

AMERICAN CRIME STORY

THE PEOPLE V. O.J. SIMPSON

EPISODE 5: "THE RACE CARD"

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Based on

"THE RUN OF HIS LIFE"

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TITLE: "1984"

1

INT./EXT. JOHNNIE'S CAR - DRIVING

1

Johnnie drives Sunset Boulevard through Beverly Hills in an expensive car, the Strip ahead of him. His two small daughters, MELODIE and TIFFANY, chatter in the back seat.

MELODIE

Daddy, I could sit up front on the way
and she could sit up front on the way
back.

JOHNNIE

No, I don't want to have to figure
this out every time I take my girls to
dinner.

TIFFANY

Can't we *negotiate* it, Daddy?

He smiles at them in the rearview -- only to see an LAPD CRUISER stalking his bumper. Then BLUE LIGHTS. His smile disappears and he pulls to the curb.

JOHNNIE

(to himself)
Oh, Man. Here we go...

He reaches into his pocket, takes out his wallet and removes his license.

JOHNNIE'S POV - REARVIEW MIRROR ON THE DOOR -- The LAPD PATROLMAN steps out of his car, sheathes his baton, and unfastens the snap on his service revolver as he walks to us.

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

Children. The police want to talk to
us. What do you say to police?

KIDS

Nothing!

JOHNNIE

Who talks to the police?

KIDS

Our lawyer!

The Patrolman arrives at his door and looms above him, his eyes scanning the interior. Johnnie hands him his license and starts to reach for his glove box.

JOHNNIE

Officer, I'm just going to get my
registration --

PATROLMAN

Sir, please keep your hands on the wheel.

The Patrolman scans Johnnie's license, then takes in the surroundings.

PATROLMAN (CONT'D)

Where you headed tonight?

JOHNNIE

I'm taking my daughters to dinner. May I ask why you pulled me over?

PATROLMAN

You seemed to change lanes without signaling two blocks back.

JOHNNIE

I assure you I always signal, especially with my girls in the car. This is the third time this week I've been pulled over for no reason.

PATROLMAN

Is this your vehicle?

JOHNNIE

(keeping it together,
barely)

If I could reach into the glove box I could show you my registration.

The Patrolman, his hand resting on the revolver, looks to the girls in the back seat.

PATROLMAN

Is this your father's car?

The girls are petrified, look to Johnnie. That's it.

JOHNNIE

NO. You do not speak to my children.

PATROLMAN

Sir --

JOHNNIE

I know the deal -- I'm black, I'm driving in a fancy white neighborhood in a nice car, you pull me over. But you leave my children out of it!

PATROLMAN

Sir, out of the car. Now.

The Patrolman grips his revolver, still in the holster.

Johnnie slowly, carefully opens the door and steps out. The Patrolman counters, one hand on the gun and the other getting out his handcuffs.

PATROLMAN (CONT'D)

Sir, because of your hostile attitude
I'm going to have to handcuff you
while we discuss this.

He puts Johnnie face first against the car and cuffs him. His face registers fury, humiliation at being domineered this way. He meets his daughters' eyes through the window and can't hid it from them. The girls well up in fear, and begin to cry. Johnnie begins to panic as the situation spirals out of control.

JOHNNIE

Officer. Please. Take my license and
call it in. Find out who I am.

When he meets Johnnie's eyes, Johnnie burns it into him:

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

If you don't take that opportunity for
yourself I guarantee you will regret
it.

PATROLMAN

Stay right there. Do not move.

The Patrolman walks back to the cruiser.

Johnnie leans down, cuffed behind his back, and smiles at his girls.

JOHNNIE

It's okay. It's okay. We're gonna be
sitting at the Hamburger Hamlet in
five minutes. I promise. Okay?

He looks back to see the Patrolman returning. He stands up to face him.

PATROLMAN

Turn around.

Johnnie does, and the Patrolman uncuffs him. Johnnie rubs his wrists as he turns back around. The Patrolman shrugs, smiles. Hands Johnnie's license and registration to him.

PATROLMAN (CONT'D)

(chastened but still smug)
Have a nice night, Mr. Assistant
District Attorney.

The Patrolman turns and walks to the cruiser.

Johnnie gets back in the car. He turns to the kids, trying to salvage the night.

JOHNNIE

See? We're on our way. Now let's get us some burgers! I'm starving!

The girls are still shaken.

TIFFANY

Daddy what did he say to you?

JOHNNIE

Just grown-up talk. Don't worry about it. Forget it ever happened, girls.

He forces another smile and pulls into traffic. The girls look out the window. Almost idly, Melodie says:

MELODIE

Did he call you a nigger?

Johnnie winces.

JOHNNIE

No. No he didn't. He didn't have to. And don't you girls ever use that word. Ever. It's a terrible word.

(then)

We've worked very, very hard to get to a place where people don't say that word much anymore. But sometimes... People will make you feel the same bad way, with how they treat you, even when they don't say that word. Like that policeman back there. And you must never let anyone treat you that way, you hear?

GIRLS

(not fully comprehending,
but kind of)

Okay.

JOHNNIE

Still, sometimes... sometimes I wish they'd still just came out and say it.

His night ruined, Johnnie keeps driving.

PREACHER (O.S.)

(PRELAP)

We all pray for Johnnie Cochran today...

CUT TO:

2 INT. SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH - MORNING

2

Sunday Service. The pews are filled with blacks. A PREACHER stands up front, with the choir.

PREACHER

We know this trial begins soon, and we want to fill brother Cochran with all the righteous spirit we have in this room. Come down, Johnnie...

JOHNNIE

Same face as above, more weathered and powerful. Sharply dressed, he slides into the aisle and walks to the front. The Preacher takes Johnnie's hand. Heads bow.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

In the name of Jesus, let us pray for our friend and your servant, that he may take up your sword against the corrupt and brutal forces that oppress us all. Let us vest him in the garment of our love and strength so that he may prevail in OJ's trial. We ask you Jesus, and know that you are listening, King *Jesus* is listening when we pray!

That cues the GOSPEL CHOIR behind the Preacher, who break out into a big-energy rendition of "King Jesus is Listening When You Pray," singing and swaying enthusiastically. The church audience beams and claps along, including Johnnie.

SMASH CUT TO:

3 INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

3

TELEVISION - THE CHURCH

THE GOSPEL CHOIR CONTINUES -- PULL OUT to reveal it's on a TV in

THE D.A. BULLPEN

Marcia, Hodgman and Chris sit glumly, watching this news footage which highlights Johnnie sitting in the front row, the main of the hour.

MARCIA

Great. Now they've got Jesus on their side, too.

TV ANCHORMAN (V.O.)

After the service, Mr. Cochran addressed reporters.

ON THE TELEVISION: Johnnie outside the church, speaking to a few REPORTERS.

JOHNNIE (ON TV)

Of course, we all know Christopher Darden is a fine attorney... But all of a sudden, he shows up NOW? After we have eight African Americans on the jury. WHY IS THAT? It's obvious to me that Mr. Darden is being used as a tool by the D.A.'s office, because he himself is African American!

Chris stares, stunned, sucker-punched. On the TV, the CAMERA PANS by the sea of exalted black faces. Chris is mortified. Marcia quickly turns the TV off.

TITLES! "AMERICAN CRIME STORY: THE PEOPLE VS. O.J. SIMPSON"

CUT TO:

4 INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING 4

Johnnie sits at the head of the table, leafing through a 'Trial Overview Brief' written by Lee Bailey.

TWENTY attorneys and investigators mill about. Bailey, Dershowitz, Scheck, Kardashian and Shawn are waiting. An awkward silence.

Johnnie checks his watch. He leans in to Shawn.

JOHNNIE

Where is Bob?

SHAWN

(she glances back)
Carl's out with him.

5 INT. COCHRAN LAW OFFICES HALLWAY - SAME TIME 5

Carl stands, exasperated, with petulant Shapiro. Norman Rockwell's civil rights PAINTING of RUBY BRIDGES hangs behind them.

SHAPIRO

Listen, I appreciate your concern, but I refuse to be in the same room with a particular individual and you know why.

Carl stares at him, at a loss.

CARL

No I don't. I don't even know who you're talking about.
(wild guess)
Is it... Johnnie?

SHAPIRO
NO! Lee! He raped me!

CARL
WHAT?!

SHAPIRO
What if he raped your son? That's
what it feels like to me. Would you
feel comfortable being in a room with
that person?!

Carl grimaces. What the hell is he talking about?

CARL
So why'd you drive all the way over
here, if you weren't gonna go in?

Shapiro shrugs, lamely.

SHAPIRO
You don't understand. He was the
Godfather to my son.

It doesn't matter. Carl is done.

CARL
Bob, what do I tell the team?

SHAPIRO
Tell them I KNOW Lee was the source of
the leaks to the New York Daily News.
Saying I was in over my head!
Steamrolled! It's inflammatory!
Untrue! Totally abhorrent.

Drained, Carl throws up his hands and walks away.

6 INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

6

Carl enters, and Johnnie and Shawn look up for an update.
Carl shakes his head -- no. Johnnie sighs.

JOHNNIE
Let's get started.

The room quiets, then... SLOWLY THE DOOR OPENS. Shapiro edges
in. ALL EYES turn to him. No one speaks. Finally, in
dramatic fashion... Shapiro points at Bailey.

SHAPIRO
Judas.

Bailey isn't in the mood.

BAILEY
Blow it out your ass, Bob!

More silence. Johnnie intervenes.

JOHNNIE

Now that we've resolved that, let's
get down to work.

We CROSS-CUT IN A DANCE BETWEEN... defense and prosecution
strategy sessions...

7 INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

7

Marcia addresses the prosecution.

MARCIA

We begin with domestic violence. We
have 62 instances of Simpson beating,
degrading, and stalking Nicole over
their 17-year relationship. He was a
serial abuser. That proves motive...

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

Dershowitz addresses the defense.

DERSHOWITZ

We know they're going to hone in on
OJ's past abuse.

INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

MARCIA

He was a ticking time bomb. Ron and
Nicole's murders were the natural
escalation of a pattern.

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

SHAPIRO

Lots of people have turbulent
marriages, but there's no correlation
which equates that to OJ being a
killer.

INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

HODGMAN

We have a solid timeline to work with.

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

SCHECK

They're doing us a huge favor
establishing such a narrow window for
OJ's alleged attack.

INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

HODGMAN

Everything starts with the plaintive wail of the Akita.

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

KARDASHIAN

I'm guessing everyone's aware their bombshell witness is a dog.

Chuckles. Shapiro adds.

SHAPIRO

We debunk their timeline, we have reasonable doubt.

INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

MARCIA

There was blood in his car and in his driveway. Her blood was on his socks in his bedroom.

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

DERSHOWITZ

There's no way they call Fuhrman to the stand. He's damaged goods. Too big a risk.

INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

MARCIA

The amount of physical evidence is overwhelming. There's a mountain of it! Frankly, it's more hard evidence than I've ever seen in a murder case.

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

JOHNNIE

The truth is, the LAPD rushed to judgment targeting OJ Simpson.

INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

HODGMAN

The mere fact that we find blood where there should be no blood is devastating proof.

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

JOHNNIE
I've seen it before. Officers start down a misguided path and refuse to turn back. Then, somebody realizes they need a better case.

INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

MARCIA
We have motive, evidence, and opportunity.

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

JOHNNIE
A few small lies, evidence is adjusted and "improved," officers are protected by a code of silence.

INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

MARCIA
(cocky)
Everything we need to put that monster away.

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

JOHNNIE
(exuding confidence)
But evidence doesn't win the day. Jurors go with the narrative that makes sense. We're telling them a story. And our job is to tell that story better than the other side tells theirs.

CUT TO:

8	OMITTED	8
9	OMITTED	9
10	INT. D.A. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY	10

The prosecution waits for a meeting. Marcia and Hodgman whisper, away from the table. Bill avoids Chris's eyes as they return. Marcia holds a LIST.

MARCIA
Everyone, this is who you'll be responsible for putting on the stand.

A quick glance at Chris... then she starts reading:

MARCIA

Hank, you've got the crime lab guys. I couldn't think of anyone more suited to sort through all of that blood evidence. Bill, I know your hands are full with discovery. You take the coroner. I'll handle the dog bark witnesses and the cops at the crime scene. Woody and Rock, of course you've got DNA. And Chris, you've got Vannatter and, uh... Fuhrman.

Chris freezes, stunned. FUHRMAN? The other lawyers stare hard at their papers, avoiding any eye contact with Chris.

Chris peers around at the room of solely WHITE LAWYERS, crushed. Realizing what's happened.

MARCIA

(glued to her paperwork)

Ok, we all know what we need to do.

The rest of the team rises, avoiding looking at Chris, and quickly disperses. Marcia reads her file.

Chris doesn't move. Exasperated, he desperately wants to say something to Marcia. To complain, in some way.

CHRIS

Marcia...

MARCIA

What?

Chris stares, tortured. Wanting to speak. Until --

CHRIS

N-nothing. Let's get to work.

Chris folds and Marcia returns to her paperwork.

CUT TO:

11 INT. CRIMINAL COURTS ELEVATOR - DAY 11

A stone-faced Mark Fuhrman rides up surrounded by BLACK, HISPANIC and ASIAN PASSENGERS.

12 INT. CHRIS'S NEW OFFICE - DAY 12

Chris sits behind his desk as Fuhrman enters the room.

FUHRMAN

Mark Fuhrman.

CHRIS

Chris Darden. Have a seat.

Fuhrman obliges, politely. Chris leafs through a file. Fuhrman eyes around.

FUHRMAN
Is Bill Hodgman's office on this floor?

CHRIS
Upstairs. You know Bill?

FUHRMAN
Yeah, he's a smart guy.

CHRIS
He won't be joining us.

FUHRMAN
That's fine with me, sir.

Chris takes a moment, immediately seeing through Fuhrman's veneer of civility. He already doesn't like him.

CHRIS
How would you describe yourself on the stand?

FUHRMAN
Pretty comfortable. I've done it before. Are you going to be putting me up?

CHRIS
If that's not a problem?

FUHRMAN
I imagine it's not for me to decide.
(stilted)
But, I definitely don't have a problem with it.

Chris knows better. He can feel Fuhrman's antipathy.

CHRIS
We'll need to work out a schedule to go over your testimony and any trouble areas you might encounter. I'd also like to take you through some mock cross-examinations.

FUHRMAN
(he nods)
Whatever you need, *sir*.

Fuhrman's *sir* drips with condescension. It makes Chris's skin crawl. He chooses his words carefully.

CHRIS

You should know the Defense plans to raise some incidents from your past. Allegations of things you've said. They're going to come at you.

FUHRMAN

I'm confident I can handle any BS they would try to bring up.

(a long stare; neither blinks)

Uh, what type of incidents?

Ah -- a brief chink in the armor. Chris relishes answering.

CHRIS

We've seen their list of witnesses. They're going to claim you're a racist.

Fuhrman doesn't flinch.

FUHRMAN

Ah...

(then)

Well, that won't be an issue with me. Ask around. I work with black cops everyday. I think your SID investigated one of my black buddies.

Chris knows that's a shot at him. He stares at Fuhrman with disdain.

13 INT. MARCIA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

13

Marcia packs up for the day. Several paralegals are still working when Chris walks in.

CHRIS

I met with Fuhrman.

Marcia senses bad news... and isn't in the mood to hear it.

MARCIA

Good. You can fill me in tomorrow.

CHRIS

(unrelenting)

He says all the appropriate things...

Marcia stops packing her things. She's annoyed.

MARCIA

But...?

CHRIS

But... truthfully, the guy isn't right. I get a really bad vibe from him.

MARCIA

A bad vibe? That's it?

(irked)

Chris, nobody's asking you to date him. Just prep him.

Marcia grabs her purse to leave. Chris struggles to explain.

CHRIS

He's one of those people who thinks you can't see how he really feels, because he acts polite.

MARCIA

That makes no sense. If somebody acts polite, then they are polite.

(beat)

Am I out of line, saying you're bringing a preconception to this, because you're black?

Chris takes a breath. He zeroes in.

CHRIS

Marcia, I don't expect you to understand. But... there's a way that certain white people talk to black people. It's disingenuous. It makes us not trust them.

(beat)

If I feel it, the jury will feel it.

Marcia realizes his strong conviction. She contemplates this. But then -- Chris overplays his hand.

CHRIS

Fuhrman doesn't need to be a witness. He's not even the cop who entered the gloves into evidence.

MARCIA

What? No --

CHRIS

He doesn't have to go on the stand --

MARCIA

No! You're playing into the Defense. I understand this man has had troubles, but his psych records have already been ruled inadmissible.

(MORE)

MARCIA (CONT'D)

We're not panicking, and we're not gonna let the police go on trial here. You're not in SID. The cops are our allies.

Chris goes silent. Frustrated. Marcia whirls to exit.

MARCIA

Chris, he's what we've got. Fuhrman has something to contribute, and you need to get him ready. So massage it. Do whatever's necessary to make him come across as credible.

(she checks her WATCH)

Oh my god, it's 8 o'clock already. My babysitter's gonna kill me. Gotta go!

She bolts. Chris is left standing there, stymied.

CUT TO:

13A OMITTED

13A

14 INT. PRESS ROOM, CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - MORNING

14

The room is filled with REPORTERS chatting and killing time. DOMINICK DUNNE, 70, a witty bon vivant, holds court.

DOMINICK

Have you heard? Ito has agreed to let them televise the entire trial! It's now a TV show! I guess in La-La-Land, everything becomes entertainment.

(he chuckles)

This is the hottest ticket in town. I'm surprised there aren't scalpers.

SCHATZMAN

As long as I get a seat.

SNOOTY REPORTER

Who are you?

SCHATZMAN

The Los Angeles Sentinel. A larger black readership than any of you.

SNOOTY REPORTER

So Dominick, what's your angle here? Crime or gossip?

DOMINICK

I'd dub it a mélange. Vanity Fair.

The group laughs. In front, a fidgety PRESS LIAISON posts a lone PIECE OF PAPER. He turns.

PRESS LIAISON

I know you've been waiting. Due to the number of requests, most publications will have to share seats during the trial and take shifts. I'm sorry.

Everybody GROANS. The Liaison quickly ducks away. The entire PRESS CORPS swarms around the paper... as the Liaison taps Dominick on the arm. Whispering.

PRESS LIAISON

Could you come with me, please?

Dominick nods, intrigued.

15 INT. ITO'S CHAMBERS - MOMENTS LATER

15

Dominick sits on a sofa across from Ito's desk. Several law clerks work busily. Ito is in short sleeves.

ITO

I've read some of your past coverage of murder trials.

DOMINICK

I'm lucky to write for a magazine that allows me to take a stand, Your Honor.

ITO

There's no mistaking how you feel.

DOMINICK

No. That's something I'm proud about.

Ito waits a moment, growing solemn.

ITO

I'm assigning you a permanent seat in the front row.

Dominick cloaks his surprise, remaining silent.

ITO

You'll be next to the Goldmans. The seat is yours for the length of the trial.

DOMINICK

Thank you, Your Honor.

They awkwardly look at each other. Ito clearly feels the need to explain more.

ITO

Without being too forward, I sense that you will be able to sympathize with them in a way that the rest of us can't. That you'll know how to deal with the family. Not intrude or ask inappropriate questions.

Dominick considers, melancholy.

DOMINICK

Because of my daughter's murder?

Ito's eyes lower. This is very uncomfortable for him.

ITO

I apologize for dredging up what I imagine is a deeply painful memory, but I felt that it was important for you to know why.

DOMINICK

I'm sure the Goldmans will appreciate the gesture, Your Honor. I know I do.

(pained)

The trial of Dominique's killer was torture enough. But then the way he got off with a slap on the wrist...

(quiet)

Let's hope this one goes better.

Ito stands, smiling, indicating the meeting is over. Dominick follows suit. Then, something pops into Ito's head.

ITO

You're a Hollywood guy. I know you worked in showbiz. Wanna see who sent me a fan letter today?

DOMINICK

(curious)

Uh... who?

Ito reaches into his desk and pulls out an envelope, cradling it like a precious heirloom.

ITO

Arsenio Hall!

Ito beams as he hands over a letter and Arsenio HEADSHOT.

CUT TO:

Establishing. People with BULL HORNS scream obscenities at each other as a NEWS REPORTER tries to talk over them.

WHITE BULLHORN GUY
HE KILLED HER, YOU IDIOT!!

BLACK BULLHORN GUY
BURN IN HELL!! HE'S
INNOCENT!!

NEWS REPORTER

Well.. things are certainly getting
exciting out here as lawyers arrive
for today's pre-trial motions!

17 INT. CRIMINAL COURTS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

17

Walking with purpose, the defense team passes a GROUP OF
D.A.'s. Unnoticed, Chris is among them.

Chris sees Johnnie -- and reacts. Chris is still hurt. Chris
deliberates, then hurries after Johnnie.

CHRIS

(forcing a smile)

Johnnie, can I have a minute?

Always gracious, Johnnie nods for the others to continue.

Chris is skittish. It's obvious that he holds Johnnie in high
regard, even as he tries not to show it.

JOHNNIE

Big day, today. You holding up
alright?

Chris takes a deep breath.

CHRIS

I don't want you to take this the
wrong way.

(beat)

The press conference you gave. About
me. That was a cheap shot. It was
unfair, and beneath the both of us as
professionals.

Johnnie listens without reaction.

CHRIS

In this trial, we're equals.
Everything from our past is out the
window. So, it's my sincere hope that
we can agree from this point forward
to treat each other with respect.

Johnnie nods, smiles, and pats Chris on the shoulder. But
then, LETHAL:

JOHNNIE

I'm not here to be respectful.
Brother, I'm here to WIN.

Johnnie continues into the court, leaving Chris winded.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

17A OMITTED

17A

18 INT. ITO'S COURTROOM - DAY

18

It's cramped, with only four rows of benches for SPECTATORS. The press corps surrounds the victims' families.

Three still photographers are in back. The technician runs the remote-controlled video camera from a CONSOLE in the back corner.

Shapiro rises from the defense table. The Tech turns a dial, and the camera PIVOTS to Shapiro. Bob notices this through the corner of his eye. He adjusts his pose, cheating to camera, then addresses Judge Ito.

SHAPIRO

Your Honor, we've submitted a motion to exclude all 62 domestic-violence allegations that the People have put forward. This is a murder case, not a domestic violence case. The prosecution seeks to turn these proceedings into an inquiry into the character of OJ Simpson. This concerns us deeply because the evidence put forward is simply not relevant.

Hodgman reacts, displeased. He whispers to Marcia. She nods.

We CUT TO... Hodgman addressing Ito. Bill takes a pause.

HODGMAN

Your Honor, counsel's reasoning is flawed and their logic is specious. The defendant's character and prior history are the point. Let's do a hypothetical. Let's pretend that we're not even going to tell the jury that Nicole and OJ were married. Our jurors would naturally ask, "Why would OJ Simpson kill a perfect stranger?" It wouldn't make sense. It's only when you understand the context and their relationship and OJ's jealousy, that his motive for committing these brutal murders can be understood.

Ito is impressed as... OJ audibly protests in Johnnie's ear. Marcia leans into Chris, gloating.

MARCIA

This case is ours.

Chris is in his own space, peering intently at his papers. Hodgman returns to the prosecution table. Marcia whispers.

MARCIA

Knock 'em dead, Darden.

Okay. Chris gives Johnnie a quick glance. Things are on his mind. He rises, then clears his throat.

CHRIS

Your Honor, I'd like to address a separate issue?

ITO

All right.

Chris anxiously steps forward.

CHRIS

Your Honor, Detective Fuhrman is going to play a very small role in this case, but we believe when he's called to the stand, we're going to be forced to go back fifteen odd years to ask him about completely irrelevant statements people have claimed he's made. These statements are racially insensitive and divisive. The question is, why bring them up?

Johnnie looks up.

CHRIS

They're going to ask him whether he made a racial slur or repeated a racial epithet. But why ask? There is no legal purpose to it. But Mr. Cochran and the Defense have a purpose for entering this area: That purpose is to inflame the passions of the jury and to ask them to pick sides.

The entire courtroom, including Dominick and Schatzman, leans forward at full attention.

19 INT. DARDEN'S RICHMOND HOUSE - SAME TIME 19

Pops, Michael and Chris's Mom watch on Court TV.

20 INT. ITO'S COURTROOM - SAME TIME 20

CHRIS

The N-word is a dirty filthy word, Your Honor.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It is so prejudicial and inflammatory that to use it in any situation will evoke an emotional response from any African American. We are talking about a word that blinds people.

(pause)

When you mention that word to this jury, it will blind them to the truth. They won't be able to discern what is true and what is not. It will impair their judgment. It will affect their ability to be fair. It will force the black jurors to make a choice: Whose side are you on? "The man" or "the brothers"?

Hodgman winces. This is too much. Startled, Carl whispers.

CARL

Is he for real?

Johnnie's wheels are spinning. He doesn't respond.

21 INT. DARDEN'S RICHMOND HOUSE - SAME TIME 21

Mom and Pops share a glance.

CHRIS (ON TV)

Now, the Court may think, "Mr. Darden, this is an awful extreme argument," but it's true...

22 INT. ITO'S COURTROOM - SAME TIME 22

CHRIS

So, the People strongly urge the Court, respectfully, not to allow that vile word to be uttered at any time during this trial.

Johnnie glances at the courtroom video camera then back to Chris. Here we go. Johnnie quickly rises to his feet.

JOHNNIE

Your Honor! I didn't plan to speak on this matter, but I would be remiss were I not to respond to my good friend, Mr. Chris Darden.

Hodgman covers his face with his hand. Marcia notices.

MARCIA

What?

HODGMAN

Put on your seat belts.

Oblivious, Chris takes his seat confidently.

JOHNNIE

Mr. Darden's remarks this afternoon are perhaps the most incredible remarks I've heard in a court of law in my 32 years of practice.

WE SEE JOHNNIE ON A SMALL MONOCHROME MONITOR, at the camera tech's console. He PANS the camera, following Johnnie.

OJ watches Johnnie -- what is this about?

JOHNNIE (ON TV)

His remarks are deeply demeaning to African Americans.

INSERT - FULL-SCREEN COLOR TELEVISION

JOHNNIE (ON TV)

And so, I want to apologize to African Americans across the country.

WIDER to REVEAL we're in...

23 INT. DARDEN'S RICHMOND HOUSE - SAME TIME 23

Dead silence.

JOHNNIE (ON TV)

It is preposterous to say African Americans collectively are so emotionally unstable that they cannot hear offensive words without losing their moral sense of right and wrong.

24 INT. ITO'S COURTROOM - SAME TIME 24

Marcia gets what Hodgman meant... Oh. Pale, Chris shakes his head: "That's not what I meant."

Johnnie steps forward, asserting his control.

JOHNNIE

They live with offensive words, offensive looks, offensive treatment everyday. We understand that there are racists in this country, but we still love and believe in it.

(genuinely affronted)

So, I am ashamed that Mr. Darden would allow himself to become an apologist for Mark Fuhrman.

OW! This is a kick in Chris's gut. It's too much. Aggrieved, Chris gestures to rebut, but nobody pays him any attention --

JOHNNIE

Who are any of us to testify as an expert as to what words black people can and cannot handle?

OJ's face sets, getting what's going on, and absorbing Johnnie's offended expression. He stares at Chris.

INSERT - JOHNNIE ON THE MONITOR

JOHNNIE (ON TV)

All across America, believe me, African Americans are offended at this very moment...

ANGLE - JOHNNIE

He plays to the camera.

JOHNNIE

And, so for somebody that I have a lot of respect for, I have to say this was outlandish, unfortunate and most unwarranted.

Marcia and Hodgman stare forward, shell-shocked. No one will look at Chris, who sinks down in his chair, paralyzed.

JOHNNIE

Thank you, Judge.

Passing the prosecution table, Johnnie leans down towards Chris, ice-cold...

JOHNNIE

...Nigga, please.

Johnnie walks away. Chris sinks lower. Eviscerated.

CUT TO:

25

INT. D.A. OFFICES - MORNING

25

We track through the BULLPEN which has completely been taken over by the OJ case.

Prosecutors, clerks, cops and investigators move through like lab rats in a maze.

CU - A LOS ANGELES TIMES on a table. The HEADLINE reads, "LAWYERS FACE OFF OVER RACE." Below are PHOTOS of CHRIS and JOHNNIE.

WIDER - CHRIS

He picks up the newspaper and eyes the headline. Chris sighs, then notices a "Man On The Street Poll" below it.

Chris stares, then his jaw drops at the RESULTS...

CHRIS
(reading)
*"88% of black Angelenos see Chris
Darden as an Uncle Tom"?!"*

At wit's end, Chris slams the paper down. People turn.

Chris grabs his suit jacket and moves for the door. Then, in the hall, he spots Gil. Ah. He chases after him --

26

INT. CRIMINAL COURTS HALLWAY - SAME TIME

26

CHRIS
Gil!

Gil turns.

GIL
I'm in a hurry.

CHRIS
I'd like to do a few interviews...
with the black press.

Gil is puzzled.

GIL
Why?

CHRIS
I think it's important for people to
understand what my role is on the case
and who I am.

GIL
Is this about the poll? Marcia told
me there was some poll.

Chris starts to answer, but Gil cuts him off.

GIL
No one's doing press, Chris. If I had
to respond every time some crab apple
said something about me... You'll
only do more harm drawing attention to
yourself.
(he turns to exit)
D.A.'s don't go on talk shows. It's a
sensitive case. No press.

Gil vanishes around a corner. Chris watches, demoralized.

27 INT. MARCIA'S OFFICE HALL - DAY

27

Marcia approaches her office to find Chris waiting outside, looking distressed. Before she can even speak...

CHRIS

We have to reconsider Fuhrman.

Marcia GROANS. She unlocks her door. Chris follows her in.

28 INT. MARCIA'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

28

CHRIS

He's wrong for this case.

Drained, Marcia takes a seat.

MARCIA

You had a rough couple of weeks.
We're not changing our trial strategy
because of it. Toughen up. You're
letting Johnnie get in your head.

Stung, Chris doesn't waver. They stare at each other. Both, knowing she's right.

CHRIS

Can I share something with you?

MARCIA

As long as I don't have to get out of
this chair. I'm wiped.

She kicks off her shoes. Chris takes a serious beat. Then:

CHRIS

In the 70s, when I was in law school,
affirmative action was the big deal.

MARCIA

I remember.

CHRIS

No you don't. You're white.

She laughs. He nods, then continues, serious:

CHRIS

I busted my ass, I had the grades, to
get into that school. But every time
I entered a classroom, I felt people
staring at me. Like I took some more
worthy person's spot.

(wounded)

That bullshit hurts. Those feelings
never leave.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

And now, almost 20 years later, I'm expected to sit and swallow those same kinds of accusations all over again. Johnnie's out there trashing me in front of every TV camera he can find.

Marcia is surprised by Chris's candor. She is moved.

MARCIA

But... he's wrong. Just like every idiot who doubted you back then. You're on this case because you're creative, dedicated and smart. That's why I wanted you.

Her statement is multilayered. Chris appreciates this.

CHRIS

Thanks.

MARCIA

You're going to help us WIN. So Johnnie can go screw himself. No matter how many stunts the Defense pulls, you know that we're behind you.

He relaxes. They share a lingering moment.

CUT TO:

29

INT. JOHNNIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

29

Dale lies in bed, reading a Tom Clancy novel.

In front of her, Johnnie is in sweatpants and a T-shirt, rehearsing his opening statement.

JOHNNIE

"This case is about an obsession to win at any cost. We are confident that the evidence will reveal the LAPD is a Blunders in Blue operation."

Dale winces. Johnnie stops.

JOHNNIE

What?

DALE

Sounds like you're trying to be funny.

JOHNNIE

(he considers this)
Okay. How about... "We will reveal that the evidence collected by the LAPD was contaminated, compromised... and corrupted."

(MORE)

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

(he smiles)

That's nice alliteration. Three Cs.

Satisfied, he makes a note. She watches him.

DALE

I'm really happy you're on this.

JOHNNIE

(serious)

It feels like my destiny...

She gives him a sexy look.

DALE

Destiny is a powerful attraction...

JOHNNIE

(moving closer)

Hm. You know what else is a powerful attraction...?

He tosses his notepad and starts to climb over to her on the bed and kiss her, when --

RING!! It's the phone.

JOHNNIE

AGHGH, SHIT!

The mood is ruined. Pissed, he grabs a bedside PHONE.

JOHNNIE

Good evening! Johnnie Cochran.

INTERCUT:

30

INT. COCHRAN CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

30

Carl is swimming in paperwork. Defense underlings and paralegals work everywhere.

CARL

(panicking)

We have a problem.

JOHNNIE

What time is it? Are you still working?

CARL

You're kidding.

(then)

Shapiro's staff messed up and didn't submit twelve of our witnesses into discovery.

JOHNNIE
 (unreadable)
 Really.

CARL
 You're going to have to pull those names out of your opening statement tomorrow. I'm sorry to do this to you.

Johnnie mulls this over. Then, decisive --

JOHNNIE
 I'm not removing those names.

Carl gasps. Like he misheard. He's stunned.

CARL
 What?! No, no, Johnnie, we can't do that! Hodgman and Ito will go nuts if those names just show up.

JOHNNIE
 Maybe so.
 (unflappable)
 But Carl, here's the thing: There are times when you just have to fall on your sword for the client.
 (beat)
 Tomorrow will be your day.

CUT TO:

31 INT. ITO'S COURTROOM - MORNING 31

The video camera feed is TURNED ON.

32 EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - SAME TIME 32

We're in the back of a NEWS TRUCK focused on a video monitor with PEOPLE WAVING OJ SIGNS, then travel out into complete mayhem.

Satellite trucks are everywhere. The streets are packed. Vendors hawk T-shirts and souvenirs. The OJ Carnival is open for business!

We TRACK past opposing GROUPS OF PROTESTERS, spilling out into the street, to find a SERGEANT trying to keep some sense of order.

SERGEANT
 Get these people back! Everybody needs to stay on the sidewalk!

He spots TWO TOWNCARS approaching.

SERGEANT

And don't let any of those reporters
block the street!

A feverish gauntlet of 30 video cameras and a zillion
photographers line the stairs.

REPORTERS and CAMERA CREWS fall over each other as the DREAM
TEAM steps out of the towncars in front of the courthouse like
movie stars arriving at a red carpet premiere.

With a swagger, Bailey grabs Shapiro's arm. Bob struggles not
to recoil, grimacing all the way to the door, as...

CAMERAS pop! FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!! It's a ZOO!! DEPUTIES
forcefully part a path through the chaos for the attorneys as
they enter --

33

INT. CRIMINAL COURTS HALLWAYS - SAME TIME

33

Bedlam. The Goldmans push through, overwhelmed, as...

The Brown Family exits the elevator into the crush, supporting
each other.

Creeping towards the courtroom, Juditha looks up -- and spots
OJ's family. Right in front of them.

There's an awkward moment. What to say? What to do?

Juditha and Eunice stare at each other. The two grandmothers.
And then... impulsively, they EMBRACE. Denise doesn't like it.

The crowd surges. The ladies get jostled into each other.
It's an ordeal, a wave of people. Juditha leans into Eunice.

JUDITHA

(whispering)

I have some pictures from Justin's
birthday. Would you like to see them?

EUNICE

(she smiles, gently)

Of course. That would be nice.

Juditha pulls Eunice aside, to an alcove. Juditha opens her
PURSE, fiddles with her wallet, then pulls out BIRTHDAY PHOTOS
of their grandchildren. Eunice oos and aahs.

EUNICE

So cute.

JUDITHA

It was a wonderful little party.

A moment of humanity amidst the madness.

DENISE
 (then, impatient)
 Mom.

Juditha turns, brought back to reality, and puts her wallet away as we find Marcia watching through the crowd.

Moved by their interaction, she steadies herself and enters the courtroom ready to win.

34

INT. ITO'S COURTROOM - LATER

34

Jam packed. People are sardined in. It's electric.

The lawyers sit at their tables, pumped like athletes before a big game. Chris fidgets. OJ nervously talks in Bailey's ear. Johnnie has a steely calm. Marcia buzzes with adrenaline. Dominick sits next to the Goldmans.

The reporters and family members have a hushed, almost reverent demeanor as a BAILIFF steps forward.

BAILIFF
 All rise, court is in session. Judge
 Lance Ito presiding.

Ito takes the bench.

ITO
 Good morning. Let's bring in the
 jury.

The moment of truth. A door opens, and the TWENTY-FOUR JURORS AND ALTERNATES get escorted into the courtroom.

EVERYONE STRAINS to get a good look at the men and women who will decide the case. 15 Blacks, 6 Whites and 3 Hispanics.

SCHATZMAN
 Wow. That sure ain't Simi Valley.

The Jurors feel all eyes on them. Nervous, they take their seats. A flew glance at OJ and their gazes widen.

CUT TO Marcia skillfully at the podium.

MARCIA
 ...We've watched OJ Simpson win the Heisman Trophy, we've watched him in movies and commercials. We think we know him. But, what we've been seeing is a public face, the face of the athlete, the actor. Like many public men, he also has a private side. The OJ you never met: The face of a batterer. The abuser. The murderer.

Hodgman and Chris nod, pleased. She's nailing it.

MARCIA

I would like to summarize the results of our evidence from these heartless slayings. The blood trail at the Rockingham property matches the defendant. The blood found on the glove recovered at Rockingham matches the defendant. The blood drops at the Bundy murder scene... match the defendant. And the blood found in the Bronco matches a mixture of the defendant, Ron Goldman and Nicole Brown.

Shawn glances anxiously at Johnnie. But he's completely relaxed.

CUT TO Johnnie at the podium, radiating confidence.

JOHNNIE

Dr. Martin Luther King said it best: Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. And so here, we embark upon a search for justice. A search for truth.

The Jurors sit up, intrigued.

JOHNNIE

None of us were out there on June 12th 1994. We must rely upon the witnesses to provide a full picture. But, let me talk about those witnesses the prosecution didn't mention. Witnesses who will exonerate OJ Simpson. One might wonder why the prosecution didn't bring to your attention Mary Anne Gerchas?

Perplexed, Marcia and Hodgman look at each other. Who the hell is she??

Carl winces, his heartburn kicking in.

JOHNNIE

Or Rosa Lopez? Joe Stellini? Or Alan Austin?

Frantic, Hodgman and Marcia scan through their documents. Those names aren't there! Hodgman vaults up.

HODGMAN

Y-your honor, I hesitate to interrupt another lawyer's opening statement, but it appears that for some reason these witnesses haven't been turned over to the People.

Hodgman struggles to contain his outrage.

Ito hesitates, weighing what to do. This could be a big delay. Hodgman shakes his papers, ready to explode.

ITO

Maybe... we should excuse the jury.

Eyebrows raise. Really? The bailiff steps forward and escorts the JURY out. The prosecution stews. The defense squirms.

Curious Jurors rubberneck backwards, trying to see what's going to happen as... THE DOOR SHUTS THEM OUT. Then --

ITO

Mr. Hodgman.

HODGMAN

Your Honor, what is this?! Opening statement by ambush?! This is a complete surprise! A horrible breakdown! The people have not received reciprocal discovery!

ITO

Counsel, can you address these issues?

Johnnie pats Carl on the shoulder, then grabs a seat. Carl sheepishly stands. Hodgman sips his water, perspiring.

CARL

I will try, Your Honor.

ITO

I have to say, Mr. Douglas, I've known Mr. Hodgman as a colleague and as a trial lawyer, and I've never seen the expression on his face that I see now. Mr. Hodgman, why don't you take a few deep breaths.

HODGMAN

Give me a moment, Your Honor. I just need to slow myself down, a bit.

ITO

Okay. Mr. Douglas?

CARL

(dying inside)

It's regrettable as I stand before you, Your Honor, that we have not coordinated our efforts as well as we would have liked. I say that, because I have some documents that I do intend to give over to the People. I tell the Court with all seriousness that I am embarrassed by this and take full responsibility.

Beet red, Hodgman is ready to burst a blood vessel.

HODGMAN

Your Honor, while I am delighted and appreciative that Mr. Douglas is taking full responsibility, the fact remains that the People have been denied their right to a fair trial!

Hodgman suddenly PAUSES. Strangely --

HODGMAN

I-I apologize, Your Honor. I-I'm not quite fini...

Something's wrong. Hodgman tries continuing, but can't. He is hyperventilating.

HODGMAN

I-I'm having, having some c-chest p...

And suddenly, Hodgman COLLAPSES! He's DOWN.

The crowd GASPS, astonished.

Hodgman lies on the floor. Flat out.

CUT TO:

35 INT. COURTROOM - MINUTES LATER

35

PARAMEDICS roll Hodgman out on a gurney. They rush him out the back of the courtroom.

Marcia, Darden, Johnnie, Shapiro... everybody is stupefied.

Nobody knows what the hell to say or do. The courtroom doors close. Slowly, all faces turn back to Ito. An awkward pause.

ITO

(feebly)

Why don't we adjourn for the day.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

36 OMITTED 36
37 INT. GARCETTI'S OFFICE - LATER 37

Gil is in crisis mode. He meets with Marcia, digesting the bad news. He rubs his brow, sick.

GIL
Bill isn't coming back. It's like this building is cursed. Like we were built on Indian burial grounds.

MARCIA
(rattled)
His wife says he'll return... eventually.

GIL
Jesus!

MARCIA
The team will pick up the slack. We have a good group.

Gil is less than convinced. He begins pacing.

GIL
Bill had a lot of responsibility and you're only one person. Do we add another senior prosecutor?

MARCIA
(threatened)
What? No! I can handle the case!

GIL
Another body could be helpful.

MARCIA
I think adding anyone would be disruptive --

GIL
(ignoring her, musing)
It would need to be someone the community could support.

Gil's spin is worrying Marcia. Forceful, she thinks fast.

MARCIA
Look, if we're being honest, Chris is ready to step up.
(closing the deal)
(MORE)

MARCIA (CONT'D)

He took Johnnie's best shot and came back strong in opening statements. I think he could be a perfect Co-Prosecutor.

Gil stops. Intrigued...

CUT TO:

38

INT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

38

In an opulent home, Dominick holds court. A swanky dinner party of white BEVERLY HILLS SOCIALITES hang on every word.

DOMINICK

The relationship between the families is quite peculiar. When you consider that the son of one is on trial for murdering the daughter of another... it's startling that they greet one another in court so warmly. Not even a hint of awkwardness.

SOCIALITE WOMAN #1

My God.

DOMINICK

The friendliness won't last, of course.

SOCIALITE WOMAN #2

What about OJ's girlfriend, Paula? She can't still be with him?

Dominick is about to answer -- when an AFRICAN AMERICAN BUTLER enters with dessert.

Oh! Everyone abruptly falls silent. Not a peep. They awkwardly wait while the Butler places the dishes around the table... then... leaves. Dunne resumes:

DOMINICK

The interesting thing about Paula Barbieri is she had broken up with OJ the day of the murders. I heard she was with Michael Bolton at the Mirage in Las Vegas that night. But once OJ was arrested, she returned to his side.

(beat)

Naturally, the big question has always been why did Nicole return to him, again and again? I'm sure fear played a part, but I hear that her parents pushed her to reconcile with him every time they split, and that OJ set her father up with a Hertz dealership.

(MORE)

DOMINICK (CONT'D)
 She didn't know any better. Did you realize she had just turned 18 when they started dating...?

The group is SHOCKED silent. Then --

SOCIALITE #1
 What else?

Dominick loves this.

DOMINICK
 Well... next week promises to be extraordinary:
 (a hammy dramatic pause)
 The jury will visit the crime scene and OJ's mansion. And OJ will be there too. Imagine! The first time he's been back since the Bronco Chase!

The guests react, tantalized!

CUT TO:

39 INT. MARCIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

39

Half of the bed is STACKED WITH PAPERS and FILES.

Marcia lays on the other half, dialing a phone. As it RINGS...

INTERCUT:

40 INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

40

Chris drags out of bed, in boxer shorts and a T-shirt.

His PHONE sits in the middle of the floor. The CORD doesn't reach all the way across to the room. He groggily answers.

CHRIS
 Hello?

MARCIA
 It's me. Bill's not coming back.

CHRIS
 (shocked)
 What?! Wow. That's terrible.

Chris is really thrown by this. Now alert. But quiet.

Then...

CHRIS
 Who is Gil assigning?

MARCIA

No one.

Chris is surprised.

MARCIA

We spoke this afternoon, and I told him the best way forward is to elevate you to Co-Prosecutor. If you're comfortable with that?

Stunned, Chris isn't sure what to say.

CHRIS

My God... Marcia...

MARCIA

Are you happy?

CHRIS

You know I am.
(psyched)
I can't believe you did this for me...

MARCIA

(sincere)
I did it for the Browns and the Goldmans. Now it's on us.

Chris takes a moment, sobered by the gravity of their task.

CHRIS

We have to take it all the way.

MARCIA

Yes, we do. And we will.

CUT TO:

41 INT. ROCKINGHAM HOUSE - DAY

41

Johnnie stands in the middle of OJ's FOYER.

The walls are covered in PHOTOS of OJ with only white people: Golfing buddies, charity events, women... every single person is white!

Johnnie frowns.

JOHNNIE

This won't do at all.

CUT TO:

42 LATER

42

Johnnie oversees a CREW OF UNDERLINGS redress EVERY ROOM.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

All of the photos of white people come DOWN. Photos of black people go UP.

Bibles are scattered.

A copy of "Presumed Innocent" is placed on a coffee table.

43 INT. OJ'S BEDROOM 43

Next to OJ's bed, Johnnie swaps out a framed NUDE PHOTO of Paula Barbieri and replaces it with OJ's mother, Eunice, in a wheelchair.

44 INT. FOYER 44

Johnnie watches from the staircase, as the RUBY BRIDGES PAINTING from Johnnie's office gets carried in.

The crew delicately hangs up the art.

Carl stops next to Johnnie, admiring the painting.

CARL
Sure looks familiar.

JOHNNIE
(he smirks)
It's on loan from the Cochran
Collection.

CUT TO:

45 INT. LA COUNTY JAIL MEETING ROOM - DAY 45

Handcuffs are removed from OJ's wrists in the f.g. while Johnnie watches at a table. OJ approaches and takes a seat.

JOHNNIE
Tomorrow when the jurors tour the crime scene and Rockingham, it'll be important for all of us to make a positive impression. It's the only time they'll get to see you outside of the courtroom. All eyes will be on you, but hey.. You're OJ... you're used to that. You put it on. Smile. People will melt.

OJ
(he nods, feeling good)
Okay.

JOHNNIE

But -- I don't want you to seem surprised when you see that we've redecorated.

Huh? OJ reacts, perplexed.

OJ

"Redecorated"? Why would you do that?

JOHNNIE

We wanted to project the right image. Someone our jurors could admire and fully relate to.

OJ doesn't get it.

OJ

People do admire my house. Everybody loves my house! It was in Sunset Magazine.

Johnnie sighs, trying to find the right words. Then --

JOHNNIE

OJ, the majority of the jury is black.

OJ

(on-guard)

Yeah...?

They stare at each other. Johnnie takes a moment.

JOHNNIE

Look, do me a favor. Try to imagine your life before any of this happened. How many black people did you interact with on a daily basis? How dialed in were you to the community, and issues the average black person deals with? How many blacks did you even consider a friend?

OJ

AC! And he's darker than I am!

Exasperated, Johnnie doesn't even bother to respond.

OJ suddenly gets still. He leans back dubiously.

OJ

Are you trying to say something about me, Johnnie?

JOHNNIE

Absolutely NOT. Nobody's judging you, brother, but let's be honest, being nicknamed the Mayor of Brentwood isn't going to forge any bonds with our jury! People YOU NEED to acquit you of a double-murder charge.

OJ sizes up Johnnie, collects himself.

OJ

Okay. Okay. I hear you. I can go along with all that.

JOHNNIE

Good. Thank you.

OJ leans in to Johnnie, fixes him.

OJ

When they say "Mayor of Brentwood." I know what they're saying when they say that.

(beat)

But between us right here, I want you to know that I never "left anybody behind." I did what just about anyone would do, or have a right to do. I manifested myself out of a messed-up place. I did that. And don't think there weren't people back where I come from, holding onto the back of my shirt the whole time, trying to get me to drag them out too. But that's not how it works. You have to get your own. Nobody can do it for you. And you won't ever catch me apologizing for having a beautiful house in a beautiful neighborhood that doesn't have people trying to come over the wall to get to me and what I earned. Never.

JOHNNIE

Well. Alright. Yes. And I'm glad you understand what we gotta do here.

They look across the divide. Then:

OJ

And you should see the house I bought my mother.

CUT TO:

47 OMITTED 47

48 INT. BUNDY CONDO - LATER 48

A few Jurors meander through Nicole's now EMPTY condo.

Everything has been moved out. It's depersonalized and cold. They aren't sure what they should be looking at.

Marcia steps in after they leave, shocked. A deep sadness overtakes her as she peers around.

Chris enters as Marcia takes in the barren space.

CHRIS
Everything alright?

Marcia doesn't like her vulnerable side exposed. But, strangely, she feels comfortable with Chris.

MARCIA
What happened here? Why'd they clear
out the place?
(sad)
This doesn't show us anything. She
was a mother. There was a family...

She trails off. Chris is silent.

49 INT. ROCKINGHAM ESTATE - LATER IN THE DAY 49

The Jurors enter OJ's estate. They are awed. It's homey. Fresh cut flowers are in vases. Wood burns in the fireplace.

Bailey watches FOUR BLACK JURORS in particular who seem conspicuously impressed.

We'll come to know these two women and two men as The Gang Of Four: QUEEN BEE, EN VOGUE, SPEED and EASTER ISLAND.

Speed wears a San Francisco 49ers Cap. His name says it all.

SPEED
Damn... this is what I'm talkin'
about.

Amused, Bailey whispers to Johnnie.

BAILEY
Didn't Juice play a short time for San
Francisco?

JOHNNIE
(he grins, whispering)
Yeah. I saw him too.

Livid, Marcia and Chris gape at all this. Seething, Marcia spots a photograph of NELSON MANDELA.

MARCIA

Jesus. This is a search for TRUTH?

Chris shakes his head.

CHRIS

I thought Johnnie was above this type of nonsense.

MARCIA

(she snaps)

On what planet do you live?! Johnnie is not above anything.

ON OJ

He peers at a wall of photos. He mutters to Kardashian.

OJ

I don't even know who half these people are.

CUT TO:

50 SERIES OF SHOTS: 50

Jurors leisurely stroll around, admiring photographs. TWO BLACK LADIES are impressed by the Ruby Bridges painting.

In OJ's 4-car garage, a white bearded juror, SANTA CLAUS, drools over his FANCY SPORTS CAR.

51 EXT. ROCKINGHAM POOL - DAY 51

The tour winds down. Jurors and deputies marvel at OJ'S LIFE-SIZE STATUE by the pool.

OJ moves freely, chatting with defense attorneys.

Off to the side, we see Marcia complaining to Ito. Gesticulating all around the property. He's barely listening.

Sick of all this, Chris takes a seat on a bench. Suddenly --

OJ (O.S.)

Get off my bench!

Startled, Chris looks up. OJ is HOVERING ABOVE HIM.

OJ

(ominous)

I don't want you on my bench!

Within earshot, a couple of JURORS turn and gawk. Well this is crazy! Are the prosecutor and defendant about to fight?

Chris is unsure how to deal with this awkward, potentially dangerous situation. He is frozen.

Until -- Johnnie calmly intervenes, slipping between the men. Breaking the tension, he puts his arm around OJ.

JOHNNIE

Come on.

Furious, Chris watches Johnnie and OJ slink away. Johnnie hands OJ off to a Deputy. Then... Johnnie returns.

JOHNNIE

I'm sorry about that.

CHRIS

(indignant)

You need to keep your defendant under control!

JOHNNIE

He just got a little emotional...

Chris frowns, unappeased. Johnnie glances around, then moves closer. Chris becomes guarded. He knows Johnnie.

CHRIS

What?

JOHNNIE

There's something I've been meaning to tell you.

Johnnie tries to usher Chris away for some additional privacy. But, Chris won't move.

Unfazed, Johnnie leans in even closer.

JOHNNIE

Whatever happens, don't do Fuhrman. Make the white people do it.

What?! Chris stares at him, in disbelief.

Johnnie squeezes Chris's arm, then walks away.

Chris is stunned. Speechless.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

52 INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - MORNING 52

Getting dressed, unglued, Chris unloads into the phone.

CHRIS
How DARE he try and mess with my head!

INTERCUT:

53 INT. DARDEN'S RICHMOND HOUSE - SAME TIME 53

Pops sits, on the phone. A game show plays on his TV.

CHRIS
I'm Co-Prosecutor, Pops!

Pops tries to cut in, but Chris is not finished woofing.

CHRIS
It's ridiculous that I have to deal
with this kinda garbage during a trial
of this magnitude!
(beat; more ranting)
Maybe he's intimidated by me?! I
dunno! Another strong intelligent
brother?! But the bottom line is...
this has to stop!

Pops sighs. Old, wise, and not a mushy sympathetic shoulder.

POPS
Son, you been talking for twenty
minutes about how you're in charge
now. Well fine then. You're in
charge. So, act like it and stand up
for yourself.

We PUSH IN on Pops. He has more to say.

POPS
And how do you even know he was trying
to mess with your head?

CHRIS
What??

Pops takes a measured pause.

POPS
Son, is it possible that he was just
trying to give you some good advice...
Black man to Black man?

Chris goes silent, totally off-balance. Now he has no idea what to think.

CUT TO:

54 INT. CHRIS'S OFFICE - LATER

54

Chris sits with some D.A.s. He's the only black person in the room.

Mark Fuhrman is in a chair across from them, in the middle of a mock cross-examination.

CHRIS
How do you feel about interracial couples, Detective?

FUHRMAN
Don't care.

CHRIS
I'm not sure what you mean by that? What's there to care about?

Fuhrman realizes his small error. He responds politely, but with an edge.

FUHRMAN
I don't have an opinion. They're the same as anybody else.

CHRIS
Do you have any hobbies, Detective?

FUHRMAN
I collect World War II memorabilia. Mostly medals.

CHRIS
What about sports heroes?

FUHRMAN
George Foreman and Magic Johnson.

Chris doesn't buy it.

CHRIS
I'm surprised to hear that. In the past, haven't you expressed a dislike for African Americans?

FUHRMAN
(flat)
No sir, I have not.

Chris tightens... his tone growing more pointed.

CHRIS
Have you ever unfairly targeted
African Americans while on the job?

FUHRMAN
No.

CHRIS
Have you ever been accused of unfairly
targeting African Americans?

FUHRMAN
Probably, at some point. Suspects say
just about anything to get off.

Fuhrman is good at this. Chris can't land a blow.

CHRIS
Have you ever used a racial slur in
describing an African American?

FUHRMAN
No.

Chris stops.

CHRIS
You're saying you've never used the N-
word?

Fuhrman finally loses some of his coolheaded veneer.

FUHRMAN
What does this have to do with the
case?

CHRIS
(persisting)
Detective, have you used THE WORD?

Fuhrman pauses. The other prosecutors look at each other.
This no longer feels like a prep session.

FUHRMAN
Anybody ever told you I said "The
Word?"

CHRIS
So if the defense calls a witness that
testifies that you've used it, how do
you respond to that?

Fuhrman leans in to Chris, defiant.

FUHRMAN
I haven't. Ever. Okay?

Chris sighs. What more can he do with this man?

55

INT. MARCIA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

55

Marcia and paralegals work, when Chris barges in.

CHRIS

I'm not putting Fuhrman on the stand!

Marcia isn't in the mood, but Chris's tone is different.
Resolute.

CHRIS

And it's not because of Johnnie or
because I worked SID.

Everyone's eyes turn to Chris.

MARCIA

(weary)

Aren't we past this?

CHRIS

No. Look, you can give me any of
Bill's witnesses.

MARCIA

That's real noble. He had the
coroner.

Marcia realizes the paralegals are staring. She turns --

MARCIA

Could you guys give us a moment?

The staffers awkwardly get the hint. They grab their things
and exit.

MARCIA AND CHRIS are left alone. They regard each other.
Neither really wants to argue. There's too much respect.

MARCIA

I can't control who found the glove,
Chris, and the truth is Fuhrman will
present best if you have him.

CHRIS

(pointed)

Why is that?

Marcia's uncomfortable silence speaks volumes.

CHRIS

Say it. Go on. Because I'm black.

Marcia stares, annoyed. She realizes she has little choice.

MARCIA

Fine. Your dislike for him would read
to the jury anyway.
(full of hubris)
I'll take him. What's so difficult?
He's just a cop on a stand.

Chris finally relaxes, terribly relieved. Thank you.

CUT TO:

56 INT. CHRIS'S TOYOTA CAMRY - DRIVING

56

Chris crawls forward trying to get out of the courthouse driveway. People are EVERYWHERE.

Chris glowers at the line of cars stopped in front of him.

Out of the corner of his eye, Chris sees a BLACK PROTESTER, holding a SIGN with a red, black and green AFRICAN CONTINENT on it.

The man spins and Chris nods a hello -- only to have the protester RUSH TOWARDS his driver's side window!

Chris looks away as the protester RAGES through the glass.

BLACK PROTESTER

OREO!!! SELLOUT!!! SOMEBODY'S GONNA
GET ALL YOU GODDAMN LIARS!!! YOU GONNA
PAY FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO OJ!!!

Wild-eyed, the man SPITS on the window.

BLACK PROTESTER

LOOK AWAY ALL YOU WANT!!! I KNOW YOU
HEAR ME!!! YOU PUNK ASS NIGGAAAAA!!!!

Chris pulls forward as the loogie dribbles down the glass.

CUT TO:

57 INT. FUHRMAN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

57

Immaculate. Homey. Classical music plays.

Fuhrman cleans his MEMORABILIA CASES. Inside are his WWII MEDALS.

We SLOWLY PUSH IN on the medals. Closer. Closer. Gradually discovering... they're all German... SWASTIKAS!

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END