

SAWGRASS WARS

"The Old Alliance"

Episode 12 Season One

Written by

Kurt Weichert

Based on the Sawgrass Wars novella series
by Kurt Weichert

Kurt Weichert
Website: weichertmedia.com
Email: kurtw423@gmail.com
Phone: (239) 810-9356

FADE IN:

EXT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - IRON GATES - DAY

Iron gates taller than Gethsemane Church block the road.

A tarnished crest decorates their center: two lions supporting a shield divided between a field of sugarcane and a merchant ship under sail.

Beneath it, a stone marker bears a single date: 1824.

The old black Lincoln stops beside an intercom.

INT. OLD LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

Billy presses the intercom button.

Nothing.

He presses it again.

MAN'S VOICE (FILTERED)
State your business.

Bo leans across Billy toward the speaker.

BO
Tell Forbee that Bocephus Dawber
has come to call.

Silence.

Then the gates begin to open.

EXT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - PRIVATE ROAD - DAY

The Lincoln travels between sugarcane fields stretching to the horizon.

The stalks rise higher than the car, green blades bending beneath the morning wind.

Smoke drifts from a distant plantation mill. Heavy trucks move between warehouses. A crop-dusting plane passes low overhead before banking south.

INT. OLD LINCOLN - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Billy watches MIGRANT LABORERS climb from the back of a flatbed truck.

Beyond the cane stand small concrete buildings with rusted roofs and laundry hanging between them.

BILLY
I thought machines did most of this
now.

BO
They do.

BILLY
Then what are all those people
doing?

BO
The work machines can't.

The Lincoln crosses a narrow bridge.

Below, the canal water is the color of strong coffee. Dead fish float near the bank.

Billy looks down at them.

BILLY
What killed those?

BO
Could be anything.

BILLY
Looks like runoff.

Bo glances toward the canal.

BO
You planning to become an
environmentalist?

BILLY
I'm asking a question.

BO
Questions are useful when you ask
the right person.

BILLY
Who's the right person?

BO
The one who benefits from the
answer.

EXT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - MAIN HOUSE - DAY

The plantation house appears beyond a line of royal palms.

Enormous. Three stories of faded coral stucco. White columns supporting broad verandas. Green shutters. A copper roof oxidized nearly turquoise.

Dry stone fountains stand in the gardens.

The Lincoln circles toward the front steps.

INT. OLD LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

Billy stares up at the house.

BILLY
This doesn't look like Dawber
County.

BO
That was the idea.

EXT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - MAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Lincoln has not fully stopped when CHARLES, a thin Black man in a white jacket, opens Bo's door.

CHARLES
Mr. Dawber.

BO
Good morning, Charles.

Charles is surprised Bo remembers him.

CHARLES
Mr. Battenberg is waiting in the
library.

Bo steps out. Billy follows.

Charles looks toward the Lincoln.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Would you like me to have someone
move the automobile?

Billy glances at Bo.

Bo hands Charles the keys.

BO
Park it wherever you hide things
from the guests.

Charles accepts the keys without smiling.

CHARLES
This way.

INT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

An entrance hall designed to make visitors feel small.

Portraits cover walls two stories high. Pale men in military uniforms, judges' robes and formal evening clothes look down on Billy.

A crystal chandelier hangs beneath a painted ceiling filled with angels, ships and storm clouds.

Billy stops beside a portrait of TWO YOUNG WOMEN near the plantation fountain.

One wears a pale yellow dress and faces the camera with a confident smile.

BILLY
Alex's mother?

Bo stops.

BO
Mary Lee.

Beside her stands an older girl with darker hair and a guarded expression.

BILLY
Who's that?

BO
Her sister, Abigail.

BILLY
Vinnie's mother?

BO
Yes.

Billy looks at Mary Lee again. Alex has her eyes.

BILLY
She looks happy.

BO
She hadn't married Kenny yet.

Billy turns toward him.

BILLY
You think marrying Kenny made her
unhappy?

BO
Forbee did.

BILLY
What do you think?

BO
I think Forbee made both daughters
choose between their husbands and
their inheritance.

BILLY
Who did they choose?

BO
Their husbands.

Bo looks toward the upper balcony.

BO (CONT'D)
For a while.

Charles waits beside mahogany doors.

CHARLES
Mr. Battenberg does not like to be
kept waiting.

BO
He waited twelve years. Another
minute won't hurt him.

Charles opens the doors.

INT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - LIBRARY - DAY

FORBEE BATTENBERG sits behind a desk large enough to land a
small airplane on.

Age has reduced him but not softened him. White hair combed straight back. Narrow face. Burgundy robe over his shirt and trousers though it is nearly noon.

One hand rests on a silver-headed cane. The other holds two fingers of Scotch.

Floor-to-ceiling shelves hold leather-bound books and photographs of governors, senators, foreign businessmen and men named in organized-crime investigations from New York to Havana.

A wooden model of the plantation's first sugar ship rests near the window.

Forbee looks at Bo.

Neither man speaks.

Then Forbee rises.

FORBEE
You look terrible.

Bo crosses the room and embraces him.

BO
You look dead.

FORBEE
I've felt dead since you went to prison.

BO
That bad?

FORBEE
Worse.

Forbee grips Bo's shoulders.

FORBEE (CONT'D)
Let me see you.

BO
I'm not a racehorse.

FORBEE
No. Racehorses have better teeth.

Bo laughs.

Forbee joins him.

For a moment, the imprisoned crime boss and decaying aristocrat are boys again.

Forbee notices Billy.

His laughter fades.

FORBEE (CONT'D)
Timothy's son.

BO
Billy.

FORBEE
I know his name.

Forbee studies him from across the room.

FORBEE (CONT'D)
Come closer.

Billy approaches.

Forbee examines his face.

FORBEE (CONT'D)
The resemblance is extraordinary.

BILLY
That's what everyone says.

FORBEE
Your father once hit a baseball
through the window of my Rolls-
Royce.

Billy looks at Bo.

BILLY
He never told me that.

FORBEE
He was seventeen. Your grandfather
wanted him arrested. I convinced
him otherwise.

BILLY
Why?

FORBEE
Timothy hit three home runs for
Dawber High the following
afternoon. Talent should not be
wasted over broken glass.

Forbee lowers himself into his chair.

FORBEE (CONT'D)
Sit down.

Two chairs face the desk.

Bo takes one. Billy takes the other.

Forbee looks at Billy.

FORBEE (CONT'D)
That chair is for Mr. Dawber's
attorney.

Bo settles back.

BO
He's with me.

FORBEE
He's a child.

BO
He's a Dawber.

Forbee's eyes move between them.

He reaches beneath the desk and removes another glass.

FORBEE
What are you drinking, boy?

BILLY
Nothing.

FORBEE
Nothing is not a drink.

BO
He's not eighteen.

Forbee pours Scotch anyway and places it before Billy.

FORBEE
Then he should begin learning
moderation.

Billy leaves the glass untouched.

Forbee notices.

FORBEE (CONT'D)

Good. Your father would have emptied it before I finished pouring.

The room quiets.

Bo looks through the window toward the plantation fields.

BO

What happened here?

Forbee's face hardens.

FORBEE

Vincent Del Vecchio happened.

BO

Your son-in-law.

FORBEE

My punishment for allowing Abigail to attend college in New Jersey.

BO

You could have disowned her.

FORBEE

I did.

BO

Didn't stop her from marrying him.

FORBEE

No. It merely ensured I was not invited.

Forbee opens a desk drawer and removes a thick folder of financial statements.

FORBEE (CONT'D)

He began with transportation contracts. Then fertilizer. Equipment leasing. Distribution. Every time the plantation encountered a difficulty, one of Vincent's companies appeared with a solution.

BO

For a price.

FORBEE

Always.

BO
What does he own?

FORBEE
Not the land.

BO
Forbee.

FORBEE
Not yet.

Bo holds out his hand.

Forbee passes him the folder.

Billy watches Bo scan the documents.

The man who left prison with a Bible and a dead watch reads balance sheets as quickly as most men read newspapers.

BO
Three loans secured against next year's harvest.

FORBEE
Yes.

BO
A distribution agreement giving Del Vecchio Imports first right of refusal on all processed sugar.

FORBEE
Temporarily.

BO
Seven years isn't temporary.

FORBEE
It was the only way to keep the mill operating.

Bo turns another page.

BO
Who is Ray?

FORBEE
My chief financial officer.

BO
Vincent's man?

FORBEE

Mine.

BO

He authorized this equipment lease.

FORBEE

At my direction.

BO

The rate is criminal.

Forbee takes a drink.

FORBEE

I know.

BO

Then why sign it?

FORBEE

Because our primary harvester failed three weeks before cutting season. The bank refused to extend additional credit. Vincent had a replacement here in four days.

Bo closes the folder.

BO

So he owns the transportation, the equipment and the buyer.

FORBEE

He does not own Battenberg.

BO

He owns everything Battenberg needs to survive.

Forbee's hand tightens around his cane.

FORBEE

That is why I asked you here.

BO

You didn't ask me.

FORBEE

I sent six letters to prison.

BO

They returned four.

FORBEE
You received two.

BO
I came.

FORBEE
Twelve years late.

Bo leans forward.

BO
What do you want?

FORBEE
I want Vincent out of my
plantation.

BO
Abigail won't like that.

FORBEE
Abigail has not spoken to me in
nine years.

BO
She'll speak to you when you start
hurting her husband.

FORBEE
I am counting on it.

Bo smiles. There is the Forbee he remembers.

BO
What do I get?

Billy looks at him.

Forbee appears offended.

FORBEE
Our families have stood together
for nearly a century.

BO
Our grandfathers stood together
because yours had capital and mine
had guns.

Forbee glances at Billy.

FORBEE

Certain family discussions should remain private.

BO

He needs to understand.

FORBEE

Understand what?

BO

Why a Battenberg calls a Dawber when the lawyers stop working.

Forbee looks toward the portrait of his grandfather above the fireplace.

FORBEE

The Battenbergs brought sugar expertise from the Caribbean. We brought engineers, financing and access to international markets.

BO

And the Dawbers cleared the opposition.

FORBEE

That is an inelegant description.

BO

Accurate, though.

Billy studies an old framed PLANTATION MAP.

BO (CONT'D)

Your family brought deeds for land where people already lived. Mine brought rifles. Five years later, the plantation had tripled in size.

FORBEE

And your family received canal access, warehouses and entry into every important home in Florida.

BO

During Prohibition, your sugar boats carried more than sugar.

Forbee looks at Billy.

FORBEE

Our families built this county.

BILLY

On somebody else's land.

Forbee stares at him.

Bo's mouth twitches with amusement.

FORBEE

You brought an idealist.

BO

I brought Timmy's son.

FORBEE

Timothy understood loyalty.

BO

Timmy understood a lot before
Vietnam.

Forbee turns toward the window.

FORBEE

And then Scully destroyed him.

Billy sits straighter.

BILLY

My father made his own decision.

Forbee turns back.

FORBEE

You think eighteen-year-old boys
make decisions? They follow the
loudest man in the room.

Bo's voice cools.

BO

Careful.

Forbee raises a hand.

FORBEE

I meant no disrespect.

BO

Yes, you did.

Bo places the financial folder on the desk.

BO (CONT'D)

But Billy will learn that
disrespect only matters when it
costs something.

Forbee watches him for a long beat, then smiles.

FORBEE

You have been home less than forty-
eight hours.

BO

Long enough.

FORBEE

What do you want?

BO

Reopen the old packing house.

FORBEE

That property belongs to the
federal government.

BO

It goes to auction in six weeks.

FORBEE

You have no money.

BO

You do.

Forbee laughs bitterly.

FORBEE

Did you not read the folder?

BO

I did. You have land, equipment and
a name the banks still pretend to
respect. What you don't have is
cash flow independent of Vincent.

FORBEE

And the packing house provides
that?

BO

Not by itself. We reopen Dawber
Marine. Cold storage. Trucking.
Repair. We put men back to work and
give this county a reason to depend
on us again.

FORBEE
Legitimate businesses?

BO
Every one.

FORBEE
No smuggling.

BO
No drugs.

Forbee searches his face.

FORBEE
Do you expect me to believe prison
reformed you?

BO
No. I expect you to believe prison
taught me what gets seized.

Billy looks from one man to the other.

Forbee laughs.

FORBEE
God, I have missed you.

BO
You fund the acquisitions. I
rebuild operations. Battenberg
trucks stop paying Del Vecchio
companies to carry your sugar.
Battenberg equipment gets repaired
here instead of leased from
Vincent. We control the county
road, the canals, the storage and
the labor.

FORBEE
And when Vincent objects?

BO
He can object from New Jersey.

FORBEE
He has people in Florida.

BO
So do I.

FORBEE

You had people. Half are dead,
imprisoned or working for Johnny
Malone.

BO

Then I'll bring them home.

Forbee pours more Scotch.

FORBEE

What percentage?

BO

Half.

FORBEE

For providing no capital?

BO

For providing the county.

FORBEE

Thirty.

BO

Forty-nine.

FORBEE

Forty.

BO

Forty-five, and Battenberg
contributes to my restoration fund.

FORBEE

How much?

BO

Two hundred thousand the first
year.

FORBEE

For that church?

BO

For the county. Gethsemane gets the
first lumber shipment.

Forbee shakes his head.

FORBEE

You become charitable in prison?

BO
I became aware of presentation.

FORBEE
Forbee Battenberg does not buy
public affection.

BO
No. You purchase politicians. This
is cheaper.

Billy looks down to hide a smile.

Forbee catches him.

FORBEE
You find something amusing?

BILLY
No, sir.

FORBEE
You have your father's terrible
manners.

BO
He has better judgment.

FORBEE
We shall see.

Forbee lifts his glass.

FORBEE (CONT'D)
Forty-three percent.

Bo extends his hand.

BO
Done.

Forbee stares at it.

FORBEE
You always did negotiate like a
thief.

BO
You always did surrender like a
gentleman.

They shake hands.

EXT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - SECOND-FLOOR VERANDA - DAY

Bo and Forbee overlook the sugar fields.

Wind travels through the cane in long waves.

From this height, the labor housing cannot be seen.

Neither can the dead fish in the canal.

Forbee rests both hands on his silver-headed cane.

FORBEE

When my grandfather stood here,
everything to the western horizon
belonged to Battenberg.

BO

Most of it still does.

FORBEE

Land is meaningless when another
man controls what leaves it.

Bo looks toward the mill.

BO

Then stop letting him.

FORBEE

You make that sound simple.

BO

It is.

FORBEE

Vincent is married to my daughter.

BO

You've spent twelve years asking
permission from a son-in-law you
despise.

Bo faces him.

BO (CONT'D)

Stop asking.

Forbee looks across the fields.

FORBEE

I have two daughters who believe I
ruined their lives.

BO
You probably did.

FORBEE
Mary Lee is dead.

BO
I know.

FORBEE
She died poor.

BO
She died with Kenny.

FORBEE
That is not the comfort you think
it is.

BO
And Abigail?

FORBEE
Lives in New Jersey surrounded by
Del Vecchios.

BO
She made her choice.

Forbee's expression tightens.

FORBEE
Her son comes here sometimes.

BO
Vinnie.

FORBEE
Vincent Junior. He prefers Vinnie.

BO
Smart boy?

FORBEE
Cunning. Vulgar. Undisciplined.

BO
So, yes.

FORBEE
He has none of the Battenberg
refinement.

BO
He has Battenberg blood.

FORBEE
Diluted.

Through the library doors, Billy studies Mary Lee's portrait.

BO
What about Alex?

Forbee snorts.

FORBEE
What about him?

BO
Your other grandson.

FORBEE
He is a Gregory.

BO
He has Mary Lee's mind.

FORBEE
He has Kenny's criminal instincts.

BO
Forbee, you're describing every
successful man in this house.

Forbee ignores him.

FORBEE
I received formal notification this
morning. Kenny Gregory is dead.

BO
No, he isn't.

Forbee studies him.

BO (CONT'D)
Kinder used another inmate's body.
Federal agents found Kenny alive in
a hidden cell.

FORBEE
Then the Department of Corrections
may amend its records when it finds
the time.

BO

Until then, you're planning to use the death certificate.

FORBEE

Official records have consequences, Bocephus.

BO

Does Alex know his father survived?

FORBEE

He knows what people have told him. He does not know where the federal government has taken Kenny, and he has not received the death certificate or probate documents.

BO

You planning to give him something?

FORBEE

Mary Lee's personal effects.

BO

What about her share?

FORBEE

She forfeited any claim when she married Gregory.

BO

That isn't what she believed.

FORBEE

She was mistaken.

Bo studies him.

BO

Why summon Alex?

FORBEE

I did not say I would.

BO

You will.

FORBEE

Why?

BO

Because he's seventeen, angry and tied to Johnny Malone.

(MORE)

BO (CONT'D)

Better to bring him through your
front door than wait for him to
come through a window.

Forbee looks toward Mary Lee's portrait.

FORBEE

I will consider it.

BO

No. You'll do it.

FORBEE

This is still my house.

BO

Then act like it.

Bo returns inside.

Forbee remains on the veranda, looking over the plantation.

For the first time in years, the old man stands straighter.

INT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Billy and Bo wait near the doors.

Forbee crosses to his desk, picks up the telephone and dials
from memory.

SECRETARY (FILTERED)

Del Vecchio Imports.

FORBEE

This is Forbee Battenberg. Put
Vincent on.

SECRETARY (FILTERED)

Mr. Del Vecchio is in a meeting.

FORBEE

Interrupt him.

Several seconds pass.

VINCENT (FILTERED)

Forbee.

FORBEE

I reviewed the plantation
agreement.

VINCENT (FILTERED)

And?

FORBEE

I will not be signing it.

Silence on the line.

VINCENT (FILTERED)

You owe my companies eight million dollars.

FORBEE

I owe considerably less once the equipment leases are properly audited.

VINCENT (FILTERED)

You agreed to those leases.

FORBEE

Under duress.

VINCENT (FILTERED)

Be careful using words you don't understand.

Forbee looks at Bo.

FORBEE

I understand them perfectly.

VINCENT (FILTERED)

What changed?

Forbee smiles.

FORBEE

Bocephus Dawber came home.

The line goes quiet.

When Vincent speaks again, the anger is gone.

VINCENT (FILTERED)

That convict can't protect you.

FORBEE

No. But my partner can.

Forbee hangs up.

The old man stands taller.

He presses another button on the phone.

CHARLES (FILTERED)
Yes, Mr. Battenberg?

FORBEE
Find Alexander Gregory.

Bo smiles.

Forbee looks toward Mary Lee's portrait.

FORBEE (CONT'D)
Tell my grandson that, according to
the State of Florida, his father is
officially dead -- and that his
grandfather requires his presence.

INT. KENNY'S FORD BRONCO - PARKED - DAY

A formal message trembles in ALEX GREGORY'S hand. It reads:
FORBEE BATTENBERG REQUESTS YOUR PRESENCE. OFFICIAL
NOTIFICATION CONCERNING KENNETH GREGORY'S LEGAL STATUS.

Alex reads it twice.

Then crushes it in his fist.

His father's name stares back at him from the wrinkled paper.
Kenny survived, but no one will tell Alex where the federal
government has taken him.

Alive in secret. Officially dead.

Alex starts the Bronco.

EXT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - IRON GATES - DAY

Kenny's old Ford Bronco rattles through the gates shortly
before noon.

The air conditioner died years ago. The driver's window
remains open against the heat.

INT. KENNY'S FORD BRONCO - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Alex wears a white button-down shirt his mother bought him
before she died. It is too small across the shoulders now,
but it is the only thing he owns that Mary Lee Battenberg
would have called presentable.

He drives toward the plantation house.

EXT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - MAIN HOUSE - DAY

A black Cadillac Escalade with New Jersey plates waits in the circular drive.

Two MEN IN DARK SUITS stand near the front steps.

Alex parks beside them.

One approaches.

BODYGUARD ONE
You Alexander Gregory?

ALEX
Who wants to know?

The man looks him over.

BODYGUARD ONE
Mr. Battenberg is expecting you.

ALEX
Then I guess that answers your question.

Alex steps around him.

The second man blocks his path.

BODYGUARD TWO
Hold up.

ALEX
For what?

BODYGUARD TWO
We need to check you.

Alex looks toward the plantation doors.

ALEX
Does my grandfather search all his relatives now, or only the poor ones?

VINNIE (O.S.)
They're with me.

Alex looks up.

VINCENT "VINNIE" DEL VECCHIO JR., 24, stands between two white columns on the veranda.

Sunglasses. Pink dress shirt. Dark trousers. A hamburger in one hand and an imported beer in the other.

He inherited his father's dark hair and his mother's Battenberg features. Handsome enough to be trusted. Amused enough to make that a mistake.

Vinnie raises the hamburger.

VINNIE (CONT'D)

Let him through. He's family.

The bodyguards step aside.

Alex climbs the stairs.

Vinnie embraces him with one arm.

VINNIE (CONT'D)

Look at you.

ALEX

Look at you.

VINNIE

I look fantastic.

ALEX

You look like a nightclub threw up.

Vinnie laughs.

VINNIE

There he is.

Alex nods toward the bodyguards.

ALEX

Your father's?

VINNIE

My babysitters.

ALEX

You need two?

VINNIE

One keeps people from killing me.
The other keeps me from
embarrassing the family.

ALEX
Which is which?

VINNIE
They're still figuring it out.

Vinnie offers him the hamburger.

VINNIE (CONT'D)
You hungry?

ALEX
No.

VINNIE
Good. Forbee had the kitchen make
it for me and then complained when
I ate it.

ALEX
Why are you here?

VINNIE
My father sent me.

ALEX
Forbee summoned me.

VINNIE
I know. He's been announcing it
like the British Empire recalled a
rebellious colony.

Alex looks through the open doors.

ALEX
You see him yet?

VINNIE
Oh, yes.

ALEX
How bad?

VINNIE
He has discovered courage.

ALEX
From where?

VINNIE
Bo Dawber.

Alex's expression changes.

ALEX
Bo came here?

VINNIE
Yesterday.

ALEX
What did he want?

VINNIE
Based on the contracts scattered
across the library, I'd say
everything.

Vinnie takes another bite.

VINNIE (CONT'D)
My father is not happy.

ALEX
Good.

VINNIE
You still hate him?

ALEX
Your father?

VINNIE
Yeah.

ALEX
I don't know him well enough to
hate him.

VINNIE
That never stopped Forbee.

Alex smiles despite himself.

Vinnie's expression softens.

VINNIE (CONT'D)
I heard what they did to Uncle
Kenny.

Alex looks away.

VINNIE (CONT'D)
Is he all right?

ALEX
He's alive. That's all anyone will
tell me.

VINNIE
My mother wanted to call.

ALEX
Why didn't she?

VINNIE
Because my father told her not to.

Alex nods.

ALEX
That sounds more familiar.

VINNIE
Abigail cries when she talks about
Mary Lee.

ALEX
My mother stopped talking about
this place before she died.

VINNIE
They both chose badly.

Alex looks at him.

ALEX
You mean our fathers?

VINNIE
I mean they chose men Forbee could
punish them for loving.

A BELL rings inside the house.

Vinnie checks his watch.

VINNIE (CONT'D)
That means His Majesty is ready.

ALEX
You coming?

VINNIE
I've been ordered to attend.

ALEX
Why?

Vinnie finishes the beer.

VINNIE

Apparently Forbee wants to
disappoint both grandsons at the
same time.

INT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - LIBRARY - DAY

Forbee waits behind his desk in a white linen suit and dark
blue tie. His silver-headed cane rests within reach.

Charles stands near the windows with a tray of iced tea.

Forbee examines Alex from the moment he enters.

FORBEE

You are late.

ALEX

Your message didn't include a time.

FORBEE

When I summon someone, I expect
them immediately.

ALEX

I was out of town.

FORBEE

Where?

Alex sits without being invited.

ALEX

Out.

FORBEE

Were you with Johnny Malone?

ALEX

No.

Forbee studies him.

Alex's answer is not quite a lie. Johnny separated from him
and Bones the previous evening.

Forbee looks toward Vinnie.

FORBEE

Remove the food.

VINNIE

I'm still eating.

FORBEE

You are in my library.

VINNIE

I noticed.

FORBEE

Food is consumed in the dining
room.

Vinnie looks at the hamburger.

VINNIE

This is why your staff hates you.

FORBEE

My staff understands standards.

VINNIE

Charles brings me extra fries.

Charles remains expressionless.

Forbee points toward a wastebasket.

Vinnie drops the remaining hamburger into it and sits beside
Alex.

Forbee opens a folder.

FORBEE

You both know why Alexander is
here.

VINNIE

His father.

FORBEE

I asked whether you knew. I did not
request your participation.

VINNIE

Then why am I in the room?

FORBEE

Because your father sent you to
intimidate me.

Vinnie leans back.

VINNIE

My father sent revised terms.

FORBEE
Which I rejected.

VINNIE
You haven't read them.

FORBEE
I rejected the previous agreement.
Changing the date does not improve
it.

VINNIE
He removed the equipment surcharge.

FORBEE
After your companies collected it
for four years.

Vinnie glances at Alex.

VINNIE
Family dinner is usually worse.

Forbee ignores him.

He removes a CERTIFIED DOCUMENT and slides it across the
desk.

Alex does not touch it.

The seal of the Florida Department of Corrections occupies
the upper corner. Beneath it: KENNETH GREGORY. DATE OF DEATH.
CAUSE OF DEATH: SUICIDE BY HANGING.

Alex reads the words. His face remains still.

ALEX
That's a lie.

Forbee folds his hands.

FORBEE
It is the official finding.

ALEX
He's alive.

FORBEE
Then the government should correct
its paperwork.

ALEX
They know Kinder staged it.

FORBEE

The warden responsible is dead. The certificate remains.

ALEX

Then why show it to me?

FORBEE

Because the state presently recognizes you as his heir.

Alex finally picks up the document.

His knuckles whiten around the paper. An administrative signature beneath the suicide ruling makes the lie permanent.

Alex folds the certificate once.

Then again.

FORBEE (CONT'D)

Careful. That is a certified copy.

ALEX

It's a certified lie.

FORBEE

An estate was opened before Kinder's deception was exposed. Until the state closes it, you may need that for probate.

ALEX

What probate?

FORBEE

Your father possessed certain property.

ALEX

Widow's Walk belongs to my father.

FORBEE

Not according to this certificate.

ALEX

Then the State of Florida can wait for him to come home.

FORBEE

Ownership is rarely that simple.

ALEX

It is when there's one heir.

Forbee opens a second folder.

FORBEE
The marina carries debt.

ALEX
I know.

FORBEE
Substantial debt.

ALEX
I know how much.

FORBEE
The property taxes are delinquent.

ALEX
Three months.

FORBEE
The fuel supplier has filed a lien.

ALEX
Which disappears when I pay him.

FORBEE
With what money?

Alex looks at him.

FORBEE (CONT'D)
I am prepared to purchase Widow's Walk. You would receive enough to complete your education and establish yourself somewhere other than Dawber County.

ALEX
No.

FORBEE
You have not heard the offer.

ALEX
I don't need to.

FORBEE
Your father's marina is failing.

ALEX
My father kept it alive from prison.

FORBEE

Your father used it to conceal
smuggling income.

ALEX

So did you.

Forbee's eyes harden.

FORBEE

Be careful.

ALEX

Your sugar went out on the same
boats.

Vinnie looks between them.

VINNIE

This is going well.

Forbee grips his cane.

FORBEE

Your mother disgraced this family
when she married Kenny Gregory.

Alex leans forward.

ALEX

My mother died poor while you lived
here surrounded by paintings of
people who stole half this county.

FORBEE

She made her choice.

ALEX

She chose somebody who loved her.

FORBEE

She chose beneath herself.

Vinnie stops smiling.

Forbee looks toward him.

FORBEE (CONT'D)

Abigail made the same mistake.

Vinnie sits forward.

VINNIE

My father saved this plantation.

FORBEE

Your father attached himself to it
like a parasite.

VINNIE

He lent you money when no bank
would.

FORBEE

At criminal rates.

VINNIE

You signed the papers.

FORBEE

Your father exploited my daughter.

Vinnie stands.

VINNIE

My mother hasn't asked you for
anything in nine years.

FORBEE

She will when Vincent loses access
to my land.

VINNIE

You think Bo Dawber changes that?

Forbee rises with the help of his cane.

FORBEE

Bo Dawber understands the
difference between partnership and
extortion.

Alex laughs.

Both men look at him.

FORBEE (CONT'D)

What?

ALEX

You found the only man in Florida
who could make Vincent Del Vecchio
look honest.

Forbee points his cane toward the door.

FORBEE

You may leave.

ALEX

I came for my father.

Forbee opens a lower drawer.

He removes a small CARDBOARD BOX and places it on the desk.

KENNETH GREGORY has been written across the top in black marker by the Department of Corrections.

Alex stares at it.

Forbee pushes it toward him.

FORBEE

These were forwarded to my attorney
because your location was unknown.

Alex opens the box.

Inside: Kenny's reading glasses, a cheap plastic comb, three letters, a wristwatch and his wedding ring.

Alex picks up the ring.

His mother's name is engraved inside: MARY LEE.

The edges blur.

Alex blinks until they sharpen again.

Vinnie sits beside him.

Forbee remains standing behind the desk.

FORBEE (CONT'D)

There is one additional item.

He removes an envelope.

Kenny wrote ALEX across the front in handwriting that leans sharply to the right.

Alex reaches for it.

Forbee does not release the envelope.

FORBEE (CONT'D)

Your father expected you to become
better than him.

ALEX

You read it?

FORBEE

No.

ALEX

Then how would you know?

FORBEE

Because every disappointing father eventually makes that request of his son.

Alex pulls the envelope from his hand.

Forbee lowers himself into the chair.

FORBEE (CONT'D)

You will sell Widow's Walk.

ALEX

No.

FORBEE

The state presently recognizes you as the owner.

ALEX

The state is wrong.

FORBEE

You cannot operate it alone.

ALEX

I won't be alone.

FORBEE

Johnny Malone?

Alex places the letter in the box.

ALEX

You're scared of him.

FORBEE

I am not scared of an accountant.

ALEX

Then why did you ask?

Forbee's face reddens.

Vinnie stands and places one hand on Alex's shoulder.

VINNIE

We're done.

FORBEE

I did not dismiss you.

VINNIE

No. You just told both of us our mothers ruined the family by having us.

FORBEE

That is not what I said.

VINNIE

It's what you meant.

Forbee lifts his cane and points it at Vinnie.

FORBEE

You are here to deliver your father's agreement.

Vinnie removes a document from inside his shirt and drops it onto the desk.

VINNIE

There. Delivered.

FORBEE

Tell Vincent I will not sign.

VINNIE

Tell him yourself.

FORBEE

I did.

VINNIE

Then why am I still here?

Forbee looks between his grandsons.

Alex holds Kenny's belongings against his chest. Vinnie stands beside him. Side by side, they look less like rivals than allies.

FORBEE

Neither of you understands what your fathers have done.

Alex moves toward the door.

ALEX

No. We understand what you did to our mothers.

Alex leaves.

Vinnie follows.

The library doors close behind them.

Forbee listens to their footsteps recede across the marble hall.

Then reaches for the Scotch.

EXT. BATTENBERG PLANTATION - OLD FOUNTAIN - DAY

Alex carries Kenny's box to the dry stone fountain.

Brown leaves cover the basin. One carved dolphin has lost its head.

Alex sits on the edge.

Vinnie dismisses his bodyguards with a wave and joins him.

For several moments, neither speaks.

Alex opens Kenny's envelope.

ALEX (READING)

Dear Alex, if you are reading this,
then either I am dead or the prison
has finally become efficient enough
to deliver mail, and I know which
one is more likely.

Alex stops.

He laughs once, but the sound breaks in his throat.

Vinnie looks toward the fields.

Alex continues reading.

ALEX (READING) (CONT'D)

I won't tell you to stay away from
trouble because trouble is the only
Gregory inheritance worth anything.
I will tell you that Johnny Malone
is the smartest man I ever knew and
the most dangerous friend I ever
had. Learn from him. Don't become
him.

Alex's eyes move across the page.

ALEX (READING) (CONT'D)
Your mother believed you could be
anything. I believed you could own
everything. She was probably the
better parent.

Alex looks down at his mother's name inside the ring.

ALEX (READING) (CONT'D)
Whatever happens, Widow's Walk is
yours. Don't sell it to Forbee. He
will call that place worthless
right up until the moment you sign
it over.

A beat.

ALEX (READING) (CONT'D)
I am sorry I left you alone. Dad.

Alex reads the final sentence again.

He folds the letter carefully and returns it to the envelope.

Vinnie waits.

VINNIE
What did he say?

ALEX
Not to sell.

VINNIE
Good advice.

ALEX
He said Johnny was dangerous.

VINNIE
Also good advice.

ALEX
He said my mother thought I could
become anything.

VINNIE
What do you think?

Alex looks toward the sugar mill.

ALEX
I think anything is too small.

Vinnie smiles.

VINNIE

There he is.

Alex places the death certificate inside the box.

ALEX

How much money does your father
make from this plantation?

VINNIE

Depends whether you ask him or the
government.

ALEX

How much?

VINNIE

Millions.

ALEX

Moving sugar?

VINNIE

Moving everything. Food, liquor,
cigarettes. Anything that fits in a
truck or a shipping container.

ALEX

Drugs?

Vinnie looks at him.

VINNIE

Not through Battenberg.

ALEX

That wasn't my question.

VINNIE

My father isn't stupid.

ALEX

Neither was mine.

Alex stands and looks across the endless fields.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Johnny says the old business failed
because too many people touched the
product. Colombians, boats, pilots,
Dawbers, cops, warehouses,
distributors. Every hand created
another person who could steal,
talk or get arrested.

Vinnie leans against the fountain.

VINNIE
What business?

ALEX
Medicine.

VINNIE
You want to sell medicine?

ALEX
I want doctors to sell it.

Vinnie laughs.

Alex does not.

VINNIE
You're serious.

ALEX
There are pain clinics opening
along the coast. Patients pay cash.
Doctors write prescriptions.
Pharmacies fill them. Everything
looks legal because every bottle
has somebody's name printed on it.

VINNIE
That's not new.

ALEX
The scale is.

Alex watches cane trucks roll away from the mill.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Cocaine needs airplanes, boats,
armed crews and men who murder over
percentages. Prescription pills
arrive in cardboard boxes from
licensed manufacturers.

He turns toward Vinnie.

ALEX (CONT'D)
No Coast Guard. No radar. No
midnight landings. No cartel
demanding sixty percent.

VINNIE
What do you need from me?

ALEX

Doctors.

VINNIE

I don't know doctors.

ALEX

Your family knows gamblers.

Vinnie's smile slowly returns.

VINNIE

My father knows everybody who owes money.

ALEX

A doctor with debt is a business partner.

VINNIE

Where do we put the clinics?

ALEX

Miami first. Then Broward.
Somewhere near the interstate.

VINNIE

Why not Dawber County?

ALEX

Too small. Too many people know us.

VINNIE

How do we move the pills?

Alex nods toward the cane trucks leaving the plantation.

ALEX

The same way everything else moves.

Vinnie follows his gaze.

VINNIE

You want to use my father's
distribution network.

ALEX

I want to use what he doesn't know
he has.

VINNIE

You are seventeen.

ALEX
Turning eighteen.

VINNIE
That doesn't make this less insane.

ALEX
No. It makes it harder to prosecute
me if we start now.

Vinnie laughs.

VINNIE
You really are Aunt Mary Lee's kid.

ALEX
You barely knew her.

VINNIE
My mother talks about her every
Christmas after the second bottle
of wine.

Alex looks toward the plantation house.

Forbee stands behind the library window, watching them.

ALEX
What would our grandfather do if he
knew?

Vinnie glances back.

VINNIE
He'd call us an embarrassment.

ALEX
He already does.

VINNIE
He'd try to stop us.

ALEX
He already will.

Vinnie extends his hand.

VINNIE
How much does a crooked doctor
cost?

Alex looks at it.

ALEX
Depends how crooked.

He shakes Vinnie's hand.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Good. Find me one.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE TWELVE