

COURTROOM 302

"A Blind Lady With A Sword"

by

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Based on the book by

Steve Bogira

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CHARACTER PAGE

MAIN CHARACTERS

JUDGE DANIEL ARMATO - 46, Judge in Courtroom 302

ASA MATT KANNY - 34, Senior Assistant State's Attorney

ASA JULIE "JULES" LOPES - 31, Assistant State's Attorney

ASA CLAIRE O'CARROLL - 25, Assistant State's Attorney

APD PAUL "CHITS" WOJCICKI (voy-CHITS-ski) - 33, Senior Assistant Public Defender

APD AARON DUNN - 28, Assistant Public Defender

DEPUTY RANDY BULLOCK - 32, Sheriff's Deputy

DEPUTY LYNN GUERRERO - 27, Sheriff's Deputy

LAVERNE HAGLER - 38, Armato's Clerk in 302

EPISODIC CHARACTERS

MARTIN BATES - 30, walk-in defendant on a drug charge

RAUL MONTEZ - 34, private defense lawyer

LEON HALL - 13, hate crime victim

DINO FALCONE - 18, hate crime defendant

DONTRELLE JAMES - 19, gun case defendant

OFFICER MACKLIN - Chicago Police officer

JUDGE FELICIA TRYON - 50, Judge in Courtroom 400

JUDGE OWEN CROSSWAITE - 68, Presiding Judge at CCB

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1 INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY 1

A SOOTHING CHIME sounds from a Zen alarm clock as **CLAIRE O'CARROLL** blinks awake. She's 25, fresh-faced, possessed with a nervous energy. She jumps out of bed, starts pulling entry-level business suits from her tiny closet...

QUICK CUTS of Claire in the mirror, trying various skirt/blouse combos, not happy with anything she's seeing. She wants to look right for the big day -- her first as a newly-minted Assistant State's Attorney (ASA).

2 INT. LOCKUP - PROCESSING AREA - DAY 2

-- A POLICE WHISTLE SCREAMS. Shirts, pants, and jackets hit the floor as THIRTY CUSTODIES trade their street clothes for ill-fitting TAN JUMPSUITS -- the letters *DOC* stenciled on the back. A VOICE hits them, hard as a hammer:

DEPUTY RANDY (O.S.)
Welcome to County! You are now
property of the Illinois Department
of Corrections!

Their tormentor steps into view: **DEPUTY RANDY BULLOCK**, 32, 240 pounds of bad-ass, neck like a tree trunk. He carries no gun as he walks the line.

DEPUTY RANDY (CONT'D)
You may think you're here 'cause
you committed a crime. That is
incorrect. You're here 'cause you
were too *stupid* not to get caught!

3 INT. ARMATO'S BEDROOM - DAY 3

ON **JUDGE DANIEL ARMATO**, 46, keen-eyed, going gray at the temples. He examines his reflection in the mirror, frowns as he fastens his belt over an expanding paunch. He sucks in to steal an extra loop. Not going gently into middle age.

Armato snaps on a SILVER CUFF-LINK as --

4 INT. LOCKUP - DAY 4

-- HANDCUFFS ARE SNAPPED SHUT, ratcheting onto wrist after wrist.

DEPUTY RANDY (O.S.)

Today, you will have a court appearance. You will address the Judge as "Your Honor." You will speak only when spoken to.

WIDER to find Randy moving down the row of PRISONERS.

DEPUTY RANDY (CONT'D)

Failure to do so may result in a strange sensation. That will be my boot up your ass!

5 INT. CICERO DINER - DAY

5

CLOSE ON A WHITE SOX TRAVEL MUG, half-filled with coffee. A WHISKEY BOTTLE TIPS INTO FRAME, filling the mug the rest of the way. WIDER TO FIND **PAUL "CHITS" WOJCICKI** (voy-CHITS-ski), 33, Assistant Public Defender (APD), taking a satisfied sip from the mug.

He watches a MORNING SHOW on the TV over the counter: Split-screen shows A LOCAL ANCHOR interviewing ASA **JULIE "JULES" LOPES**, 31, dark hair, olive skin, pretty enough to be on-air talent, smart enough it doesn't matter.

JULES (ON TV)

-- Well, Kyle, a Hate Crime is only charged when someone crosses the line from speech to criminal action. There's no law against bad language.

ANCHOR KYLE (ON TV)

So would you say the upcoming Bridgeport Hate case, which has community leaders up in arms, is unusual?

JULES (ON TV)

Absolutely. The Hate Crime enhancement in Bridgeport is rarely used and puts an extra burden on us as prosecutors--

Chits watches the broadcast, amused, as a WAITRESS brings over a heaping plate of EGGS AND HASH. She notices a SPLINT on his right wrist.

WAITRESS

What happened to you, Counselor?

CHITS

Dog bit me.

As Chits digs into the meal with his good hand --

6 INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY 6

A CONE OF LIGHT from a single desk lamp illuminates ASA **MATT KANNY**. He's 34, solid, unassuming -- until he gets up before a jury. Matt sits alone in the darkened office, poring over case files for the day. Then, LIGHTS FLICKER ON around him.

WIDER to see the receptionist, **DANETTE**, enter the BULLPEN. She jumps, startled, to see Matt sitting there.

DANETTE

-- Mr. Kanny, you scared the daylight's outta me. Why you at a secretary's desk?

MATT

Morning, Danette. We're outta coffee filters.

DANETTE

Then you best get off your ass and buy some. This ain't a charity.

Matt smiles as she sweeps past -- their teasing is good-natured and constant. He stands, stretches as he crosses to a narrow window and peers out at the early morning gray...

7 EXT. COURTHOUSE - AERIAL VIEW - CONTINUOUS 7

CLOSE ON MATT'S FACE as he stares out the window, then --

-- CAMERA ZIPS BACK HIGH AND WIDE to reveal: The COOK COUNTY CRIMINAL COURT BUILDING (CCB) -- largest and busiest in the nation. Seven stories high, seven decades old, covering a full city block. Doric columns on the facade support statues of Truth, Justice, and Liberty.

TIME LAPSE - As the SUN RISES behind CCB, a trickle of EARLY ARRIVALS turns into a flood, until a LONG QUEUE forms at...

8 EXT. COURTHOUSE ENTRANCE - DAY 8

...WE STEADICAM ALONG THE LINE as it snakes out of the courthouse and down the block. These are WALK-IN DEFENDANTS, FAMILY MEMBERS, WITNESSES, JURORS -- all here for their day in court. ATTORNEYS AND COURT STAFF jump the line, flashing ID badges as they hurry inside...

9 INT. COURTHOUSE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS 9

...CAMERA FINDS **MARTIN BATES** near the head of the line. He's 30, Caucasian, shakily sober. Martin approaches the metal detectors as a BORED DEPUTY recites a litany:

BORED DEPUTY
Everything out your pockets --
keys, wallets, cell phones, no hats
or do-rags. Illegal items will be
confiscated and you will be
charged...

Martin empties his pockets and steps through the metal detector, raises his arms in anticipation of an extra pat-down. Lifts his pant legs to show the tops of his socks. He's done this many times before. As Martin is frisked by a DEPUTY --

-- CAMERA PICKS UP JULES flashing past on a full tank of caffeine. WE RECOGNIZE HER from the morning show, dressed to the nines in Jil Sander -- professional and sexy...

10 INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY 10

STEADICAM WITH Jules into the BULLPEN -- now a hive of activity. She's greeted by Danette and another staffer, **ESPERANZA**.

DANETTE
Nice show this morning, Jules.

JULES
Thanks.

ESPERANZA
Yeah, *muy caliente*.

Jules frowns as they dissolve in a fit of giggles. The Witness Coordinator, **BOBBY**, approaches, hands her a file.

BOBBY
Here's today's witness list... Hey,
you know where I could find a good
mariachi band?

JULES
Um, no.

She continues through the Bullpen, sees hidden smiles and furtive looks everywhere she turns. Something's up but she's not sure what. She makes a beeline for...

11 INT. MATT'S OFFICE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

11

...Jules pokes her head in, sees Matt gathering case files onto a ROLLING CART. These two are best friends.

JULES
What's going on?

MATT
Don't you mean, "*Que pasa, mi amigo?*"

JULES
Okay -- I'm still waiting for the punch-line.

Matt swivels a small desktop TV to face her, rewinds: WE SEE A REPLAY of Jules finishing up her morning show segment:

JULES (ON TV) (CONT'D)
--And that's it for today's "Legal Minute." I'm Julisa Lopez for "A.M. Chicago"--

MATT
"Julisa," really? Since when?

Jules groans, finally understanding all the teasing.

JULES
They wanted ethnic. I was born on the South Side.

MATT
You went to boarding school. Not a lot of homies at Lake Forest Academy.

JULES
I was on scholarship, okay?

MATT
You were on the equestrian team.

JULES
And every day after training, I had to work in the cafeteria and wear this awful hair-net.

MATT
Yet somehow you managed to transcend your tragic, ghetto upbringing.

Jules sighs, heads toward her office across the hall. Matt exits behind her, towing the file cart.

JULES
I'm never gonna live this down, am I?

MATT
Don't worry, I'm sure it'll blow over.

JULES
Yeah? When?

Jules unlocks her office, swings the door open to see...

12 INT. JULES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 12

...The room is wall-papered floor-to-ceiling with TORTILLAS.

JULES
(calling after him)
This isn't funny.

ANGLE ON MATT - A smile creeping onto his face. He thinks it's damn funny.

13 INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY 13

DING! Elevator doors open, spilling out a load of passengers into a bustling hallway. STEADICAM with Matt as he weaves his cart toward a set of DOUBLE OAK DOORS. A sign outside reads simply: "302."

14 INT. COURTROOM 302 - CONTINUOUS 14

...ENTER WITH Matt rolling the cart into a VAULTED COURTROOM topped with an intricate Beaux Arts ceiling. The JUDGE'S BENCH is empty but the GALLERY is packed with DEFENDANTS, WITNESSES, and FAMILY. ATTORNEYS shout out names of clients. JURORS IN ID BADGES clutch paperback novels. An IRATE WOMAN screams at her LAWYER as a baby CRIES in the b.g.

CAMERA SPINS to pick up CHITS, emerging from the chaos and approaching up the aisle, his White Sox mug in hand.

CHITS
Matty, gimme a reason to smile.

Matt hands him an armful of files from the cart.

MATT
Seventeen custodies, ten walk-ins.
Gonna need a continuance on Hanks.

CHITS

What for?

MATT

The girlfriend is pissing backward.
Says he never touched her.

CHITS

She told the cops he beat her ass.
You gonna treat her as a hostile
witness?

MATT

Not if the Public Defender can
convince his ass-beating client to
take a "bullet."

CHITS

A year in County? No state prison?

MATT

Cross my heart.

CHITS

I'll encourage him to accept the
State's Attorney's generous offer.

Matt notices Chits' splinted wrist.

MATT

What happened to your wrist?

CHITS

Carpal tunnel. See you at bond
hearings.

CAMERA STAYS with Chits as he heads away up the aisle. He
spots -- MARTIN BATES looking for a seat in the gallery.

CHITS (CONT'D)

Can't say I'm happy to see you back
here, Martin.

Martin looks away, hangs his head in embarrassment.

15

INT. LOCKUP - DAY

15

ON THIRTY PAIRS OF JAIL-HOUSE SNEAKERS -- slip-ons, no laces -
- tromping down a tunnel into the DANK BASEMENT LOCKUP.
WIDER to see a LINE OF CUFFED PRISONERS led by Randy.

RANDY

Toes on the yellow line! Don't
make me tell you twice.

The PRISONERS shuffle along a painted line in front of the OVERCROWDED HOLDING CELLS. **DEPUTY LYNN GUERRERO** greets them - she's 27, petite, but her voice radiates pure authority.

DEPUTY LYNN

Gentlemen, we have a few simple rules in Holding. Rule #1: No hands in your pockets. We don't know you and we don't know what you're thinking. Rule #2: No standing in the cells. If you can't find a seat, use the floor. Rule #3--

She's interrupted by a chorus of CATCALLS as another Deputy leads in a half-dozen FEMALE PRISONERS, placing them in a separate cell. Lynn hides a smile.

DEPUTY LYNN (CONT'D)

Rule #3: Show some respect for your fellow custodies. We don't want any problems today.

16 INT. COURTROOM 302 - DAY

16

STEADICAM WITH CLAIRE as she enters a swirl of activity -- the BABBLE OF ATTORNEYS AND CLIENTS, the CRYING BABY. She tries to project confidence as she approaches Matt.

CLAIRE

Mr. Kanny? I'm Claire O'Carroll.

MATT

Who's your client?

CLAIRE

Um, the state of Illinois?

Matt suddenly remembers where he's heard her name before.

MATT

O'Carroll? You're the new Grade One?

CLAIRE

Yes, sir, Mr. Kanny--

MATT

Call me Matt. Welcome to 302.

She follows him to the cart, where he's sorting case files.

CLAIRE

I just want to tell you how excited I am to be working for the State's Attorney. In law school, I wrote my senior thesis on the Hearsay Exception and the Constitution--

Matt cuts her off with a smile, not unkind but necessary.

MATT

Do me a favor, Claire. Forget everything you learned in law school.

CLAIRE

What?

MATT

We're not gonna be interpreting the Constitution today. You know what a bond hearing is?

CLAIRE

Judge sets an amount for bail based on...the nature of the crime and defendant's criminal history?

MATT

Right. We've got 81 cases on calendar today. Seventeen custodies trying to bond out--

Before Matt can finish, a WOMAN'S VOICE barks out:

LAVERNE (O.S.)

All rise!

The clerk, **LAVERNE HAGLER**, addresses the room. She's 38, African-American, imperious -- the Judge's enforcer.

MATT

(sotto; to Claire)
Watch and learn, okay?

LAVERNE

Court is in session, the Honorable Daniel Armato presiding. No gum chewing, no eating or drinking, no sleeping. No reading, this ain't a library. Turn off your cell phone or it's gonna get confiscated -- and you will take that baby outside.

Everyone stands as JUDGE ARMATO sweeps in wearing his robe. He settles at the bench and gets right to business.

ARMATO

Sit, sit, we have a busy morning.
Number one on the calendar?

LAVERNE

People vs. LaMichael Jenkins.

Claire takes a seat in the gallery as Matt heads to the bench. He's joined by Chits as a MALE PRISONER is brought out by Randy. Lynn holds the next prisoner at the door.

MATT

ASA Matthew Kanny for the People.

CHITS

APD Paul Wojcicki on behalf of
Defendants 1 through 17.

ARMATO

Probable cause, background?

Matt launches into a rapid-fire summation. The dialogue is at an auctioneer's pace, intense, non-stop.

MATT

Patrol officers in the 3300 block
of Dearborn observed the defendant
in a hand-to-hand transaction.
Recovered .02 gross grams of a
substance resembling rock cocaine.
Defendant made a spontaneous
confession outside of Miranda.

ARMATO

Mitigation?

CHITS

Defendant is 24, lifelong resident
of Chicago, high school diploma.

ARMATO

D-Bond at \$30,000, set for prelim.

LAVERNE

People vs. Henry Grozny.

ARMATO

Probable cause, background?

Matt doesn't even pause for breath as the NEXT DEFENDANT is swapped in.

MATT

T-stop for 22-350 on West 71st and Princeton. Officers obtained consent to search the vehicle, found the ignition punched. Defendant is a parolee with two prior auto burgs.

ARMATO

Mitigation?

CHITS

Defendant is 27, lifelong resident, drives his 82-year old grandmother to church on Sundays--

TITTERS of laughter from the gallery.

CHITS (CONT'D)

What? I'm serious.

ARMATO

Defendant's grandmother will have to rely on public transport. D-Bond at \$30,000, set for prelim.

ANGLE ON CLAIRE - She watches from the gallery, spellbound, as DEFENDANTS are herded past Armato. The process is little more than a blur to the uninitiated. A VOICE in her ear:

AARON (O.S.)

Crazy, huh? My first day in 302, I thought my head was gonna explode.

Claire turns to see **AARON DUNN** behind her. He's 28, African-American, outspoken, with an easy smile. They speak quietly:

AARON (CONT'D)

Aaron Dunn, Public Defender.

CLAIRE

Claire O'Carroll, State's Attorney.

AARON

We'll be seeing a lot of each other then. Welcome to the "suck."

CLAIRE

Nice to see you have such a high opinion of the place.

AARON

Cook County CCB's the busiest courthouse in the country. 302's the busiest courtroom at CCB.

CLAIRE

Does it always go this -- *fast*?

AARON

They don't call Armato "The King Of Dispo" for nothing.

(off her puzzlement)

Dispo, y'know, "disposition?" Plea bargain? We settle more cases in 302 than any other two courts combined.

CLAIRE

Why?

AARON

Average jury trial takes two weeks but we can dispo a case in 15 minutes. Wham-Bam-off to the Slam.

CLAIRE

You're kidding.

AARON

Wish I were. Court system can't handle the trial-load so we deal: State gets a quick conviction, PD gets a lighter sentence for his client -- and another brother goes to jail.

Claire shoots him a look, amused at the heavy cynicism.

CLAIRE

Don't sugar-coat it, tell me what you really think.

AARON

I just call 'em like I see 'em.

CLAIRE

Don't we ever go to trial?

AARON

Only for the Big Three -- murder, violence, and sex crimes. And heaters, of course.

CLAIRE

Heaters?

AARON

Media cases, like the Bridgeport Hate case. Good for the Judge's profile. Rumor is Armato's hot for a slot on Appeals Court. Just stay on your toes -- and watch out for Laverne.

CLAIRE

Who's Laverne?

AARON

You haven't met the Wicked Witch?

He nods toward Laverne as she calls the next case:

LAVERNE

People vs. Martin Bates... Martin Bates? We don't got all day!

AARON

(to Claire)

Take my advice -- steer clear.

ANGLE ON MARTIN - Rising nervously, he walks forward to stand alongside Chits.

ARMATO

Probable cause, background?

MATT

Defendant was in Douglas Park after-hours in violation of Muni Code 14.22. Officers recovered a foil packet with .03 gross grams of a substance resembling rock cocaine. Defendant is on formal probation for possession of narcotics.

ARMATO

Mitigation?

CHITS

Defendant is 30, lifelong resident, cares for a minor child. Assigned to drug treatment, but never completed the program.

Armato eyes Martin sternly.

ARMATO

You are wasting county resources,
Mr. Bates. If you don't want to
face your addiction, give the space
to someone who does. D-Bond at
\$25,000, set for prelim.

MARTIN

Your Honor, I'm trying to quit, but
please don't lock me up--

All eyes go to Martin -- he's breached protocol by speaking
up during his hearing.

ARMATO

Sir, your bond has been set --
(overruling him)
-- Deputy, escort Mr. Bates
to Lockup.

MARTIN

(desperation)
-- I gotta take care of my
boy, Theo. He's only 12-
years old!

Randy puts an iron grip on Martin's arm and leads him away.
OFF Chits, watching Martin go, his interest piqued...

17

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

17

FIND Matt as he exits the courtroom in a hurry. A dapper
attorney, **RAUL MONTEZ**, 34, calls after him:

RAUL MONTEZ

Hey, Counselor, what's the
difference between a State's
Attorney and God?

MATT

God doesn't think he's a State's
Attorney.

Matt grins and the men embrace like the old friends they are.

RAUL MONTEZ

How's the office? You miss me?

MATT

Nope. Once a prosecutor crosses to
the dark side, he's dead to us.

RAUL MONTEZ

You wish. When're you gonna get
wise and make the leap yourself?

MATT

Ah, can't really see myself doing
criminal defense.

RAUL MONTEZ
Other side of the same coin...
(shows off his suit)
...except it's *shinier*.

MATT
That a Brioni?

RAUL MONTEZ
Got three more at home just like
it. That's home as in Knollwood.
Where you could move your family if
you ever took a decent paying job.

Matt laughs it off, but that hit close to the bone.

RAUL MONTEZ (CONT'D)
C'mon, you and Annie would love it
there. Great neighborhoods, good
schools for Zach.

MATT
Schools in Englewood are just fine.

RAUL MONTEZ
Yeah, if you don't mind the
occasional drive-by.

MATT
Builds character. And foot-speed.

Now it's Raul's turn to laugh as Matt quickly gets off-topic.

MATT (CONT'D)
Why didn't you tell me you were
coming in today?

RAUL MONTEZ
Left you three messages at home.

Matt hesitates, just for a heartbeat.

MATT
Machine must be on the blink.
What's the occasion?

RAUL MONTEZ
Pre-trial in 302. I'm representing
Dino Falcone.

MATT
Bridgeport case? Nice get.

RAUL MONTEZ

My senior partner knows his old man
from their union days.

MATT

"Union?" So now you're defending
mob kids.

RAUL MONTEZ

Alleged. Besides, their money's as
green as anyone's. You know who's
prosecuting?

MATT

(smiling wider)
Oh, yeah.

18

INT. ARMATO'S CHAMBERS - DAY

18

FIND Judge Armato sitting across from Matt and Raul, their
game faces on. Friendship doesn't extend to this arena.

ARMATO

All right, gentlemen, gloves off.
What's it gonna take to dispo this?

RAUL MONTEZ

My client, Dino Falcone, is only
17. He's been locked away from his
family for the past six months.
Given his age and lack of a
criminal record -- we'd accept time
served plus a lengthy probation.

MATT

Time served is a joke. Your client
brutally assaulted a 13-year old
boy -- kicked him in the head with
a steel-toed boot -- all for being
black in the wrong neighborhood.

RAUL MONTEZ

That allegation has never been
proven.

MATT

The defendant's own friend, Frank
Rossi, heard him shouting racial
slurs at the victim, Leon Hall--

RAUL MONTEZ

That's hearsay, since Rossi isn't
here to testify. He dropped out of
sight two months ago.

MATT

He just dropped back in...

Matt pulls out a BOOKING PHOTO of a scowling young man -- FRANK ROSSI, 18. Hands it over to Armato.

MATT (CONT'D)

Picked up on a separate warrant.
He'll testify to the racial slurs.

RAUL MONTEZ

He'll testify to *anything* once you make his other charges go away.

Armato watches them bicker with some amusement.

ARMATO

Is the State willing to make an offer, Mr. Kanny?

MATT

Eight years for aggravated battery, plus a deuce for the hate crime--

RAUL MONTEZ

Ten years? You're trying to paint my client as a monster!

MATT

If the steel-toed boot fits.

RAUL MONTEZ

I feel terrible about what happened to that boy, but Dino's being made a scapegoat--

MATT

Dino Falcone is a racist and a thug. He's lucky he's not on trial for *murder*--

ARMATO

Okay, okay, I think we all know where this is heading.

Armato presses a buzzer, looks up as Laverne enters.

ARMATO (CONT'D)

We're gonna set Falcone for trial. *Voir dire* to begin after prelims.

LAVERNE

You have Judge Crosswaite at one.

ARMATO

Two-o'clock then. Put in a request for extra security, and set aside seats for the media.

LAVERNE

One row?

ARMATO

Two, and find out where the cameras are gonna be. I don't want to pull an "Ito" on this one.

19 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

19

CLOSE ON **LEON HALL**, 13, African-American, bespectacled. His hair is buzz-cut short, growing back over a SURGICAL SCAR running the length of his skull.

MATT (O.S.)

Going to trial means you'll be under pressure from the media, as well as civic and religious groups.

WIDER to see Leon's mother, **SHARICE HALL**, 34, hovering protectively at his side, Matt seated across from them.

MATT (CONT'D)

Everyone will want a statement. It's best for our case if you don't give them one.

SHARICE HALL

I only care what's best for my son. Does he have to be at that trial?

MATT

Of course not, but having him in court would be a huge advantage.

SHARICE HALL

Why, if he doesn't need to testify?

MATT

We want to make sure Dino Falcone goes to prison. The best way to do that is let the jury see Leon.

SHARICE HALL

Let them feel sorry for him, you mean?

MATT

Juries are about feelings as much as facts. We want Leon front and center. Can you do that, Leon?

Leon starts to speak. He struggles, his speech slurred.

LEON HALL

Is -- Is -- he gonna be there?

MATT

Mr. Falcone? He'll be in court. But he won't be able to hurt you.

SHARICE HALL

Just seeing that animal will hurt enough...

(to Leon)

You don't have to do this. You don't ever have to see him again.

LEON HALL

I don' -- don' wanna see him. I wan' him to see me, mama... I wan' him to see what he did to me.

Sharice finally relents. OFF Matt, determination growing...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

20 INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

20

Matt moves through the bustling office, cell phone to his ear. The conversation is cordial but has an edge to it.

MATT

-- I wouldn't miss his soccer game, Annie. I know it's the playoffs, Thursday at 7:00... I'll definitely be there...

Jules approaches, her expression grim. Matt quickly ends the call.

MATT (CONT'D)

Gotta go. Okay, bye.

(to Jules)

I know that face. What's wrong?

JULES

Just got a call from DOC -- Frank Rossi is dead.

MATT

What?! How?

JULES

Hung himself in his jail cell.

MATT

They didn't have him on suicide watch?

JULES

Apparently not.

Matt stops, struggles to process this devastating news.

JULES (CONT'D)

You okay?

MATT

Sure. Bridgeport trial starts tomorrow and I just lost the only witness who can testify to the hate crime.

JULES

You still have his written testimony--

MATT

--Which I can no longer get into evidence--

JULES

(finishing his thought)
-- because it's hearsay. What about trying to deal the case?

MATT

No. I don't want to dispo this.

He looks back to Leon, still sitting in the GLASS-WALLED CONFERENCE ROOM with Sharice. An idea forming...

MATT (CONT'D)

I'm gonna have to put Leon on the stand.

JULES

Poor kid can barely put together a sentence. Defense'll kill him.

MATT

Not if you help him prep for cross.

JULES

I've commented on-air about the case. Could be seen as prejudicial.

MATT

Not a chance. I've seen every one of your shows.

Jules is thrown for a loop.

JULES

You have?

MATT

You haven't brought up any evidence that could be considered inadmissible.

JULES

You've seen every one of my shows?

MATT

Sure. I'm thinking of starting a fan club.

JULES

With a membership of one.

Jules tries to hide it but she's secretly flattered.

JULES (CONT'D)

Who's gonna cover 302?

Matt spots Claire carrying a cardboard box of her stuff to her office. He flags her down.

MATT

Claire, I need you in court this afternoon. You up for it?

CLAIRE

Um -- sure. No problem.

She approaches, excited but totally *unsure*.

MATT

Armato likes to roll arraignments after lunch. Just set each case within the statutory time period.

CLAIRE

Ten court days from the day of the arraignment, right?

MATT

Ten-of-ten for dope cases, eight-of-ten for everything else. He may squeeze in a prelim on you.

CLAIRE

I'll be ready.

MATT

Good. Call me if you get in any trouble.

OFF Claire, thrilled and determined not to get in trouble...

21

INT. PRESIDING JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

21

FIND Judge Armato being ushered into a grand office. A group of JUDGES mingle informally with **PRESIDING JUDGE OWEN CROSSWAITE**, 68, genial with a steely edge.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE

-- Case gets filed as a Residential Burglary but the defense objects, says the items were stolen from a church, not a house. And then the prosecutor says, and I quote, "but Your Honor, it's the House of God."

The Judges break up with laughter as Armato pours himself a cup of tea. Crosswaite excuses himself, approaches Armato.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE (CONT'D)

Danny, how's the family? Kids still at Braeside?

ARMATO

Yes, sir. Thank you again for the letter of recommendation.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE

Least I can do. I hear you're taking Falcone to trial.

Armato is not surprised -- There's not much that happens in the courthouse that Crosswaite doesn't know about.

ARMATO

I think it's the right call.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE

So do I. Tricky case though. I'm sure you'll keep it on the rails.

ARMATO

I'll do my best.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE

Don't think I haven't noticed how smoothly 302 is running. Gonna be tough keeping you in the fold.

ARMATO

Thank you, sir, but I'm not planning on leaving CCB.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE

Unless you get tapped to fill that slot in Appeals. And don't pretend you're not campaigning for it.

ARMATO

With all my heart.

Crosswaite laughs, then lowers his voice conspiratorially:

JUDGE CROSSWAITE

Attaboy. I've got a short list of candidates, and you're at the top.

OFF Armato, pleased...

22 INT. SEVENTH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY 22

Claire waits impatiently with a CROWD at the ELEVATOR BANK. "OUT OF ORDER" signs are posted on two of the six doors. She checks her watch, and hoofs it to the stairwell...

23 INT. STAIRWELL - DAY 23

Claire descends the worn risers to the third floor. She tries the door -- IT'S LOCKED. She yanks at the knob, then sees ANOTHER DOOR. This one reads, "EMERGENCY EXIT." She gingerly pulls it open, no alarm...

24 INT. BACK HALLWAYS - DAY 24

Claire winds her way down a twisting corridor into the guts of the building. No crowds back here. She turns a corner, and runs into a BARRED PORTAL. She can't get through.

CLAIRE
Great, Claire...

She retraces her steps, but stops in confusion. Which way is out? She rounds another corner -- and finds herself face-to-face with A LINE OF HANDCUFFED PRISONERS. The LEAD PRISONER shoots her a gap-toothed smile.

LEAD PRISONER
Lookee here, you my lawyer, sweet-thing?

CLAIRE
No, I'm -- Could you -- Excuse me.

LEAD PRISONER
No, no, 'scuse me.

He brushes Claire's hair with his fingertips and she jerks back. OTHER PRISONERS make kissing noises, blocking her way. Claire's panic is starting to rise as --

DEPUTY LYNN (O.S.)
Grab some wall! Now!

The reaction is immediate -- the men face the wall as Lynn comes striding up. She catches the Lead Prisoner looking back over his shoulder.

DEPUTY LYNN (CONT'D)
What're you looking at? Only thing for you back here is an ass-kicking!

The man's head snaps back toward the wall. ANOTHER DEPUTY takes charge of the men, as Lynn turns on a frazzled Claire

DEPUTY LYNN (CONT'D)
What the hell're you doing? Trying
to get hurt?

CLAIRE
I--I got lost -- It's my first day--

Lynn softens as she sees Claire is scared out of her wits.

DEPUTY LYNN
Hey -- it's okay. You with the
Public Defender?

CLAIRE
State's Attorney.

DEPUTY LYNN
Wow, you really are lost.

She takes Claire under her wing.

DEPUTY LYNN (CONT'D)
Look -- don't ever let 'em see you
get rattled. You gotta stay in
control with these guys.

CLAIRE
Stay in control, got it.

DEPUTY LYNN
Don't let 'em push you around 'cause
you're a woman. They've all got
mothers and sisters, remember that.

OFF her exit, leaving Claire behind shaken...

25 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 25

A CAMCORDER has been set up on a tripod facing Leon. He and Jules are alone, practicing a mock cross-examination.

JULES
Leon, you told the police you got
hit in the back of the head and
fell down. Is that right?

LEON HALL
Y-yes.

26 INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 26

CLOSE ON A SMALL MONITOR, showing a live feed of Leon's interrogation. WIDER to see Matt watching beside an anxious Sharice Hall.

SHARICE HALL
Is this really necessary?

MATT
Leon needs to be ready for anything
the defense might throw at him.

SHARICE HALL
I don't want him to do this.

MATT
I know how hard it is. But he's
our only chance at a conviction.

Sharice is conflicted, eyes the monitor...

INTERCUT:

JULES
-- And you saw Dino's face? That's
how you knew he was kicking you?

LEON HALL
Yes.

JULES
So you must've turned over onto
your back at some point.

LEON HALL
N-no.

JULES
Then how did you see his face?

LEON HALL
I -- I don' remember -- I jus' did.

JULES
But you said you didn't turn over.

LEON HALL
I d-d-did, I-I t-tol' you--

Sharice tightens at her son's growing agitation. Jules
presses gently.

JULES
Either you turned over or you
didn't, Leon. Which is it?

LEON HALL
I d-d-didn' t-turn b-b-but--

JULES
Maybe you got confused?

LEON HALL
N-N-NO! I-I know w-w-what I s-saw--

JULES
Okay. Let's take a break.

27 INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 27

Jules exits the conference room, her concern evident. She pulls Matt aside.

JULES
You see that?

MATT
Yep.

JULES
And you still want to put him in front of a jury?

MATT
I can't win without him.

Jules weighs her next words carefully.

JULES
I've known you a long time, Matt. I know it's not about ego. So -- why not deal this one?

MATT
Remember the Daryl Simmons case?

JULES
Black kid who got tossed off a roof?

MATT
White defendant took a plea. Four years suspended, no jail time...

JULES
...and a week's worth of rioting on the South Side.

MATT
Whole city's watching this case. We need a verdict, not a plea.

OFF Jules, she knows Matt is right on this one...

28

INT. COURTROOM 302 - DAY

28

Court is in session, Armato on the bench. CAMERA FINDS Claire on her own for the first time. She nervously skims through files, trying to get up to speed.

LAVERNE (O.S.)
People vs. Amare Hudson.

Claire snaps up, realizing that case is hers. She stands.

CLAIRE
Claire O'Carroll. For the People.

CHITS
Paul Wojcicki for the Defendant.

Claire moves to a table and sits, trying to appear poised and confident. An embarrassed silence as she waits for someone to speak. Armato is just staring at her. Now Claire notices everyone is staring at her. Chits WHISPERS in her ear:

CHITS (CONT'D)
This is the Defense table. State's Attorney sits closest to the jury.

CLAIRE
Right. I knew that.

Claire scoots herself to the other table. Trying to ignore the STIFLED LAUGHTER from the gallery.

ARMATO
Motions?

CHITS
Your Honor, we'd like to put the prelim over for 30 days.

ARMATO
Counsel? Ms. O'Carroll?

Claire fumbles the file, thoroughly flustered. Chits takes pity, WHISPERS to her:

CHITS
No objection by the People.

CLAIRE
Uh, no objection by the People,
Your Honor.

Armato sighs, irritated. It's gonna be a long afternoon.

29

INT. LOCKUP - DAY

29

FIND AARON down at the crowded holding cells, running down a list of new CUSTODIES.

AARON
Dontrelle James?

An amped-up teen, **DONTRELLE**, hops up. He's 19, African-American, jumpy as hell. They speak through the bars.

AARON (CONT'D)
Dontrelle, I'm Aaron Dunn. I work
for the Public Defender--

DONTRELLE JAMES
You my lawyer?

AARON
I've been assigned your case, yes.

DONTRELLE JAMES
Look, man, I shouldn't be in here.

Aaron has heard it all before. He reads Dontrelle's sheet.

AARON
Possession of a loaded firearm.
You're looking at three years max.

DONTRELLE JAMES
What?! Wasn't even my gun.

AARON
Relax, I can probably plead you
down. Get you county jail instead
of prison time--

DONTRELLE JAMES
I didn't do nothing wrong! Cops
didn't have no reason to stop me.

AARON
Says here you had expired tags.

DONTRELLE JAMES
That's bullshit! Check the DMV!

Dontrelle is really getting worked up. A couple of Deputies, including Randy, look over.

AARON
Keep your voice down.

DONTRELLE JAMES
Wasn't nothing wrong with my tags.

AARON
Then why'd they pull you over?

DONTRELLE JAMES
Why do you think? Your skin's same
color as mine!

He grabs Aaron's wrist through the bars. Aaron tries to pull
back, but Dontrelle holds on tightly. The DEPUTIES alert.

DONTRELLE JAMES (CONT'D)
Those cops would've treated you
same as me! You know I'm right!

Dontrelle struggles as the Deputies drag him out of the cell.
A Deputy KNOCKS him down. Aaron steps in on instinct --

AARON	DEPUTY RANDY
Hey! No need for that --	Step back, sir --
(struggling)	
-- <u>Get off my client!</u>	-- <u>I said step back!</u>

Aaron is suddenly yanked away and BODY-SLAMMED by Randy.

DONTRELLE JAMES (CONT'D)
See?! That's what I'm talking
about!

OFF Aaron's considerable shock and pain...

30

INT. COURTROOM 302 - DAY

30

Claire is questioning a uniformed cop, **OFFICER ELLIS**. Her
questions are halting but she's gaining confidence.

CLAIRE
On May 12th, 2011, sir -- what was
your occupation and assignment?

OFFICER ELLIS
Chicago PD Officer assigned to
patrol.

CLAIRE
And on that date, were you at the
3700 block of South Wells?

OFFICER ELLIS
Yes, I was.

CLAIRE

Did you see anyone at that location
who's in the courtroom right now?

OFFICER ELLIS

Yes. The gentleman in the tan
jumpsuit.

Officer Ellis points to a LATINO DEFENDANT in a DOC jumpsuit,
sitting next to his weary defense lawyer, **RUBINO**.

ARMATO

Indicating the defendant for the
record.

Claire runs through her mental checklist, trying to remember
what's next. She picks up an EVIDENCE ENVELOPE.

CLAIRE

I have in my hand an evidence
envelope containing a white,
powdery substance marked as
People's 1. Do you recognize it?

OFFICER ELLIS

Yes. I recovered it from the
defendant's left front pocket.

CLAIRE

Nothing further, Your Honor.

Claire sits, relieved to make it through her first prelim.

ARMATO

Cross?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY RUBINO

No questions, Your Honor.

ARMATO

People?

CLAIRE

The People rest.

Rubino looks up, confused. Armato just stares at Claire.

ARMATO

You know what that means, Counsel?
By resting, you've finished putting
on your case?

CLAIRE

Yes, Your Honor. I have.

Rubino's eyes go wide, his weariness evaporating.

ARMATO

Okay. Any motions by the defense?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY RUBINO

(jumping up)

Yes, motion to dismiss for
insufficiency of the evidence.

ARMATO

Motion granted. Case dismissed.

CLAIRE

What?

It happens so quickly, Claire doesn't have time to blink.

ARMATO

Defendant will be released from
custody.

CLAIRE

(panicked)

I don't understand, Your Honor.
Why is he being released?

ARMATO

Because, Ms. O'Carroll, you have no
evidence that a crime occurred.

CLAIRE

The evidence is right here, marked
as People's 1--

ARMATO

-- And normally you would've asked
the defense to stipulate the
substance in question was an
illegal narcotic. But you didn't.

CLAIRE

I -- I can do that right now.

ARMATO

This case is dismissed.

OFF Claire, left sitting in stunned silence. She may lose
her job on her very first day.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

31 INT. CLAIRE'S OFFICE - NIGHT 31

FIND Claire, quietly crying her eyes out in the privacy of her office. A SOFT KNOCK, and Matt is in the doorway.

MATT

I just got a thank-you note from a defense attorney. Any idea why?

CLAIRE

It's my fault. I let a drug dealer back on the street. I totally screwed up.

MATT

Yeah, you did. Good thing we can re-file on him.

CLAIRE

We can?

MATT

We get two bites at the apple on felony filings. Armato was just teaching you a lesson.

Claire breathes a sigh of relief but she's still shaken.

CLAIRE

I knew this job was gonna be tough. I knew I'd have to pay my dues but -
- I don't know, I thought--

MATT

You thought you'd be trying major felonies, and you will. But this is the reality: Too many cases, not enough time, no perks, lousy benefits.

Claire has to laugh at that job description.

MATT (CONT'D)

And you can't fall apart every time you don't get a win.

CLAIRE

It won't happen again.

MATT

Sure it will, but you get past it.

Claire dries her eyes, gathers herself.

CLAIRE
How did you know?
(off Matt's look)
That you wanted to be a prosecutor?
How'd you know?

MATT
I didn't. Always thought I'd end
up at one of the big downtown
firms, writing billion-dollar
contracts from my corner office at
the Hancock. But my first felony
trial was a four-count child
molest. Put the guy away for 25 to
life. Didn't come down off my
cloud for a week.

CLAIRE
That sounds -- amazing.

MATT
It was. You don't get that kind of
rush writing a contract.

OFF Claire, buoyed by the pep talk...

32 INT. LOCKUP - NIGHT 32

A BARRED DOOR CLANGS OPEN, revealing a stone-faced Aaron
sitting in an empty holding cell. He looks up to see Chits.

CHITS
What the hell happened to you?

33 INT. LOCKUP ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER 33

Aaron is incensed as he gets onto the elevator with Chits.
As soon as the doors close...

AARON
I've never been treated like that.

CHITS
--Calm down.

AARON
Those deputies were out of control.
I should file suit--

CHITS
--No, you shouldn't.

AARON

It was excessive use of force--

Chits stops him cold.

CHITS

How do you think they keep control down there, huh? They're outnumbered ten-to-one, no guns or batons. All they have are latex gloves and attitude.

AARON

Doesn't give them an excuse--

CHITS

--They don't need an excuse. Long as they protect you, me, and everyone else in this courthouse.

(eyes Aaron)

Do your job. Let them do theirs.

34 INT. MATT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

34

The office has emptied out for the night. FIND Matt, lying on a sofa, tie loosened, a file open on his chest.

JULES (O.S.)

What're you still doing here?

Matt looks up, surprised to see Jules. He wasn't expecting anyone this late.

MATT

Ah, hey -- Just going through my opening for Falcone.

JULES

Anything you wanna run by me?

MATT

"Ladies and Gentleman of the jury..."

(a pregnant pause)

That's it. I got nothing.

JULES

Eloquent and concise. Don't worry, you're gonna be great.

MATT

I'd settle for adequate.

Jules barks out a laugh.

JULES

Since when? How many trials have you done at CCB? Couple hundred?
(off his shrug)
And how many times have you tanked the opening? Name one.

MATT

Kijana Henderson, double homicide.

JULES

You had the flu.

MATT

I could've been better prepared.

JULES

How? IV fluids? You got Murder Two.

MATT

Should've been One.

She crosses to him, closes the file on his chest.

JULES

Go home. Have dinner with Annie.
Play Beyblades with Zach.

MATT

Okay. See you tomorrow.

Matt throws her a smile as she exits, then -- his smile fades. He closes his door and LOCKS IT. Pulls a SUITCASE from under the desk, gets out clean clothes and a blanket.

He strips off his shirt, clicks off the light and curls up on the sofa. He's not going home tonight.

35 EXT. COURTHOUSE ENTRANCE - DAY 35

A NEW DAY. NEWSVANS are parked along the curb. A group of AFRICAN-AMERICAN ACTIVISTS hold hands in a PRAYER CIRCLE on the courthouse steps. More activists hold up signs reading, "JUSTICE FOR LEON."

36 INT. CCB - MEDIA ROOM - DAY 36

CLOSE ON A TV MONITOR, showing a live shot of the same prayer circle. A CHYRON reads: "BRIDGEPORT HATE TRIAL." CAMERA FINDS Jules doing her morning segment with a TWO-MAN CREW.

JULES

The term "Hate Crime" is deceptive. Many perpetrators hate their victims, but hate-based violence only becomes criminal when it's attached to a group -- like race, religion, or sexual orientation. That's it for today's "Legal Minute." I'm Jules--Julisa Lo--
(to the CAMERAMAN)
I'm sorry, can we do that again?

The Cameraman resets as Jules fixes a smile on her face.

JULES (CONT'D)

That's it for today's "Legal Minute." I'm *Julisa Lopez* for "A.M. Chicago."

The Cameraman cuts as Jules yanks out her earpiece, her newly-ethnicized name sticking in her craw.

37

INT. LOCKUP - DAY

37

FIND Martin and Chits talking through the bars of a holding cell. Martin is shaky from the forced sobriety of lockup.

CHITS

I'm trying to get the Judge to reduce your bond.

MARTIN

So when can I get out?

CHITS

Not that easy. Would've helped if you completed your drug treatment.

MARTIN

I tried, I told you.

CHITS

Gotta try harder, Martin.

MARTIN

I was clean for six months. Walked past the same corner every day on my way to work, dealers calling out my name. But I kept on walking. Then I got laid off, and it got harder to keep walking...

(torn)

After a while, I couldn't help it. You have any idea what that's like?

Chits gives away nothing -- but he knows a helluva lot more than he'd care to admit.

CHITS

I do, Martin. But you broke the law.

MARTIN

It's my body, my problem. Who gets hurt aside from me?

CHITS

What about your son?

MARTIN

I make him breakfast every morning. Pick him up from school every afternoon. I'm there for him.

As Chits takes a sip from his White Sox mug...

...CAMERA FINDS RANDY - He's sorting paperwork at a desk, one eye glued to a SMALL TV chained to the wall. Lynn approaches, herding a line of PRISONERS.

DEPUTY LYNN

Got those D-90s for me?

DEPUTY RANDY

Still working on 'em.

DEPUTY LYNN

Been working on 'em for an hour.

Lynn notes Randy's obsession with the TV. ON THE MONITOR: A grainy broadcast of Jules' morning show segment. Lynn looks back to Randy, surprised.

DEPUTY LYNN (CONT'D)

You're kidding. Little Miss Spray Tan? You got a thing for her?

DEPUTY RANDY

What? No. Didn't even notice she was on.

Lynn looks to the prisoners in the cell behind Randy.

DEPUTY LYNN

That right, guys?

VARIOUS PRISONERS

Hell no... Fool's been watching her all morning...

DEPUTY RANDY

Shut up.

(back to Lynn)

It's nothing, okay? I -- happen to think she's a good lawyer.

DEPUTY LYNN

Me too. Especially in those little, pencil skirts she wears.

WHISTLES of agreement from the prisoners. Randy silences them with a look. He lowers his voice, comes clean to Lynn.

DEPUTY RANDY

So I like her, what's the big deal? We work in the same building.

DEPUTY LYNN

State's Attorney's up on Seven, we're down in the Basement. Only thing we have in common with them -- is the *elevator*.

DEPUTY RANDY

You saying she's outta my league?

DEPUTY LYNN

I'm saying a woman like that needs to be romanced. Can't just show up at her door with a six-pack.

Lynn slams the cell door shut, her wheels turning.

DEPUTY LYNN (CONT'D)

You need to get her attention, do something mysterious...

(an idea forming)

Get her a dozen roses.

DEPUTY RANDY

How's that mysterious?

DEPUTY LYNN

When you leave them for her with a note -- from a "Secret Admirer."

She grins. OFF Randy, considering the merits of that plan...

38

INT. COURTROOM 302 - DAY

38

CLOSE ON MATT, focused, intense. As he rises -- CAMERA CRANES UP to reveal the PACKED GALLERY: One side is mostly African-American, including Sharice Hall. The other side is filled with well-dressed Italian-American supporters of...

DINO FALCONE - 17, dark hair, clean-cut, in a blue suit and tie, looking more like a college freshman than a racist thug. He's seated at the defense table between FOUR HIGH-PRICED LAWYERS, including RAUL MONTEZ.

Claire watches from the back of the courtroom as Matt faces the MIXED-RACE JURY. He fishes something from his pocket and holds it up: A QUARTER.

MATT

This case is about a quarter. Twenty-five cents. It was almost the cost of a human life. Leon Hall didn't know that. He was out riding his bike -- like any 13-year old might do on a beautiful day in Chicago -- when he got a flat tire. But in Leon's neighborhood, air cost a quarter, and he didn't want to waste the money. Why would he? When in Bridgeport -- just a few blocks across the Dan Ryan -- he could get air for free.

(beat)

So Leon did what any smart kid would do. He pushed his bike to Bridgeport. And his only mistake on that fine day -- was running into Dino Falcone...

He gestures to Dino at the defense table.

MATT (CONT'D)

But Dino came from privilege. He didn't like it when blacks came into his neighborhood. So when he saw Leon, he started yelling racial slurs. He chased Leon down. And then he stomped him within an inch of his life.

(staring right at Dino)

He beat a young boy into a coma, causing permanent brain damage.

Dino lowers his eyes as Matt lets it sink in with the jury.

MATT (CONT'D)

Now Dino's family is trying to buy his freedom. They've gone out and hired the best defense lawyers. I know they're the best, 'cause I've seen how much those suits cost.

LAUGHTER from the gallery as Matt looks to Raul and his cohorts.

MATT (CONT'D)

But all their money, all their
prestige can't stack up to this...

(holds up the QUARTER)

One quarter. The twenty-five cents
that Leon Hall was trying to save
the day he went to Bridgeport.

ANGLE ON CLAIRE - Watching Matt in awe, not sure how she'll
ever be able to perform in this arena. Now Raul stands:

RAUL MONTEZ

What happened to Leon Hall is a
tragedy. But Dino didn't do it.
The State's Attorney has no
corroborating witnesses to back up
their outlandish claims, because
Dino didn't do it. Everyone from
the Mayor's office to the Average
Joe on the street is looking to
blame someone for this terrible
crime -- but Dino didn't do it...

39

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

39

STEADICAM WITH Jules, rushing to court to find Matt. She
nearly runs into Aaron coming down the hallway.

AARON

You handling Dontrelle James?

JULES

That and about 200 other cases.

AARON

T-stop in Wicker Park, possession
of a loaded firearm?

JULES

That's mine. You looking to dispo?

AARON

I'm looking to *dismiss*.

Jules eyes him, amused.

JULES

Bold move, considering your client
is a member of the Roseland
Gangster Disciples.

AARON

He was pulled over without cause.
CPD had no reason to stop him.

JULES

Not what the cops are saying. What
about the gun?

AARON

Wasn't even his.

Jules laughs out loud, then sees Aaron isn't joining in.

JULES

Wait, you're serious? Never
figured you for a "true believer."

AARON

What's that supposed to mean?

JULES

Means I thought you were smarter
than that.

AARON

I believe what my client tells me.

JULES

That's your first mistake. Everyone
lies.

AARON

Not me.

JULES

You're lying right now.

Aaron bristles at her patronizing tone.

DEPUTY RANDY (O.S.)

There a problem, Ms. Lopes?

They both look to see Randy manning the doors to 302.
Aaron's eyes go cold, but Jules shoots him a smile.

JULES

No problem, Randy...
(back to Aaron)
But thanks for asking.

...Jules approaches Matt as the gallery fills behind them.

JULES
Heard you rocked your opening.

MATT
Put two jurors to sleep. How's
Leon?

JULES
Ready as he'll ever be--

Matt cuts her off, looking past her to the defense table.

MATT
Who the hell is that?

Jules turns. A YOUNG LAWYER has been seated next to Dino --
dark hair, clean cut, blue suit and tie. The similarity
between them is striking.

MATT (CONT'D)
I need to see the Judge in chambers.

41 INT. ARMATO'S CHAMBERS - DAY 41

Matt is furious as he and Raul stand before Judge Armato.

MATT
Defense is playing games, Your
Honor. They're trying to trick the
witness into making a false ID.

RAUL MONTEZ
The young man in question is a new
associate who's been researching
the case. He's in court for his
legal opinion, nothing more.

MATT
Then have him sit somewhere else.

RAUL MONTEZ
I don't see how the State's
Attorney has the right to make us
play musical chairs.

MATT
And I don't see how justice is
served by deliberately confusing a
witness with a brain injury--

RAUL MONTEZ
Justice? Oh, please--

ARMATO

I'm going to deny the motion. If your witness can't make an ID, you don't have much of a case.

MATT

But, Your Honor--

ARMATO

Motion is denied. Defense may sit wherever they want.

42

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

42

Matt exits into the hall, followed by Raul a moment later.

RAUL MONTEZ

Tough break.

MATT

Yeah. When'd you hire this "new associate?"

RAUL MONTEZ

I believe it was...this morning.

Matt has to laugh at the sheer audacity of the maneuver.

MATT

I still say my guy makes the ID.

RAUL MONTEZ

Maybe he does... Or maybe the State's Attorney takes two years for simple battery.

Matt takes a beat -- he and Raul both know what's at stake.

MATT

Two years? Not much of an offer.

RAUL MONTEZ

Better than losing on a bad ID. It's a good deal. If it were me, I'd take it.

MATT

Guess that's why I'm never gonna wear that suit.

Raul laughs, heads back into court. OFF Matt, hoping to hell he made the right call...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

43 INT. COURTROOM 302 - DAY

43

CLOSE ON Leon Hall, on the witness stand...

LEON HALL

-- I didn' wanna pay for air. So I w-went to the other gas station.

MATT (O.S.)

The one in Bridgeport?

LEON HALL

Yes.

CAMERA ARMS AROUND TO FIND Matt leading him through the direct examination. Jules watches from the packed gallery.

MATT

And what happened when you got there, Leon?

LEON HALL

I heard someone yellin' but I didn' know they was y-yellin' at me.

MATT

How did you figure it out?

LEON HALL

Cause they was saying, "Get that n-nigger..." And there wasn' no one black there but me.

An uneasy stir from the African-American side of the gallery.

MATT

What happened next?

LEON HALL

I started to run but -- someone knocked me down, then they was kickin' me.

MATT

Did you see who was kicking you?

LEON HALL

Yes.

MATT

Is that person in this room today?

LEON HALL
I-I'm not sure...

An AUDIBLE GASP from the gallery.

LEON HALL (CONT'D)
...I don' see so good out this eye.

MATT
Want to take a closer look?

Leon nods. The gallery holds its breath as he steps down from the stand and limps to the defense table. He looks to Dino, then to the Young Lawyer look-a-like. A moment of confusion crosses his face, then -- he points to the Lawyer.

LEON HALL
That's not him...
(pointing right at Dino)
...But that is.

CHEERS from Leon's contingent, along with stony silence from Dino's family. Matt spots Jules in the gallery -- they share a look of silent celebration.

MATT
No further questions.

44 INT. PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE - DAY

44

Chits pushes into the PD's office -- it's funky-friendly like a Berkeley dorm floor. He's met by Aaron.

AARON
I want to run a motion to suppress on Dontrelle James.

CHITS
You want to, or the client does?

AARON
What does it matter? I'm trying to free an innocent man.

CHITS
Innocent? Defendant was cruising Wicker Park at 3 a.m. with a loaded handgun. You think he was delivering Girl Scout cookies?

AARON
He shouldn't be prosecuted for what he *might've* done.

CHITS

Why not? He'd end up on your desk
either way.

They share a look -- a difference of opinion they may never
get past.

AARON

When I was in college, I used to
drive to my mom's in Elmhurst. I'd
get pulled over once a month, like
clockwork. Chicago PD couldn't
fathom a reason for a black man to
be driving in a white neighborhood.

CHITS

So now you're trying to right that
wrong? One gang-banger at a time?

AARON

I can win this one.

Chits is skeptical, but he has to admire Aaron's passion.

CHITS

Okay. Your case, your call.

45

INT. CHITS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

45

...Chits enters his tiny office, cluttered with White Sox
memorabilia. He reaches for his travel mug, finds it empty.
He frowns as a shadow blocks his door: LAVERNE.

LAVERNE

What am I s'posed to do with these?

No greeting, she just holds out a dozen RED JUVENILE FILES
like they're radioactive. Chits flashes her a sunny smile.

CHITS

What can I do for you, Ms. Hagler?

LAVERNE

Don't "Ms. Hagler" me. There's no
signature on these juvie custodies.
I need you to sign 'em now.

Chits shows off his splinted wrist.

CHITS

May take me a while.

LAVERNE

Yeah, I'm just made of time.

She plops the files on his desk. Chits fumbles with a pen in his bad hand/wrist.

CHITS
(re: his wrist)
Roller skating with my niece.
Never doing that again.

LAVERNE
Mm-hmm.

CHITS
Are you doubting my veracity?

LAVERNE
Don't need no fifty-cent word to
know when I'm being lied to.

Chits shoots her a look as he initials the files.

LAVERNE (CONT'D)
What was it last month? Broken
rib? Month before that, your knee?
Or was that the shoulder?

CHITS
Been a good year for my physical
therapist.

LAVERNE
Just 'cause I don't smell it on
your breath don't mean I'm stupid.

Chits hesitates for a beat, caught in his lie. He covers as he resumes signing -- but then pulls out ONE RED FILE from the bunch. He examines it excitedly.

CHITS
I need to take this one.

LAVERNE
What? No, you can't--

CHITS
I'll walk it over to DOC myself.

Chits bolts out, on a mission. OFF Laverne's glare...

46 INT. COURTROOM 400 - DAY

46

ON A UNIFORMED COP, **OFFICER MACKLIN**, 26, buzz-cut. Jules questions him in front of **JUDGE FELICIA TRYON**, 50, African-American -- This is a suppression hearing. A half-dozen COPS watch, along with shady-looking ASSOCIATES of Dontrelle's.

OFFICER MACKLIN
-- I was patrolling the 2000 block
of West Evergreen when I stopped a
vehicle without current DMV tags.

JULES
And who was inside the vehicle?

OFFICER MACKLIN
Defendant was the sole occupant and
driver. He consented to a search.

At the defense table, Dontrelle protests in a loud whisper:

DONTRELLE JAMES
That's a damn lie--

Aaron hushes him with a look.

JULES
And what did you find?

OFFICER MACKLIN
A Baretta 9mm with a full clip.

JULES
No further questions.

JUDGE TRYON
Cross?

Aaron stands.

AARON
Officer Macklin, you said you
pulled the defendant over because
of expired tags?

OFFICER MACKLIN
That's correct.

AARON
Would it surprise you to learn his
vehicle registration was current on
the night in question?

OFFICER MACKLIN
Yes, it would.

AARON
So if you didn't pull him over for
the tags, what else could it have
been? Maybe a DWB?

OFFICER MACKLIN
What's that?

AARON
"Driving While Black."

JULES
Objection, argumentative.

JUDGE TRYON
Sustained.

AARON
Let me rephrase. Are you a racist,
Officer Macklin?

JULES
(outrage)
Objection--

JUDGE TRYON
I've got this, Ms. Lopes.
(to Aaron)
Counsel, I understand you've been a
recent guest in Lockup. Are you
seeking a return visit.

AARON
No, Your Honor. There is a point
to this line of questioning.

JUDGE TRYON
There better be.

Aaron turns back to Macklin on the stand.

AARON
Officer Macklin, what percentage of
the drivers you pull over are
African-American?

OFFICER MACKLIN
I wouldn't know.

AARON
I'd like to offer into evidence
Officer Macklin's arrest reports,
from September, 2010, to May, 2011,
marked as Defense Exhibit 1.

JULES
Objection, relevance.

JUDGE TRYON
Overruled. What've you got?

Aaron hands a thick sheaf of photocopies to the Judge.

AARON
In this nine-month span, Officer Macklin cited over 462 African-Americans. He also pulled over Caucasian drivers -- 11 of them.

Macklin tightens as Judge Tryon studies the photocopies. She finally looks up.

JUDGE TRYON
I'm going to grant the motion to suppress the search due to lack of cause. The gun is no longer admissible. Case dismissed.

Dontrelle lets out a WHOOP, wraps Aaron in a bear hug as his associates slap high-fives. Aaron darts a triumphant glance to Jules -- as Macklin and the cops shoot daggers at him.

47 INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT 47

ON A WALL CLOCK -- showing 6:42. WIDER TO FIND Matt, as he rushes to make his son's soccer game. Danette snarks at him.

DANETTE
Half day?

MATT
U-11 soccer playoffs. Zach's starting left wing.

DANETTE
Like I understood a word you just said.

MATT
See you tomorrow, Danette.

DANETTE
Not if I see you first.

Matt is halfway out the door when Claire finds him.

CLAIRE
Jury's in! We just got the call.

MATT
Falcone? It's only been two hours.

CLAIRE

That's good, right? I mean, good
for us. Quick verdict?

Matt checks the clock, winces as he realizes what he has to do.

MATT

Tell the clerk I'm on my way.

Matt shrugs off his overcoat, heads to the elevator. He dials on his cell, tries to keep his tone breezy:

MATT (CONT'D)

Annie, it's me. I've got to take a
verdict so I'm running a little
late. Tell Zach I'll be there by
half-time. Save a seat for me.

48 INT. COURTROOM 302 - NIGHT (MONTAGE) 48

QUICK CUTS (MOS): EVERYONE stands as the JURY files back into the courtroom. OVER THIS, "*I'm Waiting For My Real Life To Begin*" by Colin Hay FADES UP...

ON LEON, struggling to his feet. Sharice helps steady him.

ON DINO, standing nervously between Raul and his lawyers.

ON MATT, anxiously sneaking a peek at his WATCH as he awaits the reading of the verdict.

ON ARMATO, glancing at the verdict form, then passing it off to Laverne.

ON RANDY AND LYNN, manning the perimeter of the courtroom with a phalanx of deputies.

ON LAVERNE, as she begins to read the verdict aloud -- and the GALLERY ERUPTS. The African-Americans rejoice, while Dino's family agonizes.

ON RAUL, crestfallen, as he tries to console his client. Dino angrily brushes him off.

ON MATT, mobbed by well-wishers including Claire. REPORTERS shove microphones in his face. Matt begs off, pushing past them. He checks his WATCH again, grimaces at the time...

49 EXT. MILLENNIUM PARK - NIGHT 49

...The SONG CONTINUES as Matt rushes up to a flood-lit SOCCER FIELD. He slows as he sees -- the game is over.

The last few PLAYERS AND PARENTS drift away as the goal nets are taken down. All that's left are a scattering of ORANGE RINDS by the sideline bench. HIGH AND WIDE ON Matt, alone on the field, realizing what he's sacrificed on this night...

50 INT. ARMATO'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT 50

Armato enters his chambers, surprised to find someone waiting for him -- Presiding Judge Crosswaite.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE
Sorry to intrude. I had the
Bailiff let me in.

ARMATO
This is a surprise, sir.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE
Heard you got a quick verdict?

ARMATO
Guilty on all counts.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE
Outstanding work, Danny. You'll
have my recommendation for Appeals.

ARMATO
Thank you, sir.

JUDGE CROSSWAITE
Now let's do right by the Falcone
boy. He deserves a fair sentence,
don't you think?

Armato's smile freezes. He's stunned.

ARMATO
What did you have in mind?

JUDGE CROSSWAITE
Time served, four years probation.
It sends the right message.

ARMATO
The right *message*?

JUDGE CROSSWAITE
Think it over. And congratulations
again, Danny.

OFF Armato, his world crashing down around him...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

51 INT. STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

51

FIND Matt in a familiar position on his sofa, tie loosened. He looks up to see Jules in the doorway.

JULES

Heard about Falcone. Why aren't you celebrating?

MATT

Brass band left a half hour ago. How was your suppression hearing?

JULES

Got my ass handed to me. Turns out the AO was profiling.

MATT

Imagine that.

JULES

You heading home soon?

MATT

In a little while.

Jules tries to decide if she should speak up about what's really on her mind.

JULES

You wanna talk about it?

MATT

About what?

JULES

Why you've been sleeping in your office?

Matt's grin fades.

MATT

Was it that obvious?

JULES

Only to me. And anyone who's noticed the pillow marks on your face the past few weeks.

Matt looks away, clearly uncomfortable with the situation.

JULES (CONT'D)
C'mon, I've got a bottle in my
office. Single malt.

52 INT. JULES' OFFICE - LATER THAT NIGHT

52

CLOSE ON A HIGHBALL GLASS being refilled. WIDER TO FIND Matt and Jules on their way to a world-class drunk.

MATT
--I don't remember how the
arguments started. Not like it was
any one thing. But when they
stopped -- that's when I knew we
were in real trouble.

JULES
I can't believe you didn't tell me.

MATT
Yeah, I forgot this was all about
you.

JULES
That's not what I meant. I tell
you everything.

Matt gives her a skeptical eye.

MATT
Like when you were dating that
defense lawyer? The one with the
hunchback?

JULES
That was a football injury. You
were so mean to him.

MATT
All I asked was if he ever played
at Notre Dame...

He stifles a laugh. Jules swats him, swaying slightly.

JULES
My point is, you can talk to me
about more than work.

MATT
Work's part of the problem. Annie
put me through law school, but she
never really understood why I
wanted to be a State's Attorney.

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

To her, this was a stepping stone,
not a destination.

JULES

Would it help if I talked to her?

MATT

That's the worst thing you could
do. She already calls you my work-
spouse.

JULES

She does?

MATT

All the fun of marriage, none of
the hard work.

JULES

Not *all* the fun--

She stops short, realizing what she just said out loud. They
laugh, feeling the effects of the whiskey. Jules eyes her
watch, groans as she realizes the lateness of the hour.

JULES (CONT'D)

I have to be up in five hours for
the morning show. I never
should've agreed to it.

MATT

So quit. You still have your day
job.

JULES

Easy for you to say. People take
you seriously.

Jules drains her glass. Matt stares at her, uncomprehending.

MATT

You're one of the best trial
lawyers in the building. You don't
need a side gig to prove that.

JULES

You really think so?

MATT

I wouldn't want to go up against
you--

He reaches for the bottle to refill her and KNOCKS it onto the floor. As they both bend to pick it up -- their faces stop about five inches apart...

The moment is electric -- Matt can't help himself, he leans in and KISSES HER. Jules doesn't pull away. They stare at each other. Then Matt kisses her again, harder this time, throwing caution to the wind. They tumble onto the floor with a LOUD THUMP.

The office door suddenly swings open -- RANDY stands there with a BOUQUET OF ROSES. The ones he was planning to leave anonymously. They all stare at each other for a frozen moment. Hard to say who feels the most awkward.

53

EXT. COURTHOUSE ROOF - DAY

53

NEW DAY. A DOOR SWINGS OPEN to reveal Claire. She steps out to a breathtaking view: WIDER to see she's on the ROOF -- the downtown skyline spreads its mighty shoulders along the shores of Lake Michigan. Claire steps to the edge, basks in the sunshine.

ARMATO (O.S.)

Don't you know the roof is off-limits, Counselor?

Claire spins, surprised to find Armato, out of his robes, gazing out over the city. He looks pensive, like a man who hasn't had a wink of sleep.

CLAIRE

Sorry, Your Honor, I was -- exploring. I don't know my way around the courthouse yet.

ARMATO

Don't exactly know your way around a *courtroom* either.

CLAIRE

That was inexcusable. It won't happen again, I promise.

ARMATO

I hope not. Frankly, I was expecting more from a University of Chicago grad.

Claire is shocked Armato knows anything about her at all.

ARMATO (CONT'D)

Don't look so surprised. I make it my business to know what's going on in this building.

CLAIRE

Even on the roof?

ARMATO

Especially the roof. Easier to think up here. It's quiet, no motions or pre-trials...

(scowling)

And it better stay that way.

CLAIRE

My lips are sealed.

She makes a locking motion to her lips, throws away the key. Armato considers her for a moment, amused.

ARMATO

Why'd you come here?

CLAIRE

I told you, I was exploring--

ARMATO

No, I mean, here to work. Why take a job with the State's Attorney?

CLAIRE

It sounds corny, but -- I wanted to seek justice.

Armato shakes his head, dubious.

ARMATO

You ever see the statue of Justice? It's a blind lady with a sword. Every so often she hits her mark. But mostly -- you're better off getting the hell out of her way.

CLAIRE

You really believe that?

ARMATO

Some days more than others.

CLAIRE

Well -- I feel lucky. I mean, we have an incredible responsibility.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Our decisions determine life and death. We can take a man's freedom away, or give it back to him.

Where else can you do that?

(a beat)

I think it's the most noble profession in the world.

OFF Armato, oddly moved by Claire's unfiltered idealism...

54

INT. LOCKUP - DAY

54

FIND Martin being marched into a holding cell. Chits is on the other side of the bars, holding the RED JUVIE FILE.

CHITS

Got you an I-bond, Martin. You should be out in a couple hours.

MARTIN

Thank you.

CHITS

You can thank me by finishing your drug program.

MARTIN

Won't do no good. I can't stop using, I've tried.

CHITS

Don't tell me, tell him...

Chits steps aside, revealing a SMALL CELL across the room. A few JUVENILE OFFENDERS are locked up away from the adults. Martin is stunned to see a tough-looking boy, **THEO**, 12:

MARTIN

Theo?

THEO

Dad?

Martin looks to Chits, uncomprehending.

CHITS

He got popped with three dime bags. Possession for sale, first offense.

Chits turns on his heel, leaves father and son facing each other through the bars. Martin's first response is anger.

MARTIN

What happened? You selling now?

THEO
It wasn't mine, I swear. I was
holding it for a friend--

MARTIN
You expect me to believe that?
You're s'posed to be in school.

THEO
I was. It was in my locker.

Martin can't believe what he's hearing.

MARTIN
Did Goody put you up to this?

THEO
No.

MARTIN
Then who you working for?

THEO
No one, I told you!

MARTIN
Don't you lie to me. Who told you
how to do this? You had to learn
from someone--

THEO
You. I learned it from you.

Theo slumps down in the cell. OFF Martin, his horror at the realization of what he's passed on to his son...

55 INT. ARMATO'S CHAMBERS - DAY 55

FIND Judge Armato putting the final touches on his sentencing decision. He stares out the window at the SKYLINE, knowing this will affect the rest of his judicial career.

Finally, he stands, slips on his black robe with little fanfare as we follow him into...

56 INT. COURTROOM 302 - CONTINUOUS 56

The gallery is packed with the supporters from both sides awaiting sentencing. Matt is at the prosecution table.

LAVERNE
All rise! Court is in session, the
Honorable John Armato presiding.

-- Armato takes the bench. He eyes Dino Falcone among his retinue of lawyers.

ARMATO

This decision gives me no pleasure. Because of the actions of one young man, another young man has lost his ability to lead a normal life...

Armato looks to Leon Hall, seated next to his mother.

ARMATO (CONT'D)

And yet there have been many pleas on behalf of the defendant from religious and community leaders, who would like to see him get a shot at rehabilitation rather than a lengthy prison sentence. They believe Mr. Falcone can become a productive member of society if given the opportunity. I believe that is possible as well...

(beat)

However, I also believe this court has the responsibility to seek justice. We must earn the right to practice the most noble profession in the world.

Claire looks up, startled to hear her words echoed back from Armato.

ARMATO (CONT'D)

Defendant will rise...

Dino and his lawyers stand.

ARMATO (CONT'D)

This court sentences you to ten years in state prison. Time served to count against that sentence--

The gallery goes crazy. Matt watches quietly as Dino is led away. OFF Armato, steeling himself for the aftermath...

57

INT. MAIN LOBBY - DAY

57

FIND Martin walking against the incoming stream of VISITORS. He's back in street clothes, happy to be free, but worried about his legal problems -- and now those of his son.

He notices a sign on a door as he passes: "D.A.T.E. - DRUG ABUSE TREATMENT EVALUATION." Martin stops, does a mental coin toss. He takes a deep breath, turns back to the door -- and steps inside.

CAMERA FINDS CHITS - Watching from down the hall. He allows himself a smile as he takes a sip from his White Sox mug. His eyes drift down to the mug -- as if he can taste the irony of his own addiction. He shakes it off as he exits...

58

INT. COURTROOM 302 - DAY

58

The gallery is filling up for a new session -- ATTORNEYS, DETECTIVES, DEFENDANTS, and FAMILIES. CAMERA FINDS Claire haggling with a fast-talking defense attorney, **BEN KIM**.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY KIM

My client'll take Grand Theft
Person, six months, no state prison.

CLAIRE

He shoved the kid off the bike.
That's robbery, two year low term.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY KIM

Judge'll never give him two. If he
cops to the robbery, can you keep
him in County?

Claire hesitates, then sticks to her guns.

CLAIRE

The offer is two years.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY KIM

Okay, two years. I'll take it.

Claire stands there, amazed with herself. Realizing the thrill of what she just accomplished.

ANGLE ON MATT, dealing his own cases. He spots Jules coming down the aisle. They have a brief, awkward exchange:

MATT

Hey, missed you at sentencing.

JULES

I heard, ten years. Congrats.

MATT

Thanks. So, uh...last night --

JULES

Yeah --

MATT

I'm sorry. I never meant to --

JULES

Hey, don't worry about it.

MATT

You sure?

JULES

Never happened.

MATT

So we're okay, then?

JULES

Yeah. We're okay.

They turn back to their cases. Then one of them looks back. Surprisingly, it's not Matt. OFF Jules watching him with newfound interest...

59

INT. ARMATO'S CHAMBERS - DAY

59

ON Armato, staring down at a FORMAL LETTER, his expression is unreadable. The intercom BUZZES.

LAVERNE (ON INTERCOM)

They're ready, Your Honor.

Armato tosses the letter on his desk. As he exits, CAMERA PUSHES IN on the letter, which reads:

"The Honorable Owen Crosswaite, Presiding Judge of Criminal Courts. It is my pleasure to recommend the following outstanding judicial candidates for the Court of Appeals..."

A list of THREE NAMES follows. None is "Daniel Armato."

END OF SHOW