

Eddie, The Collegiate Senior

Chapter Three The First Days Back

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The first day of the semester brings with it a very important meeting between law enforcement and the University's coaching staff. After track practice, Officer Hayes meets with Mr. Frazier, Provost Leighton, and Dr. Zunde. Present today with Officer Hayes is Mack, Bad Dog, and Mad Dog. Today, Mack is going by the name Jackson Finley. Mad Dog will be going by the name Tony, and Bad Dog will be going by the name Dino. Several athletes were also invited to the meeting, which strategically includes Eddie, Mark, and Braden.

The coaches and the three team members meet with Officer Hayes in the nicely appointed office reserved for the meet officials during a meet. Walking in last are the three undercover officers playing the parts of Jackson Finley, Tony, and Dino. Seeing the three undercover officers, Provost Leighton announces, "Mack! How have you been?" The undercover officer, who Provost Leighton knew as Mack, replies, "I've been great. For the next few weeks, though, it sounds like my name will be Jackson Finley." Provost Leighton tells the undercover officer, "for some reason, I liked the name 'Mack' better." The undercover officer replies, "me too. Mack certainly took care of Addison Grimsby."

Now that everyone is present, Officer Hayes opens the meeting, and brings the coaching staff and athletes up to speed on the situation involving Mayor Jamieson. Eddie, of course, is well aware of what is going on with the mayor. But, what Eddie is not aware of is Officer Hayes' plan of action. Everyone pays close attention, knowing that they all will have to play their part, and do so in a very convincing way.

Presenting his plan, Officer Hayes begins by stating, "there's going to be a lot going on at this divisional meet. As we all know, The President of the United States will be attending, and the Secret Service will be all over the place. Hopefully, they'll all stay out of our way. So, now down to

business. I spoke with Eddie a few days ago. Tomorrow, at noon, Mr. Jackson Finley will have a meeting with Mayor Jamieson at Romano's, an upscale Italian restaurant. The purpose of that meeting is to introduce Jackson Finley to Mayor Jamieson. Eddie will be at that meeting." Eddie comments, "that's a really nice restaurant." Officer Hayes replies, "and, you'll be having lunch in a private room. It's a nice setup, no pun intended. Oh, and order whatever you want. It's on the department's tab."

Officer Hayes asks Mr. Frazier, "do you have the list for me, coach?" Mr. Frazier hands Officer Hayes three copies of a computer printout of who is expected to place in which race during the divisional meet and their expected times, and replies, "as far as our statistics show, this will be the outcome of the meet." Officer Hayes asks, "are you still on track to win all the medals?" Mr. Frazier replies, "in the track events, yes. In the field events, unless there's something we're not aware of, yes. And, during this meet, Eddie might just break the world record in the 60-meter dash."

Mr. Frazier then mentions, "for your information, we expect that Bobby B. will likely break the world record in the shot-put during this meet." Dr. Zunde adds, "once Bobby B. breaks the world record, the field guys will get fired up, and perform better." Officer Hayes replies, "wait a second. Let me get this straight. Bobby B. will likely break the world record in the shot-put during the meet?" Dr. Zunde replies, "yes. Today, during practice, he was eight centimeters off the record. With the meet pressure and the President watching, he's very likely to break the record." Officer Hayes comments, "wow! I know your team was good, but I had no idea your team was that good."

Officer Hayes and the undercover officers look at each other as if they were just handed a pot of gold. Officer Hayes tells the group, "if Bobby B. and Eddie are represented to break the record ahead of the meet, and they follow through, we'll have Mayor Jamieson right under our thumb."

The undercover officer playing the part of Jackson Finley asks, "how confident are we that the shot-put and 60-meter dash records will be broken?" Mr. Frazier replies, "Eddie holds the world record in the 100-meter dash. He is perfectly capable of breaking the record in the 60-meter dash." Dr. Zunde replies, "for the shot-put, I'm 100 percent confident that Bobby B. can do it." Officer Hayes asks, "how can you be that sure?" Already having a plan, Dr. Zunde replies, "I'll point to the President, and tell Bobby B., 'the President is in the stands. He's the guy who cost you an Olympic gold medal. Get out there, and show him what you can do.' That will certainly motivate Bobby B." Mr. Frazier laughs, telling Officer Hayes, "after hearing that, he'll definitely break the record."

Over the past few years, Mr. Frazier and the University staff have been compiling statistics on all the teams in the division. The University's coaching staff knows the outcome of the meet before it is even held. In the past, the statistical analysis has proven to be very accurate. This meet is expected to be no different. And, with Dr. Owen's computerized analysis, the confidence level of the meet outcome is higher than ever.

Reviewing the projected outcome of the meet, the undercover officer playing the part of Jackson Finley comments, "all this is really good. I can do a lot with this." Officer Hayes announces, "Mr. Finley will be asking the mayor for money, initially inviting him into the organization on a pay to play basis." Holding up Mr. Frazier's documentation predicting the meet results, Officer Hayes predicts, "if this holds up, he'll be glad to pay to play. But, either way, the undercover officers will all be wearing a wire. After lunch tomorrow, we should have enough to take this Mayor Jamieson character in. But, we don't want to do it just yet. Like we did with Alistair Crum and this Paxton character, we want to shake out the organization the best we can before we make any arrests."

Focusing on Mr. Frazier, Provost Leighton, and Dr. Zunde, Officer Hayes instructs them, "during the meet, Jackson Finley will be walking around the venue. When he speaks with you, do a lot of pointing and act very agreeable. You can be sure that Mayor Jamieson, who will be watching from the stands, will be keeping a close eye on what goes on at the benches. We can be really sure he'll be watching Mr. Finley's every move."

Braden asks, "how can I help?" Officer Hayes replies, "you and Mark will be brought into the picture a little later. The plan is to either get the mayor to ask you to fix a race, or have you guys to offer to fix a race, all for money. Then, Mr. Finley will learn of what happened, and take Mayor Jamieson on a ride somewhere he'd rather not go, just like we did with this Addison Grimsby character." Braden energetically comments, "I'd really like to be along for that ride!" Knowing that Braden is an officer of the law, Officer Hayes laughs and replies, "we might be able to arrange that."

The meeting is quickly wrapped up. Everyone clearly understands their part, and agrees that the organized gambling ring must be disassembled. Mr. Frazier and Provost Leighton are particularly bothered that, in certain sports, the outcomes might be fixed. But, no one is more ticked off than Eddie. Eddie never liked Mayor Jamieson from the moment he met him.

The next day, Eddie drives into the parking lot of Romano's Italian Restaurant in his MGB, and walks inside to meet Jackson Finley. Inside, Jackson Finley, Tony, and Dino, all dressed in appropriate and quite

expensive attire, are waiting. Playing the part well, Mr. Finley exclaims, "Eddie! It's good to see you again!" Eddie gives Mr. Finley a fist bump, replying, "back at you, boss!" Mr. Finley asks Eddie, "is there any sign of Mayor Jamieson?" Eddie replies, "I don't see him around anywhere." Mr. Finley tells Eddie, "let's go in and get seated." Mr. Finley instructs the maitre d' that Mayor Bradford Jamieson will be arriving soon, and to escort him back to the private room as soon as he arrives.

Eddie and the undercover officers are escorted to a spacious and beautifully appointed private room, which is sure to give the mayor the impression that Mr. Finley is who Eddie claims he is. As they are waiting for Mayor Jamieson, Mr. Finley and Eddie discuss the upcoming meet. Eddie informs Mr. Finley that he is very confident that the University's team will win all the medals, just as Mr. Frazier predicted.

Mayor Jamieson is escorted to and enters the private room. Eddie stands up, and tells the mayor, "Mayor Jamieson, I'd like you to meet my agent, Mr. Jackson Finley. Mr. Finley, this is Mayor Bradford Jamieson, the mayor of our town." Mr. Finley and Mayor Jamieson shake hands and exchange greetings. Mr. Finley announces, "these are my associates, Tony and Dino," leaving great uncertainty as to their role. Tony, and Dino each greet the mayor with a very firm handshake. Immediately gaining the upper hand, Mr. Finley tells the mayor, "you may be seated."

Mr. Finley asks the mayor, "so, Mr. Jamieson, Eddie tells me you're a businessman. Am I correct?" Put on the spot by Mr. Finley's opening line, Mayor Jamieson replies, "yes, sir. I have my hands in a few things." Taking some time to respond, Mr. Finley mentions, "good. Eddie is a businessman too. He tells me he's made a lot of money in the stock market. Eddie also has his hands in a few things too. It's not good to have all your eggs in one basket." Mayor Jamieson replies, "I totally agree." While everyone reviews the menu, Mr. Finley controls the conversation, bringing up irrelevant topics, such as how nice the weather is in the Carribean.

Prior to the waiter walking into the room, Dino, who has a view to the door, quietly taps on his water glass with his spoon, alerting Mr. Finley that someone is about to enter the room. The waiter enters the room to take everyone's order. Mr. Finley tells Eddie, "please, go ahead, Eddie," again demonstrating to the mayor who is in control. Eddie orders a veal Parmesan dish, with two extra pieces of veal. Tony and Dino, who obviously work out in a gym, take Eddie's cue, and also order a meal with extra meat. After all, today's dinner is on the police department's tab. Mr. Finley makes sure that Mayor Jamieson is the last to order, just to see the mayor's reaction.

When the waiter leaves, Mr. Finley announces, “when Dino taps his glass with his spoon, the waiter is about to enter the room. Then, we start talking about the weather, if you know what I mean.” Eddie replies, “got it.” Following suit, Mayor Jamieson replies, “understood, sir.”

Now that the orders are taken, Mr. Finley asks Eddie, “so, how is Kathy doing?” Eddie replies, “she’s doing great. She’s teaching gym class in school now.” Looking at Mayor Jamieson, Mr. Finley strategically comments, “it’s too bad Kathy’s eligibility to compete has expired. She was very valuable to me, if you know what I mean.” Mr. Finley’s commentary is solely to get a feeling of how easy or difficult it will be to work with Mayor Jamieson.

The meal is served. Mr. Finley begins to talk business, telling Mayor Jamieson, “Eddie tells me that you’re interested in a piece of the action.” Mayor Jamieson replies, “my organization is always looking for ways to expand. In talking with Eddie, he tells me that you can, perhaps, help us in that area.” After an uncomfortable one-minute pause, Mr. Finley asks Mayor Jamieson, “just how big is your organization?” Mayor Jamieson explains, “we have about three dozen agents in the field, and three in management, one of who is my odds maker. I run the organization. When I have some good inside information, I also place bets myself through a competitor.” Mr. Finley replies, “touching the third rail¹. I see.” Mr. Finley asks Mayor Jamieson a few more questions regarding his organization, gauging the mayor’s truthfulness and interest in expanding.

Mr. Finley has ascertained that Mayor Jamieson is very forthcoming with any and all information. Not wanting to leave Mayor Jamieson in the dark, Mr. Finley explains, “my organization is involved in track and field, as you well know. We are also involved in football, basketball, and wrestling. Don’t ask me how we got involved in wrestling, but we did. What makes the University’s track team so lucrative is that, Eddie, and a few others, not only control the meet, but also can run a race in whatever time I want them to run it in. It’s not every day that I am afforded that luxury.” Mayor Jamieson interrupts, and asks, “are you telling me that you can control the meet to that specificity?” Mr. Finley confidently and calmly replies, “yes.”

Not fond of Mayor Jamieson interrupting him, Mr. Finley pauses for a minute, then continues, “look. It’s like this. The outcome of the divisional meet has already been determined.” Reaching into his briefcase, and finding the document with the expected outcome of the meet, Mr. Finley explains, “I have a lot of money riding on this meet. And, when I say ‘a

¹ Touching the third rail: *slang*. To engage in a very dangerous activity.

lot', I mean a lot." Holding up the document, Mr. Finley explains, "this five-page document contains who will place first, second, and third place in each event, and their expected time or distance." Mr. Finley then leans on the table toward Mayor Jamieson, and informs him, "it is very likely that, during this meet, the world record will be broken in two events. This document tells which events they are. Imagine how much money you can make by knowing that ahead of time." Mayor Jamieson is quite surprised at what he is hearing.

After a long pause, Mr. Finley asks Mayor Jamieson, "have you ever heard of Alistair Crum?" Mayor Jamieson suddenly becomes nervous, and replies, "yes, I have. What brings his name up?" Mr. Finley explains, "he's out of business now. His odds maker made a very big mistake, and his organization had to make a seven-and-a-half-million dollar payout. Can you believe that?" Mayor Jamieson replies, "I heard about that through the grapevine. That was quite unfortunate for him." Mr. Finley firmly informs Mayor Jamieson, "I don't make mistakes. We don't figure out the odds. We control them." Mr. Finley's statement is exactly what Mayor Jamieson has been waiting to hear. And, Mr. Finley is now convinced that Mayor Jamieson was not likely to be involved in Alistair Crum's organization.

Dino lightly taps his water glass with his spoon. The room is suddenly eerily silent. The waiter enters the room and takes everyone's dessert orders. Mr. Finley gives the impression that he obviously does not want anyone to eavesdrop on the sensitive conversation.

Eddie, who has been quietly eating lunch while he is listening to the conversation mentions to Mr. Finley, "me and Kathy went to the Florida Keys over Christmas break. Mark, and a few others, came with us. The weather was beautiful. You must like it in the Carribean." Mr. Finley replies, "the Cayman islands are beautiful. And, the banking system down there is very private, if you know what I mean." Eddie replies, "I can understand that." Hearing the side conversations, Mayor Jamieson is very convinced that Jackson Finley is a key mastermind behind fixing sports outcomes.

Over dessert, Mr. Finley tells Mayor Jamieson, "I'm going to make you an offer. I strongly suggest you take it." Holding up the document outlining the expected meet results, Mr. Finley tells Mayor Jamieson, "I will sell you this document for a very fair price. This document, as I mentioned earlier, has in it who will place first, second, and third place in each event, and their expected performance. With this information, you can't lose." Mr. Finley sounds very convincing, but the mayor has questions. Mayor Jamieson asks, "how accurate is your information?" Mr. Finley replies, "I'd guess about 98 percent accurate. What do you think, Eddie?" Eddie replies, "that's about what we've been running, somewhere around 98 percent. Personally, I'm performing at 100 percent." Seizing

the opportunity, Mr. Finley comments, “Eddie hasn’t let me down yet. His bonuses reflect that.”

Mayor Jamieson, wanting to be in on the action, asks Mr. Finley a few more questions. After the question and answer session, Mr. Finley gives Mayor Jamieson the price of the document, a price to which the mayor cheerfully agrees. During the negotiations between Mr. Finley and Mayor Jamieson, Eddie thinks to himself that the mayor is really a dumb ass. But, Mr. Finley sounds very convincing. So are Tony and Dino, who have been quiet during the meeting, enjoying their gourmet lunch.

When the bill arrives, Mr. Finley lays some cash on the table, including a 100 percent tip, ensuring the mayor sees his generosity. Mr. Finley bluntly tells Mayor Jamieson, “I prefer cash for our transaction. Let’s take a trip to your bank.” Looking forward to receiving the inside information, Mayor Jamieson replies, “sure. We can do that now.” Mr. Finley tells Eddie, “I’ll meet up with you and your guys later, and distribute your packages.”

After enjoying a gourmet lunch courtesy of the police department, everyone heads out to the parking lot. Eddie goes back to work. Mr. Finley, his associates, and Mayor Jamieson enter Mr. Finley’s limousine, and take a ride to Mayor Jamieson’s bank.

The next day, before practice, Braden asks Eddie, “how did your meeting go with the mayor?” Eddie replies, “that guy is a total sucker. I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. The undercover officers had him right under their thumb the whole time. And, I got a really good lunch out of it.” Braden tells Eddie, “I wish I can be there when all this goes down.” Eddie reminds Braden, “it sounded to me like Officer Hayes offered you a front row seat.” Braden smiles, hoping that he can play a part in this case.

Eddie and Braden take a seat with the rest of the tribe. Pointing to the entrance to the arena, Mark tells Eddie and Braden, “look who’s back.” Eddie laughs, and replies, “I wonder what he wants.” At the entrance to the arena stands Mr. Alexander Stupeck, the attorney who represented Jeff McCutchen last year when he believed that he was unfairly cut from the track team. Mark tells Eddie, “whatever it’s about, it should be fun. I hope we get to stay for the show.”

Mr. Frazier walks into the arena, accompanied by Provost Leighton, Dr. Zunde, and Dr. Owens. Standing behind his lectern, Mr. Frazier shuffles a few papers before he addresses the team. Seeing Mr. Stupeck out of the corner of his eye, Mr. Frazier is ready for some free entertainment. Not wanting Mr. Stupeck to hear what he has to say to the team, Mr. Frazier turns to Mr. Stupeck, and exclaims, “Stupeck! What do you want?”

Mr. Stupeck walks up to Mr. Frazier, telling him, "I would like to see you, Edward Bogenskaya, Mark Svoboda, Axel Braden, and Robert Bradshaw." Mr. Frazier announces, "Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Bobby B., please stand up." The four athletes stand up, and Mr. Frazier tells Mr. Stupeck, "there they are! You've seen them, and you've seen me. Now, gather up your stuff, and go home!" Mr. Stupeck replies, "coach, please show a little respect." Provost Leighton, who has a hard time not laughing at Mr. Frazier's treatment of Mr. Stupeck, walks up to Mr. Frazier, and whispers, "I'll take care of this." Mr. Frazier replies, "thank you."

Provost Leighton walks over to Mr. Stupeck, waving to Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Bobby B. to join the meeting. Walking into a private office so that Mr. Stupeck cannot hear Mr. Frazier's announcements, Provost Leighton asks, "Mr. Stupeck, how may I assist you today?" Mr. Stupeck replies, "first of all, Dr. Nicholson wants his equipment returned to him immediately." Playing dumb, Provost Leighton asks, "what equipment would that be?" Looking at his notes, Mr. Stupeck replies, "these men allegedly took a parabolic microphone, a pair of binoculars, a tape recorder, and a 35-millimeter SLR camera from Jeff McCutchen and Brad Evans. They belong to Dr. Nicholson, and he wants them back."

Mark interjects, "we didn't take a pair of binoculars." Mr. Stupeck insists, "you most certainly did!" Mark laughs, and replies, "we took binoculars, not a pair of binoculars. If we took a pair of binoculars, we would have two binoculars, but we only have one. If you really want to get technical, we took a pair of monoculars." Now angry, Mr. Stupeck exclaims, "I'm not here to argue semantics!" Eddie asks Mr. Stupeck, "why not? You're an attorney. That's your job." Braden comments, "and, he ain't no good at it, just like McCutchen ain't no good at running track." Mr. Stupeck is now primed for a heated argument. And, Provost Leighton is amused at how easily the guys worked over Mr. Stupeck.

Provost Leighton asks Mr. Stupeck, "so, Dr. Nicholson wants his equipment returned?" Mr. Stupeck replies, "yes. And, the sooner, the better." Provost Leighton tells Braden, "Officer Braden, will you please explain to Mr. Stupeck why his request cannot be honored at the present time?" Mr. Stupeck interrupts, and asks, "this man is a police officer?" Provost Leighton replies, "yes. Axel Braden is one of our campus police officers. I'm surprised you didn't know that, since he has previously arrested Todd and Jeff McCutchen." Likely lying, Mr. Stupeck comments, "I had no idea Officer Braden and the athlete on the team were the same person." Mark comments, "well, now you do," which raises Mr. Stupeck's blood pressure a few points.

Answering Mr. Stupeck's question, Braden replies, "I'd be glad to explain why Mr. Nicholson won't be getting his stuff back any time soon. Evans and McCutchen were arrested for trespassing. The equipment they

were carrying was confiscated because they cannot prove it was theirs. The evidence is now in the possession of the campus police.” Provost Leighton then informs Mr. Stupeck, “Dr. Nicholson will get his equipment back if it is, in fact, his after the court case is settled. Please have Dr. Nicholson provide proof of ownership, which should include the receipt and documentation indicating the serial number of each item. If he cannot provide that information, it is unlikely any of it will be returned to him.” Mr. Stupeck sternly informs Provost Leighton, “you, ma’am, are going to regret being so difficult. I’m going to take you to court.”

Mr. Stupeck’s threat falls on deaf ears. Provost Leighton has already discussed the matter with the University’s attorneys, who are much better caliber professionals than is Mr. Stupeck. The University’s attorneys have assured Provost Leighton that the campus police have acted in a manner congruent with what would be generally expected, and the confiscated equipment should remain in the custody of the campus police until the matter is settled.

Not wanting to be bothered by Mr. Stupeck’s attitude any longer, Provost Leighton commands the irate attorney, “Mr. Stupeck, please leave this arena immediately. If you refuse, I will also have you arrested for trespassing.” Provost Leighton tells Braden, “Officer Braden, will you please escort Mr. Stupeck out of the building. If he gives you any trouble, please arrest him for whatever charges you can come up with.” Getting the picture, Mr. Stupeck tells Provost Leighton, “that won’t be necessary. I’ll leave on my own. And, I can assure you, you haven’t heard the last of this!”

Throwing out her trump card, Provost Leighton rebuts, “and, neither have you, Mr. Stupeck. Our police department ran the serial numbers of the confiscated equipment. Please be informed that the Nikon camera that was in the possession of Jeff McCutchen at the time of his arrest has been reported as being stolen three months ago. Now that you have informed me that Dr. Nicholson lays claim to that camera, please inform your client, Dr. Nicholson, that he will now be considered a suspect in the case.” Now speechless, Mr. Stupeck hammers his fist on the table, mumbles a few obscenities, and storms out of the room, followed by Braden.

As Mr. Stupeck leaves the arena, Braden tells Mr. Stupeck, “it sounds like to me that your mouth was writing checks back there that your ass can’t cover.” Mr. Stupeck warns Braden, “you people haven’t heard the last of this!” Braden laughs, telling Mr. Stupeck, “come on back anytime you want. I’m sure Mr. Frazier and Provost Leighton are gonna kick your ass again.”

After Mr. Stupeck leaves, Mark comments, “well, that didn’t go exactly like he expected.” Provost Leighton informs her athletes, “we suspect the other equipment is stolen as well. The serial number on the parabolic microphone has been ground off. That’s usually a sign that it has been stolen. It doesn’t look like they’ll be getting that back anytime soon either.” Provost Leighton then tells the group, “now that Mr. Stupeck is gone, let’s get out there and join practice.”

Walking out into the arena, Provost Leighton and the four athletes see a television camera being set up in one corner of the arena. Provost Leighton comments under her breath, “now what?” Walking over to Mr. Frazier, Provost Leighton asks, “what’s going on?” Mr. Frazier replies, “more problems. Todd McCutchen has gone to the news and reported that Eddie and Mark don’t attend classes.” Provost Leighton replies, “wonderful. What’s next?”

Looking over at the news crew, Provost Leighton points out, “that’s Angela Meadows. She graduated from our University last year.” Mr. Frazier replies, “I know. She’s on our side. I told her we’d have a statement for her. So, we have to come up with something in the next hour for her.” Provost Leighton asks, “and, you said Todd McCutchen is the one who went to the press?” Mr. Frazier replies, “yes.” Provost Leighton yells out, “Braden, Eddie, Mark, please see me!” Provost Leighton tells Mr. Frazier, “this is obviously retaliation for confiscating the equipment last Fall when they were caught spying on our team. It appears that McCutchen is now trying to gain the upper hand by engaging in psychological warfare.”

Mr. Frazier asks Provost Leighton, “what did Stupeck want?” Provost Leighton explains, “he was sent here to lay claim to the equipment that we confiscated from Todd McCutchen and Brad Evans. He claims that Dr. Nicholson owns the equipment.” Mr. Frazier suggests, “it’s absolutely no coincidence that Stupeck shows up about the same time McCutchen went to the press.” Provost Leighton observes, “well, you were right again, George. The other teams are trying their hand at busting us on technicalities.”

Eddie, Mark, and Braden run up. Eddie asks, “what’s up?” Provost Leighton replies, “I need a favor from you guys. Todd McCutchen has gone to the news media, and informed them that Eddie and Mark do not attend classes.” Mark comments, “uh oh.” Provost Leighton asks, “will you all collectively use your minds and write down for me every crime or potential crime Todd McCutchen has committed? And, I need this now.” Braden comments, “we’re gonna need a lot of paper for his rap sheet.”

Eddie, Mark, and Braden get working on the list. Mr. Frazier asks Provost Leighton, “what’s your plan, Athena?” Provost Leighton replies,

“Todd McCutchen, or whoever he is working for, is trying to discredit this University. My plan is to discredit Todd McCutchen as a witness the best I can.” Mr. Frazier smiles, and replies, “I like it. Hopefully, that will keep everyone off our back.” Provost Leighton assures Mr. Frazier, “when I get done, no media outlet would dare interview Todd McCutchen again.”

Ten minutes later, Braden walks over and hands Provost Leighton the list, telling her, “I think we got it all. We could have missed something, but I think that’s it. Oh, and Mark took the notes.” Glancing at the piece of paper, Provost Leighton sees the words “every crime or potential crime Todd McCutchen has committed” written in large letters.

Quite puzzled, Provost Leighton asks, “what’s this?” Braden laughs, and replies, “like I said, Mark took the notes. That’s exactly what you told us to write down. The real list is on the other side. I had nothing to do with it.” As she turns the paper over to see the real list, Provost Leighton laughs, and tells Braden, “someday, Mark could get a job as a comedian.” Mark may have come up with the silly stunt, but Braden was in on it 100 percent. And, not surprisingly, so was Eddie.

Eddie and Mark walk over as Provost Leighton reviews the list, commenting, “this is good. This is really good.” Provost Leighton asks Eddie, “what is your GPA?” Eddie replies, “a 3.8.” Asking Mark, Provost Leighton asks, “and, yours?” Mark replies, “mine is also a 3.8.” Provost Leighton makes a note of Eddie’s and Mark’s GPA, and tells the group, “thank you very much. I’m going to sit down for a moment and prepare my statement.”

A half hour later, Provost Leighton speaks with Angela, who shows Provost Leighton the video of McCutchen’s public statement, which has not yet been aired. McCutchen, who appears very awkward on camera, states that Eddie and Mark have never attended any classes, the University’s coaching staff overlooks hazing of the athletes, and a few other complaints.

Angela tells Provost Leighton, “trust me. I’m on your guys side. I don’t know who else Todd McCutchen may have talked to but, if we get the University’s statement, the other stations will want to get it from us. And, we’d be glad to give it to them.” Provost Leighton tells Angela, “I’ve prepared our official statement. So, whenever you’re ready, we can begin. And, please have the training exercise that is in progress as a background to the video.” Angela and Provost Leighton go over the script, make a few cue cards, and discuss the subject matter of the interview.

During the discussion of what will be brought up during the interview, Angela whispers to Provost Leighton, “thanks again for the tip last year that a few records were going to be broken at the Spring divisional meet.”

Provost Leighton whispers back, “getting that message out really brought our University a lot of positive attention. Thank you for airing that!”

The cameras begin rolling. Angela begins, energetically stating, “good evening! This is Angela Meadows, and I have standing here with me now Dr. Athena Leighton, who is not only the provost of the University that Edward Bogenskaya and Mark Svoboda attend, but part of the coaching staff of the University’s track team as well. Provost Leighton, Todd McCutchen, who formerly attended your University, has come forth with an accusation, claiming that Edward Bogenskaya and Mark Svoboda, members of the University’s track team, have never attended class. Will you be willing to give us the University’s official statement on Todd McCutchen’s complaint?” Eddie, Mark, and Braden, standing off to the side, watch as Provost Leighton comes to the University’s defense.

Quite skilled in the art of making speeches, Provost Leighton responds, “first of all, Angela, both Eddie’s and Mark’s accomplishments in their course work and GPA are quite respectable by any standard. Quite frankly, Todd McCutchen’s claim comes as quite a shock to the University. But, whenever an accusation is made, it is wise to look at the circumstances behind the accusation. Let me begin by stating that Todd McCutchen once attended this University, and was expelled for disciplinary reasons due to his frequent involvement in criminal activity, which are now a matter of public record.”

Angela asks, “can you elaborate, Provost Leighton, on the criminal activity you are alluding to?” Provost Leighton continues, “I’d be glad to, Angela.” Reading from cue cards displayed to her from behind the cameraman, Provost Leighton explains, “Todd McCutchen’s criminal career began when he crashed Mark Svoboda and Paula Giovani’s wedding some years ago. At that time, Todd was arrested for public drunkenness. Some time later, in an attempt to get Edward Bogenskaya expelled from this University, Todd McCutchen planted steroids in Edward’s locker. When that didn’t work, Todd attempted to plant steroids in another athlete’s locker. This time, Mark Svoboda was his target. Todd has also been arrested for planting marijuana in Dune Buggies belonging to several track team members.” The director issues the “cut” signal, stating, “this is great! We need to segment this.” The director then tells Angela, “keep going! Move on to the next question.”

The cameras begin rolling again, and Angela continues, “it sounds like Todd McCutchen has a history of shady activity. What else can you tell us?” Again, referring to cue cards, Provost Leighton replies, “yes, Angela. He does. When Todd McCutchen was in high school, he was disqualified from the State invitational meet because he tested positive for steroids. And, after he graduated from high school, Todd McCutchen was caught taking his younger brother’s place in a relay race at the State invitational

meet. The officials caught it, and his school, Centerville High School, was disqualified and sanctioned for one year. But, it doesn't end there, Angela. During last year's Spring divisional meet, Todd McCutchen collapsed during a race, and was rushed to the emergency room, where they found he had several banned substances and performance enhancing drugs in his system." Perceiving another break, the director again issues the cut signal, and tells Angela, "great! Let's move on to the break ins here at the University." Angela tells Provost Leighton, "you're doing great!" But, Provost Leighton already knows that.

The cameras begin rolling again, and Angela asks, "I understand from a confidential source that Todd McCutchen was involved in a break in, right here at the University. Can you comment on that, Provost Leighton?" Provost Leighton explains, "that is an ongoing investigation, so I am limited in what I can say. But, yes, Angela. Todd, and his brother, Jeff, were both arrested for breaking into the arena, and attempting to steal the performance records of this team and other teams in the division. They also attempted to take about three dozen stopwatches. But, it doesn't end there. Most recently, Todd McCutchen and Brad Evans were caught spying on our track team. When they were caught, our police department confiscated various pieces of equipment, such as a camera and a parabolic microphone. Some of the equipment they were caught with was reported to be stolen. The evidence is currently under lock and key at our campus police station."

With the camera focusing in on Angela, Angela announces, "so, who are you going to believe? A disgruntled former student with a rap sheet longer than his college transcript, or the indisputable facts presented here today by Provost Athena Leighton of the University. We'll let you decide. This is Angela Meadows, on site here at the State University. And, now we go back to our studio."

The director issues the directive, "cut," and asks Angela, "do we have anything else on Todd McCutchen?" Angela replies, "there is the gambling activity that his family was involved in, and how the Centerville track was out of calibration." The director suggests, "while we're here, let's get that too. But, we'll use it for another piece." Provost Leighton informs Angela and the director, "Mr. Frazier would be the better person to speak with regarding that issue." The director asks Provost Leighton, "can we speak with him?" Provost Leighton replies, "sure. Let me get him." Provost Leighton walks over to get Mr. Frazier, who will be glad to have his viewpoints aired.

Briefed by Provost Leighton of the issue at hand, Mr. Frazier is ready to offer his opinion. Angela begins interviewing Mr. Frazier, stating, "this is Angela Meadows, and I have with me here now Mr. George Frazier, who is the head coach for the University's track team. Mr. Frazier, there is

some talk that there are some tracks in the area which are, how do I say this, rigged?" Mr. Frazier smiles, finally getting the opportunity to be heard.

Mr. Frazier responds, "yes, Angela. That is true. I am informed, by a very reliable source, that the Centerville High School track was grossly out of calibration until it was recently recalibrated to the metric standard. Before the recalibration, lane one was two and a half yards short of 440 yards! And, the engravings on the curb denoting where the blocks are placed were way off. Lane six is reported to me to have been 448 yards! If you were running in lane one, you had a ten and a half-yard advantage over the runner in lane six! Up until last year, any meet held on the Centerville track was a rigged meet!"

Already knowing the answer, Angela asks Mr. Frazier, "I understand that, recently, there has been another problem with the Centerville track. Can you elaborate on that controversy?" Mr. Frazier replies, "sure. I'd be glad to, Angela. After the Centerville track was recalibrated, someone came in after and moved the survey markers. The inside lane was 400 meters, as it should be. But, each lane out from there was two meters longer. So, a runner running in lane six would be running ten meters farther than the runner in lane one." Angela asks, "was anything done to correct this, coach?" Mr. Frazier replies, "yes. I understand that the survey markers were reset into the curb, and are now immovable." Knowing about the gambling issue, Angela responds, "it sounds like a lot is at stake if someone goes to those lengths to gain a slight advantage."

Angela tells the director, "now, we can move on to the organized gambling." Mr. Frazier smiles, already knowing what is going on behind the scenes. Angela tells Mr. Frazier, "we're going to tie this in with the Centerville track piece." Not knowing what is coming, Mr. Frazier is confident that he is ready.

The cameras roll again. Angela asks Mr. Frazier, "Coach Frazier, there has been talk about Centerville High School having some involvement in organized gambling, particularly in rigging the outcomes of track meets. Do you have any information that you can share with our viewers?" Mr. Frazier explains, "I understand from the authorities that Mr. James Ruff, the former Centerville track coach, is now in jail. Get this, Angela. Mr. Ruff was bailed out with marked bills that were used in organized gambling! Brad Evans is now the track coach at Centerville, and has ties to another university in our division. Evans was caught with Todd McCutchen spying on our team at the end of last semester. And, Todd McCutchen was caught trying to steal our performance records at the beginning of this academic year. Rigged tracks, stealing performance records, spying on the competition. We've seen this before. It's not hard

to put this together and see that someone is running an organized gambling ring again.”

Angela asks Mr. Frazier, “do you have any evidence that organized gambling will affect the outcome of the collegiate divisional meet coming up this weekend?” Mr. Frazier confidently replies, “they can gamble all they want to, but our goal is to win! And, that’s what we’re going to do out there this weekend!” Mr. Frazier is walking a tight line, knowing that Officer Hayes is in the process of investigating an organized gambling ring affecting collegiate sports. But, Mr. Frazier’s statement should reassure Mayor Jamieson that Mr. Finley’s information is correct.

Angela asks Mr. Frazier a few more questions, getting enough exclusive material to boost ratings over the next week. With the President in town, and attending the divisional meet, track and field will certainly get a lot of exposure. And, Mr. Frazier has put the word out that another world record might be broken during the divisional meet.

Track practice comes to a close, with the team more than ready for the upcoming meet. The team heads to the locker room, more energized than ever. Mr. Frazier tells Provost Leighton, “it’s getting a little more complicated, Athena. Just when I thought I could simply tell them to put one foot in front of the other faster than their opponent, all this happens.” Provost Leighton replies, “consider it an honor, George. They can’t take us down on the track, so they’ve resorted to trying to take us down off the track.” Mr. Frazier and Provost Leighton head to their offices, more confident than ever of winning every medal in the divisional meet.