

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

# GOLD

**BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**  
Patrick Massett & John Zinman



# **GOLD**

by

Patrick Massett & John Zinman

**EXT. THE JUNGLES OF INDONESIA - DAY**

A NATIVE slashes through thick foliage, leading a patrol of  
INDONESIAN MILITARY -- shouted commands and radio chatter.

The tribesmen hack through the perimeter of the brush and the  
party emerges onto the wide silt bank of a muddy river.

Suddenly WILD BOAR let out a chorus of squeals and scatter  
into the brush, and there, splayed on the river bank, we find--

A BODY.

One of the soldiers approaches -- the stench is palpable --  
the body already decomposing.

The soldier finds a wallet, checks the ID -- we don't see the  
identity. The Soldier speaks into his radio.

SOLDIER  
(Indonesian)  
We have the body...

While from the jungle the eyes of a wild pig can be seen  
peering out, waiting to resume its meal.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - DAY**

A hand tosses ice into a low ball. Realizes there's no booze.  
Into the cabinet, finds a stashed bottle. The MAN pours a  
healthy measure of whiskey. KENNY WELLS (40's), unshaven,  
takes a long drink, masking his nerves. He is a about an inch  
from total collapse.

WELLS  
Sure I can't pour you one?

VOICE (O.S.)  
No, thanks. I'm working.

The VOICE is calm, in control, authoritarian.

WELLS  
All the more reason.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Wells, sit. We've got a lot to cover.

WELLS  
Here I am. Fire away.

Wells raises his glass in a mock toast. He will not be rushed. He's got an easy smile and sparkling eyes -- but his face tells the story of a man acquainted with his whiskey.

VOICE (O.S.)  
How did you meet Michael Acosta?

WELLS  
The first time or the second time?

VOICE (O.S.)  
How did you meet him, Wells?

WELLS  
You sure you don't want a drink?  
You're making me nervous.

Wells sits and faces us. Off the silence --

WELLS (CONT'D)  
April of '88 -- I had three properties  
crap out on me in six week period.

SIERRA NEVADA RANGE... TILT DOWN to find Reno against it...

**EXT. RENO, NEVADA - DAY**

*SUPER: Reno, Nevada... April, 1988*

-- ROULETTE WHEEL SPINNING, reveal it's in a grocery store.  
-- COWS GRAZING scrubland on the edge of town.  
-- OLD CASINOS. Dusty ranches. Tourists. Migrant workers.  
-- A ONE-ARMED BANDIT, with a gun "arm," pays out nickels.

...SLOWLY TIGHTENING as if a dry wind carries us to...

**EXT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - MORNING**

A faded watering hole from the boomtown days.

WELLS (V.O)  
I was on the balls of my ass,  
scrambling. Not exactly uncharted  
waters, but I was in pretty deep...

A beat up '79 Caddy Eldorado, covered in a layer of road grime, it's bumper held on with wire, pulls into a spot and dies. For this hour there are already many cars in the lot.

Through a smoky haze, Wells stares out, eyes like a Bukowski poem. He's got one lit cigarette as he lights another. Flicks ashes at the ashtray, misses -- a constellation of burn marks.

WELLS (V.O.)

Ten AM. And I knew the board of directors had already convened.

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - CONTINUOUS**

Wells enters like the cock of the walk, back slapping and waving hellos, a well-liked regular. His suit looks like it might have been slept in... more than once.

Middle-age men in bad suits with bad hair fill the tables, working phone lines and yellow pads. These are modern-day "prospectors," promoting bottom-feeder mining stocks. Pass a couple regulars -- CONRAD "CONNIE" WRIGHT (40's) and SCOTTIE NEVINS (50's) -- doing more drinking than working.

A BARMAID concentrates on scratching a lotto ticket that looks like the slots: Cherry... Cherry... Cherry! The winning amount: \$5.00 --

Wells approaches one of the traders, clamping down on his shoulders with both hands, working out the knots. This is BOBBY BURNS (50's), balding, pouring a shot into his coffee.

WELLS

Bobby Burns!

BURNS

Oh yeah, that's the stuff...

WELLS

You boys hear about this cowboy's tombstone that won the contest for *Best Tombstone? The 5 Rules To Follow For A Happy Life...*

Smiles from the guys at the surrounding tables. They all lean in to listen. Wells clearly loves the attention.

WELLS (CONT'D)

One: it's important to have a woman who helps at home, cooks from time to time, cleans up and has a job. Two: it's important to have a woman who can make you laugh. Three: it's important to have a woman you can trust, and doesn't lie to you. Four: it's important to have a woman who is good in bed, and likes to be with you.

(MORE)

WELLS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Five: it's very important that these four women do not know each other or you could end up dead like me.

Everyone laughs. Wells beams, punctuating the punch-line with a slap on Burns's back. Burns calls out to the barmaid --

BURNS

Whaddayou think, Kay?

KAY is short for KAYLENE, an ex-Jr. Miss Reno, and *second runner-up* Jr. Miss Nevada. She loves Joe Montana, horses, and Kenny, though in reverse order. Kay's jeans are a half-size too small, not because she's trying to be sexy but because she's happy.

KAY

I'll kill him right now.

More laughter. Wells loudest of all.

WELLS

(to Burns)

So, whatcha working? Anything I should know about?

BURNS

Telmerek. Their Auckland stake, the bank called the note. I picked up a bunch of the debt, I gotta flip it before the call.

WELLS

Any bites?

BURNS

Nibbles.

WELLS

Keep throwing that line.

A pat on the arm and he's off to the bar where his double Seagrams is already being poured by ROY BAKER (60's), sweet face that's seen some miles -- like a broken down boxer.

ROY

A little eye opener, Kenny?

WELLS

Breakfast of champions, Roy. Breakfast of champions.

Wells raises his glass in his signature salute.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
To the mother lode.

Wells pounds the whiskey and WE GO...

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - BACK BOOTH - LATER**

Wells sits at his "desk" -- the corner booth in the back of the bar. Working one of the two phones on the table. He flicks the ash from his smoke into a half full ashtray.

WELLS  
(into phone)  
...It's an outstanding opportunity,  
which is why I'm calling you  
personally. The geologic reports are  
encouraging and we're taking a very  
aggressive position. We're looking at  
yields in the high six figures.  
A prospectus? ...Of course, I can mail  
one right out. I should tell you,  
though - this offering is already  
oversubscribed. I'm taking out of my  
own holdings to cover demand but hey,  
we can always get you in on the next  
one... I understand. Look, why don't  
I give you a ring this afternoon and  
we'll see if there are any parcels  
left. Well, if you just give me...

Click. Another one that got away.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
You have a pleasant day...

He hangs up the receiver and grabs his drink, a HAND stops it before it reaches his lips.

KAY  
11:15, Kenny.

WELLS  
Oh, Christ.

He hops out of the booth. Maybe drinking all morning suddenly not the best idea.

KAY  
There's a fresh shirt in the "office."

WELLS  
Where would I be without you?

KAY  
Sittin' right here.

Wells grabs his briefcase and heads into his adjunct office.



**INT. GREENHORNS BATHROOM - DAY**

Fresh shirt laid out. Wells gives himself a sink bath.  
Electric shave. Visine. Gargle of Scope.

And WE GO...

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Wells emerges, transformed, presents himself to Kay.

KAY  
It's a miracle.

WELLS  
A million bucks?

Her looks says let's not get carried away, but she says:

KAY  
Two million.

He drains his drink.

WELLS  
I'll come by for you after. We'll  
celebrate.

KAY  
I'll have my dancing shoes on.

Down the bar a NICKEL SLOT MACHINE noisily pays out. They both  
see this as a good sign.

WELLS  
I've got a good feeling about this.

And he's off. And WE GO:

**INT. COLEMAN & MEAD CAPITAL GROUP - RECEPTION - DAY**

TIGHT ON a PICTORIAL in Northern Prospector. Wells, in the  
reception of a local investment bank, flipping pages. Flip  
Flip. Checks his watch, looks at the receptionist, BEV.

WELLS  
Any idea how much longer, Bev?

BEV  
Shouldn't be too much longer now,  
Kenny. How you been?

He makes the so-so gesture with his hand. Two bankers enter. LLOYD STANTON (30's) and HENRY ANDREWS, even younger, in nicer suits, with looks on their faces that say, "*Let's get this over with.*" Stanton extends his hand.

STANTON  
Mr. Wells, I'm Lloyd Stanton. My  
colleague Henry Andrews.

Wells puts on a smile and shakes hands.

WELLS  
Good to meet you.

STANTON  
Come on back.

**INT. COLEMAN & MEAD CAPITAL GROUP - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Stanton and Andrews take seats at one end of the conference table. Wells stands uncomfortably alone at the other end.

STANTON  
What can we do for you?

WELLS  
Aren't we waiting for Clive?

STANTON  
Mr. Coleman is tied up in a meeting.

WELLS  
No offense boys, but I was supposed to  
be meeting with Clive.

STANTON  
None taken. But, if you were  
supposed to be meeting with Clive  
you'd be meeting with Clive.

That stung. Wells takes just a moment to recover. Sits. Slaps a smile on his face and slides documents across the table.

WELLS  
We're developing some very exciting  
properties that are spot-on for your  
investor profile: low buy-in with a  
sizable upside and the beautiful part  
is they're all only twelve to eighteen  
months to cash positive.

Stanton and Andrews listen impassively, scanning the documents.

ANDREWS  
Manitoba?

WELLS  
We picked up an option on a skipped  
claim at auction.

ANDREWS

It's a ninety day option.

WELLS

Yes, the window is narrow, but there's an excellent shale formation that...

STANTON

...Natural Gas? Environmental impact's gonna be a bitch. I don't like the liability. What's next?

He dismissively flips the page, leaving Wells to quickly shift gears.

WELLS

Eastern Utah. We're sitting on a nice land-lease opportunity. The overburden is borax rich so there's an immediate revenue source, but the real prize is in the granite under-shelf. Our studies point to rich chromium and nickel deposits.

ANDREWS

There's a pretty long chain of title on this claim. No payouts. What makes you think you're gonna be luckier than all these others?

WELLS

All under capitalized. Never got past development, none of them.

STANTON

*Under capitalized?* I'm not sure under capitalized does your situation justice.

Wells swallows down another helping of pride and pushes on.

WELLS

We've hit a down turn, yes, true enough, but...

STANTON

...Mr. Wells, Washoe has a practical value hovering just above zero. Your debt load is untenable and you come to us with raw land, no infrastructure, no fungible assets. You can't possibly expect us to underwrite this.

WELLS

I'm talking about a small offering here. If you'll just look at the geo you'll see what I see, which is money.

Stanton looks him in the eye. A beat.

STANTON

Not our money.

He closes the documents with an air of finality.

STANTON (CONT'D)

We can't help you, Mr. Wells.

WELLS

These are jackpot, gentlemen. You back away from these - these are career changing opportunities.

Stanton rises from his chair.

STANTON

If you'll excuse us.

WELLS

I want to talk to Clive!

Wells stands, his already red face flushing, every broken capillary showing like battle scars.

WELLS (CONT'D)

My father put Clive Coleman on the map. He built this goddamn bank!

STANTON

You are not your father, Mr. Wells.

Like a dagger. Wells stands stunned by the statement.

STANTON (CONT'D)

Bring us something we can sell and we'll talk.

WELLS

These are good properties.

STANTON

They're crap, Wells. Played out hand-me-downs. I'd be embarrassed to even talk to my clients about them. Andrews...

Stanton slides the documents across the table at Wells.

STANTON (CONT'D)  
Is there anything else?

Wells gathers up his papers.

WELLS  
Yeah. Go fuck yourself.

He grabs his bag and walks out with as much dignity as he can muster.

Stanton watches him go. He knows he did his job, he kicked Wells's ass, but it doesn't mean he has to feel good about it. *There but by the grace of God...* Andrews, on the other hand, is smiling, misreading his boss.

ANDREWS  
Not even noon and the guy reeks like a still.

STANTON  
Shut up, Andrews.

**EXT./INT. WELLS'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Wells on the street. Tracking with him. Walk of shame. Door slams. Leans back in his car seat. Trembling.

WELLS (V.O)  
That had to be the worst day of my life.

WE PULL IN CLOSE on Wells's face, panic rising in his eyes...

DISSOLVE TO:

AN AMBER STREAM OF SEAGRAMS splashing over a tumbler of ice.

WELLS (V.O) (CONT'D)  
I'd lost my house and was living at Kay's. We were pretty close to losing that, too.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL WE ARE...

**EXT. RENO NEIGHBORHOOD - DUSK**

A street of small tract homes. A nice little neighborhood forty years ago, now it feels a lot like the people who live here -- tired and in need of attention. It's getting dark, that moment the night and soul closes in.

**INT. KAY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

The place is small and reflects a woman's touch, just the slightest bit girly. Everything worn, humble, but maintained. On the counter, we see a mess of BILLS, mostly RED NOTICES -- Phone. Electric. Gas. Car. Wells sits on the edge of the sofa, talking on the phone, pitching for his very life.

WELLS

...we're looking at yields in the high six figures... Yes, that's right.  
Kenny Wells. Washoe Mining. I spoke to your wife last week.

A SERIES OF DISSOLVES. MORE WHISKEY -- as much spills on the table as makes it into the glass. On the table, a pretty good dent in the bottle.

WELLS (CONT'D)

...I'm taking out of my personal holdings to cover demand... Could you hold on a sec, I've got to take this call...

IT'S DARK NOW

Wells is now slumped in an armchair. He muzzles the phone and reaches for his drink.

WELLS (V.O) (CONT'D)

Washoe Mining, the company my grandfather scratched out of the side of a Nevada mountain, that my father built into a real player.

He drinks with a shaky hand. Steadies, and downs the rest.

WELLS (V.O) (CONT'D)

...It only took me five years to run it into the ground.

He's blind drunk, struggling to get his mouth around the words. The fight has gone out of him...

WELLS (CONT'D)

If you could just let me know when a good time would be for us to sit down, I'm sure you would see...

But that's as far as he gets. The hum of the dead line. He sets the phone down, leans his head against the cold window and closes his eyes. His breath fogs the glass instantly.

WELLS (V.O) (CONT'D)

At the close of that day, Washoe was trading at four cents a share - if it was trading at all...

He pulls a cig, last in the pack. Fire flares in his eyes.



**INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)**

Hand, cigarette, fire, a deep inhale. Wells's eyes -- turning his attention back to the off-screen voice.

WELLS

Rock bottom, as they say. Pun intended.

VOICE (O.S.)

You're avoiding the question, Mr. Wells. How was the Indonesian venture with Acosta initiated?

Wells leans back in his chair, a challenge in his expression. If we want the story, we're gonna have to indulge him awhile.

WELLS

Relax. I'm getting there.

**INT. KAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Kay walks into the house, still in her sales vest, with its name tag - "Hi! I'm Kay!" - looking for Wells...

**INT. KAY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

...who she finds passed out on the sofa. She takes in the prospectus papers all over the floor, the bottle of Seagrams, mostly drained.

She stores her tips. Lights one of Kenny's cigarettes. Pours a drink. Puts on some music. Through thin curtains sees a neighbor dragging a trash can around the side of the house.

Kay flops back on the couch next to Wells. He realizes she's home and sorta half sits up.

WELLS

Oh Kay. What are we gonna do? Kay?

KAY

Just shush...

And he sags against her, head on her shoulder.

WELLS

What are we gonna do?

KAY

We'll get by, baby. We always do.

His eyes have eased shut. Which she looks sideways and sees. She sighs, leans her head back, takes a sharp pull on her cig and blows smoke up at the ceiling. And we look down at the tableau through the smoke.

WELLS (V.O)

I had a half a gallon of Seagrams in me. I should've been dead. But I wasn't. Instead, what happened was I had a dream. I mean, literally. I had a dream.

Camera pushes down, tightening on Wells...

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

Indonesia...

Closing on Wells's sleeping eyes. And suddenly WE ARE --

**EXT. JUNGLE - DAY**

WE SOAR above the jungle canopy, diving down through the lush foliage, emerging atop a jagged ridge overlooking --

A PRISTINE JUNGLE VALLEY. A shimmering river winds through. Everything is bathed in BRILLIANT GOLDEN LIGHT, breathtaking.

WELLS (V.O)

I met Mike Acosta years earlier. That was the first time. I still had a little money then and Indonesia was booming. I was looking for a way to get in...

**EXT. JUNGLE RIVER - DAY**

Boots splashing through a shallow creek. A HAND scoops into shallow moving water and pulls up a fistful of silt. A figure silhouetted in jungle.

SUPER: *INDONESIA - 1982*

WELLS (V.O)

...Back then, if you were aiming to put a hole in the ground in Indonesia, you wanted Mike Acosta telling you where to dig.

TIGHT ON miners carrying bags of ore up wooden ladders.

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

He was what they called a "River Walker." A hands-on geologist. The real deal: Oxford college, MIT.

And AT THE TOP FIND MIKE ACOSTA, 30's, giving orders,  
squinting against the light, something regal in his bearing.

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

Mom was Venezuelan. Dad, English. Left  
when he was little. That's always  
tough.

**INT. JAKARTA HOSTESS BAR - NIGHT**

Diaphanously clad *HOSTESSES* lounge with businessmen. Racy as hell for a Muslim country. Everyone sweating cheap booze.

Acosta holds court at a corner table. Prospectors hang on every word. Chief among them Kenny Wells.

WELLS (V.O.)

He'd just discovered the largest copper strike in Southeast Asia and everyone wanted a piece of him. And for a half-English guy, his teeth weren't all that messed up.

Acosta dumps an ashtray on the table, scatters the contents, using ashes and burning embers to illustrate his point.

ACOSTA

You got the Nazca plate off South America, the Pacific plate, Juan de Fuca, North American, South American. You've got trenches, fissures and fault lines - Aleutian, Marianas, Tonga - the plates rubbing and grinding up on each other - six trillion kilobars of pressure, ten thousand degrees Celsius kicking up geothermic hot spots all along the Pacific Rim.

He takes them all in with a rogue's smile... An *INDONESIAN GIRL*, who understands no English, hangs on his every word.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

Pressure, heat and time. And there's no better cooker than right here.

Is he talking about geology now, or where his hand is resting on the back of the thigh of the Indonesian girl?

WELLS (V.O)  
 He called it the "Ring of Fire"  
 theory. And he definitely had  
 everyone's attention.

ACOSTA  
 It's how I found the copper, and it's  
 why I'll find the gold.

Find Wells nodding along, smitten.

WELLS (V.O.)  
 I was too small-time to really get his  
 ear, but I kept tabs on him... And  
 then I had the dream.

CUT TO:

**INT. KAY'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - MORNING**

Still drunk, Wells digs through junk piled in a disused room that houses an old broken down jacuzzi. An empty pool outside in a concrete yard. He searches a milk crate with items from a long ago move. Finds an old business card -- MICHAEL ACOSTA.

WELLS  
 Okay, okay. Here we go.

Now he moves to a dresser, a JEWELRY BOX sits on top. A glance to the sleeping Kay. And he opens the box. He pulls out an ANTIQUE PAVE DIAMOND AND GOLD LADIES PENDANT WATCH.

Kay stirs and Wells slips the watch into his pocket.

KAY  
 (sleepy)  
 You're up early.

He gives her a kiss goodbye which turns into a real kiss as she pulls him down.

KAY (CONT'D)  
 You wanna talk about yesterday?

WELLS  
 I've got a plan. I've gotta go.

KAY  
 Kenny, listen. Carl had an idea...

WELLS  
*Carl? American Home Carl?*

KAY

He said he could get you on, for a  
while, if you wanted.

WELLS

I... I don't know... I'm not really --

KAY

I bought everything you're selling and I'm no fool. You could sell ice to Eskimos.

WELLS

I don't know, babe. Let me get back from this trip.

KAY

It'd be temporary. Just til the market turns.

(a real proposal)

We could fool around in the warehouse.

A moment as he looks at her. All sorts of things going on in there. It's love. And the certainty she's with him. Always.

WELLS

I'll be back soon, a week at most. If it doesn't pan out, I'll talk to *Carl*.

KAY

Wait. What? Back from where?

And he's gone. Kay gets up, mystified, about to go after him when she sees the open jewelry box. Her watch is gone.

KAY (CONT'D)

Dammit, Kenny--!

**INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY**

A GOLD ROLEX PRESIDENTIAL sliding off a wrist. It's placed on a counter, followed by a diamond pinky ring, sapphire cuff links and Kay's pendant watch.

A ROLL OF CASH changes hands.

WELLS (V.O)

I didn't think twice. I was on my way.

**EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY**

Pushing as Wells exits, counting his money, wiping frame...



WELLS (V.O.)

It was like I was being called. It was the gold calling. I know that sounds crazy, but if you knew that feeling... If you knew...

As a PASSENGER JET TAKES OFF just over the pawn shop.

**EXT. JAKARTA, INDONESIA - ESTABLISHING - MORNING**

The city sparkles -- it's a collision of tradition and technology; tall towers and shanty towns; soaring wealth and crushing poverty. There's something electric about it.

Super: *JAKARTA, INDONESIA*

WE FIND Wells entering one of the finest hotels in the world.

**INT. JAKARTA PALACE HOTEL - AFTERNOON**

Lavish. Everything the name implies. Wells on a house phone. One cigarette smolders in an ashtray as he lights another.

WELLS

Yeah, Mike, it's Kenny Wells. I'm in the lobby of the Jakarta Palace... leaving another message. We must have gotten our wires crossed about the time. Look, I have a few other meetings, I'll try and move things around. Give me a jingle, okay?

He hangs up. He checks where his watch would be. Asks a passing waiter the time. Still no Acosta. He drinks. Drags on his smoke and burning ash falls on his jacket, making a hole.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Goddammit.

He starts to furiously brush it off when he hears --

ACOSTA (O.S.)

Wells?

And there's ACOSTA. Calm and confident and smiling.

WELLS

Hey, Mike! Thanks for coming. It's good to see you again.

Does Acosta remember him? Maybe. A hustler trying his best not to look needy. Disapproving eyes from around the clubby lobby.

ACOSTA

I know a local place, a bit more color, if you know what I mean.

WELLS

What, they're not pouring here?

Then Acosta remarks something in Indonesian and a lobby clerk snaps obsequiously, ushers them toward the lounge.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Now you're talking, Mike.

**INT. JAKARTA PALACE HOTEL - LOBBY - LATER**

A discreet bar cart navigates a lounge area now packed with Jakarta's international business elite.

WELLS (O.S.)

...So this salesman goes up to a house and knocks on the front door. It's opened by a ten year-old boy who has a lighted cigar in one hand, a glass of whiskey in the other and a Penthouse magazine tucked under his arm.

Salesman: "Hello son. Is your mom or dad home?" The little boy: "What the fuck do you think?"

Wells laughs loud. A BARMAN mixes their drinks. Acosta takes his, glances at his watch.

ACOSTA

So, Kenny, what are we talking about?

WELLS

Ring of fire, Mike. Ring of fire.

Acosta gives a little laugh.

ACOSTA

You're playing my greatest hits, now. Fire's gone out of that one.

WELLS

What are you talking about?

ACOSTA

Ring of fire hasn't been proven. It's the opinion of my fellow *esteemed* geologists that the whole thing is, quoting here, a *crock of shit*.

Wells takes a moment, the wheels turning, then...

WELLS

Well, what the hell? You called it wrong, what are you gonna do?

Acosta shoots a look.

ACOSTA

In this game there is no right or wrong, there's only hits and misses.

WELLS

So, you still think you're right?

ACOSTA

I don't think I'm right. I know I'm right. There's gold here.

WELLS

I'm happy you said that, Mike. I truly am. I believe you.

ACOSTA

I hate to dash your hopes, but don't you think others have come along before you, with the same thought and, from the looks of it, deeper pockets?

WELLS

Ring of fire is real. I knew it the minute I heard it. It was like a lightning strike. I never forgot it.

Acosta laughs. He can't help it.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Go ahead and laugh. I'm used to it. But hear this, I don't just *believe*, I *know*.

ACOSTA

No one will back me on this one.

Wells mixes them both two more strong ones.

WELLS

I will. I'll get the money.

ACOSTA

You look like you had to rob someone to get here.

WELLS

Tell me where you want to dig, Mike, and I'll make sure the bills are paid.

ACOSTA

You roll in here like we're old pals? I'm a mirage, mate. You know jack shit about who I am.

WELLS

You know it's out there. I can see it in your eyes. You still believe.

As Wells says this, we can see Acosta start to believe, maybe for the first time in a while.

WELLS (CONT'D)

I get it. I was born on the side of a mountain, too. My father scraped everything he had out of the rocks. He died with dirt under his fingernails. I intend to do the same.

Acosta just might be wavering. Wells won't let him get away.

WELLS (CONT'D)

This business wrote me off years ago, and maybe you're not running a hot hand... Let's prove 'em wrong. Prove all of them wrong. And you know why? 'Cause *Ring of Fire* is right. Tell me I'm crazy, I'll be on the next plane.

Acosta is inscrutable. Wells waits, sweating. Finally:

ACOSTA

You're crazy.

Acosta rises from the table. He tosses cash down and brushes past, leaving Wells like a raft with a hole in it.

ACOSTA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Do you have a hat?

DISCOVER Acosta has stopped behind Wells with a kind of *this is the dumbest thing I'll ever do* expression.

WELLS

Yeah, I got a hat.

But Wells is starting to smile.

ACOSTA  
Good. I'm taking you upriver.

WELLS  
What river is that, Mike?

ACOSTA  
The only one that matters.

Acosta walks out. Wells drains his drink. And WE GO...

**EXT. TALKING BIRD FISHING VILLAGE - DAY**

A fishing village on market day. Talking birds, snake gazers, and WELLS, weekend sporty, exiting a cab. The DRIVER yells and points toward the river. Everyone wants to sell him something.

He sees Acosta waiting by a traditional freighter canoe with the long-shaft outboard. The boatman, OBB, smokes a cigarette.

ACOSTA  
You're late. This is Obb.

Wells eyes the boat warily.

WELLS  
That thing gonna make it?

ACOSTA  
Let's hope so.  
(messing with him)  
Ever seen a Borneo pit viper?

WELLS  
Well I tell you, Mikey, I feel like  
I've met a few --

ACOSTA  
Drop out of the trees. Good swimmers,  
no bigger than this...  
(hands 12 inches apart)  
But if one gets you, find a phone,  
call your loved ones.

Wells looks around. A few native faces. Huts. No phones.

WELLS  
(re: their boat)  
I went on the exact same thing once at  
Weeky-Watchee.

Wells hops on the freighter canoe, rocking the shit out of it.

**INT./EXT. FREIGHTER CANOE - KENSANA (KIN-SANA) RIVER - DAY**

Obb pulls away from the pier. Wells watches "civilization" disappear behind a bend. And suddenly DAYAK TRIBESMEN panning for gold. In 300 yards, they've gone 5000 years back in time.

ACOSTA

The Dayak have been panning this river for thousands of years. That's how it got it's name, "*Daya Kensana.*"

Acosta lets that hang there, like a tease.

WELLS

*Daya Kensana?*

ACOSTA

The word, *Daya*, actually means *upstream...* *Kensana* means *gold.*

Wells can't contain his smile.

WELLS

*Upstream Gold?*

ACOSTA

That's its name.

WELLS

You gotta be shittin' me. If I had invented it, I wouldn't have had the balls to name it that.

**ANGLES ON THE JOURNEY**

Natives pass in a canoe going the other way; wildlife along the shore; ANGLES from shore, poo rafts next to clothes washing next to teeth brushing. Wells staring. A snake drops and swims through the water. Wells coolly lights a cigarette.

RISE UP TO SEE the freighter canoe tiny with a white wake, the river golden in color, bisecting an endless green canopy.

Wells POVs. Sun and jet lag. The steady buzz of the prop. Peering from under his hat, water rolling by. His eyes fight it, then shut. Then Acosta is shaking him awake. River narrower and darker under overhanging trees.

**EXT. KENSANA RIVER LANDING - DAY**

The boatman pulls up at a muddy bank. A faint trail goes up into jungle. Acosta hops ashore and Wells follows.

ACOSTA

So, listen... the Dayak are warrior people. Probably best known for *Ngayau... headhunting.*

WELLS

What the fuck?

ACOSTA

They believe all of a man's power is centered in his head. So they take the head. Doesn't happen much anymore, but they're probably around thinking we're traders or someone's mother-in-law.

Suddenly Wells freezes. There are **FACES** in the leaves, watching them. Then Wells realizes Acosta has vanished up a dense trail. Wells nearly runs after him.

Acosta stands. He has attached a heavy coconut to the end of a bamboo stick. He tests its weight on the ground. **THUMP**. Then sets out again. Thump Thump Thump.

WELLS

Okay, I'll bite. What is that?

ACOSTA

It makes the king cobras and pythons think an elephant is coming.

Wells watches every footfall.

**OMIT**

**EXT. JUNGLE STOPPING POINT - DAY**

Light filters from high in the canopy. THUMP THUMP THUMP. The coconut vibrates the earth. Wells follows, drenched in sweat.

WELLS

Getting a world-class case of crotch rot back here.

(continues, then)

Jesus... How long..?

He stops.

ACOSTA

Forty million years. For the geology to cook. Then we come along and take it.

WELLS

I meant --

ACOSTA

I know what you meant, Wells. But imagine being asked to give up something you've been hoarding for 40 million years? This jungle will test you, Wells. Hold you up, weigh you, and decide your worth within an ounce.

WELLS

Do you always talk like this? Like a book on tape.

ACOSTA

I suppose I do. Do you listen to books on tape, Wells? *Ken Fol-let... Louis L'Amour... Ed-gar Rice Bur-roughs?*

He's really made a meal of those pulp names.

WELLS

Where are we going, Acosta?

A no look point back over his shoulder --

ACOSTA

Up. I want to show you something.

WELLS

Up? How far up?



ACOSTA

Six, seven miles tops. Watch your  
step.

Wells looks up. If there's a way, only Acosta can see it.

**EXT. JUNGLE - TOP OF THE RIDGE - AFTERNOON**

Acosta emerges from the foliage into a clearing. Wells struggles up after --

Acosta stands on the edge, staring out like a man who's come home. Wells is bent over, sucking air, drowning in sweat...

ACOSTA

Take a look.

Wells looks out and is instantly spellbound -- it's JUST LIKE HIS DREAM. GOLDEN LIGHT sparkles over a pristine valley. The KENSANA RIVER snaking around, smoke from a small village on the river far in the distance.

WELLS

My God, it's just like my dream.

ACOSTA

There have been a few folks up here tapping over the years but they've all focused on the foothills far to the south, drawn by the basalt overlay.

He points to an area on the opposite side of the valley.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

What interests me is the other way, on the east bank, up from the river. That small depression, like a giant left a footprint walking away.

Far away we see limestone features we will recognize from the "Washoe site." True excitement in Acosta's voice --

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

Those limestone structures are 300 million years old, the pale color comes from skeletons of tiny sea creatures. But the placer gold I've recovered there is much older. Something happened there, Wells. Something hot and angry. That's where we'll find the tasty bits.

But Wells is barely listening. He's transfixed.

WELLS

My dream... It's out there...

ACOSTA  
Damn right it is.

Two men together, staring out at their destiny, and WE GO:

**EXT. KENSANA VILLAGE - DUSK**

A small village on the river. A vendor scoops rice onto flat leaves, grilling some kind of meat over an open fire. He puts the two portions up on a flat board.

Wells goes for his wallet. Acosta stops him, producing a small pouch. He removes a pinch of GOLD DUST, sprinkles it on a scale on the vendor's cart.

ACOSTA  
Coin of the realm around here.  
(beat)  
When you think about it, Gold is utterly useless. Copper, Iron, Beryllium, Palladium, Bismuth, these are metals you can do something with. But the one that's good for nothing is the one that everybody wants. Does have a quality though. When you hold it in your hand, it does something to you.

Weights are adjusted, a little more dust -- no one can take their eyes off the sparkling gold.

WELLS  
Like get you to spend your whole life looking for it.

**EXT. KENSANA VILLAGE - DUSK**

ACOSTA  
...so the lease is currently held by a Brazilian company.

Acosta sits comfortably, eating. Wells searches his pockets, finds a couple of mini-bar bottles of scotch, and a packet of airplane peanuts. Offers one of the bottles to Acosta.

WELLS  
Only chance you got of surviving what's in that bowl of microbes.

ACOSTA  
...They're looking to unload it cheap - getting buried on some Kazakh venture.

Wells finds some peanuts from the plane. Eats them.

WELLS

You know, Mikey, I'm starting to love how you talk. And the first thing I'm gonna do is move some paper.

ACOSTA

None of the big guys will touch us.

In Wells we see a touch of the old confidence returning.

WELLS

You want to raise money from the big boys, from Harvard endowment or some pension fund, I am not your guy. But the little guys, the guys you've never heard of... those are my guys. How much do we need?

ACOSTA

Seven, seven-fifty to start.

Ouch... Wells takes a beat to re-focus.

WELLS

But how much are we gonna need?

ACOSTA

It's not just the lease. We must first procure a permit, which in Indonesia means lining pockets. There are capital costs, too. Equipment. You don't just do this with a couple shovels and a pick-axe.

WELLS

I'll get the money. Whatever it takes.

Wells is about to wipe his face with his NAPKIN, but has a sudden idea. He pulls out a pen and quickly scribbles something down on it then slides the napkin over to Acosta.

ACOSTA

What's this?

WELLS

A contract. Read it. Sign it.

Acosta looks over what Wells has written on the napkin. They share a look -- a moment. WE DON'T SEE WHAT'S ON THE NAPKIN.

ACOSTA

Fair enough.

WELLS  
We got a deal?

Acosta signs and sticks his hand out to Wells. They shake.

ACOSTA  
Deal.

**INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - DAY**

WELLS  
For the first time in my life, I was  
selling something I believed in. I  
could feel it in my bones.

Wells up, remembering the energy. Reveal more of the space: a  
pastiche of several eras, kind of a luxury camp mixed with a  
whorehouse.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
Any real salesman will tell you...

VOICE (O.S.)  
Mr. Wells, please sit down.

The voice belongs to PAUL JENNINGS, early 40s, buttoned-down  
shirt, conservative suit, but a fun tie that was probably a  
gift. A tape recorder is on the table. Two other men, BANKS  
and LEVINE, both 30's, skeptical, watch as Wells takes his  
seat again.

WELLS  
...If you believe it, you can sure as  
shit sell it.

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - MORNING**

BURNS  
(braying into the phone)  
Hell yeah it's risky...

Bobby Burns standing mid-pitch.

BURNS (CONT'D)  
I'm being straight here. But hey, no  
risk, no reward, right?

It's the usual crowd, but the mood is electric. Everyone's  
working the phones, telling versions of the same story.

CONNIE  
Acosta! Largest copper strike in  
history. Yeah, that guy. We got him --

NEVINS

Platinum resume. Pla-ti-num. Oxford.  
MIT. That's right: *The Copper King* --

BURNS

*Kin-sana*. Indonesia. It literally  
means River of Gold. No, I'm not  
fucking kidding.

Camera finding Wells AT THE BAR with his own phone, taking in snippets of the phone pitches.

WELLS

(into phone)

It's a 20k minimum buy-in and shares  
are flying off the shelf.

Kay, passing with a tray of drinks, as Kenny tries to pull her over. She shrugs out of his grasp and continues on.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Babe, this is fucking crazy --

BURNS

Going like hotcakes. *Hotcakes!!*

Connie covering the mouthpiece, interrupts over --

CONNIE

I'm batting 500. BabeFuckingRuth.  
Every other call, Kenny.

WELLS

Keep throwing the line.

(into phone)

The best. What'd I tell you? The best.

(calling to Kay)

Babe, shine those dancing shoes, get  
'em ready --

She flips him off. It's not a forever anger, but she's angry.

ACOSTA (O.S.)

We don't even have the exploration  
rights. What are they selling?

WELLS

They're selling the story, Mike. And  
right now, the story is you. Hey,  
speaking of which, what are you doing?

ACOSTA (O.S.)  
I'm down in Kupang City, looking at  
coring equipment.

WELLS  
 (yelling to the guys)  
 Acosta's in *Kupang City* looking at  
*coring equipment.*

The sales pitch shifts, *Kupang City. Special coring equipment.*

BURNS  
 (into phone)  
*Coring rigs will come from Kupang  
 City. I'll put you down for 20. Two  
 shares. You got it.*

WELLS  
 (into phone)  
 You're magic.

And as WE LOOK over this makeshift trading floor in full action, the SOUND OF KEYS BEING PUNCHED rises above the din of sales chatter -- TAPE PRINTOUT SCROLLING, and WE ARE...

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - NIGHT**

Bobby Burns bangs figures into an ADDING MACHINE. Wells circles. It's been a long day, everyone's exhausted. Burns scrolls the tape, tears it off with a flourish. Passes it to Wells, who reads, swallows hard, then delivers the number.

WELLS  
 (into phone)  
 Two hundred sixty seven thousand, four  
 hundred and thirty-four dollars.

Over the phone, there's SILENCE.

**EXT. MINING SUPPLY - KUPANG CITY, INDONESIA - DAY**

Acosta checks out new equipment while on a portable phone --

ACOSTA  
 (into phone)  
 Not exactly the number I had in mind.

Realize Acosta is now looking at the USED EQUIPMENT YARD.

**EXT. USED EQUIPMENT YARD - KUPANG CITY - DAY**

Acosta stands looking up at rusting industrial dinosaurs against the endless blue sky.

WELLS (O.S.)  
 I might be able to borrow a little bit  
 against it.  
 (beat)  
 (MORE)



WELLS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

No. *Truth*. That's it for now. Can you make it work?

ACOSTA

That'll get us the permit, a few holes. If we work fast and get lucky, who knows...

WELLS

Get us a little good news and we'll raise more money.

Suddenly hear some DUDES AT A FOOSBALL TABLE loudly ARGUING over PAC-10 football, drowning out Wells.

ACOSTA

You work out of a bar, Wells?

WELLS

Keeping a lid on expenses, Mike. Makin' the dollar holler.

Acosta hanging up, wondering just what he's gotten himself into. He examines a well-used drill, speaks Bahasa with the mining equipment salesman, haggling.

**INT. KAY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

A suitcase on the bed. Wells sorta packing, a haphazard undertaking under the best of circumstances. He takes a drink. Surveys the possibilities.

WELLS

Which tie? This one or this one?

Reveal Kay behind him, drink in hand.

KAY

I want my watch back.

WELLS

First off, it's your mother's and second you're gonna get it back.

KAY

It *was* my mother's until she gave it to me.

WELLS

I gotta bring my good shoes, where are my good shoes?

KAY

Look under the bed. I don't like to see my stuff up in pawns, Kenny. You know I'm sensitive to it.

He gets down to look under the bed. See his ass sticking out.

WELLS

We always talk about our dreams, about the ranch, clean air, big views, our place above it all. That's what I'm doin', getting us out of this shitbox.

KAY

I don't mind this shitbox.

He's back up with the shoes.

WELLS

See, right there, that's what I love -- you're like one of those booster rockets that helps us get up to the stars.

Stands back with the shoes. He wiggles the shoes.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Too much?

KAY

What the fuck, Kenny?

KAY (CONT'D)

We figure shit out together, Kenny. Through thick and fuckin' thin. If you needed my watch, I'd give it to you.

WELLS

I know, babe. I'll be back soon, I promise.

He starts off... Then pauses like he remembers one last thing.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Oh, here -- why don't you time me?

He dangles her mother's watch. Turns, smiling. She smiles, too. Love rushes in, overflows.

KAY

Wear the blue tie. It brings out your  
eyes.

As we PRE-LAP a CALL TO PRAYER --

**EXT. JAKARTA, INDONESIA - DAWN**

Crossing river traffic reveals a luxury hotel amid minarets.

Super: *JAKARTA, INDONESIA*

**INT. JAKARTA PALACE HOTEL SUITE - DAY**

Acosta goes over paperwork, shaved, hair groomed, transformed.  
Wells, adjusting his blue tie, comes out of the bathroom.

ACOSTA  
What's that smell?

WELLS  
I dropped a goose.

ACOSTA

And are you wearing cologne?

WELLS

Yeah, why? You getting turned on?

ACOSTA

Listen to me: we have one shot at this. He's the *Minister of The Interior of Indonesia*. If he doesn't like us for any reason, we're done. Never put your hands on your hips. Crossing your arms is considered aggressive. And cologne, here, is an insult.

WELLS

You get a whiff of some of the folks around here? I might suggest changing the national cologne policy.

ACOSTA

We get the deal. We don't insult. We don't talk. We listen, we get our permit and we get out. Are we clear?

WELLS

...yeah. Got it.

ACOSTA

Now go wash it off.

Wells stands there for a moment like a humiliated child. Then goes back into the bathroom. Off Acosta, WE GO:

**INT. JAKARTA PALACE RESTAURANT - DAY**

A formal room with a Chinese theme. Seated at the table is the MINISTER OF MINING. A cadre of security and yes-men flanking. The Minister speaks with a cultured Indonesian accent.

MINISTER

...I have reviewed your permit request for the Kensana property...

As a waiter pours hot liquid into small bowls at each setting, we find Wells perspiring in his bad suit. He picks up his bowl and starts to sip his "tea." Acosta clears his throat -- Wells sees the Minister dipping his fingers into his bowl.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

(to Acosta)

There is a conspicuous lack of documentation.

WELLS

Hey, we've got the paperwork --

The Minister ignores him as Acosta jumps in.

ACOSTA

Yes, excellency. We have reports from previous attempts, but judged it best not to waste your valuable time.

The Minister accepts this, but still ignores Wells.

MINISTER

(beat, to Acosta)

What makes you think you will find what others before you could not?

ACOSTA

They were looking in the wrong place. The underlying geology is sound.

GIANT PRAWNS are placed in front of them. Wells can't help it--

WELLS

Hey, can I get a fork?

The waiters don't move. Acosta and the Minister ignore Wells.



ACOSTA

There's gold there, Excellency. And  
with your blessing, we will find it.

A long beat. Wells gets uncomfortable. Realizes his arms are  
crossed. Uncrosses them. And sells.

WELLS

Mike really knows his stuff. There's  
no one better...

The Minister doesn't even look at Wells, addressing Acosta.

MINISTER

As you know, our natural resources are  
a divine inheritance of all the  
people.

ACOSTA

As is your capable stewardship,  
Excellency.

MINISTER

A heavy responsibility to be sure.

Wells fidgets, then barks to a waiter --

WELLS

Hey! Who's a guy gotta bang to get a  
drink around here?

Wells definitely has the Minister's attention now.

MINISTER

I am a Muslim, sir. I do not drink.

WELLS

I'm an American and I do. And last  
time I checked, I'm hosting this  
little shindig, so you might want to  
at least acknowledge I'm sitting here.

MINISTER

You are most definitely an American.

WELLS

What's *that* mean?

MINISTER

It's the belief that *paying* for lunch  
is a *substitute* for manners.

WELLS

You're right. And I apologize. I can see I've offended your delicate moral sensibilities. But I may have just the thing to help you get over it.

And with that, he pulls out a THICK WAD OF CASH from his jacket, sets it down on the lazy Susan with a THUD. And then spins it -- the cash rotates around the large table toward the Minister. The Minister stares at Wells with contempt.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Now that you mention it, I've been thinking of converting to Muslim.

ACOSTA

That's enough.

WELLS

Even if we don't find any gold, at least I still get the forty virgins--

ACOSTA

Wells --!

WELLS

I'm not greedy. I'll go half--twenty's a windfall. Hell, if they're really virgins, two would probably kill me.

The cash slowly stops revolving. The Minister never looks at it. He stands, throws down his napkin, and, entourage in tow, sweeps imperiously from the restaurant.

Acosta looks at Wells, his anger and disbelief palpable. Then he grabs up the cash and goes. Wells is alone, his face flushed with embarrassment. He sees a patron staring at him.

WELLS (CONT'D)

What the fuck are you looking at?

Wells pours himself a cup of tea, hand shaking as he drinks. Then he looks up and sees Acosta coming back. Wells stands, about to apologize, but before he can speak -- CRACK!

Acosta decks him. Wells falls backwards over the chair, hitting the floor. He looks up at Acosta standing over him and, in a flash, recognizes just how much this matters to him, that much of his poise is a kind of cover.

WELLS (CONT'D)

You gonna tell me what happened?

Wells gets up, brushing himself off. Acosta takes his time.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

ACOSTA  
He took the money.

A smile spreads across Wells's face.

WELLS  
Of course he took the money. It's money.

**EXT. KENSANA VALLEY - DAY**

INFINITE JUNGLE in an anamorphic frame. Every leaf and blade of grass swaying in the wind. Then Acosta appears. This is Wells's POV. He hurries to stay close.

ACOSTA stops moving. He looks at Wells. He looks down. Wells approaches cautiously and also looks down. Acosta makes an X in the soil.

Now reveal a small army of NATIVE WORKERS waiting. A FOREMAN shrieks and they break into motion... clearing the "giant's footprint" for the first drill position at the "Washoe site."

The sky is blue, dotted with white clouds; the river sparkles gold surrounded by the limestone cliffs.

Tight shots of assembly, metal to metal. Acosta busy. Wells, in his Loman suit slapping at Mosquitos, jungle pressing in.

**EXT. WASHOE SITE - VARIOUS - DAY**

A METAL SCAFFOLD lyrically sways above the grass, framed against the limestone cliffs. A break in the grass suddenly reveals a WATER BUFFALO pulling the first drill.

The drill is positioned. Jungle has been beaten back.

A GIRL leads a goat out of a watchful crowd to the drill where a Dayak "BORETN" waits. He murmurs prayers in his language.

Then pulls a knife and, without hesitation or sentimentality, draws it across the goat's neck --

AN ARM YANKS THE PULL-CORD on the drill, ROARING to life --

Panning NATIVE FACES to find WELLS as a gentle SUN SHOWER begins to rain down.

WELLS

See, ahh... That's beautiful! The sky  
is blessing us.

Acosta stares up at the sky with a different perspective.

ACOSTA

Monsoon's coming early.

WELLS

*Monsoon?*

CRACK! FLASHES OF LIGHTING. Wells's face realizing the  
seriousness. THUNDER RUMBLES. Rain falls harder. The DRILL  
SPINS down into the earth...

**INT. MAIN TENT - NIGHT**

Vinyl spinning on a record player. Something lofty, obscure.

WELLS

A record player? Am I paying for that?

But you can tell the whole thing makes Wells happy. He's got a  
whiskey. The native foreman is there. And through the flaps  
two distant drills glow under colored tarpaulins.

ACOSTA

(re: the map)

We're here. And now we step out in a  
semi-circular pattern. Six man crews,  
twelve hour shifts, around the clock.  
Tomorrow I'll start looking at core  
samples. We'll send the most promising  
down river to the assay lab. When we  
get a hit we'll drop holes to chart  
the contour of the vein.

**EXT. WASHOE SITE - VARIOUS - DAY**

Three foot ROCK CORES laid out in a wooden box... Pull back to  
reveal ten boxes... then twenty... Moving INSIDE --

THE CORE SHED

Where a CIRCULAR SAW cuts a CORE. Wells watching Acosta  
examine a section, then toss it in a ROCK CRUSHER... The  
RUBBLE is then bagged in canvas sacks... which are closed and  
sealed with HOT WAX... and finally stamped with a WASHOE LOGO.

THE CORE SAMPLES are carried in a long line through the valley  
toward the river -- an Indonesian Salgado come to life.

Wells and Acosta watch, all hopes and dreams in that line.

WELLS

What do we do now?

CAMERA RISES UP from the workers carrying the core samples to the limestone cliffs and endless sky.

ACOSTA (O.S.)

We wait. And we keep drilling.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. MAIN TENT - DUSK**

Wells sprays himself liberally in bug spray, making a cloud under the light. Almost immediately a bug bites his shoulder.

WELLS

These bugs don't give a fuck about this bug spray.

AT THE CAMP STOVE

Wells, spatula in hand, watches mystery meat sizzle. He cooks and talks over his shoulder to Acosta who is working.

WELLS (CONT'D)

The guy who invented the hamburger was smart. But the guy who invented the cheeseburger... Genius.

He begins serving them up.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Don't ask where this meat came from.

IT'S LATER

They're both relaxing. Wells maybe a bit more relaxed.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Goddamn jungle. Nothing for 200 miles and look at us. Not so bad.

Acosta takes in the night. Raises his cup in a salute to the dark jungle all around. They both drink.

ACOSTA

What's the meaning of the tattoo?

WELLS

It's from a poem I read as a kid:  
(Acosta waits)  
*The bird with no feet sleeps on the wind.*

ACOSTA  
You're full of mysteries, Wells. You  
really are.

WELLS  
You got any tattoos, Mike?

ACOSTA  
Only on the inside.

Wells looks at him a beat, then looks out into the dark. The  
sounds of drilling drift across the valley floor.

**OMIT**

DISSOLVE TO:

And a LONE MESSENGER running up the trail...

**EXT. WASHOE SITE - DAYS LATER**

Wells meets him halfway, takes the ASSAY REPORT and tears it  
open, reading. Even from a distance we can tell it's bad news.

A DRILL IS MOVED to a NEW POSITION. DRILL 2 IS MOVED. CORES  
ARE CRUSHED and BAGGED. A CANOE LOADED WITH CORE SAMPLES  
motors away down the rising river. The rain is torrential. The  
MAIN TENT looks like it's about to float away. Acosta meeting  
Obb... Wells meeting him... Acosta...

**INT. WASHOE SITE - MAIN TENT - CONTINUOUS**

Acosta and Wells, back to back, working. Acosta thinking about  
geology, Wells looking at financials. Realize neither one is  
looking at an unopened report on the table. Finally Acosta  
tears it open, reads it. Passes it to Wells: *INDO-KARTA  
LABORATORIES - ASSAY REPORT.*

WELLS  
...These things look worse every time  
we get one.

Acosta stares steadily at his map, which shows an increasingly  
desperate spray of holes.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
Thirty, 100 meter holes, Mike. Thirty.  
And what do we got? We got shit.

ACOSTA  
Remember what I told you about  
patience?

WELLS

Remember what I told you about money?

ACOSTA

Yeah, it wasn't a problem.

Looks at the numbers. They don't lie.

WELLS

It's a problem now.

ACOSTA

I'll try something else. Move further  
up the seam. Drop 80 meter holes. Move  
faster.



WELLS

Do it.

Wells suddenly shudders with a chill. Acosta looks at him.

WELLS (CONT'D)

I'm fine.

ACOSTA

You don't look so good.

WELLS

It's ninety-eight degrees out and  
pissing rain. And all we're pulling up  
is dinosaur shit. How am I supposed to  
look?

(beat)

Jesus, I'm freezing.

Wells starts to shake. Acosta puts a hand to Wells's head.

ACOSTA

You're burning up.

WELLS

I'm fine.

(off Acosta's concern)

I said, I'm fine.

Wells forces himself to stand. He moves to Acosta's maps.

WELLS (CONT'D)

All right, where do we go next?

But Wells has to sit. Off Acosta's concerned look WE GO...

**EXT. WASHOE SITE - DAY**

That fucking rain. WORKERS, meager items held in plastic bags, assemble in their tent. The FOREMAN speaks to his men.

WELLS (V.O)

We drilled our holes, assayed the  
cores and got nothing. Zero. We were  
nearly busted, out of money, out of  
time. Workers quitting. But, no way I  
was giving up, I was gonna find a way  
to keep going if it killed me.

One RIG IS SILENT. Wells struggles across the compound through the downpour to stop the men from leaving. He falls. Picks himself up. Waves his arms. Yells in a language they don't speak. Even the buffalo is leaving. He slips again --

WELLS (V.O) (CONT'D)

I picked up a bad case of malaria, which takes out something like a million people a year... And I was on the list.

From the mud he sees the workers vanishing, a skeleton crew on the remaining rig. He rolls on his back. And still the rain comes down.

**INT. MAIN TENT - RAINY DUSK**

Acosta enters. Doesn't realize Wells is slumped in a chair in the gloom.

WELLS

The workers are leaving, Mike.

ACOSTA

I know. I've got the new assay reports.

Acosta lights a lantern, sees Wells.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

Jesus. Get your ass in bed already.

It's an effort for Wells to speak, painful.

WELLS

Talk to me.

ACOSTA

There's nothing to talk about. We're not finding anything.

Wells sags. The reality that he's losing again sinking in. Wells has another fit of chills. He's half-delirious.

WELLS

Maybe we're pushing them too hard. Maybe we should take it easy, enjoy it a little bit.

ACOSTA

*Take it easy?* Is that a Reno bumper sticker? The losers' credo.

WELLS

Nah, man, it's just life. Sometimes you just gotta take it easy... I'm freezing.

Acosta helps him to his cot. Pulls the thin blanket over.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Maybe cut 'em all in... offer ownership, share in the upside...

The DISTANT WHINE of the last drill suddenly GOES QUIET. The TIMELESS CACOPHONY of the jungle RISES.

WELLS (CONT'D)

I'm scared, Mike. Don't let me die out here for nothing...

Wells passes out into a feverish sleep. Acosta watches him a long time before reaching a decision.

**EXT. MAIN TENT - DAWN**

Acosta steps into the empty, silent camp. Rain curtaining off his hat. He sets out alone.

**EXT. LONGHOUSE VILLAGE - LATER**

Acosta walking through the rainy jungle toward a village. See natives in the limestone cliffs looking down. Acosta passes a pond where people bathe and fill jugs with muddy water.

AT THE LONGHOUSE there are DAYAK WOMEN on the porch. Acosta has a few quiet words. One slowly stands, disappears through the DARK OPENING. Acosta cannot see inside. It's too dark. The remaining women look at him evenly. The "FOREMAN" appears, obviously a LOCAL CHIEF.

ACOSTA

(Dayak)

What can I do to get you to return to work? We are running out of money, it's true. But we're close. I know it.

A beat as the foreman considers Acosta. Then he gestures to follow. The rising CRIES of a child can be heard.

**INT. THATCH HUT - DAY**

Thrumming rain on the thatch and in half-gloom find a feverish CHILD. Acosta watches as the mother tries to get him to take a sip of water. Acosta kneels and passes his canteen to the mother. Urges her to pour clean water.

WELLS (V.O.)

He realized what they needed wasn't stock options, but drinking water and antibiotics. And damned if he didn't go to every little place every one of our people came from. Streams that had no name. All feeding the great Kensana river.

**INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - DAY**

A skeptical Jennings observes Wells a moment.

JENNINGS

And you believe this was sincere?

WELLS

Absolutely. Mike's half a native anyway. He was trying everything. And I was a mess. Malaria is no joke.

**INT. MAIN TENT - DAY**

The monsoon continues, but Wells is oblivious, a shuddering chill wracking his body. Acosta watches this uneasily.

ACOSTA

We need to get you out of here. I'm pulling the plug.

WELLS

Not happening. Tell me the plan.

ACOSTA

What they need... they need clean water, antibiotics...

(reluctant)

If we get filter systems up here, I think they'll come back.

Wells looks up with dim eyes, a smile crossing his face.

WELLS

I've got maybe eighteen hundred dollars of room left on the Visa. Five hundred on Diner's Club. Use it all.

Wells hot and dry. Acosta looks down at him. He doesn't think Wells is gonna make it. He's seen it before.

**EXT. SMALL CREEK - DAY**

A break in the rain. Misty clouds circle limestone mountains.

Brown water in a micro filter as Acosta hangs it from a branch. Clear water flows out a hose. A child tastes the clean water, doesn't like it. Several children laugh.

In the river a mother sits with her baby on her lap.

As Acosta fills ANOTHER FILTER, reveal NATIVES finding gold up the stream. It almost mocks Acosta.

**INT. MAIN TENT - DAY**

THE SAME LIMESTONE CLIFFS... ONLY NOW WE TILT DOWN and FIND RENO, GAUDY NEON NESTLED IN GREEN JUNGLE. CASINO SOUNDS AND NOISES MIXED WITH JUNGLE.

Wells tossing and turning on the cot having his fever dreams.

WELLS (V.O)

I spent the next few weeks in a malarial haze. I should have been dead. The workers stayed. Mike kept it all going. And he kept me alive.

**EXT. SMALL CREEK - DAY**

Acosta in the rain, turns and sees something that stops him --

WELLS (V.O.)

Did he manage to enjoy himself a little bit along the way..?

A BEAUTIFUL NATIVE GIRL stares at Acosta through the rain. It's like they know each other.

WELLS (V.O.)

How should I know? I was delirious. I do not recommend Malaria treated with a bunch of leaves.

**INT. MAIN TENT - DAY**

Rain. And the sound of an IGNITING FLAME... FUMMM --! A BUTANE FLAME. And Wells in and out of consciousness to find a BORETN in their tent brewing a potion of herbs as Acosta watches.

WELLS

What is that?

ACOSTA

No idea. But they say it works.

WELLS

They don't have electricity. Or socks.

The BoretN brings a bamboo mug toward Wells.

ACOSTA

Come on, get it down.

Wells chokes down the remedy.

**EXT. WASHOE SITE - VARIOUS - DAY**

Limestone cliffs and mist. Drills spinning, biting into earth. Clouds passing overhead. Men feeding pipe to the machine.

Wells drenched in sweat, looking like death --

ACOSTA and FOREMAN load CORE SAMPLES onto a boat.

DRILLS SPINNING, biting into the earth/WELLS TOSSING, TURNING, drenched as the FEVER FINALLY BREAKS.

Obb brings another report. Acosta reads, betraying no emotion.

FEVER DREAM: A RAFT FLOATING ON A GOLDEN RIVER... We're drifting toward it as it goes around a bend... SOMETHING on it... a BODY.. FUNERAL BIER. Closer... closer... it's WELLS --

**INT. MAIN TENT - DAY**

WELLS COMES TO -- surprised to be alive. Surprised it's not raining. Realizes Acosta is right there looking at him.

WELLS  
What day is it?

ACOSTA  
No idea.

WELLS  
Month?

ACOSTA  
August.

See this is a different month than Wells expected.

WELLS  
You been sitting here this whole time?

ACOSTA  
Let's not get carried away.

Wells now realizes Acosta has an assay report.

WELLS  
You gonna talk, or what?

ACOSTA  
We pulled seventeen more cores.

He looks at Wells, unreadable.

WELLS

What? What do they say? No good?



ACOSTA

Not good...

Wells falls back. Acosta stands, a completely different look on his face, one of wonder --

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

More in the vicinity of great.

Wells looks up. A face that's almost afraid to hope.

WELLS

Don't mess around, Mike.

ACOSTA

Eighth of an ounce per ton.

Wells scans the reports, rising to his feet.

WELLS

Eighth of an ounce per... WHAT!???

Acosta smiles -- Wells is in shock.

ACOSTA

We've got a strike, Kenny.

Wells smiles, laughs, screams!

WELLS

We've got ourselves a gold mine!

ACOSTA

That we do.

Wells struggles up to his feet and joins Acosta best he can in jumping up and down.

WELLS

WE GOT A GOLD MINE..! WE GOT A GOLD MINE..!

CAMERA DRIFTS outside to meet Wells who appears through the doorway as he YELLS TO THE HILLS --

WELLS (CONT'D)

WE GOT A GODDAMN GOLD MINE --!!!

Which ECHOES back to him from the cliffs --

WELLS ECHO

WE GOT A GODDAMN GOLD MINE MINE MINE!!

SMASH TO:

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - NIGHT**

POP!!! Gold-leafed bottles in buckets. Champagne sprays from the bottle as Wells moves through the crowd at the bar, filling everyone's glasses.

WELLS (V.O)

That moment, there's no way I could possibly describe the feeling.

The regulars are all here, sharing in Wells's victory.

WELLS (V.O) (CONT'D)

It's amazing how a little gold dust can change everything. For better or worse, the ride had begun. And what a goddamn ride...

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - LATER**

The place is vibrating! MUSIC OVER. Wells is with Bobby Burns and Connie and Nevins celebrating at the bar. Kay passing out a round of drinks, the last one to Wells.

Kenny looks at Kay; Kay looks at Kenny, deep into each other, a small moment of private understanding in passing that says it all. Then he turns to his guys:

WELLS

To the best team in the business!

CONNIE

You're a stand up guy, Kenny.

NEVINS

To sharing the wealth.

WELLS

To the mother lode!

They clink glasses and drink deeply, *"To the mother lode!"*

**INT./EXT. CADDY ELDORADO - SCENIC COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

Kenny and Kay driving into the hills on a perfect afternoon. Fun and carefree, windows down, 70's music on the radio.

KENNY

Smell that? Smell that air? Mountain air. It's a tonic.

KAY

Ah, so good. So good.

They're singing along. Passing small family ranches.

KAY (CONT'D)

Remember I told you Janice got promoted to run Truckee?

WELLS

Mmm hmm. Good for her.

KAY

Well, Carl asked me if I'd like to be considered to take her place. Assistant Manager position.

Outside the car as they go zipping past, music trailing, a GHOST TOWN, faded signs and abandoned buildings... A dangling sign reads, "MAGGIE'S CREEK... Pop -- "0" in spray paint.

WELLS

That's great, babe.

KAY

Everything's working out so great.

By way of agreement he rubs her thigh where the dress has ridden up. Sunlight filters through the trees above. Kay's toes are painted eggshell blue.

WELLS

You're gonna be able to quit all of it if you want... Never work another day in your life. *Blue skies* coming.

**INT. ELDORADO - MAGIC HOUR**

WELLS

Close your eyes.

Wells drives down a country lane.

**EXT. ELDORADO - DAY**

Wells stops, gets out and starts around the car.

KAY

(happy)

Kenny Wells, what are you doing?

WELLS

Eyes closed. No peeking.

He opens Kay's door, leads her a short distance.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Okay, now open 'em.

She opens her eyes. In her eyes something immense that must be comprehended. And for a moment we don't see what she's seeing and then we do:

**DREAM RANCH LAND**

The sweep of ranch land is epic. Prairie dogs hop away. Elk in the distance the size of ants.

KAY

It's beautiful.

WELLS

It's going to be our place, above it all, away from it all. Like we always wanted. We'll put the house here.

(MORE)

WELLS (CONT'D)  
 Fieldstone and oak. The kind that  
 lasts forever. A big kitchen where I'm  
 standing. And a great room with two  
 fireplaces.

He turns to look at Kay, to see if she's going with it.

KAY  
 Can we afford this?

WELLS  
 Almost, baby. Almost...

Wells jogs a short distance away, still going...

WELLS (CONT'D)  
 Bedrooms here and here and here... And  
 here... For the kids. Ah, come on,  
 Kay... How many kids?

KAY  
 People usually start with one.

They look at each other. It's golden hour. Then she skips  
 through the field toward him.

KAY (CONT'D)  
 Kitchen should go the other way,  
 Kenny. To get the morning light.

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - NIGHT**

Wells laying it out for the boys: Burns, Connie, and Nevins.

WELLS  
 It'll be straight commission to  
 start, but this hook's got meat on  
 it. There's money out there, so reel  
 it in.

They throw back the rest of what's in their glasses. Wells  
 leans over and whispers to Bobby Burns.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
 This stock's gonna start cooking. You  
 sell a little here and there. Don't  
 wait. Think rainy day, Bobby boy.

**EXT. DREAM RANCH LAND - DUSK**

The car doors are open, a great SONG plays on the radio. Wells  
 and Kay slow dance in the field as a glorious sunset fades.

And PULLING BACK to find a BILLBOARD ON STILTS showing a "dream house." As Kay and Wells slowly turn in the distance and the music is gently blown away across the fields.

**INT. THREE GREENHORNS BAR - NIGHT**

Wells and Kay dancing in that way happy couples do, almost like they're one person, her head melting against his chest.

BURNS (O.S.)

Kenny... this is Walt Kealer. He publishes "The Gold Digger."

KEALER

We reach a half a million readers and they'd all love to know what you got cooking over there in Indonesia. You have a minute, I'll buy you a drink.

Kealer, a serious guy, and Burns both look at Kay.

KAY

(almost a whisper)  
No one dances like you.  
(to the world)  
He's all yours, Walt.

WELLS

Hell, I read the Gold Digger. Step over to my office, Walt.

Wells signals for two drinks, leads Kealer to the booth.

KEALER

They're saying you bring this in, you'll get the Golden Pickaxe. What do you say about that?

WELLS

I say we probably just jinxed it.

KEALER

How many ounces you guessing?

WELLS

Millions of ounces, Walt. Millions.

Kealer whistles. Makes a note.

KEALER  
Placer mining?

WELLS  
Hard rock. It ain't amateur hour.

KEALER  
How's the infrastructure?

WELLS

Building it from the ground up.

Wells sees Kay at the bar flirting/teasing with two regulars. Queen of the runway. He loves this.

AT THE BAR

Kay waits for Roy to mix fresh drinks.

ROY

(nodding at Wells)

Seems like someone's ship is finally coming in.

KAY

Everyone's, Roy.

(so proud)

He makes shit happen. He really does.

A customer sidles up and wraps a big arm around. Kay flashes some wattage --

KAY (CONT'D)

JD, where you been hidin' yourself?

BACK WITH WELLS --

KEALER

On a different tack, what do you think your dad would say if he could see you right now?

WELLS

The last card you turn over is the one that matters.

**INT. COLEMAN & MEAD CAPITAL GROUP - CLIVE'S OFFICE - DAY**

CLIVE Coleman, 70's, flanked by a now-deferential Andrews and Stanton, opposite Wells.

CLIVE

Kenny, your father and I started out together in this business. Hell, he put me in the business, but I don't have to tell you that.

WELLS

Dad always spoke well of you, Clive.

CLIVE

One of the best men I ever knew.



The mention of his father in this context makes Wells proud.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

You've gone from 4 to 23 cents on the first assay result. And you've pulled two more that confirmed those findings?

WELLS

Three more.

CLIVE

*Three more...* I'd like to underwrite a private placement of Washoe stock. I believe we can raise between eight and ten million dollars.

WELLS

Capital's definitely top of the agenda right now.

CLIVE

A lot of folks will want to make this deal, but we've got history and I hope you know you can trust me. I only wish you'd brought it to me sooner. I could have helped you from the get-go.

Wells' gaze now slides to Stanton, a deer in headlights. Wells pushes his coffee mug across the table.

WELLS

Top that off for me, will you?

Stanton rises and exits with Wells's mug. WE FOLLOW HIM --

**INT. COLEMAN & MEAD CAPITAL GROUP - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Stanton walks to the kitchenette. A COWORKER looks at him like a condemned man. Hear LAUGHTER from the conference room. He pours the coffee, takes a deep breath, and heads back.

**INT. COLEMAN & MEAD CAPITAL GROUP - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Stanton comes back in to find the group on their feet, Wells shaking hands with Clive Coleman.

CLIVE

Stanton. Mr. Wells has agreed to give us his business. On one condition.

Stanton blanches. Here it comes. Wells is stone-faced.

WELLS

I want you to personally handle my account. I need you to be available to me 24-7 and 365.

Stanton is speechless for just a moment, but finds his voice.

STANTON

Absolutely. Yes. Thank you.

Clive slaps the stunned Stanton on the shoulder.

CLIVE

Congratulations. Seems you made quite an impression.

A look between Wells and Stanton, a look of understanding. Stanton is grateful, but also knows that Wells owns him.

WELLS

It's gonna be a wild-ass ride. You ready for that?

STANTON

Yes, sir.

WELLS

Then what are we standing here for?  
Let's go make some money.

SEQUENCE --

-- THE WASHOE SITE -- the noise is staggering as ACOSTA supervises more core drilling. FOUR DRILLS now working, CONVERGING as they MAP THE CONTOURS of the vein.

-- THE ASSAY LAB -- a Washoe sack is cut open, the crushed rock core sample is poured onto an industrial scale.

-- THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR -- Wells, Bobby Burns and the guys work the phones. Kay brings Wells another Seagrams. He gives her a smile, never missing a beat of his pitch.

-- STOCK TICKER -- Washoe climbs...\$2.75...\$3.10...\$4.87...

ACOSTA (V.O.)

Kenny. You check the last report?

WELLS (V.O.)

I'm looking at it now... Holy shit...  
HOLY SHIT!

-- VIEW THROUGH A MICROSCOPE -- and there it is, scattered among the base rock -- GOLD! Flecks of it, but there's something preternatural about the way it glitters, and at this magnification, it is mesmerizing.

ACOSTA (V.O.)

Holy shit is right, my friend.

WELLS (V.O.)

Whooooow!!!

**INT./EXT. NEW WASHOE OFFICES MONTAGE - DAY**

-- A RENO OFFICE BUILDING catching morning sun. WASHOE MINING PLAQUE slides into the lobby list of tenants. REVERSE to WELLS watching, THE BOYS behind holding boxes of stuff.

-- ELEVATORS OPEN. WASHOE SIGN FIRST THING YOU SEE. The boys all swoop in and fan out and get to work.

-- TWELVE PACKS go in the fridge. Folding tables opened. Phones pulled out of boxes, wires snakes across the floor.

-- A FAX MACHINE begins slowly ticking out a fax: *WASHOE TEAM HEADED BY GEOLOGIST MIKE ACOSTA...*

-- BOOZE BOTTLES ONTO GLASS SHELVES... and we're in Wells's corner office. He and Kay overseeing something. Whip to a STUFFED ELK, evidence of the Greenhorns, now on the wall.

WELLS

Damn nice of Roy to loan us that Elk.

She pushes him backwards by his chest until he's sitting new desk chair. She straddles him. Corner windows. View of Reno.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Kay, do you want to work here? Quit all those other jobs?

She looks at him.

KAY

You be the prospector, Mr. Wells. I'll be the barmaid who got swept off her feet.

He spins his chair. Around and around they go --

WELLS

I love you, Kay.

KAY

You better.

-- CAMERA RACES ACROSS THE FLOOR TO FIND THE FAX IS FINISHED. CONNIE TEARS IT OFF AND READS IT: "UPDATES ESTIMATE ON *INDONESIAN MINE -- KENSANA TO YIELD IN EXCESS OF 10 MILLION OUNCES!*" Connie stares in disbelief.

CONNIE

We're gonna be so fucking rich.

CROSS CUT TO:

-- A COMPUTER SCREEN -- WASHOE'S FINANCIALS displayed in GRAPHS and CHARTS. WASHOE'S SHARE PRICE is listed at \$6.26. Pull back to reveal WE ARE in --

**INT. BROWN, THOMAS - TRADING FLOOR - NEW YORK - DAY**

A young banker, BRIAN WOOLF (30's), scans the info on his screen. He hits print and strides across the trading floor. He barely breaks stride as he passes the PRINTER, grabbing the freshly printed documents and we go...

**INT. BROWN, THOMAS - HOLLIS DRESHER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

50th Floor. Breathtaking Manhattan views. We are suddenly a long, long way from Reno. A file on a desk: *IDEAS FOR HOLLIS.*

INSIDE -- *RECOMMENDATION: WASHOE MINING LTD. STRENGTH OF CONVICTION -- HIGH.*

Woolf stands before HOLLIS DRESHER (50's), impeccable in bespoke, as Dresher looks over the newly printed documents.

DRESHER

Who are they?

WOOLF

Wildcatters basically. This Acosta had some success before. Copper. Got taken over by Freeport Mac. It's all in there.

Dresher takes a moment before looking up from the documents.

DRESHER

I like this. Bring them in. Let's have a closer look.

**INT. WASHOE OFFICES - "CONFERENCE ROOM" - DAY**

A folding table in Kenny's office. Wells is with Bobby Burns, Connie Wright and Stanton... a Washoe board meeting.

STANTON

We're about fifty percent allocated right now. And we want to set aside thirty of the remaining fifty for you boys to unload.

They love this idea. It's low-hanging fruit at this point.

WELLS

Hold that thought. I gotta bleed the beast.

As soon as he's gone, the phone RINGS. They all stare at it.

BOBBY/CONNIE/NEVINS

Kay!!

Through the doorway, passing, without missing a beat --

KAY

(into phone)

Good morning, Washoe Mining. How may I direct your call.

(beat)

Please hold.

She covers the mouthpiece, then realizes they actually have a hold button. Which she presses.

KAY (CONT'D)  
Kenny! You got a call!

Wells emerges from the executive head. They all watch him pick up the receiver. Press the button.

WELLS  
This is Kenny Wells.

**INT. BROWN, THOMAS - DRESHER'S OFFICE - NEW YORK - DAY**

Woolf, looking over the skyline.

WOOLF  
Mr. Wells. This is Bryan Woolf of Brown, Thomas, in New York.

WELLS (V.O.)  
No shit.

**INT. WASHOE OFFICES - DAY**

Wells is listening, starting to fidget nervously.

WELLS  
(into phone)  
Wait. Really? ...  
(covering phone)  
*Bryan Woolf, mineral group at Brown, Thomas in NYC.*

STANTON  
(impressed)  
Brown, Thomas. Wow.

WELLS  
(into phone)  
Okay. Okay... I look forward to it.

Wells slowly hangs up. Everyone looking, *what just happened?*  
Then, Wells calling out --

WELLS (CONT'D)  
Kay, they're flying me out!

Everyone feeling a bit of awe and excitement. Kay's smile is painted there like a barmaid Mona Lisa.

**EXT. THE SEAGRAMS BUILDING - DAY**

The Seagrams building, solid as the booze that built it. And at the base, Wells staring up. As Acosta looks him over.

ACOSTA  
Wells. Wells--!

WELLS  
I truly had no idea there was a Seagrams *building*. Like the Vatican.

ACOSTA  
Wells! Where'd you get the tie?

Wells looks down at the tie.

WELLS  
Airport. Forty bucks. Don't like it?

Acosta snaps off the tag still hanging from the loop.

ACOSTA  
You ready?

WELLS  
Who you talking to, Mikey?

But Wells's eye is caught by some WALL STREET HONCHOS, composed, confident, effortless, heading to a meeting.

ACOSTA  
Wells!

WELLS  
Stop saying my name. Are you ready?

Wells pulls his gaze back. They look at each other. Neither one is ready.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
Shit. We're all just selling used cars.

Wells brushes by confidently. AND WE GO:



INT. BROWN, THOMAS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Woolf, Dresher and others in THE MINERAL GROUP. In this rarefied air, Wells looks out of his depth --

WELLS

We've got a private placement in play right now that's over fifty percent subscribed! And that's off our current assays. The numbers keep coming in good, and they will, sky's the limit on this thing.

Woolf steps up, he's sophisticated, confident.

WOOLF

You don't need to sell us, Mr. Wells. We've done the math and we believe you're sitting on the largest gold find of the decade. At Brown, Thomas we have a history of helping guide people such as yourself through what are sometimes complicated waters.

WELLS

Complicated how?

WOOLF

That delicate balance, Mr. Wells, between being asset rich and cash poor. The important thing is we believe you can go all the way and we want to help you get there.

Wells loves this. Woolf has said exactly the right thing, but you also get the feeling he has done this many times before.

WOOLF (CONT'D)

We'll need big money onboard, of course, investment banks, mutual fund managers, pension fund administrators. We have the team and the relationships to introduce you to this world.

WELLS

We've done all right up to now.

WOOLF

There is no doubt about that.

He smiles.

WOOLF (CONT'D)

May I speak plainly, Mr. Wells?

Wells looks at Acosta, then back to Woolf.

WELLS

That's the only way to speak, Bryan.

WOOLF

Our clients will want to see a serious plan to turn lab results in a volatile region into an investment we can all stake our reputations on.

WELLS

That's not gonna be a problem --

WOOLF

It's not a problem, per se, but there remains the fact that neither of you have taken a find of this magnitude all the way through production.

WELLS

Now wait a minute. We found it. We can dig it up. It's not that complicated.

WOOLF

(choosing words carefully)  
Actually, historically, what we've found is it can be quite complicated and we'd like to help formulate how you present the operations side.

Suddenly Wells is beginning to feel a little pushed.

WELLS

What does that even mean? What's he saying?

WOOLF

I'd like you both to consider bringing on a strategic partner.

Wells is suddenly wary. And we see how small town he really is. He lifts Woolf's business card --

WELLS

(reads)  
*Managing Director of Substrate Minerals, Metals, Oil, and Gas.* I don't even know what that is.

(MORE)

WELLS (CONT'D)

Have any of you ever set one of your hand-made loafers down in a hole on the side of a mountain? Washoe has history.

WOOLF

We've done a fairly thorough analysis of Washoe, Mr. Wells. And we believe you need some *strategic* help.

WELLS

It's a new day. And Indo is goddamn different.

(bangs table)

I know how to bring this baby in!

Acosta observes Wells for a moment. We think Acosta is going to judge him, pile on... instead:

ACOSTA

Wells came and found me. I was at a low point, I'll admit. It happens in this business. Ups and downs. He backed me with his last cent. More than that he risked his life. Almost lost it, too. And now we have the bull by its horns.

WELLS

A big-ass bull!

ACOSTA

I've worked with the best and I can tell you Kenny Wells is up there with them. Which must count for something.

A declaration of friendship, and faith. This means the world to Wells.

WOOLF

It does, Mr. Acosta. We're not by any stretch of the imagination suggesting that anyone take a backseat, we're simply asking you to be open to *strategic* alliances.

WELLS

No fucking way.

That's that. Acosta goes to the window. He looks out.

ACOSTA

There's something about finding gold -- it's difficult to put into words -- the taste of it on your tongue, gritty and electric, the feel of it between your fingers. It's like a drug. It hooks you. It's what you're missing here in the city; so you must understand why we feel a bit possessive over it.

(beat)

So I have proposal: put together your *institutional* players, the guys who rep the big money, whomever needs to kick the tires on this thing... And we'll take them on a little trip up the river...

Now Wells is looking at Acosta, starting to go with it --

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

You know what river that is?

WELLS

The only river that matters -- the  
KENSANA --!

ACOSTA

And they can decide for themselves if  
we're ready to scale this thing up.

CUT TO:

**INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - NIGHT**

JENNINGS

So it was Acosta who proposed the  
junktet to Kensana? Or did you cook  
that up together?

Wells looking at Jennings.

WELLS

You just don't get it. We weren't  
"cooking up" anything.

(MORE)

WELLS (CONT'D)

I was getting hit from all sides by people wanting in -- Hart Hubbard, my neighbor, *lawn care professional*, usually worried about Kay's mulberry over his back fence, only now he's dropping mining terms, "Kenny, I hear the *grade purity* at Kensana is quite high. How is the core frequency?" Hart Hubbard. He cuts grass for a living.

JENNINGS

We've interviewed Mr. Hubbard.

Wells looks at Jennings and Banks and Levine. All dressed up in their middle-class rectitude.

WELLS

I'm just saying I wasn't feeling like I had to *cook up* anything.

JENNINGS

So it was Acosta who proposed the banker junket?

WELLS

(beat)

Yes.

(can't help himself)

And it was a genius move. I don't exactly cut the right figure in a Wall Street boardroom. They didn't like my suit or the smell of my whiskey. And let's be clear: we were in a fight, a fight for control. With that one move Mike shifted the balance of power.

CUT TO:

**INT. JAKARTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY**

A group of BANKERS blinking in blinding tropical sunlight as they follow Wells out of the terminal.

WELLS (V.O.)

They were coming to our house and that was a whole new ball game.

OWENS (40), BINKERT and JACKSON (30's). These are men set free from the concrete jungle, ready for a taste of the real thing. They all pull wheeled carry-ons, some dressed in the latest "in" safari-wear from Ralph Lauren.

They're met by Mike Acosta, in full bush gear. Suddenly the Bankers' outfits look foolishly ersatz.

WELLS  
Gentlemen, this is Mike Acosta.

ACOSTA  
Anyone who wants to turn back, this is  
your last chance.

They all look at him, *"Is he fucking kidding?..."*

WELLS  
He's messin' with you, come on.

A few of the Bankers sigh, some aren't sure.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
Welcome to Indo, boys.

**EXT. KENSANA RIVER - DAY**

The front of a canoe breaks the plane, followed by Owens, Binkert, Jackson... taking it all in. It's one of those perfect tropical days -- a balmy breeze, glorious sunshine and billowing clouds hanging in an impossibly blue sky.

They pass TRIBESMEN panning along the bank.

WELLS  
They've been panning this river for  
five thousand years. That's how it  
got its name... *Kensana*. It means --

He shoots a look to Acosta, making the Bankers wait for it...

ACOSTA  
River of gold.

OWENS  
That's not real?

A smile between Wells and Acosta -- this is the show and they're loving it. And RISING UP the river is indeed gold colored, snaking through hills of green.

**EXT. WASHOE SITE - DAY**

-- A BULLDOZER CLEARS A SECTION OF JUNGLE -- a CREW works a DRILL RIG. Acosta shouts over the din, machete in his hand.

ACOSTA  
When we got the hit, we stepped out in  
a radiating pattern...We'll keep going  
until we have the complete picture of  
(MORE)



ACOSTA (CONT'D)  
 the underlying geology-- how long, how wide, how deep. It's this mapping that gives us the real sense of what we're sitting on.

The men look down at the ground. It's just ground. But their imaginations are working. Acosta points all around them.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)  
 It's everywhere.

**INT. WASHOE SITE - CORE SHED - DAY**

Acosta leads the group into the CORE SHED. Throughout the building, lying in wooden cradles, are the CORE SAMPLES -- six foot long cylinders of rock and earth.

ACOSTA  
 Our typical drill depth is between three and five hundred feet. We pull out our core samples in six foot segments, six inches in diameter packed solid with rock and soil.

He moves to a massive workbench covered with crushed rock.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)  
 This building is guarded 24/7 and kept under lock and key.

Acosta pulls the leather thong around his neck from his shirt, see a huge GOLD NUGGET and a key --

ACOSTA (CONT'D)  
 This is the key.

With that, he hoists up a diamond blade CIRCULAR SAW and it hums to life. He brings the blade down on the rock, OBLITERATING the rock, and our hearing, as it cuts a three-foot section of core. Again, he shouts over the noise --

ACOSTA (CONT'D)  
 The cores are cut into sections and then crushed!

He heaves the cut section into a CRUSHER which AUTOMATICALLY ACTIVATES the mechanism -- adding insult to aural injury.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)  
 The pulverized cores are then bagged and sealed!

He produces a WAX-SEALED CANVAS SACK as an example. Starts to heave it toward the bankers who dance out of the way --

**EXT. KENSANA VILLAGE - DOCKS - DAY**

The SAME SACK lands on a freighter canoe with other sacks. All labeled and sealed, and under GUARD.

ACOSTA

Under guard, the samples are sent down river to independent labs in Kalimantan. If a seal is broken or damaged in any way, the lab, by law, has to discard the entire sample.

(beat)

The bottom line is every safeguard has been put in place to assure the security of the process.

The Bankers nod, impressed. But that's not really what they came all this way for. They're not quite sold.

WELLS

Diamond tipped saw blades, rock crushers and core samples ripped from the guts of the earth... It all sounds great, but that's not what you came to see. Am I wrong?

JACKSON

No, you're not.

Wells and Acosta exchange a knowing look.

WELLS

You boys want to see some gold?

**EXT. KENSANA RIVER - TRIBUTARY - AFTERNOON**

Late afternoon sun filters through the canopy. This could be Eden. A few of the bankers, knee deep, pan the rocky bottom.

BINKERT

No one's gonna believe this shit.

Owens swats at a bug. He looks more annoyed than impressed.

OWENS

So, what do you think?

BINKERT

Not sure. What about you?

OWENS

Acosta seems to know what he's talking about but, I don't know...

Jackson, working the river a few yards away, calls out!

JACKSON

Hey, come here - check it out!

Acosta heads out to him. Wells gestures to the pan.

WELLS

Looks like it might be the stuff.

Acosta holds the pan of mud up to the light -- glimmers of gold are seen in the fading sun.

WELLS (CONT'D)

What do you think?

ACOSTA

Give me a minute.

The Bankers all watch, rapt -- Acosta takes the pan and moves back to the river bank, dumps the mud into a waiting SLURRY. He takes a bucket of river water and starts pouring the water SLOWLY over the mud. Then, right before their very eyes...

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

Keep your eyes peeled...

Like magic...

A HUGE GOLD NUGGET appears! Acosta holds it up into the light, reveling in its sparkling quality.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

(tosses it to Jackson)

A few more like that and you can pave Wall Street.

The Bankers are fucking speechless. Wells looks at the converted Owens...

WELLS (V.O.)

Pay dirt.

CUT TO:

**INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - NIGHT**

Jennings, jacket off, sleeves rolled up, paces. Wells rattles the ice cubes in his empty glass.

WELLS

Now, I honestly don't know if that was just a stroke of luck or an amazing piece of showmanship or both. But when Jackson pulled that nugget out...

CUT TO:

**INT. JAKARTA HOSTESS BAR - NIGHT**

INDONESIAN GIRLS dance, somehow more naked than naked. It's Wells, Acosta and the Bankers -- everyone getting loaded.

WELLS (V.O)

...We had 'em.

Acosta shouts out to the BARTENDER in Bahasa. MUSIC UP. Girls dancing together. Acosta passing drinks to the bankers...

ACOSTA

It's called a convex dome. What every geologist dreams of finding and that's what I think we've got at Kensana. Basically, it's a volcano that's collapsed in on itself, forming an inverted shell...

Wells cups his hands.

WELLS

...or a bowl full of all the stuff we're looking for.

BINKERT

How much "stuff" you think we're talking about?

Acosta smiles, throws back his drink and shouts out to a waitress, holding up his empty glass, signalling for drinks.

ACOSTA

Our current assays point to a deposit of anywhere from ten to thirty-five million ounces. When we find the dome, and we will find it, I wouldn't be surprised if we prove eighty to one hundred million ounces...

Jackson still has the presence of mind to do some calculations on his calculator. He looks at the number.

JACKSON

...Is that right?

He redoes the calculations. They all wait. He looks again.

JACKSON (CONT'D)  
You're talking over thirty billion  
dollars.

They all freeze. This is bigger than anyone imagined. Even Wells suddenly has the queasy look of a man starting to look at the drop on a roller coaster. He raises his glass.

WELLS  
May we all be in heaven an hour before  
the IRS knows we're dead.

They laugh and, right on cue, out come the girls. Two for each Banker. As one of the girls runs her fingers through Jackson's hair, her breasts pressing against his face, he turns to Owens...

JACKSON  
The business trips are going to be  
outstanding.

OWENS  
Hell of a write-off.

Wells and Acosta stand off together, watching as the magic takes hold --

WELLS  
Not a bad day.

Acosta smiles. And as the party rages, WE GO:

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. AMERICAN HOME - DAY**

Bright sun. As a car drives by and pulls into a sparsely crowded parking lot, hear a phone STARTING TO RING from the perspective of the caller. Then hear --

KAY (O.S.)  
Hello?

INT. JAKARTA PALACE HOTEL - WELLS'S SUITE - DAWN

WELLS with a phone in one hand, drink in the other.

WELLS

What are you doing, baby? It's me.  
From halfway around the world.

KAY (V.O.)

Kenny!

(to someone OS)

It's Kenny --

(to Wells)

I was just telling some people the  
story of how we met.

(continuing the story)

*I'd run off from home, didn't finish  
high school--I had a couple teachers  
who were real dicks--anyway, I was  
working for a magician --*

Wells is twenty floors up, smiling at the dazzling fairy  
lights of nighttime Jakarta.

WELLS

Not-So-Amazing Cecil --

KAY (V.O.)

Cec had this one trick, his only  
trick. Kenny came...

(to Wells)

*How many shows in a row, Kenny --?*

Wells looks inside the suite where a last dancer sways in  
front of Acosta. The bankers have gone to bed.

WELLS

Twenty --

KAY (V.O.)

*Twenty shows in a row. And the trick  
was?*

WELLS/KAY SIMUL

I wanted your number, baby/He wanted  
my number --

Hear OS LAUGHTER through the phone.

WELLS

I love that story.

INTERCUT:

**INT. AMERICAN HOME - DAY**

Kay on a white phone in the La-Z-Boy area. A few coworkers are chuckling, heading back to their respective areas.

KAY

How's it going over there?

WELLS

They're all in, baby. Everything we've been waiting for. Everything --!

KAY

Wait. Kenny... Really? *Really* really?

Wells looks at the lights, which seem to dance with destiny.

WELLS

I'm sending a plane for you, baby. A chariot like you deserve -- private jet -- to meet me in New York City... Blue skies...

(off her pause)

Did you hear me? Kay?

Kay holding the phone... Sees a MANAGER, CARL, signalling her.

KAY

I did...

She suddenly just turns away and JUMPS FOR JOY --

WIDE IN THE STORE: Kay airborne --! Screaming with happiness.

WOOLF (V.O.)

...Brown, Thomas, in association with Coleman and Mead Capital Group, are proud to announce the initial public offering of Class-A common stock...

**INT. BROWN, THOMAS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Woolf is holding the "Wall Street Journal," reading the full page "Tombstone" ad to Dresher and the room full of associates and enthralled board members.

WOOLF

And the listing of Washoe Mining on *the New York Stock Exchange!*

He holds the paper up with a smile. The boardroom ERUPTS!

**EXT. THE WALDORF-ASTORIA - NIGHT**

A town car pulls up. A DOORMAN opens the door. Kay looks country and momentarily lost.

DOORMAN

Welcome to the Waldorf-Astoria, Ma'am.



Kay looks country and lost.

**INT. THE WALDORF-ASTORIA - VARIOUS - NIGHT**

The lobby is majestic. Worldly patrons. The Vanderbilt room. The hallway a dizzying assortment of patterns. The BELLMAN opens the door of a suite. Her head is spinning.

**INT. THE WALDORF-ASTORIA - WELLS'S SUITE - NIGHT**

KAY

Kenny?

Yellow roses lead the way, the main room of the suite filled with hundreds.

KAY (CONT'D)

...Are you here?

She heads into the bedroom and finds Wells nearly camouflaged.

WELLS

I wanted to surprise you... Are you surprised? It's your favorite flower, right?

She takes in the huge suite, the Chrysler Building out the window lit up like it's marking the center of the earth.

WELLS (CONT'D)

You look beautiful.

KAY

Through thick and fuckin' thin...  
Thick ain't so bad, Kenny Wells.

He takes her in his arms, rolling across the huge bed.

KAY (CONT'D)

Are these the softest sheets you ever felt?

WELLS

Let's get under 'em.

And we begin to HEAR SHOUTING, a CRAZY ENERGY, WHICH TAKES US:

INT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - HALLWAY - MORNING

Wells and Kay exit the elevator and see Acosta waiting.

WELLS

My two favorite people in the world.  
Kay, Mike. Mike, Kay.

KAY

(re: Wells)

You know this one stole my watch to go  
meet you?

WELLS

That's my girl.

ACOSTA

(laughing, to Kay)

Actually he omitted that detail.

(to Wells)

Kenny--?

KAY

I'm just teasing --

WELLS

She's teasing --

KAY/WELLS/ACOSTA

No, she's not --

KAY

It's really good to meet you, Mike.

They cross down the hall to find

WELLS

Bryan, Kay. Hollis, Kay. My man,  
Stanton you know. Sweats as much as I  
do...

And then all are whisked away by NYSE OFFICIALS. And we begin  
to hear NOISE, like a sporting event is happening beside them.

ACOSTA

(to Kay)

You must be proud of him.

KAY

Never doubted for a second.

They both smile, knowing just how far they've come to get here... Then a door opens and they pass INTO A VAST SPACE of light and air:

**INT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - TRADING FLOOR - CONTINUOUS**

ON THE FLOOR looking up at the balcony where suddenly WELLS and KAY and ACOSTA appear amongst the bankers and OTHER DIGNITARIES. Suddenly the room is QUIET in a HELD BREATH.

As we ZOOM up toward Wells and Acosta. Wells throws his arm around Acosta as THEY RING THE OPENING BELL!...  
*DING!DING!DING!DING!*

WELLS  
(to Kay)  
I'm ringing the bell, baby!

KAY  
I'm so fucking proud of you, baby. So fucking proud of you.

As we hear the ROOM ERUPT, we start pulling back --

**INT. GREENHORNS - DAY**

PULLING RIGHT OUT OF THE BAR TV: CNN coverage of the boys ringing the bell at the New York Stock Exchange.

Bobby, Connie, Scotty, Roy, all the regulars, maybe have stayed up all night to celebrate with Kenny.

And CELEBRATE THEY DO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

-- A STOCK TICKER -- WASHOE IS OFF TO THE RACES --  
\$28.00...\$35.00...

-- THE CNBC CRAWL -- \$67.00... Behind the anchor, the Washoe logo with the heading: "*Washoe On The Move.*"

-- THE TRADING FLOOR -- as purchase slips fall to the floor like confetti. We GO TIGHT ON ONE OF THE SLIPS as it slowly drifts in air -- "BUY: TRT @ \$110.00"

WELLS (V.O)  
In a single trading day we went from twenty-three bucks to over a hundred and ten. It was unbelievable.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

WELLS (V.O) (CONT'D)

The way I see it, what banks do, who the hell knows, but what made this country is not tight-asses in suits, no offense, taking the safe way down, it's guys like Mike and me, who jump.

-- TALL BUILDINGS in Mid-Town. Black car. Doors opening. Kay and Kenny exit, Kay feeling great in a new dress, shoes.

**INT. FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - BAR ROOM - NIGHT**

Waiters with trays of champagne. Binkert, Owens and Jackson swirling around Acosta and Wells and Kay.

Then Woolf is pulling Wells and Acosta away.

WOOLF

Kenny, Mike, this guy may sit on your board... if you're very lucky.

Kenny Wells and Mike Acosta shaking hands with the potential board member. As Kay is quietly edged out of the circle.

DRESHER

Kenny, come say hi to the richest guy  
in Delaware. And best looking.

Kenny meets the richest, best-looking guy in Delaware. As we see a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN openly watching Wells and Acosta.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Everyone has gathered. Woolf leads a toast:

WOOLF

To a very good day... To Kenny Wells  
and to Mike Acosta.

WELLS

To the mother lode!

And there's that woman again. In his sight line. Light in her eyes. Wells makes a show of downing his glass in one gulp --

WELLS (CONT'D)

Fill 'er up and keep it flowin'.

JACKSON

Kenny, Mike, try this on for size.

Jackson punches figures into his ever-present calculator.

WELLS

(to Jackson's wife)  
He sleep with that thing, or what?

JACKSON'S WIFE

He just sets it on vibrate and we're  
both happy.

JACKSON

As of the closing bell this is what  
you're both worth, on paper anyway.

And then Wells is looking at the figure, and even he is stunned. Time slows and the world goes silent, like he's slipped into a dream.

And in this dream his heartbeat thuds, and bankers laugh; the beautiful woman throws a seductive glance. And Acosta's voice from far, far away:

ACOSTA

*A lot of zeros, my friend.*

A crystal bell is tolling... for dinner. Everyone moves.

DRESHER

It takes them a full week to do their  
rotisserie duck.

Kay watches Kenny, surrounded by admirers, head for the other room. He forgets to look for her.

**INT. FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - POOL ROOM - DUSK**

As guests pour into the famous *POOL ROOM* we find Kay. She pauses, openly taking it all in as others pass. She clutches her champagne flute like a wand.

**INT. FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Camera sweeps across the now-candlelit room, murmur of intimate conversations and laughter. It's that time after dinner before desert when people start table hopping. We find Kay with an empty seat beside her. She glances up, watching Kenny work the room.

WELLS

...It's all gambling. Risk. If I really wanted to make money, I'd stay home on Sunday and bet pro-football.

We realize the beautiful woman is seated at the same table where Wells is now holding court.

WELLS (CONT'D)

...*Stallone on the sidelines in Philly, Eagles won't cover--!*

Kay's wine glass is refilled. She glances at Acosta who smiles mysteriously.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Miami won't cover in San Fran. Hell, the game starts at midnight for them.

The woman catches his eye, holding out a hand. He gives her a smoke and lights it.

RACHEL

Thank you. Rachel Hill.

Their eyes connect.



WELLS

What brings you out, Rachel?

RACHEL

I'm in *Investor Relations*. At Brown Thomas. *On the team*.

There's an empty seat across from her. He considers this. She opens her hand in a gesture that says, please.

WELLS

Does that mean you relate to investors?

RACHEL

Something like that.

Wells laughs. And Rachel laughs with him. Across the room Kay downs her drink. She watches Wells say something and laugh again. She doesn't want to look at the way Rachel Hill smokes, but she can't help it.

WELLS

Rocks of gold as big as your knuckle  
just sloshing along in the river --

KAY  
Hello, I'm Kay.

We realize instantly Kay is sort of drunk and emotional.

RACHEL  
Hello, Kay.

WELLS  
This is Kay, say hello to Rachel.

KAY  
I just did.

WELLS  
Rachel works at Brown Thomas. She's on  
*the team.*

KAY  
I'm going to the washroom. Then I want  
to leave.

Wells is supposed to say, "I'll go with you," but he doesn't. As Kay moves off, Wells catches Acosta's eyes on him, Acosta's look asking: "*What the hell are you doing?*" But Wells's attention is drawn back to Rachel as...

UNDER THE TABLE

Rachel's sexy shoe drops from her sexy stocking foot, which now moves it's way under the cuff of Wells's pants leg.

She considers him coolly. Off his expression, WE GO...

**INT. FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - LADIES'S RESTROOM - NIGHT**

Kay looks into the mirror, trying to keep it together.

Two UPPER EAST SIDE WOMEN enter, waiting for the mirror. The women wait. Kay looks at herself in the mirror and WE GO...

**INT. FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Rachel and Wells still talking. Wells all swept up with the wine and newfound celebrity.

RACHEL  
To go out into the wilderness and  
discover something that everybody  
wants... how does that feel?

They consider each other. Rachel's foot is doing something else under the table. In the twinkling room no one notices.

WELLS  
Better than a kick in the ass.

**INT. FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - BAR - NIGHT**

As Kay makes her way up the stairs, she overhears:

WOOLF (O.S.)  
It's like a drunk raccoon found the  
Hope Diamond. You don't want to get  
too close, but you don't want to let  
it get away either.

Laughter. It's Woolf at the bar talking to a banker, LEWIS  
HORNE. Kay pauses a moment to listen.

HORNE

It's *your* raccoon, Bryan. Do you let  
it run a multi-billion dollar company.

WOOLF

And lose you as a client?

Woolf is shaking his head as Kay sidles up.

KAY

Who wants to buy a girl a drink?

Woolf covers:

WOOLF

Kay, meet Lewis Horne!

KAY

(to the bartender)

Three double shots of Jack.

(to Horne)

*Lewis*, I like that name, *Lewis*.

She's flirtatious. Her cleavage like the prow of a ship. The  
men share a glance: did she overhear? She raises her glass.  
They raise theirs.

KAY (CONT'D)

I propose a toast--

HORNE/WOOLF

Here, here --

KAY

To a small creature...often taken for  
granted or considered a nuisance just  
because of its survival skills.

She heard.

KAY (CONT'D)

(fun fact)

Their babies are called "*kits*."

(beat)

They are intelligent, fierce fighters,  
and omnivorous. They eat anything.  
Just like humans.

WOOLF

Kay--

KAY

And they're cute even when they're  
waking you up 'cause they got the lid  
off your garbage can.

(beat)

To the raccoon.

She downs her shot. Smiles sweetly, leaves them there. Horne  
downs his shot and watches her go, impressed and leering both.

HORNE

Do raccoons mate for life?

**INT. FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

As Kay approaches the table, she sees Rachel and Wells,  
heating up. He turns, sheepishly. Kay picks up her bag.

KAY

Stay if you want. I'm going.

WELLS

Come on, babe, one more drink.

Kay heads for the door. Wells glances back to Rachel's half-  
smile, but suddenly Acosta is at Wells's side, standing over  
him.

ACOSTA

What are you doing?

WELLS

What do you mean? Mike, Rachel --!

ACOSTA

Time to go, pal.

INT. THE WALDORF-ASTORIA - WELLS'S SUITE - NIGHT

Kay walks in, Wells does his best to keep up with her. They both make drinks right away.

KAY

...I don't want to talk about it.

WELLS

I wasn't doing anything.

KAY

I don't want to talk about it.

WELLS

Okay, well maybe I should've banged her right there on the table!

KAY

You're too drunk to get it up anyway.

WELLS

I'll take that challenge.

He tries to make a move. She shrugs away.

KAY

I don't care about you flirting with Miss Pneumatic '88. Think I haven't seen it before?

WELLS

Wait, her tits aren't that big. They're not real?

KAY

None of this is real.

WELLS

Kay --

KAY

And you know what, none of it ever was real. We drive up to look at that dream ranch and it's so nice, Kenny, but on the way we pass through where? What did we go right through?

He knows.

KAY (CONT'D)

*Maggie's Creek*. Where your great-grandad staked a claim.

(MORE)

KAY (CONT'D)

And it's a ghost town. Which is  
exactly what this place feels like to  
me.

WELLS

I knew if I brought you along, you'd  
work overtime to screw it up for me.

KAY

You have never needed any help in that  
department.

And she leaves the room. And he goes after her.



**IN THE BEDROOM**

Kay sits on the bed, taking off her new shoes. Wells appears in the doorway. Watches her a moment.

WELLS

You know what your problem is, Kay --?

KAY

No, why don't you tell me --

WELLS

You have no vision. It's like your whole world is this big --

Wells holds up two fingers an inch apart --

WELLS (CONT'D)

At one end is your kitchen sink and the other end is the goddamn parking lot of a furniture store.

That hurt, actually.

KAY

You mean an actual job that would support a person in a place they live. You mean that *vision*. You know what, fuck you!

WELLS

Fuck you!

Now she starts packing her things, which really starts to piss him off, and every item she drops in her bag urges him to say more that he'll regret later.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Yeah, run back to your crappy little life.

KAY

I like my crappy little life. It's mine--

WELLS

All you've ever wanted was a broken bird--

KAY

What the fuck are you even talking about--?

WELLS

Oh, you said the right things, but in your heart you didn't believe them. You didn't believe in me. You like me losing. It's comfortable.

KAY

These people are using you. They don't care about you. And they certainly don't believe in you.

She takes her old clothes into the bathroom. Door shuts.

Door opens. Herself again. Heading for the door.

WELLS

You just can't let me have the win.  
You don't have it in you.

She passes by him without a look

WELLS (CONT'D)

Did it ever occur to you that I know  
what I'm doing?

She looks at him, really looks at him.

KAY

I hope you do.

At the door of the suite, she turns.

KAY (CONT'D)

Where I'm from, if something seems too  
good to be true, it usually is.

(beat)

I just never thought that applied to  
us.

The door shuts automatically behind her. On the other side  
find Wells staring at the door. Almost goes after her.

WELLS

I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING!

AT THE BAR -- Angry self-righteous cubes in the glass.

AT THE WINDOW -- the chasms of the city late at night --

A GHOST TOWN.

CUT TO:

**INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - NIGHT**

More whiskey in a glass. Wells feeling no pain now either, or maybe the same pain masked in the same way.

JENNINGS

What did you do next, Wells?

WELLS

What'd I do? What'd I do?

(beat)

I rode it. And what a ride, Jennings.

What a ride...

SMASH TO:

**EXT. HELICOPTER - FLYING - LONG ISLAND - GOLDEN HOUR**

The beaches of the south fork glow pink as a CHOPPER races away from the setting sun.

**EXT. DUNE ROAD LANDING PAD - GOLDEN HOUR**

The landing pad on Dune Road, an X amidst sea grass and water. As a chopper banks in over the Shinnecock Bay. Across the road Owens and Binkert, dressed for monied summer fun, wait in a mint VW Thing. Wells exits, ducking low. He crosses the road.

**INT. VW THING - DAY**

Wells hops in the car. They pass him a six-pack as Owens pulls out of the beach parking lot.

BINKERT

You know how you found the River of Gold?

WELLS

Yeah.

OWENS

Well, it turns out, it flows to right here.

The car toodles off down the sandy lane past massive houses set back in the dunes.

**EXT. DUNE ROAD BEACH PAD - DAY**

Wells and Dresher with THOMAS CRANEPOOL, 50's, one of those men who exude permanence.

CRANEPOOL

How's it feel, Mr. Wells, to be a Rock Star?

WELLS

Like I should be banging groupies, not chatting up bankers.

CRANEPOOL

Oh, I imagine we can find a few of those around here somewhere.

DRESHER

Be nice, Wells. This is our host, Thomas Cranepool.

WELLS

I'm making a lot of these rich fucks a lot richer, so I'm thinking I got a little leeway.

As Wells saunters away, Cranepool smiles easily.

CRANEPOOL

Mi casa es su casa.  
(to Dresher)  
I hope he enjoys himself.

DRESHER

I don't think you have anything to worry about in that regard.

**OMITTED****EXT. DUNE ROAD BEACH PAD - POOLSIDE BAR - LATER**

The sun has dropped behind the trees. Wells gets the bartender's attention again.

BARTENDER  
Seagrams on the rocks?

RACHEL (O.S.)  
And I'll have the same.

Wells recognizes that voice. It's RACHEL.

WELLS  
You sure you want to do that?

She signals the bartender: line it up, buddy.

RACHEL  
It reminds me of my childhood.  
(smiles)  
So how is everything in the very  
enchanted world of Kenny Wells?

WELLS  
I feel like a million bucks only a few  
hundred times better.

RACHEL  
That must be a very nice feeling.

WELLS

Looks like a few other people around here feel the same way.

She follows his gaze. Faces of self-assured guests. Face, face, face. In Rachel's eyes, the net-worth of everyone.

RACHEL

...Maybe... Maybe not.

WELLS

Hey, you want to get wet?

RACHEL

That's funny, Kenny.

WELLS

Why is it funny?

She leans in close to him, whispers something in his ear. His expression tells us it was a direct hit.

**EXT. DUNE ROAD BEACH PAD - HOT TUB - NIGHT**

Wells and Rachel are in the hot tub. And she is perfection itself, the kind of complete package used to escape every shit backwater the world over since time began.

WELLS

So... how'd you... uh, end up out here?

RACHEL

Well let's see Kenny there are two answers to that question, short form would be, *I know Tom. Tom is a friend.*

She slides almost imperceptibly closer.

WELLS

I'll bet he is.

RACHEL

Now, now. I stay with his cousin Timmy down the lane. Timmy's really quite a character if you don't know him.

WELLS

I don't know Timmy.

RACHEL

I really don't feel like talking.

She moves closer. He looks at the surface of the water.

WELLS

Help, there's a creature in here with us, an octopus or something.

She leans closer to him, her chest is now against his chest, and her hand still working, slowly, so slowly. She's just above him. And he's looking at her.

RACHEL

Shhh, let's just feel things.

And she moves again and we can tell it feels very good indeed. Suddenly a VOICE from behind --

HANCOCK (O.S.)

Wells? Kenny Wells?

Wells looks up at MARK HANCOCK. A trim, self-assured South African mining mogul, CEO of Newport Holdings.

HANCOCK (CONT'D)

Mark Hancock. Seems I've caught you at a bit of a disadvantage, Mr. Wells.

Wells doesn't skip a beat. He stands, steps out of the tub, completely naked, for all to see. Wells extends his dripping hand, which Hancock, unflappable, accepts with a smile.

WELLS

Good to meet you. This is Rachel.

HANCOCK

I know the lovely Rachel.

Wells wraps a towel.

WELLS

Hancock controls more gold than anyone else on the planet.

HANCOCK

With the possible exception now of Mr. Wells.

Wells takes a moment, finding his smokes, checking out Rachel in water and moonlight.

WELLS

So, this is how it happens?

HANCOCK

This is how it happens.

He lights a cigarette with his gold Dunhill lighter.



**EXT. THE SKYLINE OF MANHATTAN - SUNRISE**

The sun rises through the buildings to the east. We're drifting down the Hudson, hearing the sounds of sex.

Pulling into the corporate chopper as Rachel rides Wells.

RACHEL

I've always wanted to do this.

WELLS

I wish to god it had occurred to me.

The chopper banks, the Statue of Liberty one direction, the twin towers and all of Manhattan the other.

**INT. BROWN, THOMAS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Hancock and his lawyers are seated at one end, Wells's bankers at the other including Dresher and Binkert. No one is speaking, they listen to the rant coming from the next room.

WELLS (O.S.)

This isn't a deal, it's a goddamn rape!

**INT. BROWN, THOMAS - ANTEROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Wells paces like an animal. His personal banker, Stanton, looks on, shocked. Woolf tries to talk him down.

WOOLF

Kenny, listen to me --

WELLS

This is mine! I found it, me and Mike. We were the ones up to our asses in shit and mud and malaria and this asshole offers a minority partnership?!

Woolf stays cool, always reasonable.

WOOLF

Kenny, let's keep perspective here. When someone offers you this amount of money, it's a good day. You may say yes, you may say no, but it's not like anyone's trying to offend you.

WELLS

Well mission goddamn not accomplished.

Stanton steps up for Wells.

STANTON

Bryan, this deal is shit and you know it!

WOOLF

Hancock and Newport Holdings have the expertise and the experience to bring this home. This was always there as a contingency. You know that.

WELLS

No. No. This is where *Washoe Mining* becomes a player. Not *Newport...*

(looking at the papers)

I don't even see our name. You took our name off of it!? You took my name.

WOOLF

But again just taking a step back for a moment, wouldn't it not be terrible to sit back and enjoy your success.

WELLS

*Wouldn't it not be terrible...* What kind of way of talking is that?

*Wouldn't it not be terrible* for me to just bend over and grab my ankles. You think you can buy me out and take my name and just vanish Kenny Wells to the corn field?

Woolf has had enough.

WOOLF

If you hit the pause button for a second and consider without emotion, you'll realize this is the kind of very rare moment where with the stroke of a pen, no one in your family, I'm talking your children's grandchildren, will ever have to worry about money again.

For once, Wells doesn't respond right away. He pats for his cigs. Stanton hands him one. Wells fires up and takes a long drag, and finally looks at Woolf.

WELLS

See these hands? These are my father's hands. I clawed into the guts of the hot earth with these hands. I will bury you with these hands, Brian. Now you go tell that silky sable Hancock he works for Kenny Wells.

**INT. BROWN, THOMAS - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The air has been sucked out of the room.

HANCOCK

You know, I almost respect this  
guy.

Hancock is already reaching for the phone.

CUT TO:

**EXT. WASHOE SITE - DAWN**

Tranquil, beautiful. Only the chickens are awake...

**INT. WASHOE SITE - MAIN TENT - CONTINUOUS**

Acosta at a desk, working with a slide rule planning something cool. As the SOUND of military jeeps shatter the calm.

**EXT. WASHOE SITE - MORNING**

Military jeeps filled with armed SOLDIERS roaring down a freshly cut road toward the site. A soldier steps from a vehicle and begins a slow trek toward Acosta.

CUT TO:

**EXT. WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - RENO - DAY**

Wells's Caddy swings into a prime spot. It's all fixed up now. Fresh paint. He takes a moment to appreciate this turn of events. And WE GO...

**INT. WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

The chaos of a recent move-in, phones on the floor, lots of busy employees. Wells is met almost immediately by Bobby Burns and a few others.

BURNS

Where the hell have you been?! Mike's  
on the phone --

Wells sees the panic in everybody's eyes. Not good.

He sweeps into his office, which looks out on Reno. There's a full bar, the elk head -- a kind of "*You can take the man out of the Greenhorns, but you won't get the Greenhorns out of the man*" declaration.

**EXT. KENSANA SITE - SAME TIME**

ARMED INDONESIAN SOLDIERS herd WASHOE WORKERS out the gate like frightened cattle, forcing them into the backs of trucks.

Acosta is caught up in a wave of workers as they're pushed out of the gate. Acosta speaks on a bulky satellite phone.

ACOSTA

They're locking us out!

**INT. WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - WELLS'S OFFICE - DAY**

Wells stands at his desk, smoking.

WELLS

What? What are you talking about?

ACOSTA

They're taking over the mine. The military's here, the Minister revoked our exploration permits.

A terrifying realization begins to dawn on Wells.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

What happened at your meeting with Hancock?

(yelling)

What happened at the meeting!?

WELLS

They were trying to push us out, Mike.

ACOSTA

Push us out? What do you mean?

WELLS

They even took our name, Mike. Right off everything.

ACOSTA

You bloody moron.

WELLS

They can't revoke the permit! They can't just steal it away from us!

Acosta is livid, screaming as he's herded onto a truck.

ACOSTA

I told you from the beginning: Suharto  
can do whatever he wants!

Wells paces, he knows this could be the end.

WELLS

Oh, God... Oh, my God.

Acosta sees a SOLDIER knock one of the WORKERS to the ground  
with his rifle. Fury in Acosta's face as he rushes over,  
shoves the soldier out of the way.

ACOSTA

Do not touch my men.

The Soldier levels his rifle at Acosta. Acosta stares back.  
Defiant. Acosta helps the worker to his feet.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

(Dayak, subtitles)  
Get to the trucks. Go...

WELLS

Mike - what's going on?...  
(silence from the receiver)  
Mike? Mike?!

Acosta backs away from the Soldier, turns and walks slowly  
back to the phone... He picks it up. Finally --

ACOSTA

We lost the site. You knew who you  
were dealing with. They're killers --  
Hancock first among them.

Wells seems to physically crumble -- he buries his face in his  
hands. Completely at a loss.

WELLS

I'm sorry, Mike. I'm sorry.

**INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - NIGHT**

Wells looks up at Jennings -- it's not easy telling someone  
what a fuck-up you are. He's embarrassed, the pain of the  
moment, the booze, the miles, all fresh on his face.

WELLS

It turned out that, in addition to long-standing ties to Suharto, Newport Holdings has on its Board an ex-President of the United States, who was actually IN one of Suharto's weddings -- a *groomsman*.

(MORE)

WELLS (CONT'D)

So the whole time they were looking me in the eye offering to make my grand-kids rich, they had a backup plan, which was to steal it all away.

JENNINGS

And Acosta had ordered you to sell.

WELLS

Yes... no... he didn't order me. We were winging it, the negotiating I mean, it was sort of agreed upon, the direction, without really talking about it, you know what I mean?

JENNINGS

Did he tell you to take the deal? Yes or no?

WELLS

(reluctant)  
...Yes.

JENNINGS

But you didn't.

WELLS

No.

Jennings glances at the more junior men. This is significant.

JENNINGS

Why not?

Wells is now truly embarrassed. Finally, he gets it out.

WELLS

Because Kensana would become a Newport mine and Mark Hancock's Midas touch continues. Kenny Wells? A footnote -- the lucky bastard who fell down drunk and woke up in a pile of money.

Jennings takes a moment. Walks over to Levine. Confers for a second. See them looking across the space at Wells. There's disagreement. Jennings comes back.

JENNINGS

That was a pretty foolish business decision, wasn't it?

WELLS

It was my dream. I dreamed it. And if you sell your dream, then what do you have left?

**EXT. KAY'S HOUSE - DAY**

Wells pulls up. Sees his stuff in boxes and garbage bags on her front lawn. He gets out. Then realizes Kay is sitting on the stoop smoking a cigarette.

KAY

I'm just sitting here. Obviously this is an emotional thing, but I'm not going to let it get that way.

WELLS

What're you doing?

KAY

What am I doing? Really? Okay. To make this easier I'm sitting here making a mental list. Of all the shit you never did. A Shit Kenny Never Did List.

WELLS

Kay --

KAY

For instance... my "yard" -- it's pebbles and weeds. The "grass." The "sprinklers." That's next weekend. The big hole in the back yard -- I mean, the "pool." Remember that? Because all I see is *crabgrass*. And you. I see you, Wells.

She starts to cry. And is mad at herself for it.



And now she's on her walk staring at the grass growing between the cracks and through her tears she starts ripping at it and throwing it at him.

KAY (CONT'D)

You see all this? See how hard it is?  
It's not hard. Look at me. Look. So  
I'm just going to stay here with my...

WELLS

Kay --!

She starts kicking his stuff. Kicking it at him.

KAY

Take your stupid crap... Take it...  
and leave my stupid crapgrass --

And then she stops, realizing the thing she didn't want to happen --getting massively upset -- has happened.

KAY (CONT'D)

Wherever you're going, whatever you're  
becoming, I don't want to go with you  
or become that.

WELLS

Kay... Kay, I'm sorry.

KAY

You're always saying that where I'm  
concerned. Go say you're sorry  
somewhere else for a while.

She goes inside and slams the front door behind, leaving him outside with all his stuff. Which he now starts collecting.

He throws it in the trunk of the car as HART HUBBARD, neighbor, comes around the side of his house.

HART HUBBARD  
Is this a bad time?

WELLS  
Go fuck yourself, Hart.

Wells gets in and without a look back drives away.

**EXT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - DAY/NIGHT**

Wells pulls into the bar parking lot. The new leather interior mocking him. Flicks ashes haphazardly at the console ashtray and we see he's already got a bunch of burn holes.

CNBC REPORTER (O.S.)  
...Major news on Wall Street. Washoe stock was off nearly fifty points at the opening bell this morning...

The caddy parked outside in daytime. Then it's night time.

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - NIGHT**

Wells sits alone, unsteadily, at the bar. He watches the CNBC MARKET REPORT. Roy watches Wells with concern as he pours the last shot from a bottle of Seagrams.

CNBC REPORTER (ON TV)  
...On news of the Suharto government's revocation of Washoe's exploration rights... There is talk of a deal in place for Mark Hancock of Newport Holdings to take over Washoe's stake. President and CEO Kenny Wells has not commented publicly on the news.

Roy picks up the remote, about to flip...

WELLS  
I'll comment. *They stole it. They goddamn stole it.*  
(drinks)  
I'm gonna need another.

ROY  
You're gonna need to go home, Kenny.

WELLS  
Yeah okay, Roy. A roadie then--

ROY  
How 'bout a cab.

Wells just looks at Roy. By the look on his face, this could go bad. But a smile comes to Wells's face as he slides off the stool, wobbles onto his feet. It's not a friendly smile.

WELLS  
Piece of advice, Roy, and you should take my word on this. You ain't the only game in town.

ROY  
Go home, Kenny.

And as he sways for the door, Roy watching him sadly, WE...

STANTON (O.S.)  
I'm telling anyone who'll listen, we have legal remedies. There will be a settlement...

**EXT. WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

The late afternoon sun sets the gold WASHOE sign aglow. As a tired Mike Acosta gets out of a taxi. And takes in Reno in all its desolate glory.

STANTON (O.S.)  
...None of which I really believe by the way...

**INT. WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

Burns and Connie listen to Stanton.

STANTON  
I stemmed the bleeding for now, but the bottom's gonna fall out.

Scottie Nevins goes looks out the window.

NEVINS  
Kenny was at the Greenhorn all night-rough. Roy bounced him. And I swung by the house. Kay tossed him out.

Acosta enters.

ACOSTA

Look at this. It's like a clown car.  
Trying to work the pedals with your  
clown feet.

(beat)

Where is he?

**INT. KAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Kay is asleep in her bed. She's awakened by the RINGING PHONE.

INTERCUT:

WELLS AT A PAY PHONE --

KAY'S ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.)

*This is us, we can't get to the phone  
right now. You know what to do.*

BEEP. ON KAY -- silence on the line. Then -- CLICK.

WELLS -- he hangs up. He has to steady himself as he fishes out more coins. He dials.

ON KAY -- the phone rings again. This time she turns on the bedside lamp, sitting up listening.

WELLS (ON ANSWERING MACHINE)

Kay, it's me. Are you there? If  
you're there will you pick up?

Hearing his voice hurts, but she's not picking up.

WELLS is barely able to hold his head up, slogging through his words. Cue the pity-party string section --

WELLS (CONT'D)

Okay... guess you're not home, then.  
I was just calling to... I just wanted  
to hear your voice. I screwed up,  
Kay... I thought I could stake a  
claim, and build something, something  
real, that's all I wanted... with  
you... with Washoe...

(beat, sincere)

You were right. You were right.

The line goes silent. Kay looks stricken, but she fights the urge to pick up. Wells leans his forehead against the phone -- drifts off for a second. He comes-to with a start.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Kay? It's me... I'm gonna stop now.  
I'm not calling anymore --

She quickly picks up just as Wells hangs up --

KAY

Hello?

Too late. Wells staggers a few paces and tries to light a cigarette, but he's too fucked up to pull it off. He throws it away, turns back to the phone, searches around for change. He's out of change.

**EXT. PAY PHONE AREA - MORNING**

Wells passed out under the phone, receiver dangling. The caddy parked at an odd angle, half over a curb. Door open. DINGING. Then a boot pauses above him. Kicks him. Kicks him harder.

WELLS'S POV, staring up into a BACKLIT FIGURE. Another kick, a voice from far away, the voice of God --

ACOSTA

Get up. Get up.

A stunned look, the sun in his eyes, the sickness of booze.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

You don't get to make the mistake AND feel sorry for yourself. It's one or the other, mate.

WELLS

Would've been confused about who's kicking me when I'm down, then I heard the *condescension*...

ACOSTA

You haven't heard anything yet.

He starts to kick him again, but Wells pulls Acosta's legs out from under him. And it's on: a release of drunken pent-up fury and failure, sloppy and real. They flail, tackle, expending the agony of mutual failure, until they're both wiped out, sprawled on their backs.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

I propose a draw.

**INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - LATER**

A JET OF COLD WATER ON WELLS.

**INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - LATER**

The shower is still running.

ACOSTA (O.S.)  
How are you doing in there?

No answer. Acosta pulls back the curtain to find Wells sitting on the shower floor, seemingly out cold.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Acosta holds out a Styrofoam coffee. Which he probably spiked with Seagrams. MotherfuckingTheresa.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)  
Here, get this down.

**INT. MOTEL - ROOM - LATER**

Acosta in the open doorway. Maybe a highway out there somewhere. A gloomy day. Wells sits on the edge of a bed in half light, the worse for wear.

WELLS  
I think Kay's done with me.

ACOSTA  
Smart woman.

WELLS  
(beat)  
Mike, I'm sorry.

ACOSTA  
You know what people say? That you're a drunk. Out of your league.

WELLS  
Yeah? Well fuck them. I need a big lecture from *Mr. Golden Boy* in his golden glow. How hard and messed up everything is. Tell me that from your perch at the bar of the Jakarta Palace after you've used that instinct of yours to find some other big strike with some other people.

Acosta stares at him a moment.

ACOSTA

That's what you think?

WELLS

That's what I know. That's what everybody knows. You're *MikeFuckingAcosta*.

ACOSTA

I've never lacked for confidence...

Wells in agreement on that one. But Acosta seems to be deciding whether to tell him something.

ACOSTA (CONT'D)

Okay. So we're in North Sulawesi, monsoon season -- this is 1980 --

WELLS

*The copper strike* --

ACOSTA

Yeah, the *famous copper strike*. Only we were looking for *bauxite*. On *the way* to where I'm planning to drill, I get us stuck. Five feet of mud. We've found nothing. We've drilled nothing. We're just sitting in the rain, day after day, watching the metal rust.

WELLS

What'd you do?

ACOSTA

Under the theory that it's better to do something than nothing, I reported this *was* where we were trying to get to. Instead of being lost, we had arrived. *This* was the spot... Nowhere became somewhere --

WELLS

The place you got stuck?

ACOSTA

Yeah. The place I got stuck.

Wells looks up and slowly everything changes, it has a charm, a purpose, it's *cool*. It's the place to hit bottom, part of the legend. He goes up to Acosta. A beat. Then...

WELLS

I love that--!

Wells claps him on the back. Looks out at the same Reno he's always looked out at, the same grim futureless rain or dust or whatever's out there and now it looks different, too -- bright and infinite and possible, just like his dream.

WELLS (CONT'D)

You were looking for bauxite and you found copper. I went looking for gold and I found a friend.

ACOSTA

That may be the single hokiest thing I've ever heard in my life.

(off Wells's hurt expression)

Okay, it's true. But you did con me into signing that goddamn napkin.

It's the moment of truth for Kenny Wells.

WELLS

You know what we said when we started this thing... So... you got a plan?

ACOSTA

Don't you?

But ACOSTA has the beginnings of a slow smile. THE ROAR OF A JET PLANE -- Wells turns and looks out the door -- and the VIEW THROUGH A MOTEL DOORWAY is A RUNWAY IN JAKARTA as an AIR INDONESIA JET drops out of the sky...

WELLS (V.O.)

Turns out, Suharto had a son, his youngest, Darmadi - *Danny* -- bit of a screw-up, a real problem for the old man. So I guess you could say, we all understood each other.

**EXT. CILIWUNG RIVER - DANNY SUHARTO ESTATE - DAY**

Wells and Acosta are ferried down an urban river in a swanky taxi boat. They arrive at a colonial boathouse and disembark.



WELLS (V.O.)

Suharto had been trying to get Danny set up for years, but everything Danny touched turned to shit. I figured if we could bring Danny on board as a partner, maybe he could get daddy to change his mind and swing things back our way. It was a Hail Mary from our own one yard line, but it was all I had... It also didn't hurt that Danny had been regularly ignored by a certain ex-president of the United States who was a groomsman at his father's third wedding and also happened to sit on the board of Newport Holdings.

They are led into a pool area where DARMADI "DANNY" SUHARTO plays "chicken" in the pool with a GIRL on his shoulders.

WELLS (O.S.)

So, this guy walks into a Cadillac dealership, okay?...

**EXT. ESTATE - DAY**

A massive estate. Wells and Acosta sit in the pool pavilion with Danny, now in a lush bathrobe. Danny looks every bit the royal child with skin that glows. He listens as Wells, in full form, nails the joke...

WELLS

...Salesman says, "Excuse me sir, are you thinking about buying a Cadillac?" And the guy says, "No, I'm definitely buyin' a Cadillac. I'm thinking about pussy!"

Wells laughs. Danny looks at Acosta and then back at Wells who's still laughing. Acosta drops his head as WE WAIT...

Danny stares at Wells. A long beat. Then...

DANNY

Cadillac is pussy magnet.

Danny smiles, then laughs. They all start to laugh. Acosta can't believe it.

WELLS

You like Cadillacs?

DANNY

'62 Eldorado. Finest car ever made.

**INT. DANNY'S '62 ELDORADO - DAY**

The Pixies' "Where is my mind?" plays. Danny driving through downtown Jakarta. Wells in the front seat, Acosta in back. Danny on a driving pillow which raises him up in the seat.

DANNY

(yelling over music)

I love Pixies! I lived in Boston. My sister went to Pine Manor. Dated --

Points at Acosta in the backseat.

ACOSTA

Your sister's crazy.

DANNY

My sister is so crazy. Is it too early for a drink?

He nods at the glove box. Wells finds a bottle of BLACK LABEL.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Red label is for peasants --

WELLS

That's what I always say --

**INT. BAMBOO BAR - NIGHT**

Danny, Wells, Acosta in a bar that hasn't changed since the Dutch were running things. Everyone knows Danny.

DANNY

Gerald Ford, tall man. George H.W. Bush, a very tall man. Mark Hancock a tall man. My father a small man. Small in stature. But he loves his family.

WELLS

Mine, too. Then he died in the driveway bringing in groceries.

Wells points to where his heart is. Danny raises a glass.

DANNY

To father of Wells --

**EXT. DANNY'S ESTATE - NIGHT**

Voices in the dark, drunken, furtive. Then shapes emerge. Now see Danny. A key tries to find a lock. Drops. Gropes.

DANNY  
85-15 split, if you have the balls.

ACOSTA  
That's robbery --

DANNY  
That's deal. If you have balls. No  
balls, no deal.

Now the key slowly fits in the lock. It makes a subtle  
clicking sound.

ACOSTA  
50-50 and I'd consider it.

Danny shakes his head, no. CAMERA NOW FINDS WELLS... Sweat and  
true Hail Mary desperation all over his face.

DANNY  
Kenny? Do you have balls?

ACOSTA  
Don't do it. It's not worth it.

Wells looks again through the bars of a cage. He swallows.

WELLS  
Open it.

The heavy bars slam shut behind him. Discover his eyes are  
clenched shut. Slowly they open. Adjusting to the gloom.

WELLS'S POV -- YELLOW EYES, almost lit from within, moving,  
belonging to SOMETHING VERY LARGE that paces in a circle.

DANNY  
(whispered to Acosta)  
*Only 50 left in world.*

Wells takes another step. A low GROWLING. He FREEZES. Wells  
looks back at Danny and Acosta. Then takes another step --

As a SUMATRAN TIGER

Moves forward into the moonlight. Crouched, ready to pounce.

DANNY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(reverent)  
*Sumatran tiger... very rare.*

Wells slowly reaches out his hand. Closer. Suddenly --

The TIGER ROARS.

ACOSTA

Wells --!

Wells reaches out and touches the tiger's head, right between the eyes. The huge cat STILLS. Wells stills. A tableau -- Kenny Wells' hand touching a Sumatran tiger between the eyes.

Wells scratches with his knuckles.

WELLS

I'm touching a tiger! I'm touching a goddamn tiger!!

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN, THOMAS - CORRIDOR - DAY

Big views over Manhattan on a stormy Monday morning. The office seems dead. Woolf walks down a long hallway.

INT. BROWN, THOMAS - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Woolf steps into his office where he finds Dresher waiting.

WOOLF

Hollis. What's going on?

DRESHER

You haven't heard? Wells cut a deal.

WOOLF

A deal? What are you talking about? Who'd cut a deal with him?

DRESHER

Suharto... The Indonesian government.

WOOLF

What?

DRESHER

Washoe retains fifteen percent of the find, the other eighty-five goes to the company of Suharto's choosing, which just so happens to be owned by his son. Wells cut us off at the knees.

Woolf is stunned.

WOOLF

What about Hancock?

DRESHER

He's gone. Can't compete at that number. Deal's over, Frank. Wells and Acosta are now the only outside partners in the biggest gold strike in history. We represent exactly none of it.

WOOLF

Fifteen percent is a terrible deal.

DRESHER

Is it? What's fifteen percent of thirty billion dollars?

Woolf knows now he's looking at the executioner.

WOOLF

I can explain -- you met him --

DRESHER

You are going to be fine, Bryan; you'll land on your feet.

We stay on Woolf, in shock. The SOUND of a CHORUS of VOICES rises, and WE GO...

**INT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - DAY**

Bobby Burns and the boys singing along drunkenly to some song. As Wells enters carrying a heavy, taped-up roll of fabric, and a small, wrapped gift. Booze and music and cigarettes as they turn and cheer him. But he's looking for Kay.

WELLS

Hey, Roy. Seen Kay around?

ROY

You didn't hear?

WELLS

Hear what, Roy?

ROY

She quit. Got the promotion out at the American Home -- *Assistant Manager*. Proud of her.

CNBC REPORTER (ON TV)

...In our top money news, a story that is being compared to David and Goliath, or maybe that's *Kenny and Goliath* -- Kenny Wells that is...

As someone TURNS UP THE VOLUME on THE TV above the bar --

CNBC REPORTER (ON TV) (CONT'D)  
 Washoe Mining has secured a deal with  
 the Suharto government of Indonesia to  
 retain control of their massive gold  
 strike there, fending off a takeover  
 by Newport Holdings.

CONNIE  
 Kicking Hancock's ass --

More CHEERS. WELLS is the center of attention.

CNN REPORTER/WELLS SIMUL  
*Washoe shares are soaring on the news.*

As CLIVE Coleman spots Wells. Wells sees Clive as he  
 approaches. Whatever he's here for, it looks serious.

CLIVE  
 Got a minute?

Wells steps out with Clive.

**EXT. THE THREE GREENHORNS BAR - LATE AFTERNOON**

Strip plazas, dollar stores, pawn shops. And the first star in  
 the sky, the Northern Star. Or a planet. One of them.

CLIVE  
 I just got a call.

Wells freezes. Clive enjoys the moment. Giving away nothing.

CLIVE (CONT'D)  
 The National Association of  
 Prospectors is gonna honor you with  
 the Golden Pickaxe.

WELLS  
 Are you shitting me?

CLIVE  
 You are officially the best miner in  
 the world. And somewhere I'm sure your  
 dad is smiling.

There, outside The Three Greenhorns Bar, Kenny Wells has  
 finally been accepted on terms he cares about.

WELLS  
 Well if he's not smiling, I'll smile  
 for the both of us.

He can't speak any more. Too overcome by the moment. And then he realizes where he's gotta go --

**INT./EXT. AMERICAN HOME - LATE AFTERNOON**

The Caddy pulls up. Wells gets out. Opens the trunk. Gets that big roll of gift fabric he bought in Indo.

He's happy. A peace offering in hand. Starts forward, then stops. He stares, his face falling. He sees --

KAY,

Wearing her own clothes, a manager now, smiling at something her boss is saying. She rests a hand on his arm --

**OMIT**

**EXT. KAY'S HOUSE - DUSK (MINUTES LATER)**

THE ROLL OF FABRIC HITS THE FRONT DOOR and drops to the stoop. Then the wrapped gift hits the door and drops.

Wells back in his car. Door SLAMS. Car CAREENS AWAY, barely breaking around a distant turn.

CUT TO:

**EXT./INT. HARRAH'S HOTEL AND CASINO - RENO, NEVADA - DUSK**

The Caddy rolls up under the awning at Harrah's. An unctuous MANAGER welcomes Wells personally.

MANAGER

Welcome to Harrah's Reno, Mr. Wells.

WELLS

Thank you very much... *Carissa*.

MANAGER

We have you in the *Prospector Suite*, which has a wonderful view of the mountains. Will you need help with your bags?

WELLS

Oh, yeah.

He looks back at the Caddy as the luggage trolley passes.

DESK MANAGER

The *Prospector Suite* has a lovely view of the mountains, Sir.

WELLS

I'll take it.

DESK MANAGER

Will you need help with your bags?

WELLS

Oh, yeah.

**INT. PROSPECTOR SUITE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY**

The boxes he took from Kay's. Rodeo clown ashtray. A few childhood pictures. Young Kenny holding a string of bass. Grandfather on a side of a mountain. His father standing next to a new Caddy, looking for all the world like Wells.

There's a KNOCK at the door of the suite. Wells opens it to find MIKE ACOSTA standing there.

WELLS

I didn't think you could make it.

ACOSTA

(pure Wells)

*Who you talking to, Wells?*

(beat)

Besides, you'll definitely need help with your tie.

**INT. PROSPECTOR SUITE - MASTER BATHROOM - EVENING**

Gold fixtures everywhere. Acosta sitting on a counter watches Wells wrestle with the bow tie.

WELLS

I'm nervous.

And the bow tie does present a mystery.

WELLS (CONT'D)

A thousand monkeys, a thousand years... Okay, hotshot...

Acosta quickly ties the tie. Adjusts it. And now we see a changed Wells. He looks good. Catches himself in the mirror. Acosta catches the same reflection.

Wells pulls cards from his jacket. Looks at Acosta. A true friend is the one you feel comfortable practicing this kind of speech in front of.



WELLS (CONT'D)

*My great granddad came out here on a wagon. He had a horse and two mules...*

(to Acosta)

Too much?

ACOSTA

No, man. It's good.

**EXT. RENO SKYLINE - SUNSET**

Mountains in the distance.

**INT. HARRAH'S HOTEL AND CASINO - BALLROOM - NIGHT**

Wells at his table with Acosta, Bobby Burns, Stanton, Clive, Connie, Nevins. He's quiet. This means a lot him.

BOBBY BURNS

Kenny, you're a star, boy. Don't sweat it. I mean really, don't sweat.

He's sweating. Someone passes him a napkin.

MC (O.S.)

It's been a long night and I'm sure you will soon hit the tables here at Harrah's Reno and make it a lot longer night. And hit those tables people... it's why Verna makes the rooms so reasonable.

Laughter around the room. A few big firms have tables. And lots of smaller players. It's everyone's night.

MC (CONT'D)

They do accept gold for bar tabs...

(laughter)

Now we come to our last honor, the 1988 Golden Pickaxe for "Prospector Of The Year," which goes to our own Kenny Wells! Get up here, Kenny--!

Wells rises and makes his way, showered with applause and FLASHING cameras. The crowd rises, saluting Wells, saluting that part of themselves that hangs on, refuses to give up.

Wells cradles the Golden Pickaxe statue, which is exactly as it sounds, a golden pickaxe. He stares out, savoring his moment. Then holds it up as flashbulbs flash.

Pulls his speech from his pocket. Looks out at faces, laughing faces, no one taking this quite so seriously.

WELLS

Every last one of us who calls the  
great state of Nevada home arrived  
here with a dream.

VOICE (O.S.)

(yelling out)  
Drinks on Kenny.

Laughter. And AT WELLS'S TABLE --

BURNS

*Great state of Nevada?*

He sees Kay. He smiles. Realizes it's not her.

WELLS

...That was my great granddad who came  
out here on a wagon. Had a horse and  
two mules when they finally stopped  
moving and said this was the place, he  
was only about forty miles from right  
here.

At the back of the room, ACOSTA IS LEAVING. He pauses and  
turns to Wells. A nod of respect and congratulations passes  
unspoken between them. And then ACOSTA IS GONE.

Wells looks at the statue.

WELLS (CONT'D)

What is a prospector?  
(the crowd groans)  
No, I'm serious. It's someone who  
believes it's out there. Who wakes up  
every morning and somehow believes.  
Again and again. It's not there.  
Standing at the edge of a desert,  
watching the sun rise and something in  
him says, "it's that way, just walk."

FLASH, FLASH, FLASH! Wells walks the center aisle, drowned in  
flashing light and glorious adoration. Everyone's reaching out  
to shake his hand.

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

And the sun is higher and it's getting  
hot and nobody else sees anything. And  
everyone else wants to turn back...

And then IT'S LATER and EVERYONE'S CROWDED AT THE BAR.  
Champagne corks are popping. POP POP POP.

WELLS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 And everyone else has turned back. And  
 now he's alone. And it's burning hot.  
 And there is no water...

And ON THE CASINO FLOOR Wells is PLAYING ROULETTE. The WHEEL  
 IS SPINNING. STACKS OF MONEY are moving. SHOW GIRLS ARE  
 FLOCKING.

Then IT'S EVEN LATER. WELLS IS SPORTING DRINKS ALL AROUND.  
 Champagne. POP POP POP.

WELLS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 It's out there... It's out there...  
 It's out there...

TIGHTER ON THE FACE OF KENNY WELLS as he sits back at his  
 table, accepting the congratulations of his friends. As people  
 call his name and cheer and FLASHBULBS POP -- POP POP POP --

BACK AT THE PODIUM. Tight on Wells as he takes in all of the  
 listening faces.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
 And it doesn't matter whether he finds  
 it or not. It doesn't matter. That's a  
 prospector.

He basks in it, the words vibrating for everyone in the room.

**INT. PROSPECTOR SUITE - MORNING**

Tracking across the detritus of a huge night to find Wells in  
 bed, sound asleep. The phone starts to RING -- Wells doesn't  
 move. Then finally he moans, rolls toward the phone --

WELLS  
 Hello..? What..? What?

Wells is instantly awake. Hear the INDONESIAN FOREMAN saying  
 something FRANTIC over the and over--

WELLS (CONT'D)  
 I'm sorry I can't understand you. No  
 go? I don't understand. Slowly. Speak  
 more slowly.

AT THE WASHOE SITE: THE FOREMAN YELLING INTO A SATELLITE  
 PHONE THE SIZE OF A SUITCASE.

FOREMAN

(slowly)

No gold. There is NO GOLD.

The window behind Wells reveals sun just catching the peaks, flaming morning gold. Wells grips the phone like a lifeline.

**EXT. WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

A mob scene outside. As Wells pulls up in his car, the crowd converges on him. He can barely get his car door open. He squeezes out and pushes through the furious crowd --

WELLS

I don't know any more than you do  
right now!

...But nobody's hearing him -- PEOPLE shout out: *"You fucking thief!" "I'm gonna kill you!" "Where's our money?!"*

WELLS (CONT'D)

I will get to the bottom of this!  
I promise!

Suddenly, out of nowhere -- A FIST -- WHAM -- right across Wells's face! It staggers him. The crowd lets out a roar of approval. This is getting real ugly, real fast.

A PAIR OF HANDS GRABS WELLS. He turns, panic in his eyes -- but it's Connie Wright. Bobby Burns is with him. They pull Wells through the mob to the building's side entrance.

CONNIE

Total shit storm, Kenny.

Wells is still dazed.

WELLS

I know... I know...

They fight the last few feet to the door and as they force their way inside, WE FOLLOW THEM...

**INT. WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

They're out of breath, adrenaline pumping. Wells turns to face his friends' haunted expressions...

WELLS

What happened? How did this happen?

BURNS

The independent assayer... they  
couldn't reproduce Mike's findings.

Wells trying to take it in.

CONNIE

There's no gold, Kenny. There's no goddamn gold. There never was.

WELLS

That's not possible.

SEQUENCE OF SCENES --

CNN NEWS CENTER -- A professorial looking MINING EXPERT explains to a NEWS ANCHOR...

MINING EXPERT

It's called "salting" and it literally means, when someone sprinkles gold dust into a sample of rock, like you'd add salt to a steak.

GOLD DUST -- pours onto a DIGITAL SCALE.

MINING EXPERT (CONT'D)

By all appearances, Washoe's security protocols were iron-clad. But if the person administering security is fraudulent, the system breaks down.

Then, the gold dust sprinkles into a GROUND SAMPLE OF ROCKS --

MINING EXPERT (CONT'D)

...It's the oldest trick in the book.

NEWS ANCHOR

"Oldest trick in the book." And yet major mining corporations, investment banks, auditors, everyone was fooled.

MINING EXPERT

We weren't fooled; we didn't look.

TIGHT ON: A MAGNIFIED IMAGE -- TWO GOLD SAMPLES, side by side. The one on the LEFT has smoothly rounded edges; the one on the RIGHT is angular and jagged.

GEOLOGIST (O.S.)

The image on the left is the type of gold found in the Washoe samples. This is river gold - notice how the edges are rounded, worn smooth by the erosion of the water.

WE PULL BACK to --

A FINANCIAL SHOW -- The GEOLOGIST is seated across from a Jim Cramer-type financial HOST.

GEOLOGIST (CONT'D)

...What we should have found is flake gold - the sample on the right, pulled directly from the rock, rough edged and angular.

The Host is nearly apoplectic --

HOST

That seems like a pretty big freakin' detail to overlook!

GEOLOGIST

It's a big detail. But you have to understand, everything else about the Washoe samples was right...

HOST

...But the gold was wrong! It's right there, that's what you're saying?!

GEOLOGIST

Yes.

**INT. WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - WELLS'S OFFICE - DAY**

The guys are hard at work, going over financial documents. Wells is on a phone at the center of it all --

WELLS

(into phone)

*Acosta? Mike Acosta?* No. Yes, I do mind waiting -- Did he or did he not come to the Kalimantan?

Bobby Burns approaches Wells. Burns looks gut-punched.

BURNS

The New York Stock Exchange just suspended trading. They're taking Washoe off the board.

Washoe is done, finished. Wells sinks back in his chair. And slowly hangs up the phone. The news seems to take whatever air he's got left out of him.

A long silent moment. There's nothing more to say, but Burns just stands there. He looks in shock, like he's had his soul ripped out. Wells looks up at him...

WELLS

You sold some, right? Put something away?

Burns hesitates before answering...

BURNS

Yeah... Of course. You?

Wells nods halfheartedly. It's clear neither sold a damn thing.

WELLS

Bobby?...

Burns can't meet Wells's eyes.

WELLS (CONT'D)

Goddammit, Bobby! I told you to sell some.

BURNS

I thought...I thought... it was just going to keep going up.

Wells is genuinely distressed. And then Burns looks up -- his eyes are damp, on the verge of crying. He can barely speak...

BURNS (CONT'D)

Kenny, did you know, Did you know, Kenny?

It's like a blow to the heart.

WELLS

What? Did I know? I can't believe you would ask me that.

Burns looks absolutely crushed.

WELLS (CONT'D)

I'll take care of you, Bobby.

Connie rushes in carrying a sheath of PAPERS.

CONNIE

Kenny...

Burns' expression hardens -- fists clenched like he's gonna punch Wells.

BURNS

I don't want you to take care of me!  
I want you to leave me the hell alone!

Burns walks away, a busted man. Wells turns to Connie. One look and he knows this is big.

WELLS

What?

CONNIE

I don't even know how to say this --

He dumps the papers on Wells's desk.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Look.

Wells reads. It doesn't take him long to understand. He throws a glass at the wall. It shatters.

WELLS

WHAT!!!???

Connie answers Stanton's questioning look.

CONNIE

Acosta was dumping stock. Shell companies. Banks in the Philippines, the Azores. Multiple layers. All off-shore.

STANTON

How much?

CONNIE

Get ready for it... *164 million.*

WELLS

I don't believe it.

STANTON

Son of a bitch! What do we do? Kenny?

WELLS

There's gotta be an explanation. We gotta find Mike!

AT THAT MOMENT, they hear TIRES SCREECHING, CAR DOORS SLAMMING. And look outside. DOZENS OF AGENTS rolling up, the familiar blue jackets with the white lettering -- FBI. Hear them entering. Then, a BULLHORN:

FBI

This is the FBI! Step away from your desks! Take two big steps away from your desks. Do not touch anything!



MONTAGE of FBI raid. Floor by floor. They arrive at Wells's office. Connie and Stanton in the middle of the room, frozen.

Wells at the window. Below, he sees the SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE step out of a car, already giving quiet orders --

It's JENNINGS.

Who looks up. Sees Wells at the window. Wells looks at him.

**INT. NBC NEWS STUDIO - NIGHT**

Sitting with ROGER MUDD is MARK HANCOCK, chairman of Newport Holdings. Hancock as clean as snow as he rewrites history.

HANCOCK

We suspected there were problems early on, which is why we decided not to pursue the joint venture Washoe offered us. We got as many of our investors out of Washoe as fast as possible.

An insert PHOTO of Kenny Wells and Mike Acosta appears.

ROGER MUDD

You made a lot of money. I mean before the walls came tumbling down.

Hancock doesn't want to talk about that.

ROGER MUDD (CONT'D)

And how much money was lost in the fraud? That we know of.

HANCOCK

Billions. Large institutional investors lost billions of dollars.

ROGER MUDD

So one, or maybe both of them, two outsiders took everybody on Wall Street for a ride.

HANCOCK

Yes, it really looks like they did.

ROGER MUDD

And Acosta has vanished.

HANCOCK

With hundreds of millions of dollars.

ROGER MUDD

Kenny Wells has consistently maintained his innocence, that he was duped along with everyone else. Given that, what do you make of this?

He picks up a copy of NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE -- Kenny Wells on the cover. Mudd reads the caption out loud:

ROGER MUDD (CONT'D)

*"Kenny Wells - Fool or Mastermind?"*  
...Care to comment?

Off Hancock, maybe for the first time, he's at a loss...

HANCOCK

That is a very good question, Roger.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT./EXT. PROSPECTOR SUITE & WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

A MONTAGE of time passing. Wells in the suite on the phone. Wells at an increasingly empty Washoe headquarters. Wells is increasingly desperate, then finally hopeless.

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. WASHOE HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

Wells stands on the steps in front of the building, a hundred MICROPHONES and CAMERAS in his face. NEWS VANS jam the sidewalk. A mob of ANGRY PROTESTORS held at bay by POLICE.

WELLS

Mike Acosta was my friend and partner and he betrayed me. I had no knowledge of the deception he perpetrated. As CEO of this company, it was my job to know. I take full responsibility for my failure in this regard and I apologize sincerely to those who have lost their investments. Wherever you are, Mike, it's time to come in. Tell what happened... *Mike* --?

He can't go on. Finally, he chokes out --

WELLS (CONT'D)

That's all I have to say at this time.

The assembled reporters shout out a flurry of questions at Wells's back as he leaves. They pursue him. Surrounding his car. Trying to stop him from pulling out.

**EXT. HARRAH'S HOTEL AND CASINO - RENO - DAY**

Wells pulls in. Crowds out front waiting for him.

**INT. HARRAH'S HOTEL AND CASINO - RENO - DAY**

Angry FRONT DESK GUY trying to talk about the bill.

FRONT DESK GUY

Mr. Wells, when exactly will you be  
departing?

People hearing his name. Crowds turning. Pouring in.

**INT. ELEVATOR - DAY**

The doors closing out the faces of angry, shouting people.  
Wells just shuts his eyes and rides in blessed silence.

DING.

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

Wells checks the hallway both directions.

AT THE "PROSPECTOR SUITE"

Checks hall again. Uses his key to open the door.

**INT. PROSPECTOR SUITE - DAY**

Wells entering, motoring toward the bar, freezes. Finds:

JENNINGS, BANKS, AND LEVINE

Waiting for him like executioners on execution day.

A beat.

WELLS

Do I need a lawyer?

JENNINGS

Do you need a lawyer?

A moment between poker players. Then Wells shakes his head.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Right answer.

Jennings posts two guards outside the door. Sets the tape recorder on the table. Wells at the bar searching, finding the stashed bottle.

WELLS

...Sure I can't pour you one?

JENNINGS

No, thanks. I'm working.

WELLS

All the more reason.

JENNINGS

Wells, sit down. We've got a lot to cover...

The same exchange that started the film. Time has caught up with Kenny Wells' storytelling.

FADE TO BLACK:

SLOW FADE IN:

The Golden Pickaxe STATUE catching morning sun...

**INT. PROSPECTOR SUITE - MORNING**

The Sierra Nevada out the windows. It's fall.

SUPER OVER -- *RENO, NEVADA - OCTOBER, 1988*

Wells facing Jennings, listening.

JENNINGS

I think it's pretty unlikely we'll ever see your partner again.

WELLS

Wait, what do you mean? You're not telling me something. What happened to Mike?

JENNINGS

A lot of very powerful people are very angry at Michael Acosta.

WELLS

What happened!?

Jennings searches Wells's face again for a trace of the disingenuous.

JENNINGS

*What happened?* Yes. That's what we're trying to put together.

(MORE)

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Seventeen billion dollars of value disappeared overnight. That is certain. What else? Michael Acosta waves goodbye to you in the ballroom downstairs -- ta-ta -- goes back to Indonesia on a jet chartered with Washoe funds, and then he does his disappearing act. This you know...

Off Wells -- PRE-LAP:

The sound of HELICOPTER ROTORS, growing louder. Deafening...

SMASH TO:

**EXT. JUNGLE - PRE DAWN**

A helicopter chops at the morning air -- flying in low over the lush jungle as the sun is about to rise.

JENNINGS (V.O.)

First, he's locked out of the assay lab in Kalimantan by The Minister of the Interior. So he goes back to Jakarta.

**EXT. JAKARTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY**

Acosta emerges from a plane and walks down the gangway stairs.

JENNINGS (V.O.)

Where he is immediately detained by Indonesian Military.

Waiting for him at the bottom are INDONESIAN SOLDIERS.

OFFICER

(subtitled)

This way Mr. Acosta.

JENNINGS (V.O.)

And they hold him while they try to reproduce for themselves the lab results claimed by Washoe.

**INT. INDONESIAN MILITARY BARRACKS - DAY**

Acosta watching men march in formation through a doorway.

JENNINGS (V.O.)

Which of course they are unable to do.

**INT. PROSPECTOR SUITE - DAY**

Jennings takes his time. He's enjoying this a little.

JENNINGS

And at this point either he's being moved to an actual prison, or he's bribed one of the officers. Either way, he's on a military helicopter.

**INT./EXT. HELICOPTER - FLYING - DAY**

Acosta sits in the hold of the chopper, two soldiers across from him, a pilot and another SOLDIER up front, all armed.

JENNINGS (V.O.)

They fly north loosely tracking the Kensana river.

The chopper arcs in, following the river's course.

Acosta stares out, far into the distance, taking in the breathtaking beauty.

JENNINGS (V.O.)

Do not underestimate the Suharto family. They are gangsters whose turf is a nation of 100 million.

Acosta in the back of the chopper. He's got a six-pack of Tuborg Gold in cans. He cracks one, holds the others out to the soldiers, who decline. He drains the beer. He looks down at the river as it passes far below, flashing gold in the sunlight, a snaking golden river, golden dream --

Hands suddenly undo his harness. An involuntary breath. Then a smile creeps onto his face.

Acosta now at the open hatch door of the chopper. Tighter on his eyes taking it in. He's coming home.

IN SILENCE MIKE ACOSTA FALLS FROM THE HELICOPTER

Falling and falling and falling toward canopy and water --

JENNINGS (V.O.)  
 A thousand feet up, over the Kensana,  
 Mike Acosta takes a header.

ON THE PILOT -- as he turns and looks back and sees the EMPTY SEAT, the soldiers buckling back in. He turns back around.

ACOSTA POV of ONRUSHING RIVER. CLOSER AND CLOSER AND THEN ALL AT ONCE AS WE SMASH --

**INT. PROSPECTOR SUITE - DAY**

Wells is on the edge of his seat, eyes red from lack of sleep, booze, cigarette smoke. He's shaken up by the news. He doesn't want to believe it.

WELLS  
 No way. No fucking way. Mike was too good, too savvy. He had to be planning this. He knows what they do to you for salting. What you think they'd do. He faked it. Or he paid just to have the story out.  
 (desperate)  
 164 million goes a long way in Indonesia...

JENNINGS  
 (beat)  
 They found a body.

WELLS  
 Are you sure it's him?

JENNINGS  
 I'm not sure of anything, except Mike Acosta traded water filters for river gold, but now the Indonesian government has gone unusually quiet on the subject and seems to have, publicly at least, lost all interest in finding Michael Acosta.

**EXT. INDONESIAN JUNGLE - DAY**

THE CRANE SHOT of the INDONESIAN MILITARY and DAYAK in semi-circle around the SPLAYED BODY.

One of the soldiers breaks ranks and moves forward, kneeling by the body. What he sees there sickens him --

JENNINGS (V.O.)  
 Hands and face were eaten away.  
 Probably by wild pigs.

BANG. All heads whirl. The BIG SNAKE FALLS. Floats down river.  
 The soldier finds the wallet, flips it open, checks the ID.  
 And this time we see the name -- MICHAEL ACOSTA.  
 And a picture of MIKE ACOSTA, smiling.

JENNINGS (V.O.)  
 There was an autopsy, corroborating  
 the identity with dental records from  
 Boston.

**INT. PROSPECTOR SUITE - DAY**

Jennings produces documents with a sort of bemused skepticism.  
 Autopsy. Photos of a pig-eaten body. Affidavit of cremation.

JENNINGS  
 Then they sealed the report, cremated  
 the remains. Interestingly Danny  
 Suharto dumped a lot of stock as well.  
 So the Suhartos are even richer, Mike  
 Acosta is ostensibly dead and buried,  
 a hundred sixty four million is still  
 missing, and the question I'm left  
 with is whether or not you were in on  
 it?

Wells takes a moment. Slowly shakes his head. Sad.

WELLS  
 I can't believe it.

JENNINGS  
 Can't believe what?

Wells eyes well up. He rubs at them, making them even redder.  
 He lights a cig to cover the emotions.

WELLS  
 ...Everyone in the business had  
 written him off, called his theories  
 crap, and he couldn't let that be the  
 last word on him.

JENNINGS  
 You talking about Acosta or yourself?

Wells ignores that.



WELLS

We were running out of money and I was sick with Malaria, I think that's when the salting started. Mike was sure he was right, the gold was there, but he needed to buy us more time to find it. I don't think he set out to swindle anyone, but by the time he realized he was wrong and there was no gold, he was in too deep. I honestly think he just didn't want to let me down. And I was fooled just like everybody else.

A pregnant beat. Levine, Jennings' underling, leans down. He's saying something that is mostly muffled... "Either world's biggest fool or..."

LEVINE

*...he's not telling the truth --*

WELLS

The truth!? The only truth here is that when everyone's getting rich nobody gives a shit about *the truth*. All anyone had to do was look. Open their eyes. The gold was wrong. The find was too good. Red flags everywhere, but no one looked, because no one wanted to know. Not me, not you, not anyone. What we all wanted was to believe. Why? Because we were making so much money.

Jennings looks over at Banks and Levine. That landed.

JENNINGS

(to his coworkers)  
Mark, Eric, sit down please.

Jennings checks the cassette on the tape recorder. And when he addresses his questions to Wells we can feel it's all coming down to this.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Were you aware that Mike Acosta was salting the Washoe core samples?

WELLS

No!

JENNINGS

You had no knowledge Mike Acosta was perpetrating a fraud?

WELLS

No. I thought I'd won the lottery.

JENNINGS

You were not in collusion with Mike Acosta on the Kensana gold strike?

WELLS

No.

JENNINGS

Did you profit from the Kensana fraud?

WELLS

You know I didn't. I can't pay the hotel bill. Hell, I can't even get the minibar.

JENNINGS

Did anyone close to you profit?

WELLS

No.

JENNINGS

You have gained nothing?

WELLS

My friends lost money, my neighbors lost money, but I lost everything. Because, the real truth is... I never cared much about money. I cared about gold. It's different, Jennings. It's different.

Jennings, Banks, and Levine walk away and confer. It's clear they're having a difficult time reaching a quorum.

Wells turns and looks at the mountains. And then Jennings crosses back.

JENNINGS

(into tape recorder)

End of deposition, 6:45 AM, Seventeen, October, 1988, conducted by Paul K. Jennings - Special Agent In Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, District of Nevada, Reno.

He presses stop on the recorder. Closes his notes. He and Wells look at each other a long moment.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

You're free to go, Mr. Wells.

Wells seems like he wasn't expecting this and maybe almost like he was past caring about it.

WELLS

Look at that, somebody believes me.

JENNINGS

I wouldn't go overboard. In fact, I wouldn't leave the state. Wouldn't start buying new stuff or chartering any more jets.

WELLS

I gotta sneak out of here without the front desk guy seeing me. You picking up that tab?

JENNINGS

It's been quite a whirlwind, hasn't it, Mr. Wells?

Wells has no fucking idea how to even begin to answer that one. As the coworkers leave --

BANKS

Good luck, Mr. Wells

LEVINE

We'll be keeping an eye out for you.

Jennings starts to leave, then pauses --

JENNINGS

What are you going to do now, Wells?

And as we push in on Wells, we can see deep in his eyes the beginnings of a plan...

**EXT. PARKING LOT - HARRAH'S HOTEL AND CASINO - MORNING**

Wells looks back at the hotel. He sees two red-tailed hawks perched on a balcony rail. They drop in unison and then rise on a warm draft. Wells watches them rise and rise.

DISSOLVE TO:

ONE WHITE ROSES...

**INT. SEDAN DE VILLE - DAY**

Is placed on the passenger seat of his car. Wells smoking. Driving. Flicks ashes at the ashtray, misses by a mile.

Through the glass, a familiar, neater house appears.

**EXT. KAY'S HOUSE - DAY**

He pulls into the driveway of Kay's house. The car shuts off.

He gathers himself. Picks up the rose. Gets out of the car. Hart Hubbard, pruning a bush, stops snipping.

NEIGHBOR

Kenny, I'm still worried about that mulberry over the back fence.

An old Mulberry tree grows over the shared fence. Wells doesn't need to look.

WELLS

I know. Good to see you, Hart.

HART HUBBARD

Good to see you too, Kenny.

He's at the door. He takes a breath and knocks. After a while he hears footsteps. Then the door opens. Revealing KAY. She looks at the single flower. At Wells.

WELLS

Can I come in?

Kay considers a beat longer than is comfortable, then steps aside to let him in.

**INT. KAY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Wells sees the pool has been fixed and filled. It sparkles. Wells sitting at the dinette looking at Kay. She looks at him. A golden light shines through new curtains above the sink.

KAY

I made curtains.

WELLS

The house looks great. And so do you.

Kay puts the flower in a small vase. She puts two coffee cups on the dinette. She looks at him a moment then shakes her head. Wells takes a cup of coffee.

WELLS (CONT'D)

I called up Carl.

KAY  
 You called Carl?  
 (beat)  
 What'd he say?

WELLS  
 I think he was surprised to hear from  
 me. He'll see me next week. No  
 promises.

KAY  
 Wait, you really called him?

WELLS  
 (beat)  
 No... Not yet. But I'm going to.

She starts to laugh. He starts to laugh. He reaches out his  
 hand to hold hers across the table. They look at each other.

WELLS (CONT'D)  
 Goddamn.

And then they laugh at the absurdity of it all, of life, of  
 trying to make sense of any of it.

KAY  
 Oh, some stuff came for you. Some  
 mail.

She goes and finds a grocery bag of stuff that's come for him.  
 He dumps it on the table, searching past catalogues and time-  
 share opportunities, until he finds what he's looking for:

A FOREIGN ENVELOPE

Thin and light blue with *PAR AVION* stamped on it.

Wells looks at it. He looks at Kay. Then he takes out a small  
 pocket knife, uses the short blade to slice it open.

He extracts... an old napkin.

THE NAPKIN.

The one he and Acosta signed in the jungle. He unfolds it.

He reads:

*Prove 'em all wrong.*  
*"50-50"*  
*Whatever it takes...*

Followed by two faded signatures: *Kenny Wells & Mike Acosta.*

He stares at Mike's signature a long moment, remembering.

KAY (CONT'D)

What? What is it?

ALSO IN THE ENVELOPE -- A DEPOSIT SLIP

\$82,000,000

In his name, at THE FIRST BANK OF GIBRALTAR, exactly half what Acosta sold, fifty percent.

He looks up at Kay mysteriously.

And he smiles.

SMASH TO BLACK:

**THE END**

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