

VERBATIM

"COLLEGE ADMISSIONS SCANDAL"

by

Brett Weiner

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"COLLEGE ADMISSIONS SCANDAL"

TEASER

GRAPHIC: The following dialogue is taken directly from primary sources. Every word is presented verbatim.

CHEESY MUSIC starts to play.

GRAPHIC: A golden key surrounded by the text "Unlocking Potential" and "Creating Opportunity".

INT. SINGER'S OFFICE - DAY

*

RICK SINGER, male, 50's, white, thin, salt and pepper hair, speaks directly to camera. It's some sort of promotional video. He's rehearsed and stiff.

SINGER

Hi. My name is Rick Singer and I'm the founder of The Key. As a father myself, I understand the stress the college admissions process can put on your family. For the past 25 years, our coaches have been helping our students discover their life passion in guiding them and their families through the complex college admissions maze. My Key Method unlocks the full potential of your son or daughter and sets them on a course to excel in life.

WE HEAR A PHONE RING. A CLICK as someone picks up--

EXT. STANFORD QUAD - DAY

Singer, now in his late 50's, hair more salt than pepper, paces around an academic quad, cell glued to his ear. He hears an encouraging VOICE:

VOICE (V.O.)

Give 'em your shit, dude. Give 'em the razzle dazzle, Rick.

Singer's moving, kinetic, completely different from the video. He's in his element.

SINGER

No problem.

UNKNOWN VOICE (V.O.)
 Alright, here we go. Gordon...
 Gordon, is coming, 2 seconds...
 Gordon?

A HICCUP in the call as another person connects.

CAPLAN (V.O.)
 Yeah.

INT. CAPLAN'S OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT

GORDON CAPLAN, male, 52, white, rigid, sits at his desk, holding his office phone to his ear. His space is all straight lines, not a pen or paper out place.

VOICE (V.O.)
 Meet, Rick Singer, the Godfather.

SINGER
 Is this Gordon Gecko of Wall
 Street?

Caplan pauses, confused.

CAPLAN
 No, it's Gordon Caplan, how are
 you?

SINGER
 I'm only kidding with you Gordon,
 how are you doing?

Caplan shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

CAPLAN
 Yeah... good. Uh... so, you just
 uh... my wife has told me a little
 bit about what you guys do. Could
 you just, give me a little bit of
 background?

SINGER
 Uh, background of who we are or
 background on what we can do?

CAPLAN
 Uh, both please.

Singer takes a moment to roll his shoulders and neck, like an athlete preparing for a competition. He returns the phone to his ear and cranks up the charm.

SINGER

Ok, so, who we are. We are a 290 million dollar company that I own of 1,000 employees across the US and 280 internationally. And what we do is we help the wealthiest families in the U.S. get their kids into school.

As Singer speaks, he gestures as if he's in the same room as Caplan, talking with his free hand.

NOTE: [REDACTED] names will be replaced with a BEEP.

SINGER (CONT'D)

So we have the [REDACTED], we have every NBA owner, every NFL owner, we got everybody. So what we do is we create a concierge service for all of our families to help them get into school. Every year there are- is a group of families, especially where I am right now in the Bay Area, Palo Alto, I just flew in. That they want guarantees, they want this thing done. They don't want to be messing around with this thing. And so they want in at certain schools.

Singer stops moving for a moment as he comes to his special selling point. He points at himself.

SINGER (CONT'D)

So I did 761 what I would call, "side doors." There is a front door which means you get in on your own. The back door is through institutional advancement, which is ten times as much money. And I've created this side door in.

Singer smiles.

TITLE CARD: VERBATIM

ACT ONE**INT. CAPLAN'S OFFICE/EXT. STANFORD QUAD - DAY - INTERCUT**

Singer walks down the quad, moving quickly on his cell, attentive.

In his office, Caplan taps a pen on his desk, unsure. He adjusts his phone, trying to get more comfortable.

CAPLAN

Ok so I... uh... I went to Cornell.
Uh, I've already given about three
quarters of a million dollars
there.

FREEZE FRAME: GORDON CAPLAN

*

We transition from the freeze frame of Caplan to STILL PHOTOS
of the exteriors of Caplan's home and work. WE HEAR a FEMALE
NARRATOR:

*

*

NARRATOR (V.O.)

GORDON CAPLAN is a resident of
Greenwich, Connecticut and New
York, New York. CAPLAN is an
attorney and the co-chairman of an
international law firm based in New
York.

BACK TO SCENE

Caplan adjusts his phone again, trying to get comfortable.

CAPLAN

Um... she's about 150th or 170th
top college recruit for... for
tennis. And she- she... uh... is
not a terrific student. Her grades,
uh, particularly in...

*

*

*

SINGER

I know she's got a [REDACTED]. I
already know that. And she's gotta
fix them.

CAPLAN

Uh, and she's been testing very
badly. Um. She does well in English
and she does reasonably well in
math.

SINGER

Ok, so- so Gordon, let's-- let's be frank. Right?

Singer finds a spot of shade beneath a tree.

SINGER (CONT'D)

First of all, your 750 is diddly dink in the world. Like I have the [REDACTED]. They've given 50 million to Cornell, right? And I have all the [REDACTED]. They, they, they only get one guarantee a year, and they ask for 5 or 6 a year. Okay? So here's the first thing we need to do. And I think I mentioned this to your wife. We need to get your daughter tested for a learning difference.

Caplan stops tapping his pen. He's not sure about this.

SINGER (CONT'D)

Here's why. If she gets tested for a learning difference, and let's say it's my person that does it, or whoever you want to do it, I need that person to get her 100% extended time over multiple days. So what that means is, we'll have to show that there's some discrepancies in her learning, which there's gotta be anyways. And if she gets 100%, Gordon, then, I own two, two schools. I can have her test at one of my schools, and--

Singer leans against the tree, confident, relaxed.

SINGER (CONT'D)

--I can guarantee her a score.

Beat. A CELL PHONE RINGS and we're in--

INT. MCGLASHAN'S OFFICE/INT. SINGER'S OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT

BILL MCGLASHAN, male, 55, white, never a tie and always colorful socks, types on his computer, multitasking as he talks into his bluetooth headset. His private equity firm office is sleek and modern.

MCGLASHAN

And then what about-- If you get a,
if you get double time, you
automatically get multiple days?

Singer, headphones hard-wired into his cell, rolls his chair
back from his desk.

SINGER

Automatically, yes.

MCGLASHAN

Oh, so it's either multiple days
with 1.5, or double, two times
time?

SINGER

Correct.

FREEZE FRAME: BILL MCGLASHAN

*

The freeze frame of McGlashan transitions to STILL PHOTOS of
McGlashan's work and home.

*

*

NARRATOR (V.O.)

WILLIAM E. McGLASHAN, Jr. is a
resident of Mill Valley,
California. McGLASHAN is a senior
executive at a global private
equity firm.

BACK TO SCENE

MCGLASHAN

The [REDACTED] is going through the
stress of her SSATs, which is
totally cute and sad to watch. But
it's like Jesus Christ. This whole
testing thing is such a nightmare
for kids.

SINGER

It is.

MCGLASHAN

It's awful. It really is.

INT. CAPLAN'S OFFICE/EXT. STANFORD QUAD - DAY

Singer leans back on a bench facing the quad.

SINGER

The number on the testing is \$75,000. Okay? It's \$75,000 to get any test scores you would like to get on the SAT or ACT. Okay, that's--

CAPLAN

Explain to me how that works.

Singer smirks. He's reeling Caplan in.

INT. WEST HOLLYWOOD TESTING CENTER - DAY

As Singer describes the plan, WE SEE it wordlessly play out.

SINGER (V.O.)

[Your daughter] will go in and take the test.

CAPLAN'S DAUGHTER takes the test alone in a sparse classroom with proctor MARK RIDDELL, male, mid-30's, white, trim.

LOWER THIRD: MARK RIDDELL, SAT/ACT Proctor

SINGER (V.O.)

She'll be the only one, taking it in the room with-- with Mark. She will take the test. She will walk out the door.

Caplan's Daughter writes her answers on a separate piece of paper, not the official sheet. She hands it in to Riddell and leaves.

As soon as she's gone, Riddell rips up her answers and starts bubbling in the official sheet himself.

SINGER (V.O.)

Then Mark will finish the exam. He will then take the exam and look at her-- what she's done, and then ensure that whatever score we decide that we want to get-- he has it down to a-- unbelievable that he can do it.

Riddell finishes and puts the answers in an ACT envelope.

SINGER (V.O.)

She will never know that this actually occurred.

INT. CAPLAN'S HOME - DAY

A pile of mail sits on a kitchen counter, with an envelope from the ACT test sitting on top.

SINGER (V.O.)

You will get your results back in, you know, anywhere from, 11-- depends on what day it goes back in. But anywhere from 11 to 20 days. And she'll get her results and she'll say--

Caplan's daughter grabs the envelope and tears it open. A brief pause, then she excitedly mouths Singer's words:

SINGER (V.O.)

"Oh, my God, Dad, I got a 33!"

INT. CAPLAN'S OFFICE/INT. CAR - DAY - INTERCUT

*

It's later in the day, and Singer's now driving. Caplan's in his office, legal brief in hand.

*

SINGER

It's the homerun of homeruns.

CAPLAN

And it works?

SINGER

Every time.

Caplan laughs along with Singer.

INT. SINGER'S OFFICE/INT. MCGLASHAN'S OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT

McGlashan's multitasking, half distracted by the emails on his laptop.

MCGLASHAN

Now does he, here's the only question, does he know? Is there a way to do it in a way that he doesn't know that happened?

SINGER

Oh yeah. Oh he...

MCGLASHAN

Great.

SINGER

What he would know is, that I'm going to take his stuff, and I'm going to get him some help, okay.

MCGLASHAN

So that, that he would have no issue with. You lobbying for him. You helping use your network. No issue.

INT. CAPLAN'S OFFICE/INT. CAR - DAY - INTERCUT

*

Singer talks at the car's speakerphone.

*

SINGER

I also need to tell [your daughter] when she gets tested, to be as, to be stupid, not to be as smart as she is. The goal is to be slow, not to be as bright, all that, so we show discrepancies. And she knows that she's getting all this extra time, everywhere that she is right now. At the Academy kids are getting time all the time.

Caplan stops looking at his brief.

CAPLAN

You mean the Greenwich Academy?

SINGER

Everywhere.

CAPLAN

Oh, you mean at her tennis academy. I see. Yeah. Okay.

SINGER

Yeah, everywhere around the country. What happened is, all the wealthy families that figured out that if I get my kid tested and they get extended time, they can do better on the test. So most of these kids don't even have issues, but they're getting time. The playing field is not fair.

CAPLAN

No, it's not. I mean this is, to be honest, it feels a little weird. But.

SINGER

I know it does. I know it does. But when she gets the score and we have choices, you're gonna be saying, okay, I'll take all my kids, we're gonna do the same thing.

Singer laughs.

CAPLAN

Yeah, I will.

Caplan sits and thinks for a moment as WE HEAR the start of a new conversation:

CAPLAN (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)

Okay, well look, we are in for the, get her extra time, to the extent we can, extra time on the test.

EXT. CAPLAN'S OFFICE/INT. SINGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Caplan's tucked in a nook outside his office talking on the phone to Singer, who meanders around his office to stretch his legs.

SINGER

Right.

CAPLAN

And then, and taking the test one time and get her a, you know, a score in the 30s.

SINGER

Correct.

CAPLAN

We are in for that, at 75, not an issue.

SINGER

Done.

CAPLAN

Done. The other stuff...

Caplan laughs, unsure.

SINGER

That will be up to you guys, it doesn't matter to me.

CAPLAN

Yeah, I, I hear ya. It's just, to be honest, I'm not worried about the moral issue here. I'm worried about the fine, if she's caught doing that, you know, she's finished. So I, I just--

SINGER

It's never happened before in twenty-some odd years. The only way anything can happen is if she--

CAPLAN

Someone talks--

SINGER

Yeah, if she tells somebody. And that's why even on the payment to the school thing, nobody, we never tell the, you know, she just needs to know that you're gonna get some help on this class.

CAPLAN

Correct.

SINGER

She'll be more than happy.

CAPLAN

Oh yeah, I, she won't talk.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**OVER BLACK:**

A cell phone RINGS. The ringing stops with a CLICK.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Singer's shaving while on speakerphone. *

SINGER
Rudy, commissioner.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY - INTERCUT

RUDY MEREDITH, male, 51, black, casual, sets up cones for a soccer drill while talking on the phone. *
*

MEREDITH
What's up man?

LOWER THIRD: Rudy Meredith, Head Coach, Yale Women's Soccer

SINGER
I'm in London. Working.

MEREDITH
You in London. Can you stay in one spot?

SINGER
I can't because the posse will come after me.

MEREDITH
Who's the mafia?

SINGER
No the posse.

MEREDITH
Oh the posse. Who's the posse?

SINGER
I got people always chasing me, big boy. Everybody wants something from me.

MEREDITH
Cause they know you the man, that's why.

Singer grins at the compliment.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD/INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Same call, but a little bit of time has passed. Singer is now *
 putting on his jacket in the hotel room, while Meredith *
 carries a mesh bag of soccer balls.

SINGER

So I have two at-- two at-- two at
 Stanford on- and two kids at Yale,
 two kids at Stanford. I'm trying to
 find out who's stepping up first.

MEREDITH

Ok. Alright. It don't matter cause
 maybe I might maybe I might have a
 name or a spot for both of them.

SINGER

I'm sorry?

MEREDITH

I said maybe I might have a spot
 for both of them.

SINGER

Really?

MEREDITH

Maybe. Yeah. Give me the... give me
 the names. I'm working on it... I
 got a new athletic director. That's
 what I'm trying to tell you, I'm
 trying to work it.

SINGER

Ok, alright. Well let me I'm...
 like I said--

MEREDITH

Just give me both names. Just give
 me both names, and I'm good.

INT. WINE CELLAR/SINGER'S HOME - NIGHT - INTERCUT

AGUSTIN HUNEEUS JR, 53, Chilean-American, caustic, pours wine *
 samples into different glasses while on speakerphone. *

HUNEEUS

So I just wanted you to walk me
 through the whole kinda water polo
 thing again and how it works.

(MORE)

HUNEEUS (CONT'D)
 You and I did, you know, like the
 economics, the timing, how all that
 works.

FREEZE FRAME: AGUSTIN HUNEEUS JR.

The freeze frame of Huneeus transitions to STILL PHOTOS of
 his home and vineyards.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 AGUSTIN HUNEEUS, Jr. is a resident
 of San Fransisco, California.
 HUNEEUS is an owner of vineyards in
 Napa, California and elsewhere.

BACK TO SCENE:

Singer pulls up Huneeus' daughter's resume on his laptop.

SINGER
 OK. So, um, I'm putting together --
 I need to put together, uh, uh, pro-
 - sports profile -- will be a water
 polo profile -- now --

HUNEEUS
 Yeah. Yeah.

INT. DONNA HEINEL'S OFFICE - DAY

DONNA HEINEL, female, 57, white, by-the-book, sorts through
 profiles of prospective athletes, putting them into a manilla
 folder.

LOWER THIRD: Donna Heinel, Senior Associate Athletic
 Director, University of Southern California

SINGER (V.O.)
 -- and take her transcript, test
 scores, and profile to the s-- to
 the senior women's athletic
 director, who actually is the
 liaison for all sports at USC. So
 football, everybody, has to go
 through her.

INT. SINGER'S HOME - NIGHT

Singer leans back in his chair.

SINGER

She'll get presented. And if they --
in the committee, if they say, "OK,
good, she's in," then what happens
is Donna tells me--

*

INT. DONNA HEINEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Heinel, on the phone, mouth's Singer's words:

SINGER (V.O.)

"She's in. We're good," and then
she gets a letter from admission,
which'll say in there, uh, she's
been admitted, uh, conditionally
admitted.

INT. AGUSTIN HUNEEUS HOME/SINGER'S HOME - NIGHT - INTERCUT

Huneeus spits wine into a silver dump bucket.

HUNEEUS

What would her chances be, without
this process?

SINGER

Zero.

HUNEEUS

She won't get in.

SINGER

Zero. She has zero chance.

*

INT. GIANNULLI HOME - DAY

MOSSIMO GIANNULLI, male, 56, white, fashion magnate, stands
next to his wife, LORI LOUGHLIN, female, 55, white, cheery,
phone in hand. They are both staring at something. She takes
a picture of it with her cell and they crowd around the phone
to see the result.

*

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FREEZE FRAME: GIANNULLI AND LOUGHLIN

*

STILL PHOTOS of the couple's home and Giannulli's office.

*

NARRATOR (V.O.)

MOSSIMO GIANNULLI and LORI LOUGHLIN
(collectively, "the GIANNULLIS"), a
married couple, are residents of
Los Angeles, California.

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(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 GIANNULLI is a fashion designer.
 LOUGHLIN is an actress.

GRAPHIC: False Athletic Profile

The fake profile for Giannulli's daughter, which lists many impressive accomplishments and skills.

SINGER (V.O.)
 Lori and Moss, I met with USC today
 about [REDACTED]. I need a PDF of
 her transcript and test scores very
 soon while I create a coxswain
 portfolio for her.

INT. GIANNULLI HOME - DAY - BACK TO SCENE

REVEAL: The parents are taking photos of GIANNULLI'S DAUGHTER on an ergometer.

SINGER (V.O.)
 It would probably help to get a
 picture with her on an ERG in
 workout clothes like a real athlete
 too.

Giannulli and Loughlin swipe through the photos they took.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 In April 2018, Giannulli
 reprimanded a high school counselor
 for suggesting to USC that
 his daughter was not, in fact, a
 coxswain.

GRAPHIC: Counselor Notes

We see the notes of Giannulli's daughter's high school Counselor.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 Account of counselor call and days
 to follow.

As the Counselor reads his notes, we intercut the text with the scene playing out as described.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS/COUNSELOR NOTES - DAY - INTERCUT

A friendly high school guidance COUNSELOR (male) walks on the private school campus with a sour-faced Giannulli. Giannulli mouths the Counselor's words that are in quotes.

COUNSELOR (V.O.)

While we were headed to my office I asked if he had walked over or drove, they live very close to campus. Mr. Giannulli replied, "What does it matter?" in a curt tone. I said I was just making conversation, he replied, "Let's not."

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE/COUNSELOR NOTES - DAY - INTERCUT

The Counselor takes a seat in his office. Giannulli sits and immediately points his finger at the Counselor.

COUNSELOR

When we sat down in my office, he aggressively asked what I was telling USC about his daughters and why I was trying to ruin or get in the way of their opportunities.

Giannulli starts yelling, his mouth in slow motion. The Counselor sits frozen, terrified.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Giannulli then went into an agitated stream of consciousness stating he could not believe I had put [REDACTED]'a admission to USC at risk.

Giannulli, still in slow motion, is even angrier.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Giannulli went on to say he still did not "get it," I was his daughters' counselor, I was supposed to help them. He then stated he "knows lots of people"

The scene returns to normal speed and Giannulli again mouths the Counselor's words that are in quotes:

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

Given Mr. Giannulli's angered state I did not want to say that outright making an accusation. Mr. Giannulli still pushed on why I acted as I had and I stated that "it was my job to ensure there is integrity in this process," referring to the college admission process.

While Giannulli pauses for a moment to let that sink in, WE HEAR cell phone RING and then a voicemail BEEP:

*
*

HEINEL (V.O.)

I just want to make sure that, you know, I don't want the -- the parents getting angry and creating any type of disturbance at the school.

INT. DONNA HEINEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Heinel, uncharacteristically agitated, finishes her voicemail for Singer:

HEINEL

So I just don't want anybody going into [SLOANE's son's high school] or [the GIANNULLIS' daughter's high school], you know, yelling at counselors. That'll shut everything -- that'll shut everything down.

INT. MCGLASHAN OFFICE/INT. SINGER'S HOME - EVENING - INTERCUT

Singer sips a pre-dinner scotch as he talks to McGlashan, who's still at work.

SINGER

So I'm gonna make him a kicker.

MCGLASHAN

(laughs)
He does have really strong legs.

SINGER

(laughs)
Well, this will be for-- this will be good for one of the--

MCGLASHAN

Maybe he'll-- maybe he'll become a kicker. You never know.

SINGER

Yeah! Absolutely.

MCGLASHAN

You could inspire him, Rick. You may actually turn him into something. I love it.

SINGER

So, you know, essentially she told me when I get all the paperwork together, and I gotta create this profile pic. So what I'll probably need, if you guys have any pictures of him playing multiple sports, or something where you can kind of see his face a little bit in the action?

MCGLASHAN

Umm. Hmm.

SINGER

It would be helpful because I will Photoshop him onto a kicker.

MCGLASHAN

(laughs)

Okay. Okay. Let me look through what I have. Pretty funny. The way the world works these days is unbelievable.

SINGER

It's totally cra-- like, last year I had a boy who did the water polo...

ON COMPUTER SCREEN - TIME LAPSE

A picture of a teenage water polo player open in photoshop. But this kid seems way too high out of the water. *

SINGER (V.O.)

And when the dad sent me the picture, he was way too high out of the water. That nobody would believe that anybody could get that high.

MCGLASHAN (V.O.)

Yeah--

In FAST FORWARD a mouse starts manipulating the photo, placing the athlete deeper in the water. *

SINGER (V.O.)

So I told that dad, I said, "What happened?" He said he was standing on the bottom! I said, "No no no no no."

MCGLASHAN (V.O.)
Yeah exactly. You gotta be
swimming. Exactly.

The cursor arrow finishes and saves the file. The final photo
is substantially better.

INT. MCGLASHAN HOME/INT. SINGER'S HOME - EVENING - INTERCUT

McGlashan laughs along with Singer.

MCGLASHAN
That's funny. That's great. *
(recovering) *
Okay, well yeah, it's too bad that
she doesn't have a lacrosse program
with scholarships. That'd be easy.

SINGER
I know. It'd be much easier. *

EXT. SOCCER FIELD/INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY - INTERCUT

Meredith lines up soccer balls on the field. *

MEREDITH
How do you explain it to the
parents when they when come aboard?
Like how do you get them aboard?

SINGER
I tell them listen you're gonna
make a donation to my foundation,
and I'm going to, uh, help the
folks who helped us. You the family
are out of it.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN:

A website for "The Key" loads up, prominently featuring
Singer.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The Key Worldwide Foundation
("KWF") is a non-profit corporation
founded in or about 2012 and based
in Newport Beach, California.

GRAPHIC: IRS FORM 990 for The Key Worldwide Foundation.

WE SEE the document and snippets of text from the mission
statement.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
IRS Form 990 for 2016, Organization
Mission:

SINGER (V.O.)
The Key Worldwide Foundation
endeavors to provide education that
would normally be unattainable to
underprivileged students.

*

WE SCROLL down the bottom of the statement.

*

SINGER (V.O.)
Our contributions to major athletic
university programs, may help to
provide placement to students that
may not have access under normal
channels.

*
*
*
*
*
*

INT. ISACKSON'S HOME - DAY

A tasteful upper-class home in the bay area has paperwork strewn over the floor and couch. BRUCE ISACKSON, male, 61, white, nervous energy, shuffles through hardcopies of his financial records as he talks with Singer on speakerphone.

BRUCE ISACKSON
Hey, I was checking for one thing,
just for my taxes. I need to get
the letter, like you did last time--

SINGER (V.O.)
Okay.

BRUCE ISACKSON
--for the-- for the Facebook stock
that I did.

FREEZE FRAME: THE ISACKSONS

*

The freeze frame of Bruce Isackson transitions to STILL PHOTOS of their home and work.

*
*

NARRATOR (V.O.)
BRUCE ISACKSON and DAVINA ISACKSON,
a married couple (together, "the
ISACKSONS"), live in Hillsborough,
California. BRUCE ISACKSON is
president of a real estate
development firm in Woodside,
California.

BACK TO SCENE:

*

SINGER

Was this for-- was this for [your second daughter]?

ISACKSON

This was, when we did the testing. Yeah. Yeah.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN:

A computer screen showing Isackson's Facebook shares transfer.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

On or about July 15, 2016, Isackson transferred 2,150 shares of Facebook, Inc. stock, having a value of approximately \$251,249.

EXT. DALLAS RESTAURANT/INT. SINGER'S HOME - NIGHT - INTERCUT

JOHN WILSON, male, 59, white, boisterous, hands his ticket to a VALET as he holds his cell to his ear. Singer's at home, no signs of life, totally quiet.

WILSON

I don't want to be a jerk here but, you know, what am I committing myself to?

FREEZE FRAME: JOHN WILSON

The freeze frame of Wilson transitions to STILL PHOTOS of his Wilson's work and home.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

JOHN B. WILSON is a resident of Lynnfield, Massachusetts. WILSON is the founder and CEO of a private equity and real estate development firm.

BACK TO SCENE

WILSON

Because that's the other thing I need to understand because, you know, budget wise and everything and I'm not --

SINGER

Yeah, I don't think --

WILSON

I'm not like a super-gazillionaire here where I can just throw away millions. Yeah.

*

SINGER

No, I know that. Um...

WILSON

Liquidity wise. What -- when I do -- if I pull the trigger, say I pull the trigger, what does that really mean?

MONTAGE: THE MONEY TRAIL

MUSIC PULSES as WE SEE flashes of the checks, invoices and wire transfers.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Bill to: Hyannis Port Capital.
Description: Special Consulting
Invoice. Rate 20,000.

A FLASH of Singer signing his name on W-9.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Pay to the order of Mark Riddell,
\$35,000. West Hollywood College
Prep.

Riddell rips open an envelope containing a check.

*

NARRATOR (V.O.)

50,000.00. To the order of The Key
Worldwide Foundation. \$50,000.
McGlashan Family Charitable Fund.
Mossimo Giannulli Trust. \$50,000.00
Donna Heinel.

Money flies out of ATMS. Envelopes stuffed with CHECKS. A computer mouse clicks for WIRE TRANSFERS. Faster and faster, NUMBERS fly by, back to back to back:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

100,000. \$100,000.00 USC Mens Water
Polo. Wilson Family. 200,000.
200,000. 500,000. 500,000.

INT. WILSON'S OFFICE/INT. SINGER'S OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT

Wilson takes a seat and rolls his chair up to his computer.

WILSON

Oh, by the way, you should mark your calendar for next Ju-July, if you want, in, uh, Paris. Got a big birthday, July, uh, 19.

SINGER

OK.

WILSON

I rented out Versailles.

INT. CAPLAN'S OFFICE/INT. SINGER'S OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT

Caplan squeezes a stress ball, nerves getting to him.

CAPLAN

And has anybody ever gotten into an issue with this?

SINGER

Nobody. We've done this for four or five years and had probably 20-plus people do it. So-- but that's the process.

CAPLAN

Never been an issue?

SINGER

Never been an issue.

INT. ISACKSON HOME - NIGHT

A frightened Bruce Isackson keeps crossing the room while talking to Singer IN PERSON. Singer sits in a love seat, his knee bouncing.

BRUCE ISACKSON

I'm so paranoid about Davina, I go, 'I really don't want you talking on the phone to Rick about this.' You know, I'm thinkin', you know, are they—I mean, I can't imagine they'd go to the trouble of tapping my phone—but would they tap someone like your phones?

Off Singer's pause--

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. VAN - DAY**

A nondescript van idles in a hotel parking lot. Out steps
AGENT LAURA SMITH, female, late 30's, no-nonsense. She
wearing a jacket with "FBI" in giant yellow block lettering
on the back. *

NARRATOR/LAURA SMITH (V.O.)
Affidavit in support of Criminal
Complaint.

As soon as WE HEAR her voice, we recognize it immediately --
AGENT SMITH IS OUR NARRATOR and has been the whole time.

GRAPHIC: Affidavit in Support of Criminal Complaint *

Quick glimpses of the affidavit as Agent Smith reads it.

LAURA SMITH (V.O.)
I, Laura Smith, being duly sworn,
state as follows: I am a Special
Agent with the Federal Bureau of
Investigation ("FBI") assigned to
the Boston, Massachusetts Field
Office.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Agent Smith and her fellow FBI AGENTS move with purpose
across a hotel parking lot. *

LAURA SMITH (V.O.)
Since approximately March 2018, I
have been one of the case agents
for "Operation Varsity Blues," an
investigation of fraud and bribery
in the college admissions process.

They turn a corner and head to the entrance of the hotel. *

LAURA SMITH (V.O.)
In submitting this affidavit, I
have not included each and every
fact known to me about this
investigation. Rather, I have
included only those facts that I
believe are sufficient to establish
probable cause.

Then, WE HEAR a NEW MALE VOICE, more conversational:

ROSEN (V.O.)

The case began, I would say
officially, in sort of the
February/March time period of 2018.

*

INT. COURT - DAY

*

ERIC ROSEN, male, 40's, white, Assistant US Attorney,
explains the investigation in open court.

*

*

ROSEN

*

We executed a search warrant in Los
Angeles, as stated in the statement
of facts, at a home of a person
suspected of being involved in a
securities fraud, specifically,
pump and dump schemes in the United
States, Canada and Switzerland.
Like many individuals involved in
that, they choose to come in and
cooperate with the government, in
early March this individual came in
and cooperated and engaged in a
multi-day proffer with the
government.

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EXT. SOCCER FIELD/INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY - INTERCUT

*

We replay the first conversation we saw between Meredith and
Singer underneath Rosen's voiceover.

*

*

ROSEN (V.O.)

*

During the time of that proffer,
the cooperator revealed that he had
been engaged for some time in a
bribery scheme with the current
defendant, Mr. Meredith.

*

*

*

*

*

*

SINGER

*

I'm in London. Working.

*

ROSEN (V.O.)

*

Mr. Meredith then began making
phone calls to Mr. Singer in
California. And those calls were
designed to corroborate what we had
learned from email search warrants
as well as bank records as well as
to lay the foundation for a wiretap
of Mr. Singer's telephone.

*

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*

INT. US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Rosen and Agent Smith, listen to another call we've heard before, this one between Caplan and Singer.

SINGER (V.O.)
 --what we do is we help the wealthiest families in the U.S. get their kids into school.

ROSEN (V.O.)
 And then as stated in many publicly available documents, the wiretap began in early June of 2018.

Agent Smith listens, concentrating.

LAURA SMITH (V.O.)
 On September 21, 2018, I participated in the approach of William "Rick" Singer, who was a target of the Varsity Blues investigation.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Agent Smith and the FBI Agents burst in and swarm the room, flashing badges, catching Singer and Meredith mid-sentence.

LAURA SMITH (V.O.)
 We approached Singer in a hotel room at the Marriott Long Wharf in Boston where he had been meeting with Rudolph Meredith, the women's soccer coach at Yale University and a cooperating witness in our investigation.

Shocked, Singer turns to Meredith, who doesn't pretend -- he knew this was happening. Staggered, Singer sits as the FBI explain his options.

LAURA SMITH (V.O.)
 After consulting with his attorney, Singer agreed to consensually record phone calls with other individuals involved in his scheme, including several coaches.

INT. US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

FBI AGENT SEDRONI (female) speaks into a cell phone.

SEDRONI

It is appro-- it is Wednesday,
October 24th, 2018, at
approximately 10:28 a.m. Finn will
be making a consensual recording
with Bill McGlashan at the United
States Attorney's Office in Boston,
Massachusetts. I will now be
handing over the recording device.

Agent Sedroni slides the phone on a table across to Singer.
Agent Smith and Rosen sit near Singer, watching.

*
*

INT. MCGLASHAN'S OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT

McGlashan picks up on his bluetooth. As usual, he's
multitasking, this time reading an investment prospectus.

MCGLASHAN

Rick, you there?

SINGER

I'm here. How are ya, Bill?

MCGLASHAN

Oh, hey, sorry about that. My, my
bad cell coverage there for a
minute.

SINGER

No problem.

MCGLASHAN

I'm good.

SINGER

No problem.

MCGLASHAN

So what's goin' on?

Singer holds up a piece of paper. It's a script to follow.

SINGER

So--

MONTAGE: PARENT CALLS

Singer calls the parents involved in his scheme, over
multiple days, rapid fire.

*

INT. ISACKSON HOME - DAY

*

SINGER

What's happened is my foundation
is, is getting audited now.

BRUCE ISACKSON

Uh-huh.

INT. GIANNULLI'S CAR - DAY

*

SINGER

I just want to make sure you're --
give you a heads-up that... So my
foundation is being audited --

GIANNULLI

OK.

SINGER

-- which, as you know, is normal.

INT. HUNEEUS' HOME - DAY

*

SINGER

They just started an audit on my
foundation.

HUNEEUS

Yeah.

INT. ISACKSON HOME - DAY

*

SINGER

So they asked about your payments.

INT. HUNEEUS' HOME - DAY

*

SINGER

So there's a payment obviously for
50k in April, for us, taking-- for
[your daughter] taking the test...

HUNEEUS

Yeah, I remember.

INT. MGGLASHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

*

SINGER

And, as you know, when families pay for either, either takin' the test or goin' through the side door, all the money goes through my foundation, and then I pay it out to whoever needs to get paid--

INT. GIANNELLI'S CAR - DAY

*

SINGER

And, of course, I'm not gonna say anything about your payments goin' to Donna Heinel at USC to get the girls into USC, through crew. So --

GIANNELLI

Sure.

INT. ISACKSON HOME - DAY

*

SINGER

So, of course I'm not going to tell the IRS this is where the money went--

BRUCE ISACKSON

Right, right, right.

INT. MGGLASHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

*

MCGLASHAN

--the issue the IRS always has is taxes. They, they -- the IRS doesn't care about anything other than you're paying your taxes.

INT. HUNEEUS' HOME - DAY

*

HUNEEUS

Dude, dude, what do you think, I'm a moron?

SINGER

No. It doesn't-- I'm not saying you're a moron. The point is, is that--.

HUNEEUS
I got it, Rick -- I got it.

INT. GIANNULLI'S CAR - DAY

*

SINGER
So I just want to make sure our
stories are the same, because --

GIANNULLI
Yeah.

SINGER
-- an th-- and that your 400K was
paid to our foundation to help
underserved kids.

GIANNULLI
Uh, perfect.

INT. HUNEEUS' HOME - DAY

*

HUNEEUS
I'm going to say that I've been
inspired how you're helping
underprivileged kids get into
college. Totally got it.

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

An empty podium in front of a blue curtain. FBI AGENT JOE
BONAVOLONTA, male, late 40's, white, steps into frame.

*

*

BONAVOLONTA
Operation Varsity Blues culminated
early this morning when approximately
300 special agents from the FBI and
the IRS Criminal Investigations set
out to arrest 46 individuals across
the country for their roles in an
international college admissions
bribery and money laundering scam.

MONTAGE: PARENT ARRESTS

EXT. CAPLAN'S HOME - MORNING

*

It's early morning as FBI Agents knock hard on Caplan's door.
He opens it, half asleep.

*

EXT. WILSON'S HOME - MORNING

Wilson, in boxers on his doorstep, struggles to explain to federal agents why this is all a big misunderstanding.

BONAVOLONTA (V.O.)

Make no mistake, this is not a case where parents were acting in the best interests of their children.

EXT. HUNEEUS' HOME - DAY

Huneeus opens his door, sees the FBI, then immediately tries to shut it. The agents catch it and force it open.

INT. MCGLASHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Agents cuff McGlashan, who is stunned speechless.

BONAVOLONTA (V.O.)

This is a case where they flaunted their wealth, sparing no expense to cheat the system so they can set their children up for success with the best education money can buy literally. Some spent anywhere from \$200,000 to \$6.5 million for guaranteed admission.

EXT. GIANNULLI HOME - DAY

Agents lead Giannulli and Loughlin into an unmarked car.

EXT. ISACKSON HOME - DAY

Bruce Isackson sees the FBI and he deflates. He knew it.

GRAPHIC: The FBI charged over 50 parents, coaches and co-conspirators in Singer's scheme.

INT. COURT - DAY

Huneeus, with great effort, puts on his humble face for the court.

HUNEEUS

My actions threatened to disadvantage the very people that the system was already stacked against. I deserve the consequences of my actions and whatever sentence you decide today.

GRAPHIC: Agustin Huneeus Jr was sentenced to five months in prison, 500 hours of community service and a \$100,000 fine.

INT. COURT - DAY

Caplan gets emotional as he reads from a prepared statement.

CAPLAN

I failed. I failed my daughter, I failed my wife, I failed my son, I failed my parents, I failed my colleagues, my friends, and I failed the profession that I loved so much and worked in my whole life.

GRAPHIC: Gordon Caplan was sentenced to one month in prison, 250 hours of community service and a \$50,000 fine.

GRAPHIC: Bruce Isackson, Rudy Meredith, Mossimo Giannulli and *
Lori Loughlin pleaded guilty. They have not yet been sentenced.

GRAPHIC: John Wilson pleaded not guilty.

INT. COURT - DAY

JUDGE INDRIA TALWANI, female, 59, empathetic, reflects on the case at a sentencing hearing.

JUDGE TALWANI

And that's why I end up at the end here by just really reflecting on why there was a sense of outrage in this case. It isn't because people discovered that there isn't a true meritocracy out there. I think most parents working with their children know that their children had a hard row to go in the first place. That's not the outrage.

INT. WEST HOLLYWOOD TESTING CENTER - DAY

Caplan's daughter takes the ACT as Riddell looks on.

JUDGE TALWANI (V.O.)

The outrage is a system that is already so distorted by money and privilege in the first place with some children having small classes, individual tutoring or counseling--

INT. HOME GYM - DAY

Giannulli and Loughlin direct their daughter to pose on an ergometer.

JUDGE TALWANI (V.O.)

--homes with books and guidance and food and a roof over your head, prep classes, friends who can help you find good internships in the summer, help writing college essays, college counselors along the way who can help diagnose your child's learning problems.

EXT. ACADEMIC QUAD - DAY

COLLEGE STUDENTS walk to class. Some greet each other. On the surface, just another average day on campus.

JUDGE TALWANI (V.O.)

In a system of that sort, in that context, that took the step of obtaining one more advantage to put your child ahead of theirs.

GRAPHIC: Rick Singer pleaded guilty to racketeering conspiracy, money laundering conspiracy, conspiracy to defraud the United States, and obstruction of justice. His sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled.

END ACT THREE

TAG**INT. SINGER'S OFFICE - DAY**

*

Back to the promotional video from the very beginning. A wooden Singer wraps it up.

SINGER

Getting into the right college will set the trajectory for the rest of your son or daughter's life. Don't leave it to chance. Let a Key coach come alongside you and your family to truly unlock your student's potential.

As Singer's image FADES OUT, we hear:

BRUCE ISACKSON (V.O.)

(pre-lap)

Yeah, no, I appreciate that, and I'm glad you did.

INT. ISACKSON HOME - NIGHT

Singer sits in a love seat, containing his energy, while Bruce Isackson spirals.

BRUCE ISACKSON

I'm just thinking, oh my God, because you're thinking, does this roll into something where, you know, if they get into the meat and potatoes, is this gonna be this-- be the front page story with everyone from Kleiner Perkins do whatever, getting these kids into school, and--

SINGER

Well, the, the person who'd be on the front page--

BRUCE ISACKSON

Well, I, I-- But if-- but they, they --

SINGER

Yes.

BRUCE ISACKSON

--went the meat and potatoes of
it, which a-- which a guy would
love to have is, it's so hard for
these kids to get into college, and
here's-- look what-- look what's
going on behind the schemes, and
then, you know--

*

Bruce flops onto a couch opposite Singer as the reality of it
all washes over him.

BRUCE ISACKSON (CONT'D)

--the, the embarrassment to
everyone in the communities. Oh my
God, it would just be-- Yeah. Ugh.

SMASH TO:

TITLE: VERBATIM