LUCKY 7

"Pilot"

Fifth Network Draft

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ACT ONE

EXT. ASTORIA, QUEENS, NY - DAY

A multi-cultural boulevard in Astoria: shops, delis, street kiosks. Amidst the everyday bustle, we hear RUBBER ON ROAD! Suddenly, a PURPLE BENTLEY comes TEARING round a corner, in mid-chase, SCREECHING down the street-

INT. PURPLE BENTLEY - SAME

NICKY (24, slick blue sharkskin suit and designer shades) is at the wheel, weaving between cars, while MATT (26, Hugo Boss suit, smooth) freaks out in the passenger seat, looks over his shoulder at a BLACK ESCALADE, pursuing-

MATT
Let's just give it to 'em, Nicky!

The Escalade closes in; Nicky SWERVES, almost loses it.

NICKY
Sonsabitches! Over my dead body!

MATT
Keep driving like that, it could happen!

From the NOISY CHAOS of this chase, we CUT TO:

INT. EXAM ROOM - PLASTIC SURGEON'S OFFICE - DAY

A TV SCREEN - showing BREAKING HELICOPTER NEWS FOOTAGE of the Bentley chase. Oblivious to it, DENISE (40s, pretty, made up and bejeweled to the nines) holds up MOVIE STAR PROFILE-CARDS, comparing her own features in a mirror-

DENISE
I can't decide, Doctor: Angelina Jolie or Nicole Kidman? What do you think?

DOCTOR
How about Jolie lips and a Kidman nose..?

The question hangs, as Denise is distracted by:

ANCHORMAN (ON TV)
...a purple Bentley leading a high speed chase through Astoria, Queens...

Off Denise's shocked look, we CUT TO:

PITCH BLACK - a ringing cell phone LIGHTS UP, revealing LEANNE (20's, cute with a pixie hairdo), lying down in a cramped space. INTERCUT:

DENISE
Leanne, oh-my-god, turn on your TV!
Nicky's being chased by the police.

LEANNE
The police..?

Light suddenly streams in, revealing Leanne is INSIDE -

THE TRUNK OF THE BENTLEY

Matt has pulled down the arm-rest panel and is looking in from the back seat. Behind him, we see Nicky driving.

MATT
You okay back there..?!

DENISE (THROUGH PHONE)
Who's that talking? Is that Matt..?

LEANNE
I have another call, Denise. Gotta go...
(hangs up; to Matt, fearful)
That was Denise! She saw us on the news!?

MATT
The news..?!

As Matt absorbs that, he hears CHOPPER BLADES WHIRRING overhead. Matt looks up at the sky - A CHOPPER OVERHEAD!

MATT (CONT'D)
Dammit.
(to Leanne, reassuring)
Don't worry, they're after us, not you.

LEANNE
I can't get caught, Matt. Emma needs me.

Matt reaches out, takes her hand in his.

MATT
I promised you, babe - I got you.

They share a look of solidarity, and then another phone rings. We SWING TO - in front, NICKY answers his cell.

NICKY
Hey, there, sorry I'm late...

INT. BACKSTAGE - CARNEGIE HALL - SAME

SAMIRA (20, Pakistani), ravishing in a gown, peeks out of the curtain at the audience, intense on the phone-

SAMIRA
Nicky, I go on in twenty minutes!

TWO CELLISTS and a FRENCH HORN PLAYER, in formal wear, look over at her, wondering what's up, as we INTERCUT:

NICKY
(to Samira)
BQE's a parking lot, go on without us.

SAMIRA
Go on without you? YOU HAVE MY STRADIVARIUS!!!

Uh-oh: Nicky glances over at a VIOLIN CASE. Frustrated, he YANKS at the wheel with a SCREECH as we CUT TO:

INT. GAS STATION/MECHANIC SHOP - SAME

ANTONIO CLEMENTE (40s), in coveralls emblazoned with a "Gold Star" logo, stands beside an old station wagon, talking to MRS. DELAGARZA (70ish, curmudgeonly).

ANTONIO
Brake pads should be good now, Mrs. Delagarza.

MRS. DELAGARZA
For this price? They better be!

Her crankiness resolves in a smile, though, as she holds out a New York Post - a PHOTO on Page 6: a dapper, TUXEDOED ANTONIO, posed alongside an Older Man.

MRS. DELAGARZA (CONT'D)
You and the Mayor, isn't that something? Would you sign it for me?
(as he obliges her)
What the heck are you doing here, climbing under cars for a living?

ANTONIO
I'm an international man of mystery. This is just my cover.

He WINKS at her but then... A TV in BG takes his attention - he sees the BENTLEY, leading the pursuit-

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
What the..? I know that car.
(bolting outside)
They're gonna ride right past here!

IN THE BENTLEY - As Nicky tears through the streets, Matt looks back at the Escalade and cruisers in their wake-

MATT
Just pull over, Nicky!

NICKY
I can lose 'em!

MATT
You're insane, you know that?

MATT (CONT'D)
You've gone nuts!!!

NICKY
...You got a better idea?

Matt reaches over, pulling out A DUFFEL -

NICKY
Don't even think about it. Matt?! What're you doing, Matt?!!

MATT
Giving 'em what they want!

WIDE ANGLE - CHOPPER POV

Looking down as the chase speeds up an elevated on-ramp. Suddenly, A PLUME OF CASH streams out of the Bentley's sun roof, slowing the pursuers - as we CUT TO:

EXT. GOLD STAR GAS STATION - DAY

Antonio watches police cars race by up the on-ramp. He shakes his head and starts back in, but feels something, and looks up into... a rainfall of MONEY FLUTTERING DOWN all around him. He is engulfed - perplexed, mystified - by the STORM OF CASH. It's surreal. We TILT UP TO a sign: "GOLD STAR GAS 'N SHOP" and MATCH CUT TO:

A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH

...the same sign: "GOLD STAR GAS 'N SHOP" - under which stand SEVEN EMPLOYEES, less glamorous now in tacky uniforms, in front of the gas station/minimart: Nicky and Matt from the car, Leanne from the trunk, Denise from the doctor's office, Samira from Carnegie Hall and Antonio from the auto shop. At the center of the group is BOB HARRIS (50's, the smiling, friendly boss)...

WOMAN'S VOICE (PRELAP)
You still have your cold, Bob, stay home.

SUPER: "6 MONTHS EARLIER"

INT. BOB'S HOUSE - DAY

Bob SNUFFLES into a handkerchief as he stares at the photo. He has taken it from a shelf of mementos - Gold Star pens, key chains, hats... a funny plaque that says "Boss of the Week." His girlfriend ILENE (50s) looks on.

ILENE
One day off isn't going to kill you.

BOB
Can't break my streak, another 468 shifts in a row, and I get a free box of wine!

ILENE
I know, you're the Cal Ripken of gas station managers. - Have you told them?

BOB
No use getting 'em all wound up til it's set in stone. I have the meeting today.

She kisses him, sweetly, as he gets ready to go.

ILENE
Did you check what the lottery's up to?

BOB
45 million. Give or take.

ILENE
Fingers crossed. Bora Bora, here we come!

Bob SNEEZES, as she hands him his GOLD STAR TRAVEL MUG.

INT. ANTONIO'S APARTMENT - DAY

A GOLD STAR MUG in the hand of Antonio - who at present, has no inkling he will ever meet the mayor or own a tux. He marches around the table of his kitchen, evaluating the 'troops': JULIO (14), ALMA (12) and SANDRA (9).

ANTONIO
Homework?

ALL THE KIDS
Yes, sir.

ANTONIO
Lunch?

ALL THE KIDS
Yes, sir.

ANTONIO
Inhaler?

ALMA
(wheezy and annoyed)
Yes, Dad!

ANTONIO
Resume breakfast. We leave at precisely zero-seven hundred.

The kids dig back into breakfast as Antonio's wife BIANCA (38) steps in, a wilted piece of bread in her palm.

BIANCA
The toaster we got as a wedding present, which was not exactly state-of-the-art 15 years ago..? Well, this may come as a shock to you, but... *está muerta*.

He grins, Cheshire cat-like, and waves her over to a cabinet - he opens it and reaches for something in back.

ANTONIO
Some people lose the mystery in their relationship. Some people lose the surprise, the connection, the Wow. But those people, my lovely bride...

From a tin coffee can, he plucks out a fat WAD OF CASH.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
...they are not us.

He unpeels a couple of 100-dollar bills and, taking the limp slice of bread from her, replaces it with the money.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Go get your toaster, *mi cariña*.

She hugs him, thrilled. THEY KISS. At the table: Julio rolls his eyes, Alma looks queasy, Sandra beams with joy.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
All right, troops, we are mobilizing!

He's never felt so on top of things. He grabs a DONUT.

INT. DENISE'S HOUSE - DAY

A DONUT rises to the mouth of Denise (un-coiffed and 25 pounds heavier than the Denise we saw earlier) - in a faux-Adidas track suit. But as she goes to bite into it, her husband TED (40s), reading the paper, interrupts her -

TED
Hon - a minute on the lips...

DENISE
...A lifetime on the hips. I know. You're right. Thank you.

She puts the donut down and looks at the phone bill.

DENISE (CONT'D)
We went over our minutes again. And all these texts to some 646 number..?

TED
(looks at the bill)
Oh. That's when I was trying to work out the cable problem. With the cable guy.

Denise does a calf stretch; it does NOT come naturally.

DENISE
You texted the cable guy?

TED
I'll call them and get it worked out.

DENISE
Okay, gotta hit the pavement.

She moves to kiss him, but he crosses for some coffee.

DENISE (CONT'D)
I'm walking to work now. Gonna lose a pound a week until I'm back at the weight I was on our wedding day.

TED
How long will that take?

DENISE
Not long. By Novemberrr...
(calculating in her head)
...2014. All right, off I go!

Furtively, she snags the DONUT on her way out, as we HEAR Olivia Newton-John's "Let's Get Physical," and we CUT TO:

EXT. QUEENS BOULEVARD - DAY

Through a crowd of morning pedestrians, we FIND the red and white-striped tracksuit of Denise, SPEED-WALKING. It's adorable, if a tad ridiculous. Unconsciously, she twists her WEDDING RING as we CUT TO:

EXT. STREET/INT. GYPSY CAB (DRIVING) - DAY

A WEDDING BAND on the finger of AHSAN (40's), a gypsy cab driver giving a ride to his daughter, Samira, a beat-up violin case in lap. In her worn Gold Star uniform, Samira couldn't be further from the gowned, ravishing beauty at Carnegie Hall. Ahsan loves America. We see flags, eagles, visages of Kennedy and Reagan plastered around his cab.

AHSAN
You should go to a real school, Samira. To make it in America, you have to be educated, well-spoken...
(screams at traffic)
Pick a lane, you Prius bastard!

SAMIRA
Juilliard *is* a real school, Dad.

Out the window, she spots DENISE, SPEED-WALKING -

SAMIRA (CONT'D)
Keep it up, Denise! Looking good!

Denise gives a thumbs-up. As they drive on -

SAMIRA (CONT'D)
Miss Hagerty says I'm good, Dad - she thinks maybe I could get a scholarship and play in an orchestra someday..!

AHSAN
Who's gonna marry a girl who's got a violin stuck to her face half the day?

SAMIRA
I'm not interested in getting married any time soon, so don't worry.

AHSAN
Well, I am worried! And you better get interested. Your mother spoke to her cousin in Srinigar. They found a man. A doctor.

SAMIRA
Arranged marriage? Really, Dad? What're you gonna do next, throw me in a volcano?

AHSAN
Don't worry, he has most of his hair.
(off her glum look)
Oh, cheer up, Samira. You live in the greatest country in the world.
(screams out window)
Are you all idiots?! It says DON'T WALK!

A HONKING CAR BLURS by...

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

A CAR PULLS TO THE CURB, lets out A LITTLE BOY. REVEAL Leanne (long hair loosely clipped back, unlike the pixie 'salon-cut' we saw her sporting in the trunk of the Bentley). She walks with daughter EMMA (7), in a tutu and tights, a pair of ballet shoes hanging around her neck.

EMMA
It's pizza day. Can I have five dollars?

LEANNE
(digging through her bag)
Let me see, honey... how much I've got here... I just paid for dance class, and this was for the lottery pool but...

EMMA
It's okay, I don't need it. If we win the lottery, every day will be pizza day. And anyway, I'm off gluten.

It's sweet relief, and Leanne feels it. Emma takes her lunchbox and does an ARABESQUE, head high.

LEANNE
Nice! Don't forget to point that toe! And I'll see you at the recital!

Emma starts off, then turns and runs... JUMPING into her mother's arms and KISSING her.

EMMA
We're a good team, Mommy.

A WOMAN'S VOICE (PRELAP)
What kind of mother are you?!

INT. KORZAK HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The woman, RUTH (50s) holds up a cereal box as she argues with MARY (24, very pregnant). A small boy, HENRY (5), eats at the table, grinning impishly over a colorful bowl of sugary cereal.

RUTH
You think there's fruit in a Fruit Loop? There's... 'thiamine hydro-chloride.' What tree does that grow on?

MARY
You're gonna lecture me on how to be a mother..?

INT. KORZAK HOUSE - MATT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Beside a mound of blankets, a pillow stirs to life.

MARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
One of your kids is half asleep..!

Out pops Matt's weary face (a far cry from the stylish, Hugo Boss suited Matt we saw in the purple Bentley). He looks at the clock: 7:45 AM. Buries his head again.

INT. KORZAK HOUSE - NICKY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nicky does yoga - struggling to keep his balance in a one-legged 'tree pose.' Posters on the wall of his dream Maxim girl and his dream car, A PURPLE BENTLEY. But here, in his worn T-shirt, those dreams seem a long way off.

MARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...The other's a convict!

Nicky's focus is blown - his one-legged tree FALLS! THUD.

INT. KORZAK HOUSE - MATT'S BEDROOM - AS BEFORE

Matt stares at the ceiling, listening to the dulcet tones of the women in his life screaming at each other.

RUTH (O.S.)
Well, no one made you and Matt move back into my house and eat my food!

MARY (O.S.)
Oh yeah? Obama did! We woulda never moved back in here if I hadn't got laid off!

A DOOR SLAMS! Then Nicky barges in, stares at Matt.

NICKY
You gotta do something! This yelling is totally screwing up my *samadhi*!

MATT
She's your mother, too.

NICKY
Well, Mary's your... baby mama!

And then, Mary appears, looking wound up. Matt tries to placate her.

MATT
Have you and Mom been fighting again?

NICKY
Yeah, because it's not like everybody in Queens couldn't hear it!
(at Mary, as he storms out)
And, for your information, I am an *ex*-convict, okay?!

Once Nicky is gone, Mary moves over to Matt on the bed.

MARY
You gotta find us a place of our own, Matt. We can't keep living with your crazy mother and your delinquent brother.

MATT
Well... I was holding off till it was a sure thing, gotta get Bob to give me that raise, but... Check it out.

He pulls out a FLYER for a new apartment complex.

MARY
What is it..? Shut up! You got us one?!

MATT
Not yet but soon. I need a little more money for security and first month.

She slides her hand under the blanket. In silky tones:

MARY
Can you imagine how great it'll be to have our own place again? Nobody to walk in on us or find our toys in the drawers?

MATT
Oh no. Did Mom find the... -- ?

MARY
(finger to his lips)
Just imagine, a place with, I don't know, a big bathtub, and thick walls, and shag carpeting in every room. Shag, Matt. In every room. Imagine the fun we'd have...

MATT
I like shag.

Her hand still at work under the covers...

MARY
I know you do. You're the shagmeister, the king of shag. So - go get a raise as big as the one I'm getting out of you.

MATT
I will. I'm gonna talk to Bob today.

MARY
Good. Because once this baby's born, I ain't spending another day under that witch's roof.

She gives a tug under the blanket. His face reflects an uncomfortable mix of arousal and apprehension.

INT. GOLD STAR - DAY

Customers flow in and out. Antonio enters, chomping on a breakfast burrito. He hands invoices to Denise at the register. As he teases, she ignores him-

ANTONIO
Oh, Denise. You temptress. You voluptuosa vixen de Astoria. If Bianca finds out about us, there's gonna be trouble...

DENISE
(stamping the forms)
Two smog checks. Oil change. Alignment. Wiper blade replacement...
(then notices)

DENISE
Processed cheese, saturated fat, nitrates, SODIUM; do you have any idea what that's doing to your body?

ANTONIO
No, but maybe later, you could show me. Me, you, and a breakfast burrito...
"*Welcome to Fantasy Island...*"

She grimaces and hands him the invoices. He turns to leave but Leanne arrives, handing him-

LEANNE
Your coffee.

ANTONIO
Smoky, fruity; chocolate overtone with notes of hazel. What kind is it?

LEANNE
Instant.

DENISE
Can I get your opinion on something?
(as Antonio leaves)
You too. I could use a male perspective.

ANTONIO
I've been married fifteen years, honey, I have no more male perspective.

DENISE
It's probably nothing. Just, I was doing bills, and I noticed Ted had some texts to a strange number.

ANTONIO
What's some?

DENISE
A hundred and seventy-four.

Antonio almost spits up his coffee.

DENISE (CONT'D)
He said it was the cable guy.

ANTONIO
(as he moves away)
From a male perspective..? Totally makes sense. Love to stay and chat, but I got a steering column - thing - replacement.

DENISE
It does sound kinda suspicious, right?

LEANNE
Why don't you call the number?

DENISE
Really? And say what?

LEANNE
Just see if the cable guy picks up.

As Denise ponders that, Matt and Nicky blow in-

MATT
Is Bob in yet?

LEANNE
In back. Just got in from a meeting.

DENISE
Hey, the drawing is tomorrow, so I need your lottery pool money.

Nicky, doubles back, handing Denise cash. Matt digs through his pockets. Nada. He looks at Nicky-

NICKY
Sorry, bro, tapped out.

He buzzes off. Matt looks at the girls-

MATT
Can you spot me this week?

LEANNE
Don't worry, Matt, we got your back.

Matt and Leanne trade a warm smile, innocent enough, <u>but it lasts a beat longer than it should</u>. We linger on Leanne, watching Matt off, but her spell is broken by--

DENISE
That's the fifth week in a row. You wanna cover him again?

LEANNE
Actually, I already put in my last five.
(off Denise's glare)
Have a heart. You can spare five bucks. Poor thing, he's under so much stress.

As Denise begrudgingly searches her purse for her wallet, she pulls out a series of items: a PINK RABBIT'S FOOT, a metal 4-LEAF CLOVER pendant, a LAUGHING BUDDHA figure-

LEANNE (CONT'D)
Maybe we should try different numbers.

DENISE
If we pick new numbers, then our old numbers will win. Why tempt fate?

She puts down a FULL-SIZE HORSESHOE - CLANG! - as she finds the money and we CUT TO:

INT. GOLD STAR - BACK HALL/UTILITY ROOM

Nicky walks by the utility room, spotting Samira inside. He enters and closes the door. She wheels around, SPOOKED - and he plants a kiss on her. She pulls away-

SAMIRA
Someone'll hear us.

NICKY
Not if we're quiet. Or we can turn on the power vac and do it as loud as we want!

SAMIRA
Nicholas... stop. I'm not like that. And I don't want everybody thinking I am.

NICKY
I was just teasing. Fine, I'll go - IF you come out with me Friday. DJ Foosh is spinnin' at the Smashbox.

SAMIRA
Sure, I'll just tell my parents I'll be out all night at some hip-hop dive with an ex-convict.

NICKY
Reformed ex-convict.

She smirks. Then, he goes serious. Looking into her eyes.

SAMIRA
Why're you looking at me like that?

NICKY
(struggling through)
Aap... hayn... bohot... khoobsoorat...

She marvels a beat, then breaks out laughing. He sulks-

NICKY (CONT'D)
Guy tells you you're beautiful in Urdu, you don't have to laugh at him.

SAMIRA
(trying not to laugh)
You actually said I was duck-like.

NICKY
I did?

Then he laughs too. Now she looks into his eyes.

SAMIRA
You're very sweet. It's just, there are a lot of expectations. My parents want...

NICKY
Forget them - what do *you* want?!

She pauses, pondering it deeply. Not really certain.

SAMIRA
...I want to take things slow. Okay?

He nods, trying to hide his dismay in a smile. Then, doing his best Donald Duck impression, he quacks out-

NICKY
You're still one hot duck.

He kisses her again, and she pushes him out the door. But by the look on her face, we can see she really likes him.
PRELAP - the DUCKLIKE SOUND of a nose blowing-

INT. BOB'S OFFICE - DAY

Bob wipes his nose with a hanky as Matt is in mid-plea-

MATT
...Bob, in all the years I worked here, have I ever once, ever asked you for... a day off? Extra vacation time..?!
(before Bob can answer)
...thing is, I got a baby coming in a month, so I only got a few weeks to find a place, which I did, but they want 3 months security, that's like 3200 bucks-
(then)
I'm not asking for a handout, just an advance.

BOB
Matt, you know I'd love to front you the dough, I really would. Problem is... I had a meeting this morning. The owner of Gold Star is selling to a national chain.

MATT
Wha..? What's that mean?

BOB
It means they're not even sure who, if any of us, will be able to keep our jobs.

Matt sinks, seeming devastated.

INT./EXT. GARAGE/STREET - DAY

As Antonio and Nicky work to re-attach the hood of a truck, Nicky hears the rumble of a subwoofer, sees a tricked-out Escalade across the street. Two badasses - EDDIE and GRONK - lean against it, eyeballing him.

NICKY
Gimme a sec, will ya?

He goes, leaving Antonio struggling to hold up the hood-

ANTONIO
Hey, don't make it a lunch break!

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Nicky guardedly approaches Eddie and Gronk.

EDDIE
You're out six months - no call, no text... Don't you love me no more?

NICKY
C'mon, guys, I'm workin'...

GRONK
I'm pretty sure you still work for us.

EDDIE
That was a lot of dope, Nicky. You promised you could deliver it. You get busted, who do you think pays for it?

NICKY
I did my time. I didn't rat you out. Way I see it, I paid plenty.

GRONK
(shoving Nicky)
The way *you* see it?! That was our 60K.

ANTONIO (V.O.)
Got a problem, guys..?

They all turn to see Antonio, crow bar over his shoulder.

ANTONIO
'Cause I really need him back at work.

EDDIE
Go on, Nicky. Go make us our money back.

They get in the Escalade and drive off, leaving Nicky rattled. As he walks back with Antonio-

ANTONIO
What was that about?

Nicky just looks away and heads back to work, frustrated.

INT. BOB'S OFFICE - AS BEFORE

Matt slumps in a chair, shell-shocked - as a PHONE RINGS.

MATT
This can't be happening. This job's all I got, Bob. I'm scared she'll leave me... I mean, we're at the end of our rope here.

BOB
...You gonna answer that?

MATT
(gets his phone)
Hey, Mom. What?! I'm on my way!
(to Bob)
Mary passed out. She's on her way to the hospital..!

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Nicky pulls his old car up. Matt jumps out, rushes inside-

INT. HOSPITAL - VARIOUS

Matt rushes down the hall, accompanied by a NURSE-

MATT
Where is she? She okay? Where is she?

NURSE
Relax, sir, she's right over here.

They turn a corner, arrive at a room - he steps in the doorway to see - Mary in bed looking up at him, smiling. And in her arms, she's holding an adorable baby girl.

MARY
Guess she couldn't wait to meet you.

Matt sighs a huge smile, totally relieved and overjoyed-

EXT. STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nicky holds gifts; flowers and a teddy bear. He's on his cell phone, a little on edge-

NICKY (INTO CELL)
Hey, Lenny, it's Nicky... Yeah, how you been? ...I'm good, you know... But since you asked, I am kinda in a jam. ...Lenny, would I call you out of the blue and hit you up for cash? Tsch! Come on...

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Matt sits bedside, cradling his new baby girl.

MATT
I can't get over how beautiful she is.

He hands Mary the baby. A warm, comforting moment of joy between them. But then, Mary goes clear-eyed-

MARY
...Did Bob give you the raise? Are we getting the apartment?

Off Matt, all the panic and stress returning, double--

BACK ON THE STREET - WITH NICKY (AS BEFORE)

NICKY (INTO CELL)
Bernie. Hey, bro, we been friends forever, right? ...It's Nicky. NICKY KORZAK! (CLICK) Bernie? BERNIE...?!!

BACK IN THE HOSPITAL - SAME (AS BEFORE)

MATT
...I just need a little more time.

MARY
You gotta understand, Matt, I can't take it anymore. I'll get Henry and the baby and go to my sister's until you find us a place...

MATT
Come on, Ma's not so bad.

MARY
She put me into premature labor!

At that moment, Matt's mother comes whirling in with little Henry, who jumps on Matt's lap, hugging him -

RUTH
There's my shweet baby girl... oh yesh..!
(takes the baby from Mary)
This swaddle's all wrong. Like a burrito. Poor thing: "I'm not a burrito! No I am not." Did mommy do this to you? Don't worry, Nana's here to fix everything...

MARY
(to Matt)
I'm calling my sister.

Off Matt, hugging his son, looking at his new baby-

BACK ON THE STREET - WITH NICKY (AS BEFORE)

NICKY (INTO CELL)
(desperate now)
Marco, I ain't asking for a kidney, here! You know these guys. I don't come through, they're gonna break somethin'!

CLICK. Frustrated, Nicky SLAMS the bear against a parking meter, then notices a BLINKING LOTTERY sign in a liquor store window, through which, he sees the cashier, taking money from a a line of customers, buying tickets.

INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE THE NURSERY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Matt sits against the wall holding A TEDDY BEAR, stuffing falling out of its head. Beside him, Nicky pours from a brown-bagged-bottle into Dixie cups - hands one to Matt.

NICKY (CONT'D)
To my big brother and his baby girl.

They chug. Matt's PHONE BUZZES - he checks a text. His look: oh shit. He holds it up for Nicky to see.

MATT
I called the realtor to see what she could do. She needs the money, all of it, in two days, or we lose the apartment.

NICKY
...You really think Mary'll take the kids and move out?
(off Matt's 'yes' look)
What're you gonna do?

MATT
I dunno. Think of something.

NICKY
I was thinking, where could Matt find some quick dough..? And, you know... tomorrow's lottery night. Jackpot's sky high, always tons of cash coming in.

Matt shoots him a look. Nicky hesitates, then offers-

NICKY (CONT'D)
You know the combo to the safe...

MATT
Nicky!

NICKY
We could make it look like a robbery. There's already been three in the neighborhood. We use the same M.O. Perp comes in after closing. No one would know-

MATT
I would know. Okay? I would know. And you just got off parole, you shouldn't even be thinking about this!

NICKY
I'm thinking about you! You got no money, you might lose your job. Mary's gonna take the kids. You're in a hole, Matt! A freakin' abyss. This is a way out...

MATT
Forget it, alright?! It's crazy!

An uncomfortably long beat. Then Nicky nods. They stand up, and as they hug, Nicky says it quietly-

NICKY
Insurance covers Gold Star - nobody gets hurt. I'm just saying...

Nicky starts off. Matt looks in at his baby girl through his conflicted reflection in the nursery window. Then-

MATT
...Wait.

Nicky turns. And as the two hold a look, we can see the birth of a bad idea taking seed. And then we GO TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. GOLD STAR - NEXT DAY

A new day at Gold Star. As people come in and out-

JOEY (PRELAP)
Sure know your way around a cheesesteak.

INT. GOLD STAR - DELI COUNTER

Leanne makes a sandwich for JOEY (30, sweet-shy-smitten).

LEANNE
I better. I'm from Philly.

JOEY
No kiddin'! I lived there for a bit when I was a kid. Which part?

LEANNE
(suddenly evasive)
Kinda all over. We moved around a bunch.

As she hands him his sandwich, we sense her discomfort, like she's hiding something.

JOEY
I bet someone in my family knows you-- I got so many relatives in that town it's like a freakin' infestation-

LEANNE
(relieved as she spots...)
Matt! What are you doing back?!

Matt stops, edgy and nervous, which he tries to hide.

MATT
...There's nothing to do at the hospital. Mary and the baby are bonding, so...

LEANNE
Congratulations! It's so exciting!

Leanne leans over the counter to hug him. Joey sulks off.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
By the way, thanks for talking to Emma the other day. It's good for her to have a male influence in her life and... well, it really helped.

Matt's gratified to hear that.

MATT
So the dance recital was good then? She got over her stage fright?

LEANNE
They had to drag her off.

MATT
That's great, Leanne. I, uh...
(their eyes are locked)
...I better go clock in.

INT. GOLD STAR - UTILITY ROOM - DAY

Denise walks in, talking on her cell phone-

DENISE
Hey, Sweetie, I'm gettin' off a little early, so, I was thinkin' I'd stop by the butcher, you know, make you some of those ribs you like? Maybe we can watch the lottery drawing tonight. Or a movie or somethin'. All right. Call me when you get this message. If you want. Or I'll just see you at home. Okay. I love you.

She hangs up, then pulls out a napkin - stares anxiously at the TELEPHONE NUMBER handwritten on it. She STARTS DIALING the number, but then CLOSES THE PHONE. Then -

She eyes the scale. Nervously, she kicks off her shoes and mumbles something, like a prayer to the diet gods. But just as she's about to step on the scale, she sees-

DENISE (CONT'D)
Matt!
(bear hugging him)
A girl. Oh, I'm so happy for you!

MATT
Yeah, thanks, Denise.

BOB (O.S.)
There he is!

Bob enters, handing him a bottle of booze. Denise grabs her shoes and exits-

MATT
Thanks, Bob.

BOB
Don’t thank me, thank Gold Star's soon-to-be parent company, “Valdez Industries.” There's a whole crate of the stuff in my office. Baby’s doin’ okay?

MATT
Yeah... she’s early, but, she’s strong.

BOB
‘A son’s a son until he takes a wife. A daughter’s a daughter for life.’

Bob embraces him in a paternal hug, then-

BOB (CONT’D)
Good. Okay. Now, stop having babies and get back to work.

As Bob exits, Matt hangs up his jacket and notices his HAND IS SHAKING! He then catches sight of Nicky, walking past the utility room. The brothers trade an intense nod - and we are sure at this moment, that <u>THE ROBBERY IS ON!</u>

INT. GOLD STAR - VARIOUS - DAY

As Bruce Springsteen's “LUCKY TOWN” blares, we roll through a MONTAGE: DENISE, rings up customers buying lottery tickets. - Nicky eyes the CASH she takes in.

Matt nervously restocks a shelf while casing the security cameras. He steals a clandestine look to Nicky, who walks back to the garage, stopping at his coat, on the rack, making sure his GUN is still in the pocket as we FADE TO:

INT. GOLD STAR - THAT EVENING

We find everyone at the front of the shop, around Matt. Leanne’s daughter, Emma, is there with her book bag, sitting on Leanne’s lap. Antonio hands Matt a wool blob-

MATT
Wow, thanks...
(then)
What is it?

ANTONIO
A onesie. Bianca knitted it. She had to leave off the legs and the sleeves, ‘cause, you know, baby came early.

Bob blows his nose. Nicky eyes Matt, prodding him to-

MATT
Jeez, Bob, you look as bad as you sound. Why don't you take off? I can close up.

DENISE
I'd stay and help, but I have to get home to make dinner for Ted.

Antonio and Leanne trade a look, then-

ANTONIO
Sorry, Matt, but my Mets are playing.

BOB
Nick, can you help your brother out?

NICKY
I would, but I have a date...

SAMIRA
With who?!

Nicky looks over at her, a little flummoxed. He obviously didn't factor in Samira's reaction to his alibi.

NICKY
Just some girl I met in a bar.

Clearly hurt, she glares at Nicky as we hear a car horn, belting out the first bar of the "Star-Spangled Banner."

SAMIRA
That's my dad. Congratulations, Matt.

MATT
Thanks, Samira.

She grabs her violin case and darts out, snubbing Nicky.

LEANNE
We can stay for a little, right Emma?

MATT
(to Emma)
Don't you have homework?

EMMA
I have to do a paragraph on helping.

LEANNE
Perfect research, then, isn't it?!

MATT
Nah, don't worry. I can handle it.

Leanne tries to hide her obvious disappointment.

BOB
Well, guess I will call it a day, then.

Bob pats Matt on the back, then exits. Nicky gives Matt a loaded look, then walks out. Denise, Leanne and Antonio follow. Matt closes the door - HIS HAND SHAKES as he turns over the "CLOSED" sign.

INT./EXT. GOLD STAR LATER - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Matt mops up, sweating, furtively eyeing security cams-

OUTSIDE, Matt stacks the folding sign. And as he brings it in, WE SHOOT DOWN THE STREET TO NICKY, walking toward the shop, a ski mask over his head. He enters the shop, pulling out a gun, coming up behind Matt -

NICKY
Let's do this!

INTERCUT - SECURITY CAM POV - as Matt whips around seeing the gun, genuinely spooked. He throws up his hands. There's no audio on the cameras, but it looks very convincing as Nicky waves the gun, marching Matt into-

THE BACK OFFICE - SECURITY CAM POV OF Matt, kneeling at the safe. Nicky behind him, yelling. It looks vicious, and it's only when we come out of POV that we hear-

NICKY (CONT'D)
I'm being a good robber here, but you..?
You're overdoing the victim thing.

MATT
I can't think with you pointing that gun at me! Where'd you get it, anyway?

NICKY
Under your son's bed. It's a toy. Now get in character, or I'm gonna squirt you!

A CELL PHONE RINGS from inside the shop. They freeze.

NICKY (CONT'D)
Forget about it. Just open the safe.

The phone RINGS again. It's disconcerting to Matt. He finally opens the safe. He pulls out the money-

MATT
Gimme the bag.

NICKY
The bag! I knew I forgot something.

MATT
You forgot the bag..?!

Nicky looks around, yanks a large box of Cheerios from a crate - tears it open, pours out the cereal, hands Matt the box-

NICKY
Stuff it in here!

MATT
Are you kidding me...?!

NICKY
What's the difference?!

Matt stuffs the money in the cereal box, and then - THE DOOR JINGLES! The boys freeze, hearing footsteps - Nicky ducks into the dark. Matt gets to his feet, just as Bob enters. Matt tries not to act nervous-

MATT
Hey, Bob. What's up?

BOB
Forgot my phone on my desk.

Matt smiles. Bob turns to leave, but then -- HE STOPS - noticing that pile of Cheerios scattered on the floor.

BOB (CONT'D)
Everything okay here..?

Before Matt can answer, Nicky panics, grabs a bottle from the gift crate of booze and SMASHES Bob over the head. Bob CRUMPLES to the floor, UNCONSCIOUS AND BLEEDING. Nicky grabs the money and runs. The fake robbery is suddenly feeling very real as Matt drops to Bob's side-

MATT
Bob..! Bob! BOB!

Matt's hands shake as he pulls out his cell, barely able to dial. We hear the fear and distress in his voice-

MATT (CONT'D)
I need an Ambulance! There's been a robbery at Gold Star Gas and Shop! Please hurry! Please..!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. STREET/GOLD STAR - NIGHT

Denise and Ilene, distraught, escort the gurney as paramedics load Bob, unconscious, into an ambulance.

ILENE
Thanks so much for coming, Denise.

DENISE
Whatever you need, Ilene, I'm here for both of you.

Denise looks over and waves, reassuringly... to MATT, who sits in the open back of a cop car, watching them...

MAN (O.S.)
Matt Korzak..?

Matt looks to find the man: DETECTIVE AL MINETTI (40s), who is genial and professional. Matt, however, has trouble avoiding getting tripped up by his own guilt.

MINETTI
Al Minetti, Robbery/Homicide. You okay?

MATT
Kinda shaken up.

MINETTI
The unis downloaded me, so I won't make you go through it all again right now. Just a couple questions. How long you worked here?

MATT
Almost seven years.

MINETTI
And you stayed late to close up?

MATT
That's right.

MINETTI
Is that usually your job?

MATT
Not usually, no, but...
(sweating a little)
Bob was under the weather, so I offered.
(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)
I knew about those other robberies, so... I didn't want anything to happen.

MINETTI
What do you mean?

MATT
To Bob. I didn't want anything to happen to Bob. - How bad is he?

MINETTI
Touch and go. Head injury, loss of consciousness - that's never good. But he's lucky you were there.

The terrible irony of that is not lost on Matt...

MATT
...Yeah.

MINETTI
The unis'll drive you home now.

Matt nods, heads to the squad car as we HEAR:

MATT (PRELAP)
You went too far! Typical hothead bull -

INT. KORZAK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

NICKY
Are you calling me stupid? Because if you're calling me stupid -

MATT
Stupid would be a compliment! It implies some minimal brain activity -

He grabs Nicky; they tussle. Messily, across the furniture. Nicky restrains Matt until he calms, spent.

NICKY
Hey... hey! Settle down! Easy!

MATT
Bob... Bob's in bad shape, man. He might not make it.

NICKY
Bob's tough, he'll be fine.

MATT
You know that? You don't know that.

NICKY
I know this - we gotta control the things we can and not worry about the things we can't. And have the wisdom to know the difference. You hear me?

MATT
I can't lie. We gotta tell the truth.

NICKY
Whoa, whoa... the what?

MATT
There is a thing called moral obligation-

NICKY
Where's your moral obligation to me, huh? I did this for you! You wanna drag me down on something you roped me into?

MATT
It was your idea! And I never figured on this! You hit him with a damn bottle!

NICKY
Listen up, big brother, I been in the joint. You'll last maybe ten minutes there. And then what happens to Mary and Henry and that little girl you ain't even got a name for yet? What happens to them when you're stuck doing time?

Matt goes quiet. He has no answer to this, can't even contemplate an answer. Nicky pulls some bills from a wad and chucks them at his brother.

NICKY (CONT'D)
Nine large! Split two ways. I rounded up your cut, don't thank me. Dickhead.

Matt stares at the cash in his hand, like it's contaminated. The DOORBELL RINGS. They expect the worst.

MATT
It's probably that damn detective, he didn't believe me for a second.

NICKY
Put the money away. And relax. As long as we stick together, they got nothing.

As they stuff the money in their pockets, their mother Ruth appears, sleepy, in night-clothes.

RUTH
Who the hell is that? Between you two idiots yelling, the phone ringing and now the door - how am I supposed to get through one freakin' hour of Revenge?

NICKY
It's all right, Ma, go to your room.

But she remains as they hear the DOORBELL AGAIN and:

DENISE (O.S.)
Nicky! Matt! Open up, it's me, Denise!

She sounds distressed. Nicky opens the door.

NICKY
...Denise..?

DENISE
I tried calling, but nobody answered... You haven't heard yet?

She wanders in, flustered. The guys exchange a dire look.

MATT
Is it Bob? He's dead, ain't he?

NICKY
Is it brain-damage? Like... he'll never remember anything?

RUTH
Did something happen to Bob?

DENISE
(surprised)
There was a robbery, Ruth - Bob got his head bashed in. They're not sure he'll live. - Didn't you tell your mom?

NICKY
We didn't want to upset her.

MATT
Denise - tell us. Is he dead..?

And as Denise STRUGGLES for words, a cover of "MONEY CHANGES EVERYTHING" rises, and we CUT TO:

INT. LEANNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leanne sits on the couch watching TV, Emma beside her, doing homework. As the lottery drawing begins, Leanne grabs a scrap of paper with her numbers scribbled on it.

LOTTERY ANNOUNCER (ON TV)
The first digit in tonight's winning number is Six...

LEANNE
(looks at the paper)
Six... Okay, good start.

Emma puts her feet up on the couch - Leanne notices.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
No shoes on the couch.

LOTTERY ANNOUNCER (ON TV)
...followed by Eight...

Interest piqued, Leanne moves to the edge of the sofa.

INT. SAMIRA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Samira practices her violin as her mother RIJA (40s) prepares dinner. Ahsan and her two brothers play Wii.

INT. LEANNE'S APARTMENT - AS BEFORE

LOTTERY ANNOUNCER (TV)
...followed by Three... Six... Nine...

LEANNE
(reading her paper)
...Three... and Six... and Nine...

Leanne stands up, getting excited; Emma looks up from her homework.

INT. ANTONIO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bianca opens up her new fancy toaster - a Delonghi. She is quite thrilled. In BG, the kids play.

INT. LEANNE'S APARTMENT - AS BEFORE

LOTTERY ANNOUNCER (ON TV)
...followed by Seven...

LEANNE
Seven, yes yes yes!

Leanne, stands up on sofa, IN HER SHOES. Emma looks over at her mother, wondering if she's lost her mind.

LOTTERY ANNOUNCER (ON TV)
And the final digit is...

LEANNE
Please please please, say 'One.' God or Buddha or Vishnu, or whoever's on duty up there, please make him say 'One...'

FULL STOP. There is a sudden surreal silence, as fate hangs in the balance, and then we hear the man say...

LOTTERY ANNOUNCER (ON TV)
...One...

Leanne goes motionless. A beat of wonder and disbelief - has the impossible just happened? - and then she looks at Emma and EXPLODES in exultation. Mother and daughter leap up, jumping on the couch, YELPING AND GIGGLING.

EMMA
Did we really win?! Did we really win?!

Leanne hugs her tight, even as they continue jumping.

LEANNE
Every day is gonna be pizza day!

EMMA
WITH PEPPERONI!

Leanne reaches over for her phone, her hand TREMBLING.

INT. SAMIRA'S HOUSE - AS BEFORE

Samira's cell chimes; a text from Leanne. She gets up and rushes to the TV, turns it on to the men's consternation.

AHSAN
Hey! We are playing that!

The lottery comes on the TV. Her family is aghast, as -

SAMIRA
Oh my god... I won... I won...

They have no clue what's up until she yells in Urdu -

SAMIRA (CONT'D)
Ham jiit ga'e! Ham nay lottery *jeet lii!*

They all GO BERSERK. Ahsan dances over to a poster of "Washington Crossing the Delaware" and LAYS A KISS on it.

INT. ANTONIO'S APARTMENT - AS BEFORE

Bianca hangs up the phone and SCREAMS IN JOY! The kids all look at her -

BIANCA
Our number's come up, *mis hijos*!

She turns up Salsa music, starts dancing with the baby.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
Call Papi! Call Papi! Call Papi!

INT. A BAR - NIGHT

Antonio sits, sipping a beer, watching the Mets game on the overhead TV. The BARTENDER is a friend.

ANTONIO
Another loss. When are they gonna learn?

He finishes his beer and gets up to go, dropping a ten.

BARTENDER
What is it, Christmas?

ANTONIO
Generosity breeds bounty. I'm feeling lucky today.

INT. KORZAK HOUSE - RESUME PREVIOUS SCENE

THE SAME MOMENT where we left them - Denise struggles:

MATT
Denise. Tell us what's happened...

DENISE
Well, what's happened is... the bunch of us in the pool... we've won the lottery. We are going to split 45 million dollars.

Stillness; silence. Denise is the first to break the moment, jumping up and down in pure catharsis.

A spontaneous celebration erupts. The brothers are rapturous, roughly hugging and slapping each other.

NICKY
We're rich!

MATT
We're the Trumps of Astoria!

NICKY
I'm getting me that purple Bentley!

Ruth runs back in, holding a cheap bottle of champagne.

RUTH
I don't believe it! It can't be real!

DENISE
It's real! Here's the ticket!

NICKY
6-8-3-6-9-7-1, we love ya!

Nicky kisses it. Matt pops the cork; Ruth pours cheap bubbly, spilling most, as a spirited giddiness pervades them all. But when we PUSH IN ON Matt, we see, in his eyes, that his joy is tempered, and some panic persists.

CUT TO:

CCTV footage: the 'Robber' holds Matt at gunpoint - body language is odd, as if Matt is directing him...

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT

At a console, Minetti reviews the footage. REWINDS it; PLAYS IT AGAIN. He turns to another, younger DETECTIVE -

MINETTI
Get me a list of all Gold Star employees in the past 5 years.

DETECTIVE
You think it's an inside job?

MINETTI
Something's hinky.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. SAMIRA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Samira's extended family (about 20 of them) is in the midst of a toast led by Ahsan.

AHSAN
This is not the first, but the THIRD time I have won the lottery: once, when this beautiful woman agreed to marry me...

RIJA
That's right, you'd better flatter me. Or I'll buy myself a new husband!

AHSAN
...and then gave me three wonderful children. Second, when I decided to change our life and come to America.

RIJA
Decided? *You* decided!

AHSAN
And now this! Too much for one family!

They CLINK glasses and drink. Samira is thrilled to see her father so charmingly excited. Ahsan leans in to her -

AHSAN (CONT'D)
That doctor will really love you now! This dowry will make up for all the ways you're exactly like your mother!

Rija slaps his shoulder as she dances by. Off Samira, almost forgotten in the moment that should be hers...

INT. ANTONIO'S APARTMENT - SAME

Antonio walks the hall, hearing Salsa music blaring from his place, the hubbub of a gathering. He's perplexed. Realizing his door is unlocked, he pushes it open - to huge acclaim from a crowd of friends and neighbors.

CROWD
Antonio! There he is! *El hombre!*

He smiles, gives high fives, not sure what all this is about. OOMPH! He is nearly tackled, suddenly - realizes it is Bianca, wrapping herself around him with force.

BIANCA
Oh my god, oh my god!

ANTONIO
What the hell..?

BIANCA
Cousin Rico ran into Samira's brother at the Costco - he told him. And then Rico called me and -

ANTONIO
Wait, what? Told him what?

BIANCA
You won! The lottery, you big dummy! I got a new oven all picked out, an entertainment system with a 52-inch screen, Wi-Fi in every room...

As it dawns on him, Antonio's face darkens and sinks.

ANTONIO
Whoa, whoa... slow down. You're getting carried away. Let's... Come over here.

He pulls her off into the LITTLE GIRL'S ROOM - it's all pink and frilly. Rico, drunk now, pokes his head in -

RICO
Dude, I got a lead on a Florida oil investment. Buy-in's 25K, I say you and me, we go in for 4 shares at 100K apiece, we're like so made in two years...

ANTONIO
Not now, Rico, not now.

He shuts the door behind them. 'Hello Kitty' is staring him in the face. He turns to Bianca, who's still excited.

BIANCA
We are freakin' rich. Like J. Lo rich!

ANTONIO
Listen... Bianca. There's something I need to say.

BIANCA
(fretful from his tone)
Are you... Are you having an affair?

ANTONIO
I am not having an affair.

BIANCA
Oh... oh. Good. That's good. Because I love you, baby. I love you so much.

And she really does, she's just a little nuts now. Antonio thinks on what he needs to say some more.

ANTONIO
Come with me.

INT. ANTONIO'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Antonio leads her in.

ANTONIO
You know that coffee can I showed you this morning? With the money? Well, every week for about, oh, almost two years now, I have been prudently saving money in that can.

BIANCA
Okay, great, but here's the thing: you don't have to do that no more.

ANTONIO
What I mean is, I have been saving money in there... INSTEAD of throwing it away on the Gold Star lottery pool.

It starts to dawn on her, but she can't believe it.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
So bad news is - I didn't go in on that winning ticket. Good news -
(eyes the shiny new toaster)
I have gradually saved up almost $400, some of which you used today to buy yourself this beautiful new toaster.

Beat. A pall slowly comes across her face, storm clouds obscuring a blue sky, as she takes it in... Calmly, she walks over to the toaster and suddenly - like a lightning strike - reaches out, picks up the toaster and SLAMS it down against the tile counter. He tries to intercede...

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Please, Bianca, don't...

But she continues SMASHING IT, over and over, pieces flying all around like battle shrapnel...

BIANCA
I can't believe it! You've been lying all this time!

ANTONIO
Not lying, baby, come on...

Finally, exhausted, she tosses the toaster carcass to the floor in disgust. She's in sad, quiet tears. He feels terrible, frustrated. He wipes her tears away.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry. I never... I mean, I figured, what's the chances? I took a bet on being responsible, a good provider. I never imagined...

She sees how devastated he is; puts a finger to his lips.

BIANCA
Shut up.
(then, tenderly)
You're the best husband, the best father, anyone could want. - But you're gonna have to explain it to my mother when she gets here in the morning. I just bought her a first class ticket.

She straightens her dress and kisses him. Hard. She still loves him, and there's passion there. As she goes, he feels bummed, but more than that - fortified. His cell phone BUZZES - it says: "FROM ILENE." He answers.

ANTONIO (TO PHONE)
Hey, Ilene - is everything okay..?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Matt stands over the sleeping baby's crib. Mary's eagerly flipping through a realty magazine.

MARY
We could move into Manhattan, I guess. Or better yet, Jersey. Great for kids. I always wanted a house in the suburbs. Ho-Ho-Kus - I heard it's like paradise.

A NURSE comes by and checks on the baby in the crib.

NURSE
Adorable little girl you got there.

Matt smiles, politely, and addresses her quietly.

MATT
There's a patient here - Bob Harris. He got hurt in a robbery earlier tonight. Could you let me know what room he's in?

NURSE
Sure, I'll check on that for you.

MARY
Gotta have a cook's kitchen, and a jacuzzi, and definitely a bidet. I've always wanted a bidet.

He picks up the baby and moves over to the bed.

MATT
Me too.
(then)
What's a bidet again?

He lies down beside her, his head on her shoulder, as he cradles the baby.

MARY
And a big lawn so the kids can play. And a big giant lawnmower to mow it with - the kind you gotta drive around.

They both laugh, giddy. Even he, despite his preoccupation. They look at the sweet baby.

MATT
When I'm here with you like this, holding her, I feel like all the stuff we ever wanted is in reach. Like everything is right in the world.

MARY
Everything is right.
(then, off his look)
Bob is gonna be okay, Matt. And the cops will find the sonuvabitch who did it. But you know Bob himself would say, don't let one bad thing prevent you from appreciating all the blessings we have.

She's got a point. Kind of. He looks at the food tray in front of her: pale veggies, slop, jello. He hands the baby to her, takes the tray, dumps it in the trash.

MARY (CONT'D)
Hey! I'm hungry!

He's already dialing the phone.

MATT (ON PHONE)
Yeah, Bouley, please...

MARY
Bouley? That's like the fanciest restaurant in New York.

MATT (ON PHONE)
Hey, Pierre. If I order some grub and send a car to pick it up, is that gonna be a problem? Service charge? How much..? A hundred bucks? No problem. Okay, so you got lobster? Caviar? That 'Perry-er Jew-ette' champagne..?

She is giggling, hysterical with joy, as she sees her man relaxing, loosening up and embracing their new status.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU ROOM - SAME

Bob is unconscious. The machine he's attached to BEEPS. Ilene bends over to kiss him and whisper in his ear -

ILENE
You won, Bob. You all won.
(tearful)
Bora Bora, sweetheart. Don't you remember? We're going to Bora Bora.

He does not react, but the machine BEEPS FASTER; somewhere in there, Bob gets it. We SWITCH TO A POV - through the window, from down the hall...

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Matt, tormented, can glimpse Ilene whispering to Bob. He wants to go in - but he's too confused. Too scared. He turns, walks away. POUNDING MUSIC drives us into...

INT. HIP-HOP NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

A DJ on stage, a packed dance floor. Find Nicky by the bar, chatting with some dude. Then, glancing to the door, he LIGHTS UP. Because he sees Samira enter, out of place in a long coat. As she approaches, she takes it off...

...and he lights up some more - because underneath, she's wearing something revealing and sexy as hell. He's blown away - it's almost better than winning the lottery!

NICKY
Wow. All I can say is...
(starry-eyed)
...*quaaaack quaaaack*.

SAMIRA
(smiles shyly)
What happened with your date?

Her laser-like attitude takes him by surprise; he needs a moment to catch up to her reference - his 'alibi.'

NICKY
What? Oh, that was just a favor. My buddy's cousin was in town. What a bore - she's like Mormon or born-again or something -

SAMIRA
So, you were trying to make me jealous?

NICKY
...You're here, ain't you?

A glint in his eye. It charms her; she smiles.

SAMIRA
Sorry, I'm late. I had to be sure they were totally asleep. I feel like a rebellious teenager.

NICKY
A *rich* rebellious teenager - who can now do what she wants, when she wants. With whoever she wants. Not just what her family 'arranges' for her. So tell your daddy, ARRANGE THIS!

She likes the sound of that, pulls him in for a kiss. Then, he drags her out to the floor where they dance.

SERIES OF CUTS - HIP-HOP MUSIC - Nicky and Samira dancing - hot, sexy. They share a drink, passing it to each other on the floor. He looks across the room and spots -

Eddie and Gronk, girls on their arms, eyeballing him.

GRONK
Can you believe that douchebag?

EDDIE
Yeah. Here, spending *our* dough.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB - ALLEY - NIGHT

OOMPH! Nicky is thrown into a wall - hard, crunching into it. REVEAL Eddie and Gronk working him over.

NICKY
Can we talk about it?

CRUNK! Nicky gets punched. In BG, Samira protests.

SAMIRA
Stop it, please!

Gronk empties Nicky's pocket - pulls out a wad of cash.

GRONK
Look at this, Korzak. You got like twelve hundred bucks in here. Lyin' bastard.

NICKY
I'll get you your money, all of it - it won't be a problem now, I swear.

GRONK
Someone die and leave you a bundle?

NICKY
I'll get it for you. I will.

EDDIE
From now on, you don't make a cent that don't go to us. Got it?
(grabs Nicky's face)
...Got it?

Nicky nods. Then, Eddie shoves his head, so it hits against the wall - painfully. The guys walk away, passing Samira. Gronk grabs her suddenly.

GRONK
Stay away, Slumdog. What's his is ours, and next time..? Won't just be the money.

They go. She is freaked out, rushes to Nicky. He tries to brush it off, but he's bruised, humiliated.

SAMIRA
Are you okay?

NICKY
Yeah, no worries, I've had worse.

SAMIRA
No worries?! They could have killed you!

NICKY
If they wanted to kill me, I'd be dead.

SAMIRA
I should never have come out with you.

NICKY
No, come on, don't say that...

SAMIRA
I mean, we flirt at work, we like each other, sure, but... we're too different.

SAMIRA (CONT'D)
The world you run in, these people - it's not for me.

NICKY
You're overreacting. This was a one-time thing...

SAMIRA (CONT'D)
I can't do this!

She starts to go - he takes her arm. Resolutely:

NICKY
I can handle those guys - I swear I can. Let me work this out. I've changed.

She seems to want to believe him - but doesn't. She pulls away and walks off. Leaving him there, as we FADE TO...

INT. GOLD STAR - NEXT DAY

Denise and Leanne make their way, as they put on their uniforms, from the back to the front register.

LEANNE
Any more word on Bob?

DENISE
Still in the coma. But Ilene thinks he heard her when she told him we won.

LEANNE
What did Ted say when you told him?

DENISE
I haven't. He got home late.

Huh? But before Leanne can follow it up, they arrive at the register - Matt is there. Leanne goes through a pronounced change of demeanor, seeing him...

LEANNE
Are you okay? I heard the guy had a gun.

MATT
I'm good, we're lucky he didn't use it.

DENISE
I wouldn't call Bob lucky.

MATT
No, of course not.

Denise moves away to do some shelf-straightening. Leanne stands close to Matt - VERY CLOSE. It's intimate.

LEANNE
I was worried about you when I heard.

MATT
I'm fine, really.

LEANNE
It's a lot going on for you. The baby, the robbery, the lottery...

She puts her hand on his arm; like a warm blanket to him.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
If you need anything... somebody to talk to or anything... let me know.

He looks at her, their faces close. She seems so gentle, uncomplicated, compared to everything else. The air between them CRACKLES and then - Denise pops back in.

DENISE
Did you see Bob at the hospital?

MATT
No, I tried, but... he was sleeping.

LEANNE
Bob's the nicest man ever. I hope they find the guy that did this and string him up by the balls.

Matt swallows hard, as Nicky steps up from the back as Samira is coming in to work. Awkward looks between them.

NICKY
Is the lottery dude here yet?

DENISE
Nope. Should be soon.
(then)
Hey, Samira.

SAMIRA
Hey, everybody.

Nicky smiles at her, hesitantly. She nods and looks away. Leanne pulls out a bottle of vodka.

LEANNE
A quick little taste for us all to celebrate. And one extra one for Bob.

As she fills shot glasses, we see, out the window -

EXT. STREET/GOLD STAR - SAME

Antonio looks in as his co-workers raise a toast. He's pleased for them, no doubt, but still it pains him.

DENISE (INSIDE)
Cheers!

Antonio turns and walks past the shop. Rounding a corner, he takes out his cell phone. INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GOLD STAR - AS BEFORE

NICKY
Here's to no more money worries!

The phone RINGS on the counter; Denise picks up.

DENISE
Gas 'n shop.

ANTONIO
Hola, guapissima...

DENISE
(covers the mouthpiece)
Shh, it's Antonio.
(as they go silent)
Hello, Antonio. Running late?

ANTONIO
No, not really, I'm uh...
(fake coughs)
...I think I got whatever Bob had, so I'm gonna stay home today.

DENISE
Oh, that's too bad. Can we do anything for you?

ANTONIO
Bianca's making soup, I'll rebound soon. Sorry to miss the big celebration - tell everybody, you know, kudos. I can't believe you guys finally did it - that is really... awesome. Yeah, so... Let me know if there's any more word on Bob.

DENISE
Sure thing, we will.

OUT ON THE STREET, Antonio shuts his phone and walks off. BACK IN THE STORE, Denise hangs up.

DENISE (CONT'D)
Says he's sick. But he didn't sound like himself.

LEANNE
Yeah, being in the pool with us for so long, and then... it's gotta hurt.

MATT
We could all chip in, buy him something.

LEANNE
Yeah, like a car.

NICKY
Don't get crazy now. Maybe a flatscreen. Or a toaster or something.

The DOOR JINGLES as WILL WATSON (30s, slick, handsome) enters - he's the lottery representative.

WILL
Morning, I'm Will Watson from the Empire State Lottery. You must be the lucky six?

DENISE
Hi, yeah. We spoke on the phone.

WILL
Oh, Denise, right? Great. Is there somewhere we can all chat?

INT. BOB'S OFFICE/BACK OF STORE - 10 MINUTES LATER

Leanne, Denise, Matt, Nicky and Samira are assembled.

LEANNE
...A news conference? Like, with cameras and stuff?

WILL
It's pretty standard. Hopefully, Bob will be able to be there, but if not... we'll forge on without him. Now, there is one thing we need to go over. Matt?

MATT
...Yeah? That's me, I'm Matt.

WILL
Hey, Matt. There is a condition in the lottery rules stating that for any pool member to automatically share in a jackpot, that individual has to have personally paid into buying the winning ticket. It's come to our attention that that is not the case with you.

MATT
What..? No. I mean, I was gonna pay in, right, Denise? Been a little strapped...

NICKY
So you're saying, he's out?

WILL
Not necessarily. The remaining members of the pool can still vote to include him. So, Matt... Will you excuse us?

Matt nods, looks around at them all, and then leaves, hearing behind him as he closes the door:

WILL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
All right, this will be a blind vote, so each of you will write 'yes' if you want Matt included, 'no' if you don't...

CUT TO:

Matt fretting. In the BATHROOM, staring at his face in the mirror, dripping water. - Working the REGISTER, tapping his knee obsessively with a pen. - Pacing in the PARKING LOT, chugging from a coffee cup. Will pops out.

WILL (CONT'D)
Okay, Matt, ready for you.

INT. BOB'S OFFICE - DAY

All of the others are there, stoical expressions on their faces as Matt enters and takes a seat.

WILL
Sorry it took so long, we were trying to break the tie.

MATT
It was a tie?

DENISE
Two votes for, two against.

MATT
Wow. So, did you break it?

Matt glances at their faces - varying degrees of stoniness and evasion - ambiguous.

WILL
No. Which means we'll need Bob to.

MATT
...Bob..?

NICKY
They spoke to Ilene. Bob's awake.

WILL
We can't proceed until we resolve this. So - he'll have to be the deciding vote.

Matt and Nicky exchange looks, very concerned.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. HOSPITAL ICU - DAY

As Will leads the gang down the hall, Matt and Nicky trade anxious eyes. They get to Bob's room. Through the window, they see Bob, laid up in bed, talking to another man. The brothers are clearly shocked and remorseful. And Denise, seeing Matt's emotional reaction--

DENISE
This must be hard for you to see, Matt. I know how close you are to Bob.

-- Matt, feeling terrible, looks away. Nicky hides his face, ashamed. As Will taps on the glass, that man talking to Bob turns and...

IT'S MINETTI! MATT is uneasy, now, as Minetti heads over and opens the door.

MINETTI
Mr. Korzak.

MATT
How's he doing?

MINETTI
His memory seems to be coming back.

And now Matt's heart is pounding as Will tells them all-

WILL
Please wait out here.

Will enters. As the door shuts, Minetti turns to Nicky-

MINETTI
You Matt's brother? Just the man I wanna talk to.

Minetti leads Nicky down the hall to talk. Matt, tense, looks through the window, watching, but not hearing, as-

INT. BOB'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME

Will walks up to Bob, who lies in bed, frail, head bandaged, eyes on the ceiling. Ilene sits bedside, spent, unreadable. As Will talks with Bob, Ilene shoots a strained look through the window at-

MATT - OUTSIDE THE ROOM - swallows hard, 'Do they know?' He then looks down the hall at--

MINETTI TALKS TO NICKY, away from the others. Minetti consults a file-

MINETTI
You did two years for grand larceny?

NICKY
Is that what it says in your file?

MINETTI
When he hired you, did Bob know you were an ex-convict..?

NICKY
Reformed ex-convict, all right?! I did my time and I don't gotta prove nothin' to you or anybody else! With those three other joints getting hit, I should have helped my brother close up last night. I've been kickin' myself thinking he could have been killed in there!

MINETTI
(backing off now)
Easy, Nick, I'm just doing my job.

And we SHOOT DOWN THE HALL to Samira, sitting against the wall, pretending to read a book, but really clocking Nicky, a touch of suspicion in her eyes now.

INT. BOB'S HOSPITAL ROOM - (AS BEFORE)

WILL
So, as you can see, we need you to break the tie, Mr. Harris. And if you need some time to think about it...

BOB
I don't have to think about it.

Then, with great difficulty, Bob finally turns his head toward Matt through the window, meekly waving him in. Bracing for the worst, Matt enters. He walks to Bob's bedside. Bob glares at him, then GRABS Matt's wrist-

BOB (CONT'D)
Matt's a good kid. A good kid. My best employee. Like a son to me. He should have a share of the money.

It's a tender moment, and a huge relief for Matt. Bob ekes out a smile. It's both touching and heartbreaking.

IN THE HALL - DENISE has found a standing scale. Sure no one's looking, she kicks off her shoes. But just as she's about to step on - MATT EMERGES FROM BOB'S ROOM. Denise hurries over as Leanne gives Matt a big hug - a hug that lingers a moment too long, too intimate.

LEANNE
Congratulations!

MATT
Thanks, Leanne. Whew!

A sweet moment, until-

MINETTI (O.S.)
Matt, can I have a second?

Matt turns, disconcerted now, to see Minetti waving him over. Leanne looks on with concern as he walks down the hall to join Minetti and Nicky -

MINETTI (CONT'D)
I noticed on the security tapes, that the perp seemed to be talking a lot. Since there's no audio, think you could tell me what he was saying?

MATT
He was yelling, mostly. I had a gun in my face. That's all I remember.

We SHOOT DOWN THE HALL TO LEANNE, who's watching Matt, distracted, half listening to a very distressed-

DENISE
...and when I got home last night, he wasn't there.

LEANNE
Who wasn't?

DENISE
Ted! He left me a note that he was at a friend's house and would be home late.

LEANNE
...So?

DENISE
So he never came home at all!

And that gets Leanne's attention.

LEANNE
Oh Jeez, you poor thing.

DENISE
I was worried, you know, cause I made dinner and everything. It's not like him to just disappear like this...

LEANNE
Denise! Did you call that number? The one he texted?

DENISE
I'm afraid. I don't want to know.

LEANNE
Maybe because you already do. That prick!

DENISE
...I don't blame him.

LEANNE
What?! You don't deserve this.

DENISE
No, I've been thinking about it. All these years, it's like I've had blinders on. I mean, I used to be something to look at. Maybe I let myself go a little. Or, you know, a lot. We used to hold hands, and go for walks, and talk. And we had plans. Maybe things would've been different if we had kids. If I didn't have that miscarriage. If it wasn't just us, watching each other get older and... fatter. I don't know what happened...

LEANNE
Denise, it's not your fault...

DENISE
WE HAVEN'T HAD SEX IN FIVE YEARS!

Everybody looking at them now. And Minetti is standing right there, awkwardly-

MINETTI
Uh, I don't mean to interrupt. I just need a second. Alone. With Denise. A few questions, if that's...

Leanne hugs her and exits. As Minetti interviews Denise, her mind is somewhere else - on her marriage woes.

MINETTI (CONT'D)
I want to verify what time you went to the Korzak home last night.

DENISE
Uh, around nine thirty.

MINETTI
And Nick was there?

DENISE
Yes, and their mother, Ruth.

MINETTI
Did you discuss the robbery?

DENISE
A little. Ruth was shocked to hear about it.

MINETTI
She didn't know?

DENISE
I guess they hadn't told her.

MINETTI
Didn't you think that was strange?

DENISE
(nervous)
I don't know, I was thinking about other things... We'd just won the lottery.

Minetti smiles, then-

MINETTI
Yes, well, you're a very lucky woman. Is there anything else you wanna mention about last night?

A beat. Then, almost as if it spills out uncontrollably-

DENISE
I think my husband left me.

Minetti stands there awkwardly as Denise falls into him, sobbing in his jacket. We SHOOT OVER TO LEANNE, who stops Will Watson in the hall.

LEANNE
Excuse me, Mr. Watson... I was just curious if you knew what kind of personal information they're gonna need, you know, before they can give us the money.

WILL
Usual stuff, I think. It’s no big deal.

LEANNE
It’s just, I had a couple moving violations when I was younger. Lost my license for awhile...

WILL
You’re you, right?
(off her look)
As long as you can prove that, there shouldn’t be any problems.

He smiles, but as he walks off, deep concern on Leanne’s face makes us wonder what she is hiding as we find Samira, reading, music bleeding out of her headphones-

MAN’S VOICE (ON INTERCOM)
SAMIRA RAJPUR! SAMIRA RAJPUR! Please report to the nurse’s station..!

Samira, pulls off her headphones, a little concerned, as she walks over to the nurses station, asking A HANDSOME, YOUNG INDIAN DOCTOR (VINOD, 30), lab coat, stethoscope-

SAMIRA
Excuse me, Dr., I think someone was...

VINOD
Paging you. That was me. And you must be Samira. Your father called me and told me you were here.

SAMIRA
My father..?

VINOD
Actually, he called my mother, who called my father, who called me. It’s like the Manhattan Project...

SAMIRA
Who ARE you?

VINOD
...I'm Vinod.
(off her blank look)
The man your parents want you to marry?

SAMIRA
Oh, wow! Uhm... you look really different from your picture.

VINOD
Good different, bad different..?

SAMIRA
Good different. Better different.

VINOD
Good that it's better different, cause, the alternative would, you know, well, it would suck.

SAMIRA
I didn't know you worked here. I mean, I knew you were a doctor, but, sorry, this is just...

VINOD
Weird.

SAMIRA
...Totally.

VINOD
Anyway, I heard you had doubts about meeting me, let alone marrying me, and I just wanted you to know I feel the same.

SAMIRA
You do?

VINOD
My parents are pushing me into this thing, too. So I thought we could settle the matter with a coin toss. Heads: we marry - tails: we have meaningless sex and, you know, never tell our parents.
(off her straight face)
Hmn. That joke kills in Karachi.

SAMIRA
(in Urdu/subtitled)
Mujhe shaq hai. ("I doubt it.")

Vinod laughs. And off Samira's charmed smile, we SWING TO Nicky, watching the interaction. Clearly jealous.

EXT. GOLD STAR - NEXT DAY

News vans, cameras, a crowd gathering, anticipation for a news conference building, while-

INT. GOLD STAR - SAME

Everyone is here, except Bob who's still in the hospital. As they primp, fix each other's ties, etc. - Denise, looking resolute, furtively wanders to the back, passing-SAMIRA - smiling as she fills out AN APPLICATION. At the top of the form, we see - 'JUILLIARD,' as we CUT TO:

INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE SHOTS: Denise enters. Locks the door. Kicks off her shoes. Stares down at that scale. Crosses her fingers. Holds her breath... then steps onto the scale. A long beat, then she looks down and we PRELAP--

ANTONIO (O.S.)
Filthy rich bastards!

INT. GOLD STAR - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone turns, shocked to see Antonio, in work clothes, entering through the back. They all go quiet as Denise joins them from the utility room-

ANTONIO
Look at all of you, dolled up like Rockefellers. Well I got somethin' to say. I don't know if any of you are comin' back to work in this dump, but...
(softening with a smile)
...I still expect all of you to be on time at my house on New Years Eve. And I don't wanna hear no lame excuses, "Oh, Antonio, I couldn't find my way outta my mansion," or, "I'm so sorry, my Rolls wouldn't start."
(off their disarmed laughs)
We're family. Right? Family. Money don't change that. Nothin' changes that. I'm happy for you. All of yous. You deserve this. And it couldn't have happened to a better bunch of workin' stiffs.

Everyone is moved. Spirits are high.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Alright, now go out there and give your neighborhood something to cheer about.

A group hug. But it's bitter sweet as they watch Antonio head back to work. Will Watson enters-

WILL
Okay, folks. It's show time!!

Our gang walks to the door, looking out the window at the mounting excitement in the street. Samira sees HER FATHER'S CAB pulling up - someone in the car with her dad - she's not sure who, as Matt leans in, confiding to her-

MATT
I know you and Denise voted against me havin' a piece of all this. I just wanted to say there's no hard feelings. Okay?

SAMIRA
What makes you think it was us?

The math runs through Matt's head like a bolt of lightning, and he shoots a look at Nicky, now wondering if his own brother could have voted against him.

But Nicky is looking out the window at that Escalade amid the crowd; Eddie and Gronk back again, to spook him a little. Judging from the look on his face, it's working.

Leanne puts on a baseball cap, pulls it over her brow, to hide her face, when Denise steps up, giddy. She whispers.

DENISE
I lost a pound.

LEANNE
Great! But Denise, honey, I'm worried - you're doing this for Ted?

DENISE
I was. Now I'm doing it for me.

She looks at that mysterious phone number, written on that napkin - crumples it up and tosses it in the trash And off Denise's impish, victorious grin, we CUT TO:

INT. GOLD STAR - GARAGE

Antonio is under the hood of an old Mercedes, looking through the fence at the crowd on the street.

With some frustration, he jams the cap off an old radiator but is oddly amazed as he fishes out a crumpled TEN DOLLAR BILL. And as he starts to laugh, A COLLECTIVE MOAN draws us to--

EXT. GOLD STAR - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

We find MINETTI, deep in the crowd. Even he marvels at the spectacle as our gang walks out to cameras and fanfare. At this moment, these regular folks are rock stars on this corner in Astoria, like the Beatles landing in America. The press shouts over the cheering crowd-

REPORTER
How's it feel to be rich?!

REPORTER 2
Will you buy a house?!

REPORTER 3
Will you quit your job?!

REPORTER 4
Travel the world..?!

Amidst the chaos and questions, we PAN ACROSS our gang:

Matt is a little unnerved as he sees Minetti - Leanne turns her face away from the cameras - Nicky spots Gronk and Eddie, nervously avoiding their gaze...

Samira has an eye on Nicky, but then looks out to her dad, standing by his cab, smiling, and - oh no! - he's got Vinod with him, an arm around his shoulder - Denise looks out and - to her surprise - SPOTS TEDDY, waving to her sweetly, innocently, from the crowd...

From the din, one question rings out-

REPORTER 5 (O.S.)
How do you feel, winning all that money?

And it catches them all off-guard, like a brand new thought: how do they feel? We return to Matt, who after a moment of pause, grins, convincing himself...

MATT
All in all... pretty damn lucky.

And off the group's various reactions, cameras FLASH! We FREEZE on the image, which morphs into a New York Post cover headline: "**FILL 'ER UP!**" And in smaller print: "**Astoria Gas Station Employees Hit a $45M Jackpot!**"

END OF PILOT