

BAD EDUCATION

WRITTEN BY
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Based on the article
"Frank Tassone: The Bad Superintendent"
by Robert Kolker

(and my own first-hand account
of the damned thing.)

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INT. EAST HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

We open on a long hallway cast in a sickly fluorescent glow. It's after hours at East Hills Elementary.

The walls are adorned with a litany of children's art projects. Crude renderings of family portraits, dream pets, at least one trip to the moon.

The silence shatters as a monolithic heavy-duty buffing machine crawls into view, its twin brushes whirring and grinding against the blue tile floor.

The contraption, powered by a faceless night janitor, emits a withering cacophony of howls and squeals and hisses with each forward movement. An ancient beast in the throes of death.

The janitor pushes on down the hall, a pair of headphones blocking the unseemly noise from his ears.

He drifts past a bathroom door marked BOYS. A crack of light pours from the base of its wooden frame. It's OCCUPIED.

INT. BOYS' BATHROOM - EAST HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

FRANK TASSONE, early 50s, stands at the kiddie sink in a tight undershirt and tailored dress slacks.

He crouches to examine himself in the mirror. Sucks in his considerable paunch. Combs back his hair. Inspects the dark circles under the eyes.

He unclasps his briefcase. Fetches a small grooming kit.

He hums a tune as he dabs his face with cover-up. Tweezes a rogue hair from his nose. Spritzes himself with cologne.

BIG BILL (V.O.)
Harvard, two. Dartmouth, two. Yale,
five. UPenn, *eight*. Cornell, *ten!*

INT. AUDITORIUM - EAST HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

WILLIAM 'BIG BILL' BLAUSTEIN, 50s, school board president, commands the podium. He addresses a seated assembly of parents and taxpayers.

BIG BILL
That's just a taste of the kinds of
acceptances we saw for last year's
outgoing senior class. Pretty
remarkable stuff, huh?

Bill fishes a newspaper from the podium's bottom shelf.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)

Now let's talk about why we're here tonight. This morning's Wall Street Journal, hot off the presses.

He waves the paper up high.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)

Roslyn Public Schools ranked fourth in the nation, based on SAT scores and percentage of students that get into their first-choice colleges.

He smirks.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)

Folks, there's no simpler way for me to put it. Our kids are getting smarter. That's why Roslyn's number four in the country, and number one in Long Island overall. Thanks for playing, Jericho! Sorry, Syosset!

The crowd eats this up.

INT. EAST HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

Frank's black patent leather shoes squeak against the newly buffed floor. He's now donned in a full suit.

BIG BILL (V.O.)

I'd like to bring out the man behind the curtain. In his twelve years at Roslyn, he's reformed our education system from pre-K all the way on up through the high school.

Frank pauses to admire the vibrant, imaginative children's artwork that papers the walls. The product of first graders.

He runs a hand along the swirling contours of the crayon drawings. Grinding the waxy resin between his fingers.

INT. AUDITORIUM - EAST HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

BIG BILL

Please join me in welcoming our district superintendent, and my personal friend, Frank Tassone.

Frank takes the stage to resounding applause.

He gives the room a hearty wave, smiling broadly. His fingers coated with a layer of crayon residue.

FRANK

Thank you, Roslyn. This would've never been possible without your tireless support.

CROWD

Number four! Number four! Number four! Number four--!

PRE-LAP: Beep. Beep. Beep.

INT. GYM - NIGHT

Frank paces on a treadmill, breathing heavily. A personal trainer stands beside him, monitoring his heart rate.

The gym is otherwise empty.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT

Frank emerges from the Lincoln Tunnel, coasting past the toll booths and into Long Island. He drives a black Mercedes.

It's the crack of dawn. The early morning sun just barely inching out from over the treetops.

EXT. ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Frank's car sails past the fleet of school buses as they pull into the roundabout, teeming with students.

The chyron below reads:

**ROSLYN HEIGHTS, NY
SEPTEMBER 2002**

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Frank strides into the building. The bullpen is swarmed with balloons and gift baskets bearing the number "4."

FRANK

All right everyone, let's keep the momentum up. The next budget vote's only nine months away, people!

His personal secretary, MARY ANN, flanks him as he walks through the office. She carries a small note pad with her.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Hi Mary Ann. Do we know if Mr. Hale's wife gave birth last night?

MARY ANN

Twins. Boy and a girl.

FRANK

Perfect. Let's fire off a card to their home address, and maybe one of those edible arrangements.

MARY ANN

You still haven't sent over the discussion questions for Dickens. They're meeting at six today.

FRANK

That's right. Which book are we reading this month?

Mary Ann glances down at the note pad.

MARY ANN

"Martin Chuzzlewick"?

FRANK

It's *Chuzzlewit*. Okay, let's see. Question one, how does the novel's picaresque approach extend to each of its characters?

Mary Ann scribbles furiously.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Two, to what extent do we identify with the motives of Pecksniff? Do his actions strike us as uniformly appalling, or might we-- excuse me just a sec, Mary Ann.

He stops at the cubicle belonging to PAM GLUCKIN, 50s, the district's business manager. Her desk is mobbed with photos of her family and myriad pet dogs.

PAM

Good morning, Dr. Tassone.

FRANK

Mrs. Cremona.

PAM
It's Gluckin now. Third time's the
charm, or so they say.

She motions to her brass nameplate. The surname portion has
recently fallen victim to a sloppy case of Wite-Out.

FRANK
You know we can get that replaced.

PAM
But it's much funnier like this,
isn't it?

Frank smirks.

PAM (CONT'D)
Any receipts for me to reconcile?

He pats down his pockets.

FRANK
Looks like I'm clean out. I'll let
you know if anything surfaces.

PAM
Good boy.

DEBBIE
Happy Friday, Dr. Tassone!

DEBBIE RIGANO, 30s, a new hire, stands at her adjacent
cubicle in a gaudy leopard-print blouse. Smiling clumsily.
Lipstick smeared across her two front teeth.

PAM
Deb, sweetie?

Pam taps on her own teeth. Debbie blanches.

DEBBIE
Shit. Shit!

She retreats back into her cubicle.

MARY ANN
(to Frank)
Did you say picturesque--?

FRANK
Picaresque. Mary Ann, is there any
way you could pick up a smoothie
from Holiday Farms? I was running
late this morning.

MARY ANN

Yeah. What do you want in it?

FRANK

Oh, I don't know. Some blueberries, almond milk, shredded coconut, flax seeds-- maybe just say it's for Dr. Tassone. They know what I like.

Frank whips out his wallet. It's stacked to the brim with credit and debit cards of every color.

He plucks one in specific, a GOLD CORPORATE CARD, and hands it to Mary Ann. Pam watches from her workstation.

MARY ANN

Okay. Before I go, there's a mother camped out in the conference room. I told her we need the space for your 8:30 but she says she won't leave until she speaks with you.

FRANK

Oh boy. Who is it this time?

MARY ANN

Cindy Schweitzer.

PAM

I'll get the plunger.

FRANK

Be nice, Pam. It's committed parents like Cindy Schweitzer that keep the lights on around here.

(a pause)

On second thought -- if I'm not back in an hour, call 911.

He disappears into the conference room.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

CINDY SCHWEITZER, 40s, paces the room with a frenetic energy. Frank tracks her from a spot in the corner.

CINDY

I'm telling you, I'm so upset I could throttle someone. That awful Ziporkin. She's intimidated by him, that's what this is. She misspells words and he calls her out on it. Believe me, this is political.

FRANK

I hear where you're coming from,
but Barbara Ziporkin is more than
qualified to teach the third grade.
I hired her myself, straight out of
Columbia Teacher's-- my alma mater--

CINDY

She's horrendous. Chad's place is
in OMNI with the other gifted kids.

Frank serves up one steaming pile of "the usual":

FRANK

Yes. But a child's placement in our
accelerated program isn't solely
based on teacher recs. It's also
standardized testing scores--

CINDY

She wouldn't give him a bathroom
break during the test. He has a
hyperactive bladder. I have a
doctor's note in my purse.

Cindy reaches into her handbag, starts fishing.

CINDY (CONT'D)

It's in here, just a second--

FRANK

Miss Schweitzer...

She stops, looks up at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Miss Schweitzer, has Chad mastered
his time tables?

CINDY

(reluctant)
Of course he has.

FRANK

Cindy.

He doesn't break his gaze. She softens.

CINDY

I'm afraid, Dr. Tassone. If he's
not in OMNI-- if he starts seeing
himself as subpar-- he's such a
remarkable boy, Dr. Tassone, I know
if you'll just meet with him--

FRANK

If he's your son, I'm sure he's
very remarkable indeed.

Cindy smiles faintly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'll talk with Barbara, see if we
can't schedule a make-up test for
Chad. In the meantime, here's some
literature on how you can foster
your child's sense of self-worth.

He hands her a pamphlet from a nearby shelf. She gives it a
cursory glance, pauses at the byline.

CINDY

You wrote this?

FRANK

It's a bit of a spare hobby.

CINDY

We could all learn a little
something from you, Dr. Tassone.

FRANK

Oh, I find I'm the one who's
constantly learning. This community
never ceases to surprise me.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Frank takes a seat behind his polished wood desk.

The back wall is coated with advanced degrees, commendations,
photographs of Frank posing with state politicians, sports
figures, Geraldo Rivera. Souvenirs from various exotic trips.

He gazes at the lone framed photo on his desk. It's a '60s or
maybe '70s era bridal portrait of a very pretty young woman.

The photo exudes an uncanny stock-photo quality, as if it
once served in a print ad for the perfect nuptials.

Frank twists the wedding ring on his finger, deep in thought.

He procures his copy of the prior day's Wall Street Journal.
Locates the public school rankings. Roslyn listed fourth.

He stares down at the paper, a measure of dissatisfaction on
his face. His pen hovering over the preceding three schools,
making small circles in the air.

Frank brings the pen down over the number one spot. Lets it linger there. Watches the ink BLEED THROUGH the PAGES...

RACHEL (O.S.)

Hi.

Frank looks up to see RACHEL KELLOGG, 16, standing in the doorway. A bulging blue backpack slung over her shoulder.

FRANK

Hello.

RACHEL

Sorry. I'm Rachel Kellogg, with the Hilltop Beacon. I scheduled an interview with Mary Ann...?

FRANK

Mary Ann's out on an errand. That's fine, I have an open door policy when it comes to students.

He gestures for Rachel to enter. She sits across from him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What's on your mind, Rachel?

RACHEL

Right. Sorry. I have a list of questions prepared...

Rachel shuffles through her notes. Frank watches.

FRANK

Any relation to Jeremy Kellogg?

RACHEL

He's my brother.

FRANK

You know, I taught Jeremy how to cross the street. He must have been seven, eight years old. Didn't look where he was going, strolled right out in front of the bus. He nearly put the driver in cardiac arrest.

He laughs to himself.

FRANK (CONT'D)

How's Jeremy these days? Is he keeping himself out of trouble?

RACHEL
He's a junior at Northwestern.

FRANK
That's fantastic. Good for Jeremy.
Do you remember who he interviewed
with there? Was it Mulvihill, or--?

RACHEL
I'm not sure.

FRANK
Please give him my best. And your
father... he's big into finance,
right? Works on Wall Street?

RACHEL
Yeah.

FRANK
I've never had much of a head for
numbers. English was always my
favorite subject in school. I guess
that's why I'm here as opposed to
there... Wall Street, I mean.

RACHEL
Okay. I'd like to ask you about the
building renovations outlined in
last May's budget plan.

Frank leans back in his chair.

FRANK
Fire away.

RACHEL
Do you mind if I record this?

Rachel sets a bulky recording device on the desk. Frank gives
it a double-take, smiles.

FRANK
Go right ahead.

Rachel clicks the RECORD button. The tape begins to roll.

RACHEL
So there's a new wing being added
at the middle school.

FRANK
We're expanding to meet the needs
of a growing student population.
(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

More families are choosing Roslyn than ever before.

RACHEL

And the SkyWalk at the high school? The second-story bridge that'll connect the Social Studies and Science wings...?

FRANK

Yes. That's the result of my talks with students who claimed it was exceedingly difficult to get across the building in four minutes flat.

Rachel checks her notes.

RACHEL

The SkyWalk construction is projected to cost north of seven and a half million dollars.

FRANK

I'd need to have the budget in front of me, but yeah, that seems more or less accurate.

RACHEL

Why not just give the students five minutes in between classes instead of four?

Frank's smile fades.

FRANK

You don't like the SkyWalk?

RACHEL

It's not that I don't like it--

FRANK

The poll conducted in last June's Beacon showed a 100% approval rating among students...

He digs out a copy of The Hilltop Beacon, Roslyn's student newspaper, from his desk drawer. It's marked in Post-Its.

RACHEL

No, it's-- I guess I'm just not sure why we need a seven and a half million dollar SkyWalk when our classrooms are still leaking.

FRANK

Leaking?

RACHEL

Like, with water.

FRANK

Right. The leaks were unfortunate, but we are handling them--

RACHEL

But it just seems like you're--

FRANK

You asked me a question. Am I allowed to answer it?

Rachel tenses.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Thank you. The leakages are a rather unfortunate by-product of the building's age. But we have a repairs team that deals with all that. You should talk to Jack Lombardo, our grounds supervisor.

RACHEL

It just seems like administration is more concerned with cosmetics than doing actual maintenance.

An awkward beat hangs in the air. Frank stares back at her, unsure of how to respond. He looks hurt.

FRANK

I-- I'm not--

There's a knock on the door.

MARY ANN

Sorry, Dr. Tassone. I have your smoothie here.

Mary Ann crosses past Rachel, sets the smoothie on Frank's desk. It's an unappetizing dark brown color.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

They were all out of flax seeds.

FRANK

That's okay. Thank you, Mary Ann.

MARY ANN

Also, your 8:30's waiting for you
in the conference room.

Frank checks his watch. He looks to Rachel.

FRANK

Would it be all right with you if
we continued this another time?

RACHEL

Sure.

FRANK

I'm sorry for the interruption. Do
you need a pass for next period?
Mary Ann can write you a note.

RACHEL

I'll make it in time. Thank you.

He stands, offers a hand to Rachel. She accepts it.

FRANK

Thanks for your feedback, Rachel.
But I really do think you'll like
the SkyWalk once it's finished.

RACHEL

I'm sure I will.

EXT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Rachel exits the building. She descends the hill to the high
school campus, where the SkyWalk construction is underway.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Frank sits at the head of the table, flanked on either side
by local real estate agents.

FIRST AGENT (JOYCE)

The demand is insane. Skyrocketing.
We're seeing homes go for over a
million in Roslyn Heights.

SECOND AGENT (SHAWN)

You don't get those kinds of
numbers in Syosset or Jericho.

FRANK

But those towns are also further from the city, a longer commute...

THIRD AGENT (IRENE)

Not Manhasset. Not Great Neck.

FIRST AGENT (JOYCE)

It's the public schools. The better the school, the higher the price tag. Simple as that.

SECOND AGENT (SHAWN)

I've got buyers calling me off the hook about Roslyn. Whatever you're doing here, it's working.

FIRST AGENT (JOYCE)

We owe you a steak dinner, Dr. Tassone. You're making our jobs very easy right now.

Frank takes a long sip from his smoothie.

FRANK

Just out of pure curiosity, how much can you make a year as a real estate professional?

The agents exchange a series of looks.

EXT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Frank and Pam eat lunch at a secluded picnic table. Frank shakes his head, stabbing his straw into the smoothie.

FRANK

It's not right.

PAM

I know.

FRANK

We have the most important job in the world. We sculpt the minds of children. But nobody wants to be a teacher, 'cause the money's shit.

He stares off into the distance.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Are we the schmucks?

PAM

Don't talk like that. Do you even realize the impact you've had on so many kids' lives over the years?

FRANK

They never come back afterwards.

PAM

Doesn't matter. All that matters is that you sent them off right.

Frank looks to her.

FRANK

How come every time there's a screw loose in my head, you're standing right there with a toolkit?

PAM

Please. You can save your mixed metaphors--

FRANK

I'm serious. They put my name in all the papers, but you're the one that keeps this place afloat.

Pam cracks a smile.

PAM

It might be nice to have my name in the papers every once in a while.

FRANK

Trust me, it's not worth the aggravation.

Frank takes one last draw from his smoothie. He grimaces.

FRANK (CONT'D)

This diet's killing me.

Pam offers up her pastrami sandwich.

PAM

I won't tell anyone.

Frank leans in, takes a bite. They both laugh.

INT. CAFETERIA - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Rachel eats her lunch alone at a corner table, playing back the interview through a pair of headphones. She transcribes quickly, her hands splattered in blue ink.

Out of the corner of her eye, she spots JACK LOMBARDO, 50s, the grounds supervisor. Heavysset. Cheap suit.

She packs her bag quickly. Rushes up to him.

RACHEL

Mr. Lombardo, I was hoping you'd grant me an interview--

LOMBARDO

Here's something for you to print. It's a haiku. Seventy, sunny. Birds are chirpin', grass is greenin'. Grounds ain't never looked better.

RACHEL

That's too many syllables.

LOMBARDO

You don't have very many friends, do you, Rachel?

He waves her off.

Rachel follows him, discreetly.

INT. LIBRARY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Lombardo argues with MRS. DWYER, the school librarian, deep in the stacks. Rachel spies on them from the adjacent row, between two encyclopedia volumes.

MRS. DWYER

I sat there and watched them do the repairs myself, and they're using the same rinky-dink materials--

LOMBARDO

This is a library. You might want to watch your decibel level.

MRS. DWYER

Can you please explain to me why every time there's a light drizzle outside, the sky falls down?

She reaches a hand out in Rachel's direction. Rachel quickly DUCKS... The librarian grabs one of the books in her vantage.

MRS. DWYER (CONT'D)

Look at this water damage. See those smudges? I've had to throw away entire catalogues of books.

LOMBARDO

It's not grounds' fault your books are shit quality.

MRS. DWYER

My books-- my books are not--!

LOMBARDO

Calm down, Chicken Little. The sky's not going anywhere.

He wanders out. Mrs. Dwyer lingers behind, exasperated.

Rachel talks through the stacks, still masked from view.

RACHEL

Mrs. Dwyer? I don't think your books are shit quality.

MRS. DWYER

Thanks, Rachel. But you really shouldn't spy on people.

INT. BEACON OFFICE - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Student editors crowd the tiny basement space, tinkering with rudimentary layout and clip art on bulky desktop computers.

NIK AGGARWAL, 17, junior editor, reviews Rachel's article. Jaded beyond his years. His feet propped up on the desk.

NIK

You were just supposed to ask him about his favorite hobbies. What's all this crap about the budget?

RACHEL

I found a story.

Nik slides the article back her way.

NIK

You know we have to submit every issue to the principal before we go to print, right?

(MORE)

NIK (CONT'D)

He kicks it up to Tassone, and Pam Cremona, or Gluckin or whatever...

RACHEL

They can't censor us.

NIK

It's not censoring. It's symbiosis. The school pays for us to exist, so we repay them by not writing crap that makes them look bad.

RACHEL

What about journalistic autonomy?

NIK

There is no autonomy. We're a high school paper, one of five bajillion extracurriculars Roslyn offers. We come here every day to socialize in a controlled group setting and then tack it on to our college resumés. It's a beautiful thing, really.

Rachel glowers at him.

NIK (CONT'D)

Listen. I know you want there to be some big conspiracy. But these are just a bunch of boring old people doing their jobs. Nobody cares.

RACHEL

I care.

NIK

I know. That's what makes you so special. Now get me something on homecoming before five.

He gets up, pats her on the back.

NIK (CONT'D)

We're all counting on you, Kellogg.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

The office staff clears out for the evening.

Pam remains at her desk. She watches her colleagues depart. Her fingers trembling in anticipation.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHARON'S HOUSE - DAY

Frank leads a salon gathering over traditional tea and scones. He presides over a cadre of Roslyn mothers, talking excitedly amongst themselves.

A neat stack of Dickens discussion worksheets rests on the coffee table, virtually untouched.

Frank clears his throat. The chatter dies down.

FRANK

So, what did we all think of *Martin Chuzzlewit*?

The women glance nervously at one another.

Frank picks up on their collective unease. He soldiers on.

FRANK (CONT'D)

One of Dickens' very best works. The book is notable, in particular, for its picaresque qualities...

He's greeted with an instant chorus of assents, emphatic assents, and one or two remarks on the vivid imagery.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Okay. Why don't we start by discussing Seth Pecksniff?

Crickets.

INT. KITCHEN - SHARON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank empties a plate of half-eaten scones into the trash.

The salon's host, SHARON FARKAS, 40s, washes the dishes beside him. The other women have cleared out for the evening.

SHARON

You can't feel bad about it. If these women can't appreciate the culture Dickens has to offer, that's their problem.

FRANK

Did I get through to anyone?

SHARON

Sure. You have a real passion for the material. That shows.

She sets down her last dish. Turns to Frank.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Can I ask you a personal question?
It's just-- so it's been sixteen
months and change since Peter left,
and my kids seem to be coping with
it much better...

FRANK

I'm glad our Banana Splits program
is working out for them.

SHARON

Right.

She takes a beat.

SHARON (CONT'D)

But I guess what I'm trying to say
is-- y'know what, never mind. I'm
an idiot for even thinking...

FRANK

You can talk to me, Sharon.

Sharon meets his gaze. Her lower lip quivers.

She leans in. Frank recoils.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I-- I'm sorry.

SHARON

No, it's not... I'm such a...

She inhales sharply, suppressing tears.

FRANK

Stop that. You're a strong woman
who just wants the best for her
kids. There's no shame in that.

He draws his wedding ring into view.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I don't talk about Joanne often.

Sharon nods, her eyes drying.

FRANK (CONT'D)

It's been almost thirty years now,
but the pain-- well, the pain's
still very real.

SHARON

I can only imagine.

FRANK

You have to find other outlets to get through the day. My work keeps me fulfilled. The students, and doing the best I can by them. I guess it's my way of honoring her.

SHARON

You don't ever think about, y'know, about trying to move on...?

FRANK

No, I don't. Not when the only thing between us and that number one spot is a six to seven percent increase in our annual budget.

SHARON

Fourth place is still pretty good.

FRANK

I like the sound of first better.

Sharon places a hand on his shoulder.

SHARON

The kids are lucky to have you.

FRANK

Thanks, Sharon.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Rachel peruses the frozen foods section. She dumps a pile of microwaveable pizzas into her shopping cart.

She checks out the items. Pays with her own cash.

INT. KITCHEN - RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Rachel and her father DAVID, 40s, feast on the pizzas at the cluttered kitchen counter.

David sports a few days' stubble. He has a drink with dinner.

DAVID

How was your interview? Did you ask if they needed any help over there?

RACHEL
It didn't come up.

DAVID
What do you mean?

RACHEL
It just never came up.

DAVID
Rachel...

RACHEL
You're over-qualified.

David massages his forehead.

DAVID
I've gotta get out of this house.

He clears both their plates.

Rachel sees a pile of bills on the counter. She tears open an envelope from Roslyn Public Schools.

A notice of outstanding school tax payments. Bold lettering, underlined, italicized. Fifteen thousand dollars.

DAVID (CONT'D)
They're pushing for eighty-two million next year. Education's the biggest industry in town.

He drops the dishes in the sink.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'll call tomorrow, see if they have any openings.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT

Frank sits in traffic on the Long Island Expressway, making the tedious crawl back to the city.

He stares straight ahead, gripping the wheel tight.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Frank pulls the Mercedes into its designated space. The taillights slowly fade.

He sits in silence for a moment.

EXT. FRANK'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Frank enters the lobby of an apartment complex. He waves to the doorman, who triggers the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - FRANK'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Frank stands alone in the elevator, facing forward. He removes his wedding ring. Buries it deep in his pocket.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank unlocks the door to his apartment. He sees a pot roast on the dining table. Two place settings.

FRANK

Hello?

His voice echoes through the empty space.

Suddenly, we catch a glimpse of a MAN, 50s, as he CREEPS UP on Frank FROM BEHIND... CLOSING IN... and PRESSES a FINGER into the BACK of HIS TEMPLE.

MAN

(voice distorted)

Gimme your wallet, prick. I'm not fucking around.

Frank doesn't react. The man sulks.

MAN (CONT'D)

I can't scare you.

FRANK

It's that new cologne. The Kenneth Cole. It's a dead giveaway.

The man gets out in front of Frank. He's baby-faced, with a relaxed posture. We'll come to know him as STEVE.

He sizes Frank up and down.

STEVE

You look nice.

He grabs Frank by the lapels. Kisses him.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I picked up your dry cleaning.

FRANK
Thanks. I'll reimburse you.

STEVE
What's wrong?

FRANK
Nothing. I'm just tired.

He gives Steve a peck on the cheek.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Let's eat.

INT. BEDROOM - FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank sits up in bed, reading a book.

He gazes across the room, where the bathroom door hangs slightly ajar. Steve's taking a shower, singing to himself.

Frank purses his lips. He returns to his reading.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

The lights have been shut off for the night, save for the halogen lamp at Pam's desk.

Pam pulls up a spreadsheet on her computer. An exhaustive line-item list of district expenses, typed in minuscule font.

She extracts a handful of receipts from her desk drawer. Each of them charged to P. GLUCKIN.

Pam inputs their contents into the spreadsheet:

THE SHARPER IMAGE ROOSEVELT FIELD -- \$472.22
FORTUNOFF OLD COUNTRY RD -- \$287.53
ROSA MEXICANO BELLMORE -- \$96.52
LESLIE'S POOL SUPPLIES -- \$124.98
SHELL GAS MERRICK RD -- \$38.22

She gazes at the expenses. Takes a sip from her coffee mug.

Her finger hits the backspace key. Stays there.

The cursor races leftward, wiping out the SHARPER IMAGE text in one fell swoop.

She thinks.

The cursor blinks idly on the screen.

She brings her finger down. Tap. Tap. Tap.

In the place of Brooks Brothers, the spreadsheet now shows a \$472.22 expense belonging to

McGRAW HILL / TEXTBOOK RESUPPLY

She feeds the original receipt INTO the SHREDDER. Hovers the cursor down to the FORTUNOFF line item. Just as she prepares to hit the backspace key once more...

CUSTODIAN (O.S.)

Sorry, Pam. I didn't realize you were still in here.

Pam withdraws her hand from the keyboard. She peers up at the elderly CUSTODIAN, clearing out trash bags.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

Another long night?

She speaks in a measured, restrained tone.

PAM

You know me. Burning the midnight oil whenever I can help it.

She watches as he circulates the bullpen, a hobble in his step. Moving very slowly.

PAM (CONT'D)

Any fun weekend plans?

CUSTODIAN

Yeah, I'm gonna enjoy our last few rays of sunshine before fall rolls around. You?

PAM

Oh, I think I'll see my family. Have a quiet weekend at home.

She smiles.

We hear the off-screen ROAR of a JET-SKI.

EXT. QUANTUCK BAY - DAY

TIGHT on PAM, having the TIME OF HER LIFE.

She commands a turbo-powered KAWASAKI, face drenched in salt water, hair thrashing about in the breeze. A wild joker's grin from ear to ear.

WHOOSH! As she SOARS over a WAVE in SLOW MOTION.

We're treated to similar action shots of four additional family members, charging ahead on separate jet-skis.

They're identified via CHYRONS in FREEZE-FRAME, each captured in the throes of ecstatic, exhilarating bliss:

HENRY GLUCKIN, 50s, Pam's new husband, wiry and diminutive, sporting an unconvincing spray tan;

JOHN 'JOHN BOY' McCORMICK, 20s, Pam's son, puffy-faced and hopelessly good-natured;

AMBER McCORMICK, 20s, Pam's daughter, a strawberry blonde with her mother's looks;

and DEBBIE RIGANO, 30s, Pam's niece, whom we already know from her brief introduction at the administrative office.

The five of them veer their Kawasakis in a synchronized circle, following one another in close succession, creating a formidable eddy in their center.

EXT. BACK PATIO - PAM'S BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Pam and Henry host a pool party at their Hamptons home.

Kids scurry about on the deck, assailing each other and the countless pet dogs with complicated high-tech toy weapons. John Boy joins in on the fun, a big kid himself.

Jack Lombardo splays out on a floatie, sipping on a frozen margarita. He finds himself unwittingly caught between two youngsters in a Super Soaker battle.

LOMBARDO

Watch it, or I'll take that thing
and bash you over the head with it.

Elsewhere, Henry fires up bison burgers on the grill. He's accompanied by a friend, another dad.

HENRY'S FRIEND

Single best stretch of beach on the
island, I've always said. I know a
guy paid eight hundred for his, but
that was only a two-bedroom. This
property-- jeez, it must've cost
you a frickin' fortune.

HENRY

Nah, not bad. Not too bad. It was a foreclosure, so.

HENRY'S FRIEND

C'mon, help me out here. How does a used car salesman afford a place on Dune Road? I mean, I know Pam's a civil servant...

Henry turns to his friend, offended.

HENRY

Firstly, the Jeeps, Oldsmobiles and Chevys I deal in aren't used. At worst, at very worst, they're lightly pre-owned. And, now that you mention it, I happen to do some consulting in my spare time.

HENRY'S FRIEND

What kind of consulting?

Henry takes a beat.

HENRY

Y'know. Futures and shit.

Pam loiters at the bar, entertaining friends of her own. They shout over the sound of the blender, gnashing ice.

PAM

To be honest, I'm not crazy about the second level. We're doing a big remodel after the season's through.

PAM'S FRIEND

Who are you using?

PAM

John Boy.

PAM'S FRIEND

John Boy's a contractor?

PAM

Oh yeah. He's emerging as a real force in the industry. They've got him spearheading some pretty major heavy-duty projects--

They observe as John Boy's tackled by an onslaught of kids, groaning dramatically as he sinks to his knees.

JOHN BOY

Ma! Help me, ma! They've destroyed
my All-Spark! Ahh!

Pam returns to her friends.

PAM

Like I was saying, he's finally
found his niche. But then again,
he's always been very creative,
very handy with construction. You
should see him with the-- what's it
again-- the K'Nex sets. He barely
even needs the manual.

Debbie appears beside Pam.

PAM (CONT'D)

Girls, have you met my sister's kid
Debbie Rigano? The two of us work
together now. You know, in Roslyn.

PAM'S FRIEND

That's great. What are you doing
over there?

DEBBIE

I'm district clerk. I'm very new.

PAM

They love her. She's a star.

DEBBIE

I'm okay. Getting better. Aunt Pam,
can we talk in the house a sec?

PAM

Sure. Excuse me, ladies.

INT. DEN - PAM'S BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Pam straightens a painting of two horses galloping that hangs
above the fireplace. Debbie waits for her on the couch.

PAM

This is an original Christian Riese
Lassen print. Henry and I bought it
from a dealer in Maui.

She steps back to admire the art.

PAM (CONT'D)

I find it very evocative.

Pam sits down next to Debbie.

PAM (CONT'D)
So what's going on?

DEBBIE
Honestly, I feel bad even bringing it up. See, Jared's birthday's in a couple of weeks, and he's been asking for this Sony PlayStation whatever... and he keeps saying how all his friends already have it...

PAM
The video game system.

DEBBIE
Yeah. So money's been kinda tight lately, and you know how those things are so frickin' expensive--

PAM
Charge it to the card. Leave the receipt on my desk Monday morning.

Debbie grows tense.

DEBBIE
Right, but I was wondering if you couldn't just loan me the money, y'know, out of your personal? I'd pay you back as soon as I'm able--

PAM
Debra. Stop.

She places a hand on Debbie's. They make eye contact.

PAM (CONT'D)
Do you trust me? You trust me, don't you?

DEBBIE
Yeah. Yeah, I trust you. Of course I trust you.

PAM
Then trust that I know what I'm doing. And that there's absolutely nothing for you to be afraid of.

DEBBIE
He just wants that PlayStation so goddamn much, y'know?

PAM
You can't put a price on a child's
smile. It's priceless.

Debbie nods.

DEBBIE
Yeah.

PAM
Yeah indeed.

INT. CLASSROOM - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Frank convenes with the seven-person school board. Men and women. Parents. Big Bill, front and center.

FRANK
As you all know, this is our most
important budget yet. This is the
one that'll define us. We need to
work together to sell this thing.

BIG BILL
This is why you called us all here
on a Saturday? Christ, Frank, the
vote's nine months away.

FRANK
Exactly. We can't let it sneak up
on us again. You all remember what
almost happened in '01.

BIG BILL
Okay. What did you have in mind?

FRANK
This time, we go to the mattresses.

Frank picks up a piece of chalk. He pivots to the chalkboard behind him. Starts sketching with a wild energy.

FRANK (CONT'D)
The whole town has to feel a strong
personal stake in the future of our
schools. We've gotta get out in the
streets and shake every hand, kiss
every baby, tout every achievement--

PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S.)
Say cheese!

INT. VARIOUS - DAY

Frank poses with the winners of the middle school science fair. With the student cast of *The Pirates of Penzance*. With the all-county varsity basketball team.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The marching band parades through the streets, campaigning for the budget. Blocking cars. Stopping traffic.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Big Bill schmoozes with the mayor and a few other municipal officials. All the men puff on fat cigars.

INT. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

Frank cranks the bingo cage, the numbered marbles swooshing and rattling before him. He plucks one out.

FRANK

B-5! It's B-5! Come on up, Muriel!

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHARON'S HOUSE - DAY

Frank spearheads a lively discussion on *Great Expectations*.

He cracks a joke. The room erupts in laughter.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - DAY

Frank is honored as the Roslyn Rotary Club's Man of the Year.

He presents his trophy for the flashing cameras, flanked on either side by drunk elderly vets in fezzes.

INT. TEMPLE SINAI SYNAGOGUE - DAY

Frank stands at the podium, clad in a yarmulke. He's flanked by the young Bat Mitzvah, BECCA BLAUSTEIN, and a RABBI.

Frank reads from the sacred scroll laid out in front of him, donning a pair of glasses.

FRANK

*Baruch atah adonai, eloheinu melech
ha'olam, asher bachar banu...*

INT. CATERING HALL - NIGHT

Becca and her adolescent friends clutter the dance floor, bopping and hopping, as a bored party DJ spins tunes.

Her father Big Bill lingers on the perimeter, drinking steadily. Frank's seated beside him, sober for the night.

FRANK

Thanks for having me. Becca's grown into quite the young woman.

BIG BILL

You're family. Amy never would've had a snowball's chance at Penn if you hadn't pulled those strings.

FRANK

Amy was a talented student.

BIG BILL

She was just so-so. Maybe Syracuse or Binghamton grade, definitely not Penn material. You put her there. You made the difference.

He looks out at his younger daughter on the dance floor.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)

I don't ask for much in this life, but I'm counting on you stepping in again when it's Becca's turn.

FRANK

Of course. But I maintain a school superintendent's only as capable as his board president.

BIG BILL

Let's see how the re-election bid goes. Judy Rothman's already taking out full-page ads against me in the paper, the fuckin' mongrel.

Bill downs the rest of his drink.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)

Scary times we live in. You hear the news about Dave Kellogg?

FRANK

That's Rachel and Jeremy's father, right? Works in financials?

BIG BILL
He did. For a little trading
company called Enron.

Frank processes this.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)
Can you believe he had no idea? The
guy lost his life savings in the
span of an afternoon. I hear he
reported to the top brass directly.

FRANK
You think maybe we can find him
something? The board treasurer
position's opening up...

BIG BILL
Better not to invite that kind of
heat. You know how people talk.
(a pause)
I mean, how can you be so close to
something and just not know? I have
sympathy for the guy, but c'mon...

FRANK
It could have happened to anyone.

BIG BILL
Maybe. Not me. Not when I've got a
family to feed.

Bill gets up. He storms the dance floor, arms outstretched.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)
Where's my father-daughter dance?

INT. KITCHEN - RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rachel fishes a drink from the fridge. David enters, hands
dug into his pockets.

DAVID
Hey. They're showing the house
tomorrow. If you wouldn't mind
straightening your room a little...

RACHEL
Yeah. No problem.

She brushes past him into her bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - RACHEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel browses her room, picking items up off the floor. Beneath a pile of clothes, she finds an old, bent photo of their family on the front porch of the house.

Rachel's a toddler, Jeremy a few years older. David's dressed in a suit, trim and clean-shaven. Professional. His arms wrapped around a woman we haven't seen before.

Four smiling, happy faces.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DEBBIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Debbie watches as her son and his friends play a video game on the new system. Utterly absorbed.

She can't help but smile.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank loosens his tie, kicks off his loafers.

STEVE (O.S.)
Did you have fun?

FRANK
I was working.

Steve appears in the doorway.

STEVE
What did they serve?

FRANK
During the reception there was a sushi bar, and for dinner we had a choice between salmon and gnocchi.

STEVE
That's great. I had oatmeal for dinner, in case you were wondering. I had oatmeal and you had gnocchi.

FRANK
Actually I had the salmon. It was dry. You wouldn't have liked it.

Steve glares at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You could have gone out.

STEVE
Or you could have brought me.

FRANK
I told you it was a work function.
It wouldn't have been--

STEVE
Appropriate?

Frank doesn't respond.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You're a coward.

FRANK
I'm a coward who loves you.

STEVE
You don't.

FRANK
I do. You know I do.

STEVE
But you're not--

Frank kisses him. Tender. Committed.

Steve pulls away, smiling.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You taste like dry salmon.

FRANK
I can fix that.

He goes to the bathroom. Gargles mouthwash. Spits.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Hey, are you tired yet? I could use
your help with something.

INT. BEDROOM - FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steve sits on the bed, a Roslyn yearbook perched on his lap.
He's opened to the faculty section, which is neatly annotated
with an array of flags, tabs and Post-Its.

Frank paces before him.

STEVE
Jamieson.

FRANK

That's too easy. He's been around since the stone age.

STEVE

Okay. Schiffer.

FRANK

Mel Schiffer, social studies. Ninth grade global history. He coaches little league, likes old westerns.

STEVE

Caruso.

FRANK

Iris is eleventh grade pre-calc. Regents level-- no, honors. She lives in Glen Head, in a charming old converted farmhouse.

STEVE

Really? I love that.

FRANK

Don't get too excited. There's no central air.

STEVE

Figueroa.

Frank stops.

FRANK

Figueroa... Figueroa...

INT. CAFETERIA - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The school faculty gathers for a district-hosted brunch. The room's centerpiece is an overflowing chocolate fountain.

Frank presides over one of the many faculty tables.

FRANK

Mr. Figueroa! How's your squash game holding up? Still competing in those tournaments?

MR. FIGUEROA

Oh yeah. Every weekend.

FRANK

That's great. So important to keep fit. Hey Karina, are they having you back on Jeopardy any time soon?

SECOND TEACHER (KARINA)

Just the once, unfortunately.

FRANK

Aw, that's a shame. You and Alex had some rapport. You made our school look very good that night.

SECOND TEACHER (KARINA)

Thanks, Dr. Tassone.

The caterer pops in, offering a tray.

CATERER

Broiled lobster tails?

FRANK

None for me, thanks. Excuse me a sec. Jim! How are the twins--?

Frank strides over to the next table. The teachers turn to one another, mystified.

SECOND TEACHER (KARINA)

Lobster tails? Are you kidding me?

MR. FIGUEROA

The guys in custodial told me he covers it all out of pocket. He knows how to treat his people.

SECOND TEACHER (KARINA)

No kidding. Back in Jericho we were lucky if we got cold cuts.

DOUG BRESSLER, 40s, high school principal, spies Frank from across the room. He beelines toward him.

BRESSLER

You've outdone yourself this year.

FRANK

As any administrator worth his salt will tell you, happy teachers equals happy schools.

BRESSLER

Ain't it the truth. Hey, I've got something to run by you.

He hands Frank a print-out brochure.

FRANK

The National School Conference Institute? I haven't heard of them.

BRESSLER

It's a new outfit. They're putting up a big speaker series next month. I'm thinking our presence could make for some healthy PR...?

Frank flips through the pages.

FRANK

Well, Principal Bressler, this certainly seems like an interesting opportunity for Roslyn. I'd love to expand our national scope.

He looks up at Bressler.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Where'd you say it was being held?

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Debbie's on the phone with a travel agency. She gives the conference brochure a once-over.

DEBBIE

I'd like to book three round-trip tickets to Las Vegas.

TRAVEL AGENT (O.S.)

Sure, we'll get that squared away for you. Would you like to hear about our VIP deluxe package?

DEBBIE

Gee. VIP? I'm sure they're not looking for anything too fancy...

TRAVEL AGENT (O.S.)

Are you an outside agent?

Debbie furrows her brow.

DEBBIE

I'm, uh, I'm not--

TRAVEL AGENT (O.S.)

As an outside agent, you'll earn a five-percent commission on today's travel booking. That is, provided you're contacting us on behalf of your clients.

DEBBIE

Oh.

She bites her lip. Leans back in her chair, props her feet on the desk. Twirls the phone cord with her finger.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

You know what, why don't we go ahead and book three VIP deluxes. For my *clients*.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Homecoming is in full swing. Students and community members pack the bleachers, swathed in Roslyn blue and white.

The marching band performs a rousing halftime show, complete with cheerleaders and baton twirlers. The school's bulldog mascot cartwheels across the astroturf.

Frank and Pam confer on the sidelines, distanced from the pandemonium that defines the scene.

FRANK

Did you ever play an instrument?

PAM

Seven years' clarinet. I loathed every minute of it.

FRANK

Growing up, my school didn't have a music program. I think I would've really excelled at the saxophone.

(a pause)

You're upset with me.

Pam's head stirs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Pam. Tell me what's going on.

PAM

Y'know, my dad tried to discourage me from administrative work.

(MORE)

PAM (CONT'D)

He said it'd always be a guy in a suit at the top of the chain. That I'd get stuck in the steno pool.

FRANK

Is this about the conference?

PAM

When's my turn, huh? I've been here even longer than you. When do I get to be the face for once?

FRANK

That was never up to me.

He looks out at the crowd.

FRANK (CONT'D)

They love the suit. The straight laces and buttons and cufflinks. I'm every other jerk-off they've ever met. I don't rock the boat or threaten the status quo. With me they feel safe and secure.

He turns to her.

FRANK (CONT'D)

But you put a woman in the same position, a woman who's confident, capable at that-- she's a moving target. An object of scorn, and nastiness, and ridicule. They look for reasons to challenge her. You saw what happened to Julie Flynn in Syosset. I don't want that for you.

PAM

I don't need you to protect me. You think I'm scared of them?

FRANK

I think they're scared of *you*. Of real progress. Of change.

PAM

In that case, maybe you're the one they should really be afraid of. You and your *straight laces*.

Frank tightens.

PAM (CONT'D)

Frank.

FRANK
No. You're right.

PAM
Frank, I'm sorry.

He meets her gaze.

PAM (CONT'D)
Did you tell him you're going?

FRANK
Yeah. He knows. He's not thrilled.
It's only two days, but... I think
I could use some time.

PAM
If you ever need anything.

Frank nods. Pam touches his hand.

FRANK
Fuck 'em. If this is really what
you want, let's make it happen.
I'll help however I can.

PAM
Thanks, Frank.

We see the two of them from a CAMERA MONITOR, zooming in slowly to capture their interaction. Their words are lost amidst the ROAR of the MARCHING BAND.

Rachel lowers her camera.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Pam sits at her workstation, tapping away on her keyboard.

RACHEL (O.S.)
Hi Mrs. Gluckin.

She looks up to see Rachel, wind-blown and soaking wet.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Hi. I was told to come to you if I
wanted to take a look at the annual
budget reports.

PAM
What's this about?

RACHEL

Oh, sorry. I'm Rachel Kellogg with
The Hilltop Beacon.

PAM

Since when are you guys doing
budget stories? It seems a fairly
dull subject for the Beacon, if you
want my opinion.

Rachel shrugs. Pam eyes her strangely.

PAM (CONT'D)

Okay. Well, we post the budgets
online for anyone who wants to see.
If you visit our website, there
should be a link on the homepage.

She gives a polite smile. Returns to her computer.

Rachel doesn't budge.

RACHEL

Sorry. Only the function summaries
are available online. I was hoping
to see the line-by-line reports.

Pam exhales, visibly irritated now.

PAM

Which year specifically?

Rachel thinks.

RACHEL

All of them, I guess.

PAM

What for?

RACHEL

Budget reports are a part of the
public record, right? If a request
is made, you're not allowed to
obscure them--

PAM

Hold on, who's obscuring? No one's
obscuring. You're welcome to take a
look at however many budgets you
want. I'm just telling you, they're
not very exciting. It's a lot of
numbers and percentages...

RACHEL
That's okay. I'm in Math Olympiads.

PAM
You're in the Math Olympiads.

Rachel nods eagerly.

PAM (CONT'D)
Well, don't say I didn't warn you.

She hands Rachel a small key.

PAM (CONT'D)
They're waiting for you down in the
basement. Happy hunting.

INT. BASEMENT - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Rachel combs through the district archives, plucking dusty old binders from the shelves one by one.

She steps straight into a cobweb. Gets some in her mouth. Doubles over in a coughing fit.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Rachel returns to Pam with a stack of binders.

RACHEL
Could I use the Xerox machine to
photocopy some of these?

Pam stares at the mammoth pile. She bites her lip.

PAM
It's ten cents a sheet.

Rachel smiles.

INT. COPIER ROOM - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Debbie feeds the reports into the Xerox, one page at a time. Rachel stands beside her, cradling a bag filled with dimes.

DEBBIE
So, you're a junior?

RACHEL
Sophomore.

DEBBIE

That's nice. My son's in sixth grade. His name's Jared.

RACHEL

Cool.

They look off in opposite directions. The copier spits out spreadsheets by the second.

INT. LIBRARY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Rachel pores over the budgets with a highlighter. She wears a pair of headphones to tune out the surrounding chatter.

INT. KITCHEN - RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rachel approaches David at the kitchen counter. He's nursing a drink, struggling to stay awake.

RACHEL

Can I borrow your laptop? I need to use your software for something.

DAVID

My old financial software?

RACHEL

Yeah. For a project I'm doing.

DAVID

Do you need any help?

RACHEL

Nope, I'm all set. Thanks Dad.

She leaves with the laptop.

INT. BEDROOM - RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rachel configures her own spreadsheet on the laptop. Inputs the numbers from the school budgets. Chews on her pen.

EXT. ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A severe thunderstorm besieges the school and its campus. Streaks of lightning flash ominously on the horizon.

The SkyWalk, still nowhere near completion, appears to be swaying in the heavy winds.

INT. HALLWAY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The hallway is lined with trash cans serving as rain buckets, receptacles for the widespread ceiling leakage.

Rachel walks past the library. She looks in through the window to find Mrs. Dwyer scurrying about in a yellow rain coat, attempting to rescue every book she can.

INT. HEALTH CLASSROOM - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The health teacher gives a lecture. She tries her best to ignore the blue tarp (or "bladder") dangling overhead, which accumulates rainwater in its ever-swelling basin.

She gazes up at the tarp. It's GURGLING and MOANING, like an upset stomach... and just as it looks READY to POP...

INT. CASINO - CAESAR'S PALACE - DAY

A cocktail waitress POPS THE CORK on a BOTTLE of CHAMPAGNE.

She winds through the packed establishment, delivering the glasses to Bressler and Lombardo at a craps table.

Lombardo blows on the dice in his hand. Flings them forward.

LOMBARDO
Eleven! Eleven! Eleven--!

INT. EVENT HALL - RAMADA INN - DAY

Frank watches a dull PowerPoint lecture at the education conference. He copies down the bullet points in a notebook.

Beside him are two unoccupied seats.

INT. LOBBY - RAMADA INN - DAY

Frank mingles with the other attendees, putting his best face forward. He shakes hands, collects business cards.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Frank takes a midnight stroll down the strip, a tiny presence in the shadows of the great playground hotels.

He pauses outside a popular gay nightclub. His face awash in the bright neon glow of the signage. The beat pulsing from inside, reverberating out into the street.

He keeps walking, past the club. Gets a tap on the shoulder.

MAN
You got a light?

FRANK
I don't. Sorry.

He looks up, briefly glimpses the man.

He's early 30s, youthful and handsome, dressed in a faux leather jacket patched at the elbows.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Jason?

Jason keeps walking. Frank pursues.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Hey, Jason! Jason DiMarco!

JASON
Back off, man. I just asked if you had a light, not some kind of--

FRANK
You're Jason DiMarco from Levittown High School, maybe fifteen years ago. From when I taught there.

Jason stops. He meets Frank's gaze.

JASON
Dr. Tassone?

FRANK
It's Frank.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Frank and Jason sit across from one another in a corner booth. Jason shifts uneasily on the vinyl.

JASON
Hey, uh, Frank -- do all teachers have a memory like you do? I always figured they just forget about you the second you're outta there.

FRANK

It varies, I think. Three hundred kids a year, things start to get a bit hazy. And they rarely come by again afterwards, so you don't get much in the way of follow-up. But there are some you don't forget.

JASON

I don't know. I would've figured I'd be pretty forgettable.

FRANK

You liked books.

Jason cracks a smile.

JASON

Yeah. Yeah, I did. Like sci-fi and shit. Harlan Ellison.

FRANK

You carried around that beat-up copy of *Dune* with you, always. It was a nice detail, I put it in your college rec. You went on to Stony Brook, right? How was that?

Jason looks down at his menu. Scratches the back of his neck. Frank glimpses a series of bruises on his forearm.

JASON

Not so good. I think I was burned out on the whole Long Island scene, to be honest. I left after a year.

FRANK

And you live out here now?

JASON

Yeah. Is that okay?

FRANK

What do you mean?

JASON

I just feel like you're judging me, like, for not doing more.

FRANK

Oh, I'd imagine there are lots of people that live in Las Vegas and do just fine. More than fine.

He takes a sip of coffee.

JASON

Yeah, I guess you could say I'm in between things. I was dancing, actually, up until pretty recently.

FRANK

Dancing?

JASON

Yeah. You know. Anyways, that was a pretty good gig and all, till I went and fucked up my ACL...

FRANK

You could write.

Jason laughs.

JASON

Okay. What am I writing?

FRANK

Science fiction. Something in the vein of Harlan Ellison, or *Dune*.

JASON

Nobody wants to read that from me.

FRANK

I'd read it.

Jason sobers.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm serious.

JASON

Hey, can you-- can you stop?

FRANK

Stop what?

JASON

I don't know. This.

FRANK

We're just talking.

JASON

C'mon. It's two in the morning and you're sitting here messing around with me. Don't you have, like, a wife waiting for you at the hotel?

FRANK

No. No wife.

JASON

Really? At your age?

FRANK

I'm a widower.

Jason shakes his head.

JASON

Fuck. You know, they used to say things about you back in Levittown.

FRANK

Like what?

JASON

Nothing. No, nothing. Stupid stuff. You know how kids talk.

Frank peers up at him.

FRANK

What did they say?

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Bressler and Lombardo wait to board the plane. They spot Frank as he approaches, clad in last night's wrinkled suit.

BRESSLER

Where were you? We tried knocking on your door this morning.

FRANK

I overslept.

BRESSLER

In your suit, by the looks of it.

LOMBARDO

Glad to see at least one of us got some strange pussy this weekend...

FRANK

I missed you two at the conference.

BRESSLER

Yeah. Y'know, that stomach flu
knocked us both right on our ass.

LOMBARDO

Terrible, terrible timing.

Frank sighs.

FRANK

Did you win any money at least?

BRESSLER

We did okay.

LOMBARDO

Thanks for the respite, Frank.
You're a hell of a guy.

They walk ahead of him. He grimaces.

EXT. BACK PATIO - PAM'S BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Grey skies. Calm seas. Seagulls heading west.

John Boy roams the patio in a hard hat and utility belt,
taking measurements with a roll of tape.

He whips a pencil from behind his ear. Jots down notes.

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

John Boy maneuvers a shopping cart down the sheetrock aisle,
plucking a variety of supplies from the shelves.

He's not exactly discerning.

INT. CHECKOUT - HOME DEPOT - DAY

A clerk rings up John Boy's purchases. He swivels a credit
card machine forward. The total is \$3,423.25.

WHOOSH! As John Boy SWIPES HIS CARD through the reader. We
see the RAISED PRINT on THE PLASTIC, in SHARP FOCUS:

JOHN D. McCORMICK
ROSLYN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EXT. PARKING LOT - HOME DEPOT - DAY

John Boy loads up his pick-up truck.

He gets in the driver's seat. Unfolds a map of Home Depot store locations across Long Island. Checks off the top one with his ear pencil.

EXT. PARKING LOT - ANOTHER HOME DEPOT - DAY

John Boy pulls up to a nearly identical Home Depot.

INT. ANOTHER HOME DEPOT - DAY

John Boy weaves through a new aisle.

INT. CHECKOUT - ANOTHER HOME DEPOT - DAY

Whoosh! John Boy swipes his card.

EXT. PARKING LOT - ANOTHER HOME DEPOT - DAY

John Boy packs his truck with the second round of supplies. He ticks another Home Depot off the list.

INT. CHECKOUT - YET ANOTHER HOME DEPOT - DAY

Yet another clerk. Yet another stockpile of goods.

Whoosh.

EXT. PARKING LOT - YET ANOTHER HOME DEPOT - DAY

The clerk helps John Boy carry his supplies to the truck. He sees it's already stuffed beyond capacity.

CLERK

How many of our stores have you visited today?

JOHN BOY

Yeah. A couple, I guess. The ones in Farmingdale and Patchogue didn't have what I was looking for.

John Boy climbs up into the back of his truck. He attempts to rearrange the boxes to create more space.

CLERK
They didn't have plywood?

JOHN BOY
Nah, they were all out. So you
gonna help me load this or what?

CLERK
I'm not sure it'll fit.

JOHN BOY
It'll fit.

He wipes a bead of sweat from his brow. Keeps at it.

CLERK
Sir. Sir? You know we actually
offer a free ship-to service for
our high-value customers...

John Boy stops. Peers down at the clerk.

JOHN BOY
You think I'm high-value?

The clerk looks at the colossal heap of merchandise.

CLERK
Reasonably, yeah.

INT. BREAK ROOM - YET ANOTHER HOME DEPOT - DAY

The clerk eats lunch with his fellow employees, recounting
the story in between mouthfuls of his tuna fish sandwich.

CLERK
So the guy gives me this home
address in Westhampton, a full
fifty miles from Roslyn.

CLERK'S FRIEND
What's a Roslyn Schools contractor
doing buying supplies all the way
in Selden? And don't public schools
get all their materials wholesale?

They take a look at John Boy's customer receipt. The STORE
MANAGER pokes his head in.

STORE MANAGER
Tool chests? Shower heads? This
stuff screams home improvement.

He whisks the receipt off the table.

STORE MANAGER (CONT'D)

It so happens my wife's cousin's married to one of the boardies over at Roslyn. Let's see if they can't make some sense of this.

INT. DEN - BIG BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

The fax machine prints out a copy of John Boy's receipt.

BONNIE BLAUSTEIN, 50s, examines the purchases. Her head reeling in utter disbelief.

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - BIG BILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Bill sits in a bathroom stall, leafing through a magazine. His phone rings. He fumbles to answer it.

BIG BILL

Honey?

BONNIE (O.S.)

You need to come home. Now.

INT. KITCHEN - BIG BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Bill and Bonnie assess the receipt together.

BIG BILL

He can't be one of Lombardo's guys. The school's supposed to put out bids for construction materials.

BONNIE

Then who is John McCormick and why does he have a Roslyn expense card?

BIG BILL

I don't know any McCormick over there. There is no McCormick.

BONNIE

Wait, wasn't Pam Cremona-- or Pam Gluckin or whatever-- her first husband was a McCormick, wasn't he?

They look at one another. Bill laughs.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

What?

BIG BILL

No fuckin' way. Pam Gluckin, of all people, with a house on Dune Road?

EXT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Pam backs her Corvette into its parking spot, bopping her head to a cheery '80s pop song on the radio.

Her vanity license plate reads DUNENUT.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Pam enters the building, a spring in her step. She finds ALL SEVEN MEMBERS of THE SCHOOL BOARD waiting for her.

BIG BILL

Hi Pam.

Pam's smile fizzles.

INT. RESOURCE ROOM - ROSLYN MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Frank oversees a panel of restless sixth graders, all seated on bean bag chairs. He folds his hands over his knees.

FRANK

So, what do you all hope to achieve in the sixth grade? We'll go around in a circle, counter-clockwise starting with Spencer.

Spencer stares blankly ahead, mouth hanging open.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Spencer, are you with us?

No visible reaction.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Spencer? Is he okay--? All right. Why don't we move on to Heather?

HEATHER

I don't know about sixth grade, but I'd like to be a cardiothoracic surgeon like my mom.

FRANK

That's great, Heather. But again,
thinking a bit more short-term--

The door swings open, revealing Frank's secretary MARY ANN,
heaving to catch her breath.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Mary Ann?

MARY ANN

Come... quick...

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

Frank faces the school board. He looks pale, drained of
color. His head's spinning.

The board members shout over one another in a mess of fury
and panic. Frank can barely register them.

BIG BILL

She's a fucking thief!

JUDY ROTHMAN

She made off with thirty thousand
dollars in taxpayer money, and
that's just between all the Home
Depots. Who knows who else has one
of those expense cards?

THIRD BOARDIE (STAN)

We have a moral obligation to
report this to the community.

JUDY ROTHMAN

No. This is a criminal matter. We
need to call the police. The FBI.

FOURTH BOARDIE (BETH)

You think the FBI would care about
something this small-time? Aren't
they busy investigating terrorists?

JUDY ROTHMAN

I think it's worth giving them a
call, at the very least.

Frank gazes past them at the conference room window, where
Pam sits quietly in detention.

They make eye contact.

FIFTH BOARDIE (WENDY)
I just got off with our lawyers.
They recommend we report.

SIXTH BOARDIE (JOEL)
Okay, so what are we waiting for?
Let's crucify the bitch.

BIG BILL
I'm calling the mayor. No, the
sheriff. Who should I call first?

THIRD BOARDIE (STAN)
You think they'd have the FBI in
the yellow pages--?

FRANK
Hold on.

They all turn to him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I need to sit down.

BIG BILL
Frank, are you okay? Quick, someone
get him a glass of water.

Bill guides him to a chair. Debbie, lingering off to the
sidelines, scrambles to the water cooler.

FRANK
I'm sorry. I should've caught this.

BIG BILL
It's not your fault. It's neglect
on all our ends.

Debbie returns with a paper cup. She hands it to Frank.

FRANK
Thanks, Debbie. Maybe see if
there's anything we can get Pam
while she's locked up in there.

JUDY ROTHMAN
Haven't we given her enough?

FRANK
She did a terrible thing, but she's
still a human being. And so are we.

Judy nods to Debbie. Debbie proceeds.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I think we need to wait until we have a firm number for Andy.

JUDY ROTHMAN

Andy, our auditor? The man's a moron. He's the one person that should've picked up on this--

THIRD BOARDIE (STAN)

Fuck him too, the prick.

FRANK

We can't afford to jump the gun. Not when there's so much at stake. Let's see how deep the well runs before we commit ourselves to any definitive course of action.

He looks at Bill in appeal.

BIG BILL

We'll give him one more hour. After that we start making calls. Frank, go ahead and drink that water. We need you with us tonight. Anyone have any food lying around?

FRANK

I'll be fine. I'm just a little shell-shocked. Thanks, everyone.

He takes a sip.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

Pam sits in solitude.

Debbie enters, passes her a water. Pam gulps it down in one shot, crinkles the paper cup in her closed fist.

PAM

How could John Boy be so careless? I'm pulling him off the remodel, that's for sure. We'll have to hire a real contractor. A professional.

She stares out the window at the board members.

PAM (CONT'D)

Frank's gonna fix this. We've had each other's backs, always.

(MORE)

PAM (CONT'D)
Frank could sell those people ice
in the winter... He'll step up.

DEBBIE
Hey Aunt Pam?

Pam turns to her.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
You think they'll find out about
the PlayStation?

PAM
No. I told you, I handled that.

DEBBIE
That's good. It's just... I might
have also done some early Christmas
shopping, is all.

Pam tightens.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
See, I wasn't gonna mention it till
after the holiday, 'cause I picked
you out something real nice and I
didn't want to spoil it, y'know...

PAM
How much?

Debbie bites her lip.

DEBBIE
Oh... oh, you know... maybe about
eight thousand or so at Macy's? And
another two at Lord & Taylor...?

Pam blinks.

PAM
Frank will take care of this.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

ANDY MILLER, 50s, the district auditor, hunches over an
impossible array of budget papers. Sweating from all pores.

The door opens. Frank enters, visibly stressed.

FRANK
How's it coming along?

ANDY

There's no way. There's just no way. There's check warrants missing, purchase orders...

He looks up at Frank.

ANDY (CONT'D)

How could I have overlooked this? Pam tells me one thing, she says don't worry about it, and I believe her like the idiot schmuck I am.

Andy shuffles through the papers. It's hopeless.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I never so much as think to check up, and then... Christ. I'm gonna lose my job. We're gonna lose our firm. I've been in this business thirty years and... and my kids...

FRANK

Andy.

ANDY

We're dead. They're gonna kill us, Frank. Every last one. Game over.

FRANK

Nobody's killing anyone. Andy, I need you to look at me. Andy.

Andy does so, weakly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You're running the show here. You have to hold it together. Now how much did you find, concretely?

ANDY

Concretely? I dunno. Two hundred twenty-three thousand. But that's just the obvious stuff. Who knows what's buried in here--?

FRANK

Two hundred twenty-three thousand. That's our number. That's the number we go to them with.

ANDY

You're not hearing me. That might just be the tip of the iceberg.

FRANK
You don't know that.

ANDY
Frank, she would've kept the
fucking receipts.

FRANK
But she could have just misplaced
them, right? I mean, there's a very
real scenario where every other
expense on there is totally legit.

ANDY
Maybe. I don't know.

FRANK
Jesus Andy, Pam's not some criminal
mastermind. She's our friend, and
she made a stupid mistake.

ANDY
Yeah. No, yeah, you're right.

Frank nods.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Okay, but what about Hevesi? The
state comptroller's office could
barge in here at any time and
conduct an outside audit.

FRANK
Have they ever done that, in your
thirty years of experience?

Andy thinks. His head stirs.

ANDY
Two hundred twenty-three thousand,
that's what I can find.

FRANK
Maybe we round it up to two fifty.
A nice, clean number.

ANDY
Two fifty. Sure.

FRANK
We're gonna make it through this,
Andy. We're gonna keep our jobs.

ANDY

Yeah. Yeah, we are.

INT. BATHROOM - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

Frank grips the sink tight.

He takes a deep breath. Stares at himself in the mirror.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

Frank returns to the board members.

FRANK

According to Andy, the sum total's
two hundred fifty thousand dollars.

The board reacts in collective disgust.

FOURTH BOARDIE (BETH)

That fucking woman. She's got a set
of balls on her.

BIG BILL

She's gonna rot in prison. Her and
her shitbag son.

Bill whips out his cell phone.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)

Yeah, it's Bill. I need to speak
with Mayor Kolitz...

FRANK

Bill. Put down the phone.

JUDY ROTHMAN

Why should he?

FRANK

Because if the town finds out about
this, the school's as good as dead.

They all process this.

BIG BILL

(into the phone)
I'll call you right back.

He hangs up.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)
 What are you talking about?

FRANK
 It'll be very difficult to explain this away as an isolated incident. Once an establishment is perceived as corrupted, even by one bad egg, the public never sees it the same. Think about Watergate.

JUDY ROTHMAN
 Spare us your civics lesson. We're talking about a crime, a theft of taxpayer money.

FRANK
 Judy, you've been on the school board how long? Seven years?

JUDY ROTHMAN
 Eight years. Proudly.

FRANK
 And in eight years, how many times has our proposed budget passed without incident?

Judy thinks.

JUDY ROTHMAN
 Eight.

FRANK
 And what will happen when our new budget goes up for approval in May? The one that gets us to first?

FIFTH BOARDIE (WENDY)
 I see what he's saying. If an employee was able to siphon two hundred fifty thousand dollars without anyone noticing--

FOURTH BOARDIE (BETH)
 --why keep pumping more and more money into our school system?

FRANK
 If a scandal this seismic breaks, our budget's torpedoed and we start back at square one.

FIFTH BOARDIE (WENDY)
The teachers don't get paid, they
migrate out in droves...

THIRD BOARDIE (STAN)
Would it affect the colleges?

FRANK
It's reasonable to expect that
admissions officers at top-tier
schools would view us differently.

BIG BILL
No. What? Why would they--?

FRANK
If they smell trouble, they could
decide to lay off Roslyn kids for a
few years. The yesses become nos
overnight. I've seen this kind of
thing happen before.

Bill's face grows very pale. He takes a seat.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Okay, then we start to plummet in
the rankings. Our sister schools
push us out of the top ten, the top
hundred even. We become little more
than a blip, an obscurity...

BIG BILL
Worse. We're a fuckin' cautionary
tale. And that's when our property
values crap out. 'Cause on Long
Island, a town's worth is defined--

JUDY ROTHMAN
--by its public school system.

The board absorbs this.

BIG BILL
What the hell do we do?

FRANK
There's one other option.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

The school board filters into the conference room. Pam glares
up at them, anxiously awaiting her fate.

Frank emerges from the pack. He takes a seat at the table, straight across from Pam.

PAM

Frank...

FRANK

It's gonna be okay, Pam. We'll get you home to your family soon.

He looks her in the eyes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You've done a lot for this school, Pam. The board knows that. They're willing to see this incident for what it is -- a lapse in judgment.

Pam nods.

FRANK (CONT'D)

In light of that, they've opted not to press charges or notify police.

PAM

Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Frank.

FRANK

You'll make full restitution, at the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

PAM

Two fifty? Absolutely. Full restitution, of course.

FRANK

You'll finish out the work week, and then you'll resign quietly.

PAM

What?

FRANK

On Friday you'll surrender your administrator's license. You'll sign a confidentiality form--

PAM

Frank.

Frank stops.

PAM (CONT'D)
Frank, what's happening?

She looks at him.

PAM (CONT'D)
Frank, I don't understand what's happening. Why are you--?

FRANK
You stole from the schools, Pam. From the kids. This behavior, it stretches beyond the bounds of immoral. It's heinous, and very likely indicative of sociopathy.

PAM
Sociopathy? What--?

FRANK
The shameless self-interest, the unstable personality, the parade of... of rotten marriages...

PAM
(pleading)
Frank.

Frank averts his gaze. Bill speaks up.

BIG BILL
You need help, Pam. Real medical help. You're a sick woman.

JUDY ROTHMAN
We're very concerned about you.

Frank gives her a short, knowing nod. *This is the way it has to be.* Pam swallows her pride.

PAM
I-- I'm a sick woman.

She chokes on her words.

PAM (CONT'D)
I'm ashamed of myself. I'm ashamed of my actions. There's no excuse for what I did.

BIG BILL
Well, the sociopathy.

Pam flinches.

PAM

Right.

FRANK

Pam, before you go I think it's important for us to recognize the board's extraordinary compassion.

PAM

Thank you, Frank. Thank you, everyone. Judy. Bill.

BIG BILL

Get better, Pam. We all, y'know, we all care about you.

Bill shows Pam the door.

FRANK

We'll make all the arrangements first thing tomorrow morning.

PAM

Sure. Yeah. Good night, all.

She staggers out of the room.

Frank exhales. Bill gives him a pat on the back.

BIG BILL

You saved us tonight, Frank. Go home and get some sleep.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT

Frank drives home. The highway's clear.

His phone chirps. Incoming call from PAM.

Frank pulls over to the side of the road. Kills the engine.

He stares at the phone. Flips it open. Doesn't speak.

PAM (O.S.)

Frank? Frank, I know you're there. I need you to tell me everything's okay. I'll never say a goddamn word to anyone. They'll never know--

He hangs up.

He starts his car.

INT. BEDROOM - FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank joins Steve in bed.

STEVE
How was your day?

FRANK
Great.

Steve embraces him.

STEVE
I missed you.

FRANK
Yeah. I missed you too.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pam returns home. Henry and Debbie are waiting for her.

PAM
Where is he?

She pushes past them. Henry tries to stop her.

HENRY
Pam.

PAM
He's in his bedroom, isn't he? He's
in his bedroom. Don't touch me--!

John Boy slinks out of his room. He smiles sadly.

JOHN BOY
Hi ma.

PAM
Hi ma. Hi ma.

Pam LUNGES FOR HIM.

Henry and Debbie HOLD HER BACK.

PAM (CONT'D)
You moron! You dumb moron!

JOHN BOY
Ma, stop screaming. Ma...

PAM
You're just like your father! Get
the hell out of my house! I don't
want you living here anymore--!

John Boy's eyes start to pool.

JOHN BOY
You're scaring me...

HENRY
Stop it, Pam. You don't mean any of
that. We love you, Johnny Boy.

Amber, Pam's daughter, surfaces from her bedroom in pajamas.

AMBER
What's going on?

PAM
What's going on is John Boy fucked
my entire career, this family's
livelihood. Because he's a *moron!*

HENRY
Your mother lost her job today.

AMBER
Oh. So you can go to a different
school, can't you?

PAM
They're taking away my license.

AMBER
Why? They can't do that. They can't
take your license, unless...

The room falls silent, save for John Boy's sniffles.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Mom. What did you do?

PAM
I took money from them.

AMBER
You what?

PAM
I stole. We all did.

AMBER
Who did?

HENRY

I'm gonna go walk the dogs--

Pam shoots him a glare. He stays put.

PAM

(to Amber)

Your car. Your clothes. This house.
The other houses... the trips...
your college tuition...

Amber's eyes widen.

PAM (CONT'D)

You could've gone to state school.
But you didn't want that. I just
wanted... I just wanted you to be
happy with me...

AMBER

Mom.

HENRY

It's okay, honey. We'll get you a
job at the dealership. We need a
new girl at the front desk anyways.

PAM

You mean like a secretary?

AMBER

Mom.

JOHN BOY

Ma...

HENRY

We'll find something. I'm just
saying we'll work it out.

PAM

I have degrees. I have multiple
degrees in... in education...

AMBER

I'm gonna be sick.

HENRY

We'll get through this, Pam. You're
the smartest woman I know. You're
gonna land right side up.

AMBER

I'm really gonna be sick.

Amber rushes to the bathroom. We hear her HURL.

DEBBIE
I'll take care of her.

Debbie follows after Amber. Henry guides Pam to the couch, shrouds her in a quiet embrace.

PAM
Thank you, Henry.

JOHN BOY
Ma?

John Boy manifests in their sight, casting a long shadow.

PAM
Yeah, John?

JOHN BOY
What you were saying before... you
don't really hate me, do you?

PAM
No. No, of course not. Come sit
over here with me.

John Boy does so.

Pam puts her arm around him.

PAM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I yelled.

Debbie returns with Amber. Amber looks very pale.

PAM (CONT'D)
I still get to finish out the week.
If there's any odds or ends that
need settling...

She looks to Debbie.

PAM (CONT'D)
We'll be fine. There's nothing for
us to worry about.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Rachel appears before Pam, a smile on her face.

RACHEL

Hi Mrs. Gluckin. I was wondering if you had all the individual purchase orders for 1999 through 2002 handy.

Pam stares at Rachel. She twitches.

Rachel doesn't get the hint.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Mrs. Gluckin? I saw an expense for a pizza oven and I spoke with Paula in the cafeteria but she said they didn't know about any pizza ovens--

PAM

Rachel.

RACHEL

Yes?

PAM

Rachel, if I were to pick up my phone and call Nik Aggarwal at the Beacon, would he confirm that he assigned you this story?

RACHEL

No. I mean, not strictly speaking.

PAM

Maybe even generally speaking too?

Rachel doesn't break eye contact.

RACHEL

Maybe.

PAM

Yeah. I hate to burst your bubble, but whatever it is you think you're looking for, you're gonna come up short. No one's hiding anything.

She shuffles papers absently on her desk.

PAM (CONT'D)

On the contrary, we show up here every morning, day in and day out, because we care about providing you with a proper, quality education. Because we're nice people.

Pam smiles, perhaps a little too wide.

RACHEL

I know. But I'd still like to see the purchase orders.

PAM

Well, you can't. Because I'm tired, and my feet are sore, and I have a lot more work to do today.

(a pause)

Also, that pizza oven never went to the high school. Because we ordered it for the middle school. They've got pizzas for days down there.

Rachel processes this. She backs off.

Pam catches sight of Frank as he strolls into his office. She gets up from her chair, follows him inside.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - CONTINUOUS

Frank settles in at his desk. He proceeds with his morning routine, neglecting to acknowledge Pam's presence.

PAM

So that's how it's gonna be, huh?

FRANK

I'm not sure I know what you're referring to, Mrs. Gluckin.

PAM

Fuck you, Frank.

Frank looks up at her.

FRANK

I did what I could to protect you.

PAM

You fired me. Shamed me. Dragged me through the mud. Ignored my calls.

FRANK

I saved you and your son from a life in prison. And you still get your pension and health benefits, more than you deserve.

PAM

You're gonna sit there and pass judgment on me?

(MORE)

PAM (CONT'D)
Frank Tassone, the beloved
educator, nobly dedicating himself
to the children...

She shakes her head.

PAM (CONT'D)
They think I'm so bad? Just wait
until they get a load of their
superintendent.

FRANK
I have nothing to hide.

PAM
You have everything to hide.

FRANK
How I conduct my personal life is
nobody's business but my own. It
doesn't affect the work I do for
this school district.

PAM
We both know that's not what I'm
talking about.

They lock eyes.

PAM (CONT'D)
I see right through you. I always
have. Necessary and proper, my ass.

Frank passes a form across the table.

FRANK
Your exit interview. Please answer
these as honestly as possible.

PAM
Oh. That's a nice touch.

She grabs the paper.

PAM (CONT'D)
If I'm the sociopath, I shudder to
think what that makes you.

FRANK
Hey, if you could send Debra Rigano
in on your way out that'd be great.

Pam's face falls.

PAM
You wouldn't.

FRANK
Take care, Pam. Best of luck.

He motions to the door.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Pam returns to her workstation.

She pulls a key that hangs from her neck, on the same chain as her ID badge. Unlocks the bottom drawer of her desk.

There's a slim blue binder marked **WORDPOWER TECH**. It looks as though it's never been touched.

Pam thinks for a moment.

She extracts the binder. Packs it in her bag.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Debbie sits across from Frank, wringing her hands nervously.

DEBBIE
You're reassigning me?

FRANK
We could really use your expertise down in special utilities. I think it'll be a much better fit.

DEBBIE
Yeah. Yeah, but y'know, I thought I was a pretty good fit up here.

FRANK
We're doing some shuffling. Trying some things out. It's very routine.

DEBBIE
What about Pam's old job? Like, as a business manager? Maybe, y'know, maybe I'd be right for that...

FRANK
Actually, we have Andrew Miller stepping in as interim manager--

DEBBIE
Andy the auditor?

FRANK
--until we're able to find a more
appropriate replacement for Pam.
He's very qualified.

Debbie shifts her weight in the chair.

DEBBIE
I think I should-- I think I might
wanna-- you know, there's a couple
things I know about--

FRANK
Hold on. Sorry to interrupt you.
It's just, I wanted to compliment
you on your necklace. That's really
very pretty. It matches your eyes.

DEBBIE
Thanks.

FRANK
It's new, isn't it? I don't think
I've seen you wear it around here
before. I've got a pretty good eye
for these kinds of things.

DEBBIE
Yeah. It's new.

FRANK
You get it from Lord & Taylor? Or
was that one from Macy's?

Debbie TENSES.

DEBBIE
Special utilities?

FRANK
Yeah, I think so. Thanks Debra.

INT. HALLWAY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Nik stops Rachel on her way to class.

NIK

What the fuck, Kellogg? I just got a call from administration saying you've been asking about budget archives and purchase orders.

RACHEL

You're six and a half months older than me, Nik. You can call me by my first name.

NIK

I didn't approve a budget story.

RACHEL

Yeah. Okay.

Rachel keeps walking. Nik gets out in front of her.

NIK

Where's the piece on the Cancer Benefit Fashion Show that you were supposed to submit on Monday?

RACHEL

I'll have it in tomorrow.

NIK

We're going to print tomorrow.

RACHEL

Then I'll have it tonight.

NIK

Marnie Cahill says you haven't shown up to Spanish since Friday.

RACHEL

I'm gonna be late for Euro.

She breezes past him.

NIK

I'm worried about you. Hey--!

He reaches out, grabs a hold of her backpack -- and it TEARS OPEN AT THE SEAMS. Papers GO FLYING.

Rachel bends down to gather her work.

NIK (CONT'D)

Shit. I'm sorry.

He helps her. Sees the endless flurry of budget print-outs, painstakingly marked and highlighted with the illegible scrawl of a crazy person.

NIK (CONT'D)
What is all this?

Rachel ignores him.

NIK (CONT'D)
You're insane. This is insane--

RACHEL
Leave me alone, Nik.

NIK
No. No way am I gonna be a party to whatever it is you're doing here. You're out of the Beacon.

RACHEL
Great. I was gonna quit your shitty newspaper anyway.

Nik gets to his feet.

NIK
Man. I was gonna ask you to prom next month.

She stops. Looks up at him.

RACHEL
You were?

NIK
Maybe. Yeah. I was definitely thinking about it, at least.

He walks out, leaving Rachel stunned.

INT. LIVING ROOM - RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rachel reassembles her notes on the coffee table. David wanders past. He glimpses the papers.

DAVID
You did all this?

RACHEL
Yeah.

He's impressed. Proud.

DAVID

Listen, Rach. I know I haven't been
the best these past few years. But
I want you to know that I-- I'm--

He takes a closer look.

DAVID (CONT'D)

They spent over a million dollars
on lab supplies?

RACHEL

No. That's just Sargent-Welch.

DAVID

That can't be right... Have you
tried calling them to verify?

RACHEL

You can do that?

David smirks.

DAVID

Oh yeah.

INT. DOORWAY - PAM'S HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell chimes.

AMBER (O.S.)

I'll get it!

Amber rushes into view. She unlocks the door.

A MAN IN A PINSTRIPE SUIT stands at the porch, a cluster of
balloons in his hand. He instantly breaks out into song:

PINSTRIPE MAN

*Hey Pam. We at custodial heard
you're feeling blue, so we asked
our friend to sing an extra-special
song for you--!*

AMBER

What the fuck?

The man's smile fades.

PINSTRIPE MAN

Are you not Pam Gluckin?

AMBER

No, I'm her daughter.

PINSTRIPED MAN

Is she home? I've got an extra-special song addressed to her.

AMBER

I'm calling the police.

She moves to close the door.

PINSTRIPED MAN

Wait! I'm Tony Treble, her singing telegram. I was hired to deliver a get-well-soon greeting.

AMBER

But my mom's not sick.

PINSTRIPED MAN

They said she had stage four ovarian cancer.

AMBER

What?

PINSTRIPED MAN

If she doesn't have cancer, then what's all this?

He steps aside to reveal a seemingly interminable array of get-well-soon kitsch cluttering the porch.

Amber's mouth drops.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PAM'S HOUSE - DAY

The house has been overtaken with sympathy baskets and flowers. The phone's ringing off the hook. Total mania.

Pam weaves past Henry, who wrestles an oversized stuffed bunny through the door. She picks up the phone.

PAM

Yes, this is she... No thank you. Please don't call here again.

She hangs up.

PAM (CONT'D)
 They want to donate the proceeds of
 the fashion show to pay for my
 medical expenses.

She turns to John Boy, who picks at an elaborate edible
 arrangement. Slaps the food from his hand.

PAM (CONT'D)
 Don't touch anything. We're sending
 it all back.

JOHN BOY
 Can't we keep the macaroons?

PAM
 Those macaroons belong to cancer
 victims and their families. Not us.

She takes a deep breath.

PAM (CONT'D)
 What the fuck did Frank tell them?

INT. HALLWAY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Nik snaps the plastic bindings off a freshly printed batch of
 Hilltop Beacon newspapers.

The front page reads "ADMINISTRATOR RETIRES SUDDENLY DUE TO
 SEVERE ILLNESS," with a photo of Pam at a pie-eating contest.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Bressler reads the paper, shaking his head. He consoles his
 secretary, who dabs away tears with a Kleenex.

Frank's voice crackles from the loudspeaker.

FRANK (O.S.)
*We wish Pamela Gluckin a speedy
 recovery. May God be with her
 through this unthinkable trial.*

INT. GYM - DAY

Frank pumps iron with the help of his physical trainer.

He sprints on the treadmill. Steadfast. Determined.

INT. AUDITORIUM - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Frank and Bill ring in the early-decision college acceptances on a massive projector.

BIG BILL
Cornell, *five!* Amherst, *six!*

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Andy occupies Pam's former cubicle, reconciling a stack of crumpled petty cash receipts.

Debbie clears out her belongings at the adjacent desk. She hauls her boxes to the elevator. Presses the DOWN arrow.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

The office staff operates a de facto assembly line, preparing holiday cards and candy canes for the Roslyn taxpayers.

They stamp each card with Frank's signature.

INT. KITCHEN - RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

David tosses Frank's holiday card in the trash. He returns to poring through the budgets with Rachel.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pam's extended family gathers for a Christmas Eve dinner, a classic Bing Crosby noel drawling over the radio.

John Boy barrels in dressed as Santa Claus. The kids go apeshit, rush him with open arms.

Pam watches in an ugly sweater, trying her best to smile.

EXT. TOWER OF LONDON - DAY

Frank tours the historic sight in an overcoat and scarf.

He pauses to admire a majestic view of the Thames and the sprawling London Bridge. Breathes in the cool winter air.

A younger man appears beside him, nestles his head into Frank's. He looks up at him -- it's JASON.

Frank returns his gaze, smiling softly.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - HENDERSON, NEVADA - DAY

Frank plucks the FOR SALE sign from its stake on the lawn.

He and Jason pose for a photograph in front of their quaint new home. The Las Vegas skyline looms on the horizon.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Rachel confronts the chairman of the science department with the budget spreadsheets.

She points out the lab supplies charge from Sargent-Welch. He furrows his brow, visibly perplexed.

INT. STAFF ROOM - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Rachel brings the custodians a fresh batch of Krispy Kreme doughnuts. They eat them up happily.

She asks about materials expenses. They shake their heads.

INT. LIBRARY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Mrs. Dwyer breaks out in a guttural cackle as she reads the various library charges. She nearly falls off her chair.

INT. KITCHEN - RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

David sits at the kitchen counter, examining a list of district vendors and their accumulated charges.

He flips open the phone book. Places a call.

DAVID

Good afternoon. Is this Champion
Products in Uniondale--?

He gets the info he needs. Checks the vendor off his list.

EXT. HALLWAY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Lombardo spots Rachel heading his way.

RACHEL

Mr. Lombardo! Mr. Lombardo--!

He turns and hustles in the opposite direction.

INT. KITCHEN - RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

David works his way down the list of vendors.

He reaches HSG MANAGEMENT CONSULTING, a company paid a total of \$78,347 over the course of eighteen months.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

Henry's landline rings. He picks up.

HENRY

Chevy Bellmore, this is Henry.

DAVID (O.S.)

I think I have the wrong number.
I'm looking for HSG Consulting...

Henry lights up. He doesn't get many of these calls.

HENRY

Hey yeah, sure! This is Henry S. Gluckin, chief executive officer of HSG. How can I assist you today with your consulting needs?

A pause on the other end.

DAVID (O.S.)

Did you just say Gluckin?

HENRY

That's correct.

DAVID (O.S.)

As in, Pam Gluckin?

Henry's face falls.

DAVID (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey Henry, are you aware of a seventy thousand dollar charge to the Roslyn school district--?

Henry hangs up. Breathing heavily.

HENRY

Fuck. Oh fuck.

The phone rings again. He's startled by the shrill sound.

He stares anxiously at the blinking red light.

INT. KITCHEN - RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rachel and David go over the vendor list together. Most line items have either been checked off or marked in red.

DAVID

I tried WordPower Tech, but the number's been disconnected.

He draws Rachel's attention to a vendor near the bottom of his list, circled twice and bordered in question marks:

WORDPOWER TECH -- \$803,570

Rachel's eyes stay fixed on the text.

RACHEL

Nobody I've spoken to has any idea who they are or what services, if any, they've rendered.

DAVID

I did some digging online. They're a one-man operation, as far as I can tell. Have you heard the name Stephen Signorelli before?

RACHEL

No. No, I don't think so.

DAVID

I also found an address. A place in the city. Upper East Side.

INT. LIRR TRAIN - DAY

Rachel takes the train into Manhattan.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Rachel stands outside a closed door at the end of a long hallway. She checks the address. It's a match.

She knocks on the door. Waits.

MAN (O.S.)

Hold your horses, I'm coming.

The door opens... It's STEVE, clad in a grey bathrobe.

STEVE

Sorry, you caught me in the shower.
I guess I'll have two of the thin
mints and two of the do-si-dos.

He fishes a few bills from his wallet. Looks up at Rachel,
sees she doesn't process his meaning. His smile dissolves.

STEVE (CONT'D)

It's not cookie season, is it?

RACHEL

I'm not sure. I'm here to see
Stephen Signorelli.

STEVE

It's pronounced *Seen-yor-elli*, but
yeah, you've got him.

RACHEL

I'd like to ask you a few questions
about your company WordPower.

Steve's face turns to stone. He reaches for the doorknob.

STEVE

WordPower's closed.

He shuts the door on her.

Rachel arches an eyebrow. She retreats back down the hall,
making her way toward the elevator bank.

She passes a man in gym clothes, a fresh bag of dry cleaning
slung over his shoulder. They nod politely to one another...

It's FRANK.

He doesn't recognize her. Not immediately.

Rachel rounds the corner. She watches as Frank stops at an
apartment door... the same apartment she just left.

Frank thinks. He looks back in the direction Rachel headed.

Rachel withdraws her head from view.

Frank doesn't see her. He shrugs it off. Twists his key in
the lock, opens the door. Disappears inside.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Frank sees Steve on the phone. Steve hangs up instantly.

STEVE
You're home.

FRANK
What's wrong?

STEVE
Is she still out there?

FRANK
What are you talking about?

STEVE
Frank. She asked about WordPower.

Frank's eyes widen.

He drops his dry cleaning. Races to the elevator bank, just in time to see Rachel VANISH BEHIND the SLIDING DOORS...

He heads for the stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL - FRANK'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Frank charges down the stairs, two at a time.

FRANK
Come on. Come on.

INT. LOBBY - FRANK'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Frank rushes into the lobby.

Rachel's nowhere to be found. Frank pivots to the doorman.

FRANK
Did you see a girl--?

DOORMAN
You just missed her.

The doorman points. Frank whisks around, sees the revolving door's glass partitions swinging...

He barrels out after her.

EXT. FRANK'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Frank emerges onto the street. He nearly collides with a jogging pedestrian, apologizes quickly.

He does a full three-sixty. No sign of Rachel.

FRANK

Fuck--!

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Rachel watches from an alleyway across the street.

She catches her breath, her mind running a million miles a minute -- *what the fuck did I just see?*

EXT. BIG BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Bill finishes walking his dog. He emits a protracted yawn, reaches a hand into his mailbox.

He finds a lone blue envelope, his address scrawled on the front in sloppy handwriting.

Just as he starts to rip it open... His home phone rings from inside the house. His cell phone. His wife's cell phone. A discordant symphony of beeps, chimes and jingles.

Across the street, Judy Rothman steps out from her own home. A matching blue envelope in her hand, already torn open.

They make eye contact.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

The board crowds around Frank as he reads the letter. Each member holds a butchered blue envelope.

FRANK

"We believe Dr. Frank Tassone and Pamela Gluckin participated in an embezzlement scandal so as to support their lavish lifestyles--"

He sets down the letter.

FRANK (CONT'D)

This doesn't make any sense. It's barely even proper English.

JUDY ROTHMAN

We each got one. All seven of us.

FRANK

It's ludicrous. I'd hardly describe my lifestyle as lavish-- are they referring to my car allowance?

BIG BILL

Who's this "we," anyway? I don't get it. An anonymous letter...

THIRD BOARDIE (STAN)

Whoever it is, or they are, they're on the money about Pam Gluckin.

FRANK

The only people that knew about that are standing in this room.

The board exchanges a series of paranoid looks.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We can't waste our time pointing fingers. Who else got one of these?

BIG BILL

The mayor. A few trustees.

FRANK

Okay. I'll call them all myself, explain the situation.

JUDY ROTHMAN

And what is the situation, Frank?

FRANK

This is clearly a smear campaign designed to sabotage the school's credibility before the budget vote.

BIG BILL

Who the hell would do that?

FRANK

Our enemies.

FIFTH BOARDIE (WENDY)

We have enemies?

SIXTH BOARDIE (JOEL)

Like Great Neck?

FRANK

Maybe. Who knows? If that budget doesn't pass, we're screwed.

JUDY ROTHMAN

Are we even going to consider the implications of what this letter says? If the crime goes beyond Pam, extends to other administrators...

FRANK

You mean me.

Judy takes a beat.

JUDY ROTHMAN

Yes.

Whispers and glances abound among the board.

BIG BILL

No. Hell no. As our president, I'm putting my foot down. This is Frank Tassone we're talking about here. The man's reputation is nothing less than sterling in this town, and for damned good reason.

His peers agree. Judy shrinks.

FRANK

Thank you, Bill. The board's vote of confidence is essential.

He turns to face the rest of the board.

FRANK (CONT'D)

The culprit of this cruel prank will be identified.

BIG BILL

When I get done with them, they'll wish they'd never owned a pen.

He balls up the letter, pitches it into the trash.

INT. HALLWAY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Drip. Drip. Drip.

Rainwater trickles idly from the ceiling, landing in the buckets below. The impact echoes through the desolate hall.

Rachel walks past, sidestepping an unattended puddle.

FRANK (O.S.)

It's past school hours.

She looks up, startled.

We see Frank's silhouette at the end of the hallway, leaning against the brick wall.

RACHEL
Sorry. I lost track of time.

Frank approaches her.

FRANK
Who else got one of your letters?

RACHEL
What?

FRANK
I've already spoken with the board,
and the mayor, and all the others
at town hall. Can you remember if
there was anybody else--?

RACHEL
I don't know what you're talking
about. What letter?

FRANK
Last weekend you showed up at my
home unannounced. You invaded my
privacy, Rachel. Accosted my
roommate, my--

Frank bites his lip. He composes himself.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Whatever it is you know about me,
or think you know-- these rumors
have to stop. They have to stop
before someone gets hurt. Before
our school is harmed beyond repair.

Rachel doesn't respond.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I know it's not in your nature to
trust people like me. That you're
angry, and afraid-- afraid of being
burned again by a system that has
no regard for you. For your family.

She meets his gaze.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm not like them. Can't you see that? I'm not some evil, faceless, money-hungry CEO. I'm a *teacher*, for Christ's sake. All I've ever cared about is my students, and providing them the best possible--

RACHEL

Why are the ceilings still leaking?

FRANK

I'm trying to tell you-- will you just let me talk--?

RACHEL

You said they'd stop...

FRANK

Enough about the fucking ceilings!

An uncomfortable silence, punctuated by the drips.

Frank looks mortified. He retreats slowly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm a good person.

RACHEL

I'm sorry.

(a pause)

I never wrote any letters.

She exits, leaving Frank alone in the empty hallway.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

The elderly night custodian from earlier clears out Frank's trash can. He happens upon a crumpled sheet of paper.

It's Bill's discarded copy of the letter.

INT. HALLWAY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Rachel twists open her locker.

Inside she finds THE LETTER, crinkled and coffee-stained. Scrawled on the backside is a note:

THANKS FOR THE KRISPY KREME.

EXT. BIG BILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bill answers the doorbell. Rachel's standing on the front porch, David beside her.

BIG BILL
Can I help you?

Rachel hands Bill the letter. Bill deflates.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)
Yeah. Just my luck.

INT. BEACON OFFICE - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The Beacon editors read over Rachel's article, along with the anonymous letter. Nik paces behind them.

FIRST EDITOR (SCOTT)
This is all real?

SECOND EDITOR (STEPH)
I'm friends with Jess, the mayor's daughter, and she overheard her dad talking about the letter.

FIRST EDITOR (SCOTT)
We have to go to print with this.

SECOND EDITOR (STEPH)
Bressler will never go for it. Not to mention Tassone...

FIRST EDITOR (SCOTT)
If they try and censor us, I'll pay for the print cost myself. It'll be a nice topic for my college essay.
(to Rachel & Nik)
Great work, guys.

Nik turns to Rachel.

NIK
Hey, y'know, if you still want to go to prom...

RACHEL
No.

NIK
Okay. Maybe just think about it and get back to me.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Bressler scans the Beacon copy, munching on his breakfast.
He sees the front page headline. Spews out his food.

INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The loudspeaker hisses to life.

BRESSLER (O.S.)
*Ahem. Rachel Kellogg and Nikhil
Aggarwal, please report to central
administration immediately.*

All eyes on Rachel.

She gets up, walks out.

INT. HALLWAY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Nik emerges from the next classroom over. He catches up to Rachel, breathing quickly. They walk down the hall together.

NIK
Okay, no need to panic. We have to
just stick to our guns-- they could
never expel us, I don't think--

Bressler blocks the exit. He's drenched in sweat.

BRESSLER
It's not true, is it? You made it
up, it can't possibly-- I would've--

RACHEL
Keep walking, Nik.

She guides Nik through the door, eyes fixed straight ahead.
Nik casts a quick glance behind at the agitated principal.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Rachel and Nik sit across from Frank, who surveys the Beacon copy with a face of stone.

Frank reaches for his pen. Uncaps it with a short CLICK.

Nik watches him, terrified. Rachel doesn't react.

Frank scribbles a small note in the margins. Underlines a word. Circles another.

He hands the copy back to Rachel.

FRANK

You use the passive voice in the second paragraph. It should read "the letter alleges" rather than "is alleged by the letter." There's also a misplaced comma in the final paragraph, and that photo should have a proper caption.

An awkward silence hangs over the room.

NIK

You're not mad?

FRANK

I can't block you from exercising your First Amendment rights.

NIK

But--

FRANK

How I feel about it is immaterial, Mr. Aggarwal. I can only add that the district is taking steps to investigate each and every claim in the letter, and that until we have more information it should only be viewed as hearsay.

RACHEL

Would you care to comment on the allegations about you specifically?

FRANK

Would I care to--? No, they're completely ridiculous. That's really all I have for now.

Rachel and Nik get up to leave.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Rachel, would you mind sticking around a minute?

Rachel sits back down. Nik gives her a look, exits.

Frank waits for the door to close fully before continuing.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I need you to know that if you did in fact write this letter, you'd be breaching journalistic ethics to report on its validity. That's very serious. It's the kind of thing we have to tell colleges about.

RACHEL

I didn't write the letter.

FRANK

I felt I'd be remiss if I didn't at least issue the warning.

RACHEL

Thanks, Dr. Tassone.

She exits.

INT. HALLWAY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Nik deposits three separate stacks on the windowsill.

The front page of The Hilltop Beacon reads "MYSTERY LETTER ACCUSES TOP ADMINISTRATORS OF MISALLOCATING FUNDS."

The bell rings. Students pour out into the hallway. They coast past on their way to next period, ignoring the papers.

Finally -- a disembodied hand enters into frame, fishing a copy off the top of the first stack. Another hand appears, does the same. Then another. Then another.

INT. AUDITORIUM - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Frank faces an influx of concerned parents, some wielding copies of the Beacon. Talking over one another all at once.

The school board stands at his side, shifting anxiously.

FIRST PARENT

Why are we hearing about this from our children and not you?

SECOND PARENT

What did you do with Pam Gluckin?

FRANK

Nobody did anything with Pam. Pam's very ill. I'm afraid we don't have too much to share right now.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

All I can really say is that our auditor is conducting a full investigation--

THIRD PARENT

Where the hell's our money?

This sparks an uproar. The board gives Frank a look.

He leans into the microphone.

FRANK

The school has taken very good care of every cent it's been given and will continue to do so. Sit tight, we'll have more information soon.

Frank cedes the podium to Bill.

BIG BILL

Yes we will. And in the meantime, please remember to check "yes" on the May 12th budget vote!

A round of renewed protests.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

Andy enters Frank's office, a mess of papers in hand.

ANDY

I'm finding more irregularities by the hour. Nonsensical charges, illegitimate vendors... This isn't just a matter of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. It could very well be over a million.

FRANK

And?

Andy doesn't know how to react.

FRANK (CONT'D)

My hands are tied until we have a concrete number. Do your job, Andy.

ANDY

I got a call from Hevesi today.

FRANK

The state comptroller?

ANDY

You said he'd never call.

FRANK

Hm. Well, I suppose there's a first time for everything.

Frank returns to his work.

ANDY

There's something else.

FRANK

Yeah, what's that?

ANDY

A flight to London, billed to the school. Five thousand dollars each way. First class. Concorde jet.

FRANK

You know my contract permits me to travel to Europe once a year to represent Roslyn at global forums.

ANDY

But they charged us for two seats.

Frank stops.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I figured it was a mistake, but then I called the airline. We paid for two passengers, sitting side by side in first class. That's twenty thousand dollars total.

Andy stiffens.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Frank, who's Jason DiMarco?

Frank glares up at him.

FRANK

I can't believe this. You have the nerve to walk into my office and question my integrity-- this coming from the man who spent the past six months falsifying our records to cover up his own incompetence--

ANDY

What? I didn't...

FRANK

Oh, don't feed me that crap. I'm onto you, Andy. Don't pretend for one second that you're not just as guilty as Pam Gluckin. So again, I'll ask you to please nut up and do your fucking job before I call Hevesi myself and let him know you were busy doing community theater while Pam robbed us blind.

He collects himself.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Was there anything else, or...?

ANDY

No. Sorry for barging in.

Andy shuffles out.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - NIGHT

Andy stares at Frank's closed door. The light still on.

INT. ANDY'S CAR - NIGHT

Andy places a call on his cell.

BIG BILL (O.S.)

For fuck's sake, Andy. Do you know what time it is?

ANDY

It's about Frank.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Bill confers with Frank under the bleachers.

BIG BILL

We paid for your dry cleaning.

FRANK

In my employment contract you'll find there's a clause about necessary and proper expenses.

BIG BILL

I know that. I wrote your fucking employment contract.

FRANK

Right. The board has always permitted me my discretion in determining what constitutes necessary and proper.

Bill gets in close.

BIG BILL

You racked up thirty thousand dollars in dry cleaning charges over the course of four years. Please explain to me how the hell that's "necessary" by any stretch.

FRANK

I'm the public face of this school district. It's my responsibility to project an image of success, on behalf of the students.

BIG BILL

Maybe we should have bought all your clothes too?

Frank shrugs.

FRANK

Well, that's a matter of opinion.

BIG BILL

I trusted you. I defended you. How can you be so blasé about this?

FRANK

I haven't done anything wrong! My contract clearly stipulates--

BIG BILL

Fuck your contract. You need to tell me right now -- were you and Pam Gluckin in on this together?

FRANK

Bill, you know me. We're friends.

BIG BILL

I'm really not so sure anymore.

He takes a deep breath.

BIG BILL (CONT'D)

This has gone way too far. I'm coming clean about last November. About how we handled Pam.

FRANK

That's absurd. The budget plan we slaved over for months would go belly-up in a heartbeat. The taxpayers, they'd never ever forgive us-- forgive the board--

BIG BILL

So be it. Good luck to you, Frank. I'm gonna go find us a new lawyer.

He turns to leave.

FRANK

This isn't right, Bill. You know it's not right. After everything I've done for you and your family.

Bill pauses.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm a smart guy, Bill. I could've been running a Fortune 500 company by now, riding around on my jet and laughing at all the suckers. But I wanted to help people. Okay, so I charged some dry cleaning. So what? Look at them! I work harder than all of them combined. I put my soul into this job-- for Christ's sake, it's fucking dry cleaning!

Bill keeps walking. Frank gets out in front of him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I can get Becca into Harvard.

Bill sighs. He brushes past him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I have the head of admissions on speed-dial, don't think I don't. I got us all the way to four, didn't I? Four in the goddamn country, and you want to throw it all away like it's-- like it's just-- Bill. Bill?

He's all alone.

EXT. QUANTUCK BAY - DAY

Pam stands at the water's edge, eyes fixed on the murky horizon. There's a cold front brewing.

She pops a cigarette between her teeth. Brings the lighter up to her mouth. Ignites. Takes a very long drag.

Behind her, we hear the growing sound of POLICE SIRENS.

Pam doesn't flinch.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Frank feeds quarters into the slot. Dials a number.

Ring. Ring. Ring.

JASON (O.S.)

This is Jason. Leave a message.

A protracted BEEP.

FRANK

Jace, it's me. It's Frank. I was thinking-- I've been thinking we might want to spend the summer together. In Nevada. And who knows, if that goes well, maybe I could stick around for even longer.

He rubs his face with his hand. His wedding ring visible.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm scared this place is trying to swallow me whole. I feel like I could asphyxiate to death at any moment. And that maybe you're the only one who can pull me back out again. I'd like to come to you now, if that's okay. If you'll have me. I really hope you'll have me.

EXT. ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

News vans swarm the roundabout. Local reporters and camera crews loiter on the school's front lawn.

INT. HALLWAY - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Frank journeys across the school, dodging the crumbled ceilings, rain buckets and unfinished construction.

Students and faculty part, allowing him to pass. They all stare at him quietly.

INT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Frank strides into the building.

FRANK

The high school's falling apart.
Mary Ann, try Jack Lombardo.

Mary Ann pops up from her workstation.

MARY ANN

Mr. Lombardo left the country.

FRANK

He left the country.

MARY ANN

Yes.

FRANK

Okay. Well, do you know if he's
planning on returning anytime soon?

MARY ANN

He didn't say. But he did run out
in kind of a hurry. And he also
mentioned he couldn't be reached.

Frank chuckles to himself.

FRANK

Yeah, I bet.

MARY ANN

There's another thing.

FRANK

Right. The numbers came in, and my
budget plan was rejected by an
overwhelming majority.

MARY ANN

How did you know?

FRANK

Because I'm a fucking mind reader,
Mary Ann. That's how.

His coarse tone draws the bullpen's collective gaze. He feels their eyes on him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Just draft a press release, okay?
We can still control this. We can
still-- we can--

He notices two nondescript men in suits, wholly unfamiliar, sorting through papers at Andy's old cubicle. Both wear government ID badges.

They don't look at him. They don't even notice him.

INT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Frank presides over a public forum. The place teems with parents, taxpayers and reporters. Standing room only.

FRANK

I can confirm that Pamela Gluckin
has been placed under arrest, and
that the school will be pressing
criminal charges.

The mob overpowers him with a litany of complaints, pleas, questions and accusations.

He exhales. Continues.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Your voices have been heard, loud
and clear. We know that you're
upset. We know that you're angry.
But we cannot afford to hold our
schools' budget hostage-- to place
a filibuster on education--

FOURTH PARENT

How can we trust a board that lied
to us about stolen funds?

FIFTH PARENT

The budget's obviously grossly
inflated if she was able to make
off with hundreds of thousands of
dollars without anyone noticing!

SIXTH PARENT

This is collusion! You all should
resign immediately--!

This is met with applause.

Frank spots Judy Rothman and the other boardies, crouched in
near anonymity among the volatile crowd. They all look sick.

Bill is nowhere to be found.

FRANK

I'll answer any and all questions
after I've finished my statement--

SEVENTH PARENT

How much was taken? Who else is
involved--?

EIGHTH PARENT

Where was the auditor? Where was
the board treasurer--?

NINTH PARENT

You keep changing your story. Why
does Newsday know more about this
than we do--?

We go in TIGHT on FRANK.

Eyes darting this way and that. Face going red.

The parents' shouting loses coherence altogether. Their
voices gradually WARPING into a long, piercing DRONE...

Frank shuts his eyes. He retreats inward.

The drone fades to nothingness. He listens to the pulse of
own heartbeat. Growing calmer... calmer...

His heart stops.

His eyes flicker open.

All at once, the shouting RESUMES in FULL FORCE -- building
to a wild, incomprehensible CRESCENDO of TOTAL MADNESS --

FRANK

Enough!

His voice CUTS THROUGH as he BANGS HIS FIST on THE PODIUM.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You're going to listen to me! You are all going to listen to me--!

The room quiets.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Okay. I'm ready to take your questions in an orderly, adult manner. Rhonda?

He points to the nearest parent.

TENTH PARENT (RHONDA)

When the school's law firm advised the board to report on Pam Gluckin, did you purposely seek out a second legal opinion that would favor your own conclusion?

FRANK

I-- I don't--

He sighs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

How many of you ladies in here are lawyers?

He's met with a sea of hands.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Frank circulates his office, rounding up every valuable he can find -- his most impressive diplomas and awards, stray papers, the photo of him and Geraldo Rivera.

He snaps open his briefcase. Shovels all the items inside with effort. Forces the thing shut.

We see the framed portrait of Frank's young bride Joanne, left behind on his desk.

Frank reaches for his coat. Just as he's about to make his way out the door -- motherfucking CINDY SCHWEITZER bursts in.

CINDY

Oh, Dr. Tassone. I'm so glad I caught you.

FRANK

Miss Schweitzer, now's really not the best time...

CINDY
Please. We just need one minute.

FRANK
We?

Cindy's son CHAD, 9, pokes out from behind his mother.

CINDY
Chad has something he'd really like to say to you. Won't you take a seat and hear him out?

FRANK
Can it wait?

CINDY
I'm afraid not.

She indicates Frank's chair. He begrudgingly sits down.

FRANK
Yes, Chad?

Chad removes a sheet of loose-leaf from his back pocket. He gazes down at the words, the paper trembling in his grip.

CHAD
Good afternoon Dr. Tassone. How was your weekend good I hope. I would like to talk to you today about the OMNI program that you are running.

Frank blinks. He stares forward.

CHAD (CONT'D)
I very much hope that you will consider me for this program. I believe that I am very bright and could benefit from learning thusly at an ack... ack... ackel...

CINDY
Sound it out.

CHAD
Ack... ackel... ackrelated...?

FRANK
(teeth clenched)
Accelerated.

CINDY
Thank you, Dr. Tassone. Did you
hear what he said, Chad?

Chad nods.

CINDY (CONT'D)
Now start the sentence over.

CHAD
Which?

Cindy points. Chad squints.

CHAD (CONT'D)
I'm-- I am-- I believe that I am
very bright and could benefit from
learning thusly at an... at an...
acks... axel... axelrated...

Frank looks like he's about to pop a blood vessel.

FRANK
Accelerated.

CHAD
Arreleccated?

FRANK
Accelerated.

CHAD
Asselerated.

Frank stands. He looms high over Chad.

FRANK
Accelerated. Accelerated. Let's say
you're stuck in a car that's moving
way too slow, so slow you might
want to blow your friggin' brains
out all over the dash, so you go
ahead and you *accelerate*. Say it
with me now. Accelerate! I can't
hear you... Accelerate! Accelerate!

He stops, catching his breath.

Chad's in tears. Cindy stares at Frank, horrified.

CINDY
Dr. Tassone...?

Frank thinks. He bolts out the door.

EXT. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Frank retreats to his parking spot. He glances down the hill at the high school, one final time.

A small smile creeps out from the corners of his mouth. Till he notices something odd in the distance... He looks closer.

The SkyWalk project, half-completed, appears to TREMOR.

Frank's smile dissipates. He can't tear his eyes away, can't help but watch in utter awe as IT ALL UNFOLDS --

BOOM! The structure CAVES IN and COLLAPSES ENTIRELY, exposing a flimsy core of cheap plastic and aluminum siding.

Frank backs away. He scrambles into his car and peels out of the lot with a sharp SCREECH.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Frank approaches the airline counter.

FRANK

I'd like to buy a seat on the next flight to Las Vegas, Nevada.

AIRLINE CLERK

Round-trip or one-way?

FRANK

Oh, let's plan on the latter.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

Pam sits across from the Nassau County district attorney and two state's investigators -- the same two men Frank saw earlier sifting through files.

D.A.

Two beachfront homes in Florida and the Hamptons. Five Yamaha jet-skis. Luxury cars. Vacations to Brazil, Puerto Rico and Hawaii. Jewelry. Artwork. Electronics. Dog food...

Pam stares past them, impassive.

INT. ANOTHER INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

We see John Boy in a very similar situation.

D.A.
Thirty thousand dollars at six
separate Home Depot stores...

INT. YET ANOTHER INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

And, of course, Henry.

D.A.
Seventy-eight thousand dollars in
monthly installments to your
company HSG Consulting...

HENRY
Not my company.

D.A.
Mr. Gluckin, your initials are HSG.

HENRY
Do I really look like a consultant
to you? I sell used cars. I'm the
biggest schmuck you'll ever meet.

He lets out a nervous laugh. The investigators aren't amused.

D.A.
Moving right along...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

Pam hasn't moved.

D.A.
I have some bad news for you, Pam.
You're going to prison for a very
long time. But maybe it's not too
late for you to save your family.

She flinches, briefly. Tempers herself.

D.A. (CONT'D)
C'mon. Do you think John Boy will
survive two days in state max? What
about your husband? If you help us
out, they walk. Light probation,
maybe. Community service.

Pam looks up at him.

PAM
What do you want?

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Frank lingers on the sidelines, hands in his pockets. He's out of sorts among the openly gay crowd.

Jason hops up into the DJ booth, makes a request. A light touch on the palm to seal the deal.

The DJ nods, swaps out the record for another.

A new song. A slight change of pace.

It's "Oh Me Oh My (I'm a Fool For You Baby)" by Lulu. Slow and beautiful. And maybe a little jazzy too.

Frank sees Jason. Jason sees Frank.

He holds out a hand.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

Back on Pam.

D.A.

We know you're not the only ones involved. Most of the receipts are missing, but we've got a few ideas. If you can give us a not-so-gentle push in the right direction...

She thinks.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Jason guides Frank to the heart of the dance floor. Frank surveys the atmosphere, self-conscious.

Jason pivots to face him. Rests a hand on his cheek.

Frank closes his eyes. He exhales deeply.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pam returns home. Henry and John Boy are waiting for her.

JOHN BOY

Ma...?

Pam ignores him. Walks upstairs.

INT. BEDROOM - PAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pam digs through the back of her closet.

She finds what she needs.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Frank and Jason sway to the music.

Jason's a great dancer. Frank's not so bad himself.

The song continues to build.

INT. BASEMENT - CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Debbie's stationed at the lone basement desk, fighting to stay awake. Her nameplate reads "SPECIAL UTILITIES."

Suddenly, the elevator light flashes. Someone's coming down.

Debbie gets excited. She stands upright, eager to greet her new visitors. Straightens her blouse and skirt.

The elevator doors PART... Five cops SWARM IN.

Debbie's smile evaporates as the officers push her against her desk, cuffing her wrists behind her back.

EXT. ANDY'S HOUSE - DAY

Andy's ushered across his front lawn in cuffs, flanked by two hard-faced cops. His family watches from the front porch.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

The song reaches its peak.

Frank gives Jason a playful twirl. Jason laughs.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steve sits by himself at the dining table.

There's a knock on the front door. Firm. Resolute.

He takes a deep breath. Pours himself a shot of whiskey.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Frank leans his head on Jason's shoulder.

He whispers something in his ear as the song fades out.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

PAM

I have one more condition. I hope
it won't be a problem.

D.A.

What's that?

A pause.

PAM

I want him to suffer.

INT. JASON'S CAR - NIGHT

Frank and Jason drive back to their home.

They spot the flashing blue and red lights directly ahead.
Blinding their vision.

Jason looks past the police cruisers. Cops are pushing their
way into the house, the front door wide open.

JASON

What the fuck? They're going inside
our house. Frank, they're going
into our home--!

Jason shoots out of the car. Rushes up the lawn.

JASON (CONT'D)

That's our house, motherfuckers--!

The cops apprehend him on sight. They confront him with a
baggie of heroin. Wrestle him to the pavement.

Frank watches through the windshield. His hand hovers over
the stick shift. Tempted to pull the car into reverse...

A knock on the driver's seat window.

VEGAS COP

Frank Tassone?

FRANK

Yeah. I'll be right out.

He exhales. Unbuckles his seat belt. Opens the door.

VEGAS COP

Frank Tassone, you're under arrest on charges of grand larceny in the first degree. You have the right to remain silent...

The cop racks off the Miranda Rights, forcing Frank's hands behind his back. He stares straight ahead, expressionless.

JASON

Frank! Frank--! He's an old man, you assholes. You can't push him around like that--!

Just then, Frank DOUBLES OVER in the COP'S GRIP. EYES ROLLED to the BACK OF HIS HEAD. FOAMING at the MOUTH.

VEGAS COP

Get up. Get up--!

JASON

He's having a heart attack. You fucking pricks! Don't you see you're giving him a fucking--

Jason continues to scream, his pleas muted to WHITE NOISE.

Frank's POV: The nighttime sky. Stars twinkling. Peace.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

A sharp white light overhead.

Frank's strapped to a gurney, surrounded by EMTs.

LEAD EMT (O.S.)

His vitals are normal. No sign of cardiac arrest.

SECOND EMT (O.S.)

You think he's faking?

LEAD EMT (O.S.)

We'll bring him in, just in case.

Frank's vision fades as he passes out.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

Some time has passed. Frank now occupies the hot seat. He looks sickly and pale, like he hasn't slept in months.

In a departure from his typical refinements, he wears an unflattering orange jumpsuit. No make-up. No grooming kits.

D.A.

Gee, I wish the taxpayers footed the bill for *my* personal trainer.

Frank doesn't respond.

D.A. (CONT'D)

Earth to Frank. Am I coming in loud and clear...?

FRANK

Necessary and proper.

D.A.

What's that? What did he say?

FRANK'S LAWYER

As we've gone over time and time again, per the language in Dr. Tassone's contract, he's entitled to expenses "necessary and proper to the discharge of his duties."

D.A.

Oh, you mean like the health spas? The custom tailoring? The trips to Las Vegas, London, Thailand--

FRANK'S LAWYER

You're harassing my client.

D.A.

--Cancun, Morocco, Indonesia, New Orleans, St. Thomas... That sounds nice. Where's St. Thomas, Frank?

INVESTIGATOR

It's in the Virgin Islands.

D.A.

The Virgin Islands. Wow. Was there an administrator's conference in the Virgin Islands too?

Frank stays mute.

D.A. (CONT'D)

You know, I happened to pay a visit to that pretty little loft of yours on the Upper East Side. You've got a real flair for design. I guess it helps when you have an unlimited piggy bank to draw from...

FRANK'S LAWYER

Frank, don't say a goddamn word.

D.A.

And that roommate you've got, boy, he's a real cut-up. What's his name again? Steve? We have Steve right next door. I hear Steve fancies himself quite the entrepreneur. Hey, what's that company called--?

INVESTIGATOR

WordPower Technologies.

D.A.

That's right. WordPower. Hey Frank, what does WordPower do anyways?

Frank stares at him. No response.

INT. ANOTHER INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

Steve sits in a similar predicament.

STEVE

We printed pamphlets. Handbooks.

D.A.

We?

STEVE

Me. I did.

D.A.

No partners over at WordPower? No, huh? I only ask because according to your company's records, at least half that money was transferred over to Frank Tassone.

Steve shakes his head.

STEVE

You can't make me. You can't make me testify against my spouse.

D.A.
Your spouse?

STEVE
We're domestic partners. We've been together for thirty-three years. We're entitled to the exact same protections as other married couples, under federal law--

D.A.
Are you married?

STEVE
We had a commitment ceremony in 2001, on a boat in the Caribbean--

D.A.
You didn't answer my question.

Steve tenses.

D.A. (CONT'D)
Thirty-three years, huh?
(to his cohorts)
When did he say his wife passed?

INVESTIGATOR
'73.

D.A.
That's only thirty-one years ago.

STEVE
What are you talking about?

D.A.
His wife, Joanne.

STEVE
Frank never had a wife. I knew him in 1973, he didn't-- he'd never--

D.A.
Really? They say he brought her up constantly. Had a photo on his desk and everything. You must've been by his office, right? I mean, you did do almost a million dollars worth of contract work over there...

Steve goes red in the face.

STEVE

That's not true. You're a liar.
You're a liar and-- and a bully--

D.A.

Then there's the matter of Jason
DiMarco, the hot young number your
so-called "domestic partner" bought
a house in Vegas with last year.

He slides a photo of Frank and Jason across the table. The
picture they took the day they closed on the home.

They're smiling. Arm in arm.

D.A. (CONT'D)

He's a *dancer*.

INT. HALLWAY - POLICE STATION - DAY

Frank's escorted from the room, his hands cuffed in front of
him in a prisoner restraint belt.

He spots Steve as he exits the adjacent room, subject to his
own police escort. They meet head-on.

STEVE

What do you have to say?

Frank's head stirs. He stays silent.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Nothing? Nothing--?

He SPITS IN FRANK'S FACE.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Thirty-three years, Frank!

The police pull him away. His shouting echoes down the hall:

STEVE (CONT'D)

Thirty-three years! Thirty-three
years and not one thing to say--!

Frank doesn't react. Lets the saliva slither down his cheek.

LEAD COP

Come on, buddy. Let's go. One foot
in front of the other.

Frank nods. He takes a step forward.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Frank's escort emerges from the building. The station steps are lined with onlookers and news cameras. Booming, hissing.

Bill. Judy. Bressler. Bonnie. Cindy. The other board members. The book club women. The real estate agents. The rotary club. Nearly every Roslyn taxpayer we've met till this point...

The escort pauses briefly next to SHARON FARKAS, the book club organizer. We remember Sharon. She hit on Frank once.

SHARON

Hey. Fucking faggot.

Frank keeps walking. They reach the squad car parked on the curb. The rear door's already open and waiting...

He sees a small, hazy figure across the street. Away from the rest of the mob. Standing alone, watching him.

It's Rachel.

They make eye contact.

LEAD COP

Watch your head.

Frank disappears behind tinted windows. Rachel watches as the car drives off, disappearing down the road.

A reporter taps her on the shoulder.

REPORTER

Excuse me. Are you Rachel Kellogg?
The girl that broke the story?

Rachel snaps back to reality.

RACHEL

What? Oh. Yeah.

REPORTER

I'm Susan Levine-Spound with the
Times. Do you have a minute?

RACHEL

The Times?

REPORTER

Yes. The New York Times. I'd love
to hear your side.

Rachel smiles, totally speechless.

Nearby, one of the book club members answers questions for the local news cameras. She offers her own free insight:

BOOK CLUB WOMAN

Well, if you ask me, I think what he did was downright Pecksniffian.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Frank stands for his sentencing, his lawyer beside him. He looks terrible, as if he's melting.

The rafters are filled with taxpayers and parents, eagerly awaiting Frank's fate.

ON OCTOBER 10, 2006, FRANK TASSONE WAS CONVICTED OF STEALING \$2.2 MILLION FROM THE ROSLYN SCHOOL DISTRICT.

HE WAS SENTENCED TO 4-12 YEARS IN PRISON.

Applause from the rafters. Frank shuts his eyes.

A hand touches his shoulder. He's whisked out of frame.

INT. HALLWAY - COURTHOUSE - DAY

Pam's family convenes around her, bidding a series of tearful farewells. Henry gives her a long hug.

PAMELA GLUCKIN PLED GUILTY TO EMBEZZLING \$4.3 MILLION.

SHE RECEIVED A SENTENCE OF 3-9 YEARS.

INT. DEN - PAM'S BEACH HOUSE - DAY

The Hawaiian horse painting is removed its spot above the fireplace, tossed in an ever-growing pile of loot.

HER POSSESSIONS WERE SOLD AT AUCTION.

EXT. BIG BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Bill wanders outside to fetch the morning paper. He steps in a MOUND of DOG SHIT left on his front porch.

He glances over at his next-door neighbor, walking her collie a few yards off. She gives him the finger.

BILL BLAUSTEIN WAS OUSTED FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD.

**HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE SUCCESSFULLY SUED BY THE
COMMUNITY FOR NEGLIGENCE.**

He rushes back inside to change out of his slippers.

EXT. ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Custodians and maintenance workers clear out the SkyWalk wreckage, piece by piece.

A TOTAL OF \$11.2 MILLION WAS STOLEN IN THE ROSLYN SCANDAL.

INT. STAFF ROOM - ROSLYN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Building inspectors prod at the ceiling tiles. They crumble apart instantly on impact. Plaster everywhere.

INT. HALLWAY - EAST HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

The bell chimes.

The young students, ages five through eleven, pour out of their classrooms all at once. Bright-eyed, fresh-faced.

**ROSLYN IS NO LONGER FEATURED ON THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
RANKING OF TOP PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

SYOSSET AND JERICHO ARE BOTH IN THE TOP TEN.

INT. ARCHIVE ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

A gloved hand files the handwritten letters and battered blue envelopes into a nondescript storage bin.

THE AUTHOR OF THE ANONYMOUS LETTER WAS NEVER DETERMINED.

INT. LIVING ROOM - RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Rachel and David pack up their belongings. They're assisted by Rachel's older brother JEREMY, 20, back from college.

Rachel sorts through old papers. She comes across her front page Beacon headline. Rereads the first few lines.

Jeremy looks over her shoulder as she places the newspaper into a box. His brow furrows.

JEREMY

Whoa. That's weird.

RACHEL

What is?

JEREMY

That guy taught me how to cross the street in first grade.

He picks up the paper. Studies Frank's photo.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Yeah. I wandered straight into oncoming traffic, and he stepped out in front of me right at the last second. Saved me from being steamrolled by a school bus.

He shrugs.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

He seemed like a decent enough guy.

Rachel absorbs this.

EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

The Kelloggs load their boxes into a moving van.

They pull away from the house and out of Roslyn forever.

INT. REC ROOM - MID-STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

Frank holds court over an assembly of state prisoners. Each of them has a copy of Dickens' *Little Dorrit*.

FRANK

So, what did we all think of this week's reading?

He waits. No response.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Okay, let's start by going over these discussion questions. Take one and pass the rest back.

He distributes a stack of papers.

INT. HALLWAY - MID-STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

Frank walks back to his cell, hands in his pockets. He happens upon a stray parcel of clay.

INT. FRANK'S CELL - MID-STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

Frank deposits the clay in the sink basin. He blends it with ground cinnamon and ginger purloined from the mess hall.

He rubs the resulting concoction on his face, across his cheeks and forehead, smoothing over the cracks of his skin.

He draws back his hands, revealing the amalgam's function as a more-than-capable powder foundation.

Frank examines himself in the opaque sink mirror. Combs back his hair. Plucks an errant hair from his chin.

He doesn't look half bad.

MAN (O.S.)

Tassone. You've got a letter.

Frank arches an eyebrow. This is new.

He hustles to the mail cart, grabs an envelope.

He plants himself on his cot. Tears the thing open in one motion. Peruses the enclosed contents.

It's an impersonal, typewritten government form.

He squints, reads closer... His mouth drops.

It's too good to be true. Almost.

**DUE TO A LOOPHOLE IN NEW YORK STATE PENSION LAW,
FRANK TASSONE IS ENTITLED TO \$173,495.04 A YEAR**

TILL THE DAY HE DIES.

Frank looks directly into the camera.

He cracks a smile.

ROLL CREDITS.