

VESPUCCI - Scene: The Offer (Revised)

[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 faintly.

Suddenly, every light in the apartment FLICKERS violently for a split second. The light on the hearing device flashes 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, unfazed.

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.

<MS. THOMPSON> > 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.

<ELIAS> > I wasn't aware I was in business.

<MS. THOMPSON> > (She gives a soft chuckle) > Oh, son, a man with your talents is always 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.

<MS. THOMPSON> > 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 stares, speechless and mortified. He takes a breath, forcing the panic down. His mind races, connecting the TV news report to this sudden, total intrusion.

<center>ELIAS</center> > (Voice steady, analytical) > This demonstration of capability... is this related to the situation in Canada? My... hobby... is it somehow relevant?

Ms. Thompson's smile gains a new layer of genuine respect. He's not just a mark; he's sharp. This is the moment she confirms he's worth the investment.

Her gaze then drifts over to his mother, 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 signing 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?

The lawyer places the contract on the worn coffee table and offers a sleek, heavy VSI-branded pen. Elias takes it and signs his name, his old life, away.

The moment the pen lifts from the paper, Ms. Thompson's tablet, still on the table, PINGS softly. Her warm smile shifts, becoming one of ownership.

Simultaneously, the apartment door swings open—no knock.

Two healthcare professionals, a MAN and a WOMAN in crisp, reassuring blue scrubs, stand in the doorway. They are calm, friendly, and radiate competence.

<center>LEAD NURSE</center> > Good afternoon, Mrs. Dubois. We're the team from Veridian Home Health. We're here to help you get settled.

They step inside, moving with quiet efficiency. Elias watches, stunned by the speed.

<center>MS. THOMPSON</center> > (To Elias, her voice still honeyed but now with the weight of command) > A car will be waiting for you downstairs. Tomorrow, 0600 sharp. Don't be late, darlin'.

Ms. Thompson, the lawyer, and the security guard turn and leave. The door clicks shut behind them.

The medical team is already at work. The lead nurse is taking his mother's vitals with a silent, advanced-looking device. They speak to her in soft, respectful tones.

Elias stands alone in his own apartment, now a stranger in it. He watches the new team care for his mother with a level of expertise he could never provide. He got what he wanted. His face is a complex mask of relief, excitement, and the first, dawning flicker of what he has truly done.

[SCENE END]