

THE BOX

Written by

Roddy Rich

INT. 1950S ERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Immaculately decorated house with baubles and trinkets throughout, the kind of house with a bear-skin rug somewhere. We see awards and newspaper clippings lauding a man named CLARK WEXLER, Superstar Lawyer.

Clark (54), sits in his chair by the fireplace. Two GENTLEMEN watch him from the table off to the side. Clark is well-dressed and clearly unwinding from another day at the firm.

He finishes the last of the Brandy in his glass and stands up to refill.

The two Gentlemen stand, ready to assist, and he waves them down. He clips another ice chunk from the bucket and pours liquid relief into the glass.

CLARK

Steno.

The older and less well-kept of the two gentlemen stands up from the table. Steno (70), with mousey features and an outdated suit speaks meekly-

STENO

(gulps)

Yes sir.

CLARK

I think we both knew that this time would come. You've outlived your utility. It's time to go.

STENO

Please sir. I have more to give, I really-

CLARK

I have Moles here for that. He does what you do, even better.

MOLES (35), a younger and much more suave man nods to Clark with a smile. Steno looks at Moles with disgust.

STENO

What about everything we've been through? I was there as soon as you were done with law school.

Clark recalls and takes another sip.

STENO (CONT'D)
I've done everything you've asked
for! Remember? You used to call me
old reliable.

Steno walks to the wall with the framed newspaper clippings.

STENO (CONT'D)
Your first case! The one with the
water main bursting on 110th
street, I was there!

Clark nods.

STENO (CONT'D)
The case of mistaken identity, when
that guy got fingered for robbing
that bar! I was there!

Clark sips.

STENO (CONT'D)
And who could forget, the case that
made you a star! I was the one who
reminded you to look into the
nurse's alibi!

CLARK
Are you taking credit for *my* work?

STENO
Of course not. All's I'm saying is
we're a team.

Clark sets his drink down to stoke the fire.

CLARK
Steno. Do you know what the other
attorneys say when I walk around
with you? They say I look silly for
having such an old and disgusting
assistant like you.

Steno holds back tears.

CLARK (CONT'D)
And quite frankly I agree with
them. Their assistants are all
young, well-kept, helpful... It's
an optics thing.

Clark sits back down in his chair, caressing the lip of his
glass.

STENO
So. What happens to me then?

CLARK
Well. You have too much critical
information. We've got to get rid
of you.

Steno drops to his knees.

STENO
Please no please! I'll do anything!

CLARK
It's what we do with assistants
like you. You're just too close,
you have too much information.

Steno sobs.

STENO
How are you gonna do it?

Clark points to the fireplace with his cup hand.

STENO (CONT'D)
Please anything but that please!

CLARK
Look it's how other attorneys do it
too. You understand don't you? If I
left you out on the street you
could be a big liability.

Steno screams.

STENO
Please! I'll do anything! I'll go
into the box! What about that? Just
put me in the box and forget about
me.

Clark's eyes widen.

CLARK
Hey, now that's an idea...

He shares a glance with Moles who is also surprised by the
proposition.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 You have a deal Steno, one lifetime
 in the box.

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY HOME, PRESENT DAY - NIGHT

We see a family going through the clothes and boxes of a deceased relative.

MOM (48), JASON (8), and KIMBERLY (15) are delicately moving items into piles. Mom's eyes are puffy and red. Tissues are also piling up.

Mom opens a box labelled, "Memories". In it she finds a few dried flowers, pictures of forgotten lovers, love letters, dice, and an old Stenographer's notebook.

She holds the notebook aloft.

MOM
 Wow, this must be your
 grandfather's notebook for when he
 practiced law.

JASON
 Oh cool! Can I have it?

KIMBERLY
 (not looking)
 Dibs if it's a Moleskine notebook.

Mom flips through it.

MOM
 Yeah, it's only about half-way
 done. Are you sure you want it
 Jason?

Jason nods. Mom lowers her head to Jason's eye level.

MOM (CONT'D)
 You have to take very good care of
 it and keep it in a nice place.

Jason nods even more. Mom hands Jason the notebook. He slides his hand over the top of it.

"Stenographer's Notebook" is displayed on the front cover, however the "-grapher's" part of the cover is heavily creased.

JASON

Hi Steno!

Jason hugs the notebook.

JASON (CONT'D)

Thank you Grandpa.