

THE WAGER

Written by

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Based on
"The Book of Job"
of the Holy Bible

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FADE IN:

1

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

1

You can smell the money as you walk into this brand new, ultra-posh house, which includes a "secret treasure room," protected by the latest high-tech security.

The homeowners, KEN DURANT (42) and his trophy wife, CARLA (37), a former model, are hosting a housewarming party for 7 of their closest friends and business associates.

Among the guests is STEVE MILLER, also 42, who could have been on the cover of GQ. Ken and Steve have a tenuous relationship at best, having been arch-rivals since junior high.

Steve is also a very accomplished amateur magician and has just wowed the guests with two amazing magic tricks that defy explanation.

Dinner is over and the guests are still seated around the dining room table chatting about Steve's magic tricks.

STEVE

(loudly, so that everyone else stops talking and looks at him)

Ken, I wonder if you might permit me one final magic trick.

KEN

(looking somewhat dubious, but then smiling)

The stage is all yours, my friend.

STEVE

You're very proud of your new house, Ken, and well you should be. It's a beautiful house and you've done a great job on it. And I mean that sincerely. I wouldn't mind living here myself.

KEN

Fat chance, Steve, but thank you. You're right. This house is my Mona Lisa.

STEVE

And it seems you are particularly proud of your secret room.

KEN

Yes, I am. I did a lot of research to make it foolproof.

STEVE

Well, then, I hate to tell you that it's not foolproof, Ken. In fact, it's extremely vulnerable.

KEN

I doubt that very much. But what are you saying?

STEVE

I'm saying you could lock me inside that room and I could easily escape within minutes ... maybe an hour, tops.

KEN

(laughs)

No way, Steve. You might like to think you're Houdini, but you're not. Once the door to that room is shut, the only way anyone inside can get out is if someone - and that someone is only me right now - opens the door from the outside. I designed it so there's simply no way to open the door from the inside without the pass code and palm recognition.

STEVE

Then you will be amazed when the door opens while I'm inside, won't you, Ken?

CARLA

I will be, that's for sure.

KEN

Is this that one final magic trick you wanted to perform, Steve?

STEVE

Exactly.

KEN

Well, this is one trick that's not going to work. But I have no problem if you want to try.

STEVE
I do want to try, Ken. But let's
make this one interesting.

KEN
What did you have in mind?

STEVE
Let's make a bet. If I can escape
from your secret room, I get this
house, and the land it sits on, of
course.

There is a gasp from the other couples.

KEN
(laughing)
You want me to give you my new
house?

STEVE
Only if I win. But you seem very
certain that I can't escape, so
what's the problem?

KEN
(thinking it over)
Okay. So you want me to bet my
house.

STEVE
And something else.

KEN
And that would be...?

STEVE
(Looking at Carla)
If I win, I also want your wife.

DISSOLVE TO:

2

BLACK SCREEN

2

SUPER: "Two hours earlier"

DISSOLVE TO:

3 INT. FOYER - NIGHT 3

Ken walks down the stairs into the Foyer. He is "dressed to kill," and could easily have been on the cover of GQ with Steve.

He glances at the front door, then at his watch, and walks into the Great Room.

4 INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT 4

The Great Room is aptly named. It is circular, 30 feet in diameter, and a marvel of engineering. It serves as living room, TV room, and study, with high cathedral ceilings peaking in the middle with no visible support, and floor to ceiling sliding glass doors on the entire back wall overlooking the patio and swimming pool.

Ken walks over to the wet bar and inspects it to make sure all is ready.

CHRIS, female caterer/bartender in her early 20s, white blouse, black pants, black cummerbund and bow tie, appears from the opposite direction carrying a tray of hors d'oeuvres.

KEN

Chris, let's put out another bottle of Vodka. I know Mrs. Babcock, George's wife, likes to drink it as well as I.

Chris nods as the doorbell rings.

KEN (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

5 INT. FOYER - NIGHT 5

Ken opens the door and sees GEORGE BABCOCK and his wife, ADRIENNE BABCOCK.

George is late 50s and was a lawyer in the Army's Judge Advocate General's Corps for 20 years before becoming a successful corporate attorney - and still speaks and acts like a Colonel.

Looking very distinguished, he is tall with broad shoulders, wears glasses and carries a cane with a highly polished round brass ball on top, even though he doesn't need it to walk.

Adrienne, early 40s, short and thin, was George's trophy wife about 10 years ago, and is still quite attractive with shoulder-length brunette hair. Both well-dressed.

KEN

George! ... the only lawyer in the whole world Shakespeare would not have wanted to kill. Thanks for coming. And Adrienne, I was just talking about you.

GEORGE

It better have been fucking good, whatever you were saying.

ADRIENNE

I hope you were saying that I need a drink.

Adrienne hands Ken a housewarming gift.

KEN

As a matter of fact--

ADRIENNE

--Is Carla here?

KEN

She should be down in a minute. Come on in to the Great Room and I'll get you that drink.

Ken shows them into the Great Room.

KEN (CONT'D)

(to George as they walk)
By the way, George, great job getting that settlement today. I really appreciate the work you do for me.

KEN

(to both of them)
And thanks for this.

Ken puts the gift on a table.

KEN (CONT'D)
 (to Chris)
 Chris, please get Mrs. Babcock a
 vodka tonic, right Adrienne?

ADRIENNE
 You remembered... how nice.

The doorbell rings again.

KEN
 (to George)
 George, tell Chris what you want
 while I get the door...

7

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

7

Ken opens the door to find BOB STODDARD (mid-50s), nerdy with glasses, and his wife, SUZANNE (also mid-50s), straight-laced with hair in a tight bun. Both well-dressed.

KEN
 Bob ... Suzanne ... come on in.

As they walk past Ken, he sees their new car in the driveway.

KEN (CONT'D)
 Is that a new Mercedes, Bob?

BOB
 Yep. It's the new E-Class 400. Heck
 of a car.

KEN
 Well, obviously, I'm paying my
 accountant far too much if you can
 afford that!

BOB
 No. That's just the price you pay
 for me to keep you out of trouble
 with the IRS.

They all laugh. Suzanne hands Ken their housewarming gift.

KEN
 Thanks. We're starting in the Great
 Room.

Ken shows them the way.

8 INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

8

Ken puts the gift on a table.

KEN
Of course you know George, and his
wife Adrienne.

Everyone shakes hands.

KEN (CONT'D)
(to Bob and Suzanne)
What can I get you to drink?

The doorbell rings again.

KEN (CONT'D)
Chris, would you get the door while
I get our new guests some drinks?

9 INT. FOYER - NIGHT

9

When Chris opens the front door, DR. FRED LAMONT, early 50s,
is standing there with his wife, BARBARA, (also early 50s).
Both well-dressed.

FRED
You're not Carla, or I'm in a time
warp.

CHRIS
No, my name is Chris.

FRED
I'm Dr. Fred Lamont, and this is my
wife, Barbara. You know, you look a
little like Carla ten years ago.

CHRIS
Thank you. Please come in.

Chris shows Fred and Barbara into the Great Room.

10 INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

10

Ken is handing drinks to Bob and Suzanne when Fred and
Barbara enter.

KEN
Ah, Fred and Barbara.

Barbara hands Ken their housewarming gift which Ken puts on the table with the rest of them.

KEN (CONT'D)

I think you might already know everyone ...

(to Fred)

... And I'll bet they're all patients of yours, or will be soon.

(beat)

Tell Chris what you want to drink, and then I invite everyone out to the patio. It's such a beautiful night.

DISSOLVE TO:

11 EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

11

The sky is pitch black, no moon, few visible stars. The patio has an outdoor wet bar and bar-b-q, large pool and hot tub on the next level down, upscale Tiki torches around the perimeter, etc.

All the men (Ken, George, Bob, Fred) are gathered in one group, the women (Adrienne, Suzanne, Barbara) in another, having separate conversations. Background party music plays and Chris offers drinks and hors d'oeuvres.

The doorbell rings again, and both men's and women's groups stop their conversations and turn to look in the direction of the front door.

KEN

(leaving the men's group)

Excuse me, that must be Steve.

He walks to the front door, leaving the other four men looking surprised.

FRED

Steve was invited?

BOB

Why would he invite Steve?

GEORGE

Probably to rub his fucking nose in it.

BOB
That would be like Ken. What I
can't believe is that Steve
accepted the invitation. Surely he
would know--

FRED
(interrupting)
--Maybe it was Carla's idea.

12 INT. FOYER - NIGHT

12

Ken opens the door and Steve walks in, holding a bottle of wine.

KEN
(somewhat sarcastically)
Glad you could make it, Steve.

STEVE
(cordially, but coldly)
Sorry I'm so late, Ken. Had to stop
by and get an appropriate
housewarming gift.

He hands the bottle of wine to Ken.

KEN
(reading the label)
Krug Clos d'Ambonnay Champagne. I
know this label. Very nice, and
very expensive. Thank you.

STEVE
I thought it might go well in your
"very nice and very expensive" new
wine closet, which I'm anxious to
see.

KEN
We're going to take everyone on a
tour of the house just as soon as
Carla joins us.

STEVE
Oh? She's not ready yet?

KEN
She got home late ... won't take
her long.
(taking Steve's arm)
(MORE)

KEN (CONT'D)

Come on in. I'm sure you know everyone.

STEVE

(pulling away)

Actually, I've been driving for a while trying to find that wine, and I need a restroom first.

KEN

Sure. Just down the hall, first door on the left. Come on out to the patio when you're done. I'll make you a drink.

STEVE

Be right there.

Ken heads back to the patio, but we follow Steve down the hall.

He stops at the first door on the left, opens it just a crack, looks around, and then closes the door again quietly and instead goes up the stairs, disappearing through another door.

13

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

13

As the door opens, Carla is facing the mirror, leaning over the sink and putting on makeup. She is dressed in an LBD, very short, almost backless, with a lot of cleavage visible in the mirror. As Steve walks in, she turns abruptly.

CARLA

(surprised and worried)

What are you doing? You can't be in here!

STEVE

(sternly)

Be quiet.

(looking her over carefully)

Perfect! But, like I said, you better not be wearing any panties. Turn around.

When Carla is slow to respond, Steve turns her around roughly and bends her over the sink, pulling up her dress and exposing her bare ass.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Good girl.

He unzips his pants and starts to enter her from behind.

CARLA

Hey, careful. That's my as ...

Steve covers her mouth with one of his hands and keeps pumping away. Carla reaches up and in the mirror we see her pull down the front of her dress and her bra so she can rub her bare breasts on the cold counter top. She starts to moan through his hand, clearly on her way to an orgasm.

STEVE

You love it when it's dangerous,
don't you, Carla?

They both orgasm quickly. When they're done, Carla turns around and kisses Steve passionately on the lips.

CARLA

I love you so much, Steve. You're
so much fun!

STEVE

(smiling)
Put yourself back together.
(He smacks her ass.)
See you on the patio.

14

EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

14

Steve joins the men's group on the patio. Ken hands him a drink as he greets each guest by name.

KEN

We were just discussing the rise
and fall of the Roman Empire--

GEORGE

(interrupting)
--Bullshit. We were talking about
the fact that this new Congress
still can't get anything done.
Nothing's changed. Bunch of
pansies.

BOB

Come on, George. We should all be
grateful that government is so slow
and inefficient. We'd be in real
trouble if it weren't.

FRED

I just don't understand why people put up with this. You'd think by now--

GEORGE

(interrupting)

--Well, don't blame me, Fred. I voted for None of the Above, along with 90 million other Americans, which is a lot more votes than any of the candidates got.

FRED

How did you do that, George?

GEORGE

By not voting at all. As long as they won't put "None of the Above" on the ballot, staying home is the only way.

Carla appears, looking stunning in her LBD, and walks around shaking hands and greeting each guest by name. She ends up at Ken's side, giving him a peck on the cheek.

CARLA

Sorry to take so long, everyone.
(glancing at Steve)
I had an unexpected visitor.

KEN

(amid groans from the men)
Oh, come on, Carla. No one wants to hear about that female stuff.

(in a stage whisper)

But I'm glad you said something so I know what to expect for the next couple of days.

(groans from the women for the sexist remark)

Do you feel up to taking us on a tour of the house?

CARLA

No, this house is your baby, Ken. I think you should do it.

KEN

Well ... whatever ... follow me, people.

Ken leads the group back inside the house and starts the tour.

15 INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

15

KEN
I designed this Great Room based on
the Villa Circuitus, Sweden's first
circular passive house.

DISSOLVE TO:

16 INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

16

The whole group is re-entering the Great Room at the
conclusion of the tour.

KEN
And last, but certainly not least,
is my pride and joy.

Ken points to a blank wall that looks like any other wall.
There is a large, ornate clock hanging on the wall and
nothing else.

KEN (CONT'D)
It was just finished yesterday.

GEORGE
What's so fucking special about
this wall?

KEN
This is no ordinary wall, George.

GEORGE
Sure as hell looks like it.

KEN
That's because I'm trying to
protect what's behind this wall and
don't want anyone to know it's a
special wall.

GEORGE
Well, you've done a great job,
because it looks like any other
goddam wall to me.

He taps it with the brass ball on his walking stick.

KEN
Observe ...

Ken touches three different places on the wall and a small panel moves, exposing a screen and keypad. There's a slight audible gasp from the group.

KEN (CONT'D)

This, my friends, is the latest generation of biometric authentication systems based on palm vein pattern recognition technology.

ADRIENNE

I don't understand.

KEN

Sorry. I get carried away.
(holding up his right hand, pointing at his palm)

This little device checks the unique pattern of veins in a person's palm and only authenticates someone already approved in the system.

BOB

So if someone wants to get into ... whatever's behind the wall--

KEN

--Well, if they are lucky enough to expose the secret panel, not only do they need to input a special pass code, but they also must match the palm reader identification.

SUZANNE

You must really want to keep people out of ... whatever's behind this wall.

KEN

Oh, Suzanne, I do. I do. I mean, not right now, because I haven't put anything in here yet. But that's not the best part.

(He starts to input some numbers on the keypad, then stops.)

Would you all mind turning around for a minute?

(They all do.)

Thanks.

Ken inputs some numbers on the keypad.

KEN (CONT'D)
It's probably not necessary to hide
the pass code from you ...

As Ken finishes inputting the last number, the screen lights up.

KEN (CONT'D)
... since you wouldn't pass the
palm test anyway. But you can never
be too careful.

He puts his palm on the screen, and suddenly a perfectly camouflaged door in the wall opens, startling the group, who all turn around again to see what's happening.

Through the now-open door, the group can see a small room containing a floor-to-ceiling wine rack, some open shelving and what appear to be locked safety deposit drawers of various sizes.

KEN (CONT'D)
Notice that the door is almost
exactly the same as the doors on a
bank vault, with stainless steel
locking rods. You couldn't blast
this thing open if you wanted to.
Now, it's small, so we can't all
fit in the room at one time, but if
there's anyone who wants to join
me.

Ken steps inside the small room and two at a time, the others go in to take a look.

17

INT. SECRET ROOM - NIGHT

17

Barbara and Suzanne have gone in first.

BARBARA
Why on earth ...?

KEN
Let's just say that I have some
valuable things I want to protect.

SUZANNE
Like what?

KEN

Well, Steve just brought us a very nice and very expensive champagne as a housewarming gift, and as soon as we're done tonight, I will make it the first thing I protect by putting it in this room. To christen the room, so to speak.

Barbara and Suzanne leave the secret room and George and Adrienne step inside.

GEORGE

You must have a lot of priceless shit that I don't know about for you to go to all this trouble.

KEN

Well, as you know, my little hedge fund has done pretty well over the last few years, thank you very much. But you haven't seen the best part ... Excuse me.

Ken slides by George and Adrienne who were still looking around the room. As soon as he is out of the room, the door automatically SLAMS shut, trapping George and Adrienne inside.

18

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

18

KEN (CON'T)

(to the remaining group
outside the door)

If a burglar was lucky enough to get past all the security and get inside, there are facial recognition cameras constantly scanning the room, and if they don't see MY face, the door automatically shuts and locks, capturing whomever is inside.

Through an intercom speaker in the exposed security panel, George and Adrienne can be heard banging on the door with his walking stick and yelling.

GEORGE

Let us out of here, goddam you! I'm giving you a direct order to open this door.

KEN
(speaking into the
intercom)
At ease, George. I'm not one of
your lieutenants.

Ken motions to the rest of the group outside to turn around again while he inputs the numbers on the keypad and puts his palm on the screen, The door opens again. George and Adrienne walk out.

GEORGE
(threatening to hit Ken
with his walking stick)
You son of a bitch.

KEN
Come on, George, relax. You were never in any danger. The room is temperature and humidity controlled - for the wine, of course. You could have survived in there for days - if you had any food and water.

STEVE
I assume that once trapped inside, there's no way to get out without someone opening the door from this side. I mean, I noticed there were no windows, no way out except through this door. Correct?

KEN
Absolutely correct. If someone unauthorized is trapped in there, once I've called the police, I can open the door and voila ... they arrest the criminal.

STEVE
And yours is the only palm it will recognize on either side, and the only face it will recognize on the inside?

KEN
Correct. For now. Obviously I will add Carla to the system ... but it's brand new and we haven't had time for that yet.

A bell rings from the direction of the dining room.

CARLA

It's time for dinner, everyone. If you would all follow me.

DISSOLVE TO:

19

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

19

All 9 are seated around a large table. At one end is Ken, with his wife Carla on his right. Next to Carla is Fred and his wife, Barbara. On the other side, Adrienne is on Ken's left with her husband, George. Then Suzanne with her husband, Bob. At the other end of the table, opposite Ken, is Steve.

Everyone has just finished the main course and Chris is clearing the table.

BARBARA

(leaning close and
whispering to her
husband, Fred)

Do you really think Ken makes enough money to need a room like that to protect his ... stuff?

FRED

(leaning back and
whispering)

I don't know ... maybe ... or he's involved in something we don't know about and has something he has to hide.

BARBARA

Or maybe it's just his version of a man toy, instead of a big truck or boat.

FRED

Maybe.

Ken stands up and taps his wine glass with his spoon.

KEN

I just want to thank you all for joining us for this little housewarming. I hope you enjoyed your meal. In addition to having our best friends here to celebrate with us, I thought I would take this opportunity to announce that I have decided to run for the U.S. Senate in next year's election.

Everyone looks surprised, and then realize that they ought to be applauding the announcement, which they do.

KEN (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you. You'll be hearing a lot more about that soon. I'm holding a press conference in two weeks. But next time you come here for dinner, you better bring your checkbooks! Getting elected is ridiculously expensive, and I'll need your help.

A few forced laughs.

KEN (CONT'D)

But now is not the time to talk politics. I'm hoping Steve, as usual, has a new magic trick or two to entertain us while we wait for dessert.

All eyes turn to Steve at the other end of the table. There is genuine applause this time.

SUZANNE

Oh, yes, please.

ADRIENNE

Wonderful!

Steve holds up his hands to show there is nothing up his sleeve. Laughter at the cliché.

STEVE

Okay. Here's what we're going to do. Let's go around the table and everyone say a number between 1 and 20. Who's got a cell phone with a calculator?

Bob takes one out of his pocket and holds it up.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Of course, the accountant would have a calculator.

(Laughter)

So Bob, if you would please, add up all the numbers that everyone is going to give you, and then at the end we'll total it. Let's start with you, Suzanne.

SUZANNE

13.

STEVE
George, you're next. Let's go right
around the table.

GEORGE
9.

ADRIENNE
7.

KEN
18.

CARLA
(smiling at Ken)
18 for me, too.

FRED
3.

BARBARA
12.

STEVE
I won't play so you don't think I
pulled something over on you. So,
Bob, you're the last one.

BOB
Oh, right. 14.

STEVE
So now that makes ...

BOB
94.

STEVE
94. Does everyone agree?

They all nod.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Ken, do you still have that bottle
of champagne nearby I brought as my
gift?

KEN
(reaching for it)
Right here.

STEVE
There's an envelope attached to the
ribbon.

KEN

Right. I just thought that was a housewarming card that goes with the gift.

STEVE

I haven't touched that envelope or the bottle of champagne since I gave it to you when I arrived, correct?

KEN

Correct. As far as I know.

STEVE

And especially not after everyone here started calling out their numbers, correct?

KEN

Correct.

STEVE

Ken, would you please take the envelope off the ribbon, open it, and read us what's written on the card inside in large red numbers.

BOB

You've got to be kidding me.

ADRIENNE

It can't be.

Ken holds up the card for everyone to see.

KEN

94.

Everyone gasps, then starts applauding.

FRED

How in hell did you do that?

ADRIENNE

That's unbelievable!

GEORGE

I don't fucking understand.

SUZANNE

It's not possible.

BARBARA

That's as good as anything David Blaine does. Maybe better.

STEVE

Thank you, Barbara. That's quite a compliment.

BOB

Tell me this, Steve. As Treasurer of the duPont Company, how do you have time to study magic? And "study" isn't really the right word, since you're obviously already very good at it.

STEVE

It's just a hobby ... but I love it.

BARBARA

I think you should do it full-time.

STEVE

(laughing)

Not enough money in it for me, Barbara. And you know how I love money.

Everyone laughs.

CARLA

Do another one for us, Steve.

Applause.

STEVE

Okay, Carla. If you insist. But aren't you missing an earring?

Steve points to his own right ear. Carla checks both ears, and discovers her right earring is missing. She looks at Steve inquisitively.

CARLA

I could have sworn ...

ADRIENNE

I know she had both on when we sat down to dinner, because I was commenting to her how lovely they are.

STEVE

Well, I hope everyone agrees that I have not been anywhere near Carla - (he smiles at Carla) at least since dinner started.

Everyone nods in agreement.

KEN

Steve, those are very expensive earrings. I hope you didn't do anything that you can't un-do.

STEVE

No worries, Ken, as they say *down under*. Take a look in that bottle of champagne I brought you tonight.

Ken looks at the bottle, then holds it up to the light and carefully examines the bottom.

KEN

You're shitting me. That looks like Carla's earring ... *down under*.

He holds the bottle so others can see the earring on the bottom.

GEORGE

You opened the fucking champagne and dropped her earring in the bottle?

STEVE

Now, George, when would I have done that?

GEORGE

I haven't got a goddam clue, but that's the only explanation.

STEVE

Well, if that were the case, the champagne should have no fizz left, would it?

ADRIENNE

That's true.

Others nod in agreement.

STEVE

So, Ken, looks like you need to open the bottle and see if the cork pops, and then take out Carla's earring.

Ken realizes that he's been trapped into opening this expensive bottle of champagne and sharing it with everyone.

KEN

You're right. I have no choice. I wanted to save it until election night, but ...

(passive-aggressively)

... obviously Steve had other plans for it.

(to Chris)

Chris, bring me 9 champagne glasses from the cupboard, please. We all might as well enjoy this fine bottle - that is, if it's still good.

As Chris arrives with the glasses, Ken pops the cork with a loud bang.

FRED

Well I guess that takes care of that theory. That bottle had never been opened.

Ken pours the champagne into the glasses until the bottle is empty. The earring falls out into the last glass.

KEN

(drying off the earring
and handing it to Carla)

My dear, I believe this belongs to you.

Carla holds up the earring so everyone can see it's a perfect match with the other one, and then puts it back in her right ear. Meanwhile Chris has distributed the champagne glasses to the guests.

KEN (CONT'D)

(holding up his glass)

A toast ... To Steve, the world's greatest wannabe magician.

Everyone toasts Steve, and then begin to chat amongst themselves wondering how he did it.

KEN (CONT'D)

(to Chris)

Chris, I think it's time for dessert.

DISSOLVE TO:

Dessert is over and people are still chatting about the magic tricks.

STEVE

(loudly, so that everyone else stops talking and looks at him)

Ken, I wonder if you might permit me one final magic trick.

KEN

(looking somewhat dubious, but then smiling)

The stage is all yours, my friend.

STEVE

You're very proud of your new house, Ken, and well you should be. It's a beautiful house and you've done a great job on it. And I mean that sincerely. I wouldn't mind living here myself.

KEN

Fat chance, Steve, but thank you. You're right. This house is my Mona Lisa.

STEVE

And it seems you are particularly proud of your secret room.

KEN

Yes, I am. I did a lot of research to make it foolproof.

STEVE

Well, then, I hate to tell you that it's not foolproof, Ken. In fact, it's extremely vulnerable.

KEN

I doubt that very much. But what are you saying?

STEVE

I'm saying you could lock me inside that room and I could easily escape within minutes ... maybe an hour, tops.

KEN

(laughs)

No way, Steve. You might like to think you're Houdini, but you're not. Once the door to that room is shut, the only way anyone inside can get out is if someone - and that someone is only me right now - opens the door from the outside. I designed it so there's simply no way to open the door from the inside without the pass code and palm recognition.

STEVE

Then you will be amazed when the door opens while I'm inside, won't you, Ken?

CARLA

I will be, that's for sure.

KEN

Is this that one final magic trick you wanted to perform, Steve?

STEVE

Exactly.

KEN

Well, this is one trick that's not going to work. But I have no problem if you want to try.

STEVE

I do want to try, Ken. But let's make this one interesting.

KEN

What did you have in mind?

STEVE

Let's make a bet. If I can escape from your secret room, I get this house, and the land it sits on, of course.

There is a gasp from the other couples.

KEN

(laughing)

You want me to give you my new house?

STEVE
 Only if I win. But you seem very certain that I can't escape, so what's the problem?

KEN
 (thinking it over)
 Okay. So you want me to bet my house.

STEVE
 And something else.

KEN
 And that would be...?

STEVE
 (Looking at Carla)
 If I win, I also want your wife.

Another gasp from the other couples as they all look at Carla, who seems stunned.

GEORGE
 Now hold on one goddam minute.

SUZANNE
 Carla isn't an object you can treat like a poker chip.

ADRIENNE
 That's not legal, is it George?

FRED
 This is getting ridiculous.

BARBARA
 Excuse me, Steve, but Carla is not chattel.

STEVE
 (holding up his hands)
 Sorry... sorry... I should have said, "I want you to divorce your wife so I can marry her."

The room erupts with astonishment again.

KEN
 (waving his hands at everyone)
 Everybody just calm down.

The blood seems to drain out of CARLA'S face completely. KEN just stands there for a minute not saying anything. Finally...

KEN (CONT'D)
 And what do I get if I win?

STEVE

As chairman of the Delaware Democratic Party, I guarantee your party's nomination for election to the U.S. Senate next year.

(beat)

You'll have to win the general election on your own, but in this state, as you are well aware, winning the Primary is tantamount to winning the general. So I'm basically guaranteeing you'll be the next Senator from Delaware. And you know I have the connections and the clout to back up that guarantee.

KEN

Yes, I do know that.

Ken is clearly considering the bet.

BOB

Ken, you can't be seriously considering this bet.

KEN

I don't know, Bob. It's a given that I will win this bet tonight. Trust me, there's no way for anyone to open that door from the inside other than me. And now I'm being offered a guarantee that I will win next year as well. That's worth considering, don't you think? Might save us a lot of campaign money.

BOB

But what if you don't win tonight? You stand to lose everything you've worked so hard for - including your wife, apparently - and as your accountant, I have to tell you, you can't afford it, on top of the fact that it's downright insane.

GEORGE

And as your lawyer, I'm telling you the risk is too high. You'd be a fool to take this bet. Just remember, you could win the Senate seat next year anyway, without Steve's guarantee. Why take this chance?

Kan pauses.

CARLA
(offended)
Ken, are you out of your fucking
mind?

KEN
Carla, there is simply no chance I
could lose this bet, and I would
never risk our marriage on
something that wasn't guaranteed to
win.

Carla gets up and storms off, giving Steve an angry stare as
she goes.

KEN (CONT'D)
Carla?

STEVE
If I win, you give me this property
and you divorce your wife. Or if
you win, I give you the U.S. Senate
nomination. That's the bet, Ken.

KEN
(suddenly suspicious)
You're still pissed Carla chose me
and not you, aren't you?
(beat)
What makes you think Carla would
want you after we're divorced? Is
there something going on between
you two?

STEVE
Maybe she won't want me. We'll have
to wait and see, won't we?

Ken sits down in his chair, looking thoughtful.

SUZANNE
I don't believe this is actually
happening.

BOB
I think they're both nuts.

BARBARA
This was supposed to be a simple
housewarming party!

ADRIENNE

Where's Chris? I need another drink.

STEVE

Well, Ken, what's it going to be?

GEORGE

Ken, you pay me as your lawyer to give you good advice. I'm telling you, do not do this. Swallow your pride. Walk away from this bet.

BOB

Think about this, Ken. If you lose, not only do you lose this house, but you'll have to divorce Carla, who will get half of everything that's left - which basically will be your hedge fund.

Ken sits and stares at Steve for a minute.

KEN

It's hard to pass up a sure thing.

(beat)

Okay, Steve. I'm all in. You've got yourself a bet. But I'm already holding the nut flush.

STEVE

(laughing)

Which means I have to flop a full house on the river. Ask George to put this in writing, and everyone here will need to sign as witnesses.

KEN

George...

GEORGE

Very big mistake, Ken. I should refuse.

KEN

Well, then I'd have to fire you and find new legal counsel for me and my firm.

GEORGE

(giving in)

Give me some paper and a pen...

As George writes up the bet, Ken and Steve have a staring contest while others express their disagreement and dismay.

ADRIENNE

Chris, where's that drink. And make it a double.

BOB

What a circus this turned out to be.

BARBARA

Are they both drunk?

FRED

This can't possibly turn out well.

GEORGE

All right. There you go.

He slides the paper across the table to Ken.

STEVE

(without breaking eye contact with Ken)

Ken, please read it...

Ken picks up the paper and starts to read.

KEN

I, Ken Durant, and I, Steve Miller, agree to the following wager, as attested to by the witnesses below. I, Steve Miller, agree to be locked in a special room designed by Ken Durant, and then escape from that room within sixty minutes. If successful, Ken Durant will deed over to me his house and land, and divorce his wife, Carla. If unsuccessful, I guarantee to get Ken Durant elected as the Democratic candidate to the U.S. Senate in the next Primary election. This wager is legal and binding on both parties.

(stops reading)

And then there are places for you and me to sign, and the others to witness.

STEVE

Sounds good to me.

(looking at George)

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

But I want one more clause that says, "This agreement may not be amended or declared invalid for any reason."

George looks at Ken, who nods his approval.

STEVE (CONT'D)

And I didn't realize there would be a time limit.

GEORGE

You said yourself "an hour, tops" a few minutes ago.

STEVE

(pausing)

Okay, I'm fine with that. Just add the additional clause.

Ken passes the paper back to George who adds the additional clause.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(to George)

Good. Send it down to me. I'll sign it now.

The paper is passed down the table to Steve, who signs it and sends it back to Ken, who also signs it. Then it is passed around the table and the other guests, one by one, sign their names as witnesses.

FRED

Who am I to judge? If this is the kind of game you two want to play, I won't stand in your way.

Fred signs.

BARBARA

I think both of you have lost touch with reality. You both ought to be ashamed of yourselves. But...

Barbara signs, then passes it across the table to Bob.

BOB

I feel like I'm signing my own pink slip. Well, it was great while it lasted.

Bob signs.

SUZANNE

You two never cease to amaze me,
how stupid you can be for being two
very successful businessmen. Next
thing you know, one of you will be
running for President.

After Suzanne signs, the paper goes to George. Adrienne
elbows George and gives him a dirty look.

GEORGE

What? My partners would kill me if
I lost this account. And you'd have
to cut back on your visits to the
mall.

George signs.

ADRIENNE

(obviously a little drunk
by now)

I don't care what anyone else
thinks, I'm not signing. Both of
you can go to hell. I don't want
any part of this. By the way, did
anyone consider Carla in all this?
And where's Chris?

She passes the paper back to Ken without signing.

KEN

It's okay, Adrienne. George, I
think you should hold on to this.
I'll count on you making sure it
gets enforced.

Ken passes the paper back to George.

KEN (CONT'D)

So, Steve, are you ready?

STEVE

Let's go...

KEN

(to Chris, who has just
brought Adrienne another
drink)

Chris, we'll have our after-dinner
drinks in the Great Room...

(to the group)

Shall we?...

He motions in the direction of the Great Room.

21

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

21

The group is walking into the Great Room. Adrienne and George are the last two, with Adrienne holding on to George for support walking. Her speech is a little slurred.

ADRIENNE

(whispering to George)

What's with Steve and this house?

GEORGE

Steve grew up in a mansion across the road. He was told that it had been built by the famous magician, Harry Blackstone. No one's sure if that's true, but it's what got Steve interested in magic. That mansion is now a school, and he always wanted this piece of land to build his own house - thinks Ken intentionally stole it out from under him.

ADRIENNE

Well, did he?

GEORGE

Knowing Ken the way I do? Absolutely. That rivalry has been going on since high school.

ADRIENNE

And what about Steve and Carla?

GEORGE

(shrugs)

Who knows?

They all stop in front of the wall where they know the invisible door is located. Ken touches the wall in 3 different places and the panel opens revealing the key pad and palm reading screen.

KEN

Okay, people. You know the drill,
Turn around.

The group all turn away as Ken inputs the pass code on the keypad and then puts his palm on the screen. They turn back around as the secret door opens.

KEN (CONT'D)
 (to Steve)
 Let me go in first so it recognizes
 my face.

Ken goes in and then invites Steve to join him.

22

INT. SECRET ROOM - NIGHT

22

KEN (CON'T)
 (pointing to a panel on
 the interior wall)
 We can talk back and forth through
 this intercom, so whenever you're
 ready to give up, just say so and
 I'll open the door for you.

STEVE
 Does David Blaine ever surrender
 during one of his stunts?

KEN
 I honestly don't know. But I know
 you will. You'll have to, or the
 clock will run out. Doesn't matter
 to me which comes first. I still
 win.

STEVE
 See you soon...

23

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

23

KEN
 (walking out the secret
 door)
 What time is it?
 (looking at his watch)
 Okay. 9:15. The clock has started,
 Steve. You've got an hour.

The door closes and locks behind him.

KEN (CONT'D)
 Everyone make themselves
 comfortable. Chris, let's have
 those after dinner drinks now.

Ken raises his voice just a bit and aims it toward the secret
 door.

KEN (CONT'D)
Steve, can you hear me?

STEVE
(through the intercom)
Loud and clear, Ken. So I don't
have to push any button to talk?

KEN
No. It's all sound activated. How
are you doing?

STEVE
(through the intercom)
I'm fine, thanks. Very nice room
you built. No cell phone reception,
though.

KEN
The walls are lined with lead. Hope
you weren't counting on using your
cell phone for your escape.

STEVE
(through the intercom)
No, nothing like that. Just thought
I'd check the score of the Eagles
game while I had the time. They're
on Sunday Night Football
tonight....

The clock on the Great Room wall says 9:16.

DISSOLVE TO:

24

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

24

Everyone is sitting around in silence. The clock on the wall
says 9:31.

STEVE
(through the intercom)
Ken...

Everyone sits up, startled.

KEN
Yes, Steve. Do you surrender?

STEVE
Not a chance. Can I talk to Fred?
Privately?

KEN
Well, okay, if you must.
(to Fred)
Fred, the volume control on the
intercom is on the far right side
of the panel.

Fred walks over to the panel on the wall.

FRED
I'm here, Steve.

STEVE
(whispering)
Fred, could you turn the volume
down so only you can hear me? And
then whisper so no one else can
hear you? Is that possible?

FRED
(whispering)
Well, I think so. We can try it.

Fred finds the volume knob and turns it down. They both
whisper into the intercom from now on.

FRED (CONT'D)
Say something, Steve.

STEVE
Can you hear me?

FRED
Yes.

STEVE
And are you sure no one else can
hear you or me?

FRED
(looking around at the
group behind him)
As far as I can tell.... what's
going on?

STEVE
I'm having some pretty strong pains
in my chest, and I'm starting to
sweat, even though I know the room
is not hot. It's also hard to catch
my breath.

FRED
Any pain down your left arm?

STEVE

No.

FRED

Any dizziness?

STEVE

No.

FRED

Remember what I told you last month when you came to see me? You're a heart attack just waiting to happen. Let's just hope this is nothing more than indigestion from dinner, or maybe a small panic attack.

STEVE

I don't have panic attacks, Fred.

FRED

Well, I wouldn't rule it out under the present circumstances. I'll check with you again in a few minutes and see how you're doing.

STEVE

Okay. Thanks. And Fred, don't mention this to anyone, please. Doctor-patient privilege and all that.

FRED

If that's what you want...

STEVE

It's what I want. Thanks.

Fred turns the volume up on the intercom and returns to his seat.

KEN

What was all that about?

FRED

Nothing, really.

KEN

Fred, it couldn't have been nothing. What did he want?

FRED

Look, Ken, I'm not just your doctor. I'm Steve's doctor as well. So I'm bound by doctor-patient confidentiality, not to mention HIPAA, from discussing anything with anyone about Steve. Funny thing is, technically I just violated HIPAA by even telling you Steve is my patient. So let's end the questions there, please.

KEN

(throwing up his hands)
Okay. Okay.

BARBARA

(leaning over toward Fred)
But is Steve okay, Fred?

FRED

I meant no more questions from anyone, dear. Please...

Everyone resumes their silent vigil. Fred looks at the clock on the wall, which says 9:34.

DISSOLVE TO:

25

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

25

The clock on the wall says 9:47. There is an undercurrent of polite conversation going on in the group. Adrienne is officially drunk and has passed out in her chair.

BARBARA

George, is Adrienne okay?

GEORGE

She'll be fine. Just let her sleep.

Fred gets up and walks to the intercom, turning down the volume again.

FRED

(whispering)
Steve, are you there?

STEVE

(whispering back)
Yes, I'm here, but I'm not doing so well.

FRED
What's happening?

STEVE
My chest feels very tight, and I almost feel like I'm suffocating. I get twinges of pain down my left arm now, and I'm a little dizzy.

FRED
Any pain in your lower jaw?

STEVE
Well, now that you mention it, yes. But I can't tell you the exact location.

FRED
Move your jaw around. Does that make the pain any worse?

STEVE
(after a few seconds)
No. The pain is the same.

FRED
Steve, chances are pretty good you're having a heart attack. We need to get you to a hospital.

STEVE
No way, Fred. I'm not losing this bet.

FRED
Steve, this is now a matter of life and death. It won't do you any good to win if you're not alive to enjoy it.

STEVE
I think you were right the first time. It's just a panic attack, or maybe indigestion.

FRED
No, Steve. The symptoms - especially that thing with your jaw - say it's a heart attack.

STEVE

Okay, Fred. Give me a few more minutes and see if this passes before we do anything, or say anything to anyone.

FRED

I'll check back in 15 minutes, and if nothing's changed, I want your agreement to surrender and get you to a hospital.

STEVE

All right. I agree.

FRED

Fifteen minutes, Steve.

Fred turns up the volume knob again and retakes his seat.

KEN

Fred?

FRED

Same answer as before, Ken.

BARBARA

Oh, this has gotten ridiculous. I wish I hadn't signed that stupid paper.

The clock on the wall says 9:49.

DISSOLVE TO:

26

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

26

Fred checks the clock on the wall again which says 10:02. Suddenly through the intercom everyone hears a loud thud, like something heavy dropping on the floor. Fred jumps up and goes back to the intercom.

FRED

Steve?

Silence.

FRED (CONT'D)

Steve, can you hear me?

Silence. Fred turns the volume all the way up.

FRED (CONT'D)
(louder)
Steve? Talk to me!

No response.

FRED (CONT'D)
(loud enough for everyone
in the room to hear)
Steve, are you alright?

BARBARA
Fred, what's going on?

FRED
(turning to face the whole
room)
Steve is having a heart attack.

GEORGE
What the hell?

SUZANNE
Is he all right?

FRED
His symptoms started about a half-
hour ago, but he told me I couldn't
tell anyone. Now he's not
responding at all. We need to get
him to a hospital fast. Open the
door, Ken, so I can do CPR.

KEN
Hold on just a minute, Fred.
Steve's not having a heart attack.
This is just a trick to get me to
open the door so he will win our
bet. Steve's fine.

FRED
Steve is not fine. Again, although
I'm not supposed to tell you, he
has a history of heart disease, and
I've been expecting him to have a
heart attack any day. Now open this
door so I can try to save him.

BARBARA
Open the door, Ken.

BOB
For Christ's sake, Ken. Don't be a
complete asshole. Open the door.

FRED
Someone call 9-1-1, quickly.

GEORGE
I've already done it. An ambulance
and the police are on their way.

KEN
The police? What for?

GEORGE
Because if you don't open that
door, and Steve dies, you're in
deep shit, Ken. And I'm not going
to be able to save your ass this
time, with all these witnesses.
Besides, I have to cover my own ass
and not be an accomplice.

FRED
He may already be dead, for all we
know.
(to Ken)
So open the goddam door.

KEN
He's really got all of you fooled,
doesn't he? This is a typical Steve
trick, but you're all falling for
it. He can't escape the room
himself, so he needs me to open the
door for him. But if I do that,
he's going to walk out healthy as
can be, and I will have lost my
house - and my wife. There's no way
I'm opening that door.

Carla walks into the Great Room.

CARLA
What's all the commotion about?

SUZANNE
Steve has had a heart attack in...
that room...
(pointing to the blank
wall)
... and Ken won't open the door to
let Fred in to try to save him.

CARLA

Why not?

(She walks over and gets
into Ken's face.)

Ken?

KEN

He's just faking a heart attack,
Carla, so I'll open the door and
lose the bet.

CARLA

You two actually made that bet?

Livid, Carla SLAPS Ken hard in the face.

CARLA (CONT'D)

Well, just so you know, no matter
how the bet turns out, I'm
divorcing you. And if it turns out
that Steve is hurt somehow, I'll
never forgive you.

Carla goes over to the intercom and starts yelling "Steve"
into it. When there's no answer, she goes crying out of the
Great Room. Suzanne follows her. Fred takes over Carla's
place at the intercom trying to get Steve to answer. Barbara
is at his side.

GEORGE

And I doubt Carla will be visiting
you in prison either, asshole.

KEN

Prison? For what?

GEORGE

In the state of Delaware, it's a
mandatory minimum 25-year prison
sentence for 2nd degree murder,
which this would be.

KEN

Now, hold on just a minute. I'm not
murdering anyone.

GEORGE

Oh, yes, Ken. Yes, you sure as shit
are.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I've defended a number of these cases, so I know the law book definition of 2nd degree murder in this state by heart, and you qualify to the letter by "recklessly causing Steve's death under circumstances which manifest a cruel, wicked and depraved indifference to human life."

KEN

But I'm telling you there's nothing wrong with Steve. You'll see. It's just another of his tricks.

BOB

Wait a minute! Ken, you've got cameras inside that room. Turn them on and let's see what's going on inside.

KEN

They're facial recognition cameras. They don't produce video. I never thought about needing to use them to ... anyway, we can't see anything with them. And I'll bet Steve knew that while he was planning this whole thing.

BOB

Look, Ken, Carla says she's going to divorce you anyway. So you'll probably lose the house to her no matter what. Plus half of everything else. So why not give up, open the door, and let's pray Steve IS only faking and is still alive, and you don't also go to jail for murder.

GEORGE

Ken, why won't you just open the goddam door?

KEN

Because I'm telling you there's nothing wrong with Steve. It's just a trick ...

(beat)

... and a very good one, I must admit.

The doorbell rings.

KEN (CONT'D)

Chris, see who that is, and tell them "not now."

(He looks at his watch,
which says 10:05, then
looks back at George)

You'll see. In about 10 minutes, Steve will walk out of that door with no problem. But I will have won the bet. This is all a gigantic lie.

Chris returns with two policemen following, OFFICER KELLEY and OFFICER JOHNSON.

OFFICER KELLEY

Mr. Durant. I'm Officer Kelley, and this is Officer Johnson.

(They hold out their hands
for Ken to shake.)

We've met before. Nice to see you again, sir. What seems to be the problem?

GEORGE

I am Mr. Durant's lawyer, and I will answer your questions for him--

FRED

--I'll tell you what the problem is. There's a man trapped inside a secret room ... right there ...

(pointing at the wall)

... and he's most likely having a heart attack and needs medical attention *immediately*. But Ken here is the only one who can open the door, and he refuses to do so because of some idiotic bet the two of them made.

Officers Kelley and Johnson go over to the wall and start inspecting it, looking for a door.

OFFICER KELLEY

Is that true, sir?

KEN

Yes, it's true that--

GEORGE

(interrupting)

--Ken, I'm telling you to keep quiet and let me do the talking.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I don't think you understand how serious this is.

KEN

It's okay, George. I've got this.

George throws up his hands, walks away and plops down in a chair.

KEN (CONT'D)

Yes, Officer Kelley. It's true that there is a man behind that wall who's pretending to have a heart attack so I will open the door and he will win our bet. Steve's a very good magician, and this is only a trick.

(looking at his watch)

In just a few minutes the bet will be over, and I will have won, and I'll open the door and we'll see that Steve is not having a heart attack after all.

OFFICER KELLEY

But do you know that for sure, Mr. Durant? I mean, are you positive he's not having a heart attack--

FRED

(interrupting)

--Look, I'm Steve's doctor, and it is VERY possible he's having a heart attack - highly likely based on the symptoms he's telling me.

OFFICER KELLEY

So you can talk to him?

FRED

Well, not any more because he won't answer. It sounded through the intercom like he collapsed on the floor. He may actually be dead already, but if we stop wasting time and let me get to him, we might save his life.

OFFICER KELLEY

Mr. Durant, I ask you again... how can you be so sure this man... what's his name?

KEN
Steve Miller.

OFFICER KELLEY
How can you be so sure that Mr.
Miller is not having a heart attack
and needs help?

KEN
(looking at his watch
again)
Officer Kelley, everyone knows what
the symptoms of a heart attack are,
or if they don't, they can look it
up online. Steve is just telling
Fred what Fred needs to hear to
convince him he's having a heart
attack. And in just another 5
minutes or so I'll prove it to you.

FRED
Officer, we might not have another
5 minutes or so. Make him open the
door now.

The doorbell rings.

GEORGE
That should be the paramedics. Bob,
go let them in.

OFFICER KELLEY
(looking around)
Is there no one else who can open
this door?

FRED
No. It's got this high-tech palm
reader... thing...

OFFICER KELLEY
Then Mr. Durant, I order you to
open that door now.

KEN
(looking at his watch
again)
And if I refuse?

OFFICER KELLEY
Well, for starters, I will charge
you with criminal obstruction of
justice for interfering with a
police investigation.

GEORGE

Well, there goes your political career - not many known felons get elected to the Senate these days.

OFFICER KELLEY

But that's just for starters. If this man is dead, or if he dies later in the hospital, you'll be charged under Title 11, Section 635, second degree murder for recklessly causing this man's death under circumstances--

KEN

(interrupting)

--I've already been told what 2nd degree murder is, thank you very much.

OFFICER KELLEY

Then open the door.... NOW!

The clock on the wall says 10:09. Bob returns with the paramedics pulling an ambulance stretcher.

KEN

Just a couple more minutes...

OFFICER KELLEY

I said NOW!

KEN

You'll see.

(waving his arms around
the room)

You all will see. Steve is fine. This is just a trick to get my house, and my wife.

OFFICER KELLEY

You bet your house and your wife?! Are you nuts? Anyway, OPEN THE DOOR NOW! And that's my last warning before I book you for obstruction of justice.

Ken doesn't move. He just looks at his watch and shakes his head.

KEN

(bewildered, to no one in
particular)

What the fuck is happening?

NOTE: This screenplay is written specifically for a production company (such as Netflix) who is experimenting with letting the viewer choose his/her own ending remotely. This screenplay has SIX (6) different endings for the viewer to choose from, depending on when they want Ken to open the door (now, or wait 5 minutes until he's won the bet), and what condition Steve will be in whenever Ken opens the door (dead from a heart attack, alive but having a heart attack, or faking the heart attack). The SIX DIFFERENT ENDINGS all START HERE. The script that follows is only one (1) of those possible endings....

OFFICER KELLEY

That's it. You're under arrest for--

KEN

(interrupting)

--All right. Stop. I'll open the door.

(under his breath)

Shit. Couldn't wait just 5 more minutes.

Ken goes over to the panel and starts inputting the pass code. He stops and looks around, about to ask everyone to turn around.

KEN (CONT'D)

Oh, hell ... what's the use now?

He finishes inputting the pass code with everyone watching. As he puts his palm on the screen, he says to the policeman.

KEN (CONT'D)

You understand that you lost this bet for me, that you cost me my house.

GEORGE

(getting up from his chair)

And your wife ... don't forget your fucking wife.

KEN

(dismissively)

She doesn't count. She said she was going to divorce me either way.

As the door opens, the policemen and George and Fred and Barbara all crowd around to see what's happened on the other side.

KEN (CONT'D)
 Now, are you all happy? Here's
 Steve, as healthy as he can ...

Steve is standing on the other side of the door, smiling.

KEN (CONT'D)
 ... be.
 (now angry)
 See, I told you so.

Barbara screams.

GEORGE
 Mother ... fucker.

FRED
 Oh, my god. Steve?

Steve steps through the door into the Great Room with no sign of a heart attack.

STEVE
 I'm fine, Fred. You were right,
 Ken. I was faking the heart attack
 to get you to open the door. And it
 worked. I won the bet. This house
 is mine now!

KEN
 You asshole! I knew it!

Ken goes and slumps into a chair next to Adrienne, who is still passed out. Steve follows Ken and stands above him.

STEVE
 Ken, if you had just waited another
 5 minutes ... if you just had the
 guts to follow your own convictions
 ... I'm sure glad I don't have to
 guarantee you a U.S. Senate seat.
 The last thing we need is another
 spineless senator who can't
 maintain his own integrity.

Carla and Suzanne come running in and go straight to Barbara.

CARLA
 (to Barbara)
 What's wrong? We heard you scream.

BARBARA
 (pointing to Steve)
 He's fine. No heart attack.

CARLA
 (looking at Steve)
 I don't understand.

STEVE
 I needed Ken to open the door so I
 could win the bet, so I faked the
 heart attack.

Carla starts SLAPPING Steve in the face and beating him on
 the chest.

CARLA
 You son of a bitch. You had us all
 worried sick. I hate you! I hate
 you! I hate you for pulling this
 stunt, and for involving me in this
 bet.

Steve tries to protect himself while George and Bob pull
 Carla off of him. She collapses on the floor in tears.
 Suzanne picks her up and puts her on a sofa and tries to
 console her.

GEORGE
 (angrily)
 What Carla said is how we all feel,
 Steve.

George takes his walking stick and pokes Steve in the chest
 rather hard several times.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 That was a really shitty thing to
 do, and you're a fucking bastard
 who ought to be shot.

OFFICER KELLEY
 Wait just a minute, here. Everybody
 calm down. Nobody's going to shoot
 anybody. Not while I'm here.
 (pointing to Steve and
 asking Fred)
 This is the man you say was having
 a heart attack in that room?

FRED
 Yes, Officer, it is.

OFFICER KELLEY
 And now he says he was just faking
 it?

(beat)
 (MORE)

OFFICER KELLEY (CONT'D)

Just exactly what kind of a prank
are you all trying to pull ... and
is it on me?

(looking around for a
camera)

Am I on TV or something? Am I being
Punk'd?

GEORGE

No, Officer, there's no camera.
These two men ...

(pointing to Ken and
Steve)

... made a bet that this one ...

(pointing to Steve)

... could escape from this special
locked room that that one ...

(pointing to Ken slumped
in the chair)

... had just built that supposedly
no one could get out of. This one

...

(pointing to Steve)

... apparently faked a heart attack
trying to get that one ...

(pointing to Ken)

... to open the door and let him
out before the time ran out.

OFFICER KELLEY

Are you all crazy? Is this what
rich people do, fuck with each
other like this for entertainment?
Well, you just cost the taxpayers
of this state a lot of money,
bringing me out here, and the
paramedics as well. Someone is
going to have to pay for this.

STEVE

(smiling)

I'll be happy to pay, Officer
Kelley. It was so worth it.

PARAMEDIC #1

Excuse me. It looks like you don't
need us. Can we go?

OFFICER KELLEY

Yeh, sure. Thanks for coming.

The paramedics leave, loudly rolling the stretcher in front
of them.

Adrienne wakes up in her chair where she has been passed out. She sits up and shakes her head.

ADRIENNE
What's going on?

Barbara comes over to Adrienne.

ADRIENNE (CONT'D)
I had the strangest dream. I dreamed Ken and Steve made this really stupid bet--

BARBARA
(interrupting)
--It's okay, Adrienne. Why don't you go back to sleep.

ADRIENNE
Oh, okay.

Barbara lays Adrienne back down in her chair as Adrienne passes out again.

OFFICER KELLEY
(to Steve)
Now let me get this straight. You were locked in that room on a bet that you could get out?

STEVE
Correct.

OFFICER KELLEY
So you faked having a heart attack to get him ...
(pointing to Ken)
... to open the door?

STEVE
That's right.

OFFICER KELLEY
But you didn't really have a heart attack?

STEVE
No.

OFFICER KELLEY
(with due respect)
Sounds pretty clever to me.

STEVE

Well, it was clever because it worked. But I was counting on Ken to fold when you put the pressure on him.

OFFICER KELLEY

So you're saying I was part of your plan?

STEVE

Oh, yes. A very important part.

OFFICER KELLEY

And just how did you know I'd go along with this plan of yours?

STEVE

I know a lot about you, Officer Kelley.

OFFICER KELLEY

(staring at Steve, then shaking his head)

I wish I could think of something to charge you with ...

(waving his hands around the room)

... all of you ...

(looking at Steve)

... but especially you, because this whole thing is - I'm not even sure what to call it ... unnatural, maybe.

KEN

(getting up from his chair)

I need a drink. Where's Chris?

Ken leaves the room, yelling "CHRIS!"

SUZANNE

Well, I agree that it's "unnatural." But it also feels ...

(searching for the right word)

... evil.

(She shudders)

And I want to get out of here. In fact, I think we should all leave. Bob, let's go.

Bob and Suzanne start to leave.

GEORGE

Before anyone leaves, I just want to check something with all the witnesses. Does everyone agree that Steve won the bet?

FRED

Technically he got out of the room in time, and that's all the wager said he had to do. It didn't say how he had to do it. I'm not sure he played fair, and I don't like the fact that he used me in his twisted game. But yes, Steve won the bet. He gets the house, and Ken has to divorce Carla.

The others nod and voice their agreement.

GEORGE

Okay, then. That's what happened.

Bob and Suzanne once again start to leave when Bob stops and turns around.

BOB

George, do you need help with Adrienne?

GEORGE

Hell no. I've got her. This has been happening a lot lately.

George goes and picks Adrienne up from the chair, heads to the front door and follows Bob and Suzanne out. Barbara and Fred walk over to Carla on the sofa.

BARBARA

Carla, are you alright? Do you want me to stay with you for a while?

CARLA

No, thanks, Barbara. I'll be fine. It's just a shock. The last hour has been hell. I don't understand how it all happened, and so fast.

(screams)

I'm so angry at both of them!

Carla starts crying again.

FRED

Do you need something to help you sleep?

Carla shakes her head, No.

BARBARA
I think we should stay, at least
for a little while.

CARLA
No, I'm all right. Thanks anyway.

FRED
Then we'll be going. We'll check in
on you tomorrow.

Fred takes Barbara's arm, who reluctantly agrees to leave.
Now it's just Steve and Carla and the two policemen in the
Great Room.

OFFICER KELLEY
Well, I guess I'm done here, too.
(to Steve)
But I will be sending you a bill on
behalf of the State of Delaware.
And you're lucky I'm not hauling
you off to jail.

STEVE
(handing him a card)
Send the bill here, please, Officer
Kelley.

OFFICER KELLEY
(reading the card)
Treasurer of the duPont Company?
Oh? One of *them*. Fine. Whatever.
(He turns to leave and
then turns back)
I think you all have too much money
and too much time on your hands.
Good night.

He motions to his partner and the policemen leave.

STEVE
(to Carla)
So it's just you and me, babe ...
alone again.

Steve looks around the room, surveying his new house.

STEVE (CONT'D)
We are going to be so happy here,
my dear, sweet, hot, sexy Carla.
(beat)
I'll fix us a drink.

Steve walks toward the wet bar. Carla gets up and walks over to Steve and SLAPS him hard - again.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Hey, stop hitting me!

CARLA
(livid)
You asshole! I don't want to marry you! I didn't want to divorce Ken. I liked it just the way it was. We had it so good. It was perfect. But then you had to go and ruin everything, didn't you, with that stupid bet. What the hell were you thinking? And with what? Definitely not the head on your shoulders.

Ken appears back in the room and walks over toward Steve, obviously pissed.

KEN
(to Carla)
Carla, get out of the way.

Carla looks at Ken, frightened with the look in his eyes. But she obeys and steps aside.

KEN (CONT'D)
(to Steve)
You son of a bitch. You took everything from me tonight - my house, my wife, my dignity ... my life!

Ken raises a gun he is holding in his hand and points it at Steve.

CARLA
(hysterical)
No, Ken! Don't!

BANG! Ken shoots Steve point blank in the chest. Steve falls to the floor. Carla screams. Ken drops the gun on the floor, turns, and starts to walk away. Carla quickly lunges and picks up the gun and BANG! shoots Ken in the back, who falls over dead on the floor.

CARLA (CONT'D)
(screaming at Ken's body)
I told you not to let him get hurt!

Then BANG! She shoots again, putting a second bullet into Ken's body. Then Steve moans and moves a little. Carla turns and BANG! shoots Steve again.

CARLA (CONT'D)
 (screaming at Steve's
 body)
 And you asshole! I am not some
 trophy you can bet with!

She turns and BANG! shoots Ken again, with a crazed look in her eyes.

CARLA (CONT'D)
 (beginning to sob, clearly
 having a breakdown)
 Goddam you!

Then she turns and BANG! shoots Steve again.

CARLA (CONT'D)
 And you, too!

At which point, the gun is out of ammo and just clicks as she obsessively tries to shoot both of them one more time.

Officer Kelley and Officer Johnson appear cautiously with guns drawn.

OFFICER KELLEY
 Drop the gun, Mrs. Durant. You're
 out of bullets. Just drop the gun
 and put your hands up over your
 head where we can see them.

Sobbing, Carla drops the gun to the floor and puts her arms up. Officer Johnson forcefully pulls Carla's arms down and handcuffs her.

OFFICER KELLEY (CONT'D)
 Mrs. Durant, you're under arrest
 for the murders of both these men.

OFFICER JOHNSON
 You have the right to remain
 silent; anything you do or say can
 and may be used against you in a
 court of law. You have the right
 ...

DISSOLVE TO:

27

BLACK SCREEN

27

SUPER: "EIGHT MONTHS LATER"

Sounds of a gavel banging on a table.

MALE (V.O.)

Carla Durant, you have been found guilty by a jury of your peers for the murders of Ken Durant and Steve Miller in the first degree. The laws of the State of Delaware carry a mandatory sentence for these crimes of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

Gavel bangs again.

DISSOLVE TO:

28

INT. PRISON VISITATION ROOM - DAY

28

Carla is being led into the prison visitation room by a guard who is directing her to a table in the corner.

SUPER: "ONE MONTH LATER"

When she sees who is sitting at the table, she almost faints, and the guard has to catch her and hold her up.

GUARD

Are you okay?

Carla doesn't answer. She simply stares at the visitor. The guard seats her at the table and cuffs her to the table, but never looks at the visitor. We can now see that it's Steve sitting across from her.

STEVE

Hello, Carla.

CARLA

But ... you're dead?!

STEVE

Sshhh. Keep your voice down.

CARLA

But I killed you?! Well, Ken and I together, we killed you.

STEVE

Do I look dead to you?

CARLA

(still unbelieving)

No. But I saw you, lying there on the floor. Ken shot you once in the chest and I shot you twice more.

STEVE

I never let a little thing like a few bullets keep me down.

CARLA

But I'm in this place because I murdered you.

STEVE

And don't forget about Ken. You murdered him, too. But that was not part of my plan.

CARLA

What plan?

STEVE

No one was supposed to be killed. I was supposed to win the bet. Then you would get a divorce, get a nice alimony from Ken along with half his company, and come live with me in that beautiful house. And maybe eventually we'd get married.

CARLA

You put me through hell that night. At first, when you were in that damned locked room, I thought you were dead, thought I had lost you. I was devastated. After all we had meant to each other, I didn't deserve that kind of treatment. And I hated you for that!

STEVE

Oh, Carla. My sweet naive Carla. No one deserves what they get in life. Bad things happen to so-called "good" people, and good things happen to so-called "bad" people all the time. Your religions have taught you a lie, that "good" behavior will bring you "good" rewards in life ... and afterwards.

CARLA
(confused)
What are you talking about?

STEVE (CON'T)
In this game, no one chooses their experiences. All you can do is choose how you want to react to the experiences you're given. In poker terms, you have no control over the cards you're dealt, only how you want to play them. That's all that matters. Ken's choice got him shot - by you. Your choices landed you in here. Right now, you can decide to have a happy and meaningful life here in prison, if you want to.

CARLA
(defiantly banging her fist on the table)
No! You had no right to do what you did to me, or to Ken for that matter.

STEVE
Oh, that's where you're wrong, Carla. I had full and unequivocal permission.

CARLA
From who?

STEVE
Do you mean, from "whom"?

CARLA
Fuck you. You know what I mean.

STEVE
From the Big Boss himself.
(when Carla looks puzzled)
Apparently, sweet Carla, you don't know your Holy Bible very well. It's all in there, if you care to read it. And you've got plenty of time for that now.
(beat)
But let's not get hung up on all that stuff. Let's just enjoy what time we have left together.

Steve looks around and sees the juice bar against the wall of the visitation room.

STEVE (CONT'D)
They wouldn't let me bring
champagne in here, so we'll have to
settle for some apple juice. I'll
be right back.

Steve goes to the juice bar and pours two glasses of apple juice. He brings them back to the table, sits down again and starts to hand one to Carla, then looks at the bottom of the glass.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Well, at least this time your
earring is not in the bottom of the
glass.
(beat)
A Toast. To Life.

CARLA
(looking around dazed and
confused)
Guard! Guard! Come see. He's alive!
I didn't kill him! Look!

Carla turns to point to Steve at the table, but there is no one there. She looks around the visitation room, but it's empty. She finally see a business card on the table, picks it up and reads:

INSERT: "THE BOOK OF JOB: Chapter 1".

FADE OUT.

THE END