

OFFSIDE

Written by

William P. Barrett

Based on the novel OFFSIDE: A Mystery
By William P. Barrett

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3718 Canary Palm Ct., Las Vegas NV 89121
(702) 625-7189

FADE IN:

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE, CALIFORNIA--DAY

It's a sunny fall morning in 2006 in Valley Mirage, a largely upscale--and uptight--suburb of Los Angeles.

MONTAGE SHOWS SCENES OF VALLEY MIRAGE--DAY

--Pretty residential streets.

--A wide, fast-flowing freeway.

--Big new cars.

--Sign outside City Hall reads, "VALLEY MIRAGE: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S BEST SUBURB"

--Shots of several big homes. The last has a for-sale sign in front of it that says "Must Sell. Repo."

END MONTAGE

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

The gas station has a giant electronic message board on its sign prominently showing the date, the time and a message that changes daily. It reads, "Saturday, September 23, 2006, 9:20 a.m. Truth is a precious weapon; use it sparingly".

The changing message is Valley Mirage's moral conscience.

A GROWING SOUND materializes of voices and cheering.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE PARK--DAY

The large park has many soccer fields, all in use. A sign somewhere says VALLEY MIRAGE SOCCER LEAGUE. Children and young teens play soccer, their parents cheering them on, their coaches coaching. It is a festive scene, the epitome of America.

Some parents display large team banners with team names.

MONTAGE

--Parents hold banner reading "Sharp Shooters".

--Other parents hold banner reading "Victorious Secrets".

--Still other parents hold banner reading "Scared Kickless".

END MONTAGE

Parents line the sidelines. Some yell at various referees or intensely watch the action on the field. Many more are drinking coffee, looking at newspapers and talking to one another about non-soccer matters.

One parent along a sideline, BARRY BUTTON, holds court with other parents.

SUPER: "DR. BARRY BUTTON, SOCCER PARENT, UCLA ECONOMICS PROFESSOR"

BARRY

Home prices're way too high. Too much easy credit. U.S. history's the history of boom, bubble and bust. Now's the bubble.

A NEARBY PARENT

(after a swig of coffee)
So what'll happen?

BARRY

A bust. Triggered by something. Maybe fraud. And if everyone tries to sell? No buyers at good prices. Goodbye, home equity.

Button suddenly looks at the soccer field.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Get back, Chelsea! Get back!

Amid the clamor of the park, a VERY LOUD VOICE on a different field eventually dominates. It is that of DIEGO DIAZ. He is a stout, excitable, almost cartoonish Latino man in his late 40s with thinning hair.

Diego is not well educated but doesn't much care what you think.

SUPER: "DIEGO DIAZ, SOCCER COACH, L.A. GARBAGE TRUCK DRIVER"

Diego coaches a team of 12-year-old boys called the Artful Dodgers--it says that right on their jerseys. He loudly rattles off a stream of typical soccer coach comments.

DIEGO

(screaming)
Man on! Man on! Man on!

At the sound and force of his dominating voice, Canada geese migrating over the field veer in another direction.

On the soccer field before Diego, the other team gets a breakaway going. There are two players against Diego's goalkeeper and a defender.

Attacker without the ball stays even with the defender until the attacker dribbling the ball lobs a pass over the head of the defender. Teammate darts ahead to take the pass and scores an easy goal, booting the ball by the hapless keeper.

Diego expresses his displeasure.

DIEGO (CONT'D)
No goal, ref! Offside! He was
offside! Ahead of the defender! No
goal! Our kick!

Referee RICK HERMANNIK, who is also in his 40s and a little stout, chugs up the field behind the play.

SUPER: "RICK HERMANNIK, VOLUNTEER SOCCER REFEREE, REAL ESTATE APPRAISER"

Rick points to the center of the soccer field, signaling the goal is good. He whips out from a pocket an obviously fancy pen--the words "Grayson-Tighe" can be seen--as well as a gamecard and marks the goal.

Diego throws up his hands in disgust.

A MOMENT LATER

Rick blows his whistle and puts his arms out horizontally.

HERMANNIK
(shouting)
Halftime!

On the sideline, Diego again throws up his hands in disgust.

A MOMENT LATER

Rick is at the tent where referees check in for matches, rest between halves and get water. "Referee Tent" is stenciled on the roof.

RICK
Mark, signed up online to ref a
different match. Got switched to
Diaz's. Would rather experience an
earthquake. Why?

Sitting at the desk under the tent is MARK RIGAS.

SUPER: "MARK RIGAS, SOCCER PARENT, BOARD MEMBER, REAT ESTATE BROKER AND INVESTOR"

MARK

Uh, no idea. Computer does stuff.
And our systems don't always work
right.

Also sitting at the desk is MANNY WHITNEY.

SUPER: "MANNY WHITNEY, SOCCER PARENT, LEAGUE COMMISSIONER,
FUNERAL DIRCTOR"

Manny affects a soothing, unctuous manner befitting his day
job.

MANNY

Rick, probably was for the good of
the game.

MAYBE FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

It's the second half of Diego's match. A similar play arises:
another two-player breakaway against his team. Except this
time there is no defender other than the poor goalkeeper.

Attacker without the ball runs ahead of and eight yards off
to the far side of the attacker with the ball. Attacker with
the ball doesn't pass it to his teammate and easily scores.

Rick again signals it's a good goal by pointing to the center
of the field, takes out his fancy pen and marks the game
card.

DIEGO

Offside again, ref! Other player
was in front! In offside position!

Diego continues shouting, but his words can't be heard.
However, expressions of shock appear on the faces of some of
the parents and players near him.

MOMENTS LATER

Match over, Diego storms off the field and encounters a group
of league officials. Besides Whitney and Rigas, they include
GEORGE BRENNAN,

SUPER: "GEORGE BRENNAN, SOCCER PARENT, LEAGUE VICE
COMISSIONER, LAWYER"

SIDNEY KEATING,

SUPER: "SIDNEY KEATING, SOCCER PARENT, BOARD MEMBER,
STOCKBROKER"

and JANIS JOHNSON.

SUPER: "JANIS JOHNSON, SOCCER PARENT, BOARD MEMBER, WANNABE
POLITICIAN"

GEORGE

Diego, really shouldn't yell at
refs like that. Bad image for kids.
And hard to keep refs.

DIEGO

(aggressively)
How about keepin' coaches? We do
all the heavy liftin'.

Manny, George, Mark, Sidney and Janis look at one another.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

Parents have those big fancy jobs
downtown. Hollywood. Can't get back
in their fancy cars weekdays to
coach practices. Stuck on "the 5."
"The 101." "The 405."

Diego uses his fingers to make air quotes as he mentions the
freeways.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

You *need* Latino worker bees like
me.

A MOMENT LATER

Having calmed down a bit, Diego hugs a cute young Latina
woman with a dog, an expressive basset hound.

SUPER: "DORA DIAZ, ONLY CHILD OF DIEGO DIAZ, OFFICE MANAGER"

DORA

Hi, Daddy!

Diego nods frostily toward the fit, handsome young Latino man
in his mid-20s with Dora. He is HECTOR RIVERA.

SUPER: "HECTOR RIVERA, DORA'S FIANCÉ, SOCCER COACH, CONSUMER
PRODUCTS REPAIRMAN"

Unlike Diego, Hector is polite, soft-spoken and deferential. He has a bag of soccer balls and a clipboard, indicating he is about to coach a match. Diego's body language suggests he is not terribly fond of his daughter's future husband.

DIEGO

Damn ref. Loves talking 'bout that twenty-four grand pen he uses to mark goals 'gainst me.

HECTOR

Sort of hard to blame the ref when losin' six nothin'.

Diego gives Hector a dirty look.

DIEGO

Who ya for?

(pause)

Hey, what'd ya think of those no-offside calls?

HECTOR

Looked okay to me.

Diego gives Hector another dirty look.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

First one, teammate wasn't ahead when dribbler kicked the ball t'him. No offside position. So no offside.

Diego continues to give Hector a dirty look.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Second one, teammate was in offside position. But doing nothin'. Didn't get the ball. No pass. No offside.

Diego frowns again.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

All covered in that pre-season laws refresher we went to couple weeks back.

FLASHBACK--INT. VALLEY MIRAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA--NIGHT

Crowded room of referees, coaches and league officials listen to a presentation by two soccer laws instructors. Clock on wall reads 6:22 p.m.

Among those seen seated in the room are Diego, Hector, Manny, Diaz, George, Sidney, Mark, Janis and Rick.

One lecturer is BILL ROGERS.

SUPER: "BILL ROGERS, SOCCER PARENT, BOARD MEMBER, ACCOUNTANT"

BILL

Offside's been in the laws forever.
Once called sneaking. Most
misunderstood rule in soccer.

The other lecturer is HARRY BARNETT.

SUPER: "HARRY BARNETT, SOCCER PARENT, BOARD MEMBER, LIQUOR STORE OWNER"

They take turns making points, almost like they're a comedy act.

HARRY

Maybe in all of sport!

BILL

It's complicated. Like life itself.

HARRY

And it's singular. No S.

BILL

Attacking player ahead of both
teammate with the ball and next-to-
last defender is in offside
position.

HARRY

Teammate behind him passes the ball
and he kicks it.

BILL

Bam! Offside!

HARRY

But it's not an offense just to be
in an offside position.

BILL

Offside player has to get involved.
Usually by touchin' the ball.

HARRY

No pass, usually no offside.

BILL

But a player in an offside position
can be guilty of offside without a
pass or touch.

HARRY

Like if he blocks the keeper's view
or somehow interferes.

BILL

Coaches and parents complain a lot
about offside calls or non-calls.
But rarely the players.

HARRY

Because they are right there.

BILL

And not drinkin' coffee or talkin'
'bout real estate.

TWO HOURS LATER

Clock on the wall reads 8:34 p.m. Attendees wearily put their
written exams into a large box at the front as they prepare
to leave the room. The side of the box is labeled "Soccer
Laws Refresher Exam 2006".

BILL

Everyone, good news. Tests're just
to reinforce the review. Won't be
graded. No one can flunk.

DIEGO

Wish I had that rule in high
school.

One of the last to turn in an exam is Hector.

BILL

Hey, Hector. Got your van?

HECTOR

Yeah.

BILL

School doesn't like us leavin'
trash. Dumpsters're locked. Take
the box and chuck it somewhere.

HECTOR

Sure.

EXT. OUTSIDE VALLEY MIRAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA--NIGHT

Hector puts the box into his van, which on the side says "WeFixThingsRightNow". Below that is the sub-heading, "When You Need It To Work", with an image of a cartoon-like character glaring at a computer emitting smoke.

A glimpse into an open door of the van shows it is full of electronic parts and soccer junk.

BACK TO PRESENT TIME--VALLEY MIRAGE PARK--DAY

DIEGO

Hermannik is just a lousy ref.

Diego suddenly clasps his hands in front of him and looks upward.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

Dear Lord. In the past year you took away my favorite comic, Richard Pryor. My favorite actor, Don Knotts. My favorite singer, Lou Rawls.

Hector and Dora look puzzled, as do SEVERAL SOCCER PARENTS passing by.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

Dear Lord, I just wanna tell ya Rick Hermannik's my favorite referee."

Diego grins slyly. Hector suppresses a laugh. Dora looks alarmed. The passing soccer parents frown and hurry away. Dog hunches down on the ground and whines.

HECTOR

You're a funny guy, Diego. But be careful. Someone could take that wrong.

Diego gives Hector yet another dirty look.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--NIGHT

Unit is a dreary second-floor garden-style apartment in an older, run-down section of Valley Mirage. Clock on wall reads 7:10 p.m.

Hector and Dora are cooking in the tiny kitchen together. Their conversation comes as they move back and forth, almost choreographed. The dog sits on the edge of the kitchen on the floor eagerly hoping for droppings.

Hector cuts celery using a big knife.

HECTOR

Don't think your dad likes me much.

Dora strains vegetables in a spinning colander.

DORA

Oh, he's just jealous you're fit. Younger. Better-looking. Have winning soccer teams. Nothin' personal.

Hector continues chopping, but with more force.

HECTOR

Yeah.

DORA

He hasn't liked anyone I've been with.

HECTOR

(looking up)

Look. I know he grew up in East Los Angeles. Tough area.

DORA

True.

HECTOR

Dropped out of high school. Hard life. Managed to buy a small home here.

DORA

Where I grew up as the only child!

Hector smiles.

HECTOR

Best thing he ever did.

DORA DIAZ

(brightly)

Yes!

HECTOR

Lost it in the divorce.

DORA
(frowning)
Yep.

HECTOR
Now livin' alone in a nearby flat
like this. Coaches youth soccer to
feel important in Valley Mirage.

DORA DIAZ
He cares about his players!

HECTOR
Valley Mirage's pretty swank. Older
parts like here are for Latino
hired help like us.

Dora stops preparing food.

DORA
You sound bitter.

HECTOR
Oh, life could be worse. But it
peaked for me when Valley Mirage
High won the state soccer
championship.

DORA
You were the captain!

HECTOR
Yeah. Got a partial soccer
scholarship to Cal State. Had to
drop out after two years. Not 'nuff
money.

DORA
I didn't even get to college.

HECTOR
Yeah, but you run an office. Tell
people what to do.

DORA
But I still have a boss.

HECTOR
I liked college. Liked studyin'.
Readin'. Doin' research. Should've
played football. Or basketball.
Bigger scholarships.

DORA
Not your sports.

HECTOR
So what do I do now?

DORA
Repair complicated stuff! Fix computers!

HECTOR
Sure. Business card calls me technology consultant. What I really do? Go to people's homes and repair their out-of-warranty gear.

Rivera squeezes a rag.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Oversized popcorn machines. Indoor golf driving ranges. Motorized cat-litter boxes.

DORA
Hey, cats have to poop somewhere.

HECTOR
All by-products of an affluent, conspicuously consumptive consumer society.

DORA
Oooh, such big words!

HECTOR
Companies roll out fancy new products. Market the hell out of 'em. Keep quality low so they break down. Folks have to get new ones.

DORA
Or call WeFixThingsRightNow.

HECTOR
Correcto.

DORA
You get a van to use for off-hours. Job helps pay for food. Rent. Stuff.

Hector is almost talking to himself.

HECTOR

Not that I really do much. A touch of oil fixes the motor. Hold down the off-on button for fifteen seconds. Gizmo resets itself.

DORA

Voila!

HECTOR

Good thing for me most people lose their service manuals.

DORA

You mean good thing for us!

HECTOR

Sometimes I even get praised as another Einstein. Depressing'.

DORA

(puzzled)
Why?

HECTOR

Einstein never helped cats poop before comin' up with E equals MC squared.

DORA

You don't know that.

HECTOR

So I coach soccer to keep my sanity. And to kill time. Not unlike Diego, I suppose.

DORA

You're good at it!

HECTOR

At least I don't scream bad things at referees.

Dora quickly changes the topic.

DORA

Uh, let's eat!

SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Clock on wall shows 8:58 p.m. Hector and Dora have finished dinner and are sitting next to each other on the ratty couch in their living room.

They hold hands around the dog, which is curled up between them asleep.

HECTOR

Time to watch "Perry Mason."

DORA

You love that old courtroom TV show. 'cause you always guess the killer. Me, I'm more "America's Next Top Model."

HECTOR

I like "Perry Mason" a lot better than "Law and Order."

DORA

Because?

HECTOR

Everything in "Law and Order" is from the perspective of cops and prosecutors.

DORA

So?

HECTOR

Latinos growin' up in Southern California don't always see a lot of merit in the perspective of cops and prosecutors.

DORA

Look, Hector. You're smarter than anyone I know. Quit your job. Get your degree. Then law school. And change the system!

Dog looks up and wags its tail. Hector sighs.

HECTOR

A nice thought. No ambition.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Monday, September 25, 2006, 7:40 a.m. Money often costs too much."

Hector in his WeFixThingsRightNow van drives past the sign.

MONTAGE--HECTOR HAS A TYPICAL WORK DAY FIXING SILLY GIZMOS

--Having passed a sign for Burbank, he works on a truly giant stand-alone popcorn machine while the owner waits eagerly licking his chops.

--Having passed a sign for Silver Lake, he wiggles behind an indoor golf-driving range that ludicrously nearly takes up an entire living room to push and hold the off-on button for a reset. The owner, decked out in golfing gear, practices his swing in the adjoining hallway.

--Having passed a sign for Northridge, he sits on a bathroom floor adding a drop of oil to the motor of a mechanized cat-litter box. A cat rubs up behind him and meows. Rivera looks annoyed, scrunching up his nose at the smell.

END MONTAGE

EXT. DOS HOMBRES SALOON--NIGHT

Hector's van is parked outside a neighborhood bar.

INT. DOS HOMBRES SALOON--NIGHT

Hector has a beer with SCOTT AMBROSE.

SUPER: "SCOTT AMBROSE, SOCCER PARENT AND COACH, REAL ESTATE LEASING"

Scott is maybe 15 years older than Hector, college educated, sophisticated and well read.

SCOTT

Someone once wrote Los Angeles was a commodity to be advertised and sold like mouthwash. I agree.

HECTOR

A bitter taste for some.

SCOTT

So much California history and image is sketchy. Riddled with racism and often made up.

HECTOR

F'instance?

SCOTT

State's named for a character in a sixteenth century Spanish novel. A lesbian queen into bestiality and murder.

HECTOR

Sounds like a movie plot.

SCOTT

Honest. Nordhoff Street, major drag in the Valley?

HECTOR

(grimacing)

Fixed a cat litter box there today.

SCOTT

Named for a P.R. man secretly working for railroads. Made up stories to draw white settlers.

HECTOR

Watch what you wish for.

SCOTT

The mighty University of Southern California?

HECTOR

The Trojans!

SCOTT

Second president wrote a best-selling book saying L.A. would become a center of white supremacy.

HECTOR

Not anymore. Latinos like me are like forty percent of the population.

SCOTT

Ever been in Arcadia?

HECTOR

Sure. Just below the San Gabriels. Fix stuff there all the time.

SCOTT

Famous for the Santa Anita Park race track. Infamous for an old written pledge by city leaders to stay "Caucasian Forever."

HECTOR

Not anymore. Mostly Asian now.

SCOTT

Out here it's how you look. Beverly Hills tops America in plastic surgeons per capita.

HECTOR

Not surprising, based on what I've seen there during calls.

SCOTT

Or Pasadena. Historic mansions. CalTech. Rose Bowl. Rose Parade.

HECTOR

Dora and I went one New Years.

SCOTT

And some of the state's worst public schools.

HECTOR

Can't have everything.

SCOTT

Consider our Valley Mirage.

HECTOR

Okay. I'm considerin'.

SCOTT

Was given its name long ago by a cynical developer. Figured it would sound good.

HECTOR

Come to think 'bout it, there is no valley here.

SCOTT

Righto. Also figured he could keep out new minorities. 'til courts made that illegal.

HECTOR

Good for me.

SCOTT

City council's still elected at large. No districts. So a Latino can't get elected in the 'hood.

HECTOR

Figures.

SCOTT

Los Angeles County gets wildfires.
Earthquakes. Landslides. Flooding.
Insane Santa Ana winds.

HECTOR

Life in LaLa Land.

SCOTT

Yet nearly 10 million folks live
here. One out of every 30
Americans. Makes little sense.

HECTOR

At least it's sunny.
(pause)
When there's no smog.

SCOTT

Everyone out here is workin' an
angle. Even in the soccer league.

HECTOR

How's that?

SCOTT

Manny Whitney is lookin' for his
next body. George Brennan his next
car accident.

HECTOR

Could be the same incident.

SCOTT

Sidney Keating his next brokerage
client. Mark Rigas his next
property deal. Janis Johnson
voters.

HECTOR

Speakin' of real estate, why do I
see more repo signs?

SCOTT

Blame Washington. After nine-
eleven, pols wanted to shore up the
economy. By makin' home loans
easier, cheaper to get.

HECTOR

Okay.

SCOTT
Also blame Wall Street. Bought those loans, put 'em into big bundles and resold them to investors.

HECTOR
What's wrong with that?

SCOTT
Wall Street didn't keep the loans. So they didn't care 'bout credit quality. Or what happened to investors. Or to homeowners.

HECTOR
So?

SCOTT
Borrowers no longer needed twenty percent down, good credit. Even much of a job. Didn't even have to pay back principal every month.

HECTOR
Sounds sketchy.

SCOTT
They're called NINJA loans.

HECTOR
Ninja?

SCOTT
Short for no income, no job or assets. Also called loser loans.

HECTOR
Ninja sounds better.

Scott takes a swig of beer and looks at his mug.

SCOTT
Then there're all those adjustable rate mortgages. Called ARMs.

HECTOR
Heard 'bout them.

SCOTT
Rates started low. Like two-and-a-half percent. To get homeowners hooked. But now rates're resetting to levels owners can't afford.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Five, six percent! And gotta start
 payin' back principal.

Scott looks up at Hector.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Welcome to Repo City.

HECTOR
 Think I need another beer.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Tuesday, September 26, 2006, 7:50 a.m. The golden rule: Those with gold make the rules".

Hector in his WeFixThingsRightNow van drives past the sign.

MONTAGE--HECTOR HAS ANOTHER TYPICAL WORK DAY FIXING SILLY GIZMOS

--Having passed a sign for Sierra Madre, Hector in a home pushes a button on a giant platform vibrating exercise machine bearing the label "ShakeOffTheWeight" as a woman in exercise garb and high heels waits to get back on.

--Having passed a sign for Whittier, Hector gets on a ladder in a home to fix a giant-screen television bolted to the ceiling of a bedroom.

--Having passed a sign for Long Beach, Hector sits on the floor fixing a fancy but toy ATM machine while a mother and her three-year-old child, holding an "ATM card," wait expectantly.

END MONTAGE

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE STREET--DUSK

Hector and his truck have been pulled over to the side by a burly Valley Mirage motorcycle cop with flashing lights on his vehicle. The helmet-wearing cop stands at Hector's rolled-down window.

MOTORCYCLE COP
 Came up clean. Here's your license
 back. You were weaving a bit. Watch
 how you drive.

HECTOR
Okay, officer.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Hey, your name sounds familiar.
Didn't you captain that high school
state championship soccer team a
few years back?

HECTOR
I did.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Me, I'm a tackle football guy.

HECTOR
Uh, okay.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Soccer's too boring. Confusing.

HECTOR
What's so confusing? Hands are bad.
Feet good. Just kick the ball into
the box at the end of the field.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Offsides. Don't understand it. All
it does is stop promising plays.

HECTOR
Think it's offside. No S.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Whatever.

HECTOR
Don't like stops? Football stops
after every single play. Refs have
to handle the ball.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Also don't like it that the clock
ticks up rather than down.

HECTOR
A little easier for the ref to keep
track of things. 'cause play rarely
stops. Really makes no difference.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Hey! How can a Latino like you
afford to live in Valley Mirage?

HECTOR
Rent in the poor section. Split
bills with a roommate. I'm frugal.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Too much for me. Have to live way
over in Simi Valley.

HECTOR
We all make our choices in life.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--NIGHT

Hector and Dora are eating dinner at the kitchen table.

HECTOR
Got stopped again by a Valley
Mirage cop. Said I was weavin' a
bit. A pretext to run my ID. See if
I'm wanted for anything.

Dora rolls her eyes.

DORA
You wanted? Talk about barkin' up
the wrong tree.

HECTOR
My real offense was DWL. Driving
While Latino. Big crime 'round
here.

DORA
So what happened?

HECTOR
Came up clean. His dashcam would
show I wasn't weaving. Let me off
with a warning.

DORA
What was the warning?

HECTOR
Don't drive while Latino.

DORA
(eyes widening)
You're kiddin'!

HECTOR
I am. But not by much.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Wednesday, September 27, 2006, 7:50 a.m. "Money often costs too much".

It's the morning rush hour in Valley Mirage. As a string of fancy, high-end cars pass by the sign, camera picks up on an old beat-up car that eventually comes to a stop several blocks away in the driveway of a home.

EXT. RICK'S HOUSE--DAY

By Valley Mirage standards, the home is a bit on the smallish side. A discreet sign next to the door says, "Richard A. Hermannik, real estate appraisals".

ROSE CALDERA, the driver, gets out of the car, lugging a vacuum cleaner and assorted cleaning materials. A large Latino woman of uncertain age with a weathered face, she is obviously a cleaning lady.

SUPER: "ROSE CALDERA, CLEANING LADY"

EXT. RICK'S FRONT DOOR--DAY

Rose, at the front door, turns the handle, finds the door unlocked and opens it.

ROSE
"Buenos días, Mister Rick. Mister
Rick?"

Getting no response, Rose goes inside with her gear and disappears from view. It is obvious she is used to cleaning when Hermannik is not there.

A MOMENT LATER

There is a scream. Rose runs out of the house onto the sidewalk hysterically shouting and pointing to the house.

ROSE (CONT'D)
¡Está muerto! ¡Está muerto! ¡Está
muerto! ¡Está muerto!

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF RICK'S HOUSE--DAY

Passers-by on foot and in vehicles stop. Much commotion ensues. A passing parcel delivery van stops. A DELIVERY VAN DRIVER dials 911 on his cell.

DELIVERY VAN DRIVER

Look, my Spanish ain't the greatest. But I think there's a woman here screamin' someone is dead.

MOMENTS LATER

EMTs and cops have arrived. Some have entered house.

Hector happens to be passing by in his work van starting his workday. He slows down because of the congestion, then continues on his way.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF RICK'S HOUSE--DAY

HAL EASTBROOK, a neighbor, speaks to COP 1.

SUPER: "HAL EASTBROOK, SOCCER PARENT, STAY-AT-HOME DAD"

HAL

He referees youth soccer on weekends. On Saturday, had a loud run-in with a coach. Over an offside call.

COP 1

(incorrectly using the plural)
It figures. No one understands offsides.

INT. RICK'S HOME OFFICE--DAY

Rick's body, face down, lies on the floor in front of the desk with his computer. Only the top part of his body is in view. There are several EMTs and law enforcement personnel in the room, including EMT 1, COP 2 and COP 3.

EMT 1

(talking to cops)
Looks like he's been dead a day or two. I'm not the medical examiner. But sure looks like a murder. Strangled by a cord 'round his neck. No pants.

COP 2

Okay.

EMT 1

There's one other thing ...

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF RICK'S HOUSE--DAY

Hal is still talking to Cop 1

HAL

It was quite the run-in. The coach yelled where the referee could put his whistle. In a place where the sun don't shine.

INT. RICK'S HOME OFFICE--DAY

Cop 2, who is wearing a glove, touches the computer keyboard. Screen suddenly powers up. Cop 2 peers at the screen, the text on which can't be seen by us.

COP 2

Looks like he was interrupted writin' some kind of report for a soccer league.

COP 3

What does it say?

COP 2

(looking at the screen)
Something about a threat he received on the phone a half-hour earlier from a coach about a no-offside call. Sort of trails off.

COP 3

Does he name that someone?

Cop 2 squints at the screen.

COP 2

Uh, San Diego.

COP 3

(annoyed)
That's a city, not a person!

Cop 2 squints at the screen again.

COP 2

Oh. Diaz. Diego Diaz.

LATER THE SAME DAY

EXT. OUTSIDE DIEGO APARTMENT--DAY

Like his daughter, Diego lives in an older, run-down garden apartment complex in Valley Mirage with a parking lot in front. A Valley Mirage police car is seen parked in a corner.

Passing the police car, Diego drives up in his pick-up truck, coming home from work. He parks, gets out and walks toward his apartment. He looks up to see two uniformed cops come up to him with guns drawn. They are Cop 2 and Cop 3.

COP 2

Mr. Diaz?

DIEGO

That's me.

He sees the guns.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

Hey, why you pointing them at me?

COP 2

Police officers. Turn around.
Frisking you. Under arrest for
suspicion of murder.

DIEGO

(as he complies)
Murder? Of who?

COP 3

Rick Hermannik.

DIEGO

How can he be dead? Sonoabitch just
refereed my match.

COP 3

Found dead this morning. Strangled
in his home.

Diaz flinches.

DIEGO

What? You're kiddin'!

COP 2

Put your arms behind you.

Cop 2 slaps on handcuffs.

DIEGO

Hey, what's this?

COP 2
Coming to headquarters.

Cop 3 leans over to Cop 2 and whispers something. Cop 2 pulls a laminated card out of his shirt pocket. He starts reading from it in haltingly awkward and extremely mispronounced Spanish.

COP 2 (CONT'D)
You have the right to remain
silent. Anything you say can be
used against you--

Diego cuts him off.

DIEGO
Hey, I know my Miranda rights. But
why the Spanish?

COP 2
Well, uh, uh. You're, uh, Latino.

DIEGO
Yeah, but you're not. That's the
problem 'round here. You sound like
a three-year-old. Stick to English!

Chastened, Cop 2 flips over the laminated card and continues reading in English.

COP 2
Uh, okay. You have the right to
remain silent. Anything you say can
be used against you ...

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--NIGHT

Hector and Dora sit glumly on their sofa watching television news accounts of Diego's arrest, clicking from channel to channel. The dog is also on the sofa and not happy.

ON THE TV SCREEN

ANCHOR 1 intones in front of a mish-mash graphic showing a bloody soccer ball and a random photo from a past World Cup match.

ANCHOR 1
Tonight in suburban Valley Mirage.
A referee of youth soccer is dead.
A coach stands accused of his
murder and desecrating the body.
And there is video.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

DORA
Desecrating? Video?

ON THE TV SCREEN

ANCHOR 1
A brand new service on the Internet called YouTube allows anyone to display video shot with their camcorder or cellphone. Someone posted this clip.

A somewhat shaky, grainy video shows Diego shouting at Hermannik.

DIEGO
You are your game! You and your whistle! Someone should shove it where it belongs!

ANCHOR 1
That coach is Diego Diaz. He is accused of the murder of that referee, Richard Hermannik. Found strangled in his home.

BACK TO APARTMENT

DORA
No!

ON THE TV SCREEN

ANCHOR 1
And authorities report his whistle was inserted in his body in an, ah, unnatural place.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

DORA
Oh my God!

Hector uses the clicker to change the channel.

ON THE TV SCREEN

ANCHOR 2 is speaking against a backdrop of video of rioting soccer fans in another country.

ANCHOR 2

A search warrant was issued for Diaz's home. Paperwork says cops found a half-written report on Hermannik's computer screen.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

DORA

What did it say?

ON THE TV SCREEN

ANCHOR 2

The report said Diaz had just called to complain angrily about an offside call in that match.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

DORA DIAZ

Oh my God!

Hector uses the clicker to change the channel.

ON THE TV SCREEN

ANCHOR 3 speaks next to a photo of Rick cribbed from a webpage.

ANCHOR 3

Forty-seven-year-old Hermannik was a part-time soccer referee. His day job was an real estate appraiser in booming Valley Mirage. He was unmarried and lived alone in the home where his body was found.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

Hector uses the clicker to change the channel.

ON THE TV SCREEN

ANCHOR 4 speaks in front of a stock image of a Valley Mirage Police badge.

ANCHOR 4

Valley Mirage Police are investigating. Anyone with information is asked to contact Detective Reynolds Wolfington.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

Hector uses the clicker to turn off the TV.

HECTOR
Yeah, Wolfie. We all know 'bout
him. Hates Latinos. Thinks we're
all one big gang.

Dora begins sobbing.

DORA
What about Daddy?

HECTOR
Hope he has a good lawyer.

DORA
(angrily)
What does that mean?

HECTOR
Well, Diego is a hothead.

DORA
You think he did it?

Rivera realizes how upset Dora is.

HECTOR
Well, uh, uh, I hope not.

DORA
Look. I don't want to be engaged to
someone who thinks my daddy is a
killer.

HECTOR
Okay. Calm down. Let's talk 'bout
this.

DORA
You're the one who's got some
talking to do.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Thursday, September 28, 2006, 6:20 a.m. IRS: The
trick is to stop thinking about it as 'your' money."

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Hector and Dora are asleep in bed when there is a heavy pounding on the door. They wake up. Hector looks at the clock by the bed.

RIVERA
Too early for the Mormons or
Jehovah Witnesses.

Hector gets up, puts on a bathrobe and opens the door.

INT./EXT. ENTRANCE TO HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Valley Mirage Police Detective Captain REYNOLDS WOLFINGTON and Sergeant DENNIS KELLY stand framed in the entranceway.

SUPER: "REYNOLDS WOLFINGTON, VALLEY MIRAGE POLICE DETECTIVE CAPTAIN"

SUPER: "DENNIS KELLY, VALLEY MIRAGE POLICE SERGEANT"

In physical appearance they somewhat resemble Laurel and Hardy. Reynolds is a hulking fellow and does all the talking. Dennis is the opposite, slim and quiet. Reynolds is in a suit. Dennis is in a police uniform.

Reynolds holds out a badge.

REYNOLDS
Detective Captain Reynolds
Wolfington. Valley Mirage Police.
This is Sergeant Dennis Kelly. Like
to have a word with you.

HECTOR
Sure. What do you want?

REYNOLDS
You can tell us everything you know
about the murder of Rick Hermannik.

HECTOR
That's easy, Detective. Nothin'.
'cept what's been in the media.

REYNOLDS
(a tad accusingly)
Where were you?

HECTOR
Where was I when?

REYNOLDS
During the murder.

HECTOR
Well, when was that?

REYNOLDS
'bout 9:15 Tuesday night.

HECTOR
Right here with Dora. My fiancée.
Watching TV.

REYNOLDS
(sarcastically)
With the murder suspect's daughter.
What a convenient alibi.

HECTOR
Don't need an alibi. Haven't done
anything.

REYNOLDS
Diaz needed a look-out. Or a
getaway driver.

HECTOR
Not me.

REYNOLDS
Diaz doesn't have much of an alibi,
either.

HECTOR
Oh?

REYNOLDS
Told us he got a phone call 'bout
nine from a man named Jerry. Said
Jerry told him he had found a check
on the ground made out to Diaz.

HECTOR
Okay.

REYNOLDS
Would wait for him in a fast-food
joint parking lot 'bout 20 minutes
away.

HECTOR
And?

REYNOLDS

Diaz said he drove over to the joint. No Jerry and no check. Said the joint was closed. Drove home.

HECTOR

Okay.

REYNOLDS

His alleged trip just happened to happen while the murder was taking place. Diaz can't verify his alibi.

HECTOR

Can't help you.

REYNOLDS

Course, we have that YouToo video of Diaz yelling where Hermannik could put his whistle. Almost a confession.

HECTOR

Detective, I think you mean You Tube. Not YouToo.

REYNOLDS

So you know something about it!

HECTOR

Well, younger generation's a little more hip on tech. And I partly repair computers for a livin'.

Reynolds points to the parking lot below.

REYNOLDS

I see from your truck.

HECTOR

So sure, I know YouTube. But I was there when Diego shouted.

REYNOLDS

Plus the message on Hermannik's computer screen about Diego calling to bitch.

HECTOR

Saw that on the news.

REYNOLDS

Diaz had the means, motive and opportunity. Case closed.

HECTOR
Uh, if that's so, why are you here?

Reynolds becomes a little flustered.

REYNOLDS
Uh, uh. Just trying' to tie up some loose ends.

HECTOR
Okay. So the case isn't closed.

Realizing Hector just called his bluff, Reynolds tries to cover up by being more threatening.

REYNOLDS
Listen, Rivera, you're not out of the woods on this yet. Remember, lying to a cop is a crime.

Hector stands there silently.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
So is obstruction of justice. Like trying to lead me in the wrong direction.

HECTOR
Okay. But I'm not leadin' you in any direction.

REYNOLDS
You're free to go.

HECTOR
Where to? This's my home.

Reynolds realizes how stupid his last comment was.

REYNOLDS
Yeah. Right. We're not finished with you.

Reynolds and Dennis leave. Hector closes the door.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Dora comes out of the bedroom in her nightgown. The dog is next to her. Dora has been listening to it all.

DORA DIAZ
Horrible man. But why didn't you stand up for Daddy?

HECTOR
 Conceded nothin'. Wolfie wasn't
 'bout to listen to me. Just doin'
 his job.

DORA
 You defended yourself!

HECTOR
 I know what I did. Or didn't do.

DORA
 So you think Daddy did it!

HECTOR
 Well, never heard 'bout a ref being
 killed. At least 'round here.
 Yelled at, f'sure. All the time, in
 fact.

Dora waits for a response.

DORA
 Yes?

HECTOR
 Ah, under Wolfie's theory, Diego
 told the world he'd assault
 Hermannik. Then did it in a way
 guaranteein' his arrest. Not very
 plausible.

DORA
 Why didn't ya point this out to
 Wolfie?

HECTOR
 Uh, didn't seem like the right
 time. Two against one.

DORA
 Well, if you don't support Daddy,
 it's going to be two against one
 again. Me and the dog against you.

Dog growls. Hector grimaces.

MONTAGE--HECTOR HAS ANOTHER TYPICAL DAY REPAIRING STRANGE
 GIZMOS

--Passing a sign for Azusa, he works on a truly large big-
 screen TV that covers the entire wall of a room so small
 there's hardly any space for someone to sit and watch.

--Passing a sign for La Canada, he jiggles a plug in a living room to start up a racing simulator. This is a giant contraption in which the owner--wearing a helmet--sits in a seat that vibrates surrounded by three large screens giving the illusion of racing in the Indianapolis 500.

--Passing a sign for North Hollywood, he sits on yet another bathroom floor adding yet another a drop of oil to the motor of yet another mechanized cat-litter box.

--He is seen driving in his van at the end of the day, clearly exhausted and worn out.

END MONTAGE

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE PARK--DAY

Hector is seen coaching his soccer team at a practice and appears much happier and animated.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--NIGHT

Hector and Dora sit glumly with the dog on the sofa watching TV.

ON THE TV SCREEN

One of the cable channels airs a panel discussion on the Hermannik murder involving a CONSERVATIVE PUNDIT and a LIBERAL PUNDIT. Both are blowhards.

CONSERVATIVE PUNDIT

We conservatives don't much like soccer. Too European. No head-crunching tacklin' like good ol' American football. Killing shows failure of liberal permissive thought!

LIBERAL PUNDIT

What do you mean? Sure, we liberals like soccer's egalitarian nature. Feet no hands. Less violence. But this is the failure of conservative law and order!

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

Hector uses the clicker to change to another cable channel.

ON THE TV SCREEN

A single full-of-himself opinion commentator, of uncertain political persuasion, speaks, looking at the camera.

OPINION COMMENTATOR

Maybe this is simply all about overbearing soccer parents. Soccer parents. Al Capone got better press. So did killer bees and Charles Manson. It's come to this.

Commentator holds up front page of a New York City tabloid newspaper. The big headline occupying most of the page is "Whistle Up The Wazoo".

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

Hector uses the clicker to turn off the TV.

HECTOR

National story now. Course, Diego technically isn't a soccer parent. You never played.

DORA

He didn't kill anyone!

HECTOR

Okay, okay.

DORA

Look, we have to do something. I saw Daddy's lawyer today. His divorce lawyer. Said Daddy won't get released on bail anytime soon.

HECTOR

Figures.

DORA

Said we need to hire a private detective. Lawyer says he needs some facts to work with. But Daddy doesn't have the money. We don't.

HECTOR

So?

DORA

Lawyer said we should poke around ourselves. He said be careful. Don't threaten anyone. Don't lie. Write down what we find.

HECTOR

Not sure takin' criminal defense
advice from a slimy divorce lawyer
is such a good idea.

Dora's face brightens with a mixture of excitement and
flirtatiousness.

DORA

We could do this together!

HECTOR

Like we don't have day jobs we
need. Let's see what happens.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Friday, September 29, 2006, 6:35 a.m. U.S.
economy is based on the inability of Americans to be
economic".

INT./EXT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Reynolds and Dennis are back and again pressuring Rivera in
the doorway.

REYNOLDS

Witness said your van passed by
Hermannik's house just after his
body was found. With you driving.

HECTOR

Probably true. Startin' my work
day. Heading toward the freeway to
go to Valencia. Fixing a giant walk-
in wine cooler.

REYNOLDS

Quite the coincidence.

HECTOR

What, a giant walk-in wine cooler
in Valencia? Everybody there drinks
a lot.

REYNOLDS

They say the perp always returns to
the scene of the crime.

HECTOR

Ain't no crime to be off to work.

REYNOLDS

Another witness told us after his crack 'bout the whistle, Diego prayed for God to strike Hermannik dead.

HECTOR

So get an arrest warrant for God. You'll put Valley Mirage back in the news.

Reynolds frowns, then continues.

REYNOLDS

Also learned Diaz was in an East Los Angeles gang. Early 70s. Questioned then 'bout a murder.

HECTOR

He would have been 15 years old. I wasn't born yet.

REYNOLDS

Maybe you later joined the same gang.

HECTOR

Never been in a gang. Lived in Pacoima, San Fernando Gardens, 'til age 10. Mom moved here to get me away from gang influence.

REYNOLDS

Hermannik's killin' could be a gang matter.

HECTOR

Doubt they off soccer refs. And how many years did Diego get for that killin' in the 70s?

Reynolds realizes Hector has called his bluff again.

REYNOLDS

Uh, none. He, uh, wasn't charged.

HECTOR

Why are you here again?

REYNOLDS

To tell you you're not in the clear.

HECTOR
So surprising.

A MOMENT LATER, AFTER REYNOLDS AND KELLY HAVE DEPARTED

Dora has come out of the bedroom in a robe and is hugging Hector.

DORA
I love your Mom!

HECTOR
She saved me. Didn't know my dad.

DORA
She had to take that job as a seamstress in the dry cleaning shop here.

HECTOR
But not such a bad living. 'cause none of the gringos know how to sew anymore.

DORA
Or some Latinas like me.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Saturday, September 30, 2006, 8:42 a.m. Don't seek revenge on people who are already miserable".

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE PARK--DAY

STREET OUTSIDE THE PARK

It's Soccer Saturday. A line of TV news vans is parked along the street. Reporters with their camera crews and microphones conduct interviews about the Hermannik murder as soccer families enter the park.

MIKE MILLS is interviewed with his wife and their 11-year-old daughter, dressed in a soccer uniform.

SUPER: "MIKE MILLS, SOCCER PARENT, ROCK MUSICIAN"

MIKE
It was terrible. But nobody likes referees.

PENNY RICHTER is interviewed as she enters with her 12-year-old son, also in a soccer uniform.

SUPER: "PENNY RICHTER, SOCCER PARENT, STAY-AT-HOME MOM"

PENNY

Well, I don't understand offside.
So I can see why the coach got mad.

CHRISTINE WALSH, a six-year-old who looks like Shirley Temple, is interviewed next to her approving parents and older brother dressed in a soccer uniform. She is not dressed in a uniform.

SUPER: "CHRISTINE WALSH, SOCCER SIBLING"

Walsh claps her hands over her ears.

CHRISTINE

Referee whistles are so loud!

INSIDE THE PARK

A small gathering of league officials, coaches and referees holds a brief memorial for Hermannik. Those present include Manny, George, Sidney, Janis and Hector. Mark leads the gathering.

MARK

We grieve the loss of a member of our soccer family. For me, he was a friend and associate. But for the good of the game, matches will be played today.

Standing at the back of the group, Hector turns and walks across the park. He lugs a bag of soccer balls to the field where his match is scheduled.

Some coaches, referees and parents watch him from a distance, murmuring among themselves and even pointing.

By his side glances with grimaces, Hector shows he is aware he is the object of their attention, and not happy about it.

A SHORT WHILE LATER

Hector is on the sideline coaching his team of 12-year-old boys, the Aardvarks. He is competently directing the players. Parents line the rest of the sidelines and talk among themselves.

PARENT 1

The whole of society is out here every week.

PARENT 2
Whadaya mean?

PARENT 1
Look over there.

Parent 1 points to a nondescript woman walking along the sidelines in a guilty manner, looking left and right. She then whispers in the ear of a man with a clipboard. She is HELEN MILLER.

PARENT 1 (CONT'D)
That's Helen Miller. She's The Spy.

PARENT 2
What?

PARENT 1
Lurks the other sideline for actionable intelligence. Like which player has to leave at half time for something. Then tells Hector's assistant coach.

PARENT 2
Oh.

PARENT 1
Or there.

Parent 1 nods toward a man standing nearby. He is HARVEY HENDLEY.

PARENT 1 (CONT'D)
Harvey Hendley. His nickname's The Optometrist.

PARENT 2
Why?

PARENT 1
Listen to him.

HARVEY
Ref, are you blind?
(pause)
Ref, are you blind?
(pause)
Ref, are you blind?

PARENT 2
Okay.

Down the sideline a bit is MAX MORRIS. An older man with an unkindly face, he sits in a chair and glares. At the players. At a piece of trash blowing by. At birds passing overhead.

PARENT 1

(pointing)

That's Max Morris. The Evil Eye. Glares at everything. If looks could kill, he'd be on San Quentin Death Row.

PARENT 2

Lethal ejection.

PARENT 1

We got 'em all. Expectant Fathers. Wild expectations for their kid. Gossip Girls. Talk about everything 'cept soccer.

PARENT 2

Like us.

PARENT 1

Rambos. Can't understand why defender can't just take out an attacker. Julia Childs. Halftime orange peels for players, but oblivious to the match.

PARENT 2

Makes me hungry.

Hector continues to coach, but coaches parents as much as his players.

MONTAGE--HECTOR HANDLES PARENTS.

--Hector deals with QUARRELING PARENTS.

HECTOR

Look, I know you're gettin' divorced. So just stand at opposite ends of the field.

--Hector deals with a HYPERVENTILATING PARENT.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Just breath slowly. Sloooooowly.

--Hector explains basic soccer rules to a QUICK SUCCESSION OF PARENTS.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 (to one parent)
 Yes, it's legal for a big opponent
 to bump a smaller player off the
 ball.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 (to another parent)
 No, it's not handball unless the
 player deliberately touches the
 ball.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 (to a third parent)
 No, it's not a foul every time
 someone falls down.

END MONTAGE

AFTER THE MATCH IS OVER

Hector's players gather in a circle and cheer.

ASSISTANT COACH
 I'll take a four-to-one win
 anytime.

HECTOR
 Beats some of the alternatives.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Hector drags his ball bag across the fields toward the
 parking lot where his van is parked. He falls in step with
 two yellow-shirted referees.

REFEREE 1
 Hey, Hector, we don't think you did
 anything. You never yell at refs.

HECTOR
 Thanks. But I'm not charged with
 anything. Diego is.

REFEREE 2
 He *does* yell at refs. All the time.
 None of us likes officiatin' his
 matches.

HECTOR
 So I hear.

REFEREE 1

In fact, Rick told me after that match he got switched to it at the last minute. Wasn't happy 'bout reffing Diego.

HECTOR

Oh? Switched by whom?

REFEREE 1

The computer system, I think he was told.

HECTOR

These things have minds of their own. But someone still has to program 'em.

REFEREE 2

There but for the grace of God go any of us.

A MOMENT LATER

Hector, still walking across the fields toward his van, sees more parents pointing toward him and murmuring.

He looks off in one direction and sees board members Manny, George, Sidney, Mark, Janis, Bill and Harry together watching him.

He looks off in another direction and sees Reynolds and Dennis, dressed awkwardly in casual civilian clothes, watching him like he is under surveillance.

As Hector nears his van, he crosses himself.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--NIGHT

HECTOR

Everyone was watchin' me. Even Wolfie. Not a good sign.

DORA

At least you're not in jail like Daddy!

HECTOR

Would be if Wolfie had his way.

DORA

Doesn't he need some evidence?

HECTOR

This is Southern California. I'm Latino. He doesn't need much.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Sunday, October 1, 2006, 10:10 a.m. If money is the root of all evil, what is the root of all money?"

Hector passes by driving his WeFixThingsRightNow van on his way to a supermarket.

INT. WEFIXTHINGSRIGHTNOW VAN--DAY

As Hector pulls into the supermarket parking lot, his phone chirps that an email has come in. He looks at his phone. A look of disgust crosses his face.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Hector shows Dora the message on his cell phone.

DORA

(reading from the screen)
"Go back where you came from,
killer, or else we'll finish the
job."

HECTOR

I was born in L.A.

DORA

Hector, be careful!

HECTOR

Email came from an untraceable
source.

DORA

Evil people are out there!

HECTOR

A lot of folks in Valley Mirage
soccer know of my connection--you--
with Diego. But who else?

DORA

Time to go visit Daddy.

EXT. PETER J. PITCHESS DETENTION FACILITY--DAY

Sign outside large jail complex reads "PETER J. PITCHESS
DETENTION FACILITY--COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES"

Hector passes by driving his WeFixThingsRightNow van. Dora is
in the passenger seat.

INT. JAIL VISITATION ROOM--DAY

The long, thin room is painted a drab, sickly green. Down the
middle is a wall with windows, stools and a telephone hanging
from the wall by which visitors can speak with inmates on the
other side. Guards patrol.

The room is crowded. Dora and Hector are at one window
sharing and holding the phone like it's a walkie-talkie.
Diego, in a prison jumpsuit, is on the other side holding his
phone to his ear.

DIEGO

Hate this place. But I'm a hero to
lots of guys here.

DORA

Why?

DIEGO

'cause I'm accused of killin' a
ref. Authority figure.

DORA

Daddy, I'm worried.

DIEGO

Most everybody here played soccer
growin' up. If there was a vote,
I'd be elected mayor of the jail.

Hector giggles.

DIEGO (CONT'D)

What you laughing at?

HECTOR

Your, ah, way with words.

DIEGO

Wish you'd find the words to get me
outta here. They won't give me bail
'cause it's a killin'. Didn't do
nothin'!

DORA
I believe you, Daddy!

DIEGO
(looking at Hector)
You?

HECTOR
Cops say you need proof for your
alibi.

DIEGO
So go look! Obviously, I'm not in a
position to find any here.

HECTOR
(after a pause)
Know anything that might help your
case?

DIEGO
Sure!

DORA
(surprised)
You do?

DIEGO
(shouting into the phone)
Figure out who had it in for
Hermannik! That's who was offside!

EXT. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FREEWAY--DAY

Hector drives his van, with Dora in the passenger's seat.

INT. HECTOR'S VAN--DAY

Soccer balls rattle around in the back of the van.
Occasionally, one pops into the front seat.

DORA
Could've been a little more
sympathetic.

HECTOR
Thought I was. Asked 'bout anything
that could help him.

DORA
He didn't do it. What would he
know?

HECTOR
Insight can come from anywhere.
Even from Diego.

DORA
Like what?

HECTOR
Whoever killed Hermannik was
offside.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--NIGHT

Hector is sitting on the couch watching television. Dora sits down next to him. Dog jumps up between them.

DORA
Whatcha watching?

HECTOR
Documentary on a cable channel
'bout how soccer reached America
and became popular.

ON THE TV SCREEN

Screen shows a big question mark.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Contrary to what the Brits may say,
soccer didn't start in England. So
where did it?

Screen shows an ancient drawing from China of men kicking a ball, with Chinese-sounding music.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Something like soccer called tsu-
chu was played in China 2,000 years
ago.

Screen shows a drawing of men kicking a ball in ancient Greece. They are naked, and black boxes are strategically put over their private parts.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
In Greece, it was called episkros,
and the players wore no clothes!

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

DORA
Cover-up!

ON THE TV SCREEN

Screen shows drawing of players kicking a severed head.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Soccer came to England after Roman
invaders brought the game in 43
A.D. Sometimes, heads of fallen
soldiers were used as the ball.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

DORA

Gross!

A FEW MINUTES LATER

ON THE TV SCREEN

Screen shows a drawing of American Indians playing a ball
game on a beach with Pilgrims watching.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Pilgrims came to Plymouth Rock in
1620. They were astonished to see
native American tribes competing on
Atlantic beaches.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

DORA

Before the gringos got rid of the
Indians.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

ON THE TV SCREEN

Screen shows classic drawing of the Rutgers-Princeton "first
college football game" in 1869.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

First organized public soccer match
in America was in 1869 between
Rutgers and Princeton. But the
schools lied for decades it was
traditional college football.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

HECTOR

Another cover-up!

A FEW MINUTES LATER

ON THE TV SCREEN

Screen shows footage of President Richard Nixon in the Oval Office.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
June 23, 1972, was a historic day
for American soccer. President
Richard Nixon signed a bill.
Required schools getting federal
aid to have equality between the
sexes in things like sports.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

DORA
So?

ON THE TV SCREEN

Screen shows same footage of Nixon.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Schools immediately started girl
soccer teams. This lead to an
tremendous explosion in popularity.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

DORA
Yea!

ON THE TV SCREEN

Screen shows a photo of Nixon with H.R. Haldeman, his Chief of Staff.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But on that very same day, Nixon
met for 90 minutes with his chief
of staff, H.R. Haldeman. They
plotted the cover-up of the
Watergate break-in.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

HECTOR
More cover-ups!

ON THE TV SCREEN

Screen shows same photo.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Two years later, Nixon had to release his secret tape recording of that plotting. He quickly resigned the presidency.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

HECTOR

So soccer's never been far from both good and evil.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Monday, October 2, 2006. 7:05 a.m. Money is a terrible master but an excellent servant."

INT./EXT. ENTRANCE TO HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Reynolds and Dennis are back at the front door pestering Hector.

REYNOLDS

We discovered a highway patrolmen stopped you the night of the murder. For erratic driving.

HECTOR

Didn't get a ticket. He ran my name. Came up clean. Sent me on my way.

REYNOLDS

Maybe you were a lookout. Or the get-away driver.

HECTOR

While driving home from work?

Reynolds looks annoyed.

REYNOLDS

I mean later.

HECTOR

Look, Diego and I aren't that close. Dora and I visited him at the jail yesterday. He yelled at me.

REYNOLDS

Why?

HECTOR

For not getting him out of jail, I guess.

REYNOLDS

He's there because he's charged with murder.

HECTOR

He's there 'cause he can't get bail.

REYNOLDS

We're not done with you yet.

HECTOR

So I've heard.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Wednesday, October 4, 2006. 6:50 a.m. Why is money called dough? Because we all knead it."

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Hector goes out to his van ready to start his workday. He sees that two of the tires are flat.

A MOMENT LATER

Hector inflates the tires using a battery-powered pump from his van, then goes on his way.

EXT./INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--NIGHT

Hector sets up a small motion-detector camera on the balcony overlooking where the van is parked. Dora watches him.

HECTOR

Somebody let the air out of two tires. Don't know why. But we'll see if the perp comes back.

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Sun is rising. Hector goes out to the van. He sees the two tires are flat again.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Hector and Dora look on his computer at the video feed from the camera. So does the dog.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

The picture is dark and hard to see due to a lack of light. A shadowy figure dressed in black crouches next to one wheel of the van, then next to another, then runs off.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

HECTOR
Someone's up to no good.

DORA
Hector, I'm scared.

HECTOR
So am I.

EXT./INT. HECTOR-DORA APARMENT--NIGHT

Hector clamps a floodlight on the balcony railing, totally illuminating the parked van.

HECTOR
This ought to keep away the critter.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--NIGHT

Sign reads, "Friday, October 6, 2006. 7:05 a.m. Money isn't everything, but it sure keeps the kids in touch"

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Sun is rising again. Hector is out at the van. This time, all the tires are inflated. Hector nods approvingly, gets into the vehicle and drives off to work.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE PARK--NIGHT

Hector plays in an adult soccer league under the lights. Angry about what's been happening in his life, he plays hard with a grim look on his face. Too hard, given he is the best player and a lot of the older players are out of shape.

MONTAGE--HECTOR PLAYS ROUGH AND EVEN DIRTY IN ADULT SOCCER

--Running stride for stride with an older, winded opponent who is dribbling the ball, Hector gives him a shoulder-to-shoulder bump that sends him flying. It's legal, although there are cries of "Unfair" from the sideline.

--In a scrum in front of the opponent's goal after a free kick, Hector puts his arm around the waist of another older opponent. The referee blows his whistle and signals a holding foul against Hector.

--On an attacking play Hector is in an offside position and, although he doesn't touch the ball, deliberately and obviously blocks the keeper's view. The referee blows his whistle, raises his left arm and shouts, "Offside."

--On defense, Hector gets too close to the opponent with the ball, and they both go down. The referee blows his whistle and signals a foul against Hector.

END MONTAGE

Hector stands in front of REFEREE 3, who is holding a yellow card above his head.

REFEREE 3
Yellow card. Persistent
infringement of the rules. Too many
fouls.

HECTOR
Okay.

REFEREE 3
I know who you are. Let's not have
any killings out here.

Referee 3 moves away. Hector has an astonished look on his face.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--NIGHT

Hector eats dinner with Dora.

HECTOR
Ref knew who I was!

DORA
Not surprising. I imagine there's
quite a buzz among the refs here.

HECTOR
But you're the one related to
Diego. Not me. At least, not yet.

DORA
I don't play soccer. And I don't
foul.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Saturday, October 7, 2006. 9:40 a.m. Get rich
slow, or get poor fast"

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE PARK--DAY

Hector with his clipboard drags his ball bag across the park.

MANNY (O.S.)
Hello, Hector.

Hector turns.

HECTOR
Hi, Manny.

They shake hands.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
No TV vans this week.

MANNY
Indeed. There's something I have to
talk to you about.

Hector senses trouble.

HECTOR
Oh?

Manny uses his best funeral director manner.

MANNY
Look, Hector, we all know you. Fine
fellow. Fine coach. We don't think
you had anything to do with what
Diego Diaz did--

Hector angrily interrupts.

HECTOR
What he's accused of doing!

MANNY
Yes, accused of doing. Diego is
certainly entitled to a presumption
of innocence.

HECTOR
Certainly is!

MANNY
Of course, since he's in jail, he
can't coach. So his assistant coach
is taking over.

Manny pauses.

MANNY (CONT'D)
Um, um, your engagement to his
daughter is well known. Some folks
here are uncomfortable with your
continued presence on the fields.

HECTOR
What do you mean? I'm not accused
of anything.

MANNY
Indeed not. But your being here
will be, ah, ah, disruptive. Get
people's minds off the matches.

HECTOR
More so than talking 'bout real
estate?

MANNY
The league's executive committee
met. You have an assistant coach.
We decided you should turn over the
team to him for rest of the season.

HECTOR
I'm being suspended for doing
nothin'?

MANNY
Not suspended, really. More like
placed on temporary leave. We did
the same for Diego.

HECTOR
Where in the Laws of the Game does
it say someone can be sent off
'cause a fiancée's father is
accused of a bad crime?

MANNY
Doesn't. But we have the inherent
power to act for the good of the
game. An old soccer principle.

HECTOR

How is this for the good of the game? People will think the league thinks I had somethin' to do with this.

MANNY

Your absence will hardly be noticed. We're not announcing this. Or acting like it's a big deal.

HECTOR

Yeah. Like all those private admonitions you give to coaches that everyone finds out about in two minutes.

Hector uses his fingers to form air quotes while saying "private."

MANNY

Word does have a funny way of getting out.

Manny looks at his watch.

MANNY (CONT'D)

You can coach today. But that's it for the season.

HECTOR

(shaking his head)
Not fair. Not fair at all.

TWO HOURS LATER

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Dora is not present. Still dressed as a coach, Hector sits at his computer. Dog watches with curiosity.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

At the top is:

"Valley Mirage Soccer League By-Laws--Right of Appeal"

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

Hector squints at the screen, reading. Then he smiles and starts typing.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

With a flourish, Hector hits a key on his keyboard, then waits.

Hector's cellphone rings. He answers.

INTERCUT -- Hector-Dora Apartment / Valley Mirage Park

HECTOR

Hello.

MANNY

Manny Whitney here. What's this all about?

HECTOR

League rules say I have the right to appeal somethin' like a suspension to the full board. If I request a hearing. So I just did.

MANNY

Uh, you have to put it in writing.

HECTOR

I did. Under league rules, email's a writin'.

MANNY

I see. But, uh, you also have to state grounds.

HECTOR

No. Rules say I only have to file a notice of appeal. You got that. And that I can make my plea and present evidence at the hearing.

MANNY

(stalling for time)

Ah, okay. I'll put this on the agenda of our next board meeting in three weeks.

HECTOR

'cuse me. Rules say appeal *shall* be heard within seven days if time is of the essence. Which this certainly is. Season is runnin' and I'm not coachin'.

MANNY

Seven *business* days.

HECTOR

Rules say nothin' 'bout countin' by business days. The word used is *shall*. As in *must*. Board has to hold a hearing by next Saturday.

MANNY

(realizing he has no case)
Okay. I'll see what I can schedule before then. Within your seven-day deadline. I'll let you know.

Dog wags its tail.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Hector is no longer dressed as a coach.

DORA

Researchin' and filing' an appeal of your suspension was pretty lawyer-like. Like Perry Mason. So what can we do for Daddy?

HECTOR

Got no idea how to investigate a murder.

DORA

Sure you do. Treat this like you treat soccer. Like that adult league you play in.

HECTOR

Oh?

DORA

You chase every ball. Every pass. Watch everything. Wait for someone to screw up. A mispass. A miskick. Then you swoop in for the kill.

HECTOR

OK. You work in business. You can be the boss.

DORA

Me?

HECTOR

Sure. Tell me what to do.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign says, "Sunday, October 8, 2006. 9:10 a.m. Economists laid end to end still never reach a conclusion".

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Hector and Dora are sleeping in bed. Hector's cell phone rings, which wakes them up. Groggy, he lets the call go into voicemail, then looks at the caller ID.

ON THE CELL PHONE

Screen reads "Jeff Berman".

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

HECTOR

He's the reporter from the local paper covering the case.

Hector puts the message on the phone's speaker so Dora can listen.

JEFF (V.O.)

Hi, Mr. Rivera. Jeff Berman, Valley Mirage Daily Post. Heard the soccer league suspended you as a coach. Been told it has something to do with Diego Diaz's, ah, situation. Would like your side. Please call me.

Hector hangs up.

HECTOR

(quotes in his voice)
So much for those "private" suspensions.

He uses his fingers to make another air quote around "private."

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Hector is on his cellphone. He is angry.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

You said this wouldn't get out, Manny. Not even a day, and it's goin' to be everywhere.

MANNY (O.S.)
So sorry. Reporter called me, too.
Somehow knew about your status.
Said he had gotten an anonymous
email with the tip.

HECTOR
Pretty good tip.

MANNY (O.S.)
I said it was temporary until
things die down. And was no
reflection on you.

HECTOR
So you confirmed it!

MANNY (O.S.)
Thought saying no comment would
sound a lot worse.

HECTOR
Didya tell him I'm appealin'?

MANNY (O.S.)
Uh, no. He didn't ask. Wanted to
volunteer as little as possible.

HECTOR
That's just great.

MANNY (O.S.)
By the way, your hearing'll be 7
p.m. Thursday at the school.

HECTOR
See you then, I guess.

Hector terminates the call.

DORA
Goin' to call the reporter?

HECTOR
Don't want to get into a
discussion. I'll text him
something.

SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Hector and Dora are dressed. Hector's phone chirps. Rivera
looks at it.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Text message from Scott Ambrose.
 Berman's story 'bout me is online.

Hector and Dora hunch over Hector's laptop. Hector reads from the screen.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Here's the headline.
 (quotes in his voice)
 "Soccer League Suspends Coach
 Dating Daughter Of Accused Referee
 Killer."
 (dropping the quotes)

DORA
 Dating? We're engaged!

Hector continues reading.

HECTOR
 (quotes in his voice)
 "League Commissioner Manuel H.
 Whitney is proprietor of a local
 funeral home. He said the action
 was no reflection upon Rivera but
 because his presence might distract
 others on the fields."
 (dropping the quotes)

DORA
 I make dinner and we're only
 dating?

Rivera continues to read.

HECTOR
 (quotes in his voice)
 "Rivera responded to a Daily Post
 request for comment with a text
 message. 'Am dealing with this
 administratively. Hope to be back
 on the pitch very soon,' he wrote."
 (dropping the quotes)

DORA
 I do the wash and we're only
 dating?

HECTOR
 First time I've been in the paper
 since we won that high school
 soccer title. At least he quoted my
 message correctly.

DIAZ
We're only dating?

HECTOR
Chill out. It's a family newspaper.
Probably can't say unmarried folks
are livin' together. Would be too
big a scandal.

DORA
You're such a prude.

HECTOR
Wonder if anyone readin' this will
think I'm guilty of somethin'?

Hector's cell phone rings. He looks at the screen.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Uh, oh. Seth Upland. My boss at
WeFixThingsRightNow. Can't be good.

Hector answers the call.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Hi, Seth. What's up?

SETH UPLAND has an annoying, grating New York-style voice.

SETH (O.S.)
At this end, not much. At your end,
seems like a lot. Judging from this
story I'm seeing online.

HECTOR
Oh that. Not accused of anything.

SETH (O.S.)
Story said you worked as an
appliance repairman.

HECTOR
Didn't say for whom.

SETH (O.S.)
Not good for business.

HECTOR
What's not good for business?

SETH (O.S.)
Your connection to an accused
killer.

(MORE)

SETH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And your goin' into people's homes
as our worker to fix things.

HECTOR
So what? Things stay fixed. You
don't get calls 'bout my work.

SETH (O.S.)
True.

HECTOR
Get paid to fix fancy popcorn
machines. Leave. Go to the next
job. All day long. Polite.
Customers don't even know my name.

SETH (O.S.)
What if something happened?

HECTOR
Like what? If I killed someone?

SETH (O.S.)
Well, yes.

HECTOR
You can't be serious!

SETH (O.S.)
Have to look out for the business.

HECTOR
What's that mean?

SETH (O.S.)
WeFixThingsRightNow thinks it would
be a good idea for you to lay low
for awhile. Until this thing blows
over.

HECTOR
You're suspendin' me like the
soccer league did? Even though I've
done nothin' wrong?

SETH (O.S.)
Wouldn't put it that way. It's for
the good of the company.

HECTOR
So much good in the world!

SETH (O.S.)
Course, we'll have to get the van
back. Won't have anyone available
to fetch it until mid-day Tuesday.

HECTOR
It'll be here when you want it.
Make sure the tires are inflated.
Been a problem 'round here.

Hector ends the call. Dora hugs him.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Pompous asshole!

DORA
Oh, Hector! You need this job.

HECTOR
Thought you told me to quit the job
and go to law school.

DORA
I did. But until you do that, you
need a job.

HECTOR
Sure. But maybe not this job.

Hector and Dora kiss lightly.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
I'm apparently on furlough. So that
gives me time to work on Diego's
case.

DORA
I'll help!

HECTOR
Okay. But first thing first.

DORA
Yes?

HECTOR
I need some coffee.

EXT. A STREET IN VALLEY MIRAGE--DAY

Driving his van to a coffee shop, Hector spots a large house that has a rental truck in the driveway with furniture and boxes in it and on the front lawn. HARRY SMITHFIELD, a man in his 50s, is carrying a box from the house toward the truck.

SUPER: "HARRY SMITHFIELD, REGISTERED NURSE"

Hector stops his vehicle, gets out and walks up to Smithfield.

HECTOR

Mr. Smithfield? Hector Rivera. The guy who fixed your big flat-screen television two years ago. Just passin' by and saw you outfront.

Smithfield puts down the box and wipes his brow.

HARRY

Sure, I remember you. Came on time.

HECTOR

Hope everything's okay.

HARRY

Losin' the house. Movin' in with Lita's sister's family in the Valley. At least we don't have any kids to upset.

HECTOR

Sorry to hear that.

HARRY

Lita lost her job as an office worker. My hours as a nurse got cut way back. Economy's slowin' down, too, I guess.

HECTOR

Too bad.

HARRY

On top of that, started gettin' killed by our mortgage. One of those interest-only ARM loans with nothin' down.

HECTOR

(nodding)
Heard 'bout them.

HARRY

Payin' only two-and-a-half percent at the start. Figured the home would keep goin' up twenty percent a year. Forever.

HECTOR

And?

HARRY

Mortgage rate reset to five-and-a-half percent. Also had to start paying principal.

HECTOR

Yes?

HARRY

So payments went from 'bout two grand to nearly six. Every month.

HECTOR

Almost tripling.

HARRY

Yeah. Couldn't handle it. We had been livin' way too large.

HECTOR

My condolences.

HARRY

Home value stopped going up. We probably overpaid to start with. Seller probably made a killin'.

HECTOR

Who was the seller?

HARRY

Some guy named Richard Stevens. Never met him.

HECTOR

Name I don't know 'round here.

HARRY

House was empty when we looked at it before buying. And we pre-signed all the papers for the closing. The way it's done in California.

HECTOR

Guess your lender must be upset.

HARRY
Screw them. They didn't do much due diligence on the deal.

HECTOR
Oh?

HARRY
Some out-of-state outfit in Pittsburgh. Named Yankee Mortgage Bank. We filled out forms listing income, all that. They never asked for paystubs, tax returns.

HECTOR
I see.

HARRY
Yeah. And we probably hyped the numbers a bit.

HECTOR
From what I hear, that was the style then.

HARRY
Free and easy. Too free and easy.

HECTOR
Look, I know you have stuff to do. Good luck.

HARRY
You know, that TV you fixed never gave us any more trouble.

HECTOR
Happy to hear that.

HARRY
Course, we had to sell it.

HECTOR
Ouch!

INT. VALLEY MIRAGE COFFEE SHOP--DAY

Hector sits at a table with coffee in front of him and his cell phone to his ear. He has called WAYNE EMERSON.

HECTOR

Haven't chatted since Coit left the team when you all moved to San Bernardino last year. How're things goin'?

SUPER: "WAYNE EMERSON, SOCCER PARENT, FACTORY WORKER"

WAYNE (O.S.)

As well as can be expected. Not easy losing your job, and then your home.

Hector seizes the opportunity.

HECTOR

Remember you told me something 'bout adjustable-rate mortgage and the rate going way, way up.

WAYNE (O.S.)

Yes. But worse than that. We were sold a pile of crap.

HECTOR

Crap?

WAYNE (O.S.)

House was never worth anywhere near what we paid for it. We were snookered. Our lender was, too. Yankee Mortgage Bank.

A look of surprise and then curiosity crosses Rivera's face.

HECTOR

I, I've heard of Yankee.

WAYNE (O.S.)

Yankee deserved the hit it took. Lent us far more than we could handle.

HECTOR

Guess the seller made out like a bandit.

WAYNE (O.S.)

Sure did.

HECTOR

Who was that?

WAYNE (O.S.)
Some fellow named Larry Samuels.
Never met him.

HECTOR
Guess that's common.

Bill shouts into the phone.

WAYNE (O.S.)
He had it comin'!

HECTOR
Uh, who had what comin'?

WAYNE (O.S.)
Rick Hermannik! The guy your
fiancée's dad's accused of killin'!
Good riddance. If I'm on that jury,
Diego will walk!

HECTOR
Uh, not sure I understand.

WAYNE (O.S.)
Hermannik was the appraiser. Who
said our home was worth a lot more
than it was! Some people just need
killin'!

HECTOR
Uh, okay.

WAYNE (O.S.)
And in case you wonder, I have an
alibi.

HECTOR
You're not the killer type.

WAYNE (O.S.)
The night the papers said Hermannik
was throttled? Was moving our
remaining stuff to a storage
facility out here. Surveillance
cameras everywhere.

HECTOR
If you feel this way about
Hermannik, there must be others who
feel, ah, just as strongly.

WAYNE (O.S.)

Maybe. But most homeowners who lose their homes don't look back to see if they were snookered. They go quietly. Don't ask questions.

HECTOR

I see.

WAYNE (O.S.)

Conditioned by banks to be ashamed. Even though big business does the very same thing.

HECTOR

It does?

WAYNE (O.S.)

Sure. Didn't the great Donald Trump throw his own companies into bankruptcy to get out from payin' back something? Over and over.

HECTOR

Think I read that somewhere.

WAYNE(O.S.)

Yet he gets hailed as a great businessman! A great leader! Best-selling author. Own TV show! Even talked 'bout runnin' for president!

HECTOR

Oh, that won't happen.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Hector is on his cell phone with Harry.

HECTOR

Look, Mr. Smithfield, know you're busy. This is for a friend. Do you know who the appraiser was on your house?

HARRY (O.S.)

Box of closing documents happens to be right here next to the van. Moment, please.

Hector nervously takes a sip of coffee.

HARRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Here it is. Herman. Richard A.
Herman.

HECTOR
Are you sure it's Herman?

HARRY (O.S.)
Wait. No, no, it isn't. Richard A.
Hermannik. Sorry. Wasn't here when
he came for the appraisal.

HECTOR
Okay. Thanks.

INT. DOS HOMBRES SALOON--NIGHT

Hector and Scott are talking in a booth.

SCOTT
I heard someone on the soccer
league executive committee pushed
for your suspension. Don't know
who.

HECTOR
You're in the real estate biz. Tell
me about appraisers.

SCOTT
Supposed to see if the home is
worth more than the loan. To
protect the lender. And I suppose,
the buyer.

HECTOR
Okay.

SCOTT
Appraisers are hired by the lender.
But in reality the buyer's agent
often picks 'em.

HECTOR
Hermannik may have been involved in
wildly inflated appraisals for
Yankee Mortgage. Loans that went
bust. How could I get a list?

SCOTT
At the Los Angeles County
recorder's office in Norwalk.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Room full of computer terminals.
You search the database by name.

Hector scribbles notes on napkins he pulls out of a holder.

HECTOR
Okay.

SCOTT
Run the name of Yankee Mortgage
through what's called the grantee
index. Click on each entry. You'll
get the name of the borrower. Write
it down.

Hector is still scribbling.

RIVERA
Okay.

SCOTT
California law requires a lender
fixin' to repossess to file
something called a notice of
default.

Hector is still scribbling.

HECTOR
Okay.

SCOTT
Search the borrower names you wrote
down to see if a notice of default
has been filed 'gainst them.

Hector is still scribbling.

HECTOR
Okay.

SCOTT
Then call up images and look at
actual documents.

Hector looks up at Scott.

HECTOR
Is the sales price recorded?

SCOTT

No. But you can figure it out.
California has a property transfer
tax. The amount paid is written
somewhere on the deed.

Hector resumes scribbling.

HECTOR

Okay.

SCOTT

Los Angeles County rate outside
L.A. is dollar ten per one thousand
dollars of the sales price. Divide
the tax paid by point zero zero one
one. Gives ya the sales price.

HECTOR

Sounds like a lot of work.

SCOTT

Not really. On those terminals you
can really zip through the data and
the images. And Yankee doesn't seem
like a big player here.

HECTOR

Okay.

SCOTT

Make sure you bring a calculator.
And make sure you divide.

INT. HECTOR-DIAZ APARTMENT--NIGHT

Clock on wall reads 7:50 p.m.

Hector and Dora are sitting at the kitchen table. Dog is
nearby.

DORA

So Hermannik did bad stuff as an
appraiser. Did it get him killed?

HECTOR

Who knows? Just chasing down the
only lead we got.

DORA

What about what Ambrose said?

HECTOR

I suddenly have some time on my hands. Think I'll make a trip tomorrow to Norwalk. Take Diego's car.

DORA

I want to come! I'll phone in sick.

Dog wags its tail.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Monday, October 9, 2006. 7:13 a.m. Wealth and money are not the same"

Diego's car passes by. Hector is driving and Dora is in the passenger seat.

A LITTLE LATER

EXT. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FREEWAY--DAY

Diego's car is moving slowly due to traffic.

INT. DIEGO CAR--DAY

HECTOR

I drive to these L.A. suburbs all the time. But still hate the 5.

DORA

My aunt lived in Norfolk. Used to talk to me about the town. Typical SoCal story.

HECTOR

Which is .. ?

DORA

Originally full of Indians. But area sat on the main path north from Mexico. The Camino Real. Bad news for the Indians.

HECTOR

Why?

DORA

Spanish soldiers with priests arrived in the 1700s to take over California. Their illnesses killed off a lot of Indians.

HECTOR

Like Christopher Columbus in the New World.

DORA

Right. Then priests forced those left onto prison farms they called missions. That killed even more.

HECTOR

Grim.

DORA

Land was then given for nothin' to a well-connected Spanish soldier.

HECTOR

Stealing from the Indians.

DORA

Mexican War in the 1840s gave California to the U.S. Soldier's heirs got chased off by gringos.

HECTOR

So much for a gift.

DORA

For decades, nothing much happened 'round Norwalk besides the railroad. And farming. And buildin' a hospital for the mentally ill.

HECTOR

I'd go nuts farming, too.

DORA

Not funny!

HECTOR

(grinning)
Proceed.

DORA

After World War II, developers found the area. Cheap land. Cheap homes, too.

(MORE)

DORA (CONT'D)

For folks of lesser means. Goodbye,
gringos. Hello again, Latinos.

HECTOR

We'll be saying hello there soon,
too.

EXT. HARRY L. HUFFORD REGISTRAR-RECORDER BUILDING--DAY

Car passes sign reading, "Harry L. Hufford Registrar-Recorder Building, Norwalk, California" and enters the parking lot. The Huff is a big six-story, glass-facade building. It is a busy place with a lot of people coming and going.

INT. HARRY L. HUFFORD REGISTRAR-RECORDER BUILDING--DAY

Hector and Dora pass through the lobby. They see a number of warning signs.

On an electric door: "WARNING: DOOR OPENS OUTWARD".

On a bathroom door: "WARNING: DO NOT PLACE MORE THAN ONE CHILD AT A TIME ON THE CHANGING TABLE".

On a wall: "WARNING: PROPOSITION 65 NOTICE OF CANCER-CAUSING MATERIALS".

They pass a door in the lobby marked "WEDDING CHAPEL" with a removable sign hanging on the handle reading "CEREMONY IN PROGRESS." Outside the door are benches full of waiting couples. Most of the women are noticeably pregnant.

With a grin, Hector nods his head toward them.

HECTOR

Another warning.

DORA

Not funny!

Hector and Dora go through a doorway next to a sign reading, "REAL ESTATE RESEARCH, ROOM 2207".

Room 2207 is big, stark and institutional. There is overhead lighting and a white linoleum floor. Windows line one wall. The room is full of tables with computer terminals. People are clustered around many of them.

Hector and Dora go to an open computer terminal.

HECTOR

Showtime.

Hector opens a shoulder bag he has been carrying and pulls out a bunch of crinkled, dirty napkins.

Dora wrinkles her nose.

DORA
What are those?

HECTOR
Notes from talking yesterday with
Scott Ambrose.

Dora opens her shoulder bag, pulls out a standard yellow legal pad and loudly slaps it down on the table.

DORA
Let's do this the right way.

EXT. NORWALK NATIONAL COMMUNITY BANK--DAY

Time on sign outside building reads 3:10 p.m.

Car carrying Hector and Dora passes by.

INT. DIEGO CAR--DAY

Dora looks her a yellow pad.

DORA
So every single recent Yankee
Mortgage loan in Valley Mirage went
into foreclosure.

HECTOR
Yeah.

DORA
Same three-deed pattern. Home was
sold by what seems to be a real
person. To someone with a hard-to-
trace plain vanilla name. And no
mortgage.

HECTOR
Yeah.

DORA
Then resold the very next week for
fifty percent more. Also to someone
else with a hard-to-trace plain
vanilla name.

HECTOR
Like Richard Stevens and Larry
Murphy.

DORA
And no mortgage.

HECTOR
Right.

DORA
Then soon resold for not much more
to a real buyer with a big loan
from Yankee Mortgage Bank.

HECTOR
Buyers like Harry Smithfield and
Wayne Emerson.

DORA
Loans that defaulted. So the second
set of hard-to-trace plain vanilla
buyer-sellers made killings.

HECTOR
Don't think homes go up fifty
percent in a week. Even in Southern
California.

DORA
And who buys a home without a
mortgage?

HECTOR
Bill Gates...
(pause)
... but didn't see his name.

Hector smiles.

DORA
So was Hermannik the appraiser in
any of these other three-deed deals
that eventually went bust? Norwalk
records don't list appraisers.

HECTOR
Well, we have a lot of names. We
have the Internet to research phone
numbers. And we have cell phones.

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY TURNING INTO NIGHT

Wall clock says 6:25 p.m.

SERIES OF SHOTS--HECTOR AND DORA SIT FACING EACH OTHER AT KITCHEN TABLE AND WORK THEIR COMPUTERS AND PHONES CALLING BUYERS AND SELLERS

--Hector looks at his computer screen, which is full of listings for "John Jones," and shakes his head.

--Dora talks on her phone when she suddenly pulls it away from her head and looks at it with a frown; she was just hung up on.

--Hector ends a call with a puzzled look on his face.

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS

Wall clock says 9:35 p.m.

Hector and Dora wearily compare notes at the kitchen table.

DORA

A lot of hang-ups. One person cut me off sayin' he was on the do-not-call list. Like I was sellin' somethin'.

HECTOR

Couldn't find any of the first- or second-deed buyers with the plain vanilla names.

DORA

The third-deed buyers who lost their homes were pretty mad.

HECTOR

Furious.

DORA

None of those first-deed sellers met their buyers. But some were fuming to learn their homes quickly resold for fifty percent more. According to the records, anyway.

HECTOR

Whadaya mean?

DORA

Remember, we found no mortgages on any of those first-deed and second-deed deals. First-deed sellers said they got their money.

HECTOR

So?

DORA

It's almost like ...

HECTOR

Yes?

DORA

Someone fronted their own money to the first-deed seller. Then created a phony deal with a phony buyer to show a higher price for the second deed.

HECTOR

Okay.

DORA

Then sold the house to a real sucker who paid with the big mortgage from Yankee Mortgage.

HECTOR

Okay.

DORA

Like an evil flip of some kind.

HECTOR

The third-deed buyers we talked to were all first-time buyers.

DORA

Appraiser would use the pumped-up second-deed price to justify the pumped-up third-deed price to the sucker and Yankee.

HECTOR

No third-deed buyers who talked to us knew who their appraiser was. No surprise there, I guess.

DORA

So we still don't know if Hermannik was involved in deals other than Smithfield and Emerson.

HECTOR

Although some said they would check
and we could call them back.

DORA

Probably no appraisals on the first
and second deeds.

HECTOR

Why not?

DORA

No mortgages. No mortgage, usually
no appraisal. It's mainly the
lending bank that wants the
appraisal.

HECTOR

Hey, how do you know that?

DORA

Googled it.

HECTOR

Oh.

DORA

And we don't know if any of these
foreclosures are connected.

HECTOR

True.

DORA

How does any of this help Daddy?

HECTOR

Don't know. Going to bed.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign says "Tuesday, October 10, 2006, 7:19 a.m. Money can't
buy love, but it improves one's bargaining position"

INT./EXT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

Reynolds and Dennis have returned and are in the doorway
pressuring Hector. Dora is nearby.

REYNOLDS

Should run you in for intimidating
witnesses. Obstructing justice.

HECTOR
On what grounds?

REYNOLDS
You've been calling folks.
Suggestin' Rick Hermannik was
killed for something he did in real
estate.

HECTOR
Not true.

REYNOLDS
What's not true?

HECTOR
That Hermannik's name was mentioned
to anyone.

REYNOLDS
Aha! So you admit making calls!

HECTOR
Sure. Diego's entitled to a
defense. Seemed like a good idea to
look for others with a motive.

REYNOLDS
That's the job of his lawyer. His
P.I. You a P.I.?

HECTOR
Course not. But no one's getting
paid. And Diego's lawyer gave the
go-ahead to do this.

DORA
If you want, I'll call him now. You
two can chat.

Reynolds does not want to talk to a lawyer.

REYNOLDS
Not necessary. But Ms. Diaz, you
should stay out of this.

DORA
Why? Diego's my daddy!

REYNOLDS
Hector was making the calls. Not
you.

Hector and Dora exchange glances.

HECTOR
You said folks were intimidated.
How so?

REYNOLDS
Heard they felt they were being
targeted.

DORA
You heard? Didn't speak to them
yourself?

Reynolds realizes he just gave away a little too much.

REYNOLDS
Well, no. Someone told someone on
the soccer board.

HECTOR
The soccer board?

REYNOLDS
Yes.

HECTOR
Who told you.

REYNOLDS
Who told me.

HECTOR
Odd. Didn't recognize any names as
ex-soccer parent in Valley Mirage.

REYNOLDS
Really? How do you think the board
found out?

DORA
Don't imagine you'd tell us who on
the soccer board got the complaint.

REYNOLDS
You imagine correctly.

HECTOR
Board's holdin' hearing tomorrow
night 'bout my appeal of my
suspension. Might not get a fair
hearin' if someone thinks I'm
intimidatin'.

A quizzical look comes over Reynolds's face.

REYNOLDS

Why were you calling around?

HECTOR

Seems Hermannik appraised homes that went into foreclosure. Might have created hard feelings. Maybe real hard feelings.

REYNOLDS

So didja find anything?

DORA

Folks who lost overpriced homes from sellers they never met. Who also didn't know if Hermannik had been involved.

HECTOR

Frankly, a lot more questions than answers.

REYNOLDS

(a little eagerly)

So you don't have another suspect?

DORA

Not yet. We're working on that.

HECTOR

When we find someone, you'll be among the first to know.

A FEW MINUTES LATER AFTER REYNOLDS AND DENNIS LEAVE

Hector and Dora are alone.

DORA

Wolfie didn't know I was makin' calls.

HECTOR

Because he was contacted after I called someone.

DORA

Yeah.

HECTOR

Wolfie's not that lucky. I was making calls. But neither you nor I mentioned Hermannik's name to anyone. Maybe we should have.

DORA
 (lightly)
 Then we'd be in the slammer,
 arrested by Wolfie and his
 sidekick.

HECTOR
 Didn't see any good reason to tell
 Wolfie 'bout Hermannik's connection
 with Smithfield and Emerson.

Rivera bows his head in deep thought, then looks up at Dora Diaz.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 You know, the fact no one I called
 had a soccer connection can mean
 only one thing.

DORA
 Which is?

HECTOR
 Someone on the soccer board got a
 call for a reason having nothin' to
 do with soccer.

DORA
 And?

HECTOR
 That someone called Wolfie and made
 it sound like I was makin' threats.

Dora is excited.

DORA
 Someone who doesn't want us to be
 askin' questions of the people
 we're askin' questions of!

HECTOR
 Maybe.

DORA
 Like the killer!

HECTOR
 We should be so lucky.

DORA
 But who?

HECTOR

Dunno. Everyone on that board got connections. Lawyers. Agents. Financial types. Politician. Liquor dealer. Others I don't know. And of course our friendly funeral director.

DORA

Murderers' row.

Hector looks at his watch.

HECTOR

Oh m'God. Seth Upland's flunkie's comin' soon for the WeFixThingsRightNow van. Gotta get my stuff outta there.

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

The WeFixThingsRightNow van is backed into a spot in front of the garden apartment building.

The ground behind the van is covered by stuff Hector has removed, mainly connected with soccer: soccer ball bags, first-aid kits, soccer shoes, orange cones, a collapsible team bench, loose papers, boxes, food containers, cups.

A sweating Hector has done the heavy lifting while Dora watches.

DORA

Where're we goin' to put all this stuff?

HECTOR

Kitchen. 'til I sort through this. Lot of it will go.

DORA

It better!

Hector reaches into the back of the van.

HECTOR

One more box.

Hector removes the box and puts it on a nearby low wall. The box is labeled "Soccer Laws Refresher Exam 2006."

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Oh. The tests we took at the pre-
 season meeting. Was supposed to
 pitch 'em. Never got around to it.

DORA
 So pitch 'em now.

HECTOR
 I will.

But out of curiosity, Hector casually opens the box and leafs through papers.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 I remember these questions. Pretty
 basic stuff. On topics like
 offside.

DORA
 Which I still don't understand.

Looking through the papers, Hector suddenly does a double-
 take. He holds up a packet.

HECTOR
 Rick Hermannik's exam.

Dora is startled.

DORA
 A voice from the dead!

Hector casually scans the exam, then stiffens.

HECTOR
 This makes no sense.

DORA
 What makes no sense?

Hector still looks at the exam.

HECTOR
 No, it makes perfect sense.

DORA
 What makes perfect sense?

Hector paws through the box, pulls out another exam and holds
 it up.

HECTOR
 Your dad's test.

DORA
Daddy passed a written exam?

HECTOR
Wasn't graded.

DORA
Good.

Hector quickly looks through Diaz's exam.

HECTOR
Wow!

DORA
What's wow?

HECTOR
Let's get this stuff into the
apartment. Got work to do!

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--DAY

The kitchen floor is completely covered with the stuff taken from the WeFixItRightNow van and is a mess. The dog looks puzzled.

The box labeled "Soccer Laws Refresher Exam 2006" sits on the kitchen table next to Hector's laptop and a yellow notebook pad.

Dora is dressed for work. She and Hector kiss.

HECTOR
While you're at work, I'm goin' to
be here readin'. Researchin'.
Making calls.

DORA
For Daddy?

RIVERA
For him. And me. And us.

MONTAGE -- HECTOR WORKS ALONE IN THE APARTMENT

--He pulls an exam out of the "Soccer Law Refresher Exam 2006" box, looks at the pages as he flips them, and smiles. Then he pulls out another, and smiles again. Clock on the wall reads 9:35 a.m.

--He finishes a call on his cell phone and hangs up with a contented grin. Clock on the wall reads 11:50 a.m.

--He peers at the computer screen and rapidly scribbles notes on a yellow pad. Clock on the wall reads 1:45 p.m.

--He works on his computer, especially using a mouse on the table. A glimpse of the screen shows the words "Microsoft PowerPoint". Clock on the wall reads 4:23 p.m.

END MONTAGE

INT. HECTOR-DORA APARTMENT--NIGHT

Clock on the wall reads 6:20 p.m. Dora has returned home from work. She and Hector are sitting at the kitchen table across from each other. Hector has filled her in.

HECTOR

So all this is goin' in a
PowerPoint show I'm making for my
soccer board hearin' tomorrow
night.

DORA

Going for broke!

HECTOR

Sort of.

DORA

I want to be there!

HECTOR

(pause)
Okay.
(pause)
I'll tell the board you're there to
make sure the PowerPoint works
correctly.

DORA

I don't know how to fix computers!

RIVERA

Board doesn't know that.

DORA

Okay!

HECTOR

Don't be surprised if you get some
funny looks.

DORA

Why?

HECTOR
 You know, daughter of the accused
 killer.

DORA
 You're the fiancée of the daughter
 of the accused killer.

HECTOR
 I'll get my share, too.
 (pause)
 Nervous. Never done public
 speaking.

DORA
 Sure you have. You talk to soccer
 parents all the time. That's all
 this will be.

HECTOR
 (smiling a bit)
 Hope you're right.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--NIGHT

Sign reads, "Thursday, October 12, 2006, 7:08 p.m. Double
 your money: Fold it over and put in wallet"

INT. VALLEY MIRAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA--NIGHT

The Valley Mirage Soccer League Board is meeting to hear
 Rivera's appeal of his suspension. Board members are sitting
 at three tables arranged in a wide U facing a white wall.

We see Manny, George, Sidney, Mark, Janis, Bill and Harry,
 along with others.

Hector is standing in the middle of the U next to a small
 table with his computer and a small projector that projects
 on the wall.

Dora sits off to the side outside the U. Several board
 members eye her warily.

HECTOR
 Mr. Whitney told me I was suspended
 due to my connection with a coach
 accused of killing a referee.

MANNY
 Basically true.

HECTOR

So if I can show you Diego wasn't the killer, maybe you'll lift my suspension.

GEORGE

This isn't a court of law!

Manny waves his hand.

MANNY

Let him go on.

HECTOR

You've all seen the YouTube video of Diego's hot comments. But here's what happens earlier on the clip.

ON THE WALL

Shaky YouTube video shot from sidelines shows the play. Two players on the opposing team have a breakaway toward the goal. Attacker without the ball is ahead of and off to the side of the attacker with the ball. The attacker with the ball doesn't pass it and easily scores.

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Not an offense to be in an offside position. Player in front was offside but off to the side. Never touched the ball. Not interferin'

SIDNEY

I remember that.

HECTOR

Hermannik correctly allowed the goal.

JANIS

Yep.

HECTOR

Police got a search warrant for Diego's apartment. Paperwork revealed the message on Hermannik's computer screen after his body was found. Said Diego had called him.

ON THE WALL

A page of the police affidavit is displayed. Yellow highlighting appears around some of the text, which Hector reads.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 (quotes in his voice)
 "Diaz continued to complain bitterly about the no-offside call I made near the end of Saturday's match. I told Mr. Diaz the offside offense requires the offside player to physically touch the ball. He profanely disagreed and threatened ..."
 (dropping the quotes)

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

Hector turns off the image.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Incorrect statement of the Laws. Offside can be called without a touching of the ball by the offside player. If he interferes with the play. By, say, blocking the keeper's view.

SIDNEY
 Remember that, too.

HECTOR
 Hermannik had been a referee for years. Could he have not known that?

GEORGE
 We'll never know.

Several board members give him dirty looks.

HECTOR
 Maybe. And maybe not.

MANNY
 How so?

HECTOR
 Remember that practice laws exam we took a couple weeks ago before the season began?

BILL
 Sure. I wrote the test.

HECTOR

I was supposed to throw them out.
But forgot. Still have 'em.
Including Hermannik's.

An AUDIBLE GASP is heard from someone in the room.

ON THE WALL

Hector displays the cover page of the multi-page test. Yellow highlighting appears around the written-in name: Rick Hermannik.

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Remember this question?

ON THE WALL

Hector displays a page of a test. Yellow highlighting appears around some of the text, which Hector reads.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

(quotes in his voice)

"Under the Laws of the Game, can a
player be guilty of offside without
physically touching or playing the
ball?"

(dropping the quotes)

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

Hector pauses.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Let me show you Hermannik's answer
in his own hand.

ON THE WALL

Hector displays the same page, but zooms in on a handwritten X in a box marked yes.

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Hermannik answered yes. Correct
answer. Yet just a few weeks later,
Hermannik supposedly wrote a note
to the contrary. Incriminating the
hell out of Diego.

Several members of the board nod their heads.

GEORGE
Very puzzling.

HECTOR
T'me, suggests words on the screen weren't written by Hermannik. But by someone else. Like the killer.

More members of the board nod their heads.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Couldn't be Diego. Wouldn't implicate himself. Also, he's a klutz with computers. Can't type. And this message used complex and grammatically correct English.

Dora grins in the corner.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
And the whistle? Diego can't even put on a bandage correctly.

Dora grins again.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Police said there was no sign of forced entry. Meaning Hermannik likely knew his killer. Saw no threat. Would he really have let a fuming Diego Diaz into his house?

Several board members slightly shake their heads no.

HARRY
I wouldn't.

There is light laughter in the cafeteria.

HECTOR
Diego also took the laws exam.

ON THE WALL

Hector displays the cover page showing Diego's handwritten name, then the page showing the question, highlighting it in yellow, and the X in the yes answer box.

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Answered it right, too. So Diego was objectin' not 'cause he didn't know the rules.

(MORE)

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Possibly a bad angle. But more
likely 'cause he objects to every
call 'gainst him.

Several board members break out in grins.

BILL
That's for sure.

ON THE WALL

Hector displays a picture of Rick taken from a newspaper
story about his death.

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

HECTOR
Hermannik was sort of a mystery
man. Lived alone. No kids. A real
estate appraiser.

MANNY
We know that.

HECTOR
Did you know this? At the center of
dozens of folks in Valley Mirage
losin' their homes to fraud and
mortgage foreclosures. After his
pumped-up appraisals.

JANIS
No!

HECTOR
People we can't find bought houses
without a mortgage. Quickly sold
them to other persons we can't
find. Without mortgages for fifty
percent more.

SIDNEY
So?

HECTOR
Then the houses was sold to real
buyers after Hermannik appraisals.
Based on that fifty percent
increase.

MANNY
Oh.

HECTOR

With mortgages from the same far-away lender. Yankee Mortgage Bank of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

JANIS

No.

HECTOR

Dora Diaz and I figured out much of this three-deed scheme. By going to the deed room in Norwalk. And making a lot of phone calls.

MANNY

I can see.

ON THE WALL

Hector displays the image of a newspaper story from the Pittsburgh Times. Headline reads, "Yankee Mortgage under investigation for real estate fraud."

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

HECTOR

This story ran just a month ago. The claim is Yankee Mortgage funded mortgages without due diligence. Didn't care if the borrowers could pay. Yankee then sold the loans to Wall Street investment banks.

JANIS

No!

HECTOR

They knew better, too. Didn't care. Sold the loans in packages as bonds to unwary investors.

There are SEVERAL GASPS in the room.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Here is another newspaper clipping. Fished it up on the Internet. From Texas. A long time ago.

ON THE WALL

HECTOR displays an obviously old image of a story from the Dallas Post. Headline is, "Local appraiser sentenced to two years in mortgage fraud flip ring."

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

HECTOR (CONT'D)

A 1983 story from Texas I found
'bout Hermannik. Our Rick
Hermannik.

JANIS

What does it say?

HECTOR

Went to jail in Texas for flipping
properties in suburban Garland with
phony sales to justify higher
prices. Swindled everyone.

SIDNEY

They all collapsed!

HECTOR

From stuff like this. Used plain-
vanilla names that couldn't be
traced. Three other guys also went
to jail.

MANNY

All very interesting, Hector. But
where are you going with this?

HECTOR

Referees can change their jerseys.
But can they change their
character?

MANNY

Tell us.

HECTOR

Deeds always say to whom they
should be returned after recording.
Usually to the buyer.

SIDNEY

Correct.

HECTOR

Take all of these three-deed
sequences. The first two deeds--to
people who can't be found--should
all list different addresses. But
they in fact list the same buyer
return address. P.O. Box 2040,
Valley Mirage, California.

MANNY

Sounds vaguely familiar.

HECTOR

Should. An address used as a contact by someone on this very board. Sitting in this room right now.

MANNY

What?

HECTOR

Care to comment, Mark Rigas?

The face of Mark turns beet red. A general commotion breaks out. Mark says nothing.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

He was the secret buyer of the first deed, using his own money. Not telling his client, who was the seller. The secret seller and buyer of the second deed. Make-believe to gin up the price. And the secret seller on the third deed to the suckers with borrowed money from Yankee.

Mark still says nothing, even as fellow board members start to eye him suspiciously.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Yankee didn't care. In fact, it needed crooks like Rigas. Wall Street needed crooks like Rigas.

JANIS

The system was rigged!

HECTOR

We called a lot of those real first sellers. Told 'em their house quickly resold for fifty percent more. Some got pretty angry.

MANNY

I can only imagine.

HECTOR

Someone called Rigas to complain. About big money they thought was left on the table.

SIDNEY

I bet!

HECTOR

So Rigas called Wolfie--I mean Detective Wolfington. Rigas falsely told him I was threatenin' folks.

MANNY

Wow!

HECTOR

The detective told us he had been called by someone on the soccer board. But no one we called knew of our soccer connection. So the call to the board, to Rigas, had to be for another reason.

Mark still sits mute.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Rigas knew 'bout the Yankee Mortgage probe. After all, it was in the paper. He knew it was a total fraud.

MANNY

Indeed!

HECTOR

One person who could put him in prison was Hermannik. Ex-con. Repeat offender. He would have every incentive to cut a deal.

Mark still sits mute.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Remember that memorial service on the fields for Hermannik? Rigas actually called him a personal friend and business associate.

MANNY

I do remember that.

JANIS

Some friend!

HECTOR

Rigas had to get rid of Hermannik. Here's how he did it.

BILL

Tell us!

HECTOR

He hacked into the computer referee system to put Hermannik on Diego's match. Waited for the inevitable explosion.

MANNY

Okay.

HECTOR

Lured Diego into a no-alibi situation. Killed Hermannik. For good measure, inserted that damn whistle. Then framed Diego with that message on the computer.

MANNY

I can see the logic to this.

HECTOR

Rigas took that rules test, too.

ON THE WALL

Hector displays the cover page showing Mark's handwritten name, then the page showing the question, highlighting it in yellow, and the no answer box, which is marked.

BACK TO THE CAFETERIA

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Rigas got the offside question wrong. Just like whoever wrote that message on Hermannik's computer.

Mark stand up. He is angry.

MARK

Sure, they were my deals. But I operated in good faith. Hermannik must have been pullin' a scam on me.

Dora calls out from her seat.

DORA

More like a conspiracy!

MARK

Didn't kill anyone. Don't have to take this. I'm leavin'.

REYNOLDS (O.S.)

Afraid not, Mr. Rigas. Stay where you are.

Reynolds, Dennis, Cop 2 and Cop 3 step out through a swinging door from the cafeteria kitchen. They walk quickly to Mark.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

Mr. Whitney invited us to come and observe the proceedings. Glad we did.

(turns to Mark)

Mr. Rigas, you're under arrest.

Dennis turns Rigas around and frisks him. Kelly pulls an object out of his pocket.

DENNIS

What's this?

HECTOR

Probably Hermannik's very expensive fountain pen. The one he bragged about. Used to fill out game cards.

MANNY

That's what it is!

HECTOR

And likely also used to forge signatures of those phony buyers and sellers. Nub and ink are pretty distinctive. Very incriminating.

REYNOLDS

Let me see it.

Dennis hands the pen to Reynolds.

HECTOR

Rigas took it after the killing. But couldn't bring himself to toss something worth twenty-four grand. A pity for him. But good for Diego, and me.

Reynolds looks at Dennis.

REYNOLDS

Take him away. I'll be along shortly.

Dennis and Cop 2 march Mark out a door.

Hector, who is standing next to Dora, turns to Reynolds.

HECTOR

Rigas saw me talkin' to refs about Hermannik. You might check Rigas's computer for the threatenin' email I got last week tellin' me to go away.

REYNOLDS

Okay.

HECTOR

Also might check to see if he sent the anonymous tip to the reporter 'bout my suspension.

REYNOLDS

Okay.

HECTOR

This also might explain the shadowy figure messin' with my van's tires. Hoping to stop me from pokin' around. You might see if he has an all-black commando outfit.

REYNOLDS

Okay.

DORA

It's the least you can do.

REYNOLDS

You were right about Rigas calling me and lying. You said you hadn't mentioned Hermannik's name in those calls. That got me to thinking like it got you to thinking.

DORA

(sarcastically)
He can be taught!

REYNOLDS

Looked into Rigas's background. Turns out he was in the Army. Vietnam. A special ops unit. That got rid of the enemy commando-style. Leaving behind nasty calling cards. Like that whistle.

HECTOR

Might explain a love with black camouflage outfits.

REYNOLDS

Reviwed Hermannik's background, too. But misspelled his name searching records. Just realized it watching your show.

DORA

Details are important.

REYNOLDS

Probably how he passed a background check to be an appraiser. And a ref.

DORA

Probably.

REYNOLDS

That YouTube video? Was posted by a parent with no connection to this. Just trying out a new toy.

Cop 3 holds out a cell phone.

COP 3

Diego Diaz on the line at the jail.

REYNOLDS

Give it to Hector.

Cop 3 hands phone to Hector.

HECTOR

Hector here. Cops just arrested Mark Rigas for Hermannik's murder. To cover up a mortgage fraud they both were involved in.

DIEGO (O.S.)

Told ya Hermannik was lousy!

REYNOLDS

He'll be released soon.

Hector turns to Reynolds.

HECTOR

Perhaps this'll prompt you to rethink your attitude about Young Latino Males. Older ones, too.

Reynolds bows his head, then looks up.

REYNOLDS
Already has.

Hector looks at the remaining board members, who by now are a little shell shocked.

HECTOR
I seem to have your attention.
Perhaps you could lift the
suspension of me. And Diego.

Manny races through the motions.

MANNY
Allinfavorsayayeallopposedsaynothea
yeshaveit.

HECTOR
Thank you.

MANNY
Meeting adjourned.

A MINUTE OR TWO LATER

Hector talks to board members with Dora at his side.

HECTOR
I suppose it was Rigas who pushed
for my suspension on your executive
committee.

Manny is ashamed.

MANNY
'twas. Obviously didn't want you
around the fields askin' questions.

HECTOR
Hermannik wasn't killed for a
soccer reason. But think about this
in soccer terms.

MANNY
Okay.

HECTOR
Offside is an offense. But it's
okay to be in an offside position.
So long as play isn't affected.

MANNY

That's what they say.

HECTOR

It's all about personal responsibility. Like life. Not taking that wrong final step. Not going over the line.

SIDNEY

Soccer explains the world!

HECTOR

If certain people hadn't gone over the line, a lot of folks would still be in their homes. Hermannik would be alive.

SIDNEY

But in prison.

JANIS

Oh, Hector. You should go to law school.

Dora, standing next to Hector, smiles.

HECTOR

I'll think about it.

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE PARK--DAY

It's Soccer Saturday again with the usual noise, action and banners.

On one field, Diego loudly coaches on a sideline. A DIFFERENT REFEREE blows his whistle, raises his right arm and calls out his ruling.

DIFFERENT REFEREE

Offside!

Diego throws up his hands in disgust.

On another field, Hector signals to his players and expertly coaches. Dora and the dog, happily wagging its tail, are nearby.

On the sideline of yet another field, Barry, the economics professor, is pontificating. With a coffee cup, he holds court again with other parents, also drinking from coffee cups.

BARRY
Home prices're way too high ...

EXT. VALLEY MIRAGE GAS STATION--DAY

Sign reads, "Saturday, October 14, 2006, 8:45 a.m. Which is the greater crime? To rob a bank or to own one?"

After lingering on sign,

FADE TO BLACK

THE END