

MATADORS

Pilot

By Jack Orman

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

ECU OF AN EYE FLUTTERING OPEN, TO SEE...

THE CURVES OF AN ATTRACTIVE WOMAN slip IN AND OUT OF FOCUS as she finishes zipping up. HOLD FOCUS as she turns, backlit by the morning light - lovely, even radiant --

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

**ALEX GALLOWAY**, handsome (late 20's), naked under the sheets, takes a moment to shake his slumber and confirm that the vision in front of him is not a fantasy.

**JULIANA LODARI** stares back at him. HOLD ON a stolen moment: the lover's eyes lock in adoration and affection... Then:

JULIANA  
This didn't happen.

ALEX  
So I'm dreaming?

JULIANA  
It can't have happened. At least not right now. So it didn't.

INT. WELL APPOINTED KITCHEN - DAY - MINUTES LATER

Juliana rushes through a coffee-and-toast grab as the LOCAL NEWS plays on a flat screen.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
Opening statements begin today in the Jason O'Neill Murder Trial, nephew to Governor Terrance O'Neill...

Alex appears in the archway in a rumpled suit.

ALEX  
They're at it already?

JULIANA  
The governor's making a statement.

ALEX  
Why didn't you wake me?

JULIANA  
Big day; figured you needed your rest.

ALEX  
My big brother's on today. I just have to sit there and look pretty.

JULIANA

Then you'd better get home and work  
on that.

A smile from Alex, another brief connection. Then...

ALEX

I know that this 'can't have happened.'  
I didn't come here for that to happen.  
But I'm glad it did.

Juliana doesn't respond, but betrays her mutual feeling. A  
breath. Then the SOUND of the front door opening --

MAN (O.S.)

Juliana, you still here?

Juliana pivots quickly. The lovers stare at each other Shit!

ALEX

I thought you said he was in Portland.

JULIANA

He must've taken the red-eye.

Is the man her husband? Whoever he is, he CALLS OUT again:

MAN (O.S.)

Shouldn't you be at the courthouse  
already?

JULIANA

(calling back)

Uh...Yeah, just leaving now, dad.

No, it's her father. Juliana opens the patio door -- time  
for Alex to make an escape. Alex looks down at his feet: **no  
shoes**. Juliana gives him a look: sorry, tough it out.

ALEX

You're a grown woman.

JULIANA

In his house... with you.

INT. BACK OF NEWS VAN - ON A VIDEO MONITOR

The GOVERNOR speaks under the cyron: LIVE - GOVERNOR'S MANSION.

GOVERNOR (V.O.)

The court respectfully requested that  
I, as Governor, not attend the criminal  
proceedings against the two defendants  
accused of killing my nephew...

PAN OFF the monitor as a TECH swings open the back door.

TECH

How's that? Courtroom feed clear?

TECH #2

You're magic.

TECH #2 nods to a second monitor displaying a wide angle view of a courtroom where the attorneys get settled. The Governor continues on the adjacent monitor --

GOVERNOR (V.O.)

...my appearance, as the victim's uncle,  
could unduly influence the jury...

The Governor orates on about faith in the judicial system as the courtroom feed flutters with NOISE and FLASHES OF BLACK.

TECH #2

Ah...nope, we're losing it again.

Tech grunts in frustration; rambles back out --

EXT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Tech hurries to examine a cable connection and BUMPS into Juliana rushing in the opposite direction --

TECH

Whoa, slow down.

The tech reaches to save one of her legal binders from hitting a puddle, but Juliana juggles a catch and keeps moving.

JULIANA

I-got-it, I got-it. Sorry.

STAY WITH Juliana as she presses forward; WIDEN TO REVEAL this news van is but one of a phalanx of BROADCASTING VANS and SATELLITE UPLINKS in the parking lot turned MEDIA VILLAGE in the shadow of the Courthouse.

SECURITY GUARD (V.O., PRE-LAP)

No one gets through without court  
issued ID.

EXT. FRONT OF THE COURTHOUSE - DAY

Alex, also in a hurry; has been stopped by A SECURITY GUARD.

ALEX

George, I told you, I lost that card.

SECURITY GUARD

And I told you to get a new one.  
They want us really strict today.

ALEX

You think I suddenly got a face  
transplant? Have an evil twin?  
Come on, I'm one of the litigators.

SECURITY GUARD

Fine. Today only. And give me your driver's license.

Alex pads his pockets -- no wallet. Alex smiles... uh...

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

Juliana hurries off a service elevator. One of her binders now slips off and slides across the floor.

INT. COURTHOUSE LOBBY - DAY

Alex bounds up the lobby stairs in a pair of brown dress shoes that don't quite match his suit.

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

Juliana rounds a corner, sees the bailiff closing the doors to the courtroom.

JULIANA

Hold the door, please.

Alex rounds the opposite corner. Alex and Juliana each suppress a smile as they close the distance, meet up right outside the courtroom and pivot into the courtroom. Face to face, but no time to debrief, except:

ALEX

You didn't bring my shoes, did you?

COURT CLERK (O.S.)

All rise.

INT. COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

The packed galley stands as Alex and Juliana split off to opposite far aisles and make their way to the front, over...

COURT CLERK

Docket Number CR-467021. People vs. Paul Canterna and Kyle Tuck. This court is now in session.

Juliana reaches the prosecution table just in time, joins her cousin, **GABRIEL LODARI**, mid 30's, handsome, focused; and **NATALIE WALKER**, early 30s, a mixture of polished look and natural beauty that screams high-maintenance woman -- but fun. Natalie gives Juliana an inquisitive look. She shrugs.

JUDGE

Be seated.

Alex slips in behind his brother, defense attorney **MITCH GALLOWAY**, also mid 30's -- a devil-may-care exterior masking a killer instinct and drive. On sight of Alex:

MITCH

Nice hair.

Alex pads his brown locks - nothing wrong with them. Mitch is messing with him for being late. Mitch sits next to the defendants, two college students, KYLE TUCK and PAUL CANTERNA.

JUDGE

Good morning. Counsel, please enter your appearances.

Both Gabriel and Mitch pop back up and talk over each other:

MITCH

Good Morning, your Honor.

GABRIEL

Good Morning, Your Honor.

JUDGE

One at time, please.

MITCH

Mitch Galloway, for the defense, Your Honor.

GABRIEL

Gabriel Lodari, for the prosecution, Your Honor.

Mitch and Gabriel look at each other, two take-charge adversaries ready for battle, neither giving an inch from jump.

JUDGE

Are we seriously starting this way, counselors?

TIME CUT TO:

ECU - A GLASS OF WATER IS Poured

WIDER - Gabriel sets down the pitcher on his table; takes a long swig of water with his back to the jury. Mitch already rolls his eyes at the posturing. Gabriel winks at Juliana. Let's rumble. Then he dramatically turns to the jury and launches into his opening statement.

GABRIEL

Ladies and gentlemen, over the course of the next few days, you will be told two stories -- one by the prosecution and one by the defense team. These stories will be similar in many ways: the same characters, the same locations, the same tragic ending. But ultimately, these stories will have one striking and crucial difference: Only one of them will be true.

Gabriel pauses for dramatic effect. He then changes cadence and rambles off the "basic facts" of the case. As Gabriel does so, **INTERCUT** his Opening Statement with **SUBJECTIVE VISUAL POPS** of the events he describes.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Fact: A young man with a promising future, named Jason O'Neill, was found at 11:58 pm on September 4th of this year, in a Westly University parking lot... His skull crushed.

**VISUAL POP:** Night. A co-ed finds a bleeding, unconscious JASON.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Fact: An hour and fifty minutes earlier at a downtown bar, Jason O'Neill had confronted the defendants, Kyle Tuck and Paul Canterna in a large, public, and physical altercation.

**VISUAL POP:** Paul and O'Neill engage in a shoving match - screaming all around, including Kyle and O'Neill's friends.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Fact: Paul Canterna and Kyle Tuck do not attend Westly University. And yet, they were videotaped by Westly security entering that campus at 11:10 and rushing out at 11:56.

**VISUAL POP:** A campus security monitor shows Paul and Kyle speeding out in a mid-sized truck.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Fact: The defendant's blood was found on Jason O'Neill.

**VISUAL POPS:** A lifeless hand is swabbed for DNA. Pipettes calibrated. Tests run.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Fact: Later that night, Jason O'Neill died in the hospital of severe brain hemorrhage caused by a narrow blunt force instrument.

**VISUAL POP:** A hospital monitor flatlines. Doctors confer over an X-ray of a cracked skull. END INTERCUT on...

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Fact: Jason O'Neill was murdered.

Gabriel pauses to allow the statement to resonate. The jury is spellbound. Mitch knows he must break that spell.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Now the defendants will tell you they were on campus to see a girl--

MITCH  
Objection. Mister Lodari is setting  
the expectation that my clients will  
testify -- not his promise to make.

JUDGE  
Sustained. The jury will disregard.

MITCH  
(as he sits, to the jury)  
If I were responsible for all Mister  
Lodari's promises, I'd be mending broken  
hearts all over the midwest.

That earns Mitch a laugh from the jury. He has successfully  
impeded Gabriel's momentum. Gabriel tries to steal some of  
it back by addressing Mitch --

GABRIEL  
Would you like to finish my opening  
statement for me, too?

MITCH  
I don't have that active an imagination.

Another chuckle from the jury. Ouch. Walked into that one.

JUDGE  
Talk to me or the jury, Counselors,  
not to each other.

GABRIEL  
He's interrupting me,  
Your Honor.

MITCH  
He asked me a question,  
Your Honor.

The Judge peers down impassively at the two squabbling  
attorneys like a stern father. Gabriel turns, facing the  
jury, but calls out over his shoulder as if addressing Mitch.

GABRIEL  
I wish I had imagined all of this.  
Jason O'Neill would still be alive.

INT. UNION STATION - CONTINUOUS

The courtroom camera-feed plays on a television above a coffee  
cart in the middle of the large marbled lobby, crisscrossed  
by mid-morning commuters. A BARISTA fires up the cappuccino  
machine and is shushed by the gathering crowd of spectators.

BARISTA  
What?

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

A dramatic pause as Mitch now stands in front of the jury --  
his turn at an opening statement.

MITCH

'How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg? Four: calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg.'

(then, re: Gabriel)

And calling conjecture fact doesn't make it the truth.

As Mitch prattles off his side of the story, **INTERCUT** with competing **SUBJECTIVE VISUAL POPS** of the events he describes.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Truth: Yes, earlier that night, my clients did have an altercation with the deceased. A violent altercation. Blows were exchanged. Blood drawn. That's where DNA traces were exchanged, not during some hypothetical later second struggle in a parking lot.

**VISUAL POP:** *The bar altercation is a full-on brawl. Hard punches. Blood. Jason's posse jumps in. Kyle breaks it up.*

MITCH (CONT'D)

Truth: My clients did visit the Westly campus for about forty-five minutes later that night, but...

Mitch turns to Gabriel, regarding one of his exhibits.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Could you hand me that map of yours?

Gabriel smiles wryly, knows the tactic -- a conscious effort to diminish Gabriel's courtroom image to that of Vanna White.

MITCH (CONT'D)

(back to jury)

My clients were visiting Paul's girlfriend, Anne Stehly, the object of the bar brawl...

(as Gabriel hasn't moved)

Is there a problem with your exhibits?

GABRIEL

No. Help yourself.

Gabriel didn't take the bait. As Mitch walks over to the map exhibit and reaches down for it himself, he notices something: Alex's shoes don't match with his suit. Mitch looks up at his brother Alex, who shrugs. Mitch shakes off the idle thought, grabs the map and continues --

MITCH

My clients spent over a half an hour of that forty-five minutes in a dorm room on the opposite side of campus from where the deceased was found.

**VISUAL POPS:** Dorm room. Anne opens the door to find Paul and Kyle; invites them in. She gets some ice for Paul's face.

MITCH (CONT'D)

And the most important truth: There is no murder weapon. Now, Mister Lodari will try to convince you that it was a tire iron. Why? Because the eight-year-old truck my clients were driving has a tire iron that wasn't originally sold with it. That's it. That's the overwhelming evidence with which he'll ask you to convict my clients.

(then)

Mr. Lodari wants to see my clients testify. Even though the burden of proof is entirely on his side; and he doesn't have something as basic as a murder weapon to show you.

Mitch looks to Alex, decides to go for a risky play --

MITCH (CONT'D)

But sure. We'll testify. The truth is on our side. Yet we all know that when the nephew of the governor is killed, blame must be assigned...

Gabriel bolts up to object and SPILLS his GLASS OF WATER.

GABRIEL

Objection.

MITCH

...with or without actual evidence.

Gabriel quickly clears his legal briefs as water spreads.

MITCH (CONT'D)

(to jury)

You see? Mister Lodari is already nervous or trying to distract you.

GABRIEL

The victim's relationship to the governor is completely irrelevant.

MITCH

No, it's prejudicial, but not irrelevant. When a prosecution is politically driven...

JUDGE

Stop right there. Both of you. Bailiff, clear the courtroom -- everyone, but the attorneys.

(to his clerk)

Pass me your phone.

(re: courtroom camera)

And turn that thing off!

**BEGIN INTERCUT SEQUENCE:** Two high-powered men move through separate parts of the city. Out of buildings. Into their chauffeured cars. We never see their faces, but know they are on the move -- with purpose.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER - INTERCUT

Entirely empty except for the Judge, who's still on the bench, and the lawyers: Gabriel, Juliana and Natalie on one side. Mitch and Alex on the other. Silence. Finally Mitch stands...

MITCH

Your Honor, we don't want to waste the court's time. If it's imperative you speak with the head of my firm, we can adjourn and arrange--

JUDGE

Mister Galloway, we're not adjourning. No one is going anywhere until I speak with all members of both trial teams; that includes your father.

The back doors open, all heads turn to see: **BROOKE COMAS** -- striking, smart. The Judge understandably mistakes her...

JUDGE (CONT'D)

The courtroom is closed to the press.

MITCH

She's our investigator, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Come in. Sit down. Say nothing.

**CONTINUE INTERCUT:** The two high powered men take separate routes to court, similar to those traveled by Alex and Juliana earlier, but with two distinct differences: we never get a good look at their faces and, they aren't rushing.

In the courtroom, Brooke passes Mitch (defense attorney) a note: "Think I found something." Mitch looks back at her: what? - as Gabriel (prosecutor) stands, attempts his appeal:

GABRIEL

Your Honor, I understand the sensitive nature of this case, but is the immediate presence of State's Attorney Lodari completely necessary?

JUDGE

I'm only saying this once, counselor. And your uncle will hear it directly.

Alex sneaks a glance at Juliana. Shit, it's like detention.

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

Finally, we get a good look at these two legends: **VICTOR GALLOWAY** and **ROMAN LODARI** (both late 50's) round separate corridors and spy each other equal distance to the courtroom doors. They pause a moment -- like gunfighters outside a saloon -- a lifetime of personal and professional antagonism, but also mutual respect, fills the space between them.

VICTOR

Called into the principal's office.

ROMAN

Bet your kid started it.

That actually earns a smirk from Victor as the two push into--

INT. COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

As the two patriarchs enter and take their places in front of their respective tribes --

JUDGE

Welcome Gentlemen. I appreciate your coming at such short notice.

ROMAN

Not at all, Your Honor. We appreciate the sensitive nature of this case.

VICTOR

And the burden of responsibility and outside pressures it brings.

But it's a thin veneer: both men are annoyed as hell to be called in like this. Victor is slightly more erudite than Roman, but still a warrior. Roman carries a slight chip on his shoulder, chiseled there by humble beginnings.

JUDGE

Of course you do. I confess this is the biggest trial I've ever adjudicated. So I'll get right to it. I took this extraordinary measure to ensure you all hear me: I don't know how or where this generational family feud started, but I will not allow it to corrupt this case.

ROMAN

Your Honor, I assure you the State's Attorney's office strives to be professional in all ways. I apologize if the Court feels we've fallen short of that standard.

VICTOR

As do I. Sometimes our firm's passionate advocacy and commitment to our clients can appear combative.

JUDGE

It's way beyond passion, gentlemen. Smoke a peace pipe or settle it with pistols at dawn, either way don't bring it here. Consider this courtroom holy ground.

Victor and Roman both know better than to protest or placate further. Victor would rather chew glass, but offers a hand to Roman. Roman looks at it. Fuck. Okay. Roman reaches out; accepts the symbol of détente. It almost reads genuine.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Good. I'm glad we have that settled. Because next time, I'll sanction every single one of you. Court resumes at one.

The gavel hits. The judge quickly pivots out. Just as fast, Roman and Victor release their handshake and stride out without a word. Roman glances briefly at Alex, then Juliana. Does he know? Or was that Alex's imagination?

Beat. The second generation of rivals stand, admonished.

ALEX

So you guys wanna grab a burger?

Juliana chuckles, but no one else does. The feud is still on.

The rival gangs pack up and clear out, as Mitch and Gabriel stare each other down with bravado.

Alex and Juliana are left alone in the empty courtroom, still standing on opposite sides of the aisle.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I guess it's up to us.

JULIANA

The duel or the burger?

ALEX

To kiss and make up.

Can't kiss; but she steps forward and extends her hand. Alex takes it. Peter glances back from the main doors to note the connection. Off this intimate handshake --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. UPSCALE HOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

**SUPER: THREE WEEKS EARLIER**

A nondescript sedan rolls to a stop several empty rows away from any other parked vehicles.

**PETER DOHERTY**, a dashing Chicago detective with old school attitude, throws the car into park; glances in his rear-view mirror at an attractive woman in his back seat: **LINDA**, well-kept, a smoker's voice that works for her, but on the decline.

PETER  
Wait here. I'll bring him out.

LINDA  
Honey, I've long stopped waiting in cars for boys.

Peter gets out and throws on his blazer, offering a glimpse of his gun on his back belt.

PETER  
It's a State Prosecutor's Annual Mixer. Believe me - not your scene.

LINDA  
What does a lawyer need with a gun?

Peter taps his badge against her window as he moves off --

PETER  
I'm a cop. I just work for lawyers.

EXT. UPSCALE HOTEL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Roman Lodari, the State's Attorney, exits the back of a town car, spots Peter finishing his trek across the parking lot.

ROMAN  
Peter. We've finally dragged you to one of these?

PETER  
Couldn't change the venue, Sir?

Roman glances at the hotel marquee... and shrugs.

INT. SAME UPSCALE HOTEL - MEZZANINE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Defense attorney Mitch Galloway gazes down into the open lobby at Roman Lodari (rival family patriarch), who crosses with Peter into his semiformal event in a banquet hall

MITCH

The State's Attorney indicts your son for murder and he doesn't have the decency to move his prosecutor party out of your hotel?

BRANDON TUCK (50's), a wealthy real estate developer, has cleared out the lounge for a private meeting.

TUCK

You can bet I would've stuck it to the sons-of-bitches on the deposit.

Tuck's son, Kyle and his less affluent friend, Paul Canterna - codefendants in the O'Neill Murder Trail -- sit on a couch.

MITCH

My brother was held up in court. He should be here any minute.

TUCK

Then he'll miss the headline. But if I'm right in this decision, you already know why I asked you here.

MITCH

Mister Tuck, you realize that changing counsel in a case of this magnitude three weeks before trial is not generally a winning strategy.

TUCK

I should've fired these jokers at the preliminary hearing. All they want to do is take my money and make a deal. I don't care if this dead kid was the Governor's nephew or the Dali Lama, I need someone to stand up and fight, play some damn offense.

MITCH

I know this judge. He's won't grant a continuance this late simply because you fired your attorneys.

TUCK

Then you'd better get to work.

MITCH

And you're aware that my firm doesn't have the most cordial relationship with the State's Attorneys office.

TUCK

You hate each other. I don't act capriciously, Mister Galloway. But I take action when I need to. paralysis here equals failure.

MITCH

I just want to be clear. By hiring us, you'd be declaring war.

TUCK

Son, they're trying to put these boys in prison for the rest of their lives for something they didn't do. War is exactly what we need.

INT. BANQUET ROOM/HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Splash! Red wine flies -- onto Juliana Lodari's skirt. Natalie, the-fun-but-dramatic-member of the prosecution team, is the culprit, flailing her hands while making a point --

NATALIE

Oh, God. I'm so sorry!

Natalie turns to a fellow PROSECUTOR at the party.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

See what you made me do!

PROSECUTOR

All I said was "Another Lodari."

Natalie, perhaps slightly tipsy, half-admonishes, half flirts with the fellow prosecutor, while Juliana blots her skirt.

NATALIE

Explain to me how nepotism got her into the Manhattan DA's office.

(to Juliana)

What did you win -- thirty cases?

JULIANA

(re: stain)

I've gotta get this out.

PROSECUTOR

Seriously, Juliana. Welcome to the State's Attorney's Office.

STAY WITH Juliana as she nods and heads to the exit while Natalie continues to flirt-rant at the fellow Prosecutor.

NATALIE

Forget it. You blew it. She hates you now. I think I hate you now.

Juliana intercepts her cousin, Gabriel Lodari, and Peter (detective assigned to State's Attorney) sneaking out.

PETER

...No, it's not an active case. But you're gonna want to hear this.

JULIANA

No way. You guys aren't escaping unless you take me with you. You said this thing wasn't that bad.

GABRIEL

Give us a second, will you, cuz?

EXT. UPSCALE HOTEL - NIGHT

Peter and Gabriel push through the revolving door -- coming almost face to face with Alex Galloway, who's on his way inside. No words are exchanged.

GABRIEL

What the hell is Alex Galloway doing here?

PETER

I'll find out. Let's do this first.

GABRIEL

Do what first?

PETER

You still want to nail the guy who killed Caroline?

Off Gabriel, suddenly very serious.

INT./EXT. PETER'S PARKED CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Gabriel gets in back with Linda; Peter in the driver's seat.

LINDA

What took you so long? It's freezing.

PETER

Tell him. Tell him what you told me.

LINDA

Richard Manning and I broke up.

(off Gabriel's look)

He's a bad guy. I shouldn't have protected him. But there are details about the night he slammed into your fiancée that I remember now.

GABRIEL

Now? Now you're ready to tell the truth? Three years later? After Manning's been acquitted of manslaughter?

Gabriel starts to get out of the car, pissed.

PETER

Just listen, Gabe.

GABRIEL

It doesn't work that way, honey. I can't prosecute him again.

PETER

Maybe you can.

(off Gabriel, to Linda)

Tell him about the coke.

LINDA

Richard was drunk, sure. But I also saw him snort up that day about half an hour before the accident.

GABRIEL

Peter, it's irrelevant. Possession is a lesser included offense. Double jeopardy still applies.

LINDA

And he gave me a gram that afternoon.

Boom! There it is. Gabriel looks at Peter -- bingo --

PETER

We get the prick on distribution.

INT. LOBBY ADJACENT HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

A bartender points directions to Alex Galloway.

BARTENDER

One floor up on the mezzanine. But it's closed now -- private meeting.

ALEX

Yeah, that's me.

Alex turns to head up when he stops short, seeing Juliana Lodari approach the bar. Juliana looks up at him. A SUSPENDED MOMENT. A thunderbolt. A history.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Juliana?

JULIANA

Alex... Hi.

Slight beat. It's awkward and kinetic at the same time.

ALEX

I...uh...heard you were back in town.

JULIANA

Three months now.

(slightly embarrassed)

Couldn't wait to get out, remember?

Now here I am, working for my father.

ALEX

Yeah, I keep hoping to bump into you at the courthouse. But a hotel bar works just as well.

JULIANA

State's Attorney's Annual Mixer.

ALEX

Oh, right. I think they keep losing my invitation.

JULIANA

A room full of drunk prosecutors. Could be dangerous for a defense attorney.

ALEX

With you dressed to kill? Absolutely.

JULIANA

You're looking pretty lethal yourself.

ALEX

(re: her skirt stain)  
Party foul?

JULIANA

Red wine. I need some club soda.

ALEX

Club soda's a mistake. You gotta pour white wine on red wine -- counterbalance the acidity.

JULIANA

(rolls with it)  
But of course: simple chemistry.

ALEX

Electron Proton Attraction.

JULIANA

Yin and yang.

ALEX

Day and night.

JULIANA

Boy and girl.

Alex holds Juliana's look - chemistry indeed -- as he orders from the bartender:

ALEX

Glass of chardonnay, please.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Gabriel Lodari and Peter push back inside, already strategizing --

GABRIEL

Statute of limitations on distribution is three years. That gives us less than two weeks to indict Manning.

PETER

Finish your grip and grin. I'll drive her home, get a formal statement.

GABRIEL

Peter... Thank you.

PETER

You got it, buddy.

Peter moves back outside as Gabriel fist pumps the air. But his mood is instantly punctured when he sees: his cousin, Juliana, with Alex Galloway at the hotel bar. Alex pulls Juliana's skirt taut as she dribbles white wine on it. What the fuck?! Gabriel beelines to the bar --

AT THE HOTEL LOBBY STAIRCASE

Mr. Tuck, Kyle and Paul walk Mitch Galloway to the first floor.

MITCH

As soon as you inform prior counsel, I'll call over for the casework.

TUCK

They'll know before you reach your car.

PAUL

Thank you, Mister Galloway. I really appreciate it.

MITCH

Thank me when we've won, Paul. Your father okay with this?

PAUL

I haven't told him yet.

Mitch is suddenly distracted, spotting his brother, Alex, having words with Gabriel Lodari at the bar, as Tuck turns to Paul.

TUCK

I'm paying. What's the problem?

PAUL

They just have to iron out some history.

AT THE HOTEL LOBBY BAR

Gabriel (Lodari) and Alex (Galloway) have been sparring since Gabriel interrupted Alex and Juliana's flirtation.

GABRIEL

Pretty lame party crashing. Hovering in the lobby... Jump on in, eat our food, tell some jokes.

ALEX

(re: Juliana)

I'm guessing the only interesting thing about that party is now here.

GABRIEL

Keep your hands off my cousin.

JULIANA

Gabriel, we weren't making out. He was helping me with a wine stain.

GABRIEL

He was tugging on your skirt...

Mitch arrives to back up Alex. He swigs the white wine.

MITCH

You caught us: My brother and I came here to drink your booze and grope your woman.

GABRIEL

After a long day of pimping the justice system, no doubt.

MITCH

That's right. There was another reason. Who owns this hotel again?

Their moment stolen, Alex stands and turns to Juliana --

ALEX

It was almost good seeing you.

JULIANA

Almost.

GABRIEL

(puts it together)

You vultured the O'Neill case?

MITCH

Rescue is the word I think you're looking for. We're rescuing the case.

Alex moves out. Mitch follows; he and Gabriel continue to jaw at each other as the distance between them spreads.

GABRIEL

You rescuing both misunderstood killers  
or just the rich kid?

MITCH

Against you? Gave 'em a two-for-one  
special.

Alex glances back at Juliana, reconnection made, spark relit.

GABRIEL

Generous *and* brave. If I was related  
to Victor Galloway I wouldn't come  
within shooting distance of John  
Canterna.

MITCH

See you in court, counselor.

Alex's trance is broken on mention of the name. To Mitch --

ALEX

You agreed to represent John Canterna's  
son without talking to him first?

MITCH

It was twenty years ago. He's had  
to have gotten over it by now.  
(off Alex's look)  
Or maybe Brooke can soften him up.

POV INSIDE A HOUSE

A front door opens to sunlight. Reveal Brooke (defense team  
investigator): charm meets no-nonsense attitude. Alex and  
Mitch stand a few feet behind.

BROOKE

Detective John Canterna?

INT. CANTERNA LIVING ROOM - DAY - MINUTES LATER

Tension. Alex, Mitch and Brooke sit opposite JOHN CANTERNA  
(50's) in a modest, but well kept living room. His son,  
Paul is there, but doesn't say a word. Police department  
citations adorn the room. Finally...

ALEX

Nice picture. Is that Colorado?

CANTERNA

(no mood for bullshit)  
Do you think my son is innocent?

MITCH

What I think isn't important. Only  
what we convince a jury to think.

CANTERNA

Like convincing a jury that an honest  
cop planted evidence?

There it is. No way they would avoid their connected past.

MITCH

Detective Canterna, I was twelve-years  
old when my father tried that case.

CANTERNA

No, I get it, your dad was advocating  
for his client.

Mitch turns to Alex. That easy? No. Canterna continues...

CANTERNA (CONT'D)

And making a name for himself: Victor  
Galloway, the King Of Acquittal.  
Everyone knew that lunatic was guilty,  
but the only person who went down in  
that trial was me. For doing my job.  
But hey, your daddy did alright by it.

MITCH

Who was the prosecutor on that case?  
Who cut you loose when it looked like  
his career was sinking with yours:  
Roman Lodari, the same guy who's now  
going after your son with the full...

CANTERNA

You're not here to right some wrong,  
to thwart a miscarriage of justice.  
You're here for the press conference.  
You're here to stay relevant.

MITCH

We're doing just fine, Detective.

ALEX

And it won't cost you anything.  
Mister Tuck is picking up our fees.

CANTERNA

So you cut-throats can use my son?  
Get out of my house.

BROOKE

So what if they use him?

All stop. Canterna turns to Brooke, a bit stunned.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Use them right back.

Mitch gives her a look: what the hell are you doing?

BROOKE (CONT'D)

I know these guys; I know they're honorable men. That's not your problem. In a trial like this, you need cut-throat. You don't have to invite them to dinner, Detective, but right now, these two cut-throats are your son's best chance at not spending the rest of his life in prison.

EXT. CANTERNA HOUSE - LATER

Alex, Mitch and Brooke head back to the car.

ALEX

Nice save, Brooke.

MITCH

I wouldn't call it a save exactly. Maybe a strong close.

ALEX

Let me translate, Brooke. I speak Mitch. He means: thank you.

MITCH

I don't know if you needed to hit cut-throat twice.

BROOKE

That was the easy part. Now we have to pull this off with three weeks prep.

ALEX

You never know, we might wrangle a continuance.

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Juliana grabs a law book as she's shadowed by Natalie.

NATALIE

They'll never get a continuance.

JULIANA

Gabriel wants a brief ready anyway.

NATALIE

I heard you got that wine stain out.

JULIANA

I bet you did.

NATALIE

Cavorting with the enemy?

JULIANA

He's an old...

INT./EXT CAR - INTERCUT

Alex drives. Brooke is shotgun. Mitch in the back.

ALEX

I wouldn't say "boyfriend."

BROOKE

So it was just a physical thing?

MITCH

It was a horny teenage crush on a girl he couldn't have.

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - INTERCUT

NATALIE

Forbidden love?

(off Juliana's shrug)

Wow. Like Romeo and Juliet.

JULIANA

It almost ended that way when my father found him in our house.

NATALIE

You had high school sex with him?

INT./EXT. PARKING GARAGE - INTERCUT

Trio gets out of the car and head into their building.

ALEX

I don't kiss and tell.

MITCH

Good. Cause you still can't have her. She's opposing counsel.

ALEX

I said hello to a girl at a bar I haven't seen for twelve years.

MITCH

Uh-huh.

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - INTERCUT

JULIANA

Seriously, it was twelve years ago.

NATALIE

And he's even hotter now, isn't he?

Juliana gives up, retreats into her office.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Forbidden lust. I love it!

INT. GALLOWAY LAW OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAYS LATER

**SUPER: TWO DAYS TO TRIAL.** Prep and more prep. A weary Alex both interviews and coaches Kyle Tuck and Paul Canterna.

ALEX

Remember: Yes or no whenever possible.  
Don't elaborate.

PAUL

Oh, right. Yeah. No.

ALEX

Okay, so after you left your girlfriend  
on Westly campus, where did you go?

PAUL

No. I mean... home. I went home...  
after I dropped Kyle off at his car.

ALEX

Where was that?

Paul looks to Kyle - a loaded beat. Alex stares at them: What?

PAUL

Kyle didn't want to park his Beamer  
at a downtown bar. So he parked it  
at one of his dad's construction sites.

KYLE

My dad makes me work construction a  
few hours a week to keep me grounded.  
Obnoxious, I know.

Alex's Assistant enters with a note. As Alex reads it--

ALEX

No, it's fine. It's specific. Juries  
like specifics. Adds authenticity.  
(exiting, re: note)  
Excuse me.

INT. ROMAN'S OFFICE / STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Roman Lodari packs his briefcase as he questions his nephew,  
Gabriel, having summoned him, along with Juliana.

ROMAN

You don't have enough on your plate?  
Lead counsel in the most visible trial  
of the year, starting in two days;  
now against the Galloways.

GABRIEL

If I could've waited to arrest Richard  
Manning, I would have. The statute of  
limitations has me up against the wall.

ROMAN  
(calls out to assistant)  
Kim, did you print my boarding pass?

KIM (O.S.)  
On your desk.

JULIANA  
Where are you going?

ROMAN  
Portland. Some federal think tank.  
Don't worry I'll be back on D-day.

GABRIEL  
Uncle Roman, I've been handed a second  
chance to convict the bastard who  
killed Caroline. I gotta take it.

ROMAN  
Calm down, Gabriel. I'm not stopping  
you. I'd keep going after the bastard  
too. You just can't prosecute it  
yourself. I'm giving it to Juliana.

GABRIEL  
Why? Because Victor Galloway is  
already screaming vendetta?

INT. VICTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Victor Galloway debriefs the issue with Mitch and Alex.

VICTOR  
Am I wrong? The man has a vendetta.

ALEX  
What do you expect, dad? Manning  
killed Gabriel Lodari's fiancée.

VICTOR  
Allegedly. You really need to work  
on incorporating allegedly into your  
vernacular.

MITCH  
Not even allegedly. We got Manning  
acquitted of the manslaughter charge.  
This double-jeopardy reach around is  
now a drug case. And what do they  
got? The word of a scorned lover?

ALEX  
I don't like it. It's ugly. Personal.  
I say pass it to another firm.

VICTOR

Richard Manning has been a corporate client for fifteen years.

ALEX

And we shouldn't have represented the drunk in the first trial.

(off Victor's look)

Alleged drunk.

MITCH

I think you just volunteered, bro.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Very late. Most of the lights are out - save one.

**SUPER: TRIAL EVE - O'NEILL MURDER TRAIL**

INT. GALLOWAY WAR ROOM - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Midnight defense team strategy session: Brooke has her head on the table as Mitch and Alex debate opening statement options:

MITCH

There are bar fights every Saturday night all over the city. This one just involved the Governor's nephew. It doesn't prove motive.

ALEX

No, no, if you say "doesn't prove motive" you're conceding there *is* motive.

Brooke lifts her head. She wants the boys back on track.

BROOKE

Look, I know I'm just the investigator here, but shouldn't you just pound away at the lack of a murder weapon?

ALEX

(riffing, as if to jury)

And not for lack of trying, ladies and gentlemen. The government spent countless man-hours searching for a fictional tire iron to fit their tortured theory. Dormitories were ransacked, houses combed, every building, back alley and construction site along our client's route home exhaustively searched. They even made eight thousand people late for work one Tuesday by shutting down the expressway. Why? Because they knew you, the jury, would demand it.

MITCH

Might work.

ALEX

Might? That's golden, write it down.

Mitch notices that Brooke has disengaged -- like she's puzzling something that Alex just said...

MITCH

What is it?

BROOKE

...Nothing.

INT. LODARI WAR ROOM - STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The prosecution team, Gabriel, Juliana, Natalie and Peter (detective) in a last minute strategy session of their own --

GABRIEL

Forget the murder weapon. We stress location, timeline and motive.

JULIANA

Timeline and location, yes. But motive is thin.

GABRIEL

(re: Paul's mug shot)

Thin? Look at Paul Canterna's face two days later.

JULIANA

Anger, revenge, I get it. But then you undermine our DNA evidence.

GABRIEL

The picture evokes state of mind. The bruising on the codefendant doesn't have to all come from the bar fight.

PETER

I don't know, you'd be surprised how much damage can be inflicted with a few well-landed punches.

NATALIE

Juliana's right. Get to motive later; hit the heart of this whole thing: their alibi witness. You gotta preview and undercut her in some way.

BACK TO GALLOWAY WAR ROOM (CONFERENCE ROOM) - NIGHT

ALEX

As our only alibi witness? Yeah, I wish the girlfriend was stronger.

MITCH

Her statements read as consistent.

ALEX

In person she's not compelling.  
Tentative, like she's trying to remember  
what to say. She'll be okay, but we  
can't rest the whole thing on her.

MITCH

You have our guys taking the stand  
already?

BROOKE

It's one in the morning, fellas. Do  
we really need to decide this now?

ALEX

Only if Mitch wants to call his shot;  
show the jury we're confident, tell  
them up front that our guys will testify.

Mitch smiles -- likes the aggressive call. He's tempted.

MITCH

Why don't you just double-dare me?

INT. RIVAL LOBBIES / EXT. STREETS - TEXTING SEQUENCE - LATER

INTECUT Alex riding down a lonely escalator in an expansive  
modern lobby WITH Juliana walking by herself through a more  
classic marble lobby. Alex is preoccupied - with the case or  
something else? He pulls out his phone; texts, pauses before...

Juliana's phone vibrates. She checks it; finds a text that  
reads: *U still up?* Juliana ponders... then texts back.

Alex walks across the parking garage roof as his phone displays  
her reply: *Remember the address?* Alex smiles with nostalgia;  
texts back: *Living at home again? Should I climb the trellis?*

Juliana is outside as she laughs, types back: *My dad's in  
Portland. Front door is fine.*

INT./EXT. LODARI HOUSE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Said front door opens to reveal Alex on Juliana's doorstep.  
The one-time lovers regard each other...

JULIANA

What are we doing?

ALEX

I have no idea.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. LODARI HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex stares at an elegant Goya painting of an 18th Century Matador as Juliana emerges from the kitchen, her shoes and suit jacket off - hands Alex a glass of milk.

JULIANA

I was only gonna stay here a couple weeks, but I haven't even had a chance to look for a place.

ALEX

This painting makes sense now.  
(as she hands him the...)  
Milk?

JULIANA

You need your strength. What makes sense?

ALEX

(re: painting)  
I ran into a professor from Loyola Law School. He told me our fathers started the Matadors together. Did you know that?

JULIANA

I thought it was just my dad.

ALEX

(shrugs, figures)  
Good name for a secret law school society: Matadors. Part showman, part strategist.

JULIANA

Killer instinct.

ALEX

With all this bad blood, it's hard to imagine our two Matadors were once close friends.

There's a ritualistic quality in the way these two move about the room, a dance.

JULIANA

Apparently, it's a lot easier for two friends to become enemies, than two enemies to become friends.

ALEX  
Who, us? We were enemies?

JULIANA  
No, we were rebels.

ALEX  
You were a rebel. I was forbidden fruit.

JULIANA  
(smiles, then)  
Don't get me wrong. The feelings were real.  
(off Alex)  
Weren't they?

ALEX  
They had to be. I haven't felt that way since. Until I saw you again.

Boom goes the dynamite. So, there it is.

Juliana stares at Alex -- the spark has turned to flame. But Alex needs to clear something up first --

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I'm representing Richard Manning.  
(off Juliana's look)  
The man who killed your cousin's fiancée...

JULIANA  
I know who he is. I'm prosecuting him.

ALEX  
Oh.  
(an awkward beat)  
You know we didn't go looking for the case the first time. And we offered to plea it.

JULIANA  
Is that why you're here now? In the middle of the night? To offer a plea?

ALEX  
No.

JULIANA  
What are you here for?

Alex slowly moves closer to Juliana, takes her hand. Then...

ALEX  
I thought I knew driving over here.

JULIANA  
Did it slip your mind?

Alex pauses for a moment, then steps closer, pulling Juliana's hand to his chest with both of his.

ALEX  
Something like: I don't want bad blood between us.

Alex inches in...bringing them ever so slowly together.

JULIANA  
And now?

ALEX  
I want more.

Finally, their lips touch - a gentle, but long overdue kiss. The pair falls to the couch, as clothing falls to the floor...

EXT. HIGH RISE CONSTRUCTION SITE - EARLY MORNING - NEXT DAY

The steel skeleton of a skyscraper looms as a group of Construction Workers arrive for work. A woman's lower leg slides into the foreground.

BROOKE'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Excuse me, can you tell me where the shift supervisor is?

Heads turn and take in the incongruent vision: Brooke (defense team investigator), in her smart skirt and heels.

BROOKE  
It will only take a second, I promise.

EXT. LODARI HOUSE - ABOUT SAME TIME

Bang. Roman Lodari shuts the back door of a town car as his driver pulls away. Roman notices an unfamiliar car parked on the street and Juliana's car still in the driveway.

INT. LODARI HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Roman immediately calls out as he enters, leaving his carry-on bag just inside the door.

ROMAN  
Juliana, you still here?

He hears the TV on in the kitchen -- and voices underneath?

*Note: We've caught up to our opening scene, only now it's from Roman's POV.*

As Roman makes his way to the kitchen --

ROMAN (CONT'D)  
Shouldn't you be at the courthouse  
already?

Roman stops, noticing something. He leans for a closer look: a  
pair of men's dress shoes on the floor in his living room.

JULIANA (O.S.)  
Uh...yeah, just leaving now, dad.

Roman hears the backdoor shut as he enters the kitchen.

ROMAN  
Someone here?

Juliana scrambles. She turns off the TV, on the run.

JULIANA  
Sorry, the volume crept up on me.  
Wish me luck.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON A HANDSHAKE --

JUDGE (O.S.)  
Good. I'm glad we have that settled...

REVEAL AND REPEAT: Roman and Victor are shaking hands --

JUDGE (CONT'D)  
...Because next time, I'll sanction  
every single one of you. Court  
resumes at one.

The gavel hits. Roman and Victor release their hands and stride  
out without a word, passing their respective admonished tribes.  
*Note: We are now caught up in our story.*

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A NEWS HELICOPTER SWOOSHES overhead when Mitch pushes out a  
side entrance. Brooke chases after him, toward his car as  
several reporters and camera crews start rushing their way.

BROOKE  
Mitch. Mitch, slow down.

MITCH  
Can you believe that judge? He drags  
my father and his uncle in there  
like we're a couple of kids.

BROOKE  
You did ignore his admonishment not  
to mention the victim's relationship  
with the Governor.

MITCH

C'mon, he knew I was gonna ignore it at some point. Be a man; slap me with a contempt citation.

BROOKE

I know how they could've ditched the murder weapon.

This bombshell stops Mitch, but only for a beat, and he's on his way, flashing smiles to the closing media swarm.

MITCH

You mean how the "real killer" could've ditched the murder weapon. It's not our job to theorize about how our clients ditched anything.

BROOKE

It's my job to have a theory about everything. The morning after the murder, there was a huge cement pour at the construction site where Paul dropped off Kyle. A tire iron could have easily been missed in all the rebar.

MITCH

Very creative, but you know we've been hired to argue the *defense* here.

BROOKE

Just want you prepared in case the prosecution ever realizes it.

MITCH

I wouldn't sweat it. If you're right, the murder weapon is now encased in 100,000 cubic feet of concrete below 5,000 tons of steel.

On that, Mitch ducks into his car as the gang of reporters reach to within earshot, SHOUTING QUESTIONS.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

**PROSECUTION'S CASE SEQUENCE:** Wardrobe and time-of-day lighting change from beat to beat as Gabriel and Juliana Lodari make the government's case. **INTERCUT** more **SUBJECTIVE VISUAL POPS** illustrating the prosecution's theories.

The defendants' fathers, John Canterna and Brandon Tuck, sit separately in the galley, while Gabriel questions a BARTENDER.

BARTENDER

Seemed like regular drunken hazing at first. O'Neill had that small one...

GABRIEL

The defendant, Kyle Tuck?

BARTENDER

--yeah, him, in a headlock. He was shouting: I'll kill you. O'Neill and his buddy were laughing at him. Then the other one there started swinging.

**VISUAL POP:** *The bar that night. Kyle, in a headlock, screams in anger at O'Neill's posse. Paul throws a punch at O'Neill.*

GABRIEL

"I'll kill you." Did he sound like he meant it?

BARTENDER

Sure. But I didn't think they'd actually do it.

MITCH

Objection.

TIME CUT. NOW A CAMPUS SECURITY GUARD IS ON THE STAND

Juliana scans the video surveillance camera and FREEZES ON an image of a Toyota Tocomo rolling through the frame.

JULIANA

Are vehicles instructed to stop on their way out and return their visitor passes?

SECURITY GUARD

Yes, Ma'am.

JULIANA

But the defendant's truck sped through without stopping at 11:56 pm, correct?

**VISUAL POP:** *Paul and Kyle speed off the campus in Paul's truck.*

Back in the courtroom, Mitch cross-examines the guard.

MITCH

When you issued this pass, did you ask my clients where they were going?

SECURITY GUARD

To see a girl in McKinley Dorm.

MITCH

So you knew my client's were heading to the east side of campus?

TIME CUT. NOW A MALE COLLEGE STUDENT IS ON THE STAND

COLLEGE STUDENT

I remember because our Coach gave us midnight curfew. We pulled into the west lot with ten minutes to spare.

GABRIEL

Is that when you saw a dark Toyota  
Tocoma pulling out of the west lot?

COLLEGE STUDENT

I'd say gunning it. Yes.

**VISUAL POP:** *The College Student leans on his horn as Paul's trunk nearly hits him, barreling out of the west lot.*

GABRIEL

And, as soon as you parked in that  
lot, did you notice anything else?

COLLEGE STUDENT

Yes, I found Jason O'Neill with his  
head bashed in.

**VISUAL POP:** *The Student discovers Jason O'Neill, unconscious.*

Back in the court, Alex cross examines the College Student.

ALEX

On these Saturday nights when you're  
rushing back for curfew, do you always  
take note of the exact make and model  
of every car you pass?

COLLEGE STUDENT

No, just the ones speeding with their  
lights off.

Ouch. Mister Tuck (Kyle's father) is not happy.

TIME CUT. NOW A FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST IS ON THE STAND

He points to a detailed diagram of the victim's skull.

PATHOLOGIST

The fracture pattern is consistent  
with a single blunt force by a dense  
object with a narrow constant diameter.

GABRIEL

So, like a pipe or... a tire iron?

MITCH

Objection! Leading.

**VISUAL POP:** *O'Neill's head is struck with a tire iron.*

PATHOLOGIST

I'd say more like a tire iron.

END OF SEQUENCE

INT. COURTHOUSE CAFETERIA - DAY

Short lunch recess. Alex walks with his tray of food, finds that Brandon Tuck has intercepted Mitch.

TUCK

I told you I wanted offense. We need some attack. You're just rolling over.

MITCH

Mister Tuck, we had to play some defense. They got the ball first, but we held them to a field goal. Now we get the ball.

TUCK

Field goal? They just put up twenty-eight points.

Over this, Alex turns away, leaving Mitch to deal with Tuck Senior. He spots Juliana, Gabriel and Peter eating together. Alex catches Juliana's eye. He decides to extend an olive branch; walks up, casually sits with the prosecution team.

ALEX

Boy, you guys are really landing some punches in there.

The statement is met with cold silence. Heads around the room, including Mitch's, turn discreetly as if Alex sat at the wrong table in the high school cafeteria.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hmm, the mac and cheese looked a lot better under the heat lamp.

Met with more aggressive silence. Juliana throws Alex a rope.

JULIANA

I just drown it in salt.

ALEX

Good idea.

Alex spies the salt-shaker next to Peter. Alex nods, do you mind? Peter reluctantly passes it over.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Thanks. So... who here thinks this feud of ours is counterproductive?

Gabriel looks to Peter. Is this asshole lost?

ALEX (CONT'D)

I mean how did it even start?

PETER

The way I hear it, your father screwed over his best friend for a job.

ALEX  
That's debatable. But then that  
friend made it personal; stole my  
dad's girlfriend.

GABRIEL  
(to Peter, for Alex)  
They're starting to believe their  
own lies.

ALEX  
The point is: this has been snowballing  
for thirty years and we're all getting  
crushed by the avalanche.  
(then, olive branch)  
So...Richard Manning - what are you  
guys looking for?

Taboo. Juliana looks at Alex: Don't do this. Not here.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I know you want jail time. As long  
as he doesn't have to plea to a felony,  
I think I can get you three months.

GABRIEL  
(getting up)  
There's no plea on Manning.

ALEX  
I thought she had the case.

Alex turns to Juliana, whose look says STOP. But instead,  
Alex follows after Gabriel. Peter again notes Juliana and  
Alex's familiarity, as we FOLLOW Alex hounding Gabriel --

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Look, Gabriel, I know this is personal.  
Believe me, I wish it wasn't on my  
desk. But the only evidence you have  
of narcotics distributions is the  
statement of a jilted lover.

GABRIEL  
Wrong again. We have a smoking gun.

ALEX  
Oh, yeah? Are we ever gonna see it?

Gabriel would rather punch Alex in the mouth, but instead,  
he stops near Mitch, who watches -- what the hell?

GABRIEL  
You want discovery right now? In the  
cafeteria? Here it is: Manning gave  
his mistress the coke in her apartment.  
She had a kid; hence a nanny; hence a  
nanny-cam. We have videotape.

ALEX  
(skeptical)  
An ex-mistress kept nanny-cam footage  
for three years?

GABRIEL  
(moving on)  
Justice is a bitch.

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Well intentioned but unwise, Alex continues to tail Gabriel --

ALEX  
Okay, obviously, you're calling the  
shots on this. Six months.

GABRIEL  
Do you have a learning disability or  
a hearing problem? No deal.

ALEX  
I know this is hard and you don't  
trust us. But honestly, I'm trying  
to help here.

GABRIEL  
Thanks. I'll pass.

ALEX  
C'mon, don't make the same mistake  
again. Manning wouldn't have been  
acquitted the first time if you hadn't  
over-reached...

GABRIEL  
(stops, snapping)  
Manning wouldn't have been acquitted  
if your brother hadn't done what you  
guys always do: tear down and impeach  
anyone in your way to collect from  
your scumbag clients.

ALEX  
You need to let go of it.

GABRIEL  
I don't need to hear this from you.  
Caroline was everything to me.  
(pokes Alex's chest)  
He killed her. And you helped him.  
For blood money.

Alex swats away Gabriel's hand. Gabriel shoves Alex in return. Alex shoves back. Both tempers lost now. They're way past words, ready to escalate to blows until -- a camera crew down the hall suddenly turns in their direction.

And freeze.

Alex discovers Juliana, who has seen the last part of the confrontation from the other side of the corridor. Alex can't hold her indicting gaze.

Just like that, both men collect themselves and disperse in opposite directions without another word.

INT. COURTROOM - DAYS LATER

Lips lean up to a microphone... meekly...

ANNE

Yes. That's right.

Reveal Mitch questioning a sympathetic by visibly nervous Anne Stehly - not a particularly strong witness; avoids eye contact.

MITCH

Thank you, Ms. Stelhy. I can tell this has been nerve-racking for you; I appreciate your fortitude and honesty. Just a two more questions.

(off her nod)

How long in total would you say Paul and Kyle were in your room that night?

ANNE

About thirty-five, forty minutes.

**VISUAL POP:** Kyle and Paul hang in Anne's dorm room. She's engrossed in their story; gets Paul some ice for his face.

MITCH

And based on your familiarity with the Westly campus, would Paul and Kyle be able to drive to your southwest dormitory, visit with you for thirty-five minutes, then drive over to the northwest side of campus, kill somebody and drive out in forty-six minutes total?

ANNE

No.

MITCH

Thank you very much.

JUDGE

Mister Lodari?

Mitch sits, confident in his strong direct. Gabriel stands for his cross, but doesn't move from behind his table.

GABRIEL

Ms. Stehly, do you have feelings for the defendant?

ANNE

We were dating, yes.

GABRIEL

Not anymore?

ANNE

It's...been hard with...all of this.

MITCH

I understand. Thank you.

(starts to sit, then)

Oh, and you said you attended the campus movie that night, before the defendants arrived at your room. Did you walk back to your dorm with anyone?

ANNE

My friend, Christine Doyle.

MITCH

But you were alone when the defendants allegedly arrived, is that correct?

ANNE

Yes, I was alone.

MITCH

No further questions, Your Honor.

Mitch turns to Alex. That's it? That's all the questions he has for their critical witness? Strategy or stupidity?

INT. WOMAN'S DORMITORY - DAY

A dorm room door opens to reveal Peter, who pulls his detective's badge.

PETER

Christine Doyle?

INT. COURTROOM - NEXT DAY

Same faces. Same places. Only this time Kyle is not at the defense table. He's on the stand. Alex questions him on direct.

KYLE

I thought he was a jerk.

(to the jury)

I'm sorry, I know he's dead and I feel bad for his family, but it's the truth.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

He started the fight in the bar, called Annie a whore and beat the hell out of Paul. It wasn't even close to fair with that posse of his there.

**VISUAL POP:** Kyle's in a choke-hold as O'Neill and Paul fight. O'Neill's friends push Paul, allowing O'Neill to land a violent blow. Paul falls to the floor, but pops right back up, charges --

ALEX (V.O.)

Did Paul get his licks in?

KYLE (V.O.)

Sure. Paul's dad always told us: if a bully's gonna beat you up, make sure he doesn't enjoy it.

Back in the courtroom, Kyle is confident and relaxed. His blunt honesty seems to be playing well with the jury.

KYLE (CONT'D)

But it ended there. We never saw O'Neill again.

ALEX

So you and Paul didn't go to Westly campus that night looking for more?

KYLE

How could we? O'Neill was still at the bar when we left. We went to see Annie. Paul knew O'Neill was full of crap about sleeping with her, but he wanted to make sure.

ALEX

Did he?

KYLE

Paul never even asked her. He could tell by her reaction when we told her about the bar fight. She didn't even know who O'Neill was. The guy was just mouthing off.

TIME CUT TO: Juliana cross-examining Kyle.

JULIANA

What did you three talk about for forty minutes in Anne's room?

KYLE

The fight mostly. She thought Paul should go to his dad; he used to be a cop. But Paul was over it. Then she wanted to give him some ice for his eye.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

(turns to the jury)

But she only had these three little cubes in one of those mini-fridges, so he rolled a cold soda on it instead.

JULIANA

Did she call or text anyone during the time you two spent in her room?

KYLE

Uh...maybe. I don't remember.

JULIANA

However, you remember the three little ice cubes and the soda?

KYLE

Yes.

Juliana backtracks to her table and picks up a cell phone.

JULIANA

Your Honor, I'd like to introduce Exhibit 47 -- a cell phone belonging to Christine Doyle.

MITCH

Objection. We've never seen nor heard of this phone before.

JULIANA

Your Honor, we just came into possession this morning when Miss Doyle offered it to our investigator.

JUDGE

I'll allow it, pending foundation. Objection over-ruled.

Mitch looks to Alex. Have they just walked into a trap?

JULIANA

Mister Tuck, what would you say if I told you that between 11:12 and 11:44 that night, the roughly forty minutes she was allegedly with you and Mister Canterna in her dorm room, Anne Stehly and Christine Doyle exchanged twenty three text messages, which fortunately have not yet been erased from Miss Doyle's phone?

MITCH

Your Honor, just because Miss Lodari prefixes her own theories with "what would you say" doesn't mean she can testify herself.

JUDGE

It's a question, Mister Galloway.

JULIANA

Mister Tuck?

The jury leans forward: pivotal moment. Kyle's brimming confidence has suddenly vanished.

KYLE

I...I, uh, I'd say that's a lot of texting.

JULIANA

A lot of texting, yes. Can you explain how Anne Stehly exchanging twenty-three text messages in that thirty-five minute period escaped your keen and specific recollections?

KYLE

Fast thumbs?

The cavalier joke falls flat. Kyle has lost the jury. Mitch wants to bury his head. This is a train wreck.

JULIANA

That's your answer? Fast thumbs? That's your answer for why Anne Stehly ignored her boyfriend, who was just beat up by a guy who called her a whore? To send twenty-three text messages about vampire movies, breakfast and bubble gum?

MITCH

Your Honor...

KYLE

Paul didn't mean to kill him.

Juliana stops. Say what? A hush, even Juliana stands in shock.

KYLE (CONT'D)

We never got to Annie's room. We saw O'Neill pull in... I don't know, Paul just snapped, grabbed the tire iron from the back... one swing and--

CRACK - GLASS SHATTERS. The jury's attention is drawn to the defense table where Mitch has knocked over his glass of water.

SMASH OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. GALLOWAY CONFERENCE ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Crisis Mode. Mitch presses Kyle for the rest of his story.

KYLE

Paul wanted to fight O'Neill one-on-one without his buddies -- so we went looking for him.

MITCH

Wait. You just told the court you saw O'Neill as you pulled in. Did you go looking for him or happen to see him?

KYLE

Look, I panicked, I got a little confused up there, okay? Like how panicked and confused I got when Paul pulled that tire iron.

MITCH

During this, now second, fight?

KYLE

There wasn't a second fight. Paul just walked up and swung.

***VISUAL POP:** In the campus parking lot Paul swings the tire iron at O'Neill, who is looking away from him.*

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - INTERCUT

They've separated their clients. Alex interviews Paul, who is devastated and nearly speechless.

PAUL

I can't believe he said that. Why would he say that?

ALEX

Paul, look at me: Focus. Were you ever in Anne Stehly's dorm that night?

PAUL

No. No, Kyle said I could take him.

ALEX

O'Neill?

PAUL

A fair fight, one on one. We found him walking back to his dorm in the West parking lot.

**VISUAL POP:** Paul and O'Neill fist fight in the parking lot.

ALEX

A fair fight with a tire iron?

PAUL

No. It was fair. But I was getting my ass kicked. I fell down. O'Neill was screaming at me, asking were we done or if I wanted more.

**VISUAL POP:** O'Neill screams at Paul, who raises a hand: Stop. O'Neill move to help Paul up. The fight is over, then -- CRACK! A tire iron slams into O'Neill's skull.

PAUL (CONT'D)

O'Neill was helping me up when Kyle just hit him with it.

INT. GALLOWAY CONFERENCE ROOM - INTERCUT

Kyle tells Mitch a whole different story.

KYLE

We drove out of there; didn't say anything to anyone, not even our parents. Paul's like a brother to me. When the police asked about it, I covered for him and...we've been in this together ever since.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - INTERCUT

PAUL

Kyle talked Annie into saying we were with her. He said if we stuck to the story there's nothing they could prove.

(then)

He was just trying to protect me.

ALEX

He's not trying to protect you now.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A television behind the bar plays "Gotcha" footage of Alex and Gabriel's altercation in the courthouse corridor as Alex and Mitch share a drink at the bar.

ALEX

It's been a week. How many times are they going replay that thing?

MITCH

You want it on a loop now.

(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

The more they show of you brawling in the hallway, the less they show of us getting our asses handed to us in court.

ALEX

(to bartender)

Can we turn that off, please?

MITCH

I thought her daddy just put her on as second chair for exposure? Your high school crush is an assassin. Killer instinct with style.

Right. Alex notes the irony, raises his drink.

ALEX

A matador.

MITCH

In a skirt.

They drink to that. Beat. Postmortem over. Now what?

ALEX

So who are we choosing?

MITCH

I'm thinking Johnny Walker.

ALEX

These kids have inconsistent defenses. We can only rep one of them.

MITCH

I gotta remind you who hired us?

ALEX

Yeah, but who do you believe?

MITCH

(quotes his spiel)

"It doesn't matter who I believe, only who I can get a jury to..."

ALEX

Come on. You and me: two brothers having a drink in a bar. Who do you, Mitch Galloway, believe?

Mitch looks at Alex, then down. He doesn't want to say.

MITCH

The rich kid's a quick thinker, I'll give him that... But he's overselling. Too many forced details.

Alex agrees, but can also read his brother --

ALEX

But you wanna stick with him anyway.

MITCH

(sarcastic)

No, let's defend the son of a cop who hates us. For free - and lose; lose publicly and lose big.

ALEX

There's such a thing as a noble effort.

MITCH

Not in the criminal defense business. Kyle's already out in front of this steamroller and his buddy is about to be crushed by it.

EXT. CHICAGO BAR - LATER

After a few more, the brothers spill onto the sidewalk.

MITCH

I don't regret calling our shot in opening statements. We would've put Kyle on the stand and walked into this anyway.

ALEX

Could have done without the "truth is on our side" bit.

Mitch shrugs as he hails a cab.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Seriously, we have to decide.

MITCH

I thought we did.

ALEX

All things being equal, wouldn't you rather represent the innocent?

MITCH

All things are never equal.  
(opens cab door, turns.)  
But I admire your idealism. Tell you what: we'll shoot for it. Even, we rep Kyle and get paid. Odd, we fall on our sword for the "innocent."

Alex has nothing to lose. Shrugs okay... One, two, three: both men throw out one finger. Mitch climbs into his cab.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Even. We get paid.

ALEX  
Seriously, that's how we're deciding?

MITCH  
No, seriously, we don't have a choice.

ALEX  
You mean the courage.

Mitch shuts the cab door. Conversation over. The taxi drives off. Alex stares after it -- in complete existential moral crisis. Then suddenly, the cab's brake lights shine as it rolls to a premature stop. Mitch gets out, looks back at his brother. Son-of-a-bitch. Off Alex's smile --

CLOSE ON AN EAR

pressed against a receiver.

VICTOR (O.S.)  
I'm sure it's a healthy number, Mister Tuck, but we can't represent both anymore...

SLOWLY COME AROUND TO REVEAL Victor Galloway, fielding a hostile call with a soft-spoken certitude.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
That's true, but we have the same ethical obligation to everyone we represent...

INT. VICTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Reveal Mitch and Alex quietly standing in front of Victor, like two officers summoned before the base general.

VICTOR  
(continues into phone)  
I'm both: The head of the firm and their father. As both, I trust their judgment and stand by their decision.

Victor pulls the phone from his ear. Nothing left to say; Tuck has apparently hung up. Victor sets down the receiver, never taking his eyes off his two sons.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
You're both idiots.

MITCH  
Unpredictable idiots.

VICTOR  
Pro-bono's one thing; I don't care about the money.  
(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

That's a lie, I do care about the money -- but how big a hole do you want to dig for us? The entire State of Illinois is watching this case -- future clients. Did you enjoy your public flogging so much, you have to go back for more?

MITCH

(to Alex)

You wanna tell him?

ALEX

No, you go ahead. You tell him.

VICTOR

Tell me what?

Victor braces himself for another bombshell...

MITCH

Apparently...well, we believe...our sole remaining, monosyllabic, screwed-six-ways-to-Sunday client is...

(to Alex)

How did you say it?

ALEX

Innocent.

MITCH

Right. Innocent.

ALEX

If we can't represent the innocent, who can we represent?

Victor appreciates their pluck -- his boys are effectively charming him, but...

VICTOR

Didn't I warn you about that word?

MITCH

Seductive, isn't it?

VICTOR

Nobody's innocent - just somewhere on the guilty spectrum.

(then)

Paul Canterna was there, wasn't he? He engaged in a felony; lied to the police; drove the assailant away from the scene.

(conclusion)

It's deal time, boys.

It's final. Alex and Mitch both know not to argue.

MITCH

Given that the Lodari's have our nuts in a vice grip, I'm not sure how motivated they're gonna be to entertain a plea.

VICTOR

The victim is still the Governor's nephew. They need a slam-dunk

MITCH

Better not require groveling.

VICTOR

Oh, I'm not sending you.

INT. EMPTY COURTROOM - DAY

Alex sits on the prosecution table in an empty courtroom - a restless ambassador. The back doors open to reveal Juliana as his counterpart. Alex hops off the table; turns and claps his hands in applause. Juliana nods sheepishly as Alex uses the courtroom floor to play out a fantasy...

ALEX

I've dreamt of that perfect cross: Trapping opposing counsel, locking a witness into a game-changing lie and then... decimating. But never in the dream am I the one getting decimated.

JULIANA

I had a hunch it might go well, but I was surprised myself.

ALEX

Sorry - not buying it; I'm officially afraid of you now.

JULIANA

I was even more surprised that you guys chose to stick with Paul Canterna.  
(off Alex)  
Believe it or not, that's a compliment.

ALEX

I'm sorry about that thing in the hall with your cousin. I was just hoping to get us all past it... so maybe things could be different.

JULIANA

Some things you need to leave to time.

ALEX

Some things I don't want to wait for.

They both know he means her. Juliana holds his gaze -- but there's nothing else to say -- so, breaking away --

JULIANA  
You have a plea offer?

ALEX  
Yes. I do.  
(switching gears)  
I've seen the nanny-cam footage and so has my client. While Mister Manning's mistress appears to snort what he gives her, you don't see what it is or how much - there's no audio.

JULIANA  
Wait. I assumed you wanted to discuss a plea in...  
(re: courtroom)  
...*this* case.

ALEX  
Oh. No. Way too much ego and press on the line now. That can only be negotiated by the Matadors themselves.

INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Ding. The elevator doors open and Victor Galloway steps onto enemy territory. A hush rolls over the office bullpen as aides and prosecutors nearly do double takes when they see Victor striding to the corner office. Gabriel watches from his office door, catches a look from Victor.

Victor walks the final leg of the gauntlet, stepping up to Roman's receptionist behind a large oak desk.

VICTOR  
Victor Galloway to see Roman Lodari.

INT. ROMAN LODARI'S OFFICE - DAY

Victor gazes out Roman's large window.

VICTOR  
I always wondered if you could see my office as well I can could see yours. On clear days, we train binoculars over here; see if we can read your lips.

ROMAN  
Spotters? Really? We can only afford the snipers.

VICTOR  
(touché)  
Walked into that one, didn't I?

ROMAN  
Your tribe seems to be doing that a lot lately.

Victor suppresses the urge to counter. Instead...

VICTOR

We need to get this one right, Roman.

ROMAN

I appreciate your confidence in me.  
I plan to.

VICTOR

Kyle Tuck, the son of a wealthy real estate developer, killed the Governor's nephew. It happens to be the truth -- but it's also a better story. A story in which you're the hero, with justice applied evenhandedly, across socioeconomic levels. How many poor or underprivileged kids do you put away each year?

ROMAN

How many do you represent?

VICTOR

Exactly. But I walked away from the money on this one. Why?

ROMAN

Tell me you're not using the I-word.

VICTOR

No, Paul Canterna is guilty of poor judgment.

Roman guesses Victor's next line.

ROMAN

Particularly in his choice of friends.

VICTOR

And misplaced loyalties.

Roman smiles, ironic -- a hit of sadness and regret in it.

ROMAN

I can empathize with that. A common tale: working class kid gets screwed by money and privilege. I've watched my closest friend use his birth right and position to step right over me.

VICTOR

I empathize too. I've suffered betrayal at the deepest level for a perceived slight.

ROMAN

Betrayal's a one-way street. It only happens once. Then it's simply war.

The two matadors stare each other down -- the personal schism still wide and raw. Victor gives his pitch --

VICTOR

The fight was over. O'Neill was helping Paul up when Kyle Tuck cracked his skull. We'll give you eye-witness testimony for three years probation on obstruction, no jail time. You declare victory. And we both make things right with Detective Canterna... And maybe start to make things right between us.

The last part strikes a chord with Roman, but the timing also pisses him off.

ROMAN

You really are desperate, aren't you?

Victor doesn't respond, already having extended himself as far as he's willing to go. He simply holds Roman's look.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

I'm all for mending fences, Victor, but you're too late. We're already talking to the Tuck kid about a plea. He has a different version as you might expect. And he's giving us premeditation on Paul Canterna. That's first degree murder: a capital offense. That's... well, that's victory.

A kick in the gut. Victor absorbs the blow. Then...

VICTOR

Forgive me. I forgot who you were for a minute.

An indictment of Roman's character and his motives.

ROMAN

We choose between defendants all the time for a conviction, just like you had to choose. But I appreciate how hard it was for you to swallow your pride and come over here yourself. Maybe if you had done it sooner...

Victor turns and walks out without a word. Fuck you.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. JULIANA'S CAR / EXT. CHICAGO STREET - NIGHT

Hard rain pours in a stand-still traffic jam. Windshield wipers in overdrive offer glimpses of the bad accident up ahead, accompanied by the flashing lights of emergency vehicles, as Gabriel sits in the passenger seat, impatient.

GABRIEL

Six blocks. I can walk back to the office faster.

JULIANA

If you feel like drowning.

GABRIEL

Wake me when they clear it, will you?

Gabriel slouches in his seat, closes his eyes. Beat. Juliana looks out the window, then back at Gabriel --

JULIANA

Good news. I got twelve months on Richard Manning.

GABRIEL

What?

JULIANA

Won't be a felony, but we'll get a full year of jail time.

GABRIEL

No. I told you. No deal on Manning.

JULIANA

I already accepted it.

GABRIEL

Then pull it.

JULIANA

It's my case, Gabe. It was assigned to me for a reason.

GABRIEL

Yeah, for appearances. I want the maximum: three to seven years.

JULIANA

We'll never get that with a plea.

GABRIEL

That's why we go to trial.

JULIANA

To lose? Again? We don't have it,  
Gabe. Twelve months is a gift.  
They've done us a favor here.

GABRIEL

You mean he's done you a favor.

JULIANA

Who?

GABRIEL

Alex Galloway. You think I haven't  
noticed? Even Peter said something.

JULIANA

Why? Because I don't spit on him  
when he passes by? He's trying to  
make it right.

GABRIEL

He can't make it right...she's dead!

The heart of it. Long beat. The rhythm of the windshield  
wipers fills the hard silence, until...

JULIANA

We seek these convictions and say to  
ourselves: good, we brought the  
families justice -- like their pain  
goes away too. But it doesn't.

Gabriel looks out the window -- the flashing red lights of  
the emergency vehicles take him back to that terrible night.

GABRIEL

(a confession)

It was raining that night too -- not  
like this, but enough to delay the  
White Sox game, which I didn't mind  
because I was neck deep in trial.  
She called the office three times.  
Not mad, just...accepting, laughing:  
Let's stay home, watch it on TV. But  
I pushed it: No, we can still make  
the top of the third inning if we  
take separate cars.

(beat)

She didn't even like baseball.

Gabriel is far away somewhere for a moment, then...

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I think I will walk back.

JULIANA

Gabe, come on, it's pouring.

GABRIEL  
Take the deal.

JULIANA  
Gabriel...

GABRIEL  
No, you're right. Just...take it.

Gabriel gets out and shuts the door. Juliana watches as he braves the rain under the red strobe lights of the emergency vehicles.

INT. AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT DINER - LATE NIGHT

A bell chimes. Mitch enters, shakes off the rain. He finds Brooke at the empty counter on her cell phone. Alex sits in a booth with Paul Canterna, painstakingly walking through his account. Mitch steps over to Brooke.

BROOKE  
Thought a change of scenery might help.

MITCH  
And?

Brooke puts her phone away as she nods over to Paul and Alex --

BROOKE  
He's sympathetic, but the Lodari's are going to tear him up.

MITCH  
Wait until I get his buddy, Judas, back on the stand. He's already been proven a liar in open court.  
(to counter waiter)  
Can I get some coffee, black?

BROOKE  
While you're at it, ask Judas what he did with the murder weapon.

MITCH  
Here we go. You and the murder weapon.

BROOKE  
Or ask Paul. He has to know something about it.

MITCH  
As a rule, defense attorneys don't ask their clients if and where they disposed of murder weapons. We can't knowingly let them perjure themselves.

BROOKE

As a rule, defense attorneys don't represent clients because they think they're innocent.

Mitch looks at Brook: good point.

DINER BOOTH - MINUTES LATER

Mitch has pulled up a chair to the table. Brooke sits with Alex, opposite Paul, who stares back. The question looms.

PAUL

I don't know.

MITCH

Kyle didn't just leave the tire iron there. They didn't find anything in that parking lot.

PAUL

No. He threw it in his bag and took it with him.

MITCH

When you dropped him off at the construction site?

Paul nods. Mitch looks to Brooke. Shit, she might be right.

PAUL

What?

MITCH

Brooke has a theory that Kyle got rid of it there.

PAUL

My dad had that theory too.

ALEX

Your dad?

The trio of lawyers looks at each other. Paul suddenly gets incredibly nervous.

BROOKE

Paul, when did you tell your father what happened?

PAUL

He didn't do anything.

MITCH

We're your attorneys, Paul. Anything you tell us is confidential, protected by law. When did you tell him?

ALEX

That night?

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Brook steps off an elevator lift -- many stories up the partially erected high-rise. She strides purposely toward the Shift Supervisor from Act One. No hello's. Brooke simply holds up a picture of Detective John Canterna.

BROOKE

Is this the inspector?

SHIFT SUPERVISOR

Sweetheart, I called accounting. You don't work for the company.

BROOKE

Is this the man who surprise-inspected the rebar cages on September 5th, right before the concrete was poured?

EXT. CANTERNA HOUSE - DAY

Detective John Canterna rolls out from working underneath an old car in his driveway; finds Brooke standing over him.

CANTERNA

All alone? Where are "my-son's-best-chance?"

BROOKE

In early. Working on a theory.

CANTERNA

They didn't jump ship. I'll give them that. Sure blew a fubar-sized hole in the sucker though.

BROOKE

You want to hear it. The theory?

Canterna doesn't need to; walks toward the garage, over...

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Paul came home the night of the murder and confided to the one guy besides his best friend who he knew he could trust - his father. His father thought about bringing his son downtown and getting ahead of the whole thing until he realized who the victim was.

Canterna reaches down and grabs some keys off a milk crate. He doubles back to the car as Brooke continues...

BROOKE (CONT'D)

The nephew of the governor gets killed and someone is going to swing for it. This father wanted to believe his son didn't do it, but he was worried he wasn't getting the whole story...

Canterna steps to the back of the old car; unlocks the trunk.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

...And he was a retired detective. He had seen what people do with murder weapons in the panicky hours after the crime. Figured he'd go check...as insurance.

CANTERNA

I've also seen kids tell their parents what they want to hear.

BROOKE

Detective Canterna, we're out of options. You don't have the luxury of doubt anymore.

Canterna stares at Brooke, then pops the trunk. As Brooke peers inside --

JUDGE (V.O.)

Before we proceed...

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

All invested parties present. Gabriel and Juliana on one side. A packed defense table on the other: Mitch and Alex with Paul, and Kyle with his new lawyer, DANIEL WHITCHER.

JUDGE

...Mister Lodari, I understand the State's Attorney's office has come to a plea agreement with one of the defendants.

GABRIEL

We have, Your Honor. We'd like to formally withdraw....

Mitch stands; interrupts.

MITCH

Your Honor, before any housekeeping matters, we must place a piece of evidence in the custody of the court.

JUDGE

One thing at a time, Mister Galloway.

But Mitch is already pulling something out of a large bag.

MITCH

I understand, Your Honor. But I'd feel much more comfortable if you held onto this tire iron for us.

INT. UNION STATION - COFFEE STATION - CONTINUOUS

A BARISITA stops foaming some steamed milk and turns to the television playing the trial coverage...

BARISTA

What did he just say?

INT. COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

JUDGE

Excuse me.

Mitch holds up a tire iron covered in plastic wrap.

MITCH

We need you to hold onto the murder weapon.

INT. UNION STATION - CONTINUOUS

A SWARM OF COMMUTERS rush over to the coffee station television to catch this dramatic turn of events.

GABRIEL (V.O.)

Objection. No foundation.

INT. COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

MITCH

Oh, that's coming, I just didn't want this lying around in my car. If I get a flat tire, I might forget and... well, that would be embarrassing, wouldn't it?

JUDGE

Bailiff, please take this--what appears to be a tire iron, and mark it--

MITCH

Defense Exhibit H. We also request that the court order the government to analyze it for fingerprints and blood.

(to Gabriel)

Thanks, sorry. Go ahead. Make your deal. Let him off.

Gabriel looks at Mitch, scrutinizing him. Then looks up at the bailiff tagging the tire iron. Is this a huge bluff?

JUDGE  
Mister Lodari.

Gabriel turns to Juliana, whose look advises that he waits.

MITCH  
Your Honor, we're happy to table this plea motion until we hear from their foundation witness.

Brandon Tuck (Kyle's father) reacts from the galley -- not happy -- nor are Kyle and his new lawyer, over --

JUDGE  
Mister Galloway, I take it your foundation witness is present?

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

The jury listens. John Canterna is on the stand. Alex holds up the tire iron, having just asked a question --

CANTERNA  
Yes, the tire iron from Paul's truck.

ALEX  
When was the last time you saw it?

CANTERNA  
This morning when I gave it to your investigator.

ALEX  
How long had it been in your possession?

CANTERNA  
Since the morning of September 5th. I retrieved it from a rebar footing cage at the Tuck Towers construction site, located at 204 W. Grand Ave.

ALEX  
What made you think to look for it there?

CANTERNA  
Where else would Kyle dump it?

WHITCHER  
Objection. Speculation.

ALEX  
The witness is describing his own thought process, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Overruled. You can cross-examine the witness on his assumptions.

ALEX

There appears to be some blood on this tire iron; after you retrieved it, why didn't you turn it into the police?

CANTERNA

The justice system doesn't always work the way we think it should. This was my son, I didn't want to take a chance.

ALEX

But you don't know for sure whose blood or fingerprints are on this tire iron, do you?

CANTERNA

No, I don't. But I choose to trust my son.

ALEX

Thank you.  
(stops, turns back)  
Oh, one more question. Have you ever be accused of "reallocating" material evidence before?

CANTERNA

Only by a defense attorney.

That gets a small chuckle from the jury.

CANTERNA (CONT'D)

Twenty years go.

ALEX

And had you in that case?

Canterna studies Alex, who is offering him a chance to finally go on the record and clear his name, twenty years later. Then...

CANTERNA

No.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Media village is hopping as the Tech (from Act One) is back out checking cable connections.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

...a huge turn of events. Once blood and hair samples on the tire iron matched the victim....

INT. BACK OF NEWS VAN - ON A VIDEO MONITOR

A Trial Expert speaks under the cyron: LIVE - JURY IS IN.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

...then the fact that only Kyle Tuck's fingerprints are on the murder weapon is as inculpatory as you can get....

PAN OFF the monitor as the TECH swings open the back door.

TECH

Okay, courtroom feed clear?

Tech #2 leans back eating, looks at the fuzzy courtroom feed with the jury crossing in the extreme foreground.

TECH #2

Better hurry up. They're walking in.

EXT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Tech rushes out; nearly rams into Alex, sprinting to court.

TECH

Hey, watch it!

ALEX

Sorry.

EXT. FRONT OF THE COURTHOUSE - DAY

Alex bolts up the Courthouse steps; sees his friend, George the Security Guard. Alex stops, realizes...shit, no ID.

SECURITY GUARD

You gotta be kidding me.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Juliana is in her place. On time. Like everyone else.

JUDGE

Has the jury reached a verdict?

FOREPERSON

We have, Your Honor.

As the bailiff takes the verdict from the foreperson, start to INTERCUT VISUAL POPS with a more objective shooting style.

**VISUAL POP:** *The altercation at the bar begins with words between Paul and O'Neill, egged on by Kyle, until one of O'Neill's friends grabs Kyle in a headlock and Paul intercedes.*

CLOSE ON the verdict as the bailiff walks it to the judge.

**VISUAL POP:** Paul and Kyle drive on campus; finish taking their visitor's pass as Kyle rambles into Paul's ear like Iago.

KYLE

You can take the guy. Straight up.  
I know you can take him.

The Judge reads the verdict; considers it as he notes Alex settling in late to his place with Mitch and Paul. Alex shrugs at Juliana across the aisle. She stifles any kind of reaction -- okay, a hint of amused incredulity. As the judge hands the verdict back to the Bailiff --

**VISUAL POP:** Kyle and Paul spot O'Neill by himself in the West Parking lot. The truck cuts off O'Neill as Paul gets out. Fight time.

The Bailiff hands the verdict back to the Foreperson.

FOREPERSON

We, the jury in the above-entitled action, on the counts of First Degree Murder and Felony Murder, find the defendant, Paul Edward Canterna...

**VISUAL POP:** A flurry of blows. Paul is losing the fight. Beaten, Paul falls to the pavement; has trouble standing. O'Neill stands over him, screaming. Paul puts a hand out: stop.

FOREPERSON (CONT'D)

...Not guilty.

Paul reacts with incredible relief. Mitch places a hand on his shoulder. Alex looks back at Paul's father, John Canterna.

FOREPERSON (CONT'D)

On the count of First Degree Murder, we find the defendant, Kyle Tuck...

**VISUAL POP:** O'Neill is helping Paul up when -- CRACK -- he's hit from behind. O'Neill instantly drops. Paul looks up to see Kyle standing over him, holding the tire iron.

FOREPERSON (CONT'D)

...Guilty.

Quiet, intense reactions all around. Gabriel looks satisfied, glances over at Mitch. They fought this one to a draw.

EXT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

The media game. MUSIC. The warring tribes huddle into two distinct clusters on the front steps of the courthouse, both Gabriel and Mitch declaring victory.

Peter approaches John Canterna, who's talking to Brooke, and extends a hand to the former detective. Some common ground.

Juliana catches a glimpse of Alex through the throng. They lock eyes for a fleeting moment, but quickly lose sight of each other through the shifting sea of people.

This battle is over, but the war continues.

INT. GALLOWAY LAW OFFICES - DAY

Alex walks to his office as he finishes a phone text to Juliana: "Worthy Adversaries." Alex is greeted by applause from the office staff, including Alex's Assistant, LAUREN.

LAUREN

Wow, I really didn't think you were gonna pull this one off.

ALEX

Gotta keep swinging, Lauren. Put yourself in the position to get lucky.

Alex walks into his office and finds a present on his desk.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What's this?

LAUREN

A present from the State's Attorney Roman Lodari of all people.

ALEX

Roman Lodari?

LAUREN

Dropped it off personally. No note.

That's weird. Alex is wary, as he opens the wrapped box. And he is caught off guard even further by its contents. Oh, boy. Alex considers the message it's meant to send.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Well, what is it?

ALEX

My shoes.

As Alex stares down his own errant dress shoes in the box --

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW