

SOLD SHORT

by

Joe Marrino

8390 E. Via De Ventura, F110
Scottsdale, AZ 85258
(602) 799-0891
marrino@me.com

WGAw #1603225

FADE IN:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO / EMBARCADERO - DAWN

Weathered landings rest on crooked pillars that disappear into black water along the wharf. The assailing rain dances along the surface creating a steady HUM. A commuter ferry passes, all passengers huddled inside.

Diverse modes of land transport climb the slick blacktop veins of the city in rhythm with the traffic signals, whose lights stitch a path into the thick haze.

INT. CALL CENTER - MORNING

A sprawling cubicle labyrinth corrals sporadic pods of workers. Their mouths move continuously emitting a DRONE throughout as they glare into oversized monitors.

ISABELLA BASTARDI, a young woman wearing a stylish top, races through.

Muffled HOLLERING and frantic CHATTER.

REPORTER #1 (V.O.)

The VIX has spiked up. We're ninety percent in the red. This is shaping up to be another bloody day for traders.

Isabella's long, chestnut brown hair pulled back, a wireless headset on. A small scar at the top of her trachea contrasts otherwise flawless olive skin.

INT. CALL CENTER - CONTINUOUS

She arrives at the cubicle of a CALL CENTER REP; a woman wearing a wired headset. Isabella reaches behind the desk phone, plugs in. A birth mark is visible on the back of her neck shaped like a bear paw: a semicircle adjacent to three parallel lines resembling claws.

ISABELLA

What are we looking at?

Isabella faces her.

INT. CALL CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Isabella and the woman stare at the rapidly changing computer screens; Isabella controls the keyboard.

Shouting NUMBERS and aggressive crowd NOISE.

REPORTER #1 (V.O.)

Something has spooked the bulls on the floor and there is nowhere to hide today.

ISABELLA

Make a call here, it's dropping.

A line graph on screen shows the position moving down.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Do you want them or not?

She strokes the keys shifting from screen to screen.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Yes or no?

CALL CENTER REP

Should we call Angela?

Isabella waves her off, focused on the screens.

Hectic trading floor YELLING activity.

REPORTER #1 (V.O.)

There's nothing out of Europe, the Fed hasn't met, but the negativity is palpable.

ISABELLA

I'm closing out all the positions and suspending further trading in your account.

The MAN'S VOICE is now slightly audible. She moves methodically, entering trades. Confirmation messages pop up on the screen. The final message reads:

Please confirm the following trade:

Security Type: CALL OPTION

Buy/Sell: SELL TO CLOSE

Number of Contracts: 150

Underlying Symbol: SPY

Order Type: MARKET

Nearby employees rise. Isabella eyes the clock.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Please do not raise your voice at me.

She punches the keyboard one last time.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

A significant amount. No, you shouldn't be trading naked options.

Catching her eye from off in the distance is the H.R. MANAGER, a clean-cut, portly man in his middle forties.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD PLAYGROUND - LATE MORNING

Colorful ribbons adorn a grassy field behind an elementary school as two teachers rally the exuberant students. Competitive event stations line the grounds. A sign reads: Congratulations McKinley 3rd Graders! SAM, a young boy with bushy dirty-blond hair, in grass-stained jeans and a tee shirt, falls in at the back.

TEACHER #1

OK, one more event and then lunch.

An enthusiastic CHEER erupts from most of the children.

TEACHER #2

Don't forget, those of you expecting family, nobody is allowed off the grass.

Sam's eyes scan the perimeter of the area.

INT. CALL CENTER / HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE - NOON

A modular desk sits solo in the sparse office. Isabella sits across from the H.R. Manager, reflecting disbelief.

H.R. MANAGER

I don't have it. I'll talk with her and see if there was some kind of a mix up.

ISABELLA

We've been discussing this for six months. It's right here.

She hands him a folder. He glances at the first page.

H.R. MANAGER

Even with this, everything's on hold.

He closes the folder tenderly.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD PLAYGROUND - NOON

The event stations stand empty and blankets cover one side of the lawn hosting the noshing families. Alone in the grass, Sam sees VANESSA, a woman in her fifties, worn, teetering around the corner.

Bracing herself on the brick wall, she digs in her purse, pops gum into her mouth, smooths her tousled hair, sniffs powerfully, then swallows and clears her throat a couple of times.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD PLAYGROUND - LATER

At opposing corners of the blanket, Vanessa lays down as Sam stares at the horizon. A shabby cooler bag holds the remainder of the rations. She suckles from her plastic bottle filled with watered down pink liquid.

VANESSA

You should go play with your friends.

Vanessa motions to a pack of boys playing football.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD PLAYGROUND - LATER

Sam and a LANKY BOY scale a chain link fence. Three other ADOLESCENT BOYS look on in fear, behind bushes. Children play in the grass behind them. A football sits in the open field that Sam and Lanky Boy study.

LANKY BOY

Go ahead.

Sam takes a step, then stops.

LANKY BOY (CONT'D)

Don't be a puss.

Lanky Boy takes three steps forward, then looks back to Sam.

LANKY BOY (CONT'D)

Come on, mute.

With the three boys behind the fence enraptured, Sam and Lanky Boy inch forward, eyes darting, breathing short. Gaining momentum, their strides get longer, crouches straighten. Reaching the ball, Lanky Boy picks it up.

TEENAGE BOY #1 (O.S.)

Hey!

Jerking backward, Lanky Boy bumps into Sam, sending them both to the ground. They scramble up, Sam a step behind.

FOUR TEENAGE BOYS in ragged athletic apparel are in pursuit. Sam looks back, panting, eyes wide.

The boys at the fence disband in all directions, vanishing behind the bushes. Losing ground on the advancing teenagers and with Lanky Boy pulling away from him, Sam's face is panicked.

TEENAGE BOY #2

Not today.
(Laughing)

Just before he's out of reach, Sam lurches forward, fully extending his leg and he kicks Lanky Boy's foot. Lanky Boy's right foot hits his left leg, tripping him, sending him to the ground. The football slips from Lanky Boy's grasp, his body hits the dirt with a THUD. Sam moves past him, the teenage boys stop and grab Lanky Boy.

TEENAGE BOY #3

You little fucker.

Sam leaps and scales the fence. One of the teenagers jerks Lanky Boy up by the shirt, then thrusts him back down.

TEENAGE BOY #4

You can thank your buddy for this.

LANKY BOY

No, don't.

Lanky Boy covers his head as the teenager kicks him in the gut. Sam peers through the bushes, panting, eyes wide, mouth agape.

The teenagers drag Lanky Boy away.

INT. CALL CENTER / OUTER HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Toe to toe, Isabella squares off with ANGELA, a middle-aged, red headed woman stuffed into a dated skirt-suit. Angela holds a folded piece of paper in her hand.

ISABELLA

You been jerking me off this whole time.

A group of employees watch from down the hall.

ANGELA

Excuse me?

ISABELLA

I talked to H.R.

ANGELA

Well, congratulations.

ISABELLA

You never submitted my paperwork.

A sign on the door next to them reads: Wellness Room.

INT. WELLNESS ROOM - AFTERNOON

A Koala Kare changing station is on one wall across from a framed picture of wild flowers, reading: SERENITY.

ANGELA

I was handling that another way.

ISABELLA

Bullshit!

Grinning, Angela steps back and leans against the wall.

ANGELA

So this is how you deal with it?

ISABELLA

Don't change the subject.

Straightening herself, looking to the paper in her hand.

ANGELA

The subject is Mr. Aswathy Gupta.

The name wipes the anger from Isabella's face.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Ring a bell?

Stepping forward, leaning in.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

You blew out two-hundred-seventy grand of legally purchased options and didn't verify a single one of them with the client.

Visibly deflated, Isabella retorts.

ISABELLA

I covered his ass.

ANGELA

You should have covered your own. He complained. Quality pulled the call.

Isabella stares in disbelief.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

They're busting the whole lot.

ISABELLA

He was clueless. I guarantee he exaggerated his actual trading experience on his Options Agreement.

ANGELA

Depending on the open tomorrow, we're out about eighty grand, minimum.

Angela pulls out her cell phone and pushes a button.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Not that it matters now, but I got a verbal from Carl to promote you after the freeze.

ISABELLA

You expect me to buy that?

ANGELA

I'm not selling it.

With physical poise, Angela opens the door.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Don't embarrass yourself any more by forcing me to have you removed.

Isabella melts back into the wall as Angela exits.

ANGELA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Bill, I need you to retrieve Isabella Bastardi's badge and see her out right away. I'll stop by with the signature.

Isabella is frozen in disbelief.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

Emerging from the shrubs, Sam sees the picnickers focused on something. Following their gaze, Sam stands stunned. A mother kneels by his blanket, his teacher hovers over the mother, a crowd of kids circle them. The boys from the fence look to Sam. Sam's teacher beckons him.

TEACHER #2

Sam.

In succession, the crowd focus' their pitiful stares on Sam. The gossip ripples outward, heads swivel. The audience shift exposes Vanessa, face down on the blanket. Sam's arm go limp.

His teacher approaches him, her eyes saddened. Sam rockets toward the gate.

TEACHER #2 (CONT'D)

No, wait.

Passing classmates, turning the corner in full stride, using the cars as cover, Sam vanishes into the city.

EXT. CITY STREETS - EVENING

A drizzle glazes the streets, reflecting car lights.

INT. JAZZ BAR - EVENING

Mahogany wood and chocolate leather booths border the dimly lit den; JAZZ MUSIC plays. Leaning against the bar, CHRISTIAN DOHERTY, in his late forties, tall and paunchy, wears a sharp tailored suit. A rocks glass filled with ice and golden liquid perspires on the napkin in front of him as his unadorned fingers massage the phone he feigns interest in. He waits for his cue, covertly inspecting the ELEGANT YOUNGER WOMAN in a stunning skirt as she orders from the bartender.

INT. B.A.R.T. STATION - EVENING

Isabella limps down the stairs toting a cardboard box. Touching the platform, a young man in a hooded sweatshirt racing for the departing train bumps her, spinning her face to face with a sign for no-contract mobile phones.

INT. JAZZ BAR - EVENING

The bartender departs, the elegant woman checks her face and Christian approaches her wearing a smile. They exchange greetings. Moments pass, her face turns to a scowl as she walks away without her order. His face sours, he searches the internet on his phone.

INT. DOUGHNUT SHOP - EVENING

A teenage girl behind the counter, a couple at the center table sipping coffee, talking. Sam sits in the corner with hot chocolate, eyeing the street through the window.

INT. JAZZ BAR - EVENING

Looking at a picture of a sexy young TEEN GIRL wearing panties and sticking out her cherry-shaped ass, Christian presses the text of a phone number on the Craigslist ad, the phone DIALS. Raising to his ear, a sexy voice answers.

TEEN GIRL (V.O.)

What's your name, sweetie?

He withdraws the glass from his mouth, the ice CLINKS.

INT. B.A.R.T. TRAIN - EVENING

Isabella, earpiece in ear, sits isolated staring at a mother and child at the opposing end of the cabin.

REPORTER #2 (V.O.)

With the jobs report disappointing and housing showing no signs of recovery, the European situation is now calling into question the solvency of the banks.

Pulls out a tattered travel book, flips through pictures earmarked: Eiffel Tower, Ibiza, London Eye. She SIGHS.

PETER SCHAFER (V.O.)

This is just the beginning. Our government and those around the world are trying to solve a debt crisis by issuing more debt. If you were maxed out on your credit cards, would you be solving any of your problems by opening more credit accounts?

She snatches a falling picture of her in Times Square embraced by a young man, both smiling. Taking in the visual she hastily crams it back into the book.

REPORTER #2 (V.O.)

If that's not the solution, then what is the correct move for us right now?

Her gaze slowly fixates on a wrapped present poking out from atop the remains of her boxed employment.

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - MORNING

The dilapidated three story row home with three entrances reflects the state of the street. The greenery mostly weeds. A beat-up woody station wagon in the drive.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Sam lays on the floor in his pajamas mesmerized by the cartoons on television. WALTER TAYLOR, a man in his sixties, sinks into a lounge, reading the newspaper.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Vanessa in a house-dress fixing breakfast, cigarette in hand. A SMASH, Vanessa darts to the front door.

VANESSA

Is that you, Isabel?

Isabella holds the wrapped present and an envelope.

ISABELLA

You expecting anyone else?

VANESSA

Oh, come on.

Moving in close to Isabella, Vanessa whispers.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

He's not feeling well today.

ISABELLA

What's wrong?

VANESSA

There was an incident between him and a friend at school, but don't say anything.

ISABELLA

What? Why not?

VANESSA

Can we have a relaxing morning for once?

ISABELLA

Look who's talking.

Vanessa retreats. Isabella enters the family room with the present and envelope, she touches Walter's head.

WALTER

You a millionaire yet?

She walks to Sam, a mug filled with dark liquid by him.

ISABELLA

A little bit short.

WALTER

Another five thousand laid off at Cellcom.

Isabella nudges Sam with her foot.

ISABELLA

Good show?

Sam briefly shapes his mouth into the form of a smile.

WALTER

I'm just waiting. Everybody at work is convinced we're getting axed any day now.

ISABELLA

You hear anything solid?

WALTER

Five percent salary cut last month. The real problem is we have no orders.

Isabella surveys the room where her presence has little impact. She nudges Sam again with her foot.

ISABELLA

I brought you something.

He perks up, she hands him the gift, he opens it.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Huh?

Sam lights up at the sight of a cell phone.

WALTER

What's he going to do with that?

Sam gestures typing motions with his fingers to Walter.

ISABELLA

That's right, a couple of months, we'll get you on a text plan.

Sam, furrowed brow, rushes past Vanessa in the doorway.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Sam.

VANESSA

Oh, leave him be for a bit.

ISABELLA

What's going on? What happened at school?

VANESSA

It's nothing, he'll be fine. Leave it.

Flashing Vanessa a critical look.

ISABELLA

Sounds like great advice.

Isabella picks up Sam's mug, extends it to Vanessa.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

This all he drinks?

VANESSA

Oh, stop it.

Isabella hands Walter the envelope.

ISABELLA

I'll get you the rest in a week or so.

Walter puts the paper down.

WALTER

The rest? And you're buying cell phones?

ISABELLA

It's my old one. It didn't cost anything.

Counting the money in the envelope.

WALTER

I thought you were moving up over there.

ISABELLA

It's taking longer than I expected.

WALTER

It's been going on like this, how long?

ISABELLA

I know.

Finishing counting, holding the cash in his hands.

WALTER

Enough already. You need to cash out whatever is left of my 401K.

ISABELLA

There's almost nothing. And you're going to get killed with taxes and penalties.

Walter storms out of the room.

VANESSA

Harold is on our ass again this month.

Isabella gives Vanessa a hateful look.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - MORNING

A bed and dresser stand alone amongst dirty clothes and newspaper comics scattered about.

Sam lays in bed, face down, cell phone in hand. Isabella sits on the edge of the bed. Vanessa hovers just outside, unnoticed.

ISABELLA

You upset about school?

Isabella examines his small body on the bed.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Hey.

Sam shrugs his shoulders. Isabella strokes his head.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Please, talk to me. Come on.

Sam rolls over, uses his hands to sign something.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

I didn't promise. I said I would try.
(pause)

So, what happened with you and that boy?

Vanessa barges in, hands on hips.

VANESSA (O.S.)

The breakfast out there is getting cold.

Sam signs something to Isabella.

ISABELLA

A couple months, I promise.

Isabella stands, heads for the door. She stops at the dresser, picks up a small brass and wooden buck knife.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Is this Papa's knife?

Sam hangs his head, fiddling with the phone. Isabella shakes her head, takes the knife and exits.

EXT. DIVE BAR - EVENING

Rain falls on the sidewalk outside a run-down bar. Bodies can be seen inside passing by through the door window. The sign for a pawn shop next door goes dark.

INT. DIVE BAR - EVENING

The casual dress of the patrons indicate a local hangout. The wooden bar spanning the length of the narrow joint is flush with beer-drinking men chatting up young women.

A bearded male bartender, wearing a Talking Heads tee-shirt and full sleeve tattoos tends to the crowd. Ash trays, spilled beer and damp bills litter the bar top.

A CHEER draws attention to the back of the crowded room. Isabella, dressed in tight jeans and a revealing top, leans over the pool table and lines up the eight ball. A fit middle-aged man with long, but well-kept hair leans on his cue, peers at her open shirt. The small group of onlookers are transfixed by the game.

She sinks the shot with ease. The crowd breaks the silence with CHEERS and HECKLING. Isabella smiles and holds out her hand as the man places a twenty in it.

ISABELLA

Merci Beaucoup.

She places it on the outside of a small wad of ones.

INT. BATHROOM STALL - NIGHT

Isabella snorts a small scoop of white powder being held by the same man from the pool game.

ISABELLA

Muchas gracias.

She reaches for the door, he yanks her into a hard kiss.

INT. LOFT - EARLY MORNING

Sparse, modern, a big screen TV is on a far wall in front of two leather chairs, a table against a wall behind the bed has personal items on it. Isabella, in white sheets, sits up on the bed at center, fingers her hair, looks around. The man from the pool game is asleep next to her, clothes strewn about the floor. Rain TAPS on the window and cars SPLASH on the street below.

INT. LOFT - LATER

In a bra and panties, Isabella stands at the table, several fifties and twenties flutter by her fingers. She pulls out two fifties and two twenties and carefully places the remaining wad under a set of keys. Taking one of the fifties, she folds it origami style into an envelope, reaches over to a small vile of white powder, unscrews the cap and taps about half into it. She screws the cap on, places it in its original locale, licks her finger, wipes a bit of spilled powder and rubs her gums.

A GROAN comes from behind her. The man repositions himself, then lies motionless.

Closing the envelope, she tucks the stash in her bra, slinks to the bathroom.

INT. BUS - MORNING

Isabella sits on a bus in the clothes from the night before, ear buds in, lost in a blank stare at the streaming city life through the windows. A group of unkempt teens poke and flirt with each other in back. A well-dressed man in an overcoat sits opposite Isabella coveting her legs. Her cell VIBRATES, she answers.

ISABELLA

This is Isabella.

Sitting up straight, dismay comes over her face.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

That one was perfect.

Seeing the man staring, she shifts and lowers her voice.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Forget the title, I've done the work.

(pause)

What's the difference?

Her head drops.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Yeah.

The bus comes to a SQUEALING stop.

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)

Castro Street.

The teens stampede out onto the dampened blacktop.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - MORNING

Isabella stands in the hallway, Walter holds the door closed with one hand, cash in the other, a fifty visible.

ISABELLA

That's all I have.

WALTER

It's not enough. We've got your mother's doctors, her prescriptions and everything else.

ISABELLA

Everything else?

She flashes him a look of defeated disapproval. He checks back through the opening crack of the door.

WALTER

Don't pull that shit on me.

Looking down.

ISABELLA

Is any of it helping her?

Reaching out and touching Isabella's arm.

WALTER

What do you want me to do? Who the hell you think is holding this together?

She pulls away.

ISABELLA

I gotta go.

Isabella hustles down the hallway. Through the crack, Sam's head is visible observing from inside.

WALTER

Anytime you want to take over, be my guest.

Isabella exits the exterior door as Walter watches her go. Sam's head disappears from the crack.

EXT. NORTH BEACH / VINCENZO'S DELICATESSEN - DAY

A European style storefront displays meat and sandwich specials on the windows. An old woman stands under the front awning, shakes water from her umbrella.

INT. VINCENZO'S DELICATESSEN - DAY

Isabella stands in a back room, an envelope in her hand, facing VINCENZO, a beat up bull dog of a man in a faded green Boston Celtics tee shirt and stained apron. He is skillfully coaxing pink and white ground meat from a grinder into pig intestine, coiling them into a gray plastic tray with his nine-and-a-half stubby digits.

VINCENZO

You hit a rough patch, that's all.

ISABELLA

I'll get it right back to you.

Vincenzo flicks a switch on the machine and it halts.

VINCENZO

I know you will, honey.

Washes his hands in a sink, wipes on a towel as he walks to an old metal desk. Produces a photograph and hands it to Isabella. He points to it in her hand.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

Who's that?

A faded photo of a young, beaming Vanessa, in a nursing uniform, arms around a young Vincenzo and another young man. Behind them, a sign reads: Vincenzo's Delicatessen.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

Your old man was solid, just like you.

Isabella looks up at Vincenzo with a soft smile.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

My offer still stands here, you know?

He motions to the surroundings with a smirk.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

All the glitz, and it's reliable.

A teenager, TOMMY, enters in a white apron with a sausage sandwich on a paper plate in one hand, a lunch bag under his arm and a brown grocery bag in the other hand. Vincenzo flops down into the desk chair. Tommy places the items on the desk, sneaking glances at Isabella.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

No napkin?

Tommy studies the plate and turns to exit.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

How could I eat?

TOMMY

Sorry, Vinny.

VINCENZO

How many times? Soft as a grape.

Vincenzo winks at Isabella and points at the exit.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

You come in, kid forgets how to breathe.

They both smile for a moment. Reaching across his desk.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

Here.

Vincenzo holds up the two bags.

ISABELLA

Uncle Vin, it's too much already.

VINCENZO

Go ahead, now, don't aggravate me. It's for your mother and Walter.

Isabella takes the two bags. The phone RINGS up front.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

And make sure Sammy gets some of that sausage. It'll put hair on his chest.

Looking up at the photo in Isabella's hand, then at her eyes, choking up as he says the words.

VINCENZO (CONT'D)

She was never the same after he passed.

TOMMY (O.S.)

Desi wants two large on New England minus six and a half.

Vinny motions to the front room, shaking his head.

VINCENZO

(to Isabella)

Mister subtle.

She leans over and kisses him on the top of the head.

EXT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

A weathered second story flat in a working class neighborhood sits atop a barren laundromat.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

A mattress sits in a corner with disheveled bedding, clothing scattered, an old desk with a laptop sits opposite the bed, papers strewn about with lottery tickets stacked next to a No Money Down Real Estate book. Financial news is on a small TV across from the desk, investment books dominate a wall shelf and a news article hangs, titled: Lone Woman Circles the Globe. Beneath it on a table sits a world atlas with several sticky notes poking out. An eight by ten photograph of a vintage one-man wooden sailboat sits on the atlas.

Isabella holds a paper in one hand, her cell phone in the other, pressed to her ear. Staring out the window, the DRIZZLE outside muffles the TRAFFIC.

ISABELLA

Yes. I'm following up from our conversation last week.

Crosses the room, pauses at her desk to check her notes. On the computer, an online blackjack game is in progress.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

He indicated he was close to a decision.

Flopping into her chair.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

He did. Did he say why?

Scratching out Mr. White's name on the paper.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Hanging up, she circles the years of trading experience required in the printed job ad. In silence, Isabella scrapes her desk with the brass and wooden buck knife.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

The DOW currently down two-hundred thirty points. Up next we'll be speaking to Peter Schafer who says, look out below.

Her phone VIBRATES. She places the ad on a pile next to her desk. All are scribbled on and crossed out. Looking at the phone, she presses the speaker button.

ISABELLA

Hey.

JACK (O.S.)

What would you say if I told you I had the offer of a lifetime for you?

ISABELLA

I would tell you that I'm still not interested in a three-way.

LAUGHTER comes through the phone.

JACK (O.S.)

Well, maybe this will turn you. First, how long have you been trading?

Isabella grabs her resume, slides it in front of her.

ISABELLA

Plenty. Why, what are they looking for?

JACK (O.S.)

At least three years of direct, hands on.

Moving a pen to her recent title, TRADING SUPPORT SPECIALIST, she pauses, a few dollars next to her arm.

ISABELLA

That's perfect.

In one swift motion, she crosses out the word, SUPPORT.

EXT. BULL & FINCH INVESTMENT HOUSE - EVENING

Geometrically divided glass towers huddle together, light beams through an array of rectangular portals. The Transamerica building's concrete spire penetrates the dingy cloud underbelly drowning the urban terrain. Two professionally dressed shadows scurry from a monolithic structure into a waiting cab as car HORNS signal their various positions throughout the vicinity. Rain blankets Isabella entering the grandiose doors.

INT. ELEVATOR - EVENING

Isabella sees her reflection in the mirrored door, shakes off the rain and adjusts her tousled hair. She places a breath mint in her mouth, sniffs powerfully, then swallows and clears her throat a couple of times.

INT. OFFICE - EVENING

Isabella sits in an office across a cherry desk from a substantial man, his face obscured. A stack of green and white lined printouts sit on one corner of his credenza, a business card held in a polished silver stand reads: Senior Financial Consultant. As his left thumb plays with his wedding ring, he reviews her resume in his right hand. Peering around the paper, he notices her silk bra through the gap in her shirt.

SUBSTANTIAL MAN

How do you like it at Andersen?

ISABELLA

The people are nice and they provide a great pathway to management, which I am expecting promotion to any day now.

SUBSTANTIAL MAN

Then why leave?

ISABELLA

I think I have more to offer.

He sharply cuts her statement short.

SUBSTANTIAL MAN

What, exactly?

ISABELLA

I feel that Bull & Finch is a great firm
and I can learn a lot from.

He cuts her off again.

SUBSTANTIAL MAN

Every dollar you make is coming right out
of my pocket, so spare me the canned crap.

His eyes dissecting her, he reclines in his chair.

SUBSTANTIAL MAN (CONT'D)

I need someone intelligent, personable
and responsible with my clients when I am
out of the office. Re-balance accounts.

Firming her posture, Isabella steps on his last word.

ISABELLA

I can do that.

Now smiling at her, his face in full view, it's Christian
Doherty, the man from the Jazz bar.

CHRISTIAN

I don't start spending more time with my
wife and kids, what's the point, right?

Christian slides a paper across the desk to her.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

This is what I'm offering.

Isabella picks up the paper and looks at it.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

You free me up to bring in more assets, I
break through the next tier, my percentage
goes up on the total. We both make money.

Christian fixes a serious stare back onto Isabella.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

You don't perform, you're all expense.

Lowering the paper, Isabella mimics the tone.

ISABELLA

I always perform.

Christian holds the stare.

EXT. BULL & FINCH - NIGHT

A taxicab sits outside the grandiose exterior doors. Rain blankets the car in sheets of water. Lightning flashes just before a thunderous BOOM.

INT. TAXICAB - NIGHT

Isabella is hunched over in the back seat, shaking.

DRIVER

You OK?

Lifting her head, tears flowing, she smiles slightly and burst from CRYING to emotional LAUGHTER.

INT. BULL & FINCH / BULLPEN - MORNING

The office is filling up with well-dressed staff.

INT. COMPLIANCE HALLWAY - MORNING

In a dim, secluded hallway, a sign on the door reads:
Compliance Office - Authorized Employees Only

INT. COMPLIANCE OFFICE - MORNING

JACK, in a designer vest, enters, turns on the lights, crosses to the computers lined up against the bay of bank-teller windows and turns them on.

INT. BULLPEN - AFTERNOON

Isabella shadows CAROL, in her late thirties, dressed in a conservative blouse, through the office carrying the green lined printouts from Christian's credenza. Carol points to JAMES GLAZIER, clean cut, mid forties, standing in his rolled sleeves behind a large, modern, glass walled office, on a headset watching four computer screens. A large TV is tuned to the financial channel.

JAMES

Take the eighth spread and roll them right back into cash. Good. Call me back.

CAROL

James. Former Air Force. His old man is in defense. They run what amounts to a small hedge fund. Gets whatever he wants.

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Carol points towards KATHERINE EDWARDS, an aged, svelte woman, walking an elderly couple out. They approach Katherine, exchange introductions and they shake hands.

KATHERINE

What brings you in?

CAROL

Isabella just started with Christian.

KATHERINE

Really?

She simulates a smile.

ISABELLA

Looks like he could use the help.

Katherine cuts her off.

KATHERINE

I'm sorry, will you excuse me for a moment?

Katherine skirts away. Carol looks perplexed.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

A corner office with windows overlooking the water, a dark-wood desk with a conference table to one side, a sitting area to the other, with art and sculptures adorning. WARREN CULVER navigates effortlessly out from behind his desk in his modern wheelchair, dressed perfectly in a tailored suit. His grace and style make the lines on his face imply knowledge over age. Katherine stands at center, hands on her hips.

KATHERINE

This is unacceptable, Warren.

Rolling to Katherine, he takes her hand. His relaxed speech and southern drawl ads familiarity to his words.

WARREN

Now dear, you know we can't communicate effectively when feathers are ruffled.

Katherine pulls away, moves to the conference area.

KATHERINE

Don't patronize me.

WARREN

Is that what I'm doing?

KATHERINE

He puts them into whatever you want.

WARREN

Everyone gets the same opportunities.

KATHERINE

I have more total assets.

Warren rolls himself to the sitting area.

WARREN

You have the least amount in Managed Money Accounts. For heaven's sake, you have eighty percent in treasuries.

Warren picks up a dish of candy-covered chocolates from the table and extends it to Katherine.

KATHERINE

I do what's right for my clients.

WARREN

We just had one of the best bull market recoveries of our lifetime and your clients are earning two percent. Is that right?

Warren carefully selects a chocolate from the dish.

KATHERINE

It's a bounce. Stimulus games based on garbage fundamentals. It's down thirty five percent from the top. These people are not traders. Capital preservation.

WARREN

You see, I have to make my numbers, too.

Katherine moves closer to Warren.

KATHERINE

At what risk?

He pops the chocolate in his mouth, replaces the dish.

WARREN

Start shifting some of your assets into a more balance ratio and.

Katherine circles back away.

KATHERINE

You don't tell me how to handle my clients.
I'll leave before that ever happens.

Warren rolls back over to his desk, patiently finishing the chocolate in his mouth before speaking.

WARREN

Gonna be tough without any clients.

KATHERINE

I walk, they walk with me.

WARREN

Not with an injunction.

Katherine steps toward the door, then stops.

KATHERINE

I'll skewer you in the press.

Calmly sitting with his hands folded.

WARREN

And a gag order.

Katherine marches toward the door.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Come now, let's work on something more
positive together like we used to.

Katherine exits. Warren looks at the empty doorway.

INT. WASHINGTON D.C. / WHITE HOUSE / PRESS ROOM - MORNING

The U.S. President at a podium flanked by several suits.

PRESIDENT

I'm pleased to announce we are initiating a joint effort between the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Justice and the White House to rein in fraudulent market activity. The American People deserve transparency. I gave my word on the campaign trail and today marks the first step in making good on that promise.

APPLAUSE from the suits and the audience.

INT. BULL & FINCH / HALLWAY - MORNING

Isabella cruises through the office, slips of paper in her hands, she ducks in James' door.

INT. JAMES' OFFICE - MORNING

James has his headset on.

JAMES

Right, I'll call you when I see it pop.

Eyeing Isabella.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What?

Raising a slip.

ISABELLA

Your IPO allocations.

Raising his hand.

JAMES

Give 'em to me.

Isabella crosses the room, hands James the slip.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Four hundred. What the fuck is this shit?

Isabella steps back.

ISABELLA

Christian told me to hand them out.

Crumpling the paper.

JAMES

Tell that motherfucker a thousand, minimum.

Looking down at the slips in her hand, he approaches.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Give me these.

He grabs them from her. Shuffling through them.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Aw, cut the shit. How many did he get?

ISABELLA

Who?

JAMES

Who? Christian.

Abandoning her and punching a button on his phone.

SHEILA (V.O.)

Yes.

JAMES

Get me the full allocation list for Western Pike Pharmaceuticals.

SHEILA (V.O.)

I'll bring it right in.

Stepping forward, Isabella reaches for the slips.

ISABELLA

Can I get?

JAMES

These?

James holds up the slips. She stops in her tracks.

JAMES (CONT'D)

These are no good.

He crumples them and throws them into the trash. Isabella retreats out the door.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Warren, at his desk, glasses perched on nose, looking over papers, talking on the speaker phone.

BILL (V.O.)

Clean house. Get rid of the dead weight.

WARREN

We risk the assets moving with them and we are on the cusp there as well.

Holding up a green lined printout.

BILL (V.O.)

You've got to increase your margins. The risk trade is back on. Send out the memo.

WARREN

Risk goes both ways. We try to play catch up in this market, a lot can happen.

BILL (V.O.)
It's your office, Warren, but.

WARREN
Indeed it is, Bill.

Silence holds in the air momentarily.

BILL (V.O.)
For now, anyway.

The line CLICKS dead, then BEEPS immediately.

SECRETARY #1 (V.O.)
James is waiting. Says it's urgent.

Warren peels off his glasses and rubs his eyes.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Isabella is seated at the small table looking over papers in Christian's office. He's seated in his high-back leather chair, visually locked onto the Federal Reserve Chairman giving a speech on TV. The closed-caption transcript is on the screen and Christian is talking to it. Christian leaps to his feet, TV remote in his hand.

CHRISTIAN
Recovery, my ass! Housing is in the shitter and people are bidding up 2% bonds.

Christian's phone RINGS and begins to blink.

CAROL (O.S.)
Christian Doherty's office, this is Carol.

CHRISTIAN
More Que-E. This guy is robbing us blind.

Grinning to himself, Christian turns to Isabella.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
Another three percent pop, though.

CAROL (O.S.)
Christian, it's George Gavoni.

Christian presses the speaker phone button.

CHRISTIAN
Gorgeous George, how are you, sir?

GEORGE (V.O.)
How'd we do yesterday?

George speaks in a rapid, upbeat way.

CHRISTIAN

A couple points. Not too terribly bad.

GEORGE (V.O.)

OK, that's good. Up is good.

CHRISTIAN

That is what we want to see, George.

Christian grabs a file from his desk, hands to Isabella.

GEORGE (V.O.)

You got any other hot ones for me?

CHRISTIAN

Western Pike is Friday. B&F is writing it. Should be a nice in and out pop.

GEORGE (V.O.)

I like that. Let's get on it.

CHRISTIAN

Done. When are we golfing again?

GEORGE (V.O.)

Other line, gotta go.

The phone CLICKS. Christian presses the speaker button, points to the file in Isabella's hand.

CHRISTIAN

Runs a cement business, half under the table. He's not flashy, but he's loaded. Loves IPOs, loves to trade.

Isabella flips through the pages.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I wish I had a hundred clients like him.

The phone RINGS, then stops.

CAROL (O.S.)

Christian Doherty's office, this is Carol.

Christian pulls a pad of paper and a cell phone from his desk drawer, hands them to Isabella.

CHRISTIAN

This phone rings, you pick it up. Keep it with you at all times.

CAROL (O.S.)
Christian, it's Mr. Sanders.

Christian points to the pad of paper.

CHRISTIAN
Everyone you know. Your relationship,
phone numbers, salary, assets.

ISABELLA
But nobody I know really has.

CHRISTIAN
Horse shit. You think this is a free
ride?

Christian positions his headset and holds his finger
over a button on his desk phone.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
Anything else?

Christian presses the button on the phone.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
(to Carol)
I'll take Sanders. Call the Kennedy's
and confirm their ten-o'clock.

Christian grabs the green lined printouts from his desk
and turns to Isabella.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
Call each of these out-transfer requests,
find out what they are about and get me
appointments with all of them right away.

He hands her the print out and motions for her to leave.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

FRANK, a tall, pale-skinned, buttoned-up man is standing
by a shelf looking at office awards and pictures of
Warren with notables.

FRANK
We should cool it, at least get through
this P.R. stunt from the White House.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE / BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

Warren is parked up next to the toilet sideways, fiddling
with something around his lap area.

WARREN

We're already behind this quarter. Not the time to get cold feet on me.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Frank reaches to the back, holds up a picture.

FRANK

I wonder if you're being too aggressive.

Front and center in the picture are a younger version of Frank and Warren. Both men are standing.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE / BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

Warren stops what he is doing and sits still.

WARREN

Me, too aggressive? Come now, Francis.

Liquid falling into the toilet ECHOES off the tile.

INT. LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Brokers are gathered in a conference room, six rows deep and wide, split down the middle by a walkway, overflow standing in back. Christian is seated up front with Isabella, the entrance is bottlenecked with late comers peering in. KENNY, a middle-aged balding man in an expensive shirt and tie, sits in one corner focused on his smart phone while James flirts with SHEILA, his petite secretary, by the entrance. Katherine stands behind the chairs by the door as Warren rolls to the front of the room.

Warren spins his chair to face the crowd. Frank steps from the side and hands Warren a sheet of paper. Warren grasps it without acknowledgement.

WARREN

I'll get right to the point. Managed Money. I've said it before. Move your larger accounts.

KATHERINE

Those accounts aren't right for everyone.

Smiling briefly, then looking at his paper.

WARREN

Now, the other thing we need to discuss is last months numbers and the contest.

(MORE)

WARREN (CONT'D)

Once again, we have Christian taking the top slot for total new assets in Managed Money and second for trading commissions.

Christian nods from his seat. Isabella beams.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Earns you another week in Beaver Creek.

He motions to a colorful poster on the wall of a skier.

WARREN (CONT'D)

You may have to start paying taxes there.

Warren chuckles, perusing for confirmation of his humor.

WARREN (CONT'D)

First place in trading commissions goes to James. Excellent work, both of you.

James holds up a hand. Christian whispers to Isabella.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Once again, it's no surprise who the contest winners are. What is a surprise is how far back the rest of you sit. As a result, they'll be no other awards today.

He hands the paper back to Francis who steps forward.

WARREN (CONT'D)

IPO business is not dead, people.

KENNY

Are we going to see any of the good ones?

Warren scowls at Kenny.

WARREN

You all want the cherries, got to go through a few pits. Get in touch with Christian and make it happen.

Kenny frowns. Warren departs, the room follows.

INT. ISABELLA'S WORK DESK - EVENING

The office is dark, few people still around. Isabella slides her finger down the green lined printout, DIALS.

OLD MAN #1

Hello?

ISABELLA

Hello Mr. Franklin, my name is Isabella Bastardi, I'm calling from Bull and Finch. I'm calling because we just received your request to transfer your account out.

OLD MAN #1

Who is this?

ISABELLA

Isabella. I'm with.

OLD MAN #1

I don't have any money for you.

ISABELLA

No, sir, I'm not.

OLD MAN #1

I signed up for that service where you people are not supposed to call me anymore.

ISABELLA

Your account is currently with us, sir.

OLD MAN #1

I don't have. Who are you looking for?

ISABELLA

Mr. Thomas Franklin.

OLD MAN #1

You have the wrong number.

DIAL TONE. She runs her hand through her hair, gazing at her desk pictures facing her: Sam's smiling face in one, Isabella wearing a hat and coverall, on a small boat over blue water in the other.

INT. COMPLIANCE OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Carol stands back as Isabella and Jack examine the top page of the green lined printouts.

ISABELLA

The phone number is wrong.

Looking over the papers.

JACK

No way. These are all established accounts.

Jack PUNCHES on his computer, it DIALS. He hangs up.

JACK (CONT'D)

Works fine.

Isabella smirks.

ISABELLA

Yes, it dials, but it's the wrong person.

Frank thrusts open the door. Jack goes stiff, Frank inspects their activity, motions to Isabella.

FRANK

Who are you?

JACK

She works for Christian.

Frank pauses, then focuses his attention on Jack.

FRANK

What are they doing in here?

CAROL

Jack was helping us verify an account.

Looking down at Jack's papers, Frank reaches out.

FRANK

One of these?

Jack extends them. Snatches, Frank flips a few pages.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'll take care of these.

Half reaching back out for the papers.

ISABELLA

But Christian asked me to.

Frank glares at Isabella.

FRANK

I'll make sure he gets them.

Frank examines the documents closer. Jack, Isabella and Carol look to each other. Frank points at the women.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You two, out.

Pointing at Jack.

FRANK (CONT'D)

My office.

Frank opens a closed door and enters with the prints. Isabella conceals a single green lined printout on the outside of her leg. The ladies eyeball Jack and exit.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - EVENING

Isabella sits on the couch in the living room next to folded children's laundry, the green lined printout next to her, she thumbs through a phone book. Walter, in his chair, paperwork and a beer in hand, news on TV.

TV ANCHOR (O.S.)

With hope out of Europe, the Dow managed to push up by fifty three points, closing positive for the day.

WALTER

Move our account? You had such a great thing going there. And in this job market?

ISABELLA

It wasn't as great as I thought.

WALTER

Didn't you say there was little left.

ISABELLA

What, are you going to leave it there?

Isabella tears out a sheet of the phone book.

WALTER

So every time you jump, we have to follow?

Vanessa hurries in from the other room.

VANESSA

What's going on with you two?

WALTER

Here we go again with her.

Walter gets up and storms out with papers in hand.

VANESSA

What is he talking about?

Isabella looks in her red eyes, examining.

ISABELLA

What's wrong with your eyes?

Raising her hand.

VANESSA

I have had it up to here with you two.

Isabella leaves the room. Vanessa lights a cigarette.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - EVENING

Sam, tucked in his bed, grins. Isabella, lying next to him, reads a book in a convincing creature voice.

ISABELLA

And on our way I can show you your kingdom.

Isabella makes a broad sweeping motion with her arms.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

This is all yours. From here, as far as the eye can see, in all directions.

Sam points to a new cell phone by Isabella's purse. She Looks in the direction of his finger.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

The phone?

Sam nods.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

They gave me that at my new job.

Sam displays a disjointed frown.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

OK, I have to know something.

They look into each others eyes.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Who exactly do you want to text so badly?

Hesitating a little, he breaks eye contact, then points to Isabella. Isabella sets the book down, reaches out and gently turns his head back in her direction. They look into each others' eyes.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

I'm here now.

Isabella grabs onto Sam's hands, shakes them gently.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

What is it? Talk to me.

They lock stares for an extended moment, Sam's eyes filling with water, Isabella pleading with hers.

VANESSA (O.S.)

Are you still up?

The door swings open and Vanessa strides into the room.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Come on, young man. Teeth, right now.

Sam pauses for a moment, rolls off the bed and scurries out. On his way by, he swipes across Isabella's purse.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

Isabella Collects her jacket in the darkened hallway. Walter appears with papers and hands them to her.

WALTER

They got more signature lines on there than when we rented this place.

Isabella reaches out and takes the papers.

ISABELLA

I'll let you know when it's transferred.

Isabella shuffles toward the front door.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isabella sits at her computer, the phone book page and green lined printout, with two numbers circled, in front of her. A phone directory up on the internet, she works several four digit combinations on a piece of paper, adding, subtracting, exchanging digits.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Isabella, seated at the conference table, Christian preaching. A shelf holds rows of identical, hard-bound books. A stack is on the table, one in her hand.

CHRISTIAN

Managed Money Accounts. One to three percent off the top of total assets goes straight to me. Very low impact.

Isabella flips through the book.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

A professional money manager handles all the trades. An average of one to three meetings a year per client.

Christian walks to Isabella, squeezes her arms, his crotch rubs her back. Distressed at the sight through the office window, Carol leaves her desk.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Translation: More time prospecting for new clients and working IPOs. Got it?

Isabella pulls away.

ISABELLA

I think so.

Christian walks back to his desk.

CHRISTIAN

Update the pull-sheets. Anything with a hundred grand plus in non-Managed Money, write it up and leave the rest to me.

ISABELLA

How about idle cash in the trading accounts? I could start to build relation.

Christian's arms fall to his sides, his head forward.

CHRISTIAN

Did I say that? Just do what I said.

Gathers his wallet and car keys.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

This is basic stuff.

Pointing to the shelf.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Go through these, you can get the rest of the files from the basement. Show me what you have when I get back from lunch.

ISABELLA

I finished the out transfer appointments.

Reaching out with the green lined printouts.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

About thirty percent success.

CHRISTIAN

That's it?

ISABELLA

Better if you don't count the ones with
bad phone numbers.

Abruptly changing demeanor. Grabbing the prints.

CHRISTIAN

They shouldn't be on here.

ISABELLA

Well, I know.
(pause)
Wait, what?

CHRISTIAN

Any bad numbers, just report them to me.

Christian exits the office. Isabella watches him leave,
then pulls out the one green lined printout she kept.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - LATER

Taking in the stack of books in front of her, Isabella
slumps, grabs the TV remote and ups the volume. PETER
SCHAFER, a middle aged bald man in glasses sermonizes.

PETER SCHAFER

Managing to the quarterly numbers is a
cancerous, self-serving, greed-based
strategy destroying this economy.

Katherine gracefully enters. Isabella pops upright.

PETER SCHAFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

These violent swings up and down are not
signs of a healthy market.

KATHERINE

Do you have a minute?

The phone RINGS.

PETER SCHAFER (V.O.)

The truth is, nothing has been solved.
Valuations are much too high. They're
looking back when we need to look forward.

Isabella gets up, looks at the display, presses the
speaker button.

ISABELLA

Christian's office.

SECRETARY #2 (V.O.)

I've got a walk-in for Christian.

ISABELLA

He's not in.

SECRETARY #2 (V.O.)

You want it or should I give it to Marrino?

Katherine motions for Isabella to take it.

ISABELLA

I'll be right up.

PETER SCHAFER (V.O.)

My recommendation to my clients is to protect themselves. These valuations are not based in reality and they'll be plenty of opportunity to get in at much lower prices.

She rushes out of the office, leaving Katherine alone.

INT. KATHERINE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Two cups of tea sit on a round table as classical MUSIC softly permeates the room. The office is tidy and appointed with art and photographs. Katherine is at her credenza with a file.

KATHERINE

I promise you, it will pay off.

Isabella is across the room inspecting the photos of Katherine with her friends and family that litter the office. A young raven haired woman recurs with Katherine in several pictures, charting their lives.

ISABELLA

I don't want to baby sit adult children who don't know their ass from their elbow.

KATHERINE

Patience. It will come. These adult children, as you put it, are exactly the kind of people who need our help.

ISABELLA

I came here to trade. Make money.

KATHERINE

Day trading is a losing proposition. It does more harm than good. Look here.

Pointing to the open file.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Tim and Phyllis Crawford. My oldest clients of twenty two years. They started with me as a walk-in rolling over a twelve thousand dollar IRA.

Pointing to a picture of the three of them at a sunset harbor dinner on a boat.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Now I manage their entire financial life. Stocks, bonds, insurance, trusts for their children. One point two million. They split their time between here and Paris.

The phone RINGS. Katherine sits and grabs the phone.

EXT. DOWNTOWN WAREHOUSE / ALLEYWAY - AFTERNOON

Rain falls on the late model luxury sports sedan parked by the dumpster near the back entrance to a warehouse.

INT. DOWNTOWN WAREHOUSE / HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Christian is escorted by a leather-clad dominatrix down a long, dark hallway, sliding doors every fifteen feet on either side. An opaque ceiling emits a glow of deep red, coloring the figures as they move. Sensual HOUSE MUSIC surrounds them.

INT. BULL & FINCH / CAROL'S DESK - AFTERNOON

Carol sits at her desk, her cell phone to her ear.

CAROL

I'm leaving now. Don't leave him alone.

She grabs her purse and runs out.

INT. DOWNTOWN WAREHOUSE / PADDED ROOM - AFTERNOON

Wall to wall raised padded bedding covers the area except for a path in the middle leading to the door. Purple light floods the room, flat screens show porn on every wall, as a WELL DRESSED MAN stands alone. The slider opens, Christian enters and the door slides shut.

WELL DRESSED MAN

What the fuck is this place?

CHRISTIAN

It's discreet, Tom. That's what it is.

Christian reaches for a hidden panel behind one of the pads on the wall. He flicks a few switches, the TVs turn off and the lights go from purple to soft white. He reaches under the two large side pads and folds them up to reveal two couches facing each other.

TOM

Jesus. Are you a regular or what?

He folds up the center pad across from the sliding door to reveal a stocked bar with full, top-shelf bottles.

CHRISTIAN

The owner is a client.

TOM

Great. Any drug dealers?

Christian cracks open a bottle of scotch.

INT. PADDED ROOM - LATER

Christian and Tom sit across from each other sipping drinks, a now half-empty bottle on the bar.

TOM

It's a great opportunity. Three years up front, even if there's a little attrition.

CHRISTIAN

I'm the one with my ass hanging out.

TOM

You'd be crazy not to jump at it.

Christian holds the drink and stirs it with his finger.

CHRISTIAN

I'll need another ten percent up front. And the retention threshold has to come down or the risk is too great.

TOM

I can't do that.

They stare at each other.

CHRISTIAN

I've got to get back.

Christian sets his drink on the bar, then rises.

TOM

I thought we were past all this.

CHRISTIAN

Stay as long as you like.

Christian exits, closing the slider behind him.

INT. BULL & FINCH / CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The light blinks from the phone on Christian's desk. On the TV, the FLOOR REPORTER at the stock exchange is reporting. A chart for Western Pike is on screen.

FLOOR REPORTER (V.O.)

As you can see, the IPO for Western Pike is doing very well. It has certainly exceeded expectations. With fifty minutes remaining, let's see if it can hold up on this suddenly declining market.

The graph shows a jagged line from bottom left to top right, except at the far right, where it angles down.

INT. KATHERINE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

A cell phone VIBRATES on an empty chair. Katherine is at her desk on speaker phone, SHOUTING with as much poise as possible.

KATHERINE

We'll go over the portfolio and I'll show you both how you're positioned to generate more than enough for you and Mr. Cunningham to be comfortable right in your own home.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM (V.O.)

But he said I should move the money now before the opportunity was gone.

Isabella inspects Katherine's pictures. In one, Katherine and the raven haired girl are both wearing aprons covered with splatter. The girl is displaying a clay bowl, Katherine's hair noticeably darker than now.

KATHERINE

When's the last time you two had Morton's?

MRS. CUNNINGHAM (V.O.)

Oh, it's been some time now.

KATHERINE

Would you enjoy accompanying me there on Monday afternoon for lunch?

Another black framed image captures Katherine beaming, with her arm solidly holding onto the adolescent girl in equestrian riding gear, behind them a strapping horse.

MRS. CUNNINGHAM (V.O.)

Well, now, we usually eat lunch at eleven.

KATHERINE

I'll make the reservation and pick you two up at 10:30. How does that sound?

MRS. CUNNINGHAM (V.O.)

I guess that would be fine.

KATHERINE

Until then, Mrs. Cunningham.

Finally, a platinum border frames a black and white of an aged Katherine with a bride and groom. The young wife leaning into her husband, arm around his waist, head on his shoulder, her other hand only just clasping the fingers of Katherine. Isabella holds up the picture.

ISABELLA

Does she live in town?

KATHERINE

Yes. With her husband and kids up by Laurel Heights.

ISABELLA

How come I've never seen her?

Katherine rises and takes the photo.

KATHERINE

Attorneys. Between their jobs and kids, you know. We catch up when we can.

She places the picture in the original location.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Wipers labor to clear the rain. Christian holds his cell to his ear, jerking the wheel with the other hand.

CHRISTIAN

Fuck.

He re-dials.

ISABELLA (V.O.)

Hello.

CHRISTIAN

Jesus, where's Carol?

ISABELLA (V.O.)

I don't know.

CHRISTIAN

Where the fuck are you?

Christian catches a yellow light turning red and stomps the breaks before plowing pedestrians crossing early. His papers launch from the passenger seat to the floor.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Don't walk!

A JAY WALKER drops her coffee leaping off the street.

JAY WALKER

Asshole!

ISABELLA (V.O.)

Just down the hall.

Raging at the woman.

CHRISTIAN

Move!

Isabella bolts. Christian eyes the mess on his floor.

INT. BULL & FINCH / HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Isabella dashes past employees.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Isabella tears through the door.

ISABELLA

OK.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

You there?

Isabella sits in Christian's chair, sinking too low to operate the computer keyboard. She hunts blindly on the underside of the chair with her hand for the lever.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Are you there?

ISABELLA

Yeah.

Her seat thrusts up.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Yes.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Click on the broker portal.

Searching the screen, Isabella CLICKS the mouse.

ISABELLA

Broker number?

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Six, three, two, zero, six.

Isabella PUNCHES in the numbers on the keyboard.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Jolting forward, cell to his ear, Christian squints to see through the water veiling his view.

ISABELLA (V.O.)

I'm in.

CHRISTIAN

Roll out of the Western Pike IPO in all accounts. Start with Gorgeous George.

ISABELLA (V.O.)

Alright.

The keyboard CLICKS.

ISABELLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Two thousand shares.

CHRISTIAN

Sell four.

ISABELLA (V.O.)

But you don't.

CHRISTIAN

Sell four thousand. I'll flatten it before the close, just do what I tell you.

ISABELLA (V.O.)

You want me to sell two and short two?

CHRISTIAN

Click the god damn sell button.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Isabella moves the mouse over the sell button, CLICKS.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Did you do it?

ISABELLA

Yes.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Good. Type in four thousand shares.

Isabella moves the mouse and CLICKS. She PUNCHES four times on the keyboard with her finger.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Got it?

ISABELLA

Yes.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Christian weaves past a car double parked on the street. His head whips from side to side without slowing down.

CHRISTIAN

Order type is Market.

The traffic light ahead turns yellow as Christian propels forward. Just before entering the intersection, the break lights on the car in front of him shine a steady red. Dropping the cell phone, Christian grabs the steering wheel with both hands, bracing himself.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Isabella's hand about to come down on the Enter key.

ISABELLA

Looks good.

The sounds of SKIDDING TIRES pierce through the phone, then a quick CRUNCH, then silence.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Hello?

Examines the phone, then back to her ear.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Christian?

She hangs up and presses a button. The phone RINGS several times, then the voice mail.

CHRISTIAN'S VOICE MAIL (V.O.)

You have reached Christian Do.

Isabella hangs up. Hesitating, she PRESSES Enter.

A message appears on the screen: Warning: You are about to place an order to sell more shares than are in this account. If you proceed, you must deposit the balance of the shares in this account prior to Settlement Date.

Isabella PRESSES the Enter key again.

A message appears on the screen: Sale of 4,000 WSPK entered successfully.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

The car is empty, a cracked cell phone on the floor, an airbag deployed from the steering wheel, lies limp. YELLING can be heard outside, then a car HORN.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Christian, getting soaked, leans into the 80's model Mercedes, over OLD MAN #2, in a tweed jacket and Oxford.

CHRISTIAN

Fine, let's call the police. Give me your cell phone and I'll do it for you.

OLD MAN #2

I won't be barked at.

A BYSTANDER comes from the car stopped behind Christian.

BYSTANDER

Is there a problem here?

Turning to stand toe to toe with the Bystander.

CHRISTIAN

We've got this handled.

Old Man #2 SHUTS his car door. A CLICK is heard as he presses the lock button.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Isabella PRESSES the Enter button, a message appears on the screen: Buy of 2,000 WSPK entered successfully.

She marks the second of two checks by the last entry in a list of account numbers, sits back in the chair and looks at the chart on the screen which now looks like a jagged mountain peak. The Western Pike IPO has been losing ground steadily from its earlier high, now at its low for the day at the bottom right of the screen.

The seconds tick down in the corner of the screen; a small box reads: Countdown to Market Close: 00:09:36

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE - EVENING

Warren is behind his desk. Frank holds papers, Christian in his damp coat, they both flank the sitting area in front of Warren. Frank gestures to Christian.

FRANK

How could you let this happen?

CHRISTIAN

I got cut off. She thought she was.

FRANK

Why was she even involved?

WARREN

Francis, I don't think this is helping.

Frank moves to Warren, displaying the papers for him.

FRANK

We have a real problem here. I can't cover this. It's technically impossible for those shares to have been sold legit at those high prices. The purchase lows only hit at the end of the day, long after the highs they were sold at.

Warren takes the papers for inspection.

CHRISTIAN

But you filter all of my trades through the house account first.

FRANK

And?

Stepping toward Frank.

CHRISTIAN

Can't you match them up with other.

FRANK

There's too many shares! Nobody else traded it as heavy as you, so there is nothing to swap it with. I'm on the hook if I ignore this.

CHRISTIAN

It's about you, then?

Pointing and leaning toward Christian.

FRANK

No, this is about you fucking up.

Warren POUNDS his fist onto the desk.

WARREN

Enough.

(pause)

Frank, bottom line. Where do we stand?

Frank circles back and takes a seat on the couch.

FRANK

I could ignore it, put myself on the hook.

(pause)

I could report it to you and you could ignore it, putting you on the hook.

Gesturing to Christian.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Or, Christian could take the hit.

WARREN

There's got to be another way.

Frank grabs a chocolate from the dish, throws it back.

FRANK

No matter what happens, this exposes everything we've been doing. It's a flag. Christian's now marked. We do something, or eventually the SEC will uncover it.

WARREN

How long?

FRANK

Could be right away. Outside range, a couple of months, tops.

Warren rolls over to the dish of chocolates.

WARREN

Maybe we could take another route.

Grabs the chocolate dish, inspects it.

WARREN (CONT'D)

What if we don't cover it up. What if we just partitioned them off to the girl.

CHRISTIAN

What does that mean?

WARREN

(to Frank)

You can retro her trading number to her start date, right?

FRANK

Yeah.

WARREN

(to Christian)

You'd have to lose all of your active trading accounts. Not just the ones with the pharmaceutical trades.

Warren rolls back to the trash can by his desk.

CHRISTIAN

What does that solve?

WARREN

Put that account, all the questionable and legit trading accounts under her name. Give her some slack to run with them, using the same strategy.

(to Christian)

I mean, we hired her to take over your trading while you developed the Managed Money business, isn't that right?

Warren nods suggestively to Christian.

FRANK

That's pretty thin.

Warren empties the dish of chocolates into the trash.

WARREN

Look. It's thin, but it's what we have to work with. And it's all we need.

(to Frank)

Scour the accounts and wipe clean everything you can prior to her hire date.

FRANK

Anyone scratches the surface and they'll see what's going on.

WARREN

God damn it, Francis.

Places the empty dish onto his desk.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I have a contact at the SEC. They're looking for headlines. We can give them one tied up in a neat little pink bow.

Warren rolls to the middle of the room.

CHRISTIAN

All she has to do is open her mouth and we're exposed.

Christian and Frank take seats opposite each other.

WARREN

At the end of the day, she screwed up. Look, she's broke. She can't afford a good attorney. Given the circumstances, I think there's little risk here. We can throw a little cash at her and strong arm her into signing non-disclosure and non-compete agreements.

CHRISTIAN

So, what? We just let her run until someone figures it out.

WARREN

When Frank is done cleaning the books, I'll reach out with the concerns that you and Frank have brought to me. From that point, the deal we strike with the SEC will just be a matter of negotiation.

Frank and Christian rise and exit the office. Warren rolls back behind his desk. As the door shuts, he presses a button on his cell phone.

MARGERIE (V.O.)
Cohen, Roberts and Steinway.

WARREN
Good evening, Margerie. Warren Culver
for Richard Cohen, please.

Grabs a paper on his desk.

MARGERIE (V.O.)
Of course, Mr. Culver.

Places his reading glasses on.

RICHARD
This is unexpected.

WARREN
Looks like I may need a little surgery.

RICHARD
Are we talking major arteries?

The paper Warren holds is, Daily Gross Trading Revenue.

WARREN
A limb.

RICHARD
It's not Jimmy, is it?

Number one on Warren's paper is, James Glazier.

WARREN
Are you kidding? The other one.

Number two is, Christian Doherty.

RICHARD
I'm in with one of our councilmen at the
moment. Let me get back to you on this.

WARREN
Right.

He hangs up.

EXT. CHRISTIAN'S HOME - NIGHT

A modest victorian house sits on a corner lot, ornately
painted, sculpted bushes and cut grass out front.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOME / KITCHEN - NIGHT

BETH, in a long flowing casual skirt retrieves a pie from the oven with an embroidered mitt. The room is modern, light wood and stainless steel, well organized, accented throughout with pictures, flowers and homework on the fridge. Two children's backpacks sit next to each other on the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Two young girls in pajamas, JACQUELINE and CINDY, lay quietly on the rug. Cindy is reading a book while Jacqueline colors in the lines of her booklet.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Dressed in a sweater and pants, Christian leans on a leather chair with a drink in one hand, cigar in the other. The door is closed and he is blowing smoke out the open bay windows that frame a beautiful view of the city lights. Isabella sits opposite him on a couch wearing a slightly sexier version of her office attire.

The room is a stark contrast to the kitchen and living rooms. An artistic print of a bull battling a bear on pavement surrounded by greek columns dominates one wall with a sniper rifle mounted on the adjoining wall. A framed picture of men in desert fatigues standing in front of a camouflaged mobile communications unit hangs next to the rifle. On a pedestal table below the rifle, a World War II era code-breaking machine resembling an old typewriter in a small wooden box is displayed.

CHRISTIAN

Do you have any idea what you did today?

ISABELLA

What I thought you wanted.

CHRISTIAN

Who told you to think?

ISABELLA

If I did nothing, you would have.

He takes a step closer, shoots a sip from his glass.

CHRISTIAN

You know how fucked I would be?

Isabella darts her eyes to the oriental rug covering the wood floor.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

If you hadn't done what you did?

Shooting her eyes back to his. Smiling now, Christian sucks in from his cigar and releases the smoke.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Very impressive.

Isabella exhales. Christian points out the window.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Half the assholes in that office would have shit themselves and screwed that up.

Christian flicks the extended ash of his cigar in the direction of the ash tray and it dusts the table.

ISABELLA

I knew I had to do something.

CHRISTIAN

Pretty bold.

Christian stops and locks his stare onto Isabella again.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

You've got balls, I'll give you that.

Christian holds his stare, emitting a plume of smoke.

ISABELLA

I wasn't going to leave you with negative shares on an IPO.

Moving closer as if to inspect her face.

CHRISTIAN

You think you're ready to run your own accounts?

Delighted.

ISABELLA

Are you kidding? Yes.

Moving in eye to eye, close enough to smell her perfume.

CHRISTIAN

I want you to run all the trading accounts.

Katherine steps back from the news.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Managed Money is my thing. Obviously,
you're the trader here.

ISABELLA

But why would you give me your highest
revenue generating accounts?

CHRISTIAN

You get it, that's why.

(pause)

And don't worry, you're gonna pay me for
them. Every penny I deserve.

They both smirk.

BETH (O.S.)

Chris, dessert is ready.

Christian walks to the door and opens it slightly.

CHRISTIAN

We'll be right down.

Closing the door, he crosses the room and puts his cigar
out by the window, then walks to Isabella.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Congratulations.

Christian extends his hand to shake. Isabella smiles.

ISABELLA

Thank you.

Slowly, Isabella extends and joins her hand with his.
With his other hand, he pulls an envelope from his pocket
and holds it out. Her eyes move to the envelope.

A stack of green bills visible, Isabella reaches out.

EXT. GHIRARDELLI SQUARE - DAY

The sun is shining and the square is bustling with
tourists. A line is forming outside the ice cream shop.

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - DAY

Sam and Isabella sit at a table in the corner as tourists
swarm throughout. A large ice cream with a hot chocolate
sits in front of Sam and a small cup in front of
Isabella, who is reading an email on her phone.

ISABELLA

I want you to start looking around for a text plan and a phone you like.

His eyes widen. He sets his cup down. She looks up.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

What do you think?

Sam nods in agreement.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Plan on a couple of weeks from now after I cover a few bills.

Excited, Sam raises his arms and knocks the hot chocolate onto the floor. It SMASHES, brown liquid sprays across the floor and on the pants and bags of the customers next to them. Sam freezes, Isabella leaps up.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Christ.

A FAT MAN, a WOMAN, and a LITTLE BOY inspect the mess.

FAT MAN

Oh, come on.

The woman gathers the items off the brown speckled floor, the boy looks at his pants and the fat man rises.

WOMAN

The gifts.

Customers in nearby seats rise and move away. Isabella surveys the situation, reaches to help the woman.

ISABELLA

I'm so sorry, if anything is ruined I.

Snapping back at her

WOMAN

Leave it alone.

Retreating.

ISABELLA

Excuse me.

A teen in an apron comes over and wipes the floor. The fat man looks at Sam sitting in silence.

FAT MAN

Don't get up, we got it.

ISABELLA

Relax, it was an accident.

FAT MAN

Don't tell me to relax. He made a mess.

Approaching the man.

ISABELLA

By accident.

Pointing her finger.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

And it's being cleaned up, so sit your fat ass back down and shut up.

The man puts his ice cream down and squares off.

FAT MAN

Who the hell do you think you are?

A six-foot, well-dressed, HANDSOME YOUNG MAN in his thirties, with black hair appears and puts a grip on the fat man's shoulder. The fat man winces.

FAT MAN (CONT'D)

Hey.

The handsome man tightens slightly, bringing the fat man down more, leans in and calmly whispers in his face.

HANDSOME MAN

Don't be an asshole.

The woman looks at her husband, the handsome man lets go. The teen stops wiping to view the spectacle.

FAT MAN

Come on, let's go.

WOMAN

But the gifts.

The man grasps his boy's hand and yanks.

FAT MAN

Now.

They waddle off with their dripping bags. Isabella snaps at the handsome man.

ISABELLA

That wasn't necessary.

The handsome man looks at the teen, still kneeling on the floor. The teen stands and leaves.

HANDSOME MAN

I get carried away when I see a beautiful woman in distress.

Smiling, pointing to the stairs.

HANDSOME MAN (CONT'D)

I was just on my way upstairs and I saw the whole thing.

Looking around at the customers.

ISABELLA

I didn't need your help.

HANDSOME MAN

Even so, it was my pleasure.

Isabella collects Sam and they scurry out.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOME / BASEMENT - EVENING

The room is finished with an epoxy covered floor, large area rugs covering most of the space, a couch and TV on one side, a pool table and small bar on the other. A massive glass aquarium holds a Burmese python, a dead tree limb diagonally crossing the enclosure. Another space in the wall is opened next to the snake revealing a guinea pig in a wire cage eating tiny food pellets. Standing on the floor delineation between rugs, Christian holds an eighteen inch metal tube while Jacqueline feeds a miniature harpoon into one end.

CHRISTIAN

All the way in until you feel it release.

Smiling, Jacqueline pushes it in with her finger. Light from the doorway fills the stairs as Beth descends.

JACQUELINE

Got it.

Beth stops, watches them in silence for a moment.

CHRISTIAN

Hold it up to your mouth like before.

BETH

Your parents called again.

Jacqueline looks back quickly.

JACQUELINE

Hi Mommy.

Jacqueline hoists one end of the pole to her mouth as the other end sways back and forth.

CHRISTIAN

Call Cindy.

Christian rests his hand under the weapon to steady it.

BETH

She hates this. Leave her alone.

CHRISTIAN

Deep breath through your nose and hold it.

JACQUELINE

OK.

BETH

I'm out of excuses.

CHRISTIAN

I told you. Let the machine get it.

Her little rib cage heaves.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

(to Jacqueline)

Line up the dot on Jimmy Dean.

BETH

What about the new girl?

He breaks with Jacqueline to look at Beth.

BETH (CONT'D)

I don't trust her.

CHRISTIAN

Don't start with me on this.

In one big thrust, Jacqueline pushes all of the breath out of her tiny body, a SWISH of air releases. The razor-tipped dart pierces the pig's flesh instantly, knocking it back from the feed as it lets out a SQUEAL.

JACQUELINE

I did it!

Lowering the gun and bouncing up and down on her toes.
The pig twitches for a moment before laying still.

CHRISTIAN

Nice job, all right!

Jacqueline hops over to the pig, Christian follows.

BETH

Let me talk to Daddy. He can help.

CHRISTIAN

(angrily)

Jesus. He's in a much different position
than us. The BF stock is all we have
left. I'm working to try and free that
up so the risk is not all with the firm.

Holding the pig with one hand against the enclosure,
Christian pulls out the spear with the other.

JACQUELINE

Can I feed Mr. Loafers?

CHRISTIAN

(to Beth)

Please, just leave him out of it.

Christian holds the pig up by the tail.

BETH

All we have left?

Sneering at Beth.

CHRISTIAN

(to Jacqueline)

Watch me this time. OK, sweetie?

Jacqueline frowns and drops the gun.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Hey!

Frightened, she immediately picks it up again.

JACQUELINE

It slipped.

Christian swings the pig gently over the python as a
drop of blood drains down and falls from the tip of the

snout. Jacqueline stares in awe at the spectacle. The snake, locked on the pig, slowly coils itself, almost visually building the muscle tension it needs. The snake strikes in an instant, snatching the hairy rodent head in its jaws and coiling around and around until barely more than a few patches of hair are visible from in between the rippling muscles.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walter stands by the doorway as Vanessa throws clothes into a bag, a cigarette in one hand, slurring.

VANESSA

I'm getting out of this shit hole.

WALTER

Where are you gonna go?

Mocking his tone of concern.

VANESSA

Away from here.

WALTER

What about Sammy?

Angrily.

VANESSA

Don't you use him against me.

She grabs the TV remote from the bed, throws it at him. He shifts his body, it SMASHES against the wall.

INT. CLUB / DINING AREA - NIGHT

A swanky downtown nightclub vibrates with a deep BASS rhythm. Floor to ceiling purple and gold drapes frame the massive entrance from the dining area to the dance club. A semicircle raised bar with an angled mirror backing reflects the crowd of patrons onto the long row of booth seating where Isabella sits with three friends. TAMARA MORRISON, a dark, curvy siren with black curls in a tight red body dress is being pressed to talk.

TAMARA

I don't want to.

WOODY CARLSON, a short, buff, clean cut man in a long sleeve shirt rubs his hands together in anticipation.

WOODY

You're not leaving here until you spill.

Checking her phone, setting it down and responding.

ISABELLA

It's kind of freaky.

ASHERY SILVER, a punk chick with facial studs is now interested.

ASHERY

Bel knows?

Tamara, swaying, too tipsy for the time of night.

TAMARA

It's embarrassing.

All together now, they BADGER her to reveal.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

OK, OK.

The waitress arrives, dressed in a long-sleeve unitard, boy-shorts, a choker collar and knee-high leather boots.

WAITRESS #1

Can I get you guys anything else?

ISABELLA

Another round.

ASHERY

I'm good.

ISABELLA

Come on, it's on me. Whatever you want.

WOODY

Nice.

ASHERY

Look, you don't have to.

ISABELLA

It's long overdue so don't give me any shit about it.

ASHERY

Big shot now, huh? OK, Yeah.

Raising her glass to the waitress. They all nod.

ISABELLA

I have an open tab at the bar.

Motioning to the bar, she notices the handsome man from the ice cream shop standing alone and looking dapper.

TAMARA

Thanks, Bella!

WOODY

Alright, let's go with the story.

The waitress leaves, Tamara drops and covers her head.

TAMARA

I feel so pathetic. I changed my mind.

ASHERY

Do it anyway.

TAMARA

Fine!

Lifting her head, she takes a drink of her martini.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

This guy, Mitch. Super hot guy we are courting for a big P.R. deal and he takes me out to Bouche. Awesome food.

WOODY

What's that?

ISABELLA

It's French.

ASHERY

It's lame. And shouldn't you be taking him out if you're trying for his business?

TAMARA

He asked me out, out. And it's not lame.

WOODY

OK, what's the problem?

TAMARA

Nothing. Yet. He drops me off and all went well. I was really into him.

Isabella looks back, the handsome man's not at the bar.

ASHERY

Oh, that's a surprise.

TAMARA

You shut up.

Searching, concerned, Isabella's eyes land on the handsome man a few yards away. Their eyes lock, he smiles and holds his drink up to acknowledge her.

WOODY

Did you guys set a wedding date yet?

Startled, Isabella jerks her head back.

TAMARA

Anyway, the next week, he wants to take me to the ballet. Sounds good, right?

The waitress arrives with the drinks, distributes them. Woody checks his watch.

WOODY

Are we going to finish this story tonight or will there be an intermission?

Tamara motions with her eyes to the waitress.

ASHERY

Yeah, she hasn't heard anything quite as crazy as a second date at the ballet.

The waitress leaves.

ISABELLA

Will you just get to the point?

Isabella looks back, now with composure, and smiles at the handsome man still holding his gaze on her.

TAMARA

OK, so, we have another amazing night and he takes me back to his place.

The handsome man bows his head slightly.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

It's this gorgeous condo on the twentieth floor overlooking the Bay Bridge.

Isabella returns the slight bow and turns back slowly.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

The more I find out about this guy the more I am falling for him. It's like he is my ultimate dream, my soul mate.

ASHERY

Her soul, being a greedy cash-box.

Tamara shoots her a dirty look.

TAMARA

Maybe I just think success is important.

ASHERY

Right, defined by your bank account.

ISABELLA

Can we continue, please?

TAMARA

So, anyway! We end up in bed, which sits in a bay of windows overlooking the bridge lights. It was so beautiful.

Pausing, looking down, then at her friends, blushing.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Right at my peak, the lights go on and an eighty year old couple walks in on us.

WOODY

Nice!

He smiles with satisfaction, the others ROAR.

ASHERY

So, he's into group sex with old people?
OK, I hear that.

Slugging on her new drink.

TAMARA

Grandson. House sitting from Ohio.

Laughing, Isabella scans the room, no sign of the man.

WOODY

What did you do?

TAMARA

They started yelling at him. He's apologizing. I ran into the bathroom.

ASHERY

Weren't you suspicious when the bed smelled like Vicks and talcum powder?

TAMARA

I am never going to find a man.

ISABELLA

Don't go overboard. I don't think he was quite what you were looking for, anyway.

TAMARA

Every time, I screw it up.

ISABELLA

How exactly did you screw that up?

TAMARA

You know what I mean.

ISABELLA

Why do you need a man? Be your own woman.

TAMARA

Oh, like you?

ISABELLA

Yes. Exactly.

The handsome man appears, bows his head and extends his hand to Isabella, sitting on the outside of the booth, holding her eyes in his. Flashes a playful grin.

HANDSOME MAN

May I have this dance?

Smiling, her friends puzzled, extends her hand to his.

ISABELLA

But of course.

Tamara looks on, her mouth widens. He whisks Isabella through the curtains into the PULSING dance club.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Walter, draped over Vanessa's back with her in a bear hug, holding her wrists as she fights hysterically. He's in sweat-pants and she's in her house-dress. The car keys, clenched tightly in her grip, RATTLE around.

VANESSA

You son-of-a-bitch.

Angry, defensively steadying her aggressive movements.

WALTER

Put them down.

Sam is visible from around the corner.

VANESSA

Who in the hell do you think you are?

WALTER

You're not going anywhere.

VANESSA

Samuel, call nine-one-one.

Stern.

WALTER

(to Sam)

Go back to bed.

VANESSA

Call the police, Samuel!

Sam stands frozen, eyes wide, hands over his ears.

INT. CLUB / DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Up against the wall in the dark club, lights spinning and flashing, people packed in, dancing, Isabella and the handsome man stand close, move their bodies in sync, almost shouting into each others' ears when they speak.

HANDSOME MAN

Mal. It's short for Malik.

ISABELLA

I owe you an apology for the other day.

MAL

Not necessary.

Their hands clenched together motionless in a still shake, in between their pressed bodies, he kisses her.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / OUTER HALL - MORNING

Walter exits the apartment in an overcoat to find HAROLD, the old watchful owner, neatly dressed in a jacket and slacks, circa 1960, waving his arms as he talks.

HAROLD

I'm not going to tell you people again.
Three calls about the noise.

Sam follows Walter in jeans and sneakers with a backpack.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Always something with you people. I get woken at all hours. Yelling, they say.

Imperceptibly gesturing to Sam with his eyes and head.

WALTER

Can we talk about this later?

HAROLD

It's a secret? You think he doesn't know?

Harold hunches and directs his words to Sam.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

He knows what goes on, don't you?

Sam shuffles behind Walter who puts one arm around him and the other arm out toward Harold.

WALTER

Enough.

HAROLD

The next time, I'm calling the police.
Is she in there now?

They flee from Harold toward the exit.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - LATE MORNING

Christian's desk phone RINGS. The caller ID reads: Private. Seated, tilting back her coffee, Isabella reaches to answer it. As she places the phone to her head, she chokes and coughs, deepening her voice.

ISABELLA

Yes.

CALLER

You playing me for a counter offer?

Isabella stiffens and plants her coffee on the desk.

ISABELLA

I'm sorry, are you looking for Christian?

A CLICK is heard through the end of the receiver. Isabella slides the phone from her ear, hanging up.

EXT. SUSHI RESTAURANT / PATIO - NOON

Jack and Isabella are sitting at a table overlooking the water. The plates and glasses are empty. Isabella extinguishes a cigarette and gazes at the ocean.

ISABELLA

Have you ever just wanted to sail away?

JACK

What about Mal? He sounds amazing.

ISABELLA

Well, I never said I would be alone.

Smiling.

JACK

I am so happy for you. You deserve it.

ISABELLA

Sometimes I wonder.

JACK

About what?

ISABELLA

If these things last.

JACK

Don't wonder, just enjoy it.

Acknowledging this with a smile.

JACK (CONT'D)

I can't wait to meet him.

WAITRESS #2 brings the check and Isabella hands her a credit card. Jack reaches for his wallet.

ISABELLA

It's on me.

Isabella nods to the waitress.

WAITRESS #2

I'll be right back.

JACK

Come on, you didn't have to do that.

ISABELLA

It's my way of saying thank you for taking care of all of our trades the way you do.

Jack puts his wallet back into his pocket.

JACK

Look at you. It's, our trades, now.

Isabella smiles as she checks her phone.

JACK (CONT'D)

Although I appreciate it, Frank won't even let me look at Christian's accounts. He handles everything himself.

Isabella contemplates.

JACK (CONT'D)

It's weird, really. It's like his baby.

ISABELLA

So, which accounts do you handle?

JACK

Everyone else's.

A text on her phone reads: Christian: Where are you?

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Isabella's bedroom is in a state of organized clutter. The financial channel on in the background, the green lined printout on one corner of her desk and a sheet of trade transactions in front of her. She sits at her desk scrolling through the web. A title reads: Short Selling of Initial Public Offerings (IPOs)

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

We're here tonight with two of our favorite guests. Peter Schafer, a private asset manager who has a unique take on this market and where it's heading. Also joining us tonight is Terrance McCormick from T.K. Capital and their opinions couldn't be more different.

Isabella scrolls down the page and stops.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

OK, Peter, why do you think, and I quote, "Next stop for this market: The basement."

Excerpts from the text: To short an IPO, or sell IPO stock you don't already own, you must borrow them; This can be very difficult on the first day of trading; You can't sell what you don't already own or have borrowed.

PETER SCHAFER (O.S.)

Let's start with demographics. We talk about the Baby Boomers like we had the Midas Touch. Truth is, by sheer volume moving through the system, we created our own demand.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

So you're saying we're in for a big decline?

Isabella scrolls through another web page. Excerpts from the text: The company issuing the IPO is legally obligated to support the stock price of that new company.

PETER SCHAFER (O.S.)

Big spending is over. The demand drops off a cliff very quickly as our population matures. It's already started, it's going to be worse than the Great Depression and it's going to last about a decade.

TERRANCE (O.S.)

Peter, have you seen earnings lately? This market has bottomed and we are on the verge of another bull market.

Excerpts from the text read: An issuer typically issues severe penalties to brokers who sell IPO shares quickly.

PETER SCHAFER (O.S.)

Earnings are a lagging indicator. They look backward, not forward.

TERRANCE (O.S.)

I see, now earnings don't matter?

PETER SCHAFER (O.S.)

Every leading indicator is pointing down.

Isabella closes the web page and looks at her papers.

INT. COMPLIANCE OFFICE / INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - EVENING

The office is small, with fine furniture and large, pleasant landscape prints. Frank sits at his computer, papers in hand. Warren is beside him, the door ajar.

FRANK

It's not clean enough.

Frank hands him a paper. Warren examines.

WARREN

You've already moved all of the others. I don't think we have a choice.

Hands it back.

FRANK

All I've done is shift the problem from Christian. They all tie back to me now.

WARREN

Not to you, to the girl.

FRANK

But I'm still exposed here.

Warren rolls toward the door and stops.

WARREN

I need you to go with me on this.

FRANK

I'm not comfortable with it.

WARREN

You will be safe. We give them Isabella and I promise a few favors and the case is closed. This is small time stuff.

A VIBRATING NOISE comes from outside Frank's office. Warren swings the door open. Jack's distinct vest disappears out the main door. Frank jumps up past Warren to the main door and stares at the empty hallway. Looking back at Warren, he slams the door closed.

INT. BULL & FINCH / BASEMENT STORAGE ROOM - MORNING

Isabella kneels on the floor surrounded by open boxes, papers strewn about, green lined printout in hand. She moves her finger to a phone number and date on the print out: (415)626-2694, Oct 17th. She pulls an account statement from a stack on the ground, locates the phone number and date of the statement: (415)626-3693, Sept 22nd. The account numbers on both match.

INT. BASEMENT STORAGE ROOM - LATER

Isabella is standing on a chair, reaching up to put one of the boxes onto the top shelf, electric equipment CHURNING. Her lean legs, flexing with the stretch, are visible from the thigh all the way down to the arch of her foot as it slips out of the high heel she is wearing. Frank slinks from behind a shelf, freezing to take in the sight before him. Upon placing the box, Isabella jerks back, startled by Frank's silent appearance.

ISABELLA

What are you doing?

She steps down from the chair, Frank leering at her.

FRANK

How did you get down here?

She pauses as she reaches for the final box on the floor.

ISABELLA

Jack, why?

FRANK

You don't have authorization to be here.

Hastily, she clutches the last box.

ISABELLA

Well, we need to change that.

She steps up, shoves the box into place and steps down. Grabbing a six inch thick file folder with rubber bands around it, she presses it to her chest, steps to leave.

FRANK

What were you doing?

Frank angles in her way.

ISABELLA

My job.

She squeezes around him and scurries by the dark shelves.

INT. KATHERINE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Isabella is standing over Katherine's desk with the green lined printout in her hand.

ISABELLA

Who has access to change the accounts?

Takes the paper from Isabella.

KATHERINE

Compliance and the account manager.

ISABELLA

So it could have been Christian?

Fingering the marked changes and the hand written notes.

KATHERINE

Possibly, but a flag automatically goes to Compliance notifying them of any change.

ISABELLA

Every change has been in the last month.

KATHERINE

What did Christian say?

ISABELLA

To let him handle it.

Katherine hands the paper back.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Christian sits at the computer typing furiously, door closed, his entire account list on a print out in front of him. A sporadic few accounts throughout have N/A written next to them and the top third of the first page has check marks next to the account numbers. Christian SLAMS down on the enter key, then reaches over and adds a check mark to the next account in line.

He types in another account number, HITS enter. Moving the cursor over the last four digits of the phone number, he adds one to the first digit and subtracts one from the last digit. Through the window, Katherine appears by Carol's desk and looks into Christian's office. The number changes from, (415)626-8854, to (415)626-9853.

His cell phone VIBRATES, he picks it up.

CHRISTIAN

Jesus, Tom, I called five hours ago.

TOM (V.O.)

I still haven't heard back about the additional percentage you wanted.

Christian swivels in his chair, faces the back wall.

CHRISTIAN

Fuck it, the original deal works.

TOM (V.O.)

That's great. Why the change of heart?

CHRISTIAN

That's my concern, I just need you to make it happen this Friday.

TOM (V.O.)

Kind of late notice. I don't know if I can. Early next week might.

CHRISTIAN

We've got a personnel situation going on here and I want out before it accelerates.

TOM (V.O.)

Does it have to be Friday?

CHRISTIAN

I drop my notice late Friday, they don't have time to get to the courts to block contact. Gives me all weekend to sign the new docs with my big clients. Come on, this your first time?

TOM (V.O.)

They'll just call the accounts directly.

A SQUEAK from the door hinge is heard. Christian spins so fast in his chair, he DROPS the phone. Katherine is standing half in the room holding the door handle.

CHRISTIAN

What?

KATHERINE

Sorry to bother you, Christian, but Carol is away and I was looking for Isabella.

Christian rises, storms to the door. Katherine backs out as he approaches, he slams the door in her face.

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Isabella strides through the office holding a few bound financial plan books and the green lined printout. Kenny rounds the corner, looking frantic. They stop just short of a collision.

ISABELLA

Oh, Kenny.

KENNY

Where's Christian? I need some action.

Puzzled.

ISABELLA

IPOs?

KENNY

Yes, where is he?

ISABELLA

In the large conference room with a client. He'll be finished pretty soon.

Kenny hurries off the way he came. Warren rolls around the corner, smiling at Isabella.

WARREN

There she is.

ISABELLA

Hello, Warren.

Gesturing to the green lined printouts.

WARREN

That's it, keep those accounts with us.

ISABELLA

Right. That's the goal.

WARREN

I hear good things about you. Keep it up
and you'll have your own office some day.

Smiling politely.

ISABELLA

I'd like that.

WARREN

Good things.

Warren rolls himself away.

INT. ISABELLA'S WORK DESK - EVENING

A male hand holds up the picture of Sammy smiling, looks
at it, then places it on the edge of the desk.

INT. BMW SUV - EVENING

Parked toward the back of a crowded lot, a hotel lobby
in the distance, Beth checks her makeup in the mirror.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - EVENING

Christian and Kenny sit at the small table, an opened
bottle and two glasses in front of them. Christian
leans in, grabs onto Kenny's arm.

CHRISTIAN

You want the truth, Kenny?

Kenny leans in.

KENNY

Yes.

CHRISTIAN

I'm not the guy you need to talk to.

KENNY

Come on.

Kenny tries to pull away, Christian tightens his grip.

CHRISTIAN

Hey, listen. You want the hot IPOs, right?

Kenny pulls back and stares blankly at Christian.

KENNY

That's why I'm here.

CHRISTIAN

And I'm trying to tell you.

Pointing at Kenny.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Isabella is your girl.

KENNY

Your assistant?

CHRISTIAN

She's not my assistant. That was just to get her in here so I could hand off the trading without a bunch of noise from all the sissies around here.

KENNY

So, what does that mean for me?

CHRISTIAN

It means, you need to get in good with her. Warren loves her. Thinks she's some kind of trading goddess.

Christian lifts one arm and shapes his hand into a cup.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

She's got him by the balls.

KENNY

Really?

Christian gets up, puts his hand on Kenny's back and leans down by his side, speaking into his ear.

CHRISTIAN

Being totally honest with you. She's not bad, from what I can see. Been running my accounts. Well, they're hers, but been doing a hell of a job since day one.

KENNY

What do you mean, they're hers?

CHRISTIAN

I'm focusing on Managed Money. Let her do the trading. I can't match the kind of returns she's been getting, anyway. Takes a real talent. Sorry to say, I don't have it.

KENNY

I'm a little surprised with all this.

CHRISTIAN

You have to keep this to yourself until Warren announces it. He'll have my ass.

KENNY

Yeah, no, I won't say anything.

CHRISTIAN

OK, so you're going to be working with the new hotshot little girl we have, you need to know a few things.

Christian opens the bottle and tops off Kenny's drink.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Let her do her thing, whatever that is. You're going to have to hold a few losers here and there. So, put them in your accounts that are over performing in another assets. You hit a big loser, you pad it with a hot one the next time around.

Motions Kenny to drink and he does.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

It's simple. You accumulate over all of your accounts. The more IPOs you get and the longer you hold them, the higher your rank. The higher your rank, the better your allocation for the hot ones.

Christian tilts back his glass as Kenny stares blankly.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Laying back on the bed, her shirt open, pants unbuttoned, exposing her black silk bra and panties, Beth continues to undress as periodic flashes of light immortalize her performance. An athletic man with black hair in tight black underwear trunks stands on the end of the bed holding the camera, back turned.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOME / MASTER CLOSET - NIGHT

Christian flips through papers while kneeling at the back of the closet. An open safe exposes a hand gun, a few stacks of money and folders. Stopping, he pulls out a thick set of documents clipped together, titled: Marriage License and Prenuptial Agreement.

INT. BULL & FINCH / JAMES' OFFICE - MORNING

Sheila holds papers, standing next to James who is sitting in his chair looking over a document.

JAMES

How the fuck is he hitting these so hot?

Sheila hands him another sheet with a chart on it.

SHEILA

I graphed his trading over the last few weeks and compared it to yours.

James grabs the sheet and looks it over.

JAMES

Eighty-five percent average?

SHEILA

That's including the deals that tanked.

James looks up again at Sheila.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

He's hitting the good ones over a hundred.

James sees Christian approach.

JAMES

That's a bunch of bullshit.

They watch Christian enter his office, close the door.

INT. ISABELLA'S WORK DESK - AFTERNOON

Isabella sits at her desk, headset on, papers in one hand, mouse in the other. She notices Sam's picture is out of place at the edge of her desk. Grabs it, ponders for a moment, places it back where it belongs.

ISABELLA

We're moving one hundred thousand each,
for both you and your wife.

Isabella scratches something on a sheet of paper.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

In the IRA accounts, correct.

She CLICKS on her mouse.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

I've got a meeting with Christian this afternoon to discuss the Winslow deal.

Isabella leans back, plays with her hair. She eyeballs the thick file folder from the basement, now under her desk.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

I'll call you first thing. Thank you, Mrs. Sneider.

Isabella disconnects, noticing Christian's other line, presses it, then the mute button.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Christian is seated, leaning forward, on his desk phone. Isabella's personal cell phone in his hands, he clips the back on and sets it to the edge of his desk.

TOM (V.O.)

The papers are set for this Friday. Gonna be a busy weekend rounding up assets.

CHRISTIAN

OK, great. I'll call you back.

He hangs up the phone, sees the line still active for a second, then go dead. He pauses in thought.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Hey, Isabella.

Moments later, she appears in the doorway.

ISABELLA

Hi.

CHRISTIAN

You OK? You look frazzled.

ISABELLA

Fine. What's up?

CHRISTIAN

You're getting sloppy.

He reaches for her cell phone and holds it up. Confused, she looks back to her desk.

ISABELLA

Oh, I didn't realize.

She steps forward and takes it.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

The tale end of the evening traffic hustles by a stone building off the main street. Yellow lights flash by a trolley crossing. A man in an overcoat rolls a brief case into an alleyway and is swallowed by darkness.

INT. SHEPHERD, GIMBAL & ASSOCIATES OFFICES - EVENING

Isabella sits in the inner lobby of a dated office, rifles through the six inch file folder from the basement. The RECEPTIONIST gathers her belongings by a sign: Shepherd, Gimbal & Associates, Attorneys at Law

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Gimbal will be out in a moment.

Isabella nods, her phone VIBRATES in her purse, she reaches for it. The receptionist enters the elevator.

ISABELLA

Hi.

MAL (V.O.)

What are you up to?

ISABELLA

Just running some errands.

MAL (V.O.)

Want me to pick up some Mu Shu for later.

ISABELLA

Sure. I'm checking out, so let me call you later, OK?

MAL (V.O.)

Bye, beautiful.

ISABELLA

Bye.

She hangs up the phone.

INT. MIKE GIMBAL'S OFFICE - EVENING

MIKE GIMBAL, an older man with gray hair, in a brown jacket and loose tie, sits across from Isabella. The file folder open in front of him.

MIKE

I don't see how you come out clean on these IPO trades.

She stares back, defeated.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Isabella and Mal lie still in bed, naked, spooning; the broken city lights pierce the room. He strokes her shoulder. As Mal's hand passes by Isabella's face, he removes a plain silver ring from his pinkie, places it on the ring finger of her right hand. Isabella, puzzled.

MAL

With this ring.

They both giggle. She rolls over to face him.

ISABELLA

You get this in Chinatown?

She chuckles to herself.

MAL

No.

He plays with her finger.

MAL (CONT'D)

I've had this since I was twenty-six.

His eyes focused on her small hands.

ISABELLA

Yeah?

Studying him now.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Where did you get it from?

Making eye contact, serious.

MAL

This was my mom's wedding ring from my father. I want you to have it.

Staring in disbelief, Isabella begins to get emotional, holds him close, a tear rolls down her cheek. She removes the ring, hands it to him, rises and walks to the bathroom. The sound of the SHOWER being turned on and the door CLOSING cues Mal. He rises and crosses the room in the other direction, scanning the area.

MAL (CONT'D)

Where are your smokes?

ISABELLA (O.S.)

On the desk.

At the desk, the top covered with strewn papers, he opens one lower desk drawer, looks in and closes it. He opens the other lower drawer, reaches in, moves things around, then pulls out a notebook. Opening it to the marked page, he sees a list of names, account numbers, symbols and share quantities. A photograph slides out of the bottom and wedges itself upside down partially under the corner of the desk.

ISABELLA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Find them?

Startled, Mal SLAPS the cover closed, thrusts it back into the drawer and closes it. Looking up, Isabella has just rounded the corner, naked, she pauses at the sight of his look. Breaking eye contact, Mal scans the desk, shuffling papers, flips his hands up.

MAL

Where are they?

Isabella pads to the desk, uncovers a single sheet of paper, revealing the pack. The photograph visible, wedged under the desk leg, Mal grabs the pack.

MAL (CONT'D)

We need to get you a maid.

He walks to the kitchen, Isabella picks up the photo. The faded photo shows Vanessa at an easel in her home studio, wearing a paint stained apron, holding a brush. She's surrounded by finished art and materials. An adolescent Isabella holds a Barbie doll in one hand and her mother's leg in the other, both looking content.

EXT. PRESIDIO HEIGHTS / JAMES' HOUSE - MORNING

James, in a dark suit on his back patio, cell phone to his ear, watches fog roll over the Golden Gate Bridge.

JAMES

You got a line on him?

INT. SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION, S.F. REGIONAL
OFFICE - MORNING

SEC AGENT #1, in his fifties, clean cut, navy blue Brooks Brothers suit and pin striped Oxford shirt, sits in an office. Tall buildings visible out the window.

SEC AGENT #1

I think he finally slipped up. Got a bunch of questionable trades on Western Pike Pharmaceuticals. We're pulling time and tape from the exchanges. Need to look at their books to see how far it goes, but it gives us the in we needed.

JAMES

I'll check in again tomorrow.

SEC AGENT #1

Give your old man my best.

EXT. JAMES' HOUSE - MORNING

James hangs up the phone and takes in the view.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Vanessa shuffles around as if in her own world, passes Sam in his pajamas, then looks at his clothing.

VANESSA

For Christ's sake, aren't you dressed?

He examines her movements.

INT. LIVING ROOM / INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Sam silently stands outside the kitchen, hearing the sound of glass CLINKING and the refrigerator CLOSING. Peeking his head around the wall, Sam sees Vanessa tilt her head back, then RINSE a glass in the sink.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOME / KITCHEN - MORNING

MARLENA, a woman in her sixties with straight gray hair in a neat ponytail, dressed in a white sweater, wraps sandwiches. Cindy and Jacqueline eat fresh fruit at the kitchen table, GIGGLING to each other. Beth, keys in hand, assesses the girls as she breezes by.

MARLENA
Buenos dais, Senorita.

BETH
Hola, Marlana.

Beth's cell phone VIBRATES in her purse, she answers.

BETH (CONT'D)
Hi.

Stops at the desk, opens the drawer and reaches in back.

BETH (CONT'D)
Yes, I'm leaving now.

She removes a small red address book, flips through, pulls out a slip of paper and opens it. Reading it, she tucks it into her pocket and puts the book back.

EXT. EMBARCADERO / COFFEE STAND - MORNING

Isabella, against the ocean backdrop, stands in line. From behind the stand, Christian surprises her.

CHRISTIAN
Aren't you supposed to be at work?

She checks the time on her phone.

ISABELLA
Well, I.

CHRISTIAN
Relax. I'm only kidding with you.

They move up in line.

ISABELLA
What are you doing down here?

CHRISTIAN
Another day off of school for the girls. Dropped them with their grandparents so Beth can have some girl time.

Isabella smiles.

BARISTA
What can I get you?

ISABELLA
Small coffee, black.

Motioning to Christian.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Can I get you something?

CHRISTIAN

Don't be silly.

He steps forward and hands the Barista a twenty.

ISABELLA

Oh, thank you.

The Barista gestures to Christian.

CHRISTIAN

Nothing for me.

The Barista pours her the coffee, hands him the change.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I'm glad we ran into each other, though.
I wanted to talk to you outside the office.

They walk over to a lamp post by the waterfront sidewalk.

ISABELLA

What about?

CHRISTIAN

To let you know what a good job you are
doing. I can see you have real talent.

Blushing a bit, uncomfortable.

ISABELLA

I appreciate that. Thank you.

She sips her coffee.

CHRISTIAN

I want you to know that you're appreciated.
I value the fact that I can trust you.

ISABELLA

You couldn't tell me this at the office?

CHRISTIAN

Of course I could. It's just, I want you
to trust me too. You're my partner now.
If things were to change for any reason,
reorganization or whatever. I would make
sure you land on your feet.

Stepping forward.

ISABELLA

You're frightening me a bit. Are there going to be layoffs?

Reaching out his hand and touching hers.

CHRISTIAN

No, no. Please, don't spread that rumor. You like working with me?

Pulling her hand away.

ISABELLA

Absolutely. Things are going great. And I appreciate the trading accounts.

CHRISTIAN

You've earned them. They'll be more coming as well. Just hang in there for me, OK?

ISABELLA

Sure.

CHRISTIAN

I'll see you back at the office.

ISABELLA

OK.

Isabella walks away, looking back, Christian watches.

EXT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Sam kneels on tan carpet in the back of the station wagon playing with action figures. The windows surrounding him display swaying trees and dark clouds.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Vanessa paces the floor in her house-dress and slippers, smoking, a sweaty glass in her hand. A loaf of generic white bread and yellow mustard sits on the counter.

EXT. FACTORY - AFTERNOON

Walter, in coveralls and a hard hat, stands outside a warehouse door of a ship yard smoking a cigarette. BANGING and POUNDING noises dominate the area.

INT. STATION WAGON - AFTERNOON

Sam lays flat and motionless in the back of the station wagon, eyes closed, action figures surrounding him, the brass and wooden handled buck knife tucked into his front pants pocket. Light rain drips from the windows.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / SAM'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Mal hops inside an open window, freezes, listens. A VIBRATING NOISE comes from the room next door. The kitchen faucet RUNS and the sound of dishes CLANK.

EXT. FACTORY - AFTERNOON

Walter, cell to his ear, RINGING. He throws his cigarette to the ground and goes back inside.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / VANESSA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Mal lays a thick blanket over the VIBRATING phone, displaying the name: Walter. The faucet still RUNNING, Mal creeps to the doorway to check if it's clear. Head low, he pokes it out just enough to see the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

As Vanessa reaches her bedroom door, she sees Mal's head edging out. Instinctively she raises her glass and SMASHES it down on his head. The glass BREAKS, sending water, glass and Mal to the floor. The silver ring rolls from his jacket pocket. Petrified, she runs.

EXT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

The wagon jerks backwards out of the drive, skidding on the slick asphalt then thrusting forward down the hill. The bumps shake soot from the ashtray to the carpet.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Isabella leans over Christian's desk, BANGING on the keyboard. A cell phone VIBRATES on her desk, then is silent. The display reads: 3 Missed Calls

EXT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Mal staggers out, crosses the street to an IDLING Mercedes. In the driver's seat wearing sunglasses is Beth. Mal gets in, blood dripping from his head and hands. Shaken, Beth looks in disbelief.

BETH

What happened?

MAL

I'm OK. Go after the wagon.

Grabbing one of his hands and inspecting a bloody finger.

BETH

Where's my ring?

MAL

Drive!

The car SQUEALS away.

INT. STATION WAGON - AFTERNOON

Barreling down the street, buildings flying by, an old woman makes it to the side of the street, pulls out a paper and pencil and jots down the license plate number.

Vanessa Grips the steering wheel with one paw and pulls out the car lighter with the other, cigarette hanging from her mouth, breathing heavy, eyes half closed, over correcting her steering with each attempt. A dome of chestnut hair rises above the back seats.

Vanessa presses the red glowing lighter ring to the tobacco and smoke ribbons to the ceiling. A bright yellow, three-wheeled go-cart with two TEENAGERS pulls out in front of the wagon and Vanessa yanks the wheel.

TEENAGER

Slow down!

Bobbing her head, Vanessa pulls a long drag from the cigarette, fighting her eyelids downward push. Sam scales the back seat and flops down on the bench. Startled, she twists her head, arm and body following. The movement sends the car careening toward a bus stop full of travelers sheltered from the now driving rain.

VANESSA

Sam?

Vanessa studies the seat-back of the empty passenger seat. The bus stop empties in all directions leaving one lone woman struggling to free her baby carriage from the enclosure. SCREAMS of panic fill the air.

Vanessa's head now resting on her shoulder, Sam steadies himself, belly balancing on the jostling seat-back, reaches over her shoulder.

Pushing with one leg, arm stretched, Sam's fingertips reach just shy of the wheel.

Cracking her eyes, the foreground fast approaching, Vanessa tugs the wheel, Sam slams against the side of the car, GROANS, tumbles to his back behind the seat.

Losing all faculties, Vanessa slumps against the wheel, dropping the lit cigarette to the carpet, the wagon trucks toward a red-light intersection. Cross traffic flowing steadily, Sam presses his hands against his ears and clamps his eyes shut.

The wagon approaches, the cross walk almost clear, a man yanks his son up into the air and away. A gap in the traffic looks to allow the wagon to pass. They enter the intersection just as a dump truck crosses their path and CRUNCHES the drivers side of the car.

The wagon is SMASHED and pushed into the steel traffic signal post at the intersection, the faux wood panels crumple with impact. RUBBER SKIDDING and METAL BENDING puts the whole area on alert. The wagon is pinned to the traffic light by the dump truck.

Blood stains the tan carpet in the front. Sam is trapped in the foot well by the bent-back front seats. His hands and feet are moving.

Three witnesses draw near from different directions. The diesel engine of the dump truck KNOCKS, PINGS and CLATTERS, then lets out an exhaustive trailing HISS. RAIN POURS down on the otherwise silent intersection.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Lights flash and SIRENS BLARE as the white and red ambulance dashes down the slick pavement.

INT. AMBULANCE - EVENING

Two paramedics sit across from each other, working, as Vanessa is secured and motionless in the stretcher.

INT. B.A.R.T. STATION - EVENING

Isabella advances in the ticket queue with the other commuters, a new cell phone in a bag, still in plastic, she reaches for her other HARASSING phone.

ISABELLA

What is it?

Isabella stops dead, backing up the line, prompting perturbed expressions from her fellow travelers.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

I'm coming right now.

Exiting the line, Isabella bolts up the stairway.

EXT. BAKER BEACH - EVENING

A full moon illuminates the big red bridge in the background already outlined with dotted lights. The white water of the breaking surf agitates, then smoothes the slick dark sand. Two men stand in the darkness just out of reach of the oceans' wet fingertips.

CHRISTIAN

What happened?

MAL

Fucking old lady smashed me.

Motioning to his bandaged head.

MAL (CONT'D)

I couldn't find it.

CHRISTIAN

You're sure it's not in her apartment?

MAL

Positive.

CHRISTIAN

You looked all around?

MAL

It ain't there.

Turning away in frustration, then back to Mal.

CHRISTIAN

Alright, give me the rest of the shit.

Mal pulls out a thick envelope from his jacket and hands it to Christian. Christian grabs it, looks at the contents. With Mal visibly naked in a few, Christian rushes through pictures of Beth in various states of undress, in multiple sexual positions with several different hotel furnishings as backdrops.

EXT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

A cab quickly halts outside the receiving doors.

INT. HOSPITAL / WAITING AREA - EVENING

Isabella turns the corner to see Walter sitting outside a closed door and darkened wall of glass with Sam and Vincenzo. Sam has a small bandage on his cheek, but otherwise looks healthy. His tiny frame contrasts with the solid limb of Vincenzo draped around him.

Speeding up, she slides to her knees in front of Sam and scoops his small body into her arms and they embrace. After several moments, Isabella's eyes open and are met with the serious gaze of Walter's. They both hold the expression, then Walter breaks away with restrained emotion.

INT. HOSPITAL / PATIENT ROOM - EVENING

Isabella sits in a sparse room next to a motionless body hooked to medical equipment. The only sounds are slow, rhythmic BEEPS from the life-support machines. Dim light comes through the glass from the hallway, steady blinking numbers populate the machines.

Next to Isabella sits a small stack of papers, titled: Authorization for Withdrawal of Life Support Systems. One line at the bottom, titled, Witness, has Walter Taylor printed and an empty signature line. The line above that with an empty signature space is titled, Authorized Signature: Isabella Bastardi. Staring blankly into space, Isabella fondles a tarnished and tattered silver and emerald lily hair pin.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Vanessa, thirty years younger, sits in a flattering sun dress on a colorful patchwork blanket, arranging containers of home-made food. A three year old golden blonde headed Isabella sits in the grass twenty yards away playing with a Raggedy Ann doll. ANTHONY, a rugged man, stands about forty yards in the other direction putting out a cigarette on the side of a barbecue grill.

He slices open a bag of charcoal with a small, brass and wood handle buck knife. Arranging the charcoal, he looks around to see an empty matchbook on the wooden shelf. Checking his pockets, he produces only car keys.

ANTHONY

Hun, do you have any matches?

Digging in the picnic basket.

VANESSA

I gave you mine.

ANTHONY

They're all gone.

VANESSA

Then, no.

Flipping the car keys in a circle on his finger.

ANTHONY

I'll be right back.

The man walks toward the parked car on the empty street.

VANESSA

Hurry back. She'll need a nap soon.

Isabella picks wild flowers, neatly arranging them around her doll laying on the ground. A small mound of granular dirt protrudes from the grass just behind her. A couple of hornets go in and out of the hole at the top of the mound. Without alerting her, one patrols the area and circles the little girl.

Vanessa pulls out a used set of birthday candles from the basket. HUMMING to herself, she looks back to check on Isabella, dumps the candles and sorts through, choosing three that are the least burned.

With her doll almost entirely covered with flowers, Isabella reaches around the doll's head to place a flower on the last uncovered spot. She slips and tumbles forward, her face presses into the doll, scattering the flowers. Wobbling back up, attempting to brace herself, her hand slams down, landing squarely on top of the mound. She SCREAMS, face terrified, her retracting hand produces an endless stream of BUZZING black and yellow chaos.

Vanessa drops three straws, scrambles to her feet.

Standing spread eagle, frozen with fear, mouth open, tears falling, Isabella is enveloped in a dense BUZZING blanket of hornets crawling in her ears, nose and mouth.

Vanessa swoops in, clasps Isabella in her arms, who's WAILING louder and consistently now, and presses the girl to her chest. They race away with Isabella's small legs wrapped around Vanessa's stomach. Vanessa upends the blanket, sending the orderly picnic items scattering, and she crawls under cover of the checkered cloth.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

OK, baby. It'll be OK.

Vanessa frantically wipes and squeezes the frenzied creatures from both her and Isabella, pounds them into the ground, making little progress. Both faces red and swelling, the little girl starts to WHEEZE, thrash and fight for air. CRYING, pain turns to fear in her eyes as she stops making any noise from her throat.

Vanessa pulls a brilliant silver and emerald lily hair pin from her hair and uses her body to hold the girl still. She locates a spot at the base of the girls neck, presses down and pierces the girls throat with the hair pin. Blood drips down her neck and the shock prompts the little girl to fight harder, her eyes open in terror. Air now RUSHES THROUGH the hole in her throat. Vanessa grabs a red and yellow striped straw from the ground and puts it in the hole, the GASPS for breath now take on a more MECHANICAL sound.

Anthony arrives back in the car and slowly pulls up to the curb, his radio playing SOFT STRINGS and HORN MUSIC. Smiling, from a distance he sees rustling under the blanket and turns off the engine. As it stops, so does the calming music, replacing it are sounds of PANIC and the recognition of this shows immediately on his face.

INT. HOSPITAL / HALLWAY - EVENING

Walter stands alone in the shadows of a dimly-lit, quiet hall by a vending machine, papers in hand. Isabella's signature now populates the designated line.

INT. TAMARA'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Isabella sits at a chair next to Tamara in an upscale modern office. A glass jar of M&Ms sits on the corner.

ISABELLA

If you sell a stock you don't already own, it's called selling short. The brokerage house is loaning you the stock from their other clients so you can sell.

Tamara, puzzled. Isabella reaches for the glass jar, pulls out a handful of M&Ms and places them on the desk.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Let's say you sell one hundred shares for ten dollars per share. Ten times one hundred is one thousand dollars, right?

She points to the pile of candy on the desk.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

That thousand dollars for the sale gets deposited into your account. That's yours. Now, you have to buy the shares back so you can give back the ones you borrowed.

TAMARA

OK.

ISABELLA

Ahhh, but if the stock price has fallen from ten dollars a share to five dollars a share, you pay less, right?

TAMARA

I guess.

ISABELLA

You do. Five times one hundred is only five hundred dollars, not one thousand.

Isabella cuts the pile of candy in half with her hand and slides one half to the side.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

So, now you have bought back the original one hundred shares you borrowed, but you paid half as much to buy them back as you did to sell them in the first place.

Isabella points to the remaining candy on the desk.

TAMARA

What do I do with that?

ISABELLA

Whatever you want, it's yours.

TAMARA

Why are you telling me this?

ISABELLA

I need you to publish a press release. A news story on Bull & Finch.

TAMARA

Are they looking for a new P.R. firm?

ISABELLA

No, no. Look, I need a favor.

TAMARA

You're not making any sense.

ISABELLA

Promise me you can keep your mouth shut.

Isabella grabs Tamara's hand and squeezes.

INT. BOOK STORE - AFTERNOON

Isabella runs her hand along a shelf of books and stops at one titled, Public Relations Online.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Thumbing through the index of the P.R. book, she marks chapters with a pen: Piggybacking: Referencing Larger Company Names, Using Social Media, and Going Viral. Quickly truing to, Piggybacking: Referencing Larger Company Names, the sub title quote reads, "The key is to reference several larger firms in the same industry causing a spider web effect to all of their readers."

INT. VINCENZO'S DELICATESSEN / FREEZER - EVENING

Vinny stands opposite Isabella, surrounded by metal shelves full of boxes and meat wrapped in plastic.

VINCENZO

I don't know, kid.

ISABELLA

There's nobody else I can trust that has access to this kind of money.

VINCENZO

That's a big chunk of change.

ISABELLA

I've got to be in heavy. I can't go back from this. What would you say, instead of points, you take a taste of the deal?

VINCENZO

What deal?

ISABELLA

Hamstring a stock and bet the drop.

VINCENZO

Come on, honey, that's a little outside of my expertise.

Motions to the meat hanging.

ISABELLA

I'm talking fifty percent in one day.

VINCENZO

(pausing)

I'm listening.

Isabella pulls a pad of paper from her purse and writes.

INT. FREEZER - LATER

The pad now filled with lines and drawings, Isabella points to the left side with a big 'BF' circled.

ISABELLA

We release the story, the stock will fall.

She points to the arrow going down.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

It's a big deal, so I'm thinking we can grab forty percent. Fifty, max.

VINCENZO

But it's bullshit, right?

ISABELLA

Doesn't matter, we're playing the reaction.

She points to the right hand side of the paper.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

We short sell the stock just before we release the story, taking advantage of the high stock price. The stock value then plummets from the reaction to our news release. Then, we buy it back on the cheap and pocket the profit.

VINCENZO

Isn't someone going to validate that the story is accurate?

Isabella smiles.

ISABELLA

You'd be surprised. Anyway, by the time they figure it out, we'll have our cash in hand.

Referring back to the note pad.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Now, I'll give you access to my account, but don't panic and cover the short position.

VINCENZO

Hey, you know who you're talking to?

They smile. Isabella sketches out numbers on the pad of what the expected return will be given the scenario.

ISABELLA

We split the profits fifty-fifty. We hold it through Friday morning and I'll take care of the rest.

VINCENZO

What if it doesn't work?

ISABELLA

I'll take the hit for any losses.

VINCENZO

How are you going to do that?

She pauses, gathers her things, walks to the freezer door, then stops and looks him in the eyes.

ISABELLA

I'm counting on this.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Isabella sits on the floor, alone in her dark room. The tip of a cigarette she drags marks her stillness and a laptop by her feet provides the only light. On the monitor, a press release document in progress, titled, Bull & Finch IPO Trading Scam Tied to Massive Illegal Profits in Client Accounts.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - EVENING

In his chair, Christian dials from his cell phone. On his monitor appears, Dialing Isabella Bastardi.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Isabella looks at her work cell, VIBRATING, which reads, Christian.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - EVENING

The monitor reads, Voice Mail - Business Cell.

CHRISTIAN

Hi, Isabella. I heard about what happened. I'm very sorry. Let me know if I can do anything for you.

He hangs up. The monitor reads, Voice Mail - Business Cell, 20:46:22. He CLICKS on the icon.

VOICE MAIL (V.O.)

Hi, Isabella. I heard about what.

He CLICKS to stop. He CLICKS on another category, titled, Internet Access History - Personal Cell.

INT. TAMARA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Woody, Ashery and Tamara sit around her laptop in an upscale apartment with city views, all drinking wine. Tamara looks at her notes, CLICKS a stock trading screen.

TAMARA

At a set time, I leak the story. Then the stock should drop like a rock.

WOODY

How do you know it will work?

TAMARA

If you don't have the balls for it, maybe it's better if you don't do it.

He perks up.

WOODY

Balls? How about, it's illegal as shit.

ASHERY

What kind of money are you talking about?

TAMARA

It depends on what you put in, I guess. More money than you make in a day.

WOODY

This is some shady crap, here.

Ashery stands and paces the floor.

TAMARA

Also depends on the impact the story has.

ASHERY

What happens if we get caught?

TAMARA

Caught for what, taking a stock tip from our best friend, who is a broker?

They all look at each other, imperceptibly nodding.

INT. COMPLIANCE OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Jack enters and closes the door behind him. Frank appears from behind his private office door, still, watching. Jack looks back, confused.

JACK

Hey.

Jack treads to his station at the front, Frank observes.

EXT. CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

Isabella kneels down in front of an engraved headstone, Anthony Joseph Bastardi, with an empty plot next to it. She creates a small crevice next to the headstone using the silver and emerald lily hair pin. She pulls out a small picture of her and Sam and places it in the hole.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Frank is holding a lock-box with badges, standing over Jack's shoulder, who is seated facing Frank's desk.

FRANK

Where the fuck is it?

Frank holds up a badge without looking at it.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Corporate theft and policy violation.

Frank paces in front of Jack, who's cowering.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - LATER

Jack sits in a chair, hunched over the cell phone, WHISPERING into the receiver.

JACK

The badge I gave you.

ISABELLA (V.O.)

What's wrong with yours?

JACK

No, I need the one you have back before Frank finds out it's missing.

A KNOCK echoes through the phone.

ISABELLA (V.O.)

Shit, hold on a sec.

Closing his eyes, listening to dead air.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Isabella looks through the peep hole, opens the door in a bra and panties, her hair still wet. Tommy from Vincenzo's, gawking, holds a large rolled up brown paper bag with an order ticket stapled to it.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Still hunched and whispering.

JACK

Look, I did you a big favor.

ISABELLA (V.O.)

No, you're right.

A man's leg visible standing behind Jack.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

The phone to one ear, opening up the paper bag.

JACK (V.O.)

I need it now.

She holds up the picture of her parents from Vincenzo's.

ISABELLA

Where can we meet without being seen?

JACK (V.O.)

Meet me in the basement, behind the stacks.
You have to hurry.

ISABELLA

Give me thirty minutes.

Isabella hangs up, takes the picture and the rest of the contents of the paper bag and places it in a duffel.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - AFTERNOON

Katherine hurries down the walkway wearing her jacket.

EXT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Isabella walks up to Walter sitting on the steps, he's holding the hospital papers and a beer.

ISABELLA

You knew she still loved my father.

Pausing, registering the words.

WALTER

What does that mean?

ISABELLA

To put up with all the bullshit? All this time?

WALTER

You don't always get to choose who you love.

(pause)

Or who loves you back.

Tipping back the beer.

WALTER (CONT'D)

She wasn't a bad person.

(pause)

I wish you could have known her. When you were young. Before all the shit.

ISABELLA

You gave her enough chances.

Tearing up.

WALTER

And how many was that?

(pause)

Be careful how hard you judge her.

Isabella lights a cigarette.

ISABELLA

Now we're going to make her into an angel?

WALTER

No angel. I'll give you that. But you may find at some point you can understand things a little more as you.

ISABELLA

Am I going to understand that time and time again she let us down? That you always let her back in only to eat shit? Again.

WALTER

I can't do this with you right now.

He stands up and takes a step. She looks at him as he begins to break.

Isabella reaches out and grabs his hand.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Need you to get Sam from school while I.

Isabella pulls her hand back.

ISABELLA

I can't.

Scowling at her, angry.

WALTER

When we adopted Sammy you promised to help us out. Now, I need your help.

ISABELLA

You know I help out. Every month.

WALTER

That's not what I mean and you god-damn well know it.

ISABELLA

You could have told me she was slipping.

WALTER

Anytime you wanted to you could have stepped in, but I didn't see.

ISABELLA

I didn't know what was going on. You.

WALTER

Give me a break with that babe in the woods routine. You were here enough. Saw what was going down. You didn't want to know.

Isabella hustles away.

WALTER (CONT'D)

That's it, run away. That'll solve it.

He watches her disappear around the building.

INT. KATHERINE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Jack and Katherine sit on a hill in her Jaguar at a red light, Jack shaken, Katherine's cell to her ear, RINGING.

JACK

I'm sorry, I didn't know what to do.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

She's been digging around in Christian's accounts and Frank is acting crazy.

ISABELLA (V.O.)

This is Isabella, leave me a message.

KATHERINE

Call me back. I've got more information.

JACK

Tell her I'm sorry.

The light turns green and she drives off.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The SCHOOL PRINCIPAL stands at the door, Walter irate.

WALTER

You just let him go with anybody?

Handing Walter a hand written note.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

No, of course not. He had a note with your signature on it and, well, considering the recent events with your wife.

WALTER

I can't fucking believe you people.

Walter races out of the school.

INT. BULL & FINCH / BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

Isabella hesitantly rounds the corner of the dimly lit room from behind a shelf stacked with file boxes. Electrical equipment fans BLOWING and machinery GRINDING. Checks her phone, a timer counting down with under three minutes. Between two machines, she spots movement.

ISABELLA

Jack?

A shadow takes shape approaching an overhead light.

CHRISTIAN

Try again.

Isabella ducks behind a densely stacked shelf.

His arms behind him.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

That's no way to greet your partner.

She pulls out her personal cell phone. The signal bar reads: No Service. She places it on the ground.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Are you going to make this difficult?

She pulls out her work cell. The signal: No Service. The phone on the ground begins to VIBRATE and CHIME. Christian looks at the BF stock price on his cell phone.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

If you need to borrow my cell, I seem to be getting excellent service down here.

Holds up the cell.

INT. TAMARA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Tamara, Woody and Ashery sit staring at her laptop. A cell phone alarm VIBRATES on the desk.

WOODY

Go, now!

Tamara hits the send button from a webmail account, the address field populated with all of the news wire outlets. The press release disappears from the screen.

EXT. BULL & FINCH - AFTERNOON

Three American made sedans pull up and stop outside the monolithic doors. Eight conservatively dressed MEN in suits exit the cars and hurry in.

INT. BULL & FINCH / BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

Isabella pulls out the cell she bought Sam. She unwraps it, initiates the internet. The signal grabs, she types, the stock trading page loads. She presses the Bull & Finch symbol link. The stock is showing red, and continuing down -12%, -13%, -14%. Presses the tab, Positions. Her short of BF stock moving up +16%, +18%, +19%.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)

What do you think? Is now good, Sam?

Spinning around, Isabella sees Christian holding Sam by the collar. Tear stains moisten Sam's dry cheeks. Christian presses the send button on a webmail account from his phone.

The address field is populated with the major news wire outlets. An email with a press release titled, CORRECTION, disappears from the screen.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

It was a great try, really. I applaud you for the size of your.

ISABELLA

Sammy, are you alright?

CHRISTIAN

What do you want? Want him to grunt for you? He's fine. Come out here so we can discuss your very limited options.

ISABELLA

Sam, did he do anything to you?

Isabella looks at her phone and her short position is reversing fast, +17%, +15%, +12%. Christian lifts Sam's tiny body off the ground, he lets out a tiny SQUEAL.

CHRISTIAN

I'm tired of fucking around here.

Isabella appears from behind the shelf, cell in hand.

ISABELLA

What do you want?

CHRISTIAN

Drop it.

Yards apart, they stand with their possessions in hand.

INT. TAMARA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Frantically pounding the table, the financial channel on in the background, Tamara looks to Woody and Ashery.

TAMARA

What happened? What's going on?

She CLICKS on the story titled, CORRECTION.

NEWSCASTER #2 (V.O.)

One of the largest firms on Wall Street is having a roller coaster day today with conflicting news coming across the wire.

TAMARA

Oh my god.

(MORE)

TAMARA (CONT'D)

(pause)

Someone jumped our release.

ASHERY

What did you do?

TAMARA

Nothing! You saw me.

WOODY

What does that mean?

Woody grabs the laptop and begins to CLICK around.

TAMARA

It's a void, our story is dead.

NEWSCASTER #2 (V.O.)

It's difficult to say what exactly is going on, but it appears that the stock is recovering from the sharp slide earlier.

WOODY

Holy shit, they're tanking. Look.

He spins the screen around, their BF short position has lost almost all of the positive ground, +9%, +6%, +2%.

TAMARA

Buy them back. Cover the short.

Ashery has her phone to her ear.

WOODY

We should talk to Isabel.

Pulling the phone from her ear.

ASHERY

Right to voice mail.

TAMARA

Come on, do it!

WOODY

We agreed to.

TAMARA

We're losing ground. Her phone's not even on.

She grabs the laptop.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

You can do what you want, but I'm.

Stopping for a moment.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

They're negative.

The screen shows, -5%, -8%, -11%. Tamara CLICKS and TYPES feverishly.

INT. BULL & FINCH / HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Elevator doors open and the men in suits rush out.

INT. VINCENZO'S DELICATESSEN - AFTERNOON

Vincenzo reclines at his desk sipping a glass of mineral water, focused on the laptop open in front of him.

NEWSCASTER #2 (V.O.)

We are bringing another breaking story to you. Moments ago, a bombshell has been dropped regarding Bull & Finch that may just shed a little light on the unusual trading activity we have seen today.

INT. BULL & FINCH / BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

The cell phone is on the ground by Isabella's feet. Christian thrusts his arm outward, sending Sam to the ground with a THUD. He struts across the floor to Isabella. Reaching her, he leans forward, clutches Isabella and jerks her petite body against his strapping frame. Isabella pushes against him with little affect.

ISABELLA

You fucking slob.

Christian strikes a fierce blow to Isabella's kidney, sends her to the floor clutching her side. Trembling, Sam begins to move toward Isabella. Still reeling from the blow, Isabella shifts in Sam's direction.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

No, baby. I'm OK.

Sam holds his ground. Christian unbuckles his belt. Isabella shifts her attention between Sam and Christian.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

(to Christian)

What are you doing?

(MORE)

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

(pause)

Turn around now, Sam.

Sam hesitates before moving slightly forward.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

No, Sammy, please. Do what I say.

With his pants unzipped, Christian rips down the top of Isabella's pants to expose her ass and panties.

CHRISTIAN

Slob, huh?

Christian gropes his crotch.

ISABELLA

Sam, now! Please.

Turning around and crouching down, Sam clamps his hands against his ears and squeezes his eyes shut.

Christian snatches Isabella's panties in his fist, lifting her body off the ground, tearing them from her hips, releasing her limp body to the floor with a THUD.

CHRISTIAN

You're going to try and sabotage my deal?
All of my stock? My children's future?

Crouching tighter now and leaning his head lower, Sam is mouthing something inaudible to himself.

ISABELLA

You want to add rape to the charges?

Checking on Sam, Christian SNICKERS, positions himself directly behind and above Isabella, clutching her side.

CHRISTIAN

Rape? But you were so successful at
seducing me and moving up the ladder.

Christian shifts his pants and begins to mount Isabella.

ISABELLA

What's wrong with you? That's your
defense? Nobody would believe.

Isabella GROANS.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

No, Christian. Please don't.

Christian loses himself in the scent of her hair, working his hands over her petite body.

CHRISTIAN

I know all about you, Bel. Where exactly you go at night, who you talk to. That your short of Bull & Finch must be pretty far under water right now.

An expression of fear on her face, Isabella struggles to locate Sam over Christian's massive body. Catching her eye, Christian turns to check on Sam who is still crouched covering his ears.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Squawk box over there can't help you.

Moving her hand down her bare hip and crumpled pants, then into her boot, Isabella stretches her fingers.

ISABELLA

You'll go to jail.

CHRISTIAN

With how dirty your hands are on this? Open your mouth, you'll be right there with me. What will happen to Sammy then?

Christian begins to thrust and GRUNT.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

We pour so much of our personal lives into our technology. It's a wonderful thing if you know how to control it.

Slowly removing her fingers from her boot, Isabella repositions her hand firmly onto something.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I know how to control it.

As Christian raises his hips slightly, the small blade from the brass and wood handled buck knife slices across his achilles tendon, blood splatters.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Christian snaps backwards, swats Sam with a powerful blow, sending him flying across the room, landing with a THUD, his body and bloody knife skid across the floor.

Isabella raises her hand to her head and plunges her mother's broach deep into Christian's neck.

He lurches away clutching his throat.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Ahhh!

Rolling away, Isabella scans for Sam, who is starting to rise. She repositions her disheveled clothing, hurries over to Sam, kneels and clutches him tightly.

ISABELLA

Sam. It's OK, baby.

Sam latches onto her, wraps his small legs around her stomach and buries his face into her neck. Turning to Christian, she sees him writhing, slowly pulling the object from his body. Isabella hobbles over to him and violently boots him in the groin. Christian coughs in agony. She swiftly dislodges the object from his neck and wipes it on his clothing. He HOWLS as she limps away with Sam.

EXT. BULL & FINCH / BACK ALLEY - AFTERNOON

Isabella peeks out of a metal door, scans the area, then hustles Sam out. They disappear around the corner.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOME / KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Beth is standing alone, a large envelope on the counter with a thick document, titled, Petition for Dissolution of Marriage. Next to it lies photographs. She is holding one of them showing her lying on a hotel bed in panties, covering her breasts. The phone is to her ear, RINGING.

INT. WARREN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Warren rolls out of the bathroom, office phone RINGING. He bends his head to look out the door, SECRETARY #1 is talking to several men in suits. He answers the phone.

WARREN

Yes.

BETH (V.O.)

I need your help, Daddy.

Three men enter his office, secretary #1 following.

WARREN

I'm going to have to call you back.

The phone slides off of his ear.

SEC AGENT #1

Warren Culver?

WARREN

Yes, how can I be of assistance?

The agent holds up an ID badge and approaches Warren.

INT. INTERNET CAFE - EARLY MORNING

Isabella sits at a table with good street views, papers neatly ordered by her laptop, a bag under her table. Sam sleeps on two chairs across from her, both are wearing the same clothes from the day before, looking roughed up. Isabella stares at the XpressTrade sign across the street.

She enters an account number, presses ENTER: Ashery Silver: -22%. Another account number, presses ENTER: Woody Carlson: -27%. Another account number, presses ENTER: Tamara Morrison: -16%. The last account number, ENTER, Isabella Bastardi: +43%.

Confused, she lets out a sigh, dropping her head in hands. Her cell phone VIBRATES, she pays no mind. An ANCHORMAN from the financial channel is on the TV in front of her.

ANCHORMAN

In a shocking revelation in the world of finance, a senior broker from Bull & Finch triggered an investigation late yesterday rocking the once respected firm. The share price dropped almost fifty percent in a matter of hours, helping to pull the DOW down two-hundred-fifteen points.

Isabella jolts up, grabs the remote and turns up the volume. A news clip begins to run from yesterday. Katherine, standing with an ATTORNEY, makes a statement.

KATHERINE

My actions today were taken with great deliberation and thought. There appeared no alternative route other than to expose the corrupt and misaligned practices of those with influence within what was once a prestigious firm. Our clients deserve better. It was my duty as a conscientious financial representative to see that their interests were attended to.

The screen cuts back to the Anchorman in the studio.

ANCHORMAN

That was Katherine Edwards, a Senior
Financial Consultant with Bull & Finch.

In the top right of the TV screen, images loop of the
front of the office, workers coming in and out.

ANCHORMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

After the announcement yesterday, the
S.E.C. has opened a broad international
investigation of the firm, questioning
top management. It appears that there
may be a connection to the trading
irregularities and the conflicting news
stories published simultaneously yesterday.

Images switch to Warren being rolled out of the office
in front of Frank, both being escorted by men in suits.

ANCHORMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The firm has declined to comment directly
on the accusations, only stating through
their headquarters that they always work
in the best interests of their clients,
will cooperate fully with the investigation
and are committed to getting to the bottom
of these accusations and weeding out
wrongdoing at any level. Also, one injury
of unknown origin or severity has been
reported by police on scene.

On screen, a man in a stretcher is hoisted into an
ambulance. The anchor smiles to his CO-ANCHOR.

ANCHORMAN (CONT'D)

Investigators are still trying to locate
two individuals they feel have information
pertaining to the investigation: Isabella
Bastardi and Malik Rusminikov.

Their security badge photos appear on the screen.

The XpressTrade sign lights up.

EXT. BUS STOP - EARLY MORNING

Isabella kneels in front of Sam.

ISABELLA

Stay right here. I'll be right back.

Sam nods.

INT. XPRESSTRADE - EARLY MORNING

Isabella passes through the double doors holding documents in one hand, inspecting and adjusting her torn shirt with the other. She walks to the teller, a YOUNG MAN in a tie, sorting checks behind the glass.

YOUNG MAN

How can I help you?

She hands over the passport and account information.

ISABELLA

Withdrawal please.

He takes the documents.

YOUNG MAN

Certainly.

PUNCHES her information into the computer.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

How much would you like to withdraw?

ISABELLA

The entire balance. A cashier's check.

The man lifts his head from the computer.

YOUNG MAN

Is there a problem with our service?

ISABELLA

No.

YOUNG MAN

I just noticed that this is a new account.

ISABELLA

That's correct.

YOUNG MAN

So, I was wondering if there was any.

Cutting him off.

ISABELLA

Personal reasons.

Pausing for a moment.

YOUNG MAN

Of course.

His head dropping back down, BANGING the keyboard a few more times, ending with one final PUNCH. A PRINTER responds in the background. An OLDER MAN in a tie and jacket enters the area. The young man retreats and returns with an envelope. He hands it to her.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Here you are, Mrs. Cosgrow.

She takes the envelope and her identification. His head descends, then his eyes snap up at her.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Excuse me, could you hold on a moment.

He scuttles away to the older man. A message flashes on the computer: Fraud Alert: Hold all funds.

The men look back to Isabella and see nobody.

EXT. SIDEWALK - EARLY MORNING

Isabella and Sam dash past the crowd, holding hands.

INT. TAMARA'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Tamara hunches over at her desk, the phone to her ear.

TAMARA

I need you to call me back. We all do.

EXT. BANK - EARLY MORNING

Sam stands outside a building looking through the window. Isabella is at the counter, hands the envelope over.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Isabella stands in the less-cluttered room, Sam sleeping on the uncovered bed, drawers and closets opened and sparse. Five organized stacks of one hundred dollar bills sit on the empty desk top, one much larger than the rest. Isabella takes a very small portion of bills off of the largest stack and buries it in her purse.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Isabella slowly opens the front door, listening for signs of life. The TV is AUDIBLE in the background. Walter is asleep on his chair in front of the TV. She creeps into the living room carrying a small bag. Approaching Walter, she TRIPS on a toy and freezes.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Isabella broadens the crack of Walter's bedroom door, light casts through the entryway. A long, burned ash of a cigarette sits in a crowded ashtray next to an empty bed, the ashtray side neatly made.

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

She enters the closet and places something from the bag onto the top shelf, behind some of Walter's clothes. She places a note on the slept-on pillow.

INT. TAMARA'S WORKPLACE - EARLY MORNING

SECRETARY #3 sits looking at three green pastry boxes on her desk, phone to her ear.

INT. TAMARA'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Tamara reaches for her desk phone that's RINGING.

TAMARA

This is Tamara.

SECRETARY #3

You have a delivery from Vincenzo's delicatessen.

She pauses, Confused.

EXT. VINCENZO'S DELICATESSEN - EARLY MORNING

Tommy stands at the front door under the glare of the entry light. Vincenzo opens the door, Tommy enters.

INT. VINCENZO'S DELICATESSEN - EARLY MORNING

Tommy hands Vincenzo a deep green bakery birthday cake box with white ribbons tied around in a bow.

INT. FREEZER - EARLY MORNING

Vincenzo stands in front of the open green box filled with stacks of cash and other items. He pulls out a picture of Mal and Isabella, Mal's face is circled. He flips it over, a street address is written and the silver ring is taped on back.

EXT. PEER - MORNING

The ferry sounds it's HORN and pulls from the dock.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT / OUTER HALL - MORNING

Two uniformed police officers stand outside the door.

INT. ISABELLA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A knock at the door fills the silent room.

INT. ISABELLA'S PARENTS' HOUSE / BEDROOM - MORNING

Walter sits on the bed, a green bakery box open next to him, cash visible inside. He holds a picture of Vanessa, Sam and Isabella surrounding him with a birthday cake in the middle. They all wear heartfelt smiles.

EXT. FERRY DECK - MORNING

Isabella exits a door, scans the area, then walks away. Her hair now a natural, golden blonde like when she was young. The sign on the door reads: WOMEN

INT. FERRY CAFE - MORNING

Isabella approaches the small counter where a young BOHEMIAN WOMAN and her SON sit with a glass of water and a cup of coffee in front of them. The woman is on a call with her back slightly turned.

BOHEMIAN WOMAN (V.O.)

Je lui ai dit d'aller à l'enfer

The ATTENDANT, an old man in a black vest, wipes off the counter at a vacant seat.

ATTENDANT

What can I get you?

Isabella inspects the offerings displayed on a shelf.

ISABELLA

Have any hot chocolate?

ATTENDANT

Sure. Is that it?

Isabella nods, then scopes out the room. The attendant pushes a cup in front of Isabella.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Three-seventy-five.

Isabella looks at the bohemian boy and his cup of water. She slides her cup in front of the boy.

ISABELLA

Give me one more.

The boy grins from ear to ear.

INT. FERRY CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Holding her cup, Isabella gazes out the window at the diminishing landscape of the San Francisco coastline.

FERRY BOAT CAPTAIN (V.O.)

For those of you with us all the way to Vancouver, now is a good time to double-check your passports. We will be checking them before we re-depart out of Seattle.

Isabella pulls out the brown paper bag, removes the picture of her dad, mom and Vincenzo from the top to reveal a stack of neatly folded parchment-style papers and passport IDs. The top one is from Canada.

EXT. FERRY DECK - MORNING

Isabella sits alone on a bench sipping the hot chocolate.

Sam emerges from the women's rest room door where Isabella had exited before, his hair cut short and shaved on the sides. He shuffles toward Isabella, hops up next to her and she hands him the cup. Holding on with both hands, Sam sips the hot chocolate, smiling, the buck knife poking out of his front pants pocket.

SAM

Thank you.

Isabella pulls her hair back, winds it and secures it up with the tattered silver and emerald lily hair pin, uncovering the birth mark on her neck.

Sam's new haircut exposes a small birth mark on the back of his neck shaped like a bear claw: a semicircle adjacent to three parallel lines resembling claws.

The sun breaks over the hilly city behind them as the ferry crosses under the Golden Gate Bridge.

FADE OUT.