

ROUGH JUSTICE

"Pilot Episode"

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"PILOT EPISODE"

ACT ONE

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Morning light streams in REVEALING two lovers, naked in bed... high-heeled boots and a thong on the floor... bottle of WINE on the nightstand. Signs of passion, but now, rest.

The ALARM sounds -- "Rough Justice" by THE ROLLING STONES -- the Man stirs, turns it off and sits up. Meet our hero, CYRUS GARZA, 45. He looks at the GORGEOUS BRUNETTE, with her sexily placed tattoos, asleep next to him. He smiles at the pleasant memory, then --

-- he's getting dressed, pulling on jeans and a "Lee Atwater Blues Band" T-shirt.

GORGEOUS BRUNETTE (V.O.)

Stay.

He turns, sees she's just waking.

GARZA

I wish I could. But I'm already late.
I'll call you.

GORGEOUS BRUNETTE

(knows him better than that)
No you won't.

Dammit, she looks even better than she did last night.

GARZA

Hell, what good's a lifetime appointment
if you can't enjoy your life?

As he falls back into bed with her --

INT. GARZA'S PORSCHE - DAY

Garza zips through traffic, talking on the PHONE.

GARZA

I'm going to the Wizards game tonight.
What's the over-under? Okay, gimme the
under.

(beat, then skeptical)

The Cavs are your stone-cold lock? With
Shaq eating his way out of the league?

(MORE)

GARZA (CONT'D)

(beat)

It's regardless. Regardless of how fat he is. Irregardless is not a word, but double-or-nothing is. I'm in. I gotta go. I'm pulling into the office.

He looks out the window and we REVEAL: The Supreme Court.

GARZA (PRELAP) (CONT'D)

Stop right there --

INT. SUPREME COURT - COURTROOM - DAY

No jeans. No naked women. It's the highest court in the land. Nine judges wrestling with the biggest issues of the day. Garza is one of them, up on the bench, tearing into an earnest Lawyer.

GARZA

-- we've all read your brief, and I can't speak for my colleagues, though God knows I wish I could, but your argument against handgun possession is ludicrous. You're basically asking us to bend the rules because your client doesn't like them. Well, guess what? There are a lot of rules I don't like either. Like no splitting aces in Black Jack, terrible rule. Or the designated hitter. Ruined baseball. Or what about taxes? I don't like those. According to your argument I shouldn't have to pay them.

(over the lawyer's fumbling)

I'm sorry, but it's not the role of this Court to pronounce the Second Amendment extinct. You gotta give us something based on what's actually in the Constitution, not what you wish was in there. I hope for your client's sake you have that.

The Lawyer stands there, mute. He's got nothing. Off Garza, one of the most powerful guys in the country --

INT. VERIZON CENTER - NIGHT

The Wizards play the Celtics. In the stands FIND Garza and his DAD, 70, in a Celtics JACKET, on the way to their seats.

DAD

See the way they look at you? It's cuz they don't like you. You're not for the little guy.

(to a random fan)

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

My son the Supreme Court Justice, last game he came to, he sat in a fancy-schmancy box with his pal Dick Cheney and plotted the end of the world.

GARZA

Actually we talked about girls.

DAD

Who? His gay daughter who neither of you think has the right to get married?

GARZA

Dad, can we just enjoy the game?

As they take their seats, Dad turns to the Man next to him:

DAD

Watch out. He's pro-torture.

EXT. A CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a BUMPER covered in STICKERS: "Labor Built This Country," "Trust Me, I'm A Lawyer," "How Can You Be Pro Choice and Pro War?" WIDEN to REVEAL a Prius Plug-In Hybrid speeding down a two-lane highway. Over this we HEAR:

DAD (V.O.)

-- I didn't spit in his face. Throwing popcorn is not spitting.

INT. DAD'S PRIUS - NIGHT

Headlights from passing cars illuminate Garza and his Dad, who is driving them home from the game.

GARZA

All I'm saying is you don't have to pick a fight with everyone.

DAD

I do when they tell me they don't believe in global warming. I know, you don't believe in it either, but you're a schmuck.

Garza sees a car nosing into the road near the top of an oncoming hill. A warning:

GARZA

Dad --

DAD

I see him --

The CAR LURCHES into the road. Garza's dad swerves into oncoming traffic to avoid it as HEADLIGHTS from a truck RISE UP over the HILL directly in front of them.

GARZA

DAD!

The father STOMPS on the BRAKE. We BLACK OUT and there is the SOUND of a terrible CRASH.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Pews full of mourners. An open CASKET laid in front as a MINISTER delivers a eulogy MOS. Garza sits in the first row, deep in his own thoughts. Behind him sits his oldest friend, AL DRUZINSKY, 45. As Al puts a comforting hand on Garza's shoulder, we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GREENSVILLE PENITENTIARY - VISITING AREA - NIGHT

CHYRON: 18 MONTHS LATER. We're CLOSE ON the peaceful face of GREG BEALS, who has lived more than a third of his 30 years on death row.

BEALS

Promise me something.

REVERSE onto JEWELL WILLIAMS, Greg's fiancée. Never missed a visitation in eleven years.

BEALS (CONT'D)

Promise that you'll move on. The girls need a man in the house.

He puts his hand to the PLEXIGLASS separating them. Jewell mirrors his hand with hers.

JEWELL

Marry me.

Before Beals can respond, his attorney enters. It's Al -- a bleeding heart, hopeless optimist and true believer.

AL

Okay. It's not over.

JEWELL

The Governor said no?

AL

The Governor's an idiot.

Jewell looks back to Beals. They've been through so much. This can't possibly be the end.

BEALS

It's alright.

JEWELL

No, it's not. There's nothing remotely alright about this. Here.

She hands Al an ENVELOPE, as Al opens it -- CASH.

JEWELL (CONT'D)

It's not close to what we owe, but it's all that's left. Maybe it'll buy a miracle, cause I'm out of prayers.

AL

Good, cause I'm an atheist. And keep this. At least until we've won. Which we're going to. I just filed a request for a stay with the Supreme Court. It's a Hail Mary, but we've got the truth on our side, and that's better than any prayer.

Off Al's pep-talk, we HEAR the DINGING of SLOT MACHINES.

GARZA (PRELAP)

Bless me father, for I need a four.

INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - NIGHT

Garza, the life of the party, plays all seven hands at a raucous blackjack table. He's flanked by beautiful women. The DEALER hits his 17, gives him 21. Garza cracks his megawatt smile. Waves the dealer off each of his hands.

GARZA

Res. Ipsa. Liquitor. Speaks. For. Itself.

(the Dealer reveals her card)

Be kind. I'm a poor public servant.

The Dealer hits. Busts. Garza high fives the CHEERING crowd.

GARZA (CONT'D)

And people say there's no justice.

As Garza rakes in his chips, MERETA STOCKMAN, 30 -- a romantic in a prim, proper and pretty package -- approaches the PIT BOSS. Mereta is Garza's law clerk. He is her sun and stars.

MERETA

See that gentleman over there? The one with the... well, the really nice smile.

PIT BOSS
Dimple Guy?

MERETA
Dimple Guy. Exactly.

She snags a drink from a cocktail waitress. Takes the swig of unrequited love.

MERETA (CONT'D)
It's not enough that he sits on the Supreme Court, or that he was a Rhodes Scholar, or that he rescues dogs. No. On top of all that -- dimples.

PIT BOSS
You got something I should know about Prince Charming or not?

INT. CASINO - LOBBY - NIGHT

The Pit Boss and his MUSCLE hustle Garza toward the exit. Mereta hurries to keep up.

GARZA
Counting cards is legal. In Uston v. Resorts International the Jersey Supreme Court affirmed five to four.

PIT BOSS
And the Jersey Bouncers just de-firmed two zip.

Pit Boss and Muscle release Garza. As they head off:

PIT BOSS (CONT'D)
He's on the Supreme Court? No wonder the country's going down the crapper --

GARZA
Last I checked, Mereta, you were a law clerk, not a nurse maid. That was a six deck shoe I was beating. No one beats a six deck shoe.

Mereta hands him a FOLDER.

MERETA
Habeas petition from Greenville. Execution is scheduled in two days. The justices who weren't doubling down have given their opinions. It's four-four. Gregory Beals' life is in your hands --

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY HOTEL - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Mereta and Garza emerge to find PROTESTERS holding candles and waving posters. Jostling through the crowd:

MERETA

-- which is why these people are here.

GARZA

You sure? Maybe Springsteen is playing.

Off "Stop the execution!" "Gregory Beals is innocent!"

MERETA

No, it's you they want. On a stake.

They arrive at their LIMO when from behind Garza, angry:

PROTESTER

You're going to let Beals die, aren't you?

Garza turns. He loves to engage detractors. Especially blonde, blue-eyed, attractive ones. Mereta rolls her eyes. She knows where this is going.

GARZA

Let me guess -- ACLU.

PROTESTER

Card carrying member.

MERETA

Justice, we really should go.

GARZA

Before you burn a flag in protest, remember a jury unanimously convicted Beals of killing a cop. Three appellate courts saw no reason to overturn that verdict, but perhaps you know better.

PROTESTER

I might, if you'd let him have a fair trial.

GARZA

I don't 'let' people have anything. I follow the law --

MERETA

-- you have an eight a.m. call --

GARZA

-- if Beals had exculpatory evidence he had to present it at the state habeas hearing. He didn't.

PROTESTER

Because he had an attorney who slept through the trial!

MERETA

(pulling Garza to the car)
I'm sorry to interrupt, but we really do need to go and if you have a problem with the law, maybe you should take it up with the law makers --

GARZA

-- while you're at it, how about picking up a copy of the Constitution? If a law violates it, I'll overturn it. If not, I'm Switzerland.

PROTESTER

Wow, would your dad be disgusted right now.

Garza stops, turns back. A nerve's clearly been hit.

PROTESTER (CONT'D)

He was a hero of mine. He was never "Switzerland". He used the law to give people hope, to lift their spirits, not to shatter their dreams. He wasn't afraid of anything.

GARZA

He'd be terrified of you.

PROTESTER

He'd agree with me. That his son is... is a...

GARZA

Schmuck?

PROTESTER

Yes!

GARZA

Yeah, he used to call me that a lot.

PROTESTER

Does making a joke like that help you sleep at night?

GARZA

It's not a joke and I sleep like a baby.
Though for you I'd be happy to make an
exception.

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An old rambling place decorated in Americana. Books, briefs and articles everywhere. And on the couch beneath a stuffed Bison head lies the sleeping PROTESTER. Bathed in a narrow band of light from an open door. We follow the light into...

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

... where Garza, at his ridiculously cluttered desk, his rescue MUTT at his feet, watches DOCUMENTARY footage on his DESKTOP. Images of his DAD... marching alongside Robert Kennedy... Cesar Chavez... orating... on courthouse steps...

NARRATOR

...it was Garza's core values of love and compassion that led him to fight for a minimum wage, better working conditions and voting rights...

....a lump in his throat, the son takes a sip of his Scotch, PAUSES the film on the IMAGE of his old man. The Protester was right -- Dad would be disgusted. The mutt watches as Garza crosses to a legal BOX labelled BEALS, pulls out a thick BRIEF, and as he settles in for a read...

INT. SUPREME COURT - GARZA'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY

LUCINDA PEARL, 29, sits on a couch wearing a black leather jacket, black boots, and a "Boys Are Stupid Throw Rocks at Them" T-shirt.

EDDIE (O.S.)

Can I help you?

EDDIE FRANKS, 26, is Lucinda's opposite: A short, tightly wound Brooks Brothers conservative. She gives him a once-over, blows a huge bubble. Pops it.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'm Eddie Franks. I clerk for Justice Garza.

LUCINDA

I don't want to be your lover.

EDDIE

I'm sorry. What did you say?

LUCINDA
You want to get in my pants, don't you?

EDDIE
Uh, not really. No.

LUCINDA
Good. Because I don't sleep with people
I work with.

Before Eddie can respond, Garza enters --

GARZA
Lucinda, excellent. Come on in. I see
you've already met Eddie.

Lucinda POPS another bubble. On Eddie, utterly confused:

INT. SUPREME COURT - GARZA'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Lucinda and Eddie watch as Garza pours himself a drink.

GARZA
Okay, tell me what you've got.

LUCINDA
Haldol. The prison doctor pumped him
full of it.

EDDIE
Pumped who? What are we talking about?

GARZA
Greg Beals. I asked Lucinda to do some
research.

EDDIE
Research? I thought you'd already
decided. His execution is tomorrow.

GARZA
Exactly. So make it quick. Haldol --
why should I care?

LUCINDA
You ever been on it? Turns you into a
zombie. Which is what Beals looked like
in that court room. The DA even referred
to, and I quote, "his insensitive,
remorseless face".

GARZA
The DA tell the jury why he looked so
whacked out?

LUCINDA

Nope. Didn't say a word.

EDDIE

If no one said a word, how do you know he was drugged?

LUCINDA

I hacked into the county jail logs.

EDDIE

You did what?

LUCINDA

Relax, Harvard. They're public records. I'm not telling you anything you don't have the legal right to know. They doped the guy.

Mereta enters, NOTE PAD in hand.

MERETA

-- the nerve of some people. Oh, am I interrupting?

EDDIE

It's okay. We were just getting tips on breaking and entering. The legal version. And by they way, I went to Yale.

LUCINDA

I know.

GARZA

What is it, Mereta?

MERETA

Politico called. They're running an absurd story alleging you have half a million dollars in gambling debts and saying this is another example of why you're unfit for the job. They want to know if you'd like to comment.

LUCINDA

Did they mention the affair with the Brazilian Ambassador's wife?

GARZA

Okay, first of all, she didn't speak English, so I had no idea who she was. And second, how did you know about that?

LUCINDA

I never removed the bug I put on your phone during the hearings. Get over it.

EDDIE

Okay, who is she?

LUCINDA

She is a private investigator.

GARZA

Judiciary hired Lucinda to do oppo research on me during my confirmation hearing. She worked alone and found out... well, let's just say various tidbits, all of which, thankfully, eluded the Dems army of investigators. And now she seems to have found a few tidbits in Beals that eluded us.

EDDIE

Justice, you're actually considering granting him a new trial?

GARZA

The prosecutor broke the law.

EDDIE

Even if that's true, and judging by Lucinda's in depth knowledge of illicit drugs I doubt it, it doesn't matter.

MERETA

It does if it raises questions about his actual innocence.

EDDIE

If there was misconduct, the defense had eleven years to find out. They didn't. Just because Beals only has three meals left, doesn't mean you get to change the rules to give them another chance.

Under this, Garza grabs a DECK of cards.

GARZA

Five bucks says I can cut the ace of spades. One cut. No looking.

LUCINDA

I prefer strip poker, but I'm in.

GARZA

Security says you're carrying. May I?

Lucinda pulls a KNIFE from her boot, off which Mereta shoots Eddie an 'oh my god' look. Garza takes the KNIFE, slices through the deck, finds the ace of spades "cut" in half.

EDDIE

Great. Fantastic. Now we know how you got lunch money in 6th grade.

GARZA

I followed the rules. Doesn't always lead to justice. Even if it's been eleven years. Beals deserves another trial. Mereta, I'll need a draft of the opinion by six.

MERETA

What about Politico?

GARZA

Tell them I'd join Gamblers Anonymous but then I'd have to stop gambling. Great work, Lucinda.

LUCINDA

(to Eddie)

And you thought I was just hot.

INT. SUPREME COURT - GARAGE - NIGHT

Garza exits the elevator, his keys already out. He presses 'unlock', and the lights of his Porsche flash. Before he gets to it a LIMO pulls up. A tinted rear window rolls down to REVEAL silver-haired SENATOR SIDNEY VIDALIN, 50s.

SIDNEY

Get in.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Garza joins Sidney in the back seat. Sidney fumes, a rolled up DOCUMENT in his fist.

GARZA

Had I known you were taking me to the prom, I would've brought you a corsage.

SIDNEY

Do I look like I'm in the mood for your moronic jokes?

GARZA

No, in fact I think there's actual steam coming out of your ears.

SIDNEY

Anderson v. Lynton Tobacco. Frankel v. Portland. Manilow v. Three M. All five-four decisions. Five-four. These are precedent setting cases and they all went south. Because of you.

(re: DOCUMENT)

And now I have to read this telenovela you call an opinion on Beals? Are you kidding me? Who the hell do you think you are? Going soft on the death penalty? What happened to your principles? You're a judge who follows the Constitution to the letter. You don't make it up as you go along.

(Garza smiles in disbelief)

You think this is funny? We didn't pick you because of your 'legendary genius' or your toothy smile. They might work with a cute protester up in Atlantic City, but in the big leagues you're a dime-a-dozen, a means-to-an-end, a cog in the wheel.

GARZA

You're mixing your metaphors, but I get your gist.

SIDNEY

Good. So get your ass back upstairs and make this thing right.

Sidney hands the DOCUMENT to Garza.

GARZA

It is right.

SIDNEY

Look, if this new direction of yours is about your dad's death, see a therapist. If it's a mid-life crisis, screw your secretary. But don't shift the god damn balance of the Supreme Court. We put you in there, we can take you out.

GARZA

You make it sound like you're gonna hire a hitman.

SIDNEY

We're gonna impeach you. And don't think we can't do it. Section 1, Article 3: justices shall hold their offices during good behavior. Who are we kidding? That rules you out.

(MORE)

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

(on INTERCOM, to the driver)

Pull over.

(then)

Who do you think leaked that story to Politico? You're at the tipping point here, Cyrus. You don't vote the right way on Beals, you are out.

EXT. LIMO - NIGHT

Garza gets out. The Limo pulls away. Off Garza, alone on a dark corner, we HEAR the DRIBBLING of a BALL --

EXT. GARZA'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Garza, drenched in sweat, drives hard to the basket above the garage for a lay up. Venting his aggression, when --

AL (O.C.)

One-on-none in the middle of the night?
This can't be good.

Garza looks up, sees Al walking up the driveway.

GARZA

Vidalin's threatening to impeach me.

AL

What?

GARZA

You know why? What my sin is? I won't execute Greg Beals.

As he tosses Al the ball --

AL

You're being blackmailed into murdering my client?

GARZA

But that's not what really pisses me off.

AL

Something could piss you off more?!

GARZA

Okay, not more. Nothing's worse than that. But a close second? Sidney's right -- I don't belong on the Court.

AL

What? Okay, are you drunk?

GARZA

No, I'm not drunk. But two hours ago I was sitting in the back of his limo and you know what I was thinking?

AL

That he's the one who should be impeached?

GARZA

That you were right about Dad. He used to joke that you and I must've been switched at birth because you guys agreed on everything.

AL

Not quite everything. I mean now that he's not around I think it's safe to admit I didn't think "An Inconceivable Truth" was the greatest movie ever made.

GARZA

My whole life I've thought his ideas were naive, even dangerous. But I swear to God a few nights ago I was watching documentary footage of him and weeping.

AL

Weeping? Really? Okay, but you were trying to get a girl in bed, right?

GARZA

No, she was already asleep.

(then)

He never thought people should take responsibility for their own lives. That everyone was a victim. He was like St. Jude. It was always one lost cause after another. Remember Jeremy Tuggenberg --

AL

You kidding? The drooler your dad wouldn't cut from our rec league team? He let him shoot twelve free throws every time he got fouled.

GARZA

Exactly. My dad was willing to bend the rules whenever it suited him. I hated that.

AL

Are you telling me you based your entire legal philosophy on the Toogs?

GARZA

Yes, on following the rules. On putting the system before the individual. But now... since the accident... I feel as if by doing that I'm hurting the people I should be protecting.

AL

People like Greg Beals?

GARZA

Yeah. People like Greg Beals.

AL

So what are you saying?

GARZA

I'm saying screw Sidney.

INT. SUPREME COURT - GARZA'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Garza puts on his ROBE as we HEAR:

GARZA (V.O.)

Gregory Beals is scheduled to be executed today by the state of Virginia...

INT. SUPREME COURT - COURTROOM - DAY

Garza takes his seat on the bench alongside his Colleagues. He scans the gallery, locks eyes with... Sidney.

GARZA (V.O.)

There are those who'd say that granting him yet another trial is a fool's errand which serves no purpose except to cause chaos by delaying the wheels of justice. There was a time when I would have said those people are right...

INT. SUPREME COURT - COURTROOM - LATER

Garza reads from his OPINION, which is what we have been hearing him narrate.

GARZA

But it seems to me now that chaos is a fair price to pay for the life of another human being...

ANGLE ON AL, seated in the gallery next to Jewell.

GARZA (CONT'D)

And that's why I am staying the execution of Gregory Beals and sending the case back for a new trial.

Jewell hugs Al, as Garza sets his OPINION aside. No longer reading. Talking from the heart:

GARZA (CONT'D)

I love this Court. It's cautious respect for precedent and neutrality has at times saved our country. But I came here a different judge, a different man. I used to be satisfied being cautious and neutral. Being Switzerland. I'm not anymore. The job of a justice is to preserve the status quo. Today I am announcing my resignation from the Court because I am ready to change it.

A beat of silence. No one expected this. Garza looks out to where Sidney was sitting. He's gone. The gallery reacts, and as we HOLD ON Garza, we,

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Garza looks out his window at the TV crews that have gathered. He's the star of this news cycle. He turns away, his eyes landing on a PHOTO -- a young Garza in a Boston Celtics jersey standing next to his father -- when his CELL RINGS. He checks caller ID, then:

GARZA

Admit it, you miss me already.

INT. LIMO - INTERCUT

Sidney in the backseat, on the phone.

SIDNEY

You pissed off a lot of people today.

GARZA

Yeah, and it feels pretty good.

SIDNEY

Enjoy it because by tomorrow, you're gonna be the most hated man in America. You're on your own, pal. I suggest you get a bodyguard.

Sidney hangs up. ON Garza, alone with his father --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. SUPREME COURT - DAY

TV news crews record protestors burning Garza's picture in effigy. Sidney was right: Garza is viewed as a traitor.

CLAIRE SAX (PRELAP)

Wow, you really can't win...

INT. SUPREME COURT - GARZA'S CHAMBERS - DAY

CLAIRE SAX, 40s, "wife of", senior partner in a K Street firm, looks out at the protestors as --

CLAIRE SAX

The Left hated you when you joined the Court. The Right hates you when you leave.

Garza is behind her, packing up photos and awards.

GARZA

Controversy is never bad for business, but if you don't think my name will look good on your firm's masthead I can find someone who does.

CLAIRE SAX

And this is strictly business?

GARZA

I thought so, but if you want to throw in some incidentals...

CLAIRE SAX

I don't.

GARZA

Then, yes, it's strictly business.

CLAIRE SAX

I can't believe I'm even considering this but what's your proposal?

GARZA

Your firm gets my name on the door and I get the same salary as you.

CLAIRE SAX

You really think you're worth that?

GARZA

No, but I know you do. Oh, one other thing -- I pick my cases and my team.

Off him smiling, knowing she can't resist, we go to:

INT. AL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Everything Garza's place isn't -- a picture of domesticity. Al and Garza set the table at which WILLA, 16 and surly, does her homework.

AL
I already have a job.

GARZA
The firm's given me carte blanche. We can parachute in all over the country --

LUCA, 6, races through, without stopping:

LUCA
-- Dad, Benny hit me for no reason!

AL
(calling out)
Ben, don't hit your brother!

GARZA
We'll go wherever the action is. In California, it's gay marriage. In Montana, euthanasia. Connecticut, affirmative action.

WILLA
Didn't you vote against all those things?

AL
Don't you have a desk upstairs where you can do your homework?

Willa scowls, starts gathering her books as:

AL (CONT'D)
Look, it all sounds very tempting. But thanks to you I'm preparing for a little trial called Beals.

GARZA
Yeah, about that. I'd like Beals to be our first case.

AL
You were his judge, now you're gonna be his lawyer? Did you want to leave the bench or get disbarred?

Before Willa exits, to Garza --

WILLA

Fascist.

GARZA

It's completely legal and I need you. I've heard the best lawyers in the country argue every day for the past ten years. None of them was as good as you. Not to mention the fact that I trust you, even though you've raised your daughter to think I'm Mussolini.

AL

You should hear her mother. Look, you really want to do this?

GARZA

You know better than anyone that our whole legal system is based on making sure someone gets a fair trial. That's why everyone's guaranteed a defense -- to protect that one innocent person that's been falsely accused. Greg Beals might be that person. So yes, I want to do this. The only question is, do you?

EXT. GARZA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie and Lucinda watch Mereta set lunch on a poker table. Takes out poached salmon, grilled vegetables as --

LUCINDA

So what are you, his law clerk or his Girl Friday?

MERETA

I try to help Justice Garza, I mean, Mr. Garza, wherever I can.

LUCINDA

Do you sometimes help him on your knees?

Eddie bursts out laughing, Mereta remains poised.

MERETA

If by that you mean do we have anything other than a professional relationship, the answer is no. Salmon?

Mereta sets a plate in front of Lucinda, takes a seat.

EDDIE

Why do I feel like I'm at the last supper?

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I graduate number one, I'm president of law review, I deserve better than to get one of the top jobs in the country only to have my justice go postal.

MERETA

I think what he's doing is amazing.

EDDIE

What, representing a cop killer? The state had an eyewitness who said Beals did it. The medical examiner blew out his alibi at trial.

LUCINDA

Hey Harvard, if you don't like it, what are you doing eating the salmon?

EDDIE

Don't worry. My resume's in with Justice Esposito. As soon as he gets the okay to add an extra clerk, I am out of here.

Just then the front door opens, it's Garza and Al.

LUCINDA

What was that? I'm not sure I heard you.

Eddie smirks, as --

GARZA

Excellent. You're all here. Mereta, thanks for picking up lunch.

MERETA

There's fruit in the kitchen and drinks in the 'fridge. Since this is our new office, I thought I should stock up.

Lucinda puckers and makes an ass-kissing sound.

GARZA

I want you guys to meet Al Druzinsky, our new partner.

EDDIE

You represent Greg Beals.

AL

Only through his last two appeals.

GARZA

Al's the reason Beals is still alive. I just got the briefing schedule.

(MORE)

GARZA (CONT'D)

It's a nightmare so lets dive in. I assume you guys have read through the trial transcripts. Any thoughts?

MERETA

I'll go first.

(off her NOTES)

It's not based on the transcripts, but Aaron Whelply? The eyewitness in the case, he told his shrink he never saw Beals the night Pam Hogan was murdered.

AL

He recanted his testimony? When? He died in prison six months ago.

MERETA

Dr. Felicia Moore was his court appointed therapist. She just called the office, actually our old office. I guess with the publicity of you taking the case she decided she wanted to come forward.

GARZA

Will she testify?

MERETA

Uh, I didn't ask her that exactly, but --

GARZA

Call her, get her depo, see if she'll testify. What else?

AL

There's the time line issue. Pam Hogan's body was found in a crack house on April 8th. At trial the ME said the killing could've happened as early as April 3rd.

LUCINDA

The one day Beals doesn't have an alibi.

EDDIE

Because starting April 4th he was in jail for stealing a truck. Some alibi.

GARZA

Are the ME's dates solid? Did anyone ever challenge him?

AL

No, but I came to this case after the habeas hearing.

(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)

No new evidence was allowed. And I don't know how you think you're going to get any in now.

GARZA

Leave that to me. Meanwhile Lucinda, see if you can shake the ME's story.

LUCINDA

I'll call the body farm.

EDDIE

I don't want to know what that is, do I?

GARZA

Too bad, cause you're going with her.

LUCINDA

I promise I won't bite.

EDDIE

Can I get that in writing?

GARZA

Now there's a good lawyer. Okay, anything else? No? Cause there's one thing that's bugging me. I got a call today from the DA. He wants to set up a meeting with Clark Hogan.

MERETA

The victim's husband?

GARZA

Seems he's unhappy we've taken this case.

EDDIE

Can you blame him? As far as he's concerned you're trying to free his wife's killer. He probably hates your guts.

GARZA

Yeah well, line forms to the left.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Garza and Al sit across from CLARK HOGAN, 40s, earnest and appealing. Next to him is D.A. MANLEY FREED, 50s, neither earnest nor appealing. Clark looks directly at Garza:

CLARK HOGAN

You ever been in love?

A wave of surprise and discomfort ripples across Garza's face. He's never been in love. Bailing Garza out --

AL

I have. Married 15 years.

CLARK HOGAN

Pam and I only got two, but she was my life. We were going to grow old together, take care of each other... I still wake up every morning hoping to find her next to me.

GARZA

Mr. Hogan, the DA just told us you're thinking about asking the judge to commute Mr. Beals' sentence to life.

CLARK HOGAN

If it means preventing another trial.

AL

You don't want to relive it, huh?

CLARK HOGAN

I can't. All those details, the what-ifs... I'd worked vice, I knew how dangerous it was...

D.A. FREED

Clark and his wife were on the force together.

GARZA

I can't imagine the suffering you've endured and I wouldn't ask you to revisit any of it if I didn't believe that Mr. Beals is innocent.

CLARK HOGAN

You have proof of that? I mean, if Beals didn't do it, who did?

GARZA

We don't know, but --

CLARK HOGAN

You don't know? Then what are you doing here? You're a Supreme Court Justice, or you were until you lost your mind --

D.A. FREED

Clark --

CLARK HOGAN

No, what the hell are they doing here?
My wife was murdered. There was an
eyewitness who saw Beals pull the trigger--

GARZA

Actually we have some questions about
that witness.

D.A. FREED

Questions? Isn't it a little late for that?

CLARK HOGAN

You lawyers are all the same. This is
just a game to you. You don't care about
the truth. All you care about is
winning. You make me sick.

D.A. FREED

Okay look, stirring all this up is
exactly what Clark wants to avoid. We're
offering Beals life in prison --

CLARK HOGAN

-- which is more than he deserves.

D.A. FREED

And since this case has dragged on long
enough, tell him he's got twenty-four
hours to decide.

INT. GREENSVILLE PENITENTIARY - VISITING AREA - DAY

Garza and Al on one side of the glass. Beals on the other.

BEALS

They want me to plead guilty?

GARZA

We could say no and go to trial, but if
we do that and lose --

AL

-- which is a real possibility. The jury
deliberated all of thirty-six minutes
before coming back unanimously against
you. Plus which, we've lost three
appeals since.

BEALS

That's before I had a Supreme Court
Justice for my lawyer.

AL

If we had DNA evidence, maybe. But we don't.

GARZA

No, but we do have a great team and we're challenging the forensics and the eyewitness testimony.

AL

If you lose you'll be executed. They're giving you a chance to save your life.

BEALS

Justice Garza, you're the only reason I'm still here. Tell me what to do, and I'll do it.

Garza considers this. It's hard. A man's life is on the line.

GARZA

You know, most people think being on the Supreme Court is about looking for the truth. But the truth is, that's rarely what it's about. Which is why I left. This is your life, Mr. Beals. I can't decide this for you. But if it were me, I couldn't say that I'd killed someone, if I hadn't. If it wasn't the truth.

BEALS

I didn't kill anyone.

GARZA

Then there's your answer.

Off Beals, willing to follow Garza's lead --

JUDGE DENNER (PRELAP)

I want the lawyers to approach.

INT. FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT - COURTROOM - DAY

Garza, Al and D.A. Freed approach JUDGE RICHARD DENNER. Fat body, wise mind. Holds Garza in high regard. Or did.

GARZA

Hey Dick, how you doing? How's Martha?

JUDGE DENNER

She's fine. But I'm a little concerned about you.

GARZA

About my resignation? You should be thrilled. You're probably on the short list to replace me. If they ask, I promise I won't say anything about our night in Vegas.

JUDGE DENNER

I was talking about this case. Did you really have your client reject a plea to commute his sentence to life?

GARZA

He's innocent.

JUDGE DENNER

Not in this court, he's not. At trial the state met its burden. Your client is presumed guilty. The burden is on you to convince me he's not.

GARZA

Yeah, I'm pretty clear on how that works.

JUDGE DENNER

I hope you're equally clear that this courtroom will not be used as a soap box for your sudden disregard for the justice system.

GARZA

I'm not on a soap box. My client didn't get a fair trial.

JUDGE DENNER

So you bent the rules to give him another one, opening the flood gates in every district court for endless re-litigation. This could bring the system down.

GARZA

You can't put the system before a man's life.

JUDGE DENNER

Damn right I can. That's what a judge is supposed to do.

AL

Excuse me, your honor. But is the offer still available?

D.A. FREED

For another six hours it is.

AL

A moment?

(pulls Garza aside, tough)

I know you left the Court to hit home runs. And that this offer might feel like a double. But to Beals it means getting to grow old, to see his kids grow up. So before you turn down the offer again, try and remember this is about his life, not yours.

Garza looks at Beals and Jewell, who sits behind him in the gallery. Then to the Judge:

GARZA

We're going to trial.

JUDGE DENNER

I hope you know what you're doing, Cyrus.

He waves them off. Al and Garza step back towards Beals as --

AL

One thing I disagreed with your dad about was that you were a schmuck. But it looks like he was right about that, too.

And with that Al walks out of the courtroom. On Garza, stung, we --

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. BODY FARM - WOODS - DAY

Eddie hovers, uneasy as Lucinda kneels beside a corpse.

EDDIE

Are we here to meet a forensic anthropologist or an axe murderer?

LUCINDA

These bodies were donated. It's called science. I know you right wing wackos have an issue with that, but unfortunately Jesus isn't around to tell us when exactly Pam Hogan died.

EDDIE

And the maggot eating that guy's eye will?

LUCINDA

People lie. Maggots don't. The secrets of the dead are no different from the secrets of the living. All you need to know is where to look.

EDDIE

Where do you look for Garza's? I mean, why'd he really quit? He break the law? Get a girl pregnant?

LUCINDA

O-oh, maybe you're right. Maybe he has some dark secret. Does that turn you on?

EDDIE

What? No.

LUCINDA

Really? Because I'm starting to think you have some dark secrets of your own. You're gay, aren't you? It's okay. Just admit it.

EDDIE

First you think I want to 'get in your pants', now you're saying I'm gay? Maybe I just don't find you that attractive.

LUCINDA

Or maybe you're bi. I am. Hey, Steve --

REVEAL anthropologist STEVEN ZARET, 30s, a ponytailed hippie, approaching, in his hand is a manila ENVELOPE.

LUCINDA (CONT'D)
-- thanks for helping with this. Get a chance to look at the autopsy photos?

ZARET
Yep. I'm ready to go over them with you.

As Zaret pulls autopsy PHOTOS from the envelope --

LUCINDA
Great. Oh, and this is Harvard. He's thinking of coming out.

ZARET
That's cool. So take a look.

Zaret lays the PHOTOS on the ground by the corpse. This is our first look at the brutal murder of Pam Hogan.

ZARET (CONT'D)
Right here you can see the marbled appearance of her extremities. That along with the bloating, indicates she died approximately seven degree days before autopsy.

EDDIE
Degree days? What does that mean?

ZARET
The temperature affects decomposition. The warmer it is, the faster a body decomposes. An average temperature of 70 degrees would put her death no earlier than April 8. But if it was below 60, she could've died as early as April 1.

EDDIE
Three days before Beals was jailed.

LUCINDA
So if it was 60 degrees, Beals has no alibi. If it was 70, we've got a case.

EDDIE
Okay, that's great, but how the hell do we find out what the temperature was inside a Richmond crack house during the first week in April, eleven years ago?

ZARET
Among other things, you'll need access to the Department of Energy's computers, which are classified.

LUCINDA

I don't think that'll be a problem.

INT. ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL - DOCTOR'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Mereta paces, pulls out her notepad and CELL, dials as --

MERETA

She told me she'd be here at six. Maybe she got stuck in traffic.

-- Garza studies a "Universal Pain Assessment Chart" (the one with smiley faces ranked 1 thru 10). Sotto:

GARZA

I'd say we're at a solid four.

MERETA

Hi, I'm calling for Dr. Moore...
Vacation? Are you sure? Felicia Moore?
The shrink?

GARZA

And we're at five...

MERETA

I spoke with her earlier today. She confirmed that the eyewitness recanted his testimony.

(then to the phone)

No, I don't want another doctor. By any chance did she leave a forwarding number?

GARZA

Forget it.

MERETA

(ignoring him, into the phone)

What? She didn't mention a vacation.

Garza takes the phone from her.

MERETA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

GARZA

The D.A. got to her.

MERETA

But she was our case.

GARZA

Which is why we're now at a 10.

MERETA

What?

GARZA

Nevermind. Look, I should've told you to sit on her. I forgot how rough the game is played. C'mon. Let's go.

Garza heads out. Mereta starts to follow when she sees the pain chart. Under 10 she reads "worst possible pain". Off Mereta's pained face:

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Garza pulls two BEERS from the fridge, hands one to Mereta.

MERETA

Why did you hire me? I mean, I know you hired Eddie because he was number one in his class.

GARZA

I hired Eddie because he's smarter than me. I hired you, because you're prettier.

MERETA

Okay, you broke like ten laws just now.

GARZA

Fine. You're not pretty. But as a liberal elitist you believe in affirmative action for race and gender, right? So why not for high cheekbones?

MERETA

I was in the top of my class.

GARZA

You were seventh. The other six applied.

MERETA

Okay, well, since you clearly don't respect me, maybe I should quit.

GARZA

Most women would if they were you. In my experience, women with your looks latch onto rich men then spend their days bitching because the contractor put the wrong kind of marble in the master bath. But you're here working your ass off which impresses the hell out of me. Cheers.

As he raises his BEER the DOORBELL RINGS.

GARZA (CONT'D)
That's Doc Levin. My... herbalist.

MERETA
You have an herbalist? Who makes house calls?

GARZA
Yeah. I figured with all the changes in my life, I could use a good cleanse.

Garza takes a last swig, exits. Off Mereta, curious --

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Garza shows in DOC LEVIN, a thick stump of a man.

GARZA
Look, Doc, I know I'm due.

DOC LEVIN
More like overdue. You got an illness here, and you didn't treat it. Now we're in a situation where you don't have much time.

GARZA
How long?

DOC LEVIN
Are you gonna take it seriously?

GARZA
Seriously? This is one of the reasons I left the court.

To see an herbalist? Sounds more like a conversation you have with your oncologist.

DOC LEVIN
So no ducking appointments?

GARZA
No, no more ducking. How long?

DOC LEVIN
Best case scenario, six months.

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - OUTSIDE STUDY - NIGHT

Mereta listens at the door, realizing why Garza left the Court. He only has six months to live. And off this, we...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY - DAY

Lucinda applies lipstick when Eddie arrives, holding a monogrammed BRIEFCASE as --

EDDIE

For the record? I'm not a party to this.

LUCINDA

Did you get the stuff or not?

EDDIE

Everything that's legal.

(re: briefcase CONTENTS)

I figured the house Pam Hogan was found in wasn't always a crack den, so I pulled construction permits. I got the floor plans, venting and insulation specs.

LUCINDA

Insulation specs? How butch of you.

EDDIE

Do you take anything seriously?

LUCINDA

Me? You're the one who's gonna ditch this case the minute Justice Esposito blows his dog whistle. You do realize we're trying to save an innocent man's life here, right?

EDDIE

I'll be sure to mention that when Homeland Security comes in and busts us.

LUCINDA

Wow.

EDDIE

What?

LUCINDA

I'm just picturing the meltdown you're gonna have when your little fantasy world where Homeland Security busts me for flashing my boobs comes crashing down.

EDDIE

Flashing your boobs? That's your big plan for accessing classified data?

LUCINDA

Hey, they're nice boobs. Not that you'll ever know.

And with that, Lucinda grabs the briefcase, and heads off.

EXT. GARZA'S HOUSE - BACK PORCH - DAY

Al hands Garza a Big Gulp as --

AL

It's diet, with a splash of cherry.

GARZA

I take it you heard we lost the shrink.

AL

Yep.

GARZA

And this is a polite version of I-told-you-we-should've-taken-the-deal.

AL

Actually it's my macho way of apologizing for walking out on you in court. But in the I-told-you-we-should've-taken-the-deal department, you seen the Richmond paper?

GARZA

Let me guess, Clark Hogan.

AL

Front page. It basically accuses us, sorry you, of forcing the 'hero cop' to relive his worst nightmare. I know every DA tries his case in public --

GARZA

Only when he's running scared.

AL

I'm just saying the judge could be influenced.

Just then Lucinda and Eddie bound out of the house --

EDDIE

We got it! Beals' alibi, it holds. Lucinda was amazing --

LUCINDA

He's in love with me now.

EDDIE
No, it's just --

GARZA
It's okay. We're all in love with her.

AL
I'm not in love with her, no offense.
So, what did you find?

LUCINDA
The temperature in the crack house was never below 70 degrees which based on the rate of decomposition means the earliest the murder could've happened was April 8th.

GARZA
Five days after Beals was sent to prison. He couldn't have done it.

AL
Okay, I am in love with her after all.

Just then a TOWN CAR pulls into the driveway. The group watches as a DRIVER opens the door for Claire Sax.

GARZA
Claire. What a mildly pleasant surprise.

CLAIRE SAX
I thought we should discuss your request in person, and since you seem to have no interest in using the office we've supplied for you --

GARZA
You came to me. Even better. Al, Eddie, Lucinda, this is Claire Sax. Our ATM.
(to Claire)
We just got some good news on the case. Al, call the court. Tell them we need more time to file an amended brief.
(to Lucinda and Eddie)
You two start writing. If we're lucky we'll get 'til the morning.

After they exit and Garza is alone with Claire:

GARZA (CONT'D)
So? You wanted to discuss?

CLAIRE SAX
You call and ask for \$250,000 cash -- ?

GARZA

I told you. It's an advance, to cover my expenses.

CLAIRE SAX

Your expenses? What, like your team? You're paying them in cash? They're lawyers, not drug mules.

GARZA

It's not for my team, okay? I have a personal issue. And I need you to respect that. If you can't, I'm more than happy to beg. As I recall you like it when I do that.

CLAIRE SAX

Just tell me this isn't going to get me in trouble.

GARZA

It's not going to get me in trouble.

She shakes her head, smiling. She turns to go --

GARZA (CONT'D)

Was that a yes? That's a yes, right?

CLAIRE SAX

(not turning back)

Yes!

On Garza, this guy always seems to get his way...

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Al races in, interrupting Lucinda and Eddie writing the brief.

AL

I got the clerk to give us an extension -- but only 'til close of business. Where's Mereta?

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Mereta, on the phone. The Mutt at her feet.

MERETA

Nonono, please, Mr. Rains, don't hang up. I just need five minutes --

But clearly whoever she was talking to has hung up. Mereta sighs, defeated, when Al bursts in --

AL

How fast can you write up some points and authorities?

(off Mereta)

Are you crying?

MERETA

What? No. I was just... has Mr. Garza told you why he left the Court?

AL

It was that or get impeached.

MERETA

I'm serious. You're his oldest friend. Hasn't he said anything to you?

AL

Yeah, that he left to make a difference. Why do you ask?

MERETA

...I don't know... I just...

AL

Did he say something to you?

MERETA

What? No. It's just... It's about the case. I mean, the only thing I've actually done is lose our star witness. I can't even get someone who was at the crime scene to give me five minutes on the phone.

AL

Who's that?

MERETA

Simon Rains. He was the crime scene technician. Garza asked me to go through the trial transcripts and I noticed he was never called to the stand. I thought that was weird.

AL

You're right. That is weird.

MERETA

If he had evidence that supported the prosecution, they would've had him testify, right? But maybe I'm just being stupid.

AL

You're not being stupid at all. That's a good lead.

MERETA

It would be if he would talk to us.

INT. FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT - COURTROOM - DAY

Jewell absently fingers a MEDALLION around her neck as she tracks Beals, being escorted by a Guard to Garza and Al at the defense table. Lucinda and Eddie watch Jewell and her fiance exchange a loving gaze while Mereta watches Garza, concerned. The BAILIFF continues:

BAILIFF

In the case of Gregory Beals versus The State of Virginia. All having business before this court draw near, and you shall be heard.

The court room doors swing open. Eddie turns, sees it's Clark Hogan. As Hogan finds a seat in the gallery:

EDDIE

Poor guy. Bad enough his wife's killed, now he's gotta sit through this?

LUCINDA

Exactly what the DA wants you to think.

Garza moves to the lectern, notices a MAN in the gallery. BUZZ CUT. Windbreaker. Nothing special about him except his intense stare. Garza takes a beat then turns to the Judge.

GARZA

Gregory Beals is innocent. For the past eleven years he's been behind bars for a crime he did not commit. His children, the woman he loves and his freedom have been taken from him. The only thing he has left is his innocence. Today the Defense will introduce new evidence that proves --

JUDGE DENNER

New evidence? Justice Garza, you know there is not a single case which allows you to introduce new evidence on appeal.

GARZA

Actually there's one, your honor. This case. Beals.

(MORE)

GARZA (CONT'D)

In Beals the Supreme Court held that the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act does not prohibit the introduction of new evidence on appeal when that evidence can prove a defendant's actual innocence.

D.A. FREED

Your honor, that's Justice Garza's opinion.

GARZA

I was writing for the majority.

D.A. FREED

Most of whom wrote opinions stating they disagreed with him on that point. Not to mention, that when Justice Garza wrote that opinion he was clearly experiencing a moment of personal crisis.

GARZA

Excuse me? I'm not on trial here.

JUDGE DENNER

-- Mr. Freed --

D.A. FREED

I'm just saying context is important if you're going to consider using that opinion to overturn every precedent and principle of jurisprudence.

GARZA

What "principle of jurisprudence" is more important than the truth?

D.A. FREED

Your honor, we're prepared to argue procedural issues -- judicial error, faulty instructions to the jury -- questions Mr. Beals is legally entitled to raise. But the question of Mr. Beals' guilt was asked and answered years ago.

GARZA

Incorrectly. The decision in Beals is clear. The system cannot be preserved at the expense of an innocent man's life.

JUDGE DENNER

Dammit, Cyrus. I warned you not to bring your soap box in here.

INT. FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT - HALLWAY OUTSIDE COURTROOM - DAY

Garza, Al, Eddie, Mereta and Lucinda huddle --

GARZA

Eddie, I need you to research every opinion Denner has issued from the bench. If he won't listen to an opinion of mine, maybe he'll listen to one of his own.

Jewell Williams approaches --

JEWELL

What was that? What just happened?

AL

The judge refuses to hear new evidence.

JEWELL

I don't understand. It proves Greg's innocent --

GARZA

-- he says there are rules...

JEWELL

Rules? What rules?

GARZA

Technically you can't introduce new evidence after a --

JEWELL

-- and you didn't know that?

GARZA

I did, but --

JEWELL

But what? You told Greg not to take that deal. What am I gonna tell my girls? How am I gonna explain to them that our own lawyer killed their father --

MERETA

Killed him? Okay, for your information, Mr. Garza has six months to live and he's spending them trying to save Greg's life.

(to Garza)

And don't try and deny it. I overheard you and Dr. Levin.

GARZA

Okay, Jewell, listen to me: I know you're scared, but it's not over. Trust me. But right now, I need a minute alone with my team, can you give us that?

JEWELL

You were our last hope.

The team watches as Jewell moves off, then:

MERETA

I know I shouldn't have eavesdropped, but I'm glad I did --

LUCINDA

Me too!

MERETA

-- because now we can focus on getting you the help you need --

GARZA

-- I think you misunderstand--

MERETA

-- and on what really matters. And for me, that's you.

EDDIE

... o-kay...

MERETA

I love you. I do. And I don't care if you're all hearing me say it. Because it's the truth.

All eyes on Garza who is, for the first time, at a loss.

GARZA

Uh... wow....

LUCINDA

Is it just me, or does it seem like the feeling is totally not mutual?

And on this incredibly awkward moment, we --

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT - DAY

Garza pays for a coffee, brings it to Mereta.

MERETA

Look, I didn't mean to embarrass you in front of everyone. And you may not feel the same way as I do, and that's okay, but I'm glad I got to tell you before... well, you know...

GARZA

Doc Levin is my bookie.

MERETA

What?

GARZA

He's called Doc because no one operates on the spread better.

MERETA

But he said you only have six months.

GARZA

To pay what I owe. Turns out no one can beat a six deck shoe.

MERETA

Politico was right?

GARZA

No, they were wildly inaccurate. They said I owed half a million. It's only two fifty.

MERETA

So you're not dying?

GARZA

Not unless you want to kill me.

MERETA

You're completely healthy.

GARZA

Listen, about what you said --

MERETA

-- Oh my god. Everybody heard.

GARZA

It's okay. I talked to them.

MERETA

What did you say? I mean, other than I'm fired.

GARZA

Mereta, you're not fired. In fact, I feel like maybe it's my fault, saying that I hired you because you're pretty. Maybe that gave you the wrong impression.

MERETA

Yeah, maybe. Okay, I'll go with that. It's your fault.

GARZA

And as far as what I told them, let's start with the easier part. The six months. I didn't mention the debt. I'd rather just keep that between you and me if that's okay.

(Mereta nods, then:)

What I did say is that I've been having some GI problems and that everything's fine, but that when Doc Levin said I'd have to be retested in six months, you heard I had six months to live.

MERETA

And they bought that?

GARZA

People don't ask a lot of questions when you mention GI problems. Now, about the other part. I'm forty-five, never been married, and I don't even know the names of the last three girls I slept with...

MERETA

Cindy Sugarman, Hailey Simpson, Chelsea Hathaway.

GARZA

(he has to laugh)

You are way too good for me.

MERETA

But not good enough.

(beat, then bailing him out)

I'll see you back at the office. Don't worry, your secret's safe with me.

ON Garza, watching her walk away...

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The whole team, including Mereta who's clearly still reeling, eats pizza as Eddie enters, holding a CASE BOOK --

EDDIE

I found a case. "Leeds v Gilbert". In it, Denner ruled that a case based on circumstantial theory falls apart if any part of the theory is weak.

GARZA

What's the standard?

EDDIE

Reasonableness.

LUCINDA

I'll tell you what's reasonable. Me being pissed off that the proof I found is being ignored.

GARZA

Lucinda, what you and Eddie found, about the time of death, is something that Beals' original attorney reasonably should've have discovered at trial.

LUCINDA

Yeah, if he hadn't slept through it.

GARZA

But if we find something that was impossible to know at trial, then based on Leeds we have a shot....

AL

Mereta's got something.

LUCINDA

Besides a pathetic school girl crush?

GARZA

Down tiger.

MERETA

It's the crime tech on the case. Simon Rains. He never testified. I think he knows something the prosecution doesn't want us to find out.

AL

Mereta and I pulled all the cases he's worked. He testified in every murder except this one.

MERETA

It took us a while, but we finally tracked him down.

GARZA

And?

AL

And he went out of his way to tell us he's not protecting anyone.

MERETA

And that --

(reading off her NOTEPAD)

"You lawyers, cops, you're all the same... You'd turn on your best friend."

LUCINDA

He hates cops and lawyers. I kinda like the guy.

GARZA

So who is he protecting? A best friend? Maybe one of the other crime techs? Was there another one at the scene?

EDDIE

No. But there was one at the lab. She did intake. Catalogued and stored evidence.

GARZA

What evidence? I've never heard of a murder case with less evidence. That's one of the things that's been bugging me.

MERETA

You think it was stolen.

GARZA

Eddie, you got a name for me?

Off Garza, knowing they have a lead... PRELAP:

MERETA (PRELAP)

Yes, I'm calling for Rita Schmidt...

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

High energy, boiler room feel. Lucinda's on Facebook, friending every "R. Schmidt". Eddie, Al, Mereta and Garza work the phone lists. Into the PHONE:

MERETA

...I'm with Blue Cross... Are you sure?

EDDIE

Is this the Schmidt residence? Yes, I represent the estate of Mr. Keith Schmidt... I have a bequest for a Rita Schmidt... no...?

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Less energy. Empty coffee cups, soda cans. Still on PHONES:

AL

-- okay, but are you related to Rita Schmidt? There's no reason to get upset, ma'am.

(to Garza)

I think she just told me to screw myself in Greek.

MERETA

-- yes, it looks like Rita's subscription has expired... I have this as R. Schmidt... the R is for Roberta... oh, I apologize...

EDDIE

We've Googled, we've Facebooked. I didn't think you could disappear anymore.

GARZA

Anything in the department's records?

LUCINDA

Not since she quit in '99. Two months after the murder.

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

No energy. Garza pops a beer, takes a deep swig. Into PHONE:

GARZA

Yes, hello. This is Ross Barnes. I'm calling from Oregon. May I speak to Rita Schmidt? Yes, I know it's late, but it's a family emergen--

-- but the person has hung up. Garza looks around the room. Eddie, Mereta and the Mutt are asleep. The phone list in his hand: every name's crossed off. Frustrated and tired, he tosses the list.

It LANDS ON HIS KEYBOARD, clearing his Oxford English Dictionary screensaver to REVEAL HIS EMAIL account. He stares at it a beat, then nudges Eddie awake. Energized --

GARZA (CONT'D)

I got it.

EDDIE

Huh? What?

GARZA

We don't know how to find Rita Schmidt, but maybe her ex-partner Simon does.

(off the email screen)

Odds are when we talk to him, he turns around and talks to her.

EDDIE

Yeah in a private, legally protected way.

GARZA

U.S. Penal Code 634-point-8: Laws and regulations regarding wiretapping do not apply to patently unlawful conversations. I'd say hiding a material witness qualifies as unlawful.

EDDIE

Just out of curiosity, did you have to look that up, or have you memorized the entire penal code?

GARZA

Remember: 634-point-8. In case you're caught. I'm gonna go call Lucinda.

As Garza head out --

EDDIE

Waitwaitwait. Caught doing what?

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The CAMERA FOLLOWS a wire from a telephone junction box, mounted on a HOUSE. It leads into the passenger window of --

INT. LUCINDA'S GREMLIN - NIGHT

-- where Eddie watches Lucinda attach the wire to a small digital RECORDER. With mixed emotion:

EDDIE

Esposito blew his dog whistle this morning. He got the okay to add a clerk. I start Monday.

Lucinda hits the "record" button on the RECORDER. Takes out her cell PHONE and dials. Hands the phone to Eddie.

LUCINDA

Go on, take it. Give you one last story to tell your Harvard buddies about your week slumming it with the bad ass P.I.

He smiles, amused, as SIMON RAINS picks up.

EDDIE

Hello, Mr. Rains? I'm one of the lawyers working on the Beals case. Nonono, we don't need your help. We talked to Rita... Yeah, this morning. She said she'd cooperate. So, uh, just wanted to let you know. Thanks.

He hangs up, gives Lucinda back the phone.

LUCINDA

Wow. A natural born liar. Who knew?

TOUCH TONE BEEPS sound out from the recorder. The number dialed appears on the recorder's SCREEN. Lucinda has tapped the line. She and Eddie listen in:

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

First Baptist, how may I help you?

SIMON (V.O.)

I need to talk to Rita Schmidt.

Eddie looks at Lucinda. This is so cool.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

I'm sorry, she's in a meeting right now. May I take a message?

Lucinda turns off the recorder. Eyes the AREA CODE.

LUCINDA

215. Looks like Garza's going to Philly.

INT. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

Garza enters, sees a WOMAN speaking with some parishioners. He approaches, waits until she's free, then --

GARZA

Seems like a great place to get married.
My fiancée and I are looking around.

RITA SCHMIDT

It is. It's a great place.

RITA SCHMIDT, 30s, offers a peaceful smile.

GARZA

That's what we've been told... are you
the pastor?

RITA SCHMIDT

No. I'm his assistant.

GARZA

Must be interesting work. Have you
always done it?

RITA SCHMIDT

No...

GARZA

Really? What did you do before? If you
don't mind my asking.

She gives Garza a closer look, and her smile fades as she
recognizes him. Her hopes of remaining hidden fading --

RITA SCHMIDT

I was in law enforcement.

GARZA

Around here?

Beat. There's no way around it. She's been found. So:

RITA SCHMIDT

I know who you are.

GARZA

I need to know what happened that night.

Off Rita, shedding a silent tear --

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT - DAY

Garza and Al and Beals sit opposite D.A. Freed and his team. Eddie, Lucinda and Mereta are in the gallery, next to Jewell. Behind the prosecutor sits Clark Hogan.

JUDGE DENNER

So I'm assuming after our last little get-together that we're all ready to play by the rules today.

GARZA

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE DENNER

Excellent.

Garza stands, notices Buzzcut Man is once again in the back row, staring. Garza takes a beat to refocus, then:

GARZA

I want to begin by saying I was wrong when I suggested there was one opinion that allows new evidence on appeal. In fact, there are two --

JUDGE DENNER

You're kidding, right?

GARZA

No, and I can't imagine you were either when you wrote it. In Leeds versus Gilbert you wrote that in a case based on circumstantial theory --

JUDGE DENNER

That was a tort case. This is a murder trial.

GARZA

-- you said any case, not tort or murder, any case, falls apart if any part of the theory is weak. But how can you prove a theory is weak without being able to argue another theory? And the only way to do that, is to admit new evidence.

Denner takes a long beat. Then, pissed that Garza's trapped him with his own words:

JUDGE DENNER

Get on with it.

GARZA

The defense calls Rita Schmidt.

The courtroom doors open. A Bailiff escorts Rita in. D.A. Freed consults his team -- who the hell is she? -- as the bailiff swears her in. Rita takes the stand. Garza questions her without notes.

GARZA (CONT'D)

Ms. Schmidt, can you tell the court what your job was in April of 1998?

RITA SCHMIDT

I was a crime scene technician with the Richmond police department.

GARZA

And were you working April 8th, the night Lieutenant Pam Hogan's body was found?

RITA SCHMIDT

Yes, I was in the crime lab.

GARZA

And did you catalogue the evidence brought from the crime scene where the body was found?

RITA SCHMIDT

Yes, I did.

GARZA

And was a pair of prescription glasses among that evidence?

RITA SCHMIDT

Yes.

GARZA

Did the glasses belong to Gregory Beals?

RITA SCHMIDT

No.

D.A. FREED

Objection. Speculation.

JUDGE DENNER/GARZA

Overruled.

GARZA

Who did they belong to?

D.A. FREED

Your honor, she can't possible know whose glasses they were!

RITA SCHMIDT

They were Clark Hogan's.

GARZA

Thank you. I have nothing further.

Murmur in the gallery. Mereta, Eddie and Lucinda watch as a stone-faced Clark Hogan leans in, whispers to the D.A.

Garza takes his seat next to Al as D.A. Freed stands, wobbly, clearly forced to wing it. A quiet aside:

AL

You think Freed's gonna bite?

GARZA

We're about to find out.

D.A. FREED

I have no intention of re-arguing the facts... but I have no choice but to challenge this outrageous accusation.

Exactly as Garza hoped. Freed turns to Rita, dismissive:

D.A. FREED (CONT'D)

You do know that Clark Hogan was married to the victim?

RITA SCHMIDT

Yes, I do.

D.A. FREED

That he is a decorated police officer who's served this community for over 20 years.

RITA SCHMIDT

Yes.

D.A. FREED

And as they were married, isn't it possible that if a pair of Captain Hogan's glasses were found at the crime scene, isn't it possible that his wife had them on her when she died? Brought them from home, was going to give them to the Captain at work...?

RITA SCHMIDT

Yes, that's possible. But it's not what happened.

D.A. FREED

Really? And how do you know that?

RITA SCHMIDT

Because that night... when I came back from a break... he was trying to steal them.

Eddie and Mereta watch as Clark Hogan shakes his head as if to say "that's not true". Incredulous:

D.A. FREED

A decorated police officer was trying to steal his own glasses?

RITA SCHMIDT

He'd realized that he had left them at the scene... that they'd been found and brought to the lab... when I caught him, he was... wild... strung out... he told me he was an addict --

D.A. FREED

Okay, this just gets better and better. What's next? He's Jack the Ripper?

Garza sits there, impassive. Knowing that if things are going your way, you keep your mouth shut.

RITA SCHMIDT

All I know is that he said his wife had found out about his habit, and had followed him to the crack house... He said they argued and... like I said, he was wasted... they were fighting and... he shot her.

D.A. FREED

And you're only telling us this now? After eleven years?

RITA SCHMIDT

He threatened me. He said I'd end up like her. I have three boys...
(cracking under the pressure)
I'm all they have...

One of Freed's lackeys hands him a piece of PAPER as --

D.A. FREED

-- do you actually expect us to take your word over that of a bereaved widower? When it comes down to it, that's what you're asking us to do. Because there's no proof, is there?

RITA SCHMIDT

Her blood was on them... the glasses.

D.A. FREED

What glasses?

(holding up the PAPER)

I have the evidence list right here. The list you signed off on. And nowhere on here is a pair of glasses.

RITA SCHMIDT

That's because I took them.

D.A. FREED

You took them?

RITA SCHMIDT

I thought that someday I might need them, for protection.

Garza stands, holding an evidence bag, containing GLASSES.

GARZA

We'd like Mr. Hogan's glasses to be marked Defense Exhibit one --

D.A. FREED

Your honor, you've already ruled on this. The question of new evidence has been asked and answered --

GARZA

-- yes, it has. But that's not the question that matters. The one that does matter, is whether you, whether any of us, uses the law to prevent or to do justice.

(then)

People come into this room searching, hoping, expecting not just fairness, but moral rightness. Moral rightness. We all know the rules are there for a reason, without them we'd be living in chaos. We also know that when those very rules we depend on put an innocent man behind bars, to death even, there's something wrong.

(MORE)

GARZA (CONT'D)

And there's something wrong with us,
deeply wrong, if we let that happen.

(then, to Judge Denner)

So many times I was sitting up there,
right where you are, feeling like my
hands were tied, like I was a prisoner.
In this case, your honor, your hands
aren't tied. In this case you can do
what's right. Justice demands it. It
demands the immediate release of Gregory
Beals, and that Clark Hogan be taken into
custody for the murder of Lieutenant Pam
Hogan.

INT. PENITENTIARY - HALLWAY - DAY

Start on Jewell, with her two GIRLS, standing with Garza and Al. Waiting. The door at the far end of the hall opens. A Guard and Gregory Beals walk in, make their way toward them.

Both Garza and Al watch as Beals is brought to Jewell. The MUSIC RISES, Aaron Neville singing "I Shall Be Released". Beals gets down on one knee.

BEALS

Will you marry me?

JEWELL

Yes. Yesyesyes.

They embrace, tears of joy. The girls join them. Garza and Al watch. After a beat, Beals approaches them.

AL

I'm so happy for you, Greg.

BEALS

Thank you so much. And Justice Garza, I
don't know what to say. You gave up
everything to save a guy like me.

GARZA

Who says you were the only one who needed
saving?

Jewell arrives, to Garza:

JEWELL

I wanted to give you this.

She takes the MEDALLION from around her neck. Garza looks at it and smiles warmly.

GARZA
St. Jude. The Patron Saint of Lost Causes.

JEWELL
My sister gave it to me when all this started. But it's over now so...

GARZA
He was my father's favorite. Thank you.

Jewell kisses him on the cheek, then Al.

BEALS
You take care.

GARZA
You too.

Beals and Jewell walk away from Garza and Al, who watch as they join their daughters. Off the MEDALLION:

GARZA (CONT'D)
You think I was one of Dad's lost causes?

AL
No. I think you were his pride and joy.

Garza and Al turn, and walk away. The camera lingers on the reunited family as the MUSIC takes us to...

EXT. GARZA'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

A different kind of family. Celebrating a victory. Garza plays hoops with Al and Al's kids (Willa, Luca and BEN). They're all wearing "Garza's Just Deserts" T-Shirts. So is the mutt. Music blares from a BOOM BOX. A cloud of smoke rises from the BBQ revealing Eddie working the grill. Lucinda approaches, looking for seconds --

EDDIE
You're loving me now.

LUCINDA
No, I just like your meat.

As he puts a brat on her plate --

EDDIE
I'll let my Harvard buddies know.

LUCINDA
(starts to go)
You do that.

EDDIE

By the way, I decided not to go with Esposito. I'm staying.

LUCINDA

Oh, thank god. You and I can finally make love among the legal briefs.

(beat, off Eddie)

I'm kidding! Oh my god, you actually thought --

EDDIE

No!

LUCINDA

Good. Because it's not happening. Ever. Keep your meat on the plate.

MERETA

Can I have a hot dog?

REVEAL Mereta, approaching with a plate.

EDDIE

Sure. One hot dog coming up.

LUCINDA

Is that for you or your lover, I mean boss?

MERETA

(deep breath then,)

What I said before was said in a moment of stress and misunderstanding and does not reflect how I truly feel and I apologize if I put any of you in an uncomfortable position.

Uncomfortable position? Lucinda busts out LAUGHING, leaves.

EDDIE

Don't worry about it. Sometimes we all say things we wish we hadn't. Except for Lucinda, who always says things we wish she hadn't.

ANGLE ON Garza talking on the PHONE, while watching Al and his kids on the basketball court.

GARZA

...Sounds great. I'll talk it over with Al and get back to you.

He hangs up as Al makes a three-pointer.

AL
 Claire's hot for you now.

GARZA
 Everyone's hot for us now that we won.
 That was about a case in Florida. Some
 'David' going up against big pharma.

Just then Willa walks past, gives Garza a Hitler Salute. Al
 shakes his head --

AL
 Maybe you were right not to have kids.

MERETA
 Excuse me, Justice. I mean, Mister Garza --

GARZA
 How about Cyrus?

MERETA
 There's someone here to see you. It's
 one of the neighbors. He's complaining
 about the music.

ON Garza, thinking that's odd...

INT. GARZA'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Garza enters. Surprised to find that the "neighbor" is none
 other than Doc Levin.

GARZA
 Doc? What are you doing here? Is there
 a problem? You got the money, right?

DOC LEVIN
 I got it, but your tab was already paid.

GARZA
 What are you talking about?

DOC LEVIN
 Some guy showed up this morning, paid
 your nut to the penny.

GARZA
 Some guy? Who was he?

DOC LEVIN
 I didn't ask. He didn't say. Only
 hiccup is you gotta agree to drop some
 case you're working on.

GARZA

What case? There is no case.

DOC LEVIN

All I know is he said you were taking a case against Big Pharma and he didn't want that.

Processing this, Garza looks out the window, sees BUZZCUT Man across the street, watching...

DOC LEVIN (CONT'D)

So what do you want me to do?

GARZA

I don't know what you're gonna do with his money, but you're taking mine.

DOC LEVIN

You're not for sale. I respect that. Especially when it means I get paid two for the price of one.

GARZA

(distracted, off Buzzcut Man)
I gotta make a call, Doc.

DOC LEVIN

Hey, no problem. I'll let myself out.

Doc leaves as Garza picks up the phone and we...

INT. STUDY - INTERCUT

The PHONE RINGS. A hand picks up, bringing the receiver up to REVEAL Sidney.

SIDNEY

Yeah?

GARZA

It's me. Call off the bodyguard.

SIDNEY

I don't know what you're talking about.

GARZA

The side of beef with the buzz cut. He's been following me everywhere.

SIDNEY

I have nothing to do with that. I told you, you're on your own.

He looks down the street. Buzzcut Man is gone.

GARZA
Then who is he?

SIDNEY
I have no idea. But wherever you are,
you should leave.

GARZA
And go where?

SIDNEY
You should've thought of that before.

And with that, Sidney hangs up. Garza stands there, feeling just as Sidney predicted, like the most hated man in America, when there's a KNOCK and Al enters.

AL
Everything okay? 'Cause you got game.
Unless you're planning on ducking me.

Garza looks out the window. More to the world than to Al:

GARZA
I'm not ducking anybody.
(then, to his friend)
Let's do it.

And as they head out, to take on each other and the world:

THE END