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in Order of Work Performed)

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INT. MCDONALDS - MORNING

Gaunt white girl. Sunken eyes. American Poor. By herself in a booth. Knees bounce like she's low on Meth. No wrappers or food, just a napkin she presses between her palms. Move below the table-top. At her feet: a black leather *Coach* briefcase with a sterling silver Fort Knox-style lock. Tits-on-a-bull out of place next to her shredded Converse. Leather strap connecting the lock has been cut.

A Black Teen hits the front door. Gaunt momentarily brightens, eyes betray life. Realizes it's not who she hoped, eyes re-sink, continues nervous vigil.

EXT. GEORGETOWN - SAME MOMENT

Postcard D.C. Neighborhood. Autumn weekday morning: natty ties and scrubbed pink faces blur. Incongruent: a Black Teen sprinting. Tailback fast. Goes down ugly-hard pivoting into an alley, scrambles to his feet without pause, moves behind a line of dumpsters. Sweating silence.

Exhales measured out the nostrils: as little noise as possible, he knows how to hide. Mid-exhale: head pops apart. Silenced shots fired by a PURSUER from shadows. Pursuer: jug-jawed, goateed, bland, White. Teen crumbles over his legs -- no ceremonial gasps and clutches, just instant lights-out.

Next breath: a Bicycle Messenger escaping traffic flies past as the Pursuer turns, tucking his 9MM into an inner jacket pocket. Messenger's eyes sweep the nearly decapitated Teen. Pursuer doesn't hesitate: re-draws as the Messenger starts panic-pumping pedals. A moment to aim, fire, hits the Messenger with two silenced-shots high on his back, a third rips off his helmet. Face-first into another dumpster.

Noise causes pause, turned heads. Pursuer ducks into a parking garage as passers-by convince themselves it was nothing so they can go back to getting to work.

INT. METRO TRAIN - MORNING

CONGRESSMAN STEPHEN COLLINS: tall, textbook handsome, educated, sharp-smart Charlottesville accent. Stands in a crowded Red-Line train. Halts mid-tunnel. Groans and time-checks from the coffee Cogs. Five seconds, then over the PA:

ENGINEER

Trains in-n-outta Metro Center been
stopped...they're telling me for a
body on the tracks...

Collective maw: equal parts sympathy, antipathy, and fury aimed at the PA speakers. Stephen can't help but roll his eyes, check his watch...

EXT. U.S. CAPITOL BUILDING - MORNING

Establishing shot.

INT. CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

Stephen hustles into his office. Late. GREER THORNTON: erstwhile Secretary/mother-hen Assistant. Greets him with ashen face and cup of coffee. ANDREW PELL: high-priced political consultant/press-secretary in tailored Boss. Not a zit-blemish-stray hair. Hired by the G.O.P. on rising-star Stephen's behalf. Pell's jaw clenched.

STEPHEN

I'm late guys -- not worth going
gray over: I've rehearsed the
briefing a dozen times-

GREER

-D.C. Police just phoned.
(beat, Stephen's undivided
attention now)
Sonia Baker was killed in an
accident on the Metro this morning.
(beat)
They identified her by her Staff
Badge...I gave them her Mother's
number in Michigan...

Stephen ghost-white, hesitates, shock hitting in waves. He sits Indian-style in the middle of his office. All eyes on him now. Andrew kneels, and without flinching:

ANDREW PELL

Horrific news. I'm deeply
sorry...if we postpone today's
briefing, we'll never get this many
clean-up hitters in one room again.
We're scheduled to start in ten
minutes. What do you want to do?

INT. CANNON BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING

Packed. Andrew introducing Stephen: two steps back, two to the right. Fake stern-face hides genuine sad-face.

ANDREW PELL
Morning. Congressman Collins,
Chairman of the Joint Select
Committee investigating the Defense
Department's Contracting and
Outsourcing Practices, has invited
you here for a briefing on his
Committee's findings thus far, in
anticipation of his full report due
this Winter.

Andrew turns, nods. Stephen steps to the mic. Still gray:

STEPHEN
Before we dive in, I need a moment
to offer my condolences to Janine
Baker...who just now found out
about her Daughter...some of you
have already heard that one of my
Researchers, Sonia Baker was-

-more than 'some' have heard -- hence the turn-out. The
Reporters' 'if it bleeds it leads' ethic bubbles. A thin,
brunette Female Reporter with a *Washington Globe* credential:

REPORTER #1
-accident?

REPORTER #2
Suicide?

REPORTER #3
Outward signs of depression?

Stephen rattled, on his heels. Andrew smells it immediately,
re-takes the helm:

ANDREW PELL
The authorities are investigating
and we're not Psychologists. We're
here this morning in the '*spirit of
transparency*' you all have demand
quite publicly-

REPORTER #4
-Congressman, you and I take the
same train in the morning...

STEPHEN
(quiet, no eye contact)
If you say so.

REPORTER #4

Sorry...but we stopped for 'a body
on the tracks...' Surreal now that
we know who it was.

That takes Stephen's breath away.

ANDREW PELL

Try not to take such obvious glee
in connecting the dots, Scott.

Stephen just turns, bolts, unable to hide flooding tears. Big
collective startle-ogle, then two-dozen cameras pop-pop-whir.

INT. THE LEE LAW FIRM, RICHMOND VA - MORNING

Pictures of ANNE COLLINS and her husband Stephen on a desk.
Anne: a beauty more 'dignified' than 'sexual.' Creases to her
forehead many read as 'intensity.' Were she less concerned
with decorum she would correct them: 'quiet desperation.'

Anne is an Attorney at a prestigious-ancient-unimportant
Richmond, Virginia firm. Her husband's press conference on C-
SPAN in the b/g. Two other Associates with her. Law books
laid open. All three working. Anne writing long-hand: left-
handed, wedding ring prominent.

Over the television we hear what just transpired beginning
with Andrew's castigation: "...*spirit of transparency.*" Then
Reporter #4's interruption about riding the same train as
Stephen. That gets the attention of Anne and her co-workers.

Anne focused on Stephen's image: his breakdown. His televised
tears tell her and the two Associates everything they need to
know about who and what Sonia Baker was. Outside of her
burning-red cheeks, she hides her humiliation much better
than her husband hid his grief. No words. Goes back to
writing long-hand. Penmanship much less steady than before.

INT. WASHINGTON GLOBE NEWSPAPER - MORNING

Not the paper of record, as witnessed by shabby seventies-era
furniture neither retro nor modern. A place that has been
teetering on insolvency since the first printing. 10 AM.

CAL MCAFFREY enters: wiry like a welterweight. His Life's joy
is scrapping against stacked odds. Stops at the Receptionist,
JESSY CALDWELL: a girl you swear would be attractive were it
not for her penchant for pastry. Loud, smart, in-love with
newsroom gossip-swirl.

Cal grabs a clean sheet and a pen off her desk. Writes:
"Sorry. Call if you need an ear. Cal." Folds it, hands it to
 Jessy:

CAL

Send this and a bottle of Jack
 Daniels green-label to Stephen
 Collins' Office?

JESSY

Pricey: a Messenger all the way
 across town.

CAL

(back-pedaling away)
 Wait 'til you see how much the
 bourbon costs. Take it out of my
 stock options.

JESSY

You seen our stock price lately?

CAL

Nor do I slow down to peak at
 fatality car-wrecks.

INT. GLOBE CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Story-planning session in-progress. A dozen Reporters/Staff
 seated. Led by Editor-in-Chief CAMERON FOSTER: the biting but
 avuncular Lord. British in the way Churchill was British. An
 Oxford-educated, hired-gun Newspaper Man who has never known
 another industry/world. Cal the last one in per usual.

CAMERON FOSTER

Morning Precious. Need anything?

CAL

I'm good thanks.

CAMERON FOSTER

You do look refreshed.

(back to business)

My top local for the day: black
 Teen murdered in what D.C.P.D. call
 drug-deal gone bloody, heart of
 Georgetown. A Bike Messenger also
 caught in the cross-fire. Anyone do
 better?

Two seconds in and Cal's already the other pole around which
 the meeting revolves. Reaching for a muffin:

CAL
That's a story? Kinda' thing
happens twice a night in South East
D.C.

CAMERON FOSTER
Over there it's life. In Georgetown
it's news. And just so I know how
to proceed: will you be crusading
or reporting today?

CAL
Who knew you wouldn't think they
can be one in the same.

A classroom ohh-ahhing at the smart-ass student.

CAMERON
Don't try this at home kids.

Cameron holds up a photo of Collins crying at his Press
Conference printed off a Blog.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
And on the National front, what do
we call this?

DELLA SMITH: sorority dimples hide zero-sum tenacity.
Youngest Reporter on staff. Adopted Cal as mentor whether or
not he cared/agreed.

DELLA
The beginning of the end just as he
was getting started.

Room chuckles.

CAMERON
The heads of all five of our loyal
readers would implode with that
Gordian knot of a headline-

CAL
-why the beginning of the end?
Because a member of his staff
killed herself? For the second time
this morning: where's the story?

CAMERON
(beat)
Do you need *more* sleep?

PETE, a tertiary team member, asks:

PETE

At the risk of exposing what a piss-poor Reporter I am: who is this guy Collins?

HELEN PRAGER: the brunette who asked Collins if it was a an 'accident' at his briefing. Globe's Political Correspondent.

HELEN

Congressman Stephen Collins, Republican, Virginia's 7th District, i.e. Richmond. Chairs the Joint Select Committee investigating Pentagon contracts -- that's code for the billions being spent on private military, third-party interrogators, and logistical support for the War on Terror-

PETE

-a *Republican* Congressman investigating that? I'm sure lots will come of his work.

HELEN

That's the rub: Collins is sinking his teeth in. Making his Party nervous. His Committee was formed as a quick fix to placate outrage at all the no-bid contracts, but he's pushed the agenda lots deeper.

CAMERON

Give me an example.

HELEN

He's the one who released all those numbers last year -- 1 out of every 5 American soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan isn't actually an Army Grunt nor a Marine, but an employee of a private Company. 1 out of 3 Interrogators. Half our support troops. I mean, these companies still refuse to release how many of their 'employees' have been killed in action, let alone how large a proportion of our overall forces they represent.

CAMERON

Huge assignment for a fresh-face from Richmond.

HELEN

Ex-Naval Officer, the Son Senator
George Fergus never had-

CAL

(interrupts from nowhere)
-and he's a 6-2 white Republican
who got 60% of the vote in mostly
African-American Richmond. Makes
him the Republican answer to the
Democrats' Golden Boy in Chicago.

People swing their focus on Cal: how do you know this?

DELLA

Cal's a good friend of his.

CAL

Was a good friend. Same dorm at
U.Va. I ran his first campaign --
the only one he lost. Haven't
talked to him in a year.

CAMERON FOSTER

Cal McAffrey ran a Republican
campaign?

CAL

He was a Democrat back then.

CAMERON FOSTER

Probably why he lost. Why didn't
you follow him to the dark side?

CAL

(motions to shabby
surroundings)

It should be obvious I don't care
about paychecks.

(more ohhs-ahhs)

Just so I'm clear on the content of
this story: man cries about co-
worker obliterated by Train. We
feel those tears are sufficient
cause to cloud-out his future...

CAMERON FOSTER

Grow up: he's either got the
constitution of a hothouse flower
or he's nobbin' her. Neither of
which speaks to much of a 'future'
at all. Collins is our front page.

CAL

And here I thought we were a legit paper-

CAMERON FOSTER

-with the smallest readership in town. So we run with Collins-

-Cameron points to a muted TV mounted in the corner of the room as proof of his instincts: Stephen Collin's picture next to the CNN Talking-Head soundlessly mouthing the obvious-

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)

-as will every other paper and news outlet, even the ones with money and ego. Helen: stay focused on the political fallout. And Cal: just stay away from it-

CAL

-to which non-story are you referring now? Collins or Stagg?

CAMERON FOSTER

As for the Stagg story, you can either take it -- *drugs and all their felonious cousins making appearances on our posher streets* -- or you can go cover the National Geography Bee...

CAL

Anything behind door number three?

CAMERON FOSTER

Pink slips.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cal and Della sit down at his desk.

DELLA

Where do we start?

Cal cracks open an old-school rolodex, thumbs to a card: Captain John Borda, D.C.P.D. Dials the number...

CAL

Johnny. Cal. Anybody heading this *DeShaun Stagg* murder investigation yet?

CAL(cont'd)

(beat)

Of course the going rate...

Cal listening, then scribbling on a post-it. Hands the post-it to Della. We read it: Detective Brown, ext. 08865. Standing as he hangs up. To Della:

CAL (CONT'D)

Call this guy. You can probably set-up a meet sometime today.

DELLA

(as Cal is turning,
grabbing his jacket)

Where are you going?

INT. FACELESS CAPITOL ANTEROOM - DAY

Stephen sits, trying to hide his devastation. SENATOR GEORGE FERGUS and Andrew Pell stand across from him. Fergus a consummate Republican: pink, well-coiffed, the hands of an ex-All-American fullback, clipped East Tennessee drawl.

SENATOR FERGUS

Brass tacks: were you having a relationship with Sonia Baker?

STEPHEN

It was simple. Physical. That's it.

Andrew and Fergus share the same muted reaction.

ANDREW PELL

That's not 'it.' Blogs are burning with your picture. Networks will pick it up from there. You crying and the implication of those tears will be your introduction to most of the rest of the country.

SENATOR FERGUS

Steve: we're not trying to live your life. But we have to get everything out now. Andrew can steer this but it won't be easy, and you can't stay silent.

(beat)

Democrats can get away with this kind of thing without much of a hitch anymore -- we can't.

ANDREW PELL

These next 72 hours will be brutal: you'll be everything wrong with American Politics. But then the sheer news cycle, and our own intrinsic weapons will mitigate the outcry.

STEPHEN

What weapons?

ANDREW PELL

Sonia Baker was a 25 year-old adult, neither an intern nor hard to look at. People forgave Kennedy because he aimed at targets worth hitting, but they pilloried Clinton because he aimed at targets he couldn't miss. We're on the winning end of that equation. Mix in heartfelt apologies, your wife by your side, and we come out the other end bloody, but breathing...

The unspoken: we need to talk to Anne.

STEPHEN

I'll talk to Anne.

Pell's solemn nod cut with anxiety: do so quickly. Stephen stands, leaves. Just Fergus and Pell.

ANDREW PELL

You're sure he's worth the storm?

SENATOR FERGUS

No question. So don't ask again.

EXT. D.C. MORGUE - AFTERNOON

Cal at a waiting room vending machine too long, struggling with a ratty dollar. The bustle of grief envelops. A striking, African-American Pathologist, JOY JACKSON, steps into frame, hands him a crisp \$1. He trades her his bill: and we see Benjamin Franklin's half-assed smile -- what we thought was a ratty dollar is a ratty \$100. Cal uses the \$1 to buy something sugar-frosted awful.

CAL

(points to the ratty \$100)
I could use that to take you to The Palm or Citronelle instead.

JOY

That was our deal-breaker Calvin:
you thought \$100 was all you needed
at The Palm or Citronelle.

CAL

So DeShaun Stagg...this Kid popped
in Georgetown yesterday morning.
Cops say 'drug-deal gone bad.'

JOY

'Popped' mean shot? And you ever
heard of a drug-deal gone good?

CAL

You got anything yet?

She hands him a photocopy: Stagg's toxicology report. Cal
reading...then more question than statement:

CAL

He didn't have anything in his
system...

JOY

Just bronchodilators and anti-
inflammatories: he was Asthmatic.

CAL

That's it?

JOY

Baby Boy was pristine.

CAL

You ever heard of a drug-dealer
without drugs in his or her system?

JOY

Only the good ones.

CAL

Anyone come to claim the body?

JOY

Nope.

Cal hesitates, hands her the carcinogen-biscuit he just
bought.

CAL

Hungry?

Joy takes it, tosses it in the trash. As they walk away from one another: the Gaunt White Girl we saw waiting in McDonald's, now sitting in the waiting room. No black briefcase at her feet. Exhausted, black-rimmed eyes tracking Cal as he walks down the hallway, dialing his Cell...

INT. MORGUE HALLWAY - NEXT MOMENT

Ringin'. Answer.

DELLA (O.S.)
Della Smith.

CAL
You meet that Detective yet?

DELLA (O.S.)
Not until Eight.

CAL
You near the fax?

DELLA (O.S.)
What do you have?

CAL
Something you can trade.

EXT. STEPHEN AND ANNE'S HOME, RICHMOND - EVENING

Cookie-cutter Colonial. Press camped: all the local 'Eyewitness News' vans, plus some of the 24-hour news channels. Stephen drives right past, into his garage. Let's the door close before he gets out.

Anne is already there, off to the side on a couch not yet dumped at Goodwill, a bottle of Bud from the spare freezer. Stephen gets out. His wife's presence startles him...

ANNE
(beat)
Were you still rehearsing?

No answer. Anne takes a pull of her beer. Stephen conjuring some magical string of words he knows will never come.

ANNE (CONT'D)
'Power loosens wallets and zippers.' My Dad's warning to me on election night.

STEPHEN
(quiet, before he realizes
what he's saying:)
After 10 jack and cokes-

ANNE
-was he wrong? And you don't get to
mention his drinking for the rest
of your life.

Impossible to look his wife in the eyes. Laughter from the
local press Turds filters through the walls.

STEPHEN
I don't have the words.

ANNE
Then laugh like them. Because I
wanted your babies once and you
said 'not yet' so many times that I
can't anymore. Laugh because I had
offers in New York and Chicago and
San Francisco but took a job in
Richmond because you wanted to
'run.'

STEPHEN
Annie, please, let's just get-

ANNE
-because for 14 years I've been
someone's wife...instead of *Me*. And
the kicker: that 'someone' thought
so little of the sacrifice, he
fucked a Staffer...a little blonde
girl...

STEPHEN
(heart-broken)
Please Annie: let's get out of here-

ANNE
-you get out of here.

STEPHEN
I cancelled my week, drove all the
way down because-

ANNE
-let me genuflect. Trace your route
back or I'll make a scene worse
than your water-works today.

EXT. MEMORIAL BRIDGE STEPS - 7:59 PM

DETECTIVE BROWN: 6'5", 260-pound bull-necked African-American Police Officer gulping the same exact pastry we saw Joy Jackson toss at the Morgue. He and Della step toward each other. Both enamored with their respective careers -- only ever see this cloak and dagger-type shit in movies.

DELLA
Detective Brown?

DETECTIVE BROWN
Della Smith?

Brown and 5'7" 130-pound Della standing next to one another is a study in diametric opposites. Which is probably why there is immediate chemistry between them.

DELLA
Thanks for meeting me so quickly.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Gives me a chance to take a stroll,
grab some dinner.

DELLA
(nodding at the pastry)
Looks...filling.

DETECTIVE BROWN
(smile gets wider)
So how does this all work?

DELLA
Back-scratches. I do yours, you do mine.

DETECTIVE BROWN
I'll bring the oil.

DELLA
(little smile)
I give you information you don't know, you give me information I don't know. Equal Exchange always. You'll be my Anonymous Source-

DETECTIVE BROWN
-said the Reporter to the Sucker. If you want me to confirm or deny something, maybe, but more than that and I'm gonna start to sweat.

Brown's unspoken: *show me instead of telling me.* Della pauses for effect, then simply hands him a copy of Stagg's toxicology report:

DELLA

Okay. DeShaun Stagq didn't have any drugs in his system outside of asthma medications.

Brown studies, amazed.

DETECTIVE BROWN

How did you get this?

Della just coyly bats her eyes. Brown smiles handsome again, shakes his head. Fully taken with his diametric opposite.

DELLA

Your turn to scratch mine. What else do you know about DeShaun Stagq?

DETECTIVE BROWN

(beat)

That he was never busted for drugs. Not even a paraphernalia charge. Not once. D was a purse-snatcher, a five-finger-discounter extraordinaire.

DELLA

No Drugs?

DETECTIVE BROWN

And the first time he tries, he gets popped in the cranium for his ambition.

DELLA

What about this Bike Messenger that got hit? Was he involved?

DETECTIVE BROWN

Insofar as the poor Kid was probably just in the wrong place, wrong time. And now he's in a coma at GW Hospital.

DELLA

Do you think-

DETECTIVE BROWN

-been your turn to scratch, Girl.

Della pauses. Then just gently takes the carcinogen-biscuit out of his hand, dumps it in the trash ala Joy Jackson: that's a real favor.

And Brown smiles widest as he takes his time watching Della walk away.

INT. CAL'S TOWNHOUSE, ROSSLYN, VA - NIGHT

Across the Potomac from Georgetown. A knock at his door. Cal red-eyed, on-edge because of the hour, looks through the peephole: a green Jack Daniels label staring back at him.

CUT TO:

Stephen and Cal sit at the kitchen table. Bottle open: Stephen on the rocks, Cal cutting with Coke. Awkward between them, but an obvious affinity, history.

CAL
(smart-ass, like this is
just a nice visit)
So how's life treatin' you?

Stephen pauses, the first smile we've seen from him.

STEPHEN
Like a baby treats a diaper.
(beat)
Pretty cool how I show up now ain't
it?

CAL
Yeah. Maybe next year you'll get
the plague and I'll see you again.

STEPHEN
(smile, big beat)
I'm sorry.

CAL
What for?

STEPHEN
Many things.

CAL
(beat)
So am I.
(beat)
You been home yet?

Obvious pain flashes across Stephen's face.

STEPHEN

Until Anne told me to get out.
Neighborhood was over-run with the
local news Turds. Same with my
apartment downtown.

CAL

You stay here then.

STEPHEN

No. I can do a hotel-

CAL

-they'll find you in an hour.

STEPHEN

They won't find me here?

CAL

It'll take them longer.

Lull. Each drink. Stephen feeling more and more like he owes
his friend something, *an explanation*, in return for Cal's Mi
Casa Su Casa...

STEPHEN

She was a vacation...hour-long sex.
A flutter in the gut. There wasn't
a future...sooner or later she was
going to get tired of the old guy.

Cal matches Stephen's weary smile, nods along...supportive,
then helpful:

CAL

Have you called her Mom yet?

STEPHEN

I'm the last person she'd want to
hear from.

CAL

You should. First thing tomorrow.
Just my advice, buddy. You should
apologize for her loss or she could
hammer you: 'He never so much as
phoned after my Daughter's
suicide.'

STEPHEN
 (emphatic)
She didn't...
 (beat, less so)
kill herself...

Cal pauses, raises his chin: 'empathy' giving way to
 'interest.'

CAL
 You say it like you know different.

Stephen pulls out his cell, dials his voice-mail, up to Cal's
 ear. Message from Sonia: positively sunny voice.

SONIA'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Hey, you left your scarf here...you
 probably still call it a 'muffler'
 don't you? You left your 'muffler'
 then. I can't wait for the weekend.

Message ends.

STEPHEN
 Sound suicidal to you?

CAL
 (beat)
 Not even a little bit...

Stephen's shoulders shrug: *told you*. His eyes glaze with
 tears. Not enough to leak. Cal slowly pushes his half-full
 Jack & Coke glass away, no more drink...

CAL
 Then what happened?

STEPHEN
 You been in the Metro during rush
 hour: it's all elbows and knees
 from the Lemmings trying to jockey
 to be first on the train...and she
 was so light...

CAL
 An accident? Somebody would've seen
 that Stevie...would've screamed...

STEPHEN
 Really? Kitty Genovese.

CAL
 What?

STEPHEN

Who. Re-read your Psych 101. Raped and murdered in the middle of Queens, guy took 30 minutes to finish. 38 people admit they heard it, did shit. That was this horrific crime and nobody peeped -- not because they were afraid but because they couldn't be bothered. But you think they would for an *accident?*

(beat)

Baffled someone didn't take her shoes...

Stephen slumps back. Just looks beaten, hopeless for humanity now. Cal on the brink of rebutting him, choosing 'Reporter' over 'Friend.' Doesn't. Puts his hand on Stephen's shoulder.

CAL

Sleep.

Stephen rubs his eyes, nods, pounds what's left in his glass. Stands, waiting for direction.

CAL (CONT'D)

Upstairs is all you. I don't have an extra toothbrush.

Stephen grabs the Jack Daniels bottle, aims for the stairs:

STEPHEN

No sweat. Thanks for the room-
(holds up the bottle)
-and board.

CAL

Night.

Cal stays sitting, in-thought. Waits to hear the door close upstairs. Picks up his cell, dials, an answer:

DELLA (O.S.)

(groggy)

What?

CAL

You up?

DELLA (O.S.)

I'm talking.

CAL
Can you still bat your eyes and get
a hold of phone records?

DELLA (O.S.)
Whose?

CAL
Sonia Baker's. Land lines and Cell.

DELLA (O.S.)
Why?

CAL
To get a hold of her Shrink, see if
that Shrink will talk anonymously.

DELLA (O.S.)
(beat)
Thought you said it wasn't a story?
(beat)
How do you know she had a Shrink?

CAL
Because Girls who jump in front of
trains either have Shrinks or they
date me...and I've never met her.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - MORNING

Cal doing a Lexis-Nexis search on '*Felony*,' '*Statistics*,' and
'*Georgetown*.' Scribbling numbers when Della pounces, drops a
small stack in front of him. Telephone records. Sonia Baker
the name on the front page.

DELLA
I had to agree to go out on not
one, but two dates with a sweaty
role-player named Vic for these.

CAL
(pulling out of thought)
Role Player?

DELLA
Like, he is the Lord of the Rings.

CAL
(smiles)
Midgets sprinting after a wedding
ring for nine hours.

CAL(cont'd)

Tell him that's what you thought of those movies on your first date, and I bet he cancels the second...

DELLA

Just what I need: *rejection from Vic.*

CAL

So, Sonia have a Shrink?

Della face changes, she sits, and opens Sonia's phone records to the last page: one number high-lighted, next to it the words "*incoming call.*" She hands Cal his phone: dial it...

DELLA

No. No Shrink. Not even a Medical Doctor...

Cal hesitates, searching Della's face, then dials the highlighted number, eyes remain on Della: ring, ring, ring-

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

This is D. I'll hit you back.

Beep. Cal's face: like he's talking to the dead...a good idea who "D" is...

CAL

'D' as in-

-on cue Della drops another set of phone records: DeShaun Stagq the name on the front page.

DELLA

(pointing at them)

That's why I had to agree to two dates with Vic instead on one.

(beat)

One call. From DeShaun, To Sonia.
About an hour before they both
died. Less than one minute in length, meaning Stagq probably left her a message.

Cal leans back, mind spinning like a top now...

CAL

(beat)

What the fuck?

DELLA

Well put.

CAL

How in God's name would Sonia and Stagg know each -- was Sonia Baker using?

DELLA

Or maybe dealing?

CAL

Or butterfly-high when she jumped...was that the very last call Sonia Baker took or made?

DELLA

No. The last was 33-minutes, from her phone to the Watergate Office Building: front desk of a firm called 'Synergistix.' Their web-site says they've been the 'premier Incubator' inside the Beltway since '98 -- whatever that means...

CAL

(thinking)

Dot.com relics. Rich Dudes would give office space to start-ups in return for stock...we'll come back to them...First, call every number on Stagg's records, see if any belong to family members -- I want to talk to 'em. I'm going down to the City Hall Dungeons to see if I can't pull a Stagg birth certificate.

DELLA

Brave. I'd mainline coffee first.

INT. STARBUCK'S - LATE MORNING

Cal in-line, yawning, heeding Della's advice.

CAL

Medium black.

BARISTA

Grande.

CAL

Medium.

Cal juggles his notebook, bag, wallet. Drops his bag to the floor to fish out two bucks, pays, drops the change in a tip bowl. Grabs his coffee, looks back down: bag gone.

Rising tide panic. An immediate, wild, hopeless scan concurrent with under-the-breath curses -- then he sees his bag, in front a Gaunt White Girl sitting at a nearby table. Her tired, scared eyes locked on his. Cal slowly takes a seat across from her. A silent moment. Gaunt pushes his bag back to him, motions to an ATM in the corner of the coffee shop.

GAUNT

I'll sell you the last bag DeShaun ever took.

CAL

(beat, spinning)

What -- how much?

GAUNT

What you gave the Morgue Lady...

INT. UNKNOWN EMERGENCY STAIRWELL - LATER

Down dark stairs. Underneath the last flight: the black leather Coach briefcase Gaunt had at McDonald's.

GAUNT

(beat)

We lifted briefcases. Ransomed 'em back to Owners. People'd rather pay then replace everything.

(memories, distant)

Dee grabbed 'em, passed 'em to me quick, kept running to make sure anyone following saw him, not me.

CAL

How did you know I'm not someone you should run from?

GAUNT

I know you work for the Paper.

CAL

We're the first ones you should run from. You been following me?

(off Gaunt's 'yes' nod)

Why were you at the Morgue?

GAUNT

As close to a funeral as Dee was gonna get. And you can sleep on the chairs and no one asks you to leave because they guess your too sad.

CAL

Dee have a family?

GAUNT

Me.

CAL

(beat)

You have a name?

GAUNT

(beat)

No.

Cal pauses, reaches into his pocket with his right, points with his left at the briefcase, ominous, half-open.

CAL

What's in it?

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Elevator doors open. CHRIS KAWAI, Washington Globe in-house Council steps out. Handsome. Immaculately dressed/groomed. Jessy's standard sour-puss morphs into a wide-grin. Chris continues past with a nod, aiming for Cameron's Office. Jessy jumps, follows like a Beatles fan:

JESSY

How's the Law?

CHRIS KAWAI

Are they in there?

JESSY

What's so secret?

No response. Kawai keeps walking. Cameron's door: closed, shades drawn. Kawai moves to knock, Jessy steps in front.

JESSY (CONT'D)

We better give the shave-and-a-haircut so they know it's us.

Jessy knocks, Cameron opens the door without the 'two-bits' part. Chris sneaks past. Jessy brushes lint off his shoulder as he does. Cameron notes her grin:

CAMERON FOSTER
Way out of your league: go trawl
the mail room.

Jessy heedless of the slight, tries to peak around Cameron.

JESSY
People used to show me lots of
things when I first started.

CAMERON FOSTER
What does that tell you about your
mouth?

Door closes in Jessy's face.

INT. CAMERON'S OFFICE - NEXT MOMENT

Cameron, Cal, Della, and Chris Kawai. No niceties. Anticipation. Heart-race mystery revving as they stare at the Black Coach Briefcase.

CAMERON FOSTER
(rhetorical, for the room)
Core question: do the Police need
to know about this?
(to Cal)
Go.

Cal opens it: Glock 9mm, meticulously labeled files, a cell phone. Kawai puts on a rubber dish-washing glove, picks up the gun: serial number filed off. Picks up the cell-phone: battery dead. Opens files: all Sonia Baker. Addresses, pictures, her phone numbers, routes to and from work/gym/favorite Bars plotted on maps. The largest picture: her eating with a distinguished-looking man, not Stephen, at an outdoor table at the *Ireland's Four Courts* in Arlington.

CAL
DeShaun Stagg's angle was grabbing briefcases, ransoming them back to the owners. He'd snatch, run, pass it to someone on the sly, keep running to draw off any chase. This was the last bag he ever took.

CHRIS KAWAI

Our drug-deal turned execution story is wrong?

DELLA

D.C.P.D. has no record of him ever dealing or using. His record was all petty theft, things like this.

CHRIS KAWAI

Where did you get the case?

CAL

Case and Story from the '*someone on the sly...*'

CHRIS KAWAI

Your source have a name? Address?

(off Cal's 'no' nod)

Good: no way to produce either if the Police ask. And they will.

CAMERON FOSTER

Time-frame relative to Sonia Baker's death?

CAL

Stagg grabs the case while this guy buys coffee. His favorite spot is any Starbuck's: mostly well-heeled types juggling bags, money, white-hot liquid.

CAMERON FOSTER

Your Source see the owner of this case?

CAL

No. Was waiting outside. Stagg handed off the case like he always did, kept sprinting, but no one chased -- must have taken the guy a minute to realize it was gone. Stagg and my source meet up, cut into the case, turn on the phone-
(anticipating Kawai's interruption)

-I already checked: over the counter pre-paid minutes. Name on the application: *John Public*. Amazing it could be that fake.

CAMERON FOSTER

You seen the Troglodytes that work those counters? Not amazing at all.

CAL

Phone rings within minutes of them turning it on. My Source answered. Said the guy wasn't pissed, didn't haggle, just asked to meet at Metro Center that morning. They agreed quick: lots of people.

CHRIS KAWAI

Your Source wasn't bothered at all by the contents of this Case?

CAL

My Source is still shaking a day later. They were both terrified.

CHRIS KAWAI

Then dump the case, never look back-

CAL

-when I said my Source didn't tell me where he/she lived it's because they don't have a home. Money means food for them.

DELLA

So Stagg calls Sonia as a way to make peace with having to sell it back.

CAL

And uses his own phone because he doesn't want touch anything in this case ever again. They hit Metro Center. Stagg makes my Source wait with the case at a McDonald's, make sure everything's cool: no Cops or any a' this Guy's friends orbiting.
(beat)

And the only people who know anything after that are dead.

DELLA

(moral compass finding true north, emphatic:)
Well, and the Man that owns this bag, filled with all Sonia Baker, all the time, and a loaded gun...

The room takes a moment to absorb.

DELLA (CONT'D)

I mean, we know Stagg met that Man at Metro Center and didn't live to tell about it. We know Sonia Baker was also killed at Metro Center at almost the same time-

CAMERON FOSTER

-we assume. We guess. We know nothing outside of one Source's story. Thus we need to investigate, corroborate -- we're a newspaper -- and I'll be damned if we can't do those things better than the *Police*-

DELLA

-he called her to tell her about what he found. To warn her. He did something *good*. We should do the same...and give this to the Cops.

CAL

My Source is just one point Della. You need two to draw a line.

DELLA

We have two bodies...

(beat)

Whatever your rationale, it's still wrong to keep that case.

Cal taking in Della's righteous swell. Then she stands, leaves. Silence. Doubt.

CAMERON FOSTER

What are our Legal obligations?

CHRIS KAWAI

i.e. How long can you keep this case?

(beat)

D.C.P.D. has listed Sonia Baker's death as a suicide?

CAMERON FOSTER

Yes.

CHRIS KAWAI
 (calculating)
 Time to inventory...time to
 research contents...time for me to
 check relevant case law...
 (beat, finality)
Five working days.

INT. GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - EVENING

Della hustling down the floor. Wet from rain. Hangs her press credential from her neck as she goes. Our thought: she's going to sell-out the Globe, the case. A man in a Men's Wearhouse-type two-button suit passes her, a little brush past. We've seen that bland, goateed face before: the Hitman.

Rounds a corner. Detective Brown sitting in a hallway, drowsy, reading a Sports Illustrated. At the opposite end: two uniformed Officers in guarding a room. Brown lightens, then darkens at the sight of Della, stands.

DETECTIVE BROWN
 What are you doing running around
 by yourself on a night like this?

DELLA
The Bike Messenger is in danger.

DETECTIVE BROWN
 (beat, instant serious)
 You 'think' or 'know'?

DELLA
 ...know...the guys watching his
 door better be armed...

Brown springs, hustling toward the Messenger's room -- taking Della at her word on instinct. Della on his heels. Fire Alarm that moment. Startles everyone, throws things into panicked over-drive. Brown calling for back-up as he now runs:

DETECTIVE BROWN
Emergency tactical to G.W.
Hospital, now.

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Della, Brown, Doctors, and the Orderlies carrying the Bike Messenger down the flights. Slow but steady. Brown leading the way. Eyes wide, gun out, peering around every corner in the stairwell before descending the next flight-

-then Brown's chest detonates. Drops. Two-seconds. Then the Messenger's body is riddled with silenced rounds fired through a now-starred stairwell window. The threat moved outside. Stretcher dumped as everyone hits the deck.

Then silence. Like nothing extraordinary just happened. No one moves. One of the orderlies starts crying. Della on her back, under the sill, wide-eyed: watching a red laser-aimpoint slowly scan the stairwell, steady, back and forth, looking for someone/something else. Dot plays across the back of the Doctor. Then it snaps off. Gone. Sirens now. Screams revving up. An audacious hit precisely executed.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Massive Police presence assembled and moving. Della in shreds: face and shirt blood-spattered, eyes blank. Cal pushes past D.C.P.D. showing his credential but not caring what they say/think. Gets to Della. Wipes the blood off her face with his sleeve.

CAL

Tell me it's not yours-

DELLA

(tears flooding)

-YOU WOULDN'T LISTEN...can you draw
a line with four bodies?

Cal just moves her to his car -- after she twice shoves him away. Della inside now, sobbing. Looks up as he closes the passenger door: a gray-haired D.C. Police Officer, DETECTIVE BELL, has been watching the whole spat, staring at Cal: one part anger, two parts quizzical...

INT. WASHINGTON GLOBE - MORNING

Cameron's door flies open. Cameron, red-faced, steps outside, scans the bullpen of cubicles that make up the Newsroom:

CAMERON FOSTER

WOULD SOMEONE TELL DELLA SMITH HER
HOUSE IS ON FIRE...OR...THAT SHE
JUST WON THE LOTTERY...

Nobody in the newsroom moves, outside of turning to look at Cameron: *the Old Man finally lost it.*

CAMERON FOSTER

NOBODY?!

Storms back into his office. Detective Bell sitting there with two other uniformed Officers. Bell just as righteously angry, ready to arrest anyone he thinks deserves it.

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)
I don't make it a habit of lying,
Detective. I haven't seen her-

DETECTIVE BELL
-why was Della Smith at G.W.
Hospital minutes before a witness
and a Detective were killed?

CAMERON FOSTER
How could I know when I haven't
seen her since? I could give you my
opinion, but you seem in no mood-

DETECTIVE BELL
-just happened to show up? Like the
Reaper herself? No clue as to what
was about to go-down? How 'bout
that timing!

No response from Cameron because he's already given it.

DETECTIVE BELL (CONT'D)
...what's your 'opinion' then...

CAMERON FOSTER
Well...I think she took a shine to
your Detective Brown.

DETECTIVE BELL
White girl takes a shine to an
overweight Brother twice her size
and age?

CAMERON FOSTER
It's what I love about America.

DETECTIVE BELL
Wait until you see our courts and
jails.

Detective Bell and the other Officers bolt. Implicit and overt declarations of War ringing in Cameron's ears. He waits until the elevator doors close on the boys in Blue, listens for the gears and pulleys to activate. Then from his doorway:

CAMERON FOSTER
DELLA. CAL. NOW.

Cameron's P.O.V.: Cal sitting at someone else's desk, hiding his face, stands. Della comes out of the kitchenette. Both head toward us, take the seats in Cameron's office the Cops just vacated. Tension. Blood-on-hands weighed against what everyone senses is a Titanic, if still utterly confused story. Della still dazed, still irate.

CAMERON FOSTER
(gentle as he can)
Why did you go the Hospital last night?

DELLA
To try to stop what happened. The Police-

CAMERON FOSTER
-still say Sonia Baker committed suicide-

DELLA
-bullets that killed people missed me by inches...I heard them hit...
(beat)
You know she didn't kill herself. I know she didn't-

CAMERON FOSTER
-why stay in the Kitchen, Della?
(big beat)
Why not come out and show Detective Bell what he was looking for if you know what happened to Sonia Baker?

Della pauses big. No response comes. Cameron let's his point sink-in, then continues, softer now:

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)
Ask yourself how things would have gone any different had we handed that briefcase to the D.C. Police. They wouldn't have even inventoried it before last night.

DELLA
We could have told them what we thought. They might have rallied to the Bike Messenger sooner.

CAL

(best brotherly tone)

You going to Detective Brown was
you doing just that. If blood is on
anybody's hands, it's on mine.

CAMERON FOSTER

We need you tip-top for this story
Della. Because, all due respect to
your deductions, we don't know what
the story is yet.

INT. JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - MORNING

Committee in-session. Packed to the point of overflow with
Press: nudging, jostling, flashes reflecting off Stephen's
face -- obvious all this attention isn't for just the daily
workings of Government. An EXECUTIVE from U-Ex, one of the
largest Contractors doing business with the Department of
Defense, making his submission to the Committee.

EXECUTIVE

U-Ex provides Fighting Men and
Women in support of American
Missions abroad. And we do so with
a for-profit service ethic and
laser-like corporate focus-

STEPHEN

-Sir, save it for your recruiting
video. Everyone here knows who U-Ex
is: when the Defense Department
gives a Company a \$772 Million
contract, we up here tend to read
up on that Company.

EXECUTIVE

\$772 Million is nowhere near the
largest contract being paid out.

STEPHEN

Believe it or not we know that too.
But right now I need you to focus
on this question: why can't my
Committee get an answer from U-Ex
regarding how many of your Private
Military Contractors, your
employees, have been killed and
injured in the War on Terror?

EXECUTIVE

I was told I'd be allowed to make
my submission without interruption.

STEPHEN

Adapt.

EXECUTIVE

(beat, imperious)

I was also told this hearing was
focused on our no-bid Contract-

STEPHEN

-not by me you weren't.

(beat, starting to steam)

I don't remember much from school-

EXECUTIVE

(before he realizes it)

-save your taste in women?

Heads snap-to. A collective gasp. Stephen pauses, smiles
small, minds his temper...quieter-deeper now...

STEPHEN

Save a couple quotes. Two from
Virgil pop to mind. The first, and
I'll para-phrase: 'Rome's end began
when our Athletes and Entertainers
became more revered than our
Statesmen and Generals.' Sound like
a place we all know?

(beat)

And the second, more to our present
business: 'that End became
irreversible when our Armies began
hiring Mercenaries instead of
drafting Patriots. Loyalty to
paychecks, not flags-

EXECUTIVE

-I object to you using 'Mercenary'-

STEPHEN

-I don't care. Now, I can't do
anything about the first quote: I'm
no match for T.O. or Tom Cruise.
But I sure as hell can do something
about the second, because I'm
certainly a match for you,
regardless of how big a mess I've
made of my personal life.

Scattered hoots/claps. Andrew appears in the back of the room: 'nervous.'

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
We'll re-convene at 1:30.
(to the U-Ex Exec:)
Come back prepared.

INT. FACELESS CAPITOL ANTEROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Andrew and Stephen alone.

ANDREW PELL
The Times say they have a document
proving you were leaving Anne.

Stephen breaths deep: '*when will the hits stop coming?*'
Andrew hands him a faxed copy of a real estate contract.

ANDREW PELL (CONT'D)
A real estate application with both
your name and Sonia's on it...

STEPHEN
She lived in this decayed old frat
house on T Street. I put her in-
touch with the guy who hooked me up
with my Apartment in-town. So what?

Andrew pointing to specific spots on the document:

ANDREW PELL
Her name, but your cell-phone
listed as primary contact. Your
check-mark on the 'I'll co-sign'
box. Your signature at the bottom.

Stephen cycles answers...nothing plausible. Sits down heavy.

STEPHEN
What do you want me to say?

ANDREW PELL
Quite a lot as it happens.

Andrew points to something else on the bottom, not part of
the application, but written on it before it was faxed: "A
Well-Wisher."

ANDREW PELL (CONT'D)
That Anne's handwriting?

STEPHEN

No.

ANDREW PELL

(beat)

What was this with Sonia, Steve?

STEPHEN

(beat)

We were just talking...words on a pillow, you know?

ANDREW PELL

No...I've never cheated on my wife.

Stephen just claps sarcastically: *good for you Fuck-Face.*

ANDREW PELL (CONT'D)

I've called Anne. She's on her way.
You two will appear together at a
press conference at 3 PM-

STEPHEN

-you tell her before you tell me?

ANDREW PELL

Yes.

STEPHEN

You weren't going to try to 'live
my life for me,' remember-

ANDREW PELL

-and you were going to tell me
everything, so those bets are off.

STEPHEN

And if I say no?

ANDREW PELL

Please do. I've tried to beg off
this 'project' twice. Fergus said
if I do I never work again. 3 PM.

INT. CAPITOL CAFETERIA - LATER

Fergus having lunch with other Men dressed just like him.
Only differentiating characteristics are neckties. Collins
approaches the table. Smiles and nods back and forth. Eyes
around the place tracking Stephen. Kneels next to Fergus.

STEPHEN

Thanks for the mandate you gave
Andrew: not letting him opt out.

SENATOR FERGUS

If Andrew played football he'd Punt
on third down. You have many
friends not wavering in their
commitment to your future, Son.
Especially not after that
performance today with that Smug
sonofabitch from U-Ex. That's why
eyes were on you when you walked in
-- that exchange is all the talk...

STEPHEN

I'd love to believe that.

SENATOR FERGUS

Then do.

(beat, whisper)

Instead of the 'stereotypical
politician philanderer,' you're
looking like what you really are.

STEPHEN

What's that?

SENATOR FERGUS

A gifted Leader with a bit of an
appetite.

Stephen flattered/embarrassed at the strange praise.

SENATOR FERGUS (CONT'D)

Now that you got U-Ex on their
heels, I think it's time we revisit
my earlier idea of forcing them,
and the rest of these Companies to
literally buy into the concept of
legitimate corporate citizenship-

STEPHEN

-Sir-

SENATOR FERGUS

-I know you have problems with it.
But Steve, I'm not saying you
shouldn't knock them on their ass.
I'm just saying maybe don't do it
in front of a packed stadium.

SENATOR FERGUS(cont'd)

I have a feeling we can cow them
into pro-actively donating millions
for schools and infrastructure,
both here at home and in our
theaters of operation.

Stephen unsure exactly what's being asked, or if it indeed
it's being ordered.

INT. CAL'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Cal at his computer. Searching Government Printing Office
public documents pertaining to Stephen's Joint Committee
work: more documents stating who, what, functions served, how
much. Cal writes a note on a nearby pad: "Stevie stirring up
dark corners of the economy..."

STEPHEN (O.C.)

(flat, bloodshot)

Yo-

CAL

(startles)

-Christ!

Closes his browser, closes his pad.

STEPHEN

(small laugh)

Snuck in through the alley. Sorry.

CAL

(beat, still startled)

Hungry?

Stephen grabbing a beer:

STEPHEN

Thirsty.

CAL

Me too.

Stephen grabs another, pops both, sits.

CAL (CONT'D)

(big beat, awkward)

I need to ask you some questions
about Sonia Baker.

Stephen hesitates, off-guard:

STEPHEN

Least you gave me some kind of sign
before you flipped from 'Friend' to
'Reporter'—

CAL

—you're taking a fucking beating
right now. Because of that I'm
gonna be both. Look like the mid-
life Lech who used up a young girl
until she killed herself. But I
believe she didn't kill herself.

STEPHEN

I told you that—

CAL

—nor do I buy she got shoved -- an
accident -- like I already told
you: I believe somebody would've
said something by now -- this ain't
Queens.

STEPHEN

(beat, fear)

What's that leave...

Cal hands Stephen a DeShaun Stagg press clip. Stephen reads.

CAL

Ever heard that name: *DeShaun
Stagg?*

(off Stephen's 'no' nod)

Kid. Criminal. Shot the same
morning Sonia died. A Witness to
his murder and a Police Officer
investigating it were themselves
murdered last night.

STEPHEN

Okay...so...

CAL

DeShaun Stagg called Sonia an hour
before they both died.

Stephen looks like he could throw-up. Slightly gape-mouthed --
and indeed, his hits keep coming...still reading...

STEPHEN

What? How would she know a guy like
that? Sonia wasn't a fuckin' User—

CAL
-nor was Staggs a dealer as it turns
out. Bag snatcher. She lose a bag?

STEPHEN
No.

CAL
A Wallet? Her Cell-

-house phone rings that moment. Cal stops, lets it ring-out
to his machine. Eyes on Stephen's face, feels the fear of
Friend. Then Anne Collins' voice on his machine:

ANNE (O.S.)
Cal, it's Anne. Collins.

Stephen looks up: fear cut with confusion now. Cal gives him
a hold up sign, heads for the phone.

ANNE (O.S.)
I know it's been a year-

CAL
-hey Annie Hall.

Cal points to the phone, a sign to Stephen: 'you want to talk
to her?' Stephen, deep in-thought, waves it off.

CAL (CONT'D)
How you hanging?

ANNE (O.S.)
By piano wire. You seen him?

CAL
Couple times.

ANNE (O.S.)
He staying there?

CAL
No.

ANNE (O.S.)
I'm coming to town. Got time for a
drink -- or twenty?

CAL
Sure -- but with everything going
on, why the Hell would you want to
come to DC, now?

ANNE (O.S.)
This press conference.

Stephen's face changes: realizing Anne's probably telling Cal something he didn't himself share with the friend trying to protect him from the storm -- suddenly wants to talk to her.

CAL
(puzzled)
What press conference?

Stephen rips the phone from Cal as Anne is saying:

ANNE (O.S.)
Fax to the Times-

STEPHEN
-I've been calling for two days now-

-click.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
God damn it...

Hangs the phone up. Trying to play it nonchalant. Cal beginning to steam.

CAL
My place. My phone-

STEPHEN
-my wife.

CAL
-my friend. If Annie wants to talk to me, I'm going to talk to her. And thanks for letting me know about this Times scoop necessitating a joint-press conference. I hear that right?

STEPHEN
Heaven for-fend you get scooped about a little particular piece of human misery in your business-

CAL
-you're not 'little,' this is my job, and you knew both when you knocked.

Stephen: pent-up vitriol uncorked on his friend.

STEPHEN

Your 'job' is a waste product,
Brother. Remember that Teddy
 Roosevelt line from above your desk
 in school? I never forgot it: 'It's
not the critic who counts: not the
man who points out how the Strong
Man stumbles...' Take it now as an
 indictment on every penny you've
 ever scrounged from a 'story.'

CAL

If banging 25 year-old Blondes
 makes you a 'Strong Man' Stevie,
 I'm Mr. Universe-

STEPHEN

-no: the things I've done in Office-

CAL

-name two over the last two years?
 Name one bill you wrote? One you
 didn't get to sign after all the
 heavy-lifting was done, because the
 King-Makers forced the Author, some
 balding first-term Cheeseburger
 from Montana or Missouri to let you
 -- because you got the broader
 shoulders, the deeper voice, the
 more perfect part-

STEPHEN

-fuck you.

Heads upstairs to pack his bags.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Cal on Stephen's tail.

CAL

Don't pout now *Strong Man*: you've
 made 'indictments.' So let me
 explain the thing you've done for
 your constituents this last year:
 you snapped that big horse-chicklet
 grin at them every chance, the one
 that tells people 'you're now in on
 the joke: I haven't given you
 better schools-roads-crime rates-n'
 shit, but you get to watch the
 G.O.P. groom me for bigger-better-

STEPHEN

-I'm digging with my fingernails to get to a spot where I can streamline better ways to be, not just for my own constituents, but everyone. The best way to do that, here and now, is to tear the ass outta this for-profit version of our Armed Forces before it just becomes the way we War: infinitely easier to fight and die when you can just hire more guns.

CAL

Down-shift, Caesar: megalomania never ends well-

STEPHEN

-and what the fuck do you do, Cal-

CAL

-dig with my fingernails for the truth-

STEPHEN

(mock relief)

-oh thank Baby Jesus. It's that easy-

CAL

-yes it is.

Crumples the Real Estate form/Fax given to him by Andrew, throws it at Cal's chest.

STEPHEN

Cannon Building at 3. And cram your guest room up your ass, Cal.

Heads downstairs. Slams the door so hard on the way glass panes shatter in the frame. Cal already regrets his vitriol.

INT. CANNON BUILDING BRIEFING ROOM - LATER

Packed. Collins' story getting national traction. Helen Prager already seated. Cal sits down next to her. Cal just hands her the un-crumpled Real Estate form/Fax. She reads...goes wide-eyed...

HELEN

That's what this is about? Anne Collins is being used to block?

CAL
Have Della trace that originating
fax number in the footer.

Andrew, Stephen, and Anne step in. 'Hushed' turns 'silent.'

ANDREW PELL
Anne and Stephen Collins have asked
that I arrange this meeting so they
might be able to cut through the
chatter and pabulum that has only
grown louder since yesterday.
(beat)
Anne...

ANNE
Despite what I'm about to say, I
still believe, adamantly, that none
of it is your business. I do this
for the memory of what I once
thought possible.
(beat)
My marriage has been -- shaky --
for the past several years. And
transgressions occurred on both
sides that didn't help put it on a
more solid footing.

Stephen looking at his wife like he might have the very first
time he saw her: love.

HELEN
What does 'transgressions on both
sides' mean?

ANNE
(beat)
Speculate.

Smiles ripple through the assembled Reporters at her great,
one-word answer -- just got ahead of the situation by telling
the Reporters to do just what they would have done otherwise.

REPORTER #1
So you weren't surprised by
Stephen's affair?

Stephen takes his eyes away from his wife's face.

ANNE

Why would you ask? Because being surprised by it in our society is just as egregious a sin as the Affair itself?

Reporter #1 silent, no quick answer...

ANNE (CONT'D)

The only thing I've been surprised by is how blatant your questions have been throughout. It doesn't speak well of the fourth estate: neither your interest in this, nor your crass inquiries about it.

Smiles double: *she's got balls, ability*. Reporters, not wanting to get drilled like Helen and #1, start questioning their questions. Cal smiles wider than most.

EXT. GRANITE HALLWAY - POST-PRESS CONFERENCE

Andrew and his cadre surround Anne, usher her quickly down the Hall. Cal posted 20 feet up, in their path. Waves at Anne, prompts Andrew to veer in a different direction.

ANNE

(to Andrew)

Relax. An old Friend.

Cal waves to Andrew now as Anne veers back toward him: faux sweetness. Anne smiling at Cal as she steps to him.

ANNE (CONT'D)

You look fit, Calvin.

CAL

You should run against Steve in the next election after that showing. Still up for one or twenty?

ANNE

(nods back toward Andrew)

I'm up for a scalding hot shower. I'll call when I'm through: a few more stops he wants to make-

CAL

-I'll bet: they're gonna gild the lily with you.

(beat)

CAL(cont'd)

Steve doesn't know how lucky he got today-

ANNE

-I didn't do it for Stephen. There are dozens of people I know and love that have worked on his Committee for years now. I don't want to see their work forgotten, because Stephen's zipper didn't stay up.

(beat)

You and he had it out?

CAL

He told you?

ANNE

Didn't have to: only other person who can get him that pissed is me.

INT. KINKO'S, FOGGY BOTTOM - LATER

Della at the front desk, flirting eyes aimed at a heroin-thin 20-something Register JOCKEY. Getting no response whatsoever - - not even a blink nor a curl to the lip that might resemble a quarter-smile. Plan B. Shows him the Real Estate Form.

DELLA

This was faxed from here this morning at 8:55 AM. Were you here?

No answer.

DELLA (CONT'D)

Remember who faxed it?

No answer. Della switches gears again:

DELLA (CONT'D)

You know this is a Police matter.

JOCKEY

Let me see your badge, your gun, or your warrant then...

Della hesitates, sets down a \$20. Jockey chuckles.

JOCKEY (CONT'D)

I can buy my own snack. NEXT.

EXT. KINKO'S - NEXT MOMENT

Della outside, cycling different ways she can re-attack. Calling Cal when she sees someone on the street she has seen before/knows: this diminutive, dapper, BABY-FACE young man. Watch him lick his finger to get his wedding band off, then turn into the Kinko's.

INT. KINKO'S - NEXT MOMENT

We go inside again with Baby Face. Instantly doing what Della couldn't: charming the, we now realize gay, Register Jockey. Jockey instantly brightens when he sees who's next in-line.

BABY-FACE

(educated English accent)

Told you I'd be back. This morning you said you've seen this Bloke who sent the fax before, that he must work in this area.

JOCKEY

Just my guess: I see him around lunch-time sometimes, walking with a wrap, a salad...

BABY-FACE

I hovered around from 11 to 2 today-

JOCKEY

-watching me?

BABY-FACE

Wouldn't you like to know. And I didn't see any-

(pulls his steno-pad)

-'Blonde, well dressed Male sporting a Panerai watch...'

JOCKEY

You'll have to come back tomorrow. *I'll point him out to you.*

BABY-FACE

(coy)

There's an idea. What direction did he turn when he left this morning?

EXT. KINKO'S - MOMENTS LATER

Della across the street, watches Baby Face step outside. Directly behind her is the monstrously ugly Watergate Complex. Into the phone.

DELLA
Cal, I know who's running this
story for the Times.

INT. THE MAD HATTER - NIGHT

Prototypical D.C. Bar. One angle in D.C.'s Herpes Triangle. Baby Face relishing happy-hour beers, sharking Suckers at the pool table. Behind him, as he wins \$50 with a Minnesota Fats-style trick shot: Della and Cal. Wry smiles.

CAL
Nice shot Danny.

Baby Face/DANNY hesitates, doesn't turn.

DANNY
Nice entrance McAffrey.

Now he turns.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Evening Ms. Smith. Thought I saw
you today.

Cal to the Suckers Danny is taking money from:

CAL
Go back to your beers: he sharked
his way through Princeton-

DANNY
-but I never graduated. Just one
more game...

Sucker #1, 50 bucks lighter, losing his buzz, sneers toward Danny half-hearted.

SUCKER #1
Bitch, I should take my money back.

Suckers walk. Danny to Cal:

DANNY
Thanks a million, Mate.

DELLA

Times not paying so well anymore?
Supplementing the income with Happy-
Hour pool?

DANNY

Freelance is just that: free.

CAL

You sign a contract with them?

DANNY

The Times?! Did they hit me in the
head with a blunt object?

CAL

Would you like to sign a contract?

DANNY

You got a blunt object?

Della and Cal not laughing.

DANNY (CONT'D)

...with your Lot? No thanks.
'Times' looks better on a resume.

CAL

You have less than half the story,
Danny. And I know you care more
about that than your resume or you
wouldn't have let them bounce you
out of Princeton so easy.

DANNY

Solid logic. Now let me try: I
think our half is awfully strong or
you wouldn't be here.

CAL

Ask yourself: if we already know
about the fax, if we already know
where it's from, why would we be
asking you, especially you, if you
wanted to come aboard now?

DANNY

Because I know more than the fax-

CAL

-as do we. But both of us need some
context, huh?

CAL(cont'd)
(hands his business card)
Call me if you really want it.

EXT. MAD HATTER - NEXT MOMENT

Della and Cal twenty steps away. Cal's cell rings in his pocket. Della smiles: that's why I chose you as Mentor.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Della and Cal flanking a pissed Cameron -- staring holes through Danny, standing at the end of the long hallway separating cubes. Cal and Della trying to explain why this Interloper, who Cameron obviously dislikes, is there.

CAL
One: he knows things we don't.
Two: he's damn good Infantry,
Cameron -- his work ethic is
unsettling: never sleeps-

CAMERON FOSTER
He never sleeps because he's a piss-
head who never turns his back on a
drink. Thinks winks and Cheshire
grins work as well in the field as
they do in movies.

DELLA
Is he wrong? He pulled his wedding
band off and put that grin on
before he went into the Kinko's --
and came out two minutes later
smiling wider.

CAL
He is our key to zeroing-in on the
'Well-Wisher.'

CAMERON FOSTER
(deep in his rant now)
You met his Wife? Absolute train
wreck. He met her at The Camelot.
Cantaloupe implants. Speaks in
monosyllables.
(Cal and Della hiding
their laughs)
You know what the Times is paying?

CAL
He hasn't even mentioned money.
He's hungry for this story.

CAMERON FOSTER
(beat, down to Danny)
OY!

Danny approaches, wary. Cameron takes his time, sizes him up.

CAMERON FOSTER
You're skinny like a Rummy.
(beat)
Use your Mother's maiden name on
anything you publish. You work
through Cal exclusively. And if you
call me 'Dad' or 'Pop' I'll have
you escorted off the premises by
men with vice-grips where their
hands should be, who steer blokes
like you nose-first into the walls.

DANNY FOSTER
(small smile)
You paying what I'm worth, Pop?

CAMERON FOSTER
Commensurate to what you know.

INT. CAMERON'S OFFICE - LATER

Team brought back together. The News is a 24-hour business.
Cameron still mad-dogging his Son, uncorks a bottle of Red.

CAL
This is Dan. As of twenty minutes
ago he left the Times, stepped into
the light.

Helen Prager and Pete nod. Cameron setting glasses in front
of everyone. Danny waves his Dad off.

DANNY
None for me, thanks.

Cameron hesitates, hides his shock, Cal smiles.

DANNY (CONT'D)
So where do we start?

CAL
Usually with the new guy.

DANNY
This better be worth it.
(beat)

DANNY(cont'd)

Well Wisher: young, well-dressed, blonde male who wears a Panerai watch, and who turned left out of Kinko's. The Clerk said he remembers because Blondie was wearing the Prada suit from this month's G.Q. Clerk has seen him before, about that part of town, usually at lunch. So unless he works at the Saudi Embassy or the Kennedy Center -- i.e. unlikely -- I say the Watergate is the only choice in that neighborhood where he could have a job that affords those clothes, that watch, and why he turned that direction when he left.

DELLA

(pulls pages from her bag)
WAIT-wait-wait: Sonia's last call, 33 minutes to a number at the Watergate-

CAL

-Synergistix.

DANNY

You got phone records?
(off Della's smile-nod)
Think this firm might be where Sonia was getting \$4000 a month for 18 months, ending two months ago?

CAL

You got bank records?

DANNY

(his own smile-nod)
From both Citibank and Riggs. Riggs was where she put the \$4000 checks. I can't figure out where the payments were coming from yet. My guess: Collins. Hush-money because he wasn't gonna leave his wife despite the pillow talk. Sonia gets fed up, things go south, the payments stop.

(beat)

All this prelude to her throwing herself under the Metro as a big middle finger to a cruel world...

Nobody says anything -- room goes cold.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Too flip?

CAMERON FOSTER
She didn't top herself.

DANNY
How do you know?

CAL
She was on a hit-list.

DANNY
(beat, wide-eyed)
What hit-list?

CAL
That's kind of where we're up to.
You heard of Deshaun Stagg?

DANNY
(beat, cycling)
The drug murder yesterday?

DELLA
Except it wasn't drugs.

CAL
Stagg nabbed briefcases. We think
he stole a Killer's briefcase this
time: all things Sonia Baker
inside. We think he called Sonia to
tell her what he found.

DANNY
(edge of his seat)
And she didn't then immediately
scream to the Cops?

DELLA
No. She called-

DANNY
-someone at the Watergate Office
Building. Fuck me...and I bet your
paychecks the person she talked to
is blonde, wears a \$5000 Italian
watch, and signs his faxes: 'Well
Wisher.'

CAL
That's where we start tomorrow.

Big smiles bounce around the room: *we're getting closer.*

CAMERON FOSTER
Nobody kisses their own ass until
you get Blondie's name.

EXT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Everyone heading out. Della asks the obvious:

DELLA
How? It's the Watergate: 5,000
people live, work there. It's 20
feet from the Saudi Embassy. The
only place tougher to walk around
unnoticed is the White House.

DANNY
When I need an unorthodox approach,
I sit down with a friend of mine
named 'Al Cohol.' Follow me.

Cal at his desk. Checking voice-mails. Big smile.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Cal, Buffalo Billiards, let's go.
I'll tell you what it was like to
be raised by Himmler.

Pointing to his phone:

CAL
I'll meet you all.

EXT. CAL'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Anne on Cal's front stoop. Unsure smiles back and forth.

CAL
What up Annie Hall? Surprised
Neighborhood Watch hasn't zip-
cuffed you yet.

ANNE
I'm worried more about people in
your line of work.

CAL
Ah, nobody sweats the Globe, thus
nobody sweats me. You hungry?

ANNE
 For someone to talk to.
 (laughs at herself)
 How's that for 'Needy Bitch' right
 off the bat?

INT. CAL'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Inside. Cal in the kitchen, uncorking wine. Anne scanning his
 bookshelves: packed with books that have been read/worn.

ANNE
 Still a big Hemingway fan?

CAL (O.C.)
 His problem is he hasn't come out
 with anything new in a long time.
 I'm on a James Ellroy kick now.

ANNE
 Never heard of him.

Steps to her with a glass of wine.

CAL
 Because you only read what Oprah
 tells you.

ANNE
 Eat it. Still dating Kristen?

CAL
 Her problem is she hasn't come out
 with anything new in a long time.

Anne laughs, slowly sits back into her chair. Long beat.

ANNE
 Never fails Calvin.

CAL
 My ability to attract Skanks?

ANNE
 No. You putting me at ease. No
 matter how much time has passed.

CAL
 I feed you adult beverages and
 you've always laugh at my jokes --
 it's cake.

And Anne has always been intrigued...not in the way you are with someone you want to spend a life with. But the way you are with someone you would love to spend a summer month with - the kind that would glow in memory, tickle you thereafter with quiet questions about what might have been.

ANNE

Just one of the worst stretches
ever for me.

CAL

(beat, means it)
You're doing great, Annie.

ANNE

Y'know...I knew it would come. When I said I wasn't 'surprised,' I wasn't: it's kinda' like knowing you're gonna die, just not when. Because Stephen always got way too big a charge out of glances, smiles.

(beat)

Came home bombed once after a rally. We'd been married two years. I've never forgotten this. And he admitted those glances and smiles are the times when he feels alive.

Cal silent, solemn, just listening.

ANNE (CONT'D)

That's not even the awful part, really. Least he's true to what he is. The awful part is being forced to look at how I haven't been. To look at 14 years. No children, no career to speak of. And I can't shake that it's my own fault...got any books for that?

Cal smiles, gives her a small kiss on the temple. She leans into him naturally, resting her head on his shoulder. The look on both of their faces: apprehension at how comfortable it feels, how quickly he lifted his arm, and she nestled in.

EXT. DELLA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE NIGHT

Della and Helen all giggles and bleary eyes, exit a cab. Pete and Danny inside, also hammered. Post Buffalo Billiards.

INT. DELLA'S APARTMENT BUILDING STAIRWELL - NEXT MOMENT

Stumbling upstairs.

HELEN

I'd like to punish little Danny
Foster.

Giggles to cackles. Someone on his way down passes them.
Della flirts as a pissed-off neighbor, still scrubbing sleep
from his eyes, opens his door.

DELLA

I'm painfully single...

Guy never turns around, never acknowledges a word, but
definitely slows. And we've seen that male-pattern bald head
before: Hitman. Just as he stops, just as we realize he's
assessing whether or not to turn around. Della slows too,
trying to refocus bloodshot eyes: do I know you? Neighbor
lets loose, cuts her thought in-half:

NEIGHBOR

Could you all shut up? Please? God
Damn School Night...

Hitman continues downstairs. Too many people, too much risk.
Everything from him thus far is cold-blooded Professionalism.
Della and Helen chuckling again as they open her door.

INT. DELLA'S APARTMENT - NEXT MOMENT

Beyond 'ransacked.' Cushions shredded with razor-slash X
cuts, closets obliterated, refrigerator and stove ripped from
the wall. Water from a broken pipe leaking a puddle. Della
hits the front door: bolts every lock she has. Sober now.

INT. POLICE STATION - EARLY A.M.

Everyone a blood-shot jagged edge this late/early. Cameron
imperious, wearing his press-pass around his neck. Della's
tear-stained bloodshot eyes downcast, not all there.
Detective Bell on the opposite side of the table.

CAMERON FOSTER

You sent someone into her place.

DETECTIVE BELL

Go to Hell.

CAMERON FOSTER

You didn't get the answers you wanted in my office, so you got proactive. Don't pretend you're Lot isn't capable of that: I remember the Lt. Stow's and the Chief Soulsby's: D.C.'s finest.

DETECTIVE BELL

When was that? A decade ago?

CAMERON FOSTER

The Department has gotten oh-so much better since.

DETECTIVE BELL

You told me you weren't a liar. I believed you-

CAMERON FOSTER

-before or after your pithy threat about 'courts and jails?'

DETECTIVE BELL

I didn't send anyone into Ms. Smith's Apartment.

Della raises her eyes accusingly:

DELLA

I think the Man I passed in my stairwell was the same one from the Hospital, when Brown and the Messenger were killed-

DETECTIVE BELL

-you think?

DELLA

I went out tonight...wasn't sober until I saw my apartment. The guy I think I passed in my stairwell was the same one who walked right past Brown...I mean, please: he's one of your Officers, 'Plainclothes...'

Bell deadly serious now, leans in close/quiet:

DETECTIVE BELL

Brown was the only Detective at the Hospital that night, Della.

(beat, no blinks)

I swear on my children.

Silence. Things starting to dawn...Della's bottom lip starts quivering like she's cold. Eyes well...

DELLA

No...but...why not follow me
up...into my place then?

DETECTIVE BELL

Were there other people?
(off Della's half nod)
Too risky.

Bell putting things together quickly now, points to Cameron's press-pass, words still aimed at Della:

DETECTIVE BELL (CONT'D)

You were wearing your press-pass
that night at the hospital -- I saw
it.

DELLA

(beat)
Okay...

DETECTIVE BELL

So did he. I say this guy didn't
shoot you then because he thought
you knew or had something he wants
or needs. Apparently still does.

Bell let's the chill set-in. Even Cameron remains silent.

DETECTIVE BELL (CONT'D)

I need your statement Ms. Smith. A
description of the Man you saw.

CAMERON FOSTER

I'll get Chris Kawai down here now-

DETECTIVE BELL

-an Attorney?

CAMERON FOSTER

Obviously-

DETECTIVE BELL

(to Della, as though
Cameron isn't there)
-you're not under arrest-

CAMERON FOSTER

-Detective Bell, do you expect we-

DETECTIVE BELL
-I don't give a shit about 'we.' I
care about 'her.'

DELLA
(to Cameron)
I'm okay.
(big beat)
I don't need a Lawyer.

Long moment of eye contact between Della and Cameron.
Something like silent pleading in his eyes.

INT. CAL'S SAAB - MORNING

Cal, Helen, Danny, Pete. Parked in front of the Watergate.
Mid-conversation about last night, everybody shaken.

DANNY
What do you mean 'ransacked?' Who
says ransacked?

HELEN
Cops apparently. And by ransacked I
mean her place is gutted.

Bad way to start a morning.

CAL
But she's safe now?

HELEN
Still at the Police Station.

PETE
Should we call this off, wait for
her?

CAL
Della would be more pissed than
Cameron if we did. We do this.

INT. WATERGATE OFFICE BUILDING, SYNERGISTIX - MOMENTS LATER

Prager steps to the Receptionist, smiling, drops her
credentials and business card.

HELEN
Hello. I'm the Business Reporter
for the Globe.

HELEN(cont'd)

So sorry to drop by without calling, but I'm doing a story on Incubator Firms five years after the dot.bomb. Everyone keeps telling me to speak to Mr. Koles. I take Virginia Avenue to work, so I thought why not just stop by...

RECEPTIONIST

(all smiles)

You missed him by a day. Mr. Koles left for Bermuda last night.

HELEN

Pays to be the CEO.

RECEPTIONIST

I'd love to know how much.

Prager laughs, eyes catch on the sign-in clipboard...

HELEN (CONT'D)

Anyone covering for him?

RECEPTIONIST

(eyes the credential again, beat)

Let me call somebody for you...

As she looks down to call, Prager signs-in: a space for her, and then another where the Employee you're there to see would sign after they've fetched you. Prager steals four pages from the front of the binder on the sly.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Nobody available. I can take a card and have Mr. Koles call you...

HELEN

(snatching her card and credential back quick)

You know what? That's okay. I'll just try back. Thanks though.

INT. CAL'S SAAB - MOMENTS LATER

Our crew scan Employee signatures, matching them against copies of the "Well-Wisher" handwriting sample.

CAL

(engrossed)

I say it's either Ryan Lott...or Dominic Foy...look at the 'L-s.'

DANNY
How do we figure out which?

CAL
(beat, thinking)
Who in here lives closest?

DANNY
Probably me...DuPont Circle...

CAL
(starting his car)
You got a bicycle helmet at home?

INT. WATERGATE OFFICE BUILDING, SYNERGISTIX - MORNING

Danny dressed as a Bike Messenger. Steps to the same Receptionist.

DANNY
Packages for D. Foy and R. Lott.
(holds up his own
clipboard)
I have to hand deliver to both.

CUT TO:

RYAN LOTT: short, African American, Dockers. Signs, puzzled.

CUT TO:

DOMINIC FOY: Blonde, well-dressed, Panerai watch.

DANNY
Beautiful watch, Mate -- what does
Foy Associates do?

Dominic Foy smiles smug: *well let me tell you Mr. Bike Messenger...*

INT. CAL'S SAAB - MOMENTS LATER

Danny getting in the back.

DANNY
Well-Wisher is Dominic Foy. No
question. Runs his own little
wannabe K Street PR firm.

Danny looks up as he's speaking, ducks: Foy pulling out in a blue BMW M5, windows down, Eminem emanating from inside. Dipshit Extraordinaire.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Speaking of the King Wanker...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATE MORNING

Foy sits in a leather chair, his unopened stack of mail to his left, sipping a half-caf double-decaf venti something, 'reading' an issue of the Economist. More or less yawning, scanning the place for interesting faces. Cal sits down across from him, cup in-hand, copy of the Globe in the other.

CAL
That your M5 out there?

FOY
(wary)
Yeah.

CAL
LeMans Blue is by far the best
color for that car.

Foy half-impressed with the obvious inside knowledge.

CAL (CONT'D)
And the 2003 body style is the last
of the greats if you ask me.
Infinitely more refined than that
new iDrive, Buck Rodgers bullshit.

FOY
(beat, fully-impressed)
What's in your garage?

CAL
1997 turd-brown Saab with velour
seats. And it's parked on a curb.

FOY
Ouch.

CAL
Yeah, dive into my nightmare:
water's warm.

Foy laughs, pleasantly surprised at this unexpected conversation, settling into it. Then Cal ends happy feelings:

CAL (CONT'D)
If only I had a job in PR, huh?

Foy's smile dies in stages.

FOY
How do you-

-Cal pulls the package Danny delivered 20 minutes ago from the bottom of Foy's stack, hands it to Foy who flinches: open this one first. Foy nervous, eyes trying to figure out Cal...

CAL (CONT'D)
If it was a bomb would I be this close, Dude?

Foy slowly opens it: pulls out a copy of the Real Estate Form he signed 'Well-Wisher,' faxed to the Times. Cal's Globe business card stapled to the corner. Foy turns green.

CAL (CONT'D)
Why did Sonia Baker call you the morning she died, Dominic?

Foy wide-eyed blank like a spotlight deer. Then in a flurry, scoops his mail, bolts. Hits the front door like the place is on fire. Hitting the remote entry/start buttons from this side of the street. Into his BMW, lays rubber. Unlucky: Cop car three lengths behind him. Red/Blue lights swirl.

EXT. CAL'S SAAB - MOMENTS LATER

Drive by Foy getting a ticket. Everyone in Cal's car sipping coffee, shaking their heads at Foy like disappointed parents.

CAL
We follow Foy wherever he leads.

INT. CAMERON'S OFFICE - DAY

Cameron responds to Cal's last words from the previous scene:

CAMERON FOSTER
You're sure?

CAL
No doubts.

CAMERON FOSTER
You may kiss your own asses. What now?

DANNY

I donated \$500 to the Georgetown Alumni Fund to track down Sheena Gough, Sonia's Roommate at Georgetown and one of the 202 numbers in her phone records. Maybe she knows the story with Foy. How do I get reimbursed for the 5-large-

CAMERON FOSTER

-you don't, and '5-large' is five thousand, Rube.

CAL

How's Della?

CAMERON FOSTER

I'd love to know myself-

-Police storm the Newsroom with warrants that instant. Big noise. All heads turn. Della with them. She and Detective Bell aiming at Cameron's Office, enter without asking.

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)

(at Della)

You could have at least warned me.

Della has been through the wringer. Just hands Cameron a Police sketch of the Hitman, and then a DVD.

DELLA

I won't die for this story.

In the Newsroom b/g: Reporters and Police in shoving matches, desks rifled. Cameron pops the DVD into a TV: surveillance camera footage from Metro Center. People streaming past. Morning commute/nothing special. Then a train horn blaring. Then screams. People running to and from the train...

Two seconds later: the Hitman's face rounds a corner, calm, not running, heading right past us, toward the exits. Shaded and blurry, but certainly him. His head on a swivel, looking for something, someone. Bell hits pause, freezing the image. Cal can't help but narrate the Hitman's movements. Quiet:

CAL

Looking for Stagg now...asked to do the deal at Metro Center so he could kill Sonia and Stagg back-to-back.

Cameron places a hand on Della's shoulder: silent apology. Hesitates, steps behind his desk, opens a safe, to Bell:

CAMERON FOSTER
Call off the SS.

Places the briefcase on the desk, steps aside. Bell examines everything: gun, phone, pictures, maps, more and more irate:

DETECTIVE BELL
Who decided this wasn't evidence?

CAL
(before Cameron can speak)
It was given to me.

DETECTIVE BELL
By whom?

CAL
Homeless. No name.

DETECTIVE BELL
He or she?

CAL
Couldn't tell.

Bell puts Cal into the wall hard. Cameron's pictures fall.

DETECTIVE BELL
Cal McAffrey, you're under arrest
for obstruction of justice for
sure, negligent homicide if I can
make it stick.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Cal cuffed, marched out of the newsroom. Massive swirl around him. Cameron trailing, furious.

CAMERON FOSTER
PETE, TAKE PICTURES OF THIS.
Headline: Yet another Reporter
arrested for protecting a Source.
(to the Cops)
Smile Jack-Boots: you're tomorrow's
news.
(to Cal)
I'll rally the lawyers-

CAL
-don't rally anybody. Give me the
leeway to cut a deal on my own: we
need Foy, they need help...

CAMERON FOSTER
(as the elevator doors
close, amazed)
*You're really thinking about that,
right now?*

INT. D.C. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

Cal sitting in a sweat-box alone. Bell enters.

DETECTIVE BELL
No Lawyer?

CAL
I'll take a phone call instead.

DETECTIVE BELL
You should want a lawyer. For the
blood on your hands. For protecting
your Congressman pal Collins.

CAL
From what?

DETECTIVE BELL
From that briefcase. It throws a
long shadow on the Fair-Haired Boy.

CAL
Phone call.

DETECTIVE BELL
Look what he'd have to gain by
having that little girl iced.

CAL
You sales-pitching me or
questioning me? Phone call.

DETECTIVE BELL
No blackmail headache, no spunk-
stained blue dress to haunt him,
keep the Office, keep the Wife,
keep rising...

CAL
You're right. I'd toss her in front
of a fuckin' train too. Phone call.

DETECTIVE BELL
No: you'd hire it out. Hence the
briefcase. Use your head-

CAL

-after you. This is the same guy I saw beat-the-teeth outta two Charlottesville Townies for pellet-gunning a stray dog. Same guy who told me Sonia's death wasn't a suicide way before you Krispy Kremes cared, long after you shipped her remains back to Michigan because you got Dead stacked like cord-wood in that Circle-of-Hell Morgue. Phone call.

DETECTIVE BELL

What else did Congressman Steve tell you about Ms. Baker's death?

CAL

If you had the Nuts, Bell, you'd look into the Companies Stephen is investigating.

DETECTIVE BELL

What? *Corporate conspiracies that threaten the highest levels...* all my years on this job and I've only ever seen that on TV-

CAL

-all your years at this job and you've only ever seen Congressmen on TV. First one you get close enough to sniff you wanna smear. Phone call.

DETECTIVE BELL

No.

CAL

If you're keeping me here to prevent me from doing a better job than you, I'd be very embarrassed. So let me get back to my Story.

DETECTIVE BELL

It's a Case. Not a Story.

CAL

(beat, leans in)

Then arrest me.

DETECTIVE BELL

Don't nudge me.

CAL

You agree the best way to prove either one of our theories would be to nab this Hitman alive?

(off an 'obviously' nod)

Then publicize that I've been arrested for withholding **key** evidence in a murder investigation.

DETECTIVE BELL

(big beat, getting it)

You as Bait?

CAL

The Hitman bent on me means he's not bent on Della Smith anymore.

Bell shocked, respects the guts. Ponders Cal for a time.

DETECTIVE BELL

This is a dangerous game McAffrey. Lots of waivers to sign.

CAL

Get a pen.

Bell hesitates another second, waves in a uniformed OFFICER:

DETECTIVE BELL

Make it look like we've relaxed Della Smith's protection -- look like -- plainclothes only. And wake-up the press office.

CAL

And I need a favor. In return I give everything I know, which is more than I've told you-

DETECTIVE BELL

-start now.

CAL

(beat, cornered)

Sonia Baker was receiving \$4000 a month. Not from her job.

DETECTIVE BELL

Where'd you get that? We got her records-

CAL

-her Riggs account? The name Sonia Kelly? Kelly being her middle name?

No response from Bell means 'no.'

CAL (CONT'D)

I won't pile-on, but you really need me...so do me this favor...

DETECTIVE BELL

I won't stop investigating Collins.
He's coming in for questioning.

CAL

That's not the favor I'm asking.

DETECTIVE BELL

What then?

CAL

There's a guy named *Dominic Foy*...

EXT. ADAMS MORGAN NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

Danny looking for an address. Finds it. Starts searching nearby parked cars. Eyes lock on a black Jeep Grand Cherokee: what an upper-middle class Dad would buy his upper-middle class-aspiring Daughter for graduation. Bounces on the bumper to trigger the alarm. The door to the house he was looking for opens: a woman dressed for the gym steps out, turns off the alarm: SHEENA GOUGH. Danny holds out his press pass.

DANNY

Sheena Gough?

SHEENA

Why didn't you knock?

DANNY

You wouldn't have answered. You were roommates with Sonia Baker-

SHEENA

-touch my car again I'll have the guys who live upstairs pound you.

DANNY

Just want your take on why Sonia had sex with a guy like Dom Foy?

Disgust supersedes anger/sorrow.

SHEENA
Did *Dominic* tell you that?

DANNY
You know Foy?

SHEENA
Everybody does. He's the guy who
tries so hard you cringe.

DANNY
Then why would Sonia call him the
morning she died? Very last call?

SHEENA
She wouldn't.

DANNY
She did. I have proof.

SHEENA
(beat, spinning)
Sonia had a Savior complex:
dipshits like Foy flocked to her.

DANNY
When was the last time you saw them
together: her and Foy...

SHEENA
(big beat)
Her Birthday party. Two birthdays
ago. Outer Banks. Foy crashed it,
brought a trunk full of groceries
so we wouldn't make him to leave:
steaks, brats, cases of beer-

DANNY
-expensive for 'just friends'-

SHEENA
-he wasn't there for her Birthday.
Not just anyway. He was also there
to celebrate her new job.

Danny silent...sour...lips move like he's counting:

DANNY
Couldn't have been her Birthday.

SHEENA
Were you there? April 17. Year and
a half ago. He posted pictures on
his web-site: foydog.com-

DANNY
-bullshit...foydog?

SHEENA
Like I said: cringe.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - EVENING

Buzzing with deadlines for tomorrow's paper. Our P.O.V.:
looking into a conference room. Inside: Chris Kawai, Cameron,
Detective Bell, and two other Officers we don't know, one
male, one female. In the middle of an intense conversation
muted by the glass. Pull back: Cal, Della, Helen, and Pete
hovering outside, in the middle of their own discussion:

DELLA
You're setting yourself up as bait?

CAL
If this Hitman gets focused on me,
then he's no longer focused on you.

Takes Della by surprise.

CAL (CONT'D)
I envy your sense of right and
wrong, Ms. Smith. So I'm trying it
on -- vaguely smothering,
uncomfortable fit...

Della just hugs him tight. No hesitation, no awkwardness. The
team stanches a collective smile.

DELLA
Thank you.

Danny steps off the elevator and to the Team, sees his Dad
and the Cops in the conference room:

DANNY
(points in at the Cops)
Weren't you just there?

CAL
They think it's safer to talk here.

DANNY
Talk about what?

PETE
Cal's ploy to get a Congressional Medal of Honor.

DANNY
Oh. Well then, sorry in advance for shattering the good-feelings:
Collins has been lying to you Cal.

CAL
(beat, taken aback)
Who wouldn't hide they were ditching a Wife for a 25 year-old-

DANNY
-bigger.
(beat)
Just talked to Sheena Gough -- Sonia's old roommate: Foy crashed Sonia's 23rd birthday party -- to also celebrate her new job with Congressman Collins. This was April, two years ago. But your notes say Collins said she was hired in June of that year.

Room calculates dates, turns to Cal for a response...one not quick in coming from Cal...

CAL
Could be an easy mistake: this all what, 19 months ago now?

DANNY
(dropping web-site print-outs and bank records)
Foy took pictures, put them on his web-site. And Sonia started receiving \$4000 a month on May 30 of that year -- two days before Collins says she was hired...

Cal spinning. No eye contact with anyone. A long silence. Cameron opens the conference room door that moment:

CAMERON FOSTER
We have a deal.

INT. GLOBE CONFERENCE ROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Whole team inside now.

DETECTIVE BELL

This is Officer Jack Wisnewski and Officer Leah Hargrave. Jack will run point for your security detail McAffrey, and Leah will become you Della until we snatch the Killer.

CAMERON FOSTER

Della, can you stay with your Mom in Chicago?

DELLA

I'd rather take my chances with a Killer.

Small smiles.

DETECTIVE BELL

Call her. You leave tonight.

(hands her a piece of paper)

My brother-in-law is a C.P.D. Officer. His boys will pick you up, have eyes on you 24-7.

LEAH HARGRAVE

I'll need a key to your place Ms. Smith, and if you don't mind a hair sample so I can match color.

DETECTIVE BELL

(to Cal)

A judge has agreed to sign off on your fake 'bail,' and we've already posted Cruisers outside your place-

JACK WISNEWSKI

-don't deviate from your norm: go to work, to the gym, get beers at the same bars, etc.

DETECTIVE BELL

And let's all pray this Fuck bites.

CAMERON FOSTER

And misses.

CAL
And the Foy favor?

DETECTIVE BELL
Same judge who signed your bail
denied warrants for Foy: one phone
call and a facsimile of a fax you
think matched his handwriting
weren't deemed sufficient cause.

CAL
But you found him?

DETECTIVE BELL
Flight from Reagan to Vegas.
Tomorrow morning.
(beat, eye contact between
he and Cal)
Cops can't touch him...

INT. OFFICER JACK WISNEWSKI'S CAR - MORNING

In a parking garage. Jets taking-off. Morning rush. Wisnewski
looking out his window, dialing his phone...into his phone:

JACK WISNEWSKI
It's Jack. This fuckin' McAffrey is
quick. He's using our protection
Detail to scare this Foy guy.

Wisnewski's view now: Cal with a blonde guy holding luggage,
standing outside a gorgeous, LeMans blue BMW M5.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MORNING

Move to Cal and Foy now. Cal looking haggard, pointing:

CAL
Look over the railing.

Foy does, edgy: Police Cruisers near the entrance of the
parking garage -- the Cruisers assigned to just track Cal...

CAL (CONT'D)
They'll take you down. Got contacts
in the D.C.P.D. who promised you'll
never make it to Vegas.

Destination details scare Foy all the more.

FOY

They know Vegas? Why they after me?

CAL

You're a material witness in Sonia Baker's murder-

FOY

-MURDER? They said suicide.

CAL

If it was suicide, why are you running to Vegas?

FOY

I need...a vacation...

CAL

Spurned ex-lover sends a fax exposing his rival, but then goes on a Vegas vacation the week of his dead lover's Memorial?

(beat)

That's your story? There are like five lies in there, all of 'em bad.

Foy's watches a plane take off. Cal steps aside, opens a path to the terminal...

CAL (CONT'D)

Go *Foydog*: chance they won't see you. But I'll bet paychecks that Panerai belongs to a Traffic cop this time tomorrow.

(Foy frozen in-place)

You need to get your story straight, Dominic. Practice on us.

INT. OFFICER WISNEWSKI'S CAR - SAME MOMENT

Back to Wisnewski, still on his phone: watching Foy get into Cal's car with him. Someone else waiting in the backseat.

JACK WISNEWSKI

They're leaving together. What do you want me to do?

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME MOMENT

Bell on the phone with Wisniewski. Small commotion at the front-door: Stephen Collins entering, cameras nipping at his heels before the doors close them out. Bell into the phone:

DETECTIVE BELL
Your assignment, Wiz.

Bell steps to Collins as he hangs up. Doesn't offer a hand for shaking. Looking for Collins' Attorney...

DETECTIVE BELL (CONT'D)
There's another seat at the circus.
Where's your lawyer?

STEPHEN
If I wanted a lawyer I'd have shown
with one.

DETECTIVE BELL
Wrong time for pride, Congressman.

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

We've been here before. Pre-game. Bell shuffling papers.
Collins trying to stay calm-focused-clipped. First bullet:

DETECTIVE BELL
She threaten to go public?

STEPHEN
No.

DETECTIVE BELL
Maybe she had some ugly-ass
'friend' who illegally recorded her
bitching about you on the phone?

STEPHEN
No.

DETECTIVE BELL
Young girl like that, powerful Cat
like yourself...imagine when you
end something like that, the young
girl would feel like her world is
crumbling.

STEPHEN
Read the Papers. It wasn't ending.

DETECTIVE BELL

I guess she had so much class that
instead of writing a tell-all or
yapping on The View, she jumps
Juliet-style in front of a train...

Stephen just glares: *I just told you it wasn't ending...*

DETECTIVE BELL (CONT'D)

Lucky Man.

(beat)

Think she killed herself?

STEPHEN

You care what I think?

DETECTIVE BELL

Nope. Got me. Truth be told, I
could give a fuck about you
entirely. What I do care about are
obliterated families. I care that
your actions have ruined lives: a
Mother no longer with a daughter,
your Wife a punch-line for the rest
of the decade, and one of my
favorite Officers with his heart
blown out, and I had to try to
explain it to his seven year-old.

Stephen stands, bristling:

STEPHEN

I didn't come here today to get
spit on...I came to learn why...why
she died...what the last year of my
life was for...

(big beat)

Next time you bring me in, arrest
me first, alert the press, go big.

DETECTIVE BELL

(beat)

You're playing this with epic
stupidity, Congressman.

INT. FOY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Foy pacing. Cal looks out the windows: Wisniewski down in the
parking lot, chatting with the Officers in the two Cruisers -
that will freak Foy if he sees it. Cal shuts the curtains.

CAL
Keep these closed: Cops might
follow me to get to you.

Foy paying little attention. Just a steady bitching stream:

FOY
What kind of Hotel doesn't have on-
demand? Or a mini-bar?

Cal obviously already losing his patience with Foy...

INT. ADJOINING HOTEL ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Prager and SHELDON: Globe's typist/transcriber, setting up a listening post. Computers, scanners, printers, etc. A whisper-quiet war room. We hear Foy's bitching through speakers turned way down.

FOY (O.S.)
Doesn't that make this a 'Motel?'

Danny enters with Foy's luggage. Opens it. Pulls out a dress shirt, admires it, checks the label: Boss. Just shakes his head. Finds his Palm Trio Phone. Immediately hot-sync's the contents into a laptop: addresses, numbers, notes, e-mails.

INT. FOY'S HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Knock on the door. Foy flinches hard enough to spot himself.

CAL
Relax.

Cal opens it. Danny enters with Foy's luggage. Foy: relief. Likes Danny much more than Cal.

CAL
Let's start then.

Foy breathes deep, trying to find stamina for this.

FOY
Where?

CAL
Where else, Dominic? Sonia Baker.
How did you know her?

FOY
We interned together.

CAL
You date her?

FOY
(beat)
Like off-on...friends-with-benefits-

CAL
-get your lies straight, quick.
Again, Why would someone who dates
somebody off-n-on fax a letter to
the Times exposing a Rival? That's
the jealousy of somebody in-love.

FOY
I'm not lying-

CAL
-explain then. We know you sent it.

Danny eyes Cal on the sly: chill.

FOY
I...thought it was wrong. Alright?!
She's dead, but Collins gets to go
on living? Pretending to be young
again, while the one with
everything in front of her is gone.

And we've never seen Cal this intent, this impatient.

CAL
What did she say when she called
you the morning she died? Something
that pissed you off? Something
about Collins?

FOY
(beat, sketchy now)
I don't...she just left a message-

CAL
-FUCK YOU Dominic: a 33 minute
message?

(beat, Foy reeling)
We know much more than you think.
One more little lie and I swear to
you, I call my P.D. Contact, tell
him where to find you, and hold you
down until he gets here...

Foy's face falls. Danny grabs Cal, pushes him out the room.

INT. HALLWAY - NEXT MOMENT

Danny fearless: five inches shorter, 30 pounds lighter than Cal, but right in his grill:

DANNY

If you wanna go Good cop-Bad cop
tell me first-

CAL

-it's no game.

DANNY

Then what is it exactly?

CAL

(beat)

My Friend...more talent and promise
in his toes than you'd find in the
whole fucking Foy family tree...and
he's wasting away: his reputation,
his work, his life -- while that
Turd lies to our face-

DANNY

-you're a Reporter. Not an Advocate-

CAL

-thanks for that precious gem. What
I am is after the truth.

DANNY

Funny way of doing it.

(rat-a-tat whisper)

Foy's not so dumb he won't remember
he can just walk anytime, take his
chances with the Cops who we both
know won't arrest him. You need to
get your lies straight too...push
him like you are and we never get
what he really knows...

Cal stays quiet -- knows Danny is right.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You got him here -- now let me keep
him here.

(beat)

You've been charging this for days
straight now -- you need rest.
Foy'll be here when you-

-Cal's phone rings. Answers it. Before he can say hello.

ANNE (O.S.)
 (not doing well)
 Cal, it's Annie.
 (beat)
 Do you have minute?

CAL
 (immediate concern)
 What's up?

ANNE (O.S.)
 Sorry to drop on you like this...
 (tears)
 I just got scared...really. I
 don't...like I might never be able
 to stop things from falling apart.

Cal turns away from Danny, a pause to switch gears, tone.

CAL
 It's okay. You're in an awful spot.
 (beat)
 If you need a pair a' ears I could
 maybe drive down tonight...

ANNE (O.S.)
 I'm not in Richmond...might never
 go back. An Op-Ed yesterday blamed
 me: *'...if only I had provided a
 family for my Husband...'*

CAL
 Figures. That Place is a fuckin'
 county-sized Cracker Barrel.

Anne's tears go to laughs.

CAL (CONT'D)
 Where are you?

ANNE
 Four Seasons...only if you're not
 busy though...

CAL
 Under what name?

ANNE
 Guess.

CAL
(big beat, looks up at
Danny)
I can be free for a spell. Give me
twenty minutes.

Hangs up. Cal hesitates, yanked in multiple directions at
once. Chooses. Nods and walks away from Danny, Foy.

EXT. FOY'S MOTEL - LATE MORNING

Bright sun. Cal heading to his car. Wisnewski waiting...

CAL
I've got to go meet a friend. You
all can hang back-

JACK WISNEWSKI
-I look forward to meeting her.

CAL
(stunned, beat)
My phone?

JACK WISNEWSKI
Hooked into your land-lines and
Cell in case this Hitman calls you
direct...gotta read the fine print.

Cal spinning, could tear his hair out. Needs sleep.

CAL
What now?

JACK WISNEWSKI
I do my job, you keep your daily
routine.

CAL
Who else knows?

JACK WISNEWSKI
No one is going to say anything.

CAL
(beat)
Because there's nothing to say.
She's a friend.

JACK WISNEWSKI
Lucky. All my pals look like Bell.

CUT TO:

INT. PLUSH ELEVATOR - TIME UNKNOWN

Our P.O.V.: closed doors in front of us. Charlie Mingus pipes out from Bose speakers. Elevator doors open. Nothing/no one. Doors close. Pulleys activate. Up another floor. Doors open again: cleaning cart stuffed with towels, soaps, etc.

Doors close. Up another floor. Doors open again: a big man in a suit sitting in the floor lobby, in those chairs no one ever sits in. WISNEWSKI. He looks up at us. Doors close on his gaze. We look up: an electric red '5' signifies we're on the Fifth Floor. Our finger presses a button: '4.' Down again. Doors open. We step out. Cleaning cart gone.

EXT. FOURTH FLOOR LOBBY/HALLWAY - NOON

Step into the hallway, passing the big, gilded mirror: we're the HITMAN. Goatee gone revealing a jagged scar along the jawline -- built in disguise. Wearing a Kangol driver's hat turned backwards and a long Burberry rain coat. Looking every bit the hip, urban Conventioneer heading back to his room.

Hitman scanning, sees the cleaning cart parked in front of one the rooms closest to the elevator bank. Door propped open. Quickly, nonchalantly steps to that room, grabs a clip board off the cart...

INT. HOTEL ROOM BEING CLEANED - NEXT MOMENT

Steps inside quietly, kicks the rubber stop away from the door, allowing it to begin closing. Sets the clipboard on the floor as he waits another for the door to close with a click. When it does, the startled MAID steps out the bathroom:

MAID
Sorry Sir...this your room-

-Hitman just gently takes hold of the little woman's shoulders, moves her away from a desk edge so she won't clip her head on the way down. And punches her square in the chin. A flat sound like packing meat. Instant night-night. The Maid's unbroken fall to her back makes us cringe again.

Hitman pulls/pockets her Master Keycard. Picks up the clipboard again, flips to a gridded print-out titled: FLOOR 5. Scanning the names of guests registered on floor 5. Lingers on a specific line: Annie Hall -- Room 527.

EXT. FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stairwell door opens. Hitman. Not worried about his noise yet: I'm a guest here. A Plainclothes walking with his back to him: bored patrol. Hitman scans to see which way numbers move: 527 in the direction the Plainclothes is walking.

Hitman starts that way, quiet now: not wanting the Plainclothes to turn around. Sweat on his brow. Keycard in his left. Right hand in his coat pocket. He's timing things so he'll be just behind Plainclothes as they converge on 527.

Hitman springs quiet-fierce. Hand-in-pocket comes out revealing a K-Bar combat knife. Drives the entire 7-inch blade up under the base of the Plainclothes' skull. A violent motion that leaves no doubt a life is ending. Plainclothes' eyes roll, a vague whimper. Hitman keys 527 almost the same instant. Ducks inside with Plainclothes still hung from his blade, not yet completely without muscle control.

INT. ROOM 527 - NEXT MOMENT

Hitman setting Plainclothes down as gently as he can.

CAL (O.C.)
Hello? We're actually all good...

Hitman steps around the corner, keeps the knife up, pockets the keycard, pulls his silenced 9MM. Cal and Anne sitting on the bed, Anne's eyes red from crying. Both go out of body now: does this man truly have a gun and knife? Hitman never stops walking toward Anne, puts the knife to her cheek, aims the gun at Cal, speaks his first words:

HITMAN
(sweating, soft-spoken)
My briefcase. And if you say 'don't have it' or 'can't get it,' you'll watch me open her.

CAL
I have it. I can get it-

-knock-knock on the door stops everyone cold...

HITMAN

YUP?

UNKNOWN KNOCKER (O.C.)

Room Service.

Hitman to Cal, whispering, knife deeper into Anne's cheek:

HITMAN

What did you order?

CAL

Champagne.

HITMAN

(beat)

Those our Club Sandwiches?

UNKNOWN KNOCK (O.C.)

(beat)

Yes Sir.

Hitman pivots, fires three silenced shots through the door instantly, rapid succession: one head-high, one waist-high, one knee-high. Wounded growl from the other side of the door.

A pause. Then big screams from way down the Hall. A guest has seen the shooting. Commotion builds quick. Doors up and down the hallway opening:

UNKNOWN FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

BULLETS! THAT MAN'S BLEEDING!

Doors slamming again. The obvious: Hotel Security/Cops being called right now. Hitman sweating times two, hesitates for the first time, reaches to grab Anne: a hostage to clear his way. Cal wraps her up tight, not letting him-

HITMAN

-I'LL FUCKING MURDER-

CAL

-COPS ARE ALREADY HERE-MORE GETTING CALLED RIGHT NOW-YOU GOTTA MOVE!

Hitman panicky. One last effort to rip Anne free. Cal kicks him hard. Hitman points the gun at Cal's face ready to pull-

CAL (CONT'D)

(head down in a flinch)

-forget your briefcase then.

Hitman, pure frustration, sprints to the door. Out the peep-hole: Wisnewski on the ground, blood pooling. Hitman opens the door, gun already aimed.

EXT. FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY - NEXT MOMENT

Wisnewski down: temple grazed, also hit in the torso. Trouble breathing. Hitman picks him up, grabs Wisnewski's weapon from his shoulder holster as Wisnewski remembers to try the same, fumbling for it until the Hitman pistol-whips him. Hitman tucks Wisnewski's gun into his coat pocket. Kicks Wisnewski hard in either ankle: making sure he has no back-up gun.

HITMAN

I'll push you where I want you to move: go with it. If you fall or fuck around I take your life.

Grabs Wisnewski's left hand, looks: wedding band.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Think about your family.

Pushes wheezing Wisnewski to the stairwell. Door closes behind them as we hear the elevator 'ding,' then commands:

BOOMING VOICE

527! MOVE!

INT. FOUR SEASONS KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Hitman and Wisnewski run/stumble/sweat, parting the shocked waiters/cooks/bell boys.

HITMAN

MAKE A HOLE! THIS MAN NEEDS HELP!

EXT. FOUR SEASONS DELIVERY BAY - NOON

Sounds of heavy traffic somewhere close. Hitman and Wisnewski through the door, moving toward bushes, then a drop-off to Rock Creek Parkway: a main thoroughfare through a heavily-wooded section of D.C. Easy escape.

Hitman and Wisnewski get to the sloped drop-off. Wisnewski looks over at the Hitman half-smiling back at him, a man who loves his work: see ya, Pig. Then his face disappears in a red micro-burst. Heart-stop shock being this close.

No gunshot report. Just flowing traffic. Hitman drops instant-dead. Wisnewski follows, down to his knees, searching for his Providence. Nothing. Sirens converging. Someone grabs him, lays him gently on his back: Detective Bell.

DETECTIVE BELL
AMBULANCE!

Bell eyes the dead body next to Wisnewski: gruesome. Officers and Medics running back to them now.

DETECTIVE BELL (CONT'D)
Who got him? We didn't post Snipers-

JACK WISNEWSKI
-I didn't see it.

Horns blare below, distant -- Bell looks up: a black, blacked-out Suburban flying away. Bell can't take his eyes away, even after it disappears behind downtown buildings. Medics shove Bell out of the way.

INT. ROOM 529 - DAY

Room 529, connected to 527 via an internal door. Make-shift nerve center. Horns, sirens, shouts waft up from street-level. Bell standing with a group of Police. A Female Officer is on a cell phone in the middle of the group. All hover, anxious the hear what's being said. She hangs up, talks to Bell for five seconds. Bell breaks from the group, steps into-

INT. ROOM 527 - NEXT MOMENT

-EMTs lift Plainclothes' dead bulk onto a stretcher. Cal and Anne standing now, both vacant from shock.

DETECTIVE BELL
You guys alright?

Cal doesn't nod. Anne does slowly, cheeks tear-stained.

CAL
(no eye contact)
Please get her out of here.
Quietly.

DETECTIVE BELL
Where to?

CAL
1510 Jackson.

Bell grabs a nearby Detective, hands him keys:

DETECTIVE BELL
My car is out back. Take the alley
under the Whitehurst out.

Cal hugs Anne hard, gives her his house key.

CAL
I'll be home soon as I can...

ANNE
What just happened?

CAL
(beat)
I'll be home soon as I can.

Anne led out. Cal pauses, make sure she's out of earshot.

CAL
The Hitman dead?

DETECTIVE BELL
What are you doing here with her?

CAL
God damn it: she's a friend.

DETECTIVE BELL
You meet married female friends in
Hotel rooms with curtains drawn?

CAL
When they're hounded like she is.

DETECTIVE BELL
(big beat, circumspect)
The Hitman is dead, but we didn't
kill him.

CAL
Who did?

DETECTIVE BELL
Would you believe 'somebody in a
black Suburban.'

CAL
Will you now?
(beat)
Any guess on who?

DETECTIVE BELL
 (beat, nods back to the
 Woman with the cell)
 None. Keisha's talking to a buddy
 at Secret Service, getting nowhere.

CAL
 (wheels spin over-drive)
 Promise I'm the first outside of
 you to hear this Hitman's name.

DETECTIVE BELL
 If he's got one, and what in-trade?

CAL
Dominic Foy. Everything he gives
 me. You'll need it when you start
 going after the Principals in this.

DETECTIVE BELL
 You're an optimist.
 (beat)
 You think Foy can peel back the
 layers?

INT. FOY'S HOTEL, GIFT SHOP - CONCURRENT

CAL (V.O.)
Dominic Foy has more secrets than
smarts. And we'll get to his
 secrets quicker if you crank-up the
 heat on him.

Sheldon, the Globe's typist/transcriber we last saw in the
 listening post adjoining Foy's room, already bored with this
 gig. Blows dust off a bottle of water. Then he hears a voice
 he's only ever heard once before through headphones.

FOY (O.C.)
 Got any magazines that have
 actually been published during the
 Bush Administration?

Sheldon's forehead wrinkles, turns, sees Foy for the first
time: buying magazines, smirking at the woman behind the
 counter. Sheldon steps behind him in-line, looks over his
 shoulder at his magazine selection: Details, Us Weekly,
 Cosmo. Grin moves over Sheldon's face. From Behind Foy:

SHELDON
 Maybe from the first Bush...

Foy turns back, sees Sheldon holding his own copy of Details. 'Pissed' to 'grinning' in under two seconds. And just who and what Dominic Foy is becomes a bit clearer.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Cal off the elevator. His P.O.V.: Danny leading Sheldon the Transcriber into Cameron's Office, grabbing Helen Prager and Pete. Hustling. Something's up. Cal moves in behind them.

INT. CAMERON'S OFFICE - NEXT MOMENT

Everybody grabs a seat. The big smile on Danny's face dies when Cal comes in, sits down: everyone has heard snippets and rumors of what happened at the Four Seasons...

CAL
Someone should tell Della the
Hitman's dead.

HELEN
Four Seasons?
(off Cal's 'yes' nod)
Everyone's clamoring for what they
think is a story, but no one's
getting details-

CAL
-let 'em spin then. Gives us more
time to focus on Foy.

CAMERON FOSTER
Spoken like an Editor. Hitman have
a name yet?

CAL
Tomorrow. Maybe.

CAMERON FOSTER
(eyes boring-in)
Why were you at the Four Seasons
with Anne Collins, Cal?

The entire Team, save Danny, flip their attention to Cal, no one had heard the 'Anne' part yet... Cal on his heels.

HELEN
What?

CAL
None of your business, Cameron.
How'd you find out?

DANNY
Turn down the volume on your
mobile.

CAL
(daggers at Danny)
Eavesdropping?

DANNY
I'm a Reporter.

CAL
I'm not the story.

PETE
You hired him to work on the
Stephen Collins story. Anne Collins
is a part of that-

CAL
-who are you again?

PETE
Pardon me? I'm just one the guys
who does all the shit you're too
busy or too 'senior' to do...

Cal hesitates, breaths deep...slowly realizing he's in the
wrong here...lashing out to obfuscate...

CAL
I apologize.

CAMERON FOSTER
And I'm still waiting for mine.
(beat, points to Sheldon)
Can someone tell me why he is here?

Danny remembers Sheldon's presence:

DANNY
Sheldon found something out.

CAMERON FOSTER
(beat)
Who's Sheldon?

SHELDON
 (meekly raising an index
 finger, nervous to be in
 with the Big Guns)
 Well...me. And Dominic Foy is gay.

Mouths gape, smiles sprout, the mood changes...

SHELDON (CONT'D)
 (egged on by the smiles)
 If he and Sonia had a relationship
 it was a Will & Grace type thing-

DANNY
 -don't milk it.

SHELDON
 (beat)
 I'm in the Hotel gift shop. He's
 buying magazines: Details, Us
Weekly, a Cosmo... I made a joke...9
 minutes later he dove on me...

CAMERON FOSTER
 You're gay?

SHELDON
 I have a 27-inch waist.

CAL
 (quieter than normal,
 still smarting from
 Cameron's rebuke)
Foy blew you? Nine minutes from
 'hello' to 'hey now?'

SHELDON
 And that's not a record.

Helen's lyrical laugh...

CAMERON FOSTER
 (like he just discovered
 an indigenous tribe:)
 You people are barbaric...

CAL
 What does Foy know about you now?

SHELDON
 That I'm there for a sales meeting.

CAMERON FOSTER
I suppose you want this figured
into your performance bonus?

EXT. FOY'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Cal doesn't knock. Uses a spare key to open the door.

INT. FOY'S HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Scrambling sounds. Cal rounds the corner: Foy terrified, his
copy of Cosmo fashioned into a truncheon.

FOY
JESUS...KNOCK! I was ready to fuck
you up. How do you just get to walk-

CAL
-room's under my name.

Foy's cell-phone rings...he startles for a second time.
Checks the number, groans, swipes the phone off the table
like it's evil.

CAL
Detective Bell calling again?

FOY
Won't stop.
(beat)
How do you know?

Cal pulls a D.C.P.D. visitor's badge from his pocket.

CAL
Because I just came from there.
Threatened me if I didn't tell them
where you were...they know the last
person Sonia called was you.

FOY
(beat, flustered)
Fuck it. I'm gonna go see him then-

And Cal has him trapped now, sits:

CAL
-and what will you say, Dominic?
(points to the Cosmo)
That you were the *spurned lover*?

CAL(cont'd)

Bell might buy that you and Sonia were *pals*, might buy you talked fabrics and colors, but these guys will smell that you never had sex with her, or ever even wanted to...

FOY

What...sm-smell what...we were much more than *buddies*-

CAL

-you gonna tell them what you told me: so bosom-close you were heading to Vegas instead of her funeral?

FOY

(beat)

My grief is different than yours.

CAL

Just like your sexual preference.

(Foy goes green)

You weren't in love with her. Biblically anyway. You weren't spurned for Collins. Thus I need to know why you really sent that fax. And I need to know now or we're done here.

Foy's eyes welling up. The grimace of the trapped and afraid.

CAL (CONT'D)

Dominic: it's obvious you're afraid of something, someone. Fear would explain your actions, that fax. And you're so afraid that you don't think even the Police can help...or you'd have already gone to them...

FOY

(beat)

I need money, okay? Cash for travel...far as I can get...by the time I get back you'll have stories about fish 100-times bigger than me-

CAL

-then point them out.

FOY

If I can get like...20...

CAL

Thousand?

Foy nods like: *what else?* Cal just bloodshot-tired of Foy:

CAL (CONT'D)

Fuck off.

Foy gets a second wind talking cash, lights a cigarette, finally realizing Cal really needs what he has.

CAL (CONT'D)

Non-smoking room-

FOY

-under your name.

(beat)

They don't want me, alright? They want someone else.

CAL

Who?

(beat, no answer, then:)

Thousand. On my word.

FOY

(beat)

Warner-Schloss hired me to find an Applicant for an opening in Stephen Collins' office.

That catches Cal in the gut...

CAL

Warner-Schloss? Most white-shoe PR firm in town?

(off Foy's 'yes' nod)

Subcontracted out to you?

(Foy won't nod again)

Why?

FOY

Maybe...it was a job they didn't want to do, asked for by a client they didn't want to lose.

CAL

When was this?

FOY

Your turn to fuck off. 20.

CAL

Can't ask for it 'til morning.

Foy smug with his rare win:

FOY
You know where I am.

INT. CAL'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Old school Dave Matthews filtering in from the living room.
Cal steps in: Anne half-asleep on the couch. His CD
collection raided, several stacked in front of the stereo.

CAL
(quiet)
Hey. How you holding up?

ANNE
Can't convince myself today really
happened.

Cal sits down next to her. She stares at him
unapologetically. He keeps his eyes straight ahead.

CAL
I hear you.
(beat)
The guy who came at us is gone.

ANNE
Who was he?

CAL
I don't know yet.

ANNE
Why?

CAL
(beat, a lie)
Nor that yet...

ANNE
(beat)
You kicked him away from me.

CAL
Just a reflex-

ANNE
-that not everyone has.

Cal meets her eyes finally. A long beat as we expect the
simmer to boil. Key in the front door. Cal and Anne, one foot
from one another, swing their sights to the entry-way:

STEPHEN (O.C.)
 (calling out)
 You here?

Stephen rounds the corner, sees Cal and Anne. His face falls. Like a child who just found out his parents lie. In his hand, his own brand-new bottle of Jack Daniels green label -- peace pipe for their fight. Cal closes his eyes.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
 (much quieter, pulls out
 Cal's spare key)
 Took your spare by mistake when I
 left...
 (puts the key on a side-
 table, then the bourbon)
 That's for the...shit I said...

Long silence. An anger Stephen can't stem starting to roil in his face, still quiet. To his wife:

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
 Cal doesn't look embarrassed, but
you do.

ANNE
 Who the hell are you to preach?

STEPHEN
 I've got enough guilt for it not to
 be preaching.
 (to Cal)
 You been fuckin' *this one-that one-*
this one since freshman year. And
 the first real woman you've ever
 been with, Brother, is my wife-

ANNE
 -to whom you're so devoted you
 destroyed the marriage for an
employee. And we're not doing
 anything but talking-

STEPHEN
 -only because I walked in when I
 did. A guy I called my best friend
once.

That twists the knife already in Cal. But he stays mum.

ANNE
 How do you know he's not?

STEPHEN

If this is what best friends do,
I'll settle for acquaintances.
(settling in, at Cal now:)
I'd catch you looking at her now
and again...way a poor kid looks at
a Mansion...

CAL

(quiet)
How did you look at her?

STEPHEN

You don't get to talk now, *Friend*.
Even caught her looking back a
couple times: *he might be fun so
long as no one found out-*

ANNE

-get out.

STEPHEN

(beat)
Have a good night. Spend it trying
to deny those bits of-
(right at Cal)
-truth to each other.

EXT. CAL'S HOME - NIGHT

Cal follows Stephen outside, out of Anne's earshot.

STEPHEN

I wouldn't follow me right now-

CAL

-or you'll take a swing at me-

STEPHEN

-If you were a Man you'd have
already offered up your chin-

CAL

-if you weren't angry-blind-
(pointing back to the
house)
-you'd see that's what I just did
in there by keeping my mouth shut.

STEPHEN

You're all angles and lies, Cal.

CAL

Look in the mirror before you spit:
Sonia Baker wasn't hired in June,
Steve.

(beat)

Her friends threw her a joint
 birthday/new job party two years
 back. And her birthday was April...

Stephen legitimately puzzled, thrown by the topic shift.

STEPHEN

Like I said: all angles-

CAL

-and I'll swallow that. But not the
 'lies' part -- not from you.

STEPHEN

I'm not lying. Greer Thornton hires
 the staff in my office -- like most
 Chiefs do in most every other
 fuckin' Congressman's office. And
she hired Sonia Baker in June.

Stephen gets in his Car. Takes off. Cal's head elsewhere
 already, deep in-thought, processing this new information.
Stephen hit the 'all angles' part on the head...

EXT. GREER THORNTON'S HOME, CAPITOL HILL - MORNING

Modest but nice. Early Morning. Cal waiting in the periphery.
 Looks as worn-out as we've ever seen him. Thornton out her
 door, locking the dead-bolt, turns around with a start.

CAL

Morning Greer.

GREER

(big startle)

CAL! What do you want?

CAL

To ask you a question I should have
 started with: why would you have
hired Sonia Baker, Greer?

Greer hesitates, instant-defensive, walking now:

GREER

Good school, great smile...you need plenty of that in a Congressman's office. I don't have to explain my hiring decisions to anyone.

CAL

So why are you doing just that?

Greer hesitates, no answer, looking for a cab now...

GREER

I'm on my way to work, Cal-

CAL

-I'll walk with you. Couldn't you have gotten 1000 interns just as smart, just as smiley, and paid them nothing? A Congressman's Office needs plenty of that too-

GREER

-the opening was a paid position-

CAL

-that people with graduate degrees queue-up for. Especially for a job with a comer like Steve.

Greer: no answer, walks faster, scans corners for Cabs.

CAL (CONT'D)

You know who Warner-Schloss is?

GREER

You only ask obvious questions? The PR folks-

CAL

-the PR Giants. You know they hired a guy to find an ideal applicant for that 'paid position?' Ideal from their perspective not Steve's. And I say the candidate they found, that they vetted, that they somehow maneuvered in, was Sonia Baker.

Greer would jump on a city bus if it passed.

CAL (CONT'D)

Did you also know Warner-Schloss's newest client is U-Ex?

That snaps Greer to attention, slows her pace.

CAL (CONT'D)

Found that out this morning. Took two hours of digging. That's the same U-Ex Stephen is investigating if you're having-

GREER

-shut up, Cal.

CAL

So how did Sonia Baker's resume make it to you? In the mass of better qualified resumes that flood the Capitol daily? I bet my life it didn't come in the mail...

Greer says nothing. Looking scared like Foy now. Ready to hitch-hike so long as it gets her away from Cal's questions.

CAL (CONT'D)

Greer: Steve is in trouble...

GREER

(beat)

I promise I didn't know any of what you just told me.

(looks around, coming clean, quiet:)

George Fergus told me about Sonia. Gave me her resume -- he was close with her family. 'Strongly encouraged' me to give her a chance...I wouldn't still have this job if I ignored things like that.

Cal hesitates, belts out a whistle: flagging a cab for Greer. Then pulls out his cell-phone.

INT. GRAND HYATT - MORNING

Cal moves like a shark. Navigating a pudgy-pale-conservative throng: an entire lobby of Tucker Carlsons. A banner reads: American Functional Families Coalition. Cal heat-seeking Senator George Fergus. Sees him, starts that way, held back by Organizers, twenty yards from Fergus. Fergus laughs over pastries with other distinguished-looking white guys.

CAL
I need to get a word with the
Senator. Tell him it's Cal McAffrey
from the Globe and I'm on deadline.

One of the Organizers approaches Fergus like penitent Catholics approach the Pope. Whispers. Cal sees Fergus frown: *fuck him*. Cal pulls a notepad, writing as the Organizer walks back to him. Before the Organizer can say: 'Sorry.'

CAL (CONT'D)
Hand him this note. Now.

Organizer reluctantly walks back, note in-hand. Cal watches Fergus get angry, open it quickly. Switch to Fergus's P.O.V., reading Cal's note: Sonia Baker's family says 'hi.'

Fergus looks up at Cal, smiles wide now, steps lively.

SENATOR FERGUS
Oh, *that* Cal McAff-

CAL
-we need privacy.

EXT. GRAND HYATT ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Maids on a smoke break as Cal and Fergus engage. Fergus all light and goodness...initially.

SENATOR FERGUS
So what's up? How'd you find me-

CAL
-if you suggested Greer Thornton hire Sonia Baker, that's tantamount to ensuring Sonia got the job. If it then turns out Sonia was reporting Stephen Collins' Committee findings to one of the very companies being investigated, way before those findings were to be published -- well Christ -- that might not look so good for you.

SENATOR FERGUS
(face turns evil)
One: never use the lord's name in vain with me. Two: how could you even assume a bright, naïve 25 year-old girl was, what: *a double agent?*

CAL
Because a bright, naive, 25 year-
old blonde sounds like the perfect
double agent-

SENATOR FERGUS
-Mr. McAffrey: I went to bat for a
young girl whose family I met and
respected. A family that seemed
like the wholesome ideal upon which
this country was founded-

CAL
-what's Sonia's Mom's first name?

SENATOR FERGUS
(big beat)
Pardon-

CAL
-you heard me *Family Friend*...

Fergus hesitates, caught, turns deeper crimson. Talks fast:

SENATOR FERGUS
Publish any a' this speculative
drivel and I'll come after you and
your third-rate paper with
everything I have.

CAL
Janine.

Fergus fumes to hide his embarrassment, bolts.

INT. CANNON OFFICE BUILDING, STEPHEN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Stephen in the same clothes we saw him in when confronting
Cal and Anne. Frantically trying to put together his day's
paperwork. Greer arrives, hangs up her coat, fresh from her
run-in with Cal. She pops into his office: just takes in the
sight of Stephen, his obvious deterioration...

STEPHEN
I haven't even read the names of
the people were questioning today.

Stephen sits, ready to admit defeat, eyes shrink-wrapped in
tears. Greer steps to him, just hugs him like a Mother.

GREER

You're going to let me deal with re-scheduling it all. You're going to get some coffee and breakfast, and you're turning off your phone.

STEPHEN

(big beat)

Why did you hire her?

GREER

(heart-sick)

I'm so sorry.

STEPHEN

About what?

GREER

Never telling you...that...Fergus gave me her resume, said give her a chance so I did. And I never told you...I mean it seemed like an inspired choice after the first week...so quick on her feet...

STEPHEN

You never have to apologize to me.

(beat, his face darkens)

Where's Senator Fergus right now?

Greer sees the change, pauses, checks her Committee Schedule.

GREER

Key-noting the American Functional Families Coalition. Grand Hyatt.

Stephen puts his jacket back on. Greer hands him his scarf, obvious worry crossing her face.

STEPHEN

You got nothing to worry about.

GREER

I'm not worried about me...

Stephen kisses her on the forehead.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - SAME MOMENT

Select people filter into a conference room. Welcoming Della back after her short 'witness protection' stint.

As people chat/joke Jessy enters, gives Cameron his messages for the morning: Cameron zeroes in on one from Andrew Pell. Calls from the conference room phone.

CAMERON FOSTER

You rang?

ANDREW PELL (O.S.)

Morning. To beg your comments on your star Reporter having his own affair with Anne Collins...

(Cameron gape-mouthed)

Professional courtesy before I call the Times, Post, etc.

(no answer from Cameron)

I think this whole story is going to re-warp around your Boy.

CAMERON FOSTER

Lies are Sad. Even yours.

ANDREW PELL

Stephen walked in on them last night: he's the source, the quote. Again, do you want to add anything?

CAMERON FOSTER

He'll look petty.

ANDREW PELL

That's nothing compared to what he's 'looked' like these past few days -- I'll gladly take 'petty'--

-Cameron hangs up, thinks, grabs Della: guest-of-honor two bites into a donut-

CAMERON FOSTER

-get your jacket.

DELLA

What are we doing?

CAMERON FOSTER

Getting you up to speed.

EXT. CANNON OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

Cameron and Della heading up the steps to Stephen's office when they pass him on his way out to the Hyatt/Fergus. They immediately start trailing him, walking in lock-step.

CAMERON FOSTER
Congressman Collins. I'm Cameron
Foster, Editor of the Globe. This
is Della Smith, one of our-

STEPHEN
-I'd fire McAffrey right now,
minimize the blow-back.

Della's eyes moving back and forth: *what is going on...*

CAMERON FOSTER
If you do this, make this story
about Cal and your Wife, you'll
never get answers about Sonia.
You'll never know who was pulling
strings or even if they were indeed
being pulled.

Della's eyes turn down, hiding her shock: *Cal and Anne?*

STEPHEN
But that two-faced son of a bitch
burns.

DELLA
(more a question to
herself)
He's your best friend...

STEPHEN
People keep saying that. And what
the hell do you know?

DELLA
(beat)
I know he's been your voice for the
duration of this story, re-framing
things around the companies you're
investigating, even to the Police
who think you had the most to gain
from Sonia's death.

That slows Stephen a bit.

CAMERON FOSTER
Congressman, we'll come after you
equally hard if you do this --
we'll be the voice against you that
never stops screaming, even after I
sack Cal.

Della looks up at Cameron to see if he's serious.

STEPHEN
Whatever you scream about me is
already being said.

CAMERON FOSTER
Warner Schloss was paying Sonia.
Got her the job on your staff.

That grabs both Stephen's and Della's attention.

STEPHEN
The fuck are you talking about?

CAMERON FOSTER
We have the guy they hired to find
an Applicant for your open spot two
years ago: her name was Sonia
Baker. Her real job was to spy on
your work for Warner Schloss, the
PR firm that represents-

Stephen ashen now:

STEPHEN
-U-Ex. You know this?

CAMERON FOSTER
We guess this in a very educated
way. This same Source is also the
'Well-Wisher' who faxed the Times
the Real Estate form...that's how
we found him...

Stephen dumbfounded now.

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)
Kill the story about Cal and Anne,
and I let you ask the Well Wisher
the questions we both want -- need
-- answered...

Stephen searches the two faces in front of him...then pulls
out his cell, dials:

STEPHEN
Andrew, kill the story...I said
kill it: I won't go on record, I'll
say you're a liar and no one who
knows you will doubt it.

Click. Back to Cameron and Della, focused fury.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I've got time right now.

INT. FOY'S HOTEL, LISTENING POST ROOM - DAY

Collins scans the room like you would a whorehouse. This is why he despises the press. Danny nods, shows Collins the stationary mic he should speak into. Whispers.

DANNY
Congressman, I'm Dan. Sit here,
speak quietly into the mic. Your
questions will go through Della's
earpiece-

STEPHEN
-I talk to this guy face-to-face.

CAMERON FOSTER
Please mind your voice, Sir: he's
in the very next room. Della will
have you in her ear. You tell her
what to ask, and she will.

Della nods, doing her hair to hide the hardware. Stephen doesn't answer, just sneers. Cameron to Danny, quieter:

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)
Post down the hallway. Don't let
Cal barge-in if and when he shows.

INT. FOY'S HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Knock-knock. Foy hits the peep-hole, lingers, then opens the door. All caution, all the time. Sticks his hand out without words. Cameron hands him a \$20,000.00 check. Foy immediately checking watermarks, color-patterns and what not.

Della re-introduces herself to Foy -- Foy just nods quick. They all sit, steno-pads and pens pulled out. Game-time.

CUT TO:

Stephen listening through small speakers next to his mic. His first question:

STEPHEN
What was your job, and what did you
get for it?

We hear Della ask it over the speakers. Then:

FOY (O.S.)
 (halting, fearful)
 Warner-Schloss paid me \$175,000 in
 consultancy fees...got my firm
 office space at the Watergate...

CUT TO:

Foy's room. Foy continuing with the same answer, his
 trepidation obvious:

FOY (CONT'D)
 In return I had to find a female
 Applicant for a job in Stephen
 Collins' office. Sell her on
 certain duties. 'Make sure she's
 smart, young, from the Midwest, but
 she can't be such a schoolgirl that
 she won't take chances.'

A small hesitation before all of Della's questions...

DELLA
 Why you?

FOY
 Went to school here. I know
 people...the scene...it's how I met
 Paul Canning from Warner-Schloss to
 begin with: big industry happy-hour
 at the 18th Street Lounge.

DELLA
 Why Sonia?

FOY
 Perfect fit.
 (a plea)
 But you have to please believe that
 I never thought she'd die...

Stephen: furrowed brow, guts being eaten away, tight on the
 tightness in his face. Hissing:

STEPHEN
Why Sonia?

Della repeating, then:

FOY (O.S.)
 Just had balls.
 (beat)
 Beauty.

FOY(cont'd)

She was from some fucking place
called Shepherd, Michigan. Took
time to warm to the job but like I
said: perfect fit.

CUT TO:

Foy's room.

DELLA

What was the job?

Foy silent.

DELLA (CONT'D)

Domin-

FOY

(fast, like in a
confessional)

-reporting to Canning on what
Collins' was investigating. His
findings, if any penalties were
coming. Everything. The important
shit got passed to U-Ex. I swear to
God I dunno what they did with it.

DELLA

Can you confirm any of this?

FOY

Yes.

DELLA

(beat, waiting...)

How?

Foy silent.

CAMERON FOSTER

You haven't cashed that check yet.

FOY

(beat)

Got accidentally cc'ed on an e-mail
from U-Ex to Warner Schloss, about
Sonia's work.

DELLA

Who at U-Ex?

FOY
Some guy named Rich Siegler. V.P. I
don't know him -- and he better not
know me after this...

INT. FOY'S HOTEL, HALLWAY - SAME MOMENT

Cal rolls off the elevator. Danny greets him ala Bouncer.

CAL
(beat, surprised)
Jessy said Cameron's here. Why?

DANNY
Follow me. And no matter what, stay
silent when I open the door.

INT. FOY'S HOTEL, LISTENING POST ROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Danny leads Cal in. Cal and Stephen reel, eye-blink shock,
then ice forms. Stephen continues staring at Cal as he says:

STEPHEN
If you were that involved, had so
much riding on this: your business,
your offices -- why send the fax?
Why not be *honorable*, keep your
mouth shut? And Della, you better
say '*honorable.*'

CUT TO:

Foy's room.

FOY
Fuck you! It was honorable: I'm the
one who put her there!

DELLA
Why implicate Collins?

FOY
I had nothing else to prove
something bigger was going on: so I
showed that Collins and Sonia were
more than fucking, then tried to
get out of town while you all would
ask questions, figure shit out...

DELLA

Nothing else except this e-mail you just talked about.

FOY

You think I want to end up like her? I sent the fax because I was scared...am scared...you know what that e-mail said?

CAMERON FOSTER

How would we?

FOY

'Canning, you and your boy - ME - better get her back on-board or there will be hell to pay.' Then Sonia dies. Then Canning gets moved to the Warner-Schloss Tokyo Office. Won't return my calls.

(beat)

That e-mail is my A-bomb: I'll drop it when I got nothin' left.

DELLA

What did 'back on-board' mean?

FOY

(beat, to himself)

Why didn't I go -- fucking risk it?

(big beat)

Sonia called me that morning 'cuz she thought we were scaring her back into-the-fold with a call about somebody after her: guns and pictures found in some luggage. I swore to God I didn't know anything...and she started bawling.

DELLA

So she had stopped informing for Canning, for Warner-Schloss?

FOY

YES!

DELLA

And she was crying because she was scared of them, somebody after her?

FOY

No. The only reason she was crying was Collins.

FOY(cont'd)

She got pregnant...he didn't know.
She was terrified he'd find out
what she'd done for Canning --
Warner-Schloss...that he then
 wouldn't want her or his kid. She
 got so wrecked about it she burned
 her last two paychecks from Warner-
 Schloss: \$8000. Who does that?

CUT TO:

Stephen trembling. Cal sitting now, equally shocked.

DANNY

(almost to himself)

The deposits stopped two months ago
 but not the payments...she called
it off with Warner-Schloss...

FOY (O.S.)

...that's why the e-mail came: when
she didn't deposit those checks.
 Sonia stopped returning all calls
 until she called me that morning...

CUT TO:

Foy's room.

FOY (CONT'D)

I tried to get her to think about
 the publicity if it came out, an
 abortion, keeping her word, what
 her decisions meant for ME! That's
what we talked about for 33
minutes. Tell that bully Cal.

(fear-cracks)

Then she dies. Then I'm told it was
 a murder...and now I want no more
to do with it -- I'M FUCKING
TERRIFIED HERE. I just please want
 to go somewhere warm, come back to
 a blank-slate. So write your story
 and get people OFF ME. I'm nothing-

CUT TO:

Stephen lightning-quick out the door before Cal can move.
 Pivots, then a massive forearm-shiver through Foy's door.

INT. FOY'S HOTEL ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Heart-stop shock. Foy a lamb at slaughter: Collins bashes him with a hook, picks him up rag-doll style, throws him into the AC unit. Cal rushes Stephen. All three go down. Before Cal can pull him off, Stephen hammers Foy's jaw twice: big pops.

STEPHEN
(shaking rage)
USED HER -- SENT HER INTO THIS SHIT
-- MY CHILD -- FUCKING COWARD PIMP-

-Cal and Danny rip Stephen away. He shakes them, bolts. Foy looks up, dazed, bleeding, bleating, sees Sheldon. Sheldon kind of waves: *uh-oh...*

FOY
(through broken teeth)
...you're in sales...

Cameron to Cal, over Foy's groans and everyone else's shock:

CAMERON FOSTER
Give me everything you have. We go
to press tonight.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Della allowed into Foy's room. A NURSE lists greatest hits:

NURSE
Jaw broken, three teeth broken: two
already pulled. Two months wired-
shut, another three of therapy.
What happened to him?

DELLA
He got his ass beat.

Nurse can't help but chuckle at the truth. Stifles it quick.

NURSE
He declined to speak to the Cops.

DELLA
The guy that did this to him isn't
the one he's really worried about.

Nurse shakes her head, rolls out.

NURSE (O.C.)
Thought I had problems.

FOY
(to Della)
-SHEK.

DELLA
What?

FOY
-NUNNY!

DELLA
Oh: *your check. Money.* It'll be
here when they release you. Rest.

Foy sure he'll never see the check again, pointing, yelling
through a wired jaw as Della walks out of his Hospital room.

FOY
NIGH NUNNY!

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NEXT MOMENT

Her phone rings as she makes a bee-line for the elevators.

DELLA
Della Smith.

CAL (O.S.)
The Hitman's name is Robert
Bingham. Find out everything you
can. Call Bell for details -- and
tell him where to find Foy.

DELLA
We don't have this U-Ex e-mail yet.

CAL (O.S.)
But we have the name of the U-Ex
sender: Rich Seigler. We'll
intimidate something better out of
him. Bell needs Foy and that e-mail
more than we do-

DELLA
-but he's really fucked up-

CAL (O.S.)
-cruel world. Bell is why we know
 the name 'Bingham.' For that I'd
 give him ten Foys.

Della can hear Foy yelling marble-mouthed at the Nursing
 Staff now down the hall.

DELLA
 Done.

INT. CAL'S TOWNHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Cal bee-hive busy: organizing, annotating, re-writing. The
 team's story in twenty pieces, laid out on his kitchen table.
 Anne comes in with two cups of coffee, hands one to Cal.

CAL
 (surprised)
 Where'd you go?

ANNE
 Everywhere I could get lost in a
 crowd: Union Station, Air and Space
 Museum...

CAL
 (big beat)
 You need to know something Annie.

Anne sees the seriousness, sits. Cal gathering his words...

CAL (CONT'D)
 Sonia Baker was engineered into her
 position in Stephen's office. She
 was put there by Warner-Schloss to
 spy on his work...

Anne's hand goes over her mouth instinctively.

ANNE
 No.

CAL
 Two separate sources confirmed it.

After a long moment:

ANNE
 I need to apologize...

CAL

For what?

ANNE

For what? Warner-Schloss has
millions right? Could've hired
Ph.D.'s to study best hair color,
best cup size before they did this.
(like she's explaining it
to herself, packaging it)
Add-in that Stephen and I were
having problems...

And Cal can smell the revisionist history coursing through
Anne's thoughts right now. His sleep-deprivation, despite his
efforts to stanch the heat in his cheeks, catches up to him.

CAL

Annie: don't be a caricature.
(Anne hit by his words)
You weren't at your press
conference, weren't when he came
firing in here last night, so why
start now?

ANNE

How were you expecting me to react,
Cal? So you're good enough to tell
me what you know, just so long as I
react in a way that reassures you?

CAL

(beat, quieter)
There's another thing I know: *Sonia*
was pregnant with Stephen's child.
(Anne's eyes overflow
without weeping)
She hadn't told him yet, but they
were obviously already looking to
buy a place together -- don't you
think her pregnancy would have put
him -- and them -- over the top?

ANNE

(long beat)
That's how much you love me? That
you'd sling rocks like this instead
of just telling me you cared?

Cal realizing he can never take it back, getting the gravity
of his words, how vicious they were on reflex.

CAL

I'm...you don't have to be
anybody's Junior Varsity. You don't
have to settle for: 'the other girl
is gone so now he'll have me back.'

ANNE

Who said I was even thinking that?

Anne bolts. Maybe forever. Cal numb, dazed. Not at all the
same person he was three days ago. Slowly goes back to the
raw materials of his story because he has nothing else...

INT. CAMERON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Cal, Della, Danny, Prager, and Pete sit on couches. Waiting.
Cameron reading the mess of papers/notes/print-outs Cal
organized -- barely. Finishes it, smiles big, sincere.

CAMERON FOSTER

Journalism as Journalists would
have it. Big story. Big Hitters.

Everyone smiles. Finally. The effort culminates-

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)

-if only I could print it.

Evaporation. Cameron hands them a notice they pass around.

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)

U-Ex has threatened a lawsuit on
multiple grounds, half crap, half
not. And our foundering Ownership
has instructed us to back off.

CAL

Chin-less Bastards.

HELEN

How the hell did U-Ex even know
about it?

CAMERON FOSTER

Our Ownership says we can't print
anything without multiple,
verifiable sources.

CAL

Which is the same as quashing the story: who's going to go on record as a verifiable source when the prevailing suspicion is that U-Ex might kill people that impede?

DELLA

That means we can print what now?

CAMERON FOSTER

Just the Warner-Schloss bits.

DANNY

Which will hurt more than help.

CAL

If this story dribbles out like rabbit shit it's useless. Instead of hitting our readers with a blast, we hit them with a BB they won't notice, but every other paper in the City will -- we'll give them big bread-crumbs as to how massive a story it is. They'll make the Warner-U-Ex connection in about twenty seconds, and they'll publish right out from underneath us.

Cameron done with Cal, his own anger bubbling:

CAMERON FOSTER

That's a lot of vitriol, Cal. Maybe because you're masking your own responsibility for these problems?

CAL

Come again?

CAMERON FOSTER

Ask your friend Stephen if he'll go on record as a source? Even anonymously and we could print. *Oh*, but you probably can't ask him...

CAL

(indignant)

Don't blame this on me because you Limeys don't have the stones-

CAMERON FOSTER
 -yellow card for 'Limey,' red card
 for 'Stones.' I mean, use your
 imagination. And why can't you call
 Collins? For the room...

Cal just mad-dogs a fearless Cameron. Della turns away.

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)
 Cal seems to have been fucking the
 Wife.

Danny, Prager, and Pete gasp. Look at Cal like a Leper.

CAL
No I have not.

CAMERON FOSTER
 Really? Where was she last night?
 (beat, no answer)
 Sex or not, it's colossally bad
 judgment Cal. You should have at
 least gotten sex for the trouble.
 (beat, again no answer)
And I'm not printing a thing about
Warner-Schloss. In fact I'm only
 going to print a few words at all.

Puzzled faces stare back at the Old Man.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - NIGHT

A formatting computer. Cameron on it, everyone else gathered
 around. Front page, right under the Mast-Head. Everything
 blank save the following words, typed by Cameron in the
 largest-boldest font:

***The Story we can't show you. Ask
 your Congressmen and Senators. Ask
 Warner-Schloss. Ask U-Ex.***

Mouse-clicks send. Picks up a phone, dials a quick in-house
 extension, looks at his Reporters as it rings.

CAMERON FOSTER
 See you in the Soup Lines.
 (the line picks up)
 Eddie, Cameron. It's a full stop.
 Just sent new Copy. Lock your
 doors. No one gets in or out until
 you finish the new run.

Smiles bounce back and forth. Cameron stands, throws on his jacket. To the entire buzzing newsroom:

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)
Everyone turn off your computers or
 you're fired. You're following me
 to the Austin Grill. And if you
 think I'm drunk now, check back
 with me in 20 minutes. Only people
 with expense accounts are allowed
 on this first elevator down.

INT. AUSTIN GRILL - NIGHT

Everybody close to 'bombed.' Laughing, making fun of their competitors, their owners. Gallows humor. Cameron grabs Cal and Della, mid-conversation, puts shots in their hands, all three pound them...liquor dissipates lingering resentments.

CAMERON FOSTER
 What's the topic?

DELLA
 Spreadsheet-Dorks own everything.

CAMERON FOSTER
 I got an idea: let's organize the
 world's workers into a Utopia.

CAL
 Therein lies the problem: the
 'workers' don't own anything.

CAMERON FOSTER
 You're a worker and you do.

CAL
 900 sq. ft. condos don't count-

CAMERON FOSTER
 -but stories do...

CAL
 (beat)
 What are you talking about now?

CAMERON FOSTER
I'm bouncing you off full-time.
 (smiles die)
 You'll stay on as Freelance: 14-day
 rolling contracts.

Cal dazed but stoic. Della just shocked. Cameron grabs his bag, hands Cal a 14-day rolling contract:

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)
Sign it. Della, sign as witness.
Then back-date it to last Monday...

A small-smile starts to curve around Cal's face.

CAMERON FOSTER (CONT'D)
 You're coming with me to the
 meeting in Baltimore tomorrow.

CAL
 What meeting?

CAMERON FOSTER
 The Emergency one our Owners don't
 know they need to schedule yet...

CUT TO:

A guy with a hand-truck delivering bundles of newspapers to the massive newsstand in the middle at Union Station. 5 AM. Place just coming alive. The man who runs the station takes one look at the bundle, the amazingly sparse front page and HEADLINE -- **ASK U-Ex** -- and immediately replaces the New York Times with the WASHINGTON GLOBE on his largest, center shelf.

INT. TRAFALGAR MEDIA CORPORATION LOBBY - MORNING

Too early the next Morning. All the mastheads of the papers and magazines Trafalgar owns, hung like trophies along the walls. The Globe one of those mastheads. Cameron and Cal hung-over. A well-dressed, effete man motions for them to follow.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Granite. Cold. Stone-faced Upper Management hovering, reading copies of Cal's team's pages/notes/print-outs -- the 'story' Cameron read yesterday. A big copy of today's all-but-blank Front Page. A Polygon conference phone in the middle of the massive table. A thick British ACCENT pipes out:

ACCENT (O.S.)
Is that Sod here yet?

Cameron quick-whispers to Cal:

CAMERON FOSTER

Sod is good, replace 'Limey' with Sod.

(into the speaker phone)

You can only mean me, Bob. Yes I'm here. Good Morning to you. Actually it's more like noon there isn't it? Is it raining?

BOB (O.S.)

Shut up. What's this stunt?

CAMERON FOSTER

No stunt. It's the Middle Ground: we're accusing U-Ex of nothing, but stamping any future story, in whatever paper with guts enough to actually print it, as the Globe's.

The RANKING COG at the table:

RANKING COG

There's nothing here. 'Dominic Foy' has changed his story twice that I can count and I'm just halfway through Mr. *McAfee's* (sic) notes, maybe 'ramblings' is better...

BOB (O.S.)

You've made your statement Cameron. Accounting says you've spent more than \$50,000.00 on this story already. I say move on with other stories, or with other careers.

CAMERON FOSTER

Who told you to tell me that?

BOB (O.S.)

If you're asking to be sacked I'll be happy to oblige right now.

CAMERON FOSTER

No. My office has the prettiest view of an alley an Editor ever had. This is just the first story you've ever demanded I move past.

BOB (O.S.)

Because this is first time I think your instincts have abandoned you.

CAMERON FOSTER
I assure you they haven't: if
anything they have only-

BOB (O.S.)
-have you seen our stock price?

CAMERON FOSTER
I try to look away.

BOB (O.S.)
I'm investing in radio stations as
a way to boost value: terrestrial
stations in the U.S. are cheap with
all the talent heading for
satellite. Thus I can't have the
Government so angry with us they
find reasons to withhold licenses.

CAMERON FOSTER
(something resonating)
Okay...just know that Mr. McAffrey
will take his story elsewhere.

Room pauses big, then smirks in-unison.

RANKING COG
No he will not.

Cameron pulls the 14-day rolling contract he had Cal and
Della sign, back-date to last Monday, sets it in the middle
of the table. A scramble to read it.

CAMERON FOSTER
Sacked him last week for
'unprofessional conduct.' He's been
free-lance since, and there are
only a couple days left on his
current contract.

Cogs go into full-panic. Ranking Cog high-pitched:

RANKING COG
His removal from full-time staff
wasn't in any of your minutes-

CAMERON FOSTER
-it wasn't a removal, it was a
firing.

CAMERON FOSTER(cont'd)

And I didn't want to go on record with anything he might use against us in a legal proceeding, i.e.: 'McAffrey is the most bull-headed, over-rated jackass in the business today.' Or similar such words.

CAL

(back at Cameron)

Biggest surprise in all this hasn't been anything in MY story, it's that your ticker hasn't seized up from all the excitement, Gramps. I'll be so glad to leave this bunch that talks about stocks and not stories.

(right at Ranking Cog)

Enjoy reading my 'ramblings' in the Post, Dick.

RANKING COG

It's Richard.

CAL

It's McAffrey.

Cameron whispers to Cal as everyone else at the table scrambles, looking through the contract for loopholes:

CAMERON FOSTER

Don't gild the lily, Mate.

RANKING COG

(into the speaker phone)

Sir, what should we do...

EXT. TRAFALGAR MEDIA CORPORATION PARKING GARAGE - MORNING

Heading back to Cameron's ancient Mercedes. Cal smiling.

CAL

I worship you Old Man.

CAMERON FOSTER

Get in-line.

(beat)

Did you catch it?

CAL

Catch what?

CAMERON FOSTER
'The Government.'
 (beat)
 Bob said he didn't want to anger
 the 'Government.' We never
mentioned or implicated the
Government in any of this...

CAL
 (cycling thoughts)
 ...Wow...wow.
 (light bulbs)
I know who Bob was talking about,
how U-Ex even knew we had a story
to threaten in the first place.

INT. SENATOR GEORGE FERGUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Senator Fergus smiles as a blank, sullen Stephen enters.

SENATOR FERGUS
 Morning, Son.

Stephen sits heavy. No stomach for manners, play-acting.

STEPHEN
 You told Greer to hire Sonia Baker.

Fergus prepared.

SENATOR FERGUS
 I saw something intangible in her.

STEPHEN
 Greer was adamant to come here with
 me. I begged her off with a promise
 I'd tell you what she wanted to in-
 person: 'I've never been more
disappointed in anyone George.'

SENATOR FERGUS
 (beat, stymies a scoff)
 The Help are easily offended.

STEPHEN
And easily underestimated. You put
 Sonia there for U-Ex. Own it.

SENATOR FERGUS
 I put her there for the U.S.

STEPHEN
(seething, mini-explosion)
You Motherfucker-

SENATOR FERGUS
-watch your words now-

STEPHEN
(leaning in, menace)
-or you'll 'disgrace' me? How about
'Liar' for a word...how about if
you interrupt me again I'll knock
your teeth down your throat.
(Fergus on his heels: *this
guy might do it too*)
You knew I was involved with her.

SENATOR FERGUS
(moderated tone)
I had suspicions...but like I said
no one was trying to live your life-

STEPHEN
-TWO YEARS OF MY WORK -- FOR WHAT?
So she -- YOU -- could pass along
my findings to one of the companies
I'm charged with investigating? Was
it just one George?

Fergus leans in himself now.

SENATOR FERGUS
Be a leader instead of an ideologue
now. What happens when you drop the
report you want to write? When
America sees that things with our
Military aren't all above-board?
That some things are simply rotten?
What happens when Voters demand the
Defense Department end
relationships with these Companies
because of things you've uncovered?

STEPHEN
YOU MEAN WHEN THE PEOPLE ARE TOLD
THE TRUTH? I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY
DO THEN -- BUT AT LEAST THEY'D KNOW
THE SCORE-

SENATOR FERGUS
-the score? The Army and Marines
have missed recruiting targets for
13 straight quarters-

STEPHEN

-I sent you that memo-

SENATOR FERGUS

-combat loses in Iraq have exceeded our estimates. Afghanistan is catching fire again. Places like Iran and Syria loom large...that's the score. Then you release your report. One that might compel us to cancel contracts -- I know how well you write. That means we could lose 20% of our frontline troops because they're privately employed. Greater percentages of our interrogators, translators, support troops -- what then? Who shoots the guns? Pumps the gas? Cooks and serves the food-

STEPHEN

-THAT WASN'T MY MANDATE-

SENATOR FERGUS

-DRAFTEES WILL! That's who, Stephen. That is what will happen.

STEPHEN

Is that some hook I'm supposed to bite down on-

SENATOR FERGUS

(tone tell us it's true)
-this discussion has been had in rooms you can't get into yet. Our Leadership would rather impose a new draft and suffer the massive political loss, than be forced to quit the War on Terror.

Stephen sits quietly as his world continues its slow unravel.

STEPHEN

Why?

SENATOR FERGUS

It's the lesser evil. Let the other Party pull us out and then forever be associated with a lost War. Once memories dull a bit, we'll be able to say: '*if you'd have just given us more time.*'

(benevolent mentor mode)

SENATOR FERGUS(cont'd)
 This is why I keep pressing you to
 think more cooperatively, everyone
gets what they need. That is
 Government, Son, Capital G. Ugly
 but necessary.

Stephen pauses, then drops a letter on Fergus's desk.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I resign. My Office. My Committee.

SENATOR FERGUS
 (beat, floored)
 No...I won't let you...you don't
 know what kind of life you could
 live -- noteworthy-

STEPHEN
 -just not now, right?

SENATOR FERGUS
 What an awful mistake.

STEPHEN
 Like killing Sonia Baker.

SENATOR FERGUS
...is that an accusation? For God's
 sake...the stakes were never that
 high.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - DAY

Della tracking down the source of Foy's 'A-bomb' e-mail: a U-
 Ex V.P. named RICH SIEGLER. Navigating the U-Ex corporate
 labyrinth: Google searches, phone books, Department of
 Defense handbooks. Finally getting him on the phone.

DELLA
 Mr. Richard Siegler?

RICHARD SIEGLER (O.S.)
 Who's calling?

DELLA
 My name is Della Smith from the
 Washington Globe. I need to tell
 you we're going to press with a
 story tonight regarding Sonia
 Baker, U-Ex, Warner-Schloss and the
 Collins Joint Select Committee.

Just static. Then a small, imperious laugh.

RICHARD SIEGLER (O.S.)
Then get ready for bankruptcy.

DELLA
So long as you get ready for
publicity. 'From: R.Siegler@U-
Ex.com, and I'll para-phrase: 'if
you, Paul Canning, and your boy
Dominic Foy, don't get her, Sonia
Baker, turned around there will be
hell to pay.'

Siegler not so imperious any more. Long pause.

RICHARD SIEGLER (O.S.)
Where did you get that?

We look down at what Della is reading: not Foy's e-mail, but
paraphrasing directly from the transcript of Foy's Q & A with
Collins. A bit of a bluff.

DELLA
Point is I have it. I'm using your
name to link U-Ex to this story
unless I get something else.
Something better.
(beat)
Mr. Siegler?

INT. CAL'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Knocking. Through the peephole: Stephen. Cal opens it.
Hesitant nods back and forth. Awkward silence. Then:

STEPHEN
(beat)
Anne told me once she wouldn't
leave me if she found out I was
going to another woman for sex. But
she'd leave in a heartbeat if she
found I was going to another woman
for *support* -- that was the bigger
crime. I think she was right...

Cal just nods small: *then I'm guilty*. Stephen nods back.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
You drink all that Bourbon yet?

INT. CAL'S KITCHEN - NEXT MOMENT

Open bottle between them, half-gone. No words. then:

STEPHEN

I'll go on the record with you.

CAL

(staggered, amazed)

Why?

STEPHEN

Because I resigned today. Because George Fergus is a vicious Liar, the kind of whore Voters should know enough about to hate...

CAL

What can you bring?

STEPHEN

Truckloads. Financial records, e-mails, testimony transcripts, memories. I can show you how private Committee discussions prompted corporate moves by U-Ex that were wholly out of character.

CAL

Like what?

STEPHEN

Like U-Ex was founded by a General famous for giving the Secretary of State the bird -- got a painting of it in their offices. Suddenly last year he calls me, says they're ready to talk about 'greater Government oversight' a week after we talked about that very subject behind closed doors. Another time I mentioned how I couldn't stand their Governmental Affairs Officer. She was gone the next month.

CAL

You knew you had a leak?

STEPHEN

Capitol Hill. Your ulcers would bleed if you worried about leaks. I just didn't know it was Sonia. And

STEPHEN(cont'd)

I didn't know they could use a ranking Senator to maneuver someone in...someone now murdered...and now I want to set fire to it all.

CAL

You have the documents, disks...

STEPHEN

(pushes Cal his car keys,
then his phone)

Boxes in the backseat. Call your crew. Tell 'em I'm drinking, and to bring lots of paper.

CUT TO:

Night now. Cal's house taken over. Flooded with Globe Reporters, Typists, Lawyers. Danny, Della, Cameron, Prager, Pete, Chris Kawai all there, all shirt-sleeves, all sorting-reading-digesting two years of files-documents-disks.

Brimming. The feeling of being on the cusp of a massive discovery. Stephen the busiest, answering questions, pulling critical documents-facts from the middle of red-wells and file-boxes, lending a hand wherever one is needed. Soap for his soul. Cameron slides in next to Cal. Quiet.

CAMERON FOSTER

I worship you Boy.

CAL

Get in-line.

CAMERON FOSTER

You saved your job with this.

CAL

(nods toward Stephen)

He saved my job with this.

DELLA

We have enough here to fight U-Ex in any court they file in...enough to insinuate they had the most to gain for silencing Sonia Baker without saying they killed her.

CAMERON FOSTER

I want to more than 'insinuate.' You don't threaten me with lawsuits and not expect me to attack with every bullet I have. When do you meet this U-Ex Turd Rich Siegler?

DELLA
 (looks at her watch)
 An hour. He said people get
 suspicious if you leave before 8.

CAL
 Sounds like a magical place to
 work.

CAMERON FOSTER
 Where?

DELLA
 Rio Grande restaurant.

CAMERON FOSTER
 You choose the place?

DELLA
 Of course.

CAMERON FOSTER
 Take Pete and Mail Room Zeke with
 you just in-case...and get
something big from him.

Smiles at both Cal and Della: proud again. Turns to leave,
 tussles his Son's hair on the way to the door.

CUT TO:

Cal's place destroyed ala post-party: boxes-papers-files.
 Stephen and he re-organizing, re-packing. No words. Stephen
 on his tenth drink of the night. Then Stephen's sobs without
preamble. Comprehending all he's lost.

STEPHEN
 What do I do now, Brother?

CAL
 What you're doing now is something.
 (points at the same files)
This is something...

STEPHEN
 Poisonous Fuckers. Sunk their claws
 into a beautiful girl -- *my baby*.
 Fergus, Foy, and Paul Canning:
 smiling with Sonia at the Four
 Courts every week over beers, like
it's a game...I could beat him to
 death with my hands.

Cal's pained, furrowed brow, eyes gone distant...

EXT. RIO GRANDE RESTAURANT- NIGHT

Parked on a side street. Della out of her Car. Leaves Pete and a giant guy we assume is Mail Room Zeke, inside. Walks to a black BMW 760. Window rolls down as she nears. Richard Siegler, still wearing his U-Ex security badge on a lanyard: older, paunchy, nervous bordering on scared.

RICHARD SIEGLER
Della Smith?

DELLA
Turn on your interior lights.

RICHARD SIEGLER
(beat, getting it)
You think I've got someone with me?

DELLA
I have people with me...

He does. Della peers into the windows: clear. Circles to the passenger side, Siegler eyeing the two men in the Car she just came from. Della gets in.

INT. BMW 760 - NEXT MOMENT

Siegler just hands her a file labeled: S-B. U-Ex's entire Sonia Baker file. Siegler opens it in Della's hands, pulls a document, points to a specific name on the page.

RICHARD SIEGLER
Redact every mention of this
person's name. I didn't have time.

DELLA
(reading)
Nick Beizer? Why?

RICHARD SIEGLER
He's my friend.

DELLA
What about your name? It's
everywhere...

Siegler just reaches across and opens her door for her: go.

DELLA (CONT'D)
I need Robert Bingham's file too.

RICHARD SIEGLER
Who?

DELLA
C'mon: you've come this far.

RICHARD SIEGLER
(either genuinely puzzled
or a talented Liar)
I don't know 'Robert Bingham' Ms.
Smith. I've just handed you
everything I know -- everything
you'll need to hang my company.

DELLA
Alright, you want me to actually
say it first? Fine. We know Robert
Bingham killed Sonia Baker. For a
fee. We know your company's
business is Soldiers for Hire. So,
you expect me to believe you
weren't the ones paying him?

RICHARD SIEGLER
(pure eye contact)
We're not Murderers for hire. Get
out of my car.

Della does. Puzzled. We stay with Seigler as he drives away
from Della. Turns onto Highway 66, settling into his drive.
Unbuckles his seat-belt. Turns up Aaron Copeland's
Appalachian Spring. Accelerating always. The big V-12
starting to roar. Ahead lies the Key Bridge underpass.

And Siegler doesn't blink as he slams his car into the
abutment at 90 miles per hour. A bomb sound when he hits.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Della enters. The scene frantic: finalizing the story,
proofing the various sections. Headline:

***A Profitable, Bloody Triangle: U-
Ex, Warner-Schloss, and U.S.
Senator George Fergus.***

Cal rolls in now, seconds behind Della. Sees her, immediately
pulls her into the Men's Room. Before Cal can speak:

DELLA

We got everything. Siegler wouldn't cop to murder -- I really don't think he knew -- but Cameron thinks we still have enough to pin it all on U-Ex. It's actually a great strategy because what are they gonna say: we did plant spies, we did buy a Senator, but we didn't kill anybody? And by the way we're also a Company of Mercenaries?

Cal quiet, odd, doesn't think it's as great as Della...

CAL

Was Sonia's picture with that guy at Ireland's Four Courts, the one with the beers in their hands, shown or mentioned anywhere in our notes? Anywhere outside Bingham's Briefcase?

DELLA

No-

CAL

-you're absolutely sure that picture wasn't logged at all?

DELLA

(beat, worried now)

It never left the briefcase, Cal. We never logged any of that stuff.

(beat)

Why? Who was that guy with Sonia?

Cal stays silent. Della more and more suspicious...

DELLA (CONT'D)

Cal, we're going to press against a Corporation that has threatened to ruin us. U-Ex has the kind of cash and friends that only blunt truth can beat...and even then...

CAL

Tell me what you found out about Robert Bingham.

DELLA

(beat)

Top of my head: grew up in Crozier, Virginia. Marine Corps Force Recon-

CAL
-Crozier?

DELLA
Right outside of-

CAL
-U.Va's campus...

Cal somewhere far off now.

DELLA
Cal: what? If we're wrong we're
done...
(beat, no response)
I'm telling to Cameron to hold it.

Della tries to bolt. Cal grabs her arm. Somebody coming into the facilities the same moment. Cal kicks the door shut.

CAL
If you tell him something's up,
he'll shut it all down. Give me
thirty minutes...I'm begging.

Della's eyes: the compassionate little sister...

INT. CAL'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Cal through the front door. Stephen blankly watching college football. Someone in the kitchen making something.

CAL
Who is that?

STEPHEN
Who do you think?

CAL
(baffled)
She left here last night like she
was never coming back.

STEPHEN
She's like me: has no place else.
(something like envy)
She's making you dinner.

Cal sits down next to his friend. Blank himself now.

CAL
Get rid of her.

STEPHEN

You.

CAL

Robert Bingham.

Stephen exhales small from his blank face. Long silence.

STEPHEN

Meet me on the tow-path.

Cal leaves. Stephen slowly stands, steps to the kitchen.

INT. CAL'S KITCHEN - NEXT MOMENT

Leans against the door frame. Unsure what to say...

ANNE

Did I hear Cal?

STEPHEN

You two are better than you and I.

Anne's face immediately, involuntarily softens at weakness exposed, admitted...

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

You should make a run of it.

And before she can say anything, ask him what that means, he leans in, and very quietly, very tenderly kisses his wife.

EXT. TOW PATH ALONG THE POTOMAC - NIGHT

Autumn trees shed leaves as Steve approaches Cal. They sit on a bench looking across at Georgetown, the Waterfront, the Watergate, the Kennedy Center, and to the far right the Lincoln Memorial. A silent, laden moment passes.

STEPHEN

I miss home. Richmond.
Charlottesville. Real Virginia.

CAL

Never felt like home to me.

STEPHEN

The biggest fight we ever had --
before we got old -- was when I
said I got how Lee could fight for
Virginia instead of the U.S.

CAL

I knew you needed real help then.

Smiles. Then silence save moving water. Cal unsure how to proceed, so he just goes:

CAL (CONT'D)

Brother, you knew Sonia met Paul Canning at the Four Courts. And the only hint of that meeting anywhere was found in a Hitman's briefcase: Robert Bingham's briefcase.

(beat)

How could you know that?

More silence. Then:

STEPHEN

Lots of people look at me with what I can only describe as unbridled admiration. It's this glint in a smiling eye that's better than anything you can drink or smoke.

(beat)

Robert Bingham was the first. He was in high school when we were in college. Part of me being in Naval R.O.T.C. was hitting all the surrounding Schools -- remember? I'd give those little talks: '*stay in-school and you can get as squared-away as me.*'

(beat)

Bingham was a kid in the audience at one a' those. Asked a dozen questions, even started writing me even though I never wrote back. Joined the Marines because of me.

(beat)

Started his own security business when he got out. I forgot him until our house in Richmond got robbed. Called him because I thought I'd get a break on a burglar alarm.

CAL

(beat, waiting)

And...

STEPHEN

And when he showed up he wasn't the little pipe-cleaner he was in high school: he got built, got able-

CAL
-picture of Paul Canning, Steve.

STEPHEN
(beat)
I stayed at Sonia's place once this summer, after I got sick from a dinner the night before.

(beat)
This guy named 'Paul' called, left a message on her machine: 'this is Paul, gotta re-schedule this week's meeting -- how 'bout Wednesday at Ireland's Four Courts...'

(beat)
Played it over and over, trying to process it. I knew the voice. Paul Canning was a comer at Warner-Schloss, a regular at all the dinner parties, constantly introducing himself to me.

CAL
So you asked Bingham to follow her to that Wednesday meeting...

STEPHEN
(losing it)
To observe. To observe. He was really good. Started finding unbelievable stuff: Warner-Schloss, U-Ex, just how Sonia was ruining my work.

CAL
(getting angry, more at himself than his friend)
So about what time did you say 'push her in front of a train'-

STEPHEN
-FUCK YOU. I said 'observe'-

CAL
-YOU'RE A LIAR, STEPHEN.

That takes Stephen's breath. Like he just realized it when Cal said it.

STEPHEN
I swear to Christ he just did it. He seemed more upset about what she was doing than I was...

STEPHEN(cont'd)

(beat)

She was destroying my work, Cal.
Work you and I know is the most
important going on anywhere in this
town right now. She had to stop-

CAL

-she did stop. She told two ugly
Corporations 'no' because she loved-

STEPHEN

-NO-NO...PLEASE DON'T SAY IT...I
didn't know. You think this
would've happened if I'd known? I
WAS TEARING MY LIFE APART FOR HER!
I didn't know any of it 'til Foy-

CAL

-that excuses it? How ridiculous it
all is? Here you are going after
Contractors -- the Pentagon's guns-
for-hire -- and yet you yourself
hire a fucking Contractor to do
your dirty work?

Stephen can't answer.

CAL (CONT'D)

Who killed Bingham?

STEPHEN

No.

CAL

I'll find out.

STEPHEN

Not from me and no you won't.

CAL

(beat)

You knew Bingham killed Sonia from
the first...and you got afraid of
him...needed to shut him up...who?

STEPHEN

No.

CAL

You come into my home, throw out
some parable about a girl murdered
in Queens...was that to fool me?

CAL(cont'd)
Or the last good parts in you
indicting yourself -- because
 you're like one of the 38 people
 who just let it happen-

STEPHEN
 -I DIDN'T LET SHIT-

CAL
 -right: you had him killed too.

Stephen silent, permanently broken now. Cal: tormented, head
 in hands, getting the gravity of it all...

CAL (CONT'D)
 What are you anymore, Brother?
Stalin? How many Killers you know?
 (big beat, no answer)
 What did you think you could
 achieve, however high you got, that
 was worth demolishing all these
 Families?

That thought makes Stephen shudder.

STEPHEN
 If you print this...they'll write
 my work off to a Zealot. Bury it.
 Forget me quick as they can. The
 next guy'll be so carefully chosen
 you'll never hear another-

CAL
 -you can't ask me that.

STEPHEN
Then save my life...please...I'll
 kill myself before a trial.

CAL
 (quiet, calls his bluff)
No you won't. Your trial is your
 chance to tell the world what you
 just told me, make your case
 against these Companies regardless
 of your actions. Even if it means
 you'll spend years behind bars...
 (Cal's heart breaks now)
 ...that's why people vote for you,
 why they look at you the way they
 do, why I ran your campaign back
 when we would throw a punch at
 anyone.

CAL(cont'd)

You do what you think is right, no matter how vicious, or self-destructive, no matter if it killed the one woman you ever adored...

STEPHEN

(a bite to it now:)

And you'll write this story no matter what: even if it means losing the closest thing to a brother you've ever had...even if it means losing the one woman you ever adored: you and Anne carry on after this and you'll be pariahs to everyone, to each other.

Cal stands, nods, slowly walks away from Stephen who stays seated, watching. Cal reaches into his coat, pulls a tape recorder, shuts it off.

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Cal off the elevator, trying to hold it together. Abjectly heart-broken. Della follows him as all eyes track.

DELLA

What is it...who is it?

Cal just hands her the tape recorder. She hits rewind, presses play, Stephen's tinny-voice pipes out.

STEPHEN (O.S.)

...SHE WAS DESTROYING MY WORK CAL.
Work that I know is the most important going on anywhere in this town right now. She had to stop...

Della's wide-eyed shock.

DELLA

Stephen Collins?

Cal just sits down at his desk, trying to hide his eyes.

SMASH TO BLACK

INT. GLOBE NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Kids at Christmas. A new story being built. Sheldon transcribes Cal's last conversation with Stephen. Cal broken, but typing furiously. We read words like: betrayal, power, murder, principle run amok, guilt, and **TRUTH**.

Comes to the end of his story, and can only stare. A hand moves over his on the mouse: Della. She leans in, helps move the pointer to the 'send' key. Pull back: the entire team behind Cal, waiting for his story. Cal clicks 'send.'

CUT TO:

Unseen hands turning printed pages for us now. Pictures of Stephen, Anne, Sonia, Bingham, and DeShaun Stagg. Everything fleshed out. Complete. An earth-shattering story -- journalism and journalists would have it. The new headline:

***Congressman Stephen Collins
Implicates Himself in the Murder of
Sonia Baker.***

EXT. TOW PATH ALONG THE POTOMAC - NIGHT

Stephen still sitting, taking in the river, the lights, deep breaths like he's savoring the air. Red and blue lights swirl now at one end of the path. Bell steps from a squad car...

INT. PRINTING PRESS - TIME UNKNOWN

Printing presses running the new story. The Headline over and over and over again. Cal standing in the middle of the printing press floor, headphones on, eyes dry, watching his story roll as somewhere else pieces of himself wither away.

And then he just slowly takes the headphones off and becomes part of the mechanical noise before the National storm.

STATE OF PLAY