

THE LIBERTINE

Ben Kopit

Jesse Silver // Mindframe

WME

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON - A ROLLED UP NEWSPAPER

Swinging in the HAND that carries it. Behind the paper a MARBLE FLOOR becomes an ELEVATOR FLOOR.

The carrier taps the paper against his leg as the elevator moves.

The elevator floor becomes a CARPETED HALLWAY. The hand drops the paper in front of a door then reaches into a BAG and pulls out ANOTHER NEWSPAPER.

The carrier walks down the hallway and does this a second time, then a third. At the fourth door -

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - HALLWAY - DAY

The paper lands at the feet of DAVE MONROE, 35, a friendly policeman doing SUDOKU in a FOLDING CHAIR.

DAVE
My hand is here.

PEDRO, 28, the newspaper delivery man, answers.

PEDRO
I like to see you work for it.
(re: Sudoku)
You on Advanced yet?

DAVE
They should call the goddamn Medium level Advanced, just to fluff the ego. Label the next one Genius.

PEDRO
It's all about celebrating mediocrity, huh Dave?

Pedro continues down the hall. Dave picks up the paper and opens the door behind him.

INT. MAURICE'S APARTMENT - FRONT HALL - DAY

Dave steps into the swank apartment.

DAVE
Mr. Lunel-Caspi? I have your paper.

MAURICE LUNEL-CASPI, 60, distinguished, French, and overbearing, appears in a SILK ROBE.

MAURICE
He's late. Again.

Maurice grabs the newspaper and looks at the front page, clearly disappointed in what he sees. He rummages the paper until he finds what he wants.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Page three beneath the fold. A
national insult.

Maurice steps into the

LIVING ROOM

And cuts out the article. Dave awkwardly watches an ANKLE MONITOR poke out from beneath Maurice's robe.

Maurice tapes the clipping to a WALL COLLAGE of news items. They read:

-- "Head of French National Assembly Arrested in New York for Sex Assault."

-- "Maurice Lunel-Caspi: 'I did not attack that maid.'"

-- "MLC suspends campaign for French president"

DAVE
Any big news?

MAURICE
Does the most overpaid doorman in New York want a hot tip to sell the Post?

DAVE
I'm a police officer.

MAURICE
Whose job is to sit outside my door.

Dave turns to leave.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Third page beneath the fold. There's your answer.
(off Dave's look)
No new news.

DAVE
Your robe is ugly.

MAURICE

Remember my lawyer's sending someone
at two.

The door shuts behind Dave.

Maurice stares at the wall, bored. He scratches his ankle.
The skin around the monitor is irritated from his nails.

Maurice flops onto the couch and flips through the paper.

Maurice looks over at an interior DOORWAY. He takes the
newspaper and walks over.

Maurice almost knocks, then fixes his robe and hair. He
knocks.

No answer.

Maurice knocks again.

EDITH (O.S.)

Go away.

Maurice opens the door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

EDITH RIVET, 55, Maurice's commanding wife, rises from her
LEATHER CHAIR and marches away from her LAPTOP. She wears a
BUSINESS SUIT and speaks with an ambiguous international
accent.

EDITH

We have one rule in this apartment.
One rule.

MAURICE

I saw an article you might find
useful.

Edith starts pushing Maurice out of the room.

EDITH

Wait until I come into the kitchen,
then show it to me. Or, if it can't
wait, email me.

MAURICE

You want me to email you from the
living room?

EDITH

I want you to walk into the living
room.

MAURICE
I will if you look at the article.

EDITH
I'll look at it in the living room.

Maurice makes a courteous gesture toward the door.

MAURICE
After you.

EDITH
Cut the gentleman crap and walk in
front of me.

Maurice walks ahead.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maurice steps into the living room. Edith slams the door on him. Maurice tries to open it. Locked.

MAURICE
You're a fucking child, Edith!

EDITH (O.S.)
Keep sweet talking.

Maurice steps away from the door and puts the paper on the table. He fidgets, sits, stands, and sits.

Edith marches out toward the front door.

MAURICE
I'll just put the article aside then.

EDITH
You look like a lazy slob. Why don't
you get dressed?

MAURICE
For what? In case I bump into someone
I know in the bathroom?

EDITH
Just because you can't go outside,
doesn't mean you have to give up on
having a day. Maybe if you get
dressed you'll get some work done on
your book.

MAURICE
I'll get work done if you look at
the article.

Edith walks over and looks at the paper.

EDITH
Which one?

Maurice grabs a bejeweled PEN out of Edith's purse and circles an article. Edith snatches the pen back.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Watch the Visconti.

MAURICE
Why don't you carry expensive jewelry like a normal woman?

EDITH
The pen is mightier than the earring.

Edith drops her pen in her bag and looks at the article. The headline reads, "Sale of news blog 'The Euro Post' drives stock price beyond value." Edith brushes it aside.

MAURICE
They say you're wasting our money.

EDITH
My money.

MAURICE
You don't think you should even read it?

EDITH
If I deem a company worth acquiring, trust that it is.

Edith puts on her coat and starts to leave.

MAURICE
I'm going to work from the bedroom today.

Edith stops.

EDITH
If you go in there, I'll know.

MAURICE
You hid a camera?

EDITH
I'll smell it on you.

MAURICE

You're out all day while I'm stuck here. It doesn't make sense to let the nice room go to waste.

EDITH

If we're forced to share an apartment because of your disgusting behavior-

MAURICE

-I'm a victim of baseless accusation.

EDITH

Promise me that you won't go in my room.

Maurice squirms.

MAURICE

Fine.

EDITH

(re: wall collage)

You wouldn't want to separate yourself from this monument of self worship.

MAURICE

You mean my comic collage of slander leveled against me?

EDITH

And don't sit around bored all day. Only boring people get bored by their own company.

As Edith turns to leave, Maurice reaches under her arm and steals her Visconti pen out of her purse.

Edith leaves.

Maurice takes the pen and shoves it down his pants. He rubs the pen back and forth, then takes it out and sniffs it. He drops the pen on the table with a satisfied grin.

Maurice walks over to the collage and stares at it.

His eyes wander to a PICTURE of him in a New York perp walk. He has a slight paunch in the photo.

Maurice looks down and sucks in his gut. He holds it for a second then exhales.

Maurice flops onto the couch and opens his LAPTOP. He taps the top of the laptop, too distracted to work. He closes the laptop. He looks bored.

He picks up the TELEVISION REMOTE and turns on the TELEVISION.

The TV turns onto some bland financial news. Maurice channel browses until it lands on a news show where a female HOST, 45, is conducting an interview with JAQUELINE LUNEL-CASPI, 26, identified on screen as: "Daughter of MLC and Edith Rivet."

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
He's a pig. My father is a pig.

The STUDIO AUDIENCE cheers.

HOST (V.O.)
So in the opinion of MLC's daughter,
MLC is guilty?

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
That's for the jury to decide. I
will say I don't let my friends near
that snake.

Maurice picks up his PHONE and dials.

MAURICE
(dialing)
Pig. Snake. Stop mixing metaphors.
(talking into phone)
Edith, thank you for not picking up.
I didn't want to talk to you either.
Jaqueline's at it again. Will you
call her?

Maurice hangs up the phone.

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
I think one of the great things about
your country, and why I am happy to
be studying here, is that you call
your leaders to task on their sexual
misconduct. You end their careers.
We need more of that in Europe.

HOST (V.O.)
Let's get back to your mother, a
personal hero and a feminist icon.
Why is she still with him? And will
this trial impact her upcoming
purchase of The Euro Post?

Maurice turns off the TV and sits for a moment. He walks
into the

SECOND BEDROOM

Which is much more modest than Edith's room. He opens the top drawer of his DRESSER.

The drawer is filled with socks, rolled and color-coded from light to dark. Maurice starts reorganizing them from dark to light.

Maurice closes the drawer and opens the CLOSET.

The closet contains clothes also organized by shade and color.

Maurice takes out a pair of SLACKS and walks with them back into the --

LIVING ROOM

Where Maurice starts to put on the pants. He changes his mind and drops them on the floor.

Maurice returns to the couch and opens his laptop. He taps the top of the screen, and closes it again.

Maurice walks over to the SIDEBBOARD and pours himself a BRANDY.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The television shows a French channel covering a soccer match.

Maurice lies on the floor staring at the ceiling with his feet on the couch. Next to him are a somewhat depleted BOTTLE of Brandy and his glass.

There's a KNOCK on the front door.

DAVE (O.S.)
Mr. Lunel-Caspi?

Maurice snaps out of his daze and stands as Dave enters.

DAVE (CONT'D)
The legal associate is here.

Maurice fixes his robe and hair.

MAURICE
Send her in.

DAVE
Don't you want to get dressed first?

MAURICE
I'll consider it.

Dave shakes his head and exits. Maurice sits on the arm of the couch with his legs spread a little too wide.

BECKY, 25, pretty in a tight outfit that stretches the limits of professional, strolls in.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Welcome to the lonely castle.

BECKY
That's quite an entrance you have.

MAURICE
Don't worry about Dave. He's harmless.

BECKY
Maybe you could use some legal advice.

MAURICE
Then, should we get down to business-

BECKY
-Becky

MAURICE
I prefer Rachel.

RACHEL A.K.A. BECKY
Whatever.

MAURICE
Rachel, do you want to take off that pretty outfit?

RACHEL
Isn't he a cop?

MAURICE
If you're worried about Dave-

Maurice reaches into his robe's pocket and pulls out a WAD of HUNDREDS. He drops them on the table.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
-You could always do this pro-bono.
I believe that takes care of the legality.

Rachel looks at the money.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
I put in extra for the added circumstances.

Rachel picks up the money and fans it. She drops the cash in her PURSE.

RACHEL
Do I recognize you?

MAURICE
Why don't you take off that pretty outfit?

Rachel looks toward the front door nervously. She looks at the master bedroom door.

RACHEL
Is that the bedroom?

MAURICE
No, it's this one.

Maurice leads Rachel into the

SECOND BEDROOM

And sits on the edge of the bed. Rachel moves toward him.

MAURICE
Stop. Stand back.

She does.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Take off the left shoe first. Leave your right shoe. Now your bracelet.

LATER

Rachel awkwardly tosses aside her undershirt, leaving her trying to balance in her bra and panties on one high heel.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
You may now take off your right shoe.

She does. She finds this creepy.

RACHEL
You're not going to hurt me?

MAURICE
I'm offended you would ask. There's a police officer right outside. Crawl to me.

Rachel crawls to him. Maurice stands.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Take off my robe.

LATER

Rachel rides Maurice as he lies passively, his head propped up by multiple pillows. He watches her without contributing any motion to the sex.

Maurice hears the FRONT DOOR CLOSE. He tosses Rachel off him and covers her mouth.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Shhhhhh.

They listen. Someone rustles through the living room.

Maurice locks the bedroom door.

EDITH (O.S.)
Maurice? Are you in there?

MAURICE
Yes, darling.

Rachel stifles a laugh. Maurice glares at her.

EDITH (O.S.)
Did you steal my pen?

MAURICE
How can I steal our shared property?

EDITH (O.S.)
I had a panic when I couldn't find it. That's not funny.

Edith tries to open the door.

EDITH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Why is the door locked?

MAURICE
I'm not dressed.

EDITH (O.S.)
You haven't been dressed in days.

MAURICE
I'll be out soon.

EDITH (O.S.)
Never mind. I have the pen.

Maurice hears Edith walk out of the apartment and close the front door. Maurice sighs with relief.

RACHEL

I should go.

MAURICE

Let's try you facing the other direction.

LATER

Maurice lounges as Rachel gets dressed post-coitus.

RACHEL

So, what do you do?

MAURICE

Would you believe I'm a civil servant?

RACHEL

I've had politician clients.

MAURICE

But I'll wager none of them were real civil servants.

RACHEL

What they get you on?

MAURICE

Nothing. I'm innocent.

RACHEL

Of course you are.

Maurice closes his robe and leads Rachel into the

LIVING ROOM

Where they see Edith sitting on the couch and waiting.

MAURICE

Edith, this is Becky, an associate from Nick's office.

EDITH

(to Becky)

You can leave.

Becky hightails it out.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I don't want to hear an explanation.

MAURICE

I don't have one.

EDITH

And you took my pen.

MAURICE

It would seem you have better things to be mad about.

EDITH

Pen, prostitute, they're the same thing. Careless, risky behavior that effects us both.

MAURICE

Are you saying I should have been more discrete?

EDITH

Why would you do something that might bring me back?

MAURICE

I didn't think you'd come back for the pen.

EDITH

But it was a chance. Just like Dave coming in and finding you fucking. You had to skirt the danger. Did you pay with a credit card?

MAURICE

I gave cash.

EDITH

Bravo. What if she'd been an undercover cop? You don't think you're a high value target? Maurice Lunel-Caspi, awaiting trial in New York for attempted rape and soliciting prostitution. They'd have a field day.

MAURICE

That would be hard on you.

EDITH

And Dave just let her right by. What a moron of a doorman.

MAURICE

He's a police officer.

EDITH
He's a buffoon.

Edith marches to the front door.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Edith opens the door and fakes a smile to Dave.

EDITH
Dave, honey-

DAVE
Yes, Ms. Rivet?

EDITH
Did you happen to check that woman's
credentials?

DAVE
Was she not supposed to be here?

EDITH
No, of course she was supposed to be
here.

DAVE
Because if someone came in who wasn't,
I have to report that.

EDITH
She was supposed to be here, and if
you'd asked her for an ID, she would
have had one, but you are supposed
to confirm everyone before they come
in.

DAVE
I don't understand what the problem
is.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Edith shuts the door and walks back to Maurice.

EDITH
I'm going to have to start working
from here.

MAURICE
Now, let's not over-react.

EDITH
You think I want to? You can't be
left alone.

MAURICE

I've learned my lesson. I'll work on my book.

EDITH

I will not be married to a sex offender.

MAURICE

The good news is you aren't.

EDITH

I know, she misinterpreted the whole thing. Here's something you may not realize. Upstanding world leaders don't make passes at hotel maids. Even if they think the maid might enjoy their wrinkled body.

MAURICE

Why don't you go back to France?

EDITH

So they can pull your bail?

MAURICE

I didn't ask the judge to make it contingent on your presence.

EDITH

Fucking sicko. No, the head of the National Assembly is not going to spend three weeks in Rikers jail. It's bad enough that you let them photograph you in that ridiculous perp walk.

MAURICE

It's a grand New York tradition.

EDITH

It's barbaric. How is a person innocent until proven guilty when they splash photos everywhere with handcuffs?

MAURICE

Finally, something we agree on.

EDITH

I'll be in my bedroom working. You can reach me on email.

Edith goes into her bedroom and slams the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maurice sits on the couch in front of his computer. He is wearing actual pants and an actual shirt. He stares at the screen. He taps the top of the computer. He looks at his NOTE CARDS on the table.

One note card reads, "collectivist necessity." Another reads, "adapting automation."

Maurice types for a second then leans back. He stands and walks to the master bedroom. He knocks.

EDITH (O.S.)
Send me an email.

MAURICE
I did.

Maurice hears typing.

EDITH
I've replied.

Maurice returns to the computer.

Maurice looks at his email and sees a NEW MESSAGE from Edith. He opens it. His original email reads, "Come into the living room." Her reply reads, "eat shit and die." There's an ATTACHMENT labeled, "Maurice." Maurice opens the file. It's a picture of a MONKEY EATING SHIT.

Maurice returns to the bedroom and knocks again.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Email.

Maurice keeps knocking. Edith burst out into the living room. She looks as though she's been crying.

EDITH (CONT'D)
What?

MAURICE
Have you been crying?

EDITH
Fuck you.

Maurice gestures for Edith to sit. She does.

MAURICE
I want to help with your acquisition
of Euro Post.
(MORE)

MAURICE (CONT'D)
I know Pierre pretty well. I think
we can get their editorial staff to
endorse you.

EDITH
I don't need your help.

MAURICE
Then help me with my book.

Edith hesitates.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
I can spam you all day.

EDITH
What's the last thing you wrote?

MAURICE
Chapter two.

EDITH
So, you're on chapter three?

MAURICE
No, I mean I wrote the chapter
heading. "Chapter two."

EDITH
Where are you stuck?

MAURICE
Let me read you some of what I have
so far.
(reading)
"The collective spirit is an
unavoidable pre-condition for the
expansion of the spirit of freedom-"

EDITH
(interrupting)
It's clunky.

MAURICE
What is?

EDITH
The sentence.

MAURICE
Don't worry about the sentence.
Just let me keep going.
(MORE)

MAURICE (CONT'D)

"The social safety nets created, in and of their own activities, are of secondary value, their primarily value is in the knowledge of their existence-"

EDITH

-It's awful.

MAURICE

Let me read the whole paragraph.

EDITH

It's a terrible sentence.

MAURICE

It gets better. "It is in that knowledge that the spirit of the group liberates the spirit of the individual, beyond the essentials of living into the essence of living-"

EDITH

-I can't listen to this shit.

Edith goes back into her bedroom.

Maurice stares at his laptop, deflated. He closes the computer and carries it into the

SECOND BEDROOM

Where he opens it on the bed.

Maurice opens a LIVE SEX CHAT WINDOW on the computer. There's a WOMAN IN LINGERIE looking bored.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

Hi there handsome.

MAURICE

Don't talk until I say so.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

Oh, you're a kinky one.

Maurice takes off his shirt.

MAURICE

Stand up and turn around.

Maurice hears the front door and muffled hellos.

Maurice shuts the laptop.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Merde.

There's a KNOCK on his door.

EDITH (O.S.)

Maurice, Jaqueline and Nick are here.

MAURICE

Hold on.

Maurice starts to put his shirt on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maurice steps out to see Edith, Jaqueline, and NICOLAS DENMAR, 55, Maurice's slick lawyer.

MAURICE

(to Jaqueline)

Nice to see you somewhere other than my television.

JAQUELINE

No it isn't.

EDITH

(to Jaqueline)

Don't sit like that.

Jaqueline recrosses her legs.

NICK

Shall we begin?

EDITH

What kind of question is that? Just start so we can finish.

MAURICE

I don't know. Are we sure Jaqueline isn't recording us?

JAQUELINE

Have you even listened to my interviews?

MAURICE

They warm my heart on mute. Maybe Dave should frisk her for devices.

JAQUELINE

Funny. Freud said nasty humor comes from guilt.

EDITH

Dave has been swapped out for another fellow.

MAURICE

What? Have we vetted this one?

EDITH

(sarcastic)

He went through twelve rounds of interviews and a Rorschach test. Sit.

Edith gestures for Nick to begin. Maurice marches away from the conversation.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice opens the door and sees JUSTIN WYATT, 42, a different police officer in Dave's chair.

MAURICE

Who are you?

Justin folds his MAGAZINE and looks up defiantly.

JUSTIN

Officer Justin Wyatt.

MAURICE

You don't stand for a world leader.

JUSTIN

Not all of them.

MAURICE

Where's Dave?

JUSTIN

Downstairs. We traded posts.

MAURICE

You mean I have two men guarding me?

JUSTIN

Don't flatter yourself. Mr. Birke on the seventh floor is awaiting trial for insider trading.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice bursts in on his impatient family and lawyer.

MAURICE

We're not the only people under house arrest in the building.

EDITH

Yes, Kenneth Birke on the seventh floor.

MAURICE

You knew about this?

JAQUELINE

There's no "we" under house arrest.

MAURICE

We should invite him to dinner.

EDITH

Nicolas, control your client.

JAQUELINE

Wouldn't the whole house arrest situation make that a little impossible?

MAURICE

He's only in for insider trading, not attempted rape. I wouldn't be surprised if he has building privileges.

Edith gives Nick a "hurry up" tap on the shoulder.

NICK

Maurice, we're here for Jaqueline.

Nick puts a BAG OF BAGELS on the table. Maurice sits and starts in on them.

NICK (CONT'D)

Discrediting these charges is a team effort. That means all of you have to work together.

MAURICE

Jaqueline, you could come to the dinner.

JAQUELINE

Why would I have dinner with an inside trader?

MAURICE

Alleged.

(MORE)

MAURICE (CONT'D)

You never want to see just me. This would take some pressure off.

EDITH

Maurice. Focus.

MAURICE

Don't you think it would be nice to have company?

EDITH

If I want company, I'll leave the building.

MAURICE

Show off.

JAQUELINE

Nicolas, do you bill by the hour?

NICK

Absolutely.

MAURICE

Then he won't mind waiting. Edith, go knock on their door.

JAQUELINE

It's not enough she stands by you, you want her to run errands.

EDITH

When you make a jab like that, lean forward. It will make you more threatening. When you lean back that way, it comes off as a defensive bark from a scared little girl.

MAURICE

Nicolas, why don't you take a stab at the conversation?

NICK

I want to update you on the status of the trial. Things are going about as well as could be expected, and I remain cautiously optimistic.

MAURICE

Get to the content.

NICK

We're working very hard to establish that these charges are baseless character assassination.

MAURICE

To prove these charges are baseless character assassination.

NICK

(to Jaqueline)

Which is greatly hindered by your maligning your father in the public forum.

JAQUELINE

He should just plead guilty.

MAURICE

Ha.

JAQUELINE

Really.

MAURICE

You don't actually think I'm guilty.

JAQUELINE

Of course I do! Why else would I be saying these things on TV?

MAURICE

Because you're an attention hog.

JAQUELINE

The narcissist sees himself in everyone.

MAURICE

It's not polite to psychoanalyze your parent. I think there's a commandment against it.

JAQUELINE

What have I said to suggest I think you're innocent?

MAURICE

I'll tell you what happened.

NICK

That's not necessary.

MAURICE

She needs to hear me tell the story.

NICK

Then tell her while I'm not around.

MAURICE

You're paid by the hour.

NICK

Our strategy involves having you plead the fifth and avoid the stand. We'll discredit the maid, and you will never have to tell your side. That means I don't need to hear your story. I don't want to hear your story.

MAURICE

But it exonerates me.

NICK

It's irrelevant.

MAURICE

You think I'm a rapist.

NICK

It's not my job to think one way or the other.

MAURICE

We've been friends for decades.

NICK

The only thing that matters is discrediting this maid.

JAQUELINE

She has a name. It's Ama Parker.

EDITH

Good for her.

JAQUELINE

Excuse me?

EDITH

I mean, most people get to have their own name, but good for her that she has one too.

MAURICE

Edith, what are you doing?

EDITH
 (to Jaqueline)
 Do you want to be the daughter of a
 sex offender?

JAQUELINE
 I didn't know I had a choice.

EDITH
 By some strange circumstance, it
 appears you may. Do you choose to
 be the child of a world leader and a
 business mogul, both of whom will
 lovingly hand you a golden career as
 a graduation present? Or do you
 choose to be the daughter of a
 criminal deviant and his disgraced
 wife? Neither of whom will be able
 to make a single call on your behalf?

JAQUELINE
 I may have a blossoming career as a
 TV pundit.

Maurice and Edith chuckle.

EDITH
 I'm proud of your instinct for self
 promotion, but do you really think
 you're going to get calls you after
 this trial?

JAQUELINE
 (to Maurice)
 Your career is over. You just don't
 see it yet.
 (to Edith)
 And you can free yourself from him
 any time.

MAURICE
 You really think I'm guilty?

EDITH
 What are you even doing here?

JAQUELINE
 I wanted to hear him confess.

NICK
 Don't confess.

MAURICE
 How can I confess to something I
 haven't done?

NICK
That's good. Keep saying that.

MAURICE
You all know me.

JAQUELINE
You're a swine.

EDITH
Both of you, calm down.

MAURICE
I'm your father.

EDITH
Nick, what advice do you give when
your clients become overly emotional
in court?

NICK
I usually tell them to imagine they're
in a long line at the DMV. I find
that brings out the perfect balance
of indignant restraint.

MAURICE
I'll make some phone calls for you.
I'll get you a plum executive job
out of school.

JAQUELINE
No one wants your calls.

MAURICE
For now.

EDITH
Honey, I know you feel abandoned.

JAQUELINE
Don't take an interest in psychology
now.

EDITH
I love your passion for people.

JAQUELINE
Don't humor me to control me. You
hated it when I minored in psychology.
You said it was soft.

EDITH

You see your father not doing his part, and you think, "if he's going to let the Lunel-Caspi ship sink, why should I stay onboard?"

MAURICE

I'm fighting this trial with everything I have.

EDITH

You see his creepy wall collage.

MAURICE

That's my wall of vindication.

NICK

She's right. It sends a message that you are not sympathetic with the victim.

MAURICE

Of course I'm not sympathetic with the victim. She's trying to frame me! If you have a problem with it, don't bring journalists into my living room.

NICK

It's not about the collage, it's about a pattern of behavior.

MAURICE

My behavior is not the issue. The issue is your competence as a lawyer.

JAQUELINE

Your behavior is the only issue.

EDITH

(to Jaqueline)

You don't care about self interest, fine. Doesn't your father deserve a fair trial?

JAQUELINE

Everyone deserves a fair trial.

EDITH

And can he get a fair trial if you turn public opinion against us?

JAQUELINE

Fine. I'll think about it.

EDITH
That's all we can ask.

MAURICE
No, it's not all we can ask. We can
ask for some goddamn loyalty.

EDITH
(to Maurice)
Recognize a win.

MAURICE
(to Nick)
Come into the other room with me.

NICK
What for?

MAURICE
I need some legal counsel. Away
from their biased ears.

Maurice leads Nick toward the master bedroom.

EDITH
Not that one.

Maurice nods and leads Nick into the second bedroom.

JAQUELINE
If you had any self-respect, you'd
leave him.

EDITH
Jaqueline, when you become married,
you will be perfectly free to leave
your own husband. I'll support you
when you do. In the meantime, don't
tell me to leave mine.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice pulls Nicolas over by the bed.

MAURICE
You have to get me a girl up here.

NICK
I thought you wanted to talk about
the case.

MAURICE
Are there any major changes?

NICK

No.

MAURICE

Then fuck the case. I'm going crazy up here. Edith's always watching me.

NICK

So are the police.

MAURICE

That's why you need to help. Dress her up like a lawyer. That will get her by.

NICK

And implicate the firm?

MAURICE

I did it before. The doorman was completely fooled.

NICK

That could come back to me!

MAURICE

It was only Edith who caught on. She's smarter than a cop.

NICK

I don't want you telling me things like this.

MAURICE

I'm climbing the walls. You're my lawyer and a friend. You're supposed to take care of me. Can't you see I'm suffering?

NICK

The issue is a non starter.

MAURICE

You'll have to pay for her. My bank records are being looked at. I can pay you back.

Nicolas opens the door and walks into the

LIVING ROOM

Maurice follows.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Good news, family. Father's case is
looking better.

Nicolas looks at Maurice like, "what are you talking about?"

EDITH
In just that time?

MAURICE
The maid is a hussy, lying bitch,
and she's going to crack.

JAQUELINE
That the legal term?

MAURICE
Nick, is that the legal term?

Nicolas starts packing up.

NICK
(to Edith)
Any news with the Euro Post?

EDITH
Stick to the trial.

NICK
All I'm saying is Denmar and
Associates has a corporate division.
We'd love to pitch you.

EDITH
My husband and I believe a healthy
marriage rests on separate friends
and separate lawyers. Especially
when a lawyer can't control his
client.

JAQUELINE
Do you know how proud I used to be
to introduce myself?

MAURICE
(to Nick)
I like that you can't control me.

JAQUELINE
Lunel-Caspi. That's all I had to
say when I entered a room, and I
owned the floor. Now, I avoid it.
I just say Jaqueline.

MAURICE

I thought most young people introduced themselves by first name.

JAQUELINE

I am branded with your last name.
And that name is shit. And you have
fucked me just as surely as Ama
Parker.

MAURICE

I don't look at it that way.

JAQUELINE

The truth is never how you see things.

Jaqueline leaves.

NICK

Keep the bagels.

Nicolas leaves.

EDITH

I have to go to a meeting.

MAURICE

What about?

EDITH

I'm buying some stupid food channel.

MAURICE

They'll wait. Sit with me.

EDITH

Pass.

MAURICE

I'll be in your room.

Edith sits next to him.

EDITH

What?

MAURICE

I'm a good father.

EDITH

It all depends on where you put the
bar.

MAURICE
I haven't slept with any of her
friends.

EDITH
There's an achievement.

MAURICE
I hit on Mary, but she rejected me.

Edith gets up to leave.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
You see, I can take no. I wouldn't
force myself on someone.

EDITH
You're a pillar of virtue.

MAURICE
If I can't convince my family, how
can I convince anyone?

Edith's face become a little pitying.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
What is that look?

EDITH
What look?

MAURICE
Is that pity? Is that what pity
looks like on your face?

EDITH
I suppose a little.

Maurice stands.

MAURICE
Don't fucking pity me. I am Maurice
fucking Lunel-Caspi. Head of the
French fucking National Assembly.
One of the most powerful fucking men
in the world. And a champion and
crusader for the downtrodden.

EDITH
I like how you just tacked that on.

MAURICE
I'm also a fantastic fucking dinner
host, and I'm going to invite that
inside trader to dinner.

EDITH

I hope you cook for them.

MAURICE

We'll fucking order take-out. It's New York.

Maurice marches to the PHONE and picks it up. Dials.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hello, Marcus?... Can you connect me with Ken Birke's apartment?...Thanks...Hello, is this Ken?... It's Maurice Lunel-Caspi from upstairs?... You knew we were in the same building?... Well, I'm glad you follow the news...Look, do you have a wife?... Her name's Nina, that's great. My wife's name is Edith. Seeing as we're both brothers in ankle monitors, I'd like to invite you and Nina over for dinner tonight...eight o'clock...Because any earlier is boorish...Then it will have to be tomorrow...Okay, see you tomorrow at eight.

Maurice triumphantly looks toward Edith, only to discover she's already left.

Maurice flops onto the couch. He looks around, seeming bored. He gets up and walks into the second bedroom.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Maurice, looking like he just woke up, stumbles in wearing his robe and slippers. He opens the cabinet and takes out some CEREAL.

He opens the fridge and takes out some MILK. He sniffs the milk, decides it's good enough, and pours it on his cereal. He takes a bite, then picks up the bowl and walks while eating, leaving the milk out.

He passes through the

LIVING ROOM

Then opens the front door.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maurice sees Justin and addresses him with a mouth full of cereal.

MAURICE
(muffled)
Is my paper here yet?

JUSTIN
Excuse me.

MAURICE
My paper?

Justin nods at the PAPER, but doesn't do anything. Neither does Maurice. Justin kicks it to Maurice. Maurice kicks it back.

Justin begrudgingly lifts it up. Maurice sees that his hands are full, opens his legs and grabs the paper between his thighs.

Maurice pivots and shuffles inside while clutching the paper between his legs.

INT. MAURICE'S APARTMENT - FRONT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Maurice kicks the door closed, then opens his legs and drops the paper. Maurice puts the bowl on the floor, picks up the paper, and walks into the

LIVING ROOM

Where he opens the paper and looks at the front page. He becomes excited and bangs on Edith's door.

MAURICE
Edith. Edith. We made the front
page.

A SLEEPY GROAN comes from behind the door.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Come out and see it.

EDITH (O.S.)
Go away.

MAURICE
I'm opening the door.

Maurice opens the door.

EDITH
Go away!

Maurice closes the door. He gets his scissors and cuts out the article. He tapes it to his collage.

The article reads, "National Assembly discusses impeaching GLC."

Maurice exits to his bedroom then returns carrying his laptop. He sits facing the collage and opens the laptop. He turns on the computer. He presses some buttons, creating the sound of a SKYPE DIAL.

FRENCH WOMAN(From Laptop)
Bonjour.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Is Mr. Bonnay available?

FRENCH WOMAN (From Laptop)
(French with subtitles)
I'm sorry he's out.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Have him call me. It's about an
amendment to the housing bill.

Maurice closes the laptop. He opens it again. Maurice closes the laptop and exits.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maurice tosses his laptop onto the bed then drops his robe and gets under the covers. Maurice opens his laptop in bed.

On the screen, Maurice opens up a SEX CHAT window. A STRIPPER greets him.

STRIPPER
Well, hello, handsome.

MAURICE
Dance for me.

The stripper starts dancing. Maurice watches the screen as his eyes flutter in and out of sleep.

LATER

Maurice wakes from a nap. He rolls over and sees his laptop. The stripper sits in the chat window watching Maurice sleep.

STRIPPER
Dream about me?

MAURICE
How long was I out?

STRIPPER

Only four hours.

MAURICE

Jesus. AmEx will love that one.

Maurice closes the chat window and gets out of bed. He puts on his robe and slippers.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maurice walks in and sees Edith reviewing SPREADSHEETS on the couch.

EDITH

I just needed a change of scenery.
I'm not talking to you.

MAURICE

Excluding that sentence, I assume.

Edith keeps reading.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I've always wanted you to be a better
listener.

Edith says nothing.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Perhaps I'll show you my stump speech.

Edith says nothing.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

You make coffee?

Edith points to the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Maurice pours himself a COFFEE.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

The paper this morning, did you see
it? It said that they're talking
about impeaching me.

No response.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Are you excited about our dinner
guests?

No response.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
You are coming, right? I'll take
your lack of response as a yes.

EDITH (O.S.)
I'm not coming.

LIVING ROOM

Maurice walks over sipping his coffee.

MAURICE
Well, you lied about the not talking
to me thing, so you'll forgive me if
I take that as a lie too.

Edith carries her work into her bedroom.

Maurice looks momentarily proud, then bored. He flops onto
the couch, spilling some of his coffee onto his lap.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Ow!

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Maurice sits in front of his computer, trying to
concentrate.

-- Maurice lies on his back with his computer on his knees,
trying to concentrate.

-- Maurice walks with his coffee and trips over the cereal
bowl from earlier. He spills milk and coffee.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Damn it.

-- Maurice lies in bed and starts to masturbate. He gets
bored and stops.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Maurice, dressed nicely, sits at an empty DINING ROOM TABLE.
He raps his fingers and looks bored. He hears a KNOCK and
perks up.

INT. MAURICE'S APARTMENT - FRONT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice walks toward the front door.

MAURICE
Coming. Coming.

Maurice pauses about five feet from the door.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
I'll be right there. Hold on a sec.

Maurice stands and waits.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Almost there.

Maurice waits another second then opens the door. KEN BIRKE, 33, enters wearing a TOO HIP SWEATER. His wife, NINA, 32, enters wearing an ARCHITECTURAL DRESS and WIDE RIM GLASSES.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I was just in the middle of something. Everything's so busy. Come in.

KEN
It's rosé.

Ken hands Maurice a BOTTLE OF WINE. Maurice jokingly sniffs the bottle.

MAURICE
Smells fresh. I'll go put it in the dining room. Can I take your coats? Of course, you're not wearing any.

KEN
Not too cold in the elevator. Nina almost wore one anyway.

NINA
It looked awesome.

MAURICE
I'll just deposit this in the dining room.

Maurice exits.

NINA
The first thing you say is a dig at me?

Ken ignores her comment.

KEN
Is that a Magritte?

NINA
It's a Mondrian. And it's a print.

KEN
I know it's a print.

NINA

Then don't act impressed.

Maurice returns.

MAURICE

Where are my manners?

Maurice shakes their hands.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Maurice Lunel-Caspi.

KEN

Ken Birke.

NINA

Nina.

MAURICE

Entré.

Maurice leads them into the

LIVING ROOM

And gestures to the couch.

MAURICE

We're just waiting on the Mrs.

Ken and Nina sit.

KEN

This short term rental, where you find your broker?

MAURICE

Thinking ahead to your next house arrest?

KEN

Ah, well, I suppose you never know.

Nina shoots Ken a look. Ken seems anxious and has an occasional snuffle. Maurice walks to the SIDEBBOARD.

MAURICE

You want a drink? Bourbon, maybe?

KEN

Is the Argentine peso worth more than the Bolivian boliviano?

MAURICE

Is it?

KEN

Last time I checked

NINA

I don't drink.

MAURICE

Wild American youth.

KEN

You should offer her a --

Ken mimes smoking.

NINA

Ken!

MAURICE

What's your brand?

NINA

Not that kind of smoke.

Ken looks amused.

MAURICE

Oh. It's been hard for me to walk
to Washington Park.

NINA

Frankly, with Ken's house arrest-

MAURICE

-It's best not to bother with illegal
drugs.

NINA

That's been our thought. Kinda crazy,
but, you know.

Maurice hands Ken his drink.

KEN

Life saver.

NINA

Actually, I will have a drink.

Ken looks surprised.

MAURICE

Excellent. Bourbon as well?

NINA
What are you having?

MAURICE
A martini.

NINA
Make it two.

MAURICE
Don't get lost without me.

Maurice exits.

KEN
You'll drink here but not at Dad's?

NINA
They're European. Chill.

KITCHEN

Maurice makes two MARTINIS while he shouts to the other room.

MAURICE
Do you like the gym?

INTERCUT LIVING ROOM / KITCHEN

Ken gets up and starts looking at Maurice's collage.

KEN
What did he say?

MAURICE
The gym in the building? How do you find it?

KEN
Four point five out of ten.

NINA
We should follow him into the kitchen.

KEN
Bah.

Ken starts thumbing through all of Maurice's STUFF.

NINA
What are you doing?

KEN
What are you doing?

MAURICE
Does it have an elliptical machine?

NINA
Not that I've seen.

Ken looks through Maurice's BOOKS.

NINA (CONT'D)
I'm going in.

KEN
Suit yourself.

Nina stands just as Maurice returns with the drinks.

MAURICE
Then I don't feel so bad about being
stuck up here.

Maurice notices Ken looking through his shelf.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
See anything you like?

KEN
(ignoring question)
Cheers.

Ken toasts Maurice and Nina. Maurice sits next to Nina.

MAURICE
You sure you don't want to join the
gin crowd?

KEN
Bourbon's great.

MAURICE
Good man. I always try to drink the
booze of the country I'm staying in.
It shows solidarity. When I'm in
Scotland, I drink Scotch. When I'm
in Japan, I drink Sake. When I'm in
Mexico, I drink the water.

Nina rests a hand on Maurice's thigh.

NINA
But you're drinking a martini.

MAURICE
I may switch to bourbon later.

Maurice looks at Nina's hand on his thigh.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Where is Edith?

Maurice goes and knocks on the bedroom door.

EDITH
Go away.

Maurice keeps knocking.

MAURICE
Darling, our guests are here.

EDITH (O.S.)
Fuck off!

MAURICE
We like to use pet names for each other. I call her cunt mouth. She calls me fuck face. It's magic when we kiss.

NINA
That's a lovely print you have.

MAURICE
It came with the rental. Like the books.

Maurice resumes knocking.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Edith, we all miss you.

Edith throws the door open and stands fuming.

EDITH
What?

MAURICE
Edith, this is Nina and Ken.

NINA
Your husband's been telling us wonderful things about you.

MAURICE
Is her scowl not as lovely as I said?

Edith looks at Nina as though about to snap, then regains composure and walks calmly into the room.

KEN
Ken Birke.

EDITH

Edith. Don't you two look smart?

MAURICE

Edith envies intelligence.

Edith pours herself a bourbon.

EDITH

Refill?

Edith freshens Ken's drink.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Has Maurice been boring you with stories?

NINA

I love a good yarn.

MAURICE

I was waiting for my audience.

EDITH

But I've heard all your stories.

MAURICE

That's why I make them up. At the age of fourteen, I was ranked number one in the world at backgammon.

KEN

No.

EDITH

He loses at checkers. But he can wear you down with his chatter.

NINA

I think he's a blast.

EDITH

Ken, you strike me as a man who speaks his mind. Is my husband boring?

KEN

If you want to share complaints about him, I'm a good listener.

Edith seems puzzled by this response.

MAURICE

Ken, how have you been keeping busy cooped up?

KEN

Well, I can't trade O.P.M., so I'm
just handling my own portfolio.
Stayin' in the game.

NINA

(to Maurice)

What have you been doing?

Nina seems flirtatious.

MAURICE

Just plugging away at my book.

KEN

What kind of book deal you got?

MAURICE

A good one.

KEN

I bet you do.

NINA

What's it about?

MAURICE

The social contract. How the main
value of safety nets is not their
actual use so much as a sense of
security, allowing people to excel
without the fear of penury. God,
why can't I put that in my book? It
always comes out so much clearer
when you say it.

EDITH

Clearer doesn't make it interesting.

NINA

I think it sounds great.

KEN

Socialist books make money.

MAURICE

What was that?

KEN

(catching himself)

I don't talk politics. My bad.

MAURICE

You've just started.

KEN
Without thinking.

MAURICE
You think I can't handle your opinion?

KEN
Move on to someone else.

MAURICE
Boy, spit it out.

KEN
I'm no expert, but dependency breeds dependency.

MAURICE
Who would have thought? A republican in that sweater.

KEN
Libertarian.

MAURICE
Oh.

KEN
Americans don't need to be treated like infants.

NINA
Ken will write you an amazon review. I think the book sounds fab.

EDITH
Are you two hungry?

MAURICE
Yes, I believe food is part of every good dinner party.

KEN
Where's your bathroom?

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ken exhales and loosens his tie.

KEN
Fuck.

Ken takes out a BOTTLE OF RITALIN and pours some on the sink. He crushes them with a TOOTHBRUSH and snorts.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Maurice, Nina, and Edith sit around a table of ITALIAN FOOD.

NINA
I'm sorry about Ken. He's under a
lot of strain.

MAURICE
I was more interested in his better
half anyway. Rosé?

Edith chugs her bourbon and pushes the glass for Maurice to
fill.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Nina?

NINA
Fuck ya.

Nina takes her new glass and puts it next to her almost full
martini.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ken rummages through the medicine cabinet. He finds a BOTTLE
OF VIAGRA.

KEN
Bingo.

Ken pulls out his PHONE and snaps a photo of the prescription
label. Ken keeps rummaging the bathroom.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Maurice, Edith, and Nina eat.

NINA
(to Edith)
This pasta is great.

MAURICE
I ordered it myself.

NINA
And this is a great table. Great
room.

EDITH
Is your apartment not so nice?

NINA
No, it's great.

They hear a CRASH as Ken trips in the hall. He enters, looking wired.

KEN

I, uh, thanks for having us.

Ken starts eating. Maurice passes him a glass of wine.

EDITH

Are you feeling all right?

Ken gives a thumbs up.

NINA

He's tops.

MAURICE

You'll have to tell me what bottom looks like.

KEN

Have you hit bottom recently?

MAURICE

I've never been better.

KEN

I'm sorry, but if we're gonna talk, then we might as well talk, right? Otherwise, we're not really talking.

MAURICE

Edith and I communicate telepathically.

EDITH

Is that where these headaches come from?

MAURICE

I've been tickling your medulla oblongata.

NINA

Ken, don't you love this table?

KEN

It's all right.

EDITH

You two enjoying Dave?

KEN

He's fine. Don't know why you sent him down.

MAURICE
You sent Dave downstairs?

EDITH
I did.

MAURICE
I thought they rotate guards.

EDITH
Policemen.
(to Ken and Nina)
Dave made a little mistake on our watch. Nothing that would come up at your apartment, but Maurice is sneakier than he seems.

MAURICE
I think they're sneaky too.

EDITH
Would you like to know why I sent Dave downstairs?

MAURICE
Let's eat in the living room. It's a casual dinner.

Maurice takes Ken and Nina's plates out of the room. Edith waves that it's okay to leave.

LIVING ROOM

The group gathers into the living room and puts food and drinks onto the coffee table.

MAURICE
Should I put on music?

EDITH
Afraid of talking?

NINA
Music is good.

EDITH
(re: wall collage)
Maybe Maurice will show you his original art.

KEN
I was looking at that. Dish about it.

Maurice walks to the collage.

MAURICE

Well, it's my wall of vindication.
Have you been keeping your press
clippings?

NINA

Ken can't look at them.

MAURICE

An innocent soul knows no shame.

KEN

They miss any dirt?

EDITH

This dinner party.

NINA

You are handling your house arrest
amazingly well.

MAURICE

This is my favorite piece of coverage.
It's a Paris Times editorial about
how the French have the good sense
not to think the private lives of
their politicians have anything to
do with public performance.

KEN

(to Edith)

Don't you own The Paris Times?

MAURICE

And this is my least favorite thing
on the wall.

Maurice indicates the infamous PERP WALK PHOTO of Maurice
being walked to the courthouse in handcuffs.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

How, in the land of innocent until
proven guilty, they can make a man
who is merely accused walk in
handcuffs before photographers is
beyond me.

EDITH

It's grotesque.

MAURICE

Ken, did you have to suffer this
barbaric tradition?

KEN

My lawyer got me out of it.

MAURICE

Good man. Or woman. They let me out a full half a block from the courthouse so that every newspaper and news network in the world could line up to take photos. I swear, Home & Garden got a picture of me.

KEN

About the only good thing he did. Fucker's mangling my case.

MAURICE

Take my guy, Nicolas Denmar. He's the best. As one innocent man to another.

EDITH

How on earth do you know he's innocent?

MAURICE

The Brandill Towers wouldn't rent to anyone guilty.

NINA

Oh, Susan Myer is guilty.

MAURICE

Who is Susan Myer?

KEN

Computer hacker on the fifth floor.

MAURICE

You mean there are three people under house arrest in this very building? How remarkable is that? We should start a book club.

KEN

What would we read?

MAURICE

Miranda rights.

Nina forces a laugh and puts her hand on Maurice's knee.

NINA

It's very nice of you to have us.

EDITH
Nina, are you also in finance?

NINA
I used to work at Sotheby's. Now I
just sit on museum boards.

MAURICE
Why did you stop?

Ken mimes being pregnant.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
You have kids?

KEN
Any year now.

EDITH
Well then dear, it appears you quit
too early.

NINA
Honestly, I'm not even sure I want
children.

KEN
Say again?

NINA
What I really want is to re-claim
being a stay-at-home wife for the
countercultural, urban post-post-
feminist.

EDITH
Maybe you can turn it into a college
major.

KEN
She doesn't mean no kids.

NINA
Edith, I admire you and all, but we
can't all run empires.

MAURICE
Not unless they were very small.

KEN
(laughing)
Tiny empires.

NINA
(to Edith)
What's your accent?

EDITH
France by way of London, Geneva, and
New York.

KEN
Humble roots.

EDITH
Maurice's English is better than my
French. When we're alone, we speak
English.

MAURICE
But we always listen to French music.

Maurice turns on SERGE GAINSBURG.

NINA
Mmmm.

Nina stands and starts to sway.

MAURICE
I think eating is done.

Maurice grabs all the plates, whether they're done or not.
Ken is left holding his fork.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Nina, why don't you come make drinks
with me?

Maurice and Nina exit.

KEN
Do you mind if I look around the
rest of your apartment?

EDITH
Yes.

KITCHEN

Maurice carries stacked plates into the kitchen as Nina
follows.

MAURICE
Gin and Tonic?

NINA
Hit me.

Maurice makes two drinks. Nina comes flirtatiously close.

NINA (CONT'D)
Is that why you brought me in here?
To watch you make drinks?

MAURICE
You're the most entertaining person
in the apartment.

NINA
I heard about you.

MAURICE
And what did you hear?

NINA
Things.

MAURICE
What are you doing?

NINA
What do you want me to do?

MAURICE
Your husband's in the other room.

NINA
He won't be later.

Maurice puts his arm around her waist.

MAURICE
You could come back in a few hours.

NINA
I need a favor.

MAURICE
Does it involve nibbling your rump?

NINA
I need you to make a call for Ken.

Maurice lets go instantly. Nina tries to keep it flirtatious.

NINA (CONT'D)
You know people in Washington,
probably in Albany. You could get
the charges dropped.

MAURICE
It's not the best time for me to be
granting favors.

NINA

You could do it through back room
phone calls. I know how these things
work. I'd be very grateful.

Maurice marches out of the kitchen. Nina sighs and follows.

LIVING ROOM

Maurice, followed by Nina, sits as though ready to pounce.

MAURICE

Don't you think it's odd that I had
to endure that humiliating perp walk
as he got snuck in the side of the
courthouse?

EDITH

Maurice, do we have to?

MAURICE

I just think it's an odd imbalance
when he's being accused of stealing
and I'm accused of lust.

KEN

Insider trading is not exactly
stealing.

EDITH

And sexual assault is not exactly
lust.

MAURICE

But I'm not on trial for sexual
assault. I mean, I am, legally, but
those charges will be thrown out as
spurious. The real accusations come
in digging around my past behavior
and discovering that, surprise
surprise, I've had a sex life.

EDITH

We don't want to hear about your sex
life.

KEN

I wouldn't mind.

MAURICE

What you do makes me sick.

KEN

What happened to both being innocent?

MAURICE

The case is irrelevant. You're guilty because the entire banking industry is guilty.

KEN

Now I'm the banking industry?

MAURICE

It's an abomination that makes money out of money.

KEN

You're a hundred times as rich as we are.

MAURICE

But our money comes from making something.

EDITH

Actually, love, your money comes from marriage.

MAURICE

But the origin of our fortune is books.

EDITH

The origin of my fortune.

KEN

Which she inherited.

MAURICE

But the origin of her family money is tangible objects that add value to the world.

NINA

Ken, let's go.

KEN

No, this is about to get good.

MAURICE

You should listen to your hussy wife.

NINA

Maurice!

MAURICE

And next time you want a favor, offer your own body.

EDITH
She did what?

KEN
You offered to fuck him?

NINA
What was I supposed to do? It's a
hail mary.

KEN
And he said no?

MAURICE
It's in my vocabulary.

NINA
Come on.

KEN
Still, clever.

EDITH
You're not mad?

KEN
Mad? You've never had to fight for
anything.

EDITH
I have fought harder than anyone in
your generation can conceive of.

KEN
Okay, moneybags. You're still going
to try and get my charges dropped.
Whether you want to or not.

MAURICE
You should take your wife's advice
and go.

KEN
I don't think so. Sitting there
with your passive income and class
derision. And by the way, we're
upper class!

EDITH
Lower upper class.

KEN
Too bad I have this!

Ken shows Maurice a photo on his phone.

KEN (CONT'D)

That's a bottle of Viagra with your name on it. And this is a bottle of Propecia, and this is grime buildup, and in the other bathroom I found a dildo. Do what I want, or these go straight to the press.

MAURICE

Wow, Edith, I think he got us.

EDITH

No choice but to play ball.

Nina tries to pull Ken toward the door.

KEN

(to Maurice)

I win?

MAURICE

Sure. I'll put a call in to the secret society of back room deals.

KEN

You think this is a joke? A call to the governor will be fine.

NINA

Ken, they're not going to help us. Your plan is retarded.

MAURICE

Actually, I will help you. Not because you're blackmailing me with shit I don't care about, but because you showed moxy.

EDITH

Really?

KEN

Really?

NINA

They're lying.

MAURICE

(to Edith)

It's what Mr. Absolon would have wanted.

EDITH

Karma for all of Mr. Absolon's favors.

KEN
Who's Mr. Absolon?

EDITH
An old friend we use as a moral
compass.

MAURICE
And he would have said that, even
though you're a leach on the economy,
we should show you some charity.

KEN
We don't have to argue anymore.

MAURICE
Even though you're a pustule of
unsound logic and selfish thinking.

KEN
I can still walk out.

EDITH
You should do that. We're not going
to make any phone calls.

KEN
But you just said you would.

MAURICE
Already?

EDITH
It's too easy. Mr. Absolon is a
code word we use at parties. It
means play along as I lie through my
teeth.

MAURICE
As though there were anywhere else
to lie through.

EDITH
You've found a few.

KEN
You know what? I don't need anything
from you. No one hands anything to
me.

EDITH
I'll call for you.

KEN
You will?

NINA
See you downstairs.

Nina leaves.

MAURICE
(to Edith)
Won over by all his clever fishing
for dirt?

EDITH
Absolutely. Asking if you'd hit
rock bottom, that's some virtuosic
political maneuvering.

KEN
You couldn't tell I was looking for
material to blackmail with?

EDITH
No, asking me to complain about
Maurice is subtle.

MAURICE
Honestly, honey, you didn't really
guess it until he pulled out the
phone.

EDITH
And it's embarrassing, but who expects
the clown machiavelli?

KEN
So, you'll call tomorrow?

EDITH
Probably not.

KEN
Monday?

EDITH
Maybe never.

KEN
I'm confused.

MAURICE
You're going to jail.

Ken struggles for words then storms out.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
You have a vibrator?

EDITH
I can't believe he wasn't upset when
his wife's propositioned you.

MAURICE
We showed them.

EDITH
Sure did.

Edith finishes her drink and head for her bedroom.

MAURICE
I'm not a bad man.

Edith stops.

EDITH
I know.

MAURICE
I can be a good husband and father.

EDITH
That ship is sailed.

MAURICE
What if it isn't? What if I get
help?

EDITH
Help for what?

MAURICE
I have a problem. It's medical.

EDITH
That's convenient logic.

MAURICE
So, take the convenient logic and
let it give us another chance.

EDITH
You don't deserve one.

MAURICE
This thing with the maid? You know
I didn't do that.

EDITH
I want to believe you.

MAURICE
I have cheated.

EDITH
It's not the what, it's the how.
I've cheated too, but you'd never
find out in the papers.

MAURICE
I have a problem.

Edith says nothing.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Tell me what you're thinking.

EDITH
Your book is crap. And it was nice
to see you mop the floor with that
yuppie couple.

MAURICE
I'm going to kiss you.

EDITH
No.

MAURICE
I am.

EDITH
No.

Maurice kisses Edith. She pushes him away.

MAURICE
Now, I want you to pretend you didn't
say no just now, and that way you
can follow your gut without losing
face.

Maurice kisses Edith again. She hesitates, then kisses him
back.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice bursts through the door with Edith.

EDITH
Softer.

Maurice kisses her softer.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Softer.

Maurice, with great difficulty and a lot of physical guidance
from Edith, manages to kiss her gently.

He seems deeply uncomfortable with the lack of animalism.

EDITH (CONT'D)

This way.

Edith leads Maurice sensually toward the bed. Maurice is constantly trying to steer their interaction more violent and aggressive, but Edith forces him to be slow and romantic.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Softer.

They begin to make love. Maurice is like a caged tiger, jumpy and uncomfortable with Edith's languid energy, but unable to change their choreography.

AFTER THEY'RE DONE

Edith and Maurice lie in bed. She looks content. He seems anxious. Maurice gets out of bed.

EDITH (CONT'D)

You can sleep here tonight.

MAURICE

It's too soon. I don't want to violate your space.

Edith looks nervous as Maurice exits.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice plops onto his bed and opens his laptop. He logs into a SEX CHAT WINDOW. A BUSTY BLONDE greets him.

BUSTY BLONDE (V.O.)

Hello, handsome.

MAURICE

Turn around and bend over.

BUSTY BLONDE (V.O.)

Okay.

MAURICE

Now bark.

BUSTY BLONDE (V.O.)

Woof.

Maurice starts to masturbate.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Maurice, in his robe and slippers, is chipper as he poaches AN EGG. He hums as he creates two BEAUTIFUL PLATES OF EGGS AND SPINACH. He grabs one of the plates and saunters to the-

LIVING ROOM

And knocks on Edith's door.

EDITH (O.S.)
One minute.

Maurice opens the door.

EDITH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I said one minute.

Maurice closes the door, a little miffed. Edith comes out in HER ROBE.

MAURICE
I made eggs florentine.

EDITH
Thank you.

Maurice tries to kiss her but Edith dodges the kiss and takes the eggs.

KITCHEN

Edith puts her plate on the ISLAND and gets ORANGE JUICE as Maurice watches.

MAURICE
So, I'm not allowed in the room again?

EDITH
You were right about it being too soon.

MAURICE
And when I tried to kiss you?

EDITH
Maurice, last night happened.

MAURICE
But shouldn't have.

EDITH
I didn't say that. It let us know there's still something we can work towards.

MAURICE
You're an Indian giver.

EDITH
We can't start out where we were
last night. We have to take it slow.

Edith takes a bite.

EDITH (CONT'D)
This is really good.

MAURICE
Fresh Direct.

Maurice starts to eat.

EDITH
You're going to need to do some
things.

MAURICE
And what if I need you to win me
back?

EDITH
You really think I should be making
the effort?

MAURICE
What do you need me to do?

EDITH
First, I need you to actually work
on your book.

MAURICE
I thought you said it was crap.

EDITH
It is crap, but until you come up
with a better one, you need something
to do.

MAURICE
What's house arrest good for if not
a chance to be lazy? Like the flu.

EDITH
What do you think I liked about you
last night?

MAURICE
Being an asshole?

EDITH

Having energy. You need to put that energy into something, or it poofs away. I also need you to get dressed every day.

MAURICE

Black tie or white?

EDITH

If people think you're a loser, don't look like a loser. When you're back on top, you can dress like a slob.

Edith finishes breakfast.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I'm going to my room. See you at lunch.

MAURICE

If I'm available.

EDITH

Don't disturb me.

Edith exits.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maurice, wearing SLACKS and a BUTTON DOWN, sits in front of his laptop and notes. The TV is on in the background. He types unproductively, one key at a time.

He looks over at Edith's door. He goes to her door, almost knocks, then goes back to the couch. He tries to type.

He takes the TV remote and tries to balance it on the top of his laptop. The remote falls. He notices something on the TV and becomes excited. He turns up the volume.

ON THE TELEVISION

Jaqueline is being interviewed on NEW YORK ONE. A caption reads, "Live: daughter of MLC."

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Thanks, Mark. Glad I'm not taking the Midtown Tunnel. We're here with Jaqueline Lunel-Caspi, daughter of Maurice Lunel-Caspi and Edith Rivet.

JAQUELINE (V.O.)

Thanks for having me.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Jaqueline, you've been talking up quite a storm since your father was arrested.

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
My mother taught me to speak my mind.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Much to our good fortune. So, tell us, what was it like having a sexual deviant for a father?

Jaqueline fidgets nervously. She is choosing her words carefully.

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
My father could have been a better parent, it's true, but the biggest problem was that I didn't get to see him very often.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
In the past, you've said that you stopped feeling comfortable bringing friends home at around fifteen.

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
My dad can be overly flirtatious. But, the French have a very different outlook on sexuality from Americans.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
I'm sorry, I'm puzzled by your change in tone. In the past, you've called him, "a sexual scum, who preys on every woman around and uses power to bully women into sex."

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
I may have been lashing out a little.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Why did you refuse when the judge offered to let him stay with you under house arrest? Forcing your mom to fly to New York and rent an apartment?

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
I don't want to distract from the case.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Then why did you come on this show?

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
I thought we might talk about other
issues. I have a lot of very strong
opinions.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
You want to talk about other issues?

JAQUELINE (V.O.)
I thought we might talk about Gaza.

Maurice excitedly runs to Edith's door. He almost knocks,
then runs back to his laptop and does some typing. He looks
back at her door expectantly. After a second, Edith bursts
into the living room.

EDITH
What's she saying?

MAURICE
Take a look.

The television has switched to a DIFFERENT ANCHOR. Maurice
hits mute.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
I guess they pulled her off.

EDITH
Why didn't you knock?

MAURICE
It's not lunch yet. I thought you
wanted an email.

EDITH
Not if Jackie's on TV.

MAURICE
These rules are very confusing.

EDITH
If she's on again, knock.

Edith starts to leave.

MAURICE
Edith, it's you.

Edith turns and sees herself talking on TV under the words,
"Previously Recorded."

EDITH (on TV)
I'm not here to talk about my husband.
(MORE)

EDITH (on TV) (CONT'D)
I just want to answer investor
concerns about my acquisition of The
Euro Post and say that everything is
moving smoothly.

MAURICE
The deal's in trouble?

EDITH
No.

MAURICE
When did you do that interview?

EDITH
An hour ago.

MAURICE
While I was sitting right here? And
you were in the bedroom?

EDITH
You know, they have cameras on
computers now.

MAURICE
Amazing. From your laptop to CNN to
my TV. What a long journey to travel
from the bedroom to the living room.

EDITH
Don't marvel at technology. It makes
you look like an old man.

Edith turns to go.

MAURICE
I should do something nice for
Jaqueline.

EDITH
I know she'd enjoy a confession.

MAURICE
I could try to get her a job. Make
some calls.

EDITH
Do you have any sway right now?

MAURICE
The worst I will get is a no.

EDITH

Okay. Just be careful on the phone.
Police could be listening. The last
thing we need now is charges of
nepotism and bribery.

Edith leaves. Maurice gets his CELL PHONE and makes a call.

INT. MAHOGANY OFFICE - DAY

SENATOR MARK KALEY, 55, hangs up his PHONE RECEIVER and
presses speaker phone.

SENATOR KALEY

Maurice. Good to hear from you.

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

MAURICE

Senator. I'm in your state.

SENATOR KALEY

So I hear. You'll forgive me if I
haven't been to visit.

MAURICE

Maybe you'll innocently touch a
staffer's shoulder and it will land
you in the apartment next to mine.

SENATOR KALEY

I wouldn't be surprised. Maurice, I
don't want to waste your time. I
can't do a thing to help the case.

MAURICE

I'll beat these charges on my own.
And I would never solicit political
favors.

This last sentence seems more directed at a third party: the
possible wiretap Maurice is dancing around.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I have someone for you to hire.

SENATOR KALEY

But that's not a favor?

MAURICE

I'm doing you a favor. This woman
is the best you will find.

Maurice's intonation becomes very wink, wink, listen to what
I'm really saying.

SENATOR KALEY

And why do you think I would like this woman?

MAURICE

She's smart. She's eager.

SENATOR KALEY

A hard worker?

MAURICE

The hardest.

SENATOR KALEY

I don't think I need anyone.

MAURICE

I would hire her in Paris, but she lives in New York. She'll be a great addition on your staff.

SENATOR KALEY

Send her by my New York office tomorrow at seven. PM.

MAURICE

You won't regret it.

SENATOR KALEY

I expect not to.

Maurice hangs up. He looks proud.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nicolas sits opposite Maurice.

NICK

Can't we just get started?

MAURICE

Don't be impatient. It's almost one.

NICK

Why don't you just knock on the door?

MAURICE

Because I want to respect her schedule. Why don't you read a magazine?

Nick opens a MAGAZINE and starts reading.

Edith comes out her door. She sees Nick.

EDITH
Nicolas? What are you doing here?

MAURICE
He came to update me on the case,
but I told him to wait. I wanted to
include you in it.

EDITH
I want to get some food and clear my
head.

MAURICE
He brought Zabars.

Nick puts out FOOD. Edith sighs and sits.

NICK
So, we hit a little bit of a speed
bump yesterday.

MAURICE
What's going on?

NICK
We'd been able to establish that Ms.
Parker was farming out housekeeping
jobs to an undocumented worker.

EDITH
What does that have to do with
anything?

NICK
It establishes a pattern of deceit.
The problem is that the worker seems
to be her mother, so we think it
would backfire and make her look
sympathetic.

MAURICE
What else do you have?

NICK
We think we can prove that she cheated
on her last year's taxes.

EDITH
Which means what?

NICK
It shows she needs money.
(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

We're going to argue that this whole case is just to lay groundwork for a civil suit which would set her up for life. But here's the capper. Six months ago, she got breast implants.

MAURICE

That makes sense.

EDITH

I'm sorry to keep asking the same question, but what do breast implants have to do with anything?

NICK

Can't pay her taxes, but she can afford breast implants? Plus, it suggests that she may have come on to Maurice a little bit.

EDITH

Why don't you poke holes in her story?

NICK

It's a he-said, she-said. These are things we can prove.

MAURICE

What else is there?

NICK

That's it.

MAURICE

You made me wait a half hour for that?

NICK

I didn't choose to wait.

MAURICE

You could have said all that over the phone.

NICK

I wanted Zabars.

Nick exits.

MAURICE

I think things are looking good. Is something wrong?

EDITH
I don't think you should include me
in these lawyer meetings any more.

MAURICE
I thought you'd appreciate the
thought.

EDITH
I do appreciate the thought. It's
the action I'm not thrilled about.

MAURICE
I'm sorry.

Edith throws out her food and heads to her door.

EDITH
I'll be in my room.

Edith goes into her bedroom. Maurice starts to clean up.
Edith sticks her head back out.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Actually, you can come in.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice follows Edith inside and grabs her waist.

EDITH
Wrong idea.

MAURICE
Tease.

EDITH
Have a seat.

Maurice takes a seat and Edith goes to her desk.

EDITH (CONT'D)
I'm going to let you help me on my
acquisition. Here are The Euro Post
financials. You can look at them if
you want. But, this is what I really
want from you.

Edith hands Maurice two PACKETS.

EDITH (CONT'D)
The first one is people I'm thinking
of hiring. The second is current
staff: reporters, editors, managers.
(MORE)

EDITH (CONT'D)

I want to cut thirty to forty percent.
I'd love your advice on whom to sack.

Maurice starts to read through the packets.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maurice is sitting on the floor with both packets and a HIGHLIGHTER, annotating the lists to death. Edith stands up.

EDITH

I'll see you later.

MAURICE

Where are you going?

EDITH

I have a meeting.

MAURICE

You could hold your meeting here.

EDITH

It's nice to see you working on something. You can continue after I'm gone or in the morning.

Maurice gets up and tries to kiss her. She brushes him off.

INT. FRONT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice watches Edith go out the front door.

MAURICE

Bye.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice tosses his laptop onto the bed and opens it. He signs into a SEX CHAT WINDOW. He sees the same woman in lingerie from his first chat.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

I recognize you.

MAURICE

I felt like a familiar face.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

That's sweet.

MAURICE

Press your breasts up against the camera.

Maurice starts to unbutton his pants.

LATER

Maurice, looking bored, sits on the floor next to his open laptop. He dispassionately watches the woman in lingerie dance.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

How am I doing?

MAURICE

Just keep going.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

Is there something that you want?

MAURICE

Not really. Actually, yes.

Maurice excitedly grabs a STACK OF PAPER.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I want to read to you from my book.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

Okay.

MAURICE

Tell me what you think.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

I'm not exactly an expert.

MAURICE

Say that you like it.

(reading)

The underlying mechanisms of an economy and the amicability of a community are an inextricable pair.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

That sounds smart.

MAURICE

Say it sexy.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

That sounds smart.

MAURICE

Not just your intonation, your actual words.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

That sentence makes me so hot.

MAURICE

Exactly.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

I want to rub it all over me.

MAURICE

Wait until I read more.

(reading)

If a person is truly valued, he will be valued in both respects; if you remove one form of value the other shortly follows.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

Oh, baby.

MAURICE

(reading)

This creates a paradox of paradigm.

WOMAN IN LINGERIE (V.O.)

Say it again.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Maurice sits on the floor going through Edith's packets as Edith works on her computer.

MAURICE

Done.

EDITH

Have much success?

Maurice proudly carries the packets over and plops them on her desk.

MAURICE

See for yourself.

EDITH

I'll look at them later.

Maurice starts rubbing Edith's shoulders.

MAURICE

How about a study break?

Edith removes his hands.

EDITH
I'll look at them later.

MAURICE
I'm getting to you. It's only a
matter of days.

Maurice walks into the

LIVING ROOM

With a spring in his step. He finds a stack of THREE UNREAD
NEWSPAPERS. He flips through the first one. He starts
cutting an article out.

LATER

Maurice finishes tacking the last article to his collage.
He contentedly flops onto the couch and starts typing. For
the first time, he seems to be typing easily. He seems to
get an idea, then grabs his phone and makes a phone call.
The French woman from earlier answers.

FRENCH WOMAN
Bonjour.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Is Delegate Bonnay in?

INT. FRENCH OFFICES - DAY

She sits at a MAHOGANY DESK.

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

FRENCH WOMAN
(French with subtitles)
Delegate Lunel-Caspi?

MAURICE
Oui.

FRENCH WOMAN
(French with subtitles)
I'm sorry, he's out.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
When will he be in?

FRENCH WOMAN
(French with subtitles)
I don't know.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Tell him to call me. I want to get
some progress on this bill.

FRENCH WOMAN
(French with subtitles)
Sir, Delagate Bonnay is no longer
cosponsoring the housing bill.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
What? We spent months on it.

FRENCH WOMAN
(French with subtitles)
Do you want me to relay your message?

Maurice hangs up and dials a different number.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Hello. Is Delegate Dufort there?

INT. DIFFERENT OFFICE - DAY

A RECEPTIONIST answers.

INTERCUT

RECEPTIONIST
(French with subtitles)
He is. May I ask who's calling?

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Maurice Lunel Caspi.

RECEPTIONIST
(French with subtitles)
I'm sorry. He just stepped out.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Tell him this bill is too important
to drop over my legal troubles.
I'll take my fucking name off the
draft.

RECEPTIONIST
(French with subtitles)
Delagate Dufort has already introduced
his own housing bill.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
What? How are they different?

RECEPTIONIST
(French with subtitles)
Your name isn't on it.

Maurice hangs up. He dials again.

INT. THIRD OFFICE - DAY

ANOTHER RECEPTIONIST answers.

INTERCUT

RECEPTIONIST 2
Bonjour.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Maurice Lunel-Caspi for Delegate
Morin.

RECEPTIONIST 2
(French with subtitles)
I'm sorry, he's not in.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
You tell Morin that I have photos of
him that will go viral if he doesn't
answer the phone.

RECEPTIONIST 2
(French with subtitles)
One moment.

INT. NICER OFFICE - DAY

DELAGATE MORIN, 45, answers.

DELEGATE MORIN
Maurice?

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Why is no one answering their phones?

DELEGATE MORIN
(French with subtitles)
I can't be talking to you. They're
pushing the impeachment.

MAURICE
(French with subtitles)
Who is?

DELEGATE MORIN
(French with subtitles)
Don't call me again.

The phone clicks off. Maurice goes back to the couch. He resumes typing a little less energetically than before.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Edith comes out and sees Maurice typing.

EDITH
I'm going out.

MAURICE
Wait. Sit with me.

Edith sits.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
My political career may be over.

EDITH
It may be.

MAURICE
How was your day?

EDITH
I think I have to back out of my
Euro Post bid.

MAURICE
Competing offer?

EDITH
My legal team thinks, without you in
office providing cover, I'm open to
an anti-trust suit. They actually
want me to divest a couple companies.

MAURICE
It's nice to be talking without
arguing.

They sit for a second. Neither has anything to say.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

EDITH
Does it matter?

MAURICE
Is that a new Restaurant?

EDITH
I'll see you later.

She exits. Maurice turns on the TV.

LATER

Maurice is watching TV when he hears a KNOCK.

MAURICE
One second.

Maurice saunters to the

FRONT HALL

And opens the door.

NAOMI, 22, sexy in her pantsuit, enters past Justin.

NAOMI
Thank you, officer.

JUSTIN
(to Maurice)
You're supposed to let me know when
the law firm sends someone by.

MAURICE
I'm sorry. I will in the future.

JUSTIN
Do that.

Maurice closes the door.

MAURICE
Who are you?

NAOMI
Naomi. Nick sent me.

Naomi saunters into the

LIVING ROOM

As Maurice follows.

NAOMI (CONT'D)

Nice place.

Maurice dials his phone.

EXT. NEW YORK SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Nicolas answers his phone while walking.

NICK

Maurice! Is she there yet?

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

MAURICE

Who is she?

NICK

A little present for sending me Ken Birke. He was so eager to sign, I charged him fifteen percent above my usual rate. But don't worry, I told her to wait until Edith left.

MAURICE

I thought you weren't going to send anyone.

NICK

I knew you'd be grateful. Have fun.

Nick hangs up.

Maurice stands hesitantly. Naomi waits for him to decide what to do.

MAURICE

This way.

Maurice leads her to the second bedroom. As he does, his PHONE RINGS. Maurice puts it on silent.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maurice lies in bed, clearly post-sex, as Naomi gets dressed.

MAURICE

What's the hurry?

NAOMI

If you want to go twice, it's double.

MAURICE
How far did you come from?

NAOMI
Somewhere around none of your
business.

MAURICE
Do you go to school?

NAOMI
Would you like that?

Maurice and Naomi jump as they hear THE FRONT DOOR OPEN.
Maurice locks the bedroom door.

MAURICE
Hide.

They hear someone MOVING ABOUT the apartment. Someone tries
to open the door. Naomi ducks behind the bed.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
I'm just getting dressed.

Someone starts banging on the door. Maurice puts on his
robe and pulls the doorknob.

Jaqueline stands on the other side, fire coming out of her
nostrils.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Honey?

JAQUELINE
If there wasn't a cop outside, I
would stab you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jaqueline marches into the room as Maurice follows.

MAURICE
What have I done?

JAQUELINE
I don't know why I ever expected
anything from you except sickness
and depravity.

MAURICE
What happened?

JAQUELINE

I went to see Senator Kaley. He grabbed my ass and tried to plant one on me. Correction, planted one on me.

MAURICE

That can't be right.

JAQUELINE

You think I'd make this shit up? I just had to see you one more time, so that my last image of you could be one of hatred.

MAURICE

There must have been some misunderstanding.

JAQUELINE

Misunderstanding? What sort of reasonable thing might he have been thinking that would cause him to grope your daughter?

MAURICE

Let me call him.

JAQUELINE

Where's mom? I couldn't reach her.

MAURICE

Don't go anywhere.

Maurice rushes into the

SECOND BEDROOM

And grabs his cell phone. Naomi pokes her head up from behind the bed. Maurice waves for her to stay down. He checks his phone: "12 missed calls"

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Shit.

LIVING ROOM

Maurice bounds in and frantically dials. Jaqueline drinks WHISKEY at the sideboard.

INT. MAHOGANY OFFICE - NIGHT

Senator Kaley is slumped dejectedly on his couch. The PHONE RINGS. He frantically answers.

SENATOR KALEY

Hello?

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

MAURICE

You made a pass at my daughter?

SENATOR KALEY

I didn't know she was your daughter.
You didn't tell me that.

MAURICE

You didn't recognize her from the
news?

SENATOR KALEY

You think I have time to watch the
news? I get summaries. Is she there
with you? You have to get her not
to go to the press. I can help your
case. No, I don't know that. I can
try to help your case.

MAURICE

You just attack any woman who comes
into your office?

SENATOR KALEY

I thought you were sending a whore.
I thought that's the type of
relationship we had. I would never
let you near my daughter. We've
been to orgies with whores her age.

MAURICE

Why would I send you a prostitute?

SENATOR KALEY

To coax me into calling the governor.
But oh, this is much more clever.
You set me up. You used her to trap
me in a scandal. Now I have to help
you.

MAURICE

You think I used my daughter as bait?

SENATOR KALEY

Why all the dancing around the topic?
The wink-wink innuendo?

MAURICE

I didn't know if my phone was tapped,
and I didn't want to be calling in
favors.

SENATOR KALEY

Phone tapped?

MAURICE

It probably isn't.

SENATOR KALEY

Never call me again.

Senator Kaley hangs up.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maurice puts down his phone and looks at Jaqueline.

JAQUELINE

I'm going to the police.

MAURICE

You should.

JAQUELINE

Don't try that reverse psychology
crap on me.

MAURICE

If you feel you need to go to the
police, you should go to the police.
And the press.

JAQUELINE

It will ruin whatever shred you have
left.

MAURICE

Probably.

JAQUELINE

Oh no, you do not get to be noble
now. You do not deserve to be noble
now.

MAURICE

All I wanted was to help you.

JAQUELINE

Stop that. My last image of you
will not be sympathetic. You can go
to hell for all I care.

Jaqueline puts down her drink and starts to exit.

JAQUELINE (CONT'D)
Tell mom to cut your balls off.

Before Jaqueline can exit, Edith bursts inside.

EDITH
Where is he?

Edith walks over and knees Maurice in the balls. Then she knees him in the face.

EDITH (CONT'D)
You are the lowest form of scum on earth, and that's belittling to scum.

JAQUELINE
Why didn't you call me back?

EDITH
I was in a movie.

MAURICE
What did you see?

EDITH
A 3-D film about fucking whales.
What difference does it make?

MAURICE
No difference.

EDITH
(to Jaqueline)
Baby, are you all right? Did he hurt you?

MAURICE
The police will examine her.

EDITH
What? You can't go to the police.

MAURICE
Let her go.

EDITH
You'll destroy all of us.

JAQUELINE
He deserves to be taken down.

EDITH

You won't be able to pin a criminal charge on him. And even if you could, I know you think he deserves punishment, but is it worth destroying yourself to get even? Destroying me? We don't deserve to be victims of his baselessness.

JAQUELINE

How am I destroying you?

EDITH

My reputation is tied to his. I use his name to make business deals.

JAQUELINE

You'll pick yourself up.

EDITH

I heard your voice mail. What do you think it will look like that someone was able to mistake you for a prostitute?

JAQUELINE

I was wearing a pant suit.

MAURICE

High class escorts can dress that way.

JAQUELINE

I'll get a book deal out of it.

EDITH

Do you have any bruises to photograph? Were there any witnesses?

JAQUELINE

I have a red palm where I slapped him.

EDITH

(like a prosecutor)

Do you have anything to gain by defaming the Senator? Do you have any way to prove any of your story?

JAQUELINE

I was there.

EDITH

Isn't it true that you went on television and suggested that your father was guilty of sex charges to which he was later acquitted?

JAQUELINE

That doesn't mean he was innocent.

EDITH

Isn't it true that you have a deep seated hatred of powerful men because of your childhood neglect?

MAURICE

Edith!

EDITH

Isn't it true that you're a vindictive bitch?

JAQUELINE

I object!

EDITH

Look at him. You know what happened. A media circus would just pervert the truth.

JAQUELINE

I never want to see him again.

MAURICE

Honey.

EDITH

You never have to see him again.

Jaqueline kicks Maurice.

JAQUELINE

I'm taking this whiskey.

Jaqueline puts the BOTTLE in her purse and exits.

Edith heads toward her room.

MAURICE

Edith, wait.

EDITH

You're not worth another kick.

MAURICE

I'll leave. I'll await trial in Rikers.

Edith comes back.

EDITH

Don't you dare.

MAURICE

You don't deserve to be around me.

EDITH

Do you want to be front page in prison clothes?

MAURICE

I still love you.

EDITH

I made you, and I deserve to get something out of the decades of investment I've put in. Whose family connections helped you get started? I made those introductions. I've funded your campaigns. I've run editorials to help your friends and destroy your enemies. I deserve to have you in the National Assembly making deals on my behalf. You do not get to destroy your career.

MAURICE

I need you.

EDITH

From now on, you will be like a ghost in this apartment. If I walk into a room, you will hide so I don't see you. If I am in the living room, you will not walk through it to get to the bathroom. You will pee in a cup and wait until a path is clear.

MAURICE

Okay.

Edith goes to her room. Maurice walks into the

SECOND BEDROOM

And opens his closet. Naomi gets up from behind the bed.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

You can go now.

Maurice lifts HANGERS and starts putting on a SUIT.

NAOMI
Is your wife gone?

MAURICE
It doesn't matter any more. You can
just walk through the living room.

NAOMI
This extra time will cost something.

Maurice hands her his WATCH. Naomi exits. Maurice finishes putting on the suit.

INT. FRONT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice takes a deep breath then opens the front door.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Justin sees Maurice standing in the doorway.

JUSTIN
(re: suit)
Special occasion?

Maurice pushes past him and starts sprinting down the hall. Justin pursues.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice slams through a door and starts running down the stairs.

Justin comes after him.

JUSTIN
(into walkie)
Runner in Stairwell B.

A door opens below Maurice, and Dave starts running up the stairs. Dave tackles Maurice.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dave and Justin drag Maurice back into the apartment.

MAURICE
I want to go to Rikers! I want to
go to Rikers!

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Nicolas sits opposite a sloppily dressed Maurice.

NICK
You sure you won't let me fight it?

MAURICE
I want to go to Rikers.

NICK
Even though you broke your house arrest, you didn't go outside. The judge is willing to let you stay if Edith will vouch for you.

MAURICE
I don't want Edith to vouch for me.

NICK
At least put on something nice for the cameras.

MAURICE
That was last night. This is what they get today.

Nick nods.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice and Nick walk past Justin.

MAURICE
See you, Justin.

Justin glares at Maurice.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice and Nick watch the elevator doors open and step into

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

As Maurice and Nick walk towards the door, a HUGE BODYGUARD steps in front of them. Then ANOTHER HUGE BODYGUARD. Then Edith.

MAURICE
What's going on.

The bodyguards pick up Maurice and carry him back to the elevator.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Hey!

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The bodyguards throw Maurice onto the couch. Edith and Nick stand by.

MAURICE

You can't do this to me.

EDITH

I wouldn't bet on that.

MAURICE

Nick, you're not going to stand for this.

NICK

As your lawyer, if Edith can get you to maintain house arrest until trial, it is my legal advice that she do so.

MAURICE

This is imprisonment!

NICK

What do you think house arrest is?

EDITH

You guys can leave.

Nick and the bodyguards exit.

MAURICE

You do not get to win on this.

EDITH

You're not thinking long term.

MAURICE

I have a right to my own demise.

EDITH

If you won't think of our well being, think of Jaqueline.

MAURICE

She'd enjoy watching me go to prison.

EDITH

If you make this easy, I'll give you a divorce.

MAURICE

I wasn't asking for one.

EDITH
Then I am. We can't stay in this
marriage.

MAURICE
I think I could.

EDITH
It's toxic.

MAURICE
For now, maybe.

EDITH
For ever.

MAURICE
I'm sorry I ran. It was a tantrum.

EDITH
Tell me what happened.

MAURICE
You get older. You drift apart.

EDITH
No that, you dolt. In the hotel.
With Ama Parker.

MAURICE
You know the story.

EDITH
I know the public version. I want
the full version.

MAURICE
I don't want to tell you.

EDITH
Why?

MAURICE
I'm afraid you won't find me
attractive again.

EDITH
Maurice, I could not find you less
attractive if you were covered in
shit and beetles.

MAURICE
I'm not even sure I know what
happened. I mean, I know what I
did.

EDITH

Start there.

MAURICE

I made a pass at her. She took it wrong.

EDITH

How did you make a pass at her?

MAURICE

I saw her looking at me, and I thought she was checking me out. I still think she was checking me out. I'm a handsome man, don't you think?

EDITH

I used to.

MAURICE

I pegged her for a shy one, so I thought she would appreciate my being forceful. I thought she would want to be taken.

EDITH

Maurice.

MAURICE

So, I walked up behind her, and I grabbed her around the waist.

EDITH

You didn't.

MAURICE

I know it was a bad idea, but it was early, and I was in a good mood. She pulled away, but I thought she was playing hard to get. I thought, I'll give her one more chance to loosen up. So, I grabbed her one more time, and she broke away. Now, I could tell she wasn't interested, so I tried to explain. But before I got a chance, she was out the door.

EDITH

Maurice, you assaulted that woman.

MAURICE

I didn't. I made a pass at her. But, from her point of view, she was assaulted.

(MORE)

MAURICE (CONT'D)

And she will always have a memory of my face, my face trying to rape her. And, even if that's not what happened, that's how she'll carry it. For the rest of her life.

EDITH

We won't get divorced during this news cycle. It would look like an admission of guilt. Six months after the trial: that's when we'll file.

Maurice seems to accept this.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I'm going back to my room. In about an hour, I'm going to have dinner. You should be out of the living room and kitchen by then.

Edith exits. Maurice goes to his collage and starts pulling down press clippings.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - DAY

Maurice, unshaven and unkempt, lies in bed in the afternoon sun. His phone RINGS. He is slow to answer it.

MAURICE

Hello?

EXT. COURTROOM STEPS - DAY

Nicolas radiates pride as he talks on the phone.

NICK

They dropped the charges.

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

MAURICE

Oh.

NICK

We were able to get her husband to admit that she paid him to marry her so she could immigrate from Panama.

MAURICE

How did you do that?

NICK

Does it matter?

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

She can't bring a civil suit if she gets deported, which was the whole point. And she's decided her citizenship is more important than revenge, so she's not going to testify against you.

MAURICE

Is she still getting deported?

NICK

Not if she keeps her trap shut. I told you we would lick this. Go celebrate.

Maurice puts down the phone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice knocks on Edith's door. No response. He keeps knocking. Edith opens the door and stands furious.

MAURICE

This is the last time. We won.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Maurice shaves

-- Edith puts on make-up

-- Maurice puts on his suit

-- Edith puts on jewelry

INT. FRONT HALL - LATER

Maurice and Edith, dressed sharp, stand in front of the front door.

MAURICE

You ready?

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice and Edith walk past Justin.

JUSTIN

Congratulations.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice and Edith ride the elevator, neither talking nor looking at each other.

EDITH

Six months.

INT. BRANDILL TOWERS - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Maurice and Edith walk through the lobby and out the front door, where they are engulfed in a cloud of FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY.

FADE OUT.