

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.

Money Mike

An all-black Lamborghini rolled up to El Paraíso.

When Michael Torres stepped out, people noticed.

Slim. Sharp. Diamonds flashing under neon.

Money Mike.

Inside, the scent of cigars and perfume mixed with reggaetón. Heads turned. Whispers followed.

At the table waited Javier "El Tiburón" Muñoz.

"Muy seguro, Mike," he sneered, mocking the confidence Mike carried into the game.

Mike only smiled. Javier broke hard, scattering color across the felt, and Mike answered with ruthless control. Ball after ball disappeared until only the eight remained.

Karina watched from the bar.

Mike struck. The eight-ball slid home, and the room exploded.

"You got lucky," Javier muttered.

"Luck's expensive," Mike replied.

A man appeared behind him. "El jefe te quiere ver." He pointed toward the oak door where the boss was waiting.

Mike kissed Karina's cheek. "Ya vuelvo."

Behind the oak door, cigar smoke and power waited.

Carlos sat behind his desk.

"Maicol, estás haciendo mucho ruido." Carlos kept his own voice low; the attention Mike attracted sounded like a personal offense.

"I'm just playing my game."

Carlos slammed his fist down.

"No juegues conmigo." The order not to play games with him landed harder than the fist against the desk.

After a long pause, Carlos smiled. "Tonight, you ride with Raúl."

And with Raúl, nobody stayed clean.

Chapter 1: In the Shadows of Miami

"If Mike had listened that night, half the blood spilled later would've stayed in people's veins."

Neon spilled across Biscayne Boulevard as Mike rolled downtown, Lamborghinis and Bentleys gliding past like predators in a glowing aquarium. Music leaked from clubs into the humid air — reggaetón, house, bass so heavy it rattled the windows. Miami was wide awake, hungry and beautiful.

Mike read the city the way he read a pool table. Every lane had an angle, every room a weak pocket, every dangerous man a tell. That instinct had built his name. It had also taught him the lie that nothing was truly random if he watched closely enough.

The Green Room hid beneath a five-star hotel, discreet and deadly. A valet opened Mike's door. "Evening, Mr. Torres."

Mike tossed him the keys and a folded bill. "Cuídalo bien, mi llave." He trusted the valet to take good care of it, or at least paid him as if he did.

Inside, heat and perfume wrapped around him. Bodies pressed together on the dance floor, women in silk dresses and men in tailored suits, money flashing like jewelry. Champagne flowed. Smoke curled. A DJ blended Latin beats with deep house, the rhythm pounding like a second heartbeat.

Karina stood at the bar, glowing in the neon, Marisol beside her.

"Si sigue así, va a terminar muerto," Marisol muttered as Mike approached. She watched him as if she could already see where his recklessness would end.

Karina's smile did not reach her eyes. "Ese hombre cree que puede con todo, pues." To her, Mike's confidence looked too much like a belief that he could survive anything.

Mike kissed her cheek. "Por favoor. You worry too much." He touched Marisol's shoulder. "Tell your brother I'll bring the Lambo by for a checkup." Charley was the only mechanic Mike trusted with it.

From the mezzanine, a man in a charcoal suit photographed the three of them and sent the image to a contact saved only as **A**. The message erased itself from his phone before he disappeared into the crowd. A ceiling camera followed him for six steps, then pivoted back toward Mike.

The velvet curtains parted. The music dipped, and a steel cage rose from the floor. The club became something else.

Viktor Morozov stood beside it, pale and patient, sipping vodka like the violence didn't concern him. "My fighter is about to show Miami how Russia does business."

Inside the cage, the Bear waited, carved from muscle and scars. Across from him stood El Loco, Miami's favorite.

The door slammed. El Loco rushed forward, but the Bear barely moved before driving one knee into his ribs, then another. The crowd gasped.

"¡Coño!"

The Bear caught him, hurled him down, and hammered him against the mat. Blood flecked the steel as phones rose across the room. Some people screamed, others cheered, and a few turned away. One final punch twisted El Loco's jaw. He stayed down.

For one breath, silence swallowed the club.

Viktor smiled. "Impressive, no?"

Mike nodded once. "Tiene fuerza. Pero Miami tiene corazón." The Russian had strength; Mike was betting on Miami's heart.

Viktor's smile twitched. "We'll see."

They moved to the pool tables behind the cage. Velvet ropes.

Heavy money on felt. Men with guns under their jackets watching every shot.

Viktor broke hard. Mike answered without hurry. When the final ball dropped, Viktor's smile disappeared.

Karina slipped to Mike's side, her eyes darting.

"Esto se puso feo," she whispered, her gaze already searching for an exit from whatever the night had become.

"No te preocupes," he said, steering her toward the dance floor as if movement could outrun her fear, her favorite reggaetón thumping through the room.

Her phone buzzed. She stepped away, read the message, and came back pale.

"Carlos sabe," she murmured. "Te quiere ver." The color left her face; whatever Mike had hoped to hide from Carlos was already known, and the boss was calling him in.

Mike's chest tightened.

"Vámonos."

Outside, Miami pulsed around them — engines, sirens, music bleeding into the street. Karina kissed him under the neon, holding on like she felt the storm coming.

Carlos was waiting.

EVERY SHOT HAS CONSEQUENCES.

Miami Hustle is a short, cinematic crime-thriller novella set between Miami nightlife, Colombian roots, and high-stakes billiards. Every deal has a cost, every shot has consequences, and Book 1 is only the opening move.

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