

BILLIONS

"Bulls, Bullies & Bullshit"

Written by

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PREVIOUSLY ON BILLIONS:

Axe makes a massive investment in Sandicot, New York, a near bankrupt town, after learning a casino is planning to open there.

Charles Sr. gets wind of Axe's plan and uses his connections to move the casino elsewhere to hit Axe in his wallet.

Axe forces the town into austerity to recoup his investment despite all the public services like the police department, schools, and fire houses that will have to cease operation.

U.S. Attorney Chuck Rhoades went hard after Axe for insider trading in season 1. The resulting showdown cost them both Wendy Rhoades. She married Chuck, but worked with Axe from the beginning of Axe Capital to coach his traders into money-making machines.

Wendy and Chuck remain estranged though they are seeking marital counseling. The two of them take turns living at home so their kids have continuity. She's not thrilled that he uses their son in a photo op to kick off his bid for public office, but they are reconciling.

Charles Sr. pressures Chuck to make the marriage work, not because he'll need a woman at his side for the campaign, but because he'll need Wendy to coach him to a win and then to govern.

This episode takes place before Chuck makes any moves toward running for Governor, but after Axe has invested in Sandicot.

EXT. FBI MOBILE COMMAND - NIGHT

S.W.A.T. gears up in the darkened area between mobile command and their vehicles. Check rifles. Check vests. Check helmets. Good to go.

FBI SPECIAL AGENT TERRI MCCUE, rounds the back of the truck in full gear. She strides over to the AGENTS standing in front of the monitors mounted on the truck's exterior.

All the screens broadcast surveillance footage from inside their target. Terri nods at one.

INSERT MONITOR

SERGEI PRYNAKOLOV (73), burly guy with thin grey hair and a pockmarked face, watches a custom-made television that's measured in feet, not inches, from a thick couch that nearly swallows him whole.

BACK TO SCENE

Terri thumps on her vest.

TERRI
This almost feels like overkill.

AGENT
But necessary.

He gestures to another monitor.

INSERT MONITOR

A group of MERCENARIES, Prynakolov's bodyguards, play cards in a room with zero frills. A couple dozen AK-12s line one wall. Numerous Grach 9mm pistols sit in racks above several cabinets fully stocked with ammunition.

BACK TO SCENE

The agent leans away to gaze up at the imposing Bundt Tower.

AGENT (CONT'D)
Think they advertise a weapons room in the brochure for prospective buyers?

Terri shrugs and checks her watch.

TERRI
Where is that warrant? We're going to lose the element of surprise if we're out here swinging our dicks much longer.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

At his desk, U.S. ATTORNEY CHUCK RHOADES clutches his phone in a white knuckled grip. Puts it on speaker so his AUSAs, BRYAN CONNERTY, KATE SACKER, and LONNIE WATLEY can listen in.

CHUCK

Did you tell him that we have an operation underway at this very moment?

CLERK (V.O.)

He's aware and suggests that you postpone until the legalities can be completely resolved.

CHUCK

Postponed? We're running a full scale joint operation between the FBI, ATF, and Homeland not a child's birthday party.

CLERK (V.O.)

I understand, sir. However, those were the instructions he left before meeting his wife at the opera.

Connerty looks like he's about to have a heart attack. Whispers--

CONNERTY

We've got to pull them back.

CHUCK

Let me see if I understand this. We've got a suspected sex trafficker and black market arms dealer surrounded in his penthouse apartment, but we can't go in to get him because Judge Vaulder rescinded the first warrant due to unresolved "legalities" the likes of which he did not specify before skipping merrily off to the opera. Is that about the gist of it?

The clerk's gulp is almost audible.

CLERK (V.O.)

Yes, sir.

Sacker rolls her eyes in disgust while Lonnie just shakes his head in disbelief.

CHUCK

I'm glad we understand one another.

Furious, Chuck stabs at the disconnect button.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Pull them back.

Connerty is already on has his phone.

EXT. FBI MOBILE COMMAND - NIGHT

Terri's face is incredulous as she listens on her phone.

TERRI
You've got to be shitting me.

CONNERTY (O.S.)
I wish I were. Get out of there.
Now. Quietly.

TERRI
Quietly? We've got the fucking
mobile command down here on the
street. Quietly isn't an option.

CONNERTY (O.S.)
Do your best. We can't tip our hand.

Terri hangs up. Takes a moment to control her anger.

TERRI
Pack it up.

Nearby AGENTS all turn stunned eyes on her.

AGENT
Say what now?

TERRI
Warrant fell through. We're done.

INT. AXELROD HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

BOBBY "AXE" AXELROD comes in, flipping through a stack of mail. He pauses on an envelope from an unfamiliar law office. Rips it open. His expression saddens.

INT. AXELROD HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

LARA AXELROD reads in bed. She looks up when Axe brings the letter in.

LARA
Hey hun. You're home early.

AXE
Aunt Gretchen died.

She gives him her full attention, though not completely sure who Aunt Gretchen is.

LARA
I'm sorry babe. What happened?

AXE
I don't know. This just says she left her estate to me.

LARA
Someone in your family had an estate?

AXE
I know. Surprised me, too.

He pulls out his phone to dial the number on the letterhead.

AXE (CONT'D)
Car accident maybe? She always drove like a bat out of hell.

LARA
That Aunt Gretchen. We haven't heard from her in years. Not since she moved to Florida.

AXE
Heaven's waiting room.

He frowns at the still ringing phone.

AXE (CONT'D)
They don't even have voicemail down there? What kind of low rent lawyer is this?

He hangs up and crawls into bed next to Lara. She holds him.

AXE (CONT'D)
She gave me my first job.

LARA
I thought your first job was--

AXE
My first, first job. I was four. Just learned how to hold scissors. I clipped coupons for her.

LARA
Seems a little tame for you.

AXE

She paid me in candy. Great upside.
I noticed - the more candy coupons
I clipped, the more candy I got. I
took the extra to school. Sold it.

LARA

I bet you were popular.

AXE

Until the teacher ratted me out to
Mom. One more reason for her to
hate Aunt Gretchen. I didn't get to
visit very much after that.

He fiddles with the letter.

AXE (CONT'D)

She was a pretty cool lady.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

Axe strides in with the letter.

AXE

Deb, I'm unavailable for the next
few minutes.

DEB (O.S.)

Got it.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SMALL LAW FIRM - DAY

Tiny office filled with neatly shelved law books. JONATHAN
BEAKMAN (49), a hulk of a man, taps out a brief on an old PC.
The rotary phone on his desk RINGS. He picks it up.

JONATHAN

Mr. Beakman speaking.

AXE

This is Bobby Axelrod. You
contacted me about--

JONATHAN

Ah, yes. Mr. Axelrod. Gretchen
spoke so highly of you when we
drafted her will.

AXE

Aunt Gretchen had a will? The woman
who never plans beyond the next
coupon run?

JONATHAN
I insisted on it. A moment please.

Jonathan flips through neatly ordered files on his desk and opens Gretchen's. He tears up a bit --

A PHOTO OF GRETCHEN

a woman with long grey hair pulled back into a ponytail, laughs as she flies a kite - slides out.

Jonathan clears his throat. Gets down to business.

JONATHAN
She left you--

AXE
Mr. Beakman, I'm not interested in what she left me. Give it to her favorite charity for all I care. I do wanna know what happened to her.

Jonathan pauses. His fingers stroke the picture.

JONATHAN
She had melanoma.

Axe paces, agitated.

AXE
Skin cancer? I'm no doctor, but isn't that like one of the most treatable cancers out there?

JONATHAN
Well, yes. If the patient seeks treatment, anyway.

AXE
If? Are you telling me that my life-loving aunt died because she refused to get treatment for a curable cancer?

JONATHAN
She didn't refuse so much as she couldn't afford it.

AXE
And yet she could afford to pay you for a will.

JONATHAN
I do not appreciate the accusation, Mr. Axelrod.

(MORE)

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

The irrevocable trust - in your name, might I add - was a favor because she was determined to leave something to her favorite nephew. Something the creditors couldn't take.

AXE

Creditors? She was a frugal woman. Which creditors were on her doorstep? And why didn't she come to me?

Jonathan plays with the file. Debates how to proceed.

JONATHAN

Embarrassment, I would imagine. She was a proud woman. She went to her grave refusing to admit she'd been scammed. When the bank foreclosed, I insisted that she protect the remains of her seizable assets. We managed to save a small plot of land in Sandicot, New York. That's what she deeded to you.

Axe gets real concerned at the mention of Sandicot. He sits at his desk with a frown.

AXE

Scammed? Mr. Beakman, I think it's best you tell me the whole story.

INT. MARRIOTT - BALLROOM - DAY

SEATON BUNDT (52), nerdy looking guy in wire-rimmed glass, holds court before a few dozen hopeful INVESTORS. GRETCHEN AXELROD (58), hangs on his every word. Takes copious notes.

SEATON

If you sign up for Bundt University today, I will discount the mandatory real estate course kit by 50%. That's a \$2500 savings.

Gretchen reaches for her checkbook. He stops her.

SEATON (CONT'D)

Do you have a credit card?

INT. AXE CAPITAL - AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

Axe's face is red with fury. He does a quick web search for Bundt University.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

She bought her way up through the ranks until she was deemed ready to do her first real estate deal. Shortly after she purchased the property in Sandicot, she fell ill.

Speaking of ill, Axe looks a little green around the gills himself. Hits for "Bundt University" and "scam" number in the hundreds of thousands.

AXE

(under his breath)
Motherfucker.

JONATHAN

When she found out about the cancer, she was already overwhelmed with debt. I think she was starting to come to her senses. She refused to take on more. Her priority was to pay everything off instead.

AXE

She chose death over more debt. Just like her.

JONATHAN

I suggested that she get her money back from that confounded university. I took a look at the "courses" they sold her. Worthless.

AXE

This Bundt University? Any relation to our incoming president?

Jonathan snorts before he can stop himself.

JONATHAN

Another of his failed enterprises. Those degrees have less value than the paper they're printed upon. I couldn't turn up one person who became a real estate mogul after completing the course.

AXE

What about lawsuits? Hasn't anyone sued them into oblivion, yet?

JONATHAN

Plaintiffs have tried. Many, many times. The cases are always settled and swept under the rug.

AXE

That rug includes a gag order, I would imagine.

JONATHAN

Yes. A criminal fraud investigation was close to having legs here in Florida, but the Governor squashed it. I just don't understand. Mr. Bundt seems able to get away with every sin under the sun.

AXE

We'll see about that.

Off Axe's pissed off face.

INT. HORACE SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

Lara sits across from TOPHER MORTON. GORDIE, next to her, finds his swinging feet extremely interesting.

LARA

Suspended? For how long?

TOPHER

The incident had some unfortunate anti-Muslim overtures. This school is supposed to be safe for all people. It's best that Gordie remain at home until we've resolved the situation to the satisfaction and safety of all involved.

LARA

That is unacceptable. My child would not hit anyone unprovoked. What led to the fight?

TOPHER

The motivation is irrelevant.

LARA

Not to me, it isn't. You've accused my son of being anti-Muslim. Motivation is intrinsic.

(to Gordie)

What happened?

His words tumble out. He can't wait to tell his side.

GORDIE

Nassim won't leave Dean alone. He calls him names all the time. Makes his life hell.

TOPHER

We do not use that type of language here, young man.

GORDIE

I only hit him to make him stop being mean.

TOPHER

Violence is never the answer, Gordie. I hope you spend your suspension thinking about other ways you could've resolved--

Lara silences Topher with a stink eye.

LARA

Did you hit Nassim the first time he bullied your little brother?

GORDIE

No. He's been going at Dean for a while. His teacher wouldn't do anything so I did.

Lara levels a look at Topher.

LARA

Mrs. Lester knew Dean was being bullied and did nothing about it?

TOPHER

This is the first I'm hearing any of bullying.

LARA

Now that you have, you'll also be suspending Nassim as well as Gordie, I expect.

TOPHER

I'm not at liberty to discuss the disciplinary action of other children with you.

GORDIE

He's not suspended. He went crying to Mrs. Lester and made it out like it was all my fault. He's such a victim.

TOPHER

You are only making things worse for yourself, Gordie.

GORDIE

But he is! He--

Lara squeezes Gordie's shoulder before he goes into a full meltdown. She's got this.

LARA
What exactly will you do to address
the bully's behavior?

TOPHER
As I said before, I'm not at
liberty--

LARA
Right. What you mean is that you'll
do nothing.

She stands and motions for Gordie to join her.

LARA (CONT'D)
Far as I can see, your negligence
is the proximate cause of Gordie's
behavior today. If you'd done your
job, a child wouldn't have had to.

TOPHER
Mrs. Axelrod--

LARA
Gordie is not suspended. He will be
here tomorrow as usual. For now,
both my boys will be coming home
with me. I suggest you use this
time to think about how you
could've resolved the situation
before it got to this point.

Topher is left gaping at her and Gordie as they walk out.

INT. LARA'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Lara keeps one eye on the road, the other on Gordie and DEAN in the backseat. Gordie can barely contain his excitement as he brings his little brother up to speed.

GORDIE
You missed it. Mom really put Mr.
Morton in his place.

DEAN
Nassim said you'd probably get
expelled. He can't wait until
you're gone.

GORDIE
No way, man. That little sand
monkey is such a tool. He's--

LARA

Hey!

Anger at the breaking point, Lara swerves off the road and parks. Glares at her kids so they know she means business.

The boys stare back. Stunned. And a little afraid.

LARA (CONT'D)

Where did you learn that language?

GORDIE

I'm sorry, Mom.

LARA

I don't want "sorrys". I want to know what you were thinking. Hitting that boy.

GORDIE

He was picking on--

LARA

Not good enough. We do not hit people, Gordie. Not ever. At least not physically.

DEAN

But Nassim tore up my homework and put it in the trash before I could turn it in. Mrs. Lester gave me an F.

LARA

And you deserved it. If your father and I have taught you nothing else, it's to not be a victim. You take control of the situation and turn it to your advantage. Understand?

The boys share a confused look. Lara takes a calming breath when she sees their uncertainty.

LARA (CONT'D)

When somebody picks on you, you can't just go around hitting them.

GORDIE

How do you get them to stop?

LARA

You have to be smart about it. Hit them where it will hurt the most.

She checks the mirrors then gets back on the road.

LARA (CONT'D)

Tell me more about this Nassim.

EXT. SECLUDED BIKE PATH - NIGHT

Axe pedals along, looking like he hasn't a care in the world. He pauses next to a bench to stretch. HALL, looking suspiciously nondescript with his black suit and blank expression, waits for him.

AXE
What'd you learn?

HALL
There's no easy in. All of Bundt's companies. They're privately held. A hostile takeover isn't an option.

AXE
Not interested in what we can't do.

HALL
Bundt's a malignant narcissist. He needs power. Functions only when he feels important.

AXE
He's in short supply of neither power nor importance these days.

HALL
No, he is not. But that just means there's more to trick him out of.

Axe smiles and gets back on his bike.

AXE
What you're saying is that it's time to scam the scammer. See how he likes it. Find me a weak spot.

HALL
The university looks promising. Run by Seaton Bundt. A cousin. I'll apply a little pressure and get back to you.

INT. AXELROD HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lara fixes snacks for Gordie and Dean while she talks.

LARA
Power dynamics are key. Nassim assumes he has power over you. You have to show him why he's wrong.

Axe comes through to grab some water. Steals a chip from Gordie and kisses Lara's cheek. She doesn't miss a beat.

LARA (CONT'D)

But you also have to do it with as little collateral damage as possible. You know what that means?

GORDIE

Is that like when stuff you didn't mean to happen happens?

LARA

That's exactly it. Design your strategy so that no one else gets hurt. Otherwise, you're no better than the bully. Got it?

Axe smiles and keeps walking. He sure loves this woman.

INT. COURTHOUSE - JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

JUDGE MORTON VAULDER (69), wiry man with a head full of white hair reads briefs at his desk. He looks up when the door opens after a quick KNOCK.

The CLERK gestures for Chuck to enter. He's all benign smiles when he does. Vaulder stands in greeting.

VAULDER

Chuck, my boy. Aren't you looking fit? Come in. Come in.

CHUCK

As are you. I swear you're aging backwards.

He sits in the chair Vaulder indicates.

VAULDER

Oh stop it. The one aging backward is your father. I saw him at the Yale Club just last month.

CHUCK

I believe he mentioned that.

VAULDER

He mentioned that the Governor's Mansion might be in your future.

CHUCK

It's just a nice thought. A little daytime fantasy. Nothing more.

Vaulder gives him a knowing look.

VAULDER

Come on Chuck. You're an ambitious man. I don't understand why you fight it so hard.

CHUCK

I'm not fighting it. I just have more pressing issues to resolve first. Issues like putting Sergei Prynakolov behind bars.

VAULDER

You know how I know you're ambitious? Because I'm ambitious. We recognize one another, don't we?

CHUCK

We do at that.

VAULDER

I'm glad you get it. Tell your dad, I'm still waiting on him to sack up for a round of golf.

Vaulder goes back to reading his briefs. Chuck's been dismissed. In Vaulder's mind anyway.

Chuck leans in.

CHUCK

I need that warrant.

Vaulder looks up, disappointment on his face.

VAULDER

I thought we understood one another, Chuck. Since we don't, let me spell it out for you.

Vaulder leans in.

VAULDER (CONT'D)

Prynakolov is a very wealthy man. Wealthy men can afford to tie up a court for years. I don't have years, Chuck. What I do have is my name on a very short list to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court. Like I said, ambition recognizes ambition.

Chuck nods and stands.

CHUCK

I should go to another judge then?

VAULDER

You're not hearing me, Chuck. Tides are a changin'. Advancement isn't the only thing at stake. If you'd like an invitation to keep your current job come January 20th, you'd be wise to forget all about Prynakolov. There are plenty other assholes out there for you to pursue.

Chuck stares at the judge for a long moment. He gets it. Hates it, but gets it.

CHUCK

I'll tell dad you're looking forward to a tee time.

VAULDER

Good seeing you, Chuck.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Fresh off the meeting with Vaulder, Chuck storms in. The evidence against Prynakolov covers a few white boards.

CHUCK

What am I missing? What am I...?

Sacker brings some file boxes in. Stops short when she sees Chuck.

SACKER

I didn't realize you were in here.

CHUCK

There's a huge piece of this puzzle missing and it's biting us in the ass.

SACKER

You didn't get the warrant. Did he say why?

CHUCK

He's chosen to take the vacant seat on the Supreme Court instead.

SACKER

Fuck. It's happening already.

Chuck gives her a puzzled look.

CHUCK

It's happening? What's happening?

SACKER
President-elect Bundt. He and
Prynakolov have been friends for
decades.

CHUCK
They've had some business dealings,
sure, but friends?

SACKER
Not just friends. BFFs.

She sorts through a stack of files until she finds the bank
record she wants. Hands it to Chuck.

SACKER (CONT'D)
Prynakolov pays 18% above market
value for his penthouse in Bundt
Tower.

CHUCK
That's not just a guy being so rich
he doesn't feel like negotiating?

SACKER
I thought so at first, too. But
that 18% is the exact amount Bundt
needs to pay on one of his many
loans with Bank Russia.

CHUCK
Why didn't we include Bundt in the
criminal enterprise portion of
Prynakolov's case?

SACKER
Because we were focused--

CHUCK
--On the sex trafficking. Fuck.

SACKER
Other than his attending a party or
two, we can't tie Bundt to any of that.

Chuck stares at the sex trafficking evidence mounted on the
white boards.

CHUCK
What would all this look like if we
include the financial crimes and
those associated with them? The
money laundering, etc.?

SACKER
So we're not dropping the case?

CHUCK

No, Sacker. We're not dropping the case. But we're sure as hell going to get a lot smarter about it.

INT. EXCLUSIVE CLUB - STEAM ROOM - NIGHT

Hall, in nothing but a white towel, manages to give off a predatory vibe in the thick steam while looking totally relaxed.

Seaton Bundt stumbles his way inside, still wearing his glasses. He sits on a bench across from Hall. He's not sure what to do. Or that he's the prey.

HALL

First time here.

SEATON

Is it that obvious?

HALL

I haven't seen you around before.

SEATON

Oh. Uh. Yes. Fair point. I got an invitation in the mail. I guess they're looking to increase their membership.

HALL

Membership drive. Got it. What do you think so far?

SEATON

I'm not sure. The price tag. It's pretty hefty for just a fitness club. I have a treadmill at home.

HALL

I suppose you have some of the most influential judges at home, too?

SEATON

No--

HALL

Wealthy bankers?

SEATON

Not exactly.

HALL

A membership here isn't about the treadmill.

SEATON

I see.

HALL

What's your name?

SEATON

Bundt. Seaton Bundt.

HALL

Any relation too--?

SEATON

(really annoyed)
Cousin.

Hall gives a knowing nod then settles back against the wall.

SEATON (CONT'D)

What?

Seaton wipes the steam off his glasses with his towel. They fog right back up again.

SEATON (CONT'D)

You think they only want me as a member because of Frank, don't you?

HALL

(shrugs)
It couldn't hurt. You have the same last name after all.

SEATON

That doesn't mean a thing to my cousin. I run his university. So you'd think he'd at least talk to me about being secretary of education. But no. Some chick from Michigan is his pick. My name didn't even make the short list. He's such a prick.

HALL

So what? You don't need him. Build your own empire. One that'll make him wish you'd been the entire list.

SEATON

How would I do that?

Hall shrugs, a little annoyed he has to spell this out.

HALL

Make a few influential friends of your own. Lay the foundation of your kingdom with them.

Seaton nods and sits back; imagining for a moment.

SEATON
Is it too much to hope that you
might be one of those influential
friends?

HALL
Yes.

Seaton wilts.

HALL (CONT'D)
But I might have one or two to whom
I could introduce you.

INT. AXELROD HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Axe checks an incoming text on his burner phone. It simply
says, "I'm in." Axe grins. Calls Wags on his real phone.

AXE
I've got a potential client I'd
like you to meet.

INT. SUSHI JOINT - NIGHT

MIKE "WAGS" WAGNER sits across from Seaton over a seriously
impressive spread of sushi. Seaton lightly dips a bite in the
ginger sauce.

SEATON
The chef here is a true artist. I
hate to ruin his work with the
ginger, but this is the only way I
can tolerate the taste.

WAGS
Why bother at all? It's a shame to
not enjoy this wonderful meal to
its fullest extent.

SEATON
The ginger keeps my cholesterol
manageable.

WAGS
If only the rest of life were as
easily managed.

SEATON
If only.

Wags toasts Seaton. Dabs at his mouth; gets down to business.

WAGS

I hear that you're in the market
for someone to manage your
investment funds.

SEATON

I'm in the market for someone to
grow those funds exponentially so I
can reinvest them in the school I
run. Turn us into a world class
institution.

WAGS

We're talking about your cousin's
university, correct?

Seaton scoffs.

SEATON

People always forget. That's my
name on the door, too. We need to
move beyond these real estate
seminars. Become a full fledged
institution of higher learning.

WAGS

A lofty goal.

SEATON

But obtainable. Once my cousin is
inaugurated, he'll have less time
to meddle. Giving me the space to
move into other areas of study.

WAGS

Sounds like you have things all
mapped out.

Seaton positively lights up as he talks about his plans.

SEATON

I do. We'll start with business.
Offer MBAs. Online at first to keep
costs down. I have my eye on a
couple professors from Wharton and
Yale. I just need the funding to
entice them over.

WAGS

Which is where Axe Capital comes in.

SEATON

A couple big scores and I can take
Bundt University to the next level.

Wags likes this guy despite himself. But he has a job to do.

WAGS
I think we can help you.

EXT. PRIVATE AIRSTRIP - DAY

Prynakolov, flanked by his SECURITY GUYS, waddles toward a waiting jet. Before he can climb aboard, black SUVs screech to a halt all around him.

FBI, ATF, and Homeland Agents flash their badges and surround Prynakolov and his guys. Terri leads the charge.

TERRI
FBI. Weapons on the ground. Now!

The security guys drop weapons and the black cases they carry, but look furious about it. They get down on their knees; lace hands behind heads. They know the drill.

The Feds quickly secure them while Terri cuffs Prynakolov.

She talks on her radio while another agent opens one of the cases. It's stuffed with currency.

TERRI (CONT'D)
Patch me through.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

As before, Chuck, Connerty, Sacker, and Lonnie wait around Chuck's desk. The phone line is open.

TERRI
Prynakolov is in custody.

CHUCK
Great work Agent McCue. Great work indeed.

News helicopters hover overhead. Terri checks them out.

TERRI
Our little secret is out. Just in time to hit the evening news.

CHUCK
Smile big. This is a win for us all.

Chuck hangs up.

LONNIE
This is quite a hornets nest to stomp on. You're sure about this?

CHUCK
We wanted to shake things up. See
what came loose. Now we wait.

INT. HORACE SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

MRS. LESTER (44), WASP-Y intellectual, prowls around the classroom while the STUDENTS work through a quiz. The school bells CHIME.

MRS. LESTER
Okay, my friends, time is up.
Pencils down. Line up for recess.
I'll have your grade when you come
back inside.

The kids organize themselves in chaotic lines by the door.

NASSIM SHARIF, a chunky boy bigger than Dean, but shorter than Gordie, takes his time getting up. He leans across the desk to whisper--

NASSIM
You're dead, Deanhead. Your asshole
brother ain't here to help you now.

Without breaking eye contact with Nassim, Dean raises his hand. Nassim looks nervous.

DEAN
Mrs. Lester?

NASSIM
(sotto)
Snitches get stitches.

MRS. LESTER
Yes, Dean.

DEAN
May I help you collect the quizzes?

Nassim rolls his eyes then lumbers away to the end of the boy's line.

MRS. LESTER
That would be nice, Dean, thank
you.

Dean hops up and starts collecting the papers from the desks while Mrs. Lester shepherds the kids out.

Once he's alone, Dean pulls out a blank quiz he pilfered and traces Nassim's name on it from his real quiz. Dean shuffles the fake quiz in with the others and shoves Nassim's real quiz down the back of his pants.

Mrs. Lester returns just as Dean is innocently organizing the colored pencils back in their boxes.

MRS. LESTER (CONT'D)
Thank you, Dean. That looks very nice.

DEAN
I thought I'd do the magazines next.

MRS. LESTER
Let's leave those for later. Go
outside and play. It's a lovely day.

Dean heads out while she sits at her desk to grade the quizzes. He's a walking smirk once his back is to her.

INT. LARA'S CAR - DAY

Lara waits behind the wheel while the boys climb in the back seat and buckle up. They're both giddy.

DEAN
Give it to her.

Gordie digs in his bag for Nassim's quiz. Hands it to Lara.

DEAN (CONT'D)
I did just as you said.

GORDIE
Me, too. No one saw the swap at
recess either.

DEAN
I handed it off to Gordie like a pro.

GORDIE
Good thing, too. They totally
searched him for it.

Lara twists around in her seat to face them.

LARA
What? They searched you?

DEAN
Yeah, but not really. It was just
to make Nassim feel better. 'Cause
he was crying and saying I took it
and everything.

GORDIE
Big ole crybaby.

LARA
Most bullies are. That's why you
have to stand up to them.

DEAN
The best part-- they had to call
his dad to come pick him up.

GORDIE
He'll leave you alone now for sure.

LARA
Only if he understands that you are
behind his missing test. Does he?

DEAN
I whispered it myself when I helped
him with his coat to show that I
had no hard feelings about him
saying I took it.

Lara smiles and eases into traffic.

LARA
That's my boy.

EXT. AXELROD HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Lara's car heads up the driveway and parks behind a modest
brown Chevrolet SUV blocking the path to the door.

KHALID SHARIF (36), an imposing man with a full on black
beard, steps out as her car approaches. He motions inside his
car. A cowed Nassim climbs out to stand beside his father.

INT. LARA'S CAR - DAY

Lara parks a little bit away from the SUV. The boys' eyes are
huge saucers when they spot their guests.

LARA
Who is this?

DEAN
That's Nassim.

GORDIE
And his dad.

LARA
You boys go straight inside. Not one
word out of you. Got it?

GORDIE
But Mom--

LARA
Don't make me repeat myself.

EXT. AXELROD HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Dean and Gordie walk as slow as possible while Lara deals with the Sharifs. Her smile is welcoming.

LARA
May I help you?

KHALID SHARIF
Is Mr. Axelrod available? We have a few things to discuss regarding our children.

LARA
And you are?

KHALID SHARIF
I'm here to speak with your husband.

LARA
Well, he's not here, so I'm afraid you'll speak with me or no one at all.

Khalid's eyes narrow and his hackles rise at the steel in her tone despite the cheery smile.

KHALID SHARIF
When will he be available?

LARA
He won't be. If you do not wish to speak with me, I'll ask you to kindly leave my property.

His look turns patronizing when she calls it her property.

KHALID SHARIF
Get back in the car, Nassim. We will wait inside for Mr. Axelrod.

LARA
No you won't. You will say whatever it is you came to say to me or you will vacate the premises. Those are your options.

Khalid stares her up and down for a long a moment. Advances on her.

Lara fights the urge to run. She stands her ground, but presses the security button on her car keys repeatedly.

KHALID SHARIF

Perhaps your husband is a man so weak that his wife speaks to him as if he is a simpleton. However, I am not a weak man and you will police your tone when you address me.

LARA

This is my home and you are an uninvited guest. I will speak to you however I see fit.

His eyes turn cold and evil. This time when he advances, she does back up. And hates herself for it.

SECURITY (O.S.)

Step away from Mrs. Axelrod!

Two ARMED SECURITY MEN flank Khalid. He still stares holes into Lara.

KHALID SHARIF

I will ask you again, when will your husband return? Clearly he is unaware how in need of a firm hand his wife and children are.

SECURITY

Sir. It's time for you to go.

KHALID SHARIF

Your son cheats on tests. And you speak at me with blatant disrespect. It is no wonder this household has no morals.

LARA

Please escort him off my property.

One of the security guards grips Khalid's arm. He yanks it away. Narrowly misses hitting Lara.

She recoils out of the way while the guard forcefully shoves Khalid against the back door of the vehicle. Twists his arm behind him.

Inside the vehicle, Nassim recoils at the THUMP. Then brings his face close to his father's. Only the glass separates the two. Looking into his son's eyes while that powerless deeply embarrasses Khalid.

The guard holds him there while the other searches for the keys to the van. Finds them in the man's pocket.

SECURITY

We've got it from here, Mrs.
Axelrod. Our apologies. He said he
was a friend of Dean's.

LARA

You couldn't have known. Thank you.

She heads up toward the door. Gordie and Dean's faces are
pressed against the windows watching the whole thing.

One guard hauls Khalid down the driveway on foot while the
other drives the SUV. They leave both outside the gate and
close it tight behind them.

Khalid glares at Lara before getting in the SUV and peeling
away.

Knowing her boys are watching, she takes a moment to compose
herself. Her hands shake. Once she's together enough, she
heads inside the house.

LARA (CONT'D)

Okay guys. Time to do homework.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The staff of Axe Capital, including TAYLOR MASON, MAFEE,
DOLLAR BILL STERN, and BEN KIM sit around the conference
table, tossing out ideas.

Axe sits at the head while Wags paces behind him shooting
ideas down left and right.

WAGS

People, people, please. Is it "Play
it Safe" day or something? Did I
miss a memo?

Mafee's phone dings. He checks the screen; rolls his eyes.

MAFEE

President-Elect Bundt is all over
Twitter bad mouthing Lockboe &
Heeding Aerospace. That company's
ripe to short today. It's already
trending up. You know it's going to
ricochet and ricochet badly.

WAGS

What did I just say about playing
it safe? Everybody knows it's going
to ricochet. My great grandma
Betty, knows it's going to
ricochet. Everyone'll be out there
making the same play.

Axe stays unusually quiet while Wags rails on.

MAFEE

You had a great grandma named Betty?

WAGS

Get out there and bring me some
fucking money making ideas that
will blow my fucking hair back.

Dismissed, the traders scatter back to their desks.

Axe still sits. Thinking.

WAGS (CONT'D)

Can you believe that? Everyone
knows Bundt's rants don't move the
markets like they would've from one
of his predecessors.

AXE

No they don't.

He gets up and heads for his office. A puzzled Wags follows behind.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

Axe wanders in, still deep in thought. Sits at his desk and checks the Lockboe & Heeding tweet. Wags comes in and closes the door.

WAGS

Care to share what's on your mind?
You haven't been focused all day.

AXE

You said it yourself. Bundt's senile
ass doesn't have the power to move
the markets. You know who does?

WAGS

Is this a trick question?

AXE

Me. Go short on Lockboe & Heeding.
Use the Bundt University account.
Then I want you to take a long
position with the Grexto account.

WAGS

That'll wipe out the university.
Completely.

AXE
Exactly. Bonus if you can create a
margin call.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Chuck reads depositions on his couch when Connerty comes in.

CONNERTY
He's not saying a word.

CHUCK
I never imagined he would. And now
that he's got his high powered
shark circling--

CONNERTY
That's the thing though. They're
both acting like they smell blood
on the water. Like there's still
some way out of this for him.

The phone RINGS. Chuck gets up to answer it.

CHUCK
Surely Bundt wouldn't be brazen
enough to try to interfere now.
We've got this guy cold.
(into phone)
Really. Put him through.

Chuck listens for a moment. Connerty starts to leave. Chuck
motions for him to stay. Puts the phone on speaker.

BRAD THE STAFFER
My name is Brad Perkins. I'm part
of the transition team for the
president-elect. Is this U.S.
Attorney Charles Rhoades?

Chuck shares a WTF look with Connerty.

CHUCK
Yes, Mr. Perkins. How may I help
you?

BRAD THE STAFFER
President-Elect Bundt is a big fan
of your work there in the Eastern
District of New York.

CHUCK
You mean the Southern District.

BRAD THE STAFFER

Uh huh. The president-elect is hosting a fundraiser at the Plaza tonight. Black tie. He'd be honored if you would attend. He'd be available for a photo op.

Chuck and Connerty exchange confused looks. As if that sweetens the deal.

CHUCK

Please thank the president-elect for his kind invitation, short notice though it is. I will check my schedule.

BRAD THE STAFFER

Great. I will tell President-Elect Bundt that you will see him there.

The staffer hangs up.

Chuck looks to Connerty.

CONNERTY

I don't think that was an invitation.

CHUCK

No.

CONNERTY

You wanted to see what shook loose.

CHUCK

I did indeed.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

Axe works at his desk. Wags knocks then enters.

WAGS

I just got a call from Seaton Bundt.

AXE

What? Already?

WAGS

He's been checking his account balance and is delighted with the growth.

AXE

For now.

WAGS

Yes, well, he's so thrilled that we've been invited to the fundraiser his cousin is hosting at The Plaza.

Axe sits up excited.

AXE

Are you shitting me?

WAGS

I would not shit you about this.

Axe's smile is scary big.

EXT. SHARIF HOME - DAY

Lara parks behind the old SUV. She gets out and surveys the plain house for a moment before ringing the doorbell.

NADIA SHARIF (32) plain Jane in super modest attire, answers.

NADIA SHARIF

May I help you?

LARA

I'm Lara Axelrod. I was hoping we could talk about our children.

Nadia bristles at the name.

NADIA SHARIF

Axelrod? Your son is the one who ruined my Nassim's grade point average. I have nothing to say to you.

She tries to close the door, but Lara's not having it.

LARA

And your son is the one who's been bullying Dean. I believe there is enough blame to go around. Perhaps if we talk, we can find a solution for everyone.

NADIA SHARIF

Of course we can talk. After you call the school and explain what happened to my son's test.

LARA

Of course I'll make that phone call. It's an easy enough misunderstanding to iron out.

(MORE)

LARA (CONT'D)

In exchange, Nassim needs to go to counseling so he can work through whatever it is that's making him harass my son. He has to learn that he can't just bully his way through life.

Nadia snorts.

NADIA SHARIF

My son is not the bully. Yours is. The older one hit my child and nothing. No punishment for such a brutal act.

LARA

He was not punished because your son started the altercation. Gordie was protecting his little brother.

NADIA SHARIF

So I'm sure you'll understand when we protect Nassim and file assault charges with the authorities. If the school is unwilling to act, then we will find someone who will.

LARA

That is not necessary.

NADIA SHARIF

Of course it is. Strength and might are all white devils like you respond to.

LARA

White devils?

NADIA SHARIF

You will hear from our attorney.

Nadia slams the door in Lara's face. She's so stunned that she just stands there a moment. She gathers herself and leaves. Already plotting. No one threatens her family.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - WAGS' OFFICE - DAY

Wags works at his desk. Axe, wearing the biggest grin of his life, pokes his head in.

AXE

The markets are closed. The final tally is in. Bundt University is out \$237 million. Those doors will be shuttered by week's end.

As quickly as he showed up, Axe leaves. Wags' face falls once he's gone. He genuinely feels bad for Seaton.

INT. AXELROD HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lara, in cozy clothes, pours a generous glass of white wine. She takes the first sip just as Axe strides in wearing tuxedo pants and an open shirt. He holds a box of cuff links.

AXE
Hey Lar. Which ones should-- You're not dressed.

LARA
But you certainly are. Where are you going?

AXE
Where am I-- Didn't you get my messages?

LARA
I've had a bit of day. What messages?

AXE
Fundraiser. For the president-elect.

Her eyebrows shoot up.

LARA
Excuse me? Don't you hate that guy? And that was before he killed Aunt Gretchen. Why are you going to a fundraiser for him? And what is he raising funds for anyway? The election is over.

AXE
We. We are going to his fundraiser. And we're going because we need to celebrate the bankruptcy of his sham of a University. And make him pay for the champagne.

Lara freezes.

LARA
Bobby. What did you do?

AXE
I didn't do anything.

LARA
I'm not kidding. We just got the U.S. Attorney out of our hair.
(MORE)

LARA (CONT'D)

Messing with the president-elect means Secret Service and a lot of other law enforcement types we don't need in our lives.

AXE

Really. I didn't do anything. The market on the other hand-- As much as he'd like to think otherwise, Bundt does not control that. So come on Lar. You look like you need a night out anyway.

He frowns and really studies her.

AXE (CONT'D)

What's the matter? You said you had a day. Wanna talk about it?

She puts the wine down and pastes on a smile. No, she really doesn't.

LARA

Later. Apparently, I have a fancy fundraiser to dress for.

INT. RHOADES' HOME - FOYER - NIGHT

Chuck paces the foyer and fusses with his waistcoat. Checks his watch. Hides the gesture when WENDY RHOADES hurries in. She sees it anyway.

WENDY

I'm so sorry. I've-- Is something happening in midtown? People are out en masse with picket signs.

CHUCK

Our illustrious president-elect is hosting a fundraiser at The Plaza tonight. The word must be out.

WENDY

That's not where you're headed.

He shrugs into his jacket. His tie goes a little askew. From force of habit, Wendy fixes it.

CHUCK

Mr. Bundt would like a word.

WENDY

I don't see how you'll get there. I'm sure all the streets are blocked by now.

(MORE)

WENDY (CONT'D)

I've never seen someone inspire quite this level of loathing in the collective consciousness. It's fascinating.

CHUCK

Sounds like you want to come with me. Witness the circus firsthand.

WENDY

Not on your life.

She finishes with the tie, but doesn't move away immediately.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Be careful. God only knows what people are out there thinking tonight.

An intimate moment passes between them. She backs away.

CHUCK

I promise to leave all my Molotov Cocktails at home.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - GRAND BALLROOM - NIGHT

Axe walks in with Lara on his arm looking very much the victor. Wags trails behind them. He snags a glass of champagne from the first passing waiter he sees.

The trio makes their way across the room. Greet familiar faces as they go. Until Seaton pops up in their path.

SEATON

You! You actually have the nerve to show up here? After what you did.

AXE

Who are you?

Wags steps between Axe and Seaton to make the introductions.

WAGS

Axe, this is Seaton Bundt.

AXE

Ah. Mr. Bundt. You've had a rough day in the markets. You have my deepest condolences.

Axe and Lara step around a stunned Seaton while Wags hangs back to pick up the pieces.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Gridlocked traffic. Thick groups of PROTESTERS make their way through the stuck cars carrying picket signs: "Thanks for ruining Bundt cakes" "Not My President" "Dump Bundt, Not Cake" "Liar, Liar, Wish His Pants Were on Fire".

Chuck looks around from the back seat of a Towncar. Pushes the door open.

CHUCK
You did the best you could.

Chuck gets out and heads for a nearby subway.

INT. SUBWAY - NIGHT

Chuck squeezes onto the train. A GUY in a bunny rabbit suit makes room for him the best he can in the packed space.

CHUCK
Thanks.

BUNNY
(super deep voice)
You got it.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - GRAND BALLROOM - NIGHT

Wags catches up to Axe and Lara.

WAGS
I think I'm going soft.

LARA
I can get you a prescription.

WAGS
No. That's fine. I mean Seaton. We bankrupted him and I'm-- I'm sad.
It's very strange.

Axe points out their target.

FRANKLIN BUNDT (69), chunky but charismatic, holds court across the room. His adoring wife, DEFNE (42), is all diamonds and smiles next to him. She's mostly ignored.

LARA
I don't think it ever hit me how much younger she is than he.

AXE
He does seem to trade them in pretty regularly.

LARA
Don't get any ideas.

AXE
Never. We should pay our respects.

WAGS
I'll catch up later.

The couple heads Bundt's way while Wags beelines for the bar.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT

COPS man barricades, trying to keep the angry PROTESTERS back. They brandish clever signs and chant:

PROTESTERS
No half baked Bundt cake!

Chuck makes his way to a heavily armed OFFICER in riot gear. Holds up his ID.

CHUCK
I'm U.S. Attorney Chuck Rhoades. I have a meeting at the Plaza.

OFFICER
No one gets through.

CHUCK
If you could just call--

OFFICER
I need you to step back, sir.

CHUCK
Look. I get it. You don't want to be here. I don't want to be here. You know what my meeting is about? There is a high probability that I've been summoned here to be fired. But there's a small chance that I might not be. The only way for me to know for sure is to get to that meeting. So what do you say? Put me out of my misery?

OFFICER
No one crosses the perimeter.

Seeing the officer is not budging, Chuck reaches for his cellphone.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Hands out of your pockets, now!

Chuck raises his hands. Shows the phone in one hand, his ID & badge is still in the other.

CHUCK
I'm just making a phone call.

A SECRET SERVICE AGENT hears the commotion and hurries over.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
Sitrep.

OFFICER
This man was just leaving.

Chuck spots the agent's earpiece.

CHUCK
Actually, I was about to call Agent Dunlevy of the Secret Service to clear my entrance.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
And you are?

CHUCK
U.S. Attorney Chuck Rhoades. The president-elect is expecting me.

The agent gets on his radio.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
Copy. Come with me, sir.

The agent opens the barricade for Chuck to enter. Despite the cops being on high alert, the loud, but peaceful crowd makes no attempt to breach.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - GRAND BALLROOM - NIGHT

The Secret Service agent escorts Chuck in. Points him in Bundt's direction before heading back out to his post. Chuck pauses to get the lay of the land. Raises an eyebrow when he spots the Axelrods.

The GUESTS surrounding Bundt laugh at his latest comment as Axe and Lara join them.

AXE
President-Elect Bundt. It is an honor to meet you, sir. You pulled off quite the upset.

BUNDT
Only an upset to those retarded enough not to believe in me.

AXE

Like I said. It was an upset.

Bundt gets the message. Turns his full attention on Axe. Sensing what's coming, Defne kisses Bundt's cheeks and heads for the ladies'.

BUNDT

I didn't catch your name. I mean, mine is a household one, but yours--

AXE

Robert Axelrod. Axe Capital.

BUNDT

Ah. A hedge fund guy, I take it. I never trust these new money types. They always come across so-- desperate.

The guests around them laugh uneasily at Axe's expense. It doesn't faze him.

AXE

This is my wife, Lara. The first and only. I always find the men who have trade in for a younger model every year to be so-- desperate.

The dig lands. Wipes the smile right off Bundt's smug face.

BUNDT

Is there something you wanted?

AXE

Some of us just enjoy a good circus every now and again. You know how people like gawking at freaks.

Bundt's face goes real red. He's an inch from popping a vein.

From the edge of the crowd, Chuck watches the showdown. Picks up on the personal nature of Axe's loathing.

AXE (CONT'D)

Although-- I am curious. Markets are my business. I've noticed a shift recently. Usually when the leader of the free world speaks on a company, the market moves whichever way that leader dictated. But now, whenever you speak, the markets go the other way. Do you suppose that's because no one takes you seriously as the leader of the free world or something else entirely?

Everyone in the immediate vicinity goes real quiet. Waits for Bundt's response. It's eerily reminiscent of the Titanic the way the band continues to play on in the background.

Bundt laughs, breaking the tension of the moment. His amusement doesn't reach his eyes, however. They stay cold and trained on Axe. Guess who is firmly on his shit list now.

BUNDT

Just like all you leftist elite liberals. Insults and more insults. It doesn't bother me because the American people hired me with the biggest landslide margin of error this country has ever seen in a presidential election. I'm here to work for them.

AXE

And I'm sure you'll do a mediocre job, just like in every other business venture you've ever touched.

Bundt opens his mouth to retort, but his staffer, CHICKEN LITTLE, nerdy dude in his 20s, whispers in his ear. Points out Chuck.

BUNDT

Can you believe this guy? Just rude. Am I right? But I have urgent business to discuss with this tremendous U.S. Attorney, here.

He beckons Chucks into the circle. Treats him to a hearty handshake. At the last moment, Bundt yanks on Chuck, pulling him off balance.

BUNDT (CONT'D)

It's a pleasure to meet you Mr. Rhoades. A pleasure. I tell you, if you want to meet a tough guy, meet a U.S. Attorney. Boy are you guys tough.

Bundt turns to Axe.

BUNDT (CONT'D)

Have you met Mr. Rhoades? My tough U.S. Attorney.

Chuck and Axe eye one another.

AXE

Rhoades.

CHUCK

Axelrod.

Bundt senses the animosity.

BUNDT
Old friends, I see. How fortunate.
Well, Mr. Rhoades is my new friend.
We have much to discuss.

Most of the crowd gets the hint. They wander off.

Axe stares back. Unfazed. He's going nowhere. Bundt glares at him for a moment. Like the little bitch he is, Bundt caves to the real alpha male. Chuck barely contains his smile.

BUNDT (CONT'D)
Mr. Rhoades. Let's find a bit of
quiet.

The two men walk off. Axe stands his ground, victorious.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Bundt's Secret Service detail clears the hallway before ushering Bundt and Chuck in. Chicken Little hovers nearby.

BUNDT
I'm a big fan, Mr. Rhoades. Big
fan. Did my staffer tell you that?
That I'm a big fan?

CHUCK
Yes sir. He mentioned it.

BUNDT
You're doing a job. Just
tremendous.

Chuck is thoroughly confused.

CHUCK
Did you ask me down here to tell me
what a good job I'm doing?

BUNDT
I also wanted to say I'm concerned.

CHUCK
Concerned, sir?

BUNDT
Look, Charles. Can I call you
Charles?

CHUCK
Charles is my fath--

BUNDT

I see you as a friend, Charles. And when I see my friends in trouble, I like to help them.

CHUCK

As anyone would.

BUNDT

Glad you understand, Charles. I want to be friends for a very long time. And you know what?

CHUCK

I really don't.

BUNDT

I appreciate it when my friends return the favor. And help me out.

CHUCK

I am at your service, sir.

BUNDT

I have reason to believe that my business holdings are under attack.

CHUCK

Under attack how?

BUNDT

Just today, my university was hit hard by a margin call. It wiped us out. We have to shutter operations.

CHUCK

I'm sorry to hear that. However, there's nothing illegal about margin calls.

BUNDT

My cousin, good guy, but really stupid. He let himself get sucked into one of those too good to be true deals. Now my university is gone because of it.

CHUCK

I understand, but I'm not sure what you'd like me to do about it. The stock market is never a sure thing. Perhaps your cousin got caught up.

BUNDT

He didn't get caught up. He was enticed.

(MORE)

BUNDT (CONT'D)

I want that con artist outed and
brought to justice. There is no place
in my America for such fraud.

Chuck fights not to remind Bundt he's the biggest con artist
ever. Opts for--

CHUCK

Of course, Mr. President-Elect. I
will get my office on it immediately.

BUNDT

Not your office, Charles. You.
Personally.

CHUCK

Personally?

Bundt nods to his Secret Service detail indicating he's
finished. Chicken Little hands him his coat.

BUNDT

Just so you're not too overwhelmed,
I'll get that nasty business with
what's his name? Prenkle? Pranalov?
Whatever. They all sound the same.
Off your plate. I want your full
attention on this.

And just like that, the other shoe drops.

CHUCK

My full attention. You certainly
have that, sir.

BUNDT

That's what I like to hear. Hey.
You do a good job and there just
might be a position in my cabinet
waiting for you come January.

CHUCK

Thank you sir. That would be
something.

Chuck is all subservient smiles until Bundt and his entourage
leave. Once they do he smirks. He's going to take this
bastard down so hard.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Vaulder sits on the bench.

Sacker sits at the prosecutor's table while Lonnie fights for
their lives at the lectern.

LONNIE

Your honor--

VAULDER

I've heard enough, Mr. Watley. It is an utter disgrace that the State is so ill-prepared to argue such a weighty matter as this.

Prynakolov and his ATTORNEY look like smug little canaries at the defense table.

LONNIE

This hearing was sprung at the last minute with no warning--

VAULDER

That is no excuse to deny the defendant his right to a speedy trial.

The defense attorney hops to her feet.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

At this time, your honor, we request bail. My client is in failing health. Since the prosecution seems so determined to drag things out as long as possible, it is a concern that he will die in custody before we even get to trial.

LONNIE

That is patently ridiculous.

VAULDER

She has a point. Bond is set at \$1 million. Your client will surrender his passport, wear a monitoring device and be restricted to his residence in Bundt Tower.

Vaulder bangs his gavel and leaves.

LONNIE

Your honor!

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Thank you, your honor.

The BAILIFF escorts Prynakolov out followed by his attorney.

Lonnie looks at Sacker.

LONNIE

What the hell just happened?

Sacker shrugs. Gestures with her phone.

SACKER

I still can't raise Chuck.

Lonnie rubs his forehead.

LONNIE

We have to go tell him we just lost
our defendant. Hooray.

EXT. PRIVATE AIRPORT - TARMAC - DAY

Director of Homeland Security, TODD MACKEY (50s), still in
great shape from his Border Agent days, shakes Lara's hand.

DIRECTOR MACKEY

I really wish you'd let us have a
proper ribbon cutting. What you did
for us is just--

LARA

My husband and I are eternally
grateful to you. You guys are the
first line of defense our shores
have. This is the least we could
do.

After managing to retrieve her hand from him, she gestures at
the BOMB TECH teams surrounding them. They all play with new
bomb robots. Each robot has a city name stenciled on the
side: Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, New York.

LARA (CONT'D)

You all have a tough job. A lot of
bad people out there. At the end of
the day, I'd rather one of these
rolling circuit boxes go home in
pieces than one of you.

DIRECTOR MACKEY

Rolling circuit boxes. We've been
trying to upgrade for years. But at
\$150 grand each. Just not in the
budget.

Lara smiles and gestures to the New York robot which is
slightly bigger and has more gadgets.

LARA

That one may have been \$250. I'll
do anything to protect my home.

Lara and the director share a laugh. Start walking back
toward Lara's chauffeured car.

Behind them, the bomb techs load the robots on a couple
Axelrod jets to take them to their new homes.

DIRECTOR MACKEY
If there's ever anything I can do
to help you, please just ask.

LARA
There might be something--

INT. U.S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - BULLPEN - DAY

Chuck stands at the front of the room addressing the entire staff except Lonnie and Sacker. Connerty looks around for them. He settles next TONELLE "T" BURTON, another AUSA.

CHUCK
Who scammed Bundt University? That
is our priority. I need you to drop
everything and unmask the culprit.

CONNERTY
You see Lonnie or Sacker this
morning, T?

TONELLE
Rumor has it, they're in court.

CONNERTY
Court? Nothing was scheduled.

She shrugs. They both look at a younger AUSA with her hand up. Chuck gives her a patient smile.

CHUCK
Yes, Vanessa.

AUSA VANESSA
Isn't that like-- you know--
Overkill? I mean the entire office
on one case?

CHUCK
You make a very good point.
However, that's what's been asked
of us and we're going to oblige.

TONELLE
What about Prynakolov? We've got a
lot of man hours invested.

CHUCK
Dropped.

A surprised murmur ripples through the office.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Let's get to the bottom of this
Bundt University fraud.

Chuck spots Sacker and Lonnie as they enter.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Get me everything there is to know
about this institution of higher
learning. And I do mean everything.
Thank you, everyone.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Chuck sits at his desk while Lonnie and Sacker fill him in on
Prynakolov's bail hearing.

Connerty comes in.

CONNERTY
We're not actually dropping the
Prynakolov case are we?

CHUCK
That's exactly what we're doing.

Chuck gestures for Connerty to close the door. He does.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Of course we're not dropping the
Prynakolov case, but Bundt needs to
think we are.

SACKER
He made bail almost an hour ago.

CONNERTY
Excuse me?

CHUCK
Fill you in later. Bundt sure is
getting his money's worth with Vaulder.

CONNERTY
What are we gonna do?

CHUCK
Did Agent McCue ever retrieve her
cameras from the penthouse? That's
where we'll start.

EXT. SUSHI TRUCK - NIGHT

Wags gets his order and sits on a nearby bench. Takes one
heavenly bite of his dinner before Seaton, looking seriously
desperate, plops down next to him.

SEATON

Mr. Wagner. I've been trying to get in contact with you since the fundraiser.

WAGS

You fired us. I don't answer the calls of *former* clients.

SEATON

I did some digging. Gretchen Axelrod. Any relation?

WAGS

To me? No.

SEATON

Deny it all you want, but I figured it out. It's my cousin Mr. Axelrod is after, not me. But nonetheless, here I am caught in the crossfire.

WAGS

It was bound to happen. We're all just pawns in someone else's game. Take care of yourself.

Wags gets up to leave. Appetite gone, he tosses the remains of his dinner in a nearby trash can.

SEATON

If I give you Frank, can you fix this for me?

Wags pauses. He'll hear him out.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

Still wearing yesterday's clothes, Wags bounds in interrupting Mafee's pitch to Axe.

MAFEE

--30% return.

WAGS

Give us a moment.

Mafee nods and heads out.

AXE

What has got you mimicking a very satisfied canary?

WAGS

You know how you wanted to wipe Bundt clean off the map?

AXE

That was yesterday. Today, I've moved on.

WAGS

Not so fast. We delivered a pretty good blow, but this here. This is the knockout punch.

Wags holds up a thumb drive then drops it on Axe's desk.

AXE

Do I dare ask what that is?

WAGS

Turns out, Bundt is in some really deep shit. I'm talking colluding with a foreign power and treason shit. That right there is proof.

Axe stares at the drive for a long moment. Pushes it back toward Wags.

AXE

Not interested.

WAGS

Since when are you one to leave cash on the table?

AXE

Treason ain't cash. Whatever's on that drive is way above our pay grade. We have no business-- Where would we even start anyway?

WAGS

Rhoades. That's where we'd start. You saw him and Bundt the other night. That man would be too happy to inject the needle himself.

AXE

In what world would I ever help Rhoades? If the man was on fire and I had a glass of water, I'd drink the water then pee downhill just to prevent even the smallest measure of relief. Hard pass. Get Mafee back in here. He has something to say that I actually want to hear.

Wags and Axe have a stare off for a moment. Wags caves and walks out. Sends Mafee back in.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

MARNI ROLAND (42), sits across from Khalid. Three nondescript LAWYER TYPES are also at the table.

MARNI

Our hands are tied. If we continue to employ you without a valid visa, we will be breaking the law.

KHALID SHARIF

Fine. I will go to Egypt and fill out whatever paperwork. I shall be back in less than a week. You will restore my access then.

He stands to end the meeting much to Marni's annoyance. She's so annoyed that she can't contain the glee in her voice.

MARNI

I'm afraid you misunderstand. You no longer work here. Since you no longer work here, we cannot sponsor you on any future visas. However, we do wish you the very best of luck.

KHALID SHARIF

Wait. You are having me deported? What about my family? I need to contact them. Where is my phone?

MARNI

Your wife and son are already in custody. I imagine you'll be reunited once you reach Egypt.

KHALID SHARIF

In custody? How dare you!

Marni calmly presses a button on the intercom.

MARNI

We're ready.

KHALID SHARIF

You had my family arrested?

Five ICE AGENTS including Director Mackey enter the conference room and surround Khalid.

DIRECTOR MACKEY

Come with us, please, sir.

EXT. STREET - DAY

ICE agents escort a sullen Khalid out of the building.

Nearby, Lara leans against the wall.

LARA
Have a safe flight, Khalid.

He turns to see her. His face goes scary red. Like every single blood vessel he has is about to pop.

KHALID SHARIF
You! You did this.

LARA
Fucking right I did.

EXT. HORACE SCHOOL - LOADING ZONE - DAY

Lara waits for Gordie and Dean by the car. She watches other PARENTS pick their KIDS up, but there's a tension in the air.

A group of MINORITY STUDENTS huddle together while some WHITE KIDS taunt them.

Gordie and Dean steal Lara's attention when they bound over to her. Both bursting with excitement.

LARA
What's up, guys?

GORDIE
Mom, you should've seen it!

LARA
Seen what?

DEAN
The police stormed the school. They took Nassim out of class and I don't think we'll ever see him again.

GORDIE
Dummy, they weren't the police. They were ICE.

LARA
ICE agents came here? I thought they weren't permitted on school property.

GORDIE
They must think Nassim is a terrorist or something.

Lara shoots a considering look at the school.

SONYA (6), cute as a button Latina, cries her eyes out while JESSALYN (34), her white mother tries to console her. Urges her toward the car.

LARA
Are a lot of kids upset?

Gordie shrugs.

GORDIE
Only the illegal ones. They're
afraid they'll get deported too.

LARA
Sonya's not illegal.

DEAN
No, but Scott told her that she's
next.

LARA
That's awful, Dean.

DEAN
It's the price of living in Bundt's
America.

LARA
This is everyone's America.

Dean shrugs and climbs in the car followed by Gordie.

Lara closes the door, horrified, at how nonchalant her kids are. She takes another look around the school grounds.

LARA (CONT'D)
Fucking collateral damage.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Chuck, Connerty and Lonnie sit in Chuck's office. Sacker comes in with a huge stack of files. Distributes them before sitting herself.

SACKER
This is everything we've turned up.
So far, there's not much indicating
someone is going after Bundt
Enterprises. If anything, it's the
other way around.

CONNERTY
Is this correct? 320 fraud lawsuits
are pending against the university?

CHUCK

Bundt is Teflon. Those fraud suits aren't going anywhere. We need something to topple him off what he imagines to be a throne.

CONNERTY

It would help if there was something more concrete. Not just innuendo and supposition.

LONNIE

The only concrete thing we have is that Axe Capital handled the trades. But they were on the level. For once. Axe just had a bad day.

Chuck sits back to consider the printout Lonnie hands him.

CHUCK

Axe doesn't have bad days. Not on deals this mundane. The way he spouted off at the party-- There's something here. I can feel it.

SACKER

How do you plan to find out what?

He grabs his coat and heads for the door.

CHUCK

I think I'll just-- ask.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - AXE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Axe shuts down. DEB, his assistant pokes her head in.

DEB

Chuck Rhoades is still here. What do you want me to do?

AXE

What do you mean by still?

DEB

I mean he's been waiting in the lobby for the past two hours. I thought he'd go away, but he's a persistent guy.

AXE

What does he want?

DEB

To talk to you. He wouldn't be more specific.

Axe takes a moment to weigh his options.

AXE
Wags still around?

DEB
Yeah.

AXE
Send them both in.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - GLASS WALKWAY - NIGHT

Axe stands guard while Deb escorts Chuck up. The men lock eyes. No love lost between these two.

Wags joins Axe.

WAGS
What do you think he wants?

AXE
We're about to find out.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - AXE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Axe shows Chuck a minimum amount of civility. Chuck is careful to keep his metaphorical hat in hand. Wags stands sentry by the door.

CHUCK
Thank you for seeing me.

AXE
What ludicrous accusations do you have for us today? Are you convinced I shot JFK? Maybe faked the moon landing?

CHUCK
Nothing quite so fanciful, I'm afraid. No. I'm here because I thought I noticed some - well - friction between you and the president-elect the other night. I was hoping you'd share what's behind it.

AXE
Are you looking to switch careers with your wife? Or wait. Is she your ex yet? Doesn't matter. Get out. You wasted your time coming all the way out here. More importantly, you're wasting mine.

Axe stands, but Chuck doesn't budge.

CHUCK

This is not about feelings. If Mr. Bundt has wronged you in some tangible way, I want you to know that the U.S. Attorney's office is here to serve you the same as we serve all the citizens of this great nation.

Axe snickers and looks to Wags.

AXE

Can you believe this guy?

WAGS

I surely cannot.

AXE

What? You want me to point on a babydoll where Bundt has touched me? That's not happening. But rest assured, if he did hurt me, I'd return the favor 100 fold. Without your help. Good night, Chuck.

With nothing left to argue, Chuck takes his leave. Wags and Axe look at each other.

WAGS

That man truly has no shame.

INT. CHUCK'S CAR - NIGHT

Chuck checks his messages in the Axe Capital parking lot. A KNOCK on the window startles him. He rolls it down to find Wags standing there.

WAGS

For the record - you attorneys love records - this is a gift from Seaton Bundt, not Axe Capital. Merry Christmas.

Wags drops the thumb drive in Chuck's car and walks away.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Chuck sits at his computer. Connerty, Lonnie and Sacker read over his shoulder. All have horrified looks on their faces.

SACKER

The whole family's going to prison.

LONNIE
Maybe not the 10 year old.

SACKER
I'm not taking that bet.

CHUCK
This file is labeled Prynakolov.

Chuck opens the file. A sound recording plays.

BUNDT (V.O.)
When I'm in office, you know I'd
look into lifting those sanctions.
Just ridiculous. It's like they're
afraid of people making money.

PRYNAKOLOV (V.O.)
Small people with small plan.

BUNDT (V.O.)
That's not us, though. We're men of
vision. It'll be the best pipeline.
And I know just who to help you
fine folks get up and running. He's
tremendous. You'll love him.

PRYNAKOLOV (V.O.)
First, you must win election.

BUNDT (V.O.)
You worry too much. Vlad has his
best people on the data farming.
The talking points were amazing for
the last debate. And I'm expecting
another dump of Kristi's emails.
She's done.

PRYNAKOLOV (V.O.)
Good, good, my friend. I will be
cheering you on. The future looks
profitable for us both.

Lonnie finds a chair and sinks into it.

LONNIE
You don't think they were referring
to Stinson, do you?

CONNERTY
Bundt's appointee for State? You're
damned right I do.

LONNIE
That's what I was afraid of.

CHUCK

And now we know why Bundt went to
such lengths to protect Prynakolov.

SACKER

We've just been handed a rock solid
case for treason against our
incoming president. On a silver
platter no less. What do we do now?

Before anyone can answer, someone SCREAMS in the bullpen.

Connerty, Sacker and Lonnie rush out. Chuck secures the flash
drive before joining them.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - BULLPEN - DAY

Chuck comes in to see the whole staff - ATTORNEYS,
PARALEGALS, ADMINS - gathered around the televisions.

CHUCK

Is everyone all right? What's
happened?

Vanessa shakes her head and points at the news footage.

INSERT MONITOR

Straight chaos is on the screen with panicked PEOPLE fleeing
from a stage. They fight through red/white/blue balloons and
streamers only to trip over bodies. More shots are fired. The
camera itself shoots from an askew angle on the ground. Blood
drips down the lens. The feed cuts back to the NEWS ANCHOR.

BACK TO SCENE

A horrified gasp erupts in the bullpen. The anchor narrates.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

We apologize for those graphic
images. This is the footage that
went out live during today's rally.
We don't have details other than
President-Elect Bundt has been
shot. I repeat, President-Elect
Bundt has been shot.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - BULLPEN - DAY

Axe, Wags and all the TRADERS watch the news.

ANCHOR #2

Mr. Bundt made the trip to
Huntsville today to host a rally
for the NRA.

(MORE)

ANCHOR #2 (CONT'D)

As a staunch supporter of gun rights, he refused the recommendation from the Secret Service to keep the rally gun-free. From what we have been able to piece together, a resident, unhappy with rumored appointees to Bundt's cabinet brandished a weapon.

The expressions on the traders' faces range from stoic to excited as they watch the footage of Bundt going down. No time to be horrified here. It's all factual information.

AXE

Suspend all trading. Resume the moment the markets bottom out.

The traders jump into action. All eager to do their own type of killing and boost their numbers come bonus time.

Off Axe's pumped face.

INT. COURTHOUSE - JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Vaulder gapes at his TV. Another TALKING HEAD reports:

ANCHOR #3

Other attendees spotted the weapon and opened fire. President-Elect Bundt was caught in the crossfire. The Secret Service attempted to move Bundt to safety when one of the men from his private security detail blocked their egress.

VAULDER

Fuck me.

INT. SONYA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jessalyn opens the door to find Lara on her doorstep with a huge, beautiful assortment of multi-ethnic dolls in her arms.

JESSALYN

Lara! What an unexpected surprise.

LARA

I heard what happened at school the other day. I wanted to bring Sonya a little something so she knows how much she's welcome here.

Jessalyn tears up. Motions for Lara to come in.

JESSALYN

That's so sweet of you. I really didn't expect to be explaining adoption quite so soon.

LARA

I'm so sorry.

JESSALYN

Oh stop. It's not like it's your fault. I was just about to put on the tea kettle. Won't you join me?

Lara's phone buzzes. The news alert smacks her in the face.

LARA

Turn on the news.

JESSALYN

What?

LARA

The news. Someone just assassinated Franklin Bundt.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - BULLPEN - DAY

Chuck turns off the televisions. His staff all looks to him for direction. He takes a moment.

CHUCK

We have all just suffered a great shock. This is not just business as usual. Take today. Perhaps even tomorrow if you need it. When you come back, be ready to go full steam ahead on Prynakolov. This office needs a win. Our clients, the American people, need a win. And that, my friends, is what we're going to give them.

Folks nod their subdued agreement, then file out.

Chuck's gaze slides toward a picture of Prynakolov's face on a well-used bulls eye.

Off the satisfied smirk blossoming on Chuck's face.

FADE OUT.