COLD OPEN

EXT. MARKET, ALTAMARA CITY, ALTAMARA - DAY

ERIC QUILL (20s, American, clean cut) moves through a crowded Central American market. A title wipes across the screen: “Altamara City - Central America.”

He spots an INFORMANT. They make a BRUSH DROP (exchanging their bags as they pass) and continue on.

EXT. OCEANA IMPORT/EXPORT - TEN MINUTES LATER

Eric walks up the steps to the run-down offices of Oceana Import-Export, located in an old Colonial building.

INT. OCEANA IMPORT/EXPORT OFFICES - SAME TIME

Ceiling fans rattle as Eric urgently enters the dingy office. SHERMAN (50s, permanently sweaty and put upon) looks up from his old PC.

SHERMAN
You’re sure amped up. Did you get hot sauce on your balls again?

ERIC
(holds up bag)
Primo intelligence. I’m finally hitting my stride. What’s going on here?

SHERMAN
High drama. A cow climbed up the stairs onto the roof.

Eric walks to a door, slides his ID card through a hidden electronic reader and pulls it open. He motions inside.

ERIC
Don’t worry. There’ll be an opening in here soon.

SHERMAN
No, no. I don’t belong in the plantation house. I’m happy here in the fields, singing my spirituals.

Eric enters the closet as we hear Sherman’s voice trail off.

SHERMAN (CONT’D)
Swing low...sweet chariot...
INT. THE STATION - SAME TIME

Eric enters a sleek command center built into an old hotel (The Station). Above the RECEPTIONIST hangs a seal that reads: CIA, ALTAMARA STATION: 50 Years of Spreading Freedom.

He moves down a hallway as MIA (20s, pretty, no-bullshit), comes the other way. He smiles and raises the bag.

ERIC
Last week the rebel leadership had a secret meeting. They made a video...and I got it.

He pulls out a VHS tape out of the bag. He’s annoyed.

ERIC (CONT’D)
Who still uses VHS? Do we even have a player?

MIA
In the small conference room.

A group gathered around a cubicle bursts into LAUGHTER.

MIA (CONT’D)
(off Eric’s reaction)
Larry’s showing clips from his “best of surveillance” compilation.
(glances over)
Oh, “kitten in the bordello” -- I love this one. So cute.

She rushes to the cubicle as Eric walks down to the empty conference room. As he’s about to enter a voice calls out.

STAN (O.S.)
Where do you think you’re going?

STAN (nerdy, intense) rises from his desk and rushes over.

STAN (CONT’D)
Does anyone read my memos?! All conference rooms must be signed out with me. Otherwise, we have chaos.

Stan pulls the door closed and locks it.

ERIC
But no one’s in there --

STAN
Ted reserved it from 1 ‘til 2:30.
Eric looks over to an office marked “Ted Gannon, Head of Station”. Through the glass TED (60s, gruff) leans back, phone at his ear, blowing a ping-pong ball above his mouth.

ERIC  
Can’t we assume he’ll be busy for --

STAN  
In espionage one doesn’t assume. Effective station procedures are the foundation on which America’s intelligence successes are built.

Stan settles back into his desk.

STAN (CONT’D)  
But I won’t take your shoddiness personally since you’re the “new guy.” You don’t know any better.  
(smiles condescendingly)  
I mean one doesn’t blame the infant for the soiled diapers.

He turns back to his work.

MIA (O.S.)  
Who’s making copies of their memoirs on the company Xerox!?

Stan races to investigate. Eric hears Mia WHISTLE from the conference room. She’s picked the lock and motions him over.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FIVE MINUTES LATER

We see grainy video of REBELS in fatigues, ammo belts and Castro beards playing the plastic instruments of “Rock Band.”

REBELS  
(heavy Hispanic accents)  
Anyway you want it! That’s the way you need it! Anyway you want it!

Eric watches stone faced, while Mia bounces with the music.

ERIC  
I paid eight hundred dollars out of pocket for this.

Suddenly Stan bursts in with fury in his eyes.

ERIC (CONT’D)  
I’m sorry, Stan! It was potentially actionable intel - I couldn’t wait. Top priority.
Stan glances to the TV as the rebels enter the guitar solo portion of the song. He turns and stares daggers at Eric.

INT. OCEANA IMPORT/EXPORT OFFICES - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Eric, now deflated, emerges into the run-down Oceana offices.

SHERMAN
You look like crap. I feel better.

ERIC
This is a dead-end post, isn’t it?

Sherman doesn’t answer, just starts singing.

SHERMAN
*Swing low...sweet chariot.*

Eric steps up to the window and stares out wistfully.

ERIC
A buddy from my training class got placed in the Kabul station. Real enemies, no budget oversight, tea every afternoon and free kabobs on Fridays. Plus it’s on the career fast track. And me? I’m stuck --

Suddenly, GUN SHOTS ring out. Eric’s eyes widen with adrenaline as he draws his .45 from his shoulder holster.

ERIC (CONT’D)
Rebel attack!

Then, an agonized “MOO” fills the air. A beat later, a huge COW plummets past the outside window. It lands with a CRASH on the street below. Nonplussed, Sherman looks up at Eric.

SHERMAN
They can’t walk down stairs. What else can you do?

A disappointed Eric re-holsters his gun. He looks out the window to see that the cow has landed on the back of a black hearse, its four hooves pointed straight up at the sky.

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES.

END COLD OPEN
ACT ONE

EXT. OCEANA IMPORT/EXPORT OFFICES - DAY

We push in on the offices of OCEANA Import/Export.

TED (O.S.)
People, our days as the red-headed step child of the Agency are over. Langley has finally taken an interest in the great nation of Altamara and an extraordinary mission lays ahead of us.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

Ted addresses the station (Mia, Larry, Stan, and others).

TED
We’ve been commanded to give this country the President it needs. (beat, smiles)
For most of you, this will be your first election op. Trust me, they’re a helluva lot of fun. We did a ton of these babies back in the 70s.
(laughs at a memory)
I remember one time we ended up on a cigarette boat, off Tierra del Fuego, with a dead Argentine opposition leader. And Kenny Wheaton...you guys ever work with Kenny? He’s a real hell-raiser. Anyways, he takes a can of kerosene and a fishing net and --

Ted notices the room is watching him blank faced.

TED (CONT’D)
Ask me about it over drinks. (motions to the back)
Start it up.

A title fades up on a projection screen: OPERATION: FANTASTIC. Antonio pipes in.

ANTONIO
Operation Fantastic? Are we putting on a musical?

TED
Langley likes op names to reflect positivity and optimism.
MIA
So I guess “Operation: Rig the Election” is out.

Stan raises his hand.

STAN
We’re rigging the election? I thought the agency didn’t do stuff like that anymore. I don’t know that I’m comfortable with --

Suddenly, Ted launches at Stan and yanks him from the chair.

TED
Man up, Stan! Man up!

Ted swings his hand down and grabs Stan’s balls.

STAN
Please don’t.

TED
These are marshmallows. You hear me? Marshmallows!

He releases Stan then turns to the group.

TED (CONT’D)
Let me be clear: Operation Fantastic demands iron balls.
   (beat)
   We’re going “old fashioned” on this one. That might mean buying a few people’s votes or it might mean yanking out a dissenter’s tongue just to set an example. So if that’s...
   (quotes with fingers)
   “outside your comfort zone” or “not where you’re at” get the hell out.

His glare scans the room. Three people start to get up.

TED (CONT’D)
Sit down!

Everyone sinks back in their seats.

TED (CONT’D)
Good. We’re all in this together.

He then notices an empty seat near the back.
TED (CONT'D)
Where the hell is Eric?

We push in on Stan, with a slight smirk.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. THE STATION - DAY EARLIER

Stan hums Vader’s Theme from Star Wars while clicking through an email account that reads “Eric Quill <EricQ@cia.gov>”. We see that he’s deleting unread emails: “From: Ted, Subject: MANDATORY MEETING”, “From: Mom, Subject: I’m in Remission!!”

BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

STAN
Guess he just blew it off.
(shakes his head)
Some people.

EXT. LA VOZ DEL PUEBLO BUILDING - DAY

We push in on the “La Voz” building, with a mural of a reporter typing as flames emanate from the typewriter instead of paper. The flames chase a Fat Cat (top hat, cigar) and Uncle Sam running away hand in hand. We hear the out of breath voice of VERONICA (20s, Altamara local, earnest).

VERONICA (O.S.)
U.S. companies dump phenol, cyanide ...ammonia in the Delgado River.

INT. VERONICA’S OFFICE, LA VOZ BUILDING - SAME TIME

Veronica, clothed but with skirt pushed up, rides Eric on top of her desk. His seersucker pants sit around his ankles. Various anti-American posters and murals fill the office.

VERONICA
We’re...demanding...they...clean up...their waste.

Her voice gets more emphatic as she reaches climax.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
It...is...a...moral...imperative!

She collapses on top him. He affectionately strokes her hair.

ERIC
God, I love when you’re indignant.
VERONICA
(out of breath)
How can anyone not be? I’m working on an article right now about how the CIA --

ERIC
The CIA? In this country? No.

VERONICA
(with fire in her eyes)
Yes. Stop being so naive, Eric. So typically American -- in your little office bubble eating tuna sandwiches and overseeing coffee and pottery exports while the puppet masters pull the strings and laugh at our ignorance.

ERIC
How do you know about the tuna?
(beat)
My breath, right? God, no matter how much you brush or floss, tuna just won’t --

His cell phone RINGS. He glances at the number, rolls his eyes, and answers it.

ERIC (CONT’D)
I can’t talk right -- What?... When?...Now? Why the hell didn’t I ever hear about this?!

He hangs up and moves to get off the desk.

ERIC (CONT’D)
I have to go. Meeting.

Eric watches as Veronica slips on her panty hose.

ERIC (CONT’D)
God, I’m so in love with you it makes me nauseous.

VERONICA
I’m not in love with you.

ERIC
Then why do you have sex with me?! I’m not even that good looking.
VERONICA
I don’t know! It’s like when you have a painful sore in your mouth but you can’t stop playing with it.

ERIC
That’s heart warming.

She stands and slips on her heels.

VERONICA
Do you want to come to lunch with my father tomorrow? I need you to pretend to be my fiance.

ERIC
I think by any objective standard, this counts as mixed signals.

VERONICA
Since I’m twenty five all he talks about is when I’m gonna get married. This should shut him up.

ERIC
(excited)
Hold on, this is textbook. You’ve never discussed your family before.
(off her confusion)
Don't you see, you're frightened of commitment and this "fake fiance" thing is a way for you to be close to me without exposing yourself emotionally. It’s classic fear of intimacy behavior. We’ll work through it.

He hugs her, she softens and nuzzles into his shoulder.

VERONICA
Maybe you’re right.
(beat)
Though you’re the third fake fiancé I tried to recruit. The other two had to spend the day with their wives.

His phone RINGS again. He snaps it up angrily.

ERIC
I’m coming!

He slams it down.
INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, THE STATION

Images splash across the conference room screen. In the back, Eric sneaks into the empty seat next to MIA.

ERIC
What did I miss?

MIA
We’re rigging an election.

ERIC
Cool.

An image of EL PRESIDENTE (70s, robust) pops on the screen.

TED
We all know El Presidente Garcia Montero, the venerated leader of Altamara. A force of stability and progress.

(beat)
Sadly, he’s decided to retire.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE, PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - LAST WEEK

President Montero lays on a massage table. A tall Swedish woman works on his back as an AIDE holds documents to sign. The door opens. Ted enters, followed by Larry carrying a briefcase. They walk up to the President.

TED
We think you should go to Saint Tropez...forever.

Larry opens the briefcase, revealing stacks of cash. The President takes a moment then gives an “okay” shrug and nod.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

TED
With the field open, there are two main contenders for the presidency.

The image of BENNY GONZALEZ (50s, squat) comes up on screen.
TED (CONT’D)
The first: Benny Gonzalez -- labor leader, author and famed anti-American. We respectfully tried to dissuade him from running.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY
Ted and Larry on a couch across from Benny.

TED
Run for President and we kill you.

BENNY
(laughs)
Go ahead and try. It’ll give me something to talk about at Castro’s eighty third birthday.

Benny cheerfully treats himself to a danish on the table. Larry shakes his head and mumbles under his breath.

LARRY
Fuckin’ smart ass.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

TED
Luckily, the other contender is Francisco Villalobos...

An image pops of FRANCISCO VILLALOBOS (40s, smooth, sophisticated) with TIM MCGRAW in front of an American flag.

TED (CONT’D)
Media mogul, coffee exporter, philanthropist, adventurer --

ERIC
And cocaine middleman.

TED
I’m disappointed in you. A prosperous Latino businessman so, of course, he must be a coke smuggler. That’s pathetic.

ERIC
I have photos from our “arms for coke” meeting with him in my --
As Eric moves to get up Ted stops him with a withering look.

TED
Bigotry aside, people love the man.
And so does the Agency.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRANCISCO’S ESTATE - DAY
Ted and Larry address Francisco, bundled up in a big parka, on the back of a dogsled. Huskies paw at the snow.

TED
You should run for President.

FRANCISCO
No time. I’m training for the Iditarod.

Larry flips open another briefcase full of money.

FRANCISCO (CONT’D)
I’m already rich.
(to dogs)
Mush!

Francisco takes off, as we see that servants have arranged a snow path and snow blowing machine on the tropical estate.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

TED
Despite his uncertainty, our mission is clear: make Villalobos the next president of Altamara. He’ll come around. So be proactive, take initiative.

LARRY
I’m glad you say that.

Larry pulls a paper out of his briefcase.

LARRY (CONT’D)
In my spare time I’ve worked out a hidden surveillance plan for St. Mary’s Woman’s College. And I’d like to put it into action.
MIA
(dubious)
Dorms...locker rooms...

LARRY
Wherever subversives might lurk.

MIA
What's shocking is how bad you are at hiding what a pervert you are.

TED
No dice, Lar. But I love the effort.
(to the group)
Now, everyone get the hell out there and make this country's veneer of democracy work for us.

INT. HALLWAY, STATION

Mia and Eric walk down the hallway in mid-conversation.

MIA
Why pretend you have a choice? You're gonna end up going to the lunch. You're a prisoner to her.

ERIC
I know. It's the mixed signals that really drive me crazy.

MIA
I thought things were getting better. Didn't she give you keys to her place last month?

ERIC
Yeah.
(beat)
And then changed the locks. I mean she had a good reason. I forget why, but it made sense at the time.

TED (O.S.)
Quill! In my office.

Eric turns and sees Ted leaning out his office. Mia continues on as Eric heads to Ted. He passes Stan.

STAN
Hey, New Guy. Did you put on weight?
ERIC
Since yesterday?

Stan shrugs. After a beat, Eric turns with realization.

ERIC (CONT’D)
Are you trying to psych me out before I meet Ted?

STAN
(caught)
No. I just don’t want you to have a stroke or get diabetes. Jeez, sue me for caring.

INT. TED’S OFFICE – FIVE MINUTES LATER

Eric sits across the desk from Ted. His office filled with the detritus of forty years in the CIA. Ted leans back in his chair expansively.

TED
The first day you walked in here I was struck by how much you reminded me of myself. Smart...ambitious... with a rakish disregard for authority. It formed a soft spot in my heart. I want you to thrive in my station.

He sits forward and claps with enthusiasm.

TED (CONT’D)
Now, I know you didn’t mean those racist things you said before about Francisco being --

ERIC
A cocaine smuggler? Actually, I have proof that --

TED
Apology accepted. I have a very important job for you. There’s a “contractor” who’s come down from Langley. And I want you to be his go-to man.

ERIC
Contractor? You mean “assassin”?

TED
No, I mean “contractor.” I’m building the station a rec room. (MORE)
TED (CONT'D)
(beat, laughs)
Of course, I mean assassin.

ERIC
(beat, nervous)
I don’t know how I feel about using assassins to get a cocaine smuggler elected President. It’s a little --

TED
Sordid?

Eric takes a beat then nods.

TED (CONT'D)
Of course it is. Isn’t that why we joined the agency?

ERIC
That’s not exactly why I --

TED
Come on, Eric. You know the whole “means justify the ends --”

ERIC
I think the saying actually is “the ends justify the me --”

TED
(smiles)
Exactly. We’re saying the same thing. The bottom line is: what we do is justified.

Ted settles back into seat.

TED (CONT'D)
I’ve been in this game a long time. And I’ve had guys come through here who’ve gone to stations around the world -- Manila, Bratislava, Kabul --

ERIC
(pause)
Kabul, really?

TED
Yes. And everything you’ve heard is true. I can make that happen, if you’re on my team. So...

Eric takes a breath and then...nods. Ted smiles and opens a safe hidden in his bookshelf. He removes an envelope.
TED (CONT’D)
This is the assignment. He’ll be here tomorrow at five. I should warn you: assassins are an odd bunch. Worked with one in Marrakesh who wore a three piece suit made entirely of human hair. (beat)
Actually, it was quite elegant. All fine Scandinavian blonde --

ERIC
I’m sure I’ll be fine.

TED
You’re now like a son to me, Eric. (beat)
Just don’t screw up, or I’ll treat you like my father treated me.

EXT. OCEANA TRADING OFFICES/ THE STATION - MORNING

Establishing shot as sun rises over front offices.

INT. RECEPTION, THE STATION - NEXT DAY

Mia stands by the RECEPTIONIST (40s) reading out loud a flyer taped to the wall titled “Station-wide Contest!”

MIA
Whoever blackmails, bribes or in any other way gets Francisco Villalobos to run for President, wins a trip to the Agency’s Up and Comers Conference in Aspen. The fast track to advancement!

Below is a picture of Francisco with a plus sign and a big “You” followed by an equals sign and a picture of Aspen.

MIA (CONT’D)
Wow. Not bad.

She then notices HANK (late 30s, good looking but intense) sitting in the waiting area.

MIA (CONT’D)
Who’s the looker?

RECEPTIONIST
He’s here for Eric...and he’s insane.

After a beat, Hank leans over to the receptionist
HANK
Excuse me...excuse me again. Could you lower those electronic blips and beeps I keep hearing. They’re very distracting.

RECEPTIONIST
You mean...the office sounds?

Hank smiles and nods.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT’D)
Uh...I’ll do my best.

She glances at Mia and then pretends to turn down volume knobs on her desk.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT’D)
Is that better?

HANK
Yeah. Thanks.

INT. STATION - DAY.
Mia steps up to Eric’s cubicle.

MIA
There’s a head case waiting for you in reception.

ERIC
Oh my God, it’s the contractor from Langley. He’s already here? (beat) What’s he like?

They both peak over the cubicle just as Antonio steps up behind Hank with a box of Girl Scout cookies.

ANTONIO
It’s Girl Scout cookie time, are you interested in --

Without turning around, Hank does a swift arm movement which drops Antonio flat on his back. Eric and Mia’s eyes widen.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. RECEPTION, THE STATION

Eric and Mia walk down the hallway towards Hank waiting in reception.

ERIC
He wasn’t supposed to be here until five. I have that lunch with Veronica in an hour.

MIA
So that’s why you’re all spruced up.

(beat, re: Hank)
Good luck. I’m ready to notify your next of kin if necessary.

She gives him a slap on the back and heads off as Eric walks over to introduce himself to Hank.

ERIC
You must be Hank Schneider. I’m Eric Quill. Pleasure.

Eric notices Antonio still out cold surrounded by cookie boxes.

HANK
Tell him when he wakes I took two boxes of thin mints -- the money’s in his shirt pocket.

Hank rises and motions to a newspaper on the waiting table.

HANK (CONT’D)
By the way, the sudoku is already done in that newspaper -- very disappointing.

ERIC
Sorry. I did that.

Eric guides Hank into:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As they sit, Hank shakes his head in disapproval.

HANK
I guess you just drop the used paper there when you’re done, like scraps for your guests to pick at.
ERIC
I don’t know about that, I just --

HANK
You walk or commute to work?

ERIC
I walk.

HANK
So no train or car or bus ride?

ERIC
No.

HANK
Tell me honestly: did you do that sudoku on the toilet, then put it out for everyone to touch?

ERIC
(clearly lying)
No.

HANK
That’s disgusting.

They sit in tense silence. After a beat, Eric sits up.

ERIC
I’ve gotta ask: how the hell does someone end up doing what you do?

HANK
(sighs in annoyance)
Murder’s as old as the monkeys but I’m treated like the bearded lady.
(with mock fear)
“Oohh. His job’s so cold and creepy. What makes him tick?”
But, fine, I’ll bite: I was a go-nowhere spook. HQ asked me to kill someone. I did. My pulse didn’t rise, so they said “Want a new job.” I said “What’s it pay?” They said “More than you make now.” I said “Great. Sign me up.”
(beat, pointed)
How’s that Mr. Profiler? Satisfied?

ERIC
(beat)
Why don’t we just move on to the procedural stuff and call it a day?
HANK
I think that’d be best.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eric carries a bottle of wine and cradles his cellphone to his ear as he walks away from the Oceana building, down the street.

ERIC
(on phone)
I’ll pick you up in ten. Veronica, I know. Sorry, I’m late.

He reaches a Chevy Nova and unlocks the door.

INT. CHEVY NOVA - DAY

Eric hops in.

ERIC
(on phone)
I know. I got held up in a meeting with a guy who happens to be certifiably insane.

He settles in and adjusts mirror. Suddenly, Hank’s face pops up in the mirror and terrifies Eric.

ERIC (CONT’D)
Holy crap!

HANK
My hotel’s on the way. You mind?

EXT. STREET, ALTAMARA - LATER

Eric jumps out of the parked car, and pops open the trunk. He suddenly looks up and sees Veronica at a butcher’s stall.

ERIC
Veronica, what’re you doing --

VERONICA
Getting papa’s dogs some scraps. My office is only...

She grabs her butcher’s bag and walks over, then accidentally BUMPS into Hank emerging from the car.

VERONICA (CONT’D)
(dazed)
...a block away.
HANK
(smiles warmly)
Hi, I’m Hank.

Their eyes lock. Then something distracts him. He reaches over and gently lifts a ladybug off her shirt then shows her.

HANK (CONT’D)
A ladybug.

He opens his hand and blows the ladybug free. Veronica is clearly smitten. Eric notices and moves Hank along.

ERIC
Just dropping Mr. Schneider off at his hotel. Let’s get a move on --

VERONICA
(to Hank)
Do you have lunch plans?

ERIC
I’m sure he’s exhausted and --

HANK
No, I don’t.

INT. FRANCISCO’S HACIENDA - DAY
Veronica leads Hank into the living room as Eric follows.

FRANCISCO (O.S.)
Is that my baby?

FRANCISCO VILLALOBOS (50s, smooth, confident) emerges at the top of the staircase and descends.

ERIC
(whispers)
Your father’s Francisco Villalobos?

VERONICA
(whispers back)
I use my mother’s name. It’d kill me in revolutionary circles if they knew my father was rich. I’d be stuck picking up every check.

Francisco steps up and hugs Veronica, then turns to Hank.

FRANCISCO
Eric, I’ve heard so much about you. You’re finally making my little girl a proper woman.
He embraces Hank.

    ERIC
    Actually, I’m Eric.

Francisco turns to Eric, and squints with recognition.

    FRANCISCO
    Do I know you from somewhere?

    VERONICA
    Eric works at Oceana Import/Export.
    He probably ships your coffee.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DINGY ROOM - NIGHT

Francisco and four sleazy looking guys sit across a table from Ted, Larry, Antonio and Eric.

    TED
    So we’ll pay for your cocaine shipment...if you smuggle in our rocket launchers. Agreed?

Francisco stands with a smile and shakes Ted’s hand.

BACK TO:

INT. FRANCISCO’S HACIENDA

    FRANCISCO
    Of course, Oceana. Right.

    ERIC
    Coffee business. Yes.

    VERONICA
    And this is Hank Schneider.

    HANK
    You’ve a lovely home...and family.

He glances to Veronica, she blushes. Eric tensely smiles.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The four sit at a long dining table.

    ERIC
    We haven’t really set a date yet?
    I think spring is always nice.
    Honey, what do you think?
Veronica giggles at a private comment Hank made.

VERONICA
Whenever.
(beat, to Francisco)
Say, where’s grandma? I’ve missed her.

FRANCISCO
She’s upstairs resting.
(to Eric and Hank)
I’m so lucky to have my mother living here. The rock of my life.

VERONICA
She’s my inspiration.

HANK
My grandmother raised me.

Veronica reaches out a comforting hand.

ERIC
I love old people. I’ve given up many a seat...many a seat.

HANK
If you’ll pardon me, I have to use the restroom. Where is --

VERONICA
Oh, I’ll show you.

Veronica pops up and leads Hank out, before Eric can interject. The moment they’re gone, Francisco jumps up and gets in the chair directly across from Eric.

FRANCISCO
So...how are things at Oceana Imports? I believe your boss desperately wants me to do business with your company. Perhaps so much that he would take advantage of my daughter’s vulnerable nature.

ERIC
No. My feelings are genuine, unfortunately.
(beat, optimistic)
However, there is this contest, and it would be great for my career if you would consider running for --
Suddenly, the door opens and a small tank of a woman enters, ISABELLA (80s). Francisco’s face drops, then regroups.

FRANCISCO
(Spanish, pleasantly)
It’s Mama! I’m with company, but --

ISABELLA
(Spanish)
Tough shit. My room’s cold.

FRANCISCO
(Spanish, sweetly)
Then we’ll turn up the heat.
(yells)
Pablo!

A frightened man-servant enters, PABLO.

FRANCISCO (CONT’D)
(in English, furious)
You have one job: keep her away from me and you can’t even do that.

PABLO
She frightens me.

FRANCISCO
Fix her heat and keep her out!

PABLO
The heat is up to a hundred. Her parakeets have heat stroke.

FRANCISCO
Then burn something, induce a fever, inject chili peppers into her veins. But let her in here again and I’ll shoot you.
(in Spanish, to Isabella)
All fixed. I love you, Mommy.

He leans in and kisses her.

ISABELLA
(in Spanish)
You smell like onions and whores.

She and Pablo exit. Francisco collapses into the chair.

FRANCISCO
I really wish you hadn’t seen that.

A deflated Francisco pours himself a brandy.
FRANCISCO (CONT’D)
To Latinos the love for one’s mother is very special.

ERIC
I think that’s true for most cultures...most mammals, in fact.

FRANCISCO
Then I am not a mammal, because I hate her with every ounce of blood in my body. She scares me...I’m a coward.

(beat, desperate)
Please don’t tell anyone... especially Veronica. She worships that old witch. God knows how.

HANK (O.S.)
Veronica’s taking a quick shower. She didn’t hear anything.

Eric turns with surprise to see that Hank stands next to him. Something catches Eric’s eye.

ERIC
Your shirts’s on inside-out.

Hank shrugs, then turns to Francisco

HANK
You know...you could just rub the old lady out.

ERIC
(damage control)
Okay, it’s time for you to --

FRANCISCO
What the hell is he talking about?

HANK
I’m just saying --

ERIC
Let’s not cause alarm with extreme measures that might shock those in the room who don’t have psychopathic tendencies.

HANK
Grandma’s a problem...you get rid of the problem. Simple.
FRANCISCO
Are you honestly talking about killing my mother?!

ERIC
No!
(whispers to Hank)
What’s wrong with you?

FRANCISCO
If something happened to her, my life would be completely changed --

ERIC
I know. Nothing’s going to --

FRANCISCO
I’d feel compelled to do something that honors her memory. Maybe... public service. Elected office.

The room goes silent as the true meaning of Francisco’s comments sinks in.

ERIC
Are you saying if we get rid of --

HANK
He’s not saying anything. He’s... musing.
(to Francisco)
Isn’t that right?

Francisco nods. Hank takes Eric off to the side.

HANK (CONT’D)
You have to learn how these things are done. But you have your Presidential candidate if you want him.

Hank pulls Eric’s cellphone out and hits Ted’s number.

HANK (CONT’D)
Call Ted, give him the good news. Take the credit, make a name for yourself. I’m gonna end up with your girl, so it’s the least I can do.

He smiles and hands the phone to an unsure Eric.
ERIC
Ted, it’s Eric. I have some...uh...great news.

INT. CHEVY NOVA - DAY
Eric drives stiffly, while Hank and Veronica are snuggled up looking through the postcards in the back.

VERONICA
Grandma gave me a set of postcards she made of her parakeets. Isn’t that sweet? This one is her favorite...El Santo. She loves him so much.

HANK
She has a such a strong energy -- I could feel it the minute we met her.

VERONICA
I know she can’t live forever...but I hope when I have kids they get a chance to know her.

HANK
They will. I just know it.

VERONICA
(smiles)
You make me feel so safe.

Hank takes the card and leans forward to let Eric look.

HANK
Isn’t Santo beautiful, Eric?
(in low voice)
I’m thinking I’ll induce either a heart attack...or seizure. Any preference?

Eric swallows with guilt and shakes his head.

INT. BREAK ROOM, THE STATION - DAY
A disheveled Eric lays on a table while Mia tries to make a decision in front of the vending machines.

ERIC
It’s awful. Veronica -- Miss Peace and Poetry is shacked up with that psychopath right now. I saw them go into his hotel.
MIA
Women love the bad boys.

ERIC
He’s a contract killer!
(beat)
I need to get out of this place. I can’t handle this stress.

MIA
You know what’ll cheer you up? Funyuns.
She hands him a bag of funyuns.

ERIC
So you don’t think I should feel guilty about bumping off Veronica’s grandmother?

MIA
She hasn’t been very considerate of your feelings.
(beat)
But then I’m the wrong person to ask -- I’m a very vengeful dater.

INT. ISABELLA’S ROOM - DAY
Isabella feeds her parakeets, then opens the doors to her balcony. Suddenly, she faces a MASKED MAN holding a syringe. She SCREAMS and retreats as the masked man follows.

Inside Isabella’s expression changes to cold, ruthless confidence. She lets out a loud BIRD CALL. Suddenly, a frantic cloud of PARAKEETS descend and peck him. He staggers blindly back across the balcony toward the railing.

Francisco enters the room.

FRANCISCO
Oh my God, Mama is...

He sees Isabella turn from the balcony.

FRANCISCO (CONT’D)
(clearly disappointed)
Alive.

Below the balcony, Hank lays dead.

INT. ERIC’S OFFICE - LATER
Eric is on the phone.
ERIC
(Spanish with subtitles)
So?

Intercut with Isabella, in her room, whispering in the phone.

ISABELLA
(Spanish with subtitles)
He’s gone. Thank you.

Eric hangs up and let’s a sly smile.

INT. TED’S OFFICE – DAY

Eric sits across from a depressed Ted.

TED
Our wet boy, professional assassin,
best-in-Langley’s-human-arsenal,
just got killed by Francisco’s
eighty-two year old mother.

ERIC
No?!

TED
He didn’t even get to kill who he
came down here to kill.

Ted clicks mute off his T.V. Benny rides in the back of a
convertible through a crowd in downtown Altamara City.

NEWS ANNOUNCER
Anti-American Benny Gonzalez rides
in his convertible with only his
little Yorkie, Coco, as protection.

Ted shuts off the TV and throws the remote across the room.

ERIC
It was my job to watch out for Hank
and I let you down. So if you want
to transfer me out of this sta --

TED
Oh God, no. Setbacks are part of
the job. But you showed
initiative, drive and ruthlessness.
That can’t be taught.
(pause, smiles)
It’s such a comfort knowing that if
a dark, dirty, morally questionable
job comes up -- I’ve got my man. I
mean you were gonna kill a grandma.
(MORE)
TED (CONT'D)
That's outstanding.
(sighs contentedly)
Oh no. I'm not letting you go.

We push in on a figure of a bald eagle attacking a bear.

INT. STAN'S DESK - SAME TIME

Stan sits wearing headphones, Ted's voice bleeds through.

TED (O.S.)
Now get the hell out there and continue making me proud.

STAN
(to himself)
Goddammit.

Eric exits Ted's office and passes by Stan.

STAN (CONT’D)
Hey New Guy...we should grab lunch sometime.

ERIC
(leery)
Okay.

Stan gives a tight, awkward smile. Eric continues into the break room. Stan clicks his computer, and suddenly hears Eric’s voice coming through the headphones.

ERIC (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Shit. No Funyuns.

Stan smiles, then dials his phone.

STAN
Hi, this Stan Latham at Oceana Import/Export. Cancel our re-stock of Funyuns.

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC - DUSK

Hank’s COFFIN moves past the Station staff and Veronica. Eric steps up and lays an unmarked Sudoku puzzle on it. He puts a comforting arm around Veronica and smells her hair.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
TAG

INT. ERIC’S APARTMENT – MORNING

Eric, in boxers, opens his curtains. Something is taped to the window. It’s the sudoku puzzle Eric left on Hank’s coffin. However filled in the middle are not numbers but words. They spell out “NICE TRY ERIC.”

Off Eric’s disconcerted expression we...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW