

"TRIAL"

-Pilot-

Written By

David E. Kelley
&
Jonathan Shapiro

©2015. Property of Side Porch Productions. All rights reserved. No portion of this script may be sold, or transferred, or performed, reproduced, distributed, or used by any means, or disclosed to, quoted, or published in any medium including, without limitation, any website, without the prior written consent of the copyright holder.

THIRD DRAFT

July 20, 2015

CAST LIST

ATTY. BILLY McBRIDE
ATTY. LUCY KITTRIDGE
ATTY. JULIE McBRIDE
ATTY. DONALD COOPER
ATTY. KELVIN WYATT

Judge William D. Keller

Rachel Kennedy
Gina La Croix
Jason La Croix (minor) *

Alejandro Marquez
Gabriel Marquez
Brittany Gold
Leigh Chen
Gavin Lister
Atty. Thomas Turley
Sylvia

*
*
*

Francesca Cooper
Horace
Joe
Court Clerk Cave
Clerk Wilson *
Frankie
Tony

Ryan La Croix (non-speaking)

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

LAW FIRM OF COOPER & McBRIDE

- DONALD COOPER'S OFFICE - DAY
- CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING & DAY
- LOBBY - DAY
- ELEVATOR - DAY
- 23RD FLOOR, CORRIDOR - MORNING & DAY
- KELVIN WYATT'S OFFICE - DAY
- LUCY'S OFFICE - MORNING

JUDGE WILLIAM D. KELLER'S COURTOOM - DAY

- COURT LOBBY - DAY
- SIXTH FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY
- MEN'S ROOM - DAY

CHEZ JAY'S BAR - MORNING, EVENING & NIGHT

*

BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL, POLO LOUNGE - 5:00P.M.-ISH

*

STARBUCKS - SUNDOWN

*

OCEAN LODGE MOTEL, SANTA MONICA

- BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY, EVENING, SUNDOWN & NIGHT *
- ADJOINING ROOM - MORNING, DAY & NIGHT
- BATHROOM - MORNING
- SHOWER - MORNING

LUCY'S SANTA MONICA LOFT - MORNING

COOPER HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

*

LA CROIX HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - DAY

JULIE'S TESLA - DAY

BILLY'S MERCEDES - MORNING & DAY

(MORE)

EXTERIORS:

LAW FIRM OF COOPER & McBRIDE - DAY

L.A. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - MORNING & DAY

CHEZ JAY'S BAR - MORNING
- PARKING LOT - NIGHT

BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL - 5:00 P.M.

OCEAN LODGE MOTEL, SANTA MONICA - MORNING & NIGHT
- BALCONY - EVENING *

CULVER CITY, CA - DAY
- LA CROIX HOUSE - DAY

BEL-AIR - EVENING *

COOPER HOUSE, PORCH - EVENING *

LONG BEACH MARINA - MORNING
SANTA MONICA - NIGHT
SANTA MONICA PIER - NIGHT

THIRTY-FOOT CRAFT - NIGHT
ANOTHER BOAT - NIGHT

"TRIAL"

-Pilot-

*

ACT I

PACIFIC OCEAN - NIGHT. A CALM SEA, EMPTY, BUT FOR A SINGLE THIRTY-FOOT CRAFT HALOED IN THE THICK FOG BY ITS OWN NAVIGATION LIGHTS. ACROSS THE BLACK EXPANSE TO THE EAST, THE YELLOW HARBOR LIGHTS AND RED OIL-FIELD FLARES OF LONG BEACH TWINKLE IN THE DISTANCE. BARELY VISIBLE THROUGH THE FOG.

1 EXT. THIRTY-FOOT CRAFT - NIGHT

1

CLOSE ON RYAN LA CROIX

Mid-forties. Seems older. Men who compromise themselves get a certain look.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Ryan is the skipper of this craft. Whatever he's up to out here... can't be a pleasure cruise. He's a lesser man just for taking this trip.

AS THE CAMERA PULLS FURTHER BACK... THE VESSEL FADES INTO THE FOG. WE SEE ONLY ITS DIMMING NAVIGATION LIGHTS... AND THEN NOTHING BUT FOG. THEN BLACK. A BEAT OR TWO... WE THEN HEAR SOUNDS AS THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO PULL BACK. OTHER IMAGES FADE INTO EXISTENCE AND WE FIND OURSELVES ON:

2 EXT. ANOTHER BOAT - CONTINUOUS

2

THIS ONE IS A THIRTY-FIVE-FOOT, OLD FISHING BOAT. ALEJANDRO AND GABRIEL MARQUEZ, EARLY THIRTIES, ON BOARD. ALEJANDRO STEERS THE BOAT AS HIS BROTHER, GABRIEL, PREPARES THE FISHING GEAR.

GABRIEL

Que maldito frio, hombre. Con esta niebla. Fucking cold, man. Fucking fog.

ALEJANDRO

Pues haga algo pa que te calientes. Trabaje muy rapido. Do something to get warm. Try working faster.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

GABRIEL

Chupame lo. Try sucking my dick.

Such is their relationship. The thin line between brotherly love and a fist-fight.

ALEJANDRO

Hay algo enfrente de nosotros.
There's something ahead of us.

GABRIEL

Que? What?

ALEJANDRO

Se ve en el radiolocalizacion.
Sera un barco. The radar is showing
it. Maybe a boat.

GABRIEL

Veo que son luces. Los ves? I can
see its lights. You see it?
(then)
Que belleza. It's beautiful.

ALEJANDRO

Que? What?

GABRIEL

*La niebla sobre las luces. Se parece
como una obra de arte.* The fog
around the lights. It's like a
painting.

ALEJANDRO

Estas fumando yerba de nuevo? You
smoking the cannibis again?

GABRIEL

(pulls out his iphone;
AS HE VIDEOS IT)
*Son preciosos, idiota. No tenes
ningun apreciacion por arte. It's
pretty, bicho. You got no artistic
appreciation.*

AND THEN: BOOM. A MASSIVE EXPLOSION AHEAD. WHAT ONCE WAS PERHAPS A BOAT IS NOW A MASSIVE FIREBALL. THE BLAST SENDS WAVES OF FLAME AND BLINDING LIGHT ACROSS THE WATER IN A PERFECT 360-DEGREE ARC. PILLARS OF FIRE SHOOT HUNDREDS OF FEET INTO THE AIR, THEIR KINETIC ENERGY CREATING A WHIRLWIND ABOVE THE CONFLAGRATION.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

THE CONCUSSIVE POWER OF THE BLAST DISPLACES AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF WATER, MOMENTARILY CREATING A HOLE IN THE SEA. THE HOWLING WHIRLWIND, THE ROAR OF BURNING WHITE-HOT MATERIAL, THE HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLING OF FLYING DEBRIS IS DEAFENING. THE BROTHERS ARE KNOCKED TO THE FLOOR. AS THEY RISE--

ALEJANDRO

Qué cono? What the fuck?!

GABRIEL

(seeing ahead)

Dios mio! Jesus Christ!!

A MASSIVE WAVE IS COMING. RIGHT AT THEM.

ALEJANDRO

Agarrarse! Hold on!

THE WAVE SMASHES AGAINST THE BOAT, PULVERIZING IT.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

SUPERIMPOSE: "TWO YEARS LATER."

3 EXT. CHEZ JAY'S - MORNING

3

A local hangout on Ocean Boulevard in Santa Monica, best described as a dive with a deep past. The Rat Pack once partied here. Now... the establishment fights to stay alive.

CUT TO:

4 INT. CHEZ JAY'S - CONTINUOUS

4

It's cave-like; a long bar, dark paneled walls trimmed year-round with TWINKLING CHRISTMAS LIGHTS. At the moment... a BARTENDER behind the bar, A CLEANING CREW MEMBER, WASHING FLOORS. And ONE CUSTOMER AT THE BAR. MEET BILLY McBRIDE. Fiftyish, rumpled suit... he's nursing his second scotch and playing "Words With Friends" on his ipad. Somehow, we're able to see that this human carcass used to be one of the elite. The big and powerful. He still clings to that. As FRANKIE, the bartender, tops off Billy's scotch--

FRANKIE

How you doin' today, Billy?

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

BILLY

"Azurite." That's a word, right?
(then)
Bingo. Right on.

He takes a healthy gulp of his scotch, as JULIE McBRIDE, forty-five, enters. A regal-looking beauty, impeccably dressed. She holds a sad look at her ex-husband. Part of her still loves him, always will, but whatever affection she might harbor, at the moment she's pissed.

JULIE

(to Billy)
You fuck.

He turns to see her. Just to look at her still takes his breath away, but that's his secret. She approaches; then slaps down a piece of paper on the bar. He looks at it.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You skipped the summary judgment hearing.

He stares at the paper.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Does the case even ring a bell?

BILLY

I called the client twice. Got the machine, then a message saying the number was no longer in service.

JULIE

So you just skipped the hearing. Did you bother to see if he'd moved, or call our office to update the contacts?

BILLY

(pointed)
Did I call "your" office? No, Julie, I neglected to call "your" office.

If subtext could talk...

JULIE

I try to help you, Billy, I swear.
I throw you cases I...

She stops herself... scans the room, the glass of scotch, him.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

JULIE (CONT'D)

Is this what it is now? All the
time?

He says nothing, won't give her the satisfaction of an
answer. A beat; she heads off; stops at the door.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Your daughter's doing fine, by the
way. If that's of any interest.

And with that parting shot, she's gone. A beat. There
are lows in life. Being pitied by the love of your
life is one of the bigger ones.

BILLY

Ever been in love, Frankie? I don't
mean that head-over-heels bullshit.
I mean real love. When it aches in
your bones?

Frankie knows a rhetorical question when he hears one;
he wisely withholds a response. Billy takes the last
sip of his scotch, then taps his glass on the bar,
indicating he'll have another.

CLOSE ON LUCY KITTRIDGE,

twenty-seven, in the middle of some above-average morning
sex. As she writhes on top of her mate, just enough
perspiration to make her glisten, WE HEAR A CELL PHONE
RING.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

5 INT. LUCY'S SANTA MONICA LOFT - CONTINUOUS

5

Lucy is on top of KELVIN WYATT, good-looking colleague,
thirty-two, seems equally engaged in the aerobics.

LUCY

(re: the phone)
Shit.

She reaches for it without breaking pelvic stride; she
can multi-task.

KELVIN

Don't...

LUCY

It's work.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

They both stop thrusting as Lucy answers.

LUCY (CONT'D)
(into phone)
This is Lucy.

INTERCUT WITH JULIE, IN HER TESLA.

JULIE
Where are you, and don't say the
office, I just tried you there.

LUCY
What's wrong?

JULIE
I need you to go to my ex-husband's
office, get the Petrovich file,
that med-mal I had the stupidity to
turf him, he was a no-show at summary
judgment, the case was kicked.

Suddenly A HORN, FROM A CAR JULIE NEARLY CUTS OFF.

JULIE (CONT'D)
(to the Driver)
Go fuck yourself.
(back to Lucy)
Go get the file, before he screws
it up worse.

LUCY
If the case is dead, what further
damage--

JULIE
Just go get the file, please. Right
now. *

LUCY
Can we not just send a messenger? *

JULIE
Gee, if we could, I might not be
calling you. *

As JULIE CLICKS OFF, WE STAY WITH LUCY AND KELVIN.

LUCY
Okay. Done here. *

And she hops out of bed. *

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2) 5

KELVIN *
(it's all about me) *
What? *

LUCY *
I gotta get out of litigation. You *
want to have sex, get me into *
corporate, you need the Latin *
translation for that? *

KELVIN *
(with a smile) *
I love it when you pretend to be *
cold. *

And she smiles a little. *

LUCY *
Seriously. We'd see each other *
more if I worked in corporate. *

And she disappears into the bathroom. *

CUT TO:

6 EXT. OCEAN LODGE MOTEL, SANTA MONICA - LATER 6

An old motel, perched right next to Chez Jay's. Two old eyesores, the last holdouts in the gentrified "hot spot" slated for development. A MERCEDES PULLS INTO THE PARKING LOT; Lucy Kittridge deboards. She regards the motel.

CUT TO:

7 INT. MOTEL, BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY 7

It's a makeshift office. Some strewn files... it's a dump. There are some framed photos, hints of Billy's more-glorious past. But those days are long gone. Lucy steps in.

LUCY *
Hello? *

Nothing. She sees an adjoining room. Lucy peeks in.

8 INT. MOTEL, ADJOINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 8

This is where Billy lives. *

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

Fully-clothed, he's napping on his bed, a MASK ON HIS FACE, some breathing contraption. Lucy regards him: "That's the Billy McBride?" Then--

LUCY

Hello?

Billy pops awake. Lurches up. Pulls the mask off; WE HEAR A HISSING SOUND.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I--

BILLY

S'okay.

(points to his office)

I'll be right with you.

Lucy exits back into:

9 INT. MOTEL, BILLY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

9

She waits; takes measure of the dump. Billy enters.

BILLY

Help you?

LUCY

You're Billy McBride?

BILLY

I am.

LUCY

Lucy Kittridge, I work at your old firm. What's that breathing thing about, do you have emphysema or something?

BILLY

Sleep apnea. How can I help you, Lucy Kittridge?

*

LUCY

Your ex-wife sent me over to pick up the file on the Michael Petrovich case, which I guess is no longer much of a case.

*

*

Billy just stares, looks her up and down, she sure is beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

LUCY (CONT'D)
(re: the look)
You finished?

BILLY
Almost.
(with some charm)
Some women get offended when you
admire them, others think it rude
when you don't. I can never tell
which is which.

*

LUCY
You got that file?

He looks around, trying to remember where it is. Then
pulls open a drawer, pulls out a manila folder.

BILLY
There you go.

LUCY
That's all of it?
(off him)
Little thin.

BILLY
Lean and mean.

*

She takes it; starts to leave. Stops at the door, turns
back just in time to see him take a sip of whisky. She
considers. Then--

LUCY
May I ask... And please don't take
this the wrong way...
(off him)
Are you still any good?

*

He just stares.

LUCY (CONT'D)
I have a neighbor, she's also a
friend. Her brother died two years
ago on his company's boat, it was
ruled a suicide, she's convinced it
wasn't and wants to sue for
negligence. My firm refused to
take it on. The boat was insured,
so it should figure to settle
quickly. Any interest?

Billy just glares.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (2)

9

BILLY
My ex-wife put you up to this?

LUCY
No.

His wheels are spinning a bit.

BILLY
This boating accident. It happened exactly when?

LUCY
December of 2014.

Ah.

BILLY
The Statute of Limitations is about to toll, so you're looking for a warm body with a bar ticket to file the complaint.

*
*
*
*

LUCY
The body need not be warm.

*

OFF Billy, we:

*

CUT TO:

10 EXT. LAW FIRM OF COOPER & MCBRIDE - DAY

10

South Grand Avenue, in downtown L.A. This is a grand location. The building is on the same block as the brand new Eli Broad wing of the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Coburn School of Music, and Disney Hall -- all 21st-Century Modern. But it is also one block from the Civil and Criminal Courts. A FERAL PACK OF THIRTY OR SO BIKE MESSENGERS can always be found on the corner of this block because it is the heart of the legal district; this is their staging area. Lucy, in her Mercedes, PULLS UP TO THE VALET; emerges with blue-tooth and ipad -- all she needs in the new paperless, mobile world. She also has the file she picked up from Billy.

LUCY
(into phone)
I don't know, to be honest, but even if he's a fraction of what he was in the past, he's better than anybody you could hope to get at this stage.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

She no-look tosses her keys to the UNIFORMED VALET, who catches them. Nobody walks or parks themselves in L.A.

LUCY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I'll shoot you the address, just go see him, and I'd do it today before he forgets even having the conversation.

As she walks to the building, a PLAINCLOTHES SECURITY GUARD with a long pole and mirror checks for bombs under her car, while ANOTHER SECURITY GUARD checks the trunk.

CUT TO:

11 INT. LAW FIRM, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

11

The lobby, like the street, is ALMOST DEVOID OF PEOPLE; crowds are not allowed in or near these firms. LUCY WALKS THROUGH THE METAL DETECTOR, NODS AT THE TWO ADDITIONAL SECURITY GUARDS ON DUTY.

LUCY

(still into phone)

There is nobody else, Rachel, that's what I keep telling you, and a week from now you're barred by the Statute.

The Security Guard checks Lucy's security badge and gives her a hard look, which annoys her more.

LUCY (CONT'D)

(still on phone;

listens; then)

Just go see the man.

She clicks off and stares impatiently at the SECURITY GUARD, who is now CROSS-CHECKING HER PASS ON A COMPUTER TERMINAL.

LUCY (CONT'D)

(to the Guard)

Really, eight months, you still don't know I work here?

12 INT. LAW FIRM, ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

12

Yet another level of security; Lucy tries to swipe her pass-key for the 23RD floor, but the button won't light no matter how many times she jabs it.

LUCY

Fuckshit.

THOMAS TURLEY, fifty, joins her, mock-shocked at her language; a Cooper & McBride corporate partner, he's a big, tall, handsome, wealthy Mormon; part of the firm's large "Mormon Mafia."

TURLEY

Litigators. You all have such potty mouths.

He swipes his pass-key over the detector; it LIGHTS UP FLOOR 33. As Lucy goes to swipe her pass-key, he blocks her hand.

*
*

TURLEY (CONT'D)

That's alright. You're going to thirty-three. Donald Cooper would like to see you.

*
*
*
*

LUCY

Ha ha, whoever you are.

*
*

TURLEY

You find the idea of seeing Donald Cooper funny, do you?

*
*
*

LUCY

Donald Cooper wouldn't know me from a bar of soap.

*
*
*

TURLEY

Well, that's about to change, I guess.

*
*
*

13 INT. LAW FIRM, DONALD COOPER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

13*

Minimalist cool; no books, not even on the shelves, and no paper, except for the Harvard degrees and autographed photos on the wall: U.S. Supreme Court Justices, a couple Presidents, including Obama. There are FOUR COMPUTER MONITORS on the desk, and a desk phone with four corresponding lines. ATTY. DONALD R. COOPER, sixty-four, is at his desk.

*
*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

One look at him is to know he'd happily eat a grandchild if his nutrition depended on it. He wears a wireless ear-piece. He scans all four monitors, making notes, and hitting the audio for any monitor that interests him.

*
*

MONITOR #1 IS SCROLLING THROUGH DISCOVERY DOCUMENTS, MOSTLY PATENT DRAWINGS FOR A COMPLICATED HIGH-TECH BATTERY.

MONITOR #2 IS A LIVE FEED FROM A VIDEO COURT HEARING TAKING PLACE IN NYC, THE SOUND IS OFF, BUT THE SCREEN HAS SUBTITLES. THE JUDGE IS ON THE BENCH, READING HIS OPINION.

MONITOR #3 IS A LIVE FEED OF A CORPORATE MEETING WHERE AN OLDER CEO IS MAKING A PRESENTATION TO THE SHAREHOLDERS.

MONITOR #4 IS A TAPED PRESS CONFERENCE OF G-8 MINISTERS IN MUNICH, GERMANY.

As Lucy is let in--

*

LUCY
(to Cooper)
You asked to see me?

*
*
*

But Cooper has spotted something on Monitor #2, and holds up a finger to keep Lucy quiet. ON THE MONITOR, THE JUDGE IS WAITING FOR A REPLY. COOPER THEN HITS THE MONITOR #2 AUDIO.

*
*
*

COOPER
(to the Judge; via phone)
Yes, Your Honor, Donald Cooper here, our position would be that under Dodd Frank, neither the bank nor our client can be held personally liable for what would amount to the plaintiff's bad choice.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

THE JUDGE NODS AND GOES BACK TO READING. COOPER MUTES HIM and speaks to Lucy.

*
*

COOPER (CONT'D)
Ms. Kittridge.

*
*

LUCY
Yes. Lucy Kittridge.

*
*

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

COOPER
(moves toward her)
A pleasure. Donald Cooper.

As they shake hands--

LUCY
(a little in awe)
The pleasure's mine.

COOPER
Youth. Such an intoxicating package
of promise, idealism...
(slightly pointed)
...ambition.
(then)
How long have you been with us, Ms.
Kittridge?

AS HE SPOTS SOMETHING ON MONITOR #3; THE CEO HAS PUT ON
GLASSES TO SEE BETTER. COOPER HITS THE CORRESPONDING
AUDIO FOR THE IMAGE, AND SPEAKS TO SOMEONE ON THE OTHER
END.

COOPER (CONT'D)
(to Lucy)
One second.
(to the screen)
Get his glasses off, he looks old.

INSTANTANEOUSLY ON THE SCREEN, WE SEE A COOPER & MCBRIDE
ATTORNEY, SITTING BEHIND THE CEO, WHISPERING SOMETHING
TO HIM. THE CEO IMMEDIATELY TAKES OFF HIS GLASSES AND
PUTS THEM IN HIS COAT.

COOPER (CONT'D)
(to Lucy; re: the
Monitor)
A shareholder revolt, they want him
out and his son in.

LUCY
(re: the Monitor feed)
And who's our client in Germany?

COOPER
Germany.
(then)
Their regulators anyway, trying to
claw back some money from Putin.
How long?
(off Lucy)
How long have you been with us?

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (3)

13

LUCY

Two years.

COOPER

Wonderful. And have you enjoyed working here?

LUCY

Very much, sir.

COOPER

Excellent. And tell me, would there be any evidence of your employment here?

(off Lucy)

I'm sorry if I should know, it's just nothing you've done has ever been brought to my attention.

LUCY

I believe... if you read my year-end review, my work... it's been considered exemplary.

COOPER

Yes, tough thing about running a firm, so little time to read associates reviews.

(off her)

Not that I've heard nothing about you. For instance, it's been brought to my attention that you'd prefer to be in corporate.

Lucy is thrown. How the fuck did he hear that?

COOPER (CONT'D)

That true, Ms. Kittridge? Litigation doesn't suit you?

LUCY

I... um... don't know exactly what you've heard.

COOPER

I just told you what I've heard.

LUCY

I'm very happy in litigation.

COOPER

Then why the urge to switch departments?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (4)

13

COOPER (CONT'D)

Is it perhaps the sex is better in
corporate?

*

Lucy stares back. Beyond offended, but also intimidated.

*

COOPER (CONT'D)

Free radicals often turn into
malignancies, one of my roles as
Senior Partner is to safeguard the
firm from cancers in the grid.

*

*

*

*

*

LUCY

I'm very happy in litigation.

*

*

Cooper holds a look.

*

COOPER

Yes. You look happy.

*

*

A beat.

*

COOPER (CONT'D)

It does not serve the interest of
Cooper and McBride for the minions
be be running around the halls in
want. If you're not satisfied with
the opportunities presented by this
firm, then there are others. That's
the beauty of law firms and lawyers.
These are glut times.

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

14 INT. KELVIN'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

14*

Kelvin is at his desk, as Lucy blows in--

*

LUCY

Did you tell Donald Cooper I wanted
out of litigation?

*

*

*

KELVIN

What?

*

*

LUCY

Did you?

*

*

KELVIN

I've never even met the guy.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

LUCY

Well, I just got called into his office because he heard I want to switch to corporate, you're the only person I shared that with.

KELVIN

Shared, are you kidding, you asked me to make it happen, you told me in Latin, even. So I floated your name in the department.

LUCY

Well, it floated up to Cooper, and now I'm fucked.

KELVIN

Why, what'd he say?

LUCY

Some bullshit about free radicals turning into cancer, and he asked me if I thought the sex was better in corporate, so he obviously knows about you and me.

KELVIN

(pleased)
Really? So he's heard of me?

LUCY

You know what, Kelvin,--

KELVIN

How'd you handle it?

LUCY

How did I handle it, how do you think I handled it?

KELVIN

I hope well, 'cause it was probably your interview.

LUCY

What are you talking about?

KELVIN

Lucy. Cooper is an Olympian mind-fucker, he likes to put people on tilt and see how they respond. You maybe just had your interview for corporate. So how'd it go?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2) 14

Lucy sinks. *

LUCY *
It went like I'll be staying in *
litigation. *

CUT TO: *

15 EXT. CHEZ JAY'S, PARKING LOT - NIGHT 15

The lot is now fairly full.

16 INT. CHEZ JAY'S - NIGHT 16

THE PLACE COMES ALIVE AT NIGHT; A LOT OF REGULARS. WE FIND BILLY AT THE CORNER OF THE BAR; HE'S HOLDING COURT BEFORE A SMALL THROG OF CUSTOMERS. They consider Billy a fixture of the place.

BILLY
(feeling no pain)
So I got the guy on the stand -- I
mean, I had to call him, right? I *
gotta give him a chance to explain
himself to the jury.

ANGLE RACHEL KENNEDY

forty-two, enters. A bit damaged; fluctuates between being pretty and not. A distressed/sexy look.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(to the Bartender)
Top it off here, will you, Joel.
(back to the Throng)
I ask him: "Sir, what would possibly *
possess you to kick a midget half *
to death?" He says: "When the little *
fucker's standing right next to my
wife, telling me her hair smells
nice."

LAUGHS, GROANS. Good ol' Billy, a million stories, most of them with laughs.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Swear to God. I kid you not.

RACHEL
(approaching)
Excuse me. Mr. McBride?

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

BILLY

Maybe yes, maybe no, I ain't accepting service of nothing, if that's why you're here.

RACHEL

My neighbor is Lucy Kittridge, she told me you two talked about you possibly handling my case. My brother died in a boat accident two years ago.

TIME CUT TO:

17 INT. CHEZ JAY'S - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

17

Billy and Rachel, in a booth.

RACHEL

He was depressed, I'm not denying that. But he would never kill himself. And even if he wanted to, why blow up a boat? That's kind of a lot of trouble to go through, don't you think?

BILLY

Not if the vessel's insured.

*

RACHEL

He would never take his own life.
This I know.

*

*

BILLY

You said he was depressed, what about?

RACHEL

A lot of things. But work was one of them. Rand Tech, that was who he worked for. They make rocket fuel for the military. He was feeling increasingly guilty about being part of the war effort. But that would never have rendered him suicidal. I know my brother. Something else happened out there.

A beat, as Billy measures her. There could be something to this.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I Googled you. You used to be like
this big hot-shot.

BILLY

That right? Did Google say what
happened to me? 'Cause I'd like to
know.

*
*
*

RACHEL

There was a lot of talk about
alcohol.

*
*

A beat.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Do you still drink too much?

*

BILLY

Actually, no. I drink exactly the
right amount.

*

RACHEL

I don't mean to judge.

BILLY

Uh huh.

RACHEL

I'm an aesthetician by trade.
(tracing his face
with her finger)
This puffiness under your eyes.
That's alcohol. Plus, your face is
a little fleshy. Which is too bad,
'cause you've got nice cheek-bones.
A shame to hide them.

A beat. Alcohol plus a compliment...

CUT TO:

18 INT. MOTEL, ADJOINING ROOM - LATER

18

Billy and Rachel, half-dressed, are copulating like two
angry pigs. As a lawyer, as a man, Billy's desperate
to believe he's still got it. His esteem has
metastasized into a bit of an angry chip on his shoulder.
All this comes out when he fucks. He thrusts so fast
and furious, it looks like he's having an ass-spasm.
Rachel's not complaining. They fuck like savages. Off
this, we:

CUT TO:

19 EXT. CULVER CITY, CA - DAY 19*

AN OLDER MODEL MERCEDES TRAVELS DOWN A RESIDENTIAL STREET, UPPER-MIDDLE-CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD. THE CAR IS A PIECE OF JUNK. But as least it's a Mercedes.

20 INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS 20

BILLY DRIVES, checking the street numbers. Spies the target house. PULLS OVER.

TIME CUT TO:

21 EXT. LA CROIX HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 21

Billy stands at the front door, waiting. The door opens to reveal GINA LA CROIX, mid-forties.

BILLY

Mrs. La Croix?

Gina just stares back.

BILLY (CONT'D)

My name is Billy McBride, I'm an attorney. Do you mind if I come in?

GINA

What's this about?

BILLY

It's about your late husband.

Gina stares.

TIME CUT TO:

22 INT. LA CROIX FAMILY ROOM - MINUTES LATER 22

Gina and Billy.

GINA

My sister-in-law... Ryan was her only sibling, perhaps her only friend, and she just can't let it go. She's a lovely woman, but...

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

BILLY

It's very strange for a boat to
just explode like that.

*

GINA

Less so when you drop a match into
the fuel tank.

BILLY

Is that what you think happened?

GINA

All I know is that my husband was
not in a very good place.

He studies her.

BILLY

It's an unusual way for somebody to
kill himself.

*

*

GINA

I didn't know suicidal people
followed norms.

*

*

Billy's intensely studying the woman, as we:

ANGLE: JASON LA CROIX,

eleven; he arrives at the door's threshold, listens.

BILLY (O.S.)

The boat was owned by a billion-
dollar company.

*

RESUME

GINA

What are you suggesting? I should
extort a company because it has a
lot of money?

*

A beat.

BILLY

I don't mean to upset you.

GINA

Rand Tech was very good to Ryan,
they've been wonderful to us. They
created a fund to pay--

*

*

She stops upon seeing Jason enter the room.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

GINA (CONT'D)

Please excuse us, Jason.

A beat. Jason looks to Billy.

JASON

(to Billy)

Do you know something?

GINA

Jason, this is a private conversation.

Jason exits.

GINA (CONT'D)

It took some time to get closure on this. And frankly, the idea that you or my sister-in-law are going to start tearing open wounds to chase some big pot of gold strikes me as repulsive.

BILLY

I'm not doing that.

GINA

This was a very painful time in my life, I shall not be revisiting it. I need you to leave, please.

Billy rises, goes to the door. Looks back.

HIS POV

Standing at the door's threshold... Jason stares back.

CLOSE ON BILLY

CLOSE ON JASON

RESUME

Something in the boy's eyes. Billy can't be sure of much these days. But the expression in those eyes is unequivocal: "My father did not commit suicide." OFF Billy, we:

CUT TO:

- 23 EXT. OCEAN LODGE MOTEL - NIGHT 23
- 24 INT. MOTEL, BILLY'S OFFICE - NIGHT 24

Bottle of Johnny Walker Red on his desk, paperwork in front of him, Billy is poring through the file. Been awhile since he's had to concentrate like this; he risks pulling a muscle. Something catches his attention... there's a noticeable up-tick in scrutiny.

BILLY
(to himself; softly)
What the fuck?

CUT TO:

- 25 EXT. LONG BEACH MARINA - MORNING 25

Billy walks.. draining some coffee, smoking a cigarette. From the look of him, he polished off all that Johnny Walker Red last night. HE EVENTUALLY SPIES HIS TARGET.

HIS POV

A COUPLE OF FISHERMEN, PREPPING THEIR BOAT FOR THE DAY'S WORK: STENCILED ON THE STERN: "INSURANCE ES BUENO."
Billy approaches the Marquez brothers.

BILLY
Excuse me? Alejandro Marquez?

ALEJANDRO
(immediately suspicious)
Yes.

BILLY
My name is Billy McBride. I'm an attorney.
(to Gabriel)
Are you Gabriel?

Gabriel looks to Alejandro; unsure if he should answer.

ALEJANDRO
How can I help you, Mr. McBride?

BILLY
I understand you witnessed a boat explosion two years ago. I'd like to talk to you about that if I may.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

ALEJANDRO

We've already said everything we know.

BILLY

I understand, but... in reading the OSHA report... I noticed that your own boat sank that night.

ALEJANDRO

(a little discomfort)

Who are you, sir?

BILLY

I told you, I--

ALEJANDRO

No, what are you? What is your purpose here?

(then)

We told the insurance company everything.

BILLY

This ain't about insurance or nothing. I represent the sister of the guy who exploded along with that Rand Tech boat. We're pursuing a claim, so I just need to interview witnesses, which you two are the only ones.

ALEJANDRO

We saw a boat blow up. Boom. That's all.

The guy is dodging. A beat.

BILLY

And your boat sank around the same time?

ALEJANDRO

Yes. It got swamped by a wave.

BILLY

It was a calm night. OSHA listed it as a rogue wave. Would you agree with that?

ALEJANDRO

I'm not an oncologist.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

BILLY

No, I ain't either. But see, a rogue wave, that refers to earth or sea activity, like an earthquake, or volcano or whatever. Now something called a "shock" wave, that's more of an explosion kind of thing.

(a beat)

Possible OSHA got it wrong? It was maybe more of a "shock" wave that sank your vessel?

ALEJANDRO

It was a big wave.

A beat.

BILLY

Mr. Marquez. I'm getting the sense that my showing up here is somehow threatening to you. My intent here is only--

ALEJANDRO

We saw a boat go boom. That's all.

BILLY

It sank your boat from three hundred yards away. Quite the boom.

ALEJANDRO

What are you, curious? Like a cat?

BILLY

Is that some kind of a threat, sir?

ALEJANDRO

We said everything we know.

Billy thinks not. But he can see he's getting nowhere.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. LAW FIRM OF COOPER & MCBRIDE - DAY

26

Billy, on foot, approaches the building. Been awhile since he's been in the neighborhood. He pauses to drink in the surroundings. "Wow. I used to live here." He then continues on toward the building.

27 INT. LAW FIRM, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

27

Billy enters, approaches the ONE SECURITY GUARD he recognizes: HORACE, African-American, sixties.

BILLY
How we doin', Horace?

HORACE
(surprised; warmly)
Billy. How you doing, sir? *

BILLY
Eh, y'know. How 'bout you?

HORACE
I'm a grandfather now. *

BILLY
Do not tell me. Tanya?

HORACE
She's all grown up, sir. Married,
making a family of her own.

BILLY
Oh, my god. Tell her "hi" from me,
would you?

HORACE
I surely will. It's so good to see
you again.

BILLY
You, too, Horace, I'm headed to see
Lucy Kittridge. She's in litigation.

HORACE
Oh, yes.
(checking the list)
I'm not seeing anything here.

BILLY
Yeah, it's last-minute, I'm kind of
a walk-up.

This is awkward.

HORACE
Oh.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

HORACE (CONT'D)

(then)

I can't really let anyone through
without... it's a whole new security-
world out there, you have no idea.

BILLY

But you know me.

HORACE

That I do. But...

As ANOTHER, younger SECURITY GUARD, a bit of a brawniac,
arrives; let's call him JOE.

JOE

Everything okay?

HORACE

I got it, Joe.

JOE

(unconvinced)

There a problem?

HORACE

(annoyed)

There's no problem. I said I got
it.

Joe, still unconvinced, measures Billy.

BILLY

(to Joe; Irish temper
flaring)

He said he's got it.

Joe looks to Horace, finally heads off.

HORACE

(sotto)

I'm sorry, Mr. McBride. They got
so many rules here now. The place
has changed.

(then)

I can't let you through.

BILLY

Horace.

Billy points to the mounted bronze "Cooper & McBride"
on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

BILLY (CONT'D)

That's my name on the wall.

HORACE

I know that. If it were up to me,
I'd tell a lot of people here to go
fuck themselves. But things ain't
up to me.

BILLY

How 'bout you call Lucy Kittridge,
tell her I'm here.

HORACE

I ain't even s'posed to do that.
But I will, I will indeed.
(then)
But promise me you won't go near
Mr. Cooper. I could get fired.

BILLY

I promise.

28 INT. LAW FIRM, 23RD FLOOR CORRIDOR - TWO MINUTES LATER

28

Billy steps off the elevator. Looks around, still trying
to fathom how much the place has changed. He's gape-
jawed. A legal assistant, SYLVIA, twenty-six,
approaches.

SYLVIA

(to Billy)
Mr. McBride.

BILLY

Yes.

SYLVIA

Right this way, please.

As Billy walks, he takes in all the art, the opulence,
the high-tech... welcome to today's Big Law. Wow.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Ms. Kittridge is right here in the
conference room.

BILLY

Thank you.

29 INT. LAW FIRM, CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

29

As Billy enters; Lucy sees him, rises.

LUCY

Billy.

She smiles, goes to greet him as he moves to do the same. But, instead of a handshake -- suddenly -- BOOM -- SHE COLD-COCKS HIM WITH A STRAIGHT RIGHT TO THE JAW, DECKS HIM. He doesn't know what hit him.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I send a woman in need, still
grieving over her brother, and you
fuck her?

BILLY

(rubbing his chin)

It was kinda mutual. From what I
remember.

LUCY

Get up.

BILLY

You gonna hit me again?

LUCY

I might. Get up.

As he climbs to his feet--

BILLY

Is this what you do? You punch
people? *

SHE PUNCHES HIS SHOULDER.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Okay. I'm taking her case. Does
that count for anything? *

Lucy glares.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I paid a visit to the dead guy's
wife. She says the man took his
own life. But she's hiding
something.

LUCY

You know this how?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

BILLY

I got a knack for reading people.
You being the exception. I also
saw the son, and got a good bead on
him. Then I talked to the fishermen
who witnessed the explosion. They
didn't like me asking questions.

(then)

Whatever happened on that boat, the
truth of it ain't out yet.

LUCY

You got a theory?

BILLY

If it's an industrial accident, a
lot of regulatory bodies get
involved. There's fines, a shitload
of investigations, licenses can get
suspended. Suicide's a lot cleaner,
saves a lot of dough. My bet is
that Rand Tech probably settled
with both the widow and the
fishermen, no admission of liability,
nice and tidy.

(re: his chin)

You got any ice?

LUCY

So what's the next step?

BILLY

Well, since the Statute tolls in
six days, the next step would be to
file the complaint.

JULIE (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Billy turns to see Julie, who has just entered. As
always, the sight of her stops his heart a beat.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You're not allowed to be here,
there's a court order.

BILLY

I got business with Ms. Kittridge.

JULIE

What sort of business?

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

JULIE (CONT'D)

(to Lucy)
What sort of business?

LUCY

My neighbor. The boat-explosion case I tried to open here. I gave it to him.

JULIE

Because..?

Silence. Julie just freezes Lucy with an icy stare.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Did you tell Mr. McBride why the case was declined here?

(off her)

You didn't.

Billy is now fixing a stare on Lucy.

LUCY

Turns out there's a conflict. This firm represents the defendant.

BILLY

You people represent Rand Tech?

A beat.

BILLY (CONT'D)

(with a smile)

So I'd be forced to go up against my old firm?

JULIE

You're not taking the case, we'll conflict you out.

BILLY

Really, and how would that work?
I'm not a lawyer here, remember?

(big grin)

Wow. Ain't life funny sometimes?

(to Lucy)

You'll send me the rest of the file?

LUCY

I sent it all.

BILLY

Really? Little thin.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (3)

29

And he exits. Julie just death-glares Lucy.

LUCY

The woman deserves a lawyer. Between the client and this firm, I can't find a single attorney willing to take it on.

JULIE

Well, seems you did.

OFF Julie, we:

CUT TO:

30 INT. LAW FIRM, LOBBY - MINUTES LATER

30

Billy, the smile still on his face, steps off the elevator, starts for the exit. Stops upon seeing--

HIS POV

Cooper. As his eyes find Billy... he stops... forty feet away. They stare at each other like gunslingers at the O.K. Corral. Then Cooper approaches.

*

*

COOPER

Billy. How are you?

*

*

BILLY

Can't complain. How 'bout you, Donnie?

*

*

*

Cooper hates being called "Donnie," but he doesn't bite. He smiles. Then--

*

*

COOPER

There's a restraining order.

BILLY

How's the family, Frannie good?

*

*

Cooper glares. As Joe, the Security Guard, approaches--

*

JOE

(to Cooper)

We okay here, sir?

COOPER

Show Mr. McBride out please.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: 30

BILLY

No worries. I was just leaving.

(then)

See you, Donnie. My love to Frannie. *

He heads off; shoots Horace a wink. OFF Cooper, we:

CUT TO:

31 INT. LAW FIRM, DONALD COOPER'S OFFICE - LATER 31

Cooper and Julie.

JULIE

It's the case against Rand Tech. *

Brought in by as Associate. We *

turned it down. She referred it to *

Billy.

COOPER

And who is this Associate? *

JULIE

Lucy Kittridge, a second-year in *

litigation. She a good kid, *

excellent lawyer. *

COOPER

(her again?) *

Lucy Kittridge. *

OFF Julie, we:

CUT TO:

32 EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL - 5:00 P.M. 32

BILLY PULLS UP FRONT IN HIS OLD MERCEDES. THE VALET
GIVES HIM A LOOK: "WE DON'T PARK THOSE."

BILLY

(to the Valet)

Try not to scratch it.

As BILLY HEADS FOR THE ENTRANCE--

33 INT. POLO LOUNGE - 5:00 P.M.-ISH 33

BRITTANY GOLD, thirty, lot of makeup, a lot of cleavage,
sits at the bar, sipping a martini. She's working.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

Billy enters... spies her, approaches. As she sees him--

BRITTANY

(warm smile)

Hey, Billy.

BILLY

Already on the job.

BRITTANY

You know it. This is the witching hour. How you doin', baby, long time.

BILLY

I'm good. Listen, I may have some work for you.

BRITTANY

Really?

(playful)

What you got in mind?

BILLY

No, I mean real work. Legal secretary work.

BRITTANY

(less interested)

Ah.

BILLY

That was kind of our arrangement, remember? I defend you, and you do work for me as needed.

BRITTANY

I thought the arrangement was "you get me off, I get you off."

BILLY

Seriously. I got a case with some real potential.

BRITTANY

(she's heard this before)

Another big case, huh?

BILLY

This one could be very real.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

BILLY (CONT'D)

But it could involve a lot of administrative shit, drafting, pleadings and so forth, I need a legal secretary.

(then)

Please.

OFF this, we:

CUT TO:

34 EXT. BEL AIR - EVENING

34*

An oversized Victorian mansion of sorts. Whoever lives here has money, which is sort of the point.

*
*

35 INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

35*

Donald Cooper and his wife, FRANCESCA, late fifties, elegant; they sit at the imported French dining room table, as a SERVANT TOPS OFF HIS BORDEAUX. The Servant departs as the two eat in silence; Cooper stares at his plate.

*
*
*
*
*

FRANCESCA

Everything okay?

*
*

Cooper looks up.

*

FRANCESCA (CONT'D)

You look a little distracted.

*
*

COOPER

Tough day at work.

*
*

She nods; they resume eating in silence, until--

*

COOPER (CONT'D)

(without looking up)

Billy McBride showed up today.

*
*
*

Francesca freezes for a nano-second before she resumes eating. Cooper totally clocked it.

*
*

FRANCESCA

(simply)

Really? What about?

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

COOPER

He's under the impression he'll be representing somebody suing one of our clients.

*
*
*
*

FRANCESCA

Ah.

*
*

She could probe further, but it's not a discussion she wants to evolve. Cooper clocks that as well. OFF THEM, eating in silence, we:

*
*
*

CUT TO:

36 EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER - NIGHT

36

Billy sits on a bench with Rachel Kennedy. The air is cool, warm clothing. He sucks on a cigarette throughout.

BILLY

I plan to file the complaint by tomorrow if possible. We got some standing issues, but they should be beatable.

RACHEL

And then what? After we file?

*

BILLY

We go into discovery, which, frankly, we can't afford. Could run hundreds of thousands of dollars. Our best bet would be to settle within the boat's policy limits, and get out of Dodge.

RACHEL

Any settlement would have to include an admission from them that it wasn't suicide.

BILLY

We can go for that. But, look... lawsuits -- all of 'em -- are about money. They ain't about admissions, they're almost never about justice. It all comes down to a number.

RACHEL

Well, in this case, the number isn't that important.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(off Billy)

I get that the law isn't noble.
But my brother was.

He stares into her; he can see her resolve.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I was a pretty shitty sister, never
gave him much other than a few
headaches and some added debt. He
deserves his dignity. That's what
I want to give him here.

BILLY

I respect that. But you also got
to appreciate a one-third contingency
of your brother's dignity ain't
gonna half-settle my bar tab. I
gotta get some dough out of this.

RACHEL

I understand that.

A look between them.

BILLY

Also, what happened between us last
night... that probably shouldn't
happen again.

RACHEL

Did it only happen because you were
drunk?

BILLY

Why would you say that?

RACHEL

I know I'm not an attractive woman.
(then)

I used to be, y'know. In fact,
it's one of the reasons I became an
aesthetician, I wanted to study the
science of preserving...

(admitting)

...my cup doesn't runneth over with
esteem. I've never accomplished
much. Probably another reason I
want to accomplish this for Ryan.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

BILLY
You're a very beautiful woman.

RACHEL
You don't need to say that.

BILLY
As you get to know me better, you'll realize I don't say things I don't mean. You're a beautiful woman. But if we're to be lawyer and client, we gotta respect certain boundaries. Keep things uncluttered, y'know?

RACHEL
Yeah.
(then, admitting)
It was nice being desired last night, even if fueled by alcohol. I don't get that often.

Billy can see this is an honest, vulnerable woman. If he has clarity on anything at this moment... it's knowing he's going to fight for her.

CUT TO:

37 INT. LAW FIRM, 23RD FLOOR CORRIDOR - MORNING

37

Lucy heads for her office, coffee in hand, cellphone at her ear.

LUCY
(into cell)
No, what I'm telling you is that for the purposes of libel law, they actually can sue,

*

As she unsuccessfully tries to open her office door with her pass-key--

LUCY (CONT'D)
companies can be deemed individuals when it comes to being slandered,
(re: her pass-key)
fuck me up the ass.
(into cell)
Sorry, my pass-key isn't working.
Can I call you back? Thanks.

*

*

*

She clicks off, tries her pass-key again.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

LUCY (CONT'D)
(to the lock)
Cocksucker.

JULIE
Lucy.

Lucy looks to see Julie; an uncomfortable look on her face.

LUCY
I wasn't calling the door gay.

JULIE
Can you join me in the conference room, please?

LUCY
(sensing)
What's the matter?

JULIE
Please.

TIME CUT TO:

38 INT. LAW FIRM, CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

38

Donald Cooper sits. Bespoke suit, French cuffs. Also seated, LEIGH CHEN, forties, Head of Human Resources, and GAVIN LISTER, fiftyish, Head of Security. Julie enters with Lucy; a deer in the headlights -- she immediately knows something's up.

LUCY
Okay. This doesn't feel good. *

Cooper shoots her his version of a smile. Then--

LUCY (CONT'D) *

What's going on?

COOPER
Please sit.

Lucy looks to Julie; Julie is just staring at the floor.

COOPER (CONT'D)
Please.

Lucy sits. A beat. Cooper takes a sip of water. He enjoys seeing his prey squirm.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

But Lucy just stares him right in the eye. A beat.

COOPER (CONT'D)
You're not a squirmer. That's
admirable.

Another sip of water.

COOPER (CONT'D)
I'm afraid it's not working out,
Ms. Kittridge.

LUCY
What's not working out?

Silence.

LUCY (CONT'D)
I'm getting fired?

COOPER
It's not working out.

LUCY
Why?

COOPER
By now, you know your key-pass has
been de-activated. Your cell phone
will be disconnected within--

*

LUCY
I'd like a reason.

COOPER
You don't get one.
(a beat)
Now, were I to explain -- I won't --
I might say you were being discharged
for violating your duty of loyalty
and confidentiality to a firm client.
For self-dealing and deception in
order to secure outside compensation.
For theft of proprietary information
relating to the economic interests
of the firm, disclosing privileged
information --

LUCY
Whose privileged information?!
What the hell do you mean, self-
dealing? What the fuck is this?!

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

COOPER

You shopped a case against our own client to another lawyer.

LUCY

That's what this is about?

*

COOPER

You'd prefer I lay it off on your fucking too many junior partners in corporate?

*

*

*

*

JULIE

Alright, Donald.

*

*

CHEN

(hands Lucy a bill)

These are personal account charges. The firm takes credit cards or cash. No personal checks.

*

Lucy stares at it, incredulous --

COOPER

It was the firm's money; money you spent on personal items, student loans, clothing, your car lease --

LUCY

The student loan payments and car was part of my signing bonus.

COOPER

To be paid back by you upon termination for cause.

(to Lister)

Where are the car keys?

LISTER

Valet; we already have them.

CHEN

(hands Lucy an envelope)

Notice of cancellation of health benefits, insurance, club memberships, and mortgage payments.

LUCY

You're calling in my home loan?

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (3)

38

COOPER

(checks file on his
desk)

Seems we also co-signed your
mortgage.

(a half-smile)

Shitty day.

*
*
*
*

A stunned beat.

*

CUT TO:

39 INT. LUCY'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

39

THROUGH THE GLASS, WE SEE SECURITY, WAITING TO ESCORT
HER OUT. She stands there, stunned, still trying to
absorb the shock. Then, Julie enters. Silence. A
look between her and Lucy.

JULIE

Please know I fought for you.

More silence.

JULIE (CONT'D)

If you need a reference, I'll
absolutely see that you get one.

(then; genuine)

I am so sorry. I truly am.

*

LUCY

They're not going to get away with
this.

JULIE

Honey, they get away with everything.

Julie exits. OFF Lucy, we:

CUT TO:

40 INT. MOTEL, BILLY'S OFFICE - DAY

40

Brittany Gold is there at the computer, working on the
complaint.

BRITTANY

This says helicopter accident.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

BILLY

I told you, it's a pony, a "go-by," just wherever it says, "helicopter," you substitute with "sea-faring vessel" or "water-craft."

BRITTANY

Are you serious? *

BILLY

They're both wrongful-death cases, just change the names of the parties, "chopper," to "boat," then I'll fill out the one-page form attachment.

A KNOCK. They look up; there stands Lucy.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Hey.

LUCY

Hey.

BILLY

(introducing)
Lucy Kittridge, Brittany Gold.
(re: Brittany)
My staff.

LUCY

(to Brittany)
Nice to meet you.
(to Billy)
They just fired me. *

BILLY

What? Why?

LUCY

My guess is that it's got a lot to do with the personal shit between you and Cooper. Can we talk about that?

BILLY

I'm sorry.

LUCY

Don't be. I only miss my car.

BILLY

What are you gonna do?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

BILLY (CONT'D)

You want to work here?

LUCY

You're funny.

*

BILLY

Seriously. Can't pay you a salary,
at least not right off. But I'll
cut you in.

*

LUCY

On all this? Gee.

*

BRITTANY

We could kinda use some help. So
far, we're suing a helicopter
company.

Lucy picks up the document, gives it a glance.

LUCY

What the hell is this?

BILLY

That's just a pony.

LUCY

Are you kidding me?

*

BRITTANY

This was my question.

Lucy stares at Billy.

BILLY

What? It's done all the time.

LUCY

(to Brittany)

How fast can you type?

BRITTANY

Hey, I can go fast, slow, and any
speed in between, hon.

LUCY

(to Billy)

I'm not working here, I'm just doing
this.

As Lucy talks; Brittany types.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (3)

40

LUCY (CONT'D)

(rapid-fire)

General allegations -- all capped
in bold. One: Rachel La Croix
Kennedy files this note individually
and as a successor in interest and
heir of Ryan La Croix, deceased,--

BILLY

A sister ain't a successor under--

LUCY

We don't need to concede that.

(back to Brittany)

Rachel Kennedy is the sole surviving
sibling of the decedent. Two:
Plaintiff is informed and believes,
and herein alleges, that Rand
Technology, hereinafter referred to
as Defendant, is a business
incorporated in the County of Los
Angeles, State of California. *

BRITTANY

You're fast, but I'm with you.

LUCY

Plaintiff is informed and believes
and herein alleges that Defendant
is a limited liability company or
other business entity duly organized
and existing under the laws of the
State of California, with its
principle place of business in Long
Beach, California. *

ANGLE BILLY

As she rattles off the complaint; Brittany types
furiously. Billy just watches... This kid is good.

CUT TO:

41 INT. LAW FIRM, DONALD COOPER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

41

Cooper, master of the universe, sits at his desk; Julie
sits across from him, reading the complaint. Finally--

JULIE

(re: the complaint)

Well. That didn't take long.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

COOPER

No. It didn't.
(then)
At least his writing has improved.

*

JULIE

I'll make it go away.

COOPER

Oh, we're not settling. Have your
team draft the answer by noon, to
be filed by end of business, together
with a motion to dismiss.

*

JULIE

On what grounds?

COOPER

On the grounds that I pay you over
a million dollars a year and for
that kind of money you'll come up
with something.

JULIE

Okay. First of all, I shouldn't be
handling this personally, since
it's my ex-husband.

*

COOPER

Just get the document drafted. I
will handle it.

A beat.

JULIE

I beg your pardon?

*

COOPER

It's our biggest client, should
they not warrant the services of
our most senior partner?

*

*

JULIE

This needs to be settled, quickly,
quietly,--

COOPER

I just told you, we are not settling,--

JULIE
And that's a
mistake, this case
cannot--

COOPER (CONT'D)
--if Billy wants
his pound of flesh,--

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

41

COOPER (CONT'D)
He'll have to settle for mine.

*

She holds a look.

JULIE
We can be rid of this for fifty
grand, why risk--

*

COOPER
I want the answer and motion filed,
do it ex-parte so we can end-run
notice, I want to be in court
tomorrow.

JULIE
What?

COOPER
Then make sure Billy gets notice,
so he shows up.

JULIE
What the hell are you doing?
(off Cooper)
Did you at least run this by Leonard
Betts?

COOPER
The last time I checked, I was in
charge here, not--

JULIE
As Rand's general counsel, he might
deserve a heads-up, especially since--

COOPER
I have given you a directive, Julie.
I'd like the answer and the motion
filed, please.

*

*

*

CUT TO:

42 INT. MOTEL, BILLY'S OFFICE - SUNDOWN

42

Rachel and Billy.

RACHEL
Tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

BILLY
(concealing his own
surprise)
It's just a tactic.

RACHEL
And they can just get it dismissed
without even hearing any evidence?

BILLY
It ain't gonna happen. We'll be
fine.

RACHEL
(reading the document)
What's abstention doctrine?

*
*

BILLY
Jurisdiction, saying it belongs in
Federal Court. Look, this is kitchen-
sink bullshit, the only issue with
teeth is the standing thing, which
we discussed, but we'll clear that.

RACHEL
So what happens exactly?

BILLY
We show up, they'll argue, I'll
argue, the Judge will rule, the
case will go on. This is a very
good sign, truth be told, means
we've got their attention. Most
defense strategies, it's kick-the-
can-down-the-road 'til the plaintiff
loses interest.

(then)
We're gonna be fine.

*

But Rachel's no dummy. She can see his doubt through
the bluster. OFF this, we:

TIME CUT TO:

43 INT. STARBUCKS - LATER

43

Rachel and Lucy.

RACHEL
I'm feeling like maybe we rushed
too fast, y'know?

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

LUCY
Well. The complaint had to be filed,
the Statute was about to toll.

RACHEL
And is it normal for the defense to
be so aggressive?

LUCY
(admitting)
No.

A beat.

RACHEL
Be honest with me. Is this Billy
really any good? *

LUCY
I know he used to be.

Rachel takes a breath. Off her anxiety, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

44 EXT. COOPER'S PORCH - EVENING

44*

Cooper sits on the back porch. Nursing a scotch, SMOKING
A CIGAR. He's staring out into the expansive grounds;
he's in Master-of-the-Universe mode. Tempered with a
bit of doubt. The DOOR OPENS, Francesca emerges, sits.
Silence. Until-- *

FRANCESCA
Is it really wise for you to be
handling this case yourself? *

COOPER
(mulling over the
question)
'Is it wise' for me to handle it
myself? Hmmm. *
(then) *
Y'know, I think it must be. And *
you know what leads me to think *
that, honey? The fact that I decided *
to handle it myself. *

OFF Francesca, we: *

CUT TO: *

45 INT. MOTEL, BILLY'S OFFICE - LATER 45*

Billy is at his desk, he's poring through the motion to dismiss. He's also got his old Horn book out on civil procedure. A book, an old one at that, what a dinosaur. Notes in the margins, this book is a bible, a good-luck charm, a keepsake... a relic. But it still works for him. He gulps some coffee.

46 EXT. MOTEL BALCONY - LATER 46

Billy paces up and down, up and down. Mentally going over his argument.

47 INT. MOTEL, BILLY'S OFFICE - LATER 47

Billy paces, keyed up, cell phone tucked between shoulder and ear, listening to it ring, waiting for someone to answer his call. Finally, A TIRED VOICE ANSWERS the other line.

CLERK WILSON (V.O.)
Clerk's office.

*

BILLY
(charm and good cheer)
Good for you, working late, how you doin'? Billy McBride here, I got a quick question.

CLERK WILSON (V.O.)
Who is this?

*

BILLY
Billy McBride, attorney. I'm actually good friends with Reginald Rucker, Reggie still around?

CLERK WILSON (V.O.)
It's after hours, Mr. McBride.

*

BILLY
Yeah. Listen, I filed a wrongful death suit on the calendar for tomorrow. My secretary said she maybe forgot to check the box for punitive damages.

CLERK WILSON (V.O.)
You got to check the box.

*

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

BILLY

Yeah, which is why I'm calling, she feels terrible about it, so I was just wondering, if you could just pull out the document --

CLERK WILSON (V.O.)

We're not allowed to mark up files.

*

BILLY

I realize that, and I would never presume... here's the thing: My firm might fire her over this. She's got a kid with bone cancer and I feel terrible because, truth is, I should've checked her work, because I know how upset she's been.

CLERK WILSON (V.O.)

I can't tamper with Court documents, sir.

*

BILLY

Yeah, you're right, you're absolutely right. Know what, I should best talk to the Judge directly. Can you tell me who's sitting?

CLERK WILSON (V.O.)

I can't give out that information.

*

BILLY

C'mon. She's got a kid with bone cancer.

A beat.

CLERK WILSON (V.O.)

Judge Keller.

*

CLICK. BILLY HEARS THE DIAL TONE.

BILLY

(to himself)
Keller?

It's clear he doesn't know who that is. The door opens. Julie enters, holding a copy of the Complaint. Stares. A beat.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Don't tell me, I've somehow fucked up yet again.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (2)

47

BILLY (CONT'D)

Let's see, we must be up to page six-hundred, volume-three of the many ways I've managed to disappoint you, what is it this time?

JULIE

(re: the document)

I know who wrote this. Lucy Kittridge is gifted, with a special talent for drafting.

BILLY

Must be the reason you people fired her.

JULIE

Is she working on this case?

BILLY

I don't have to tell you--

JULIE

Is she on this case?

BILLY

Get out.

JULIE

You listen to me.

BILLY

No, I don't gotta do that no more--

JULIE

This girl has talent, Billy, she has a future, I care about what becomes of her, and I will not let you drag her down in the sinkhole--

BILLY (CONT'D)

--we ain't partners, remember, I don't -- oh, you care about her, that's why you tossed her to the curb, just because--

BILLY (CONT'D)

You have no right barging in here--

JULIE

--if you want to fuck up your own life, that's one thing, but I will not--

As it really escalates--

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (3)

47

JULIE (CONT'D)
--she's twenty-
seven years old,
what did you trot
out, the Ernest
Hemingway bullshit,
the poetic romance
of being a washed-
out alcoholic?

BILLY
I am sick of you
passing judgment,
you fucking hear
me, I'm doing my
best to survive
here and all you
can do is--

BILLY (CONT'D)
(screaming)
You did this to me!!

The scream startles both of them; an eruption years in the making, perhaps.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(powder-kegging)
You did it.

JULIE
(incredulous)
I did it?

BILLY
(fighting emotion)
In sickness and in health! That
was the vow, in sickness and in
goddamn health! And when I got
sick...

A beat. He's nearly quaking with rage, hurt.

JULIE
You don't think I tried?

BILLY
Not hard enough. The time I needed
you most...

JULIE
We have a daughter. I was becoming
guilty of parental neglect just
letting her be around you.

BILLY
Get the fuck out of here.

JULIE
Billy, I will always love you. But--

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (4)

47

BILLY
(screams)
Get the fuck out!!

A beat.

JULIE
For God's sake, you're still not
well. Don't be--

BILLY
I have to be in court in the morning.
Please leave.

The emotion between them is palpable, strangely, so is the residual chemistry. And it's devastating for her to see what he's become. She simply exits. Billy sits at his desk. Slams his fist down hard. Drops his head into his hands.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. MOTEL BALCONY - LATER

48

Billy stands, sucking on a cigarette. The anxiety is starting to build a bit. Takes a deep long drag. Across the parking lot... Chez Jay's. Buzzing.

ANGLE BILLY

We can read his mind, almost. "Not tonight." But he's been losing the "not-tonight" battle for years. He sucks in some air as if it were willpower. It's not.

CUT TO:

49 INT. CHEZ JAY'S - MINUTES LATER

49

Billy enters, finds a seat at the bar. The bar-keeper, TONY, approaches.

TONY
Hey, Billy. Thought you were gonna
be a no-show tonight.

BILLY
Just delayed, that's all. Chivas,
neat.

The drink is quickly poured. Billy first inhales it... then sips, swishes it in his mouth.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

It's like meeting God. He takes another sip, a little closer to a gulp... and then...

HIS POV

Sitting at a table... staring at him... Lucy.

RESUME

Billy just meets her stare. She then rises, approaches, sits next to him.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

LUCY

Am I going to have to jump up and argue this tomorrow?

BILLY

You'd have trouble staying anonymous if you did.

LUCY

I'm not going to just sit back and let you fuck this up. I care about this woman, and I won't--

BILLY

Jesus Christ, everybody cares about everybody, when did it become such a fucking caring world?

A beat.

LUCY

There could be real money in this. And here you are, the night before a motion that could squash the whole thing... and you're drinking.

*

*

BILLY

And if I wasn't, I'd likely be shaking in there tomorrow. I don't think we want that.

She just stares. Then--

LUCY

I'm going to be sitting in the back. I will jump up and enter my appearance if necessary. Swear to God.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (2)

49

LUCY (CONT'D)

(then)
Why does Cooper hate you so?

BILLY
Complicated.

LUCY
Tell me.

BILLY
Short version: he hates me for what I am, hates himself for what he ain't.

LUCY
Which is what?

BILLY
(with a wink)
Me.
(off her)
When we first started, we actually made for a good team. He liked the glamour of the law. I preferred the muck. I'd grind out some big wins, mostly product liability, he'd invest our winnings in the business, client relations, we built this big giant.
(takes a sip)
But along the way, I became beloved. He didn't. Respected, sure. But beloved?

LUCY
And he resented that.

BILLY
We had this plaque on the wall. "The true measure of a man is his heart." He didn't like how the math came out, so he had it taken down.

He takes another sip.

BILLY (CONT'D)
The only thing Donald Cooper really cares about is perception. The Architectural Digest house in Bel Air, the Ivy-League educated trophy wife. You ever seen her?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

*

49 CONTINUED: (3)

49

BILLY (CONT'D)

Grace Kelly looks, the Louis Vuitton bags, steps off the private plane in her linen suits, never a wrinkle. We'd call her Donald's immaculate conception, and he didn't mind that we did. 'Cause with him, it's all about appearance. So the day I became a poor reflection on him... he stuck a knife in my back. Secret late-night partners meeting... all of a sudden, I'm gone. As I was escorted out, I promised him I'd fuck him up good.

*

LUCY

Did you?

BILLY

No.

(then, with a wink)

Fucked his wife, instead.

*

*

LUCY

Serious?

BILLY

That's another difference between us. Donald's the kind of guy them kind of women want to marry. Me? Well...

He smiles.

LUCY

You slept with his wife?

BILLY

I'm not a perfect person.

LUCY

Oh my god. They're never going to let you win here. Or give you anything.

This could be true. He takes another sip.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Are you ready for this?

BILLY

I sure as shit hope so.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. SANTA MONICA - NIGHT 50

All is still. Middle of the night. THE CAMERA CRAWLS ALONG THE SHORE... the streets are dead quiet... WE CONTINUE TO PAN, THEN CLOSE ON THE OCEAN LODGE MOTEL.

51 INT. MOTEL, ADJOINING ROOM - LATER 51

Billy lies on his back, in bed; WE HEAR THE GENTLE WHIRRING OF THE CPAP as WE CLOSE ON HIM; CPAP MASK ON HIS FACE. His eyes are open. Sleep is not coming easily tonight. He lies there, breathing the air into his abdomen, trying to calm himself.

52 INT. BATHROOM - MORNING 52

STEAM. A FEW SUITS ARE HANGING ON A HOOK... Billy's way of steaming out the wrinkles.

53 INT. SHOWER - CONTINUOUS 53

BILLY STANDS; THE SHOWER POURS OVER HIS HEAD. EYES CLOSED. Perhaps a ritual, who knows.

TIME CUT TO:

54 INT. MOTEL, ADJOINING ROOM - LATER 54

Billy, standing before the mirror, tightening his tie. JUMP CUT TO: Fastening his cuff-links. When in court, always cuff-links. JUMP CUT TO: Standing in front of the mirror, pressing ice-packs to his eyes. He then massages his face, trying to shed some of the puffiness. He even gives his face a coupla slaps, get the blood flowing. Brittany enters.

BRITTANY

Hey.

(then)

Handsome. Wow.

(sees his nerves)

What can I do?

BILLY

I'm good. Trial bag?

BRITTANY

All packed.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

BILLY

Okay. Okay.

(then)

Listen, I really 'preciate you
jumping in in a pinch like this.

She clocks his nervousness.

BRITTANY

Just go in there... relax... be
you.

She tightens his tie.

BRITTANY (CONT'D)

So handsome.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. L.A. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - MORNING

55

WE FIND BILLY'S MERCEDES AS HE NEGOTIATES HIS WAY INTO
A CHEAP PARKING LOT NEARBY. He hates underground
parking; another one of his superstitions/rituals.

CUT TO:

56 INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

56

BILLY PULLS INTO A SPOT AND PARKS. Reaches into his
trial bag, pulls out a little shooter of scotch. DOWNS
IT. Pulls out a little shooter of Listerine. GARGLES,
DEBOARDS... SPITS. Good to go.

CUT TO:

57 INT. COURT LOBBY - DAY

57

Billy enters the building, proceeds through Security.
He can feel his chest tighten with each step. He moves
through Security, stops, takes measure of the place.
Been awhile since he was here. He sucks in a breath,
heads for the elevator.

58 INT. COURT, SIXTH FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY

58

Billy steps off the elevator. Immediately spies Rachel,
seated, waiting. Lucy is sitting next to her. Billy
approaches; they rise.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

RACHEL

Hey.

BILLY

Hey. You okay?

RACHEL

Nervous. You?

BILLY

A little.
(to Lucy)
Moral support?

LUCY

Yep.

But her look says otherwise. She won't hesitate to jump in if he falls on his face.

BILLY

(to Rachel)

We got about twenty-minutes or so before they call us in. It don't figure to be a long hearing, but--

He freezes.

HIS POV

The far end of the corridor; Cooper and his Team coming towards them.

RESUME

BILLY (CONT'D)

(softly)

You gotta be kidding me.

As they approach--

BILLY (CONT'D)

(to Cooper)

Seriously?

COOPER

(to Billy)

Good to see you again, Billy. Lucy, what a surprise.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (2)

58

BILLY

(re: the entourage)

What's this, some kind of shock-and-awe shitshow?

COOPER

You don't recognize what this is, Billy? The is the ending. *

Billy stares back. Cooper's face breaks into a cocky smile.

COOPER (CONT'D)

It appears you've catastrophically mis-stepped, my friend.

Billy stares, ushers Cooper aside. The following is sotto.

BILLY

Okay. Recognizing both our friendship and that maybe I've overstepped, I'm gonna let you walk away from this for seven hundred grand.

(off Cooper)

That would be a five-hundred-thousand-dollar savings, Donald, given the half-million surcharge I typically add on for assholes. Seven hundred grand, you get to walk away a hero.

COOPER

What shall we call this, gallows humor?

BILLY

Call it whatever the fuck you like, but--

COOPER

You actually expect us to pay out on some ridiculous bullshit lawsuit that--

BILLY

That's exactly what I expect, because just the filing of this bullshit lawsuit gives you all kinds of problems.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (3)

58

BILLY (CONT'D)

For starters, Rand will have to file an SEC report about the pending litigation, that could impact stock prices, add to that, it could fuck up whatever buy-outs or acquisitions they got going.

COOPER

Something tells me this will get dismissed long before any SEC reporting deadline--

BILLY

What about EU reports for foreign exchanges, or how 'bout the EU version of OSHA, since the allegation is that a worker died on the job--

As Cooper puts a hand on Billy's shoulder--

COOPER

(condescending)

Billy, Billy--

BILLY

Get your fucking hand off me.

COOPER

If your career wasn't dead before, it most certainly--

BILLY

(intense)

Let's stick to what's dead in this case, it's a man, who was involved in DOD, weapons research, Donnie. The Pentagon's Inspector General for Research and Procurement has to be notified, you think about that? You tell your client they're looking at endless paperwork and bureaucratic bullshit that'll cost them millions of thousands of dollars in billable hours, or don't you care since it's you who stands to profit from it all.

As Cooper turns away, Billy grabs him.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What's gonna happen once Wall Street gets wind of this?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (4)

58

BILLY (CONT'D)

A quarter cent decline in stock,
that's a billion dollar-plus loss
for Rand.

COOPER

Rand stands well protected here,
you forget I hold the ultimate trump
card.

BILLY

Which is what?

COOPER

Which is you, my friend. Best of
luck.

And Cooper heads off.

CUT TO:

59 INT. COURT, MENS' ROOM - MINUTES LATER

59

Billy enters... the anxiety is building. He goes to
the sink, RUNS HIS HANDS UNDER COLD WATER. Wipes his
face. Looks at himself.

BILLY

Like riding a bike, that's all.
Riding a bike.

(INTO THE MIRROR)

"Morning, Your Honor."

(again)

"Good morning, Your Honor."

CLERK CAVE (O.S.)

All rise.

CUT TO:

60 INT. JUDGE WILLIAM KELLER'S COURTROOM - DAY

60

ALL PARTIES PRESENT. CHAMBERS DOOR opens and out steps
JUDGE WILLIAM D. KELLER, thirty-eight, thick Chief
Justice John Robert's low-key style but steely resolve --
a velvet hammer.

CLERK CAVE

The Honorable William Keller
presiding.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

BILLY
(to himself)
Jesus Christ. He's a kid.

As Julie enters and takes a seat in the rear, exchanges eye-contact with Lucy.

JUDGE KELLER
Morning, Counsel. I see this matter was calendared for an initial hearing on defendant's motion to dismiss and the setting of discovery dates, but I understand there's a problem with the plaintiff's original filing.

COOPER
Good morning, Your Honor. Donald Cooper appearing for the Respondent, Plaintiff's complaint is defective on several grounds, the first and perhaps most-embarrassing is the glaring lack of standing.

BILLY
Billy McBride for the Plaintiff,
Judge--

COOPER
(flicking that away)
I might direct my learned brother's attention to the California Rules of Civil Procedure, which expressly provide--

BILLY
(moving up)
Before we get to the chapter on standing, you'll first come across a section on notice which requires a seven-day heads-up before scheduling any hearing, making this ex-parte stunt--

COOPER
Certainly Mr. McBride can appreciate when a company's good name has been defamed as it so has been here, the urgency to set the record straight becomes paramount,
(then)
though I do realize some people become comfortable over time with stained reputations.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (2)

60

Billy now glares at Cooper.

JUDGE KELLER

(concealed delight)

Well. It seems the baggage has arrived.

COOPER

The named Plaintiff in this matter is neither a surviving spouse nor surviving child, as required--

BILLY

Wrongful death can be asserted by any person dependent on the decedent economically or emotionally.

COOPER

The California Supreme Court has expressly held remote interests cannot bring wrongful death cases.

BILLY

It's a discretionary call,--

COOPER

One which should hardly fall to you.

JUDGE KELLER

Sounds like a good time for me to jump in.

(to Billy)

I realize, Mr. McBride, that many judges extend latitude on standing, but there's a reason we have certain technical rules in play.

BILLY

Understood, Your Honor, and all those rules have in common an underlying legislative intent to serve justice. Denying a grieving sister her day in court, squashing her effort to determine how her brother died, that hardly coincides--

COOPER

He died by his own hand, that has long been--

BILLY

I'm sorry, are you the tryer of fact here, 'cause if so--

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (3)

60

COOPER

This matter has been investigated
by OSHA,--

BILLY

Which based its findings on
interviews conducted with agents of
the Defendant,--

COOPER

May I be allowed to finish?

BILLY

May we be allowed to start? 'Cause
that's what you're in here trying
to shut down, a "start," you may
not be concerned as to how Ryan La
Croix died, I'm sure you don't even
care, but here's a flash.

(points to Rachel)

She does.

JUDGE KELLER

Your point's well-taken, Mr. McBride.
But I'm granting Defendant's motion,
this case is dismissed.

A stunned beat.

BILLY

Wait. What?

JUDGE KELLER

Your complaint is defective. Not
only on standing, but under the
Federal High Seas Act.

BILLY

(what?)

I beg your pardon.

JUDGE KELLER

When a person perishes on a water-
craft, the exclusive remedy would
be in Federal Court.

(a little too self-
satisfied)

Seems I have no jurisdiction.

BILLY

I would direct Your Honor's attention
to the California Wrongful Death
Statute which expressly applies to--

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (4)

60

JUDGE KELLER

(bristling)

You're presuming to tell me the law now?

BILLY

I'm presuming to argue it, that's sort of the point of these proceedings, even the ones that turn out to be a mockery.

That gets a glare.

JUDGE KELLER

I would hope Counsel doesn't mean to insult the integrity of this Court.

BILLY

Well, Your Honor has the right to hope.

(off the Judge)

One of the first things they teach you in Judge-school is "don't fall for the High Seas Act, it's a piece of legal hooey." There's case law that says so, and among the criticism, nobody knows what 'High Seas' even means. Bays versus inlets, rivers, big lakes, it's not even clear how far out you need to paddle before the sea is defined as high.

JUDGE KELLER

I've made my ruling.

BILLY

And it's a bad one. If you mean to toss this woman's case on standing, or "high seas,"--

JUDGE KELLER

(pointed)

Sometimes the baby goes out with the bath water, Mr. McBride.

(then)

You're familiar with bath water, aren't you, sir? The stuff that circles down the drain, we call it sewage.

A beat. Billy stares.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (5)

60

JUDGE KELLER (CONT'D)

The thing about discretionary calls:
I must take into account a variety
of factors. The Rules of Civil
Procedure. Certainly the merits.
The credibility underlying the
parties' positions, which
necessitates me weighing the fitness
of the litigants themselves. Mr.
Cooper stands before me beyond
reproach; an esteemed member of the
Bar. You, on the other hand, have
twice been suspended from practice.
There's been more than a few
malpractice claims lodged against
you. I have grave concerns here,
sir. The benign guess is that you're
using this lawsuit to circumvent a
restraining order which purports to
keep you away from your old firm, a
place you previously tried to steal
files from.

BILLY

I never--

JUDGE KELLER

(abrupt)

I'm talking now, sir.

(then)

The more malignant conclusion might
be that you're saddling this woman
up, exploiting her grief to extract
nuisance change from a deep-pocket
Defendant, if I offend you, Mr.
McBride, consider it in kind, because
your recent track record both offends
and shocks the integrity of this
court, as well as the California
Bar at large.

Billy stands there, poleaxed. The personal attack...
it's an ambush.

BILLY

What is this?

ANGLE JULIE

It pains her to see him humiliated like this.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (6)

60

RESUME

JUDGE KELLER

(to Billy)

Do you know what I find especially sad? It was twenty-two years ago, I walked into a courtroom not very far from where I now sit... I was sixteen years old, and I watched you in action. It was something to behold. And I said to myself right then: "I'm going to be a lawyer. I'm going to grow up and be him."

(a beat)

What a tragedy to see what you've become. Among other things, a drunk.

BILLY

It's not me that appears to be in the bag this morning, Judge.

JUDGE KELLER

What did you just say?

BILLY

I believe you heard me.

A beat.

JUDGE KELLER

The case is dismissed. I am fining Mr. McBride twenty-five thousand dollars for contempt of court.

BILLY

Excuse me?

JUDGE KELLER

I do not excuse you. Calling my courtroom a mockery, that's contempt. Suggesting I've been bought, that's contempt. I further find this prosecution to be frivolous, motivated more by your ill will toward a former law partner -- I am ordering the plaintiff to pay full defense costs for both this proceeding and the preparation time connected thereto.

(to Rachel)

Ms. Kennedy, I won't dismiss with prejudice, you're free to try again.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (7)

60

JUDGE KELLER (CONT'D)
Should you do so, I strongly urge
you to retain another lawyer. We're
adjourned.

Billy stands there, poleaxed.

COOPER
(sotto; to Billy)
Not quite how you drew it up?

And then Cooper heads to his table. Judge Keller
collects his papers, rises; starts off. Suddenly--

BILLY
I'd like to be heard, Judge.

The Judge stops in his tracks. Stares.

JUDGE KELLER
We're adjourned, Counsel. We're
done.

BILLY
I'm afraid we're not done. And I
should like to be heard.

Confusion. Judge Keller looks to Cooper.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Why the fuck are you looking at
him?

ANGLE JULIE

As she drops her head into her hands. "Uh oh."

RESUME

JUDGE KELLER
(to Billy)
I do not tolerate profanity in my
courtroom, sir. That will cost you
another twenty-five thousand dollars.

BILLY
Yeah, we can take all that up at my
hearing, Judge.

Judge Keller stares back, confused.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (8)

60

BILLY (CONT'D)

Certainly Your Honor knows -- like any good Judge would -- that by holding me in contempt, you entitle me to a contempt hearing. Where I'm allowed to introduce evidence, included but not limited to certain activities of the Defendant, possible misdeeds of Defense Counsel and, best of all, evidence of judicial bias.

Judge Keller just glares.

BILLY (CONT'D)

That's right, Judge, I said 'bias.' You want to tack on another twenty-five thousand?

The Courtroom is frozen.

JUDGE KELLER

You've mis-stepped, Counsel.

BILLY

Gee, that's the second time I've been told that today.

(re: Cooper)

He told me I mis-stepped, now you're telling me. You guys sure think alike. Two peas in a pod, I guess.

ANGLE LUCY

concealing a smile.

RESUME

BILLY (CONT'D)

Phone records, e-mails, credit card receipts -- a lot of shit becomes admissible in contempt hearings. I happen to know for a fact my learned brother likes to wine and dine members of the Bench, sometimes the subject of future employment gets dangled, sometimes not. Who knows? Today the first time you two have met?

(a beat)

Schedule my hearing, Judge. Anytime is good for me. When's good for you?

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (9)

60

ANGLE JULIE

She's also fighting a smile.

RESUME

JUDGE KELLER

My Clerk will propose a few dates
and notify the parties.

Judge Keller shoots another look to Cooper and departs.
Billy heads back, goes to Cooper.

BILLY

(sotto)

Not quite how you drew it up?

And as Billy goes to Rachel, THE CAMERA CLOSES ON COOPER.
Now he's powder-kegging. This was supposed to be over.
And it's not. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK AS COOPER SLOWLY
TURNS TO LOOK AT BILLY. BILLY'S STARING RIGHT BACK.
"It's fucking war, now." "It's war."

BILLY (CONT'D)

Be seeing you.
(adding)
Donnie.

*
*
*
*

CUT TO:

61 EXT. COURTHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

61

Billy and Rachel, on the move. As they head to the
curb, to the pedestrian crossing--

RACHEL

I don't understand what happened.
Did we just lose, did something
good happen? I'm confused.

BILLY

We didn't lose, and it could be very
good. Unless the Judge comes to
his senses and rescinds the contempt
finding.

AS THE LIGHT CHANGES; THEY BEGIN TO CROSS.

BILLY (CONT'D)

In which case we lose our hearing.
But either way, I'm feeling we got
enough to recuse his biased ass.

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

BILLY (CONT'D)

All in all--

SUDDENLY, A BLARING HORN -- A SKIDDING SCREECHING SOUND: BOOM! RACHEL IS STRUCK BY AN OUT-OF-CONTROL MINIVAN; IT SENDS HER AIRBORNE INTO A CLUSTER OF BYSTANDING MESSENGERS, STANDING WITH THEIR BICYCLES. CHAOS, PANIC, SCREAMING.. IT HAPPENED IN A NANO-SECOND. Billy's in shock for a beat, 'what the fuck happened?' WE HEAR BYSTANDERS REACTING, SOME CALLING NINE-ONE-ONE.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Rachel?

Looking around. She's vanished.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Rachel?!?!?

AND THEN HE SEES THE CROWD OF ONLOOKERS. HE RUSHES OVER.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Rachel?!

HE PUSHES HIS WAY THROUGH. MUTED SOUNDS OF HORROR, DESPAIR, PANIC. AND THEN HE SEES IT.

HIS POV

HER HEAD IS ROTATED THREE-SIXTY, A LEG IS CONTORTED. SHE'S DEAD DEAD. IN AN INSTANT. NOT A SPEC OF LIFE IN HER. SHE LAYS THERE, EYES FIXED OPEN, HER BODY MANGLED. IT'S GROTESQUE.

AS THE CAMERA CLOSES ON BILLY... HIS SHOCK, HIS HORROR. HIS FACE CONTORTS WITH DISBELIEF. NUMB, HE STARTS TO BACKPEDAL AS WE HEAR THE ONCOMING SIRENS. It's over. She's dead. Was this intentional, was it an accident? He cannot process anything other than she's gone. Suddenly, he cannot feel his legs. He lowers himself slowly to the sidewalk. Sits. OFF HIM, DAZED, THE CAMERA PULLS UP: AN AERIAL VIEW. BILLY SITS THERE... MADNESS, CRISES SWIRLING ALL AROUND HIM. OFF THIS, we finally, mercifully,

FADE OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED