

CAPITOL CRIMES

Written by

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Inspired by the 2014 FBI investigation into political corruption in California. While events and dialogue are drawn from public records, this is a work of fiction. Characters and certain events have been created or altered for dramatic purposes.

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FADE IN:

INT. BRIDGE - MILITARY SHIP - NIGHT

Thud.

Pages rustle.

A cynical and weathered captain (55) leafs through a thick book of maintenance logs, flag of the Philippines behind him.

Operations, incidents, and observations all detailed on paper in a near-endless chart. This guy's a stickler for details.

Truck headlights appear through the windows of the bridge. They're blinding in the dark. The captain grabs binoculars and looks at the approaching vehicle.

He checks his watch. A gold Rolex on his wrist that costs a lot more than a military man should be able to afford. It's 2am exactly. He makes for the exit walking rigid and upright.

EXT. MILITARY SHIP - NIGHT

Two officers carry a large trunk up to the open rear doors of the previously approaching truck. The Filipino truck driver is dressed in black--nondescript. He wants to keep it that way.

CAPTAIN AGUILAR

Do you have the inventory list?

The driver presents a shopping list to the captain. It's like the maintenance log, but with weapon details.

INSERT

ISRAELI WEAPON INDUSTRIES

- 24 x TAVOR TAR-21

BAZALT

- 4x RPG-7 ROCKET LAUNCHER

END INSERT

The captain examines it like the maintenance log then nods to the two officers. They take a pair of crowbars and pry the lid off revealing a dozen automatic rifles arranged neatly.

The captain ticks them off one-by-one as the officers hand off the guns to the men in the back of the truck.

Two more officers arrive with another trunk while the first two continue to: hand off gun; hand off gun; hand off gun.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. REBEL MILITIA CAMP - PHILIPPINES - MORNING

From back of truck: hand out gun; hand out gun; hand out gun.

Each rifle is placed in the hands of a rebel fighter dressed in camo. Once armed, each fighter runs off to the line of pickup trucks.

Think of ISIS fighters crowded into the bed of their pickups.

EXT. PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT BUILDING - MORNING

The grand neo-classical building with dome, sculptures and large windows stands on a busy city street, thrumming with jeepneys, buses, cars, motorcycles, and bicycles.

Honk, honk, honk. A row of pickups speed around the corner and screech to a halt outside the opulent marble building.

They fly a green & white flag as they jump out of the trucks.

Bang.

Bang.

Bang.

Bodies hit the floor as the militia fighters shoot the military security stationed outside the building.

Bang.

Bang.

Bang.

Before they can react, one man's down. Then another.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - SAME

The driver turns in his seat, shouting for his comrades to get out and fight. Suddenly, the windshield smashes as two bullets hit him in the chest.

Blood everywhere.

EXT. PICKUP TRUCK BED - CONTINUOUS

Two remaining fighters look up to see a security guard shooting at them from a second floor window.

They hit the deck.

There's shouting and muttering from the hidden fighters.

A few more bullets hit the car. Then...

A fighter emerges with a shoulder-mounted RPG-7 rocket launcher. He aims. Then the rocket whistles through the air until...

Boom!

Direct hit. Debris strewn all around.

PRELAP: the deafening blast causes a RINGING in the ears.

INT. GRAND BALLROOM - NEW YORK - NIGHT

A champagne glass RINGS as it's struck by a spoon.

This is a fancy charity fundraiser.

Three dozen people--rich folks and their spouses--are dressed to the nines. No one is in anything shabbier than a handmade Italian suit and silk tie.

Except for the man on stage with the champagne glass.

There stands LELAND YEE, a political animal in his early 50s. That means he knows how to work a room for campaign donations and that he's usually the poorest person in that room. His suit is Men's Warehouse. On sale.

Behind him a PowerPoint reads:

Violence and Videogames
State Senator Leland Yee, PhD

YEE

Some of you know me as a pediatrician. That's where I learned my most important lesson about public service--sometimes the hardest patients to treat are the parents.

Knowing laughs from the crowd.

YEE (CONT'D)

When a child came to my office with a broken arm, I could set the bone. But when that same child came with a broken spirit? That required a different kind of healing.

He pauses, letting that land.

YEE (CONT'D)

Today, our children face a new kind of trauma. While we debate gun control--and we should--violent video games pour poison into young minds hour after hour, day after day. The gaming industry profits while parents feel powerless.

The audience nods. This isn't a crowd of gamers.

YEE (CONT'D)

(building to crescendo)

We put warning labels on cigarettes. We put ratings on movies. But when it comes to interactive violence--violence that children don't just watch but practice--we throw up our hands and say "it's just a game."

His voice drops, becoming more intimate.

YEE (CONT'D)

As a doctor, I took an oath to do no harm. As your representative, I take that same oath. And I'm telling you - the harm is real.

The well-heeled crowd is transfixed.

YEE (CONT'D)

We need action. Not just on guns, but on the culture of violence that normalizes them. Because if we only treat the physical symptoms while ignoring the disease... what kind of doctors would we be?

Rapturous applause. He's got them in the palm of his hand.

INT. GRAND BALLROOM - LATER

Further applause as Yee waves to the crowd at the end of his speech and exits stage right to—

BACKSTAGE

—where two people are waiting for him.

First is COSBY. She's Yee's slim and polished Chief of Staff, and the political brains behind his operation.

The other is JACKSON, his fundraiser and a grizzled brawler of the political world (and illegal underworld).

They do a classic West Wing walk-and-talk.

COSBY

Great work out there. You set them up, but now you gotta knock 'em down.

Yee

I'm a grown man--I thought I'd be past groveling, like a kid asking for pocket money.

JACKSON

Do you want to be the next Secretary of State for the state of New York?

YEE

Yes.

JACKSON

Do you have enough money to self-fund your campaign?

YEE

I've got twenty grand, but all that's going to college tuition.

JACKSON

Then this is the necessary part.

Yee

What's the number?

JACKSON

Thirty-two. But that's just to clear the mayoral campaign's debt.

(MORE)

JACKSON (CONT'D)

We need to raise another fifty K
before we announce for Secretary of
State.

COSBY

Just think about all the good you
can do when you win.

JACKSON

The money's more useful in our
pockets than theirs.

YEE

Anyone I'm targeting?

JACKSON

Most are established donors, but
keep an eye out for Gene Shelby.

YEE

Shelby Therapeutics, Gene Shelby?

COSBY

He was hooked on your every word--a
true believer.

They stop at a door. Colby straightens Yee's polyester tie.

YEE

Gene Shelby.

He opens the door to the-

BALLROOM

—which is full of people milling around. Yee takes a deep
breath, like a sailor inhaling in the ocean breeze before a
new voyage.

He's immediately approached by a matronly lady.

MARGARET

Senator, Yee, what a pleasure.

YEE

Ms. Waltham, I haven't seen you
since the Harriman dinner. How's
Michael doing?

MARGARET

Crew at Yale. They begin competing
in the fall. But, please, you know
you can call me Margaret.

YEE

Of course. Well, I'd love to introduce him to my boys at some point, if you don't hold it against them that they're not water sports people. Badminton. Nationally ranked.

MARGARET

Please, I could never hold anything against you. Though, I cannot stay. We have opera tickets at the top of the hour.

She reaches into her purse and brings out a WHITE ENVELOPE and hands it to Yee.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I wanted to be sure to donate to your campaign, though. You're a wonderful senator.

The event's photographer spots them and urges them to stand for a shot together.

Click.

The cameraman captures the two of them beaming--Yee subtly holding the envelope in his hand.

Yee discreetly hands off the check to Jackson who peeps inside.

INSERT: \$500 made out to SENATOR YEE FOR OFFICE

Yee clasps her hand firmly, yet tenderly.

Yee

Ms. Waltham, I can't thank you enough.

BRIEF MONTAGE of Yee receiving checks.

- Firm handshake. "I can't thank you enough"
Yee hands it off to Jackson.

Jackson peeps the check: \$500 SENATOR YEE FOR OFFICE

- Firm handshake. "I can't thank you enough"
Yee hands it off to Jackson.

Jackson peeps the check: \$500 SENATOR YEE FOR OFFICE

- Firm handshake. "I can't thank you enough"
Yee hands it off to Jackson.

Jackson peeps the check: \$500 SENATOR YEE FOR OFFICE

END MONTAGE

Yee (CONT'D)
Mr. Shelby!

GENE SHELBY, early 60s, turns. He's wearing a fine silk ascot.

SHELBY
Senator, an honor. You gave quite the rousing speech up there.

YEE
It comes easy when it's a topic so close to your heart.

SHELBY
I can tell. Well, I'm very happy to see you here so I can contribute to your cause.

He hands a WHITE ENVELOPE to Yee. Jackson puts his hand out to take the check--almost Pavlovian--but Yee holds on to it.

YEE
That's a truly fine ascot you're wearing. Italian?

SHELBY
Carvet, I believe.

YEE
French! How much does one of those cost--if you don't mind me asking.

SHELBY
Not at all. I'd say about a thousand dollars. I can put you in touch with my tailor if you're ready to step into a finer suit.

Yee opens the envelope: \$250. SENATOR YEE FOR OFFICE.

He shakes Shelby's hand and slides the envelope back into his pocket.

YEE
No, that won't be necessary. But perhaps I can put you in contact with Jackson here when you're ready to donate to the campaign.

And he politely, yet pointedly, leaves Shelby with Jackson.

JACKSON

The legal limit is five hundred dollars.

SHELBY

What if I want to donate more than five hundred?

Jackson smiles mischievously.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

It's wet and dilapidated--no one cares enough to maintain it, which makes it the perfect place for an illegal sale.

Two men and a few cases of liquor are illuminated by a van's headlights.

VINCENT ROSSI, 30s, from Jersey and looks like he could be an extra in The Sopranos.

JUN, 19 and boyish--he constantly vapes like his life depended on it. Right now he has his phone camera out, snapping a shot of the moonlight streaking through the rotting slats on the roof.

VINCENT

Put the phone away, you idiot. You trying to create a paper trail?

JUN

It's just for Instagram. It's not like I'm taking a shot of the goods.

VINCENT

Focus on the job.

JUN

I'm gonna be more than this job, you know.

VINCENT

I only want to see your phone out if you're getting me Yi-Wen's number.

A third person, VONG, late 30s and stoic, stands off in the shadows.

JUN

I ain't helpin' you fuck my cousin, bro.

VINCENT

Why not?

JUN

I gotta see her on the holidays. I
can't look at her straight if you
fucked her crooked.

VINCENT

Look at this.

(he spins around)

I'm prime real estate, baby.

JUN

You're in foreclosure, bro.

A car's headlights light up the warehouse as it approaches. It's a clean new BMW 5-series. Two men exit, one carrying a duffle bag.

Vong approaches them and they hug.

Vong

Alright, are we gonna do this?

VINCENT

(tapping the van)

It's all here.

The man with the duffle, CHALMERS, steps forward and tosses the bag to Vincent's feet.

CHALMERS

It's all there.

BOYD

Fourteen thousand nine hundred and
eighty.

Vincent looks at the two askew. Jun is incensed like a slighted teenager--enough to stop vaping for a second.

JUN

What the fuck? We said fifteen.

Vong raises his hand for Jun to stop. He doesn't.

JUN (CONT'D)

No, we said fifteen. This is xin
shou nonsense. You kiddin' me?

BOYD

The duffle cost twenty.

VINCENT
This fucking guy.

BOYD
The count is the count. I don't
make money by adding free swag.
This ain't a fucking birthday
party.

JUN
Hey, fuck your bullshit, man.

Vincent puts an arm on Jun to restrain him.

Vong
Hey. Keep your fuckin' lid on.
Zhong Kong Tong pays me to be here
to keep things easy, and that's
what I'ma do.

CHALMERS
As long as these guys aren't
shifting bootleg product.

JUN
Fuck you, we ain't hustlers.

Vong pulls out his gun and pistol whips Jun, breaking his nose.

VINCENT
Christ, man. What the fuck?

Vong
I told him to hold it down.

Jun grabs his nose, blood squirting everywhere. He's hurt and he got the message. Vincent steps up.

VINCENT
Alright. Alright. Let's just get to
dancin'.

He inspects Jun's nose while Chalmers begins loading the booze behind.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
(discreetly to Vong)
You really fucked him up, dude. I
gotta tell Dai Lo about this.