

BILLIONS

Pilot

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FULLY COLLATED 2nd Yellow Revisions - 02/09/15
2nd Pink Revisions - 01/30/15
2nd Blue Revisions - 01/19/15
Goldenrod Revisions - 01/16/15
Green Revisions - 01/15/15
Yellow Revisions - 01/13/15
Full Pink - 01/08/15
Blue Revisions - 12/18/14
Production Draft - 12/12/14

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1 INT. BEACH HOUSE, MONTAUK - DAY 1

A MAN is LYING ON THE FLOOR of a vacant, unfurnished house. It's not clear if he's injured or resting or meditating. And it's not just a house, it's a palace.

CLOSE ON: The Man. BOBBY "AXE" AXELROD, early 40s, but in excellent physical shape, like an ex-college wrestler. Casually dressed, the intensity and intelligence in his eyes is far from casual.

He listens to the sound of the waves, through open French, doors crashing on the nearby beach. The squawk of a sea bird pierces the moment.

Axe gets up, stretches, checks the views as he walks through a massive cook's kitchen. He notes a detail on the cabinetry.

Then he strides into the Great Rooms, cavernous, sprawling. The dining rooms, lush. He runs his hands over fine woodwork, marble. He feels the hardware, testing the seal on the doors as they open and close.

Axe exits through a side door.

2 EXT. BEACH HOUSE, POOL - DAY 2

Axe REMOVES his clothes, completely, DIVES into what seems to be an Olympic-length swimming pool.

Axe goes the distance of the pool underwater. When he gets to the far end, he props himself up on his arms, surveys the entire thing. A slow, determined smile comes to his face.

3 EXT. BEACH HOUSE, REAR - DAY 3

He exits the house and walks the beach, his feet seeming to float on the fluffy white sand.

He could be trespassing or it could be he's in a dream...

4 EXT. BEACH HOUSE, FRONT - DAY 4

He appears from around the side of the house.

He's not in a dream. This is his life. He crosses to a waiting Bentley, CHAUFFEUR inside.

MIKE 'WAGS' WAGNER leans against the car. Wags is a bit taller, more stylishly dressed and more Patrician in manner.

(CONTINUED)

A smiley real estate agent, FERN, waits expectantly. Axe ignores her. WAGS and FERN notice he's wet but don't speak to it.

AXE

Dovetail joints. The kitchen cabinets. All hand done.

WAGS

The things you notice.

AXE

Real quality is never on the surface.

FERN

I told you it was special, Mr. Axelrod.

A beat. Axe turns to her. She's nervous and keeps talking.

FERN

The Norton spread is the last of the important beach front properties. They only come available once in a generation.

We see a look in Axe's flinty eyes, and it's hard to determine if it's humor or contempt.

AXE

Was I first.

NOTE: whenever Axe asks a question, he conveys the idea that he already knows the answer. It's a tactic. And also: most of the time, he does.

FERN

I can't lie.

AXE

Sure you can.

He looks her over.

AXE

But you won't. Go on.

FERN

Barton Oakleigh was first. But only because he'd been courting the owner for ten years.

AXE

They really stick together, these fucking old-line WASPS...

He turns to Wags.

AXE

No offense, Wags.

WAGS

None taken. I work for a living.

AXE

An exception to the breed.

He turns back to Fern.

AXE

The ask.

FERN

Eighty-three million.

AXE

And he went to Bart Oakleigh to get it. He should've come to me first.

WAGS

Chopper's waiting. We're gonna be late--

AXE

How am I late when it's my fucking chopper.

Wags shrugs, amused. Axe leans in to him.

AXE

I don't get wowed very often anymore.

WAGS

Oh, boy.

AXE

Guy like me--people who built this place wouldn't even let me stay in their servant's quarters back then.

4

CONTINUED: (3)

4

WAGS

A lot's changed.

AXE

Yeah.

Fern gathers herself.

(CONTINUED)

4

CONTINUED: (4)

4

FERN

(gestures to Wags)

As I was telling your COO, I believe they'd accept a preemptive offer of eighty million--all cash--to stop showing it.

AXE

Uh huh. I'm sure he would.

They turn to get in the car. Axe looks back to Fern.

AXE

I'll take a one week window. Exclusive. Show it to anyone else, I never think about it again. Prick should've shown me first.

As they get in the car.

WAGS

Axe, a buy like this will make a lot of noise.

AXE

Fair point. That's why I'm gonna think about it.

A beat.

AXE

But, Wags, it gives you a hell of a feeling, doesn't it.

WAGS

Yeah. It does.

5

INT. A ROOM - NIGHT

5

ANGLE ON: STILETTO HEELED KNEE-HIGH BLACK SUEDE BOOTS step into frame next to the naked torso of a MAN. A moan.

On his back on a tile floor the MAN, 40s, good looking, hands bound, leather belt tied tight as a gag, WRITHES in pleasure and pain.

A DOMINATRIX stands over him, cigarette in hand. We don't see her face.

DOMINATRIX

You're in need of correction, aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

5

CONTINUED:

5

MAN

(slurred)

Yes.

She leans down and loosens the gag.

DOMINATRIX

I might leave marks.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

MAN

Not a great idea.

DOMINATRIX

That's not a 'no.'

We still don't see her face as she draws on the cigarette, gets it glowing, then stubs it out on his bare chest.

DOMINATRIX

That's gotta burn. I better fix it.

Her knees bend slightly, then we hear the sounds of her URINE splashing down on him.

6 EXT. US ATTORNEY FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT, MAIN OFFICE - DAY

HELICOPTER SHOT: Establishing lower Manhattan. The court buildings. The imposing marble columns of justice.

7 INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

7

Government functional. ASST. U.S. ATTORNEYS in offices, ASSISTANTS and PARALEGALS, reflecting the diversity of New York, at desks in front.

As Chief Assistant US Attorney BRYAN CONNERTY moves through the office, the energy moves with him. Connerty is American born, blue collar, smart, but thinks he owes all his success to his ability to outwork the world.

8 INT. U.S. ATTORNEY, KATE SACKER'S OFFICE - DAY

8

He enters KATE SACKER'S office. Sacker, back to the door, on her head set, is late 20s, perfectly put together, looks like her parents paid for law school. Connerty stands and listens.

SACKER (INTO HEADSET)

...You sure you can't use them?
They only come through New York
once this year...Yeah, yeah, I love
Lebron. Happy to take the tickets.
I'd much rather see him in Brooklyn
than the Garden.

Connerty leans in, CLICKS Sacker's phone off. Sacker spins.

SACKER

Bryan!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Connerty sits on the corner of Sacker's desk.

8

CONTINUED: (2)

8

SACKER

Guy from law school. We don't have any cases against his firm. I insisted on paying face value. No gift.

CONNERTY

Face value for a game against the Cavs? Even if you're paying, you're getting hooked up. We don't take. You're lucky it was me who heard and not Chuck. Walk with me.

9

INT. US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

9

They begin to move down the hall, nodding at COWORKERS.

CONNERTY

Believe me, whoever gave you those tickets is gonna be dining out on the fact an assistant US Attorney is sitting in his seats. Next thing you know, the story'll be the entire office is having orgies in the executive suites at Barclays Center.

SACKER

I get it.

CONNERTY

You think you get it. Guys who sit in Chuck's chair become Mayor. Governor. Beyond. This needs to be a fuck-up-free zone. Learn something from what happened to that fat man in the statehouse across the Hudson. Our guy's not going down behind 'Ticket-gate.'

Connerty puts a hand on Sacker's shoulder.

CONNERTY

And you know what? Even if you were chasing ambulances at Jacoby & Meyers, I'd tell you to turn down the tickets. Ask me why.

SACKER

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONNERTY

Because you're too young to be
taking favors. Ages twenty-two to
forty are the favor doing years.

(MORE)

9 CONTINUED: (2)

9

CONNERTY (CONT'D)

You want to collect IOUs until your pockets are bulging. That's how you build a career.

Sacker absorbs it. Then rebounds.

SACKER

And all this time, I thought the key was kissing your ass.

CONNERTY

Well, ya got something right.

They reach an assistant's desk, manned by KIM, 40s, professional, and enter...

10 INT. U.S. ATTORNEY CHUCK RHOADES' OFFICE - DAY

10

CHUCK RHOADES, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, sits behind a big desk in a power suit. We RECOGNIZE him as THE MAN WHO WAS WITH the dominatrix.

Chuck's office is Government-plush. Big windows looking out over downtown New York, plaques, awards and a seal on the wall, a standing American Flag, as well as a triangular-folded one in a frame from Ground Zero.

SACKER

Sir.

CHUCK

Guys, what's on deck--

SACKER

Progress report on two of the open investigations--

The intercom buzzes.

KIM (V.O.)

Ari Spyros from the SEC.

CHUCK

Call back--

KIM (V.O.)

Is here.

Chuck stands as ARI SPYROS enters. Dark eyed and cadaverous, he has a green file folder bearing the SEC crest in hand. No one is happy to see each other.

(CONTINUED)

KIM

I'm sorry, Chuck, he wouldn't--

10

CONTINUED: (2)

10

CHUCK
It's fine, Kim.

She leaves.

CHUCK
What's the occasion? We're not
interviewing right now.

SPYROS
(no laugh)
Funny.

SACKER
I should--

Sacker moves for the door.

CONNERTY
Stay and learn something.

SPYROS
Can we speak privately?

CHUCK
This is private.

SPYROS
Okay. Here.

He extends the FOLDER. Chuck takes it, trades a look with
Connerty, starts flipping through it.

CONNERTY
This got your panties all sticky?

SPYROS
Drenched. Suspect trading pattern
on Pepsun Pharmaceuticals...

CONNERTY
And?

SPYROS
One of my grunts riding the MIDAS
spotted a days-long buy spike....

11

INT. SEC OFFICE - DAY

11

CUT TO SHOTS OF GRUNTS at the SEC, combing computer programs,
REACTING as they discover something BIG.

12 INT. U.S. ATTORNEY CHUCK RHOADES' OFFICE - DAY 12

SPYROS
Look at this.

SPYROS takes the folder from Chuck and starts spreading out pieces of paper with lots of rows of data.

(CONTINUED)

SPYROS

You can all study the charts, or I can give you the answers to the test: these three small firms all knew exactly when to buy and when to sell the stock.

CONNERTY

They had inside information. You must get pings like that every day.

SPYROS

We do.

CHUCK

So get 'em talking, and fine 'em.

SPYROS

It's bigger than that. All three firms have links to Bobby Axelrod.

A BEAT. This is a big deal. Chuck's eyes flare at the name, he looks like he wants blood, but he plays it cool.

This isn't remotely satisfactory to Spyros. He grabs the folder, pulls out THREE 8" x 10" PHOTOS.

INSERT PHOTOS.

SPYROS

Dan Margolis, Century Capital.
Lenny Bosco, Old Oaks Investments.
Peter Decker, Quaker Ridge
Financial. This is big. It's
criminal. And I want to be part of
treeing Bobby Axelrod--

CHUCK

Hey, I want to be an astronaut, but I get air sick in choppy weather.

Looks at Spyros.

CHUCK

Your burden of proof is lower. They'll talk to you because they're happy to pay a fine and move on. I'm at the coalface. And I don't appreciate you strolling in here, telling me how to deploy my resources, because you can't build your own case.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

12

CONTINUED: (2)

12

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Especially considering how much we
have on right now.

He nods to a big white board which reads: TERRORISM and
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS, SECURITIES & COMMODITIES FRAUD TASK
FORCE, COMPLEX FRAUDS, PUBLIC CORRUPTION, ORGANIZED CRIME.

SPYROS

You're still taking bows from
busting up that drug cartel--

SACKER

We didn't break down the door of
some warehouse in the Bronx. We
systematically dismantled a
criminal organization that used the
proceeds of their drug operation to--

SPYROS

I get it: you guys are rock stars--

CONNERTY

We get it--you want to be one too.

CHUCK

None of that matters. Look, Spyros
if you've lucked onto some trail of
bread crumbs that leads to Bobby
Axelrod, it could be a win for
everyone. Leave your stuff and
we'll take a look and let you know
if it rises to the standard we can
prosecute. One that won't be
reversed on appeal.

A beat.

SPYROS

You know, I understand the source
of your reluctance, I have a wife
too, but it's your job to--

CONNERTY

Hey!--

Spyros holds up his hands in half surrender.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (3) 12

SPYROS
So that's it?

CHUCK
Unless you want a bottle of water
on your way out...

Connerty and Sacker love it.

12A EXT. AXE CAPITAL - DAY 12A

Establishing shot.

13 INT. AXE CAPITAL - DAY 13

The place is large, in a suburban office park, but the interior space has been re-made, modernized.

There are beautiful YOUNG WOMEN at a reception area, rows of desks with computers and Bloomborgs, and suspended above the main floor, like the bridge of the Starship Enterprise, are the glassed in Executive Offices.

Bobby Axelrod, dressed in a suit, a half dozen ENVELOPES in his hand, moves from the Exec level, down a staircase, and through the offices. His face is set in determination when--

A portfolio manager, MICK DANZIG, late 30s and analyst BEN KIM, 22, Korean, both in fleece and Khakis, flank Axe.

DANZIG
Bobby, we are ready to roll on something sweet. I think you'll want to piggyback--

AXE
What do you got?

DANZIG
LumeTherm Power getting bought by Electric Sun. Price is forty-one. Stock is trading at thirty-five. We're looking at a seventeen percent bump in two weeks when the deal closes.

BEN
Annualized, that's four hundred forty two--

(CONTINUED)

DANZIG

I'd love to size up. Maybe you buy two million shares for the main fund.

AXE

Sounds about right.

Axe starts moving on.

DANZIG

(excited)

Great. Scott Kazawitz's name is being floated as the new chairman.

Now Axe stops, turns.

AXE

Kazawitz. That's a new piece of information.

DANZIG

That's what you pay me for.

AXE

Who said this deal is gonna close.

DANZIG

Ben said it would this morning.

BEN

Me? Everyone's saying it.

Axe looks at Ben as if seeing him for the first time.

AXE

(to Danzig)

Who is this.

DANZIG

My new analyst.

AXE

If we hired you, you must be a genius. Yale?

BEN

Stanford. Then Wharton.

AXE

Okay, Stanford-Wharton. ElectricSun is controlled by Kazawitz.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED: (2)

13

AXE (CONT'D)

He also owns 19.3 percent of LumeTherm backdoored through his stake in Southern Wind. Did you see that block trade last Thursday coming out of Merrill?

DANZIG

Yeah. That was Fortress cashing out their shorts before the merger.

A beat. Axe just looks at him.

DANZIG

Wasn't it?...

Axe closes the distance between them.

AXE

Trade was at 12:52, when everyone was at lunch. Which tells me they wanted it to be missed. You guys caught it, which is something, I guess. But you're looking at it backward. ElectricSun's offer was just a ploy to temporarily prop up LumeTherm. Typical Kazawitz play to bail on a loser. He's an animal. The block trade was Kazawitz getting out of SouthernWind, getting out of LumeTherm. Probably paid \$19 mill to Merrill to let him hide through those swaps. Kazawitz rode the story, and now he's out. Which means you need to be out. In fact, short. It'll slide to thirty-two and change after word breaks.

Axe turns to leave.

DANZIG

Wow. That's a good catch, Axe.

AXE

My cholesterol's high enough. Don't butter my ass, Danzig. Just get smarter.

Then he turns to Ben.

AXE

Your read was right with the information you had. You're new.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (3) 13

AXE (CONT'D)

You'll figure it out. Or you'll be gone.

Axe moves on, leaving them staring after him.

BEN

Jesus Christ.

DANZIG

Yeah. And he went to Hofstra.

14 INT. AXE CAPITAL, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 14

A GROUP of about forty people are gathered--several 18 YEAR OLD BOYS and GIRLS, spiffed up in blazers and dresses, along with their MOTHERS, some GRANDPARENTS, some younger siblings.

Coffee and refreshments. One beautiful, fresh faced woman in her mid-thirties, and dressed impeccably, trades pleasantries with some of the mothers. She is LARA AXELROD.

LARA

He'll be here in a minute, he's just grabbing the checks...It never does get easier, but moments like this show that some good can come from even the worst of times.

The Mothers nod.

15 INT. AXE CAPITAL, MEN'S ROOM - DAY 15

Axe steadies himself against the sink. Pale, he stares at his reflection in the mirror, then leans over and starts splashing water in his face.

He comes up, face wet, bracing himself. Pulls some typewritten pages out of his jacket pocket. Looks them over.

AXE (PRE-LAP)

I loved and remember each and every one of your fathers...

16 INT. AXE CAPITAL, CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER 16

Axe, surrounded by some of his senior people, including Wags, DOLLAR BILL and BUTCH "THE POUCH" PROBERT, is at a lectern, in front of the assembled, who look at him with near adoration.

(CONTINUED)

Through the window, we can see some of the work stopping, out of respect.

AXE

...So I'm proud of all of you, who are ready to head off to school in the fall. Twenty-six of ours put through college by the memorial foundation so far. Eighteen graduates. One a doctor, two lawyers. And this year's group. Let's bring them up and give them a round of applause for their achievement.

Axe checks the first envelope.

AXE

Freddie Aquafino. Off to Duke. Ah, Freddie--I traded shoulder to shoulder with your father. The day I met him, he taught me more about how a man should conduct himself at work than I've learned in all the years since. He'd be so proud of you today. First year's tuition and board.

A beaming Freddie, along with his MOM, steps up to Axe, takes an envelope. They embrace. She tries to snap a picture.

SHARI STRANG, 26, brunette, Masters in Communications from Princeton, focused, smart, quick. Every guy at the firm swears he'll take a shot at her. Few get up the courage.

SHARI

No photos, please--we've all agreed.

Axe puts a hand out--"I got this."

AXE

Not of this guys. We can take some later without the envelopes.

FREDDIE

Come on, Bobby. For my dorm room.

AXE

Don't post it anywhere. This is just for us.

As the Mom snaps the pic, Axe whispers to Shari.

AXE (WHISPERS)

You eat raw meat for breakfast?

SHARI

It's a weekday, isn't it?

Axe turns back to the room as the mother retakes her seat.

AXE

That's what this is all about, not only how our firm survived 9/11, but how we didn't give up, how we all committed to each other, to this family. I am so moved by how we've flourished together.

Some applause. One widow, JUNE, sips wine, speaks low.

JUNE

Some flourishing more than others.

The room goes quiet.

JUNE

It's just wrong that you're the one standing there.

Gasps of offense and 'shhs'. But Axe has heard her. It's a knife to the gut.

AXE

No, no, it's okay, June. I...
uh...I'd feel the same way. I get it. You gotta be thinking: "Why was he spared? Why's my husband gone?" For months after the planes hit, all I could do was ask myself why. Why was I the only surviving partner? Why wasn't I there? Could I have done something...Why was I the one out of the office on meetings that morning?

Axe, haunted by memory, struggles with it for a moment.

AXE

We'll never know. So I made up my own why: because of you. This.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AXE (CONT'D)

We were a small firm back then--
under a hundred people, still
raising money, but we were always a
family, and even though our family
got cut in half by those
sonofabitches that day, we've
gotten stronger by tenfold since
then. A hundredfold.

Nods in the crowd. Axe re-finds his footing.

AXE

Which was why even when our security--our very survival, was in doubt in the dark days after, we pledged the firm's remaining assets to support the families of those we'd lost and to send every child--living or yet to be born--to college and grad school after that if they so chose.

DANZIG

You put it all on your back, Bobby!

Affirmative yells. Axe looks to Lara, she gives him an encouraging smile.

AXE

Am I the greatest guy in the world? Hell, no. I just did, what I knew the partners and friends I'd lost would have done for my family. What your husband would have done, June. I tried my best because I knew they would've done it for me. You know I'm sorry. I miss Rake every day. As my beautiful wife, Lara, misses her heroic brother Dean.

June dissolves into tears at this. Lara goes to her, embraces her, hands off the glass of wine.

AXE

But we fight on. It's what we do.

Lara looks over her shoulder as she leads June out, gives Axe a nod of encouragement and he puts a smile on.

AXE

Mary-Elizabeth Price. Heading to College of Charleston...

More applause as it continues, and we HEAR...

CHUCK (PRE-LAP)

Bobby Axelrod is Mike Tyson in his prime...

17 INT. CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

17

Chuck and Connerty eat at Chuck's desk,

CHUCK

And you do not want Mike Tyson in his prime. Remember what happened to the guys who fought him then?

CONNERTY

They got their faces pushed in. But eventually he got beat. Buster Douglas knocked him on his ass. Ketchup.

Chuck slides over the Heinz.

CHUCK

Eventually is the key word. When Tyson was ready to go. Since my appointment, the office is undefeated in financial prosecutions--81 and 0. That's because I know when the time is right.

CONNERTY

I get it, but this would be a big one.

CHUCK

Bryan, what do you think happened this morning?

CONNERTY

We got significant information.

CHUCK

Maybe. Or maybe it was Spyros setting us up. See: if we go first and lose in the criminal action, Spyros and the SEC can still get him civilly. So if we win, Spyros wins. If we lose, Spyros still wins.

CONNERTY

Damn. Ketchup's empty.

CHUCK

We've got to play three dimensional chess. Axe is a folk-hero in this town.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

17

CONTINUED:

17

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Guy gave the New York City Fire Department Foundation \$100 million-- last year. Police gave him a plaque at Ground Zero with his name on it.

CONNERTY

Spitzer's name was on all the highway signs too. Signs come down.

Chuck gets a kick out of this.

CHUCK

That's why I love ya, man. But a good matador doesn't try to kill a fresh bull. You wait until he's been stuck a few times. We need an opening, no matter how small--a shift in momentum--before we start. Then we get the guy the moment he's get-able, just like the rest. But not if there's a chance we lose. Right now, Axe's game is too tight. The whole thing, too fraught.

CONNERTY

What about the other issue, the one Spyros mentioned: home. Was he right about that?

Chuck's eyes are as flat as his tone.

CHUCK

No.

Chuck starts eating. After a moment, Connerty does too.

18

EXT. AXE CAPITAL - DAY

18

Lara walks June out toward the parking lot.

JUNE

I'm sorry, I don't know what...

LARA

It's a tough day for everyone.

JUNE

I just...I just had to sell the Oceanis, which Dave just loved--

(CONTINUED)

LARA

I'm sure that's why it upset you.
I'll drive you home in your car,
Andy will follow us. Keys.

June hands over her keys. Lara signals her DRIVER.

LARA

Me, I never set foot on a yacht until I started dating Bobby. In Inwood, growing up, the only boating we did was the Staten Island Ferry. Big Irish family, five sibs. Close though. Firemen, cops, nurses. When I first moved up here, this world, I saw how everyone looked at me. I had my frosted hair, but not the Warren-Tricomi kind. Like out of a box. And I cursed more than you all do in public.

JUNE

I never judged--

LARA

Course not. So I got my act together. And I'm comfortable in this life. But certain things you learn in Inwood, they never leave you. Like the idea that if someone has a problem with you, and they come to you in person, you do what you can to take care of it. But if they take that beef public...Ground just falls out from beneath that person where I'm from. Find yourself all alone.

ON: June. She understands.

JUNE

Are you...threatening me?

LARA

(almost laughing it off)
Yeah. Yep. I am. It's how I grew up. Now get in the car.

Axe stands off to the side of the bleachers. He appears totally focused on the game his son, DEAN, 10, is playing when Wags approaches with two early 30s portfolio managers-- BUTCH "THE POUCH" PROBERT and "DOLLAR" BILL STEARN.

AXE

Really? Here?

WAGS

They're going to obliterate each other on Superior Auto. Has to be your call.

Axe finally nods, waves the men over.

THE POUCH

We've got to be long Superior. We should increase our position, I think.

AXE

You think.

WAGS

We think you have female genitalia, but we still let you use the Men's room.

DOLLAR BILL

(low)

Road to ruin...

ANGLE ON: The clock, 25 seconds.

AXE

Okay. Tie ball game. Gotta make something happen.

Two PLAYERS on the opposing team, double team Dean's teammate, who TRAVELS.

The REFEREE, 16, sweet faced, blows his whistle.

REF

That's a travel.

ANGLE ON: The BENCH. The COACH of Dean's team explodes.

COACH

Bullshit! That was no travel. He was fouled!

The REF looks rattled. Axe shakes his head, looks to The Pouch.

AXE

No reason to get on that kid. None. Go 'head, Pouch.

(CONTINUED)

THE POUCH

Aluminum wheels for cars and light duty trucks have totally replaced steel, and the numbers out of the factory tell me Superior is producing the shit out of them.

The other team has SCORED, going up by 2.

COACH

You're costing us the game, ref!

AXE

He should save it for the traders at his firm. Not here. Jesus.

COACH

Time. Time.

The game breaks, teams huddle up. Axe turns his attention back to the men from the office.

AXE

Okay. Dollar Bill, what does the cheapest man in America think.

DOLLAR BILL

That The Pouch is wrong. Numbers out of the factory tell me they over-produced this quarter. They're stuck with merch they can't move and stock's gonna dip. Short.

AXE

What's your level of certainty.

This is a VERY SPECIFIC question with a VERY SPECIFIC meaning.

CUT TO:

Signage announces the warehouse is: SUPERIOR AUTOMOTIVE CO.

Suddenly a souped-up custom pick up truck with oversized tires and flames painted on the sides, ROARS UP.

(CONTINUED)

It's driven by GENE a blue collar guy with Elvis sideburns.
Dollar Bill crosses to him carrying a BOWLING BAG.

Gene gives a nod, hops out, uses a key to remove a padlock
and throws open the loading bay door.

21 CONTINUED: (2) 21

ON: The massive bay--stuffed with BOXES OF MERCHANDISE.

ON: The unzipped bowling bag on the hood of the truck, BRICKS OF CASH and a boxed ROLEX protruding from the top.

22 INT. BASKETBALL GYM - DAY 22

ON: Dollar Bill.

DOLLAR BILL
I'm not uncertain.

Wags leans forward a bit. Axe NODS. Turns back to watch. The signal has been sent. The men no longer exist to him.

WAGS
We're done here.

They move off.

THE POUCH
Why didn't you tell me you were certain?

DOLLAR BILL
Why would I? Do your own fucking work.

Axe watches as The PLAY begins.

AXE's POV: Dean and the POINT GUARD, on offense, cross half court.

DEAN
8 seconds!

The Point Guard dribbles, then passes to Dean, who LAUNCHES A THREE POINTER, which goes through the hoop as the time RUNS OUT.

AXE PUMPS HIS FIST.

REF
TWO! That's a two, foot was on the line. Game tied.

Quick disappointment on Axe's face. He covers it up with a SMILE as Dean looks over to him.

AXE
Good shot, Deanie! Stay sharp-- overtime.

(CONTINUED)

Dean smiles back. But the positivity is undercut as the Coach comes storming onto the court and gets in the Ref's face.

COACH

That was the game. You are the worst I've ever seen! You suck! I'm calling Steve to have him dump your ass out of this league. That'll be the last call you blow.

No one moves. Not the opposing coach, not a parent. They just stand there as the kid is almost reduced to tears.

And then Axe steps onto the court and approaches the conflict.

He puts an arm on the Ref's shoulder, talks to the Coach.

AXE

Larry, settle down. The kid's doing the best he can.

The Ref cheers a little.

COACH

He robbed Deano of a game winner--

AXE

Hey: it was close. Respect the call. Don't be an asshole. The boys see you like this, they're gonna turn into assholes too. You've still got some coaching to do. Be a grown-up.

The Coach, now cowed, heads back to his bench.

AXE

(to Ref)

Kid. Life lesson here. Be strong. Guy like that...You have to shut him down right away or he thinks he owns you. Next time, toss his fat ass outta of the game. You're the Ref. You! Okay.

The young Ref is buoyed. Axe strides off to some cheers from the parents. He gives Dean a thumbs up.

Chuck and Connerty are heading into the building when Kate Sacker spots them.

SACKER

Sir, I may be speaking out of turn,
I shouldn't have even been in that
meeting where Axelrod was
discussed...but, you know the
Norton place out at the beach?

(CONTINUED)

23

CONTINUED: (2)

23

CONNERTY

Why the fuck would we?

SACKER

Not you. The US Attorney. His father's house is around the jetty--

CHUCK

Yeah. I know the house. What?

SACKER

I just heard Bobby Axelrod is trying to buy it.

A look between Chuck and Connerty.

CHUCK

Where'd you hear that?

SACKER

Court clerk's cousin works for the realtor and mentioned it.

CONNERTY

How much?

SACKER

Eighty-three million--

CHUCK

Really? That would get widely reported. Widely.

CONNERTY

People hate guys who buy things like that.

CHUCK

(to Sacker)

Good instinct bringing this to me...Sacker is it?

Sacker smiles, and they continue on.

AXE (PRE-LAP)

Danny fucking Margolis...

24

INT. AXE CAPITAL, AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

24

DAN MARGOLIS, early 30s, dark circles under his eyes, stands there in a zip up hoodie. Axe sits back, feet up on his desk.

(CONTINUED)

AXE

What brings you back. When I saw
you at Sun Valley you said you were
happy as a clam in shit at Century.

MARGOLIS

I am, I was. You know how it is.
Things are good there. I like
Jerry. But I miss the family.

AXE

Well you had to go it on your own,
with a bigger chunk of the pie.

MARGOLIS

Yeah, true. Place looks great, by
the way. That your rolling art out
front--the Lambo?

CLOSE ON: AXE'S EYES, studying Margolis closely.

AXE'S POV: CAMERA TILTS from Margolis' unblinking eyes, down
to his racing PULSE, visible above his collar.

AXE

No. I like to sit tall in the seat.

MARGOLIS

Oh. Well. I've got some ideas, I'd
love to share 'em with you.

AXE

I'd love to hear 'em. Come to the
next dinner. We'll bang some
steaks, talk some concepts.

MARGOLIS

Yeah. Okay. I was just hoping to--

AXE

No, I know what you were hoping.
Door's always open.

MARGOLIS

Cool, Bobby. Thanks. I will. And
take care.

Margolis exits. Axe watches him through the glass wall.

Then Axe gets up and opens a small wall safe. He takes
something out and exits his office through another door.

Axe emerges onto the roof of the sprawling four story office
park building and watches as Margolis drives out of the park.

25 CONTINUED: 25

Then Axe crosses to the other side of the roof, that overlooks the Greenwich side of the Sound.

He pulls out what he took from the safe: a Motorola Micro-Tac, circa 1994. It looks about as relevant as a Model T.

AXE (INTO PHONE)
Hall. I need to see you...

26 INT. ABANDONED OFFICE - DAY 26

Folding chairs and card tables, with FBI AGENTS, a TECH GUY, Connerty sitting there as Dan Margolis walks into the room.

MARGOLIS
Did you hear it okay?

Margolis unclips a pen from his shirt pocket under his hoodie and puts it and a Blackberry on the table.

CONNERTY
Yeah, we heard you get jack-shit clear as a bell.

DANZIG'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)
...I just lost my mojo somewhere along the line.

27 INT. SHRINK'S OFFICE - DAY 27

Big windows, water view, nice rug, high-end furnishings. Pictures of a couple KIDS on her desk.

Mick Danzig, the young PM, sits there somewhat miserably.

DANZIG
It's fucking gone. And you're Mrs. Mojo, so I booked the appointment...

WENDY
That's Dr. Mojo.

He sits across from WENDY RHOADES, a psychiatrist who holds a tablet/stylus, and radiates high intellect, high focus and is, under the professional demeanor, highly attractive.

DANZIG
Right. I hear it happens to guys my age. Maybe I'm depressed. Maybe I should try some Prozac, Effexor--

(CONTINUED)

WENDY

Uh huh. We'll get to that. First, I want you to know that even though I work here, you have full doctor-patient confidentiality. Unless you plan to kill somebody, you can say what you want in here and by law I can't tell anyone...(he nods) Now. Have you been eating, sleeping, exercising?

DANZIG

Yeah, more or less. Maybe not so much with the sleeping.

WENDY

And things with your wife?

DANZIG

Okay. Mostly.

WENDY

Sex?

DANZIG

Normal. I've been married ten years, so...

WENDY

So down to just once a day.

They trade smiles.

WENDY

So it's really just the book.

DANZIG

I'm down four percent. Year to date. Everyone else is up double digits. I'm down. I'm fucked.

She puts down the tablet, leans forward.

WENDY

You don't need meds. You're just listening to the wrong voice...

Danzig perks up at this.

WENDY

You're tuned in to the one yelling at you over the loudspeaker that you're fucking stupid and you're performance blows. You're ignoring the quiet one inside telling you where the Alpha is. That's the voice that got you here. And it's the one that's still there if you're willing to listen...

Danzig is nodding now.

WENDY

What's that voice telling you?

DANZIG

That even though I stiffed a few, that I'm...pretty damn good.

WENDY

Uh uh. What'd you take down last year?

DANZIG

Seven point two million.

WENDY

Seven point two million.

The number itself seems to pump him up.

WENDY

So what's it saying?

DANZIG

That I'm awesome.

WENDY

There you go. And what does it have to say back to that loud critical voice?

DANZIG

It's saying Fuck You.

WENDY

Good. Now we can pick through your childhood, beat by beat, to find out why you feel you don't deserve to make your bonus. Or, you can listen to the right voice.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

27

CONTINUED: (3)

27

WENDY (CONT'D)

I want you to go back to your
Bloomberg and cut bait on your
losers--you know the ones.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (4)

27

WENDY (CONT'D)

The ones you've been defending, hoping they'll come around but you secretly know never will. I want you to just commit, that you are in it for the long haul. That you will succeed. Once you do that, the new ideas, the winners, will present themselves. Because you are a winner.

She's got him totally tuned in now.

WENDY

You're in the Special Forces here, you're a Navy SEAL. And there's a reason for that. Did the SEALs make a mistake signing you up? No, they did not. The SEALs don't make mistakes. So get out there and do what needs to be done...

Danzig's fists are clenched, he's on the edge of his seat, ready to rock.

WENDY

We have to stop here.

Danzig pops up out of his chair and goes for a High-Five, which Wendy meets.

DANZIG

Dr. Fucking Mojo.

He exits. She trails after him to the door and we see that hers isn't a free-standing practice, but is housed inside...

28 INT. AXE CAPITAL - DAY

28

Where she's the on-staff performance coach. The pretty young RECEPTIONISTS across the way smiles as she ushers in her next polo-shirt wearing PATIENT.

29 INT. U.S. ATTORNEY CHUCK RHOADES' OFFICE - DAY

29

Chuck sits, alone, on his couch. His eyes are closed. His breath coming deep and slow.

Next to him, his smart phone is running a Meditation Timer.

After ten more seconds, it bings, softly, three times. Chuck slowly opens his eyes, rubs his hands on his face.

30

INT. US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

30

Chuck enters. It's an imposing setting for a meeting. Law books, case studies, hundred year old leather chairs.

Two men await him. They stand as he enters. One, SKIP WOLKOWSKA is mid-50s, a little sheepish despite a ten-thousand dollar suit and haircut to match. The other is his short, bald ATTORNEY.

Then a third man, OLDER, facing the other way, stands.

Chuck's eyes immediately go to the Older Man, who is late 60s and hasn't had a sheepish moment in his life.

OLDER MAN

Thank you for agreeing to see us.

CHUCK

What the fuck are you doing here, dad, trying to get me disbarred?

The Older Man, CHARLES RHOADES SR., does not look cowed.

SENIOR

Christ. You're more dramatic than your mother.

Some men would be cut by this. Chuck laughs. Chuck Senior does too. The Attorney does not.

ATTORNEY

We are not breaking any rules or regulations. Mr. Rhoades is not being compensated to appear here.

CHUCK

I know how careful he is. And why you brought him. But believe me, it's already backfired.

SENIOR

Hear us out. Skip knows he did wrong.

CHUCK

Now that he's been convicted, sure. But when he had chance to plead out--

(CONTINUED)

SENIOR

That's the past. Right now, we want to set something up that will allow Skip to show his rehabilitation, and for him to contribute to society--

CHUCK

By what? Let me guess: upping his forfeiture amount in order to secure a downward departure--a reduced sentence. Money that would otherwise be very hard for us to track down. Say five million to reduce his time to twenty-four months?

ATTORNEY

We were going to suggest ten, in exchange for house arrest--

SENIOR

Which represents a far more fair--

Chuck glances to Wolkowska.

CHUCK

Uh huh. That way, without having to worry about actually going to prison, you could get right to doing charitable works and warning your buddies about the pitfalls of being a bad actor.

SENIOR

(a meeting of the minds)
Exactly.

CHUCK

That sounds reasonable. It's the type of deal that's been made in this library countless times...

Wolkowska gets hopeful, trades a look with Senior.

CHUCK

By my predecessors. But not by me. You can't buy your way out of justice here.

Chuck turns to Wolkowska.

CHUCK

You thought bringing my father
would afford you some kind of
courtesy--

WOLKOWSKA

Not at all. No-

CHUCK

But you miscalculated. Badly. Instead of using my father, you should've emulated him and built your fortune without fucking up. You didn't. So your cronies are going to see that they better not trade on inside information or abuse their positions or they'll end up like you. Broke. Humiliated. Incarcerated by law.

Wolkowska silently begins to cry.

WOLKOWSKA

I'm not prepared for this. I can't. Please, sir.

ATTORNEY

This was to be about leniency. Have some mercy.

When Chuck answers, he looks directly at Charles Senior.

CHUCK

My father always taught me that 'mercy' was a word pussies used when they couldn't take the pain.

SENIOR

Maybe I taught you too well.

CHUCK

I love you, dad, but if you walk into my office and try to use your influence again, you'll walk out of here in handcuffs.

Then Chuck turns to Wolkowska and softens his tone.

CHUCK

Mr. Wolkowska, I've known many men in your position. And I can tell that you have the strength to get through it and come out the other side a better man. I wish you well. You can see yourselves out.

31 EXT. AXELROD HOME, WESTPORT - DUSK 31

HELICOPTER SHOT: Pushing in off the Sound, establishing the lush enclave of Westport and...the Axelrod house:

Massive. A classic colonial book-ended by large 18th century restored barns that create a ring around a pebbled driveway.

From the outside, Axe's home is elegant, despite the fact that it's bigger than some small towns.

32 INT. AXELROD HOME - NIGHT 32

The place goes on forever, but there are warm, understated, classic design elements throughout.

In a place of honor is a framed photo. A FIREFIGHTER, DEAN BENJAMIN, in his dress uniform with the dates 5/3/1975-9/11/2001 on a brass plaque at the bottom.

FOLLOW an out of control GERMAN SHEPHERD as he careens around corners until he arrives, panting, in the...

33 INT. AXELROD HOME, KITCHEN - NIGHT 33

The Axelrod's chef, RYAN, holding a serving dish piled high, sticks out a leg, stopping the dog.

A HOUSEKEEPER grabs hold of the dog's collar and struggles to get it out of the room.

There are several dining rooms, but Axe, Lara and their boys Dean and GORDIE, 8 eat around the kitchen counter.

As Ryan puts down the tray, Axe notices the dog's struggle.

AXE

Ah, let him free. It's ok. Let him go free.

The Housekeeper does and the dog goes a little crazy. Axe laughs. As do Lara and the kids.

AXE

Live-wire, that one.

The dog runs over to a corner of the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

LARA

Yeah. He chewed up a custom sofa.
Gotta calm him down.

DEAN

Send him to obedience school.

LARA

He's going to the vet to get fixed.

Axe winces. The boys get it. Giggle.

LARA

Guys--what do you say to Chef Ryan?

KIDS

(rote)
Thank you.

LARA

Okay. Dig in.

All three Axelrod men grab biscuits, as they are also being served the cutlets by Ryan.

And then the dog sprints to the breakfast nook across the kitchen and SPRAYS the furniture and floor.

The Housekeeper scrambles over.

AXE

See that, boys. He's marking his territory.

LARA

He's peeing on the furniture.

AXE

Yeah but he's showing Ryan who's boss. That's why it's called a pissing contest when two men try and stake out their turf.

LARA

Yeah, well, I don't love it when men do it either.

Axe takes a bite of corn, looks at the dog, now barking up a storm as he's dragged from the room, tosses him a biscuit.

AXE

Poor guy. Okay! Dean. You ready?
Seventh president. Hint. He came
two after Monroe.

(CONTINUED)

DEAN
Jackson. Andrew Jackson.

Axe turns to Gordie.

AXE
Where was he from?

GORDIE
Let's talk Yankees.

His older brother laughs.

DEAN
'Cause you don't know. Don't switch
the subject.

Axe watches, smiling.

GORDIE
I do know.

DEAN
Prove it.

GORDIE
Seattle?

Dean laughs harder.

DEAN
There was no Seattle back then.
Idiot!

Gordie hangs his head.

DEAN
I knew you didn't know it.

GORDIE
I bet I'd get it on the next guess.

DEAN
I bet you don't.

GORDIE
How much?

DEAN
Ten pushups.

GORDIE
Deal.

33 CONTINUED: (4)

33

They shake. Gordie's manner changes.

GORDIE

Border areas near The Carolinas.

Lara and Axe crack up.

AXE

You can't fall for that every time, Dean. See, he knows his customer and sets you up. He's willing to look foolish short term to win long term. You gotta remember that.

Dean nods.

AXE

And Gordie, don't sucker your brother.

Axe gives Gordie a proud wink, Gordie smiles wide.

LARA

Pay the bet. We don't welsh.

Dean drops and begins doing pushups. They all count 'em out.

FAMILY

1,2,3...

Axe and Lara smile at each other, lost in the site of their kids having so much fun. Then Axe drops and does the rest of the pushups with them.

34 OMIT

34

35 EXT. RHOADES HOUSE - NIGHT

35

A government SUV pulls up to the Brooklyn Heights brownstone. Chuck gets out and enters the structure.

36 INT. RHOADES HOUSE - NIGHT

36

Chuck enters. The place is warm, family, well decorated but low key. Could own it or it could be a rental.

His family is in the kitchen--KEVIN, nine years old, and EVA, six, are at the island eating and watching a video on iPads.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

CHUCK
Hey guys.

(CONTINUED)

KIDS

Daddy!

They actually look up from the video, he gives them kisses.

CHUCK

What'd you do in school today?

KEVIN, EVA

Nothing. Boring...

REVEAL Chuck's wife is WENDY RHOADES, the AXE CAPITAL PSYCHIATRIST. She's at the dining table with a glass of wine and her laptop. He crosses to her.

CHUCK

Hey, babe.

WENDY

Hi, honey...

She finishes typing something, closes the laptop as he comes around and they kiss. He sits across from her.

CHUCK

What are you working on?

WENDY

Just session notes.

CHUCK

Wall to wall Oedipal complexes making 'em all go limp?

WENDY

You have an amazing understanding of people.

CHUCK

What are we drinking?

WENDY

The usual. How's crime fighting?

CHUCK

The usual...

He grabs her glass, sips the wine. And then, casually...

CHUCK

You good with your situation? I know you said you might've been feeling bored a while back.

(CONTINUED)

WENDY

That's not exactly what I said.

CHUCK

You said you weren't sure if you were still growing.

WENDY

What's this about?

CHUCK

I was talking to the Head Counsel of GE and they're looking for a new Head of HR. I could put in the word if you wanted.

WENDY

Is there something...Is there some reason I can't keep doing my job?

CHUCK

What do you mean? Heard about a position, so I presented it.

She doesn't buy it.

WENDY

Don't you get enough of moving the pieces around the board at work?

CHUCK

You don't want to hear about opportunities, fine.

She looks at him.

WENDY

Are you prosecuting someone at AXE, what's going on Chuck?

CHUCK

First of all, no. Second, you know we don't discuss that.

WENDY

So quit your goddamn job.

He glances towards the kids in the kitchen, they don't react.

CHUCK

Easy. I'm the U.S. Attorney, Wendy--

WENDY

So? I've been working there since before we were married and long before you were in office.

CHUCK

Look. Not that we're there, but we did always discuss that a day might come when there was a conflict.

WENDY

That was before I was making eight times what you make. And before you started making Chuck Senior plays like this--

CHUCK

Leave him out of it. And whoever makes more--is that what we're teaching the kids?

WENDY

Are we teaching them daddy's job is always more important than mommy's?

CHUCK

I work for the public good.

WENDY

You work for the good of Chuck Rhoades. Sometimes maybe they intersect.

CHUCK

Turn off your fucking shrink switch once in a while.

She's about to take the bait, settles.

WENDY

Let's take this down a notch.

CHUCK

Yeah.

WENDY

I just don't know where this is all coming from. And you know I don't like to be manipulated--

CHUCK

I--

(CONTINUED)

WENDY

Not that that's what you were doing, but I felt that way.

ON: Chuck. Guilty but hiding it.

WENDY

And of course your job's important. You're a superhero. You know I'm super proud of you. But my thing matters to me too.

CHUCK

Of course. You're killing it.

A smile of detente between them.

WENDY

Piccata's warming in the oven if you want it.

Chuck sits there tapping his finger on the table for a moment, then stands.

CHUCK

Come on, kids, bath time.

He gets up and heads toward them. Wendy watches him go.

CHUCK (PRE-LAP)

...Anytime you can disrupt a criminal enterprise, it's a good result.

A press conference is underway. Chuck is at a podium with a poster board on an easel behind him. Connerty and others from the office stand by with some FBI and ATF AGENTS. A table with seized BRICKS OF CASH, DRUGS, GUNS.

CHUCK

That's what happened here. Over four hundred kilos of cocaine and dozens of weapons seized. Two point eight million off the streets in this takedown.

The poster: LATIN KINGS, NAMES OF MEMBERS. Next to each, there are charges like TRAFFICKING, WIRE FRAUD, ILLEGAL TRANSPORT OF GUNS, in the "PLEA" column is the word "GUILTY."

CHUCK

All defendants have been indicted
and are off the streets.

JENNY GRACE, PR for the US Attorney's office steps up.

GRACE

Ok. We've only got time for one.

JOURNALISTS raise their hands, shout questions.

GRACE

Jessica?

The other reporters groan.

JESSICA

Should we expect follow-on arrests?

CHUCK

Unless all the drug dealers close
up shop and open Pinkberries.

The room LAUGHS.

CHUCK

We expect several related arrests.
Thanks everybody. That's it.

A young, aggressive financial reporter, MICHAEL DIMONDA, with
a bit of a swagger screams out.

DIMONDA

You're proud about small time
convictions, of small time players--
uneducated minorities with limited
options. What about the hundreds of
millions--billions--in fraudulent
gains in the financial sector? Why
aren't you prosecuting the
investment banks and hedge funds
for insider trading? You're
bragging about netting minnows, but
you won't touch a firm like Axe
Capital.

There's an awkward silence in the room.

CHUCK

My office is soft on financial
crime? Go ask the eighty-one
convicted felons of financial
crimes currently serving time.

DIMONDA

But you have a very specific
conflict of interest--

CHUCK

Growing up, I saw first hand the
corrosive power big business can
have. And I am determined to check
it. Take Skip Wolkowska. He has
many influential friends. But their
entreaties on his behalf were not
entertained. As your own paper
reported after the details at his
leniency conference somehow leaked
out. Mr. Wolkowska will serve his
full sentence, effective
immediately. That's all the time
that I have, thank you.

Chuck walks off and speaks to JENNY GRACE, the office's PR
person.

CHUCK

Who let the fucking Journal in with
the blind-siding questions?

As she opens her mouth to answer, Chuck moves on. Connerty
follows him into an anteroom and Chuck turns.

CHUCK

That guy you know over at Skadden
on Axe's team...

CONNERTY

Bruce Doppelt. We went to law
school together.

CHUCK

Yeah. Get with him and tell him to
tell Axe not to buy that house.

CONNERTY

Not to buy it...That's three
dimensional chess.

Chuck's government SUV drops him off.

39 INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - DAY

39

The elevator opens directly into a lavish but tasteful apartment. The ELEVATOR MAN holds the door as Chuck exits.

Chuck walks through a foyer into a living room.

CHUCK

Mom.

ELLEN RHOADES, late 60s but looks younger, dressed in understated Upper East Side style offers a cheek for a kiss.

ELLEN

Hello, dear. I hear you've been busy. He's in the den.

40 INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT, DEN - DAY

40

Its a clubby room. Chuck finds Chuck Sr. in a leather chair.

CHUCK

What the hell was that stunt?

SENIOR

Skip Wolkowska's an old friend. He asked for help and I didn't want to refuse. But I was ninety percent sure you'd react the way you did. A win any way you look at it.

CHUCK

How's that a win?

SENIOR

I knew Skip's lawyer would spread it and it'd land in the news. If you treat me that way, they'll all fear you. You need this right now. To be seen as tough on Wall Street.

CHUCK

Some audible to call.

SENIOR

You're welcome.

Senior gestures to his computer.

(CONTINUED)

SENIOR

Now, listen, you didn't smile enough during the presser. You let them get to you.

CHUCK

You're right.

SENIOR

I didn't like that question about Axe Capital. What prodded it?

CHUCK

My guess: Spyros planted it. SEC wants me to move on Axe.

SENIOR

If you move on him, and take that risk, you have to get the reward. Let the SEC mop up, collect their fines, but they can't be seen as leading it.

CHUCK

I know.

SENIOR

Don't underestimate that Spyros. You can't be seen as having Washington leading you around by the nose.

CHUCK

I said "I know," dad. I have some ideas.

SENIOR

Good. Your focus needs to be on how to deal with Axe. He's popular. Don't forget the first few Gotti prosecutions. A lot of people have Axelrod's back in this city. He's made them a lot of money. You know the line: if you're going to strike at the king...

Chuck nods.

CHUCK

The king is house shopping right now. Prime beach front, heritage. Hasn't even come to market yet.

(CONTINUED)

This puzzles Senior.

SENIOR

That would be a mistake. A conspicuous buy like that, in the news, he goes from a billionaire you can pull for to another rich asshole. Right now, if you take him on and lose, the city will be laughing at you. But if he turns the populous against him, it makes you look like a hero whether you win or lose. Because you're risking your reputation for the people. He gives his edge to you...Nice idea, but he won't make that mistake.

CHUCK

Probably not. But the motor that runs a guy like Axe, revs at a very high speed. Eventually he'll have to take it out for a spin.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

40

CONTINUED: (3)

40

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I passed word he shouldn't buy it.

An admiring look from Senior.

SENIOR

Smart. He doesn't like being told what he can or can't have. Maybe I could have a friend make a bid. Get those competitive juices flowing.

CHUCK

I like that.

SENIOR

Roger could always use a new house. I know Denny Dantone is actively looking...

Ellen enters.

ELLEN

You guys know I only drag the food into this room for the Super Bowl. Come on, Charles. I made the pot pies, I should get a little time.

The men stand. Ellen leaves.

SENIOR

Your mother--that's a loyal woman--

CHUCK

Don't--

SENIOR

I'm saying your mother would never allow her job--

CHUCK

She never left the kitchen, dad. That's what you wanted in a wife. Not me.

SENIOR

Still. She's putting you in a difficult position. Why's Wendy still working there?

(CONTINUED)

40

CONTINUED: (4)

40

CHUCK

We've started to discuss it.
Legally, there's no conflict yet.
She'll do the right thing.

SENIOR

We'll have to hope so, son.

40A

INT. CHUCK'S OFFICE - LATER

40A

CHUCK

Need Spyros at the SEC.

By the time Chuck gets to his desk, Spyros is on.

CHUCK (INTO PHONE)

You know the story of the mouse who
starts roaring like a lion?

SPYROS

No.

CHUCK

Well--it doesn't end well for the
goddamned mouse.

INTERCUT WITH:

40B

INT. MEN'S ROOM - SAME

40B

SPYROS

Do the people you work with pretend
they're impressed when you speak in
riddles like some kung fu
instructor from the movies?

CHUCK

Then let me be direct. I know you
sent that reporter in to ask about
Axe Capital.

SPYROS

Why would I do that? We're on the
same side.

CHUCK

You're on yours. I'm on mine.

SPYROS

We can both benefit. Besides, it's
the right thing to do.

(CONTINUED)

40B CONTINUED:

40B

CHUCK

You wouldn't know the right thing
if it kneeled down and blew you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

40B CONTINUED: (2)

40B

CHUCK (CONT'D)

If you pull any shit like that
again, I'll loose hell on you.

Chuck hangs up.

41 INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

41

BRUCE DOPPELT--DOPP knocking on 300 lbs with a spray tan and
a yarmulka, reclining in a barber chair, is being attended to
by BARBER, MANICURIST, PEDICURIST (FEMALE, ATTRACTIVE).

CONNERTY

Oh, it must be nice--making
partner...

It's Connerty. He sits on the arm of the next chair.

CONNERTY

Million a year and manicures on
demand.

DOPP

Not nice enough. You do the math:
Taxes. My million turns into five
hundred and change before we even
start. The six hundred grand I
borrowed for my partner's equity
share. A hundred a year on the
mortgage and maintenance, ninety
for Jesse and Seth to go to Dalton.
Summer camp. Alana gets pregnant
again, I'm working at a car wash on
weekends.

CONNERTY

Get a sheet without a hole.

DOPP

(laughs)

Come on, you're the one who's
looking good. No overhead. And when
you finally sell out and play for
the defense, you're gonna get an
extra hundred grand for every year
you did this cry-me-a-river public
sector shit. What are you at?

Connerty doesn't answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONNERTY

I wasn't raised to discuss money.

DOPP

Nothing to be embarrassed about.
You're doing the people's bidding.

CONNERTY

Were you this douchey at law
school?

Dopp waves off the Barber for a moment and sits up.

DOPP

Back then you thought it was
bracing and refreshing.

CONNERTY

Yeah. Like a douche.

DOPP

You up over a buck fifty yet?

CONNERTY

You up over two-fifty? Pounds.

DOPP

Proudly. Give me what I want.

Connerty stays silent. Dopp reads him.

DOPP

Under one-fifty? That is sad.

Connerty relents.

CONNERTY

One sixty-five.

Dopp tries to contain his joy.

DOPP

See how easy that was. Like losing
a baby tooth. Good news is this:
When you get out of there, you're
starting at one-four. Easy. If you
nail some headline cases, one-
seven.

CONNERTY

I'm staying.

41

CONTINUED: (2)

41

DOPP

No you're not.

CONNERTY

Speaking of headlines, is this shit we're hearing about the beach house real? 'Cause that's a headline you don't want.

DOPP

Since when's a rich guy buying a house illegal?

CONNERTY

Are you a child?

DOPP

If there was any doubt we'd tie him to his chair. World's full of haters, but Bobby runs a clean shop.

CONNERTY

So he just keeps a top defense firm on retainer at eight hundred an hour because he loves lawyers.

DOPP

Must be. And we're a thousand an hour. There's nothing there.

CONNERTY

Like Warren Buffet says: if you put a police car on anyone's tail for five hundred miles, he's going to get a ticket. Tell him not to buy that house.

42

INT. AXE CAPITAL, AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

42

Wendy Rhoades knocks and is waved in by Axe, who sits at his desk inhaling a chili cheeseburger.

AXE

Come in. Sit.

She does, throwing her legs over the arm of the chair. Their rapport is intimate, comfortable, though not romantic.

AXE

(re: his burger)

Bite.

(CONTINUED)

WENDY

No thanks. If I were your GP, I'd say put that right in the trash.

AXE

That's why I don't let him hang around here. Glad you came in, I was gonna come see you.

WENDY

About?

AXE

A purchase I'm considering.

WENDY

An impulse purchase?

AXE

Naturally.

WENDY

Sizable?

He nods.

WENDY

I'm guessing it's something you may not even particularly need.

AXE

People are saying that if I do, it'll unleash the hounds. Which makes me want it even more.

WENDY

This is good. Back when we started you wouldn't have been able to recognize the motivation until long after you'd bought it.

AXE

Well back when we started I was just rich, not super rich. Being a billionaire--I never get to talk about this with anyone, 'cause who's gonna give a shit--but being a billionaire, when you walk into a room, it's like being a woman with a perfect set of tits. Or great legs. Or eyes like yours. You know exactly what everyone's looking at.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

42

CONTINUED: (2)

42

AXE (CONT'D)

And exactly what they want. You know what that's like.

A moment of vibe between them.

WENDY

Okay, player. Identifying the fact that buying can be a surrogate for power, and outside authority isn't something you do well--That's progress. You've come a long way since we started.

AXE

I guess, considering that when we started I was staggering around crying, along with the half of us still breathing.

WENDY

But knowing isn't enough. You've got to exercise control. Don't get into a bitch fight over nothing. Don't buy it.

The door to Axe's office swings open. Mick Danzig is standing there. Nods to Wendy who nods back.

DANZIG

You nailed LumeTherm Power. Deal crumbled and it's at thirty-one nineteen.

AXE

Nice.

DANZIG

You said thirty-two-ish. But I saw it was going even further. So I waited.

AXE

Whoa, living dangerously. Alright, good job. You made us another eighteen million.

Danzig and Wendy share a glance.

DANZIG

Yeah. Thanks.

Danzig closes the door. Axe turns back to Wendy.

(CONTINUED)

AXE

We got sidetracked. You came to me.

She hesitates. He figures it out.

AXE

You're thinking about leaving.

WENDY

Well, it's crossed my mind.

CLOSE ON: Axe. The look in his eyes changes to one of feral self preservation. But in a fraction of a second a sympathetic expression takes its place.

AXE

Is this about comp?

WENDY

No. You've always made that clear. I'm better paid than anyone in my med school class except the guy who invented the synthetic bladder.

AXE

I'll short his company, give some speeches, chop him down to size.

She laughs.

WENDY

It's not about comp, but it is about value--mine. And growth. As in whether I'm still growing. I love this place, but I do miss seeing more than a handful of other patients--at risk adolescents, women in crisis. Using those other muscles.

AXE

I need you. But I'd never stop you. Is this something you want right now. Where's this coming from.

He stares at her with intensity.

WENDY

It's...been on my mind.

He leans back. He's gotten some kind of answer from her.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (4)

42

AXE

Your value to the firm is absolute. You just saved me from making a huge mistake for dick measuring purposes. So let's do this: spend as much time away from here as you want, see other patients outside. But stick with me.

Touched by his words, she smiles, nods, then stands.

WENDY

Thanks.

Wendy gets up and leaves. He looks after her.

43 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

43

HELICOPTER SHOT: A pair of headlights snakes down the winding road.

44 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

44

Axe's Bentley is parked across from a Range Rover. Lit by headlights, Axe stands, coat wrapped tight, with HALL, 40, black suit, black tie, black eyes, no smile.

HALL

I checked with my sources in Washington. There's no case file against you, but Dan Margolis was pinched. He was released on his lawyer's recognizance. Arraignment is currently on hold.

AXE

Which tells you what.

HALL

That he's cooperating. How the hell did you know?

AXE

He was making too much eye contact, barely blinked, and his pulse was hammering like he was running a marathon. Suddenly I felt like I did back in 2007, way before the Whitney report blew the doors off the housing bubble.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

44

CONTINUED:

44

AXE (CONT'D)

When only me and five other guys
knew it was gonna burst.

HALL

You were smart to stay quiet.

Axe says nothing.

HALL

Look, the SEC isn't the thing.
Fines are part of life. The attack
to worry about is the U.S.
Attorney's. Here's what you're
going to do. One: that reporter
from the Journal--the one who asked
about you--he needs to be handled.
I could do it, but then he's out of
the game, no value added. Better if
you make him your best friend.

Axe nods.

HALL

And two: remember, you don't have
to out-swim the shark, you just
have to out-swim the guy you're
scubadiving with.

Axe knows what he's saying.

AXE

You want me to do that.

HALL

You remember that night in
Reykjavik. So late it was early?

AXE

Wish I didn't. But I do.

HALL

You said: the only thing you were
afraid of--

AXE

Windbreakers.

HALL

Guys in windbreakers walking into
your office and saying 'step away
from the computer.'

(CONTINUED)

AXE

And you said you'd make sure it
wouldn't happen.

HALL

So let me make sure.

Axe nods. Hall hands his smart phone to Axe.

HALL

Look there. Memorize it.

Axe does, wipes screen and hands phone back.

AXE

Steven Birch.

HALL

It's either him or you.

AXE

If it has to be someone, may as
well be that fraud. We're sharing
the stage at the Delivering Alpha
Conference this week; he acts like
he's my best friend despite short-
squeezing me on HMOs last year.

Axe picks up a WHITE CANVAS BAG at his feet, puts it down by
Hall's as payment. Hall takes it and heads for his car.

AXE

Hall.

He turns back.

AXE

(raw)

Wendy Rhoades tried to quit today.
We've been fighting back to back in
the trenches for thirteen years.
But today, she tried to quit.

Hall takes it in.

HALL

You still trust her?

AXE

I want to.

Hall turns and goes.

45 INT. BRONX RESTAURANT - DAY

45

A six-table eatery. Axe is in back with Dimonda.

DIMONDA

I didn't know this place was open
for lunch.

AXE

It's not.

Dimonda looks around, realizes the place is EMPTY.

AXE

We're off the record. If you fuck
me I never talk to you again.

DIMONDA

Got it.

AXE

Good. If you ever want to come
here, just call me. Now why is my
name coming out of your mouth at a
press conference.

DIMONDA

Hey, it was before you asked me to
lunch.

Axe laughs.

AXE

Jump in.

DIMONDA

Let's talk about those kids you put
through college--

AXE

That's the one question that'll get
me walking away from the table.
It's between them and me. And I
don't talk about it with anyone
else.

Dimonda begins again.

DIMONDA

Okay. Why do you think it's fair
for you to have it both ways?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

45

CONTINUED:

45

DIMONDA (CONT'D)

To write public letters to boards of directors when you want the media to help you shame them, to drive down the stock, but then you're secretive and refuse to even talk on the record about anything else?

AXE

Fair isn't the question. It's all a negotiation. You--the media--know that better than anyone.

DIMONDA

My job is to tell the public what's going on.

AXE

That's pure capitalism. You have a business. I have a business. What's next.

Food arrives, wine.

DIMONDA

Ok. Softball. Underhand. Give me some insight into how you process information--

AXE

The press acts like information's a dirty word. Everyone has access to the information. We just know how to analyze it better.

Axe tries to leave it at that, but can't help himself.

AXE

Now you answer me one: when did it become a crime to succeed in this country? America used to salute the guy in the limousine. They wanted to be the guy in the limousine. They still want to. But now they throw eggs at it. And you know why-- because of guys like you--the media--you hate us, and turn them against us.

Axe leans back. Dimonda drops the reporter pose.

(CONTINUED)

DIMONDA

I only went egging once. Biggest house in the neighborhood and they never gave out any candy, so they deserved it. We destroyed that place.

AXE

Once? You're an altar boy. That was every Halloween for me. We'd plan for weeks, stash cartons, let em rot. And we'd go so late that not even the cops were out anymore.

They share a laugh at this. Then, after a beat...

AXE

You're from around here, right.

Dimonda realizes Axe has checked him out, admires it.

DIMONDA

Grand Concourse. Then White Plains.

AXE

Me too. Well, Yonkers. But it wasn't nice back then.

DIMONDA

Yonkers used to be a place you could really get your ass kicked.

They let it hang there for a second and then both crack up.

AXE

You're a good kid for a fucking hack.

DIMONDA

And you're a good guy for a bankster.

Axe wrestles with something.

AXE

Okay. Fuck it, I wasn't gonna give this, but you're here for a story. And now I like you...Steven Birch.

DIMONDA

Piedmont Capital.

45

CONTINUED: (3)

45

AXE

Yeah. That swap deal he did on Canadian Pacific...The timing is very curious.

DIMONDA

What kind of swap?

AXE

I'm not gonna write the article for you. Do an autopsy on the deal, you'll find yourself a Pulitzer in the carcass.

Axe looks at his watch, writes on a cloth napkin.

AXE

My cell number. Only call after the market closes. Don't leave voicemail, don't email.

DIMONDA

Understood.

Axe gets up and heads for the door.

46

INT. US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

46

Chuck moves with purpose. Connerty falls into stride.

CONNERTY

Let me take another shot at Axe. I have an angle: Peter Decker. We flip him, prove a nexus, then we can make a case.

CHUCK

And if someone confessed, we'd know who shot Kennedy.

CONNERTY

So you gonna let that geek at the SEC get him?

CHUCK

No. I'll handle that.

Connerty holds out an iPad with DECKER'S PICTURE on it.

(CONTINUED)

CHUCK

Why's Decker any different than the last guy you ran at him, who came up empty?

CONNERTY

Few reasons. He was inner sanctum when he was at Axe. We don't need him to wire up. Just to talk. Plus, he's easier to leverage--three young kids, private school, wife in some six-year PhD in public service program. And he went to Wharton with a bunch of Axe's guys. You know how close that cabal is. We get him to roll and they could domino right to Axe.

Chuck considers it.

CHUCK

Keep building a case on Decker. But don't do anything yet. Timing is everything.

Chuck slaps Connerty on the back and continues on.

The Delivering Alpha Conference--TITANS OF BUSINESS address an audience of PROFESSIONALS.

Up on stage, DAVID FABER from CNBC interviews Axe and STEVEN BIRCH--around Axe's age, looks a little worse in a suit.

DAVID FABER

How do you respond to the criticism that hedge funds are the scavengers of the financial sector, and that a select few have undo influence on the markets. Any position you take, public statements you give, could make or break the fortunes of a company--

AXE

We're not scavengers. We're white blood cells, scrubbing out bad companies, preventing bubbles, earning for our investors.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

AXE (CONT'D)

And for good companies, we're oxygen for the shareholders. Hedge funds like mine are market regulators.

BIRCH

I want people like Bobby Axelrod on that wall, I need them on that wall. Axe makes my life easier by shouting when he sees something.

(CONTINUED)

There is a slight disturbance in the audience as Chuck and Connerty make their way along the front row, stepping over other AUDIENCE MEMBERS and sitting down in the center.

Axe SEES Chuck and Connerty, becomes even more pointed.

AXE

The moment I let someone in a boardroom or some government office, tell me what I can or cannot buy, we may as well close the shop. And I am not closing the shop.

FABER

Well let's get specific. You've been very outspoken on certain companies.

AXE

Make your numbers or don't sell yourself on those numbers.

FABER

What's your problem with these boards?

AXE

Crony capitalism is not capitalism. If these CEOs want to stock the board with pals and pretend they're independent...

BIRCH

...They should also pretend to be unemployed, because that's where they're headed.

Applause in the audience...

WITH CHUCK AND CONNERTY:

CHUCK

(loud whisper)
Axe puts on a good show.

CONNERTY

Wish I had some popcorn.

Connerty shakes some Milk Duds out of a box.

FABER

Let's touch on the role of the
activist investor in today's
market.

Axe once again looks to Chuck and Connerty down in front. He
knows they want to RATTLE HIM, but he steels himself.

AXE

The way I look at it: if you're not
active, your're irresponsible. If
you're holding stock in a public
company, you have a duty.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (4)

47

AXE (CONT'D)

I'm not just playing for myself,
I'm playing for all shareholders.
Like my good friend Steven Birch.

Birch nods along as Connerty passes the Duds to Chuck.

WITH CHUCK AND CONNERTY:

CONNERTY

You got a pen? I want to take
notes.

CHUCK

We'll buy the DVD.

Axe and Chuck lock eyes as Chuck chews a Milk Dud.

48 INT. CONFERENCE SPACE, WINGS - DAY

48

Axe and Birch walk off stage to applause, in separate
directions.

Birch begins talking to an AUDIENCE MEMBER.

ANGLE ON DIMONDA: iPhone held low, FILMING the conversation.
He's on the case.

Axe reaches Wags, some of his other Guys and Shari the P.R.
woman.

49 INT. GREEN ROOM AREA BACKSTAGE - DAY

49

SHARI

Those fucking guys. I wasn't told.
I don't know why Brooks saved those
seats for them. I will hunt him
down and skin his ass--

AXE

Enough.

She knows when to make herself scarce.

SHARI

I'm gonna get me that scalp.

She goes.

(CONTINUED)

WAGS

You crushed. Crushed.

AXE

Let's get out of this rat-fuck.

As they turn to go, Chuck, Connerty, and Sacker enter.

The entourages stare at each other. It's not the Jets and the Sharks. But it's not that far off.

CONNERTY

Watch out, he may buy the building.

WAGS

It's an A minus building. Needs overhaul. He doesn't consider anything other than triple A.

CONNERTY

Yet he hired you--

Chuck steps in front of Connerty.

CHUCK

Easy.

AXE

You learn anything from my talk.

CHUCK

Volumes. Staying for mine?

AXE

I know your act.

Turns to face Chuck. No one else can hear. This isn't performance. This is personal.

AXE

You sending me messages. It's just the two of us now.

CHUCK

Kids in my office really thought you might buy that house. I told 'em, your balls are big, but not that big...

AXE

Yeah. I'll probably pass.

Axe makes like he's gonna go, then...

(CONTINUED)

AXE

It's so nice though, you know?
Feels like you're part of the beach
and ocean. And that air out
there...Shit you know about it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AXE (CONT'D)

Your daddy's got a little place out there. He must let you use a bedroom some weekends if you say "please".

CHUCK

Walk away.

AXE

I should. Then again, what's the point of having fuck you money if you never say fuck you.

Chuck gets even closer.

CHUCK

You're a smart man, so you know when I bring an action, it's not some county or even state--it's the United States versus. Don't give me a reason.

AXE

Oh, I know who brings an action. And I know how you feel about your perfect record too. You can't afford a mark in the Loss column.

Chuck almost smiles.

CHUCK

There's a saying in baseball: 'Towns fire managers. Owners just give them the bad news.' You're the only guy running the big money that they cheer for. Because you play that 9/11 shit for all it's worth.

AXE

Fuck yourself. I've never put out a single press release, given one interview. I lost every one of my friends that day.

CHUCK

You've managed to make some new ones since. Like I said: they may be cheering now, but believe me, they are dying to boo.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (4)

49

FABER (O.S.)

...And now, from the other side,
the man whose job it is to ride
herd over the bulls and the bears-
Chuck Rhoades.

The men wheel in opposite directions-Chuck toward the stage,
Axe toward the exit.

50 INT. AXELROD HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

50

Axe sits, eyes closed, on a couch, his iPhone next to him
running the MEDITATION TIMER. He opens his eyes. Somehow, he
can't find the groove.

The phone BUZZES, its screen says "WAGS." Axe opens his eyes.
Exhales. Takes the call.

AXE

Yeah.

WAGS (O.S.)

Denny Dantone's coming in with on
offer on the Norton house. Sixty-
two million. Prepared to close in a
week, I hear.

AXE (INTO PHONE)

How the fuck did he see it.

WAGS (O.S.)

He didn't. He knows the house. Been
to parties there.

AXE (INTO PHONE)

Sonofabitch.

He hangs up. Then he NOTICES the DOG lying down on a dog bed,
quite docile now. He tosses a piece of bread crust. The dog
doesn't move.

The side door opens, and Lara enters, carrying some bags. She
kisses Axe hello.

AXE

What the hell's wrong with Elmo?

LARA

He went to the vet and got fixed.
Remember?

(CONTINUED)

Axe stares at the dog. Once WILD and FULL OF LIFE, he is TAMED, BROKEN almost, by the emasculation.

50 CONTINUED: (2) 50

CLOSE ON: AXE. The situation, the indignity of it, plays on his face. He comes to a decision.

He walks out of the kitchen and takes out his cell phone and places a call.

AXE

The house. I want it.

WAGS

Let's take a beat. People will say--

AXE

They might. Offer sixty-three million cash. Take it or leave it on the call. Wire goes out first thing.

As he hangs up, a slight satisfied smile comes to Axe's face.

51 INT. RHOADES' HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAWN 51

Chuck, asleep next to Wendy, is awakened by his buzzing cell phone. He answers, moving out of the bedroom.

CHUCK

Yeah?

DIMONDA (V.O. PHONE)

Mr. Rhoades, Mike Dimonda here, sorry to wake you.

CHUCK

I was up.

DIMONDA (V.O. PHONE)

I'm calling for comment.

CHUCK

On?

DIMONDA (V.O. PHONE)

On Skip Wolkowska's suicide.

ON: Chuck's face, stunned. He didn't see it coming.

CHUCK

(flat)

No comment.

He hangs up. Exhales.

51A EXT. US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY 51A
Chuck, still carrying the weight of the suicide, enters.

52 INT. US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

52

Chuck moves through, realizes a hush has fallen over the office and STAFF. Sacker is there and looks to him. Connerty notices him enter too. Chuck stops.

CHUCK

Rough morning. Part of the price we pay for representing the people. But a reminder like this is useful. What we do has consequences, intended and unintended. The decisions we make, the actions we bring, have weight. I'll have to carry this one. Would I have given a break to some drug dealer? No. So why would I give one to a businessman? None of this can change our mission: come to work every day and be just and strong in the actions you bring, and don't waver.

Chuck gives a nod and moves on. After a beat...

SACKER

That's it. Back to work.

Across the office, Connerty falls into step with Chuck.

A quick smile from Connerty and he flashes his iPad, which shows the headline.

CONNERTY

Front fucking page of the Post. Beach Bum! It's like he's daring you.

The slightest smile on Chuck's lips as they arrive at his office and enters...

53 INT. U.S. ATTORNEY CHUCK RHOADES' OFFICE - DAY

53

They enter and a new white board has been set up, with a picture of Axe at the top. Below blank space, at the bottom are THREE PICTURES, with names: Dan Margolis, an X over his face, Pete Decker, and Lenny Bosco.

CHUCK

Next up to the plate: Pete Decker, Put together a team.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

53

CONTINUED:

53

CHUCK (CONT'D)

We've got a lot of work to do.

CONNERTY

So now you're sure...

CHUCK

Yeah. And not just because of the PR cushion he's giving us. At that conference, up close. I got a read on him.

Chuck warms to it.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

It's psychology. I looked in his eyes and dared him. No matter how bad he wants that place, if he has nothing to hide, he walks away. Because he's a disciplined player. And he knows it's the disciplined move. To avoid the hassle. To avoid me finding out that some portfolio manager who sits on the other side of his office has a gambling problem. Or that his energy sector guy paid off a regulator. No. If he's innocent he passes. But a guilty man, he buys that house to show me he's not afraid. That he has nothing to hide. He has to make a stand.

Connerty gets it.

CONNERTY

So we take a look at Axe Capital.

Chuck turns to the whiteboard filled with info on Axe.

CHUCK

Yeah. We take a real close look.

Connerty turns with him and they study what they've got.

54

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

54

HELICOPTER SHOT: Racing along the beach, push into...

55 EXT. BEACH HOUSE, MONTAUK - NIGHT 55

The house, now Axe's, is empty, but beautifully illuminated. We see Axe, Lara, and kids through the window, celebrating.

Axe's cell phone rings. He answers it.

HALL (O.S.)
There's movement.

ANGLE ON: Axe, taking it in.

56 INT. RHOADES HOUSE, DEN - NIGHT 56

Chuck enters. It's late. Wendy is in the den, laptop open.

CLOSE ON: Chuck's face, awareness that he has just engaged the battle, putting it all--home, family, career--at risk.

And then he masks it, sits down next to her.

CHUCK
You waited up.

WENDY
And made sure the kids were asleep.
I wanted to see you.

She shuts her laptop. Chuck runs his fingers through her hair.

CHUCK
Me too.

They kiss. She grabs a handful of his hair, YANKS IT.

CHUCK
That hurts.

WENDY
I'll bet it does.

The kissing becomes more intense. His hands go down her body, past her thighs until they cross her knee and reach the STILETTO BLACK SUEDE KNEE HIGH BOOTS.

FADE OUT.