

GOLDEN FROG TIME

Story by:

Brian Koppelman & David Levien & Brian Chamberlayne

Teleplay by:

Brian Koppelman & David Levien

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OPEN ON:

EXT. IRISH BAR - NIGHT

Establishing.

TERRY BURKE (PRE-LAP V.O.)  
...Everybody pays...

INT. IRISH BAR - NIGHT

Cold open on: JOHNNY and TERRY BURKE, last seen in 210, are in their haunt. A POCKMARKED MAN pleads he can't pay back his loan.

The Burkes assure him that in some fashion, he will indeed pay. They loom over him and though the threat is real and physical, it doesn't seem it will be a beating.

INT. AXE CAPITAL - NIGHT

AXE, WAGS, DEB KAWI and TAYLOR are the only people still at the place.

Wags finishes a phone call in his office, walks across to Axe's and tells Axe that he just got off the phone with THEO, the prime from Patriot Bank, who confirms Patriot is rolling out the Ice Juice IPO.

This followed other calls and convos. The IPO is real and Rhoades Senior is into the juice company deep. The CEO is Ira Schirmer, Rhoades' fucking lawyer...

Axe inquires about the fundamentals of the company and the likelihood of the IPO tanking.

Wags has to tell him: Sorry boss, it's solid.

Axe processes this.

INT. SENIOR'S APARTMENT, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CHUCK, SENIOR and IRA have had dinner and are drinking expensive liquor. Spirits are high as they get final word that the Ice Juice IPO is well-subscribed and going out at \$18 per share.

Ira's still a little disappointed he won't be ringing the bell at the Exchange the next morning.

Senior advises: "Don't be a cliché, my boy, just be rich."

Senior tells of his storied business past to Chuck and Ira. He's taken these rides before. A bit of his history comes up, his rise in real estate, his big public failure, his political ambitions that faltered in the wake of that.

It ends with Senior saying that he always knew Chuck would eventually make all of it right.

But Ira can't help but do the math: Holy shit, I'm worth over 125 million dollars.

"On paper, Ira" Chuck cautions his friend.

Senior: You never tally your sheet until the lock up period is over...but I have to admit, this one feels good.

Chuck seems uneasy at the optimism. He bids them good night and good luck, his face conflicted.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

It's after hours and the bio-lab is closed. Except for one station. A LAB TECH stands next to another MAN whose face is pressed against a microscope.

MICROSCOPE POV: Something small but aggressive consumes other material on the slide.

The Man looks up from the microscope. It is HALL.

Hall: It seems very fast.

Lab Tech: It is. And aggressive.

A large cash payment exchanges hands and the Lab Tech opens a dry ice freezer and gives Hall a FROZEN CYLINDER.

INT. RHOADES HOME, BEDROOM - DAY

Chuck and WENDY wake up together. They share a smile. And a comment about Chuck leaving before the kids wake up, lest they be confused or too hopeful...

Before he starts to dress, Chuck gets lost in his Blackberry.

Wendy says: You look like my guys at work right now--what's so interesting?

Chuck tells her he's reading pre-trading news on the juice company IPO.

Wendy: Exciting for Ira.

Chuck: Not just Ira...I'm in it too.

She's surprised, and asks him why?

Chuck: Because I saw it. Exactly what would happen with this company and what it would do for me. I've only seen three things that clearly in my life. One was my first time actually arguing in court--I knew it was my calling. The second was when I met you--and I knew it was my destiny. The third was this.

Wendy is surprised by the power of his statement.

Wendy: Wow. Well good luck then...

INT. AXELROD HOME, BEDROOM - DAY

Axe wakes up and looks over to find he's...alone again.

With a WTF look on his face he moves quickly...

INT. AXELROD HOME - DAY

Down the stairs and into...

INT. AXELROD HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

DEAN and GORDIE sit eating breakfast. A bit of relief from Axe. Where's mom?

Boys: Downstairs doing yoga.

INT. AXELROD HOME, YOGA ROOM - DAY

Axe enters to find LARA and her YOGA INSTRUCTOR doing sun salutations.

Lara: Do you need me?

Axe: No, I'll see you later. You can get back to your downward dog.

EXT. AXE CAPITAL - DAY

Establishing.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

TAYLOR is unpacking a series of file folders when Wags walks in. Taylor will be running a review of all analysts to weed out inefficiencies.

Wags: You're going to shank someone, to earn respect on the yard.

Taylor: If individuals aren't performing up to standards, then, regretfully, changes might have to be--

Wags: You're going to shank someone...But first, he's waiting for us on your other project.

Taylor nods, grabs their iPad and leaves with Wags.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

Wags and Taylor sit across from Axe. Taylor's project was a forensic accounting of Senior's net worth.

Taylor begins: The financial records your man provided were very...comprehensive.

Axe: He's a good man. And thorough.

Taylor tells them that Senior is wealthy but cash-strapped. He's mostly illiquid, locked up in long term investments. He's recently poured all of his cash into real estate in Kingsford.

But all that property won't be flip-able for at least two years, when the casino is a proven winner.

Axe: Then where'd he get the capital for the juice company, banks?

Taylor: No institutional money behind him on this, no formal loans. It had to be a personal loan...

Pleasant information to Axe.

Taylor leaves.

Axe and Wags, alone now.

Axe: You know those poison tip arrows certain tribes used that could go through one guy and kill another? This might be like that.

Wags: Yeah. South American tribes used Golden Frog Poison. I tried to smoke it once, but the shaman jumped across the tent to stop me.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Chuck is behind his desk while RANDO PARALEGAL works on Chuck's computer, installing QUODD stock-watch software.

Rando: You know you didn't have to pay for this, you could just go to Yahoo finance and hit refresh every few--

Chuck: I'm aware. Are we set?

Chuck's meeting has arrived: ARI SPYROS of the SEC, with CONNERTY and SACKER sitting in. Rando Paralegal leaves.

Spyros pulls out some trading history: Klaxon Auto Group...

Chuck: I read the stories--pump the brakes and there's nothing there. Big recalls.

Spyros: The company was robust. The whole street was long. But Bobby Axelrod was short right before the news broke.

Sacker: As always.

Connerty: You have anything besides the usual rotten smell?

Spyros hands over his documents and says: I'll leave that part to you. The surface looks smooth, but there's got to be criminality underneath.

Chuck seems uncharacteristically distracted. It's because the market's about to open. Connerty and Sacker are eager to get into Klaxon. Chuck says go ahead and waves them out.

Then he hurries around behind his computer...

INT. MONTAGE - DAY

--Chuck behind his desk.

--Ira and Senior in Senior's study.

--Axe behind his desk.

All look at their screens.

--Mafee at his Bloomberg calls it: "And they're off. Ice Juice opens at \$18.00...already pushing north.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, WENDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Taylor comes to Wendy to ask: How do you fire someone?

Wendy gives some astringent advice: Analysts are too important, you can't afford to carry one who isn't pulling his or her weight. Do them the long term favor of getting them one step closer to where or what they should be doing.

Taylor takes in the advice, buttressing himself for what they might have to do.

Wendy: But one thing--doing it will change you.

Taylor: I am used to radical shifts.

Wendy: This is different.

At the door, Taylor turns and tells Wendy that Taylor's dad was fired when Taylor was in seventh grade.

Wendy: I imagine that affected the home life.

Taylor: Um. Yeah.

Taylor goes.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, TRADING FLOOR - DAY

Taylor walks toward the conference room, steels himself then points and says: Graff. Let's go.

A nervous GRAFF gets up and walks toward the conf. room.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, COFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Sacker and Connerty have run down some details of the Klaxon Auto deal. They see that it's solid, that it bears scrutiny, but they have discovered the name signed on the research-- Taylor.

Connerty says: I was trying to warn this kid about where they were working...

Sacker: I think they know.

They move Taylor's picture to the top of the white board, just below Axe.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

Axe looks down over the lower trading floor when his phone rings. It's Hall: Chuck and Wendy have spent another night together...

Axe hates this. His annihilation of his enemy isn't complete.

INT. MONTAGE - DAY

--Chuck at his desk watches the stock.

--Ira and Senior do too. Ira: We cracked twenty! He goes for a high five. Senior reluctantly and uncomfortably returns it.

--Axe, near Mafee's desk, leans in and sees the price.

He is walking away when his phone rings. INTERCUT:

INT. INSTITUTIONAL CORRIDOR - DAY

LAWRENCE BOYD, in work coveralls, stands in the hallway on a cheap pre-paid cell phone.

Boyd: Stock is running. When will you do it?

Axe: Soon.

Axe hangs up. Boyd goes back to buffing the linoleum floor.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A shaken looking Graff emerges from her interview with Taylor.

Ferguson looks at her.

Graff: Still alive. For now.

Ferguson: What happened in there?

Graff: I don't want to talk about it...

INT. SENIOR'S APARTMENT, STUDY - DAY

Ira turns from the screen in disbelief.

Ira: I'm worth a quarter of a billion dollars.

Senior, getting in the spirit, raises a hand: Up high, kid.

Ira cracks a high five, then says he's headed to the kitchen for a soda, want anything?

Senior waves him off, and when he's alone, picks up his phone and calls his broker.

Senior: Stock's about to pop to 30. Buy me in at the market for seven hundred thousand shares.

Broker: Are you sure?

Senior: This thing's a goddamned runaway train. Do it.

He hangs up.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, AXE'S OFFICE - DAY

Axe sits at his Bloomberg reading the tape. Wags and Mafee are with him, looking on.

They see the big block buy come in. Mafee misreads it as a mutual fund play. With laser-like logic similar to the Kazowitz read in the pilot, Axe understands it was Senior's buy. He knows it was him.

Axe predicts and watches the stock bump up another \$4 on the purchase...then he picks up his phone and texts Iceland a message: "Golden Frog time."

EXT. STREET CORNER, NEAR WAREHOUSE - NIGHT, FLASHBACK

Hall delivers the Metal Cylinder to a MAN IN A CARHARTT JACKET. The man puts it in his lunchbox, then enters work at...

EXT./INT. ICE JUICE PRODUCE WAREHOUSE - SAME, FLASHBACK

Rows of beautiful, fresh fruit and vegetables line the space. WORKERS carry cartons earmarked for various locations.

SIGNAGE READS: ICE JUICE--GET RAW. GET SOUL. GET ICED.

The Man in the Carhart enters, takes off his jacket revealing a nametag that reads: RONNIE - MANAGER.

INT. IRISH BAR - NIGHT, FLASHBACK

Axe sits with the Burkes, huddled, talking. We can't hear what they're saying.

Johnny Burke points over to a somewhat downtrodden figure sitting at a corner table--the Pockmarked Man from the intro.

Terry explains that sometimes, a man comes along, who's just the right man for a job.

Then they huddle again, Axe nods, understanding something the Burkes have told him.

EXT. ICE JUICE STORE - DAY

A man sits on a bench across from the store GUZZLING a bottle of Ice Juice. As he lowers it, we see he is the Pockmarked Man.

He sits and waits, looking slightly unsettled.

INT. ICE JUICE STORE - DAY

It's later. There's a HEALTHY CROWD in the serene white-tiled store. Cool music plays. People wait on line, buy products.

The Pockmarked Man collects his Drop Dead Red from the counter and turns away. Now he looks a little queasy and unwell.

He takes a sip, then SPEWS UP watermelon colored juice all over the white tile floor before collapsing.

Customers SCREAM.

INT. FINANCIAL JOURNAL - DAY

MIKE DIMONDA sits down with his lunch to an already-ringing phone. He answers, listens, grabs for his pen and notebook.

His EDITOR is passing by and Dimonda calls out: "Burt, I'm gonna table the new home starts feature, I've got a hot one. People are getting sick on Ice Juice..."

INT. AXE CAPITAL, CONFERENCE ROOM/BULLPEN - DAY

Through the glass we see Taylor finishing up with FERGUSON, who exits, shaken.

Graff looks to him. "I made it," he says. "Holy shit..."

Wendy makes her way across the floor and sees:

A group of Axe Cap regulars: DOLLAR BILL, BEN KIM, Mafee, EVERETT WRIGHT are crowded around Mafee's screen. There's a bunch of excitement over what they're seeing.

Taylor steps out of the conference room.

Wendy asks them: What's all the excitement.

Taylor: We're short a name. And as of now, it's going up. People are betting on the exact moment it will turn.

Wendy: Anyone betting that it won't turn?

Mafee: No ma'am. This is a red light short. Axe doesn't get positions this size wrong.

Wendy: What is it?

Mafee: Ice Juice.

ON: Wendy. Understanding and concern play on Wendy's face. She turns and begins to exit the floor.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, COMMISSARY - MOMENTS LATER

Wendy, on her way out, spots Rudy, Ferguson and Graff, glumly eating.

Wendy: I'm sorry, I'm going to have to cancel our appointment.

Rudy: Oh no, I really could use to talk--

Wendy: What's going on?

And Rudy mentions the inquisition going on with Taylor. The others join in and we get a quick sense that this job means the world to each of them, a brief insight into who they are, especially Rudy, before Wendy tells them she really needs to leave for a family emergency.

Maybe we learn why Rudy is nicknamed Rudy after the Rudy character -- that he went to junior college after dropping out of high school to be a video game competitor, and then found a skill for finance, and barely made it to Axe Cap.

Then Taylor calls out, from above, RUDY! And he glumly goes upstairs.

INT. FINANCIAL JOURNAL, ANOTHER DESK - DAY

KORNBLUTH is now pitching in on the story. Dimonda and he are working together Woodward/Bernstein style.

Kornbluth: I've got illness breaking out at six other locations. Past victims are preparing a lawsuit.

Dimonda: I've got a doctor who treated some victims speaking out against their 'flash-pas' technique as unsafe.

Kornbluth: This is another Chipotle.

Dimonda: Worse...

They keep working.

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, CHUCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Wendy walks into Chuck's office surprising him.

Chuck: What's going on?

Wendy: How's your stock play? I heard something on my way here.

Chuck: I think it's going well. Seems to be up. Way up.

Wendy: Oh Chuck...it's not gonna stay there.

Chuck: Is that why you're here?

She says she's there out of concern for him, and out of loyalty. She has to tell him something: Axe Cap is short the stock...

He thanks her for telling him. Then he asks her why she's looking at him like he's a pathetic dog in a shelter.

She says: Get out of the stock, Chuck. Any way you can. They're going to crush you.

This pricks Chuck's pride: Is that so? I'm just a defenseless little child then? I'm glad to know how little you think of me...

Wendy says: I think enough of you to come here and violate my agreement with my company. You don't understand what you're dealing with.

Chuck can't believe her lack of faith. He says "I think I understand plenty right now."

Wendy: Are you going to get out of your position?

Chuck: No.

Wendy: Can't or won't?

Chuck: What difference does it make?

She just shakes her head and goes. He is moving back behind his computer when his cell phone rings.

INTERCUT PHONE CALL W/IRA AT SR'S.

Ira is freaking out over stories that are hitting--on Twitter and news sites...Some kind of illness, listeria or legionnaire's seems to be breaking out in multiple locations.

The stock's starting to getting pummeled. The smart money is fleeing to safety, and when that happens the bottom drops out.

Chuck is concerned, asks: What's my dad saying?

There is the sound of a GROAN from Senior in the background.

Chuck checks his computer.

Chuck: I see that it's dropping.

Ira: Dropping? We're down below 30 already--as fast as we were up. The deal may break--that's when you go below the offer--which is an unmitigated disaster.

Chuck: I'm sorry to hear that. Is there any way you can sell--

Ira: My stock's all restricted!

Chuck drops into his desk chair to watch the carnage.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, CONFERENCE ROOM/BULLPEN - DAY

Taylor watches Rudy, wet with sweat, exit. He walks slowly along the bullpen, gives a 'thumbs up.'

The PMs and Analysts start a low chant: "Rudy, Rudy..."

Mafee: "I just now realized what they're saying...Rudy, as in Rudy Ruettiger..."

INT. AXE CAPITAL, WAGS' OFFICE - DAY

Axe is there with Wags. Axe talks about the straits this will put Senior in. He considers preparing to run a straw bidder at Senior's Palm Beach place, to scoop it up cheap when he has to sell it.

Wags: Closing bell coming. Care to watch the docking of the Hindenburg?

Axe moves around and they watch the final moments.

The stock closes at \$1.89, stillborn, Chapter 11 in the company's future.

INT. MONTAGE - DAY

--The glum faces of Senior and Ira and Chuck are in contrast to Axe and Wags.

INT. AXE CAPITAL, CONFERENCE ROOM/BULLPEN - NIGHT

Taylor packs up their files and exits the conference room. Wags walks up.

Wags: Who'd you chose?

Taylor: I could've fired Rudy, it was a toss up but...he's scrappy and he amuses me, so I fired Fiorito instead.

Wags: Baptized by blood...

Wags claps Taylor on the shoulder. It's true, Taylor is carrying the weight of it already...

INT. SENIOR'S APARTMENT, STUDY - NIGHT

Chuck comes in. The place has the vibe of a morgue. Ira is on the couch, his dream crashed and burned. (His holdings now only worth \$10 million--on paper--and who knows how low it'll go by the time he's able to sell).

Senior is like a man who's seen horrible sights at the front of some bloody war. He's drinking hard. He turns to Ira.

Senior: Only thing to do is write it off against your cap gains.

Ira: This was going to be my cap gains...Anyway, I should be apologizing to you.

Senior: You should apologize to your friend--

Chuck: Dad--

Senior: He's the one who really took the pounding.

Ira slowly puts it together.

Ira: Oh god, no, Chuck...you didn't. You went into your trust?

Chuck nods: I authorized it. I had that much confidence in it. I'd do it again. It was a fluke thing.

Ira: The whole 8 million in equity?

Chuck: Yes--

Senior: That's where we started.

Chuck and Ira: What?

Senior: It was rolling. And what you do when you have an advantage is press it.

Chuck: How much?

Senior: All of it.

This lands like an artillery shell on Chuck. His entire trust fund, gone.

Ira: I'm going to throw up--

Chuck: You must have had an Ice Juice today.

They look at Senior. He raises his glass and then drains it.

EXT. TAYLOR'S APT. BUILDING - NIGHT

As Taylor walks up, Connerty is waiting. He gives them the hard-ass Ed Harris now, actually giving the specific warning and vision of where Taylor is headed.

He talks ominously about how Taylor will be comfortable and well dressed and rich but will lose their entire sense of self. For money. And it won't take long.

INT. AXELROD HOME, FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Axe enters. He finds Lara on the couch, drinking red wine. A few pizzas on stones rest on the table in front of her.

Axe greets her. Tells her about his victory, in crushing Rhoades Senior and his company.

She's friendly, almost warm. She pours him a glass of wine.

Axe asks of the pizzas: these don't look like Bruno's...

Lara: I called, he was closed. Ryan did these up in the wood burning oven.

Axe: Nice...But let's celebrate.

He goes to the fridge, comes back with a 1/2 kilo tin--a tub really--of beluga caviar.

He sits down and spoons out heaping mounds of the black gold onto the pizza. They start eating and drinking.

INT. AXELROD HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Time cut to Axe and Lara in their bedroom. They're in bed, on the verge of making love. Axe is on top of her when he realizes she's just not really there.

He rolls off and asks what's wrong.

Lara: I'm trying.

This new reality sinks in on him.

INT. YALE CLUB, CHUCK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Chuck enters, carrying the weight of the busted IPO and the loss of his whole trust. He sits down on the edge of the bed...and begins to miserably convulse in some outpouring of emotion...

CUT TO:

INT. INSTITUTIONAL CORRIDOR - DAY, FLASHBACK

Lawrence Boyd is doing his job, running a buffer over the endless corridor's floor, when Chuck steps out of a stairwell.

Chuck: How would you like to be done with this floor, for good? And out of that halfway house and home with only your platinum wristwatch for jewelry instead of an ankle bracelet?

Boyd: When? How?

Chuck: Right away.

Boyd: Any deal with you has to be in writing.

Chuck: Terms of your release will be. This part will never even be spoken of again.

Boyd: Whatever it is, I'm ready.

Chuck: Make a call to Bobby Axelrod and tell him you need to see him. That it's urgent. Then, when he shows up, you tell him...

INT. YALE CLUB, CHUCK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Back to Chuck on the edge of the bed. Tears are streaming down his cheeks now. But he's not crying. No, he is fucking laughing his face off.

FADE OUT.