

***REVISED 2/8/17**

JACK WANG

1/20/17

"SALAMANDER - Network Draft #3"

Scene 1

INT. NEWS STUDIO - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S CORNER OFFICE - DAY

Seated at a cluttered desk, with an impressive array of media awards peppering his overloaded bookshelves, a bespectacled **NEWS EDITOR** (50s) holds his cell phone to his ear.

He listens intently to the voice on the other end of the line. THE NEWS EDITOR'S FACE IS ASHEN. His hand trembling as the line goes dead and he fully absorbs the content of the call he just received...

After a beat, he removes his glasses... Wipes a tear from his eye... Crosses to the window... Sits down on the window ledge... Swings his legs out into the open air... And without hesitation, THE NEWS EDITOR LEAPS--!

And as we hold on the open, empty window and THE SOUNDS OF SCREECHING TIRES and SHOCKED SCREAMS FROM WITNESSES of the News Editor's suicide drift up from the street, we CUT TO:

INT. ASTOR PLACE SUBWAY STATION - DAY - INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

Seated on a crowded bench waiting for the UPTOWN TRAIN is **JACK WANG** (30s), Eurasian, roguishly handsome, easy-going demeanor.

A no-frills iPhone headset dangles from his ear as he stares at A PICTURE OF THE BESPECTACLED NEWS EDITOR PAPER-CLIPPED TO A FILE FOLDER FILLED WITH HANDWRITTEN DOCUMENTS. Then--

With a self satisfied grin, Jack closes the file folder and slips it back into a LARGE RED ENVELOPE: #1 (yes, the same red envelope from the robbery).

And as Jack tucks the Red Envelope into a Duffel Bag containing all sixty-six Red Envelopes, his cell phone rings. Jack answers:

JACK

Yes.

EXT. PRIVATE AIRFIELD - DAY - INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

As Meghan heads for a BLACK SUV parked beside the hangar, she speaks into her phone:

MEGHAN

It's done. Our heist team is paid, airborne and know never to return to the States.

(then)

How'd it go with number one?

JACK

Exactly as I expected: When I presented him with his options, he chose the coward's way out.

(MORE)

SALAMANDER

1/5

1/20/17

"SALAMANDER - Network Draft #3"

19

JACK

JACK (CONT'D)

And with him out of the way, I can make sure his position is filled with someone more amenable to my needs.

MEGHAN

So it's all going perfectly as planned.

JACK

(mood darkening slightly)
Except that you missed one of our "loose ends."

Meghan stops in her tracks.

JACK (CONT'D)

At the security company. The brother. Apparently he was out to lunch.

Megan is annoyed at herself for sloppy work.

MEGHAN

I'll clean it up. Tonight.

Just then an **ELDERLY WOMAN** ambles slowly towards the bench.

JACK

No need. I've already put someone on it...

Meghan is disappointed and agitated simultaneously at hearing someone else is being tasked to "clean up after her"...

MEGHAN

Who?

Jack rises and affably gestures for the Elderly Woman to take his seat on the bench.

JACK

Don't get bent. You know you're not the only one working for me.

(then)

But you're still my favorite. Just don't let it happen again.

A threat, despite his easy tone. Then:

JACK (CONT'D)

I'll have something for you later today.

With that, Jack clicks off. The Elderly Woman takes his seat, smiling up at him, she offers thanks:

ELDERLY WOMAN

What a sweet boy.

2/5

1/20/17

"SALAMANDER - Network Draft #3"

20

JACK

Jack offers back a slight bow and smile. And as he steps away he withdraws from the Duffel another **RED ENVELOPE** -- #2. Jack opens the envelope and slips out the contents:

A FILE FOLDER OF DOCUMENTS. Paper-clipped to the cover is A PHOTOGRAPH OF a silver-haired woman, **HELEN BARRETT** (60s), regal. And we **MATCH CUT TO:**

INT. LAKE HOUSE - DANBURY, CONNECTICUT - DAY

Helen Barrett works a jigsaw puzzle with her grandchildren, **CAMERON** (7) and **SIENNA** (4).

HELEN

Do you see another mostly blue piece that may fit in this spot...?

Cameron grabs a puzzle piece and holds it up.

CAMERON

This one.

HELEN

Give it a try, Cam.

Before Cameron can place the piece, Sienna reaches for it.

SIENNA

Let me, let me...

Cameron hands the piece to his sister, who smiles big as she tries to mash the piece in place. Helen pets Cameron's head for being accommodating. *She loves these children.*

Just then, her **CELL PHONE RINGS**. As Helen rises and crosses the room to retrieve it, she offers advice to Sienna:

HELEN

Try turning it a couple of different directions, Love Bug. Until it slips in nice and easy.

She answers her cell phone

HELEN (CONT'D)

Helen Barrett.

scene 2

EXT. COLUMBUS CIRCLE - DAY - INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

Dressing a coffee at a **KIOSK**, Jack speaks into his headset:

JACK

Five o'clock this afternoon. The carousel in Battery Park. Don't be late.

3/5

EXT. BATTERY PARK - THE CAROUSEL - DAY

Scene 2

Helen sits beside the Carousel as the sun dips toward the horizon. She checks her watch, and just as it turns five o'clock... Meghan sits down beside her.

~~MEGHAN~~ JACK
Senator. It's an honor.

(Yes, Helen Barrett is a U.S. Senator.) She glares at Meghan.

HELEN
Who are you?

~~MEGHAN~~ JACK
Who I am... isn't important. But let's see if I know something about who you are.

Helen's eyes narrow.

JACK
~~MEGHAN~~ (CONT'D)
Let's start sixteen years ago. You're a lawyer in West Virginia. Representing labor unions. When one day, two men show up at your home. They tell you you've been a naughty girl. Union pay-offs. Medicare fraud. Cronyism. Am I warm so far?

Helen's face remains blank, but we see the truth in her eyes.

JACK
~~MEGHAN~~ (CONT'D)
You, of course, assume the worst. That you're headed to a long stretch in prison. But the two men had other ideas in mind... They tell you they want you to run for Congress. That they can guarantee you'll win... And, in exchange, every once in a while, you'll return the gesture. Simple favors. A vote here, an introduction there.

(beat)
And now, here we are. Three straight terms. And you're the senior member of the Defense Committee. Where, year after year, you vote to increase the defense budget. More troops, more missiles, more drones. And the contractors, the ones who build the weapons of mass destruction, they funnel money back to you. Because that's how it works in your world... Tit for tat. Pay no attention to the sons and daughters who get killed overseas.

And finally Helen can't listen to this anymore.

HELEN
What do you want from me?

Meghan meets Helen's gaze:

A/S

JACK~~MURKIN~~

Same as you've been doing for years. A simple favor... Only now, it won't be about serving your own interests.

As the implications of that land on Helen, a LOUD CLANG TRANSITIONS US TO:

INT. NORA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Ethan's belt buckle CLANGS off the bottom of the dining room chair and lands uselessly on the hardwood floor--!

Ethan shakes his head, "Fuck! Another near miss--!" (He's been at this for a while.)

Ethan draws the belt, which is TETHERED TO THE CELL PHONE CHARGING CORD, back towards himself. He winds up another attempt with this MAKE-SHIFT ROPE-HOOK and--

He hooks it! With the belt buckle hooked around the cross support rod of the dining room chair, Ethan delicately, gently, begins drawing the chair towards him...

Closer... closer.... Then--

He reaches out and retrieves the laptop bag. ETHAN PULLS NORA'S LAPTOP FROM IT, FLIPS IT OPEN AND BEGINS TYPING FURIOUSLY. And we TRANSITION TO:

INT. JHP WEALTH & TRUST - KANT'S OFFICE - DAY

Kant ushers Nora into his office. She notices as he pulls the door closed behind them.

KANT

Have a seat. Just a few forms to fill out. There's a pen on my desk.

She sits, trying to hide her fear. *This was a terrible idea.*

As Kant retrieves LEASING FORMS from a file cabinet, Nora retrieves a pen from his desk... As she does, NORA'S EYES FALL ON AN OPEN FILE FOLDER OF DOCUMENTS...

The top one appears to be a MASTER LIST OF SAFE DEPOSIT BOX NUMBERS. Accompanied by the names of the customers they belong to.

And now NORA'S HEART is POUNDING in her chest.

KANT (CONT'D)

Here we are.

As Kant hands her the leasing forms, Nora tries to appear calm. She starts to fill them out when--

S/S