

## Episode 4

(Distorted music)

Banquist: I can't believe it! I never thought it could happen here, to us...

Bertolio: We'll be fine for at least a few months...

Banquist: The lines I saw to the kitchen, the shutters going over the skyscraper windows...

Bertolio: I just got a position...the firm hasn't closed yet...it's not much, but we can tide over for a while..

Banquist: But what will my parents say? I'm not married, I'm not in school..

Bertolio: We don't need to tell them. Come with me, we'll hide away from the storm outside....we'll shelter together...until this all passes...

(The WPR station)

Boy intern: All right. Two coffees, one with cream but no sugar, one black...I think that's right. Are they still yelling in there?

Girl intern: Oh god, I think they are.

Boy intern: Brace yourself. Can you help me with the door?

(The door swings open, and they head into the studio, where Kay is berating Jacob and Eliza)

Kay: Do you have any idea how many sponsors we might lose? Or how much my phone has blown up in the last two hours? My god, I can't do business with that thing going off the hook every three seconds! Our bold little radio experiment might get stuffed into the crawlspace, all because you couldn't bite your tongues and play nice with Jonathan, for just a couple minutes! A couple more minutes and that interview would have been over and we would have sailed on to next week without a hitch, but you couldn't do that!

Jacob: Are you done yet?

Kay: My god!!

Eliza: Jacob...not now. Kay, listen...we know what we did was bold...

Kay: Do you? By his toothy grin I'd swear you think this was just another prize fight at the Garden. Left, right...cross jab! Going down, taking hits, are they gonna make it? Coming back up, a hard gutshot...BAM! KO! Eliza and Jacob pull it out once more! Embarrassing. This is a radio show, you guys. We deal with intelligent conversation, not political heroism. Not....two-fisted muck-raking cross-examining political beatdowns!

Jacob: Why don't treat this as a prize fight. Although it was equally entertaining.

Eliza: What we treat it as is serious conversation. We brought issues to light as any honest person would. Jonathan couldn't answer them, at least not honestly. As far as I'm concerned, his failure was his own.

Kay: In all these years, since I found you two cleaning microphones in that Brooklyn radio den, since I signed on the dotted line for the loan for this studio, since I shook down those glitzy types at the Campbell to be the show's first guests....have I taught you nothing? Four years to build this, one night to ruin it.

Jacob: We've done this before, you know.

Eliza: Twice.

Kay: And I chewed you out then too! But those were just cat fights with nobodies. This was Jonathan Mura. The Iron King himself. And you just ruined his shot for the Senate! Oh....you really picked a night to start this...you really picked a winner.

Jacob: You're right, Kay. We did pick a winner. And you know what? Wait till word on the ratings get back. See how much of a winner it is.

Kay: (Disarmed) Well, we'll see about that...

Eliza: None of the other guests were a quarter as crooked as Jonathan Mura. I couldn't stay silent after I heard from those sources in Hooktown.

Jacob: Journalistic integrity, Kay. Didn't you teach us that as well?

Kay: JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY DOES NOT GIVE YOU LICENSE TO RUIN MY SHOW! (Door swings open)  
What took you so long? Which of these is mine?

Girl intern: This one has cream, sir.

Kay: Thank you. And from you...uh...get me some transcripts of the broadcast if you can...I'd like to review tonight's happenings word for word, if I get the chance.

Boy Intern: Sure thing, Mr. Kay! Could I read it too, if that's all right?

Jacob: See? They seemed to enjoy it. And another thing...how many people out there do you think actually care for Jonathan Mura? Do you think they'll be upset when they hear him destroyed like that?

Kay: I can't argue with that.

Jacob: Look, I'm not trying to downplay this or be reckless. But from a business standpoint, you have nothing to be afraid of. No one has ever done anything like that on air before. If you lose some sponsors, you'll gain others.

Kay: You can't throw the producers a curveball like this! What am I supposed to tell the guys upstairs? Your gig is ruining people on air now?

Eliza: Well....

Jacob: Yes. You should tell them that.

Kay: You can't be serious about this for one minute, can you?

Eliza: Tell them this then. This is our show's mission from now on. No, not to just bring people on to attack them, but...the show is about fighting. Bringing to light injustice. Exposing corruption. No longer will we simmer to titans of a broken system. Not with the state this world is in.

Jacob: The old format was getting stale, it's true..

Kay: You guys really think they're going to buy that upstairs? The crusading Columbia radio hosts?

Jacob: Answer honestly: did you enjoy us dissecting that senile psychopath's budding Senate career?

Kay: Well, I...

Jacob: Did you enjoy it?

Kay: (chuckles) What I enjoy is second to larger matters of business, DeGrim!

Jacob: If you enjoyed it, you weren't the only one.

Eliza: No one is alone. If radio has taught me one thing, it's that.

Kay: Oh, how did I get this far without a heart attack? Your future here depends on that next inbound ratings sheet. If it looks good, I'll show it to the board and tell them everything you told me. About your newfound mission. Mean time, I want you to write a goddamn perfect programming proposal! We're going to treat this as a completely new show. You're going to explain to the board why it was a good idea to drag a guest through the mud.

Jacob: Should be fun homework.

Eliza: I agree. I already have some ideas about what I'll tell them. Back to Jonathan...where is he, anyway? I saw him for a few minutes in the commissary...

Kay: Well, he screamed into the lobby phone for a good ten minutes. Then, he went out into a black Cadillac and disappeared, swish! Into the night!

Jacob: Oh boy...

Eliza: Huh...that's unfortunate.

Kay: Ya think? Looked like he was gonna murder the receptionist with his bare hands!

Jacob: All right, all right, all right...you've made your point, we see the errors of our ways. Now...let's just bring Jonathan back here and we'll unsay everything we said, just to make you happy.

Kay: You better watch your mouth, Jacob.

Jacob: Don't you get mad again, Kay. Cool it, or I won't let that pretty little intern give you anymore coffee. Understand?

Kay: I will murder you!

Eliza: Oh for God's sakes, do we have to keep fighting like this? What's done is done. Personally, I feel pretty great about all of it. I think we did a lot of good tonight.

Kay: For everyone but Mura.

Eliza: Well I for one am not gonna worry about him. People who rant and spew like that deserve to be shut up on stage, no matter the means. Could you believe that....air he kept putting off? Like he was a god, descending from Olympus to grace us with his presence.

Jacob: Hmm, I didn't notice.

Eliza: But it's just a façade. He gets too big of a head, and lets on more than a reasonable person would.

Jacob: Not even The Iron King can keep a scandal like that covered up for long.

Eliza: Exactly. Which leads me to wonder...will Mura get any jail time for this? Legal prosecution of any sort?

Jacob: Probably not. Men like Jonathan Mura don't go away for infractions like this. Oh sure...he might have to apologize to the papers now...or he might have to scapegoat some subordinates and have them take the fall. But he'll be fine. It wouldn't be the first time he's bent a powerful organization to his will.)

Eliza: I guess. Well at least we don't have to worry about someone like him in government.

Kay: I doubt he'd of won, anyway. I mean, he was a businessman, for Christ's sakes. He would have been running against experienced lawyers and politicians who know the system better than their own wives. A pile of money and a bunch of wordy speeches would be his only friends come election day.

Jacob: I don't know about that.

Kay: How do ya figure?

Jacob: Mura is more than just a rich talker, Kay. As much as I hate to admit it, that man was right about a lot of things.

Kay: (chuckles) Really? This is coming from you now?

Eliza: Right about what?

Jacob: The myth of it all. America...making something of yourself, shaping the world according to your will. If he was that hypnotized with his own myth, the dream of his life, you better believe he could hypnotize others. Those ideas runs far deeper than you might care to admit...any reform that denies that is going to have a rude awakening.

Kay: Are you saying he would have won?

Jacob: No. I'm just saying he'd have a better chance than you'd think.

Kay: I suppose.

Jacob: But he took it too far, and became a monster. Anyone who takes their ideas to those extremes becomes a monster. That was some great work, Eliza. That little speech you gave? The hairs on the back of my neck were standing like soldiers.

Eliza: (warmly) Really? The cynical Jacob is admitting to being moved by one of my humble orations?

Jacob: (flirtatiously) I wouldn't quite go that far. But keep trying. You might get there one day....(footsteps of the interns returning)

Girl intern: Here are the transcripts, Mr. Kay!

Kay: Good! Thank you, I'll take those. I'm reading these thoroughly, and I'll be waiting for the ratings sheet like a prisoner waiting for parole. You might have done well tonight...

Jacob: I'm sorry, what was that?

Eliza: I heard it too...

Jacob: We might have done well? Is that acknowledgement I hear?

Kay: You put on a show, that's for damned sure. I'm not talking to you two until I get the ratings in. Work on that proposal, and don't get big heads. You're both on a tight wire right now. So with that, good night, thank you for the headache. (Leaves the studio)

Eliza: Good night!

Jacob: Poor guy. What did he ever do to deserve working with us?

Eliza: Perhaps we can go a little easier on him? As good as this feels...god, I still can't believe we did that! I knew going in that we had to...but I didn't know if I would or not...

Jacob: Once the stone got rolling though...Thanks for the push. Don't for a second think I was behind Jonathan.

Girl Intern: Miss Astor...

Eliza: Yes...Caroline, is it?

Jacob: Forgot they were even there!

Caroline: It was amazing listening to that. I've never heard anything like that in my life.

Boy intern: Me neither. Oh man, I can't wait to tell all my friends that I work here, with you! They're gonna be green with envy!



Caroline: What will you do with the proposal Kay was talking about? Not to butt in...

Boy intern: I was wondering that too. Can we help at all?

Eliza: Thank you. You've both been grand about this already. I suppose we'll have to come up with a question format, a guest list...we'll need to nail that down. A catchy title...

Jacob: We already have a good title.

Eliza: That's true. Looking back at us, Jacob? Polishing the grand oak staircase of high society...serving snifters of polite conversation to the rich and powerful...It's a wonder we didn't scream at a guest sooner.

Jacob: The novelty of a talking show is done. We've blown way past that.

Eliza: So what next? How to we go about it?

Jacob: We're gonna have to line up some guests. Put the word out.

Eliza: There was that one, Dwight Elkland...a California labor organizer? I'd love to speak to him....that could be the format of the show, from now on! Bring on the world's fighters. Those who could no longer say or do nothing, after they saw all the evil going on day to day.

Jacob: Maybe...(thinking) We shouldn't jump the gun yet on declaring crusade. That could get sour pretty fast.

Eliza: It's what we did to Mura, and it worked out fine!

Jacob: Yeah, but can it work out every time? We have to be...realistic. Test the waters. I know some people I'd like to talk to first. I'll discuss the show with them, try to get a feel for the public mood.

Eliza: Very well...I hold off on declaring crusade for now. But I will start writing a letter to Dwight Elkland. I'd love for us to speak, even if you're sour on him!

Jacob: Who says I am? You mischaracterize me. (Joking) Don't go lawyer on me the way you did on Mura!

Caroline: Well, whatever you end up doing, I can't believe we'll be here for it!

Eliza: Yes, you'll both be here, helping us every step of the way. (Pause) Now, if you don't mind, Jacob and I need to talk about a proposal. You've both had a very productive day.

Boy intern: I'll say!

Caroline: Let us know if you need anything else, Miss Astor!

Eliza: We will!

Caroline: Good night! (leaves)

Boy intern: Good night! (Leaves. A brief pause. Jacob and Eliza wait for them to be out of earshot, then give a muffled laugh)

Jacob: Were we like that at that age?

Eliza: I'm sure we were even worse. (There is a tense silence) Well....?

Jacob: Well what...?

Eliza: I don't know.

Jacob: Me neither.

(A long pause)

Eliza: Not feeling like working on the proposal quite yet?

Jacob: I've had a long night. I'm sure it can wait for the morning.

Eliza: The board is out of town, if I remember. We'll have a few days.

Jacob: And, I have some friends I'd like to talk to about it. (Pensive) I don't want to start until I consult them...

Eliza: Well, I'm glad that settles it. (Pause) What's next in the life of Jacob DeGrim?

Jacob: Not sure. The usual, most likely. (Eliza giggles)

Jacob: Is there something amusing about that?

Eliza: About what? A nice refreshing dive into a local watering hole?

Jacob: I'd prefer you called it what it was.

Eliza: And what's that?

Jacob: A round of victory drinks. It's not every night when you put down an industrial slave master.

Eliza: (Laughing) But it is every night when you drink as if you did!

(Both laugh)

Jacob: We all have our vices.

Eliza: Most of us do, anyway.

Jacob: Really? It's not like you're perfect.

Eliza: Jacob...what could possibly make you think that I am anything less than flawless?

Jacob: As if.

Eliza: It's so. I bet you can't give me a single example of me being anything less than a darling angel of warm and lovely light.

Jacob: Well that's a bet you're gonna lose pretty quickly because I can think of three off the top of my head.

Eliza: Really?

Jacob: Really.

Eliza: Then I wait in enraptured earnest.

Jacob: One: breaking into the library past hours on multiple occasions.

Eliza: Only to study for some extremely difficult finals.

Jacob: Two: smearing the entire statue of one of the women's college presidents in lipstick.

Eliza: Only because said president was a violent, sexist egotist whose wife was tyranny and whose mistress was greed.

Jacob: Lying to your professor about having an inflamed bladder so you could skip out on an exam, then hocking your shoes to a pair of tourists so you could have enough money for a train to take you to a sunlit meadow many miles away, where you lied for hours with nary a care in the world.

Eliza: (warmly) Only because you asked me to.

Jacob: You're quite good at this.

Eliza: At what?

Jacob: Justifying yourself.

Eliza: Explaining is more like it.

Jacob: I suppose that's subject to the prejudice of your audience.

Eliza: I think my chances are good.

Jacob: Oh, I just thought of another one. I have no idea why I didn't think of this one before. Do you know what I'm talking about?

Eliza: I have my suspicions.

Jacob: It was sometime past midnight on a March morning. We were waiting for a bus to arrive somewhere just north of the Brooklyn Bridge...is it coming back to you?

Eliza: I believe it is. We were interns together at that old radio station, weren't we?

Jacob: 107 Brooklyn Brogue. Off the air for five years now. Long hours interviewing subway station workers and garbage men.

Eliza: We had a long night, didn't we? We were arm in arm against the shutters of a coffee shop, waiting for a bus to whisk us back to Morningside Heights and all the warmth it promised.

Jacob: The night was cold, all right. We shivered, looked south and saw the city breathing off all its slanted roofs.

Eliza: But north....north was where the lights were. Millions of em...

Jacob: Like...one big department store, all laced up for Christmas?

Eliza: I do believe I said that. Yeah, first I said it. Then, when I looked again and saw all those skyscrapers like the jewelry quills of one breathing beast, I felt it, too. Like a warm hand being laid deep inside.

Jacob: That wasn't all you were feeling.

Eliza: Like you said, it was a cold night.

Jacob: And then...?

Eliza: I got a crazy idea.

Jacob: Tell it to me.

Eliza: "Let's stop waiting, Jacob. The bus doesn't care about how cold we feel. Let's go now, across the river."

Jacob: The pedestrian walks on the bridge were closed. Structural damages needing immediate repair.

Eliza: Then let's swim. It's not that far.

Jacob: The water's freezing. You'll get hypothermia and drown.

Eliza: Then I'll just keep looking at the skyscrapers the whole way. The fire of the city will keep me warm.

Jacob: When you ran up to the wharf across the street I thought you were joking. But when you took off all your clothes and dove in...

Eliza: Hard to misinterpret that, right?

Jacob: I'd never been so terrified.

Eliza: I'd never been so cold. But no going back, right? So I swam, and swam, and swam...through those ancient freezing waters with my goal so close and far beyond.

Jacob: I hailed a cab and told him to go to Chinatown immediately. Go faster than you've ever gone in your life.

Eliza: I believe my words to myself were the same. I don't think you can imagine the kind of cold I was feeling. You'd have nothing to compare it to.

Jacob: But...

Eliza: One just has to swim on, I guess. (Pauses) You know, I don't think I could have done it if I was swimming away from the downtown.

Jacob: Really?

Eliza: Try it some day and see what I mean. I looked down and around, and everywhere there nothing but my red-white limbs and the darkness that yawned forever underneath me. But up above...those towers, Jacob. Dozens of em. It was like there was a glistening sheet wrapped around my eyes the whole way. It gave me an objective...a goal that seemed doable. Every stroke I took I felt like I only had one or two more to go.

Jacob: That must have felt pretty nice when you finally got there.

Eliza: Damn right. When I pulled up on the Manhattan walkway I felt like some crazy fish beached on a shore of the future. All those lights were all around me as I just laid there and soaked them in. Like it was light I was swimming in.

Jacob: I saw you from the bridge. You weren't far, luckily enough. There were so many ways you could have died that night. You were so cold...

Eliza: (Smiling at Jacob) But you warmed me up again.

Jacob: (Smiling) You weren't the best conversant that night.

Eliza: After my ordeal? How could I be?

Jacob: Even before that...

Eliza: Oh. I see what you're getting at...

Jacob: Just a few rounds to keep the cold at bay. I'm not judging...

Eliza: Wasn't that your original intention?



Jacob: I've gotten over it.

Eliza: Well I wasn't that bad. I was still able to swim, wasn't I?

Jacob: True. It's just that swimming across the East River probably seemed like a better idea to you than it would have normally.

Eliza: I must admit, that's probably true.

Jacob: Altogether, a regrettable night.

Eliza: Speak for yourself. I probably got to Manhattan sooner than I would have if I had waited for that bus. (Pause) But aside from that, I guess I don't have an excuse for what I did. You got me. Consider me dethroned.

Jacob: Yeah, I guess you are. But still...you were young.

Eliza: I was old enough.

(A long pause)

Eliza: Are you going to leave now?

Jacob: What else is there to do?

Eliza: Stay here.

Jacob: I can't.

Eliza: Why not?

Jacob: I've been in this building too long. Let me get out and see if there's a world beyond these walls.

Eliza: But it's so cold out there. Stay warm with me in here. How bout it? If you ask me, it's only fair. You kept me through that night...now, I should keep you.

Jacob: I think we both know that that can't happen. There was a time for that. Once.

Eliza: (pauses) I miss those days. Things were simpler back then. For both of us...

Jacob: I know.

Eliza: Is there any chance...?

Jacob: Of that coming back?

Eliza: Yeah.

Jacob: (Pauses) I suppose there's a chance for anything. (Suddenly downcast) Even if that chance is small.

Eliza: I'm not one to lose hope, Jacob.

Jacob: (chuckles) If only we were all so talented...(He strides out of the studio)

Grotius: (moving hurriedly up metal stairs) Ok, what am I gonna tell him. 'All right you, you think you can' hmm (coughs nervously, 'All right you, you think you can push me around cuz I'm after hours programming? You have any idea what kind of pull I have with the audience?' Yeah, something like that...'You better listen...or I'll...' what will I do, 'I'll have them write so many angry letters the postman will have to bring them to you in a cargo ship...' Ok. Something like that. (Stops, breathing nervously,

trying to summon courage) Here we are...even his office door has an owl on it...ok (knocks on the door)  
Hello? I'd like to have a word with you...(the door swings open. Immediately there is ominous roaring  
sound) What the hell is this...(Grotius screams...his voice is drowned out by radio static)