

STRAYS

Written and Created by
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SERIES PILOT SCRIPT

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For 832 years the life of Francesco di Pietro di Bernardone has profoundly influenced the world.

As a young man, he engaged in the business practices, political activities, and social conventions expected of him - *just like most of us* - even experienced war and fought as a knight.

But at age 25, that way of life - "a normal life" - all changed.

War was not chivalrous, violence did not promote stable progress, and wealth did not bring inner peace.

So this worldly knight abandoned his armor, renounced the fortune he would one day inherit from his wealthy cloth merchant father, then famously stripped naked in the town square to begin a spiritual journey.

We know him today as Saint Francis of Assisi, *the patron saint of animals*, the embodiment of a spiritually dedicated life of simplicity and service. His joy in service has inspired countless millions and is as powerful a beacon today as in the 13th century.

Today, atop the Catholic world, there is excitement from the first Pope from the Franciscan Order. Pope Francis.

Without the religious adornment, without the preaching and the sermons, how would a spiritual journey of simplicity - seeking answers in our complex, modern world - be lived in action?

What might that life look like today?

Strays is that story.

Scott Hawkins is the kind of character we all wish we had in real life -- someone you call and he's there -- a life coach from life's toughest school.

He's an ex-con on a journey of redemption, a man changing the world one person at a time.

Scott Hawkins has gone home, to Western Pennsylvania, the heart of where America works.

In prison, help from man and beast showed him a way out of hell.

Now he's giving back and finally really living.

STRAYS

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Images unfold as impressionistic pieces that reflect what it *felt like* long ago -- moments remembered.

A TIN CAN

Bounces in *slow motion* along the broken asphalt of the playground, then a scuffed-up sneaker connects with it as it's kicked by--

SCOTT HAWKINS

Then a 12-year-old kid -- lost in reverie -- bathed in the glow of morning light like a protective aura.

He's still awkward, on the cusp of becoming a good athlete. Possessed of a natural inquisitiveness. Not much of a talker, but that masks an almost constant inner conversation with himself... just a kid trying to figure it all out.

SCOTT (V.O.)

When I was a kid, I asked God to show me He was real.

A RUSH OF LEAVES

Scrape across the pavement colliding with his sneakers and--

A DUST DEVIL

Whips up from the scattered dirt and swirls into his face. His hands rise up in defense and his eyes slam shut. When he lowers his hands and opens his eyes, the light is blocked by--

KYLE RADOVICH

A tough kid with an angry edge, 17, and ready to strike back at a world that's been nothing but pain to him.

SCOTT (V.O.)

That day, Kyle Radovich gave me a bloody nose and took my lunch money. He was angry at everything and I was in his way.

As the dust devil swirls around them--

KYLE'S FIST

Slams into Scott's nose -- Scott crashes backward against the pavement -- a foot lands on his chest, pinning him down -- Kyle's hand thrusts into Scott's pants' pocket and yanks out a few dollars.

SCOTT (V.O.)
I was scared, but I wasn't angry.
He looked more hurt than I did...
and terribly alone.

Scott looks up to SEE falling wisps of dirt cascade toward him as Kyle stares down at him, then moves away.

EXT. CEDAR CLIFF LANE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A tree-lined street in a small town where it was still safe to walk home alone from school. Scott scuffles along daydreaming until a scarred, mangy DOG crosses his path.

SCOTT (V.O.)
When I walked home from school, a mangy, stray dog followed me. I yelled at it to go away, then I kicked it when it got too close.

Scott continues on...

SCOTT (V.O.)
It still followed me. Until Radovich came 'round the corner. Then it stepped in front of me to face him.

The dog stands his ground and Radovich takes heed and stops.

SCOTT (V.O.)
Radovich saw this mangy mutt and stopped. The dog went right up to him...

Radovich braces for an attack...

SCOTT (V.O.)
...and wagged its tail and licked his hand.

Radovich is visibly shaken as if it's the only time he's ever been accepted by anyone.

SCOTT (V.O.)
Radovich said: "Nice dog, kid" and walked away. When he was gone, the dog left.

The dog watches Radovich leave... and when he's gone, the dog looks back at Scott until Scott looks into his eyes... then the dog turns and trots off.

SCOTT (V.O.)

Never saw that dog again. I always wondered if that dog knew what he was doing. Or God for that matter. *But what's God to a dog?* We're all looking for answers. I wouldn't see the connection until I was forty.

EXT. PITTSBURGH - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Moving UP OVER trees on Mt. Washington to REVEAL the Duquesne Incline below and the skyline of the city at The Point, the confluence of three rivers. Soar over the city, then--

EXT. WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Low-level FLIGHT OVER the lush, green, rolling hills... in the distance, a town, getting closer. And in that town--

EXT. SLAVICH'S BAR - DAY

"SLAVICH'S" -- bold letters above the door. Proud. Somewhere between NY & LA where things aren't hip -- just rock solid real. A small town in Western Pennsylvania -- like Monessen or maybe Jeannette -- call it RUSHTON.

INT. SLAVICH'S BAR - DAY

The SIGN above the mirror says it all: **"Where America Works."** Over beers, pretzels and peanuts, FACTORY WORKERS and UNION REPS have an "informal" discussion -- tensions rising.

FRANK

Rushton Glass Works started as a family business for chrissake! We came through the depression, handled environmental restrictions, we can take this guy!

JAKE

Bryson Percy's not just some guy, he's a predator. And this is a publicly traded company now.

BOBBY

Jake's right, no one like him's come here before.

JAKE

And a predator don't leave 'til his belly's full. I say let him buy it!

BOBBY

Percy'll pay big, he's got the bucks. We'll all make out.

LOUIE

You're bein' suckered, Bobby. This guy's not out to make us happy.

FRANK

Last time this town had visitors like this, they locked the women in the cellar and loaded the muskets.

NICK

We all know management's gonna ask us to take a pay cut. How many here can handle that? This guy's money is real. My family could use some of that.

LOUIE

Then what, Nick? Where do you work?

NICK

At the factory, what the hell you think?!

FRANK

What factory, you schmuck, Percy's gonna strip it like a hot car and sell it for parts!

JAKE

You don't know squat, ya little bastard, you just wanna keep things the way they are -- and they suck!

FRANK

Yeah, your mother would know.

Jake LUNGES forward, grabs Frank by the neck, and pulls him back across the table. The whole place erupts! Fifteen guys grabbin', shovin' and swingin' at each other...

Then a tough, grizzled SIXTY-FIVE YEAR OLD MAN, sitting off to the side, gets up and wades into the middle -- grabs both Jake and Frank and bangs their heads together.

ANDREAS

Don't get emotional. Clouds your judgement.

Everyone just stops. The old man's presence commands the bar. Jake and Frank stagger to a booth holding their heads.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Anyone here know how this man Percy gonna make his play?

(no response)

No? Then you need someone you can trust, someone who gets Percy's game.

They know that he's right... and they know who to get.

NICK

Andreas, it's been fifteen years, is he still...?

The old man stares them down, testing their sincerity with his piercing eyes. The doubts fade... Louie steps forward.

LOUIE

Will you make the call for us?

ANDREAS HAWKINS walks OUT as they part to let him through.

JAKE

What the hell is that, who's he callin'?

FRANK

His son.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

"Down the road" from Rushton -- in Pittsburgh -- across the Allegheny from The Point -- near where the Steelers play.

A battered, old VAN rumbles up to the curb nearby. The driver gets out and moves toward the liquor store only to stop.

SCOTT HAWKINS stares at the store entrance. He is now a man, not normally given to hesitation. His physical presence radiates gravitas. His eyes shine with a keen intelligence. But his last fifteen years have been spent in a soul-scarring place. He is now 40... and starting over -- a changed man.

As he stares at the liquor store, he HEARS GUNSHOTS FROM INSIDE -- but he doesn't react.

Moments later, a YOUNG MAN staggers OUT of the store -- this is Scott Hawkins at 25, with longer hair -- we HEAR SIRENS -- SEE a RED LIGHT REVOLVE ACROSS HIS FACE -- and the young Scott Hawkins raises his hands -- which are COVERED IN BLOOD.

Scott stares at the store entrance, *the vision only in his head*. His resolve weakens... He turns around and pops some quarters into a newspaper stand and yanks out the POST-GAZETTE. He slides open the van door and tosses it inside...

SCOTT
I gotta do this thing. You guys
stick around.

The "guys" are THREE MALE DOGS -- all mutts -- all BIG. Scott leaves the van door OPEN, and with mounting resolve HEADS BACK to the liquor store until he SEES --

ACROSS THE STREET

As BENNY, a kid, 13, street-seasoned with major attitude, BUMPS INTO a businessman, WALTER, who clutches his briefcase. Benny BENDS DOWN to PICK SOMETHING UP, then WALKS AWAY.

Walter feels his pocket and realizes his WALLET is MISSING -- SEES Benny just as Benny looks back and REACTS to Walter's glare -- Benny TAKES OFF -- with Walter in pursuit!

SCOTT HAWKINS

Moves to intercept Benny, who RACES ACROSS the street TOWARD him. Benny WHIPS by Scott, who HOOKS him -- SPINNING him around to a dead stop. Walter RUSHES OVER and GRABS Benny -- JERKS him out of Scott's hands -- SHAKES him violently!

WALTER
(to Scott)
Thanks, Buddy, this little punk
just ripped off my wallet!

Scott GRIPS Walter's arm -- FORCING him to release Benny, who starts to BOLT -- but is quickly SNARED by Scott!

BENNY
I just found it lyin' on the
sidewalk! I was gonna return it.

WALTER
I'm haulin' you straight to the
cops, you little bastard!

SCOTT
You don't really want to do that.

WALTER
The hell I don't.

SCOTT
Gotta sit there while they fill out
paperwork. Show up at an
arraignment, then come back for a
trial. You'd miss a few tee times.

Walter considers all this...

SCOTT (CONT'D)
What you want is your wallet back.

WALTER

Yeah...

SCOTT

(to Benny)

And you wanna return it.

BENNY

Yeah...

SCOTT

(motions for wallet)

Okay...

Benny gives up the wallet tucked in his rope belt.

WALTER

Alright... it's over.

SCOTT

You're forgetting his reward.

WALTER

Are you nuts, he stole the damn thing, I'm not --

SCOTT

If he stole it, you gotta take him to the cops. But if he found it, then a reward would be nice.

WALTER

There's no way that --

SCOTT

Then pay me.

WALTER

Why the hell should I pay you?!

SCOTT

For keeping you out of jail. Because you were gonna beat the crap outta him -- not just get your wallet back. My fee's twenty bucks.

Scott's riveting glare has Walter digging into his wallet.

WALTER

(hands over money)

Whole city's goin' to hell!

Walter LEAVES -- disgusted. Scott hands Benny the twenty.

BENNY

Thanks.

SCOTT
You're not done yet.

BENNY
Now I get the stupid lecture. Go ahead, save my rotten little soul.

SCOTT
I want the twenty.

BENNY
That's my reward.

SCOTT
(SNATCHES the twenty)
It's my fee -- for saving your butt and not handing you to the cops, because you did rip off his wallet.

BENNY
So what?

SCOTT
So you're not that good at it. You might want to try something else.

BENNY
Like what?

SCOTT
Don't know. Not my choice.

Benny SNATCHES THE TWENTY BACK and DASHES OFF! Scott doesn't move -- merely gives THREE SHORT WHISTLES and --

OUT OF THE VAN

Leap the three big dogs, who look to Scott. He simply points at Benny. The dogs RUSH Benny -- stopping him in his tracks. The dogs back Benny up with military precision, right to Scott, who PLUCKS BACK THE TWENTY.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Like I said, not real good at it.

Benny never takes his eyes off the dogs who never take their eyes off of Benny. Scott's cell RINGS... an OLD FLIP PHONE.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Hello...
(surprised)
Dad...
(listens, then)
Yeah... I'll see ya.

Scott "ends" the call... considering it's implications.

BENNY
Can I split now?

Scott hands Benny a simple business card from his pocket.

BENNY (CONT'D)
What's this for?

SCOTT
Whatever. It's got a number on it.

Scott walks past him and the dogs follow.

BENNY
You work somewhere?

SCOTT
No.

BENNY
How come?

SCOTT
Been in prison.

BENNY
Where ya goin'?

The dogs get INTO THE VAN. Scott closes the door.

SCOTT
I'm goin' home.

Scott climbs in and drives off. Benny pockets the card.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - DAY

A bare bones, paint-peeling pad in the Hill District. This is where you live when you have nothing.

A battered open suitcase lies on the bed. A dresser drawer's open as a Great Dane/Rhodesian Ridgeback mix approaches.

SCOTT
(to the dog)
Cary, three pair of socks. Three.

The dog places his front paws on the dresser drawer and peers down inside at a pile of socks rolled into pairs. He corrals THREE pairs of socks in his mouth and trots them over to the suitcase where he drops them inside.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
(on cell phone)
Hello, Karl Vorn's office please.
(a beat)
It's Scott Hawkins for Karl.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(a longer beat)

Hello, Karl. Yeah it's me.
Pittsburgh. Yeah -- fifteen years --
been out six months. And I got
something for you. I know it's
quick -- and it's risky, but
there's a good pay off if it goes
down the way I see it. Alright,
I'll get it started and be back at
you. Yeah, like old times.

Scott ends the call and pockets the phone. We HEAR the **ECHO**
of a **PRISON CELL DOOR CLOSING...**

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A hand holding a piece of mirror extends out of the cell
bars. A pinprick of light illumines an INMATE's face in the
mirror. The inmate's scratchy voice whispers a warning:

INMATE (V.O.)

You're marked. No goin' back.

INT. SCOTT'S APARTMENT - DAY (PRESENT)

Scott closes the suitcase, lifts it off the bed, and heads
for the door. All three dogs follow.

SCOTT

Archie, get the lights.

A German Shepherd/Malamute mix stands on his hind legs and
paws OFF the lights at the wall switch.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Barney, the door.

A Rottweiler/Lab mix pulls the door knob with his mouth...
the door CLICKS closed... and they're gone.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. RUSHTON, PA (VARIOUS SHOTS) - DAY

Scott and the "guys" drive around town in the van -- passing "old memories."

A playground:

CHILDREN (V.O.)
(distant ECHO)
Red rover, Red rover, let Scottie
come over.

The High School:

STADIUM P.A. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
(distant REVERB ECHO)
Number 33, Hawkins, five yards on
the carry. First down.

BETH (V.O.)
(ECHO of memory)
Hey, Scott... How about the Sadie
Hawkins dance? You and me?

The Bus Depot:

CARTER (V.O.)
(very clear)
This bus is goin' to Pittsburgh,
little brother. Then I get another
to Quantico, Virginia. And a jet to
the Persian Gulf to kick some Arab
butt! Keep your nose clean. I'll
see ya.

The van drifts by the depot...

EXT. ANDREAS'S HOUSE - DAY

...and INTO the gravel driveway of his father's house. It's not much, but it's sturdy and been around for awhile.

INT. ANDREAS'S HOUSE - DAY

Scott OPENS the front door and he and the dogs step INSIDE...

SCOTT
Dad...

No answer. Scott looks around -- nothing's changed. He SEES --

IN THE DINING ROOM

A Gulf War shrine of Marine Corps medals, folded American flag from the casket and a dress blues photo of his fallen brother, CAPTAIN CARTER HAWKINS, remains untouched since '91.

The house is quiet, but screaming with memories for--

IN THE LIVING ROOM

His mother's faded maroon velvet chair has never been moved.

Scott forces himself to look away...

...but his eyes draw back and *this time* his MOTHER sits slumped in the chair -- dead. Scott rushes to her side.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
(touches her face, pleads)
Mom, come back -- Mom!

Scott turns from the NOW EMPTY chair as his jaw tightens. He didn't expect this rush of emotion and he's flustered.

The three dogs are suddenly attentive -- their eyes on Scott.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
(to dogs)
I'm okay.

Scott's turned by the SOUND of the REAR KITCHEN DOOR...

SCOTT (CONT'D)
In here, Dad.

Andreas Hawkins strides purposely INTO THE LIVING ROOM and shakes his son's hand, with barely a glance at the dogs.

ANDREAS
Scott. Good trip?

SCOTT
Smooth. The guys liked it.

The guys have been attentive to Scott and watching Andreas. As Scott addresses each by name, they sit... still watching.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
(to a scruffy German Shepherd/Malamute)
Archie.
(to a thick black & tan Rottweiler/Lab)
Barney.
(to a handsome Great Dane/Rhodesian Ridgeback)
Cary.

ANDREAS
As in "Grant?"

SCOTT
He's very handsome.

ANDREAS
They part of that program?

SCOTT
No... picked 'em up after.

ANDREAS
Pound, huh?

SCOTT
No, they were just around.

So much emotion held back by both...

SCOTT (CONT'D)
(gestures)
You put in new front steps.

ANDREAS
My foot went through the old ones.

SCOTT
Came through town. Not much's
changed.

ANDREAS
Not much needed to.

Scott nods and slides onto the couch, like an old ritual.

Even though it's better positioned to talk, Andreas bypasses his dead wife's chair and sinks into his own well-worn chair.

Father and son are now NOT facing each other.

With a simple wave of Scott's hand, all three dogs lie down.

SCOTT
What about this Percy thing? Any
new developments?

ANDREAS
He's filed some motion with the
SEC.

SCOTT
A 13D?

ANDREAS
That's it.

SCOTT

Then he wants to take over the factory.

ANDREAS

We're healthy. No lawsuits, no pension liabilities, and no debt.

SCOTT

That's what makes you so attractive.

ANDREAS

We run the company too well?

SCOTT

Strong, like a twelve point buck. That's when the hunter wants it.

ANDREAS

And this one, this Percy?

SCOTT

Not sure yet.

ANDREAS

(gets up)

Some people wanna know what you know.

SCOTT

Better if I know what they want.

His father walks past him and the dogs to the door...

ANDREAS

You may have to tell them that.

INT. RUSHTON GLASS WORKS - FACTORY MEETING HALL - DAY

An expansive meeting hall within the belly of the beast. Filled with workers -- men and women -- brimming with anticipation -- CLAPPING for Scott, who stands with Andreas and Louie on the raised stage at the front of the room.

VOICES RING OUT in the crowd: *"You were in our prayers."
"Number thirty-three's back in the line up!"*

LOUIE

(shouts over crowd)

We all know he's been away too long. It wasn't fair -- and that's all I'll say about it. Now he's come home to help.

The crowd erupts in applause and hoots and hollers again. Scott raises his hands to quiet 'em down.

SCOTT
I haven't helped yet. But I see a
lot of familiar faces. I haven't
forgotten how you helped me.

A WOMAN'S THROATY VOICE cries out:

PRISCILLA
Then give us some of that good
education we helped pound into that
thick head of yours.

SCOTT
(laughs, looking)
That can only be Priscilla Cochran,
am I right?

PRISCILLA stands and waves...

PRISCILLA
(grins)
For once you're right. What else
you know?
(serious)
We need ya, Scott.

Scott looks out over the many faces...

SCOTT
You need to know what you want. How
far you're willing to go to get it.
Your factory's in play by a
corporate raider. Play. Remember
that word. To some of these people,
that's all this is -- a game.

LOUIE
So we'll play it better than he
does!

APPLAUSE and CHEERS erupt throughout...

SCOTT
Maybe... if you know how he thinks.
(stares at them)
Do you?

The hall is SILENT... unsettling.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. RUSHTON GLASS WORKS FACTORY MEETING HALL - DAY

Scott shakes the workers' hands as the last of them file out
the door... leaving Louie and Andreas.

SCOTT

I need a computer -- I wanna track
some information on Percy.

LOUIE

You don't have one?
(Scott shakes head "no")
You takin' after the old man?
(to Andreas)
He could'a used yours if you --

Andreas cuts him off with a GROWLING GRUNT...

SCOTT

When a lot's taken away, you
realize you don't need much.

LOUIE

Could'a popped for one when ya got
out.

SCOTT

It was either dog food or a
computer. Not a real choice.

LOUIE

But you still had a bundle when
they sent you up, so...
(realizes)
It went to her, didn't it?

Scott doesn't respond and by his silence, Louie knows.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

(deeply impressed)
That's somethin'.
(back on track.)
Alright. Harvey's got all the toys.
(laughs)
May have to buy a car first.

SCOTT

Harvey Tushinsky?

ANDREAS

Sells computers, satellite dishes.

SCOTT

Out of the dealership?

Both men just nod...

EXT. TUSHINSKY MOTORS - DAY

It's a used car lot, but the sign reads: "THE PARKING LOT FOR
THE INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY."

Scott crosses the street toward the dealership and a WHEELCHAIR rolls next to him. In the wheelchair is ALFIE GEMEL, class clown, and imp -- still.

ALFIE
(without stopping)
Hey, Scott Hawkins, how ya doin'?

SCOTT
Alfie...
(catches up to him)
Alfie Gemel, my God, I'm sorry...
what the hell happened?

ALFIE
You ever buy a used car from
Harvey?

SCOTT
An accident?

Scott helps Alfie and the wheelchair roll up onto the sidewalk. Alfie plows on -- toward a line of used cars.

ALFIE
Stick around. This'll be good.

EXT. TUSHINSKY MOTORS - USED CAR LOT - DAY

HARVEY TUSHINSKY -- an expensive suit can't cover up the huckster as he plies his oily charm on an unsuspecting WOMAN. Scott watches as Alfie barrels in on Harvey from behind...

HARVEY
Ma'am, you happen to be looking at
our pick of the week. This car is a
status symbol.

WOMAN
I'm looking for safety.

HARVEY
And that is why you're looking at
this car. Built like a tank.

ALFIE
(rolls up)
Lady, you wanna live? Don't buy it.
I used to run marathons, then I
bought a used car from this man.
First time I hit the brakes --
nothin' -- no brakes! Went off the
road into a tree and into this
chair!

WOMAN

(to Harvey)

You ruined this man's life -- and
you're willing to do the same with
me -- you scum sucking pig -- you
probably voted for Trump!

She turns and quickly walks away. Alfie ROLLS OFF RAPIDLY
through the lot -- with Harvey chasing him!

HARVEY

Alfie, you sonuvabitch...

ALFIE

(laughing)

I love you too, Harvey.

Harvey's gaining as Alfie "wheels" through the lot. Alfie
glances over his shoulder -- then LEAPS OUT of the chair and
RUNS -- right by Scott -- collecting a "high-five."

HARVEY

(chasing Alfie)

Hey -- Scott Hawkins!

SCOTT

Harvey, where're your computers?

HARVEY

(still running)

Inside, I'll cut you a great deal.

(calls after Alfie)

Slow down, you little bastard!

Harvey and Alfie DISAPPEAR around the BACK of the lot...

INT. TUSHINSKY MOTORS - MAIN OFFICE - DAY

Scott sticks his head IN the OPEN door and SEES a woman in a
chair with her BACK TO HIM -- filing. This is BETH CASSIDY...
proof that 40 is sexy and classy.

SCOTT

Excuse me, Harvey said you had
computers in here.

BETH

(turns around)

Yes, we do.

For both, time's suspended... a flood of memories, then the
sudden heat from a spark long dormant, and faces flush...

SCOTT

Beth... Beth Cassidy.

BETH
Scott Hawkins, My God, look at you.
Look at you.

She gets up and he meets her in a friendly hug and kiss.

BETH (CONT'D)
You look great.

SCOTT
No, you look great.

BETH
(grins)
I'll try not to argue with that.
(suddenly awkward)
It's been a... Seein' your Dad?

SCOTT
Yeah. And this factory thing.

BETH
Oh yeah, how's that going?

SCOTT
That's why I'm here. Need a
computer. Gotta get online.

BETH
Well Harvey's got computers and
we're the WiFi center in town.

SCOTT
That's great, that's what I -- even
your hair's the same -- it's just
like it's...

BETH
I'm married now. It's Beth Bunnel,
actually.

SCOTT
Stan Bunnel? The Bun Man?

BETH
(uneasy, sad)
Just Stan these days.

Raw emotions exposed, she can't hold his gaze...

SCOTT
Judge Jaworski still on the bench?

BETH
Crotchety as ever. And he bites
now.

SCOTT

Good, I can use some teeth.

BETH

And maybe some lunch?

There's almost a plea in her voice... Scott hears it.

SCOTT

I've been known to eat.

BETH

(just stares at him)
Scott Hawkins...

EXT. CITY HALL/COURTHOUSE - DAY

Scott EXITS the municipal building with a FOLDED LETTER in his hand and passes a PICK-UP TRUCK in a space marked: "RESERVED FOR JUDGE JAWORSKI -- PARK HERE AND GO TO JAIL"

INT. ANDREAS'S HOUSE - DAY

Morning light leaks in UPSTAIRS as Andreas leaves his room down the hall. The door to Scott's room is cracked open. Andreas glances in as he passes, then suddenly stops.

IN THE ROOM

Scott kneels in silent prayer by the side of the bed. The three dogs wait patiently. A piece of paper, words scrawled in prison with blood, lies on the floor...the words: ***Make me an instrument of thy peace. Francesco di Pietro di Bernardone***

OUT IN THE HALLWAY

Andreas is not sure what to make of it. This is not the son he knew. It's almost unnerving.

INT. RUSHTON GLASS WORKS FACTORY MEETING HALL - DAY

A packed house -- this time with TWO LONG TABLES up ON THE STAGE -- one on the RIGHT, the other on the LEFT. At the LEFT sit Louie, Andreas, Nick and Frank, with ONE EMPTY CHAIR.

At the RIGHT, the team of Bryson Percy, three men and two women, all impeccably dressed. At the END of this table is BRYSON PERCY -- cool, confident, real power seeing all.

AT THE FRONT

Scott ENTERS HOLDING THE FOLDED LETTER. He scans the Percy table until his eyes rest on Percy himself -- whose gaze is ALREADY FIXED on Scott. Jake walks over to Scott...

JAKE

You ready to take 'em on?

SCOTT
(looks only at Percy)
Hand this paper to his chief aide.

JAKE
(takes letter)
Sure, no problem.

Scott walks down the center aisle to the empty seat at the factory table WHILE Jake carries the letter to Percy's table.

ON STAGE

Percy's chief aide, DANIEL MULLIN, wiry and bright, scans the LETTER handed to him by Jake... then approaches Percy.

MULLIN
We've got a problem.

Percy only looks at Scott as he listens...

MULLIN (CONT'D)
Some local magistrate, a Judge Jaworski, has slapped us with a restraining order for failure to disclose our 13D.

PERCY
We can't make our move today.

MULLIN
No, it won't be a slam dunk. I don't know how this got by us.

Percy looks back at Scott, who sits quietly, saying nothing.

PERCY
Like water.

MULLIN
Water???

PERCY
"The softest of stuff in the world
Penetrates quickly the hardest;
Insubstantial, it enters
Where no room is.
By this I know the benefit
Of something done by quiet being;"
(off Mullin's stare)
From the Tao Te Ching.
(re: Scott)
That man is their water.

MULLIN
We'll check him out right away.

PERCY

His name is Scott Hawkins. Formerly mergers and acquisitions with Dosler-Vorn. A money meteor right out of Cornell. Razor sharp.

MULLIN

I know all the Dosler-Vorn guys, he's not --

PERCY

He's been out of it for fifteen years.

MULLIN

Which firm?

PERCY

The state's.

MULLIN

Oh... Fraud?

PERCY

Armed robbery.

MULLIN

Jesus...

PERCY

Prison will have changed him. I want to know how.

MULLIN

Right away. Tom should've been on top of this, I'll --

PERCY

(calm, but ice)

Don't fix the blame, fix the problem. I want us in the kill zone on this.

MULLIN

(realizes)

Hawkins... Andreas Hawkins, the union shop steward, is that...?

(Percy nods)

That old man's never said a thing at any meeting.

PERCY

Didn't have to. He did something. He brought in his son.

Percy looks at Scott and his father... both sitting quietly.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Beware the quiet man.

MULLIN
I didn't think we'd need it, but we
have found a corporation, the *Eight
by Twelve Company*. They own enough
shares to put us over the top.
We've tendered an offer to them.

Louis goes to the speaker's podium, adjusts the microphone.

LOUIE
I'm glad to see everyone here. I'd
like to welcome Mr. Bryson Percy
and his associates to The Rushton
Glass Works.

Percy stands to a smattering of APPLAUSE, waits until Scott
looks over, then he picks up Scott's folded letter, the
restraining order, and NODS. Scott NODS back.

Percy turns, and STRIDES right OUT of the meeting hall. The
gauntlet thrown -- and accepted. The game is on. Daniel
Mullin approaches the podium and microphone.

MULLIN
We came here with an open, honest
approach only to be met with
subterfuge. We'll be rethinking our
position. We'll let you know.

LOUIE
I don't understand...

MULLIN
(points at Scott)
Perhaps you should ask him.

The entire Percy team EXITS, plunging the meeting hall into a
frenzy of conversation.

INT. SLAVICH'S BAR - DAY

Around a large table, things heat up.

JAKE
You're gonna blow it for us!

SCOTT
It bought us some time. Percy's not
going anywhere.

BOBBY
How the hell do you know that?!

SCOTT

I know this game. And it's almost over if we don't move fast.

NICK

He's never walked out before. Not when we handled it ourselves. We talked, and he gave us his word.

SCOTT

His word? That's just conversation.

BOBBY

His word's been good.

SCOTT

Yes, at keeping you from seeing what he's doing. While you talk, he's been buying up outstanding shares through other company names.

FRANK

Maybe we should settle.

SCOTT

Now's the time to hold his feet to the fire. Make him show his hand.

JAKE

Easy for you. We got families to feed. We're not gonna let some slick ex-con ruin our dreams!

An uncomfortable silence felt by all...

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A hand holding a piece of mirror extends through the cell bars. A pinprick of light illumines an inmate's face in the mirror. His scratchy voice whispers a warning:

INMATE

He's marked you. He's marked you.

INT. SLAVICH'S BAR - DAY (PRESENT)

Scott's eyes study Jake... like prey. His muscles tense to spring -- then he slowly let's out a controlled breath.

SCOTT

You can't run from this. But if you want me gone, just tell me.

NICK

Maybe we got some talkin' to do.

SCOTT
You know where to find me.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE PARK - DAY

A GAZEBO overlooks the quaint gardens and trees. Scott and Beth carry Styrofoam boxes of their lunch up INTO the gazebo.

SCOTT
(eating fries)
The Rosebud hasn't changed. Greasy and great.

BETH
It's not twenty four hours anymore.

SCOTT
A three a.m. Bud run doesn't look as good when you're not eighteen.

BETH
(looks at Scott)
Some things look better.

SCOTT
You like being Harvey's office manager?

BETH
Harvey can be an ass sometimes. But he's never boring. That can go a long way in this town.

SCOTT
You thinkin' about kids?

BETH
If there's still time. Thought I'd have a bunch by now. Rushton's okay for kids, even without money. One reason I stuck around.

SCOTT
I always thought you'd be a great mother.

BETH
I had plans on makin' you a great father.
(Scott smiles at her)
Mrs. Scott Hawkins. I wasn't the only girl who practiced saying it.

SCOTT
Would've been a rough ride.

BETH

Maybe I could've made it better.

Scott can see the pain in Beth's eyes.

SCOTT

You're separated, aren't you?

Beth just nods, fighting back the tears...

BETH

You look back and wonder how the hell you got here.

(takes deep breath)

Listen to me talk about pain. I have no right. Being in prison, falsely like you were, I can't imagine how awful that was.

SCOTT

It may've been the best thing to happen to me.

BETH

(shocked)

How can you say that? You were so successful so young and you --

SCOTT

I did it, Beth.

(off her stunned silence)

I was in that liquor store. And I shot that girl -- bullet hit her spine. She's a quadriplegic.

BETH

I don't... how could you --

SCOTT

I was only fourteen when Carter was wounded. You know we first heard he was dead, that's how messed up he was -- a total quad and half vegetable. Took the V.A. over a year to handle his case and then it was only half-assed. He wasted away for over eight years like that. When he finally died my Mom fell apart, my Dad didn't talk about it. Still doesn't. All those medals.

(still painful)

It was friendly fire.

BETH

What?!

SCOTT

No heroics. Just mistakes. The fog of war -- sounds like a painting, doesn't it? The fog of war. Finding that out, after he died, I think it killed Mom. Nothing made sense. What was the point of anything? Except to numb the pain. I didn't plan to hang with that guy. But I was there... with that gun. And prison... I'm not who I was before. That's a good thing. So pain is relative... and some prisons have no bars.

Scott touches her face, she melts into his touch until a CAR HORN BLARES! An old Buick jumps the curb scraping to a halt! An drunk man clambers out -- STAN BUNNEL, Beth's husband.

STAN

(angry, to Beth)
You think I don't know what you do?! I know!! I know all about you!

BETH

Stan, you're drunk.

STAN

But I'm not blind!
(to Scott)
You don't belong here anymore!

With HIS BACK TO THEM, Stan pulls a GUN from under the seat.

Scott does NOT see the gun, but he knows a threat and tenses to move as an *echoed warning rings* in his head...

INMATE (V.O.)

He's marked you. Gotta gut 'em.

Stan Bunnel grips the gun tightly, seething, then thinks better of it, gets in his car, and floors it back into the street! Beth watches her husband drive off...

BETH

Welcome home, Scott Hawkins.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE