HOBOKEN, N.J.
11:00 pm.

I'd been sitting at the bar for three hours or about five years, depending on how you looked at things.

Then, the same response mechanism that had taken me down so many times before kicked into gear.

I would later realize it was going to be one of my usual weaknesses that took me down.

Was it the booze? A girl? My temper? Or the delusion I could make a difference?

Girl sure had balls. I had to give her that.

*WHAT? WHAT'D YOU SAY?*

*YOU HEARD ME. I'M NOT FRIGHTENED OF YOU. YOU SPRAY-TAN GUIDO DOUCHÉ.*

Before I knew what I was doing, I was pulling a gun on the coked-up kid of New Jersey's most powerful mob boss, and yet again, my life was tumbling into chaos.
And then there was the woman I tried hardest of all never to think about...

...but no matter how hard I tried, I was always remembering something or other.

Rose, my only child?

I didn't even remember which woman I was remembering. In some ways, maybe it didn’t matter?

Was it my mother?

I'm sure Dad is just just working late again...

Michelle, my wife, my future?

Or Mons, that perfect and seemingly immortal harpy? In the end, they all left me.

You're no more able to kill me than I am you. There's more than one way to kill someone, Max.
ELEVEN YEARS AGO...

It had always been the same: No matter how many people I killed or how well, I could never escape from the fact that the people I cared about ended up worse for knowing me.

FOR A PARANOID LUNATIC, STICK UP NO SURE KNOWS HOW TO ORGANIZE A SCORE.

I KEEP TELLING HIM, LAY OFF THE GODDAMN V, THAT SHIT IS A ONE WAY TICKET TO THE NUT HOUSE.

STICK TO COCAINE LIKE A NORMAL HUMAN BEING.

WE GOT COMPANY.

BLAST HIS ASS, BOYS.
Now, my days were calmer. A nonstop jamboree of frivolity, clean living and, most important of all, a healthy outlook on life.
THE 1970s...

My father never wasted time with television.

He was too busy majoring in telling other people how to live.

YOU'VE... YOU'VE GOT TO BE TRUE TO SOMETHING, MAX. OTHERWISE, LIFE IS POINTLESS.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE ABLE TO LOCK DEATH IN THE EYE WITHOUT FEAR, WITHOUT REMORSE. I LEARNED THAT WHEN WE WERE AMBUSHED DURING TET.

And minoring in hypocrisy, he was a family guy—when it suited him.

AND ODOSSUS FINALLY MADE HIS WAY HOME TO ITHACA, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT EVEN THEN... EVEN THEN... THE GODS WERE NOT QUITE DONE PERSECUTING HIM!

My mother was a dreamer. Her father, who I adored, taught ancient literature at college. Both of them lived in a world of myth.

They read and talked and dreamed of a better, truer world.

YEY, PENELLOPE, SHE HAD WAITED FOR HIM!
HELLO? HELLO? WHO'S THERE?

She turned a blind eye to some things.

I WILL TEACH YOU TO RESPECT ME, HELEN!

IT'S OKAY, JACK. IT'S OKAY. YOU'RE HOME. YOU'RE SAFE. WE'RE ALL SAFE.

And hoped we could all forget about others.

Yet my father had his own demons. He had done and seen things in Vietnam, and now we all lived with the consequences.

I wanted to protect her, but I didn't know how.
I didn’t even know what I was looking for. Everyone I cared about was gone, or close to going, one way or another.

I was getting dressed to go and see people who wouldn’t care.

I felt like what I was—an old soldier putting on a uniform to fight a battle I no longer knew how to win.

I ached everywhere. I was too old to be carrying on like this. Sometimes, I idly wondered which bit of me would fail first.

Middle-aged panic was something I had grown pretty used to.
This poor bastard was in an even worse state than me.

God only knew what went on inside his apartment, let alone inside his head.

Luckily, thanks to my highly disciplined personal health care regime, I had got my own nightmares sort of under control.

It was time to go and get some VIP transportation.
That skyline reminded me of so much...

...of my partner, Alex Balder.

I believe in you, Max. Despite what my eyes and ears tell me, I still believe in you.

Thank you, sir.

Don't worry, I got you, Bud.

...of my boss, who I was due to meet later...

I just ask you one thing: don't make a fool of me.

...and the woman who was the cop I could never be.
While people like me lived...

...I’ve buried so many.
I loved my grandfather, but I should have told him then and there I knew he was full of shit.

Hey, I loved my wife as best I could... Max... Max, where are you? Come say hi to Cheryl.

My mother was dead. I don’t know if it was the booze or the beatings or the betrayal that got her.

Three years later, my father joined her.
As I lived through my own PTSD, remembering how...

...I cheated...

...I lied...

...and killed the wrong people.

This... This is wrong...

It was time to get properly drunk... or die trying.

To be continued...
ROCKSTAR GAMES PRESENTS

MAX PAYNE 3

MAY 15

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