

Warrior Class

by

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Represented by:

Creative Artists Agency
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Cast of Characters

NATHAN BERKSHIRE (50's) - A many faceted political creature.
Caucasian. Easy demeanor.

HOLLY LILLIAN EAMES, formerly HATHAWAY (40's) - Suburban
housewife. Caucasian.

JULIUS WEISHAN LEE (40's) - A square jawed Marine turned politico.
Asian.

ACT ONE

SCENE I: A NICE SPOT FOR LUNCH. BALTIMORE, MD.

At rise: A burly, oak-filled steak house. The place is empty, but shouldn't be on such a pleasant afternoon.

NATHAN sits and fiddles with his iPhone.

HOLLY enters.

Nathan stands.

HOLLY

Mr. Berkshire?

NATHAN

Yes, yes. Please -- Nathan. Holly?

HOLLY

Yeah.

They shake hands.

NATHAN

Nice to meet you, Holly.

HOLLY

Nice to meet you.

NATHAN

Nice to meet you. Please ...

HOLLY

Sure.

They sit.

Nathan hands her a menu.

NATHAN

Have you had lunch?

HOLLY

No, I-

NATHAN

Have something, please.

HOLLY

Are they even open?

NATHAN

Oh, sure, they're open. The owner's a friend. I stop here every time I'm in town. He's giving us a couple of minutes of privacy before the big lunch rush.

HOLLY

Great. What's good?

NATHAN

Can't go wrong with the burgers. When you order a burger here, they take a steak and grind it. It's not ground meat that's just sitting there.

HOLLY

Wow.

NATHAN

They take an aged steak, slice off the crust and grind it. You want to go see them do it?

HOLLY

No. That's alright.

NATHAN

Hard to find a place that grinds a steak. This is a dying breed.

HOLLY

Yeah. Well, I'm sold.

NATHAN

Good, good. I'm going to get one too. How do you like yours?

HOLLY

Rare.

NATHAN

Woman after my own heart. That's good.

HOLLY

Right.

NATHAN

Absolutely. Rare.

He whistles through his teeth and holds up two fingers.

NATHAN (cont'd)

(to whomever is off-stage)

Raw. Absolutely. (to Holly) Something to drink.

Water's fine. HOLLY

Baltimore has fine water. NATHAN

Not really. HOLLY

Right. NATHAN

I live here. I read the reports. I know. HOLLY

Beat.

Want a soda instead? NATHAN

Seltzer. HOLLY

Great. Should we order something for your husband? Three burgers? NATHAN

He's not coming. HOLLY

Oh. NATHAN

Yeah. HOLLY

Beat.

Trish told me you were coming together. NATHAN

Yeah, I know- HOLLY

Everything alright? NATHAN

I just changed my mind. HOLLY

I see. NATHAN

HOLLY
I'm sorry. I changed my mind.

Beat.

NATHAN
Nothing to be sorry about.

Nathan takes a recording device out of his jacket pocket.

NATHAN (cont'd)
(apologetic)
I'm just going to need a record of this conversation, that's all.

HOLLY
That's fine.

NATHAN
Yeah?

Holly nods.

NATHAN (cont'd)
Okay, then. So, Trish filled you in about everything.

HOLLY
Yeah. I'm sure I don't have anything much interesting to say.

Nathan presses record on the device and sets it out on the table.

NATHAN
Great. Let's just call this ah ... "Burgers" then.

HOLLY
Burgers.

NATHAN
Great. So, I'm glad you were able to see me with such short notice.

HOLLY
No problem.

NATHAN
Great. Does anybody know that you're meeting with me today?

HOLLY
I didn't tell anyone. Does anyone know that you're meeting with me?

No. NATHAN

Just burgers, then. HOLLY

She toasts him with her glass of water.
She takes a sip. Chews some ice.

Nathan chuckles.

NATHAN
That's right. Okay, so, like I was saying, I'm glad you could meet me on short notice. This is just a routine conversation as part of the vetting process and hopefully we'll be able to go through it quick, quick, quick, then it's Burgers and "nice to meet you, have an antacid on me."

Sure. HOLLY

NATHAN
(speaking into the recorder)
Great. So, for the record, this is Nathan Berkshire. It's Monday, April 13th, 11:30 am and I'm here with ...

He holds the recorder up to Holly.

Holly Eames. HOLLY

He speaks into the recorder.

NATHAN
Formerly Holly Hathaway. Great. Okay, so Holly.

Yeah. HOLLY

NATHAN
(referring to the tape recorder)
Let's just pretend that this isn't here okay?

Beat.

Right. HOLLY

NATHAN
Okay, fair, impossible. But, this is just a part of the routine. It's not The Inquisition, alright?

NATHAN

Yeah. Have you been keeping up with him since then?

HOLLY

I hear some news occasionally.

NATHAN

But you haven't had direct contact.

HOLLY

No.

Nathan writes something on a legal pad.

NATHAN

What's the news you're hearing?

HOLLY

He's a politician now. I don't exactly know what kind.

NATHAN

New York Assembly.

HOLLY

Yeah. (as in, "Of course, just like everyone else, I saw the speech.") I saw that speech he gave at the Nine Eleven Mosque Site.

NATHAN

Wasn't that something?

HOLLY

Yeah.

NATHAN

Really smoothed over a lot of tensions. Helps that he was there that day.

HOLLY

Yeah. He's "the Republican Obama," right?

NATHAN

(eye-roll)

That's just Sean Hannity being Sean Hannity.

HOLLY

Yeah. That's what they say.

NATHAN

It's not a help. Between me and you, I wish I never heard that phrase again. Anyway, you know that Julius joined the Marines after graduation.

HOLLY

I heard that.

NATHAN

Silver Star in Kuwait.

HOLLY

Didn't know that, but that's great.

NATHAN

Teach For America when he got home. Harvard Law Review.
General Counsel for the Ministry of Hope.

HOLLY

Yeah.

NATHAN

What do you think about that?

HOLLY

Good for him. I guess we're meeting because he's running for
Congress now, right?

NATHAN

We're vetting him for the House. Yes. But, between you and
me, I really believe in him. Lots of faith.

HOLLY

Yeah.

Beat.

NATHAN

Anyway, okay, good. You know he's married now, right?

HOLLY

Yeah.

NATHAN

How do you feel about that?

HOLLY

What do you mean?

NATHAN

Is it odd for you at all?

HOLLY

I'm married. I have kids. Nothing's odd.

NATHAN

Okay good to know.

He writes something on a legal pad.

NATHAN (cont'd)

So, Holly, what kind of relationship did you and Julius have?

HOLLY

He was my boyfriend.

NATHAN

Right, no, I mean ... huh.

He laughs.

HOLLY

I'm sorry. I didn't understand the question.

NATHAN

No, no. I'm not sure I knew the question myself. You know I've only had one girlfriend my entire life?

HOLLY

Yeah?

NATHAN

My wife. We met in high school and that's been me ever since.

HOLLY

Wow.

NATHAN

Yeah. I got real lucky. So would you say that you and Julius had ... a good relationship?

HOLLY

I mean ... we broke up.

NATHAN

Right. But, would you define it as abusive, violent?

Beat.

HOLLY

(measured)

No. He was never "abusive or violent" towards me.

NATHAN

Okay. Good. But, perhaps it was a turbulent relationship.

HOLLY

Yeah.

NATHAN

Not unlike many relationships between young people inexperienced with relationships.

HOLLY

I guess we don't all meet our soul-mates in high school.

NATHAN

(smiling)

I went to Arthur Murray before the junior prom. That was my secret.

HOLLY

Nice.

Beat. Nathan writes something down.

NATHAN

Look, like I said, I really think that Julius is one of the special ones. I think he's going to change the world.

HOLLY

Julius always had something special about him.

NATHAN

I'm glad you agree with me. You do this as long as me and you get a nose for the good ones.

He takes out some papers.

NATHAN (cont'd)

So, hey, some friendly business before Burgers.

HOLLY

What are those?

NATHAN

Just a letter of certification.

HOLLY

Certification.

NATHAN

Just to certify that everything you said just now is true. You and Julius had (reading) "a relationship typical of the relationships that many young people have."

HOLLY

I'm sorry, this is so bizarre.

NATHAN

I know, we live in a crazy time. Everything ... makes such a difference. This will just help us keep your relationship with Julius ... *private*. Probably what you want anyway. We've already contacted your college and they've expunged all the records. So-

HOLLY

Wow. Okay.

NATHAN

It's ridiculous how formal all these things have gotten.

Beat.

HOLLY

(looking at the papers)

Yeah.

NATHAN

But, you can't play the game if you don't play the game, so-

Pause.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Mrs. Eames,-

HOLLY

I'm not signing these.

Beat.

NATHAN

Oh.

HOLLY

No.

She pushes the papers back to Nathan.
Nathan turns the tape off.

NATHAN

May I ask, "Why?"

HOLLY

He scared the Hell out of us. My family. My dorm. We didn't know what he was going to do. It was the worst time of my entire life.

NATHAN

Good. I'm glad you're telling me this.

HOLLY

Why?!

NATHAN

Because, Holly, I'm here to help.

End of Scene.

SCENE II: JULIUS'S KITCHEN, FOREST HILLS GARDENS, NY

Late evening. A well-appointed kitchen that is fresh out of a Williams-Sonoma catalogue. There is an ultrasound on the refrigerator.

Julius, a tall square jawed Asian man stands barefoot at a granite-top kitchen island. There is an air popper that is popping a huge billowy mound of white popcorn into a large glass bowl.

Nathan enters, wearing what he wore in the previous scene.

NATHAN

Julius.

Julius turns to him.

JULIUS

Nathan.

Julius turns the popcorn machine off.

JULIUS (cont'd)

Hey.

The men shake hands, warmly, almost jovially.

NATHAN

I came as soon as I heard.

JULIUS

Magda didn't take your coat at the door?

NATHAN

No-no.

He pats the pockets of his coat.

NATHAN (cont'd)

I got so much in these pockets, she'd need to sign a non-disclosure just to pick up a hanger. (empathetic) Jesus, Julius.

JULIUS

I bet you're right.

NATHAN

Jesus.

JULIUS
Something to drink? Hot tea?

NATHAN
Nah, that'll just keep me up. Hot water.

JULIUS
Chinese in another life?

NATHAN
You know it, my friend. I came as soon a Trish called me.

JULIUS
Yeah.

NATHAN
Jesus.

Beat.

JULIUS
I think it's going to be alright. Come on, have a seat.

Nathan sits. Julius pours a kettle full of steaming water into a mug and sets it before Nathan.

NATHAN
Thank you.

JULIUS
Sure.

NATHAN
How's Annie feeling?

JULIUS
She's really tired.

NATHAN
I can imagine. I can imagine.

JULIUS
Baby's okay though.

NATHAN
That's what Trish said. Thank God.

JULIUS
Well, we're not quite out of the woods, you know? Nobody knows what's going on.

NATHAN
I know. But, really thank God.

JULIUS

I know. She started bleeding during the speeches.

NATHAN

Jesus.

JULIUS

(a little abruptly)

I'm sorry. Nathan ...

Beat.

NATHAN

What?

Julius clears his throat. Makes a gesture, "Come on. You know."

NATHAN (cont'd)

(realizing his mistake)

Oh shit. Right. Right. I'm sorry.

Nathan crosses himself.

JULIUS

It's okay. It's just, you said it like three times already.

Nathan crosses himself.

NATHAN

No. No. You're absolutely right. Old habit of a professional sinner. You're absolutely right.

JULIUS

It's okay. Just looking out for your soul.

NATHAN

Hey, let me know if you find it. I left it on a train in New Rochelle in two thousand and two.

JULIUS

I've got a few good leads.

NATHAN

Much obliged.

JULIUS

Anyway, we got out of the ER half an hour ago.

NATHAN

Wow. (Beat.) Any press?

JULIUS

No.

NATHAN

What the Hell?

JULIUS

I know you'd love to believe otherwise, but, the press corps doesn't chase Junior Assemblymen around at their cousin's weddings.

NATHAN

Give me six weeks, Julius. Give me six weeks.

JULIUS

I'm holding you to it. You didn't need to come.

NATHAN

Bullshit.

JULIUS

You didn't. But, thank you.

NATHAN

Of course. This is some scary shit.

JULIUS

Yeah. Want some popcorn?

NATHAN

You and your fucking popcorn.

Nathan takes a bowl of popcorn and starts to eat it.

NATHAN (cont'd)

We've got to get you a manlier snack. Think I can get you to choke on a pretzel or a pork-rind?

JULIUS

I like popcorn. It'll be my thing.

NATHAN

What thing?

JULIUS

My Ronald Reagan jelly bean thing.

NATHAN

If this is what she's coming up with I'm firing Tippy Winston tomorrow.

JULIUS

Corn lobby'll love it.

NATHAN

I don't know why you need our own machine.

JULIUS

Annie got it for me.

NATHAN

I guess you'd better keep it, then.

Julius picks up the popcorn maker.

JULIUS

Yeah. We had one of these when I was a kid. I loved it. Annie bought it for me when we finally got pregnant. She said it's the only thing from my childhood that I talk about.

NATHAN

Well, that's the whole point in having kids, right? Sharing the good things.

JULIUS

I guess.

NATHAN

Or maybe the point is learning just how high your blood pressure can really go, right?

JULIUS

Yeah. How's Marty doing?

NATHAN

Like anyone says shit to me.

JULIUS

Okay. Keep me posted.

NATHAN

Thanks.

Beat.

JULIUS

I remember when my parents sent me to China to live with my grandparents. No one there believed that an air popper existed and that we owned one. I felt like that girl in the Ray Bradbury story, "All Summer in a Day," who couldn't convince the other children on Venus that the sun existed. You know that story.

NATHAN

No. Never heard of it.

JULIUS

It's good. Venus is a place where it rains all the time.

NATHAN
("doesn't ring a bell")

Nope.

JULIUS
It's good. I remember being a kid and wishing that people could read my mind so they could see I was telling the truth.

NATHAN
Well, I'm sure politics will cure you of that soon enough!

Julius laughs.

JULIUS
Okay. I hope so.

Beat.

NATHAN
You were born here though, right?

JULIUS
Hm?

NATHAN
You were born in ... the United States.

JULIUS
I'm sorry.

NATHAN
You said your parents sent you back to China.

JULIUS
Oh! Oh, right! No. I was born at New York Downtown.

NATHAN
Okay. That's what I thought.

JULIUS
I said, "Back to?"

NATHAN
Yeah.

JULIUS
I meant "to," I guess. "To to."

NATHAN
You lost me again.

JULIUS
I was born here. So, I guess they sent me to China. (Beat.)
Not "back to."

NATHAN

Right. (Beat.) Why'd they do that?

JULIUS

Well. (Beat.) Uhm ... I guess, ah, well, I guess they had to ... buy back their freedom.

NATHAN

What do you mean?

JULIUS

It's, ah, not cheap to get here, Nathan. They worked for like 17 hours a day at the restaurant to pay it off and, uh, it's not like there was day care, you know?

NATHAN

Oh. (Beat.) Got it. I get it.

JULIUS

It's not that strange. A lot of kids with immigrant parents get sent back.

NATHAN

Right.

JULIUS

The parents get to send money home. A dollar goes a long way over there. It's not a problem, right?

NATHAN

A problem? Julius, I told you this from the start. I absolutely love the perspective that you're going to bring to this race. Love it. You're going to show a lot of people a lot of what they don't know about this country. You keep that perspective. It's what makes you different.

JULIUS

Okay.

NATHAN

They're citizens now, though, right?

JULIUS

Definitely. Definitely. For like thirty years now.

NATHAN

Okay, so we've got nothing to worry about then.

JULIUS

Good.

Beat.

NATHAN

I've got a little business, Julius. You ready to talk a little business? I know you had a long day.

JULIUS

If you're going to put in sixteen hour days, I guess I better too.

NATHAN

Okay. Good. It's just a few things.

JULIUS

What's up?

NATHAN

Number one. Want to see our numbers from your first dinner?

JULIUS

Yeah.

Nathan looks for something on his iPhone. He finds it and shows the iPhone to Julius.

JULIUS (cont'd)

You're kidding.

Nathan nods his head.

NATHAN

Not bad, huh?

JULIUS

Were there that many people there?

NATHAN

There's always no-shows. But, as long as the checks show up ...

JULIUS

Still. Wow.

NATHAN

Wow, Julie. Since the YouTube of your speech went viral, whole new ball game. I've got three more dinners set up for you this month.

JULIUS

(patting his stomach)

I'm going to have to start running again.

NATHAN

It's the booze you got to watch out for. It's the special drink for every course.

(MORE)

NATHAN (cont'd)

I think of it like accounting for wind in golf. When I meet a socialite after a meal, breakfast included, I assume there's three drinks in her already and I am left.

JULIUS

Ha. What's Number Two?

NATHAN

Number Two is, Buck Hollister wants to know why he can't get a sit down with you.

JULIUS

I'll meet with Buck.

NATHAN

That's not what he /says.

JULIUS

/I just don't want to go to that club.

NATHAN

Where? The place on Polk?

JULIUS

Yeah.

NATHAN

What are you kidding me? They've got a chapel in there and they have service twice a day.

JULIUS

Yes, I know. And I heard what else goes on there.

NATHAN

They lay on their tanning beds.

JULIUS

That's not all.

Nathan takes out his iPhone.

NATHAN

To each his own. Look, you've got to meet with Buck. I'm insisting on this one. If you follow the dollars, all roads lead to Buck. Nothing gets built Upstate without his Hancock.

JULIUS

Yeah, I know.

NATHAN

It's not politics, Julie. Republican, Democrat nobody goes anywhere without getting a map from Buck Hollister first.

JULIUS

I didn't.

NATHAN

Well, fine.

JULIUS

I got elected. No one saw me coming. Who says you can't do it a different way?

NATHAN

That's not the way it happens. You can't count on getting lucky.

JULIUS

It's the way it happened for me.

NATHAN

You want to stay elected? Fuck that, you want to make a run at the The House?

He starts to tap something into the phone.

NATHAN (cont'd)

I'm just saying.

JULIUS

I don't want to get wrapped up in all that other stuff.

NATHAN

Okay, but if you meet somewhere else that's fine, right?

JULIUS

Sure. But, that's how it starts.

NATHAN

What starts?

JULIUS

The way we said we don't want to go. It starts with staying at The Clubhouse when you're in Albany.

NATHAN

(finishing typing)

For you? No way, my friend. No way. Okay. Done. We'll meet at Leland's.

JULIUS

Alright.

Nathan puts the iPhone away.

NATHAN

You look at those letters I forwarded to Trish?

JULIUS

Yeah.

NATHAN

What are you thinking?

JULIUS

Lot of choices.

NATHAN

Everyone in New York wants a Republican from The City with a big mandate on their committee. What do you think?

JULIUS

You first.

Beat.

NATHAN

I think you go with Gary.

JULIUS

Really.

NATHAN

Yeah.

JULIUS

Why?

NATHAN

'cause he's got a hundred and thirty-nine New York State assemblymen with a testicle in one hand saying, "Thank you, Sir. Take the other if you let me on to 'Racing and Wagering."

JULIUS

Hey, now. There are thirty-eight women in The Assembly.

NATHAN

Them, you don't need to worry about. They got balls to spare.

JULIUS

Right. (Beat.) I got a call from Danny O'Brien.

Beat.

NATHAN

I'm not surprised.

JULIUS
Yeah.

NATHAN
That's the other way to go.

JULIUS
I'm interested.

NATHAN
Right.

JULIUS
It's the most important work.

NATHAN
No doubt, no doubt.

JULIUS
What? Tell me what you're thinking.

NATHAN
Look, the idea is to get your Congressional campaign up and running by the next election cycle, am I right?

JULIUS
And to do a good job in the Assembly./

NATHAN
/Right, of course./

JULIUS
/Besides, what am I going to run on if I don't do anything?

NATHAN
Well, here's the thing, you don't want to give them anything to hang you /with.

JULIUS
/I know, I know. But, this is important.

NATHAN
Racing and Wagering's got one task this session: pick a contractor to rebuild the Atlantic Stakes Racetrack. We're talking four hundred million into the budget-

He snaps.

NATHAN (cont'd)
Just like that, just from video poker. The state's so broke, no one's going to care who you guys pick, as long as you pick somebody.

(MORE)

NATHAN (cont'd)

But, Gary needs you 'cause he's not going with Charlie Lam's bid and you know Charlie's not going to make this easy. I'm sorry, Julie, but you know that's the way it is.

JULIUS

That's a lot of fences to mend. The whole Sino-American Political Action Committee's going to blame me.

NATHAN

But they'll still vote for you. So it's win-win. Danny O'Brien's got this passion project and he's Danny, so he'll be fine. Doesn't mean his coat-tails are safe.

JULIUS

Have you read his info sheet?

NATHAN

I don't need to read it. I know the story. They've been talking about it forever and it's a really unpopular bill to begin with. Let the Old Lions fight this out. You're a Young Buck.

JULIUS

There's a letter from a twenty-five year old girl. She's been in jail since she was sixteen.

NATHAN

It's a bad law.

JULIUS

A bad set of laws. People need second chances. Sixteen.

NATHAN

I hear you.

JULIUS

He's close. We could be a part of it.

NATHAN

Okay.

JULIUS

What do you think I should do?

NATHAN

Look, there's no crystal ball. Something might happen at the right time and Danny's bill might strike the right chord. I don't see it as likely, but it could happen. Gary's new racetrack might be built on an Indian burial ground full of poltergeists. Who knows? But, in the end, they pay you to make decisions and you make them and you go where they take you. Shit's bigger than all of us, my friend. But, I wouldn't be backing you if I didn't think you had something special. I trust you to trust yourself.

JULIUS

Yeah.

NATHAN

So, what are you thinking? Gary wants to hear from us this week.

JULIUS

This thing with Gary, it's for sure?

NATHAN

For-sure, for sure.

JULIUS

And the local bid he wants. It's legit.

NATHAN

No surprises.

JULIUS

Huh.

Beat.

NATHAN

This isn't about an extra lulu, is it?

JULIUS

A lulu? No.

NATHAN

'cause I don't want you joining committees for money.

JULIUS

No, no. I've got that book I'm writing.

NATHAN

Okay. Right. That's good.

JULIUS

Trish set it up with Josie McKenna.

NATHAN

Rand McNally.

JULIUS

Random House.

NATHAN

Right. Random Something. Anyway, that's good. That's good. I just want you walking upright. Eighty percent of this job is not getting bit by The Living Dead.

JULIUS
I know.

Pause.

NATHAN
Good.

JULIUS
I like that Gary's pick is the greenest.

NATHAN
That's true. That's definitely true.

JULIUS
You think I should go with him.

NATHAN
I think you can't be soft on crime right now.

Beat.

JULIUS
I'm sorry. I'm not ready.

NATHAN
Okay.

JULIUS
I'm sorry.

NATHAN
No need. Your first committee's a big call. We'll punt.
Give ourselves another week.

JULIUS
Would you hate me if I went with Danny?

Beat.

NATHAN
I'd be proud as Hell if you did, Julius. I'd be proud as
Hell.

JULIUS
Okay.

NATHAN
But, I want you to sleep on it. Promise me you'll sleep on
it.

JULIUS
I will. I just, I got this far on my own terms, didn't I?

NATHAN

You sure did.

JULIUS

I just need to think about it some more.

Nathan pecks something into his iPhone.

NATHAN

That's all I ask. It's fine. We'll talk about this more at Leland's and I'll call Danny and Gary tomorrow.

JULIUS

Alright. It's late. You want to stay in the guest room? Magda made it up for you.

NATHAN

Julius. I got another thing. Just one thing.

JULIUS

What?

NATHAN

I met Holly Hathaway today.

JULIUS

Oh.

NATHAN

She's Eames now. Holly Eames.

JULIUS

Right. Okay.

NATHAN

You did the right thing telling me about this.

JULIUS

Yeah. (Beat.) Is it going to be trouble?

NATHAN

I don't think so.

JULIUS

She's on board?

NATHAN

Well, no.

JULIUS

Does she have anything we don't want her disclosing?

NATHAN

Well, she says that you stalked her and terrorized her dorm.

JULIUS

Shit.

NATHAN

I know.

JULIUS

You talk to anyone else from her dorm?

NATHAN

Yeah. She didn't stay friends with them and no one else seems to remember which Chinese guy she was dating at the time.

Julius draws an invisible circle around his own face.

JULIUS

Perks.

NATHAN

Ha. I guess it was pretty hush.

JULIUS

Nothing happened. She called the campus police, they said, "Don't talk to her anymore." I didn't. That's it.

NATHAN

The records have been expunged.

JULIUS

So there's no proof.

NATHAN

Well ...

JULIUS

It's our word vs. her's.

NATHAN

It's your word vs. her's and, look, I don't know that this is a conversation we want to be having in any kind of public forum.

JULIUS

It wasn't that bad and lots of pols have pasts.

NATHAN

You're not lots of pols, Julius. Look, there was that thing at Virginia Tech, right? Korean kid, shooting everyone.

JULIUS

Yeah.

NATHAN

I went online for a little spin. There's a lot of ... well ... stories. You got that Virginia Tech guy, you just had that guy down at the Discovery Channel shooting everyone up. There was a doctor up at Yale. We had that guy up in Binghamton, shooting other immigrants. We had that guy in Minnesota shooting hunters in the forest.

Nathan draws an invisible circle in the air.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Like it or not, all these guys are wearing your face.

He puts a dot in the middle of the circle.

JULIUS

Four guys!

NATHAN

Five.

JULIUS

There are millions of Asian people in this country.

NATHAN

But there's a story here. Last thing we need is for you to spark the conversation.

JULIUS

So, what do we do?

NATHAN

She wants to play ball.

Beat. Julius shakes his head.

JULIUS

What does she want?

NATHAN

She wants us to get her husband a job.

JULIUS

(sarcastic)

Great.

NATHAN

Seems he's been out of work for over a year now.

JULIUS

Who is this guy?

NATHAN

We did a background check. Standard issue Asswipe, Esquire.

JULIUS

Great. And we have to bottle feed him. How long?

NATHAN

I don't know.

JULIUS

"I don't know." means forever.

NATHAN

Yeah.

JULIUS

What do I do?

NATHAN

Again, that's up to you.

Beat.

JULIUS

I can't do it.

NATHAN

Okay. That's good to know.

JULIUS

I've got my life together, you know?/

NATHAN

/I do./

JULIUS

/I can't be in somebody's pocket forever.

NATHAN

I understand.

JULIUS

So, what do we do? Are we finished? Is it hopeless?

NATHAN

You didn't just bring me on because I'm good with polling numbers.

JULIUS

So what?

NATHAN

So what, I can play a little ball myself.

JULIUS

Okay.

NATHAN

I've got some moves to make.

JULIUS

Like what?

NATHAN

This is when we get into the territory of "You shouldn't know about this."

JULIUS

Ah. Okay. Okay. If that's what you think is best.

NATHAN

It's for the best. Hollister's got someone on his team that I work with a lot. He's trustworthy. Is that cool?

JULIUS

Hollister's going to know?

NATHAN

We'll keep it extracurricular. I said, "He's trustworthy." Plus, I want him for our team. This will give us a sense.

JULIUS

Okay. If that's what you think you should do.

Nathan stands up.

NATHAN

That's what I think we should do.

Julius stands up.

JULIUS

Ok. Thank you.

NATHAN

That's my job, Assemblyman.

Julius and Nathan shakes hands.

JULIUS

You're not staying.

NATHAN

No, Sir. I've got to get back down to Baltimore.

JULIUS

Okay. Thank you.

NATHAN

Don't worry about a thing, except your wife and your baby.

JULIUS

Okay.

NATHAN

Does Annie know?

JULIUS

About what happened in college? Yeah. She knows.

NATHAN

Okay. That's good. How many weeks are you guys?

JULIUS

Nineteen.

NATHAN

Jesus, that's scary. But, you'll be fine Julius. Just keep the faith. You're going to be a great dad.

JULIUS

Okay.

NATHAN

Okay. Trish has the details for your meeting with Hollister. Tell her to make sure it's on the red Google Calendar.

JULIUS

Right. Red.

NATHAN

And I promise you, The Post is going to be encamped at the entrance to Leland's, so wear a good tie. Blue.

JULIUS

Alright. Blue.

Nathan exits.

Julius stands in his kitchen alone.

Lights FADEOUT.

SCENE III: A NICE SPOT FOR LUNCH. BALTIMORE, MD.

The back room. The middle of the night. There's a bar.

Nathan sits at a table covered in manila folders and papers. His traveling office has landed here. He's typing on his iPhone.

Holly enters.

There she is.
NATHAN

Hello.
HOLLY

Holly.
NATHAN

Mr. Berkshire.
HOLLY

They shake hands.

Really, you didn't need to come so late.
NATHAN

It's fine. This is better for me.
HOLLY

Right.
NATHAN

My mother-in-law's in town. Makes it easy.
HOLLY

Yeah. That's what Trish told me. "Wayne's out of town."
NATHAN

Beat.

Yeah, you know.
HOLLY

I do. I do. Well, I'm really looking forward to meeting him someday.
NATHAN

Sure.
HOLLY

Sit, sit.
NATHAN

Holly sits.

So, you're back already.
HOLLY

Just getting some work done here. Was planning on seeing you tomorrow morning before I went down to D.C.
NATHAN

HOLLY

You work a lot of hours, Mr. Berkshire.

NATHAN

Doesn't quite feel like work. I'm sorry, but, just give me a minute?

HOLLY

Sure.

Nathan pecks something into his iPhone and hits send. The phone makes an airplane sound.

NATHAN

Sorry.

HOLLY

It's alright.

NATHAN

No, it's not. It's rude as Hell. If my wife were here, she'd confiscate the damn thing.

HOLLY

It's okay.

Nathan gets up, turns the iPhone off and puts it on a table far on the other side of the room.

NATHAN

This thing is harder to quit than cigarettes and I was a two pack a day man for thirty years.

HOLLY

It's fine.

Nathan returns to his seat.

NATHAN

Okay. Okay. So, welcome to the back room.

HOLLY

Ha.

NATHAN

If you want, I can get us a bunch of cigars and we can get it nice and smokey for you.

HOLLY

No. That's alright.

NATHAN

I'm sorry, the kitchen's closed. But, I can still get you a soda or something.

HOLLY

Okay.

NATHAN

Another seltzer?

HOLLY

How about a Coke?

NATHAN

A Coke. Alright.

Nathan goes to the bar and shoots Coke into a glass with a soda gun. He puts a wedge of lemon on the lip of the glass.

NATHAN (cont'd)

You know, I wish they still had those cocktail umbrellas.

HOLLY

Just a Coke is fine.

NATHAN

The world has changed, Holly. There was a time, every bar on the Eastern seaboard had a stash of cocktail umbrellas. I'd come home and I had to have ten for each kid. My daughter left them all over the house. My son kept his in a cognac box like a little neat freak.

He pours himself a Scotch and soda.

HOLLY

Yeah.

NATHAN

They were so different. Some of them were real little umbrellas and you could open them and close them.

He returns to his seat and gives Holly her Coke.

HOLLY

Yeah.

NATHAN

Some had pointy toothpick ends. Not a hit with my wife. And they were all made of different paper and different dyes.

HOLLY
Yeah.

NATHAN
Cocktail umbrellas ..., oh! and tooth-picks that have cellophane tassels!

HOLLY
I'm sorry?

NATHAN
Like for sandwiches.

HOLLY
Oh right.

NATHAN
With a pickle on top.

He mimes sticking a pickle to the top of a sandwich.

NATHAN (cont'd)
Now they just wrap everything in paper and it falls apart when you try to eat it.

HOLLY
Yeah.

NATHAN
Okay. I don't want to keep you from your kids. So let's talk.

HOLLY
Good.

NATHAN
Alright.

HOLLY
Thanks for getting back to me so soon.

NATHAN
I am a man with answers. Men with answers get back soon.

HOLLY
Alright. Good. Great.

NATHAN
So, I can't do it.

HOLLY
What?

NATHAN
I can't make the deal.

HOLLY
Why?

NATHAN
I talked to Julius. I talked to some of my guys. We're going to help-

HOLLY
I don't-

NATHAN
We're going to make you happy.

HOLLY
Okay.

NATHAN
But, it can't be a job in New York. It just can't be. I'm sorry.

HOLLY
That's not what you were saying before.

NATHAN
Before is before. Today is today. I had a few conversations. You know, it's always bigger than you think it's going to be.

HOLLY
You said this kind of thing happens all the time.

NATHAN
It does.

HOLLY
"Nobody's as clean as they want to be." You said it.

NATHAN
That's true.

HOLLY
"Everybody's got to twist around to get clean. Everyone's got to wring the towel."

NATHAN
I know, I know, and-

HOLLY
I found three HUD jobs that are opening up.

Beat.

NATHAN

Okay. That's true. There are those jobs.

HOLLY

What's wrong with those jobs? Real estate is Wayne's expertise.

NATHAN

That's right.

HOLLY

He would be brilliant.

NATHAN

Yes, but, there's a line for all those HUD jobs.

HOLLY

What?!

NATHAN

And you need a ticket to jump the line.

HOLLY

I've got a ticket! You said so yourself!

NATHAN

Okay, look.

HOLLY

What is this?!

NATHAN

Where are you from, Holly? You're from around here, right?

HOLLY

Yeah.

NATHAN

Owings Mills. (a guess)

HOLLY

Catonsville.

NATHAN

/Catonsville. Right. That's right. No farms, right?

HOLLY

No.

NATHAN

Well, I grew up in a little town in Upstate New York called Pavillion. Dairy cows. And one of my first jobs at the farm was shooting cowbirds.

HOLLY

Cowbirds.

NATHAN

They're these chunky little things that take over sparrow nests. A cowbird makes a terrible noise and it bothers the cows so much that it literally shrivels them up. They don't put on any weight. Milk dries up. You get me?

HOLLY

I get that we're the cowbirds.

NATHAN

You're the cowbirds and I can't let you in the barn at this point. A job with the New York City HUD is too close to Julius right now.

HOLLY

I don't believe this.

NATHAN

Look, my job is to get Julius elected.

HOLLY

Right.

NATHAN

So, everyone's got to wring the towel, but nobody wants it hanging around. I can't make a deal if it means he doesn't get elected. What's the sense in that?

HOLLY

We're not going to say anything.

NATHAN

It's going to make noise. It's going to make noise, Holly.

HOLLY

Well, it's your job to deal with it.

NATHAN

Listen, how 'bout you hear me out. I told you we're going to make you happy.

HOLLY

(tense)
I'm listening.

NATHAN

So look. I don't want you to take this the wrong way-

HOLLY
(not happy with where this is
going)

Okay.

NATHAN
Just hear me out. First thing that comes off the table is
Wayne.

HOLLY
What?

NATHAN
I know, but hear me out.

HOLLY
What the Hell are you talking about?!

NATHAN
We're not ready to get into bed with your husband.

HOLLY
Really.

NATHAN
I know that's not what you want to hear.

HOLLY
You're right.

NATHAN
Okay, alright, let me back up here. I want to know what you
want, Holly. You're asking us to give Wayne a job. Why
Wayne?

HOLLY
Look, I don't want to explain this to you. You want me to go
away? you give me what I want.

NATHAN
I just don't understand. Your kids are in school, you can do
whatever you want. You were Law Review yourself before you
dropped out of Chapel Hill-

Holly stands up.

HOLLY
I don't know why I'm talking to you when I should be talking
to the New York Times.

NATHAN
Holly, sit down! (Beat.) Please, let me finish.

Hold.

Holly sits.

HOLLY

If you've got something to say, you'd better say it.

NATHAN

Well, how does the thought of finishing up your JD sound? You can finish at Hopkins. Scholarship, Law Review, everything. We'll get you a clerkship with Judge Depodesta over the summer and when you're out, you get your pick of firms. But, that's all preamble.

He takes something out of one of the manila folders. It's a photograph.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Imagine Casey and Olivia spending the better part of their childhoods there.

Holly looks at the photograph.

NATHAN (cont'd)

(reading from a spec sheet)

Four bedrooms, five bathrooms, state-of-the-art kitchen, huge backyard. Pool for the summers. There's even a barn up the street for horses. How long's it been since you've ridden a horse?

He passes the sheet over to her.

Beat.

HOLLY

I don't know.

NATHAN

I'm talking to a Junior Olympian. Look, I know somewhere along the line, things didn't go as planned, I know. This isn't how it was all supposed to turn out, am I right? I know I'm right. But, you can pick up and move and get everything moving in the right direction again. No mortgage, nothing. All you've got to do is pay the taxes every year.

Beat.

HOLLY

What exactly is it that you do, Mr. Berkshire?

NATHAN

I'm retired.

HOLLY

Huh.

NATHAN

But, I was in real estate before.

HOLLY

Where?

NATHAN

Every/where.

HOLLY

/Everywhere.

NATHAN

Ha.

Beat.

HOLLY

What ... a party boss can just hand out new lives at will?

NATHAN

Isn't that what you're asking for?

HOLLY

I'm asking for a job. He'll do a good job.

NATHAN

I'm not a party boss. The political party is a thing of the past. The party backs whoever attracts the money and I'm a money guy. What I do is find guys with bright futures, guys like Julius, and I lead them to the money and find out if they can drink.

HOLLY

Can he?

NATHAN

Faster than you can pour it.

He points at the photograph.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Here's the deal. This place is in Carroll County. Carroll County, which is vacating three executive seats in the next four years. Give me four years and one of those seats can be yours. That's what this actually should be about, am I right?

SILENCE.

NATHAN (cont'd)

I told you I was going to make you hap-

HOLLY

It's because he's having an affair, right? That's why you don't want to work with Wayne.

Pause.

NATHAN

Yes.

HOLLY

God.

NATHAN

This is not about Wayne. It's about Holly. You're who we want, Holly. You're who we want to get behind.

HOLLY

Yeah, right.

NATHAN

Yes.

HOLLY

(sarcastic)

Sounds great.

NATHAN

It is what it is. Give me four years.

HOLLY

I don't know.

NATHAN

This is your time. Truth is, Wayne doesn't even know you're meeting us, isn't it? You came here on your own.

No response.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Moving the family to New York is not going to keep him away from her. It's not that far away. He's with her right now. Called his mom to come babysit. (as in "That takes balls.") Come on.

HOLLY

Huh.

NATHAN

I'm sorry, look, you're talking to me because you want out of this. The only way out is you slip away quietly and laugh your way to the bank. You splash this around the papers and every chance of a new start is gone. Gone, Holly.

(MORE)

NATHAN (cont'd)

Instead, it'll be a year and a half of misery and scum bags camping out on your lawn, scaring your kids and when they're all gone, you're still back where you started.

HOLLY

I ... I have to think about it.

NATHAN

This is a good deal.

HOLLY

I have to think about it!

Beat.

NATHAN

Alright. But, did you ever consider that Julius has become a pretty good guy since you knew him? That he was a boy when you knew him?

HOLLY

Yeah, I did.

Beat.

NATHAN

Okay, then.

HOLLY

But, if you're going to ask me to pretend that nothing happened-

NATHAN

No. No I'm not asking that.

HOLLY

'cause it happened to my life. It happened.

NATHAN

Okay.

HOLLY

I know, exactly, the last day I got on a horse. It was the day I went on a trail and I found Julius's back-pack hanging from one of the trees. And there was no one else around!

NATHAN

Okay.

HOLLY

Or when he called my parents' house and told me someone kidnapped him and he didn't know where he was.

NATHAN

You know he had a rough go of it. You know his family-

HOLLY

I KNOW! I KNOW! I dated him for two years! I know! But, this happened to me and I've spent half my life wondering what's around the next corner. What if I were your daughter?!

NATHAN

Yeah.

HOLLY

So what if I'm her? Imagine that!

Beat.

NATHAN

I do.

HOLLY

And?

NATHAN

And ... you saw his speech, right?

Holly nods.

NATHAN (cont'd)

You know we didn't even really send anyone to campaign for him? DiLorenzo, the Democrat that had Julius's seat, was there for like twenty years, hugely popular. Any Republican who ever tried to touch that seat got slaughtered and never came back. Julius wasn't even running at first. The pastor in his church asked him to do it. That's how he got in. No political action committees, not a single PAC behind him. We gave Julius fifteen thousand dollars worth of canned tele-marketing from George Pataki and Al D'Amato. Come on.

Eye-roll.

NATHAN (cont'd)

And six weeks before election day, he gives that speech. Music. "Has it been that long since I've heard it?" Am I right? Look, I got a lot of guys who know how to play the game -- Dad's dad, was somebody's Dad's dad. But, you're in a room with them long enough, months, years and eventually you feel like there's a ghost in the room. That's not Julius. He's green, he's so green and he drives me crazy sometimes, but he got put in office because there's something there. And everyone can see it. And I've got to wonder if all the hard times he went through didn't have something to do with it. The real hard times that me and you we just don't understand.

(MORE)

NATHAN (cont'd)

Look, I have no idea if someone like Julius can get anything done in Albany, in Washington. But I want to see if it can be done. To me, it would be the biggest tragedy in the world to see him buried in the game. But, that's why I'm trying to make this deal between you and me in Maryland with my own contacts. I'm retired. Got a golf game that needs me. I only come out now for people who matter to me. I wouldn't be trying to make this deal if I didn't think it was the best for both of you.

HOLLY

I don't know.

NATHAN

This happens all the time. I have two talks like this a month. Half the people in office are there because they're nursing someone's skeleton. And a lot of them get there and they do good work. It's actually what they were meant to do. We can do something here.

HOLLY

I don't know.

NATHAN

I just don't see the sense, Holly. Ruining things for him, how does it help you? Nobody's who they were when they were in college. He turned out okay.

Holly gets up.

HOLLY

I've got to go home.

NATHAN

Wait.

HOLLY

I've got to think about all this.

NATHAN

Wait.

HOLLY

I'll call you tomorrow, alright? It's late.

NATHAN

Holly, this deal expires once you walk out the door.

HOLLY

Are you serious?

NATHAN

I can't risk you taking my offer and going to the other side.

HOLLY

Fuck you.

NATHAN

And I'm telling you, the moment you go over there the game is one hundred percent over. It's over.

HOLLY

Fuck you. I'm leaving.

NATHAN

Holly!

HOLLY

GET OUT OF MY WAY! YOU CAN'T KEEP ME HERE!

SILENCE

NATHAN

(not in her way)

No I can't. That's not what I'm trying to do.

HOLLY

I know. (Beat.) I'll talk to you tomorrow, Mr. Berkshire.

NATHAN

Holly, do you know that Wayne was involved with Hammerstein Securities? He was the trustee on the Shearwater deal, sound familiar?

HOLLY

No.

NATHAN

Which we're being told was not on the level. He was certifying "cash grants" when nothing was in escrow.

HOLLY

What are you talking about?

NATHAN

He'll be dis-barred if someone calls the SEC. I'm sorry I've got to put it this way.

Beat.

HOLLY

This is disgusting.

NATHAN

Holly-

HOLLY

You're turning this on me.

NATHAN

This is the way the game is played and it's my job to cover the bases. If you go to press or go to the Dems, I'm going to have to call the SEC, and remember, your college has expunged all the records already. They never involved the municipal police. No one in your dorm remembers anything about Julius. I've spoken to all of them. What they do remember is that you had a nervous breakdown before graduation.

HOLLY

Don't do this. What are you doing?

NATHAN

Trying to make a deal.

HOLLY

What are you doing?!

NATHAN

It's a good one.

HOLLY

He stalked me!

NATHAN

So you say.

HOLLY

It happened!

NATHAN

I'm on your side.

HOLLY

Yeah.

NATHAN

I'm on both of your sides.

Pause.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Your position's not as strong as you'd like to think it is. Your husband's a crook and you're a desperate housewife with a history of anxiety disorders. Are you listening to me? I think you should take this deal.

Beat.

Holly takes a piece of paper out of her purse. She reads from it.

HOLLY

(reading)

"The day will finally come when the hypocrites and phonies who control this school, this world, the people who make a poison, bitter stew of lies and deceits for the rest of us to intoxicate our senses on will find that those of us who are under their boots will remember. I remember. I remember each and every one of them and they will remember me." There's lot's more.

She puts the piece of paper in front of Nathan.

HOLLY (cont'd)

That's a picture of his gun. I have copies of all of this. Now tell me that anyone like that turns out well. Tell me he's the one who turned out well.

End of Scene.

End of ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

SCENE I: A NICE SPOT FOR LUNCH. BALTIMORE, MD.

At rise: Lunch time and the place is packed with diners. The buzz of the lunch crowd permeates the scene.

[Note: Julius and Holly are aware of the other diners on the periphery. This entire scene must be played as though eyes and ears are watching.]

Julius and Holly sit at a table. Julius closes the menu and slots it back between the condiments on the table.

JULIUS

You know, I've wondered if I would ever come across you again. A chop house is not where I thought it would happen.

HOLLY

They have a good burger here.

JULIUS

I guess you're not a vegetarian anymore.

HOLLY

No.

JULIUS

That's hard to believe.

HOLLY

I started eating chicken when I was pregnant and it was downhill from there.

JULIUS

I'll say. You like the burger.

HOLLY

(shrugging)

They take a steak and grind it.

JULIUS

I see. You sure you don't want anything?

HOLLY

A Coke is fine.

JULIUS

Alright then.

He butters a roll.

JULIUS (cont'd)
I'll get the burger when they come around.

HOLLY
Good choice.

JULIUS
Alright.

HOLLY
When's Mr. Berkshire getting here?

JULIUS
I asked him to sit out this inning. Sometimes the best way to get something done is to just get the right parties together.

Beat.

HOLLY
Okay.

JULIUS
Yeah. So, you have kids now.

SILENCE.

JULIUS (cont'd)
You started eating chicken when you were pregnant?

HOLLY
Oh. Yeah. Two. I have two daughters.

JULIUS
That's wonderful.

HOLLY
How 'bout you?

JULIUS
Uhm, work in progress for us.

He takes a bite of his roll.

HOLLY
It'll change your life.

JULIUS
Yeah. That's what I hear.

Beat.

HOLLY
She's beautiful. You're wife.

JULIUS
Oh. Thank you. She is. Inside and out.

HOLLY
I read that profile. Her story sounds inspirational.

JULIUS
Yeah.

HOLLY
You never mentioned her.

JULIUS
In college?

HOLLY
Yeah.

JULIUS
I'd forgotten about her. I must have been eight when our
parents worked together.

HOLLY
Yeah. Well, good for you, Julius.

JULIUS
Thanks.

Beat.

JULIUS (cont'd)
(easy)
It's strange to be seeing you again.

HOLLY
Yeah. You haven't changed too much.

JULIUS
Neither have you.

HOLLY
(incredulous)
Yeah, right.

JULIUS
It's true. It's true. (Beat.) Not so bad, right?

HOLLY
What?

He gestures at the air between the two of them.

JULIUS

The world hasn't come to an end.

Beat.

HOLLY

Oh. You'll have to try this burger before that happens.

They laugh.

JULIUS

Okay. Nice to be reacquainted, Mrs. Eames.

HOLLY

Nice to be reacquainted ... *Assemblyman*.

JULIUS

I know. It's funny that I became the politician.

HOLLY

I know, right?

JULIUS

We always thought it would be you.

HOLLY

I wish I'd saved the receipt for that crystal ball. (Beat.)
The Marines, huh?

JULIUS

They had those recruiters on campus.

HOLLY

That's right, in their uniforms.

JULIUS

Came up to me in a parking lot. I said, "Yes."

HOLLY

I just ... it just seemed totally unlike you.

JULIUS

Sometimes you want to be "totally unlike you."

HOLLY

Sure. I get that. Did you like it?

JULIUS

I don't regret it.

HOLLY

That's great. (Beat.) I really liked your speech. The one everyone's talking about.

JULIUS

Thanks. That means a lot.

HOLLY

Did you write it yourself?

JULIUS

Well, yeah.

HOLLY

I always told you you were a good writer.

JULIUS

I know. Thank you.

HOLLY

You were good. (Beat.) I'm sorry about your sister.

JULIUS

Oh. Uh, thank you. (Beat.) Did you ever meet her?

HOLLY

Twice. The last time was before she started working at the World Trade Center.

JULIUS

That's right. At Min's wedding.

HOLLY

Yeah. Min. How is she?

JULIUS

Great. Great. She and Sean have an eight-year-old.

HOLLY

Wow. That's great.

JULIUS

Yeah. How are your folks?

HOLLY

Oh, my folks? Well, they're, uh ... gone.

JULIUS

What?!

HOLLY

Yeah.

JULIUS
(as in "Dead?")
Gone?

HOLLY
Yeah.

JULIUS
Oh, /God.

HOLLY
/Well, you know my dad had that heart /thing.

JULIUS
/Yeah./

HOLLY
/And he had that for like twenty years, so ...
She shrugs as if to say, "We got a pretty good deal."

JULIUS
Still, they were so young.

HOLLY
I know. My mom. I don't know.

JULIUS
She was always so health-conscious.

HOLLY
Yeah.

JULIUS
She got sick?

HOLLY
Yeah. Something, I don't know. Lupus.

JULIUS
Wow. I'm so sorry.

HOLLY
Yeah ... and the hospital when Dad was there and the germs ... not good.

JULIUS
That's terrible.

HOLLY
Yeah.

Beat.

JULIUS
I liked your parents a lot.

HOLLY
You and Dad really liked each other. I know.

JULIUS
When was all this?

HOLLY
Dad was two years ago. Mom, last Christmas.

JULIUS
I'm sorry. I didn't know.

HOLLY
No. How would you?

JULIUS
Yeah. (Beat.) Are you alright?

HOLLY
Uhm, no. Very not alright. But, you know ...

Pause.

JULIUS
Yeah. (Beat.) Annie and I lost our baby this week.

HOLLY
What?

JULIUS
Yeah, it's okay.

HOLLY
Julius.

JULIUS
Really. Yeah. It's okay.

HOLLY
I didn't even know you were pregnant.

JULIUS
No. How would you?

Beat.

HOLLY
Right. This was your first?

JULIUS
Yeah.

I'm so sorry.

HOLLY

It's fine.

JULIUS

What happened?

HOLLY

We don't know. They're still doing tests.

JULIUS

Right.

HOLLY

So, we'll know ... well I don't know when we'll know anything. But we were about twenty weeks, so it's tough.

JULIUS

Oh my God! This happened this week?

HOLLY

She'd had some bleeding and then they told us he wasn't ... well, anyway, it happened on Tuesday.

JULIUS

Tuesday! Oh God. I'm so sorry.

HOLLY

Yeah.

JULIUS

How's your wife?

HOLLY

She's alright. She's at her sister's place. She's close to her sister so that's nice.

JULIUS

You should be with her.

HOLLY

I will. (Beat.) Just had some business that needed to be taken care of. Didn't want it hanging around.

JULIUS

Beat.

Yeah.

HOLLY

Yeah.

JULIUS

Pause.

JULIUS (cont'd)

I think the last time I saw you, I'd never known anyone that died.

HOLLY

Yeah. Me neither.

JULIUS

That's weird, isn't it?

HOLLY

Yeah.

JULIUS

When was there such a time?

HOLLY

I don't know.

Beat.

JULIUS

This is all really fucking weird.

Holly laughs a little.

HOLLY

It's pretty bizarre.

JULIUS

I know. I know.

HOLLY

It's pretty bizarre.

JULIUS

So. I'm here to talk. I guess we should really talk. That way I can get back to New York and you can get back to your family ...

HOLLY

"Have an antacid on me."

JULIUS

What?

Holly waves him off.

HOLLY

Nevermind.

Okay.

JULIUS

Holly reaches into her purse and takes out a voice recorder.

JULIUS (cont'd)

Are you serious?

HOLLY

I thought you'd have your own.

JULIUS

Nope.

HOLLY

Mr. Berkshire always has one. I figured I'd have my own copy of whatever's said.

JULIUS
(as in "I didn't come armed.")

Sorry.

HOLLY

Do you want me to make you a copy?

JULIUS

That would be lovely.

HOLLY

No problem. (into the recorder) This is Holly Lillian Eames, formerly Holly Hathaway. It's Friday, April 16th. 1:30 pm. I'm here to speak with Julius Lee. (to Julius) You want to confirm?

She holds up the recorder to Julius.

JULIUS

Sure.

Julius takes it.

JULIUS (cont'd)
(into the recorder)

This is Julius Weishan Lee. It's Friday, April 16th. I'm at O'Mahonney's Steakhouse because Holly Eames, my ex-girlfriend, who I haven't seen in twenty-years, is extorting me now that I've been elected to public office.

He hands the recorder back to her.

JULIUS (cont'd)

I'm kidding.

HOLLY

Very funny.

JULIUS

But, I mean, I'm just saying, that's what it kind of is,
/isn't it?

HOLLY

/That's not how I see /it.

JULIUS

/It's kind of why we're here. It's okay, but, cards on the
table, right?

HOLLY

I'm here because you told me that you have something new to
put on the table. I didn't come to argue or to be blind-
sided.

JULIUS

Well I hope you came ready to hear me out.

HOLLY

What?

JULIUS

It's been a long time since we've known each other. You've
changed. I've changed. I'm doing good things in the world
and you want to ... I don't even know what it is you're doing
... but, it's over things I did when I was a Sophomore in
college, Holly? I don't even know what you think I did.

Beat.

HOLLY

You know what you did.

JULIUS

Really, I don't. So why don't you tell me? Let's work it
out.

HOLLY

I gave Nathan copies of the letter you wrote me.

JULIUS

Which says nothing. I read it.

HOLLY

No one can read that letter and think that is says nothing.

JULIUS

I wrote that letter to a girl I was in love with before I
left college to join the Marines, /Holly.

HOLLY

/And everything before /that?

JULIUS

/I'm sorry there was a misinterpretation.

HOLLY

All those awful fights.

JULIUS

I'm sorry, I remember things more fondly.

HOLLY

You left school after the police talked to you. Why would they do that if it was nothing?

JULIUS

What are you talking about?

HOLLY

The police told me they talked to you.

JULIUS

They talked to me about you. Not me. They said you were upset and calling them. You and I had a break up. I was heartbroken. I was messed up. I left school to join the Marines. I worked things out with my life and now I'm doing well. That's really all that happened.

HOLLY

If there isn't something to that letter we wouldn't even be talking.

JULIUS

We're talking because you don't get to look like me and have any trouble in the past. Not if you want to play this game.

HOLLY

Nobody told you to play it.

JULIUS

What's that supposed to mean?

HOLLY

Oh, it's a coincidence that you're a politician now?

JULIUS

All this came looking for me.

HOLLY

Why is everything you do so fucking weird?

JULIUS

Holly, you're threatening to ruin my life.

HOLLY

I'm ruining your life?

JULIUS

Everything I've worked for. Why are you doing this?

HOLLY

Because I don't think you're fit for public office.

Beat.

JULIUS

(easy)

Says you and every Democrat in Manhattan. Lucky for me, you don't get to vote in New York State.

HOLLY

You're not.

JULIUS

If you got to meet a few more elected officials, you might think differently. You might. I can't believe we're here over a bad breakup in college.

HOLLY

Yes, Julius. I'm really that childish and vindictive.

Beat.

HOLLY (cont'd)

Look, since we're old friends, I really appreciate you recommending Wayne for this position. I'm sure you'll see from his resume that he's very qualified. In the future, I'd really rather be talking to Mr. Berkshire about this. If you have another offer, we'd definitely be interested as long as it's in accordance with the terms I've already discussed with Mr. Berkshire.

JULIUS

This is bullshit.

HOLLY

If there isn't anything else, it was great seeing you, but I've got to pick up the kids.

JULIUS

This is not about Congress. This isn't even about me! This is about you taking advantage because there's an angle to take advantage of! (angry) This is about you trying to piece your life back together even if that means tearing apart mine!

Julius smacks his hand on the table.
The dining room quiets. All eyes are
on them.

Beat.

The diners resume their meals. There
is a nervous titter energy in the room.

JULIUS (cont'd)

Sorry about that.

Silence.

JULIUS (cont'd)

Sorry.

Silence.

JULIUS (cont'd)

I'm-

HOLLY

You told me that you got a gun and were going to kill
yourself. Do you remember that?

No response.

HOLLY (cont'd)

You sent me a picture of it. You'd show up at my classes,
just sitting in the hallway looking miserable and I had to
... walk by you like nothing was the matter. Do you remember
that?

No response.

HOLLY (cont'd)

You called me, blind drunk, screaming and crying, telling me
weird stories that made no sense. You left things on the
trails where I road McGill, weird things, weird books and
pictures. I was afraid to even open it. You sent letters to
my parents. Do you remember that?

No response.

HOLLY (cont'd)

You scared me so much! ... and that took everything from me.
Everything! Half of me was always worried that I was going
to hear that you shot yourself, half of me was scared that
you would show up at my door with a gun in your hand. Do you
have any idea what that did to me, what that still does to
me? I was the one that was supposed to move to New York or
D.C. I was the one who had dreams that were going to turn
into something.

(MORE)

HOLLY (cont'd)

So, I'm sorry, if someone is going to ask me if you're decent; if you're right, I'm not going to say, "Yes!" Not unless I get something in return, and that something is my life back and that includes my husband! That includes my husband!

JULIUS

(can't look at her)

You realize of course that you're blaming me because you have a life that has fear in it.

HOLLY

You can save your, "I grew up in the slums, my parents were slaves, my playmates grew up to be sex workers" stories for someone else. Your life was fucked up. I don't care. Doesn't mean that anybody had less of a life because their's wasn't fucked up before they met you. The rest of us are normal. You are not. You look at all those guys on the news, you look at that guy at Virginia Tech and tell me that you weren't five minutes away from being that guy.

No response.

HOLLY (cont'd)

Okay. This is pointless. There are four New York City HUD positions now that are acceptable to us at this point. I saw that one just opened up. Why don't you have Mr. Berkshire, or someone else who actually has something to say, talk to me next time, okay? This is pointless.

JULIUS

Okay.

HOLLY

What?

Julius picks up Holly's recorder. He turns it off.

JULIUS

You want your pound of flesh, you have it.

Julius takes some paper out of a briefcase.

JULIUS (cont'd)

These are the certification papers that Nathan asked you to sign before. Remember these?

Julius writes something down on a piece of paper.

JULIUS (cont'd)

Nathan wants you to meet him here today at 2 p.m. You guys can work out all the details. I'll instruct him to be agreeable. How's that?

HOLLY

Okay.

JULIUS

Good. 2 p.m.

He holds out the paper to her.

HOLLY

That's it? Just like that?

JULIUS

I was hoping that we could ... I was hoping that it would be different. But, it is what it is.

Beat.

Holly takes the paper.

HOLLY

It'll be easy. We'll be smart about it.

JULIUS

I'm sure you will.

Holly stands up.

HOLLY

Okay then. Alright.

She extends her hand. Julius shakes it but doesn't stand up.

JULIUS

Alright.

HOLLY

I'm sorry for everything you're going through right now, Julius.

JULIUS

It's politics. I get it. I wish things were different.

Beat.

HOLLY

Right. (Beat.) It was good to see you.

JULIUS

You too. Best of luck.

HOLLY

Thanks. (Beat.) I know you think I'm crazy, or pathetic or something.

JULIUS

No.

HOLLY

There was a time when things weren't so good for me and ... he's suffering now, you know? And if I don't do something ...

JULIUS

Okay.

HOLLY

Yeah.

Holly starts to exit.

JULIUS

It was full of carrots.

HOLLY

What?

JULIUS

That backpack on the trail. McGill liked carrots so ... it was apples and carrots.

Beat.

HOLLY

Yeah. And other thing.

JULIUS

Yeah. For what it's worth, ... a lot of what happened was ... you know I cared about you a great deal, you know?

HOLLY

Yeah. I know. I cared about you too.

JULIUS

I'm sorry.

HOLLY

Thanks. Me too.

Holly exits.

SILENCE.

Julius takes a roll and delicately splits it open. He spreads some butter on the bread, then he spreads some jam on the bread.

He looks at it for a moment and takes a bite.

End of Scene.

SCENE II: JULIUS'S KITCHEN, FOREST HILLS GARDENS, NY

Nathan sits in a darkened kitchen. There are papers strewn all around him. He rubs his eyes. This was a long day.

His phone rings. He sees who's calling. He answers it.

NATHAN

(to the person on the other line)

Yeah, Trish ... You hear anything? ... Shit. No. Nothing here. ... I'm just sitting here. Even the house-keeper's gone. I have no idea where he is.

She says something funny.

NATHAN (cont'd)

When he comes back, I'm tying him to the fence outside your apartment, how about that? ... Yeah.

He glances at his watch.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Trish, I looked at the time. You've got to get home. ... Yeah, yeah, your husband's ... yeah, yeah, exactly. ... Okay, just close up and have the calls forwarded to my cell. Yeah. ... Yeah. ... Oh, Trish. ... Did you call Diane? Did you get me that number? ... Well, do you work for me or do you work for my fucking wife?! ... Yeah, I got a pen.

He begins to write.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Mm-hm ... mm-hm ... okay. I got it. And they said I'm allowed to call him there any time? ... His who? I got to talk to his who first? ... Oh. ... Oh. ... Right. Okay. That's good. Alright, My Dear. Go home. I'll talk to you tomorrow. ... Yeah. ... Yeah. ... Yeah, I know, okay. ... Bye.

The person on the other line hangs up. Nathan puts the phone down. He looks at the number he has written down. He dials.

A man's voice answers the phone.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Hello. Uhm ... is this David? ... Hey, this is, uh, Nathan Berkshire, I'm Marty Berkshire's dad. ... Yeah ... yeah ... hey ... yeah, I uh, I got your number from my wife, Diane ... Right, so, I heard he got out. Okay. That's good. That's great news. Is he doing alright? ... You think maybe I can talk to him. ... Oh, okay, okay, I get it, yeah, it's fine, I was just hoping I could, you know? Just, "How you doing?" that kind of thing, but, hey, you're the expert right ... (tense) well, you've been someone's sponsor before, right? ... Well, okay then. ... Tell him ... "Pop called." ... Alright. Good-bye.

He hangs up.

He tries to read some of the papers that are in front of him, but suddenly, he's not interested in any of it.

He goes into the cupboards looking for a glass. He opens three or four until he finds one. He runs some tap water and fills the glass. He'd kill for a stiff drink right now.

He sits down and drinks the water.

He wanders around the house some more and finds a piano in a back room. He starts to play. Timidly at first, but then he gets into it. He is an excellent pianist. He plays a frenzied honkytonk dance melody.

Keys in a door. The doors opens. Lights in the apartment come on.

Nathan stops playing.

Julius enters wearing what he wore in the previous scene.

Nathan re-enters the kitchen.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Julius.

JULIUS
Hi, Nathan. That sounded good.

NATHAN
Thanks.

JULIUS
Yeah.

NATHAN
It's a little out of tune around Middle C.

JULIUS
I'll have it looked at.

NATHAN
Good. Where the Hell have you been? I called Annie's sister, no one knew where you were.

JULIUS
I went to church.

NATHAN
Oh.

JULIUS
Sorry.

NATHAN
We're going to have to get you your own security detail.

JULIUS
Okay.

NATHAN
Jesus.

JULIUS
I'm sorry, I just pulled into a church I thought looked ... right. I don't know. Turned off my phone. Catholic church.

NATHAN
Have you gone to see Annie today?

JULIUS
No, not yet.

NATHAN
Her sister says that she's doing okay.

JULIUS
Okay. Good.

Nathan puts his arm around Julius. He points up at the ceiling.

NATHAN

How's the big man?

JULIUS

He's doing okay too.

Nathan lets go and sits back down.

NATHAN

Good. You get what you needed to get out of it?

JULIUS

Today was one of those days where you don't know if you're just talking to yourself.

NATHAN

That's supposed to be part of it, right?

JULIUS

I guess.

NATHAN

That's what I hear. You have the recording?

Julius takes a voice recorder out of his coat pocket. It's attached to so intricate looking bugging wires.

JULIUS

Here.

NATHAN

Good. What did you get?

Nathan takes it.

JULIUS

She's pretty clear. There are four jobs at the HUD that she's willing to accept for her husband.

NATHAN

And what did you say?

He examines the recorder to make sure everything is in order.

JULIUS

Nothing. I said I thought she was extorting me. It's on there. I listened to it.

Okay.

NATHAN

He puts the recorder in his pocket.

NATHAN (cont'd)

I don't like audibles, Julius.

JULIUS

Well, it worked out fine.

NATHAN

It might not have. I don't think you were thinking.

JULIUS

I was hoping!

NATHAN

You were hoping that the world got turned on its head?

JULIUS

Something like that.

NATHAN

Sorry, my friend. That's not the way it usually goes.

JULIUS

I guess not.

NATHAN

You were not in your right head today. It's too soon to jump back in. That's why you went running down there by yourself, hair on fire, turning everything upside down. You have lieutenants for a reason.

JULIUS

No, it was fine.

NATHAN

I'm serious.

JULIUS

It was fine. It was something I needed to do.

NATHAN

Why?

JULIUS

I understand her a little better now.

NATHAN

Huh.

JULIUS

I was almost killed a couple of times in Kuwait. I remember what it was like when I came back. That fear. That shell shock.

NATHAN

(incredulous)

She said you gave her Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?

JULIUS

No. She said she was always looking for me. Always waiting for something terrible. That's what it was like.

NATHAN

You can't help that. Some people take things too far. Got acid on their nerves.

JULIUS

Yeah. Maybe. (Beat.) Remember you brought me up to the farm and I met your dad?

NATHAN

Sure do.

JULIUS

And remember that he was telling me about setting traps for the foxes and that sometimes a fox would bite it's own foot off to get free?

NATHAN

(rolling his eyes)

Yeah, he remembers that real clear.

JULIUS

And I told him that I'd seen mice bite their feet off to get out of glue traps.

NATHAN

Yeah. You two psychos had a nice bond over that.

JULIUS

I thought what he said about that was so interesting. He said an animal and a man feel the same amount of pain, but they feel a different amount of suffering. "Because a man suffers he can never do what a fox can do." But, some people suffer more than others, right? Some men are men, some are foxes?

NATHAN

I ... think so, probably.

JULIUS

So if you're making the laws, do you privilege the men or do you privilege the foxes.

Beat.

NATHAN

Men, right?

JULIUS

Even if the men never make it out of the trap?

Beat.

NATHAN

Hell if I know, Julie. You got me.

JULIUS

Yeah. Just something I was thinking about when I was sitting in that church.

NATHAN

I don't know.

JULIUS

No. (Beat.) So, is it all taken care of?

NATHAN

Yes. She came to see me. She signed the confirmation.

JULIUS

That's good.

Nathan holds up the recorder.

NATHAN

And with this and the signed confirmation for the first interview, I'd say that makes us rock solid.

JULIUS

You promised her husband the position.

NATHAN

She spoke to Kenny Clark himself.

JULIUS

(not "Great.")

Great.

NATHAN

It's fine. He's fine.

JULIUS

Okay.

NATHAN

He's on board.

JULIUS

Yeah, there's a new passenger everyday.

NATHAN

Nature of the beast. No man is an island.

JULIUS

So, who's going to call the SEC?

NATHAN

I think we'll have Manny Jordan do it.

JULIUS

Okay.

NATHAN

Time for him to step up a little.

JULIUS

That's good. I like Manny.

NATHAN

Yeah. We'll see how he does.

JULIUS

Are we going after Wayne directly?

NATHAN

I don't think you want to know the gory /details.

JULIUS

/Maybe if people started telling me what's going on, I wouldn't be going to Baltimore on my own to get answers.

Beat.

NATHAN

Fair enough. We're not going after Wayne Eames. We're going after Raj Senevin. He's a senior analyst at The Brevoort Group.

JULIUS

Brevoort Group?

NATHAN

It's a hedge fund up in Greenwich. Senevin golfs with the C.O.O. of Hammerstein and brought him a totally unrelated cash grant scheme last year. Looks like Hammerstein's a clearing house and they've got a bunch of lawyers like Wayne certifying blank paper. The SEC has been monitoring Brevoort since 2006 so the paper trail on Raj Senevin goes way back.

Julius shakes his head.

JULIUS

Okay, okay. I'm sorry I asked.

NATHAN

Bottom line is, Senevin's going down, Hammerstein's going down and Wayne is getting caught in the net. The guys at Brevoort are going to turn Senevin in themselves, so it won't look like it's coming from us.

JULIUS

They're on the train too I guess?

NATHAN

Something like that.

JULIUS

Huh.

NATHAN

You wanted to know.

Beat.

JULIUS

I guess he deserves it.

NATHAN

Who?

JULIUS

Wayne. You said he's crooked, right?

NATHAN

Judge-not-lest-ye-my-friend. Judge not. It's business.

JULIUS

So, he's going to jail?

NATHAN

No. Buck Hollister's going to be doing the heavy-lifting here. He'll get Wayne's name out of the investigation.

JULIUS

How's he going to do that?

NATHAN

By being Buck Hollister.

JULIUS

So Wayne won't even be dis-barred?

NATHAN

You want him to be?

JULIUS

No.

NATHAN

No, it's better this way. Less waves means less that splashes on you. You want them grateful and quiet not angry and looking for answers. They'll be scared. That and this certification should make Holly Eames formerly Hathaway go away for good.

Beat.

JULIUS

Okay. Good.

NATHAN

"Okay. Good?"

JULIUS

I'm sorry, Nathan. Thank you. Thanks. I really appreciate it.

NATHAN

You're welcome. Not bad for a week's work I think.

JULIUS

I'm glad it's done with. I guess this means that I'm taking that position on Racing and Wagering.

NATHAN

Yeah, I guess it does. And you're going to have to go to Polk Street to ask for it.

JULIUS

Okay. I can do that.

NATHAN

Not the end of the world. You'll probably get a Johnnie Walker Blue and a blowjob out of it.

JULIUS

Can't wait.

NATHAN

And no more calls with Danny O'Brien.

Beat.

JULIUS

Fine.

NATHAN

Danny'll get in your head and talk all kinds of nonsense to it.

JULIUS

Yeah, that's fine. What am I going to say to him anyway?

NATHAN

Good. Exactly. (Beat.) Of course it also means this Congress thing isn't going to work out this time. I'm sorry.

Pause.

JULIUS

Oh.

NATHAN

Yeah.

JULIUS

I see.

NATHAN

We all talked about it and it seems that everyone agrees that you're just too valuable in the Assembly to send you off to Washington.

JULIUS

Right.

NATHAN

I can tell you're disappointed.

JULIUS

No.

NATHAN

It's a timing thing, Julius.

JULIUS

I was nineteen when all this happened with Holly.

NATHAN

This had nothing to do with anything.

JULIUS

No, no, of course not.

NATHAN

You've just got a lot on your plate right now.

JULIUS

Right. I see.

NATHAN

Campaigns take a long time to get going.

JULIUS

What have I been doing for the past year?!

NATHAN

There's a lot to all of this Julie, you know this.

JULIUS

What have I been doing?!

NATHAN

We always knew that this was a possibility.

JULIUS

Why go through all the trouble then? Why get Hollister and the SEC and everything involved?

NATHAN

You're one of my guys, Julius. I don't want you to feel like you're being hung out to dry here.

JULIUS

What do you want me to feel like?

NATHAN

Like you've got a bright future and you've got some breathing room now.

JULIUS

We both know that there's no oxygen in "breathing room."

NATHAN

You're a Hell of a talented guy. We just think you need to take a few steps back. Maybe the world's not quite ready for you yet; maybe you're not quite ready for the world.

JULIUS

Maybe the world's not quite ready for the Seneca-Cayuga Casino they've been talking about. Maybe I'm not ready to vote Buck Hollister's pockets for the next four years!

NATHAN

Well, then you're going have some trouble, Assemblyman, because on your say-so, I just ran up and down the Eastern Seaboard recruiting and army of suits to get your ex-girlfriend's husband a job at HUD and you used the newly found influence of your twenty weeks in office to get her a cost-free, McMansion in Carroll County, Maryland. So you'd better think twice about what pockets you vote.

JULIUS

Huh.

NATHAN

We've got a lot of mouths to feed now and all of us have been picking up your fucking checks, Julie! You want to get burned or get paid? Up to you. My choice is get paid.

SILENCE.

JULIUS

Who are you going with?

NATHAN

Instead?

JULIUS

Yeah.

NATHAN

Nancy Esparza or Willis McGinn.

JULIUS

Huh.

NATHAN

They're just a little more solid right now.

JULIUS

Yeah.

NATHAN

McGinn's been a state senator for three terms.

JULIUS

Democratic state senator.

NATHAN

Is that a problem?

Beat.

JULIUS

Well, you've got a lot of guys, Nathan.

NATHAN

Which you also knew.

JULIUS

I did. I did.

NATHAN

Look, this is not a step back.

JULIUS

It's not a step at all.

NATHAN

What did you think was going to happen? We were going to see you in the White House some day?

Beat.

JULIUS

No. I didn't think that.

NATHAN

No. So, ... look, Julius, you're an earner. That's what every bum out there with straight teeth is trying to become. You know how hard it is to find a guy that gets the PAC checks coming in?

JULIUS

Obviously not that hard.

NATHAN

I've been doing this a long time. Sometimes it's the time to push, sometimes it's the time to build your record, earn your keep.

JULIUS

I thought that was "hanging myself."

NATHAN

Don't be reductive. You know it's a lot of moving parts. You want to pin me down on something I said yesterday, all it proves is that you're not looking ahead two months.

SILENCE.

JULIUS

Shit!

Nathan puts his arm around Julius's shoulder.

NATHAN

Hey, you know, it's not the end of the world. Racing and Wagering is going to keep you plenty busy. You'll be getting your Assembly campaign going in about a year. We got the tape, we got the certification. You're Teflon now. Make another great speech; fill up the war chest. Bring in a few more big guns. Make the right votes. Okay?

Pause.

JULIUS

Okay.

NATHAN

Okay. You popped your cherry. Welcome to Politics For Real.

He claps him on the back.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Four years, who knows what's going to happen. Everything could be different. It's guaranteed things will be different. By then you and Annie'll have a baby, maybe two.

JULIUS

No we won't.

NATHAN

What do you mean?

JULIUS

She doesn't want to try anymore.

NATHAN

Why?

JULIUS

Something inside her just decided, "No more."

NATHAN

Shit.

JULIUS

We've been trying so long now.

NATHAN

I know, but still ...

JULIUS

Too much has fallen through. (Beat.) Too many times.

NATHAN

That's why she's at her sisters?

JULIUS

I ... uh ... we can't seem to see eye-to-eye on it.

NATHAN

What did you say to her?

He takes out his iPhone.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Are we talking a hundred dollars in flowers or five hundred.

JULIUS

No. It's nothing like that.

NATHAN

What did you say?

JULIUS
She said it.

NATHAN
What?

JULIUS
"There's just something that's not right anymore between us."

NATHAN
Since when.

JULIUS
I don't know.

NATHAN
Do you agree?

JULIUS
My God, stop.

NATHAN
Sorry.

Beat.

JULIUS
(quiet)
Doesn't matter if I agree.

Beat.

NATHAN
No. I guess it doesn't. (Beat.) You know, this is all normal, right? Nature of the beast. It is. It'll work itself out. You should have Annie talk to Diane. You know, I counted it once, I think that I stay in my actual house for maybe two months total out of every year. You want to know why? Diane doesn't like it when I'm home. Oh, we love each other and she's happy when she sees me. But, I can tell, after a few days at home it's like the British have reinstated the Quartering Act. The kids were the same way too. Used to be they'd run to see me; then they'd run to their rooms; now they're out there in the world in some foxhole or something hoping I forgot them.

Pause.

NATHAN (cont'd)
Diane used to tell me that I wasn't fit for the house. That they were civilians and that I was from a warrior class. You ever think that? You were a Marine. You ever think that in ancient Greece we'd be Spartans?

JULIUS

We in politics?

NATHAN

I don't know. We whatever.

JULIUS

I think you were a Spartan if you were born in Sparta.

NATHAN

But what if you chose to go to Sparta? I mean, who does that? I was thinking that's what's happening with all the Chinese guys? I figure it's got to take a lot of a certain something to leave home, come to a place where you don't know anything and make a go at it. I figure it's the people from the warrior class that are coming. And you're here and you're a slave, like you said ...

He pushes all of his limbs together
constricting his body.

NATHAN (cont'd)

And you're like this. Where does all that go?

He releases.

JULIUS

You're telling me you'd be shooting people if they shipped you over to China?

NATHAN

How do I know I wouldn't? If I came to seek Elysian Fields and ended up polishing the armor. I don't fucking know.

Beat.

JULIUS

Yeah. Me neither. It's late. As you said -- I've ... I've got a lot on my plate.

NATHAN

You sure do. I think you need to go to bed. You look like Hell. Let's take a week to regroup, make a new plan. We're in this together, alright?

JULIUS

Good night, Nathan.

NATHAN

I'll call you in a week.

JULIUS

That's fine.

NATHAN

Alright.

Nathan starts to exit.

JULIUS

"Following foot soldiers leads to the grave."

NATHAN

I'm sorry?

JULIUS

I should have listened when they told me that you're finished.

NATHAN

Who says that?

JULIUS

Danny O'Brien. Guess you needed Hollister to buy a judge? to get your meth-head kid out of a hit and run? So now you're just ... you are polishing the armor.

Beat.

NATHAN

I could tell you a thing or two about Danny O'Brien, would make your blood cold.

JULIUS

Yeah.

Nathan turns around.

NATHAN

You never had a shot, Julius. And you should have known that from the beginning. And you should thank me now, 'cause at least you'll be sticking around. That's all that matters. "Know your enemy. Know your terrain. Know yourself." Some Chinese guy said that once. I'll call you in a week.

JULIUS

You guys taught me a real lesson, huh?

NATHAN

I don't know yet.

JULIUS

You knew about Holly.

NATHAN

Look, Julie-

JULIUS

Before I ever met you. That's why Hollister sent you to me.
(Beat.) I got to say, this has been a lot of work to own a
vote on Racing and Wagering.

NATHAN

Doesn't quite feel like work.

JULIUS

So, it was all about a casino?

Beat.

NATHAN

It was about something, Julius. But, I don't remember what
it was. I think it's better that way, yeah? Good-night,
Assemblyman.

Beat.

JULIUS

Good-night ... Nathan.

Nathan exits. The sound of a door
opening and closing.

Julius stands alone in the kitchen. He
puts some kernels in the popcorn maker
and turns it on. He puts a bowl
underneath it.

He goes to the back room and stands in
front of the piano. He plays a scale
around Middle C and the B is flat. He
plays the B again. Flat. Again.
Flat. B. Flat.

As the popcorn begins to pop, the
lights fade out on Julius.

IN DARKNESS, we hear the sound of the
kernels exploding like gunfire.

End of Scene.

END OF PLAY.