



TOWER HEIST

aka

UNTITLED TRUMP HEIST PROJECT

by
Adam Cooper & Bill Collage

Revisions by
Russell Gewirtz
Rawson Thurber
Ted Griffin

Current Revisions by
Leslie Dixon

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INT./EXT. MANHATTAN - DAYBREAK

(and QUEENS, and BROOKLYN, NEWARK, STATEN ISLAND, THE BRONX, HARLEM, and the disappearing corners of Manhattan that under overpasses, or too close to soup kitchens to have become gentrified). (TITLE SEQUENCE)

We'll see A SERIES of SHOTS of the city waking up.

Except that it's two cities:

One, the sparkle-y winner-take-all Manhattan of the movies, "The Apprentice," and Eva Gabor.

Two, the get-real Manhattan where the regular people, whose daily sweat makes Sparkle-y Manhattan go, begin their hard-working day.

Over the beeping/shrillings/radio blarings of various ALARMS we see QUICK CUTS of TENEMENT PIPES shuddering as rusty water spatters onto three squirming kids in a bathtub, being hastily bathed by their bi-racial mother.. to MULTIPLE jets of a WaterWorks shower pummelling the backside of a SUPERMODEL...

We see ARMS going into uniform sleeves, to ARMS going into a Dolce & Gabbana chemise... Dr. Scholl's pads going into sensible shoes... manicured toes going into thousand dollar platforms with six inch heels.

We see name tags pinned on front pockets.... bow ties clipped onto collars... to A ROLEX being fastened around a man's wrist... back to...

AN OLD GUY (LESTER) sits at the kitchen table of his Lower East Side one bedroom, which has seen no renovation since they put in hot water in the '30's. He is painstakingly SEWING A BUTTON on the sleeve of his DOORMAN'S UNIFORM.

EXT. MANHATTAN AND BOROUGHES - DAY

VARIOUS SHOTS of the underclasses moving towards their jobs... and their overlords perhaps going to work, perhaps not. TENNIS SHOED FEET step down stairs to SUBWAY STATIONS. MAGLI SHOED feet get out of LIMOS. AWNINGS pulled down on VENDOR CARTS... ITALIAN SILK SHADES pulled down so a RICH GIRL can go back to bed. A messenger on a bicycle is grazed by a BMW. The well dressed driver zips down his window, craning his neck -- not to see if the messenger's okay, but instead to inspect his car for scratches.

Towards the gleaming towers of Midtown, the employed underclass is walking, walking...

... from the other direction walk a couple of CLUBBING RICH KIDS, still in their party clothes, having been out all night...

... Hardhats edge around them, just trying to get the hell to their jobs..

... PAMPERED DOG PAWS are also walking. TILT UP TO REVEAL:

One person walking is a uniformed black man, 30's, MR. WASHINGTON. He is walking SIX pedigreed DOGS in front of A SLEEK, STATE OF THE ART MODERN LUXURY BUILDING.

(AND GUYS, IF WE WANT TO DO AN HOMAGE TO THIS KIND OF LATE 60's/EARLY 70's HEIST ENERGY, WE COULD DO A WINDOWPANE SCREEN EFFECT, WITH MANY SHOTS OF WILDLY ECONOMICALLY DIVERGENT NEW YORKERS... from satellite dishes on cardboard boxes to helipads on buildings... you get the idea...)

One of the dogs slips its leash! A silky AFGHAN makes a break for freedom, dashing down the sidewalk as, coming around the corner, we see--

5TH AVENUE/59TH STREET N R W

COLE HOWARD, on one side or the other of 40. He takes in the tableau at a glance -- the screaming dog-walker trying to catch up, the bounding Afghan.

In a swift move, Cole plunks down 2 dollars on a vendor's cart and grabs a small SHISH KEBAB, waving it at the dog's eye level. The hound stops instantly, practically levitates to get the meat, as MR. WASHINGTON, the dog walker, catches up.

MR. WASHINGTON

Mr. Howard -- ahhh, thanks --

COLE

Carry a stash of treats, Mr. Washington -- you're competing with every enticing smell in Manhattan.

Cole goes into the building. Mr. Washington watches after him, nodding.

MR. WASHINGTON

Yeah, aren't we all.

EXT. FOYER OF BUILDING - DAY

LESTER, the old doorman, now in full uniform, smiles at Cole, the Residence Manager, as he strides in, clearly in charge of the place.

COLE
Morning, Lester.

LESTER
Looking to be a fine day, Mr.
Howard.

FROM A HIGH ANGLE, LOOKING DOWN on Cole, and for the first time we catch a glimpse of this building: sleek, modern, the jewel of the block.

ABOVE A STAFF ENTRANCE, a security camera peers down. ON A PLASMA SECURITY MONITOR, DISPLAYING NUMEROUS ANGLES: Cole shoots a salute to the camera and -- BUZZZZZZ! --

INT. THE TOWER -- BACK HALLWAYS -- DAY

-- he's admitted inside. Cole pushes on down the corridor, passing maids, porters, attendants -- offering each a friendly, firm smile.

COLE
Morning. Morning, Miss Lewis, your son better? Good. Mr. Stuart, there're some Vodka bottles on the roof deck... school's obviously out... Mrs. Lopez, the elevator's reeking--!

The STOUT HISPANIC JANITRESS nods vigorously, rolling her eyes. She holds up an ANTISEPTIC SPRAY BOTTLE: she's on it.

MRS. LOPEZ
You don't got to tell me! The cheap cologne on that guy, oh my God!

COLE
Miss Lopez. Residents' guests who wear miniskirts are women, until we are otherwise instructed.

She nods. Knows he's right. He pokes his head inside--

INT. A SECURITY ROOM - DAY

where a GUARD mans the monitors. Cole points at a DARK CAR on the screen.

COLE (CONT'D)

What's with the tinted windows
across the street?

GUARD

Don't know. Been there all night.

COLE

Keep an eye. It's not your typical
towncar.

CHARLIE GIBBS, concierge, Cole's age, falls into stride with
him. They've been ten years on the job together.

CHARLIE

Morning.

COLE

Mr. Gibbs.

CHARLIE

What'd you do this weekend?

COLE

Worried about this place.

CHARLIE

Y'know it *is* our 10 year
anniversary. Think you could start
calling me Charlie?

COLE

(only half joking)
And that's the beginning of the
end. Next it'll be "bro" and
"Dude," and the discipline around
here'll go straight to hell. Even
talking about it opens a crack into
the abyss.

They enter--

INT. TOWER -- LOBBY -- DAY

The most elegant, most comfortable private lobby in NYC. A
three-story high ceiling with a glass wall filling the space
with light. A cherry-oak-paneled concierge's counter topped
with Egyptian marble. Designer divans and reading chairs
galore and a zen fountain.

Charlie points towards the front door, at LESTER, the doorman
we saw earlier. Well into his 70s, he knows no greater
pleasure than doing his job well.

CHARLIE

What about him?

A GAGGLE of KIDS swarm through the lobby, off to school. Cole knows all their names. Their favorite, however, is Lester: he's a giant teddy bear to them.

LESTER

Who did their homework for today?
 Whatya mean no homework today?! Why
 not?! Oh, cause it's the first day
 of school!! ...

Lester opens the door for the kids. They rush out.

COLE

What about him?

CHARLIE

You call Lester, Lester.

COLE

I prefer Lester to you.

Cole pats Charlie on the shoulder and goes -- he obviously likes Charlie enough to bust his balls. (And we will soon see that he is actually more informal with Charlie than anyone in the place.)

The lobby is coming to life, now. All staff wear an earpiece and a mic clipped to their sleeve, except Cole who keeps a slender walkie in his breast pocket.

COLE (CONT'D)

Everyone awake? Okay, service with
 a smile.

The staff, at their stations, nod back.

ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN AND AN OVERLY BEJEWELED WOMAN EXITS.

Cole is there to welcome her; today's performance has begun. She doesn't break stride, just starts barking "favours."

BEJEWELED WOMAN

Cole, my day today is a ballbuster.
 At ten a man's coming from Pierre
 Laveurre to measure for my
 valances... then the TV lift
bandits are coming, *again* -- it's
 still having these epileptic
 seizures--

Thus begins A MONTAGE OF COLE'S MORNING. He is a master at handling each resident: he compliments, he cajoles, with children he clowns, to older residents he kowtows. As he accepts each resident "request," Charlie keeps a discreet to-do list at his desk.

VARIOUS RESIDENTS

...pick up my dry-cleaning/... move
the armoire/ stir the
confit/appraise the
Monet.../...feed the finches/...the
moth larvae will have to be *picked*,
nit by nit, off those sweaters/...

Cole's just as good with staff. Later, eying some NEW, PETITE SIZED LINGERIE on a rack, he delegates to a PORTER:

COLE

...ah, ah, no -- not to the
apartment, to Mr. Davis's *office*...
(low)
.. Mrs. Davis is a size 12.

Cole talks a mile a minute into his mouthpiece, directing and redirecting building traffic.

COLE (CONT'D)

...It's 7:45 and I'm still seeing
laundry carts. You should all be
on your way... Mr. Hutensky, Mrs.
Simon is still missing her Mercedes
key. -- Well, that dog does eat
just about anything, I'm afraid
you're going to have to do some...
panning for gold. Miss Hahn, be
aware, the windows in 66B have
been removed, try not to plunge to
your deaths...

Under Cole's running patter we see MORE MONTAGE: VARIOUS SHOTS of the minute details that makes running a full service luxury building so complex: Beds made/plants watered/a Venus Flytrap plant fed meat/BROWN HANDS picking up JEWELRY off a dresser and dusting the dresser before meticulously replacing the jewelry, unmolested... MAIDS in OVERCOATS even vacuum an 66B, an apartment that's A CONSTRUCTION SITE, freezing wind blowing in through the gaping holes where the windows are still missing.

AT THE PACKAGE STATION a pert Hispanic girl, PEREZ, discreetly reads a book. Suddenly, in her earpiece:

COLE'S VOICE

Miss Perez--?

(as she jumps)

For six months I've pretending not to notice you've been studying for the bar. Please don't make it so obvious that the residents notice too.

She blushes, nods, and better buries her books, grateful for his lenience.

INT. GUARD STATION - DAY

The two guards continue to stare, on screen, at the mystery parked car.

COLE'S VOICE

...Steve, Miguel, has it moved?

GUARD #1

No sir!

(clicking off, turns to friend)

What's he going so crazy for? Has this building ever been hit?

GUARD #2

Shit, no.

GUARD #1

It's probably just some guy getting a blow job.

GUARD #2

For a day and a half?

GUARD #1

Maybe he's 80.

They laugh. MONTAGE CONTINUES: Cole besieged by residents. (The first is a stringy, edgy, rich woman, Miss Hollingsworth. We will be seeing her again.)

HOLLINGSWORTH/VARIOUS RESIDENTS

Make sure Mother takes her Lexapro AND her Atavin -- one without the other she behaves like a Chimpanzee/...

(MORE)

HOLLINGSWORTH/VARIOUS RESIDENTS

...strange clicking noises on line
 one -- it could be my ex husband
 wiretapping me back.../
 ...balloons, streamers and a pinata
 which *can't* have candy with peanuts
 or her little best friend will die
 on the spot....

The CAMERA JUMPS BACK from Cole, handling 11 things at once,
 BACK to a long shot of the lobby, BACK to the exterior of the
 building, looking in, BACK from ACROSS THE STREET...

Someone, with very professional equipment, *is watching the
 building through a telephoto lens.*

TITLE-UP: T O W E R H E I S T

INT. THE LOBBY - DAY

Cole finally has a moment to breathe. But ever vigilant, he
 looks around.

COLE

--So where's our new elevator
 man...? Isn't he starting today?

CHARLIE

Looks like he's jumped the gun.

He gestures at THE ELEVATOR BANK, where ARTHUR BRANIFF, 60,
 gets off the elevator, MR. DEV'REAUX, dapper in his new
 uniform, happily chatting while manning the elevator.

Despite his \$200 haircut and hand-tailored dress shirt and
 Caribbean tan, Braniff is a master at getting people to
 forget Fitzgerald's maxim about the rich ("They're different
 than you and me").

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Well, Jamal, nice t' meechea.

DEV'REAUX

Pleasure, sir!

Cole turns to Charlie, nonplussed.

COLE

"Jamal?"

CHARLIE

Told a resident his first name...?!
 Uh uh uh.

Cole wants to yank Dev'reaux aside, but Braniff seems to be enjoying the encounter, so Cole keeps a smile on his face for a moment more.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Jamaal, has Cole taught you the golden rule of working here yet?

COLE

(shooting daggers at Deveraux)

We haven't actually run Mr. Devr'eaux through the *protocol*...

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Jamaal, if I asked you, would you go pick me up a cheeseburger?

DEV'REAUX

Of course.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Thing is, I want a certain kind of brie on my burger they only sell at Michel's cheese shop downtown. Think you can get that first?

DEV'REAUX

Certainly, Mr. Braniff.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

As for the hamburger, only organically-fed, free-range beef, please. Can you make sure of that?

DEV'REAUX

I think so.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Finally the buns. This is the most important part. I need the buns blessed by the pope himself. See to it, willya?

DEV'REAUX

(catching on)

Got the Vatican on speed-dial.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

He's a natural.

(to Dev)

Always say yes. That's the golden rule. Say yes, then figure out how the hell you're gonna manage it.

(MORE)

ARTHUR BRANIFF (CONT'D)
 I may live at the top of this building but I'm in the service industry same as you and Cole, and I know soon as I say 'no' to a customer, I'm flat-out on my ass.

Braniff gives Dever'aux a \$100 bill.

ARTHUR BRANIFF (CONT'D)
 Another thing, Jamaal: I do everything myself. Keeps me honest. I'll get my own cheeseburger, and you get one too, on me!

As Braniff wanders off, Dever'aux's suddenly sees--

LOBBY SEATING AREA -- COFFEE TABLE -- DAY

A copy of NEWSWEEK is casually splayed across the coffee table, a PICTURE of ARTHUR BRANIFF on the COVER! Dev'raux doubletakes, staring at the photo, as Cole steps into frame beside him.

DEVER'AUX
 Wow. He's pretty real for...
 (picks up magazine)
 ..."The Wall Street Wizard?!"

COLE
 Mr. Dever'aux, as you can see, some of our residents are pretty high profile individuals. What made you think you should jump in without any orientation?

MR. DEVERAUX
 Well, pushing buttons, shooting the breeze, I mean -- I know the job.

Charlie and Cole exchange a look.

COLE
 Remind me: where did we steal you away from?

DEV'REAUX
 Spent the last two years at the Richelieu on 78th.

COLE
 That's a good building. Why'd you want to leave it?

DEV'REAUX

You wanna play baseball, you gonna
wanna play someday for the Yankees.
This building's the Yankees.

COLE

(not unkindly)

Then don't treat it like the sand
lot. "Pushing buttons" and
"shooting the breeze" is seriously
demeaning your job. You are
crucial to these people: you are
part of protecting them.

DEV'REAUX

From what, sir?

Cole gestures across the lobby, where Arthur Braniff has been
stopped by an anxious-looking MIDDLE AGED GUY in a SUIT.
This is FITZHUGH.

COLE

He's gone ten steps, and he's
already under attack from Mr.
Fitzhugh over there, a much less
successful money manager who's
desperate for tips. Mr. Gibbs,
head him off, please...

Charlie quickly speeds off to stop this encounter. Mr.
FITZHUGH is already in mid-pitch.

MR. FITZHUGH

--I *did* try your office, but
everything's on voice mail -- if
you could just -- *one millisecond* --
see, I'm having a hell of a time
locking down even a safe 2% return
in this market, and any
suggestion... just the wisp of a
hint... would really help me out of
a ...well, verging on catastrophic--

He sees Charlie coming, who is shooting daggers at him.
Quickly, to Braniff:

MR. FITZHUGH (CONT'D)

Thank you! We'll reconvene soon!

He scurries off. Charlie sighs to Braniff.

CHARLIE

Mr. Howard apologizes. He got past
us.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

I can't really blame Fitzhugh.
He's losing his apartment.

(sighs)

Tough times make civilized people
do uncivilized things.

Braniff shrugs affably and goes. Meanwhile, across the lobby, Cole continues to brief Mr. Dev'reaux.

COLE

After the doorman admits a visitor,
you're their second line of
defense. And your antenna should
be out at all times for anyone
going up in your car who gives you
even the smallest uneasy feeling...

His eye drifts towards...

EXT. THROUGH THE LOBBY FRONT GLASS - COLE'S POV - DAY

The TINTED WINDOW CAR still sits, mysteriously, across the street. Two OVERCOATED MEN walk past.

COLE

Like those two.

He walks outside, Lester opening the door, Dever'aux at his heels.

EXT. THE BUILDING - DAY

Cole watches the men continue down the street, then turns to Dev'reaux, explaining.

COLE

That's the second time they've
walked by the building from the
same direction. May be nothing,
but it's a little off.

DEV'REAUX

Man. Not even your job, but you
notice everything!

COLE

It's *all* my job. There's a
cellular structure to a full
service building -- in order to
keep this hive running we all
exceed our job descriptions.

(MORE)

COLE (CONT'D)

These residents won't notice ordinary service -- only the extraordinary service will get you that bonus.

Cole gives the building's perimeter a once-over. He spies a scrap of trash at the curb and squats to pick it up.

Dev'reaux just stares. *That's* dedication.

EXT. THE TOWER -- FROM HIGH ABOVE -- DUSK

A tarp covering the absent window on 66 flaps in the wind as the sun goes down.

Below, Mr. Washington exits the staff entrance, in his civvies, knocking off for the night. He passes MISS HOLLINGSWORTH, the stringy, nasty woman we met earlier.

MR. WASHINGTON

Evening, Miss. Hollingsworth.

(the woman startles)

--It's just me, Mr. Washington.

MISS HOLLINGSWORTH

Oh! Oh.

MR. WASHINGTON

Out of uniform. Got it.

He keeps his expression cheerful, but drops it the minute she goes on her way. Racist bitch!

INT. THE TOWER -- BACK HALLWAYS -- MOMENTS LATER

ON A CHECK: "Alimony -- September." Cole's mailing his monthly dues as Charlie, in civvies now, raps on the door.

Exiting, Cole and Charlie pass the LOCKER ROOM. Cole leans in to kill the light, to find Lester still here, gazing into space.

CHARLIE

Lester? You okay?

LESTER

...just gettin' my shoes on... I'll be outta here in a jiff...

Cole eyes Lester, knows the old man has something on his mind.

COLE

What.

LESTER

Naw, it's a long day for you, Mr. Howard...

Cole smiles.

COLE

And now it's over, and I have time. What.

LESTER

It's just, ah... I uh, I asked Mr. Simon a few weeks ago to get me some funds from my 401 thing --
(quickly)
--not playin' the horses or anything, Mr. Howard -- my little grandkids out in California, their daddy got laid off, and they're feeling the pinch, you know--

COLE

For you to even bring it up, it's more than a pinch.

LESTER

Well, they're behind kinda every which way...

COLE

Losing their house?

LESTER

(sighs)
Yeah, if I don't help...

COLE

Of course, why wouldn't you help?

LESTER

Well, that's just it... Mr. Simon, he hasn't given me the money.

COLE

When did you ask him?

LESTER

Six weeks ago.

COLE

And you still don't have the money.

LESTER

He says that the bank's gonna get to it.

COLE

Well you're --
 (not wanting to guess
 Lester's age)
 --of a certain age, you can take that money out. This makes no sense at all.

LESTER

Banks get busy, like anybody.

COLE

Not with our pension plan.

INT. THE TOWER -- MR. SIMON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Doorplate: "PROPERTY MANAGER." Mr. Simon sits and peruses his Wall Street Journal a moment before he addresses Cole.

MR. SIMON

The economy's in the crapper, Cole.

COLE

With all due respect, sir, I don't really see how that entitles a bank to stall giving Lester some of his money.

MR. SIMON

Everyone's cutting staff.

COLE

Then the remaining bank employees can work free overtime, as we do.

There is a subtle dig there, but Cole keeps his expression pleasant and professional.

MR. SIMON

Don't get smart. The resident board thinks we may have some staff redundancies.

COLE

Whoa, Whoa: cut OUR staff? My people are out there busting their--

MR. SIMON
 (raises a hand: enough)
 I just want to prepare you for
 possible contingencies.

Mr. Simon simply picks up his newspaper and starts reading.
 The interview is over.

MR. SIMON (CONT'D)
 Hang up the Christmas tapestry
 tomorrow, please.

COLE
 It's already done.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE -- NIGHT

Cole, Charlie and Lester exit the building together, heading
 to their various homes. Cole notices: the tinted window car
 is still sitting there. And -- across the street -- there's
 ANOTHER ONE!

COLE
 There's two of them, now? Why
 haven't they been towed?

CHARLIE
 (shrugs)
 Call the city.

COLE
 We did. They're doing nothing --
 no, really, it makes *no sense* --

Cole finally lets Charlie pull him along, down the sidewalk,
 walking along with Lester, pleased to have company. At a bus
 stop, they wait with Lester for his crosstown, Cole trying
 not to flick a glance back at the mystery cars.

LESTER
 -- the littlest one tells me the
 other day on the phone: "Grandpa,
 what's invisible and smells like
 worms?" "Bird farts," he says. The
 way he laughed at his own joke I
 just about died.

COLE
 You ever think about moving out
 there?

LESTER

Nah. I can help 'em out more from here, and no use pretending I don't love the job...

COLE

Lester. The day you go, we change the name of the building, cause it'll never be the same.

Nothing could mean more to Lester. His bus arrives.

LESTER

Night, Mr. Howard. Mr. Gibbs.

COLE

Lester, outside the building...?
It's just Cole.

Charlie drops his jaw. He's never seen Cole give that permission to anyone. They watch Lester step aboard, then proceed to the subway.

INT. CHET AND MARTY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

All that is mundane and lower middle class in Queens. The house is festooned with cheap BIRTHDAY BALLOONS AND STREAMERS. MARTY, Cole's mother, 60's, sympathetic and kind, if a bit timid, admits Cole, who is holding a PRESENT.

COLE

Hey, Mom.
(peers inside)
Where's Dad?

MARTY

In his office.

COLE

It's his *birthday*.

MARTY

(sighs)
It's tax time.

INT. HOWARD HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cole stands in the doorway, looking in at his father, WALT, an accountant, looking dutiful and harried, up to his eyeballs in his clients' TAX RETURNS.

COLE
Dad. You coming out?

WALT
Yeah, I will...

And he means it. He wants to. It's just.. *so much work.*

COLE
Brought you something.

He enters the office, places the present on his Dad's desk.
Walt unwraps it.

WALT
Oh, hey, great, an organizer!

COLE
I know your old one's a little
frayed.

Cole smiles, glad his present pleases. Marty appears behind him.

MARTY
Walt, you gotta give it half an
hour.

Walt sighs. He wants to go to his own birthday party; he really does. He gets up, feeling torn.

INT. HOWARD LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

People are toasting and mingling around a nervous looking Walt. He can't stop thinking about that pile of paper on his desk.

SLIDE (O.S.)
Hey, here's *my* present, Mr. H.

SLIDE is a sharp-looking black man, about Cole's age, a little too flashily dressed for a modest birthday party. However, he seems very comfortable with these people. He hands Walt an iPhone, out of a satchel in which Cole can see -
- there are about 20 of them, all in their original boxes.

Walt is very fond of Slide, but is immediately suspicious.

WALT
Do you have a receipt for this?

SLIDE

Ah, now, we're not gonna start that--!

WALT

No, really, Darnell--!

SLIDE

Shit, nobody call me that now--

MARTY

Well, we just can't help remembering the old days...!

There are PICTURES on the wall of kindergarden buds, 5 YEAR OLD SLIDE and 5 YEAR OLD COLE, with their arms around each other.

COLE

He's been Slide for a while, Mom.

Cole and Slide appraise each other and smile, two old friends whose lives have gone in entirely different directions.

COLE (CONT'D)

Hey.

SLIDE

Hey.

COLE

You don't still live around here...?

SLIDE

Nah. Got a soft spot for your old Dad.

COLE

Yeah, well. He was around.

SLIDE

There's that.

Slide's clearly wasn't.

COLE

What have you been doing --?

Slide just laughs.

COLE (CONT'D)

Okay. Never mind.

Cole looks around, notices the house is all torn up. Most notably, the kitchen. Like, they're cooking on a HOT PLATE.

COLE (CONT'D)

Gawd, Mom -- they're still not finished?

MARTY

A coupla permits didn't come through.

COLE

But you applied two years ago.

WALT

Man says we gotta wait.

SLIDE (O.S.)

You don't gotta wait. I just did mine, and... last time the city came around, I just... made a contribution.

COLE

To..?

SLIDE

Their well being.

COLE

That's generally called "taxes."

The word "taxes" just convulses Slide. Walt, Marty and Cole are taken aback.

SLIDE

Oh, sorry, sorry, no disrepect.

COLE

Hey, seriously, Slide. Just curious, really -- I mean, why wouldn't you want to pay for schools and roads and police protection--

SLIDE

You feel *protected* by the police?

COLE

I--

SLIDE

Educated by the schools?
(to Cole)

(MORE)

SLIDE (CONT'D)

I notice you in hock up to you ass
to pay for that fancy-ass college --
tax dollars weren't there to help
you then. You still paying that
off?

We see on Cole's face: he is.

COLE

Ah, but I would never, ever have
the job that I have--

SLIDE

No, you right, you right. You got
a good job.

Slide means it. He respects Cole.

SLIDE (CONT'D)

Yeah. I know. There's days I envy
that job of yours.

His PHONE starts to ring. And ring. Cole looks down. The
control line flashes THE TOWERS.

SLIDE (CONT'D)

This ain't one of 'em. 'C'mon,
let's get a beer...

Cole is torn. He wants to go with Slide, needs to answer.

SLIDE (CONT'D)

You got to get that?

COLE

No...

It stops ringing. Immediately starts again. Marty looks at
him.

MARTY

Honey..? We're about to cut the
cake. Don't.

Cole looks around the room at his family, who's watching him.
He sighs.

COLE

I won't leave. Okay? I promise.
(answering, into phone)
Yeah.

INT. A CAB - MOVING - NIGHT

Cole sits in the back seat, cab racing along, practically levitating with anxiety. He is on the phone.

COLE

Nonono -- exactly WHAT. Did you see. --Why aren't they there? When did you call them. What kind of response time is that? --Well, how they can take that position, that nothing's actually happened, when there's bulges under the coats of men who have been staking out my building and they're taking up positions around the perimeter-- what happened to crime prevention?! -- Okay, I'm here, get out front, NOW NOW NOW!

EXT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- DAY

The cab screeches up and Cole jumps out, met by THREE SECURITY GUARDS.

COLE

Okay, where are they?

The guards look around.

GUARD #1

I don't see 'em now. But when the wind blew their coats against them, you could see it -- they're definitely packing.

Cole notices: the TINTED WINDOW CAR IS NOW ACROSS THE STREET -- right IN FRONT of his building.

COLE

God damn it -- enough!

He marches up to the car, starts banging on the windows.

COLE (CONT'D)

WHO ARE YOU IN THERE?! WHAT DO YOU WANT?!

No response. Cole rushes into the lobby.

INT. LOBBY FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Cole races up to the NIGHT DESK MAN, agitated.

COLE

Okay, no one comes in, all right?
Not until I find out who these
jokers are and what they want.

NIGHT DESK MAN

What about, goes out?

COLE

No one goes out.

NIGHT DESK MAN

Cause the Mink Brinks is here. Do
I not let them go out?

COLE

What? They came yesterday.

NIGHT DESK MAN

They're here now too.

COLE

They're in the garage? Now?

NIGHT DESK MAN

Yeah, they forgot to take Mr.
Braniff's wife's mink to storage.
He's bringing it down to them.

COLE

HIMSELF?!

NIGHT DESK MAN

He does everything himself.

Cole wheels on the guards.

COLE

Down down down--! Go down and see
what the hell's going on?!

INT. SURVELLIENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Cole races in:

COLE

Garage! Mink Brinks! Find it!

The guy clicks around on the cameras until an IMAGE of the BRINKS TRUCK can be seen. TWO GUYS are opening the back. They are casually dressed.

COLE (CONT'D)
Zoom in on them. I don't know
them. Zoom in on the shoes!

The technician obeys.

Their SHOES are EXPENSIVE ITALIAN LEATHER.

COLE (CONT'D)
Italian leather with TASSLES?! I
DON'T THINK SO. -- MAYDAY!! Oh
shit--

He now sees, on camera, ARTHUR BRANIFF HIMSELF approaching the truck, helpfully carrying HIS WIFE'S MINK, sheathed in opaque thick PLASTIC.

Cole shrieks into his mouthpiece:

COLE (CONT'D)
Where are you two--?! I think it's
a kidnapping!

He races for the elevators.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

THE GUARDS rush out of the elevators. Braniff is nowhere to be seen. The truck's doors are closed, and the truck is beginning to pull away.

GUARD #1
Truck's moving!

COLE'S VOICE
Where is he?

GUARD #1
We don't see him!

COLE'S VOICE
Oh God -- they got him!

INT. ELEVATOR -- ON COLE...

...pacing like a caged animal.

COLE
 Don't open those doors! Mr.
 Morgan, how strong is a Brinks
 truck!

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

The guard, to his horror, watches as the truck BATTERS the closed gate like a battering ram, almost decimating it. The truck backs up for another try...

GUARD #1
 Strong.

The elevator opens. Cole rushes out, as the TRUCK SURGES FORWARD, SMASHING the grate!

COLE
 SHOOT OUT THE TIRES!

The guards start blasting. The truck SMASHES through. No way to tell if it's hit.

The three men rush to the exit.

EXT. ALLEY ALONGSIDE THE TOWERS - NIGHT

The brinks truck, all its right tires shot out, is fatally leaning on one side. It limps forward, SCRAPING the side of the building, making sparks.

Cole and the guards race towards it with everything they've got. They're gaining. The truck's slowing. Before it stops the DRIVER and HELPER jump out and run for it.

Cole and the guards have more important matters. They race to the now-stopped truck. Cole gestures to Guard #1 to shoot out the lock. He obeys. The men wrestle the door open...

And there, looking very shocked, is ARTHUR BRANIFF.

COLE
 Mr. Braniff--! Sir -- !

He leaps up to help Braniff, who is four shades of grey. He turns and quietly VOMITS into a corner.

GUARD #1
 Did he hit a mink?

COLE
 (looking around)
 There's no minks.

Suddenly TWO TINTED WINDOWED CARS squeal into the alley, blocking off both avenues of escape!

Cole and the Guards freeze. *Who are these people?!*

MEN get out of the cars with GUNS DRAWN. Two of them are *the same men Cole saw earlier -- passing his building. Twice.*

Cole and his guards are now seriously outnumbered. They freeze, terrified.

The men draw guns. The LEAD AGENT, female, attractive in a down-to-business way, 30's, flips a badge.

FEMALE AGENT (DENHAM)
 FBI.

Cole doesn't get it.

AGENT DENHAM
 We have a warrant for this man's arrest.

Braniff looks astonished. Cole is immediately protective.

COLE
 This man is not one of the perpetrators -- he's the *victim* of an attempted kidnapping --

AGENT DENHAM
 This was not a kidnapping. It was an attempt to flee.

COLE
 Flee from what?! You are making a serious mistake, and against one of *my residents--*

AGENT DENHAM
 He'll be residing at Rikers--

Braniff throws up his hands, conciliatory.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
 All right, all right. We'll get this straightened out.
 (to Cole)
 Would you mind telling my wife to call Marty Klein?
 (MORE)

ARTHUR BRANIFF (CONT'D)
Tell her not to cry, it's the FBI,
not the Gestapo. Oh, and --

He hands Cole the plastic-wrapped coat.

ARTHUR BRANIFF (CONT'D)
Take her her mink. She'll worry.

Cole reaches out to take the wrapped coat. The female agent immediately SNATCHES IT out of his hands.

COLE
Is this a shakedown? How can you
people possibly use a mink coat as
eviden--

The agent ZIPS THE PLASTIC OPEN.

There is no mink inside the plastic. Instead, hanging neatly, are SEVERAL PLASTIC POUCHES of various sizes, containing toiletries, thick envelopes, and reams of documents.

Cole's jaw drops. Arthur sighs impatiently.

The agent zips open a compartment, pulls out a PASSPORT, flips it open. It has Arthur's face on it, but not his name. The other agents pull CASH and DOCUMENTS out of the other envelopes.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
This proves nothing.

AGENT DENHAM
Yeah. I guess everybody puts fake
passports, account numbers and wads
of Euros in mothball storage. I
know I do.
(to Braniff, "charming")
Walk with us.

The agents cuff him and lead him down the alley, where Cole can see SCADS OF REPORTERS and a few POLICE waiting, flashbulbs already popping.

COLE
The underground exit might be more
discreet.

AGENT DENHAM
Oh no. Mr. Braniff's getting the
full perp-walk.

Cole volunteers his jacket to be laid over Braniff's cuffs.

EXT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

A crowd has gathered outside along with a NEWS CREW to document Braniff's walk of shame. Agent Denham escorts him to a squad car, loading him into the rear seat. She returns Cole's jacket and Cole looks from her to Braniff, not sure what to believe. The police caravan pulls away and Cole steers Mrs. Braniff away from cameras.

SUSAN BRANIFF, a facelifted and pampered 60, bursts from the front of the building, a MINK COAT over her nightgown.

SUSAN BRANIFF

Arthur! What is all this?! He's done nothing wrong!

Agent Denham gets a load of her.

AGENT DENHAM

Looks like her mink's safe.

INT. COLE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CLOSE ON --

A fistful of Advil being shaken into Cole's hand. The appropriate ending to an awful day.

His apartment lacks a woman's touch and housekeeper's visit. On a mantel, evidence of a former life: a wedding photo.

Cole sits, eating Kung Pao chicken out of a counter, gloomily watching TV. His phone rings.

INT. SIMON'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

There are many, many tchockies and two little yapping dogs -- Simon is evidently prissy. He is on the phone.

MR. SIMON

What the--

INT. COLE'S LIVING ROOM

Cole holds the phone away from his ear.

MR. SIMON'S VOICE

--HELL happened?!

COLE

We don't know anything beyond the arrest.

(MORE)

COLE (CONT'D)
 Five news crews still parked
 outside, I imagine we'll find out
 when they do.

Cole suddenly sits bolt upright, his attention captured by
 the TV.

COLE (CONT'D)
 Sh! Turn on channel four now!

THE TV - CLOSE (AND WE CROSS CUT BETWEEN THE TWO MEN:)

Braniff is the top story.

CNBC ANCHOR (ON TV)
*...last year Wall Street titan
 Arthur Braniff was the subject of a
 60 Minutes profile but this
 afternoon he's the subject of an
 FBI indictment. We haven't learned
 the charges against him...*

MR. SIMON
 Did he murder someone? Rape
 someone? He better not've done it
 in the building.

CNBC ANCHOR
*...but there is heavy speculation
 that he will be charged with
 several counts of securities
 fraud...*

MR. SIMON
 What kind of fraud?

COLE
 Securities fraud. Swindling.

MR. SIMON
 Ah, no no no NOOOO--!

COLE
 I know. He seemed like a good guy.

MR. SIMON
 Fuck that! He runs our BOARD!

COLE
 Yeah, well, somebody else will step
 in.

MR. SIMON
 He manages the building's assets!

Cole stares at the receiver. He never thought about that.

COLE
Manages, as in... invests?

He hears only CURSING from the receiver.

COLE (CONT'D)
Mr. Simon, are we talking about the
funds for potted palms in the
lobby, or...?

There's no answer from Mr. Simon.

COLE (CONT'D)
OR--?!

Mr. Simon snorts with disdain.

EXT. THE MANHATTAN SKYLINE

As the Sun comes up over the gleaming midtown buildings...

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- DAY

Cole comes in, pensive, the weight of the world on his
shoulders. He looks around the lobby, at all the people who
work for him.

Porters decorate the holiday TREE; it's days before Christmas
and the lobby bustles with activity -- DELIVERY MEN hauling
in fir trees, RESIDENTS returning with shopping, OTHERS
leaving on holiday with piles upon piles of luggage.

DEV'REAUX
(overloaded with ski bags)
-- where you folks headed for the
break? St. Moritz?!
(with a bit of edge)
Get outta here, that's where I ski!

The holiday music grates in Cole's ears.

INT. THE PACKAGE ROOM - DAY

Cole has THE ENTIRE STAFF assembled. This is the hardest
moment of his life.

COLE

The press hasn't made this announcement yet, but the arresting agent was good enough to take my call and fill me in. I didn't want any of you to hear this from some... impersonal source.

(a deep breath)

It seems that... Mr. Braniff's great success was actually a giant Ponzi scheme. Anyone who had anything invested with Mr. Braniff...

(beat)

...has probably been defrauded.

Murmurs of shock from the staff. Cole soldiers on, hating having to tell them all this.

COLE (CONT'D)

As your pensions were invested with Mr. Braniff...

We PAN across the devastated faces of the MAIDS, VALETS... and Lester. Poor Lester, who is doing his best to remain stoic in these desperate circumstances.

MAID #1

So that means...

These are the hardest words Cole will ever have to say:

COLE

It's all gone.

More murmurs. They can't believe it. Cole continues, with all the compassionate dignity he can summon.

COLE (CONT'D)

Some of you may need some time to process this... and I will make myself available to answer any further questions... if I can. And anyone who absolutely needs to go home for the day, I will do my best to operate with a skeleton crew. I appreciate anyone staying who possibly can... but I can't in good conscience expect that from you, in light of... what you must be feeling. If you could just tell me... who needs to go...?

He scans their stunned faces. They all want to raise their hands and leave. Some of them are blinking back tears.

MS. PEREZ

Is your pension gone too, Mr. Howard?

COLE

Well. Yes. I'm sure it is. Of course it is, I--

A couple of them *start* to raise their hands, then, exchanging glances with the others (who aren't) put their hands back down.

Lester dabs at his eyes, but pulls himself together, mustering a heartbreaking smile.

LESTER

Wouldn't want to leave you short-handed, Mr. Howard.

Slowly they all dissemble, go back to their posts.

Cole watches them go, knowing he's just been witness to a major act of bravery, of loyalty.

He has never been so touched in his life.

EXT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- DAY

Mr. Svickhar approaches Charlie.

SVICKHAR

Mr. Howard gonna be out soon?

CHARLIE

Why?

SVICKHAR

The Grinch is here.

He indicates outside where --

EXT. THE TOWER -- MAIN ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

-- another caravan approaches, with a trail of news trucks. One crew is on the street already taping:

REPORTER ON STREET

"...just an hour ago State Superior Court released Arthur Braniff on ten million dollars bail on condition that he remain under house arrest here at his penthouse apartment on 5th Avenue..."

Agent Denham is first out of a sedan, followed by Braniff, hands unbound this time. He's assaulted with questions from the press. Fighting through them, he stops to declare:

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Yes, mistakes were made. People lost money. I'm sick about that. But they were mistakes, made with the best intentions. And I'm truly sorry they were made.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Charlie, Ms. Perez, and Dev watch Braniff from inside.

CHARLIE

(bitterly quoting Braniff)
"Tough times makes civilized people do uncivilized things."

Braniff comes in out of the media storm, along with his wife and lawyer and a phalanx of FBI agents. Cole turns to his employees:

COLE

I know what you're thinking: how dare they make us his jailers. You'll think about spitting in his coffee and overwaxing his floor. But this is the Towers, and we will remain consummate professionals. This is also America, and he's innocent until proven guilty.

The hostile clamor of the crowd outside is replaced by an icy silence inside as Braniff finds himself face-to-face with the Tower staff.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Hello, everyone. Sorry about the circus out there...

No one responds. Cole, keeping his tone neutral, tries to set a good example.

COLE
Mr. Braniff. Welcome home.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
Thanks, Cole. Good to be back.

Braniff sounds like the same genial guy he ever was. But now they know better. Agent Denham ushers Braniff to the elevators.

ARTHUR BRANIFF (CONT'D)
Hi, Jamaal.

DEV'REAUX
Mr. Braniff. How was the slammer?

Cole notices--

LESTER

Is at his post, but he looks weak, grey, stunned. As he greets residents, his voice is wobbly.

Cole crosses, puts his hand on Lester's arm. Gently:

COLE
Nobody appreciates your staying more than I do, but... I think you need to take a personal day now.

Lester wants to protest, but he finally nods. He's beaten.

LESTER
Thank you, Mr. Howard.

COLE
(kindly)
You never are going to call me
Cole, are you?

Lester smiles weakly, shakes his head and goes. Cole watches after him, worried.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- DAY

FBI TECHNICIANS wire the place, turning a \$45 million apartment into a prison cell. A prison cell with five bedrooms and floor-to-ceiling views of Central Park.

A Technician fits Braniff with an ankle bracelet as Agent Denham tours the apartment with his lawyer, MARTY KLEIN.

MARTY KLEIN

My client would like access to the swimming pool downstairs.

AGENT DENHAM

Absolutely not.

MARTY KLEIN

Then the gym on forty-three.

AGENT DENHAM

A dim, delusional dream.

MARTY KLEIN

At least let him have access to the sundeck on fifty. Even death row inmates get fifteen minutes of fresh air a day.

AGENT DENHAM

Mr. Klein, the rules of your client's occupancy here are simple: he leaves the apartment for any reason, he gets remanded to federal custody and forfeits his ten million dollars bail. If your client wants fresh air so badly, I suggest he stick his head out a window. Or in an oven. --What is that?

Middle of the room sits a GREEN AUSTIN-HEALEY TWO-SEATER.

MARTY KLEIN

Obviously you don't watch 60 Minutes. That is a 1958 Austin-Healey. Mr. Braniff is a car enthusiast.

AGENT DENHAM

What's it doing up here?

ARTHUR BRANIFF

(entering, trying out his ankle bracelet like he's trying on new shoes)

We were going to keep it at the Cape, but it gets better mileage here in the city.

EXT. A COFFEE KIOSK - DAY

Lester, still looking weak and grey, painstakingly counts out the change for a cup of coffee. When the vendor hands it to him, Lester's hands are shaking so badly that he can barely lift it.

INT. ARTHUR BRANIFF'S APARTMENT - (CONTINUATION OF PREVIOUS SCENE -) NIGHT

Marty Klein is admiring the Austin Healy. He and Braniff chat affably as if nothing had happened.

MARTY KLEIN

Aahhhh, this was the one you snaked Mallya out of! How'd you get it up here?

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Very carefully. And I made him throw in his best bottle of Latour.

Marty Klein crosses to the Braniffs' WINE REFRIGERATOR, takes out a BOTTLE of CHATEAU LATOUR, '61, looks at the DISTINCTIVE TOWER on the label, whistles. Braniff grabs it back.

BRANIFF

No you don't. That's for my 60th.

AGENT DENHAM

Well, we'll have to confiscate it. Along with all these paintings.

Braniff looks to Marty Klein.

MARTY KLEIN

Everything in this apartment is the legal property of Mrs. Braniff. Consequently none of it is subject to your seizure warrant, Agent Denham.

AGENT DENHAM

(no rollover)

Yeah. She's a blinking, innocent fawn.

INT. LESTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lester slowly comes into the room, shell shocked. He sits on his bed, takes off his hat. He looks at the pictures of his TWO GRANDKIDS. For whom he can now provide -- nothing.

INT. BRANIFF APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

She considers Braniff, oddly sanguine given the circumstances. How can he be under house arrest and seem so unconcerned? Cole enters with the Sentry Agent.

AGENT DENHAM

Mr. Howard, thank you for joining us.

Cole is staring at the Austin Martin. He can't believe it.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Beauty, huh? This was the first model off the line, made a present to Winston Churchill shortly before his death.

Agent Denham can't believe this guy is going on about his car like nothing's happened. She snaps at him:

AGENT DENHAM

Mr. Howard is not here for a car show.

(to Cole)

I wanted to bring you up to speed on some restrictions to Mr. Braniff's stay here.

(Cole nods)

Mr. Braniff may receive no visitors without authorization from my office and a federal officer present. That includes family members, Mr. Klein here, even your staff. Any mail incoming or outgoing must be vetted by my office. Also, you should prepare your staff for an onslaught of food deliveries: the Braniffs will be eating in for the foreseeable future. Questions?

Cole doesn't have any. He stares at the opulence of the Austin Martin, then back at Braniff, who remains cool as a cucumber.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

I have one. What if there's a fire?

AGENT DENHAM

Then I'll know there's a god.

INT. THE TOWER -- ELEVATOR -- DAY

Cole and Denham ride down together. In silence. At first.

COLE
Thanks for taking my call last
night.

AGENT DENHAM
You're welcome. No more one in the
morning, okay.

COLE
You were up.

AGENT DENHAM
Even so.

A silence.

COLE
I was anxious about--

AGENT DENHAM
--your people, I know. And I'm
glad I could help. I want my pound
of flesh, though.

Cole blinks at her. Then gets it.

COLE
Oh! A favor back! Sure, sure.

AGENT DENHAM
What did you think I meant?

COLE
I-- never mind.

She smiles at him wryly.

AGENT DENHAM
Please. When would you find the
time?

The elevator doors open and they enter...

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Cole escorts Agent Denham across the lobby.

COLE

I have...
 (realizing how little)
 ...some time...

AGENT DENHAM

Look, I get the 17 hour day thing.
 I'm in your tribe.

She gives him an understanding smile as she says this that might hint at something personal...? He appraises her.

COLE

Warmth? Understanding?
 (cut the shit)
 Uh-uh. What do you want?

She unapologetically launches in.

AGENT DENHAM

Look, we still don't completely
 have everything clear about
 Braniff.

COLE

Ahhh. You think I might know
 something.

She does. DING! The doors open on the lobby.

AGENT DENHAM

Outside.

EXT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

Cole sees Agent Denham to her sedan. She stops, peers up (way up) at the penthouse.

AGENT DENHAM

We've accounted for every dime
 Braniff took, all his holdings,
 everything he owns. The math
 doesn't jive. Somewhere he's
 stashed twenty mil.

COLE

(facetious)
 Where? In his apartment?

She just shoots him a look. Yeah. Maybe.

COLE (CONT'D)

Um... you people are pretty thorough. You don't think you would have found it?

AGENT DENHAM

Man swindled sixty billion. You tell me. And it's all he's got now. If I were him, I'd keep it close. So if you think of anything we might have missed...

She hands him a card: "Jillian Denham, FBI." Cole reads it.

COLE

I have your number, remember?

She remembers, slightly flustered.

AGENT DENHAM

Yeah... how did you get that?

COLE

In my business, the stuff you are asked to find at four in the morning...?

(shrugs)

It's a simple phone number.

AGENT DENHAM

A *classified* phone number.

He ducks the barb, smiling.

COLE

Are you sorry?

A beat. She smiles back at him -- a nice smile -- and goes. Cole watches.

INT. LESTERS APARTMENT - NIGHT

We HOLD ON LESTER'S ANTIQUATED ANSWERING MACHINE, which clicks on.

COLE'S VOICE

Hey, Lester. This is, "Mr. Howard," I... I'm thinking about you tonight and I'm in your neighborhood and thought maybe we could grab a quick dinner or something... you there?

INT. CAB - NIGHT - MOVING

Cole is, in fact, still in midtown, heading downtown, in brutal traffic, but concerned enough about Lester to tell that white lie. He is on his cell phone.

COLE
Lester, please pick up if you're there. I'm getting a little...

He looks into the phone. This isn't right. Not at all.

COLE (CONT'D)
(to the driver)
Yeah, DIRECTLY THROUGH TIMES SQUARE?! There's a good rush hour solution! C'mon--!

INT. LESTER'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Empty and quiet. No sign of Lester. KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK.

COLE'S VOICE
Lester? You home? It's Mr. Howard. It's Cole, open up.

INT. HALLWAY -- OUTSIDE LESTER'S FRONT DOOR -- CONTINUOUS

Cole waits for a response. Nothing. He runs his fingers atop the doorframe, then checks under the mat. No key.

Not expecting much, he tries the door. To his surprise, it's UNLOCKED.

INT. LESTER'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Cole enters. Scours a living room. No sign of Lester. Continues into a BEDROOM.

And there he is, lying atop his bed, sound sleep. Cole lets out a sigh of relief.

COLE
Jeez, Lest, you gave me a scare.
(he doesn't rouse)
Lester...c'mon, wake up...

Cole goes to his bedside. The man's out. On his bedside table: two empty vials of pills. Cole grabs at a phone --

EXT. HOBOKEN -- NIGHT

AN AMBULANCE speeds to an ER, Cole's town car following.

INT. EMERGENCY WARD -- MOMENTS LATER

The Nurse leads Cole through.

NURSE

-- we're really supposed to keep him under observation at least forty-eight hours but as you can see we need the bedspace. Legally we can't release him on his own accord so either you'll have to sign for him or we can call whatever family he's got --

COLE

-- no: nobody tells his kids --

ER RESIDENT

Then he's all yours.

She points him to Lester, on a hospital gurney, alive and conscious. Chin dabbled with grey matter, remnants of the charcoal solution used to pump his stomach. Cole approaches.

COLE

Hey, Lester. How ya feeling?

Lester, ashamed, turns his head away. Cole makes a decision.

COLE (CONT'D)

Whatyasay you come stay at my place for the holiday?

LESTER

Don't wanna put you to any more bother.

COLE

Lester. This is kind of maybe a good moment to put yourself first...? Come on... please... Why'd you do it?

LESTER

I lost all my money. Everything I saved, everything I set aside.

COLE

Your 401K wasn't everything, was it?

LESTER

Nah, nah... but it was doing so good I gave my savings to Mr. Braniff too.

COLE

(that brings him up short)
Your *savings*? All your other money?
(Lester nods)
When?

LESTER

'Bout a month ago.

COLE

And he took it? All your savings?

Lester nods, feeling ashamed. Cole reels, appalled.

COLE (CONT'D)

Lester, you mind if I step out a while? I gotta check on a few things back at the Tower.

LESTER

Don't worry, Mr. Howard. I'm not gonna try anything dumb again. Don't want to let you down.

Cole can't believe the man's loyalty. He swallows his bile and goes.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- NIGHT

By the elevators, Dev slips an ENVELOPE into the hands of two excessively burly UKRANIAN GENTLEMEN. They look strangely out of place at the Towers.

DEV'REAUX

Okay, so are we good?

The two men look at each other and almost laugh with disdain.

DEV'REAUX (CONT'D)

I mean, in a minimal way, good -- I know we're not *good* good, but we're not at a punishing place, either....

The men turn and walk away without a word.

DEV'REAUX (CONT'D)
 I'll get more next week.
 (as they're out of
 earshot)
 From fuck-all knows where.

Charlie spies Cole marching in, furious, beelining toward the elevators.

CHARLIE
 ('what the hell')
 You forget something?

Cole just blasts on by, intent.

INT. THE TOWER -- ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

Cole joins Fitzhugh aboard Dev's car.

DEV'REAUX
 Mr. Howard, what are you --

COLE
 Shut up, Dev. Take 'er up.

They start up. Straight at Fitzhugh, intent:

COLE (CONT'D)
 You're finance. What do you know
 about all this Braniff bullshit?

Fitzhugh blinks, shocked by Cole's vehemence.

FITZHUGH
 Well... when I still, ah, had an
 office to go to we talked about
 him... I mean, the returns were too
 good...

COLE
 When did he know? That it was all
 going sideways? When did Braniff
 know his Ponzi scheme was cooked?

FITZHUGH
 Had to be around Halloween. That's
 when he started cashing out his
 buddies. We all wondered--

COLE
 So any money an investor gave him
 after that, say a month ago --

FITZHUGH
 -- he was just using it to bail
 water out of the Titanic.

That's all Cole needs to hear. He turns to Dev resolutely.

COLE
 Penthouse.

The doors open on Fitzhugh's floor. Dev looks to him.

DEV'REAUX
 Fourteen.

FITZHUGH
 Oh, no, I want to see this.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- NIGHT

Susan Braniff swigs vodka and pencils a crossword, scratching her shitsu's ears. Arthur Braniff pumps his legs (ankle bracelet-clad) atop a stationary bicycle, watching TV.

SUSAN BRANIFF
 Hon-eeee? What do you want
 tonight? Le Bernadin takeout?

Life in prison when you're a billionaire. Then: the door to the elevator anteroom: POUND-POUND-POUND! Susan jolts up. Braniff stops pedaling and, sweat-soaked, answers the door.

There stand (in order of proximity) Cole, Fitzhugh, and Dev. Braniff detects an air of hostility.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
 C'mon in, fellas.

They enter in order, Fitzhugh introducing himself.

FITZHUGH
 Hi, remember me--? Chase Fitzhugh,
 14E. Used to be a big fan.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
 So...what brings you guys up here?
 Cole knows I'm not supposed to have
 visitors without supervision.

Everyone turns to Cole. Who remains silent. Seething.

ARTHUR BRANIFF (CONT'D)
 Can I fix you a drink? Some of you
 look like you could use one.

DEV'REAUX
Yeah, I'll take a --

COLE
We won't be here that long.

Braniff senses a torrent coming on. He turns to his wife.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
Susan, why don't you leave us for a spell? I have a feeling Cole will speak his mind more freely without a lady present --

COLE
I don't give a flying fuck what I say in front of your wife. She lies down with a dog, she's got fleas, too.

Wow. That blows everyone's hair back a little.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
(his good humor exhausted)
Say what you're gonna say.

COLE
You took Lester's money.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
Yes I did. He came to me, asked me to invest it, I had no idea --

COLE
It was everything he had.

Fitzhugh picks up on the emotion in Cole's voice.

FITZHUGH
What happened to Lester?

Cole studies Braniff's face, monitoring it as he answers:

COLE
He took an overdose of sleeping pills this morning.

Dev and Fitzhugh both react, gut-punched. It's harder to tell how Braniff feels: is his concern genuine?

BRANIFF
Ah, Jesus.

COLE

I got one question for you. Do you care?

ARTHUR BRANIFF

What do you mean, do I care --

COLE

-- do you feel any responsibility, any remorse for what happened to Lester --

ARTHUR BRANIFF

-- as I was saying, I had no idea we were going to lose everything, of course I feel badly --

COLE

-- THEN WHY HAVEN'T YOU ASKED ME WHETHER HE'S ALIVE OR DEAD?

Cole's caught him. And for a moment he detects Braniff acknowledge it.

That does it. Cole looks around, sees what he needs, goes to it. A fireplace poker. He snatches it up, as a weapon.

SUSAN BRANIFF

Oh my god! I'm calling security!

COLE

I *am* security!

He's off to the next room, and Dev and Fitzhugh bolt to catch up with him. When they do, Cole is facing down --

-- the 1958 Austin-Healey. He steps up to the plate, draws back the fireplace poker and WHACK! A headlight goes flying. Braniff arrives, cringes at the destruction.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Ah, Jesus.

COLE

Now he cares...

WHACK! There goes the other headlight.

FITZHUGH

Cole, that's an Austin-Healey! They don't make those anymore.

COLE

Not like doormen. They make new ones of those all the time.

WHACK!

COLE

And the people who PARK YOUR CARS (whack!) and SHINE YOUR SHOES?! I'm sure they'll have no trouble REPLACING (whack!) their LIFE SAVINGS!

DEV'REAUX

(fuck it)

Shit, lemme have a swing!

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Susan!! Call the FBI!!

COLE

Don't bother. I'm done here.

That's not quite true. He takes one last WHACK at the windshield, spiderwebbing it, then tosses the fire poker aside like he's hit a walk-off homer.

IN THE LIVING ROOM, Susan Braniff is on the phone.

SUSAN BRANIFF

-- yes, he's here right now. He's destroying the place --

Cole enters, finds the phone line, rips it from the wall.

COLE

I'll send a man up in the morning to fix that.

He exits. Followed by Fitzhugh and Dev'reaux.

FITZHUGH

Folks. Pleasure meeting you.

DEV'REAUX

(as he closes the door)

Merry Christmas, everybody.

Off Susan Braniff, stunned, and Arthur Braniff, pissed --

DEV'REAUX (O.S.CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(through the door)

Now this is one HELL of a building!

INT. PJ CLARKS -- AN HOUR LATER

Holiday revelers sing karaoke and get hammered at the bar. In the back, Cole, Dev'reaux, Fitzhugh and Charlie huddle in a booth; the mood here is funereal.

DEV'REAUX

How do you steal sixty billion dollars?! I mean, nobody sit up after the first ten billion gone and say, whoa! Let's change the locks?!

FITZHUGH

The bigger the lie, the more brazen you are telling it, the more people'll buy it. That's what they taught us at Wharton.

(to Cole)

You talk to Lester? He doing alright?

Cole nods, lost in his thoughts. Charlie notes his demeanor.

CHARLIE

Cole? You okay? There are other jobs, you know.

Cole's not listening. Charlie, Fitz and Dev exchange glances, worried. Then:

COLE

How much you guys know about interior design?

CHARLIE

That's not a career for these times! Those guys are working for food!

COLE

Something funny about the Braniff place. Remember they hired that hot-shot designer..? And he ripped everything up...?

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF PENTHOUSE -- YEARS AGO

A major redo. Hard hats tear up floors and knock down walls as a MALE INTERIOR DESIGNER walks the job with Cole, gesticulating at his work.

COLE (V.O.)

He went around yammering about how much he hated *walls*, and how everything had to be open, open, open...? So...

They pass a WALL in the middle of the living room.

INT. UPTOWN SALOON - CONTINUOUS

COLE

-- why'd they leave that one wall dead in the middle of the place?

Charlie stares at Cole.

CHARLIE

You're fired from your job in the worst economy since the dust bowl and that's what's on your mind? A wall?

Cole doesn't answer. His mind is going a mile a minute. He turns to Fitzhugh.

COLE

Your living room has the same lay-out as Braniff's, right?
(Fitz nods)
Your kids in bed yet?

FITZHUGH

(this is awkward)
They're asleep. They're not in bed.

INT. THE TOWER -- FITZHUGH'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

The four men tip-toe into Fitzhugh's apartment. It's dark but everyone can see: what used to be a cozily-appointed home is now nearly empty, almost totally bereft of furniture.

FITZHUGH

The mortgage obviously came first... we had to downscale...
(despite his brave face, he's torn up over this)
I think my wife's hiding back there... she'll be embarrassed I've got people over. Doesn't want you to see the sleeping bags... I'm just gonna kiss them goodnight...

He goes. Cole moves to the wall matching the one in Braniff's place. He starts tapping along it.

CHARLIE

Cole, what are you doing?

COLE

Checking if this wall is load-bearing.

CHARLIE

I know, I mean: what are you doing checking if it's load-bearing?

Clunk. A hollow sound. Cole taps all around it. Smiles.

DEV'REAUX

What'd you find?

COLE

Space. Braniff knocked down every unnecessary wall but this one. Why do you think he did that?

Charlie moves close enough to Cole to whisper:

CHARLIE

Would you tell me what's going through your head?

COLE

No.

INT. THE TOWER -- COLE'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Cole goes through old records in the middle of the night. Finds the file he's looking for, withdraws it.

EXT. GRAND ARMY PLAZA -- CHRISTMAS DAY

The square is awash with New Yorkers and tourists alike, bundled up in holiday garb. Cole stands waiting by Pulitzer Fountain. Then, across the square -- -- Jillian Denham arrives. In civilian clothes and all the more attractive for it, so we will now refer to her as JILLIAN.

JILLIAN

Merry Christmas.

COLE

Thank you for meeting me. I hope I didn't take you away from anything.

JILLIAN
Nothing I'd want a second date
with. You?

COLE
Just a houseguest.

JILLIAN
We heard. Lester feeling better?
(Cole nods)
We also heard about your run-in
with Braniff. You know, you
violated three federal laws by
going up there.
(beat)
Because of that, a lot of people
down at the bureau want to buy you
a drink.

COLE
Does that include you?

She smiles.

INT. ELAINE'S - NIGHT

Jillian and Cole are midway through a couple of martinis,
which are tasting very, very good about now. The paper with
the layout of Braniff's penthouse is rolled out in front of
them.

JILLIAN
You really think the 20 million is
here?

COLE
There's no other place it could be.
They knocked down every non-load-
bearing wall in the place except
one.

(withdraws more evidence,
a Tower sign-in sheet)
Here -- see? A delivery and
installation to Braniff's penthouse
from an "H&J Security." They sell
and install safes.

(taps the layout wall)
I think there's a safe in this
wall. Like you said: if you had
that much money, you'd keep it
close.

She scours the layout, intrigued. Then, looks away.

JILLIAN

Shit.

COLE

No, look, I think it's there--

JILLIAN

No -- I bet you're right.

COLE

Then why "shit?"

JILLIAN

(hands the layout back)
You never showed me this.

COLE

What?

JILLIAN

I didn't hear any of this.

Cole studies her now: is she joking? No.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)

Word came down yesterday. The bureau is officially hands-off as far as Arthur Braniff is concerned.

COLE

(aghast)
What do you mean "hands off"?
You're not going to prosecute?

JILLIAN

No, it's too public to do nothing, but... they'll make a deal, he'll give up a few cohorts and they'll all do a little time. Not hard time mind you, a year maybe in a club fed.

COLE

After everything he's done? Who in the hell would want to protect that--

JILLIAN

We think Braniff has files on people, some very rich, very powerful people. We have strict orders: Do-Not-Touch.

(MORE)

JILLIAN (CONT'D)

So whether it's in a safe in that wall or in a helium balloon over Tribeca, he's gonna walk away from all this with a twenty million dollar parachute.

COLE

You're kidding me.

JILLIAN

I was funny once.
(re the drink)
Want another one?

COLE

I, ah, I never have seconds.

JILLIAN

Moderation in all things. Probably wise.

Cole plays with his swizzle stick for a moment, then suddenly slaps his palm down on the bar.

COLE

And look where it's gotten me!
Grade-grubbing, student loans,
trainee programs, years and years,
every i dotted, every t crossed,
every form filled out, punctual,
loyal, crossing on green, waiting
on red, inching my way up bit by
bit, grovel by grovel, to some kind
of white collar "security" that's
never secure... because I'm not
one of them!!

A beat.

JILLIAN

Yeah. The rich are very, very clubby. They look out for each other. And no one else.

COLE

They don't know us, they don't see us, they don't think about us --

His head comes up. Suddenly, under his breath:

COLE (CONT'D)

They'd never see us coming.

JILLIAN

Oh, no, no, no, whatever you just said, I did not hear.

COLE

Oh, but you know what I--

She covers her ears like a child:

JILLIAN

La la la! I can't hear you! I can't hear you! La la la la!

She shoots him a sly look, though. He laughs.

COLE

And I thought I wasn't going to like you for not hearing things.

She smiles at him. Cole pays the check.

COLE (CONT'D)

Well... it's been eye-opening.

They get up off their stools, friends now. He's still thinking, a mile a minute.

COLE (CONT'D)

Too bad I'm banned from the building for life.

JILLIAN

I'm sure Mr. Simon felt that way. Until he started thinking about finding someone who knows every inch of that building from the tiniest crack in the mortar to the steel in the beams, the name of every resident, who keeps his mouth shut about where the bodies are buried, doesn't complain, moves like lightening and makes everyone around him look good -- ONE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

Cole blinks. He hadn't thought about it in exactly that light.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- MONDAY MORNING

Arthur Braniff pours coffee from a sterling silver pot and offers it to Cole, who declines.

Braniff offers it instead to Mr. Simon, who receives it gladly. They sit around Braniff's dining room, a picture of civility.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Nothing for you, Cole? Water?

Cole demurs.

MR. SIMON

Mr. Braniff, let me say how gracious you've been in all this. What happened over the holiday, what Mr. Howard did coming up here, was wholly inexcusable. It's a testament to your generosity, sir, that he is allowed on the premises.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

It's a trying time for everyone. I don't blame anybody for losing their cool given what they've been hearing in the press. And Mr. Howard's too valuable an asset to the building to lose over a silly flare-up. I'm sure he regrets what he did.

Braniff smiles at Cole, which nearly sets him off. But today Cole's keeping his cool.

MR. SIMON

Mr. Howard volunteered to come here this morning to apologize, in the hopes we might put this unseemly incident behind us. Mr. Howard?

Everyone faces Cole. Braniff. Mrs. Braniff, standing guardedly in a doorway. Even Jillian, here to monitor the visit. Cole chooses his words carefully.

COLE

Mr. Braniff, I deeply regret what transpired between us last week. If I could go back, I'd behave much differently. Please know that my estimation of your character hasn't wavered a bit throughout this ordeal, and that today I hold you in the same respect I always have.

To Mr. Simon's ears this sounds like the proper kowtowing. But Braniff knows: Cole is saying go-fuck-yourself.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

And let me say that I know your job's tough. I mean, resentments are bound to bubble up when you feel sometimes like a... a glorified servant.

He says this affably, but it is giant FUCK YOU back to Cole.

MR. SIMON

As for Mr. Braniff's automobile?

Cole's eyes briefly flit to "The Wall," then back to Braniff. He's made his decision.

COLE

Sir, I will pay you back for all the damage that's been done.

And Braniff knows what Cole means: I'm coming for you. And it kind of makes him smile. Hey-ho, let's go.

MUSIC KICKS IN, TRANSPORTING US TO --

INT. DRESS FACTORY FLOOR -- GARMENT DISTRICT -- DAY

Lines and lines of Chinese immigrants sewing this year's fashions for three dollars-an-hour. Sweatshop, U.S.A.

INT. DRESS FACTORY -- BACK OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

The factory MANAGER, a diminutive Chinese man, plays lookout at the door. A PAIR OF HANDS massages an office safe's dial. To the right: click-click-click. To the left: clack-clack-clack. Then: click-clack-click.

The hands belong to SLIDE LINDUS. Cole's childhood friend.

SLIDE

Open says me.

The safe complies. The Manager pushes Slide aside to get inside the safe but first Slide plucks up a band of cash from within. The Manager protests in Cantonese but...

SLIDE (CONT'D)

Ah-ah-ah-ah. Don't even think about paying me in merchandise. You ain't got nothing my size.

INT. DRESS FACTORY -- ELEVATOR -- LATER

Slide rides down surrounded by Chinese seamstresses, a good foot-and-a-half taller than the bunch. He smiles at them.

SLIDE

Any you ladies a masseuse?
 (his cell RINGS; he reacts
 to the ID and picks up)
 Old King Cole, you merry old soul,
 why are you admitting you know me?

EXT. UNION SQUARE COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

Slide enters the restaurant, approaches Cole in a booth near a window.

COLE

Promise you won't laugh.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE -- DAY

FROM A DISTANCE AWAY: Cole and Slide bestride the sidewalk, Cole doing the talking, Slide the listening. Then, about halfway down the block, Slide stops in his tracks and stares at Cole. We can't hear what he says but we can imagine. Cole smiles and insists: no, he's not fucking with him.

A BLOCK AWAY AND WE'RE HIGH ABOVE THE STREET NOW as Cole and Slide round a corner. Cole points up and Slide looks.

REVERSE: LOOKING PAST COLE AND SLIDE, UP AT THE TOWER, specifically the penthouse. Slide looks upon it the way some men look upon Everest, with ambition and abject terror.

And thus begins a RECRUITMENT MONTAGE --

EXT. MCCARREN PARK -- BROOKLYN -- DAY

-- BEGINNING WITH DEV'REAUX, who is walking along, suddenly aware of a PRESENCE walking behind him. Flicking a glance backwards, he sees a GUY with A BASEBALL BAT. Heart pounding, he picks up speed, afraid to break out into a dead run, but veering off the path to the left.

The guy keeps walking. Then approaches HIS 10 YEAR OLD KID, tousles his hair and hands him the bat, pulling out a SOFTBALL. Just a Dad and son, playing ball.

Dev exhales. Then stiffens, sensing more presences. Turns to find COLE and SLIDE standing behind him.

COLE

Don't you get tired of jumping out
of your skin like that?

DEV'REAUX

What you doing here?

COLE

How much do you owe those guys?
And don't say "what guys," I know
when you've been sleeping, I know
when you're awake."

DEV'REAUX

(sighs)

Okay. I made a few... optimistic
predictions.

SLIDE

--Dumb-ass bets--

Dev'reaux *really* doesn't get it. Stares at Cole.

DEV'REAUX

How come you not firing me?

INT. A ONE DOLLAR STORE -- DAY

ON THE WHEELS OF A BABY STROLLER rolling along... pushed by
Fitzhugh, spending an afternoon comparing pathetically ultra-
low prices on hideous canned meat. Cole falls in alongside
him.

COLE

Fitz. What if there was a way in
this lifetime to permanently avoid
Spam?

FITZHUGH

(defensive)

You know, there are some people who
actually *like* Spam.

COLE

You're not one of them.

EXT. COLE'S BUILDING -- NIGHT

Cole loads a misty-eyed Lester into a taxi.

LESTER

Mr. Howard, I don't know how to...

COLE
Sh-sh. No need, Lester.

LESTER
(as they shake)
Thank you... Cole.

Lester gets in; the cab goes. Cole looks up. Sprinkled around the block, waiting, are Charlie, Slide, Dev'reaux and Fitzhugh. Cole gives the signal: coast's clear, c'mon in.

INT. COLE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Our five guys sit around a fold-out card table. Cole has just laid out, with Slide's help, "the plan." The others sit stunned into silence by the audacity of it. After a spell, Charlie leans forward and speaks. Very, very slowly.

CHARLIE
Yeah. Good, good thinking. Let's just rob the penthouse apartment of the building we work in -- with the tenant *still inside* -- with FBI agents STATIONED OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOOR, WITH security cameras -- to steal twenty million that MIGHT be in there -- IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR SHIFT?!

There's no mistaking Charlie's tone for enthusiasm.

COLE
It's a little frisky, I admit.

CHARLIE
Why don't I just pull out a bomb on an airplane? Same odds of getting away!

COLE
What do you think, Fitz?

FITZHUGH
Can you come back to me?

COLE
You said it: if you're gonna steal, steal big.

FITZHUGH
Listen, I am beyond comfortable with white collar crime...
(MORE)

FITZHUGH (CONT'D)
 no matter how much you steal, if
 you do it with decimal points
 instead of a crowbar...? Worst
 case, you're out in two.

DEV'REAUX
 How far out you got our asses
 hanging on this thing?

SLIDE
 Your jobs are compartmentalized.
 In fact, technically you wouldn't
 be doing anything illegal.

COLE
 (he doesn't want to skirt
 the truth)
 Well -- aiding and abetting.

CHARLIE
 (exasperated, to Cole)
 You've lost your mind.

COLE
 Look. Braniff's gonna walk away
 clean on this thing with *20 million*
dollars unless we do something.
 The five of us. You see? We're
 the cavalry.

CHARLIE
 Oh, yeah, cavalry! A concierge, a
 building manager, an elevator
 operator... and this one -- this
 guy I don't know from Adam -- your
 childhood buddy who YOU trust
 because he's been stealing since
 you were in your playpen--?

It's a moment of truth between Charlie and Cole. They hold
 each other's stares.

COLE
 Charlie... You know why I'm doing
 this, don't you?

CHARLIE
 Yeah, yeah, 'cause of Lester.
 The man is 74 years old, you're
 gonna throw your life away for a --

COLE
 Cause if we don't do this, we're
all gonna be Lester!

DEV'REAUX
 (suddenly)
 I'm in!

COLE
 ... Work hard for fifty years, play
 by the rules, then wind up with
 nothing!

A beat. We sense Charlie almost wavering. But...

CHARLIE
 I got a family.

COLE
 Then take care of them. 'Cause no
 one else will.

Another beat. Cole pulls out all the stops.

COLE (CONT'D)
 Come on, Charlie.

It's the first time he's ever called Charlie by his first
 name, and we see it hit, in Charlie's eyes. But then.

CHARLIE
 Low, low blow my friend.

He starts to leave the room, turns at the door.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Any other time? That would've
 meant a lot.

He goes. A beat.

SLIDE
 You want me to kill him?

COLE
 Would you stop?! He's not going to
 tell anybody.

But Cole is nervous. Fitzhugh speaks up.

FITZHUGH
 When I am faced with a decision I
 generally make lists of pros and
 cons...?
 (waves the paper he's been
 writing on)
 And it seems that...
 (MORE)

FITZHUGH (CONT'D)

I would rather do hard time as
someone's bitch than see my family
living in a car.

Slide turns to Cole and smiles -- they have their crew!

EXT. COLE'S BUILDING -- ROOF -- DAY

A cold day in February. There will be no TRAINING MONTAGE
cause there's nothing to train for. There's only this: our
four guys -- Cole, Slide, Dev and Fitzhugh -- bundled up in
overcoats, freezing their asses off on Cole's frozen roof.

COLE

OK, day of the heist, we've got to
be prepared for different
potentialities.

(as Fitzhugh opens his
mouth)

No, that's not a word. Don't care.

(Dev raises his hand)

Yeah, Dev?

DEV'REAUX

Why are we outside? My balls are
sno-cones.

FITZHUGH

Yeah, can't we go in? I can't
think.

COLE

Exactly why we're up here. We
don't know how cold that day's
going to be, could be raining,
could be hailing frogs. We've
gotta be able to think on our feet.
Okay so let's say it turns out to
be diamonds in Braniff's safe. No
problem, we put 'em in our pocket.
But what if it's a stack of cash
the size of...

Cole points to an old rotting refrigerator box on the roof.

DEV'REAUX

We could throw it down the garbage
chute, pick it up downstairs.

COLE

Okay, but how do we control the
trash room?

FITZHUGH
 (to Slide)
 You're the professional, you tell
us.

Slide looks from man to man to man, amused: this is who he's working with. Then, he crosses to the refrigerator box --

SLIDE
 Here's what we do.

-- plucks it up, tears it in two and crams it in an empty trash can. He sets his Zippo to it. Dev and Fitz gather around to warm their hands.

SLIDE (CONT'D)
 We lucky enough to get in and outta that penthouse with his shit, gettin' it out of the building's the fun part!

The men stare at him. What?! Fun? Slide turns to Cole.

SLIDE (CONT'D)
 (to Cole)
 When you thinking we do this?

Cole joins the fire, his confidence shaken just a tad.

COLE
 A day where people are very, very distracted.

BAGPIPES and DRUMS transport us weeks ahead, to --

EXT. 5TH AVENUE -- DAY

-- THE SAINT PATRICK'S DAY PARADE. Running straight up 5th Avenue. The sidewalks teem with onlookers.

It's March 16th. The day of the heist.

REVELERS -- beefy, Irish looking blowhards, are tussling in the street. Three of them pick up a fourth and stuff him in a garbage can, all of them howling with laughter.

Looming high above the parade -- lest we forget how very, very tall it is -- is The Tower.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- DAY

Lester is back on the job. He monitors the crazed crowds through the front window as Fitzhugh comes up beside him.

LESTER

Who *is* St. Patrick, anyway?

FITZHUGH

The Patron Saint of cirrhosis.
(a hand on his shoulder)
Good to have you back, Lester.

INT. THE TOWER -- COLE'S OFFICE -- DAY - TIGHT ON

Cole's fingers drumming on his desk. He's nervous. MISS HOLLINGSWORTH stands before him, bitching, her 100 YEAR OLD MOTHER, OLD MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH in a wheelchair beside her, catatonic. (We saw Miss H. before, bitching to Cole in the early montage.)

MISS HOLLINGSWORTH

...but Mother has to get her pills
at EXACTLY NOON. And if you've
given Rosie the day off! Who's
going to--

COLE

Rosie's had an emergency. I've
arranged a substitute.

MISS HOLLINGSWORTH

(grudgingly accepting)
Hmpf.

INT. THE TOWER -- FITZHUGH'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Kids scream and frolic, herded into coats by Mrs. Fitzhugh.

In the bedroom, Fitzhugh tries to steel his courage.

MRS. FITZHUGH (O.S.)

Honey! We're going!

Fitzhugh steps out. Hugs each kid deeply -- will he be
behind bars next time he sees them? -- kisses his wife.

FITZHUGH

I love you.

MRS. FITZHUGH

(off his intensity)
Yeesh. We're going away one night,
what's up with you?

She searches his face.

FITZHUGH

Nothing!

MRS. FITZHUGH

I'd think it was another woman but
you can't even take her to
MacDonald's.

They laugh grimly. He hugs her tight.

THEIR LITTLE BOY

Does Grandma have ice cream?

FITZHUGH

(mortified)

Yes. Because Grandma has a
freezer.

Fitzhugh watches them to the elevator and Mrs. Fitzhugh blows him a kiss before she disappears. Fitz catches it, scared.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- DAY

Charlie organizes the front desk. As far as he knows, it's just another day. Until he eyes Cole and Dev exit the back halls together and his antennae go up. Maybe it's the conspiratorial way Cole sends Dev off on an errand.

As Cole passes by, they trade nods: in the weeks since Charlie bowed out, a chilly distance has grown between them.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- DAY

Susan Braniff dresses in her massive walk-in closet with floor-to-ceiling shoe shelves as her husband sits atop their bed talking on his cell.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

-- no, Marty, I won't, I don't
care, that's too long. Go back,
no, listen to me, go back and offer
five months and tell 'em I'll give
up Myerson, Witt and Golding --

(aside, to Susan)

-- could you ask Cunningham or
whoever's on sentry today to get
lunch? I'm starved --

SUSAN BRANIFF

(weary of her stay-at-home
husband's demands)

-- yes, I'll ask Cunningham or
whomever's on sentry --

ARTHUR BRANIFF

-- and ask him to go ahead and order, will ya? I'm gonna be on with Marty a while longer --
 (back on the phone)
 -- whatya mean they don't care about Golding, he was up to his tits in this --

WE GO WITH SUSAN through the apartment as she plucks up her purse. She hesitates at an envelope with two theater tickets peeking out, takes them too. She exits into the elevator anteroom where young AGENT CUNNINGHAM keeps sentry.

SUSAN BRANIFF

Ah, so it's you today, Agent--

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

(hates this gig, hates her)

Cunningham. I've only told you a dozen times, ma'am.

SUSAN BRANIFF

You people all blur in my mind. My husband wants his lunch now.

She presses the elevator call-button and --

INT. THE TOWER -- ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

-- 'PH' lights up on a panel. Washington reports in his mic:

WASHINGTON

Headed up to the penthouse.

INT. THE TOWER -- BACK HALLWAYS -- CONTINUOUS

Cole hears this on his walkie/takes out his cell/dials.

INT. MISS HOLLINGSWORTH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The stringy, Miss Hollingsworth gestures contemptuously at OLD MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH in a wheelchair -- Brooke Astor incarnate. In front of the aged lady is a tray with Jell-o and on the tray, SEVERAL PILLS.

MISS HOLLINGSWORTH

Now, she gets very agitated -- I need you to help me hold her while you give her the pills.

The CAMERA turns around. And we see that the ATTENDANT helping her... is DEV'REAUX.

DEV'REAUX

Yes, yes... they explained it all to me, ma'am. At your service.

As they approach the old lady, she moans and shrinks in terror. Dev can't help but notice:

DEV'REAUX (CONT'D)

She really don't like 'em, does she?

MISS HOLLINGSWORTH

It's total dementia. She doesn't know what's best for her.

DEV'REAUX

Yes, ma'am.

As Miss Hollingsworth holds her mother, Dev'reaux RAISES THE PILLS to the woman's lips...

...then PALMS THEM.

Is that a flicker of appreciation in the old woman's eyes? We're not sure.

INT. THE TOWER -- FITZHUGH'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

The place is nearly empty now. A sofa, a cabinet, little else left. Fitz sits, eyes closed, when RIINNG.

FITZHUGH

Yes, Mr. Howard?

COLE'S VOICE

Mr. Fitzhugh, you're up.

INT. THE TOWER -- ELEVATOR -- DAY

Washington and Mrs. Braniff ride in silence. DING! Fitzhugh steps aboard. Smiles are exchanged.

FITZHUGH

Hello. Sorry, we met around Christmas. I'm Chase Fitzhugh.

SUSAN BRANIFF

(an unpleasant memory)
I remember.

The doors close.

FITZHUGH
(making conversation)
Off to lunch?

SUSAN BRANIFF
My friends tell me it's unwise to
be seen eating out these days. They
mean it's unwise for them to be
seen eating out with me these days.

Fitzhugh feigns empathy.

FITZHUGH
How awful! You did nothing wrong.
(spots the theater tix)
Ah, you have tickets for a matinee.
What show?

SUSAN BRANIFF
These? Someone dropped them off
yesterday, someone I obviously
don't know, because I despise
Shakespeare.

FITZHUGH
(through clenched teeth)
Just a mass of cliches, isn't he?

Nodding in agreement, she RIPS THE TICKETS IN HALF, tosses
them. Fitzhugh sighs. Strike one.

DING! They exit.

INT. THE TOWER -- STAFF KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Cole withdraws a cake from a hiding place. Sets it alongside
a cake knife, plastic forks, paper plates, etc.. Licks
frosting off his hand --

MS. DOLOWITZ
Mr. Howard, you wanted to see me?

COLE
Yes, Ms. Dolowitz. Would you
assemble the maid staff in the
package room please?

MS. DOLOWITZ
(nervous)
Now?

COLE
 No job cuts. Don't worry.
 (she moves to use her mic)
 Radio silence if you would.

Ms. Dolowitz thinks it odd but obeys. As she goes, Dev arrives in the doorway. He nods: mission accomplished.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY

Charlie tracks Mrs. B and Fitz out the elevator door and across the lobby as Cole appears.

COLE
 Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Svichkar, may I see
 you both in the package room?

CHARLIE
 (on guard, resistant)
 Who'll watch the desk?

COLE
 Mr. Dev'reaux can.

CHARLIE
 (fuck)
 Certainly.

Dev comes around to man the front desk. Svichkar heads into the package room and Charlie follows him, reluctantly.

EXT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- DAY

Susan Braniff exits the Tower, followed by Fitzhugh.

FITZHUGH
 Thanks, Lester.
 (to Mrs. B)
 Beautiful day. You know what I
 love to do on days like today? Take
 the ferry to Staten Island. Out on
 the water, feel the breeze, drink a
 little chablis...

SUSAN BRANIFF
 (a brushback)
 Then I think you should go do that.
 Good afternoon, Mr. Fetzter.

She goes. Foiled, Fitz gives her a moment, then tails her.

INT. THE TOWER -- PACKAGE ROOM -- DAY

Charlie joins Washington, Dolowitz, the maids and other staff here. Cole signals them to enter quietly.

CHARLIE

Cole, what are you --

COLE

Sh-sh-sh.

(then, in a stern voice)

Ms. Perez, a word with you.

Perez's had her nose in the mail until now; she looks up, surprised to find so many people in her workspace.

COLE (CONT'D)

Ms. Perez, your job here is to monitor the delivery of incoming and outgoing mail. And yet the most important letter this building may receive all year slipped your attention.

(withdraws an envelope)

From the "American Bar Association?"

She swallows hard as he hands over the letter. Everyone in the room looks hopeful for her. She opens it, starts to read...and her eyes well up.

PEREZ

I passed!

(everybody cheers)

How did you know?! I might've flunked!

COLE

I know *exactly* how much time you had to study. Congrats, counselor.

Cole reveals the cake from the kitchen. As Perez cuts the first slice, Cole glances at Charlie, who feels foolish for being so paranoid. However --

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

-- at the front desk, Dev has seized the moment to dismantle the front desk switchboard and detach Braniff's phone line.

COLE (O.S.)

Mr. Dev'reaux, piece of cake?

DEV'REAUX

You betcha.

As Dev'reaux reaches for his slice his hand brushes against Cole's, and COLE PALMS SOMETHING out of Dev's hand.

One guess what.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE -- DAY

Mrs. Braniff navigates a path through the St. Patty's Day revelers. Not far behind Fitzhugh keeps an inconspicuous tail. She diverts onto a side street and he mirrors her.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- DAY

A DELIVERY GUY from the neighborhood deli enters. He salutes Charlie, back at his post --

DELIVERY GUY

Lunch for Rapunzel.

-- and Charlie waves him on through. Just then Cole emerges with two slices of cake in hand.

COLE

Just a sec. Do me a favor and take these up to Mr. and Mrs. Braniff? We're all pretty torn up that they're unjustly imprisoned this way and can't be part of our celebration, and they do love German chocolate cake...

(the Delivery Guy glares at him: you kidding?)

I know, "do it yourself," but see, the FBI *draws guns* when there's extra people up there... Here, let me take these and you take these...

And before the Delivery Guy can protest, Cole's taken his delivery pouch from him and loaded him with two plates of cake, forks, napkins, etc. Charlie knows something is up.

COLE (CONT'D)

Got 'em? Great. Thanks.

DELIVERY GUY

(under his breath)

Next time wait on the prick yourself.

Charlie's antennae are up again. He turns to see: the entire Tower staff is eating cake. Uh-oh. He sets down his slice.

EXT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- DAY

A SQUADRON OF MOUNTED COPS pass by, on parade.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Braniff watches the parade from his window, on the phone.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

No -- wait -- no -- THURSDAY? I
want to be out of here MONDAY --
I've got a villa reserved in Como--
OK, OK, yeah. If you can get that,
close it. Let's make the deal and
be done with it.

(he hangs up; there's a
KNOCK at the door)

Yeah?

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

(sticks his head in)

Lunch is here.

EXT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- DAY

ON A PAIR OF FLORSHEIM WINGTIPS CLICKING ALONG THE SIDEWALK.
They belong to a man in a Brooks Brothers suit, bespectacled,
carrying a briefcase. He approaches the Tower.

LESTER

May I help you, sir?

SLIDE

(a mid-Atlantic accent)

Yes, I'm here to see an apartment.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- DAY

The Delivery Guy places sandwiches on Braniff's dining table.
And the TWO SLICES OF CAKE.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

(re: the cake)

What's this shit?

DELIVERY GUY

They gamme it downstairs, some guy.

Braniff eyes the cake, uneasy.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
 (suspicious)
 Not the manager?

DELIVERY GUY
 Maybe.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
 Was he supercilious?

DELIVERY GUY
 --Expi-alidocious!

The delivery guy gives him a fuck-you grin. Braniff scowls, pays the guy. And pointedly gives him a ONE CENT tip. When the delivery guy and Cunningham are gone, Braniff takes his food straight to the kitchen --

-- and dumps the cake in the trash. He's not taking any chances if it was sent up by Cole. Then: he unwraps his corned beef sandwich and takes a bite.

INT. THE TOWER -- COLE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Cole bites into an identical corned beef sandwich. Charlie appears in his doorway.

COLE
 Dijon?! How ivory tower, Dijon on
 corned beef...!

CHARLIE
 If that was Braniff's, you sure
 they all obeyed your order about
 not spitting in it?

COLE
 They always obey my...

He thinks. Hm. He drops the sandwich in the trash.

CHARLIE
 Stop this. Now. So far the worst
 you've done is, what, drug the man?

COLE
 That is a horrible accusation.

He ain't sayin' a thing.

CHARLIE
 He can still just wake up, never
 know what happened. If you keep
 going with this...

COLE

What, Charlie? You'll call the cops on me? After all the years we've worked side by side?

CHARLIE

Don't make me choose.

We see, on his desk, PICTURES of Charlie with a WIFE and KIDS. Also children's DRAWINGS -- Fathers Day Cards. Cole sees what Charlie has to lose. He nods.

Over both their walkies:

SVICHKAR'S VOICE

Mr. Howard, I have a Mr. Bissell here to see you.

Cole starts out. Charlie shoots him a look -- *don't!*

Cole measures him, goes anyway.

INT. CHOPSTIX NAIL SALON -- MIDTOWN -- DAY

Korean manicurists start in on Mrs. Braniff's hands and feet; she lies back, towel over her eyes, indulged to the max. Fitzhugh monitors from across the street, checks his watch.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- DAY

Slide, in costume, speaks to Svichkar at the front desk.

SLIDE

-- I spoke to Mr. Fitzhugh himself and he assured me it was fine.

SVICHKAR

We still have to follow protocol.

(Cole arrives)

Mr. Howard, this is Mr. Bissell. He was hoping to view the Fitzhugh property but they're not at home.

COLE

Not a problem. I'll show you up.

Emerging behind Cole, Charlie takes one look at Slide in his pinstripe suit and can't contain himself.

CHARLIE

Oh, c'mon, you gotta be, you can't expect anyone'll believe this...

SVICHKAR

Mr. Howard, we don't have clearance
from the Fitzhughs.

COLE

That's okay, Mr. Svichkar. Come,
Mr. Bissell, elevators're this way.

Charlie spots Mr. Simon entering the lobby and recognizes his
chance to safely sabotage Cole's heist.

CHARLIE

(too loudly)

Are you forgetting that we need
written consent from an owner
before admitting *any visitor* into
their unit?

(Cole keeps moving)

Isn't that right, Mr. Simon?!

MR. SIMON

(finally paying notice)

Is there a problem, Mr. Howard?

Cole stops, shoots Charlie a look: well played. Then:

COLE

I have the situation under control,
Mr. Simon.

MR. SIMON

What situation?

CHARLIE

This gentleman is here to see the
Fitzhugh apartment. Unfortunately
we have no written consent from
them.

MR. SIMON

Then there's no issue. He can't go
up.

Advantage: Charlie. Cole's stymied. He's rescued by --

SLIDE

Perhaps I can shed some light,
Mister...?

MR. SIMON

Simon, Tower property manager.

SLIDE

Morris Bissell, Liberty Mutual. My bank handles the Fitzhugh mortgage.

MR. SIMON

Don't you mean "handled?"

He snickers at his own (unfunny) joke. Slide draws Mr. Simon aside, for discretion's sake. Meanwhile, Mr. Lindus approaches/distracts Charlie.

LINDUS

...why are all these people outside?...

SLIDE

Recently we were forced to foreclose on the Fitzhughs, sadly. We allowed them a thirty-day grace period to move but technically the bank is now tenant of record so...

MR. SIMON

Sorry, your name again was...?

SLIDE

Morris Bissell.

He withdraws a business card, hands it to Simon. It reads: "Morris Bissell, Liberty Mutual." Simon turns to Cole:

MR. SIMON

Take him on up. Sorry for the confusion, Mr. Bissell.

Now it's Charlie who's stymied. As Cole and Slide continue to the elevators, under their breaths:

COLE

Where'd you get the business card?

SLIDE

Some dude's wallet I... found. Your buddy gonna be cool?

Cole shoots Charlie a look as he boards the elevator and Slide sets a finger to his lips just as its doors close.

Charlie, incensed, grabs the phone at the front desk. He starts to dial, then hesitates.

SVICKAR

Who you calling?

CHARLIE

I don't know.
 (he slams the phone down;
 Cole was right; he can't
 turn them in)
 Shit!

MUSIC PUMPS UP as the heist kicks into higher gear and --

EXT. THE TOWER -- ROOF -- DAY

-- COLE AND SLIDE EMERGE FROM A DOORWAY AND STEP OUT INTO A THREE-SIXTY VIEW OF THE CITY SURROUNDING THEM.

Dev'reaux is already here, supplies in hand. He tosses each man a white jumpsuit and gloves, then proceeds to remove the tarp from a WINDOW-WASHING PLATFORM stored at the roof edge.

MOMENTS LATER, Cole and Slide, wearing their jumpsuits over their suits, help Dev hoist the platform over the side of the building and into position.

Slide peers over the side: it's a heart-stopping, vertiginous view. Cole appears beside him.

SLIDE

You ever done this before?

COLE

I get dizzy stepping off the *curb*.
 (cell buzzes; he picks up)
 Mr. Fitzhugh, how are we?

EXT. CHOPSTIX NAIL SALON -- MIDTOWN -- CONTINUOUS

Fitzhugh continues to watch Susan Braniff's nails get done.

FITZHUGH

They've finished moisturizing her feet and're about to start buffing.

COLE

Do you have a plan?

FITZHUGH

I'm... pondering.

From a newsstand he plucks up a magazine promoting an article "Inside The Braniff Swindle."

EXT. THE TOWER -- ROOF -- CONTINUOUS

Cole hangs up, dials a new number. Meanwhile, Slide tests the platform cables' strength. To Dev:

SLIDE

How much weight can this baby bear?

Dev has only his elevator operator experience to guide him.

DEV'REAUX

I push the buttons! Do I look like
a structural engineer!

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- DAY

Braniff's cell RINGS on his dining table. Braniff is nowhere to be seen. Is he asleep?

EXT. THE TOWER -- ROOF -- CONTINUOUS

Cole hangs up.

COLE

No answer. Whatya think?

SLIDE

We got two hours. Tops.

As good a final thought as any. Over the side they go.

A WIDE VIEW of the Tower, Central Park beyond it, the parade on the street below and on top our two faux window-washers climbing out onto a two-foot wide, ten-foot long apparatus. Dev hands Slide his banker's briefcase as he gives Cole a quick tutorial.

DEV'REAUX

This is your 'up' button, this is your 'down.' This locks it in place. Run into any trouble, this *might* be manual override I got up here. Might not.

SLIDE

You got my back. Nice to know.

Cole lowers them from view.

INT. CHOPSTIX NAIL SALON -- MIDTOWN -- CONTINUOUS

Fitzhugh enters, approaches the young female PROPRIETOR at the front, careful not to be seen by Mrs. Braniff within.

FITZHUGH

Hi... Speak English?
(she indicates a little;
he opens his magazine)
Know who this is?
(MORE)

FITZHUGH (CONT'D)
 (he points out Braniff;
 (she nods/scowls)
 Good. This is his wife.

He points from a picture of Mrs. Braniff to the real deal, currently being waited on by a trio of manicurists. The Proprietor doesn't like this one bit.

PROPRIETOR
 (her English is better
 than she let on)
 That bitch is in my shop?

Fitz takes out a pair of \$100's.

FITZHUGH
 Need you to do me a favor.

EXT. THE TOWER -- ROOF/SIDE -- CONTINUOUS

ABOARD THE PLATFORM WITH COLE AND SLIDE, more than anything else it's claustrophobic up here: there's no place to go, barely any place to step. Both Cole and Slide can't help looking at the drop as they descend.

SLIDE
 Aren't we not supposed to look
 down?

COLE
 I remember that now. --My God!!
 (re: a streaked window
 pane)
 I've been *paying* these window
 washers, and THIS is the service
 they-- these people are criminals!!

SLIDE
 You the criminal!!

COLE
 (nonplussed)
 No! I'm...

SLIDE
 You just "frisky."

FROM WITHIN THE PENTHOUSE: The window-washer apparatus lowers into view. Still no sign of Braniff inside. Cole stops their descent when they're flush with the apartment.

OUTSIDE: Slide opens up his briefcase. Inside is the very latest in fiberglass-cutting technology: a suction-clamp with an extendable arm attached to a blade.

Slide affixes it to the window and prepares to cut. He looks to Cole, who dials Braniff's cell again.

INSIDE: Braniff's cell RINGS. Unanswered.

OUTSIDE: Cole nods to Slide: do it. Slide begins to cut.

INSIDE: While it's not exactly noisy, the bladework's loud enough to draw attention from anyone inside the apartment.

ON THE ROOF, Dev watches from above. Over his walkie:

WASHINGTON'S VOICE

Mr. Dev'reaux, what's your twenty?

DEV'REAUX

I'm, um, in the building -- why?

WASHINGTON'S VOICE

Mr. Svichkar's taking his break, need you to come cover for him.

DEV'REAUX

Why, certainly. On my way.

He mouths: FU-UCK! He doesn't move.

A FLOOR BELOW: Slide finishes slicing a four-foot circle out of the window. Then, with a practiced push, he thrusts the entire piece of fiberglass into the penthouse without dropping it, then lays it softly on the floor.

SLIDE

Now this I've done.

A pro at this, Slide lifts one leg out of the apparatus, straddling its rail, then dips his foot inside the four-foot hole. When his foot's flat on the floor, he pulls himself over and inside the apartment, ducking his head as he goes.

Now it's Cole's turn. Not a pro. He tries to mimic Slide's method but once he's got a foot inside the penthouse --

-- a sharp wind picks up and banks off the edifice, pushing the apparatus out. Just as Cole begins to flounder, Slide reaches out and grabs him and pulls him in.

They've breached the penthouse.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The two men stand absolutely still, panting, listening. Time to verify if Braniff's actually asleep.

First things first, though. Cole tip-toes to the front door leading to the elevator anteroom and -- ever so slowly -- bolts it.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR: Agent Cunningham, wrapped up in a magazine, doesn't hear a thing.

BACK IN THE PENTHOUSE: Cole signals Slide: you check that way, I'll go this way. Slide, who's never stepped foot inside such a decadent living space (much less b&e'd one) takes it all in. He pretends to be blase:

SLIDE

North facing windows. You call that natural light? For 50 million, you should get two exposures at least!

INT. CHOPSTIX NAIL SALON -- MIDTOWN -- DAY

Done with her pedicure, Mrs. Braniff rises from her chair. She rudely waves off the help of those who've labored over her the past hour, then:

SUSAN BRANIFF

Where are my shoes?

The manicurists look around too. No one knows. The Proprietor looks on, hiding a smile.

SUSAN BRANIFF (CONT'D)

Excuse me. My shoes?! You DO know those were Louboutin's!!!! Where. Are. My. Shoes?!

EXT. MIDTOWN -- CONTINUOUS

Strolling along, Fitz tosses Mrs. B's shoes onto a roof. He takes out his cell and dials.

FITZHUGH

Hello, New York Post? Do you have a paparazzi desk? -- I mean, do fish swim, but--

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- DAY

Cole corrals the shitsus into Mrs. Braniff's shoe-filled walk-in and shuts the door. Slide, meanwhile, conducts a search for Braniff. He ducks his head into a DEN, sees nothing, starts to go when SNORING draws him back.

Braniff has fallen off a couch and lies asleep on the floor, sandwich wrapper at his side.

SLIDE

This the mofo?

Cole appears to confirm it is.

MOMENTS LATER, PULLING BACK FROM THE WALL as Cole and Slide move furniture and lamps away from it.

Slide starts tapping along its surface, strikes something unforgiving and follows its perimeter. Then, withdrawing a chisel, he prepares to drive it into the surface but --

-- Cole stops him first. Concerned the noise might alert the Sentry outside. He looks about, finds a universal remote on a coffee table and punches in a selection.

The voice of Barry Manilow suddenly fills the penthouse.

"...oh Mandy, well you came and you gave without taking..."

Slide scowls at him. Cole gestures: not my playlist. Slide resumes his work, burying the chisel into the drywall.

IN THE ANTEROOM: Agent Cunningham shakes his head at Braniff's choice in music, flips the page on his magazine.

"...but I sent you away, oh Mandy..."

INT. CHOPSTIX NAIL SALON -- MIDTOWN -- DAY

Mrs. Braniff is apoplectic, ranting.

SUSAN BRANIFF

How. Can you possibly. Have lost. One of the ONLY NINE PAIRS of Day Lewises produced in Florence, Italy in THE LAST CENTURY?! Besides the fact that they should be in the MET, how'm I supposed to walk home?

No one looks sympathetic..

PROPRIETOR

So sorry, please you take coupon for free visit?

Susan Braniff, apoplectic, storms out the door, only to be met by --

EXT. CHOPSTIX NAIL SALON -- CONTINUOUS

-- a WALL OF PAPARAZZI, flashing/clicking away at Public Enemy #1's wife in bare feet. Mrs. Braniff is mortified.

She tries to cover her face, trudging forward, tip-toeing through midtown trash, barraged at every angle by blinding flashbulbs. It's almost possible to feel sorry for her.

Then, hero to the rescue, Fitzhugh steps forth.

FITZHUGH

Mrs. Braniff, you alright?

SUSAN BRANIFF

Oh, it's you... Fisticuffs...

FITZHUGH

Whatever. Here, let me help.

(to the paparazzi)

Please, gentlemen, have some dignity.

He guides her to the street, still swarmed by photographers, then into the back seat of a cab.

SUSAN BRANIFF

Thank you so much, Mister, uh... I keep losing it.

(to the cabbie)

The Tower, please --

FITZHUGH

No, no, no. They're there, too. Swarming.

SUSAN BRANIFF

No!

FITZHUGH

Do you have a relative nearby? Someone you can stay with until I can douse these prurient flames?

SUSAN BRANIFF

A sister in Greenwich.

FITZHUGH

Go there. I'll have the building call you when it's safe.

The taxi whisks Mrs. Braniff away, paparazzi clicking. Fitzhugh watches it go, then turns to them.

FITZHUGH (CONT'D)
501 Cherry Street, Greenwich. Go
to town.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- DAY

Slide purchases a grip on the drywall he's dug into. Then, moment of truth, he yanks it. Cole looks, sighs with relief.

A large titanium safe sits within. Our guys share a smile and Slide begins to inspect it.

COLE
(whispered)
Can we get it out?

SLIDE
Cemented in. Hand me the case.

Cole grabs the case and Slide removes the tools of his trade.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE -- DAY

Fitzhugh returns to the Tower. He looks up to the platform high above. Boy is he glad that's not his part of the heist.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- MOMENTS LATER

Fitz heads straight for the elevators. Mr. Simon approaches.

MR. SIMON
Mr. Fitzhugh...

FITZHUGH
Mr. Simon?

MR. SIMON
Mr. Bissell from Liberty Mutual
went up to your apartment a few
minutes ago.

FITZHUGH
(no idea who that is)
Oh.

MR. SIMON
I'm sorry to hear of your financial
difficulties. If there's anything
we can do to assist you --

FITZHUGH
-- oh, no, no thanks --

MR. SIMON

-- for instance, arrange a moving company for the weekend?

That stops him. Mr. Simon's giving him an eviction notice. Fitz'd like to slap the needlehead's face.

FITZHUGH

Thanks. The solution is definitely underway.

He goes. Meanwhile, Charlie gets an idea, picks up the phone, presses 'PH.' Listens. Nothing.

CHARLIE

What's wrong with the phones?

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

"...feel sad when you're sad, feel glad when you're glad..."

As Slide toils, Cole casts a glance to where Braniff snoozes.

COLE

Time table?

SLIDE

Six hours. Five minutes. Somewhere between the two. Wanna wake him up and ask him the combination?

(re: the music and Braniff)

'f you keep this shit on, I fall more asleep than *him*.

Cole finds the remote, kills the Manilow. He checks his watch, edgy, unsure what to do with himself. He peers out the hole in the window to see the parade below when HIS CELL PHONE RINGS.

SLIDE (CONT'D)

Don't answer!

COLE

I'm supposed to be working! I'd answer!

(clicks phone on)

Hello?

And we CROSS CUT BETWEEN:

INT. JILLIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It looks a lot like Cole's. The home of a single person who's never home, sparsely furnished. She's even eating Kung Pao chicken out of a container, just like Cole did earlier.

JILLIAN
Hi, ah... this is...

COLE
Jillian?

JILLIAN
Uh, yeah. Good guess.

COLE
What's up?

It is very disconcerting for him to be talking to an FBI agent while watching his buddy crack a safe.

JILLIAN
This is a personal-slash-professional call.

COLE
Oh. Oh. I -- that's nice. I hope.

JILLIAN
Well, yes. I hope too.

An awkward pause. And she's not usually awkward.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
I, ah, just wanted to mention that there was, in our last meeting, a path you were considering going down... and I just wanted to warn you that if you were to go down that path... none of which did I suspect for a moment...

SLIDE
Damn!

He's fumbled a combination. He tries again.

JILLIAN
What--

COLE
Lobby commotion. Go on, go on...

JILLIAN

Um. Right. Path. Okay. If you were to, um, in any way pursue some illegal recourse against Mr. Braniff... not only would I be obligated to take you in...

COLE

Presuming you were to find out.

JILLIAN

Which I probably would, because I have the radar of... a witch.

COLE

That's a harsh way to put it.

JILLIAN

It's a phrase coined by my ex husband.

COLE

Then he was cheating on you.

JILLIAN

(smiles)
Still.

COLE

Get back to, if you had to take me in...

JILLIAN

Right. If you were to go to prison for some... protracted period... we would, ah...

Cole is dying to know where this is going.

COLE

We would what?

JILLIAN

(sighs, gives it up)
...never, ah, have a second date.

Cole *beams*. Did he just hear what he thought he heard? *That this intelligent and attractive woman is INTERESTED in him?!*

SLIDE

Fuck me! This motherfucker's Fort Knox!!!

Cole cringes and scuttles to the far end of the room, waving at Slide to shut up.

COLE

I would really not like *anything*...
to get in the way of that.

JILLIAN

(pleased)
Really?

Slide GETS THE SAFE OPEN. Cole doesn't notice.

COLE

(firmly)
Oh yeah. But, ah, that wasn't much
of a date, was it?

JILLIAN

(blushing)
Well, you paid...

COLE

I should have had that second
drink.

JILLIAN

You think?

Slide is waving at Cole. Cole doesn't notice.

COLE

I just... I don't know, it's been
so long since I've really relaxed
with someone...

Slide THROWS A PILLOW at Cole's head. Cole finally sees THE SAFE starting to OPEN...!

COLE (CONT'D)

Gotta go. Work. Work. It's work--

JILLIAN

Oh. Sure. I hope--

CLICK! He's gone. She's left staring at the receiver, not sure what happened.

Back in the Braniff apartment, Cole and Slide are staring at the safe. Their faces fall.

Because the safe is dead empty.

SLIDE

Now this is a disappointment.

Cole stares in disbelief. He steps forward to feel inside the safe, for a trap door, anything. All he finds is a CD-ROM lying on its floor.

SLIDE (CONT'D)

Well, we got us some Barry.

INT. THE TOWER -- PENTHOUSE ANTEROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Where the Sentry finishes one magazine, moves onto the next. DING! Someone's arriving via elevator. It's Charlie. He's elated/relieved to see the Sentry awake.

CHARLIE

Hey, how ya doin'?

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

Okay, thanks.
(pointedly)
How can I help you?

Charlie looks to the door to the penthouse, shut. Wonders what's going on in there?

CHARLIE

Oh, I just came up to see if everything's alright up here.

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

Because the Federal Bureau of Investigation is inept?

CHARLIE

Well, the whole Kennedy thing was kind of a debac--

A stony stare from Cunningham.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Nonono, you guys are great...just... wanted to know if you need anything--

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

--that several thousand takeout menus can't provide?

There are, indeed, 10 dead rainforests' worth of takeout menus stacked to the ceiling. Charlie's not getting anywhere. He keeps looking at the door: what to do?

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Cole and Slide continue to weigh their options.

COLE

Maybe...maybe...

(re: the disc)

...maybe this *is* something, I don't know, something that--

SLIDE

--has twenty million dollars hidden in it? Shrunk down by some ol' "miniaturization" machine!

COLE

We have to at least look at this.

SLIDE

(annoyed)

It's probly some DVD of some four-way with some other old, ugly-ass couple?

COLE

(tapping his forehead)

I don't need those images right now-

SLIDE

Rich folks like to keep shit like that in their safe. You know, "savor the moment," for later.

COLE

Ewww, just -- would you STOP!

With Slide, and only Slide, Cole reverts to age 13.

INT. THE TOWER -- PENTHOUSE ANTEROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Charlie's still working on Cunningham.

CHARLIE

Awful quiet in there. Maybe we should check.

AGENT CUNNINGHAM

The Towers does advertise soundproof doors.

Charlie sighs.

CHARLIE

Right.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Cole, meanwhile, is succumbing to the reality that this was a huge folly. He's pissed at himself.

COLE

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry I dragged you guys into this--!

Meanwhile, Slide roams the apartment, looking for things to steal. He eyes the wine refrigerator.

SLIDE

Well, we gotta cut some losses. They's some pretty fine reds in there--

COLE

No! No no, I'm not a common thief!

SLIDE

Oh, hey, then, what are you? A special thief?

COLE

I--

SLIDE

A "frisky" thief?

COLE

Just... let it go.

SLIDE

Is you or ain't you a thief?!

COLE

I'm a Robin Hood thief! I want that 20 million to give back to my staff!

SLIDE

A thief is a motherfuckin thief! So get your tidy whitey ass in gear, and take a good look around this place for something we can cash in for our valuable time--!

Slide stops cold. Cole follows his gaze. LOOKING THROUGH THE 1958 AUSTIN-HEALEY'S WINDSHIELD as our guys move into view, Slide taking it in like he's discovering lost treasure. Which he might just be.

SLIDE (CONT'D)
Why's he keep this up here?

COLE
Why do you think? A classic "tiny penis" move.

SLIDE
(surveying)
Nah. This is not a male enhancement vehicle. This is a showtune-singing little pussy car, if you ask m--

He stops, struck by something.

COLE
What. What.

SLIDE
Pull up your flashlight app.

MOMENTS LATER, AT FLOOR LEVEL: The Austin-Healey's body lifts up and Slide wiggles underneath it. On his back, light beam-blazing cell phone between his teeth. He looks up and down the chassis, then draws up a pen knife and scratches at its metal. He blinks as black flakes fall into his eyes.

Meanwhile, Cole grips the rear bumper, straining to keep the two-seater lifted for Slide.

COLE
What. What.

The only response is LAUGHTER, then:

SLIDE
Robin. Your men gonna be merry.

EXT. THE TOWER -- ROOF -- MOMENTS LATER

Fitz has joined Dev and they sit here, nothing to do but wait, when they hear the platform motor rev up. They rise to see Cole and Slide ascend into view, empty-handed.

COLE
Change of plans.

MOMENTS LATER: All four men stand in silence. It's a lot like their training scene on Cole's roof, except they're not freezing and dumbfounded -- they're just dumbfounded. Finally, in disbelief:

DEV'REAUX

What kinda dude melts gold
down...into a chassis of a car?

COLE

Someone who's number's up.

They all think.

DEV'REAUX

Can we just break it up, take the
parts that are gold?

SLIDE

No time. Whole chassis's made of
gold. Braniff'll wake up soon.

FITZHUGH

Or Shoeless Jane'll be back.

A beat.

DEV'REAUX

So that's just it? We all just
tiptoe outta here and pretend none
of this happened?

COLE

(an idea)

No.

They all look at him.

INT. THE TOWER - CONSTRUCTION SITE ON 66 -- MOMENTS LATER

A door bursts open and Dev and Fitz sprint into the Hancock's apartment-under-renovation, deserted. As they hustle past tools, planks, and other debris --

FITZHUGH

...this is crazy, this is crazy,
this is crazy...

DEV'REAUX

...I know, I know, I know...

Arriving at the GIANT TARPS covering the windows, they rip them down revealing a GAPING HOLE to the outside.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

A MATCHING GAPING HOLE exists now here, four flights up. A full panel of window has now been cut away;

the hole is large enough to, well, drive a car through. The window-washing platform has been pulled inside and rests in the living room, cables still attached.

Tires roll noiselessly across the hardwood floors. Slide pushes the Austin-Healey as Cole steers, leaning in through the driver's window. They stop a few feet short of the windowless panel.

Unhooking the cables from the window-washing platform, they each lie down and attach them to the car's undercarriage.

In the back, Braniff snores away, dead to the world.

Cole and Slide rise to test the cables: secure.

COLE
(into his walkie)
Mr. Dev'reaux?

INT. THE TOWER -- CONSTRUCTION SITE ON 66 -- CONTINUOUS

Dev and Fitz frantically build a ramp of cinderblocks and planks and other material. Dev'reaux answers the call:

DEV'REAUX
Yes, Mr. Howard.

COLE'S VOICE
I need you back in position.

Dev tears off, leaving Fitz on his own, calling after him:

FITZHUGH
Wait, wait, wait: *I have to do this part alone?!*

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Svichkar has overheard this, bewildered. He turns to Charlie, who senses the urgency in Cole's voice.

SVICKAR
"Back in position?" He was s'posed to relieve me ten minutes ago.

EXT./INT. THE TOWER -- PENTHOUSE/ROOF/CONSTRUCTION SITE

Cole and Slide look out the windowless panel, at the sidewalk full of people far below.

COLE

Here's where it gets tricky.

SLIDE

Oh, 'cause it was so easy before!

DEV'REAUX'S VOICE

(breathless)

Mr. Howard, I'm in position.

Cole grabs hold of a beam and leans out the window to look up. Above him, Dev leans over the edge. Cole signals him: take it up.

UP ABOVE: Dev hits the 'up' button on the manual override, muttering to himself in fear.

DEV'REAUX

My job's "compartmentalized."
Right. Well, I am exceeding my job
description! And I have EARNED my
motherfucking bonus!

IN THE PENTHOUSE: The cables grow taut and the Austin-Healey starts to roll toward the open window. As the back bumper clears the window, the cables lift the rear tires off the floor and Cole and Slide gently push the car's front out the window and --

-- it's aloft, dangling upside down a thousand feet in the air, twisting in the breeze.

ABOVE IT: Dev stops retracting the cables and, with a signal from Cole, begins to lower the car.

BELOW IT: Fitzhugh, alone in the construction site, watches the automobile descend toward him.

FITZHUGH

Ah shit, it's coming to me.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE -- CONTINUOUS

More ruddy faces, parade drums, bagpipes. High above, the Austin-Healey looks like a white beetle creeping along the glass seventy floors up. A few revelers notice, too drunk or too immured by New York's every day audacity to be alarmed.

EXT./INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY/FRONT ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

Charlie's attending to a RESIDENT when a PASSERBY shouts at the lobby and points upward.

PASSERBY

Hope you gotta permit for that!

Charlie's spine stiffens: this can't be good. He excuses himself, rounds the desk and hurries outside.

LESTER

Mr. Gibbs, what'd he mean?

They both push out onto the sidewalk til they come into view of the Austin-Healey high above, inching closer to the Hancock's floor. Charlie rushes inside --

CHARLIE

...ah-no, ah-no-no-no...

-- leaving Lester to peer up on his own, jaw-dropped.

EXT./INT. THE TOWER -- PENTHOUSE/ROOF/CONSTRUCTION SITE

Cole and Slide monitor the car's descent. Fitzhugh signals them: stop, and Cole signals Dev above: stop.

ABOVE: Dev stops the cables.

BELOW: Fitzhugh's too cautious to just reach out and grab the Austin's grill. First, he finds some rope and ties it around a cement mixer, then clinging to it with one hand reaches out with the other --

-- and leaning half out the windowless panel he tries once, twice, three times to grasp it.

Cole watches, concerned.

Fitzhugh gives a little slack to his safety rope and leans out again. At last he manages to grasp the grille --

FITZHUGH

Got it!!

-- just as another sharp gust of wind banks off the Tower and pushes the Austin away from its face, dragging with it --

-- Fitzhugh, who loses his grip on the rope and ends up with only a grip on the car, resulting in --

-- his dangling a thousand feet in the air clinging to the front of a vintage automobile made partly of gold as the Saint Patrick's Day Parade continues below him.

Crazier things have happened in New York. Cole and Slide watch helplessly. There's no way out of the apartment.

Dev watches, too, in horror. Into his mic:

DEV'REAUX
Should I bring him up?!

Cole signals below: NO! For fear it'll jostle him.

Fitzhugh keeps one hand clasped to the grill and tries to reach for the rope dangling out of the windowless panel with the other. He's inches from it. Still he can't reach it.

He loses hope for a moment, then recommits himself, straining to grasp the rope --

-- when A HAND lunges out and grabs him by the arm and yanks him into safety.

It's Charlie. Who glares at him, mad but relieved.

CHARLIE
I must be out of my mind.

Fitz, on the floor, can't believe he's alive.

Cole and Slide peer down, mystified.

SLIDE
Where'd he go?

Then Charlie appears in the frame below, glowering up at Cole. Cole can't help but gratefully smile back. Then, Charlie does something surprising --

-- he waves for the car to be lowered even more. Cole obeys the order, gestures to Dev above to continue lowering. When Charlie signals to stop, Cole repeats it.

Inside, Fitzhugh gasps for air.

FITZHUGH
Thanks. I didn't think you'd--

CHARLIE
Sir, you live in The Tower. It's a full service building. And we're pulling this baby in.

MOMENTS LATER, FROM ABOVE: Charlie and Fitz both reach out and grab the Austin-Healey, a two-man job if there ever was one. Cole signals Dev to lower it and --

-- the ex-banker and concierge guide the car onto the makeshift ramp until it's safely rolled inside.

The cables go slack and Charlie signals for them to stop. With Fitzhugh's help, he disconnects the cables.

IN THE PENTHOUSE: Slide signals Dev to raise the cables as Cole moves the window-washer platform in position.

ON THE ROOF: Dev hits 'Up' but nothing happens. He tries again. Zilch. He shouts down:

DEV'REAUX
It won't come up!

IN THE PENTHOUSE: Slide looks to Cole: you hear that? Cole peers up at Dev:

DEV
The motor's cooked!

Cole and Slide realize: they're not taking the platform outta here. A moment of reckoning.

Arthur Braniff starts moaning and stirring. Waking up.

SLIDE
How do you see it?

COLE
We leave by the door, we go to prison.

SLIDE
Or--?

MOMENTS LATER, they step out onto the edge of the penthouse's windowless panel, cables wrapped around their waists, and --

-- begin rappelling down the side of the building, gloved hand over gloved hand.

Cole looks down, sees Charlie and Fitzhugh waiting below, and the sidewalk sixty-six stories beneath them. Jee-zus.

ON SIXTY-SIX: Dev arrives beside Charlie and Fitzhugh. They all watch Cole and Slide descend.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE -- CONTINUOUS

More and more people are starting to pay attention to the stunt high, high above them. Among them: some COPS. They start moving toward the Tower.

EXT./INT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

Lester continues peering up. It's begun to dawn on him just who might be risking life and limb up there. And possibly even why. He spies the cops rounding the corner, heading his way, and he wanders back inside --

-- locking the front door behind him.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Braniff's eyes open. He squints around the room: how the hell did I get on the floor? He moans, then struggles to sit up. And feels something odd: a breeze.

BRANIFF

Susan?

He staggers to his feet. Moves into the next room. And discovers an absence.

At first, he doubletakes. Can't believe it. But as he slowly realizes, yes, it's true--

His Austin-Healey is missing!!!

He begins to hyperventilate. Then, sobs like a girl.

OUTSIDE: Cole and Slide continue their shimmy down. Slide arrives first and Fitzhugh grabs him and pulls him in.

IN THE PENTHOUSE: Braniff rushes into his living room. Sees the window-washing platform. Then the missing panel of glass in his window. The cables coming from the roof. Goes to them.

FROM BELOW: He peers down from his window. And sees --

-- one man scaling down one of the cables and another man pulling him into safety.

BRANIFF (CONT'D)

Hey!

Cole and Charlie both look up. And lock eyes with Braniff.

It's hey-ho, let's go all over again.

INT. THE TOWER -- CONSTRUCTION SITE ON 66 -- CONTINUOUS

Cole detaches his cable.

COLE
Braniff saw us!

SLIDE
Shit!

CHARLIE
He saw us both.

DEV'REAUX
What do we do?

Eyes are on Cole. Who looks to Charlie. Who nods: he's in.

COLE
What would Houdini do?! He'd make
this damn thing disappear!

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Braniff makes a beeline for a phone. He picks it up, calls downstairs. Nothing. Fuck.

He moves directly for his front door and thrusts his foot across the threshold. A red light FLASHES on his ankle bracelet. Beep-beep-beep!

BRANIFF
They s-stole my car!

INT. FBI OFFICES -- MIDTOWN -- DAY

Agent Denham's in a budget meeting which has nearly put her to sleep when a JUNIOR AGENT barges in.

JUNIOR AGENT
Arthur Braniff just set off his --

Jillian's out of her seat before he finishes.

EXT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- DAY

A CABAL OF POLICEMEN are pounding on the door and yelling.

Inside, Lester appears, playing up his old age; he puts a hand to ear -- whatyawant? -- then starts fumbling in his pockets, stalling for time: where did I put that key now...?

INT. THE TOWER -- ELEVATOR/CONSTRUCTION SITE -- DAY

Elevator doors open and Dev gets in. He hits a button, then 'Close Doors' urgently. He counts to two-thousand in his head, then pulls the Emergency Break.

Back on 66, Cole, Slide, Charlie and Fitzhugh push the Austin over the rubble of the construction site to the elevator.

Slide grabs a crowbar and pries its doors open. In the shaft, the roof of Dev's elevator has stopped two feet beneath their floor level.

COLE

Sideways.

The four men tip the automobile on its side.

INT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- DAY

Lester finally gets the door open. The Cops rush in.

LESTER

Slow down, slow down: gosh, what's all this fuss about?

INT. THE TOWER -- ELEVATOR/CONSTRUCTION SITE ON 66 -- DAY

The men have the Austin on its side --

COLE

One-two-three, go.

-- then push it into the elevator shaft so that its grille dips down atop the elevator car below. Like the flag-raisers on Iwo Jima, they arc the Austin-Healey up and into the shaft entirely. Everyone's a little stunned it fit.

FITZHUGH

What now?

COLE

(to Slide and Fitz)

You and you, with me on top.

(to Charlie)

Take the freight to the basement.

Look for a place to hide this.

CHARLIE

And then?

COLE

I've got the ride down to figure that out.

Slide and Fitz step onto the elevator roof. Meanwhile, Cole gives a last instruction to Charlie, unheard. Charlie takes off and Cole joins them inside the shaft. They all take hold of the car, to keep it steady. Cole smiles at Dev'reaux.

COLE (CONT'D)
 How're you liking the job so far?
 (then, downward)
 Mr. Dev'reaux, basement please.

IN THE ELEVATOR CAR: Dev hits the button and they descend.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- DAY

NYPD COPS have entered to inquire about 'just-what-the-fuck' is going on upstairs. Svichkar is trying to understand what they're complaining about when --

-- Jillian marches in, leading a phalanx of other FBI Agents. She goes straight to the elevators and Mr. Washington.

JILLIAN
 Where's the elevator to the penthouse?
 (Washington indicates its floor on a panel)
 Get it here.

INT. THE TOWER -- ELEVATOR/ELEVATOR SHAFT -- DAY

Dev sees 'Lobby' illuminate on his panel. He shouts up:

DEV'REAUX
 Guys! Someone's calling for the elevator from the lobby!

Cole, Slide and Fitz watch shaft walls zip up around them.

SLIDE
 Can't he override it?

COLE
 Not from the lobby!

Something catches Fitzhugh's eyes. The portion of the chassis Slide scraped clean. It shines beautifully.

FITZHUGH
 Holy God, it *is* made of gold.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY/ELEVATOR/ELEVATOR SHAFT -- CONTINUOUS

Jillian waits impatiently. The elevator arrives at last and its doors open to reveal Dev, trying to look nonchalant.

DEV'REAUX
Miss Denham. Hello.
(she steps aboard with a
quartet of agents)
Floor, please.

JILLIAN
Cut the shit.

He hits 'PH.'

Above them, Cole, Slide and Fitzhugh trade worried looks as the elevator starts to ascend again.

INT. THE TOWER -- BASEMENT -- DAY

Charlie exits the freight elevator and nearly bulldozes CUSTODIANS on his way to the resident elevators.

CHARLIE
Sorry. Pardon.

He spies the floor numbers increasing on Dev's elevator.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Shit.

INT. THE TOWER -- ELEVATOR/ELEVATOR SHAFT -- DAY

Dev tries to make small talk.

DEV'REAUX
So, you going up to see Mr.
Braniff?

She ignores him. That's okay. Dev's accomplished what he intended. Because --

-- above, Cole has heard who's inside/where they're going. Beside him, Slide stares straight up and whispers:

SLIDE
Think there'll be enough room?

It's a good question. He, Cole and Fitz can always duck. That's not true of the Austin-Healey between them.

They all prepare to crouch as the elevator slows. It's going to be tight. They brace for impact, and --

-- the rear bumper of the Healey crunches up against the ceiling just as the elevator stops --

-- causing, INSIDE THE ELEVATOR, its roof to flex downward. It goes unnoticed by anyone but Dev, who inches into a corner of the elevator in case the Healey comes crashing through.

DEV'REAUX
(as doors open)
Penthouse!

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Jillian exits the elevator and comes quickly into contact with Arthur Braniff and Agent Cunningham.

JILLIAN
Mr. Braniff. Are you aware--

ARTHUR BRANIFF
My phone's dead -- I *wanted* you here! Look! Howard and Gibbs broke in here and stole my car! I saw them! LOOKLOOKLOOK!!!

Jillian wrinkles an eyebrow: did she hear that right? Braniff thrusts a finger toward the void in his apartment formerly filled by an automobile. She takes it in.

JILLIAN
No question: your car is gone.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
You see?! You see?!

JILLIAN
Your car must be very important to you...

ARTHUR BRANIFF
Oh, for God's sake, there are only 56 left in the WORLD--!

JILLIAN
...because you just forfeited ten million dollars.

This lands with a thud.

ARTHUR BRANIFF
No! I didn't! I wasn't escaping! I *wanted* someone up here--!

It is slowly dawning on him that he has made a mistake. She gives him a stony stare. He brazens it out.

ARTHUR BRANIFF (CONT'D)
 Now look, I've had about enough of
 this shit!

More stony stare. Uh oh.

INT. THE TOWER -- ELEVATOR/ELEVATOR SHAFT -- CONTINUOUS

As its doors close, Dev lets out a sigh of relief.

DEV'REAUX
 Back to the basement?

Above, Cole thinks in silence. Fitz and Slide trade a look.

COLE
 No. Braniff'll tell her it was us,
 she'll have agents scouring the
 whole place.

FITZHUGH
 Then where do we take this thing?

INT. THE TOWER -- 14TH FLOOR -- LATER

A quiet hallway. Then: elevator doors are pried open and a two-seater sportscar is lowered onto it carpeting. Slide, Fitzhugh and Cole push the car clear from the elevator shaft.

COLE
 You guys got it?

They nod. He tears away to the emergency stairwell.

At his front door, Fitzhugh fumbles for his keys, finds the right one at last and inserts it -- under Slide's withering stare. Just as he gets it open --

OLD MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH,

His neighbor, the one we previously saw in a wheelchair emerges from her apartment door. They're caught red-handed.

FITZHUGH
 Uhhh....

She looks at them. She seems entirely different. Her eyes are clear, she's spry, and she's walking -- we realize this is the first time we've seen her undrugged.

DEV'REAUX
 Hello, Ma'am!

There's nothing good to say, so he babbles ridiculously:

DEV'REAUX (CONT'D)
It's nice to see you up and about.

OLD MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH
I'm *extremely unhappy* with this!

DEV'REAUX
We... don't have much of an excuse,
ma'am.

The old lady barely glances at the guys, the car, the guilt and fear on their faces.

OLD MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH
Well, how in the world were you to
know that my daughter was
deliberately keeping me insensible!
(shaking her head)
What money does to people...!

The men stand there, holding a stolen car.

DEV'REAUX
We couldn't agree more, ma'am.

She finally seems to focus on them -- a bit.

OLD MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH
(beat, with total hauteur)
But I must say, this is very
shoddy. You gentlemen should be
using the service elevator.

She gets into the next elevator, muttering to herself. Being mega-rich and still a bit addled, she is too self-preoccupied to give a damn what these common men are doing.

OLD MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH (CONT'D)
...plummeting standards of
service... going to make a
complaint...

The doors close behind her. They all look at each other: *what the hell just happened*. But no time to ponder. Fitz and Slide push the Austin the rest of the way into

INT. THE TOWER -- FITZHUGH'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

-- shutting the door behind them and collapsing against it. They look at each other and smile. Holy shit, they did it.

INT. THE TOWER -- BRANIFF'S PENTHOUSE -- DAY

Agents fan out as Braniff backpedals a mile a minute to Jillian.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

Oh, now, look, *I have already cut the deal*, there's nothing to talk about! You take me in, you'll get called out on the carpet!

Agent Farley enters from another room, approaches Jillian.

AGENT FARLEY

You've gotta see this...

Jillian follows him. So does Braniff. They come into view of the large hole in the wall Slide made and the empty safe within it. Braniff hadn't spotted this before and he blanches. Meanwhile, Jillian realizes: this is the safe Cole was telling her about. She tries not to smile.

JILLIAN

Mr. Braniff, there seems to be a hidden safe in your apartment. During our inventory of your possessions you neglected to mention this.

ARTHUR BRANIFF

I, uh, I...

JILLIAN

You've now violated two conditions of your bail. I'm sorry to say that Le Bernadin will not be delivering to your next address. I hereby remand you to federal custody.

Agent Farley steps up and cuffs Braniff, who realizes protest will get him nowhere. Farley and Cunningham lead him out.

Jillian considers the empty safe again, then goes to the absent window and looks out at the lines of cable twisting downward. She can't quite believe Cole did this.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)

(to a Junior Agent)

Do a sweep of the entire building. Especially that floor with all the construction.

INT. THE TOWER -- PACKAGE ROOM -- DAY

Charlie enters, sees cops in the lobby, not sure if he's being hunted, off-the-hook or what. He passes by Ms. Perez.

PEREZ

Where the hell you been? You missed all the excitement?

Charlie pulls Perez aside.

CHARLIE

Miss Perez, can I trust you with something?

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Svichkar's on duty at the desk, Washington's standing in as lobby attendant, and Lester's shooing away lookieloo's out front. Charlie taps Svichkar's shoulder.

CHARLIE

Go on your break. I got it.

Charlie tries to resume his work and not look guilty as hell as cops and FBI agents scurry back and forth. He feels a presence creep up behind him.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We're both screwed, you know that.

It's Cole, out of his window-washer's jumpsuit and back in his manager's threads at last.

COLE

I know. It's been a pleasure, though. --Well, not most of it.

From the elevators, Braniff is led out. As he passes through the lobby, he stares daggers at Cole. But he says nothing.

Next: Braniff passes Lester on the way out. Lester's hands find their way into his pockets.

LESTER

You can open the door yourself, Mr. Braniff.

Exit Arthur Braniff.

COLE

At least he's going away for good.

CHARLIE

Not from us. We'll get the cell
next door.

Cole winces.

COLE

You do that thing I asked?

Charlie nods. Now, from the elevators, comes Jillian. Cole puts on a hopeful smile for her but it fades as she approaches.

Because she looks deadly serious.

EXT. THE TOWER -- FRONT ENTRANCE -- MOMENTS LATER

IN SLOW-MO: A DRUMS-AND-BAGPIPES VERSION OF "MINSTREL BOY" PLAYS AS CHARLIE AND COLE ARE LED OUT, COATS OVER THEIR CLASPED HANDS TO DISGUISE THE HANDCUFFS ON THEIR WRISTS. THERE'S MORE DIGNITY THAN SHAME IN THIS PERP WALK, LIKE SOLDIERS BEING LED TO AN ENEMY'S FIRING SQUAD.

FROM INSIDE THE LOBBY, DEV WATCHES AS JILLIAN OPENS A REAR SEDAN DOOR AND GUIDES CHARLIE AND COLE INSIDE.

IN A WINDOW ON THE 14TH FLOOR, FITZ AND SLIDE WATCH AS THE FBI SEDAN PULLS AWAY.

FADE OUT.

A VOICE

This is FBI Regional Director Mazin interrogating suspects Cole Howard and Charles Gibbs in the robbery of the penthouse apartment of Arthur Braniff. March seventeenth, three-thirty-four a.m..

FADE IN ON:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM -- FBI BUILDING -- NIGHT

DIRECTOR MAZIN and Jillian sit across from Cole and Charlie.

DIRECTOR MAZIN

Mr. Howard, Mr. Gibbs, as you're aware, Arthur Braniff identified both of you as perpetrators in the theft of his antique, sorry what was it --

JILLIAN
 -- 1958 Austin-Healy --

DIRECTOR MAZIN
 -- thank you, the theft of his
 antique 1958 Austin-Healey
 yesterday from his seventieth floor
 penthouse apartment in the Tower
 building.

(he shakes his head, not
 quite believing it)
 Guys, I guess the principal
 question I want to ask you is: why
 the hell did you do this?

Cole and Charlie share a look: you wanna tell him?

COLE
 As I did *not* do it, I can't answer.
 I guess, though, I can speculate.
 I can tell you why I *would* do it if
 given the opportunity, which of
 course I have not had.

He lets this wash over the room for a moment, then continues.

COLE (CONT'D)
 I personally would not want to
 witness the faces of my staff when
 they open their envelopes and find
 zeros where their life savings used
 to be. I know that I would do my
 damndest to change the look on
 their faces when those envelopes
 are opened, to one of relief and
 joy. I can honestly say that I
would do just about anything on
 this earth to bring that about...
 IF I had the ingenuity...

They are hanging on his words.

COLE (CONT'D)
 ...which, unfortunately, being a
 glorified servant, I really don't.

He smiles benignly -- the ultimate passive/aggressive coup.
 Admitting nothing, admitting everything.

DIRECTOR MAZIN
 That is tantamount to an admission,
 sir, and don't think--

JUNIOR AGENT
Their lawyer is here.

DIRECTOR MAZIN
(to Cole and Charlie)
You guys call somebody?
(Cole and Charlie shake
their heads)
Send him in.

Ms. Perez enters, still in her Tower uniform, a legal valise in hand. She carries herself like an experienced lawyer.

MS. PEREZ
Good morning. My name is Elizabeth Perez, I'll be representing these gentlemen.

DIRECTOR MAZIN
(eyeing her uniform)
Ms. Perez, are you licensed to practice law in New York State?

MS. PEREZ
As of noon yesterday, yessir, I am.

DIRECTOR MAZIN
Have a seat then. You know the charges being brought against your clients?

MS. PEREZ
I do. And I'm going to ask that they be immediately dropped.

DIRECTOR MAZIN
On what grounds?

She opens her valise and withdraws the CD-ROM from Braniff's safe (which Charlie gave her earlier).

DIRECTOR MAZIN (CONT'D)
What is that?

Jillian has a pretty good idea; she won't meet Cole's eyes. But she's smiling.

EXT. FBI BUILDING -- NIGHT

Cole and Charlie bid Ms. Perez adieu.

COLE

Not twenty-four hours a lawyer and
you're already blackmailing the
Feds.

PEREZ

(grins)
Sharks are born swimming.

CHARLIE

What just happened in there?

COLE

Those were Braniff's files on the
disc.

(as Perez nods)

You look at 'em?

(she nods)

Make a copy?

(she shrugs: maybe)

Good girl. You may take the rest
of the day off.

MS. PEREZ

Thank you, gentlemen.

She means for their actions yesterday. She shakes both their
hands and goes. Cole and Charlie consider each other, gulf
between them long gone. They start walking.

Jillian, in a window above, watches them go.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN -- DAYBREAK

As we first saw it. City waking up. Workers hustling to get
to their a.m. shifts.

Among them now are Cole and Charlie, crossing town together
in yesterday's clothes, two old friends walking in silence.

They round a corner and head toward --

EXT. THE TOWER -- DAYBREAK

Still and beautiful and idle at this hour. Cole and Charlie
have shifts to start, too.

INT. THE TOWER -- LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Cole and Charlie enter. Lester says nothing -- he drops all
professionalism and hugs them.

As they cross the lobby they are aware of a SLOW BUILDING OF
APPLAUSE from the porters, janitors, Mr Svichkar -- everyone.

They pass the elevators.

DEV'REAUX

Good morning, Mr. Howard. Good
morning, Mr. Gibbs.

Cole grabs him by the neck and hugs him. Charlie tussles his hair. Cole turns back to his staff, moved beyond words. He looks around at the applauding lobby, tries to think of something to say...

He never gets the chance. MR. SIMON looms before them, furious.

MR. SIMON

You two. Now.

He leads them backstage. Off their reactions: uh-oh...

INT. THE TOWER -- FITZHUGH'S APARTMENT -- DAY

PROFESSIONAL MOVERS carry his furniture and boxes out the front door. The Austin-Healey is noticeably absent; instead there is a pile of boxes marked "Living Room," "Kitchen," "Kids' Room."

FITZHUGH

Guys, there are my irreplaceable
pre-Columbian crock pots in that
box so take extra care, okay?

Two movers SCREAM in pain lifting an ultra-heavy couch.

MOVER

Jesus! This thing's a hernia and a
half! What's it made of, lead?

Fitzhugh knows the answer but won't share it.

Stepping out of his bathroom is Slide, wiping grease from his hands, having been up all-night dismantling the Austin. He watches it being carried out in boxes and furniture.

SLIDE

Looks like you got it from here.
See you at Trump Towers?

FITZHUGH

We'll split things up there.

Off a Mover's odd look, in explanation --

FITZHUGH (CONT'D)

We're lovers.

INT. THE TOWER -- COLE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Mr. Simon closes its door behind Cole and Charlie.

MR. SIMON

(he takes them in)

I don't know who you know or what you used to get out of this but I want you to know: I know what you did yesterday. You two are through here. And don't think the residents board doesn't know what you did!

COLE

Really? They all know?

MR. SIMON

You of all people know how clubby these people are!

COLE

I do. And, because they are so...
(crosses his fingers)
"...clubby," I'm sure most of them, if not all of them, were heavily invested with Mr. Braniff. And might be just a bit pissed at him...?

Mr. Simon's face falls.

EXT. THE TOWER -- STAFF ENTRANCE -- A DAY LATER

Mr. Simon is shown the exit, his possessions packed into a box. Various staff wave "so long" as Mr. Simon staggers away: what the fuck just happened?

Mr. Simon stares at them flabbergasted.

INT. JILLIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

It's her usual evening. The couch, some work scattered around, the TV on. There is a KNOCK.

She frowns. She's not expecting anyone.

A CARD is slid under the door. She picks it up, reads it.

Then opens the door.

It's Cole.

She turns and walks back into the room, continuing to look at the card.

JILLIAN

"...Property Manager..?" Mr.
Simon's job.

COLE

And Charlie got mine.

JILLIAN

It's "Charlie" all the time now?
(as Cole nods)
Well, that's something.

She takes a good look at him. For the first time since we've met him, he's wearing the casual, but sneakily stylish, clothes of a truly liberated man.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)

I've thought a lot about you.

She sits at her table. So does he. They face each other.

COLE

How so?

JILLIAN

I just have not been able to get
over what you did. I'm serious --
it really affected me --

COLE

I'm not a criminal, Jillian.

(sighs)

It took everything I had to bend my
brain around the idea that, even if
stealing's wrong, some time, some
place, there's gonna be that *one*
sonofabitch who just has it coming.

(sighs)

Okay. I know. I don't blame you.
I'm a thief. --Yeah. I know. I
just wish--

In a fluid move, she reaches under the counter and brandishes--

THE WINE BOTTLE: '61 CHATEAU LATOUR!

--which she plops, with a flourish, onto the table.

It's Braniff's bottle. No question. Cole's jaw drops -- *she has stolen it!*

JILLIAN

Drink?

Their eyes meet. She smiles. He smiles, relieved, impressed... and titillated.

She grins at him... gets out the glasses... and a corkscrew... and as he leans back in his chair, a happy, happy man... and we

FADE OUT

.... (but of course, being a heist movie, we have tags!)

OVER END CREDITS:

A MONTAGE OF THE TOWER STAFF opening their pay envelopes. As each of them reads the figures inside, their eyes go wide. Some scream, some faint, some cry, and some do a spazzy happy dance.

Dev'reaux immediately has to hand his check to the BURLY UKRANIAN GUYS who wag their finger at him -- don't fuck with us again. They go.

SCREEN GOES BLACK