

THE OVER/UNDER

Pilot Episode
"LUCKY BASTARD"

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THE OVER/UNDER

EPISODE 101

TEASER

TIGHT ON--

PAUL KELLER, 35, as he takes a deep breath. He is attractive, magnetic, smooth-as-hell-- the kind of guy women kill for and men emulate. The fluorescent lights color him a bit sickly.

The SOFT TICK OF AN EGG TIMER is heard in the background.

PAUL

Right. Okay.

Paul settles in for a big rap session.

PAUL (CONT'D)

As you know, I'm a trader. I'm pretty accomplished... not a numbers geek, but I've got strong contacts in the field and I'm not afraid to take big chances that pay huge. Bottom line, I make a pile. But you know, in this city, a pile is like, it's more like a wad of gum on the sidewalk.

WE HEAR-- people MOANING in agreement.

PAUL (CONT'D)

So anyway. I met my wife Vicky about five years ago. Some party in the meatpacking district, co-worker dragged me. She had on these jeans, like so tight you could read her fortune... And the mouth on her... We were fucking in the bathroom three hours after we met. PRIMAL, I mean...

Paul LEANS BACK and laces his hands behind his head...

PAUL (CONT'D)

God, we had some times. Jetting off to Cabo on a second's notice... screwing in the limo at 7am after a night of clubbing... we just *burned* through money.

A beat. Paul's eyes darken a little...

PAUL (CONT'D)

But then. The market turned and I needed to recoup. So I started doing a little dirt on the side. Minor stuff, football mostly, some track. And I was making it. Dollar by dollar. But it wasn't enough. I had to up my ante. I began trading options.

Paul clears his throat. This is the hard part.

PAUL (CONT'D)

And then one day. I made a bad call. So I doubled up. Then I doubled up again. Then I doubled up *again*. Blew right through my savings. I'm two or three days facing expiration, I'm trying to sell and nobody's buying. I see it happening. My *brain knows* I need to pull out, to stop loss. But for whatever reason, I can't. So I just rode those fuckers down until they were worth abso-fucking-lutely nothing.

STARK SILENCE. Long beat. Paul sweats it out.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(quietly)

That was. Not pretty. We almost lost everything.

(brighter)

So. The following week I showed up in the basement of this church. Year and a half later, here I am.

PAN OUT TO REVEAL--

--a GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS MEETING. A group of NINE MEN AND ONE WOMAN, mostly white and mid-to-upper class, sits around a square of cafeteria tables. They chew on fancy bakery pastries. On the table lies a pile of GAM-ANON pamphlets.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm Paul and I'm an addict.

Everyone raps his/her knuckles on the table in approval. The EGG TIMER RINGS.

LATER--

The meeting is over, folks are milling about, stacking chairs, cleaning up, etc.

WALLY, 45, a trim, compassionate man, approaches Paul.

WALLY

So Paul, I hear you're leaving us?

PAUL

It's just Brooklyn. Half an hour cab ride. Forty minutes on the F.

(on Wally's look)

Come on, man. I'll still come to the city for meetings.

WALLY

(displeased)

It's too soon to move so far away from your support group.

PAUL

I feel great, Wally. Do I miss gambling? Yeah. Do I miss the rush, the adrenaline? The headiness? Yeah, sure. But I have my job, my health. Vicky's great, her business is doing great. Honest to God, things have never been better. I'm accepting life on life's terms.

WALLY

You sound like a pamphlet.

PAUL

(cheerful)

I'm *that guy*. I'm pamphlet guy. Deal with it.

Wally pats Paul on the back.

WALLY

I'm just a phone call away...

PAUL

See you next week...

Wally exits.

CLOSE ON PAUL-- His smile drops and his eyes deaden.

He is absolutely NOT THAT GUY.

END TEASER

TITLES:

Wearing shades, Paul Keller stands in the middle of busy Kelly Street in (fictitious) Kerrigan Gardens, Brooklyn. He drinks a cup of coffee in slow-mo as the world, sped up, rushes around him: Caribbean nannies pushing white babies in \$900 strollers; three pregnant women with boutique shopping bags; Puerto Rican and black teens in mid-horse-play; Italian grandmas hollering to each other; a horde of small kids stampeding; old Italian men in undershirts gossiping... etc. In the periphery, an Italian barber closes up shop and is quickly replaced by an upscale maternity store. (Perhaps we see this all reflected in the lenses of Paul's sunglasses?)

Paul whips off his shades... we zoom in... inside his pupils are PILES OF FALLING MONEY.

END TITLES

SUPERIMPOSE:

"Six months ago..."

EXT. ENCLOSED ROOFTOP BAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

AN EXCLUSIVE DRINKING CLUB atop an elegant NYC hotel. The skyline twinkles with promise... gorgeous ladies in skimpy halter tops drape the arms of wealthy young gentlemen. This is the PLAYGROUND OF THE GLITTERATI. It's late winter.

Paul wears a designer suit and sips a stylish beverage. He chats with RUDY YOUNG, 28, a hotshot trader-type, and FABIO, 30, a less sexy co-worker.

RUDY

Whooo! Tough day, mofo's.

(a toast)

To Magic Numbers Keller on his major fail.

PAUL

Fuck you very much, Rudy.

FABIO

So you made a bad call. It happens. I might'a done the same. Maybe.

PAUL

(defensive)

The stocks traded at discounts to net current assets. They had minimal debt, they were generating earnings...

RUDY

Down boy...

PAUL

(riled up)

The tech stock was fucking *buying* the aerospace stock, they already owned fucking 60%. Everything pointed to the deal going through.

Paul finishes his drink and gestures for another. Fabio and Rudy EXCHANGE UNCOMFORTABLE LOOKS.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Anyway. It's an inefficient market. Opportunities like these exist. It'll come back around.

FABIO

Sure it will.

The men drink and SCAN THE ROOM.

FABIO (CONT'D)

High-roller heaven up here.

A TALL BLOND ARYAN dude glances over. He has a lady on each arm and perfect teeth.

FABIO (CONT'D)

That Hitler youth keeps throwing eyes at you.

PAUL

Three years ago I cleaned him out of about eighty-five grand. Remember, Rudy?

RUDY

Dolphins and the Jets. You bet him we'd see two credit card commercials before the Jets scored. That's some sick luck.

PAUL

Not luck. Balls.

RUDY

Stupidity, you mean.

PAUL

A man afraid of risk is a man afraid of living.

FABIO

Then why not ditch the legit world completely? Dirty dough favors the bold...

PAUL

I haven't placed a bet since September 2009.

RUDY

Rocking the twelve steps. Kudos man. Gambling is for chumps.

FABIO

Like you?

RUDY

Gambling, trading... same shtick different necktie.

PAUL

I think I'd rather play it classy this time. Start up my own multi-asset fund. "Keller Investments."

RUDY

Hooo. Dream big, grasshopper.

A SUPER-SEXY WAITRESS delivers drinks to the men. She leans over and LICKS PAUL'S EAR, then disappears.

FABIO

The fuck was that?

PAUL

A left-over. Guess she didn't hear I got hitched.

RUDY

How about flinging your castoffs to us single dudes, Keller?

PAUL

Take your pick. I got my diamond, who needs cut glass?

RUDY

Oouuuch.

FABIO

That was harsh.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Speaking of...

He grabs his winter coat and downs his glass.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Gotta keep my nose clean for a bit.
We just closed on our Brooklyn pad.

FABIO

Brooklyn? You gonna start a family
or something?

PAUL

Naw, man. Vicky wanted more space.
It's gorgeous. A duplex. Roof deck,
amazing view. And the neighborhood
was voted best in the boroughs last
year... you'll come visit.

FABIO

(dripping sarcasm)

Yeah. I'll go to *Brooklyn*. For some
cheesecake. Maybe even a *hotdog*.

Fabio and Rudy laugh.

PAUL

Enjoy your zillion dollar rat
traps.

Paul glides out the door.

FABIO

Lucky bastard.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - A LITTLE LATER (FLASHBACK)

Outside a SWANK HI-RISE CONDO in Tribeca, Paul slides out of
a taxi. A DOORMAN immediately makes way for him.

DOORMAN

Evening Mr. Keller.

PAUL

Hey Henry.

He hands the doorman SEVERAL LARGE BILLS.

DOORMAN

Thank you kindly. Sure will miss
you 'round here.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - CONTINUOUS (FLASHBACK)

Paul enters the SMALL LOFT WITH HIGH CEILINGS. He
immediately fixes himself a cocktail.

His wife, VICKY KELLER, 32, crouches behind a camera in the living room. She is a striking brunette with flirty, devious eyes and a biting wit, and more than a touch of punk.

A PHOTO-SHOOT is in progress... beneath large portable studio lights, a YOUNG NAKED PIERCED GIRL, 22, sprawls artfully across a black tarp. She is coated in gold body paint.

VICKY

Hi babe... sorry about the mess... they're renovating the floor above my studio, the pounding was driving me wacko.

PAUL

Thought they did that last month.

VICKY

That was downstairs. I cannot WAIT to get the hell out of Manhattan. Paul, this is Frida.

YOUNG NAKED PIERCED GIRL

Hi.

PAUL

Body paint?

YOUNG NAKED PIERCED GIRL

For my erotica portfolio.

VICKY

She's a Suicide Girl. She wants to fuck us when we're done here.

YOUNG NAKED PIERCED GIRL

If I can shower first...

ON PAUL - Heck, why not.

INT. LOFT BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER (FLASHBACK)

Warm in the glow of post-coital bliss, the MOONLIT THREESOME snuggles beneath the satin sheets on Paul and Vicky's bed.

ON PAUL, GRINNING IN HIS SLEEP - I'm one lucky bastard.

SUPERIMPOSE:

"Present day..."

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE-- MORNING

Late hot summer.

Out the window-- stunning view of the Manhattan skyline from 38 stories up. Large plush office.

Paul sits at his desk in his suit, eyes huge and blank. He grips a mug of cold unsipped coffee. Phone rings, he does not answer, just stares ahead.

After a moment, a knock. Rudy pops his head in.

RUDY

Keller. Just heard. Fuck, man. Thought that aerospace shit was ancient history. Guess the numbers caught up.

(small beat)

He let Patrick and Julia go too... It's like a funeral out there.

(small beat)

You okay?

PAUL

I'm, ah. Yeah. It's.

RUDY

I mean Patrick's no surprise. Fat fuck couldn't find a value stock if it farted in his mouth. But you.

(small beat)

No one's safe.

(then)

You got any prospects, or...

PAUL

Sure. I'm gonna walk out that door, take the elevator downstairs, buy a tall caramel macchiato, and sip it very very fucking slowly.

Rudy doesn't quite know what to do with this.

RUDY

Um. Okay. Well if you need anything.

PAUL

How about a line?

RUDY

Have a gram in my desk. For emergencies.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - TIMES SQUARE-- DAY

Paul stands outside his former place of business holding a cardboard box of his belongings. His eyes are wild and he's a little coked up. He GAZES AROUND at the lights, the movement, the noise, people in fast/slow motion around him...

EXT. LUXURY APARTMENT - KERRIGAN GARDENS - LATER

Establishing... a 3-story contemporary building with an overly manicured front area slammed between two homier, older, traditional buildings with signature front gardens.

INT. LUXURY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vicky stands in the living area of her brand new loft-like luxury duplex, speaking on her cell. The place is SPARSELY FURNISHED and modern-looking. JOSÉ, a contract worker, stands nearby sipping from a mug.

LARGE FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS line the walls. They are beautiful, sensual black-and-white nudes-- the edginess of Ellen von Unwerth with the theatricality of Helmut Newton.

JOSÉ

You take all these?

VICKY

Yeah.

JOSÉ

(re: a photo)

That chick could use a Brazillian.

VICKY

(into the phone)

Hi babe. Listen José wants a check before he starts with the floor and I can't find your book. Call me after your meeting, bye.

She hangs up. José gives her a friendly smile.

JOSÉ

How many units in this building get bought?

VICKY

Just this one.

JOSÉ

You should have waited 'til the market bottomed out.

VICKY
 ("fuck you")
 Want a biscotti with that?

JOSÉ
 You got any normal cookies?

At that moment, Paul enters with his box of belongings.

VICKY
 You're home. Why are you home.

PAUL
 No notice. No warning. Not even a rumor.

VICKY
 What? You're fired?

JOSÉ
 I'll take cash. Whatever you got.

Paul hands José a wad of bills. José scurries out the door.

PAUL
 Don't panic.

VICKY
 Fired fired?

PAUL
 Just once.

VICKY
 Did they give you a reason?

PAUL
 Several. "Poor third quarter..."
 "economically unsound..." "can no longer afford you."

VICKY
 You made one bad call!

PAUL
 Apparently it was a doozy.

Vicky SURVEYS THE HUGE UNFURNISHED living room.

VICKY
 Well. Suppose I should cancel the
 tiliary modular seating set from
 West Elm...

EXT. PUZZO'S HARDWARE - SAME

MARINO PUZZO, 22, unwinds a hose and waters some planted herb racks. He is an attractive, good-natured, ambitious Italian kid. He wears a blue apron that reads "Puzzo's Hardware-Serving Kerrigan Gardens since 1955."

Marino SMILES AT LOUIE, 65, and greets him with a Brooklyn accent.

MARINO
Hey Louie, how's the leg?

LOUIE
Still attached. Hey shouldn't you be starin' at a computer makin' big numbers outa little ones?

MARINO
Go give that smelly cat of yours a bath.

The old man waves him off, laughing.

Marino spots TWO TEN-YEAR-OLD BOYS dragging an enormous potted plant out into the street.

MARINO (CONT'D)
Hey. Tommy. Billy. Whadda you think this is, a church sale? I didn't see any bills leave your hand...

TEN-YEAR-OLD #1
Your dad said it was cool.

MARINO
He did, huh? "Just take it?"

TEN-YEAR-OLD #2
Yeah.

INT. PUZZO'S HARDWARE - CONTINUOUS

FRANKIE PUZZO, 50, works the cash register. He's round, ruddy, smiling, old-school.

FRANKIE
Thank you Christine, you be good now. Good luck with the funeral.

Marino enters.

MARINO
Why you giving away plants?

FRANKIE

The boys wanted something for their
grandma's yard.

MARINO

That was a fifty dollar tree.

FRANKIE

It was looking deadish.

MARINO

"Deadish"? What does that even
mean?

FRANKIE

Rosie's been good to us--

MARINO

We can't afford to be givin' shit
away, pop. Those other two units
still haven't sold...

FRANKIE

Recession's almost over the papers
say--

MARINO

... and the landscaping out back is
totally jacked from all the rain...

FRANKIE

(to a customer)

Hey Theresa, how's your mom, how's
her zucchinis?

MARINO

Pop.

FRANKIE

Marino. What you have yet to grasp
is that you do these people favors,
they'll do you favors. In this
town? That means a hell of a lot
more than a couple'a measly shrubs.

(then)

Go home, play with your sister.
Give that wife of yours a foot-rub.
Have an iced latte. Enjoy life.

ON MARINO- Exasperated.

**INT. UPSCALE SUSHI RESTAURANT (MIKADO) - KERRIGAN GARDENS,
BROOKLYN - NIGHT**

Paul and Vicki both take large gulps of sake. A JAPANESE WAITER, 23, hands them a hugely ornate platter of sushi and a bottle of expensive sake.

JAPANESE WAITER
Sake compliments of Ichiro.

The waiter gestures to ICHIRO OKKOTSU, 51, the owner of Mikado, working furiously behind the sushi bar. He nods at Paul and Vicky. Paul raises his glass in gratitude.

VICKY
(to Paul)
How nice, isn't that nice?

PAUL
God knows we spend enough here.

Marino waits for Vicky to down her shot of sake, then:

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm thinking maybe your father
could float us for a little while.

VICKY
Paul.

PAUL
Just until I find something else.
It doesn't have to be a *thing*--

VICKY
But it will be. He's Victor Finkel.
He "doesn't suffer fools."

PAUL
He doesn't think I'm a fool.

VICKY
Only fools loose tens of thousands
on options.

PAUL
We never told him it was a gambling
debt.

Paul TAKES A BITE of fish.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Fuck me, this is good.

A WOMAN WITH A TWO-YEAR-OLD nearby gives them the stink-eye.

VICKY

Don't children have bedtimes?

PAUL

This entire neighborhood is like one huge fucking daycare.

VICKY

How did we not see it?

PAUL

We were blinded by the beauty of California closets and custom cabinetry. And a *phenomenal* roof deck.

(beat)

So. Your father.

VICKY

I would rather mop diarrhea from the floors of the local geriatric center than ask him for another fucking dime.

The woman with the two year old begins to BREASTFEED her son.

VICKY (CONT'D)

(not quite under her breath)

Jesus god no. Is that even legal? That kid's like, eight.

WOMAN WITH THE KID

Mind your own business.

VICKY

Lady. You're waving your tits two inches from my water glass. It's my business. And hey, weren't the *suburbs* invented to protect you from people like me?

WOMAN WITH THE KID

(to her friend)

I'll be in the bathroom.

The lady grabs her child and storms off.

PAUL

You are such a cunt.

VICKY
 Aren't I just?
 (raising her glass)
 Death to the breeders.

PAUL
 Clink.

They giggle and drink, then make out drunkenly.

INT. MARIO'S ROOM - SAME

Mario sits at his desk poring over a computer screen while LILIANA, 19, a beautiful Latina girl, lounges on his twin bed. She is FIVE MONTHS PREGNANT.

MARINO
 We're barely gonna make it through
 the end of the month.

LILIANA
 How's he managed to keep his store
 this long?

MARINO
 It's not the store. It's that
 fucking building. "Just fix it up
 and flip it." Never flipped a
 goddamn thing in his life, not even
 a pancake. All his friends bitching
 about city folk moving in
 destroying shit, what does he do?
 Takes grandpa Carlo's money and
 blows it on a heap of bricks. Not a
 brain in his head.

Liliana stirs uncomfortably, moaning a little.

MARINO (CONT'D)
 You okay?

LILIANA
 Hand me the water?

Marino hands Liliana a glass of water. She drinks.

MARINO
 We owe two years worth of taxes. If
 we get audited we're screwed. And
 health insurance? We were supposed
 to get that last fall...
 (then)
 Should I put the air on?

LILIANA

Yeah.

Marino closes the window and flips on the AIR CONDITIONING WINDOW UNIT.

MARINO

Even this makes me sick. Fucking electric bill. He's gonna have to fire Sam and get me in there working mornings.

LILIANA

What about college?

MARINO

(beat, then)

Don't know. I guess wait and see.

LILIANA

Three years since you graduated, Marino. How long is "wait and see"?

MARINO

I don't know.

LILIANA

This kills me. You are a math and computer GENIUS, *Miejo*. Any other white boy with your skills would have scholarships coming out his ass. But you don't even apply.

MARINO

And go where? My grades are pathetic. I never even took the SAT's.

(then)

I can't leave him and Nunzie.

LILIANA

But what about me? And Peanut?

He lies awkwardly next to her, placing his hand on her belly. He has no answer.

INT. PAUL AND VICKY'S BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

Vicky is sound asleep. Paul is WIDE AWAKE, staring at the ceiling. In a panic. He slips out of bed.

INT. VICKY'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Paul flips on the lights, holding a tumbler of whiskey. He REGARDS THE ROOM... white walls, studio lights, shelves of equipment, reflector discs, stool, radio, laptop, mirror, muslin, tripod, Ikea desk.

Everything looks incredibly NEW AND EXPENSIVE.

ON PAUL-- feeling those lean times ahead.

He moves toward Vicky's desk and grabs her phone. He SCROLLS THROUGH THE NUMBERS--

CLOSE ON THE PHONE-- as Paul stops at the name "Victor Finkel". Paul grabs a pencil and SCRIBBLES DOWN THE NUMBER.

INT. PAUL AND VICKY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Paul sips coffee and reads the paper while Vicky eats a *Fage* yogurt and STARES AT HIM, thoughtfully. Finally he looks up.

PAUL

What?

VICKY

(shrugging)

Just not used to seeing you in your Calvin Kleins this late in the morning.

PAUL

I'm a newly-minted man of leisure.
(then)
Please kill me.

VICKY

Could be worse.

PAUL

How?

VICKY

Could be 4am, you coked out of your mind weeping I need to sell my wedding ring 'cause you lost forty grand on a boxing match.

PAUL

Fun memory, thanks for that.

VICKY

No problem.
(then)

(MORE)

VICKY (CONT'D)
 Go for a stroll, you'll feel
 better. Or try that café on Kelly,
 the one with the dreadlock
 patchouli dude.

Paul doesn't move.

VICKY (CONT'D)
 Go on, scoot! I don't want my 10am
 judging me by my deadbeat hubby.

PAUL
 Mark my words. I'll be gainfully
 employed by day's end. Gonna make
 some calls, cook up some Keller
 Magic.

VICKY
 Eye of the tiger, baby.

Vicky stands with her coffee.

PAUL
 Where you off to?

VICKY
 Gotta go set up. This one warned me
 she's quote-unquote enormous. No
 idea what that means.

PAUL
 Don't let her sit on the Eames
 chair.

She kisses him and vanishes.

INT. TEA LOUNGE - A LITTLE LATER

Paul slumps uncomfortably on an OLD RATTY COUCH. He chatters
 into his bluetooth while nibbling on a scone.

PAUL
 Hey Benjamin. It's Paul Keller. How
 are you man?
 (...)
 Wow. News travels fast. Yeah, it
 was a shock. But hey, lemons from
 lemonade, right?
 (...)
 Funny you should ask... I'm about
 to start calling around, get my own
 asset management thing going...
 thought I'd give you guys first
 dibs.

A few STROLLERS ASSEMBLE nearby. Paul is oblivious.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 No worries, that's cool...
 everyone's a little fucked for
 capital these days...

SECONDS LATER--

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Ken, what's up, it's Paul Keller.
 Listen, I'm--
 (...)
 No worries, no worries. Talk soon.

SECONDS LATER--

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Hey, Ahmed, it's Paul. Listen, I'm
 just calling to see if you'd be
 interested--
 (...)
 Keller. From DMO.

Meanwhile, MORE STROLLERS HAVE AMASSED. Paul glances up in time to realize he is the only person without a toddler.

AT THAT MOMENT, all the moms and nannies in the room BURST INTO SONG: a spirited take on "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star."

PAUL (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Hello? Ahmed? Damn it!

Frantic, Paul searches for an explanation. He spots a FLYER--

INSERT-- flyer text:

"Mommie-n-Me Sing-a-long!!
 Every Thursday morning at 11:30."

ON PAUL - I hate my life.

INT. VICKY'S STUDIO - SAME

Vicky snaps photos of a HUGELY PREGNANT NAKED HAILEY, 28, wrapped awkwardly in white tulle.

HAILEY
 Are my nipples visible?

VICKY
 Nope.

HAILEY

That's good. There's a fine line between tasteful and tacky. You don't know Annie Liebowitz, do you?

VICKY

Nope... chin down.

HAILEY

I LOVE her. It's so sad, what they're doing to her intellectual property. As an attorney I find it repugnant. It's her art, for crying out loud.

(then)

I'm so thrilled to be doing this. The female body is a MIRACLE.

VICKY

Head left a little...

HAILEY

And also a nightmare sometimes... I don't know if you've ever been pregnant but the intestinal blockage is UNREAL. And when you finally loosen up? Whoa Nellie!

ON VICKY- forcing a smile, muscling through it...

HAILEY (CONT'D)

But Valerie, it is SO worth it. It's creation. You know how you make art with your lens? I'm making a human with my *body*. It's so, what's the word I want.

(thinking, then)

PRIMAL. We take such pains to be civilized, we get our hair and nails done, sip our beverages and make polite conversation, and then in one small moment, it all falls away. We're *animals*.

(then)

Can we airbrush my stretch-marks?

EXT. KERRIGAN PARK - LATER

Marino and his friends ANGEL and JAMAL, both 22, bounce a basketball between one other lazily. It is OPPRESSIVELY HOT. They dump cups of water on their heads.

JAMAL

Yo my cousin comin' in from Ohio
this weekend. Brotha got SICK cash.

ANGEL

Where he get it?

JAMAL

He a recording artist. Some psycho
hip-hop clown shit. They paint they
faces and braid they hair. Lookin'
all crazy.

ANGEL

A Juggalo, man.

MARINO

Juggler?

ANGEL

Juggalo. Lo.

MARINO

The fuck is that?

ANGEL

Insane Clown Posse. Dark carnival.
Drinking fluorescent soda and shit.

MARINO

I have no idea what you're saying.

ANGEL

ICP and Psychotic Records, *they* the
artists. Juggalos follow 'em. Some
whack motherfuckers. Millions of
'em. What's your cousin go by?

JAMAL

Stage name, you mean? Pernicious
Rob.

Marino and Angel CRACK UP.

MARINO

"Pernicious Rob"? Where he get
that?

JAMAL

His name Rob. He pernicious. How do
I know?

ANGEL

Does he ride you around in his
Clown Car?

JAMAL

His Bentley, son.

ANGEL

Oh snap!

MARINO

Hooooo.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

He a PIMP. The ladies, the Cristal,
all of it. Motherfucker like to
spend. I seen him drop six grand on
a coin toss. He flash it even when
he lose it, know'm sayin'?

MARINO

Must be nice...

JAMAL

This weekend, man. We ragin'. You
down?

ANGEL

Straight up. You down, Marino?

MARINO

Workin,' man.

ANGEL

Boy always workin'. When you
college-bound, homes?

JAMAL

Yeah, you supposed to be gettin'
your think on.

MARINO

Postponed.

JAMAL

For real? What a waste...

AT THE OTHER END OF THE PARK-- Paul sits, eating a sandwich
miserably. A STRANGE SCRAWNY BESPECTACLED BOY, 6, approaches.

BESPECTACLED BOY

Where's your baby?

PAUL

I don't have one.

BESPECTACLED BOY
Are you a Sexual Predator?

PAUL
Wish I knew how to answer that.

Nearby, Angel and Jamal begin snapping each other with wet shirts. The SPRAY OF WATER hits Paul and the little boy.

A TYPE-A MOM runs over to the little boy and snatches him up. She also wears a tiny baby in a sling on her chest.

TYPE-A MOM
Careful! Babies here!

ANGEL
It's our park, mama. Go back to the upper west side.

TYPE-A MOM
I'll call the cops if you don't show some respect!

They taunt her and SLAP THEIR SHIRTS at her.

PAUL
Hey, settle down, this is a public space.

Angel and Jamal come menacingly close to Paul.

JAMAL
The fuck you gonna do about it, Yuppie?

MARINO
Back off guys. Let him finish his prosciutto sandwich in peace.

Jamal and Angel reluctantly back off. They all run off, playfully shoving one another.

ON PAUL-- watching Marino, too late to thank him... But he looks familiar...

TYPE-A MOM
They really need to look into moving the projects further away.

INT. VICKY'S STUDIO - SAME

Vicky and Hailey (now in a robe) flip through digital proofs on Vicky's monitor.

HAILEY
 (squealing)
 I look like a goddess! No wonder
 you're so pricey.

VICKY
 Four years of art school, two of
 graduate study...

HAILEY
 I can't believe I'm your first
 woman-with-child.

VICKY
 I don't really do bump photography.
 Nude portraiture is more my thing.

HAILEY
 Well maybe you should look into it.
 My friends all want their bellies
 shot. And you have that "artsy"
 thing everyone loves...

Vicky clicks around on her computer.

VICKY
 Do you want the proofs on disk or
 should I upload them?

The pregnant lady notices a LONG INTRICATE TATTOO on Vicky's
 inner arm. It is of a tree, complete with roots.

HAILEY
 Gosh. That's a big one! Is it new?

VICKY
 I got it when I was fifteen.

HAILEY
 Does it mean anything?

VICKY
 Yes.

Pause. It is clear Vicky is not going to follow up.

HAILEY
 (uncomfortable)
 Do you take credit?

Suddenly, the POWER GOES OUT in the studio.

VICKY
 Whatthefuck.

INT. METHODIST CHURCH BASEMENT, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Another Gamblers Anonymous meeting. The EGG TIMER ticks. DANNY, 40's, wears a too-tight T-shirt with a drawing of the risen Christ and the slogan "Jesus Hates The Yankees."

DANNY

... and you know, part of recovery is bein' a good son and all, so I went to Toledo to visit my mom, it was so humid, you know how like it's a swamp out there? August in Toledo, man. Ball-sweat city.

People GROAN IN AGREEMENT, including the woman.

DANNY (CONT'D)

So I went grocery shopping for her, bought her those Stella Dora Breakfast treats, she's crazy 'bout those, and some V8, and a red rose because I love her...

A collective "Awwwwww."

DANNY (CONT'D)

...and some new Keds because she has corns and it's the only shoe she can wear... what else....

ON PAUL- crawling out of his skin.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Oh. And a yoga mat. Also, I bought her and her friend Betty some lottery tickets, and I was buyin' them and thinkin' you know, I could just get some for myself. Twenty bucks worth. Just get 'em, scratch 'em off, no biggie. But I didn't.
(smiling)
And *that's* when I knew I was better.

All RAP THEIR KNUCKLES on the tables in appreciation.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Thanks.

The timer goes off.

WALLY

Okay. Who's next. Paul? Wanna share today?

PAUL
What was the topic?

WALLY
How has your life improved since coming here and/or when did you realize you were better.

PAUL
Um. Okay.

Wally WINDS THE EGG TIMER.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I, uh. I got laid off yesterday.
Collective "awwww," "that's rough," "fuckin' economy," etc.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Yeah, so. And we have this place in Brooklyn we just bought, so.
Collective "yow," "that's hard," "fuckin' Brooklyn," etc.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Coming here was easier when I could just walk over. Um. But you know. When I started coming here. I was. Things were. It was chaos. But now.

Long beat.

Paul's face blanches. A MOMENT OF CRISIS, as he realizes he was so much happier when he was gambling.

WALLY
Paul? You okay?

Paul BEGINS TO SWEAT AND FIDGET.

WALLY (CONT'D)
Wanna pass? You can pass.

PAUL
Yeah. Yeah. Pass.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - LATER

Paul walks towards the subway. He passes a deli with a HUGE LOTTO SIGN in the window. He passes an OFF TRACK BETTING facility. He passes a lit billboard for a CELEBRITY POKER show, with Ben Affleck's huge laughing head. He even passes a sporting goods store with a FOOTBALL DISPLAY in the window.

It seems like the entire city is mocking him.

EXT. KELLY STREET - LATER

A BEATEN DOWN Paul trudges home with the throngs of day-jobbers coming off the subway--all crushed souls. He stops at the laundromat to pick up his dry cleaning, and catches an OLDER DUDE and a MATRONLY WOMAN seated outside in mid-conversation. Heavy Brooklyn accents.

OLDER DUDE

Why do they need a gay party night at a pizzeria? This isn't a gay neighborhood!

MATRONLY WOMAN

Someone'll put a stop to it. They wouldn't let that happen so close to the church.

OLDER DUDE

Different class of people moving in, I tell you... they look on you like you're a piece of shit.

They GLANCE AT PAUL. He takes pains to smile generously.

PAUL

Evening! Scorcher today...

They GLARE.

INT. PAUL AND VICKY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul enters the room and FLIPS THE SWITCH ON. No light.

He then spots Vicky, sitting in a chair in panties and a bra, smoking in the dark.

PAUL

Hot as fuck in here. Central air broken?

(then)

Why are you smoking in the dark?

VICKY

(slow boil)

Thought it was the fuse. Checked the fuse box. Nope. Thought it was a grid thing, maybe the Great Blackout of 2010. Nope. What do you think it was, babe?

PAUL
(dubious)
The electric bill?

VICKY
We had it set to automatic payment
from your old credit card. The one
we cut up six months ago when my
father paid it off.

PAUL
Did you call them?

VICKY
I did. They said they'd turn it on
after the weekend.

PAUL
Why so long?

Vicky shrugs. Paul notices a FULL ASHTRAY OF BUTTS next to
her chair.

PAUL (CONT'D)
How long have you been sitting
there?

VICKY
About twelve cigarettes.

Paul KNEELS BY VICKY'S SIDE.

PAUL
I'll handle the electricity first
thing tomorrow.

VICKY
Okay.

PAUL
And we'll leave this place. This
neighborhood. We can do that.

VICKY
I won't go back to renting a tiny
room in a crappy building with
crooked landlords and noisy
inconsiderate douchebag tenants. I
can't do it anymore.
(desperate)
I feel trapped. I want to scream, I
want to tear my skin off.

PAUL
What can I do to help, baby?

VICKY
(thinking, then)
You could press this lit cigarette
into my neck and beg me to suck
you.

Paul thinks she's joking.

PAUL
I don't beg for blowjobs.
(then)
But I'll burn you...

He takes the cigarette from her. She pulls her hair aside and tilts her head, **BARING HER NECK**. He moves the lit end toward her. She watches him, not flinching. It's a **GAME OF CHICKEN**.

He gets **VERY VERY CLOSE...** then he realizes she is not joking. He pulls away.

VICKY
(flirty)
Coward.

PAUL
(disturbed, but aroused)
Psycho.

She smiles. Then she unzips his pants.

EXT. KELLY STREET - EARLY MORNING

Marino walks up the street in his work apron, clutching a cup of coffee. He pauses outside Garibaldi's Jewelry store.

The windows are **PLASTERED WITH SIGNS** that read "50-75% off!" "Going Out Of Business Sale!" "All Jewelry Marked Down!"

He spies a particular item... **CLOSE ON--** a beautiful sapphire ring. Marino notes the price tag - \$2000. He grimaces.

INT. PUZZO'S HARDWARE - CONTINUOUS

Paul sits on a bench outside the hardware store, waiting for the store to open.

Marino approaches. He nods a greeting to Paul and unlocks the door. Paul, surprised, **RECOGNIZES HIM**.

PAUL

Oh hey. You're the guy from the park. With the friends.
(on Marino's puzzled look)
The T-shirts? They got a kid wet?

MARINO

Oh. Yeah. Sorry about that.

PAUL

It wasn't my kid.

Marino eyes him as if he might be a stalker.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm actually, I'm just looking for a home generator. For like a blackout.

MARINO

We got a couple different kinds. Come on in.

INT. PUZZO'S HARDWARE - CONTINUOUS

Paul follows Marino to an appliance aisle. Then it hits him.

PAUL

You're Frankie Puzzo's son! I knew you looked familiar. You sanded our floors. We bought the penthouse in your dad's building? The one on third?

MARINO

Oh right. You're married to the photographer.

PAUL

I am. What a decent guy, your dad. He made us feel so welcome.

MARINO

Yeah, he's a trip. You just move from the city?

PAUL

Tribeca, yes. In February.

MARINO

How you like it?

PAUL
 (tactfully)
 It's an adjustment...

Paul's phone rings.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Excuse me a minute.

Paul slips his bluetooth onto his ear.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Rudy, hey man!

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. OUTDOOR MANHATTAN CAFE - SAME

Rudy paces with his phone, looking a bit strung out.

RUDY
 Keller! How's day two of lazy-
 shitness?

PAUL
 I'm appliance shopping.

RUDY
 Say no more. Listen. I know you're
 out of the game these days but did
 you hear anything about Artie
 getting busted?

PAUL
 No, what happened?

RUDY
 No clue. Tried both his numbers.
 One's disconnected, the other keeps
 ringing. Of course my fucking back-
 up bookie is also MIA.

PAUL
 Got a wad burning a hole in your
 pocket or something?

RUDY
 Three investors from Dubai flew in
 last night. They're looking for
 action.

Something in his tone piques Paul's interest. He moves away from Marino and lowers his voice.

PAUL
How much are we talking here?

MARINO
You're not gonna believe this...
(pause, then)
A quarter. Each.

This KNOCKS THE WIND out of Paul.

PAUL
Three heads at twenty-five a piece?
Are you shitting me?

Marino LISTENS DISCREETLY...

RUDY
The motherfuckers are mentally ill.

PAUL
Pre-season NFL, or what?

RUDY
Yeah. Couldn't make it easy, could they...

Paul becomes twitchy.

PAUL
Ah, listen, lemme call you back. I may know someone.

RUDY
Really?

PAUL
Maybe. Give me an hour.

RUDY
You got it.

Paul hangs up and approaches Marino.

PAUL
(a tad desperate)
Do you have yesterday's paper somewhere? The Post? And Wednesday's? And this morning's? Just the sports section.

MARINO
In the back maybe?

PAUL
How much could I give you for them?

MARINO
(long-shot)
Twenty.

Without hesitation, Paul peels off a twenty for Marino.

ON MARINO-- wow. This guy.

EXT. PAUL AND VICKY'S ROOF DECK - SAME

Vicky lounges in a chaise, sipping coffee on the furnished roof of her luxury apartment. She wears pajama bottoms and a tank top. She appears to be TRYING HARD TO ENJOY HERSELF...

VICKY'S POV-- a perfect view of the Manhattan skyline.

We can see the LONGING in her eyes.

INT. DELI - A LITTLE LATER

Paul sits at a table poring over the sports pages.

He then STARES AT HIS PHONE. He sweats. He fidgets. He is SHAKING WITH VOLTAGE. This is the most alive we've seen him. We understand he is faced with a POINT OF NO RETURN.

Perhaps we ZOOM INTO HIS EYES. We see the reflection of the phone, its keypad beckoning...

ZOOM OUT. Paul dials.

PAUL
Hey Rude-man, it's Keller. Listen, my guy will take, but he wants to go through me. Had a scare last week I guess. So, who do these guys like?
(...)
Cincinatti, all of them? Okay. Where are they right now?
(...)
Okay. Yeah, the line from Vegas has the Saints by six and a half, so...
(...)
Great, okay. I'll pass it on.

Paul hangs up. He writes down a bunch of figures. CLOSE ON the pad:

25 x 3 = \$75,000 on Bengals
needed: \$75,000 on Saints

10% commission

And then, much bigger:

the vig =
\$7500 *IN ONE WEEKEND*

He runs his hands through his hair.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Holy balls.

EXT. KERRIGAN STREET - SAME

Paul walks quickly down the street, pulsing with adrenaline.

He passes by Mikado Sushi, which is closed. He peeks in to see Ichiro hovering over a large sheet of architect paper.

ON PAUL-- struck by an idea.

INT. OLIVER'S LOFT - LOWER MANHATTAN - LATER

OLIVER OHRT, a skinny grey man of 48, pours Vicky a small glass of port. The room is an ENORMOUS LIVE-IN ARTIST'S STUDIO-- and a total wreck of materials. Stacks of unframed paintings and photos litter the place along with piles of gear. A RATTY FUTON lies in the corner.

It is the exact opposite of Vicky's pristine decked-out space.

VICKY
(re: the port)
And which famous model gave you
this?

OLIVER
Naomi. God what a horrible night. I
threw myself a party to get over my
ex-wife, she shows up with her
stunning new journalist girlfriend.
I got outrageously drunk, woke up
next to a girl from my portrait
class.

VICKY
(teasing)
I thought I was the only student
you slept with.

OLIVER
Just the best, *mein Schatz...*

They clink glasses and sip.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

So. Tell me about life in Gotham Lite.

VICKY

My studio is dreamy... We have a gorgeous roofdeck...

OLIVER

Any shows coming up?

VICKY

Not yet.

OLIVER

I know a fantastic gallery in Dumbo run by the lover of a Russian billionaire. And sunset park is supposedly up-and-coming...

VICKY

It's not really gallery work. A few private commissions. Maybe a bump or two.

OLIVER

(not understanding)
A bump.

VICKY

Pregnant women. Mid-gestation.

OLIVER

Oh dear lord.

VICKY

(defensive)
Paul's out of work, we have a mortgage...

OLIVER

If you had stayed with me we could have been broke WITHOUT a roofdeck to pay off.

VICKY

I don't want to be broke, Oliver.

OLIVER

What do you want, *Liebling*?

VICKY
 (thinking)
 Glamor. Speed. Artifice.
 (then)
 A community of people addicted to
 chaos.

OLIVER
 You can't find that in Brooklyn?

VICKY
 I'm not really looking.

OLIVER
 Then look. Be open to it. Some
 wild shit might be growing in your
 own backyard...

ON VICKY-- drinking her port. Wild shit, huh...

INT. MIKADO SUSHI - SAME

Paul and Ichiro examine the architect paper. They share a
 bottle of sake.

ICHIRO
 (pointing)
 Koi pond. Bamboo fence. Wheelchair
 ramp.

PAUL
 And these hatchmarks...?

ICHIRO
 Landscaping. Bushes, rocks.

PAUL
 And this?

Ichiro squints.

ICHIRO
 Soy sauce.

He dabs the spot with a napkin.

PAUL
 Eating sushi under the stars... I
 love it.

ICHIRO
 It is our dream.

PAUL

A beauty. When does construction start?

ICHIRO

Never. We plan this garden for three years. Business too slow now.

(small beat, then)

I see men like you with money. I have admiration. I know you do something right. You live American Dream. You survive bad weather.

(solemn)

I come here with American Dream. I do something right in my heart. But the bad weather wash me away.

PAUL

It's about luck, Ichiro.

ICHIRO

One makes luck. I need recipe.

Paul is thoughtful. He returns to the blueprints.

PAUL

How much will this cost, if you don't mind me asking?

ICHIRO

Thirty thousand.

Paul leans in, his eyes twinkling.

PAUL

(slowly)

What if I told you. That you could have that money. By Monday. In cash.

ICHIRO

I would make sarcastic face.

PAUL

Well then... start sneering.

INT. MARINO'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Marino, Frankie, and Liliana sit around the dinner table eating lasagna. Also at the table are PEDRO, 11, Liliana's younger brother, and CATHERINE, 75, Frankie's mother.

FRANKIE

Delicious lasagna. Nunzia, you did good. Come join us!

NUNZIA, Marino's chubby 14-year-old sister, enters with a basket of garlic bread.

NUNZIA

This is gourmet. I used three heads of garlic and mixed parmesan cheese and sour cream for the spread.

FRANKIE

Perfetto. Your mother woulda been proud.

CATHERINE

Così buona ragazza!

Catherine pinches Nunzia's cheeks.

NUNZIA

Thanks grandma. Daddy, could I grab an immersion blender from the store tomorrow? Mine broke and I wanna get the good one, the Cuisinart. It's expensive but they totally last forever.

FRANKIE

Whatever you want, pumpkin.

Marino glares at his father.

Pedro grabs three pieces of bread. Liliana smacks his hand.

LILIANA

Pedro, no es codicioso.

PEDRO

But I'm hungry...

Frankie looks at Marino, who has NOT TOUCHED HIS FOOD.

FRANKIE

Marino. Why so quiet? Eat something, say something.

Marino scans the table at ALL THE MOUTHS he needs to feed. He lifts a forkful and takes a tiny anxiety-ridden bite.

INT. PAUL AND VICKY'S KITCHEN - SAME

The apartment, still without electricity, is LIT BY CANDLES. Triumphant and a little tipsy, Paul pours himself a whiskey. He sees a NOTE ON THE COUNTER: "Went to Ollie's, back later"

Paul sighs, a teeny bit irritated. He sips whiskey and scribbles on the PAPER FROM EARLIER.

INSERT PAPER--

needed: ~~\$75,000~~ \$45,000 on Saints
\$30,000 from Ichiro
\$45,000 from ??????

PAUL
(delight and terror)
Shit fuck bitches.

Paul is CHARGED. We understand this is his comfort zone... This is a man ADDICTED TO CHAOS.

He retrieves the slip of paper with VICTOR FINKEL's phone number. He grabs his phone. Deep breath. Begins to dial...

THEN-- Ding-dong.

INT/EXT. PAUL AND VICKY'S FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Paul opens the door... Marino stands on the front step.

MARINO
You got a minute?

INT. SUBWAY CAR - LATER

Vicky sits on the F train reading the New Yorker. Across from her, three VERY STYLISH GIRLS in party attire giggle with each other.

Vicky glances at them over her magazine. She BECOMES FIXATED as they pass a flask around and adjust their makeup.

The subway stops at York street. The girls tumble out. After a second, Vicky pops up and impulsively FLINGS HERSELF OUT THE DOORS, nearly getting caught as they close.

EXT. DUMBO STREET - CONTINUOUS

The girls stumble down the street. Vicky follows at a safe distance.

They come upon a LARGE GRAFFITIED WAREHOUSE with music thudding inside, "Fixin To Thrill" by the Dragonettes.

A line of super sexy hipster kids snakes around the side of the building.

The bouncer LIFTS THE ROPE for the three girls. Vicky slips in behind them.

INT. PAUL AND VICKY'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Paul offers Marino a tumbler of whiskey.

MARINO

No thanks.

Paul takes a seat on the couch. Awkward pause.

PAUL

So. What can I do for you?

MARINO

I was thinking you could maybe talk up this building to your buddies. Sell them on the neighborhood, make the place sound hip, et cetera.

Paul is taken aback by this strange request. He recovers.

PAUL

I don't know anyone who's looking to buy right now...

MARINO

They don't gotta move in themselves. They could rent it out.

PAUL

(tiny beat, then)

Who exactly do you imagine my friends to be?

MARINO

Guys with money. Guys who make money by spending money. Guys who make money by moving money around.

PAUL

Pretty accurate.

(then)

Are you sure you know what you're asking? I moved here to get away from people like me, you know.

MARINO

I know.

PAUL
 (not totally genuine)
 Well. I'll see what I can do.

MARINO
 Thanks.

Another AWKWARD BEAT. Marino makes no move to leave.

PAUL
 Anything else I can help you with?

MARINO
 Nope.
 (then, loaded)
 Anything I can help you with?

PAUL
 (cautious)
 What do you have in mind?

MARINO
 Dunno. Maybe a little pre-season
 action.

The men SIZE EACH OTHER UP...

PAUL
 I'm looking for a couple of big
 players. I mean *huge*. Platinum.

MARINO
 I got one.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - LATER

Vicky stands by the bar sipping a drink. She scans the room. It is full of SWEATY BOUNCING DRUNKEN TEENAGED HIPSTERS. The song is now a remix of "Hardhead Set" by Skinny Puppy.

ON VICKY- nauseated. This is not at all what she expected.

TWO SLOPPY TEEN BOYS stumble over to Vicky. One wears a TRUCKER HAT and the other wears AVIATOR SUNGLASSES.

TRUCKER HAT
 Hi so, me and my buddy have a bet.
 He thinks you're 40. I told him
 he's fucking nuts.

AVIATOR SUNGLASSES
 38. She's younger up close. But
 still kinda MILF-ey, no?

Sickened, Vicky makes a beeline for the door....

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

...and vomits right next to the bouncer. A GIRL WAITING ON LINE, 19, groans in disgust.

GIRL WAITING ON LINE
I hate when old people can't hold
their liquor.

INT. DINER - SAME

Jamal, Marino, Paul, and PERNICIOUS ROB, 27, are all squashed into a diner booth eating disco fries. Pernicious Rob is a large black man with EVIL CLOWN MAKE-UP and a mass of braids.

A POSSE OF EVIL CLOWNS sits at a nearby table: the entourage.

PERNICIOUS ROB
You know I'm from Ohio so I can't
be bettin' on no faggot New Orleans
team.

PAUL
It's not about the team. It's about
the points.

PERNICIOUS ROB
I know how it works, mother fucker.
Me and Double Death Killa been
dealin' dirt since the crib, am I
right Double-D?

DOUBLE DEATH KILLA, 26, nods from the posse table.

DOUBLE DEATH KILLA
Word.

PAUL
Well think about it this way.
Saints are the favorite. By taking
them you stand to--

PERNICIOUS ROB
Talk numbers to me.

PAUL
(nervously)
Ah numbers aren't really my strong--

MARINO
(excited- this is his
moment)
(MORE)

MARINO (CONT'D)

Okay look. Bengals are at plus 6.5, but if you go with them you gotta lay, say, \$115 to win \$100. That's 15%. Saints backers can lay \$105 to win \$100. That's only 5%. So if you lay 30 grand on the Saints, we're talkin' \$1500 as opposed to \$4500.

(bottom line)

Everywhere else it's \$110 across the board. You won't find another deal like this.

ON PAUL-- stunned; did he just crunch those in his head?

Marino WINKS AT PAUL.

JAMAL

We go with Saints, we just gotta make sure Cincinatti at a MAJOR disadvantage. They gotta lose by more than seven.

PERNICIOUS ROB

No problem. We got family all up and down that mofo, am I right Hatchet Murda?

HATCHET MURDA, 25, throws a gang-sign from the posse table.

PAUL

I'm not sure I want to know about any shady goings-on...

PERNICIOUS ROB

Ain't no shady. We got each other's back, s'all. We family. Family do right by family.

From the posse table, a chorus of "holla" "yeah you right" "know it" and "word."

PAUL

All right then. So you're in?

PERNICIOUS ROB

We in. Twenny g's, sucka. BAM.

They shake.

INT. PAUL AND VICKY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Vicky lays on the bed with a WASHCLOTH ACROSS HER FOREHEAD.

Paul enters with a flashlight.

PAUL
Hi baby... you okay?

VICKY
Never again will I chase a gallon
of port with two vodka gimlets.

PAUL
Oh Ollie.

VICKY
Vodka was after Ollie. At a club in
dumbo.

PAUL
With who?

VICKY
Myself. It was wall-to-wall
obnoxious. Sweaty American Apparel
teenagers...

Paul climbs into bed.

VICKY (CONT'D)
Easy...

PAUL
Sorry.

Paul settles in more gently. Small beat.

VICKY
So what'd you do all day? Besides
not buy the generator...

PAUL
(lying)
I tried a gazillion stores. I even
went to Ikea. You know, it is
impossible to extract oneself from
that place in under three hours.

VICKY
...the glimmering promise of a
better-designed yet entirely
disposable life.

PAUL
And tiny meatballs. And
lingonberries.

VICKY
Okay no more talking. 'Nite.

PAUL
 G'nite.
 (then)
 Love you.

Vicky moans. CLOSE ON PAUL-- Guilt City.

We stay close on him, awake, as TIME PASSES... and now it is morning. Light streams in. Paul has NOT SLEPT ONE WINK.

INT. PAUL AND VICKY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Paul grips his phone. Deep breath, once again.

PAUL
 (into phone)
 Victor? Hey, it's Paul. Listen, you
 free for a visit this afternoon?

INT. PUZZO'S HARDWARE - SAME

Marino stocks shelves while Frankie sets up the register.

FRANKIE
 What is he, a bookie?

MARINO
 Yeah. But I don't think he's done
 it before. Seems a little shaky.

FRANKIE
 Takes practice, like anything else.
 Where he get his line from?

MARINO
 The newspapers.

FRANKIE
 The *papers*? He can't operate like
 that. Should get some fella from
 Vegas. Or the Dominican Republic.

MARINO
 (a thought)
 Or me.

FRANKIE
 You don't know shit bout making a
 line.

MARINO
 It's crunching, right? Could do
 that in my sleep.
 (MORE)

MARINO (CONT'D)

I grab every stat ever made, punch 'em into my computer, calculate the likelihood of a certain team winning by a certain amount. Then call around to see who's injured, whose mother died, etc. Anything that could trash a player's game.

FRANKIE

Sounds like a lot of work.

MARINO

Might be worth it. Those guys pull in a ton...

(then, backing off)

Should we get some'a that organic pesticide? People been askin'...

FRANKIE

(warming to it)

You know... an old-fashioned numbers racket might be just what this neighborhood needs. Back in the day all those wiseguys come over from Sicily, started running numbers the second they got off the boat... *Everyone* got involved. Postal workers, college kids, wall street guys, people on welfare... even the gays... you remember Sonny?

MARINO

Yeah. Used to bring us those big licorice cigars from Canada.

FRANKIE

He had quite an operation here for a while.

MARINO

What happened?

FRANKIE

Moved upstate to be a millionaire. He passes through now and again. We drink cappuccinos and reminisce.

(wistful)

It was a real community.

ON MARINO- controlling his enthusiasm.

INT. PAUL AND VICKY'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Vicky rolls over in the bed, moaning.

VICKY

Baby, could you get me a--

She opens her eyes. No Paul.

EXT. VICTOR FINKEL'S HOUSE - SAME

A taxi pulls up to an enormous McMansion in north Jersey. Paul climbs out and rings the bell.

VICTOR FINKEL, a strikingly handsome man of 58, answers the door in a bright plum velour track suit. He holds a TINY DOG.

It is immediately clear he is VERY GAY.

VICTOR

(smiling hugely)

My long lost son-in-law! Come in,
your favorite dark roast Kona
awaits...

INT. HEALTH FOOD STORE - AFTERNOON

Vicky, looking a bit green, coasts through the aisles for something for her tummy. HAILEY SPOTS HER and waddles over.

HAILEY

Veronica!

Vicky smiles, trying to be polite.

VICKY

Hi. It's Vicky. I should have
corrected you before.

HAILEY

Oh my god. I'm so sorry! My head is
oatmeal these days.

VICKY

No worries. Bit foggy myself.
Haven't been this hungover since
the late 90's.

Hailey grabs a few lollipops and hands them to Vicky.

HAILEY

Preggie pops. With brown rice syrup
and no chemicals. Got me through
morning sickness. Try the ginger.

VICKY

Thanks.

HAILEY

Listen, I'm having a garden brunch tomorrow, I'd love you to come meet some of my girlfriends. They all flipped over the proofs--

VICKY

I can't--

HAILEY

Wait! I'm making mushroom quiche and virgin mary's.

VICKY

(tiny beat, then)

Okay. This is probably rude but here goes. I don't, I'm not... *good* with women. I said that wrong. I mean I have trouble relating to normal ladies with normal lives.

HAILEY

(annoyed)

Yes you're very special Vicky but these women don't bite. Here.

She hands Vicky her card.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Call if you're coming so I know how much to make.

She vanishes. Vicky feels shame.

INT. VICTOR FINKEL'S PARLOR - SAME

Victor sits on a faux-Victorian chair stroking his puppy while Paul sips kona. Victor's partner, BRAD, 40, tunes a piano.

VICTOR

That's a lovely note, Brad. Hit it again.

Brad hits it again.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I thank my stars I met a man who can tickle the ivories. My one deep regret in life is never taking music lessons.

(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Well, that and not handling my divorce better.

(then)

So. Did you come all the way from Brooklyn to look dapper on my chaise, or is this a money thing?

PAUL

Both. Though it's not a loan this time, Victor. It's an investment.

VICTOR

You sound like a vacuum salesman. I don't suffer fools, Paul.

PAUL

I know--

VICTOR

You can buy a lot of goods with your charm but at the end of the day you need to back it up. And by the way, that money was not a loan. It was a gift.

PAUL

Vicky insists on paying it back--

VICTOR

--a *wedding* gift for the wedding I wasn't invited to.

PAUL

No one was invited, Victor. We eloped.

VICTOR

(sour)

I spend a good deal of my energies convincing myself that not everything Vicky does is an assault on my person. But evidence often suggests the contrary. Like now, for instance--

PAUL

She doesn't know I'm here.

VICTOR

(perking up)

Really? And why would Hubby defy his bride thusly? Are you tiffing?

PAUL

No... It's a project she may not fully support at first.

VICTOR

Related to your gambling addiction, by any chance?

Paul is SHATTERED.

PAUL

She told you?

VICTOR

Poor girl was distraught enough to confide in me, if you can believe it. Moment of weakness I suppose...

(happy/sad nostalgia)

We were pals once. When she was a baby she used to hang onto my beard with her little fists-- I had this bushy woodsman thing, it was the 70's-- and she would *wail* when I tried to pry her off. So I'd let her hang there. With her tiny knuckles.

A long beat. Brad plays a FEW SAD NOTES on the piano.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(soft)

Just tell me this: is she happy?

PAUL

She's, you know. Complicated.

VICTOR

(beat, then, recovering)

If this "project" is something of which I approve, Paul, I'll want to be involved. Intimately. You think you both can handle that?

ON PAUL-- not sure at all.

INT. MIKADO SUSHI - NIGHT

Paul drinks his sake quickly. Vicky can barely eat. Ichiro stands behind the sushi bar EYEING PAUL. A HUGE PLATE OF SPECIAL SUSHI is placed before them.

VICKY

We didn't order this...

WAITER
Compliments of Mister Ichiro.

VICKY
Wow. That's generous...

Ichiro NODS AT THEM. Vicky waves back.

VICKY (CONT'D)
Weird. Anyway. I think I need to go to this garden brunch tomorrow. Pregnant Hailey is hosting. Is it okay if you don't come? Might be a lady thing.

PAUL
Buncha broads all perioding together? No thanks. I'll just catch the game at CJ's.

VICKY
Okay.
(then, thoughtful)
Do you think I'm an asshole?

PAUL
Where could this be going?

VICKY
Sometimes I think I'm a big fucking jerky bitch. Like I have to work really hard to be polite. Harder than most people.

PAUL
What brought this about?

VICKY
I dunno. Just thinkin'.

PAUL
You're frank and incisive. And freakishly attractive. Not an easy combo for most people to swallow...

Paul notices Vicky's uneaten food.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Could I have your dragon roll?

Vicky shrugs. Paul digs in, eating like a jittery freak. Vicky watches him, maybe clocking his nervousness a tiny bit.

INT. CJ FAGAN'S PUB - AFTERNOON

Paul enters the bar. Already seated near the TVs are Marino, Frankie, and Nunzia. Nunzia sips a coke and reads a book.

PAUL

Frankie! How ya been?

FRANKIE

Hiya Paulie. Hope you don't mind us crashing your party. I got money on this game.

(on Paul's look)

Some bookie from Queens, you don't know 'im.

PAUL

What'd I miss?

FRANKIE

Carson Palmer's out. Apparently his car got towed outside his house last night. Got into a fight with one'a the towing guys. Whacked 'im in the jaw. Not sure if he's in jail or what.

Marino and Paul EXCHANGE LOOKS.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Hey Paulie. My son tell you he was captain of the math team?

MARINO

I wasn't captain. I quit after a week.

PAUL

Why?

MARINO

Buncha squares, man. Video games and Big Gulps. Not one of 'em ever been laid.

(then)

That means intercourse, Nunzie.

NUNZIA

I know what *laid* means, I'm not retarded.

PAUL

No college?

MARINO

Sucky grades. Mom died my junior year, so... kinda lost focus.

PAUL

I'm sorry.

Marino kinda shrugs. Small solemn beat. Then--

FRANKIE

Kick off!!

All eyes on the TV. But then...

The BAR DOOR OPENS-- ICHIRO ENTERS. He nods a greeting to the stunned Paul and takes a seat in the back of the bar, away from the group. Paul turns to the TV and SILENTLY FREAKS.

EXT. HAILEY'S BACK GARDEN - SAME

Vicky wears a pretty flowered sundress with her hair in a pony tail-- this is the most normal we've seen her look. She is quite beautiful. She clutches a bottle of champagne.

Deep breath. She knocks on the back door. Hailey opens it.

HAILEY

(delighted)

You made it!

VICKY

Yeah. Did you know there's a police car in your driveway?

HAILEY

My husband's a cop. Come on in!

Vicky follows Hailey into a very lovely, overgrown garden. About SIX WHITE WOMEN in their 30's in varying stages of pregnancy lounge about, looking large and uncomfortable.

BRUCE, a BEEFY UNIFORMED POLICEMAN, 40, eats off to the side.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Hi ladies, this is Vicky! The girl I was telling you about! Vicky, this is Tammy, Ashley, Becky, Becca, Sarah, and Marta. Oh and my husband Bruce.

BRUCE

Hey.

MARTA
Beautiful work, Victoria. So
artistic!

VICKY
(trying)
Thanks... when are you due?

MARTA
(deflated)
I'm not. I'm just fat.

VICKY
(mortified)
Oh. Sorry--

ASHLEY
Are you free tomorrow by any
chance? My husband and I need some
shots with our two year old twins
while I'm still preppers...

VICKY
I think so--

ASHLEY
We want it to be very informal,
like we're Brad and Angie and
you're the paparazzi chasing us
through the park...

BECCA
Hailey, you didn't tell us she was
so skinny and pretty...

TAMMY
Are you free Thursday?

SARAH
What about next Sunday?

HAILEY
Don't harass the girl! My gosh!
(then)
Quiche?

Vicky takes the quiche from Hailey, a bit overwhelmed.

INT. CJ FAGAN'S PUB - LATER

Frankie, Paul, and Marino sip beers post-game.

ON THE TV SCREEN- the score reads "Saints 21, Bengals 7."

FRANKIE
Happy Sunday, boys...

An ecstatic Ichiro approaches and shakes Paul's hand.

ICHIRO
Thank you, thank you. This means
great deal.

PAUL
(smiling)
First rule of trading? Never lose
the client's money.
(then)
Make sure to buy your new bushes at
Puzzo's Hardware.

Ichiro nods and slips out the door.

FRANKIE
Much obliged, Paulie...

MARINO
Hey, how much you make, Pop?

FRANKIE
(proud)
A cool hundred. How 'bout you?

Marino looks at Paul expectantly.

PAUL
Oh.

Paul hands Marino TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS CASH.

PAUL (CONT'D)
For delivering the evil hiphop
clown.

Marino counts it as Frankie's EYES GROW WIDE.

FRANKIE
Are you kidding me? Are you fucking
kidding me? How much was the vig on
this game?

PAUL
Um. Seven thousand five hundred.

FRANKIE
So each side had...
(trying to calculate)
Marino help me out.

MARINO
Seventy-five grand--

FRANKIE
Seventy-five grand?

PAUL
To the dollar.

FRANKIE
Who, finance people?

PAUL
Mostly. Couple of wildcards.

FRANKIE
That is absolutely INSANE. Listen.
We could be in business with this.
Your contacts, Marino's brain...

MARINO
Easy, pop--

FRANKIE
We could take over the basement
unit in Paul's building. Get some
flat screens, hook up satellite.
Folks from the 'hood relax on our
couches while they lose their
shirts. Nunzia cooks the snacks,
Little Pedro's phone clerk, money
delivery is Liliana. A real family
business.

Paul and Marino glance at one another. The idea THRILLS AND
TERRIFIES them both.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Don't say anything. Just think
about it.

EXT. KERRIGAN STREET - DAY

A pair of sassy shoes STRUTS DOWN THE BLOCK. PAN UP to Paul
swinging a paint can to the Bee Gee's "Stayin' Alive" ala
Saturday Night Fever.

He stops at the window of Arturo's Pizza. MARIA, 50's, grins.

MARIA
Hiya Paulie, two or three?

Paul peels off a hundred dollar bill.

PAUL
Two, two. Gimme two.

A TINY BIT LATER--

Paul eats the slices folded together while he struts with his paint. He passes Ichiro and Marino as they unload a crapload of plants off a truck into Ichiro's restaurant.

Printed on the side of the truck: "Puzzo's Hardware- Serving Kerrigan Gardens since 1955."

EXT. PAUL AND VICKY'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS -

Paul glides down the steps into the basement apartment.

INT. BASEMENT APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS -

Paul hands the paint can to Frankie, who is touching up detailing with Nunzia and Liliana. The couches are covered in tarps. All greet Paul with friendly smiles. Liliana shows off her NEW SAPPHIRE RING.

A DOCKED IPOD plays in the corner. All groove out a moment.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK - SAME

Vicky squats at an awkward angle with her camera, trying to capture the pregnant Ashley, her bald husband WALTER, 35, and two adorable toe-headed TWIN GIRLS, age 4.

The family FROLICS in the grass, laughing joyously. THEY ARE DELIGHTFUL. Others gather 'round to watch them play, warmed by the sight. It is quite special...

...but somehow, Vicky is nauseated.

VICKY
You guys are doing great. Now try something new...

Vicky changes positions... and the family runs off.

VICKY (CONT'D)
Shit.

She gathers her equipment and chases them down a hill, taking moving shots like a rogue journalist-- but they are VERY FAST. Vicky can barely keep up.

The family finally reaches the edge of the water and begins SPLASHING ONE ANOTHER. Vicky reaches them, completely out of breath. She snaps a few more shots, but then she stops.

She bolts to a nearby garbage can, leans over it and HURLS.

INT. CVS - LATER

Vicky trolls the aisles, swigging a Glacier Freeze Gatorade...

SECONDS LATER-- she grabs a bottle of Pepto Bismal...

SECONDS LATER-- she snags several rolls of Tums. She scans the medicines and comes upon the boxes of PREGNANCY TESTS.

ON VICKY-- no. Not that.

EXT. ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL CHURCH - NIGHT

Paul chats on his bluetooth headset outside the church.

PAUL

Well, you made your twenty-five
back, plus another 25.

INTERCUT WITH--

INT. VICTOR FINKEL'S DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Victor and Brad share an intimate, romantic dinner. Victor puts Paul on speaker.

VICTOR

Marvelous, Paul. How wonderful your
hedge fund is profitable so
quickly! I knew you weren't just a
pretty face. You can keep my
earnings.

PAUL

I can't do that--

VICTOR

Please. I'd love you to buy
Victoria a cruise to some
ridiculous island. She's never been
on a cruise, has she?

PAUL

Doubtful.

VICTOR

Uptight people think cruises are nightmares of indulgence and consumption, but once they climb aboard and some delicious young bronze thing in uniform delivers them a cup filled with slush and rum... well. Earth is rosier planet indeed.

PAUL

Listen Victor, I have a meeting--

VICTOR

Paul dear, would you mind passing on the information of the fella who sold your apartment to you?

PAUL

Why?

VICTOR

(loaded)

No real reason. Just want to keep my eye on the market in case something glorious pops up...

Paul CLOSES HIS EYES-- dear lord.

PAUL

I'll email the info.

VICTOR

Thank you darling.

Paul hangs up. He DROPS HIS HEAD A MOMENT... then perks up as if forcing himself to remember what an amazing life he has. He walks toward the church and enters through the basement--

PAN TO THE LIT SIGN--

"BROOKLYN GAM-ANON MEETING EVERY MONDAY NIGHT AT 7:30PM. FREE COFFEE AND PASTRY. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!"

INT. PAUL AND VICKY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Paul enters to find Vicky wrapped in an afghan watching Melrose Place, sipping a DUNKIN DONUTS COFFEE.

VICKY

I hate Ashlee Simpson. She's so *not* the class-A fuck all the dudes on the show think. She's just a Grade D low-rent skank.

PAUL
Whoa doggie.

VICKY
I had a shit-filled day. Chased the
Munsters all over prospect park.
They wanted action shots. Please
get a job soon.

PAUL
I'm working on it.

A strange silent beat.

VICKY
How was the meeting?

PAUL
They had Entenmanns.

VICKY
Yikes. What a downgrade.

PAUL
Stale baked goods quell the
addict's passions. Lucky for you I
did not partake..

Paul NUZZLES HER, kissing her neck.

VICKY
I think people are moving into the
basement unit. The lights are on
and it smells like paint.

PAUL
They're related to the owner. I
recognized the kid from the
hardware store.

VICKY
S'long as they're not fuckwits.

PAUL
(forcing a yawn)
Exhausted. You coming to bed?

VICKY
Soon. Need to finish my hate-fest.

PAUL
Okay.

A beat. SOMETHING IS OFF between them. They look at each other, groping... they don't quite understand it but it is there, marking the distance between them.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Well. G'night. I love you.

VICKY

Love you too baby.

They kiss. Paul leaves. Vicky watches after him, disturbed.

ON VICKY-- her face flickering in the blue light of the TV...

THEN-- we sweep past her face... out the window... down the block... past the Italian bakeries, the upscale baby stores... into the Dunkin' Donuts at closing time... into the bathroom... and into the trash as the WORKER empties it.

CLOSE ON-- a pregnancy test. POSITIVE.

END OF PILOT.