos left the body to empty itself across the marble; Cuca and the incinerator could handle what remained.

Velasquez stared at his fingerprints on the machete while Caliche wrapped the weapon in plastic. Only then did he notice the tiny red light glowing in the upper gallery: a camera, aimed at the chair.

Carlos followed his gaze. “For the archive,” he said.

Somewhere beyond the mansion, a man Carlos trusted would preserve the recording, index every face, and store the billionaire’s fear for the day it became useful. By sunrise, the footage would vanish from Carlos’s own system and survive only in a ghost archive he could not open without Arcadio. Velasquez understood the arrangement now. Carlos owned him—and all the power his billions commanded.