

SHOW ME

Written by

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Based on the novel Show Me, by Christopher Jackson

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SHOW ME

INT. PAY THE LORD MINISTRY MEGACHURCH, STAGE - DAY

Spotlights pierce the darkness to illuminate an elevated pulpit. ORGAN MUSIC swells.

EMCEE (O.S.)

Welcome, Christians, to the Pay the Lord Network, coming to you live from beautiful Baxter, Missouri. It's time once again for an hour of preaching, prayer, and paying unto the Lord. This is Tithe More, Earn More with your spiritual guide for the next hour -- Reverend Tobias "Holy" Roller!

Reverend TOBIAS "HOLY" ROLLER strolls up to an elaborate pulpit, gazes at a 7,500 member congregation, and launches into his sermon.

ROLLER

We are a Christian nation. Christ must stand tall both in our hearts and upon our land. We cannot have true freedom without full obedience to the Lord our God!

INT. TV STUDIO - PRODUCTION CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The PRODUCER of Tithe More, Earn More and her ASSISTANT manage their control panels.

PRODUCER

Ten seconds in and he's off script.

ASSISTANT

Off his meds is what he is.

PRODUCER

He's gonna plug American Jesus.

ASSISTANT

I'm getting the graphic ready.

INT. PAY THE LORD MINISTRY MEGACHURCH - STAGE

ROLLER

Two years ago, the Lord asked me why the tallest statue in America wasn't one of Jesus Christ watching over the great God-fearing state of Missouri.

A few "AMENS" waft up from the congregation.

ROLLER (CONT'D)

I had no answer. But the Lord, who knows all and sees all, did!

INT. TV STUDIO - PRODUCTION CONTROL ROOM

ASSISTANT

See, this is what I don't get. If the Lord knows all and sees all, why did He even ask the question?

PRODUCER

Maybe it was rhetorical.

ASSISTANT

Wouldn't all of God's questions be rhetorical?

PRODUCER

You're killing me.
(throws hands up)

INT. PAY THE LORD MINISTRY MEGACHURCH - STAGE

ROLLER

Our nation has strayed off course. We've been lured down the path of secularism.

More "AMENS" drift up from the audience.

ROLLER (CONT'D)

They want us to worship government, not God. And who will guide us out of the spiritual wasteland in which we now find ourselves?

(long beat)

American Jesus!

Projected on a screen behind Roller is a rendering of a two-hundred-foot tall copper statue of Jesus, straddling a lake cove like the Colossus of Rhodes. The audience cheers.

ROLLER (CONT'D)

Two-hundred feet of Jesus watching over America's heartland.

The audience responds with "AMEN".

ROLLER (CONT'D)

Now, this might be more Jesus than some people here want. But tell me, can there ever be such a thing as too much Jesus?

A chorus of "NO" rises up from the audience.

INT. TV STUDIO - PRODUCTION CONTROL ROOM

ASSISTANT

I disagree. I think two-hundred feet of Jesus is too much Jesus.

PRODUCER

Two-hundred feet of Jesus will pay our salaries for ten more years.

ASSISTANT

You're not making it better.

INT. PAY THE LORD MINISTRY MEGACHURCH - STAGE

ROLLER

When I promised to build American Jesus, those liberal late night talk show hosts had a field day with crazy old Reverend Tobias Roller. Didn't they?

The audience murmurs its assent.

ROLLER (CONT'D)

You know who else they were laughing at? You. Committed, God-fearing Christians. And... they were laughing at the Lord.

Roller points both hands skyward. The diamond pinkie rings on each hand glint in the spotlight.

ROLLER (CONT'D)

Where in the Bible does it say: "I am the Lord thy God. Mock me."

The audience laughs.

ROLLER (CONT'D)

You know who's laughing now? We are! Why? Because we are almost there. Just a couple million dollars more to reach the promised land!

The audience claps and cheers.

ROLLER (CONT'D)

And do you know where we will all reside when we get to the Promised Land?

INT. TV STUDIO - PRODUCTION CONTROL ROOM

PRODUCER

Now he's gonna trot out Gated Galilee. Cue the graphic

The Assistant presses buttons on his control panel.

ASSISTANT

Whatever we're selling here, it sure as hell ain't salvation.

INT. PAY THE LORD MINISTRY MEGACHURCH - STAGE

ROLLER

Christians, imagine a place where your neighbor shares your values, your God, and your view of American Jesus. You don't have to, because we're gonna build it. Gated Galilee!

The image of American Jesus is replaced with a graphic of a gated community, nestled on the banks of a lake in the Ozarks. American Jesus stands in the background.

The audience claps and shouts AMEN.

ROLLER (CONT'D)

In Gated Galilee we will all
worship alike, think alike, and
look... uh... look upon our
neighbors with Christian love.

INT. TV STUDIO - PRODUCTION CONTROL ROOM

ASSISTANT

He almost said it. Almost said
"look alike".

PRODUCER

But he didn't.

ASSISTANT

Didn't have to. You don't have to
be a dog to hear that whistle.

PRODUCER

He knows who's watching.

ASSISTANT

That place is going to have the
worst block parties ever.

INT. PAY THE LORD MINISTRY MEGACHURCH - STAGE

ROLLER

While faith may move mountains,
only dollars buy steel, copper and
construction equipment. Fellow
Christians -- dig deep. I'm not
asking. The Lord is. And He repays
his debts one-hundred-fold.

INT. TV STUDIO - PRODUCTION CONTROL ROOM

ASSISTANT

That's some serious vig the Lord
has to carry. Even the Corleones
offer better rates. No wonder God
always needs money.

PRODUCER

Just cut to the graphic.

The Assistant punches a button. His monitor shows a digital
image of an enormous Jesus statue towering over Gated
Galilee.

Chyrons roll. "Tithe to the American Jesus 909-555-1618 MC VISA PAYPAL Accepted" "Invest in Gated Galilee -- 1200 Lakeside Residences Watched Over by American Jesus!"

The Assistant walks to the rear of the booth. He opens a door and peers into a cavernous office space, dozens of people wearing headsets CHATTER over a cacophony of RINGING PHONES.

ASSISTANT

Jesus Christ... he may get the money. But who's gonna build it?

INT. PENAL SOLUTIONS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Penal Solutions CEO LAWTON BOATWRIGHT and "Holy" Roller view a video accompanied by a surging musical soundtrack and the *basso profundo* voice of a DRAMATIC NARRATOR.

DRAMATIC NARRATOR (V.O.)

Penal Solutions, Incorporated is America's leader in Privately Operated Correctional Facilities. Penal Solutions has been exacting penance for a pittance since 1993.

The screen displays a photo of Penal Solutions facilities.

DRAMATIC NARRATOR (V.O.)

With facilities in the south and mid-west, we lead the industry in the number of incarcerated guests.

The screen shows glossy charts highlighting "Number of Incarcerated Guests", "Average Length of Stay", "Capitalization Rates" and "Lobbying Resources."

DRAMATIC NARRATOR (V.O.)

We also lead in average length of stay, thus maximizing revenue extraction from our legally remanded resources.

Boatwright hits the pause button on the remote.

BOATWRIGHT

Now pay close attention.

Boatwright presses the play button. On the screen a graphic for "Conviction Construction!" appears.

DRAMATIC NARRATOR (V.O.)
 With judicial reforms and other
 threats to our traditional revenue
 stream, Penal Solutions has
 developed novel revenue generation
 vectors from existing assets.

The graphic fades to a photo of prisoners wearing hard hats,
 studying blueprints, and wielding hammers and nail guns as
 unconcerned guards look on with proud smiles.

DRAMATIC NARRATOR (V.O.)
 Conviction Construction fuses Old
 Testament justice with American
 optimism. We believe anyone can
 change if they are willing to work.
 We believe work builds character.
 We believe work builds Missouri.

Boatwright clicks off the projector and eyes Roller.

BOATWRIGHT
 Well, what do you think?

ROLLER
 Mr. Boatwright...

BOATWRIGHT
 Please, call me Lawton.

ROLLER
 Lawton. I, uh, I'm not sure.

BOATWRIGHT
 Let me get to the point. The
 average wage for a construction
 worker in Missouri is thirty
 dollars an hour. Maybe more.

ROLLER
 I don't know what you...

BOATWRIGHT
 The average wage for a convict
 working offsite is about eight
 dollars a day.

Boatwright waits vainly for Roller's reaction.

BOATWRIGHT (CONT'D)
 Perhaps you see where I'm going
 with this.

(beat)

(MORE)

BOATWRIGHT (CONT'D)

Holy, it's no secret you're in the market for a new Gulfstream G-650.

ROLLER

It would be nice to save souls without flying commercial.

BOATWRIGHT

I'm giving you a way to save millions on American Jesus and Gated Galilee. Money you can use to purchase Air Jesus One.

Roller thinks for a moment and then sticks out his hand.

ROLLER

Lawton, if you can pull it off, you have a deal.

Boatwright takes Roller's hand.

ROLLER (CONT'D)

But isn't building a statue beyond the skills of your average inmate?

BOATWRIGHT

Let's just say that I have scouts looking for talent.

EXT. NEWHOUSE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY - DUSK

JOHNNIE NEWHOUSE, African American, clad in a business suit and construction hard hat, strides out of a warehouse with a sign proclaiming "Newhouse Construction" above the doors.

Phone pressed to his ear, Johnnie approaches a rusting Pontiac Aztek in the company parking lot. MICHAEL, a young man in his 20s, intercepts him, holding out a clipboard.

JOHNNIE

Hold on a second, honey...

Johnnie sets his phone on the Aztek's roof.

MICHAEL

Mr. Newhouse, these purchase orders need to go out this evening...

JOHNNIE

(signs the forms)
Michael, what would I do without you?

Johnnie retrieves his phone from the roof. Michael taps the roof twice with his hand.

MICHAEL

We got a pool going on when this
old gal is gonna conk out on ya...

Johnnie laughs as he moves over to the driver's side.

JOHNNIE

I'm not givin' up on her yet!

The Aztek's door CREAKS as Johnnie opens it.

INT. PONTIAC AZTEK - NIGHT

Johnnie, his phone on speaker, talks with his wife ROBERTA NEWHOUSE as he motors down I-70 toward St. Louis.

ROBERTA (V.O.)

(on phone)

Johnnie, what's this about a
betting pool on when "this old gal"
is gonna conk out?

JOHNNIE

(laughing)

It's about the car, not you. No
plans to trade you in.

ROBERTA (V.O.)

Better not be. But he's right about
that car. I give it a week before
it disintegrates entirely and you
end up scooting down the interstate
on your butt.

JOHNNIE

She'll hold together. I'll be home
soon.

ROBERTA (V.O.)

Good. The kids are hungry.

Johnnie ends the call and gives the Aztek's dash an affectionate double-tap. The dash lights flicker.

EXT. I-70 HIGHWAY - 5 MINUTES LATER

While passing a billboard concealing a McAlister, Missouri police car, the Aztek's electrical system fails and its lights go out. Johnnie pulls over.

The police cruiser BURPS its SIREN, and pulls behind the Aztek, lights flashing.

INT. PONTIAC AZTEK - CONTINUOUS

In the rear view mirror, Johnnie sees a policeman approach, hand on holster. In frustration, Johnnie slaps the dash of his fickle Aztek.

The Aztek's electrical system springs to life -- right at the moment the policeman leans to peer through the hatchback window.

EXT. PONTIAC AZTEK - CONTINUOUS

Scared by the Aztek's unexpected burst of flashing lights, blaring alarm and staccato horn blasts, OFFICER RAY STAPLES draws his gun and sinks into a crouch.

As he does, the rear hatch also self-activates, sending the hatch upward into Staple's nose.

Overwhelmed by the cacophony of sound, light and pain, Staples fires three shots into his right foot.

Writhing on the ground, Staples keys his shoulder microphone.

STAPLES
Shots fired, officer down!

INT./EXT. PONTIAC AZTEK - MOMENTS LATER

Three police cars converge on the scene, lights flashing. Two officers, guns drawn, shine flashlights into the car. Johnnie puts his forehead on the wheel, hands behind his head.

OFFICER #1
Get out of the vehicle! Now!

OFFICER #2
Don't move a fucking inch!

JOHNNIE
I can't do both at the same time,
officers.

A beanbag projectile shatters Johnnie's window, coating him in glass shards. Two officers yank him through the window and throw him on the ground. One kneels on Johnnie's back.

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)
Officer. This is all a mistake.

OFFICER #1
It sure was. You shot a cop!

JOHNNIE
No, I didn't! He shot himself.

OFFICER #2
Bullshit. He's a highly trained
police officer.

A third officer, parked directly in front of the Aztek, opens his cruiser's trunk and takes out a semi-automatic pistol. He fires two shots into the ground.

OFFICER #3
Looks like he had a gun.

OFFICER #1
Make him fire the last round. We'll
need residue.

Office #3 saunters toward Johnnie, who tries to resist.

OFFICER #3
Don't fight. You know what you did.

Officer #2 forces the gun into Johnnie's hand and fires it.

JOHNNIE
Why are you doing this?

INT. STATE SENATE PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

An obviously angry Missouri State Senator KIRBY HIGGINBOTHAM grips a podium as cameras CLICK away.

HIGGINBOTHAM
The young woman is a valued member
of my staff, dedicated to helpin'
the people of southern Missouri.

St. Louis Ledger reporter BEN HUGHES, mid-thirties, tired of gaslighting, raises his hand.

BEN
Senator Higginbotham, Ben Hughes,
the St. Louis Ledger.

HIGGINBOTHAM

I know who you are. Don't know why you'd want to remind everyone you're a reporter.

BEN

Multiple sources said you spent the night with the young woman at a hotel in Kansas City.

HIGGINBOTHAM

We saved taxpayer dollars by sharing a room.

BEN

Your thriftiness is duly noted, Senator. It's your horniness that is in question.

Higginbotham glares at Bennet.

HIGGINBOTHAM

I am a State Senator, and I expect to be accorded the respect entitled to me by the office I hold.

BEN

Senator, I expect you to accord your office, a position of public trust, the same respect you demand.

HIGGINBOTHAM

I don't need civics lessons from an enemy of the people, or the liberal readers of your insignificant little column.

BEN

Speaking of an insignificant little column, Senator... did you have intercourse with that young woman?

Higginbotham's face flushes deep red.

HIGGINBOTHAM

This press conference is over.

Higginbotham turns on his heel and leaves.

INT. MISSOURI ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE - LATER

Missouri State Attorney General MORRIS DOLLARHYDE and Higginbotham smoke cigars and drink bourbon.

HIGGINBOTHAM

Morrie, did you hear what that elite Ivy League, ball busting, fake news spewing prick said to me?

DOLLARHYDE

Ben Hughes went to Mizzou. He's from Eminence, for God's sake. Put himself through J school running float trips on the Jack's Fork. You go culture warrior on him, he'll eat your fucking lunch.

HIGGINBOTHAM

You a member of the Ben Hughes fan club?

DOLLARHYDE

No. I'm president of the know your enemy club.

(beat)

Hughes is smart. He can write -- not that anyone reads anymore -- and he won't back off. You best understand that.

Dollarhyde takes a puff on his cigar and releases the smoke.

DOLLARHYDE (CONT'D)

Anyway, his boss will be getting a call and he'll soon be out of our hair.

(grins)

And that's why you're here, Kirby...

HIGGINBOTHAM

I don't need any more lectures about my personal --

Dollarhyde raises his hand and smiles.

DOLLARHYDE

You getting caught with your pecker someplace it shouldn't be ain't news and ain't my business. You know Galen Emringer, the St. Louis County Prosecutor?

HIGGINBOTHAM

Your six foot eight shadow?
(waves hand across room)
Heard the fix was in for him to inherit all this.

DOLLARHYDE

Yep. He becomes state attorney general and I move into the governor's mansion. And to help that along, he and I got a deal cooking downstate -- in your district. You follow?

Dollarhyde sips his bourbon.

HIGGINBOTHAM

What's in it for me?

DOLLARHYDE

You get paid. Enough so you won't have to put the extracurricular pussy on the state payroll.

HIGGINBOTHAM

In exchange for what?

DOLLARHYDE

The contacts you made in China during that trade delegation a few months back.

HIGGINBOTHAM

Why?

DOLLARHYDE

I know you don't get to church much anymore -- what with the grievous harm you're doing to at least seven of the commandments. But do you remember who was crucified alongside Christ?

HIGGINBOTHAM

He was crucified between two thieves.

Dollarhyde smiles through the cigar smoke.

DOLLARHYDE

We're throwing in with the thieves.

INT. ST. LOUIS COUNTY HOLDING CELL - DAY

St. Louis County Prosecutor GALEN EMRINGER and McAlister Chief of Police BARRY LENOX peer through a one-way glass screen. Johnnie sits at a table on the other side.

Emringer waves a file he's holding in Lenox's face.

EMRINGER

You expect me to take this bullshit to a jury?

LENOX

What can I say, Galen? Perp shot Staples three times.

EMRINGER

In the right foot? Who the fuck does that?

(beat)

Weapons report shows Staples fired three shots from his gun.

LENOX

He returned fire.

EMRINGER

Oh he did, did he? Lemme guess, he was trying to shoot Newhouse in his foot.

LENOX

Things get confused in a firefight.

EMRINGER

Word is your fucking dipshit deputy could get confused in a pillow fight.

(beat)

Your story is that this guy...

(points at Newhouse)

... pops his rear hatch during a traffic stop, timing it perfectly to hit Staples in the schnozz. He scampers over the seats to the back of the car like he's a gymnast, leans out to get the proper angle...

Emringer does a comical Arabesque.

EMRINGER (CONT'D)

...and pops three caps into the top of Staples's right foot. He then yells "take that motherfucker" like the psychotic foot shooter he is, and returns to the front seat to sit calmly and await arrest.

He stares at Lenox.

EMRINGER (CONT'D)

That's the story you want me to place in front of a jury?

LENOX

(shrugs)

Stranger things have happened.

EMRINGER

No, Barry. They have not.

(beat)

Does he have a lawyer yet?

LENOX

His company's lawyer called. Said they would retain a defense attorney.

EMRINGER

Company?

LENOX

Newhouse Construction Company.

Emringer's holds up a finger to pause Lenox. He checks a page in the back of the file before handing it back to Lenox.

EMRINGER

Shred it. We need a better story if we're going to court.

EXT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Emringer exits the police station and taps the "Windtalker" secure messaging app on his phone to call Boatwright.

EMRINGER

Lawton? This is Emringer. I've got just the man you're looking for to head up our little project.

BOATWRIGHT (V.O.)

Good. If this guy's the real deal, don't let him slip the hook.

EMRINGER

Don't worry.

FRAMING JOHNNIE - MONTAGE

-- Emringer visits Officer Staples and his wife BELINDA STAPLES at their house. Emringer hands them each a folder and hands a pair of crutches to Staples.

-- Chief Lenox interrogates Michael from Newhouse Construction. Lenox holds up a glassine packet of drugs and a pistol in an evidence bag. Michael shakes his head "no".

-- In a courtroom, a succession of witnesses point at Johnnie from the witness stand, including two prostitutes, two tattoo-covered thugs, and a reluctant Michael.

-- On crutches, Officer Staples, in dress uniform, slowly moves towards the witness box.

-- Belinda Staples, in the witness box, weeps as she points at Johnnie. The all-white jury dab their eyes with Kleenex.

-- Guards lead Johnnie away, past Roberta Newhouse and their two sons hugging each other.

INT. COURTHOUSE HOLDING CELL - DAY

Johnnie sits, cuffed to a table. Emringer enters.

JOHNNIE

What game are you playing?

EMRINGER

One you and your lawyers can't begin to understand. Don't blame them. They don't know the rules.

JOHNNIE

Rules? Aren't any I can see.

EMRINGER

I am going to make you an offer. You're going to accept it.

Johnnie glares at Emringer but says nothing.

EMRINGER (CONT'D)

In return for a light sentence, you are going to do some construction work down in the Ozarks.

JOHNNIE

You destroyed my life, reputation and family because you don't want to pay what I normally charge?

EMRINGER

Yeah. That's about it.

JOHNNIE

I think I'll go with my initial plan of kicking your ass on appeal.

EMRINGER

Here's the thing. Remember how you're sitting here for crimes you didn't commit? You think I can't do the same to your wife? Your kids?

JOHNNIE

You wouldn't...

EMRINGER

I already did... to you. And don't think you're the first. I won't hesitate to do it again. Sooner you get on board, sooner it'll be over.

Johnnie says nothing.

INT. PENAL SOLUTIONS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY #13 - DAY

Roberta and Johnnie huddle at a table in an unoccupied office.

JOHNNIE

Four years if I help them with some construction projects.

Roberta, holding both of his hands, nods.

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

They won this round. No surprise. Game's the same as always.

ROBERTA

For sure. Jury was whiter than the Osmond family in a snowstorm.

JOHNNIE

We'll get through this.

ROBERTA

Since you never spend a damn nickel, we got plenty of money.

Johnnie laughs, stands and gives her a hug. His left hand slides over her pants pocket.

JOHNNIE

You're the strongest person I know.
Do what you need to do.

ROBERTA

We always have. We always will.

INT. ROBERTA'S BMW SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Roberta extracts a small piece of paper from her rear pocket.
On it: "Avoid Tennison Gambit." Roberta shakes her head.

ROBERTA

That man and his chess moves.
(starts car)
Don't you worry, honey. Nobody's
messin' with this black queen.

INT. ROLLER LAKE HOUSE - NIGHT

Roller, Higginbotham, Emringer, Dollarhyde and Boatwright
toast each other with bourbon tumblers.

BOATWRIGHT

Gentlemen -- we are a go.

ROLLER

Now what happens?

DOLLARHYDE

(to Emringer)
We're gonna fill our war chests so
I can replace that bilious bag of
farts in the governor's office and
Galen can take over as Attorney
General.

Dollarhyde and Emringer clink glasses.

BOATWRIGHT

Kirby, where are we on the
construction materials?

HIGGINBOTHAM

My China guy has steel for Jesus
and drywall for Galilee lined up.

BOATWRIGHT

Price?

HIGGINBOTHAM

Cheap. Even after handling charges.

DOLLARHYDE

That's not a price. It's a vague assurance offered without context.

HIGGINBOTHAM

Here's some context for ya, Morrie. I'm taking a bit off the top.

DOLLARHYDE

You sound like a fucking crook.

HIGGINBOTHAM

We all are. May as well own it.

ROLLER

And what am I getting for this handling charge?

HIGGINBOTHAM

Cheap steel, cheap drywall and me heading off any inquiries about what might be going on down here.

EMRINGER

What about the quality of what we are paying you to, uh, handle?

HIGGINBOTHAM

My China guy swears his stuff is A-Number-One.

EMRINGER

A-Number-One? That an official Chinese certification, is it?

Emringer polishes off his drink.

HIGGINBOTHAM

Honestly, how bad could it be?

EXT. AMERICAN JESUS JOB SITE - DAY

SUPER: "ONE MONTH LATER"

Johnnie Newhouse and CLARENCE "TIMMY" TIMMONS inspect a pallet of steel girders. Timmy taps one with a wrench.

TIMMY

This stuff is shit. My middle-aged dick is harder than this steel.

JOHNNIE

I'll take your word for it.

TIMMY

Could be old steel from China. Had some turn up in a project out in 'Frisco a few years ago. Damn stuff wouldn't hold a weld for shit.

Johnnie checks the bill of lading on his clipboard.

JOHNNIE

Timmy, says here this is American steel, from the Uber Strong Steel Corporation of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

TIMMY

Uber Strong? I've been working steel all over for 20 years. Never heard of 'em. Probably a cutout.

JOHNNIE

You mean our employer is cutting corners? Hard to believe, ain't it?

TIMMY

Should we warn 'em?

Johnnie motions toward a group of workers welding metal.

JOHNNIE

The man ruined our lives so we could build him a giant Jesus. I intend to do just that.

Johnnie puts his arm on Timmy's shoulder and leads him toward the group of workers. He leans toward Timmy.

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

Here's what I'm thinking...

REVERSE ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

Johnnie and Timmy stop at the welding site.

TIMMY

It'll take a miracle to pull off.

JOHNNIE

If American Jesus can't deliver us a miracle, who can?

INT. TULSA OKLAHOMA STRIP MALL - OFFICE - DAY

MILANA BRANKOVICH lounges at a desk in a sparsely appointed office, watching a You Tube video. Higginbotham enters.

HIGGINBOTHAM

There she is! My favorite C.E.O.
Whaddya say to a nice steak dinner?

He smiles. Milana logs off and grabs her purse. Higginbotham puts his hand on her buttocks as they exit.

EXT. TULSA OKLAHOMA STRIP MALL

Higginbotham and Milana emerge from a small office. Above the door, a small sign: "Uber Strong Steel."

On either side of the Uber Strong office: the "Bronze Bod Tanning Salon" and the "Absinthe to Zinfandel Package Liquor Store."

INT. NEW YORK TIMES EXECUTIVE SUITE - DAY

SUPER: "18 MONTHS LATER"

Ben Hughes pleads with the EDITOR-IN-CHIEF of the New York Times.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Ben, no one gives a shit about Missouri! Why go back?

BEN

There's a story there. A big one.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Mrs. O'Leary's cow kick over a lantern again?

BEN

That was Chicago, asshole.

(beat)

Look, I'm grateful you took me on after I left St. Louis.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Left?! You got fucking fired! Dred Scott had better luck in St. Louis than you did.

BEN

Listen, between me bringing in a Pulitzer and the royalties from my new book, it's not like I don't have options.

The Editor-in-Chief folds his arms, reclines, surrenders.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

You fucking Millennials and your fucking options. God I miss the Boomers. Leveraged out the ass and scared shitless of getting fired.

BEN

Sorry I'm debt free.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Me too. Okay, Missouri boy. You got a year sabbatical. And then, like your stupid state motto says, you better Show Me.

EXT. SHOW ME LAKE ROADSIDE SCENIC OVERLOOK - DAY

Ben takes in a view of Show Me lake snaking through the Ozarks. In the distance he sees two tangles of scaffolding straddling a small cove -- the legs of American Jesus.

He gets in his Land Rover and proceeds down a two-lane highway.

INT. BEN'S LAND ROVER - LATER

On a highway shoulder, a police cruiser idles behind Ben's Land Rover. Ben rolls down his window as Quantrill County Deputy Sheriff RIE KITAMURA approaches the car.

RIE

Good afternoon, sir. Do you know why I've pulled you over?

Ben smiles at Rie.

BEN

Because I have New York plates?

Rie flashes a professional and practiced smile.

RIE

You were traveling fifteen miles an hour above the posted limit. Being from New York is just a bonus.

BEN

(imitating Maxwell Smart)
The old sudden speed limit change from fifty-five to forty trick.
(reverts to normal voice)
I'm originally from here, actually.
Just moved back.

Ria's smile gets bigger, brighter, and more genuine.

RIE

In fact, it's the old fifty-five to twenty-five trick. It's a real motherfucker.
(serious now)
County makes a good living off it.
Afraid I'm gonna have to write you up.

Flustered -- and smitten -- Ben takes a chance.

BEN

Officer... Deputy. I was wondering, and I hope you don't find me too forward considering the circumstances, but is there a...
(points at her nameplate)
... a Mr. Kitamura.

RIE

I'm sure there is somewhere.
Probably can't swing a dead cat in Japan without hitting one. And there's my father and brother back in the old country.

BEN

They live in Japan?

RIE

Orange County.

BEN

I'm asking if you're single.

Rie looks Ben over.

RIE

Are you a census taker?

She hands Ben the ticket.

BEN

No.

RIE

Good. We're not partial to census takers. They're scouting landing sites for the black helicopters flown by the One World Government.

BEN

Thank God I'm only asking you out then.

RIE

The part of Mr. Kitamura is still being cast.

Rie hands Ben her card.

RIE (CONT'D)

The Maxwell Smart impression intrigues me. Let's meet at six-thirty. At the risk of stereotyping myself, I'm in the mood for sushi. Shocking as it may seem, Baxter has a good place. But it's not cheap. And fair warning, I can really pack it away.

INT. SAMURAI SUSHI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ben and Rie take sushi from a platter between them.

BEN

My gut says to be wary of dining at a place named Samurai Sushi.

RIE

Normally you should go with that. But remember, this is southern Missouri. Folks enjoy a little adventure, but within reason. A name like Nobu, or Kaiseki, scares the locals. Samurai? That's a name they can get on board with.

BEN

Or Mr. Miyagi's?

Ben plops some squid into his mouth. Rie smiles at him.

BEN (CONT'D)

Did I do it wrong?

RIE

How should I know? You think just because I'm Asian I know how to eat sushi? What's next? A gong sounding every time I enter a room?

BEN

I...uh, no, I just...I mean...

Rie bursts out laughing.

RIE

Sorry, that was mean. You should've seen your face when you thought any chance of sex was out the window.

BEN

Can I just admit right now that you are several steps ahead of me and always will be?

RIE

And don't you forget it. But about the sushi -- you did it just right.

Ben drinks some Kirin Ichiban lager. He ponders the bottle.

BEN

Missouri's really changing. When I was a kid you had your choice of Budweiser or Busch. Maybe Falstaff if you didn't mind being gassy.

RIE

World's getting smaller. Things pop up where you least expect them.

BEN

Nice segue. Just what the hell are you doing here?

Rie flashes a smile.

RIE

I know you've been dying to ask.
(beat)
Bit of a tomboy growing up outside L.A. Played soccer, field hockey, and softball in high school. Surfed. Got a law degree but hated being a lawyer.

(MORE)

RIE (CONT'D)

Joined the FBI and liked it, but wanted something a bit more... local and hands on. Maybe it's the Japanese D.N.A., but I need a sense of community.

BEN

Baxter would check the local box. Big change from L.A. though.

Rie surveys the platter and moves to take a piece of tuna.

BEN (CONT'D)

Not supposed to eat those... tuna's endangered.

RIE

But this one's already dead.
(pokes chopstick at it)
See? Unresponsive to external stimuli. Would be a waste not to eat it.

BEN

You make a sound point.

He takes a piece of tuna and swallows it.

RIE

Saw an opening for a deputy here. I don't think they cared about my FBI background. Probably figured I could talk to the Chinese tourists.

BEN

But you're not --

RIE

-- I know. It's a daily fight.

BEN

Is it worth it?

RIE

I love the outdoors and the scenery, and there are some wonderful people here. And there's nothing wrong with being the trailblazer.

Long beat.

RIE (CONT'D)

I checked you out... before I came here. Just to be safe.

BEN

I would have expected no less from a cop. You showed, so I guess you don't think I'm the Zodiac Killer.

RIE

I can't say you aren't. But I'm armed and will take my chances.

Ben looks her over.

RIE (CONT'D)

Thinking about where the gun is?

BEN

Kinda natural to wonder.

RIE

If the date goes really well or really poorly, you might find out.

Ben reaches for some sushi.

INT. RIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rie and Ben have a nightcap on Rie's couch.

RIE

I read one of your books.

BEN

Which?

RIE

Dead on Arrival, the one on the health care system.

BEN

I wanted to call it "Take Two Aspirin and Go Die in the Corner Because That's All You Can Fucking Afford." But my editor thought that was too grim and wordy.

RIE

You consider yourself a crusader?

BEN

Don't have a cape. But yes. It's why I came back. Unfinished business.

Rie leans over and kisses Ben.

RIE

We have a lot to talk about. Later.
(beat)
Almost forgot...

She pulls a small pistol from her rear waistband and sets it on the coffee table.

RIE (CONT'D)

Surprised?

BEN

Enchanted might be a better word...
Of course, I was hoping to find it myself.

Rie smiles and pulls him close for another kiss.

RIE

Other treasures await discovery.

INT. RIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Ben and Rie snuggle in bed.

RIE

I'm pretty sure everyone's on the take but me. I'm the best cop on the force, certainly the best trained. And that scares them.

BEN

What are they hiding?

RIE

Some deal our dipshit Sheriff, Horace Poole, has cooking with Lawton Boatwright and Holy Roller.

BEN

You ever see him with Kirby Higginbotham, Morris Dollarhyde or Galen Emringer?

RIE

A lot. You know about them?

BEN
They're why I left. And they're why
I came back.

Rie rolls on top of Ben.

RIE
I like you.

BEN
I suspected as much the second time
we did it. Do I still have to pay
the speeding ticket?

RIE
You were good, but not that good.

Ben laughs and kisses her.

BEN
Crusaders by day, lovers by night?

RIE
An elegant quid pro quo. Something
for each of us.

BEN
I love it when you talk dirty in
Latin.

RIE
I'll remember that.

BEN
Lotta loose threads dangling. Care
to pull on a few with me?

Rie smiles and nods.

RIE
But first, *etslay uckfay*.

INT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

SUPER: "SIX MONTHS LATER"

In a light-filled, modernist house in the hills overlooking
Show Me Lake, Ben and Rie prepare for their morning run.
Ben's phone BEEPS. He glances at a text.

BEN
They're meeting again.

RIE
I'll bring the binocs.

EXT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ben and Rie jog down a narrow lane bordered by fall foliage.

EXT. LAKESIDE COFFEE SHOP DECK - DAY

Ben and Rie relax on the deck. Rie raises her binoculars.

BINOCULAR VIEW

Boatwright and Roller stroll in front of an enormous copper plated foot, surrounded by scaffolding.

RIE (O.S.)
God, that's a big toe.

Boatwright and Roller shake hands and go to their cars. The binocular view shifts over to a copper plated, stern-faced, frowning head of Jesus, still sitting on the ground.

BEN (O.S.)
Jesus looks pissed.

The view shifts to Johnnie Newhouse and "Timmy" Timmons on the hill behind, also watching Boatwright and Roller.

BEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So do those two guys on the hill.
It's time we found out why.

EXT. LAKESIDE COFFEE SHOP DECK - DAY

Rie takes the binoculars and looks through them.

RIE
I think the one on the left is
Clarence Timmons. Found him in the
case files before Poole fired me
for being an honest cop.
(beat)
Anyway, Timmons built Tupper
Blackwood's theater here in town.

BEN
The country music star?

RIE

The one and only. We should pay him
a visit.

EXT. AMERICAN JESUS JOB SITE - CONTINUOUS

Johnnie and Timmy watch Boatwright and Roller's ferry cross
the lake. Timmy gazes skyward at the scaffolding.

TIMMY

I guess they're happy.

JOHNNIE

Should be. They got prison labor,
cheap steel, and big margins.

TIMMY

Course they don't know what's gonna
happen to their precious statue.

JOHNNIE

Ain't our fault, really.

(shrugs)

Just doing what we can with the
materials we've been given. How
were we supposed to know?

Timmy turns his eyes skyward again.

TIMMY

Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord.

JOHNNIE

Lord's gonna have to take a number.

INT. ELECTION HEADQUARTERS - BALLROOM - NIGHT

Dollarhyde and Emringer pose for photos on a stage with their
wives. Streamers and balloons fall from the ceiling. MUSIC
BLARES.

INT. ELECTION HEADQUARTERS - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Emringer and Dollarhyde brush confetti from their hair. The
doors open to a suite. Boatwright, Higginbotham, and Roller
greet them.

INT. GUBERNATORIAL HEADQUARTERS - PRIVATE SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Roller offers Emringer and Dollarhyde glasses of bourbon.

At the bar, Quantrill County Sheriff HORACE POOLE pours a drink.

HIGGINBOTHAM
Governor-elect, and Attorney
General-elect -- let me be the
first to congratulate you.

DOLLARHYDE
You're the eight hundredth person
to do that. Had you been downstairs
and not next door schtupping the
C.E.O. of Uber Strong Steel, you
could've been the first.

HIGGINBOTHAM
Milana wanted to get out of Tulsa.

DOLLARHYDE
You brought a woman bored with
Oklahoma to Missouri?

HIGGINBOTHAM
She wanted to see what all the
election night fuss was about.

DOLLARHYDE
There's a million reporters here.
You, and thus we, could get caught.

HIGGINBOTHAM
It's the perfect cover. Who would
expect a guy to bring his mistress
to an event like this?

EMRINGER
Your wife's downstairs!

HIGGINBOTHAM
Exactly! Perfect cover!

Everyone stares at Higginbotham.

BOATWRIGHT
Don't get too attached to Milana.
We're gonna have to cut her loose
soon.

HIGGINBOTHAM
She's in it for the Green Card,
which I've delivered along with a
lot of Kirby Love.

BOATWRIGHT

Well, maybe Kirby Love is what's needed. I know if you fucked me I'd want to keep it a secret.

HIGGINBOTHAM

Relax. American Jesus is coming along. Just like the bridges.

EMRINGER

Those fuckin' bridges....

DOLLARHYDE

What were you thinking putting that steel in the Jeff City Bridge? I gotta drive over that thing.

HIGGINBOTHAM

What's wrong? We came in on budget.

DOLLARHYDE

You came in on budget because you used cheap Chinese steel.

HIGGINBOTHAM

It's the same steel we're using for the Kirby J. Higginbotham Bridge in Baxter. You think I'd put my name on a project that wasn't top grade?

DOLLARHYDE

I think you'd tattoo your name on a venereal disease if there was profit to be had.

HIGGINBOTHAM

What are you really worried about?

EMRINGER

Ben Hughes. He's poking around. Asking questions.

HIGGINBOTHAM

I hate that fucker.

DOLLARHYDE

He doesn't much like us, either.

BOATWRIGHT

We need to find out what he knows.

ROLLER

How do we do that?

BOATWRIGHT

Same way we built American Jesus.
We hire out. That's why I brought
Horace here.

(nods to Poole)

He has a couple of locals --
Junior, Jr. and Barney Tribble --
that he uses for odd jobs.

DOLLARHYDE

Guy's name is Junior, Jr.?

POOLE

It's a long story.

DOLLARHYDE

I bet it is.

INT. OZARK METH LAB TRAILER - DAY

In a shabby trailer used for meth cooking, Poole, leaning on
an old kitchen table, stares at two obese, slovenly men:
BARNEY TRIBBLE and JUNIOR TRIBBLE, JR.

JUNIOR, JR.

Can't we just kill 'em and burn
their bodies in a meth trailer?

POOLE

This isn't Breaking Bad. Just
follow them. Tell me who they're
talking to.

BARNEY

I hate following people. So does
Junior Jr. Let's just kill 'em.

POOLE

A dead reporter and a dead deputy
sheriff who used to work for me?
That would bring heat I don't want.
And to get it off me, I would have
to pick you two up for murder.

JUNIOR, JR.

I wouldn't do that. We'd sing like
a couple of fucking canaries.

Poole pushes himself off the table's edge and kicks Junior
Jr. in the groin. Junior Jr. falls to the floor, groaning.

POOLE

What have we just learned, Barney?

Barney glances at his brother rolling on the floor.

BARNEY
Don't get kicked in the fucking
nuts.

POOLE
Besides that.

Beat.

BARNEY
Don't threaten to squeal.

POOLE
There ya go. Now, are the
instructions clear?

BARNEY
Follow Hughes and Kitamura.

POOLE
Good.

Poole points at a door at the other end of the trailer.

POOLE (CONT'D)
Care to explain why you got Carl
Messmer taped up in the john?

Junior Jr. struggles to get up.

JUNIOR, JR.
(wheezing)
Weekly collection was light. But we
damn well know he's been cooking up
a storm and selling it on his own.

Poole shakes his head in mock sadness and opens the bathroom door to reveal CARL MESSMER bound with duct tape.

POOLE
We can't have that. Since you seem
to have your hearts set on killing
someone, start with Carl.

EXT. METH LAB TRAILER

Poole adjusts his hat as he exits the trailer and lumbers toward his cruiser. A muffled BLAM emerges from the trailer.

After Poole drives off, the Tribbles emerge from the trailer and amble over to their bright red Dodge Ram 2500 Power Wagon. They drive off. The trailer explodes in flames.

INT. TUPPER BLACKWOOD'S HOUSE - DAY

Framed gold records line the walls of Country music legend TUPPER BLACKWOOD's living room. He sits across from Rie and Ben.

RIE

... We were hoping you could tell us about Clarence Timmons.

TUPPER

Timmy? He was a damn hard worker. Built this house and my theater. Honest too. That arrest was bullshit.

RIE

Charge sheet has him for resisting.

Blackwood ran his hands through his blond hair, worn long.

TUPPER

Wouldn't you if someone slapped on the cuffs for no good reason?

Tupper shakes his head.

TUPPER (CONT'D)

You ask me, he was framed. But I'm a singer, not a private detective. I did what I could at the trial.

RIE

Had any contact with him?

TUPPER

Visited him in the jailhouse. Let him know I took care of his crew.
(beat)
There's another guy got dumped in there the same way Timmy did.

BEN

Johnnie Newhouse?

TUPPER

The big deal contractor up in St. Louis? Yep. Heard his wife visits him often.

BEN

We'll track her down. Does Timmons have family around here?

TUPPER

Moved 'em to Florida. Afraid of what'll happen if they stay.

Tupper gets up and motions for Ben and Rie to follow him to the balcony off the living room.

EXT. TUPPER BLACKWOOD'S HOUSE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Tupper points across the lake at the headless American Jesus.

TUPPER

A million dollar view shot to hell. I like Jesus as much as the next fella, but you can overdo it.

RIE

It's definitely going to be a conversation starter.

TUPPER

You're right if you mean all the conversations will start with "What the fuck is that?"

BEN

Soon you'll forget he's there.

TUPPER

If Holy Roller nailed your pecker to the table, would you get used to it?

BEN

You're going to be a challenge to quote in the New York Times.

Tupper laughs.

TUPPER

They don't call me the Poet from Paducah for nothing. Anyway, bad as my view is, the one from Timmy's cell is worse. What can I do to help?

BEN

Holy Roller may be the weak link. You know him?

Tupper nods. He motions Rie and Ben inside.

TUPPER

Ya'll fans of Cookin' With the Clagmores?

RIE

The reality...

(makes air quotes)

...show about a family of Ozark meth cookers?

TUPPER

Yep.

INT. TUPPER BLACKWOOD'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

On Tupper's TV screen, several hillbillies run around in a panic in a makeshift meth lab. An older hillbilly swats desperately at his flaming beard.

TUPPER

See Boone Clagmore, the one with his beard on fire? Real name's Donny Peterson. We golf on weekends.

(beat)

You wanna know about Holy Roller, let's go talk to Donny.

INT. DONNY PETERSON'S HOUSE - DAY

Tall, gaunt, with a gray ponytail, DONNY PETERSON tosses three logs on a fire. Tupper, Rie and Ben occupy easy chairs arrayed in front of the fireplace.

DONNY

I started out with small parts, mostly. John Wayne shot me when I was 19. Sam Jackson shot me last year. Wasn't 'til Cookin' that I had a lead role.

With a poker, he stirs the fire a bit.

DONNY (CONT'D)

I'm also executive producer.

(beat)

That's how I met Holy Roller.

BEN

He's a fan?

DONNY

He was looking to do a "crossover."
Used that term like he knew what it
meant. I tried to explain that the
only thing Cookin' has in common
with his religious program is that
they're both bullshit.

BEN

How'd that go over?

DONNY

Not well.

(beat)

He wanted Boone Clagmore to repent
his sins at the feet of American
Jesus.

RIE

Hoo boy....

DONNY

Gets better. Holy Roller would then
emerge from behind the statue, pray
over me and declare me saved.

BEN

Good Lord...

DONNY

Precisely. I took a hard pass.

Tupper, listening with his eyes closed and his hands clasped
behind his head, gives a nod.

TUPPER

Tell 'em what happened after you
told Roller "no thank you."

DONNY

(to Rie)

Deputy, can I assume there is no
love lost between you and Horace
Poole?

RIE

Poole fired me a few weeks ago.
Claimed I had to go due to budget
cuts.

Donny nods.

DONNY

Shortly after I declined Holy's offer, Sheriff Poole arrested one of my crew on a trumped up D.U.I. He said I could get him released if I reconsidered Holy's offer.

BEN

I take it you passed.

DONNY

Told him the studio had high powered lawyers on retainer.

RIE

Did Poole understand the message?

DONNY

Never heard another word. Maybe 'cause I threw Roller a bone. I arranged for product placements of OzarKlean on Cookin'.

BEN

What the hell is OzarKlean?

Donny grabs a bottle with pump on the top from an end table and tosses it to Ben.

DONNY

Hand sanitizer. My crew also uses it as an accelerant. Says its better than napalm. Sold by one of Holy Roller's companies but made by inmates at Penal Solutions.

RIE

Wait a minute. Pay the Lord Ministry is in the hand sanitizer business with Penal Solutions?

TUPPER

And more. They also sell handicrafts they claim are Oncalla Tribal designs... belts, necklaces, what have you. Sell 'em on TV, online, and in stores here.

RIE

The Oncalla must love that.

TUPPER

Not hardly. I sold 'em in the gift shop of my theater until a genuine Oncalla dropped by to tell me how fucking offensive it was.

BEN

Holy and Boatwright got more companies than Warren Buffett.

DONNY

Maybe so, but Holy's having cash flow issues. Now that American Jesus is almost done, the donations are drying up.

Ben nods at Rie.

BEN

Hmm. Could be a good time to apply some pressure...

EXT. DONNY PETERSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben and Rie's Land Rover passes by a large red Dodge Ram 2500 Power Wagon parked on the roadside. After a few moments, the Dodge starts and slowly heads in the same direction.

INT. ST. LOUIS - WHITE CASTLE - NIGHT

In a window booth, Rie and Ben face Roberta Newhouse. Outside, a light snow dusts the parking lot.

RIE

Just so you know, we're being followed.

Roberta glances out the window.

ROBERTA

The two giant rednecks in the bright red truck?

RIE

Yeah. We want to force them into doing something stupid.

ROBERTA

Doesn't seem like it will take much forcing. Do they really think we can't see them?

RIE
It's like playing peek-a-boo with a
baby.

Roberta studies Ben as he downs a slider.

ROBERTA
Mr. Hughes, what's your thinking on
what happened to Johnnie?

BEN
The narrative Galen Emringer spun
about Johnnie fit everyone's
preconceptions.

ROBERTA
Not everyone's. Just white folks'.

BEN
Point taken. We tend to make it all
about us.

Roberta smiles.

ROBERTA
Why I suggested meeting at White
Castle. Make sure you felt safe.

RIE
What about me?

ROBERTA
Benihana's not open this late.

BEN
Emringer made Johnnie look like
Capone, Madoff, and Jeffrey Epstein
rolled into one. It was overkill.
Framing a black man isn't hard.

ROBERTA
You don't say.

Ben attacks another slider, gulping it down.

BEN
But they left themselves exposed.
Complicit cops, coerced
witnesses... too many loose ends.

ROBERTA
Johnnie agrees. Says they brought
their queen out too early.

Ben and Rie look at her, perplexed.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)
Johnnie loves playing chess.

RIE
I see.

ROBERTA
Says it's like life. White always goes first. Black can't afford to make a mistake.

Roberta's face flashes through a range of emotions as she thinks of her husband. She turns her focus to Ben.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)
I'm running our business, making money, and even bought a BMW to show people who look away when they see me that I am not on the ropes.
(beat)
But I'm tired, outnumbered, and would like some help. My kids and I ... we want Johnnie back home.

BEN
I know. But this will require some patience. I was coming at it from a different angle when I found you.

ROBERTA
Patience I got plenty of. Johnnie too. We'll stick.

BEN
Good, because this is a criminal hairball. It's big, complicated and it's gonna take time to unravel.

Roberta and Rie look at Ben.

RIE
Who unravels hairballs?

ROBERTA
Yeah. You really a writer?

Roberta snatches the last slider off of Ben's plate.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)
Penalty for mixin' metaphors.

RIE
Withholding food's the only way he
learns.

INT. FBI ST. LOUIS FIELD OFFICE - DAY

A tall African American woman, FBI Special Agent JANICE MORTON gazes out her office window and down onto the Tribble's truck parked across the street.

AGENT MORTON
Jesus Christ... You could see that
thing from orbit.

RIE
They actually honked at someone
while trying to stay behind us.

Agent Morton leans on her desk and gives Ben the once-over.

AGENT MORTON
Bennett Hughes. You were a big pain
in the ass when you worked at the
Ledger. And a bigger pain in the
ass when you worked at the Times.

Ben smiles at the left-handed compliment.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)
Now you appear to be a colossal
pain in the ass to some folks we
don't like. For once, we may have
common cause.
(beat)
But understand this -- the only
reason you get to sit here is
because of her.

Agent Morton nods at Rie.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)
We're in a bind. Rule of law
suffers in hyper-partisan times.
Can't go after bent pols without
being accused of having a political
agenda.

Morton pushes off her desk, lingers at her office window again, gazes outside for a moment and turns around.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)
Of course, if evidence presented
itself instead of us having to get
it, well, as officers sworn to
uphold the law...

She holds her hands palms out and shrugs.

BEN
The Deep State in action.

AGENT MORTON
The Tribbles reporting on this
meeting might stir things up.

RIE
We hope so. But, we need your help.

AGENT MORTON
We're picking up some chatter.

Agent Morton heads for the door. Rie and Ben follow her lead.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)
We need a bit more. And we'll get
it. Stand by.

RIE
Thanks, Janice.

AGENT MORTON
Good to see you again, Rie.

INT. NEWHOUSE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Emringer points to an expensive black leather recliner in a
spacious living room.

EMRINGER
May I sit down so we can talk?

ROBERTA
That's Johnnie's chair. No one sits
in it until Johnnie gets back.

EMRINGER
Fine. I'll get to the point. If I
were you, I would quit talking to
reporters. Otherwise, I might find
evidence of crimes involving you.

Roberta strides up to Emringer, glaring at up at him until he
backs up a foot. She smiles.

ROBERTA

You don't scare me. I scare you.
That's why you're here.

(beat)

I'm talking to Ben Hughes. And I'm
gonna keep on doing so. That boy
has got some bloodhound in him...
and he's picked up your scent.

Emringer turns to leave.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

Do you have a favorite chair in
your house, like Johnnie has here?

EMRINGER

Sure do. Enjoy it every night. Too
bad Johnnie can't do the same.

ROBERTA

I suggest you sit in it as often as
you can. Because, soon enough, you
won't be able to for a long time.

INT. PENAL SOLUTIONS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY #13 - DAY

In the visiting room, Johnnie laughs with Roberta.

JOHNNIE

You really told him he couldn't sit
in my chair?

ROBERTA

Darn right. The next person who
sits in it is gonna be you. Course
you better not be planning to laze
about all day. There are plenty of
chores waiting for you.

JOHNNIE

Lucky I'm in such good shape from
all this statue building.

(glances overhead)

It sounds like he wants to make
sure you know your place.

Roberta nods in understanding.

ROBERTA

My place is by your side. He thinks
he can bully me. He can't.

JOHNNIE
He didn't know any better.

ROBERTA
He's got bigger fish to fry than
me. Ben Hughes is sniffing around
and will turn up something.

A KNOCK at the door signals the visit's end.

As Johnnie gives her a hug, his hand taps her pants pocket.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

In a back booth, Ben confers with Roberta.

ROBERTA
Where's Rie?

BEN
Giving the Tribble's something to
chase while we talk.

ROBERTA
They could use the exercise.

BEN
How'd it go with Johnnie?

Roberta hands him the note Johnnie passed her.

BEN (CONT'D)
(reading note)
"We both know what the next move is
going to be. After that, Q.b.6."
(long beat)
I suck at chess. Translation?

Roberta smiles.

ROBERTA
It means the black Queen is about
to make things very interesting.

INT. DOLLARHYDE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dollarhyde, Emringer, Boatwright and Roller huddle around
Dollarhyde's desk.

EMRINGER
Roberta Newhouse is tougher than
hell. And pissed.

ROLLER
Has every right to be.

EMRINGER
Be that as it may, I don't want her
talking to Hughes.

ROLLER
She made some noise during the
trial, but no one cared.

BOATWRIGHT
Yeah, but now Ben Hughes is her
megaphone. And her pit bull.

EMRINGER
We can pass his scribbles off as
elitist liberal bullshit.

DOLLARHYDE
I agree with Lawton. It's not
Hughes's prose I care about. It's
his investigation.

BOATWRIGHT
We need to tie up some loose ends.

The others look at Roller.

DOLLARHYDE
Holy, we got some things to discuss
that don't concern you. Why don't
you take a stroll.

Roller gets up without a word. Before leaving, he reaches for
a pump bottle of Ozarklean on Dollarhyde's desk.

INT. STAPLES RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Officer Ray Staples, annoyed, yells up the stairs.

STAPLES
Why should I take out the damn
trash? I got shot in the foot.

BELINDA (O.S.)
That again? That was two years ago.
And it was your own goddam fault.

With an exaggerated limp, Staples clunks up the stairs and
passes by Belinda in the kitchen. She sneers at him.

BELINDA (CONT'D)

You limp like that chasing cocktail waitresses down at The Rathskeller?

Staples grabs two Hefty bags off the floor.

STAPLES

I don't have to chase 'em. They're happy to sit on my lap.

BELINDA

Hundred-dollar bills work wonders, don't they?

Staples heads out the door with the bags.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Staples manhandles two trash bins to the curb. Down the street, an engine REVS UP and headlights flash on. The lights approach rapidly. Staples shields his eyes.

The Tribbles' Dodge slams into Staples, knocking him down the street. It rolls over him again before roaring away.

INT. SHERIFF POOLE'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Poole, not happy, yells into his cell phone.

POOLE

The job ain't remotely done.
You were supposed to steal
Newhouse's Beemer and use that to
run over Staples.

Poole slams his palm on the kitchen counter.

POOLE (CONT'D)

The whole goddamned point of the
goddamned murder was to frame the
goddamned wife of the goddamned guy
we already goddamn framed.

INT. TRIBBLE BROTHER'S DODGE - CONTINUOUS

While Barney drives, Junior, Jr. mutes their phone.

JUNIOR, JR.

That was a lot of goddamns.

BARNEY

Sound's like he's fixin' to do some
nut kickin'.

POOLE (V.O.)

You assholes there? Or'd you do me
a favor and drive into a tree?

Junior Jr. unmutes the phone.

JUNIOR, JR.

Boss, her house had alarms and
shit. We couldn't get near it
without floodlights turning on.

BARNEY

Couldn't a stole that Beemer
anyways. Googled a video on how to
do just that. Need a laptop and a
college degree in electronic brain
surgery to boost one.

POOLE (V.O.)

You googled how to steal a BMW?
Tell me you didn't use your phone.

JUNIOR, JR.

What'd you want me to use? My
toothbrush?

INT. SHERIFF POOLE'S RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

POOLE

My point, numb-nuts, is that
watching videos on how to steal a
BMW might be considered a fucking
clue by law-enforcement
professionals such as myself.

BARNEY (V.O.)

Good thing we didn't steal it then.
What about the Newhouse lady? Me
and Junior, Jr. could kill her.

POOLE

You've done enough killing for now.

EXT. INAUGURAL STAND - DAY

On a winter day, Dollarhyde rises from his chair on the
Capitol's portico and surveys the crowd on the south lawn.

On the lawn, Roberta and her sons unfurl a long white banner reading: "GOVERNOR DOLLARHYDE: WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO OFFICER RAY STAPLES?"

Dollarhyde stares at it as he recites the oath of office.

REVERSE ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

DOLLARHYDE

... and support the Constitution of the United States and the State of Misery... uh, Missouri.

SNICKERS and MURMURS float up from the crowd.

EXT. CAPITOL SOUTH LAWN - 5 MINUTES LATER

The crowd witnessing the inauguration listens to Dollarhyde's speech as a Missouri STATE TROOPER approaches Roberta.

STATE TROOPER

Ma'am, we're going to need you to remove your banner.

ROBERTA

Why? I'm not attacking the capitol while waving a Confederate flag.

STATE TROOPER

Ma'am, I'll be happy to lead you to the designated protest area.

ROBERTA

I know you're just following the orders of the governor of the Great State of Misery. We'll go quietly.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

As Roberta loads her banner and her kids into her BMW SUV, she notices Rie and Ben walking toward her.

BEN

I take it that was your move?

Roberta smiles and nods toward her boys.

ROBERTA

Time the boys learned it's our duty to make good trouble.

RIE
You're in Dollarhyde's head. Him
flubbing his oath should make the
late-night shows.

BEN
How'd Johnnie know they'd hit
Staples?

ROBERTA
He knew they'd do something. But
murdering a cop? Uh-uh...

BEN
They're cleaning up.

ROBERTA
And sending a message.

BEN
It's working, because no one's
talking.

RIE
While they'd be stupid to come
after you directly, they're getting
desperate. Unpredictable.

ROBERTA
As Johnnie might say, we're in the
endgame now.

BEN
I thought Iron Man said that.

Roberta laughs.

ROBERTA
Johnnie said it first.
(beat)
And at the end of this match...
only the Black King will be
standing.

RIE
So what's next?

ROBERTA
A misdirection play. Johnnie likes
football too...

INT. GOVERNOR DOLLARHYDE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Emringer and Dollarhyde confer.

DOLLARHYDE

I made an ass of myself before I finished the oath of office!

EMRINGER

It wasn't that bad.

DOLLARHYDE

Are you shitting me?! Look. Not governor for an hour yet, and this is already going viral.

Dollarhyde flips a laptop around on his desk to show Emringer a video clip from the hobbling scene in the film "Misery."

Edited onto James Caan's sweatshirt: "I (heart) Misery." With Dollarhyde's face superimposed over hers, Kathy Bates swings her sledge hammer while a voice mimicking Dollarhyde's says: "Welcome to the Great State of Misery."

EMRINGER

Wow. That was quick.

DOLLARHYDE

You think? What kind of sick fuck sits poised at his computer waiting for a governor to mispronounce a state's name?

Dollarhyde slams the computer shut.

DOLLARYHYDE

Why we need to get people in this country back to work. So they don't have time for this goofy shit.

EMRINGER

It'll pass.

DOLLARHYDE

Well, I'm sure as fuck not watching Jimmy Kimmel tonight. Maybe not for the next four years.

(beat)

Moving on. Newhouse?

EMRINGER

Good news is all the witnesses have refused to talk to Hughes. Seems they got the message.

DOLLARHYDE

Just takes one. We need to shut off
this line of inquiry.

EMRINGER

Chief Lenox is on it.

INT. JONAH HEARNS' APARTMENT - DAY

JONAH HEARNS sets his bong on a shabby coffee table and exhales a huge cloud of smoke. He picks up a remote. As he presses the "on" button, Chief Lenox kicks in his door.

The Tribble brothers, wearing ill-fitting police uniforms, follow Lenox into the apartment.

NEW ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

Junior, Jr. pins Hearns face-first to a wall.

HEARNS

What the hell?

Lenox stands casually to Hearns' right.

LENOX

Jonah Hearns. You're wanted for stealing a late model Dodge Ram pickup and running down Officer Ray Staples.

HEARNS

No way, man. I don't boost pickups... especially Rams.

Junior, Jr. grinds Hearns' face into the wall, hard.

JUNIOR, JR.

Don't be dissin' no Dodge Ram.

Junior, Jr. jerks Hearns off the wall. Barney holds a Dodge Ram steering wheel in gloved hands.

BARNEY

Take this and put your hands on it.
Like you're drivin' a truck.

HEARNS

I'm not touching nothing.

Barney clobbers Hearns with his free hand.

LENOX

Best do as your told.

Hearns takes the wheel. Barney hands drops it in an evidence bag held by Lenox.

BARNEY

One more thing and we're done.

Junior, Jr. spread-eagles Hearns on the wall.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

Left-handed or right-handed?

HEARNS

What the fuck?

Junior, Jr. knees Hearns in the groin. Hearns gasps.

BARNEY

Are you left or right-handed?

HEARNS

Left...

Barney pulls out a .22 automatic and wraps Hearns fingers around it. He squeezes off the clip at the door frame.

Junior, Jr. knees Hearns in the groin again. Hearns slides down the wall. Junior drops the .22 in another evidence bag.

Lenox hands Barney his service weapon. Barney shoots Hearns in the chest. Barney hands the gun back to Lenox.

BARNEY

Congratulations. You're a hero.

INT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A newspaper slams down on a coffee table

BEN (O.S.)

Goddammit!

The St. Louis Ledger's headline: "Cop-Killer Slain in Shoot-Out" appears next to a decade-old photo of Jonah Hearns. A sub-headline: "Suspect wanted revenge for incarceration."

Rie peers over Ben's shoulder and scans the article.

RIE

Ben.

BEN
It's because of me.

RIE
No.

BEN
I'm getting people I don't even
know killed...

Rie slams her palm down on the table. Ben flinches.

RIE
Stop it. This isn't about you. Most
things aren't. Man the fuck up.

BEN
Jesus.

RIE
I love you, but you can be
insufferable.

BEN
I work for the New York Times. It's
a prerequisite.

Rie smiles.

RIE
Fair point. But don't play this
game if you don't like the rules.
And rule number one is that people
can get hurt or killed.

BEN
And rule number two?

RIE
You can't do anything about rule
number one.

BEN
I didn't even know this Hearn's guy.
Sounds like I wouldn't want to. But
I'm still pissed.

RIE
Good. Use that anger. Find justice.

BEN
I want to, but it seems like
they're eliminating all the leads.

Rie points to the paper.

RIE

Or creating more. Look where it says Hearns stole a Dodge Ram.

BEN

I see it. So?

RIE

This is the difference between a gifted amateur such as yourself and a pro like me.

(beat)

Why a Dodge Ram? There were no witnesses when Staples was killed. No one could identify the vehicle.

BEN

You think they were overcompensating for something they knew to be true? The Tribbles drive a Ram. They killed Staples.

RIE

Exactly. And you figured it out almost as fast as a Border Collie would've. Good boy.

BEN

In my defense, that is one of your smarter dogs.

Rie takes his hand.

RIE

Dollarhyde and Emringer, they know the law, crime, and criminals. But only as end users. They're not familiar with the messy part of the investigation. All the things that don't make sense. They want it in a pretty package to put in front of a jury. And that's what they did here... they were too specific.

BEN

Because they knew what type of vehicle was used.

RIE

It's a confession of sorts. If you look at it the right way.

BEN

It's good to work with a pro.

Rie kisses him.

RIE

I bet it is. I hope I get to one day.

EXT. GATED GALILEE SPEC HOUSE - DAY

A just-completed model home sits alone amongst many demarcated, empty lots. A scaffold-clad American Jesus looms in the background.

In the driveway, Roller and Boatwright exit from two luxury vehicles.

INT. GATED GALILEE SPEC HOUSE - DAY

Boatwright and Roller hold handkerchiefs to their noses as they survey the living room.

BOATWRIGHT

Sweet Jesus. This must be what Satan's butthole smells like.

Boatwright dabs his watering eyes with a handkerchief.

JOHNNIE

We think it's the drywall.

ROLLER

How could drywall cause this?

TIMMY

Seen it before. About fifteen years ago. Drywall from China used to build houses... mostly in the South... off-gassed a bunch of contaminants. The rotten egg smell is sulfuric acid.

ROLLER

Sulfuric acid?

BOATWRIGHT

Why didn't you notice this before?

JOHNNIE

It don't smell bad in the cold.
Found out when we turned on the
heat.

Roller eyes Johnnie and Timmy.

ROLLER

You two sure there ain't no funny
business going on? Prisoners trying
to sabotage the project?

TIMMY

Sir, we just build what you tell us
with what you give us.

Boatwright runs his hand along a beautiful kitchen counter.

BOATWRIGHT

Drywall aside, the rest looks good.
What do you propose we do?

JOHNNIE

We can keep the frame and the
exterior, but that's about it. Toss
the rest and we'll need new
drywall.

Roller collapses into a chair.

ROLLER

We appear to be screwed.

BOATWRIGHT

It ain't good, that's for sure.

Boatwright turns to Johnnie and Timmy.

BOATWRIGHT (CONT'D)

Then rebuild. Save what you can.

TIMMY

You need to get on the horn and rip
your supplier a new one.

BOATWRIGHT

It's at the top of my "To Do" list.

EXT. GATED GALILEE SPEC HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Roller and Boatwright board their respective vehicles and
drive away. Timmy claps Johnnie on the shoulder.

TIMMY

Doping up that drywall was a stroke
of evil genius.

JOHNNIE

It was time to go on offense.

TIMMY

We got 'em looking one way. They
won't even see the real hit coming.

INT. FBI ST. LOUIS FIELD OFFICE - DAY

Agent Morton leans back in her chair, chatting on the phone.

AGENT MORTON

I have a stock tip for you, Rie.

RIE (V.O.)

(on phone)

All ears...

AGENT MORTON

Uber Strong Steel in Tulsa. I hear
they pay a nice dividend.

RIE (V.O.)

We'll take a look.

AGENT MORTON

Call me when you know something.

BINOCULAR VIEW

A neon sign above a theater marquee: "Tupper's Joint." The
view shifts down a few feet. Ben and Rie approach the "Will
Call" window and retrieve some tickets. They head inside.

INT. TRIBBLE BROTHER'S DODGE - CONTINUOUS

Junior, Jr. sets the binoculars down.

JUNIOR, JR.

Tell Poole what they're doing.

Barney picks up his phone and sends a text.

BARNEY

This followin' shit is boring as
hell save the odd hit and run.

JUNIOR, JR.
 Got that right. They better have
 something better soon, 'fore I lose
 interest.

INT. TUPPER'S MUSIC THEATER - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Tupper warmly greets Ben and Rie. He hands Ben a set of keys.

TUPPER
 Black Navigator parked out back.

BEN
 Appreciate the loaner. Will help us
 throw the Tribbles off the scent.

TUPPER
 That shouldn't be hard.

RIE
 We won't be gone long.

TUPPER
 Take your time. I've got seven cars
 and nowhere to go...

RIE
 Sounds like the title for a great
 country song.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - STUDY - AFTERNOON

Dollarhyde, Emringer, Boatwright and Roller eat lunch.

BOATWRIGHT
 Horace says Hughes and Kitamura
 slipped their leash last night.

ROLLER
 St. Louis? See the Newhouse woman?

EMRINGER
 Why the secrecy? That relationship
 is out in the open.

DOLLARHYDE
 I agree with Galen. They've got
 another lead. My vote is Tulsa.

BOATWRIGHT
 Sounds like it's time to cut our
 connection to Uber Strong Steel.

The others nod in agreement. Roller puts down his unfinished sandwich and turns away.

BOATWRIGHT (CONT'D)

Might be best if they didn't find the C.E.O. at her desk.

DOLLARHYDE

Kirby's Tulsa bound as we speak.

ROLLER

Don't tell me he anticipated this move by Hughes and Kitamura.

DOLLARYHYDE

Oh, hell no. The only thing Kirby's anticipating is getting laid.

BOATWRIGHT

Okay. If he gets there ahead of Hughes and Kitamura, we can get control of Milana. Then what?

EMRINGER

We need her off the grid and out of Tulsa. Any ideas?

ROLLER

I can't believe I'm saying this, but how about my winter place down in Marathon?

DOLLARHYDE

Damn good idea, Holy.

BOATWRIGHT

I'll phone Kirby and tell him to get Milana to Holy's place in the Keys ASAP. Holy, you send Kirby the alarm and entry codes.

EMRINGER

Let's get moving, gentlemen.

The meeting adjourns. Boatwright and Roller slowly depart.

EMRINGER (CONT'D)

(sotto to Dollarhyde)

This is a temporary fix. We're gonna need a more permanent solution...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE STUDY - CONTINUOUS

As he exits the study, Roller glances back to see Dollarhyde and Emringer in deep discussion.

ROLLER

A more permanent solution? Where does it end, Lawton?

Boatwright stops and fixes Roller with a dead-eyed stare.

BOATWRIGHT

It ends when it's over. And you don't stop until it is. You need to understand that before someone decides you're the weak link.

Roller applies a squirt of OzarKlean to his shaking hands. Boatwright strides ahead, tapping his phone screen.

BOATWRIGHT (CONT'D)

Kirby, it's me. Listen up, slight change of plans...

EXT./INT. TULSA STRIP MALL - LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - DAY

In the Navigator, Ben and Rie stake out the tiny headquarters of Uber Strong Steel.

BEN

I'm guessing the steel's not actually manufactured here.

RIE

(smiling)
Maybe there's a room in the back.

BEN

Are stakeouts always this boring?

RIE

Not really. Usually I pass the time having sex with my partner.

BEN

Do I count as a partner?

Rie yawns extravagantly.

RIE

I suppose. Probably worse ways to kill three minutes.

Ben points to Milana Brankovich leaving the office and walking to her small Nissan sedan.

BEN

She's on the move. Too bad for you.
Those would've been the best three
minutes of your life.

Rie eases the Navigator forward and falls in behind Milana.

INT./EXT. LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - EVENING

Ben and Rie, parked down the street, stake out Milana's house.

BEN

I'm starting to feel sorry for the
Tribbles. Following people sucks.

RIE

That's because you're no good at
it. Did I ever tell you I graduated
first in my Following Class at the
FBI Academy?

BEN

Following class? That's the name?

RIE

Real name's classified.

Higginbotham parks his Chevy Tahoe a few cars in front of the Navigator and walks to the door.

RIE (CONT'D)

Now things are getting interesting.

BEN

Don't see a bag. Are they staying
the night or making a run for it?

RIE

How much you want to bet they stay
at a hotel? A nice one. Milana
doesn't strike me as Holiday Inn
with an ice machine down the hall
type of gal.

BEN

Sexiest hotel in Tulsa's The Mayo.
As you know from last night...

Ben smiles and winks. Rie doesn't buy it.

RIE
Minibar was good.

Milana and Higginbotham leave the house. Milana carries a large suitcase. They get in the Tahoe and depart.

BEN
Looks like a long trip.

RIE
At least as long as we're looking
for her.

Rie puts the Navigator in gear and falls in behind the Tahoe.

EXT. MAYO HOTEL - 20 MINUTES LATER

RIE
The Mayo. Good guess, Sherlock.

BEN
Cheap bastard's parking the car
himself. Let's get the valet.

RIE
And bump into them when they come
into the lobby. He'll shit nickels
when he sees us.

BEN
Shit nickels? You silver-tongued
devil. I've never wanted you more.

Rie kisses him.

RIE
You've never not wanted me the
maximum amount. Let's get moving.

INT. MAYO HOTEL - 5 MINUTES LATER

Higginbotham and Milana enter the lobby. Higginbotham does a double take when he sees Ben and Rie, who mimic surprise.

BEN
Why Senator Higginbotham, imagine
running into you here.

Higginbotham tries to brush past them.

HIGGINBOTHAM
Sorry, don't have time to chat. On
important state business.

Ben and Rie block their way.

BEN
Polling the electorate again?

Higginbotham leans in close to Hughes so Milana cannot hear.

HIGGINBOTHAM
Fuck you, paper boy.

Milana, unsure of what is going on, smiles uneasily at Rie.

MILANA
Kirby, aren't you going to
introduce us?

HIGGINBOTHAM
Just some constituents is all. They
really oughta stop by my office.
Hell, we ain't even in Missouri.

BEN
Yet, you're still working hard for
the Show Me State. One might say
your commitment is Uber Strong.

Higginbotham has murder in his eyes but before he can reply
Rie zeros in on Milana.

RIE
My name's Rie. You are?

MILANA
Milana.

Rie points at Milana's elaborate belt.

RIE
That's a lovely belt.

MILANA
Thank you. Kirby gave it to me.
It's from one of your native
tribes. Oncalla, I think.

RIE
Oncalla, huh? Looks good on you...

Higginbotham takes Milana's elbow and steers her to the
elevator.

HIGGINBOTHAM

Okay, nice seeing you folks. Come on Milana, we need to get going.

Ben smiles at Rie.

BEN

Shit nickels, indeed. I think he made change for a twenty.

RIE

Yep. And now he'll be arranging for an early checkout...

INT. MISSOURI GOVERNOR'S MANSION STUDY - NIGHT

Dollarhyde yells into his cell phone. Emringer looms nearby.

DOLLARHYDE

Goddammit, Kirby! Hughes and Kitamura found Milana?

HIGGINBOTHAM (V.O.)

(on phone)

Don't worry. I'm gonna give 'em the slip. Right after I slip Milana a little somethin'.

EMRINGER

Jesus. You're on the run yet still making time to pork the one person who could put us all in the clink?

HIGGINBOTHAM (V.O.)

I'm good at multi-tasking.

Dollarhyde holds his head in his hands as he leans over the phone on the desk.

DOLLARHYDE

Kirby, in a couple of days I will deliver a major speech that will define my administration. But, I am in the middle of rewriting it. Why? Because I just learned my fucking speech writer is not, apparently, a native English speaker. Twenty page speech and the only words I could keep were: 'My fellow Missourians.'

Dollarhyde pounds the desk in frustration.

DOLLARHYDE (CONT'D)
I don't have time for this shit!

INT. MAYO HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Phone crooked in his ear, Higginbotham sits on the bed in his underwear and undershirt. Steam and shower noises waft from the nearby bathroom.

HIGGINBOTHAM
Governor, I must strongly advise you against starting your speech with "My fellow Missourians, I don't have time for this shit."

DOLLARHYDE (V.O.)
That's not what I... fuck! Get Milana to Marathon and ghost her.

Higginbotham listens to Milana singing in the shower.

HIGGINBOTHAM
I'll cut the line once I get her settled. Plenty of fish in the sea.

Higginbotham hangs up and strolls into the bathroom.

INT. MISSOURI GOVERNOR'S MANSION STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Dollarhyde sneers at the phone like it's a rancid piece of meat and looks up at Emringer.

DOLLARHYDE
Gonna be one more fish in the sea.
Call Poole and tell him its time for the Tribbles to suit up.

INT. MAYO HOTEL PARKING GARAGE - RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

In the Navigator, slumped low, Ben and Rie sip coffee and peer across the garage at Higginbotham's Tahoe.

BEN
Still think they'll run?

RIE
Yep.

BEN
Nice as the Navigator is, I'd rather be in our suite.

RIE
I dunno. The driver's seat gives a
kick-ass massage.

BEN
Wait a second. My seat doesn't have
that. Let's switch. I'll drive when
we follow them.

RIE
You? Did you graduate from FBI
Following Class?

Ben glances up. Higginbotham and Milana wheel suitcases to
the Tahoe.

BEN
You think airport?

RIE
That's my guess.

Rie starts the Navigator and discreetly follows the Tahoe.

INT. TULSA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - MORNING

Higginbotham and Milana present their IDs at a ticket
counter. The CLERK queries them.

CLERK
Destination?

HIGGINBOTHAM
Miami.

A small person, slightly hunched, wearing a hoodie and dark
glasses, turns and leaves from Higginbotham's queue.

INT. AIRPORT GARAGE - RENTAL CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Rie takes the drivers seat, pulling her hoodie down, removing
the dark glasses, and shaking her hair free. She smiles.

RIE
Miami.

INT. ST. LOUIS - WHITE CASTLE - DAY

Ben, Rie, and Roberta confer in a booth.

ROBERTA
No friends this time?

BEN
It's odd. Either they've gotten a lot better at it, or they haven't been tailing us the last two days.

RIE
They're not better. Getting better would suggest a capacity to learn.

ROBERTA
Is this Uber Strong Steel connection enough?

RIE
Not quite. My friend at the Bureau thinks if they nab Higginbotham now, they'll lose the rest.

ROBERT
But he might turn on them. Johnnie could be home for dinner.

RIE
You and Johnnie will have dinner again. Just not yet.

ROBERTA
Fact we're using "will" instead of "someday" is progress.
(beat)
Seems Kirby Higginbotham is a loose end like Ray Staples was.

BEN
(glances out the window)
I'm more worried about Milana, the head of Uber Strong Steel.
(beat)
And I worry about you.

ROBERTA
There's people in line ahead of me. Johnnie and his friend Timmy.

BEN
Did Johnnie say he's in danger?

ROBERTA
He wouldn't. But, last time he slipped me a note.
(MORE)

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

Said he and Timmy were executing
the next piece of their plan.

RIE

I wish they'd put that on hold.
We're going to end up with a blue
ribbon clusterfuck on our hands.

ROBERTA

The mouth on you. Who taught you to
talk like that? The FBI?

RIE

High school soccer team.

Roberta laughs.

BEN

I need to talk to Johnnie. Can you
pass him a note?

ROBERTA

Sure. We've had a lot of practice.

Ben writes a note out on a page from his notebook, rips it
out, and hands it to Roberta.

BEN

I hope he likes country music.

EXT. MARATHON KEY BEACH HOUSE - PATIO - DAY

Eyes closed, AirPods in, Milana lies on a deck chair. She
wears a light sun dress, cinched by the Oncalla belt.

Two meaty hands compress themselves around her skull, picking
her up. She opens her eyes in terror.

NEW ANGLE

Junior, Jr. grimaces. His arms strain and suddenly cross. A
sickening, MUFFLED SNAP. He lets go of Milana's skull.

JUNIOR, JR.

(to Barney)
Go git the saw.

EXT. ARBY'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Barney throws a ladies carry-on suitcase into a dumpster. He
returns to the Dodge Ram Power Wagon.

INT. TRIBBLE BROTHER'S DODGE

Barney drives as Junior Jr. calls Poole.

JUNIOR, JR.
We did it right, Sheriff.

POOLE (V.O.)
Meaning?

JUNIOR, JR.
She'll never be found. We dumped
the, the middle part of the body...
the toro?

POOLE (V.O.)
Torso.

JUNIOR, JR.
Yeah, that. Weighted it down real
good and dropped it in the ocean.

POOLE (V.O.)
And the rest?

JUNIOR, JR.
Dumped arms and legs and the head
in that Everglades swamp. Gators
everywhere. She's gone.

POOLE (V.O.)
And the house?

JUNIOR, JR.
Barney and me cleaned like we never
have before.

INT. SHERIFF POOLE'S RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

POOLE
That I can believe.

JUNIOR, JR. (V.O.)
What's next, boss? Me and Barney
sorta like these business trips. We
feel like big time executives.

POOLE
C'mon back. We got a little work
for you closer to home.

EXT. MARATHON MARINA - POLICE SKIFF - DAY

Monroe County Sheriff GORDON CASTLEREAGH lifts a white plastic sheet and examines something laying in the skiff's cockpit. A DEPUTY watches him.

CASTLEREAGH

This is a new one, even for Florida. Who found the, uh, body?

DEPUTY

Tourist on a jet ski. Body was floating and he almost hit it. Fell off and grabbed onto the body because he mistook it for a raft. After he finished puking, he went ashore and called us.

CASTLEREAGH

Any ideas on why all these jugs of water are tied to it?

DEPUTY

For weighting it down?

CASTLEREAGH

Are you suggesting they thought weighting a body with jugs of water would make it sink?

Castlereagh studies the body again and notices something.

CASTLEREAGH (CONT'D)

A lot of the milk jugs are only half full. I can't even...

DEPUTY

They didn't quite think it through.

CASTLEREAGH

Or they didn't think at all.

DEPUTY

Or they thought as hard as they could.

(beat)

Sweet Jesus.

CASTLEREAGH

Must be out-of-staters. One thing anyone from Florida knows how to do is properly weight down a body.

(beat)

(MORE)

CASTLEREAGH (CONT'D)

Any reports of arms, legs, or heads washing up on the beach?

DEPUTY

Heads plural? Jesus, I hope not. No further reports of other body parts. Not today, anyway.

CASTLEREAGH

Identification is gonna be a challenge.

DEPUTY

Other than D.N.A., which may be long shot, all we got is that belt.

Castlereigh pulls on a latex glove, kneels down and gently lifts the Oncalla belt by its buckle. He twists it slightly to see underneath.

CASTLEREAGH

Stamp says "Based on Genuine Oncalla Designs." That's odd enough to be promising.

(beat)

I got some googling to do.

INT. MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The deputy enters Castlereigh's office. Castlereigh, on the phone, directs the deputy to take a seat.

CASTLEREAGH

(on phone)

Chief Running Buck, I can't thank you enough for your time. Have a good day, sir.

Castlereigh hangs up and grins at the deputy.

CASTLEREAGH (CONT'D)

That was Walter Running Buck, Chief of the Oncalla Nation.

DEPUTY

The tribe that made the belt?

CASTLEREAGH

Nope, the Oncalla Tribe does not make those belts.

DEPUTY

Who does?

CASTLEREAGH

The Pay the Lord Ministry located
in Baxter, Missouri.

DEPUTY

A church is making fake Indian
belts?

CASTLEREAGH

Not quite. Inmates at a for-profit
prison are making the belts. Pay
the Lord, run by Tobias "Holy"
Roller, sells them.

DEPUTY

The Oncalla must be pissed.

CASTLEREAGH

Indeed. They are suing the living
shit out of Pay the Lord.

DEPUTY

How's that going?

CASTLEREAGH

About as well as Wounded Knee.
Roller's making money. And so are a
bunch of lawyers. Tribe's not.

DEPUTY

Great country we live in.

CASTLEREAGH

It varies. But, we got a lead.

The deputy waits as Castlereagh leans back in his chair.

CASTLEREAGH (CONT'D)

Tobias Roller winters down here.
Big house on Marathon.

DEPUTY

He buy it? Or did Pay the Lord?

CASTLEREAGH

Probably the ministry. Likely calls
it a parsonage or some such
bullshit to avoid taxes.
Regardless, pull the sale records.

INTERCUT - ROLLER LAKE HOUSE/SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Roller's hands shake as he sets his phone on his desk.

Sheriff Castlereagh and the Deputy stare at a speaker phone.

ROLLER

Sheriff... Castlereagh... is it? A belt we sold was used to murder someone?

CASTLEREAGH

Not quite. The belt was found on a woman's torso floating two miles from your house off Marathon Key.

Roller swivels in his chair and looks at the framed painting of Jesus on the wall. He takes it down and sets it on the credenza behind his desk, with Jesus facing the wall.

ROLLER

Sorry, Sheriff. I was collecting my thoughts and contemplating how much evil still exists in our world.

CASTLEREAGH

Why I have a job, Reverend. Make sure people are held to account.

ROLLER

The Lord will do that.

CASTLEREAGH

As will I.

ROLLER

I suppose we could send you a list of sales we've made in down there.

CASTLEREAGH

That's a start.

Roller exhales in relief. It's temporary.

CASTLEREAGH (CONT'D)

Oh, one more thing Mr. Roller. Is anyone staying at your house?

ROLLER

No. It's supposed to be empty.

CASTLEREAGH

It's just that neighbors recalled seeing a truck leave your property.

ROLLER

Could have been the groundskeepers.

CASTLEREAGH

We'll ask them. Any alarm system activations?

Roller stares into space while talking.

ROLLER

None that I know of, Sheriff.

CASTLEREAGH

I've taken up enough of your time.
We'll be in touch.

Castlereagh hangs up. Roller douses his hands in OzarKlean, and places another call.

ROLLER

Governor, it's Tobias. We got a serious problem...

INT. GOVERNOR DOLLARHYDE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dollarhyde, Emringer, Poole, Roller, Higginbotham and Boatwright stare at each other across a small table.

DOLLARHYDE

This is embarrassing. We keep fucking up murders. First Staples, and now Milana.

BOATWRIGHT

It's a big wound... but not fatal.

EMRINGER

That's like Lincoln telling his wife he has a slight headache and wants to leave the play early.

Roller goes to the wet bar and fixes a drink. Higginbotham, distraught over Milana, motions for Roller to make him one.

HIGGINBOTHAM

Why kill her? I was sleeping with her.

BOATWRIGHT

Kirby, if we couldn't murder someone you were fucking, we wouldn't be able to murder anyone.

Roller hands Higginbotham a bourbon and takes his seat.

ROLLER

Well, maybe if you didn't murder people we wouldn't be in this mess.

EMRINGER

Says the guy using convict labor to build a giant Jesus statue.

DOLLARHYDE

Moving on.

(beat)

Horace, how the fuck did the Tribbles fuck this up?

POOLE

They flunked basic science. Thought lashing jugs of water to her would sink the torso.

EMRINGER

Jesus Christ! Instead of sinking the torso they turned it into a fucking raft?! We're lucky 130 Cubans didn't climb on board and sail the S.S. Half-a-Milana right up onto Miami Fucking Beach.

DOLLARHYDE

How'd the Tribbles even find Florida? I can't begin to comprehend the generations of circular cousin fucking required to produce those two.

EMRINGER

Solutions?

BOATWRIGHT

Let's wait this out. They'll find another headless body in Florida soon enough.

ROLLER

What about the belt?

POOLE

Trail's a dead end.

DOLLARHYDE

If we agree we don't have to watch our backs, how do we move forward?

BOATWRIGHT

Quit hiding and start strutting.
Time to put the spotlight somewhere
else.

Boatwright raises up on his arms, locking his elbows and
leaning over the table.

BOATWRIGHT (CONT'D)

American Jesus! It's more than a
big-ass statue. It's a symbol of
public-private and faith-based
partnerships. The restoration of
the American spirit. The redemption
of the American soul.

The others nod excitedly.

EMRINGER

Governor, use the dedication of
American Jesus to unveil your
platform of small government and
highlight the importance of faith.
Play up Gated Galilee and the power
of redemption offered by the Penal
Solutions construction project.

DOLLARHYDE

Yeah. That will horrify the libs.
The media will forget about
investigating actual crimes and
focus on slaying imaginary dragons.

Dollarhyde nods and looks his team over.

DOLLARHYDE (CONT'D)

The murders, the framing of
innocent people... it'll all be
water under the bridge!

Roller holds his thumb and forefinger an inch apart.

ROLLER

You were this close to making me
feel better.

HIGGINBOTHAM

So that's it? We just cover up
Milana's death and move on?

EMRINGER

You better hope so. Since you
literally drove her to her death.

Dollarhyde slaps his hands on his desk and rises.

DOLLARHYDE

Let's do it. Holy, make sure the only thing bigger than the unveiling of American Jesus would be the return of the original.

ROLLER

Already on it. Tupper Blackwood asked to put on a show for the construction crew at American Jesus. Good publicity, and good practice for the main event.

EMRINGER

Ain't he a friend of Hughes and Kitamura?

BOATWRIGHT

Let him give the concert. It might be a chance to find out what they're up to.

EMRINGER

Makes sense. Probably look worse if we decline.

Emringer and Poole stay behind as the others depart.

DOLLARHYDE

Long pole in the tent is Kirby. Keep an eye on him.

INT. FBI ST. LOUIS FIELD OFFICE

Agent Morton backs away from her computer and reaches for the phone.

AGENT MORTON

Rie? Check your email. Sending you a police report from Florida.

INT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ben returns from a jog. Rie scrolls her iPad.

RIE

(to phone)

It's identical to the one I saw her wearing.

Ben leans closer to see the photo.

RIE (CONT'D)

We'll be in touch. Thanks, Janice.

Rie cuts the connection.

RIE (CONT'D)

Milana Brankovich is dead... they found her torso off Marathon Key.

BEN

Torso? Jesus Christ.

RIE

Higginbotham rented a car at Miami Airport three days before the body was discovered. He put two-hundred and ninety-one miles on it. Enough for a round trip to Marathon, where Holy Roller has a house.

BEN

Higginbotham isn't a killer.

RIE

The Tribbles weren't with us during that time frame. Back now, though.

BEN

They're getting desperate.

RIE

Might not take much to turn Roller or Higginbotham.

BEN

I have an idea.

INT. OFFICE OF SENATOR HIGGINBOTHAM - DAY

Higginbotham's cell phone BEEPS. He picks it up.

A text: "Cutting off Milana's head is going to get you the death penalty, Kirby." The phone BEEPS again.

Another text: "Was the knife made of Uber Strong Steel?"

Higginbotham throws his phone on the desk.

INT. DONNY PETERSON'S HOUSE - DAY

Donny Peterson applies a substance on Ben's nose.

DONNY
That should do it.

Ben checks the mirror. He has a black goatee, a larger nose, and black shoulder length hair drawn into a ponytail.

BEN
You do damn good work.

DONNY
Used to do my own makeup. Like to keep my hand in.

TUPPER
You about done?

DONNY
Finished. Ben looks like a member of your crew... underpaid and over medicated.

Ben hands his jacket to JOHN, a man of similar build.

BEN
(to Rie)
Ready to take the Tribbles for a detour?

Rie nods and takes John by the arm and they leave.

EXT. AMERICAN JESUS JOB-SITE - DAY

From a stage next to the American Jesus, Tupper and Donny, dressed as Boone Clagmore, sing a honky-tonk tune.

Backstage in his roadie disguise, Ben pretends to work. Johnnie approaches him. Ben sees him and gestures upward.

BEN
Damn thing is huge.

JOHNNIE
It's a fair amount of Jesus.

BEN
Thanks for meeting me.

JOHNNIE

I appreciate the help you've given Roberta. She speaks highly of you.

(beat)

I doubt we have much time.

BEN

Roberta says you've been screwing with them on Gated Galilee.

JOHNNIE

That's just to distract them from the real threat.

BEN

Which is?

Johnnie pats the sandaled toe of American Jesus.

JOHNNIE

Let's just say the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

EXT. STAGE LEFT AT THE CONCERT - CONTINUOUS

Boatwright scans the crowd from an elevated scaffolding. He sees Johnnie talking to a man with a goatee and pony-tail. Before he can ask the guard to check it out his phone rings.

BOATWRIGHT

Kirby, make it quick.

HIGGINBOTHAM (V.O.)

(on phone)

Someone sent me a text the other day asking why I killed Milana.

BOATWRIGHT

Fuck. What do you mean "the other day?" This is vital, need-to-know-right-the-fuck-now information.

HIGGINBOTHAM

I think Hughes sent the text.

BOATWRIGHT

Of course it's Ben Hughes. Who else would it be? Milana? Kind of hard to send a text with no arms, no legs, and no fucking head, don't you think?

EXT. AMERICAN JESUS JOB-SITE - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Johnnie and Ben stare up at American Jesus.

JOHNNIE

Bad steel. Crooked inspectors.
Pissed off workers. Add 'em all up
and American Jesus is goin' down

BEN

How long?

JOHNNIE

Hard to tell. It won't take much.

BEN

Okay. Things are in motion. Now
keep your head down.

JOHNNIE

We'll be model inmates. But
Judgement Day is coming.

INT. OFFICE OF SENATOR HIGGINBOTHAM - DAY

Higginbotham glances at his phone while listening to HELEN, a pork industry lobbyist. A new text: "I know about the murders. Talk now and you can save yourself."

HELEN

This bill will have every farmer in
Missouri putting diapers on their
hogs.

Higginbotham puts his phone down and sidles around his desk.

HIGGINBOTHAM

Helen, the bill's as good as dead.
Government has no say in how bacon
makes its way onto my plate.

Helen gives Higginbotham a quick peck on the cheek and scoots away as he reaches for her buttocks. Near the office door, she hands him a bag.

HELEN

A little something to help you
remember us when you vote, Senator.
(winks)
Batteries included.

Helen leaves. Higginbotham's phone buzzes. Text: "You have one day to make your choice."

HIGGINBOTHAM

One day? You don't have that long
to live, asshole.

INT. TRIBBLE BROTHER'S DODGE - DAY

Barney drives in heavy traffic. Junior, Jr. points ahead.

JUNIOR, JR.

There's the S.U.V.... Don't get too
close. We don't wanna fuck this up.

BARNEY

No worries. We're pretty good at
this.

JUNIOR, JR.

Should be. We been doin' it enough.

BARNEY

You got the gun ready?

Junior Jr. pats a small automatic on the seat next to him.

JUNIOR, JR.

First for us... a murder-suicide.

INT. HIGGINBOTHAM'S CHEVY TAHOE - DAY

Stuck in traffic, Higginbotham opens the bag Helen gave him.

He extracts a masturbatory device with a silicone pig head on
the business end and the name "Princess Porker" in a livid
pink font down the side.

He presses the power switch and watches in amazement as the
device's head gyrates and undulates.

He pulls down his pants and attaches the device. An
ELECTRONIC WHIRRING begins.

HIGGINBOTHAM

Oh! Princess, you have some skills.

INT. BEN'S LAND ROVER - DAY

Ben and Rie edge along in heavy traffic.

BEN

Any sign of the Tribbles?

RIE
We're clean so far.

BEN
What are they up to?

RIE
They're going to make a move soon.
I've decided to up armor.

BEN
I've noticed you're sporting a few
new intriguing, ah, contours.

RIE
I'll bet you have.

INT. HIGGINBOTHAM'S CHEVY TAHOE - DAY

Edging along in Jefferson City Bridge traffic, Higginbotham's face is flushed, sweaty. He squeezes his eyes shut as Princess Porker whirrs away.

Higginbotham opens his eyes wide and grabs his chest with his right hand. He keels over, his foot jammed against the accelerator.

INT./EXT. TRIBBLE BROTHERS' DODGE - DAY

The Tribbles see Higginbotham's Tahoe speed up, lurch to the left, carom off a concrete safety barrier, smash through a steel girder and plunge into the Missouri River.

Barney slams on the brakes.

JUNIOR, JR.
What the fuck just happened?

BARNEY
We didn't even get a chance to kill
him or nothin'...

JUNIOR, JR.
We better call the boss.

INT. POOLE RESIDENCE - DAY

Sheriff Poole holds his head in his hands staring at his cell phone on the kitchen table.

POOLE

You're sure you didn't call an audible on the bridge?

BARNEY (V.O.)

(on phone)

We was sticking to the plan. Follow him home, shoot him and his wife.

(beat)

Hey! We can still shoot the wife.

Poole, exasperated, stares at the ceiling.

POOLE

Just come back home. Don't shoot anyone, don't run over anyone, don't saw anyone in half.

INT. FBI ST. LOUIS FIELD OFFICE - DAY

Ben, Rie, and Agent Morton video-conference with Sheriff Castlereagh.

CASTLEREAGH (VIDEO DISPLAY)

Milana Brankovich, if that's who it was, died hard. Worse, she died in my county. I don't like that.

AGENT MORTON

No doubt. We got in touch with Ms. Brankovich's relatives through the U.S. embassy. We'll be able to run D.N.A. tests soon for confirmation.

CASTLEREAGH

Thanks. I asked Roller for permission to search his home here.

RIE

How'd that go over?

CASTLEREAGH

Sounded like he'd eaten a hundred Tide Pods. But he allowed it. Didn't have much choice.

(beat)

Higginbotham's death set you back?

AGENT MORTON

Some, but not for long. Roller is also a weak link, and I think he'll break. Thanks for squeezing him.

CASTLEREAGH

My pleasure. He won't need much of a push. How'd Higginbotham die?

BEN

He had a massive heart attack while masturbating with an electronic pig head with silicone lips on the business end. Lost control of his vehicle, drove through a guardrail, and took out a girder made of defective steel he illicitly procured. He then plunged to a very ironic death in the Missouri River.

Long beat.

CASTLEREAGH

Ya'll are weird up there.

RIE

Means something, coming from a Florida man.

INT. GOVERNOR DOLLARHYDE'S PRESS ROOM - DAY

Dollarhyde grips his podium. Ben raises his hand.

BEN

Governor Dollarhyde, Ben Hughes of The New York Times...

Dollarhyde frowns.

BEN (CONT'D)

Were you aware of Senator Higginbotham's involvement in a scam to profit from the use of substandard steel in state infrastructure projects?

DOLLARHYDE

Senator Higginbotham sat on several important committees that are integral to my administration's plans for rebuilding Missouri.

BEN

How does rebuilding a bridge with substandard steel help Missourians?

DOLLARHYDE

While I was not aware of Senator Higginbotham's transgressions, we will get to the bottom of them.

BEN

Governor, we've heard that the late Senator flew to Florida recently with Ms. Milana Brankovich, the C.E.O. of Uber Strong Steel, the company that supplied the substandard steel.

DOLLARHYDE

The Senator's ah, extracurricular activities were, sadly, well known.

BEN

But, Brankovich disappeared and the Senator is a person of interest in the discovery of a corpse in Marathon. In fact, the body was discovered near Reverend Tobias Roller's home there.

DOLLARHYDE

Your question? This is a press conference, not a jury summation.

BEN

In time, perhaps it will be.

DOLLARHYDE

This press conference is over.

Dollarhyde, followed by a coterie of aides, storms out.

INT. GOVERNOR DOLLARHYDE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Grim-faced and tired, Dollarhyde and Emringer huddle.

DOLLARHYDE

Hughes is going nuclear on us.

EMRINGER

Expect an article in the Times.

They both slump back in their chairs and sip whiskey.

DOLLARHYDE

Remember the first race you ran?

EMRINGER

Yep.

DOLLARHYDE

Mine was for the school board. When I won, I remember thinking I could change the world.

EMRINGER

How'd we go from the school board to this?

DOLLARHYDE

Game got bigger, stakes higher, elections more expensive. Lines got crossed.

EMRINGER

Lines got obliterated. You don't realize until it's too late. I keep telling myself I'm the same guy.

DOLLARHYDE

Doesn't matter. Depending on which cable show you watch, you're either doing the Lord's work or Satan's.

Dollarhyde toasts Emringer with his bourbon.

DOLLARHYDE (CONT'D)

You and me, Galen, are products of our times.

EMRINGER

Question before us is whether our time is up.

Dollarhyde's contemplative air suddenly evaporates.

DOLLARHYDE

Our time has just begun. Tomorrow you and I go to Baxter. The next day American Jesus makes his debut.

EMRINGER

It's going to be memorable.

DOLLARHYDE

And busy.

(beat)

You up for what needs to be done?

Emringer thrusts his glass outward.

EMRINGER

Forward.

INT. ROLLER LAKE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dollarhyde, Roller, Emringer, Poole, and Boatwright gather to watch Roberta Newhouse on TV.

ROBERTA (ON TV)

My husband, and others, have been forced by the State of Missouri to build American Jesus and Gated Galilee so Pay the Lord and Penal Solutions could make money.

Roller clicks off the TV and shakes his head.

ROLLER

The things she's accusing us of...

DOLLARHYDE

Are remarkably accurate.

POOLE

I shoulda told the Tribbles to shoot her.

EMRINGER

We shoot people when they need to be shot. Not before.

BOATWRIGHT

Nice to see an Attorney General with standards.

ROLLER

Hughes and Kitamura were behind this.

BOATWRIGHT

We can't afford to let them keep pushing us.

DOLLARHYDE

Horace, the Tribbles ready?

POOLE

They know what to do.

DOLLARHYDE

That would be a fucking first.

POOLE

They've had some bad luck, but
we've planned this one out.

EMRINGER

They've fucked up three murders so
far, I guess they're due.

POOLE

They'll hit Hughes and Kitamura
early tomorrow morning and dump
their bodies in an abandoned iron
mine out near Theodosia.

DOLLARHYDE

(looking at Poole)

You and your men up for the rest?

POOLE

By tomorrow night, we'll be good.

ROLLER

Will this work?

BOATWRIGHT

It has to.

Roller douses his hands with more OzarkKlean.

INT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben and Rie speak on Zoom with Agent Morton and Sheriff
Castlereagh.

CASTLEREAGH (ZOOM)

The Tribbles left fingerprints in
Roller's beach house. I shared this
information with your Sheriff
Poole...

AGENT MORTON (ZOOM)

This case is hopping state lines
like Bonnie and Clyde in a V-8
Ford.

(beat)

They didn't wipe the place down?

CASTLEREAGH (ZOOM)

They tried, I guess. Wiped down the
doorknob. We found good prints on
the refrigerator though.

BEN
First place I woulda looked.

RIE
What was Poole's reaction?

CASTLEREAGH (ZOOM)
He confirmed the Tribbles were unaccounted for during the time Brankovich was murdered.

AGENT MORTON (ZOOM)
Hmmm. Tribbles are their fall guys.

RIE
Wanna bet the Tribbles will be killed resisting arrest?

AGENT MORTON (ZOOM)
That's why I'm going down in the morning. I'm worried you and Rie are on their "To Do List" as well.

BEN
Don't worry. Rie can kill a man seven times before he hits the ground.

AGENT MORTON (ZOOM)
Let's hope it doesn't come to that.

EXT. ALLEN ROAD - ABOVE BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - DAWN

The Tribbles park their Dodge on the shoulder of a residential road and tramp through the woods, down a hill to Ben and Rie's house.

INT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Barney and Junior, Jr. ponder Ben and Rie's empty bedroom.

BARNEY
What the fuck? They ain't here.

JUNIOR, JR.
Car is. I bet they went out early for their stupid run. We'll grab 'em when they're tired after all that cardio shit.

BARNEY

Why I never jog. Gotta be ready at all times to use maximum force.

Junior, Jr. surveys Barney's girth.

JUNIOR, JR.

Yeah... that's the reason.

EXT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ben and Rie walk the last hundred yards to their door, catching their breath and cooling down.

BEN

You got kitchen duty. I beat you by at least a foot.

RIE

All this hardware slowed me up.

They reach their front door. Rie enters first.

Junior, Jr. emerges, snatching Rie around her waist. Barney grabs Ben, drags him in and slams him against the door.

INT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Barney punches Ben in the gut doubling him over. Junior, Jr. bear-hugs Rie from behind.

BARNEY

(sotto to Ben)

You both are gonna die this morning. Only question is who goes first.

Rie briefly fights back. Lacking ability to maneuver, she shifts tactics and ceases to struggle, collapsing in on herself. She emits a soft sob to sell it.

Junior Jr. loosens his grip slightly, letting his hands slide upward to Rie's breasts. This frees Rie's forearms. Junior Jr. lowers his head to whisper into her right ear.

JUNIOR, JR.

That's it, sweetheart. Quit fighting. This will --

Rie snaps her hands down and two collapsible batons, still in compact form, slide out her jacket and into each hand.

Rie drives the metal ball protruding from the baton into Junior Jr.'s right eye. He HOWLS in agony, raising his hands to cover his eye.

Rie slides down and rolls left, swinging around on her right knee. Whipping her right arm, the baton telescopes open and slams into Junior Jr.'s ankle, shattering it.

Junior Jr. falls to his knees. Rie jumps up, snaps open the baton in her left arm and uses her body weight to drive both batons onto Junior Jr.'s skull. He collapses, unconscious.

Barney turns when he hears the scuffle. Ben knees him in the groin, head butts him in the mouth, and punches him in the throat.

Rie whips the batons into Barney's ankles. As he falls, she windmills them into his skull.

Ben and Rie rest with hands on knees, catching their breath.

BEN

You okay?

RIE

Yeah. You?

BEN

Touch and go until you went into Black Widow mode. What, no gun?

RIE

Too big for the .22 I'm carrying. Besides, we want them alive. More or less.

Ben surveys the unconscious Tribbles.

BEN

Looks like you decided on less.

Rie kisses Ben and gently places his right hand on her left breast.

BEN (CONT'D)

Wha?

Rie points at the pile of Tribbles on the floor.

RIE

I won't go another second with him being the last man to have touched me.

(MORE)

RIE (CONT'D)

(beat)

I decide who... I decide when.

Ben glances at the slag heap of Tribbles

BEN

You sure as hell won't get an argument from me.

INT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 30 MINUTES LATER

BARNEY'S POV

Blackness. Then gray. Then an out-of-focus face leaning in close. After a moment, Ben's face comes into clear view.

LIVING ROOM

Bound to a chair, missing two teeth and suffering from two broken ankles, Barney moans.

BARNEY

Eww boge by fuggin angles an nogged ow by fuggin teeve.

BEN

I can't take credit for your ankles, but I did do the teeth.

Barney struggles but an excessive amount of Gorilla tape binds him to his chair.

BEN (CONT'D)

Don't bother. You're not going anywhere.

Bound and seated nearby, Junior, Jr. awakens with a moan. His right eye is swollen shut and watering.

JUNIOR, JR.

I guess we're in trouble.

BEN

My better half is finding out just how much.

Rie enters the room

RIE

Janice will be here soon.
(looks at the Tribbles)
(MORE)

RIE (CONT'D)

Now that Porky and Porkier are wakey-wakey, maybe they'd like to hear how screwed they are.

JUNIOR, JR.

Fuck you, Chop-Chop girl. No one gives a shit what you think.

Rie nods at Junior, Jr. and leaves the room. The Tribbles look at Ben, who shrugs.

Rie returns holding a vintage stapler -- massive, solid and loaded with heavy duty staples.

RIE

Chop-chop girl?

Rie picks up the Junior, Jr.'s red baseball cap and jams it on his head. For a second, he relaxes, relieved.

Rie shakes her head "no" and raises the stapler above his head. His eyes go wide.

Rie slams the stapler's pommel three times with all of her strength, driving staples through the hat and into Junior, Jr.'s skull.

JUNIOR, JR.

Oww! Goddamn! What the fuck you fucking psycho Jap bitch!

Rie slams the stapler on his head again and pounds home three more heavy duty staples.

JUNIOR, JR. (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ! Why are you stapling my fucking hat to my fucking head?

RIE

Because I don't have a nail gun.

BEN

If I may venture an opinion. Ms. Kitamura is expressing displeasure with both your racism and your misogyny. And, she might still be mad you were going to kill her.

Rie slams the stapler on Junior, Jr.'s head and drives home another staple.

RIE

Thanks, I forgot about that.

JUNIOR, JR.
 Motherfuck! Stop reminding her of
 shit!

Agent Morton steps into the living room, followed by several
 FBI agents.

AGENT MORTON
 I'm Special Agent Janice Morton.
 You two must be the Tribbles.

She surveys the wounded Tribbles.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)
 I see you've already met Rie.

JUNIOR, JR.
 She stapled my fucking hat to my
 fucking head.

AGENT MORTON
 Should help you not to lose it.

RIE
 One more word Junior, and I'm gonna
 staple your dick to the chair.

BARNEY
 Jeeza Kwaisu. I ting she sewious.

Rie, with murder in her eye, moves toward Barney.

RIE
 Really, a fake Japanese accent?

BARNEY
 Nah waycism! Nah waycism! No
 teeve! No teeve!

Rie stops glaring at Barney and resumes glaring at Junior,
 Jr.

JUNIOR, JR.
 Hear that? She threatened me with
 dick stapling. That is cruel and
 unusual punishment.

AGENT MORTON
 Rie, I must advise you not to
 staple this man's penis to the
 chair.

JUNIOR, JR.
 Thank you!

AGENT MORTON

Be a waste of a good staple. A paper clip would do.

JUNIOR, JR.

What the hell? Don't I have rights?

AGENT MORTON

You have the right to remain silent. I suggest you exercise it or I'll let Rie get back to work.

Three more men enter the living room: two FBI AGENTS escorting one of Poole's deputies, ANDY GIBBONS.

FBI AGENT #1

Found the deputy here watching the house.

GIBBONS

You clowns need to back off. I'm on official sheriff's business.

AGENT MORTON

Not anymore. Anderson, park him over there with the other trash.

Gibbons points at Agent Morton.

GIBBONS

Lady, I don't know who the hell you think you are, but I'm gonna call my Sheriff and then we're gonna send you back where you belong.

AGENT MORTON

Where would that be?

Gibbons starts to speak but stops.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)

Shut up. We'll get to you in a moment. But know this. Your comfortable life of corruption is over. A much harder life has begun. How much harder is up to you.

FBI AGENT #2

Also, if you ever point at my boss again, I will break your fingers.

BEN

Deputy, believe it or not, that is not even close to the scariest threat I have heard this morning.

Agent #2 guides Gibbons to a chair next to the Tribbles and places the deputy's phone on the table next to their phones.

Gibbons stares, amazed, as a third FBI AGENT, wielding needle nose pliers, prepares to remove a staple from Junior, Jr.'s head.

FBI AGENT #3

This might hurt.

JUNIOR, JR.

I got one workin' eye, one workin' ankle, a lump the size of a fucking watermelon on my noggin, and you're fixin' to pull several fucking staples out of my fucking skull.

(beat)

We're way past might.

One of the Tribble's phones rings. The screen shows "BOSS" is calling. Morton glances at the phone.

AGENT MORTON

Boss? Gee, I wonder who that might be. We won't answer this one. We'll let him sweat for a few minutes.

(to the Tribbles)

He'll probably call back in ten.

JUNIOR, JR.

More like twenty. He's been calling regular. Wants to know the job is done. Ow!

Junior, Jr. glares at Agent #3, who triumphantly holds a staple in the pair of pliers.

FBI AGENT #3

Got one!

Morton sighs and stops the Agent from continuing.

AGENT MORTON

Let's take a break.

The Agent nods and Morton turns to the Tribbles.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)

When he calls, follow my instructions and you might just live to see whatever offspring you have sired get life sentences of their very own.

JUNIOR, JR.

(nods at Rie)

Keep her away first. Then we'll talk...

Barney shakes his head in agreement.

INTERCUT - POOLE'S POLICE CRUISER/BEN AND RIE'S LIVING ROOM

Poole phones the Tribbles.

With Agent Morton listening in next to him, Junior Jr. answers.

POOLE

Where in the hell have you been?

JUNIOR, JR.

Doin' the job. Hughes and Kitamura are dead. Got the bodies with us at home, cut in half.

POOLE

When'd you do this?

JUNIOR, JR.

We went in early 'cuz it was safer.

POOLE

Why'd you cut 'em up? You decide that was fun after Florida?

JUNIOR, JR.

No, it ain't fun. You know what else ain't fun? Carrying a whole body up a damn mountain. This makes 'em more, ah, portable.

POOLE

When do you leave for the mine?

JUNIOR, JR.

In an hour.

POOLE
Good work boys. Get rid of the
bodies then take a rest.

INT. BEN AND RIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Agent Morton cuts the connection.

AGENT MORTON
You didn't screw it up.

She looks at Gibbons, still guarded by two agents.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)
Be your turn in a second. You have
the same deal these two have. You
fuck it up, we show you no mercy.

A phone on the table buzzes. Agent Morton picks it up. It
displays: "POOLE." She hands it Gibbons.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)
Put it on speaker.

Gibbons nods. He puts the phone on speaker.

POOLE (V.O.)
You still at the Hughes place?

GIBBONS
Sure am. Ain't seen a thing yet.

POOLE (V.O.)
And you won't. The dumbasses hit
them early.

GIBBONS
Still want us to work it the way we
planned?

POOLE (V.O.)
Yep. Get out to that holler and
tell me when they're on the move. I
want them dead in an hour.

Poole cuts the connection. The Tribbles glare at Gibbons.

JUNIOR, JR.
You motherfucker. You were gonna
kill us.

GIBBONS
Orders.

JUNIOR, JR.
I am so gonna shiv your ass when
we're in the pen.

Barney nods vigorously in agreement.

AGENT MORTON
I'm pretty sure you just added
another felony to the list.

JUNIOR, JR.
Like it fucking matters.

Another agent hands Agent Morton three folders.

AGENT MORTON
(to the Tribbles)
You boys may have saved yourselves
from death row. When you can move
again, we'll have you sign these.

JUNIOR, JR.
Now can someone take these fucking
staples out of my head?

INT. ROLLER LAKE HOUSE - DAY

Dollarhyde puts his phone on speaker.

DOLLARHYDE
Please tell me the news is good.

POOLE (V.O.)
Hughes and Kitamura are no longer a
problem. Tribbles are next.

Emringer high-fives Boatwright, who punches Roller on the
shoulder. Roller rubs his shoulder.

DOLLARHYDE
Now we're cookin' with gas. Horace,
you put the Tribbles down yourself.

POOLE (V.O.)
I'll let you know when it's done.

Dollarhyde cuts the call and grins at the others.

DOLLARHYDE
We made it. Tribbles will take the
fall for all of it. Holy, let's get
American Jesus open for business.

EXT. RURAL ROAD NEAR THEODOSIA MINE - AFTERNOON

Five FBI agents in tactical gear detain two Quantrill County deputies. One agent holds a radio next to a DEPUTY's mouth.

DEPUTY

Truck's two minutes out, Sheriff.

The Dodge Ram cruises slowly by the group. It pauses as three agents jump into the back. Three black SUVs follow at a distance.

EXT. RURAL ROAD BRIDGE NEAR THEODOSIA MINE - MOMENTS LATER

Poole, standing in front of two cruisers blocking the bridge, waves down the approaching pickup.

The truck stops. Three men in tactical gear, armed with carbines, pop up from the truck bed and level their weapons.

The DRIVER and PASSENGER dismount, drawing their sidearms.

DRIVER

FBI! Don't move! You're under arrest!

The passenger disarms Poole, forces him to the ground and cuffs him. Poole's deputies kneel, hands on heads.

POOLE

I'm the Sheriff of Quantrill County...

A pair of ladies' shoes appears under Poole's gaze. Poole slowly raises his head to see Agent Morton.

AGENT MORTON

Not anymore.

Another agent, wearing gloves, hands Poole's phone to Morton. With her gloved hands, she takes the phone, smiles when seeing it is still unlocked, and taps out a message.

Ben and Rie step forward.

POOLE

What're you assholes lookin' at?

RIE

Not much.

EXT. SHOW ME LAKE FLOATING STAGE - DUSK

Dollarhyde, Emringer, Roller, Boatwright stand on a floating barge bearing a stage, 100 feet in front of an illuminated American Jesus.

They gaze at two huge LED screens on the Baxter lakefront.

DOLLARHYDE

Holy, you put on one helluva show.
I'm gonna use you for my
presidential inauguration...

EXT. LAKESIDE VIP SEATING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Ben, Rie and Agent Morton chat with Tupper and Donny.

TUPPER

You gonna arrest them now or after
the show?

AGENT MORTON

After. But first I'm gonna blow
their minds.

She excuses herself, takes three steps, and turns around.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)

No tweeting or I'll shoot you.

Morton enters the control booth, flashes her credentials, and talks to the crew. She hands one a flash drive. They nod. Morton returns to her seat and leans over to Ben and Rie.

AGENT MORTON (CONT'D)

You two ready for your close-up?

EXT. SHOW ME LAKE FLOATING STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Roller smiles as he surveys the crowd on the lakefront.

ROLLER

Governor, I think today is going to
be the start of --

Suddenly, Roller points at the giant lakeside LED screens.

Dollarhyde turns to face the screens.

DOLLARHYDE

Jesus!

On the screen to their left, a message in capital letters:
 "GOVERNOR DOLLARHYDE: THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION IS
 PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE ARREST OF SHERIFF HORACE POOLE, HIS
 DEPUTIES, AND THE TRIBBLE BROTHERS. THEY ARE NOW COOPERATING
 WITH AUTHORITIES. PLEASE LOOK AT THE OTHER SCREEN. SINCERELY,
 MANY FBI AGENTS"

The group shifts their gaze to the other screen. They see Ben
 and Rie waving and smiling. Behind Rie stands Agent Morton,
 holding up her FBI credentials and a set of handcuffs.

The image on the screen unexpectedly shakes.

EXT. LAKESIDE VIP SEATING AREA - CONTINUOUS

People MURMUR and look about as the sound system and other
 equipment VIBRATES and RATTLES.

DONNY
 What's going on?

BEN
 Earthquake.

TUPPER
 In Missouri?

BEN
 Missouri gets a lot of 'em.

RIE
 By California standards this is
 just a little throat clearing.

An immense WRENCHING SQUEAL echoes across the lake.

TUPPER
 Oh, my GOD!

He points. Two-hundred feet of American Jesus tilts forward.

EXT. SHOW ME LAKE FLOATING STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Those assembled on the floating stage hear two sounds --
 SCREAMS erupting from the crowd on the Baxter lakefront and
 the SHRIEK OF TWISTING METAL emanating from American Jesus.

The group turns toward American Jesus. Aides and assistants
 dive off the barge. The core group of 4 VIPs can do nothing
 but stare. Roller closes his eyes and falls to his knees.

ROLLER

I'm sorry.

The grim visage of American Jesus plows downward through the group, obliterating them and the floating stage.

EXT. LAKESIDE VIP SEATING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Special Agent Morton briefly ponders the unused handcuffs in her hand. She reluctantly returns them to her jacket pocket.

AGENT MORTON

Guess I won't need these.

BEN

Johnnie was right, it didn't take much.

RIE

That was some Old Testament wrath of God shit.

BEN

The Mother of All Headbutts. But not the kind of justice I wanted to see delivered.

RIE

We still need accountability. They betrayed the public and an entire faith.

BEN

You're right. Lotta work still to be done.

INT. NEWHOUSE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

SUPER: "SIX MONTHS LATER"

Johnnie leans out from his favorite chair, reaching toward a chessboard. Ben watches from the board's other side.

JOHNNIE

Checkmate.

BEN

How? What?

JOHNNIE

You brought that pawn out but didn't cover the lanes of attack.

BEN

I didn't even get to move my
horse.

Johnnie slaps his thigh and laughs. Rie, watching from the
sofa, shakes her head.

RIE

That was brutal, Ben. I may have to
rethink my life choices.

She twists the engagement ring on her finger. Roberta perches
on the arm of Johnnie's chair

ROBERTA

Don't be too hard on him. Johnnie's
been playing for years. And there's
things Ben's good at. Maybe none
better. His articles have changed
Missouri, and I bet the book does
as well.

JOHNNIE

Certainly changed my life.

Johnnie and Ben fist bump.

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

Tell you what. I'll stick to
building houses and playing chess.
You write the books.

BEN

Deal.

They stroll together to the dining room. We stay with
Johnnie's chair as the conversation continues amidst plates
and cutlery CLINKING and CLANKING.

BEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I hear you and Timmy joined forces
and are rebuilding the entire state
of Missouri.

JOHNNIE (O.S.)

Yep. Timmy's taking care of the
Ozarks branch and I'm running the
show in north.

BEN (O.S.)

Who's the C.E.O?

ROBERTA (O.S.)
 I am. First order I gave was that
 they both get new trucks and
 replace them every two years...

MAIN TITLE: "SHOW ME"

END CREDITS MONTAGE

A series of newspaper headlines and photos:

-- "St. Louis Ledger: McALISTER POLICE CHIEF BARRY LENOX AND FIVE DEPUTIES INDICTED FOR MURDER, GRAFT"

-- An unhappy Lenox in handcuffs, wearing an orange jumpsuit.

-- "St. Louis Ledger: FEDERAL INDICTMENTS HANDED DOWN AGAINST THREE ST. LOUIS COUNTY JUDGES"

-- "Quantrill County Courier: RIE KITAMURA ELECTED SHERIFF, VOWS TO CLEAN HOUSE" (with a headshot of Rie)

-- Poole, Gibbons, and six other deputies being led away in cuffs by FBI officers.

-- "Quantrill County Courier: ONCALLA TRIBE AWARDED \$60 MILLION IN CASE AGAINST DISGRACED PREACHER'S MINISTRY."

-- Chief Running Buck flanked by Timmy and Johnnie, all hold shovels at the ready in front of a sign proclaiming "Oncalla Hills" where Gated Galilee once stood.

-- "St. Louis Ledger: DOLLARHYDE AND EMRINGER IMPEACHED POSTHUMOUSLY"

-- "New York Times: BEN HUGHES SCORES A SECOND PULITZER FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING"

-- "Wall Street Journal: PENAL SOLUTIONS ENTERS CHAPTER 7 BANKRUPTCY"

-- "Kansas City Star: PULITZER PRIZE WINNING REPORTER JOINS THE STAR" (with a headshot of Ben)

-- A gold record on Tupper's wall with "Seven Cars and Nowhere to Go" as the song title. Tupper and Donny share songwriting credit.

□

THE END