

The Good (Bad) Shepard



A Five Episode Prestige Limited TV Series

Series Bible

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Series Overview

A high-end corporate thriller blending psychological manipulation, luxury settings, and moral ambiguity. The series explores power, revenge, loyalty, and transactional relationships in a world where perception is currency.

Series Logline

An accomplished professional mediator covers up a deadly confrontation with a con artist, but as a relentless PI closes in, her attempts to control the narrative ignite fraud, infidelity, and a boardroom coup that threatens to strip her of everything.

Themes

- Ambition versus morality
- The seduction of power
- Corporate warfare as emotional warfare
- Connivance, revenge and emotional leverage
- Luxury masking corruption

Tone and Style

Tone

- Sophisticated
- Suspenseful
- Darkly humorous
- Character-driven

Visual Style

- Luxury contrasted with moral decay
- Warm interiors
- Corporate glass and steel
- International locations
- Intimate close-ups during negotiations

Summary

Length: Five episode Teleplay (~6 hours)

Genre: Psychological Thriller

Audience: Adult; likely R (language, violence, sexual situations)

Characters:

- 1 Lead (female 40-45)
- 6 Supporting (2 male (25-28); 2 male (40-45); 1 female (40-45); 1 female (25-28))
- 10+ Tertiary players

Locations: 4-6; primary shoots – offices, bars, restaurants, hotels, yacht, jet

Budget: Estimated moderate: \$5M - \$10M

It all starts after a con man reads an article about a successful woman



Series Structure

Episode 1: The Cure and the Con

Tracy Shepard, a razor-sharp New York mediator rushes to settle a dispute between two nanotech companies, only to get pulled into a biotech family feud that could lead to a cure for her blind father—until leaked “confidential” books, an FBI raid, and a vanished CEO compel her to invest in the biotech research.

Episode 2: Lex Talionis

After losing \$1m in the scam and learning the “FBI raid” that launched her involvement never happened, a dismayed Tracy hunts her con man through a nanotech company’s inner circle—then lures him into a deadly trap, forcing her to stage an alibi, coerce an her unwitting accomplice Marilyn into silence, and trade guilt for power just as a private eye gets dangerously close to the truth.

Episode 3: No Request is Out of Bounds

When a relentless private investigator uncovers the true identity of the dead con man and ties him to the nanotech orbit, Marilyn is ambushed by an overseas blackmailer and Tracy—racing to contain the fallout—hires an Asian security fixer whose “solutions” may be more dangerous than the scandal itself.

Series Structure

Episode 4: Constructing Facades

Unleashing a covert operation directed by her sometime lover, Tracy stages a bogus FBI probe to smoke out her one-time private investigator and ensnare Marilyn into betrayal, revealing the one loose end neither woman can control: the gun.

Episode 5: The Price of Avarice

With the private investigator closing in and corporate loyalties unraveling, Tracy Shepard wages a quiet war to protect her secret—only to discover that ambition, desire, and revenge may destroy her long before the truth does.

Audience Appeal

The Good (Bad) Shepard offers a timely blend of female-driven psychological drama, corporate intrigue, and high-end suspense, centered on a compelling antihero whose pursuit of revenge ultimately costs her everything.

A Compelling Female Antihero

Audiences embrace complex female leads; Tracy Shepard joins that tradition. She's intelligent, successful, vulnerable, manipulative and relatable. Viewers are invited to root for her, question her, and ultimately judge her.

Escapist Luxury Meets Real Consequences

The series takes viewers inside a world of luxury while grounding the story in recognizable human struggles such as loyalty, betrayal, ambition and revenge. The result is aspirational viewing with emotional stakes.

Multiple Points of Entry

Different audience segments connect with different characters. Viewers may identify with Tracy's struggle for control, Hannah's ambition, Marilyn's quest for recognition, Matt's drive for success, and Richards' pursuit of leverage.

A Bingeworthy Mystery Engine

Every episode ends with new revelations, shifting loyalties, unexpected alliances.

Production Company Appeal

Limited Series Economics

Five episodes means lower production risk, shorter commitment, easier talent attachment and stronger binge potential while still delivering a complete story.

Franchise Potential without Dependence

Series one stands alone. However, the ending creates multiple potential continuation paths: Tracy rebuilding after collapse, Hannah's rise, Matt's consolidation of power, Marilyn's independence, Richards' leverage campaign, Aiman's uncertain loyalties. The property offers both closure and expansion.

Gender-balanced Appeal

The series contains female-driven emotional storytelling, corporate power struggles, mystery elements and relationship drama, allowing it to appeal across gender lines. Strong vehicle for mid/late-career actors.

Advertiser Appeal

Affluent Adult Audience

The target audience aligns with viewers of premium streaming dramas, prestige limited series, and high-end business and legal thrillers. This audience typically over-indexes in household income, education and discretionary spending.

Luxury-Friendly Environment

The show's world naturally accommodates travel, hospitality , financial services, automotive, technology, and luxury consumer brands without feeling forced.

Product-Placement Opportunities

Options include hotels, airlines, yachts, accessories, watches, clothing, restaurants, and liquor/wines.

Comps: avarice, deception, ambiguity, revenge



The Night Of

One bad decision triggers everything; moral ambiguity; investigation drives the story

Mare of Easttown

Flawed female protagonist; personal & private life collide; ensemble cast

Sharp Objects

Female-centered psych thriller; secrets drive the story; moral ambiguity



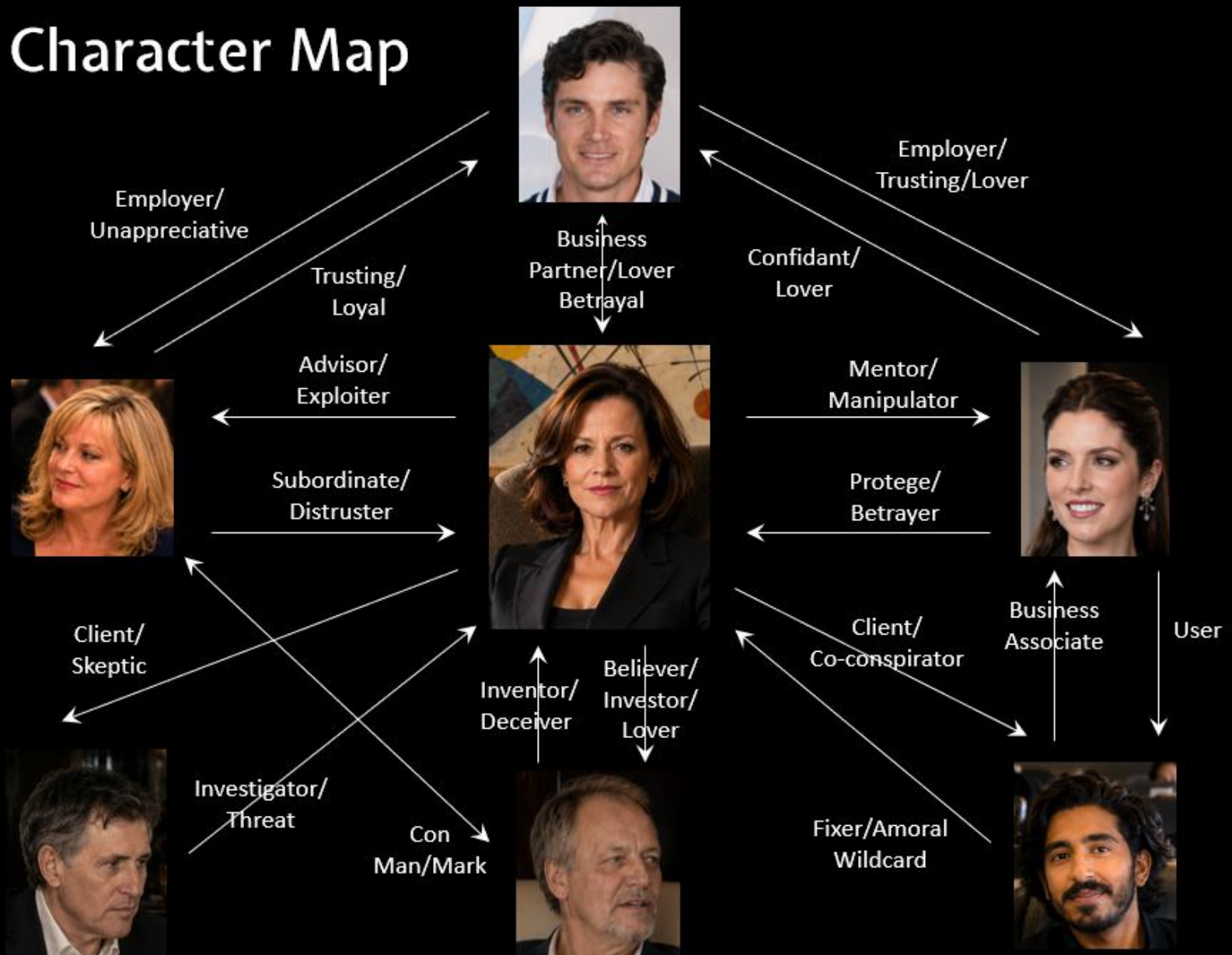
Presumed Innocent

Successful people make catastrophic decisions; secrets compound over time; ambiguity

The Undoing

Protagonist's life slowly falls apart; wealth is a character; trust is challenged

Character Map



The Main Characters

TRACY SHEPARD



Core Arc

Beginning: As a professional mediator, she's detached and confident. She believes every problem can be solved through negotiation.

Middle: She becomes emotionally invested in people and outcomes for the first time in years.

End: Tracy evolves into a power player who no longer merely resolves conflicts—she creates them, manipulates them, and ultimately becomes part of the very world she once stood outside of.

WHO TRACY IS AT THE START

When we first meet Tracy, she's elite, wealthy, intelligent, highly disciplined, emotionally guarded, and professionally detached.

She enters conflicts but is never personally involved in them. Her job is literally to stand between warring parties and force compromise. In Los Angeles she effortlessly controls hostile executives through force of personality and wit. She is the smartest person in the room and knows it.

At this point Tracy's life philosophy is essentially: Everyone has a price; everything is negotiable; emotions are secondary to leverage.

THE INCITING INCIDENT

Fischer gives up his airline seat - a small act of kindness changes everything. For perhaps the first time in years Tracy encounters someone who appears genuinely altruistic.

That gesture creates: curiosity, gratitude an obligation - and eventually emotional investment.

THE FATHER WOUND

The most important emotional driver underneath Tracy's story is her father. His blindness from retinitis pigmentosa creates a vulnerability we rarely see in her. When Fischer explains the therapy - "My father has it" - is the crucial moment as Tracy stops being a mediator.

She becomes personally involved. For the first time she wants something, has hopes and becomes emotionally exposed

This becomes the crack in her armor.

THE RESCUER

Tracy initially views herself as a helper: to Fischer, her father, and to bring the therapy to market. Her motives are largely noble; this is why she agrees to see the recalcitrant Fletcher. But something unexpected happens - instead of finding an obstacle, she finds a human being.

FLETCHER CHANGES HER

Fletcher is arguably the most important relationship in Tracy's arc. He represents everything absent from her world: authenticity, vulnerability, creativity and idealism

He lives in a shabby bungalow, he paints, he plays guitar. he talks about curing disease rather than monetizing it Tracy gradually falls under his influence. For perhaps the first time in years, she likes someone not because they are useful but because they are genuine.

THE SHIFT FROM MEDIATOR TO PARTICIPANT

This is Tracy's central transformation. At the start she solves other people's problems. By the middle, Tracy's inside the problem. She investigates financial records, warns Fletcher, exposes fraud, protects the cure and finally, becomes emotionally attached. The line between professional and personal disappears.

THE INVESTOR DECISION

The pivotal moment of the series occurs when Tracy rejects the venture capitalists and personally invests in Fletcher's cure. This is important. Earlier Tracy would have remained neutral, collected a fee and moved on to the next negotiation. Instead she risks her money, reputation and emotional stability.

The decision proves she has changed. She's no longer merely observing; she's choosing sides.

LOVE VERSUS CONTROL

One of Tracy's deepest flaws is her need for control. She's comfortable negotiating, maneuvering, and manipulating if necessary. On the contrary, she's uncomfortable trusting, surrendering and depending on people

Fletcher forces her into emotional territory where negotiation doesn't work. For a time she seems genuinely happy. The relationship reveals a softer Tracy that almost no one sees.

THE DARKER EVOLUTION

As the series progresses, Tracy increasingly uses her gifts not simply to resolve disputes but to shape outcomes. She takes on the roles of investigator, strategist, manipulator and power broker. The qualities that made her successful mediator begin turning into weapons.

She discovers she is extraordinarily good at influencing people, and she becomes increasingly willing to do so.

RELATIONSHIP WITH MARILYN

As a largely overlooked executive in Matt's company, Marilyn feels mixed about Tracy when first meeting her. She respects her success but is wary about her motivations with respect to the company. After Tracy warns her of an impending scam, Marilyn reluctantly participates in Tracy's plan to expose Fischer.

When Tracy kills Fischer, Marilyn seeks escape but finds that difficult after Tracy becomes a board member of the firm – and Matt's wife. From that point, Marilyn's trust is broken and she becomes increasingly adversarial, even though Tracy holds most of the cards.

RELATIONSHIP WITH MATT

Matt represents a different future. Whereas Fletcher represents idealism, science and authenticity, young Matt represents power, wealth, influence, corporate dominance

As Tracy moves deeper into Matt's orbit, she gains status but risks losing pieces of herself. Their relationship becomes a test of what Tracy values most.

RELATIONSHIP WITH HANNAH

Hannah begins as subordinate and protégé. Over time Hannah becomes a confidante, a witness, and in some ways a moral mirror. Their relationship allows us to see Tracy from the outside.

What begins as mentorship gradually becomes more complicated because Hannah sees both Tracy's brilliance and her capacity for manipulation.

THE TRAGIC IRONY

The irony of Tracy's arc is that she starts as someone who fixes conflicts. But the deeper she becomes emotionally involved, the more conflict follows her. Her strengths create her problems. Her intelligence allows her to uncover secrets, gain leverage and influence outcomes. But it also tempts her to play God.

WHERE TRACY ENDS

By the end of the series Tracy is no longer merely a successful mediator. She has become a participant in the struggle for power. She possesses greater influence, wealth and authority. but she's also burdened by secrets, compromises and emotional scars.

The woman who began the story believing every dispute could be solved through negotiation discovers that some conflicts are moral rather than transactional.

And those conflicts cannot always be mediated away.

MARILYN JENKINS



Core Arc

Beginning: Talented but overlooked corporate manager seeking advancement and validation.

Middle: Becomes entangled in Tracy's personal war against Fletcher/Calvin and discovers how dangerous Tracy can be.

End: Achieves the career success she always wanted, but at the cost of carrying secrets and becoming increasingly dependent on Tracy's protection and favor.

WHO MARILYN IS AT THE START

Although Marilyn is not a power player, she's competent, ambitious, somewhat insecure and eager for recognition. Unlike Tracy, Marilyn lacks confidence in her ability to control situations; unlike Matt, she lacks institutional power; unlike Hannah, she lacks Tracy's direct mentorship. She's a risk-averse middle manager trying to climb the ladder.

What Marilyn wants is actually simple: respect, recognition and advancement. The last thing she wants is legal trouble and professional destruction.

WHY SHE MATTERS TO THE STORY

Marilyn functions as Tracy's mirror. Both women are intelligent and ambitious operating in male-dominated corporate environments. But they handle power differently.

Tracy commands rooms; Marilyn seeks permission to enter them. Tracy intimidates; Marilyn worries.

This contrast makes Marilyn an excellent lens through which to view Tracy.

THE CALVIN/FLETCHER STORYLINE

Marilyn's life changes when she becomes involved with "Calvin." Unlike Tracy, Marilyn initially sees Calvin through the lens of romance and possibility. She is emotionally exposed in ways Tracy rarely allows herself to be.

When Tracy eventually convinces her that Calvin is really Fletcher and a dangerous con artist, Marilyn struggles to accept it. She wants to believe the relationship was genuine.

This becomes her first major test. She must choose between comforting fantasy and unpleasant truth. Eventually she sides with Tracy.

THE RELUCTANT ACCOMPLICE

One of Marilyn's most revealing moments comes when Tracy asks her to help trap Calvin. Marilyn clearly doesn't want to be involved. She repeatedly asks why Tracy can't simply go to law enforcement. She seems to understand the danger better than the revenge-seeking Tracy does.

Yet she ultimately participates anyway. Why? Because Marilyn is meek and trusting. It's one of her defining characteristics: she may complain, she may hesitate, but when pushed, she shows up.

LEARNING TO PLAY THE GAME

Throughout the series Marilyn slowly absorbs Tracy's worldview. Tracy teaches her lessons such as “You don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate.’ At first Marilyn resists that philosophy.

She wants merit to matter and she wants success to be earned, but experience teaches her otherwise. As the series progresses she becomes more politically sophisticated and less naïve.

THE PROMOTION

The biggest external milestone in Marilyn's arc is her promotion becoming General Manager of NanoNano's Malaysia operation. This is everything she has been working toward, yet remarkably the promotion does not make her happy. Instead, it creates anxiety. Why? Because she immediately worries people will assume she got the job through Tracy's influence or through Tracy's relationship with Matt.

That insecurity reveals the core wound in Marilyn's character: she desperately wants to believe she earned success, but she fears others won't.

MARILYN VERSUS TRACY

One of the most fascinating elements of Marilyn's arc is her changing relationship with Tracy. At first Tracy is kind of a mentor, a rescuer and an ally in the fight against a perpetrator of ruthless confidence schemes.

Later Tracy becomes intimidating. Marilyn increasingly realizes Tracy is capable of manipulating almost anyone. Marilyn notices the darker side of Tracy's talents which engenders real fear.

MALAYSIA

The Malaysia promotion represents Marilyn's transformation. When we see her running operations, she is no longer the uncertain woman seeking approval. She commands teams, drives schedules, manages crises and makes hard decisions. In many ways she becomes what Tracy always believed she could become. The timid subordinate evolves into a genuine executive.

THE COST OF SUCCESS

The tragedy in Marilyn's arc is that achieving her goal doesn't free her. Instead it entangles her further. By the later episodes she knows too many secrets, complicit in too many lies and a participant in too many compromises. Like it or not, Marilyn has become part of Tracy's dangerous world. Marilyn gains status but loses innocence.

WHERE SHE ENDS

By the end of the series Marilyn has completed a classic ascent arc. She starts out as overlooked, uncertain and in search of professional and personal validation.

She becomes confident, influential and professionally successful. But she never becomes Tracy and that distinction is important.

Marilyn retains a conscience and a degree of vulnerability that Tracy largely suppresses. She remains one of the few major characters who still asks "Is this right?" while everyone around her asks "Can we get away with it?"

HANNAH GOLDMAN



Core Arc

Beginning: Energetic young attorney, fiercely loyal to Tracy, eager to learn from her mentor.

Middle: Increasingly exposed to wealth, influence, and powerful people. Begins developing her own ambitions and attractions.

End: Crosses lines she once believed she would never cross, discovering that she is more like Tracy than she wants to admit.

WHO HANNAH IS AT THE START

When young Hannah enters the story, she exists largely within Tracy's shadow. She is intelligent, ambitious, disciplined, confident and still learning.

Most importantly, Hannah admires Tracy. Tracy is mentor, employer, role model, and perhaps in her eyes, surrogate family figure.

Hannah believes Tracy has all the answers. At the beginning, her identity is tied to Tracy's success.

THE PROTÉGÉ

Hannah initially functions as Tracy's lieutenant, attending meetings, drafting documents, watching Tracy negotiate. She studies the mechanics of power.

One revealing moment occurs during the RodCone negotiations when Hannah can't resist taking a shot at opposing counsel, displaying Tracy-like sharpness before she has earned the authority to wield it. Tracy immediately reins her in.

That moment foreshadows her entire arc: Hannah wants Tracy's power, but she hasn't yet learned the cost. In the end, she will.

WHAT HANNAH REALLY WANTS

On the surface she wants professional success. Underneath she wants significance. She wants to stop being "Tracy's assistant" and become a major player herself. This desire grows stronger as she gains exposure to billion-dollar deals, CEOs and corporate players, private jets, luxury hotels, corporate power, and forbidden sex.

The world Tracy inhabits becomes increasingly seductive.

THE FIRST CRACK IN LOYALTY

A central theme of Hannah's arc is that loyalty becomes harder as opportunity increases. At first, loyalty costs her nothing; later, loyalty costs her everything.

As Tracy becomes more powerful, more secretive, and more morally flexible, Hannah is increasingly forced to make judgments of her own. She begins to realize Tracy is not always right.

That realization is frightening because to this point Tracy has been her north star.

MATT BLANKENSCHNEIN INFLUENCE

Matt becomes the catalyst for Hannah's transformation. What makes the relationship powerful dramatically isn't merely attraction, it's validation. Matt sees Hannah as smart, attractive, capable, important – and as a possible replacement for Tracy.

For perhaps the first time, someone powerful treats her as a principal rather than an apprentice. That is intoxicating. Matt understands this instinctively.

THE TEMPTATION OF POWER

The relationship with Matt is not simply romantic, it is symbolic. Matt represents influence, status, leadership, freedom and independence from Tracy.

Choosing Matt is, in a sense, choosing her own future over her mentor's orbit.

The attraction therefore becomes both emotional and professional.

THE BETRAYAL

Hannah's defining moment occurs when Matt presses her for information about Tracy. She immediately hesitates as her first instinct is loyalty. She says: "Tracy's been very good to me." This is one of the most revealing lines in the series because Hannah knows exactly what she's doing – that sharing information is a betrayal. She knows Tracy would view it that way.

Yet she proceeds, not because Matt forces her but because she wants Matt.

And because part of her has begun choosing a different allegiance.

WHY THE BETRAYAL MATTERS

The information Hannah shares is almost secondary. What matters is the choice. The protégé chooses someone other than the mentor. That moment marks Hannah's transition from follower to independent actor.

Unfortunately, independence arrives through betrayal.

HANNAH BECOMES TRACY

The irony of Hannah's story is that she spends much of the series admiring Tracy, yet Tracy's greatest lesson is not mediation. It's survival. By the end Hannah begins exhibiting Tracy-like traits: strategic thinking, compartmentalization, secrecy and a willingness to manipulate information.

The student becomes increasingly similar to the teacher.

THE EMOTIONAL COST

Unlike Tracy, Hannah has not yet learned how to suppress guilt. She feels it. She worries. And she second-guesses herself. Even after sharing information with Matt, she immediately attempts to minimize its significance and reassure herself she may have overreacted. That hesitation makes her sympathetic.

She is not cold. Not yet.

HANNAH'S CENTRAL QUESTION

Every major character has a core question. Tracy's question is "How much control is too much?" Marilyn's is "Do I deserve success?"

Hannah's is "Who do I become when I stop following someone else's example?"

The series never gives a simple answer, leaving an opening for a second series.

WHERE SHE ENDS

By the conclusion Hannah is no longer merely Tracy's protégé. She has become independent, influential, experienced, but nonetheless compromised.

Hannah has crossed ethical lines and pursued forbidden relationships. She has chosen ambition over loyalty at crucial moments, yet she remains more emotionally open than

Tracy. That leaves hope that she may ultimately become a better version of what Tracy is. Or a more dangerous one.

The series deliberately leaves that question unresolved.

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MATT BLANKENSCHIN



Core Arc

Beginning: Charismatic CEO, visionary entrepreneur, charming corporate warrior.

Middle: Appears to become Tracy's ideal partner and ally.

End: Revealed as a master strategist whose desire for control rivals—and perhaps exceeds—Tracy's own.

Matt's journey is fundamentally about the conflict between love and power.

And whenever forced to choose, Matt chooses power.

WHO MATT IS AT THE START

When we first meet Matt, he appears almost larger than life; a successful, charismatic wealthy entrepreneur. He is witty, confident, visionary – but still a bit wet behind the ears when it comes to learned experience in business.

Unlike many CEOs in television dramas, Matt isn't a bully. He wins people over with his charms. He entertains and makes people feel special.

His greatest weapon isn't authority, it's likability.

WHY TRACY IS ATTRACTED TO HIM

Matt represents something Tracy lacks. Tracy's world is conflict; Matt's world is creation. He builds companies, takes risks and dreams big.

Unlike the squabbling executives Tracy mediates, Matt acts. This attracts her immediately. Their early interactions have a playful quality absent from most of Tracy's relationships.

THE COURTSHIP

The yacht sequence is the emotional heart of Matt's early arc. He succeeds where others fail, getting Tracy to lower her defenses.

This is not accidental. Matt recognizes almost immediately that Tracy's public persona is armor. When she nervously explains that she's not really the "Medea of Mediation," Matt simply lets her talk until she exposes vulnerability.

He understands people - especially Tracy.

WHAT MATT REALLY WANTS

At first glance, Matt wants business success, innovation, market share, growth and industry domination. But those are secondary.

What Matt truly wants is control and influence. He wants to be the person shaping outcomes, the person everyone depends on, the person who sees further than everyone else.

THE GREAT IRONY

Matt falls for Tracy because she is one of the few people he cannot immediately control.

Unlike most people who bend around Matt, Tracy doesn't. She challenges him, questions him, negotiates with him – even mocks him. Her resistance and refusal to become his possession fascinates Matt.

Ironically, the very quality that attracts him eventually becomes intolerable.

THE MARRIAGE

The marriage initially appears to represent victory for both. Matt gains a brilliant partner, a major shareholder and a strategic ally. In a twist on the idea (given Tracy is older than Matt by a dozen years) she is also a “trophy wife.”

Tracy gains much-wanted partnership greatly enhanced financial security and influence. Yet beneath the surface both are attempting the same thing: They are trying to merge two alpha personalities, and neither truly knows how to surrender control.

THE CEO'S WORLDVIEW

Matt possesses a fundamentally different philosophy from Tracy. Tracy believes every conflict can be negotiated. Matt believes every conflict can be won.

This distinction becomes increasingly important. Where Tracy seeks leverage Matt seeks advantage. Where Tracy manipulates people Matt manipulates systems.

HANNAH

Hannah's storyline reveals one of Matt's darker qualities. Matt doesn't simply pursue Hannah because he finds her attractive. He recognizes her value: inside information, access and influence.

When Hannah hesitates to discuss Tracy, Matt immediately applies reassurance, validation, and emotional pressure. The scene demonstrates how similar Matt and Tracy actually are. Both understand leverage, timing and vulnerability.

The difference is style: Tracy uses confrontation, Matt uses affection.

THE REVELATION

Over the course of the series we gradually realize Matt may be the most politically astute character in the show. More than Tracy, Aiman, and Richards because Matt rarely appears to be strategizing. He appears spontaneous, which is often the most effective strategy of all.

MATT AND POWER

One reason Matt is compelling is that he genuinely likes people. His manipulation isn't driven by cruelty, rather by utility. He can love, admire and care about someone, and still use them.

That complexity keeps him from becoming a villain. He's not really malicious, he's pragmatic.

THE TRACY CONFLICT

The central conflict of Matt's arc is that he enters a romantic relationship and a subsequent marriage with the one person who refuses to stay manageable. As Tracy grows more independent, powerful and secretive, Matt becomes increasingly uneasy. He admires Tracy's strength but he also fears what she might be doing beyond his view.

When questions arise involving Aiman and other hidden activities, Matt's curiosity is not purely personal. It is strategic.

Knowledge is power and Matt hates not knowing.

WHERE HE ENDS

By the conclusion of the series Matt stands near the peak of his influence. He has corporate power, wealth, prestige and strategic advantage. His company is hitting on all cylinders and the competition is wilting.

Yet his victory feels incomplete. The woman he married and brought into the firm has become increasingly difficult to predict.

The people around him are withholding information, and the systems he once controlled perfectly have become unstable.

For perhaps the first time, Matt finds himself surrounded by players rather than subordinates.

THE TRAGIC DIMENSION

Matt's tragedy is subtle. He genuinely wants love and connection, but he can't help evaluating everything through the lens of utility and influence.

As a result, he risks converting every relationship into a transaction, including the most important ones.

GRAYSON RICHARDS



Core Arc

Beginning: A competent but struggling private investigator hired to locate a con man.

Middle: Becomes obsessed with uncovering hidden truths and increasingly crosses ethical boundaries.

End: Transforms from investigator into participant, using information as a weapon and ultimately attempting to leverage secrets for personal gain.

WHO RICHARDS IS AT THE START

When we first meet Richards he is essentially a contractor hired to solve problems. His motivations are simple: find the target, satisfy the client and earn his fees. Unlike Tracy, he has no grand vision. Unlike Matt, he has no empire. Unlike Fischer/Fletcher, he has no mission.

Richards is a survivor.

THE OUTSIDER

Richards occupies a unique place in the series. Everyone else belongs somewhere:

- Tracy belongs in elite boardrooms.
- Matt belongs among CEOs.
- Hannah belongs in corporate law.
- Marilyn belongs in management.
- Fletcher belongs in biotech.

Richards belongs nowhere, moving between worlds. People underestimate him, and that gives him an advantage

THE FAILED INVESTIGATION

Initially Richards appears somewhat ineffective, struggling to locate Fletcher. Tracy grows frustrated with his lack of performance, wounding his professional pride. Richards wants to be competent, even more than he wants money. Being beaten bothers him.

THE OBSESSION

Most investigators would move on, but Richards slogs on even after Tracy tells him she no longer cares about the case. This is the first sign that something has changed. The job becomes personal - not emotionally but professionally.

He is obsessed with solving the puzzle.

INFORMATION IS POWER

Richards gradually discovers a truth that becomes the foundation of his arc: information has more value than justice. He begins collecting identities, reports, evidence, rumors and secrets.

At first he gathers information to complete an investigation; later he does so because information itself is valuable.

THE MORAL SLIDE

Richards does not become corrupt all at once; his decline is incremental. Each step feels justified. He bends rules, accesses questionable sources, pressures people and exploits vulnerabilities. Eventually operates in ethical gray zones.

The important thing is that Richards always has a rationale; he never views himself as a villain.

THE CORONER THREAD

The coroner investigation marks another turning point. Richards uncovers evidence others missed or didn't care about. For sure he demonstrates persistence and intelligence, but he also becomes increasingly willing to exploit weaknesses in systems and people.

His methods become as interesting as his discoveries.

THE BLACKMAIL TEMPTATION

Richards' defining flaw is greed, not necessarily financial greed but greed for opportunity. Every revelation creates a new possibility, every secret creates leverage.

He cannot resist exploring how that leverage might be used. This is where he begins to resemble Tracy. The difference is that Tracy usually uses leverage to achieve a strategic objective. Richards often uses leverage because he possesses it.

WHY RICHARDS IS DANGEROUS

Many characters underestimate Richards because he lacks status, wealth and influence. But he possesses something more dangerous: knowledge. He uncovers things people desperately want hidden. And unlike corporate executives, he has little to lose.

RICHARDS AND TRACY

The Tracy-Richards relationship evolves dramatically. Initially they are client and investigator; later they become adversaries, and ultimately mutual threats.

Richards gradually realizes Tracy is involved in matters far larger than the assignment he originally accepted. Tracy gradually realizes Richards knows too much.

Each begins evaluating the other as a potential risk. This creates some of the strongest tension in the series.

THE NOIR HERO

Richards is very much in the tradition of noir detectives: he's clever, cynical, flawed. He's convinced he's smarter than the situation. The tragedy is that he may actually be right.

He often *is* the smartest investigator in the room, yet intelligence alone cannot protect him.

WHAT RICHARDS WANTS

At a deeper level, Richards wants recognition. He wants proof that he matters and he wants to be more than a hired gun. Every breakthrough reinforces that desire, and every discovery makes him feel closer to significance.

This becomes increasingly dangerous.

THE TRAGIC IRONY

Richards starts as someone seeking the truth. He ends as someone exploiting the truth. That shift defines his arc. The information does not change, his relationship to it does.

WHERE HE ENDS

By the conclusion of the series Richards has evolved from investigator, observer and outsider into manipulator, power broker and formidable threat.

Still he never fully joins the world he studies; he remains an outsider looking in and that isolation is what ultimately defines him. He knows everyone's secrets but belongs nowhere himself.

AIMAN HAKIM



Core Arc

Beginning: Charming Malaysian security executive who appears to be little more than a useful business contact.

Middle: Evolves into Tracy's confidant, fixer, and occasional lover.

End: Becomes the keeper of Tracy's most dangerous secrets while forcing her to confront the consequences of her own methods.

WHO AIMAN IS AT THE START

When we first meet Aiman on the flight to Kuala Lumpur, he appears disarmingly pleasant. He's intelligent, cultured, observant and effortlessly charming. He's also younger than Tracy – about the age of her husband Matt.

Unlike Fischer's awkward kindness or Matt's charismatic bravado, Aiman projects calm confidence. He immediately begins reading Tracy.

THE HUMAN LIE DETECTOR

Aiman's defining skill is perception. Within minutes he correctly infers Tracy is powerful authority figure who's carrying a problem with her.

This is important because Tracy is usually the observer. For perhaps the first time in the series someone is observing her.

WHY TRACY IS DRAWN TO HIM

Aiman represents something different from both Matt and Fletcher. **Fletcher** represents idealism, **Matt** represents power. **Aiman** represents capability to solve complex problems. He's a man who gets things done without speeches and grand visions, offering solutions.

THE OFFER

Aiman's business proposition becomes one of the most important moments in the series. At his company, "No service request is out of bounds." That line encapsulates his character. Most people hear customer service; Tracy hears possibility.

THE SHADOW WORLD

Aiman introduces Tracy to a world beyond negotiation. Throughout her mediation career Tracy solves problems through persuasion, contracts and leverage. Aiman solves problems through logistics, surveillance, staging and operational execution. He becomes the bridge between Tracy's unique needs and real-world action.

THE FIXER

Every power structure eventually requires someone willing to do uncomfortable things. Aiman fills that role. He helps arrange protection operations, surveillance, covert activities, fabricated scenarios and highly questionable corporate solutions.

Unlike Richards, he does not obsess over truth; unlike Tracy, he does not obsess over leverage; unlike Matt, he does not obsess over control.

He concentrates on effectiveness.

THE MORAL FLEXIBILITY

One reason Aiman is fascinating is that he rarely appears conflicted; he accepts the world as it is. If a client wants something done, he evaluates feasibility not morality.

That makes him both useful and dangerous.

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH TRACY

The Tracy-Aiman relationship is fundamentally different from Tracy's relationships with Matt and Fletcher. Matt challenges her authority; Fletcher challenges her heart; Aiman challenges her self-image.

Aiman sees the real Tracy, not the mediator, executive or public persona. He sees the operator.

THE ROMANCE

The romance between Tracy and Aiman is less about love than recognition. They share traits such as intelligence, discretion, emotional control, strategic thinking and manipulation of others.

Each understands the other's professional language creating a space for intimacy. The brief affair eventually becomes one of the catalysts for Tracy's downfall when Matt gets wind of it.

THE BUSINESS PARTNER

As their relationship deepens, Tracy increasingly relies on Aiman. What begins as a business connection evolves into dependence. She turns to him when conventional institutions fail. She trusts him with matters she would trust to almost no one else.

This trust is significant because Tracy trusts very few people.

AIMAN'S VIEW OF TRACY

Perhaps the most revealing moment comes when Aiman innocently references the reviled nickname "The Medea of Mediation." Tracy reacts sharply and Aiman immediately backs off.

But the scene reveals something important: He has studied her, understands her reputation and recognizes the darkness she seeks to hide.

THE PROFESSIONAL EQUAL

Most people in Tracy's orbit occupy subordinate positions. Hannah learns from her; Marilyn depends on her; Richards works for her.

Aiman occupies none of these positions. He's one of the few characters who meets Tracy as a peer. They negotiate with each other, challenge each other and occasionally manipulate each other. But neither fully dominates the relationship.

THE IRONY

The irony of Aiman's arc is that he may be the least deceptive major character. His business literally embraces moral flexibility. He tells Tracy almost exactly who he is from the beginning - we'll do anything for the right amount of money. Aiman hides nothing, unlike Fletcher, Matt and Richards.

The audience simply doesn't appreciate the significance until later.

WHERE HE ENDS

By the conclusion of the series Aiman occupies a unique position. He possesses knowledge of Tracy's secrets, her operations and her vulnerabilities. He could be a major player in a second season .

Yet he never attempts a coup, never seeks ownership. He doesn't try to become Matt or Tracy. Power is not his objective, access, information and utility is

He remains a man operating comfortably in the shadows while others battle in the spotlight.

Fischer and Fletcher Cuttbate



Unlike all the other characters in the series, Fischer (and his various aliases) is a con man playing other people to seduce his marks into turning over large sums of cash for the opportunity to advance medical research while earning dividends on their investments. Life details of the man behind the con artists are not developed in the series for he simply plays the catalyst for all of Tracy's actions and decisions going forward. As the "identical twins" are introduced in the first episode, and dispatched in the second, their arcs are brief and contrived.

Core Arc - Fischer

Beginning: Motivated entrepreneur focused on monetizing a breakthrough therapy for a rare eye disease that affects Tracy's father. Thoughtful and generous, excited for Tracy's interest in his work.

Middle: Manages to entice Tracy far enough into the scam to keep her attention.

End: Revealed to be a corporate criminal along with co-conspirators who goes into hiding after the discovery of illicit financial maneuvers.

Core Arc - Fletcher

Beginning: Estranged twin brother who disdains the focus on monetizing the therapy, actively blocking business plans. Introduced as a crusty eccentric, Fletcher readily drops his façade after deciding corporate mediator Tracy is genuine.

Middle: The once cautious Fletcher feels confident enough to reveal to Tracy his alternate eye disease cure. He successfully parlays his false sincerity and studied naivete into a significant cash investment from Tracy.

End: Revealed to be a con man playing dual roles, he remains hidden until his next con targeting Marilyn comes to Tracy's attention. His arc ends with him on the floor with a bullet hole in his throat.

THE TWO MEN

One of the reasons Fischer is compelling is that he effectively exists as two characters. In order to pull off the scam on Tracy, the man who claims to be Fischer is a regular businessman pursuing a therapy for a rare eye disease that happens to afflict Tracy's father. The R&D for such a therapy captures Tracy's interest in an outsized way.

The man who claims to be Fletcher is presented as Fischer's identical twin – yet he is almost the opposite of Fischer. Fletcher is an eccentric who disdains the ways of the corporate world, and as such is an adversary to his brother. Yet he attracts Tracy when he reveals he has a better solution to the eye disease than Fischer

THE DREAMER

At his core, Fletcher is a dreamer. He is not primarily motivated by power nor control. His obsession is the cure; it's his life's mission. This makes him unusually sympathetic. The audience believes his goal is fundamentally noble.

THE TWIN BROTHER CONFLICT

The conflict with Fletcher's brother is central to understanding him. Fletcher sees himself as more an artist than a businessman like his corporate brother. It bothers him

that Fischer wants to monetize the therapy by dragging out patients' recovery, rather than cure the disease once and for all.

WHY TRACY FALLS FOR HIM

Fletcher projects authenticity and vulnerability – things Tracy rarely encounters in others. For example, his spare bungalow, his lack of polish, his dedication to playing the guitar and painting - all stand in sharp contrast to Fischer's cramped approach to dealing with the insidious eye disease.

Fletcher feels real which is his greatest deception.

FLETCHER AND TRACY

The relationship works because both characters see idealized versions of one another. Tracy sees someone who's a visionary, an artist, a scientist. Fletcher sees and plays on Tracy's attributes as a savior, investor, and most importantly, a believer.

The Good (Bad) Shepard

Pilot Episode Treatment: “The Cure and the Con”

A sharp, professional Manhattan mediator rushes to settle a dispute between two nanotech companies, only to get pulled into a biotech family feud that could lead to a cure for her blind father—until leaked “confidential” books, an FBI raid, and a vanished CEO compel her to invest in the biotech research.

The time is the present; the place is New York City. Tracy Shepard, a stylish woman in her 40s paces anxiously among other would-be airline passengers waiting on standby to board an early morning flight from New York to LA. As a professional mediator on contract to two companies doing business in the fast-growing nanotechnology industry, she is due in LA to lead a meeting to resolve a dispute between the feuding high-tech firms: NanoNano and PicoTech. Normally very organized and punctual, Tracy has arrived late to the airport and her tardiness has put her seat in jeopardy. After cajoling the gate agent unsuccessfully to pull a dead-heading flight attendant off the plane, Tracy is just about ready to throw a fit when a rumped, slightly overweight middle-aged man intercedes and makes a chivalrous offer. He is Fischer Cuttbate, a passenger on the flight to LA.

“I don’t mean to butt in, but I couldn’t help overhearing your predicament, ma’am. I’d be happy to trade my seat with you for one on the next flight. I’m in no hurry.”

Impressed by Fischer's uncommon generosity, and a bit smug that she triumphed over the gate agent in the end, Tracy swaps tickets with Fischer and boards the plane. Tracy waves to Fischer as she boards the plane in time to make her important meeting as the good-Samaritan saunters off to an airport bar.

In LA, Tracy enters a conference room and is met by Ron from NanoNano, a large man suffering from acromegaly – a growth disorder that distorts the hands and faces of its victims. Tracy proceeds to introduce herself to the heads of the two companies who have hired her to mediate them out of a dispute that is hurting business for both of them: Matt Blankenshein of NanoNano, and Sumner Fogle of PicoTech. Matt is a confident, young entrepreneur accustomed to wealth and privilege, a man who sees no boundaries. Fogle is the opposite: a portly businessman in his sixties who cautiously, patiently worked his way to the top from the rank and file in companies of the past. Each man has brought along several executives to the mediation, and tension in the conference room is high. Responding to a testosterone-fueled outburst contesting her credibility, Tracy makes it clear to the men in the room that today she's in charge. "I could ask all of you to lay your cocks on the table and I'll choose the winner with a ruler... or you can shut up for a nanosecond and let me outline a plan that no one will like but no one will completely despise either." Unaccustomed to being berated – by a woman no less! – the men shut up and take their seats like chastised schoolboys.

Tracy makes a compelling case to NanoNano and PicoTech on the financial and strategic virtues of accepting her proposals. Both companies compete in the fast-growing nanotechnology industry, and while the two battle each other they are vulnerable to competitive encroachment by upstarts. Not yet ready to capitulate, the executives argue and sling insults across the table, as well as at Tracy, but her methodical, even-keeled temperament prevails. In the end, Matt and Fogle agree on a resolution; deep down the two CEOs believe NanoNano came out ahead. After Fogle

and his team somberly leave the conference room, Matt congratulates Tracy on her tenacity. “Impressive, Ms. Shepard. You’ve got quite a pair for a lady.” Tracy is unfazed by the cocky remark, for she’s encountered Matt’s type many times before in her mediation dealings: the brash young, full-a-cum, hot-shot son of privilege. Not that she finds Matt unattractive – quite the contrary. She remains cool. “I’m glad you’re glad, Mr. Blankenshein.” When Matt inquires about Tracy’s next mediation gig, she replies playfully, “As I recall, it’s a dispute over oil leases in Texas. Someone probably laid pipe where they shouldn’t have.” Matt enjoys Tracy’s double-entendre. Later that evening as Tracy sips a fruity cocktail by the hotel pool she takes a call from Matt who invites her to meet him the next day, but she informs him that she’s taking an early flight back to New York the next morning. Flattered and not ready to burn any bridges, Tracy tells Matt, “Next time.”

The following morning Tracy walks onto a jet en route to New York City when to her surprise she encounters Fischer sitting in her row in first class. With more time now she thanks him effusively for giving up his seat for her. She also makes it clear that tardiness is not one of her traits, blaming the late arrival on her normally-competent limo driver. Fischer replies that giving up his seat really wasn’t a big deal. “My meeting with the venture capitalists wasn’t until the next day.” The mention of “venture capitalists” intrigues Tracy who inquires to the nature of Fischer’s business. He explains that he and his identical twin brother Fletcher own a small bio-tech laboratory that is developing a therapy for a rare eye disease: retinitis pigmentosa. Tracy is taken aback. This exact disease afflicts her father Charles, a former physics professor at Columbia University who is now completely blind and essentially house-bound in a modest New York apartment . She presses Fischer for information and learns that progress on the promising retinitis therapy is at a standstill because Fletcher opposes the infusion of cash from outside investors. Fischer makes it clear that he’s

irritated by his brother's intransigence – especially since Fletcher is hands-off and contributes little to the business operations, despite being a fifty-percent co-owner.

Concerned that a therapy capable of helping her father might never come to market, stymied by a dispute between the two brothers, Tracy offers her mediation services at no charge. Fischer insists on paying something for the effort, and he and Tracy settle on \$1,000. After shaking on the deal, Fischer invites Tracy to come by the lab's office sometime to hear a presentation on the retinitis therapy.

Back in New York, Tracy visits her father Charles in his brownstone apartment in Manhattan. Sitting together in the living room, Tracy recounts her conversation with Fischer regarding the retinitis therapy, including the news that the progress has stalled due to the fraternal dispute. Charles implores Tracy to help mediate the dispute to which she replies, "That's what I hope to do. I'm planning to go to Jersey in a few days to meet with the brother." Later, while tidying up the kitchen Tracy discovers an old pistol in a cabinet drawer. Fearful that her father might one day descend deeper into depression and commit an act of suicidal desperation, Tracy stows the pistol in her purse.

Some days later, having decided to accept Fischer's offer to hear a presentation Tracy makes a trip to the lab offices where she meets Chad Knecht, the business director, and Jim Torrent, the chief scientist. Fischer greets Tracy and escorts her into a conference room. Torrent proceeds to explain the workings of the disease and the technology behind the therapy. After the presentation Fischer reiterates his concerns about financing, and makes a prediction that his recalcitrant brother will refuse to meet with Tracy. Tracy informs Fischer, "Would it surprise you if Fletcher already agreed to meet with me?" Fischer is impressed. As Tracy prepares to leave, Knecht says he will email the presentation file to her.

Back in her stylish Sutton Place apartment, Tracy finally works up the nerve to deal with the pistol she took from her father's kitchen drawer. Following instructions she located on the internet Tracy safely pops out the clip. Sadly, she places the pistol and the clip in her closet. Returning to her computer, Tracy notes that Knecht has emailed the presentation file as promised. She prints it out.

The next day Tracy shows up at Fletcher's rustic bungalow in New Jersey. After making Tracy wait on the porch while he finishes a phone call Fletcher calls her in, only to treat her shabbily. Believing Tracy to be one of Fischer's tools of persuasion, Fletcher challenges her motivations and credentials. Even after Tracy portrays herself as merely a disinterested party seeking nothing more than a satisfactory compromise to the brothers' dispute, Fletcher behaves rudely, going so far to question her fascination with retinitis pigmentosa. "Why do you care so much about this? Does someone you know have retinitis or something?" Tracy snaps at the cheeky provocation, putting Fletcher down hard with the facts of her own father's struggles. Tracy is about to storm out when Fletcher begs for forgiveness. He admits his demeanor was uncalled-for; his arrogance put up as a shield against what he believed to be a crass ploy engineered by his brother. Haltingly, Fletcher begs Tracy to stay. Sensing contrition or perhaps an opening to influence a weakened opponent, Tracy agrees.

Fletcher reveals some interesting news to Tracy: while Fischer and the lab scientists have been developing a therapy to address retinitis pigmentosa, Fletcher and an outside collaborator have been working on an actual cure to the insidious eye disease. Fletcher explains that a cure is better for the patient, but that a therapy which must be administered daily makes more money for the company. Fletcher contrasts his vision of producing a one-time cure with Fischer's greedy approach of milking suffering patients forever. And there in a nutshell is the real source of their dispute. He despises the venture capitalists that his brother wants to tap. "It's only money to them."

Furthermore, Fletcher reveals his admittedly paranoid fear that Fischer is manipulating the finances of the lab they co-own to secure an advantageous position should the therapy prove a financial success. Tracy isn't sure what to make of things now. Perhaps her preconceived notions about Fletcher as a contrarian Luddite were misguided.

Noticing a vintage electric guitar in a stand, Tracy asks Fletcher whether he plays. He explains that he purchased the guitar years ago. "It's the same kind that Keith Richards plays, a 1955 Telecaster." Fletcher proceeds to play some Rolling Stones tunes; Tracy is impressed.

On the train ride back to New York, Tracy thumbs through the presentation emailed to her previously by Chad Knecht. After reaching what should have been the end of the presentation Tracy discovers a number of additional pages containing financial data marked "confidential." It appears they have been appended accidentally. Back home in front of her computer, Tracy concludes that Fletcher's concerns were legitimate; someone at the lab has in fact been cooking the books to Fletcher's disadvantage. Determined to warn Fletcher of the deceit, Tracy arranges to meet him again.

Fletcher shows up the next day for lunch at a tony Manhattan restaurant. He's decidedly underdressed for the venue, sporting worn jeans and a flannel shirt. In contrast, Tracy arrives impeccably turned out. Tracy shows Fletcher her analysis of the confidential financial charts, but he acts insufficiently concerned. He'd prefer to learn more about Tracy. Discussing art, Fletcher learns that Tracy owns an original Kandinsky painting. Tracy already knows that Fletcher is a fan of Frida Kahlo as evidenced by his derivative painting she observed on an easel in his bungalow. Fletcher reveals that his own mother went blind with glaucoma, and Tracy summarizes her academic background, but as time recedes she feels compelled to circle back to the

subject of their lunch meeting: potential fraud at the lab. Finally, Fletcher concedes he should probably consult a forensic accountant.

A week later, Tracy is in hot Texas mediating the dispute over oil leases she had previously mentioned to Matt. During a much needed break from the childish behavior of the so-called professional company executives, she checks in with her assistant who informs her she received a call from someone at Fischer's lab. Tracy returns the call and learns from the receptionist that the lab can't pay her \$1,000 invoice for her mediation services. "We can't pay for anything right now," informs the receptionist. "The FBI raided our company on Monday and froze our accounts." Tracy asks to speak to Fischer and learns he is on the lam – no one knows where he and his business manager are. Tracy is floored.

Back in New York, sorting through a pile of mail, Tracy opens a letter from Fletcher which contains a note and a check. In the note he explains that he took Tracy's advice, hired a forensic accountant and discovering the depth of fraud, sadly called in the FBI to investigate. When he learned the FBI froze the accounts he felt obligated to make good on Fischer's agreement to pay Tracy \$1,000 for her services.

Later, Tracy pays a visit to her father, but she's subdued. The stress of the Texas mediation shows through; furthermore, in light of the demise of the lab, she's sorry now that she built up the promise of the retinitis therapy. Charles senses Tracy's downbeat mood and suggests she take a break from the rat-race. "Find a nice man. Fall in love." Charles's advice only deepens Tracy's sadness. Always working, constantly on the go, mid-40 year-old Tracy doesn't need to be reminded that she's long neglected her love life. She changes the subject, informing her father that the next mediation involves professional football – a dispute that includes a college player, his agent, and the New York Jets. Charles is more interested in the status of the retinitis therapy. She

dances around the troubles facing the lab, noting that Fletcher has some better ideas about a real cure.

“He just needs money to get it rolling,” notes Tracy.

“Money? That’s all? Why don’t you help him out, Tracy?”

Tracy demurs. She’s not an investment banker. But to keep her father hopeful, she quickly adds, “Believe me Dad, when Fletcher gets further along I’d be happy to invest. You know, helping to run a real business with real products would be a breath of fresh air.”

Riding home in her limo from her father’s place Tracy receives a call from Fletcher. He rambles on a bit about being foolish for not confiding completely in Tracy. Finally, Fletcher gets to the point: he invites Tracy to dinner where he will explain everything to her. Although wall-to-wall booked with meetings and engagements, Tracy accepts his invitation.

Fletcher meets Tracy at an upscale Manhattan restaurant around 8pm for dinner. In a complete turnabout from the sartorial debacle he suffered at lunch some weeks earlier with Tracy, Fletcher shows up in a stylish suit and tie. Dinner is served, along with copious amounts of fine wine. Fletcher and Tracy talk about the demise of the lab, the fate of Fischer, the future of the therapy. Despite the dismal state of affairs Fletcher appears unconcerned. With some prodding from Tracy, Fletcher finally reveals the reason he summoned her to meet with him. “I know I led you to believe I was just messing around, because I didn’t want anyone to know about it, but I’m on the verge of a real cure.” To this point, Tracy assumed Fletcher was light-years away from developing his visionary cure. But with Fletcher’s declaration of near-success, Tracy is ecstatic (an emotion amplified by the consumption of alcohol.) Fletcher reveals that while his twin brother was a profligate soul, he saved his inheritance money and is now

prepared to plow \$1 million into the cure. Tracy assumes this amount is sufficient to proceed but Fletcher corrects her, making it clear that with new hiring, equipment and insurance costs he will need another million. And he surprises Tracy when he says he plans to meet with venture capitalist the following day despite his revulsion for their practices. “It seems that’s the only way research turns into a product,” comments Fletcher, “unless you’re a multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical company.” Before Tracy, now modestly inebriated, can react to what appears to be a risky plan, Fletcher compliments her well-defined legs and sexy feet. The remark catches her off-guard, and for the first time in decades, she feels like a little girl.

After dinner, Tracy and Fletcher stroll the periphery of Central Park. Tracy kisses him and invites him home to check out her . . . Kandinsky. In the throes of making love, Tracy spots a truly remarkable sight: a pair of dice tattooed on Fletcher’s testicles. A three and a four. He explains the provenance of the tattoo, but Tracy prefers to press on with sex, noting proudly that she can peel a banana with her feet.

The next morning, hungover and feeling quite washed out, Tracy struggles to get out of bed. Fletcher has already showered and gotten dressed. After fetching aspirins and water for Tracy and helping her to the window for a breath of fresh air, he reminds Tracy of his upcoming meeting with the venture capitalists. Tracy fears Fletcher is ill-equipped to go toe-to-toe with the VCs who will undoubtedly try to strike a deal that disadvantages him. She offers – insists – to accompany him to the meeting. Fletcher is relieved to know Tracy the mediation expert will be there with him.

Later in the afternoon, Fletcher and Tracy meet the VCs in a mid-town hotel conference room where they receive a decidedly one-sided offer. As Tracy suspected, the VCs peg Fletcher for a business novice and try to play him for a patsy. They challenge him on the wisdom of developing a cure when a life-long therapy seems more lucrative. Fletcher reacts angrily to this same line of reasoning that drove a wedge

between him and Fischer. Sensing no worthy proposal is forthcoming, Tracy abruptly cuts the meeting off and sends the VCs packing. After the VCs leave, Tracy turns to Fletcher: “They’ll rip you off.”

Fletcher is both angry and downbeat.

“So where am I going to get the funds to go on, Tracy? I’m out of ideas.”

Tracy responds quickly, “From me, Fletch. Let me be your angel investor.” The unexpected proposal from Tracy brightens Fletcher’s demeanor ten-fold.

“You’d loan me the money?” Fletcher asks.

“No, Fletch, not loan. Invest. I would take an equity position.”

They resolve to meet get their lawyers together to hammer out a deal. Then Fletcher invites Tracy out for a drink, and although she’s barely recovered from the previous evening’s over-indulgence, she accepts.

A week or so later, the big meeting commences. Fletcher’s people propose a deal to Tracy that is essentially structured as a loan. Tracy reminds them that she’s interested solely in an equity position. She gets an offer of stock, but Tracy counters with a proposal whereby the new company grants her millions of stock options that if exercised after an IPO would make her the majority shareholder. Fletcher’s people recoil, but she’s not finished. She also demands a seat on the board. They counsel Fletcher on the risks, but when he signals his satisfaction with the arrangement, they back off. The deal is sealed. Later on, Tracy and Fletcher celebrate in her bed.

The next day Tracy has lunch with her lawyer Hannah to go over some of the finer points of the deal. Hannah notes that Fletcher’s lawyer wants to set up the first board meeting in a week, but Tracy reminds her that she’ll be out of town a lot in the coming weeks on the big football negotiation.

Tracy hits the road to conduct shuttle diplomacy among the star college football player, his aggrieved agent, and the New York Jets front office. Things go poorly at first when the agent and the football player's father get into it, but Tracy senses from the interactions that the agent is the most vulnerable of the parties. Later she meets him one-on-one and makes a monetary offer for him to go away. In an indignant response the agent threatens to go to the press with a smear against the football player's father. Unimpressed, Tracy comes back with a claim that someone she knows has hacked into the agent's computer and found nothing that would support the agent's threat. She adds that the hacker, however, did come across some child pornography. The insinuation is that Tracy could make life pretty miserable for the agent if he doesn't capitulate. The mediation quickly wraps up when the agent takes some go-away money.

Back home at last, Tracy gets ready for the first board meeting. She's excited about getting the operation underway, and of seeing Fletcher again. Arriving at the lab building, Tracy notes the piss-poor condition of the lobby. She trudges up the stairs to the second floor and finds the door to the lab offices removed. She peers inside and finds the lab office a mess; it looks like a gut renovation is in progress. A spooky cleaning lady informs Tracy that the previous tenants left abruptly, and the owner is prepping the space for a new tenant. Tracy is shocked. She runs down the stair, nearly tripping in her sexy heels, and heads for a nearby bistro where she orders a stiff drink and phones her lawyer Hannah. Within minutes Hannah calls back with disturbing news: it seems the phone numbers for Fletcher's people have been disconnected, that the lab office had been rented month-to-month for the past four months, and that Fletcher's home in Jersey is available to lease. Realizing the worst, Tracy instructs Hannah to collect as much information she can gather while something useful may still

exist. She hangs up, gulps her drink and simmers at the notion that she's just been scammed out of \$1 million.

The Good (Bad) Shepard

Second Episode Synopsis: “Lex Talionis”

After losing \$1m in the scam and learning the “FBI raid” that launched her involvement never happened, a dismayed Tracy hunts her con man through a nanotech company’s inner circle— then lures him into a deadly trap, forcing her to stage an alibi, coerce an her unwitting accomplice Marilyn into silence, and trade guilt for power just as a private eye gets dangerously close to the truth.

In the wake of being swindled out of a million dollars, Tracy Shepard tries to do the “proper” thing: she marches into an FBI office and lays out the entire nightmare— Fischer and Fletcher Cuttbate, RodCone Labs, the miracle eye cure, the missing men, the “raid,” the fake incorporation, the vanished office. Special Agent Taft listens... and then drops the first gut-punch: the FBI has no record of any raid, any warrants, or even RodCone Labs. The “raid” Tracy was told about wasn’t a botched operation—it was part of the con.

Taft’s forensics team starts building a composite sketch, but Tracy’s details are frustratingly thin. The artist floats a chilling possibility: what if the “twin brothers” were never two people at all? Tracy realizes she never saw them together—only heard the story of their feud.

Back home, Tracy refuses to sit still and hires a private investigator, Grayson Richards, offering a strong incentive: his fee plus 25% of any recovered money. Richards immediately treats the entire thing as an engineered operation—someone tipped the con man off about Tracy’s flight, perhaps even manipulated the overbooking, the late limo, the timing. Tracy is forced to consider the unthinkable: she wasn’t unlucky—she

was selected. As Richards leaves, Tracy blurts one humiliating but crucial detail: the con man has a snake tattoo on his penis. Alone, the iron-willed “Medea of Mediation” finally breaks and cries.

A dark montage follows: Tracy spirals, liquidates her life (her precious Kandinsky goes at auction), and collateral damage spreads—Hannah is pushed out, Tracy’s driver ends up job hunting, and Tracy lies to her blind father about a “bad investment,” insisting she’s fine while quietly hollowed out. Three months pass. Taft calls again with nothing. Tracy is stuck in limbo, angry and humiliated.

Then a headline snaps her back to predatory focus: NanoNano announces its IPO. Tracy calls Matt Blankenschein—who recognizes her instantly and flirts like a shark—and maneuvers an invite into NanoNano’s orbit. She flies to San Diego, attends the IPO celebration, and starts reading the room: the fratty male executive culture, the bragging, the casual misogyny—and especially Marilyn Jenkins, NanoNano’s HR leader.

When Marilyn casually describes a “biologist” named Calvin who’s developing a breakthrough cure but is blocked by... his twin brother who prefers a daily pill... Tracy feels the floor drop out from under her. Different city, same story. And then Marilyn confirms the one detail Tracy can’t ignore: Calvin has a snake tattoo. Tracy pulls Marilyn aside and dismantles the con point-by-point—fabricated printouts, planted “scientists,” and a familiar thread: Ron Slomsky, now suspected as a co-conspirator.

Tracy convinces Marilyn to cooperate in a sting: accept Calvin’s invitation, get him drunk, get him home—then Tracy will confront him and force a confession. Tracy simultaneously deepens her leverage elsewhere, cozying up to Matt on his yacht with flirtation and strategy, hinting she belongs on his board while making herself indispensable.

The trap springs in New Jersey. Marilyn plays her part, bails at the last moment, and Tracy enters Calvin's (Fletcher's) bedroom holding her father's pistol. But Tracy's version of "negotiation" has turned feral: she offers Lex Talionis—finger or confession—backed by a gun and a pair of heavy-duty snips. Calvin taunts her, calls her bluff... and lunges. The gun goes off. Calvin dies with a shot through the throat. Tracy, shaking and sick, crosses a line she can't uncross—she mutilates the body in rage and stages the scene.

She cleans surfaces, steals the dead man's phone, drives into the dark, and manufactures her alibi: a panicked fake 911 call as "Tiffany," a frightened 16-year-old who "shot a would-be rapist with his own gun." She drops the phone in a pine forest so police will find it and track the "girl," then disappears into Manhattan like nothing happened.

The next morning, news confirms the story is working: police treat it as a messy sex crime gone wrong, the phantom "girl" still missing. Tracy flies as if resuming her old life, slides into Matt's world again, and then has to do the one thing she didn't plan for: tell Marilyn. At a San Diego bistro, Marilyn is horrified—Tracy didn't just confront the con man; she killed him. Tracy insists it was self-defense and that the narrative is under control. Marilyn wants to go to authorities; Tracy demands silence. Their relationship becomes a negotiation in the rawest sense: leverage, fear, self-worth. Tracy offers Marilyn what Marilyn secretly wants— status and power—and begins shaping NanoNano's strategy (cosmetics, Malaysia expansion) in ways that conveniently elevate Marilyn too.

Time jumps forward. Tracy's new life "wins": Matt gets major government contracts, talks about eye-disease markets, proposes marriage, and Tracy becomes a board-level force. Marilyn is promoted and shipped to Malaysia as a GM—rewarded, but also exiled, and now permanently compromised.

Finally, the past claws back. Richards calls a year later: he found a coroner's report matching the tattoo detail; the victim was murdered and no one was charged. Tracy, now "happy," tries to shut it down—too forcefully. Richards senses something off. After the call, Tracy quietly checks the kitchen drawer and confirms the truth she's been hiding from everyone, including herself: the pistol is back.

The Good (Bad) Shepard

Third Episode Synopsis: “No Request is Out of Bounds”

When a relentless private investigator uncovers the true identity of the dead con man and ties him to NanoNano’s orbit, Marilyn is ambushed by an overseas blackmailer and Tracy—racing to contain the fallout—hires a Kuala Lumpur security fixer whose “solutions” may be more dangerous than the scandal itself.

Grayson Richards, stung by Tracy’s sudden disinterest, refuses to let the “tatted cock” case die. In a rain-soaked night visit to a coroner’s office, he bribes an autopsy tech for the goods: the con man’s real name—Walter Mough (a.k.a. Fischer/Fletcher Cuttbate)—and grisly documentation that confirms the identifying tattoo. Richards’ curiosity hardens into conviction: the death wasn’t random; it’s connected to the women the con man targeted and to whoever made sure the truth stayed buried.

Tracy makes a calculated move: she tracks down Hannah Goldman, now polished and working at a real estate law office. Under a flimsy pretext, Tracy offers Hannah a new role at NanoNano—more money, more status, more proximity. Hannah resists—she’s stable now—until Tracy’s pitch turns honest in its own way: loyalty isn’t optional, and Tracy needs someone she can control. Hannah accepts under pressure and charm, amused and wary in equal measure.

Meanwhile Richards pushes his investigation through official channels (FOIA), then unofficial ones. He needles an evidence clerk, learns the rhythms of an under-resourced police department, and pulls a thread that leads west: a small outlet’s headline—Ron Slomsky—the disgraced former exec.

Richards flies to San Diego and visits Slomsky in a grim Section 8 apartment. Slomsky insists the child porn charges were planted—cleanly, expertly—and he is bitter enough

to talk. Richards offers a lifeline: cyber-forensics help to build an appeal, in exchange for the truth about Mough/Cuttbate and the scams. The deal works. Slomsky admits he played a role in the original con against Tracy: manipulating logistics, ensuring she arrived late, setting up the “chance” encounter. He hints at a second target inside NanoNano—a woman executive—and admits the crew tried to run the con again around the time Walter Mough ended up dead.

Richards heads to NanoNano HQ under cover as a curious investor. In the lobby he catches sight of Matt—and Hannah, now in his orbit. He collects annual reports, studies the officer photos, and lands on the only woman executive prominently featured: Marilyn Jenkins, stationed in Malaysia. Richards draws a mental line between Tracy and Marilyn and feels the case crack open.

In Kuala Lumpur, Marilyn is under strain running the cosmetics division—technical delays, chemistry complications, schedule pressure. Her team proposes a material swap; she demands an impossible acceleration. Then her aide patches through a call from Richards—who name-drops Ron Slomsky and the tattoo, confirming he’s not guessing. Marilyn panics and hangs up. Richards, undeterred, literally draws the connection between Marilyn and Tracy in the annual report—his “snake” diagram turning suspicion into strategy.

Back in San Diego, Matt directs Tracy to “fix” Marilyn’s mess in Malaysia—framing it as persuasion, not science. Hannah is tasked with travel logistics; Tracy orders Hannah to come with her, reinforcing the new hierarchy: Hannah is no longer a former employee— she’s an instrument.

On the flight, Tracy meets Aiman Hakim, a polished Malaysian security executive who clocks her as powerful and troubled. Tracy bristles—she’s been conned on a plane

before—but Aiman’s pitch is smooth: protection from extortion syndicates, discretion, customized services, “no request out of bounds.” Tracy takes the card.

In KL, Tracy confronts Marilyn—not about chemistry, but about Richards. Marilyn reveals Richards called, connected them, and now suspects the truth behind Walter Mough’s death. Tracy’s composure tightens into menace: they must neutralize Richards, one way or another. Marilyn resists anything overtly illegal, but Tracy frames it as survival. As Tracy leaves, she issues the familiar command: no law enforcement; this stays between them.

That night Tracy summons Aiman at the St. Regis. She signs his NDA—then deliberately reveals she’s Tracy Shepard, not “Hannah.” Their flirtation turns into an affair layered with leverage: Tracy isn’t just buying services; she’s auditioning Aiman as a weapon. Aiman googles NanoNano and realizes too late he’s sleeping with the CEO’s wife. Tracy doesn’t blink—she simply gives instructions. The dynamic is clear: Aiman is intrigued, compromised, and now inside her gravity.

Back in Malaysia, Marilyn receives an anonymous envelope: a crude sketch of a penis with a snake tattoo—proof someone is watching, and someone knows. Matt calls to congratulate her on the project recovery; Marilyn plays along, shaken.

At a quiet restaurant, Marilyn is approached by a stocky stranger in an ill-fitting suit. He knows about Cuttbate, the “hooker” cover story, Ron Slomsky, and Marilyn’s connection to Tracy. He doesn’t want justice—he wants quid pro quo. Marilyn tries to bluff; he corners her with logic and implied receipts. The stranger leaves her with a warning: don’t contact authorities.

Marilyn calls Tracy in panic. Tracy cuts her off—Sunday, quarterly, no details on the phone—then hangs up. Marilyn orders another Jungle Bird with more rum. Across the ocean, Tracy lies beside the evidence of her own duplicity (hotel room, shower, men’s

clothes) and later lounges on Matt's yacht, casually proposing "security" for Marilyn—while privately calling Aiman. The cover story becomes strategy, and the strategy becomes a trap.

The Good (Bad) Shepard

Fourth Episode Synopsis: “Constructing Facades”

Unleashing a covert operation directed by her sometime lover, Tracy stages a bogus FBI probe to smoke out private investigator Richard and entrap Marilyn into betrayal, revealing the one loose end neither woman can control: the gun.

Marilyn is unraveling. When Richards calls, she explodes — “I will not be blackmailed!” — and slams the phone down. Richards is baffled; Marilyn’s panic confirms his suspicion: she’s tangled in something bigger than corporate harassment. He tries again and is shut out by her aide. Richards, now frozen out, takes notes and recalibrates.

Marilyn flies to San Diego and, with cruel irony, meets Tracy at the same bistro where the Cuttbate story first detonated. Marilyn blurts “blackmail” out loud; Tracy grips her forearm hard enough to bruise — control by touch. Tracy’s response is surgical: she reframes the crisis as IP harassment, not murder-adjacent scandal, and unveils her plan — she’s going to involve her “FBI contact” to intimidate Richards into backing down. Marilyn hates it, but Tracy’s certainty is intoxicating: no traces, no witnesses, hooker story holds. Then Tracy drops a detail that lands like a brick — her father has the gun. Marilyn realizes this isn’t paranoia; it’s exposure.

Tracy brings Aiman into deeper waters — literally — meeting him on Matt’s yacht. Aiman is out of his depth (boat shoes cosplay), but Tracy is perfectly in control. She asks about FBI methods and pushes for something this week, before the quarterly ends. Aiman promises a former agent on payroll and says he loves a challenge.

At the quarterly, Marilyn tries to play steady while Hannah offers sympathy and becomes the liaison to the “security firm.” Matt praises Marilyn publicly, Tracy keeps

her leashed privately, and Marilyn retreats to La Valencia for the weekend—pink hotel, pink expectations. Then the hammer drops: two “FBI agents” approach Marilyn poolside and summon her downtown. The downtown “FBI office” is a dingy storefront with flickering fluorescents and mugshots on the wall—low-budget authenticity. Erskine and Colby interview Marilyn: Richards, harassment, motive. Marilyn sticks to Tracy’s script—Chinese IP theft—until their questions sharpen toward something else: why did Tracy hire Richards at all? Why would Tracy contact the FBI about a PI she once employed? The agents imply Tracy may be compromised. Marilyn leaves shaken, lights a cigarette, and feels the ground shifting under her.

Crosscut: Matt heads to his own escape—Cabo on the Brobdignagian—surrounded by buddies and groupies. Hannah arrives with paperwork, gets pulled into the boys’ club dynamic, and is subtly sexualized and socialized into Matt’s orbit. Tracy, meanwhile, travels to New York and visits her father—seeking comfort and control in the same breath. At Dad’s brownstone, Tracy learns the unthinkable: her father sold the pistol—cash, no bill of sale, to a stranger from the library. Tracy’s composure fractures in real time. The gun isn’t just a weapon; it’s the physical link between rumor and prosecution, between narrative and evidence. Now it’s loose in the world.

Back in Mexico, Matt boasts about “Chinese harassment” and praises Tracy’s expensive KL security contract. Hannah is pressured into drinking and “fitting in.” Matt privately invites informality—“Call me Matt”—a small boundary shift that signals bigger ones coming.

In KL, the blackmail Stranger escalates: he confronts Marilyn in her parking garage, flashes a gun, demands a ride. But Marilyn now has the one thing Tracy’s money can buy: a bodyguard who acts like a professional. The bodyguard barrels in, tackles the Stranger, disarms him, zip ties him, and drags him upstairs—not to the police, but first to Marilyn’s apartment for “question time.” This sequence reveals the real nature of the

“security” solution: it’s not protection, it’s private coercion. The bodyguard unlocks the Stranger’s phone with face-ID brute force and finds the recorded restaurant blackmail. When the Stranger won’t give Richards’s number, the bodyguard escalates to a taser — buzz, scream, repeat — until the Stranger breaks.

Marilyn hears the screams from the kitchen, shaken by what Tracy’s hired help is capable of, and by what it means about Tracy. The bodyguard leaves Richards’s private number on the table and hauls the Stranger away. Marilyn is told to lock the door, work from home — like a hostage in her own life.

Marilyn reports the attack as IP theft intimidation to Matt (who is calling from the yacht at night under stars). Matt insists she fly back to the home office “until things settle.” Tracy calls too, delighted the stooge is in custody — “good for us” — and Marilyn confesses the blackmail angle while Tracy stays calm. It’s “all going according to plan.”

We then learn the chilling truth: the “FBI storefront” was not real law enforcement at all — it was Aiman’s staged operation, executed at Tracy’s request. Over lunch in New York, Tracy sits beside Aiman while she talks Marilyn through the cover story, careful not to be overheard. Aiman is distracted by vegan beef; Tracy is engineering outcomes.

Back in San Diego, Marilyn returns to the storefront again — only now the agents have sharper knowledge: Tracy was scammed, hired Richards, fired him, Richards became obsessed, and Richards now suspects Tracy killed the con man. The agents pressure Marilyn with 18 U.S. Code 1001 (lying to the FBI), and propose a plan: wear a wire, meet Richards, and let him hang himself. Marilyn agrees — partly coerced, partly cornered — offering Richards’s private number as leverage. The agents prep her with a brooch mic and a watch mic. Marilyn nervously tests them (“Testicles, testicles...”), the absurdity of it underscoring the terror.

Marilyn sits poolside in her distinctive scarf, waiting. “Richards” arrives—only it isn’t him. It’s a Fake Richards, an actor planted by Tracy/Aiman to manipulate Marilyn into confession and redirect blame. He plays the part: mentions the tattoo, the throat shot, the dead con man, and needles her about Tracy. He tries to frame Tracy as the anonymous tipster, to test and, if she fails, break Marilyn’s loyalty.

Marilyn, spiraling, begins to talk. First in denial, then sarcasm, then tears, then a fatal shift: she gives details—Tracy went to Cuttbate’s house to get a confession, the gun went off, the heel-stomp, the prostitute alibi, the long-game competence... and finally the devastating practical detail: “I think her father still has the gun.”

We cut to Richards alone in his office with the real gun—Dad’s pistol—spinning it on his desk like a compass that keeps pointing toward his heart.

The Good (Bad) Shepard

Fifth Episode Synopsis: “The Price of Avarice”

With a private investigator closing in and corporate loyalties unraveling, Tracy Shepard wages a quiet war to protect her secret—only to discover that ambition, desire, and revenge may destroy her long before the truth does.

The episode opens in the quiet bureaucracy of NanoNano’s procurement wing, where Marilyn, preparing to return to Kuala Lumpur, thanks Gordon for shielding her security expenses at the corporate level. Hannah, now embedded in procurement, begins to notice something troubling: the sudden appearance of Pacific Rim Security Services—an unapproved vendor with sprawling indemnification clauses and complex invoices that Gordon doesn’t have the resources to fully vet. Hannah volunteers to review the contracts herself, quietly stepping into dangerous territory.

Across the country, Richards deepens his off-books investigation. In a diner parking lot, he bribes an evidence clerk for access to the murder weapon and bullet. At a gun shop, he pays for an unofficial ballistics analysis that comes back with a damning “maybe.”

Meanwhile, Tracy’s hired operatives—posing as FBI agents—are actively dismantling Richards’s support network, manipulating Ron Slomsky with techno-babble lies while laughing at how easily he’s fooled.

Tracy, lounging on Matt’s yacht, learns from Aiman that Richards has identified Walter Mough—the con man’s real name. She realizes Marilyn has talked. Her control tightens.

The game is entering its end phase.

In Dubai, Matt and Hannah travel together under the guise of business expansion. Their professional partnership slips into intimacy at the Armani Hotel rooftop pool and later in bed—an affair layered with ambition, dependency, and betrayal. Hannah

simultaneously uncovers more suspicious Pacific Rim invoices: vague “field operations,” a mysterious Saigon LLC, and a downtown San Diego storefront lease. She brings these concerns to Matt, carefully framing them as accounting anomalies rather than accusations against Tracy.

Back in Malaysia, Tracy confronts Marilyn directly. Playing doctored recordings, Tracy forces Marilyn to resign under threat of prosecution, stripping her of power and dignity in one brutal meeting. Marilyn gets one final revenge: revealing she saw Matt and Hannah boarding a Dubai flight together. Tracy absorbs the blow in silence.

Matt receives Marilyn’s resignation during a high-level dinner in Dubai and begins to see fractures forming across his empire.

Meanwhile, Tracy and Aiman collaborate to corner Richards. They obtain surveillance footage proving Richards bribed morgue staff and illegally accessed evidence. Armed with this leverage, Tracy meets Richards in a New York hotel bar. She forces him to abandon the investigation under threat of criminal exposure. Richards extorts \$50,000 anyway —and delivers the ultimate humiliation: Tracy’s father unknowingly sold him the murder weapon, now rebranded as a valuable Audie Murphy collectible. Tracy pays, but leaves him with a chilling warning: “Death is the only water that washes away dirt.”

Believing she’s neutralized Richards and purged Marilyn, Tracy returns to San Diego expecting to reclaim control. Instead, she discovers Matt has fired Gordon, uncovered Pacific Rim’s fraudulent contracts, and begun legal proceedings to remove her from the board. Worse: Matt is openly with Hannah now.

On the yacht, Tracy confronts both of them. Matt admits the affair, announces he’s reshoring the cosmetics division, and informs Tracy the board will vote her out. Her

leverage is gone. Her narrative collapsed. She storms away soaked in rain, breaking a heel on the sidewalk—an unglamorous fall from power.

That night, alone in her apartment, Tracy receives a large wooden crate. Inside: her Kandinsky painting, returned by Matt with a curt note: “Sending your painting back. I never liked it.”

The gesture is surgical. Everything Tracy built — career, marriage, dominance—has been dismantled. She stands in silence, staring at the artwork that once symbolized her taste, status, and control.

Selected Scene Mockups

Tracy insists on making her flight



The moment the Gate Agent takes her thumb off the mike, TRACY gets in her face. Tracy, a tall, professional-looking woman also in her 40s wears a stylish black suit cut above the knee, and expensive heels that show off her toned legs.

TRACY
Listen. You've got to let me on that flight. I absolutely have to be in LA by noon. I'm mediating a dispute--

The Gate Agent turns away, disinterested in listening to the pleas of a latecomer.

GATE AGENT
--Impossible.

TRACY
I know you're deadheading at least one stewardess. Give me her seat and send her on the next flight.

The Gate Agent serves Tracy a look.

GATE AGENT
We don't call them stewardesses. They're flight attendants now.

Tracy glowers at the Gate Agent. Before tempers flare out of proportion, Fischer steps up to the counter. In heels, Tracy towers over him.

FISCHER
I don't mean to butt in, but I couldn't help overhearing your predicament, ma'am. I'd be happy to trade my seat with you for one on the next flight. I'm in no hurry.

TRACY
Really? Oh my. That's very generous of you sir, but I wouldn't want you to miss your flight.

Fischer explains his business... and his dilemma



FISCHER (CONT'D)
We're about ready to start clinical trials. That's when the serious financing is critical, hence my meeting with the VCs.

TRACY
What's the rare eye affliction?

FISCHER
Retinitis pigmentosa.

TRACY
My God!

FISCHER
It's a progressive retinal dystrophy.

TRACY
I know!

FISCHER
It starts with tunnel vision and usually leads to total blindness.

TRACY
I know! My father has it. He's essentially blind now, poor man. He used to teach Physics at Columbia. But now...

Fletcher charms Tracy during her negotiation visit



FLETCHER
It was nice of you to come all the way out here. I thought it would be a waste of time, but I'm glad I got the opportunity to explain my side.

TRACY
Me too.

FLETCHER
Uh, Tracy, don't tell Fischer about what I said about him cutting me out of the action. I shouldn't have mentioned that. And don't tell him about my work on a cure either. It's way too soon for that, OK?

TRACY
If you say so. It's important that my clients trust me.

FLETCHER
I trust you, Tracy.

TRACY
Well, thank you.

Tracy scans the room and sets her eyes on the guitar.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Do you play the guitar, Fletcher?

FLETCHER
Yeah, a little. Well actually, I've been playing since I was about nine. I bought that Fender 20 years ago at an auction - it's the same kind that Keith Richards plays. 1955 Telecaster.

Disturbed, Tracy finds a pistol in her blind father's drawer



TRACY
I'll be in the living room. Do you want anything from the kitchen?

DAD
How about some juice? I'll be out in a jiff.

Tracy rubs Dad's shoulder and pecks him on the cheek.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy roots around in the refrigerator and pulls out a quart of milk. She sniffs it and recoils. Tracy dumps the lumpy contents down the sink and reaches into a drawer for a towel. Hidden under the towel is a semi-automatic pistol. She's disturbed at the presence of a weapon.

Dad feels his way into the kitchen, running his hand along the wall.

DAD
So nice of you to visit me. What's new, Tracy Rae?

Tracy quickly stows the pistol in her purse. She pours a glass of juice, takes Dad by the arm and leads him out.

TRACY
Nothing special, Dad.

Tracy challenges VCs over their weak offer to fund Fletcher



TRACY
Development of a cure for retinitis pigmentosa is non-negotiable. Period. No life-long therapy. That's not the objective of Mr. Cuttbate's company.

VC #1
And why, may I ask, Mrs. Shepard, is that not the objective?

TRACY
Providing a cure is the right thing to do--

VC #2 grins derisively.

TRACY (CONT'D)
--and the clinical trials for a cure will cost significantly less than the trials for a therapy. The time to market will be reduced by a factor of two. The risk of competitive encroachment will be reduced dramatically. Get it?

VC #2 stops grinning. He glances nervously at VC #1 and rummages through his charts and tables.

VC #2
Well... I'm not so sure... I don't know... about that...

After uncomfortable rambling from VC #2, VC #1 intervenes.

VC #1
OK, look. You're the scientific expert Mr. Cuttbate. We're just simple financiers. Far be it from us to tell you how to conduct R&D. If you think a cure is a better play than a therapy, so be it.

Fletcher looks over at Tracy and smiles at the display of her business acumen. She remains stoned faced, refusing to look at Fletcher.

The moment Tracy realizes she's been scammed



INT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Suite 212 is a mess, looking as though gutted for renovation. Wearing expensive shoes, Tracy gingerly steps around detritus on the floor. SOUND of scraping O.S.

TRACY
Hello? Is anyone here?

The scraping stops. A CLEANING LADY steps out of a restroom.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Where is everybody? Isn't this Cuttbate Associates?

CLEANING LADY
(In Spanish with subtitles)
They left. I'm scraping shit off the bathroom floor. Would you like to help me?

TRACY
Do you speak English?

CLEANING LADY
Si. Un poco.

TRACY
Where is everybody?

CLEANING LADY
They leaves. Two weeks ago.

The old Cleaning Lady flashes Tracy a creepy toothless smile. Tracy bolts for the door.

Richards takes note of Tracy's stiletto heel



TRACY

Here's everything I know. As I explained to you on the phone Mr. Richards, I want this bastard Fletcher Cuttbate found and prosecuted. The FBI doesn't impress me.

RICHARDS

I understand, Ms. Shepard. My firm has a solid track record.

TRACY

On top of your fee, you can keep 25 percent of any money you recover as an added incentive. I expect results, Mr. Richards.

RICHARDS

From what you've already told me, Ms. Shepard, I am convinced that Fischer and Fletcher Cuttbate - no doubt aliases - are one and the same person.

Tracy shrugs, her legs crossed, a stiletto heel dangling from her toe.

C.U. Of the shoe and its pointy heel.

Richards notices.

Marilyn reveals a tantalizing clue



INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT/WOMEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tracy stands over a sink and washes her hands. She examines her face in the mirror. Suddenly she sees the image of Marilyn in the mirror fidgeting behind her. Tracy turns around and faces her.

MARILYN

Um, he does have a tattoo of a snake. On his... y'know.

Matt and Tracy get close on the yacht



The breeze kicks up. Matt drapes his sport coat across Tracy's bare shoulders.

TRACY

You have nice hands.

Matt looks down at Tracy's sexy feet.

MATT

And you have nice--

TRACY

--Matt, I know you read that silly article about me. Where they called me the "Medea of Mediation".

MATT

Medea?--

TRACY

--I'm not like that. Really. In my business I have to project an image--

Matt gently places his finger on Tracy's lips, cutting her off. He leans forward and kisses her.

MATT

Would you like to go below deck?
Relax a bit? Taste that '92?

Tracy turns her back on Coronado Island and embraces Matt.

Tracy finally confronts Fischer



Fletcher stands up slowly after spotting Tracy pointing a pistol at him. It's her father's old semi-automatic.

FLETCHER

Easy, Tracy. Shit. What d'ya want? Your million dollars? I ain't got it. It got split up an' spent. I'm sorry, but tha's the way the game works.

Tracy notes the easel propping up the painting with veins coming out of eyes.

TRACY

I see you're still ripping off Frida Kahlo.

FLETCHER

Why're you pointin' a gun at me?

TRACY

I came to negotiate for something that might make us whole again. You took a lot of money from me and you didn't hold up your end of the bargain. You let my father down, too. That wasn't nice, Fletcher.

FLETCHER

Sorry.

TRACY

Tell me, how did you come to know my business? And my father's affliction? How did you put it all together?

FLETCHER

You're the Medea of Mediation, aren't you? Interesting article.

Tracy smirks and shakes her head in disgust.

Matt, Tracy & Dad watch a classic that's a bit on the nose



INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tracy sits on the sofa, Matt puts his arm around her.

MATT
Who was that?

TRACY
No one. An old client. Whatcha watching, Dad?

DAD
"Double Indemnity."

MATT
A scam leads to murder.

C.U. of Tracy's fraught face.

Richards pries a technician for morgue secrets



INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

Inside the Autopsy Room, Cody resumes examination of a corpse on a slab. Cody addresses Richards without taking his attention away from the task at hand. Richards removes a notepad from his breast pocket.

CODY
What do you wanna know about Mr. Snake Tattoo?

RICHARDS
As much as you can tell me. And show me.

CODY
Show you? His body was removed over a year ago.

RICHARDS
I assume there are some records. Y'know, photos, tissue samples, stuff like that.

CODY
That wasn't in our agreement, Mr. Grayson.

RICHARDS
Richards. Well, can we add it to our agreement?

Aiman offers Tracy a unique business opportunity



AIMAN
Well, maybe for your subordinates?
We provide unique services
customized to your needs.
Concierge treatment. No service
request is out of bounds.

TRACY
No request is out of bounds?
Interesting.

AIMAN
You have a vital exec who may be
vulnerable to kidnapping, or his
family? We prevent that. You have
a trade secret you can't afford to
have stolen? We protect that. You
have a rogue employee? We insulate
you from such pengkhianatan.
(beat)
Treachery.

Marilyn's bodyguard subdues her tormentor



INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

The Stranger's attention is drawn to the advancing vehicle.
The license plate matches the Stranger's citation: V 8891.

STRANGER
What the fuck?

Marilyn escapes from the startled Stranger just as the
Bodyguard bounds out of the vehicle straight for the
assailant. Before the Stranger can prepare, the Bodyguard
tackles him to the pavement, dislodging the gun. Marilyn
picks it up and points it toward the wrestling duo. The
Bodyguard subdues the Stranger and zip ties his wrists behind
his back. Straddling the prone Stranger, the Bodyguard
brusquely addresses Marilyn.

FBI "agents" contact Marilyn



EXT. LA VALENCIA HOTEL/POOL - DAY

Wearing a one-piece swimsuit, pale skin shimmering with oil, Marilyn lounges by the Pool, sipping a cocktail. Two FBI agents, ERSKINE and COLBY dressed in dark G-Man suits approach her. Their shadows cross her face and body capturing her attention. She sits up.

ERSKINE
Marilyn Jenkins?

MARILYN
Yes?

Erskine produces a badge and quickly flips it shut.

ERSKINE
My name is Inspector Erskine, and this is my partner Special Agent Colby.

COLBY
Ma'am.

ERSKINE
Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions for us? Not here, of course. At our office downtown.

MARILYN
About what?

COLBY
Downtown, Ma'am.

Matt stumbles in on Hannah unannounced



INT. ARMANI HOTEL/HANNAH'S ROOM - DAY

Hannah hustles to get dressed. Just as she gets on her panties, but nothing else, Matt enters the Room holding his cell phone. She covers her breasts.

MATT
Oh, gee. I'm sorry. I guess the door wasn't locked.

Hannah stands stunned. Matt looks away.

MATT (CONT'D)
I just wanted to show you the photos from the Skypool.

Matt looks back at Hannah.

MATT (CONT'D)
The sunshine on your face, and the Burj al Arab in the distance, well...

Matt approaches Hannah who maintains composure. He reaches out and caresses her face, encountering no resistance.

HANNAH
Matt--

MATT
--You are so beautiful.

Matt moves in closer.

MATT (CONT'D)
May I kiss you?

Richards seeks the help of a gunsmith



INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

Richards stands at a counter across from a bearded elderly GUNSMITH, and with a latex-gloved hand produces Dad's pistol.

GUNSMITH
Remington Rand M1911. Lovely
weapon. You wanna sell it?
Restore it?

RICHARDS
Neither.

Richards places a small zip-lock bag containing a spent
bullet on the counter.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)
I want to know if this gun shot
that slug.

GUNSMITH
Why?

Tracy flies home a day early, finding an awkward scene



EXT. SAN DIEGO MARINA - DAY

Tracy enters the code and opens the gate and heads toward the
docked yacht. She walks the gangplank and boards the vessel.
Matt, in a bathing suit, sits at the table on the aft deck
scrolling his phone. When he spots Tracy, he jumps up
nervously.

MATT
Tracy! What are you doing here? I
thought you were coming back
tomorrow.

TRACY
You look a little underdressed for
a client meeting, Matt.

HANNAH (O.S.)
Matt, honey, do you want salt or
tadin on the rim?

Tracy crosses her arms and stares daggers at Matt.

MATT
I can explain.

Hannah, in a skimpy bikini, steps onto the deck carrying two
cocktails, unaware of the dynamic going on.

Richards forces an expensive transaction



INT. NYC HOTEL/LOBBY BAR - NIGHT

Tracy and Richards sit together at the same table as before. This time the Lobby Bar is busy and noisy. Tracy hunches over the table writing out a check.

TRACY'S POV - ENDORSING A CHECK TO MR. GRAYSON RICHARDS FOR \$50,000.

She rips the check from the book and hands it toward Richards. As he goes to grasp it she drops it on the floor.

RICHARDS
Demeaning to the end, huh, Tracy?

Richards moves to pick it up but Tracy impales the check with her stiletto heel.

TRACY
Look me in the eye you invertebrate bottom feeder and swear: "our business is finished".

Richards holds up his right hand.

RICHARDS
I swear: "Our business is finished".

Tracy lifts her heel off the check. Richards picks up the check and gets a brief look at Tracy's fine foot. He brings the check to the table and flattens the hole in the paper.

Matt's parting shot: sending back Tracy's Kandinsky



INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy peers out the peephole, then unlocks and opens the door. In the hallway stand two husky, black CUSTODIANS balancing a large rectangular wooden crate on a dolly.

CUSTODIAN #1
Is it OK if we roll this in, Ms. Shepard?

TRACY
I'm not expecting anything, especially something this big. Are you sure it's for me?

Custodian #2 hands her a shipping slip.

CUSTODIAN #2
Has your name on it.

TRACY
OK, roll it in.

The men roll the crate into Tracy's Apartment. She runs her hand along the top of the crate.

TRACY (CONT'D)
How am I supposed to open this thing? It's nailed shut.

CUSTODIAN #1
I brought a crowbar. Figured you might need help.

Custodian #1 pries open the crate, completely removing the wooden side. He pulls away some packing material revealing Tracy's Kandinsky painting. Taped to the frame is an index card. Tracy plucks it off the frame and reads the text.

MATT (V.O.)
Sending your painting back. I never liked it. Matt.

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Writer Bio

Herb Schultz

Writer of five spec scripts

Architect's Rendition – An architect enlists three associates in a complex scheme to murder his wife, and each other.

Double Blind Test – A woman conned by identical twins gets revenge.

*Tempus Fu*it* – The life of a scientist who hunts for the thief of his invention is upturned by the invention itself.

The Stoooper – A racetrack stoooper fights to recover a valuable lottery ticket that rightfully belongs to him.

Stalled – Imprisoned in a bathroom stall, two disabled men plot an escape from their sadistic captors.

Author of three novels, a collection of short stories, and a a collection of essays

RonnieandLennie about conjoined twins who are saddened after becoming separated.

Architect's Rendition, a story of a Machiavellian man who gets random people to kill each other for his benefit.

Double Blind Test, a tale of deceit, romance and lex talionis.

Sometimes the Sun Does Shine There and Other Stories - Winner of the 2012 Indie Reader Discovery Award for best short story collection
Culture Justly Scrutinized: A Take on Six Years of Virtue and Venality