

TERMS

Season One Episode 4

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VICTORIA PACE
(on phone)
Daniel!

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
I just landed in Rockford.
Victoria, am I being punished?

VICTORIA PACE
(on phone)
You're a reporter. Your life is
punishment.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
No seriously, this NORVAD story was
a turd six months ago, and it's a
turd now. If you were mad at me you
could have just had Jeffery assign
me to a women's soccer story like
any normal dictator. Making me go
to Illinois just seems cruel.

VICTORIA PACE
(on phone)
Daniel, I run an international
media conglomerate. I don't get
bogged down with editorial
assignments, even to torture
spoiled writers who think they are
clever.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
But Jeffery said you requested me
for this, so clearly there's
something I've done to offend you.

VICTORIA PACE
(on phone)
Maybe I just have faith in you,
Daniel.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
Well you can have the utmost faith
in the fact that I'm allergic to
bullshit assignments and the only
medicine in this town comes from
clinics whose names sound
remarkably like dive bars.

VICTORIA PACE
(on phone)
Enjoy Rockville, Daniel.

SOUND: she ends the call.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
It's Rockford. Goddamn Rockford.

MUSIC: Intro String

VOICE: Terms

MUSIC: intro

1.4.2 INT. DIVE BAR, ROCKFORD, IL

1.4.2

SOUND: bar noise and a TV.

CHARLES DUNWALKE (ON TV)
...But, it's okay. It's going to be
okay. Because, I'm willing to make
those hard decisions.

JOHN
I've been waiting my whole adult
life to hear that from a president.

DANIEL
President-elect.

JOHN
What?

DANIEL
Nothing. Sorry. You excited about
Dunwalke?

JOHN
I am. Wasn't sure at first, but the
more I listened, the more I liked
him. He doesn't care about being
popular, just doing what's right.

DANIEL
I'm Daniel.

JOHN
John. Good to meet you.

DANIEL
You from here, John?

JOHN

All my life. If you don't mind my saying, I can tell you're not.

DANIEL

What gave me away?

JOHN

Everything.

DANIEL

Sounds about right.

JOHN

That's okay. We love visitors. It's beautiful here. And we've got better food than they do up in Chicago. Honest to God.

DANIEL

Dunwalke's a big Chicago guy, though, right?

JOHN

He's a Southern Illinois boy at heart. Either way, it's better than being a Washington guy.

DANIEL

Really? Why?

JOHN

He's not beholden to anyone but the people. Even the good ones go bad when they've been there for decades. Look at Oliver Pierce.

DANIEL

You're not a fan? I would think everyone around here was--

JOHN

No. We're not. He's a smart guy and I think he's a decent man, but he lost his way. Forgot who got him elected. Forgot our problems. Cared about being loved more than being good.

DANIEL

It must have worked. A lot of people do love him. Even on the other side.

JOHN

Of course. Liberals love Pierce because they think he stands up for the underprivileged. But he only stands for some of them. Other people's wars. Other people's poverty. Other people's problems. Nobody's taking care of me. Nobody took care of my wife.

DANIEL

What happened to your wife?

JOHN

Got sick. I work two part-time jobs. 60 hours a week, but no insurance. My little girl left school. Came home and got a job to try to help. Still wasn't enough. My wife passed two years ago in December. I owe more money to banks and hospitals than I'll make in a lifetime. And my little girl is still here working. Trying to help her daddy keep his house.

DANIEL

I'm sorry.

JOHN

Yeah, well, I'm the same as a lot of folks, Dan.

DANIEL

You really think someone like Dunwalke would have made a difference?

JOHN

I think he would have tried. I think he'll stand up for people like my wife, instead of taking care of people half way around the world or spin whatever he needs to do to make sure he and his buddies stay rich. We deserve a President like that.

DANIEL

I don't disagree with you, John. I think a lot of people are pissed off. But why do you trust this guy, of all guys? Why do you think this guy is the guy to do it?

JOHN

I trust a man who cares enough to get mad about something. Let me tell you a little story. When I was a kid we had these, um, dance classes. They'd teach us how to waltz, how to do this thing and that thing for the dances and the parties. The guys would kinda stand against the wall on one side and the girls would stand against the wall on the other side and, of course, there were always those girls who weren't invited to do anything. I came home from the first class talking about a girl that nobody liked, that nobody wanted to dance with, nobody wanted anything to do with. And my father looked across the table from me and he says, 'son, the next class you go to, you ask that girl to dance, or don't you bother going home. Your job as a man is to look around the room. A real man does what's hard. A real man gets mad when someone is left out. A real man gets mad when someone is forgotten.' And that's the way people around here fell, man. They're just hard working people. They're not pretty like the people you see on TV. They don't all talk like the people you see on TV. They don't probably read the books that you think a well-educated person should read. But they're good, hard-working people. So, I don't know I that I care whether I trust him, to tell you the truth. I care that somebody sees what's happening enough to get mad about it. I care that someone's looking around like my daddy told me to look around that dance hall and say, 'those people deserve to be invited to the dance. Those people deserve a turn or two around the floor.'

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Yeah. I guess given what you know about Dunwalke, it seems like he might be that guy.

JOHN

I think at least he's making the right kinda noise. I think he's pissed off about the right things.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

And all the noise the press made about him, none of that was enough to change your mind, none of it really stuck?

JOHN

You know, I don't know if Dunwalke can make it happen again, but if we're going down, then hell, man, let's go down fighting.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Of course, if you didn't have all the information....

JOHN

What's that?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Nothing. I think I'm going to head to a meeting I just decided I'm actually going to go to. Before I go, let me ask you something.

JOHN

Sure.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

You ask that girl to dance?

JOHN

If you'd known my father, you'd known that what would have happened if I hadn't was a whole lot worse than the humiliation of asking the ugliest girl in town to dance with me.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

[laughs] It was really great talking to you John.

JOHN

Ah, you too, Daniel.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

I appreciate the conversation.

1.4.3 INT. US DISTRICT ATTORNEYS OFFICE, ROCKFORD, IL

1.4.3

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Mr. Valdez, how long have you been an Assistant US Attorney?

RICHARD VALDEZ

I'm not helping with your story, Mr. Schwartz.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

I won't cite you, I'm just trying to...

RICHARD VALDEZ

When you called me to ask for this meeting and mentioned NORVAD, I had to call my boss. I have been given a direct order NOT to talk about the case on or off the record.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Kinda like the way that whole case went away six months ago, huh?

RICHARD VALDEZ

No comment.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

So you start an investigation that goes so far up the food chain that it's guaranteed to make your career. *Until* someone upstairs gets cold feet and kills the case before you even get started.

RICHARD VALDEZ

No comment.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

But hey, Rockford's nice, right? Specially after all that time in Austin. Super exciting. I'm sure you don't mind being stuck here.

RICHARD VALDEZ

What I mind is irrelevant. I have been ordered by my superiors NOT to supply any information regarding this case. Thanks for stopping by.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Look I get it. You don't want me to be here, and I don't want to be here. But there is a difference between you and me.

RICHARD VALDEZ

I imagine there are several...

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Well, a lot of college and your penchant for plaid ties... but I'm talking about the fact that I don't really WANT to talk to you, but my bosses and telling me to. But you... you wanted to make a case out of this years ago. You probably wanted to make a name for yourself in the process and you probably were pretty pissed when it got shut down. So you WANT to talk to me and your bosses have told you NOT to. That's a difference.

RICHARD VALDEZ

Is this where you subtly dangle career glory in front of me if I give you information?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

I don't do anything subtly Richard. It's part of my curmudgeonish charm. I'm saying EXPLICITLY that if I can break this story, your bosses will have to reopen the case so it won't look like they're complicit in a coverup.

Now somebody put it my organization's ear that YOU were someone who might want to see this come to light and so I'm here. I don't wanna be. But I am. SO while I am here, I might as well give you the chance to give this some thought.

RICHARD VALDEZ

It doesn't matter what I want to do or what my bosses say. This is a closed file of a case that did not go to trial and therefore is NOT public record.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Okay. Good. We are communicating. Two people examining a set of circumstances. So... you have a file that you cannot show me. I have the ability to file a Freedom of Information request that might get me some of that. What could it get me that would be useful?

RICHARD VALDEZ

I'm not gonna talk about this case.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Absolutely not. I'd be shocked if you did, Richard. But we are talking in generalities about the information contained in all files. Specifically closed case files that never went anywhere. What kind of thing is in that kind of a file? Generally speaking?

RICHARD VALDEZ

(beat. Then sigh)

Generally speaking, there is an initial report from law enforcement. A list of involved parties. Any background research, and the target letter that is sent to the parties being investigated.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Look, here in my bag I just happen to have a FOIA request here for the TARGET letter in the Norvad investigation.

RICHARD VALDEZ

It won't help. Revealing the contents or even the recipients of a TARGET letter is a violation of their right to personal privacy...

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

As are the contents of the letter outlining the focus of the investigation. So I'm expecting those to be redacted.

RICHARD VALDEZ

So why are you asking for it?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

I wasn't gonna. Because like you said, no point. Like I said, I didn't wanna be here. But now I'm curious. This target letter went out via snail mail?

RICHARD VALDEZ

And email.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

And email? An email I could also do a FOIA request for?

RICHARD VALDEZ

Yes. And the recipient's email addresses will be redacted too.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

I am sure they will. But is anyone else CC'd on an email like that? Other involved parties. Like government agencies, maybe?

RICHARD VALDEZ

What do you mean?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Other involved parties. Like other people who would ALSO have been pissed when this investigation got the kibosh. People who's bosses haven't explicitly tell them not to talk to me.

RICHARD VALDEZ

(getting it) Interoffice communication isn't protected if it doesn't reveal information about private citizens.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

That is my understanding. I'm thinking there might be someone else interested see the truth come out. Provided that person was cc'd on the email.

RICHARD VALDEZ

It would only be polite to keep the agent who brought this to my attention in the loop.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
See... just like that. Now I want
to be here.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

1.4.4 EXT. FBI PARKING LOT

1.4.4

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
Agent Franks?

AGENT FRANKS
Yeah? Who are you?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
My name's Daniel Schwartz. I'm a
reporter with Pace Media. I wanted
to ask you about --

AGENT FRANKS
I think I know. Not here. You want
to grab some lunch?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
Wow. That was--yeah, I could eat.

AGENT FRANKS
Get in.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
I appreciate you meeting with me,
Agent Franks. I'm contacting you
because in my research on a case
filed but then dismissed by
Assistant US Attorney Valdez, I
found your name on an email thread.

AGENT FRANKS
I can't give you any information
about the investigation.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
Can you at least confirm that you
were looking into the Norvad deal?

AGENT FRANKS
I started looking into it. I went
to Valdez and let him know I might
be bringing him something. Then I
got orders that I was being
reassigned and the case was never
opened. I can;t make any further
comment--

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

That's not going to lead me anywhere that gets this case reopened. I looked into this, man. I dug for a month on this and I came up with nothing, probably looking through the same information you did. I didn't find anything, but you did.

AGENT FRANKS

I didn't say I found anything

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

You had to have found something or you wouldn't have been pulled off the case. Don;t you want to know where this all leads? If there was nothing to be found your bosses wouldn't have stopped you from looking.

AGENT FRANKS

Depends on who I consider my actual boss, I guess.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

What?

AGENT FRANKS

Doesn't matter. Look, Mr. Schwartz, I cannot directly give you any information on an investigation, closed or open. I could lose my job.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Then why the fuck did you agree to talk to me?

AGENT FRANKS

I didn't agree to talk to you. I asked you if you wanted some lunch.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Dude, fuck lunch.

AGENT FRANKS

There's this great place that opened up last year. It's a chain from the city, but the Italian beef is pretty incredible. I just can't ever remember what it's called.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
Um, you want me to look it up?

AGENT FRANKS
No, just do me a favor and scroll through history on the car's GPS. I was there last month sometime.

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
I can just--

AGENT FRANKS
No, use the GPS history. I know it's in there. The Bureau requires that all coordinates are kept until they're logged and archived. It all ends up on file somewhere, but they only do it every so often. This one probably goes back months. Everywhere this car's been.

SOUND: scrolls through GPS history

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
Maybe Portillo's on State Street?

AGENT FRANKS
That's it. And what do you know? Here we are. You want me to get you an Italian beef or a dog?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
You're going to get my lunch?

AGENT FRANKS
Sure. No need for us both to go wait in line. You just hang out here. In the car.

SOUND: FRANKS gets out of car, door shuts; DANIEL scrolls through GPS history

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
Goddamn Rockford.

SOUND: phone dials.

JEFFREY
Hello?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ
Jeffrey. It's Dan.

JEFFREY

What's up?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

I am currently NOT having the most interesting lunch I've not had in months.

JEFFREY

Norvad?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Yeah, the FBI agent the AUSA pointed me to.

JEFFREY

What names?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Nope. He gave me no witness names or contacts whatsoever.

JEFFREY

So why you smiling?

DANIEL SCHWARTZ

Because I am happy, Jeffrey. Take these addresses down as I read em off. It's gonna be a lot.

MUSIC: Outro