

FADE IN:

INT. GETTY AND CHASE DEPARTMENT STORE, HAMPTONS, N.Y. - DAY

Sleek, compulsive, high-maintenance HILARY DARLING SWANSON, 51, skims through a rack of evening dresses. Unlike other shoppers, she treats the task like Vera Wang planning her fall line. And well she should. Even at the half-century mark, Hilary's figure has kept pace with the best of them.

Across the rack, ARLENE DARLING, 49, *putzes* along in a torpor. Unlike her sister, Arlene's humble origins have apparently stalled on that side of the tracks. She wears old Levis, hiking boots and a Steelers football jacket. But just to pass the time, she grabs a gown, reads the tag.

ARLENE
Incredible.

HILARY
Don't look at the price, Arlene.
I told you, it's my treat.

ARLENE
This would have covered my back
rent. Why couldn't you treat me
to that?

HILARY
You're nothing but a pill.

A roving SALESWOMAN espies Hilary chinning a satin dinner dress with an exaggerated boatneck.

SALESWOMAN
Very nice. I've got a pair of
shoes that would match that to a
T.

HILARY
Do you? Well, then. I'll be over
in a few.

The saleswoman casts an unencouraging look at Arlene as she departs. Arlene's unnerved by it, moves onto another rack, grabs another dress. This one looks like the shredded remnants of a power suit worn during a nuclear explosion.

ARLENE
Hilary, you think she has shoes to
match this?

HILARY
That's a mis-rack.

Hilary points to a display sign: "CLEARANCE HALLOWEEN COSTUMES".

HILARY (CONT'D)

Look over there.

Arlene glances over at the accessories department. There, a pretty ACTRESS with a face familiar to us all is browsing the belts. And she's toting a bag from Saks.

ARLENE

Isn't that -

HILARY

Don't gawk, Arlene. Give her her privacy.

ARLENE

Why? Nobody else is.

Arlene means the TWO UNDERCOVER SECURITY EMPLOYEES staking out the celebrity from different angles.

ARLENE (CONT'D)

Boy, that last movie she did really tanked, poor thing.

HILARY

When you get to her level, it doesn't matter. I'm trying these on.

ARLENE

I bet it matters to her.

Hilary marches off to the fitting room. Arlene lingers, sees the actress surreptitiously slip a ruby-studded belt into her Saks bag. Afraid she'll get bust, Arlene resolves to go warn the perpetrator of her doom. As she sets off:

HILARY (O.S.)

Arlene, where are you?

Like a tethered ball, Arlene stops dead in her tracks. She snags the first dress within reach, catches up with Hilary.

INT. FITTING ROOM - DAY

Hilary sashays out of her stall in the alluring boatneck. She checks the fit in a full-length mirror. It's perfect. Arlene makes sure the coast is clear before stepping out in her selection. This number calls to mind a Bavarian windmill. Hilary gives it a perfunctory glance, then focuses on the more appealing image in the mirror.

ARLENE

This is why I shop the boys' department at Sears.

HILARY

You're not serious.

ARLENE

They have husky sizes.

HILARY

So, all you have to do is cut off the little bugle boy. What do you think of this? It's Ralph Loren. I like it.

Suddenly, the actress sweeps into the room. With several dresses and accessories draped over her arm, she enters the middle of three stalls. Curious, Hilary and Arlene retreat back to theirs on either side.

ARLENE'S STALL

As Arlene undresses, she hears the unexpected sound of SAWING, like a jeweler's file on plastic. Then some fumbling with hangers. Now more sawing. Then the sound of a PURSE UNZIPPING and a loud POP of a plastic bottle.

HILARY'S STALL

Trying not to pry, Hilary sets to work removing her dress. Gazing in the mirror, she stops to stare at her bust.

HILARY

I could have been an actress.

The sound of something SPILLING next door jars her attention. She looks down, sees a swarm of little capsules roll across the divider, right up to her Rockports.

FITTING ROOM

A stall opens and the actress flies out, as if late for a curtain call. And her Saks bag is bulging. The sisters emerge from their stalls. They check the middle one, find a pile of security tags and the ruby-studded belt.

HILARY

My God, she's just robbed Getty and Chase. Whatever for?

ARLENE

Remember that time she checked into a psych ward - after the break up with what's his name? She's a sick puppy.

HILARY

Well that doesn't give her the right to - Arlene, what are you doing?

Arlene retrieve some tissue paper from a trash can, scoops up the sawed tags and stashes them into her Steelers jacket.

ARLENE

I don't want her to get caught.

HILARY

This is not your affair. Now put those back before a clerk walks in here.

Undeterred, Arlene retrieves their own dresses and piles them in the middle stall.

ARLENE

Let's go.

Too shocked to argue, Hilary takes her purse and follows Arlene out. Moments later, one of the two guards rushes into the room. He searches the stalls, finds nothing conclusive. He pulls out a two-way radio, dangles the belt.

SHOP FLOOR

The second guard is shadowing the actress's getaway when he hears a disgruntled voice on his radio:

RADIO

Wait for the alarm.

But the pretty actress exits the store without a peep.

HAT SECTION

Arlene approaches an ELDERLY MATRON trying on a felt hat with goose feathers. With the old dame distracted, she slips the tags into an open flap on the lady's large purse. Meanwhile, the shoe saleswoman we saw earlier is now bearing down on Hilary. She waves a pair of high heels in the air. Hilary panics and bolts for the exit. Arlene catches up and the sisters leave together.

EXT. GETTY AND CHASE - DAY

As the sisters reach daylight, a Jaguar driven by the actress burns rubber past them on the sidewalk. The sisters cross afterwards into a parking lot. Hilary activates her remote car keys and a Mercedes Benz flashes its lights.

HILARY

Arlene, we could have been arrested.
What were you thinking?

ARLENE

C'mon, sis, we're still in present
tense here.

The two guards emerge from the store now, see the sisters quickly board the Mercedes. The guards set off in hot pursuit. That is, until an ALARM sounds back at the entrance. The guards turn back, see the elderly matron, who looks mortified. They hesitate, then grudgingly trot back to the entrance to subdue Grandma.

INT. MERCEDES (CONTINUOUS)

As Hilary revs up the engine and peels away. Arlene sees the arrest in her side view mirror, cringes.

ENTERING HIGHWAY 27, THE HAMPTONS (CONTINUOUS)

Hilary merges into traffic, then changes to the fast lane at a near right angle. She has her eyes on her rear-view mirror, but no one is following them. The sisters relax.

ARLENE

Boy, who says the rich lead blasé,
predictable lives?

HILARY

Of course, we don't. But it
doesn't usually involve felonies
at the street level. And since
when did you become a shoplifter?

Arlene glances at the logo on her jacket. Then she retrieves a copy of the New York Times from the back seat.

ARLENE

I don't steal. I wonder what she's
doing in the Hamptons.

HILARY

Arlene, don't you know, this is
the Beverly Hills of the East
Coast. Just look around you.

Arlene checks the view out the windows. Many palatial estates dot either side of the highway.

ARLENE

More like Russia before the
Bolshevik Revolution.

HILARY

Russia? What are you talking about?

ARLENE

I'm talking about that.

She points out an estate with an elaborate manmade waterfall tucked between two massive Greek columns and a profusion of statuary on the front lawn.

HILARY

Oh, I know, it's so lacking in subtlety. Douglas and I looked at that place.

ARLENE

Speaking of felonies, how's hubby dealing with the probe?

HILARY

The S.E.C. called yesterday looking for him. This whole Congo mess has been a nightmare.

ARLENE

"There's gold in them there hills." I can't believe people fell for such a third-rate scam.

HILARY

It's not gold. It's called coltan. They use it to make cell phones and micro-chips.

ARLENE

I know what it is. The warlords fund their massacres there with the bribes they get from the mining companies.

The Westhampton Yacht Club rolls into view outside Hilary's window. The sight of the yachts gives Hilary a sick feeling. But she quickly shrugs it off.

ARLENE (CONT'D)

Anyway, those investors should have seen it coming.

HILARY

Well, I guess we can't all be geopolitical geniuses like you. So, Arlene, did you apply for food stamps yesterday?

ARLENE

Nope. The line was too long.

Arlene keeps reading as Hilary exits the highway. She heads up a long, winding hill past more palatial estates.

INT. 70TH FLOOR, LOWER MANHATTAN HIGHRISE, NEW YORK - DAY

An espresso machine FOAMS MILK O.S. An elevator door opens, revealing DOUGLAS SWANSON, 55, a bushy-blonde chief executive adorned in black slacks, a silk shirt and studded leather blazer. Beside him, a RUSSIAN BODYGUARD cuts off his exit, pulls out a brush, and removes the white powder sprinkled down the shirt.

Doug now alights from the lift alone. He breezes down an office corridor adorned with palm plants and huge murals of ocean waves on both walls. A secretary, NATALIA, 26, steps out from reception counter, hands him a coffee drink.

DOUG'S EXECUTIVE SUITE - DAY

From the floor-to-ceiling windows, we get a tantalizing sweep of the Manhattan skyline. Several restored pinball machines are set up in the corner. Behind an ash black desk, a surfboard is mounted above a large plaque reading: "WAVE SECURITIES". Farther into the suite, Doug's attorney, NEIL FEINSTEIN, 75, sits on a sofa with two S.E.C. agents, JEFFREY BROOKS and BOB PARKER, both in their thirties.

NEIL

Doug, there you are. These gentlemen are from the Securities Exchange Commission. Jeffrey Brooks and Bob Parker. Did you forget we had a meeting?

DOUG

What's up?

Snubbing his guests, Doug settles in at his desk, opens a laptop, waits for it to boot up. He slurps the drink, stares at a framed photograph of Hilary and him foisting cocktails on a yacht out at sea. The sight distresses him.

COUCH

Prominent on a wall is an enlarged photo of Doug as a young man in swim trunks. A surfboard under his arm, he stands on a beach between TWO HAWAIIAN GIRLS. One holds a trophy.

BROOKS

Mr. Swanson, If you don't mind, we have some questions.

NEIL

He knows. He just needs to check his mail.

PARKER

(lowered voice)

Wasn't he a bigtime surfer back in the day?

NEIL

Won all the championships. In the same year, no less.

PARKER

How did he end up here?

NEIL

His father passed away and left him the firm. Anyway, like I said before, someone else handled those transactions. Doug doesn't have a clue. Literally.

PARKER

By someone else, you mean James Ogadipo?

NEIL

That's right. Doug signs off on deals every day, based on whatever James and our other guys - and gals - recommend. The Malakoff Mine promised good returns. So, we invested in it. Not rocket science. Had no idea about a rebel attack on the horizon.

BROOKS

Mr. Ogadipo tells a different story.

NEIL

Ogadipo will tell you Hamas was in on this if it'll save his ass. Doug never should have hired him.

BROOKS

Alright. We gotta go. We'll be in touch.

NEIL

Look forward to it, guys. Here, you can use this other door. *Ciao.*

Doug doesn't even notice the men leaving. He fires off another bid as Neil pours some coffee from a decanter.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Well, that went well. Except for the part where you got here a half hour late and gave those two the finger.

DOUG

She's wants a divorce, Neil. And sixty million dollars.

NEIL

Who? Hilary? You don't think she knows anything about this?

DOUG

She wouldn't know a junk bond from a breakfast bar. She might have overheard me on the phone.

NEIL

Well, whatever it was, we can invoke spousal privilege. Don't worry about it.

Doug fires off another bid as Neil walks behind his desk to see what he's working on.

DOUG

She's got something on me.

NEIL

Gee, I don't know, maybe it has to do with that 16-year-old you did down in Cancun last week. What are you bidding on now?

DOUG

Small town in Michigan.

NEIL

Who's going to run it if you win?

DOUG

The guy who cleans my pool.

NEIL

Anyway, it's not like we're dealing with the Carnegies here. Isn't her father a retired steelworker?

DOUG
He's an asshole.

Doug types in another bid, waits. Now he SHRIEKS in anger, slams the laptop shut.

NEIL
Okey, dokey. You want me to drive out to Westhampton and take care of this? I'll offer her five million, which I'm sure she'll take. Is her sister still there?

DOUG
(pulls out his smartphone)
No. Leave them alone. I'll take care of this myself.

NEIL
Fine. Who're you calling?

DOUG
Sergey. She needs to be taught a lesson.

NEIL
(swipes phone away)
What do you mean, a lesson?
What's going on?

DOUG
Nothing. Give it to me.

NEIL
I'll give it to you, alright.
We're this close to five felony indictments, and you want to play tit for tat with trailer trash.
Man. You were crazy in love a year ago. Las Vegas wedding. No prenup.
And now this one-eighty. What's going on?

Unnerved, Doug goes over to his arcade, fires a pinball. Neil sets the phone on the desk, goes back to the couch, packs up his briefcase.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Ever since you two went sailing on the Riviera it's been downhill. You're back on the manic-depressive thing. Do me a favor, Doug, call that counselor. I can't go on like this.

As soon as Neil departs, Doug he retrieves the phone, redials the call. As he waits:

DOUG
Yeah, Neil, go back to your law library and suck lemons.

INT. SECURITY ROOM, SWANSON ESTATE, WESTHAMPTON - DAY

On the second floor, with a balcony overlook. Inside the room, Doug's home security chief, SERGEY, 40, watches a porn video on a console. Other screens show surveillance around the estate. On one screen, Hilary and Arlene sun themselves beside a pool. Sergey's cell phone RINGS.

SERGEY
Yes, Mr. Swanson.

EXT. POOLSIDE - DAY

JAZZ MUSIC plays on a boom box O.S. Arlene lies on the diving board, on her back, with a Heineken balanced on her stomach. Two empties nearby. Doug's POOL GUY, 62 and lethargic, skims leaves from the water.

Hilary reclines in a lawn chair in some Nike sweats. She sips a banana daquiri and skims a *Land's End* catalog.

HILARY
I need a ski jacket.
(reaches in sweats for a pen)
Damn it, these pockets are like
Hobbit burrows.

ARLENE
Does anyone ever actually swim in
this pool?

HILARY
What business is that of yours?

ARLENE
I've just never seen anyone.

HILARY
It's autumn. Who swims in the
fall?

ARLENE
(sticks hand in water)
Wow, that's hot. Boy, if I had
this much money to throw around,
I'd --

HILARY

You don't. Now I'm trying to work.

Hilary finally retrieves a felt tip pen from the pocket. She circles a ski jacket with fir trim in the catalog.

ARLENE

Well, if I did, I'd give it all to the Global Fund for Women. And the Dalai Lama.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE

Sergey closes his smartphone.

SERGEY

Igor!

IGOR, a middle-aged thug in a bad-fitting suit, steps in from the balcony. Beyond him, we see Highway 27 and the yacht club in the distance.

POOL

The housekeeper, LOURDES 47, brings out a lunch tray. Arlene springs to her feet, reaches the table before Hilary has closed her catalog. Adjourning to lunch in a more dignified manner, Hilary arrives, looks over the food.

HILARY

This isn't right, Lourdes.

LOURDES

It's fish and chips.

HILARY

I asked for garlic fries.

LOURDES

I don't know, Mrs. Swanson, I just bring it out.

HILARY

Well, are you skilled enough to take it back?

LOURDES

If you want.

ARLENE

I'll keep mine.

HILARY

No, take them both. And tell Cook if he can't follow my instructions, he doesn't have to worry about dinner.

ARLENE

Jesus, Hilary, what do I care about garlic fries? I'm starving here.

HILARY

You're a guest in this house, now start acting like one.

ARLENE

It's only till I get back on my feet.

HILARY

What feet? You were born with a tin cup in your claws.

ARLENE

Well, it's not like you're fricking Ms. Magazine material.

HILARY

Ms.? Don't insult me.

ARLENE

Alright, Good Housekeeping.

HILARY

Tuh!

ARLENE

Fish and Game?

The breeze suddenly picks up, blows leaves blows across the patio. They both sense something ominous about that.

HILARY

You remember that guy who came over last week to see Douglas? He had a name like Home Depot.

ARLENE

Yeah?

HILARY

He called the next day and left a long message on our land line. Doug has the same greeting on his cell. It was right before Doug sold his shares in that mine.

Listing to one side of her chair, Arlene's face is turning white. She is barely conscious, let alone listening.

HILARY (CONT'D)

I taped the message on my voice recorder, then saved it as new. Smart, huh? Now I have the evidence I need to put me behind a Maserati and Cokehead behind bars. But that stupid recorder's the size of my thumb and I can't find it now. Have you heard anything I just said?

ARLENE

(rousing; whimpering)

I wouldn't have drank this much knowing lunch was gonna take so long.

HILARY

(as Lourdes approaches:)

Look. Groucho's back. Now get a grip.

(to Lourdes:)

Well, that's more like it. You see, dear, that wasn't so difficult, was it?

LOURDES

No, no trouble. If that will be all.

HILARY

For now. But stay within range.

Hilary directs Lourdes' attention to a bell on the table. Lourdes ignores her, signals the pool man to follow her inside. As they go, Arlene picks up a garlic fry, bites into it. It's frozen. As Hilary sets the napkin across her lap, she sees sauce oozing from Arlene's mouth.

HILARY (CONT'D)

How repulsive.

Hilary gently lifts one fry, as if to suggest that this is how civilized people eat. Then she notices the tiny ice crystals on it. At this moment, Sergey and Igor burst onto the patio, yank the women from their chairs.

HILARY (CONT'D)

What on earth! Let go of me.

ARLENE

We didn't steal anything from that store.

As Igor restrains each of them by an arm, Sergey rifles through their purses. He doesn't find anything. He takes both bags, grabs Hilary by the arm they all head out the pool gate.

EXT. ENTRANCE, SWANSON ESTATE - DAY

A few minutes later. An iron gate rolls open. Sergey drives Hilary's Mercedes down from the house and parks. He and Igor pull the sisters from the back seat and toss them onto the main road along with their purses. Then the men walk back to the Mercedes and the entrance gate rolls shut.

HILARY

You'll be sorting garbage down at the landfill when I'm through with you, Sergey!

Sergey translates what she says. The men laugh, climb into the car, accelerate back up the drive.

HILARY

He must have found it.

ARLENE

Found what?

HILARY

Wake up Arlene. The world's going by. I'm filing charges. Damn, I left my phone on the table. Give me yours.

ARLENE

It's in my room.

HILARY

In your room? What good is it there? The whole point of a cell phone is its mobility. It goes where you go. Now what?

ARLENE

I guess the idea is for us to take that.

HILARY

That's the servants' car.

(Arlene hands over the keys.)

No, you drive. I'm beyond upset.

ARLENE

And I'm just a little plastered.

INT. BMW - DAY

They get in and fasten their seatbelts. Arlene inserts the key but doesn't turn the ignition. A BEAT.

HILARY

Well, what are you waiting for,
the green flag?

ARLENE

It just seems like... This car.
This is happening too fast.

A delivery truck comes rumbling down the road. The DRIVER stops alongside the BMW. He has a cell phone.

ARLENE

Hil, unroll your window quick.

HILARY

(To driver:)
We're fine. Thanks.

Before Arlene gets a word in edgewise, Hilary rolls up the window and the truck moves on.

ARLENE

Why did you say that?

HILARY

That rubbernecker would have called
People magazine if I told him what
happened. And taken photos of us in
this jalopy. Have you no shame?

Arlene drops her head on the steering wheel, MOANS.

(end excerpt; contact rregello@thecityedition.com for info)