UNTITLED CUSACK/MCCABE/ELMORE/CAVELL WALL STREET PILOT

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TEASER

CLOSE ON A RUNNING FAUCET

A sparkling stream of New York City municipal water jets from the spigot of a distinctive FRESH NORDAQ FILTRATION SYSTEM into an equally-distinctive BLOWN-GLASS CARAFE.

WIDEN OUT to REVEAL we're in --

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - NIGHT

As a KITCHEN RUNNER finishes filling the carafe, turns off the tap, fast-walks the water toward the dining-room door, bringing us through the kitchen, past various prep stations where LINE COOKS work furiously to arrange banquet trays full of hors d'ouvres. The trays are in turn grabbed by a seemingly never-ending line of WAITERS and WAITRESSES, who then hurry them out into the dining room.

We TRACK WITH OUR RUNNER, still holding his carafe, as he bursts through the dining-room door and into --

INT. TIME WARNER CENTER - PER SE - CONTINUOUS

Lavish party at the top of the world. All the men (and the crowd, we'll note, is mostly men) wear tailored suits whose subtle differences in quality reveal the job titles of their owners: bottom of this pyramid are the ANALYSTS, top are the TRADERS, and within each group there are even more subtle differences determined by rank -- nobody here would dare out-dress his boss.

Our Runner makes his way through the crowd, sets his carafe down in front of an overworked BARTENDER, who barely acknowledges its arrival. As the empty-handed Runner starts back toward the kitchen, we STAY WITH THE WATER as the Bartender pours a glassful. Almost immediately, a different hand picks up the glass and again we FOLLOW, which brings us finally to JACKSON HOLLIDAY (20s, handsome, trader-elegant) as he nods his thanks to the bartender, takes a sip.

Jackson's huddled with three other traders, DEAN (20s, former prep-school jock), RITCHIE (20s, a Beta working to look like an Alpha), and SETH (early-30s, slick), the others' immediate boss, each holding a drink that's clearly not water. Seth watches the others, clearly waiting for an answer --

DEAN
Just so I'm clear -- you're asking how much we'd need to earn to make sure all our descendants'll be rich?

SETH
(yes)
Your kids, their kids, their kids' kids...

RITCHIE
Forever?

SETH
'Til the sun explodes or burns out or... whatever the hell it's supposed to do.

JACKSON
How many kids do we have?

SETH
As many as we goddamn want.

RITCHIE
But don't you have to set some assumptions? What if Iran nukes the East Coast? What if the Feds eliminate the estate-tax exclusion?

SETH
Assume none of that happens.

The three junior men think for a moment, maybe doing quick math, maybe trying to figure the answer Seth wants.

RITCHIE
Fifty?

Seth nods seriously, turns to Jackson.

JACKSON
Fifty sounds good.

Seth turns to Dean.

DEAN
I say seventy-five.

Seth smiles, apparently satisfied.

SETH
Either way, play your cards right, get lucky a couple times, you can get there.

JACKSON
To seventy-five million dollars?

SETH
Sure, why not? Lotta guys make that in a year.

JACKSON
Conklin, for example.

RITCHIE
Shit, maybe in a down year.

JACKSON
Hard to see getting there on commission.

Seth nods as though this is what he's been getting at.

SETH
See, that's what I keep telling you: no one stays a trader forever.
(beat)
Except maybe Bradford.

The three junior men chuckle dutifully. Seth acts as though something just occurred to him.

SETH (CONT'D)
(to Jackson, deadpan)
That reminds me -- have you thought about how it makes me look to have one of my guys seen drinking water?

RITCHIE
It's all right -- anyone notices, they'll assume he's an analyst.

DEAN
Or a fag.

SETH
(deadpan)
Isn't that the same thing?

Again Dean and Ritchie chuckle dutifully. Jackson doesn't take the bait --

JACKSON
Tokyo's back from lunch in half an hour. My Japanese is bad enough sober.

SETH
Jesus, you ever seen how much the Japs drink at lunch?

Before Jackson can respond (assuming he's even planning to), a VOICE outside the circle does it for him --

BRADFORD (O.S.)
You know one drawback to being head of trading? No more business travel. Everybody comes to you.
(to Seth)
You should keep that in mind while you're angling for my office.

All four look up at ROGER BRADFORD (50s, tired), who in turn makes a point of not watching Seth's reaction, instead rattles the ice in his empty glass in the direction of the Bartender. The Bartender steps over, pours him a refill.

SETH
Not sure I'd say I'm "angling" for it, just figure you've gotta get tired of it sooner or later--
(exaggerated innocence)
How long's it been now?

Again Bradford ignores Seth, this time because he's turned his attention to Jackson --

BRADFORD
Conklin sent me to bring you over.

This news sends a visible shockwave through the group. For a moment, even Seth loses his veneer of cool --

SETH
Him?

Bradford pretends not to notice Seth's upset, but we can tell he's loving it. He goes on as though this is no big deal --

BRADFORD
One of the Chinese used to be a general or something -- Conklin wants to trot out the war hero.

JACKSON
I wasn't a war hero, I was a battlefield intelligence officer for six weeks, then I got blown up.

BRADFORD
(deadpan)
Not certain that's the way he wants you to tell it.

Bradford starts to lead Jackson away. Seth, having recovered himself, holds out his AMBER-COLORED DRINK to Jackson.

SETH
You might not be a war hero, but you can at least show up drinking something brown.

INT. TIME WARNER CENTER - PER SE - MOMENTS LATER

As Bradford guides Jackson through the crowd --

BRADFORD
Under no circumstances do you talk business -- especially not business we have with them. He's bringing you in to charm them. Charm them.

We see now they're headed for a small huddle of men in the far corner of the room. At first, because of the positions, we only see four of the five: SYDNEY COHEN (60s, rich and soft), Conklin's in-house cousel; a CHINESE TRANSLATOR; former Red Army general MR. ZHANG (60, military bearing); and his junior partner, MR. LIN (40, stylish), living embodiment of the new-rich, bigger-is-better *Tuhao* style.

As Bradford and Jackson get closer, the fifth member of the group comes into view, the best-dressed man in this room of men who'd never out-dress their boss: J.D. CONKLIN (late-40s, elegantly handsome), Master of the Universe.

Conklin has clearly just made a joke -- he shares a BELLY LAUGH with Lin, while the Translator works to suppress a grin; Zhang, however, remains stone-faced. Conklin continues to laugh, but his eyes flick slightly to the side, clocking Bradford and Jackson's approach.

CONKLIN
(to Zhang and Lin)
You gentlemen remember Roger Bradford, our head of trading. And this is Jackson Holliday, a fellow former military man.

Jackson's smile wavers only slightly at this introduction. Handshakes all around as the translator translates. For the first time, Zhang smiles slightly --

ZHANG
(to Jackson, in heavily-accented English)
Afghanistan?

JACKSON
Iraq.

Zhang answers in rapid-fire Chinese. The Translator nods.

TRANSLATOR
Colonel Zhang says battlefields differ but all war is the same.

Jackson's not quite sure what to make of this.

JACKSON
I'll... take his word for it.

The Translator stares, uncomprehending. Conklin frowns.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Tell him I defer to his experience.

The Translator delivers this message; Zhang smiles fully now. A wave of relief passes through the group.

INT. TIME WARNER CENTER - PER SE - SAME

From ACROSS THE ROOM, we watch as Jackson continues to help Conklin charm the Chinese -- we're now too far away to hear their conversation. REVEAL we're now in the POV of JAMIE MEADOWS (late-20s, smart, ambitious) as she observes the interaction, perhaps with a particular focus on Jackson. The man with her, DOUGLAS (late-20s), watches the group as well, clear disdain on his face. Because Douglas is (like Jamie) a lawyer, he's not part of the Trader/Analyst fashion hierarchy: his suit is expensive but conservative, basically indistinguishable from what everyone else in his department has on. Jamie's wearing the Wall-Street-female party uniform of a Diane Von Furstenberg wrap dress (and wearing it <u>well</u>). Douglas harbors a major crush on Jamie -- hard to blame him.

DOUGLAS
Look at 'em all -- like someone opened the cages at the zoo.

Jamie looks around the room, which is nothing but genteel.

JAMIE
Funny, I was just thinking they seem pretty tame.
(off his look)
My dad's been telling me horror stories, trying to talk me out of taking this job.

DOUGLAS
Your dad work on the Street?

JAMIE
He spent a couple years at Salie's after college.

DOUGLAS
He hate it?

JAMIE
Enough he decided to go to law school.

Douglas thinks about this a moment, then shrugs --

DOUGLAS
He's right, they're not tame. Just putting on a show for the rest of us -- cram themselves into Italian suits, chew with their mouths closed, hope they pass for human.

JAMIE
And if the rest of us weren't here they'd be double-fisting Red Bull and Patron, chanting "Greed is good" at a digital stock ticker?

DOUGLAS
Pretty much. Or else hunting for a stripper to gang rape.

JAMIE
That's a lovely image.
(glances at Jackson)
And in your mind they're all that way?

DOUGLAS
Spend four years at Deerfield learning to flush nerds' heads in toilets, four more at college learning to puke without staining their shirts, then the nerds grow up to be analysts and the flushers become salesmen, only they call it "trading" so no one'll realize they're just hawking used cars.

JAMIE
And how do we fit into all that?

DOUGLAS
We keep them out of jail.

Douglas stares at her for an awkward moment. From history, she knows where this is headed, tries to head it off --

JAMIE
Douglas...

DOUGLAS
Pretty sure this place has a roof deck --

JAMIE
Look, you're a sweet guy. I appreciate all the time you've spent helping me settle in --

DOUGLAS
-- of course, I know my place has a roof deck...

JAMIE
(tired of this)
I'm gonna get myself another drink.

DOUGLAS
I'll come --

JAMIE
No. Just...

She moves away toward the bar, leaving Douglas to gaze after her, somewhere between forlorn and lascivious.

She reaches the bar. The Bartender may not remember any of the other drinks he's served tonight, but he remembers hers --

BARTENDER
'Nother Manhattan?

JAMIE
Might as well, I guess.

As he mixes the drink, Jackson walks up looking slightly dazed. When the Bartender sets down Jamie's Manhattan, she slides it over in front of Jackson.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
You look like you need this more than I do.

He looks at her for a long moment, then throws back the Manhattan in one swallow, nods at her gratefully --

JACKSON
I just spent half-an-hour talking about how Lin's considering ditching his Bugatti for a Viper.

JAMIE
A Venom. It's a super car.
(off his look)
I have younger brothers. Anyway, Lin won't drive one unless they raise the price.

JACKSON
Unless they raise it?

JAMIE
Lin's *Tuhao* -- "new money." Drives the Bugatti 'cause everyone knows it's the most expensive.

Jamie lowers her voice, signals with her eyes --

JAMIE (CONT'D)
(re: Douglas)
He still watching?

Jackson looks surreptitiously over her shoulder.

JACKSON
Pretending not to. Looks like you made another one.
(off her look)
Just assuming -- figure you trail them behind you like bread crumbs.

Before she can decide whether to be flattered or offended --

BOOM! A NOT-TOO-DISTANT EXPLOSION rattles the windows. The LIGHTS GO OUT. As the sound of SIRENS and CAR ALARMS drift up from the street below, a murmur of PANIC passes through the crowd befitting post-9/11 New York.

JAMIE
Jesus, should we -- aren't we supposed to... get out of here?

JACKSON
Whatever it was, didn't sound like it was real close to us.

Somebody nearby SCREAMS. A nervous TITTER of laughter in its wake. Jackson realizes his hand has moved reflexively inside his jacket; making sure no one else noticed, he lets his hand fall back to his side.

The RESTAURANT MANAGER appears at the front of the room, raises his hand for quiet. When he gets it --

RESTAURANT MANAGER
Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sure there's no cause for alarm. So let's all just keep calm -- and keep drinking --
(more nervous laughter)
-- and I'll keep you updated as soon as there's news about... whatever that was.

As the crowd MURMURS, Jamie still looks very freaked out --

JAMIE
I don't like this.

JACKSON
It's okay, take it easy --

JAMIE
I'm okay, I just -- can we -- can we get out of here?

Jackson eyes her like he's making a decision. FLASHLIGHTS coming out, bobbing about. Hear SETH'S VOICE --

SETH
Jesus, Bradford, what did you do?

More anxious laughter. SIRENS far below, joined by MORE...

JACKSON
Come with me.

He takes her by the arm and they hurry out of the restaurant.

EXT. COLUMBUS CIRCLE - NIGHT

BANG! The security door opens onto the street, where CROWDS are already beginning to form. Commotion, snatches of rumor, the SIRENS everywhere. Jackson turns to Jamie, sees she's freezing, puts his coat around her shoulders.

JACKSON
Better?

JAMIE
Yeah, thanks. I'm just -- not great in tall buildings, this kind of thing...
(looks at her cell)
I got no phone service at all --

JACKSON
Circuits're probably jammed, everybody calling each other, "Did you feel that?"

JAMIE
Yeah, I was thinking I should call my mom -- every time a cab jumps a curb anywhere in the five boroughs, she panics 'til she hears from me.

Jackson's worried he might have insulted her, makes a big deal of surveying their surroundings, spots a TOWN CAR --

JACKSON
That's one of our cars there. Want to get out of the cold, at least?

JAMIE
Definitely.

They head over to the town car.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

They land inside, the DRIVER (40s, old school New York) glancing up at their entry. Already talking --

DRIVER
You guys know anything? Everything I got is dead.

JACKSON
Not yet.

DRIVER
Streets are only gonna get worse, you wanna get out of here? Now's the time.

Jackson and Jamie look at each other. Jackson shrugs.

JAMIE
Is it weird I don't want to go home?

JACKSON
I'm at Sixty-Third and York. If, that's okay --

JAMIE
Sure. Let's go.

She's still trying her phone, frustrated.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Dammit --

At which point, Jackson's phone RINGS.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Hold on -- you have service?

JACKSON
Guess it's one of those things...
(into the phone)
Hey, Pop... I'm fine... no, nobody knows... yeah, I'll call you back.

He hangs up. Shrugs.

JAMIE
Would you mind --

JACKSON
Of course.

He hands it over, looks out the window as she dials, watching the growing CROWDS on the oddly dark streets.

JAMIE
(into the phone)
Mom, it's me... No, I'm okay... I'm okay. Do you have power there?... What are they saying?

Off Jackson, what the hell is going on? --

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLONK. Jackson tries the taps -- ominous sounds from the depths of the building, but no water. Huh.

JAMIE (O.S.)
Anything?

JACKSON
Not yet.

He steps back into the living room. She's lit CANDLES; the glow illuminates them both. She grins, a little awkward now.

JAMIE
Sorry I kind of freaked out back there. It's just... lotta people I grew up with worked in the towers --

JACKSON
Terrorists, they like to hit big, visible targets, get people scared. This feels more Act of God.

JAMIE
How do you know so much about this stuff? Got us out of the building, your phone works -- sure you're not a secret agent or something?

JACKSON
Superhero. You should see my Batcave.

JAMIE
That -- is an interestingly weird invitation.

She smiles at him, the candlelight working some magic.

JACKSON
Conklin and the Shanghai suits -- how you think they're making out?

JAMIE
Something tells me Conklin's gonna come out on top no matter what.

JACKSON
Let's hope so.

JAMIE
Well, no water. You got anything else to drink?

He smiles.

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - LATER

And they're making out, starting to get a little heated. She pulls away after a second, fighting with her judgment --

JAMIE
Wait, wait. We can't do this.

JACKSON
We haven't done anything, yet.

JAMIE
Yeah, but we're getting close to it, and once we go down that road --

JACKSON
Why don't we just see what happens?

She shakes her head. Dammit --

JAMIE
You know what's about to happen.

And she presses against him once more, undoing the buttons of his shirt. As she does, and the situation gets more serious, TRACK DOWN along their legs until we reach --

JACKSON'S ANKLE. Which he carefully reaches down for, still locked up with Jamie, pulls the pant leg up to reveal --

AN ANKLE HOLSTER with a smallish GLOCK 38. He carefully RIPS THE VELCRO OPEN, removes the holster, shoves it out of sight.

And then they sink together into bliss, his covert action unnoticed by Jamie. Off these two, getting serious --

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Jamie and Jackson in bed, curled up close. His eyes POP WIDE as he hears his APARTMENT DOOR OPEN and CLOSE quietly.

He slides out of bed, pulls on his boxers, digs the HANDGUN out of his tangled clothes. Then he heads into --

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

To find... Assistant Attorney General ALICIA BRYCE (40s, patrician beauty, flinty) waiting on his sofa.

JACKSON
Jesus, Bryce. Make yourself at home.

BRYCE
You forget, we're the ones own the apartment.

JACKSON
What are you doing here?

BRYCE
You turned your phone off. Needed to make sure you're alive.

JACKSON
I'm alive.

BRYCE
And that you haven't broken cover.

JACKSON
Except for getting a call on the Priority System when nobody else in the city had cell service, yeah, so far I'm clean.

BRYCE
That explain the girl in your bedroom?
(off Jackson's look)
Don't you like how I'm smart enough to keep my voice down?

JACKSON
We were together when it happened. Speaking of which, what <u>did</u> happen?

BRYCE
Explosion below ground, collapsed the water tunnels leading into the city. It's a mess. Could be weeks getting the water back on.

JACKSON
An attack?

BRYCE
Not sure yet. Either way, it's gonna get busy here, next few days. Get your game face on.

JACKSON
Clearly, you know where to find me.

She gets up, heads for the door. Opens it, turns --

BRYCE
And Jackson -- from now on? Keep your damn phone on.

She heads out. Off Jackson --

<u>END TEASER</u>

ACT ONE

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - TRADING FLOOR - DAY

The FURY OF THE TRADING FLOOR -- FIFTY OR SO TRADERS, each occupying his own six-foot-wide section of an enormously long table, each with three or four FLAT-SCREEN COMPUTER MONITORS fanned out in front of him like playing cards. This is where the magic happens, the center of Conklin's universe. The world is shaped based on the calls made in this room and those like it, ghost in the machine of the global economy.

On the walls, LCD TVs show VARIOUS BUSINESS-NEWS CHANNELS, news tickers under the bobbing heads blaze with headlines referring to the previous night's accident -- CITY REMAINS WITHOUT WATER; DAMAGE ONLY BEGINNING TO BE CALCULATED...

Here at the firm, despite the gravity of the situation, nobody's watching -- these guys (and they are virtually all guys) are here to fucking work, not catch up on current events. This place is a slaughterhouse if you're not down with the program. And these boys are all kinds of down.

FIND JACKSON at his work station, talking into his BLUETOOTH. At the stations beside of him, Dean and Ritchie do the same. Behind them, zooming up-and-down the line in a wheeled office chair that he propels with his feet like Fred Flinstone's car, Seth watches over their shoulders. Behind Seth, Bradford stalks the room, watching over <u>everyone's</u> shoulder.

Still concentrated on his Bluetooth conversation, Jackson glances up as Jamie makes her way along the walkway on the edge of the trading floor, headed toward the lawyers' offices. She's careful not to return his look.

Bradford, too, has noticed Jamie, moves to intercept her. She doesn't break stride as he falls into step beside her --

BRADFORD
You're late. That's not like you.

JAMIE
Don't believe I've worked here long enough to establish what I'm like.

BRADFORD
(lowers his voice)
Something I want to show you.
(off her look)
Not like <u>that</u> -- papers, a legal thing. Need help connecting dots.

JAMIE
Sydney's the in-house counsel.

BRADFORD
And you're his latest fair-haired boy -- or girl -- which means next time some "irregularity" turns out to be a cancer and the regulators come around looking for someone to hang, Sydney'll be the one slipping the noose over your head.

JAMIE
Are you saying you think Sydney's doing something illegal?

Bradford looks around to make sure nobody's eavesdropping.

BRADFORD
You have an email you never use?

JAMIE
I don't see what --

BRADFORD
Something from college maybe, or something that came free from a service provider, been collecting junk mail the last few years.

JAMIE
My undergrad alumnae one, but it's mostly a forwarding service --

BRADFORD
Text it to me. I'll be sending you something there. Don't check it from your work computer.

He veers off back toward his traders. Jamie opens her mouth to object, but she's cut off by the appearance in front of her of a well-dressed FEMALE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT.

ASSISTANT
Ms. Meadows?

JAMIE
Yes --

ASSISTANT
They're waiting for you upstairs.

JAMIE
Upstairs?

ASSISTANT
Executive conference room.

JAMIE
What? Who's waiting? I don't --

ASSISTANT
(polite but forceful)
This way, please.

Jamie's caught off-guard -- is she in trouble? Did the Assistant hear any of what Bradford just said? -- no choice, Jamie lets the Assistant out of the trading floor.

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Jamie enters to find the room full of maybe a dozen people -- half of them RISK-MANAGEMENT NUMBER CRUNCHERS, half LOW-LEVEL LEGAL ASSOCIATES, including Douglas (Jamie's love-struck companion from the party), all led by Sydney Cohen (Douglas and Jamie's direct boss, whom we also glimpsed at the party).

SYDNEY
Ah, good, you're here.

JAMIE
I'm so sorry, Sydney, the subway --

SYDNEY
I'm the one should be apologizing.
(off her confusion)
For what's about to get dumped in your lap -- although I suppose it's what one's always told about crisis and opportunity.

JAMIE
I'm not sure I'm following.

SYDNEY
(re: the assembled staff)
They'll get you up to speed.

Before Jamie can ask anything else, Sydney's out the door. She looks around, realizing she's now in charge of this room, changes her manner from "employee" mode to "command" mode.

JAMIE
All right -- get me up to speed.

As she settles in, CAMERA pulls away from her, until we've slipped THROUGH THE WINDOW and we're OUTSIDE THE BUILDING.

And now we're TRACKING down along the building. At the ground, we don't stop but CONTINUE below the surface, past the SUBWAY tunnel, down further, until we come to rest on...

INT. DEEP WATER TUNNELS

No day or night down here, deep below the bedrock, where clean water's drained from the aquifers upstate and poured into Manhattan. Pinch point of the unfolding crisis, a violently COLLAPSED TUNNEL -- SANDHOGS everywhere, the men who dig and blast these tunnels, now scrambling to fix them.

TRACK ALONG these grizzled men, almost all either Irish or, oddly, Grenadian -- so much so they've taken on each other's characteristics, odd mashup of verbal cadence, until...

We land on TWO MEN in heated disagreement. One of them is PHILIP SHAW, 52, hard, seen it all -- taking a raftload of shit from TOMMY RYAN, 50s, grizzled SANDHOG foreman.

RYAN
You kidding me with this, Shaw? Let me tell you what I've got here--

SHAW
I saw the news, Tommy. It's bad, I get it. Look, not like I need you to break anything -- tunnel went on its own, just like you boys've been warning it would for fifty years -- all I need's for it to stay broke 'til the pressure builds enough we can all get what we want.

RYAN
Christ, I got kids. What if they find out I did what you're asking?

SHAW
What if they find out how much you owe, who you owe it to?

Ryan grabs him by the shirt, backs him up against a stone wall. Other Sandhogs NOTICE, but nobody moves to intervene; it's between these two. Shaw gives him a humorless smile.

RYAN
You threatening me? Think about where you are, how many guys we've lost down here over the years -- sometimes never even find a body.

SHAW
This is my point, Tommy -- your boys're the ones on the front line. System fails, everyone else goes a few days without a shower, but you're the ones who die.

Ryan's angry, but his resolve is slipping. Shaw presses.

SHAW (CONT'D)
Ana know you're back at the tables?
(off Ryan's angry silence)
I'm not the problem, Tommy, I'm the guy offering you a chance to get square with the Shys and do right by your boys, put the system in the hands of people who get things done, instead of a bunch of civil-servant bureaucrats who won't piss on a burning man 'til he fills out the proper form.

Ryan chews on this a moment, finally lets him go. Shaw straightens his shirt, then pats Ryan on the cheek. A blessing and a warning.

SHAW (CONT'D)
Good choice, kid. I'll be in touch.

Off Shaw walking away, leaving Tommy to stare after him --

INT. CONKLIN'S LIMOUSINE - DAY

That supremely awkward car ride with a boss you barely know, the hellish intimacy of it. Conklin's on the phone, forcing Jamie to stare out the window, sun in her eyes.

CONKLIN
(into phone)
No, we gotta dump 'em.

In the domelike silence of the car we can HEAR the other person on the line, almost SHOUTING. The only thing Jamie hears clearly from that voice is one word: **ALDRICH.**

CONKLIN (CONT'D)
(into phone)
I know we're gonna take the hit. I told you we'd take the hit. Just do what I tell you, all right? That's what's worked so far.

He hangs up, looks at Jamie.

CONKLIN (CONT'D)
You haven't asked why you're here.

JAMIE
My mother always taught me not to ask questions I don't want to know the answer to.

CONKLIN
What if I asked you?

JAMIE
Sir?

CONKLIN
If I asked you to explain why I might choose to bring a junior associate to my meeting with the Mayor, instead of my house counsel, what would you say?

JAMIE
Well, if I were opposing counsel, I'd say, "Objection, calls for speculation."

Conklin smiles in appreciation of her joke.

CONKLIN
You're not opposing counsel. You're my counsel. And I'm asking for your opinion: why am I bringing you today?

Jamie's well aware this is a test, thinks quickly --

JAMIE
This proposal is a daring move, maybe even unprecedented, on this scale. Sydney's made a career out of being conservative in terms of what he does and doesn't view as "compliance" -- the reputation that's allowed him to build is a big part of his value to you, but in this case... Also, the speed at which circumstances can change in this age of instant information might demand someone whose definitions are more... flexible.
(beat)
How'd I do?

CONKLIN
Only thing you left out is His Honor's got a wandering eye -- I'm assuming that's not news?

JAMIE
I read Page Six from time to time.

CONKLIN
It bother you, that's part of the reason you're in this car?

JAMIE
Long as it's not all of the reason.

Again, Conklin smiles --

CONKLIN
You know why I hired you?

JAMIE
Sydney hired me.

CONKLIN
All right. You know why I let Sydney hire you? Because you grew up in Scarsdale, but your father spent his career chasing ambulances around Suffolk County -- figure that means you ran with the rich girls but you weren't a rich girl.

Jamie's flushed crimson at this. She clears her throat --

JAMIE
So you're assuming I'm hungry?

CONKLIN
I'm counting on it.
(beat)
I'm about to make one helluva bet on you, Ms. Meadows. Prove me right.

INT. STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Public sector conference room, a jarring contrast to the swank digs of Conklin's firm. Cheap coffee and decades-old nicotine stains on the walls.

Around the table sit a bevy of law enforcement personnel; federal, state and local, all in cheap-adjacent suits with ID badges -- FBI, FEMA, etc. -- all looking like they could use a little sleep.

FRANK GRIGGS, 40s, Bryce's immediate boss, heads up the meeting. Among the faces there, we see BRYCE. Tommy Ryan (Shaw's Sandhog foreman) briefs the assembly --

RYAN
Those tunnels've been down there since the city was built, haven't been updated since.
(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)
We've been saying since the '60s this was only a matter of time.

FEMA ASSHOLE
Saying it, but not actually doing anything to address it.

RYAN
You ever try to get a city council to raise taxes to fix something nobody'll ever see? Just be happy we finished Tunnel Number 3, or we might be looking at two years before we got water back into all the boroughs.

SOME FED
So, no chance the tunnels were blown on purpose?

Griggs intercedes, tired --

GRIGGS
There's a chance Godzilla smashed them on his way through the harbor.
(to Ryan)
You're the expert. We just want your best guess based on the available evidence.

RYAN
Most likely scenario? They just... crumbled into sand.

Silence as they all take this in. NYPD GUY looks over at a GUY WHOSE BADGE SAYS "DWP."

NYPD GUY
Time frame on the subway?

DWP GUY
Obviously it's down until we deal with the power surges --

GRIGGS
(cutting him off)
Subway's municipal -- you can sidebar on that when we're finished. The focus of this meeting is our approach to the investigation. Bureau'll continue to run point until we can rule out terrorism.
(MORE)

GRIGGS (CONT'D)
Once that's done, you guys from FEMA, EPA, DWP can fight about who takes it from there.

A lot of voices at once shouting over one another at this. Griggs holds up his hands for peace.

GRIGGS (CONT'D)
Hey. This is the way it's gonna be. What I want right now is to know how this could've happened if it wasn't an accident.

BRYCE
What I want to know is, are we looking at the Street on this?

GRIGGS
(exasperated)
You all know Ms. Bryce, from my office. Bryce --

BRYCE
We've seen speculating on this very thing happening over the last three years, we've got agents embedded in firms with just the kind of power to pull off something like this --

GRIGGS
If Wall Street's gonna bet on this thing, then so be it. Capitalism in action. Meantime, we don't have the resources to chase down wild speculations that lead nowhere.

BRYCE
Frank, you formed my task force because the old ways of policing Wall Street gave us Enron and Bear Stearns. How can you expect the task force to do any better if you won't even consider --

GRIGGS
(shutting her down)
I'll consider it once we've got the goddamn water back on and the Governor isn't screaming at me on the phone. Anyone else?

As the voices start up the shouting again, taking us to --

INT. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY

Bryce speed-walks toward the exit, phone to her ear --

BRYCE
I need you to get something concrete that shows he's behind it.

INTERCUT:

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - TRADING FLOOR - DAY

Jackson working to look like this is another trading call --

JACKSON
I'm not sure he <u>is</u> behind it.

BRYCE
You know where he is right now?

JACKSON
The Mayor's.

BRYCE
You know why?

JACKSON
Rumor is he's gonna make a bid to privatize, get in front of this thing while it's still hot.

BRYCE
Question is how <u>far</u> in front is he?

JACKSON
Conklin's been working some secret project the past six months, hasn't granted me access, or anybody else I know. So you tell me.

BRYCE
Anybody you can talk to?

JACKSON
I know the lawyer he took with...

BRYCE
Talk to him, see what you can find out without setting off alarms.

JACKSON
(not correcting her)
I'll call you tonight.

EXT. GRACIE MANSION - DAY

Storied grounds of the New York mayor's mansion alive with activity today -- reporters baying outside the gates, SECURITY armed with assault rifles. CONKLIN'S LIMO is waved in, parks near the front. Conklin and Jamie exit. Jamie's a little overwhelmed as she's ushered towards the portico.

At the front door, they're greeted by HADEN SYKES, Mayor of New York City. Looks like he hasn't slept in days, but still projects an air of heartiness as he shakes Conklin's hand.

CONKLIN
Tough day to be Mayor, huh?

SYKES
This is nothing, J.D. Wait'll the Mets win the Series.

CONKLIN
Not gonna hold my breath. Mr. Mayor, this is Jamie Meadows, she's on my staff counsel.

Sykes eyes light up at the sight of Jamie, but he keeps it buried under that winning smile. Shakes her hand.

SYKES
(to Conklin)
No Sydney?

CONKLIN
Ms. Meadows has his full confidence.

SYKES
(to Jamie)
Welcome to Gracie Mansion.

JAMIE
Your honor.

CONKLIN
Jamie was just telling me in the car, she doesn't see any legal impediments to the proposal I'm bringing you today. Right, Jamie?

Jamie's taken aback, having said no such thing. Recovering --

JAMIE
Uh, yeah -- not so far, anyway...

SYKES
Let's take this party inside, before somebody takes a shot at me.

INT. GRACIE MANSION - DAY

Walking up the hallway towards the office.

SYKES
J.D., I hope you know what I've had to move to get you on the books.

CONKLIN
You'll be glad you did.

Jamie's PHONE RINGS, loud in the hall. Conklin shoots her a look. She grimaces, looks at the ID -- **BRADFORD CALLING.** Irritated, she ignores the call, follows Conklin and Sykes toward the mayor's private office.

INT. GRACIE MANSION - MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY (TIME CUT)

Sykes, Conklin and Jamie. Conklin's just finished his pitch, and he waits expectantly. Sykes lets him wait a beat.

SYKES
Well, it's a compelling pitch, J.D., I'll give you that.

CONKLIN
It's more than a compelling pitch, it's the answer, and you know it.

SYKES
That's a little presumptuous.

CONKLIN
Haden, not only does this city have no water, we have no guarantee when the taps will come back on or how long they'll stay on when they <u>do</u>. You're buried in red tape, the unions are killing you and they don't care if nobody ever showers again, 'cause they know <u>you</u>'ll be the one everyone blames.

SYKES
I think you're underestimating my team a little. And, you're ignoring the federal implications --

CONKLIN
I'm not ignoring <u>anything</u>. My counsel believes the hurdles can be cleared. But now is the time.

Sykes sighs, loosens his tie. Lights a cigarette.

SYKES
Christ, what a day.
(to Jamie)
You've signed off on this?

Jamie, deer in headlights, looks to Conklin. He raises his eyes. She adjusts, better this time.

JAMIE
Um. It's... doable...

Sykes thinks.

CONKLIN
Three billion a year in revenue for the city. Three billion. This is an opportunity beyond any that's ever come across your desk. Maybe that ever will. But Haden --
(leaning in)
-- it's an opportunity with a limited shelf life. You wait too long... I can't help you anymore.

Conklin sits back, satisfied. Off Mayor Sykes, stewing...

INT. TAO - NIGHT

Swank Asian fusion shit, a little played but still viable, where Jackson waits alone, looking good.

BOTTLES OF WATER all over, he can see them using big JUGS in the kitchen to cook and clean with. Scoping the effects of this disaster everybody's trying to muddle through.

Then -- JAMIE arrives, looking good herself, a little flushed with transit and maybe a little excitement. Jackson stands, takes her coat, they kiss lightly, then laugh. Not giddy exactly, but these two definitely have promise.

JACKSON
You look, wow.

JAMIE
(acting)
This old thing? I only wear it when I don't care how I look.

Off his happily confused face --

JAMIE (CONT'D)
"It's a Wonderful Life"? Violet says it, right before she -- sorry.
(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)
I have a movie thing, when I'm nervous I guess I --

JACKSON
No, I love it. Says it to Jimmy Stewart, right before she about causes a car accident.

JAMIE
She's no Donna Reed.

JACKSON
Sweet, sweet Donna Reed...

JAMIE
Wow, you just made that dirty.

They smile.

JACKSON
Ordered you a Manhattan. No ice, sorry.

JAMIE
I'll get by. What are you having?

JACKSON
Amstel Light.

JAMIE
Wow, I didn't realize it was 1998.

JACKSON
Shut up.

JAMIE
Should we go to an internet cafe after this? Do some Jager bombs?

JACKSON
Funny.

She looks up as her drink arrives. Gets more serious.

JAMIE
So, here's the thing -- I can't keep seeing you.

JACKSON
Wait, what? Just like that?

JAMIE
I mean, I like you, I like, <u>this</u>, but I can't...

JACKSON
Can't what?

JAMIE
You know what the male-to-female ratio is at work?

JACKSON
I have some idea.

JAMIE
You have no idea. Even if you know the actual figure, which you totally don't, doesn't mean the same to you because you don't have to prove you belong on the floor in the first place. If it's perceived I'm in a relationship with you... they'll eat me alive.

JACKSON
How about we talk business? Then we're just having a drink, talking about business.

JAMIE
I can live with that.

He smiles. Tension broken.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
So why would Roger Bradford be calling me every five minutes trying to get me to look at figures?

JACKSON
Oh, okay, you were serious. We're talking about work.

JAMIE
(laughs, but --)
Sorry, yeah, I mean... he's your boss, I just wondered if you had some idea what's got him so lit up. I haven't had a chance to go over the stuff yet --

Jackson hedges, not anxious to go down this road --

JACKSON
Bradford's been a weird fit, last ten years.
(MORE)

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Conklin knows their strategic ideas're too different, but Bradford's been with him from the beginning, so there's blood there... I dunno. You want me to take a look at it?

JAMIE
It's probably nothing. I dunno.

JACKSON
God, you are just completely stunning. Sorry, that had nothing to do with work.

She smiles, sips her Manhattan, avoiding his eyes.

JAMIE
You know, I'm serious. After tonight, we totally can't keep doing this. Like, at all.

JACKSON
So, then -- are we still eating, or just --?

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jackson and Jamie in bed again, hard light of the city at night lighting them up as they make love -- deeper intensity this time than before, there's a SPARK here that seems to almost scare them both as they revel in it. On a break --

JACKSON
(breathless)
You still want to talk about work?

JAMIE
Actually, I did have some questions about the figures from --

He cuts her off with a kiss. She loves it, embraces him harder, pulling him in as they make a return trip...

INT. CONKLIN'S HOME - STUDY - NIGHT

Lights dim, Conklin behind his home desk, dressed casual while popping edamame, across from --

SHAW, a little rumpled and out-of-place in Conklin's domain.

CONKLIN
You're sure this union Sandhog of yours -- he can deliver?

SHAW
Tommy Ryan. He can. He will.

They break off as Conklin's statuesque wife MOLLY steps in.

MOLLY
Honey, I need you to --

She falls silent at the sight of Shaw. Not exactly a shudder, but he's not a person she likes to find in her home.

SHAW
Mrs. Conklin. I'm seconds away from being out of your hair.

MOLLY
Don't be silly. Get you anything?

SHAW
No thank you, ma'am.

MOLLY
(to Conklin)
The disposal. It's making that sound. Carlos said he'd send up one of his guys, but --

CONKLIN
Five minutes, love.

MOLLY
Sure.

She glances at Shaw as she leaves, a perfunctory half-smile before she retreats. After a beat --

SHAW
I think she's warming up to me.

Conklin half-smiles, still on point.

CONKLIN
We need three days. Three days without water, Sykes either pulls the trigger, or they'll have his head on a stick. Shaw -- I can't afford to be blindsided on this. You understand?

SHAW
J.D. -- when've I ever let you down?

Off Conklin, mulling this...

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. THE HALLIGAN BAR - DAY

Firefighter's bar in deepest Brooklyn, only there's no firefighters here today. Just a few regulars, among them TED STRADER, 40s, unprepossessing on his bar stool in a ratty tan overcoat, well-brand Scotch amber in the glass before him.

The bar's OLD-SCHOOL TV shows the news with its endless coverage of the water crisis. Ted, watching, looks sour.

TED
Jimmy, is there anything else on? A game, something?

JIMMY WAKE, tough 50s, the bartender, breezes over. An easy and long history between these two.

JIMMY
How many times you gonna ask me, Ted?

TED
Many as it takes.

JIMMY
I gotta keep current with events.

TED
But why? I mean, what are they telling you you don't already know?

JIMMY
Maybe they'll tell me when the water comes back on.

TED
You can find that out at the tap. Come on, anything. Hockey. Swimming. Honey Boo-Boo.

JIMMY
How 'bout I freshen you up on the house, you stop breaking balls about my TV?

TED
Deal.

Jimmy does so, Ted sips.

JIMMY
What's your take on all this?

TED
Act of God. What's to have a take on?

JIMMY
Please. You always got a take. My money's on, this is all gonna bite us in the ass, and when it does, you're gonna say "I told you so."

TED
Unless you've been able to wash glasses today, I'd say it's already bitten us in the ass.

JIMMY
See? There it is.

At which point, who but BRADFORD steps in, furtive as ever, out of place as he can be in this aggressively blue-collar dive. He moves over to a spot right next to Ted, sits.

BRADFORD
Can I get a Seven-and-Seven?

JIMMY
Long's you don't mind no ice.

BRADFORD
Not a problem.

As Jimmy moves off, Bradford turns to Ted. Ted ignores him.

BRADFORD (CONT'D)
Ted. It's me. It's Bradford.

TED
Roger, it's been six years, we're not like, Korea veterans.

BRADFORD
I know, I just --

TED
What's less clear to me is, what could possibly bring you here.

BRADFORD
History.

TED
Which I've heard, teaches us nothing. Think it was maybe Sting said that, after he left The Police and started to suck.

BRADFORD
You're gonna make me work for this, aren't you?

TED
Depends. What is it you're working towards?

Jimmy arrives with Bradford's drink. He takes it directly from Jimmy's hands, sips greedily. Ted notices.

TED (CONT'D)
Still got that Battery Park thirst.

BRADFORD
And you, you got no demons, I suppose.

Ted shrugs. Moving on --

BRADFORD (CONT'D)
I should've listened to you, should've ducked out when you did.

TED
Nobody listened to me. And I should've kept my mouth shut, anyway.

BRADFORD
What I got now -- Ted, I could take him down. Put him in a hole deeper than Madoff, I'm <u>this</u> <u>close</u>.

TED
That sounds like a lonely and frightening place to be, Roger.
(sighs, can't resist --)
So, tell me -- what's our friend doing now that's so different from what he's always done?

BRADFORD
He's getting sloppy. Greedy. Betting his personal stake against the fund. Not just a little, I mean across the board.

TED
You got the math to back this up?

BRADFORD
Got the <u>trades</u>, my guys buying shit from this shell corp --

TED
(getting it)
-- but you can't prove he owns the shell corp.

BRADFORD
But I got an in with counsel. Girl they're grooming, Jamie Meadows...

TED
Pulling another victim into this. Besides yourself, I mean.

BRADFORD
Come on, Ted. You used to --

TED
I used to think you had better sense. You know how many people've been "this close" to getting Conklin? And yet somehow he never gets gotten -- how 'bout that?
(Bradford's got no answer)
You sure this isn't about you topping out as a trader, never taste the real sweetness, like Sydney and Conklin even though you were with them from the jump?

BRADFORD
(nodding toward the TV)
It's different now.

Ted can't believe what Bradford's intimating --

TED
You saying he did this?
(Bradford doesn't deny)
Far be it from me to accuse anyone of sounding paranoid, but I think the tinfoil in your helmet might be leaching into your brain.

BRADFORD
All I know is, he sat with Sykes today, pitched him on privatizing the City's water.
(as this hits Ted)
That's what I'm trying to tell you, Ted -- he's off the reservation, thinks he can't be touched.

TED
That's because he can't be touched.
(breaks off)
I say, let Conklin be Conklin. Might as well be him doing it. You remember '08? Silicon Valley? S&L's in '87? Those guys were clowns. Least Conklin's a pro.
(beat)
My question is this: when he pulls you in for the conversation that he will very soon be pulling you in for -- what are you gonna say?

BRADFORD
What do you mean?

TED
I mean, you gonna turn your back and walk away, wind up on a barstool living out of an RV? Or are you gonna take what he'll offer, use what you got to get what you want? Which we both know is not to destroy Conklin. Conklin made you.

BRADFORD
I'm gonna fix the mess we made. If nobody does anything, assholes like Conklin are going to continue to rape and pillage until there's no economy left to destroy. Who's gonna stop them, the SEC? SEC can't find its own dick with both hands and a flashlight.

Ted smiles, sad.

TED
Have another drink, Bradford. You sound like you could use it.

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Jamie pouring coffee -- as she's set upon by Dean and Ritchie, both in high spirits.

DEAN
Junior counsel, looking <u>correct</u>.

JAMIE
(easy)
Are you really commenting on my appearance, Dean?

DEAN
Just saying, you look different today. Like, lit up, or whatever.

JAMIE
I'm on a juice cleanse.

RITCHIE
More like on a high, being Conklin's prom date for the Mayor's ball.

DEAN
Handsy Haden Sykes, swordsman extraordinaire.

RITCHIE
How about it, Meadows, he make the big move?

JAMIE
He's leaving his wife, actually. We want to keep it quiet until we can control the media announcement.

She finishes doctoring her coffee, heads out into the hall. They follow her like pilot fish, out into --

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

As she walks, she meets eyes across the bullpen with BRADFORD, who still may be wearing the suit he had on yesterday. Dean and Ritchie don't notice.

DEAN
So, what was it like?

JAMIE
Gracie Mansion?

DEAN
No, not Gracie Mansion, the pitch. Sykes gonna bite?

DEAN (CONT'D)
Jackson says it looks good.

RITCHIE
Speaking of Jackson, little bird told me he swooped you out of the party when the shit went down.

DEAN
Player's gotta play, right?

RITCHIE
Actually, they'd make a cute couple. See 'em in one of those profiles in W magazine, where the wedding's gonna be...

DEAN
See, this is exactly how I know you're gay.

RITCHIE
What, I'm secure enough to admit he's a catch -- 'specially once he takes over the team after Seth gets made head of trading.

DEAN
You mean after they come for Bradford with the butterfly nets -- you see he's wearing the same suit he had on yesterday?

RITCHIE
What, again?

They've reached Jamie's door. She stops, turns, dismissive --

JAMIE
Gentlemen. A pleasure as always.

DEAN
Okay, well. You need anything --

She shuts the door on them. After a beat, they turn to go.

DEAN (CONT'D)
She's mine.

RITCHIE
Keep dreamin', stud.

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - JAMIE'S OFFICE - DAY

She settles behind her computer, deftly logs in. Switches through a few files, then glances out at the bullpen before she opens one marked --

JAMIE_EYES_ONLY.PDF

Clicks on it, starts paging through it. Some kind of legal document, pages and pages of it. And on every one of them, we see the word **ALDRICH** sprinkled liberally.

As Jamie reads this, her brow furrows. She glances out once more, then leans in, settling into lawyer mode...

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - BOARD ROOM - DAY

Conklin in the middle of addressing the senior staff. Powerpoint slides on the wall behind him. A power table of New York finance's best and brightest, all eyes on Conklin.

CONKLIN
Bottom line, gentlemen -- this deal will happen. Sykes has tacitly agreed to the terms, it's a question of when the call comes.

ONE SUIT
Yes, but -- J.D., even if he agrees, which, unless I misunderstand you, he has not actually done yet --

CONKLIN
He will.

ONE SUIT
-- even then, the Feds are gonna tear this to pieces.

CONKLIN
The Feds won't bark as long as we commit to completing the Groton upgrade. Which we will do.

One Suit looks at Another Suit, both dubious. Conklin looks around, like he's the only guy in the room who gets it.

CONKLIN (CONT'D)
Guys, I'm not gonna lie, I expected a little more enthusiasm here. This deal stands to make the firm an unholy shit-ton of real money. It's there for the taking, getting nibbled away at piecemeal by the piranhas. We're just consolidating who controls it. It's good for the city, good for the economy, and it's good for us. City had two hundred years to fix its water situation, and they fucked it up every step of the way. Now, it's our turn. So, I ask you: are we in, or are we in?

Off the board members, watching Conklin, who already knows what the answer is going to be...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. JAMIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A beautifully-kept but Manhattan-small two-bedroom apartment, the perfect starter home for a single woman on her way up. Everything first-class immaculate, framed artwork lining the hallways. The windows have a high view of lit-up cityscape.

Dressed in her home-alone uniform of sweatpants and old T-shirt, hair pulled back away from her face, Jamie sits on the couch with her legs tucked underneath her and her LAPTOP SCREEN lighting up her face.

REVERSE to find she's still poring over the documents Bradford sent her, the word ALDRICH prominent in the text.

A CHIMING SOUND snaps Jamie out of her work reverie. She moves to the HOUSE PHONE on the wall nearby, picks up.

JAMIE
(into phone)
Hola, Ignacio. No, no te preocupes. Yes, late night visitor, don't judge me. *Quien es?*

As she listens, the anticipatory smile she's trying on fades. Becomes more businesslike, as she sighs, intones --

JAMIE (CONT'D)
No, it's okay. Send him up.

TIME CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER,

As she opens the door to behold -- BRADFORD, starting to look like he's at the end of his rope, eyes wild. You can't smell it, but he reeks of alcohol, to which Jamie reacts.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Bradford, Jesus.

BRADFORD
We have to talk.

JAMIE
You smell like a distillery.

BRADFORD
I'm sorry. Haven't had a chance...

JAMIE
Never mind, just come in.

She pulls him inside, shuts the door behind him. He surveys the place, rightly feeling he doesn't belong. That tottering gait of a veteran drunk trying to cover, almost succeeding.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Can I get you something? Coffee?

BRADFORD
Drink'd be nice.

JAMIE
(merest hesitation)
Seven and Seven?

BRADFORD
Please.

She moves into the kitchen to make it, as he leans against a tall stool nearby, looking beat.

JAMIE
I don't have any ice.

BRADFORD
Nobody has ice. Did you read it?

JAMIE
Some of it.

BRADFORD
And?

JAMIE
And I'm still trying to make heads or tails.

BRADFORD
Exactly. Layers, that's Conklin's thing. You think you've peeled it all back, but there's always one more. Man is a genius.

She returns with his drink.

JAMIE
Didn't have Seagrams, you'll have to make do with bourbon.

He takes it, drinks greedily.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
(not harsh)
Easy, cowboy.

BRADFORD
Been that kind of day.

JAMIE
You want to sit?

BRADFORD
I want to know you'll help me.

JAMIE
Bradford --

BRADFORD
Jamie, I picked you because you have a soul, it's not too late for you. I can see these things.

JAMIE
Don't go ascribing me too many attributes. I may disappoint you. People don't become counsel at hedge funds for the sake of community service.

BRADFORD
I have records showing Conklin unloading the same stock as the fund is buying. But only if I can link him to the shell company.

JAMIE
Okay...

BRADFORD
Only somebody in legal can pull those documents.

JAMIE
That's privileged information --

BRADFORD
I know.

JAMIE
I could be disbarred. Bradford, I could be arrested.

BRADFORD
You don't know what he's capable of. If I told you, you'd say I was drunk and paranoid.

JAMIE
You are drunk and paranoid. Now let's get you home, okay?

She starts to usher him to the door. On their way --

BRADFORD
Jamie. You have a light coming from you. You know that?

He stumbles on the step to her door. She catches his arm before he takes a header.

JAMIE
Go see your wife and kids. I'm sure they're worried about you.

He gives a bitter half-laugh, steps out the door and wordlessly walks off down the hall. She watches him a beat, then softly closes the door behind him.

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - TRADING FLOOR - DAY

It's a frenzy today. The ubiquitous monitors alight with activity TRADERS working phones. Find JACKSON --

JACKSON
(on phone)
No, it's up four percent, last ten minutes. The hell is happening?
(beat)
No, you tell those Beijing pricks they can wait on the...

Jackson sees Jamie, working to catch his eye. When it works, Jackson smiles. Jamie makes an "I need to talk to you" gesture/face. Jackson wraps up business --

JACKSON (CONT'D)
I gotta go. Call you back.

He heads over towards her, his smile widening.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Hey. Kind of surprised to see you gunning for me in here, after all you said the other --

JAMIE
(cutting him off)
Come with me.

She takes him by the arm, starts hauling him off away from the floor. Jackson surprised --

JACKSON
Okay, then.

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - WOMEN'S ROOM - DAY

WHAM! The door slams open as she drags him inside, locks the door behind them. A theory of what's happening starting to dawn on Jackson as he takes in the surroundings --

JACKSON
Wow. This is, okay. You're serious? Because I can --

She hits him.

JAMIE
I didn't bring you in here for sex, idiot. What do you take me for?

JACKSON
Oh. What are we doing in here?

JAMIE
I need to talk to you.

JACKSON
In here?

JAMIE
Yes, in here. There's like six girls working at this place, this is basically my private domain. What do you know about a holding company called The Aldrich Group?

JACKSON
Aldrich? I've been buying from them all morning, why?

JAMIE
(sighs, gathers --)
Bradford says it's Conklin's personal shell corp.

Jackson's face tells us this is HUGE. And bad.

JACKSON
That'd mean Conklin's having our investors buy from him directly -- how many laws does that violate?

JAMIE
Pretty much... all of them. And it gets worse.

JACKSON
How can it get worse?

JAMIE
If something were to go wrong with the Chinese *tuhao* deal, Conklin's portfolio would be damaged, yes?

JACKSON
It'd take like, a rhinoceros-sized dump. He's deeply leveraged with the Chinese.

JAMIE
Okay. So, what if he's planning to torpedo the Chinese deal so he can buy back those same shares for pennies once it all falls apart?

JACKSON
(does math, then --)
You're saying Bradford can prove Aldrich is Conklin?

JAMIE
I'm saying he wants me to help him prove it.

Jackson hedges, pretends to think. This is exactly what his investigation is about; she's awfully close to some dangerous truths, and he's got to decide how to handle it. For now --

JACKSON
You're not actually considering this?

JAMIE
The stuff he sent me is tangled as hell. But I know enough to know when something's not right, and I'm telling you -- something about Aldrich is not right.

JACKSON
(careful)
There're lots of ways of looking at these deals, they're complicated --

JAMIE
Forget it. Forget I said anything. I knew it was a bad idea to talk to you about this.

JACKSON
Jamie, wait. Hold on --

But she's already turned and fled the room, leaving the door open behind her. He sighs, what a fucking mess. Starts to follow her out, only to run into a FEMALE ASSISTANT heading into the Ladies'. She looks at him askance.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Sorry.

He edges out past her into the fray, looking for Jamie. But she's already gone, as we hear --

JACKSON (CONT'D)
(pre-lap)
It's coming to a head. We need to do something.

Taking us to --

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Circling Bethesda Fountain, now parched and still, are Jackson and Bryce.

BRYCE
Relax. It just means keep your head down and focus.

JACKSON
It's blowing up beyond my department. Bradford spouting off to counsel is a big deal. And now she's got her teeth in it --

BRYCE
She. She who?

JACKSON
Jamie Meadows, the junior counsel.

BRYCE
You mean the one you're banging?

JACKSON
Jesus, Bryce!

BRYCE
You keeping your eye on the ball?

JACKSON
When have I ever not?
(beat)
(MORE)

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Maybe we can approach Bradford directly --

BRYCE
Jackson, you know as well as I do there's no way we'd ever prove Conklin owns that shell corp. Whole reason we have you in there is 'cause of how many times we've failed to get past his firewalls.
(Jackson can't deny)
Here's what you're gonna to do: you're gonna go to Conklin with the information about Bradford.

JACKSON
What?!

BRYCE
You're concerned, you love the man and want to help him -- but you're worried about his discretion, and don't know where else to turn.

JACKSON
So what, we just burn him down?

BRYCE
He's too unreliable to reach out to, and he's jeopardizing a federal investigation.

JACKSON
Trading's Bradford's life. There's gotta be another way...

BRYCE
Jackson: this is what you signed on for. You are undercover to investigate fraud and market manipulation. What'd you think was gonna happen when you found it?

JACKSON
Bradford's on the right side...

BRYCE
There are no good guys here, Jackson. When we put you undercover, you knew you'd be getting close to the people we're putting under a microscope. Don't lose sight of what we're doing here now. Not when we're so close.
(MORE)

BRYCE (CONT'D)
(softer)
These guys are breaking the law. We're not the SEC, pussyfooting around after a cut of the bad trades, we're here to put Conklin behind bars for all day. That's the stakes.

Jackson stays still, gazing at the parched fountain. Bryce moves on, leaving him there.

BRYCE (CONT'D)
I expect to hear from you tomorrow.

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - TRADING FLOOR - NIGHT

End of the day's trading, the day traders packing up, the hardcore closers working it to the last second.

As it draws to a close, Sydney comes to Bradford -- puts a friendly arm around his shoulder, at which Bradford JUMPS --

SYDNEY
Bradford. You got a minute? Big Guy wants a word.

Bradford sweats under Sydney's arm. See the OTHER TRADERS glance over, marking what's happening without really looking.

BRADFORD
I was hoping to get across the bridge before traffic --

SYDNEY
Won't take long. Come on.

Bradford lets himself be steered off, into --

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - CONKLIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

-- where Conklin is making drinks at his bar.

CONKLIN
There he is. You managed to drag him in, huh Sydney?

SYDNEY
He was trying to duck out, you believe that?

CONKLIN
Bradford. We never see you anymore, you don't call, you don't write -- drink?

BRADFORD
(nervous)
Sure.

CONKLIN
D'Asombroso Reserve tequila, tastes like caramel heaven. Ice?

Conklin holds up a CUBE from a mountain of ice cubes nearby. Bradford MARKS the fact that it even exists here.

BRADFORD
Please.

Conklin drops in the cube. The liquor looks delicious. He hands it off to Bradford, keeps one for himself.

CONKLIN
To getting it done.

They drink. Conklin pours another.

CONKLIN (CONT'D)
You tell him why he's here, Sydney?

SYDNEY
Figured that's for you to do.

CONKLIN
You want to sit?

BRADFORD
No thank you.
(accepting another drink)
What's this about?

Conklin sighs.

CONKLIN
I messed up, Roger. It's a damn shame, but there it is. I've overlooked your value to this firm. I'm usually pretty good about that kind of thing, but lately -- well, sometimes it's like I've lost sight of what's important. The fact is, you've been here since the beginning. You took the leap with me, didn't have to -- you did it because you <u>believed</u>. And we as a firm would not be where we are without your instincts, your talent -- your honesty.

Conklin bolts his tequila. Looks at Bradford. Bradford does the same, hands off his glass. Conklin refills it.

CONKLIN (CONT'D)
As a trader, I know there's only so high you can rise. One of the flaws of the system. Once a trader, always a trader, pinned to that bonus at the end of the year, always behind the 8-ball. Never a real, meaningful cut of the action.

SYDNEY
It's time for all that to change, Bradford.

BRADFORD
Wh -- how do you mean?

CONKLIN
We're offering you a full partnership. From now on, should you accept -- your voice is equal to ours on company matters.

SYDNEY
You're off the floor and where you belong, Bradford -- making decisions that affect the future of this firm and all its funds.

CONKLIN
I can only apologize for waiting this long, that was my bad. But I won't take a chance on losing you to some bunch of assholes with whom you share no history or fealty. That is unacceptable, given what we've been through. So. What do you say?

Bradford says nothing for a long moment. His mouth works soundlessly, but he stops. Tears in his eyes, he wordlessly shakes Conklin's hand, face breaking into a grateful smile.

CONKLIN (CONT'D)
Beautiful! Now we really do have something to celebrate. Sydney?

SYDNEY
No, thanks. Congratulations, Roger. Long overdue.

He claps Bradford on the back as Conklin freshens him up yet again. Handing over the drink, he holds his shoulder --

CONKLIN
One thing. You might want to drink up, enjoy the spirits -- because as part of this deal? You're going to get the help you need. Understand?

Bradford, in the act of swallowing, looks caught. Guilty.

BRADFORD
It's just -- it's been hard, since Karen got sick and, then all this --

CONKLIN
I understand. It's a crappy thing, and I hate having to do it. But we can't have your judgment affected. I need you to be the angel on my shoulder. Here on out, we keep each other out of trouble. Okay?

BRADFORD
(struggling)
Sure, J.D. Of course. Thank you.

Off Conklin, raising a glass, looks like problem solved...

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - CORRIDOR - LATER

They've been drinking it up pretty good as they pour out of Conklin's office onto the near-deserted floor. Bradford is clearly soused at this point, laughing and clinging to Conklin like a lifeboat.

BRADFORD
You comin'? It's late.

CONKLIN
I gotta stay. Heavy hangs the head, all that crap.

BRADFORD
You're such an asshole, you know that? I mean seriously.

Bradford gently pats Conklin's face, nodding, sincere.

BRADFORD (CONT'D)
Thanks, J.D. I won't let you down.

CONKLIN
Go home, Roger. Sleep it off tomorrow, we'll see you on Thursday, decide how to move ahead.

BRADFORD
Love it. Night, gents.

Bradford heads to the elevators, presses the button, sways as he waits. The car arrives, doors open to reveal -- PING! --

SHAW, against the back wall. Bradford looks up, sees him --

SHAW
Going down?

-- breaks into a grin, steps inside. The doors close.

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - CONKLIN'S OFFICE - DAY

The next morning, Sydney follows Conklin in.

SYDNEY
Should I shut it?

CONKLIN
Leave it open. You ready?

SYDNEY
What.

CONKLIN
Sykes's in.

SYDNEY
We're doing it?

CONKLIN
Called me five this morning, agreed to fast-track the privatization pitch, run interference with the unions, the whole shebang.

SYDNEY
Holy crap.

CONKLIN
Says he'll grease the right federal wheels, get us set to knock down any resistance. We did it, Sydney.
(Sydney's speechless)
Let's bring in the boys. We got celebrating to do.

And now Conklin waves in the traders, backslapping, congratulating one another, they're all fucking geniuses. Conklin smiling over them all, shaking hands, laughing.

While, unnoticed by all -- the TV MONITORS now have a NEW STORY they're covering. Under the headline "TOP TRADER TAKES A PLUNGE," we MOVE IN ON THE SCREEN as we hear the anchor --

TV ANCHOR
...trader Roger Bradford's Audi S8 apparently broke through the guard rails and plunged off the Tappan Zee bridge early this morning. A search of the river nearby turned up Bradford's body. While toxicology is still pending...

STAY ON THE SCREEN, as it bridges us to --

INT. THE HALLIGAN BAR - DAY

MATCH CUT of the same news broadcast brings us to the T.V. behind the bar in Ted's old haunt. Find Ted in his usual spot, going through bills with a cup of bar coffee.

JIMMY
'Nother coffee, Ted?

TED
How can I say no?

JIMMY
Where'd you sleep?

TED
RV.

JIMMY
You need to get a place.

TED
Got a place. Just happens to have wheels...
(notices the TV)
Hey, turn that up?

Jimmy finds the remote, turns up the TV. Ted watches --

TV ANCHOR
Bradford got his start at Salomon Brothers, but was recruited by visionary hedge-fund guru J.D. Conklin to head trading for what would quickly become one of the...

TED
Son of a bitch.

JIMMY
What, you know that guy?

Ted, shock on his face forming into something harder, gulps a last sip of coffee, gathers his shit and heads for the door.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Just put that on your tab, then?

TED
I'll see you later! I gotta go --

And he's out the door, leaving Jimmy shaking his head.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Sleek modern shard of glass housing our trading floor. Over which, we hear --

SYDNEY (O.S.)
I know we're all a little bit in shock this morning. It's been a rough couple of days.

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - DAY

The Conklin group assembled for a rare -- and brief -- moment away from the business of trading, as Sydney addresses the troops about Bradford's passing.

SYDNEY
Roger Bradford was a brilliant trader, a consummate family man, and a very dear friend. My heart today is broken along with all of yours.

VARIOUS ANGLES on traders, lawyers, analysts. TEARS in Jamie's eyes. Jackson watching, eyes hard on CONKLIN, who is behind glass in his office on the phone.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
I would encourage you not to pay too much heed to what you hear on the news. They'll try and drag his name through the mud; don't let it get to you. Bradford was working on the greatest deal this firm has ever brokered when he passed, and he believed in it with everything he had.

JAMIE meets eyes with JACKSON. They hold a glance for a beat, marking the falsity of this -- then he looks away.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
I know that, above all, Roger would want us to get back to work, and not linger over his passing. The man didn't miss a day of work in twenty years, sick or well, family crisis, you name it. Let's honor his example by getting out there and kicking some ass. Okay?

MURMURS of assent. Sydney looks them over, nods.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Okay. Back to work.

As they disperse, back to the phones and computer monitors. Jackson moves over to Jamie. Awkward for a beat.

JACKSON
You all right?

JAMIE
You hear that business about Bradford believing in the deal?

JACKSON
Pumping up the troops. I wouldn't read too much into it.

JAMIE
(unmoved)
Yeah.

SYDNEY (O.S.)
(hailing --)
Jackson.

Jackson turns to see Sydney at Conklin's office door.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
A word?

JACKSON
Sure.
(to Jamie)
Talk later, okay?

She nods, distracted. He breaks off from Jamie, follows Sydney, heading into --

INT. CONKLIN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT - CONKLIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson enters, finds Conklin behind his desk. Sydney flanking nearby. With no preamble --

CONKLIN
We're making you interim head of trading in Bradford's absence.

Jackson looks surprised. Looks to Sydney.

SYDNEY
Congratulations.

JACKSON
Thanks...

CONKLIN
Sound a little unsure, Jackson.

JACKSON
No, it's just -- I mean, isn't Seth next in line?

SYDNEY
Seth's a good trader, but he's a climber. Always politics with him.

CONKLIN
I want to see how you handle it. We're headed into a turbulent period, I need somebody who's not afraid to shake things up. You seem like a straight shooter. Doesn't matter whether you are, perception is half the game. Clients feel like they can trust you. So that means, I'm going to trust you.

SYDNEY
You'll have access to all areas of our business, no secrets. You'll be signing a nondisclosure-noncompete of my own creation. Short version is, you fuck with us, we kill you.

CONKLIN
So. You in?

Jackson, reeling, pulls it together.

JACKSON
Absolutely.

CONKLIN
Great. Now get the hell out of my office and go make me some money.

Off Jackson, about to do just that...

INT. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICES - NIGHT

Bryce burning the midnight oil at her desk, single lamp to work by. After a beat, JACKSON storms in, glares at her. She returns his gaze evenly over her glasses.

BRYCE
Congratulations, head trader.

JACKSON
You proud of yourself?

BRYCE
What is your problem?

JACKSON
The man is dead, Bryce.

BRYCE
You think I had something to do with that?

JACKSON
I think you went behind my back, outed Bradford to Conklin.
(beat)
I don't hear you denying it.

BRYCE
Jackson, you're my inside man. How could I have told Conklin anything without your involvement?

JACKSON
Still trying to figure that out.

BRYCE
How about this -- you have my word that I didn't.

JACKSON
I've been a trader long enough not to put much stock in peoples' word.

BRYCE
I didn't do this to the man, Jackson. Conklin did.
(softer)
You signed on for this because you were a believer, want to help stop the rape and pillage of our country at the hands of this asshole and assholes like him. This is the way.

He's still pissed. Bryce won't let him evade her eyes.

BRYCE (CONT'D)
I need you, Jackson. Let's get this thing done.

After a beat, he shakes his head, walks out. Bryce exhales.

EXT. JAMIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Jamie headed up the sidewalk towards her apartment.

VOICE (O.S.)
Jamie.

She turns to see whence it came, beholds -- TED, some down the street from her. Rumpled in his overcoat. She hesitates at the sight of him, uncertain.

JAMIE
Do I know you?

Ted steps forward, shakes his head.

TED
No. But I knew Roger Bradford. And I know J.D. Conklin. And we both know that Conklin killed Bradford. So there's that.

The seriousness of this taking hold in her --

JAMIE
Who the hell are you?

TED
My name is Ted. And what I know about Conklin is enough to get us both killed. I won't tell you it's a good idea to talk to me -- it's probably not.

JAMIE
I have to go.

She starts onward towards her waiting door. Ted follows --

TED
Bradford came to see me the day before he died. Said the only person he felt like he could trust... was you.

She holds again, looking at Ted, unnerved.

JAMIE
What do you want?

TED
Doesn't matter what I want. If you want to find out who you really work for, we have a lot to talk about. But I'd rather not do it here. Too many eyes.

Off Jamie, confused, on guard -- but intrigued...

INT. CONKLIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Conklin steps in from the cold, the house sumptuously acquitted, warm of light even in its opulence. Coat and scarf hung by the door, then he steps into --

INT. CONKLIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

To find Molly making dinner with his kids TARA (13) and SAM (9) -- the picture of upper-crust domestic bliss, just a wealthy, happy family living the American dream.

MOLLY
Look who's back from the salt mines.

TARA
Hey, dad.

CONKLIN
I could use a drink.

TARA
I'll make it.

MOLLY
In your dreams, sweetheart.

TARA
I know how!

MOLLY
Finish your homework. I'll make the drink, thank you.

She moves up, kisses Conklin. Tenderness --

MOLLY (CONT'D)
I heard about Roger. You okay?

CONKLIN
It's been a tough day. I need to call Joyce.

MOLLY
You haven't done that yet?

CONKLIN
Wasn't sure what to say.

MOLLY
Drink first, but then, call her. It'll make her feel better to hear from you.

CONKLIN
Okay.

MOLLY
Meantime, you hear the news?

CONKLIN
What news?

MOLLY
Watch <u>this</u> --

She moves over to the sink -- turns on the faucet -- WATER springs forth from the spigot, clear and steady and cold. She turns proudly towards him, exhibiting like Vanna White.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
We're back, baby. Isn't that great?

THE WATER, pouring endlessly into the stainless steel sink. Pushing slowly in on this, we match to --

PUSHING IN ON CONKLIN. As he watches the water once again moving in his home, there is just a trace of enigmatic SMILE touching his face. And off this image, we...

FADE OUT.

<u>END OF PILOT</u>