

1

EXT. NEW YORK. DAY.

1

New York shimmers in the morning light as we take in Manhattan. We home in on an art deco block on 5th avenue.

2

INT. 5TH AVENUE APARTMENT. DAY.

2

It's early morning. The 3-floor, 20 room, 3 terrace apartment is decorated in tasteful art deco style. Wooden floors, expensive but not ostentatious furnishings.

We see the dawn breaking through the big windows. In the distance a little girl is talking to herself as she plays.

We can hear water running as we move past the marble work-tops of the kitchen, where newspapers lie, through the bedroom, where a woman sleeps, and into one of the two en-suite bathrooms.

There an old man is leaning over the basin pulling hair dye through his hair, trying to keep it from dripping on himself.

This is Keith Rupert Murdoch (KRM). 78-years old and with a bit of stiffness in his back. He mutters to himself as dye runs down his neck.

KRM  
Oh Fuck. Shit. Fuck it.

He takes another towel from the stock of thick white ones near the double sinks and wipes his neck, tossing the dirty towel into the bath tub where several others lie.

Finally, satisfied with the dying procedure, he rubs his hair dry with another towel, and sends that also into the bath. Then, with a flannel he tries to wash away the finger marks of dye that have sullied the sink. It's messy, annoying work. Satisfied, he puts the lid back on the dye, then to his annoyance re-dirties the sink with the residue from the bottle.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Oh for fuck's sake.

He wipes it down carefully like a criminal attending to leaving no forensic evidence behind, and then crosses to the bath where he turns on the taps full and gives the dirty towels and flannels a swish around in the water - leaving them to soak.

KRM walks through the apartment leaving wet footprints as he goes.

He heads to the kitchen. Looks through the papers. Ripping the pages over with a professional brutality. Today's New York Daily Post, WSJ, New York Times.

He checks his watch makes a call, punching out the number from a piece of paper.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Murdoch here. Yeah I was told by Doctor Benson I could get to you on this number?

He looks around the room.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Yeah that's right, yeah, sure I don't need the soft soap. Yeah he talked to me about counselling and whatnot. But we agreed a special arrangement. So what's the result?  
(he listens)  
'Balign?'  
(listens impassive)  
Right, say that again? Benign or Malign? Can you speak up.

He's getting a very important piece of news but as we look at his face in close up it is hard to clock exactly what it is. Is it bad and he's being stoical, or it good and he's very restrained?

KRM (CONT'D)  
Uh-hu. Okay. And what's the time frame on that process? Okay. Yeah will do, I'll call the doc and hook that up. Okay. Thanks. Thank you very much.

He puts the phone down. Looks at the city out the window. Then he looks down.

Faxed front pages of the Times and Sun and londonpaper and a layout for tomorrow's Australian. He looks up to check out Fox News playing on a TV with the sound down.

He makes a call. Hardly looking at the phone and punching the number without looking it up anywhere.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Hello. Jim. I've seen your paper Jim.  
(MORE)

KRM (CONT'D)  
 (beat of silence - he  
 enjoys the pain he is  
 dealing out)  
 I've seen the pages.

Then He hangs up.

Looks at more pages. Dials another number - connects.

KRM (CONT'D)  
 Mike. Are you losing it?

CUT TO:

3 INT. UK BROADSHEET NEWSROOM. DAY.

3

Michael Rowle, 50, thin and anxious, editor of an unnamed Murdoch Sunday Broadsheet is on the phone. We cut between the two of them.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
 Hello?

KRM  
 Are you losing it. Have you lost  
 it?

MICHAEL ROWLE  
 How do you mean Rupert?

KRM  
 Do you look at the circulation  
 numbers Mike? You know, how many of  
 my papers you're selling?

MICHAEL ROWLE  
 Yes.

KRM  
 (he leaves a long beat,  
 turns a page, waits)

MICHAEL ROWLE  
 Hello?

KRM  
 Hello.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
 (long beat, then)  
 Sorry?

KRM

Yeah. So is it going up or down how many papers you're selling?

MICHAEL ROWLE

Well if you mean, I mean - year on year or - I mean month against - because, I forget but on the month - not this month but last month compared to the previous year's month that was actually ...

KRM

Yeah and if you compare a strawberry to an onion it's much fucking sweeter.

MICHAEL ROWLE

Yes well, I mean, you know the strategy ...

KRM

Uh-hu.

And Rupert puts the phone down. Leaving Michael spinning.

We spot Rupert's daughter, Chloe, six years old is there. Who knows for how long she's been listening? She offers KRM an envelope.

KRM (CONT'D)

What's that honey?

He opens it. It's a birthday card. Drawn in felt-tip pens.

KRM (CONT'D)

Look at that. Thanks. Thanks sweetheart.

He bends, with a little difficulty, to kiss her forehead. Grace, his eight year old, is there too now smiling.

KRM (CONT'D)

Thanks girls, thank you.

A nanny appears, Lily.

LILY

(in Mandarin, with subtitles)

Okay, away now, leave your daddy, leave him to work.

They start to shuffle off.

KRM  
No - girls, it's fine, jump up  
here. C'mon.

He lifts Chloe up on to one of the high stools - it used to be easy, but she's heavier, he's older, he finds it hard. Grace jumps up.

Lily gets them juice as Rupert sorts through a bunch of cards that are laid out for him.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Look at this - See I'll put them  
into four piles.  
(with a twinkle)  
Family first.  
(shuffles a few cards)  
Presidents.  
(lays out another pile)  
Kings and Queens and all that sort  
of nonsense.  
(then another pile)  
Then all these other jokers ...

The girls laugh. Grace is looking at the front page the New York Times.

KRM (CONT'D)  
What's wrong with that? Eh?

Grace doesn't know.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Too long. Blah blah blah blah. Bit  
of stuff  
(the story carries on  
inside)  
- now go inside for the rest? No  
thanks. I'm having my breakfast!  
(he points to another  
front page story)  
Now this has great pictures. So  
give it a page. It's dying for a  
page.

Wendi Deng, Rupert's 39 year old wife is there too now.

She approaches Chloe who at the other end of the breakfast bar, is staring at the bare-breasted woman on page three of the *Sun*. Wendi closes the paper.

WENDI  
 (in Mandarin)  
 Okay, come on, goodbye to bad  
 rubbish. Run and get your book.

KRM  
 What?

WENDI  
 I was just saying to get her book.  
 (to Lily in Mandarin)  
 I don't want her looking at all  
 this, alright?

LILY  
 (in Mandarin)  
 I was cutting fruit.

KRM  
 What?

CHLOE  
 (in Mandarin)  
 I don't want fruit, we already had  
 fruit.

WEDNI  
 You need fruit. Not just bagel.  
 More fruit. And let's have this  
 rubbish away.

Wendi picks up the Sun. Folds it and puts it on the side.

KRM  
 What. What's going on?

WEDNI  
 Nothing, we're talking about fruit,  
 okay? Now. Happy Birthday darling.  
 C'mon. Let's go back to bed. Little  
 lie-in okay?

Rupert checks the watch. He is a little reluctant.

CUT TO:

4 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - BEDROOM. DAY. 4

Wendi and Rupert are lying post-coital in their big, big bed. Murdoch is breathing slowly and steadily, with some concentration.

WENDI  
You okay, honey?

KRM  
Course I'm okay. I'm good.

WENDI  
Listen, I want to tell you, for  
later, I've arranged a surprise.

KRM  
A surprise?

WENDI  
Yeah - Lachlan, Liz, James,  
Prudence, they're flying in for a  
surprise party.

KRM  
What?

WENDI  
I thought you'd want to know. I  
didn't want it to be too  
surprising. You don't like  
surprises.

KRM  
But - this is still a surprise. You  
haven't eliminated the element of  
surprise, honey, you've just moved  
it earlier.

Wendi gives him a kiss, she rubs his belly under the sheets,  
kisses him again.

KRM (CONT'D)  
I'm doing pretty good here Wendi,  
but I'm not Superman.  
(then)  
Look. I might talk to the kids.  
Today.

WENDI  
Today? Good. Why? Did you speak to  
the hospital?

KRM  
Yeah?

WENDI  
And?

Rupert delays a beat. Is he hesitating? Is he telling the truth?

KRM  
All good.

WENDI  
All good?

KRM  
All good.

WENDI  
Oh that's great. That's just great  
that's excellent!

KRM  
Yeah. So. That's good.

WENDI  
Right, so do you want me to handle  
telling people?

KRM  
No need for nothing honey. Nothing.  
Alright. Nothing's changed. No  
press release no drama. I don't  
need any celebration.

WENDI  
Why not Rupert?

KRM  
Look I've got 10 to 20 billion of  
market cap riding on the good  
health of a little walnut hiding  
away up my shitter. I don't want to  
put too much pressure on it okay?

WENDI  
Sure?

KRM  
Sure. Any news about my health,  
that's a stock price roller  
coaster. No one knows anything was  
up, let's leave it like that?

Wendi looks at him. Is he being totally straight? She kisses  
him. She fiddles under the sheets.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Nothing doing honey. You're just  
yanking on a length of rope.

CUT TO:

5 INT. NEW YORK HOTEL SUITE. DAY.

5

Lachlan Murdoch, 37 is lounging on a bed in their penthouse suite. Sarah, his wife, an ex-model, blonde, beautiful, 36 is changing out of her travelling clothes. Lachlan is flicking round business news channels. CNBC, Fox Business. He stops on Fox Business.

SARAH  
You feeling okay about seeing the  
old man? How's your stomach.

LACHLAN  
Good, I'm all good. Before the  
party, I thought I might swing by  
the old place.

SARAH  
Oh. Okay? Great.

LACHLAN  
It's fine. It's like water off a  
duck's back.

SARAH  
I'm sure.

LACHLAN  
I'm just going to roll in there.  
Have a poke about.  
(he glances at the screen)  
Ouch. Oh wow. Calgen's down again.  
I knew it. I knew that was going to  
happen. We should have sold. Wasn't  
I saying before we should sell?

SARAH  
Uh-hu. Yeah, although you decided  
in the end?

LACHLAN  
I know, in the end I thought best  
not.

(MORE)

LACHLAN (CONT'D)  
 But I should have gone with gut.  
 Gut said sell. Why didn't I sell?

SARAH  
 How's News Corp?

LACHLAN  
 I don't even know, that's what's funny! I hadn't even thought till you asked that. Can you imagine that - when I was - big fucking boss man I must've checked thirty times a day.

(he takes a look in the paper)

But I'm so easy about that now. I don't even track that shit.

SARAH  
 Yeah, it's cool how you don't need to track it.

LACHLAN  
 (closes paper)  
 It is sweet being out of that whole - nest 'o vipers. Just kicking back. Captain of my own ship.

He relaxes, switches to some sports, Sarah heads in to the bathroom. He switches back to Fox News.

CUT TO:

6

INT. UK BROADSHEET NEWSROOM. DAY.

6

Michael Rowle is pacing on a call to a fellow editor.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
 Yeah he just called? Did he call you?  
 (listens)  
 Have you got any clue what he's thinking? Have you talked to Cal or Gary? Has Gary talked to Cal?  
 (listens)  
 Did Gary tell Cal that or was that Cal saying what he thought he wanted Rupert to hear he was saying?  
 (listens)  
 No, I'm really asking. But if you hear *anything* will you let me know?

Michael Rowle arrives with his deputy, Jo, ends his call.

MICHAEL ROWLE (CONT'D)  
Look can you just get me the  
figures laid out so if Rupert calls  
again I've got it there. That  
number.

JO  
Which number?

MICHAEL ROWLE  
The good number. The good  
circulation number. I just need to  
be able to go - blam! - 12 per  
cent! Or 17 per cent! 20 percent!  
Whatever that good number was.

JO  
I don't think we have a number that  
good? I think they said like 4 or  
something for something?

A woman a few desks along, the Foreign editor, Cassie, shouts over.

CASSIE  
Michael? Mike? I've got Leo Walsh  
on here. I think you ought to talk  
to him.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
(picks up phone, hand over  
receiver)  
Urgh? He's not a pain in the arse  
is he Cassie?  
(smiling at Jo)  
He's not going to bore me about  
'insufficient coverage for the,  
Malawi electoral process'?

CASSIE  
(re the phone)  
He thinks it's a 'hot story'. And I  
actually think it could be a hot  
story.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
Oh, well if it's a 'hot story'.  
(he picks up his phone)

We cut between Michael and:

7

INT. LUSAKA HOTEL LOBBY. DAY.

7

Leo Walsh, 27 is making a call.

LEO  
Hi, Michael?

MICHAEL ROWLE  
Hello?

LEO  
Hi, yep, just wanted to update you directly. You've probably been wondering what's going on with it the Zambian mine story?

MICHAEL ROWLE  
(straight)  
Yeah, good I've been on tenterhooks about the Zambian mine story.

Jo cracks up.

LEO  
(not catching the sarcasm)  
Cassie's told you the story, right?  
I've been on it for a week.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
No sure, I remember it all. But just remind me. Once more.

LEO  
I'm heading out there. It looks like the collapse might have been a big one 150 or so dead?

MICHAEL ROWLE  
Pictures?

LEO  
I don't know about pictures, I'll try to get some pictures. I think there will be some pictures. But it's exclusive.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
Okay, well good luck 'Scoop', keep Cassie posted.

LEO  
Will do boss. 'Hold the front page!'

MICHAEL ROWLE  
Will do!

Phones down. Leo is hyped-up.

Michael's deputy, Jo looks at him.

MICHAEL ROWLE (CONT'D)  
Fuck all. African mine - no pictures.

CUT TO:

8 INT. LIMO - NEW YORK STREET. DAY.

8

James Murdoch, 35, is in the back of a chauffeur-driven Prius. He's talking to an associate on his mobile. His assistant is there next to him.

JAMES  
Okay, that's all good. Super smart.  
You're a rockstar.

He hangs up, looks at some papers from his assistant.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Okay - cool. Coolio. So this is the bundle.  
(taking out a few sheets)  
This, this and this? For the Chinese networking site deal?

JAMES'S ASSISTANT  
Uh-hu.

Even when James acts like a prick - his observations are not stupid.

JAMES  
(looking at the papers -  
they are bound with a  
glossy cover)  
Is this it?

JAMES'S ASSISTANT  
That's recycled.

JAMES

Great. Good. It looks kind of snazzy though. You know? I don't want to be trying to sell him anything? It's more like, 'hey old man, you want to miss out on Chinese Facebook?'

JAMES'S ASSISTANT

Uh-hu. Plus, strategically, the co-venture with a provincial Government. That's sexy.

JAMES

(considers)

It sounds kind of bullshitty doesn't it? *Provincial* ...

(makes it sound pathetic)

One '*Chinese Province*'?

JAMES'S ASSISTANT

100 million people? Bigger than Germany and Australia put together?

JAMES

Make me a note of that. Pen that shit up for me. Just pen that shit on there

(points to a spot on a sheet)

James's phone goes.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Cal. Whatup motherfucker?

CUT TO:

9

INT. LEARJET. DAY.

9

Cal Pawsey, 56, News Corp senior exec is on the phone to James on a small corporate jet. We cut between them:

CAL PAWSEY

(winces)

Hey James?

JAMES

Where you at? Are you flying in?

CAL PAWSEY  
On my way. On the Learjet. Chinese  
Take-away.

JAMES  
Ready to back me up on this pitch,  
bitch?

CAL PAWSEY  
(winces)  
Course.

JAMES  
We got to keep it simple Cal. Live  
and direct.

CAL PAWSEY  
Right, don't want to bamboozle the  
old fella.

JAMES  
(beat, bit too rude about  
the old man?)  
Exactly.

CAL PAWSEY  
I can't believe I mean I *really*  
can't believe he's hesitating on  
this.

JAMES  
I know, I know. I guess he has his  
doubts.

CAL PAWSEY  
Yeah, sure. But do you think he'd  
be flip-flopping if this was a  
paper he was buying?

JAMES  
(he laughs indulgently)  
Okay, listen, see you later  
motherfucker.

CAL PAWSEY  
(winces)  
Later James.

CUT TO:

10

EXT. CAR/6TH AVENUE. DAY.

10

Claire, 24, a young journalist is getting a ride into work with Iain, a guy she knows from journalism school.

They are both anxiously looking at the numbers on the office buildings on 6th avenue as cars honk at their slow progress. Claire leans out straining to check their progress up the street.

IAIN

Okay?

CLAIRe

Hu-hu. I think ... I can't believe I didn't Google this?  
(looking)  
Are you sure? We didn't go past?

IAIN

No. I think .. Okay, here we go ...  
Nearly 1211... Yup.

They pull up outside a 60's/70's skyscraper office building.

CLAIRe

Okay. Great. Well, thanks for the ride.

IAIN

Okay. And  
(with what he hopes is  
twinkle)  
Thanks for the ride.

Claire shivers.

IAIN (CONT'D)

Ouch. Shit. Sorry. Bit creepy.

CLAIRe

Fine, it was - nice.

IAIN

It was 'nice'? Oh God, kill me now.

CLAIRe

(preoccupied)  
Hehe. Look, I'll call you.

IAIN

I'm sorry - if I - you know, a little too early? I was very excited. You're an exciting woman.

CLAIRE

(too much info for the morning)

I'll call you. I need to get in.

IAIN

And you'll be okay? Fox will rape your ideals and dreams, you do realize that? They're dream rapists. They're putting that on a banner ad.

CLAIRE

Hey well, I'm not Noam Chomsky, I think I'll be okay.

(she gets her stuff together)

Well, thanks.

He goes in for a kiss of farewell as she goes to open the car door. It's a mismatch. Then she goes back to kiss him as he withdraws. They fumble a kiss and hand-shake. He watches her go in. She is all about the day ahead, doesn't look back.

CUT TO:

11

INT. LIMO. DAY.

11

Liz Murdoch, 40 and Matthew Freud are in a car heading into New York city. Matthew has a mobile to his ear.

MATTHEW

Kelly can you do me a conference with Zddy and Steve and the Sarahs?

ELIZABETH

What have you got him?

MATTHEW

(hand over phone)  
Hey? What?

ELIZABETH

Dad. What have you got him, for his birthday?

MATTHEW

Oh? I thought we'd be going joint?  
He won't mind, will he?

ELIZABETH

(yes)  
Er. I don't know? No. I guess.

MATTHEW

I mean what do you even get the man  
who has everything?

ELIZABETH

What do you get the man who has  
everything? Well something fucking  
nice might be advisable.

MATTHEW

(into phone)  
Okay, that's fine. Tell thin Sarah  
to call fat Sarah and say I'll  
throw an hour at it. Prunch. Pre  
lunch. Prunch tomorrow. And I'll  
email Zddy and he can bcc the  
agency like I didn't intend for  
them to see it?

He puts the phone down.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

How old is he even going to be,  
140?

They travel in silence. But Matthew likes stirring things up.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I heard about this Chinese  
Facebook? You cool with all that?

ELIZABETH

Obviously I'm cool with it. I think  
it's a James thing. It's fine.

MATTHEW

Yeah. Be good to see him. Looking  
forward to it. Me and the old man.

ELIZABETH

What Matthew? What's your problem  
with him now?

MATTHEW

Nothing! We're cool now. He's charming, we get on good now.  
 (she looks at him)  
 What? We like each other.  
 (under his breath)  
 That's the line.  
 (then)  
 Because nothing at all is wrong with him.  
 (beat, then playfully)  
 With the obvious exception of everything he stands for.

Liz Looks at him. That's a bit much. But she knows he's being playful.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I'm kidding. Obviously I'm kidding.  
 (then)  
 It's got to be close though. Soon he'll be able to stop building. I mean when is the company going to be *finished*?

Liz smiles, then.

ELIZABETH

I think Mum thought if she commissioned enough statues and bought enough houses and chairs and sofas he might eventually sit down on one and stop. But he's never going to stop. He thinks if the diary's full, the reaper can't get a slot.

MATTHEW

Uh-hu.  
 (then)  
 How many personal friends do you think we've got who'll eventually be commemorated by public statues.  
 (thinks)  
 Nine, right? Am I right?

CUT TO:

12

INT/EXT. NEWS CORP/FOX BUILDING NEW YORK. DAY.

12

Clare is heading into the building. At the same time James Murdoch is getting out of his limo. James marches in to the building, just ahead of Clare. Holds the door for her. He gets guided through to an open lift, heads off to the heights of the building.

Clare stands, confused in the atrium, looking around at the hive of activity.

CUT TO:

13

INT. KRM'S CAR. DAY.

13

KRM's in his chauffeured car - heading through the New York Streets towards the News Corp building. He's talking to an assistant, mid 30s.

KRM  
(bit weary)  
So, listen I looked at the numbers,  
but what's the protein on this  
Chinese Facebook bollocks? What's  
the buzz?

MURDOCH'S ASSISTANT  
Apparently there was a Beijing  
political reaction to the idea of  
being involved. You know - that  
you're a 'right-winger'.

KRM  
We made their fucking website! The  
People's Daily website. We gave  
them Sky's encryption and what did  
I get? I'm a right-winger?

MURDOCH'S ASSISTANT  
Uh-hu.

KRM  
Do you want to go back scream that  
in their ears that they fucked me  
fair and square?

MURDOCH'S ASSISTANT  
We could make a subtle - mention of  
...

KRM  
No nah. I'm a pretty hairy fucker  
but you don't screw with China.

KRM laughs. His assistant chuckles.

They zoom through the traffic. KRM looks at the papers.  
Putting the prospective deal together in his head.

14

EXT. ZAMBIA. DAY.

14

Leo Walsh is at a check-point in the middle of the  
countryside.

LEO  
Journalist. Journalist.

SOLDIER  
BBC?

LEO  
(a beat, then)  
Yes BBC.

SOLDIER  
Which BBC?

LEO  
Which BBC?

SOLDIER  
Radio? TV? Online?

This soldier is more media literate than Leo'd hoped. He's  
fingering Leo's credentials

LEO  
Look - No. Paper. Newspaper.

SOLDIER  
Oh, newspaper now?

LEO  
(seeing this is not going  
to make an impact)  
England. British Newspaper.  
(nothing)  
Sky TV? Michael Owen? David  
Beckham? Rupert Murdoch? Homer  
Simpson?

SOLDIER  
Homer Simpson?

LEO  
Yeah. Homer Simpson company. I've  
got DVDs?

Things look more promising.

CUT TO:

15 INT. NEWS CORP. DAY.

15

KRM is at a desk, on a call.

James enters, he too is on a call. Rupert stands, they hug  
one another, while both staying on the line.

KRM  
That's all bad. None of that  
is good, okay? Yeah? You  
understand, all of that is  
not good.

JAMES  
Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah  
yeah yeah. Yeah. Cool. Okay.

They end their calls.

KRM  
Hey, how are you doing son?

JAMES  
Good. You ready to rumble?

MURDOCH  
What already? You've been here one  
minute and already you want me to  
throw my money at something?

JAMES  
Chinese Facebook dude, its hot. It  
ain't hanging around.

MURDOCH  
Yeah yeah. I've seen plenty of  
Chinese Facebook sites. Problem is -  
they all look the same.

JAMES  
Did you look at the numbers?

MURDOCH  
Yeah I looked at the numbers.

JAMES  
 Exciting. Today's the day to pounce  
 right?

MURDOCH  
 Look. Do you really want to get  
 into this right away?  
 (James does)  
 What about this line?  
 (pointing to a line in a  
 bundle of printed out  
 spreadsheets)  
 And this line is flakey when you  
 examine it. And this line is just -  
 I mean who do they think I am?  
 Uncle Cunt? Where does this go?

JAMES  
 (looking too)  
 That? Is that even - that's a  
 projection that ... is that ...  
 that's okay isn't it?  
 (then)  
 Look Dad, you can interrogate the  
 figures lots of ways but I mean, if  
 it feels right, do it, yeah?

MURDOCH  
 I'm not running a fucking hippy bus  
 firm James.

JAMES  
 But Dad man it's got to be today.  
 It can be slid through on the down-  
 low today. We won't crow about it,  
 they won't get heat from Beijing.

MURDOCH  
 Sure, and it's all very nice. Till  
 the shit starts to fly.

He picks up his phone.

MURDOCH (CONT'D)  
 Can you get me Senator Finch. And  
 Irwin and the UK PM.

JAMES  
 The cash need to be in play today  
 Dad.  
 (he knows the deal isn't  
 sealed)  
 (MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)  
 This is right. You know when  
 sometimes you just feel it?

MURDOCH  
 Yeah I've felt it a lot of times.  
 About half the time I was right.  
 (picks up phone)  
 And Wendi, can you get Wendi for  
 me?

Another assistant puts her head round the door.

MURDOCH'S ASSISTANT  
 UK PM on the blue phone.

MURDOCH  
 (right)  
 Guh.  
 (beat to James)  
 I think Wendi's input might be  
 valuable.

JAMES  
 Uh-hu?

KRM's mobile goes.

MURDOCH  
 Irwin. Hi Hi Hi - look, James is  
 busting my chops about this deal  
 hokum did you take a look?  
 (listens)  
 Uh-hu? Hu. Right. Guh. Exactly.  
 Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Guh.

CUT TO:

16 INT. NEWS CORP HQ. DAY.

16

Lachlan is walking into the same lobby we saw James walk through. He heads over to a lift in the far corner James used (his assistant carried his swipe card.)

He hits a button but a security guy heads over to intercept him.

SECURITY GUY  
 Hello? Do you have an appointment?

LACHLAN  
 No boss.

He jabs the button again.

SECURITY GUY  
I'm afraid you can't use those  
lifts sir, can I take a name?

LACHLAN  
(pissed off now)  
Lachlan.

SECURITY GUY  
Lachlan? And you're here to ...

LACHLAN  
Lachlan Murdoch?

SECURITY GUY  
(putting his body in front  
of the lift)  
I can call up - who are you here to  
see?

LACHLAN  
That isn't necessary.

SECURITY GUY  
Well it is necessary.

Another functionary/receptionist has spotted the situation  
and has a word in the Security Guy's ear.

SECURITY GUY (CONT'D)  
I'll call the lift for you right  
away sir.

CUT TO:

17 INT. KRM'S OFFICE. DAY.

17

James is lying flat out on the sofa flicking pages in his  
print outs, also on the phone. KRM picks up the blue Phone.

MURDOCH  
Hello Prime Minister. How's things?  
Crisis over?  
(the PM responds)  
Hu. I guess I assumed there was a  
crisis. There's usually a crisis?  
(the PM responds)  
I wanted to pick your brains, on  
this Chinese deal. Am I going to  
get my cock burned on that, so to  
speak?  
(listens)  
(MORE)

MURDOCH (CONT'D)  
 Okay - right. Okay. Exactly. That's  
 what I thought  
 (looking at James)  
 It is a difficult climate.  
 (James makes the wanker  
 sign)  
 How's everything there?.  
 (listens,)  
 Well I hear you. And I'll see. But  
 there's not much I can do. They're  
 animals.  
 (listens)  
 Sure they're my animals. But you  
 know, I can't wade in, that's not  
 my style. Guh. Huh.

Phone down. Through this James is on the phone, tense talking to legal counsel trying to firm up his facts on the Chinese figures. Anxious but acting cool.

JAMES (over KRM) Yeah, exactly, that's all I want, that would be cool. Well, whenever, no drama, just make it happen, yeah dude?	MURDOCH (picking up the next phone) Senator, so what you hearing, who's saying what?
--	--

The door opens Lachlan is there. He is speaking to an exec who is out there.

LACHLAN (hanging at the door) Great to see you man. Brilliant to catch up.
---

Lachlan comes in.

KRM What kind of a fucking surprise party is this?
--

LACHLAN Hey Dad, love you man.
-----------------------------------

KRM Love you Lachlan. What's going on?
---

LACHLAN Just thought I'd pop in.
-------------------------------------

James and Lachlan hug.

JAMES

Cool. You pining after the old place?

LACHLAN

Are you kidding? Nah man. Nah. I did my time. No, this is like - coming back here is - it's I'm ... what's the word?

JAMES

I don't know?

LACHLAN

I'm nonchalant. I'm just - nonchalant dude. I'm just sitting here peering in at the hamster hutch.

KRM and James choose to accept this gloss.

LACHLAN (CONT'D)

(re the papers)

So, what's happening?

KRM

Oh just looking at some figures.

LACHLAN

Uh-hu, what?

James and Rupert look at one another.

LACHLAN (CONT'D)

Oh, what, commercially sensitive, from me? Are you shitting me?

There's a brief beat.

LACHLAN (CONT'D)

What the fuck? You scared of getting corporately raided?

JAMES

Chinese web deal.

LACHLAN

Oh dude, seriously? Nah. The internet's over.

JAMES

(incredulous)

The internet is - over?

LACHLAN  
It's maturing. The gold rush is  
over. It's a new paradigm. That's  
my analysis.

CUT TO:

18 INT. FOX NEWSROOM. DAY.

18

Claire is with Sophia a producer they are in the quiet hive  
of activity which is the Fox newsroom.

SOPHIA  
Okay - you'll be over in that area.  
(motions vaguely)  
Do you have a login?

CLAIRe  
No.

SOPHIA  
Okay, it's hard getting a login.

CLAIRe  
Right, how do I ...?

SOPHIA  
I don't have time to babysit a  
media studies grad Claire. Am I  
going to need to babysit?

CLAIRe  
No.

SOPHIA  
Good. It's hard okay. Ask around.  
Now, what I need is ...

She waits.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
You might want to write this down?

Claire grabs pen and paper.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)  
Contributor management. Lock down  
everyone for today, prep them,  
check them, flip them and fry them,  
see how they test under heat.  
(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Except guys we know - don't piss  
them off by asking stupid  
questions. What's a stupid  
question?

CLAIRe

I'm sorry?

SOPHIA

Give me an example of a dumb  
question you're not going to ask?

CLAIRe

Oh - uh, I guess, I don't know,  
stuff, we already know, details we  
already have?

SOPHIA

Sure. That's a basic stupid  
question. Plus I have a hole. I  
need someone tasty for 5.15 on  
BattleLines. I have a hole there. I  
need a piquant little pepper to go  
up against John Kendal on the  
environment there. A tree-hugger,  
an owl toucher. But one thing -  
spare me the boredom, yeah? When  
you tap up some contacts just think  
- 'is this person boring?'

CLAIRe

Of course.

SOPHIA

As you speak to them, ask yourself,  
are you experiencing boredom?  
Because if you are, then - good  
luck to them but they're not going  
on television. There's enough pain  
in the world. All set?

CLAIRe

Uh-hu?

SOPHIA

Any questions, just ask. Don't free-  
lance it. But I will be very hard  
to contact.

And she's off.

Claire is left in her 'area'.

She looks around. There are computer terminals and keyboards. She hesitates. Goes to one - next to a harassed looking guy, it looks free. He's on the phone.

FOX JOURNALIST  
 Yeah I said to graphics 'a pie chart with a flag on it' and they go, 'which flag?' and I said, 'take a flying fucking guess dipshit'.

Claire motions - can I sit here? He looks at her, hand over mouthpiece.

FOX JOURNALIST (CONT'D)  
 No.

He carries on his conversation. Claire backs off. Moves around the corner to where there is a spare terminal. She sits, hits a key. 'Enter login name and password.' She has none. She hits another key. Nothing.

She looks around for help. There is none.

CUT TO:

19 INT. NEWS CORP HQ. DAY.

19

James and Lachlan are there, KRM is looking out of the window, down far, far below to the huddle of journalists who are smoking out at the back of the building.

KRM  
 Look at them. There they go.  
 Killing themselves on my time.

Claire comes out of the doors and joins the huddle. Another guy heads off across the street.

KRM (CONT'D)  
 Now where's he going? Get a sarnie before you start mate! Guh.

Murdoch's assistant pops her head in.

MURDOCH'S ASSISTANT  
 Hi. Alan wanted you to know the papers he's been preparing for Wendi and you? They're through for you to have a look over and sign off.

KRM

Tell him if they're right I don't  
need to look at them, if they're  
not, he needs to look at them.

MURDOCH'S ASSISTANT

And Peter and Kennedy and the rest  
are here.

KRM

Okay. Fine, send 'em in.

JAMES

(to Lachlan)

Okay, well dude, this is it - we're  
getting down to the nitty gritty.

(and it is therefore time  
for you to go)

LACHLAN

Okay, well if you want my input?

This hangs in the air. KRM pretends to be fascinated in a  
newspaper headline. James looks at him.

JAMES

(definitely not)

Yeah - that could be cool, but it  
might not be that cool.

Lachlan looks to his Dad. Is he going to trump his younger  
brother? KRM, looks up, pretend to be oblivious.

LACHLAN

(gives up on staying)

Okay, cool, Dad, I'll surprise the  
shit out of you later?

KRM

You're going?

LACHLAN

Love you Dad.

KRM

Love you Lachlan.

LACHLAN

(he embraces James)

Love you dude.

JAMES

Totally.

There's an uncomfortable beat as a guy from legal, a guy from finance and a banker arrive. They all know Lachlan.

LACHLAN

Guys. I'm just ... Later guys.

Lachlan goes slowly, James watches, him smiling, friendly, but waiting till he's left and closed the door to start speaking.

JAMES

So, I guess we know the business paradigm we envision in the short and medium and long term and the figures we might expect from a social networking site in an immature market it's just a question of finalising our offer based on ...

KRM

Look. I'm not sold on this whatsoever, but if we go. We offer 75 bucks a share.

JAMES

That's a lot.

KRM

That would be the bid.

JAMES

Because?

KRM

If we go, you want the shareholders getting hard-ons the first time they hear our number. It's got to be a sexy number. Once you've counted up how much you might be getting out the piggy bank- it's fucking hard to forget.

BANKER

And are you happy with the commercial environment?

KRM

No.

(hits intercom)

Is Wendi still there? Can you get Wendi?

MURDOCH'S ASSISTANT  
(over intercom)  
She's in the bathroom.

KRM  
We'll wait.

There is silence. They all look at one another for a few beats. It's uncomfortable. KRM clearly doesn't mind silence or discomfort.

JAMES  
(to the guys)  
Be interesting to get her take.

BANKER  
Absolutely.

WENDI  
(on phone)  
Rupe? You got your strength back honey?

KRM doesn't react. The three functionaries manage to keep their faces still.

KRM  
(didn't totally hear)  
What?  
(then)  
Wendi you're on conference here.

WENDI  
Oh - hi?

EVERYONE  
Hi?/Hi Wendi/Hello.

KRM  
Just want your input Wendi. If we go for this deal, what's your take on the situation - can we grow a business with a Chinese Regional Authority, is that a viable model, in your opinion?

WENDI  
I think it's a waste of money  
Rupert.

KRM  
Do you think?

WENDI

You gotta spend all this money and  
what do you get?

JAMES

Potential Wendi ... You get ...

WENDI

Maybe but I don't see it. I don't  
think you'll ever make your money  
back. I think you'll lose some  
money on this.

JAMES

We were really asking for inside  
info on the Chinese system of ...

WENDI

I think you won't make money,  
you'll lose money. Okay?

KRM

Thanks for that Wendi. Thanks  
honey.

The call is over.

KRM (CONT'D)

She's right you know? You suck up  
to these guys. How many copies of  
Deng Xiaoping's fucking biog have  
we pulped? Half the cardboard boxes  
in China are made from that big  
bastard book. But what do you get?

JAMES

But the opportunities ... In the  
long run

KRM

In the long run we're all dead.  
(beat)  
'Cept me. I have no plans in that  
direction.

They all laugh.

CUT TO:

CASSIE

Hi. Leo, just a heads up. There's a hitch with the lead - if you can get something - soon, then there's a slot - but obviously, it does need to be big.

Michael Rowle, the editor, is watching, Cassie needs to be more precise, though she finds it distasteful.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

I mean I wouldn't say this if we both didn't know that I'm not really saying it and I don't mean it as it sounds, but if it is African dead, obviously there will need to be - it needs to reach a certain threshold for Michael to feel like it's a story he can highlight.

WE CUT TO:

21 INT. VILLAGE HALL - ZAMBIA. DAY

21

Leo is edging away from a family, two of whom are crying.

LEO

Uh-hu, no obviously, of course.

CUT TO:

22 INT. UK BROADSHEET NEWSROOM. DAY.

22

CASSIE

I mean no one can put a figure on what makes a newsworthy number. That would be horrible - to even try. So I'm not about to.

(Michael nods  
encouragement)

But I guess in the grim economics of these things if you could let us know if it's going to be over a hundred or so, that would be something for us to think about?

CUT TO:

23

INT. VILLAGE HALL - ZAMBIA. DAY

23

He's managed to find a corner.

LEO

Totally, totally understand. I  
don't think we're going to be at  
that figure, but this does feel  
like a big story to me.

CUT TO:

24

INT. UK BROADSHEET NEWSROOM. DAY.

24

CASSIE

(shaking her head at  
Michael)

Well good work, keep me posted.

The call is over. Michael is not encouraged.

MICHAEL ROWLE

(over her, to Jo)

How does the Treasury thing look?

CUT TO:

25

INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT. DAY.

25

Prudence, KRM's eldest child, 46, is there. She is playing dolls with Chloe and Grace by the couch, as her husband Alisdair looks at the papers. Elizabeth and Matthew Freud are watching Prudence play - drinking orange juice. Lachlan is pacing the room. His wife, Sarah, and James' wife, Kathryn Hufschmid are talking.

PRUDENCE

And then this little girl says -  
'teacher I want to go to go  
outside!'

CHLOE

(defiant, taking doll)  
No. She doesn't want to go outside.

Wendi arrives from fixing more drinks and overhears this fragment of defiant sounding dialogue.

WENDI

Chloe - no! Don't be rude, play  
nicely with your sister here.

Prudence, older than Wendi, takes this in. Just then James arrives, breathless, he's dashed ahead of Rupert.

JAMES

He's on his way! Everyone!

WENDI

Everyone - through here!

JAMES

(motioning to the other  
side of the apartment)

Wouldn't we be better obscured this  
side? Then we can all just step  
out?

He has a point.

LACHLAN

Or - behind the couches - that  
might be nice cos we could jump up?

WENDI

No I was just thinking ...

JAMES

(the man of action)

He's coming. This side!

WENDI

Fine. Whatever.

ELIZABETH

The couches sound good?

LACHLAN

The couches would be cool?

PRUDENCE

He's coming.

LACHLAN

Go for it.

Wendi goes through a doorway to where she was planning. Lachlan behind the sofa, James to his side of the room. The others go to join them - Chloe and Grace with Wendi, Prudence and Alistair too. Lachlan and Sarah, Liz and Matthew behind sofas, James and Katherine to his side of the room.

KRM enters. He is playing a role, knows what is coming.

KRM  
Hell-o? Hi honey ...

LACHLAN  
(just jumping in a beat to  
early in his eagerness to  
be first)  
Surprise!

Momentarily later ...

WENDI  
Surprise!

Then everyone else.

EVERYONE  
Surprise.

KRM  
Oh - wow. Wow. What a surprise. Now  
this is a surprise. Jeez, you're  
all here. Wow. Pru.

He kisses Prudence, the wives.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Liz. Matthew. Alisdair.  
(gathers himself)  
Well isn't this fantastic?

Looks around the room.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Look at you all.

LACHLAN  
Happy birthday Dad.

ELIZABETH  
Happy birthday.

Rupert seeks out Wendi's eye. He's is carrying a package of envelopes. Winks at her.

KRM  
Aw, isn't this great? This is  
fantastic.  
(then)  
(MORE)

KRM (CONT'D)  
 But now listen, just before we get  
 going on my 23rd birthday  
 celebrations. And since you're all  
 here, can I just - ask all the  
 adult children -

(to Grace and Chloe)  
 I'll fill you in later girls, it's  
 boring - to come to my study for  
 five?

They all look at one another.

CUT TO:

26 INT. RUPERT'S PRIVATE OFFICE. DAY 26

Everyone is filling in. Matthew hovers, almost joins the queue to enter but is subtly blocked by KRM.

MATTHEW  
 I thought? ... Shall I just?  
 Is this a biggie, 'cos Liz would  
 probably like me to ...?

KRM  
 Matthew, I don't want to waste your  
 time.

KRM's not letting Matthew in. He being cut out of the action but slides away. Rejoins Alisdair.

MATTHEW  
 I'm just going to leave them to it.  
 Keep my nose out that's what I've  
 learned.

CUT TO:

27 INT. RUPERT'S STUDY. DAY 27

The kids chat to one another, something of a buzz. Rupert closes the door, looks at some papers, sits on the corner of a sofa as the kids joke.

JAMES  
 This is when he tells us we're all  
 adopted.

LACHLAN  
 Only you mate.

PRUDENCE

The research has paid off? Have you  
found the elixir of eternal life  
Dad?

ELIZABETH

And it's not the coconut milk -  
it's human blood.

JAMES

It's a quest. One of has to go kill  
a fucking dragon.

ELIZABETH

He's coming out.

JAMES

Is that right, have you gone gay  
Dad?

KRM

(looking at papers)  
Why did the pooftah get fired from  
the sperm bank?

JAMES

(reproachful)  
Dad.

ELIZABETH

I don't know.

KRM

Drinking on the job.  
(nothing)  
What? Bekka told me that one.  
That's good.  
(off their silence)  
What? I'm breaking the tension.

PRUDENCE

At least this old geezer doesn't  
have any way of getting his  
repellent views into the wider  
world.

(comedy 'thinks')  
Oh, wait?

KRM

Yeah yeah, so listen. I hope this  
isn't going to be a big deal for  
you guys. But it's my birthday and  
this is my birthday wish.

JAMES  
Suicide bomb the New York Times,  
and BBC?

KRM  
So look - terms of the divorce from  
your Mum.

PRUDENCE  
Not my Mum.

She's still kidding around but the atmosphere has changed.

ELIZABETH  
That's settled.

KRM  
Let me finish.  
(beat)  
Look - that was then. And the money  
was sorted and obviously, it's all  
equal financially with Grace and  
Chloe. And everyone's very happy  
and I don't want to upset the apple  
cart cos, as Anna wanted, you're  
all on the board with voting rights  
for News Corp and they're not.

(beat)  
Well, that was a decent deal for us  
all then. But - things have  
changed? So I was thinking, I'd  
like to make a technical amendment  
so Chloe and Grace get voting  
rights, on the board. Okay?

There is silence.

JAMES  
When they're adult?

KRM  
Yeah.  
(like it's nothing)  
Wendi naturally would take the  
votes till they're 30.

This sinks in.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Good?  
(no one says anything)  
Good. Okay ...

ELIZABETH

Well, look - we need to think about  
this - cos, what about when you ...  
(die)

LACHLAN

(jumps in)  
If you...

ELIZABETH

*If??*

JAMES

If and when you go Dad

LACHLAN

Right.

ELIZABETH

We'd be on one vote each, right?

KRM

Relax! I'm not about to die.

JAMES

And Wendi would have two? And - if  
it wasn't real clear who was in  
charge of the firm?

ELIZABETH

Wendi would have a lot of power?

JAMES

A fuck of a lot. Five of us. Her  
with two votes? She'd be the  
kingmaker Dad. She'd be picking the  
new you.

KRM

Look. It's what I want. It's my  
company. I think it's fair.

(this has an air of vague  
threat)

But sure, chew it over. I'm not  
asking you to sign up now.

JAMES

When do you want us to sign?

KRM

Loads of time.  
(gets up)  
After lunch.

JAMES  
After lunch?

KRM  
(pats some papers)  
I've got the papers here. Birthday  
wish kids?

He heads out.

There is a beat of silence. They are all weighing up what  
this means.

JAMES  
Fuck a duck.

LACHLAN  
(pretending to enjoy the  
moment)  
Oh fuck!

CUT TO:

28 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT. DAY

28

Wendi is anxiously waiting on a couch.

KRM  
So. I asked them.

WENDI  
Just like that?

KRM  
Yup.

He's energized, he picks up a tangerine and bounces it off  
his arm. It's clear situations like this don't bump him, they  
adrenalize him.

WENDI  
What did they say?

KRM  
It's just a deal Wendi.

WENDI  
Oh God, just like that? That's too  
much. Isn't it? Won't they react?

KRM  
Course they'll react.

WENDI  
I thought you'd do it slowly.

KRM  
I can handle it. This is just  
right. I need to make things right.  
It's your birthday present to me.  
You know I love a deal.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. SUDAN - CAFE SPACE. DAY.

29

Leo is in a cafe space with his minder/fixer, they are talking to a middle aged ex-miner and the miner's family.

MINDER  
He says it was a big collapse.

LEO  
(making out reverence)  
And would you mind asking him,  
roughly, how many people he thinks  
...  
(trying to be respectful)  
were - victims of passing to  
another realm, that fateful day?

The minder asks the question in the local language, Lamba.  
Gets a reply.

MINDER  
95.

LEO  
(writes)  
Tell him I'm very sorry. Very  
sorry.  
(beat)  
Will you ask him if anybody took  
any photographs?

Minder asks. Gets reply.

MINDER  
Yes - some. There were some. They  
were - all in the newspapers, when  
it happened.

MINER  
(jumping in)  
1987.

LEO  
Oh fuck, what? 1987? This is  
bullshit.

Leo gets up, tries to compose himself.

LEO (CONT'D)  
Tell him I'm sorry. Very sorry for  
his loss.

There's a guy in the crowd as Leo heads out.

YOUNG MINER  
I never got signed up.

LEO  
What?

YOUNG MINER  
I never got signed up. I was in  
Lusaka when the money guys came. I  
need to get paid up my friend? I  
need the hundred dollar hush-hush.

Leo's minder steps in.

MINDER  
He just wants to make money. He's a  
bad man. He's well known as a bad  
man. He makes love to the chickens.

LEO  
What?

MINDER  
I don't know, but people say he  
makes love with chickens.

The minder guides them away, but Leo looks back.

CUT TO:

The kids are still reeling. After a long beat.

LACHLAN

So. What do you think? What are we going to say?

JAMES

Oh right - you're going to lead the response?

LACHLAN

Dude, I'm just saying? We can't sit here in fucking silence, I'm just intrigued to know what you all think.

JAMES

Look - let's cut the crap. We all want to say no - why wouldn't we want to say no? Only thing is - who's scared of Daddy. Right? Well, fuck that shit. No. It's a no.

James looks round.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Or shall I get Mum on the line? I mean, after what she did for us? The divorce. This is her deal. It's a no, right?

Silence.

LACHLAN

It's not that simple though is it?

PRUDENCE

It is his birthday. They are his kids?

JAMES

Nah. Look - he never worries what people think of him. That's one of his super powers. He isn't always thinking what will people think of me if I do X, if I shaft Y. Same should go for us. One question. Do you want this?

There's silence.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Look. What would you say you were going to say if you weren't going to be boxed in by that answer subsequently? If you didn't have to actually say what you say you want to say, what would you say?

LACHLAN

If I didn't have to say what I was going to say but I could just say anything?

ELIZABETH

This is classic.

JAMES

What?

ELIZABETH

He throws a hand grenade in, locks the door, and pisses off?  
He wants to play happy families - but he also wants us to have a survival of the fittest Twister match.

JAMES

It's a no right? Is anyone here not happy with a no? Cos I think we need a joint position on this?

LACHLAN

The head of the family speaks.

JAMES

I was just fucking saying.

LACLAN

Sure whatever.

JAMES

'Sure whatever'. Fuck you. C'mon man we need to get on this.

LACHLAN

Look - I don't give a fuck James. I'm out of it all yeah? Sure I care about Mum, but the power play? The board? Who's the right guy, person, to run the firm, if Wendi's in there, it's no big potatoes. Whatever.

JAMES  
But you're also cool with a no?

LACHLAN  
What-fucking-ever.

JAMES  
Liz? Pru? Status quo? Shall we say no?

PRUDENCE  
You're all against?

ELIZABETH  
(to James)  
You're going to tell him?

JAMES  
Sure I'll tell him. I'll tell him right now. We say no, yeah?

Liz wants to say no. Prudence doesn't want to be isolated.

ELIZABETH/PRUDENCE  
Sure./Well okay.

JAMES  
Okay. Thank you.

James goes out.

CUT TO:

31 INT. FOX NEWSROOM. DAY.

31

Claire is on the line to a potential contributor.

CLAIRES  
Have you done Fox before Sharon?  
... Okay well you'd be on against,  
not against, with, John Kendall at  
5.45.

Sharon is in the small book-lined office of her New York apartment. We cut between them.

SHARON GEORGSON  
Oh, I'd be against John Kendall.

CLAIRe

Yeah? Do you feel you could make some good points against him?

A colleague approaches Claire. She's hot-desked into his place.

SHARON GEORGSON

I would eviscerate the guy. He's a straight-up oil stooge. Isn't his wife on a retainer from the open-cast guys.

CLAIRe

(trying to listen and at the same time, to her colleague)

This is a hot desk - I'm hot desking.

FOX JOURNALIST 2

It's too hot for you. That's my desk.

CLAIRe

(hand over phone)

But it was empty - I was - I'm on the line.

FOX JOURNALIST 2

Get - out - of - my - face.

CLAIRe

(into the phone)

Uh-hu.

SHARON GEORGSON

... I mean that puts carbon emissions through the roof. It would be more efficient to burn solar panels. I'm serious.

All the while, Claire is trying to walk with a fixed phone round the corner of the long desk, to find another work area. At one point she has to unplug the phone and then run round and slot the cable back in, Claire is still talking.

CLAIRe

Uh-hu, that sounds, great Sharon.

She is enthused with Sharon as a contributor though.

CUT TO:

32

INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - LIBRARY. DAY.

32

James comes and finds Rupert. Rupert is looking at papers in his little library.

KRM  
So?

JAMES  
Look Dad, here's how it breaks down.

Rupert reads it in James' face.

KRM  
What? You're kidding? Who's against?

JAMES  
I can't say ...

KRM  
Look just - don't say it.

JAMES  
But it's a no. From the group.

KRM  
(doesn't hear)  
What?

JAMES  
It's a no.

KRM  
I said don't say!  
(then)  
That's not the answer.

JAMES  
That's the answer.

KRM  
No, no it's not.

JAMES  
Look - I don't want to talk out of school, but between us - I tried.  
But it's a no.

KRM  
Okay. Fine. That's the initial response.

JAMES  
That's our response.

KRM  
That's your initial position.

JAMES  
No Dad.

KRM  
I've noted your initial position and we'll come back to it.

Murdoch gets up to head out.

JAMES  
Where are you off?

KRM  
Just these Chinese figures.

JAMES  
What?

KRM  
I want to run them again  
They starting to look flakey as  
fuck again to me.

James watches him go.

33

INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - TERRACE. DAY

33

Sarah is with Lachlan whose mind is racing.

SARAH  
So what do you think?

LACHLAN  
Well - I think a number of things it difficult to think them all at once. I mean it's his company so why not - but no, because Mum?  
(MORE)

LACHLAN (CONT'D)

But yes cos, it would be nice to keep him happy in case I ever wanted to - but I don't want to ever, be back in, right? Plus why should the two little ...

(Chloe walks through)

Hey there sweet cheeks.

(he waits)

I mean the blood and energy I put in, why should I ...

SARAH

Right?

LACHLAN

But James - I mean, I'm cool with James, but maybe ... it's just the - the request - it's got a fuck of a lot of angles.

(thinks)

Man! I'm playing 3-D chess with a fucking octopus with the brain of a Stephen Hawking dolphin here baby.

He's thinking hard. Back inside Elizabeth is talking to Matthew.

MATTHEW

What's going on, Liz, what's happening??

ELIZABETH

I'm thinking.

MATTHEW

Who dropped the stink bomb? What was it? Who's fucking who? Is there a body under the floor? Do I need to manage this shit for you Liz?

Liz walks off, catches her Dad, they head out onto the roof garden as Lachlan and Sarah come off it. There is an awkward series of smiles.

At the door, Cal Pawsey, long time News Corp courtier and also family friend arrives with a gift. Wendi greets him. He pays her elaborate court. Kisses her hand.

Lachlan watches with distaste.

LACHLAN

Oh fucking great. The Man Who Would Be King. The corporate cock cleaner.

SARAH  
Lachlan, it's okay.

LACHLAN  
What on his *birthday*? The turd in  
the punch-bowl. He pushes me out  
the firm, and then rolls in. Is he  
family now or what? This is  
bullshit.

Cal waves to Rupert through the glass, he waves back.

James arrives where Wendi is greeting Cal.

JAMES  
(apparently totally  
polite, re the catering  
and party set-up)  
Wendi, I have to say, you've  
arranged everything beautifully.

There's a beat, she could take it another way.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Well done. Congratulations. Thank  
you.

WENDI  
(ignoring any potential  
edge)  
Thank you James - I hope it's a  
nice party.

JAMES  
Well it is a nice party. So you  
should be very pleased.

WENDI  
Well I am pleased.

JAMES  
Of course, and so you should be.  
(uncomfy beat, then)  
Cal, when you have a moment, can I  
get five?  
(explaining to Wendi)  
It's just a corporate issue.

WENDI  
Of course. I keep out myself. You  
know?

She motions to business stuff whistling over her head, smiles.

Back with Lachlan and Sarah:

SARAH  
So what did you say?

LACHLAN  
We said no.

SARAH  
Okay. That's what your Mum would want right?

LACHLAN  
I know.

SARAH  
Then it's all settled?

LACHLAN  
I guess.  
(beat)  
I feel sick.

SARAH  
Is it bringing it all up again?

LACHLAN  
No.

SARAH  
No?

LACHLAN  
No. I just don't know. I mean, Dad, the poor guy, the shit he takes, the crap he catches, for us. You know, he's suffered a lot for us - to make it all possible. Doesn't he deserve a bit of sugar now?

CUT TO:

Elizabeth and Rupert are out on the roof terrace.

As caterers take round some nibbles, each of the kids is hyper aware of where every other one of their siblings is.

Liz having Rupert alone is a big deal for them all. And as they all try to carry on talking normally, enjoying the family occasion. But their eyes all flick out to the roof garden, checking the body language, the atmosphere, between Liz and Rupert.

Rupert is looking down to the street again.

KRM  
Look at them all down there.  
(beat)  
You know ...?

He pauses. She lets the grand old patriarch finish expanding his philosophy. We maybe feel he's on the verge of some thoughts. On mortality? On life?

ELIZABETH  
Yes?

KRM  
It's a fucking long way down.

Liz clocks Cal.

ELIZABETH  
So Cal came in on his Learjet?

KRM  
(mishears, testy)  
Cal 'called me Lear again'?

ELIZABETH  
What?

KRM  
King Lear?

ELIZABTH  
No. Learjet. He's come in on the  
Learjet?

KRM  
Right. Sure. Cos I'm more fucking  
Romeo than whatever.

ELIZABTH  
Right. You've never stayed awake  
through either of them.

KRM

If Shakespeare was alive now, he'd be working on the soaps, he'd be writing the fucking - Simpsons.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, I tend to think if Shakespeare was alive now he'd actually be a shoo in for director of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

KRM chuckles.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Look Dad? How long did the divorce negotiation take? Hasn't this has all been settled. Why drag it up? What's changed.

KRM

Well you know, Grace and Chloe ...

ELIZABETH

They're six and eight Dad.

KRM

Exactly, I think they're ready to step up to board level.

ELIZABETH

(doesn't appreciate the  
joke in these  
circumstances)

This is bullshit.

KRM

Liz, one thing depends on another thing. A good deal today is a bad deal tomorrow. Everything depends.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, so we sign up today - then we get shafted again tomorrow?

KRM

Everything's always changing.

ELIZABETH

Dad, we're not - you know - the Monopolies and Mergers that just has to be squared and, and, then everyone goes back to sleep as you cold-cock them and the Sunday Times or whatever. We're not the Bancroft family to be flipped and dicked?

KRM

Course you're not. You're - you know I - love you.

ELIZABETH

Or are we? Just the next bunch of suckers to get taken in by you looking them straight in the eye and telling them a lie they want to believe?

KRM

There's one thing I regret Liz.

ELIZABETH

What?

KRM

I've changed pretty quick in my life, but maybe I've been slow about women?

ELIZABETH

Oh please.

KRM

Really. Maybe it would be good having a bit more woman power in the firm? Earlier.

ELIZABETH

(sniffs)

Um. I smell carrot. Are you dangling me a carrot now?

KRM

Who's built the biggest business outside the fold?

ELIZABETH

Uh-hu.

KRM

I'm just saying. You have. Is your no a firm no? Are you negotiable.

ELIZABETH

Look everything is negotiable.  
(he looks at her)  
That's just a fact. But yeah it's a firm no.

KRM

I'm not blowing smoke up your ass, I'm just saying, if and when I'm not around, you've proved you can do it.

ELIZABETH

(looks down)  
You know what Matthew reckons?

KRM

I don't know? Does he reckon you can sell ethical flapjack on a 70% mark-up?

ELIZABETH

He reckons cos Gran's still alive, it makes you think you're still a kid. A teenager.

PRODUCTION NOTE: POSS SHOOT ALTERNATIVE LINE - 'Cos Gran lived so long')

KRM

Uh-hu. Thanks for the insight, how much do I owe him?

ELIZABETH

Like - nothing you do, really, actually, ever finally, actually really when it comes down to it actually, matters, you know?

KRM

Right. Brilliant.

ELIZABETH

And maybe today and - everything, all the buying and the selling. Maybe you're looking for your Mum's attention. Love.

KRM  
(enough)  
Alright thanks a bundle for the  
second-hand third-generation  
Freudian analysis, he may want to  
do his Mum but I'm normal in that  
department okay?

There's a tense beat. Then Prudence comes out on to the roof terrace.

PRUDENCE  
Look can I just say something?

ELIZABETH  
Shall I go?

PRUDENCE  
I don't mind. But Dad, you might  
prefer it?

KRM  
I'm easy, I'm not playing any  
games, you can say anything in  
front of Liz you want.

PRUDENCE  
Okay, it's just Dad, I was looking  
at you out here from in there and I  
just thought, you know, please,  
please, really, you've got to stop  
doing the dyeing on your own, you  
need a professional job. You just  
do.

CUT TO:

35

INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

35

Cal Pawsey and James are plotting in the only private space they could find. The medium sized bathroom off the entrance hall. James is sitting on the closed toilet, Cal is pacing.

CAL PAWSEY  
Today's the day for the China deal  
man. What is he saying? It's pay or  
play.

JAMES  
Yeah. It's in the balance.

CAL PAWSEY

Really? Still? Man. I can't believe it. I mean who's looking after the ten year strategy? The fifteen year strategy?

JAMES

Yeah.

CAL PAWSEY

I mean whoever's running the firm then ...

He motions to James.

JAMES

Right. Or ...

He motions to Cal.

CAL PAWSEY

You're too kind. But you know, China, India, these are the markets we need to be hitting, right? We need to get him on- board.

JAMES

Right. Sure. It's just today. Today's kind of a weird one.

CAL PAWSEY

Uh-hu.

Someone tries the door. Cal and James don't say anything.

LACHLAN (O.S.)

Hi?

CAL PAWSEY

(then)

Hi?

LACHLAN (O.S.)

Cal?

CAL PAWSEY

Uh-hu. Lachlan?

LACHLAN (O.S.)

You seen James, Cal?

James and Cal look at one another. No way out here. They need to admit James is in there.

JAMES  
(beat, then)  
Hi bro.

LACHLAN (O.S.)  
James?

JAMES  
Yeah?

LACHLAN (O.S.)  
Cal?

CAL PAWSEY  
Uh-hu?

LACHLAN (O.S.)  
You two fucking each other?

JAMES  
Uh-hu. That's right.

Outside the door, Lachlan walks away. Past Matthew.

LACHLAN  
Cal and James fucking.

Back in the bathroom.

JAMES  
I mean, I guess you're going to  
hear anyway so ...

CAL PAWSEY  
What?

Decides in the mathematics of things, he doesn't lose  
anything by giving Cal the full down-load.

JAMES  
Dad's talking about tearing up the  
divorce agreement. Give Chloe and  
Grace voting rights.

Cal doesn't take long to process.

CAL PAWSEY  
Uh-hu so Wendi's got two seats till  
they're what?

JAMES  
Thirty.

This changes a few things. Cal thinks. James clocks him thinking.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
You trying to remember what you  
bought her for Christmas?

CAL PAWSEY  
Hahhah. I'm just a humble servant  
(beat)  
So is this happening?

JAMES  
I don't know. We don't know. No, I  
don't think so.

CAL PAWSEY  
But no one wants to upset the big  
Silverback right?

JAMES  
No, I rolled in and I said no. I  
took it on the chin. But you know,  
there may be repercussions.

Cal is momentarily pleased. He reckons his position has been advanced by this turn of events.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Nice for you, you have clean hands.

CAL PAWSEY  
Oh? What. Nah. Nah.

James returns to more pressing concerns.

JAMES  
But you know what, on China,  
nothing changes. We both need to  
push, yeah?

CAL PAWSEY  
He's not focused. You know he was  
talking with Gary about more  
papers.

JAMES  
I know. Jesus. That's a great  
business model. 'Hey dudes you know  
all the news you get free on the  
web?

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)  
 How would you like to pay for that,  
 but the good bit is - it'll all be  
 between 12 and 36 hours out of  
 date? Cool huh?'

Cal laughs. They head out of the door.

James takes a call, nips around the corner. Leaving Cal to bump into Lachlan.

CAL PAWSEY  
 Hey. Lachlan. Let's do a proper  
 catch up later? I might grab a word  
 with your old man.

LACHLAN  
 I think he's busy.

CAL PAWSEY  
 Family business?

LACHLAN  
 Oh dude, it's all family business  
 in the end, you know that.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. ZAMBIAN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. DAY. 36

Leo is finishing up an interview on the steps of a building.

LEO  
 So no collapse? Nothing. Nothing to  
 report.

LOW LEVEL OFFICIAL  
 Bits and bobs. Bits and bobs but  
 nothing of a major complexion.

LEO  
 Well, thank you for your help.  
 (heading off, under his  
 breath)  
 Yeah, fuck you very much for your  
 help.

Leo heads off with his minder. They are making their way through a small crowd of people checking out what is going on.

Leo stops to buy a coke from a vendor.

VENDOR

Here you go. Good day?

LEO

Not really.

VENDOR

Uh-hu. They've all been paid up.

LEO

Uh-hu.

(realises this could be  
something)

How do you mean?

MINDER

Okay, we should go.

LEO

Give me five.

MINDER

(taking Leo aside)

This guy is not reliable. He's  
known for that.

LEO

You know him?

MINDER

Yes yes. He's a goat fucker.

Unfortunately he is not reliable.

LEO

Oh okay. Well will you go and check  
the phone?

(the minder doesn't want  
to go, then)

I think the phone needs checking.

MINDER

What needs checking?

LEO

The phone.

MINDER

What part of the phone?

LEO

All the main elements.

MINDER  
I don't even think I can check the phone?

LEO  
Will you please check my phone please now?

Reluctantly, the minder heads off. Then:

LEO (CONT'D)  
Who - got paid off?

VENDOR  
200, 250 dead guys. At the mine.

LEO  
Those are big numbers.

VENDOR  
Yeah, foreigners paid off people big time now - nothing.

LEO  
And this happened?

VENDOR  
Oh yeah, sure. My sister's husband was there.

LEO  
If I pay you, will you take me there, to talk to him?

VENDOR  
If you pay me, no.

LEO  
Why not?

VENDOR  
I'm joking.

LEO  
... About the dead guys?

VENDOR  
No about the dead guys I'm serious.

LEO  
What are you joking about?

VENDOR  
About coming with you.

LEO  
So you won't go with me?

VENDOR  
No I will go with you. The joke was  
I wouldn't go with you.  
(Leo's confused)  
Let's go. You pay, we'll go. No  
more joking.

CUT TO:

37 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM. DAY.

37

Amongst the family, Cal Pawsey makes contact with Rupert.

CAL PAWSEY  
Happy Birthday boss.

KRM  
Guh. So.  
(brightening)  
.. what's the news, what's everyone  
saying?

CAL PAWSEY  
Oh - not much. The trade commission  
thing is up in the air. Senator  
Shitface is squealing.  
(beat)  
But listen, boss, can I just say,  
the Chinese thing, that to me is  
hot button news.

KRM  
Uh-hu. Sure.

CAL PAWSEY  
I just wanted to say that.

KRM  
Guh.

CAL PAWSEY  
I mean, you know me, I'm a friend.  
And this is your thing, but I was  
talking to James.

KRM

Okay. Yeah.

CAL PAWSEY

And he's got this - obviously he told me about your proposal which I imagine is okay with you?

KRM gives a look which might be read as assent.

CAL PAWSEY (CONT'D)

So, I guess, just as a friend I'd say, boss, is this the right time? Are you doing the right thing?

KRM

Okay. Thanks.

This really is the limit. But Cal pushes on. KRM makes to move off.

CAL PAWSEY

Or should you be more focused on the China thing which I really, really think is a toe-hold on a gold-mine you know?

Pawsey is giving too much advice.

KRM

(heading off)

Thanks for the advice Cal.

Following KRM.

CAL PAWSEY

I hope I haven't crossed a line, I just wanted to ...

KRM

Exactly. Brilliant.

(after Pru)

Pru?

KRM is away after Pru.

PRUDENCE

Dad?

KRM

Yeah look - James gave me the initial response and I have to say I'm very disappointed.

PRUDENCE

Oh. Right.

KRM

Yeah. I'm pretty angry and I just want to know if you feel it's a good way to respond to your father?

PRUDENCE

Oh I don't know. Maybe you should speak to your three children?

KRM

(beat)

You still annoyed about that?

PRUDENCE

I'll always be annoyed about that.

KRM

It was a slip of the tongue in a bullshit interview.

PRUDENCE

Yeah you make a lot of slips of the tongue don't you? You're always letting your mouth run away with you. It's cos you're so unguarded and freewheeling. A big dumb hippy spouting off the first thought that floats into your soft head. That's you all over.

KRM

I guess I never thought you were as interested in the business so I guess, that's why I talked about the 'three kids' so - I'm sorry.

PRUDENCE

Yeah well.

KRM

So might you have a rethink though about Chloe and Grace? I mean.

(MORE)

KRM (CONT'D)  
 That's the bottom line honey, I  
 think - why shouldn't everyone -  
 all my children get treated exactly  
 the same?

PRUDENCE  
 Yeah that sounds nice.

KRM  
 Exactly. And I mean I know you're  
 not a business head but - Alisdair  
 and the kids. I'd love to see them  
 prosper.

She lets this hang there.

PRUDENCE  
 Your light touch is like a gorilla  
 with a baby hamster, you know that?  
 You think you're petting, and then  
 there's a squeeze and a squeak and  
 all you've got left is a bloody  
 smear on your hand.

She heads off, she walks through the apartment, we follow her  
 as she thinks, she crosses past Lachlan.

40

INT. JEEP. DAY.

40

Leo is bumping along with his reluctant minder driving and  
 the bottle vendor by his side. He has a laptop on his knee.

LEO  
 (on his phone)  
 Hi, yeah, look, I'm getting very  
 good stuff. Very good. It looks  
 like this was a major incident. And  
 the mine's Chinese owned.  
 (listens)  
 How do I know?  
 (taps on the keyboard)  
 No, not Wikipedia. I've got  
 sources. Look - they've paid wide  
 for a hush up and I reckon I could  
 well get this nailed. Okay?

CUT TO:

41

INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM/POOL ROOM. DAY.

41

Lachlan and James are in the pool room. They start to rack up the balls.

LACHLAN  
So, how did he take it?

JAMES  
He didn't take it.

LACHLAN  
How d'you mean?

JAMES  
He just fucking wouldn't take it -  
said that was just an initial  
position.

LACHLAN  
Oh. Classic!

JAMES  
He'll get the message though,  
eventually. If we keep a united  
front.

LACHLAN  
Yeah right. About that.

JAMES  
What?

LACHLAN  
I've been having a think.

JAMES  
Oh for fuck's sake?

LACHLAN  
What?

JAMES  
Is this a power-play?

LACHLAN  
Relax bro fucking hell, we're just  
two brothers having a chat. There's  
no power play. I just wonder if  
maybe we shouldn't have a think  
about what's fair?

JAMES  
Why can't you let it go?

LACHLAN  
What?

JAMES  
If you want to have a pop at the  
fucking champ.

LACHLAN  
Oh you're the champ, right? Okay. I  
get it. Everyone tells me you're  
the 'real thing.' The fucking coca  
cola kid. Well if you're the real  
thing, what does that make me? A  
long glass of piss. The unreal  
thing. The phoney?

JAMES  
Look, if you want to talk about  
this. Let's go to it. Let's have a  
fucking bar fight, don't skulk  
around like a bitch making out it's  
about 'fair'.

LACHLAN  
It is about being fair.

JAMES  
You're trying to make eyes at the  
big fucker.

LACHLAN  
Everything isn't a fucking  
powerplay James - I just think ...

JAMES  
Bullshit.

LACHLAN  
Look I walked away. I was there, I  
walked. I don't want the firm, the  
firm is fucking yours if you want  
it.

JAMES  
Sure.

LACHLAN  
Just cos you're a little fuck-me  
operator that doesn't mean everyone  
is.

JAMES  
How do you think Mum would feel?  
Shall we get Mum on the line?

He gets his phone out.

LACHLAN  
Don't fucking wave mum at me.

JAMES  
(pretends to talk)  
Hey Mum! Yeah, we're thinking of  
fucking you. Yeah for some  
momentary advantage. Is that cool?  
If we fuck you?

LACHLAN  
Don't act the white knight, dick.

JAMES  
Don't dick me, bitch.

LACHLAN  
Bitch.

JAMES  
Dick.

LACHLAN  
(after a beat)  
Well it was nice having this chat.  
Fuck you.

Starts to go.

JAMES  
That's right - hand the power to  
Wendi, she's the wise-apple. Suck  
up to new-mommy-Cultural-  
Revolution.

Lachlan is heading out. KRM has walked in hearing the last words

KRM  
Go on?

JAMES  
(covering)  
We were just talking about the  
Cultural Revolution.

KRM  
Sure.

JAMES  
Interesting period.

KRM  
Oh that is nice. That is fucking nice. In my apartment? I heard you called her that, but here? Very fucking suave.

Lachlan doesn't help his brother out.

JAMES  
What? Dude, Dad it's just a name, wasn't that her name? We get on great now so ..

Wendi is there.

WENDI  
We might do the presents now?

She has heard a bit of the discussion.

KRM  
Sorry honey.

WENDI  
It's fine. Wen Gi means Cultural Revolution. I changed my name. I'm not ashamed. If you were called 'Holocaust Murdoch' you might change your name right?

JAMES  
Wendi, honestly. I was horsing around.

WENDI  
And maybe you mock me cos you're a bit scared of me, right? But there's nothing to be scared about James.

JAMES  
I know. Wendi I know.

Wendi heads off. Rupert goes after her.

CUT TO:

42

INT. FOX NEWSROOM. DAY.

42

Claire is pitching her candidates for the show slot she's in charge of to Sophia her producer.

CLAIRe

So I think the best candidate for the enviro-slot is probably - Sharon Georgeson. You know her?

SOPHIA

Have we used her before?

CLAIRe

Er, not so that I know, she fronted a half hour for somewhere and that was ...?

Claire looks through her notes.

SOPHIA

Is she TV?

CLAIRe

Urgh, yeah, I think, she's bright, she's articulate.

SOPHIA

But she comes over?

CLAIRe

On the phone I thought, she's just good value. Very factish.

SOPHIA

Okay, cos we want the protein, I love giving value but the item needs to zing? It can't just lie there like a box of dead kittens on CNN? I mean this woman is she sparky?

CLAIRe

(no)

Er, yeah I'd say, yeah, yes.

SOPHIA

Great. Just maybe keep an eye out for a back-up? Someone who people will see and just go - 'Yeah! Okay!'

CLAIRe

Okay.

SOPHIA

Plus we do need to throw John a bone? Somebody he can chew on. Not easy pickings ..

CLAIRe

Not easy pickings?

SOPHIA

No, not easy pickings, but he's a great host for us so we want somebody he can get into? Not someone who's going to make a fool of themselves, but not somebody who is necessarily not going to make a fool of themselves?

CUT TO:

43

INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT. DAY.

43

Murdoch is talking to Wendi. Prudence approaches.

PRUDENCE

Hey. Are we ready for presents?

His phone goes. He peers - can't make it out, hands it Wendi to read the display

KRM

Uh, honey, on this one I can't...

WENDI

(she reads the caller display)

Michael Rowle?

KRM

What?

(he takes the call)

Michael?

CUT TO:

44

INT. UK BROADSHEET NEWSROOM. DAY.

44

Michael Rowle is on the phone, he has lots of figures spread out before him. We cut between him and Rupert.

MICHAEL ROWLE

Yeah, so listen the figure, the figure I was after was 4%. Four per cent - up if you compare a like-week with a like-week - because if you strip out Easter and ...

KRM

Guh.

MICHAEL ROWLE

So. Thought I'd let you know that.

(beat silence)

Yeah. And the paper's looking great.

KRM

Oh right. And what's the lead, what's the word?

MICHAEL ROWLE

Well actually we've got this African mine collapse. But it's looking big and looks like we've got an exclusive.

KRM

Right.

MICHAEL ROWLE

And it's not just all - 'the horror, the horror!'? There's a connection. The mining firm's Chinese. Party leaders' firm and they've hushed it all up, so, it has an angle.

KRM

(doesn't say anything)

...

MICHAEL ROWLE

Hello?

KRM

Uh-hu.

MICHAEL ROWLE

Do you like it Rupert?

KRM

(long pause)

...

MICHAEL ROWLE

Hello?

KRM

Hi.

MICHAEL ROWLE

Okay, well, listen, we'll speak  
again later maybe?

KRM

Guh.

Phone goes down.

CUT TO:

45

INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM. DAY

45

Prudence joins Matthew and Elizabeth who are talking in the kitchen as caterers buzz around.

ELIZABETH

(as Pru approaches)

So. What are you thinking?

PRUDENCE

Well, we said no, right?

ELIZABETH

Apparently he's taking that as an initial position.

PRUDENCE

Of course.

(then)

He's born Australian. Then he needs to be American, and it turns out Australian was just an initial position.

MATTHEW

Oh yeah he can be cold.

PRUDENCE

No. Nah. He can come across autistic. But he gets it. He gets blood. Families. Vanity. The Carrs, the Bancrofts, the Times, The Dow Jones. He gets blood alright.

ELIZABETH  
What are you thinking?

PRUDENCE  
Oh well, you know, I'm tempted to invite him to stop bullying us and just for once let this happy family be fucking happy.

MATTHEW  
I guess the interesting thing is for you two that it's all academic?

PRUDENCE  
What?

MATTHEW  
Well you know, the sisters -  
(to Pru)  
first born, and  
(to Liz)  
first of Anna's kids, but you never had a look in, right?

ELIZABETH  
Yeah, well, there's a number of factors that have stopped us from  
...

MATTHEW  
Yeah but one big, long, dick shaped one, lacking, right?

PRUDENCE  
It was another era. He's come along way since it was 'no blacks, no pooftahs, no suede shoes.'

MATTHEW  
Right although. I mean the whole operation. It's not exactly on the side of the angels is it?

ELIZABETH  
If it's not on the side of the angels, whose side is it on?

MATTHEW  
Fox? The Sun. The New York Post?  
The News of The World? Have you seen them lately? I mean don't get me wrong, I love them.  
(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
They're fun and great and  
pernicious little hate beacons and  
incredibly popular and ...

ELIZABETH  
(to Pru)  
He's trying to shock you - are you  
shocked?

MATTHEW  
Okay. Media training 101: defend  
the Sun, tell me what positive good  
the Sun newspaper does?

PRUDENCE  
(prickled)  
Apart from the jobs and the  
investment?

ELIZABETH  
Look - worst case scenario,  
absolute worst case, heaviest  
charge sheet, Dad had maybe, only  
*maybe* - cos who knows what would  
have happened - but *maybe* has  
coarsened the public sphere - the  
debate - in the UK, by I don't  
know, three or four percent, maybe  
four or five percent in the US and  
overall improved it by two percent  
in Australia. Okay? So that's the  
charge sheet.

MATTHEW  
Right? And what about The Sun 'wot  
won it' - what about Fox calling it  
for Bush. That right there, one  
call, might have boiled the planet  
Liz. Fucking hell. What about BBC  
off Star, out of China?

ELIZABETH  
Where's all this come from?

MATTHEW  
I just think, obviously I love your  
dad he's a great guy ...  
I just hate it when he does the  
puppet master thing.

PRUDENCE  
(pointed)  
Uh-hu? Really? Wonder why?

MATTHEW  
 (takes the implication)  
 Yeah, yeah sure maybe.

Wendi calls everyone through to the living room.

WENDI (O.S.)  
 Okay! Present time! Everyone come  
 see some presents opened.

ELIZABETH  
 (re Wendi)  
 You know - when she first came  
 over, she stayed on the bunk bed of  
 what's-his-name's five year old  
 daughter? Her first husband. That's  
 where she slept? Two years later  
 she's the kid's step-mom.

PRUDENCE  
 Look, there's lots of rumours, but  
 she's decent right? Basically.

ELIZABETH  
 Exactly. I totally agree. There's a  
 lot of rumours.

Pru smiles at Liz.

CUT TO:

46

INT. UK BROADSHEET NEWSROOM. DAY.

46

Michael is on the phone to another editor in another country.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
 What's he thinking? Have you talked  
 to anyone about what he's thinking?  
 (listens)  
 Gary says he's talked to James and  
 he might not be thinking anything?

He ends his call. Enters a small room off his office, Jo is there

MICHAEL ROWLE (CONT'D)  
 Thanks Jo, yeah, just wanted to run  
 this past you cos I was on the line  
 with Rupert and it was like this  
 (MORE)

MICHAEL ROWLE (CONT'D)  
(he leaves a beat of four  
seconds)  
Like that.

JO  
Right?

MICHAEL ROWLE  
What do you think? I mean I've  
known him go sort of  
(leaves a pause of three  
seconds)  
Loads of times and it usually means  
something, but  
(does a four second pause)  
That is pretty big isn't it?

JO  
That is a very lengthy pause.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
Dead right it is. I mean ...  
(he pauses again for four  
seconds)  
It's for fucking ever.  
(beat)  
Do you think I should spike the  
mine story?

JO  
That's definitely what you were  
talking about?

MICHAEL ROWLE  
We were talking about a number of  
things circulation, there was some  
noise ... but that was the one,  
yes.

JO  
You're certain?

MICHAEL ROWLE  
Fuck. What if he was you know,  
flossing his teeth and then I spike  
it? And his attitude is, 'why the  
fuck did you spike that?' when  
someone else picks the story up?

JO  
Yeah.

MICHAEL ROWLE

(beat)

I think I have to go with it. I think I just have some balls. And he likes it sometimes when people stand up to him? Apparently. I've heard that. Sometimes he respects that. That's my decision. We roll.

Off his attempt to be heroic we:

CUT TO:

47

INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM. DAY

47

Sitting amongst the assembled family, KRM has unwrapped a bunch of ties and small silver objects, wine decanters and personalized bathrobes. Now he's unwrapping another small silver object.

KRM

What's this - a - a - a fountain pen with a - what a- voice recorder and a -

(examining it)  
what comes out of here? What's it got on it? A cheese dispenser!? Is this a cheese pen James?

He wants everyone to laugh. Wendi and Prudence do a bit, Chloe and Grace too - and James and Lachlan's wives, but James, Liz, Lachlan, Matthew, they're not in jovial mood - not willing to play the game and court their father's good humour. Rupert tests the pen - starts writing

KRM (CONT'D)

The nib's not exactly super smooth.

He examines it.

KRM (CONT'D)

There's a rough bevel on that, it looks kind of ... where did you get this?

JAMES

Do you think I do my own shopping Dad?

KRM

Nah I'd prefer a biro and the hundred dollars in cash son.

(MORE)

KRM (CONT'D)  
You've been had.  
(winks at him, as he does  
another gift)  
I love it. Love you son

He's opened another gift - an ipod.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Okay here we go.

WENDI  
I've loaded on all your favourites  
already.

KRM  
Oh that's nice. Isn't that nice?  
Look at the size of that?

The kids nod.

KRM (CONT'D)  
(switching it on)  
Thank you Wendi. Oh - it's - it  
won't.

JAMES  
Has it frozen?

WENDI  
It's charged.

KRM  
Yeah it's - it just ... that's not  
good.

Rupert motions to a phone.

JAMES  
Let me look.  
(takes it)  
Yeah it's frozen you need to ...

KRM  
(he dials,)  
Can you get me Steve Jobs, Kristen  
please?

He puts the phone down.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Okay. Looky looky, what's next?

PRUDENCE  
You're calling Steve Jobs about a  
busted ipod?

Grace gives him a gift.

KRM  
Ah thank you sweetheart, so what is  
this?  
(starts to unwrap)  
Cuff-links. Oh that's nice - those  
are nice. I'm going to take these  
ones off and puts these on cos ...

The phone goes.

KRM (CONT'D)  
Guh?  
(listens)  
Put him on.  
(then, playing to the  
gallery)  
Hi, Steve? Yeah so my wife got me  
an ipod and it's a piece of junk  
mate.  
(listens)  
I don't know. It's black.  
(listens, asks)  
How many gig is it?  
(then)  
What does it matter how many gig it  
is? The piece of junk's frozen.  
(beat)  
What do I want you to do? I want  
you to tell me what to do.  
(listens)  
Okay. Whatever. I'm only doinking  
you Steve, alright? Selling your  
crapola all over the world.  
(listens)  
Okay. Guh.

Phone down.

KRM (CONT'D)  
He's gonna send over some more.  
Honestly.

The caterer whispers in Wendi's ear.

WENDI  
Okay, lunch. Are we ready for  
lunch?

CUT TO:

48 INT. DINING ROOM. DAY.

48

The family are all gathered around the dining table.

KRM  
Well, what a day. Great to have you  
all here and can I just say -  
(raises a glass, then,  
wryly)  
happy birthday to me.

They all raise their glasses.

EVERYONE  
Happy birthday, to you.

They all clink.

KRM  
(tucking in)  
So - what's anyone heard, what's  
the news and reviews. What's  
everyone saying?

There's a beat.

ELIZABETH  
I guess everyone's a bit pre-  
occupied, Dad.

KRM  
We can still have a chat, right?

ELIZABETH  
Sure.

Cutlery clinks. The party has been soured by Rupert's request  
to the kids, but he won't let it lie.

KRM  
Okay - fine, come on then, if no  
one's got any gossip. Let's play  
Family Fortunes. Okay, come on,  
pitch me kids. What should we be  
doing at the firm. News Corp?  
(MORE)

KRM (CONT'D)  
What's the next hundred years all about?

Silence.

CHLOE  
I think you should do more cartoons Dad.

There are chuckles.

KRM  
You see - someone's broken rank.  
Dead right Chloe. Good girl.

CAL PAWSEY  
(attempting a light tone)  
Well can I just say. Could we have a think about the name?

KRM  
Guh.

CAL PAWSEY  
'News Corp'? Could we not have spent five more minutes on the name? Are we going out of our way to make it as ugly as possible?

There are chuckles but Rupert doesn't see it as that funny.

KRM  
I suppose you'd have me drop 10 million on a company make-over?  
Glad I got you covering corporate strategy.

As always, he's joking and not joking.

KRM (CONT'D)  
C'mon let's play, what's the pitch?  
Brains trust?

The kids are all judging what they should say. Pru jumps in - playing the role she has taken, the straight talker.

PRUDENCE  
Well, if I'm honest, I think you should re-balance Dad. America.  
Sure. But remember Asia? Alisdair was saying - go on Alisdair?

He's not about to start laying down the law to his boss. He demures.

KRM  
Liz?

ELIZABETH  
(still brittle)  
What do I think? Well ...  
(pause - builds  
anticipation)  
keep going. You're doing a good  
job.

KRM  
That's - it?

ELIZABETH  
I'm serious. Don't necessarily  
listen to some young buck who says,  
'sink everything into some  
Indonesian fibre optic' or  
something. Do what you do well.  
Popular media.

KRM  
Uh-hu.

JAMES  
Well, here goes, if we're playing  
parlour games, I'll tell you what  
we should do with the firm.

KRM  
Okay here we go.

JAMES  
Get out of papers.

KRM  
Right?

JAMES  
You're addicted Dad dude. The Post -  
has any media operation ever lost  
as much money as your New York  
Post?

CAL PAWSEY  
Maybe only his London Times?

JAMES  
People think you're a hard nosed  
bugger but you're putty for a  
paper.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Five, ten year strategy get out of  
papers before they curl up and die.

LACHLAN  
Nah, get out of all news. Into  
entertainment.

JAMES  
Dude, news *is* entertainment that's  
the whole insight. An opposition is  
an old paradigm. We're a brand that  
has a relationship with a community  
of customers. We've got to embrace  
that. But constantly re-evaluate  
it. We've got to say, 'today we're  
going to eat change for breakfast,  
for the sake of it.'

KRM  
Yeah, so out of papers? Get rid of  
80% of our profit stream.  
(to Cal)  
I like this guy, what's his name  
again?

JAMES  
Everyman should kill what he most  
loves. A wise man once said that,  
and that's right. We oughta take  
the brands, hollow out the papers -  
leave them as cash husks and  
project the value online.

CAL PAWSEY  
I have to say, obviously I disagree  
with what he says, in many ways,  
but big picture. I think James is  
talking real words there.

KRM looks at Lachlan.

LACHLAN  
Look, I don't want to play.

KRM  
You've got to play.

JAMES  
Leave him alone Dad. He already had  
a go.

LACHLAN  
What?

JAMES  
 I'm just saying you already had  
 your go - running the train set.

Lachlan gets up.

LACHLAN  
 What? What?! I never ... had the  
 train set.

JAMES  
 I'm sorry?

LACHLAN  
 Cal had the train set. Dad set up  
 the track. I was on points but ...  
 the timetable ... was -

JAMES  
 This metaphor is really not working  
 for you dude.

LACHLAN  
 Just - look man, just, *fuck you*.

JAMES  
 Yeah okay, now I get it.

LACHLAN  
 I apologise, Dad, Chloe, Grace. I  
 apologise. I love you.

Lachlan heads out.

CUT TO:

49 INT. INTERNET CABIN - ZAMBIA. DAY 49

Leo is at a terminal. Typing at an old grey keyboard. A few  
 people are around checking him out as they do their emailing.

Leo is on his mobile.

LEO  
 Yeah the file didn't attach. And it  
 won't take a dongle. There's no  
 stick hole. So I'm typing it into  
 the body of an email.  
 (MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)  
 But this keyboard is fucked so  
 where there are dollar signs -  
 those should be U's and where  
 there's colons put commas. Except  
 the third colon which is a colon.  
 Yeah? I'll call when I send.

He types some more. Hurriedly. Then suddenly the screen blips. Goes dark. There is a general sigh of discontent in the cabin. Then the power blips on again. The cursor blinks as the machine boots up.

LEO (CONT'D)  
 Fucking .... What? Did this just  
 ...?

But everyone else is getting on with re-typing their emails. Leo makes another call.

LEO (CONT'D)  
 Okay. I just lost my webmail page.  
 I'm out of here.  
 (past the owner)  
 This is bullshit.

WEBSHACK OWNER  
 (laconic)  
 Come back again friend.

Leo leaves a few bank notes at the front desk and heads out onto the street. Sits on a bench with his notebook.

LEO  
 Okay I'm going to have dictate the  
 copy to you, is that okay?

CUT TO:

50 INT. UK BROADSHEET NEWSROOM. DAY. 50

The assistant on the foreign desk, MIA, is there. We cut between them.

MIA  
 Okay. Okay. Go ahead.

LEO  
 So. Paragraph.

MIA  
 What?

LEO  
Paragraph.

MIA  
Paragraph? That's the first word?

LEO  
No. Paragraph. Start. The first  
paragraph. Isn't that what you say?

MIA  
I don't know. I've never done this  
before. Why don't you just start?

LEO  
Okay. Fine, then - starting now:  
Er, A mining disaster in Western  
Zambia that may have killed or  
injured up to 200 local miners has  
been covered-up by the mine's  
Chinese owners. Paragraph. As in  
new paragraph. Not just the word  
paragraph inserted for no reason.  
Nor all these words I am now  
speaking recorded and written in  
the paper.

MIA  
Okay - sorry, I'm on 'A mining  
disaster in' ... where?

CUT TO:

51 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM. DAY.

51

After Lachlan's outburst people are hushed in knots talking.  
Murdoch comes out of his bedroom in gym gear.

He comes down a flight of stairs. He's in sour mood.

Everyone wonders what he's going to say or do. But he walks  
through the room. Says a few words to Wendi and then heads on  
through to his gym up a corridor.

CUT TO:

52 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - GYM. DAY.

52

KRM is pounding away on a running machine. His feet hit the  
track - slap slap slap - and sweat drips onto the belt. He  
looks at himself in the mirror. He's not happy.

Things are looking bleak. He is feeling tired. He looks like he might switch the machine off.

But he hits the button in front of him to take it up a notch.  
AS Cal Pawsey enters.

CAL PAWSEY  
You okay Boss?

KRM  
Guh.

CAL PAWSEY  
Wendi said maybe you'd like a word?

KRM  
Uh.

CAL PAWSEY  
(re Rupert's running)  
Squirting off a couple of klicks?

KRM  
Uh-hu.

Cal checks KRM's speed. Rupert takes it up another notch.

CAL PAWSEY  
You okay. Not - too much?

KRM  
What?

CAL PAWSEY  
All that? Bit of a shit storm?  
It'll be okay though.

KRM  
Guh.

CAL PAWSEY  
Yeah. I reckon, you want my  
opinion, I do not think this is the  
correct strategy right now, the  
Chloe and Grace thing, you know  
that?

KRM  
Guh.

CAL PAWSEY

But strategically speaking, if you push through I guess, you've got Pru on-board? Liz, I think, is persuadable. James, I don't know, but he's inside. Lachlan's the one though. He's going to be tough.

KRM pounds away in silence.

CAL PAWSEY (CONT'D)

(starts to head out)

Okay. Well, I might - I've got this Foreign Affairs dinner and I might

...

KRM

Yeah so I've been thinking.

CAL PAWSEY

(stops)

Okay.

KRM

Yeah. Maybe it's time you took a rise.

CAL PAWSEY

Okay, well - gut reaction? I think that will work! Great. Shares or cashola?

KRM

And maybe moved up a level?

CAL PAWSEY

Okay? Sounds good. Up to the stratosphere. And what would my remit be?

KRM

Wide remit. Light duties.

CAL PAWSEY

(beat, waits for more)

So like, what?

KRM

Watching brief. Effective immediately.

CAL PAWSEY

Right but ...

KRM jumps his feet to the sides of the machine and heads off to grab a towel and a shower.

KRM  
Yeah? Good?

CAL PAWSEY  
Er - yeah. I guess?

KRM  
Good.

Cal isn't sure what just happened. He looks around the room. He's gobsmacked. Murdoch exits.

CUT TO:

53 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - OUTSIDE STUDY. DAY.

53

Coming out of his gym, Murdoch spots Lachlan and nods does he want a quick chat?

Lachlan follows his Dad into his office.

LACHLAN  
What?

Murdoch pulls on a tracksuit over his gym gear.

KRM  
I just thought we should clear the air.

LACHLAN  
Yeah? Go ahead. Clear the air. I wasn't the one who - f-f-farted.

KRM looks at him, Lachlan feels like a petulant kid

LACHLAN (CONT'D)  
Look, it's just James Dad. You know how he is? I don't think he ever did a thing, just for the thing? He's always working the angles.

KRM looks at him, he couldn't possibly comment. But is there wry acknowledgement?

LACHLAN (CONT'D)  
You know why I think he's all green? He wants some world left to fucking dominate.  
(MORE)

LACHLAN (CONT'D)  
He's like China, he doesn't want to  
get to top dog and inherit a shit  
pit. He wants some earth left to  
broadcast to.

KRM  
(after a beat)  
I just fired Cal.

LACHLAN  
I'm sorry?

KRM  
Yeah. He's been swinging his dick  
around for a while and I've been  
thinking about it so ...

LACHLAN  
Wow. How long has he been with you?

KRM  
Ten years?

LACHLAN  
Double that Dad!

KRM  
Maybe. You think?

LACHLAN  
He was there when you did Wapping  
wasn't he?

KRM  
Was he?

LACHLAN  
Well yeah.

KRM  
Look, he was getting so big in his  
strides he was popping a bollock.  
Don't worry about him.

LACHLAN  
Yeah, I'm not really worried about  
him.

KRM  
He'll get his nut. He'll get his  
little fucking nugget.

LACHLAN  
's fine by me Dad. I never really  
clicked with him, you know that.

KRM  
Exactly. Plus he was unlucky, you  
know? If it was raining cunt he'd  
get hit by a poof.

LACHLAN  
So, what? His corpse is a peace  
offering?

KRM  
No. Just business.

LACHLAN  
Dad I'm happy doing my own thing.  
There's lots of opportunities. I'm  
gonna be rich, don't worry.

KRM  
Whatever. Rich is easy. Every bone  
head you meet has 10 million  
sitting on fucking deposit.

LACHLAN  
Rich is easier if you start rich.

KRM  
Money's just the mercury in the  
thermometer mate. Where's the fun?  
Power. There's no one in the whole  
wide world from the pope on a rope  
to the Queen of fucking England who  
wouldn't take a call from that  
phone.

(he points)  
And you know what?

LACHLAN  
What?

KRM  
That's just a hell of a lot of fun.  
So think about it son. Think about  
coming back in, yeah?

Lachlan thinks.

LACHLAN  
You really fired him?

KRM  
 Yeah. But the cunt's so thick I  
 don't think he clocked it yet.

KRM heads off to his bedroom.

CUT TO:

54 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - GYM. DAY

54

Cal is still reeling putting the situation together in his mind.

James enters in the background.

JAMES  
 So? What up? Did he bite on China?

CAL PAWSEY  
 I don't know.

JAMES  
 What do you mean?

CAL PAWSEY  
 I think ... I think - I think, I  
 just got fucking fired?

CUT TO:

55 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - BEDROOM. DAY

55

KRM is breathing heavily after his exercise. He doesn't look great. He goes to put one leg in some trousers. Steadies himself. Is he going to be okay?

Matthew knocks on the door.

KRM (OOV)  
 Guh?

Matthew enters.

MATTHEW  
 Hi, Rupert?

KRM  
 I didn't fucking say come in, did I?

He's there in his boxer shorts - his clothes laid out.

MATTHEW  
Shall I ...?

KRM  
No, you've seen the goods now, you  
may as well stay.

KRM carries on dressing. He's restored after his mini-wobble.

KRM (CONT'D)  
So - listen, Mr PR.

MATTHEW  
Uh-hu?

KRM  
I maybe have a job for you.

MATTHEW  
Okay? What am I selling, to who?

KRM  
Very small list of targets. Very  
high end.

MATTHEW  
Okay. Opinion formers? Government  
bods?

KRM  
Liz.

MATTHEW  
What?

KRM  
Yeah. Just a thought.

MATTHEW  
You want me to PR Liz? Why? What do  
you want her to buy into?

KRM  
Me.

MATTHEW  
Right?

KRM  
Look - I'm talking to her but I  
could do with some help ...  
(MORE)

KRM (CONT'D)  
(does it pain him slightly  
to say this)  
mate.

MATTHEW  
You want me to mount a campaign?

KRM  
Yeah. No. I don't know. I just want  
her to say yes, alright? To my  
proposal. If she says yes, I'd be  
very grateful.

Matthew likes it when people feel grateful.

CUT TO:

56 INT. FOX NEWSROOM. DAY.

56

Clare is in a booth watching VT of a climate change  
activist..

Angle on the VT. We hear the activist.

THE VONK  
I am the Vonk and I demand climate  
change. Damn right. I demand we  
change the climate back. That's  
right, I'm, the Vonk and I'm  
turning back the clock. We're going  
to de-industrialise this nation if  
we have to do it with our bare  
hands!

Clare looks incredulous as she watches this self-publicist  
addressing a public meeting.

Behind her watching is another more senior researcher, Dan.

DAN  
Who's this?

CLAIRE  
Nut-job.

DAN  
He looks - sparky.

CLAIRE  
Yeah he's semi-literate, mostly  
phoney, totally sparky.

DAN  
Who are you pitching for the  
booking right now?

CLAIRE  
Sharon Georgeson?

DAN  
Oh right. Who occasionally writes  
in the  
(mimes saying it through a  
yawn)  
New York Times.  
(then)  
You sure?

CLAIRE  
(she looks at him)  
Why? What do you think?

DAN  
What do I think?

Dan looks at Claire - will he help or lie? Further his own career by doing her down or try to make a connection?

DAN (CONT'D)  
Seeing this freak getting torn up  
like barbequed chicken I'd watch  
that. So?

CLAIRE  
He doesn't even know the basic  
arguments?

DAN  
Sure. Look, do what you think.

Dan heads off. Clare watches him go. She's wondering if she's doing the right thing.

CUT TO:

57 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - STUDY. DAY.

57

KRM is on the phone.

KRM  
Yeah put calls in to the White  
House. The line is yes there'll be  
restrictions on the Chinese site,  
but information grows.  
(MORE)

KRM (CONT'D)  
 It's like cancer. Healthy cancer.  
 Once it's out there - it just grows  
 and grows? It feeds on itself.  
 (listens)  
 Yeah but we say, politics - meh -  
 doesn't change stuff. Technology  
 changes stuff.  
 (listens)  
 And this website would further  
 American interests. And if they  
 help us I would be very grateful,  
 in forthcoming situations.  
 (listens)  
 The current owners? Give them  
 whatever fucking assurances they  
 want. Whatever they need to  
 believe. They know the score. You  
 don't sell a car and say 'you can  
 have it as long as you don't drive  
 it on the road'. Sure, I'll promise  
 not to drive the car on the road to  
 make you feel better but we all  
 know if you sell it, I'm going to  
 drive that fucking car anywhere I  
 fucking well like.

CUT TO:

58 INT. UK BROADSHEET NEWSROOM. DAY. 58

Michael's deputy, Jo, has taken a call. Michael Rowle is the other end of the newsroom talking to someone.

JO  
 (shouting)  
 Mike?  
 (louder)  
 Mike?!  
 (louder)  
 Tell Michael, it's Rupert.

MICHAEL ROWLE  
 What?

JO  
 It's Rupert!

Michael tries to walk, quickly, but ends up running the length of the newsroom as colleagues try not to laugh at the indignity.

MICHAEL ROWLE

Rupert? Sorry to keep you waiting.  
It's just, this story. It actually  
could be quite a splash. I'm  
excited.

Rupert is in his office. We cut between the two of them talking.

KRM

Yeah. Just one question Mike.

MICHAEL ROWLE

Shoot.

KRM

Is anyone really interested in  
African fucking mines?

MICHAEL ROWLE

Er, well, it depends doesn't it on  
the context, I mean ...

KRM

Straight up question: are they?

MICHAEL ROWLE

Well they should be, I think and I  
think ...

KRM

Mike, it's just a question. Do  
whatever you think. Huh?

Phone down.

Michael is left standing there. Wondering what to do.

59

INT. MURDOCH'S APARTMENT - ROOF GARDEN. DAY.

59

Lachlan is thinking hard. He sees James out on the roof garden with Cal.

James is on his mobile. Cal is looking down towards the street.

JAMES

Okay okay. Cool. That is definitely  
cool.

(ends call, to Cal)

Looks like it's going to fucking go  
man!

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)  
The owners are not *not* going to  
accept the bid and Beijing aren't  
gonna kick up a shitstorm!

CAL PAWSEY  
Uh-hu?

JAMES  
Chinese Facebook motherfucker. We  
did it. I did it. You did it!

CAL PAWSEY  
(depressed)  
Congratulations.

JAMES  
Cal man, are you sure you've even  
been fired?

CAL PAWSEY  
(pathetic)  
I don't know, what do you think?

It's obvious he's been fired. They look at one another.

JAMES  
I think, this is still a massive  
achievement.

CAL PAWSEY  
Fuck. He's such a - he's a  
terrible manager you know that? He  
makes good deal - but he breaks  
people. He has these absurd  
favourites who think they're king  
dong. These tin pot Hitlers, who  
get shit poured on them and then  
it's a cavalcade of shit cascading  
down the ranks. Then he gets bored  
and chops their nobs off and leaves  
them as these eunuchs bleeding to  
death while the caravan moves on.

James smiles. Now is not the time to defend his Dad. Lachlan emerges. He's by the edge of the railing. Cal tries to smile at James. He heads past Lachlan. AS he does so he stops for a beat. Puts his hands on Lachlan's shoulders.

For a beat things feel a little out of control. Cal is emotional. Lachlan's on the edge of a roof garden 50 stories up. Cal has him gripped by the shoulders. Cal leaves it a beat.

CAL PAWSEY (CONT'D)  
Good luck.

And he heads back inside. Lachlan is in a new mode, he approaches James.

LACHLAN  
So dude.

JAMES  
Hey! You okay.

LACHLAN  
Oh yeah. Hell yeah. I'm good.

JAMES  
Good.

LACHLAN  
And look - sorry if things got a bit rich, earlier.

JAMES  
Yeah?

LACHLAN  
Yeah. No worries yeah?

JAMES  
Oh sure, no worries.

LACHLAN  
I guess this whole thing would be a hell of a lot easier if we didn't know whatever we agree will end up on the front page of all the papers.

JAMES  
Not all the papers. The Post and the Journal and the Sun and the Times, they tend to show some delicacy, you know?

LACHLAN  
Well, they're quality papers aren't they mate?

JAMES  
Exactly. Old school. Fucking old school.

They laugh.

LACHLAN

It's like Dad always says, they wouldn't be this interested in us if all we ran was a sausage factory, would they?

JAMES

Yeah and it's like I always say, we don't run a fucking sausage factory do we? We run the biggest news outfit in the world, so.

Lachlan wants things to stay cosy.

LACHLAN

You know, I tell you what I think was an interesting time period.

JAMES

Right?

LACHLAN

After, after the Visigoths and so on - the Roman Empire. The - the Byzantines and the Western Roman Empire.

JAMES

(scarcastic)

Oh fuck yeah. Let's get into all that.

LACHLAN

Serious. I mean that worked pretty well, right? Two Emperors.

JAMES

I don't think so. Didn't they all get totally fucked?

LACHLAN

No I mean, look I can't remember but I think it lasted a thousand years or some shit?

JAMES

Oh right?

LACHLAN

Look - say it did, the two Empires set up? Say that lasted like a thousand years - that would be pretty impressive wouldn't it?

JAMES  
Yeah, I guess?

LACHLAN  
So that's something to think about?

JAMES  
You're warbling six kinds of shit  
dude. I'm getting nauseous. I'm  
going to throw up.

LACHLAN  
I just think, if and when Dad  
should - you know?

JAMES  
Right.

LACHLAN  
Maybe. I might be inside?

JAMES  
Oh.

LACHLAN  
Maybe he might want me back and  
maybe I might want to come back?  
And maybe it wouldn't have to be a  
blood bath. We could talk about  
spheres of influence?

JAMES  
Oh, right? Two Emperors? Right?

CUT TO:

60 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - STUDY. DAY.

60

Prudence knocks comes in. Rupert's on the phone.

KRM  
Just make the bid. Yes I'm happy.  
(listens)  
That's how much anything costs -  
too much. Everything's over -  
priced, pal. Just make the bid,  
that's my instruction.

PRUDENCE  
Can I?

KRM  
(phone down)  
Of course Pru.

PRUDENCE  
Are you busy?

KRM  
Always. But not for you.  
(re phone)  
Just business and a fucking editor.

PRUDENCE  
Sending out the orders from HQ.

KRM  
Nah nah. If you have to grab the pen off a guy, you hired the wrong guy. Only a jerk has to grab the pen.

PRUDENCE  
Yeah I know this speech.

KRM  
(after a beat)  
So?, what's the news? Chloe and Grace?

PRUDENCE  
Look ...  
(beat, she looks at him)  
Dad, you know me, I'll always help you out when I can.

This says it all for Rupert.

KRM  
Oh that's great news honey!

PRUDENCE  
The others though?

KRM  
Oh, right? Yeah?

PRUDENCE  
I think it's tough. It's tough for them.

KRM  
Yeah?

PRUDENCE

Yeah. But, I mean I'll do what I can.

KRM

That would be amazing.

Before she goes.

PRUDENCE

Quick quiz though?

KRM

Okay?

PRUDENCE

No thinking time, off the top of your head. How many kids have you got?

KRM

(tries for a burst of emotion, but it's a little stiff)

Easy. Six. Two new ones. Three ungrateful ones. And one solid gold diamond, right?

PRUDENCE

Okay, I might be sick.

KRM

Sorry I can't really do this - stuff.

PRUDENCE

That's alright.

KRM

But seriously, your kids. Alistair, you know it's great to have the hubby on the firm. Sometimes I wonder if he hasn't actually been held back by his relationship - to the firm. He's talented. Be great to see that flower.

Prudence look at him. It's a carrot but there's just the hint of a threat there too.

Just then Cal knocks and enters.

CAL PAWSEY

Right, so look, I think that's me  
done.

KRM

You're going?

CAL PAWSEY

Well yeah I think I'm going, so.

Cal is getting annoyed by the subtext. Pru heads out past  
Cal.

CAL PAWSEY (CONT'D)

Yeah, so just before I go. Can I  
just check, am I sacked? I was  
sacked right?

KRM

I just think it might be time for  
you to move up.

CAL PAWSEY

So that's it?

KRM

That is it.

Cal is pumped up and ready to pop. But instead of keeping him  
in the private office, KRM shows him out - walking him into  
the living room. They're in the public arena. Cal's all  
flustered. He picks up the wrong coat.

CAL PAWSEY

This isn't my - where's my coat?  
(gathering his stuff, to  
himself)  
Fucking bullshit.

Wendi takes the young kids out, but the older ones start to  
notice this disturbance in the room, start to gather, or pay  
closer attention.

KRM

(did he mishear or is he  
poking?)

What's that mate?

CAL PAWSEY

(louder)

This is fucking bullshit.

For a quiet life Rupert should show him out, but for some reason he needles him a little.

KRM

Yeah, you see it's for insights like that I've always enjoyed having you round.

Wendi has looked out another coat. She hands it to him.

CAL PAWSEY

This isn't my coat alright! It isn't the right fucking coat!!

KRM

Did you even have a coat?

CAL PAWSEY

You fuck everything, don't you?

KRM

That's right Cal.

CAL PAWSEY

You fucked Australia. You fucked the UK. Now you're fucking me and the USA. That's what you do isn't it?

KRM

Oh okay? You've been taking the pay but now let's hear what you really think big man?

CAL PAWSEY

You take the papers and the cable stations and the - fucking anything - and you hollow them out and you pump them up full of shit and then you sell these baubles of shit and you fuck them.

KRM

You were happy enough til today. Funny that.

CAL PAWSEY

Yeah well, I thought I could do something. I thought we would do something. I guess I thought there was something fucking decent here. But you know what it's just a big fat bauble of shit.

This is too much for Lachlan. He's boiling up.

LACHLAN

Two billion people can get their news from us Cal.

CAL PAWSEY

Yeah, whatever. Someone else would have done it. What's he done that'll last?

JAMES

Bullshit.

CAL PAWSEY

Do you know what you are Rupe? You're a fucking sub.

JAMES

C'mon mate, fuck off now.

CAL PAWSEY

Once a sub - always a sub. He's fucking Beeverbroot's sub at heart. It's all about the strap-line, isn't it Rupe?

ELIZABETH

Bollocks.

CAL PAWSEY

We don't do content. We do the promise of content. The most fucking tantalizing way of plating up one single gram of media protein.

JAMES

Mate. Come on dude.

CAL PAWSEY

That's what he's does. He slaps a fat stupid strap-line on everything and the whole world goes, 'oh shit, better have a look.'

KRM

If I'm the problem, Cal? Who are the good guys, eh? Who are these guys you want running the news? The good old days? Hearst? Fat Bob Maxwell? Nazi Rothermere? Are these the guys you want?

(MORE)

KRM (CONT'D)

Conrad Black in jail? Russian spooks buying up London? Are these the guys I should sell out to? Cos I tell you one thing, it's not going to be the Scott-Trust-Sulzberger-Bancroft family selling wedges of National Public Radio 4 on eco-friendly shit roll. It's going to be some hard nosed bastard who gives people what they want.

CAL PAWSEY

And you know, don't you? You always know?

KRM

No. No I don't. But I tell you what, you find out. Cos people don't buy what they don't want.

CAL PAWSEY

People buy the shiniest shit on the shelf - and that's what we sell.

KRM

You know who the cynical fuckers are? Not me giving people what they want, it's the pricks who think they know what people want. I trust the man on the street. They hate him. They think he's getting - reprogrammed by Fox and jerking off to page three, but I know it's just not that fucking serious, Cal. He's listening to this, he's listening to that, and he doesn't want some toffee nosed cunt telling him what's what?

CAL PAWSEY

Yeah well, see you around.

KRM

Yeah go on Cal. No need for a thanks. No need for that. Who built this firm? Who is this firm. It's my firm, I do what I like, mate.

Cal is gone, but this is aimed at the kids too.

KRM heads to the kitchen to get a coconut milk drink from the fridge.

KRM (CONT'D)  
 Kids - c'mon, let's do it shall we?  
 Five minutes - in my study, yeah?  
 Bring your pens.

INT. KRM'S STUDY. DAY

Wendi follows KRM, concerned.

WENDI  
 Rupe. Rupe, you okay?

She catches his arm. She expects him to be a bit shaken by this big bust up. Who wouldn't be? But he seems very calm.

KRM  
 Oh sure.

WENDI  
 I was worried, you don't normally  
 do - that stuff?

KRM  
 Well I guess, today ain't a bad day  
 to circle the family wagons, right?

There's a twinkle there. Things are going to plan.

KRM (CONT'D)  
 Slowly slowly fuckee monkey.

WENDI  
 (whispers)  
 You should be careful Rupert. You  
 think everything is a game.

KRM  
 Everything is a game though honey.  
 How is it not a game if I'm  
 playing?

CUT TO:

Cassie, the foreign editor is on the phone.

CASSIE  
 How are you doing?

Leo is in the internet shack we saw him at earlier. We cut between them.

LEO

Great. Just - writing up a bit of eyewitness first person stuff colour. Might not make it for today but it could work as a follow up next week?

CASSIE

Yeah, the thing is Leo I just think, we're spiking the story.

LEO

What?

CASSIE

Hello?

LEO

What?

CASSIE

Yeah. I'm not sure it stands up.

LEO

Did you read it? It totally stands up.

CASSIE

Yeah, I'm not sure. Michael's not sure.

LEO

It stands ten feet fucking tall.  
It stands up.

CASSIE

(pained)

Yeah, his thing is, sure, maybe it does, but does it?

LEO

Yes!

(then)

Look, I've got, what, three sources on this - I've seen the place, I've got the doctor's quotes. I've got all that hard stuff about the Chinese investment ...

CASSIE

But, isn't it hard to ever really know what happened, I mean actually happened anywhere?

LEO

This happened. After a week of rain a side of a cobalt mine collapsed. 170 people died. The Chinese owners stopped it making news. That happened.

CASSIE

But - if a tree falls in the forest and ... and it kills 170 people - but afterwards everyone says, apart from a few people, that it did or didn't - is that a news story?

Cassie looks pained at Michael Rowle who is studiously pretending to not be able to hear.

LEO

I'm not really following you.

Cassie looks to Michael for support. But he's talking to Jo.

MICHAEL ROWLE

I don't care, put anything in there. Twenty best recipes. Anything, a fucking pesto graphic.

Back with Cassie

LEO

Look - Cassie, please, there's local stringers picking this up. The Chinese are trying to close it down. This has to come out.

CASSIE

Yeah, I'm just ... not sure it stands up.

LEO

(exasperated now)

Look will you stop saying that. What does that mean?

Michael, is passing, Cassie doesn't know what else to say, offers the phone to Michael.

MICHAEL ROWLE

Leo, great work mate, we just might have to put this on the back burner till we can stand it all up.

LEO

I have fucking stood it up. It's standing up.

(but he's gone)

Michael? What's going on Mike?

Leo is left hanging.

CUT TO:

62 EXT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - OUTSIDE STUDY - CONTINUOUS. DAY. 62

KRM is going into his study. James is there.

KRM

I'm excited. I'm excited about China. I wasn't sure, but I'm glad to have been able to do this for you, you know?

The implication hangs there.

KRM (CONT'D)

I wasn't sure about China. You weren't sure about Chloe and Grace. But we both can just see the other guy's POV. That's what I like about you and me.

JAMES

Right. So it's a deal?

KRM

There's no shame in making a deal is there James? See you in five, mate. Grab the others will you?

KRM goes into his study. He's feeling pretty great. He's pulling it all together. He grabs a pen, starts crossing and ticking some bits he does and doesn't like in newspaper layouts.

CUT TO:

64

INT. INTERNET CABIN - ZAMBIA. DAY.

64

Leo is on a call. We don't see the other end of it.

LEO

I can't fucking believe it. I've been stiffed. I swear I'm ready to give this story to someone before they fucking cover the whole thing up.

(he listens)

Okay, well sure, fuck it. Give me that number. Fuck it.

CUT TO:

63

INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS. 63

Lachlan is talking to Sara.

LACHLAN

I think, I think it could be on again baby, I really do.

She's weary. She's seen the highs and lows. He's like an addict who'd nearly kicked the habit.

SARAH

Really? Are you sure honey, that you want to dive in again?

LACHLAN

I'm not diving in. That's the sweetness. I'm just preparing the ground. I'm playing him.

SARAH

You're playing him?

LACHLAN

Uh-hu. I say yes - I've got him right where I want him.

CUT TO:

65

INT. FOX GREEN ROOM. DAY.

65

Sharon Georgson is being greeted by Claire. They head into the Fox green room. There are a bunch of other contributors in there. They're a pretty weird group.

An angry young man stands by himself in the corner. There's a priest with a Starbucks and his feet up, reading some briefing notes.

CLAIRe

Hi, Sharon it's great to meet you.  
You saw the DVD? You know the shape  
of the show?

SHARON GEORGSON

Uh-hu.

CLAIRe

And your battle-line is 'Tree-  
Hugging versus Market Hugging'. The  
damage Environmental Protection  
Does.

In the background we can see the earlier segment of the show Sharon's going to be appearing on playing out. John Kendall the macho presenter is taking down a liberal guest. The strap line is 'Battle Line: Stem Cell Murder'.

SHARON GEORGSON

Yeah. Nice.

Her phones goes

CLAIRe

Now there are other contributors  
and it will be a rolling situation,  
so we'll see when and how we ask  
you to take John on, okay?

SHARON GEORGSON

(distracted)

Great. Can I just take this?

She answers the phone.

SHARON GEORGSON (CONT'D)

Hello?

LEO

Hi, Sharon? Sharon GeorgesOn?

SHARON GEORGSON

Hello. Yeah? I can't talk really.

We see Leo with his notes.

LEO

Er, I'm a friend of your colleague  
Kelly?

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)  
Kelly said you might be on a TV  
show sometime soon? I've just got  
this story?

SHARON GEORGSON  
Uh-hu?

LEO  
170 killed in an open cast mine.

SHARON GEORGSON  
Hello? What?

LEO  
No one was watching. Zambia. This  
Chinese firm just paid out hush  
money, shipped the injured out to  
three different countries.

SHARON GEORGSON  
Okay. Shit I read on a blog that  
was meant to have ... was that for  
real?

LEO  
I've stood it up.

SHARON GEORGSON  
And this is - news?

LEO  
This is total news. My boss has  
wimped out. So I'm just really  
really keen in like a public  
spirited way to get this out there.  
I mean, a name-check would be great  
but that's not important, people  
should know about this? It's Leo  
Walsh.

SHARON GEORGSON  
And this is cast iron? Cos I'm  
going on TV.

LEO  
It happened.

SHARON GEORGSON  
Well then this - it's my line -  
this is what happens without  
regulation.

LEO  
Exactly. It's a big scoop. It's  
rock, rock solid.

SHARON GEORGSON  
(gets out her pen)  
Okay this might be perfect for me.  
One hundred and seventy? That's a  
big number. Give me the details.

Off Sharon scribbling we:

CUT TO:

66 INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM. DAY 66

At the apartment, all four siblings are talking to their partners - exchanging glances. Ready to go in to see their father. We're with Matthew and Liz. She's getting ready to go in. But Matthew's got his task in mind. His pitch, his brief.

MATTHEW  
So, what are you thinking? Still,  
feeling bruised?

ELIZABETH  
Well yeah. But it's important to  
keep emotions out of these things.

MATTHEW  
Wise words, wise words indeed.  
Words of wisdom.

ELIZABETH  
I mean I don't know, who knows what  
the future holds?

MATTHEW  
Nobody does Liz. No one.

ELIZABETH  
I mean first it was Lachlan, in pole  
position, now it's James.

MATTHEW  
Exactly.

ELIZABETH

And I was talking to Dad and he obviously doesn't rule out another change of fortunes so - I mean, maybe it would be fairer - Chloe and Grace?

MATTHEW

Indeed. There is an issue of fairness. Of almost, racial equality at stake here.

She's finding Matthew a little odd.

ELIZABETH

Yeah?

MATTHEW

I feel that.

ELIZABETH

Right?

MATTHEW

Ebony and ivory - side by side on the piano keyboard, *oh lord*, why can't we?

ELIZABETH

Have you - why are you - has my Dad spoken to you?

MATTHEW

He was eager that you say yes - and you're up for saying yes so. That's cool.

ELIZABETH

Right?

MATTHEW

So a great way to finesse this would be that you were wavering and I added the key argument. That would pimp my ride.

ELIZABETH

(pissed off)

Right?

MATTHEW

Oh honey - come on. Then it's double bubble. Triple bubble.

(MORE)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
 You me and him all get bubble. It's  
 a bubble bath.

ELIZABETH  
 He took you on to PR his own  
 fucking daughter?

MATTHEW  
 Hey easy. Spin control, watch it,  
 that's just a nasty way of putting  
 something nice.

ELIZABETH  
 That's un-fucking believable.

CUT TO:

67 INT. UK BROADSHEET NEWSROOM. NIGHT.

67

Michael Rowle is handed a layout of the front page, he looks at it.

The headline we see is 'Collision Course on EU Treaty'

CUT TO:

68 INT. CHINESE INFORMATION MINISTRY. NIGHT.

68

A large impersonal room. It's full of mid-level Chinese media monitoring officials scrolling through foreign news web-sites and watching news feeds. Making notes.

Our guy clicks on a page and the headline we've just seen in London. He makes a note on a keyboard hooked up to another computer.

Behind him another official is doing his rounds.

CHINESE INFORMATION OFFICIAL  
 (in Mandarin with  
 subtitles)  
 Anything unpleasant?

JUNIOR CHINESE INFORMATION OFFICIAL  
 No. No, nothing in line with what  
 was feared. It's all ...  
 (he scrolls through the  
 page )  
 Clean. Totally clean.

CUT TO:

69

INT. FOX GREEN ROOM. DAY.

69

Sharon is waiting in a room with a few easy chairs and couches, masses of fruit and a range of still and sparkling waters.

She is fingering her notes from Leo. And looking up occasionally to check the oddballs in the green room with her and watch a little of John Kendall doing his previous segment on BattleLines. She's nervous.

Angle on the TV:

JOHN KENDALL

Next up: is it time to wipe away the era of top-down environmental protection and instead let the market look after the greenery?

Claire joins Sharon in the Green Room.

SHARON GEORGSON

Okay, I'm ready to roll all over this asshole.

CLAIRe

Sharon, er, yeah, first up we've got another - guy, to put up some of the other arguments.

SHARON GEORGSON

Oh. What? Right. Who?

CLAIRe

Are you familiar with, The Vonk?

On screen a hippy guy with some dreadlocks is sitting opposite John Kendall.

JOHN KENDALL

Let me ask you one question to start with. Is environmental protection in this country working?

THE VONK

The Vonk says no.

In the green room.

SHARON GEORGSON

No, I'm not familiar with the Vonk.

CLAIRe

Yeah, he's got an interesting perspective.

Angle on the TV.

JOHN KENDALL

You're a tree-hugger?

THE VONK

A tree never started a war. A tree never abused a child or poisoned a river.

JOHN KENDALL

So a carpet of trees from sea to shining sea, and where will the folks get jobs, Mr Vonk?

THE VONK

People don't need jobs if they ...

JOHN KENDALL

(he's enjoying this)

Oh people don't need jobs? Okay?

In the Green Room.

CLAIRe

I'm sorry. You'll get your fee and travel expenses even if you don't make it on.

SHARON GEORGSON

I'm not going to make it on?

Sophia is there. Watches a bit of the TV.

THE VONK

The world could live without people a lot better than it could live without trees. That's what the Vonk says.

SOPHIA

This is great TV.

CUT TO:

70

INT. MURDOCH APARTMENT. DAY.

70

Chloe and Grace are playing Monopoly with Wendi. James spots something as he passes.

JAMES

Ah, no. See you don't want to buy that Chloe - waterworks is a one off hit. Save it and put some hotels on Pennsylvania Avenue, then you're putting the squeeze on.

(whispers as he steals a note)

And, when the bank's not looking, slip yourself a cool 500. Everyone does it.

He winks at her. KRM comes out of his office.

KRM

Okay. Roll up, roll up, roll up, this way for the signing!

He is ushers his kids towards his office. But as they go in he just goes to have one final word with Lachlan. As James and Pru head in, KRM takes him aside for a final firm-up.

KRM (CONT'D)

So, you alright son, everything clear?

LACHLAN

Yeah, yeah I think so.

KRM

Good. Cos. You know. I hope you can be there for your Dad, cos I've always been there for you, right son?

This is just a bit too much for Lachlan. He laughs.

LACHLAN

Yeah right.

KRM

What?

LACHLAN

Nothing Dad. It's fine.

KRM  
Okay.

LACHLAN  
(can't quite let it go)  
Just - when I did need you, when I  
was on the inside - maybe you could  
actually have muzzled the attack  
dogs who chewed my ass off?

KRM  
(ushering him in)  
I never knew Lachlan. It was all  
behind my back mate ...

LACHLAN  
I got fucked six ways hard by each  
Tuesday lunch and you were always  
looking the other way?

KRM  
A business isn't a cruise ship  
Lachlan. Friction makes heat.  
Napoleon didn't have a fucking  
career development officer, right?

LACHLAN  
Fine. I don't want to get into the  
old stuff.

KRM  
Exactly.

It might be okay if they both leave it.

KRM (CONT'D)  
You're older now. You know what  
you're doing now.

LACHLAN  
I knew what I was doing before Dad,  
I knew what I was fucking doing, I  
just needed some back up.

KRM  
Well I fired Cal didn't I?

Lachlan wants to let things lie, but he can't quite let this  
go.

LACHLAN

Today. Today you fired him, when you wanted, not when I said we should. It always suits you doesn't it?

KRM

Have you been speaking to your mother? What's eating you?

LACHLAN

Here we all are - and you've dropped this bomb on us - and we're trying to have a party for you and you're nearly 80 and you're playing these games and why can't we just be a family and hang out?

Liz is on her way in.

KRM

Liz honey - just will you tell them I'll be two minutes, me and Lachlan just need to finish something and

...

ELIZABETH

It's a no.

KRM

What?

ELIZABETH

No, no fucking way.

KRM

Oh come on, hold on ... but, no, Liz sweetheart ...

James and Pru come and check out what's going on.

JAMES

What's up?

LACHLAN

She's saying no.

JAMES

You're saying no?

KRM

No she's not.

ELIZABETH

Yes I am.

KRM

This is hasty.

LACHLAN

But Dad, why? Ah? What's it all for? All the, the acquisitions and the deals and the - this today - bullshit? What are you building, what shape is it even meant to fucking be?

KRM

(dry)

The final shape hasn't been determined. C'mon kids let's get in there and ...

LACHLAN

But what the fuck is it all for? Why have you built this fucking Noah's ark of money and fucking newspapers and us?

KRM

(joking trying to keep it light)

Keeps me alive. A few more deals I reckon I can go to 120.

He's joking. But a bit of him isn't.

LACHLAN

But Jesus Dad, is it worth it? I mean, what ... profits a man if he gains the world but, but, but, fucks his family in the jam-hole?

KRM

Are you're looking for rosebud Lachlan? Ah? The key to it all? Well, fuck rosebud. The yankee dollar, that's all rosebud is, a hundred dollar bill mate. So stop worrying your heads and let's sign up.

LACHLAN

I don't buy it.

Rupert can feels things slipping. Then, to all the kids:

KRM

You know what the whole world is to  
me, family.

LACHLAN

Yeah it's your greatest  
achievement. Funny how we all live  
on different fucking continents  
isn't it?

KRM

This is a good family. How many  
billionaires do you know without a  
smackhead kid? Without one who's  
gone tits up on booze or God?

LACHLAN

Yeah this family is better than  
Harvard business school. But how  
come you had to sow the seeds of  
fuck in everything? Did we ever  
have a game that wasn't a  
competition? Ah? And if it's all  
about the family - was it a good  
idea to have three different ones?

KRM

That's too much.

LACHLAN

So, you know what? No. I'm not  
signing up so you can keep things  
sweet here. I'm not a turkey and  
I'm not voting for Christmas. So  
screw you Dad. I love you Dad.

KRM

(Re Liz and Lachlan)

So. That's two on ice. You two,  
we'll sort out the deal we need to  
make later. But you two.

(to Pru and James, as he  
goers into the study to  
get the legal papers)

Okay? Signing up.

He looks at James and Prudence.

JAMES

Well it's academic, right?

KRM

No, no, cos, critical mass of opinion, and they'll be signing later and ...

JAMES

It doesn't work for me Dad. How would this fit into my strategy?

KRM

What?

JAMES

China works. China stands or falls on it's own. And so does this and it's a shitty deal. That's all it is Dad, it's not a personal thing it's just a shitty deal.

Pru looks at the others. She smiles at her dad but she doesn't want to be left on her own, shrugs an apology.

KRM consider for a beat. There's something else. He doesn't want to do this, but he has another card to play.

KRM

Okay. Look, come in, come in here, I have something to tell you in private. Something important.

The kids look at each other - Lachlan makes it into the office. KRM closes the door.

KRM (CONT'D)

Yeah. So, here's the thing. I didn't want it to go this way but, today. Everything. The story is I'm dying.

There's shock. Lachlan laughs a squeak of embrassed, shocked laughter.

JAMES

Are you serious?

KRM

Yeah I'm serious. So. I just really want to get a few things straight and signed off. I need to get things straight.

ELIZABETH

Really? What? Are you - How long?  
For sure?

KRM

Yeah. Could be soon, could be  
later?

LACHLAN

Right and you tell us now?

KRM

I didn't want to do this but ...

LACHLAN

The only way you can tell your kids  
you're going to fucking die is when  
it's a negotiating tactic.

KRM

No. Nah Lachlan. That's not the  
situation. But look, now you know  
the situation, can we sign this  
stuff up?

LACHLAN

You hold this in reserve? Did that  
make you feel big? I guess it was  
nice knowing you had the warhead in  
the locker.

KRM clicks a pen. The kids look at the papers.

JAMES

Look, I'm going to need to see some  
medical evidence.

KRM

What?

JAMES

Look - I'm sorry and this is a  
weird day, and Dad we're going to  
beat this, and we're going to get  
through this, and we all love you  
Dad, but before I sign anything,  
can you get your Doc on speaker  
phone?

KRM

No. I'm your fucking dad and I'm  
telling you I'm dying.

LACHLAN  
We're all dying.

JAMES  
Dad, let's not let things get mixed  
up here. Can we see something?

KRM considers he's seething. But he's not about to call his Doctor. Because he can't or he won't face the humiliation?

KRM  
Go on, fuck off out of it.

ELIZABETH  
Dad? Are you okay? Do you want to  
talk about this?

KRM  
No, no I don't. Go on. Piss off.

The kids step outside the door.

KRM glowers. Shifts in his seat. Was it a tactic? Is he dying? He looks at a flat screen monitor. Looks at the newspapers on his desks. Suddenly he punches the flat- screen monitor. It hurts his aged fist. It topples over pathetically backwards.

ENDS