

SEPTILLION TO ONE

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Inspired by a True Story

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**OVER BLACK**

CLARK (V.O.)  
America owes its existence to the  
lottery.

FADE IN:

INT./EXT. MCLAREN 12C [DRIVING] - DAY

A WOMAN flies down a two-lane dirt road in a \$250k car that looks like it might actually fly. She's composed, confident... and not about to slow down for the TRAILER she finds in front of her.

CLARK (V.O.)  
Gambling is in our blood.

Without checking, the woman swerves into the oncoming lane. She's racing towards a MACK TRUCK. Locks eyes with the driver. He's half-pissed, half-terrified. She smiles a MEGA WATT SMILE -- and he's instantly disarmed. She pulls back easily in front of the trailer.

You've just met **JOY TAYLOR**. Or you would have if she slowed down. But that's not really how she's built.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Joy pulls into an ND lot. Steps out and surveys her surroundings. She's an exceptional figure in an unexceptional place.

CLARK (V.O.)  
England held its first lottery in  
1612 -- in order to fund the first  
colony in America.

AN AMERICAN FLAG, hanging from the store, flaps in the breeze. Above it, a flag for the LONE STAR STATE. Joy strides past them --

CLARK (V.O.)  
In 1776, when Washington was  
outgunned and outmanned, what did  
he do? He held a lottery to pay for  
cannons and uniforms. It turned the  
tide of the war.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Joy enters. We see a LOTTO POSTER inside -- TEXAS MILLIONS.

CLARK (V.O.)  
England won America with a lottery.  
And lost her with a lottery.  
(beat)  
Like I said, gambling's in our blood.

Joy steps up to the counter. Joy clocks the lotto poster. The clerk clocks her clocking it.

CLERK

How many you want?

Joy once again flashes that MEGA WATT smile.

JOY

All of them.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Joy shoves a GIGANTIC ROLL OF TICKETS into her car trunk. Then another. And another. She slams the trunk shut.

INT. JOY'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

If you had a Beautiful Mind but bought everything on Etsy, you'd get something like this place. There are charts and ledgers that almost look like art objects.

CLARK (V.O.)

The lottery is the American Dream  
in miniature.

Joy picks up one of the massive TICKET ROLLS. She holds it with reverence, then sets it down on the floor -- like a wheel -- and gives it a PUSH. The tickets unravel in a long line.

CLARK (V.O.)

An opportunity to hope for another  
life, a brighter future.

Joy withdraws a vintage RABBIT'S FOOT from her pocket. She massages it in her hand -- for luck, we assume -- as she slowly walks down the line of tickets.

CLARK (V.O.)

And, like the American Dream, it  
takes work. It takes investment...

Finally, she comes to a stop in front of **ONE TICKET**. She leans down and detaches it from the line. Then begins to scratch it...

CLARK (V.O.)

And, yes, it takes a bit of luck.

One Armadillo. Then two. Three. Four. Five. In a row. It's a GRAND PRIZE WINNER. And then we see the amount -- **\$8 MILLION.**

How did she know? Who the fuck is Joy Taylor?

CLARK (V.O.)

My job? My job is to make sure that  
little piece of the American Dream  
stays fair. To ensure that, even if  
the odds are long, they're even.  
For everyone.

EXT. SMALL CONVENIENCE STORY - AUSTIN, TEXAS - DAY

We finally glimpse, **CLARK**, our narrator to this point. His last name's **HAUSER** -- but think Clark Kent. If he ditched the glasses, got a haircut, and hit the gym for a week, Clark might turn in to Superman. Clark is usually the smartest man in the room... and doesn't get why this bothers people.

CLARK

People like you are why I get up in the morning.

PAN to a TATTOOED CLERK, who's been the audience for Clark's sermon. They're leaning against a concrete wall, waiting... for what we don't yet know.

TATTOOED CLERK

Who the hell are you?

Clark flashes a badge: **LOTTERY INSPECTOR**.

CLARK

Clark Hauser. Texas State Lottery.

And then we **FLASHBACK** to how they wound up here...

INT. SMALL CONVENIENCE STORE - FLASHBACK - MOMENTS AGO

*POV: A lottery card -- but the numbers are out of focus. It might be three 6's -- or is one of them an 8? PULL BACK to REVEAL --*

*An OLD MAN in a threadbare coat and thick glasses. It's clear he spends all his money on tickets -- and he can't even read them. He hands the ticket back to the TATTOOED CLERK.*

OLD MAN

Did I win?

*The Tattooed Clerk stares at the ticket, then the old man.*

TATTOOED CLERK

Sorry, old fella.

*The clerk tosses the ticket into the trash. The old man shuffles out, defeated. The clerk stares after, then reaches into the trash and POKETS THE TICKET. He turns back to the counter to see --*

CLARK

*(smiling politely)*

*Would you mind stepping out from behind the counter?*

EXT. SMALL CONVENIENCE STORE - PRESENT

Clark and the Tattooed Clerk continue their uncomfortable wait.

TATTOOED CLERK  
Aren't you gonna cuff me or read me  
my rights?

CLARK  
Don't have the jurisdiction.

TATTOOED CLERK  
I thought you were a cop.

Clark tries not to show how much this wounds him.

CLARK  
We can just wait in silence.

Finally, a POLICE CAR pulls up and a DICKHEAD LOCAL COP hops out.

DICKHEAD COP  
(Texas accent)  
Well, well. A citizen's arrest!

It's clear Clark and DICKHEAD have history. Dickhead starts to cuff the clerk's hands behind his back.

CLARK  
You cuff the first hand in front.  
It gives you maximum leverage.

DICKHEAD COP  
That something you picked up at  
Quantico?

Clark bristles. Dickhead continues talking to the clerk -- but he's clearly aiming at Clark.

DICKHEAD COP (CONT'D)  
We don't do scared straight down at  
County anymore, but we got the next  
best thing right here. See, Clark  
is a cautionary tale.

CLARK  
This is not appropriate.

Clark reaches into his pocket and pulls out a **TALISMAN** that he plays with compulsively when anxious. If we looked closer, we'd notice it's an **FBI CHALLENGE MEDAL**, awarded for his work on an op.

DICKHEAD COP  
Clark used to be FBI. Would stick  
his nose in our business, tell us  
how to do our jobs.

CLARK  
You need to complete the arrest and  
Mirandize him.

DICKHEAD COP

Like that.

CLARK

No, you actually need to complete the arrest and Mirandize him.

DICKHEAD COP

Sure thing.

Dickhead SMACKS the Clerk in the head.

DICKHEAD COP (CONT'D)

(to Tattooed Clerk)

You have the right not to be a stupid, thieving piece of shit. Got it?

Dickhead throws the Clerk into the backseat of his cruiser.

DICKHEAD COP (CONT'D)

Being a cop's not rocket surgery. Too bad you couldn't hack it.

Dickhead peels out, leaving Clark with a faceful of dirt and a fist full of rage. Then Clark turns to his car. Old, brown, boxy. There's a name for cars like this: **Piece of Shit**. And adding insult to injury, on the windshield is a **PARKING TICKET**.

CLARK

(to the universe)

Oh, come on! I'm in a legal space.

**As MAIN TITLES roll --**

INT./EXT. CLARK'S CAR [DRIVING] - LATE AFTERNOON

We see Clark drive through downtown Austin. In sharp contrast to Joy's speeding and weaving, he slows at every yellow light, yields at every intersection.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

A cramped, but meticulously organized one-bedroom.

We find Clark filing the parking ticket away -- next to two dozen others he's received in the past year. Curious for someone who so diligently follows the rules...

Clark stares at the clock. Like he's waiting. And he is. Finally --

KNOCKING. Clark answers the door, REVEALING **MEGAN**, Clark's scary smart 12-year-old daughter, carrying a backpack and a CELLO CASE.

Clark lights up. In Megan's presence, he's noticeably gentler.

CLARK

So?

Megan looks down. Clark assumes the worst. Starts to comfort her.

MEGAN

Kidding! I made first cut!

She jumps up and down, wild with excitement. Clark hesitates, then overcompensates, jumping with her.

CLARK

Let me hear what you played.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Megan is finishing a piece of music with passion and fluidity -- when she makes a small error. She starts to move on to the end --

CLARK

Go back. We do things right --

MEGAN

"Or people get hurt."

Clark nods, pleased. Megan goes back and plays. During this, Clark's PHONE RINGS. **CALLER ID: MARSHAL'S OFFICE**. Megan looks to Clark -- should she stop? Clark shakes his head and sends the call to VOICE MAIL. Megan continues and finishes with a flourish.

CLARK

(beaming)

You are absolutely getting into that school.

MEGAN

Dad, there are like twenty kids auditioning for each spot.

CLARK

So?

MEGAN

So I only have a one-in-twenty shot.

CLARK

That assumes everyone has an equal chance. And everyone deserves an equal chance... But not everyone is as talented as you.

Megan smiles. It worked.

CLARK (CONT'D)

So what shall we do this weekend to celebrate? LBJ Library? Olive Garden?

MEGAN

Actually Nicholas Long is playing at Dallas Symphony this weekend.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Clark's on the computer looking up seats. The cheapest left are \$175 each. Clark's eyes widen. He tries to talk himself into it.

CLARK

Nicholas Long's your favorite, right?

Megan reads the situation and shifts to take care of her father.

MEGAN

I can watch him on TV. It's better.  
They do close-ups on the hands.

CLARK

I don't want you to miss out.

MEGAN

I only get to see you on weekends.  
I'd rather just hang out with you.  
(beat)  
And, you know, I'm not even sure I  
want to go to that school...

CLARK

You're sure. Don't worry about the money.

Megan's clearly still worrying, but she soldiers on.

MEGAN

C'mon, I know what we can do...

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Clark and Megan watch an old episode of **COLUMBO** with rapt attention. Megan hits pause right before the big reveal.

MEGAN

It was the gardener.

CLARK

Stakes?

MEGAN

Dishes.

They pinky-swear.

CLARK

Butler. They showed him dusting in  
the library, but he was really  
hiding the murder weapon.

MEGAN

No way.

Megan un-pauses. Yep, Clark was right.



MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 You really loved working on these  
 types of cases, didn't you?

Clark tries to act nonchalant. He shrugs. But it means "yes."

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 Grandpa's sorry about what happened.

CLARK  
 He has told me several times that he  
 is not. But he loves you. And,  
 wherever she is, your mom loves you.  
 And I love you. We all love you.  
 That's what matters. That and you  
 doing the dishes tomorrow.

MEGAN  
 After we watch three episodes of  
Columbo. Back-to-back.

CLARK  
 Okay -- but I get to be the one  
 facing the TV.

Megan laughs, both with -- and at -- Clark.

MEGAN  
 That's dad humor.

CLARK  
 It's okay. I'm your dad.

Megan curls up next to Clark. He covers her with a blanket.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - EVEN LATER THAT NIGHT

As Megan sleeps, Clark pulls out his phone. Stares at the voice  
 mail from earlier. He clicks PLAY.

MARSHAL CAL FREDRICKS (V.O.)  
 Clark, thanks for applying for the  
 United States Marshals Service.  
 Again. Unfortunately, we cannot  
 offer you a job interview. Again.  
 (beat)  
 It's not that you're "radioactive" per  
se, but we cannot be the source of  
 your career rehabilitation. Feel free  
 to resubmit if things turn around.

Clark rubs his eyes. He really needs a fucking break.

EXT. ORSON'S HOUSE - MONDAY MORNING

A beautiful, old-money Texas mansion. And then into the frame  
 comes Clark's POS car. Megan hops out.

MEGAN

The next audition round is in two weeks. We can have parents --

CLARK

I'll be there. With bells on. Or something less noisy.

ORSON (O.S.)

I like the idea of bells. Let's people know to walk the other way.

And that's how we meet **ORSON** (60s), Clark's ex-father-in-law. A powerful state official and an intimidating presence. Think John Huston in Chinatown.

ORSON (CONT'D)

Go inside, Megan. Your mother's on the phone.

Megan's eyes dart between the men in her life.

CLARK

It's okay. Go ahead.

Megan gives Clark a little wave, then withdraws. Once she's gone --

CLARK (CONT'D)

So how's it going with her "running from responsibility" world tour?

ORSON

It's not responsibility she's running from.

(changing the subject)

How do you intend to pay for Megan's school?

CLARK

I'll pay for it.

ORSON

How? It costs more than you make.

CLARK

I used to make more.

ORSON

And whose fault is that?

CLARK

Yours, Mr. Texas Land Commissioner!  
And by the way, you wouldn't know anything about these parking tickets I keep getting?

ORSON

Are you sure you want to accuse me of something? How'd that work out for you last time?

CLARK

Why are you proud of that?

ORSON

Always be proud of winning. You remember that. And you teach it to your daughter -- or I will.

CLARK

I'll figure out the money. I'm up for a job. Something that would let me get back to real investigating --

ORSON

There's that foolish pride. I'll pay for Megan's schooling.

We feel the catch coming...

ORSON (CONT'D)

Just drop your claim to custody.

CLARK

I've given up a lot for Megan --

ORSON

You've given up a lot for you. If you actually wanted the best for Megan, you'd stay out of her life.

Orson walks off, leaving Clark a bit shaken. That can't be true, can it? Clark nervously fiddles with his FBI MEDAL.

INT. TEXAS LOTTERY OFFICE - DAY

The sort of office that explains why most people don't want to be government employees. No natural light, fluorescent overheads.

Clark takes a seat at his cubicle.

CLARK

Anything new?

JIMMY

Is it possible the lottery is a tool of Red China?

**JIMMY**, 25, is Clark's worshipful deskmate and a fresh-faced rookie. He's all eagerness and enthusiasm --

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Also, what makes China red? Is it cherry? I like cherry.

And not much in the way of brains. It would be easy for an experienced investigator to lose his temper with Jimmy, but then you'd feel guilty -- like you just kicked a puppy.

CLARK

What are you talking about?

Jimmy play's Clark's voicemails. We hear a voice that seems a bit... unstable.

LANTERMAN'S VOICE

I have indisputable evidence that the lottery is being used to bring diabetes to the inner city.

CLARK

Next.

LANTERMAN'S VOICE

It's Margaret Lanterman. I haven't heard back. I'm not sure you're getting these. Or my letters.

We see the thick **LANTERMAN FILE** on Clark's desk.

LANTERMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I think the Jews could actually be helpful on this one --

CLARK

Are they all her?  
(off Jimmy's nod)  
Delete.

JIMMY

She seems like a nice old lady.

CLARK

She's a conspiracy theory wackjob.

Clark looks around the office. It's otherwise deserted.

CLARK (CONT'D)

And the only person who cares about what we do. Where is everybody?

JIMMY

Staff meeting starts in two minutes.

CLARK

Shit. That dog-and-pony show.  
(off Jimmy lighting up)  
No, there won't be ponies.

JIMMY  
I know, but maybe --

CLARK  
No dogs either.

Clark heads for the conference room. Jimmy follows -- but a step behind, mulling something Clark said a moment ago.

JIMMY  
You really don't think Vivian cares?

CLARK  
She's a career salesman. She only cares about one thing --

Jimmy is hanging on Clark's words -- no idea what's coming next.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
Selling tickets.

JIMMY  
Then why are we here?

CLARK  
I know what I did. No idea what you're in for.

JIMMY  
If you find out, will you let me know?

CLARK  
(beat)  
Sure thing.

INT. TEXAS LOTTERY OFFICE / CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is packed with friendly-faced, SWEATER-WEARING MARKETERS. Clark and Jimmy, with their dime store suits, stick out. At the front of the room, their boss, **VIVIAN WILKES** (50). With her big smile and mane of orange hair, she looks like a tabby cat -- but really she's a shark.

VIVIAN  
You know what time of the year is coming up? My favorite time...

CLARK  
Oh God.

VIVIAN  
Lotto Con!

CLARK  
(whispered)  
Why is she acting like this is a thing?

PAN to JIMMY, next to him, thrilled.

JIMMY  
(whispered)  
Maybe I'll get to be on a panel.

VIVIAN  
LottoCon is the premiere event of our calendar. I know in past years it's just been held at a Hyatt, but this year we're going to eventize it.

CLARK  
What does that mean?

VIVIAN  
We're going to make it an event.

CLARK  
I was hoping for more than the literal definition of the word you just made up.

VIVIAN  
Well, someone woke up with an armadillo in his britches. By eventize I mean rather than have it at a Hyatt, we're going to have it at the Grand Hyatt. In New Orleans! And we're going to announce the biggest multi-state lotto ever.

She pauses, looking for applause. The rest of the room gives it to her. Vivian holds up a giant mock-up of the new GAME CARD.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)  
As you know, we're proud to be a G&T state. We've relied on G&T to print and distribute Texas' game cards for the last decade. And we'll be partnering with twelve other G&T states on this record-setting new game.

We see a MAP of the participating G&T states.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)  
It's called **Overnight Success**. And it's going to have ten grand prizes of \$20 million each.

Jimmy applauds. She wasn't looking for it... but she'll take it.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)  
The next month, leading up to the convention, is all about promotion.

Clark looks around, disappointed that this has set the room abuzz.

CLARK

Last year, we sold over \$3.7 billion in lotto tickets.

VIVIAN

(playing to her crowd)  
It's a good start, isn't it?

They pick up the cue and applaud.

CLARK

Sure. But it's also an incredible incentive for fraud and corruption. I've filed several reports--

VIVIAN

And I will read those reports. At some point. Probably. But right now I need you to do background checks.

CLARK

Background checks? For what?

VIVIAN

Our new campaign! For our part of selling the multi-state, I want to choose one recent winner. An average Joe or Jane who struck it big. That stuff makes everyone believe they can be next. But before we put anyone on a poster, I want you to make sure they're not kiddy diddlers or spouse smackers.

CLARK

Did you just re-brand child molestation and spousal abuse?

VIVIAN

No. I did that years ago. Anyway, Clark, your job is to vet these prospective poster people.

CLARK

I'm an investigator. A former FBI agent. What you're asking is not cracking down on crime -- it's just serving the sales force.

VIVIAN

Then we're in agreement.

INT. TEXAS LOTTERY OFFICE / CLARK'S CUBICLE - LATER THAT DAY

Clark and Jimmy comb through photos and names of recent winners.

JIMMY  
Plum assignment, eh?

Clark doesn't look up from the files.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
I think I found our poster guy! Check this out -- a man redeemed a million-dollar ticket after two years. Apparently he lost it -- and then he found it. It's a nice story.

CLARK  
It's not. It's a scam.

JIMMY  
What do you mean?

CLARK  
People don't forget to redeem winning tickets. And if they lose them, they don't sit there in silence. They complain to us.

JIMMY  
What does that do?

CLARK  
Nothing. People still do it. But assuming the man didn't file a complaint -- he didn't, did he?  
(off Jimmy's head-shake)  
Then he was waiting for potential heat to die down. Do your homework and you'll find someone close to him worked at a store or at G&T. It's a stolen ticket.

JIMMY  
Huh.

Well, that was an impressive little Columbo moment. But we can't tell if Clark's imagination is overactive -- or if he's nailed it.

CLARK  
(seeing Jimmy's spinning)  
You haven't done field interviews before, have you?

Clark gathers Jimmy for his version of rallying the troops.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
We're going to be talking to some people who were incredibly lucky -- and that luck is about to ruin their lives.



JIMMY

How can winning the lotto be bad?

CLARK

Selling lotto is a money-making proposition because most people can't calculate the enormity of the odds they face. Buying a ticket is not a sound financial decision. And the people who legitimately get lucky enough to win tend to continue making unsound financial decisions.

JIMMY

What are financial decisions supposed to sound like?

Ignoring him, Clark splits the stack of winner profiles in two.

CLARK

Steel yourself. We're about to see a mass of humanity at its most base.

LOTTO WINNER MONTAGE

*We see highlights from Clark and Jimmy's interviews --*

INT. COOKIE-CUTTER SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

*So new it feels like there should still be tags on everything. Jimmy sits across from a MAN with SILVER FINGER NAILS.*

JIMMY

*What's wrong with your nails?  
They're silver. Did you paint them?*

SILVER NAILS

*No, it's just from the tickets.*

JIMMY

*How many have you scratched off today?*

SILVER NAILS

*I haven't scratched off any in weeks.*

*We go off Jimmy's disturbed look, as we realize the man's nails have been permanently STAINED by lotto tickets.*

INT. MOBILE HOME - DAY

*Clark jots in a NOTEBOOK as he interviews a heavy, TACITURN WOMAN.*

TACITURN WOMAN

*I've finally been able to start my own business.*

*There's KNOCKING outside. The woman tries to ignore it.*

CLARK

You're not going to get that?

Still no reaction -- Clark goes to the window. Peers out. Sees three SPEED FREAKS waiting.

CLARK (CONT'D)

This is a mobile meth lab, isn't it?

TACITURN WOMAN

It's not that mobile.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

Finally a decent looking home. And a decent looking guy.

JIMMY

So after two years -- where did you find the ticket?

LUCKY FINDER

In my vegetable crisper. Would you believe that?

JIMMY

Are you sure it wasn't with your cousin who works at the Owl Mart?

We read the Finder's face. He's caught. Clark was right.

END LOTTO WINNER MONTAGE

EXT. ROSALITA MAIN STREET - EARLY EVENING

Clark arrives in front of VACANT STOREFRONTS. Seems like it will be a challenge just to find some of humanity at its basest... And then Clark notices one business that's open. "**MOM'S DINER.**"

INT. MOM'S DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Clark enters and marches over to the WOMAN behind the counter.

CLARK

Mom?

MOM

Son?

Clark stares at her quizzically.

CLARK

The sign outside says -- nevermind. I'm supposed to meet a woman --

MOM

That's what I was brought up to believe. But times are changing.

CLARK

I'm supposed to meet a specific woman. In about an hour. Thought I might grab dinner first.

Clark sees a sign behind the counter: "Ask about our specials."

CLARK (CONT'D)

What do you recommend?

MOM

Being a grown-ass man who knows what he wants.

CLARK

(getting with the program)  
Meat loaf. Mashed potatoes.

MOM

Have a seat.

Clark starts to move towards an empty table when he notices a booth with a man fast asleep -- and wearing a sheriff's uniform.

Clark sits across from the **SHERIFF** (70s, a polar bear of a man). The Sheriff doesn't notice Clark, so Clark picks up his COFFEE CUP and brings it down on the table. LOUDLY. The **SHERIFF** instinctively **grabs his GUN and sticks it in Clark's face.**

SHERIFF

(blinking awake)  
Where's my coffee?

Clark slides it back in front of the Sheriff.

CLARK

Would you mind lowering your weapon?

The Sheriff blinks at Clark for a second before he realizes --

SHERIFF

Fair enough.

CLARK

You know anything about a woman named Joy Taylor?

SHERIFF

She just won the lotto.

CLARK

That much I know.  
(flashing his badge)  
Clark Hauser, Texas State Lottery.

SHERIFF

That come in a Cracker Jack box?

CLARK

(pushing past)

Does Joy lead a clean life?

SHERIFF

Are you asking a personal question?  
I don't like personal questions.

Clark sees he's in rocky territory...

CLARK

Anything at all you're comfortable  
telling me about her?

SHERIFF

I barely know Joy Taylor.

CLARK

That's unusual in a small town.

SHERIFF

Not really. She works in  
construction. Travels a lot.

CLARK

(making note)

Construction. May or may not lead  
clean life. Religious. Thanks.

SHERIFF

What makes you think she's religious?

CLARK

She told me to meet her at church.

SHERIFF

On a Monday night? That's not  
'cause she's religious...

INT. ROSALITA COMMUNITY CENTER - LATER

An apple-cheeked REVEREND (40ish) speaks from a stage.

REVEREND

Matthew 25 speaks of a man who  
entrusted unto each of his servants a  
bag of gold. The first two invested  
wisely but the third replied, "Lord,  
I was afraid and hid thy gift in the  
earth." The man replied, "Thou wicked  
and unprofitable servant. Cast ye  
into outer darkness!"

(beat)

And now, bingo.

REVEAL CLARK in the audience, at a folding table. He's one of dozens of identical islands in this sea.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

And now, to call numbers, our lady of luck -- Joy Taylor.

JOY enters to warm applause. She seems shy and overwhelmed by the response. And then she breaks out that MEGA-WATT SMILE... and Clark almost forgets where and who he is.

JOY

Okay, everyone, first round of bingo cards is on me. Also the second. And the one after that.

Even bigger applause. Joy makes her way down the center aisle of the Church. People line up on either side of the aisle and wait for her to hand them cards as she passes. She reaches the row Clark is in and attempts to give him a card, but Clark demurs.

CLARK

None for me.

JOY

You come to bingo and you don't want to play bingo?

CLARK

I'm not here for bingo, I'm here for you.

Well, that came out more intense than he meant it. Or maybe not.

JOY

I consider marriage proposals and babies for blessing at halftime.

CLARK

I'm Clark Hauser. From the Texas Lottery.

JOY

Of course. I'm happy to speak with you, but I'm kind of in the middle of something.

A large man pushes his way in front of Clark, cutting the line of people waiting for cards.

CLARK

Excuse me, I was here.

CUTTER

I just want my card.

CLARK

I understand that you're "jonesing"  
-- but it's not your turn.

CUTTER

You're not even taking a card.

CLARK

It could be construed as a bribe.

JOY

(trying to defuse)  
Then you're welcome to pay for it.

CLARK

It's against regulations for state  
employees to play games of chance.

JOY

Life is a game of chance.

CLARK

Not the way I play it.

JOY

Perhaps you can participate another  
way --

Before Clark can inquire, Joy addresses the whole room --

JOY (CONT'D)

We're joined tonight by Clark  
Hauser of the State Lottery and  
Bingo Commission. He's gonna make  
sure there's no funny business.

The crowd applauds Clark. He waves, tries to roll with it.

JOY (CONT'D)

(playfully, to Clark)  
Watch out. Some of these bingo  
bitties are vicious.

INT. ROSALITA COMMUNITY CENTER - LATER THAT EVENING

Joy and Clark sit on stage. The Reverend rotates the wheel, Clark  
pulls the numbers, then hands them to Joy who calls them.

JOY

(into mic)  
I-26.  
(to Clark)  
I've never been vetted before.

CLARK

It's a thrill for me, too.

Clark passes a clipboard to her.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
Can you sign these forms?

JOY  
Financial disclosures? Am I running  
for president?

CLARK  
Just need to know if you've  
declared bankruptcy, have crippling  
debt. Stuff like that.

Joy thinks. Shrugs. Signs. Clark takes back the form.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
Have you ever been arrested?

JOY  
You don't know that already?

CLARK  
If I did, I'd still ask you. To see  
what you'd say.  
(beat)  
But, no, I can only see if you've  
been convicted of anything. I'm  
asking if you've ever been arrested.

JOY  
(trying to lighten the moment)  
Never had the pleasure.

CLARK  
(too serious)  
It's not pleasurable.

JOY  
(matching his tone)  
I believe you.  
(into mic)  
0-74.

CLARK  
Do you play lotto a lot?

JOY  
I do.

CLARK  
How many tickets do you buy at a  
time?

JOY  
Sometimes a dozen. Sometimes more.

CLARK  
And why do you play?

JOY  
What do most people say?  
(into mic)  
G-56.

CLARK  
Fun. Hope. Addiction.

JOY  
They say addiction?

CLARK  
Sometimes.

JOY  
I guess I just like playing.

CLARK  
I'll put you down for "fun."

Clark starts to write in his notebook.

JOY  
No. Hope.

Clark changes what he's writing.

JOY (CONT'D)  
Maybe addiction.

Clark looks up. Not happy.

CLARK  
You're addicted?

JOY  
Maybe I'm just compulsive. Like you.

CLARK  
What makes you say that?

Joy shoots him a look: "C'mon."

JOY  
(into mic)  
N-42.

An OLD WOMAN yells out "BINGO" and rushes the stage.

JOY (CONT'D)  
How's it look, inspector?

CLARK  
Verified.



The Reverend hands her a prize.

REVEREND

Thanks for playing. That's the last game of the night.

The crowd starts filing out.

CLARK

You know, 3% of all bingo revenue is to be remitted to the state.

JOY

Most of these people are old, unemployed, or both. But if you want to put your hand into their pockets, go right ahead.

CLARK

(his version of a compromise)  
Make sure you record all winnings on your W-2.

The winner doesn't hear Clark, she's too busy celebrating.

Clark gathers his things. But as he goes, he notices **MICHELLE** lingering. She's staring at her card, fighting back tears.

CLARK (CONT'D)

You okay, miss?

MICHELLE

I didn't win.

CLARK

Most people don't...

MICHELLE

But I had to. I just needed something to go right.

(off Clark's look)

We're three payments behind. A lot of people around here are behind, but we got unlucky. Our bank got bought out by a bigger bank and that bank is taking our farm.

CLARK

You don't have the papers with you, do you?

Michelle quickly snatches them out of her purse and hands them to Clark. Clearly she hasn't stopped obsessing over them.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Let me take a look.

(long beat as he reads)

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

They haven't produced the original note.

MICHELLE

What do you mean?

CLARK

What you signed originally. The new bank needs it to foreclose -- and they don't have it.

MICHELLE

Isn't that a technicality?

CLARK

The bank expects you to be bound by rules -- they should be, too.

(beat)

It's not a permanent solution, but it will buy you time. A few weeks. Maybe longer. Is that long enough for you to --

Clark doesn't even finish the sentence. Already the tears she was holding back are flowing. But now they're clearly tears of joy.

RACK FOCUS. We realize Joy, standing in the doorway on her way out, has taken in the whole interaction.

EXT. ROSALITA MAIN STREET - LATER THAT EVENING

As Clark walks to his POS car, Joy catches up to him.

JOY

You know why I keep playing, Clark?

CLARK

(quoting her)

"Fun. No hope. Maybe addiction."

JOY

Because of my father. He bought me my first ticket. It was something we could do as a family.

CLARK

That's a lovely story for a poster. It's also a crime. You can't play the lottery in the state of Texas until you turn 18.

JOY

Rules are very important to you, aren't they?

CLARK

Rules are important to all of us.

JOY  
But in very different ways.

She extends her hand. Clark shakes it. Then she leaves and he turns around to find another unwarranted PARKING TICKET.

CLARK  
Come on, Orson!

Clark climbs into his POS car. Carefully adjusts his rear mirror. Then the driver's side. As he adjusts the passenger's he sees --

JOY. Pulling alongside. In her McLaren.

JOY  
By the way, how did I do? With the vetting. How do I look?

CLARK  
Like a million bucks.

Joy smiles and speeds off. As she goes, Clark snaps a PHOTO.

INT. VIVIAN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian is behind an imposing desk. And behind Vivian is a wall covered with photos of her with a lot of famous assholes.

She holds Clark's file on Joy.

VIVIAN  
She's the one.

CLARK  
Something's off about her.

VIVIAN  
She plays the lotto. Of course something's "off" about her.

CLARK  
It's more than that.

VIVIAN  
You can have 'til the end of the week to finish vetting her. After that, I call G&T and we start printing posters with this gorgeous face on them.

INT. TEXAS LOTTERY OFFICE / BULLPEN - DAY

Clark and Jimmy sit at their desks. Now Jimmy has the file, as Clark keeps trying to put his finger on what's off.

JIMMY  
She's hot.

CLARK  
She doesn't fit the profile of most  
lottery winners.

JIMMY  
Because she's hot?

CLARK  
Because she's bright, articulate, and  
not nervous about being interviewed.

JIMMY  
So she's too perfect for the poster?

CLARK  
Yes.

Jimmy has started looking through her file. Holds up the PHOTO  
Clark took of Joy in her MCLAREN.

JIMMY  
See right here? She bought a flashy  
car, that's pretty typical.

Jimmy looks more closely at the picture. Notices something weird.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Although it's a couple years old.

CLARK  
You know about cars?

JIMMY  
(innocent)  
You don't?

CLARK  
(beat)  
Cars are not my favorite.

Clark looks at the photo again.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
But, wait, you're saying she bought  
a used car. That's prudent.  
(beat)  
Lotto winners are not prudent.

Clark's wheels are turning.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
Why would she have done that? Too  
much debt to buy a new car. Did we  
get her financials back yet?

Jimmy opens his FILE DRAWER. Clark is aghast at the mess.

JIMMY  
 I have a system.  
 (combing through)  
 Here it is.

Clark snatches it from Jimmy's hands. Peruses quickly...

CLARK  
 No debt. No liabilities. But she  
 listed the car as an asset. Last year.  
 She bought it last year.

Jimmy, as usual, is a step behind.

JIMMY  
 How could she afford that?

Clark keeps paging through. Something catches his eye. He turns  
 around the file to Jimmy. We see a very large number.

CLARK  
 Because three years ago she earned  
 over \$5 million!

JIMMY  
 From what? Her job?

CLARK  
 In construction? I don't think so.

Clark picks up his phone. Starts dialing a number. Jimmy starts to  
 ask what Clark is up to, but Clark waves him off.

INT./EXT. CLARK'S CAR [DRIVING] - THE NEXT DAY

As Clark cruises back down to Rosalita, we hear the phone  
 conversation that got us here...

CLARK (V.O.)  
 Hello, Ms. Taylor? This is Clark  
 Hauser. From the Lotto. You made the  
 first cut for the ad campaign, and I  
 had a few follow-up questions...

EXT. DIRT FIELD - DAY

Clark spots Joy on the edge of a DUSTBOWL FARM -- devoid of crops,  
 but packed with people. Clark pulls next to her and exits.

CLARK  
 Is this your farm?

JOY  
 No. It's Michelle's.  
 (off Clark's blank stare)  
 From bingo. The one you advised  
 about her mortgage.

Joy points. Michelle's in the distance, sitting on a TRACTOR. She sees Clark and waves. He waves back.

CLARK

How boring is this town?

JOY

Like a 7. But it grows on you.

CLARK

Is there really a crowd gathered to watch her plow?

JOY

No. There's a crowd gathered to watch her race.

(beat)

Mind if we walk and talk?

As they fall into stride, approaching the crowd...

CLARK

I wanted to ask you about your financial reporting. Ms. Taylor --

JOY

You can call me Joy.

CLARK

Joy --

JOY

(warmly)

Say it enough you may even feel it.

They've arrived at Joy's McLaren... which a MECHANIC is currently harnessing a plow to.

CLARK

You're racing Michelle. Is this a bucket list thing?

JOY

No. It's a bet. Michelle said my car was weak and for girls.

CLARK

It's strong -- and for girls.

JOY

She said it was weaker than her tractor.

CLARK

It's definitely weaker than a tractor.

JOY

Let's just see how the bet goes. If  
I win, she gives me her tractor.  
She wins, I pay her \$100k.

Michelle pulls alongside.

MICHELLE

Ready to lose?

JOY

Not gonna happen!

Joy climbs into her car.

JOY (CONT'D)

Any more questions?

CLARK

Are you going to buckle up?

Joy smiles warmly, strapping herself in.

JOY

Is that really what you came all  
this way to ask me?

CLARK

Three years ago, you earned over \$5  
million. What was the source?

Joy turns the ignition. The crowd shifts, clearing a path.

JOY

The source?

CLARK

Where did it come from?

JOY

Oh. I won the lotto.

CLARK

You won a lotto jackpot before?

JOY

Actually two. This is my third.

CLARK

And why didn't you mention that?

JOY

You didn't ask.

And before Clark can follow up on that explosive revelation,  
there's an actual explosion as a **STARTER PISTOL FIRES**. Clark turns  
and sees the SHERIFF with pistol in hand...

Joy takes off, her car REVVING like a motherfucker, then ACCELERATING smoothly, the plow coming along for the ride. Michelle is well behind her. Is there a chance Joy might do this?

Then, Joy's plow digs in, the McLaren bucks up, and the SUSPENSION SMASHES into the ground. SPARKS fly. And the **BACK BUMPER SPLITS OFF -- along with the plow.**

Joy SLAMS on the brakes and SPINS, barely avoiding flipping. Michelle keeps chugging along. Slow and steady wins the race.

As the crowd rushes to help Michelle celebrate, Clark heads for Joy. She still hasn't emerged. As Clark waits anxiously, he turns over his FBI MEDAL in his hand. And then --

The car door opens. Joy jumps out.

CLARK

Are you okay?  
(off her silence)  
Ms. Taylor?

JOY

Joy.

CLARK

Joy --

JOY

(smiling)  
Are you feeling it yet?

Clark can't help laughing. Once it's clear she's okay...

CLARK

Not to say I told you so, but --  
you lost.

JOY

(casual)  
Yeah, it's a shame.

Clark clocks Joy, looking almost happy as Michelle celebrates. And then it sinks in.

CLARK

You took a bet you knew you'd lose?  
(off Joy's smile)  
That's not normal. And neither is  
winning the lottery three times.

JOY

I got lucky.

CLARK

Three times.



JOY

Michelle got unlucky more times than that.

(beat)

Your bureaucratic loophole bought her some time, but she was going to lose the property eventually.

CLARK

If you were going to throw money at the problem, why not just give it to her? That would have been easier. And more direct. And your car would still be in one piece.

JOY

You're very direct, Clark. Have you found that always works for you?

CLARK

That has not been my experience, no.

JOY

If I offered Michelle money, she would have refused. It would have embarrassed her. You inspired me to come up with a more creative solution.

Then she says something that really gets him --

JOY (CONT'D)

We're not that different, Clark. We both believe justice is a virtue. I just don't think patience is.

And with that, Joy walks off, leaving one hell of an impression.

INT. TEXAS LOTTERY OFFICE / BULLPEN - THE NEXT DAY

Clark, back in business mode, has just finished updating Jimmy.

JIMMY

She's won the lotto before?

CLARK

This is the third time. In three different states.

JIMMY

Wow. She must be really lucky.

CLARK

Lucky? You know the odds of winning three jackpots?

Clark grabs a SCRATCHER TICKET off a pile on Jimmy's desk. Clark flips it over and points at the FINE PRINT.

CLARK (CONT'D)

The odds of even one win are 100 million-to-one --

JIMMY

So it's 300 million-to-one!

CLARK

No. It's 100 million times 100 million times 100 million.

Clark grabs a calculator and demonstrates. The result has a whole helluva lot of zeroes.

CLARK (CONT'D)

It's more likely that you'd randomly type Hamlet.

JIMMY

Why would you randomly type Hamlet?

CLARK

If you were a monkey.  
(off Jimmy's confusion)  
You know that hypothetical where a room of monkeys typing forever eventually produces Hamlet?

JIMMY

No, but I'd love to see it. Is a monkey playing Hamlet?

Clark refuses to engage this line any further.

CLARK

What she's done is not possible.

JIMMY

Then how did she do it?

CLARK

(trying not to lose it)  
By cheating.

JIMMY

Right. Cheating. How?

CLARK

That's what I'm going to find out.

Clark walks off with confidence building. It's almost a physical transformation. He looks taller, stronger, sexier. We're getting a window into how he must have been at the FBI.

INT. TEXAS LOTTERY OFFICE / HALLWAY

As Clark walks, he makes a quick phone call...

CLARK

Hello, Marshal Fredricks? I know you told me not to reapply until my fortunes have changed. I believe they're about to.

MARSHAL'S VOICE

(dry)

You win the lotto?

CLARK

Sorta. I'm on to a major case. The kind that could generate good press.

MARSHAL'S VOICE

How good?

We can hear the shift in attitude. Clark has his attention.

CLARK

A fraud case spanning multiple states and millions of dollars.

MARSHAL'S VOICE

If you solve a multi-state fraud involving millions of dollars of cash... yeah, I can get you a job interview.

INT. VIVIAN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Clark enters, riding the wave of confidence.

CLARK

We have to find someone other than Joy Taylor for this campaign.

VIVIAN

Why? She's perfect.

CLARK

This is her third lotto win.

VIVIAN

She won three times?!

Clark is finally getting the reaction he's looking for --

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

She shouldn't just be on a poster -- we should have her at the convention!

Or maybe not.

CLARK

What?! She's clearly cheating.

VIVIAN  
Or she's "The luckiest woman in Texas."

CLARK  
You cannot possibly be serious. Do you have any idea how statistically insane this is?

VIVIAN  
Not really. But I know how insanely good she'll look on the poster!

CLARK  
Why are you doubling down on this? Why would you invest in such a risky --

Clark reads Vivian's reaction and realizes --

CLARK (CONT'D)  
You've already submitted her as our official state choice.

VIVIAN  
And mocked up the poster and invited her to the convention.

CLARK  
Why would you have done that? I was supposed to have until the end of the week to finish vetting candidates.

VIVIAN  
Clark, it's not that I don't take your work seriously -- I just don't really factor it into what I'm doing.

CLARK  
You have to uninvite her.

VIVIAN  
I am not embarrassing myself in front of those other states.  
(under her breath)  
Especially those bitches from Oklahoma.

CLARK  
You know what the most common type of player fraud is?

VIVIAN  
Cheating?

CLARK  
(shaking his head)  
It's all cheating. The most common type of player fraud is facial manipulation.

## CLARK'S VISION OF THE CRIME

*For the first time -- but not the last -- we see Clark imagine how Joy might have pulled it off.*

(Note: These sequences have a poppy, Instagrammed quality.)

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

*Joy sits at a makeshift workbench, like the one where you'd picture Steve Jobs making the first Apple computer.*

*She examines a scratched-off lotto card under a microscope and then, with a fine laser-pen, changes a "1" to a "7". It's seamless. Joy examines her handiwork. She's pleased.*

END CLARK'S VISION

INT. VIVIAN'S OFFICE - PRESENT

VIVIAN

So you don't mean she manipulated her own face.

CLARK

(beat)

No. The face of the ticket.

Clark can see the technical route isn't going to work.

CLARK (CONT'D)

If you won't uninvite her, at least send me to G&T. I'll figure out how she did it before you print the posters.

VIVIAN

Why do you want to go to G&T?

CLARK

All her tickets were printed in states G&T handles.

VIVIAN

So what? They handle half the states in the country.

CLARK

And they're handling the upcoming multi-state. Wouldn't it be embarrassing if Joy Taylor spoiled this event that you've... eventized?

VIVIAN

(on guard)

How would she spoil it?

CLARK

If you featured her -- in front of everyone -- and she turned out to be worse than Thompson --

VIVIAN

That spouse smacker!

CLARK

If your poster girl turned out to be a giant cheater -- well, what would those Oklahoma --  
(struggles with the word)  
Bitches -- say then?

VIVIAN

Fine. You can go to G&T headquarters. But Clark, these are important people. I don't need you rubbing them the wrong way.

CLARK

How would I do that?

VIVIAN

By being you.

SAM ELLIOTT (PRE-LAP)

Hi. Howdy. Konichiwa.

INT. WHITE EXPANSE - DAY

We're CLOSE ON the face of courtly cowboy **SAM ELLIOTT** (70).

SAM ELLIOTT

That's Japanese. We do business in Japan. Love isn't the international language. Lottery is. That's what we know here at G&T.

We pull back to find Sam in a corporate dreamscape.

SAM ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Since 1982, G&T has been printing, innovating, and safeguarding the lottery across 24 states and 13 countries. What do we mean by printing? Odds are if you buy a lottery ticket --

Sam stops. Chuckles to himself.

SAM ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Odds are. Get it? Odds are, we printed it.

Sam stops alongside a massive printing press, rolling off sheets of shiny new tickets.

SAM ELLIOTT (CONT'D)  
What do I mean by innovation?

One of those shiny tickets appears in Sam's hand. Magical-like.

SAM ELLIOTT (CONT'D)  
Well, these little dream makers don't grow on trees. Someone at G&T thought up each game for you.

Sam walks on and stops in front of a closed white door.

SAM ELLIOTT (CONT'D)  
As for safeguarding, you see into that room behind me?

No, we don't.

SAM ELLIOTT (CONT'D)  
Good. Because that's the **Ice Box**. That's where a computer determines the winning tickets. It works off a secret, proprietary formula that not even the people here at G&T have access to. So you can be assured, this here lotto is as legit as they come.

Sam has walked us back to the desk area. Seated on the edge of a desk is **JIM SANDERS**. 50s. Salt-n-pepper fox in an impeccable suit.

SANDERS  
Hi. I'm Jim Sanders. CEO of G&T. And we're committed to giving back more than just a good time. Take our home state -- Texas. Last year, 7.4 million Texans bought nearly \$1.5 billion -- that's billion with a "b" -- scratch-off tickets. We printed all of 'em. And Texas schools took home nearly \$500 million in the bargain.

SAM ELLIOTT  
That's some purdy 'rithmetic.

Awkward cut in the video. We've clearly leapt forward.

SAM ELLIOTT (CONT'D)  
Well, I should be going. I'm not saying to buy a lottery ticket, but --

JIM SANDERS  
I am.

Some forced laughter between them.

SAM AND JIM  
Goodbye, now!

We pull back to find --

INT. G&T / RECEPTION AREA - SIMULTANEOUS

Clark is seated in a waiting area, where he's been watching the G&T corporate video. Behind Clark, at a welcome desk, is a very ENTHUSIASTIC MALE RECEPTIONIST. He speaks into his headset.

ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTIONIST  
(re: Clark)  
He's done.  
(beat)  
I think he did like it. I'll tell  
him you're on your way.  
(to Clark)  
Mr. Hauser, Mr. Sanders --

CLARK  
Is on his way?

ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTIONIST  
(surprised that Clark intuited)  
Yes!

And like that Clark finds himself pulled into a tight handshake with **JIM SANDERS**. Direct, friendly, corporate.

SANDERS  
Welcome to G&T. I want to thank you  
for bringing this matter to our  
attention. I assure you, security  
is paramount to us. I don't take  
chances, I sell them.

CLARK  
I was told you could show me Joy  
Taylor's other winning tickets.

SANDERS  
We keep excellent records of  
winners. Brunson will be able to  
help you.

CLARK  
Who?

And that's when Clark meets the man standing behind him.

BRUNSON  
Scott Brunson. Director of  
Security. You ain't gonna find  
nothin' that got by me.



Clark laughs. **BRUNSON** (30s) is portly, proud, and stone-faced.

**BRUNSON** (CONT'D)  
I'm serious.

**SANDERS**  
I leave you in good hands.

INT. G&T / TICKET VERIFICATION OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

What you'd picture if you thought of CSI: Lottery. A hub of phone calls and forensic activity, with specialists at workstations.

**BRUNSON**  
This is the department of ticket verification.

**CLARK**  
I thought we were the department of ticket verification.

**BRUNSON**  
That's cute. We pulled and compared all three of the winning tickets.

**CLARK**  
Any signs of facial manipulation?

Brunson produces a folder with copies of Joy's winning tickets.

**BRUNSON**  
We checked them before. We checked 'em again. Each and every one genuine.

Clark is more than a little disappointed.

**CLARK**  
If she didn't alter the tickets, she must have infiltrated the printing or distribution process.

**BRUNSON**  
You assume she's cheating. When you assume it makes an ass out of you --

**CLARK**  
And me.

**BRUNSON**  
Yes. You.

**CLARK**  
O-kay. You have a computer that determines the winning tickets.

**BRUNSON**  
Yes. The Ice Box.

CLARK  
Were all the games Joy won  
determined by this Ice Box?

BRUNSON  
All our games are.

CLARK  
Who has access to the Ice Box?

*CLARK'S VISION OF THE CRIME*

*EXT. G&T - NIGHT*

*We see JOY, dressed like a cat burglar, casing the complex. She's fast, stealthy, and pretty damn sexy.*

*INT. G&T / THE ICEBOX - MOMENTS LATER*

*An empty, white computer room -- think **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE**. And then one of the ceiling tiles slides as Joy lowers herself -- Mission: Impossible style. As Joy winds up suspended, horizontal --*

*END CLARK'S VISION*

*INT. G&T / OUTSIDE THE ICE BOX - PRESENT*

Clark and Brunson have arrived outside the Ice Box's door.

CLARK  
Can I see inside?

BRUNSON  
Nope. Essential personnel only.

Brunson gestures to the security pad outside the door.

BRUNSON (CONT'D)  
But I can tell you all comings and  
goings are logged. And there's been  
absolutely nothing suspicious.

Brunson clearly means for this to end the conversation. Clark can't help asking the follow-up.

CLARK  
How does the Ice Box work?

BRUNSON  
It randomizes the tickets.

CLARK  
Well, not randomizes. Scratch-off  
lottos aren't strictly random. The  
grand prizes have to be distributed  
throughout the run.

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

Because if they were all found within the first week of a run -- well, nobody would buy the rest of the tickets.

BRUNSON

(chafing)

Mm-hmm.

CLARK

So you use some sort of random number generator. Which, despite its name, isn't truly random.

BRUNSON

Are you here to ask questions or tell me things I already know?

Clark realizes he's falling into the patterns Vivian warned of.

CLARK

Sorry. How do you ensure the computer runs algorithms as random as possible?

BRUNSON

Shut up.

CLARK

Excuse me?

BRUNSON

Just shut the hell up for a second.

Clark shuts the hell up for a second.

BRUNSON (CONT'D)

Hear that?

(Clark doesn't)

That's room tone. Every room has one based on size, shape, acoustics. That tone is one of a kind.

CLARK

Like my fingerprint?

BRUNSON

Like your voice. Only the tone of this room doesn't make me want to piss down your throat.

CLARK

Do you talk to everybody this way? Because that would make sense. You don't know me. So it doesn't make sense for it to just be --

BRUNSON

It's you.

(beat)

The computer takes an occasional audio snapshot of the room tone and uses the frequency to start sequencing.

(NOTE: This is actual technology used by the lottery industry.)

CLARK

(nods, takes it in)

Why is it just me?

BRUNSON

I run security for the largest legal gambling operation in the world, and I don't need some desk-humper looking over my shoulder.

Clark responds with eerie calm.

CLARK

Totally. Makes sense. What about the other tickets?

BRUNSON

Excuse me.

CLARK

Joy's other winning tickets. She told me she'd buy dozens at a time. A committed lotto player like that isn't just going to win jackpots. She's also going to collect a bunch of smaller wins. And your boss just told me you keep excellent records of winning tickets, so -- what about Joy's other winning tickets?

Brunson pauses. Stares at Clark. We can't tell if he wants to take Clark's head off or tip his hat. Maybe both.

INT. G&T / SECURITY OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

On a large WALL SCREEN, we see an outline of the United States -- and several dozen small dots. These are the stores where Joy purchased winning tickets. And they seem to radiate out in three distinct lines -- like branches from a tree.

CLARK

When you look beyond the jackpots and include all the smaller wins... it looks like there's a pattern.

(pointing)

Do those lines correspond with distribution routes?

BRUNSON

I have no idea.

CLARK

Can you pull the distribution info?

BRUNSON

Nope. It's a double blind.

(off Clark's look)

The tickets are printed locally at our regional distribution centers. Then the trucking companies pick them up. We don't know which boxes are headed to which stores. And the trucking companies don't know which tickets are in which box.

Clark looks deflated.

BRUNSON (CONT'D)

So you see, Mr. Hauser, there's no vulnerability for her to exploit.

CLARK

So how do you explain her success?

BRUNSON

I don't have to. That's your job.

CLARK

I'm going to do my job. I'm even going to do yours.

(as Brunson fumes)

Have I rubbed you the wrong way? Is there some other way I should have rubbed you?

(beat)

I'm gonna go now.

INT. CLARK'S CAR - DAY

Clark's on the phone calling his office.

CLARK

I'm gonna stake out the stores. Look for a pattern myself.

JIMMY

Can I help?

Clark tries to be nice -- and get rid of him -- at the same time.

CLARK

You already have.

JIMMY

Awesome. How?

CLARK

(beat)

Phone's dying. Gotta go...

*STAKEOUT MONTAGE*

*We see the same U.S. MAP that Brunson showed Clark at G&T. Each location Clark visits is one of the dots on the map.*

*Clark winds up in Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, etc. We see the environs turn from rural to urban, dusty to snowy, rocky to lush.*

*At each store, Clark waits patiently until he sees a TRUCK show up and a DRIVER unload tickets. Clark carefully records a description of each driver in his notebook.*

*At the fourth store, we see a DRIVER we've already seen. 40ish. Tall, broad-shouldered, facial hair. Clark eagerly records this.*

*A couple of stores later, Clark sees him again. Is this our guy? Clark waits until the driver leaves, then enters the 7-11 himself.*

*Clark walks up to the desk clerk and flashes his credentials.*

CLARK (CONT'D)

The driver who was just here.  
What's his name?

The Clerk points to his delivery log-book. Just signed by...  
**THOMAS LINDEN.**

*END MONTAGE*

INT. TEXAS LOTTERY OFFICE / CLARK'S CUBICLE - DAY

Clark is poring over papers with Linden's name all over them. In the background, we hear the voice of the conspiracy theorist, LANTERMAN, as she leaves another voice mail.

LANTERMAN'S VOICE

... it explains everything that happened with the Supreme Court since the Reagan administration...

JIMMY

You sure you don't want to pick up?

Clark shoots him a look -- he'd rather hug his father-in-law.

CLARK

I'm trying to focus. Thomas Linden.  
He's Joy Taylor's inside guy.

JIMMY

But we haven't found any link between them.

CLARK  
 Keep looking. It's there.  
 Somewhere. I know it.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Clark is at his kitchen table, engrossed in the same papers, looking for that link. In the background, we can hear Megan playing. The music stops. A beat later, Megan enters.

CLARK  
 Semifinal auditions are coming up.

MEGAN  
 Two days.

CLARK  
 I know. I'll be there.

MEGAN  
 I know. But right now I need a  
 break. And I think you do, too.

Megan opens the fridge.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
 Let's make cookies.

CLARK  
 Can't. Working.

MEGAN  
 Fine. I'll just eat cookie dough.

CLARK  
 (aghast)  
 Do you know how many people  
 contract salmonella every year?

MEGAN  
 Six?

CLARK  
 144,000.

MEGAN  
 Fine.

Megan closes the fridge. Clark realizes how that must have sounded. His demeanor softens.

CLARK  
 We can make cookies. As soon as you  
 finish your homework.

MEGAN  
 No homework. My teacher was sick.

CLARK  
With what?

MEGAN  
Salmonella.

CLARK  
(perking up)  
That's so validating.

Clark stands, goes to the fridge. As soon as he opens it --

MEGAN  
Fine, I'll go do my homework.

Clark is floored.

CLARK  
You bluffed me?

MEGAN  
I'm sorry.

But Clark doesn't seem angry or even disappointed. Instead he kisses Megan on the forehead and clumsily attempts to twirl her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Dad, what are you doing!?

CLARK  
Joy doesn't know that I haven't been able to find the link between her and the driver.

MEGAN  
So, what, you're going to bluff her? I thought you never lied.

CLARK  
I never break the rules. But investigators are allowed to mislead -- if it's in the service of something greater.

MEGAN  
So can I not do my homework in the service of something greater?

CLARK  
Absolutely not.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE / MISSOURI - DAY

We PAN from the clean, recognizable lines of the **GATEWAY ARCH** -- to a pile of rubble several miles away. An active construction site. Clark finds Joy -- in her element in a hard hat.



JOY

Fancy meeting you here.

CLARK

It's not fancy. It's a construction site.

JOY

I know. I work here.

CLARK

I know. I called your boss. That's how I tracked you down.

JOY

I got your boss' invite to that lotto convention. What should I wear? As far as skin-to-dress ratio -- is it more cocktail party or boat show? Wait, it's New Orleans -- I could just rack up some beads.

CLARK

I wouldn't count on being there. We don't usually feature thieves.

JOY

What are you talking about?

CLARK

I know about you and Thomas Linden.

Clark looks for her reaction, but Joy gives nothing away.

JOY

Who?

CLARK

He's the driver who delivered tickets to the stores where you won. You were in it together. You paid him off.

JOY

I have no idea who you mean.

Clark won't let it go. He pushes the bluff further.

CLARK

You're a very attractive woman --  
(off her look)  
Objectively. Your facial proportions are very close to the golden ratio of 1:1.6.

JOY

Thank you?

CLARK

And it would stand to reason that you might leverage those looks.

JOY

Do you hear how that sounds like you just went from calling me attractive to calling me a whore?

CLARK

No.

(a beat)

Okay, now I kinda hear it.

Clark takes out his notebook. Again the MAP with her wins.

JOY

I didn't realize you were so artistic.

CLARK

You're the one making the patterns.  
(pointing to map)  
These are your wins. Why are they spread this way?

JOY

I travel for work. I buy tickets wherever I go.

CLARK

In a geographically suspicious pattern?

Joy looks at Clark and speaks earnestly, without judgment.

JOY

You really believe life is a mystery, and if you can just put the pieces together, everything will be solved.

CLARK

(quickly)

Yes.

JOY

That must be a nice way of seeing things. Very simple. Very comforting.  
(beat)

Can I borrow your pen?

Joy draws a line through several of the dots on Clark's map.

JOY (CONT'D)

That's the Balcones fault line.

CLARK

Huh?

JOY

My job takes me along that fault.

As Joy draws more lines, connecting the dots better than Clark --

JOY (CONT'D)

Also the Humboldt. Long Point-  
Eureka. And the Marianna.

Clark looks around the building site. It's not adding up for him.

CLARK

You're wearing a hard hat, but you  
have no tool belt. Don't take this  
the wrong way, but aren't you  
somewhere between a glorified Girl  
Friday and middle management?

JOY

How could I take that the wrong way?

(beat)

I work with tools, Clark. Just not  
ones that go in a belt.

Joy walks over and grabs an ORANGE, HARD-PLASTIC BRIEFCASE.

CLARK

What is that?

Joy opens it, revealing a control panel.

JOY

A reflection seismograph. It sends  
a sound pulse into the ground to  
detect fault lines. Like sonar.

CLARK

A reflection seismo--

JOY

I work at a construction site. But  
I'm a seismologist, Clark.

Joy hands Clark her card: SEISMOLOGIST. **VECTRONIX CONSTRUCTION.**

CLARK

You deal with earthquakes? What,  
you earthquake-proof buildings?

JOY

Part of my job is assessing seismic  
damage from fracking. Then there's  
soil liquefaction -- a big concern  
in Texas.

(MORE)

JOY (CONT'D)

Not to mention coastal subduction  
which is grossly misunderstood.  
That's part of what I studied at  
Texas A&M. Where I got my Ph.D.

(beat)

But, yes, I also work on  
preventative construction.

(off Clark's look)

You know, earthquake-proofing.

Clark is gob-smacked. And maybe also the tiniest bit turned on.

JOY (CONT'D)

So now that the pieces fit together  
-- how do you feel? Comforted?

Clark shakes his head. No. Joy pivots the conversation.

JOY (CONT'D)

You're not from Texas, are you?

CLARK

East coast. Came here for work.

JOY

FBI.

Clark looks at Joy. Surprised.

JOY (CONT'D)

You're fiddling with an FBI medal.  
You do that when you're nervous.

Clark looks down. Realizes she's right.

JOY (CONT'D)

Why aren't you FBI anymore?

CLARK

I picked a fight. I was on the right  
side. Turns out -- also the losing side.

JOY

Then why'd you stay in Texas?

CLARK

For my daughter. If I wasn't going  
to live under the same roof, I was  
going to be as close as I could.

This answer surprises Joy. And her genuine reply surprises Clark.

JOY

She's lucky to have a father like  
that. Someone willing to take a  
shitty job just to be near her.

CLARK

It's not always a shitty job.  
Sometimes I get to meet interesting  
people. Like you -- and Mr. Linden.

JOY

(beat)

I don't know Thomas Linden. I  
didn't conspire with him. And I  
didn't cheat.

Clark stares at her for a long beat.

CLARK

I. Don't. Believe. You.

JOY

One of these days Clark, you're  
going to wonder what it feels like  
to be on the winning side.

*STAKEOUT MONTAGE #2*

Clark zeroes in on Linden, tracking him during his day-to-day. We see Clark in his car:

- Begin following Linden outside Linden's home in Colorado.
- Watch Linden make deliveries across the map.
- Observe Linden take his lunch at a truck stop. Alone.
- Fiddle with his FBI medal -- a few times.
- Follow Linden into a grocery store. After Linden makes a drop-off, he knocks a CAN off a shelf. A customer picks it up and holds it out to him. Clark moves closer -- is this cover for a handoff? Nope. It's just a good Samaritan helping out.
- Watch Linden take his lunch at a truck stop in Oklahoma. Alone.

*END MONTAGE*

INT. CLARK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Clark is parked, looking through the diner window as Linden lunches. Clark is tired, frustrated. His phone beeps. It's an **ALARM**. Megan's semifinal audition is in four hours.

Clark throws the car in reverse, looks over his shoulder, and starts to pull out. But when Clark's head swivels front again, he sees someone joining Linden for lunch. Clark almost forgets to step on the brakes when he realizes **it's SCOTT BRUNSON.**

INT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Clark charges in, wagging his finger at Brunson.

CLARK

J'accuse!  
 (off Brunson's look)  
 It's French.

BRUNSON

Blow me! It's also French.

CLARK

You were the inside man. You facilitated all of this. Delivering the tickets to Joy and taking a nice fat cut. That's why you were such a dick to me. Not because you're incompetent but because you're corrupt!  
 (beat)  
 Maybe also incompetent.

BRUNSON

You are going to eat those words.

INT. G&T / CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Clark sits on one side, across from Brunson, Sanders, and Vivian. A dour lineup. Clark looks down at his words to Brunson. Printed.

BRUNSON

Do it.

CLARK

You can't be serious.

SANDERS

Do it.

CLARK

I'm late for a very important--

VIVIAN

You want to get there and still have a job? Do it!

Clark thinks about Megan's audition. Steels himself. Then CRUMPLES THE PAPER... AND PUTS IT IN HIS MOUTH.

Once Sanders sees Clark chewing -- and hating each bite -- he slides a DOSSIER across the table.

SANDERS

Brunson was just doing his job. After you expressed your suspicions, he came to me for permission to break the double-blind.

CLARK  
 (still chewing)  
 So you weren't colluding with  
 Linden, you were --

BRUNSON  
 Investigating him.

CLARK  
 And?

BRUNSON  
 Nothing!

CLARK  
 Why didn't you tell me?

BRUNSON  
 Because I didn't have to. Because I  
 didn't want to. Because I had a hunch  
 that your hunch was full of shit.

Clark finally swallows the paper.

CLARK  
 Maybe Linden checked out, but Joy  
 doesn't. There's just no way.

SANDERS  
 When you're dealing with numbers  
 this large, strange things happen.  
 (quoting himself)  
 Last year, in Texas alone we sold  
 over 1.5 billion -- with a "b" --  
 tickets.

CLARK  
 And the odds of this naturally  
 occurring are one in eighteen  
septillion. With an "s". You know  
 how big that number is? In between  
 it and the billion you're so proud  
 of is a trillion, with a "t", a  
 quadrillion and a quintillion, both  
 with a "q", and a sextillion, which  
 despite the look on Brunson's face,  
 is not a sexy cotillion.

Clark stands. He holds up his hand as though he had something tiny  
 pressed between his thumb and forefinger.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
 One in eighteen septillion.

As Clark speaks, we see the IMAGES he describes:

CLARK (V.O.)  
Imagine planet Earth...

*We see a SATELLITE IMAGE OF EARTH.*

CLARK (V.O.)  
...was one, endless beach.

*The water is replaced by land. Sandy. White.*

CLARK (V.O.)  
It would contain about one septillion grains of sand.

*We plunge through the troposphere, towards that planet -- and a beach which hits us like a WHITE OUT.*

CLARK (V.O.)  
Now imagine that somewhere on that endless beach there was a single grain of golden sand.

*Amidst the vast whiteness, we see a glimmering, **GOLDEN SPECK**. And then a woman appears -- it's **JOY**. And she's dressed like she's with James Bond at a Monte Carlo casino.*

CLARK (V.O.)  
Imagine trying to find that speck. Impossible? Well Joy Taylor didn't just imagine it. She did it.

*Joy's hand traces along the sand.*

CLARK (V.O.)  
Only her endless beach wasn't the size of just one planet earth -- it was the size of eighteen of them.

*We see EIGHTEEN SATELLITE IMAGES OF PLANET EARTH -- side by side. Suddenly, they're jammed together causing their own BIG BANG.*

CLARK (V.O.)  
One in eighteen septillion. Those are the odds.

*And on the other side of the explosion, we see JOY, holding that single grain of golden sand -- pinched between her two fingers.*

MATCH CUT TO:

Clark, in the conference room, making the same gesture.

CLARK  
Or, you know -- maybe she's just lucky.

He looks around the table. It's working. Time to bring it home...



CLARK (CONT'D)

And what if she's not done yet?  
What if she's planning to win your  
new lotto? The biggest one ever.

VIVIAN

So what? Everyone wants to win.

CLARK

But she's proven that she can win.  
Over and over. Which is why you  
have to uninvite her.

VIVIAN

I don't. And I won't.

CLARK

Then at least send me to the  
convention to keep eyes on her.

Vivian, Sanders, and Brunson pass looks between them.

VIVIAN

Fine, you can go. But I'm not paying  
for a plane ticket, you can drive.  
Remember to save your gas receipts.

Finally a little light. Clark looks triumphant.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

And, Clark, remember that I was the  
only person in the state willing to  
take a chance on you. You piss off  
one more person --

BRUNSON

Or piss me off again --

VIVIAN

And you won't be busting 7-11  
clerks, you'll be one.

BRUNSON

And you know what the highlight of  
their day is? Getting shot in an  
armed robbery.

INT. G&T PARKING STRUCTURE - MOMENTS LATER

Clark looks down at his phone. There's twenty minutes 'til Megan's  
audition time. His heart is pounding.

CLARK

Maybe I can still make it.

Clark hops into his POS and peels through the parking lot, weaving around parked cars. He halts at the TICKET BOOTH at the exit. He feeds his ticket to the automated machine. It spits it back out.

CLARK (CONT'D)

C'mon.

Clark feeds the ticket back in. Again it's spit out. Clark repeats the process one more time -- finally the machine takes it -- but then nothing happens. The MECHANICAL ARM won't raise.

CLARK (CONT'D)

C'mon, c'mon.

Clark looks at the booth -- no one's there.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(calling out to the universe)

Can somebody do they're damned job!

Nothing. No one.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Maybe there's another way out.

Clark throws the car in reverse, starts to pull back and then --

-- RIP. POP. HISS. A series of horrible noises. We realize Clark's just driven over a set of SEVERE TIRE DAMAGE spikes. Clark deflates along with his tires.

ATTENDANT

That sucks.

Clark turns to find the adenoidal ATTENDANT finally on the scene.

EXT. TEXAS ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Clark's behind the wheel of his car -- as it's TOWED to where Megan waits with cello -- and Orson.

ORSON

She insisted on waiting for you.  
She doesn't know when to give up on  
a loser. But one of these days --  
she's gonna figure it out.

CLARK

(to Megan)

I am so, so sorry.

Megan silently gets into the car. And they're towed away...

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT / BEDROOM - LATER

Clark is hastily -- and meticulously -- packing a suitcase while Megan is on her laptop.

CLARK

I'm so proud of you. You made the finals. That's incredible. You are incredible. And I -- really wish I could have been there. I'll make it up to you as soon as I get back.

MEGAN

Or... maybe sooner.

Megan spins her laptop around.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You know who's the paid corporate entertainment at this lotto conference? Nicholas Long.

CLARK

I'd love to, but you'd miss Friday.  
(off Megan's look)  
That's a school day.

MEGAN

You're right. Grandpa wouldn't like it.

CLARK

("well played")  
We'll have you back for Monday.

EST. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Shots of the downtown skyline, the French Quarter, Jackson Square -  
- landing on the newly restored New Orleans Convention Center.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Clark neatly arranges his clothes on one side of the closet. On the other side, Megan's cello and a simple overnight bag.

INT. NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION CENTER - SIMULTANEOUS

A bustling convention floor -- company booths, demonstrators, spokesmodels, and enthusiasts.

Clark enters, with Megan in tow, and heads to the REGISTRATION TABLE. He's greeted by a grinning TABLE JOCKEY.

TABLE JOCKEY

Welcome to the 2015 National  
Lottery Convention.

Megan reads the poster next to the table.

MEGAN

The Nicholas Long concert isn't  
until tonight.

Clark hands over his ID to the Table Jockey.

CLARK

(no time for chit-chat)  
When and where is the event with  
Joy Taylor?

SWEATER VEST

The G&T presentation is in the Ford  
Room at 5pm.

MEGAN

(thumbing through a program)  
Ooh, I think I'll check out the  
Candy Crush-themed games in the  
meanwhile.

CLARK

Better idea -- you go to the cafe  
and do schoolwork -- as if you were  
at school.

MEGAN

Dad --

CLARK

And no talking to strangers.

MEGAN

That's everyone.

CLARK

Yes, it is.

Megan heads off for the LUCKY CAFE. Clark takes a step towards the  
main floor, but he doesn't get far before--

WOMAN'S VOICE

Clark Hauser?

Clark turns to see a chubby, friendly 50ish REDHEAD -- with a  
twinkle of crazy in her eyes.

REDHEAD

How's Jimmy? Did he get the  
materials I sent?

CLARK

He's fine. I have no idea. Do we  
know each other?

WOMAN

I've left you a few voicemails. 147  
to be exact.

CLARK

Oh no. You're not --

WOMAN  
Margaret Lanterman.

And there it is. Clark looks for an escape route. **Lanterman** leans in confidentially.

LANTERMAN  
You can trust me. I'm on your side.

CLARK  
I--can't discuss official business with civilians.

LANTERMAN  
But I'm part of the resistance.

CLARK  
Still. I need to have a look around. So, maybe we can--

LANTERMAN  
I'll be your guide.  
(strangely)  
I've been here since the very beginning.

CLARK  
(resigned)  
There's just no way this isn't happening, is there?

LANTERMAN  
(plowing ahead)  
The convention is organized like Dante's Inferno...

INT. NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION CENTER / MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

A walk-and-talk on the convention floor. Lanterman has an iron grip on Clark's arm. He looks ready to gnaw it off. She points to different representative types as she speaks.

LANTERMAN  
Each concentric ring contains a different species of corruption. In the outer circle, you have the equipment salesmen. Next, the truckers and distributors. And finally, the ticket manufacturers. What do you think is at the center?

CLARK  
Joy Taylor?

LANTERMAN  
The pus-filled maw from which all corruption flows.

CLARK  
So I was close.

Lanterman points to the center of the convention floor. Clark follows the line of her hand to... a **G&T CORPORATE LOGO**. His interest is actually piqued.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
What are they doing that's so awful?

LANTERMAN  
They bribe state officials with boats. They bribe foreign governments with soccer stadiums.

The corruption angle is drawing Clark in.

LANTERMAN (CONT'D)  
And they're tunneling into Mexico in order to capture the chupacabra.

And now she's lost him. Just as Clark is trying to excuse himself, a LOTTO ENTHUSIAST walks up and holds out a pamphlet to Lanterman.

LOTTO ENTHUSIAST  
Would you sign the latest?

Lanterman politely signs a PAMPHLET.

CLARK  
What's that you're signing?

LANTERMAN  
My newsletter. Lanterman's Lotto Log.

LOTTO ENTHUSIAST  
Only thing I read.

CLARK  
That's awful. Read books.

LANTERMAN  
(to enthusiast)  
Be well, Roger.

The Lotto Enthusiast takes his leave.

CLARK  
Is that what you keep sending us?

Lanterman pulls out a copy. He thumbs through it. Rantings. Wild theories. And then at the back -- **tables of information**.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
What's this?

LANTERMAN  
I keep track of winners.

CLARK  
Why?

LANTERMAN  
People love to follow the money.

CLARK  
Who has access to that data? Do you just hand the newsletter out?

LANTERMAN  
Subscribers only.

CLARK  
(a glint in his eye)  
Is Joy Taylor a subscriber?

LANTERMAN  
No.

CLARK  
You're sure?

LANTERMAN  
I have 714 subscribers. I've met and vetted each and every one.

CLARK  
And where do you get your info?

A man in a REVOLUTIONARY WAR COSTUME walks up to Lanterman carrying two enormous bags of garbage.

REVOLUTIONARY  
Got 'em, Peggy.

CLARK  
Is that --

LANTERMAN  
Convention garbage? We've found some of our best intel this way.

CLARK  
Okay. Thanks for the tour, Margaret. It's been... eye-opening.

INT. NEW ORLEANS CONV CTR / LA NOUVELLE BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clark takes a seat next to Megan in the audience.

MEGAN  
Learn anything useful?

CLARK  
I'm gonna go with "no".

Without warning, the LIGHTS SNAP OFF. We're in darkness.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
What the why?

And then we hear POUNDING MUSIC. We see SEARCH LIGHTS comb the floor. It's like the start of the NBA ALL-STAR GAME.

A GLASS CYLINDER RISES in the center of the room, holding a MAN surrounded by hundreds of flying PING-PONG BALLS.

And then the cylinder's wall comes down and the balls fly away.  
The MAN -- **G&T'S PRESENTER** -- thrusts his hands up. Huge applause.

G&T PRESENTER  
We don't do the ping-pong lotto. We don't play around with balls. At G&T, we're all about scratchers. Personal. Tactile. Where 1-in-4 tickets is a winner. Where you all can feel the thrill of being a winner. Because you all are winners. Just like this woman --

Joy enters. Dressed to the nines. Huge applause. Behind her is the mock-up of the JOY LOTTO POSTER.

G&T PRESENTER (CONT'D)  
Joy Taylor! She's won the lotto three times. She's taken home almost \$17 million.

The crowd gasps. On a PROJECTION SCREEN, we see dollar signs.

G&T PRESENTER (CONT'D)  
What have you done with all that money?

JOY  
Fast cars, big homes, jet skis -- and a little bit in savings.

On PROJECTION SCREEN: Consumer heaven.

G&T PRESENTER  
(to the crowd)  
And for the first time you can take home more money than she has -- in a single win.  
(taking in the oohs and aahs)  
That's right. We're premiumizing the lotto experience. Introducing Overnight Success. With ten \$20 million grand prize winners.



On PROJECTION SCREEN: The new ticket.

G&T PRESENTER (CONT'D)  
 They go on sale in two weeks.  
 (to Joy)  
 Are you gonna buy one?

JOY  
 (playing along)  
 I'd be crazy not to.

The crowd laughs, loving her.

G&T PRESENTER  
 (signalling her exit)  
 Ladies and gentlemen, Joy Taylor!

Joy gets exit applause. A few people break away to approach her. Clark stands to follow.

INT. NEW ORLEANS CONV CTR / BALLROOM / CORNER - MOMENTS LATER

Clark and Megan approach Joy -- who is surrounded by her fans.

MEGAN  
 Maybe your boss was right -- looks  
 like she'll sell some tickets.

CLARK  
 I'm not worried about the tickets  
 she sells. I'm worried about the  
 tickets she buys.

Clark and Megan have made their way to the front of the line.

JOY  
 Well, hello again. And who is this?

MEGAN  
 I'm his daughter, Megan.

CLARK  
 What did I tell you about talking  
 to strangers?

MEGAN  
 She's not a stranger, she's the  
 subject of your investigation.

CLARK  
 Actually she's the object of my  
 investigation.

JOY  
 Don't call women objects in front  
 of your daughter.

Clark has no idea how to respond to this.

JOY (CONT'D)  
 (to Megan)  
 I like your hair.

MEGAN  
 I like yours more! I can never get mine to braid like that.

JOY  
 I can show you.

CLARK  
 Not going to happen. I've been over your financials. You didn't buy homes or jet skis.

JOY  
 Just playing to the crowd.

CLARK  
 Why do you live in Rosalita?

The question catches Joy slightly off-guard.

JOY  
 It's my home.

CLARK  
 You spend most of your time on the road. And you have \$15 million -- you can afford something nicer.

JOY  
 It's not all about money, Clark. It's a special place. A place where real folks live.

CLARK  
 (not buying it)  
 Why do I feel like you're "just playing to the crowd"?

Joy smiles politely, gestures to the people behind Clark.

JOY  
 You're holding up the line, Clark.

Clark and Megan head for the exit, but as they're going, Clark hears something that stops him --

G&T PRESENTER  
 We've also introduced a number of operational changes, including our version of the big dig.  
 (MORE)

G&T PRESENTER (CONT'D)  
 A new fiber optic cable system to  
 transmit ticket info to regional  
 distribution centers.

ON PROJECTION SCREEN: A MAP of the US with a nettle of FIBER OPTIC LINES drawn on it. Clark, surprised, flips open his notebook to the page with the map of Joy's wins. A lot of overlap.

CLARK  
 Fault lines, my hairy ass.

MEGAN  
 Dad!

CLARK  
 Sorry.

INT. NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION CENTER / MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Clark and Megan are moving quickly across the floor. Clark has a destination in mind -- but we're playing catch-up.

MEGAN  
 Dad, I don't want to be late for  
 the concert.

CLARK  
 We won't be -- I just have to deal  
 with -- this.

Clark stops in front of Margaret Lanterman.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
 (to Lanterman)  
 The conspiracy -- I mean the theory  
 you described earlier, about G&T  
 tunneling to Mexico, were you  
 talking about their new fiber optic  
 cable network?

LANTERMAN  
 Yes. The cover story is that it  
 connects their top secret super  
 computer to distribution centers.

CLARK  
 Do you know if --

LANTERMAN  
 (directly to Megan)  
 But in actuality it allows G&T's  
 CEO to sneak in a personal army of  
 Mexican counter-revolutionaries.

Clark steps in front of Megan.

CLARK

I'm trying to believe that you're not crazy. Please help me here. You publish a lot of data in your newsletter. Does that include the fiber optic route?

LANTERMAN

We're trying to get it from the sub-contractor G&T hired.

CLARK

Subcontractor? Do they have a booth here at the convention?

G&T PRESENTER

No, they're not in the lotto industry. It was a construction company. Vectronix.

Clark feels a hand pulling at his shoulder.

MEGAN

Dad, the concert.

CLARK

Just one second, honey.

Clark takes out the card Joy gave him. **Same company.** VECTRONIX.

INT. LOUISIANA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA - EVENING

A cavernous amphitheatre. **NICHOLAS LONG** (mid-40s, think Yo-Yo Ma) is already doing his thing. He's very good at it. In the audience, Megan watches with rapt attention, her fingers involuntarily mimicking the master's.

Clark, meanwhile, texts Jimmy: "Find out everything you can about Joy's involvement with Vectronix's fiber optic..."

Megan looks over at Clark. She's not happy with his phone.

MEGAN

Dad, the light --

CLARK

Sorry.

Clark lowers the phone. Types a couple more words and hits send. Hides the phone before Megan can glare at him.

EXT. PHILHARMONIC / STAGE DOOR - POST-SHOW

Clark waits on a long, slow-moving receiving line. At the front, we can see Nicholas Long shaking hands, signing a few autographs. Megan is on cloud nine.

MEGAN

Did you notice what he was doing in terms of the pizzicato?

CLARK

The man really knows how to use a bow.

MEGAN

That was the part when he was plucking.

Clark smiles sheepishly. Just then, a **CUTTER** joins his friend in line in front of Megan.

CLARK

I'm sorry I can't allow that.

CUTTER

Excuse me?

CLARK

My daughter has been waiting patiently, and you're cheating.

CUTTER

Chill out. I was in the bathroom. My friend was holding my spot.

CLARK

We've been in this line the entire time... and you weren't here. You're cutting.

CUTTER

What difference does it make? It's like ten seconds out of your life.

CLARK

It's the principle.

CUTTER

How about the principle of minding your own eff-ing business?

CLARK

I think that principle is trumped at the moment.

CUTTER

Well, I say I was here. Are you calling me a liar?

Clark is now tensely playing with his FBI MEDAL.

CLARK

That would be an apt description.  
(off the guy's "I dare you" look)  
Yes. You're a liar.

And with that, the Cutter hauls off and **PUNCHES Clark** square in the face. Clark slumps to the floor.

CLARK'S POV: BLACKNESS. Followed by **BLURRINESS.** The only sound is RINGING. As things normalize, the first thing we hear is --

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Exactly, then you just tuck that strand behind the other and --

MEGAN (O.S.)  
I think I got it!

Clark turns around to find Megan on the floor with him... and JOY, just behind, literally BRAIDING MEGAN'S HAIR to look like her own. Megan notices Clark coming to and moves even closer.

MEGAN (CONT'D)  
Dad, are you okay?

CLARK  
Not in the least.  
(to Joy)  
Unhand my daughter.

JOY  
Okay, Galahad. Calm down.

MEGAN  
Dad, she was just --

CLARK  
She was just tunneling into our lives just like she tunneled into the G&T fiber optic network!

JOY  
I think you got hit harder in the head than you thought. I'm here because I'm a music fan. And I happen to love Nicholas Long. What he does with his pizzicato...

MEGAN  
I know! Dad wasn't I just saying --

Clark's face says it all -- are you fucking kidding me?

JOY  
Clark, you're bleeding.

CLARK  
It's just a --

JOY  
From your eye.

Clark puts his hand to his brow, realizes he's been cut.

CLARK

I'm going to go find a bathroom.  
You both stay here -- safe and  
preferably silent.

Clark exits.

MEGAN

I should go after him.

JOY

The bleeding will stop. Eventually.

MEGAN

He needs my help.

JOY

You two really take care of each  
other. But does he always get so...

MEGAN

Intense? Yeah.

JOY

Has he always been that way?

MEGAN

He was in a car accident when he  
was fifteen.

As Megan explains, we see quick images from that day:

- Clark is 15. His brother 9. They climb into the backseat of their parents' car. Their parents call for them to buckle up. His brother starts to, but before he can --

- Clark *SHOVES* him. They start rough-housing. Normal kid stuff.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

He and his younger brother were  
fighting...

- Their parents separate them. But they remain on guard -- and *UNBUCKLED*.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

So they never got their belts on...

- The car is T-BONED. Clark and his brother are both *TOSSED*.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

And his brother got badly hurt...

- We see Clark's landed on top of his brother, pinning his shattered leg at an impossible angle.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Since then... following the rules  
has been pretty important to him.

JOY

(feeling guilty)  
I really should not have invited  
him to that tractor pull.

Megan spots Clark returning, holding a paper towel to his eye.

MEGAN

Please don't tell him I told you.

JOY

(sincerely)  
I won't.

CLARK

All right, let's get you that  
autograph and then hit the hay.

JOY

I'm not so sure about that plan.

Clark turns to see that the line is gone -- and so is Long.

CLARK

I am so sorry.

JOY

Don't worry. He's just back in the  
VIP area. See this --

Joy holds up her lanyard, pointing to a holographic sticker.

JOY (CONT'D)

I am a very important person.  
C'mon, I can get us all back there.

MEGAN

Oh my god! That sounds amazing!

CLARK

That's a very kind offer, but I'm  
afraid we can't accept.

JOY

Why not?

MEGAN

Why not?

CLARK (CONT'D)

It could be construed as a bribe.

MEGAN

What if you paid her back?



CLARK

Still.

MEGAN

What if I paid her back?

CLARK

It's not appropriate.

JOY

He's right. I shouldn't have offered. It was very nice to meet you.

MEGAN

You, too.

As Clark and Megan exit, Megan casts a backwards glance.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

Clark is laying in the bath tub icing his face. We can hear the TV blaring in the other room.

CLARK

(yelling)

Megan, turn the TV off. It's past your bedtime.

No response. Clark dumps the ice and climbs out. We follow him.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry you didn't meet him, but you got to see him play and --

Clark enters --

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- **to find Megan nowhere to be seen.** Clark stops mid-sentence.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Clark peeks his head out. The hallway is empty. His stomach drops.

CLARK

Oh no no no.

The usually composed Clark begins to panic. He's like a chicken with his head cut off. He paces the room frantically, then grabs his phone and dials Megan. Straight to voicemail.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Megan, call me immediately, you're in a lot of trouble.

Clark hangs up. Thinks. Dials Megan again. Once more to voicemail.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Don't not call me because I said you were in trouble. Although, let's be clear, you're in trouble. But call me. That's top priority.

Clark hangs up. Now what?

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Clark rushes out to his POS car -- only to find a **BOOT** on it.

CLARK

I just fixed that tire. I just fixed all the tires!

Clark looks on the dashboard. Another ticket. CAR HAS BEEN IMMOBILIZED FOR FAILURE TO PAY TICKETS. Clark calmly takes this in -- then snaps and begins kicking the shit out of the booted tire.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Does Orson have influence in every asshole state?

After he tires himself out, Clark picks up his phone and dials.

CLARK (CONT'D)

This is all your fault --

Is he calling Orson?

INT./EXT. JOY'S CAR [DRIVING] - MOMENTS LATER

Nope. Clark was calling Joy. And now she's driving him around (in a rented Porsche Panamera) as they search the French Quarter.

JOY

How is this my fault?

CLARK

You made me look like a villain in front of my kid.

JOY

I was just trying to be nice.

Clark stares out the window at the drunken revelers. He has no idea where Megan is in all the chaos. And that has him terrified. We've seen Clark unnerved before, but this is something different.

JOY (CONT'D)

I'm sure she's fine. She's a good kid. She has a good head on her shoulders. Besides, where would she go? Does she know anyone here?

Clark pounds the dashboard, furious with himself.

CLARK  
 (shaking his head)  
 If anything happens to her --

Words start failing...

CLARK (CONT'D)  
 I do this. I --  
 (beat)  
 I push people away. I don't mean  
 to. It usually doesn't happen with  
 Megan, but --  
 (beat)  
 This is my nightmare.

Clark reaches for his FBI MEDAL, needing it more than ever. But --

CLARK (CONT'D)  
 Damn it. My medal. I can't find it.  
 I must have lost it when that ogre  
 slugged me.

JOY  
 Do you need it?

CLARK  
 I got it for my first big FBI bust.  
 I was going to throw it away when I  
 lost my job and things stopped  
 making sense. Megan stopped me.  
 Told me to keep it. To draw  
 strength from a time when I could  
 put things in order.

An awkward silence. Joy reaches out --

JOY  
 That's very mature of her.

CLARK  
 Sometimes I'm not sure who's taking  
 care of whom.

JOY  
 At least somebody's taking care of  
 somebody. I would have killed for  
 that when I was her age.

Clark recalls their first conversation. Something doesn't jive.

CLARK  
 I thought your dad was buying you  
 lotto tickets, filling you with  
 hope. Or fun. Maybe addiction.

Joy looks at Clark -- and lets her guard down. For the first time,  
 we feel that she's dropping her pretenses and leveling with him.

JOY

Okay, you want the truth? I barely knew my dad. That story I told you about how he bought me that ticket? It was the first weekend I had seen my dad in... years. And you know what he had planned? Nothing. He read and he wrote -- and then he yelled at me about what he'd just read and written. When we finally went out to the market -- because there was no food in his house -- the car died on us. We ran out of gas. Who does that happen to?

(beat)

We pushed the car to a gas station. And while we were waiting for it to fill up, he bought me that ticket.

A long, awkward silence.

JOY (CONT'D)

I hate how much I miss him.

Another awkward silence. Clark feels like it's his turn to fill it, but he's not sure how. He winds up blurting --

CLARK

The divorce was pretty bad for Megan.

JOY

Your ex-wife give you a hard time about custody?

CLARK

No. She disappeared, looking for... I don't know what she's looking for. Or if she's ever coming back.

(off Joy's look)

My issue is with her father.

JOY

What did you do to his little girl?

CLARK

Nothing.

(beat)

However, I did report him to the U.S. Attorney.

JOY

Your own father-in-law?

CLARK

I was an FBI Agent. He was a powerful official taking bribes. I did my job.

JOY  
So he went to jail?

CLARK  
No. He had a lot of friends.

JOY  
Bribery will do that.

CLARK  
I couldn't get the charges to stick. But he was able to get me fired. And convince my wife to leave me.

JOY  
That must have been hard.

CLARK  
No. It was pretty easy. She thought I cared more about rules than family.

Joy turns to look at him.

JOY  
Do you?

CLARK  
Do I what?

JOY  
Do you care about rules more than family?

CLARK  
I don't care about anything as much as I care about family. And that's why I follow rules. Megan is why I follow rules.

(beat)  
Terrible things happen, you know. Every day. Murders, fires -- car accidents. You can't prevent all of them, but you can put the odds in your favor. For the people you love. If you just follow the rules.

Joy sees Clark struggle to articulate some deeply held belief. And she finds it endearing.

JOY  
Listen, Clark, there's something I want you to have. Reach into my pocket.

CLARK  
What? Why don't you just --

JOY

I don't want to take my hands off  
the wheel. Just reach over and --

Clark tentatively reaches over, getting closer to Joy than ever before. His face is in her hair. And his hand is in her pocket.

CLARK

What am I looking for?

JOY

There, you have it.

Clark pulls out a small --

CLARK

Rabbit's foot?

JOY

Always brought me luck.

We recognize it from the opening, when Joy was scratching off tickets. Clark turns the **RABBIT'S FOOT** over in his hand. Smooth. Old-fashioned. Clark clearly likes it, but starts to hand it back--

CLARK

I can't --

JOY

(knows where he's going)  
I'm not giving it to you since that could be construed as a bribe. I'm just lending it to you for a little while. To replace your medal.

Clark grasps the RABBIT'S FOOT tightly. It's comforting. He slips it into his pocket.

CLARK

(genuine)  
Thank you.

Clark spots a girl ahead on the side of the road.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Slow down.

Joy does. As they approach, they get a good look at --

-- A HOMELESS TEENAGE GIRL. Clark wordlessly holds out a few dollars to her.

INT./EXT. JOY'S CAR [DRIVING] - LATER THAT EVENING

They've been at this for some time. And they're nowhere.

CLARK  
 Screw it. I'm calling in an FBI  
 CARD Team.  
 (off Joy's look)  
 Child Abduction Rapid Deployment.

JOY  
 You really think she was abducted?

CLARK  
 I think she's a missing child and  
 every moment is valuable. They can  
 put boots on the ground and trace  
 her last cell phone communication.

JOY  
 (lightbulb)  
 What kind of phone?

CLARK  
 Uh... she has an iPhone.

JOY  
 You know there's an app that can  
 tell you where she is.

Clark did not know that.

INT. JOY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

They're pulled over to the side of the road. Joy has the FIND MY  
 IPHONE APP up.

JOY  
 What could be her password? There's  
 a hint. Favorite pastime.

Clark and Joy share a glance.

CLARK  
 Cello. JOY  
 Cello.

Joy tries it. No go.

JOY (CONT'D)  
 Anything else you can think of that  
 might have meaning for her?

Clark thinks for a long beat.

CLARK  
 Try "COLUMBO".

JACKPOT! The phone unlocks and we see Megan's location on a map.

EXT. BLUE OYSTER BAR - LATER THAT EVENING

Clark and Joy roll up in front of the neon lights of a music club. The look between them says it all -- this is a rough place.

INT. BLUE OYSTER BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Clark and Joy pass a crowd of musicians, jazzheads, and other drunks. We hear "DEVIL WENT DOWN TO GEORGIA" played virtuosically on a cello. As we approach the stage, we see the player --

-- **NICHOLAS LONG.** And as he finishes the chorus, the tune is picked up by another cello, and we quickly realize it's --

-- **MEGAN.** Locked in a competition with Long. Think "DEVIL" meets the Walk-off scene from ZOOLANDER.

Joy taps a couple of musicians on the shoulder.

JOY

What's happening?

DRUMMER

One of the saxophones --

BASSIST

Fuckin' saxes --

FRENCH HORN

-- said Nick couldn't outplay the girl while drunk. So he wagered his cello on it.

The song finishes. The circle erupts. Clark is caught between pride and anger. He takes a step towards Megan -- who still hasn't noticed them yet -- but Joy grabs Clark by the hand.

JOY

Give her a minute.

NICHOLAS LONG

So -- does she win my cello or not?  
Show of applause. Who's for me?

We hear a fair amount of applause.

NICHOLAS LONG (CONT'D)

(disappointed)

Taking genius for granted. And  
who's for Little Miss Mozart?

The group explodes in applause. Megan clearly won.

NICHOLAS LONG (CONT'D)

The mob has spoken.

Long hands his cello to Megan.



MEGAN

It's been an honor playing with you, Mr. Long. You've been my idol since --

NICHOLAS LONG

I'm old. I get it. Just take a bow and be gone.

Megan, in order to bow, quickly puts the cello down -- and Long, seeing how she does it, EXPLODES and snatches the cello.

NICHOLAS LONG (CONT'D)

Never place a cello face down! You'll dislodge the bridge. Where did you grow up? A barn where they don't handle instruments properly? I bet it was just such a barn!

Long demonstrates how to properly put down the cello.

Megan is hurt. Clark starts to step in, but Joy beats him to it --

JOY

(shouting)

Don't speak to her like that! She's twelve years old. You should be ashamed of yourself.

NICHOLAS LONG

When I was twelve, I was playing my third show at Carnegie Hall.

JOY

And now you're insulting a child while drunk at a lottery convention. Seems like you must have made a few mistakes yourself.

NICHOLAS LONG

So you must be the one who taught her to be a little bitch.

Joy grabs the cello and holds it aloft, ready to SMASH it. Long reacts like there's a gun to his head.

NICHOLAS LONG (CONT'D)

You're crazy.

JOY

No. I just believe in a little justice from time to time.

NICHOLAS LONG

What do you want?

JOY  
Let's start with an apology.

NICHOLAS LONG  
(awkward, halting)  
All right. I'm sorry I--

JOY  
Not to me, idiot.

NICHOLAS LONG  
(to Megan)  
I'm sorry.

JOY  
For what?

NICHOLAS LONG  
Everything!

JOY  
Okay then. Now, given that the girl  
won the cello fair and square, I  
assume you'd rather see it making  
music in a good home than smashed  
to a thousand pieces, right?

Off Long's uncertain face --

INT. JOY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON the CELLO. In the backseat. Cradled in Megan's arms.

The car pulls up in front of Clark's hotel. It's clear they've  
been driving in silence the entire time. Megan finally breaks it --

MEGAN  
I'm sorry, Dad, that got way --

CLARK  
(snapping)  
What were you thinking? If we hadn't  
been there, do you realize what could  
have -- Do you see what happens when  
you don't follow the rules?

Megan nods, cowed. Clark feels guilty.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
Go inside. To the lobby. And wait  
there. In full view.

Megan nods, thanks Joy, and heads inside.

Clark stares after. Uncertain. In his hand is his new talisman --  
the RABBIT'S FOOT.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I don't know what I'm doing wrong.

JOY

We wouldn't have found her if you didn't know that password. If you weren't a good father.

CLARK

Thank you. And I'll calculate the monetary value of the gas you spent and compensate you accordingly.

JOY

Whatever gets you through the night.

Clark climbs out of the car. Turns back around.

CLARK

I have to say something. I am incredibly appreciative of everything you've done tonight --

JOY

But that's not going to stop you from coming after me.

Something in Clark shifts. He's back to investigator mode.

CLARK

The fiber optic network. Your company. The routes. How you weaseled yourself into this convention and into our lives -- I'm gonna figure it all out.

JOY

I really enjoy these conversations, Clark.

And with that, she's off. And Clark heads inside to Megan.

EXT. ORSON'S HOUSE - THE FOLLOWING NIGHT

Clark pulls up in his POS car.

CLARK

Listen, Megan, I'm sorry I yelled at you, but you really have to --

MEGAN

Follow the rules. I know.

CLARK

I was going to say "be safe." I don't know what would happen to me if something happened to you.

Megan sees how vulnerable Clark is. She leans over and hugs him. Clark hugs her back tightly. After a long moment, they break.

Megan climbs out and heads inside. Orson is standing at the door. Clark smiles wanly. Orson gives him the finger. Nice moment over.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NEXT MORNING

Clark is speaking to a mustachioed FOREMAN from Vectronix. Behind them, a work crew is cutting a trench alongside the highway and laying fiber optic cable.

FOREMAN

G&T hired us to lay 2000 miles of secure fiber-optic cable.

CLARK

How secure is it?

FOREMAN

What do you mean?

CLARK

Is there any way to pick up what they're transmitting? Siphon off information or upload a virus?

FOREMAN

Not without physically tapping in to the cable. That's damn hard even if you knew where they are -- and they're buried out in the middle of nowhere. You'd never find them unless you knew exactly what you were looking for.

CLARK

Who had access to the plans?

FOREMAN

Only personnel working on the project.

CLARK

You have a list?

The Foreman proffers his project notebook. Clark scans...

CLARK (CONT'D)

No "Joy Taylor."

The Foreman shakes his head.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Thanks for your time.

FOREMAN

No problem. Got plenty of it now  
that the project's basically done.  
Took forever.

CLARK

(an inkling)  
How long?

FOREMAN

Seven years.

Spanning back to when Joy won her first lotto!

CLARK

During that time, were those fiber  
optic lines used at all?

FOREMAN

Sure. Plenty of beta testing.

Clark nods. So close. He turns to go -- when one last question  
occurs to him.

CLARK

Why did it take so long to install?  
What was the hold up?

FOREMAN

Permits. Texas was the worst. Land  
Commission needs to approve lines  
that cross multiple counties.

CLARK

Texas Land Commission? You mean  
Orson Cromwell's office?

FOREMAN

(trying to recall)  
Cromwell? Yeah, that sounds right.  
Nothing gets done there unless you  
grease the wheels. And even then --

CLARK

Did you submit your plans to  
Orson's office?

The Foreman nods. Then his cell phone goes off.

FOREMAN

Gotta' take this.

The Foreman walks off. Clark stands there processing. Is it possible Orson's part of this?

INT. CLARK'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Clark and Jimmy are going through boxes of records.

JIMMY

What are we looking for?

CLARK

Any evidence linking Joy and Orson.

JIMMY

Like sexually?

CLARK

(caught off-guard)

What? No. Maybe. I was thinking more like phone calls, bank transfers--

Jimmy holds up a sheet of paper.

JIMMY

Campaign contributions?

Clark grabs it and reads -- then kisses Jimmy on top of his head.

INT. G&T / CONFERENCE ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Clark is back at the site of his earlier humiliation, again across from Brunson, Sanders, and Vivian.

Clark is tense, holding his replacement talisman -- the **RABBIT'S FOOT** that Joy gave him.

CLARK

She worked for the same vendor that installed your fiber-optic network. And I believe she accessed the layout plans through a corrupt official at the Texas Land Commission.

Brunson is silent, considering.

CLARK (CONT'D)

You have to admit it's a troubling coincidence.

BRUNSON

So is the resemblance between your ass and your face.

CLARK

The timeline matches up. This is how she's beaten you. Three times. And she's about to do it again. For a record-setting jackpot.

SANDERS

We can work with the construction company. Check for any places she tapped in.

CLARK

It's 2000 miles. Ripping that up would take months. We need to focus on what she was accessing.

(beat)

We need to run a full diagnostic on the Icebox.

A long beat. We can see Sanders wrestling with this option --

BRUNSON

Jim, you can't be considering this. It violates all our security protocols.

CLARK

Joy Taylor has violated your security protocols.

SANDERS

(waffling)

There's a chance it's all coincidence.

BRUNSON

There's a chance it's all this asshole's paranoia.

CLARK

(a callback to Sanders)

I thought you didn't take chances -- you sold them.

INT. G&T / OUTSIDE THE ICEBOX - LATER

All our players plus a TECHIE wait outside the door.

BRUNSON

Leave your cell phones or pagers in this tray.

CLARK

Who has a pager anymore?

BRUNSON

I do, smartass. Only thing left in this world that doesn't run Google.

Clark empties his pockets. He deposits the phone, then slips the rest -- wallet, keys, rabbit's foot -- back in his pocket.

Brunson opens the door to the ICEBOX. And as they enter, we see --

INT. G&T / ICEBOX - CONTINUOUS

An all-white room. Small and simple. A desk with a server, a smaller box, and a monitor. The Tech does a physical sweep.

TECHIE

No physical intrusions.

CLARK

(whispering)

Are you sure we should be talking in here? What about the room tone?

TECHIE

That just feeds a random starting point to the computer. Few things are more random than the human voice. Talk all you want.

BRUNSON

Please don't.

CLARK

What about the software? If she accessed the main frame, read the ticket sequence or where the winning tickets were being sent --

TECHIE

This diagnostic will tell us.

The tech plugs a cord into a server and the other end into a heavy-duty military grade laptop.

SANDERS

How long is this going to take?

We watch the bar begin to creep. **2% complete.**

As Clark waits for the results, he strokes the RABBIT'S FOOT. Just as Joy did in the opening scene.

INT. G&T / ICEBOX - TWO HOURS LATER

The Tech eyes the screen. Clark eyes the Tech. **The bar hits 100%.** Clark jumps up, jolting Sanders who's started to doze.

TECHIE

(reading the log)

HPC cluster running 256 blades -- normal. Memory usage 49% with 4096 multithreads -- normal. 36.2 teraflops processing -- irregularity.

CLARK

Irregularity! That's it. The... teraflops. That's her!



TECHIE  
That? No. That's a regular  
irregularity.

CLARK  
What are you saying?

BRUNSON  
He's saying you're wrong. Joy Taylor  
never accessed the Ice Box. You just  
wasted all our time. Again.

CLARK  
(to the Tech)  
You can't be saying that.

TECHIE  
(trying to be polite)  
Not in those words, but...

CLARK  
Run it again.

TECHIE  
I did. Actually I ran it four times.

CLARK  
It doesn't make any sense.

BRUNSON  
We're done here.

CLARK  
This isn't right. Your diagnostic  
must be faulty.

TECHIE  
(suddenly firm)  
It is not.

CLARK  
Or you're not understanding how she  
did it.

BRUNSON  
Or maybe she didn't do it.

Clark locks eyes with Brunson. Can Clark let it go?

INT. G&T / OUTSIDE THE ICEBOX - MOMENTS LATER

Clark can't let it go...

CLARK  
We need to start digging up the  
fiber optics. Inspect by hand.

SANDERS

You said that would take months.

CLARK

So what? If we don't do it that way, people get hurt. In the meanwhile, you need to cancel Overnight Success. We're vulnerable and we don't even know how.

No one is going for it.

CLARK (CONT'D)

You can't just let Joy get away with it!

This doesn't sound quite right.

VIVIAN

"Joy"? Clark, how personal has this case become?

CLARK

Every time someone cheats, lies, steals, it is personal for me. Why isn't it for you?

VIVIAN

(to Sanders)

I'm sorry we've taken up so much of your time.

CLARK

The evidence that she's cheated -- and that she's going to do it again -- is overwhelming. People buy tickets thinking they have a fair shot. Do they? Technically. But not this time. They have a right to know. And if you're not going to suspend the game -- well, people need to know.

SANDERS

What are you suggesting?

CLARK

If you don't shut down the game, I'll go to the papers.

VIVIAN

Clark, you're not just playing with your career, now you're inviting a lawsuit your grandkids will feel.

CLARK

How can you all be so blind --  
unless you want to be.

SANDERS

I've put up with this long enough.

CLARK

(crossing the last line)  
Are you in on it, too? Maybe you  
like that Joy is winning. Maybe you  
think it will drive ticket sales.

SANDERS

You're fired.

CLARK

You can't fire me. I work for the  
state.

VIVIAN

You're fired.

And there it is.

INT. CLARK'S CAR - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Clark is sitting in a parked car. He looks worn. Unshaven. He's on  
the phone with Megan.

MEGAN'S VOICE

Grandpa says you're going to need  
to move again.

CLARK

I'm looking at some options. May be  
a little farther away, but --

MEGAN'S VOICE

He said you might have to move in  
with your parents. Back east.

CLARK

Why would he -- no. That's not  
going to happen.

MEGAN'S VOICE

Good.

Clark pauses. Not sure how to say this.

CLARK

I wish I were in a position to do  
more for you, Megs.

MEGAN

You do plenty for me, Dad.

CLARK

Do you like staying with your grandpa?

MEGAN'S VOICE

You've never asked me that before.

CLARK

No. I think I was afraid of the answer. How is it?

MEGAN'S VOICE

(trying to be gentle)

It's a nice house.

CLARK

You don't have to take care of me.

MEGAN'S VOICE

(leveling with him)

He's usually pretty busy. But he likes to read to me. History books. Killing Kennedy, Killing Lincoln...

CLARK

I don't know if those are history books, but it's nice he does that.

An awkward pause. Megan hears some ambient noise.

MEGAN'S VOICE

Where are you?

CLARK

Just trying to keep occupied.

MEGAN'S VOICE

The finals for Texas Performing Arts are on Saturday. I'll see you there at 4pm, right?

CLARK

That's the same day the lotto jackpot goes on sale.

MEGAN'S VOICE

Dad, you have to stop obsessing.

CLARK

(snapping out of it)

Of course I'll be there.

Clark hangs up. And then, a beat later -- we see Joy emerge from a gas station mini-mart, and we realize that Clark has been staking her out this whole time!

Joy gets in her car and drives away. Clark makes a NOTE of her activities. We see his notes are already extensive.

JOY (O.S.)  
You're bad at this.

Joy has swung around and pulled her car up next to Clark's.

JOY (CONT'D)  
Your car is noticeable. And it was outside my hotel last night and my work site this morning.

CLARK  
I'm not trying to hide anything. Just wanted to let you know I was watching. And when you buy your next ticket, I'll be there.

JOY  
Well, I'll be back in Rosalita next week. But then Santa Fe the week after. Are you going to follow me around all day or do you have to get back to the office?

CLARK  
No. I don't have to go back to the office. I was fired. One more way in which you've RUINED MY LIFE!

Joy weathers the onslaught and takes a beat.

JOY  
I'm sorry. I know you cared about that job a lot and --

CLARK  
You don't care about me or my job or my family. You're not a kindred spirit trying to do good in your own way. And I bet you made up all that crap about your father.

Something shifts in Joy. She doesn't get angry, just icily polite.

JOY  
You do understand that without color of law, your following me constitutes stalking -- do I have to call the police?

A long beat.

CLARK  
No.

JOY  
Okay, then. Take it easy, Clark.

Joy pulls away, and as she does, Clark clocks something across the street. It's JOY. On a POSTER. For the LOTTO. Insult meet injury.

INT. CLARK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Clark's in his pajamas making a drink with exacting measurement. Is it a cocktail? Nope. It's Ovaltine. Spiked with Schnapps.

Clark grabs a newspaper. Goes to unwrap it. On the outside is an advertisement page... for the lotto. Joy's face beams at him.

Clark slugs his drink. Tosses the paper. Then hears KNOCKING.

INT. CLARK'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clark answers the front door, revealing --

JIMMY, holding a box of Clark's office stuff.

CLARK

Thanks, Jimmy. They have you on the case now?

JIMMY

I don't think we're allowed to discuss --

CLARK

You're right. Good catch, Jimmy.

JIMMY

But no. The lottery is tomorrow. Pretty sure the case is dead. Do you want some company?

CLARK

Thanks anyway, Jimmy.

Jimmy nods and leaves. Clark closes the door, puts down the box, and is just returning to the couch when there's another KNOCK.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Jimmy, I said I was okay.

But it's not Jimmy. Clark opens the door to find --

TALL MAN

Are you Clark Hauser?  
(off Clark's nod)  
You've been served.

Clark signs and tears open the package. As Clark reads, he gets too angry for words. He tosses the papers. They land on the box Jimmy brought. On top of a picture of Clark and Megan. We ZOOM IN on the words: **CUSTODY DISPUTE** and scan over to **LACK OF EMPLOYMENT**.

PRE-LAP: The sound of KNOCKING.

EXT. ORSON'S HOUSE - LATER THAT EVENING

Orson answers the door to find Clark. Looks him up and down.

CLARK

I want to see my daughter. Right now. You're not taking her away from me.

ORSON

Jesus, Clark. Are you drunk?

CLARK

No. 0.03. I breathalyzed myself.

ORSON

I have people over. Important people. You can see Megan at the finals. Tomorrow. In public.

Orson tries to shut the door. Clark sticks his foot in. A gentleman with a **BOLO TIE** comes up behind Orson.

BOLO TIE

You need a hand?

ORSON

My loser ex son-in-law was just leaving.

CLARK

I am not a loser. I was set up. And if you're not here to help, stay out of my way.

ORSON

Clark Hauser, meet Cal Fredricks --

CLARK

U.S. Marshal for West Texas?  
(off the Marshal's nod)  
So about my most recent application...

MARSHAL FREDRICKS

I printed it directly into the trash.

CLARK

Okay then.

MARSHAL FREDRICKS walks away.

CLARK (CONT'D)

The whole world is against me.

ORSON

Can you blame the world?

CLARK

I know what you did. You -- and Joy Taylor.

ORSON

I have no idea who that is.

CLARK

Like hell you don't. She funneled you a bribe through your official campaign fund -- and in return you gave her the plans to G&T's fiber optic network. Then you had her lure me to a staged scene to provoke me into making an accusation that would get me fired.

Orson looks at Clark with... is that pity?

ORSON

First, no one would funnel a bribe through my official campaign. They would do that through my PAC.

CLARK

("hmm")  
And second?

ORSON

It's not that hard to get you fired, Clark. Trust me.

Orson SLAMS the door in Clark's face.

CLARK

That was remarkably convincing.  
(thinking aloud)  
This whole time I've thought Joy had an inside man. That she was working with someone at G&T or in state government. What if that's what she wanted me to think...

Clark KNOCKS again. Orson answers. Furious.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What if Joy wasn't working with G&T? What if she was working against them?

ORSON

I've called the actual police.

CLARK

Orson, I want to thank you. For once, you've advanced the cause of justice.

(MORE)



CLARK (CONT'D)

Oh, and here's my reply to your custody suit. You want to take me to court, bring it. I will destroy you.

Clark hands Orson back his legal complaint. He's pasted a reply made with cut-up parking tickets: EAT SHIT, OLD MAN.

INT. CLARK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Clark's PHONE ALARM wakes him up and reminds it's the day of the lotto -- and Megan's final audition. It's 6am. Clark jumps out of bed and starts getting dressed.

INT. COURTHOUSE RECORDS - DAY

Clark has gotten to the records room as soon as they open. A clerk, who hasn't seen the light of day in years, lifts his head.

CLARK

I want all of the lawsuits filed against G&T.

INT. READING ROOM - HOURS LATER

Clark is at a dimly lit desk, deep into reading. We can see from the growing discard piles and the coffee cup graveyard that Clark's been at it for a while.

The Clerk drops off another box of papers.

CLARK

More?

COURT CLERK

Guess they made a few enemies.

Clark tosses a useless brief aside and massages his eyes. Then he opens another brief: "Graff vs. G&T."

CLARK

"Lewis Graff, professor of statistics at Texas A&M, asserts that G&T is guilty of intellectual property theft and patent infringement."

(beat)

A&M? That's where Joy went.

INT. PATENTS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Clark is at the front desk speaking to a pudgy PATENT CLERK.

CLARK

I need patent number--  
(checking his notes)  
1513.

INT. PATENTS DEPARTMENT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The PATENT CLERK returns holding a thick filing, labeled "1513."

PATENT CLERK

In 1982 G&T was issued a patent for a lottery algorithm. Looks like it took just six months from application.

CLARK

I thought getting a patent takes years.

PATENT CLERK

The application must have been fast-tracked.

CLARK

But there was a dispute?

PATENT CLERK

Lewis Graff came forward. He presented evidence that he was first to invent.

CLARK

If Graff was first, why didn't he get the patent?

PATENT CLERK

Texas A&M assumed authority over his claim.

CLARK

How?

PATENT CLERK

Technically, universities have a right to any IP created by their professors. As a courtesy, they usually don't exercise that right --

CLARK

But in Graff's case they weren't feeling courteous.

PATENT CLERK

Guess not.

CLARK

But wait -- then shouldn't Texas A&M have the patent?

PATENT CLERK

They voluntarily dropped the claim. In favor of G&T.

That strikes Clark as odd. Why would the school do that for G&T?

EXT. TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - DAY

We pick up Clark, as he walks past the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, on the phone with Megan.

In the background, we periodically see more JOY LOTTO POSTERS. Clark notices them -- but averts his eyes.

CLARK

Today's the big day. You ready?

MEGAN'S VOICE

Dad, about the custody stuff --

CLARK

Don't worry about any of that. Just practice and prepare.

MEGAN'S VOICE

See you at four.

CLARK

See you at four.

Clark looks at his watch. **10am**. Plenty of time.

INT. TEXAS A&M LIBRARY - DAY

Clark is walking through cavernous stacks. He checks the index card in his hand, then scans the shelves until he finds the VOLUME he was searching for.

CLARK

"A Multiplicative Congruential  
Algorithm for the Generation of  
Pseudo-Random Numbers..."

He flips through a few pages filled with impenetrable mathematics.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Might as well be in Swahili.

Clark starts to put the volume back on the shelf, but then thinks better of it. He flips to the last page of the book, which lists the names of people who previously checked it out. The first name on the list is "Joy Taylor."

CLARK (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch.

Clark then moves his finger down to the last name on the list:  
**"Xian Xudong."**

INT. TEXAS A&M DORM / HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Clark looks very out of place. He walks down the hall, reading the names posted on each door until he finds -- **XIAN XUDONG**.

Clark KNOCKS. XIAN, an 18-year-old Chinese beanpole with a clipped accent and razor sharp wits, answers.

CLARK

Would you like to make fifty bucks?

INT. DORM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clark sits with Xian, Graff's thesis in front of him.

XIAN

It's an iterative function using modular arithmetic.

Clark stares at him blankly. Xian tries to explain by scribbling a note on a napkin. " $X_2 = f(X_1) \text{ mod } M$ ."

CLARK

Nope. Still nowhere.

XIAN

It's a method for generating random numbers. You start with a seed, something randomized you feed in as a starting point --

CLARK

Like room tone.

(off Xian's nod)

How complicated is this? Would a seismologist understand?

XIAN

Seismologist work with statistics all day every day.

(off Clark's look)

Seismology is a predictive science. You use past information to predict future events, so...

Clark is floored.

CLARK

I thought seismology was the study of earthquakes.

XIAN

Those are the events they predict.

CLARK

Right. Okay. So if someone -- let's say a seismologist -- read this paper and knew the algorithm, but didn't know the seed number, could she predict future events?

XIAN  
Possibly. She'd need two things.

CLARK  
What are they?

XIAN  
A large data set of past events.

CLARK  
And?

XIAN  
Information about the functional  
form of  $f(X)$ .

CLARK  
That's not in the paper?

XIAN  
Graff said he'd publish it as  
follow-up, but I couldn't find it.  
I don't think it was ever released.

Clark gets up and starts walking away.

XIAN (CONT'D)  
Hey, what about my fifty bucks?

HARD CUT TO

INT. DORM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clark is counting out crumpled bills and change.

XIAN  
Is this your laundry money?

CLARK  
Not anymore. \$47.50. Best I can do.

INT. TEXAS A&M PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Oak and red carpet. Clark enters and speaks to the SECRETARY.

CLARK  
I'm trying to get some information  
about a professor here by the name  
of Lewis Graff.

SECRETARY  
One moment.

As the Secretary quietly types, Clark stares at a PORTRAIT behind  
her of University President Burroughs.

CLARK

Nothing like staring at a portrait  
of yourself.

SECRETARY

It looks like Lewis Graff was  
terminated in 1982.

CLARK

Any information about where he went?

SECRETARY

Let me see if I can find an address.

CLARK

Thanks.

Clark waits, looking again at the photographs on the wall. One catches his eye. He leans in to look at it. It shows the University President shaking hands with JIM SANDERS.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Is this Jim Sanders, the CEO of G&T?

SECRETARY

President Burroughs and Jim are old  
friends.

CLARK

Does he donate to the university?

SECRETARY

You're standing in Sanders Hall.

Clark nods. The wheels are turning.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

Found the address. It's 112  
Sycamore Lane. Rosalita.

Clark blinks at her. Did she just say --

CLARK

Rosalita?

INT./EXT. CLARK'S CAR [DRIVING] - LATER THAT DAY

Clark passes a ROSALITA SIGN. Checks his phone. **2pm.** Still time.

EXT. GRAFF'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Clark pulls up in front of the address. 112 Sycamore.

Clark knocks on the front door. No answer. He walks around the side of the house. Looks through the window. No one's home.

One of the windows is open. Clark moves closer to the window. Ventures a tentative sniff -- then enters.

INT. GRAFF'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Clark is in the study. Bookshelves filled with math textbooks and leather notebooks. He flips through one -- filled with equations.

Clark starts rifling through file cabinets until he hits the jackpot -- an entire cabinet filled with LANTERMAN'S LOTTO LOGS. Clark takes out a handful. The data tables are circled in red pen.

CLARK

And there's the large data set.

*CLARK'S VISION OF THE CRIME*

*It's a series of quick hits.*

*- We see Joy, discovering Graff's paper in the A&M library.*

*- We see her driving out to Rosalita, meeting with him.*

*- We see them conspiring together, going through Lanterman's Lotto Logs and Graff's papers to figure out the ticket patterns.*

*But Clark is pulled out of this scenario when he hears --*

MALE VOICE

Put that down. And put your hands up!

*END CLARK'S VISION*

Clark turns around to find the aged SHERIFF with his gun drawn.

CLARK

We have to stop meeting this way.

SHERIFF

Wait... ain't you the lotto guy?

CLARK

Yes. Formerly.

SHERIFF

What are you doing breaking and entering into people's homes?

CLARK

I only entered. I didn't break.

SHERIFF

Trespassing then?

CLARK

The window was open and I smelled gas.

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

According to Texas code, a citizen can enter private premises where there's threat of fire.

The Sheriff finally holsters his weapon.

SHERIFF

If you wanted to raid Joy Taylor's house without a warrant, you should have just asked me.

CLARK

Joy Taylor's house?

As Clark looks around, we see the desk -- and recognize it from the opening. It's Joy's Etsyfied home office.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I thought they were only working together -- I didn't realize she was also sleeping with him.

SHERIFF

Sleeping with whom? What are you talking about?

CLARK

Lewis Graff lives here, right?

SHERIFF

Not since he died.

Clark feels one more piece click into place.

CLARK

Let me guess. About 7 years ago?

SHERIFF

Something like that. The place was a mess. Graff was something of a hoarder. But Joy walked through, saw the boxes, and bought it anyway.

Clark nods. The world is making sense again. But there's still a pretty big problem.

CLARK

I need to find Joy. Now. Any way you can put out an ABP? She could be in a dozen states. And I don't know how big a head start she has.

SHERIFF

Not much. I just passed her on Route Two when I was starting my patrol...



INT./EXT. CLARK'S CAR [DRIVING] - MOMENTS LATER

Clark looks at his watch. **3pm**. Shit. Still time -- but cutting it close. And then he finds JOY'S MCLAREN. Just off of ROUTE TWO -- parked in front of the local Rosalita minimart.

INT. ROSALITA MINI-MART - MOMENTS LATER

Clark arrives at the front counter where he finds JOY, holding a just-purchased lotto ticket.

CLARK

I knew it.

JOY

Clark, I don't think you understand what's going on here.

CLARK

I've done a lot of traveling the past day. The state patent office, Texas A&M, your house.

JOY

You broke into my--

CLARK

Not technically. I know you got Graff's algorithm from that house. And you combined it with a library of data from Lanterman's newsletters. And now -- I got you! I got Joy Taylor. The most, conniving, manipulative, exploitative --

JOY

It's not what it looks like.

CLARK

Like hell it isn't. You worked me. Set me up to lose my job. Tried to deflect me from what was really going on. You did even worse to Graff, some poor schmuck screwed over by G&T -- and you pick over his bones and screw him over again.

JOY

I would never do that. Lewis Graff wasn't some poor schmuck -- he was my father.

Clark wasn't expecting that.

CLARK

What?

JOY

Growing up I thought he was just this paranoid drunk. Always ranting about what had been taken from him. After he died, I looked up his work and you know what I found --

CLARK

He wasn't so paranoid.

JOY

G&T ruined him. Sanders was an A&M alum. He stole my father's work. And when my father wouldn't play ball, they buried him. I thought you'd understand.

CLARK

Understand what? That you thought that bit of bad luck entitled you to commit theft? To steal millions?

Joy eyes Clark, then the TICKET she's still holding. She pulls out a quarter. Starts to scratch it off. Gradually, the icons become visible. One star, two stars, and then... **a rain cloud.**

**NO MATCH.**

**Clark is astonished.**

CLARK (CONT'D)

That. Isn't. Possible.

And just then, we hear a woman SCREAM from elsewhere in the store.  
Is someone hurt or in danger? Nope --

SCREAMING WOMAN

I won!

Clark sees the woman jumping up and down, holding a lotto card. Clark, wheels turning, squares off with Joy --

CLARK

How did she get your card?

JOY

I guess my luck's wearing off.

CLARK

You're too precise to botch the end game. You must have a stash of other tickets somewhere --

JOY

(magician gesture)  
Nothing up my sleeves.

CLARK

In the trunk of your car then, or  
in a safety deposit box--

Clark halts as he spots something on the TV BEHIND THE COUNTER.  
It's on MUTE, but there's a BANNER about the lotto.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(to the store clerk)

Turn the volume up.

We see a FIELD REPORTER standing in front of a 7-11 with a woman  
hyperventilating with excitement.

FIELD REPORTER

We're in Little Rock with a woman  
whose life just changed. She won  
\$20 million in the record-setting  
Overnight Success. She's not the  
only one. From Georgia to Illinois  
to Connecticut, we have reports of  
five grand prize winners already --  
on the first day of the game.

Clark's trying to make it compute. It won't.

CLARK

Scratch-off lottos don't work like  
that.

JOY

Why not? It's all random. Can't  
there be five winners in the first  
day? Can't a monkey write Hamlet?

CLARK

No. I mean -- no, they're not  
random. The winners are spaced out.  
Some at the beginning, some at the  
middle, more at the end. Five of  
ten total grand prizes -- found on  
the first day? It's impossible.  
Inconceivable.

JOY

(a la Princess Bride)

I don't think that word means what  
you think it means.

Clark knows she's toying with him, but before he can reply -- an  
ALARM goes off. Clark realizes it's his phone. It's **3:30**. If he's  
going to get to Megan's audition, he's gotta go now.

CLARK

I have to go to Megan's audition.

Clark isn't sure what to do next. He's forced to improvise --

CLARK (CONT'D)

You're coming with me. I'm not letting you out of my sight until I get to the bottom of this.

JOY

You have no authority to apprehend me. You're not a cop. You're not even a lotto inspector.

CLARK

(hurt by the low blow)  
Maybe not. But I'm still a citizen. I'm making a citizen's arrest.

JOY

You've been watching too much Columbo.

Clark recognizes the absurdity of his position, but leans into it.

CLARK

I don't have you on fraud, but--  
(wheels turning)  
You're loitering in front of a convenience store.

JOY

That's a misdemeanor. At best.

CLARK

In Texas, citizens can arrest for misdemeanors that lead to a breach of the public peace, which that --

Clark gestures to the still screaming winner.

CLARK (CONT'D)

-- certainly does.

A long beat as they both stand there. Finally, Joy gives in.

JOY

Enough with the Mexican standoff. I'll come with you. But just to hear Megan play again. I could listen to her all day long. You -- not as much.

INT./EXT. CLARK'S CAR [DRIVING] - MOMENTS LATER

Clark dares to hit the speed limit as they race to Houston for the final audition. Clark breaks the silence --

CLARK

How did that other woman have your ticket?! And why are you so calm?

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

(realizing)

You're in on it together. You thought it'd be too suspicious to claim another prize. Damn! Why didn't I realize that sooner?

JOY

You have to stop thinking I have all these partners. I'm a loner, Clark. Like you.

They drive pass a Joy lotto BILLBOARD. They both clock it.

CLARK

You're on billboards.

JOY

You're the one that put me there.

CLARK

I did not. But I should speak with the woman who did.

Clark makes a phone call.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Jimmy, can you put Vivian on. It's an emergency.

INTERCUT WITH

INT. TEXAS LOTTERY OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

TIGHT ON JIMMY with his phone.

JIMMY

It's an emergency here, too.

WIDEN TO REVEAL the office in pandemonium.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I think something's wrong with the lotto. We have seven winners already.

CLARK

That's impossible.

JOY

Not impossible.

CLARK

Can you put Vivian on. I know who's responsible.

We see Vivian in the background, berating her crying minions.

JIMMY

Now's not a good time. If you want to know more, listen to the news. That's where I get my news. You know, because they're the --

CLICK. Clark's already hung up. He tunes the radio in to the news.

RADIO NEWSCASTER

... and with additional jackpot winners in Sioux Falls, Baton Rouge, and Raleigh-Durham, they've now found all ten grand prizes. Today is the day a lot of people became overnight successes.

CLARK

This is impossible.

JOY

You keep saying that and yet --

CLARK

(firm)

No. It's really impossible. That's eleven grand prize winners.

JOY

We were at seven. He found three more. We're at ten.

CLARK

Plus the woman in Rosalita. They weren't counting her. They must not know about her yet. That's eleven. And that's impossible.

That mysterious smile creeps across Joy's face.

JOY

There aren't eleven winners. By the time they've finished counting, there will be over a thousand.

*As Clark and Joy continue speaking, **we INTERCUT shots of JOYOUS WINNERS across the country:** SOCCER MOMS screaming in their minivans. OLD FOLKS crowing in a retirement home. A SCHOOL TEACHER storming out of his classroom. Etc.*

CLARK

At 20 million a piece? What's the point? There won't be enough ticket sales to cover that. No one will get paid.

JOY

G&T is on the hook for manufacturer errors. I think this qualifies. They're liable for the whole amount. And when they can't pay it --

CLARK

They're bankrupt.

Joy's true motive finally occurs to Clark.

He turns to her. His voice is almost a whisper.

CLARK (CONT'D)

This was never about winning money.

JOY

I just wanted to hit G&T the only place I knew they'd feel it.

Clark is trying to put it together.

CLARK

How did you break into the icebox?

JOY

I didn't. You did.

Clark is reeling.

CLARK

Excuse me?

JOY

There was no way I could get anywhere near the Ice Box...

CLARK

No...

JOY

Until you walked me right inside.

*And now we see the first in a series of flashbacks. Similar visual style to Clark's imagining of the crime -- but this time, we're seeing what really happened:*

*We see Clark in the Ice Box, doing his diagnostic. But we now go inside his pocket, which houses the RABBIT'S FOOT Joy gave him.*

CLARK

The rabbit's foot!

*Back at LottoCon, we see Joy conferring with the CUTTER. Slipping him money. Then we see the CUTTER punching Clark -- and pocketing Clark's FBI MEDAL. Creating the need...*

In the hotel parking lot, we see Joy paying a MECHANIC to put a BOOT on Clark's POS car. Creating the opportunity...

Then we move to Joy's car. A scene we've already watched. Joy giving Clark the rabbit's foot.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What was inside that rabbit's foot?

JOY

A little tech I had re-purposed.  
It's supposed to detect seismic  
activity--

Back to Joy's construction site. Another scene we've already watched. We see Joy opening her ORANGE, HARD-PLASTIC BRIEFCASE.

JOY (CONT'D)

But the sound pulses can also alter  
room tone.

Clark's head is spinning.

CLARK

You altered the room tone?

JOY

No. You altered the room tone. You  
locked the computer in a repeating  
pattern.

Clark's still trying to put it all together.

CLARK

How could you know I would wind up  
in the Ice Box? How could you know  
how far I'd push this?

In her Rosalita home, we see Joy reading about Clark's attempt to take down Orson.

JOY

You went after your own father-in-  
the-law to the point of ruining your  
career. I knew if you suspected he  
was mixed up in this that you would  
carry it all the way. I guess I kind  
of lied when I said I didn't have a  
partner. Thank you, Clark.

Clark's face darkens. He knows he's lost. But then something  
occurs to him --

CLARK

Don't thank me so quickly.



Clark abruptly SWERVES, pulling into the parking lot of Texas Performing Arts. He slams on the brakes, then rounds on Joy.

CLARK (CONT'D)

If G&T is liable for manufacturer errors, that only applies to errors committed by their employees. This wasn't their fault. It was mine. And I am not a G&T employee.

JOY

(unsettled)  
Clark, let it go.

CLARK

To stop one of the largest financial crimes in history, all I have to do is turn myself in, and hand over the evidence -- that I have right here.

Clark pulls out the RABBIT'S FOOT.

CLARK (CONT'D)

And I plan to do that right after Megan's audition.

Clark climbs out of the car.

EXT. TEXAS PERFORMING ARTS PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

As Clark walks towards the school, Joy chases after him.

JOY

Clark! Wait! G&T is corrupt. They stole from my dad. They bribe state officials. They're the real criminals. Not me.

CLARK

Their misconduct can't absolve you.

JOY

The old "two wrongs don't make a right" speech? Save it.

(beat)

All you've ever done is follow the letter of the law. And where has it led you? Fired by the FBI. Fired by the Texas Bureau of No One Cares. And now your asshole father-in-law is taking your daughter away. And you're letting him? Why? 'Cause you always have to follow the rules?

Clark is stoic. Joy presses harder.

JOY (CONT'D)

I once told you, Clark, we're not that different. We want the same thing -- justice. Help me get it.

CLARK

I can't. It's not right. I follow the law -- or people get hurt.

JOY

Sometimes people get hurt because you follow the law.

CLARK

There's nothing I can do about that. And I'm not going to stand here and --

JOY

What do you stand for, Clark?

Clark stares at her. He doesn't have an answer. He looks at the clock. **4:15**. Shit. Clark opens the door and enters --

INT. TEXAS PERF. ARTS ACADEMY / BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Clark scans the backstage area. A row of students, accompanied by parents, are sitting and waiting to audition -- but no Megan. Did he already miss her? Then he spots Orson. Clark runs over to him.

ORSON

(sarcastic)

Father of the year.

CLARK

Where is she?

Orson gestures. Megan is already on stage. Just starting her audition. Clark peeks into the auditorium. Family, coaches, teachers. And in the front row -- the **ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE**.

Megan looks offstage, spotting Clark. A moment between them. Happiness. Relief. She starts PLAYING. It's a difficult piece. But she has her Nick Long cello -- and now she has Clark. She plays beautifully. Clark is so incredibly proud.

Joy creeps inside the stage door. She watches from the back.

ORSON

Born winner. She gets that from me.

CLARK

She gets nothing from you... except money.

ORSON

Does that mean you're willing to drop your claim to custody?

CLARK

(through gritted teeth)  
I'm thinking about it.

Clark watches Megan play, pondering what's best for her, thinking she deserves more. And then... she plays a **WRONG NOTE**. She stops.

MEGAN

Sorry.

ORSON

(grimacing)  
She's not supposed to do that.

CLARK

I know.

She goes back a few bars to try that section again... but she makes the same mistake. Again she stops.

MEGAN

Sorry. I mean sorry I -- sorry.

Megan tries the section again... and hits the same glitch. She stops. Looks at Clark, apologetically. Humiliated. Frozen.

ORSON

And this is what she gets from you.

Clark, impulsively, calls out from the wings.

CLARK

It's okay. Just move on.

One of the Admission Committee members sternly SHUSHES Clark.

Megan shakes her head. Clark pauses -- then runs out on stage. The **STERN ADMISSION JUDGE** stands and scolds Clark.

STERN JUDGE

Parents and coaches are not allowed on stage during the auditions.

CLARK

I know. Just -- one minute, please.

Clark continues to Megan and kneels next to her. They whisper.

MEGAN

I'm sorry, dad.

CLARK

What are you sorry for?

MEGAN

You told me to get it right. And I didn't.

STERN JUDGE

Sir, get off the stage. You're interfering with the audition. This is against the rules!

That strikes a chord. And as Clark sees his daughter caught in a familiar perfectionist/OCD loop, something in him snaps. Clark lets out a small laugh. And then, in a very Un-Clark gesture --

CLARK

Well, then -- fuck the rules.

Boom. The judge sits. Shocked. Clark turns back to Megan.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Megan. For a long time, I've been afraid of the world and its unpredictability. And I made you afraid, too. And I'm sorry. I am so very, very sorry.

Megan sees how emotional Clark is. She reaches out to touch his shoulder, but he stops her. Clark grabs her hand. Holds it tight.

CLARK (CONT'D)

It's not your job to be an adult. It's not your job to save me. It's your job to be a kid. To be reckless. To eat cookie dough and possibly give yourself Salmonella.

Megan half-smiles at this.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Now I want you to forget everything I ever told you -- and just play. For the love of it. Don't worry about wrong notes. The only wrong note is no note at all. In fact, I hope you mess up -- in the best way possible. Just put your hands on the cello, close your eyes, and take a chance. I love you.

MEGAN

I love you too, Dad.

Clark turns around. Addresses the admission committee.

CLARK

Sorry about before. Please don't hold this against my daughter. She deserves a chance.

Clark walks off-stage. Megan, alone, picks up the cello. She closes her eyes -- and starts playing. It's her moment. And she shines. She plays, if not perfectly then beautifully.

Clark takes it in. Proud. And then he turns to Orson --

CLARK (CONT'D)

Yeah. About that custody thing -- she needs her father.

Orson nods. Maybe defeated -- maybe in agreement, then walks away.

EXT. TEXAS PERFORMING ARTS PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Clark pushes through the stage doors into the parking lot behind the theatre. Groups of parents are gathered there, gossiping. Clark listens in closely. Are they talking about his daughter? Nope. They're talking about all those lotto winners!

Joy approaches.

CLARK

Over a thousand winners by the time this is over?

JOY

1513 to be precise.

CLARK

1513?

(beat)

I've seen that number somewhere --

JOY

It may or may not be the number of the patent G&T stole from my father.

*QUICK FLASHBACK to Clark at the patents office. The patent clerk hands him a thick filing, labelled "1513."*

CLARK

You know, most criminals don't go for style points.

JOY

It'll be something to remember fondly while I'm hammering out license plates. Do they still do that in prison? Doesn't matter.

(nodding to the theatre)

I'm just glad I got to hear Megan one last time before you cart me to jail.

CLARK

You're not going to jail.

Clark reaches into his pocket and hands Joy the RABBIT'S FOOT.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
 (off her look)  
 You did say you were just lending  
 it me for a little while.

JOY  
 You realize this is the only  
 evidence --

CLARK  
 Yes. Yes, I do.

Joy looks at Clark thankfully. Then she reaches into her pocket  
 and hands Clark his FBI MEDAL.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
 I thought this was lost.

JOY  
 I know how much it means to you.

Clark thinks for a moment. Then hands it back to her.

CLARK  
 Keep it. I'm not a cop anymore.  
 It's time I moved on.

Joy starts to say something, but Clark cuts her off.

CLARK (CONT'D)  
 You don't need to say anything  
 else. You said it in the car.  
 There's more than one set of rules.

Joy leans in. Grabs Clark. KISSES him closely on the cheek.

JOY  
 Thank you.

And with that, she's gone. A beat later, Megan walks up.

MEGAN  
 Was that Joy? Will we be seeing her  
 again?

CLARK  
 I don't know.

MEGAN  
 So, she was innocent after all?

CLARK  
 It's complicated.

Megan holds up a lotto ticket.

MEGAN

I found this in my cello case. Do you know how it got there?

Clark looks down. One star. Two stars. Three stars. It's a winner.

CLARK

(can't help smiling)  
No idea.

MEGAN

Since you don't work for the lotto anymore, couldn't you redeem this?

CLARK

A little redemption would be nice.

MEGAN

Maybe our luck's changing.

CLARK

You never know.

**CHYRON: SIX MONTHS LATER**

INT. RAMSHACKLE OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on CLARK filing paperwork in an office more dilapidated than his old digs. For a moment, it seems life may actually have gotten worse. Then, from the background, we hear:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

The FBI's expanding probe of the lottery industry claimed another victim today as Orson Cromwell, the powerful Texas land commissioner, resigned amidst bribery charges.

Clark looks up from his paperwork to see Orson, on TV, shielding his face from local news reporters.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

The FBI probe has already engulfed top brass at G&T, including CEO Jim Sanders, who was indicted...

The TV shows Sanders exiting G&T in handcuffs. Then a shadow falls across the screen. Clark looks up to see--

MEGAN, in her new school uniform. Surprised and delighted, Clark greets her with a big hug.

CLARK

Hey! Not that I'm complaining, but it's not my weekend.

MEGAN

Well, grandpa wasn't home.

CLARK

I'm supposed to feel bad about that, right?

Megan shrugs.

CLARK (CONT'D)

How did you even get here?

MEGAN

I got a ride from a friend.

CLARK

You have friends that can drive?  
Not sure I like the sound of that.

MEGAN

She said to give you this.

Megan hands Clark a piece of paper. He unfolds it and realizes... it's a **TAB** from JOY, listing all the money Clark owes her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I think you can afford it.

CLARK

I think so, too.  
(calling over his shoulder)  
Can I take off a bit early, boss?

We PAN OVER to the Sheriff, fast asleep at his desk, and we realize that **we're in Rosalita**. Clark is now a cop there.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I should wake him. According to the deputy sheriff's manual, it's against regulation to clock out without verbal consent.

The Sheriff begins snoring loudly. Megan gives Clark a look.

CLARK (CONT'D)

We follow the rules or... we make our own.

Megan and Clark nod at his new saying. They exit to find --

JOY waiting in her McLaren. And with her, the hope of a new family. Off this unconventional trio, we --

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END