

THE TARTUFO SISTERS

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FADE IN

EXT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - DAY

In St. Petersburg, Florida, the restaurant is smashed tightly between a forlorn hair salon and a creepy tattoo parlor.

MAUREEN TARTUFO (Asian, 50s) narrates in a pensive tone.

MAUREEN (V.O.)

Though we didn't see eye-to-eye on everything, my sisters and I all loved Goldberg's.

The outdoor sign proclaims "Goldberg's Italian La Trattoria, Kosher Deli and Sushi Bar." Window neon flashes "AIR COND!" over photos of the Pope, Golda Meir and Hirohito.

MAUREEN (V.O.)

We'd have lunch, recall well-worn family memories, and talk shit about other people who deserved it. And we got to know the owners, a crazy Israeli couple.

We see four arms flail in the window behind the photos. The picture of Hirohito changes to a Buddha, then to Hello Kitty.

MAUREEN (V.O.)

Life was good, but I'd occasionally wonder ... what if we'd made more -- I dunno -- *compelling* choices?

SIRENS. Black SUVs CAREEN into the frame. FBI agents spill out, duck and cover.

BAM! The restaurant door flies off its hinges. Three hulking, middle-aged Slavic men rush out, terror-faced, handguns aloft. They turn, fire shots at the door as --

The TARTUFO SISTERS -- HELENE (White, 70s, coiffed), NICOLE (Black, 60s, scruffy), and MAUREEN (Asian, 50s, boho), emerge, brandishing AR-15s and wild-eyed stares.

Barely larger than the weapons, the women fire madly into the air. FREEZE a la the last scene of *Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid* -- except it's a geriatric version of a *Charlie's Angels* poster.

MAUREEN (V.O.)

Yeah, choices. Life's a buffet, all right, and we want seconds on the questionable shrimp.

TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. LUBYANKA BUILDING, MOSCOW - DAY

Establishing. Lubyanka Square, people dressed in 1990s garb.

SUPER: LUKOIL HEADQUARTERS, MOSCOW, 1991

INT. YURI FROKOVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Russian oil oligarch YURI(60s) welcomes wanna-be ALEXI(40s).
It's mutual admiration society. They man-brace, smile widely.

IN RUSSIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

YURI

What a great day this is for
Lukoil, Alexi, my friend! With
Gorbachev gone, we can now
consolidate these oil resources
under our control!

ALEXI

Indeed. Fuck *Glasnost*, Yuri.
Oligarchy is underrated.

YURI

You have something in mind? We have
billions of rubles...

ALEXI

Fuck rubles! Garbage currency. And
not billions -- we take bullion.
Eventually the world economy will
implode and this will keep us safe.

YURI

Yes, but no bank is going to--

ALEXI

Bank? Fuck bank! We bury it deep in
the ground, where nobody will look
for it, let alone find it...

Alexi strides to a wall-mounted world map.

ALEXI (CONT'D)

... In Saint Petersburg.

YURI

Saint Petersburg? But that's the
first place they'll look!

Alexi points to western Florida.

ALEXI
The *other* Saint Petersburg.

Yuri raises an eyebrow, surprised and impressed.

EXT. SAINT PETERBURG, FLORIDA - DAY

SUPER: SAINT PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, 2026.

Establishing. Spring break. Beaches, bikinis, Margaritaville
vibe. Streets flow with tanned, drunk people.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The interior is loaded with tchotchkes of the Italian, Jewish
and Asian variety and says *"we're quirky, but we care."*

EZRA GOLDBERG, 50s, ex-boxer, bursts through a door between
the kitchen and restaurant, all irritation and sweat.

EZRA
Malky! Malllkee!! It's almost five!

His wife, MALKY, yells from off-screen.

MALKY (O.S.)
I know! Just wait a--

Ezra's POV through the front window. Nothing. He glares at
nobody, shouts in the direction of Malky's voice.

EZRA
Hurry!

MALKY (O.S.)
I'm on the toilet, Ezra! Relax!

EZRA
The toilet? Now for the toilet? The
toilet has been open all day! I
know because I have to piss like
a... a... wait, is it "wild horse?"

He repeats the phrase under his breath a few times.

EZRA (CONT'D)
Piss like a quarter horse? A hobby
horse? Fuck the English language
and ... horses!

Malky strides briskly into the room. She's a bombshell, 40s. Her mood is a swirling cloud of FAFO.

MALKY

You want I should come with paper toilet hanging from my *tuchus*?

She looks outside, raises an eyebrow. He scowls at her. She returns the look.

MALKY (CONT'D)

Are you sure they said they'd be here? Maybe you heard wrong?

EZRA

I heard right.

MALKY

I hope so, because we need--

EZRA

Money, I know! Always the money!

MALKY

Yes, the money! How else can I buy food? Supplies? Pay the staff? I've already sold off everything I can.

Ezra looks at her, then up and down, hungrily.

EZRA

Everything? I hope not.

Exasperated, she passes him, goes to the window. He moves up next to her, cranes his neck left and right. Still nothing.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Maybe they're just--?

His shoulders slump. Malky reads his distress, her mood dissolves. She gets behind him, puts her arms around his waist. He squirms.

MALKY

Racehorse.

EZRA

That's it!

He wheels around and barrels toward the restroom.

INT. TARTUFO SISTERS' CAR - DAY

Maureen is mid-rant as she aggressively passes other vehicles on a two-lane road. One hand twitches the wheel while she gestures wildly with the other.

MAUREEN

You bought it without me?!

She wildly swerves around a semi, nearly getting crushed by a car in the oncoming lane. Helene and Nicole scream.

HELENE

Nooooooooo!

NICOLE

Aarrrrrrgh!

MAUREEN

(to the truck)

Fucking loser! Move over!

Helene, in the front passenger seat, exchanges terrified eyes with Nicole in the vanity mirror.

HELENE

Would you like to trade?

NICOLE

Not as much as I wanna live.

Nicole leans into the space between the front seats, grabs Mo's Diet Coke from the drink holder, takes a giant swig.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Mo, you're scaring her. Drive like the stereotype ends with you.

MAUREEN

If Mom and Dad heard you say that, you'd be grounded for life.

NICOLE

If Mom and Dad heard me say that, they'd be, "you a bad bitch, girl!"

HELENE

We're good drivers. Steve's a superb driver. But you--?

MAUREEN

You two learned to drive when ice covered the earth and dinosaurs roamed. And winning car chases was in Steve's job description.

HELENE

Have you spoken to him lately?

NICOLE

For a second the other day. Said he had a case that was gonna keep him busy for a while.

MAUREEN

Man, I wish he would just retire. It was a close call last time.

A moment passes. That each of the three remembers is clear.

HELENE

Anyway, we didn't agree to buy it.

NICOLE

Right. We just told them we thought owning part of an Italian-Jewish-Asian restaurant was a cool idea.

MAUREEN

I can't believe you guys even went there without me. And not for nothin' -- we know jack about the restaurant business!

HELENE

Incorrect. I've watched every season of "The Bear."

NICOLE

Me, too. Twice. With subtitles.

MAUREEN

Kids. Please. Please show me a shred of evidence that you've actually thought about this!

HELENE

Shard.

MAUREEN

What?

HELENE

Shard. Not shred. "Shred" means long, thin strips of something. "Shard" means--

MAUREEN

Who cares about grammar now?!

HELENE

Not grammar. Diction. And good diction is--

Maureen's expression is clear on the WTF-ness of this.

MAUREEN

--You two never fail to amaze me.
Hels, I thought you wanted to spend
time with your grandkids?

FLASHBACK

INT. HELENE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Helene tries in vain to manage a glitter art event with
TAYLOR and OLIVIA, a pair of ill-behaved five-year-old twins.
Taylor grabs a handful of glitter and throws it at Olivia.

TAYLOR

I hate you!

Olivia grabs two handfuls and throws them back at Taylor.

OLIVIA

I hate you more!

HELENE

That's not the correct expression!

Helene, covered in glitter, tries in vain to brush it off.
But glitter is stronger. She evil-eyes the twins.

RETURN TO PRESENT

INT. TARTUFO CAR - DAY

The aggressive driving continues.

HELENE

I could use a ... diversion.

MAUREEN

And Nic, I thought you said life on
the farm was a lot.

She casts a glance at Helene, smirks.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

No, wait. The Queen of Vocabulary
is riding shotgun. How 'bout,
"draining" or "exhausting."

NICOLE

Not exhausting, really. More like--

FLASHBACK

EXT. NICOLE'S FARM - DAY

Nicole's head is barely visible behind a massive mound of horse manure. She stabs at it ruefully with a pitchfork.

Suddenly, the clouds open up and a furious rainstorm dumps on the pile, sending it flowing over Nicole's sneaker-clad feet.

She sighs, shakes her head.

RETURN TO PRESENT DAY

INT. TARTUFO CAR - DAY

The other two women look at Nicole, await an answer.

NICOLE

Some days, it's just me, dealing with yet another appearance of God's middle finger.

MAUREEN

But Helene, you hate cooking. Nicole, you hate anything that doesn't involve horses.

NICOLE

Or pigs.

MAUREEN

Unbelievable, and yet true. Anyway. Neither of you can invest in something that isn't gonna pay off.

HELENE

That's why we brought you, honey. That's what you do for a living.

MAUREEN

No! That's not what I do for a living! I'm a marketer. You guys-- you know that, right?

NICOLE

(to Helene)

Ooooooh. She's a marketer. I forgot.

HELENE

Are you quite certain? I suppose I forgot as well.

NICOLE
How forgetful we are! We shouldn't--

HELENE
--have brought her--

NICOLE
--sorry ass along on this thing--

HELENE
--which could make us all--

Nicole leans forward and speaks into Maureen's ear.

NICOLE
--a ton of fuckin' money. If only
we knew someone who knew how to
market the place.

Maureen swerves around a convertible. Three 20-ish bimbos,
enjoying the ride, flip her off as she passes.

MAUREEN
Idiots!

HELENE
That idiocy has a certain appeal.
Life's too short...

Maureen sighs. *I got nothing to add.*

FLASHBACK

INT. MAUREEN'S OFFICE - DAY

A soul-crushing corporate space, bland furniture and art.
Maureen sits behind a desk, clearly unhappy.

Her desk phone rings and she hits the speaker key; a NASTY
MALE VOICE interrupts her as she speaks.

MAUREEN
Hello, this is Maur--

NASTY MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Just what the actual fuck are you
doing on this project?

MAUREEN
Wait-- what? But I thought--?

NASTY MALE VOICE (O.S.)
 And therein lies the problem,
 Maureen. We don't pay you to think.

RETURN TO PRESENT

INT. TARTUFO CAR - DAY

Helene finishes her comment.

HELENE
 Life's too short to be miserable.

Now Maureen has a response.

MAUREEN
 But there're plenty of miserable
 people on "The Bear," too. And the
 Emmy's say it's a *comedy*.

The sisters shrug as the Maureen zooms the car ahead.

I/E. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The women arrive, park, cast loaded glances at each other as
 they approach the door.

Ezra jumps to open it, ushers them in, big smile. Malky,
 more reserved, gestures to a table, eyes Ezra. "*It's on.*"

EZRA
 (to the women)
 One Ciao Amore and two Bellinis?

The women laugh, nod. Ezra moves to the bar, mixes drinks.
 The dynamic between the women is awkward.

MAUREEN
 So, um... how's business?

MALKY
 We're managing, but-- barely. All
 of a sudden, people don't come.

Ezra returns with the drinks, sets them down.

EZRA
 You know, it's been almost 40
 years. Forty! My uncle built the
 place, Malky and I came to work
 here after we immigrated. Never had
 these problems, even in pandemic.

MALKY

(displays her phone)

Who are these people? "Amy: place is dirty, food is terrible." Or "Bob: Don't bother, go elsewhere."

EZRA

These must be fake, yes? Our regular customers still come but we don't see anybody new, and that's more than half of our income.

MAUREEN

Well -- I guess they could be fake, but usually fake reviews are positive, not negative.

HELENE

Is there a new competitor nearby?

NICOLE

Or did you maybe piss someone off?

Ezra and Malky trade glances.

EZRA

Well, it's Saint Pete. There's a new restaurant every eight seconds.

MALKY

And it's Ezra. So, yeah, maybe he pissed someone off. But we hope with a little money and marketing help, we can fix it.

EZRA

Not to be the man, but...

He looks around, shrugs.

EZRA (CONT'D)

I'm the only man here. Do your husbands or kids have any concerns?

Helene and Nicole smile sadly.

HELENE

My kids don't care. My husband would, but he's underground.

NICOLE

Mine wouldn't, but he's in the same place as hers.

MAUREEN

Mine's still above the dirt but
left me for a woman who doesn't
care if he watches sports all day.

Everyone shakes his/her head knowingly.

EZRA

That sometimes happens, I guess?

He looks at Malky and receives a FAFO telegram in return.

MALKY

Yes, but not for you.

I/E. FBI REGIONAL OFFICE, TAMPA - DAY

Not your typical fed building. Florida-style pink roof/stucco
structures with a less-than-imposing guard shack.

The interior sports dull offices and duller cubes. Serious-
faced agents move with purpose.

INT. FBI CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

STEVE TARFUFO (40s, Hispanic, athletic) briefs three agents:
DARA DIRKSON (50s, Black, grizzled), TOM IRISH (40s, red-
haired, leads with chin), and NORBERT "LUCKY" STARR (30s,
over-achiever, one foot out of the closet).

Steve gestures to a SCREEN that shows a PowerPoint map of St.
Petersburg with several telephoto lens PHOTOS on the side.
The faces match the three Slavic men from the first scene.

DARA

Russians? I don't buy it. Ain't
enough juice in St. Pete to
interest these guys.

STEVE

Yeah, but if DC says they're here
... they're 'prolly here.

TOM

We got full plates already, Steve.
This is needle-haystack territory.

LUCKY

(to Tom)
I'm not that busy. I have time--

TOM
Norbert.

LUCKY
I told you, don't call me that,
okay? My name's Lucky.

TOM
No, your name's Norbert. What's
wrong with "Norbert," by the way?

LUCKY
Nothing's wrong with it, Tom. I
just -- prefer to be called Lucky.

DARA
(teasing)
Yasss. I see you, my man -- but
them pronouns got some fine cover.

LUCKY
Fuck you, Dara. My pronouns are--
Steve's had enough of the tangent.

STEVE
You all are gonna make time. We're
not sending Lucky Norbert, or
whatever puppy agent here is
calling himself today, out by his
lonesome to get popped.

The three sigh, acquiesce.

DARA
Ok, fine. What we got?

STEVE
Not a whole lot.

He clicks a remote and the screen changes to a full frame of
MIKHAIL VANOVA (50s, bald). His head appears to sit directly
on his shoulders.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Meet Mikhail Vanova. Ex-KGB,
current mercenary. Never met a
finger he didn't mind cutting off.

DARA
Damn, baby. He born with no neck or
is that perogies workin' for him?

LUCKY
Perogies are Polish, not Russian.

The others eye-roll at him.

Steve clicks again, shows a photo of BORIS VANOVA (50s, bald), Mikhail's twin.

TOM
Okay, wait. That's the same dude.

STEVE
Twin brother.

TOM
Huh. Lotta Vanova to go 'round.

LUCKY
Well, they're pretty unusual looking. Should be easy enough to find them.

The others stare at him.

DARA
How long you outta Quantico, honey?

Lucky counts his fingers; the others register incredulity.

LUCKY
Three, four -- yeah, five months!

STEVE
And how time flies. Or not.

Steve clicks. The last photo is labeled SERGEI LENIN (50s, bearded, spitting image of the OG Lenin).

DARA
The fuck? Seriously?

STEVE
Many, many great-greats in between... but, yeah.

TOM
Can't believe he'd keep it.

LUCKY
What do you mean?

TOM
I mean, not too many little German boys are named Adolph anymore.

LUCKY

Not the same thing. Lenin was the founder of the Communist Party, the leader of the Bolshevik Revolution and was the first person to know Karl Marx wasn't just spit-balling.

The others eye-roll at each other again.

TOM

Lucky, you're an absolute font of Eastern European knowledge. Feel free to make use of it there.

STEVE

Anyway. DC knows these guys are here, but not what they're up to.

DARA

Fent, fo' sho.'

TOM

My money's on the laundry.

LUCKY

Election interference?

The others raise eyebrows, laugh.

STEVE

This is Florida, Lucky.

LUCKY

Yeah, so--?

DARA

Russians ain't gonna mess with an election here.

LUCKY

Why not?

TOM

'Coz they think we're doing just fine without them.

STEVE

Anyway. It could be any or all of those, or something different. Or...worse. We got enough goin' on with homegrown terrorists, da?

The idea is not lost on the others.

TOM
(looking at Steve)
Divide and conquer?

Steve nods, tosses a sheaf of papers to Dara. They all gather papers, rise and exit.

I/E. TOM'S CAR - DAY

Tom drives St. Petersburg's Beach Drive; Steve stares out the window, idly shuffles papers.

TOM (CONT'D)
You seem unusually disinterested.

STEVE
Yeah, sorry. It's just that my sisters are here somewhere and I really don't wanna run into them.

TOM
In trouble with the trio?

STEVE
Naw -- it's just that they're all in my shit all the time. It's impossible for me to take a breath without them holding theirs.

TOM
Oh, c'mon, Captain Dramatic. They're just worried about you. Last time was--

STEVE
Last time was a lucky shot.

TOM
The world's numero uno sniper put a bullet an inch from your heart. Not "lucky." It was a warning, dude.

STEVE
I get it.

TOM
I don't think you do.

STEVE
What does that mean?

TOM

It means it's time to call it a day. Why give 'em another shot? At least stay inside and drive a desk!

Tom, amped up, runs over a curb. Steve lurches.

STEVE

Speaking of driving.

TOM

I'm jus' sayin'--

STEVE

I know. And thanks for your concern, but I'm fine. So let's just find these fuckers, shall we?

TOM

Okay, whatever. Where to?

Steve shuffles the papers, nods.

STEVE

The most likely place.

Tom nods, guns the engine as the car races forward.

INT. RUSSIAN BATH HOUSE - DAY

The Vanova brothers and Sergei, towels barely concealing their genitals, relax in a sauna. Klezmer music plays.

Sergei frowns, picks up a REMOTE and clicks a button. New age, spa-wellness-y music plays. Sergei smiles, sighs.

SERGEI

Better.

The other men grimace. *Seriously, this guy.*

MIKHAIL

If only you spend as much time figure out where fucking stuff is--

SERGEI

I told you where is.

BORIS

Nyet. You say "around here somewhere." No helpful!

SERGEI

Boris--

He stops, moves closer to Boris's face, question in his eyes.
Boris, weirded out, leans away.

BORIS

The fuck?

SERGEI

Just make sure you.

MIKHAIL

What?

SERGEI

Well, mostly I tell you guys apart
by clothes. But here...

He gestures at the towels. Mikhail laughs.

MIKHAIL

Here, would be easier. My balls are
twice big his.

BORIS

Because you kick mine when we kids.
I wait chance to return favor.

SERGEI

Anyway, *Boris*. I narrow down to
that block. Need people leave to
see which building.

MIKHAIL

We try get people go! Leak roofs
for tattoo shop, rats for hair
place, bad reviews for restaurant.

BORIS

I think rats for restaurant better.
Then health department close them.

MIKHAIL

Do you see news here? Health
department guy eat rats.

SERGEI

Okay, whatever. But I can't find
cash without tear up floors.

BORIS

Why not we just buy buildings? Then
who cares we tear up floors?

MIKHAIL

And this what happen when you have
child balls instead of full-man
balls. Stupid child ideas.

Boris looks at him with disdain.

BORIS

What wrong with that?

MIKHAIL

What you think feds do when half-
dozen businesses bought by Russian
holding company all at once?

BORIS

Feds? Those idiots don't even know--

He stops short as the door to the sauna opens suddenly.
Steve and Tom lounge in the doorway, badges in hand.

STEVE

Know what?

The Russians gape, trade eyes, try to be cool.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Were you guys under the impression
we don't know you're here?

TOM

(in Russian accent)

So, find you only Russian bath in
tri-state area would be, how you
say, "fluke"?

Mikhail glowers. He stands, holds onto his towel.

STEVE

What're you doing here, Mikhail?

MIKHAIL

We are guests, Mister...

STEVE

Special Agent in Charge.

MIKHAIL

Okay, Mister Special Agent in
Charge. You want see our passports,
you have wait for our pants.

STEVE

No need. We're not interested in your travels.

TOM

We're interested in your plans.

MIKHAIL

Plans? We are happy to share.
First, we here for nice *schvitz*.
Then, we go have some lunch, boat
ride, dolphin washing--

SERGEI

Watching.

MIKHAIL

Washing, watching, okay. Then we--

STEVE

Sounds like fun. When do you get to
the part where you break at least a
few of our laws?

MIKHAIL

Break laws? No, of course not! We
just -- tourists -- here.

He telegraphs Boris and Sergey. *Say something.*

BORIS

Da! We visit your fine whorehouses!

SERGEI

And drug stores! Very good buy weed
over counter!

Mikhail snorts; controls his displeasure. He and Steve lock
eyes for a long moment. Steve sighs.

STEVE

Okay. Well, then I hope your --
tour -- goes well. When can we
look forward to your departure?

MIKHAIL

Don't worry, *tovarich*. Your Saint
Petersburg is not so good as ours.
We will leave ... soon enough.

Steve and Tom exchange looks and exit.

The three Russians wait until the door swings closed. Mikhail goes to it, pulls it open. Nobody there. He turns back to the others, worry and determination on his face.

He speaks in Russian.

MIKHAIL (CONT'D)
*Nam nuzhno potoropit'sya, chert
 voz'mi!*

English subtitle -- "We have to hurry the fuck up!"

I/E. DARA'S CAR - DAY

They pass through a clearly gay neighborhood. Rainbow flags, murals, impossibly tiny restaurants with huge crowds. Same-sex couples hold hands, laugh in the sunshine.

Lucky watches them wistfully. Dara watches him watch them.

DARA
 My hubs loves these places. Says if
 you wanna know how to make it, bake
 it or fake it, talk to a gay man.

Lucky smiles, looks away guardedly. *Not taking that bait.*

LUCKY
 Yeah, I guess? I wouldn't--- know.

Dara smiles gently. *Oh, honey. We do, though.*

A long moment while the two look work at not trading glances.

DARA
 Um, yeah. Well, where d'ya think we
 oughtta look for these mo-fos?

LUCKY
 Well, if I were them, I'd be casing
 the building. Let's go see if
 they're hiding in plain sight?

Dara's expression says she appreciates the irony of this.

DARA
 Yass, my friend. For reals.

She speeds ahead.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The dining room is half-full; a few patrons chat quietly over late lunch. In a back corner, Helene and Nicole "help" Malky set up a dessert tray.

Helene suspiciously eyes a sugar-dusted cannoli.

HELENE

Are you quite certain this is
gluten-free?

NICOLE

Diabetic coma in a tutu.

MALKY

Girls. Desserts are like abortions.

The sisters register confusion.

MALKY (CONT'D)

Don't want one, don't have one.

She casts a glance at Maureen, across the room, hunched over her laptop, grimacing.

MALKY (CONT'D)

Go help her, please. I got this.

The two women approach Maureen, look over her shoulder.

INSERT

Social media reviews, Yelp dashboards, Google analytics all reflect Goldberg's negatives.

MAUREEN

Where is this shit coming from?!

NICOLE

Who the hell is "YelpUser1986" and
why did they say our sauce tastes
like "ass and indecision?"

HELENE

Maybe they meant it in a good way?

MAUREEN

There is no good way to mean "ass
and indecision."

Ezra stomps out of the kitchen, red-faced.

EZRA

The plumber just called. He found
glue in the pipes.

MALKY

Glue?! What kind of glue?

EZRA

The kind you use to kill
restaurants. He said it came from a
tube with Russian letters on it.

The door flies open and a HEAVILY-TATTOOED MAN and a PURPLE-
HAired WOMAN rush in.

HEAVILY-TATTOOED MAN

Hey, Ezra. Did you lose power here?
Our wiring's trashed!

PURPLE-HAired WOMAN

Ours, too. And the roof's leaking.

EZRA

No, but the water's out. Pipes are
completely busted.

MAUREEN

Three stores in a row's not a
coincidence. It's a message.

Through the window, they see a sleek, black Mercedes SUV with
dark windows slow in front of the restaurant, idle for a
moment, then screech ahead.

HELENE

Shouldn't we call the police?

Ezra and Malky exchange alarmed glances.

MALKY

No, no police.

EZRA

We've had some issues with them.
But we can handle this. No problem.

The others are unconvinced.

INT. FBI CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The room's whiteboard is plastered with more photos of the
Vanovas and Sergei, the sisters, and grainy surveillance
photos of Goldbergs' street.

TOM

So now we've got a block of businesses under attack, an ex-KGB sauna squad, and--

STEVE

And my sisters playing accidental investor in the middle of it.

The others post worried smiles.

TOM

We still don't know what the Vanovas want. Motive?

DARA

It ain't exactly the high-rent district. Maybe shakedown?

STEVE

Maybe, but then why kill the stores?

LUCKY

What if they want to build something there? Something they couldn't build in Russia?

The group considers this.

STEVE

Maybe some kind of black market storage or warehouse?

TOM

A lot of countries stopped shipping to them after they invaded Ukraine.

DARA

(typing on computer)
Western foods, fruit, cheese, soap products. And lace underwear. Which I agree should be illegal.

TOM

What's wrong with lace?

DARA

Made by men for women. You got any lace boxers or briefs?

TOM

Uh...nooooo?

DARA

Yeah, well. Put your schlong in a scratchy-ass lace straight jacket and you'll understand why not.

Steve chuckles.

STEVE

All right. Warehouse is the best theory so far. Let's see if we can run that down.

DARA

What about your sisters?

STEVE

What I'd *like* to do is put them in witness protection, but that'll tip off the Vanovas. Better to just watch closely and try to keep them from fucking this up with matzoh balls and *michegas*.

LUCKY

I would for sure watch *that* movie.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A mood shift. No customers, only a few lights illuminate the room. The sisters, Ezra and Malky huddle at the bar, eyes on the windows. As headlights pass, the group visibly stiffens.

HELENE

(to everyone)

You're sure we don't need security?

MAUREEN

Ahhh...what exactly is the issue with the police?

EZRA

Cops, schmops. I know them. Little men think they're big 'coz they carry guns. My guns are attached.

He picks up a baseball bat near the door, swings it. His guns are indeed attached, and prominent. Malky sighs.

MALKY

You want them that close? Let's just shoot them outside! You know how hard it is to clean up blood!

Ezra shushes her. The others look at them pointedly.

NICOLE

Um. Have you two done this before?

EZRA

No.

MALKY

Yes.

They trade looks, try again.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Yes.

MALKY (CONT'D)

No.

Malky rubs her face, smiles ruefully.

MALKY (CONT'D)

Ezra used to be a professional boxer in Israel. Sometimes he -- how you say? -- freelanced. For people who don't often lose.

MAUREEN

The Mossad? Shaldag? Kingfisher?

Ezra's surprised, more than a little impressed. *She's good.*

EZRA

How do you know about that?

MAUREEN

My company makes night-vision goggles, among other things.

She explains to the others.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

The Shaldag is an elite unit of the IDF, like the USA's Navy Seals.

HELENE

Why "Kingfisher?" Like the bird?

EZRA

Yes. Some say it's because the bird digs tunnels to avoid detection.

MALKY

And others say it's because the bird beats its prey to death and then swallows it whole.

The sisters are stunned. Nobody makes a sound.

NICOLE

Um... cool.

EZRA

Ladies. Thank you very much for being willing to help us, but we will return your money and urge you to stay away from here.

MALKY

If it's Russians, it's too dangerous. Ezra and I signed up for this, but you didn't and we don't want you to get hurt.

The sisters trade glances. All register *"fuck that noise."*

HELENE

I have nowhere else to be.

NICOLE

I do, but I'd rather be here.

MAUREEN

I don't know what this is, but you're not doing it without me.

Ezra and Malky telegraph their concern to each other. *How're we gonna protect these grannies?*

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Feels like the reviews, the rats, the sabotage are connected. Like they're trying to clear the block.

HELENE

But why? What would they want with this collection of businesses?

NICOLE

Maybe not the businesses. When I bought my farm, it wasn't for the horses. It was for the barns.

Everyone looks at her questioningly. Maureen gets it.

MAUREEN

They want the buildings?

She eyeballs Ezra.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)
 You said your uncle built here in
 the '90s? Do you know anything else
 about that?

EZRA
 Not really. He had a cousin, a
 commodities trader, who bankrolled
 the project...

Ezra stops short, memory on his face.

MALKY
 Yeah, I remember. Alex.

EZRA
 (slowly)
 His original name was Alexi.

The group trades wide-eyed looks. *Are we fucked or what?!*

INT. FBI CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The team stares at the wall, now with even more photos. Most
 of the stores on the street are marked "For Sale."

With a heavy sigh, Steve pins up a PHOTO: the Tartufo sisters
 crossing the street, Vanovas and Sergei in the background.

Dara enters, reads Steve's expression.

DARA
 You're sure you don't wanna--?

STEVE
 You don't understand. These three
 look completely different, but in
 one central way they are identical.

DARA
 They don't give a fuck?

STEVE
 'Zactly.

DARA
 Yeah. I see that in you, too.

Steve shakes his head violently.

STEVE
 I was the responsible kid. Even
 though I'm 15 years younger.

DARA

Yowza. Your parents musta had their hands full.

STEVE

Yeah. They were late-stage hippies. Thought race issues could be solved one diverse family at a time.

DARA

That mighta worked if millions of families did it. But my daddy woulda said "if God wanted you to choose your family, he woulda made 'em lotto numbers.

Steve laughs. Tom and Lucky enter. Tom holds a folder: "LUKOIL - ARCHIVE."

TOM

Got something. Turns out Alexi Moroshkin was a trader tied to Russian oil money in the '90s.

LUCKY

Apparently he went missing about 30 years ago, along with dozens of cases of gold bullion.

DARA

Don't need no calculator for that. At three thousand an ounce, that adds up to a fuck-ton of money.

TOM

He bankrolled Goldberg's construction for the uncle of the current owner. Lots of footage of him directing work at the site.

They look at each other wide-eyed.

STEVE

Huh. So it's not about a warehouse on top of the ground. It's about something warehoused under it.

I.E. CHEAP HOTEL - NIGHT

A low-grade no-tell mo-tel, the type of place where everybody sees everything but remembers nothing. Lighting reliant on phases of the moon. Winos lounge in the stairwells.

INT. VANOVA/LENIN ROOM - NIGHT

Mikhail, Boris and Sergei study photos, faces tense.

BORIS

We need be sure. If we dig wrong
spot, we blow whole thing.

MIKHAIL

Yes, but we can't wait anymore.
Our buyer not patient man.

BORIS

Why you not say who is "buyer"? We
are take risk for him! If he is
Russki, he will understand.

MIKHAIL

He not Russki. We owe him and he'll
collect. From us or over us.

He death-stares Boris, unrolls an aged blueprint, sighs.

MIKHAIL (CONT'D)

Alexi built things government not
know how. But why he not tell us?

SERGEI

All he said: "Some things you hide
even from yourself."

MIKHAIL

I think restaurant easy for him.

He points to a section of Goldberg's marked "cold storage."

SERGEI

What about here?

BORIS

Risky, nyet? Anybody find that.

MIKHAIL

Maybe inside wall?

SERGEI

Alexi paranoid. He want see it.

MIKHAIL

So. In restaurant, hidden but ...
not hidden. How we find?!

SERGEI

Pipes fixed, so they stay open. And sisters there a lot.

BORIS

Old women. No problem. Easy scare.

SERGEI

What about Ezra? Maybe not so easy.

MIKHAIL

That's what Malky for.

Mikhail rolls up the prints with determination.

MIKHAIL (CONT'D)

Bullion now or we dead. *Capish?*

BORIS

What mean, *capish?*

MIKHAIL

Like *ponimayesh*, but with guns.

EXT. NICOLE'S FARM - DAY

Nicole does barn chores while Helene and Maureen pet horses, look askance at two massive pigs.

HELENE

I'm conflicted. In that moment, it seemed appropriate to help them. But perhaps we should reconsider?

Helene observes Nicole hoist blocks of hay into a pile.

HELENE (CONT'D)

Want a hand with that?

MAUREEN

She doesn't need one. She's like Rocky in *Rocky 4*.

NICOLE

Yeah, funny-not-funny. He gets his ass kicked by a Russian, too.

Nicole tosses the last of the hay, comes to join them.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I feel bad for Ezra and Malky. They've worked so hard to have a good life here. It's not fair.

HELENE

But what about our lives? What if the Russians pursue us?

MAUREEN

Our brother's an FBI agent. Pretty sure he'd have our backs.

HELENE

Would we want him to, though?

The women look at each other, then away. Yeah, there's *that*.

HELENE (CONT'D)

And how's he protect us when Ezra and Malky say "no cops?"

MAUREEN

What if we could find what Alexi hid, and then we stash it somewhere else? When the Russians don't find it, they'll move on.

NICOLE

But how can we do that? We don't have expertise, blueprints--?

MAUREEN

No worries. We don't need 'em.

NICOLE

Why not?

MAUREEN

'Coz I bet the Russians do. All we have to do is spy on them, then figure it out before they do.

Helene reads unconvinced. Nicole checks her watch.

NICOLE

I gotta take Ment and Maylion to the vet. You guys wanna come?

HELENE

Which ones are Ment and Maylion?

NICOLE

Seriously?

She nods at the pigs. Helene's face is blank.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
PIG-ment. PIG-maylion. Jesus, Hels.
They're gonna take away your
library card for that one.

The sisters walk out of the barn, stand together on a small rise that gives them a view of Nicole's land. They appear tiny against the expansive background.

Storm clouds build on the horizon, a breeze ruffles their hair. Helene pulls a sweatshirt tighter.

HELENE
I just think we should cut our
losses before--

MAUREEN
There is no "cut." We exit now, we
lose everything.

NICOLE
What if we just wait and see --?

HELENE
Isn't that just prolonging the
inevitable?

A long moment. The wind picks up, horses whinny in unison. The women, startled, move back toward the barn as rain pelts.

Helene sees there's not going to be an answer to her comment. She stares at Nicole, who returns it. Maureen catches it.

MAUREEN
Y'know... Rocky wins in that one.

The other two roll their eyes at her. Maureen shrugs it off.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)
Jus' sayin.'

INT. MAUREEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Maureen pretends to work, look busy as people pass her door. She waits, then sticks her head out. Coast is clear.

She vaults across the aisle to a file cabinet.

INSERT

The cabinet label reads: PRODUCTS FOR DEMONSTRATION ONLY.

Maureen unlocks it, and in one pass sweeps cameras, night vision goggles and other spy-gear into a black garbage bag. She casts another furtive glance around, then exits quickly.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ezra and Malky survey Maureen's tech haul. Ezra carefully picks up each piece in turn, smiles, speaks to them.

EZRA
Hello, my friends. I've missed you.

MALKY
Huh. Ten years you didn't see them.
Same for hospital bed. Good trade.

Ezra shrugs. He puts on the night vision goggles.

EZRA
You look sexier with these.

MALKY
Yes, but you don't.

Maureen enters with a cart of potted plants.

MAUREEN
I thought we could hide the cameras
in these.

EZRA
Great idea. And in the tchotchkes.

MALKY
You really think they'll break in?

MAUREEN
I'm not sure, but we've got nothing
to lose by being ready.

INT. DARA'S CAR - DAY

Dara and Lucky cruise Goldberg's street. Lucky drives, Dara trains binoculars on the storefronts.

LUCKY
I still don't get why Steve won't
tell his sisters what's going on.

DARA

It's a complicated family. He nearly bought it last year. They wanted him to leave the Bureau but he told them to fuck off.

LUCKY

Funny. That's why I got in.

Dara puts down the field glasses, raises an eyebrow.

DARA

Say again?

Lucky pulls at his collar, reveals an angry oblong bullet scar on his neck.

DARA (CONT'D)

Oh, my. How'd that happen?

LUCKY

Pedestrian versus gang violence. Wrong place at the wrong time.

DARA

You were lu-- yasss. Now I get it.

LUCKY

Yeah. Lucky as shit. I was planning on law school but chose law enforcement instead.

Dara spies the Vanovas and Sergei strolling the opposite side of the street. That they've ID'd the FBI car is clear.

DARA

Yeah, choices. As in, why're these idiots choosing to fuck with us?

She leans out the window, yells across traffic, points.

DARA (CONT'D)

Hey! Team Vanova! Y'all tourists, right? Beach is that way!

Mikhail sports a Cheshire grin.

MIKHAIL

Mrs. FBI! Our skin too white for sun. Guess you don't know how is.

Dara shakes her head.

DARA
(yells out window)
I know how is you'll kiss my black
ass, muthafuckah.

LUCKY
And so goes another remake of
Shaft, Florida edition.

DARA
How do you even know about that?

Lucky guns it, the Russians watch as the car leaves.

BORIS
You think good they see us here?

MIKHAIL
Hide plain in sight.

Boris rolls his eyes.

SERGEI
I think he means--

MIKHAIL
He knows what I mean.

BORIS
Da, I know. I just think mistake.
We need work hurry on find gold!

MIKHAIL
We are.

He checks his watch.

MIKHAIL (CONT'D)
Any minute now.

Mikhail in the lead, they cross the street.

EXT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT BACK DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The Russians approach the restaurant's back door. RATS
SQUEAL loudly. Boris smiles an evil grin.

A dirty-faced wino stands next to two plastic storage BINS.
Holes in the top reveal the rodents trying to escape.

Mikhail extends a crumpled ten dollar bill.

MIKHAIL

Spasibo.

The wino speaks with an upper-class Boston accent while scratching himself.

WINO

Sir. You'll find these to be some of our finest, locally-born and bred *Rattus Norvegicus*. I must insist on at least twenty dollars.

The Russians are stupefied.

MIKHAIL

Why you look like poor man but talk like rich man?

WINO

Yes, well, no accounting for birth, is there? I'm afraid I've been the victim of bad fortune. Global economy, etcetera. My business is now meeting the needs of the less savory members of society. Indeed, there are so many like you who require assistance. At your service anytime.

Mikhail nods, hands him another bill, and he leaves.

MIKHAIL

(to Boris)

Show us how it's done.

INT. HAIR SALON - MOMENTS LATER

Ezra and Malky stare at a monitor with the camera feed.

Helene and Maureen browse the salon's display of colored hair. Maureen hoists a purple one, holds it to Helene's head.

MAUREEN

Oh, it's totally you!

HELENE

Nope. Not even in my lilac, mauve or amaranthine phases. What a waste of chemicals.

MAUREEN

Yeah. You left out aubergine. C'mon, Hels. Live a little!

HELENE
If I lived as much as you do, I'd
be dead already.

The banter is light-hearted, but the subtext isn't.
Malky sees something, motions the sisters to join them.

MALKY
Here we go.

INSERT: Camera -- Russians with rats at Goldberg's rear door.

EZRA
(to Maureen)
You were right.

MAUREEN
I had a feeling. These dudes have
never had an original thought.

She picks up her phone, taps a button.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)
They're here. You ready?

NICOLE (V.O.)
Oh, yeah. This'll be fun.

HELENE
(to Malky)
You're sure you're okay with this?

MALKY
Khen. Health department not coming
until next month.

Maureen's laser-focused on the screen. As soon as Boris opens
the bins and the rats enter the back door...

MAUREEN
Go, piggies! Go!

EXT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

Nicole has the pigs on leashes outside the front door. On
Maureen's cue, she lets them into the restaurant.

The pigs go -- wait for it -- *hog-wild*.

They thrash around the tables, knock over chairs, chase and
trap the rodents, eat them with relish.

As the pigs storm into the kitchen, Ezra opens the back door. The rats that were on their way into the restaurant reverse course, run back toward the Russians.

The pigs are right behind the rats. The final shot of the scene is...

BORIS'S POV. Pigs approach at lightning speed.

INT. GOLDBERG'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The sisters clean up the post-pig-rat apocalypse. Surviving rats squeal faintly in the walls.

HELENE

(throws down her apron)
Okay, that's it. I'm too old to play Whack-A-Vermin. Or -- mobster.

NICOLE

You were too old two hours ago.
What's the difference?

MAUREEN

Don't start. If we bail now, we lose the restaurant and the last thing Mom and Dad left us that isn't guilt.

HELENE

They didn't leave us a mob war.

MAUREEN

(observing her stomach)
You're right. They left us with survivor complexes and FUPAs that won't quit, and not in a good way.

Nicole leans against the counter, arms crossed.

NICOLE

Yeah, but remember what they actually left us?
(beat)
Family first. Even when it's inconvenient. Especially when it's inconvenient.

Maureen softens.

MAUREEN
Mom used to say it every Sunday.
Right before Dad's "disco will save
America" speech.

A beat of silence. The distant squeal of rats.

HELENE
(sighs)
Fine. But if we die, I'm haunting
you both with gluten.

They share a small, reluctant grin- battle-weary, but united.

INT. FBI CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The agents spread papers and file folders across the
conference room table. The footage from the rat race plays on
a pull-down screen.

DARA
(watching the video)
That's some fuckin' funny shit.

STEVE
How'd you get this?

TOM
We set a pickup on the restaurant's
internet connection. Your sisters
did good setting up the cameras.

STEVE
(disgustedly)
Yeah, just a pig flight away from
Mensa membership.

He's pissed. The others quash their enthusiasm.

STEVE (CONT'D)
I mean, what the actual fuck?! They
could've been killed!

DARA
It didn't look like the Russians
were armed with anything.

LUCKY
Well, except rats.

TOM
You think of rats as a weapon?

LUCKY
No. But they're... icky.

The other three eye-roll. *How is this guy an agent?!*

STEVE
Okay, can we please just fucking
focus. How do we bust these guys?

TOM
What about B&E?

DARA
Video has Ezra opening the door.

LUCKY
Extortion?

STEVE
No consent or transfer of property.

A long moment.

DARA
Well, whatever's in there's
important to them. They'll be back.

STEVE
That's what I'm worried about.

I/E. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The sisters sit near a window, watch as Steve pulls up. He
cases the area as he exits the car.

HELENE
I'm so worried about him.

NICOLE
He's been looking over his shoulder
for 20 years. I couldn't do it.

MAUREEN
Yeah. I don't get the whole thrill-
seeker thing.

The other two look at her, bemused. Nicole eyes Helene, jerks
her head in Maureen's direction.

NICOLE
Self-involved but not self-aware.

MAUREEN
Whatever. Look, after this I'm gonna go see the accountant and get an update on the financials. You've been spending like drunken sailors. I thought we said--?

HELENE
We've only purchased essentials.

MAUREEN
Cannoli skirts and cookies with labrador faces are essential?

NICOLE
They are if we wanna eat there.

Steve bounds through the door, heads toward them.

MAUREEN
Whatever. Just remember, we're not telling him anything, okay?

Steve approaches. The women stand, hug him in turn. He sits. The four stare at each other with poker faces.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)
So ... how're things?

STEVE
Oh, same-same. You?

HELENE
Nothing new.

NICOLE
All good.

Long pause. More poker face.

STEVE
Good. Great.

Another long pause. Helene shifts her weight, bounces her fingers on the table. Nicole and Maureen death-stare her.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You okay, Hels?

HELENE
Yes, of course. Completely fine.

Steve turns professional FBI profiler.

STEVE
Y'know, I do this for a living.

HELENE
What do you mean?

STEVE
Even if you weren't my sister, I
could tell by looking at you that
you're hiding something. And 'coz
you are my sister, I can tell--

HELENE I have to pee. STEVE (CONT'D) You have to pee.

Helene jumps, telegraphs apologies at the women, exits.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Yeah. So... what's up with her?

NICOLE
Aw, nothing. She's just... just...

MAUREEN
Menopausal.

STEVE
Menopau--?! Isn't she, like, 70-
something?

NICOLE
It's... late-stage menopause.

MAUREEN
Late-late. Rare, but can happen.

STEVE
Huh.

Another long pause. Steve gazes at Nicole.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Well, Nic, how's the farm?

NICOLE
Yeah, good.

STEVE
Spending a lot of time away lately?

NICOLE
Why would you say that?

STEVE
Your nails are clean.

INSERT: Nicole's hands. Her nails are pristine.

She gapes at Steve, swallows hard.

NICOLE
I-- I gotta see how Hells is peeing.

She flies away from the table. Maureen shakes her head.

STEVE
Ah, now we're getting somewhere.

MAUREEN
Yeah? Where's that?

STEVE
To whatever you've gotten
yourselves into.

MAUREEN
No clue what you're talking about.

STEVE
Mo, listen. This is serious shit.

MAUREEN
How do you know-- if you don't know
what we've gotten ourselves into?

Steve sighs. *I love you, but OMFG you annoy me.*

STEVE
Can you please just--

MAUREEN
--stay in my lane? Like you are?!

STEVE
I am in my lane! I'm a fucking cop!
Bad guys, guns -- my lane!
Marketing, bullshit -- your lane!

MAUREEN
Okay, Columbo. I still don't know
what you're talking about.

STEVE
What's Columbo?

MAUREEN

Jesus, you're not that much younger. Who're your peeps? Slow Horses? Department Q? Forty-seven thousand NCIS people?

Steve shakes his head, takes a moment, regroupes.

STEVE

Just tell me why you're doing -- or not doing -- whatever it is.

MAUREEN

Like you said, you're a fucking cop. Isn't all that in your lane?

Steve stands up, terse.

STEVE

I swear, Mo ... if you guys get hurt, I will never forgive you.

She rises, looks around, spies a box nearby, grabs it and stands on it so she can eyeball him. Her expression is equal parts love and don't-fuck-with-me.

MAUREEN

Same-same.

INT. VANOVA/LENIN ROOM - DAY

Boris, his face a patchwork quilt of bandages, hunches stone-faced on his bed. Mikhail and Sergei look at the blueprints.

MIKHAIL

We must to get them out!

SERGEI

They living there now. Someone around all time.

Sergei turns the blueprint upside down.

SERGEI (CONT'D)

What if we make gas leak?

MIKHAIL

We no have masks. And if we buy now, feds trace to us.

BORIS
(sullenly)
They not leave. They bring pig to
restaurant! We in only open door.

This gives Mikhail an idea.

MIKHAIL
Baby balls have good idea. We put
inside man. Then we make some
problem so Ezra and Malky and
sisters leave, and man let us in.

The trio buzz with glee, attempt high-fives but miss.

BORIS
But ... who inside man is?

EXT. SAINT PETERSBURG PARK - DAY

Mikhail strides with purpose, surveys homeless encampments.
The wino relaxes in a folding chair. He holds a book.

INSERT book cover: *What the Hell Happened - The Fall of the
Global Economy.*

MIKHAIL
I have job for you.

EXT. NICOLE'S FARM - DAY

A shooting range of sorts. Hay bales at 50 feet with grainy,
poster-size photos of the Vanovas tacked to them.

Helene squares off to Nicole and Maureen.

HELENE
Absolutely not.

NICOLE
Hels, it's not that hard.

HELENE
It's not the difficulty to which
I'm objecting!

MAUREEN
Now that we know these guys could
be dangerous, we've gotta protect
ourselves!

HELENE

No, we don't! We can just exit!

NICOLE

If we don't have guns, we're definitely gonna exit, and not in the way you're thinking.

Helene shakes her head, distraught.

HELENE

I'm incapable of understanding how we've gotten to this point. I'm a Sandy Point donor, for fuck's sake. How can I possibly do this?

NICOLE

You can hold both thoughts in your head at the same time?

Nicole squares Helene up to the targets, places a handgun in her trembling hands, tries to get her to hold the gun up.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Okay, now just-- just--

Helene swivels toward Nicole, the gun moves with her. Nicole quickly steadies the gun and points it at the target.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

Just don't do that, okay? Point it at the bad guys!

Helene takes a deep breath, steadies herself.

HELENE

Both thoughts. Okay. I'm simultaneously an anti-gun-violence-advocate and a gun-toting-grandma. Jesus Christ.

She pulls the trigger and hits Mikhail between the eyes.

HELENE (CONT'D)

Huh. Beginner's luck?

She fires again at Boris and Sergei in quick succession, again nailing them dead-on. She tilts her head, considering.

HELENE (CONT'D)

Or whatever.

Maureen and Nicole exchange wide-eyed glances, shrug.

I/E. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The wino, dressed in a suit and tie, surveys the restaurant.

He enters, spies Malky as she serves a table. As she finishes, he catches her eye and she approaches him.

MALKY
Hello. Just one?

WINO
No, sorry. I'm afraid I've already
lunched today. Actually, I'm from
the Building Depart--

MALKY
No, you're not.

WINO
Madam, I assure you--

MALKY
Go assure those Russian fuckers
they're not getting in here.

WINO
I see.

He looks around, thinks for a moment.

WINO (CONT'D)
Perhaps it would be to our mutual
advantage to work together?

MALKY
Depends. What're they paying you?

WINO
Five percent. I'm happy to change
horses for ten.

MALKY
Seven.

WINO
Eight and three squares a day,
beverages included.

MALKY
Seven. Two meals, no alcohol.

WINO
Done!

Ezra approaches, eyes Malky, who smiles.

EZRA
Nothing better than turning a
single agent into a double.

He surveys the wino.

EZRA (CONT'D)
Mazel tov. Leave the rats at home!

INT. TARTUFO CAR - DAY

Maureen drives, Helene files her nails, Nicole phone surfs.

HELENE
So what did he say?

MAUREEN
The usual.

NICOLE
Did he know anything about it?

MAUREEN
He pretended not to. But I think
he's all over it.

HELENE
What about the accountant?

MAUREEN
I'm sure he's all over it.

The way she says it gets the others' attention.

NICOLE
How bad is it?

MAUREEN
Bad.

HELENE
Bad is a disappointingly vague
word. Is it bad as in
"unfortunate," or bad as in
"egregious" or bad as in--

MAUREEN
-- as in "possibly fucked?" You
know that expression, "good money
after bad?" It's that kind of bad.

HELENE

Well, then. Definitely "egregious."
What's the plan?

NICOLE

Whatever it is, it has to be fast.
Critters gotta eat.

A long moment. The radio plays Billy Joel's "Italian Restaurant." Maureen shrugs, turns it up. She and Nicole sing. Helene shakes her head initially, then joins in.

SISTERS

A bottle of red, a bottle of white
It all depends upon your appetite
I'll meet you anytime you want
In our Italian Restaurant.

They shrug at each other. *Guess we'll figure it out.*

I/E. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The women exit the car. The Wino, still in suit and tie, serves a few customers at outside tables.

Ezra comes out, greets the women. They chat in low tones.

MAUREEN

He find anything yet?

EZRA

Not yet. He says the Russians gave
him a few places to check --cooler,
basement, places we already looked.

NICOLE

How about what they're looking for?

EZRA

He says no, just "something
sentimental value."

MAUREEN

I'll bet. I'd be sentimental over
buried treasure, too.

HELENE

Are you sure we can trust him?

EZRA

"Sure" is not a word we use either
in military or restaurant business.
But Malky's good at reading people.

The group enters the restaurant. Malky approaches, hugs them.

MALKY

You wonder if we can trust him?

The women shoot surprised looks at Ezra. He shrugs. *See?*

HELENE

It's just that -- how do we know he isn't a double...double?

MALKY

You watch a lotta TV, yes?

NICOLE

She does, but it's mostly 1960s Westerns.

MAUREEN

Or West Wing re-runs.

EZRA

We'll find out when we leave.

The Wino enters, they all look at him. He salutes.

MAUREEN

Roger that.

I/E. FBI SURVEILLANCE VAN - DAY

Steve slowly pilots the vehicle, parks. Tom, Dara and Lucky view screens with images of Goldbergs' street and interior.

INSERT: SCREEN

The Wino rushes between tables, serves irritated customers.

STEVE

What we got?

DARA

Ain't no Michelin stars, baby.

LUCKY

Only The Wino. No Russians.

TOM

Or Ezra, Malky and your sisters. My Spidey sense tells me something's amiss here.

Steve scrambles to the back, views the screens.

STEVE
I think he's playing them both.

LUCKY
You think he's that smart?

INSERT: SCREEN

The Wino spills a pitcher of beer on an elderly woman. She jumps up and brandishes her cane at him.

DARA
Smart enough to have a career in
somethin' other than hospitality.

INSERT: SCREEN

The restaurant door opens. The Vanovas and Sergei enter, guns tucked into their waistbands.

TOM
Now we're cookin' with propane.

INSERT: SCREEN

The Russians survey the crowd, move to a front table with a view of the street.

TOM (CONT'D)
(Russian accent)
Must to see Mister Special Agent in
Charge and his fine team!

STEVE
That's what worries me.

LUCKY
What do you mean?

TOM
They're not afraid of us making
them, not afraid of shooting
bystanders. Means they've figured
out how to find the gold.

DARA
These guys couldn't figure out how
to find their ass with both hands,
a map and a flashlight.

INSERT: SCREEN

The Wino approaches the Russians.

STEVE
Turn it up?

Tom adjusts some dials. Sound plays inside the van.

INSERT: SCREEN

MIKHAIL
So, my friend...?

WINO
Well, I have good news and--

BORIS
Now he say bad news! I no want no
more bad news!

Other customers' heads swivel in their direction.

SERGEI
Sssshhhh! You want everybody know?

WINO
Or, more accurately, where it
isn't. Unfortunately, gentlemen,
none of those locations -- pun
intended -- *panned out*.

Mikhail death-stares Sergei.

MIKHAIL
You say this time you sure! How
come he no find?!

SERGEI
I sure! I show you!

He jumps from his chair and makes a beeline to the other side
of the restaurant.

Steve speaks to the other agents without looking.

STEVE
Eyes over there, too, right?

DARA
Uh... sorta.

STEVE
Sorta?!

Dara hits a few keys, reveals an image with a watermark that
reads "DEMO ONLY!" Sergei's head is barely visible.

STEVE (CONT'D)
What the actual fuck?!

TOM
These are Maureen's cameras, not
ours. She apparently, uh...
borrowed... them from her company.

STEVE
Classic Mo.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - SAME TIME

Ezra, Malky, and the sisters scan the same footage as the FBI
on multiple computer screens.

EZRA
Can we take out "demo only"?

MAUREEN
I'm really sorry -- free is a good
price only until you pay for it.

INSERT: SCREEN

Sergei's head moves downward; the sound of METAL CLANKING.

MALKY
Where is he? And what's that noise?

NICOLE
Is there something below the
window?

HELENE
Or under the counter?

MALKY
That's not the counter.

She's interrupted as The Wino flies across and tackles
Sergei. The two men flail in front of the window.

Fists -- or as much as can be seen of them with the DEMO ONLY
banner in place -- fly furiously. The two men grunt and shout
with abandon.

SERGEI
I am Russia! I will have mine!

WINO
(minus highbrow accent)
I'm Southie Irish and I'll have
whatever I fucking want!

I/E. FBI SURVEILLANCE VAN - DAY

The agents are glued to the screens, wide-eyed.

INSERT: SCREEN

The fighting continues. One moment The Wino appears to be winning, and then Sergei prevails in turn.

STEVE
We gotta figure out if Sergei found
what he was looking for.

TOM
Take a run at them when they leave?

DARA
Put a tail on them?

STEVE
Both.

He looks at Tom, then Dara.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You get the entrance, you get the
tail. Lucky and I will -- wait,
where the hell is Lucky?

INSERT: SCREEN

Lucky crosses the street, strolls casually to the front of the restaurant.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Fuck! Call for backup, now!

The three agents trade panicked looks. In a split-second, they grab their vests and weapons, and exit the van.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - DAY

Ezra, Malky and the sisters grow increasingly agitated as they watch Lucky cross the street in front of the restaurant.

EZRA
There goes the FBI.

Malky grabs Ezra's arm.

MALKY
We need to go. Now!

HELENE
You want to get in the middle--?

Malky wheels around, closes the space, chin out.

MALKY
We get in the middle or it'll be
the end. Of the restaurant, our
life here, all the hopes we've had.

They're nearly out the door when Maureen barks.

MAUREEN
Wait!

She heaves a duffel bag onto the counter and dumps it --
several AR-15s, shotguns, handguns, ammo clips -- a veritable
armory on the tattoo parlor counter.

Everyone's stunned. Malky recovers quickly.

MALKY
Excellent! Please tell me these
are not "demonstration only?"

Maureen smiles wryly, shakes her head.

NICOLE
We demonstrated them at my place
yesterday. All good.

Ezra grabs a pistol. Malky stares at him. He shrugs, picks up
the shotgun and races through the door. Malky hurriedly
shoulders an AR-15 and bolts after him.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM - DAY

Seated at separate tables:

The Tartufo Sisters-- trying to eat like it's Sunday brunch.

Ezra and Malky-- behind the counter, silent but coiled.

Mikhail, Boris and Sergei-- in a booth, all smiles and
twitching trigger fingers.

The air buzzes with bad acting.

MAUREEN

(to the sisters, sotto)
Is it just me, or does this feel
like one of those spaghetti
Westerns where everyone knows the
guns are under the table?

NICOLE

Take the gun, leave the cannoli.

MAUREEN

Or Russian borscht noir.
Everybody's pretending not to know
who everybody else is.

HELENE

How can you two yuk it up now?!
We're about to be killed!

MAUREEN

(to Nicole)
Wait...did she just say "yuk?"?

At the bar, Ezra dries a clean glass with excessive force.

EZRA

(to Malky, low)
Mikhail keeps asking for more
horseradish. I'm tempted to give
him cyanide.

MALKY

Okay, but it's not kosher.

The Wino bursts through the kitchen door, dragging a heavy
burlap sack labeled "BRISKET." He grunts under the weight.

A glint of metal twinkles through the burlap. The sisters'
eyes go wide.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

The door slams open. Sergei stumbles in right behind him, out
of breath.

WINO

Help! Ezra! Malky! Sisters! A
little assist with this brisket?

SERGEI

Guys! *Seychas*! Now!!

Gunfire from somewhere. Glass shatters.

Chairs screech back. Patrons scream, hit the floor.

Maureen rolls behind her table and shoots in the direction of the Russians.

MAUREEN'S POV

Boris and Mikhail huddle behind their table, return fire.

Sergei lunges for The Wino.

Malky jumps over the bar.

Ezra intercepts Sergei, tackles him, guns drop to floor.

Mikhail grabs Malky from behind, his arm tight across her throat. He shoves a handgun against her head.

Everybody freezes.

MIKHAIL

Nobody move!

EZRA

(half-step forward)

Easy, Mikhail. You're about ten seconds from needing dental reconstruction.

MIKHAIL

I don't want hurt her! Just gold!
You stay back!

HELENE

Take it! Just let her go!

EZRA

(grinning)

"Let" and "Malky" aren't usually in the same sentence.

They lock eyes. There's a beat.

MALKY

Understood.

She stomps Mikhail's foot-hard.

MIKHAIL

Argh!

In one fluid move:

Malky twists, disarms him,

Elbows him in the face,

Knees him in the groin.

Boris, initially aghast, smiles a Cheshire grin.

BORIS
Now you know how it feel, Mister
Big Balls.

Malky's not done. She slams Mikhail onto a table, it splinters beneath him.

BORIS and SERGEI reach for their weapons.

EZRA
(pointing his gun at them)
Before you do something stupid,
remember she just turned your boss
into a schnitzel.

The front door opens. Steve, Dara, Tom and Lucky rush in, guns drawn.

DARA
Freeze!

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

All is still as everyone looks at the four agents. Odds and prison sentences are rapidly calculated. The Wino stands.

WINO
Time's up, comrades.

He pulls a gun and fires wildly at the Russians.

MIKHAIL
Duck!

BORIS
Now not buffet time!

BAM. BAM. BAM. It's a firefight.

Sergei dives behind a display of Jewish delicacies.

Boris flips a table, crouches under.

Maureen lunges toward the bar, rolls down low, comes up next to Nicole and Helene.

Nicole levels her AR-15 on top of the bar.

Helene awkwardly pulls a pistol from her purse.

HELENE
So, just like before?

NICOLE
Ideally faster.

Helene pumps off multiple rounds, they ricochet off the table that shields the Russians.

The FBI agents crouch behind the front counter, alternately yell and shoot.

STEVE
(to no one in particular)
What the hell is happening?!

He looks to the bar, see his sisters.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ.

He motions to the other agents, who nod.

TOM
We got you. Go!

Tom, Dara and Lucky all shoot rapid fire at the Russians as Steve races to the bar, vaults over and lands next to Helene.

STEVE
(to his sisters)
Okay. We gotta get outta here
before some idiot, and I include
myself, becomes gefilte fish.

Bullets whiz past racks of plastic-wrapped bagels. A menorah explodes into sparks.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Fuck! Where's your car?

MAUREEN
Out back. Keys in the cupholder.

Ezra and Malky, both now with AR-15s, spray the room.

MALKY
(shooting while flipping
behind the bar)
You picked the wrong restaurant,
boys.

EZRA
(grinning)
L'chaim, motherfuckers.

EXT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - DAY

REPLAY OF SCENE ONE

FBI vehicles CAREEN into frame.

The door blasts open. MIKHAIL, BORIS, and SERGEI sprint into the street. Gunfire behind them. They turn, open fire.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

The TARTUFO SISTERS, EZRA, and MALKY charge through the door after them, guns drawn, fury in their eyes.

SLOW MOTION - the sisters raise their AR-15s, pose in perfect sync, wild-eyed with windswept hair, totally into the moment.

FREEZE FRAME

MAUREEN (V.O.)
Yeah. Like Charlie's Angels, but
with IBS and orthopedic shoes.

UNFREEZE. They BLAST shots into the air, look surprised at their ability to actually do it.

Ezra, Malky and the sisters run to her car. Ezra yanks on the door, it's locked. They all look at Maureen.

MAUREEN
I always leave the keys in the
cupholder!

The group stands awkwardly. *This never happens in the movies.*

EZRA
The van!

He points across the street at a dilapidated CATERING VAN, hand-painted on the side:

"MOISHE'S MEDITERRANEAN MYSTERIES - FALAFEL, FUNERALS & FORTUNE TELLING"

MALKY
(running behind Ezra)
You were supposed to repaint that!

INT. CATERING VAN - MOMENTS LATER

Maureen leaps into the driver's seat.

Ezra and Malky hang out the side windows with SHOTGUNS.

Nicole and Helene scramble into the back- packed with catering items, sloshing tzatziki tubs, pita bread, a roast lamb, several briskets, glitter bombs and a suspicious urn.

Helene eyes the urn uncertainly.

HELENE
Is this-?!

NICOLE
Don't ask. Just hold on.

MAUREEN
Buckle up, bitches!

She slams the gas. The van screeches into the street, the back doors flap open as olives and napkins rain behind them.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Russians jump into a blacked-out Mercedes. It roars to life and tears after them.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

Steve, Tom, Dara, and Lucky sprint out of the restaurant. Tom scans the street, confused.

STEVE
Wait -- didn't we park there?!

DARA
Moved it. I didn't know this'd turn into "Call of Duty: Geriatric Ops."

Tom spots the FBI van. It's wedged between two scooters.

TOM
There it is!

They dive in. The van races after the others.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAINT PETERSBURG - DAY

Three vehicles tear through the streets:

The Moishes' Mystery Van, smoke and bad noises a-plenty.

The Russian Mercedes, determined and bullet-ridden.

The FBI van, smooth, sleek and swerving for position.

And just as they round 4th and Central, a ROADBLOCK--dozens of barricades, fences, safety tape--

MAUREEN
Oh... no.

NICOLE
What "oh no?"

MAUREEN
I forgot it's Grand Prix weekend.

Helene and Nicole slam into each other and the food, spew expletives as--

All three vehicles SCREAM onto the track--

EXT. FORMULA ONE STREET CIRCUIT - CONTINUOUS

--straight into the SAINT PETERSBURG GRAND PRIX.

Announcers' voices on loudspeakers echo as OPEN-WHEEL RACE CARS zip by at 190 MPH.

RACE ANNOUNCER #1 (V.O.)
--unbelievable! An unauthorized
vehicle has entered the course!
Make that two -- no, three!

MOISHE'S VAN

Maureen is laser-focused, swerves violently lane-to-lane.

An F1 car pulls up. The driver gestures wildly, swears a blue streak in Italian.

ITALIAN DRIVER
Stupida stronza! Cosa ci fai qui?
Il tuo furgone fa schifo!

MAUREEN
Stai zitto e guida!

The F1 car passes.

HELENE
 Since when do you speak Italian?

MAUREEN
 Since I learned it helps to swear
 at people in their own language.

She swerves again. A rack of lamb flies past Nicole.

NICOLE
 Can someone check if lamb is a
 recognized airbag substitute?

HELENE
 Maybe not the best time to ask, but
 -- are we insured for this?

RUSSIANS' MERCEDES

MIKHAIL
 How you let them get away!

BORIS
 How I? I try kill them while you
 get Malky foot job.

SERGEI
 (exasperated)
 And Russia university say genetics
 no matter.

FBI VAN

STEVE
 Okay. Everyone stay down. We're
 gonna skip the crossfire.

DARA
 How, exactly?

TOM
 High and outside.

Steve nods, tight-lipped. He swerves to the outside lane,
 guns it.

STEVE
I just hope they're okay.

MOISHE'S VAN

EZRA
Don't worry. Malky and I have
actually done this before.

The sisters look at them, eyes wide.

Ezra shoots out the window. Return fire takes out Malky's
side mirror. She fires back.

MALKY
Well, sort of. We had a slightly
more -- tank-y -- vehicle.

MAUREEN
If this doesn't get us on Yelp,
nothing will.

The crowd is wild as the vehicles tear up the track.

RACE ANNOUNCER #1 (V.O.)
And ladies and gentlemen, it
appears we've got a heavily-armed
kosher catering van taking the
inside lane at Turn 6!

INT. COMMENTATOR BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

The three vehicles swerve around the track, shooting at each
other. Two RACE ANNOUNCERS react in real time.

RACE ANNOUNCER #2
Well, ladies and gentlemen,
something extraordinary is possibly
happening--

RACE ANNOUNCER #1
I can say for certain we've never
seen a catering van in this race.

RACE ANNOUNCER #2
And followed by what appears to be
an armored Mercedes? And an SUV
that's clearly government issue.

They are interrupted by shots exchanged between Malky and
Ezra and the Russians.

RACE ANNOUNCER #1
This is what happens when you let
Florida have a race and a gun show
on the same weekend.

RACE ANNOUNCER #2
They don't call it the "Gunshine
State" for nothin.'

EXT. FORMULA ONE STREET CIRCUIT - CONTINUOUS

MOISHE'S VAN

MAUREEN swerves past a McLaren, narrowly avoids a pile-up.

NICOLE
They're gaining on us!

HELENE
I have an idea.

She grabs a glitter cannon, a container of dipping oil, and a
frozen brisket.

HELENE (CONT'D)
Time to party.

RUSSIANS' MERCEDES

Boris leans out with his gun. He's about to shoot—

WHOOSH! A cloud of glitter explodes in his face.

He screams, blinded, wipes madly at his face to no avail.

BORIS
Argh! Tiny, sticky things! No come
off! What fuck is? *Pomoshch'!*

INT. COMMENTATOR BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

ANNOUNCER #1
I cannot believe what I am seeing.
One of the passengers has been
taken out by a ... a --?

ANNOUNCER #2
Glitter bomb, pal. That's a glitter
bomb. You ever been glittered? It
stays forever.

EXT. FORMULA ONE STREET CIRCUIT - CONTINUOUS

FBI VAN

On the heels of the Mercedes, Moishe's van to the right. Dara levels her gun out the rear passenger window. Steve eyes her in the rear-view.

STEVE
Don't hit my sisters!

DARA
Not aiming at them, though I'mma
have a big talk with 'em later.

She fires - the Mercedes' rear tire explodes. The car flies into the track wall, spins, crashes into a porta-potty.

The crowd goes nuts.

MOISHE'S VAN

MAUREEN
We're next if we don't shake them.

HELENE
(to Nicole)
Hold my brisket.

She climbs out the side window, perches perilously, motions to Nicole to hand her meat.

Helene hurls the brisket at the FBI van.

FBI VAN

The thunk of the meat on the windshield startles the agents. Steve tries to see past it, but can't.

STEVE
Is that... brisket?

DARA
Florida, baby.

They hit the brakes.

INT. COMMENTATOR BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

ANNOUNCER #1
And in a truly unprecedented move,
a brisket appears to have taken out
the FBI.

ANNOUNCER #2
And it's not even Pesach.

EXT. TRACK - FINAL STRAIGHTAWAY

The minivan, doors flapping, speeds down the final stretch.

A real F1 car pulls alongside, the driver looking confused.
Nicole waves.

The minivan spins out across the finish line - in reverse -
trailing smoke and glitter like a victory parade.

The crowd goes insane.

INT. MINIVAN - ACROSS FINISH LINE

The sisters pant, adrenaline pumping.

MAUREEN
Did we win?

NICOLE
I peed a little.

HELENE
I think I'm still peeing.

INT. COMMENTATOR BOOTH - WRAP-UP

ANNOUNCER #1
Well, folks, I don't know what that
was, but it was the most excitement
this race has seen in years.

ANNOUNCER #2
If Formula 1's smart, they'll put
those ladies under contract
immediately.

ANNOUNCER #1
This has been the St. Petersburg
Grand Prix and possibly the pilot
of a new reality series.

(MORE)

ANNOUNCER #1 (CONT'D)
Have a great afternoon and...drive
home carefully, folks.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - HOLDING WING - DAY

Steel doors slam as Bureau agents haul the Tartufo sisters, Ezra & Malky, and the three Russians into separate interrogation rooms.

MONTAGE: INTERROGATIONS

- HELENE

I thought we were saving a restaurant. I didn't realize we were re-enacting *Red Dawn*.

- NICOLE

All I know is -- those Russians brought rats, so we brought pigs. That's Florida logic.

- MAUREEN

We were just trying to protect the brisket. I mean... yeah, there was gold, but it was mostly about the brisket.

- EZRA

I didn't shoot at anyone. I just shot near everyone.

- MALKY (mimicking Ezra)

Shot near everyone? They're gonna revoke your Mossad card.

- BORIS

We came for soup. Was no soup. You know where is?

- SERGEI

I just there make sure Boris didn't do stupid thing. But he do anyway.

- MIKHAIL

They have the bag. I swear.

- AGENT (to Mikhail)

Really. They say you do.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Steve, Dara, Tom, Lucky sit around the table, look at the crazy characters on a massive, several-windowed monitor.

STEVE
So...my sisters say the Russians
have the bag.

DARA
And they say your sisters have it.

LUCKY
And both say it's full of gold.

Tom points at Sergei on screen.

TOM
Except Sergei. His face says it's
something else.

ON SCREEN: Sergei stares blankly at the camera, expression unreadable. A hint of regret.

DARA
So what the hell is it?

TOM
Could be data. Photos? Documents?
Dirt on somebody.

LUCKY
Or maybe it's something about him.

The way Lucky says this is loaded with subtext. Dara picks up on it.

DARA
(gently)
Yeah? Like what?

LUCKY
I dunno. Something he... he's
protected, kept to himself.

Dara, Tom and Steve trade eyes. *Wait, this guy is gonna come out to us now?*

Steve shakes it off.

STEVE
Okay, maybe. But it wasn't in any
of the vehicles, and The Wino
didn't have it, either.

LUCKY
So it's still... at Goldbergs?

They eye-roll, sigh, shrug. *Jesus, when is this case gonna up and die?*

INT. FBI OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Steve ushers Helene, Nicole, and Maureen into a quiet room. It's empty except for a couple of chairs.

They stand uncomfortably, trade eyes.

STEVE
In the immortal words of Jay Leno --
What were you thinking?!

MAUREEN
We were thinking about not dying?

HELENE
We were thinking about protecting
our investment?

NICOLE
We were thinking about each other?

STEVE
No, you weren't. You were thinking
like children!

Nicole and Maureen sport defiant expressions. Helene appears near tears.

STEVE (CONT'D)
No offense, Hels. Anyway, you're
the oldest.

HELENE
Eldest. But none taken.

STEVE
(sharply)
This isn't a joke! Do you know how
close you all were to buying it?!

MAUREEN
Not that close. I measured.

She smiles apologetically.

STEVE

Hey, not laughing. You walk into my jurisdiction, into a hornet's nest, and act like it's a fucking family field trip?!

HELENE

I wanted out but they said we had too much money on the line and --

Maureen stiffens. Nicole reads it, tries to head it off.

NICOLE

That's not exactly what we--

MAUREEN

That's not at all what we said. Let's not play revision history.

HELENE

Revisionist.

It's getting ugly fast. Maureen takes a step in Helene's direction. Nicole blocks her.

MAUREEN

You're gonna play cop now?

NICOLE

Only because the actual cop is just fucking standing there.

She death-stares Steve, who's having none of it.

STEVE

You all disgust me. I can't believe we were raised by the same parents.

FLASHBACK

SUPER: Tartufo living room, Christmas/Hanukkah 1965

It's a sparsely-furnished room, threadbare furnishings, tattered rug on the floor. The tree is sports both Christmas and Hanukkah ornaments, an angel holding a menorah on top.

Helene (13), Nicole (10), Maureen (7) and Steve (4) squeal, scramble under the tree, grab at gifts, a human puppy-pile.

MARTIN TARTUFO (Black, 30s) and ELAINE TARTUFO (White, 30s) hippies in Christmas tie-dye, watch with love in their eyes.

MARTIN

Who'da thought we'd be able to pull this off?

ELAINE

You mean...the adoptions? Or their cash-limiting consequences for we of the educational persuasion?

Martin grins.

MARTIN

Honey. Just say: "teachers ain't got no scratch." Hels is already trying to mimic you.

On that, Maureen attempts to take one of Helene's gifts, a t-shirt. Helene slaps her hand away.

HELENE

You may not assert dominion over that item!

MAUREEN

(crying)

I don't want the do-mee-uyn! I want the shirt!

NICOLE

Geez, Hels. It's just a T. Let her have it now, take it back later.

Maureen uses the distraction to grab the shirt.

HELENE

No, you little Chinese monster!

Nicole moves to grab the shirt, it shears in half. Maureen drops it. Steve picks it up and runs around with it, laughs.

STEVE

Chinee monster! Chinee monster!

MAUREEN

You bad ni--!

Martin and Elaine jump into the fray, simultaneously pull the girls apart, catch Steve and dump them all on the sofa.

Martin pulls out his big-guy voice that shakes the rafters.

MARTIN

Everyone siddown!

He death-stares Maureen, still booming.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
What were you about to call your
sister?!

Maureen looks down and away, Martin thunders on.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
You know better than that. We don't
see color in this house!

ELAINE
(to Helene)
You're twice her age but not half
as mature. What were you thinking?!

Helene hangs her head.

Nicole sports a smug look. *Ha! For once I'm not in trouble.*
Martin notes it.

MARTIN
And Nic, letting them off--

ELAINE
Would just make this worse later.

Steve watches all this with the intensity of a four-year-old
viewing an ice cream sundae for the first time.

STEVE
Why, mama?

The parents exchange glances. *We knew this would happen.*

ELAINE
Because a lot of people do see skin
color, honey. It's all they see.
But that's not how we are.

MARTIN
Some brothers and sisters are the
same color, and some are different
colors. You don't have to be the
same color to love someone.

He winks at Elaine and she winks back.

ELAINE
What matters is that you love each
other so much, so hard, like this.

She grabs Steve's hands and puts them together, prayer-style.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
 Okay, are you holding your hands
 together tightly?

STEVE
 Yes!

ELAINE
 Let's see.

She play-attempts to separate the little boy's hands.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
 Ooooooh, that's very strong, very
 good love. Nic, you want to see?

Nicole comes over and holds a hand up. Steve presses his
 against hers. She smiles.

MARTIN
 Hells, Mo ... what about you two?

The two girls jump, attach their hands to Nicole and Steve.

Elaine goes to one end of the kid-chain and Martin to the
 other, press their hands together on Helene's and Maureen's.

ELAINE
 Now, is anybody getting in between
 us? Breaking into this chain?

KIDS
 No!

MARTIN
 Most important, we'll never break
 this chain ourselves. Family first!

RETURN TO PRESENT DAY

The four eye each other, smile wistfully. *Family first.*

HELENE
 Well, at least nobody died.

NICOLE
 Let's just punt? Put the Russians
 on a plane, tell Ezra and Malky
 we're sorry but we're out.

MAUREEN
 And put a nothingburger stamp on
 your file. And a cannoli. With our
 apologies.

She moves closer to Steve, regret in her eyes. Steve returns the look with a direct gaze.

STEVE
Because it's not a nothingburger.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Agents, Ezra, Malky, and the sisters all return. Cops line the block. Flashlights scan every surface.

TOM
(to Steve)
You really think it's still here?

STEVE
Whatever "it" is... yeah.

Suddenly--

A SCREAM from the kitchen. All run toward the sound.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Agents have moved a freezer away from the wall, revealing a three-foot hole.

Ezra peers in carefully, others over his shoulder.

EZRA
What the hell...?

Lucky grabs a flashlight, shines it over Ezra's shoulder.

EZRA (CONT'D)
I think that's--

LUCKY
--a prosthetic leg?

STEVE
Is it moving?

DARA
If it be movin' by itself, I be
movin' outta here.

TOM
What in the--?

A loud groan from inside the wall.

ALEXI (O.S.)
Now you turn off the air
conditioning?

A withered Alexi Moroshkin(80s), holds a cane, comes through the wall on one leg. He clutches a mangled photograph.

The agents and sisters register complete shock.

STEVE
Who the hell are you?

Ezra slowly puts it together, whispers to Malky.

EZRA
Holy shit. It's him.

MALKY
Seriously? But how--?

Alexi, dressed in a linen suit, brushes off dust, looks around for his prosthetic leg, attaches it while he speaks.

ALEXI
I'm the reason you're here.

TOM
Cool. But a name would be better.

ALEXI
Alexi. Alexi Moroshkin.

The agents, sisters and Goldbergs are flummoxed.

NICOLE
Wait. You mean, you're the oil guy?
The one who buried --?

ALEXI
Yes. I buried it all. My past. My
future. My mistakes.

MALKY
You've been under the restaurant
this whole time?!

ALEXI
Not entirely. I spent some time in
the pantry when you weren't around.
You could use a little more ready-
to-eat stuff. And less borscht.

STEVE
Why?

ALEXI

Why? Have you ever had borscht?

STEVE

Not that-- why were you hiding here? It's been more than--

ALEXI

Three decades. Yes, I know. Well, of course I wasn't here the whole time. I mean, the food is great..

He smiles at Ezra and Malky, salutes.

ALEXI (CONT'D)

But the accommodations are lacking. So I get little condo on Central Avenue. It's a gay-friendly area.

On this, Lucky surreptitiously makes notes.

ALEXI (CONT'D)

So I would just come occasionally to make sure nobody was digging.

DARA

So then you knew when the Vanovas showed up? Why didn't you just tell Ezra and Malky? Or us?

ALEXI

Because I didn't trust anyone. And I still don't.

He tosses the photo toward Maureen. It's a faded shot of a young Alexi with Mikhail and Boris, standing next to crates stamped "Lukoil - For Export."

TOM

So these crates are in the wall? Do they have gold in them? How did you get them in there? How did you get in there? And how --?

ALEXI

Oh, my good man. You have so much with the questions. I already say, I don't trust anyone, which includes FBI.

STEVE

Alexi -- I'm sorry, but you'll have to tell us where this gold is or think about it in jail.

ALEXI

Go ahead, tear down wall, Mr. Gorbachev. You won't find it.

DARA

You moved it?

ALEXI

I never had it.

LUCKY

What? Then why--?

ALEXI

I buried fakes. Lead bars painted gold. Enough to make anyone watching from Moscow -- or Washington -- think I had it. Then I disappeared. Here.

MAUREEN

You faked a heist of fake gold?

ALEXI

Not a heist. A firewall against greed, against global corruption. I knew what those fuckers were trying to do in the 90s. And I wasn't gonna let it happen.

LUCKY

So then after *glasnost*--?

ALEXI

After same as before. Gold still hidden in Kremlin basement.

STEVE

But then why hide out here?

ALEXI

Because Putin also want know where is. And I don't want to accidentally fall out of window.

DARA

I just can't believe that for three decades you've been--

ALEXI

What? Same as you. Living. Waiting. Hoping nobody would dig. But apparently people still believe in fairy tales.

The others are quiet, digesting the info. Nicole pulls Maureen and Helene a few paces away.

NICOLE
Does this mean we're not rich?

HELENE
No, it means we're characters in a metaphor.

MAUREEN
Ugh. I hate when that happens.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - NIGHT

Steve, Dara, Tom, and Lucky debrief.

STEVE
So, no gold. No crimes we can prosecute unless we charge Alexi for tax evasion.

DARA
That'd be a bold look.

TOM
We could charge the Russians with -- attempted rodent terrorism?

LUCKY
Or discharging weapons within 200 yards of a retail establishment.

DARA
Again -- it's Florida, honey. They encourage that here.

TOM
What about the restaurant?

STEVE
We'll need a statement. But unofficially -- my sisters walk away and let the story fade.

DARA
What're you gonna tell 'em?

STEVE
That I'm joining Alexi in witness protection. Or retiring.

The four grin at each other.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Steve faces Helene, Maureen, and Nicole. Ezra and Malky listen from behind the bar.

STEVE

So. It turns out you bought a restaurant sitting on a Russian conman and a pile of fake gold.

MAUREEN

Like I said. Metaphor.

A long beat.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

But -- we could still spin it.

NICOLE

What? How?

HELENE

Why? Wait. I'm searching for the exact correct word, which I think is ... yeah. Why?

"Goldberg's: Home of the Almost Gold." History, mystery, maybe even a Netflix doc.

STEVE

You can't be serious.

NICOLE

We're seniors in Florida. What else we got to do?

EXT. GOLDBERG'S - DAY

SUPER - A FEW WEEKS LATER

A long line wraps around the block. A local TV van out front. Tourists snap selfies next to a sign:

"GOLDBERG'S: The Restaurant That Hid a Russian Ghost"

And underneath:

Brisket. Borscht. Bravado.

And underneath:

"F1 driving lessons -- classes full. See waitlist inside."

INT. GOLDBERG'S - DAY

The sisters are behind the counter -- laughing, bickering, chatting with customers, who leave with heavy to-go bags.

A lull. Hedy rubs her temples. Nicole stretches her back. Maureen checks her phone.

HELENE

Next time, I vote for a bookstore.

NICOLE

Next time, I vote for a pet rescue.

MAUREEN

Next time, I vote for no next time.

Ezra barrels through the kitchen door, Malky on his heels.

EZRA

Sisters! The pig is back in the kitchen again!

MALKY

Is it weird for us to have a pig as a mascot? He's fun!

The trio smile broadly as more customers enter.

EXT. GOLDBERGS - DAY

A TV REPORTER does stand-up at a news van with the restaurant in the background.

...and so, in a stunning twist of fate, a nearly forgotten restaurant in Saint Petersburg, Florida, has become the epicenter of intrigue, nostalgia, and very spicy horseradish.

INT. GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A long table is set. Brisket, challah, pasta, stir fry, dim sum -- a glorious cultural mess. Candles flicker. Laughter rises like steam from the plates.

The Tartufos sit with Ezra, Malky, Dara, Lucky and Tom.

Ezra raises his glass.

EZRA

To the restaurant that survived rats, Russians and racing!

ALL
To Goldberg's!

They drink. The moment is warm, whole, earned.

Maureen looks around with a grin. She clears her throat.

MAUREEN
So, before dessert...

She reaches under the table and pulls out a weathered leather parcel – about the size of a large textbook.

HELENE
(fake chagrin)
Oh, no! But I didn't bring you anything!

NICOLE
How about that T-shirt from when she was four?

STEVE
If it's another marketing plan...

MAUREEN
Uh, it's not. I... I found something.

She slowly opens the parcel, peeling back layers of old linen and bubble wrap.

Gasps. Stares.

INSERT: an impossibly delicate, baroque tiara, encrusted with emeralds and diamonds that cast light beams on the walls.

STEVE
Holy shit.

DARA
Is...Is that --?

LUCKY
It's the Tsarina's tiara. Nicolas and Alexandra. Imperial collection. It disappeared in 1917--

TOM
Lemme guess. During the Bolshevik Revolution?

NICOLE
Where the hell did you get it?!

MAUREEN

It's been bugging me that when The Wino and Sergei were fighting, we didn't see exactly where they were... but I had the sense it was in the Hello Kitty panel.

STEVE

You've gotta be kidding me.

MAUREEN

Nope. And it was. I guess Alexi thought he'd grab it on his way out of town but didn't count on you guys escorting him to his plane. And Sergei didn't have an opportunity to take it without the Vanovas finding out.

They stare at it some more. The background music magically transitions to klezmer. Steve raises an eyebrow at Maureen.

STEVE

You know you can't--

MAUREEN

Jesus, of course I know. I just wanted to show it to you guys so you realize there really was something... precious... at stake.

The double entendre is not lost on anyone, and their faces show it.

HELENE

I don't know about precious. But for sure ... priceless.

NICOLE

It 'prolly could've paid for three restaurants.

Ezra and Malky trade a grin.

MALKY

Turns out we don't need that. All the news coverage has gotten us a lot of investment interest.

EZRA

We're going to open three more restaurants next year. Including a pop-up on the race grounds.

MALKY
(laughing, to the sisters)
Perhaps you can bring the famous
glitter brisket?

MAUREEN
It's a date!

Everyone laughs.

She sets the tiara gently on the table. Another long moment.

NICOLE
(to Helene)
You'd look good in it.

HELENE
I'd look ridiculous.

MAUREEN
We'd all look ridiculous.

STEVE
Pass it here.

MAUREEN
Little boy, you are not putting
that thing on.

STEVE
C'mon. One photo. For the 'gram.

MAUREEN
The 'gram is gonna get us arrested.

They all laugh.

EXT. GOLDBERG'S - NIGHT

POV through the front window

A table full of mismatched family. The tiara gleams in the
center like a trophy.

MAUREEN (V.O.)
I guess sometimes the treasure
isn't what's buried... it's the
digging it up that counts.

FADE TO BLACK.

CARDS - TEXT AND PHOTOS - OVER KLEZMER MUSIC

- EZRA AND MALKY GOLDBERG opened a chain of combo restaurant/gun ranges called "Brisket & Ballistics."

Their slogan: "Take the Glock, leave the Gefilte."

- HELENE TARTUFO became a Tiktok food critic with the handle #BetheBrisket.

She was kicked off three times for convoluted language.

- NICOLE TARTUFO returned to her farm. Ment and Maylion, the pigs, now have their own YouTube channel.

Their most-watched video is titled: "Ratfuck."

- MAUREEN TARTUFO returned the Tsarina's tiara to the Hermitage Museum.

She now runs a luxury crisis marketing agency called, "Sisters of Spin."

- STEVE TARTUFO finally took a desk job at the Bureau, where he solves crimes and develops ulcers from afar.

He denies missing the field. Nobody, especially Dara and Tom, believes him.

- LUCKY finally came out. Everybody was cool.

- THE WINO wrote a best-selling memoir entitled, "Rats, Vodka and Vichyssoise: A Survival Guide."

He now is an associate Dean at Eckerd College.

- THE TSARINA'S TIARA

is now back in the other St. Petersburg.

- GOLDBERG'S RESTAURANT still stands.

Still serves matzoh, marinara, and maki. Still makes no damn sense.

And still packs the house every night.

FADE OUT

CREDITS ROLL

"We are Family" (Sister Sledge)