90 Degrees South

SEASON FOUR

EPISODE SEVEN: Between Honor & Power, The Law Burns Darkly

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by

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**SONG AND INTRO**

**ACT I**

ANNOUNCER

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**C-SPAN OPEN MUSIC. THE MUSIC FADES OUT AND WE’RE AT A CORRISPONDANCE’S DESK.**

 CHAD

Today is April 24th, 2023, and I’m Chad Underwood for G-Span. This is day two of the 118th Congress hearings on the nominations of United States Marshals submitted by President Campbell. At nine AM, Eastern, the chair of the judiciary committee, Senator Victor Hawkes is scheduled to call Supervisory Deputy Marshal Bass Marlow to the stand.

This is a most interesting day for a number of reasons! The nominee, Deputy Marlow is the same member of the US Marshals who cracked the now infamous Chinese Dream wax drug pipeline operation. The same case which saw charges being filed against 73 individuals in 14 different countries and intercepted 2.4 billion dollars in illicit designer drugs.

It will also mark the first time a nominee attends these hearings via videoconference. Deputy Marlow is stationed at the Amundsen-Scott Research station, located at the South Pole. Due to the current winter season, all transport in or out is not possible until November of this year.

Due to this unavoidable situation, and thanks to Beauregard-Lowing corporation, additional sky-bridge satellites have been deployed to allow for high speed, uninterrupted video communication.

Finally, this hearing has been one of THE most talked about events in the past month and has been constantly trending on social media. The nomination of this nation’s number one law enforcement agent, who is mostly known by his nickname, the Ice Sheriff! Today’s hearings is expected to bring in an impressive twenty million viewers: a record for any single program on G-Span.

In an unusual turn of events, of the 12 nominations made by the President of US Marshal, only one was listed as requiring direct testimony from the nominee by the Judiciary committee, Bass Marlow. This has only intensified the public’s interest and has a large majority of America, tuning in.

**MICS IN CHAMBERS FADE UP AND WE HEAR CAMERAS CLICKING, LOW CROWD MURMUR AND BACKGROUND NOISE**

As you can see, Committee Chair Hawkes and the others have entered the chamber. An impressive showing with 15 of the full 22 member committee. Deputy Marshal Marlow is on a television display before the court and as expected, the gallery is standing room only. Let’s move now to the senator who is opening the hearing.

**GAVEL BANG THREE TIMES.**

 SEN HAWKES

Committee will now come to order. Good morning everybody. Before this hearing formally starts, I want to remind everybody present this is not an Eagles game or other sporting event. This is the people’s house and place created to uphold our laws and traditions. It is a place of integrity and honor. All those within will take this to heart and conduct themselves accordingly.

Alright. This morning, we have scheduled…

**SHUFFLE OF PAPERS.**

Ah yes, Nomination from President Campbell of Supervisory Deputy US Marshal Bass Marlow to US Marshal and establishing the 95th Marshal’s district on the continent of Antarctica. That’s a cold task!

**POLITE LAUGHS FROM THE GALLERY**

Now I understand That Deputy Marlow is presently on-station and snowed in or some such, that correct? I assume this is him here on the…on the Zenith?

 BASS

Yes Senator. Supervisory US Deputy Marshal Bass Wyatt Marlow sir.

 SEN HAWKES

Uh huh. Uh huh. Alright well let’s get you all sworn in and at least do that part proper. Please rise young man. Right hand in the air.

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you will give before this Committee on the Judiciary of the United States Senate will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help

you God?

 BASS

I do so affirm.

 SEN HAWKES

Thank you and you may be seated. Okay, for the record you were nominated by the President to serve as a US Marshal in anticipation of the 95th Federal district being passed by Congress this year. [TO HIMSELF AND FOR THE CAMERA] Mister President always puts the cart before the horse doesn’t he? Classic Bruce!

**POLITE LAUGHS FROM THE GALLERY**

Nominated and appearing before this committee is

Deputy Bass Wyatt Marlow. Twenty five years of service with the US Marshals.

Captured over 500 federal fugitives, including multiple Top 15 Most Wanted individuals.

Personally, led the successful recovery of high-profile missing witnesses in two separate WITSEC breach cases.

Operated in classified joint operations with the FBI, DEA, and DHS, tracking international fugitives.

Played a pivotal role in dismantling a major human trafficking ring, earning recognition from INTERPOL. Negotiated the surrender of a heavily armed fugitive after a 12-hour hostage standoff, saving four hostages. Was appointed as the head a cross departmental classified joint operation which led to the interception and destruction of the Dreamwork pipeline, removing 2.4 billion in drugs from US streets.

**TWO BEAT**

Well hell son, not sure if I’m supposed to salute you or try to get you to marry my granddaughter!

**POLITE LAUGHS FROM THE GALLERY**

You’ve received the Director’s Honorary Award, Distinguished Service Award, Meritorious Service Medal, Purple Heart Commendation, two times, Fugitive Task Force Award three times

WITSEC Distinguished Service Citation & the Special Operations Group (SOG) Citation

You received the ATF Medal of Valor – For confronting an armed suspect during a joint federal operation. The Presidential Unit Citation – For involvement in a multi-agency counterterrorism takedown. Also, the Congressional Badge of Bravery – For acts of heroism beyond the call of duty.

Quite an impressive service record Mister Marlow, quite the service record.

**TAPS THE PAPERS ON HIS DESK TO STRAIGHTEN THEM AND PUTS THEM DOWN. POURING A GLASS OF WATER.**

So. Do you believe yourself worthy of the honor you were nominated for by the President?

 BASS

Senator, I am a very modest man. I will not bore anybody with my opinion of myself. I will simply let my record and accomplishments speak for themselves; and defer to the wisdom of my elders and those more learned than I, to determine my worth.

**HAPPY MURMUR FROM THE GALLERY.**

**BANGS THE GAVEL**

 SEN HAWKES

 [STERN, SERIOUS]

ORDER!

**GALLERY SHUSHES**

 SEN HAWKES

 [STERN, SERIOUS]

I assure you Mister Marlow we intend to do exactly that. I know most people think we all just sit here and, rubber-stamp nominations that come across our desk. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is a reason we have extensive background checks conducted, and investigations made. A procedure we will put on full display in this hearing.

Frankly, there are a few items in your background we’d like to get clarity upon, before we render any decision on the nomination and possible advancement to the Senate for final vote. [PAUSE FOR EFFECT] You okay with that son?

 BASS

 [STOIC]

Senator, I’m happy to provide any clarity or answers this committee may ask of me.

SEN HAWKES

 [STERN, SERIOUS]

Very well then. Let me lay out the mechanics of how this will work today. There will be one round of questions. Each senator will have 20 minutes, which is twice as long as we normally allocate for questions, given the importance of this hearing. Please remain within your allotted time.

Now, to the matter of the nomination of Bass Marlow to the position of US Marshal District 95; does anybody seek recognition to speak on Mister Marlow’s nomination.

 SEN TILLIS

 Mister Chairman!

 SEN HAWKES

 Ranking member, Senator Tillis.

**ACT II**

 SEN TILLIS (GOOD GUY)

Thank you Mister Chairman. First I want to thank Supervisory Deputy Marlow for being with us here today, even though it must be via video call. I also want to thank the Deputy for his over two decades of service with the United States Marshals and helping to not only locate and arrest some of the vilest offenders that walk our streets; but for the protection he and the brave people of the Marshal Service provide to federal officials, including members of this very committee.

I’d also be remiss in my duties if I didn’t point out that asking this Deputy Marshal to testify before this committee regarding his nomination is an embarrassment mister chairman. Given his lengthy service record and the litany of awards and commendations he has received; a listing I will point out, DWARFS every other nominee presented before this committee, simply bogles my mind.

I know I cannot speak for everybody on this committee, but I must apologize for you in having to endure this ordeal and I only have one question for you…uh…uh at this time. Deputy Marlow, if your nomination goes through and you are appointed for a four year term; do you intend to continue to perform to the same level of service you have this past twenty-four?

 BASS

Um, Ranking member Tillis, I thank you for your words and your compliments. I will, disagree that testifying here, today in these chambers is an embarrassment. While I appreciate the intent and sincerity of the apology, it is my duty not only as a Deputy Marshal, not only as an employee of United States government; but as an American to appear and ensure whatever questions you and your constituents may have of me are answered.

All law enforcement officials depend upon the trust of the citizenry. Personally, I feel we in this profession, don’t always take this to heart. So, any chance I am given to help earn that trust for my profession, I will do so. To answer your question on my deliveries as a US Marshal, if appointed…my answer would be no Senator. If appointed I will be expected to work even harder than before, and this I will do.

**HAPPY MURMUR FROM THE GALLERY.**

**BANGS THE GAVEL**

 SEN HAWKES

 [STERN, SERIOUS]

I already cautioned the gallery once! Trust me people when I say there won’t be a third time!

**GALLERY SHUSHES**

Does the ranking member yield the remainder of his allotted time?

SEN TILLIS

Mister chairman I yield the remainder of my allotted time.

SEN HAWKES

 Senator Winston.

 SEN WINSTON

Thank you mister chairman. Thank you Mister Marlow for being here today. I’d like to ask you about an incident I read about last week. I’m referring to Your time on the Pacific Southwest Regional Fugitive Task Force. The shooting of Kaleo Makana.

Deputy Marshal, please recount how you and the strike-team learned of Mister Makana’s presence in the city of Eugene, Oregon July of 2013?

 BASS

Happy to do so Senator. My team and I received information from a source that Mister Kaleo Makana; wanted for failure to appear warrants and pending murder and assault charges was in the area we were conducting our fugitive retrieval operations. The source was able to provide a specific where he was staying.

SEN WINSTON

Who was this source?

 BASS

It was a confidential informant of one of the other US Marshals based in the Eugene area. His name was Pierson if I recall correctly.

 SEN WINSTON

This ‘Pierson’ was a reliable informant?

 BASS

Senator, I was not directly connected to him; but from what the Deputy Marshal who was told me; the intel he provided was usually reliable.

 SEN WINSTON

‘Usually’; not ‘Always’?

 BASS

Senator, I had no reason to doubt my fellow Deputy Marshal who was familiar with the informant and if he said the information could be trusted, it was good enough to me to act upon.

SEN WINSTON

This criminal informant of yours…I’m sorry, I do apologize…you testified he wasn’t your, criminal informant but your fellow Deputy Marshal’s. What did you decided to do with this 2nd hand account from a person whose title included the word “Criminal”?

**MUMUR FROM THE GALLERY**

 SEN BUXTON

Mister Chairman, I object to Senator Winston’s tone and move that this question be stricken from the record.

 SEN HAWKES

Rephrase the question Senator Winston.

 SEN WINSTON

Happily, Mister Chairman. Deputy Marlow. With the information provided by the Criminal informant, how did you and the team choose to use it?

 BASS

Senator, we reported the information to the operational commander and a decision was made to consider it, actionable. We were granted permission to conduct a surveillance operation of the address we were provided.

 SEN WINSTON

Information from…the aforementioned CRIMINAL informant.

 BASS

Yes senator, that is correct.

 SEN WINSTON

So, you conducted surveillance on the home you were told he be, I believe in, the vernacular it’s called a stakeout, and did you locate him?

 BASS

Senator, we did identify him in the course of the surveillance operation.

**PAPER FLIP**

 SEN WINSTON

Right, I did forget a question I had. What, did the criminal informant receive for this information he gave to your group? What was the Quid to his quo?

 BASS

Senator, I believe he had pending charges he was facing. A misdemeanor charge of being in receipt of stolen goods, a nonviolent criminal offense.

 SEN WINSTON

 [SMUGLY]

Okay, okay I got a better picture now. So, you see your suspect, and you have a warrant for his arrest?

 BASS
Yes senator we did. Several.

 SEN WINSTON

So, you charged him and put him in custody.

 BASS

No senator. By the time we established positive identification on Mr. Makana; he was just entering a third party’s home. While it was a known drug pad, we had to warrant to enter those premises and per Steagald v. United States (1981), an arrest warrant alone does not allow police to enter a third-party’s home. So, we called back to the office and asked a federal magistrate who was on standby to issue such a warrant.

SEN WINSTON

You received the warrant and then went in.

 BASS

 [UNEASY]

No Senator. As we were awaiting the approved and signed warrant to be delivered. The team and I witnessed a car stop in front of the house. Two male subjects came out and were bringing a young female with than and against her will. She fought the two males and much as she could screaming ‘no’, ‘let me go’ and did not appear to be going willingly with them.

 SEN WINSTON

Because she was yelling at them. That is what you based the assumption upon that she wasn’t a willing participant?

 BASS

Yes Senator. For that reason and due to the fact they kept assaulting her about the head and face, also, one of them produced a handgun and pistol-whipped her with it. The same individual told her to be quiet, or she’d regret it, in not exactly those words.

After seeing this take place and the two entering the house with the woman, we agreed we had sufficient evidence for an exigent search.

 SEN WINSTON

And for the gallery participants if you’d please an Exigent search is…

 BASS

When circumstances, such as if officers perceive imminent threat to life or property, um..a risk of evidence being destroyed or if a suspect being chanced runs into a home. In those instance’s and if we believe another reasonable office would also find it urgent to act; we can enter a residence or place without a warrant.

SEN WINSTON

My allotted time is running short here Deputy, so let me summarize events coming from the report you filed. You and the team called the assault in, entered the house. Shot an armed individual immediately upon entering. A shootout with barricaded suspects commenced, including the one you were originally there for. When the dust settled every occupant of that house, including the woman you saw being forced inside was dead. Only the US Marshal team was standing.

Deputy, when did the warrant you requested; the one before you saw the woman being taken inside; finally arrive?

 BASS

02:40 hours, Senator.

 SEN WINSTON

And remind us, at what time did your team enter the residence?

 BASS

Senator, it was 02:35 hours.

 SEN WINSTON

Five minutes?!?! Five minutes to have a proper warrant, perhaps an additional local city officer or two for backup? Don’t you believe the circumstances could have been different if a modicum of caution being displayed.

 BASS

Senator, with respect; nobody can know what could have been with accuracy. It may have still gone the exact same way, or it could have been worse and Marshals could have also been killed. There is no way for me to predict the future.

 SEN WINSTON

Well sadly we won’t ever know and Yulanda Perkins who was there against her will and was shot in the crossfire will also never know.

Thank you Mister Chairman, my time is up.

**SHIFTING WITHIN THE GALLERY**

SEN HAWKES

Senator Kelsey, you’re up.

**BEGIN FADE OUT**

SEN KELSEY

Thank you Mister Chairman, thank you Ranking member Tillis. Deputy Marshal, was the account we just heard fully investigated by multiple agencies and wasn’t the full Marshal team found not to be at fault?

 BASS
That is correct Senator.

 SEN KELSEY

Very good. Moving on now to your fugitive apprehension of Declan O’Sullivan; A.K.A. the Omagh Leprechaun on June 2011 in Cincinnati, Ohio?

**ACT III:**

**FADE IN MID TESTOMONY. BASS HAS BEEN GRILLED ON THE INFAMOUS CINCINNATI CASE WHERE HE AND JOYCLYN FIRST MET.**

 BASS

….Took him into custody that same evening. Murphy’s Pub in Clifton Heights section of Cincinnati.

 SEN KELSEY

 [A HINT OF CUROSITY]

I have to ask Deputy. Why was he called “the Leprechaun”?

 BASS
Senator, Mister O’Sullivan; in addition to being a member of the Real I.R.A. and being the number one wanted fugitive of the Police Service of Northern Ireland for his involvement in the 1998 Omagh bombing, stands at five foot three inches tall. He was given the name by the media after his description was made public.

He despised it and would often get into fights when somebody made a reference to his height, which given his thick brough, was often inevitable.

 SEN KELSEY

 [AMMUSED]

I see. Thank you for explaining Deputy. Please continue the events after his arrest.

 BASS

O’Sullivan wasn’t difficult to detain as he was very intoxicated. We were more concerned with the local college kids who were unhappy with us extracting what they had come to see as the Pub’s drunken fixture.

We had secured him and drove back to police station number 2 by the Ohio river, on the Kentucky/Ohio state line. He refused to speak to anybody until he could meet with the Consulate General’s office of Ireland.

 SEN KELSEY

In Cincinnati?

 BASS

Senator, we believed it to be nothing more than a delay tactic ourselves. Mr. O’Sullivan was wanted in Ireland, England, Whales, France, Spain and also managed to have a Red Notice on him from INTERPOL. The Marshals were there to serve a provisional US arrest warrant for extradition based on the U.K. court warrant he had.

After his processing, we placed Mr. O’Sullivan into protective custody and isolation in a Federal safe house nearby. It was the evening after his arrest that he was…removed from US Marshal protective custody.

 SEN KELESY

Your report reads…

PAPER FLIP

…One second…[READING FROM REPORT] ‘*Mister O’Sullivan was handcuffed to a bed where he was sleeping when the electricity to the house was interrupted. A concussion distraction device was thrown into the room next door where four Marshals were sitting. It discharged and entry was made from an unknown team who extracted and removed the Leprechaun from our custody. In the initial moments of entry, shots were fired from the Marshals at the door into the house. Retire fire was experienced and in process I was shot in the left outer thigh, momentarily incapacitating me.’*

 SEN KELESY

So, Mister O’Sullivan was freed by this team?

 BASS

Senator, it is correct that he was freed, but we later learned was that the entry team as we suspected…[EMBARRASED] was in fact a lone operator.

 SEN KELESY

 [CONFUSED]

I’m sorry…let me just…ok, so a single man located a federal safe house, protected and cloaked from general public knowledge. They located the room the fugitive was in. Temporarily rendered ineffective five United States Deputy Marshals, shooting you in the process and successfully made it out with the fugitive?

 BASS

 [EMBARRASED]

Senator [CLEAR THROAT] it wasn’t a male. It was a female.

**MUMUR FROM GALLARY**

 SEN KELESY

 [AMUSED]

 You …and your team were beat up, by a girl?

 BASS

Senator, it would be more accurate to say myself and the team were bested, by a highly trained *woman* who was working with British MI-6 as well as the US Defense Intelligence Agency who had the element of surprise and potentially inside information at her disposal.

 SEN KELESY

So then…you were sucker-punched by a girl..FORGIVE ME…a woman? This …Agent Joyclyn Folwer?

 BASS

I would not describe it in those exact words, Senator, but yes Agent Folwer was responsible and later managed to get O’Sullivan out of the country and to London.

 SEN KELESY

Well. Thank you Deputy Marshal, for the enlightenment. Mister Chairman I yield the rest of my allotted time, thank you.

 SEN HAWKES

Alright, it’s now 12:45 and I don’t know about the rest of you, but I need a palette cleanser after everything we’ve absorbed this morning. This committee will suspend for Lunch; two hours and reconvene at 2:45 to continuing with the interview of the Nominee.

**GAVEL BANG**

Committee is in recess.

**GALLREY MUMURS A BIT AS PEOPLE FILE OUT AND CAMERAS BEGIN CLICKING AWAY WITH PICTURES BEING TAKEN.**

CHAD

The chair of the judiciary committee, Senator Victor Hawkes has issued a two hour pause of proceedings to allow for a meal break. Here we see the committee members exiting chambers along with the feed of the Nominee being suspended.

To recap the mornings proceedings, Deputy Marshal Marlow was questioned on his qualifications and history with the Marshal’s office and in relation to his nomination to become the first US marshal of Antarctica, what would be the 95th federal district of the United States.

The questioning was extremely confrontational and was held to party lines as had been expected by analysist ……..

**ACT IV**

**FADE IN. MORNING AT THE STATION AND 7:30 AM. THE MORNING BREAKFAST IS IN FULL SWING AT THE STATION AND WE’RE AT THE USUAL TABLE OF THE GOOD GUYS.**

KENDRA

…even for a moment that they would be able to pull away at this point. I mean it would look really bad on them!

 ZEKE

Yeah, I’m not sure either, Lawman. Tell us what whatshername said again?

 BASS

Ms. Kirkland said the press secretary and the president’s advisors were watching the proceedings and nobody was happy. They said my remaining calm and collected against the pointed questions was making me look weak and unapologetic. They said I wasn’t following the script they’d given me.

 ZEKE

Well, that’s just bullshit. Sorry Kendra. Sorry Lord, I know I only got one more today. If anything, it sounded like you were being cool & the gang and not lettin’ em get to ya! Wouldn’t take the bait!

 KENDRA
Exactly my point! From what I saw they wanted to rattle your cage. They’re looking for any crack in your armor to exploit. Did you see that one Senator, Karlson sweating when he didn’t get a rise from you.

 BASS
Yes sweetheart, I saw. I was there.

 KENDRA
You know what I mean, Bass!

 ZEKE

If anything…and I can’t believe the words bout to come out my mouth….but Franklin’s legal advice on answering seems to be keeping them guessing.

 BASS
Yeah. I think it was after about an hour in it occurred to me that…’script’ from the chief of staff’s team would have led me into three of four verbal traps, had I used them. [SIGH] There is no lingering doubt in my mind any longer. The president’s ordered me to be set up to lose.

 ZEKE

 [STRANING]

FRACK HIM!

**SILENCE FROM BASS AND KENDRA**

 ZEKE

Only have one swear left and preacher said there ain’t no roll-over points on promises to the lord. Should have read the fine print.

 KENDRA

If my opinion counts for anything…

 BASS

It counts for everything. You too Zeke!

 KENDRA

Then I think you should go back in there and keep doing what you’re doing. Use the strategy Franklin gave you. I mean…okay…this is how I see it…you use the prepared notes and directions the White House gave you and you’re sure to slip into quicksand. As you try to get out, they’ll push you deeper and deeper. Or…stay off their scripts.

Stay with Franklin’s coaching and keep them off-guard. Their way and you’ll lose 100%. Our way, and you still have a fighting chance. As much as he’s been trying with media influencing and his Office of Citizen Morale; he’s not winning many point with the public, and this. . .is very much the court of public opinion you have going for you.

 ZEKE

And THAT is where you thrive baby-boy! The public LOVES you! You they boy and every news report leading up to this has been nothing but excitement and positive. These Senators know this and want to get that public against you. All it gonna take is one outburst from you, and like Doc Jennings says…they got their in! Don’t fall for that Shhhhhh, stuff.

**HEALS CLICKING TO THE TABLE**

 BASS

[SIGH] I got about an hour before I have to get back there. Just enough time to get me…

**BASS SUDDENLY STANDS**

 LLA

 [MAD, BUT IN A HAPPY LLA WAY]

Oh hey there, Marshal! I went ahead and got your favorite breakfast all set up soon as I seen ya walk in, don’tcha know. Now, I know I’m supposed to be nice to everybody, but I don’t mind tellin’ ya—after what I just seen on the TV while I was settin’ up my kitchen, oh boy, I’m about ready to give those leader-type folks a real piece of my mind, you betcha! Darn-tootin’, yes sirree-bob!

**PLATE IS SAT DOWN ON THE TABLE**

 BASS

Thank you Ms. Alice. And thank you for the support.

LLA

Oh don’t think nothing of it dear. Please go ahead and sit down now. Alright Zeke, Kendra, now what I can get you kids for breakfast? And don’t you go worrying none if it ain’t on the menu this morning. I’ll whip up anything you two want! Have to make sure his cheering squad is just as fed as our Marshal here!

 KENDRA

You’re the best Ms. Alice. I’m not feeling the best this morning. Stomach is queasy. Probably from getting up at 3AM to watch Bass’ hearing. Just juice and toast for me please.

 LLA

Uh huh, that’s grilled Cheese and tomato soup you always order when you get anxious or need to get ta feelin better. Hrm, you are lookin’ a bit flush over there. I got you sweetheart! I’ll also bring hot ginger tea for your tummy.

What about for you our new leader, Mister Bustamante?

 ZEKE

Honestly Ms. Alice, I could go for some grits and shrimp!

 LLA

Oh I got you too dear. Two Rubin sandwiches with extra Russian dressing and the spiciest barbeque chips I have back in special storage. Vanilla milkshake with extra sprinkles. I’ll get these up to ya both in a jiff!

**[HEELS CLICKING AWAY]**

 ZEKE

Anybody else find it weird when she knows what we really need even if’n we don’t?

 BASS

Chalk it up to just one more Mystery on the ice. *[LOOKS AT ZEKE WITH AMUSEMENT]* Extra sprinkles?

 ZEKE

 [EMBARASSED]

Yeah…that’s how grandma-ma B used to always do it. She’d put on extra sprinkles anytime one her grandkids just got a whuppin or got a skinned knee from playing outside. DON’T YOU GO THROWING SHADE AT MY SPRINKLES BASS MARLOW! Give you a good Ass-whupping before you go back into…Aw DANG IT! Used up my last one, and on your …Dumb…rear end. [POUT] Gonna be off my game the whole rest of the day. Thanks Lawman!

 KENDRA
 [REIGNING THEM BACK IN]

Gentlemen, maybe we should focus more on the problems at hand.

 BASS
I don’t know. I have a fantastic breakfast, my favorite sitting in front of me. I have the woman I love helping me out and my best friend who I got to slip for my own amusement. I have to say, I’m feeling a lot better already.

**BASS TAKES A FEW BITES**

 ZEKE

Whatever man. My own…dang fault. Shoulda been paying better attention!

 KENDRA

You have this sweetie. All you need to do is to keep levelheaded, don’t give them an inch, and just be yourself.

 BASS
Not sure I know how to be anybody else exactly.

 KENDRA
Did…did Sally really say the president may have to distance himself from you?

 BASS

In not so many words, yes. Yes she did.

 KENDRA
 [MAD]

What a…a …two-face. All this time she said she was going to be there to help.

 BASS

She was there to help, I just don’t believe any longer that it was me she was helping.

 ZEKE

Well, I know it ain’t nothing you believe in, but I’ll pray for you before you go back in there. Don’t want you thinking only the evil version of the afterlife has your back!

 BASS

I appreciate that Sprinkles. I’ll take whatever help I can get right now.

**FADE OUT**

**ACT V**

**FADE IN, SESSION BACK AND THE GRILLING CONTINUES.**

 SEN NEWCOMB

…..I’m not seeing anything else on the Dream Wax operation or the resulting arrests. Made yourself very popular that day Deputy Marshal. I want to go back now to the original investigation that brought you to the South Pole station.

This says you made an initial arrest in that murder, but that individual was later released.

So then Josh Nichols wasn’t the original suspect you had arrested for the murder of Doctor Mark Rodney?

 BASS

No Senator. That was a gentleman named David Brewster, who we later establish had been framed by Mister Nichols when he placed the murder weapon in a crate Mister Brewster last inspected.

 SEN NEWCOMB

According to this…David Brewster is 79 years old! It was your opinion as the Marshal of note that this elderly gentleman was able to overpower and kill somebody almost 50 years young than him and 100 pounds heavier?

 BASS

Evidence and forensics showed Doctor Rodney had been bludgeoned from behind, presumably he was not aware anybody was there and was instantly knocked out. Stuck in the proper location on the head and with sufficient enough force and an object of heft…I assure you it is possible.

 SEN NEWCOMB

And even after his defense counsel proved he physically couldn’t have been the one who tried to murder you after you began the investigation of Doctor Rodney’s murder, that still wasn’t enough?

 BASS
Senator, I did have to admit that after review, while I was confident he wasn’t the one who threw the chemical soaked rag into my room in the attempt on my life, it didn’t necessarily also mean he was innocent of the Rodney murder; although I will admit at that time I began having serious doubts.

 SEN NEWCOMB

So when the arrest of the proper suspect was made, of Josh Nichols; it was with the proper evidence.

 BASS

Yes Senator. He was caught accessing restricted data and attempting to send it to the Chinese embassy in Wellington, New Zealand. We set a trap which we knew the guilty culprit would act upon. Mister Nichols was apprehended after starting an upload of data as well as having a concealed weapon which was the same in design and construction as the murder weapon used on Doctor Rodney.

SEN NEWCOMB

So the search, the trap and the arrest were all authorized with the proper paperwork.

BASS

Authorized by my superiors yes Senator. However, because Amundsen Scott is a federally funded complex, the laptops used federally owned and the sleeping berths federally provided; there was no requirement to secure or require a search or arrest warrant.

SEN NEWCOMB

Well, I supposed we should be happy that one worked out in your favor this time. So, he was arrested, and you were escorting him back to McMurdo station to be handed over to US Marshals who’d take him back to the US for formal sentencing, but your plane crashed en route. The NTSB here say it was a mechanical failure, the uh..the bottles that assist in take-off didn’t eject and fell into an engine mid-flight?

 BASS
Yes Senator, that was what I was told as well; however later investigations of mine showed deliberate sabotage to ensure the drugs that had been stowed on our plane were not able to make it to America.

 SEN NEWCOMB

Ah yes, Sabotage by this employee from the Department of Energy, Chaz Wilford who you shot during a hostage standoff and is in a coma.

**MUMUR FROM GALLARY**

Back to the plane crash, in your report it says the plane broke in two, and the survivors set to creating a rescue plan. Did that include the murder suspect Josh Nichols as well?

 BASS

Uh; Senator. Before, during and after the crash Josh Nichols was handcuffed and restrained due to the threat that he caused. After learning the emergency handheld radio was damaged, and with Mister Nichols being the only one of us who could repair it, I impressed upon him the need to work with us and to achieve the rescue.

 SEN NEWCOMB

So, you shot him in the arm?!?!

BASS

No Senator, I grazed him in the arm to limit the back and forth and secure his corporation as our fuel supplies to burn wood and stay alive were…

SEN NEWCOMB

I’m sorry, I’m sorry I’m having trouble understanding what I’m reading….ok, so the plane crashed?

BASS

Yes Senator, that is correct.

 SEN NEWCOMB

Everybody survived the wreck, only you sustained any injury.

BASS

Yes Senator, that is correct.

SEN NEWCOMB

After the crash Mister Nichols was handcuffed and had shackles on?

BASS

Yes Senator, that is correct.

SEN NEWCOMB

And you needed his help to repair the emergency radio to affect a rescue?

BASS

Yes Senator, that is correct.

SEN NEWCOMB

So, to encourage his help, you shot an unarmed, handcuffed suspect in the arm?

 BASS

No Senator, that is not entirely accurate. I continue to stand by my official submitted report which states I winged him to ensure time, energy and heat, which we had limited amounts of weren’t wasted on [PAUSE] what I assumed would be his mind games in reaching some agreement. I had four other lives to think about.

SEN NEWCOMB

You shot him in the arm…I’m sorry, you pointed your agency issued firearm at him and …NICKED his arm to enlist his assistance?

BASS

Yes Senator, that is correct. During a High-Risk Tactical Operation, Marshals on fugitive task forces, witness protection, or special ops may discharge weapons in scenarios where threats are present but not yet life-threatening. I determined this to be just such a scenario.

 SENATOR NEWCOMB

Later he attacked you and he escaped; wherein you pursued him to the ends of a cliff face, estimated to be 700 feet to the ground below and he jumped rather than face re-arrest?

 BASS

That is how events took place, yes Senator.

 SENATOR NEWCOMB

He jumped in little cold weather protective clothing, no food, no gear, in the middle of the winter season, -90 degrees off a mountain.

 BASS
Yes Senator, that too is correct.

SENATOR NEWCOMB

[CONFUSED]

And he disappeared until he was seen 9 months later attending the Nobel Award Ceremony on national television?

**MUMUR FROM GALLARY**

 BASS

Yes Senator, I am not able to explain how that occurred.

 SENATOR NEWCOMB

So, we’re being asked to vote on a nominee who shot an unarmed man, in handcuffs, in custody, who then ESCAPED; not once, but twice and beyond all possible odds. . .was wearing an Armani tuxedo in Stockholm almost a year later. [SCOFFS] Mister Chairman, my time is almost expired so I will go ahead and yield….oh, sorry Deputy Marshal…what happened to the drugs that had been stowed on the plane you were on and crashed?

 BASS

 [KNOWS HE’S BEING SET UP]

PAUSE…Senator….a few months after the crash, the NTSB accompanied by agents with the DEA and FBI arrived on scene and discovered there had been a recovery operation by individuals unknown.

**A DOOR OPENS BEHIND THE SENATORS AND A STAFF RUSHES IN, HANDING SEN HAWKES A WRITTEN MESSAGE**

 SEN NEWCOMB

 [SMUGLY]

Uh-huh. Thank you for enlightening us all, Deputy Marshal Marlow. Mister Chairman, now I formally yield my remaining time.

**MUMUR FROM GALLARY. A PIECE OF PAPER IS UNFOLDED AND THREE BEAT.**

 **GAVEL BANGING**

 SEN HAWKES

 THERE WILL BE ORDER IN THESE CHAMBERS!

 **MUMUR DIES DOWN**

SEN HAWKES

Alright, here’s what’s going to happen. I’ve just been given information which was provided to this committee and pertains to these proceedings.

I believe it requires comment from the nominee in this session, however…as we will need time to review this information. As well, several members on this committee have conflicting meetings they must attend.

Now, not only do I want to discuss this information with you Deputy Marshal, and because we still have final closing remarks and proper adjournment to go through. I am issuing a continuation of these proceedings for nine A.m. Tomorrow morning. Members of this committee are expected to clear their calendars to make this a priority.

Mister Marlow, we are in adjournment until tomorrow, at which time you’ll be called back to the stand to help us understand troubling information brought to light on your wife’s passing, the investigation afterwards and support from the Marshal’s service since then. After which we will be more than ready to vote upon the nomination and advance to the senate.

This meeting adjourned until 9AM tomorrow.

**GAVEL BANG AND MURMUR STARTS BACK UP.**

**FADE OUT**

**ACT VI**

**FADE IN. WE’RE IN FRANKLIN’S ROOM. KENDRA, FRANKLIN AND BASS ARE GOING OVER EVENTS.**

BASS

 [EXTREMELY WORRIED]

…was no secret that I was suffering afterwards and I’m sure there was no shortage of rumors flying around that I was only there due to being Chuck’s son-in-law. None of that ever bothered me and it still doesn’t; but I have to believe they KNOW!

 KENDRA

But, you said how you were dealing with your wife’s…with Diane and the baby’s death wasn’t known to anybody other than Chuck and Fionna?

 BASS

As far as I know there wasn’t anybody else aware. Hell, most of those twenty years I wasn’t aware due to my….somebody must have found out. Regardless of if it was five or fifteen or last week…somebody knows!

 FRANKLIN

[DEMON]

You’re positive nobody the Senator’s staff would have interviewed about your past would have been aware of your prolonged grief disorder or dissociative coping?

 BASS

 [FRUSTRATED]

No! I can’t be positive of anything anymore! Fionna is the only living person I’m sure would have been aware and she wouldn’t have said anything under ANY circumstances.

 KENDRA

 [TRY TO CALM HIM]

Okay. Let’s take a breath here. Just because…just because they want to talk about Diane and the investigation, doesn’t necessarily….

 BASS

 [SNAPS]

OH, WAKE UP ALREADY! THEY KNOW AND I’M ABOUT TO LOSE IT ALL.

**FIVE BEAT.**

 KENDRA

 [REMAINING CALM]

Bass, we can fix this, and we’ll face it together, all of us. But please don’t snap at people who are trying to help you! Especially me.

 BASS

 [INSTA-REGRET]

You’re right. You’re right Kendra. I’m sorry about that. I’m sorry for jumping down your throat. [SIGH] Sorry Franklin.

 FRANKLIN

 [DEMON, MOSTLY TO HIMSELF IN CONFUSION]

None of this is adding up. It, it isn’t supposed to be happening this way.

 KENDRA
What do you mean Franklin?

 FRANKLIN

 [DEMON]

Hrm? [REALIZES HE WAS TALKING ALOUD, COVERS] Oh sorry. I meant that I reviewed all the files and answers Bass gave to the Senator’s staffers. None of those files or responses would have provided any insight to how Javert here was coping with the loss. Something…new happened.

[GO TO HUMAN VOICE]

 FRANKLIN

Bass. You said at the very end of the questioning some young gopher or staffer came in with a note.

 BASS

Yeah.

 FRANKLIN

He, she…they handed it to Senator Hawkes?

 BASS

Yes.

 FRANKLIN

What was his reaction?

 KENDRA

Glee and self-serving delight I’m sure.

 FRANKLIN

No really. Bass think. Really think. You saw him take the note, read the note. I bet he looked up and at you didn’t he?

 BASS

Probably. Franklin…

 FRANKLIN

 [DEMON, FORCEFUL]

TRY! THINK BACK.

 BASS

 [CONCENTRATES]

He’s….smirking. Right side of his face.

 FRANKLIN

 [DEMON]

Oh, COME ON Deputy! You’re a trained interrogator. You read human body language and facial expressions better than anybody I know. I’ve seen you do it. Think…Think back… you can get more than that!

**THREE BEAT**

 BASS

He smirks, looks quickly to his left, over to Senator Kinsey I think. He licked his upper lip and then looked at me.

 FRANKLIN

[DEMON, PROMPTING BASS TO GIVE THE ANSWER]

This tells you what?

 BASS

 [FRUSTRATED AGAIN]

Franklin, I’m a little stressed here, I’ve barely slept, my entire carrier, my entire life is coming unraveled. If they have what I fear they have, then my actions will have taken down Charlie’s legacy that he worked hard to build, and Fionna will probably be ruined and booted from the FBI. So, if you know something just FUCKING say it!

 FRANKLIN

 [BACK TO HUMAN]

Ugh! This is why everybody says you’re great at reading people but absolutely SHIT at poker! Deputy. Bass! He’s bluffing. Oh, he suspects I’m sure. He’s putting together a puzzle with no box picture to use as reference. I was watching the entire hearing down here and even I didn’t see it until just now.

 KENDRA

Franklin?!?!

FRANKLIN

Every time he thought himself or somebody else was tripping you up, he sat stoned face. He thought they had you for sure, but with the hell of a devilish defense council we sidestepped. Elegantly I may add.

BASS KENDRA

FRANKLIN! FRANKLIN!

 FRANKLIN

Right right! When they thought they had you on shooting to wound Nichols, but you gave them the acceptable exception to the rule; when they thought they might have you on the warrantless search but you cited exigent circumstances and an understanding of Steagald v. United States ruling…he licked his upper lip. He thought he had cornered you, but now he wasn’t sure.

 KENDRA
But…but you’re sure Franklin. You’re sure he doesn’t have anything.

 FRANKLIN

 [SIGH]

Not 100% sure, no. More like, 98 Percent.

 BASS

 [RESIGNED]

I’m formally declining the nomination and resigning as a US Deputy Marshal.

 KENDRA

 [SHOCKED]

What?

 BASS

 [TIRED]

You both heard me. It’s over. They won. I tried to fight the system, tried to do what my heart said was the right thing…the proper thing…

Now? Now I’ve overstepped. I got too confident, too proud. I forgot how my actions could have consciousness on those I love and have lost.

 FRANKLIN

Javert, as much as I love the smell of the sin pride, you can’t give up.

 KENDRA
Sweetheart, I know it looks bad and …okay I know you have emotions…A LOT of emotions around this topic that are still healing and raw. But to throw in the towel? To surrender? That isn’t the Bass Marlow I know.

 BASS

I’ve lost.

 KENDRA
No. You’re tired. That’s all. You have them on the ropes and they know it. They’re going to the well of desperation with something they were obviously JUST given and ….and you heard Franklin…they’re bluffing. Trying to rattle your cage.

 FRANKLIN

Stick to the plan! Answer the questions they ask honestly and use the answers I gave you in if you get in a bind! They’ll try to trip you up but I’m willing to bet…they have not.a.damned.thing.

 BASS

I’m not willing to make that gamble. I’m shit at poker, remember. I won’t gamble with the lives and reputations of anybody else. No.

 KENDRA

 [DISTRAUT, UNSURE]

Honey….I…

 FRANKLIN

Will you make me a promise? I know for fact you always keep your promises. Will you make one for me?

 BASS

What’s the promise?

 FRANKLIN

Go. Sleep on it. Go back to your berth. Drink, sleep, have phenomenal sex…all the above; whatever you need to do to relax. A bit. Don’t make any final decision until you hear back from me. If afterwards, you think this is what you want to do, then okay. But will you promise to give me one chance? My plan B?

**THREE BEAT**

 BASS

I promise.

 FRANKLIN

Doctor Jennings. As a fellow connoisseur of Verdict: Impossible. Remember the episode when the Cartel drug lord simply wanted to retire from the Narcos life and sing Opera professionally?

 KENDRA

 [MORE WORRIED ABOUT BASS]

 Not the time, Franklin.

 FRANKLIN

Just…get him back to your berth. Plan B is going to take some time to get set up and I need to start now. I may need right up to the last moment, but Bass…I’ve never known you to give up before. I’ll be damned if you do so on my watch!

 **QUIET FOOTSTEPS TOWARDS THE DOOR AND OUT.**

 **FADE OUT.**

**ACT VII**

ANNOUNCER

G-SPAN is not federally funded. We are supported by sponsors and cable providers. Our program starts now. Won’t you please join us?

**C-SPAN OPEN MUSIC. THE MUSIC FADES OUT AND WE’RE AT A CORRISPONDANCE’S DESK.**

 CHAD UNDERWOOD

Good morning, today is April 25th, 2023, and I’m Chad Underwood in our Washington DC office for G-Span. This is day three of the 118th Congress hearings on the nominations submitted by President Bruce J. Campbell. Specifically, today’s session will be a continuation of Supervisory Deputy Marshal Bass Marlow to become a fully sworn, United States Marshal.

In a truly unprecedented turn of events, this will be the longest confirmation hearing of any nominee selected to the posting of US Marshal, moving into its second full day after new information was brought into chambers yesterday afternoon and provided to Senator Victor Hawkes.

Indeed, the entire schedule for today has been revised in preparation for another day of testimony, which after. Initial comments from the Chairman will being witness being called into the chamber to provide their information after being issued subpoenas.

Obviously this has resulted in even more public and media interest, making headline news last evening and into today’s morning programs. Viewership, already at record highs is now expected to double. Indeed, it could be said that the eyes of the world, are focused on Capitol Hill and today’s nomination hearings.

**[PEAS AND CARROTS CHATTING FROM UNDERWOOD UNDERNEATH OUR HEROES CHATTING]**

 KENDRA

I’ll be sitting right over here sweetheart, right out of the camera’s view. Whatever you decide, whatever you feel is the proper thing, I hope you know I’ll support you and will always love you.

Regardless of if it’s staying here, or if it’s leaving the station, we do it together.

 BASS

 [TIRED, DEJECTED]

I got an email earlier. They rearranged the docket for today. Just like the G-span guy said, they’re going to bring somebody in to testify. Not only are they opening another round of questions; but it looks like they found somebody who knows the truth about Chuck and Fionna’s support of me and how I delt with Diane and the baby. They’ve really stacked the deck against me today. Not taking any chances. Does Franklin have anything yet?

 KENDRA

I went down there an hour ago to check. He was working on something in there franticly. Told me he’d let me know when everything was set.

**HEAVYFOOT STEPS FADING INTO SOUND**

 BASS

 [TIRED]

Honey, they’re about to start. I think we’re officially …

**DOOR BUSTS OPEN**

 ZEKE

[Breathing heavy] Lawman…they told me…be the one…tell you…damn I’m outta shape!

 BASS

Zeke. Kinda in the middle of my life ending here..

 ZEKE

Naw naw naw naw. Look Bass. You need to….you need to trust Franklin.

 BASS

 [PURPLEXED]

What?

 ZEKE

 [HEAVY BREATH CHUCKLE]

I know right! They said if’n you heard that from me, you’d know…serious! Don’t do nothing dumb. We got you!

**VOICE ON THE VIDEO MONITOR**

 VOICE
Turning on your Teleconference camera in 3, 2,

 ZEKE

Oh snap! Gotta go!

 VOICE

1…

 CHAD UNDERWOOD

Supervisory Deputy US Marsha Bass Marlow has appeared on screen in chambers…looking…more confused really than confident at first glance…

 KENDRA
 [STAGE WHISPER]

Honey! Honey! Game face!!!!

**WE SWITCH NOW FROM BEING IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM TO BE IN CHAMBERS WITH THE SENATORS.**

CHAD UNDERWOOD

Senator Hawkes and the committee are being shown in and taking their places. We’re also hearing something of a gathering as started outside the Senate building where supporters of Deputy Marlow have gathered to show their support.

**THREE GAVEL BANGS**

 CHAD UNDERWOOD

The chairman is calling the session to order. Let’s Listen in.

 **IN ROOM HUBBUB SETTLES**

 SEN HAWKES

 [OVERCONFIDENT x50]

Alright alright, lets come to order people. Again, I want to remind the gallery, the members of the press and media who are in the room, this isn’t the time for acting up! I want order and decorum. Act like you’re in… in a CHURCH, not the state fair. Okay. Good morning ranking member Tillis, members of the committee. Thank you for ensuring we had time for today’s proceedings. This is continuing the nomination review of Supervisory Deputy Bass Marlow, United States Marshal to…a Marshal position.

I want to thank you…mister Marlow for returning. Thank you, to the members of the committee who burned the midnight oil last night to get today’s schedule shuffled around up to and including , proceedings after Nominee Marlow’s.

Today should make for quite an interesting day. We’re going to be digging into some truths that might be hard to hear, difficult to see and even harder to swallow! But I have every confidence that by the end of today’s hearing; we’ll have the proper and just outcome!

Now, ranking member Tillis. Being on the other side of the political aisle, I’m sure you’ve prepared opening remarks of your own in regard to the nominee? Senator Tillis.

 SEN TILLIS

 [POKER FACE]

Thank you Mister Chairman, and I also thank you Mister Marlow for returning today. It is my hope that I get to meet you in person one day young man! [THREE BEAT] Thank you Mister Chairman and with that I yield the rest of my time.

**CROWD MURMUR, CONFUSION**

**GAVEL BANG**

 SEN HAWKES

I just got done telling you people to keep it zipped! Senator Tillis, are you sure those are the words you want in the record?

 SEN TILLIS

 Yes Mister Chairman, that is my intent.

 SEN HAWKES.

Alright then. As you want it. We might actually make lunch today on time after all!

**A FEW LAUGHS FROM HIS CRONIES AND PAPER FLIPPING**

 SEN HAWKES

Moving on ahead, we have our witness who will be..

**ZOOM CALL CONNECTS. A DARK SCREEN FLICKERS TO LIFE. A CAT AVATAR BLINKS**

FRANKLIN

Ah. We’re on? We’re on now? oh splendid!

Good morning, Mister Chairman, distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I understand I’ve been asked to testify today regarding the nomination of Supervisory Deputy Marshal Bass Wyatt Marlow.

But first—let’s acknowledge the elephant in the room. Or, rather, the cat on the screen.

It seems my Zoom call has decided to… embellish my appearance with this curious little filter. I have tried, quite sincerely, to remove it.

And yet… Some masks refuse to come off.

Now, before anyone grows concerned, let me offer this reassurance—I am, despite appearances, not a pussy.

**CROWD LAUGHS A STIFFLED LAUGH**

SEN. HAWKES

[tight-lipped]

This is completely unacceptable and outside of protocol.

SEN. BUXTON

Point of procedure, Mister Chairman.

SEN. HAWKES

[gritted teeth]

Senator Buxton…

SEN. BUXTON

Mister Chairman, I direct your attention to the approved schedule. The individual before us is Mister Cohen, attorney at law. I was sent information that Mister Cohen has information important and germane to these hearings. His extensive knowledge of information and cases the nominee has been asked and responded to; including cases he worked directly with Supervisory Deputy Marshal Marlow. Thus, it makes his testimony both relevant and necessary.

**PAPER SHUFFLING. HAWKES FLIPS THROUGH FILES, TIGHTENING HIS JAW.**

SEN. HAWKES

I want that… that *mask* removed. Immediately.

FRANKLIN

[smiling, voice smooth as silk]

Oh, Mister Chairman. *Some things cannot be undone.* But I assure you, we are doing everything possible to get this pussy off my face.

**STIFLED LAUGHTER FROM THE GALLERY. SEVERAL SENATORS SHIFT UNCOMFORTABLY.**

**GAVEL POUND**

SEN. HAWKES

[bristling]

I’ll remind you of where you are, Counselor. You want to testify? Fine. But we’re swearing you in, now.

**RUSHED SHUFFLING IN THE BACKGROUND.**

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you will give before this Committee on the Judiciary of the United States Senate will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

FRANKLIN

[chuckling softly]

Mister Chairman. I *always* tell the truth.

It’s just that I know far more of it than most.

I do so swear. This really is…Franklin’s time to shine!!!!

SEN. HAWKES

[CLEARS THROAT, RETAINS COMPOSURE]

Alright. Before us is Franklin… *[HE NOW REMEMBERS WHERE HE’S HEARD THIS VOICE BEFORE, HIS STOMACH SINKS]…*Cohen. [CLEARS THROAT] Defense counsel, licensed to practice… *[PAUSES, LOOKS UP. NERVOUS]* What the hell are you doing back here?

FRANKLIN

[SMILING]

Very good, Mister Chairman. Such a sufficient pun of a question. You know why I’m here. But if we must put on a show, let’s at least **GO** through the motions, shall we?

I am here, because I was asked. And when old, old friends need a word, I find it… *unwise* to ignore them. Besides, it’s been so long since we’ve all had a proper chat.

To answer your question, I am here as a character witness for Deputy Marshal Bass Marlow.

SEN. HAWKES

Who subpoenaed you?

FRANKLIN

Subpoenaed? Oh no, no, no, no, no. That would have required… formal service; quite impossible given I’m at the same remote station as Deputy Marshal Marlow.

Instead, I received a kind and…irresistible request—from none other than Senator Zuri Buxton after my urgent email to her. So generous, really. Zuri…if I’m not mistaken, I do believe that is the Swahili word for beautiful! *[LEANS FORWARD INTO THE CAMERA]* Love the power dress-suit Senator Buxton! Very Meryl Streep / devil wears Prada vibe you’ve pulled off! Kudos to youdos Madame Senator!

SEN. HAWKES

And what, exactly, do you wish to testify to, Counselor?

FRANKLIN

Ah. Finally, we arrive at Franklin’s TIME TO SHINE!

I have known Deputy Marshal Marlow since his arrival on this station two years ago. In my capacity as legal counsel, and let’s call it what it is, *a humble purveyor of order*, I assisted in the investigation and eventual arrest of one Mister Joshua Nichols—who, as you well know, was responsible for the first homicide on this continent.

The first stain of noy-so-proverbial blood on the ice as it were.

Of course, I also worked alongside Marlow in dismantling the designer drug pipeline flowing through this research facility.

*You remember that don’t you, Mister Chairman?*

**SENATORS SHIFT. HAWKES’ LIPS PRESS INTO A THIN LINE.**

Good Senators of this committee, the voters whom you represent, more so than at any point in time in this nation, are looking for their better angels. I, happen to know…a few things about angels. They don’t dwell in the heavens above. They won’t be found in storybooks or in the theaters or television.

They walk amongst you. You have a prime example testifying here, before you in these chambers. Supervisory Deputy US Marshal Bass Marlow is one of those individuals. A gentleman who is utterly, beyond reproach.

SEN. ROCKWELL

[leaning in]

Franklin… what’s your game?

FRANKLIN

[soft chuckle]

Oh, Jerry. You never change.

I *do* enjoy a good game. A game of chance, of wits, of careful stakes. But what I do *not* enjoy…

Is when the house is rigged.

When the cards were marked before the hand was even dealt. And when that happens… You don’t play the hand…goodness gracious no!

*[VERY SERIOUS TONE]* You change the dealer.

**THE ROOM IS SUFFOCATINGLY QUIET**

Ah. But yes…let’s… talk about games, shall we?

Tempe, Arizona, 1970s. Senator Rockwell, I assure you, the Deputy Marshal has never frequented those… *establishments.*

Poplar Bluff, Missouri. Senator Kitchner, no such shady real estate deals with bilking partners in his property portfolio. Eh, Missouri, dreadful place!

Foreign “donations” tucked into neat little offshore accounts? Senator Newcomb, I can *personally* confirm Marlow’s books are cleaner than others.

And Phuket, Thailand? Senator Winston… *tsk tsk*. You won’t find young underaged lads in seedy hotels from Bass Marlow’s history.

No, esteemed members of this committee.

**PAUSE FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT**

There are no dead bodies in his closet, or under a summer home in the Hamptons.

Now, how about…….. yours?

**DEAD SILENCE. THE ROOM FEELS LIKE IT’S SHRUNK BY HALF**

*Ah. And there it is.*

That feeling.

The moment a person realizes they are well and truly seen. So. Shall we continue?

Or would you rather… discuss the *real* matters before us? [PAUSE FOR EFECT] What’s the problem senators, does….. my avatar have your tongue?

**THREE-BEAT SILENCE. HAWKES LOOKS LIKE HE WANTS TO SINK INTO HIS SEAT**

My, my… This is fun. A regular barrel of hairless apes, or is the saying monkeys? I always forget…eh, no matter.

So…[CLEAR THROAT] Any more questions for me?

**BUXTON TAKES THE OPPORTUNITY NOW THAT ALL THE CORRUPT SENATORS ARE HUMBLED.**

 SEN. BUXTON

Mister Chairman, according to the day’s agenda; it appears you had information to provide regarding the nominee’s history. I’d like to suggest we forego that and move onto a formal vote.

 FRANKLIN

Seconded!

**GALLREY LAUGHS**

 SEN TILLIS

You cannot second a motion counselor, however I can and happily do! Second.

 SEN HAWKES

 [HOLDING IN ANGER]

Motion on the floor and seconded is to proceed direct to a vote. Any ….objections?

**THREE BEAT**

 SEN HAWKES

Great, we’ll move to a voice vote. All those approving the nomination say Aye

**15 AYES, SOME SLOWER THAN OTHERS**

 SEN HAWKES

 Those opposed say nay.

**PIN DROP**

SEN HAWKES

 Any abstentions?

 **GAVEL SMACKS ITS MARK HARD**

SEN HAWKES

Nomination carries by unanimous vote. None against and no abstentions. [DISGUSTED] We’re adjourned.

**THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE FROM THE GALLARY AS WE FADE OUT**

 **GAVEL BANGS**

**OUTRO & CREDITS**