

EVERYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL

EPISODE 1

"A BETTER WORLD"

WRITTEN BY

BENJAMIN MCINNES

INT. CHURCH – BASEMENT – DAY

A low-ceilinged church basement. Fluorescent lights line the ceiling. The walls are a dull gray. The carpet is a faded, almost bruised purple. Six folding chairs form a loose circle around a circular white table.

In the corner, a sad, empty coffee pot sits on a wobbling side table.

A narrow, twirling metal staircase leads up to the main church above.

Faint organ music bleeds down through the floorboards.

CLOSE ON:

RONALD (20s). He looks nervous.

RONALD

And all of a sudden she's gone. And  
I'm supposed to move on? Move  
forward with my life?

OVER THE THERAPIST'S SHOULDER – his notepad.

At the top of the page, in large letters:

WIFE STUFF

Underneath:

– yikes. – big yikes.

He slowly adds three large question marks.

???

RONALD (CONT'D)

I don't know if this is bad to say  
but... I'm mad. She's been getting  
dicked down behind my back for  
time...  
She introduced us. He was in my  
house. We shared books. We played  
pool.

Ronald shifts in his chair. He exhales – shaky, trying to keep it together.

RONALD (CONT'D)

And she died giving birth to a kid  
that wasn't mine...

Ronald breaks. Tears spill down his face.  
 From above, the table looks almost sacred.  
 Dead center: a box of beers.  
 A handwritten sign in front:  
 NO TOUCHING.

JACK  
 Sounds like you shared more than  
 just books, if you know what I'm  
 saying.

KATE (27), dark hair falling in loose waves, leather jacket  
 over a black dress, heavy boots. Smart. Guarded.

She laughs – catches herself – covers her mouth.

LENNOX (26), messy dark hair, oversized red hoodie, chain at  
 his neck and hanging from his jeans. Casual. Slightly  
 detached.

He smiles at Kate.

Ronald snuffles.

RONALD  
 What?

JACK  
 I'm just saying dude, when you  
 think about it – you kind of did  
 get cucked the fuck to death.

RONALD  
 What?

JACK  
 Is there a question there, Ronald?

RONALD  
 No, no question. I'm just-

JACK  
 We'll just cut that off there,  
 Ronald.

JACK takes off his cap.

A SWASTIKA tattooed on the side of his head.

JACK (CONT'D)

Look.

What I'll say to you is – Stevie's actually just left, so I do have an available space, if you will, for a support partner. And, well... if that's something you're interested in, we can have a chat after the meeting. Just come meet me by the coffee table.

Jack now holds a mug of coffee. He takes a calm sip.

HUGH

I'm sorry but- Is that a swastika on your forehead?

JACK

No, it's on the side of my head. And it's for my therapy. Therapist literally said we need to start more conversations.

The THERAPIST (60s), gray beard, glasses, in a suit, nods. Winks at Jack.

HUGH

And you thought that would be a good conversation starter?

JACK

Yes?

LENNOX

I'm in a room full of retards.

Jack grabs a beer from the center of the table. Cracks it open.

HUGH

Dude, you can't say that.

LENNOX

So this guy can have a Nazi tattoo on his forehead but I can't say retard?

Jack pulls out his 12-month sobriety chip. Flicks it onto the table.

JACK

Oh my God, calm down. It's temporary anyway.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)  
I'm not a fucking idiot like some  
people in this room. The guy said  
it should be gone in a week.

The room falls silent.

Awkward. Still.

Faint organ music bleeds through.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Well, it started a conversation,  
didn't it?

MAIN TITLES PLAY.

CUT TO:

INT. MID-MADE MEDIA - WRITERS' ROOM - DAY

ANGELA (late 20s), long blonde hair, denim jacket, carefully  
put-together.

She types at her desk.

On her screen:

Angela Diaries - Episode 961

Her thumb scrolls through Kate's Instagram.

Accidentally taps.

Liked.

ANGELA  
Shit.

She un-likes it.

MADONNA  
She's pretty!

MADONNA (40s), perfectly styled, corporate to her core, in an  
expensive power suit, watches Angela from behind.

MADONNA (CONT'D)  
Huge updates! Start with the top of  
the list - profits are at an all-  
time highest. Great work this  
quarter - I ought to sort out a  
little shared lunch. Bring your own  
food of course - we're not a food  
bank.

Madonna flips through the pages.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Du du du du duh... new hires... du  
du du du du duh... cutbacks... du  
du du du duh... Oh yeah! Ratings  
have dropped this latest episode.  
We can't have this happen, Angela.  
What's happened?

ANGELA

I'm sorry I just can't write right  
now because-

MADONNA

And I'm sure that's so hard for  
you. My heart is there, it really  
is, Angela. But my head? It's  
telling me you're the best writer  
we've got. But the recent stories?  
Snooze fest. Booring. Here at Mid-  
Made-Media we strive for greatness.  
You know why? Come on say it with  
me... because there's no excuse for  
mediocre -

ANGELA & MADONNA

In Mid-Made-Media.

Madonna is already walking away.

MADONNA

Toodles!

Angela leans back in her chair.

Her phone BUZZES.

ON HER SCREEN:

MADONNA BOSS: You're fired.

Another BUZZ.

MADONNA BOSS: PS. Couldn't bring myself to say it before.

Another BUZZ.

MADONNA BOSS: PS. You can't come to the shared lunch.  
Employees only. You understand.

Angela sighs.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH — BASEMENT — DAY

Everyone arguing at once.

Voices overlap — heated, indistinguishable.

JACK

We're really talking now.

THERAPIST

Boys, boys, boys. Quiet in the sanctuary. I didn't want to have to do this, but I do think it would be wise to have us use the sharing shaft. Jack. We'll all get a chance to talk.

Therapist bends down and pulls out a suction-cup shower dildo.

He stares at it.

Blinks rapidly, as if resetting himself.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

I've had a bit of a mix-up.

The therapist gives it a cautious sniff.

Sighs in relief.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Right. Where were we?

RONALD

Uh...

THERAPIST

Oh right, yes — your dead wife.

RONALD

It's okay. I was finished.

THERAPIST

Okay. Katherine.

KATE

Kate.

The therapist tosses the dildo to Kate.

It lands between her breasts – the tip catching her mouth.

She spits it out.

KATE (CONT'D)

Ew?

THERAPIST

Oh, I'm so sorry. I promise I  
sanitize. Honestly, hardly even use  
it. It's just – my arm's been  
acting up ever since our baseball  
match this weekend. We did very  
well, actually. If not for me  
blowing my arm out, we would have  
won the game.

Kate slams the dildo sucker first into the middle of the  
table.

It sticks with a slosh and slops back and forward.

KATE

I have the sharing shaft.

No one looks at Kate.

All eyes on the dildo.

KATE (CONT'D)

So shut up. What's the point in  
coming in here at all if you're  
going to treat this like it's some  
game? I'm not just talking to you,  
either. Jack. Every fucking week,  
you have to turn this into some–

Kate's voice trails off into a muffle.

LENNOX (V.O.)

I don't want to be here at all.  
Angela's making me come to these  
things 'cause I had one little fuck  
up at a party three months ago.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE PARTY – NIGHT

Angela weaves through the downstairs chaos, searching  
frantically.

ANGELA  
Has anyone seen Lennox?

PARTY GUY ONE  
Yeah, I seen him. He's way fucked  
up. Way fucked up. You don't wanna  
know. But uh, yeah, he just went  
upstairs with...

PARTY GUY ONE (20s) frowns. One eyebrow lifts.

PARTY GUY ONE (CONT'D)  
Wait a minute... Didn't he just go  
in there with you? Ahaha. This some  
trippy shit bruh.

CUT TO:

ANGELICA (late 20s) – identical to Angela in every way, from  
face to clothes – makes out with Lennox in a dark bedroom.

CUT TO:

Angela's expression crumples.

ANGELA  
Angelica.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH – BASEMENT – DAY

Lennox slouches back in his chair.

Kate's voice still muffled.

LENNOX (V.O.)  
I fucked her twin by accident.

Kate's voice comes back into focus.

KATE  
And you. Why do you think you'd  
know what's best for me? No-one  
knows what's best for me. I'm  
what's best for me. There. Now you  
guys know what's best for me. Me.

Kate stands, stomps over to the coffee station in the corner.

She starts making coffee from scratch.

THERAPIST

It seems everybody is feeling  
rather stressed this session.

KATE

Why is this not fucking working?

THERAPIST

You have to flick the switch.

KATE

What switch?

Kate flicks the switch.

Coffee drips.

KATE (CONT'D)

Fuck you.

THERAPIST

Right. Why don't we all just take  
it easy and spend the rest of the  
time we have with our support  
partners. You can all go off and do  
whatever you like! Because frankly?  
I'm not going to take this  
disrespect!

Chairs scrape as everyone moves toward their partners.

Kate leaves.

Lennox watches her go.

CUT TO:

INT. FLIXNET STUDIOS – ETHAN CARROT'S OFFICE – DAY

ETHAN CARROT (40s), polished, corporate, friendly, leans back  
in his chair.

His office is carrot-themed to an unsettling degree.

Carrot decor. Carrot pen. Carrot laptop.

Everything orange.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Hi, Meigh – Executive Ethan Carrot  
calling from FlixNet studios. Do  
you have a minute to chat?

MEIGH (V.O.)

FlixNet?

Yeah, I've got time. What's up?

ETHAN

I'll jump right in. We've been circling back on a few older titles lately. Lighter stuff. Everything Is Beautiful by Lennox Frontoe? Just landed on my desk. Reread it last night and can I just say this has aged beautifully. That's industry code for: this is more relevant now than when it came out.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BEST BOOKS PUBLISHING – MEIGH'S OFFICE – DAY

MEIGH (30s), brown ponytail, floral dress, pink blazer.

Her office is small and tired. Peeling paint. A flickering desk lamp. Stacks of unsold manuscripts crowd every surface.

Meigh straightens, surprised.

ETHAN

The film industry, that is.

MEIGH

Lennox? That's a name I haven't heard in a while. I'm listening.

ETHAN

It's light, fun. It's funny. The satire hits but doesn't nudge. Good for the people. And we're expanding our limited-series slate. Buying any shitty project that's bingeable. So – we want to move. Officially. Develop the book for television.

Meigh's eyes widen.

MEIGH

You're serious?

ETHAN

No, I'm Ethan Carrot. That being said, we're prepared to make an offer this week.

MEIGH

Wow. Okay.

Ethan opens a drawer. Pulls out a carrot.

Takes a bite.

ETHAN

One thing before we go any further  
– we wanted to see if you could  
reach out to Lennox? See if he'd  
want to be involved. Help shape the  
adaptation. Keep its teeth  
etcetera, etcetera.

MEIGH

Right – of course. I can do that.  
Though... full disclosure, I haven't  
talked to him in six months. He  
went pretty quiet after launch.

ETHAN

Yeah, just whenever. Just trying to  
respect his voice. Make sure he's  
looped in from day one.

Ethan leans forward.

A darker edge creeping into his voice.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY STATION – DAY

Kate lights a cigarette.

A little girl walking past drops her ice cream. Starts  
crying.

Her parents rush to comfort her.

Kate puts in her headphones.

"Jigsaw Falling Into Place" by Radiohead kicks in.

She boards the train.

INT. TRAIN – DAY

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Kate sits by the window, headphones on.

Across from her - a row of commuters in identical navy and gray. Corporate armor. Eyes glazed over, scrolling.

A man in a light blue suit rehearses a smile in the reflection of the window.

An older man sat beside Kate stares at a Corp & Co. banking app on his phone. A notification pops up:

PURCHASE DECLINED.

He sighs.

No one looks at each other.

Kate watches them all.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Train doors slide open.

The window frames Kate precisely on the left.

She stands. Moves through the bodies.

She exits dead center as the doors close.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - DAY

Kate stops in front of a massive glass tower.

She looks up - swallowed by it.

Then pushes through the revolving doors.

INT. THE AMERICAN - DAY

She moves through security. They recognize her.

A polite smile. She heads for the elevator.

Kate steps inside.

The doors close.

INT. THE AMERICAN – OFFICE FLOOR – DAY

She exits. Walks toward the bathroom.

INT. THE AMERICAN – BATHROOM – DAY

Kate perches on a closed toilet seat.

From her bag – a small brown pill bottle.

The label reads: ADDERALL.

She shakes out three pills. Swallows.

INT. THE AMERICAN – OPEN WORKSPACE – DAY

A sprawling creative bullpen. Writers everywhere – bean bags, couches, desks – typing, pacing, staring at screens.

Kate takes a seat. Opens her laptop.

On the screen:

*The System Loves You Back*

*by Kate Scavenger*

She stares at it.

Closes the laptop.

A hand reaches in and yanks her headphones out.

The music cuts instantly.

MARMALADE

What was that?

KATE

What was what, Madam Marmalade?

MARMALADE

The thingamajig that was on your screen.

KATE

Oh, that's just a poetry book I'm-

MARMALADE

Oh yup, anyway. Today I'm trusting you with a very important task.

KATE

Okay.

MARMALADE

You are to write a piece on Corp & Co.

KATE

I'm not wr-

MARMALADE

Ah, ah! You are not to argue.

MARMALADE(50's), heavy Botox, manicured hair, puts her finger up.

MARMALADE (CONT'D)

You are not to talk bad about Corp & Co in the article. You are to interview Charles Freeman.

KATE

Charl-

MARMALADE

Uh! Is that arguing?

KATE

No, madam Marmalade.

MARMALADE

Splendid. I expect the article in my inbox by midnight.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORP & CO. HEADQUARTERS — DAY

Kate knocks.

The door opens.

A blob of goop stands there.

Kate jumps back.

KATE

What the fuck are you?

CHARLES FREEMAN (50s), perfectly groomed, steps into view. His suit is immaculate – ruined only by a violently bright orange tie.

CHARLES

Frieda! What did I tell you about opening the door in your goop suit.

Charles gives the blob a firm smack.

Frieda jiggles.

A streak of slime clings to his palm.

He extends that same hand to Kate.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Gnarly Charles. It is such a pleasure for you to meet me.

KATE

You got a little something.

Kate points to his hand.

Then looks at her own.

She spits into her palm.

Extends it for a handshake.

KATE (CONT'D)

Greatest Kate. Such an honor for you to have a company willing to report on all the... good you do for the community turning a blind eye to anything...

Charles steps aside, opening the door wider.

CHARLES

Please, shut up.

Gestures for her to come inside.

Kate smiles, nods, and steps inside.

The moment she's out of sight, Charles' smile drops.

The door shuts.

CUT TO:

INT. CORP & CO. HEADQUARTERS – DAY

Kate follows Charles through rows of cubicles.

Employees type without looking up.

A few glance at him – then quickly drop their eyes.

A YOUNG EMPLOYEE (20s), pale and rattled, grabs Kate's arm.

Desperate.

She presses a handwritten note against the glass of her cubicle:

PLEASE HELP.

IT'S WORSE THAN YOU REALIZE.

FIND BROWNTOWNFROWN.

Kate leans in. Shrugs – confused.

The girl's eyes well.

She slowly pulls the note down.

CHARLES

I know what you're thinking. This is beautiful – Thousands of employees all serving the queen bee. That being I of course.

Kate smiles.

KATE

Yes.

They push through into a massive office.

Gold statues line the walls. Plaques everywhere.

CHARLES

Welcome to the Gnarly Charles Cave. That's industry code for: my office.

Kate scans the room, unimpressed.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

The business industry, that is.

KATE

Right.

The door cracks open.

A MAN (60s), silver hair neatly combed, stern face, sharp blue eyes. Dark pinstripe suit, conservative tie.

He peeks around the corner.

MAN

I just want to tell you both good luck. We're all counting on you.

The man leaves the room.

CHARLES

Look at your face. So eager for me to tell you all about myself. Luckily for you - I've prepared a podcast. 13 episodes - all improvised, me chatting about my work. I'm a very coherent speaker. Very little redundancies, as I just said - coherent speaker.

KATE

Oh.

Charles pulls out a tape recorder.

Presses play.

CHARLES (ON TAPE)

Welcome to Corp & Co. Where we stand for you. Wait. Maybe I should start like. Okay. 3 2 1.

Charles gestures to the tape. Waves a hand, dismissing the intro.

CHARLES (ON TAPE) (CONT'D)

Corp & Co. You've seen it everywhere! What does it stand for? Can. Oliver. Rich. Please. Call .Owen. The first ever sentence I spoke. Less than 15 seconds out the womb - I said that. The nurses? They rushed to the staff list, found an Oliver Rich. Oliver called his brother Owen. Turns out, Owen had fourteen bombs planted in his house. I thought one would be enough. Actually maybe there was one.

(MORE)

CHARLES (ON TAPE) (CONT'D)  
 I'm a little shaky on the facts as  
 I was no more than 30 minutes old  
 by this point.

KATE  
 Thank you. Thank you.

Kate presses all the buttons.

Nothing.

KATE (CONT'D)  
 How do I turn this off?

CHARLES  
 It's a set it and leave it kind of  
 deal. Won't stop until it's done.

KATE  
 Well, how long's the tape?

CHARLES  
 This one's only four hours. Have  
 you heard of something called  
 compression? That's why it makes  
 the sound all weird.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Lennox drives, whistling along to the music.

His phone rings.

LENNOX  
 Yello?

MEIGH  
 Lennox. Holy shit. So glad I got  
 you. You don't know how hard it  
 was- never mind, I'm too wet right  
 now to waste time.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. BEST BOOKS PUBLISHING - DAY

Meigh walking in the rain.

MEIGH  
 I have great news.

LENNOX

Please don't tell me you're my long  
lost daughter or some shit.

MEIGH

No, what? Lennox! It's me!

LENNOX

Who?

MEIGH

Meigh!

LENNOX

I know you think that narrows it  
down but it really doesn't.

MEIGH

Meigh Bennett, idiot. Your agent.

LENNOX

Ohhh, Meigh. You're not my agent.  
I'm retired. I don't have an agent.

Lennox strikes a match. Lights a cigarette.

MEIGH

You're twenty six, not retired.

Tosses the still-burning match out the window.

MEIGH (CONT'D)

And I will be your agent again  
after you hear this.

LENNOX

Eh. I doubt it.

Lennox takes a sip of his milkshake.

MEIGH

'Everything is Beautiful'? FlixNet  
wants to adapt it into a limited  
series!

Lennox chokes on his milkshake and spits it out the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

A BYSTANDER sidesteps the flying milkshake.

BYSTANDER

Phew.

He wipes his forehead.

A HEATER UNIT crashes down on him.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

LENNOX

Really? Why?

MEIGH

Because it was a hit! Because you can be a hit again. They're saying it fits current political trends. Which is great because those aren't exhausting at all.

LENNOX

I don't know...

MEIGH

And I haven't even told you the best part!

Silence.

MEIGH (CONT'D)

Lennox?

LENNOX

Is kinda bored.

MEIGH

They want to fly you out to LA to work on it. This is your moment, Lennox. This is the moment you become a true American star.

LENNOX

They want me to move to LA? No, thank you.

MEIGH

What's wrong with LA?

LENNOX

Nothing's wrong with LA. My life's in New York. You can't expect me to leave everything behind.

MEIGH

It's not leaving anything behind,  
Lennox. It's stepping into a new  
world - a better world. A rich  
man's world.

LENNOX

I do need money.

MEIGH

And money will be the least of your  
problems if you take this deal.  
Picture this. You're walking into  
the theater, taking a seat at the  
first screening, lights go dark,  
anticipation at its peak-

Lennox looks around.

Uncomfortable.

LENNOX

I gotta go.

He hangs up.

CUT TO:

INT. LENNOX'S HOUSE - DAY

Angela sits in the dark, lit only by her phone.

ON HER SCREEN:

A text thread. The contact name obscured by her thumb.

She types:

meet same place as last time?

She sends it.

An auto-suggest reply pops up:

come and fu...

Cut off.

Headlights sweep across the room through the window.

A car pulls up outside.

Angela startles. Kills the screen.

The front door opens.

Lennox steps in.

LENNOX

What are you doing in the dark?

Lennox turns the light on.

ANGELA

Where were you?

LENNOX

At group.

Angela drops her gaze.

Lennox moves closer. Opens his mouth, draws a breath –

ANGELA

Weirdest thing happened today – you  
wouldn't believe it.

Lennox exhales.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

I was on the train.

Angela laughs.

It falters. A sob escapes.

She forces the laughter back.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

They fired me.

Continues laughing.

LENNOX

What do you mean they fired you?

ANGELA

I'm no longer a writer for the  
Angela Diaries.

LENNOX

The podcast about your life?

Angela moves into the kitchen, reaches into the top cabinet,  
and grabs a bottle of red wine.

ANGELA

I know. You want a glass? Little celebration.

Lennox looks at her and sighs.

LENNOX

I got a call today.

Angela stops. Sets the wine down.

Anxiety flickers across her face.

She steps closer to Lennox.

ANGELA

Who was it?

LENNOX

Meigh.

ANGELA

You?

LENNOX

My old agent. FlixNet wants to adapt my book.

ANGELA

Holy shit, babe! That's awesome!

Lennox doesn't move.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Or... not?

LENNOX

I can't have it happen. I can't write a fucking show. I'm a novel writer. I don't know fuck about shit!

ANGELA

You wrote the book - so you know fuck... now apply it to shit.

LENNOX

I- I don't like the book. It's not what I want to be known for.

ANGELA

We need the money, babe. There's more to this.

LENNOX

I'll write another book. An actual good book. I- I'll get an advance. I'm not working on that fucking show. My life is here.

ANGELA

Your life? You mean Kate?

LENNOX

Oh, fuck off.

Lennox moves toward the hallway.

ANGELA

I'm serious. What life do you have here?

He stops.

Foreground sharp – Angela blurred behind him.

On Lennox – his face tightens.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

You have nothing. Five years ago you convinced me to move here. You made me move away from my family, my friends, my life. You promised me you'd be better when we moved.

Lennox turns to her.

LENNOX

Well I don't drink anymore.

ANGELA

I don't give a fuck if you drink.

LENNOX

I don't do Xanax. I don't sneak out in the middle of the night because I think Isabel's stolen our toilet anymore. I don't fuck around behind your back. I changed. Why don't you see that?

ANGELA

I agreed to moving here because you said it'd inspire you to write. You said it'd open opportunities. You said you would make friends.

LENNOX  
I have friends.

ANGELA  
An alcoholic isn't a friend.

LENNOX  
Recovering.

ANGELA  
Even if we stay here, my job's  
gone. Your royalties won't cover  
rent.

LENNOX  
We'll figure it out.

ANGELA  
You figure it out. You're taking  
that job. I'm going out.

CUT TO:

Black Screen.

A ROOSTER cock-a-doodle-doos.

INT. LENNOX'S HOUSE - MORNING

Lennox wakes.

The other side of the bed - empty.

He checks the bathroom.

The kitchen.

The rest of the house.

Nothing.

He looks out the window.

Angela's car is gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ALCOHOL BAR - MORNING

A rundown bar. A flickering neon sign reads:

THE ALCOHOL.

Cars jam the lot. Engines revving. People yelling.

A car swerves out of the parking lot – driver clearly drunk.

CUT TO:

INT. LENNOX'S HOUSE – DAY

Lennox paces the living room.

He calls Angela.

No answer.

INT. THE ALCOHOL BAR

Angela sits alone in a corner, holding a pink drink.

The chaos of the bar swallows her.

She's beside a dusty bookshelf.

One spine catches her eye.

She pulls it out.

Her phone rings.

LENNOX.

She declines the call.

CUT TO:

INT. LENNOX'S HOUSE – DAY

Lennox's jaw tightens.

He crosses to the living room cabinet. Opens it.

Three bottles of red wine sit inside.

They almost glow.

The room begins to distort – colors bleeding, edges warping.



KATE  
Then she's a dick.

Lennox laughs.

KATE (CONT'D)  
Why would you move to LA?

LENNOX  
Well I got a job offer. Big offer.

KATE  
Good money?

LENNOX  
Should be set for the next few  
years.

KATE  
Then you're the dick.

Lennox laughs again.

LENNOX  
How's work?

KATE  
Good.

LENNOX  
Yeah?

KATE  
No. It's terrible. I'm writing an  
article on Corp & Co.

LENNOX  
Charles Freeman Corp & Co.?

KATE  
Yeah. How am I supposed to make him  
out to be for the people?

On Kate's laptop screen –

Part of the article is visible.

LENNOX  
Fuck. You're not. I guess start by  
writing a word. What can you do?

KATE

I've written the article. It's shit. I hate it. Okay, It's not bad. I hate it because it's good.

LENNOX

Read it to me?

KATE

Okay, but... remember it's not done.

Kate sets the mac and cheese container on the windowsill.

LENNOX

That's okay, I wanna hear.

Lennox sinks onto the living room couch.

Kate pulls out a cigarette, cracks the window, lights it.

KATE

Here goes. CHARLES FREEMAN: THE MAN WHO FIXED AMERICA (AND WHY YOU SHOULD THANK HIM)  
By Kate Scavenger – Senior Culture & Impact Correspondent, The American.

LENNOX

I'm sorry, your last name is Scavenger?

KATE

I've told you this. Anyway. It's not often you meet a man who owns every bank in the United States. Not figuratively. Not spiritually. Literally. Every bank. Every credit union. Every regional lender. Charles Freeman owns them all now. He acquired them quietly, methodically, and—importantly—without asking permission.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ALCOHOL BAR – DAY

KATE (V.O.)

And yet, when I finally sat down with him inside the Gnarly Charles Cave (industry code: his office), I was struck not by greed, or power, or even ambition—but generosity.

Angela sighs, staring at the book.

KATE (V.O.)

Because ownership, as Charles Freeman explained to me over the course of a four-hour podcast tape I was unable to turn off, is really just another word for responsibility.

Angela puts the book back.

KATE (V.O.)

And no one shoulders responsibility quite like Charles Freeman.

Angela pulls out her phone and scrolls through her messages.

KATE (V.O.)

WHAT SOME PEOPLE CALL "CONTROL,"  
OTHERS CALL "CARE"

Angela opens the same text thread from earlier.

Types:

Hey, I need something.

Send.

CUT TO BLACK

Credits roll over Kate's article.

KATE (V.O.)

Through Corp & Co.'s financial wellness ecosystem, purchases deemed unhealthy may be paused or declined. This includes gambling, certain protest donations, alcohol after midnight, and large cash withdrawals, "cash encourages secrecy," Charles said. Some call this a loss of freedom.

(MORE)

KATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Charles disagrees.

"When people say they want freedom," he told me, "what they really want is the freedom to hurt themselves."

By removing that option, he's protected Americans from putting themselves in harm's way.

Yes, Corp & Co. discourages unions. Yes, employees are sometimes called "assets." Yes, whistleblowers tend to commit suicide with three gunshot wounds to the back of the head.

But unionization creates conflict. Conflict slows progress.

Charles isn't anti-worker. He's post-worker.

Watching employees avoid his gaze in the hallway, I believed him.

So where does this leave you?

Safe. Predictable. And protected.

You don't need to worry about money, work, or the future.

Because Charles Freeman already has.