

UNTOUCHABLE !

by

PATRICIA POULOS
(IMDb)

Based on a True Story
Adapted from non-fiction book
'Elders and The Real Story'

Address: PO Box 453, Caringbah NSW 1495
Australia
Phone: +61 410 285 541
Email: patricia.poulos1@gmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. JOHN JACOBS' OFFICE. DAY.

John JACOBS (45) CEO of the Eldon Group and Leader of the ruling government struts up and down his red-carpet holding his friend and comforter, a glass of scotch. He is short, stocky, with untidy curly salt and pepper hair softening his otherwise distorted face dominated by a large nose resembling a seasoned boxer. He has the power to set up banks and commit deeds none dare to question.

JACOBS

So what's she worth?

Kevin SPATE (40) National Finance Manager and right-hand man whose appearance resembles a thug, sits with Joe COOMBES (45) a sombre man and National Manager of Jacobs' Pastoral Division on opposing Chesterfields.

SPATE

About a hundred million.

Jacobs stops.

JACOBS

Really?

Spate nods. Jacobs recommences pacing. Spate continues.

SPATE

And that's without her company
which is her greatest source of
income and, her greatest asset.

Coombes interjects.

COOMBES

(puzzled)

Who are we talking about?

SPATE

Joanne Pane. She's the MD and CEO
of the Prestige Stainless Steel
Group.

Coombes visibly disinterested.

COOMBES

Oh.

SPATE

(annoyed)

She's just signed a multi-billion
dollar joint-venture contract with
China.

COOMBES
(unimpressed)
Oh.

Jacobs ignores Coombes.

JACOBS
(to Spate)
Debt?

SPATE
Nothing to speak of. Just a little
on some properties, probably for
negative gearing purposes.

JACOBS
Wise move.

SPATE
Funds her own companies. All have a
Triple A credit rating.

JACOBS
Who's advising?

SPATE
Doesn't appear to have anyone
external. Everything seems to be in-
house

JACOBS
Pretty smart cookie, eh?

Spate nods.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Financiers?

SPATE
Seems to use private funds for
acquisitions even though she could
finance these herself.

JACOBS
(impressed)
Really. Lawyers?

SPATE
Laurence and Butler. They appear to
give her whatever funds she needs.

JACOBS
Do we know anyone there?

SPATE
Not really. There's John Dear. Went
to school with him.
(MORE)

SPATE (CONT'D)

Not sure he's a main player though.
But I'm sure he'd steer me right.

COOMBES

(puzzled)

What's the interest?

JACOBS

She's looking to buy another
property.

COOMBES

(confused)

Oh.

JACOBS

BBZ are trying to get a foot in the
door and they may even steer her to
us.

COOMBES

Aren't Laurence and Butler BBZ's
lawyers?

SPATE

(excited)

Convenient isn't it?

COOMBES

(annoyed)

I meant... isn't there a conflict
of interest?

SPATE

Stop being a wet rag - who cares?

COOMBES

She might.

JACOBS

What she doesn't know won't hurt
her.

COOMBES

This might.

Jacobs' nose begins to expand as blood races through its
veins. Turning his back on Coombes -

JACOBS

(to Spate)

Make the connection.

SPATE

(excited)

Okay!

Spate stands. Walks towards door.

JACOBS
(calling out)
By the way, what's she looking for?

Spate turns to face him, slowly walking back.

SPATE
Only about three hundred K.

JACOBS
That's peanuts. She must have good
reason for not using her own money.

SPATE
(shrugs)
Guess so.

JACOBS
Local currency?

SPATE
S'pose so.

JACOBS
- unless BBZ can convince her to go
Swiss, eh?

Jacobs and Spate laugh.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
She might go for it.

COOMBES
(annoyed)
What are you talking about? You
know Swiss Franc loans are a
furfie.

Jacobs' nose begins expanding again.

SPATE
(threatening)
Don't even breathe it.

JACOBS
(to Coombes)
Listen Joe - I want what she's got
and I don't give a fuck what I have
to fuckingwell do to get it. Is
that clear?

Startled by Jacobs' aggression, color fades from Coombes'
sombre face.

COOMBES
(looking down)
I'm just saying - one day someone's
going to catch on and we'll all be
in the shit.

JACOBS
Listen you pipsqueak - the China
deal alone's worth billions. I've
got no intentions of letting BBZ or
anyone else get in my fucking way -
is that clear?

Coombes nods. Spate interjects.

SPATE
Should I have a chat with BBZ?

Jacobs swings round to face him.

JACOBS
(sharply)
NO!

Lifting his glass he gulps his now warm scotch. Takes a deep
breath. Composes himself.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
I'll deal with them. You just get
onto your contact at Laurence and
Butler.

SPATE
Okay.

COOMBES
(uneasy)
Need me for anything else?

Turning back to Coombes -

JACOBS
(annoyed)
NO - don't know why we even
bothered getting you over here.

COOMBES
I'll catch tonight's flight back.
If you do need me I'll be at the
hotel.

Coombes walks past Spate. Exits.

JACOBS
(angrily)
What the fuck's wrong with that
idiot?

SPATE
(shrugging)
Don't know.

JACOBS
(threatening)
Get him sorted. I'm not going to have him or any other fucking idiot who wants a conscience, to jeopardise MY operations.

SPATE
(concerned)
Don't worry. I'm sure he'll be fine.

Ignoring Spates assurances Jacobs begins pacing.

JACOBS
I don't have time to deal with prima donnas.

SPATE
(repeats)
Don't worry - I'll sort him.

JACOBS
You'd better 'cause YOU'LL have to deal with him.

Jacobs look leaves no doubt as to his meaning.

SPATE
(nervously)
Should have something by morning.

JACOBS
(calmer)
Sooner the better.

INT: JOANNE PANE'S OFFICE. DAY.

JO (Joanne) Pane (35) sits in her black leather executive chair behind a large cedar timber desk with protective glass. She is an enigma. The only woman in the stainless steel manufacturing industry. Honour and ruthlessness are the secret to the petite blonde's success. Married to tall, dark, handsome, DAVID (40) they have two children COLIN (10) and LEANNE (7), a housekeeper MRS. CAMERON (50) and driver PHILLIP (35) completing her domestic picture.

Her desk is orderly. A computer screen sits left. Two phones - one cream (linking to switchboard) and red (private line for her children's use). Three black leather guest chairs tuck in under the protruding desktop.

Affixed to the wall opposite is a small, clear, Perspex cabinet displaying a tiny pair of white well-worn baby shoes with soles detached from their uppers. A brass plate reads: 'COLIN'S FIRST PAIR OF SHOES'. The shoes are a constant reminder to her, from where she has come.

Knock on door. Without looking up -

JO

Come in.

Denise BARNES (50) Jo's secretary enters holding documents. Jo looks up.

JO (CONT'D)

Yes Mrs. Barnes.

BARNES

The Premier's Office is arranging clearance for your flight.

JO

Is there a problem?

BARNES

No.

Hands documents to Jo who gives them a cursory glance.

JO

Everything here?

BARNES

All except your visa and Passport. They'll be here shortly.

Jo nods.

BARNES (CONT'D)

I'll go get the mail.

INT. JACOBS' OFFICE. MORNING.

Jacobs sitting at desk reading - holding his comforter. Phone rings. Picks up.

JACOBS

Yes Trudy? [...] Send him in.

Puts phone down looks expectantly at door. Spate enters closing door behind him. Jacobs stands. Holds up partially filled glass -

JACOBS (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Drink?

SPATE

Too early in the day for me.

With the cheeky smile which endears women to his bed...

JACOBS

Never too early.

Jacobs gets up. Walks to drinks-cabinet. Holds Scotch-bottle high - tauntingly...

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Sure?

SPATE

(smiling)

Sure.

Jacobs tops up his glass.

JACOBS

(indicates)

Take a seat.

Spate walks to Jacobs' desk. A portable phone and photo of Jacobs' wife and two sons and daughter sit on gold-embossed green leather-topped cedar desk positioned at centre rear of room against a backdrop of tinted full-length glass windows. Pulls chair out. Sits. Jacobs walks back, sits.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

OKAY - so what've you got for me.

SPATE

Hold onto your hat.

JACOBS

(excited)

Really?

SPATE

She owns about twenty properties - the majority unencumbered - the balance with almost nothing owing.

JACOBS

(annoyed)

Well I gathered THAT from our last conversation.

SPATE

Yes. But Laurence and Butler hold all the deeds.

Jacobs' excitement builds.

JACOBS

Really? Even those with mortgages?

SPATE

(nods)

The financiers are their clients too.

JACOBS

(excited)

What a pot of Gold.

SPATE

(nodding)

My mate says that provided we look after them. You know, with work and stuff, they're happy to talk to us.

JACOBS

Okay. Well done. Who's the head honcho?

SPATE

Pat Deavin.

JACOBS

You'd better arrange a meeting with him quick smart. We don't want to lose her.

SPATE

(excited)

Okay.

Lifting his glass -

JACOBS

Sure you don't want one?

SPATE

Thanks. But I think I'd better get moving on this.

Jacobs nods.

INT. JACOBS' BUILDING. OFFICE. MORNING. ONE WEEK LATER.

Jacobs sitting at desk. Phone rings. Picks up.

JACOBS

Yes, Trudy? [...] Put him through.
[...] What's up?

INTERCUT WITH:

Chris PARKER (60) short, balding, walking along street talking to Jacobs on cellphone.

PARKER

They've ganged-up./

JACOBS
(annoyed)
What the hell's that mean?/

PARKER
The farmers. They're asking too
much. It's too costly to go ahead./

JACOBS
(shouting)
I don't give a fuck what it costs
make it fuckingwell happen. Seal
the fucking deal./

PARKER
Not viable./

JACOBS
Listen you fucker - I've got
contracts - I need grain./

PARKER
(annoyed)
Can't do it - won't do it - it'll
bring down the whole division./

JACOBS
(shouting)
Fuck you. Get it done or get out.

Slams phone down. It rings. Jacobs picks up.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
(shouting)
What! [...] Fucking shit forgot
about him. Make him comfortable and
get in here.

Puts phone down. Undoing his belt walks to Chesterfield as
TRUDY (20) tall, long-legged blonde personal assistant
enters. On seeing him she fearfully commences undoing her
bodice.

TRUDY (V.O.)
Can't let him rip my blouse.

He reaches out and grabs her arm. Spinning her around he
pushes her, face-down over the arm of the Chesterfield.

TRUDY
Doesn't even see me.

Throwing up her skirt he grabs her breasts pulling her into
him. She groans.

INT. JACOBS' BUILDING RECEPTION AREA. LITTLE LATER.

Pat DEAVIN (45) tall, good-looking, mop of dark greying hair dressed in a grey, silk, pin-striped suit reeking 'lawyer' sits opposite reception. Door opens. Trudy standing in open doorway.

TRUDY (V.O.)
Hope I look okay.

Looks over at Deavin.

TRUDY
Mr. Deavin.

Deavin smiles, stands.

TRUDY (CONT'D)
Would you care to come in?

He walks past Trudy. Enters. Trudy indicates to Jacobs.

TRUDY (CONT'D)
Mr. Deavin - Mr. Jacobs.

They shake hands.

Trudy exits closing door behind her.

Jacobs indicates to Chesterfield.

JACOBS
Rest your weary bones.

DEAVIN
Thanks.

Jacobs walking to drinks cabinet holding up partially filled glass.

JACOBS
Drink?

DEAVIN
Thank you, Scotch.

JACOBS
(smiling)
Man after my own heart. Water?...
Ice?...

DEAVIN
Neat.

Jacobs takes out bottle and glass. Pours for Deavin and fills his own. Walks to Deavin. Hands him his drink.

JACOBS
Thanks for coming.

DEAVIN
No trouble.

Deavin sips. Jacobs sits on adjacent Chesterfield.

DEAVIN (CONT'D)
You're interested in Jo Pane.

JACOBS
(cautiously)
Well let's say, I could be.

DEAVIN
What did you have in mind?

JACOBS
(slowly)
Well I believe you're sitting on a
gold-mine.

DEAVIN
Really? How's that?

JACOBS
You're holding all Pane's Title
Deeds. Are you not?

DEAVIN
(coy)
Could be.

Jacobs ignores his response. Deavin takes another sip.

JACOBS
They're just sitting there.

DEAVIN
Well we hold Title Deeds for safe-
keeping if that's what you mean.

JACOBS
Yes. Yes. But they're doing
nothing.

DEAVIN
(sarcastically)
That's the idea of safe-keeping.

JACOBS
Yes. But now you can make real
money on them.

Deavin sits up -

DEAVIN
(objecting)
Now hold on!

Jacobs raises his hand in reassurance.

JACOBS
Just hear me out.

Pausing as if trying to construct a palatable sentence -

JACOBS (CONT'D)
She's a valued client.

DEAVIN
Yes she is.

JACOBS
But apart from the odd property conveyance, of no real benefit to the firm?

DEAVIN
Depends what you mean.

JACOBS
You derive no other income from her.

Deavin does not respond.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
What if I offered you twice what you're getting from her?

DEAVIN
In exchange for what? Nothing you've said so far would entice me to give her up.

JACOBS
(cautiously)
Well I'm not suggesting that exactly.

DEAVIN
What are you suggesting?

JACOBS
I just want a little of what she's got.

DEAVIN
Why?

JACOBS
Well it seems she's got plenty.

DEAVIN
What's that got to do with it?

JACOBS
(annoyed)
Listen. I'm prepared to deal to get
what I want. Now what do you want?

DEAVIN
(coy)
In what sense?

Jacobs' frustration triggering the veins in his nose to fill
with blood expanding it grotesquely into prominence.

JACOBS
I'm not fuckingwell playing games
here. Either you play or I'll get
someone who will.

DEAVIN
You're playing a dangerous game.

JACOBS
Don't shit me. What d'ya think ya
doin' here?

DEAVIN
Well I didn't expect to be asked to
perform criminal acts.

JACOBS
(caution)
Now just hold on.

DEAVIN
Well that's what your suggesting
isn't it? And for what... a piddly
little amount? Get real.

Jacobs sits back smiling.

JACOBS
Let me get this right. You're happy
to play... just as long as the
price is right. Is that right?

DEAVIN
Well I'm not prepared to do just
anything. But whatever I do, do,
won't be for nothing.

JACOBS
Okay. What've you got and wha' da'
ya want for it?

DEAVIN

You've already said I've got everything. Make me a decent offer.

JACOBS

Okay. How about shares in my company to ten per cent of what I get on the sales.

DEAVIN

(furious)

You're joking! That's pittance! And I'd have no control over what you'd get. No. I want something tangible. Twenty percent of current values paid up-front plus thirty per cent in shares.

JACOBS

(shocked)

That's twenty million plus.

DEAVIN

It's costing you nothing.

JACOBS

Too much. Two mil and twenty-five percent!

DEAVIN

Twenty mil. Twenty-five percent - and... all your work.

JACOBS

What? She's nowhere near that much.

DEAVIN

Of course she is.

JACOBS

Anyway, you wouldn't with respect, have the capacity or the guys with the brains, to handle all our work.

DEAVIN

(furious)

You don't know who we've got.

JACOBS

Don't insult our intelligence. That's what got you here.

DEAVIN

(threatening)

Look, do you want to continue this?

JACOBS

Okay! Okay! Let's work it out. We know she's worth about a hundred million. Agreed?

DEAVIN

More than that. But let's use that as a base.

JACOBS

Okay. I'll give you Five mil, twenty-five per cent in shares and double the work she's giving you.

DEAVIN

(annoyed)

'You kidding me?

Jacobs stands. Turns his back on Deavin. Paces floor. Stops. Stands over him.

JACOBS

Okay... bottom line...

Gulps his drink.

DEAVIN

You've got it.

JACOBS

Okay - okay. So how many properties are we looking at? I mean, I'm not a greedy man...

DEAVIN

(calmer)

I think there's ten without mortgages.

JACOBS

I'll take them.

DEAVIN

(agitated)

Hold on... you haven't agreed to the price yet.

JACOBS

Okay. What do you want for ten?

DEAVIN

That's better.

JACOBS

Don't patronize me.

DEAVIN

Ten for twenty mil into my bank
plus twenty-five percent of current
values in shares... we do the
legals - at no charge of course -
and you list us as your solicitors.
She'll never know.

JACOBS

You're insane.

DEAVIN

Not at all. I've got what you want
and you can give me what I want.

Jacobs begins pacing floor. Stops across room. Turns to face Deavin.

JACOBS

What about those with mortgages?

DEAVIN

(guarded)

Uh uh - don't think so. They're
worth another hundred million
besides, BBZ and Caulderbank are
trying to get their split on those.

JACOBS

So you're already in deals.

DEAVIN

Let's put it this way... they've
flagged an interest.

Silence.

Jacobs resumes pacing, eyes glazed in calculations. Deavin watches as a purring cat, sipping his scotch. Jacobs stops. Turns.

JACOBS

Okay - you've got it! - Have the
Deeds delivered and I'll organize
the cash. Send shares in a few
days.

Deavin nods, finishes his drink. Puts glass down.

DEAVIN

Wise move.

JACOBS

(threatening)

Careful.

Deavin stands.

DEAVIN
(smiling)
Just one stipulation.

JACOBS
(furious)
What now?

DEAVIN
(calmly)
Nothing gets registered.

JACOBS
(impatient)
Okay! Okay!

DEAVIN
(pressing)
This won't happen unless I'm
guaranteed you'll do nothing to
register your interest.

JACOBS
I said okay didn't I?

DEAVIN
(persistent)
Yes you did. And I'm holding you to
it. I'm not going to be subjected
to awkward questions.

JACOBS
Well I want nothing in writing.

DEAVIN
Of course not. We don't want anyone
getting their hands on anything!

JACOBS
No.

DEAVIN
And so that we don't both find
ourselves behind bars, not a
whisper to anyone - not even Spate.

JACOBS
(calmer)
Don't worry. Even if, someone gets
a whiff, and it won't be from our
end - I've got the power to crush
it.

Deavin smiles.

DEAVIN
(confirming)
Of course you do.

JACOBS
We're agreed?

DEAVIN
You've got yourself a deal.

Each extend their hand. Shake. Jacobs smiles. With glass in hand he walks Deavin to door.

DEAVIN (CONT'D)
You'll have them tomorrow by courier.

JACOBS
As early as you can.

DEAVIN
Just give me a call when you've got them. No need to say much...
"weather's fine" will do.

JACOBS
Sure.

EXT. BUSY CITY STREET. NEXT DAY. MORNING.

Deavin walking along congested footpath carrying briefcase. Cellphone rings. Stops. Retrieves it from inside his jacket ignoring obstruction he's causing. Tall MAN (30) dressed in suit passes him.

MAN
Have a bit of consideration.

A well-dressed WOMAN with dark hair carrying folders manoeuvres herself around him.

WOMAN
How rude. At least move over.

Ignoring comments Deavin looking at screen, smiles. Holds it to his ear.

DEAVIN
Hi Jessie.

INTERCUT WITH:

JESSIE (20) Deavin's Secretary sitting on his desk her dark hair pinned up, long legs and shapely body pressed against it talking to Deavin on phone.

JESSIE
Good morning -- a Mr. Jacobs rang.
Said the weather's fine where he is. Didn't say where that was./

DEAVIN

No. That's alright. Anything in the mail?/

JESSIE

Not really. Anything specific you want me to do?/

DEAVIN

Just wait for me./

JESSIE

(smiling)

I am.

Deavin's smile broadens. Adjusts his jacket to cover any noticeable bulge.

INT. JO'S OFFICE. MORNING.

Jo sitting at desk reading. Barnes handing her mail.

BARNES

And these are from Laurence and Butler.

JO

(perplexed)

Oh my God. They've listed all my properties, companies and guarantees. All for a three hundred thousand dollar loan.

Barnes nods.

Jo picks up cream phone.

JO (CONT'D)

[...] Get Mr. Deavin for me please Alison.

Replaces handset. Examines documents more carefully. Phone rings. Picks up.

JO (CONT'D)

Yes Alison. [...] Put him through.
[...] Mr. Deavin.

Deavin sitting in chair in his office speaking on phone to Jo.

DEAVIN

Good morning Ms Pane./

JO

I'm just looking at these documents you've sent out for me to sign.

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

You've included all my properties,
companies and guarantees. What on
earth's going on?/

DEAVIN

They're the lender's requirements./

JO

They can't be. Even then, just
because they want something doesn't
mean they can have it./

DEAVIN

I know they seem excessive.../

JO

By a mile. This is crazy. Why
didn't you object?/

DEAVIN

I did but they were firm. You just
don't argue with these people./

JO

Why not? Why didn't you ring and
tell me?/

DEAVIN

I knew you were busy getting ready
for China./

JO

(annoyed)

So you decided to make decisions
for me./

DEAVIN

No. No. Of course not./

JO

Well get this sorted. I'll only be
in China for seventeen days. Delay
settlement until I get back./

DEAVIN

They wouldn't entertain delays and
it'd be a shame to lose the loan
after all the work we've done./

JO

What work? They've caused the
delay. I'm sure an extra couple of
weeks won't make any difference./

DEAVIN

Look why don't you sign them and
I'll rule out everything except the
property you're buying.

(MORE)

DEAVIN (CONT'D)
That way settlement can take place
while you're away./

JO
I don't feel good about this. But
if you're deleting them all except
that one, I'll sign them./

DEAVIN
It'll all be tidied up by the time
you get back./

JO
I hope so.

Puts phone down.

Jo (CONT'D)
(to Barnes)
I really am annoyed at Deavin. I
don't know why he wouldn't have
rectified these before sending them
out.

BARNES
Can't settlement wait til you get
back?

JO
I'm sure it can. Never mind. But
I'm crossing out the guarantees...
just in case.

Picks up ruler and pen. Rules through guarantees.

JO (CONT'D)
I'm almost tempted to rule out
everything except that one
property. But I guess I should
leave it for him to do.

Barnes nods. Jo hands documents to Barnes.

JO (CONT'D)
Double-check them in case I've
missed something. Hope Deavin
doesn't miss anything.

BARNES
(nods)
When would you like them to go?

JO
The morning. Not much point in
hanging on to them.

BARNES

(changing subject)

The Premier won't be leaving until the twelfth. Do you want to wait and travel on the same plane?

JO

No. I've already arranged meetings so I'll be there when he arrives.

BARNES

How are you going to deal with the threat not to refuse him anything?

JO

Oh they're just little boys who want to play with toys. I'm not one of those toys. Anyway, his wife has decided to come with him.

BARNES

Probably feels the need to hang on.

JO

(smiling)

Perhaps. But at least it'll avoid uncomfortable situations.

BARNES

Has he contacted you since you gave that speech?

JO

No. I think the reason he left early was so as not to hear it.

BARNES

Probably.

Jo tidies her desk as she speaks.

JO

They keep putting legislation through which is going to sink the country. Either these clowns don't know what they're doing or, their self-interest is such it stops them from rocking the boat.

BARNES

You can't fight them all on your own.

JO

Perhaps not. But I've got to try.
You can't float the currency,
deregulate the banks and drop
tariffs without it having a huge
impact on the economic viability of
a country.

Barnes nods. Jo changes tone.

JO (CONT'D)

Remind Phillip to pick Leanne up
from school?

BARNES

He's already on his way. I'll go
get these organized.

EXT. PRESTIGE GROUNDS. AFTERNOON.

Phillip, dressed in his normal attire of grey suit, white
shirt and thin black tie driving Jo to the airport in her
Gold Rolls Royce.

Natalie and Barnes watch as car glides along and out
driveway.

NATALIE

You know Mrs. Barnes, I think the
Premier's got a nerve asking Ms
Pane to go back into China.

BARNES

I guess being the first contract he
wants everyone to think he had a
hand in it.

NATALIE

Pretty lousy if you ask me.

Barnes nods.

BARNES

Police picked her up again at four
this morning.

NATALIE

No way. Why she doesn't tell them
to get lost. Let someone else to do
their dirty-work.

BARNES

Guess it's because she doesn't
trust the police to do the right
thing by the kids they arrest.

NATALIE

Bet the kids are glad she's there.

INT. JO'S CAR.

Jo in back seat looking at travel documents. Phillip driving. She looks up at Phillip's head protruding above obscuring headrest.

JO

Leanne's at home!?

Phillip looks in rear vision mirror at sound of Jo's voice. His eyes now visible to her.

PHILLIP

Yes. Safe and sound. No time to buy lollies today.

JO

No. Never mind. She can have some tomorrow.

She pauses.

JO (CONT'D)

My luggage is in the boot!?

PHILLIP

(with a chuckle)

Couldn't send you to China without any clothes.

Jo smiles - leans back resting her head against headrest.

INT. BBZ BUILDING. GARY AUSTIN'S OFFICE. MORNING.

Gary AUSTIN (45) sits behind a small desk in the middle of a large room surrounded by wall-to-wall walnut shelving of folders. His long legs and protruding belly are well-hidden. Untidy greying straight hair gives a perception of ineptitude contradicting the desk plaque - 'GARY AUSTIN Manager'. He's engrossed in tense negotiations with Deavin sitting opposite dressed in a grey silk suit.

DEAVIN

There's about ten. Small mortgages - miniscule amounts.

AUSTIN

We know. She's just opened an account with us. We do the transfers.

DEAVIN

Well you'd appreciate the ratio of debt to asset.

AUSTIN

Yes. And as her lawyers you're in a pretty unique position.

Deavin smiles.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

You're acting for all - are you not?

DEAVIN

Yes.

AUSTIN

And you can get payout figures. Correct?

DEAVIN

Yes of course. We've done this for her many times before.

AUSTIN

Yes. But this will be different.

DEAVIN

(feigned confusion)
Not sure what you mean.

AUSTIN

You'll get payout figures and give them to us.

DEAVIN

You mean without her knowing?

AUSTIN

Now you're getting it.

DEAVIN

Why would I do that?

AUSTIN

Get serious.

DEAVIN

(uneasy)
But what if someone contacts her?

AUSTIN

Why would they? They never have before. Have they?

DEAVIN
(spluttering)
No - don't think so. No.

AUSTIN
Well then, there's no reason
they'll do it now. Is there?

DEAVIN
Probably not. No.

AUSTIN
See. It's really quite simple.

DEAVIN
(coy)
Still don't see what you're getting
at.

AUSTIN
(frustrated)
What? You get payouts - we give you
money - you hand everything over to
us.

DEAVIN
(coy)
When you say everything - what?

AUSTIN (V.O.)
What an idiot?

Austin's annoyance building.

AUSTIN
(savagely)
I mean everything! Only the lender
will change.

DEAVIN (V.O.)
This guy's too greedy.

Deavin sits up straight feigning incomprehension.

DEAVIN
But you don't have signed
mortgages.

AUSTIN
(shouting)
Don't need them.

Retracts. Takes a deep breath.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
We've now acquired the properties
for the funds we paid to the
existing lenders.

DEAVIN
But that's nothing. Her properties
are worth millions.

AUSTIN
(smiling)
Precisely.

DEAVIN
(confirming)
And she gets nothing?

AUSTIN
Now you're getting it.

DEAVIN
And I'd do this - why?

AUSTIN
Because we're your biggest client
and there's lots of lawyers out
there who'd love our work.

DEAVIN
(cautiously)
Sounds like blackmail.

AUSTIN
(annoyed)
We know of other interested
parties.

DEAVIN
(feigning ignorance)
I know nothing about that.

AUSTIN
(sarcastically)
Of course not. Well... in or out?

Deavin sits back.

DEAVIN
So, what are you offering? I mean,
I can't do this for nothing.

AUSTIN
We don't have to give you anything.
We can go straight to the
mortgagees and deal with them.

Deavin camouflages the fear which has just gripped him.

DEAVIN
(with a smirk)
Be my guest. But don't come crying
to me when they knock you back and
alert her.

AUSTIN
 (retracting)
 We're not saying we'll do that. Our association with your firm has been long standing.

DEAVIN
 Yes. Long before you came along.

AUSTIN
 Yes. Well if you agree... our work will continue and, as a sweetener, we'll transfer into your personal account all the monies she'll continue to pay.

DEAVIN
 (annoyed)
 What? - That's pittance. It's not even two thousand a month!... I'm the one taking all the risks here.

AUSTIN
 Okay - our work, the payments, plus ten per cent of whatever we get on the sales.

Deavin shakes his head.

DEAVIN
 I want twenty per cent of sale price, the payments, we do the legals and your work continues. The sweetener?... A two million dollar up-front fee.

Austin silent.

DEAVIN (CONT'D)
 Well?

AUSTIN
 I think we can manage that.

DEAVIN
 Right. But nothing gets registered - nothing.

AUSTIN
 Precisely. And as long as we keep deducting the periodical payments from her account each month she'll believe she still owns everything.

DEAVIN
 Yes.

AUSTIN

And she'll keep paying all the expenses - rates, water, land tax, maintenance, etcetera, etcetera. She'll never know they're not hers.

Deavin feels pangs of guilt. Bends his head.

DEAVIN

No.

AUSTIN

We'll put in the up-front and each month we'll transfer the payments from her account to yours.

The sound of money brings Deavin back to reality. He nods.

DEAVIN

Think I'd better open a bank account that can't be traced.

AUSTIN

We can organise that. Probably Swiss. I'll pass the details to you once it's done. Give me half an hour.

Deavin nods.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

You realize of course - time is of the essence.

DEAVIN

I'll get straight onto it. Just take a few days.

AUSTIN

That's fine.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP. EARLY AFTERNOON.

Deavin sitting at outside table briefcase on floor next to him. Cautiously looks around, then at cellphone on table in front of him. Picks it up as if to dial, hesitates, puts down again. Sips coffee. Looking around as if about to abscond with cup and saucer nervously dials.

DEAVIN

George? [...] Pat Deavin! [...] All clear. [...] What? [...] No. No. Don't talk now. See you in fifteen. [...] Bye.

Gulps coffee. Picks up briefcase.

INT. CAULDERBANK BUILDING. SHORT TIME LATER

Large white marble foyer displaying 'CAULDERBANK' in large gold letters. Deavin carrying briefcase looking around. Walks to illuminated Directory. Runs finger down. Stops at 'Finance level 32'. Walks to lifts.

INT. CAULDERBANK. LEVEL 32 RECEPTION.

Deavin walking out of lift to RECEPTIONIST (20) behind desk wearing phone headpiece.

DEAVIN
Hello. I'm here to see George Lancer.

RECEPTIONIST
Is he expecting you?

DEAVIN
Yes.

RECEPTIONIST
Please take a seat. Shouldn't be long.

Deavin sits and waits.

George LANCER (40) tall, thin, balding with very fair skin enters. His thin lips disappear in a smile as he approaches Deavin holding out his hand. Deavin stands extending his.

LANCER
Pat? - George.

They shake. Lancer indicates as they walk.

LANCER (CONT'D)
We'll use the boardroom over here.

Deavin follows him into a large boardroom with chairs for about fifty people.

DEAVIN (V.O.)
Oh my God. Can't show I'm impressed.

LANCER
Take a seat anywhere you feel comfortable.

DEAVIN
Thanks.

Deavin sits in chair closest to door. Lancer sits next to him at end of table.

LANCER

Now we were talking about Joanne Pane.

DEAVIN

Yes.

LANCER

So, what do you think... we insert five?

DEAVIN

Why do you want them all?... Isn't the big one enough?

LANCER

(smiling)

Now be serious. Why would we pass up an opportunity like this?

DEAVIN

You're getting it for nothing.

LANCER

Why not five for nothing?

DEAVIN

That leaves her with nothing.

LANCER

Not my problem.

Deavin wrestles with his seat.

DEAVIN

(almost pleading)

I only agreed to one... the big house. That was the deal.

LANCER

Look Pat, five or nothing.

Deavin ponders.

LANCER (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Don't tell me you're going soft on me?

DEAVIN

No. But I don't renege on deals either. I didn't agree to her being left with nothing.

LANCER

Want to go away and think about it?

DEAVIN

How about four? Let's at least leave her with one of the little ones so she's got somewhere to live.

LANCER

(laughing)

You are a softie. Okay. The little one's aren't worth that much anyway. So what do you want for four?

Deavin hesitates for a moment.

DEAVIN

Two million in cash into my bank.

Lancer's face goes red with anger.

LANCER

How much?

DEAVIN

Two million. You're getting close to a hundred. I figure two percent's fair.

LANCER

But they're in a Trust.

DEAVIN

So?

LANCER

It's going to take some pretty fancy footwork to break it.

DEAVIN

Well if your guys aren't smart enough perhaps you've got the wrong lawyers. Maybe you should be using us? We created it.

LANCER

(annoyed)

Are you kidding me? You've already shown how trustworthy you are?

DEAVIN

(shrugs)

Up to you.

Deavin pushes chair back to stand.

LANCER
(reluctantly)
Okay. Give us the Deeds and we'll
deposit the funds.

DEAVIN
Uh-uh! Trust works both ways. You,
deposit the funds and then, I'll
deliver the Deeds.

LANCER
How do I know you'll keep your end
of the bargain?

DEAVIN
I'm sure you've got guys to make
sure I do.

LANCER
We do.

DEAVIN
The funds should be deposited with
BBZ earmarked for my account.
They'll be expecting them.

LANCER
(furious)
You're not even trusting us with
your account number?

DEAVIN
(firmly)
Just make the deposit.

LANCER
If we transfer in tonight, how soon
do we get the Deeds?

DEAVIN
As soon as I get confirmation clear
funds are in my bank I'll have them
delivered - same day.

LANCER
Okay. They'll come in from
offshore.

DEAVIN
Whatever works for you. As I said -
once the deposit's been confirmed
you'll have the Deeds.

Deavin stands. Lancer stands. They head to door. Lancer opens
it. Without a handshake Deavin walks to lift - presses
button. Lancer stands watching him. Deavin looks back -
smirks.

DEAVIN (CONT'D)
Remember... if you want good
lawyers - we are, the best.

Lancer turns his back on him.

LANCER
Idiot.

EXT. CITY STREET. LATE AFTERNOON.

Deavin walking out of Caulderbank Building into street
speaking on cell to Austin.

DEAVIN
Gary?... Two million's being
deposited from offshore. Can you
get them into my offshore account?

INTERCUT WITH:

Austin sitting at desk speaking on phone to Deavin.

AUSTIN
Where are they coming from?/

DEAVIN
Caulderbank./

AUSTIN
You've completely sold her out
then./

DEAVIN
(annoyed)
What's that mean? You got what you
wanted didn't you?/

AUSTIN
You're a weasel Deavin./

DEAVIN
(annoyed)
Just let me know when they're in.

INT. DEAVIN'S OFFICE. NEXT DAY. AFTERNOON.

Deavin sitting in chair at small desk. Photo of his wife and
three children on right. Manila folders, papers, a grey
phone, intercom on left. Bare fluorescent tubes illuminate.
Floor-to-ceiling shelving house black foolscap folders
stacked upright with white typed labels. Opposite him are two
old timber chairs with brown leather seats fastened with
brass studs.

Deavin on phone speaking with Austin.

DEAVIN

All good?

INTERCUT WITH:

Austin pacing floor on phone to Deavin.

AUSTIN

(annoyed)

That's what I said. BBZ's two are in. Eldon's twenty also in. You really are a piece of work.

Deavin laughs. Disengages call. Dials.

Jessie enters closing door behind her. Seductively removing clasp holding her long dark hair she motions her head releasing her locks to fall curling around each breast. Her tall slim sensuous body clad in a provocative partially-buttoned red blouse exposing her cleavage and voluptuous alluring breasts. Undoing buttons one by one she exposes small black satin cradles barely holding each. Her tongue protrudes to wet her full red lips whilst her wide white knee-length skirt swings amidst her long shapely legs as gracefully, they move her closer to him.

Deavin finding it difficult to concentrate looks away.

She reaches him. Slowly, seductively she lifts her skirt to expose her body.

DEAVIN

Yes! Yes! Thanks. Bye.

Fumbling to put phone down he turns his chair fully towards her hurriedly undoing his belt as slowly she raises her leg high over him bringing it down as she moves her body into position to straddle him. He pulls her down into him his mouth ravaging her breasts as he gulps for a nipple. Her red-nailed long fingers undoing his shirt as she caressingly tangle his hair, her lips parted in expectation.

Deavin's arms tighten as he wraps them firmly around to hold her body in place pulling her into him as he stands lifting her. Her legs tighten around gripping him, her arms around his neck hugging him as their bodies melt into each other.

Heavy breathing - groaning.

DEAVIN (CONT'D)

My darling.

INT. LANCER'S OFFICE. MORNING.

Lancer sitting at his desk on phone speaking with Deavin.

LANCER
You got the funds.

INTERCUT WITH:

Deavin on phone to Lancer.

DEAVIN
Yes. Thanks./

LANCER
Need the Deeds./

DEAVIN
Sending them out today. Can only
lay my hands on two.

LANCER
(shouting)
Two? What the hell are you playing
at? I want them all - NOW!

DEAVIN
They weren't in the Deed Packet.
I'm searching for them.

LANCER
(threatening)
I'm not playing games here. Either
you deliver all or you won't see a
cent.

DEAVIN
I'll find them. Give me a day or
so.

LANCER
Get duplicates.

DEAVIN
They might want to contact her.

LANCER
Don't be ridiculous! You're her
solicitor.

DEAVIN
I'll search the files. If they're
not there I'll get duplicates.

LANCER
Get the ones you've got to me
today. They'd better include the
big one.

DEAVIN
Yes. Yes.

LANCER
(threatening)
If I don't have them before lunch
I'll reverse the funds. And you
said you were the best...

Lancer slams phone down. Shakes his head.

LANCER (CONT'D)
IDIOT!

INT. JO'S OFFICE. MORNING.
Barnes and Natalie (20) sorting mail. Sylvia (17) office
junior, helping. Sylvia's first job. Looks up to Jo as a role
model.

BARNES
Ms Pane should be here soon.
There's a stack of mail.

Sylvia checks opened envelopes before binning them.

SYLVIA
Hope all went well.

BARNES
She only went for the Premier.

SYLVIA
I know.

NATALIE
I think it was good of her to even
consider it.

SYLVIA
Phillip should be at the airport by
now. Everyone downstairs coming up?

NATALIE
Think they're already up here.
Everyone's glad she's home.

Cream phone rings. Barnes picks up.

BARNES
Yes Alison? [...]

Covering mouthpiece Barnes whispers.

BARNES (CONT'D)
Here we go again -

Removing her hand -

BARNES (CONT'D)
Hello Mr. Austin. [...] I'm sorry
Mr. Austin there's nothing I can
do. You'll have to wait until Ms
Pane gets back. [...]

Natalie whispers to Sylvia.

NATALIE
Oh my God it's him again.

SYLVIA
(puzzled)
Who?

Natalie ignores Sylvia, listening intently to Barnes' conversation.

BARNES
No. I'm not exactly sure when
that'll be. But I'll give her your
messages as soon as she's back.
[...] Yes. I'm sure she will. Bye.

Barnes puts phone down.

BARNES (CONT'D)
Austin's causing some real problems
for Ms Pane.

SYLVIA
What sort?

BARNES
Not sure. Just feel it.

NATALIE
How did Ms Pane get involved with
this crook?

BARNES
He kept pestering the accounts for
just a little of our business and
Ms Pane felt sorry for him. Now
look.

NATALIE
I knew we shouldn't have trusted
that guy - he's got beady eyes.

They laugh

EXT. AIRPORT. MORNING. SUNNY.

Cars coming and going. People loading and unloading luggage.
Jo's car arrives and parks. Phillip gets out. Jo pushing
trolley looking around. Phillip sees her.

Opens rear door and begins walking towards her. Jo sees Phillip and steers her trolley towards him. Reaches him.

PHILLIP
Good morning Ms Pane.

JO
Hello Phillip.

Phillip puts his hand out for trolley. Jo removes hers -

JO (CONT'D)
Thank you Phillip.

Phillip pushing trolley. Jo walking beside him. Reach car. He holds door open until Jo gets in. Closes it. Walks around to boot and loads luggage. Walks to driver's door - opens it gets in.

INT. JO'S CAR.

Jo relaxing in back seat.

PHILLIP
How'd it go, Ms Pane?

Jo answers to Phillip's eyes in rear-vision mirror.

JO
Well, thank you Phillip.

PHILLIP
We read a bit about it in the papers here.

JO
Yes. There was a lot of media travelling with us. How was everything here?

PHILLIP
Good. Nothing much to report.

Jo smiles.

JO
Just take my attaché case out at the office. You can take the rest home to Mrs. Cameron.

PHILLIP
She's expecting it.

Jo closes her eyes and rests her head back in the security of being home.

INT. JO'S OFFICE. (CONTINUOUS)

Jo walks in. Places handbag on glass top followed by Barnes carrying attaché case putting it down on floor.

BARNES
Is there anything I can get you, Ms
Pane?

JO
Just a coffee. Thank you Mrs.
Barnes.

Barnes exits.

Jo sits in chair looking at mail pile. Sighs. Her eyes wander to Colin's shoes. She smiles. Sits up and begins sifting through it.

Knock on door. Without looking up -

JO (CONT'D)
Come in!

Door opens. Barnes enters with coffee and puts it down. Jo indicates to mail.

JO (CONT'D)
Sit down Mrs. Barnes. We may as
well go through this.

Barnes sits. Jo sifts through mail handing it to her.

JO (CONT'D)
I've brought gifts for everyone,
but they'll have to wait until
tomorrow. They're packed in with my
luggage.

BARNES
I'm sure everyone can wait til
then.

Handing documents to Barnes -

JO
Distribute these for me.

BARNES
Thank you. They've all been dealt
with. All except the BBZ letter. It
came in yesterday.

Jo goes through mail and finds letter. Pulls it out. Begins reading.

JO

So the Eldon settlement didn't take place after all.

BARNES

No.

JO

All Deavin's pushing was for nothing.

BARNES

Seems so. But that Austin guy's been ringing nearly every day since you left.

JO

(perplexed)

Why? If settlement didn't take place why was he ringing?

BARNES

Something about the documents not being right.

JO

Didn't you tell him to ring Mr. Deavin?

BARNES

Yes we did. But that didn't stop him ringing here.

JO

Really? Wonder why? Did you ring and tell Mr. Deavin?

BARNES

Yes. But we got the feeling he really didn't want settlement to take place.

JO

(surprised)

What made you think that?

BARNES

He kept asking for documents we'd already sent him.

JO

If settlement hasn't taken place, has Deavin returned the cheques we gave him for the duty?

BARNES

No.

JO
Well until I can sort this out
let's not tell anyone I'm back.

EXT. LARGE TUDOR MANSION. JO'S HOUSE. MONTHS LATER. NIGHT

Standing high on a hill drearily subdued in the silent darkness over-looking an ever-changing sea, the Mansion resembles a haunted house in a horror movie. The moon, shrouded in a ring of cloud obstructing its beams gives an eerie feel. Not even a possum's guttural sounds are heard.

A scream disrupts the silence.

INT. TUDOR MANSION. KITCHEN. (CONTINUOUS)

Leanne screaming. Her body immobilized by a face at the window.

A bewildered Jo bursts in. Looks at Leanne, then in direction she's facing. A man's face (INTRUDER (30)) is pressed against window looking in. Jo quickly picks up Leanne swinging her back to the window.

JO
(yelling)
Get out!

Backing out of the room.

JO (CONT'D)
I'm calling the police.

INTRUDER (O.S)
I've got papers from your bank.

Jo confused. Continues carrying distressed child into hallway/entry lowering her onto bench next to phone. With shaking hands she picks up phone and dials whilst trying to console her daughter.

JO
(breathless)
[...] It's Joanne Pane here. A
guy's got in onto the property.
[...] Yes. Thank you.

Puts phone down. Sits on bench. Wraps her arms around Leanne.
Noise.

JO (V.O.)
(panicking)
Oh my God he's trying to get in.
Where are the police?

Holds Leanne close to block out noise.

JO
(consoling)
Don't worry darling. It'll be
alright. The Police 'ill be here
soon.

LEANNE
(crying)
I want my daddy... I want my daddy.

JO
Daddy 'ill be home soon. Don't cry.

INT. TUDOR MANSION. HALLWAY/ENTRY. (CONTINUOUS)

Sirens heard. Jo disengages her arms. Moves Leanne into corner.

JO
Just stay there darling. I'm just
going to open the gates for the
police.

Leanne huddles into wall. Jo briskly walks to lounge-room windows. Parts curtains. Looks out. Police cars with flashing red and blue lights, sirens engaged, banked up behind front gates. Jo presses release button and watches as gates slowly open and cars enter.

Jo returns to sit with Leanne on bench. Once again, enveloping her in her arms.

Police Officers emerging from vehicles, begin scouring grounds.

Voices heard as sections of grounds cleared.

Knock on front door. Leanne grabs tightly onto Jo.

JO (CONT'D)
It's alright darling. It's only the
police.

Jo disengages Leanne's arms from around her, stands and walks to front door opening it to a Police SARGENT (40).

SARGENT
You okay Ms Pane?

JO
Yes thank you Sargent.

SARGENT
Did you recognise him?

JO
Never seen him before.

SARGENT
Know what he might have wanted?

Jo shakes her head.

JO
Just don't know how he got in.

SARGENT
I think he may have followed your car in through the gates and got out the same way when our cars entered.

JO
(nods)
Probably right.

SARGENT
No one here now. Would you like me to leave an officer with you for the night?

JO
No, thank you. David 'ill be home soon so we'll be fine.

SARGENT
Well if you're sure.

JO
Yes. Thank you, and for coming so quickly.

SARGENT
No problem. Anytime. Good night.

Jo closes door.

SHORT TIME LATER

Jo walking down staircase as David enters.

DAVID
(agitated)
What the hell happened? What were all the police cars doing here?

JO
Some guy got into the grounds.

DAVID
How the hell did that happen? Who was he?

JO

Calm down David. I don't know. The Police didn't catch him.

DAVID

They're bloody useless. No wonder there's so much crime. Where's Leanne?

JO

In bed.

DAVID

Listen Jo, with all the shit that's going down, I just don't want to be around anymore.

JO

(puzzled)

What's that mean?

DAVID

I just can't handle it.

JO

(annoyed)

Handle what? What part of our lives can't you handle, David?

DAVID

I've had enough.

JO

Enough of what? I don't understand what you're saying?

DAVID

The pressure. The death threats. And now this. Just can't do it.

Jo tries to diffuse anticipated direction conversation is headed.

JO

Calm down. It's over. I'm tired. I just want to go to bed.

DAVID

Sorry Jo. I'm not prepared to hang around any more.

JO

What?

DAVID

I'm leaving.

JO
(disbelief)
...you serious?

Without responding he commences climbing staircase walking past her.

DAVID
I'll grab some clothes and stay at
a hotel til I can sort out
something more permanent.

Jo sits on steps where she stood. Puts her head in her hands.

MOMENTS LATER

David walking briskly down stairs holding small suitcase passes her.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'll call you in the morning to
collect the rest of my stuff.

JO
(angry)
Stuff? What stuff? We've been
married fifteen years. What stuff
are you talking about?

Once again ignoring Jo's questions he opens front door.

DAVID
I'll call you.

JO
(resolute)
Whatever.

Just as he's closing the door.

JO (CONT'D)
What do you want me to tell the
children?

DAVID
(nonchalantly)
I don't care. Whatever you like.

Closes door. Jo remains on steps unable to move.

JO (V.O)
What can I tell them... their
father couldn't cope? God give me
strength.

INT. JO'S OFFICE. NEXT DAY. MORNING.

Jo standing at desk picks up cream phone.

JO
[...] Good morning Alison.

Pauses.

JO (CONT'D)
You know the threatening phone
calls we've been getting. [...]
Have any mentioned my children?
[...] No. No. Just wondering. Thank
you. [...] Yes. Will you get Mr.
Deavin for me?

Puts phone down. Sits heavily in chair staring blankly. Not
even Colin's shoes can inspire her.

Phone rings. Picks up.

JO (CONT'D)
[...] Thank you. [...] Yes. Good
morning Mr. Deavin. A guy got into
the grounds at home last night.

INTERCUT WITH:

Deavin sits back in chair smiling deviously speaking on phone
with Jo.

DEAVIN
Well that would have been
disturbing. You alright?/

JO
Of course I am. But he terrorized
Leanne./

DEAVIN
Any idea who he was?/

JO
No. Police didn't catch him. Yelled
something about a bank. Any idea
what he could have been on about?/

DEAVIN
No./

JO
Can you find out and ring me back?/

DEAVIN
Sure. But come to think of it,
Austin has been hassling me./

JO
For what?/

DEAVIN
Nothing to worry about - just the documents./

JO
(annoyed)
Find out who's terrorizing my kids.
I won't have a thug trying to get
into our house.

Jo slams phone down. Sits back in chair exhausted. Takes a deep breath.

JO (V.O.)
Better get on with my day.

Sits upright. Begins going through mail.

SOME HOURS LATER

Jo at desk working. Cream phone rings. Picks up.

JO
Yes Alison? [...] Thank you. Put
him through. [...] Yes Mr. Deavin.

Deavin in office speaking on phone to Jo.

INTERCUT WITH:

DEAVIN
It seems Caulderbank commenced
proceedings against you./

JO
What? For What? When?/

DEAVIN
They were threatening it some weeks
ago./

JO
Why didn't you tell me?/

DEAVIN
Didn't take them seriously./

JO
But we don't owe them anything. Are
you sure?/

DEAVIN
That's how it seems. What are you
going to do?/

JO
(shouting)
You're my lawyer - fix it!

Jo slams phone down. Gazes blankly.

SHORT TIME LATER

Phone rings.

JO (CONT'D)
Yes Alison? [...] Put him through.
[...] Yes, hello! [...]

Jo's demeanor changes. Her face flushes with fear.

JO (CONT'D)
Who is this?... Hello! Hello!...
This call's being traced.

Slams phone down. Quickly picks up red phone. Dials. Waiting anxiously takes a deep breath.

JO (CONT'D)
(feigning nonchalance)
[...] Has Phillip dropped Leanne home yet, Mrs. Cameron? [...] No. No. Don't get her. I was just checking. Thanks Mrs. Cameron.
[...] Bye.

Jo sits back emotionally, physically drained.

INT. JO'S OFFICE. NEXT DAY. MORNING.

Jo at desk working. Knock on door.

JO
Come in.

Barnes enters holding mail.

BARNES
Good morning Ms Pane. Here's the mail.

JO
Good morning. Sit down and let's go through it.

Barnes sits.

BARNES
There's a letter from Laurence & Butler. I think you may want to read that first.

Hands it to her. Jo reads first couple of lines.

JO
(shocked)
What?... They're acting for Eldon?

Barnes nods.

JO (CONT'D)
They were acting for them all the time. That's why Deavin didn't want to settle.

BARNES
It makes sense now.

Jo picks up cream phone.

JO
[...] Alison, get Mr. Deavin for me?

MOMENTS LATER

Phone rings. Jo picks up.

JO (CONT'D)
Yes Alison. [...] Thank you.[...]
I've got this letter from your firm stating that you act for Eldon. Is that right?

INTERCUT WITH:

Deavin in office speaking on phone to Jo.

DEAVIN
Well not me... Johnson!/?

Jo looks at signature on letter.

JO
Who's Johnson?/?

DEAVIN
A partner./

JO
When did this happen?/?

DEAVIN
They were his clients when he joined the firm last year./

JO
 (annoyed)
 Your firm's been our solicitors for twelve years. Don't you think you had an obligation to tell us?/

DEAVIN
 Well I don't act for them./

JO
 Don't play coy. If you've taken on a partner that's acting for them, you do./

DEAVIN
 Nothing I could do. Did the best I could for you./

JO
 (annoyed)
 What's that mean?... They're larger so you dump your obligations to us?

DEAVIN
 Of course not. You don't understand .../

JO
 Oh yes I do... I hope they serve you well. Goodbye./

Jo puts phone down. Shakes her head.

BARNES
 What are you going to do?

JO
 I don't really know. We've been with them so long I don't know how to go about getting another firm. I don't even know what mess we're in.

Barnes nods.

JO (CONT'D)
 Make a list of all the large firms and let's have a look.

SOME HOURS LATER

Barnes enters holding folder.

JO (CONT'D)
 How'd you get on?

Hands it to Jo. Jo opens it. Reads.

JO (CONT'D)
Quite a comprehensive list.

BARNES
If you like I'll start ringing
before I go home.

JO
No. No. Don't worry. Tomorrow will
do. It'll take a little while for
them to get back to us. They'll
probably need to contact all their
offices to ensure there's no
conflict.

BARNES
Pity Laurence & Butler didn't
concern themselves about it.

JO
They played it well. Milked us
both.

INT. JO'S OFFICE. MORNING. SOME DAYS LATER.

Barnes sitting opposite Jo. Jo looking at folder.

BARNES
It's very disappointing Ms Pane,
most have a conflict.

JO
Yes. Guess I expected as much.

Barnes nods.

JO (CONT'D)
Who was that solicitor who
contacted us about one of our
tenants some time ago?

BARNES
Oh yes I remember - Fredericks or
Freehill or something. I'll find
out. But he's only a guy on his
own.

JO
Yes. I know. But we'll get
competent junior and senior counsel
so it doesn't really matter if he's
not too bright.

BARNES
Guess not.

INT. BARRISTERS' BUILDING. MORNING. ONE YEAR LATER.

Jo in Foyer at lift. Presses button. Looks over and sees two large brown envelopes with Eldon Logo prominently displayed on top left hand corner. Picks them up. One addressed to each of her Barristers.

JO (V.O.)
I'll take them up.

Stops.

JO (V.O.)
Better not. Might be more mail for them.

Puts them back.

MOMENTS LATER

Jo sitting at small desk in McNeice's Chambers going through myriad of documents. McNeice (70) is robust with grey hair and beard. He enters followed by Junior, Harry GADEN (40) short, dark-haired also robust.

MCNEICE
Good Morning.

Jo looks up and smiles.

JO
Good Morning.

GADEN
How's it all going?

JO
Getting there. I've put the evidence into different piles for you both to look at.

McNeice looks at Gaden.

MCNEICE
You know my sister-in-law has shares in Eldon and I receive the mail for her here.

Not comprehending the connection Jo smiles. Gaden moves to stand behind her. He shrugs. They turn and walk out.

INT. GADEN'S CHAMBERS.

Gaden and McNeice standing, speaking quietly.

GADEN

What do you think?... She suspect anything?

MCNEICE

She's not stupid. I just hope I've convinced her.

GADEN

Didn't seem concerned.

MCNEICE

That doesn't mean she doesn't realize. Why didn't you say something about your shares?

GADEN

What could I say? Your story's unbelievable. I'm not getting into that.

Gaden paces up and down his tiny room which caters for no more than three persons.

GADEN (CONT'D)

Should we tell someone she knows?

MCNEICE

Don't be an idiot. Knows what? She can only suspect. Besides, I think my explanation's plausible.

GADEN

(sarcastically)

Right!... If we're not careful we're going to come unstuck.

MCNEICE

Speak for yourself. I've covered my tracks.

Gaden continues pacing.

GADEN

Do you think she'll sue us?

MCNEICE

(annoyed)

For what?... She's got no evidence. Besides, who'd believe her? Anyway, if we have a problem Jacobs 'ill fix it.

GADEN

I don't care! I don't need this! Why the hell did you ask her to work in your chambers?

MCNEICE

They told me to keep her occupied.
What would you have done?

GADEN

That's why we have this mess.

MCNEICE

What mess? You're making something
out of nothing. Besides, by the
time they've finished with her
she'll have nothing.

GADEN

You'd better be right.

MCNEICE

I am. Caulderbank is moving in.
We've just got to keep calm. By
Monday it'll all be over.

GADEN

Do you think she'll pay us?

MCNEICE

Of course she will. She always has.

GADEN

Yes. But everything's different
now.

MCNEICE

Stop being an idiot. They've got
the Judge they want. Neats won't be
making any waves.

GADEN

What about all the evidence she's
got? Think she'll take it further?

MCNEICE

Where can she go? She's got
nowhere.

Gaden holds his stomach.

GADEN

I'll be glad when this is over. I
think I've got an ulcer.

MCNEICE

Don't worry. The money you're
making on this will get rid of
anything.

GADEN

I'm going home.

MCNEICE

Me too. I'll tell her I'm going to the Bar Library. She'll be happy with that.

INT. MCNEICE'S CHAMBERS. SATURDAY. MORNING.

Jo sitting at desk working. Gaden enters.

GADEN

How's it going?

JO

Fine. This pile's for...

Gaden interrupts.

GADEN

I'll leave them for McNeice.

JO (V.O.)

(confused)

Wonder why he doesn't want to look at anything?... Never mind.

GADEN

Had anything to eat?

JO

Yes. Thanks. Breakfast at the hotel.

GADEN

Okay. Well don't work too hard.

INT. MCNEICE'S CHAMBERS. SUNDAY. EARLY MORNING.

Sun's rays streaming in between open slats of venetian blinds. Jo sitting at desk is distracted by the musical bells of the ancient majestic Catholic Cathedral steeple ringing out across the city heralding morning service. She gets up walking mesmerized to windows. Looks out. Lots of people. Some pushing strollers, children running around large park. Linger for a moment she returns to continue working.

McNeice enters to peeling bells.

MCNEICE

Good morning Ms Pane.

JO

Good morning Mr. McNeice. Don't the bells give a beautiful sound?

MCNEICE
(disinterested)
Yes. But how are you going with it
all?

JO
Good. Almost finished. This pile
is...

McNeice interrupts.

MCNEICE
I'll look at them later.

JO (V.O.)
(panic)
Later?... When's 'later'?...
Hearing's tomorrow.

MCNEICE
Did Mr. Gaden come in yesterday?

JO
Yes.

MCNEICE
Did he look at anything?

JO
No. He told me to leave it for you.

McNeice smiles.

MCNEICE
Did he just. Well I've got to get
going. I'll see you in the morning.

JO (V.O.)
(concerned)
Where's he going?... When's he
going to look at all this? I'm sure
he knows what he's doing.

McNeice turns to leave as Jo responds.

JO
Okay. See you in the morning. What
time should I be here?

MCNEICE
About nine. We can all go across to
Court together.

JO
Thank you. See you then.

McNeice leaves.

JO (V.O.)
Don't understand any of this. But
they must know what they're doing.

She sits back and ponders.

JO (V.O.)
(reprimanding herself)
Now's not the time to slacken
off... Hearing's tomorrow.

INT. MCNEICE'S CHAMBERS. NEXT DAY. MORNING.

McNeice dressed in his robes. Gaden and Eddie FRELAND (40) a thin, friendly man (Jo's new solicitor), and Jo stack folders of evidence Jo has compiled onto three trolleys.

MCNEICE
Didn't think they'd all fit.

Jo admires her achievement.

JO
Thought for a moment we'd need
another one.

McNeice, Gaden and Freland push trolleys out of room with Jo following into reception.

GADEN
Better get robed.

MCNEICE
Yes. We don't want to be late. I'll
get my wig on.

They exit.

Freland and Jo wait near trolleys. McNeice joins them. Gaden walks passed them to lift. Presses 'down' button. Walks over and collects a trolley. Freland grabs another. Lift door opens.

GADEN
Won't take us all.

MCNEICE
Ms Pane and I will go up. You
organize getting the trolleys up
there, will you?

GADEN
Yes. See you there.

INT. COURTROOM. LATE MORNING.

Courtroom packed with people chatting. Some wearing 'media' tags. Gaden and McNeice sitting at Bar Table. Heavily laden trolleys of evidence next to them. Jo sitting with Freland behind them. Barristers for Eldon further down Bar Table. Jo looks around.

JO (V.O.)
It has such a nice smell.

Loud knocking.

Silence.

All stand as Judge enters, walks to his chair, bows. All bow. He sits. All sit.

Jo resumes looking around Courtroom oblivious of interaction between Judge and Barristers.

JO (V.O.)
Strange. Feels strange. Maybe the
first time always does?

Jo taps Freland on shoulder.

JO
(whispers)
Who are all these people?

FRELAND
(whispering)
Apart from the media, they're
Eldon's people.

JO
Really. Wonder why there's so many.

Witnesses questioned. Freland madly writing.

JO (CONT'D)
What's going on? Looks like a play
that's got nothing to do with me.

FRELAND
Shssh!

A MALE WITNESS (30) giving evidence. Looking at Jo.

MALE WITNESS
Oh yes. We get on well.

JO
I don't know this guy. What's going
on Eddie?

FRELAND
Just sit and listen.

Jo is unaccustomed to being told what to do.

JO
I want to know what's going on.
He's lying.

Freland nods.

JO (CONT'D)
Why isn't McNeice objecting? I
don't know any of these people. I
don't even understand what they're
saying.

FRELAND
(whispering)
Just sit, and wait. McNeice knows
what he's doing.

Judge looks at clock on wall.

JUDGE
Is this a good time?

Eldon's barrister looks at clock. McNeice and Gaden look at
clock.

BARRISTER
Yes, Your Honour.

JUDGE
Say fifteen minutes.

Barrister nods. Judge stands. All in courtroom stand. Judge
bows. All bow. Judge exits. Jo, McNeice, Gaden and Freland
standing together at Bar Table. COURT OFFICER (60)
approaches. Whispers to McNeice. McNeice nods smiling. Turns
to Jo and Freland.

MCNEICE
The Judge has invited us to join
him for tea.

Jo puzzled. Looks at Freland. Freland smiles and nods in
encouragement for Jo to nod. McNeice and Gaden follow
Officer.

FRELAND
We'll go find a room.

INT. COURT. WITNESS ROOM.

Jo and Freland sitting at small table.

JO

What is, going on Eddie? Nothing of what they're saying makes sense. Why isn't McNeice objecting?

FRELAND

Don't worry. McNeice is a very senior and respected barrister. You don't get to be QC unless you're really good at what you do.

JO

But he hasn't even looked at the evidence.

FRELAND

Never mind.

JO

The reason we're in this mess is because Laurence & Butler were acting for Eldon at the same time as they were acting for us.

FRELAND

Yes. That's difficult.

JO

So when are we going to hand up our evidence?

FRELAND

I don't know. But there's more to a court-case than just handing up evidence.

JO

(puzzled)

Well why was I asked to go through all those documents if they're not important?

FRELAND

I'm not saying they're not important, I'm just saying that McNeice will use only what he needs to win.

Purporting to understand -

JO

Oh yes. Of course.

Freland gives additional assurances.

FRELAND

We've got six weeks to hand it up. He's got plenty of time.

Knock on door.

COURT OFFICER (O.S)
Court's back!

INT. COURTROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Courtroom full. All seated.

More Eldon's witnesses give evidence. No cross-examination or objection by McNeice.

INT. COURTROOM. NEXT DAY. MORNING.

Courtroom full. All seated. Eldon witness leaving stand. Barrister concludes.

BARRISTER
That concludes the Plaintiff's case, Your Honour.

Judge nods. Barrister sits down.

McNeice stands.

MCNEICE
May I have a moment please Your Honour?

Judge nods.

McNeice turns to Jo. Bending down he whispers within earshot of Freland.

MCNEICE (CONT'D)
I'm not going to call you to give evidence.

Jo puzzled. Looks at Freland. He nods.

JO
(shrugs)
Okay.

MCNEICE
(to Judge)
Thank you Your Honour. That's the case for the Defence.

Jo confused turns to Freland.

JO
What's happening Eddie?

Freland ignores her. Judge nods. McNeice sits down.

JUDGE
I reserve my decision.

COURT OFFICER
All stand.

All in courtroom stand. Judge stands, bows. All in Court bow.
Judge leaves bench. McNeice turns to Jo.

MCNEICE
We've lost.

JO
(stunned)
WHAT?... What do you mean?

MCNEICE
(repeats)
We've lost.

JO
(gulping)
But... but how can you know?... The
Judge has reserved his decision.
What's happening about the six
weeks?

McNeice losing patience.

MCNEICE
(firmly)
We've lost. You can't possibly
expect the court to waste another
six weeks... it's finished.

Jo indicates to trolleys.

JO
But what about all our evidence?
When are we going to hand all this
up?

MCNEICE
We're saving it for another Court-
case.

JO (V.O.)
(puzzled)
Another court-case. What court-
case? I don't know anything about
another court-case.

Resolute, Jo watches as trolleys are pushed out of court-room
folders left unopened, untouched. Freland and Gaden walking
together. Gaden turns to Jo.

GADEN
We'll put them into the boot of
your car.

INT. JO'S OFFICE. WEEKS LATER. MORNING.

Jo sitting at desk working. Phone rings. Picks up.

JO
Yes Alison. [...] Put him through!
[...] Hello Mr. McNeice. [...] I'm
on my way.

Jo puts phone down. Picks up again.

JO (CONT'D)
Alison would you please tell Mrs.
Barnes and Natalie that I've gone
to court. The judge is handing down
his decision at two o'clock.
Shouldn't be long.

INT. MCNEICE'S CHAMBERS. MORNING. (CONTINUOUS)

McNeice sitting at desk putting phone down as Gaden walks in.

GADEN
Neats' Judgment coming down.

MCNEICE
Yes. Just rung Pane.

GADEN
She won't believe it til she hears
it from him.

MCNEICE
Doesn't really matter. It's done.

GADEN
Heard anything?

MCNEICE
(smiling)
Yes. They rang late yesterday.
They're happy.

GADEN
(smiling)
Let's see what Neats has done.

INT. COURTROOM. LATER.

Gaden and Freland standing at Bar Table waiting. Jo enters.
Sees them. Walks to them as she looks around.

GADEN
Good morning.

FRELAND
Good morning.

JO
Hello. Where's Mr. McNeice?

GADEN
The junior normally gets the
Judgment.

JO
(disappointed)
Oh... okay.

GADEN
Big day!

JO
Guess so.

Gaden nods. People filter in and sit. Gaden sits. Jo and
Freland sit behind him.

Loud knocking.

Silence.

Judge enters. All stand. Judge bows. All in courtroom bow and
sit again.

COURT OFFICER
(calling out)
Eldon and Pane!

Gaden and Eldon's Barrister at Bar Table stand.

JUDGE
I've provided a written Judgment.
As Ms Pane did not give evidence I
can only conclude that she could
not have provided any assistance.

For a moment he pauses.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
As no defence has been put before
me, I am not to decide between one
or the other. I therefore give
Judgment in favour of the Plaintiff
in the sum of six million two
hundred and forty-seven thousand
dollars.

Jo stunned.

Judge hands Judgment to Court Officer.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
I publish my findings.

Jo moves over and whispers to Gaden.

JO
What's he saying?

Gaden ignores her.

JO (CONT'D)
(persisting)
But I was available to give
evidence. McNeice said he didn't
want to call me.

Turns to Freland.

JO (CONT'D)
You didn't tell me if I didn't give
evidence there was nothing else?...
That the six weeks would be wiped
out just like that?

FRELAND
(angry)
Quiet!

Jo turns back to Gaden.

JO
With all our evidence why didn't we
have a Defence?

GADEN
(annoyed)
You can talk to Mr. McNeice about
that.

Jo panics.

JO (V.O.)
Oh my God my assets are dissolving
before my very eyes. How can this
be?

Addresses Gaden.

JO
(firmly)
Okay. But you tell the Judge not to
give Eldon possession because I'm
going to pay out the Judgment.

Gaden loses the poker-face he has until now presented.
Shocked and annoyed he glares at Freland.

GADEN
(annoyed)
Did you know about this?

FRELAND
(flushed - shrugs)
I err... No!

GADEN
(to Jo)
I'M NOT going to do THAT!... I'm
not going to lie to the court.

Jo's legs begin to give way from under her. Trembling, she grabs onto a nearby chair, her lips quivering as they try to form words to stop the dissolution of her life.

JO
I'm instructing you to tell the
Judge not to give Eldon possession!

Gaden looks at Freland as he speaks to Jo.

GADEN
You're not instructing me.

Jo scared - puzzled.

JO (V.O.)
What's he talking about?... Maybe
he means his instructions have to
come from Freland?

Looking at Gaden she directs her words to Freland.

JO
Well I am instructing YOU, now YOU,
instruct HIM!

Freland shrugs... speechless.

Without revealing who in fact is, instructing him, Gaden reluctantly addresses the Judge.

GADEN
Your Honour, my instructions are to
request that possession not be
given to Eldon - that the Judgment
is to be paid out.

JUDGE
(bewildered)
Thank you Mr. Gaden.

INT. JO'S OFFICE. MORNING.

Mrs. Barnes visibly upset handing Jo a message.

JO
What is it?

BARNES
The Revenue Department has put this
company into liquidation.

JO
That's not possible.

BARNES
The Court just rang. Because no one
turned up at court they got their
Judgment.

Jo picks up red phone and dials.

JO
[...] Magistrate's Clerk please.
Reading from the message.

JO (CONT'D)
[...] I'm enquiring about number
227742 [...] Yes, I'll wait. [...]
Mr. Gaden was to have attended.
[...] I see. No thank you. We'll be
appealing. [...] Thank you.

Jo put phone down slowly.

JO (CONT'D)
You'd better notify all our
employees both here and in the
factory. I will have to address
them.

Tears are running down Barnes' cheeks. She tries to wipe them
away but they keep falling.

BARNES
I'll organize it. What time?

JO
Noon. Have everyone assemble in
number 3 Factory. Make sure all
office staff are there.

Barnes nods.

INT. NUMBER 3 FACTORY. NOON.

For Prestige employees this is an unusual occurrence. Jo has
never addressed them in a group before. Speculation has run
rampant as they chat amongst themselves.

Silence as Jo arrives and is assisted onto tray of one of their trucks. She waits a moment.

JO

I'm sorry everyone. It seems that today our company was put into liquidation.

Gasping fills the air.

JO (CONT'D)

Unfortunately there is nothing I can do to reverse this.

She waits a moment for them to digest the terrible news.

JO (CONT'D)

I will pay you all your entitlements and give you an excellent reference reflecting the years and devotion you have given to us. I'm certain you will all find employment as the skills you have are in great demand. I am so sorry I could not protect you from this.

Jo waits for any questions. None come forth. She is helped back down.

INT. THE MANOR. LATE NIGHT. SOME WEEKS LATER.

Jo enters front door exhausted after a long day at the office. Leanne is away at school. Obscured light coming in from gardens reveals something on the floor.

JO (V.O.)

How did THAT get there?

Picks it up. Switches lights on. Sparkling chandelier crystals diffuse the glow. Jo looks at it. Turns it over. Looks again... and again.

JO (V.O.)

(puzzled)

The words don't even make sense...
Eviction Notice?

Turning it over again.

JO (V.O.)

Is this for real?... This tiny piece of paper...?

Jo's face goes pale as she tries to comprehend the paper in her hand. Her legs weaken.

She struggles to reach the Love-seat over which her favorite painting of 'The Lady' hangs. The reality of the words begin to set in.

JO (V.O.)

What can I do? Who can I ring?

Sits. Mesmerized, she places it next to her.

A few moments later she stands leaving it on the Love-seat under the watchful eye of 'The Lady' and walks up stairs into her bedroom and lifts a blue satin night gown and robe from a drawer. She carries them into the marble bathroom on which she has never put a door.

Switching on the light, the chandelier releases sparkles of crystals which envelope her. Engulfed in the warmth of the rose-colored marble she turns on the gold-plated shower taps to allow the water to run hot as she begins undressing.

She then steps in allowing the water to run through her hair as if to wash away her problems.

JO (V.O.)

How has all this happened?

The water pounding her face her mind wanders back to when she bought the mansion.

INT. THE MANOR. BATHROOM. TEN YEARS BEFORE - FLASHBACK

Dressed in blue jeans and loose-fitting white shirt she is renovating her newly acquire home, almost rebuilding the interior to reflect the grandeur of its era. The Manor gates and doors are left open for craftsmen to come and go. She is conversing with Mr. ZACHARIA (60) a big thick-set man resonating his trade. He is the best Italian Marble Craftsman in the country and speaks with a very strong Italian accent.

ZACHARIA

But mono slabs Ms Pane?

JO

Yes. I want the Portuguese rose-colored slabs to go floor-to-ceiling.

ZACHARIA

But single slabs too heavy. Never hold on these walls.

JO

They'll hold.

Zacharia nods. He's not about to have an argument with this lady.

JO (CONT'D)
 Italian White Onyx for steps
 leading up to Spa-bath Surround,
 and around Bidet.

Zacharia nods.

ZACHARIA
 White Onyx for bathroom bench-tops?

JO
 Yes. Thank you. And the same for
 the benches above the Tasmanian Oak
 cupboards in the kitchen.

Zacharia nods.

ZACHARIA
 Walls downstairs' bathroom need
 mono slab too?

JO
 Well you're doing it for this one,
 that'll be easier for you. Much
 smaller. Cabinet tops also White
 Onyx. Also for Marble-Room floor.

Zacharia nods.

JO (CONT'D)
 Okay?

ZACHARIA
 Yes. Thank you madam.

INT. THE MANOR. HALLWAY. FLASH CONTINUES.

Jo and Mr. Zacharia walking down the stairs. Carpet Salesman
 Mr. DANES (50) entering hallway carrying sample.

JO
 Good morning Mr. Danes. Is that it?

DANES
 Yes. 'Morning Ms Pane.

Danes and Zacharia nod as they pass each other.

JO
 Let's take it into the Drawing Room
 and have a look.

The painters have finished in this room but not all the
 sheets have been lifted. The Sandstone fireplace has been
 cleaned up. It features against green with gold-leaf walls
 complementing the Cedar picture-rails and ceiling-beams.

Danes opens sample.

JO (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Yes. That looks lovely. The roses have the colours of all the rooms without looking overdone.

DANES

The manufacturers are quite excited with your design.

JO

Thank you.

DANES

You're not doing the Ballroom?

JO

No. No. I'm just repolishing the floors. I think the Grand will look good down in the far corner.

DANES

Do you play?

JO

A little.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. THE MANOR. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM.

Water running down Jo's hair, her face turned up to greet it.

JO (V.O.)

All those agents ringing to congratulate me. How quickly they turned to support Eldon... How tightly they held onto my income causing more court battles. Judge, Jury and Executioner they became, "...until we see what's going to happen".

Turns taps off. Picks up towels warmed by under-floor heating and dries herself in confines of shower. Stepping out, she places the wet towels on the heated gold-plated rack and puts on her exquisite night gown and robe tying it as she walks through her parlor to the balcony doors, opens them and steps out.

EXT. THE MANOR. BEDROOM BALCONY. NIGHT. LATE

Sitting in her favorite chair Jo lays her head back as the ebbing and flowing of the tide are heard lapping the shore.

Smiling, she gazes at the bright shining stars twinkling above her as the yacht-masts harboured below clang in the light warm breeze.

JO (V.O.)
If only I had someone.

INT. JO'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. LATER.

Jo in bed switches bedside lamp off. Her robe lays at the bottom of the bed. Hair still wet.

INT. THE MANOR. JO'S BEDROOM. VERY EARLY MORNING.

Jo asleep.

Loud knocking. Jo stirs.

JO (V.O.)
What IS that?

More knocking.

JO (V.O.)
Someone's knocking?

And again.

JO
(panics)
Oh my God someone's knocking on the door... my bedroom door.

VOICE (O.S.)
Ms Pane? It's the Sheriff here.

JO
(confused)
WHO?... What?

VOICE (O.S.)
I've come to escort you out. May I come in?

Jo sits up. Reaches down and pulls up her robe.

JO
(calling out)
I'm sorry!... WHO... who are you?

Still drowsy -

JO (V.O.)
(panic)
Oh my God!... HOW'D HE GET IN?
(MORE)

JO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Just a moment, I'll get my robe on.

Remaining in bed she drags her robe up and is putting it on when the bedroom door opens. A tall man (40) in blue uniform with SHERIFF badges on sleeves walks in.

SHERIFF
It's okay Ms Pane. There's no need to be alarmed.

JO
But what are you doing here?...
How'd you get in?

Jo manoeuvres herself out of bed to cover herself fully in the robe.

More Sheriff's Officers and Police from her station and other guys are visible, standing in vestibule.

Sargent JENNY Partledge enters.

JENNY
I'm sorry Ms Pane. I would have rung you before we came but they wouldn't let me.

JO
Thank you Jenny. That's alright. I know.

Tears well up in Jenny's eyes.

JENNY (V.O.)
After all she's done for us - I'll never forgive the Chief for this.

SHERIFF
Would you like some time to get dressed?

JO
Do I have time for a shower?

SHERIFF
Of course Ms Pane - take your time.

JENNY
(to Jo)
They said you were armed.

JO
(shocked)
WHAT?... WHO?

Jenny shrugs.

JENNY

The radio stations were blurting it out from about 4 o'clock this morning. We knew it couldn't be true and put a stop to it.

JO

But who would do such a thing?

JENNY

Don't know but there's a lot of media downstairs so you might want to prepare yourself.

JO

Thanks. But I don't know how to prepare. I don't know what's happened.

Jenny nods.

JENNY

I'll wait downstairs for you.

Jenny turns to Sheriff's Officers and others.

JENNY (CONT'D)

(agitated)

There's no need for you guys to be up here. Wait downstairs til Ms Pane's ready to come down.

Everyone turns and walks down stairs with Jenny following.

As if in a trance Jo walks to shower.

JO (V.O.)

What's happening?... All these people in my home?... How did they get in?... Up to my bedroom?

She tries in vain to wash events out of her hair but they're embedded in her brain.

JO (V.O.)

Is this real? Am I really being thrown out of my own home?

INT. THE MANOR. HALLWAY. MOMENTS LATER.

Jo walking down stairs to clicking cameras and flashing lights. Microphones thrust at her. Television cameras and booms accompany reporters with a barrage of questions.

MEDIA

How do you feel?... What are you going to do now?...

(MORE)

MEDIA (CONT'D)

Why didn't you pay the bank?... Did you have a shotgun?... Where's your husband?...

Almost reaching the bottom step, Jenny and other police officers move in to shield her from the media and those who have gained access to the-once-inaccessible-Jo Pane.

Jo is escorted by Jenny and the Sheriff to her car.

JO

What's going to happen now?

SHERIFF

The property's going up for sale.

JO

When?

SHERIFF

Not sure. But take this as a warning... if you attend at the auction I'll have to arrest you.

JO

(afraid)

Why?

SHERIFF

That's all I can tell you.

INT. JO'S NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE. WEEKS LATER.

Jo has engaged Security Guards to protect the Manor's contents. Her company in liquidation, Jo's next door neighbour has erected a fold-out bed in lounge-room.

MAVIS (60) has been a good friend. She is guarding The Manor which still contains all Jo's furniture and personal effects whilst Jo visits lawyers trying to piece together the events of her life.

INT. MAVIS' HOUSE. EVENING.

Jo just arrived.

MAVIS

How'd you go.

JO

All the large firms act for Eldon or Caulderbank. A pretty smart move. I thought about instructing other lawyers during my twelve years but felt it would have been disloyal.

MAVIS

Heard anything on the auction?

JO

No. Guess I'm too scared to ask.

MAVIS

(sadly)

Peter Brooks, has been negotiating with the bank.

JO

How do you know?

MAVIS

He was here today with the bank manager. Heard them talking.

JO

But he's given us a valuation for Court. I wouldn't have thought he'd do that. When he was at school I'd give him pocket-money for cutting my lawns.

MAVIS

It'll still go for auction. But the adverse publicity hasn't been good for the bank, so they're doing a deal with him.

JO

Really.

MAVIS

Goes to show, doesn't it.

EXT. CITY STREET. SOME YEARS LATER.

CRASH!

A 4 wheel drive rams Jo's car (now a Volvo) from behind. Jo's body is thrown forward almost in a horizontal position smashing her head on the windscreen before being pulled back by the seat-belt to collide with the seat crushing her spine. Blood streaming down her face.

Sirens. Fire Engines, Ambulances pull up next to Jo's car. Ambulance Officers get out and quickly approach her. OFFICER#1 (30) tries to open door. Calls out to his superior OFFICER#2 (40).

OFFICER#1

It's jammed.

Indicating to firemen -

OFFICER#2
I'll get them to open it.

Calls out.

OFFICER#2 (CONT'D)
Will you guys give us a hand.
Door's jammed.

Firemen obtain tools from truck.

OFFICER#1
(to Jo)
Hello.

Jo does not respond.

OFFICER#1 (CONT'D)
Can you hear me? Hello.

Jo moves. Groans.

OFFICER#1 (CONT'D)
How are you feeling. What's your
name?...

JO
(semi-conscious)
Oh... Um... I... I don't... Jo...
Jo...

OFFICER#1
Hello Jo. You've got a nasty gash
on your head. Can I take a look?...

He moves Jo's head a little towards him.

Examining her. FIREMAN#1 approaches with crowbar.

FIREMAN#1
(to Jo)
Now just take it easy lady, we're
going to get this door open.

He inserts bar and removes door.

Just ahead a red car is double parked. Smoke is coming from
its exhaust indicating engine still running.

Jo slowly regaining consciousness.

JO (V.O.)
Why's that red car waiting? My God.
He wants my evidence. Can't let
them take the car.

OFFICER#1
Move your legs for me, Jo.

JO
Um... don't think I can.

OFFICER#1
Okay. Don't worry.

Tow-trucks arrive.

JO
... My car?

OFFICER#1
Don't worry the Tow-truck drivers
'll take care of it. They'll also
get the details of the other
driver. Is there someone you'd like
me to call?

JO
No. No. I've got to get to my
lawyers.

OFFICER#1
You need to get to the hospital.

JO
Please just get me into a cab. I've
got to get all the boxes from my
boot to my lawyers.

OFFICER#1
What's the address?

JO
It's just down the street. There's
a card in my wallet.

OFFICER#1
Okay. I'll get it. I get the guys
to help me empty the car and we'll
get them to him if you just get in
the ambulance.

JO
Please be sure to get everything.
It's all so valuable.

OFFICER#1
Don't worry I will. But they're not
going to do you much good unless we
can get you to the hospital.

JO
Thank you so much.

He reaches over and retrieves card from her wallet in her
handbag.

Trolley wheeled to car. Officers place Brace around Jo's neck.

OFFICER#1
Now just relax.

Slowly manoeuvring her out, trolley transports her to ambulance.

And the red car waits.

Police arrive. Red car speeds off.

OFFICER#1 (CONT'D)
Can I get someone to give me a hand
with these boxes?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. SOME DAYS LATER.

Jo lying in bed in private room looking at ceiling, plastered leg in traction. Tubes inserted in her arm, monitors which beep when she moves. A tall, thick-set stranger with shoulder-length greying hair and Tattoos on his arms and neck walks in. Jo smiles.

JO
Hello.

Ignoring her he looks around room without. Jo tries to sit up. He walks back out.

JO (V.O.)
(confused)
Must have the wrong room.

INT. JO'S OFFICE. MORNING. SOME MONTHS LATER.

With permanent back-damage Jo, in constant pain, is in a much smaller office. Barnes has remained. They're going through mail.

JO
We received a response to our
complaint to the Law Council about
Laurence and Butler. They're doing
nothing.

BARNES
Yes.

Jo gives an ironic smile.

JO
Don't know how Deavin got the job
of CEO.

BARNES

Probably appointed by the same guys
he was dealing with.

Jo nods.

BARNES (CONT'D)

The Chief of the Serious Crime
Squad won't be pressured into
giving up. Will he?

JO

I actually asked that of James when
we put out the Press Release and he
said 'no way'. But, who knows.

Barnes nods.

BARNES

Seem a good man.

JO

Yes. He and the team have worked
very hard on this.

BARNES

After two years and your fifty-two
page statement, I don't think he'll
do you wrong. Do you?

JO

I don't know anymore.

BARNES

What would he tell Interpol?

JO

Just wish Brett would stop
threatening that if I don't have
sex with him, he'll drop it.

BARNES

But you're not taking him
seriously, are you?

JO

No. But he becomes more difficult
each year. Fighting him off at the
same time as gathering evidence is
exhausting.

BARNES

Even now?

JO

He just doesn't care how many times
I tell him I don't play around, it
makes no difference.

BARNES

That's probably because Mr. Pane's not around.

JO

His wife is.

BARNES

Still, don't think he'll do you wrong.

JO

Don't know. It may just come down to sex. Eldon's in-house Counsel's got legs up to her armpits. If she comes across he may well sell me out. Perhaps all this is just about sex.

BARNES

I think it's plus sex. Even if you'd given in to them all, they'd still have taken your properties and they'd have had you too.

JO

(smiles)

Guess so.

INT. JO'S OFFICE. SOME WEEKS LATER.

Jo on the phone to Brett.

JO

You can't be serious?

BRETT (35) detective, solid-built-not-to-be-messed-with sitting at desk on phone speaking to Jo.

BRETT

Sorry Ms Pane. We've had to give them everything./

JO

What?... Why?... Why would you do that?/

BRETT

We'd have had to have given them to them any way./

JO

But not until the hearing? And then, only copies. Who told you to do this?/

BRETT

Sorry./

JO

I warned you that once the media ran the story the investigation would be quashed. You didn't believe me./

BRETT

I said I'm sorry. Nothing I can do./

JO

I'm sorry too, Brett.

Jo puts down phone.

JO (CONT'D)

A change of government was all it took. Jacobs' ruling party won.

INT. RENTED APARTMENT. MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

Wheelchair next to Jo sitting on floor surrounded by boxes titled 'Originals Police evidence', 'Originals Court evidence'. Alone she writes on her computer occasionally pulling documents from boxes.

INT. NATALIE'S LOUNGE ROOM. NIGHT.

Natalie and partner PETE (22) sitting on lounge watching television.

NEW FLASH!

NEWS READER (O.S.)

In breaking news a black SUV with plates ADU 6580 has been hijacked from a Service Station. A woman and her two children are in the car owned by solicitor Darryl Smith!

Natalie sits up straight.

NATALIE

Oh my God, that's Eldon's solicitor. Wonder which one of his victims did this?

PETE

You know these people?

NATALIE

No. I only know that Darryl Smith was the solicitor for Eldon against Ms Pane. I'm sure she's not his only victim.

PETE

Shsh!... We're missing it - listen.

NEWS READER (O.S.)

Police are asking anyone who sees this vehicle to immediately notify Police. DO NOT approach the vehicle. The hijacker is believed to be armed. The emergency Police hot-line is Triple O. Police stress - if you see this vehicle DO NOT approach!

INT. MCNEICE'S CHAMBERS. MORNING.

McNeice sitting in chair. Door opens. Gaden storms in.

GADEN

What the hell's going on?

MCNEICE

I know.

GADEN

Well?

MCNEICE

They're not paying us.

GADEN

I've given them three years of my practice. They stopped me taking on other work. Now I'm stuck.

MCNEICE

It's because they didn't get the properties.

GADEN

Not my fault.

MCNEICE

Not mine either.

GADEN

Paid you?

MCNEICE

No. But they're blaming us. They opened up a local Real Estate office in the area to sell her properties.

GADEN

How can any of this be our fault?

MCNEICE

Don't know but they've also cancelled my shares.

GADEN

Mine too. We can't even sue.

MCNEICE

Guess we should have expected it.

GADEN

I didn't. You kept reassuring me.

MCNEICE

Don't go putting that on me.

GADEN

But you were so certain.

MCNEICE

Keep that up and I'll get you thrown out of my chambers.

GADEN

It's fine for you. You've got money. How'm I going to pay back my bank loan? I'm ruined.

MCNEICE

Just consider yourself lucky. Freland's gone to gaol. Poor fellow. He was dipping into clients' funds to survive.

GADEN

She outsmarted them and left us high and dry.

INT. JACOBS' OFFICE. SOME YEARS LATER.

Jacobs angrily pacing floor. Pensive air hovers over group of men assembled.

JACOBS

Well she's really done a job on us.

Picks book up. Holds it high for all to see. His gaze deadly. Jo's face on cover.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
 You've all seen this rubbish have
 you?

Some nod.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
 Well where the fucking hell were
 you all when she was writing this
 shit?

Directing his gaze at Spate.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
 You fuckingwell told me you'd
 organized an accident... that she
 was disabled. How the fuck did she
 write this?

Spate head drops. Jacobs thrusts book in Deavin's face.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
 (to Deavin)
 Where the fuck did you get this
 from?

DEAVIN
 They're selling them at the Legal
 Book Shop.

JACOBS
 (almost screaming)
 You mean to tell me she's actually
 selling these fucking books right
 under your fucking noses?

Deavin doesn't respond. Looks around for comfort from those
 gathered.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
 Who published it?

DEAVIN
 (quietly)
 She did.

JACOBS
 (shouting)
 WHAT?

He opens the book his nose filling with blood.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
 How the fuckinghell did she get it
 into the bookstores?

DEAVIN
 Must have influence.

Jacobs breaks into uncontrolled rage.

JACOBS
Fucking bullshit. I've got fucking
influence and look what it's got
me?... A room-full of fucking
parasitic idiots.

Turning his back on the gathering he walks to the drinks
cabinet his large hands shaking as he pours himself a drink.
Walks to window.

RYAN (40) and JOHNSON (40) Interstate Managers move close to
Spate.

RYAN
(whispering)
Think he's lost it Kevin.

SPATE
(angry)
Don't talk like that. You've got no
idea the pressure he's under with
this bloody book.

RYAN
He's not the only one. People stare
at me in the street. I can't face
anyone anymore.

SPATE
You're paranoid.

JOHNSON
Give us a break. We don't even know
if what she says is true. Is it?

SPATE
What?

RYAN
The stuff in the book?

SPATE
How the hell would I know. I
haven't read it.

RYAN
Well you'd better hurry up and do
so. Our livelihood's on the line.

SPATE
I'm not interested in what that
crackpot has to say.

JOHNSON
You should be. It's in nearly every
library around the country.
(MORE)

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Besides, you're named on almost every page.

RYAN

It's advertised on Billboards on all major highways in my State.

JOHNSON

Mine too. Can't escape it.

RYAN

Here too. Saw one as I came in from the airport. He obviously hasn't seen any.

SPATE

(concerned)

Don't know.

RYAN

Better keep him away from the highways Kevin or he'll really go berserk. I...

Stops. His face goes pale.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Oh my God I just realized. There's enough evidence in this book for police to investigate all of us.

JOHNSON

Probably already started.

RYAN

He's got no power against this, Kevin. I've got to get out.

JOHNSON

I've just wasted fifteen years of my life. Who's going to give an ex-Eldon exec a job?

SPATE

You gutless wonders. When you were getting massive bonuses - going to his parties and the all-expenses-paid first class trips you didn't care HOW he made his money. Now there's a little hiccup you're out the door?

RYAN

If you want us to stay and defend the company you've got to give us something.

JOHNSON

You owe it to us or we'll have no alternative.

SPATE

What sort of blackmail is this? I don't give a stuff whether you stay or go?

RYAN

Do it for yourself.

Spate does not respond.

Jacobs turns from windows calmer.

Silence. All eyes upon him.

JACOBS

I want her dead.

Gasping followed by deadly silence.

COOMBES

I'd be very careful what you say here.

DEAVIN

If anything happens to her everyone will know you're involved.

JACOBS

(to Deavin)

Fuck you. They'd have to prove it first. And I've got the fucking police force in my pocket.

COOMBES

Maybe - just saying - she's got a very high profile. If anything happens to her, real questions 'ill be asked.

JACOBS

(to Coombes)

Listen you fucking pip-squeak, I'm about to go broke because of this fucking book and you want me to go pussyfooting around that fucking bitch?... It ain't gonna happen.

DEAVIN

Listen to him John. You don't want to finish up in gaol.

Ryan whispers to Johnson.

RYAN

No matter what he thinks he can do -
no matter how well he covers his
tracks - this stuff has a way of
getting out.

DEAVIN

(to Jacobs)

She's even had a stop put on
lawyers lending client funds.

JACOBS

(to Deavin)

Don't YOU fucking cry to me. If you
hadn't sold her out to all and
sundry we wouldn't be in this
fucking mess. You're just too
fucking greedy.

Deavin looks away.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

I don't give a fuck how you clowns
do this - but I want every fucking
bookstore carrying this rubbish
liquidated.

COOMBES

How do you propose we do that?

JACOBS

I've just said I don't give a fuck
how. Get it done. Stop circulation.

COOMBES

Bit late for that.

DEAVIN

(to Jacobs)

It'd be foolish to do anything that
compounds the problem. Probably
best if no attention at all is
drawn to it.

JACOBS

(annoyed)

I think you fuckers forget who I
am. I quashed the Crime Commission
Investigation didn't I... I put her
company into liquidation. That's
what I do. I squash people.

Silence.

DEAVIN

Yes. But I think this requires a
degree of caution.

JACOBS

What fucker would have the fucking balls to prosecute me?... They're all too fucking gutless.

COOMBES

She's not. Names everybody. Obviously not scared of anyone.

JACOBS

What is it with you and this fucking bitch? You fucking her or something?

COOMBES

I don't even know the lady, but she's outsmarted you.

Spate interjects.

SPATE

(to Jacobs)

Think we should just steer clear of her.

Coombes continues.

COOMBES

For a smart man you fucked up. You didn't get the China deal or her properties and now you've got no hope of moving the irrefutable Charge she's got over her company's assets.

Deavin interjects.

DEAVIN

Let it go John.

Coombes continues.

COOMBES

Yep. No point complaining now. You've unleashed a tiger whose gnawing at the flesh of all who crossed her. My money's on her.

DEAVIN

We don't want any excuse for police.

JACOBS

What the fuck... what the fuck are you idiots saying? Think I should just sit and go broke because of one fucking bitch? Not on your fucking life.

Jacobs strides to his desk.

SPATE
(to Jacobs)
I'm sure it'll pass. Just like
yesterday's news.

JACOBS
Okay that's enough. Get out - all
of you. I've got to explain this
bullshit to the PM. She's even
named his fucking ministers. What a
fucking bitch.

SPATE
Take it easy John.

JACOBS
I'll get her. I swear I'll make her
pay. She'll wish she was never on
this fucking planet.

Gulping last of his drink.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Piss-off all of you.

Looking at Spate.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
You stay.

All exit. Spate looks at Jacobs his face pale in expectation.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
You know what to do.

Spate nods. Exits.

Jacobs picks up phone.

JACOBS (CONT'D)
Trudy get in here.

EXT. JACOBS' BUILDING. MORNING.

Building cordoned-off with Police tape - Crime Scene.
Forensic Investigators searching internal parameters. People
gathering around taped compound. MALE ONLOOKER (30) walking
past sees commotion. Stops. Looks enquiringly. Approaches
FEMALE ONLOOKER (20) straining to get a better look.

MALE ONLOOKER
What's happened?

FEMALE ONLOOKER

Not sure. Someone said something
about a murder.

MALE ONLOOKER

Really?... Boy!... Any idea who?

FEMALE ONLOOKER

Guy called Jacobs.

FADE OUT.