

THE GOOD (BAD) SHEPARD
A FIVE PART SERIES

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

A female GATE AGENT stands behind an airline counter scanning the floor for stragglers, one of whom is FISCHER, an ordinary-looking white man in his 40s. A few PASSENGERS on standby shift around anxiously. The Gate Agent makes an announcement over the intercom.

GATE AGENT

(Into microphone)

This will serve as the final boarding call for Delta flight 701, nonstop to Los Angeles, departing at seven o'clock from Gate B20. All ticketed passengers should proceed at once to the gate.

The moment the Gate Agent takes her thumb off the mike, TRACY gets in her face. Tracy, a tall, professional-looking woman also in her 40s wears a stylish black suit cut above the knee, and expensive heels that show off her toned legs.

TRACY

Listen. You've got to let me on that flight. I absolutely have to be in LA by noon. I'm mediating a dispute--

The Gate Agent turns away, disinterested in listening to the pleas of a latecomer.

GATE AGENT

--Impossible.

TRACY

I know you're deadheading at least one stewardess. Give me her seat and send her on the next flight.

The Gate Agent serves Tracy a look.

GATE AGENT

We don't call them stewardesses. They're flight attendants now.

Tracy glowers at the Gate Agent. Before tempers flare out of proportion, Fischer steps up to the counter. In heels, Tracy towers over him.

FISCHER

I don't mean to butt in, but I couldn't help overhearing your predicament, ma'am. I'd be happy to trade my seat with you for one on the next flight. I'm in no hurry.

TRACY

Really? Oh, my. That's very generous of you sir, but I wouldn't want you to miss your flight.

Tracy's expression makes it clear she intends to accept the offer in the end.

FISCHER

It really is no trouble, ma'am, no troub--

Tracy extends her hand which Fischer shakes.

TRACY

--Tracy Shepard.

FISCHER

OK, Tracy. No trouble at all. I know all about deadlines and business commitments and that kind of stuff. Take my place, I insist.

TRACY

Why, I can't thank you enough, Mr.--

FISCHER

--Cuttbate, Fischer Cuttbate. I go by Fish.

TRACY

Really? Fish? I mean, thank you so much... Fish.

Familiar with how rich people always get their way, the Gate Agent already has a boarding pass ready. Tracy walks to the jetway and just before disappearing waves to Fischer. Fischer waves back and walks toward an airport bar.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM/LA - DAY

Two groups of BUSINESSMEN mill around on opposite sides of a long conference table, talking, drinking coffee, eating bagels and donuts. Occasionally members of one group look with contempt at their counterparts across the table.

Tracy stands at the head of the conference table, checking her watch. RON, a big man suffering from acromegaly approaches Tracy.

RON

Ms. Shepard? I'm Ron Slomsky, CFO for NanoNano. We're glad you could make it out here on time.

TRACY

So am I. I almost missed the flight.

RON

That's what I heard.

TRACY

You did? Who told--

MATT - late-20s, handsome, stylish haircut, elegantly casual clothes - interrupts.

MATT

--Hi. Matt Blankenschein, CEO and founder of NanoNano. Can we get started?

TRACY

Let's go.

Matt addresses the crowd.

MATT

OK, everyone. Take a seat and try not to defile one another. You all know why we're here. This is Tracy Shepard. She's going to mediate the dispute between our companies. I'm Matt Blankenschein of NanoNano and this fine gentleman...

Matt gestures to FOGLE, a 60-year-old portly businessman sporting a comb-over.

MATT (CONT'D)

...is Sumner Fogle, Chief of PicoTech.

FOGLE nods to the rest of the Businessmen.

MATT (CONT'D)

You wanna say anything, Sumner?

FOGLE

Just this: Can we stop fucking around and get on with business?

TRACY

OK. Thanks for that input, Mr. Fogle.

Tracy addresses the audience.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, together you own 65 percent of the nanotechnology market. Congratulations. Of course, you want more. Greed is good, right? That's what they say in the movies.

(beat)

Let me tell you something: lust trumps greed. Greed clarifies, but lust compels. The greedy die with the gout, the lustful go out in the saddle. While you all sit here in this stuffy conference room, enjoying artisan bagels and fair-trade coffee, your competition - however meager - is chasing after your clients with a vicious hard-on. Lusting after your business.

The Businessmen look around at each other. Did she just say "hard-on"?

TRACY (CONT'D)

The world of nanotechnology is moving fast. You're losing share while you lock heads over patent violations, employee poaching, slimy marketing campaigns--

FOGLE

(Points at Matt)

--Just so you know, it was NanoNano that escalated this when they hacked into our database and stole the design specs--

BUSINESSMAN #1

--That's bullshit and you know it, Fogle! One of the assholes you fired posted those specs on Slashdot--

TRACY

--Come now, gentlemen, that's not how you're going to resolve--

BUSINESSMAN #1

--Yeah!? And what do you propose, Mrs. Mediator?

TRACY

Well, I could ask all of you to lay your cocks on the table and I'll choose the winner with a ruler... or you can shut up for a nanosecond and let me outline a plan that no one will like but no one will completely despise either.

Tracy scans the Businessmen sternly, leaning forward supported by both hands on the table. The Businessmen sit back ready to hear the proposal.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Good. Now let's look at the net present value of the damage each of you will inflict on each other absent a resolution.

Tracy presses a button, projecting a graph on a screen.

TRACY (CONT'D)

The y-axis is in millions of dollars.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM/LA - DAY (LATER)

Without sound Tracy lectures the Businessmen who then engage in a vigorous argument. Tracy balls them out but two of them begin jostling. Tracy shakes her head and smirks at the childish behavior. Ron separates them and fellow Businessmen lead the two jostling fools back to their seats. Tracy resumes her presentation. Fogle walks to a corner of the Conference Room and lights a cigarette. Matt follows him. The two begin a conversation.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM/LA - DAY (LATER)

Tracy sits near Matt who surreptitiously ogles her feet. Fogle fiddles with a pen.

TRACY

OK, so it all comes down to NanoNano licensing a couple patents as penance for...

(Quotes with fingers)

... "borrowing" the design specs from PicoTech. No more talk about stealing.

MATT

Listen. It's been a very long day. What's a couple patents between enemies. I'm not going to speak for Sumner, but he and I--

FOGLE

--You're gonna speak for me anyway, aren't you Blankenschein?

MATT

Me and Sumner are copacetic - right Summy?

Fogle grimaces, then relents.

FOGLE

Shit. Yeah. Copa-fucking-cetic.

TRACY

Fantastic. Shake on it.

After the two exchange a perfunctory handshake, Fogle retreats to his team of Businessmen. Matt lingers by Tracy.

MATT

Impressive, Ms. Shepard. Tracy. You've got quite a pair for a lady.

TRACY

Well, thank you... I guess.

MATT

If someone told me yesterday that I'd be shaking hands today with that mick leprechaun, I'd've shit in his hat. But it's a good deal. Hell, I'm glad the whole fucking episode is finally over.

TRACY

I'm glad you're glad, Mr. Blankenschein.

MATT

Matt.

(beat)

Yeah, I'm glad it's over. Now we can proceed to Defcon One - nuclear winter for PicoTech. What's next for you, Tracy?

TRACY

Me? Go back to the hotel. Shower off the coating of testosterone. Have a cocktail by the pool.

MATT

No, I meant--

TRACY

--My next mediation? As I recall, it's a dispute over oil leases in Texas. Someone probably laid pipe where they shouldn't have.

Matt grins.

EXT. FANCY LA HOTEL - NIGHT

Casually dressed, Tracy lounges with a cocktail by a lighted pool as TONEY TYPES swim and carouse. At a cabana nearby, FAMOUS MOVIE PEOPLE argue over the terms of a movie contract. Tracy shakes her head at what seems to be a looming disagreement seeking a resolution. Her cell phone RINGS.

TRACY

Tracy Shepard.

(beat)

Oh, hello, Matt.

(beat)

Tomorrow? I'd love to, but I'm flying back to New York early.

(beat)

OK. I promise. Next time I'm out this way. Yes. I will. Thanks.

INT. JET - DAY

Tracy walks onto the Jet looking sharp and confident. A slouching, rumped-looking Fischer sits in the aisle seat of first class reading a newspaper. Tracy is surprised to see him.

TRACY

Fisch...er? Is that you?

Delighted to see Tracy again, Fischer folds his newspaper and straightens up from his slouch.

FISCHER

Well, good morning, Tracy. How are you? Did you make it on time to your meeting the other day?

Fischer stands to let Tracy pass in front of him.

TRACY

Excellent. And yes, thanks to you I made my meeting.

FISCHER

(Sniffing)

Hmmm... Van Cleef and Arpels?

TRACY

That's right. Very good.

Tracy takes her seat by the window.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I can't tell you enough how grateful I am to you for giving up your seat. You're my white knight, Fischer. I wish I could make it up to you.

FISCHER

Think nothing of it. My meeting with the venture capitalists wasn't until the next day. And please, call me Fish.

Tracy kicks off her designer shoes. Fischer notes the fine definition of her feet.

TRACY

You know, Fish, I travel all over the country for my business, and that was the first time I almost got bumped. My driver overslept and I got to the airport just before the flight took off.

(beat)

I wouldn't want you to think I'm some kind of a scatterbrain.

FISCHER

Hey, it can happen to anyone, Tracy. Bottom line: you got on the plane and made your meeting.

(MORE)

FISCHER (CONT'D)

Someone else might've caved in and waited on standby - or worse, gone home and cried about it. Your perseverance paid off.

Tracy smiles in appreciation for the compliment.

INT. JET - DAY (LATER)

Tracy listens to music. Fischer reads "A Life Decoded."
Tracy studies the book cover, then pulls out the earbuds.

TRACY

You had a meeting with venture capitalists? What sort of business are you in, Fischer?

Fischer puts down the book.

FISCHER

I co-own a biotech firm with my twin brother Fletcher. RodCone Laboratories. I'm sure you've never heard of it.

Tracy shakes her head.

FISCHER (CONT'D)

We're developing a therapy for a rare ophthalmologic affliction, and so far all the preliminary test results are encouraging.

Fischer retrieves a business card and hands it to Tracy.

FISCHER (CONT'D)

We're about ready to start clinical trials. That's when the serious financing is critical, hence my meeting with the VCs.

TRACY

What's the rare eye affliction?

FISCHER

Retinitis pigmentosa.

TRACY

My God!

FISCHER

It's a progressive retinal dystrophy.

TRACY

I know!

FISCHER

It starts with tunnel vision and usually leads to total blindness.

TRACY

I know! My father has it. He's essentially blind now, poor man. He used to teach Physics at Columbia. But now...

Feeling weepy, Tracy turns away before continuing.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I'm so excited you're working on a cure. What kind of results have you seen so far?

FISCHER

Well, first off, it's not a cure. It's a therapy. Patients would have to take a pill every day. But back to your question: the results are remarkable. Up to 75 percent regeneration of retinal cells.

TRACY

That sounds impressive. So what did the VCs say, Fish? When will you start the clinical trials?

FISCHER

That's the problem. My brother Fletch doesn't want to bring new investors into the business. He's worried they'll take over and interfere with the research.

TRACY

Oh, no.

FISCHER

He means well I suppose, but he has no concept of what it takes to launch a new drug into the market. The VCs are hot for the project, but Fletch won't budge. And without the funding, we're stuck.

TRACY

Why don't you bring in the VCs anyway? Go around your brother.

FISCHER

Fletch and I inherited the business from our father. He set it up so we each own exactly 50 percent of the shares. I can't make a major decision like bringing new investors in without Fletch's vote.

TRACY

I see.

FISCHER

What really pisses me off - excuse me - what irritates me most is that Fletch is completely hands-off. He never gets involved in day-to-day operations. I haven't even seen him in three months.

Silence as Fischer sulks and Tracy mulls the possibilities.

TRACY

Y'know, Fish, I'm a pretty good professional mediator. I help resolve differences for a living. Perhaps I could be of assistance in getting your brother to change his mind. I really would hate for progress on your new drug to grind to a halt.

(beat)

Besides, I owe you one for giving up your seat the other day.

FISCHER

Really, Tracy, you don't owe--

TRACY

--I want to help Fischer. I really do. My father... Let me help you on this.

FISCHER

Well, OK. That would be great.

TRACY

Perfect.

FISCHER

I bet top mediators like you charge more than the value of a first class seat. Let me at least pay you something.

TRACY
That's not--

FISCHER
--I insist.

TRACY
Well, if it'll make you feel
better, let's say... \$1,000?

FISCHER
Deal!

TRACY
My favorite word.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Fischer is on the sidewalk talking on a cell phone. Tracy struts out of the airport pulling a stylish suitcase and heads directly for her waiting limo where a DRIVER stands by the open back door. Fischer spots Tracy and runs to her just as she steps into the limo.

FISCHER
Tracy!

TRACY
(Startled)
Fish?

FISCHER
I was wondering, Tracy, if you'd
like to see a presentation on the
eye drug. I'd love to tell you all
about it. Interested?

TRACY
Sure. That'd be great.

FISCHER
Alright. I'll set it up.

The Limo drives off into a sea of yellow cabs.

INT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY

Relaxed in the back seat, Tracy speaks on the phone to her
SECRETARY.

TRACY
 Midland, Texas? OK. Not next
 week, I have that other thing.
 (beat)
 Shale oil? Alright. Pull the base
 research. What else, Carla?
 (beat)
 Woody Johnson? What's that? Some
 kind of dildo?

Chuckling, she cups the phone and calls to her Driver.

TRACY (CONT'D)
 Yusef, take the Whitestone.

Tracy continues her phone conversation.

TRACY (CONT'D)
 The owner of the New York Jets?
 Player contract issue, right? OK.
 Did you tell my father I'm coming
 over?
 (beat)
 Thanks, Carla.

EXT. WHITESTONE BRIDGE - DAY

Tracy's Limo crosses the bridge.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Fischer shuffles to a crappy car covered in pigeon droppings and throws a piece of luggage into the truck. He hops into driver's seat, turns the key and hears a series of CLICKS suggesting the battery is quite dead. Fischer bangs the steering wheel with both hands.

EXT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Tracy's limo pulls to the curb in front of DAD's Brownstone. The Driver opens the door and Tracy proceeds up the steps to the door. She pulls keys from her purse, unlocks the door and enters.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy walks in and places her purse on the kitchen counter.

TRACY
 Dad? It's me. Where are you?

O.S. a toilet FLUSHES followed by the SOUND of water running then a THUMP of an object falling on the floor.

DAD (O.S.)

Damn it!

TRACY

Dad? Are you alright?

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/BATHROOM - DAY

Dad stands at an old-fashioned pedestal sink gripping it with both hands for support. He is frail-looking and wears a belt and suspenders. His blind eyes wander.

DAD

Tracy Rae? I'm in here. I dropped the soap. Can you help me find it?

Tracy enters the Bathroom, locates the soap, rinses it off and places it in Dad's palm.

TRACY

I'll be in the living room. Do you want anything from the kitchen?

DAD

How about some juice? I'll be out in a jiff.

Tracy rubs Dad's shoulder and pecks him on the cheek.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy roots around in the refrigerator and pulls out a quart of milk. She sniffs it and recoils. Tracy dumps the lumpy contents down the sink and reaches into a drawer for a towel. Hidden under the towel is a semi-automatic pistol. She's disturbed at the presence of a weapon.

Dad feels his way into the kitchen, running his hand along the wall.

DAD

So nice of you to visit me. What's new, Tracy Rae?

Tracy quickly stows the pistol in her purse. She pours a glass of juice, takes Dad by the arm and leads him out.

TRACY

Nothing special, Dad.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dad grabs at the air around him until he latches onto the arms of his chair. He sits down with an audible SIGH. Tracy hands Dad the glass of juice and takes a seat nearby.

TRACY

Well, maybe one thing. I met the owner of a bio-tech lab here in the City. He's working on a cure, or a therapy, something - for retinitis.

Dad jerks his head from side to side like a lizard, attempting to pinpoint his daughter's exact whereabouts.

DAD

Really!? That's fantastic! When will it be available?

TRACY

They're almost ready to go to clinical trial, but they need a cash infusion. The owner wants to bring some venture capitalists in, but his brother doesn't want to. Right now they're stuck.

DAD

Hell, Tracy. You're a mediator. Can't you get them to agree?

TRACY

That's what I hope to do, Dad. I'm going to Jersey in a few days to meet with the brother.

DAD

Tell them I'll be a volunteer.

TRACY

Okay, Dad. But it's still experim--

DAD

--It's been four years since I've read a book, or seen your face. Please, I'll happily be their guinea pig. Tell them.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LOBBY - DAY

The Lobby of the Office Building is a dusty, cramped, poorly lit space. A doorman's desk sits by the wall unattended.

Tracy scans the environs then steps up to a glass case displaying the names of various businesses that occupy the building. She spots the entry "RodCone Labs - Suite 212."

EXT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Tracy stands outside a plain door with the number 212 stenciled on it. She presses a button and is buzzed in.

INT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Tracy walks into Suite 212 which is occupied by a few WORKERS who sit at steel desks arranged in a row. A RECEPTIONIST stands and greets Tracy.

RECEPTIONIST

Ms. Shepard? Mr. Cuttbate is expecting you. Can I get you something to drink?

TRACY

Nothing, thanks.

The Receptionist leads Tracy toward the Conference Room. She glances down at Tracy's shoes.

RECEPTIONIST

I love your shoes, Ms. Shepard. Blahniks?

TRACY

Christian Louboutin.

The Receptionist nods, impressed.

INT. SUITE 212/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The Receptionist escorts Tracy into the Conference Room and leaves. Three men who are seated at the long conference table stand up to greet Tracy. They are Fischer, KNECHT and TORRENT. Knecht, RodCone's business director is mid-30s, dressed in a dark business suit. Sixty-something Torrent, the chief scientist wears a white lab coat.

FISCHER

Tracy. I'm glad you could make it. Can I get you something?

TRACY

No thanks, Fischer. I'm good.

Fischer leads Tracy to a seat at the table. He sits next to her; Knecht sits across the table. Torrent stands awkwardly at a lectern.

FISCHER

Tracy Shepard. Let me introduce you to my business director, Chad Knecht.

Fischer pronounces his name "Connect." Knecht reaches across the table and shakes Tracy's hand.

FISCHER (CONT'D)

And our chief scientist, Dr. James Torrent.

Torrent nods from the lectern.

FISCHER (CONT'D)

OK, Tracy, I know you're busy, so we won't waste any time. Jim there will give you a high-level overview of our research. I think you'll be impressed.

TRACY

I hope so.

FISCHER

Yes... And then when you meet with Fletcher, you'll be fully prepared.
(beat)
OK, Jim. Take it away.

Torrent presses a button on the lectern causing the lights to dim. A gruesome picture of a needle piercing an eyeball appears on the screen. Tracy recoils in disgust.

TORRENT

This is how some researchers have foolishly tried to cure retinitis pigmentosa, Ms. Shepard.

TRACY

(Grimacing)
Good lord.

TORRENT

We're working on a better way. A therapy. A pill patients will take every day to gradually improve and maintain the quality of their vision. Here's what we're doing.

Torrent clicks a button and a ball-and-stick model of a molecule appears on the screen.

TORRENT (CONT'D)
This is a protein called rhodopsin.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUITE 212/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (LATER)

A large "?" appears on screen. Torrent raises the lights.

TORRENT
Any questions, Ms. Shepard?

TRACY
I don't know. I guess not. That was pretty technical, but I think I got the basics. Really remarkable.

FISCHER
It's expensive work, Tracy. We really need to get Fletch on board with the VCs. I hope you can use your mediation magic on him - although I wouldn't be surprised if he refuses to see you.

TRACY
Would it surprise you if Fletcher already agreed to meet with me?

FISCHER
You mean he--

TRACY
--I'm taking the train to Hamilton Square tomorrow morning.

FISCHER
Wow. You're good.

Tracy smiles, pleased to receive Fischer's praise. She stands up, followed by Fischer and Knecht, and heads for the door. Just before exiting Knecht intercepts her.

KNECHT
Thank you for coming by today, Ms. Shepard. I'll email you a copy of Dr. Torrent's presentation.

FISCHER

Let me know how you make out with
Fletcher, Tracy.

TRACY

I certainly will. Bye bye.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tracy enters her spacious apartment on Sutton Place with its handsome view of the Queensborough Bridge. An original Kandinsky painting hangs on the wall. Tracy checks mail.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Tracy sheds her clothing. She places her expensive shoes into a slot in her closet which holds 100 pairs.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - DAY

Tracy lounges in a luxurious bath.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Wearing a terrycloth robe, her hair wrapped with a towel, Tracy reaches into a dresser drawer, gingerly removes her father's pistol by the grip and carefully looks it over.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

With the pistol atop her desk Tracy sits in front of her laptop typing.

TRACY'S P.O.V. - GOOGLE SEARCH BAR

Into which she types "how to disarm a pistol"

BACK TO SCENE

Tracy studies the laptop screen, clicks on a website and reads the instructions. Holding the pistol at arm's length while pointing it at the floor she turns her head to the side and hesitantly presses a button causing the magazine to pop out and fall to the floor. Shaking her head sadly she retrieves the magazine and stashes it and the pistol into her drawer.

Tracy then turns her attention to the laptop.

TRACY'S P.O.V. - EMAIL PROGRAM

Where a long list of emails await her attention, among them one from Chad Knecht titled "RodCone Presentation."

BACK TO SCENE

Tracy prints out the document sent by Knecht.

EXT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW/PORCH - DAY

Toting a rich-looking alligator briefcase, Tracy rings the doorbell. After a moment during which Tracy paces the porch, FLETCHER opens the door. He holds a telephone to his ear. Fletcher's dirty blonde hair is combed straight back, and he sports huge, boxy eyeglasses. Tracy extends her hand.

TRACY

Good afternoon, Mr.--

FLETCHER

--You're early. Can you wait here until I'm done with my call?

Fletcher shuts the door in her face.

EXT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW/PORCH - DAY (LATER)

Tracy paces the porch, checks her watch, and just as she's about to give up, Fletcher opens the door. Tracy turns around and steps up.

FLETCHER

I'm ready now Mrs. Shepard.

TRACY

Ms. Shepard. Tracy Shepard. How do you do, Mr. Cuttbate.

Tracy extends her hand again. Fletcher hesitates, then belated shakes it. Fletcher turns and Tracy follows him in.

INT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW - DAY

Fletcher's Bungalow is cluttered with books and magazines, an electric guitar, and an easel propping up a painting of a surgical-like image vaguely reminiscent of Frida Kahlo's pain-filled self-portraits. Tracy examines the surroundings.

TRACY

What a pleasant house you have here, Mr. Cuttbate.

FLETCHER

No, it's not.

(beat)

Have a seat.

Tracy looks around for the least-grungy chair and sits down, placing her briefcase on the floor. Fletcher plops into an overstuffed divan.

TRACY

I saw a very interesting presentation about your company's drug the other day. It seems like it could be revolutionary. But I'm just a layperson. What's your assessment?

FLETCHER

It has its pluses and minuses.

TRACY

Do you think it's ready for clinical trials?

FLETCHER

Maybe.

SOUND - TELEPHONE RINGING O.S.

Fletcher rises and exits. Irritated, Tracy wanders around the room, picking up some magazines on the coffee table. She runs her fingers across the strings of Fletcher's electric guitar. Fletcher returns, startling Tracy.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. Where were we?

The two retake their seats.

TRACY

We were talking about... the drug. Is it ready to be tested, in your opinion?

Fletcher waits a long time to respond.

FLETCHER

Possibly.

TRACY

Look, Mr. Cuttbate. I only came--

FLETCHER

--Why did you come out here? Why do you care so much about this, Mrs. Shepard? I don't suppose you know someone with retinitis?

TRACY

(Angrily)

Yes, as a matter of fact I do. Someone I love very much. My father. And it disturbs me greatly that a promising cure might not see the light of day because you can't come to terms on something as mundane as financing. It's a goddamned shame.

Tracy stands abruptly and reaches for her briefcase. Fletcher's imperious demeanor melts into that of a chastened school-boy.

FLETCHER

Wait. Please don't go, Ms. Shep... Tracy. I... I'm really sorry for acting like a jerk. I mean it... sincerely. Please, sit down. Fischer didn't tell me your father has retinitis.

(beat)

Can he... see at all?

Tracy shakes her head.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry to hear that. Please, Tracy. Don't go.

Tracy sits back down slowly.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

(Teary-eyed)

Can I get you something to drink?

INT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW - DAY (LATER)

Tracy sits next to Fletcher on the divan sipping lemonade. A notebook full of mathematical equations and scribbles sits open on the coffee table.

FLETCHER

I suppose Jim Torrent told you all about the wonderful therapy he's working on. The daily regimen?

TRACY

Mmm-hmm. I got a copy of his presentation yesterday.

FLETCHER

A therapy... not a cure. You understand the difference, right? Kind of like blood pressure medicine, or Somavert - you have to take it every day for the rest of your life. And if you stop taking it, you regress. Understand?

TRACY

I understand.
(beat)
What's Somavert?

Fletcher squirms a moment.

FLETCHER

Uh, it's, uh, a treatment for acromegaly. Anyway, what would you say if I told you I'm working on an actual cure for retinitis?

Fletcher taps the notebook proudly.

TRACY

Really? That's fantastic.

FLETCHER

Not according to Fischer. You see, a life-long therapy stands to make a hell of lot more money than a one time cure. He and his men don't want to sell a cure. Not good business.

TRACY

But--

FLETCHER

--I'm against Fischer's plan to bring in the venture capitalists because they don't care about cures and quality of life and all that shit... excuse me. It's all about the money to them.

TRACY

Hmmm. I can see your point. How far along are you with your cure?

Fletcher looks down at his hands sheepishly.

FLETCHER

Well, uh, it's in the early study phase. Not too far along, actually.

(beat)

If I could only get the money to take it all to the next level... I wish I was good with business like my brother.

(beat)

Fischer never lets me see any of the company's finances. For all I know, he's gonna cut me out of the action if his drug gets FDA approval and RodCone goes public.

TRACY

Do you really think that's a possibility?

FLETCHER

I wouldn't put it past him.

TRACY

That's a pretty seri--

FLETCHER

--Listen, Tracy. I behaved like a boor earlier because I thought you were just another one of Fischer's mind-games. But I know you're here because you're genuinely interested in a cure for this terrible disease. More lemonade?

TRACY

Sure.

Fletcher pours some lemonade into Tracy's glass.

FLETCHER

It was nice of you to come all the way out here. I thought it would be a waste of time, but I'm glad I got the opportunity to explain my side.

TRACY

Me too.

FLETCHER

Uh, Tracy, don't tell Fischer about what I said about him cutting me out of the action. I shouldn't have mentioned that. And don't tell him about my work on a cure either. It's way too soon for that, OK?

TRACY

If you say so. It's important that my clients trust me.

FLETCHER

I trust you, Tracy.

TRACY

Well, thank you.

Tracy scans the room and sets her eyes on the guitar.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Do you play the guitar, Fletch?

FLETCHER

Yeah, a little. Well actually, I've been playing since I was about nine. I bought that Fender 20 years ago at an auction - it's the same kind that Keith Richards plays. 1955 Telecaster.

Fletcher walks to the guitar. He turns on the amp and plugs in the cord which emits a SCREECH. Tracy looks on with concern that he might actually start playing. A horn HONKS O.S.

TRACY

I really should get--

Fletcher faithfully plays the first bars of "Honky Tonk Women." Tracy nods, impressed.

FLETCHER

--Who's your favorite rock star, Tracy?

TRACY

Geez, that's tough. I was a Bowie fan as a kid. Ziggy Stardust period, y'know, glitter--

Fletcher plays the opening chords of "Moonage Daydream."

FLETCHER
 (Singing)
 --I'm an alligator. I'm a mama-
 papa coming for you.

Fletcher nods to Tracy who hesitates at first then blurts out the next lyric.

TRACY
 (Singing)
 I'm a space invader, I'll be a rock-
 n-rollin' bitch for you.

Fletcher nods encouragingly.

FLETCHER
 Keep your mouth shut, you're
 squawking like a pink monkey bird.
 And I'm busting up my brains for
 the words. Keep your 'lectric eye
 on me babe.

Tracy and Fletcher sing along together.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
 Put your ray gun to my head. Press
 your space face close to mine,
 love. Freak out in a moonage
 daydream!

Tracy laughs happily and applauds.

TRACY
 Wow, Fletch. You're really good.
 Do you play in a band?

FLETCHER
 Not anymore. No time.

Tracy reaches for the glass of lemonade, just as a car horn HONKS O.S. She glances at her watch and bolts upright.

TRACY
 Shit! The train back to the City
 leaves in 20 minutes. I'm sorry,
 Fletch, I've got to go. I enjoyed
 spending the afternoon with you.

Fletcher places the guitar back on its stand.

FLETCHER
Me too. But I'm glad it turned out
better than it began.

Fletcher escorts Tracy to the door.

EXT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW/PORCH - DAY

Fletcher shakes Tracy's hand.

FLETCHER
Have a good trip back to the city,
Tracy.

TRACY
Thanks, Fletch. I will.

Fletcher watches Tracy walk to a cab waiting at the curb. He continues to watch as the cab drives down the lane and out of sight, then he walks back inside, singing to himself.

FLETCHER
(Singing)
Don't fake it baby. Lay the real
thing on me.

INT. TRAIN (TRAVELING) - DAY

Tracy sits in a first class seat reading Fortune as the train lumbers along. She puts down the magazine, retrieves the printout of RodCone Labs' presentation and thumbs through the material until she reaches a page with a big question mark like the one at the end of Torrent's pitch. Tracy discovers several additional pages marked "Confidential" that contain business spreadsheets.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy sits at her desk, poring through the business spreadsheets and consulting her laptop. She sits back and shakes her head. She circles some numbers and writes the word "WTF" next to them.

Tracy's laptop makes a "ping" SOUND. She sees an email has arrived from Knecht.

TRACY'S P.O.V. - EMAIL

Which reads "Dear Ms. Shepard, I accidentally sent you the wrong file yesterday.

Please discard it and replace it with the corrected version which I have attached. Let me know if you have any questions. Sincerely, Chad Knecht."

BACK TO SCENE

Tracy shakes her head contemptuously.

INT. UPSCALE BAR AND GRILL - DAY

Fletcher, dressed way too casually, and Tracy, looking sharp, arrive at the Bar and Grill. The MAITRE'D escorts the odd couple to a table in the back. He holds the chair for Tracy while casting a disapproving gaze toward the unkempt Fletcher. He presents menus and leaves.

FLETCHER

I'm sure you already guessed this, but I'm not used to going to nice restaurants, especially not with a well-dressed, beautiful woman. I hope I'm not embarrassing you too much, Tracy.

Tracy rolls her eyes as if it's the most ridiculous thing she's ever heard.

TRACY

I'm just glad you could meet me on such short notice. I really thought we should get together right away. It's about the financials of RodCone Labs.

A WAITER arrives. Fletcher picks up the menu.

WAITER

Pardon me, madame, sir. Would you care for sparkling, still, tap?

Tracy looks to Fletcher, but he's engrossed in the menu.

TRACY

Still, please.

FLETCHER

What's con-fit?

WAITER

Cone-fee, sir, is the French method of preparing salted duck legs in rendered fat.

Fletcher snaps the menu shut.

FLETCHER
Sounds good, that's what I'll have.
Tracy, what about you?

Unprepared to order so quickly, Tracy fumbles with the menu.

TRACY
I'll have the... uh, the tuna,
medium rare.

WAITER
Very good, madame, sir.

The Waiter leaves with the menus.

FLETCHER
What's the bad news you came to
tell me, Tracy? I assume it's
something bad, right?

Tracy pulls the RodCone presentation from her purse and lays it out on the table. Fletcher cranes his neck to view it.

TRACY
Chad Knecht emailed me these
confidential spreadsheets by
mistake.

FLETCHER
Jesus, what is all this stuff?

Tracy points to a chart with a butter knife.

TRACY
In this column are actual expenses,
and the one next to it seems to
contain fabricated expenses. And
these figures here are used to
calculate a phony I.R.R.

FLETCHER
What's that?

TRACY
I.R.R? Internal rate of return?
It's kind of like N.P.V... uh, net
present value--

FLETCHER
--How do you know all this gorp?

TRACY

I have an MBA. I worked at Salomon Brothers before I started my own mediation company.

FLETCHER

MBA, huh? I'm impressed. Where from?

TRACY

Columbia. My father was a physics professor there.

(beat)

Aren't you concerned about what might be going on at your company? What Fischer might be involved in? It might be serious fraud, Fletch. What are you going to do?

The Waiter arrives with the food.

FLETCHER

Have a nice lunch with you.

TRACY

Seriously, Fletch. I'm concerned for the cure. And for you too, of course. Maybe you should hire a forensic accountant before the whole enterprise folds up and you lose everything.

FLETCHER

You're probably right. I'll call my lawyer. I sure hope Fischer's not involved. That would disappoint me, but not really come as a big surprise.

Fletcher hacks at the duck leg. Tracy places a luscious piece of fatty tuna into her mouth.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

When I was a little boy, my mother - rest her soul - told me I was the first to be born. She told me when I was born Fischer was holding my heel. I think that says it all.

Confused, Tracy tilts her head.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Jacob and Esau? Genesis, chapter 25? Nevermind.

Tracy and Fletcher eat quietly for a moment

TRACY

I couldn't help noticing the painting in your den, Fletch. It kind of reminds me of Frida Kahlo. Did you paint it?

FLETCHER

Yeah. I know it looks like I copied her style, because I did. After Mama went blind--

TRACY

--Your mother was blind?

FLETCHER

Yeah. Glaucoma. Anyway, I came to appreciate how painful blindness can be. That's what I was trying to capture.

(beat)

I bet you know a lot about art, Tracy. Do you have a favorite artist? Van Gogh? Rembrandt?

TRACY

I guess I would say... Wassily Kandinsky.

FLETCHER

Who?

TRACY

Kandinsky. He was a Russian artist. I have one of his paintings.

Tracy sips her water, trying not to come off as an art snob.

FLETCHER

Kandinsky? I'm going to look him up. Is that with a "C"?

TRACY

"K".

FLETCHER

Maybe I can see it sometime.

TRACY

Uh, sure. Maybe. Sometime.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Tracy talks on a cell phone while pacing the lobby of a large Office Building in Midland, Texas.

TRACY

I'm still waiting for those 1990s gas-well leases.

(beat)

Yeah, I got those. I need 1997 through 1999.

(beat)

Hot? Shit, it's already 103 and it's only 11 o'clock. What else?

(beat)

RodCone Labs? What do they want?

(beat)

Well, if it's urgent, alright. Send me those leases ASAP.

Tracy hangs up, takes a seat in a mid-century modern chair facing a fountain and makes another call.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

RodCone Laboratories. How may I help you?

TRACY

This is Tracy Shepard. Someone there asked me to call? Something urgent?

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

Oh, yes. Thank you, Mrs. Shepard. It's been a hectic day. Let me check my notes.

(long pause)

Yes. I'm afraid we can't remit the money for your bill. The one for \$1,000 for... let me see... for alternative dispute resolution? You sent us an invoice last week - well, I'm afraid we can't pay it.

TRACY

Why not?

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

We can't pay for anything right now. The FBI raided our company on Monday and froze our accounts.

Tracy leans forward in the low-slung chair, dumbfounded.

TRACY

What happened? What's going on?
Let me talk to Fischer... Mr.
Cuttbate. I'm a friend of his.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

No one knows where he is. Mr.
Cuttbate disappeared before the FBI
came in. So did Mr. Knecht.

TRACY

I don't... I mean... Well, if he
comes in have him call me.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

I'm sorry, Mrs. Shepard, I have to
go.

TRACY

(Mutters)
Holy shit.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Jet lands on the runway.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY (LATER)

Tracy's limo pulls away from the curb.

EXT. TRACY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The limo pulls to the entrance of Tracy's apartment building.
She strides past the DOORMAN into the building.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tracy sits at her desk inspecting the mail. She tosses one
piece after another into the trash can, stopping at a
particular envelope. She slits open the envelope and pulls
out a check and a letter.

FLETCHER (V.O.)

Dear Tracy, I took your advice and
hired a forensic accountant to
analyze the charts you gave me.
Unfortunately you were right:
someone at the lab was keeping two
sets of books. I decided to call
the FBI.

(MORE)

FLETCHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I know now that many people were
involved, including my brother. I
also learned the lab can't pay its
bills, so please accept the
enclosed personal check from me for
\$1,000 to cover the fee you and
Fischer agreed to. Sincerely,
Fletcher Cuttbate.

Tracy sits back in her chair and twists her hair.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tracy and Dad sit together on the sofa.

TRACY
Honestly, Dad, you wouldn't believe
the way these so-called business
leaders behave. Sometimes I feel
like I'm deciding who gets to play
next with the dump truck in the
sandbox.

DAD
Why don't you cut back on the work?
Take a rest. Travel.

TRACY
I already travel too much.

DAD
Find a nice man. Fall in love.

TRACY
I don't know... I'd like... It's
just sometimes I... I don't know
what's wrong.

Tracy looks down at the floor and rubs her hands together,
then not wanting to be a buzzkill, perks up.

TRACY (CONT'D)
You know what they say: a hard man
is, I mean a good man is hard to
find.
(beat)
Hey Dad, have you ever heard of
Woody Johnson?

DAD
Sure. He owns the Jets.

TRACY

Well, my next assignment - should I choose to accept it - is a contract dispute involving the Jets and some high-flying college fullback or hunchback or--

DAD

--Whatever happened to that lab that was working on a retinitis cure?

TRACY

Uh, they, um, they're still trying to figure it out.

DAD

Oh.

TRACY

But, one of the owners is working on something even better. He just needs money to get it rolling.

DAD

Money? That's all? Why don't you help him out, Tracy?

TRACY

Geez, Dad. I'm not a banker. Besides, he's still far from getting anything into the market. It'll take time.

DAD

I see. Well, actually, I can't.

Tracy checks her watch.

TRACY

I gotta go, Dad. Talk to you later.

Tracy kisses her father's cheek.

DAD

Let me know how the big football player affair turns out.

INT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY

Tracy receives a phone call.

TRACY

Hello?

INTERCUT with Fletcher's Bungalow.

FLETCHER

Tracy, it's Fletch. How're you?
Is this a good time to talk?

TRACY

Sure. I'm heading home. You
really didn't have to send me--

FLETCHER

--I've got something important to
tell you, Trace. I feel a little
stupid for not confiding in you
before, knowing now what a fine
woman you are.

TRACY

What are you talking about, Fletch?

FLETCHER

Can you meet me Friday night for
dinner? I have some things I'd
like to show you. My treat.

TRACY

I, uh, I have to check with my
secretary, y'know. She manages my
calendar.

FLETCHER

Oh.
(Long pause)
OK.

TRACY

Y'know... Screw it. Yes, Fletch,
I would love to have dinner with
you. I'm intrigued. Where shall
we meet?

EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tracy waits on the sidewalk, dressed to kill. From O.C.
Fletcher walks toward Tracy. He also looks
uncharacteristically sharp in a double-breasted suit, white
shirt and stylish tie. Tracy spots him but isn't sure it's
him at first - he looks too good.

TRACY

Fletch?

FLETCHER

Wha'dya think, Trace? Do I look better than I did last time?

Fletcher spins around.

TRACY

Wow, you look great. I'm stunned. I mean, you look sharp.

FLETCHER

It's an Armadillo Zeg-na suit.

TRACY

(Chuckling)
Very nice.

FLETCHER

Needless to say - but I'll say it anyway - you look gorgeous Trace. I hope you like the restaurant.

TRACY

I know I will.

Tracy loops her arm underneath Fletcher's and they walk into the Restaurant.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Fletcher and Tracy sit across from one another at an elegantly set table eating artistically presented food. Wait-staff come and go, filling water glasses, pouring wine.

TRACY

So, after yet another sexist remark about me in front of a client, I decided to quit the world of investment banking and try mediation instead.

FLETCHER

What're you working on next, Tracy?

A WAITER pours the last of a bottle of wine.

WAITER

Excuse me, sir. Would you care for another bottle?

FLETCHER

Sure.

The Waiter leaves with the empty bottle.

TRACY

Mediating a 3-way dispute with the New York Jets, a college football star and his aggrieved agent.

FLETCHER

Kinda like Jerry Maguire, huh?

TRACY

Probably not. This agent sounds like a whiny loser. But I can easily imagine college-boy shouting "show me the money!"

The Waiter returns with a bottle of wine and shows Fletcher the label.

FLETCHER

Is that the same stuff as before?

WAITER

Certainly, sir. Château d'Armailhac, 1996.

The Waiter pours the wine and departs.

TRACY

Fletch, where do you think Fischer went? What's going to happen to the lab - and all the retinitis research?

FLETCHER

I honestly don't know, Trace. Deep down Fischer's a good man. Maybe he got in over his head. No doubt that bastard Knecht was behind it.

(beat)

All this drama throws RodCone Labs into Limbo.

TRACY

It's so sad. I suppose the pressure warped his judgment.

FLETCHER

Doesn't make any difference now.
Whether Fischer was a dupe or the
mastermind, if they find him, he'll
probably do time.

(beat)

Our assets are frozen and the
creditors are starting legal
action.

(beat)

This rabbit is really good. I
never had it before.

TRACY

You're amazing, Fletch. You're so
calm. How do you do it? If it was
me, and my company was in deep
trouble, and my brother was on the
lam, I'd be going crazy.

FLETCHER

I'm optimistic.

TRACY

How come?

The Waiter arrives with food.

FLETCHER

Is that the venison? It looks like
pudding.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

Fletcher and Tracy have moved along into the meal.

FLETCHER

You remember those equations I
showed you back at my house? Those
weren't just theories. A colleague
at Penn State is helping me test
formulas on animals. The results
are more than promising. We're
close to a real cure for retinitis
pigmentosa, Tracy.

TRACY

I don't understand. Are you saying--

The Waiter arrives.

WAITER

--Excuse me madame, sir. May I
bring another bottle of wine.

TRACY

No thank--

FLETCHER

--Absolutely.

The waiter departs.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

I know I led you to believe I was
just messing around, because I
didn't want anyone to know about
it, but, yeah, I'm on the verge of
a real cure.

TRACY

My God, Fletch! That's fantastic!
An actual cure. Why didn't you
show the formula to Fischer? Oh
wait, right, not good for business.
(beat)
I think all this wine is going to
my head.

The waiter returns, pops the cork and refills the glasses.

FLETCHER

That's one reason. But when I
learned he was talking to venture
capitalists, I got worried. Why
share a good thing with a bunch of
clowns who know the cost of
everything and the value of
nothing?

TRACY

So sayeth Oscar Wilde.

Tracy takes a swig of wine.

FLETCHER

Did he say that? I thought I made
it up.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

Tracy picks at a dessert. A half-drunk snifter of Cognac
sits nearby, and she's a bit tight. Fletcher drinks bourbon
from a rocks glass.

TRACY

Y'know, my dad wants t' volunteer
t' be a test subject.

FLETCHER

Well, just like with Fischer's
therapy, I have to line up funding
for clinical trials. That ain't
cheap.

TRACY

What're you gonna do? How're you
gonna get the money, Fletch?

FLETCHER

After my father died, he left Fish
and me each a half million dollars
in stocks and bonds. Fish spent a
good chunk on toys and nice
furniture. I denied myself the
comforts of life and invested.
You've seen my dumpy house. Would
you believe I have more than a
million dollars in savings?

TRACY

Really? That's fantastic. So,
when will you start the clinical
trials?

FLETCHER

After I line up another mil. It'll
cost at least two to get going. I
have to hire some people, buy
insurance, post a bond, deal with a
shitload of FDA bureaucracy.

(beat)

That's why - don't laugh - I'm
meeting with a new vulture capital
firm tomorrow.

TRACY

What? You're gonna take VC money?
I don't und--

FLETCHER

--As much as I despise them, it
seems that's the only way research
turns into a product. Unless
you're a multi-billion dollar
pharmaceutical company. I don't
have a choice, really.

TRACY

Gee, Fletch. I don't know...

The Waiter drops off the check. Fletcher pulls out his wallet and counts out large bills. Tracy sips her Cognac.

FLETCHER

Can I ask you a question?

TRACY

You jus' did.

FLETCHER

Huh? Oh, I get it.

TRACY

(Giggling)

I'm sorry, Fletch. What is it?

FLETCHER

How do you keep your legs in such great shape? You must work out, or swim a lot. You have the most gorgeous legs I've ever seen. And your feet--

Taken aback, Tracy is uncharacteristically flummoxed.

TRACY

--Well, uh, thank you, Fletch. I try. I'm... I'm glad you noticed.

Tracy looks down like a shy schoolgirl and awkwardly examines a fingernail. After a moment, she pushes her hair away from her eyes and smiles.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Ready to go?

EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Fletcher and Tracy stroll the sidewalk outside the Restaurant. Tracy touches Fletcher's shoulder and he turns toward her. As Tracy is taller by a few inches, Fletcher looks up into her somewhat glassy eyes. After a moment, she kisses him on the lips.

TRACY

Would you like to see my apartment?
I could show you my Kandinsky.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy and Fletcher roll around naked in her bed. Tracy moves her head down low. Suddenly, she sits up.

TRACY

Oh my God! Where did you ever...?

The outburst at first startles Fletcher, but he quickly chuckles knowingly.

FLETCHER

It was after a Lou Reed concert--

TRACY

--I didn't know you could get a tattoo on your, um--

FLETCHER

--Penis? Yeah. I guess anything's possible when you're wasted enough. One of my buddies picked out a design of a snake and the guy tattooed it around like it was climbing a tree. It hurt like hell the next day when I sobered up.

TRACY

(Laughing)

I can imagine.

(beat)

Lie back. I wanna try something.

FLETCHER

Uh oh.

TRACY

You said you admire my feet. I caught your brother staring at them. This foot-fetish thing must run in your family.

FLETCHER

Could be.

TRACY

I can peel a banana with my feet.

FLETCHER

Really?

TRACY

Lie back.

Fletcher lies back and a moment later lets out a moan.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Tracy lies in bed motionless. Fletcher tiptoes quietly out of the bathroom fully dressed. Tracy rolls onto her right side and faces Fletcher, groaning in agony.

TRACY

Fletch? What are you doing?

FLETCHER

Good morning, Tracy. I didn't mean to wake you. How're you feeling?

TRACY

Ugh... terrible. I never should've had that second Cognac.

Tracy sits up, then abruptly lies back down.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Ooh... I feel awful.

Suddenly, Tracy bolts past Fletcher into the bathroom. Retching SOUNDS O.S.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY (LATER)

Tracy limps from the bathroom licking her lips. Fletcher waits for her with a glass of water and aspirins.

FLETCHER

I'm sorry you feel so bad. Let me help you back to bed.

Fletcher takes Tracy's arm and walks her toward the bed.

TRACY

I'll be OK. Just let me rest by the window. Would you open it?

Fletcher leads Tracy to a lounge chair and opens the window. He places the glass of water and aspirins on a nearby table.

FLETCHER

I had a wonderful evening, Trace. I'll call you later and let you know how things went with the VCs.

Tracy sits up quickly.

TRACY
I forgot. When is your meeting?

FLETCHER
Three o'clock.

TRACY
Where?

FLETCHER
The Marriott Marquis.

TRACY
I'd like to go with you.

FLETCHER
Really? I mean, that's OK. You don't have to do that - I can manage. Besides, you don't feel well.

TRACY
VCs... They'll want to... I'll feel better by 3.

FLETCHER
Are you sure? I can handle it.

TRACY
I'm sure you can. Still though, I'd like to help. I'll try to get some sleep. I'll be better by 3.

FLETCHER
Really, I--

TRACY
--Don't do anything without me.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Two VCs, both men in their 50s dressed in dark suits and armed with reams of market data sit on one side of a conference table. Tracy and Fletcher sit on the other side. Tracy appears a bit haggard.

VC #1
Tell me, Mr. Cuttbate. Why do you want to develop a cure when a daily regimen seems the better way to go?

Fletcher angrily slams his palm on the table; he's ready to walk out of the conference room. Tracy gently reaches for Fletcher's forearm and coaxes him back into his seat.

TRACY

Development of a cure for retinitis pigmentosa is non-negotiable. Period. No life-long therapy. That's not the objective of Mr. Cuttbate's company.

VC #1

And why, may I ask, Mrs. Shepard, is that not the objective?

TRACY

Providing a cure is the right thing to do--

VC #2 grins derisively.

TRACY (CONT'D)

--and the clinical trials for a cure will cost significantly less than the trials for a therapy. The time to market will be reduced by a factor of two. The risk of competitive encroachment will be reduced dramatically. Get it?

VC #2 stops grinning. He glances nervously at VC #1 and rummages through his charts and tables.

VC #2

Well... I'm not so sure... I don't know... about that...

After uncomfortable rambling from VC #2, VC #1 intervenes.

VC #1

OK, look. You're the scientific expert Mr. Cuttbate. We're just simple financiers. Far be it from us to tell you how to conduct R&D. If you think a cure is a better play than a therapy, so be it.

Fletcher looks over at Tracy and smiles at the display of her business acumen. She remains stoned faced, refusing to look at Fletcher.

VC #1 (CONT'D)

So, Mr. Cuttbate, do we have a deal? Or at least the foundation for a deal?

Fletcher is about to respond when Tracy speaks up.

TRACY

Mr. Cuttbate will take it under consideration. That's all.

Tracy stands up abruptly and extends her hand, indicating to everyone's surprise that the meeting is over. The VCs file out of the conference room, grumbling and visibly annoyed. When they are gone, Tracy turns to Fletcher.

FLETCHER

What the hell, Tracy?

TRACY

Be cool, Fletch. Those people are just like the VCs your brother courted. Vultures. There's no upside for you and your company in any of their proposals.

FLETCHER

I don't know--

TRACY

--Trust me, they'll rip you off.

FLETCHER

So where am I going to get the funds to go on? I'm out of ideas.

TRACY

From me, Fletch. Let me be your angel investor. You have a million, you need another million. Well, I've got a million. What do you say?

FLETCHER

You? You'd loan me the money?

TRACY

No, Fletch, not loan. Invest. I would take an equity position. If you're interested, we'll assemble our lawyers to work out a mutually beneficial arrangement.

FLETCHER

I don't know what to say. I'm speechless.

TRACY

Remember, Fletch, I expect to make money on the cure, too.

FLETCHER

Of course, of course. I'll call my lawyer right away. How about tomorrow?

TRACY

Let's make it next week, Fletch. I have to check on my guy's availability.

FLETCHER

Whatever you say, Trace.

(beat)

This is so great. Let's celebrate. Have a drink with me?

TRACY

Now? It's only 4:30.

Fletcher shrugs "so-what".

TRACY (CONT'D)

Oh, what the hell. I'm mostly recovered from last night. Where do you want to go?

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Tracy and her lawyer HANNAH exit the limo and walk to the Office Building. Hannah is the same age as Tracy, much shorter and dressed in a dark, conservative suit. She carries an overstuffed briefcase.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LOBBY - DAY

HANNAH

What a dump.

Hannah starts for the elevator, then heads for the stairwell when she notices Tracy already climbing the stairs.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

(Mumbles)

Shit.

Hannah labors up the steps with the heavy briefcase.

INT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Fletcher stands by the open door. Tracy appears, followed closely by Hannah. Fletcher ogles Tracy's feet for a moment. Noticing, she grins imperceptibly.

FLETCHER

C'mon in Tracy. I'm playing receptionist today. I had to let our girl go.

TRACY

Nice to see you again Fletcher. This is my lawyer, Hannah Goldman. Hannah, meet Mr. Cuttbate.

Hannah puts down the briefcase and shakes Fletcher's hand.

HANNAH

How do you do, Mr. Cuttbate.

FLETCHER

Doing fine. Let's go to the conference room. I can't wait to do this. I'm so excited, Tracy.

INT. SUITE 212 CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Two middle-aged men, ANDREWS and ZWIEBEL, wait inside. Andrews is gaunt, Zwiebel is well-tailored and chubby. Both stand when Fletcher, Tracy and Hannah walk in.

FLETCHER

Gentlemen. This is Tracy Shepard, my angel investor. And Hannah Goldman, her lawyer.

Fletcher points to each man in succession.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

That's Arthur Andrews, my accountant and Bernard Zwiebel, my attorney general.

After all parties shake hands and nod heads, they sit at the conference table. It's Tracy and Hannah on one side and Fletcher and his team on the other. Hannah opens her laptop. Andrews consults some papers.

ANDREWS

RodCone Labs has filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 7. Liquidation. Mr. Cuttbate has formed a new corporation, Cuttbate Associates which will purchase the key assets of the defunct RodCone Labs. Equipment, computer programs, and most importantly, six patents. Office furniture and the like is going on the auction block.

Tracy nods. Hannah takes notes on her laptop.

ZWIEBEL

Mr. Cuttbate here is the sole owner of the molecular models and mathematical formulations for the retinitis cure. RodCone Labs has nothing to do with this intellectual property, so no legal or financial claims can be attached to it by some pissed-off creditor.

TRACY

Very good.

ANDREWS

The incorporation bylaws state that Cuttbate Associates will have three board seats. Right now, Mr. Cuttbate is the Chairman and Zwiebel here is holding a seat temporarily, leaving one seat open. The company has issued a million shares to Mr. Cuttbate with a par value of \$1, and is authorized to issue up to another ten million shares.

FLETCHER

About that open board seat--

ANDREWS

--Ms. Shepard, I understand you've expressed an interest in making a substantial investment in Cuttbate Associates. I've recommended to Mr. Cuttbate that his company issue \$1 million in 20-year Class A debt paying 3.875 percent over Treasuries.

TRACY

I didn't come here to loan money, Mr. Andrews. I came to take an equity stake. Mr. Cuttbate already knows that's my position, and so do you, so let's just cut the crap.

FLETCHER

That's right, Art. I already told you that.

ANDREWS

I'm merely stating what I recommended to you, Mr. Cutt--

ZWIEBEL

--Mrs. Shepard, Cuttbate Associates is prepared to issue a second lot of 999 thousand shares to you in exchange for your \$1 million investment. Under no circumstances will Mr. Cuttbate relinquish majority ownership of his company.

TRACY

I understand and appreciate your position, Mr. Zwiebel, as Fletch's legal advisor. But I have an alternative proposition to make. Grant me ten million options at ten cents exercisable upon IPO--

ZWIEBEL

--Well, I... uh, um--

Zwiebel looks at Andrews for some guidance. Hannah peers up from her laptop and smirks at the floundering lawyer.

TRACY

--And appoint me to the open seat on the board. Cuttbate Associates needs someone like me on the executive team.

ZWIEBEL

Now, Mrs. Shepard--

TRACY

--Ms. Shepard.

ZWIEBEL

I'm sorry, Ms. Shepard. Now, Ms. Shepard--

TRACY

--Mr. Cuttbate, what do you think?

Fletcher looks at his advisors who glare back at him.

FLETCHER

Well, Tracy... uh, Ms. Shepard, there's no major difference, at least to me anyway. Either way the retinitis drug can go to clinical trial. That's all I want.

ANDREWS

You know, if your company goes public, Ms. Shepard here stands to become the majority shareholder.

FLETCHER

Yeah, I know Art. If - a big 'if' - we go public. In the meantime, Tracy here is sticking her neck out a long way. It seems reasonable that she should be rewarded if it pays off.

Silence for several seconds. Tracy nods to Hannah.

HANNAH

If you are amenable to Ms. Shepard's offer, I'll deliver the detailed term sheet. Do you have a printer here somewhere, or did you lose it in the fire sale?

Both Andrews and Zwiebel look down and shake their heads at Hannah's impudent remark. Tracy isn't pleased.

TRACY

Just email it to them, Hannah.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy lies in bed, speaking on the phone while the SOUND of shower water splashes O.S.

TRACY

That's right, Dad. Yeah. The retinitis cure is going forward.

(beat)

I know. Yeah. The new company secured enough financing for... That's right.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

The trials will start... Well, I made a small investment myself. Yeah.

The splashing shower water SOUND O.S. ceases. The SOUND of a shower door opening O.S.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I have to go Dad. Listen, I'll be on the road a lot over the next couple of weeks. That football player thing I told you about. Yeah, me too. Bye.

Tracy hangs up the phone. Fletcher walks into the bedroom with a towel twisted high around his head and another wrapped around his waist. He wears a pair of Tracy's high heels.

FLETCHER

How do you walk in these things?

TRACY

Be careful. They cost \$1200.

FLETCHER

Are you kidding?

TRACY

Each. Turn around.

Fletcher turns 360 degrees.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Hmmm. They make your legs look pretty good, Fletch.

FLETCHER

Is that your secret?

TRACY

One of many. Come over here.

Fletcher lies next to Tracy on the bed wearing the shoes.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I'm really excited about the cure.

FLETCHER

Me too. Andrews thinks we can get things rolling in a couple weeks.

TRACY

Great. That's good timing because I'm going to be on the road a lot this coming month. I have to drive out to Jersey tomorrow morning to meet with the Jets' front office people. Then I have to fly to Dayton, Ohio of all places.

FLETCHER

Oh yeah. Jerry Maguire and the magical football player.

TRACY

Something like that. Did you know the name of the Jets' owner is Woody Johnson?

FLETCHER

Uh uh.

TRACY

Would you believe when I was in college I had a dildo I nicknamed Woody Johnson?

FLETCHER

Seriously?

Tracy pulls out a dildo from her bedside drawer. She shows it to Fletcher who crosses his arms, reluctant to touch it.

TRACY

See. The finish? It kinda looks like it's made out of wood.

Fletcher inspects the dildo hesitantly.

TRACY (CONT'D)

It has a strap.

Fletcher's eyes widen in trepidation.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Tracy and Hannah sit by the window at a tony midtown Restaurant. Each picks at food on tiny plates.

TRACY

I can't believe I have to fly through Atlanta to get to Dayton. What a pain in the ass.

(beat)

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

So what's up with Cuttbate Associates? Everything cool?

HANNAH

Yes. Your bank wired the money this morning.

TRACY

Good.

HANNAH

The term sheet I got from Bernard Zwiebel grants you the options and the board seat. They propose comping you ten k for being on the board. You OK with that?

TRACY

Sure. I don't care. What else?

Hannah pulls out a folder of papers from her briefcase.

HANNAH

Here are the incorporation papers. Zwiebel set up the first board meeting for a week from yesterday--

TRACY

--No good. Have him move it out another week after I'm done with the football player thing.

(beat)

I want this company to succeed. I want that cure to fly through the FDA. What do you think of Zwiebel?

HANNAH

Seems competent.

TRACY

Cuttbate Associates is going to need a high-quality lawyer to deal with all the government red tape. I'm thinking of moving him out. I'll need your help.

HANNAH

Really? Of course. I can start--

TRACY

--Do some research on lawyers with pharmaceutical background and give me a list of five or ten good ones.

Hannah deflates.

HANNAH

Uh, sure. I'll get right on it.

TRACY

Can I drop you off on my way to the airport?

HANNAH

Alright.

INT. JET - DAY

Tracy sits in first class reading Sports Illustrated.

INT. DAYTON BAR - DAY

Tracy sits in a booth in the back accompanied by MILTON, a sports agent, BRADLEY, a college football player, and his father, HAL.

HAL

I spoke with the Jets' front office. They'll pay you off.

MILTON

That's not how business is done, my friend. Why am I talking to this douche-bag? Bradley signed with me.

TRACY

Hal, I told you not to talk to--

HAL

--That paper Bradley signed, that wasn't a contract.

MILTON

Like hell it wasn't.

TRACY

Gentlemen--

BRADLEY

--This whole thing is messing... I don't want to miss the first day of training camp.

MILTON

You shoulda thought of that before,
sonny. I'm your agent!

HAL

Go to hell!

Hal stands like he's going to physically confront Milton.
Tracy steps between them.

TRACY

Let's start over... again.

INT. JET - NIGHT

Tracy sleeps in first class with shades over her eyes.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy shuffles into her apartment. She tosses the key on the
table and places her briefcase on the chair. The clock on
the wall reads 12:30.

EXT. JETS FRONT OFFICE - DAY

With her briefcase in hand, Tracy walks toward the entrance
of the Jets Front Office. Her cell phone rings and she stops
to answer it.

FLETCHER (O.S.)

Tracy? Fletch. How're you doing?

TRACY

So-so. I'm about to go to a
meeting.

FLETCHER (O.S.)

The football thing?

TRACY

Yeah. Can I call you later?

FLETCHER (O.S.)

Of course. I just wanted to make
sure you can make the first board
meeting later this week.

TRACY

Didn't my lawyer tell you? I'm not
available until next week. After
this I gotta go back out to Dayton.

FLETCHER (O.S.)
Next week, huh? OK. No problem.
Glad I called. Have a nice time in
Dayton.

TRACY
Nice time? Have you ever been
there?

Tracy walks to the entrance of the Jets Front Office.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DAYTON BAR - NIGHT

Establishing shot of a typical sports bar.

INT. DAYTON BAR - NIGHT

Tracy and Milton sit together in the bar.

TRACY
You know the Jets are going to get
what they want in the end.

MILTON
Probably. But it won't come free.
I'll fuck over that little prick.
And his asshole father too.

TRACY
How did you get to be so charming,
Milt?

MILTON
Milton.

TRACY
Give me a dollar figure.

MILTON
You trying to bribe me?

TRACY
It's called indemnification.

MILTON
I have shit on his fucking father
that will devastate Bradley.

TRACY

Ah, yes. You mentioned that to me.
But I know you're bluffing.

MILTON

How so?

TRACY

Someone I work with hacked into
your computer. The only
devastating stuff he could find was
a bunch of child pornography.

MILTON

That's a goddamn lie!

TRACY

That's what he told me. And he's
very good at what he does, if you
follow my meaning. He can make a
computer do anything.

MILTON

You fucking whore.

TRACY

Give me a number right now, or I'll
drop a dime on your internet
browsing habits.

MILTON

I have devastating information
about Bradley's old man.

TRACY

You can't be Bradley's agent. Move
on. Find another superstar to rep.
You can do it.

MILTON

I'm ready to go to the New York
fucking Post. It's devas--

Tracy folds her arms and glares at Milton.

MILTON (CONT'D)

--Alright. 200. Thousand.

Tracy sips her cocktail.

TRACY

35 it is. Thousand. Can I buy you
another drink, Milt?

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy walks in, places her briefcase on the table beneath the Kandinsky and tosses a Jets jersey across a chair. She checks her answering machine.

ZWIEBEL

(Over answering machine)

Ms. Shepard. This is Bernard Zwiebel. Just a reminder that the board meeting is Thursday at one in the former RodCone Labs office. See you there.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy takes a stylish dress from her closet and lays it out on the bed. She retrieves a few pairs of shoes and matches them up to the dress, deciding on the appropriate pair. She makes a phone call.

TRACY

Carla? Sorry for the late call.
Did you confirm my Botox appointment with Dr. Hammond?
Nine? Super. What about the spa?
(beat)
OK. What?
(Laughing)
None of your business little girl.
(beat)
Thanks. Talk to you later.

Tracy hangs up the phone, looks at the dress-shoes combination and chooses a different pair.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Tracy, looking sharp, steps out of the limo. Her Driver mans the door.

TRACY

Take the rest of the day off.

The Driver smiles and tips his hat. Tracy heads for the entrance.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LOBBY - DAY

Tracy sizes up the awful conditions of the Office Building Lobby.

She notices that the glass case with the names of various businesses still has the entry "RodCone Labs - Suite 212." Tracy shakes her head in disgust at the piss-poor condition of the lobby, then heads for the stairs.

EXT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Tracy notices the door is missing. Her pace slows. She peers inside, then tentatively walks in.

INT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Suite 212 is a mess, looking as though gutted for renovation. Wearing expensive shoes, Tracy gingerly steps around detritus on the floor. SOUND of scraping O.S.

TRACY

Hello? Is anyone here?

The scraping stops. A CLEANING LADY steps out of a restroom.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Where is everybody? Isn't this
Cuttbate Associates?

CLEANING LADY

(In Spanish with
subtitles)

They left. I'm scraping shit off
the bathroom floor. Would you like
to help me?

TRACY

Do you speak English?

CLEANING LADY

Si. Un poco.

TRACY

Where is everybody?

CLEANING LADY

They leaves. Two weeks ago.

The old Cleaning Lady flashes Tracy a creepy toothless smile. Tracy bolts for the door.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/STAIRWELL - DAY

Tracy runs down the stairwell, nearly tripping when her heel catches a loose tread.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Tracy runs onto the sidewalk and scans the block. No limo. She walks briskly down the sidewalk.

EXT. BISTRO - DAY

Agitated, Tracy takes a sidewalk table at a BISTRO. A WAITRESS steps up to take an order.

WAITRESS
May I offer--

TRACY
--Bring me a vodka on the rocks.

The Waitress pirouettes and heads back toward the bar. Tracy takes out her cell phone and dials.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Hannah? What the fuck is going on
with Cuttbate Associates!

At the next table a YUPPIE COUPLE with a TODDLER shush Tracy for the use of profanity.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Listen. Something is really wrong.
The office is empty. No one is
there except a cleaning lady.
(beat)
Yeah. Call me back ASAP.

The Waitress returns with the vodka. Tracy hangs up, takes a long drink, and lights a cigarette.

EXT. BISTRO - DAY (LATER)

Tracy sits at the table; an ashtray holds several butts. She nurses a drink. Her hair is mussed. The Toddler plays in Tracy's purse. Tracy's phone RINGS and she answers.

TRACY
Yeah?

INTERCUT with Hannah's Office.

HANNAH
Here's what I have so far. The
Cuttbate website is down. I did a
database search.
(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

The incorporation filing for
Cuttbate Associates was rejected
earlier in the week.

TRACY

Jesus.

HANNAH

I tried to contact Bernard Zwiebel
and Arthur Andrews but their phones
have been disconnected.

(long pause)

Are you OK?

TRACY

Yeah. Go on.

Tracy takes a drink.

HANNAH

The lease on Suite 212 expired
seven months ago. The rent was
paid in cash on a month-by-month
basis since then. The bungalow in
Hamilton Square is currently
available for rent.

TRACY

Good god. Listen, check through
the records of all the people I met
with regarding RodCone Labs and
Cuttbate Associates. Find someone
who can shed some light on this fuh-

-

Tracy glances at the Yuppie Couple who are staring at her.

TRACY (CONT'D)

--ugly mess.

Tracy hangs up and rubs her temples. She lights another
cigarette and sits back, resigned.

INT. FBI OFFICE/TAFT'S OFFICE - DAY

Tracy sits in the antiseptic FBI office of Special Agent TAFT
who sports a conservative suit and military haircut. Tracy
is dressed in a dark suit.

TRACY

I met this man, Fischer Cuttbate on
a flight to LA.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

He told me his company was working on a cure - I mean a therapy - for an eye disease. It's the same disease my father suffers from.

Taft nods sympathetically.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Anyway, Fischer told me his twin brother Fletcher was interfering in the business, so I agreed to try to sort it out for him, but what I discovered was that Fischer was trying to screw over Fletcher. Or so it seemed.

TAFT

How did you come to that conclusion?

TRACY

I mistakenly received...

Tracy hesitates.

TAFT

Yes?

TRACY

Uh, I received a spreadsheet that showed Fischer was cooking the books. Anyway, I passed on the information to Fletcher who then called the FBI and they shut down the company. Fischer disappeared. Then I found out from Fletcher that he had a real cure for the eye disease that he had kept secret from his brother.

(beat)

You have to understand Agent Taft... a cure for retinitis would be a godsend for my father. It would change his whole life. I had to see that it got developed.

TAFT

Completely understandable.

TRACY

So I invested money - a million - into Fletcher Cuttbate's new company. Believe me, I did due diligence.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)
My lawyer checked on patents,
incorporation documents, tax data.
Anyway, two weeks later I
discovered it was a scam.

Taft offers a box of Kleenex. Tracy scowls

TRACY (CONT'D)
Agent Taft, I never cry.

TAFT
Sorry.

Taft puts the box down.

TRACY
So help me God, I'll see to it that
the Cuttbates get the chair, or the
needle, or whatever they use these
days.

TAFT
OK, OK. We don't execute people
for running scams, but I appreciate
your outrage, Mrs. Shepard. Let's
go back to the part about the FBI
raid on, uh...
(Checks his notes)
...RodCone Labs. Tell me more
about that.

TRACY
I got a call from the Labs'
receptionist when I was in Texas.

Taft works on his computer as Tracy speaks.

TRACY (CONT'D)
She told me that the FBI raided the
place and that Fischer and his
business director, Chad Knecht had
gone missing. They couldn't pay
for my--

TAFT
--There's nothing in our records
about any raid on RodCone Labs, or
any warrants on Cuttbate or Knecht.
Nothing.

TRACY
N-nothing?

TAFT

It appears that not only was RodCone Labs a front, but that the raid was fabricated as part of the scheme to get you to ally yourself with the brother. I'm sorry, Mrs. Shepard. We'll initiate an investigation. I must tell you though that a con involving so many people in so many places over such a long period of time would have to've been perpetrated by a clever cast of characters.

TRACY

I... I... uh--

TAFT

--Do you have any pictures of the culprits?

TRACY

Uh, no. I don't.

TAFT

OK. Let's see if we can develop a composite picture of this guy Cuttbate.

INT. FBI OFFICE/FORENSICS UNIT - DAY

Tracy sits on an uncomfortable wooden chair across from a COMPOSITE ARTIST, a young woman in an FBI uniform. The Composite Artist sits in front of a computer screen.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Before we get started putting together a composite sketch, give me some basics, Ms. Shepard. Hair color and style?

TRACY

Dirty blonde, medium length, combed straight back.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Facial shape?

TRACY

Uh, oval-ish?

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Ears? Close to the head? Sticking out?

TRACY

Ears? I would say... normal. Not pasted to his head but not jug-eared either.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Lobes?

TRACY

Geez. Lobes? Regular. I don't know.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

I know it's difficult, Ms. Shepard. If you had been robbed we could show you a book full of mug shots--

TRACY

--I was robbed.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

I mean, robbed at gunpoint or something like that. There aren't too many mug shots of successful confidence men.

(beat)

I understand the person who conned you had an identical twin.

TRACY

That's right. Clearly he was party to the crime.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Do you think it's possible these twin brothers were actually one man?

TRACY

What?

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Did you ever see them together?

TRACY

Well, no, I never did actually, y'know, see the two of them together. They didn't get along.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

I see. Before I forget, can you tell me: did either one of these men have any distinguishing physical characteristics that might help identify them? A scar, maybe, or a tattoo? Anything like that?

TRACY

Uh, um... Tattoos? No. No tattoos. None that I know of.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Alright. Let's move onto the eyes. Color and shape?

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tracy and RICHARDS, a private investigator sit at a table. Tracy hands Richards a thick folder.

TRACY

Thank you for meeting me on such short notice, Mr. Richards. I understand from a friend that you're a very competent PI. I hope she's right.

RICHARDS

Thank you for your confidence, Ms. Shepard. What do you have for me?

TRACY

Here's everything I know. As I explained to you on the phone Mr. Richards, I want this bastard Fletcher Cuttbate found and prosecuted. The FBI doesn't impress me.

RICHARDS

I understand, Ms. Shepard. My firm has a solid track record.

TRACY

On top of your fee, you can keep 25 percent of any money you recover as an added incentive. I expect results, Mr. Richards.

RICHARDS

From what you've already told me, Ms. Shepard, I am convinced that Fischer and Fletcher Cuttbate - no doubt aliases - are one and the same person.

Tracy shrugs, her legs crossed, a stiletto heel dangling from her toe.

C.U. Of the shoe and its pointy heel.

Richards notices.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

Have you ever seen "Vertigo", Ms. Shepard? Great movie. Jimmy Stewart, Kim Novak, San Francisco?

TRACY

No.

RICHARDS

It involves a man who murders his wife with the cooperation of a woman who poses as her double. You should check it out sometime.

Tracy checks her watch. Richards opens the folder.

TRACY

What else?

RICHARDS

How do you think this Cuttbate fellow knew to meet you at JFK airport and to be ready to forfeit his seat for you? That couldn't have been a coincidence.

TRACY

I don't have any idea.

RICHARDS

Well, I do. You said you were flying that day to meet with some clients in LA.

TRACY

That's right.

RICHARDS

My guess, Ms. Shepard, is that Cuttbate had a co-conspirator inside one or both of those companies. Someone who knew you were planning to fly that day at that exact time and on what carrier. You said you met Cuttbate again on the return flight. Coincidence? Not in my business, Nothing is a coincidence. Everything is planned.

Tracy nods sadly.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

I'd even go so far as to postulate that members of Cuttbate's gang were on that plane to ensure it was overbooked by the time you showed up at the airport. You told me your limo driver was late picking you up that morning. Do you trust him?

TRACY

(Flustered)

Well, I, never, uh--

RICHARDS

--I'll need a list of everyone who attended the meeting you had with these two companies. That's where I'll start. OK?

TRACY

Whatever you say, Mr. Richards. You're the expert.

Tracy escorts Richards to the door. They shake hands. As Richards steps out, Tracy pipes up. They face each other, Tracy standing taller than Richards by four inches in her heels.

TRACY (CONT'D)

One more thing I forgot to mention. Fletcher Cuttbate has a, um... he has a snake tattooed on his penis.

Richards raises an eyebrow slightly, takes out a pad of paper and writes a note on it.

RICHARDS

I'll check with some of the tattoo parlors and see if I come up with anything. Good day.

Tracy closes the door, cradles her head in her hands and bursts into tears.

FADE TO WHITE.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Tracy sullenly strolls the park in the drizzle.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Tracy drinks coffee and works a newspaper puzzle.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy is on the phone with Richards, her PI. From the intercut action it is clear she is not impressed with his status.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE - NIGHT

Tracy's Kandinsky is on the block. An AUCTIONEER drives up the price between two BIDDERS. The Gavel comes down.

EXT. TRACY'S APARTMENT (LOBBY) - DAY

Tracy stands by a saddened Hannah.

TRACY

Good luck, Hannah. If you need me to write a letter of reference, give me a call.

EXT. EMPLOYMENT OFFICE - DAY

Tracy's Driver, dressed in casual clothes instead of his uniform, walks up to the front door of the Employment Office holding a manila folder.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tracy and Dad sit together on the sofa.

DAD

What's the matter, dear? You sound tired.

TRACY

Nothing. Well, maybe I am a bit tired.

DAD

You work too hard, Tracy. Too much traveling.

TRACY

Not really. I haven't been working too much lately. Not at all actually.

DAD

I don't get it.

TRACY

I made a bad investment decision, Dad. Lost some money. Kind of took the wind out of my sails.

DAD

Gee, I'm sorry to hear that.

(beat)

You don't need help, do you? I mean, you aren't in trouble, are you, dear?

Tracy hesitates

DAD (CONT'D)

Are you?

TRACY

No, no. Of course not, Dad. I'm just using the experience to reflect on what matters.

DAD

That's the way to go.

TRACY

Find a way to make it right.

DAD

Are you seeing anyone, Tracy?

Tracy stands and walks O.C.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

INSERT: TITLE CARD "THREE MONTHS LATER"

Tracy sits at her desk in front of her laptop, scrolling through webpages while somber jazz music PLAYS in the background. She is dressed casually. The wall has a slightly faded outline where the Kandinsky once hung.

SOUND - TELEPHONE RINGING

Tracy answers the telephone.

TRACY

Hello? Ah, Special Agent Taft.
 Has it been another month already?
 Don't tell me, let me guess...
 Fletcher Cuttbate remains at large.
 (beat)
 Right, yeah, I know.
 (beat)
 I understand. Thanks.

Exasperated, Tracy hangs up the phone. She trains her attention back to her laptop. She stops scrolling and takes special notice of a business news headline on the screen.

TRACY'S P.O.V. - NANONANO ANNOUNCES I.P.O.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt's Office is a sleek place, furnished in blonde, adorned with mid-century art. A flat-screen TV on the wall broadcasts silently. Matt sits at his desk casually browsing a brochure for Citation jets.

SOUND - BUZZER

SECRETARY (O.S.)

(Over speakerphone)
 Mr. Blankenschein. A Ms. Tracy Shepard is asking to speak with you. She says she's done business with you in the past.

MATT

(Into speakerphone)
 Sure. I know her. Great legs.
 Put her through.
 (beat)
 Tracy Shepard... the Medea of
 Mediation. How're you? What can I
 do you out of?

INTERCUT with Tracy's Apartment.

TRACY

Calling to congratulate you on the IPO, Matt. Mazel Tov.

MATT

Why that's sweet of you Tracy. We're very happy how it turned out. What're your series B shares worth now? 50K?

TRACY

That's about right. Fifty.

MATT

You were a smart cookie to take your fee in stock instead of cash for that mediation session with PicoTech.

(beat)

If you don't mind my asking, how many shares did they give you?

TRACY

None. I took cash from them. I didn't think their future was as rosy as yours, Matt. I've read a lot about nanotechnology and I like what I see. I want to increase my stake in the company.

MATT

That's a nice vote of confidence. Listen, we're having a little dinner party next week to celebrate the IPO. Why don't you come out here as my guest? It'll be fun and you can meet the exec team.

TRACY

Meet the exec team. Oh, I can't think of anything I'd like to do more.

MATT

Did you know we moved our headquarters to San Diego? No core talent in LA. I'll have my admin send you the particulars.

TRACY

Sounds wonderful. Ciao, Matt.

Tracy hangs up and mutters to herself with a devious grin.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Meet the whole fucking exec team.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tracy hangs up the phone and smiles deviously.

EXT. SAN DIEGO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A jet lands on the runway.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Numerous ATTENDEES of the NanoNano IPO party enjoy meals at large tables in the San Diego Restaurant. Tracy sits on Matt's right at one of the tables situated in a prime spot, accompanied by six others: NanoNano EXECUTIVES and their WIVES and GIRLFRIENDS. Food has already been served and everyone eats. MARILYN, a bubbly, 40-year-old with salt-and-pepper hair sits across from Tracy.

MATT
Did anyone else order the burricotti with braised artichokes? These currants and the mint pesto really go well together.

EXECUTIVE #1
A far cry from crackers and Easy Cheese, huh Blankenschein?

MATT
Jesus. Don't remind me. That was the staple back at Stanford. There's something not quite right about aerosol cheese, but it makes sense when you think about it.

TRACY
I didn't know you were a Stanford grad, Matt.

MATT
Hell yeah, Tracy. All the good technology shit we enjoy today came out of Stanford. Google, GPS, spy satellites, the internet--

EXECUTIVE WIFE #1

--Easy Cheese?

MATT

(Chuckles)

Shit. Maybe. Wouldn't be surprised. The guys at this table, Tracy - my dream team, my brain trust - all Stanford boys.

MARILYN

I went to Vassar.

MATT

Oh, right. I forgot. Marilyn here is our VP of Personnel--

MARILYN

--Human Resources.

MATT

I brought Marilyn on board to hedge against a y-chromosome bubble. She came over last year from Oracle.

TRACY

Oracle. Must be a big change coming to a start-up.

MARILYN

Oh yeah. All good though. It's easy to get lost in big company bureaucracy. I needed something more personal. Besides, my options were under water.

EXECUTIVE #2

Join the club.

MARILYN

When I hired in I got options at 45. Unfortunately, the next time the stock hit 45 was never.

MATT

I remember when Oracle dropped below eight bucks. I was gonna short the pig, but my old man advised me to load up on it instead. Hell, eight bucks? I picked up just about a million shares. Dumped it two years later when it hit 22.

Oohs and ahs from the Executive team.

MATT (CONT'D)

I bought the Astondoa with the proceeds. You should have seen the look on the dealer's face when I told him I'd pay cash for it.

The table laughs. Tracy rolls her eyes.

MATT (CONT'D)

I threw my dad a C-note for his sage advice.

Clapping now. Attendees at other lesser tables gawk enviously. After the table settles down, Marilyn presses on.

MARILYN

I'm hoping my financial luck will turn around. I've been talking to a biologist who's looking for an investor for his cure for acromegaly. Ron Slomsky introduced me to him.

MATT

(To Tracy)

Slomsky was our corporate strategist, but he quit and joined the enemy - PicoTech.

Boos and hisses.

MATT (CONT'D)

He has acromegaly. Huge hands, fingers like sausages. I think you met him in the mediation meeting last year. Looks a lot like that huckster on TV, uh... Tony Roma.

MARILYN

Tony Robbins. Anyway, this biologist - Calvin - is close to a cure for acromegaly, but his twin brother won't help him get the money to move it along. His brother wants to develop a pill you have to take everyday. I guess that makes more money than a cure. Calvin's ready to go to clinical trial but he's stuck. He doesn't really want to deal with VC's - he calls them vulture capitalists.

EXECUTIVE #2

I resemble that remark, Ms. Jenkins.

MATT

Clinical trials are super expen--

TRACY

--Marilyn, does this Calvin guy have a snake tattooed on his co--

The entire table stops what they're doing and looks at Tracy, waiting for her to complete the question. Finally Marilyn replies hesitantly

MARILYN

On his... what?

TRACY

On his, uh, collar... uh, collarbone?

MATT

Y'know, Tracy, I thought you were gonna say a snake tattooed on his cock.

EXECUTIVE #2

Oh, for God's sake, Matt.

Some at the table smirk, but Tracy and Marilyn appear aghast. Marilyn avoids looking at Tracy.

MATT

I wonder if that would fuck up your sperm, you know, make you squirt ink like a squid.

Laughter at the table.

EXECUTIVE #2

Jesus, Matt.

Matt grins and reaches for his wine glass, annoyed to find it empty. He snaps his fingers at an ELDERLY WAITER.

MATT

Garçon!

The Elderly Waiter cringes then turns and approaches Matt with a shit-eating smile on his face.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT/DINING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Dinner's over, the band plays non-intrusive music. Attendees of the IPO party mill around. Matt and Tracy stand off to the side alone.

MATT

A tattoo on some guy's cock?
Seriously?

TRACY

I never said that.

MATT

Yeah, but it sounded like--

TRACY

--I never said that.

MATT

OK. OK.

(beat)

Y'know, I read your book on mediation tactics. Very Machiavellian. I bet you could persuade a man to do anything you want.

TRACY

What do you think I want you to do?

MATT

Bring you into the action. Put you on the NanoNano board, perhaps?

TRACY

You could use someone like me on the board. Too many Stanford frat-boys on the team.

MATT

Yeah, you may be right. Where are you staying?

TRACY

I'm not. Taking the red-eye back to the city.

MATT

That's a shame. I was going to offer you a ride on the Astondoa. I'm taking her out tomorrow afternoon.

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

(beat)
It's a yacht.

TRACY

I know what an Astondoa is, Matt.
(beat)
Y'know, you're cute. The rich son
of a rich father... squashing your
competition, conquering the world.
Young and fulla cum. I like that.

MATT

You'd better come back out here
soon, Tracy. I want to talk to you
some more.

Tracy walks toward the Lobby.

MATT (CONT'D)

Hey.

Tracy stops and turns around.

MATT (CONT'D)

Love the shoes.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT/WOMEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tracy stands over a sink and washes her hands. She examines
her face in the mirror. Suddenly she sees the image of
Marilyn in the mirror fidgeting behind her. Tracy turns
around and faces her.

MARILYN

Um, he does have a tattoo of a
snake. On his... y'know.

INT. SAN DIEGO BAR - NIGHT

Tracy and Marilyn sit in a booth drinking exotic-looking
cocktails.

MARILYN

Tell me, Tracy - you don't mind if
I call you Tracy, do you? How did
you know about the tattoo? Do you
know Calvin?

TRACY

I don't know anyone named Calvin.
And neither do you, Marilyn. This
guy is using an alias.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

When I knew him he called himself Fletcher Cuttbate. He had a twin brother, supposedly.

(beat)

What does he look like?

MARILYN

He's a bit taller than me. Shorter than you. Blondish hair. A little overweight.

TRACY

Uh-huh. Did you ever see Calvin and his twin together, in the same place at the same time?

MARILYN

Hmm. Now that you mention it, I don't think so.

TRACY

How odd. Listen, Marilyn, you're in the middle of being conned.

MARILYN

What?

TRACY

You're being conned. In the middle of an elaborate scam.

MARILYN

I've seen Calvin's work - his computer printouts, and stuff. I've spoken to his chief scientist. I've done my own research, Tracy. Ron Slomsky, who I worked with for almost a year, vouched for Calvin.

Tracy counts out the arguments on her fingers.

TRACY

Computer printouts? Easily fabricated. Chief Scientist? One of Calvin's stooges. Ron Slomsky? I met him during the mediation session between NanoNano and PicoTech. Most likely a co-conspirator. A common thread.

MARILYN

That's quite a theory, Tracy. Very "grassy knoll."

Tracy narrows her eyes with thinly-veiled contempt.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Matt showed me a magazine article where they called you the "Medea of Mediation". Well, Medea was a jealous bitch.

TRACY

For God's sake, Marilyn, I'm not jealous. Forget that stupid magazine article. Listen to me. Calvin's story about cures and therapies is a scam. He's preying on your good nature, inventing a phony twin brother as a foil.

MARILYN

C'mon, Tr--

TRACY

--How much does he want from you?

Marilyn looks askance, checking whether anyone is listening. She scrunches down and whispers.

MARILYN

Two hundred and fifty thousand.

TRACY

Is that all? He wanted a million from me. And guess what - I gave it to the bastard. Two weeks later he and his entire charade of a business were gone. Disappeared. No trace. Do you get what I'm saying?

MARILYN

(Swallowing hard)

A million dollars?

TRACY

You're a smart woman, Marilyn. That's obvious. Think - deep down - do you really believe there are two different guys in the world with a snake tattooed on their junk? Two different tattooed-cocked, breakthrough-drug-developers who are also identical, greedy twins?

MARILYN

Sounds impossible, I must admit.

(beat)

So, what do you want from me,
Tracy?

TRACY

I was supposed to fly back tonight
but this is too important. Tell me
more about Calvin. Ron Slomsky put
you on to him. Then what?

MARILYN

I felt bad for Ron. I wanted to
help.

TRACY

Help how?

MARILYN

I thought I could connect him to
some investors, but Calvin was wary
of them. He called them vulture
cap--

TRACY

--Yeah, I know.

MARILYN

Then I thought, why not make an
investment of my own.

TRACY

Persuasive little man, isn't he?

(beat)

I know you wanted to do good,
Marilyn. I admire that.

Tracy sips her drink.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Um, you saw the tattoo so you
obviously, y'know... Where did
this take place?

MARILYN

I'm not going--

TRACY

--I'm saving your ass, Marilyn.
You owe me details.

MARILYN

What for?

TRACY

I have to know. I have to know everything so I can get satisfaction. I got taken for a million, Marilyn. I have to try to get some of it back.

Marilyn slouches and sips her drink.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Please.

MARILYN

Alright. Jesus. I fucked him if that's what you're so intrigued about.

TRACY

Where was this?

MARILYN

His house... in a little town in Jersey. Calvin's attractive in a vulnerable sort of way.

TRACY

Well, I'll go along with that, I suppose. Tell me about his house.

MARILYN

Small place. Worn out furniture. Nothing special.

TRACY

What else?

MARILYN

He has a weird painting of a man with veins coming out of his eyes. Kinda creepy. Let's see... what else? Oh, he has a rare vintage electric guitar.

Tracy chuckles and shakes her head in disgust.

TRACY

I suppose he played rock tunes for you. Am I right?

MARILYN

Well, I mentioned I liked Boston. He played "More Than a Feeling." He's really pretty good.

Tracy, the "Medea of Mediation", feels pretty jealous now.

TRACY

Jesus Christ. That fucking bastard. What an operator. OK. I've heard enough. Calvin is Fletcher Cuttbate. No doubts.

MARILYN

Well, I have to admit it sounds convincing.

TRACY

Tell me you believe me, Marilyn.

Marilyn plays with her cocktail glass for a second.

MARILYN

Yeah, OK. I believe you.

TRACY

Finally. When are you meeting Calvin Shithead again?

MARILYN

Never. Not after all this.

TRACY

I mean, when would you have met him again if you hadn't found out what a scumbag he is?

MARILYN

I was supposed to meet him in a couple of weeks for dinner in Philadelphia, y'know, to, uh...

TRACY

To what?

MARILYN

Make my investment.

Tracy writes on a piece of paper and passes it to Marilyn.

TRACY

Take this. Now, listen carefully. I want you to accept Calvin's swell dinner invitation. Insist he take you back to his place in Jersey afterwards. And see to it he gets nice and drunk. I know he can pound the booze. I've seen him in action.

MARILYN

I don't und--

TRACY

--I need you to reconnect me with Fletcher, Calvin, whatever. I need to see him again. To get some restitution. To get him to confess to his crimes. To put an end this unfunny comedy of errors.

Marilyn scratches the back of her neck and nibbles on a cuticle. She sips her drink to delay responding.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I need your help. Please.

MARILYN

(Sternly)

I don't want to get involved.

TRACY

Hell, Marilyn, you are involved! You're vulnerable! We need to bring this bastard to justice before he fucks up any more women!

A few nearby PATRONS stop conversing among themselves and look over to size up Tracy's outburst.

MARILYN

Why don't you just call the police or the FBI? Why do you have to meet him in person?

TRACY

Do you know what Lex Talionis is?

(beat)

Never mind. Look, Calvin is a con artist, Marilyn. A very good con artist. He and his cronies left no tracks. I've been to the FBI already... they're stumped. So is my expensive PI.

(beat)

And even if I turned him over, they'd probably let him go for insufficient evidence. I've got to get him to confess on tape.

MARILYN

How are you going to get him to do that?

TRACY
(Smiling smugly)
I'm a professional negotiator,
Marilyn.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt presses a button on his office phone.

MATT
(Into speakerphone)
Tracy Shepard. How was your flight
back to Gotham City?

TRACY (O.S.)
(Over speakerphone)
I decided to stay. Your invitation
for a ride on your yacht was too
tempting. Of course, that's if you
still want me to come.

MATT
(Into speakerphone)
I want you to come. I'll send a
driver for you, Tracy.

TRACY
(Over speakerphone)
Should I buy some Dramamine?

MATT
(Into speakerphone)
The Astondoa is 115 feet long. You
won't feel a swell... unless you
want to.

INT. SAN DIEGO MARINA - DAY

Tracy struts into the Marina where Matt, drinking a Bloody
Mary, awaits. She's decked out. He's a bit foppish in a
maritime-inspired outfit. Matt stands and greets her.

MATT
Ms. Shepard. You look marvelous.

TRACY
Why thank you, Admiral
Blankenschein.

MATT

Cute. If you're a good girl, I'll let you pilot her out of the harbor - of course, the real pilot has to stand next to you.

TRACY

That's OK, I'd rather hang out on the fo'c's'le.

(beat)

You do have a fo'c's'le, don't you?

Cocky Matt hesitates, flatfooted.

MATT

Um...

INT. YACHT (TRAVELING) - DAY

Tracy and Matt stand mid-ship by the rail looking out at the coast in the distance. Each holds a glass of red wine.

MATT

Why didn't you go back on the red-eye, Tracy?

TRACY

What else? I succumbed to your irresistible charms. I also got into a long conversation with Marilyn last night and missed my flight.

(beat)

Your boat is amazing.

MATT

The Astondoa is a work of art. I christened her Brobdingnagian.

TRACY

Ironic coming from the maker of Lilliputian devices.

MATT

Thank you! That was my intention. You're the only one who noticed.

(beat)

You're quite perceptive, Tracy. Maybe I do need someone like you on the board. What advice would you give a bright young CEO like me?

TRACY
Seriously? Let me think.
(beat)
Okay. I just want to say one word
to you - just one word.

MATT
Yes?

TRACY
Are you listening?

MATT
Shit yeah, Tracy. What is it?

TRACY
(Gravely)
Plastics.

Matt stares dumbly for a split-second, then laughs.

MATT
That's good. You're good.

A moment of silence. Tracy smiles and sips her wine.

TRACY
Where are we, Matt?

Matt points to the horizon at the Hotel Del Coronado, its red shingles gleaming in the sunset. Matt points off in the distance.

MATT
That's Coronado Island. And that's
the Hotel Del Coronado.

TRACY
Ah, the Del.

MATT
That's right. I'll bet you're a
movie buff, aren't you Tracy?
Plastics. You had me going.

TRACY
I know "Some Like it Hot" was
filmed at the Del. My father is a
huge Billy Wilder fan. I've seen
all his movies a dozen times each.
(beat)
Even though he can't see now, he
still listens to the dialog and
follows along.

MATT

Your father is blind? That's too bad. I'd like to meet him sometime. Chat about the classic American films.

TRACY

I know he'd enjoy that.

(beat)

This wine is excellent. What is it?

MATT

1997 Screaming Eagle. I have a case of 1992, but I like to save that for very special occasions.

The breeze kicks up. Matt drapes his sport coat across Tracy's bare shoulders.

TRACY

You have nice hands.

Matt looks down at Tracy's sexy feet.

MATT

And you have nice--

TRACY

--Matt, I know you read that silly article about me. Where they called me the "Medea of Mediation".

MATT

Medea?--

TRACY

--I'm not like that. Really. In my business I have to project an image--

MATT

--I underst--

TRACY

--An image of impartiality. Y'know, I can never let my true feelings show through. That can make me appear cold-hearted--

MATT

--That's not--

TRACY

--I just want you to know that I'm really a very passionate person. It's just that my work has kept me so busy--

MATT

--Tracy--

TRACY

--And I have so much on my mind right now--

Matt gently places his finger on Tracy's lips, cutting her off. He leans forward and kisses her.

MATT

Would you like to go below deck? Relax a bit? Taste that '92?

Tracy turns her back on Coronado Island and embraces Matt.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

The Astondoa cuts through the waters.

INT. PHILADELPHIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Marilyn and CALVIN (Fletcher) sit at a table near the wall and next to a potted plant. WAITERS remove the plates of food. A few PATRONS remain in the mostly empty Restaurant. STAFF mill around, checking watches, anxious to close up.

CALVIN

I gotta take a leak, Marilyn. Man, I'm pretty smashed. I hope you can drive. I'll be back in a minute. Get th' check, will ya?

Calvin weaves his way around the corner from the slick bar. When he's gone Marilyn dumps her vodka-tonic into the potted plant and refills it with bottled water. She hails the Waiter who arrives table-side.

MARILYN

Another Manhattan for him.

INT. PHILADELPHIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

Calvin returns to the table where a tall Manhattan straight up awaits him.

CALVIN

Wha' the fuck's this, Marilyn? I can't drink another one.

MARILYN

Are you sure, baby?

Fletcher slumps into his chair.

CALVIN

Well... maybe one more. But this's the las' one.

MARILYN

OK, baby. I just want to savor the moment. This is such a nice place and it's been such a nice evening... so far.

Marilyn flashes Calvin the sexy-eyes.

CALVIN

You're a - errrrp - vixen, y'know that?

Calvin takes a sip and purses his lips.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

I jus' hope I don't fuckin' blow chunk.

EXT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Calvin's Bungalow is similarly broken down as Fletcher's Bungalow was. Calvin fumbles with his keys as he attempts entry. After a moment he finally stumbles in. Marilyn looks plaintively over her shoulder, then follows Calvin in, closing the door behind her.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Calvin pivots clumsily, embraces Marilyn and plants a slobbery kiss on her lips and mauls her boobs. Marilyn looks like she wants to back away, but she finds the courage to force her hand against Calvin's crotch.

MARILYN

Ooo, I feel something waking up. Why don't you get ready for bed, Cal, and I'll freshen up a bit. I missed you.

She squeezes Calvin's crotch again.

CALVIN
Ouch! Not so hard, Mare.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marilyn locks the bathroom door. She slowly washes her face and hands, then makes a cell phone call.

MARILYN
Where are you?

INTERCUT with Tracy in the Driveway of Calvin's Bungalow.

TRACY
Right where I'm supposed to be -
parked next to your car. I saw you
and Mr. Shitface go inside. Where
are you now?

MARILYN
In the bathroom. He's in the
bedroom. You better be on your
toes. He's really drunk, but,
amazing, he's still able to get
around. At least a little.

TRACY
I'll be ready. I've been ready.
Is the door unlocked?

MARILYN
Yes. I made sure.

Marilyn hangs up the phone, takes one last look at herself in the mirror, breathes deeply and shuts off the light.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Calvin's bedroom is dark. A pile of clothes lies on the floor. Marilyn strides to the side of the bed and sits on the mattress next to a naked Calvin.

CALVIN
What - errrrp - took ya s'long,
Mare.

Calvin reaches for Marilyn's leg.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
How cum yer not undressed?

Marilyn collects Calvin's clothes.

MARILYN

I have to go. Goodbye, Calvin.

Marilyn turns and strides briskly out the bedroom with the clothes.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Marilyn approaches the door.

CALVIN (O.S.)

Wha' th'hell, Mare? Wha'd I do?
D'I do sump'n wrong? Wha'bout the
money?

Marilyn opens the front door.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Calvin rolls out of bed and bangs his shin on a space heater.

CALVIN

Fuck! Fuckin' fuck that hurts!

SOUND - Door slamming O.S.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Come back, Marilyn!

Calvin slumps onto the edge of the bed and rubs his shin, mumbling.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Wha' the fuck's wrong wi'tha'
bitch?

TRACY (O.S.)

The more appropriate question would
be "what the fuck is wrong with
you"?

(beat)

Hello, Fletch. How's the head?

Calvin (Fletcher) looks at a silhouette in the doorway of a tall, imposing female figure.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Aren't you going to say "hello"
Fletch? Don't you miss me?

FLETCHER

Wha' d'ya want, Tracy? Why're you here?

TRACY

I think you know why. Stand up and turn on the light.

FLETCHER

I'm goin' t' bed. I'm tired and a li'l drunk. Lock the door on your way out, please.

Fletcher flops back onto the bed and exhales long and loudly. Tracy flicks on the light switch; Fletcher shields his eyes.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Shut that off!

TRACY

I said stand up you misogynist piece of shit.

Fletcher stands up slowly after spotting Tracy pointing a pistol at him. It's her father's old semi-automatic.

FLETCHER

Easy, Tracy. Shit. What d'ya want? Your million dollars? I ain't got it. It got split up an' spent. I'm sorry, but tha's the way it works.

Tracy notes the easel propping up the painting with veins coming out of eyes.

TRACY

I see you're still ripping off Frida Kahlo.

FLETCHER

Why're you pointin' a gun at me?

TRACY

I came to negotiate for something that might make us whole again. You took a lot of money from me and you didn't hold up your end of the bargain. You let my father down, too. That wasn't nice, Fletch.

FLETCHER

Sorry.

TRACY

Tell me, how did you come to know my business? And my father's affliction? How did you put it all together?

FLETCHER

You're the Medea of Mediation, aren't you? Interesting article.

Tracy smirks and shakes her head in disgust.

TRACY

You know, I've done some reading myself. I read that Keith Richards' middle finger is insured for one point six million. Did you know that? One point six mil. I'm sure you do, a big fan like you.

Tracy steps to the end of the bed and tosses a paper bag onto the mattress. It bounces, suggesting heft.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Open the bag, Fletch.

Fletcher hesitantly opens the bag and peers inside.

TRACY (CONT'D)

You're a very good guitar player, Fletch. I really enjoyed your performance that day I came out to help you and your phony brother.

(beat)

You know, you may play as well as Keith Richards, but your middle finger isn't possibly worth as much as his. In fact I'm sure your whole arm isn't worth as much as his middle finger. Still, I'm willing to accept a finger in exchange for the million you stole from me.

Fletcher removes a brand new pair of sheet-metal snippers from the bag and looks at Tracy incredulously. She maintains her emotionless disposition. Fletcher's expression turns to horror.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Place the tool on your middle finger, Fletch.

Tracy extends her arms straight out, bringing the gun closer to Fletcher's face.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Do it now.

FLETCHER

Listen, Trace--

TRACY

--Put the fucking shears on your fucking finger. Now!

Tracy cocks the pistol. Fletcher cowers. He opens the snippers, then pukes all over his legs and feet. Tracy recoils.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Put the cutters on your finger, you worthless piece of shit!

FLETCHER

C'mon--

TRACY

--Now!

Fletcher slides the snippers onto his middle finger.

FLETCHER

(Whimpering)

Fuckin' bitch... fuckin' bitch.

Gripping the snippers, Fletcher stands before Tracy shaking, completely naked, hair tussled, chunks of barf spattered on his shins. Tracy grips the pistol steadily in both hands, her legs spread slightly for stability.

TRACY

Cut it off, Fletch. It's a good deal. You owe me a million dollars, plus interest, but I'll take your finger instead. That, or I can lodge a bullet in your cranium.

FLETCHER

What kinda options are those?

TRACY

Fair enough. As a negotiator, I always like to offer my clients options. How about I let you confess your sins on tape?

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

I have the video camera in my bag ready to go.

FLETCHER

You're a cunt, you know that? An evil cunt. You're mad at yourself - not me - 'cause you wanted t' be the big hero. Instead you fell for a scam like a stupid schoolgirl. Tracy the bigtime hero - curin' diseases, tryin' t' prove somethin' t' your lame-o father. Hah! I owe you nothin', cunt!

TRACY

Shut up!

FLETCHER

Is that gun even loaded?

TRACY

Cut off your fucking finger now or I will kill you! Or you can make a confession--

Suddenly, Fletcher lunges at Tracy with the snippers. Tracy flinches. The pistol fires a bullet through Fletcher's throat and he falls to the floor, face up. He clutches his throat and writhes like a fish out of water. A wheezy gurgling sound emanates from the hole in his throat, then a hiss, and then silence. Tracy drops the pistol and stares aghast at the body. She stoops down and reaches toward his neck to feel for a pulse, but stops short.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tracy throws up in the sink, runs some water, blots her face, and throws up again. She sits on the closed toilet, cradling her head.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy walks tentatively toward Fletcher's body. In death, he still grips the snippers. Tracy walks around to face him head on and spots his tattoo. She sneers, bends down and after a moment gouges Fletcher's face with her fingernails. Then she presses her spiked heel into his penis.

She takes the pistol and walks out.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Tracy cursorily polishes door knobs and other surfaces to wipe away any fingerprints.

EXT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Tracy climbs into her car. Fletcher's clothes lie on the passenger seat where Marilyn stashed them. Tracy moves to pick up the pants but stops short. She takes a pair of gloves from the glove compartment and puts them on. Then she reaches into a pants pocket and retrieves Fletcher's cell phone. She starts the car and backs out of the Driveway.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Tracy drives down the dark, desolate highway, eventually pulling off into a Pine Forest.

EXT. PINE FOREST - NIGHT

Tracy turns off the lights and shuts off the car. She steps out, removes her heels and does a few seconds of jumping jacks. Huffing, she walks away from the car to place a call on Fletcher's cell phone.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
Nine one one. What's your
emergency?

Tracy affects an agitated, young-girl voice.

TRACY
I need help! I just shot a guy who
tried to rape me! I don't know
where I am!

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
Calm down dear. You say you shot
someone? Is he dead?

TRACY
I don't know! I'm not sure! I'm
afraid he might come after me!

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
OK, dear. OK. Where are you?
Where do you think you are?

TRACY

He attacked me! I ran out of his house into the woods. I'm lost! I think he's... oh my god!

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

Stay where you are and leave your cell phone on. We can track your location with it. What's your name?

TRACY

Tiffany. He forced me to go with him. He was drunk. He attacked me with a big pair of scissors. I shot him with his own gun.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

How old are you Tiffany?

TRACY

Sixteen.

Tracy drops the cell phone, still powered on, onto a bed of pine needles. Unintelligible squawking SOUNDS emanate from the cell phone. Tracy runs to the car.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Tracy peels out onto the highway.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

Driving through a dicey section of a Town, Tracy tosses Fletcher's wallet out the window into the gutter.

EXT. MANHATTAN RENTAL CAR GARAGE - NIGHT

Tracy hands the keys to an attendant.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Frazzled, Tracy takes a bottle of vodka from the freezer and pours a stiff one which she downs in one gulp. She pours another.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tracy examines her body as though looking for a wound. In the background, water fills the bathtub. Tracy climbs into the bathtub with the glass of vodka. She stretches out.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy lies on top of the covers, dialing her phone.

MATT (O.S.)
 Matt Blankenschein - leave an
 intelligent message.

BEEP sound over phone.

TRACY
 Matt, Tracy. I'm missing you.
 Call me when you can. I want to
 see you again soon. I need a hug.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Tracy prepares for the day, applying makeup, getting dressed. The TV drones in the background. She steps around the bed and glances at the morning news report.

TV NEWSCASTER (ON TV)
 The Brooklyn DA's office is
 scheduled to make a formal
 statement at noon.
 (beat)
 Now let's go to Hamilton Square
 where Barry Graham is standing by.

Tracy stops and pays attention

BARRY (ON TV)
 Ernie, I'm standing on County Road
 524 which runs past the pine forest
 you see behind me where State
 Police recovered a cell phone they
 say might have belonged to a man
 who was killed last night in his
 home in Hamilton Square. According
 to 9-1-1 records a young girl
 called from this forest claiming a
 man had attacked her in his home
 with a knife.

(MORE)

BARRY (ON TV) (CONT'D)
The man who police just found shot to death in his bedroom. I had a chance to talk to Sergeant Baldwin of the New Jersey State Police earlier this morning and here's what she had to say.

TRACY
Shit.

BALDWIN
After receiving the 9-1-1 call, we dispatched troopers who followed the cell signal to the pine forest, where the phone was found lying on the ground. About an hour ago we discovered the body of a middle-aged man shot once through the throat.

TRACY
Shit.

BARRY
Do the police have a positive ID on the victim?

BALDWIN
Not yet.

BARRY
Did the cell phone belong to the victim?

BALDWIN
We think so. And other details cited in the 9-1-1 call match the scene we found at the house.

BARRY
A source tells me the body of the deceased bore some marks. Scratches. Mutilation. Is that true?

TRACY
Shit.

BALDWIN
I'm not going to comment on speculation. Although I will say that it appears the victim turned the tables on the attacker.

BARRY

What about the girl?

BALDWIN

Still looking for her. Undoubtedly she was frightened beyond imagination.

BARRY

I can't imagine. Thank you, Sergeant.

(beat)

Ernie, back to you.

INT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Tracy hands a boarding pass to the same Gate Agent who gave her a hard time before.

GATE AGENT

Welcome, Ma'am.

Tracy walks a few steps toward the jetway.

GATE AGENT (CONT'D)

Glad to see you have your own ticket this time.

Tracy freezes in irritation, then proceeds down the jetway.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Tracy and Matt sit next to each other at a coffee table in Matt's big office nursing glasses of wine. Papers are strewn about the table.

MATT

I expect year-on-year revenue growth to exceed 150 percent, and if we get that contract with the Defense Department we'll surpass our earnings per share target of nine cents.

TRACY

Have you looked at the cosmetics industry? I read that nanotechnology could be used to make some of the ingredients.

MATT

That's true, but we haven't focused there. Why do you ask?

TRACY

Just seems like a lucrative segment. Women are always open to trying new twists in makeup, cleansers and the like.

(beat)

Y'know, you may want to promote one of your women execs in advance of entering a female-oriented market. Your uber-male management team could be a liability.

MATT

Well, we only have one woman exec, but I'll definitely look into it.

Tracy looks at her wristwatch.

TRACY

Damn! I have to go Matt. Meeting someone for lunch.

Tracy stands, followed by Matt.

MATT

I'll pick you up at your hotel around seven? Do you have a place in mind for dinner?

TRACY

You pick, but I'd like to work up an appetite first. Got any ideas?

EXT. SAN DIEGO BISTRO - DAY

Tracy walks to the big plate-glass window of the Bistro and sees Marilyn inside seated at the bar with a drink in her hand. Tracy backs away and takes a couple of deep breaths.

INT. SAN DIEGO BISTRO - DAY

Tracy walks up to Marilyn and sits on a bar-stool next to her. Some BUSINESSMEN sit farther down the bar.

TRACY

Marilyn. So nice to see you again. Thanks for making the time.

The two women exchange air-kisses.

MARILYN
No trouble at all.

TRACY
And thank you so much for helping
me with Fletcher, Calvin, whatever.

A BARTENDER arrives.

BARTENDER
Good afternoon, ma'am. May I get
you something?

TRACY
I'll have a Martinez.

MARILYN
I'll take another Dirty Shirley.

The Bartender acknowledges the orders and departs.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
How did your meeting go with Matt?

TRACY
Very well. We had a really nice
conversation, and he didn't even
bring up the tattooed collarbone
incident.

Marilyn chuckles. A WAITER arrives and sets a plate of food
on the bar between the women.

WAITER
Compliments of the chef, ladies.
Mustard glazed pork belly, green
lentils, eggplant caviar, and
plums. Enjoy.

Marilyn spears one of the slimy-looking hors d'oeuvres and
stuffs it in her mouth.

MARILYN
I didn't have time for breakfast
this morning.

She spears another chunk and devours it like a hungry dog.
The Bartender brings the drinks.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

I'm really anxious to hear how you worked things out with Calvin in the end. I'll bet he shit his pants when you walked into the bedroom.

(beat)

Oh wait, he wasn't wearing pants.

TRACY

Uh, Marilyn. I've got something--

MARILYN

--What did the FBI say? I'm ready to testify against that rat.

TRACY

Testify?

MARILYN

Yes. Of course. I want to face that bastard in court.

TRACY

Shit.

MARILYN

I hope he's not out on bail. God, maybe I should install a security system.

TRACY

Shit.

MARILYN

What's wrong?

Tracy takes a big gulp of her drink.

TRACY

I've got something to tell you about my encounter with Fletcher, uh, Calvin. Whatever.

(beat)

Things didn't go exactly quite as planned. Now be cool, Marilyn. Calvin, Fletcher. They're... I mean, he's... dead. I shot him. I had to shoot him.

Marilyn stops chewing and widens her eyes. After a second she swallows the glob of food.

MARILYN

What!?! You... you killed him?

The Businessmen look over. Tracy clutches Marilyn's forearm.

TRACY

Be cool, Marilyn. Jesus, do you want the whole place to hear you? I know this is unsettling--

Marilyn yanks her arm from Tracy's grip.

MARILYN

(Whispering)

--Unsettling?

TRACY

Listen. I didn't plan on killing the fucker. I tried to reason with him, but instead of working with me he attacked me. He lunged at me with a knife... a sharp object. Do you understand? He tried to kill me. It was self-defense. I thought in his drunken condition he'd be easy to handle, but he caught me off-guard. I had no choice, Marilyn.

MARILYN

I... don't... know, Tracy. This is serious. You know I didn't want to get involved from the beginning. I told you that a million times. Now you've connected me to a homicide.

Tracy arches her eyebrows.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

OK - self-defense. But even if you did kill him in self-defense, everyone's going to think you killed him out of revenge for scamming you. And in two seconds, they'll connect me to the crime too - another ditzy broad who was sucked into one of his scams. It looks bad, Tracy.

(beat)

Why were you there with a gun anyway?

TRACY

Doesn't matter.

(beat)

OK, I brought my fathers old pistol for intimidation. I didn't know it was loaded. I didn't even know it worked. I popped out the magazine but... what difference does it make now? It's under control, Marilyn. The police think he was killed by an underage prostitute.

MARILYN

Why do they think that?

TRACY

I called 911 and played the role. They bought it.

MARILYN

Jesus! They'll trace the call back to you.

TRACY

Do you think I'm an idiot? I used Cuttbate's cell phone.

MARILYN

You're amazing. Now what?

TRACY

Now nothing. No one's gonna connect us to it. I've been monitoring the local news, and that's the way the winds are prevailing. He was killed during the commission of debauchery. He attacked a young girl and she blew him away. She gouged his face and stomped on his cock.

MARILYN

What!? You stomped on his cock? What the fuck, Tracy!

TRACY

Calm down. I had to make it look like something violent had happened.

MARILYN

Where's the gun?

TRACY

Back with my father. He never missed it.

MARILYN

What about--

TRACY

No more questions! Listen carefully. You and I were never there.

A pause.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Say it.

MARILYN

You and I were never there.

TRACY

We're two successful female executives with better things to do than consort with a slug like Fletcher Cuttbate. Let's not descend into a folie à deux. Cooperate.

Marilyn samples her drink coyly, delaying a response.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Maril--

MARILYN

--You want my cooperation? OK, you're a big-time negotiator, Tracy. Negotiate for it.

TRACY

C'mon Marilyn. I saved you a quarter million dollars. Isn't that enough?

MARILYN

I don't feel any richer than I did yesterday. Besides, it's not about money.

TRACY

I see. Power, authority, position, status.

MARILYN

Something like that.

TRACY

Ultimately all negotiations come down to self-worth. How much of it you're willing to sacrifice... How much you can exact from someone else.

MARILYN

What are you going to do for me, Tracy?

Tracy plops an hors d'oeuvre in her mouth.

TRACY

Satisfy your sense of self-worth, of course. What do you know about nanotechnology and cosmetics, Marilyn?

EXT. RICHARDS' PI OFFICE - DAY

Tracy's limo pulls to the curb outside Richards' PI Office in Brooklyn. A NEW DRIVER, a stocky, white man in a uniform opens the door. Tracy steps out.

TRACY

Stay here. This will only take a minute.

Tracy walks to the PI Office.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tracy, Matt and Dad sit together on the sofa eating popcorn and watching "Ace in the Hole" on TV. Dad sits between Matt and Tracy.

CLOSE-UP - TV

Showing Kirk Douglas's character Chuck Tatum falling wounded to the floor, ending the movie.

BACK TO SCENE

DAD

How about that, Matt? Good movie, huh?

MATT

Very good. Great suggestion.

DAD

"I don't go to church. Kneeling
bags my nylons". What a great
line.

MATT

And the one about belts and
suspenders. Genius.

Dad fingers his belt sheepishly.

TRACY

While you two recap the entire
movie, I'm going to make some
coffee.

Tracy leaves.

DAD

Is she gone?

MATT

Yeah.

DAD

Tracy's a great woman, Matt. A
real winner. I hope you respect
that.

MATT

Sure. I most definitely do.

DAD

She works too hard. Never really
had any lasting relationships.
Maybe you can change that.

MATT

I think so.

Matt reaches into his pocket.

MATT (CONT'D)

I want to show you something. Hold
out your hand.

Dad extends his palm into which Matt places a diamond
engagement ring.

DAD

What's this?

MATT

What do you think it is?

DAD

Is this a diamond? It's too big to be a diamond.

MATT

That's what eight carats feels like.

DAD

Good God, Matt. Eight carats?

MATT

Shhh. I'm going to ask Tracy when she comes out to San Diego next week. Of course, I want your blessing.

Dad begins to tear up. His feeble eyes dart around.

DAD

Oh, Matt. Of course you have my blessing.

SOUND of cups clinking O.S. Matt quickly stuffs the ring back into his pocket. Dad blots his eyes. Tracy walks in carrying a tray with coffees and creamers.

TRACY

What's wrong, Dad?

DAD

Nothing dear. Something in my eyes.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

GUESTS of NanoNano sit at several tables at the same San Diego Restaurant where NanoNano celebrated its IPO party. Some Guests dance to Latin music. Matt and Tracy sit together at a center table with a few other EXECUTIVES including Marilyn.

INSERT: TITLE CARD "ONE MONTH LATER"

EXECUTIVE #1

Hey, did you hear about Ron Slomsky?

Most of the table pays attention. Tracy continues chatting with the person sitting next to her.

MARILYN

What?

EXECUTIVE #1

He got fired from PicoTech.
 Someone told me they found kiddie
 porn on his computer.

MATT
 Jesus. What an asshole.

MARILYN
 (Shocked)
 I can't believe it.

Marilyn looks at Tracy who expresses no shock.

MATT (CONT'D)
 Good thing he left us when he did.
 That kinda press we can do without.

Matt stands and taps his glass to attract the attention of
 the room. The band stops playing.

MATT (CONT'D)
 May I have your attention everyone.
 We are gathered here today to
 celebrate the union of our fair
 maiden NanoNano and the deep-
 pocketed Department of Defense in
 the holy sacrament of government
 contracts. Hang on to your
 options, boys and girls.

The room erupts in applause.

MATT (CONT'D)
 The contract will give us the cash
 flow to pursue new avenues of R&D
 including cures for a variety of
 eye diseases - a market we believe
 is very lucrative.

More applause. Tracy nods sublimely.

MATT (CONT'D)
 Now, I have another announcement to
 make. Marilyn, would you please
 stand up.

Marilyn stands and modestly clasps her hands in front of her.

MATT (CONT'D)
 I'm thrilled to announce that
 Marilyn Jenkins has been promoted
 to General Manager of our soon-to-
 be opened facility in Malaysia
 where we'll start up our cosmetics
 operation.

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

Marilyn brings enormous experience to the role, and we're happy to have such a talented woman on the senior executive team.

Marilyn acknowledges the applause.

MATT (CONT'D)

You all better get your face time in with Marilyn tonight. She leaves for Kuala Lumpur tomorrow morning and we won't be seeing her much around here after that.

Tracy smiles deviously. Guests step up to congratulate Marilyn.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT/WOMEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tracy stands at the sink, examining an eyelash in the mirror. Like before, she sees the reflection of Marilyn watching her from behind. Tracy turns to face her.

TRACY

Hello Marilyn.

MARILYN

(Testily)

I earned my promotion, Tracy.

TRACY

Of course you did. Why would you even bring it up?

MARILYN

I suggested the idea of cosmetics with Matt a long time ago, just so you know.

TRACY

Insightful, Marilyn.

MARILYN

I don't want you telling people I asked you for help... I mean negotiated for... Shit!

(beat)

Now that you're screwing my boss, I don't want anyone thinking you had something to do with my promotion. Like payback for saving your ass on that Calvin thing--

TRACY

--Jesus Christ, Marilyn! What's wrong with you? Did you drink too many Dirty Shirleys again?

Tracy bends down low to inspect the stalls for the telltale feet of accidental interlopers, finding none.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Look, you're a General Manager now, Marilyn. The biggest big-shot woman in nanotech. You got what you wanted. Don't blow it.

MARILYN

You don't think I deserve it, do you?

TRACY

C'mon, Marilyn. Deserve's got nothing to do with it. You should know that. You don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate.

MARILYN

Is that a fact?

TRACY

That's my experience.

MARILYN

I see.

TRACY

Just keep your big mouth shut, understand? Forever. You do that and I promise you'll do well in our company.

MARILYN

Huh? What? Our... what does that mean?

TRACY

Didn't you hear? Matt proposed last night and I said yes.

MARILYN

Amazing.

TRACY

And I'm joining the board of NanoNano at the next meeting.

MARILYN
Unbelievable.

TRACY
Congratulations again on your
promotion, Marilyn. Have a safe
flight to Malaysia.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tracy and Matt dance among others to a Latin version of "Day
and Night."

FADE OUT.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Matt and Dad watch TV together. Dad wears thick glasses.

INSERT: TITLE CARD "ONE YEAR LATER"

MATT
It's not too bright for you, is it?

DAD
No. I'm getting used to it. The
picture is still a bit blurry but I
ain't complaining. I forgot how
sexy Barbara Stanwyck used to be.
Even with that atrocious wig.

Tracy walks in from O.C. with a plate of sandwiches. She
puts the plate on a coffee table and rubs her father's neck.

TRACY
How's the movie, Dad?

DAD
One of my favorites. So nice to
see it again after all these years.

MATT
I can't believe that dude from
those "My Three Sons" reruns was
such a piece of shit in real life.

Tracy shakes her head. Her cell phone RINGS and she answers.

TRACY
Tracy Shepard.

RICHARDS (V.O.)
Ms. Shepard. Grayson Richards.
You hired me to--

TRACY
--Yes, yes. What can I do for you?

RICHARDS
I have a solid lead. I came across
a coroner's report in Hamilton
County. It mentioned that the
deceased had the type of tattoo you
described. I don't know his name
yet, but he has to be your con man.

TRACY
I'm over that, Mr. Richards. I
don't care anymore.

INTERCUT with Richards's office.

RICHARDS
I feel bad that I let you down. I
want to complete the mission you
hired me for.

TRACY
Well, I appreciate that, but I
really just want to drop it.

RICHARDS
The guy was murdered. I've been
looking through the police reports.
No one was ever charged. If I can
connect some dots back to the
person who killed him, it may lead
to your money.

TRACY
(agitated)
I just want to drop it, OK?

An uncomfortable pause.

MATT
Something wrong, Trace?

Tracy walks into the Kitchen.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy cups her hand around the cell phone.

TRACY

Who told you about this coroner report? Are you certain of it? It sounds so--

RICHARDS

--No one told me anything. I dug it up myself. That's what I do. I uncovered the report and contacted the coroner who told--

DAD (O.S.)

Tracy, bring me a glass of lemonade, will ya? And one for Matt, too.

RICHARDS

--He confirmed they had a stiff come in with a weird tattoo on his, well, you know.

TRACY

Yeah, I know.

(beat)

I stopped paying you a long time ago, Mr. Richards. Why are you still working on this?

RICHARDS

I don't get it, Ms. Shepard. Don't you want to find out if this guy is your con man? Gain some closure. Maybe get some of your money back.

TRACY

I'm happy now. I don't need closure. I don't need money. I just want to forget the whole ugly thing. Understand?

RICHARDS

I suppose so.

TRACY

Thank you. I appreciate your diligence, but I think you should move on to another case.

RICHARDS

Interesting.

TRACY

What?

RICHARDS
Oh, nothing. Sorry to have
bothered you, Ms. Shepard.

TRACY
Wait--

RICHARDS
-Have a nice day. Maybe we'll see
each other again in the future.
I'd enjoy that.

TRACY
I didn't mean to sound--

Richards hangs up.

TRACY (CONT'D)
--Hello?

Tracy puts the phone down on the countertop. After a moment of contemplation about what just transpired, she opens the drawer revealing her father's pistol back in its original position amidst some hand towels.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tracy sits on the sofa, Matt puts his arm around her.

MATT
Who was that?

TRACY
No one. An old client. Whatcha
watching, Dad?

DAD
"Double Indemnity."

MATT
A scam leads to murder.

C.U. of Tracy's fraught face.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. RICHARDS' OFFICE - DAY

For a moment, Richards stares blankly then hangs up the phone. He flips through a notebook stopping at a page and makes a call. C.U. of the page where "Hamilton Co. Coroner" is written long-hand along with a phone number.

RICHARDS

Hey, it's Grayson Richards.

(beat)

I'm calling about that guy with the tatted cock.

(beat)

Yes, I am still interested believe it or not. Him, not his cock. Can we continue our conversation sometime soon?

(beat)

Cool, I'll swing by tomorrow.

EXT. CORONER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

With rain pelting down, Richards parks his car - a vintage yellow Karmann Ghia - in the lot and runs to the entrance of the Coroner's Office carrying a briefcase. The door is locked, so Richards pounds on it. After a moment, some lights flicker on inside the office and CODY, a youngish, male, gaunt autopsy technician wearing stained scrubs appears. He unlocks the door.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Richards steps inside, shaking off the wetness. He extends his hand.

RICHARDS

Grayson Richards. We spoke yesterday.

CODY

You don't wanna shake my hand Mr. Grayson. I'm in the middle of organ extractions at the moment. You're free to come back with me to the morgue if you want.

RICHARDS

Um, well you see--

CODY

--If you're the squeamish type, you can sit over there until I'm done.

RICHARDS

No, no. I'm intrigued. I've never been inside a morgue when the sausage was being made.

(beat)

(MORE)

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

Sorry, that was a bit too on the nose.

CODY

You're a PI and you've never been in the morgue?

RICHARDS

I mean, I've been inside plenty. Just not during the cutting, and dismembering, and whatever else you guys do in there.

CODY

Well, if you're implying necrophilia, that hardly ever happens. I hope that's not what you're investigating.

RICHARDS

No. Absolutely not. Nothing of the sort.

Cody walks off, followed by Richards, hesitatingly.

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

Inside the Autopsy Room, Cody resumes examination of a corpse on a slab. Cody addresses Richards without taking his attention away from the task at hand. Richards removes a notepad from his breast pocket.

CODY

What do you wanna know about Mr. Snake Tattoo?

RICHARDS

As much as you can tell me. And show me.

CODY

Show you? His body was removed over a year ago.

RICHARDS

I assume there are some records. Y'know, photos, tissue samples, stuff like that.

CODY

That wasn't in our agreement, Mr. Grayson.

RICHARDS

Richards. Well, can we add it to our agreement?

CODY

I don't know.

(beat)

I guess so.

Cody tosses a livid lump into a pan with a SPLAT.

CODY (CONT'D)

But it'll cost. Another G. You're asking for privileged shit. Confidential shit. The kinda shit that gets dudes like you and me stripped of our licenses. Possible criminal charges.

(beat)

You carry a leather briefcase with a clasp and a tiny lock, so I know you're prepared to pay for shit.

RICHARDS

Prepared, yes, and done. Another thou. That's fair.

Cody continues with his autopsy tasks, not speaking directly to Richards.

CODY

The dude's real-real name is Walter Muff. He came in here with an alias tagged to his toe, but alas the DNA. That treacherous DNA.

Richards writes the man's name.

RICHARDS

Would you know his DOB, NOK--

CODY

--Whoa! I don't work for 23 and me, jack. I just know the fucker's name. That's it. Walter Muff: M O U G H.

Richards scratches out and corrects what he had just written.

He proceeds to unlock the clasp on his briefcase, a hint of indignance at the "tiny lock" comment, and pulls out a roll of hundreds. He drops the money into a bowl next to the autopsy table.

Cody looks at Richards annoyed, then using forceps extracts the wad of bills and drops them in a plastic bag.

RICHARDS

Now show me the good stuff. The
Glengarry leads.

Cody walks to a filing cabinet, followed closely by Richards. He pulls out a folder stuffed with papers and lays them on top of the cabinet. Richards paws through the contents, arriving at a photo of Cuttbate's tattooed cock. He takes a picture of the picture with his cell phone.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

This is good, real good. I might
be able to retire on this shit.

INT. REAL ESTATE LAW OFFICE - DAY

Tracy approaches a RECEPTIONIST at the front desk in the Real Estate Law Office located in Queens. Tracy, as always, is dressed sharply, wearing her signature high heels.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help you?

TRACY

I hope so. I think a former
employee of mine works here.
Hannah Goldman?

RECEPTIONIST

Do you have an appointment?

TRACY

No, but I'm in kind of a jam with
an "all cash" deal on Malba Drive.
It's imperative I get legal
representation ASAP.

RECEPTIONIST

Let me--

TRACY

--Hannah was one of my star
employees.

The Receptionist dials the phone.

RECEPTIONIST

Hannah, a Ms., Uh--

TRACY

--Shepard. Tracy Shepard. She knows me.

RECEPTIONIST

Ms. Tracy Shepard to see you. She says it's urgent. And she, um, knows you? Something to do about a property on Malba?

The Receptionist hangs up the phone.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Ms. Goldman will see you presently. Can I get you something to drink?

TRACY

No thank you.

Tracy walks toward a bank of plush chairs. As she takes a seat the Receptionist remarks.

RECEPTIONIST

Your shoes are gorgeous, Ms. Shepard. Louboutins?

TRACY

Roger Vivier.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh. I'm not--

TRACY

--The haute couture line.

INT. REAL ESTATE LAW OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

As Hannah walks into the Real Estate Law Office anteroom, Tracy stands to greet her former employee. Hannah is much more polished and refined than when she last appeared. Better dressed, stylish hair-do, more svelte. Perhaps expecting a perfunctory hug from Tracy, Hannah stretches her arms only to be met with Tracy's outstretched hand. Hannah shakes Tracy's hand.

TRACY

Hannah. So good to see you. You look great.

HANNAH

You look even better. You're involved in a real estate deal in Malba? How can I help you?

TRACY

It has nothing to do with Malba.
Can we talk in your office?

INT. HANNAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Hannah's Office is rather drably appointed, offering a dismal view of the parking lot through bent Venetian blinds out the only window. Hannah's desk and credenza is blemished IKEA. A house plant in distress sits next to it. Her law degree is mounted in a cheap frame on the wall behind the desk. Tracy takes a seat by a coffee table; Hannah sits across from her.

HANNAH

What brings you to Queens? If not a real estate deal, then--

TRACY

--I came to hire you back. I need a good legal assistant now that I'm waist-deep in decision involving my husband's firm. A quality person I can trust. That's you, Hannah.

Hannah stands slowly and paces a bit.

HANNAH

Can I get you something, Tracy? I have a bottle of Stolli in the fridge.

TRACY

I'm good. Look, I'm sure you were upset with the abrupt, the sudden, um, layoff, but I had no choice. I was scammed out of a lot of money.

HANNAH

I'm sorry. I really am. And I'm not upset. Wasn't upset.

TRACY

My life was turned upside down and inside out by that bastard.

HANNAH

I know. And I sympathize.

(beat)

I'm doing OK here, Tracy. Easy cases, decent money, guaranteed benefits. I get to go home at a decent hour.

TRACY

NanoNano is growing like crazy.
New markets, new products,
expansion all over the world. Four
hundred new hires just since
January. My role has expanded
beyond board member and major
shareholder.

HANNAH

Wife, too, I suppose.

TRACY

Sei cattivella.
(beat)
C'mon, Hannah.

HANNAH

Tracy, I always liked working for
you.

TRACY

But?

HANNAH

But, I'm content here.

TRACY

I'll triple your salary, dangle a
sweet signing bonus in your face,
give you a platinum health plan,
and ensure the important work you
do at NanoNano will make radon
litigation seem like, uh, radon
litigation.

HANNAH

Why me?

TRACY

You're a good lawyer, Hannah.

HANNAH

Why me?

TRACY

We work well together. Always
have.

HANNAH

Why me?

TRACY

OK, the challenges inside and outside of work have reached a fever pitch. Complications abound. I need a competent person like you I can trust absolutely. A loyal subject who will--

HANNAH

--Loyal subject? Really?

TRACY

Loyalty is non-negotiable.

HANNAH

Triple salary?

TRACY

Quadruple if you say yes in 24 hours.

HANNAH

Thank you, your highness.

Giggling, Hannah curtsies before Tracy, who chuckles herself.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Richards strolls into the Police Department holding a folder of papers. He proceeds to the front desk, plopping the folder on the counter.

OFFICER

What do you want?

RICHARDS

My name is Grayson Richards. I have a FOIA for information on a deceased felon who was once arraigned in your jurisdiction. A Walter Muff.

OFFICER

Muff?

Richards opens the folder.

RICHARDS

It's spelled M-O--

OFFICER

--aka. Bush?

OFFICER #2 laughing O.S.

RICHARDS
Look, I just wanna--

OFFICER #2 (O.S.)
(chuckling)
--aka. Merkin?

Richards taps on his folder.

RICHARDS
Can you just give me the arrest
records and the other items in the
FOIA? Please?

OFFICER
Lemme see that fuckin' folder.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

Richards heads to the exit, a wide sheaf of papers squeezed under his arm. He passes by a window marked "Evidence". A portly, twenty-something EVIDENCE CLERK sits in a swivel chair in the mid-distance inside the room, scrolling on his cell phone. Richards calls out to him.

RICHARDS
Hey, dough boy. Waddle your fat
ass over here.

The Evidence Clerk stares at Richards with initial befuddlement, then rises slowly and approaches the window protected by bullet-proof glass.

EVIDENCE CLERK
Whadja just say to me?

RICHARDS
Nothing. Just talking to myself.
I said, "Oh Boy, what's the fastest
way outta here?".

The Evidence Clerk points down the hallway.

EVIDENCE CLERK
See that exit sign.

Richards dumbly looks down the hall.

RICHARDS
Now I do.

Richards spots the Evidence Clerk's badge

RICHARDS (CONT'D)
Thanks, Officer Bockleman.

EVIDENCE CLERK
Glad I could help.

RICHARDS
Maybe you could help me with something else. I'd make it worth your while.

EVIDENCE CLERK
Like what?

RICHARDS
I just got a big file related to a case I'm working on, and I might need to check out some of that evidence you got stored away.

EVIDENCE CLERK
Doesn't work that way, mister. Takes a court order.

Richards nods like he gets the picture

RICHARDS
Ah, that makes sense, I suppose.
(beat)
I bet there's a lot of shit in boxes that's been sittin' idle for years. Decades, maybe. Nobody caring about it.

EVIDENCE CLERK
That's for sure. Especially them cold cases. We got a bunch.
(beat)
My favorite is the box with a chastity belt and a set of dentures.

RICHARDS
Ouch. What happened?

EVIDENCE CLERK
Victim died of, well, y'know, excessive blood loss due to trauma.

RICHARDS
Do what I think happened, happen??

The Evidence Clerk nods with a foolish grin on his face.

EVIDENCE CLERK

This was way before DNA and stuff.
It's never gonna get solved.

RICHARDS

Why not just chuck that shit in the
trash? Or send it to Ripley's
Believe it or Not?

EVIDENCE CLERK

Probably should. We could use the
space.

RICHARDS

I can imagine. So much crime, so
little space. Thanks for showing
me the way outta here. Maybe I'll
see you later, sir.

EVIDENCE CLERK

Be safe out there.

INT. RICHARDS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Richards sits at his spare desk poring over the pile of papers he obtained through his FOIA request. A half full rocks glass of brown booze sits nearby. He reads, makes notes, reads some more, and then enters a query into his laptop. After a moment staring at the screen, Richards sits back and takes a nice, satisfying pull from the glass.

On the laptop screen: a minor California news outlet headline reading, "Ron Slomsky, former PicoTech exec pleads guilty." Ron's photo accompanies the article.

EXT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT - DAY

A plane lands at the San Diego Airport on a typically sunny day.

EXT. RON'S APARTMENT - DAY

In mid-afternoon, a taxi cab pulls in front of Ron's Apartment complex, a rough Section 8 property littered with bikes and broken toys on the sodless dirt. He exits the cab and walks to the Visitor's entrance carrying a briefcase. Even in his cheap PI suit Richards is vastly overdressed for the neighborhood of lower-class, mixed races.

Richards consults a piece of paper then walks towards Ron's Apartment. A teenaged BOY among several others hanging around calls to Richards as he gets near the door.

BOY

That dude's a sex offender. He's gotta tell you that.

RICHARDS

Thanks. I know what he is.

BOY

My mom's tryin' to get him 'victed.

RICHARDS

Good for her.

Richards knocks on the door. Ron opens it, standing a full step back into the dark apartment so as not to be seen by anyone outside. Ron hurriedly waves Richards in.

RON

Get in here, man.

Richards hustles in and shuts the door behind him.

INT. RON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ron's Apartment is a dreary mess: balled up clothing on the floor, dishes piled in the kitchen. A cat roams the place while another scratches in a clumpy litterbox. Ron extends his hand, which Ron shakes.

RICHARDS

Thanks for agreeing to meet with me, Mr. Slomsky. I'm Grayson Richards.

RON

The last person to call me Mr. Slomsky was a very unfair judge right after he ruined my life but good.

RICHARDS

Child porn rap. Pretty serious.

RON

I did not have child pornography on my computer. That's not my thing. Someone planted that shit.

(beat)

(MORE)

RON (CONT'D)

And whoever it was, they hid the footprints real good. My lawyer was very impressed.

RICHARDS

Who would want to do such a terrible thing? Assuming that's what really happened.

RON

Oh, it definitely happened.

(beat)

My guess: some asshole at work.

RICHARDS

That would be my guess as well. Can we sit down and go through some things?

Ron leads Richards to a card table cluttered with papers, clothing, trash. One of the cats sits among the detritus. With one arm, Ron sweeps the table clear, flinging the cat into the air.

The men sit across from one another.

RON

I'd offer you a drink, but I'm not allowed to possess alcohol. Sorry.

RICHARDS

That's OK. As I said in my letter--

RON

--Sorry about that, too, but I'm not allowed to possess a computer either.

RICHARDS

Understand. As I said, I'm a private investigator from New York City. I've come to believe you can help me with a case that has befuddled me for a very long time.

RON

Right. So, how can I help you? And more importantly, how can you help me?

RICHARDS

I have connections with cyber security experts who, if what you say is true and you really didn't obtain or produce these files, can construct a forensic profile and develop an audit trail that might form the basis of an appeal.

RON

I told you, man. I didn't possess--

RICHARDS

--I'd be willing to marshal such forces, at my own expense, if what you provide is critical to solving my hard case.

RON

Look, Richards, this is intriguing, but I have no idea how I can help you.

RICHARDS

I think you can. You're familiar with Walter Muff aka. Fischer Cuttbate, yes? Among other aliases?

RON

Um, uh...

RICHARDS

A dude with a snake tattooed on his penis?

RON

Huh?

RICHARDS

OK, maybe you didn't know that.
(beat)

My hard case involved a rich lady who was scammed out of a mil by a crew whom I believe was led by the late Mr. Muff slash Cuttbate.

RON

He's dead?

RICHARDS

You worked with Muff. I discovered that fact in an arrest record about a clumsy Ponzi scheme .

Ron shrugs.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)
I'll go a step further and say you were a player in one or more of his confidence games. You see, the rich lady was connected to a company you once worked for - NanoNano. Coincidence?

Ron stands and paces the room nervously. Richards pulls a bottle of booze from his briefcase and places it on the card table.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)
Bring us a couple glasses, Ron. Clean ones, if you have 'em.

Ron walks into the kitchen.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)
Look, I have zero interest in making trouble for you or anyone else regarding past con games. I'm just trying to figure out who killed Walter Muff.

RON (O.S.)
Why? Is there a 50 cent reward in it?

RICHARDS
Not a reward, so to speak. And not 50 cents, but maybe a payoff of millions.
(beat)
Does the name "Tracy Shepard" ring a bell, Ron?

Ron re-enters with two glasses and a rag. He polishes each glass and pours generously. Seated now, Ron raises his glass, which prompts Richards to do likewise.

RON
I haven't had a drink in almost two years. I'll probably be drunk in 10 minutes.

Richard smiles imperceptibly at that fortuitous possibility.

RON (CONT'D)
It'd be just my luck if my PO walked in right now.

Ron clinks Richards's glass and throws back a big gulp, whereas Richards takes a modest sip.

RICHARDS

Tracy Shepard. Know her? Stylish broad. Great legs. Always in high heels.

RON

I met her once. That's it. My job was to make sure she got to the airport late. Important to the scam but I was just a minor player.

RICHARDS

Still, you're pretty sure Muff, as Fischer Cuttbate, pulled a scam on Tracy.

RON

Yeah. And it came off clean. No one cracked out of turn. Everyone got a slice. Unlike the next scam.

RICHARDS

Tell me about that.

RON

The scam on the rich bitch worked so well, Walter wanted to run it again on another woman. I recommended someone inside NanoNano, a well-to-do woman exec who seemed dim enough to fall for it.

RICHARDS

When was that?

RON

Year, year and a half ago.

RICHARDS

Hmm. Right around the time Muff got snuffed. So, who was the lady mark?

RON

No-can-do. Maybe I'll give you her name after I meet with your cyber guy.

Ron pours himself another drink and slurps it down. Richards rises.

RICHARDS

Fair enough, Mr. Slomsky. Based on what you've told me so far, I'm convinced you can help me.

Ron rises and wobbles slightly.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

You'll get a call from my guy Bart Keyes - probably in the next seven to ten. He's a top notch forensic systems analyst. Can tell a bit from a byte without breaking a sweat.

RON

Keyes. OK. That'll be great. Thanks.

RICHARDS

Thank you, Ron.

Richards heads for the door.

INT. NANONANO HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Inside the spacious, modern, empty lobby of NanoNano Headquarters, Richards walks up to a pretty female RECEPTIONIST swiping idly behind an imposing marble front desk. Behind the desk on the wall in a minimalistic font is the NanoNano logo. The clock indicates 4:30.

RECEPTIONIST

Good afternoon, sir. Do you have an appointment?

RICHARDS

Oh no. I've been reading about the NanoNano company and I think I might wanna invest some money. Looks like a great company.

RECEPTIONIST

It really is, sir. So, what can I do for you?

RICHARDS

Could I get a copy of the annual report from the last couple of years? Wanna do some research.

RECEPTIONIST

Sure. Give me a minute.

The Receptionist leaves her post. In a moment, Richards observes Matt accompanied by Hannah, who carries a bulky briefcase, walking through the Lobby, past a GUARD and through a secured door. Richards turns to hide his face from notice.

The Receptionist returns to her station behind the front desk and hands a couple annual reports to Richards.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Here you go. You know, these are available on our website.

RICHARDS

Yeah, but I'm kinda anti-technology, if you know what I mean. I'd rather hold the information in my hands. Old school, I guess.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, I think you'll be impressed with NanoNano.

RICHARDS

Oh, I love their technology. Real promising.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT - DAY

As he consumes dinner at 5:00, Richards pages through the NanoNano annual report. He turns pages finally stopping on one in particular.

RICHARDS'S POV: A page with a dozen mug shots of the officers of NanoNano. Only one woman appears: Marilyn Jenkins.

ECU of Marilyn's photo citing her position and location in Malaysia.

INT. NANONANO MALAYSIA - DAY

Marilyn runs a small team meeting in her office which looks out over the Klang River. A clock on the wall reads 9:00. Marilyn is the only American in attendance; the rest are well-dressed young men and women of Asian descent. One of the women, SYAFIQAH, is sleek and polished in the style of a confident team leader. Another is RIZWAN, a young male dressed more casually than the others. From behind her desk an agitated Marilyn speaks to her team assembled in a semi-circle of chairs before her.

MARILYN

Listen people: Sales are flatlining on exfoliant one point zero. That was expected. But it was also expected that two point zero would be in market by now.

(beat)

Marketing has the whole campaign loaded, ready to go. We're holding up the whole show.

RIZWAN

We're behind, yes – but not because we're dragging our feet. We're troubleshooting unpredictable interactions. Nanomaterials don't behave like conventional powders.

Surprised at the tone, Syafiqah glances disapprovingly at Rizwan.

MARILYN

I know how this shit behaves.

(beat)

And I never accused any of you people of dragging your feet. Jesus, can someone just tell me what the hell is going on?

Syafiqah stands up before anyone else can embarrass themselves.

SYAFIQA

Ms. Jenkins, the silica nanoparticles keep agglomerating at concentrations above 2%. We can stabilize them, but viscosity is compromised. Two point zero is mud right now.

MARILYN

What's the plan?

SYAFIQA

Research thinks we can replace silica with titanium dioxide. Looks very promising. Messes up the development budget, but the swap out should be smooth.

MARILYN

Schedule?

SYAFIQAH

Four months to beta with early adopters.

MARILYN

Get it down to ten weeks. Matt is killing me to get the new formula into market in some form before the shareholder meeting.

The team members sit idly in their chairs waiting for more from Marilyn. She claps her hands twice.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Go!

Marilyn rises from behind her desk, stretches her back, and consults her desk calendar.

The team exits post haste. As the last member leaves, MARILYN'S AIDE, a slim male, enters the office.

MARILYN'S AIDE

Ms. Jenkins. You have a call from the states - a Mr. Grayson Richards. He says he has some information of import to discuss with you.

MARILYN

Such as?

MARILYN'S AIDE

He said it involves an investigation he's undertaking. He said it could have relevance to you.

MARILYN

Oh, hell. You need to improve your call screening proficiency. I don't have--

MARILYN'S AIDE

--He told me to tell you he spoke at some length with a gentleman named Ron Slomsky.

MARILYN

Is he--

MARILYN'S AIDE

--On hold? Yes. Do you want me to patch him through, Ms. Jenkins?

Marilyn sits down slowly. After a moment, she responds.

MARILYN

OK.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Tracy rolls into the anteroom of Matt's Office where Hannah stands in conversation across a desk with Matt's SECRETARY. Hannah is much more polished than when she was in Tracy's employ before the Cuttbate scam. Upon seeing Tracy, Hannah gives her a royal greeting.

HANNAH

Tracy, so nice to see you. When did you get in? What brings you--

TRACY

--Checking in on a project glitch.
(beat)
Oh, and my husband is on the other side of that door.

HANNAH

Of course.
(beat)
How's New York? How's your dad.

TRACY

I adore New York City. I idolize it all out of proportion. As for Dad - now that he can see again, he's watching every movie he missed in the past 25 years. He just blew through every Woody Allen movie.

Hannah chuckles and shakes her head. Then after a pregnant moment, Hannah closes in a bit on Tracy.

HANNAH

Listen, Tracy, I've been wanting to tell you in person. I can't thank you enough for giving me this job. I love it here. And I love San Diego. What a change from New York.
(beat)
Not there's anything wrong--

TRACY

--I'm glad you're happy, Hannah. You were always helpful to me. And almost always gave me good counsel.

Hannah looks surprised and then glances down chastened.

TRACY (CONT'D)

You keeping Matt out of trouble?

HANNAH

Huh? I mean, sure. Absolutely. He's awfully busy. The things he's involved in are mind-boggling.

TRACY

Yes, the things he and I are involved in are extraordinary, Hannah.

(beat)

Let me be frank. I proposed you for Matt's EA because I thought you would serve him well. And me. Consider yourself my EA, too.

(beat)

This business is more complicated than you can imagine. Unscrupulous competitors, slimy politicians, fickle employees out to steal a pencil.

(beat)

Matt will depend on you to keep his calendar organized and his mail empty. I'll depend on you for other stuff. Understand?

HANNAH

Sure I do, Tracy. Loyal subject, remember?

TRACY

Did I say that? It doesn't sound like--

HANNAH

--I remember.

After a pause, Tracy smirks and responds brightly.

TRACY

Sei cattivella.

HANNAH

OK. Now I'm gonna have to look that up.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Marilyn presses the button on her speakerphone, initiating a conversation with the waiting Richards.

MARILYN

Marilyn Jenkins here. To whom am I speaking?

INTERCUT WITH RICHARDS IN THE DINER.

Richards holds a cell phone and a pen. A pad of paper sits on the table.

RICHARDS

Ms. Jenkins, my name--

MARILYN

--what is this about?

RICHARDS

Ms. Jenkins, my name is Grayson Richards. I'm a private investigator in New York. I once worked for Tracy Shepard.

(beat)

You know Ms. Shepard, right?

MARILYN

What do you want?

RICHARDS

My employment with Ms. Shepard ended a while ago, but the crux of the case intrigued me, so I kept working on trying to find out... well, I can't talk about her case at the moment, but let's just say she lost interest which I found odd given the new information I had uncovered.

(beat)

Anyway, I found out some things that directed me to you.

MARILYN

I don't know what you're talking about.

RICHARDS

Do you know a Ron Slomsky? Worked at Nanonano, then PicoTech, then became a convicted sex offender.

MARILYN
I'm hanging up.

RICHARDS
Don't you want to know what he told me? Or do you already know, and that's why you want to hang up?

MARILYN
Look, Mr. Richards--

RICHARDS
--You were the victim of a scam, just like Tracy Shepard was. Am I right?

MARILYN
No. Scam? What?

RICHARDS
Slomsky told me he was part of a crew that scammed women using a ruse involving identical twins. That crew screwed Tracy out of a lot of money, and almost screwed you too, right?

MARILYN
I'm done with this.

RICHARDS
Does the name Cuttbate mean anything to you, Ms. Jenkins? Or maybe Calvin somebody?

MARILYN
I don't know--

RICHARDS
--How about a cock with a snake tattoo?

Marilyn terminates the call with a sharp finger to the speakerphone button. She pours herself a stiff drink and walks slowly to the big window overlooking the Klang River. The morning sun silhouettes Marilyn's curvy body.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT - DAY

Sitting over his empty dinner plate, Richards places his cellphone on the table. He revisits the NanoNano annual report still open to the page of officers.

The facing page is another collection of mug shots featuring the board of directors. Tracy's photo appears second after Matt's.

Richards draws a snake connecting the photos of Marilyn and Tracy.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Matt and Tracy sit together in slick club chairs by an art deco coffee table. A couple cocktails rest on the table. Hannah sits off to the side with her notepad. Whereas Matt and Tracy are dressed like models from Town & Country, Hannah wears a sharp business suit.

MATT

Y'know, Trace, Marilyn's update on two point zero didn't engender a lot of confidence.

TRACY

Cautiously pessimistic. Set the bar low then step over it, all the time acting as if you cured cancer.

MATT

I don't think so. She asked me to approve a requisition for a substantial quantity of some kind of chemical. Apparently she needs it to fix problems with the formula.

TRACY

Seems kinda late for that.

Matt takes a swig of his cocktail.

MATT

I think the project is in trouble. You'll have to go over there and straighten shit out.

TRACY

Me? You're not serious.

MATT

You proposed getting us into cosmetics - of all things. And it was you who pitched Marilyn for the gig.

(beat)

You own this, Tracy.

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

I have full confidence you can get your project back on track.

Slouching, Tracy dangles a high heeled shoe from her big toe.

TRACY

Chemistry is not my strong suit, Matt.

MATT

I'm surprised at you, Trace. This isn't about chemistry. It's about rallying the troops. Boosting morale. Persuasion, babe, not chemistry.

(beat)

Isn't that your métier?

Tracy abruptly sits upright, assuming a take-charge posture.

TRACY

Listen, I have a lot of--

MATT

--Have a nice flight, Tracy. Call me when you get in. And don't tell Marilyn you're coming over. I don't want to give her a chance to embellish the facts.

Scowling, Tracy drills Matt with her dagger eyes, but he casually drinks his cocktail.

TRACY

OK, Matt. But if it really is a shit-show, I expect you to do something about Marilyn when the project is over.

MATT

We'll discuss that when you get back.

(to Hannah)

Hannah, make Tracy's arrangements.

HANNAH

Absolutely, Mr. Blankenshein.

(to Tracy)

What would--

TRACY

--Come with me, Hannah.

The two women head for the exit.

EXT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT- DAY

A black limo pulls to the curb in front of the Airport's international terminal.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Tracy and Hannah sit across from one another in the cabin of the spacious Limo.

HANNAH

You're all set. Lie down seats to Tokyo and Kuala Lumpur. Your driver will be waiting for you at the KLIA Premier concourse. I reserved you a suite at the St. Regis. It's close to NanoNano Malaysia.

TRACY

I'm going to need your complete attention during this mercy mission. I can only imagine what miracles I'll have to perform to get this shit back on track.

HANNAH

I'm there for you 24 by seven.

TRACY

You'll have to do better than that, Hannah.

(beat)

Lighten up. I'm joking.

HANNAH

They use the UK outlet in Malaysia. I packed you an adapter. Also, a dollar is worth about three and a half ringgit.

Tracy knocks on the window and the LIMO DRIVER opens her door. As Tracy exits, Hannah pipes up one more time.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Have a safe flight Tracy.

EXT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT- DAY

The Limo Driver handles Tracy's luggage as he escorts her to a BAGGAGE HANDLER plying his trade on the sidewalk.

INT. JET (TRAVELING) - DAY

Tracy sits in her first class seat in the center aisle of the jet watching a movie, "Breakfast at Tiffany's". A sharp-dressed, good-looking Asian man, AIMAN, 31 years old occupying the seat next to Tracy's glances at her off and on. At the end of the movie Tracy removes her headphones; the Asian Man makes his intro.

AIMAN
How was the movie?

TRACY
I've seen it ten times and I still don't like it.

AIMAN
It really denigrates Asians.

Tracy pulls a folder from her briefcase.

AIMAN (CONT'D)
Business in Tokyo?

TRACY
KL.

AIMAN
Me too. What do you do?

TRACY
Look, don't take this personally, but I had a very bad experience that started with a conversation with a businessman on a plane.

AIMAN
Oh, how horrible. What did he do?

Tracy chuckles at the Asian Man's obliviousness.

TRACY
I just said-- How old are you?

AIMAN
Thirty-one.

TRACY
Hmmm. You look younger. 28. The same age as my husband.
(beat)
What do you do in KL?

AIMAN

I'm general manager of a private security firm for corporate executives and wealthy people. Big business in Malaysia.

(beat)

I'll bet you're a corporate executive. You run your own company, am I right?

TRACY

Maybe.

Aiman puts his finger to his temple and closes his eyes.

AIMAN

I see you running a company headquartered in San Diego, with a satellite in KL. And you're on your way to solve a looming crisis.

Aiman opens his eyes and smiles. Tracy turns away.

AIMAN (CONT'D)

Or not

TRACY

I don't like the way this conversation is going. Too many questions. Sounds like you're digging for something.

AIMAN

Oh dear. Forgive me. It was inappropriate for me to pry. Especially after you already told me you had a bad experience on a plane before. I shall say no more.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT comes by with a tray of wines; Tracy takes a red. Aiman puts in ear buds and sits back, eyes closed. Tracy takes a wine and sips, looking at the reclining Aiman. She touches his arm and he responds by pulling out the buds.

TRACY

I'm sorry for acting paranoid. I'm sure you're a respectable person, uh--

AIMAN

--Aiman. Aiman Hakim.

TRACY

Hannah. Hannah Goldman.

AIMAN

Nice to meet you, Hannah. Do you have a security team waiting for you in KL?

TRACY

Not particularly. I mean--

AIMAN

--An affluent woman in a position of authority like yourself... you must have protection, especially from Tonto syndicates. They specialize in extortion. Kidnapping sometimes.

TRACY

Well, I don't plan on going to Malaysia ever again.

Aiman produces a business card and hands it to Tracy.

TRACY'S POV: BUSINESS CARD READING "PACIFIC RIM SECURITY SERVICES" WITH AIMAN LISTED AS "MANAGING DIRECTOR, SE ASIA".

AIMAN

Well, maybe for your subordinates? We provide unique services customized to your needs. Concierge treatment. No service request is out of bounds.

Tracy studies the business card.

TRACY

No request is out of bounds? Interesting.

AIMAN

You have a vital exec who may be vulnerable to kidnapping, or his family? We prevent that. You have a trade secret you can't afford to have stolen? We protect that. You have a rogue employee? We insulate you from such pengkhianatan.

(beat)

Treachery.

TRACY

Really? And how do you do that?

AIMAN

Call me when you get settled in KL.
I'll go through our complete
portfolio of--

TRACY

--I'm staying at the St. Regis.

AIMAN

Lovely. Let's be in touch, Hannah.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Marilyn sits at her desk poring over papers and charts. Her ASSISTANT buzzes in on the intercom.

ASSISTANT (V.O.)

Ms. Jenkins, Ms. Shepard here to
see you.

MARILYN

Oh, good. Tell her I've been
expecting her.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE/ANTEROOM - DAY

Holding an expensive-looking briefcase, Tracy looks out a window, her back to the Assistant. The Assistant cups her hand over the receiver.

ASSISTANT

Um, she's not on your calendar.

MARILYN (V.O.)

I'm well aware of that. Just send
her in.

The Assistant hangs up and addresses Tracy.

ASSISTANT

Ms. Jenkins is expecting you, Ms.
Shepard. Please go in.

Tracy enters Marilyn's Office without saying a word.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Standing in front of her desk, Marilyn greets an irritated Tracy.

MARILYN

Tracy, how are you doing?

TRACY

I just flew 22 hours. How do you think I'm doing?

(beat)

And what do you mean you've been expecting me? Did Matt say--

MARILYN

--No. I was fairly confident you'd come see me personally if I stuck it in Matt's head that the project was in big trouble.

TRACY

I don't understand.

MARILYN

Something troubling has come up, Tracy, and we need to address it fast. I couldn't even mention it, let alone discuss details over the phone with you. I needed to see you face to face.

Tracy moves from irritation to worried concern, speaking haltingly with a sense of impending doom.

TRACY

What. Troubling. Thing, Marilyn?

MARILYN

Grayson Richards called me a few days ago.

(beat)

Your private investigator.

TRACY

I know who he is. I fired him over a year ago.

MARILYN

Well, he called me.

TRACY

I never mentioned your name to him. How-- why would he contact you now?

MARILYN

Apparently he continued to slog along on your case even after you fired him.

(MORE)

MARILYN (CONT'D)

He uncovered Cuttbate's real name
and connected him to Ron Slomsky.

TRACY

Jesus Christ.

MARILYN

Based on what Slomsky told him,
Richards thinks Cuttbate was trying
to scam me too. That connects us,
Tracy.

TRACY

That goddamned misshapen ogre.

MARILYN

Richards thought it was odd that
you lost interest in the case after
he made some breakthrough. Is that
true?

TRACY

I have to think. Obviously we have
to neutralize Richards. Throw him
off the scent. Or off a cliff.

MARILYN

I'm not signing up for anything
violent or illegal.

TRACY

Of course not. I'm just saying we
have to make him leave us alone.

MARILYN

He's very suspicious.

(beat)

Do you think he's trying to solve
Cuttbate's murder--

TRACY

--It wasn't murder, Marilyn!

MARILYN

His death then. Who cares?

(beat)

What if he goes on a crusade for
glory?

TRACY

Or blackmail. Either way it's bad.

(beat)

Look, Richards is going to pressure
you. He won't talk to me.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

(beat)

I can only imagine what juicy information he's already pulled out of you.

MARILYN

I didn't tell him shit, Tracy.

TRACY

Maybe not on purpose, but he's a PI. Getting people to give up information is his profession. We can't trust him not to fuck us up. Don't be surprised if he tries to get you to implicate me.

MARILYN

I don't plan on talking to him again.

TRACY

If you crack and I go down, you're coming with me.

MARILYN

Jesus. You said we had to stick together. What's with the threats? I just told you I'm not going to speak to him again.

TRACY

Fine. But your silence won't stop him. He probably assumes one or both of us was behind Cuttbate's mur-- death, directly or indirectly.

(beat)

Given that I lost money and you didn't he's going to focus on me.

(beat)

And I'm the more lucrative blackmail target of the two of us.

MARILYN

I can't argue with that.

(beat)

Y'know, Richards mentioned the tattoo. I bet that's how he identified Cuttbate's real name.

(beat)

Why did you have to tell him that sordid detail?

TRACY

I gotta go.

(beat)

Under no circumstances talk to law enforcement. Do you understand? This thing is between us alone.

Marilyn nods.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Say it.

MARILYN

This thing is between us alone.

TRACY

Good. Now, get your fucking project back on schedule. I don't have time to do deep dives and project assessments.

MARILYN

The recovery plan is on schedule, Tracy. I made a requisition that I'm sure you heard about. The budget took a slight hit, but we'll be in market as planned.

TRACY

Well--

MARILYN

--You can take credit for saving the project if that helps you with Matt.

Shaking her head, Tracy scowls at Marilyn.

INT. ST. REGIS HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Aiman sits at a table in the St. Regis bar nursing a Gibson cocktail. He wears a tailored, dark navy tropical-weight wool suit, white shirt, no tie.

Tracy arrives in her signature heels and skirt cut above the knee. Aiman rises and extends his hand.

AIMAN

Very nice to see you again, Hannah. I'm glad you reached out.

(beat)

I hope you had a successful day.

Tracy and Aiman shake hands, and take seats across from each other.

TRACY

Didn't turn out as I planned.

AIMAN

Oh, is that good or bad?

A WAITRESS arrives.

AIMAN (CONT'D)

What are you drinking, Hannah?

Tracy addresses the Waitress directly.

TRACY

Blanton's Manhattan. Straight up.

The Waitress departs.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Variety is the spice of death.
Isn't that the saying?

AIMAN

I thought it was life, but I
suppose the opposite can be true,
too.

TRACY

I was thinking about what you said
on the plane. About handling rogue
employees and their looming
treachery. I'm afraid I might have
a situation on my hands - someone
in a position of significant
authority, and trust, here in KL.

AIMAN

It's one of our premier services.
And believe me, we deliver on it
more often than you might think.
We plow through files, records,
emails, personal contacts and such
to make a case for termination -
voluntary or otherwise - and/or
litigation. Thorough and ironclad.

TRACY

I need something different.
Completely different.

The Waitress arrives with Tracy's cocktail. Aiman raises his glass which Tracy clinks.

AIMAN

To something completely different.

TRACY

This situation is very touchy.
Very delicate. Requires
imagination.

Aiman pulls a folded sheet of paper from his breast pocket.
Tracy drinks her cocktail.

AIMAN

I always carry an NDA for times
such as these.

TRACY

Mr. Preparation. I'm modestly
impressed.

Tracy accepts the sheet of paper.

AIMAN

Modestly? OK, challenge accepted,
Hannah. Tell me your situation and
your desired outcome in complete
confidence, and I'll tell you how
we would handle it. No
obligations.

(best)

But I'm quite sure you won't find
another firm here, or elsewhere
frankly, capable of crafting and
executing a superior strategy.

TRACY

Where did you go to college?

AIMAN

I got my MBA from the Sloan School.
Then McKinsey for a stint.

TRACY

I should have guessed. Your pitch
was very buzzword compliant.

Aiman sips his drink sheepishly. Tracy checks her watch
while finishing her cocktail.

AIMAN

Listen, Hannah. I may have failed to properly appreciate your dilemma. A lot of execs come to us because they don't have the courage to make the obvious moves themselves. They really just want an outsider to lay the blame on when the CFO gets shitcanned for embezzlement that should have been detected internally years earlier. It's simple CYA.

(beat)

But it's clear you're entangled in a complicated ball of wax, and boundaries must be pushed.

TRACY

Right up to the legal edge, Mr. Hakim.

(beat)

Let me look at that NDA.

Aiman hands the paper to Tracy, who glances at the text, quickly signs and returns the document. Aiman looks at the document closely, focusing on the signature

AIMAN

So, Hannah, you're Tracy Shepard now? What's going--

TRACY

--Like I said, I had a bad experience talking to a businessman on a plane.

AIMAN

I remember.

TRACY

Hannah Goldman is my assistant. If I sign the contract, she'll be your primary contact.

AIMAN

I'm sincerely intrigued. I have to know more. Will you have dinner with me, Tracy?

TRACY

That sounds lovely, Aiman. Meet me in my suite in an hour - 2103, top floor. Beautiful view, and away from people.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

I need utmost privacy if I'm going to express my needs and desires to you,

Aiman grins like a schoolboy praised by his teacher.

AIMAN

Say no more. I'll be there.

TRACY

I truly enjoyed our little badinage, Aiman. See you soon.

Tracy leaves the bar. Aiman sips the dregs of his cocktail while he pulls out his cell phone.

AIMAN

Hey Siri. What does "badinage" mean?

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Matt, Hannah and CFO JACK sit around the coffee table covered with papers and open laptops.

JACK

I anticipate full-year adjusted diluted EPS to be in a range of 36 to 38 cents.

MATT

Jesus, I hate it when we have to put it in terms of cents. Makes us sound like a lemonade stand.

JACK

Well, 260 million shares are out there, Matt. Earnings are good, could be better, but we're still a young company.

MATT

Maybe we should buy back shares.

JACK

Not now. That would look bad and be bad.

MATT

Let's cut the dividend.

JACK
C'mon, Matt. It's already a
pittance.

MATT
What else?

JACK
EPS guidance would have been higher
but we're anticipating a higher tax
rate on adjusted income.

MATT
Welcome to California.
(beat)
OK, that's enough wonk for now.
Thanks, Jack.

Jack and Hannah stand up and gather their things.

MATT (CONT'D)
Stay, Hannah.

Jack departs. Hannah sits back down.

HANNAH
What's up?

MATT
Jack's a good CFO. He had 18 years
at HP before Fiorina blew up the
company. Still, I think he's not
aggressive enough when it comes to
managing costs. Our earnings
should be at least 5 to 6 percent
higher than where they currently
sit. At least based on what I've
heard about other players in the
field.

HANNAH
That's significant.

MATT
Sure is.
(beat)
I want you to be my second set of
eyes on vendor contracts. Report
to me every month with the
unvarnished assessment of our
spending there. Are we paying for
useless or duplicate services?

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

Are the pay rates consistent with industry standards? Where can we squeeze and who can we cut.

HANNAH

OK. I'm on it.

MATT

Great. I'll tell Gordon in Procurement that you'll be shadowing him for a few weeks as a career building opportunity. He'll love it because it'll make him feel important.

(beat)

Poke around discretely and let me know what you find out.

HANNAH

Let me know when I can start.

MATT

Gord-o will call you, darling. I mean, Hannah.

(beat)

Shit. I apologize. Sincerely. I don't know why I said that. What an asshole.

HANNAH

No worries, Mr. Blankenshein.

Matt shuffles to his desk facing away from Hannah, head down.

Hannah hesitates, then quickly departs the office.

INT. ST. REGIS HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Tracy and Aiman sit across from one another at a compact table in the suite, sharing a bottle of Screaming Eagle wine. Used dishes and glasses litter the table.

TRACY

I'm sorry I couldn't be more forthcoming about how exactly my exec might a threat, Aiman. Good performer at NanoNano, but I have trust issues.

AIMAN

NanoNano? Sorry, I don't know it.

TRACY

That's not important.

AIMAN

It doesn't really matter to me what your company does and what your trust issues are. I respect the dilemma you face. We have excellent people on staff to execute. Discrete, professional, experienced.

Tracy chuckles.

TRACY

That sounds like it should be an acronym. D-P-E. Did you trademark it?

(beat)

I'm kidding. I like your sincerity. Refreshing, actually.

Aiman smiles like a kid, as he takes a sip of wine.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I want to start ASAP.

AIMAN

I can get someone on it in two or three days. If your exec responds to our entreaties, as I predict they will, the whole project should wrap in a couple weeks. If you decide something more is required after that, we can craft a phase 2.

TRACY

I'm fascinated. I never realized firms existed - outside of the movies, that is - that do this kind of "covert" operation.

Tracy makes air-quotes.

AIMAN

Necessity is the mother of invention.

TRACY

So said Frank Zappa.

AIMAN

I'm pretty sure it was--

TRACY

--It's a joke, Aiman.

(beat)

I bet you have no idea who Frank Zappa was.

AIMAN

(sheepishly)

Um, no.

(beat)

This wine is very, very delicious. Screeching Eagle. I'll make a note of it.

Aiman pours the remains of the wine into Tracy's glass, filling it half way.

TRACY

Screaming, not screeching.

AIMAN

Oh, right.

(beat)

Shall I have the contract delivered to your suite?

Tracy finishes off the wine briskly.

TRACY

Tell me about yourself, Aiman. I want to know more of the man who develops devious plans for a living.

Aiman is taken aback slightly at the response to his question.

AIMAN

Devious pans? Is that all you think I do, Tracy?

TRACY

Maybe. Does that bother you?

AIMAN

No. Does it bother you?

TRACY

On the contrary, I wish I knew you two years ago. I could have used your expertise.

AIMAN

If what I do seems devious to you,
it's because clients like you first
seek proper solutions that don't
work.

Tracy rises from the table and calls to room service.

TRACY

(into phone)
Bring up another bottle of wine,
please.
(beat)
Screaming Eagle. 2010.

Aiman ogles Tracy's shoes, and her toned legs.

AIMAN

I can't help admiring your shoes,
Tracy. The way they, uh, um, I
mean--

Tracy approaches Aiman seductively.

TRACY

--The way they show off my legs?
Is that what you're trying to tell
me?

Aiman stands, steeling himself for Tracy's admonitions.

AIMAN

I'm sorry. I didn't- Jeez, I feel
like a real--

A bit taller than Aiman, Tracy embraces him.

TRACY

--Shut up.

She kisses him. Shocked at first, Aiman submits to Tracy.
The couple moves to the couch and continue their amorous
play. As Tracy reaches for Aiman's crotch, there's a KNOCK
at the door.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Get the door. I'll be back in a
jiff.

As Tracy heads for the bedroom Aiman rises slowly,
straightens his clothing, and answers the door. A STEWARD
appears with a bottle of wine on a cart. Aiman waves him in.

STEWARD

Shall I cork and decant, sir?

AIMAN

Uh, probably better to leave it.
I'm not sure what we're doing.

The Steward departs. Aiman examines the bottle. The SOUND of a shower in the background. He sits back at the table, munches on crudité, and fiddles with his cell phone. The shower noise ceases.

AIMAN'S POV: NanoNano website on the cell phone screen.

He scrolls the phone. Tracy emerges wearing a white robe open in front, but not exposing too much, and her high heels.

TRACY

Oh, I see they brought the wine.
Will you open it?

Tracy sits down in the corner of a large sofa next to the dinner table. Aiman proceeds to cork the wine.

AIMAN

Might your rogue exec be Matt
Blankenshein? Google says he's
head of R&D at NanoNano.

Tracy laughs hysterically.

TRACY

Oh my god. Aiman. Matt isn't head
of R&D. He's the CEO, founder and
largest shareholder at NanoNano.
(beat)
And my husband.

AIMAN

Oh shit.

TRACY

He's not my rogue exec, believe me.

AIMAN

Fuck.

TRACY

Look at you. I take a shower for
15 minutes and already you're
cracking the case of the missing
strawberries.

AIMAN

I don't know what to say.

TRACY

Don't say anything. Pour me a wine, and come over here.

Aiman pours wine into two glasses, and hands one to Tracy. Before he can sit next to her, Tracy issues a command.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Remove my shoes, please. Slowly. I'll hold your wine.

Aiman gives her his wine glass and kneels before Tracy. He unbuckles the straps and slowly takes off her shoes one at a time, placing the pair off to the side. Her feet are toned, and the nails polished with a blood-red lacquer.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Sit, Aiman.

As Tracy occupies the corner of the couch, her legs now on the couch, Aiman is forced to sit opposite her in the other corner. She hands him his wine glass, and raises hers.

TRACY (CONT'D)

To devious plans.

They both take a sip of the wine. Tracy places her glass on the floor and proceeds to unbuckle and unzip Aiman's pants with her feet. Her robe is now open enough to expose her breasts. As Tracy begins to stroke Aiman, he leans his head back, MOANING.

INT. ST. REGIS HOTEL SUITE - DAY

It's the following morning. Sitting in a couch in the outer suite area, Aiman is fully dressed checking his cell phone.

Tracy emerges from her bedroom wearing a lush robe, a towel wrapped around her head. She approaches Aiman who stands to greet her. She plants a peck on his lips.

AIMAN

Good morning.

TRACY

You smell good. Amber, a touch of fruit, but not too much.

(sniffing)

I detect a hint of tobacco. Yummy.

She disengages and turns toward the bedroom. Facing away from Aiman, Tracy makes a request.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Drop off the contract with the
front desk.

After an awkward moment, Aiman pipes up.

AIMAN
I had a lovely time, Tracy.

Tracy continues to walk away from Aiman.

TRACY
Keep me apprised.

AIMAN
I most certainly will, Ms. Shepard.
(beat)
Maybe in New York. I have a
desperate client to attend to, but
I'd gladly carve out time for you.

Tracy turns and approaches Aiman. When she gets close, he takes her in his arms. They kiss.

TRACY
Remember, my dear. Discretion is
the better part of valor.

AIMAN
Is that another Frank Zappa quote?

Tracy smiles and touches Aiman's nose.

TRACY
Clever.

Aiman strokes his face and watches lustily as Tracy bends over to retrieve her shoes before heading to the bedroom.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

A plane comes in for a landing.

INT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY

Tracy makes a call from the limo.

MATT (V.O.)

Hey babe, how was your mission of mercy?

TRACY

All good. Two point zero is on track for launch, budget only slightly bent out of shape. Finance says we can bury the overrun into the price and no one will bark.

MATT

I knew you'd straighten out Marilyn's mess. You're the best.
(beat)
Let me take you out. You can tell me all about how you pulled victory from the jaws... I mean jaws from--

TRACY

--I'm in New York. Gonna check on Dad. And other stuff.

MATT

You didn't tell me that.

TRACY

So what?

MATT

So nothing. Say hi to Charles for me. When will you be back out here?

TRACY

Not sure. Definitely for the quarterly.

MATT

You better be.
(beat)
Miss you.

TRACY

Same.

EXT. NYC HOTEL - NIGHT

Tracy's limo pulls in front of the Hotel.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Sitting behind her desk, Marilyn converses with Syafiqah.

SYAFIQA

Thankfully the TiO2 arrived ahead of schedule. We were able to swap out the silica and restart the fabrication.

(beat)

And finance located a lower cost provider, so the budget hit is almost negligible.

MARILYN

My superstar. I'll make sure your contribution does not go unnoticed by senior management, Sy.

Syafiqah rises from her chair.

SYAFIQA

I appreciate that, Ms. Jenkins.

Marilyn turns her attention to the pile of correspondence on her desk. She addresses Syafiqah without looking at her.

MARILYN

Keep up the good work.

Syafiqah smiles hopefully, but when Marilyn fails to make eye contact, she leaves the office.

Marilyn pores through the correspondence, coming upon a manilla envelope clearly distinct from the rest of the letters in the pile. The envelope is postmarked "New York City" and bears no return address.

Marilyn slits open the envelope and extracts a single sheet of paper with a sketch of a penis with a snake tattoo.

Marilyn quickly folds the sheet and stuffs it back into the envelope. She glances around the office, as if someone might be watching her.

Marilyn's Assistant buzzes in.

ASSISTANT (V.O.)

Ms. Jenkins, Mr. Blankenshein on line one.

Marilyn, nervously presses a button on the speakerphone.

MARILYN

Matt, um, what can I do for you?

MATT

Just calling to congratulate you and your team on getting two point zero back on schedule.

MARILYN

I hope so. I mean thank you, Matt.

MATT

I know there were some bumps along the way, but in the end, Tracy and you got it back on track.

MARILYN

Yeah. Me and Tracy - what a team.

MATT

OK, great. Glad it all worked out.
(beat)
Have one of your staff do a post-mortem. I'm sure the other GMs would benefit from what you learned.

MARILYN

Will do, Matt.

MATT

Super. See you soon.

Marilyn removes the sheet from the envelope and, with her hand over her mouth in grave concern, gazes at the sketch.

EXT. MALAYSIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Shot of the facade of a Malaysian Restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Marilyn sits in a booth alone in a quiet section of the Restaurant, a Jungle Bird cocktail on the table. She speaks on her cell phone as a WAITER brings a plate of food.

MARILYN

It's not a good idea to leave a detailed message so call me as soon as you get in, Tracy.

Marilyn hangs up the phone, takes a sip of her cocktail, and is about to eat when a stocky, 40-something Asian male STRANGER slips into the booth across from her. He wears an ill-fitting, off-the-rack suit. Marilyn sits up, taken aback..

STRANGER
That's a delicious looking
cocktail.

MARILYN
I-- I'm sorry. What are you doing?

The Stranger remains silent, looking intently at Marilyn. She tosses her napkin onto the table and prepares to rise.

STRANGER
Sit down, please. I want to talk
to you.

Marilyn calls out.

MARILYN
Waiter!

STRANGER
Don't be stupid, Marilyn.

As the Waiter approaches, Marilyn stands up.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Did you like the little sketch I
sent you?

Marilyn turns her attention away from the oncoming Waiter, and faces the STRANGER with angst in her eyes. The Waiter addresses Marilyn.

WAITER
Is there something I can help you
with, madame?

STRANGER
Can you bring me a menu? And one
of those delicious looking
cocktails.

WAITER
Certainly, sir.

Marilyn slowly retakes her seat. The Waiter departs.

MARILYN

What is this about? What do you want?

STRANGER

What did you think of my sketch? Did I capture the intricacies of the design?

MARILYN

I don't know what you're talking about.

STRANGER

Yes you do. I can tell you saw it, and that it brings back memories for you. Whether good or bad, I don't know.

(beat)

That clever tattoo belonged to a man who is now deceased. Murdered actually. I think you know something about that.

MARILYN

I don't. Really. You obviously have the wrong person.

Marilyn stifles a burp that is close to vomit.

STRANGER

Things will go much smoother for you if you stop lying, and face the fact that I know what I'm talking about.

(beat)

The owner of that festooned, albeit tiny cock went by many names, one of which was Fischer Cuttbate. Someone shot him in the throat and left him for dead.

Marilyn drinks the rest of her cocktail. The Waiter arrives with a menu and a Jungle Bird. The Stranger addresses the Waiter.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Bring my lovely friend another one of those, please.

WAITER

Certainly, sir.

The Waiter departs. The Stranger takes a sip of the cocktail.

STRANGER

Now, I could say our tattooed friend brought his ill-timed death upon himself. After all, he tried to scam you out of a sizable chunk of change.

(beat)

Does all of this match your recollections so far?

MARILYN

I was never scammed.

STRANGER

That's true, Marilyn. You were lucky to have known his victim Tracy Shepard who warned you of his evil machinations.

(beat)

You're a top exec at NanoNano based here in KL.

MARILYN

So?

STRANGER

Your promotion to general manager was Ms. Shepard's reward for killing Cuttbate, wasn't it? You hated him. Both of you did. But you took the initiative, and reaped the rewards.

MARILYN

He was killed by a teenaged prostitute who he sexually assaulted. It was on the news.

STRANGER

Oh, Marilyn, that fable did make the news for a couple days, but the victim's name was never reported. So how would you know who the hooker supposedly killed?

MARILYN

What if his death was an accident? Did that ever occur to you?

STRANGER

Sounds like what your defense lawyer will plead in court, which is where you'll find yourself if you don't play ball.

MARILYN

I didn't kill anyone.

Marilyn suddenly goes from anxious to agitated.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Are you with Grayson Richards?

The Stranger begins to answer, then stops himself. A long pause.

STRANGER

Marilyn, you're not getting it. No one wants to see you incarcerated. No one seeks justice here. That should be obvious.

MARILYN

What is it you want?

STRANGER

Quid pro quo, Marilyn. Compensate me for my silence, stay out of legal jeopardy. Keep your hifalutin job, and your stellar reputation.

MARILYN

I see. Run-of-the-mill blackmail. I think I'll pass.

STRANGER

You worked with Ron Slomsky. He was an associate of Cuttbate when you were the target of his complex scam. He went to jail under cloudy circumstances, and he's not happy about it.

MARILYN

He's a piece of shit.

STRANGER

He's a piece of shit with receipts. You were the last person to see Cuttbate alive. Dinner at some fancy restaurant in Philadelphia.

MARILYN

Is that so? What did we have to eat?

STRANGER

Don't try the cute route, Marilyn, you're not cut out for it.

(beat)

You know what you did. Now face the music.

MARILYN

I know what I did... and didn't do. Now why don't you go away.

The Stranger slugs down his cocktail. The Waiter returns.

WAITER

Are you ready to order, sir?

STRANGER

Nah, I'm not hungry. Just give me the bill.

The Waiter produces the bill and departs. The Stranger drops a few large bills on the table.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I'll be in touch soon, Marilyn. And don't do anything rash like contacting authorities. That will only dig you a deeper grave.

The Stranger slides out of the booth. Marilyn watches him walk all the way to and out the door.

Marilyn's phone RINGS. She checks the incoming number and decides to answer.

MARILYN

Tracy. Hello.

TRACY (V.O.)

What's the delicate message you couldn't leave?

MARILYN

Richards, or someone working with him, or... I'm not sure...

TRACY

(alarmed)

What's going on over there?

MARILYN

I'm getting pressured. It has to
be your private inv--

INT. NYC HOTEL - DAY

Tracy lounges in bed. The SOUND of a shower O.S. A pair of trousers and a white shirt drape over a chair by the window. A couple empty wine bottles sit on a nearby table.

TRACY

--Stop talking.

(beat)

That fucking bastard. Let me think
for a minute. Shit.

(beat)

Let's discuss things next Sunday
when you're here for the quarterly.
Until then, do not speak to anyone
about this. And absolutely do not
communicate with Richards or anyone
else he might be connected with.
Understand.

MARILYN (V.O.)

Absolutely.

(beat)

Tracy, I'm worried. I was just
ambushed by a guy who knows an
awful lot about, you know, and is
threatening to blackmail me.

TRACY

For what? No, don't tell me.
Sunday. We'll talk then. Bye.

Marilyn puts her phone down. The Waiter arrives to retrieve
the money. Marilyn hand him her empty cocktail.

MARILYN

Another, please. More rum this
time.

EXT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT- DAY

Tracy walks toward the parked limo, her Driver in tow
handling her luggage.

INT. YACHT (TRAVELING) - DAY

Matt's Yacht cuts through the choppy, green ocean off the coast of San Diego. Matt, wearing shorts and a tee shirt sits in a deck chair along with Tracy on the aft deck. A squat pitcher of Bloody Mary's sits on a low slung table.

MATT

I have high hopes for the quarterly. The planning has come together better than I expected. And I'll give credit where it's due. Marilyn's division really came through. I'm thinking of making it a key item for the shareholder meeting.

TRACY

I'm inclined to agree, dear. Her line of business has outperformed, despite the recent setback. Looks like next year could be even better. Even if there's a recession.

Matt sips his Bloody Mary and scans the horizon. He jumps up abruptly and, like a teenager seeing his first Ferrari, points at a super yacht in the near distance.

MATT

Tracy, check it out. That's Lorenzo Fertitta's ship. The Ionian. And that one behind it must be the Hodor.

TRACY

Who the hell is Lorenzo Frittata?

MATT

Fertitta. Lorenzo was CEO of the UFC. Now he's a philanthropist enjoying the finer things in life.

TRACY

Apparently.

MATT

Damn, that ship is next level. 87 meters.

TRACY

Oh, don't tell me you're having pangs of penis envy, Matt.

Just in time to hear the "penis envy" comment, Hannah appears from below deck wearing business casual and carrying a black portfolio.

HANNAH

Good afternoon, Mr. Blankenshein.
Ms. Shepard.

TRACY

Hannah. I didn't know you were
aboard.

MATT

Hannah's running the quarterly.
I've also got her doing advance
work for the shareholder meeting.
She's a real Gal Friday.

Tracy rolls her eyes, and Hannah looks down at her feet, modestly embarrassed. Matt notices the awkwardness.

MATT (CONT'D)

What? What did I say?

(beat)

Look, you're doing a great job,
Hannah. I'm glad Tracy brought you
in. What do you have for me?

Tracy addresses Hannah.

TRACY

Come back later, Hannah. Matt and
I were in the middle--

HANNAH

--Of course. I'll be in my cabin.

Hannah turns and leaves.

TRACY

She has a cabin?

MATT

What were we in the middle of?

TRACY

Marilyn's operation has the
potential to generate a good
portion of the company's revenue,
and it's the second-most profitable
division.

MATT

I know. So what?

TRACY

We have to step up security over there ASAP. All that R&D, patents, subcontractor relations, partnering deals. We need to protect ourselves. And Marilyn, of course.

MATT

Marilyn?

TRACY

She runs the whole division. She's our most senior exec in Asia, Matt.

(beat)

Have you ever heard of Tonto syndicates?

MATT

What the hell are you talking about?

TRACY

Marilyn's a prime target for kidnapping or extortion.

MATT

C'mon, Tracy--

TRACY

--Would you rather wait to receive her pinky toe in the mail?

Matt feigns revulsion.

MATT

You're right, my love. I'll get Bob Schlanger on it.

TRACY

I'll do it. He's competent enough with mundane building security - when he's not betting on horses - but this calls for top level professionals with local presence. We have to look outside. It's gonna require a thorough contract negotiation.

MATT

You know any good negotiators?

TRACY

Funny.

MATT
Give me a kiss.

Tracy stands and pecks Matt's cheek.

MATT (CONT'D)
I knew there was a reason I put you
on the payroll.

TRACY
Is that what happened?
(beat)
I'm gonna lie down for a while.

Matt ascends stairs to an upper deck. Tracy proceeds to the Master Cabin with her bloody Mary. On her way she passes the cabin adjacent to the Master. Through the cracked-open door, Tracy observes Hannah hunched over a laptop. A Burberry patterned piece of luggage sits beside her table.

INT. MASTER CABIN - DAY

Tracy slurps down the rest of her cocktail and flops on the king-sized bed. The Kandinsky painting she lost to auction hangs above the ornate headboard. Tracy makes a call.

TRACY
Aiman? Tracy. I know it's late
there. Do you have a minute?

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Marilyn works at her desk; her phone rings. After several rings, Marilyn yells to her Aide.

MARILYN
Can you answer the phone!

No response. The phone continues to ring.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ.

She answers the phone.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Marilyn Jenkins.

RICHARDS (V.O.)
Ms. Jenkins. I'm glad I caught
you. Grayson Rich--

MARILYN
 (Angrily)
 --I will not be blackmailed!

She slams down the receiver.

INT. RICHARDS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Richards sits at his desk, a cigar smolders in an ashtray.

RICHARDS
 What are you talking-- Hello?
 Marilyn?

Richards dials the phone. Marilyn's Aide answers.

MARILYN'S AIDE (V.O.)
 Good morning. Ms. Jenkins office.

RICHARDS
 May I speak to her, Grayson--

MARILYN'S AIDE
 --I've been instructed not to put
 you through. Don't call again.

Richards hangs up, takes a puff of the cigar and jots in a notepad.

INT. JET (TRAVELING) - DAY

Marilyn reclines in first class wearing eye covers.

INT. SAN DIEGO BISTRO - DAY

Marilyn sits at the bar in the same Bistro where Tracy revealed Cuttbate's death. She munches on snacks and nurses a fruity drink. She checks her watch just as Tracy strolls in and take up a stool next to Marilyn.

TRACY
 Marilyn. So good to see you. How
 was your trip?

MARILYN
 Twenty-two hours. You tell me.
 (beat)
 Did you have to pick this place -
 of all places - to meet with me?

TRACY
Sorry you're triggered.

MARILYN
This Richards thing has made me a
ball of nerves.

The Bartender arrives.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
He's threatening to blackmail me
over Cuttbate's killing.

Tracy grabs Marilyn's forearm sharply and stares daggers at
her.

BARTENDER
Um, I'll come back.

TRACY
Chardonnay, please.

The Bartender nods and departs.

TRACY (CONT'D)
What the fuck, Marilyn! Why not
just wear a T-shirt that says "Ask
me about my criminal past"?

MARILYN
I'm sorry, but I'm scared.

Tracy releases Marilyn's forearm.

TRACY
I've arranged for stepped up
security for the KL facility, and a
bodyguard for you.

MARILYN
Is that necessary?

TRACY
(patronizing)
Um... Yes?
(beat)
I sold Matt on the idea that the
R&D and other stuff could be
vulnerable to competitive poaching.
He agreed to add personal
protection for you.

MARILYN

I appreciate that, but it won't stop Richards, or his partner. He's still gonna try to pin the kill--

The Bartender arrives with Tracy's wine.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

--Is that a Napa Valley Chard, Tracy?

The Bartender departs.

TRACY

I'm going to talk to my FBI contact to assess options. It's possible Richards figured out Cuttbate's real name with help from a coroner. I bet he bribed someone inside the morgue for information. That would compromise him big time.

(beat)

If he knows the FBI is poking around, maybe he'll back down.

MARILYN

I hope you're right.

TRACY

Richards has to be bluffing. What could he possibly know that would qualify as solid evidence? We left no traces, no witnesses, the hooker angle has stood up.

(beat)

My father has the gun.

MARILYN

Maybe you're right.

TRACY

The FBI might contact you for a statement.

MARILYN

Shit, I hope not.

TRACY

Marilyn, you were the victim of the harassment. Of course they'll want to talk to you. Just stick to the script. It's about corporate theft, pure and simple.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)
 Nothing about blackmail.
 (beat)
 Let's get something to eat. You
 can run your presentation by me.

MARILYN
 I don't have the charts with me.

TRACY
 You need charts, Marilyn? That
 doesn't give me confidence.

MARILYN
 Can you give the head games a rest,
 Tracy? I just wanna drink my
 cocktail and forget this whole
 debacle for half an hour.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

A scene of the quarterly meeting. Matt on the stage, his
 face projected on two big TV screens on either side of the
 stage. Big screen behind him with the NanoNano logo

EXT. SAN DIEGO MARINA - DAY

A MARINA WORKER accompanies Aiman to a gate. He unlocks it
 and points Aiman in the direction of a row of large yachts
 docked.

Aiman strolls along the gangway toward the Brobdignagian
 Yacht where Tracy sits at a large, round table in the aft
 section. He's dressed a little too much like Thurston Howell
 III in his brand new, never before worn boat shoes and a
 sweater draped a bit too rakishly over his shoulders. Aiman
 calls out to announce his presence to Tracy.

AIMAN
 Permission to come aboard.

TRACY
 Permission granted, Admiral Hakim.

Aiman proceeds across the gangplank onto the yacht. Shortly
 thereafter, Hannah, carrying a briefcase, appears on the
 gangplank unseen by Aiman and Tracy. When Hannah spots the
 couple in an embrace, she quickly retreats from the scene.

INT. YACHT - DAY

Tracy kisses and hugs Aiman.

AIMAN

Tracy, so nice to see you again.

TRACY

Likewise. Come, have breakfast with me.

Tracy leads Aiman by the hand to the table covered with food and drink. Aiman does a 360 degree look around.

AIMAN

Wow, this is an amazing vessel. What does Brobdignagian mean?

TRACY

Something large, gigantic. Matt thought it would be ironic to name his yacht after something large when his whole business is about making tiny things.

Aiman chuckles.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, we can't take her out this week. The entire crew except housekeeping is on leave. Matt's booked up all week with the big quarterly meeting I told you about.

AIMAN

How's that going?

TRACY

It's a slog, but with occasional moments of juicy cringe when some middle manager shits the bed during his presentation.

AIMAN

Oh, dear.

Aiman takes a bite of a croissant.

AIMAN (CONT'D)

So, what can I do for you, Tracy?

TRACY

We have to expand the scope. How much do you know about the FBI? How they conduct investigations, and such?

AIMAN

Not much. Whatever I think I know comes from watching movies, but I have a former agent on the payroll.

TRACY

How ideal. I need something done this week, before the quarterly ends. Sorry for the short notice.

AIMAN

Don't be sorry. I love a challenge.

TRACY

I'm afraid it's going to be complicated, but time is of the essence.

AIMAN

Tell me what's going on, Tracy.

FADE OUT.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The quarterly meeting comes to a close. Dozens of suited and casually dressed execs and aides mill about. Marilyn chats with Hannah.

HANNAH

I'm sorry you need a bodyguard, Marilyn. Frightening, but at least you'll rest easier.

MARILYN

The past few weeks have been disconcerting, to say the least.

HANNAH

Tracy made me the liaison to the security firm. Let me know if you need anything from them.

MARILYN

I will.

Tracy and Matt approach.

MATT

Marilyn, congratulations on an excellent presentation. I'm glad we saved you for last.

TRACY

Yes, Marilyn. Well done.

(beat)

When are you going back to Malaysia?

MARILYN

Monday. I'm spending the weekend in La Jolla at La Valencia Hotel.

TRACY

Wear something that goes with pink.

MATT

I'll get you a dinner reservation at the Addison. It's at the Grand Del Mar. Do you play golf?

MARILYN

Um, no.

MATT

You should take it up. I know the pro there. He can set you up with a lesson.

MARILYN

Maybe next time, Matt.

TRACY

Well, have a swell time, Marilyn. See you next quarter.

(beat)

Hannah, do you have a minute?

Tracy and Hannah peel off from Matt and Marilyn.

MATT

We'll get to the bottom of the harassment, Marilyn. My gut says it's some Chinese entity trying to steal our IP. They respect no boundaries.

MARILYN

Makes sense, I suppose.

MATT

I'm sure you're not in any real danger. They just come on strong as an intimidation tactic. I'm glad you held your ground and reached out to Tracy right away.

(beat)

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)
Regardless, you'll receive
protection for as long as
necessary.

MARILYN
Thanks, Matt. I appreciate it.

MATT
Have a nice weekend.

MARILYN
You too. Any plans?

MATT
Sailing the yacht to Cabo. I need
a break.

MARILYN
Sounds wonderful. You and Tracy
deserve a little get-away.

MATT
Tracy can't make it.

MARILYN
Oh. Well I'm sure you'll have fun
anyway.

MATT
I always do. Have a safe trip back
to KL, Marilyn.

EXT. LA VALENCIA HOTEL/POOL - DAY

Wearing a one-piece swimsuit, pale skin shimmering with oil, Marilyn lounges by the Pool, sipping a cocktail. Two FBI agents, ERSKINE and COLBY dressed in dark G-Man suits approach her. Their shadows cross her face and body capturing her attention. She sits up.

ERSKINE
Marilyn Jenkins?

MARILYN
Yes?

Erskine produces a badge and quickly flips it shut.

ERSKINE
My name is Inspector Erskine, and
this is my partner Special Agent
Colby.

COLBY

Ma'am.

ERSKINE

Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions for us? Not here, of course. At our office downtown.

MARILYN

About what?

COLBY

Downtown, Ma'am.

ERSKINE

You're not in trouble, Ms. Jenkins. We're looking into someone you may be familiar with. Perhaps your cooperation can help us in our investigation. Wha'dya say?

Colby hands Marilyn a card.

COLBY

Here's the address. Say 4PM?

MARILYN

OK. I was kinda expecting this.

ERSKINE

Great. We'll see you then.

The Agents depart. Marilyn stares off at the Pacific Ocean. A WAITER arrives, interrupting her pensive moment.

WAITER

Another Dirty Shirley, ma'am.

MARILYN

Huh? Uh, yes please.

The Waiter takes her empty glass.

EXT. SAN DIEGO STOREFRONT - DAY

Marilyn walks the sidewalk looking at the address numbers on the buildings. When she gets to a grim-looking Storefront with no markings, she stops. She continues farther down the sidewalk, then returns to the Storefront. She checks the card Colby gave her, then reluctantly walks in.

INT. SAN DIEGO STOREFRONT - DAY

The Storefront is bleak and threadbare. A calendar and some mug shots hang on the putty colored walls. Fluorescent ceiling lights flicker and buzz.

Colby and Erskine rise from their respective desks.

ERSKINE

You're in the right place, Ms. Jenkins. Thanks for coming in. I'm sure you were expecting something more professional looking, but our unit has to keep a low profile.

MARILYN

I was a bit confused.

ERSKINE

Can I get you something to drink?

MARILYN

No, I'm fine.

ERSKINE

This place is a dump, but we brew excellent coffee.

MARILYN

OK. That sounds good.

ERSKINE

Great. Have a seat. This won't take long.

(to Colby)

Get Ms. Jenkins a coffee.

MARILYN

Cream and sugar if you have it.

Marilyn sits in a spare wooden chair at Erskine's desk across from him. Colby brings a cup of coffee and sits on the edge of the desk.

ERSKINE

A man named Grayson Richards has been brought to our attention. You know of him, is that right?

MARILYN

That's correct, but I never met him.

ERSKINE

As I understand from your boss,
Tracy Shepard, someone has been
harassing you at your workplace.

MARILYN

And at a restaurant.
(beat)
She's not technically my boss.

ERSKINE

Ms. Shepard once employed Richards
who is a private investigator. Now
she thinks Richards is behind the
harassment campaign.

MARILYN

That's right.

COLBY

Why would he want to do that?

MARILYN

I presume he's trying to intimidate
me into revealing company secrets.
Mr. Blankenshein suspects the
Chinese are behind it.
(beat)
He's the CEO.

ERSKINE

Pardon me for being skeptical, but
that doesn't comport with the
behavior of a PI.

MARILYN

Well, I don't know--

ERSKINE

--Our investigation is very
preliminary, and there are many
gaps, but we have reason to believe
Richards is after something
completely different.

MARILYN

Like what?

COLBY

Why did Ms. Shepard hire a PI in
the first place?

MARILYN

I don't know. Why did she?

COLBY

We don't know yet, but it's curious that she would make an inquiry to the FBI about the guy she once employed. Does he know something that could compromise Ms. Shepard?

Marilyn fumbles with her coffee cup.

MARILYN

Like I said, I never met him. I don't know anything about him.

(beat)

Uh, why don't you ask Tracy?

COLBY

We have other leads to pursue before that.

Erskine stares at Colby disapprovingly. Marilyn notices.

ERSKINE

Suffice it to say we'll take whatever matters are appropriate in the proper order to get to the bottom of this harassment.

(beat)

In the meantime, we'd appreciate it if you didn't talk to anyone about our meeting today.

MARILYN

Is Tracy in trouble?

COLBY

Why would you ask that?

MARILYN

Well, you said Tracy might be compromised.

ERSKINE

No one is in trouble... so far. Like I said: preliminary, gaps.

(beat)

Thanks for coming in. We'll be in touch if we need to talk to you again.

Everyone stands and Marilyn shakes hands with the two agents.

COLBY

Enjoy the rest of your vacation.

Marilyn departs the Storefront. Once on the sidewalk she nervously lights a cigarette.

EXT. SAN DIEGO MARINA - DAY

Matt drives his McLaren into the Marina lot where he turns the vehicle over to a VALET. He proceeds to the locked gate leading to the gangway, followed by a STAFF MEMBER carrying a couple pieces of luggage and a burly BODYGUARD.

INT. YACHT - DAY

The Yacht's CAPTAIN shakes hands with Matt. A STAFFER brings Matt a cocktail.

EXT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT- DAY

Tracy's limo arrives at the General Aviation Terminal from where corporate jet passengers depart. She proceeds inside the terminal.

INT. JET - DAY

Tracy takes a seat near the front of the Jet. An ATTENDANT brings Tracy a cocktail. A couple EXECES and ASSISTANTS are already on board, sitting near the rear.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Dad opens the door and Tracy enters carrying a small bag. She drops the bag and gives her father a warm hug.

DAD

Tracy Rae, it's so good to see you.

TRACY

Me too, Dad.

DAD

It's been far too long, dear. Come on in, sit down, relax. Can I get you some lemonade?

TRACY

I'll get it. I desperately wanna wash my hands.

DAD
Bring out some cheese and crackers,
too.

Dad proceeds to the Living Room.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tracy plates cheese and crackers and pours lemonade, spilling some on the countertop. She reaches into the drawer and retrieves a towel. Suddenly she paws around the drawer searching for something. Coming up empty, puts the plates and glasses on a tray and heads for the Living Room.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM

Dad sits on the couch watching TV. Tracy takes up a spot next to him.

TRACY
Whatcha watching, Dad.

DAD
The Sweet Smell of Success. Burt
Lancaster, Tony Curtis.

TRACY
Haven't seen it.

DAD
"The cat's in the bag and the bag's
in the river"

TRACY
Sounds cruel. What's it supposed
to mean?

DAD
Problems solved, I guess.

TRACY
I wish it was as simple as that.
(beat)
How's your vision, Dad?

DAD
Never better. I can't thank your
husband enough for making the
investments. You too, dear.
(beat)

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

I was hoping he'd come out here with you, but I'm sure he's busy running things.

TRACY

Actually, he's taking a two week soiree to Mexico in the yacht.

DAD

Why didn't you go with him?

TRACY

It's five days round trip through choppy open seas. And Matt invited his Stanford buddies and their obsequious cling-on's. The conversations are stultifying.

DAD

Oh.

TRACY

We'll take a vacation alone one of these days. Bora Bora, maybe. Seychelles.

(beat)

What have you been up to, Dad?

DAD

Not much. I go to the university library now that I can read books again. Watch TV. Once a month some of the Physics Society guys get together. I try to make it when I feel well enough.

TRACY

Wha'dya say we go out for some dinner? I'm starving.

DAD

There's nothing fancy around here.

TRACY

I'm tired of fancy. I just want something simple, tasty and unpretentious. Pastrami Reuben would be lovely.

DAD

There's a deli about five blocks from here.

TRACY

Perfect. I'll call for my driver.

DAD

We can walk it, Tracy. It's five blocks.

TRACY

Yes. Yes, we can.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Tracy walks arm-in-arm with Dad. His shuffling slows the pace.

TRACY

Um, Dad, I seem to remember you keeping a gun in your kitchen drawer. What'd you do with it?

DAD

That old relic? I sold it.

Tracy stops in her tracks/

TRACY

What? Why?

DAD

What am I gonna do with a gun? Shoot my foot in self-defense?

TRACY

How'd you sell it? Don't you need special permits, or licenses, or something to sell a handgun in New York?

DAD

I don't know. I met a guy in the library and we got talking about things. His father was in the same Army division as me. He offered to buy my pistol. I guess he's a collector.

TRACY

So out of the blue he buys your gun?

DAD

He's building a memorial to his father.

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

He has his old uniform and medals.
And a helmet. He needed an
authentic pistol.

(beat)

He paid me good money. What was I
gonna do with it?

TRACY

Gee, I don't--

DAD

--It wasn't my combat arm. It was
given to me at a discharge
ceremony. I don't think it was
ever fired.

TRACY

Um, really?

Tracy and Dad resume walking.

DAD

Why do you care about that antique?
I would've thought you'd want me to
be rid of it.

TRACY

Who bought it, Dad?

DAD

I don't recall. Why are you
asking?

TRACY

Do you have a bill of sale?

DAD

What's the problem, Tracy?

TRACY

What if the guy who bought it uses
it to kill someone? Or resells it
to some drug dealer? Do you want
their crimes traced back to you?

Dad freezes.

DAD

Oh dear, I never thought of that.

TRACY

(forcefully)

Do you have a bill of sale, Dad?

DAD
No, he paid me in cash.

TRACY
Shit.

Dad looks at Tracy with concern.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Forget it, let's get dinner.

INT. YACHT - DAY

The Brobdignagian anchors off of Cabo San Lucas on a hot, sunny afternoon. About a dozen people, mostly thirty-something men but also a few younger GROUPIES mill about the yacht dressed in swim suits and enjoying colorful cocktails. A buffet of food lays out on a table in the aft deck. Matt chats with three BUDDIES.

MATT
We had a little trouble in Malaysia. Someone's been harassing the GM of the division. Smells like an attempt at IP piracy to me. Or maybe a plot to disrupt R&D.

BUDDY #1
Do you suspect anyone?

BUDDY #2
Gotta be the Chinks, or one of their satellites. Viet Nam maybe.

MATT
Tracy contracted with some security firm I've never heard of with an office in KL to investigate. They also provide personal protection. Costs a fortune.

BUDDY #3
What choice do you have? Do you want to get a package with a severed toe in it?

MATT
That's what Tracy said.

BUDDY #1
Did you consider one of your competitors? PicoTech, maybe?

MATT

Well, there is an ocean of bad blood between us, but I can't believe Fogle would be so stupid.

BUDDY #2

That old fuck is still running things there?

MATT

His son. Nepo-CEO. Since he took the reins in Q1, we've taken 13 points of share from them. When I think about it now, mini-Fogle doesn't have the imagination to pull off such a scheme.

BUDDY #3

I run into him at Torrey Pines now and then. Three handicap, but dumb as paint.

Hannah arrives with some papers. She wears business casual in a sharp contrast to the frolicking guests.

HANNAH

Sorry to interrupt, Mr. Blankenshein. I need your signature on these. I can notarize-

BUDDY #1

--Have a drink with us, darling.

HANNAH

Oh, no, I--

MATT

--That's a good idea. You've done enough work, Hannah. You deserve a break.

Buddy #1 pours out a shot of Clase Azul and hands it to Hannah. She's about to take a sip, but Buddy #1 interrupts.

BUDDY #1

Hold on, Hannah.

Buddy #1 pours out shots for the others.

BUDDY #1 (CONT'D)

Salud!

Everyone shoots the tequila in unison.

BUDDY #1 (CONT'D)
 Now change into your bikini,
 Hannah. We're taking a swim.

HANNAH
 Uh, I didn't bring one. I didn't
 think I'd--

Buddy #2 points across the yacht to three women in bikinis
 drinking, laughing and occasionally looking toward the men.

BUDDY #2
 See the hottie in the blue and pick
 polka dot? I'm sure she has a
 spare. And from what I can see, I
 bet it'll fit you just fine.

Hannah shuffles a bit uncomfortably.

MATT
 It's OK, Hannah. Margaux is cool.

HANNAH
 Well, OK, Mr. Blankenshein.

Matt hands the papers back to Hannah.

MATT
 Takes these back to my cabin. I'll
 look at them tonight.

Hannah departs.

BUDDY #3
 She's cute, Blankenshein. Where'd
 you find her?

MATT
 She used to work for Tracy.

BUDDY #3
 Oh shit. Well, all I can say is
 mind your P's and Q's.

MATT
 Aye aye, sir.

Matt departs.

BUDDY #1
 P's and Q's? You sound like Ward
 Cleaver.

Buddy #2 snickers.

BUDDY #2

Ward Cleaver. Always a little hard
on the Beaver, according to June,
anyway.

.

The men laugh and set up another round of shots.

INT. YACHT/MAIN CABIN - DAY

Matt walks in just as Hannah is about to step out.

MATT

You should call me Matt. It's less
formal, which is how I prefer
things - professionally and
otherwise.

HANNAH

Are you sure?

MATT

I'm always sure. We've known each
other for a while now, Hannah.
It's fine.

HANNAH

OK, Matt.

MATT

Great.

Matt exits the cabin.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Marilyn exits an elevator and walks into the underground
Parking Garage of her apartment building. As she waits, the
Stranger approaches from out of the shadows, startling
Marilyn.

STRANGER

Good Morning, Marilyn.

MARILYN

What are you doing here?

STRANGER

We have to continue our
conversation. It's time to move
forward. Let's go for a ride.

MARILYN

Get the fuck away from me!

The Stranger reveals a gun tucked in his waistband.

STRANGER

Take me to that snazzy blue BMW,
license plate V 8891. Where is it
parked?

MARILYN

Please leave me alone. I beg you.

STRANGER

Get moving. I'll drive.

He takes Marilyn by the arm. Just then the blue BMW arrives
down a curved ramp and into view.

INT. BMW (TRAVELING) - DAY

The Driver of the BMW, Marilyn's BODYGUARD spots the
confrontation and immediately speed toward the pair.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

The Stranger's attention is drawn to the advancing vehicle.
The license plate matches the Stranger's citation: V 8891.

STRANGER

What the fuck?

Marilyn escapes from the startled Stranger just as the
Bodyguard bounds out of the vehicle straight for the
assailant. Before the Stranger can prepare, the Bodyguard
tackles him to the pavement, dislodging the gun. Marilyn
picks it up and points it toward the wrestling duo. The
Bodyguard subdues the Stranger and zip ties his wrists behind
his back. Straddling the prone Stranger, the Bodyguard
brusquely addresses Marilyn.

BODYGUARD

Stop pointing the gun, Ms. Jenkins!

Marilyn quickly complies. The Bodyguard hoists the Stranger
to his feet. He addresses Marilyn acidly.

STRANGER

Why didn't you tell me you have a
bodyguard, Marilyn?

BODYGUARD

Shut your mouth.

The Bodyguard frog marches the Stranger toward the elevator.

MARILYN

What are you going to do with him?

BODYGUARD

A little question time, then a trip to IPD.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marilyn's Apartment is spare, as it would be for someone on an international assignment. Some kitschy ornaments adorn the walls. The Stranger sits zip-tied to a straight-back ladder-back chair in the living room. The Bodyguard is in rolled-up shirt sleeves.

Marilyn signals to the Bodyguard, who steps off to the side to speak with her away from the bound Stranger.

MARILYN

Do you think it's a good idea for him to be here?

BODYGUARD

We must take this opportunity to find out whatever we can about the extortion plot before I take him to the police. Once he's in their custody, whatever they get out of him will be unavailable to us.

MARILYN

I see.

The Bodyguard returns to the Stranger, followed by Marilyn. He reaches into the Stranger's pocket and pulls out a cell phone.

BODYGUARD

What's the unlock code?

STRANGER

Square root of Pi.

BODYGUARD

What's the code?

The Stranger remains defiantly silent, until the Bodyguard holds the phone in front of his face and yanks his head into position by his hair. The phone unlocks.

BODYGUARD (CONT'D)
I proffer the notion you recorded
your conversation with her at the
restaurant. Am I right?

The Stranger remains silent. The Bodyguard fingers the cell phone, then begins scrolling.

BODYGUARD (CONT'D)
Ms. Jenkins, what was the date of
your conversation with this man?

MARILYN
April 14th.

The Bodyguard scrolls some more. He taps the screen. The recorded conversation plays.

STRANGER
(Recorded voice)
That's a delicious looking
cocktail.

MARILYN
(Recorded voice)
I-- I'm sorry. What are you doing?

STRANGER
(Recorded voice)
Sit down, please. I want to talk
to you.

MARILYN
That's it! That's him talking to
me at the restaurant.

The Bodyguard pauses the replay.

STRANGER
You have no right to--

MARILYN
--Fuck you.
(To the Bodyguard)
Jump ahead.

The Bodyguard slides his finger on the screen.

STRANGER

(Recorded voice)

Things will go much smoother for you if you stop lying, and face the fact that I know what I'm talking about. The owner of that festooned, albeit tiny cock went by many names--

MARILYN

--Stop! Jump ahead a bit.

The Bodyguard stops the recording and slides his finger on the screen again.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

(Recorded voice)

What is it you want?

STRANGER

(Recorded voice)

Quid pro quo, Marilyn. Pay for my silence, stay out of legal jeopardy. Keep your hifalutin job, and your stellar reputation. I checked your compensation in the annual report. Substantial, congratulations. More than I make. I'll arrive at a sum you can pay, so don't cry too hard.

MARILYN

Shut it off.

(beat)

There's the proof.

(to the Stranger)

Do you know what the penalty is for aggravated extortion in this country? I looked it up. Twenty years in prison, huge fines.

(beat)

Whipping.

STRANGER

Look, I was just hired to scare you. I never saw any evidence that you--

MARILYN

--Shut up!

The Stranger nods toward the table where his gun rests.

STRANGER

That's not even a real gun.

MARILYN

Who hired you? Grayson Richards?

The Stranger hangs his head.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

It had to be Richards.

BODYGUARD

Give us his contact number.

Silence. The Bodyguard scrolls the phone.

BODYGUARD (CONT'D)

Suit yourself. I see you have a lot of contacts, but I don't see a Richards. What's his nickname?

The Stranger stares defiantly forward, clenching his jaw.

BODYGUARD (CONT'D)

I'm going to call every one of these contacts starting with the A's until I get Richards.

STRANGER

Knock yourself out.

The Bodyguard produces a hand-held Taser.

BODYGUARD

Oh, I will. Every time I get a wrong number, I'm going to light you up.

MARILYN

Tell him the nickname, goddammit!

BODYGUARD

Go in the kitchen, Ms. Jenkins.

Flustered, Marilyn retreats to the Kitchen.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

Marilyn sits apprehensively at the kitchen table, fiddling with an orange.

BODYGUARD (O.C.)
 Hello, I'm looking for Grayson
 Richards.
 (beat)
 I'm sorry.

The BUZZ of a Taser. The Stranger screams.

STRANGER (O.C.)
 Aaaaauuggghhhh!!!

A short pause.

BODYGUARD (O.C.)
 Hello, I'm looking for Grayson
 Richards.
 (beat)
 I'm sorry.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Bodyguard presses the Taser against the sofa, emitting another BUZZ. Again the Stranger screams dramatically.

STRANGER
 Aaaaauuggghhhh!!!
 (beat)
 Okay, okay. Stop it!

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY (LATER)

The Bodyguard lifts up the sweaty Stranger. Marilyn stands off to the side with her arms folded.

BODYGUARD
 I left Richards's private number on
 the table. Perhaps it can help you
 and your company resolve the
 harassment campaign.

Marilyn picks up a piece of paper and reads it.

MARILYN
 I wasn't prepared for that.

The Bodyguard hustles the buckling Stranger toward the door, and addresses Marilyn over his shoulder.

BODYGUARD
 I'll let your company know what the
 police decide to do, Ms. Jenkins.
 Work from home until I return.

(MORE)

BODYGUARD (CONT'D)
Probably a couple hours. Keep the
door locked. Don't go out.

EXT. NANONANO MALAYSIA - DAY

Marilyn's BMW, driven by her Bodyguard, arrives at the entrance of her office building. He opens the door for Marilyn and escorts her to the front door.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Marilyn stands by the window staring out at the city. Her Aide announces over the intercom.

MARILYN'S AIDE
Ms. Jenkins, Mr. Blankenshein on
the line for you.

Marilyn takes a seat at her desk.

MARILYN
Matt, what can I do for you?

INTERCUT WITH THE YACHT.

It's night and the sky is full of stars. Matt sips a cocktail on the yacht's forward deck, accompanied by some of his Buddies, the Groupies, and Hannah who, dressed in a sexy outfit appears to be one of them.

MATT
You should be asking what I can do
for you, Marilyn. I just heard
from Hannah that you were attacked.
Are you alright?

MARILYN
I'm OK, just a little shaken. I'll
be fine.

MATT
What happened?

MARILYN
A man accosted me in the parking
garage.

MATT
That's what Hannah said.
Incredible.

MARILYN

He threatened me if I didn't turn over project plans and other stuff.

MATT

Jesus. What was he going to do?

MARILYN

I don't know. He didn't get that far. My bodyguard subdued him. Took him to the police station. I'm not sure what they'll do.

MATT

Well, we're not going to let the police go easy on him, that's for sure.

(beat)

Listen, I want you to come back to the home office. Best to get away until things settle down over there..

MARILYN

Do you think that's really necessary?

MATT

Yes, I do, Marilyn.

MARILYN

OK. You're the boss. I'll start making plans.

INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marilyn is busy packing luggage. Her phone RINGS; she answers.

MARILYN

Hello, Tracy.

TRACY (V.O.)

Are you OK?

MARILYN

Yeah.

TRACY

Hannah heard from her contact at the security firm that some guy attacked you or threatened you or something?

MARILYN

It was that cretin at the restaurant. He's definitely involved with Richards. The bodyguard you hired took him down. Very impressive.

TRACY

Glad he was there to protect you.

(beat)

I'll give myself a little credit for engaging that firm. Expensive, even after negotiating the hell out of them.

(beat)

Anyway, they have influence with the local police. We won't be hearing from Mr. Cretin anytime soon. Did he demand anything besides intellectual property?

MARILYN

C'mon, Tracy, you know exactly what he-- Wait, can anybody hear me?

TRACY

No. I'm all alone.

MARILYN

He demanded blackmail money to keep Richards quiet about me supposedly, y'know, doing, y'know, to Cuttbate. We both know I didn't do it, but if Richards insinuates to authorities that I did, I'll get implicated in the sordid mess. I can't have that, Tracy.

TRACY

Neither can I, obviously.

(beat)

Putting Richards's stooge in the custody of the KL police is good for us. Richards will be forced to reconsider his whole slimy scheme.

MARILYN

I hope you're right.

INT. NYC RESTAURANT - DAY

Tracy and Aiman sit at a table in a fancy Restaurant in New York City.

Aiman eats his lunch while Tracy continues to speak to Marilyn. Distracted by his phone, Aiman is too consumed to eavesdrop. Still, Tracy scooches away from him.

TRACY

It was smart to tell Matt the harassment was over company secrets. Keeps the focus away from other things.

(beat)

Anyway, I guess I'll see you in a couple days when I get back to San Diego. Have a good flight.

MARILYN

Thanks. Bye bye.

Tracy hangs up, and returns to her meal.

AIMAN

Everything OK, Tracy?

TRACY

All going according to plan.

AIMAN

Glad to hear.

Aiman holds up a fork spearing what looks like beef.

AIMAN (CONT'D)

You'd never know this is vegan.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt sits at his desk holding court with Tracy, a couple EXECs including Jack the CFO, GREG the Sales VP, and Hannah.

MATT

Marilyn will be here in a minute.

JACK

How's she doing?

MATT

Tough broad. Put up with a lot of shit recently, but I think we've tamped down the harassment.

(beat)

Right, Tracy?

Tracy nods.

TRACY

You look tanned, Hannah.

HANNAH

Uh, well, I took a few days off.
Drove out to Palm Springs.

TRACY

Didn't it rain?

Marilyn walks into the Office carrying an attaché case and looking a trifle haggard. Everyone stands except Tracy.

MATT

There's my road warrior. So great
to see you again, Marilyn.

Matt hugs Marilyn, and the rest shake her hand.

TRACY

Yes, glad you're here, Marilyn.

JACK

I know we have a lotta stockholder
meeting stuff to go over, but would
you--

MATT

--Jesus, Jack, give her some time
to settle in. And maybe she
doesn't wanna talk about it,
y'know.

MARILYN

The whole thing happened so fast.
My bodyguard took two seconds to
disarm the piece of sh-- garbage.

GREG

He was armed? Oh my god!

MATT

You didn't tell me that.

MARILYN

And after tasing him a few times,
zip tied his hands and marched him
away.

MATT

Wow. Did you hire John Wick,
Tracy?

Everyone chuckles, except Marilyn and Tracy.

MATT (CONT'D)

Jack, let's start with the inventory turns. That's been on my mind.

JACK

Sure.

Jack preps his materials. Hannah approaches Marilyn and hands her an official-looking envelope.

HANNAH

A courier delivered this for you.

Jack takes the floor.

JACK

Top takeaway: total sales are running ahead of projections. Keep this pace, we beat by 6 percent. Congrats to Greg.

(beat)

Optical division is poised to flip positive in two to three quarters.

TRACY

How do we improve that?

JACK

More outreach to ophthalmologists.

GREG

I can do that. Just need an eight to 10 headcount boost in four US cities. They gotta have some STEM creds, though.

MATT

I'll give you four for two. What else, Jack?

JACK

Free cash flow is a click below where it should be.

Jack looks at Marilyn who is not paying attention.

JACK (CONT'D)

As you mentioned Matt, inventory turns are below where they should be. In the cosmetics division.

Hiding her moves, Marilyn slits open the envelope and peers at the contents. Jack drones on unintelligibly.

MARILYN'S POV: A REQUEST BY THE FBI FOR A MEETING.

She quickly returns the letter to the envelope.

MATT

Why might that be, Marilyn?

MARILYN

(startled)

Huh? I, uh--

MATT

--Say it again, Jack.

JACK

Um, it appears we're overstocked on materials in the cosmetics division.

The attendees stare at Marilyn, awaiting her answer. Marilyn composes herself.

MARILYN

Well, Jack, it's really quite simple. In order for me to recover two point oh, I had to replace a key production compound. TiO₂.

(beat)

That's titanium dioxide, in case you didn't know. Given the tight time-to-market deadline, I didn't have the luxury of calculating to the nearest gram how much we would need.

Tracy looks at Matt and shakes her head in disbelief at Marilyn's impudence.

MATT

I see.

MARILYN

We'll work it off. Besides I negotiated an excellent deal from the supplier. Matt signed off.

Tracy sits up, irritated. Matt smirks.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Since I made the purchase, the spot price has gone up 9 percent.

JACK

Thanks for that, Marilyn.

Jack proceeds to the next topic on his agenda.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SAN DIEGO STOREFRONT - DAY

As before, Marilyn wanders about the sidewalk looking at the addresses on the buildings, finally settling on the Storefront where she met Erskine and Colby before.

INT. SAN DIEGO STOREFRONT - DAY

Marilyn sits by the desk, drinking a coffee.

ERSKINE

Thanks for coming in again Ms. Jenkins. I hope you're not jet-lagged?

MARILYN

I'm used to it.

ERSKINE

Well, we wouldn't ask if we didn't have some new things to discuss with you.

COLBY

Since we last spoke, the FBI now believes Tracy Shepard was scammed in an elaborate con game, and subsequently hired Grayson Richards to find out who was behind it and recover stolen funds.

Marilyn chokes on her coffee.

MARILYN

Really?

COLBY

Apparently, Ms. Shepard fired Richards. Presumably he didn't perform. In any event, Richards kept working on the case. I guess he became obsessed with it.

(beat)

Somehow he discovered the con man was killed. Shot to death.

MARILYN

Really?

COLBY

Yes, really.

MARILYN

Who was it?

ERSKINE

What we think is that Richards now suspects Ms. Shepard had something to do with the con man's death. Perhaps even killing him herself.

MARILYN

That's impossible! She would never do something like that.

ERSKINE

What's the real reason Richards was harassing you? Don't tell me he's interested in company secrets.

MARILYN

I, um, uh, I have no idea. Matt thinks--

COLBY

--Could it be that you know something about the con man's death?

MARILYN

What? No.

ERSKINE

Listen, Ms. Jenkins. Marilyn. We're following up on Richards's hypothesis. Tracy could have discovered her con man's identity and then confronted him. She certainly had motive to do so.

MARILYN

So you're saying Tracy was able to find the con man in her spare time when a professional private investigator couldn't?

ERSKINE

Did Tracy confide anything with you about being scammed?

MARILYN

No. Nothing.

COLBY

It's against the law to lie to the FBI, Ms. Jenkins. It doesn't matter whether or not you're under oath. 18 U.S. Code 1001.

Marilyn shifts in her chair. A long pause ensues. The agents exchange glances.

ERSKINE

Try this on for size, Ms. Jenkins. Tracy told you about the scam and a subsequent encounter with her tormentor. We're not saying you had anything to do with his death, but you knew about it, right?

MARILYN

I don't want to--

COLBY

--You're not in any trouble... not yet.

ERSKINE

Richards wouldn't harass you unless he thought he could get something from you - like flipping on Tracy.

(beat)

I think that's his plan. Pressure you to implicate Tracy. If you refuse, he'll threaten to implicate you. Either way he has a path to extortion.

COLBY

You're both wealthy women.

Marilyn sneers.

MARILYN

Both? Hah!

ERSKINE

Forget that. Richards plans to fuck over one or both of you.

MARILYN

You could be wrong, y'know.

ERSKINE

That's really why we brought you in today, Ms. Jenkins.

(MORE)

ERSKINE (CONT'D)

Help us confirm whether Richards has any actionable evidence of Tracy's involvement.

MARILYN

What?

ERSKINE

Look, Grayson Richards ain't on a pro bono crusade to find some shit con man's killer and bring her to justice. He's not after CNN's Hero of the Year Award. His ultimate goal is to blackmail the flush Ms. Shepard.

COLBY

If Richards has solid evidence implicating Ms. Shepard, we'll hold her responsible.

ERSKINE

After due diligence, you understand.

COLBY

If he's bluffing, but threatens Tracy with blackmail anyway, we'll prosecute his ass to the fullest.

(beat)

Of course, both could be true at the same time.

MARILYN

I don't know what to say.

ERSKINE

C'mon, help us. Meet up with Richards. Feel him out.

MARILYN

What if I say no?

COLBY

We're gonna find out who killed the con man. And anyone else involved. If you don't cooperate, Marilyn, that'll weigh heavily on where we look. And what we'll do when we're done investigating.

ERSKINE

Look, it's for the best, Ms. Jenkins.

(MORE)

ERSKINE (CONT'D)

We'll set you up with a wire. It's a no-brainer. Just lunch. Where are you staying?

MARILYN

La Valencia in La Jolla. But I'm going back to Malaysia in a few days.

ERSKINE

That's good to know. We'll have to act fast, then.

COLBY

We'll coach you on what to ask and how to answer. Like he said: a no-brainer.

ERSKINE

Wha'dya say, Ms. Jenkins?

Marilyn silently sips her coffee apprehensively.

MARILYN

I have his private phone number if that helps.

FADE OUT.

EXT. GRAND DEL MAR - DAY

Tracy and Aiman walk off the 18th hole dressed in casual golf attire. Caddies and other attendants take over the equipment. The couple proceed inside to the Bar.

INT. GRAND DEL MAR/BAR - DAY

Tracy and Aiman sit at a table for two along the wall away from the others in the bar. Each has a glass of white wine.

AIMAN

This is a swell club, Tracy.
Stylish and not too masculine.

TRACY

Y'know they only recently let women in here.

(beat)

Matt joined after he kept having trouble getting tee times at Torrey Pines.

AIMAN

I guess that's one way to solve the problem.

TRACY

A solution in six figures. He doesn't even like golf that much. He mostly uses this place for offsite meetings so he can write off the dues.

(beat)

Anyway, I didn't want to discuss it while we were golfing with that fat couple from Ohio, but I have to question the fees you're charging. A half mil?

AIMAN

I hope you're not going to go into full-on negotiation mode on me, Tracy.

(beat)

Setting up a fake FBI operation on the fly is not the kind of thing you could have gotten from any other firm. Actors, props, a storefront in downtown San Diego? On top of the harasser and the body guard? It takes serious money to stage all those interactions with quality, discrete personnel.

TRACY

I appreciate that, Aiman.

Like I said on the plane that day we met, "no service request is out of bounds." That was buzzword-compliance for "we'll do anything for the right amount of money." Didn't you catch that?

TRACY

I know, I know. I'm not complaining, but it's gonna be difficult to hide this big bill--

AIMAN

--Hide?

TRACY

Disguise. Whatever.

AIMAN

Why is that necessary?

TRACY

Seriously? This type of expense is at least ten light-years from NanoNano's core business. I need you to do something about it.

(beat)

Yes, I am going into full-on negotiation mode with you. Knock off 20 percent and divide the billings over the next 8 quarters.

AIMAN

Two years? Jesus, Tracy, that's a big ask.

TRACY

I'm not asking.

AIMAN

I see.

TRACY

Look, I love your work. The things your firm is capable of. And I'm kinda fond of you, too. I have no doubt I will call upon your unique services again in the future.

(beat)

Consider this a teaser fee in anticipation of big business down the road. Make it work.

Aiman sips his wine, as does Tracy.

AIMAN

The Medea of Mediation.

TRACY

(sharply)

What did you say?

AIMAN

(shocked)

Um, The Medea--

TRACY

--Don't ever say that again. I mean it.

AIMAN

I'm sorry, Tracy. I read it in a magazine profile of you.

TRACY

Do you even know who Medea was?

AIMAN

No.

TRACY

I didn't think so. Maybe you should've studied Euripides instead of arbitrage back at M I T.

AIMAN

I'm sorry.

Tracy and Aiman simultaneously take a sip of wine, neither looking at the other. After a moment, FOGLE'S SON calls out.

FOGLE'S SON (O.S.)

Tracy Shepard?

Tracy and Aiman look toward the approaching late-20s man, trim, tanned and dressed in golf attire. He sidles next to the table.

FOGLE'S SON (CONT'D)

I bet you don't remember me. Jerry Fogle. Sumner's son. I was at that mediation meeting you ran between PicoTech and NanoNano.

TRACY

I'm sorry, but I don't remember.

FOGLE'S SON

My old man instructed me not to say anything.

TRACY

Ah. How are you?

FOGLE'S SON

Excellent. I'm running PicoTech now. My father retired last year.

TRACY

Congratulations.

(beat)

This is Aiman Hakim.

Aiman and Fogle's Son shake hands.

AIMAN

Nice to meet you.

FOGLE'S SON

So, Tracy, are you doing any consulting work for NanoNano?

TRACY

I'm on the board and manage special projects. That includes trying to keep Matt out of trouble.

(beat)

You know Matt, don't you?

FOGLE'S SON

Of course. Not well, but seeing as he's my chief competitor I make it a point to stay up to date on his comings and goings.

(beat)

Is he still the second most eligible bachelor in San Diego behind me?

TRACY

He's my husband.

FOGLE'S SON

No kidding. For some reason I thought he was with-- I guess I'm back level.

Tracy furrows her brow. Aiman takes stock of Tracy's reaction.

FOGLE'S SON (CONT'D)

Anyway, nice to see you, Tracy. Hit 'em straight.

Fogle's Son turns and walks away, his foot in his mouth.

EXT. RON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Surrounded by a few Police Officers, Ron makes a phone call.

RON

Richards, it's Slomsky. Where have are you? I never got a call from your computer expert.

OFFICER

You gotta go, man. If you don't leave the premises, I gotta arrest you for violating this O.P.

RON

You hear that, you motherfucker. I'm getting kicked out of my apartment. Call me back!

INT. LA VALENCIA HOTEL - DAY

Marilyn places a call from the hotel lobby.

ERSKINE (V.O.)

Special Agent Erskine.

MARILYN

I called him. He'll meet. I told him 2 o'clock day after tomorrow at the hotel... like you said.

ERSKINE (V.O.)

Outstanding. What did he say?

MARILYN

Not much. I could tell he was rattled. Not that I called, but that I called his private number.

(beat)

Then I guess he put two and two together. His goon must have told Richards my bodyguard tortured it out of him.

INTERCUT WITH THE STOREFRONT.

ERSKINE

What?

Erskine cups his hand over the phone and whispers to Colby.

ERSKINE (CONT'D)

Hook, line and sinker.

MARILYN

Oh shit. Forget what I just said.

ERSKINE

I don't even know what you're talking about. And at this point I don't wanna know.

(beat)

(MORE)

ERSKINE (CONT'D)

Did you establish the meeting parameters as we discussed?

MARILYN

He's all set to hear my proposal.

ERSKINE

Keep it simple, Ms. Jenkins. Let him talk all he wants, but steer him toward his extortion scheme.

MARILYN

I know the plan. But he may just be trying to solve a case. That's a possibility.

ERSKINE

A remote one based on our investigation to date, but I don't push it if he doesn't wander into extortion territory.

MARILYN

I won't, believe me. I have no interest in provoking him.

ERSKINE

You'll do fine. And if things start going sideways, we'll do an extraction.

MARILYN

Extraction?

ERSKINE

We'll come to your rescue.

(beat)

I'll come by your hotel room with Colby at noon and get you prepped.

MARILYN

I can't wait.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - DAY

Describe Matt's house. Matt and Tracy sit on the patio overlooking Coronado Island and the Pacific Ocean. Matt scrolls his phone while Tracy sips a cocktail and picks at some canapes. Several seconds go by as Tracy watches with disdain as Matt chuckles intermittently at the screen. Finally, Tracy sits up and removes her sunglasses.

TRACY

I ran into Jerry Fogle the other day at the club. I hadn't see him since I did that negotiation between you and PicoTech.

MATT

Oh yeah?

TRACY

I didn't even remember him which he seemed to take no offense to.

MATT

He's running the company now. Took over from his scorbatic old man at the beginning of the year. Maybe one of the best favors he could have done for us.

TRACY

When's the last time you saw him?

MATT

When I got back from Cabo. At the marina. He was on Sumner's sailboat.

TRACY

Is that a fact.

MATT

Yes. It's a fact Sumner owns a sailboat. What's going on, Trace?

TRACY

Nothing. Will you fix me another cocktail, darling?

Tracy puts her sunglasses back on. Matt grabs the empty glass and walks off.

INT. LA VALENCIA HOTEL/MARILYN'S ROOM - DAY

Erskine, Colby and Marilyn sit around a coffee table. She wears a black suit, yellow blouse and a garish Versace-branded scarf.

COLBY

Our best advice: be yourself. You're not in any trouble, so act confident, but not cocky.

ERSKINE

It's important you don't ensnare Richards. Let him hang himself. You can progress the conversation, but do not initiate talk about bribery and extortion.

MARILYN

I'm nervous. What if he get suspicious? Or violent?

COLBY

We'll be monitoring your conversation from 20 feet away. If anything starts going sideways--

MARILYN

--I know. You'll do an extraction.
(beat)
Reminds me of the dentist.

ERSKINE

Quick sanity check. Are you wearing the outfit you told him you'd be wearing.

MARILYN

Yes. I picked this outlandish scarf so there'd be no doubts.

ERSKINE

Great. Now let's get you wired up, Ms. Jenkins.

Marilyn stands and removes her jacket. Erskine heads to the bathroom.

COLBY

No need for that.

Colby removes a brooch and a watch from a box and shows them to Marilyn.

COLBY (CONT'D)

Let me pin this on your jacket. It contains a tiny wireless listening device.

Marilyn leans forward and Colby pins on the brooch.

MARILYN

Why do you say "wired up" when there are no wires?

COLBY

I guess for the same reason we say dial 911. Put on this watch. It's a backup bug. Both these devices are voice activated. Nothing for you to do but talk and listen.

Marilyn straps on the watch.

ERSKINE (O.S.)

Say something, Ms. Jenkins.

Marilyn speaks at a volume louder than normal.

MARILYN

Testicles, testicles, one two three.

ERSKINE (O.S.)

You don't need to speak so loudly. These mics are very sensitive.

COLBY

Say something in your normal voice.

MARILYN

What the hell am I doing?

ERSKINE (O.S.)

Perfect.

INT. RICHARDS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

At his desk illuminated by a desk lamp in an otherwise dark office, Richards pores over files and photos from his FOIA request. He examine a schematic drawing showing the outlines two human shapes facing each other standing five feet apart, one of which points a gun at arm's length at the other. A dotted line connects the end of the gun through the throat of the second figure and into a wall behind. The shooter shape is taller than the victim shape. Figures on the drawing indicate the shooter is estimated to be 3 to 6 inches taller than the victim. Other linear measurements document the scene.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Tracy escorts Richards to the door. They shake hands. As Richards steps out, Tracy pipes up. They face each other, Tracy standing taller than Richards by four inches in her heels. He notices the height difference.

TRACY

One more thing I forgot to mention.
Fletcher Cuttbate has a, um... he
has a snake tattooed on his penis.

Richards raises an eyebrow slightly, takes out a pad of paper and writes a note on it.

END FLASHBACK.

Richards puts the sketch aside and examines a copy of a grisly photograph of Cuttbate's mangled scrotum. The photo is marked "Property of Hamilton County Coroner" along with the warning "Reproduction Prohibited".

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Richards and Tracy converse.

RICHARDS

From what you've already told me,
Ms. Shepard, I am convinced that
Fischer and Fletcher Cuttbate - no
doubt aliases - are one and the
same person.

Tracy shrugs, her legs crossed, a stiletto heel dangling from her toe.

C.U. Of the shoe and its pointy heel.

Richards notices.

END FLASHBACK.

Richards reaches into his drawer and pulls out a bottle of booze. He pours out a stiff one, gulps it down and quickly pours another. He reaches into the drawer again, this time pulling out Dad's pistol. He places it on the desk and does a "spin the bottle" with it. When the pistol stops spinning, it points at Richards's heart.

EXT. LA VALENCIA HOTEL/POOL - DAY

Marilyn sits at an isolated table drinking a glass of water with a slice of cucumber. FAKE RICHARDS approaches from inside the Hotel. He bears a passing resemblance to Richards in stature and age. Upon seeing Fake Richards, Marilyn takes a long swig of water and wipes her lips.

FAKE RICHARDS

You must be Marilyn. That's one unique scarf.

(beat)

May I join you?

MARILYN

Of course. Isn't that why you're here, Mr. Richards.

(beat)

You are Grayson Richards, aren't you?

Fake Richards takes a seat.

FAKE RICHARDS

Indeed I am. I have to say, you completely caught me off guard calling me on my secure number. But when I thought about it, I should have known it was inevitable.

(beat)

Anyway, I'm glad you did.

(beat)

You want a drink? Dirty Shirley, maybe?

Marilyn cocks her head in and expression of surprise at the suggestion.

MARILYN

Uh, no thank you.

FAKE RICHARDS

Do you mind if I have a one?

MARILYN

A Dirty Shirley?

FAKE RICHARDS

A real drink.

Richards flags down a WAITER who promptly arrives as no one else is by the pool.

FAKE RICHARDS (CONT'D)

I'll have a single malt scotch, neat.

The Waiter departs.

FAKE RICHARDS (CONT'D)
 So why do you want to meet? Are
 you ready to tell me your secrets.

MARILYN
 I want you to stop harassing me. I
 have no secrets to tell you.

FAKE RICHARDS
 Harassing you, Marilyn?

MARILYN
 You're behind that that asshole in
 KL--

FAKE RICHARDS
 --KL?

MARILYN
 Kuala-- Goddammit, you know very
 well what I'm talking about.

FAKE RICHARDS
 Look, any pressure that may have
 been applied was solely intended to
 encourage you to help me solve my
 cold case.

MARILYN
 I don't know any--

FAKE RICHARDS
 --Stop and listen.

The Waiter arrives with Richards's cocktail, then leaves.

FAKE RICHARDS (CONT'D)
 Here's my pitch. Tracy Shepard
 hired me to find the guy who
 scammed her. I never found him,
 and I felt bad about that. Even
 after she dismissed me, I kept
 working on the case.

MARILYN
 Why?

FAKE RICHARDS
 I hate to fail. I thought, "Maybe
 I could recover some money for
 her". And the whole ugly affair
 intrigued me, to be honest.
 (beat)

(MORE)

FAKE RICHARDS (CONT'D)

Moreover, I thought solving this bizarre case would be a feather in my cap, and new clients would come calling.

MARILYN

And now you think you found him.

FAKE RICHARDS

I know I did. The tattoo on the cock slams the file cabinet shut.

(beat)

Sadly, the guy's dead. Shot through the throat. Body mutilated. But you know that, right?

MARILYN

Why do you persist on saying that? I don't know what you're talking about.

FAKE RICHARDS

Please, stop already. Fletcher Cuttbate? Calvin Blough? The guy who nearly scammed you too? You absolutely know what I'm talking about.

A lengthy silence.

FAKE RICHARDS (CONT'D)

I think Tracy shot him, possibly by accident, but I can't prove it. Yet. But if I could place her at Cuttbate's house the night of the killing, that would really advance the case.

MARILYN

I imagine it would.

FAKE RICHARDS

You knew where Cuttbate lived, and gave Tracy directions. Am I right?

MARILYN

What's your real motivation in all this? You're going to blackmail Tracy. Am I right?

FAKE RICHARDS

I don't--

MARILYN

--You're not trying to attract new business with your super-sleuth prowess. You just want to take her money.

FAKE RICHARDS

You were at Cuttbate's house the night he was killed. Tracy knows it because as we speak she's preparing to turn you in for the killing.

MARILYN

What?!

The Waiter returns.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Bring me whatever he's having.

FAKE RICHARDS

Make it two.

The Waiter leaves.

FAKE RICHARDS (CONT'D)

I know a guy who has a contact in the FBI. I asked him what they knew about the case... an unidentified source named you as the perpetrator.

Marilyn bolts up, agitated.

MARILYN

Oh sure.

(beat)

I shot Cuttbate dead. Then I gouged his fucking face and stomped on his pathetic cock. He absolutely had it coming after what he did.

FAKE RICHARDS

Marilyn--

MARILYN

(sarcastic)

--He almost, repeat "almost" scammed me so I tracked him down to his shithole house in Jersey and killed him. No remorse.

(MORE)

MARILYN (CONT'D)

The ultimate retribution for a wet fart of a scam. Totally normal, right? Happens every day.

(beat)

Do you realize that makes no fucking sense?!

Marilyn sits down, crying.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

--Has my whole fucking world turned upside down, for god fucking sake?

INT. LA VALENCIA HOTEL/MARILYN'S ROOM - DAY

Erskine and Colby listen into the conversation wearing headphones.

COLBY

I can't wait to hear the first question she asks when we get back together.

EXT. LA VALENCIA HOTEL/POOL - DAY

Marilyn slowly retakes her seat and has a drink.

FAKE RICHARDS

Tracy has to be the anonymous tipster.

MARILYN

(sniffling)

I can't believe it.

Fake Richards hands Marilyn a cloth napkin.

FAKE RICHARDS

You can't believe the Medea of Mediation would throw you under the proverbial bus?

MARILYN

I can't-- It doesn't-- Are you absolutely sure?

FAKE RICHARDS

I'm truly sorry I harassed you, Marilyn, but I wanted you to see the foolishness of protecting Tracy.

(beat)

(MORE)

FAKE RICHARDS (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna blackmail her.
That's not what I do. I only want
to solve the case - before the FBI
does. Selfish reasons. Pride,
maybe. A boost to my business,
whether you believe it or not.

(beat)

Will you help me?

The Waiter returns with the two scotches, and leaves.
Marilyn wipes her eyes.

MARILYN

I can't be your source.

FAKE RICHARDS

I'll pin it on stuff Ron Slomsky
told me. If anyone cares to ask
him about it, he'll deny it of
course, but he's in no position to
argue his bona fides.

Marilyn finishes her scotch, sucking in air through her
clenched teeth at the end.

MARILYN

Tracy shot Cuttbate. She said it
was an accident - and I believe
her. She only went there to get
him to confess on video tape. He
attacked her and the gun went off.

FAKE RICHARDS

Where were you?

MARILYN

I had left.

FAKE RICHARDS

Then what happened?

MARILYN

I guess she panicked and drove
away.

FAKE RICHARDS

Not before she stomped on his cock
with her high heels.

Marilyn looks at Fake Richards inquisitively.

MARILYN

How did you --

FAKE RICHARDS

--I had already suspected that, and you just confirmed it.

Marilyn sucks some remnants of her scotch.

MARILYN

Yeah, that was crazy. I couldn't believe it when she told me. Hell, I couldn't believe she told me about it at all.

FAKE RICHARDS

Why not notify the police?

MARILYN

Seriously? Commit a career-ending move over the death of a total fucking scumbag? No thanks.

(beat)

I have to give Tracy credit. She got a dire situation under control fast. Dialing 911 using Cuttbate's cell phone. Concocting the prostitute alibi.

(beat)

She's cool under pressure. Thinks ahead like a grandmaster. Plays the long game. Capitalizes on weakness.

FAKE RICHARDS

Impressive woman.

MARILYN

Shit. If only you had taken the fucking hint when she fired you and moved on, we'd all be fine right now.

FAKE RICHARDS

You've helpful, Marilyn. I appreciate it. You've confirmed my long-held suspicions. But I can't close the deal without some kind of evidence. Anything you can tell me?

She takes another sip, and sits back resigned as the orange sun sets.

MARILYN

I think her father still has the gun.

INT. GORDON'S OFFICE - DAY

Marilyn and GORDON from Procurement chat in Gordon's Office, a small, non-descript cubicle with credenzas piled high with stacks of papers.

GORDON

Don't worry, Marilyn. The expenses for the protection services will not be charged against your budget. It's corporate level.

MARILYN

I hope you can forgive me for being a little paranoid.

GORDON

Let's call it cautious. After what you had to go through... Jeez, I can't imagine my wife, and that guy, and all the other-- I promise, you won't eat any of these substantial costs.

Hannah enters.

HANNAH

Marilyn, how are you?

MARILYN

Ready to get back to KL. I've been away long enough.

HANNAH

When are you heading out?

MARILYN

Day after tomorrow.

HANNAH

What's that? 18 hours?

MARILYN

More, but I'm used to it. I take a quick hop to LA, then a direct to KL. Goes by fast with the assist of alcohol.

HANNAH

Well, travel safe. I guess I won't see you for at least three months.

MARILYN

I wish Matt would cut out these quarterly meetings. Doing them twice a year is plenty.

(beat)

I've mentioned it to Tracy, but you seem to have his ear. Bring it up with him sometime. Would save a lot of time and money.

HANNAH

I'll look into it.

Marilyn hugs Gordon.

MARILYN

Thank you, Gordon.

Marilyn departs.

HANNAH

"Thank you Gordon" for what?

GORDON

She's paranoid Jack will stuff the security expenses onto her division 'cuz it's best positioned to swallow it, financial-wise.

(beat)

It's the kind of stupid turf battle that hollows out start ups. Believe me, happens all the time.

HANNAH

Interesting.

An uncomfortable silence.

GORDON

Look, I know procurement isn't the sexiest department, but I hope you're learning some things that may buttress your career, Hannah.

HANNAH

I have, and I appreciate your patience, Gordon. It never knew we had so many suppliers.

GORDON

It seems the approved vendor list grows every month. Malaysia operations has an outsized share of new additions.

(MORE)

GORDON (CONT'D)

I can scarcely keep up.

(beat)

I know they procure a lot of esoteric compounds and chemicals, and such from all over the planet, but I was surprised at that Pacific Rim deal.

HANNAH

You know Marilyn received a lot of scary threats. Not just over the phone, but in person, too. Did you hear about her body guard taking out an armed attacker?

GORDON

I did, and I get it.

HANNAH

Tracy asked me to be a sort-of point person for the protection details.

GORDON

That really should be procurement's job, but I understand her desire to have one of her trusted aides cover it. And she's got the stripes.

(beat)

You know Pacific Rim isn't on the approved vendor list, right?

HANNAH

Time was of the essence. From what I've learned shadowing you is that it takes a long time to get a new vendor approved.

GORDON

That's true, but we already have a security firm on the approved list. It's kinda unorthodox to engage a new firm so quickly.

HANNAH

Tracy said Matt wanted someone local to KL. She negotiated the contract - that's her specialty.

GORDON

Maybe she should report to me, then. Don't tell her I said that.

(beat)

(MORE)

GORDON (CONT'D)

Look, Hannah, I'm not complaining, per se. It's just that Pacific Rim's contract seems needlessly complex, which makes compliance evaluation very time-consuming.

HANNAH

I wasn't aware.

GORDON

I don't have the time or staff to crawl through all their T's and C's, and their 20 page indemnification clauses.

(beat)

I'm worried we're... I'm exposed.

HANNAH

Oh. Maybe I can assist.

GORDON

I don't have the bandwidth to educate you on--

HANNAH

--I'm a lawyer, Gordon. I've done hundreds of contracts. Some for Tracy in a past life. I know what I'm doing.

GORDON

I didn't know you're a lawyer, Hannah. Impressive.

(beat)

OK, I'll take you up on your offer. But you might want to get permission, approval, whatever from Tracy, or Matt, whomever.

HANNAH

I'm not gonna do that - makes me look weak. I'll manage.

Gordon hands Hannah a blue folder with a Pacific Rim logo.

GORDON

Your call. Here, start by crawling through this packet of invoices.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Richards sits in his running car in the parking lot of the Diner situated in Hamilton County. The Evidence Clerk dressed in civilian clothes exits the Diner and heads for the car. He identifies Richards, opens the door and slides in with a strained GRUNT.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The Evidence Clerk places a small envelope on the console. Richards puts it in his pocket, and in return hands over an envelope. The Evidence Clerk examines the contents, and satisfied, jams it in his pants pocket.

EVIDENCE CLERK

I need that back before Friday.

RICHARDS

That doesn't give me much time.

EVIDENCE CLERK

Too bad.

Richards side eyes him.

EVIDENCE CLERK (CONT'D)

If someone finds it missing I'll lose my job and probably get charged with some kind of felony. And you will too, buddy. I guarantee it.

RICHARDS

Who's gonna know it's missing? It's been gathering cobwebs for more than a year.

EVIDENCE CLERK

Have you ever heard of Murphy's Law? A Black Goose event?

RICHARDS

Swan.

(beat)

Yeah, I get it. Would another C-note give me till next Monday? Bright and early.

EVIDENCE CLERK

Back here Monday. Seven AM sharp. I'm fucking serious. You don't wanna push me, man.

Richards hands over a hundred dollar bill, which the Evidence Clerk swiftly snatches.

RICHARDS
I don't think I could.

INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

Richards stands at a counter across from a bearded elderly GUNSMITH, and with a latex-gloved hand produces a pistol.

GUNSMITH
Remington Rand M1911. Lovely
weapon. You wanna sell it?
Restore it?

RICHARDS
Neither.

Richards places a small zip-lock bag containing a spent bullet on the counter.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)
I want to know if this gun shot
that slug.

GUNSMITH
Why?

Richards reaches into his breast pocket and produces some credentials. The Gunsmith peruses the card. C.U. of the card indicating the false name "Wesley Adams" and his profession as a private investigator.

RICHARDS
I'm investigating a case. Hoping
to rule out some things.

GUNSMITH
Local detectives can do better
analysis than I can, Mr. Adams.
Why don't you contact them?

RICHARDS
It's complicated.

GUNSMITH
It always is.

RICHARDS

Look, my client would be very relieved if I could show this gun and that slug never met each other. It would greatly simplify things.

GUNSMITH

I bet.

(beat)

Y'know, anything I come up with ain't admissible in court, if that's what you're lookin' for.

RICHARDS

I know, but you could disqualify the slug, couldn't you?

GUNSMITH

Assuming it's not mashed up I can see whether the lands and grooves align and the twist matches. If not, it ain't your gun's bullet.

RICHARDS

But if they do line up--

GUNSMITH

--If lots of data points align then your slug's a candidate. That's all.

(beat)

Bring me a bucket of 45 slugs and I'll tell ya most are a M1911 candidate. Get it. "No" is easy, "yes" ain't really possible. Not with the equipment I got.

RICHARDS

I get it.

The Gunsmith picks up the zip-lock bag.

GUNSMITH

This is in pretty good condition. Must've gone through some soft flesh. Assuming that's the kinda case you're investigating.

RICHARDS

How much for your expertise?

GUNSMITH

It's none of my business, but when guys like you - PI's and such - come to me instead of goin' to law enforcement, I catch the whiff of impropriety. Not sayin' that about you, Mr. Adams, but regardless, if you want my expertise, it'll cost.

RICHARDS

Tell me.

GUNSMITH

Three hundred for a one word answer: "no" or "maybe".

(beat)

It'll be a G for as complete a ballistics report that I can muster up.

RICHARDS

You charge three hundred dollars a word? You should write ad copy.

The Gunsmith looks confused. Richards peels off ten hundreds and places them one at a time on the counter.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

I'll need your report - just in case you say "maybe". And I'll need it Sunday by 6. Not a minute later.

The Gunsmith places a blank form on the counter.

GUNSMITH

Can do, but first you gotta sign this here form statin' you're the rightful owner of the slug and the pistol.

RICHARDS

Is that necessary?

GUNSMITH

'Fraid so, Mr. Adams.

(beat)

Look, I couldn't care less how you came to be in possession of them, or why you want a ballistics test. But I won't be a party to malfeasance. I'm sure you understand.

RICHARDS
There's no malfeasance.

GUNSMITH
Good to hear. Now, fill it out and
sign at the bottom.

Richards hesitates then starts printing. C.U. of the form showing the spaces for the SSN. Richards fills in the blanks with E A T - M Y - S H I T.

INT. RON'S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

Ron watches TV in his new, dumpy apartment. A couple cats roam the place. His land-line phone RINGS.

RON
Yeah?

ERSKINE (V.O.)
Is this Ron Slomsky?

RON
Who's asking?

INTERCUT WITH THE SAN DIEGO STOREFRONT.

Erskine sits at his desk talking into a speakerphone. Colby stands off to the side.

ERSKINE
I'm an associate of Grayson
Richards.
(beat)
Hello?

RON
What does that cocksucker want?

ERSKINE
Don't you know?

RON
No, I don't-- Wait. Are you his
computer expert?

Erskine presses the mute button and addresses Colby

ERSKINE
God, this is way too easy.

He unmutes the phone.

ERSKINE (CONT'D)
That would be me.

RON
Bart Keyes?

ERSKINE
Yep. You're a hard man to find,
Mr. Slomsky.

RON
That's because some fuckin' cunt
got me evicted. They gave me 6
hours to get out. Fuckin'
bastards.

(beat)
Anyway, my life's a nightmare since
I was framed for havin' child porn
on my computer.

Erskine mutes again, and addresses Colby.

ERSKINE
Damn, this just keeps getting more
and more bizarre.

Erskine unmutes.

RON
That's why I need your help.
(beat)
Don't tell him I called him a
cocksucker, OK.

ERSKINE
Course not.

RON
So what do you need from me, Mr.
Keyes?

ERSKINE
Richards's writing is terrible. I
can't make out the name of the guy.

RON
Which guy.

ERSKINE
Um, the tattoo--

RON
--Oh, yeah. Walter Muff.

ERSKINE

Come again?

RON

Yeah. He got a lotta shit for it.
It's spelled M O U G H. Like
rough, not dough.

Erskine dictates to Colby.

ERSKINE

Got it. Walter Muff. M O U G H.

RON

Can you prove I was framed? And
find out who put that porn on my
computer?

ERSKINE

Well, it's complicated, Ron, but
let me explain. By deploying your
IP and MAC addresses, laptop
serial, and other data unique to
you, I can trace DNS entries using
proprietary RSA tools to decrypt
the internet's WTF decision tree
protocol.

Colby stifles guffaws.

ERSKINE (CONT'D)

You're familiar with WTF protocol,
right?

RON

Not really.

ERSKINE

The worldwide trace facility. It's
an algorithm, well, technically a
heuristic, anchored on blockchain.
But don't worry - given enough time
I can decode it.

(beat)

If you're the victim of a bogus
porn plant, which Richards is
positive of, I'll prove it.

RON

That's awesome.

ERSKINE

This will take time, so just hang tight. Richards will contact you when I've completed my analysis.

RON

Tell Richards I appreciate it.

ERSKINE

He knows. You've been a bigger help than you're probably aware..

Both sides hang up.

Erskine and Colby break down in laughter. A cat jumps up on Ron's lap coaxing a placid grin from his master.

INT. YACHT - DAY

Tracy lounges on the deck reading a book ("Kill for Me Kill for You"). A purple cocktail and a bowl of olives sit on a side table. Matt enters from the upper deck.

TRACY

Is Hannah aboard? I need to talk to her.

Matt takes a seat next to Tracy.

MATT

No. She's enroute to Dubai.

TRACY

Really? What for?

MATT

I asked her to prep for a meeting I'm gonna have with the FDI. I'm finally gonna plant my flag in the UAE.

TRACY

Congratulations. Anyplace else you want to plant your flag?

MATT

Well, from there the whole of the Middle East, I say with feigned modesty.

(beat)

We talked about this, Trace. Remember?

TRACY

I certainly do. I suggested it three board meetings ago.

MATT

You did, didn't you.

(beat)

Imagine the advancements we could bring over there to food production, water management, surveillance.

(beat)

Our nano-drones could render terrorism obsolete. Or at least too expensive to bother with. The locals will be tossing flowers at our feet.

TRACY

I keep forgetting you were in diapers during Gulf War I.

MATT

Are you opposed to our move into the Emirates?

TRACY

Of course not. Just don't delude yourself over NanoNano's capabilities. We're not gonna affect yesterday's problems, let alone those of the last thousand years.

MATT

You're right, babe. I can get carried away.

TRACY

Just one more reason why I married you.

(beat)

What's Hannah gonna do in Dubai?

MATT

Grease the skids for me, I suppose. Cozy up to some sheik. Or his pet falcon. Those birds live better than the hotel workers.

(beat)

Hannah's good. Very energetic. I admire that young spirit. You know what I mean?

TRACY
 She's not that young.
 (beat)
 When are you going?

MATT
 Day after tomorrow.

Tracy drinks the remains of her cocktail.

TRACY
 My busy man. Get me another
 Aviation, darling, and have Jair
 make it this time. No offense.

Matt, acting like a servile waiter, flops a rag over his
 forearm and departs with Tracy's empty glass. Tracy resumes
 reading. Her phone RINGS; she answers.

TRACY (CONT'D)
 Yes?

AIMAN (V.O.)
 His name is Walter Muff.
 M O U G H.

INT. RICHARDS'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Richards on the phone with Tracy.

RICHARDS
 I have a solid lead. I came across
 a coroner's report in Hamilton
 County.

END FLASHBACK.

TRACY
 Excellent.

AIMAN
 Are you available the day after
 tomorrow? I'm flying in from
 Saigon.

TRACY
 I gotta go East for some long-
 overdue business in Jersey.

AIMAN
 Can you postpone? I have something
 you must hear.

TRACY
Marilyn?

AIMAN
Yes.

TRACY
I knew it. I fucking knew it.
(beat)
I'll be here. Call me when you get
in.

Angry, Tracy hangs up and pops an olive in her mouth. JAIR, the yacht's tanned bartender arrives with a purple Aviation.

INT. GUN SHOP- DAY

The Gunsmith speaks on the phone as he peers at a bullet in a plastic baggie.

GUNSMITH
Mr. Adams?
(beat)
Whenever convenient for you, come
by the shop for your "maybe"
report.
(beat)
Yeah, very close. Lots of matches.
(beat)
Sure. I'll be here til 8.

EXT. LAX AIRPORT - DAY

A helicopter lands on the tarmac. Matt and Hannah disembark and head toward the terminal. An ATTENDANT follows with their luggage.

INT. LAX AIRPORT/TERMINAL 4 - DAY

Marilyn walks off a jetway into the terminal, and heads to an arrival/departure board. She scans the board.

MARILYN'S POV: Malaysia Airlines flight XYZ to Kuala Lumpur, Terminal B, gate 140

INT. LAX AIRPORT/TERMINAL B - DAY

Matt and Hannah check in at the Emirates counter. An EMIRATES AGENT hands passports back to the couple.

EMIRATES AGENT

Your flight to Dubai will depart
from gate 207. Follow the signs to
the West gates.

(beat)

Have an wonderful trip.

INT. LAX AIRPORT/TERMINAL B - DAY (LATER)

Matt and Hannah walk toward the West Gate connector when Marilyn, dragging a roller bag spots the couple. She does a double take as the couple disappear from view.

INT. JET - DAY

Matt takes a lay-down seat in first class. After settling in, a FLIGHT ATTENDANT offers him a champagne. Already sitting comfortably, legs extended, he fiddles with some buttons on the seat console when his phone RINGS.

MATT

Tracy, what're you doing up so
early?

(beat)

That's sweet of you.

(beat)

Absolutely. Next time, I promise.

(beat)

I will.

Matt hangs up.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - DAY

Tracy makes a call.

TRACY

You can come over now.

INT. JET - DAY

Hannah exits the restroom and takes her seat adjacent to Matt's.

MATT

Y'know, my secretary thinks you're
already in Dubai. I hope you made
sure--

HANNAH

--Don't worry. I handled all my own arrangements.

MATT

I'm not worried. I needed you to accompany me for the entire trip, and I didn't want to spin up idle gossip. Or worse.

HANNAH

I completely understand, Matt.

MATT

You're the best, Hannah.

The Flight Attendant offers champagnes and menus.

MATT (CONT'D)

Have you practiced your Arabic?

Hannah raises her glass of champagne, and speaks Arabic with an American accent.

HANNAH

(In Arabic)

To success, to a fruitful partnership, and to bright beginnings in Dubai.

The couple clink glasses and sip the champagne.

MATT

I don't know what that means, but just the sound of it is worth toasting. What did you say?

HANNAH

To success, to a fruitful partnership, and to bright beginnings in Dubai.

MATT

Impressive. You must teach me how to say that. I want to use it.

HANNAH

Of course.

As the plane moves from the terminal, Matt and Hannah lie back in their big seats. He fiddles with his phone; she dons big headphones and opens Vanity Fair magazine.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Aiman and Tracy sit on stools at an island counter. Erskine stands by an open laptop.

TRACY

Somehow I knew she'd throw me under the bus one day.

ERSKINE

It really wasn't difficult to get her to spill the beans.

AIMAN

Keep in mind Marilyn fell for a complicated ruse, whatever that's worth--

TRACY

--It's worth nothing.

AIMAN

Perhaps under different circumstances she would've kept her word and stayed silent.

TRACY

You tested her and she failed. Simple as that. If you hadn't cracked her, someone else eventually would have.

(beat)

As long as she walks the earth, I'm vulnerable.

AIMAN

That sounds rather ominous, Tracy. What are you suggest--

ERSKINE

--Ms. Shepard, as you heard on the tape, our man was able to elicit a useful statement from Ms. Jenk--

TRACY

--Don't say her fucking name.

Erskine looks at Aiman. After a beat, Aiman takes over.

AIMAN

We can edit the tape to isolate the places where Marilyn seems to implicate herself. It would never stand up in court--

ERSKINE

--Inadmissible.

AIMAN

But you could use it to persuade her--

ERSKINE

--Mari... Uh, she's easily persuaded. That's obvious.

AIMAN

Try this on for size, Tracy. Confront her with the betrayal, then reveal the damning parts of the edited tape. No threats. Just passive intimidation. I'm confident she'll be a good doggy going forward.

TRACY

Doggy? I want that rat out of my company.

AIMAN

If you play too rough, she might call your bluff. The tape is a powerful tool of coercion, but it won't put her behind bars.

(beat)

Just think about it before you can her ass and leave her with nothing to lose.

TRACY

Play back that part of the tape again.

Erskine navigates the laptop to the passage on the recording. The laptop plays SOUND from the meeting at La Valencia.

FAKE RICHARDS (V.O.)

An unidentified source named you as the perpetrator.

MARILYN (V.O.)

Oh sure.

(beat)

I shot Cuttbate dead. Then I gouged his fucking face and stomped on his pathetic cock. He absolutely had it coming after what he did.

FAKE RICHARDS (V.O.)

Marilyn--

MARILYN (V.O.)

--He almost, repeat "almost"
scammed me so I tracked him down to
his shithole house in Jersey and
killed him. No remorse. The
ultimate retribution for a wet fart
of a scam.

Erskine stops the replay, and fiddles around on the laptop
for a few seconds. Tracy lowers her head. Aiman stands and
rubs Tracy's shoulders. Head still lowered, she touches his
hand.

ERSKINE

Listen to this.

He plays new SOUND.

MARILYN (V.O.)

I tracked him down to his shithole
house in Jersey and killed him. No
remorse.

(beat)

I shot Cuttbate dead. Then I
gouged his fucking face and stomped
on his pathetic cock. He
absolutely had it coming after what
he did.

Erskine stops the replay.

ERSKINE

Sounds pretty convincing to me. It
should scare the shit out of her.

(beat)

Of course she'll know the tape is
doctored, but just the fear of
having it played for the wrong
people should keep her in line.

AIMAN

At a minimum, it strongly suggests
she's far from an innocent lamb.

Tracy cradles her head.

TRACY

How did things get so out of hand?

Erskine closes the laptop.

EXT. BURJ KHALIFA - DAY

A shot of the Burj Khalifa panned from top to bottom.

INT. ARMANI HOTEL - DAY

Matt and Hannah, accompanied by two BELLMEN enter an elevator. Moments later they arrive at their respective hotel rooms which adjoin one another.

INT. ARMANI HOTEL/HANNAH'S ROOM - DAY

Hannah unpacks some clothing. A KNOCK on the connecting door, and Hannah opens it. Matt walks in.

MATT

Let's hit the pool, Hannah. I could use a dip.

HANNAH

Shit. I forgot to pack one. Dammit.

MATT

Again?

Matt goes back into his room, returning with a gift wrapped box.

MATT (CONT'D)

I had a feeling you might forget.

Hannah looks at Matt slyly, and opens the box revealing a skimpy bikini.

HANNAH

It's lovely, Matt, but a little tiny, don't you think?

MATT

I'm positive it'll fit.

EXT. ARMANI HOTEL/ROOFTOP POOL - DAY

Matt and Hannah walk onto the pool deck and are greeted by a POOL BOY who escorts them to a pair of lounges under an umbrella. The Pool Boy sets up their lounges with plush covers.

MATT
How about a cocktail, Hannah?
Margarita?

HANNAH
Sure.

MATT
(to the Pool Boy)
Two Margaritas. Tajin on the rim.

The Pool Boy nods and departs.

MATT (CONT'D)
Spectacular view, huh?

HANNAH
The architecture is stunning. I
can't believe how tall the Burj is.

MATT
A hundred sixty three stories.
Insane.

HANNAH
That reminds me: you have a dinner
reservation with an officer of the
Dubai Silicon Oasis tomorrow. The
Atmosphere restaurant on the 122nd
floor. He wants to take you to the
Museum of Science in the afternoon.
(beat)
It's that weird donut-looking
building we saw coming in.

MATT
Cool. When do I go to Abu Dhabi?

HANNAH
Day after tomorrow. It's about an
hour away.
(beat)
You have meetings with ATRC and
TII. And then a tour of the grand
mosque if you want to. And I
strongly suggest you want to.

The Pool Boy returns with the cocktails and a food plate.

MATT
That's great, Hannah.

Matt takes a sip of his drink and doffs his shirt exposing a
buff body.

MATT (CONT'D)

Enough shop talk. Let's get wet.

Matt hops up and dives into the pool. On the wall behind him is a sign that reads "No Diving". He proceeds to swim laps. Hannah removes her sarong, revealing a sexy bikini, and steps into the pool's zero-entry incline. She dips in up to her neck and navigates to the side of the pool where she drapes her arms over the edge and admires the sleek buildings of downtown Dubai. Matt swims up next to her.

MATT (CONT'D)

The swimsuit fits you perfectly.

Hannah adjusts a strap.

HANNAH

It does.

MATT

I made an informed guess.

Matt captures the attention of the Pool Boy and pantomimes the motion of drinking from a glass.

MATT (CONT'D)

I saw there's a hotel on Palm
Jumeira with a wrap around infinity
pool on the fiftieth floor.

The Pool Boy delivers the cocktails poolside.

MATT (CONT'D)

Only in Dubai, right? Anyway, I
think it's called Aura, or maybe
Aqua, Skypool. Phenomenal views.
We should check it out.

Matt kisses Hannah's neck. She takes a long swig of her cocktail.

HANNAH

I know you don't wanna talk shop,
but I've been looking over some
contracts. One in particular.

MATT

Oh yeah, I forgot to ask. Are you
learning anything from that toad in
procurement?

HANNAH

He's very nice.

(beat)

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Have you heard of Pacific Rim
Security Services?

Matt sips his cocktail.

MATT
Nope.

HANNAH
It's the personal protection firm
Tracy hired to protect Marilyn.
Tracy asked me to be the point
person with them. That was before
I started shadowing Gordon.

MATT
What about them?

HANNAH
Well, I didn't know it at the time,
but they're not on the approved
vendor list. They got the contract
even though we have another firm on
the list.

MATT
That list is a crock.

HANNAH
Oh. OK... Well, the contract was
inked for 500K - due in full upon
signing. But out of the blue it
was suddenly changed to 400K
payable over two years. No
explanation. No revised contract.

MATT
Hannah, you worked for Tracy. You
know that's her super-power. She
saved us a hundred K, and a bunch
of paperwork.

HANNAH
That's what I assumed. Tracy had
cut a great deal. But then I
discovered another contract that
slipped in simultaneously under the
radar. One for a quarter million.
I didn't flag it to Gordon. I
thought it better to bring it to
your attention first.

MATT
What's it for?

HANNAH

The name of the company was left blank, but an address in Saigon appeared in some boilerplate text. It belongs to an LLC mostly owned by Pacific Rim.

Matt finishes his drink and signals the Pool Boy for two more.

MATT

I'm intrigued. What else?

HANNAH

The contract is for something vague like "field operations". There's also a line-item for a short-term storefront rental in downtown San Diego.

MATT

That's odd. So what are you saying, Hannah? Tracy up to something?

HANNAH

Absolutely not.

MATT

I give Tracy a lot of latitude on projects she's passionate about.

EXT. SAN DIEGO MARINA - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Aiman proceeds across the gangplank onto the yacht. Shortly thereafter, Hannah, carrying a briefcase, appears on the gangplank unseen by Aiman and Tracy. When Hannah spots the couple in an embrace, Aiman's hand on Tracy's ass, she beats a quick retreat.

END FLASHBACK.

HANNAH

She's a very passionate woman.

MATT

She certainly is. I'm not worried.

Matt finishes his drink and swims away from Hannah. On his return, he rises up from under the water close to Hannah.

MATT (CONT'D)
Stay on top of it and keep me
informed.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Marilyn sits at her desk poring over papers and charts. Her Assistant buzzes in on the intercom.

ASSISTANT (V.O.)
Ms. Jenkins, Ms. Shepard is here to
see you.

MARILYN
What?! Are you shitting me? I
just got back here.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE/ANTEROOM - DAY

Holding an expensive-looking briefcase, Tracy looks out a window, her back to the Assistant. The Assistant cups her hand over the receiver.

ASSISTANT
Um, she's not on your calendar.
Should I say you're expecting her?

MARILYN (V.O.)
No! Stall her.

The Assistant hangs up and addresses Tracy.

ASSISTANT
Ms. Jenkins will be with you in a
moment.

Tracy struts past the Assistant and barges into Marilyn's Office without saying a word.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Standing in front of her desk, Marilyn greets an irritated Tracy.

MARILYN
Tracy, what are you doing here?

TRACY
Tell your secretary to hold all
calls and clear your calendar. I
have some things you need to hear.

INT. MARILYN'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Marilyn paces her office as Tracy sits at the desk in front of an open laptop playing a taped conversation.

MARILYN (V.O.)

Tracy shot Cuttbate. She said it was an accident - and I believe her. She only went there to get him to confess on video tape. He attacked her and the gun went off.

Tracy shuts off the playback.

MARILYN

Where did you get that?

TRACY

Does it matter?

MARILYN

It's all bullshit.

TRACY

You hook up with a couple guys, complete strangers, and in no time you're throwing me under the bus? You're an idiot, Marilyn. An easily compromised dunce. Just the kind of compliant fool I always had you pegged for.

MARILYN

Fuck you.

TRACY

You turned on me, Marilyn. Thank god it was with a couple of imposters and not the real FBI.

MARILYN

What?

TRACY

That's right. You flunked the test, and now you have to go. Whatever trust I might have had is gone.

MARILYN

What do you mean "go"?

TRACY

You're resigning, Marilyn,
effective immediately.

Tracy hands Marilyn a letter.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I saved you the trouble of writing
a resignation letter. Just sign
it. You can blame stress. No one
will think less of you - besides
me. I'll make sure you keep your
options. The vested ones, anyway.

MARILYN

Maybe you didn't hear me: I said
"fuck you". I'm not leaving now
that I've whipped the division into
top shape. Our profit contribution
beats every other fucking unit in
this company.

TRACY

Life will go on without you. In
fact, you've done such a bang-up
job, you're redundant now. A
chatbot could do your job.

MARILYN

Cut the theatrics. You're already
positioning to become the new GM,
aren't you?

Tracy stares daggers at Marilyn.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

The Medea of Mediation has nothing
to say?

(beat)

Maybe I'll tell the real FBI about
what actually happened that night.

TRACY

Oh yeah? Is this the story you'll
tell them?

Tracy presses a button on the laptop.

MARILYN (V.O.)

I tracked him down to his shithole
house in Jersey and killed him. No
remorse.

(beat)

I shot Cuttbate dead.

(MORE)

MARILYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Then I gouged his fucking face and stomped on his pathetic cock. He absolutely had it coming after what he did.

Tracy stops the replay.

MARILYN
Am I supposed to be intimidated by that fake recording?

TRACY
That's you. Saying those words.

MARILYN
Yeah, but--

TRACY
--This recording may not convict you for killing Cuttbate, but I guarantee it will ensure a very unpleasant future as you fight a conspiracy conviction.
(beat)
Maybe we'll be cellmates. How's that sound?
(beat)
Get smart, Marilyn. Resign. Take your severance and options and find another gig.

MARILYN
Well, as long as you're fucking Matt, I guess I don't stand a chance.
(beat)
OK, fine. I'll resign, but I want one last thing from you.

TRACY
Are we negotiating again, Marilyn?

MARILYN
Isn't that the only way you achieve orgasm?

TRACY
Just spit it out.

MARILYN
Matt's in Dubai, right?

TRACY
Yeah, so what?

MARILYN

I saw him and Hannah boarding the flight from LAX together. They looked quite the dashing young couple. Quite chummy.

TRACY

She flew to Dubai before he did to, uh, prep, uh, for him, y'know. The meetings...

MARILYN

I couldn't help admiring the way his tan leather jacket and her Burberry luggage complemented one another.

Shaken, Tracy sits down slowly.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

The look on your face right now. That's the one last thing I wanted from you.

Marilyn throws a couple items into her briefcase and clasps it shut. She signs the resignation letter and heads for the door, turning around to address Tracy.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

You better work on your cock-sucking technique, Tracy. You might have competition for the GM job.

Marilyn walks out the door.

INT. ATMOSPHERE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Matt, Hannah and a few Dubai industry PRINCIPLES enjoy dinner at a table by the windows overlooking the lights of the city.

PRINCIPLE #1

I had to get the stewardess to intervene. You should have seen the look on this mutakabbir when he learned he had to give up his seat for my falcon.

Everyone at the table laughs.

PRINCIPLE #1 (CONT'D)
 He had a valid passport.
 (beat)
 I'm talking about the bird.

More laughs.

HANNAH
 I find your country's love of
 falcon quite romantic.

PRINCIPLE #2
 The falcon is our national symbol,
 like your eagle, but they weren't
 born here. They came every winter
 and helped the Bedouins. That's
 why we're proud of them.

HANNAH
 That's beautiful.

Sensing business time is frittering away, Matt changes the subject.

MATT
 Solar energy production. That's
 another thing to be proud of. In
 oil-rich UAE, Dubai is generating,
 what? A quarter of your electric
 supply with solar? That's
 leadership. It's visionary.

PRINCIPLE #1
 Thank you, Mr. Blankenshein. It's
 refreshing to speak to someone from
 our country who sees it that way.

MATT
 You have big ambitions. Hundred
 percent renewable by 2050. That's
 a challenging goal, and we want to
 help you get there...

Matt's phone BUZZES and he glimpses at the screen.

MATT (CONT'D)
 ...um, help you get there ahead of
 schedule, uh, if possible.

MATT'S POV: Text message reading "I wanted to let you know I've resigned. You'll get my letter explaining everything shortly. Thanks for all you've done for me, Matt. M"

PRINCIPLE #2

Tell us in broad strokes what--

Frazzled Matt addresses the table.

MATT

--I'm sorry. I have something urgent to attend to.

(beat)

Hannah, please brief our hosts on our new collaboration with, uh, um. You know... the light-trapping stuff we've--

HANNAH

--The National Renewable Energy Lab.

MATT

Yeah. That's it.

(beat)

I'll only be a minute.

Matt heads quickly for a quiet corner of the restaurant.

HANNAH

NanoNano just signed onto a partnership with the US Department of Energy - early stages, you understand - to develop new and better ways to reduce sunlight reflection using our proprietary nanoparticles.

INT. ATMOSPHERE RESTAURANT/CORNER - NIGHT

Matt calls Marilyn but it goes to voicemail.

MATT

Marilyn, it's Matt. Call me back at once.

He dials again, this time calling Tracy.

INTERCUT WITH TRACY'S ST. REGIS HOTEL ROOM

Tracy sits by the window drinking, a half empty bottle of vodka and a cut-up lemon rest on the table. She's a bit tight.

MATT (CONT'D)

I can't believe Marilyn would do such a thing.

TRACY

Don't tell me she already told you what she told me.

MATT

What are you talking about?

A long pause.

TRACY

I don't know. What are you talking about?

MATT

She tendered her resignation. Just like that. No notice, nothing.

TRACY

Yeah, I know. I tried to talk her out of it, but--

MATT

--You knew? When did this all start? And why didn't you alert me?

TRACY

She was stressed out from all that harassment bullshit. She wanted out. I mean, what could you have done?

MATT

(sarcastically)

As CEO? Gee, I don't know. Give her a juicy raise, more stock, a new Ferrari. Maybe dinner at Cheesecake Factory would have worked.

(angrily)

Shit, Tracy, I could've done lots of things to keep her.

TRACY

She's gone, Matt.

MATT

You know her. You can change her mind. Offer whatever you think is necessary to keep her on.

TRACY

For your information, I'm in KL at this very moment.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

I didn't want to distract you from
your affair--

(coughs)

--affairs in Dubai.

MATT

You're in Malaysia? Right now?

TRACY

Yes, dear. I did my best to fix it
with Marilyn. Would you care to
yell at me some more?

MATT

Well, shit. No, of course not.
I'm sorry.

(beat)

How was I supposed to know?

TRACY

I flew here as soon as I realized
she was serious. I offered her the
golden handcuffs but she was
adamant.

(beat)

She handed me a resignation letter
and said she was off to a new
adventure - or something to that
effect.

MATT

Goddammit. I'll have to start HR
on a search for a replacement.

TRACY

I'll do it.

MATT

Thanks, babe.

(beat)

Anyway, I appreciate you flying
half way around the world on short
notice. Above and beyond the call,
Wonder Woman.

TRACY

How's Dubai?

MATT

Fantastic. The flight was superb,
but long and boring. No one to
talk to.

Tracy makes a masturbatory gesture.

MATT (CONT'D)

Dubai's an amazing city. I'll tell you all about it later, but I gotta get back to the dinner.

TRACY

My busy boy. I bet your itinerary is full of exciting new business opportunities. Aren't you traveling to Abu Dhabi?

MATT

Day after tomorrow. Hannah laid it all out.

TRACY

It's tight, isn't it?

MATT

Huh?

TRACY

Your agenda. She's good at scheduling. Minimum waste.

MATT

You're right.

TRACY

Maximum joy.

MATT

What are you talking about? Have you been drinking, Tracy?.

TRACY

I guess I'm a bit jet lagged. Sorry. Tell Hannah I'm proud of my little protege.

MATT

She flew back this afternoon.

TRACY

Really? So soon? You're a tyrant.

Matt checks his watch, distressed at the time.

MATT

I missed that.

TRACY

I think I'll take Hannah to lunch when she gets back. She deserves an atta-girl.

MATT

No. I mean, I gave Hannah a long weekend off. She's on her way to, um, Santorini. That's her atta-girl.

TRACY

Looks like you've thought of everything.

MATT

I really gotta get back to the dinner. Bye bye.

Both hang up. Tracy slurps the last of her drink and pours another.

INT. ATMOSPHERE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Matt returns to the table, addressing Hannah away from the others.

MATT

(whispers)

Marilyn fucking resigned.

Hannah expresses mild shock.

PRINCIPLE #1

Is everything all right, Mr. Blankenshein?

MATT

All good.

(beat)

Did Hannah tell you about the patents we've applied for?

HANNAH

I didn't get--

MATT

--A bundle of 21 really innovative patents that will give us significant competitive advantage, as well as licensing opportunities.

PRINCIPLE #2

That is most definitely an interest
of ours.

MATT

Well, that deserves a toast.

All raise their glasses.

MATT (CONT'D)

To a big future built on tiny
things.

INT. ST. REGIS HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Tracy makes a call.

TRACY

Where are you?

AIMAN (V.O.)

Saigon. How about you?

TRACY

KL. I'm heading back to San Diego
in a day or two. Can you fly back
with me?

AIMAN (V.O.)

Well, I'm going back there through
Tokyo tomorrow.

TRACY

Perfect. Send me your itinerary
and I'll meet up with you there.

AIMAN (V.O.)

Everything OK, Tracy?

TRACY

I think so. Maybe. Marilyn
resigned as we expected.

(beat)

One down, one to go.

AIMAN (V.O.)

I see. I guess we'll discuss the
one to go on the plane.

TRACY

It's a long flight. Gotta talk
about something.

AIMAN (V.O.)
I'll send you my flight number.

TRACY
Don't forget your seat number, too.

AIMAN (V.O.)
I won't... forget, that is. Sweet
dreams, Tracy.

TRACY
You too.

EXT. ARMANI HOTEL - DAY

Matt and Hannah climb into a limo as a PORTER loads luggage
into the trunk. The limo pulls away

EXT. SHEIKH ZAYED ROAD - DAY

The limo tools along the highway, passing a sign that reads
"Abu Dhabi 25 KM".

INT. TOKYO AIRPORT - NIGHT

Near the gate, Tracy greets Aiman with a hug. The couple
pass through the gate check onto the jetway.

INT. JET (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

Tracy and Aiman sit together in their first class seats.
Wearing ear buds, Aiman watches the end credits of "The
Apartment" on his screen. He removes the ear buds.

AIMAN
Your father loves this movie?
It was like "Mad Men" on roofies.

TRACY
It is a bit dated.

AIMAN
The women get treated like shit and
the main character is a patsy who
helps make it happen.

TRACY
I know, I've seen it at least 20
times. A real classic.

AIMAN

Well, that's one way to--

TRACY

--Aiman, I'm glad we could hook up on the way back. On these long flights it's so much nicer when--

AIMAN

--One down, one to go.

(beat)

You arranged to be with me right here, right now. Just tell me, Tracy, what's on your mind?

TRACY

Cutting to the chase, I see. Okay. We have to address Grayson Richards.

AIMAN

I figured that would be your next move.

TRACY

And final, I hope. I can't keep going on with this plotting.

(beat)

With Marilyn and Richards neutralized, I'll breathe easier.

AIMAN

I think the Richards play should be based on the assumption he bribed or coerced someone at the morgue to fork over confidential and privileged records. If we can show that, it becomes his Achilles Heel.

TRACY

I have no doubts he pulled some shit to get Cuttbate's real name. What do you propose?

AIMAN

I have a few ideas. If one works, it works. No need for you to be briefed or involved.

TRACY

I don't want to know.

(beat)

What are you thinking time-table-wise?

AIMAN

Time-table-wise? I guess you have seen the movie 20 times.

(beat)

Time-table-wise I think we can get to the point in the next two or three weeks where you confront Richards and close the whole thing out, once and for all-wise.

TRACY

I have to confront him? Why?

AIMAN

That's the way it works best. Face to face. You did it with Marilyn. You demonstrate you're in control; that you hold all the cards.

TRACY

Marilyn was different.

AIMAN

I know. A subordinate. But you have to look at Richards the same way. You hired him, he failed. Then he went off the reservation without your approval. You're in the best position to make him see the errors of his ways. He won't submit to anyone but you.

TRACY

Shit, it really makes me nerv--

AIMAN

--Let me go out on a limb. The night you shot and killed that guy--

TRACY

--Hold on--

AIMAN

--I bet you were in complete control. You were in charge and he was your bitch. Didn't you tell me he puked all over himself, Tracy?

TRACY

Will you keep your voice down!

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT passing by inserts herself, eyeing Aiman as she speaks to Tracy.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Can I help you ma'am? Do you need anything?

TRACY

No, I'm fine.

The Flight Attendant moves on slowly. Tracy addresses Aiman.

TRACY (CONT'D)

What's your point?

AIMAN

You're fearless. Richards already knows this.

TRACY

I don't know.

AIMAN

Let's say Richards suspects you killed Cuttbate. What more could you be capable of doing if pushed too far? He has to consider the madman theory - or I guess the madwoman theory.

(beat)

No. He'll cave once he knows you have him by the balls and you're not fucking around.

(beat)

Checkmate. You win.

TRACY

Sounds more like stalemate.

(beat)

You know so much. I suppose I'll have to hire someone to neutralize you.

(beat)

Shit, when will I finally be free? When will it end?

AIMAN

It doesn't end, because it never began. We signed NDA's, remember?

(beat)

Hang in there, Tracy. It'll all be over soon enough.

INT. ARMANI HOTEL/MATT'S ROOM - DAY

Matt, fresh out of the shower, talks on the phone.

MATT

I'm glad you made it back safely to San Diego. I hope the flight wasn't too brutal.

TRACY (V.O.)

I'm never going to Malaysia again.

MATT

Even if I make you GM?

TRACY

Hmmm. That's different. Although I don't see why we have to be in Malaysia.

MATT

Wasn't that your idea?

INT. MATT'S HOUSE -

TRACY

Seemed good at the time.

MATT

Listen, get some rest. I'll be back in a few days. Maybe you can run me through the contract for Marilyn's protection service.

TRACY

Gordon should do it. He handled all the T's and C's.

MATT

Oh, OK. But I'd like you to be there with him.

TRACY

Sure.

MATT

Great. See you soon, Trace.

TRACY

Bye Bye.

Matt hangs up. He pulls on a pair of pants and knocks on the door to Hannah's Room.

HANNAH (O.S.)

Just a minute.

INT. ARMANI HOTEL/HANNAH'S ROOM - DAY

Hannah hustles to get dressed. Just as she gets on her panties, but nothing else, Matt enters the Room holding his cell phone. She covers her breasts.

MATT
Oh, gee. I'm sorry. I guess the door wasn't locked.

Hannah stands stunned.

MATT (CONT'D)
I just wanted to show you the photos from the Skypool. The sunshine on your face, and the Burj al Arab in the distance, well...

Matt stuffs his cell phone in his pocket, approaches Hannah and caresses her face.

HANNAH
Matt--

MATT
--You are so beautiful.

Matt moves in closer.

MATT (CONT'D)
--May I kiss you?

Hannah looks deeply into Matt's eyes for a moment.

HANNAH
Yes.

With her eyes closed, Matt kisses Hannah lightly on the lips.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Kiss me again.

This time Matt gives Hannah a deep French kiss. She wraps her arms around his neck; he pulls her in tight, pressing her breasts against his chest.

INT. ARMANI HOTEL/MATT'S ROOM - DAY

Matt and Hannah romp in bed, Hannah on top riding with abandon. After climax, the couple lie together, giggling.

HANNAH
That was special.

MATT

More than special. Exhilarating.
What a wonderful way to wrap up our
trip together.

(beat)

Y'know, Hannah, I've been attracted
to you since the moment we first
met. And last night, in the
desert, under the infinite stars,
the attraction only grew stronger

HANNAH

Really?

MATT

I love your energy. Your
enthusiasm. Your joie de vivre.

(beat)

At this moment, lying next to you,
I feel young again.

HANNAH

You are young, Matt.

MATT

A man is only as young as his wife
lets him be.

HANNAH

Oh...

(beat)

Tracy's not that old.

MATT

No, I suppose not. Still, she acts
like an elder statesman at work.

HANNAH

I'm sure she wants the best for
NanoNano.

MATT

Of course she does - she's a major
shareholder.

Matt rolls toward Hannah, resting on an elbow, hand
supporting his head.

MATT (CONT'D)

Have you ever communicated with a
dude named Aiman Hakim? He's
Pacific Rim's exec in charge of
protection services division.

HANNAH

I've never spoken with him, but I know who you're talking about. Tracy negotiated Marilyn's protection contract with him, or maybe one of his--

MATT

--I'd love to know if we've contracted for more than protection services. That lease downtown. What was that for?

HANNAH

Can I tell you something?

Matt sits up.

MATT

Of course.

HANNAH

Tracy's been very good to me - mostly - for a long time.

MATT

OK...

HANNAH

I don't want to betray her.

MATT

I see. Then you shouldn't have brought it up.

HANNAH

You're right, Matt.

MATT

Hannah, if you know something that impacts me, you should tell me. I'll protect you.

(beat)

Now, do you have something to tell me, or not?

Hannah sits on the edge of the bed, facing away from Matt.

HANNAH

I saw Tracy and Hakim alone together on your yacht. During the quarterly.

MATT

Is that so? And?

HANNAH

You can't tell anyone I told you this!

MATT

Go on, I won't tell anyone.

HANNAH

I wasn't spying. Honest. I just dropped by to deliver some papers, and I, uh, saw them y'know, hugging and kissing, and...

Matt rolls onto his back, hands interlaced behind his head, staring calmly at the ceiling.

MATT

Maybe it was just a friendly embrace. I mean, you didn't see them fuck, right?

HANNAH

Oh no. I left immediately.
(beat)
You're probably right, Matt. Shit, I'm sorry I mentioned it.

MATT

Don't be sorry. I was pushy and I apologize for that, but I'm glad you told me, Hannah. You've given me some things to think about.

Matt reaches for Hannah's shoulder and coaxes her back into bed. He runs his fingers through her hair, kisses her deeply, and slips his hand under the sheets. Hannah moans.

EXT. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

On a rainy afternoon, Erskine and Colby enter the Coroner's Office.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

The two fake FBI agents proceed to a window manned by an elderly RECEPTIONIST. She parts the window.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you gentlemen?

Flopping open his badge and quickly retracting it, Erskine explains.

ERSKINE

I'm agent Erskine of the FBI, and
this is my colleague, agent Colby.

Colby similarly flashes his fake badge for a split second.

ERSKINE (CONT'D)

We'd like to speak to the coroner
if that's possible.

RECEPTIONIST

Of course. Let me get him.

The Receptionist departs. Erskine and Colby wander about the lobby. The CORONER arrives. He is an elderly man sporting a white goatee and dressed in a three-piece suit and dark tie.

CORONER

What can I do for you boys?

ERSKINE

I'm agent Erskine of the FBI, and
this is my colleague, agent Colby.
We've received a reliable complaint
that one of your pathologists
conspired with a private detective
to illegally transfer confidential
information regarding a John Doe in
your custody.

CORONER

Oh dear, that's awful.

COLBY

And unlawful.

CORONER

Yes, of course. When did this
happen?

COLBY

Allegedly happened, sir.

ERSKINE

Within the past 60 days most
likely. Do you maintain video
surveillance of the morgue?

CORONER

We have several cameras in various parts of the building. I recall video is stored for up to a year.

ERSKINE

Can we see it?

CORONER

I'll have to ask my assistant. It might be in a cloud.

ERSKINE

Do that.

INT. JET (TRAVELING) - DAY

Matt and Hannah sit next to each other in first class. Matt finishes watching "Lawrence of Arabia" while Hannah watches "The Devil Wears Prada". He taps Hannah on the shoulder; she pauses the movie.

MATT

How much do you know about our cosmetics operation, Hannah?

HANNAH

I don't know... a fair amount, I suppose. I read the status meeting minutes, and I chat with Marilyn on occasion about the business. Why do you ask?

MATT

I need to find a new GM. Tracy felt a woman should run the division, and I agreed. And still do.

HANNAH

Why not Tracy?

MATT

She's on the short list, obviously. But I want choices. And as you may have noticed, there aren't any other females in top positions around here.

HANNAH

Would you like me to work with HR to start an external search?

MATT

Tracy's already on it, but given she's a contender for the job, I'm not sure--

HANNAH

--HR can do it without her, y'know.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I want to put you up for it. I know you're gonna say something like Tracy deserves it. But you see, deserves got nothing to do with it. That's what Tracy told me once. I think you would make a great GM, Hannah.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I don't know what to say. I'm flattered.

MATT

And?

HANNAH

I'd be honored to be on the candidate's list.

MATT

You'll have to go before the board. Tracy's on the board.

HANNAH

If the process is fair, I'm not afraid. Besides, who knows who'll be on the board when the time comes.

MATT

Sei cattivella.

HANNAH

Not you too?

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Erskine, Colby and the Coroner look over the shoulder of the Receptionist seated in front of a screen.

RECEPTIONIST

Do you realize that 60 days is almost fifteen hundred hours of tape? Can't you narrow down the time frame?

COLBY

Our suspect drives a yellow antique car, so if we can buzz through the parking lot video, that might narrow it down.

ERSKINE

Also, most likely he showed up after hours, so we can start with night time video.

RECEPTIONIST

Whatever you say.

The Receptionist loads a video and fast forwards to an evening time, and she and Colby study the tape. Erskine and the Coroner step off to the side.

CORONER

What's this all about?

ERSKINE

A reliable source tells us an extortionist came here to find the identity of a murder victim so he could blackmail the purported killer. It's all unsavory stuff.

CORONER

That wouldn't be the first time something like that happened here.
(beat)

A couple years ago a rich-looking guy came in offering money to recover his wedding ring from the vagina of a woman who had been bludgeoned to death. Couldn't even make out her face, that's how bad the beating was.

ERSKINE

Horrifying.

CORONER

I know you guys deal with such things regularly, but for me, I almost threw up when I saw--

The Coroner turns away.

ERSKINE

For a man who has witnessed
atrocities - both criminal and acts
of god alike - to be sickened...

(beat)

Well, that says something about the
depravity among us.

CORONER

We called the authorities, but as
far as I know nothing happened to
the guy. But we did extract the
ring.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Colby and the Receptionist scroll rapidly through video.
Finally, Colby calls out.

COLBY

Stop! Back up!

The Receptionist rewinds.

COLBY (CONT'D)

Erskine, get over here!

Erskine and the Coroner enter the scene. Everyone stares at
the screen as the Receptionist proceeds to play tape.

POV - TAPE SHOWING YELLOW KARMANN GHIA PULLING INTO THE LOT.

ERSKINE

That's it. That's his vehicle.
Pull the video from all the cameras
starting from that day and time.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Aiman and Tracy sit next to each other in a quiet, secluded
booth away from other diners. They watch the action on
Aiman's open laptop, and listen to voices on the speaker.

CODY (V.O.)

You're asking for privileged shit.
Confidential shit. The kinda shit
that gets dudes like you and me
stripped of our licenses. Possible
criminal charges.

(beat)

(MORE)

CODY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You carry a leather briefcase with
a clasp and a tiny lock, so I know
you're prepared to pay for shit.

RICHARDS (V.O.)
Prepared, yes, and done. Another
thou. That's fair.

Aiman stops the playback.

AIMAN
I sent you all the video files.
Encrypted of course.

TRACY
What a fucking asshole. I can't
believe I hired him.

AIMAN
He is a real piece of work.

TRACY
Piece of work? He's a piece of
shit.

AIMAN
Watch this and tell me what you
think.

Aiman restarts the playback.

TRACY'S POV - Laptop video showing Richards pawing through a
folder, pulling out a photo of Cuttbate's tattoo, and taking
a picture of the photo.

RICHARDS (V.O.)
This is good, real good. I might
be able to retire on this shit.

Aiman stops the playback.

TRACY
Retire? I'll tell you what I
think. He wants to blackmail me.

AIMAN
I have to agree. But that's not
gonna happen.

TRACY
I don't know how you did it, but
you've given me something to shock
that slug Richards into submission.

AIMAN

That's what we promised, Ms. Shepard.

TRACY

Well, Mr. Hakim, I appreciate you keeping your promise. Now, I feel emboldened.

(beat)

I'm gonna confront Richards back in New York.

(beat)

Why don't you come with me. We can celebrate afterwards - anywhere you want to go.

Aiman shifts in his seat and adds an inch of distance between him and Tracy.

AIMAN

I can't. I'm leaving for Bangkok tomorrow. I've been promoted to Senior VP of operations covering Malaysia plus Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

TRACY

Congratulations, Aiman. Well deserved. I'm gonna take over as the new GM of our Malaysia operations. We'll practically be neighbors.

Tracy hails a WAITER. He arrives and she places an order.

TRACY (CONT'D)

A bottle of your best Champagne.

The Waiter departs.

AIMAN

Um, now that our work for NanoNano is complete, Tracy... the contract... I mean, I'm gonna be focused on, y'know, lots of... Are you sure you're gonna be GM?

Aiman clumsily gulps his wine, spilling some on the table.

TRACY

Are you dumping me?

AIMAN

Dumping? What? No. I just--

TRACY

--You sound like you're dumping me, babe.

(beat)

I've been dumped before, and I must say your performance is middle school at best.

AIMAN

C'mon, Tracy, let's--

TRACY

--It's OK, I had fun. I hope you did too.

(beat)

I gotta go to the ladies' room.

Aiman stands up; Tracy brushes past him perfunctorily.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Can you pick up the check for once?

Tracy tosses her napkin on the table and departs, leaving Aiman standing like a dope. The Waiter arrives with a bottle of Champagne, an ice bucket and two glasses.

AIMAN

Take that back.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt sits at his desk, Hannah sits across from him. She spreads out some papers.

HANNAH

Another strange invoice just came in. That Pacific Rim LLC is the payee.

MATT

What for and how much this time?

Hannah points with a pen to one of the papers.

HANNAH

Right here: data recovery. 150 K. The rest of the contract is a dupe of the previous contract, again with most of the fields left blank.

MATT
Well, fuck that. I'm not paying.
(beat)
Did we pay the previous bill?

HANNAH
Yeah. Gordon signed off.

MATT
Shit.

Matt presses a button on his intercom.

MATT (CONT'D)
Tell Gordon to come to my office
ASAP.

ASSISTANT (V.O.)
Yes, Mr. Blankenshein. Um, your
wife is here, shall I send her in.

MATT
In a minute.

Addressing Hannah.

MATT (CONT'D)
I gotta talk to her. Go out
through the side door.

Hannah packs her papers and leaves through a side exit

Matt hits the intercom button again.

MATT (CONT'D)
Send her in.

Tracy enters and takes the seat Hannah had occupied.

TRACY
Hmmm, the seat's warm.
(beat)
Did you accomplish everything you
wanted in Dubai.

MATT
Yes. Overall, a success. I'd give
it an A minus. The Abu Dhabi
meetings ended without the solid
commitments I hoped for. But they
didn't say no.

TRACY

Well, they never say no. Not in the first meeting.

MATT

I want to thank you again for trying to retain Marilyn. Now I gotta ask you about the contracts you negotiated with the Pacific Rim firm.

TRACY

Contracts? As in more than one?

MATT

Well, yeah.

TRACY

I did the deal for Marilyn's protection service. That's it. What are you referring to?

MATT

We received two additional bills from a company, a subsidiary I guess, of Pacific Rim for odd sounding services.

TRACY

No idea. I hope you didn't pay them.

MATT

I stopped the second one, but Gordon let the money go for the first.

Tracy shakes her head and smirks. Matt rubs his temples.

TRACY

I got HR going on a search to replace Marilyn.

MATT

Call it off. I know you want the position, and so does--

Tracy bursts out laughing.

TRACY

--Where'd you get that insane idea, Matt? The last thing I want is to be exiled to Malaysia.

MATT

For some reason I thought you'd--

TRACY

--You thought wrong. If you want my advice--

MATT

--I do--

TRACY

--My advice is make Hannah the GM. Keeps one of our females in the position, and she's capable enough.
(beat)
I'll support her with the board.

MATT

Gee, that makes things a lot easier for me. I thought I'd be sucked into a battle between the two of you.

TRACY

Oh, so you already seriously considered Hannah? I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

MATT

You just recommended her. Why would you be surprised if I came to the same conclusion?

TRACY

You should move fast. Not a good idea to leave the division leaderless for long.

Matt checks his phone and begins scrolling. An uncomfortable silence.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna visit my father this week. I won't be gone long.

Without looking up, Matt responds.

MATT

Tell Charles I said hi. Invite him to come out here for a visit some time. Maybe we can catch up over some classics.

TRACY

I will. Congratulate Hannah for me. I'll miss seeing her around here.

Matt stands and approaches Tracy. He gives her a little kiss.

MATT

Safe travels, Tracy. Call me when you arrive in the big city.

TRACY

I will.

Tracy departs. Matt's intercom BUZZES. He returns to his desk.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Gordon is here to see you.

MATT

Tell him to come in.

Gordon enters and approaches Matt's desk.

MATT (CONT'D)

You're fired.

INT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY

Riding in the Limo, Tracy makes a call.

AIMAN (V.O.)

Hello, Tracy.

TRACY

I'm calling to let you know that you're not getting paid for the coroner work. Matt smelled a rat and quashed it.

AIMAN

That's unacceptable, Tracy. That project cost a lot, and involved high risk.

TRACY

Sorry. Just be content with the money you've already been paid.

AIMAN

This could fuck up my promotion.
I'll sic our lawyers on your ass,
believe me.

TRACY

You really want to go through
discovery? With what I know about
your techniques?

AIMAN

We have an NDA.

TRACY

What we really have is M A D.

AIMAN

Um...

TRACY

I forgot, you're too young.
Mutually assured destruction. I go
down, you go down. No one wins.
And I'm prepared to go there if you
make a stink.

AIMAN

Spoken like a true cunt.

TRACY

C'mon, Aiman. So you make 45
percent profit instead of 50.
You're good at deception - fudge
the numbers, overcharge another
client.

AIMAN

Y'know, I miss you already. Maybe
in another timeline we'd be a
dashing couple running the world.

(beat)

Did you get that GM gig?

TRACY

I turned it down. Fuck Malaysia.

AIMAN

I see.

TRACY

Good bye, Mr. Hakim.

AIMAN

So long, Medea.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Aerial view of NYC skyline. A plane lands on the runway.

INT. NYC HOTEL/LOBBY BAR - DAY

In the early afternoon, Tracy sits in the half-empty Lobby Bar drinking a white wine and perusing her cell phone. She's dressed to perfection in an expensive power suit and her signature heels. Nails sharp; hair professionally styled.

After a moment, Richards walks into the hotel and scans the vicinity. He spots Tracy and heads for her table, taking a seat at the table.

RICHARDS

I had to see this for myself. I said, no way is this for real, but here you are. The lovely and elusive Ms. Shepard. How are you Tracy?

TRACY

Better than you.

Tracy finishes her wine.

RICHARDS

Well, that's not a heavy lift.

(beat)

Y'know, I was rather surprised when you shut me down just when I was about to solve the case... on my own dime.

TRACY

I'm sorry I disappointed you.

RICHARDS

Why am I here? Did you summoned me to resume the investigation? I won't charge you for the work already done.

TRACY

Just drop the whole thing - with prejudice. Your campaign of harassment and intimidation ends right here, right now.

RICHARDS

Whoa... I never harassed... or intimidated you... or anyone else.

TRACY

Cut the shit. Do you deny threatening a NanoNano exec in Malaysia?

Tracy fiddles with her cell phone.

RICHARDS

I never threatened her, I just called to inquire--

TRACY

--Why her? She has nothing to do with my case.

RICHARDS

You know that's not true.

TRACY

Shut up.

Richards's phone DINGS.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I just sent you a link. Click on it.

He checks his screen.

RICHARDS

If I do will my phone explode?

TRACY

Put it next to your head and let's find out.

Richards holds the phone dramatically at arm's length from his head.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Just watch the video.

Richards taps the screen and watches for a several seconds as audio plays from a prior scene.

CODY (V.O.)

You're asking for privileged shit. Confidential shit. The kinda shit that gets dudes like you and me stripped of our licenses. Possible criminal charges.

Richards places his phone on the table, and hails a WAITER who arrives promptly. Richards points at Tracy's glass.

RICHARDS

Bring a bottle of whatever she was drinking.

The Waiter departs.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

My compliments to whomever you hired to snatch up that video clip. Very stealthy work.

Richards wrings his hands, shakes his head.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

It must've cost you a small fortune to come into possession of such proprietary content.

TRACY

Your PI license and your freedom are on the line, Grayson. Watch the rest of video. Witness your clumsy extortion ploy.

RICHARDS

What extortion ploy?

TRACY

Retire? Your blackmail motives are obvious.

RICHARDS

You're wrong about--

TRACY

--Drop your futile crusade, or I will absolutely ensure your demise. My leverage over you far exceeds what you think you have over me.

The Waiter delivers a bottle of wine and pours out two glasses.

RICHARDS

Be cool, Tracy. Consider it dropped.

Richards picks hands one to Tracy. She checks her watch.

TRACY

Fine.

RICHARDS
Just one last thing, then we can
finally call it a day.

Tracy stares daggers at Richards.

TRACY
What.

RICHARDS
Reimburse me for my investigation
expenses... Let's say 50 K.

TRACY
You're unbelievable, you sewer rat.

RICHARDS
It's a fair price for the work I
did... and for me to fuck off
forever.

TRACY
Oh, you can fuck off all right. On
your own dime.

Richards stands up and gulps his wine.

RICHARDS
Before you dismiss me, think about
this. It took time, but I
eventually discovered the identity
of your con man when no one else
could. Now try to imagine what
else I could discover in my spare
time.

TRACY
Just go.

RICHARDS
Until we meet again, Tracy.

Richards departs.

EXT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Tracy stands on the stoop and rings the doorbell. Dad opens
the door, pleasantly shocked to see his daughter.

DAD
Tracy Rae Shepard! What are you
doing here? Come in, come in.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Tracy hugs Dad and removes her suit jacket, depositing it on a coat rack. The sound of TV movie dialog in the background.

DAD

You look great, Tracy. Why didn't you tell me you were in town. I could have made a dinner reservation, or something.

TRACY

I had a last minute meeting with, uh, a former adviser.
(beat)
Let me get us something. I'll meet you on the sofa, Dad.

Tracy and Dad head to their destinations in the Brownstone.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dad drops onto the sofa, and wipes the lenses of his special glasses.

DAD

There's fresh-made lemonade in the fridge. And that bottle of vodka you brought the last time you and Matt visited is in the freezer.

TRACY (O.S.)

That reminds me - Matt wants you to come to the coast for a visit. Watch some films together. Go out on the yacht.

DAD

That sounds wonderful. I'd love to get out of the city for a bit.
(beat)
I'll have my executive assistant check my schedule and let you know.

Tracy enters the Living Room with a tray with two glasses and a box of cookies.

TRACY

I found a box of Girl Scout cookies. Thin Mints.

DAD
I have Trefoils, too, if you prefer
them.

Tracy sits next to Dad.

TRACY
Whatcha watching, Dad?

DAD
The Big Sleep. This is the part
where Marlowe, the private
detective, takes a beating.

TRACY
Hmmm. Perfect timing.

Dad points to the TV.

DAD
See that guy? Marlowe thinks he's
blackmailing a woman.
(beat)
How long you in town, dear.

TRACY
Well, I was going to stay for a
long weekend, but plans changed and
I'm going back tomorrow.

DAD
My busy girl.

They watch the movie for a moment in silence.

DAD (CONT'D)
Oh, do you wanna hear the damnedest
thing? Remember the gun I sold?

TRACY
How could I forget. Um, you're not
in trouble for it, are you?

DAD
Of course not. The guy who bought
it just called me. You're not
gonna believe this. He said he did
some research on it, then brought
it to an auction house. Guess
what?

TRACY
Just tell me, Dad.

DAD

They told him it was bestowed by
President Truman to none other than
Audie Murphy.

(beat)

You know who that is, right?

TRACY

Of course.

DAD

Not only that. The gun appeared in
seven of his movies. Turns out
it's worth a fortune.

TRACY

Are you kidding me? What did you
sell it for?

DAD

Two hundred and fifty bucks. He
said he can get 50 thousand for it.

TRACY

Are you serious? I don't believe
it.

DAD

He told me he already knows someone
who will pay that much for it.

TRACY

Jeez, Dad, that's tragic.

DAD

It's not all bad. The guy said
he'd cut me in for 10 percent of
whatever it goes for.

TRACY

Really? That's, uh, generous.

DAD

And you thought I sold it to some
dope dealer.

TRACY

I never said that. I was just
upset that you didn't even know who
you'd sold it to.

DAD

Well, now I do. A colorful fellow.
Grayson Richards.

INT. NYC HOTEL/LOBBY BAR - NIGHT

Tracy and Richards sit together at the same table as before. This time the Lobby Bar is busy and noisy. Tracy hunches over the table writing out a check.

TRACY'S POV - ENDORSING A CHECK TO MR. GRAYSON RICHARDS FOR \$50,000.

She rips the check from the book and hands it toward Richards. As he goes to grasp it she drops it on the floor.

RICHARDS

Demeaning to the end, huh, Tracy?

Richards moves to pick it up but Tracy impales the check with her stiletto heel.

TRACY

Look me in the eye you invertebrate
bottom feeder and swear: "our
business is finished".

Richards holds up his right hand.

RICHARDS

I swear: "Our business is
finished".

Tracy lifts her heel off the check. Richards picks up the check and gets a brief look at Tracy's fine foot. He brings the check to the table and flattens the hole in the paper.

Richards retrieves a brown paper bag from his coat pocket and places it on the empty chair next to Tracy. She opens the bag and peers inside.

TRACY

Audie Murphy. You're almost as
conniving as Fischer Cuttbate.

RICHARDS

I know you hate me, but when--

TRACY

--Hate is a bottomless cup.

RICHARDS

Huh?

TRACY

And I will pour, and pour.

A long silence during which Richards shifts in his chair and Tracy stares at him.

RICHARDS

Whatever.

(beat)

What I was saying is that when you try to jam a guy who jams people for a living, you have to expect an unsavory outcome.

TRACY

Are we done here?

Richards stands up and pockets the check.

RICHARDS

As long as this clears, yeah, we're done. It's been a long and bumpy ride, but all's well that end well.

Tracy gathers her things and rises, towering over Richards.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

And I'll honor my promise to give your old man 5 K. He's a swell guy. We must have chatted about classic movies for--

TRACY

--Shut up, you pitiful piece of dirt. Don't contact him, or me, or anyone else connected to me ever again.

RICHARDS

As you wish.

Tracy begins to leave then doubles back.

TRACY

Death is the only water that washes away dirt. Remember that.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Tracy addresses Matt's Secretary in the outer office.

SECRETARY

Good afternoon, Ms. Shepard. Can I help you?

TRACY

Is Matt busy?

SECRETARY

He's not in today. Was he expecting you?

TRACY

No. I decided to fly back from New York a day early. Where is he?

SECRETARY

At the marina. He's taking a client out on the yacht.

TRACY

Is Hannah around? I need to talk to her about a contract.

SECRETARY

She took a personal day.

TRACY

OK, get me Gordon, then.

SECRETARY

Matt fired Gordon.

TRACY

Why? When?

SECRETARY

A few days ago. I don't know why.

EXT. SAN DIEGO MARINA - DAY

Tracy enters the code and opens the gate and heads toward the docked yacht. She walks the gangplank and boards the vessel. Matt, in a bathing suit, sits at the table on the aft deck scrolling his phone. When he spots Tracy, he jumps up nervously.

MATT

Tracy! What are you doing here? I thought you were coming back tomorrow.

TRACY

You look a little underdressed for a client meeting, Matt.

HANNAH (O.S.)

Matt, honey, do you want salt or
tajin on the rim?

Tracy crosses her arms and stares daggers at Matt.

TRACY

I can explain.

Hannah, in a skimpy bikini, steps onto the deck carrying two
cocktails.

HANNAH

I made an executive decision and
went with tajin.

She sees Tracy and freezes, looking at Matt, terrified.

MATT

Go back downstairs, Hannah.

TRACY

Stay, Hannah.

Tracy walks up to Hannah, gets very close to her, looks into
her eyes and takes one of the cocktails. She sips, then
turns to Matt.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I had my suspicions, and now I know
for sure.

MATT

Well, I know you've been fucking
that guy from Pacific Rim. What's
his name, Hannah?

Before Hannah can answer, Tracy responds.

TRACY

Aiman Hakim. And that's over with.
Now, you tell Hannah that it's
over, too.

MATT

Hannah, bring me that Margarita.

Hannah walks slowly to Matt who takes the cocktail and puts
his arm around her waist.

MATT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry you had to find out this
way, Tracy. I was going to tell
you.

TRACY

I see. So it's over between us -
is that what you were going to tell
me?

MATT

Yes.

TRACY

Well, I'm sure you love birds will
have a great relationship with her
running the operation in Kuala
Lumpur.

MATT

I'm reshoring the cosmetics
division to San Diego.

Tracy shakes her head in disgust and disbelief.

TRACY

Y'know, I'm having second thoughts
about Hannah as GM. In retrospect,
I can see she's not up to the job.
Fucking the boss? Very poor
judgement. I'm sure I can convince
the board to vote this down.

MATT

That's another thing I was going to
tell you, Tracy. I'm making a
motion to remove you from the
board.

TRACY

What are you talking about? You
can't do that! I'm a major
stockholder. I will fight and I
will win.

MATT

When the board learns of your
involvement with Pacific Rim and
their fraudulent invoices, I think
they will see it my way.

TRACY

There's not a goddamned thing
untoward with the work I did. It's
all above board and proper.

HANNAH

What about the two subsequent
contracts?

TRACY

Don't you dare talk to me!

(beat)

I already told you, Matt, I don't know anything about that.

MATT

The lawyers disagree. Video footage from across the street of the rented storefront shows you walking in, then out of the building.

(beat)

I don't know what went on, but you can't stand there and claim you know nothing about it.

TRACY

I'll fight you.

MATT

You should resign, Tracy. It'll be easier than litigating over something that's inevitable.

(beat)

The board will buy back your shares at a premium, and cover income taxes. You can do whatever you want after that.

TRACY

You'll hear from my lawyers.

MATT

I know.

EXT. TRACY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

In the pouring rain, a cab pulls to the curb in front of Tracy's Apartment. She hops out with a roller bag and runs to the entrance, having no umbrella to shield her. As she runs, the heel of her shoe breaks off, and she stumbles to the sidewalk. She stands slowly, picks up the heel, removes both shoes and limps inside.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT BUILDING/LOBBY - NIGHT

The DOORMAN in a jaunty uniform rises from behind his desk and assists Tracy.

DOORMAN

Ms. Shepard, are you alright. Let me help you with that.

He takes her luggage in one hand, and Tracy's arm in the other. He leads her to a chair.

DOORMAN (CONT'D)

Oh, you skinned your knee. I'll get the first aid kit.

TRACY

That's not necessary. I'll fix it up myself.

Tracy stands and limps slightly toward the elevator.

DOORMAN

A big package came for you yesterday, Ms. Shepard. Do you want me to have a couple of the boys bring it up to you?

TRACY

In an hour.

Tracy presses the button and enters the elevator.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy closes the door behind her and sets her keys on the side table. She flings the shoes on the floor and heads to the Kitchen where she takes out a bottle of vodka from the freezer.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tracy soaks in the tub, a washcloth over her eyes, her arm dangling from the tub holding a glass of vodka. A large bandage covers her knee.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy lies in bed wearing a white robe, watching TV. A KNOCK at the door.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy peers out the peephole, then unlocks and opens the door. In the hallway stand two husky, black CUSTODIANS balancing a large rectangular wooden crate on a dolly.

CUSTODIAN #1

Is it OK if we roll this in, Ms. Shepard?

TRACY

I'm not expecting anything, especially something this big. Are you sure it's for me?

Custodian #2 hands her a shipping slip.

CUSTODIAN #2

Has your name on it.

TRACY

OK, roll it in.

The men roll the crate into Tracy's Apartment. She runs her hand along the top of the crate.

TRACY (CONT'D)

How am I supposed to open this thing? It's nailed shut.

CUSTODIAN #1

I brought a crowbar. Figured you might need help.

Custodian #1 pries open the crate, completely removing the wooden side. He pulls away some packing material revealing Tracy's Kandinsky painting. Taped to the frame is an index card. Tracy plucks it off the frame and reads the text.

MATT (V.O.)

Sending your painting back. I never liked it. Matt.

FADE OUT.

THE END.