# 67

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Chapter 67 | Fifteen Years Ago

"Fifteen years ago, Mr. Fitzgerald, I was going to investigate the high-balance account at Harborview Trust. I was going to find the shell company that was funneling money through it. I was going to find the person who had the authority to approve the transfers and I was going to make sure that everyone who had ever touched that account was held accountable."

"I was going to do all of that," Marcus said, his voice steady now, the voice he had used in every deposition he had ever taken, the voice that had ended careers and built others. "I had the evidence. I had the timeline. I had the witnesses. I was prepared to present a case that would have been difficult to dismiss."

Adrian waited. He was a man who had spent his entire life in boardrooms where silence was a tool and he knew how to use it.

"But I was a single parent," Marcus continued, his eyes fixed on the table. "My son was sick. He was in the hospital. I was working three jobs to keep him there and I was working them because the firm I had been with for twenty years had just decided that my salary was a line item they could reduce without anyone noticing. I was forty-two years old and I had a mortgage and I had a son who was eleven years old and I had been told that if I made a complaint about the discrepancy in my compensation, I would be considered a difficult employee and difficult employees were not promoted."

Adrian's face did not change. He was still looking at Marcus with the same expression he had worn when he had first walked into the room.

"I did not make a complaint," Marcus said. "I did not make a complaint. I did not file a report. I did not contact the compliance department. I did not do any of the things I had been trained to do because I was afraid that if I did, I would be the person who was difficult and difficult people were not promoted and my son was in the hospital and I was afraid that if I was not promoted I would not be able to pay the bill and I was afraid that if I was not able to pay the bill my son would be in the hospital longer and I was afraid that if my son was in the hospital longer I would be the person who was difficult and difficult people were not promoted and the cycle would continue and I was afraid that the cycle would continue because I was afraid of everything and I was afraid because I was afraid and I was afraid because I was afraid and I was afraid because I was afraid