

The Oscillation

by

Raymond Kwok

DRAFT 2

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Name Raymond Kwok

Email rkwok@abatiscapitalus.com

FADE IN:

INT. SQUASH COURT - EVENING

VINCENT and HOWARD are playing squash. Both in their mid thirties. Vincent is lean and fit, with a sunken driven face. Howard is overweight: used to be an athlete but has let himself go. He is soaked in sweat.

Game is over with Vincent scoring the winner. They both sit down on opposite sides of the court. Exhausted. Sucking down their drinks.

HOWARD

I can't believe I can't even take a game off you. I used to thrash you.

VINCENT

You used to be fifty pounds lighter my friend. Remember at high school when I used to weigh more than you.

HOWARD

You're right. Next week. No more carbs.

VINCENT

And no drinking and smoking.

HOWARD

Right. I just need to finish what's left in the cellar and my last carton of Indian cigarettes. Then no more.

VINCENT

You should get serious man. You already had a scare last year. You were damn lucky that time. Next time maybe not so.

HOWARD

Yeah yeah yeah.

(beat)

Changing subject.....How's work?

VINCENT

Don't get me started. I just can't seem to get into the black for the year. It's two weeks before Christmas and I need a big trade to get my bonus. Just can't find anything out there.

HOWARD

That sucks.

VINCENT

No fucking kidding. And I got Marissa breathing down my neck.

HOWARD

Over what?

VINCENT

Over the engagement ring. You know her. Size matters.

HOWARD

Yeah but what a girl.

VINCENT

Don't get me wrong. She's worth every penny. Problem is that's all I have at the moment: pennies.

(beat)

Hey you wanna come with me to Tiffany's? Just ducking in to check out the rings.

HOWARD

Sure. What the fuck. I got nothing on.

INT. MEN'S LOCKER - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent and Howard have showered and are putting their work clothes back on.

VINCENT

How's work with you?

HOWARD

The hours are killing me, man. That's something else I need to give up. M&A is really booming. There's so many cheap companies out there. Specially in energy. And we're the go to firm for the legal work.

VINCENT

So what are you working on?

HOWARD

(whispering)

Come on, man. You know I can't tell you that.

VINCENT

Of course you can. Energy isn't even my area. I'm in healthcare remember. But I understand. You're just a grunt so you wouldn't have anything interesting to tell me anyway.

HOWARD

Beg your fucking pardon. I'm two years away from partnership. I'm on the train baby.

VINCENT

Bullshit. Aren't you still in charge of proof reading and photocopying?

Howard flicks his towel at Vincent.

HOWARD

(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)

Fuck you. I'm the main man for one of the biggest takeovers this year in the sector.

VINCENT

Yeah? Which one?

HOWARD

It's not announced yet.

VINCENT

Give me a hint, photocopyman.

Howard pauses to think.

HOWARD

(whispering)

OK. One company owns the wells and the other owns the pipelines. A marriage made in vertical integration heaven. They tried before, but this time it's for real.

VINCENT

(sarcastically)

Well that tells me a lot.

HOWARD

That's more than enough if you know your shit.

VINCENT

Fuck you. I told you I'm not in that sector.

INT. TIFFANY'S - EVENING

The store is jam packed with the Christmas crowd. Vincent and Howard wander around, half heartedly checking out rings. Howard taps Vincent on the shoulder.

HOWARD

Hey, look who's here.

VINCENT

Heidi? I must be paying her too much.

Howard and Vincent are looking at HEIDI, about thirty feet away, at a counter talking to a saleswoman. She is early twenties, blonde, tight dress, stunning but slightly cheap looking.

HOWARD

The day you get married to Marissa, she is going to tell you to fire that hottie. No way is she going to let you keep a PA who looks like that.

VINCENT

Not my type. And Marissa knows it.

HOWARD

Well do you mind if I have a go?

VINCENT

She's all yours. I gotta finish scouting for the cheapest ring they have here.

HOWARD

See ya later brother. Don't wait up.

Howard pulls his pants up over his stomach and strides towards Heidi like a conquering hero.

INT. TIFFANY'S - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent is studying a ring through the showcase. Howard walks up next to him.

VINCENT

Fast strikeout! Told her about the size of your dick?

HOWARD

No, no, no. Just realized I have to pick something up at the office. Heidi the Hottie will have to wait.

(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)

Same time next week for squash?

VINCENT

(bemused)

Yeah sure. See ya.

HOWARD

See ya buddy.

INT. TRADING FLOOR - DAY

Vincent is at his desk on the phone to IMRAN, a colleague. Two computer screens in front of him.

VINCENT

How sure are you?

IMRAN

(OS)

I'd say 90%. Willis taking over PLI just fits the bill. They need guaranteed delivery to market for their gas.

VINCENT

Thanks a million. I owe you lunch.

Vincent stares at his computer screens. Types away at the keyboard. Then stares again. Then types again. Then leans back and stares at the ceiling.

VINCENT

(whispering to himself)

I'm all in baby. Do it for Daddy.

Vincent leans back towards the computer. He hesitates for a couple of seconds, then enters his trade. The screen reads: PLI bid 23.41 ask 23.52 Last Price 23.55.

INT. TRADING FLOOR - A FEW DAYS LATER

Vincent is at his desk talking to a colleague. Phone rings. He picks up. It is IMRAN (OS for entire scene).

IMRAN

How the fuck did you know?

VINCENT

Know what?

IMRAN

Look at your screen.

Vincent looks at his screen. A news item announces the takeover offer. The stock is at \$31.

VINCENT

Intuition and a bit of luck my friend.
Who's your Daddy now?

IMRAN

I hope you choke on your bonus.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Vincent and MARISSA are making love. Marissa is mid twenties, straight blonde hair, very classy looking, a princess from a rich family. A lot of naked flesh and one great big RING.

INT. TRADING FLOOR - DAY

Heidi is at her desk. She is sorting through a pile of mail for the in trays. Each tray has a different trader's name. One is marked "Vincent". She opens one of the envelopes and takes out a folded note.

DANNY, one of the traders, early twenties, handsome, sneaks up behind her and puts his hands on her shoulders just as she is about to look at the note. She jumps and looks behind her.

HEIDI
(not really that
annoyed)
Stop it. You scared the shit out of
me.

DANNY
(grinning)
Sorry. Can you please please come over
and fix up my presentation. I suck at
it and I need it done by lunch.

HEIDI
What? And drop everything else?

DANNY
Last time. I promise. And lunch is on
me.

HEIDI
I get to choose the restaurant.

DANNY
Done.

Heidi gives a big smile, puts down the note on top of the
stack of envelopes and gets up.

INT. TRADING FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

VINCENT bounces in. High fives all around. DAVID, his boss,
sticks his head out of his office. David is around 50, over
six feet and 300 pounds, balding.

DAVID
That's a big rabbit you pulled out of
the hat, buddy. Make sure you close it
out today. I'm upping your trading
limit by twenty.

Vincent takes a bow as he walks pass David's office.

VINCENT
Thanks Dave. Appreciate it.

Vincent walks over to Heidi's desk. She is not there.

His in tray is empty. He looks for his mail. He picks up one of the stacks. The note is on the stack.

He walks over to his desk and starts sorting out the mail. He opens the note. It is a typed note: "I KNOW WHAT YOU DID. YOU ARE MY BITCH NOW".

Vincent immediately stuffs the note into his pocket. His happy countenance is gone. He looks around nervously. All the traders are either on the phone or looking at their screens. In the distance Heidi is sitting at Danny's desk working on the presentation.

EXT. PARK NEAR THE OFFICE - LATER

Vincent is sitting on a bench, uneaten lunch by his side. He takes the note out and studies it. Then puts it in his pocket again.

He lights up a cigarette and looks around. Immediately across him on another bench are two men in suits eating their lunch and looking at him. He avoids their stares.

He sees a hot dog stand. The hot dog vendor looks at him and then quickly looks away.

A woman, mid thirties, walks by. After she passes him, she takes out a cell phone and makes a call.

Vincent stubs out his cigarette, throws his lunch into the trash and walks away.

INT. VINCENT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Vincent enters his studio apartment and switches on the light. The apartment is sparsely furnished, but it has the man couch and the big ass TV.

He walks over to the fridge, grabs a beer, twists the top open and drains it. Then opens another one. Drains half of it.

The phone rings. He picks it up: "Hello". There is no one on the other end. He puts it down, flops on his leather lounge chair and switches on the TV.

The phone rings again. He picks it up. "Hello". No one. He puts the phone down, this time a little harder.

The phone rings again. He snatches at it.

VINCENT

Who is this?

There is a pause.

MARISSA

(OS for the entire
scene)

It's me honey. Bad day at work?

VINCENT

Sorry baby. Someone's been fucking
around on the phone.

MARISSA

Hmmmm. Sure it's not an old girlfriend
stalking you?

VINCENT

I wish...

MARISSA

You wish?

VINCENT

Just pulling your leg...how was your
day?

MARISSA

Fine. Mommy came into town and took me
out to lunch. Then shopping.

VINCENT

Bought anything?

MARISSA

Not really. But checked out some nice wedding gowns. There was one at Vera Wang that was just...

VINCENT

Wait. Marissa.

MARISSA

What do you mean?

VINCENT

Shush. Don't say anything. Just listen.

MARISSA

Listen to what?

VINCENT

Did you hear that?

MARISSA

What?

VINCENT

The metallic sound.

MARISSA

What are you talking about?

VINCENT

There was a metallic sound on our line.

MARISSA

Metallic sound? I don't even know what that means. Are you trying to put me off looking for a gown?

VINCENT

No no. Listen, I'm going to hang up now. I need to check out a few things.

(MORE)

VINCENT (cont'd)

We'll have lunch tomorrow. OK?

MARISSA

Whatever.

Vincent hangs up and walks to his kitchen where he takes out his tool kit.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent sits on the floor. The phone is in pieces. He picks up a piece and looks at it carefully. Then he puts it down and examines another piece.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - MORNING

David is sitting at his desk. Across are two men in suit and tie, the cheaper kind: MR HANNAFORD and MR CHEW. Hannaford is mid forties and skinny: cannot imagine him telling a joke . Chew is early twenties, an American Chinese. They both wear glasses. Vincent pokes his head into the office.

VINCENT

You want to see me?

DAVID

Yeah. Come in.

Vincent steps in.

DAVID

I like you to meet Mr Hannaford and Mr Chew. These gentlemen are from the SEC.

Vincent pauses. Then shakes hands with each of them.

DAVID

They would like to look through some of your trades Vincent.

VINCENT

Why? Is anything wrong?

HANNAFORD

No. Not at all. We randomly pick traders all the time to do a quick audit.

DAVID

He's right you know. I've had it done to me once. You OK with that?

Vincent's heart is racing at a hundred miles an hour but he is composed enough to respond calmly.

VINCENT

Sure. Not a problem. I'll set you up with a conference room and I can bring the data in.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE APARTMENT - EVENING

Vincent gets out of the elevator and walks up to his apartment. He notices that the door is slightly ajar.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent enters the apartment. He sees a man, early twenties, the CABLE GUY, with a cap and a uniform standing there holding his remote control in front of the TV.

VINCENT

What the fuck? Who are you?

CABLE GUY

Time Warner sir.

VINCENT

How did you get in here?

CABLE GUY

The young lady let me in.

VINCENT

What young lady?

CABLE GUY

Don't know. She waited around for a while and then said she has to go out. She asked me to close the door behind me when I finish.

VINCENT

I didn't call for a cable guy.

CABLE GUY

I'm just answering a service call, sir. I don't have any idea who called this in.

VINCENT

I think you need to go.

CABLE GUY

But I haven't finished yet.

VINCENT

Do I look like I care. Just get out.

The Cable Guy leaves. Vincent immediately gets hold of the remote control and starts taking it apart with a screwdriver.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Marissa enters the apartment: a flurry of shopping bags. Vincent is still fiddling with the remote control.

MARISSA

Hey. What are you doing honey?

VINCENT

Did you let some cable guy come into my apartment?

MARISSA

Yes. Your TV was going all weird. And he happened to be nearby on a service call.

VINCENT

You left him here all by himself?

MARISSA

(getting annoyed)

I promised Jenny I would go shopping with her. I wasn't going to hang around. He's from the cable company. They vet all these people.

VINCENT

Are you shitting me? You leave a total stranger alone in my apartment?

MARISSA

(getting more annoyed)

Look I'm sorry, alright. So was anything stolen?

VINCENT

I don't think so. But that's not the point. He could do things in here.

MARISSA

Do what, Vincent? Put a bomb in your remote control?

Vincent ignores her and resumes looking at the insides of the remote control.

MARISSA

I was going to spend the night here. But I guess you're getting ready for a party with your remote. I'm going.

VINCENT

(not looking up)

Fine. I'll call you.

MARISSA

Don't bother.

Marissa leaves, slamming the door behind.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Vincent is sitting at a booth, nursing a beer. Howard walks in, slaps Vincent across the shoulders, and sits down opposite him, sliding his heavy frame closer to the far end of the booth.

HOWARD

What's up, buddy? Everything going fine?

VINCENT

Everything is not fine.

HOWARD

Did you get your bonus?

VINCENT

Don't fuck around with me pal. You know I got my bonus.

HOWARD

No I don't. The last time we spoke you were shit scared you weren't going to make it. What the fuck is wrong with you?

VINCENT

You know what's wrong.

HOWARD

I really don't OK. Jesus Christ, talking to you is like talking with a girl friend who's got the shits with you but won't say what it is.

VINCENT

OK. You've had your fun. Now what do you want? Do you want money? Is that it?

HOWARD

You must be drunk. I really have no idea what you're talking about.

VINCENT

No idea?

HOWARD

Absolutely no idea.

Vincent looks away. An uncomfortable pause.

VINCENT

I'm sorry. Maybe I got it wrong.

HOWARD

Got what wrong?

VINCENT

Don't worry about it. I think I just got it wrong.

HOWARD

Whatever you say, man.

VINCENT

Let's have another round. Forget about what I said.

HOWARD

(smile on his face)

What did you say?

INT. CAR PARKED ON THE STREET - DAY

Vincent is sitting in the driver's seat. The passenger door opens. In comes CONRAN HARLEY. He is in his early fifties, weather beaten face, dark glasses, all business like. Vincent shakes his hand.

VINCENT

Hi. Thanks for seeing me so quickly.

HARLEY

Not a problem. Sounds like you're in a spot of trouble.

VINCENT

Maybe. I don't feel safe.

HARLEY

Which is why you're meeting me in your car.

VINCENT

Yes.

HARLEY

What can I do for you?

Vincent takes out the note.

VINCENT

I need you to tell me who wrote this.

HARLEY

That's three fifty an hour. Plus expenses.

VINCENT

Fine. I need it as soon as possible. And don't tell me the answer over the phone. We'll just set up another meeting like this.

(beat)

I have one suspect. His name is Howard Rollo. Works for Griffin Griffin and Schmidt. But whether it's him or somebody else, I need positive proof.

INT. CAR PARKED ON THE STREET - A FEW DAYS LATER

Vincent and Harley redux.

HARLEY

A lot of people don't believe it, but you can get finger prints off paper.

VINCENT

So who is it?

HARLEY

You guessed right. It's Rollo.

VINCENT

How do you know it's his print?

HARLEY

When a guy goes to a bar every night after work, it's not hard to get a sample of his prints.

VINCENT

Thanks. The cash is in the envelop.
Now please get out.

Harley takes the envelop and gets out of the car. Vincent stares blankly into space.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Vincent is with CHARLIE, a black market gun dealer. Charlie is mid thirties, nervous, small, oily hair, in a short leather jacket and jeans.

There is a large brief case on the bed. Charlie opens the brief case. Neatly laid out are six different kinds of revolvers.

CHARLIE

Here you go sir. Top of the line down to your Saturday night special. Totally untraceable. And I will fill the chamber for you compliments of the house.

VINCENT

Which is the most common on the streets?

Charlie takes out a snub nosed black revolver.

CHARLIE

It be this one sir.

VINCENT

I'll take it.

INT. HOWARD'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Howard is sitting on the couch. Playing a video war game on the TV.

The place is a mess, as one would expect a bachelor pad to be. Half eaten pizza on the coffee table. Empty beer bottles. The door bell rings.

HOWARD

(shouting over the din
of the video game)

Come in. It's open.

Vincent walks in.

VINCENT

Hey. Thought I'd drop by to check out the new game.

HOWARD

This is way cooler than the first version. Just check out the graphics.. ..Grab yourself a beer before you sit down.

Vincent grabs a beer from the fridge and stands behind Howard, who is still playing the game.

HOWARD

Watch that Tiger tank coming in. I got my bazooka all over it. Here it comes.

..

Vincent takes the gun out from his overcoat. He takes off the safety latch.

HOWARD

Come on man. Just sit down. I can use an extra player.

VINCENT

In a sec. I want to get a feel for the game first.

Vincent is starting to sweat. His hand trembles as he fidgets with the gun. He points the gun at the back of Howard's head and fires. The TV is splattered with blood and brain matter.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HOWARD'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

There is a loud explosion as the Tiger tank is hit by the bazooka. Vincent is still standing behind Howard. Howard turns around abruptly.

HOWARD

Did you see that? This game is awesome.

Vincent is jolted from his imagined shooting of Howard.

VINCENT

Yeah. That's really awesome....hey I just realized I need to meet Marissa. Something about the wedding plans.

HOWARD

You're her bitch already and you're not even married. Don't forget squash tomorrow.

VINCENT

I'm the bitch alright. Thanks for the beer anyway. And yes, squash tomorrow. Definitely.

Vincent hurriedly leaves. Howard continues playing the game, oblivious.

INT. SQUASH COURT - EVENING

Vincent and Howard are playing squash. All the other courts are empty and darkened. The game is fast and furious, with the far fitter Vincent moving Howard around the court.

At the end of every point, Howard is doubled over and gasping for air. Vincent seems to be working out his impotent rage by punishing Howard on the court. The rage shows on Vincent's face every time he hits the ball.

VINCENT

That's five zip. One more game?

HOWARD

No more man. I am totally fucked.

VINCENT

Come on. Stop being a pussy. I'll give you a four point head start. And put a hundred dollars on it.

HOWARD

Make it two hundred and five points.

VINCENT

You got it.

The new game starts. More fierce hitting from Vincent. More running for Howard.

Vincent drops a shot into the corner and Howard lunges for it. Then Vincent lobs the ball over Howard's head. Howard turns and runs to the back wall. He crashes against the back wall and collapses to the floor.

HOWARD

(gasping for air)

No mas.... No mas.

VINCENT

Come on pussy. Its for two hundred bucks.

HOWARD

I can't. I'm having trouble breathing.
..Getting that pain again...

VINCENT

You ok?

HOWARD

Oh fuck. This doesn't feel good. Oh fuck. I think I'm getting a heart attack.

VINCENT

You're kidding me right?

HOWARD

I'm not...kidding....serious as a heart attack...

(he manages a small smile)

Call the ambulance man....I am not kidding.

VINCENT

Hang on. My phone is in the locker room. Just hang on.

Vincent leaves the squash court.

INT. MEN'S LOCKER - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent opens his locker and frantically rummages through his clothes for the phone. He finds the phone and dials two digits.

His finger hovers over the third digit. Suddenly everything slows down. He rests his head against the locker, sweat dripping down on the floor. He never dials the third digit.

INT. SQUASH COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent walks back into the court. Howard is lying on his back. Hand on his heart.

VINCENT

I just called. They should be here in fifteen minutes.

Howard manages a smile. But cannot talk any more. Vincent walks over to the opposite corner of the court and sits down. They continue to look at each other. Vincent has tears in his eyes.

INT. TRADING FLOOR - A FEW DAYS LATER

Vincent is at his desk. Gaunt from lack of sleep. Just blankly staring at the screen. David walks by.

DAVID

Hey. Heard about your friend. Sounded really awful. Sorry about that.

VINCENT

Thanks.

DAVID

By the way the SEC guys called me up.

VINCENT

And...

DAVID

You're all clear. Nothing to it. All the other guys were cleared too.

VINCENT

There were other guys?

DAVID

Yeah. Two other from Hamm's group. You didn't think you were special did you?

VINCENT

No of course not.

Vincent's phone rings.

DAVID

Go answer it.

David pats him on the back and walks away.

VINCENT

Hello? Vincent Rayburn.

HEIDI

(OS for the entire
scene)

Vincent. It's Heidi.

VINCENT

Heidi. Where are you? Why aren't you
at work?

HEIDI

I'm so sorry Vincent. I'm at the
police station and I don't know who to
call.

VINCENT

What are you doing there?

HEIDI

It's a long story. But I just got
arrested. I need you to come bail me
out. And please please don't tell
anyone.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON

Heidi is sitting in a booth with Vincent.

HEIDI

I don't know how to thank you. I
wouldn't be able to survive a night in
that place. I'll pay you back as soon
as I can.

VINCENT

Don't worry about that now. I just want to know why you were so stupid. I mean shoplifting. Heidi, you get paid very well. What were you thinking?

HEIDI

I can't help it. It's a disease. I get the urge. Its like craving for a drug. And shoplifting gives you such a rush. Look, I don't expect you to understand.

(beat)

Can you promise not to tell anyone? I don't want to lose my job.

VINCENT

Of course not. So long as you promise to go into therapy or something to deal with it.

HEIDI

I promise.

(beat)

You're a sweet guy Vincent. I haven't got family and when I got arrested, the first person I thought of calling was you.

VINCENT

Don't mention it.

HEIDI

I could've called friends, but then none of them would have the money for the bail.

VINCENT

You've been caught before?

HEIDI

Never by the shops.

(beat)

Your friend Howard caught me once though.

VINCENT

Howard?

HEIDI

Yes. He saw me at Tiffany's. Just before Christmas. I was going to pocket a pair of earrings when the saleswoman wasn't looking. And he caught me doing it.

VINCENT

You know he died a couple of days ago.

HEIDI

Yes. I heard. Heart attack right? I know you two were close friends, but to tell the truth, I'm kinda glad he's no longer around.

VINCENT

What do you mean?

HEIDI

He didn't tell you?

VINCENT

Nope. I told you I don't know anything about this.

Close up of Vincent's face as he hears the rest of the story.

HEIDI

(O.S.)

Well after he caught me, he made me put the earrings back. And then a couple of days later, he asked me out. I didn't really want to. He's not quite my type, you know. Then he started getting really shitty about it. Kept on calling me his bitch and that sort of stuff....threatening to report me. I ended up having drinks with him and letting him get his hands over me a bit. I felt dirty you know.

VINCENT
He called you his bitch?

HEIDI
Yes.

VINCENT
The note...?

HEIDI
What note?

VINCENT
Oh my God. I'm sorry. I gotta go.

Vincent stands up. Knocks his drink over. Leaves the bar hurriedly.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent throws up. Then starts sobbing, loudly. He squats on the ground with his head between his hands.

A number of pedestrians walk by but nobody stops. Finally a middle aged couple walks by and the man puts a five dollar note down in front of Vincent.

THE END