

# **BANNERLINE**

## **No Adjectives**

A Screenplay

by Gary Bannerman and Gary Payne

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### **NO ADJECTIVES - *Synopsis***

When a distinguished international columnist, based in Seattle, writes a blistering condemnation of US talk radio, a series of events are unleashed. A focus of the article was a crusade by a Seattle radio host that ultimately killed a multi-billion dollar resort development in the Cascades. This station, mortally afraid that the doomed resort would use this article as validation for a lawsuit against the station, launches a preemptive libel action against the newspaper and the Pulitzer-prize winning columnist Jack Forbes. This pits the admired journalist, so strict an adherent to professional ethics he's earned the nickname NO ADJECTIVES, against the radio station's buffoonish, but politically-connected talk show host. But it also puts a very wealthy radio station at odds with a high-quality but financially-troubled newspaper. When the controversy does breathe new life into the resort development, the plot takes a sinister turn. We learn that two rival underworld organizations - for different reasons - have a stake in making sure the resort does not happen. One of these groups had infiltrated management of the resort company and was the secret source of damaging material that assisted the radio station's negative campaign. Jack Forbes, who lost his wife to cancer a decade before our story begins, becomes romantically attached to the young lawyer who defends him in the action, daughter of his best friend, a Seattle police captain.

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**Gary Bannerman** is a journalist, broadcaster and corporate communications consultant. He has been published in countless numbers of magazines and newspapers and, for 16 years, he hosted Western Canada's most successful news talk radio show. His award-winning work as an investigative reporter ranged from a middle east war to the role of negotiator in three prison hostage incidents. He has authored several nonfiction books.

**Gary Payne** is an award-winning film, television and video producer and director. A former chief editor of Canada's highest-rated regional TV news program, he has produced documentaries, corporate videos and TV commercials in Europe, Asia, Africa and all across Canada. He was the creator and producer of the critically acclaimed theatrical feature film *Kootenai Brown*, starring Tom Burlinson, Donnelly Rhodes and Raymond Burr.

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FADE IN:

EXT. CANADA US BORDER - BLAINE TRUCK CROSSING -- NIGHT

An 18-wheeler at the roadside is surrounded by stacks of boxes marked with stereo, TV and VCR brand names. Battle clad police (DEA, RCMP, US Border Patrol, US Customs) root through cases. Dogs sniff boxes. Cars, flashing lights. Observing from the side is Captain DENNIS SAWCHUCK, 60, (Seattle PD) in a business suit. He sips from a car coffee mug. Next to him is uniformed Blaine policeman, BILL MENDLESON, 25.

The operations boss, JASON BENDIX, (DEA), 40, comes up to them.

**JASON**

At least 40 kilos of heroin so far.  
Buried in one box. Probably 90 per  
cent pure or better.

Dennis shows that he's impressed.

**JASON (CONT'D)**

Last year we only caught about 1,500ks  
of H at all U.S. ports of entry  
combined. . . .

*(he pauses)*

Ah.. Captain..when we finish an  
operation the gang goes for a few  
drinks.. would you like to join us?

Dennis points to the uniformed Blaine cop.

**DENNIS**

Can I bring Mendleson, here - he  
pulled over the truck.

**JASON**

*(hesitant- shrugs)*

Why not?

Jason returns to the action. Mendleson. Excited. Blurts:

**BILL**

Hot damn! - that sounds big!

**DENNIS**

It is. By the time they cut it two  
or three times for the street, the  
40 kilos could be worth \$15 million.  
But the heroin flow at this border  
is like Niagara Falls.

He holds out his coffee mug.

**DENNIS (CONT'D)**

If you were able to stick this mug into Niagara Falls, and fill it: that's the damage we've done to the drug trade tonight.

Let's go get a beer or two!

CUT TO:

NEWSPAPER-- MORNING

Montage. Major urban daily, *the Seattle Examiner*. Presses rolling. Front page headline screams MAJOR HEROIN BUST AT THE BORDER. Bundles of newspapers tossed on street corners. Bus goes by with billboard with photo of Bob Kaye at a microphone and slogan: BOB KAYE SCORES KAY-Os ON K-NOW!

Sidewalk coffee shop. People amused with something they are reading. Their noses are inside the paper, ignoring drug story on Page One. People reading headline *Local Radio Talk Shows: Neurotic and Superficial: a public hoax*.

CUT TO:

INT - *EXAMINER* NEWSROOM -- SUNDAY MORNING

Big newsroom. Staff huddled in groups around desks, laughing over a story. Buzz in the air about some extraordinary happening. LOU BOUDREAU, editor, Cajun black, rushes through the room, newspaper under arm, disgruntled. The buzz in the newsroom stops. He signals to junior editors BOB and HILDA.

**LOU**

Bob, Hilda.... my office...now!

CUT TO:

INT - BOUDREAU'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

**LOU**

Jeezus...doesn't anybody read Jack's stuff before we print it?

**BOB**

No one ever touches Jack Forbes' copy. It'd be like editing the Pope.

**LOU**

Somehow I don't think the Pope would compare a prominent media personality to "fermented ignorance".... I've had calls from editors in five cities already this morning and...

He tosses a pile of pink message slips in the air.

**LOU (CONT'D)**

It looks like every other syndicated paper is checking in.

**HILDA**

Are they all pissed?

**LOU**

They are laughing too hard to talk.. it's my problem, not theirs. Jack told me he was doing a survey of American radio.. He said he would prove it's a journalistic wasteland, but I didn't know he was going to trash the local station.

**HILDA**

*(nose in Jack's article)*

Does he ever! Listen to this: "In fact, for years now, we listened to Kaye with a growing sense of alarm and self-guilt, not unlike an honorable, conscientious surgeon must feel in a hospital where a dangerous quack continues to hurt and possibly even kill unsuspecting patients."

**LOU**

Bob Kaye may be a quack, but K-NOW *(pronounced KAY-NOW!)* Radio means the Carling family. I think we are in deep shit!

**BOB**

It's just a story... and Jack's opinions?

**HILDA**

But that's the amazing thing! J. A. Forbes *NEVER* expresses opinions. Just the facts. That's why they call him "No Adjectives."

**LOU**

Bob Kaye's radio show - after years of attack - finally succeeded in killing the Raven resort development. A two billion dollar deal went down the crapper. Raven's investors have threatened to sue K-NOW. So we publish America's most renowned journalist not only condemning the whole radio industry, he uses the K-NOW as a prime example. It gets syndicated in 41 major newspapers.

**(MORE)**

**LOU (CONT'D)**

If this article ignites a new war between Raven and K-NOW, we would be in the middle.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON CAMPUS -- MONDAY MORNING

Establish university campus. Student MARK ANDRADE enters door with sign denoting SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM.

CUT TO:

INT. LECTURE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

PROF. SADRU SHIVJI, an Ismaili of Indian (Uganda) extraction, with Mark and other students. Newspapers are open.

**MARK**

Holy shit, Prof.... there goes Jack's nickname!

**STUDENT 2**

Why do they call him "No Adjectives" anyway?

**SADRU**

Jack worked with Reuters for 20 years. His mantra - world renowned - is that reporters should just present clear, unadulterated facts. Others express opinions, not him.

**STUDENT 3**

Yeah - well listen to this  
*(reads the newspaper)*  
"His obsessive passion - fermented ignorance - is a festering sore: ugly, relentless, ominous."

**SADRU**

He was quoting a famous British hatchet job of many years ago.

**STUDENT 3**

Yes but what he meant was that talk radio - and Bob Kaye - are festering sores.

**MARK**

And listen to this:  
*(reading again)*  
A Professor at Cornell said: "Most urban radio talk is neurotic and superficial."

(MORE)

**MARK (CONT'D)**

Any suggestion that these shows  
profoundly research their content is  
nothing but a hoax on the public"

**SADRU**

Some of you helped Jack with his  
research on this.

**STUDENT 2**

What a laugh. Bob Kaye won the  
Washington Association of Broadcasters  
award for *Investigative Reporter of  
the Year*. His staff is just a  
secretary and student who do nothing  
but line up guests. I couldn't find  
any public or government agency that  
ever had a visit from them. They  
have no files... everything is just  
off the top of Bob Kaye's head.

**STUDENT 3**

I can't wait for Jack's next lecture  
here. Here's another good line about  
talk show hosts: "**They behave as if  
they are some form of surrogate  
government. Their oratory is of the  
style of an evangelist, able to burst  
forward with self-righteous fury  
over even the most innocuous of  
events.**"

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNT BAKER -- MORNING

Wide establishing scenic of beautiful Mt. Baker area and the  
North Cascades. A 4-wheel drive vehicle (logo of *Raven  
International Resorts* on the door) travels along a dusty  
dirt road. Driver is DANNY MACKENZIE, 40, president of Raven.

EXT. RAVEN OFFICE BELLINGHAM -- DAY

Danny screeches to a halt at a storefront office - also marked  
with the Raven name. He jumps from the vehicle carrying a  
newspaper under the arm and runs to the door, very excited.

CUT TO:

INT. RAVEN OFFICE - BELLINGHAM -- CONTINUOUS

As Danny enters, a secretary and a young man in a suit are  
looking at a vast map of the North Cascades, covered by red  
marking flags. There is a blow-up on the wall of a TIME  
magazine cover with a photo of Mt. Baker and the heading:  
RAVEN: AMERICA'S NEXT GREAT RESORT?

Other charts with bold headings and artwork show components of Raven: HOUSING, VILLAGES, HOTELS, SKI LIFTS, HELIPADS, SHOPPING, GOLF & SUMMER

Danny enters, almost shouting, before noticing the visitor.

**DANNY**

We're back in business! We've got the bastards now! Oh! Sorry!

**SECRETARY**

Dan, this is Enzo Venzini, marketing manager from Aspen. He just dropped in to say hello. Enzo, this is our president, Dan MacKenzie.

They shake hands.

**ENZO**

I was just up in Whistler and I'm driving back to Colorado.

**DANNY**

Well... we are still alive. Barely.

**ENZO**

*(points at TIME article)*

The whole industry is amazed that the State of Washington let this happen to you.

**DANNY**

It's an old story now. We had everybody on side, and then one radio talk show host started a campaign. He made heroes of every hair brained environmental and vested-interest lobby group that was against us. ...our stock collapsed, our investors panicked...eventually we lost our political support... I cry when I think of what could have been.

**ENZO**

*(points to wall charts)*

You had everything - ski villages at Mt. Baker and Mt. Shuksan - each as big as Aspen and Whistler.

**DANNY**

Las Vegas sized casino with a hotel and convention center. Our partners the Shuksan Indians already have a small casino on their reservation. This one would have been a giant, all State approved.

**ENZO**

Washington has great mountains, but no world class resorts - why's that?

**DANNY**

It's a mystery. Whistler has 2 million skiers a year - Aspen numbers are larger. Mt Baker here - a great mountain - currently does just 200,000. There's no village and little infrastructure. Our development would have created 12,000 permanent jobs.

**ENZO**

Is there any hope?

**DANNY**

*(excitedly)*

Today, there's hope. First good news in ages. When I burst in on you, I was going to show Rita this - in Sunday newspapers all over the U.S. He holds out the newspaper. You know who J.A. Forbes is?

**ENZO**

The famous reporter?

**DANNY**

Maybe the best in the world. Well he devastates the radio station that attacked us. Forbes basically says they are a fraud... it is just the ammunition I need.

**ENZO**

For what?

**DANNY**

Maybe now we can sue this radio station for everything they've got!

CUT TO:

INT. K-NOW RADIO/CARLING'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Busy radio station. K-NOW call letters on walls and doors. Large photo of Bob Kaye at reception. Executive office interior. RICHARD ALLEN CARLING II (handsome, 35, well groomed, exudes money) and program director LOUISE WHITE. Carling slams his fist into the newspaper.

**RICHARD**

This is a time bomb!

**LOUISE**

Bob Kaye is going to go wild!

**RICHARD**

That's the least of our worries. We spent two years waiting for the shoe to drop - for Raven to sue us. I think this is all they need now... it could cost us a fortune.

**LOUISE**

Just because of one reporter?

**RICHARD**

Some reporter! J.A. Forbes has won Pulitzer Prizes, honorary degrees and gawdonlyknows what else. He is worshiped by the journalism fraternity. This is big trouble.

**LOUISE**

But he criticizes all American radio, not just us.

**RICHARD**

He attacks the industry, but we are the only station named....this article makes us look like incompetent fraud artists... where is Bob Kaye, anyway?

**LOUISE**

He's in Mexico...remember, taking a tour group of station listeners.

**RICHARD**

Oh yes, our on-air staff's greatest professional passion - holiday junkets and freebies. Get him by phone as soon as possible!

CUT TO:

EXT. - YUCATAN -- MORNING

Bus rolls along a tropical roadway followed by a small car. The scenic backdrop includes the pyramids of Chitzen Itza. A banner on the side of the bus says: *K-NOW - Bob Kaye Tour.*

CUT TO:

INT. BUS -- CONTINUOUS

Bus load of old folks wearing badges with Bob Kaye's picture. A young travel agent stands next to the driver.

**OLD PERSON 1**

How come we never see Bob Kaye?

**AGENT**

We'll meet him later today at the cocktail party. This is a vacation for him and his wife - they like their privacy.

**OLD PERSON 2**

That's not what the radio ads promised. They said "come with Bob Kaye to Mexico."

**OLD PERSON 3**

Yeah - we paid to travel with him.

The agent's cell phone rings.

**AGENT**

*(into the cell phone)*

"Yes - his car is following us. He and his wife are there

*(pause)*

I'll try to flag him down.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Crummy little car - no air conditioning - is shown following the bus. BOB KAYE and his wife (both overweight) are sweaty, crammed side by side in front.

**BOB KAYE**

This is the shittiest trip ever. Look at this dinky toy car... the hotel is a dump. We were supposed to have an ocean view and all I can see is the parking lot.

**WIFE**

It's free...maybe if you weren't so cheap we could go in style.

**BOB KAYE**

It's my duty to the station and to our listeners to take these tours.

**WIFE**

Then why aren't we on the bus with your fans?

**BOB KAYE**

They are a million years old and they drive me crazy.

**WIFE**

So why are we following the bus?

**BOB KAYE**

I don't want to get lost... jeezuz,  
you'd think they could have given us  
air conditioning!

**WIFE**

*(points out the window.)*  
Look... they are waving a sign at  
you. The bus is stopping.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK WINDOW OF BUS -- CONTINUOUS

Agent holds up large sign. **"BOB, URGENT CALL FROM SEATTLE!"**

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - YUCATAN -- MOMENTS LATER

Bus and little car are parked. Bob leans against his car,  
talking on the cell phone. Crowd of old folks watch from a  
distance - gaping as if Bob were some kind of zoo curiosity.

**BOB KAYE**

*(listening intently)*  
That sonofabitch!

Unknown to Bob, the old folks are eavesdropping

**BOB KAYE (CONT'D)**

What a fucking asshole!

Old folks are horrified. An audible gasp from one of them.  
Bob notices...flushes... gestures "sorry" to his fans.

**BOB KAYE (CONT'D)**

*(whispering now)*  
Ah, Louise. I can't come home now,  
these people depend on me. They  
spent good money for the tour.  
*(listens some more)*  
Look.. law suits take forever. Fax  
the article to my hotel .. I'll fix  
that bastard when I get back!  
*(nods and listens)*  
Listen, Louise, could you do me a  
favor... call the tour company.  
They've cheated me. We have a lousy  
room and a rotten car... they promised  
VIP. I want to be upgraded right  
away. Okay. I won't take no for an  
answer!  
*(pause)*  
Bye.

CUT TO:

INT. CARLING'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Louise hangs up the phone. Richard Carling looks on

**LOUISE**

Just great. Our biggest star is a lunatic!

**RICHARD**

We've known that for a long time....  
All right. Let's get the lawyers  
over here. To hell with Bob Kaye.

EXT. - OPEN AIR BOX - EMERALD DOWNS -- AFTERNOON

JACK FORBES shares a box with his horse trainer MARIO TANTI and best friend Dennis Sawchuk. Typical modern box with TV set. Horses on the track. Jack wears a smoking jacket and tie (rarely seen without - an eccentricity. Excellent British woolens, but a rumpled professor look.

**JACK**

*(to Dennis)*

Did I read that you have a new job?

**DENNIS**

A little different... instead of heading the Seattle PD drug squad, I'm now assigned to the drug task force on the US-Canada border. Our team includes the DEA, FBI, RCMP, the U.S. Border Patrol, Treasury, me - and a couple of other agencies.

**JACK**

I saw the paper yesterday. Another big bust.

**DENNIS**

At the Blaine-Vancouver crossing. I was there. . It's action central for Golden Triangle heroin - bigger than all other U.S. entry points combined. The sideshows are Canadian-grown grass, and South American cocaine.

The track announcer interrupts. Horses near the gate.

**TRACK ANNOUNCER (O.S.)**

*(booming P.A. voice)*

The horses are approaching the starting gate.

**JACK**

Do we have any chance here?

**MARIO**

I think *Mystical Moments* has just about had it. .. if she gets out of the gate okay, we might win a check.

**DENNIS**

*(a teasing tone)*

Remember, Jack, you just buy these cheap horses to have fun!

The horses break from the gate. *Mystical Moments* drops back. Jack and buddies moan off camera as the horse loses badly.

**MARIO**

Cheer up. Your two-year-old had a fantastic workout this morning.

**DENNIS**

*Slew's Party Boy?*

**MARIO**

He's coming along just great.

**JACK**

He hasn't done much on the track.

**MARIO**

He's a baby. I bring them along slowly. Third last time out.

**JACK**

No wins in four starts. Look at *News Talk*. Now there's a horse! - five starts, five wins. Easy wins too.

**DENNIS**

I was going to ask you about that, Jack - I saw your column yesterday

**JACK**

So?

**DENNIS**

Well you slammed Bob Kaye pretty hard - did you know that Bob Kaye owns *News Talk*?

**JACK**

No. Transvaal Stables paid stud fees of \$200,000 for *Deputy Minister* ...don't they still own him?

**DENNIS**

Probably, but Amos Vander Shaaf is always sucking up to Bob Kaye.

**(MORE)**

**DENNIS (CONT'D)**

He likes to play politics behind the scenes and Kaye's radio show adds to his power. I think Amos gave him a piece of the horse and let him be the owner of record.

**JACK**

How will *Slew's Party Boy* do against *News Talk*?

**MARIO**

I won't kid you Jack. *News Talk* is on everybody's list as a Kentucky Derby possible next year... but we have great breeding too. *Slew of Gold* is a good Kentucky sire - may turn out to be just as great as his daddy *Seattle Slew* and my mare *Misty's Party* has produced quite a few winners.

**DENNIS**

What did the colt cost you, Jack?

**MARIO**

The deal of a lifetime. I shipped *Misty's Party* to Kentucky and back. We paid \$7,500 for *Slew of Gold* but we dropped the foal at my farm here. Jack paid \$20,000.

**JACK**

Poor Mario - bring out the violins. Plus \$10,000 in training fees so far and we haven't won a jar of horse piss let alone a race.

**DENNIS**

Why haven't you put Jack's colt against *News Talk*?

**MARIO**

Amos always likes to win. I think he works his colts too hard. I'm building *Party Boy's* confidence slowly. . . I'm aiming for the *Snoqualmie Invitational*. That's when we will take on *News Talk*.

A young track attendant, wearing a smart Emerald Downs blazer and carrying a cell phone, interrupts them.

**ATTENDANT**

I'm sorry Mr. Forbes, but it is Lou Boudreau from *The Examiner*. He says its urgent that he speaks to you.

Jack takes the phone and listens.

**JACK**

Yeah, Sorry Lou. I guess I haven't checked my messages since yesterday. I've been out here at the track most of the time.

He listens, making a funny -'I couldn't care less' face at his friends.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Okay, Lou, I'll come downtown right away.

He hangs up and looks at Dennis and Mario.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

I guess they are having a bird over my column yesterday. It looks like we'll be fighting Bob Kaye on track and off track. It should be fun.

CUT TO:

INT. - BOUDREAU'S OFFICE -- LATER

Lou and Jack alone behind closed doors

**LOU**

This worries me. I think K-NOW will be forced to sue us.

**JACK**

*(amused, nonchalant)*

Why?

**LOU**

I'm sure you struck a nerve. Bob Kaye's work is shoddy. The word from Raven is that your article has given them a lift. I don't know why they didn't sue Kaye and K-NOW long before this, but now they might.

**JACK**

So?

**LOU**

K-NOW may sue us as a preemptive measure. Their lawyer has already asked for an apology from us and he said that Richard Carling is angrier than he can ever remember.

**JACK**

Young Dickie?

**LOU**

I think that your use of that nickname in the article pissed him off more than anything.

**JACK**

Better than "Big Dick."

**LOU**

His father was a powerhouse. Only his closest friends ever teased him with *Big Dick*... and then only after Richard Jr. came along.

**JACK**

*(chuckling)*

The Rising Son - do you think that'd make a good book title?

**LOU**

*(getting peeved)*

Jack this is serious. Richard Carling is no lightweight. Before the old man died five years ago, Richard managed investments behind the scenes. He quietly added fortunes to the family empire, but K-NOW made him more conscious of his image - your article hurt. I think he is going to sue and we can't afford it.

**JACK**

My syndication makes over a million dollars a year. What do you mean we can't afford it?

**LOU**

The newspaper is broke. When Rebecca Goldberg divorced her husband, she kept the house and the newspaper, while he took the money, and went sailing around the world with a young bimbo. Mrs. Goldberg has borrowed extensively to keep this paper afloat.

**JACK**

Her own high standards are half the problem. She keeps adding expensive features.

**LOU**

You are the most expensive.

**JACK**

My syndication is profitable.

**LOU**

Well, yes it is. But what can you do to help us with this?

**JACK**

What do you mean?

**LOU**

What if our legal advice is to apologize, and try to settle?

**JACK**

No way! I'd quit first. Has it entered your mind that my article is absolutely accurate? This guy Bob Kaye is sleazy - most radio talk shows have all the substance of Mary Poppins. We can demonstrate that pompous radio newsrooms, compared to the resources of newspapers, are water pistols next to bazookas.

**LOU**

Alright. Let's leave it for today. But can I ask you a question?

**JACK**

Shoot.

**LOU**

Why the radical shift in style? Why all of the opinions all of a sudden?

**JACK**

I'm not sure. Bob Kaye has grated on me for a long time. And then when those morons of the broadcasters association made him investigator of the year, something snapped.

**LOU**

Well, Jack, I thought you'd finally hit menopause. But guess what Becky Goldberg thought?

Jack just shrugs, asking with facial expression.

**LOU (CONT'D)**

She thought it was wonderful... she's your biggest fan.

Jack just grins, mischievously.

CUT TO:

EXT - CASCADES NATIONAL BANK -- DAY

Dan MacKenzie in Raven Jeep drives up Everett's main street and parks in front of Cascades National Bank.

INT CASCADES NATIONAL BANK -- MOMENTS LATER

CHILDRESS "CHUCK" GRANT (bank president) welcomes Dan and they sit comfortably at a coffee table.

**DANNY**

What did you think about the article?

**CHUCK**

Wonderful - but it might cause us some trouble.

**DANNY**

What do you know that I don't know?

**CHUCK**

Shareholders and media are asking whether we are going to sue K-NOW.

**DANNY**

We should. I've had media calls too.

**CHUCK**

I wouldn't take their calls. What did you say?

**DANNY**

I was noncommittal about the law suit, but I said it was great to see a famous reporter such as J.A. Forbes telling our side of the story and pointing out how unprofessional K-NOW has been toward us.

**CHUCK**

Did you mention me?

**DANNY**

I said you were the chairman and that any decision about fighting anybody had to come from the Board of Directors. But they know that Motty Levin and a few of us have been itching for this fight for years.

**CHUCK**

Mordecai Levin has little to do with this company any more!

**DANNY**

He's the founder, for Christ's sake!  
He's a director and he still owns a  
ton of shares. I love the guy.

**CHUCK**

Worthless shares!

**DANNY**

Not if we get going again!

**CHUCK**

Let's watch this thing closely. K-  
NOW may sue the newspaper. We should  
see how that goes... I'd hate to get  
everybody's hopes up again only to  
be crushed.

**DANNY**

That's a point. But shouldn't we  
get a legal opinion?

**CHUCK**

I'm going to talk to Boyd Jaekel to  
see if this changes anything.

**DANNY**

Jaekel has been against the lawsuit  
all along. I've talked to other  
lawyers who think we'd win big!

**CHUCK**

Boyd runs one of the biggest law  
firms in Seattle. Do you really  
want to take some Bellingham legal  
opinion over his?

CUT TO:

EXT - BLAINE -- DAY

Establish U.S./Canadian border with Peace Arch. Exterior  
courthouse in Blaine.

INT - FAMILY COURT BLAINE -- CONTINUOUS

LISA SAWCHUK (attractive lawyer 35) appears before lady judge  
with Blaine police officer Bill Mendleson in civilian clothes.

**JUDGE**

Ms. Sawchuk... the fact that your client  
was drunk violates his custody order...  
He promised to stay off the sauce.

**LISA**

Your Honor, it was a big day for a Blaine policeman to be part of a \$15 million drug bust... when the Border Drug Task Force celebrated, Bob here got carried away.

**JUDGE**

*(laughing)*

What was it, a Baggy of cocaine? Police math is a wonder of the world!

**LISA**

It was a lot of heroin.... Your Honor...but, the point is he is a very good man and a good father...I've shown you the letters from his son's school and his church. Everything is better with the boy since the divorce. This won't happen again.

**JUDGE**

Okay... this event is noted in the record. Good luck Officer Mendleson.

Mendleson (relieved) nods.

**JUDGE:**

Ms. Sawchuck.... can I ask you a question?

**LISA**

Yes?

**JUDGE**

Isn't a Seattle lawyer for a full day a little expensive for a routine matter... are we running short of lawyers up here in Whatcom County?

**LISA**

A senior officer on the drug task force asked me to help - he was the one who invited Officer Mendleson to join them for drinks. He felt responsible. I do a lot of work for Seattle police and their families.

**JUDGE**

*(Amused)*

And their world is divided neatly in two... them, and... well... I won't say it.

**LISA**

Exactly, Your Honor.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLAINE COURTHOUSE STEPS -- DAY

**MENDLESON**

Why didn't you say it was your father who asked you to help me?

**LISA**

*(chuckles)*

And advertise that Daddy is my best salesman? Get real!

**MENDLESON**

I didn't get the Judge's last comment about police.

**LISA**

She meant that the reason I was here is that cops only trust those who are within the police family.

**MENDLESON**

*(not too bright)*

But she said police think the world is divided into two?

**LISA**

Cops and Assholes!

CUT TO:

INT. K-NOW RADIO STUDIO -- MORNING

Bob Kaye is behind the microphone in his radio studio. "On Air" light is flashing red.

**BOB KAYE**

Before I go to the phone lines, I want to thank the wonderful people who traveled with us to Mexico. Great listeners - Great people.

*(pause)*

However, I'd be remiss if I didn't warn you about Puget Mexico Tours.

Grinning snidely, he winks through the glass at his producer.

**BOB KAYE (CONT'D)**

Their so-called luxury hotel - the Aztec Castle - is a flea trap, second rate.

**(MORE)**

**BOB KAYE (CONT'D)**

Meals were unacceptable... we could have had prizes for who got to the bathroom fastest and most often. Anyway, live and learn.

He looks at the flashing phone board.

**BOB KAYE (CONT'D)**

Line one go ahead.

**CALLER 1**

Good to have you back Bob. Did you see that article in the *Examiner* about you and Raven?

**BOB KAYE**

*(reddening)*

It was faxed to me in Mexico. You've got to have a thick skin in my business. One week you win an award, and the next you get called a bum.

**CALLER 1**

Where does this guy get off calling you a sore or a wart or whatever he said?

**BOB KAYE**

The article referred to some famous quote in Britain.

**CALLER 1**

What does anyone in England have against you?

Bob slams off the phone line. Rolling his eyeballs upwards.

**BOB KAYE**

No, J.A.Forbes wrote the article. He quoted someone else. Anyway, I stand on my record. Raven's world class circus would have destroyed the north of this state, a wonderful place for hiking, mountaineering, fishing and family sports.

*(pause)*

The public killed Raven, not me. Politicians were convinced to do the right thing.

*(pause)*

Newspapers hate and envy radio people, because we are better known in public and we get paid a lot more... Line two, you are on the air.

**CALLER 2**

What?. . .Ah. . . I was going to ask something else, but, Bob, when *60 Minutes* did a feature about J.A. Forbes they said he made more than a million dollars a year! Do you make that much?

Bob - steaming now - kills the phone call.

**BOB KAYE**

*(spiteful..spitting)*

I do real well. But that's not the point. I want Forbes to come on this program and face the music like a man. Let's debate radio news. Let's see how much he knows about Raven. Does he have the guts to sit here opposite me?

INT. OFFICE OF REBECCA GOLDBERG -- DAYS LATER

The Seattle *Examiner's* Chief Financial Officer GEORGE MALONEY, an egghead yuppie, is with publisher REBECCA "BECKY" GOLDBERG.

**GEORGE**

Our circulation is up, advertising is strong and everybody seems to like the direction of the paper. But we are going broke.

**BECKY**

The old story?

**GEORGE**

I'm afraid so. We simply have too much debt. You borrowed too much to buy out your husband.

**BECKY**

Getting rid of that jackass was one of the greatest bargains in my life.

**GEORGE**

If we had waited until debt was under control before the expensive changes to personnel and graphic design, we might have averted the crisis.

**BECKY**

Are the banks still with us?

**GEORGE**

Not really.

**(MORE)**

**GEORGE (CONT'D)**

They were skeptical about whether you could run this paper and, every year, as they see us sink, they get more nervous. If one forecloses, the stack of cards could come tumbling down.

A secretary knocks and then enters the room.

**SECRETARY**

They are ready for you in the boardroom.

**BECKY**

Come along George. This should be entertaining. Wayne English wants to talk Jack Forbes into groveling.

**GEORGE**

God I hope we can avoid this law suit. Will Jack cooperate?

**BECKY**

*(with a nervous laugh)*

Not a chance. Wayne will finally meet his match. Both intimidate me!

INT. EXAMINER BOARDROOM -- DAY

Jack Forbes (dark business suit) and Lou Boudreau face WAYNE ENGLISH, flanked by assistant lawyers. They are engaging in small talk prior to the meeting. English, with Jewish features, is immaculate in a perfectly tailored suit. He has a kind demeanor, but looks distinguished and powerful.

**JACK**

I guess I've arrived at capital "E" Seattle establishment.

**WAYNE**

*(amused)*

No, that would be capital "B" for Boeing or the new era, "G" for Gates. Is it possible for a Jew to be capital "E" establishment?

**JACK**

English is hardly a Jewish name.

**WAYNE**

No. My Dad was an uneducated Russian immigrant who got tired of people telling him to speak English. No one could grasp his real name, so this became his little joke.

**JACK**

The English name is ubiquitous in this state: stores, real estate, university buildings.

**WAYNE**

That's father's empire. I'm just a lawyer.

Everyone laughs, just as Rebecca Goldberg and George Maloney make their entrance. Everybody stands. George and Becky take their seats beside Lou and Jack, Becky next to Jack.

**JACK**

Wayne was saying he's just a lawyer.

**BECKY**

*(smiling)*

How many attorneys in your firm now, Wayne?

**WAYNE**

About 250 and 200 support staff. Medium-sized by Philadelphia standards. Large here.

**BECKY**

Okay - let's hear it.

**WAYNE**

I have every reason to believe that Richard Carling and K-NOW Radio will be filing suit this week. They want to protect their flank against a reopening of the Raven controversy, in which case they fear a libel suit against them would claim damages in the hundreds of millions.

Jack Forbes appears very relaxed and nonchalant through all of this. Not the slightest bit worried.

**BECKY**

We are insured, aren't we?

**GEORGE**

As a cost-cutting move last year we changed the policy.

*(looking at English)*

Mrs. Goldberg had so greatly upgraded the quality of our reporting personnel, the research resources and the editorial control, our insurers honestly believed we needed less coverage.

*(to the whole group)*

We are partly protected.

**WAYNE**

If we had to compensate K-NOW for a loss in court to Raven, we might face a huge liability.

**GEORGE**

The point is that we really can't afford anything right now. Our financial situation is critical and a lawsuit may be the final straw for our bankers, who are already nervous.

Jack is now getting irritated.

**JACK**

Why don't we cut the crap and get to the case!

**WAYNE**

Okay. How do you want it?

**JACK**

Do we win or lose?

**WAYNE**

We lose.

**JACK**

That's ridiculous. We had students in 20 cities visit only top radio news stations, the ones that bullshit about saturation coverage. We found that they rarely have more than three or four people on duty. They have no research libraries and their staff rarely even access on-line resources. There's no sense of history or background - their whole world is born anew every day. It's all phony. The talk shows are worse. These twits boast about "investigative reporting" but they usually only have one flunky assistant who books guests and screens callers.

**WAYNE**

All of your general statements about radio are defensible. Your problem is entirely K-NOW and Bob Kaye. By singling them out, They became the de facto worst offender.

**JACK**

They are typical.

**WAYNE**

*(to an assistant)*

Summarize our problem.

**FEMALE LAWYER**

Mr. Forbes can't prove Kaye's lack of research. For all we know, he may have been voicing the outstanding work of other agencies.

**JACK**

Good reporters corroborate all stories. This airhead merely mouths anything critical and suppresses and distorts the other side of the story.

**WAYNE**

We could win on these points alone, but our handicap here is your personal fame and international respect.

**JACK**

Surely that goes to credibility?

**WAYNE**

It does. But it makes you a bully. You've used your stature to pulverize a local ant. There is also the question of your style. You are renowned for "just the facts" - your nickname is "No Adjectives". This attack on Kaye was totally out of character...and that argues the fatal legal word "malice" and unprofessional emotional involvement.

*(to his other assistant)*

What are some of the pejorative words here?

**MALE ASSISTANT**

The column uses the words: FRAUD, HOAX, PRETENTIOUS, PSEUDO-PSYCHIATRY, QUACK, NEUROTIC, FESTERING SORE & COUNTERFEIT... Worse than that. It's the way these words are strung together that is so devastating.

Jack, Lou and Becky all laugh.

**BECKY**

I think the new "J.A. Forbes" is highly-entertaining.

**WAYNE**

My advice is to get out of this with as much dignity as we can. Apologize. Settle. Whatever it takes.

**JACK**

Bullshit. Do you know, Wayne, a court case is like sex. There's foreplay and the real action. You guys in corporate law are obsessed with foreplay - truck loads of paper from office to office, with endless meetings at huge hourly rates, scaring clients about the cost of court.

*(his anger grows)*

Most lawyers shit their pants at the prospect of going to court. The obscenity is that bureaucratic law just milks clients on both sides. Let's skip the foreplay and get to the sex...get this thing before a judge as quickly and cheaply as possible. My work against Bob Kaye's record. My research against his.

**WAYNE**

*(unruffled)*

We probably will face a jury, and those people are far more likely to be Bob Kaye fans than readers of your more thoughtful work.

**JACK**

I'll take my chances.

**WAYNE**

My client, Jack, is the *Examiner*. I've given you my best advice.

**JACK**

Then I am going to get myself another lawyer.

Jack gets up and stomps from the room.

**LOU**

I knew this was a waste of time.

**BECKY**

I'm going to go meet young Mr. Carling and see what can be done. Thanks Wayne.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR PATIO, OVERLOOKING LAKE WASHINGTON -- DAY

BOYD JAEKEL'S home with nervous Chuck Grant. Jaekel, also a rich corporate lawyer is well coifed, but he has a shifty look about him. He puffs on a Havana cigar.

**CHUCK**

There's lots of pressure to start fighting again... to bring Raven back to life. Danny says the Forbes column is a basis for suing K-NOW Radio.

**BOYD**

We can't do that.

**CHUCK**

But I look like an ass as the Chairman of Raven if I don't support the people who defend us.

**BOYD**

I think you should sound positive and grateful. Encourage Danny. Nobody listens to him anyway and he doesn't have any money to spend.

**CHUCK**

Do you mean we say we are thinking about suing?

**BOYD**

No, you don't have to do that. Just say that we are pleased that the *Examiner* sees the justice of our case. But our resources are thin at the moment and our shareholders will need more than one news story to start spending money again.

**CHUCK**

K-NOW Radio might sue the paper.

**BOYD**

Yes. And once they do, you'll be free to say encouraging words but you don't have to do anything until the law suit is over.

**CHUCK**

That Forbes is a helluva reporter. If this whole story comes out, I'll be finished as a banker.

**BOYD**

*(with a cackling laugh)*  
You'll be in jail!

CUT TO:

INT. CARLING'S OFFICE -- DAY

Richard Carling, in his office, watches a closed circuit of Bob Kaye on the air.

A secretary escorts Becky Goldberg into the room. They shake hands. Richard shows her to a seat. He sits in an easy chair near her.

INT. BOB KAYE'S STUDIO - DAY

**KAYE**

After J.A. Forbes' cowardly attack on this program, this radio station and on me, I expect him to be a man and come on this show .

**CALLER 1**

Bob why would you call Forbes a coward? He had the courage to speak his mind in public.

**KAYE**

No one can talk back to a newspaper. He's a coward if he can't come here and face both me and this audience.

INT. RICHARD CARLING'S OFFICE -- DAY

Richard turns down Kaye's program and turns to Becky.

**RICHARD**

He has a point. Anyway, you asked for this meeting?

**BECKY**

Yes. Jack Forbes is not going to apologize. He insists that talk radio offers poor journalism, and he was particularly offended by Bob Kaye's Raven campaign.

**RICHARD**

*(deadly serious)*

Then - Mrs. Goldberg - we have nothing to talk about.

**BECKY**

Please call me "Becky."

**RICHARD**

In view of what might lay ahead for us, I think we should be formal.

**BECKY**

What I'd like to offer your station is a full-page for rebuttal. We could make a writer or researchers available to you if you so desired.

**RICHARD**

Making J.A. Forbes' point?

**BECKY**

I beg your pardon?

**RICHARD**

Newspapers are deep in resources,  
but radio stations are illiterate.

**BECKY**

That thought never crossed my mind.  
I only wanted to emphasize my  
sincerity. What is gained by spending  
tens of thousands on lawyers?

**RICHARD**

Mrs. Goldberg, my lawyers tell me  
that we have no choice but to sue as  
a defensive measure, to halt any  
possible Raven action against us.  
But that is not what bothered me  
most. I was called "Young Dickie"  
The message was that a lightweight  
inherited the legendary empire of  
Dick Carling.

*(intensely)*

I was not hatched the day my father  
died. Dad was bored by everything  
except radio and his Aviation  
Electronics business. My role was  
finance - low key - but I will not  
allow anyone to paint me as a wimp  
who lucked out through inheritance.

**BECKY**

*(quietly, profoundly)*

I was among your father's many  
admirers. Just now - through your  
anger - I could see him in your eyes.

**RICHARD**

Mrs. Goldberg, we are definitely  
going to court.

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN AIR BOX - EMERALD DOWNS -- AFTERNOON

Jack Forbes, Dennis Sawchuk and Professor Sadru Shivji are  
there. Racing is going on in the background but they don't  
seem to be paying much attention.

**JACK**

*(to Sadru)*

Wasn't my column fair comment?

**SADRU**

Fair comment is British libel terminology.

**(MORE)**

**SADRU (CONT'D)**

I grew up with it in Uganda, and you lived with it at Reuters in London. In Canada it would work, but not the U.S.

**JACK**

What's the difference?

**SADRU**

"Fair comment" argues that if an individual sincerely believes something, and that any reasonable person with the same belief would think the same, it can be published. Libel cases lose in the British system if someone knowingly or maliciously publishes untruth, or is hopelessly negligent in research. It can even be criminal in the U.K., on the basis that injury to reputation is just as bad as physical injury.

**JACK**

And the U.S.?

**SADRU**

A bit schizophrenic. U.S. courts put so much faith in the First Amendment, you can publish just about anything. Public officials are fair game. But the word "malice" dominates U.S. libel decisions and, of course, whomever best sways a jury often wins the day. If it is proved that your intent was other than what you said, you might have trouble.

**JACK**

Who would be a good lawyer for me?

**SADRU**

Libel experience is relatively rare, but it is a simple tort. You should get someone you like and trust, who is comfortable in court and has some experience arguing torts. I could introduce you to a couple.

Dennis Sawchuk, listening intently to this, jumps in.

**DENNIS**

What about Lisa? My daughter.

**JACK**

I haven't seen Lisa in years. Does she do libel?

**DENNIS**

Not yet - but she is in court all the time. She's smart as hell and scared of nothing. And she might be real excited about working for you!

Jack and Sadru seem intrigued. Sadru shrugs.

**SADRU**

Lisa has come to the school to lecture on citizen's rights with respect to police, and the reverse. She's sharp.

**JACK**

It wouldn't hurt to have a chat, Dennis. Why not set up a meeting. .and you might give her this.

Jack reaches behind him and pulls up a large case full of envelopes and packages, none of them opened.

**DENNIS**

What's this?

**JACK**

The paper war has started on this case. I haven't bothered to read anything. Lisa should have a look.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY OF CASCADES NATIONAL BANK -- LATER

A Chinese thug, well dressed, waits in the lobby of the bank. Chuck Grant comes out of his office heading to the street. A clerk gets his attention.

**CLERK**

Mr. Grant, this gentleman hoped to have a word with you.

**CHUCK**

I'm late for a lunch appointment. Could we schedule something this afternoon?

**THUG**

I'll walk out with you. This will only take a minute.

Grant is displeased, but he walks out with him.

EXT. EVERETT MAIN STREET -- DAY

A black limo is at the curb. The driver leans against the front, enjoying a smoke.

**THUG**

The people I represent are concerned about suggestions of starting Raven up again.

**CHUCK**

What's your interest?

**THUG**

Let's just say we are environmentalists . . don't I look like a backpacker?

**CHUCK**

Look, I am in a hurry and I don't have time for games.

**THUG**

Call Jaekel.

The use of Jaekel's name startles Grant.

**THUG (CONT'D)**

Tell him Gold Icon Properties paid you a visit. Mr. Grant, my associates were not pleased to hear you quoted supporting those dreamers at Mt. Baker. . . We know about your casino problems, Mr. Grant, and how Jaekel pulls your strings.

The thug gets into the limo. Grant, worried, watches it pull away.

CUT TO:

INT. COOKHOUSE - BACKSTRETCH OF EMERALD DOWNS -- MORNING

Jack (no tie, check shirt, jeans) is eating breakfast. Dennis arrives in formal dress uniform. His daughter Lisa (overdressed) is with him. Lisa has a fat briefcase.

**JACK**

Dennis, dressed like that, you'll scare the horses.

**DENNIS**

The chief's retirement parade is today.

**JACK**

I read that he's not in great health.

**DENNIS**

His wounds have caught up to him.

**JACK**

What wounds?

**DENNIS**

*(grinning)*

Occupational hazard. Liver is giving out after a long, enjoyable career...anyway, I've got to run. This is Lisa.

Dennis just waves - and motions to her to sit down.

**JACK**

Thanks Dennis

*(and to Lisa)*

Must be ten years. Breakfast?

**LISA**

At least. Coffee would be good. Black.

Jack gets the coffee while Lisa takes some notes out of her case. As Jack resumes his eating, Lisa speaks:

**LISA (CONT'D)**

I would like to handle this case.

**JACK**

Can we win?

**LISA**

It's a matter of how we play the game and whether we can convince the referees.

**JACK**

*(relaxed, patronizing)*

That's a big improvement already.

**LISA**

We'll need a lot of evidence specifically related to Raven. We need examples of shoddy reporting to prove your argument.

**JACK**

You've got the job. Want to see my pride and joy?

**LISA**

What?

**JACK**

My two-year-old colt.

**LISA**

A horse? You mean I'm hired?

**JACK**

Yes.

**LISA**

Don't you want to know my fees?

**JACK**

Do you charge less than Wayne English?

Lisa chokes on her coffee - looks up with a big smile.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

See. I'm saving a fortune.

He pulls an envelope out of his pocket.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

That's \$5,000. For starters.

**LISA**

You mean you decided on me sight unseen?

**JACK**

Denny's daughter. How could I go wrong?

**LISA**

Let's go see your horse.

**JACK**

Besides, this case is a crock of shit.

Jack, carrying her case, first walk by the glamorous Transvaal Staples en route to a more humble barn. There, they pause to look at a horse. The name SLEW'S PARTY BOY is on the stall door. Jack pats his nose affectionately. No dialogue.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE OF BOYD JAEKEL - DAYS LATER

Lisa strides through the foyer of a major office building, into an elevator, unloading at the posh entrance to "Jaekel and Company." A receptionist shows her to a seat. In his private office, Jaekel - quite irate - talks on the phone to GEOFFREY WU (in the back of a limo with SAM LAM, who is silent). Wu has a distinct Chinese accent.

**BOYD**

Geoffrey, you had no business sending your thugs to scare Grant. He is worried enough as it is.