

The Station  
by  
Kevin Napier

12 December 2008

Half-hour Version

Kevin Napier  
244 Fifth Avenue #K204  
New York, NY 10001  
(646)461-6084  
Kevinnap@gmail.com

©2008 Kevin Napier

COLD OPEN

EXT. MARKET, ALTAMARA CITY, ALTAMARA - DAY

ERIC QUILL (20s, American, clean cut) moves through a crowded Central American market. A title wipes across the screen: "Altamara City - Central America."

He spots an INFORMANT. They make a BRUSH DROP (exchanging their bags as they pass) and continue on.

EXT. OCEANA IMPORT/EXPORT - TEN MINUTES LATER

Eric walks up the steps to the run-down offices of Oceana Import-Export, located in an old Colonial building.

INT. OCEANA IMPORT/EXPORT OFFICES - SAME TIME

Ceiling fans rattle as Eric urgently enters the dingy office. SHERMAN (50s, permanently sweaty and put upon) looks up from his old PC.

SHERMAN

You're sure amped up. Did you get hot sauce on your balls again?

ERIC

(holds up bag)  
Primo intelligence. I'm finally hitting my stride. What's going on here?

SHERMAN

High drama. A cow climbed up the stairs onto the roof.

Eric walks to a door, slides his ID card through a hidden electronic reader and pulls it open. He motions inside.

ERIC

Don't worry. There'll be an opening in here soon.

SHERMAN

No, no. I don't belong in the plantation house. I'm happy here in the fields, singing my spirituals.

Eric enters the closet as we hear Sherman's voice trail off.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

*Swing low...sweet chariot...*

INT. THE STATION - SAME TIME

Eric enters a sleek command center built into an old hotel (The Station). Above the RECEPTIONIST hangs a seal that reads: CIA, ALTAMARA STATION: 50 Years of Spreading Freedom.

He moves down a hallway as MIA (20s, pretty, no-bullshit), comes the other way. He smiles and raises the bag.

ERIC

Last week the rebel leadership had a secret meeting. They made a video...and I got it.

He pulls out a VHS tape out of the bag. He's annoyed.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Who still uses VHS? Do we even have a player?

MIA

In the small conference room.

A group gathered around a cubicle bursts into LAUGHTER.

MIA (CONT'D)

(off Eric's reaction)

Larry's showing clips from his "best of surveillance" compilation.

(glances over)

Oh, "kitten in the bordello" -- I love this one. So cute.

She rushes to the cubicle as Eric walks down to the empty conference room. As he's about to enter a voice calls out.

STAN (O.S.)

Where do you think you're going?

STAN (nerdy, intense) rises from his desk and rushes over.

STAN (CONT'D)

Does *anyone* read my memos?! All conference rooms must be signed out with me. Otherwise, we have *chaos*.

Stan pulls the door closed and locks it.

ERIC

But no one's in there --

STAN

Ted reserved it from 1 'til 2:30.

Eric looks over to an office marked "Ted Gannon, Head of Station". Through the glass TED (60s, gruff) leans back, phone at his ear, blowing a ping-pong ball above his mouth.

ERIC

Can't we *assume* he'll be busy for --

STAN

In espionage one doesn't *assume*.  
Effective station procedures are  
the foundation on which America's  
intelligence successes are built.

Stan settles back into his desk.

STAN (CONT'D)

But I won't take your shoddiness  
personally since you're the "new  
guy." You don't know any better.  
(smiles condescendingly)  
I mean one doesn't blame the infant  
for the soiled diapers.

He turns back to his work.

MIA (O.S.)

Who's making copies of their  
memoirs on the company Xerox!?

Stan races to investigate. Eric hears Mia WHISTLE from the conference room. She's picked the lock and motions him over.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FIVE MINUTES LATER

We see grainy video of REBELS in fatigues, ammo belts and Castro beards playing the plastic instruments of "Rock Band."

REBELS

(heavy Hispanic accents)  
*Anyway you want it! That's the way  
you need it! Anyway you want it!*

Eric watches stone faced, while Mia bounces with the music.

ERIC

I paid eight hundred dollars out of  
pocket for this.

Suddenly Stan bursts in with fury in his eyes.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Stan! It was  
potentially actionable intel - I  
couldn't wait. *Top priority.*

Stan glances to the TV as the rebels enter the guitar solo portion of the song. He turns and stares daggers at Eric.

INT. OCEANA IMPORT/EXPORT OFFICES - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Eric, now deflated, emerges into the run-down Oceana offices.

SHERMAN

You look like crap. I feel better.

ERIC

This is a dead-end post, isn't it?

Sherman doesn't answer, just starts singing.

SHERMAN

*Swing low...sweet chariot.*

Eric steps up to the window and stares out wistfully.

ERIC

A buddy from my training class got placed in the Kabul station. Real enemies, no budget oversight, tea every afternoon and free kabobs on Fridays. Plus it's on the career fast track. And me? I'm stuck --

Suddenly, GUN SHOTS ring out. Eric's eyes widen with adrenaline as he draws his .45 from his shoulder holster.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Rebel attack!

Then, an agonized "MOO" fills the air. A beat later, a huge COW plummets past the outside window. It lands with a CRASH on the street below. Nonplussed, Sherman looks up at Eric.

SHERMAN

They can't walk down stairs. What else can you do?

A disappointed Eric re-holsters his gun. He looks out the window to see that the cow has landed on the back of a black hearse, its four hooves pointed straight up at the sky.

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES.

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. OCEANA IMPORT/EXPORT OFFICES - DAY

We push in on the offices of OCEANA Import/Export.

TED (O.S.)

People, our days as the red-headed step child of the Agency are over. Langley has finally taken an interest in the great nation of Altamara and an extraordinary mission lays ahead of us.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

Ted addresses the station (Mia, Larry, Stan, and others).

TED

We've been commanded to give this country the President it needs.

(beat, smiles)

For most of you, this will be your first election op. Trust me, they're a helluva lot of fun. We did a ton of these babies back in the 70s.

(laughs at a memory)

I remember one time we ended up on a cigarette boat, off Tierra del Fuego, with a dead Argentine opposition leader. And Kenny Wheaton...you guys ever work with Kenny? He's a real hell-raiser. Anyways, he takes a can of kerosene and a fishing net and --

Ted notices the room is watching him blank faced.

TED (CONT'D)

Ask me about it over drinks.

(motions to the back)

Start it up.

A title fades up on a projection screen: OPERATION: FANTASTIC. Antonio pipes in.

ANTONIO

Operation Fantastic? Are we putting on a musical?

TED

Langley likes op names to reflect positivity and optimism.

MIA

So I guess "Operation: Rig the Election" is out.

Stan raises his hand.

STAN

We're *rigging* the election? I thought the agency didn't do stuff like that anymore. I don't know that I'm comfortable with --

Suddenly, Ted launches at Stan and yanks him from the chair.

TED

Man up, Stan! Man up!

Ted swings his hand down and grabs Stan's balls.

STAN

Please don't.

TED

These are marshmallows. You hear me? Marshmallows!

He releases Stan then turns to the group.

TED (CONT'D)

Let me be clear: Operation Fantastic demands iron balls.

(beat)

We're going "old fashioned" on this one. That *might* mean buying a few people's votes or it might mean yanking out a dissenter's tongue just to set an example. So if that's...

(quotes with fingers)

"outside your comfort zone" or "not where you're at" get the hell out.

His glare scans the room. Three people start to get up.

TED (CONT'D)

Sit down!

Everyone sinks back in their seats.

TED (CONT'D)

Good. We're all in this together.

He then notices an empty seat near the back.

TED (CONT'D)  
Where the hell is Eric?

We push in on Stan, with a slight smirk.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. THE STATION - DAY EARLIER

Stan hums Vader's Theme from Star Wars while clicking through an email account that reads "'Eric Quill" <EricQ@cia.gov>". We see that he's deleting unread emails: "From: Ted, Subject: MANDATORY MEETING", "From: Mom, Subject: I'm in Remission!!!"

BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

STAN  
Guess he just blew it off.  
(shakes his head)  
Some people.

EXT. LA VOZ DEL PUEBLO BUILDING - DAY

We push in on the "La Voz" building, with a mural of a reporter typing as flames emanate from the typewriter instead of paper. The flames chase a Fat Cat (top hat, cigar) and Uncle Sam running away hand in hand. We hear the out of breath voice of VERONICA (20s, Altamara local, earnest).

VERONICA (O.S.)  
U.S. companies dump phenol, cyanide  
...ammonia in the Delgado River.

INT. VERONICA'S OFFICE, LA VOZ BUILDING - SAME TIME

Veronica, clothed but with skirt pushed up, rides Eric on top of her desk. His seersucker pants sit around his ankles. Various anti-American posters and murals fill the office.

VERONICA  
We're...demanding...they...clean  
up...their waste.

Her voice gets more emphatic as she reaches climax.

VERONICA (CONT'D)  
It...is...a...moral...imperative!

She collapses on top him. He affectionately strokes her hair.

ERIC  
God, I love when you're indignant.



VERONICA

(out of breath)

How can anyone *not* be? I'm working on an article right now about how the CIA --

ERIC

The CIA? In this country? No.

VERONICA

(with fire in her eyes)

Yes. Stop being so naive, Eric. So typically American -- in your little office bubble eating tuna sandwiches and overseeing coffee and pottery exports while the puppet masters pull the strings and laugh at our ignorance.

ERIC

How do you know about the tuna?

(beat)

My breath, right? God, no matter how much you brush or floss, tuna just won't --

His cell phone RINGS. He glances at the number, rolls his eyes, and answers it.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I can't talk right -- What?... When?...Now? Why the hell didn't I ever hear about this?!

He hangs up and moves to get off the desk.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I have to go. Meeting.

Eric watches as Veronica slips on her panty hose.

ERIC (CONT'D)

God, I'm so in love with you it makes me nauseous.

VERONICA

I'm *not* in love with you.

ERIC

Then why do you have sex with me?! I'm not even that good looking.

VERONICA

I don't know! It's like when you have a painful sore in your mouth but you can't stop playing with it.

ERIC

That's heart warming.

She stands and slips on her heels.

VERONICA

Do you want to come to lunch with my father tomorrow? I need you to pretend to be my fiance.

ERIC

I think by any objective standard, this counts as mixed signals.

VERONICA

Since I'm twenty five all he talks about is when I'm gonna get married. This should shut him up.

ERIC

(excited)

Hold on, this is textbook. You've never discussed your family before.

(off her confusion)

Don't you see, you're frightened of commitment and this "fake fiance" thing is a way for you to be close to me without exposing yourself emotionally. It's classic fear of intimacy behavior. We'll work through it.

He hugs her, she softens and nuzzles into his shoulder.

VERONICA

Maybe you're right.

(beat)

Though you're the third fake fiancé I tried to recruit. The other two had to spend the day with their wives.

His phone RINGS again. He snaps it up angrily.

ERIC

I'm coming!

He slams it down.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, THE STATION

Images splash across the conference room screen. In the back, Eric sneaks into the empty seat next to MIA.

ERIC  
What did I miss?

MIA  
We're rigging an election.

ERIC  
Cool.

An image of EL PRESIDENTE (70s, robust) pops on the screen.

TED  
We all know El Presidente Garcia  
Montero, the venerated leader of  
Altamara. A force of stability and  
progress.  
(beat)  
Sadly, he's decided to retire.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE, PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - LAST WEEK

President Montero lays on a massage table. A tall Swedish woman works on his back as an AIDE holds documents to sign. The door opens. Ted enters, followed by Larry carrying a briefcase. They walk up to the President.

TED  
We think you should go to Saint  
Tropez...forever.

Larry opens the briefcase, revealing stacks of cash. The President takes a moment then gives an "okay" shrug and nod.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

TED  
With the field open, there are two  
main contenders for the presidency.

The image of BENNY GONZALEZ (50s, squat) comes up on screen.

TED (CONT'D)

The first: Benny Gonzalez -- labor leader, author and famed anti-American. We respectfully tried to dissuade him from running.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ted and Larry on a couch across from Benny.

TED

Run for President and we kill you.

BENNY

(laughs)

Go ahead and try. It'll give me something to talk about at Castro's *eighty third* birthday.

Benny cheerfully treats himself to a danish on the table. Larry shakes his head and mumbles under his breath.

LARRY

Fuckin' smart ass.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

TED

Luckily, the other contender is Francisco Villalobos...

An image pops of FRANCISCO VILLALOBOS (40s, smooth, sophisticated) with TIM MCGRAW in front of an American flag.

TED (CONT'D)

Media mogul, coffee exporter, philanthropist, adventurer --

ERIC

And cocaine middleman.

TED

I'm disappointed in you. A prosperous Latino businessman so, of course, he *must* be a coke smuggler. That's pathetic.

ERIC

I have photos from our "arms for coke" meeting with him in my --

As Eric moves to get up Ted stops him with a withering look.

TED  
Bigotry aside, people love the man.  
And so does the Agency.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRANCISCO'S ESTATE - DAY

Ted and Larry address Francisco, bundled up in a big parka, on the back of a dogsled. Huskies paw at the snow.

TED  
You should run for President.

FRANCISCO  
No time. I'm training for the  
Iditarod.

Larry flips open another briefcase full of money.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)  
I'm already rich.  
(to dogs)  
Mush!

Francisco takes off, as we see that servants have arranged a snow path and snow blowing machine on the tropical estate.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

TED  
Despite *his* uncertainty, our  
mission is clear: make Villalobos  
the next president of Altamara.  
He'll come around. So be  
proactive, take initiative.

LARRY  
I'm glad you say that.

Larry pulls a paper out of his briefcase.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
In my spare time I've worked out a  
hidden surveillance plan for St.  
Mary's Woman's College. And I'd  
like to put it into action.

MIA  
 (dubious)  
 Dorms...locker rooms...

LARRY  
 Wherever subversives might lurk.

MIA  
 What's shocking is how bad you are  
 at hiding what a pervert you are.

TED  
 No dice, Lar. But I love the  
 effort.  
 (to the group)  
 Now, everyone get the hell out  
 there and make this country's  
 veneer of democracy work for us.

INT. HALLWAY, STATION

Mia and Eric walk down the hallway in mid-conversation.

MIA  
 Why pretend you have a choice?  
 You're gonna end up going to the  
 lunch. You're a prisoner to her.

ERIC  
 I know. It's the mixed signals  
 that really drive me crazy.

MIA  
 I thought things were getting  
 better. Didn't she give you keys  
 to her place last month?

ERIC  
 Yeah.  
 (beat)  
 And then changed the locks. I mean  
 she had a good reason. I forget  
 why, but it made sense at the time.

TED (O.S.)  
 Quill! In my office.

Eric turns and sees Ted leaning out his office. Mia  
 continues on as Eric heads to Ted. He passes Stan.

STAN  
 Hey, New Guy. Did you put on  
 weight?

ERIC  
Since yesterday?

Stan shrugs. After a beat, Eric turns with realization.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Are you trying to psych me out  
before I meet Ted?

STAN  
(caught)  
No. I just don't want you to have  
a stroke or get diabetes. Jeez,  
sue me for caring.

INT. TED'S OFFICE - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Eric sits across the desk from Ted. His office filled with  
the detritus of forty years in the CIA. Ted leans back in  
his chair expansively.

TED  
The first day you walked in here I  
was struck by how much you reminded  
me of myself. Smart...ambitious...  
with a rakish disregard for  
authority. It formed a soft spot  
in my heart. I want you to *thrive*  
in my station.

He sits forward and claps with enthusiasm.

TED (CONT'D)  
Now, I know you didn't mean those  
racist things you said before about  
Francisco being --

ERIC  
A cocaine smuggler? Actually, I  
have proof that --

TED  
Apology accepted. I have a very  
important job for you. There's a  
"contractor" who's come down from  
Langley. And I want you to be his  
go-to man.

ERIC  
Contractor? You mean "assassin"?

TED  
No, I mean "contractor." I'm  
building the station a rec room.  
(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)  
 (beat, laughs)  
*Of course, I mean assassin.*

ERIC  
 (beat, nervous)  
 I don't know how I feel about using assassins to get a cocaine smuggler elected President. It's a little --

TED  
 Sordid?

Eric takes a beat then nods.

TED (CONT'D)  
 Of course it is. Isn't that why we joined the agency?

ERIC  
 That's not exactly why *I* --

TED  
 Come on, Eric. You know the whole "means justify the ends --"

ERIC  
 I think the saying actually is "the ends justify the me --"

TED  
 (smiles)  
 Exactly. We're saying the same thing. The bottom line is: what we do is justified.

Ted settles back into seat.

TED (CONT'D)  
 I've been in this game a long time. And I've had guys come through here who've gone to stations around the world -- Manila, Bratislava, Kabul -

ERIC  
 (pause)  
 Kabul, really?

TED  
 Yes. And everything you've heard is true. I can make that happen, *if you're on my team. So...*

Eric takes a breath and then...nods. Ted smiles and opens a safe hidden in his bookshelf. He removes an envelope.



TED (CONT'D)

This is the assignment. He'll be here tomorrow at five. I should warn you: assassins are an odd bunch. Worked with one in Marrakesh who wore a three piece suit made entirely of human hair.

(beat)

Actually, it was quite elegant. All fine Scandinavian blonde --

ERIC

I'm sure I'll be fine.

TED

You're now like a son to me, Eric.

(beat)

Just don't screw up, or I'll treat you like my father treated me.

EXT. OCEANA TRADING OFFICES/ THE STATION - MORNING

Establishing shot as sun rises over front offices.

INT. RECEPTION, THE STATION - NEXT DAY

Mia stands by the RECEPTIONIST (40s) reading out loud a flyer taped to the wall titled "Station-wide Contest!"

MIA

Whoever blackmails, bribes or in *any other way* gets Francisco Villalobos to run for President, wins a trip to the Agency's Up and Comers Conference in Aspen. The fast track to advancement!

Below is a picture of Francisco with a plus sign and a big "You" followed by an equals sign and a picture of Aspen.

MIA (CONT'D)

Wow. Not bad.

She then notices HANK (late 30s, good looking but intense) sitting in the waiting area.

MIA (CONT'D)

Who's the looker?

RECEPTIONIST

He's here for Eric...and he's insane.

After a beat, Hank leans over to the receptionist

HANK

Excuse me...excuse me again. Could you lower those electronic blips and beeps I keep hearing. They're very distracting.

RECEPTIONIST

You mean...the office sounds?

Hank smiles and nods.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Uh...I'll do my best.

She glances at Mia and then pretends to turn down volume knobs on her desk.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Is that better?

HANK

Yeah. Thanks.

INT. STATION - DAY.

Mia steps up to Eric's cubicle.

MIA

There's a head case waiting for you in reception.

ERIC

Oh my God, it's the contractor from Langley. He's already here?

(beat)

What's he like?

They both peak over the cubicle just as Antonio steps up behind Hank with a box of Girl Scout cookies.

ANTONIO

It's Girl Scout cookie time, are you interested in --

Without turning around, Hank does a swift arm movement which drops Antonio flat on his back. Eric and Mia's eyes widen.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. RECEPTION, THE STATION

Eric and Mia walk down the hallway towards Hank waiting in reception.

ERIC

He wasn't supposed to be here until five. I have that lunch with Veronica in an hour.

MIA

So *that's* why you're all spruced up.

(beat, re: Hank)

Good luck. I'm ready to notify your next of kin if necessary.

She gives him a slap on the back and heads off as Eric walks over to introduce himself to Hank.

ERIC

You must be Hank Schneider. I'm Eric Quill. Pleasure.

Eric notices Antonio still out cold surrounded by cookie boxes.

HANK

Tell him when he wakes I took two boxes of thin mints -- the money's in his shirt pocket.

Hank rises and motions to a newspaper on the waiting table.

HANK (CONT'D)

By the way, the sudoku is already done in that newspaper -- very disappointing.

ERIC

Sorry. I did that.

Eric guides Hank into:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As they sit, Hank shakes his head in disapproval.

HANK

I guess you just drop the used paper there when you're done, like scraps for your guests to pick at.

ERIC  
I don't know about that, I just --

HANK  
You walk or commute to work?

ERIC  
I walk.

HANK  
So no train or car or bus ride?

ERIC  
No.

HANK  
Tell me honestly: did you do that  
sudoku on the toilet, then put it  
out for everyone to touch?

ERIC  
(clearly lying)  
No.

HANK  
That's disgusting.

They sit in tense silence. After a beat, Eric sits up.

ERIC  
I've gotta ask: how the hell does  
someone end up doing what you do?

HANK  
(sighs in annoyance)  
Murder's as old as the monkeys but  
I'm treated like the bearded lady.  
(with mock fear)  
"Oohh. His job's so cold and  
creepy. What makes him tick?"  
But, fine, I'll bite: I was a go-  
nowhere spook. HQ asked me to kill  
someone. I did. My pulse didn't  
rise, so they said "Want a new  
job." I said "What's it pay?"  
They said "More than you make now."  
I said "Great. Sign me up."  
(beat, pointed)  
How's that Mr. Profiler? Satisfied?

ERIC  
(beat)  
Why don't we just move on to the  
procedural stuff and call it a day?

HANK  
I think that'd be best.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eric carries a bottle of wine and cradles his cellphone to his ear as he walks away from the Oceana building, down the street.

ERIC  
(on phone)  
I'll pick you up in ten. Veronica,  
I know. Sorry, I'm late.

He reaches a Chevy Nova and unlocks the door.

INT. CHEVY NOVA - DAY

Eric hops in.

ERIC  
(on phone)  
I know. I got held up in a meeting  
with a guy who happens to be  
certifiably *insane*.

He settles in and adjusts mirror. Suddenly, Hank's face pops up in the mirror and terrifies Eric.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Holy crap!

HANK  
My hotel's on the way. You mind?

EXT. STREET, ALTAMARA - LATER

Eric jumps out of the parked car, and pops open the trunk. He suddenly looks up and sees Veronica at a butcher's stall.

ERIC  
Veronica, what're you doing --

VERONICA  
Getting papa's dogs some scraps.  
My office is only...

She grabs her butcher's bag and walks over, then accidentally BUMPS into Hank emerging from the car.

VERONICA (CONT'D)  
(dazed)  
...a block away.

HANK  
 (smiles warmly)  
 Hi, I'm Hank.

Their eyes lock. Then something distracts him. He reaches over and gently lifts a ladybug off her shirt then shows her.

HANK (CONT'D)  
 A ladybug.

He opens his hand and blows the ladybug free. Veronica is clearly smitten. Eric notices and moves Hank along.

ERIC  
 Just dropping Mr. Schneider off at his hotel. Let's get a move on --

VERONICA  
 (to Hank)  
 Do you have lunch plans?

ERIC  
 I'm sure he's exhausted and --

HANK  
 No, I don't.

INT. FRANCISCO'S HACIENDA - DAY

Veronica leads Hank into the living room as Eric follows.

FRANCISCO (O.S.)  
 Is that my baby?

FRANCISCO VILLALOBOS (50s, smooth, confident) emerges at the top of the staircase and descends.

ERIC  
 (whispers)  
 Your father's Francisco Villalobos?

VERONICA  
 (whispers back)  
 I use my mother's name. It'd kill me in revolutionary circles if they knew my father was rich. I'd be stuck picking up every check.

Francisco steps up and hugs Veronica, then turns to Hank.

FRANCISCO  
 Eric, I've heard so much about you. You're finally making my little girl a proper woman.

He embraces Hank.

ERIC  
Actually, *I'm* Eric.

Francisco turns to Eric, and squints with recognition.

FRANCISCO  
Do I know you from somewhere?

VERONICA  
Eric works at Oceana Import/Export.  
He probably ships your coffee.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DINGY ROOM - NIGHT

Francisco and four sleazy looking guys sit across a table from Ted, Larry, Antonio and Eric.

TED  
So we'll pay for your cocaine shipment...if you smuggle in *our* rocket launchers. Agreed?

Francisco stands with a smile and shakes Ted's hand.

BACK TO:

INT. FRANCISCO'S HACIENDA

FRANCISCO  
Of course, Oceana. Right.

ERIC  
Coffee business. Yes.

VERONICA  
And this is Hank Schneider.

HANK  
You've a lovely home...and family.

He glances to Veronica, she blushes. Eric tensely smiles.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The four sit at a long dining table.

ERIC  
We haven't really set a date yet?  
I think spring is always nice.  
Honey, what do you think?

Veronica giggles at a private comment Hank made.

VERONICA

Whenever.

(beat, to Francisco)

Say, where's grandma? I've missed her.

FRANCISCO

She's upstairs resting.

(to Eric and Hank)

I'm so lucky to have my mother living here. The rock of my life.

VERONICA

She's my inspiration.

HANK

My grandmother raised me.

Veronica reaches out a comforting hand.

ERIC

I love old people. I've given up many a seat...many a seat.

HANK

If you'll pardon me, I have to use the restroom. Where is --

VERONICA

Oh, I'll show you.

Veronica pops up and leads Hank out, before Eric can interject. The moment they're gone, Francisco jumps up and gets in the chair directly across from Eric.

FRANCISCO

So...how are things at Oceana Imports? I believe your boss desperately wants me to do business with your company. Perhaps so much that he would take advantage of my daughter's vulnerable nature.

ERIC

No. My feelings are genuine, unfortunately.

(beat, optimistic)

However, there is this contest, and it would be great for my career if you would consider running for --



Suddenly, the door opens and a small tank of a woman enters, ISABELLA (80s). Francisco's face drops, then regroups.

FRANCISCO  
(Spanish, pleasantly)  
It's Mama! I'm with company, but --

ISABELLA  
(Spanish)  
Tough shit. My room's cold.

FRANCISCO  
(Spanish, sweetly)  
Then we'll turn up the heat.  
(yells)  
Pablo!

A frightened man-servant enters, PABLO.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)  
(in English, furious)  
You have *one* job: keep her away  
from me and you can't even do that.

PABLO  
She frightens me.

FRANCISCO  
Fix her heat and keep her *out*!

PABLO  
The heat is up to a hundred. Her  
parakeets have heat stroke.

FRANCISCO  
Then burn something, induce a  
fever, inject chili peppers into  
her veins. But let her in here  
again and I'll shoot you.  
(in Spanish, to Isabella)  
All fixed. I love you, Mommy.

He leans in and kisses her.

ISABELLA  
(in Spanish)  
You smell like onions and whores.

She and Pablo exit. Francisco collapses into the chair.

FRANCISCO  
I really wish you hadn't seen that.

A deflated Francisco pours himself a brandy.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)  
To Latinos the love for one's  
mother is very special.

ERIC  
I think that's true for most  
cultures...most mammals, in fact.

FRANCISCO  
Then I am not a mammal, because I  
hate her with every ounce of blood  
in my body. She scares me...I'm a  
coward.

(beat, desperate)  
Please don't tell anyone...  
especially Veronica. She worships  
that old witch. God knows how.

HANK (O.S.)  
Veronica's taking a quick shower.  
She didn't hear anything.

Eric turns with surprise to see that Hank stands next to him.  
Something catches Eric's eye.

ERIC  
Your shirts's on inside-out.

Hank shrugs, then turns to Francisco

HANK  
You know...you could just rub the  
old lady out.

ERIC  
(damage control)  
Okay, it's time for you to --

FRANCISCO  
What the hell is he talking about?

HANK  
I'm just saying --

ERIC  
Let's *not* cause alarm with extreme  
measures that might shock those in  
the room who *don't* have  
psychopathic tendencies.

HANK  
Grandma's a problem...you get rid  
of the problem. Simple.

FRANCISCO  
Are you honestly talking about  
killing my mother?!

ERIC  
No!  
(whispers to Hank)  
What's *wrong* with you?

FRANCISCO  
If something happened to her, my  
life would be completely changed --

ERIC  
I know. Nothing's going to --

FRANCISCO  
I'd feel compelled to do something  
that honors her memory. Maybe...  
public service. Elected office.

The room goes silent as the true meaning of Francisco's  
comments sinks in.

ERIC  
Are you saying if we get rid of --

HANK  
He's not saying anything. He's...  
musing.  
(to Francisco)  
Isn't that right?

Francisco nods. Hank takes Eric off to the side.

HANK (CONT'D)  
You have to learn how these things  
are done. But you have your  
Presidential candidate if you want  
him.

Hank pulls Eric's cellphone out and hits Ted's number.

HANK (CONT'D)  
Call Ted, give him the good news.  
Take the credit, make a name for  
yourself. I'm gonna end up with  
your girl, so it's the least I can  
do.

He smiles and hands the phone to an unsure Eric.

ERIC  
 Ted, it's Eric. I have  
 some...uh...great news.

INT. CHEVY NOVA - DAY

Eric drives stiffly, while Hank and Veronica are snuggled up looking through the postcards in the back.

VERONICA  
 Grandma gave me a set of postcards  
 she made of her parakeets. Isn't  
 that sweet? This one is her  
 favorite...El Santo. She loves him  
 so much.

HANK  
 She has a such a strong energy -- I  
 could feel it the minute we met  
 her.

VERONICA  
 I know she can't live forever...but  
 I hope when I have kids they get a  
 chance to know her.

HANK  
 They will. I just know it.

VERONICA  
 (smiles)  
 You make me feel so safe.

Hank takes the card and leans forward to let Eric look.

HANK  
 Isn't Santo beautiful, Eric?  
 (in low voice)  
 I'm thinking I'll induce either a  
 heart attack...or seizure. Any  
 preference?

Eric swallows with guilt and shakes his head.

INT. BREAK ROOM, THE STATION - DAY

A disheveled Eric lays on a table while Mia tries to make a decision in front of the vending machines.

ERIC  
 It's awful. Veronica -- Miss Peace  
 and Poetry is shackled up with that  
 psychopath right now. I saw them  
 go into his hotel.

MIA  
Women love the bad boys.

ERIC  
He's a contract killer!  
(beat)  
I need to get out of this place. I  
can't handle this stress.

MIA  
You know what'll cheer you up?  
Funyuns.

She hands him a bag of funyuns.

ERIC  
So you don't think I should feel  
guilty about bumping off Veronica's  
grandmother?

MIA  
She hasn't been very considerate of  
*your* feelings.  
(beat)  
But then I'm the wrong person to  
ask -- I'm a very vengeful dater.

INT. ISABELLA'S ROOM - DAY

Isabella feeds her parakeets, then opens the doors to her balcony. Suddenly, she faces a MASKED MAN holding a syringe. She SCREAMS and retreats as the masked man follows.

Inside Isabella's expression changes to cold, ruthless confidence. She lets out a loud BIRD CALL. Suddenly, a frantic cloud of PARAKEETS descend and peck him. He staggers blindly back across the balcony toward the railing.

Francisco enters the room.

FRANCISCO  
Oh my God, Mama is...

He sees Isabella turn from the balcony.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)  
(clearly disappointed)  
Alive.

Below the balcony, Hank lays dead.

INT. ERIC'S OFFICE - LATER

Eric is on the phone.

ERIC  
 (Spanish with subtitles)  
 So?

Intercut with Isabella, in her room, whispering in the phone.

ISABELLA  
 (Spanish with subtitles)  
 He's gone. Thank you.

Eric hangs up and let's a sly smile.

INT. TED'S OFFICE - DAY

Eric sits across from a depressed Ted.

TED  
 Our wet boy, professional assassin,  
 best-in-Langley's-human-arsenal,  
 just got killed by Francisco's  
 eighty-two year old mother.

ERIC  
 No?!

TED  
 He didn't even get to kill who he  
 came down here to kill.

Ted clicks mute off his T.V. Benny rides in the back of a convertible through a crowd in downtown Altamara City.

NEWS ANNOUNCER  
 Anti-American Benny Gonzalez rides  
 in his convertible with only his  
 little Yorkie, Coco, as protection.

Ted shuts off the TV and throws the remote across the room.

ERIC  
 It was my job to watch out for Hank  
 and I let you down. So if you want  
 to transfer me out of this sta --

TED  
 Oh God, no. Setbacks are part of  
 the job. But you showed  
 initiative, drive and ruthlessness.  
 That can't be taught.  
 (pause, smiles)  
 It's such a comfort knowing that if  
 a dark, dirty, morally questionable  
 job comes up -- I've got my man. I  
 mean you were gonna kill a grandma.  
 (MORE)

TED (CONT'D)  
 That's outstanding.  
 (sighs contentedly)  
 Oh no. I'm not letting you go.

We push in on a figure of a bald eagle attacking a bear.

INT. STAN'S DESK - SAME TIME

Stan sits wearing headphones, Ted's voice bleeds through.

TED (O.S.)  
 Now get the hell out there and  
 continue making me proud.

STAN  
 (to himself)  
 Goddammit.

Eric exits Ted's office and passes by Stan.

STAN (CONT'D)  
 Hey New Guy...we should grab lunch  
 sometime.

ERIC  
 (leery)  
 Okay.

Stan gives a tight, awkward smile. Eric continues into the break room. Stan clicks his computer, and suddenly hears Eric's voice coming through the headphones.

ERIC (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Shit. No Funyuns.

Stan smiles, then dials his phone.

STAN  
 Hi, this Stan Latham at Oceana  
 Import/Export. Cancel our re-stock  
 of Funyuns.

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC - DUSK

Hank's COFFIN moves past the Station staff and Veronica. Eric steps up and lays an unmarked Sudoku puzzle on it. He puts a comforting arm around Veronica and smells her hair.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Eric, in boxers, opens his curtains. Something is taped to the window. It's the sudoku puzzle Eric left on Hank's coffin. However filled in the middle are not numbers but words. They spell out "NICE TRY ERIC."

Off Eric's disconcerted expression we...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW