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WORLD OF ANGER

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FIVE STAR RESTAURANT - DAY

The CHAIRMAN of the Board of Directors of Bank Intercorporate N.A., a stiff-suited gentleman in his sixties, exits a restroom.

He walks through a dining area filled with patrons wearing the dress of fifteen years ago.

SUPERIMPOSE: "15 YEARS AGO"

The Chairman reaches a small banquet room marked with a temporary sign that reads, "BANK INTERCORPORATE BD. OF DIRECTORS / PRIVATE."

He goes in.

INT. BANQUET ROOM

Lunch sits in front of twelve, seated, older-middle-aged DIRECTORS, all of whom are male but two. Bill, the youngest, has a journal and fountain pen out.

A waiter exits and closes the door behind him.

CHAIRMAN

Put those minutes away, Bill.
Let's talk off the record for a while.

Bill shuts the journal.

DIRECTOR #1 (MAN)

Is there anyone here who doesn't think Warren Fortney should be the next C-E-O of the bank?

Faces look agreeable.

Everyone starts eating.

DIRECTOR #2 (MAN)

The job he's done has been remarkable.

DIRECTOR #3 (MAN)

What's he like outside the office?

DIRECTOR #4 (MAN)
All business at times, but a good man. Solid as a rock.

DIRECTOR #5 (MAN)
I agree.

DIRECTOR #6 (MAN)
I met him for the first time last year at the Christmas party -- he and Michelle.

DIRECTOR #4
Michelle is wonderful. She and Warren do the Westside charity gala each year.

CHAIRMAN
What about the industry atmosphere we're in? Can Fortney handle the competitiveness?

DIRECTOR #5
He's a little young for the C-E-O spot, but I think he can rise to the task.

DIRECTOR #8 (WOMAN)
He's got a toughness that goes beyond his years. I saw it in action when the foreign bond market went bottomside up.

DIRECTOR #9
I think he's what we want.

People chew.

The Chairman looks around.

CHAIRMAN
Anything else?

Everyone looks content.

CHAIRMAN
Rob, Susan, if you'll come up with an offer, I'll give Warren the good news tomorrow.

EXT. UPPER CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

Serenity hangs over an impressive street as song birds CHIRP in competition.

INT. ONE OF THE HOUSES

Nice furnishings, order, and cleanliness rule.

BEDROOM

WARREN FORTNEY, now a man of significant means in his fifties, sleeps alone in a king-size bed.

SUPERIMPOSE: "PRESENT DAY"

WHAAANNCK! WHAAANNCK! The most annoying alarm in the history of alarm clocks shatters the tranquility of the room.

Fortney fumbles for the snooze button. He slams his hand down on top of the clock.

Fortney gets up, frowning. He turns a bedroom TV on to a news show. He stubs his toe on the bathroom door frame.

FORTNEY

Ooww!

BATHROOM

He spits water in the sink.

He marches to a bedroom landline phone and pounds out a call.

FORTNEY

(into phone)

Needleton, this is Warren Fortney. When the C-E-O asks for a status report on the company's merger, he means that day. Not next Monday; not next week. I don't know what happened with you on Friday, but I want a report on my desk this morning. Got it?

He pushes the phone down.

WHAAANNCK! WHAAANNCK! The grating alarm sounds again.

Fortney silences it and drives the clock into a night stand.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

In a suit, Fortney drinks coffee and reads an online newspaper on a tablet computer. A small TV sits on the counter, turned off.

The headline on the newspaper page, which is dated "Monday, June 13," reads, "Leader's Prepare for Weekend's International Economic Summit."

Fortney peers at some toast in the oven on a metal sheet. He turns the oven temperature up.

Shrub clipping noises draw him out a back door.

EXT. BACK YARD

Fortney's sixty-year-old yard man, RICHARD, works on a bush.

Fortney points to a brick patio area under construction.

FORTNEY

I thought they were going to take this out another six feet?

Richard hustles toward his boss. He seems like a nice man.

RICHARD

Yes sir. Just haven't gotten to it yet.

FORTNEY

I thought we were going to be done with everything by now? Richard, you're the manager of the yard. Everything that happens out here is your responsibility. Do you understand that?

RICHARD

Yes sir.

FORTNEY

Do you want to keep working for me?

RICHARD

I do.

FORTNEY

Then will you get the contractors moving so I don't have to do everything?

RICHARD

Yes sir.

Fortney stomps back in to the house.

INT. KITCHEN

Smoke billows from the oven.

Fortney burns his hand removing the charred toast.

FORTNEY

Ooowwww!

The toast tumbles onto the floor.

FORTNEY

Crap!

As he shakes his hand, his HOUSEKEEPER appears.

HOUSEKEEPER

Excuse me, Mister Fortney, but is there any reason for me to keep changing the sheets in the guest rooms every time?

FORTNEY

Damn it all, what? What are you talking about?

The housekeeper shrinks.

HOUSEKEEPER

It's just that I've been changing the sheets for two years now, but, when Mrs. Fortney was here, she would tell me when someone had been in there.

FORTNEY

I don't want you to mention her name in this house again, do you understand me?

HOUSEKEEPER

Yes sir.

Fortney runs water over his burn.

FORTNEY

Just do what I pay you to do.

HOUSEKEEPER

Yes sir.

The housekeeper scurries away. Fortney examines his hand.

EXT. SUBURBAN RETAIL DISTRICT - DAY

A luxury sedan drives over the speed limit down a roadway.

INT. CAR (MOVING)

Fortney turns up the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

KWFA news for Monday, June thirteenth. City officials are busy making final preparations for the Global Economic Summit in town this weekend. Mayor Richards had this to say about the conference:

Fortney darts around slower-moving cars.

MAYOR RICHARDS

(through radio)

We're honored to have so many heads of state coming to our city. We're continuing to work on the security logistics, but I assure you we'll be ready to play host to the world on Saturday.

Fortney turns off the radio and lays on the horn at a driver in front of him.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - OFFICE TOWER

An imposing corporate sign on the building reads "BANK INTERCORPORATTE N.A."

Fortney's sedan pulls into the parking garage.

INT. BANK INTERCORPORATTE OFFICES - OUTSIDE FORTNEY'S OFFICE

Fortney's secretary, MAGGIE, who is in her forties, stands up in alert when she sees him coming.

MAGGIE

Warren, there's a problem. Larry Needleton was supposed to run asset numbers with Heartland National this morning, but now they're saying they're "uncomfortable" with the structure of the merger.

FORTNEY

What?

MAGGIE

Heartland cancelled the assets meeting.

FORTNEY

That's unacceptable. Get him on the phone right now.

He goes into his office. Maggie sticks her head in.

FORTNEY'S OFFICE

MAGGIE

Get who?

FORTNEY

Needleton!

Maggie turns and retreats.

OUTSIDE FORTNEY'S OFFICE

Maggie fumbles the phone, then dials.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Ten Bank Intercorporate executives meet. Fortney sits at the end of a conference table.

KEVIN VANG, the one junior executive in the room, who is in his late twenties, sits next to Fortney.

A SENIOR EXECUTIVE opposite Fortney passes around materials.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE

As you can see from these handouts, the number of consumer and banking laws we face overseas is stifling.

LARRY NEEDLETON, the company's acquisitions manager, sneaks into the room and nudges next to Fortney.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE

What's even more difficult at times is figuring which laws and multilateral agreements apply to what operations in which countries.

Needleton speaks under the meeting in progress.

NEEDLETON

We just got an official rejection on the non-hostile bid to Heartland.

Fortney makes little attempt to avoid disrupting the ongoing presentation.

FORTNEY

(to Needleton)

Somebody needs to explain to me what the hell is going on.

NEEDLETON

I'd be willing to up the offer if I thought money would turn things around.

The rattled meeting speaker pauses, but Fortney bullies him with hand motions to keep going.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE

Um, the bank has never really taken a hard look at cross-national comparative expenses.

FORTNEY

(to Needleton)

What's the status of the hostile maneuvering?

SENIOR EXECUTIVE

And an exact breakdown of some operational costs can't be easily presented on an annual, calendar year basis.

NEEDLETON

We stopped working on it, so nothing's ready there.

FORTNEY

Well, why not? Damn it, Needleton.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE

But we can see some trends.

He hands out another sheet.

NEEDLETON

This people will be our partners,
our customers.

FORTNEY

Not if we don't acquire the bank,
you jackass!

The senior executive stops talking. All eyes watch Fortney.

FORTNEY

(to senior executive
presenting)

Go on; I'm listening!

SENIOR EXECUTIVE

If... If you compare the
numbers for measurable annual
costs and profit, and
subtract income taxes owed by
entities in any nation, even
the U-S, a few of the results
do surprise.

FORTNEY

(to Needleton)
Take it. Take it by force,
goddamn it.

Fortney shoes Needleton away.

FORTNEY

Go!

SENIOR EXECUTIVE

The results of the analysis could
serve as the basis for a
restructuring...

Fortney huddles with Kevin.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE

... Or at least for shifts in
staffing and employment
expenditures in the countries
where the ratio is
unfavorable.

FORTNEY

When are we going to start
cracking the whip on things
like this?

Fortney wipes spit from his mouth.

INT. FORTNEY'S OFFICE

Kevin follows Fortney in while making notes on a pad.

KEVIN

I'm sorry things fell apart on
Heartland.

FORTNEY

I want you to use our superior position to crush them. Don't let Needleton screw it up.

KEVIN

You don't have to tell me twice.

FORTNEY

We should have never talked to them as equals. Remember that, Kevin.

KEVIN

I couldn't agree more.

Fortney rubs his eyes. He looks terrible.

FORTNEY

What's next?

KEVIN

There's the Global Economic Summit this Saturday and the kick-off of the president's commercial debt relief plan.

FORTNEY

I'm not going. Stop asking me about it. I'm not taking fifty cents on the dollar on projects for sovereign nations.

He paces behind his desk.

KEVIN

Sixty cents.

FORTNEY

It doesn't matter!

KEVIN

The person who's making the biggest stink about this is Laura Baird at First One. She's heading some kind of committee to get a show of support for the president's plan.

FORTNEY

Screw Laura Baird. If she wants to throw good money after bad, she can leave us out of it.

KEVIN

I'll make it clear where you stand.

FORTNEY
Is that it?

KEVIN
That's it.

Fortney buttons his jacket and heads for the door.

FORTNEY
I'll be at my lawyer's if anyone
needs me.

INT. LAW FIRM ENTRANCE - DAY

The sign on the hallway glass door reads, "CROWELL, JEFFERS &
MOORE, LLP / ATTORNEYS AT LAW."

INT. LAW OFFICE

Fortney's personal lawyer, ROY, enters with two armloads of
files. Fortney follows him.

FORTNEY
How can they do this to me, Roy?
Today is two years since Michelle
and I separated. Is this just
going to go on and on and on?

ROY
You agreed to a structured divorce
settlement. We were trying to
protect the value of your non-
liquid assets, remember?

He moves around the cluttered office replacing the files.

FORTNEY
And those investments have done
well because I chose them. Me.

ROY
That's not how community property
works.

FORTNEY
I don't care how it works.
Michelle destroyed my life.

ROY

The only loophole is if we can prove she was detrimental to the financial health of the marriage somehow.

FORTNEY

For God's sake, man, fix this. However it has to get done.

Roy shakes his head.

ROY

If we do a hearing on the remainder of the settlement, it'll be tough. Michelle looks good. She's a professor; she's smart; she comes across well.

FORTNEY

Who are you representing here?

ROY

I'll request a meeting on it, but instead of waging war on Michelle, have you ever thought about trying to compromise with her? Or even partially reconciling with her?

FORTNEY

Are you crazy?

ROY

She must of have been a positive for you at one time.

FORTNEY

Don't even mention it!

Roy drops the rest of the files.

ROY

I will mention it. You're over the line here, Warren.

FORTNEY

What?

ROY

You can't be this bullshit at the world every single day. It's not sustainable. It's not containable by the rest of the universe.

FORTNEY

I've never heard anything so ridiculous in my life.

ROY

I'm telling you this as a friend. You're out there on the edge, and it seems to me like you're about to go over the edge.

Fortney glares at him.

INT. BANK INTERCORPORATE - EXECUTIVE OFFICES FLOOR - DAY

Fortney exits an elevator with his head down.

INT. OUTSIDE FORTNEY'S OFFICE

As Fortney approaches, Maggie comes out of a nearby teleconferencing room.

MAGGIE

Warren, I've got Laura Baird from First One on teleconference.

FORTNEY

I don't want to talk to her.

MAGGIE

She wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

FORTNEY

Keeping people like Laura Baird away from me is your primary job.

MAGGIE

She said she'd keep calling until you talked to her.

Fortney looks torn.

FORTNEY

Damn it.

He starts to go into his office, but turns around. He puts a threatening finger in Maggie's face.

FORTNEY

The next time this happens, you have to think of a way to deal with this. I need a professional job of schedule management.

Maggie heads toward the teleconferencing room, but Fortney brushes past her. Maggie looks hurt.

INT. TELECONFERENCING ROOM

On a view screen at the end of a long table is LAURA BAIRD, CEO of First One Bank. She looks pleasant enough.

FORTNEY

What the devil is it, Laura?

LAURA

You're not going to take the president's package on your developing countries' deals gone bad?

FORTNEY

No, I'm not.

LAURA

How likely is it that you'll ever get anything better?

FORTNEY

It's not my job to save the godforsaken world.

He looks away from her.

LAURA

How about saving yourself?

FORTNEY

Ha!

LAURA

You used to be the sharpest C-E-O in town. What happened to you?

Fortney storms the screen.

FORTNEY

Have your little conference. Just stay out of my hair!

He hits the screen's power button, and it goes blank.

INT. BANK INTERCORPORATE BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR LOBBY - DAY

Employees leaving for the day wave at a security guard.

Fortney steps out of an elevator with a frown.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Fortney parks under a "NO PARKING ANYTIME" sign.

INT. HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA

Medical students in lab coats and scrubs mingle at a reception in the closed facility.

MINDY, Fortney's 25-year-old daughter, talks to a FELLOW MED STUDENT, a young man.

MINDY

I'm not going backwards. I won't do a residency in a hospital that's not a top ten. And it has to be surgery.

FELLOW MED STUDENT

Wow. Who died and made you queen?

MINDY

I've worked too hard.

She notices Fortney at the front of the hall.

MINDY

Gotta go.

As she finds her father, they both look annoyed.

FORTNEY

There's no place to park. Do I have to do this?

Mindy lowers her voice.

MINDY

The academic people at the med school are all touchy-feely. It helps if I look like I have a family.

FORTNEY

Where's that boyfriend of yours?

MINDY
I'm not speaking to Chad right now.

FORTNEY
Fine. How are your grades?

Mindy glares at him for asking.

MINDY
My grades are good. I ought to be able to do no worse than a top ten hospital.

FORTNEY
Top ten? I thought you were staying in town no matter what?

MINDY
And limit myself?

FORTNEY
Mindy, I don't think you know what you're doing here.

MINDY
How would you know? You don't know anything about it.

She starts across the room.

MINDY
Just come with me and meet the Dean and keep your mouth shut.

Fortney looks at his watch.

FORTNEY
Fine. Then I can get out of here.

EXT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Fortney pulls into his driveway.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN

Fortney writes out a note on the kitchen table.

The note reads: "The patio must be finished by the end of the week!" Fortney breaks his pencil on the exclamation point.

Fortney goes out the back door with the note and returns a few seconds later without it.

He throws open the refrigerator door. Nothing in there but a near-empty jug of milk, an open can of tuna, some old luncheon meat, and three rotting oranges.

Fortney smells the spoiling luncheon meat, and then grabs the oranges to throw them out. In the process, he snags his trouser's pocket on the inside of the refrigerator door.

RIP! The pocket tears. Whap! Fortney hits the floor, oranges flying across the room.

FORTNEY

Aughh!

He gets up.

FORTNEY

Damn you, you bastard!

Is he talking to the refrigerator? He is!

Fortney tackles the open refrigerator door, partially ripping it off its hinges.

Smash! The main part of the refrigerator topples over, barely missing Fortney, now sprawled out on the floor.

With great effort, Fortney flips over the refrigerator and tears out its shelves.

FORTNEY

You goddamn son of a bitch!

He jabs his hand on a sharp edge.

FORTNEY

Damn it!

He kicks the wounded beast and staggers away.

STUDY

Fortney pulls a box down from the top shelf of a closet.

He rips the box open and extracts a framed picture of himself and Michelle, a beautiful woman with a kind face. She and Fortney are all smiles in the photo.

POP! Fortney breaks the glass of the frame with one punch.

He pulls the photo out of the frame and tears it up.

He then puts the pieces of photograph, glass, and frame back in the storage box and storms out of the room with it.

EXT. HOUSE

Fortney dunks the storage box into a garbage can. He slams the lid down on top.

INT. BEDROOM

Wearing pajamas and a scowl, Fortney gets into bed and switches off a bedside lamp. He yanks the covers around him.

INT. BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

WHAAANNCK! WHAAANNCK! The world's most irritating alarm goes off -- until Fortney pounds it with his fist again.

Fortney gets up; he turns on the TV en route to the bathroom.

A tag at the bottom of the screen on a morning show reports the day and time: "Tuesday, June 14 / 6:52 AM"

MORNING SHOW HOST (ON TV)
Why should anyone buy this book?
There's nothing in it of any value.

MORNING SHOW GUEST (ON TV)
Why did you invite me on if all
you're going to do is criticize me?

MORNING SHOW HOST
It's my job to tell it like it is.

MORNING SHOW GUEST
It's a children's book, for God's
sake!

The host picks up the book, entitled "The Rainy Day."

MORNING SHOW HOST
I'm not going to lie to the
viewers.

The guest accosts the host, grasping for the book.

MORNING SHOW GUEST
Give me that! Give it to me!

MORNING SHOW HOST
Help!

The altercation draws Fortney out of the bathroom. He looks puzzled by the embarrassing fracas.

KITCHEN

Dressed, Fortney makes coffee.

Harsh tones from Richard sound outside.

RICHARD (O.S.)

No, no -- you're wrong! You could have done it by now if you had any competence at all!

Fortney investigates.

EXT. BACK YARD

Two CONTRACTORS stand over the unfinished patio. One of them shakes a finger at Richard.

CONTRACTOR #1

You still have to pay us! You're not getting out of it!

RICHARD

Don't yell at me!

CONTRACTOR #2

You're a lunatic!

FORTNEY

What's going on here?

RICHARD

This bastard is about to get thrown off the property.

CONTRACTOR #1

You're not doing anything to me.

RICHARD

Oh, yeah?

He picks up a shovel and whacks the contractor, tearing his shirt and knocking him over.

CONTRACTOR #1

Aaggg!

FORTNEY

Are you crazy!?

RICHARD
 (to contractor #1)
 If you're going to ruin my
 standing, I'll ruin you.

The other contractor goes for the shovel. He and Richard struggle over it. Fortney tries to break it up.

FORTNEY
 Stop it! Are you all out of your
 minds?

Fortney wins the pulling match for the shovel.

FORTNEY
 (to Richard)
 Go wait in the house.

Fuming, Richard obeys. Fortney tends to the fallen man.

FORTNEY
 Good God.

EXT. FORTNEY'S DRIVEWAY

Fortney gets into his car. Richard looks on.

FORTNEY
 What got into you back there?

RICHARD
 I was just doing my job.

FORTNEY
 Don't kill anybody while I'm at
 work.

He drives away.

EXT. SUBURBS - RETAIL DISTRICT

Fortney dodges other reckless drivers.

FORTNEY
 Watch it!

He swerves into another lane to avoid a collision. Other cars whiz by way too fast.

Fortney looks around at the traffic. He keeps going.

INT. BANK INTERCORPORATE - EXECUTIVE OFFICES FLOOR

Fortney exits the elevator.

As he approaches the office, Maggie and Needleton argue.

MAGGIE

I'm not giving anyone schedule time just because they want it.

NEEDLETON

This is my decision.

MAGGIE

What's so important? Write me a damn memo and tell me what's so important!

NEEDLETON

You have no idea what I do!

FORTNEY

Hey, you too. What's this?

NEEDLETON

I need money. And the Finance Department won't give it to me.

FORTNEY

What?

He shows Fortney some papers he's holding.

NEEDLETON

Products, service, loans, and institutional takeovers in sixteen states. All by ambush. But I need to do it before anyone gets wind of it.

Fortney points to his office.

FORTNEY

Get in here and explain to me what in the world is going on.

Maggie shuts the office door behind them. She looks poised to pick the fight back up.

Maggie picks up a message slip and dials a number super-fast.

MAGGIE
(into phone)
Give me the regional manager. This
Maggie for Warren Fortney's office.

She wads up a piece of paper on her desk. She dunks it into the trash can.

MAGGIE
(into phone)
Where's your report? Your numbers
through May?

She listens.

MAGGIE
I don't care what you've been doing
or what you want to do. The policy
is ten days; now do it!

She slams down the phone.

Fortney bursts out of his office, trailed by Needleton.

FORTNEY
Needleton, listen to yourself!

NEEDLETON
Talk to Finance! They've got
blinders on.

FORTNEY
That's highly unlikely.

NEEDLETON
I'm going to prove it to you.

He points at Fortney.

NEEDLETON
This is getting personal.

He storms off. Fortney watches him go.

Then Kevin approaches with a load of hard-files. He has a menacing look in his eye.

KEVIN
We need to talk.

He brushes past Fortney and goes into his office.

FORTNEY'S OFFICE

Kevin lays out papers on Fortney's desk. Fortney watches.

KEVIN

Here are heavily collateralized commercial loans with solid enforcement teeth in every nation that hosts an Intercorporate debtor in default.

FORTNEY

Yeah?

KEVIN

So we buy these loans and use their leverage to get full repayment of everything we're owed. We'll stick it to Laura Baird and the president by taking care of ourselves.

FORTNEY

Hold on, now. International lending is tricky business.

KEVIN

And we blew it with these projects that can't pay us back. So now we put the squeeze on them.

FORTNEY

Kevin, you're not lining this up in any official capacity, are you?

KEVIN

I've got everybody working on it. It has to be in the bag by the Economic Summit.

FORTNEY

Stop right there. This would be major move for the bank. How can you drop this on me without ever having mentioned it before?

KEVIN

So you're going to stand in my way again?

FORTNEY

What?

KEVIN
Every time I try to do something,
you hold me back.

FORTNEY
What are you talking about?

Kevin gathers up his papers in a huff.

KEVIN
You know what I'm talking about.

FORTNEY
You can't just go making major
decisions without checking with me.

Kevin leaves and bangs the door shut behind him.

Fortney looks perplexed.

EXT. BANK INTERCORPORATE BUILDING

MICHELLE LAINEY, Fortney's ex-wife, gets out of a cab with
her ATTORNEY in tow. She still looks attractive, but she
also looks mad.

MICHELLE
(to her attorney)
I'm going to kill him.

INT. FORTNEY'S OFFICE

Fortney tries to work at his desk. He looks disturbed and
distracted. He puts his head down on the desk.

Maggie rings his desk phone. Fortney answers it on speaker.

MAGGIE
(through phone speaker)
Your ex-wife and her lawyer are
here.

FORTNEY
Here?

He thinks.

FORTNEY
I'm in a meeting.

The door flies open, and Michelle and her divorce counsel
burst in, guns blazing.

MICHELLE

You're not getting out of this, you weasel! I oughta rip your head off right here.

FORTNEY

Michelle, what the heck?

MICHELLE

I'm going to take everything you've got and watch you shrivel up and die.

MICHELLE'S ATTORNEY

We got the message you're contesting the balance of the structured settlement. You're going to be sorry you picked this fight, Warren.

FORTNEY

(to Michelle)

It's just a legal issue. This is a legitimate dispute over a sum of money.

MICHELLE

I'm going to destroy you.

FORTNEY

What about all that stuff about "moving on" and putting our differences behind us?

Michelle pins him against the wall with her anger.

MICHELLE

The only thing I want behind me is your rotting carcass.

Fortney slides away from her and scratches his head.

FORTNEY

I've never seen you like this before...

MICHELLE'S ATTORNEY

You can take this as our official notice that we're counter-contesting. This is going to get ugly.

FORTNEY
(to Michelle)
Are you all right?

Is there a hint of genuine concern in his voice?

MICHELLE
I'm going to get you if it's the
last thing I do.

She stares at him with unhallowed eyes. Fortney stares back with a bewildered look.

Michelle marches out. Her lawyer slams the door behind them.

Fortney wipes sweat off his brow.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Commuters at a bus stop fight over who was ahead of whom in line. The BUS DRIVER yells at the squabbling crowd.

BUS DRIVER
I'm going to close this door in
five seconds! I'm gonna close this
damn door in five seconds!

INT. BANK INTERCORPORATE OFFICES - OUTSIDE FORTNEY'S OFFICE

Fortney pokes his head out of his office and looks around. Except for Maggie at her desk, the coast looks clear.

Fortney launches his escape.

FORTNEY
(to Maggie)
I'm off.

He hurries away.

INT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Fortney listens to a voice message on the hardline phone.

MINDY
(on voice mail)
Daddy, this is Mindy.

She sounds stressed out.

MINDY

Well, it's over. The hospital won't give me anything close to what they ought to, so I'm going to do my residency back East. Chad and I are history, so I'm going to go ahead and move to New York so I can do interviews.

She breathes heavily.

MINDY

That's it. I may bring some stuff to the house before I leave.

Click. She hangs up.

FORTNEY

Good grief. Can anything else go wrong today?

He dials a number. Mindy's voice mail picks up.

FORTNEY

Mindy, this is your dad. I'd like to talk to you about how you arrived at your decision, if I could. Please call me back.

He hangs up. He looks around. He rubs his face.

He dials another number. Gets Kevin's voice mail.

FORTNEY

Kevin, this is Warren calling from home Tuesday night. I'm not sure what was going on around the office today, but we need to be a little more focused on what we're after long-term with our international operations. I'd like to go over the debt-collection strategy again with you tomorrow, say mid-morning. Please call Maggie when you get in. Hopefully we can get back on track to the way I'd like things to run.

He hangs up.

Fortney looks satisfied. That ought to do it.

He sets his alarm and turns out the light.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

WHAAANNCK! WHAAANNCK!

Fortney gets up and starts his day like it's any normal day.

EXT. SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL STREET

Fortney drives to the end of a quiet street. He comes to a busy, four-lane road and puts on his left blinker.

Fortney pokes the nose of his car out into traffic to get a better view of the cars coming. Not safe to turn yet.

But now Fortney has left his front end blocking the far right lane of the larger road. He needs to back up.

But he can't back up -- another car is right on his bumper.

A car in the busier road has to come to a complete stop because of Fortney's front end. The DRIVER looks incensed.

Honk! Cars behind the stopped car are mad now.

The driver blocked by Fortney jumps out of his car and starts wailing on Fortney's hood with a tire iron!

INCENSED DRIVER

You idiot! You should never be allowed to drive again!

He makes dents in Fortney's hood.

INCENSED DRIVER

You total moron!

He hits Fortney's windshield and cracks the glass.

Fortney stands up in his door.

FORTNEY

Hey, take it easy.

Honk! Drivers behind Fortney are furious too.

INCENSED DRIVER

I'm going to kill you.

He charges Fortney, who runs for his life.

The incensed driver throws the tire iron at Fortney, and it hits him in the back. Fortney stumbles but keeps going.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Commuters, out of their cars, shove Fortney's car into somebody's front yard.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER STILL

Fortney hides in a side yard. Sweat covers his face.

He peers through bushes on all fours. His car sits oddly on a lawn.

Fortney emerges and retakes his vehicle. Despite the damage, it runs. He heads out.

INT. BANK INTERCORPORATE - PARKING GARAGE

As Fortney approaches his reserved parking space, Kevin stands in the middle of it. He looks enraged.

Kevin blasts Fortney as soon as he cracks his door.

KEVIN

You're never going to let me execute my plan on the default projects, are you?

FORTNEY

May I get out of my car?

KEVIN

I knew it. You won't let me get past a certain point, no matter what.

Fortney looks battle-weary.

FORTNEY

What in the name of God Almighty are you talking about? Have you completely taken leave of your senses?

KEVIN

You're going to be sorry when you see what this causes. You're a fool, Warren Fortney, and you're going to pay a heavy price for it.

FORTNEY

Pay a price for what? Can we go back to the boss-employee relationship we had a couple of days ago?

KEVIN

You wish!

He marches off.

Fortney shakes his head. He looks at the hood of his car.

INT. BANK INTERCORPORATE - OUTSIDE FORTNEY'S OFFICE

As soon as he appears, Maggie bites Fortney's head off.

MAGGIE

Where have you been? We've been fined, big time. By federal regulators. It all came down this morning.

She hands him a piece of paper, an "Official Fine Order."

FORTNEY

What?

MAGGIE

You've got thirty days to make these solvency adjustments, or we're out of the business.

She hands him a set of other documents.

MAGGIE

Asset management's yelling and screaming at Washington right now.

Fortney scans the documents.

FORTNEY

This is complete and utter lunacy. We can't meet these requirements. Not in thirty days, not ever. Is this a joke?

MAGGIE

If the bank is going under, you should tell me. I deserve to know.

FORTNEY

The bank is not going under!

He reads further.

FORTNEY

We've always cooperated with everything the regulators wanted us to do. What is wrong with the freaking world today?

MAGGIE

What do you mean by that?

FORTNEY

By what?

MAGGIE

That word.

FORTNEY

"Freaking world?"

MAGGIE

No the other one. "Cooperated."

FORTNEY

"Cooperate?" You don't know what "cooperate" means?

Maggie shakes her head.

FORTNEY

How can you not know what "cooperate" means?

Maggie shrugs.

FORTNEY

It means work together without ripping each other apart. Do you know what the word "patience" means?

Maggie shakes her head again.

FORTNEY

You've never heard of these words?

MAGGIE

I've never heard of them.

FORTNEY

Pull up a dictionary.

Maggie brings up an online dictionary on her computer.

Fortney types "COOPERATION" and hits enter. The site reports that no such word can be found.

FORTNEY

What?

He clears the search box and types "REASONABILITY." Nothing.

FORTNEY

"Levelheaded." Do you know what that is?

MAGGIE

I've never heard that word in my life.

She's being serious. Fortney types it in. Nothing again!

FORTNEY

What is going on?

MAGGIE

What do these mean?

FORTNEY

How about simple kindness? Do you understand that?

Maggie shakes her head.

Fortney looks like he's seen a ghost.

FORTNEY

What about love? L-O-V-E?

MAGGIE

I don't know what you want me to tell you...

FORTNEY

You've never heard of love?

Maggie shakes her head.

Fortney types it and searches. Goose egg.

He backs away from the computer. He looks around.

FORTNEY

What has happened here?

He looks up.

FORTNEY
What is this?

He starts to hyperventilate.

MAGGIE
Are you ill?

Fortney stumbles to the elevators. Maggie watches him go.

INT. ELEVATOR

Fortney punches the ground floor button.

FORTNEY
Why? What...?

He rubs his face.

EXT. BANK INTERCORPORATE BUILDING

Fortney peels out in his car.

Inside, the car radio reports disturbing news.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
Eight new regional skirmishes have
broken out in Eastern Europe and
Asia in the last twenty-four hours.
That brings the total number of
flaring global conflicts up to
sixteen.

Fortney punches off the radio.

He tries to get away from aggressive traffic again by going
up a road that switch-back-climbs a hill.

He hits construction, and two-way traffic squeezes into half
the road. Fortney's lane is on the outside.

Impatient drivers in stopped traffic heading down cut across
the climbing traffic to get to a sliver of a shoulder even
more on the outside of the hill.

FORTNEY
Watch it!

Cars honk. More slicing across causes near-misses.

A downhill errant car skids and plunges over the edge!

FORTNEY
Whaaaauuuu!?

Another car flies off the side of the hill.

Fortney closes his eyes.

FORTNEY
This can't be happening.

He crouches behind the wheel.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Fortney parks on a sidewalk. He gets out and races towards an academic building.

INT. ACADEMIC BUILDING

Fortney climbs a stairwell. He pants. He sweats. He looks crazed.

When he makes it to the top floor, he thrusts his head into the first PROFESSOR'S office he comes to.

FORTNEY
Professor Lainey! Where is
Professor Lainey?

STARTLED PROFESSOR
Down the hall.

Fortney stumbles away. He comes to a door marked "Prof. Michelle Lainey." Fortney throws it open without knocking.

INT. MICHELLE'S OFFICE

Michelle meets with a student, a young woman.

FORTNEY
Michelle, there you are! You've
got to help me.

MICHELLE
What are you doing here?

Fortney grabs her.

FORTNEY
Something terrible has happened.
The world has gone crazy.

MICHELLE
(to the student)
I want to see that paper in one
week.

The student leaves. Michelle moves away from Fortney.

MICHELLE
I said everything I had to say to
you yesterday. Now get out of
here, you miserable leech.

FORTNEY
Listen to yourself.

Michelle stamps her foot and points to the door.

MICHELLE
Out!

Fortney falls to his knees.

FORTNEY
Please, please listen to me. I'm
not making this up. Everyone has
changed except me.

He lowers his head to the floor and breathes hard.

MICHELLE
What are you talking about?

She goes to her desk and sits. Fortney crawls to her chair.

FORTNEY
Yesterday. Yesterday when you came
to see me. You've never behaved
like that in your life. That
angry. That spiteful. It's not
you, Michelle.

MICHELLE
What do you mean it's not me?

FORTNEY
Before yesterday, you were the
sweetest, kindest, most wonderful
person in the world. You never
said a cruel word to anyone.

MICHELLE
I don't know what all of those
words mean.

FORTNEY

You put the welfare of others before yourself. You put my well-being before your own. You would do anything to make me happy. Can you understand that?

MICHELLE

I don't know.

FORTNEY

Even when things were at their worst, you always kept your head. You looked out for me, no matter what.

MICHELLE

If I were all of those things, then why were you so ugly to me when we separated?

A frog wriggles around in Fortney's throat, choking off his air. Not really, but he has no good answer.

FORTNEY

I...

He puts his head in his hands.

FORTNEY

I was angry. I was frustrated. It was a difficult time for me. The pressures of my job were enormous.

Michelle stands up and towers over him.

MICHELLE

Why should I listen to anything you have to say now?

FORTNEY

You've got to believe me. Something is terribly wrong.

MICHELLE

I haven't noticed anything.

FORTNEY

Look around you. Turn on the news. Take a walk down the street. People are ripping each other apart for no reason. Does that make any sense?

MICHELLE

How are people supposed to act?

FORTNEY

Don't be an idiot, Michelle.
Things didn't used to be this way.

Michelle's face hardens.

MICHELLE

Out! Get out of here and leave me
alone.

She pulls him off the floor and shoves him toward the door.

FORTNEY

Look at yourself. This isn't you.
This isn't right!

Michelle closes the door in his face.

INT. ACADEMIC BUILDING - HALLWAY

Fortney wobbles away.

FORTNEY

(to himself)
This can't be real.

EXT. FORTNEY'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Fortney speeds down his street, way over the limit.

He stops in his driveway, gets out of his car, and sprints
for the front door.

Just as he gets inside, and ANGRY BICYCLIST rides up and
throws a rock through one of Fortney's windows.

ANGRY BICYCLIST

I oughta kick your ass!

INT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE

Fortney locks every bolt on his front door.

He checks the locks on the windows, making sure they're all
tight and secure. He draws every curtain.

KITCHEN

He checks the back door. Closes shutters on the kitchen windows. Flattens every slat.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

In pajamas, Fortney leans a chair against the bedroom door to brace it. The television is on the evening news...

NEWSCASTER

Markets plummeted further today as new threats over international financial agreements were issued from several countries. At midnight Brussels time, Brazil, South Korea, and Indonesia all pulled their currencies off the international exchange.

Fortney clicks off the TV.

He turns off the light, jumps in bed, and pulls the covers up over his head.

INT. BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

WHAAANNCK! Fortney pops up, startled. He kills the alarm.

He rubs his eyes. He looks around. Could it have all been a bad dream?

He creeps to the TV and turns it on. A news report fades in.

REPORTER

All out war is the story here. From the Middle East to the troubled horn of Africa, the situation in this sector of the globe is breaking down rapidly.

Explosions and gunfire sound. The reporter cringes.

REPORTER

It is utter chaos. There is no other word for it than chaos.

FORTNEY

No!

He switches off the TV.

FORTNEY
Why is this happening to me? I
don't deserve this.

He collapses on the bed. He clutches covers.

The phone rings, and Fortney answers and listens.

FORTNEY
(into phone)
What?

He straightens up in alarm.

FORTNEY
Both of them?

INT. FORTNEY'S CAR

Fortney rams the vehicle into "Park."

EXT. POLICE STATION

Fortney gets out of the car. He looks at its exterior. New, long scratches and dents cover it.

He heads for the station's entrance.

He surveys a battle-looking scene. Officers herd arrestees into the station like prisoners of war. Other officers hustle out of the station in riot gear.

INT. POLICE STATION

Arrestees of all socioeconomic classes pack the place.

Fortney looks in vain for someone to talk to.

FORTNEY
Michelle Lainey!

He calls around the station.

FORTNEY
Mindy Fortney! Is Mindy Fortney
here?

He sees Michelle and Mindy in a corner with several others under loose supervision. He hurries to them.

FORTNEY
What happened?

Michelle holds a bloody paper towel over her knuckles.

MICHELLE
We've been brutalized, that's
what's happened.

FORTNEY
What?

MICHELLE
I got in an accident, and I got in
a fight with a cop.

FORTNEY
What kind of fight?

MICHELLE
The kind were you have to teach
someone a lesson for being a jerk.

She checks her injured hand.

FORTNEY
Are you both nuts?

MICHELLE
What's it to you?

FORTNEY
I was called here. You've been
arrested, for God's sake. And I
really don't have time for this.
I've got a failed merger to fix; I
need to be at the bank.

MICHELLE
Go then.

Fortney looks at Mindy. She's staring into space.

FORTNEY
Let me see if I can figure out what
the situation is.

He looks around, then back at Mindy.

FORTNEY
Do you how difficult you'll make it
on your mother and me if you move
across the country?

MINDY
I hate this place.

Fortney gives up and chases after an officer.

The officer gets away, and Fortney looks back at Mindy again.

She brawls with a young boy. Michelle tries to break it up.

EXT. POLICE STATION

Fortney watches Michelle and Mindy walk away across the parking lot. He shakes his head.

He goes to his car and gets in.

INT. CAR

Fortney sits still. He looks straight ahead.

FORTNEY
(to himself)
Is this because of what I did to
Michelle?

He thinks.

FORTNEY
But I didn't do anything to her.

He puts his hands on the wheel, but doesn't start the car.

FORTNEY
Roy.

He fires up the car and peels out.

INT. ROY'S LAW FIRM - RECEPTION AREA

A police officer tapes off an area and medical teams remove bleeding gunshot victims.

Fortney arrives and sizes up the scene. A WOMAN limps past.

FORTNEY
What happened?

INJURED WOMAN
Some bastard in a case the firm's
handling did it.

FORTNEY

Do you know if Roy is all right?

INJURED WOMAN

He's not all right.

Fortney hurries down a hallway.

He finds Roy being lifted onto a stretcher by EMS workers.

FORTNEY

Roy! Why is all this happening?

But Roy's eyes are closed and his body is limp.

Fortney looks at the EMS personnel. One of them shakes his head.

FORTNEY

No.

The medics carry Roy's body away.

Fortney kicks the wall. His foot crashes through dry wall and gets caught. Fortney falls to the floor.

He bounds back up, looking determined to do battle.

FORTNEY

(to himself)

Not going to happen to me.

He brushes off his pants, straightens his tie, and heads out.

EXT. BANK INTERCORPORATE BUILDING

Fortney roars into the parking garage.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

The same group of ten EXECUTIVES from before sit at the same table, plus ten others crammed in behind them.

Everyone argues at once, blaming each other for a deluge of financial and operational problems at the bank.

"Assets are pouring out the door." "We're going under today." "We're ruined." "You're incompetent." "Warren Fortney's to blame." That sort of thing.

Fortney walks in with Maggie and Needleton. The complaints redirect to him.

"What the hell is going on, Warren?" "You've got to get these people back on track." "You've got to do something fast." "I can't work under these conditions." Etc.

Fortney yells.

FORTNEY

Shut up! Shut the hell up!

Everyone backs off, but faces remain angry.

FORTNEY

I'm the president of this company, and I'm giving you a direct order: stop arguing with each other.

EXECUTIVE #1

What about the affronts against me? I'm not going to take it anymore.

FORTNEY

I don't care! I'm going to fire all of you if you don't start working with each other.

EXECUTIVE #2

What about our cash balances? We're about to be blasted out of existence, and I want to know what you're going to do about it.

FORTNEY

The entire economy is about to collapse. Don't you get it? Can't you see what's happening around you?

EXECUTIVE #3

I want to know who's going to take the blame for this.

FORTNEY

This isn't about blame, you imbecile. We need to figure out how we can get things back on track. Now I want each of you to listen very carefully to what I tell you to do.

He looks around the room.

FORTNEY

Where's Kevin?

EXECUTIVE #4

He got off this sinking ship; he works for First One now. Taken over their international collections, I hear.

FORTNEY

What?

MAGGIE

Kevin resigned yesterday. I thought you knew.

FORTNEY

No, I didn't know.

EXECUTIVE #3

You've lost control, Fortney. Step down, for God's sake.

Rumblings of approval for this suggestion reverberate.

FORTNEY

From this point forward, nobody does anything without checking with me first.

EXECUTIVE #5

That's it; I quit.

He gets up and walks out.

EXECUTIVE #3

That goes for me too.

He exits, boiling. Two other indignant-looking men follow.

EXECUTIVE #6

You're finished, Fortney.

FORTNEY

Fine, quit! I don't care.

He shakes a finger at the remaining group.

FORTNEY

But if you stay, you don't take actions unless you clear them with me. Do you understand?

He heads for the door himself.

FORTNEY
(to Maggie)
I'm going to Laura Baird's office.
Someone needs to remind Kevin who's
who in this business.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - DAY

Fortney walks fast. He rubs his hair.

An older man in a business suit walks toward him. Fortney fixates on the man's face, which is overly flushed.

The man scowls as he passes.

Horns blow in downtown traffic. People argue on the sidewalk across the street.

A boy with same red face as the older man rides a bike toward Fortney. He holds a brick in his hand.

Fortney watches the boy pass him.

The boy rides a little further on the sidewalk and then zips into the street and hurls the brick into the windshield of an oncoming delivery truck.

The truck swerves and crashes into a hotdog vendor on the other side of the street from Fortney, knocking pedestrians off their feet! The boy speeds away on his bike.

Fortney takes a step toward the injured pedestrians, but then spies a bigger problem on his side of the street: a large man slams the head of a SMALLER MAN into an ATM machine.

The slighter man cries out.

Fortney charges and tackles the bigger guy.

As the man rolls away, he reveals his face: deep red with wild eyes. Fortney looks at him in horror. The man gets up and runs.

A POLICEMAN hurries up to Fortney and the smaller man, who has passed out.

FORTNEY
(to policeman)
It's getting worse.

POLICEMAN
Did you get a look at the guy who
did this?

FORTNEY

He was beet red. He looked like he was burning up inside.

POLICEMAN

What?

FORTNEY

What does it mean?

He staggers away.

Crash! Glass flies everywhere from a head-on collision. People scream at each other from inside their cars.

Another truck swerves onto the sidewalk and almost cuts Fortney down. He runs for his life.

EXT. FIRST ONE BANK BUILDING

Fortney dashes into the lobby of the office tower. A branch bank of First One sits next to the tower.

INT. FIRST ONE BANK BUILDING

Fortney rushes for the elevators. An ARMED GUARD stops him.

ARMED GUARD

The tower is closed to the public.

FORTNEY

I'm Warren Fortney, C-E-O of Bank Intercorporatte. One of my employees is here. Or at least he was one of my employees.

ARMED GUARD

Do you have an appointment?

FORTNEY

Yes, yes, I've got an appointment with Kevin Vang. Do you know where I can find him?

The guard leads Fortney to a desk. The guard looks in an online directory.

Fortney sees Kevin enter the lobby through a door thirty yards away. Two other men in dark suits accompany him.

Kevin's deadly serious face is red; his companions' are pink.

FORTNEY

Kevin, what are you doing?

He gives the guard a business card out of his wallet.

FORTNEY

Here's my business card. Kevin!

He runs toward Kevin, who gets in an elevator.

ARMED GUARD

Hey! Stop!

He chases Fortney.

Fortney arrives at the elevator just as the doors are closing. Kevin stares at Fortney with bloodshot eyes.

FORTNEY

No, not you.

The doors close, leaving Fortney behind. The guard grabs Fortney's upper arm.

FORTNEY

Kevin, what's wrong with you!?

EXT. FIRST ONE BANK BUILDING - EXECUTIVE OFFICES FLOOR

Fortney trots past a SECRETARY'S station.

FORTNEY

Laura Baird? Where's Laura Baird?

He bolts through an open executive office door.

LAURA'S SECRETARY

Hey!

INT. LAURA BAIRD'S OFFICE

As Fortney enters, Laura throws papers and files into a leather satchel. Laura's secretary trails Fortney.

FORTNEY

Laura!

LAURA

What are you doing here?

FORTNEY

(to Laura's secretary)

It's all right. I'm Warren Fortney
from Bank Intercorporatte.

(to Laura)

Is Kevin Vang, my former assistant,
working for your international
division? If so, why?

The secretary leaves.

LAURA

Damned if I know. He went to the
board with some eccentric proposal.
Completely over my head.

FORTNEY

Whatever he's doing, he needs to be
stopped.

LAURA

I quit. That's what I'm doing.

She shoves more papers into the satchel.

FORTNEY

Don't quit over this, Laura.
Listen to me.

He moves in close to her.

FORTNEY

Kevin has gone bonkers over some
hardball debt collection scheme
he's dreamed up. It could sink
your bank, mine, and a lot more.

LAURA

It's not my bank anymore.

FORTNEY

Damn it, pull yourself together.
Think about what you're doing.

LAURA

Screw you!

She closes the satchel and heads for the door.

Fortney dives for her legs.

FORTNEY

No, don't go!

He holds onto her. Laura struggles to shake him loose.

LAURA

Let me go!

FORTNEY

Wait, Laura. Listen.

He sugarcoats his voice.

FORTNEY

Wouldn't it be better for your career to fight your board over Kevin? You could beat him.

Laura breaks free, but lingers to lecture.

LAURA

I don't have to take what they did to me. My authority has been compromised, and I won't stand for it.

She moves away from him. Fortney crawls after her.

FORTNEY

But you, Laura. You can figure out a way to work through this, I know it. I would love to have a trusted comrade here at First One to work with on the international situation.

LAURA

Stow it. You're a bigger jerk than your demonic assistant.

She heads for the elevators.

OFFICE HALLWAY

Fortney chases Laura.

FORTNEY

Hold on a minute.

Laura pushes the elevator button and waits.

FORTNEY

If you'll stay on as C-E-O though the Economic Summit, I'll help you with it. That's something you used to care about.

LAURA

The president's debt plan is kaput.

FORTNEY

Don't you see, that's just it.
Every agreement, every economic
norm is in jeopardy.

He holds her shoulders to make her face him square.

FORTNEY

You're mad at your board; Kevin's
mad at me; you're mad at me because
everyone is mad at everyone about
everything, every minute of every
day. Something is wrong with the
whole planet.

LAURA

Why are you bothering me about it?

The elevator doors open. Fortney holds onto Laura.

FORTNEY

Because I need you to stay and help
me save what we can. The entire
economy is at stake here. Our
lives may be at stake.

LAURA

I find that hard to believe.

FORTNEY

A great evil has taken over, and
Kevin is a bad, bad egg. I know
it. Please help me keep an eye on
him until I can figure out what's
going on.

The elevator doors close. Laura draws deep breaths.

FORTNEY

I'm begging you. I need you.

Down the hall, Laura's secretary appears.

LAURA'S SECRETARY

Warren Fortney, your office called.
Something about your daughter
dropping something off at your
house before she leaves town.

FORTNEY

What?

The secretary shrugs and leaves. Fortney recalls the elevator, which opens right up.

FORTNEY

Please think about what I've said.
You're better off in here than out
there, I'm sure of it.

He gets in the elevator.

FORTNEY

I'll come back later and check on
you.

The doors close. Laura stares at them.

EXT. SUBURBAN RETAIL DISTRICT - DAY

Fortney speeds down a fairly clear road. He looks around.
He looks heavenward.

FORTNEY

Okay, I get the message. I was
terrible to everyone; I admit it.
We can stop this now.

He SQUEALS onto a residential street.

FORTNEY

There's no need to keep going.
This isn't doing anyone any good
anymore.

He barrels along.

EXT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE - DAY

As Fortney arrives home, Mindy unloads bags and a couple of
small furniture items out of her car.

Fortney stops and goes to her as she hunches over, rummaging
around in her back seat.

FORTNEY

What's this?

Mindy looks at her father. Her face is pink-red.

FORTNEY

Mindy!

She goes back to rummaging.

MINDY

I'm leaving for good this afternoon, and I can't take this stuff with me.

FORTNEY

Mindy, look at your face. Have you see how red your face is?

She looks in a mirror on her car.

MINDY

Yeah, so what?

FORTNEY

It probably means you shouldn't be making major decisions right now.

MINDY

I have to go.

FORTNEY

That's not the real you talking. Your coldness, your unforgiving side -- they've somehow been magnified. Don't do this.

MINDY

Don't tell me what to do.

FORTNEY

This is the rest of your life we're talking about. Don't throw it away chasing after something if that something isn't going to make you happy.

MINDY

What are you even talking about?

FORTNEY

You have a boyfriend here. You have a father and a mother. You have a place where you've spent your whole life.

MINDY

I have nothing.

With that she finishes the unloading, leaves her things on Fortney's lawn, gets in her car, and drives away.

Fortney watches her go.

EXT. ANOTHER RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - ANOTHER HOUSE - NIGHT

Michelle Lainey cracks her door to find Fortney in his day-worn suit from work. He looks dejected.

MICHELLE

What do you want?

FORTNEY

Please. I've got no where else to turn.

Michelle hesitates. Fortney uses his kindest voice yet.

FORTNEY

I need your help more than I ever have.

Michelle lets him in.

INT. HOUSE

Michelle leads Fortney to the living room.

MICHELLE

What is it now?

FORTNEY

There was something different today. People with red faces. It was like their blood was boiling.

MICHELLE

This is part of your changed world?

Fortney plops down in a chair.

FORTNEY

I know it's hard to believe, but I think the red faces are a kind of warning that these people are going to do terrible things.

MICHELLE

So stay away from them.

FORTNEY

I haven't told you the worst part yet. Two of the people I saw with the faces are my protege at work, and Mindy.

MICHELLE

Our Mindy?

Fortney nods.

FORTNEY

She left town today; did you know that?

MICHELLE

I didn't know it was going to be today.

FORTNEY

She's gone. My former assistant now has a position at a rival bank. Both of them have slipped into some kind of negativity trance.

He looks exasperated.

MICHELLE

Even if these things are happening, why are you so concerned about it?

FORTNEY

Don't you see? This is all my fault. I pushed Kevin and Mindy into this. I taught them not to give a damn about anyone but themselves.

He whisks away a tear.

FORTNEY

I don't know how, and I don't know why, but I think this is all happening because of me. My own personal world had become a microcosm of what's happening now on a larger scale.

MICHELLE

You were a bastard.

FORTNEY

I know; I know. Can't you see that I realize that?

MICHELLE

So you took things out on others, and now you think everyone's taking it out on you?

Fortney nods.

FORTNEY

And there's nothing I can do about it.

He slumps.

Michelle goes over to a window and peers out. She looks at her former husband in his chair of despair.

MICHELLE

Maybe there is something you can do.

Fortney looks up.

MICHELLE

I wasn't going to tell you this, but the other day when you came to my office, you said some things about me that were odd.

FORTNEY

I said that you always put others before yourself. That you were a giving person.

MICHELLE

That's it. When you did that, just for a moment, I kind of understood about everybody being so angry not making any sense.

Fortney flashes eager eyes.

FORTNEY

You did?

MICHELLE

I think I did. I don't remember being the way you said I was, but when I think about it, everyone lashing out at each other so much does seem extreme.

FORTNEY

You really get that?

MICHELLE

Sort of. When you say those other things about me.

FORTNEY

This is wonderful. This is fantastic.

He gets up.

FORTNEY

Why do you think what I said worked on you?

MICHELLE

It made me feel good about myself. I liked the way you said it.

She cracks a slight smile at him. Fortney looks relieved and happy too -- for the first time, really.

EXT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE - DAWN

Silence hangs over the neighborhood.

INT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

WHAAANNCK! WHAAANNCK!

Fortney twitches to life.

INT. BATHROOM

Fortney looks at himself in the mirror. He looks tired.

INT. KITCHEN

Fortney munches a pre-packaged danish while reading the newspaper on his tablet. The destroyed refrigerator lays on its side.

The date on the newspaper is "Friday, June 17." The headline reads, "President Proposes Global Economic Freeze / (subheadline) Emergency Stabilization Plan to be Focus of International Summit Tomorrow."

Fortney studies the electronic front page.

INT. BANK INTERCORPORATE OFFICES - FORTNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Fortney closes the door.

Needleton and Maggie sit in chairs. They look agitated.

FORTNEY
So how many senior managers quit
yesterday?

MAGGIE
Fourteen.

FORTNEY
We're in deep shit.

He paces. Maggie and Needleton's eyes follow him.

FORTNEY
Are any departments reporting?

MAGGIE
Not really.

NEEDLETON
Acquisitions is defunct. Finance
is a nightmare.

FORTNEY
Forget about acquisitions. Forget
about everything else other than
saving the bank.

NEEDLETON
And how do we do that?

FORTNEY
Well, I'm not going to give up.

Needleton stands up to go.

NEEDLETON
This is pointless.

Fortney blocks his exit.

FORTNEY
Needleton, wait. You've always
gained a certain amount of
satisfaction from doing a
successful deal, haven't you?

Needleton tries to step around Fortney.

FORTNEY
Wouldn't you like a chance to
expand on that?

NEEDLETON

So you can call me a jackass as the entire company falls apart?

FORTNEY

I'll admit that my management of you -- and every other department head around here -- hasn't been great.

Needleton rolls his eyes.

FORTNEY

All right, it's been terrible.

Fortney rubs his palms together.

FORTNEY

Needleton, you're actually a very diplomatic man. You've got a way with people, an intuition, that I don't have.

NEEDLETON

Look, Mister Fortney...

FORTNEY

Hear me out. I want you to erase just about everything I've ever said to you. Can you do that?

Needleton shrugs.

FORTNEY

I need you to stay on and help the bank through this difficult time. I need you to help me get things working again.

Needleton stares.

FORTNEY

At least think about it. What I want is to figure out a way you and I, working together, could transfer some of your skills to others at the bank.

Needleton looks like he accepts the request for the moment.

NEEDLETON

Do you want me to go now?

FORTNEY

No, I want you to hear what I have to say to Maggie too. Please, have a seat.

He does. Fortney paces again. Maggie eyes follow him.

FORTNEY

Maggie, you all but run things here. You keep everything in order; everything happening on time. You see the whole picture, most of the time better than I do.

Maggie squints. She looks confused.

FORTNEY

And all I've ever done is bark orders at you.

He stops in front of her.

FORTNEY

When what I should have been doing is thanking you.

MAGGIE

It's because I'm a woman, isn't it? That's why you can't recognize me.

FORTNEY

What?

MAGGIE

You'd never trust me with more responsibility.

FORTNEY

Is that what you think?

MAGGIE

It's true, isn't it?

Fortney shakes his head.

FORTNEY

(to himself)
My God.

Maggie waits.

FORTNEY
(to Maggie)
How come you never said anything
about this before?

Maggie thinks about it.

MAGGIE
You never talked to me before.

Fortney's face shows shame.

FORTNEY
If you'll stay, I promise that,
from now on, I'll appreciate you.
(to both)
I need you both. Or I'm dead.

EXT. CENTURY-OLD, MID-RISE OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Fortney hustles into the traditional structure.

INT. PRIVATE CLUB

Older businessmen and a few women argue and jabber with each other as they wait for a luncheon to begin.

Red faces dot the room. A businessman-of-color even has a deep red-ish face.

Fortney enters and starts looking around.

FORTNEY
(to attendees)
Mayor Richards? Is the mayor here?

Everyone ignores him.

FORTNEY
(to anyone)
I'm looking for Mayor Richards.

As Fortney searches the room, a free-for-all of pushing, shoving, and angry accusations breaks out at a buffet table.

Grown men behave like kindergartners. They grab and spill food all over the place.

Fortney sees the fracas and starts shoving people back from the buffet.

FORTNEY

Fools!

He jerks one guy back by the collar of his jacket.

FORTNEY

Don't you understand this is just making things worse?

He breaks up a scuffling match.

FORTNEY

Listen to me, people! You're never going to get anywhere like this.

His efforts are so aggressive that people stop and listen.

FORTNEY

The concept is called patience.
The operative mechanism is a line.

He starts putting people into a line.

FORTNEY

You stand behind him, and you behind him, and so on. Everybody waits their turn. Got it?

INT. PRIVATE CLUB - LATER

People depart the event. Faces still look sour.

Fortney and MAYOR RICHARDS stand in a corner.

FORTNEY

I'm telling you, Mister Mayor, somebody's got to do something to stop this madness.

MAYOR RICHARDS

I have no idea what in the blazes you're talking about.

FORTNEY

There's a better way to behave than this.

He indicates the meeting that just happened.

FORTNEY

Someone who's a public figure needs to stand up and tell people to stop fighting.

MAYOR RICHARDS

I don't have time for that. The city's coming apart at the seams.

FORTNEY

That's what I'm talking about. I'm talking about a way to deal with these problems from within.

MAYOR RICHARDS

You do it then.

He walks away.

FORTNEY

(to himself)

Damn it.

EXT. FIRST ONE BANK BUILDING - DAY

Fortney approaches the building.

A mob breaks down the door of the First One branch bank next to the office tower! A wave of angry people pour in.

Branch bank employees inside scream. The armed guard from the tower rushes out and fires his gun in the air.

Fortney darts inside the tower.

INT. FIRST ONE BANK BUILDING - EXECUTIVE OFFICES FLOOR

Fortney walks through a completely deserted floor. He comes to Laura Baird's office; her secretary's desk sits empty.

INT. LAURA BAIRD'S OFFICE

Laura sits at her desk, doing nothing.

Fortney enters.

FORTNEY

You didn't quit.

LAURA

I don't know what to do anymore.

Fortney goes to her and holds her shoulders again.

FORTNEY

Laura, listen to me. Listen very carefully.

She stares with uninterested eyes.

FORTNEY

You are hands-down the most level-headed, decent business executive in this city. You care about the people around you. You care about the people your bank serves. You care about people in other countries you'll never even meet. You care about me, even though I'm a jerk to you. You've always reached out to me, and you never ask anything for it. That's who you are -- don't you remember it?

LAURA

I don't know...

Fortney shakes her.

FORTNEY

Think, Laura, think! You're willing to go out of your way to help others.

LAURA

I don't know what you mean.

FORTNEY

I look up to you. I pretend that I don't, but I do. I look up to you because you have a selfless quality that goes beyond the business of banking. You're a beacon of hope in the crappy grind of life.

He gives her a second to let this sink in.

FORTNEY

Does it make sense that out-of-control hatred and rage should take down our city? Doesn't that violate the ethic you've always had? The principles I hope you still have?

LAURA

Well, maybe, yes.

FORTNEY

Thank God!

He smiles, and Laura does too.

FORTNEY

Do you know anything more about Kevin?

LAURA

He wants to stop the financial transactions freeze the president's seeking.

FORTNEY

The new proposal for the Economic Summit tomorrow?

LAURA

Your boy is out to kill it.

FORTNEY

How?

LAURA

He's got a dozen or so international banks with him now. It's getting to be like some kind of alternative world government based on financial leverage.

FORTNEY

Kevin is a little monster only four days old. He is not going to be able to convince any head of state to oppose the freeze by tomorrow.

LAURA

Persuasion isn't his plan, I don't think.

FORTNEY

What then?

LAURA

Assassination.

FORTNEY

Who?

LAURA

I think you know.

FORTNEY

The president? That's insane.
Killing the president would just
make things worse for everyone.

LAURA

You know the little monster better
than anyone.

Fortney walks around the room in deep fret.

FORTNEY

If he's expanding on the lessons I
taught him, he probably would be
willing to destroy himself just to
get his way in the short run. What
a fool I've been.

An EXPLOSION echoes outside the building. Loud CRIES and
urgent HOLLERING reverberate.

Fortney looks like he's going to be sick.

FORTNEY

We've got to stop Kevin. We have
to warn the president.

LAURA

Why?

FORTNEY

Because you care. The Laura I
remember cares.

He starts searching through her desk drawers.

FORTNEY

Do you have any paper?

She finds some personalized stationary. Fortney finds a pen.

FORTNEY

I'm going to write down all the
things I said about you, and I want
you to take it home and study it.

Laura looks willing.

FORTNEY

Then I want you to meet me at the
Summit tomorrow. Since it's at the
university, my ex-wife can help us
get to the president's people.

He counts off four sheets of stationary.

EXT. BANK INTERCORPORATE BUILDING - NIGHT

A gaping hole defines the street-level of the building.

Broken glass and twisted metal border the opening. Water flows from a ruptured pipe, and sparks from a live wire rain down on the lobby floor.

A large truck sits backed up to the outside of the hole. A pile of sandbags covers part of the outer wall breach.

Fortney, covered with dirt and sweat, unloads sandbags in his suit pants and work shirt. On the street, sirens wail.

Michelle negotiates sidewalk debris and approaches the bank.

MICHELLE

Warren!

Fortney stops unloading.

Michelle presents him with two colored sets of "World Economic Summit" credentials.

MICHELLE

Here are the passes. Go to the gate on the south side of campus; I'll meet you there.

FORTNEY

Let me get a few more of these out, and then I've got to set up a security camera on the roof. Will you help me?

MICHELLE

All right.

Fortney unloads another bag.

MICHELLE

You're really devoted to this place.

FORTNEY

It's all I've got left.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR

Fortney and Michelle ride up. Fortney holds a surveillance camera, a clamp, and some tools.

FORTNEY
So you've decided I'm different
from everyone else?

MICHELLE
You are different. I thought about
you after you left last night.

FORTNEY
I don't have to fly off the handle
at every little thing.

MICHELLE
I understand that much better now.

FORTNEY
When I warn the president about
Kevin, we should explain to him
what we've figured out. That
people can be changed.

The elevator stops.

MICHELLE
Don't you think it'll sound a
little far-fetched?

They exit to the outside.

EXT. BANK INTERCORPORATE BUILDING - ROOF

FORTNEY
Everyone thinks I'm crazy no matter
what reality I'm living in. I'm
used to it.

Michelle laughs.

MICHELLE
I've never heard you admit that
before.

They walk to the edge of the roof.

Open fires, smoke, flashing police/emergency lights, and
massive traffic jams dot the city below them.

FORTNEY

If it weren't so tragic, it would actually be kind of pretty.

He works to attach the camera to the edge of the roof.

As Michelle holds the base of the camera, their hands touch.

Fortney looks at her for a moment, then concentrates again on attaching the clamp and camera.

FORTNEY

It's been nice to get to know you again. I didn't think I'd ever get the chance.

The comment seems to trigger something in Michelle.

MICHELLE

Oh, I'm remembering now. You used to be like this.

FORTNEY

You must have a good memory, then, because even I can hardly remember us being on good terms.

MICHELLE

It was the old you. The old, old you. Before you stopped caring about me.

Fortney stops working.

MICHELLE

You used to make me feel good about myself all the time.

Fortney turns on the camera.

FORTNEY

At the end of things between us, I was certainly angry at you. Terribly angry. But you were leaving me. You were giving up on us, and there was nothing I could do about it.

MICHELLE

They way I remember it, I never wanted to leave...

She thinks to recapture the details. Fortney watches her.

MICHELLE

I remember you lashing out at me.
I remember you lashing out before I
knew what to do. You crushed me.
You crushed the part of me that
knew how to care about you. But I
never wanted to leave.

Fortney looks shaken.

He turns and looks out at the reeling city again.

FORTNEY

Boy, I really screwed things up,
didn't I?

Michelle moves closer to him.

FORTNEY

We'd better get some sleep.

He checks his watch.

FORTNEY

Tomorrow's almost here.

INT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

WHAAANNCK! WHAAA... Click!

Fortney jumps up faster than he's ever done before.

He hurries to get ready.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

A temporary chain link fence creates a security perimeter at
the edge of campus. Police stand guard inside the fence.

Demonstrators line the outside of the fence. Signs and
banners read: "FREEZE NOW!;" "Stop Russia before it's too
late;" "PROTECT U.S. INVESTMENTS ABROAD;" "Cancel All Debt;"
and "The End is Near."

Protesters make lots of angry noise.

EXT. CONFERENCE SECURITY ENTRANCE GATE

A sign reads, "Economic Summit CONTROLLED ENTRANCE /
Conferees and Press Only."

Fortney and Laura push their way through protesters and credentialed guests waiting in line. Michelle's passes hang around their necks.

GUNSHOTS echo from down the perimeter fence. The crowd reacts, and screams sound in the distance.

Uniformed officers and plainclothes security agents take off running toward the gunshots.

Numerous metal detectors mark the gate's entrance. Fortney and Laura snake their way to a SECURITY POLICE OFFICER.

FORTNEY

We need to talk to the Secret Service right away.

SECURITY POLICE OFFICER

What's the problem?

FORTNEY

The president's life is in danger.

SECURITY POLICE OFFICER

Tell me something I don't know.

FORTNEY

This is from someone who has access to the conference. He's probably inside already.

The officer motions to a SECRET SERVICE AGENT. The agent comes up, looking annoyed.

SECURITY POLICE OFFICER

These people say there's someone inside who's going to kill the president.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #1

Not possible.

FORTNEY

He's a banker. He's got big-time connections with a lot of people here.

LAURA

You should at least do something to increase the security around the president.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #1
Who do you think you're talking to?
What do you think we're doing here?

LAURA
We just thought we should warn
somebody.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #1
Everything that can be done is
being done.

Another Secret Service agent pulls the first one away.

FORTNEY
(to Laura)
Remember, fighting anger with any
level of anger won't work.

He looks at the metal detector lines.

FORTNEY
If we get to the president, we'd
better try to get across to him
what we've learned over the past
few days before we launch into
Kevin.

He leads Laura to the back of a line.

FORTNEY
Let's get in and find Michelle.

INT. CLASSROOM BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Fortney and Laura wait with three new/different Secret
Service agents.

After a moment, several aides come out of a classroom,
followed by Michelle. She motions for Fortney and Laura to
come in. She looks worried.

MICHELLE
Okay. He's more like us, sort of.
But things have changed.

CLASSROOM

Inside, by the windows, two more Secret Service agents stand
watch over the PRESIDENT of the United States, a stoic man.

FORTNEY
Mister President.

PRESIDENT
Professor Lainey told me who you
are.

He speaks in a neutral tone, neither angry nor sympathetic.

PRESIDENT
I'm afraid your advice on stopping
hostilities at a personal level is
a day late and a dollar short.

LAURA
What's wrong?

PRESIDENT
My economic instruments freeze is
about to be vetoed by any number of
the E-U members.

FORTNEY
Why?

PRESIDENT
They want immediate collection on
state-backed loans with an
inflation trigger.

FORTNEY
But that won't solve anybody's
problems. Not now.

The president looks forlorn.

PRESIDENT
I don't know...

MICHELLE
Can't you work around this?

PRESIDENT
I don't see any way.

He turns and looks out a window. The others watch him. The
president wears the face of death.

PRESIDENT
I'm afraid the world as we know it
is about to come to an end.

He turns again and walks out of the room. The two Secret
Service agents follow.

Fortney, Laura, and Michelle look at each other.

MICHELLE
That's it, then.

LAURA
I knew this was a waste of time.

Fortney looks alarmed by Laura's renewed negativity.

LAURA
I knew a few words of advice
wouldn't stop a meltdown.

MICHELLE
Shut up!

FORTNEY
Wait. Hold on.

He goes to the teacher's desk at the front of the classroom.

FORTNEY
I have an idea.

He finds pad of paper and a pen.

FORTNEY
Come on.

He takes off after the president.

EXT. CLASSROOM BUILDING - FRONT STEPS

The president confers with staff.

As they all start to head away from the building, Fortney bursts out the front door.

FORTNEY
Mister President, wait!

The president and his entourage turn. Laura and Michelle follow Fortney.

FORTNEY
Would twenty billion in loans get
you anywhere?

PRESIDENT
What?

FORTNEY

You can put it anywhere in the world you want. Any country.

Fortney sits on a step and starts writing on the pad.

PRESIDENT

What are you talking about?

FORTNEY

It'll take a while for my bank to pull together that much cash, and who knows what it'll be worth by then, but you can have the obligation right now, if you want it.

PRESIDENT

You don't have that much personal authority, do you? Don't you have directors and stockholders to answer to?

FORTNEY

I'll lose my job tomorrow, and my career, but if I sign the note today, it'll be binding.

The president furrows his brow.

PRESIDENT

Why would you do that to yourself?

Fortney stops writing.

FORTNEY

What good is your position in life if your life isn't worth living?

PRESIDENT

Does that make sense?

FORTNEY

It does if you don't live in a world of anger.

Michelle puts her hands on Fortney's shoulders.

Laura looks at Fortney's document.

LAURA

(to the president)

How about another fifteen billion on top of his twenty?

PRESIDENT
You would do that?

Laura nods.

She sits next to Fortney and takes two of his sheets of paper. She looks at the Secret Service.

LAURA
Anyone have a pen?

They find one, plus a folder of materials to write on.

PRESIDENT
Let me see what I can do with this.
(to a staffer)
Gavin, run get Bill.

He leans in to watch what Fortney and Laura are doing.

FORTNEY
(to the president)
There's one more thing. Have you heard about the banks that oppose the freeze?

PRESIDENT
Yes?

FORTNEY
You need to do a new security check of every person inside the conference. Right away.

PRESIDENT
Why?

EXT. CENTRAL CAMPUS GROUNDS

Two rows of chairs sit on a temporary stage in front of twenty rows of audience seats on a lawn.

On the stage, two dozen heads of state huddle with translators and Economic Summit officials.

A "World Economic Summit" banner hangs behind the stage.

Interpreters' headphones with connecting wires litter the stage, most of them sitting unused. Everyone looks anxious.

Other political figures, VIP guests, and media members fill the audience chairs. TV cameras point at the stage.

Some in the audience stand, debating.

INT. NEARBY ACADEMIC BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR

Kevin peers out a window at the conference stage.

Kevin's face is red, and he raises a trembling arm to study his watch.

EXT. CENTRAL CAMPUS GROUNDS

Two dozen Secret Service agents hustle up to the crowd.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #3
May I have your attention, please!

Agents circle the audience.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #3
Everyone needs to go through the
scanners again. Line up and come
this way.

Protests abound.

With more Secret Service agents, the president, Fortney, Laura, and Michelle arrive. The president holds Fortney and Laura's drafted documents.

The president ascends the stage; Fortney, Laura, and Michelle wait beside it.

The president gathers the heads of state together.

PRESIDENT
We've got an emergency economic
freeze on the agenda in one hour.

He holds up the documents.

PRESIDENT
I have something new. An act I
want everyone to know about. Will
you all come with me while we do
the security re-check?

Translations ensue as he leads the heads of state to a set of back stairs from the stage.

The encircling Secret Service agents peel the audience away in the opposite direction.

But one man in the audience doesn't budge -- a random man with a red face. He pulls out a gun with a silencer on it.

PING! On stage, a bullet whizzes past the president and hits a chair right beside him.

The president sees the shooter.

PRESIDENT
Down! Get down!

Most on the stage stoop or hit the deck. Members of the now-moved audience scream and run.

PING! Another bullet hits near the president.

Heads of state and conference officials run down both the back stairs and some side stairs to the stage.

Whomp! The would-be assassin is leveled by a Secret Service agent before he can get off another shot.

The president makes it down the back side of the platform.

But another gunman, also with a red face, sneaks out from underneath the stage, unseen for the moment. He also holds a gun with a silencer on it, and he keeps it somewhat hidden.

The president flees with other heads of state. The second gunman runs to blend in with them.

The gunman moves toward the president. When he has an open angle, he raises his gun. He steadies it...

Whomp! Another Secret Service agent takes him out.

Other agents hurry the heads of state along.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #4
Get inside! Inside!

They run towards one of the larger academic buildings.

The coast looks clear...

... But then comes Kevin.

From out of the shadows, near the president's escape route, Kevin steps forward. He looks intense.

Kevin points a gun with a silencer on it at the president.

Pffwmp! Kevin downs a Secret Service agent next to the president. The president veers away.

Fortney runs with the heads of state delegation. He sees Kevin taking aim again.

FORTNEY

Kevin, no!

Kevin steadies his gun with both hands.

He's got a clear shot at the president...

Wham! Fortney knocks Kevin off his feet.

Fortney gropes for the gun in Kevin's hand. He and Kevin struggle and turn over on the grass.

Pffwmp! Pffwmp! A bullet pierces Fortney's thigh.

FORTNEY

Aaugh!

Fortney grabs Kevin's hand holding the gun. He pounds it on the ground.

Pffwmp! Another bullet clips Fortney's shoulder.

Fortney pounds Kevin's hand even harder, and the gun comes free. Fortney pins Kevin on his back.

Kevin squirms with rage, but Fortney holds him down.

FORTNEY

I'm so sorry what I did to you.

Secret service agents arrive to assist. They clamp down on Kevin's arms and legs.

FORTNEY

I'm so sorry.

EXT. CENTRAL CAMPUS GROUNDS - LATER

EMS workers load Fortney onto an ambulance's stretcher. Bandages bind his wounds.

Leftover conference attendees chatter, and cameras flash and shoot footage as Fortney is rolled to the ambulance.

Michelle walks by Fortney's side.

MICHELLE

I'm here. I'm coming with you.

(to an EMS worker)

I'm his wife.

At the ambulance, Michelle climbs in with Fortney.

Laura runs up.

LAURA
(to Fortney)
Everyone's talking about what you
did. It's all over the news.

Fortney manages a smile.

LAURA
I think this could be a
breakthrough.

FORTNEY
I couldn't have done it without
you.

The attendants close the ambulance doors; Laura backs off.

The vehicle pulls out. The leftover crowd and media,
buzzing, watch it leave.

INT. AMBULANCE (MOVING) - DAY

Michelle looks at Fortney, concerned. She holds his hand.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Michelle stands up in a noisy, crowded, contentious waiting
area as a nurse brings Fortney out in a wheelchair.

Other patients waiting to be seen look like they have serious
injuries and conditions.

But Fortney looks pretty good. New bandages wrap his
shoulder and thigh.

FORTNEY
(to Michelle)
Nothing too bad. I'll be good as
new in a month.

A DOCTOR appears.

DOCTOR
Okay, Mister Fortney, I can confirm
that we do not have a bed. There's
just nothing free.

FORTNEY

That's fine. I want to go home
anyway.

MICHELLE

I went and got my car.

She takes control of the wheelchair.

EXT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Michelle helps Fortney out of her car. Fortney carries a
small retail store bag.

Fortney walks with a limp to the front doorstep. He seems
determined to make it without faltering.

At the doorstep, he turns and holds Michelle with his good
arm. Their eyes lock.

MICHELLE

I'm so proud of you.

Their lips move together, and Fortney kisses her with
prolonged feeling.

Michelle smiles with contentment.

FORTNEY

I want you to come with me to work
on Mindy. To save her from
whatever's got a hold on her.

MICHELLE

There's nothing I'd like to do
more.

She kisses him again, collapsing into the uninjured side of
his chest.

After the kiss, she looks at his bandages.

MICHELLE

Are you sure you're going to be all
right?

Fortney holds her.

FORTNEY

I've never been better.

After another moment, Fortney lets Michelle go, and then heads into the house. Michelle watches him until the front door closes.

INT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

In pajama's, Fortney unplugs his harsh-sounding alarm clock and drops it in a wastebasket. He takes a sleek, ultra-modern-looking alarm clock out of the retail bag he was carrying earlier.

He plugs it in and tests the alarm.

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP. BEEP-BEEP-BEEP. It almost sounds like it would be pleasant to wake up to.

Into bed and off with the light; thus ends one hell of a day.

EXT. UPPER CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

Serenity hangs over an impressive street as songs birds CHIRP in competition.

INT. FORTNEY'S HOUSE

Nice furnishings, order, and cleanliness rule.

BEDROOM

Fortney sleeps alone in his bed.

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP. BEEP-BEEP-BEEP. Fortney gets up and clicks off the new alarm.

He starts for the bathroom. He feels his shoulder. He stops in his tracks.

Fortney darts for the bathroom mirror.

BATHROOM

He rips open his pajama shirt. There's no shoulder wound.

Fortney feels his thigh. No wound there either.

BEDROOM

He rushes to the bedroom window and looks out. Everything looks normal.

INT. KITCHEN

Fortney holds a tablet computer and stares at the refrigerator. It sits upright in its proper place.

He pulls up the daily newspaper on the tablet.

The date on the edition is "Monday, June 13."

The headline reads: "Leader's Prepare for Weekend's International Economic Summit."

Fortney turns on the kitchen TV. A morning news show progresses. A tag at the bottom of the screen gives the date and time: "Monday, June 13 / 6:57 AM."

Fortney stares at the screen.

Tapping noises outside draw him out the back door.

EXT. BACK YARD

Richard raps on a sprinkler. Fortney still looks stunned.

FORTNEY

Richard, is today Monday, June 13?

Richard hustles toward his boss. He seems like a nice man.

RICHARD

June 13? I think that's right.

FORTNEY

But it's Monday, right? And as far as you can remember, yesterday was Sunday, June 12?

RICHARD

Yesterday was Sunday. Funny how it works that way.

Fortney nods and turns to go back inside.

RICHARD

I'll should find out tomorrow how much longer the contractors are going to take on the patio.

FORTNEY
Oh, yes. Very good.

Fortney turns away again, but then adds a second thought.

FORTNEY
Let me know what you think of the
job they're doing. I'd value your
opinion. You're... You're doing a
great job out here.

Richard beams.

RICHARD
Thank you, sir.

INT. KITCHEN

Fortney picks up the tablet again and stares at the newspaper
front page.

He puts it down and heads back to the bedroom.

BEDROOM

By bed sits the new alarm clock.

Fortney picks it up and examines it. He triggers the alarm.

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP. BEEP-BEEP-BEEP.

He peers in the wastebasket. The old clock rests at the
bottom.

So it did happen. Or did it?

INT. STUDY

Fortney takes down the box on the top shelf.

He pulls out the picture of himself and Michelle and looks at
it. He wipes dust off the picture's glass.

EXT. BANK INTERCORPORATE BUILDING - PARKING GARAGE

Fortney pulls in.

INT. BANK INTERCORPORATE OFFICES - OUTSIDE FORTNEY'S OFFICE

MAGGIE stands up in alert when she sees Fortney coming.

MAGGIE

Warren, there's a problem. Larry Needleton was supposed to run asset numbers with Heartland National this morning, but now they're saying they're "uncomfortable" with the structure of the merger.

FORTNEY

They're probably "uncomfortable" with the prospect of having to work with me.

Maggie gawks at him.

FORTNEY

Who wouldn't be?

MAGGIE

Sir?

FORTNEY

I should go visit them and show them I don't have to be such a terrible guy, don't you think?

MAGGIE

Uh, well...

FORTNEY

Set it up, if you can. And you can even tell them what I'm up to. Might as well be honest about it.

Maggie looks confused.

Fortney heads into his office. Maggie follows.

FORTNEY'S OFFICE

FORTNEY

In the meantime, would you help me find both Mister Needleton and Kevin? And call my ex-wife's attorney and see if we could do a meeting there this afternoon. Roy...

He thinks about it.

FORTNEY

Roy, who I'm sure is all right -- find out if that's the case, will you? -- Roy and I will go to them.

MAGGIE

Okay.

She scoots away.

INT. FORTNEY'S OFFICE - LATER

All seated, Fortney chats with Needleton and Kevin.

FORTNEY

So I want both of you to feel you have more latitude in your decision-making. At this point, your abilities in many areas are higher than mine. So you should teach me some things for a while.

NEEDLETON

Thank you.

KEVIN

Yes, thank you.

Needleton rises to leave, and Kevin starts to follow him.

FORTNEY

Kevin, if you'd stay for a moment, there's something else I'd like to go over with you.

Needleton departs. Fortney retakes his seat.

FORTNEY

You've been my protege here for the last several years, and I know I've taught you how to be a good banker.

Kevin nods.

FORTNEY

But we're also human. That part I've left out.

KEVIN

Sir?

FORTNEY

You know, I've groused about Laura Baird over at First One too much, haven't I? That kind of thing is unhealthy. Let's do a one-eighty and help her out.

KEVIN

Laura?

FORTNEY

She's a real leader outside of just dollars and cents, and you and I could use of as much of that as possible if we're going to be the best executives we can be.

KEVIN

Okay...?

FORTNEY

Sign us on to the president's debt plan, and I want you to take the lead on this at the Economic Summit. I want you to feel what it's like to get involved with something like that.

KEVIN

You're sure this is what you want?

Fortney stands up to end the meeting.

FORTNEY

One hundred percent.

He puts a reassuring hand on Kevin's shoulder.

FORTNEY

You're like the son I never had. I want to make sure you understand there's another side to the business world out there. A decent side.

Kevin seems pleased.

Maggie opens the office door.

MAGGIE

(to Fortney)

You'd better hurry, or you won't make your ten-thirty. Your lawyer's meeting you there.

Fortney gets going.

FORTNEY

(to Kevin)

Oh, and tell Laura I'm sorry for being such a grump. Tell her I'll come visit her later.

Maggie and Kevin eye each other. What in the world is going on with him today?

EXT. MICHELLE'S ATTORNEY'S LAW OFFICES - DAY

Fortney hurries in.

INT. LAW FIRM - MEETING ROOM

Michelle and her attorney sit across a table from Roy. Both lawyers have files and legal pads out.

Fortney arrives.

MICHELLE'S ATTORNEY

This is about the rest of the structured settlement, isn't it?

Fortney sits down.

FORTNEY

(to Michelle)

Hi.

(to Michelle's attorney)

As a matter of fact, it is.

MICHELLE'S ATTORNEY

You agreed to split all capital earnings fifty-fifty during the negotiated period.

FORTNEY

I know what I agreed to, but I want to change it.

(to Michelle)

I want to change it to give you everything in the remainder of the settlement right now. Every penny. And I won't take "no" for an answer.

MICHELLE

Why?

FORTNEY

Because you deserve it. You put up with more shoddy treatment that anyone should ever have to.

Michelle eyes open wider.

FORTNEY

And it was all my fault. Every last bit of it. You're the most wonderful person I've ever met in my entire life, and all I can do at this point is ask you to forgive me for the way I've acted.

Michelle looks to her attorney and Roy. Then to Fortney. Except for breathing, you could hear a pin drop.

MICHELLE

Who are you?

FORTNEY

Our daughter has a big decision coming up on her residency. If you'd be willing to come over for dinner tomorrow night, I'd like to remind her that she has a family in town who cares about her very much.

Michelle looks like she can't believe what she's hearing.

MICHELLE

Sure.

Roy smiles and shakes his head in approving disbelief.

INT. FORTNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Fortney turns off his computer, straightens the items on his desk a little, and gathers himself to head home.

INT. OUTSIDE FORTNEY'S OFFICE

As Fortney looks at his watch and heads for the elevators, Maggie emerges, running after him with a pad and pen.

MAGGIE

Is there anything else you wanted from me?

FORTNEY

Oh, there you are. Yes.

Maggie readies herself to take notes.

FORTNEY

Give yourself a one hundred thousand dollar raise, change your title to "Executive Operations Manager," hire someone to replace you as my secretary, and schedule time for us to go over the responsibilities of your new job.

Maggie drops the pad.

FORTNEY

Congratulations. You've certainly earned it.

He smiles and hits the trail. Maggie looks flabbergasted.

EXT. MINDY'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Fortney waits for and takes a legal parking space from a departing car this time.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA

As Fortney enters, Mindy talks to a fellow med student, the young man.

MINDY

I'm not going backwards. I won't do a residency in a hospital that's not a top ten. And it has to be surgery.

Fortney puts a hand on Mindy's back.

FORTNEY

May I talk to you for a minute?

MINDY

What is it?

Fortney pulls her to a side of the room, away from everyone. He holds her on her shoulders.

FORTNEY

I love you.

MINDY

What?

FORTNEY

I love you more than anything in the world. I don't remember the last time I told you that.

Mindy looks puzzled.

FORTNEY

Don't do what I did with my life.

Mindy looks to the med school dean they need to talk to. She looks like she doesn't know what to do or say.

EXT. HOSPITAL

Fortney and Mindy linger outside his car.

FORTNEY

So you have to bring Chad to dinner. I want to embarrass myself with my cooking in front of as many people as possible.

Mindy laughs.

MINDY

Okay; okay. I said I would.

Fortney kisses her on the head.

FORTNEY

Whatever you decide to do, I just want you to know that I think the world of you.

Mindy grins.

Fortney turns to get in his car, and Mindy starts to walk away. But then she stops. She turns around.

MINDY

Daddy!

She goes back to Fortney and lunges at him, throwing her arms around his neck.

Tears leak down Mindy's face. Fortney squeezes her.

MINDY

Thank you, daddy.

After a few moments, she releases her father. Her face is relaxed and happy.

Fortney gets into and starts his car.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD - NIGHT

Fortney passes a wooded area on his way home. From his car window, he notices a small hill that looks easy to climb.

He stops on the shoulder of the road, and then starts to ascend the hill on foot. Crickets CHIRP.

AT THE TOP OF THE HILL

Fortney looks around. He stands still.

FORTNEY

I don't know what I did to deserve
the treatment I just got.

He scans the woods surrounding the rise.

FORTNEY

But I do have something to say
about it.

He looks at the stars, and then to city lights at the horizon. He looks content.

FORTNEY

Thank you.

He turns and heads back down the hill.

FADE OUT:

THE END