

DEADLY RACKET

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FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Loud Classic Rock plays. Close-up of a pair of black Oxford leather dress shoes, walking.

Close-up on DANA. (Caucasian, 30). He's handsome and debonair. He's fairly stoic, but he possesses a beguiling, charming aura that makes it impossible to look away from him. Zoom out to see Dana confidently walking down the hall.

A MALE HOTEL GUEST (40s) walks down the hall.

Close-up of Male Hotel Guest's turquoise, Kiton diamond-studded wingtip loafers.

Close-up of Dana's Oxford shoes.

Close-up of Male Hotel Guest's shoes.

Close-up of Dana's shoes.

Close-up of Male Hotel Guest's shoes.

Male Hotel guest stops in front of his room and gets his key. Dana stands behind him, staring intensely. Then, getting into character, Dana smiles.

COLT

Excuse me, Sir?

HOTEL GUEST

(Slowly turning around)

Please, don't call me "Sir". I'm not that old.

DANA

(Politely chuckling)

Oh, sorry. Do you know where the ice machine is?

HOTEL GUEST

Yeah, you just passed it. Right behind you-

Dana shoots him in the forehead with a silencer-equipped pistol. The guest drops dead. Dana shoots him twice more in the chest, pulls a purple rose from his inside jacket pocket, and places it on top of the body. He quickly walks off.

INT. MASSAGE ROOM - DAY

A LARGE, SHIRTLESS MAN (50s) lies back on a massage table. Relaxed, he smugly grins and closes his eyes.

LARGE, SHIRTLESS MAN  
Alright. I'm passing out, so just  
do your thing.

DANA (V.O.)  
With pleasure.

Suddenly, Dana's hand, wearing a black glove, covers the man's mouth. The man's eyes bulge open as he panics! Dana rapidly slits his throat with a sharp knife! The man's eyes close, and his body goes limp. Dana leaves a yellow tulip on his chest and exits.

EXT. HOUSE, BACK YARD - NIGHT

A tattoo-covered BIKER (20s) throws a bag of garbage in a large trashcan. Dana rushes him from behind and chokes him with rope. The biker asphyxiates. Dana opens the garbage can lid, throws the biker's body over his shoulder ... and into the can. He gently closes the lid, puts a violet on it, cautiously looks around, and stealthily sneaks away.

INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

A CREEPY HIPPIE MAN (40s) is violently convulsing on the floor and foaming at the mouth. His hands reach for his cellphone ... as he almost clutches it, Dana's black Oxford leather dress shoe kicks it across the room.

Pan up to see Dana check his watch, then view the life drain from his mark. Dana checks the victim's pulse ... he's gone. Dana closes the man's eyes and leaves a pink lillie next to him. He checks his watch again, looks through the front door peephole, and scurries out.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

As Dana briskly exits the building entrance - the door starts to close behind him, and he sees an ELDERLY WOMAN (70s) slowly walking with a cane and carrying a large box. He instantly turns around, pulls a pen from his pocket, wedges it between the entrance and door so it doesn't lock, and runs to her aid.

DANA  
Mam, may I help you with this box?

ELDERLY WOMAN

Oh, aren't you just a dear! Yes,  
thank you.

Dana takes the box and leads her to the door. He routinely swings the door open, grabs the pen, pops it back into his pocket, and escorts her inside. Her daughter ISABELLA (40s) approaches in the hallway.

ISABELLA

Hey, Mom - so sorry, I thought you  
were arriving at 2!

ELDERLY WOMAN

Yes, I got out early. This young  
man was kind enough to help me.

ISABELLA

Oh, thank you so much. Here, I can  
grab that.

Dana hands her the box. They smile at each other.

DANA

Can I do anything else for you?

ELDERLY WOMAN

No, you've done plenty, Sweetheart.

DANA

Alright, well, you ladies have a  
lovely day.

He smiles and walks out.

ISABELLA

(Muttering)

You can do plenty for me.

ELDERLY WOMAN

What?

ISABELLA

Nothing. Here, right this way.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Oh, Isabella, you're such a tart.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Dana briskly walks and answers his phone.

DANA

My man.

(beat)

Just at work.

(beat)

Yeah, going great. I'm killing it.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Dana sits in a chair across a desk from his handler, VARTAN PETROSYAN (30s). Vartan is calm, relaxed, and speaks with a thick accent. He wears a bright purple velour track suit and penny loafers.

VARTAN

I hear your latest little spree  
went off without a bitch.

DANA

Um, I think what you're trying to  
say is, it was successful.

He smiles at him flippantly, then gives him a charming wink.

VARTAN

Yes ... you know what I mean, my  
friend.

(beat)

Sorry. What I was trying to say is  
"you know what I mean, Assface."

DANA

(Laughing)

Hey, this job's no fun if I can't  
bust your balls.

VARTAN

Well, in that case - this must be  
your dream come true.

DANA

Oh, it totally is! I mean, this ...  
and Jennifer Lawrence.

Vartan smiles. It's obvious these two share an enjoyable rapport.

VARTAN

I'm glad you took out those  
slimeballs. I got no sympathy for  
pedochilds.

Dana starts cracking up.

VARTAN (CONT'D)

What? Okay, Dicksmack, how do you say?

DANA

It's "pedophiles", Dude. But honestly, "pedochilds" makes more sense.

VARTAN

English is all Greek to me, Bro.

DANA

Well, to be fair, you're doing better than me - I can't speak Armenian, and you ... almost speak English.

VARTAN

You bitch of a son!  
(They both laugh)  
Okay, your next assignment: Cillian McKinnon.

DANA

Sounds like a Leprechaun.

VARTAN

Well, he's definitely got a Pot of Gold. Thanks to the \$3 million he stole from us.

DANA

Holy Shit. How'd he swing that?

VARTAN

Master of disguise. He posed as a security guard, seduced a teller, and got the code to one of our bank lockboxes.

DANA

Impressive. He almost deserves the money.

VARTAN

I'm happy to give this gig to someone else, Motherfucker.

DANA

Come on, Vartan. You know I got this. He work alone?

VARTAN

Yeah, not associated with any Irish mob. He's just a very skilled, greedy man.

DANA

Well, he's about to be a very skilled, greedy dead man.

Vartan hands him a very thick folder. Dana marvels at how thick and heavy it is.

VARTAN

Here's his file.

DANA

What's it called, "War and Peace"?

Dana looks at Vartan and realizes he has no idea what he's talking about,

DANA (CONT'D)

Sorry, wasted reference. Carry on.

VARTAN

Boss man wants you to do it at this guy's next "job". He's posing as an insurance salesman. He's currently hiring; you're going in next Thursday at 4pm, the last interview of the day.

DANA

No way, man; you know I hate doing businesses in broad daylight!

VARTAN

Buddy, it's 4pm. That's late afternoon, more like "Early Twilight".

(pointing to paperwork)

Pays VERY well. As your handler, I don't recommend saying "No".

Dana weighs the options. He needs the money.

DANA

Oh, man ... fine, let's do this.

VARTAN

Wonderful! Well, you have all the information. Any questions?

DANA  
Just one. Is Cillian McKinnon a  
"Pedochild"?

INT. OFFICE - DAY

CILLIAN MCKINNON (Redhead, 30s) talks into an earpiece as he stands in the front of the office, next to a reception desk. He appears to be the only one in the office.

CILLIAN  
Yeah, one more interview, and I'm  
done for the day. This candidate  
looks really strong - if so, I'll  
have my team ready to rock; then we  
can start moving some *serious* coin.

Angle on Dana walking toward the glass front door.

CILLIAN (CONT'D)  
Okay, he's here, gotta go. Yep.

Cillian hangs up and removes his headset.

SLOW MOTION: Dana coolly walks through the door and removes his sunglasses. Hard rock music plays. Carrying a small briefcase, he hides the sunglasses in his pocket. He smiles and approaches Cillian. END SLOW MOTION.

DANA  
Good afternoon, Sir. I'm-

CILLIAN  
Tate Adelson?

DANA  
In the flesh.

Colt extends his hand, which Cillian quickly shakes.

CILLIAN  
Marshal Campbell.

DANA  
Nice to meet you, Mr. Campbell.

CILLIAN  
Likewise, Tate. Call me Marshal.  
You drink coffee?

INT. CILLIAN'S INSURANCE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Cillian leans against the front of his desk; Dana sits a few feet across from him in a chair. They both sip coffee.

CILLIAN

Of the enormous plethora of applications I've received, you're my first choice for this position.

DANA

Wow! What a pleasant surprise.

CILLIAN

Your resume's amazing, all your referrals rave about you ... when it comes to "Adjustment Experience" - your damage inspection, financial estimates, and claim research are all unparalleled.

DANA

(Nervously)

That sounds amazing ... but I'm waiting for the catch.

CILLIAN

No catch, Tate - you want the job or not?

DANA

Absolutely!

CILLIAN

(Handing him papers)

Here's your contract. Read, sign, and welcome to the family.

DANA

(Taking papers)

Thank you! I'll do this right now.

CILLIAN

Need a pen?

Dana is already holding a pen, ready to sign.

DANA

No, thanks - I brought my own. I was just HOPING this would happen!

Cillian chuckles, happy to see his new hire so appreciative. Dana quickly signs a few places on the contract, then grabs his coffee cup.

DANA (CONT'D)

Um, I know we're just drinking coffee, but shall we toast to a fruitful future?

CILLIAN

(Hoisting his cup)

Yeah, but on one condition, pal:  
Next week, we do it with Scotch.

DANA

Oh, I'm in.

They softly clink coffee cups, then sip.

CILLIAN

Here's to you.

ABRUPTLY, Dana flings his hot coffee in the face of Cillian, who shrieks in pain! Dana double-clicks the pen he's holding. It transforms into a sharp penknife: Dana springs up and stabs Cillian directly in the jugular! Blood flows from his neck like an uncontrollable geyser. Cillian falls to the floor, Dana bends down to examine him ... BAM! The door swings open, and a SWAT Team rushes in with AK-47s and Uzis!

HEAD FBI GUNMAN

Freeze! FBI! Put your hands above your head!

Dana obliges. He is in complete shock. Even HE can't get out of this predicament. HOW THE FUCK DID THIS HAPPEN?

FBI GUNMAN #2

Get on the floor! Get on the fucking floor!

Dana keeps his hands above his head and slowly lies on his stomach. WAS I SET UP? WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

The SWAT team surrounds him, pulls him up, and cuffs him. One FBI SWAT team member searches him and pulls out a bright green Carnation.

FBI GUNMAN #3

Hey look, Boss!

HEAD FBI GUNMAN

Well, you must be "The Flower Prowler".

The SWAT team members are ecstatic. Dana looks away, livid. I EXECUTED THE JOB PERFECTLY. WHO SQUEALED?!!

INT. FBI OBSERVATION ROOM - LATER

The head of this FBI operation, LEONARD VASQUEZ (Latino, 50s), discusses the recent bust with agents CHARLTON HARRIS (Caucasian, Late 40s) and EDDIE STEVENS (African-American, 30s). Vasquez is your textbook, no-nonsense police boss. Harris is a distinguished agent with a ton of experience and a cool head; Stevens is an energetic, animated hothead.

LEONARD

THIS GUY is the notorious "Flower Prowler"? The anonymous, cross-country murderer we've been hearing about for over seven years, who's probably in bed with the biggest Armenian Mofia in the country? And just killed a major international source we've been tracing for the last three years?!!

EDDIE

That's EXACTLY what we're saying!

CHARLTON

Affirmative.

Leonard looks through a two-way mirror at Dana, who sits in the interrogation room. He lightly drums his fingers on a table and glances around.

LEONARD

He looks so wholesome, I don't get it. What's this kid's backstory?

CHARLTON

Originally from just outside Billings, Montana. Mom died young, raised by Dad. One of those crazy, "Always Be Prepared" guys.

LEONARD

Lemme guess: Ex-military?

EDDIE

Bingo! Air Force in The Gulf War. Actually one helluva a pilot, 'til he freaked out and "friendly fired" his roommate.

LEONARD

Jesus.

CHARLTON

Unintentional. Poor guy was sneaking up on him to play a prank, and he shot him. Jury ruled an honorable discharge.

EDDIE

Then he raised his kid in a log cabin. Pops taught him archery, riflery, martial arts ...

CHARLTON

And he was a natural at all three. We're talking EXCEPTIONAL. He's also incredibly athletic. Won a slew of karate trophies and got a full-ride tennis scholarship to Florida State University.

LEONARD

You lost me at "Florida".

He and Charlton share a smile.

EDDIE

Really? You just gonna start randomly doing standup comedy?

LEONARD

Relax, Tampa Bay. Ok, how does a Florida State tennis player become a Hitman?

Angle back on Dana, scanning the room, thinking ...

A SERIES OF FLASHBACKS:

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

A YOUNG DANA (9) holds a bow and arrow at a target about 30 feet away. His father RUSTY (30s) coaches him.

RUSTY

Come on, boy. Eye on the prize. You'll know when to let go.

Young Dana pulls back and concentrates. He lets the arrow go, and ... SMACK! Bullseye!

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Hey! Atta-boy!

YOUNG DANA  
Daddy, I did it!

Young Dana drops his bow and hugs Rusty, who hugs him for a moment ... then squats down and intensely addresses him.

RUSTY  
Now, see? That's how you do it,  
Son. Take no prisoners! Only the  
strong survive! You hear me?!!

Rusty shakes his son's shoulders, trying to motivate him.

YOUNG DANA  
Yeah, Dad, I hear you!

Dana wants to make him proud, but Rusty is scaring him.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

A TEENAGE DANA (15) shoots a pistol at a line of bottles. He takes out five in a row with ease and misses the last one.

RUSTY  
Dammit, kid - what happened?!!

Dana discharges the shell and lays the gun down. He looks up at his father, who's now hovering over him.

TEENAGE DANA  
I don't know, I got excited.

RUSTY  
Well, in the real world - we call  
that "Dead"! Remember, it's "Be  
Prepared" ... or "Be in the  
ground!"

TEENAGE DANA  
Okay, well, I got 5 outta of 6.  
That's pretty good, right?

RUSTY  
Yeah, until the 6th criminal puts a  
bullet in your skull! I'm gonna  
line 'em up again, load your  
weapon, Soldier!

Dana starts putting bullets in his pistol, his hands shaking. He nervously glances at his father, who obsessively places new bottles as targets.

INT. LOG CABIN, MAIN ROOM - DAY

Rusty and an older DANA (20) are ready to spar. Furniture and any other household objects have been removed to make way for this battle.

RUSTY

Ready?

DANA

Yes, Sir.

They bow at each other, then get into attack stances. They slowly circle each other, ready to pounce ... Rusty lunges at Dana, who rapidly ducks out of the way, roundhouse-kicks him, chops the back of his neck, and leaves him gasping for air on the ground! Dana approaches, ready to kick him again ... he then worries about Rusty, who grabs his throat and appears to have a hard time breathing.

DANA (CONT'D)

Dad?

Dana gets closer, and ... suddenly, Rusty sweeps his leg out from under him! Dana falls to the floor, and Rusty jumps; he's just about to pounce right on top of him ... But Dana thrusts his foot up, kicking Rusty's chest! He sends Rusty flying across the room. As Rusty tries his best to rise, Dana tackles his father and puts him in a chokehold. Rusty taps out! Dana lets go; Rusty keels over, panting like a thirst-deprived sheepdog. Dana checks on him; Rusty slowly rises.

RUSTY

Well-done, Kiddo. You're amazing.  
I've taught you everything I know,  
and now ... you clearly know more.

Rusty catches his breath. Dana pauses for a moment.

DANA

Ya know, Pop ... I just got offered  
a Tennis scholarship at Florida  
State.

RUSTY

You mean that sport for rich,  
spoiled assholes?

Dana has heard this HUNDREDS of times.

DANA

That's the one.

RUSTY

Look, you know how I feel about most people associated with tennis and country clubs. But two things - One, I can't afford to send you to college. Tennis can. You got my blessing.

He pauses, staring at his son, concerned.

DANA

And the second?

RUSTY

And Two ... Son, I'm sick.

DANA

What do you mean?

RUSTY

Doctor says I got something I'm not gonna be able to fight off without a major operation.

Dana absorbs this truth-bomb. He tears up and hugs his Dad, who gently holds him as he breaks down.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. FBI OBSERVATION ROOM - LATER

Eddie and Charlton continue explaining the backstory to Leonard.

EDDIE

So check it out: His Dad gets cancer, needs money for an operation, his best college buddy is involved with the Armenians ...

CHARLTON

It was a "perfect storm".

FLASHBACK:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

College-aged Dana (20) and his friend DAVIT (20, Armenian) cross an intersection and continue walking on the sidewalk.

DAVIT

You're telling me if Jarred Leto was dressed as a woman, completely hairless, with big boobs - you wouldn't at least make out with him?

DANA

Dude, that would never happen! Not remotely possible.

DAVIT

You're homophobic, Bro.

DANA

No, I'm not - I just can't speculate on a fictitious scenario that would never even occur.

DAVIT

Whatever, Nazi.

DANA

Look, I'm comfortable enough with my own sexuality to say he's a beautiful guy. He's just not my type.

DAVIT

So you wouldn't even kiss him?

DANA

No, man.

DAVIT

Would you let him kiss you?

DANA

Well, of course!

They both start laughing.

SUDDENLY, three men jump the boys, knock them to the ground, and start punching them! Davit helplessly defends himself, covering his face with his hands and screaming, as two men pummel him.

Dana goes into "Defense Mode": After being hit from behind by his attacker, he blocks two of his punches, kicks the man's kneecap, and chops his neck with his hand! The man instantly falls to the ground, writhing in pain.

Dana grabs one of Davit's attackers by the back of the hair and punches him in the throat, sending him to the ground!

The other attacker, crouching over Davit, looks up as Dana kicks his chin and sends him flying backwards, head over heels! As the man slowly rises, Dana punches him in the stomach, then roundhouse-kicks his head. The man spins to the ground and groans in agony. Dana squats over him.

DANA (CONT'D)

If any of you come near me or my friend again, I'll kill you all. Understand?

INJURED THUG

Yes!

DANA

Good.

He extends his hand to a shocked Davit, who grabs it. Colt helps him up and starts leading him away.

DANA (CONT'D)

Let's get outta here.

DAVIT

Holy Shit, that was amazing, dude!  
If Jared Leto saw that, he'd  
TOTALLY be sucking your dick!

INT. DINER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dana and Davit sit in a booth.

DAVIT

I work for some people who could really use your help.

DANA

You know I can't do anything to jeopardize my scholarship.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - THE NEXT DAY

Dana practices serving on a court by himself. An ARMENIAN MAN (30s) wearing designer sunglasses and a shiny, expensive suit opens the gate leading to the tennis court and addresses him.

ARMENIAN MAN

Hello, my friend. Do you have a quick second? My employer would like to speak with you.

Dana grabs a set of keys in his pocket with his left hand and grips his racket tightly with his right.

DANA

Sure.

ARMENIAN MAN

Great. Right this way, please.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Close-up of a cellphone playing a video of the recent attack, taken from a "Bird's Eye View". The three men jump Dana and Davit, then Dana quickly takes care of business. A finger hits "Pause".

Angle on Dana in the backseat of a car sitting next to SHAVO. (Armenian, 40s), who has just shown him the footage. The well-dressed Armenian Man sits in the driver's seat. Shavo is wearing an even more expensive suit and is clearly the boss. He carries himself like a very pragmatic businessman.

SHAVO

That was you, correct?

DANA

Yes. How did you get this?

SHAVO

Footage from a redlight camera.

(Inspecting Dana)

I'm not gonna lie to you. That was outstanding. You took out three of my best men in about a minute.

DANA

Well, either I'm outstanding, or you need some new men.

SHAVO

(laughing)

That's why I'm talking to you. How'd you learn to do that?

DANA

I've done my homework. And I don't like anyone hurting my friends.

SHAVO

Loyalty. A very important quality.

(beat)

I have some work for you. It pays extremely well.

DANA  
No offense, Mr. Tankian-

SHAVO  
Please, call me "Shavo".

DANA  
Okay, Shavo - but I'm just a college kid who plays tennis and tries to get decent enough grades to stay in school.

SHAVO  
And keep your scholarship.

Thrown off, Dana looks away.

SHAVO (CONT'D)  
I hear your father could use some money for ... health reasons.

Dana does his best to mask his emotions.

SHAVO (CONT'D)  
How much does he need?

DANA  
I'm not getting into this.

Dana yanks on the door handle and tries to unlock it ... he can't!

SHAVO  
(Emphatically)  
How much ... does he need?

DANA  
30 thousand dollars!

They stare at each other for a moment.

SHAVO  
Done. What are you doing Saturday?  
I know it's not school.

Dana's mind is blown. HOLY SHIT! THIS GUY CAN ACTUALLY HELP ME SAVE MY DAD???

CUT BACK TO:

INT. FBI OBSERVATION ROOM - LATER

Eddie and Charlton explaining the backstory to Leonard.

LEONARD

Those bastards preyed on him. He was practically a child!

EDDIE

Boss, that "child" has had more hits than Elvis!

CHARLTON

Lenny, here's the deal: He did his first job, and the next thing you know ... it *became* his job.

EDDIE

Money was great, he dropped outta school, and never looked back.

CHARLTON

Even though he made enough cash to cover all Dad's treatments, he still couldn't save him. After his Pop died, he became a machine.

EDDIE

A well-oiled, unstoppable machine.

LEONARD

A killing machine.  
(Thinking ...)  
Alright, Charlton. Work your magic.

Charlton leaves the room.

EDDIE

Oh, come on, Leonard! I've done extensive research, I know this guy inside and out-

LEONARD

Yet you still constantly overreact.

Though he wants to, Eddie knows he can't argue with this.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

It's okay, Eddie. You're young. Hey, when I was your age - I improved by doing exactly what you're about to do.

EDDIE

What's that?

LEONARD  
(Pointing)  
Watch and learn.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A loud beep is heard as the door opens and Charlton walks in. He locks eyes with Dana, who looks at him for a moment, then darts his eyes away and shakes his head.

CHARLTON  
My name's Charlton Harris. How are you, Dana?

INTERCUT FBI OBSERVATION ROOM/INTERROGATION ROOM

EDDIE  
Okay, are we not even gonna talk about the fact that this dude's name is "Dana Hitler"?

LEONARD  
Yeah, THAT I heard about. His old man changed it as a symbolic "fuck you" to the government he thought betrayed him. At least he had the courtesy to spell it with two "Ts".

EDDIE  
I did "NAZI" that coming.

Eddie confidently smirks at Leonard, who covers his face with both hands at this groaner.

Dana looks up at Charlton.

DANA  
How am I? Well ... I've been detained here for 12 hours, and I have a dentist appointment in the morning. It's a special procedure to prevent gum recession, so I desperately need sleep.

Charlton smiles and takes a seat at the table, opposite Dana.

CHARLTON  
I appreciate your attention to detail, but we both know tomorrow, your'e not going to the dentist.

DANA

You can call Dr. Avanesian at Town Center Dentistry-

CHARLTON

You're meeting with The Baker's Dozen, the most dangerous Armenian crime organization in America.

DANA

(Rolling his eyes)  
Okay, I get it - the 'ole "Good Cop, Bad Cop" routine.

CHARLTON

No. Just "Good Cop."

DANA

Well, let me know when he gets here.

Charlton slams his fist on the table, startling Dana, who gets into a fighting stance in his chair.

CHARLTON

Come on, Dana! You think the Armenian Mafia's so powerful, it can't be traced!

Dana thinks about this. *Oh, Shit. These guys ARE really onto me. They're onto everyone I work with.*

Eddie and Leonard are mesmerized.

EDDIE

Ok, ok ... Get 'em, Charlton!

CHARLTON

We've been tracking them for well over seven years, so we know you've been working for them at least that long, I'd say about ten years.

Dana scans the room again, looking for any possible way to escape. *Jesus, he's exactly right ...*

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

We know you're the "Flower Prowler". You're responsible for 37 deaths via orders from your employer, and we can prove AT LEAST 23. That's a lotta jail time, but I'm offering you a way out.

DANA

How?

CHARLTON

Witness Relocation. Tell me who's been hiring you, and we start you a new life immediately. Far away from here.

DANA

I wanna talk to my lawyer.

CHARLTON

Oh, you mean Brian Herzog? We just arrested him for fraud, tax evasion, money laundering and conspiring with a terrorist organization. He's gonna be unavailable for a few decades.

Leonard smiles while Eddie celebrates like his team just won The Superbowl.

EDDIE

Yeah, baby! Suck on that, Hitler!

Dana somersaults across the table, tackles Charlton to the ground, and puts his foot on his chest, pinning him down!

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Oh, shit! I'm coming, Charlton!

Eddie starts to sprint out the door; Leonard stops him.

LEONARD

Not yet. Keep watching.

Charlton is in a helpless position, but he remains calm and cool. Although Dana physically has the upper hand, he seems like a cornered rat.

DANA

You're lying!

CHARLTON

I'm not, Son. We got you on 23 murders, that's 460 years in prison. With a good lawyer, which you no longer have, you can get it down to 120 years.

Dana looks at the two-way mirror.

DANA

Are you enjoying the fucking  
show?!!

Eddie excitedly bounces; Leonard calmly watches.

EDDIE

Hell, yeah. This is better than Pay-  
Per-View.

LEONARD

Plus, it's free.

CHARLTON

I'm the only one who can help you.  
I just need a name. Now I know  
you're not gonna give up Vartan  
Petrosyan; he's your boy.

COLT

Never heard of him.

CHARLTON

That's what I thought. But Shavo  
Tankian is NOT your boy. He's evil  
and sees everyone working for him  
as easily replaceable. The ONLY  
reason he hasn't replaced you is he  
hasn't found anyone better. Oh, but  
if he did ...

FLASHBACK:

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Shavo sits behind a large, lavish desk with his feet propped  
up on it. Two large bodyguards stand behind him, and two more  
stand in front of the desk. Dana stands about ten feet away.

SHAVO

And if any possible witness in the  
vicinity happens to see you before  
or after eliminating the target,  
you eliminate them as well. Even if  
they're senior citizens, women, or  
children.

DANA

Whoa, I told you I don't do those  
categories-

SHAVO

And I'm telling you this is non-negotiable. Or YOU will be eliminated. Remember ... we know where you live.

One of the bodyguards flashes an evil smile.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dana takes his foot off Charlton's chest and helps him up.

DANA

So hypothetically ... if we do this, I serve no punishment?

CHARLTON

That's right, unless you move to Arkansas. Then you're gonna suffer.

He smiles warmly.

DANA

Oh shit, I didn't even think about that. Where would I-

CHARLTON

Trumbell, Connecticut. It's beautiful. If you're in, we've already got everything set up. You'll be working at the most elite Country Club in the city.

DANA

Doing what?

CHARLTON

Duh? Teaching tennis.

Dana thinks hard ... NOT A BAD PLAN.

Eddie's on the edge of his seat. Leonard looks satisfied.

LEONARD

Game, Set, and Match.

EDDIE

My man is GOOD!

INT. VAN - DAY

Charlton holds a large stack of papers and quizzes Dana.

CHARLTON  
Where you from?

DANA  
Louisville, Kentucky.

CHARLTON  
Where'd you go to school?

DANA  
Baylor University.

CHARLTON  
How'd you wind up in Connecticut?

DANA  
Moved to the Bristol area four years ago for a girl. Was working from home, but still played tennis everyday, had a small pool of clients I coached. She dumped me, so I decided to return full-time to my first true love.

CHARLTON  
Best match you've ever seen?

DANA  
2-way tie: The 1980 Men's Wimbledon Final where Borg edged McEnroe 8-6 in the fifth, AND the 2008 Men's Wimbledon Final where Nadal finally took Federer 9-7 in the fifth. I'll watch either of those ANYTIME.

CHARLTON  
Hmm. The only detail I don't like is they're both Men's Wimbledon Finals, but honestly - no one's gonna argue with that. Ok, finally ... what's your name?

DANA  
(Grinning)  
Colt Blake.

CHARLTON  
You love your new title, huh?

COLT

Well, Dude, wouldn't you? My name was "Dana Hittler".

CHARLTON

My God, I bet you were tortured.

COLT

Yeah, that name's the worst.  
"DANA".

CHARLTON

(Laughing)

Like I said, you got the job - but this guy's a stickler and just wants you to do an interview.

Colt shakes his head.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

Look, Woody Allen said "80% of success is just showing up."

COLT

Oh, yeah? What's the other 20%? Marrying your adopted daughter?

CHARLTON

Hey, he never adopted her; his girlfriend did.

COLT

(Sarcastically)

Oh, that makes it way less creepy.

INT. CHUN ZHANG'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

CHUN ZHANG, owner of MOUNTAINTOP MEADOWS COUNTRY CLUB, sits across a desk from Colt (formerly Dana.) Mr. Zhang is extremely serious and business-like, but very respectful and well-mannered. He speaks clear English with a Chinese accent.

CHUN ZHANG

Mr. Blake, what makes you a great tennis player?

Colt goes right into his carefully rehearsed answers.

COLT

Well, for starters, I have a mean backhand.

FLASHBACK:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Colt bitch-slaps a THUG (20s) across the face and sends him flipping backwards over a pool table.

FORWARD TO:

INT. CHUN ZHANG'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

COLT  
I have a killer slice.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. BOAT DOCK - DAY

Colt stands behind a MAN HOLDING A GUN on a docked speedboat. He quickly slices his throat, tosses him in the water, and speeds away.

FORWARD TO:

INT. CHUN ZHANG'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

COLT  
I have a strong overhead smash.

FLASHBACK:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A man in an open bathrobe points a shotgun at Colt, who rapidly somersaults over a countertop toward him while simultaneously snatching a frying pan. Before the man in the bathrobe can figure out what's happening, Colt slams the frying pan onto the top of his head! The man falls back, unconscious, while Colt grabs his shotgun.

FORWARD TO:

INT. CHUN ZHANG'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

COLT  
An effective "Stab Volley."

FLASHBACK:

INT. HALL - DAY

A MAN IN A SKIMASK slowly walks down a hall, pointing a handgun. Suddenly, a closet door swings open, and the skimasked man shoots several times into it ... at what appears to be nothing. The man inches closer, pointing the gun ... and Colt swings into frame, hanging upside-down from the closet ceiling! Colt stabs him in the chest! The man drops the gun and falls down a staircase. Colt flips down to the floor, grabs the gun, and heads down the stairs.

FORWARD TO:

INT. CHUN ZHANG'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Chun Zhang studies Colt. He's impressed.

CHUN ZHANG

Those are all incredibly valuable assets. How's your serve?

COLT

Honestly? It's not my strongest weapon.

(Leaning in confidently)

But I always break my opponent.

They lock eyes. Zhang slowly smiles.

CHUN ZHANG

Mr. Blake, you got the job.

COLT

Fantastic! Thank you so much!

He rises and shakes his hand. There's a knock on the door as it slowly opens. LEE ZHANG (Late 20s) walks in. She's beautiful, elegant, and poised. She has a lot of pizzaz and energy, but she knows how to control it. Colt is captivated.

CHUN ZHANG

Oh, hi, Love. Lee, this is our new Tennis Pro, Mr. Colt Blake. Colt, this is our Assistant Director and my daughter, Lee.

Colt stands up, speechless. She offers her hand to shake.

LEE

So nice to meet you, Colt.

He hurriedly and emphatically shakes her hand.

COLT  
Hi, there! Nice to meet you as  
well, Lee.

LEE  
Wow, quite a grip you have there.  
That's a hand, not a Wilson.

Colt quickly retracts his hand and puts it in his pocket.

COLT  
Oh, man! I'm so sorry. I'm excited,  
your Dad just gave me a job!

Lee checks Colt out. She thoroughly enjoys toying with him.

CHUN ZHANG  
Don't mind Lee, Colt. She gets much  
pleasure from other people's pain.

COLT  
(Backing toward door)  
Oh, hey, no worries. You gotta have  
a good sense of humor these days.  
Besides I have thick skin, I rarely  
get hurt-

He steps on an errant tennis ball, loses his balance, and  
knocks his kneecap against a table.

COLT (CONT'D)  
Dammit!!!

LEE  
Ooh, rare moment.

Colt hobbles on his good leg and slowly flexes the injured  
one, in pain.

COLT  
Wow, that smarts!

Chun and Lee walk over to him.

LEE  
Are you alright?

COLT  
(Sarcastic)  
Yeah, when I'm "alright", I scream  
and hobble.

She smiles at him. RESPECT.

CHUN

Do you need some ice or want to lie down?

COLT

Oh - no, thank you, Sir. I think I'll feel better after a long, hot shower.

CHUN

Very well, then. We'll email your schedule shortly, as well as your invite to our upcoming Country Club Mixer - please come! It's wonderful to have you aboard.

They shake hands again. He politely nods to Lee, who returns the gesture.

COLT

Lovely to meet you, Lee.

He begins gingerly walking out.

LEE

You as well, Mr. Ache. I mean, Mr. Blake.

He stops and slightly turns, just showing his profile and eyeing her like a target. He then wryly smiles.

INT. GLENDALE CITY JAIL, VISITING ROOM - DAY

Among the many people in the Visiting Room sits GRIGORYAN "GORE" TANKIAN (20s), son of Shavo. Gore has the best intentions and the worst mistakes. He acts purely on instinct and never thinks ahead. Alas, he is Shavo's only son and the acting O.G. while Daddy serves his time. Two guards escort Shavo to Gore's table.

GORE

Daddy!

Gore jumps up and hugs Shavo, who reluctantly reciprocates with a few obligatory pats on the back.

SHAVO

Hello, my son.

Shavo gently puts his hand on Gore's shoulder and gestures for him to sit. They both take a seat.

SHAVO (CONT'D)  
How's business without me?

GORE  
Great! We're busy, moving product  
to a bunch of clients!

Shavo motions to him to "shush".

SHAVO  
Gore, don't broadcast our lives;  
just tell me.

GORE  
(Lowering voice)  
Oh, sorry. I was just trying to get  
you some new buyers in here.

SHAVO  
I'll worry about that. Be subtle.  
I'm still in prison, remember?

GORE  
Yeah, I'm not the brightest knife  
in the drawer. Uh, I mean, I'm not  
the sharpest bulb. Um ... I'm not  
very smart.

SHAVO  
I know. You don't have an abundance  
of brains, but you got heart. Stick  
close to Narek, he's got a lot of  
experience. Together, we can  
eliminate the competition. I'm glad  
business is satisfactory.

GORE  
Yeah, Harout left a message earlier-

SHAVO  
Harout? Fantastic, when you called  
him back, what'd he say?

GORE  
I haven't yet, but I'm looking  
forward to it!

SHAVO  
Why not? He's one of our partners!

GORE  
I was running late to see you!

SHAVO  
OhmiGod, well, call him now!

Gore pulls out his phone. A SECURITY GUARD appears.

SECURITY GUARD  
Sir, there's no cellphone calls  
during visits, thanks.

GORE  
(putting it away)  
No problem, Sir.

The guard steps back.

SHAVO  
Go see what he wants. And tell him  
we gotta find that Dana bastard who  
put me in here!

GORE  
You got it, Dad.

Gore runs off.

SHAVO  
My God, that boy is one skewer  
short of a Kabob.

INT. COLT'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

Colt sips coffee and checks an email on his phone.

COLT  
Whoa! They're not messing around, I  
am booked solid.

MONTAGE OF COLT'S NEW CLIENTS (COLT POV), FUN MUSIC:

SPENCER AND DOSHA (30s), a yuppie couple with expensive sweaters tied around their necks in the heat, introduce themselves. They're rich, energetic, and clueless about virtually anything going on that doesn't involve them.

DOSHA  
Hi, I'm Dosha.

SPENCER  
And I'm Spencer!

BOTH  
And we love tennis!!!

They giggle, then smooch. Colt tries not to puke.

SPENCER

We play all the club tournaments,  
but we're always looking to  
improve. I need to add more variety  
to my backhand.

DOSHA

And I'm a serve-and-volleyer, but I  
need stronger approach shots.

They giggle again and hang on each other, affectionately.

COLT

I just need some strong shots.

The couple laughs even louder at his joke.

PATTY (15), a young teenager, talks to Colt.

PATTY

Here's the deal: I love playing, I  
hate losing. So ... can you teach  
me to NEVER do that?

GERTRUDE (70) addresses Colt.

GERTRUDE

So tennis is the only thing that  
distracts me from thinking about  
losing my husband.

COLT

Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that,  
Gertrude. Was he sick?

GERTRUDE

No, he wandered into Walmart and  
never came back.

CARTER, a shameless real estate agent, talks to Colt.

CARTER

I'm Carter Dillingham, tennis  
fanatic and local real estate  
celebrity. Even when I lose, I  
still bring down the house!

Carter thoroughly enjoys his own joke.

TONYA (50) seductively eyes Colt. She's a stunning woman with  
dazzling eyes, a shapely figure, a very obviously fake tan,  
and way too much expensive jewelry.

TONYA

Now that I'm divorced, I have more time to play. How 'bout you, Studmuffin? There a lady in your life?

COLT

Not right now.

Tonya drops a hair clip on the court. She turns around and bends over to pick it up like a stripper, looking at him while she does.

MARTY (9) addresses Colt.

MARTY

My parents made me take tennis lessons 'cause they don't want me playing video games all day. But honestly - if you just let me go play 'em in the clubhouse and look the other way, they'll never know. You'll still get paid!

Dosha slices the ball, comes to the net and hits a winning volley! She celebrates!

COLT (V.O.)

Great work, Dosha. That's the amount of spin you wanna hit.

DOSHA

Thanks!

COLT (V.O.)

Okay, Spencer, show me that kick serve!

SPENCER

Look out, Daddy's bringing the heat!

Spencer smacks the ball directly into the back of Dosha's head! She screams in pain, drops her racket, and covers her head. Spencer runs to her. Colt winces.

Patty hits a forehand into the net and slams her racket into the court.

PATTY

I'm so stupid!!!

COLT (V.O.)

Patty ...

PATTY

Lemme guess: Now you're gonna tell my parents, and I gotta go back to "Anger Management"?

Colt hits a ball to Gertrude, who completely misses it.

GERTRUDE

Oh, my Goodness. Could you hit the ball to me slower?

Colt stands next to Carter and demonstrates a drop shot.

COLT

So on the drop shot, you really wanna carve under the ball.

Carter attempts, and it doesn't even make it to the net.

CARTER

Wrong result, but right idea, huh?

Colt takes Carter's arm and slowly moves his racket, demonstrating the shot.

COLT

Uh ... yeah, but get your racket back as soon as you can and really slice under it.

CARTER

Nice. Ever considered a timeshare?

Tonya stands at the net, holding her racket extremely high, at the neck.

COLT

Tonya, your grip is way too high. Please pull your hands down to the butt of the racket.

TONYA

Oh, I love it when you talk dirty.

She looks at him while slowly stroking the racket handle.

Marty stands apathetically, holding his racket.

COLT (V.O.)

Alright, Marty - let's start with forehands, get ready!

An easy-to-reach ball bounces past Marty, who doesn't attempt to hit it.

MARTY

Are we almost done?

Colt hands a bag of ice to Spencer, who puts it on the back of Dosha's head.

DOSHA

Great, now we can't go sailing in Cape Cod this weekend!

Patty throws up a lob way too far, sending the ball over the gate. She tosses her racket and has a stomping tantrum.

PATTY

Motherfucker!!!

COLT

Okay, "Time Out"!

Gertrude stands still as another ball slowly bounces by.

GERTRUDE

When are you gonna hit it to me?

Colt stands at the net. Carter runs to a ball and shovels a one-handed backhand down the line, past Colt.

COLT

Hey! That was awesome, buddy!

Carter walks to him, out of breath, but doesn't miss a beat.

CARTER

Thank you. Colt, I assume this club's paying you around 75 grand a year, your "Net Income".

(Tackily smiling)

I can get you into a KILLER duplex with a simple downpayment of \$3500.

Tonya continues stroking her racket handle.

TONYA

Don't you think "love" sounds so much better than "zero"?

Marty pleads his case to Colt.

MARTY

Okay, how 'bout this: Instead of taking lessons, I play video games ... but only TENNIS video games?!!

Colt exhales deeply and bangs the strings of his racket against his head.

END MONTAGE.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB BALLROOM - NIGHT

The Country Club Mixer is in full swing! Colt stands in the lobby and looks at the dance floor, where members and guests cavort, swop stories, and shake it.

CHUN (V.O.)  
Colt Blake ...

Colt turns around to see his boss and his wife, LING (Chinese, late 40's, thick accent).

COLT  
(Shaking his hand)  
Mr. Lee, how are you?

CHUN  
Excellent, thank you. Colt, this is my wife, Ling.

COLT  
(Shaking her hand)  
Lovely to meet you, Ling.

LING  
You as well, Sir. I've heard great things about you.

COLT  
Oh, well, I should tell you ... they're all true.

The couple laughs. Chun looks at the bar.

CHUN  
Wow, the line's really long at the bar. But just tell them you're the new Pro; they'll take care of you.

COLT  
Much appreciated! See you two soon.

ANGLE on long line at the bar. Colt avoids it and finds a spot at the end, close to bartender EVAN (20s), who's wiping up a spill. Evan is tall, gangly and friendly.

COLT (CONT'D)

Excuse me, Sir? I'm not trying to cut in line, but I was told to inform you-

EVAN

(Smiling)

That you're the new Tennis Pro?

COLT

Yes, and you must be the new mind-reader.

EVAN

No, just an old bartender. Evan.

COLT

(Shaking hands)

Colt.

EVAN

You look like a whiskey guy. Am I warm?

COLT

Oh, yeah.

EVAN

Bourbon?

COLT

My God, you're good.

EVAN

Bulleit?

COLT

Close. Maker's.

EVAN

Dammit! I should've known you're wheat, not rye.

COLT

Give yourself more credit, that was amazing. Could I get a tall one with Club Soda and a lime, please?

EVAN

Coming up, my friend.

Carter stumbles up to him.

CARTER  
Hey, Coach!

COLT  
Carter, how are you, pal?

CARTER  
Great! Colt, here's my new idea,  
check this out: At my Open Houses  
for Luxurious Bachelor Pads, I'm  
gonna start hiring strippers!

COLT  
I like it.

CARTER  
I hope no one gets arrested for  
"Indecent Foreclosure!"

He starts chortling and slapping the bar. Just then, Tonya  
slides in between them.

TONYA  
Hi, Colt.

COLT  
Tonya. So nice to see-

She grabs him by the shirt and pushes him against the wall.  
He looks around, concerned, and contemplates his escape.

TONYA  
Your name "Colt" is cute, it means  
"young male horse". But you should  
change it to "Stallion".

LEE (V.O.)  
Tonya!

Tonya and Colt look up as Lee approaches.

LEE  
OhmiGod, Girl - the DJ is asking  
for you. He just announced nobody  
moves as sexy as you!

TONYA  
Really? Well, it's true. Time to  
prove it, Bitches!  
(Turns to Colt)  
We'll finish this later.

She confidently bounces off.

COLT  
OhmiGod, thanks for saving me. Is  
the DJ really looking for her?

LEE  
No. We have about 90 seconds to  
disappear.  
(Offering him his drink)  
I believe this is yours?

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Colt and Lee walk along the pool.

COLT  
Okay, so what have you done with  
Lee Zhang?

LEE  
I'm not drunk, but I'm also not  
following you.

COLT  
Well, you're clearly an imposter.  
You're much nicer than the woman I  
met in Chun's office.

LEE  
(Impishly smiling)  
I was just testing you.

COLT  
Did I pass?

LEE  
So far.

COLT  
(Smiling)  
Well, guess what? I been testing  
you, too, Darlin'.

LEE  
Oh, you have? So how'm I doing?

COLT  
The jury's still out.

They both are yearning to spend the night together, but are also trying their best to play it cool. Who's gonna make the first move? A loud voice breaks the tension.

ROD (V.O.)

Lee Zhang, does your Daddy know  
you're out here?

Angle on ROD PALMER (Caucasian, 30s), a clean-cut, polished man who looks like a Wallstreet insider trader. With his slicked back hair, perfect jawline, and arrogant smirk, he also looks like the exact type of man most people would love to punch. Carrying a martini, he saunters up to them.

LEE

Hey Rod, does your Daddy know every time he invests in one of your startups, most of it goes to the Chinese Mob, and you waste the rest on strippers and coke?

ROD

That's a lie. Strippers and coke are never a waste.

(Smirking at Colt)

Who's this?

COLT

The polite thing to say is, "Hi, I'm Rod". But I see you're still learning, so I'll help you out - Hi, I'm Colt.

Rod indignantly shakes Colt's hand. Lee looks concerned.

LEE

Colt, this is Rod Palmer, local entrepreneur. Rod, this is Colt Blake-

ROD

The new Tennis Pro. Yeah, I heard all about you, Cougar Magnet.

COLT

That's interesting. I haven't heard a thing about you.

Rod emphatically drinks his martini. Lee desperately tries to keep the conversation flowing.

LEE

Colt is really good! He got a full scholarship to Baylor University. You should hit with him, Rod.

ROD

No, thanks. I hit with my buddy and US Open Champion Andy Roddick. But hey, that's cute you got a free ride to a Baptist school in Waco, Texas, home of the homicidal Branch Davidian cult.

He moves over to Lee. Colt eyes him like a new mark.

ROD (CONT'D)

So Lee, whadaya say we get outta here and catch up. Ya know, for old time's sake?

LEE

First of all, no. Secondly, what you just said to him was beyond rude. And third, you're drunk. Go home.

Rod quickly gulps the rest of his drink, tosses the glass in the nearby grass, and grabs her hand.

ROD

Lee, let's forget the past-

LEE

Rod, let go of me.

ROD

Come on-

COLT

She said let go.

Rod turns around to see Colt, standing directly behind him.

ROD

And if I don't, what are YOU gonna do about it?

COLT

I'm only gonna tell you one more time: She said ... let go.

After scowling at him for a moment, Rod lets go of her ... and immediately throws a punch at Colt ... who blocks it, grabs Rod's arm, and flips him over a lounge chair!

COLT (CONT'D)

Okay, you got it outta your system. Just take her advice and go home.

Enraged, Rod picks up the chair and tries to smack Colt with it. Colt sidesteps it - then jumps, bounces on the chair, and flies over Rod's head! As he skies over him, he bops the back of his head, causing Rod to sprawl across the chair!

COLT (CONT'D)

Let's not do this, man. Look, we'll get you a ride.

Rod springs up, grabs a skimmer pole, and brandishes it!

LEE

Rod, you have nothing to prove!  
Stop acting like a child!

ROD

Shut your face, slut! This is between me & this redneck coach!

COLT

Trust me, you DON'T wanna do this!

Clutching the pole, Rod charges Colt like a medieval jousting.

COLT (CONT'D)

Lee, get down!

Lee squats and covers her head with her hands. Colt grabs the pole coming toward him, yanks it from Rod's hands, spins around, and uses the pole to knock him into the shallow end of the pool. Rod's head quickly pops up. He rests on the edge of the pool and catches his breath. A SECURITY GUARD runs up.

SECURITY GUARD

Is everyone alright?!! What happened?

LEE

Oh, just a couple of white boys trying to dance ... and failing miserably. Right, Rod?

Still catching his breath, Rod gives a "thumbs up".

INT. CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Colt and Lee are in her car. She's in the driver's seat.

LEE

Where the hell'd you learn to fight like that?

COLT  
My Dad starting teaching me Jiu-  
Jitsu when I was like 8.

LEE  
What was his name, Chuck Norris?

COLT  
(Laughing)  
It's just basic self-defense. The  
key is to always stay a step ahead  
of the opposition.

LEE  
Too bad that doesn't work in the  
dating world, huh?  
(Flirtatiously)  
'Cos you're never gonna be a step  
ahead of me.

COLT  
You're right.  
(Leaning in)  
I'm three steps ahead.

He kisses her. She wraps her arms around his neck.

EXT. GLENDALE CITY JAIL, VISITING YARD - DAY

Shavo is in an animated conversation with Gore. He does his  
best to lower his voice, as guards are in close proximity.

SHAVO  
You took out Sargis Karaoglanian?!!  
Right-hand man of our biggest rival  
on the West Coast?

GORE  
Papa, you said you wanted to  
"Eliminate the competition".

SHAVO  
I meant put them out of business,  
not put them in a casket! You just  
declared war!

GORE  
My bad.

SHAVO

(Trying not to explode)  
I mean, I guess on some level I'm  
impressed you pulled it off, but  
FUCK ME! Okay, please go get Narek.  
Love you, talk soon.

He kisses his son on the forehead, then shoves him. Gore  
stumbles out of frame; NAREK SARGSYAN (30s) quickly appears.  
Narek wears a sea green jump suit and Penny Loafers. He looks  
like an angry bouncer, but is very calm and patient.

NAREK

Hello, Shavo. I assume you heard-

SHAVO

I swear to Christ, my boy is the  
Armenian "Fredo"! Please take him  
fishing!

NAREK

Boss, I understand you're upset-

SHAVO

They think we just waged war. You  
know that, right?

NAREK

What would you like to do?

SHAVO

I'm calling Arman and explaining  
everything. He's very "eye for an  
eye", so we gotta lose somebody.  
(Contemplating)  
That driver of yours. He's out.

NAREK

Tigran? He's loyal!

SHAVO

Not when he "joked" about my  
mistress in front of my wife!

NAREK

(Deeply exhaling)  
Fair enough. Done.  
(beat)  
Anything else, Sir?

SHAVO

Yeah. Find that Dana cocksucker who  
ratted me out, and bring me his  
head.

INT. CHUN ZHANG'S OFFICE - DAY

Chun works at his desk. His intercom alerts him.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

Mr. Zhang, I'm so sorry; there's some men coming to your office who refused to wait.

CHUN

(Hitting button)

That's okay, thank you, Meredith.

The door swings open, and WANG YING (Chinese, 50s) enters with two henchmen and Rod Palmer. Surprised, Chun stands up.

CHUN (CONT'D)

Wang Ying. And Rod Palmer.

WANG

Hello, Chun. Working hard as always, you little devil.

ROD

Say whatcha want about this guy, but he is NOT lazy.

Wang and Rod approach his desk, move chairs in front of it, and sit down. The henchmen enter the office, and one closes the door. Chun is very nervous.

ROD (CONT'D)

Chun - sit down, Baby, take it easy; we just wanna talk.

WANG

For now, anyway.

He locks eyes with Chun ... then starts laughing!

WANG (CONT'D)

I'm just kidding. MAN, I should've recorded your reaction - Priceless!

Chun slowly sits in his chair. Upright.

CHUN

Very well, gentlemen ... what would you like to discuss?

WANG

What do YOU think we'd like to discuss?

CHUN

Honestly ... I have no idea. But I hear your casino is doing great!

ROD

Yeah, and we hear your club is, too. You raked in 10 mil last year.

CHUN

Well, yes - before taxes.

WANG

Nevertheless, the agreement between us, when I became an angel investor in Mountaintop Meadows Country Club, was if your total income is at least \$10 million, I get 20%.

CHUN

(Panicking)

Whoa, fellows! Please keep in mind, I pay 40% in business taxes, 10% on everything else, over a million on supplies, half a million for my staff, over 2 million on celebrity exhibition matches-

ROD

Over 3 million on your daughter's shoe collection.

Rod, Wang and the henchmen die out laughing.

CHUN

My point is - I don't have an extra \$2 million.

WANG

Well, you'll find a way to get it. You're a creative man.

CHUN

I'll do my best, but I can't make this happen in the immediate future.

ROD

You got a week.

CHUN

What? That's impossible!

WANG

Hey, we'll cut you some slack, old friend. 8 days. Come on, that's one more day than the original suggestion. I just extended your deadline by almost 15%.

ROD

Hey, 8 days from today it is.

Wang and Rod stand.

WANG

Thank you, Chun. See you soon.

ROD

And a pleasure doing business with you.

Rod winks at him. The men leave. Chun sweats and hides his face in his hands. The phone rings, startling him!

CHUN

(Answering)

Hi, Chun Zhang ... you're cancelling the exhibition match? Why? ... Oh, boy. Yeah, I know that's rough ... Okay, I understand; health and safety first. Please let me know when you can return ... Bye, now.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CLUB HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

At a secluded table, Chun sits with Colt.

COLT

You want ME to play Joey Smucker in your next exhibition? How many people cancelled on you?

CHUN

Just one. Colt, you're perfect! You're on the court 8 hours a day. You have an all-court game, groundstrokes that compete with his, and you're fun to watch. Plus, you're easy to work with.

COLT

Lord knows he's not.

CHUN  
You have no idea.

INT. LOCKEROOM - DAY

JOEY SMUCKER (Early 30s) carefully inspects an array of drinks, snacks and treats on a long table with a sign marked "JOEY SMUCKER". He knocks a can of La Croix off with disgust!

JOEY  
Tangerine? Tangerine? Where's my  
fucking Apricot?!! This happens  
EVERY exhibition! Why do I even do  
these fucking things?!!

VICTOR (early 20s), Joey's assistant, picks up the La Croix can, which is now punctured, spraying him in the face.

VICTOR  
Sorry, Joey; this is what they  
brought us.

JOEY  
But it's NOT what's in my rider!

VICTOR  
Okay, I'll just go to the clubhouse-

JOEY  
Don't worry about it, Victor. I  
don't even like La Croix; it's just  
a test to see if they got their  
shit together - which CLEARLY, they  
don't. Let's just do this and get  
paid.

He walks off. Victor looks very concerned.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - LATER THAT DAY

A wall-to-wall packed crowd excitedly anticipates the big exhibition match on Mountaintop Meadows Country Club's "Center Court". Some fans hold up signs reading "Joey Smucker, Grand Slam God!", "We Love You, Joey!", "He's One Bad Mother-Smucker!", etc.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Ladies and Gentlemen, please  
welcome today's challenger,  
Mountaintop Meadows Country Club's  
very own Tennis Pro, Colt Blake!

Colt walks on court and politely waves. The crowd mildly applauds. As it dies down, Tonya pipes up.

TONYA

Colt, shake it, you sexy beast!!!

A group of posh debutantes next to her frown.

TONYA (CONT'D)

Oh, please. Like any of you wouldn't fuck him.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And now ... please welcome Australian Open Champion, Wimbledon Champion, and U.S. Open Champion ... American tennis legend, Mr. Joey Smucker!

As Joey walks on court, the crowd goes wild, as if Led Zeppelin unexpectedly joined The Stones on their encore. Joey eats it up! He bows, high-fives and hugs fans on the front row, then brings the house down as he slaps the Umpire on the ass! He knows exactly how to play to the audience and give them the show they've been waiting for. As Colt gets stared down by Joey, he really feels out of his league ...

EXT. TENNIS COURT - MOMENTS LATER

The UMPIRE (Male, Eastern European, 40s) stands between both players. He is about to flip a coin.

UMPIRE

Mr. Smucker called "Heads"!

The Umpire flips the coin ... it lands "Tails."

UMPIRE (CONT'D)

Tails! Mr. Blake, would you care to serve or receive?

COLT

Uh, I'll receive.

Joey looks offended.

UMPIRE

Okay, Gentlemen - warm up. Good luck!

COLT  
 (Extending hand)  
 Hey Joey, I've always been a huge fan. It's an honor to meet you.

Joey shakes his hand and aggressively pulls him inches from his face.

JOEY  
 Then why the fuck would you choose to receive? I had more aces on the tour 3 years in a row, and you're gonna disrespect me like that?

COLT  
 Not at all - I just thought everybody can't wait to see your badass serve up close.

Joey buys it. He lets go of the handshake.

JOEY  
 I get it. This is your first exhibition. How adorable. But I'm still not taking it easy on you.

SMASH CUT TO:

INTERCUT INT. SOUND BOOTH/EXT. TENNIS COURT

Joey serves an ace! ARTIE (40s) speaks into a headset.

ARTIE  
 Wow! That bomb of a serve from Joey racks up another trademark ace.

Colt slams a serve; Joey weakly returns it just over the net; Colt hits a drop shot winner.

ARTIE (CONT'D)  
 Colt takes care of his serve again for 3-All.

Joey serves and volleys into the open court, easy put-away.

ARTIE (CONT'D)  
 Joey pulls ahead 5-4. They're on serve, but some added pressure on Blake now to hold this game.

The men are in a fierce all-court rally, which ends with Joey lifting a lob just long. He furiously addresses the Umpire.

JOEY

No way! That was on the line, Dude!

UMPIRE

Mr. Smucker, I was watching; I promise you it was out.

JOEY

Bullshit!

Joey slams his racket on the court, cracking the top. The crowd "ooooohs".

UMPIRE

Conduct Violation: Point Penalty,  
Mr. Smucker. 40-15.

ARTIE (V.O.)

You heard it, folks. Joey is punished a point for that tantrum. One more, and it will be a game.

Joey hits a big serve, a big forehand, and - right after Colt barely returns it - slams an inside-out forehand behind him.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Joey's done a great job of putting the past behind him. He's up 6-5.

Joey slices and rushes the net ... Colt passes him with an excellent crosscourt forehand!

UMPIRE

6 games all. Ladies and Gentleman, players will now play a tiebreaker.

Joey serves an ace!

ARTIE (V.O.)

Another ace! Smucker's on fire!

Colt brings Joey into the net, then hits a winning lob right over his head.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Whoa! Blake is really taking care of his service points; that's why it's 3-all in the tiebreaker.

During a crosscourt backhand battle, Joey finally blasts one down the line for a winner.

JOEY

Yes!

ARTIE (V.O.)  
 Smucker's up 5-4. If Colt Blake  
 doesn't take care of these 2  
 service points, he loses the set.

Blake serves an ace!

ARTIE (V.O.)  
 Second ace in a row for Blake! And  
 now a Set Point at 6-5!

During an intense rally, Blake comes to the net and taps a stretch volley ... which hits the net cord then rolls over, leaving Joey no possible way to retrieve it. End of Set!

UMPIRE  
 Game and first set, Mr. Blake. 7-5  
 in a tiebreak.

JOEY  
 Oh, come on! What was that?!! Not  
 fair - this guy plays on this court  
 every day; he's been practicing  
 that shot!

Joey kicks the net and sits down.

Artie, like everyone witnessing this madness, is entertained yet bewildered.

ARTIE  
 It seems Joey Smucker is accusing  
 Colt Blake of somehow perfecting a  
 freak lucky net shot. Once again,  
 he makes history, because NO ONE  
 has ever done that. Nevertheless,  
 the first set goes to Blake!

Colt serves out wide to the Ad court, Joey slices a defensive backhand, which Colt easily puts away with a crosscourt forehand volley winner.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
 Colt continues to easily hold  
 serve, barely even missing on his  
 first. He's up 2-1!

Joey disputes a call with a LINE JUDGE (Male, 30s).

JOEY  
 Why don't you bend over and look  
 out your good eye?!!

Artie frantically looks directly at the camera.

ARTIE

We apologize to all our viewers for any inappropriate content. Let's cut to commercial!

Joey smacks a huge, unreturnable serve down the T that Colt can only graze with the top of his racket.

ARTIE (V.O.)

The bad boy keeps serving impeccably. 3-all!

Colt slices a Pythagorean-angled serve to the Deuce court! Joey leaps and is somehow able to scoop it crosscourt and just over the net, where Colt is waiting and easily dinks it back over into the open court.

ARTIE

Our challenger is now up 5-4, on serve. I never thought I'd say this, but this next game's a "Must Hold" for Smucker. If not, Blake wins!

The two men are in the middle of another competitive rally. Joey goes big on an inside-in forehand ... it's SO CLOSE to the line, but called out! Joey yells at another LINE JUDGE (Female, 30s).

JOEY

Get another job!

But the REPLAY shows the ball landed about an inch long.

UMPIRE

Love-Fifteen.

Joey hits another penetrating serve that Colt accidentally hits into the crowd. Tonya catches it and immediately stuffs it in her top.

UMPIRE (CONT'D)

15-All.

Joey throws up a serve ...

ARTIE (V.O.)

Second serve ...

Colt surprisingly chips and charges! Not expecting this, Joey slices a high backhand ... which Colt volleys into the open court! Just before it bounces for a second time, Joey is able to scramble and throw up a defensive lob, keeping the ball in play ... but Colt it knocks away for an overhead winner!

UMPIRE

15-30.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Blake really took a risk with the old "Chip & Charge", but it paid off! He's two points away.

Joey serves big, Colt can barely return it ... and Joey easily puts it away with a swinging forehand volley.

ARTIE (V.O.)

The Champ's not done yet!

UMPIRE

30-All.

An AWESOME cat-and-mouse point: Both men use every inch of the court to defend, dictate, bludgeon, spin, slice and volley! Joey hits a deep approach ... Colt lobs a killer topspin backhand ... and Joey miraculously jumps up and smacks a perfectly-timed backhand overhead! It bounces high, Colt runs as far as he can to the corner ... and is able to hit a down-the-line backhand pass! The crowd goes wild!!!

ARTIE (V.O.)

What an unbelievable exchange!  
Smucker did nothing wrong, Blake just had an answer for everything!

UMPIRE

30-40.

ARTIE

(Bouncing in his seat)  
Match point!

Joey serves a thunderous bomb, which just clips the tape ... and bounces merely a hair outside the line.

LINE JUDGE

(Unusually loud)  
Out!!!

The crowd groans.

JOEY

(Sarcastically)  
You sure?

UMPIRE

Second service.

Joey exhales, eyes Colt, bounces the ball ... and kicks a good second serve to the body. Colt goes for the "chip and charge" again on a slice backhand, rushing to the net and sending it deep in the middle of the court. Joey tees off on a forehand, which Colt guesses correctly on and hits an impressive forehand volley down the line! Joey tracks it down and angles a crosscourt backhand passing shot ... Colt dives and hits an amazing stab volley winner just over the net!

UMPIRE (CONT'D)

Game, Set, and Match - Mr. Colt  
Blake!

The crowd is on their feet!

ARTIE

What a win! Colt Blake upsets Joey Smucker in the best exhibition I've seen all year! Man, this Colt guy has Killer Instincts!

Colt drops his racket and raises his hands in victory. He looks equally shocked and elated. Joey trots up to the net and gives him a big hug. The audience erupts!

JOEY

Great match, kid. You earned it.

COLT

Thank you, Joey.

JOEY

(Into his ear)

You're lucky I'm on probation, or I'd shove this racket up your ass.

COLT

Sounds kinky. No strings attached?

Colt pulls away and smiles. Joey's confused.

ANGLE on Lee cheering loudly. She notices a TEENAGER (Boy, 15) filming the action on his phone.

LEE

Hey, no video recording!

The kid runs off with the camera. Lee starts to chase after him, but exiting spectators accidentally block her as he disappears from the bleachers and out of sight.

ANGLE back on court. Joey signs autographs and poses for pics with fans. Chun runs up and hugs Colt.

CHUN  
You were incredible!

COLT  
Thanks. I got lucky - he was off, I was on.

CHUN  
Well, you were on enough to impress the director of the BNP Paribas Open! They're giving you a wild card to play Indian Wells!

Colt is ecstatically surprised!

INT. COLT'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MORNING

Colt, wearing nothing but boxers, gets out of bed and walks to his bedroom door ... which opens and reveals Lee wearing just a robe and holding a cup of coffee.

LEE  
Coffee, Lover?

COLT  
You read my mind, Gorgeous.

He takes the cup and kisses her. She seductively puts her hand on his chest then gestures to his coffee.

LEE  
This is how you like it, right?  
Black and strong?  
(He smiles and nods)  
Don't worry, I'm not gonna make any cheap ethnic jokes. But how Asian am I - serving my man in a robe?

He laughs, as she politely bows.

COLT  
You could never be a stereotype. You're WAY too unique. And opinionated.

She pretends to punch him in the stomach. Her phone "dings" and she pulls it out of her robe pocket.

LEE  
I knew it! That kid videoed your match, and now it's gone viral!

Colt chokes on his coffee!

COLT  
What???

LEE  
Look at this-

She shows him her phone: Quick highlights of Colt hitting shots that helped him defeat Joey. Colt is DISTRESSED! He puts his cup down and snatches his phone.

COLT  
(Grabbing phone)  
Lemme just check mine ...

He sees a text from Charlton that reads, "CALL ME ASAP at this #. ALONE!" He quickly puts on his robe.

COLT (CONT'D)  
You know what, I left something in my car. Be right back - you wanna shower?

LEE  
(Walking toward him)  
Yeah, with you.

He gives her a quick peck on the lips.

COLT  
Oh, me too! Feel free to get started, be right there!

He runs out. She looks quizzical but walks to the bathroom.

SMASH CUT TO:

INTERCUT CHARLTON'S OFFICE/COLT'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Charlton paces in his office, alone on phone.

CHARLTON  
Is this your definition of "keep a low profile"? Going Viral?

Colt alone in car on his phone.

COLT  
Of course not! Nobody was supposed to be recording-

CHARLTON  
But they did, Colt! Jesus!

COLT

Well, I'm sorry, Charlton - I can't defeat a Grand Slam Champion and police hundreds of people at the same time!

CHARLTON

I'm not gonna lie to you. That was pretty impressive, Young Man. You beat Joey Fuckin' Smucker!

COLT

Thanks, it was a rush! And by the way, he's a total dick.

CHARLTON

That's what I hear. Look, I can't hide this from The Armenians. It's only a matter of time.

COLT

I know. I mean, I'll defend myself all day long, but as far as weapons, you know I'm not allowed-

CHARLTON

One of my suppliers is already in town and will equip you with some unregistered assistance.

COLT

Wow. You're a genius.

CHARLTON

That's all I can do for you now. Hell, I'd come there myself, but I'm tracking a domestic threat-

COLT

Say no more. This is my responsibility. I'll handle it.

CHARLTON

Look, I know these guys. They're not gonna send the whole team, probably just 2. But they'll be DANGEROUS.

COLT

Good to know. Well, you know what they say: Never bet on the guy *looking* for a fight. But always put your money on the guy who's *ready* for a fight.

INT. SHAVO'S HOUSE - DAY

Narek shows Gore the recent viral clip of Colt.

GORE  
Perfect!

INT. SHAVO'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Close-up of Gore on phone.

GORE  
Daddy, we found Dana.

SHAVO (V.O.)  
Excellent news, my boy.

INTERCUT INT. COLT'S APARTMENT/INT. LEE'S HOUSE

Lee talks on a headset as she walks rapidly on a treadmill.

LEE  
You can't see me 'cause you're  
sick?

Colt has her on speakerphone as he furiously searches on his computer.

COLT  
Yeah, I got a bad chest cold  
bronchial thing.

LEE  
Bronchial? You mean in your lungs?

COLT  
Oh yeah, it's affected everything -  
my lungs, my chest, my nose ...

LEE  
Your ability to tell the truth.

COLT  
I'm sorry?

LEE  
Come on, Colt. You're not sick, I  
can hear it in your voice; you've  
got your normal energy I love.

COLT

Lee, I honestly feel contagious.  
It's not safe to be around me.

LEE

Hey, if you don't wanna see me,  
just have the balls to say so. But  
don't fucking lie to me!

She hangs up.

Colt stares at his phone in frustration, then walks over to his bed. He opens a large tennis racket bag and pulls out a shotgun, a machine gun, a Glock 17 and a 38 Revolver.

Lee adjusts her treadmill to go very fast. She angrily jogs.

LEE (CONT'D)

He's cheating. He's totally fucking  
cheating!

She can't quite keep up and flies backward off the treadmill, crashing into the wall!

INT. COLT'S APARTMENT, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Someone loudly bangs on the front door. Angle on Colt hiding behind a plant to the side of the door, holding a gun. He craftily looks through the window and sees Lee. He quickly hides his weapon and opens the door.

LEE

Oh, well, you look "bed-ridden"!

Colt pulls her inside and slams the door!

INT. COLT'S APARTMENT, HALL - CONTINUOUS

LEE

Okay, what the hell is going on?

COLT

Listen, here's the deal.

Just then, an ARMENIAN ASSASSIN crashes through the ceiling window, landing right in front of them! Colt tosses Lee on a couch and kicks it over, so she lands on the floor and has cover.

COLT (CONT'D)

Get on the floor!

LEE  
AAAHHH!!!

The Assassin tries to stab Colt with a dagger. Colt catches his hand, holds it away for a moment, then flips the assailant over on his back! As the attacker rises, Colt shoots him dead. Lee pops up from behind the couch.

LEE (CONT'D)  
Colt!

COLT  
Stay down! Now!

Lee drops down behind the couch.

Another ARMENIAN ASSASSIN crashes through the window behind Colt and tackles him to the ground! Colt's gun flies across the room, and the attacker sits on his chest and chokes him. Colt's hand slowly creeps across the floor and makes his way toward his first assailant's dagger. He finally grabs it and stabs the assassin directly in the heart! The thug crashes to the floor. Colt frisks him and removes a handgun. He checks his pulse, then runs over to Lee.

COLT (CONT'D)  
Hey Lee - he's gone. You okay?

LEE  
(Pettrified)  
What ... are you?

INT. COLT'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lee sits upright on the edge of his couch, clutching a glass of water with both hands. She is visibly shaken. Colt sits in a nearby chair. He's just broken the news to her.

LEE  
Holy Shit. All of this is  
completely true?

COLT  
Yes. I'm sorry, I didn't want you  
to find out this way.

Lee starts hyperventilating and grabbing her chest. Colt stands and tries to comfort her.

COLT (CONT'D)  
It's okay. Just take it easy,  
breathe.

LEE

Don't touch me! It'll only make it worse!

Colt raises his hands above his head and sits back down.

COLT

No problem.

LEE

I ALWAYS pick men with a deep, dark secret. They're either married or gay or ... undercover murderers!

(Gulping water)

Why can't I find a normal, nice guy who brings me flowers-

COLT

Trust me, honey; you don't ever want me to bring you flowers.

LEE

(Dumbstruck)

I am utterly shocked and appalled.

COLT

I understand.

LEE

Your real name is "Dana Hitler"?

COLT

Yeah, but Hitler's spelled with two "Ts".

LEE

What? Nevermind, I don't even wanna know. And you first became a hitman for The Armenian mafia to pay for his operation?

COLT

Yeah, I tried to save him. Then after he died, I just buried myself in my work to escape the pain.

For a moment, her look at him changes from upset and confused to sympathetic.

COLT (CONT'D)

Ironically, my job was inflicting pain on others and burying them. But please understand, I only got assigned truly bad people.

LEE

And now that you've assumed a new identity, you're not supposed to be doing that stuff anymore?

COLT

Not at all, but you realize this was self-defense, right?

LEE

(Nodding, scared)

What are you gonna do with the bodies?

COLT

Don't worry about it; I'll take care of them.

LEE

No, I wasn't offering to help you, I'm not touching them, just wondering how you're gonna dispose-

COLT

Trust me, you don't wanna know-

LEE

Yes, I do!

COLT

I'm gonna wrap 'em up and burn 'em, okay! Are you happy knowing that gruesome detail now?!!

LEE

Oh, Jesus ...

COLT

Lee, I'm sorry. Again, this is not at all how I planned on telling you-

LEE

When were you gonna tell me? Obviously, after you fucked me.

COLT

Lee ... I wasn't supposed to tell *anyone*.

She jumps up and heads to the door.

LEE

Well, as flattering as that is, I gotta go.

COLT  
Come on, don't leave. Can't you  
tell I wanna be with you?

LEE  
(Turning around)  
Well, I don't!

This surprises and hurts Colt.

LEE (CONT'D)  
I can't be with a killer. It's too  
disturbing.

COLT  
I told you, I don't do that anymore-

LEE  
You just did it twice.

COLT  
They would've killed both of us!

LEE  
(Terrified)  
I know. And now, every night I'll  
lie awake, wondering how many more  
are coming. We still work at the  
same place, but "We" are done.  
Goodbye, Colt.

She slams the door. Colt is crushed.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Chun walks to his car, a Lexus SUV, and opens the door.

ROD (V.O.)  
Everybody Wang Chun tonight!

Chun turns around and sees Rod standing next to one of his  
HENCHMEN (Chinese, 30s, huge, tattoos), smiling. Chun  
immediately backs up.

ROD  
It's okay, nothing to be nervous  
about, my man.

CHUN  
Then why is he here?

ROD  
Jun's my buddy. We always hang out.

CHUN

Well, what can I do for you gentlemen?

ROD

Oh, just checking in and seeing how you're doing on that \$2 million?

CHUN

It's due tomorrow.

ROD

I know. But if Mr. Wang isn't going to attain one of his expected goals, he prefers to know in advance.

CHUN

Look, I'm doing the best I can. I can definitely give you half.

ROD

Oh, Chun ... you think that's the answer Mr. Wang's looking for?

Chun pensively bows his head.

ROD (CONT'D)

It's only 3:30. A little early for you to be headed home, isn't it?

CHUN

I'm going to the bank. I'm exploring every possible option to give Mr. Wang the right answer.

ROD

Atta-boy, Mr. Zhang. You be safe, now.

He flashes his trademark, cocky smirk and exits with the intimidating Jun. Chun leaps in his car, then shuts and locks the door. There's a knock on the passenger window; he turns and sees Lee. He unlocks her door; she opens it.

LEE

Why the hell were you talking to Rod?

INT. COLT'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Colt walks through the front door. He looks dirty and exhausted, like he just disposed of a couple of dead bodies.

He plops down in a chair in front of his TV and turns it on. It's the National Geographic Channel.

TV (V.O.)

Unlike many monkeys, Baboons display love over violence. They intimately groom their companions and put love for their partners over their own needs, even food.

Fascinated, Colt leans in.

TV (V.O.)

Studies show Baboons live happier lives by avoiding violence and prioritizing love.

Colt has an epiphany.

INTERCUT INT. CHARLTON'S OFFICE/COLT'S APARTMENT

Charlton talks on a headset while squeezing a stress ball, walking in circles, and periodically checking his fit bit.

CHARLTON

Well, Christ, I guess you handled that problem! And I assume, the remains?

Colt talks to his "speaker phone" while scrubbing the floors.

COLT

Of course. Come on, who you think you're talking to?

CHARLTON

Good. Look, I know how Shavo and his team operate; they're not gonna make a move for a bit. Plus, we're watching them.

COLT

Great, that'll give me time to figure out how to protect Lee and her father.

CHARLTON

Well ... the plot thickens, Kemosabe. 'Ole Chun owes the local Chinese mob a cool \$2 mil; and looks like they're gonna strike soon if he can't deliver.

COLT

Oh, shit! But wait - he can't deliver? He owns a Country Club.

CHARLTON

Well, 2 million's not exactly change you find in the couch cushion. So yeah, keeping him and his daughter safe'll be challenging. But at least you got weapons.

COLT

Charlton ... I don't wanna kill anymore. I'm done with this lifestyle.

CHARLTON

Well, that's very sweet of ya, Bucko; but on top of the Chinese mob hitting your boss, you got a ruthless gang who wants you dead for putting their leader in jail. His son's in charge now; and believe me, he wants revenge.

COLT

Yeah, but you know what he wants even more? His father's respect. I'll call him. Later, Charlton!

Colt hangs up.

CHARLTON

No, wait! Fuck!

INT. COLT'S APARTMENT, FRONT DOOR - LATER THAT DAY

Colt opens a knocking door to see Lee, Chun and Ling.

LEE

Okay, I told them about you, but it's only because we have nowhere else to go.

COLT

Lee! Guess what? I don't wanna kill anymore, and it's all because of you!

LEE

Well, I picked the wrong day to ask you to save my life.

CHUN AND LING  
What about us?

LEE  
Yeah, yeah - you, too.

INT. COLT'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Colt stands, addressing Lee, Ling and Chun, who sit on couch.

COLT  
-and if you don't have the money by  
midnight - which you don't -  
they're coming for you. Correct?

Chun nervously nods. Ling squeezes his hand.

COLT (CONT'D)  
Okay, here's the plan: You gotta be  
at your place tonight, because if  
they don't find you there - they'll  
search everywhere, and that's when  
innocent people get hurt.

CHUN  
So you WANT them to find me?

LING  
Oh, I need my pills.

LEE  
My God, we'll be in the Lion's Den!

COLT  
I'll be there, too. You'll all be  
hiding; I'll be armed. Heavily.

LEE  
I thought you're done killing  
people?

COLT  
I am.

CHUN  
Then how are you gonna stop them?

Colt thinks for a moment and smiles.

FLASHBACK:

INTERCUT EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT/INT. SHAVO'S HOUSE - SAME

Colt talks in an alley on a burner phone.

COLT  
Hey, Gore! It's Dana.

Gore is on his cellphone, shocked.

GORE  
Dana?

COLT  
Listen, I'm really sorry about Shavo being in prison. I'm not sorry about those 2 goons you sent to kill me, but hey - water under the bridge.

GORE  
Why are you calling?

COLT  
I know your relationship between you and your Dad has never been great. But I got a way to fix it.

FORWARD TO:

INT. COLT'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM

Colt responds to Lee and Chun.

COLT  
The ball's in motion. First off, Chun - did you confirm me for Indian Wells?

CHUN  
Yes, you start Monday.

LEE  
OmiGod, are we REALLY talking about your tennis career right now?

COLT  
It's all part of the plan, which I'll get to in a minute. Number Two: What is the safest room in your house?

CHUN AND LING  
The Safe Room.

COLT  
Excellent.

INT. CHUN'S HOUSE, SAFE ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Colt stands in the doorway, addressing Lee, Chun and Ling.

COLT  
One more time: All you need to do  
is two things. Which are ...?

CHUN AND LING  
Stay put.

LEE  
And stay quiet.

COLT  
You're definitely gonna have a hard  
time with that one.

Chun laughs. Colt and Lee exchange an intimate glances.

COLT (CONT'D)  
Listen, this'll all work out. Stick  
to the plan, and if for some reason  
I'm not back by 6am ... call 911.  
Think positive, guys; we got this!

Chun shakes his hand.

CHUN  
Colt - thank you.

LING  
Thank you, Mr. Blake.

Ling hugs him. Colt nods to all. Lee rushes over and kisses him. Colt reciprocates, but feels awkward in the presence of her parents.

COLT  
Oh, so do your parents know-

CHUN  
Please. If you're willing to  
sacrifice your life for us, you can  
make out with my daughter.

LING  
Or me!

CHUN

What?

LEE

Mom! Gross!

LING

Just kidding! I joke to ease tension.

LEE

Please come back with your head attached.

(Whispering in his ear)

Both of 'em.

COLT

I promise, Sugar.

INT. CHUN'S HOUSE, STAIRCASE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Two THUGS (Chinese, 30s) slowly walk up the stairs with handguns drawn. As the thug in the foreground reaches the top of the stairs - Colt springs out of a large cardboard box placed inches away, yanks the nearest thug's gun from his hands, and shoots the other thug in the foot, who drops his weapon. Colt flips the first thug over the railing, then runs down to grab his partner's gun.

COLT

(Pointing both guns)

You guys ready to have some fun?

Let's Zoom your boss.

WIPE:

INT. CHUN'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Thug #1 uncomfortably sits on a large couch; Thug #2 sits next to him, with his injured, bandaged foot propped up on a small chair. Colt, aiming a gun at them the entire time, starts a Zoom Meeting with a laptop on a table positioned in front of them. Colt steps back, keeping in frame with the Thugs. An image of Wang appears onscreen.

WANG

What the fuck is going on?

COLT

Hey, Wang! I'm Colt Blake, and I believe you know your subordinates here. I'll cut to the chase, I know you got people to kill.

WANG

What do you want?

COLT

I understand Chun owes you \$2 million. That's what this is about?

WANG

Nothing personal. Just business.

COLT

Hey, I get it. Well, you're gonna get your money, and here's how:

An image on the screen displays Gore is calling in.

COLT (CONT'D)

Well, looks like we got company ...  
(Joining Gore to meeting)  
Gore - how are you, brother?

GORE

Well ... I'm here.

COLT

Beautiful - Gore, meet Wang, head of the most powerful Chinese gang in New England. And Wang ... you guessed it, this is Gore, head of the biggest Armenian outfit in The West Coast.

WANG

Hi, Gore.

GORE

Hello there, Wang.

COLT

Gore, you guys specialize in weapons; but could step up your coke game, true?

GORE

Can't argue with that.

COLT

And Wang - you have an endless supply of "Booger Sugar", but would like to expand your arsenal - yes?

WANG

That's correct.

COLT

You can both help each other; now you know how. Gore, my friend owes Wang here \$2 million, and ... well, let's just say he's a little short.

GORE

Not cool, Bro.

WANG

Thank you!

COLT

I knew you two would hit it off! Alright, Wang, here's how I'm getting your money back: I'm gonna win The BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament in Indian Wells. The Champion gets \$2.2 million.

WANG

You really think you can do this?

COLT

Yes - I just beat Joey Smucker at the club; I'm at the top of my game! 2 of the top world players are injured. And Gore's gonna help me guarantee a path to victory by ... making some players "disappear".

GORE

I can't wait!

WANG

Hmm ... I like your idea, it's very original. When's the tournament?

COLT

Starts Monday, goes for 2 weeks.

WANG

(Laughing hysterically)  
Oh, come on!

(MORE)

WANG (CONT'D)

Chun's deadline to pay me was today; now you're saying it's gonna be over 2 weeks?

COLT

I'm not done, Sir. My odds of winning this thing are 200:1. Bet on me, and you'll make some major bank.

GORE

I'm DEFINITELY in.

COLT

Wang, you run the casino. This is a bit a of gamble, but a lotta money.

Wang contemplates for a moment, then leans in.

WANG

Okay, Colt. I'm gonna do this. But if you don't win, you'll be the next player to disappear.

COLT

Hey, either way - you're gonna make a killing!

Colt laughs ... then soon sees Wang staring back at him, stone-faced. He loudly and awkwardly clears his throat.

COLT (CONT'D)

So you're in, Sir?

WANG

I'm in.

COLT

Awesome! Yes!

He jumps up, does a fist-pump, and accidentally brings his fist down on Thug #2's shot foot.

THUG #2

AAAHHH!!! NOOO!!! WHY????!!!

COLT

Oh, buddy! I'm so sorry!

The hurt thug starts softly whimpering. Gore and Wang seem like each wants to talk to the other, but is uncomfortably waiting for the other to start the conversation.

COLT (CONT'D)  
So ... you two wanna exchange  
emails, or ...?

WANG  
Sure. Gore, you got a pen?

GORE  
(Searching)  
Dammit, I don't. Oh, I'll just put  
it in my phone.

THUG #2  
AAAHHH!!! The pain!!!

INT. CHUN'S HOUSE, SAFE ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Ling sleeps with her head in Chun's lap. He looks up at the ceiling, exhausted. Lee nervously inspects her nails in the corner. Suddenly, there's a knock at the door. They all jump!

COLT (V.O.)  
Guess who, my friends?

Chun is just about to hit the "open" button.

CHUN  
You're alone?

COLT  
Yes. Finally.

Chun hits the button; the door slowly opens. Colt stands, smiling. Lee jumps into his arms, clinging to him.

LEE  
Your head's attached!

COLT  
(whispering in her ear)  
Both of 'em.

They kiss. Chun and Ling smile at each other.

CHUN  
So, I guess you worked things out?

Colt gently puts Lee down; she detaches herself.

COLT  
Yessir. Now all I gotta do is win  
Indian Wells.

CHARLTON (V.O.)  
Which you can.

Everyone is taken aback! Colt instantly points his gun behind him, in the direction of the voice ... it's Charlton.

COLT  
(Putting his gun down)  
Charlton, what the fuck?

CHARLTON  
But you're gonna need a coach.  
(Off Colt's look)  
Come on, it's not "racket surgery".

INT. GYM - DAY

Colt runs fast on a treadmill; Charlton stands next to him.

CHARLTON  
If Little Armenia is taking out all  
your competition, do you even need  
to train?

COLT  
Hey, I gotta play my first match!

CHARLTON  
Well, if you wanna win - you better  
run faster, Cupcake.

Charlton repeatedly hits a button to make the treadmill go considerably faster. Colt reluctantly sprints.

COLT  
Oh, COME ON!!!

EXT. COURT - DAY

Charlton has an entire line of tennis ball machines lined up. He randomly sets them off, one at a time, making Colt hit as many multiple shots as possible.

CHARLTON  
Forehand! Backhand! Let's go! Get  
that racket back!

INT. SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Charlton and Colt, wearing earplugs and safety goggles, stand in their designated booth with a bucket of tennis balls.

Charlton sets up a target. Colt serves a ball into the Bulls Eye! Charlton high-fives him while other shooters look at the men, befuddled.

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Colt slowly surveys the perimeter with a racket in one hand and a tennis ball in the other. Random moving targets (Life-size images of criminals and pedestrians) pop up! Colt fires groundstrokes into them. Charlton jumps from behind a building with a tennis racket and hits a ball at Colt, who reactively backhands it past him.

CHARLTON  
Good eyes, Kid!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Charlton and Colt watch Davydenko play a match on a laptop. Charlton, holding a file, hits "pause".

COLT  
First round, first match. Here we go!

CHARLTON  
Marat Davydenko. Unseeded ... but number 48 in the world. This guy likes to serve into the body. Not all the time, but you gotta be prepared for it.

EXT. COURT - DAY

Davydenko serves into Colt's body. Colt can't get out of the way in time and hits the ball well long.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

CHARLTON  
He's a big hitter and excellent on the run, but he HATES when you hit it up the middle.

COLT  
Really? But that's so much easier.

CHARLTON  
Homey don't have the patience.

EXT. COURT - DAY

Colt and Davydenko are in mid-rally. Colt keeps hitting it down the middle of the court - and after the third time, Davydenko hits it incredibly hard ... and incredibly wide.

Colt and Davydenko in another rally. Colt sticks to his strategy; Davydenko gets impatient again and goes for too much, drilling the ball in the middle of the net.

Colt fist-pumps and nods at Charlton, who jumps up out of the stands and yells encouragement!

Colt and Davydenko rally once again. Colt gets pushed to both corners, but does a great job of spinning the ball deep in the middle of the court. And once again, the Russian overhits the ball, accidentally slamming it into a linesman's head and knocking his hat off!

DAVYDENKO

Oh, no! I'm so sorry!

Davydenko rushes over to the other side of the net and helps the linesman up. The linesman gives a thumbs-up to the Umpire, and the crowd cheers them on.

DAVYDENKO (CONT'D)

You okay, man?

LINESMAN

Yeah, you're lucky it didn't hit me in the throat, Djokovic.

Colt serves and knocks off a crosscourt volley winner. He victoriously raises his hands!

UMPIRE (V.O.)

Game, Set and Match: Mr. Blake! 7-5, 6-3!

Colt and Davydenko amicably fist-bump at the net. Colt smiles at Charlton, who cheers in the stands!

INT. CAFE - DAY

Colt, Charlton and Gore sit at a table.

GORE

Congratulations, you won your first match. Who's next?

COLT  
Sasha Petkovic. Number five in the world and the number three seed.

GORE  
Ah-ha! This is where I come in!

CHARLTON  
Yep, all you gotta do is hit the medical lab.

GORE  
I get to hit?!!

CHARLTON  
Sorry, I meant "visit"! "Go to", "Drop by".

COLT  
No hit! No hit!

GORE  
Aw, come on. When do I get to crack a few skulls?

CHARLTON  
We've been over this, Gore. If you wanna make that money - and your Dad happy - we gotta fly under the radar.

INT. LAB BUILDING - LATER

Gore walks down the hall toward the lobby. A RECEPTIONIST (20s) and two of her CO-WORKERS (30s) work behind a front desk; none notice him. He stops at a fire alarm and elbows the glass, shattering it and setting it off! The employees scream and run out a door. He runs to the receptionist's computer, pulls out his phone, looks at it, and types.

Close-up of screen, which reads "Sasha Petkovic". The mouse scrolls down to "Covid Test Results." The mouse erases "Negative"; the word "Positive" is typed in. The mouse scrolls back up to "SAVE".

Gore pumps his fist! Sprinklers turn on and hit him in the face! He runs out.

INT. STUDIO - A LITTLE LATER

ARTIE

(To camera)

Breaking News: Sasha Petkovic has tested positive for Covid! He is quarantining in his hotel room, and his opponent Colt Blake moves into the third round!

INT. HOTEL - DAY

Gore and Colt sit on a couch. Charlton stands across from them in front of a bigscreen.

GORE

Next target?

COLT

Hugo Verdasco. World Number Seven and the fifth seed.

CHARLTON

Time to get creative.

Charlton clicks the remote; an image of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway appears.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

Ever been on the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway?

EXT. MT SAN JACINTO STATE PARK - DAY

HUGO (27), his girlfriend SONJA (22), and his agent MAX (35) stand by an "Observation Deck". Gore drives up in an ATV.

GORE

Hugo Verdasco?

HUGO

You know it.

GORE

Hey! Let's go shoot that feature for "Tennis Fanatic Magazine"! Everyone - jump on, plenty of room!

The other three climb on his vehicle. They look uncomfortable and confused ... Gore takes off!

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Gore sits on his ATV, finishing a call. The other three stand on the trail.

GORE

Okay, sure. Yeah, just got here.  
Great, I'll let 'em know.

(hanging up)

Brendon, your interviewer,  
apologizes - he's running 15  
minutes late, due to traffic.

MAX

Ah, Christ.

HUGO

Chill out, Max. Ok, no problem -  
we'll check out the trail.

GORE

Thanks for understanding, my  
friends. Exciting day: You're gonna  
be on the cover of "Tennis  
Fanatic"!

Gore turns on his ATV and takes off.

SONJA

What's "Tennis Fanatic"?

MAX

Ya know, I never heard of it,  
either - but hey: It's money.

INT. LOCKEROOM - DAY

Colt bounces a ball on his racket, constantly turning it over on either side. Charlton walks in the room.

CHARLTON

It's time, bud.

EXT. COURT - CONTINUOUS

SLO-MOTION on Colt as he walks out with the "Eye of the Tiger" look. Loud rock music plays. Colt puts his tennis bag down and confidently looks at the UMPIRE (Male, British accent, 40s). End SLO-MO, music abruptly stops.

UMPIRE

Your opponent's not here yet. Not even in the lockerroom.

COLT

Oh. Well, that's ... weird. So what do we do?

UMPIRE

Wait five minutes, then he gets defaulted.

Colt nods and starts stretching.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - LATER

Hugo and Sonja look dejected. Max screams into his cellphone.

MAX

Fuck! Where is this stupid interviewer? We're gonna miss your match!

EXT. COURT - DAY

Colt practices his serve. A "Shot Clock" behind him hits "2:00 Minutes".

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Sonja consoles a broken Hugo. Max continues to freak out on his phone.

MAX

The last tram just left?! Well, you better fly a helicopter up here, we got an Indian Wells match to make! I represent Hugo Fucking Verdasco!

(beat)

Hello?

EXT. COURT - DAY

Colt jogs in place. The clock behind him hits "4:00 Minutes".

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Sonja holds a sobbing Hugo. Max frantically looks at his phone.

HUGO

Now I might drop out of the World  
Top Ten.

SONJA

It's okay, Baby; at least we have  
the hotel tonight. Let's order room  
service.

HUGO

I need Key Lime Pie ...

MAX

Ha! I just looked it up - there is  
no "Tennis Fanatic Magazine"!  
Sonuvabitch!!!

EXT. COURT - DAY

Colt warms up as the Umpire speaks into his microphone.

UMPIRE

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Verdasco  
has refused to appear in the  
allotted time and is defaulted.  
Game, Set and Match: Mr. Blake.

Colt gives a subdued smile and waves at a small crowd, which  
gives a small smattering of applause. Charlton celebrates  
like his team just won The Superbowl.

ARTIE (V.O.)

And Colt Blake, the unseeded  
Wildcard, is into the  
Quarterfinals. This guy's one of  
the remaining 8, and he's only  
played one match!

INTERCUT INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT/EXT. COURT - NIGHT

Charlton meets with Colt.

CHARLTON

The good news: You're in the  
quarters.

(MORE)

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

The bad news: It'll look too suspicious if we pull anymore Tonya Harding shenanigans. You wanna win? Now you gotta earn it.

COLT

That's a shame. We're just three broken kneecaps from the trophy.

Charlton smirks at his smiling protege and hits a button on a laptop, which displays an image of NIGEL EVANS. (British, 30)

CHARLTON

What do you know about your next challenge, Nigel Evans?

Angle on Nigel bouncing the ball and preparing to serve.

COLT (V.O.)

British chap, Number 14 in the world, seeded 12 here - made the semis of The Australian Open and Wimbledon. Loves to fire a big serve and volley.

Nigel serves big to Colt, who floats a defensive return high ... Nigel swiftly puts it away.

CHARLTON

And that's exactly what he'll be doing. What's his weakness?

COLT

Huge forehand, but hates when you hit high to his backhand.

CHARLTON

And that's exactly what you'll be doing.

Mid-Rally: Colt persistently sends high, looping shots with a lot of topspin to Evans' backhand. Evans finally hits the ball out. Colt looks at Charlton in the audience, who winks.

Charlton and Colt on couch, viewing laptop.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

It's the same strategy Nadal used to beat Federer.

COLT

Oh, so you just want me to play like I've won 20 Majors? Well shit, that's all you had to say.

Mid-Rally: Colt keeps working Evan's backhand corner ... once again, Evans slices it out.

Colt on couch; Charlton paces the room.

CHARLTON

And every once in awhile ... pick  
your spots and don't overdo it ...  
go for a winner to his forehand.

Colt serves, and Evans blocks back a deep return. Colt goes three times in a row to Evans' Achilles corner, and Evan hits effective crosscourt backhands. Colt suddenly goes down the line ... for a winner! He celebrates!

UMPIRE

Game, Set and Match: Mr. Blake!

ARTIE (V.O.)

And Blake defeats Evans 6-4, 6-4!  
He really worked that backhand  
side! This unseeded sharpshooter  
has come out of nowhere to reach  
the semis!

INT. CHUN'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chun, Ling and Lee watch Colt win on TV and cheer!

INT. LOCKEROOM - LATER

Colt does sit-ups on a bench; Charlton stands.

CHARLTON

You're in "The Final Four"! Wanna  
make The Championship? You gotta  
get past Lucas Müller.

Colt abruptly stops and completely sits up.

COLT

Shit! Lucas Müller? That guy's a  
beast!

CHARLTON

But like anyone else you'll ever  
play, he's not invincible.

Colt reflects for a moment, then puts on his war face.

COLT

Alright, what I need to do?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Charlton points to laptop as Colt takes notes.

CHARLTON

Look, he's 6-5, 220. You're never gonna outhit him. But you can outrun him. You can outmaneuver him. You can outthink him. THAT'S how we win.

COLT

(Inspired!)

I love it! How do we start?

CHARLTON

With elbow pads and knee pads.

Colt looks at him, confused.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Colt stands at the net, ready. He's wearing elbow pads and knee pads. Charlton hits a passing shot.

CHARLTON

Now dive! Dive!

Colt dives and forehand-volleys the ball into the net.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

You gotta move quicker than that, son!

JUMP CUT TO:

Charlton smacks a passing shot again.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

Incoming! Incoming!

Colt dives and volleys back in, but it's a high sitter.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

Okay, that was better - but your best move in this position is to just guess left or right.

Colt rises and gets in position.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

You ready?

COLT  
Go for it, old man.

Charlton flashes a depreciating smile and ... nails a passing shot on the backhand side! Colt guesses right, dives, and hits a beauty of a drop volley!

CHARLTON  
That's it, baby! Look at you, Boris Becker!

INTERCUT INT. LOCKEROOM - DAY/EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Charlton gives Colt a pep talk.

CHARLTON  
We know he's going big, that's his only game.

COLT  
Right. I'll defend, move him around, and wait for him to miss.

Müller serves hard, Colt swats a weak return back ... Müller crushes an overhead winner!

Charlton and Colt in the lockerroom.

COLT (CONT'D)  
Um, Coach? What if he doesn't miss?

Colt spins in a soft serve, which Müller crushes down the line for a winner.

UMPIRE  
Game and first set, Müller: Six games to four.

Charlton and Colt in the lockerroom.

CHARLTON  
Then you get crafty. Remember, you're faster than him.

Colt chases down a dropshot, flicking a perfect lob over Müller's head.

Charlton and Colt in the lockerroom.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)  
More versatile than him.

Colt hits a defensive volley, which lands high at Müller's backhand. Müller rips a backhand crosscourt, and Colt guesses right! He volleys a backhand winner down the line.

Charlton and Colt in the lockerroom.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)

And smarter than him.

Colt hits a dropshot that Müller impressively chases down ... but Colt volleys into the open court. He jumps, excited!

UMPIRE

Game and second set, Blake. Six games to four.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Charlton and Colt at a table.

CHARLTON

And let's not forget one vital detail about big guys like him. If the match goes long ...?

COLT

They get tired.

CHARLTON

You better believe it. So if you get into a third set, don't just move him side-to-side ...

COLT

Bring him in!

Charlton proudly fist-bumps him.

Müller serves - Colt slices a short backhand near the service lines. Müller takes the bait and approaches the net; Colt spins a perfect lob over him.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Blake's up a break early in the third! Where did this guy come from?

Mid-Rally: Colt junkballs a forehand inside the service box. Müller runs around his forehand and goes big on an inside-out shot ... but Colt telegraphs it and is ready with a down-the-line backhand beauty! Müller is out of breath.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
 What a backhand from Blake! It's 5-3, he's just a game away!

Müller repeatedly bounces the ball, about to serve.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
 Match point for the unknown American.

He serves big to Colt, who floats a deep return, and a rally ensues. Colt eventually gains control of it with his speed and precision, sending Müller on the run once again. Colt hits another soft dropper, which Müller sprints to and replies with a brilliant dropshot of his own! Colt gallops to it, somehow scooping down the line ... and in! Then Müller actually gets to it, throwing up a high lob ... which Colt smashes in and bounces into the stands!

UMPIRE  
 Game, Set and Match: Mr. Blake! Mr. Blake wins two sets to one: 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
 He's done it! This tennis pro from the most prestigious country club in Trumbell, Connecticut is in the finals of Indian Wells! His next opponent? Joey Smucker!

INTERCUT INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - NIGHT: COLT/JOEY

Colt and Joey give separate press conferences after winning.

COLT  
 I've been working and training really hard every day, my coach and I develop a different strategy for each match ... but honestly, I've also been very lucky.

JOEY  
 I 100% deserve to be here. I've won three out of the four Grand Slams! Joey's back, baby!

COLT  
 How did I defeat him before? Look, he had an off-day, I played my best; and it was a weird fluke.

JOEY

Damn right it was a fluke! It was also just an exhibition match, so who cares?

COLT

How do I like my chances against Joey Smucker in the finals of Indian Wells? Well ...

(Chuckling)

Hey, on paper - they're slim to none. He's a legend, I'm just a teacher from Connecticut.

JOEY

So he beat me at a New England Racket Club. You know how many pro tournaments he's beat me at? ZERO! How many pro tournaments has he even PLAYED?

COLT

If you're a gambler, don't put your money on me.

JOEY

Plus, do you have any idea how hungover I was?

COLT

But also ... don't think for a second that I can't pull off an upset. I beat him before, why not again? At least, that's what I'm gonna tell myself.

A REPORTER (Female, 30s) comments to him.

REPORTER

You sound very competitive.

COLT

I'm pretty "cutthroat".

He smiles at her. She has NO IDEA ...

JOEY

He actually said that?

(To camera)

Well, lemme tell ya something, Colt ... if you're feeling froggy, then jump, Motherfucker!

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

Thousands of tennis fans take their seats at The Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
Welcome to Indian Wells! It's the  
Men's final of what tennis  
aficionados refer to as "The Fifth  
Major". I'm Artie Bell!

ANGLE on Charlton and Lee anxiously awaiting the match. Gore takes a seat next to them and fist-bumps Charlton.

CHARLTON  
Fancy seeing you hear, Boss.

GORE  
I wouldn't miss this for anything.

CHARLTON  
Gore, this is Lee. And Lee, meet  
Gore.

She nervously smiles and shakes his hand.

LEE  
(Murmuring to Charlton)  
Do we need to worry about this one?

CHARLTON  
Not at all.

LEE  
Charlton, the man's name is "Gore".

GORE  
You sure you don't want me to break  
the other guy's legs?

Lee looks horrified.

Suddenly, Wang, Rod and two henchmen sit behind them. They exchange quick pleasantries with Gore.

ROD  
Hey, everybody. Looking good, Lee.

LEE  
Thanks, Rod. I haven't seen you  
since you got your ass kicked by a  
pool skimmer.

ROD  
You always were so complimentary.  
Gore, you wanna introduce your  
friend?

CHARLTON  
I'm Charlton, Colt's coach.

ROD  
I heard. Sometimes, you even coach  
him in tennis, huh?

They look at each other. Rod knows who he really is.

WANG  
I'm Wang.

CHARLTON  
Nice to meet you, Wang.

Charlton smiles then turns back around, staring ahead.

CHARLTON (CONT'D)  
Weirdest. Fan Club. Ever.

EXT. COURT - LATER

Joey bounces the ball and serves ... an ace down the middle!

ARTIE (V.O.)  
There's that trademark serve!

Joey serves an ace out wide to Colt's forehand.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
Hello! How do you return that?

Joey goes wide to Colt's backhand, the ball bounces off the  
top of his racket.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
Smucker is ruthless on serve today!  
He's hardly lost a point.

Mid-Rally: the men move each other around the court. Joey  
gets a chance to come to net and does ... Colt hits a great  
crosscourt passing shot, but Joey stretches to hit a  
fantastic winning volley! He celebrates!

UMPIRE  
Game and first set: Mr. Smucker,  
Six games to Two.

Angle on Colt's "Fan Club". Wang and Rod are stone-faced. Gore shakes his head. Lee bites her nails. Charlton scribbles on a piece of paper.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Blake's not playing bad, but if he wants to win, he's gotta find a way to at least match Smucker's level.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Colt is in a stall. He opens the toilet paper dispenser and finds a folded piece of paper. He unfolds it and sees notes like "Chip and Charge", "On his serve - start guessing!", and "Confuse and Conquer!" He mischievously grins.

EXT. COURT - A LITTLE LATER

Colt serves into Joey's body, then rushes to net to knock off a winning volley!

ARTIE (V.O.)

There you go! Somebody's decided to change a losing game.

Joey serves another ace down the T!

ARTIE (V.O.)

Blake's playing better, but he has yet to break Smucker's serve.

Colt serves out wide to Joey's backhand, and they get into a very entertaining rally. Colt slices an excellent lob, Joey runs it down and smacks an incredible "Tweener" (Between-the-legs shot) ... by now, Colt is at the net and reaches, angling away an untouchable volley.

ARTIE (V.O.)

You gotta give Blake credit: He's not losing serve. His problem is, Joey's not either. It's 4-all!

Colt spins in a second serve to Joey's backhand, but he runs around and smacks a forehand return winner!

UMPIRE

30-All.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Blake's gotta be careful here. Smucker's two points away from victory.

ANGLE on Lee, covering her face. Charlton deeply exhales, while Gore punches his hand. Rod snaps a pencil.

BACK ON COURT. Joey angles back a return ... it hits the net, and barely drops over! TOTALLY LUCKY SHOT! Joey wildly pumps himself up. Colt looks at Charlton, who confidently points to his head, like "Think. You got this."

UMPIRE

30-40.

ARTIE (V.O.)

If Colt doesn't win this point,  
it's over. Match point.

Colt looks up to the heavens and closes his eyes.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Colt's dad Rusty motivates him.

RUSTY

Son, fortune favors the brave!

FORWARD TO:

EXT. COURT - DAY

Colt serves wide and rushes in! Joey hits a hard backhand down-the-line and Colt leaps to volley a perfect crosscourt winner! His fans are on their feet, cheering!

ARTIE (V.O.)

Well, if that's not the perfect  
response, I don't know what is!

Colt prepares to serve, eyes Joey and ... serves an ace down the middle! He feeds off the crowd's energy and motivates himself! Joey glares at him.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Blake has fought off a match point  
to make it 5-All in the second set!

Angle on Wang, pacing around. An usher offers him to sit back down; the henchmen chase the usher away.

ON COURT. Joey bounces the ball, ready to serve ...

ARTIE (V.O.)  
It's 4-All in the tiebreak.

Joey serves hard to Colt's backhand! Colt blocks it back ...  
Joey takes it out of the air with a swinging forehand volley!  
Colt anticipates, runs it down and curves an incredible  
backhand pass around the net-pole and into the corner!

ARTIE (V.O.)  
Unbelievable! Colt has the set on  
his racket here; it's 5-4!

ANGLE on his Fan Club: Lee jumps up and down. Gore has his  
arm around Charlton, who screams his support. Rod does "The  
Robot". Wang wildly claps and slaps his henchmen on the backs  
of their heads, encouraging them to follow suit.

Colt serves into Joey's body, Joey lifts up a defensive  
return, and Colt easily knocks it off at the net! SET POINT!

ARTIE (V.O.)  
Blake has two set points here; this  
one's on his serve ...

Colt serves wide to Joey's forehand! Joey gets his racket on  
it and sends it straight toward the middle ... it hits the  
top of the net, and drops back down on his side. Bad luck!

UMPIRE  
Game and second set, Mr. Blake, 7-  
6. Mr. Blake wins the tiebreak 7  
points to 4.

Colt holds up his hand, giving the unspoken good etiquette  
"net apology". Joey smashes his racket on the ground!

JOEY  
Oh, come on! That's not fair!

ARTIE (V.O.)  
Oh, there goes that Head racket.

UMPIRE  
Unsportsmanlike conduct: Warning,  
Mr. Smucker.

JOEY  
Oh, really? Well, here, take it!  
(Putting racket on Umpire  
chair)  
That's the only "Head" you ever  
get!

The crowd "Ooooohs"!

UMPIRE  
 Second violation: Point penalty,  
 Mr. Smucker. 15-Love.

As Joey sits, the Umpire covers the mic and addresses him.

UMPIRE (CONT'D)  
 Joey, the next outburst will cost  
 you a game. I'm not kidding.

Joey apologetically holds up his hand and nods. Colt looks at Charlton, who confidently points to his temples again.

Colt misses his first serve. He looks discouraged ... then prepares, sizes up Joey, and serves with a lot of spin to his backhand. Joey slices a crosscourt backhand, and Colt has snuck into the net, slapping a backhand volley behind Joey!

ARTIE (V.O.)  
 Whoa! Nobody saw that coming! Serve-  
 and-volley on a Second Serve!

ANGLE on Colt's "Fan Section", which has grown. Many people behind Wang and the gang loudly root for him. Wang, Rod, Gore, Charlton and Lee have developed a bond in support of their guy.

UMPIRE  
 Blake leads Two games to One.

Joey serves another ace!

UMPIRE (CONT'D)  
 Three games all.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
 Keep in mind, Blake STILL hasn't  
 found a way to break Smucker's  
 serve. And nobody's broken in this  
 third and final set.

MID-RALLY: The two men maneuver each other over every inch of the court. Finally, Colt dinks a killer dropshot that barely clears the net ... Joey runs to it, slicing it just back over ... but Colt is there! He lifts a weak lob over Joey's head, which Joey is able to smack a high backhand volley, but Colt guesses right with a backhand volley of his own!

ARTIE (V.O.)  
 My goodness! The quick hands of  
 Blake make it 5-4, a "must hold"  
 for Smucker!

ANGLE on Charlton, Lee and the gang starting "The Wave".

Joey serves big; Colt helplessly sprays it into the net.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
Smucker easily holds for 5-all.

Colt serves wide; Joey's spinning, crosscourt forehand barely clears the net ... but Colt is there for the easy putaway.

UMPIRE  
Game, Blake. Mr. Blake leads Six  
games to Five.

Colt sits on the changeover and looks at the note he found in the bathroom. "Chip and Charge" ... "start guessing!" ... "Confuse and Conquer!" He psyches himself up.

ARTIE (V.O.)  
Here we go, second serve.

Joey spins in a serve, Colt chips it deep and rushes in! Not expecting this, Joey overhits a backhand into the net.

UMPIRE  
Love-15.

ANGLE on Charlton and the gang screaming support.

Joey bangs an ace down the T!

ARTIE (V.O.)  
He pulls out that weapon when he  
needs it, 15-All!

Joey controls a rally, approaches the net, hits a nice volley ... and Colt perfectly times a backhand pass that lands very close near the line ... the line judge calls it in!

JOEY  
No way! Challenge!

The "Hawkeye" challenge camera shows the ball was ... IN!

JOEY (CONT'D)  
Dammit!

UMPIRE  
The call stands. 15-30.

Colt pumps himself up.

ANGLE on Colt's Fan Section: Gore pumps his fist, Charlton claps, Rod headbangs, Lee dances, Wang stoically squeezes two stress balls in each hand, and the henchmen chest-bump.

ARTIE (V.O.)

The Connecticut Kid is just two points away from the trophy.

Joey slams a serve wide; Colt barely gets a one-handed return back in play that Joey crushes with a powerful overhead.

UMPIRE

30-All.

Colt's section starts chanting, "COLT! COLT! COLT!"

ARTIE (V.O.)

In their recent exhibition match, the only time Blake broke Smucker's serve was the very last game. I guarantee you they're both thinking about that right now.

Joey stands at the service line. Colt is ready.

ARTIE (V.O.)

But Blake still has yet to break.

Joey slams another huge serve - it clips the net and bounces just outside the single's line.

LINE JUDGE

Out!

A nervous murmur echos throughout the crowd ...

JOEY

(Facetiously)

Speak up, Bro.

The audience laughs. Joey tees up a second serve ... it's a kicker into Colt's body, but Colt carves a deep approach shot into the backhand corner. Joey goes crosscourt; Colt stretches to hit a nice, angled volley down the line ... that sits up high enough for Joey to track down and dip a crosscourt pass ... and Colt is there! He leaps, sticks his racket out, and hits a brilliant forehand half-volley winner!

ARTIE (V.O.)

How did he pull that off?! Blake hits a beauty for Match Point!!!

UMPIRE

30-40.

The crowd goes wild! Lee hides her face in Charlton's shoulder, she can't look! Gore encouragingly raises his fist in the air like an angry protestor.

Rod points at Colt, screaming support. Wang high-fives other fans all around him, while the henchmen dance.

Smucker prepares to serve. Colt bounces up and down.

ARTIE (V.O.)

If Joey's ever needed a first  
serve, it's now. If Blake's ever  
needed a second serve, IT'S NOW!

Joey drops a bomb down the middle, right on the line. Colt guesses right, and gets the ball back, deep toward Joey's backhand. He bludgeons an inside-out forehand to Colt's backhand; Colt slices it back. Joey does it again; Colt slices it back. This time, Joey goes for a "fake", then at the last minute, hits a crafty dropshot that barely creeps over the net. Colt starts running toward it as soon as Joey begins to hit it ... Joey crowds the net and Colt gets to the ball just before it bounces twice and throws up a topspin lob over Joey ... that somehow lands in the backhand corner!

UMPIRE

Game, Set and Match: Colt Blake!

The crowd explodes with applause! Colt raises his hands, then falls down on the court, ecstatic and relieved.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Colt Blake has come back from Match  
Point Down to upset Joey Smucker  
and win Indian Wells! What a match!

Smucker greets Colt at the net. He shakes his hand and whispers in his ear.

JOEY

I'm onto you, Motherfucker. I don't  
know how you pulled this off, but  
I'm gonna find out.

COLT

When are you gonna shove your  
racket up my ass?

ANGLE on Colt's fan section: Lee is jumps and screams, Charlton rejoices, Gore victoriously stretches out his hands like Dicaprio on The Titanic, Rod and Wang high-five everyone, the henchmen hug each other.

ANGLE on court. Colt hoists up his huge trophy and delightfully smiles at the welcoming crowd. Joey looks at his significantly smaller trophy and shakes his head in disgust.

He then sees an attractive TENNIS GROUPIE (20s) on the front row, staring at him and wearing a T-shirt that reads, "Smuck Me, Joey!" He raises his eyebrows and grins.

ARTIE (V.O.)

This Blake kid is lightning fast.  
He's earned his nickname "Usain  
Colt"!

INT. LOCKEROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Colt and Lee embrace.

LEE

You were unbelievable. I think I  
only had six heart-attacks!

COLT

Well, I really had something to  
play for.

She smooches him.

LEE

I'm gonna check in with my folks.

She smiles and exits. Wang walks up with henchmen and Rod.

WANG

Mr. Blake.

COLT

(Handing him envelope)  
This is for you, Mr. Wang.  
(Leaning in)  
Today's Sunday, banks are closed;  
and they put a 24-hour hold on it  
after the deposit, so I had to post-  
date your check for Tuesday.

WANG

Well, I guess I can wait til then.  
(Leaning in)  
Because you just made me an  
additional \$2 million.

ROD

He doubled his profit!

Wang hugs Colt and excitedly jumps up and down.

COLT  
 (To Rod)  
 So no hard feelings?

ROD  
 Come here, you!

Rod hugs Colt. Gore suddenly runs in.

GORE  
 I doubled profits, too,  
 Motherfuckers! My Dad's so happy.  
 Colt, you're a genius!

A henchman nervously approaches Colt.

HENCHMAN  
 Mr. Blake, can you pose with me for  
 a selfie?

COLT  
 Sure, buddy.

ANGLE on Charlton, proudly looking on nearby.

WANG  
 Okay, tonight we celebrate! 8pm at  
 my Casino - I've made us all  
 reservations at The Steakhouse!

COLT  
 Sounds great.

ROD  
 Friendly warning: There will be  
 strippers there.

Rod winks. As the men exit, Wang pats Charlton's shoulder.

CHARLTON  
 We'll be there.  
 (Grabbing Colt)  
 I am so proud of you, Hotshot.

COLT  
 For winning the tournament or  
 beating Joey Smucker?

CHARLTON  
 For not killing anyone!

They laugh and hug.

TIME CUT:

"ONE YEAR LATER"

EXT. COURT - DAY

Colt stands in the middle of a court, by the net. He addresses a group of pre-teens. Lee stands to the side.

COLT

Great job, kids! Next time, we're gonna work on the mental aspect of the game. Remember, on any given day, each of the Top 100 players in the world can beat each other ... but the ones who are always in the Top 5 have the strongest minds.

A SMARTASS KID (Male, 11) pipes up.

SMARTASS KID

Is that why you quit after you won Indian Wells?

The other kids "ooohhh". A BIGGER KID (13) punches the smartass in the shoulder, making him lose his balance.

COLT

I quit because I love tennis, but it wasn't my true love.

He looks at Lee, who is beaming.

COLT (CONT'D)

I didn't wanna constantly be traveling away from my family.

He walks to her, puts one arm around her and his other hand on her pregnant stomach, and smiles.

COLT (CONT'D)

Now listen up, she's got an important announcement.

Colt heads to the back of the court by a line of ball machines. He starts loading them.

LEE

We have two more group lessons, then the new session begins. Signups start tomorrow morning, and they fill up QUICK, so please tell your parents. Thanks so much, see you soon!

The kids file out. Chun walks up to Lee with a contract, then calls out to Colt, who's just loaded the ball machines.

CHUN  
Hey, how's my new business partner?

COLT  
Fantastic, Mr. Zhang! We still on for golf tomorrow?

CHUN  
You betcha!

Chun smiles, gets Lee's signature on a contract, and rushes off. Colt bounces a ball on both sides of his racket, then hears a familiar voice:

JOEY (V.O.)  
Well, if it isn't the Tennis Legend with the 2-week career!

Colt turns to see Joey sneering at him.

COLT  
Joey Smucker. What are you doing here, looking for Umpires to prove you're partially blind?

Joey aggressively gets in Colt's face. Lee looks up, concerned. Colt backs away, remaining non-confrontational.

JOEY  
I know you did some shady shit to win that tournament!

COLT  
Look, Joey - we both know I beat you fair and square. It was so close, could've gone either way-

JOEY  
Don't patronize me, you condescending sonuvabitch! You had two walkovers, and one got stranded last-minute at The Aerial Tram!

Colt walks backwards in circles, as Joey follows him.

COLT  
Look, I don't know anything about that-

JOEY

Oh, you don't know ANYTHING about your opponent who was supposed to be interviewed by a magazine that never fucking existed?!!

Colt leads Joey to the middle of the net and inconspicuously picks up a remote on the ground. Joey violently pokes his finger into Colt's chest, who's pinned against the net.

JOEY (CONT'D)

I knew there was something fishy about you! Don't lie to me, Colt. I got your number, pal!

COLT

Wait! I understand why you're suspicious. But I have proof that I'm innocent.

JOEY

Where?

COLT

Right behind you.

As Joey turns around, Colt hits a button on the remote and runs. A barrage of tennis balls hit Joey in the head, face, and body! He falls to the ground, screaming!

ANGLE on Colt and Lee.

COLT (CONT'D)

Should we turn it off now?

LEE

No, let him suffer for a bit.

Colt and Lee walk off, hand in hand.

ANGLE on Joey shrieking! He military-crawls off court, into safety. He slowly rises, dusts himself off, and sees Carter smiling at him.

CARTER

Joey Smucker!

JOEY

What the hell do you want?

CARTER

It's not about what I want; it's about what YOU want.

(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)

And I think that's a luxury summer home in The Hamptons! Am I right?

JOEY

Eat a dick.

Just then, another tennis ball nails Joey in the back of the head! He falls out of frame.

ANGLE on Colt and Lee, walking hand in hand. They pass by a MALE TENNIS PLAYER on his cellphone.

MALE TENNIS PLAYER

Doug cancelled on me. I wanna practice - I need a hit, man!

COLT

(To Lee)

Honey, excuse me, real quick.

(To Male Tennis Player)

I'm sorry, Sir - did you say "I need a hit, COMMA, man?" Or "I need a Hitman"?

MALE TENNIS PLAYER

What?

LEE

Don't mind him, Sir; he's just joking.

(Leading Colt away)

You are ridiculous.

COLT

Thanks. I really didn't wanna have to buy him flowers.

They walk hand in hand, laughing. Close-up of both their shoes, walking together.

FADE OUT.

THE END