

Scene: The Offer

Setting: A small, slightly run-down apartment in Lewiston, Maine. **Time:** An overcast afternoon, early Season 3 timeline. **Characters:** Elias, Ms. Thompson (VSI HR), VSI Lawyer, VSI Security.

[SCENE START]

INT. ELIAS'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is neat but worn. ELIAS (38), in a plain grey hoodie, is patiently spoon-feeding soup to his ELDERLY MOTHER. The TV is on, playing a news report about the "Canadian Crisis" with the sound turned low. His mother wears a hearing assistance device, its blue light glowing.

Suddenly, the light on the hearing device flickers to **RED**, then goes dark. Simultaneously, the TV volume **BLARES** to an uncomfortable level.

Elias, startled, fumbles for the remote and turns it down. He glances at his mom, but she's dozing.

And in that moment of distraction...

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

A sharp, polite knock on the apartment door. Elias knows this isn't a coincidence. He walks to the door.

He opens it to find three people. In the middle is MS. THOMPSON (40s). Her voice is a smooth, honeyed South Georgia drawl.

<center>MS. THOMPSON</center>

Elias, honey. My name is Ms. Thompson. So sorry to bother y'all this afternoon. May we come in? We have a little business proposal we'd love to discuss with you.

He nods and steps aside, letting them in. They enter, their professional presence overwhelming the small space.

<center>ELIAS</center>

I wasn't aware I was in business.

<center>MS. THOMPSON</center>

(She gives a soft chuckle) Oh, son, a man with your talents is *a/ways* in business. You've been out of the Air Force for sixteen days. Perfect marks in remote systems operation, fluent in both Parisian and Quebecois French... my goodness. A mind like yours shouldn't be sittin' idle.

Elias is silent, his face a neutral mask.

<center>MS. THOMPSON</center>

And that's just what's on paper. We're also big fans of your little TikTok page.

Elias freezes. The mask cracks. A flash of pure, undiluted panic in his eyes.

<center>ELIAS</center>

My... my page is on private.

Ms. Thompson's warm smile widens. She doesn't say a word. She just holds out her hand. The LAWYER beside her places a sleek tablet in it. She taps the screen once and turns it to face Elias.

It's his TikTok page. And it's public. He sees a video of himself, goofing around, doing a flawless imitation of a Belfast dockworker. The view count is ticking upwards.

<center>MS. THOMPSON</center>

Is it now, honey? (She tilts her head, impressed) That Dublin accent is a little shaky, but your Glaswegian is just... pitch-perfect. That's a gift.

Elias is speechless. He's mortified. They haven't just read his file; they've walked into his most private, hidden space and turned on all the lights. He is completely, utterly exposed.

Ms. Thompson's gaze drifts over to his mother, who is dozing in her chair. Her tone becomes thick with genuine-sounding empathy.

<center>MS. THOMPSON</center>

Oh, bless her heart. It's a heavy burden, I know. A good son takes care of his mother. Your current care plan is... adequate. But it's not what she deserves, is it?

This is the hook. Her voice is full of syrupy compassion, but her words are a tactical strike.

<center>ELIAS</center>

What is this?

<center>MS. THOMPSON</center>

It's an offer, honey. Vespucci Solutions International believes in takin' care of our family. And when you work with us, you become family.

The lawyer steps forward and opens his briefcase. Inside are two sets of documents: the employment contract and a folder for a prestigious in-home healthcare provider.

<center>MS. THOMPSON</center>

We are prepared to offer your mother a full-time, 24/7, in-home care team. The best in the country. That service begins the moment you sign this contract. It's a signin' bonus.

Elias stares at the healthcare folder, then back at Ms. Thompson. He sees the steel fist inside the velvet glove, but the glove is just so comforting.

<center>ELIAS</center>

And me?

<center>MS. THOMPSON</center>

You? Darlin', you'll be given a new life. A new identity. A new purpose. You'll be part of a small, elite team of specialists. You will be challenged, you will be well-compensated, and you will never, ever be bored again.

Elias looks at his mother, sleeping peacefully. He looks at the news report on the TV, at the chaos unfolding just across the border. He looks at the contract.

He's a genius who has been living in a cage, and she's just offered him the world, wrapped in a warm Southern hug. A slow smile spreads across his face. It's the first real, excited smile we've seen from him.

<center>ELIAS</center>

Where do I sign?

[SCENE END]