

Three politicians running for major offices in the upcoming elections were abducted from their homes on the same afternoon. They were bound, gagged and brought into a room by some members of the mafia. The frightened hostages, who had not been injured at this point, wondered what their captors would demand of them.

A few minutes later, someone entered the room and revealed why they were being held. The man said abruptly and angrily that none of them deserved to be elected to public office. The man accused them of being immoral and not fit to make decisions for their individual states.

Each of the hostages wondered what on earth he was talking about. Each of the candidates had always voted to please the right wing conservatives. One of the men attempted to defend himself, but was struck in the face and told to shut up and listen. The captor informed them that paparazzi, under their hire, had acquired video of every immoral act they had done in their pasts. The immediate reaction of each of the hostages was "how ridiculous". However, at that moment, the hood that had obstructed their view was lifted to reveal three televisions with VCRs directly in front of them.

On each of the hostage's video monitors were images of them lying to a co-workers, cheating on their spouses, looking at pornography, and accepting bribes from companies (just to name a few). Each began to look at the others' monitors, not wanting to watch what was on their own screen. Each one felt somewhat relieved that the immoral acts on the other hostages' screens seemed worse than their own. The time seemed to drag on and on without relief. The men begged for the VCRs to be turned off. "What is it that you want?" each man pleaded. The captor informed them that their editors had collected one hour worth of immoral acts for each man. He told the hostages that he planned to broadcast each of the videos on the major local network television stations. "In fact, you will be the ones who have to press the play button on your corresponding VCRs."

One of the hostages mustered enough courage to ask what would happen if they refused. The captor said "If you don't press play, we will cut off your finger and then you will be free to go." Each of the hostages immediately began wishing they had been able to watch the entire video.

The first hostage thought it would be much easier to explain how he lost his finger than to justify all of the things he saw himself do in the video. He was not willing to jeopardize his career, his marriage, and his entire life. He had worked too hard to earn his status. He chose to lose the finger and was released.

The second hostage was afraid of physical pain but knew that pressing play would mean the end of his career and friendships. He decided to press play and was released. The man immediately left town so that he would not have to explain any of his actions to his friends and family.

The third hostage also decided to press play. Then he was released. He immediately went home to explain what had happened to his wife and family so they would be aware of the rough road that lay ahead of them.