

JUROR #2

Written by

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FINAL SHOOTING SCRIPT

A BLINDFOLDED WOMAN (30's, nice skin, full lips, which right now are trembling.)

PULLING BACK we see she's in a summer dress, standing in the hallway of the second-floor of a suburban home.

JUSTIN

Okay. You ready?

Before her, in front of a closed door, is **JUSTIN KEMP** (30's, broad shoulders, warm smile, Mr. All-American with some pain behind his eyes.)

He opens the door. Leans forward and gently removes her blindfold.

And now we can see **ALLISON KEMP** in full. She is PREGNANT, and her eyes, normally piercing and curious, are anxious as she enters the room Justin just opened the door to and sees --

A NURSERY

Fully decorated for a baby girl. Crib. Changing table. Rocking horse. Nursing chair. Understated pink wall-paper.

Her face goes flush, lips pursed. Does she hate it?

Justin looks at her, hopeful. Squeezes her hand.

She takes in the room, lets out a deep breath. Smiling now, through happy tears.

ALLISON

It's beautiful. Thank you.
(searching for the
words)

It would've been a lot for me.

Justin nods. Puts his hand on her belly. Looks at her.

They're truly connected in this moment... until the sound of a CAR PULLING UP outside on the street takes them out of it.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Of course they're early.

She's clearly apprehensive but he gives her a calming look that says: "Stick with me. Everything's gonna be fine."

2

EXT. KEMP HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

2

A backyard BBQ for Justin and Allison's FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES and NEIGHBORS.

Allison's outstretched on a chaise, feet up, flanked by pillows. Holding court like suburban Cleopatra in her third trimester.

ALLISON

(to her GIRLFRIENDS)

Bed rest is great. I can't go anywhere. Or do anything. But really, I'm fine. I can't wait to be a Mom, but I miss my kids. If all goes well, I'll be back at school full-time next fall.

The back door opens and Justin, apron on, weaves through the party with a plate of ready to grill burgers, dogs and buns.

JUSTIN

(to some NEIGHBORS)

Hope you came hungry.

(to some COLLEAGUES)

There's beer in the cooler.

Smiles and nods all around. Justin the consummate host.

He gets to the grill and throws the meat on. It SIZZLES.

Turns to look at some of the kids practicing lacrosse.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

(to KIDS)

Hey, Mikey. You almost have it. Remember. Point, Push and Pull. You got this kid.

Justin high fives him and turns to the parents.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

(to some FRIENDS)

I see a lacrosse title in our future, boys. Whatever you're feeding those sons of yours, it's working.

FRIENDS

Amen, Coach.

Alison and friends look on.

ALLISON'S FRIEND

(to Allison)

He is just so charming, isn't he.

ALLISON

I got lucky with him.

A **NEIGHBOR** pulls a beer from the cooler. Offers Justin one.

JUSTIN

I'm good, thanks.

BUZZ - a TEXT comes through. Justin checks it. It's a text from a prospective car buyer.

ALLISON

Who you texting? Everyone's here?

JUSTIN

It's just somebody interested in the 4Runner.

Justin gives her a knowing smile and shimmies back to the grill. He flips the meat on the grill. It has a gorgeous sear.

Allison nods. She watches Justin lovingly as he tries to pull a bun off the grill with his bare hand and nearly burns it.

Over this, the DINGING of a spoon tapping against glass.

EXT. KEMP HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

Lunch is over. The party's gathered around Justin and Allison as he gives a little speech.

JUSTIN

I was thinking the other day about this woman who turned me down twenty-six times before she agreed to a date. We met at dusk down on River Street and did one of those "penny walks" where you flip a coin at the end of each block. Heads you go left, tails you go right. Over the next few hours we saw the whole city, talking and laughing, and at the end of the evening I couldn't help myself... I asked her the question that had been burning in my mind all night: "What made you change your mind? Why'd you finally say yes?"

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

And she says: "I had to know what kind of guy asks someone out twenty-seven times."

Laughter. Allison smiles.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

"So...?" I asked. "What's the verdict?"

(to Allison)

Do you remember what you said?

ALLISON

"You're the kind of guy who forgets his wallet on a first date and is too scared to tell me."

JUSTIN

I was terrified. All I had was the change in my pocket so I'd improvised. But it was the best night of my life. And three years later, here we are.

Awwws.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I'll be honest, Allison and I weren't sure about whether to have this party.

(he looks at Allison)

But together there's nothing we can't overcome. You're the strongest woman I know and I love you more than anything. And I am so damn excited to keep building our life together.

Laughter and applause.

ALLISON'S FREIND

(hitting her boyfriend)

Why don't you ever say things like that to me?

Justin and Allison kiss.

Justin puts the dishes away. A toilet flushes Allison enters from the hallway.

JUSTIN

Your vitamins are on the table.

Her prenatal vitamins and a water are on the kitchen island.

ALLISON

Thanks.

(she swallows them,
chases with water)

It was a good party.

JUSTIN

You deserve it.

ALLISON

You're just buttering me up before
you abandon me.

Grabs the JURY SUMMONS from a pile of mail. Gives it to him.

JUSTIN

I wish I could delay it again.

(pockets it)

I don't like leaving you here.

ALLISON

I'm not an invalid.

(then)

Just tell the Judge something wildly
inappropriate and come back to me.

JUSTIN

Deal.

She waddles out of the room. Shuts off the kitchen light.

ALLISON

Sorry!

She turns it back on. Justin watches her go. So in love.

EXT. KEMP HOUSE - MORNING

Justin pulls away in the 4Runner. Waves to Allison in the window.

INT. TOYOTA 4RUNNER - MORNING

Justin drives through the downtown area of this small Southern city marked by Antebellum architecture, cobblestone streets and big oak trees covered in Spanish moss on this fall day.

Up ahead is the city's MUNICIPAL COMPLEX headed by CITY HALL.

7

EXT. CITY HALL - MORNING

7

A packed parking lot across the street from the COURTHOUSE.

The SIGN in front of it reads:

**RESERVED - F. KILLEBREW
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

Assistant District Attorney **FAITH KILLEBREW** (40's, fierce and focused) sits in the driver's seat, talking on the phone while sorting various files on her passenger's side front seat.

CAMPAIGN MANAGER (V.O.)

... Polling has you in a forty-six point deadlock. Eight percent undecided. Maybe we should leak what we have.

FAITH

This case IS my campaign. I put James Sythe away, we win.

She hangs up. Exits the car -- grabbing her purse, briefcase and some files -- and shuts the door with her shoulder, knocking her phone from her jacket pocket onto the ground.

But she doesn't notice it fall and walks away, towards The SUPERIOR COURT BUILDING, a stately structure surrounded by lawn, all under the watchful eye of an iconic bell tower.

Local TV NEWS CREWS are camped outside. A one-ring circus.

JUSTIN

Hey!

She keeps walking.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

HEY! HOLD UP!

She turns, expecting a camera and microphone in her face, but instead she sees JUSTIN approaching, out of breath.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I think you dropped this.

He holds up her PHONE. She pats herself down. No phone.

FAITH

Yes I did.

He hands it to her.

FAITH (CONT'D)
Thanks. You're a lifesaver.

JUSTIN
I saw you getting out of your car
with all that stuff --

FAITH
(nods)
Right.

JUSTIN
You need a hand with it...?

FAITH
Nope, I'm good.

JUSTIN
Well, have nice day then.

FAITH
You, too.

She turns and walks away. Justin waits a beat to give her space and heads to the main entrance.

8 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - LOBBY/1ST FLOOR - MORNING** 8

Justin exits security and heads to the VISITOR CHECK-IN desk. He hands a **BAILIFF** (50's, female, battle axe) his jury summons.

The Deputy checks it against a list, makes a mark, and hands Justin a sticker with a number on it.

9 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - JURY HOLDING ROOM - MORNING** 9

The JURY POOL (split pretty evenly between African-American and Caucasian, with other ethnicities sprinkled in) sits on folding chairs in organized rows.

Justin enters, sticks his badge on his shirt. He peers around, takes it all in. The BAILIFF hands him a QUESTIONNAIRE.

He takes it and sits, looks over the questionnaire as the Bailiff wheels out an old TV. She hits play on a DVD and a jury orientation video begins with a picture of the STATE SEAL backed by patriotic music and heavy-handed VOICE-OVER.

JURY VIDEO
As jurors, you make decisions that
change people's lives.
(MORE)

JURY VIDEO (CONT'D)

Some people will go to jail, some
will go free...

Justin and the rest of the Jury Pool's eyes glaze over.

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - ROTUNDA - MORNING

Faith sighs at the long line for the COURTHOUSE COFFEE CART.

But then Assistant Public Defender **ERIC RESNICK** (40's) turns
around from the cashier with two coffees, one for her.

RESNICK

(approaches, hands
it to her)

Sugar free vanilla with skim.

FAITH

You're good.

RESNICK

Do you have something for me?

FAITH

Voluntary manslaughter, with a
recommendation of 20 years - 15 to
serve, followed by 5 on probation.
Standard conditions.

RESNICK

Wow. That's a helluva deal.

FAITH

I'll even waive the recidivist
statute, if he pleads before we
strike the jury.

RESNICK

Ooooooooooooo.....

They walk up the stairs and keep talking.

RESNICK (CONT'D)

And admit to something he didn't
do...?

FAITH

Save that for the jury. Or better
yet, plead your guy out and go back
to your three-figure caseload.

RESNICK

My client wants a trial.

FAITH

Then you're wasting my time. And
your "client's."

They reach the top of the stairs, arriving at **COURTROOM 304.**

FAITH (CONT'D)

Last chance.

Resnick considers it... and opens the door. Motions for
Faith to enter.

She gives him a look: "Okay, game on then." Walks inside.

11

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - MORNING

11

JUDGE THELMA STEWART, four decades on the bench, addresses
the jury pool, who sit in the gallery.

THE JUDGE

The case you are about to hear is
an alleged homicide.

Justin and the jury pool perk up. As he takes in the
courtroom, he notices Faith sitting at the prosecution's
table. Her back is to the gallery but he can tell it's her.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

The state is charging James Michael
Sythe with Malice Murder for the
death of Kendall Alice Carter.

JAMES MICHAEL SYTHE (20's) sits at the defense table. Wide-
eyed, wiry, worried. A quick glance and you wouldn't peg him
for a killer. Spot the TATTOO creeping onto his neck (a
SNAKE WRAPPED AROUND a CROWN with the lettering WC in blood
droplets below it) and maybe you would...

Resnick, his lawyer, puts a hand on Sythe's knee to stop him
from tapping his foot.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

If any of you have a personal
relationship with the accused and/or
the deceased that will prohibit you
from serving on this panel in an
unbiased manner, please speak now.

YOLANDA (40's) raises her hand.

YOLANDA

He used to ride my bus.

THE JUDGE

I don't see a problem with that.

YOLANDA

He was obnoxious. Loud.
Disruptive. I'm in a mood just
seeing his face.

THE JUDGE

When was this?

YOLANDA

I don't know. Few years ago.

THE JUDGE

Then there's no reason we can't
leave it there. I think you'll make
a fine juror.

Yolanda scoffs. Judge Stewart continues.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

Is there anyone else who feels
they're incapable of serving on this
panel?

Justin raises his hand. The Judge motions to him.

JUSTIN

Your Honor, my wife is in the third
trimester of a high-risk pregnancy.
I'd like to be available to her.

THE JUDGE

That's commendable. What hours do
you normally work?

JUSTIN

Nine to six, typically.

THE JUDGE

I see.

(Justin perks up)

You have my word that this court
will not demand a minute more of
your time than that.

Justin can't help but smile. Touché.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

The fact that you don't want to be
here is exactly why you're the
perfect group to adjudicate this
case. You are impartial;

(MORE)

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

you have no skin in this game,
nothing to gain or lose. Which is
why I believe this process, flawed
as it may be, is still our best
chance at finding justice.

12 INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - DAY

12

INTERCUT between Faith and Resnick doing VOIR DIRE -- asking questions to the potential jurors sitting in the gallery.

FAITH with **DENICE** (40's, soccer-Mom, very fit and put together.)

FAITH

Do you work, Mrs. Aldworth?

DENICE

I had the toughest job there is.
Raised two kids and sent them to
college.

FAITH

Congratulations. Have you ever
served on a jury before?

DENICE

Twice. Both were mistrials.

RESNICK questions **MARCUS** (30's, rough-looking, intense.)

RESNICK

Mr. King, have you ever had a
physical altercation with a
significant other?

MARCUS

You gonna ask that question to every
guy you bring into this box?

(off Resnick's look)

Nah, man. That ain't me.

FAITH approaches a man in his 60's, this is **HAROLD**.

FAITH

How long have you lived in the area,
Mr. Chicowski?

HAROLD

Ten years.

FAITH

And you... run a flower shop?

HAROLD

Yes. With my wife.

FAITH

Bet you never come home empty-handed
on your anniversary...

Laughter from all the jurors except **ELI**, a meek 20-something guy who sketches the proceedings in a notebook, without ever looking up.

LATER -- RESNICK questions a well-built man in a flannel work shirt with three-day stubble. This is **LUKE**, 40's.

RESNICK

It says here your wife has primary
custody of your daughter.

LUKE

Yeah.

RESNICK

Do you mind if I ask who ended the
marriage?

JUMP CUT TO **COURTNEY** (30, in full make-up, revealing dress) answering the same question from Faith later on in the day.

COURTNEY

I did.

FAITH

And why was that?

COURTNEY

He couldn't handle me.

VINCE (30's, wannabe Alpha) does a double-take. Hooked.

FAITH

Right, just so I'm clear: you were
the one who filed for divorce then?

Courtney looks away. Humiliated. Her cheeks flush with embarrassment. That's a "no."

Faith makes a mark in her notes as Justin turns to Courtney.

JUSTIN

You okay?

Faith hears this and turns on a heel. Looks right at him.

FAITH
Is there a problem?

JUSTIN
That felt kinda personal.

FAITH
Sometimes it is...
(re: her
questionnaires)
Mr. Kemp. You're a magazine writer?

JUSTIN
That's right.

And now it's her turn to recognize him.

FAITH
What kind of articles do you write?

JUSTIN
Features mostly.

FAITH
So you write about a variety of
topics?

JUSTIN
Yes.

FAITH
Ever write about a murder trial?

JUSTIN
I write for a regional lifestyle
magazine. It's not exactly "Vanity
Fair."

Laughter from the room.

FAITH
I'll take that as a no. Being a
writer, I imagine you read a lot.
Have you read anything about this
case?

JUSTIN
Today's the first time I've heard
about it.

FAITH
Then I think you'd make a fine
member of this jury.

A look between them. Faith sits down. Justin sighs.

THE JUDGE

Does the defense accept or challenge?

RESNICK

We accept him, Your Honor.

THE JUDGE

Good. Then please enter "Justin Kemp" as Juror #2.

INT. KEMP HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Justin walks in the front door. Takes off his coat.

JUSTIN

Hey.

Allison, sitting on the couch, feet up, looks at him.

ALLISON

How'd it go?

JUSTIN

I got picked.

ALLISON

What happened to wildly inappropriate?

JUSTIN

I'm saving that for you. They said it'll be a short trial.

He sits down next to her.

ALLISON

Mmm hmm.

(looks at him)

Now answer me this truly important question: What are we doing for dinner?

JUSTIN

You're the boss. Any cravings?

ALLISON

Chinese?

JUSTIN

Sounds good.

13 CONTINUED:

13

She points at her feet and motions for him to rub them. Justin knows it's the least he can do and goes to work.

14 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - THE NEXT MORNING**

14

Justin sits in the jury box with the rest of the jurors we've already met, as well as a few we'll get to know later on.

Faith stands before them, giving her OPENING STATEMENT.

FAITH

The facts of the case are these: one year ago, on October twenty-fifth, James Sythe and his then-girlfriend Kendall Carter went drinking at Rowdy's Hideaway on Old Quarry Road.

Justin raises an eyebrow -- that date and place strike a chord.

With a remote control click, Faith puts up a picture of Rowdy's Hideaway on a rollaway TV. This takes us to --

15 **INT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

15

The place is jamming and Sythe and **KENDALL CARTER**, 20's, sit next to each other at a high-top table. They count to three and take tequila shots.

Kendall whispers something dirty in his ear. He loves it. But whatever she says next changes the mood on a dime.

Sythe stiffens. And Kendall does NOT like that at all. She quickly loses her temper. Unloads on him. Over the jukebox music, we can't hear what she's saying, but whatever it is, she means it.

Behind them, JUSTIN sits alone in a booth, staring into his full tumbler of bourbon, as if daring himself to take a sip.

16 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - MORNING**

16

Justin's wide-eyed -- I was there that night. He hangs on Faith's every word.

FAITH

Things got tense. They had a fight.

17 **INT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

17

Sythe tries to defend himself against Kendall's offensive. But he is starting to lose his patience and knocks a beer off the table. This sets her off more.

17 CONTINUED:

17

Behind them, we see Justin push his drink away, untouched.

He gets up, walks outside. He's followed seconds later by Kendall and Sythe as their argument spills onto the PATIO.

FAITH (V.O.)

She stormed out of the bar. He followed her.

18 **EXT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

18

BAR PATRONS share looks as Sythe and Kendall go at it. Beside them in the parking lot, we see Justin in his 4Runner through the driver's side window. Head in hands. It starts to lightly RAIN.

FAITH (V.O.)

The fight escalated and quickly got out of control.

THUNDER crackles. The rain dumps, turning into a STORM.

From here, we'll JUMP BACK AND FORTH between the OPENING STATEMENTS and JUSTIN'S MEMORY of the night in question.

19 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - DAY**

19

Back in the courtroom, we pick up Resnick giving HIS opening.

RESNICK

... This was par for the course. They'd argue, it was "over." Then they'd make up the next day when they both had calmed down. It was basically a game.

FAITH

She was serious this time. She was DONE with him; and so she left and headed down the road on foot...

Justin shifts in his seat. Thinking back to that night.

20 **EXT. OLD QUARRY ROAD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

20

Justin drives the 4Runner down the dark, tree-lined, two-lane road.

PING!

A TEXT... he checks his phone... reads the message from "ALLY" --

You ok?

21 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - CONTINUOUS** 21

RESNICK

This was just another typical night of "drama", so James Sythe got in his car and drove home.

FAITH

He flew into a violent rage and followed Kendall Carter down the road.

Justin winces, remembering.

22 **EXT. OLD QUARRY ROAD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK** 22

Justin looks back up at the road as --

WHAM!!!

In a split second --

SOMETHING appears in front of him.

THUD! It hits his hood.

His brakes SLAM. Car STOPS.

FAITH (V.O.)

And then he killed her.

JUSTIN sits there. Gasping. Heart racing as the yellow glare in his periphery grabs his attention -- it's a sign that reads: "**DEER X-ING.**"

Relief and hope swell as he turns the 4Runner off and gets out. Walks around it, looks under.

Nothing.

He goes back to the point of impact. Walks to the railing and peers over it, but it's too dark and steep to make anything out -- an abyss peppered with rocks.

Lightning FLASHES, illuminating his face. It jars him and he returns to the 4Runner. Gets in as we linger outside.

The passenger side headlight is cracked, side-panel's dented, front-end totally crumpled.

23 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - CONTINUOUS** 23

Justin in the jury box, frozen.

FAITH

He beat her viciously, pushed her over a railing -- into the creek below -- and left her to die.

She pulls up a CRIME SCENE PHOTO of KENDALL CARTER at the bottom of the creek bed.

RESNICK

James Sythe didn't attack her and couldn't have pushed her. Because he wasn't there.

Justin stares at the photograph as the truth settles in --

THIS is who he hit. Not a deer, this girl. Kendall Carter.

And JAMES SYTHE is the one on trial. The one looking straight ahead, eyes rife with fear.

A muffled CRY rings out through the courtroom. A smartly dressed WOMAN wipes the tears from her eyes with her sleeve.

This is Kendall's Carter's **MOTHER**. Her **FATHER** gives Mom his handkerchief.

Justin takes this in. Heart racing, he closes his eyes.

FAITH

James Sythe took an innocent life!

RESNICK

...James Sythe is an innocent man!

A mix of nods and skepticism from the jury. And then there's Justin, his face sweaty, color draining. He's paralyzed.

By what he's done... and by the question of what to do now.

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - BATHROOM - LATER THAT DAY

The sound of PUKING followed by a toilet flushing. The stall door opens and Justin exits, wipes his mouth and washes up.

And that's when he spots fellow juror Marcus two sinks down.

MARCUS

Damn, man. You all right?

JUSTIN

Those crime-scene pictures.
(shrugs)
Never had a strong stomach.

24 CONTINUED:

24

Marcus nods, not quite buying it. He dries his hands, exits.

MARCUS

Have a good night.

25 INT. MAGAZINE OFFICES - DUSK

25

An empty bullpen. People gone for the day. One light on.

JUSTIN'S OFFICE

Small with a view of downtown. There's a JOURNALISM AWARD on his desk beside a framed photo of him and Allison, as well as a group picture of the YOUTH LACROSSE TEAM he coaches.

His computer's open to a newspaper article on the Sythe case. He pulls up his CALENDAR and clicks back to OCTOBER 25, 2021.

The whole day is blocked off in green. It says: "**Due Date!**"

Justin bites his lip. Seeing this brings back memories.

Then he opens a new window, types "Vehicular Homicide" into Google.

CUSTODIAN

Working late?

Startled, Justin shuts his open windows and turns to see the **CUSTODIAN** smiling at him.

JUSTIN

I'll be out of your way in a minute.

CUSTODIAN

Take as long as you want. I'll come back.

(Justin nods)

Thanks again for those tickets.
My son and I had a great time.

JUSTIN

Glad to hear it.

The Custodian continues on his way. That was a close call.

He shuts off his computer, grabs his jacket and leaves.

26 INT. SAINT MARIA CHURCH - NIGHT

26

LARRY LASKER (50's, eyes that see all and give nothing) leads an AA MEETING in their closing serenity prayer.

A few dozen people, including Justin, stand holding hands.

JUSTIN AND THE OTHER MEMBERS

God, grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change, the
courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the
difference.

LARRY/ALL

Keep coming back, it works if you
work it.

Meeting adjourned. People leave. Larry finds Justin.

LARRY

You were quiet tonight.

JUSTIN

Got a lot on my mind.

LARRY

I can tell. Do you want to talk
about it?

Justin doesn't even know how to begin.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Whatever it is, my advice will be
the same.

Justin just looks at him. He's stricken.

LARRY (CONT'D)

You know what to do. We're only as
sick as our secrets.

Justin takes this in, nods his head in acknowledgement.
Turns around and walks out. Larry watches him go.

EXT/INT. DOWNTOWN POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Justin takes a deep breath, enters. A long, cold hallway
leads to a VISITOR'S WINDOW. He approaches a **DESK COP**.

JUSTIN

I need to speak with a detective.

BELEAGURED DESK COP

Regarding?

JUSTIN

Reporting a crime.

The Desk Cop hands Justin a clipboard with a FORM attached.

BELEAGURED DESK COP

Fill this out.

Justin takes the clipboard, sits down in a WAITING AREA.

He looks around -- two **PROSTITUTES** play on their phones and a **METH HEAD** picks at his face while they wait for someone to be released.

Justin fills out the form -- name, address, etc -- hesitating when he gets to the "Details of incident you are reporting".

He looks over as **TWO COPS** push a **HANDCUFFED GUY** through the waiting area, past the front desk, to the INTERVIEW ROOMS.

PROSTITUTE #1

Don't say shit without a lawyer
there!

PROSTITUTE #2

These people ain't your friends, yo!

Justin's phone buzzes. **A TEXT** from "ALLY" pops up.

How's it going?

Buzz.

We miss you.

Buzz. A PICTURE comes through on text of a meme of a pregnant belly with a hand-drawn loading bar that reads: "90% complete".

Justin smiles. And swallows hard.

A DETECTIVE approaches. Justin's gone and an empty clipboard where he was seated.

INT. UNION ALEHOUSE - NIGHT

A small campaign gathering in the dining area. **"FAITH KILLEBREW FOR DISTRICT ATTORNEY"** signage is up.

FAITH

... The people need to now how I'll
make this city safer. Women need to
know that if they're in an abusive
relationship, their community has
their back. The rest is noise.
Thank you.

Applause. From the BAR AREA, Resnick watches, drinking.

Faith says her thank-yous and goodbyes to her donors, supporters and campaign staff and heads to the bar to get a drink.

RESNICK

Nice speech.

FAITH

Thanks.

RESNICK

"Justice is truth in action?"

FAITH

Professor Nielson.

RESNICK

I remember. You still believe it?

FAITH

Of course.

RESNICK

Just as long as it doesn't get in the way of a win though, right?

FAITH

If you have something to say, Eric. Say it.

RESNICK

You were his favorite student. And now you're a...

FAITH

A what?

RESNICK

A politican.

FAITH

Are you drunk?

RESNICK

(hiccup)

Yeah.

FAITH

C'mon. I'll give you a ride.

She takes his drink away as he lifts it for the last sip. Ushers him out the door.

29

INT. KEMP HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

29

Allison, asleep. A clock ticks. A wind-chime jingles.
Justin slips in and changes into his sleepwear. She stirs.

JUSTIN

Hey. Sorry I'm late.

ALLISON

That's okay. How was the meeting?

JUSTIN

Good. I stayed after to talk with
Larry for a bit.

He gets in bed. She can hear his heart pounding.

ALLISON

You sure you're all right?

JUSTIN

I'm good.

ALLISON

It's all gonna be fine, babe.

She snuggles into him.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

We're gonna have a family.

He kisses her. Yes, we are. She drifts back to sleep.

Justin lies there, eyes open. Mind racing as we FADE TO:

30

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - MORNING

30

Faith questions an **EYEWITNESS** from the night of the crime.

WOMAN FROM BAR

I'd seen them in there before. It
was always the same thing; they'd
start off fun and flirty, but after
a few drinks, things would change.

FAITH

Change how?

WOMAN FROM BAR

Well, that night, it looked like she
was trying to talk to him, y'know --
"seriously" -- but he wasn't having
it. So she LET HIM have it.

31 **INT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT**

31

The WOMAN shooting pool. She lines up a shot and sees Sythe and Kendall Carter right in her eye line at a high-top table.

Kendall SMACKS his hand away as he tries to cop a feel.

KENDALL CARTER
 Seriously. STOP. I'm trying to
 have a conversation here.

He knocks a beer bottle off the table, shattering it. She storms out.

WOMAN FROM BAR (V.O.)
 He got mad. She left. He followed
 her outside. So I started filming.

32 **EXT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT**

32

We head OUTSIDE to find James Sythe and Kendall Carter in a screaming match.

KENDALL CARTER
 I mean it. We're done!

SYTHE
 Baby, c'mon.

KENDALL CARTER
 It's over!

SYTHE
 I'm sorry, okay?

He reaches for her arm. But she SMACKS it away.

KENDALL CARTER
 Get off of me.

She walks away.

SYTHE
 You'll be back. Like always.

She flips him off.

SYTHE (CONT'D)
 Go on then. Dumb bitch.
 (calls after her)
 I SAY when it's over!

She ignores him. Keeps walking as his rage builds.

33

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - MORNING

33

Pull back from a TV screen as the footage ends. Faith turns to the Woman From The Bar, who's still on the witness stand.

FAITH

So she left and then what happened?

WOMAN FROM BAR

He followed her. Out of the parking lot and onto Old Quarry Road.

JURORS sigh and shake their heads. Justin tenses up.

Resnick on cross-examination.

RESNICK

You saw him walk down Old Quarry Road?

WOMAN FROM BAR

Yes.

RESNICK

Did you know his car was parked on Old Quarry Road.

WOMAN FROM BAR

No.

RESNICK

So you don't know HOW FAR he followed her down Old Quarry Road, Do you?

WOMAN FROM BAR

No. I stopped filming and went back inside.

RESNICK

Thank you. No more questions.

Point, Resnick.

34

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - LATER THAT DAY

34

Faith questions the Rowdy's **BARTENDER** (30's, tats, sexy.)

Justin shifts in his seat. Trying to avoid her eye line.

BARTENDER

I was at the bar 'til close. Didn't see either of them come back in.

(MORE)

34 CONTINUED:

34

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

I opened the next day and did what I always do: took the night's trash out to the dumpster.

35 **EXT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - DAY**

35

The Bartender outside the road house is taking out the trash when she hears YELLING.

She follows the noise and sees a **HIKER**, waving his hands.

36 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - LATER THAT DAY**

36

The **HIKER** on the stand now. Taking us through his POV.

HIKER

... Because of the rain the night before, the trails were all muddy and wet. I had to cut up to Old Quarry by the bridge in order to get back to the road.

37 **EXT. WOODS - DAY**

37

The **HIKER** moves through the trees slowly navigating the slick hillside one step and a time.

He's in the creek bed now. He walks forward, stopping as he sees Kendall Carter caught on some rocks -- a lifeless, crumpled mass of jeans and heels.

He gags, nearly pukes, but holds it together.

It's eerily calm and quiet as he looks around, trying to get his composure back.

38 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - DAY**

38

FAITH

And just to be clear, when you found Kendall Carter, she was dead?

HIKER

Her head was...in a pool of blood. It was awful.

He gets emotional thinking back on it. It's effective and Faith milks it.

FAITH

Thank you for your testimony, Mr.
Reed. I know it isn't easy.

(to the Judge)

That's all I have.

Justin clocks Marcus, Yolanda, Luke and Courtney glancing at
Sythe. They're disgusted.

THE JUDGE

Mr. Resnick. Your witness.

RESNICK

(to the Hiker)

Mr. Reed, you hike those trails in
the woods frequently, don't you?

HIKER

Yes, sir. Twice a week at least.

RESNICK

In your opinion, is the hike down
the hillside difficult?

HIKER

Yes.

RESNICK

I assume you wear hiking boots when
you hike, Mr. Reed, is that right?

HIKER

Of course.

Resnick goes to the defense table and grabs a photograph.

RESNICK

This is a picture of Kendall Carter
the morning you found her below Old
Quarry Road. Can you please tell
the court what kind of shoes she's
wearing?

HIKER

(winces at photo)

Looks like heels.

RESNICK

And if she was walking along the edge of Old Quarry Road in a blinding rain storm, at night, in heels, and lost her footing, it would be next to impossible to prevent herself from falling, isn't that correct?

HIKER

Yes.

Resnick takes the photo back and shows it to the jury.

39

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - LATER THAT DAY

39

TIGHT ON a crime scene photo on the TV of the discovery point of Kendall Carter's body at the bottom of the bridge.

From the witness stand, **THE MEDICAL EXAMINER** clicks the next slide. An **AUTOPSY SKETCH** detailing Kendall's broken bones.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

The body was found lying in the posterior position, which suggests she was pushed as opposed to a fall. Rigor-mortis indicated the victim had been dead for around nine hours.

FAITH

And the cause of death?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

The severity of her skull fractures suggest she was struck with a non-specific blunt instrument.

FAITH

And the manner of death?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Homicide.

Murmurs from the JURY. Justin turns a BRONZE COIN with the number "3" engraved on it over in his hand.

FAITH

Thank you. No more questions.

Resnick rises to cross-examine the Medical Examiner.

RESNICK

Is it possible she sustained her head injuries from hitting the rocks?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Possible...? Sure. But in my professional opinion, it's unlikely.

Faith smirks to Resnick.

RESNICK

But possible, thank you. That's all for me.

Point, Resnick.

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - ANOTHER DAY

Faith questions an **ELDERLY MAN** in his Sunday's best.

FAITH

... On October 25th of last year, you lived on Old Quarry Road, correct?

ELDERLY MAN

Yes.

FAITH

Did you see anything unusual that evening?

ELDERLY MAN

I saw a man get out of his car in the middle of a storm.

WHIP PAN to JUSTIN -- holy shit.

FAITH

Do you remember what time this was?

ELDERLY MAN

Twelve-forty-eight on the button. I looked at the clock. I heard thunder, so I went to the window. Lightning lit up the sky, and there he was.

FAITH

What was he doing?

ELDERLY MAN

He looked around. Then he went to the side of the road, peered over the railing, got back in his car and drove away.

Justin goes WHITE. Carefully, he shifts his body away from the witness stand and puts his elbow on the arm rest, head on his hand, covering his face. To the observer, he looks focused, deep in thought. To the witness, he's obscured.

FAITH

Is the man you saw that night here in the courtroom today?

Elderly Man scrunches his nose and brow, thinking back to that night.

41

INT/EXT. TRAILER/OLD QUARRY RD - NIGHT

41

A TRAILER off of Old Quarry Road. Lightning strikes, illuminating the ELDERLY MAN in the window.

HIS POV --

Looking across at the road. Through the tree branches, on either side of his house, it's a narrow field of vision. And with the rain coming down it's slightly blurred, but there he is...

A MAN

Standing over the rail. From the back he could be anybody. But then, on the heels of another lightning bolt, he TURNS AROUND and we CUT BACK TO:

42

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - BACK TO SCENE

42

Elderly Man looks from Faith, to The Judge, to the JURY BOX.

Justin DROPS his pen and leans down to get it right as the Elderly Man looks his way.

He fishes for his pen, taking his time. Behind him, DENICE -- the soccer Mom -- clears her throat, forcing Justin to grab his pen and sit back up. And that's when Elderly Man says:

ELDERLY MAN

Yes. He is here today.
(clears throat,
points)
That's him right there.

He's pointing at JAMES SYTHE. Justin lets out a silent sigh.

FAITH

Let the record show the witness identified the man he saw as the defendant, James Michael Sythe.

Sythe sits there, incredulous. Trying not to clap back.

FAITH (CONT'D)

The State rests, Your Honor.

THE JUDGE

All right, then. Now seems like a good time to break for the day.

Justin can't get out of there fast enough. He exits as Resnick turns to Sythe.

RESNICK

Tomorrow, it's your turn up there.

Sythe nods. Nervous.

RESNICK (CONT'D)

Just remember what we talked about. Tell your story.

SYTHE

Okay.

RESNICK

You're gonna be fine.

But Sythe's eyes are full of fear as his Bailiff escorts him out of the courtroom. Resnick watches him led away, unsure.

INT. LAW OFFICES OF LARRY LASKER ESQ. - AFTERNOON

Larry comes out of his office and ushers Justin in from the waiting room. He's surprised to see him, but always calm.

LARRY

Justin, what's going on?

JUSTIN

I need a lawyer.

LARRY

Give me a dollar.

INT. LARRY LASKER'S PERSONAL OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Justin sits across from Larry, telling his story.

JUSTIN

... And so I went to clear my head
and found myself at Rowdy's
Hideaway.

Larry listens.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I ordered a drink. And I sat there
for a while. And then I got up and
left. When I got to my car, it was
raining. I turned back onto Old
Quarry, and went about a quarter of
a mile when I hit something. I got
out of the car, looked around,
didn't see anything and figured it
must've been a deer that ran off.
Then I got back in the car and drove
home.

LARRY

So, what's the problem?

JUSTIN

I got called for jury duty. The
Kendall Carter case. They found her
body in a creek bed about a quarter
of a mile from Rowdy's Hideaway last
October.

LARRY

What are you telling me?

JUSTIN

Maybe I didn't hit a deer.

Larry considers what he's just heard.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I... don't know what to do.

Larry looks at Justin. His eyes narrow.

LARRY

You were at a bar. You ordered a
drink.

JUSTIN

I didn't touch it.

LARRY

Doesn't matter.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Given your history, there's not a jury in the world who's gonna believe you were sober.

JUSTIN

But I'd be coming forward voluntarily. That has to count for something.

LARRY

Your previous DUI's and the fact that you were at a bar gives the State a reason to charge you with First Degree Vehicular Homicide and maybe Felony Murder. That's 30 years to life. So, basically, you're screwed.

Justin's face falls as this new reality sets in.

45

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - AFTERNOON

45

Resnick stands before the court. Turns to The Judge.

RESNICK

The defense calls James Sythe, Your Honor.

Sythe walks to the witness stand. The Judge swears him in.

THE JUDGE

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

SYTHE

I do.

THE JUDGE

Please state your name for the record.

SYTHE

James Michael Sythe.

The Clerk motions for Sythe to have a seat.

THE JUDGE

Mr. Resnick...

RESNICK

Okay, James. Let's talk about what happened on the night of October 25th.

SYTHE

Kendall and I went to Rowdy's to have some drinks and get something to eat. We were having fun. We played some darts, shot some pool.

RESNICK

There's been testimony that you guys argued. Is that true?

Justin shifts uneasily in his seat as Sythe answers.

SYTHE

She got drunk and started giving me a hard time.

RESNICK

What do you mean?

SYTHE

She was going on about us moving in together. When I told her I didn't think I was ready, she said I didn't love her. So she stormed out.

RESNICK

And then what happened?

46

EXT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT

46

Sythe and Kendall going at it in the parking lot.

SYTHE (V.O.)

We started arguing in the parking lot. She was out of her head and ran off.

She flips him off and storms away. Sythe seethes.

47

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - BACK TO SCENE

47

RESNICK

So what did you do?

SYTHE

I followed her. But it was cold and rainy.

(MORE)

SYTHE (CONT'D)

I got to my car and I noticed it was parked next to Mile Marker 217. My niece's birthday is February 17th and it kinda just... snapped me out of everything. So, I got in, turned around and drove home.

RESNICK

You didn't go after her?

SYTHE

When she got like that, there was no talking to her. I figured the best thing to do was to leave, and we'd work it out the next day like we always did.

48

INT. OLD QUARRY ROAD - NIGHT

48

Sythe starts his car. His LIGHTS shine on Kendall walking a ways up ahead of him. He goes back and forth on what to do.

Sythe PUNCHES THE GAS.

49

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - BACK TO SCENE

49

Sythe hangs his head. Poise gone. Eyes welling now.

SYTHE

Did I say some things to her I didn't mean? Yeah. Am I guilty of not always being the greatest boyfriend? Sure. Of not moving forward as fast as she wanted to because I was stupid? Absolutely. But I'd never hurt her. I loved Kendall with all my heart. And I know what you see when you look at me. But I left that life behind. I'm not that guy anymore.

Justin bites his lip as Sythe breaks down. He surveys the other JURORS for their reactions, but can't read their faces.

RESNICK

Thank you, James. I'm going to play a video now and ask you some questions about it.

Resnick plays a TIKTOK VIDEO on the rollaway TV. It's shot selfie-style, of Sythe and Kendall sitting together.

SYTHE (ON VIDEO)

It's date night with my sexy and oh-so-spicy better half.

KENDALL (ON VIDEO)

You know you love it. Never a dull moment.

SYTHE (ON VIDEO)

Never ever.

KENDALL (ON VIDEO)

But we always come back to each other, don't we, baby? 'Cause we belong together.

She puckers up for a kiss. He gives her one. They laugh.

RESNICK

Who shot that video?

SYTHE

I did.

RESNICK

Do you remember when?

SYTHE

October 25th of last year.

RESNICK

And where?

SYTHE

Rowdy's Hideaway.

RESNICK

Thank you, James. No more questions.

Resnick sits down. Faith stands up to cross-examine Sythe.

FAITH

Mr. Sythe, you just stated you loved Kendall Carter, is that right?

SYTHE

Yes. More than anything.

FAITH

And on the night of October 25th, you and Kendall drive to Rowdy's Hideaway together. Is that right?

SYTHE

We took my car, yeah.

FAITH

And when you got there, the two of you started drinking, is that right?

SYTHE

Yes.

FAITH

And then, the two of you got into an argument, is that right?

SYTHE

Yes.

FAITH

And during this argument, you knocked a beer bottle off the table, is that right?

SYTHE

(shifts uneasily)

Yeah.

FAITH

Then, she walked out and you went after her. Is that right?

SYTHE

Well yeah, but--

FAITH

And outside, the two of you continued arguing and it's your sworn testimony that you left her alone so she could walk down a narrow, two-lane road in the dark, drunk, in the pouring rain, during a thunderstorm. Is that how you treat someone you love...?

Point Faith. Off Sythe, not knowing how to respond...

FATH

Nothing more for this witness.

FAITH

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury,
Kendall Carter's murder was a savage
crime, committed by an evil man...

RESNICK

... An innocent man who is shattered
from losing the love of his life.

FAITH

An eyewitness saw him at the crime
scene AT the time of death.

RESNICK

In the middle of the night during a
rainstorm. It could have been
anyone.

FAITH

When she broke up with him that
night, and he realized she meant it,
he snapped. And so he bludgeoned
her.

RESNICK

No murder weapon was recovered.

FAITH

The defendant's DNA was found all
over the victim. No one else's.

RESNICK

Of course there was DNA. They were
a couple!

FAITH

Until they weren't.

RESNICK

James Sythe bravely took the stand
and admitted some difficult truths.

FAITH

It was a performance. Nothing more.

RESNICK

The one thing we can agree on is
this: the person responsible for
Kendall Carter's death deserves to
face justice.

FAITH

That person is James Sythe.

RESNICK

That person is still out there.

Justin tries not to choke on the irony.

FAITH

Find him guilty.

RESNICK

Find James Sythe not guilty.

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - DELIBERATION ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Bay windows line one wall. A dry-erase board on the other.

THUNK!

The Bailiff drops a FILE BOX full of evidence on the table.

BAILIFF

Good luck.

She leaves. Now it's Justin and the eleven other JURORS.
(And two ALTERNATES who sit at a small, satellite table.)

DENICE (SOCCER MOM)

All right, if nobody objects, I'd like to be the forewoman. I've served on multiple juries, I know the ropes.

Justin looks around. No one objects. So neither does he.

DENICE (CONT'D)

Good, thank you. Now, we can vote and talk or talk and vote. I say we vote. Get an idea where we stand.

(off the rooms nods)

I vote "guilty."

LUKE (BLUE-COLLAR)

Yes, ma'am. Me, too.

NELLIE (NO-NONSENSE GRANDMA)

Me three. This whole thing is such a shame.

Eli peers up from his notepad, nods. That's four.

COURTNEY (DIVORCEE)

Yeah, I think he did it.

VINCE (WANNABE ALPHA)
(trying to make a moment)
Definitely.

KEIKO (MED STUDENT)
(nods her head)
Everything fits together.

MARCUS (ROUGH-LOOKING)
Let him rot.

YOLANDA (BUS DRIVER)
Amen.

Justin hides his horror at their callousness.

Denice counts their votes off in her head.

DENICE
That's... nine for "guilty."
(she looks at **BRODY**)
How 'bout you?

BRODY (STONER DUDE)
Yeah, guilty's cool.

DENICE
(to Harold)
And you, sir?

HAROLD (FLOWER SHOP)
(shakes his head)
Kid should've pled out.

And that leaves JUSTIN. All eyes go to him.

MARCUS
And then there was one.

YOLANDA
You with us or what?

Justin stands up. Goes to the window and looks outside.

YOLANDA (CONT'D)
Well...? Don't you wanna get home
to your pregnant wife?

JUSTIN
Of course I do.

Justin pauses and looks back out the window.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

But this is somebody's life we're dealing with. Shouldn't we at least... talk about it...?

This sucks the air out of the room. The mood turns sour.

YOLANDA

This is a joke, right?

JUSTIN

No, it's a deliberation. You were ready to send this man to prison, maybe forever, just like that.

MARCUS

And...? I heard the facts of the case. Did you?

YOLANDA

Lawyer didn't prove he was innocent.

JUSTIN

He doesn't have to. The "burden of proof" is on the prosecution. Does anyone have even the slightest hesitation that James Sythe is guilty?

He looks at Yolanda. She hesitates.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

If you have to think, you're aren't sure.

YOLANDA

What I'm sure of is I got three kids to get home to!

JUSTIN

We all have lives. None of us want to be here.

Marcus eyeballs him. Denice sees this, interjects.

DENICE

Why don't you tell us what your issue is and we can all talk through it.

JUSTIN

I don't have an issue.

YOLANDA

You just like pissing me off, then?

JUSTIN

I have questions.

MARCUS

Nah, that's just your "guilt" talking.

Justin tenses up. How could Marcus possibly know?

JUSTIN

What do you mean?

MARCUS

You want to be able to go home to your little neighborhood and tell 'em: "We did right by that boy. We gave him a fair shake, just like anyone else."

LUKE

Whoa, hold up --

MARCUS

Hold up? You better back up, boy.

Nellie whistles through her teeth. Everyone STOPS.

NELLIE

(sweet but firm)

That's enough. Both of you.

(to Justin)

Please continue, Mr. Kemp.

JUSTIN

Thank you, Ma'am. All I'm trying to say is: Let's put everything else aside for a minute and remember two key points: 1) Sythe went to trial instead of taking a plea. And 2) He testified instead of taking the fifth. Now, that doesn't mean he's innocent. But I think he's earned a few hours of our time to be sure.

Nods and murmurs. Denice, the forewoman steps in.

DENICE

He's right. We should go over it.

And that's that. Sighs and scoffs from the room.

MARCUS

Fine. But it's a waste of time. Any other group of twelve people would arrive at the exact same decision we did.

52 **EXT. SUPERIOR COURT BUILDING / STEPS - DAY**

52

Faith's post-trial press conference on the courthouse steps.

FAITH

The state has the truth on its side; James Sythe is going to pay for what he did. I WILL get justice for Kendall Carter and for every woman who's a victim of domestic abuse.

REPORTER

How do you feel about the latest polling that a verdict in the Sythe trial carries a five-point swing?

FAITH

Come on, you know I can't comment on that. Thank you everyone.

Faith walks off to end the conference.

53 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - DELIBERATION ROOM - DAY**

53

Denice writes "WITNESS LIST" on one side of the dry-erase board and "EVIDENCE" on the other. Turns to the jury.

DENICE

Let's start with the most damning stuff: the eyewitness who saw Sythe on the road, at the railing, directly above where Kendall's body was found.

MARCUS

Exactly. What's left to talk about?

JUSTIN

Now, hold on. The witness was a few hundred feet away, looking from across the bridge. In the middle of the night, through pouring rain.

LUKE

I've done landscape work up there. The ridge-line's covered by trees.

MARCUS

The man made a positive I.D.

BRODY

Dude's kinda ancient, though.

NELLIE

Well, this old bird's got 20/20 vision.

She winks. Yolanda is beside herself.

YOLANDA

It's his testimony! He's got no reason to lie. To question him means we think he's lying. You think that?

JUSTIN

No.

YOLANDA

So what the hell are we talking about?

JUSTIN

I'm just saying the man saw somebody at that railing, right? Can we all agree on that?

Murmurs of "yes" and "mmm hmm."

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

So, isn't it possible that he saw someone other than James Sythe?

YOLANDA

We could sit around all day talking about what's "possible."

JUSTIN

I think we should.

DENICE

No. We should weigh the facts.

HAROLD

All right, fact: Thirty-two percent of all homicides occur between domestic partners. Fact: the police arrested James Sythe two days after finding the body. Fact: they never questioned any other suspects.

VINCE

You watch too much TV, old man.

Harold shrugs. Reaches into his jacket, takes out a POLICE BADGE and slaps it on the table. Justin's blood goes cold.

VINCE (CONT'D)

You're a cop...?

HAROLD

I was. Robbery/homicide. 22 years.

It says "RETIRED" above the police crest.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Took a buyout. Left those brutal Midwest winters and came down here.

DENICE

Why didn't you tell the lawyers?

HAROLD

They never asked.

NELLIE

Well how about that? Their mistake is our gain. What are you thinking, officer?

HAROLD

Detective. It seems to me like the police followed the evidence, found their guy and built their case.

YOLANDA

So, what's wrong with that?

HAROLD

Nothing. But "tunnel vision" can bite you in the ass. They feed Sythe to the Old Man and of course that's who he ID's. So now they're sure they've got their guy and they ignore anything that doesn't help their case. They stop asking questions.

KEIKO

Confirmation bias.

HAROLD

Bingo. No bad intentions; just a bunch of people trying to do what they think is right, unable to see everything they're doing wrong.

NELLIE

That's a good point. Where is this "blunt instrument" murder weapon they kept talking about?

JUSTIN

The prosecutor said they "couldn't recover it."

MARCUS

So, he got rid of it. Easy to do.

COURTNEY

Or, she was killed by something other than a blunt instrument.

JUSTIN

Like what?

KEIKO

Like a car.

The room STOPS as everyone considers this.

Justin tries not to panic.

JUSTIN

That's... an interesting theory.

He shifts in his seat.

KEIKO

A dark road, on a rainy night? It could have been a hit and run.

CLANK.

Justin knocks his coffee mug over.

JUSTIN

Shit.

COURTNEY

Here. Let me help.

She grabs some towels, helps Justin soak up the coffee.

With a loud POP, Harold opens a can of soda. The jurors turn as he takes a sip, a small smile forming on his face.

HAROLD

Y'know, now that I think about it...
A hit and run actually makes some
sense here.

He looks RIGHT at Justin as he says this. Oh, shit.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

The ground was slippery, we know
that from the hiker's testimony.

NELLIE

Wandering in the dark in heels.
Kids today.

KEIKO

It explains how she could've ended
up in the creek.

MARCUS

So Sythe mowed her down instead of
bashing her head in. What
difference does it make? Guy's a
piece of shit.

HAROLD

My gut says he's not a killer.

MARCUS

You just voted "guilty!"

HAROLD

I never said he was guilty. I said
he should've taken a plea bargain.
His case was weak.

YOLANDA

Maybe there's a reason for that.

HAROLD

It's called a public defender. And
the guy seemed all right, don't get
me wrong. But he's working ten
times the cases of the D.A.'s office
with a fraction of the budget. It's
not a fair fight.

MARCUS

Nothing is anymore, brother. We
just do the best we can.

HAROLD

Yeah. And I've got twenty-two years on the street telling me there's a lot more to this case than we know.

NELLIE

All right then: if you were still a detective, what would you do?

Harold considers this. Justin waits with bated breath.

But before Harold can answer, there's a KNOCK on the door. It's the BAILIFF.

BAILIFF

That's it for today. See you all back here, nine AM, Monday morning.

The Jury packs up their stuff and grab their coats.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)

And I almost forgot: Happy Halloween.

54

EXT. SUPERIOR COURT BUILDING - LATER THAT DAY

54

Harold exits the courthouse, talks on his phone.

HAROLD

Hey, it has been a minute. But I was hoping you could do me a solid...

He heads to the parking lot, gets in his FLOWER SHOP VAN.

From two rows over, Justin watches him from his 4Runner.

Harold starts the van and drives away. Justin follows.

55

INT. FAITH'S DEPUTY DA OFFICE - SAME

55

Faith's at her desk, writing a speech. She reads aloud as she types, trying it on.

FAITH

... We cannot break the law. We can only break ourselves of the law...

There's a KNOCK on her door. The Bailiff enters with news.

BAILIFF

No decision, yet. We are breaking for the weekend.

FAITH

You're kidding.

BAILIFF

You never know what a dozen
strangers are gonna do...

FAITH

Clearly. Thanks for letting me
know.

BAILIFF

See you Monday. Trick or treat.

The Bailiff leaves. Faith sighs and shakes her head.

EXT. OLD QUARRY ROAD - AFTERNOON

The flower van's parked on the side of the road. Down a
ways, Harold walks along the bridge.

REVERSE TO --

Justin watching him from across the road, in the 4Runner.
It's parked in the ELDERLY MAN'S driveway.

He sees Harold looking at the bridge. Then over at the
ELDERLY MAN'S HOUSE looking across Old Quarry Road. As if
he's trying to approximate making an ID from there.

Harold steps forward into the road, to get a bigger
perspective. Sees the DEER X-ING sign. Takes this in.

He stands there, observing, making mental notes when --

Justin's PHONE RINGS --

Shit. Justin sends it to voicemail, slides down in his seat,
out of sight.

But Harold hears it and turns in the direction of the noise.

All he sees are some parked cars. So he shakes it off as HIS
phone rings. Answers it.

HAROLD

Heading back to the shop now, hon...

Harold gets in his van and drives away, turns and looks RIGHT
AT Justin's 4Runner as he passes it.

When the coast is clear, Justin sits back up in his seat,
terrified he's been made.

57

INT. KEMP HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

57

Allison, in her nightgown, puts a teabag in a cup of hot water. She turns as she hears the key in the front door.

Justin enters. Can tell right away that she's upset.

JUSTIN

Hey. How'd it go at the doctor?
Everything... looks okay, right?

She hands him an envelope of ULTRASOUND PICTURES.

She just looks at him. Swallowing what's really on her mind.

ALLISON

We didn't make it this far last
time.

She pauses. Thinks to herself.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

How much longer is this trial gonna
go on for?

JUSTIN

I'm not sure.

ALLISON

Are you close to a verdict?

JUSTIN

I'm not allowed to discuss that.
(pauses)
It's ten-to-two for "guilty."

ALLISON

(nods)
So Monday you go in there, sway the
holdouts and voila.

JUSTIN

I'm one of them.

ALLISON

Oh.

JUSTIN

They took one look at this guy and
that was it. No discussion of the
evidence, nothing. I had to do
something.

ALLISON

Of course.

JUSTIN

Everyone deserves a chance, right?
I keep thinking about where I'd be
if you hadn't given me one...

His voice trails off. This cuts close for him.

Allison's touched. But also concerned.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Can I ask you something?

ALLISON

Sure.

JUSTIN

If I were to sell the 4Runner
without telling someone it was in a
wreck -- but they're happy with the
deal and there's no safety risk
'cause we restored it --

ALLISON

I thought it was in the ad.

JUSTIN

Just go with me. If they're never
the wiser and nobody gets hurt, did
I do anything wrong?

ALLISON

If no one gets hurt, then no. I
suppose not. Does that... help?

Justin nods. It definitely does. Allison, meanwhile, is still not really sure what's going on, but she's also too tired and pregnant to push it right now.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

All right, then. I'm heading to
bed. Dinner's in the fridge.

JUSTIN

Thanks. I'll be up shortly.

ALLISON

Good night.

She takes her tea and shuffles off. Turns off the hall light and heads up the stairs.

Justin stands there in the kitchen, turning things over in his mind. The lone light on is the kitchen island chandelier.

Its glow hangs over Justin like an interrogation room lamp.

58 **INT. UNION ALEHOUSE - NIGHT**

58

Faith walks into the bar. Resnick's waiting for her, drink in hand.

RESNICK

There she is! This round's on you!

FAITH

(sighs, to
BARTENDER)

Bourbon neat and whatever he's
having.

The Bartender fixes the drinks as Resnick waltzes over.

RESNICK

What I'm having is a great evening.
Isn't this a lovely evening?

FAITH

It should've been a two-hour
verdict.

RESNICK

What can I tell you? They're taking
their job seriously. I gave them a
lot to think about.

FAITH

I've got a mountain of evidence.
You gave them smoke and mirrors.

RESNICK

Where there's smoke, there's fire.

She rolls her eyes. This guy.

FAITH

I admire your optimism.

He finishes his drink, gets serious.

RESNICK

Look, here's the thing: You walk
into court convinced of the guilt of
the defendant. Me, I don't have any
illusions about what I do.

(MORE)

RESNICK (CONT'D)

A lot of my clients are guilty and my job is to help make the best of a bad situation. But I'm telling you, this guy didn't do it. So the fact that the jury is taking a little bit of time, gives me hope that things are working the way that they should.

FAITH

Well, enjoy it while you can.

The Bartender hands them their drinks. Resnick raises his glass. Motions for Faith to do likewise.

RESNICK

To the justice system. It ain't perfect but it's the best we've got.

They toast. Clink. His words linger in Faith's head.

59

INT/EXT. KEMP HOUSE - DINING ROOM / THE NEXT NIGHT

59

Allison dumps bulk bags of candy into a Halloween bowl.

She's dressed in a colonial print apron, with a Victorian broach on the collar of a white shirt, her hair pulled back and parted down the middle.

Justin enters from the room wearing denim overalls, wire-framed glasses and a navy suit jacket. They're the couple from Grant Wood's famous 1930 painting "American Gothic."

ALLISON

What's that?

He holds a lacrosse shaft in his hand with cardboard prongs taped to it.

JUSTIN

My pitchfork.

She shakes her head. He's hopeless, but also kinda cute.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

About last night...

She looks at him. Glad he's bringing this up.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

This case is really wearing on me.

ALLISON

I know. Just trust your gut.
You'll do the right thing.

As Justin contemplates this, there's a KNOCK at the door.

Allison hands Justin the candy bowl. Follows him to the front door, which he opens to reveal a group of **TRICK OR TREATERS**.

KIDS

Trick or treat!

ALLISON

Well, hello! Great costumes.

She hands out candy to the kids. One's dressed as Dracula.

DRACULA

Hey, Miss Crewson.

ALLISON

Oliver, is that you?

DRACULA/OLIVER

Yes, ma'am. Hey, Mr. Kemp.

JUSTIN

Oliver? Wow, you got big.
(he shrugs,
sheepish)
How's the writing going?

OLIVER

I'm on the student paper now.

JUSTIN

That's great. Good for you.

Oliver nods. Proud to be telling Justin this.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Have fun tonight. But remember to be safe.

OLIVER

We will. See you back at school, Miss Crewson?

ALLISON

Hopefully next year.

OLIVER

Okay, well. Bye.

Oliver and the kids head to the next house.

JUSTIN

He's a giant.

ALLISON

It's been a couple years.

JUSTIN

Crazy.

ALLISON

Yeah.

They share a look. So much has happened in that time.

It's an emotional moment, broken by the appearance of more trick or treaters.

Justin and Allison put their game faces back on as we CUT TO:

60

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - LOBBY - MONDAY MORNING

60

Justin passes through the security checkpoint, heads down the hall to the deliberation room.

It's LOCKED. Other jurors hang outside, waiting for the Bailiff to open it. Courtney gives Justin a little wave.

Then a HAND grabs his shoulder. It's Harold, all business.

JUSTIN

Whoa. Hey--

HAROLD

You followed me Friday after court.

Justin's not sure what to say. Harold continues.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

I picked up your tail halfway out of the parking lot. Green Toyota 4Runner.

Justin sighs. Busted. Turns things back on Harold.

JUSTIN

You're not allowed to investigate the case outside the jury room.

HAROLD

Somebody had to. Don't you want to know what really happened?

Justin nods. Harold makes sure the coast is clear and takes out a FOLDER from his bag. Inside is a COMPUTER PRINT-OUT.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

That's every registered car in the county that was serviced for body work from October 26th through the end of last year.

JUSTIN

Still with the hit and run? C'mon.

HAROLD

Auto makers keep a detailed list of repairs strictly for R&D purposes. Collect it from their dealerships pro forma, pay the Mom N' Pop shops under the table. My partner and I recovered more cars than an impound this way.

JUSTIN

There's hundreds of cars in here.

HAROLD

You hit someone with a car, there's gonna be certain hood and grille damage with head trauma. It would mostly likely be a truck or SUV.

(points to print-out)

Fifteen cars fit that description. One of them's a 2014 Toyota 4Runner. Forest green. Your car.

JUSTIN

What are you suggesting?

HAROLD

It was you. You killed her. You've been playing us this entire time.

Harold looks Justin right in the eyes... and SMILES.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Relax. I'm messing with you.

Justin laughs a little too loud.

JUSTIN

Right. So, what's the plan?

HAROLD

We do the legwork and get answers.

JUSTIN

You're reaching.

HAROLD

This was a hit and run. I can feel it. And our guy is on this list.

Justin's heart pounds. Harold hands him half the list.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

You take these, I'll do the rest.

The certainty in his voice. Justin knows Harold's committed. And unless he does something, this will lead back to him.

The BAILIFF arrives and opens the deliberation room door.

She collects everyone's cell-phones as the Jurors enter. Looks over to Justin and Harold.

BAILIFF

Party time, guys. Let's go.

Justin looks at her, an idea forming. When she looks away he "accidentally" drops his half of Harold's list. Papers scatter everywhere, and he calls out a little too loud:

JUSTIN

Goddammit!

Now EVERYONE's looking. Justin kneels down, gathers the papers. Harold hesitant knowing the consequence to come, then bends down to help.

BAILIFF

Everything all right?

JUSTIN

Yep, fine.

But the Bailiff's already on her way over. She looks at Justin and Harold, and the papers all over the ground.

BAILIFF

What's all this...?

Faith approaches Resnick with two coffees.

FAITH

Americano with Soy milk.

61 CONTINUED:

61

RESNICK

Close enough.

She sits down next to him. They sip in silence. Waiting.

Then both their phones BUZZ at the same time.

They jump up and look at each other, hopeful as we CUT TO:

62 INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304

62

The Judge grabs her JURY MANUAL. Takes out a page and hands it to Justin, who stands before him with Harold.

Behind them, at their respective tables are Faith, Resnick and Sythe. The Bailiff and Court Reporter here as well.

THE JUDGE

Read Instruction 0.01 for me,
please.

JUSTIN

"...to maintain the integrity of the jury system, I remind you that you must decide this case based only on the evidence admitted during the trial and the law I will explain to you. You may not conduct any research on your own about this case, or about any people or places mentioned during the trial. You may not visit any places mentioned in the evidence, and you may not refer to any books or documents that were not admitted during the trial. "

THE JUDGE

Sounds like you two violated every sentence in that paragraph.

He holds up the folder with the print-out inside it.

RESNICK

(interjects)

I move for a mistrial, Your Honor.

(motions to Harold)

He's a former COP. Who knows what ideas he's put in the jury's heads?

THE JUDGE

Failure to elicit his previous employment during voir dire is on you, Mr. Resnick.

RESNICK

It's misconduct!

FAITH

So kick them off, Judge, but there's no reason to start all over here.

(pouncing)

Our resources are already stretched so thin.

THE JUDGE

(hesitates, then)

She's right. Motion denied.

RESNICK

Your Honor--

Judge Stewart turns to Justin and Harold.

THE JUDGE

As for you two --

Justin tenses up. If he's off the jury, Sythe's toast.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

You violated your oath as jurors.

HAROLD

And upheld the oath I took as a police officer: "To never betray my integrity my character or the public trust."

THE JUDGE

Mr. Chicowski, you are hereby removed from jury service. On account of your background, I'm going to make an exception and not hold you in contempt of court.

Harold nods. The Judge turns to Justin.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

Mr. Kemp, you're not a retired law enforcement officer, are you?

JUSTIN

No, Your Honor.

THE JUDGE

Then how do you explain your involvement in this... transgression?

Justin looks at Harold, who comes to his defense.

HAROLD

I obtained those papers on my own,
Your Honor.

THE JUDGE

Is that true, Mr. Kemp? Did you
look at these documents or help
procure them or know what Mr.
Chicowski was intending to do?

JUSTIN

No, I didn't see them. And I did
not help him.

THE JUDGE

Do you think you can disregard
everything you've heard just now and
remain an unbiased member of this
panel?

JUSTIN

Yes, Your Honor.

The Judge nods.

THE JUDGE

I get the sense you want to be on
this jury, Mr. Kemp... Which is
interesting, considering you did not
want to be here during jury
selection.

JUSTIN

I don't want to be here, Your Honor.
But I took an oath. And I'd like to
see it through.

This strikes a chord with Judge Stewart. She nods.

THE JUDGE

Then I'm going to take you at your
word. Bailiff, please escort Mr.
Kemp back to the juror room. Mr.
Chicowski, you're dismissed.

The Bailiff leads Justin away. Harold leaves.

RESNICK

Your Honor, I would ask that a copy of these documents be made a part of the Court's record for purposes of appeal. And I would again, move for a mistrial.

THE JUDGE

The documents will be marked as a Defendant's exhibit. The motion for mistrial is denied, Mr. Resnick. Is that understood?

RESNICK

Yes, Your Honor.

THE JUDGE

All right. Then we're done here.

Faith and Resnick stand. Sheriff's Deputies escort Sythe back to jail. He looks back, catches Justin's eye as he's lead away, out of sight.

63

EXT. SUPERIOR COURT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

63

Faith exits. Turns to see Resnick looking at her, pissed.

FAITH

What?

RESNICK

"Our resources are already stretched so thin?" You are something.

He scoffs and walks off. Faith watches him go, sighs.

64

EXT. SUPERIOR COURT - STEPS - DAY

64

Harold exiting court. Turns as the door opens and Faith walks out.

She nods. Debates whether she should head back inside.

HAROLD

It's okay, I'm not a juror anymore.

FAITH

You made sure of that.

HAROLD

Feeling the pressure, huh?

FAITH

In this job, always.

HAROLD
(nods, then)
You got this case all wrong.

FAITH
Really.

HAROLD
It was a hit and run.

FAITH
No way. M.E. would've flagged it.

HAROLD
You'd think. But he did five
autopsies that day. I checked.

FAITH
(shit)
Doesn't mean anything.

HAROLD
Let me ask you something: Did you
look at ANY other suspects besides
James Sythe?

FAITH
We did our job.

HAROLD
If you'd done your job, we wouldn't
be standing here right now.

A well-placed arrow. Knocks Faith on her heels.

FAITH
The guy's bad news.

HAROLD
Maybe. Doesn't mean he killed his
girlfriend.

Gives her a look -- disappointment with a side of disdain --
and leaves.

Faith watches him go, humbled. His words turning over in her
mind as she questions everything she believed about this
case.

The Bailiff has just brought the jury up to speed.

BAILIFF

... Judge Stewart thanks you all for your patience and apologizes for the inconvenience. Juror #13 is now an official voting member of this panel.

IRENE (50, horn-rimmed glasses, true-crime buff) waves.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)

So unless you have any questions, I'll let you get back to it.

She exits. All eyes go right to Justin. Led by Marcus.

MARCUS

So what was this "misconduct?"

JUSTIN

That's between him and the Judge.

YOLANDA

Bullshit. You were there.

JUSTIN

He was investigating the case on his own. The Judge sent him home.

NELLIE

What about that stack of papers?

DENICE

What papers?

NELLIE

That he handed you. I saw it.
(off Justin's look)
These eyes don't miss a thing.

JUSTIN

(nods, she's good)
The Bailiff was on us before I looked at the papers.

NELLIE

You were talking for quite a while. Did Harold tell you what was in them?

The question Judge Stewart didn't think to ask.

JUSTIN

Okay, yes. He did. It was a print-out.

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Names and vehicle registrations. He said it could prove James Sythe's innocence.

YOLANDA

And we're just supposed to take your word for it and change our vote?

JUSTIN

I'm just telling you what I know.

Marcus and Yolanda shake their heads and scoff.

KEIKO

He was playing out a hit and run.

She looks up from Kendall Carter's autopsy file.

INT. FAITH'S DEPUTY DA OFFICE - DAY

Faith's at her desk, focused. She looks up from her copy of Harold's confiscated folder.

She types a name from the list into a LexisNexis search. The name's address and place of work come up. She scribbles them down on a legal pad. Types in the next name on the list.

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - DELIBERATION ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Keiko walks the jury through what she's thinking.

KEIKO

Kendall was 5'5. If she was hunched over and the car was an SUV or a truck, she could've easily been hit smack across the head and torso.

(holds up the autopsy)

Look at the way her shoulders are fractured...

This line of thought cuts too close for Justin.

JUSTIN

I'm sorry, are you a doctor?

KEIKO

Not yet. 3rd-year med student.

JUSTIN

Well, then I think we should leave this to the professionals who actually examined the body.

BRODY

Doctors can be careless. They told my Dad he was having a heart-attack. Turned out it was just gas.

NELLIE

They're always in such a rush.
(to Keiko)
Go ahead, dear. Speak your mind.

Keiko holds up an X-RAY to illustrate her point.

KEIKO

The right and left clavicle both show a very clean break.

YOLANDA

She couldn't get that from the fall?

KEIKO

It's not likely. Both bones had to be broken by a single, sharp, posterior impact. POW!!!

She SMACKS the table. Justin recoils.

IRENE

Do we know if Sythe's car had any damage?

JUSTIN

The police would've noted it in their report if it did.

IRENE

Not if they thought it was irrelevant. Cops hate paperwork.

YOLANDA

Please don't tell me you used to be one, too.

IRENE

I'm a dog groomer. But I watch and listen to A LOT of true crime. The first rule is: The husband did it.

MARCUS

Husband/boyfriend, same difference. You agree that he's guilty, right?

IRENE

He is a perfect suspect.

MARCUS

Thank you.

IRENE

But the second rule of true crime is: it's never the perfect suspect.

MARCUS

Jesus Christ.

IRENE

I'm just giving you my experience.

VINCE

Your "experience" listening to crime podcasts...?

IRENE

And watching "Dateline."

DENICE

Oh, great Sherlock Holmes...

IRENE

Well burn through enough cases, you start to see patterns. But I leave the detective work to the forum warriors.

JUSTIN

Good, because we're not here to solve a mystery. All we're here to do is decide if we're positive that James Sythe killed Kendall Carter.

He looks around the room. Keiko meets his eyes.

KEIKO

I'm not. Old Quarry Road feeds into the highway. When traffic's heavy, GPS will send you that way. It can get busy.

BRODY

Yep. And at night, it's gnarly. I nearly mowed down a deer once.

Justin winces. This cuts close.

ELI

Maybe that's what they thought.

JUSTIN

Who thought?

ELI

Whoever hit Kendall Carter. Here --

Eli sketches a drawing on a rollaway, dry-erase board. It's basically a story board. A birds-eye view of Rowdy's, Old Quarry Road and the creek below. He walks the room through it, with the board as an aid.

ELI (CONT'D)

She's hit here, goes over the railing and falls.

LUKE

But what about the eyewitness?

ELI

Maybe he saw someone else...

KEIKO

Someone who thought they hit a deer, got out of the car to check, saw nothing, figured it ran away and left.

Justin's nodding without realizing it.

MARCUS

So why didn't the defense bring up any of that during the trial?

NELLIE

Maybe it never crossed their mind. I mean, it only just occurred to us.

JUSTIN

That's a great point. Maybe the prosecution just got it wrong. It happens.

YOLANDA

Hold up. I'm hearing way too many "maybes."

JUSTIN

Too many maybes is reasonable doubt.

This hangs. Justin unsure whether it's connecting, until --

ELI

I agree.

BRODY

Yup.

JUSTIN

Keiko?

She nods.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Nellie?

NELLIE

(shakes her head)

I'm not sure that young man is
guilty anymore.

JUSTIN

Okay then. Anyone else?

He looks around the room. Marcus meets his stare, Courtney
turns away. No takers.

68 **EXT. DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON**

68

Faith, her copy of Harold's print-out in hand, interviews a
BURLY GUY working on his pick-up truck.

BURLY DRIVER

... I fell asleep on the highway 17,
and woke up in a ditch. Thank God
the hospital was close.

Faith crosses his name off.

69 **EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

69

A LAND ROVER's parked on the lawn. A **FRAT BRO**, shows Faith a
police accident report which she matches to the print-out on
his phone.

FRATERNITY GUY

We were street-racing down Greek
row. It was dumb.

Faith cross his name off.

70 **INT. FRENCH BISTRO - DAY**

70

Faith enters. The **HOSTESS** petite blonde is busy rolling
napkins for service.

FAITH

I am looking for Bobbe Moore. Is he
here?

HOSTESS

Hi. I'm Bobbe.

Faith embarrassed thinking Bobbe was going to be a man and in fact it is not.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)

Don't worry about it I get that all the time. Would you like a table?

FAITH

No, thanks.

Kindly waves and walks away.

Faith crosses the Hostess name off. She flips through the rest of the print-out. Stops at the next hi-lighted name on the list:

CREWSON, ALLISON. 2014 TOYOTA 4RUNNER, FR GREEN. 11/28/21 REPAIR DATE - IMAGE AUTO BODY.

She looks to her legal pad and finds Allison's address.

71

EXT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY

71

Faith stands in the middle of the parking lot where Sythe and Kendall Cline fought, re-tracing the steps of the case.

She walks down the driveway onto Old Quarry Road. Faith walks along the road just as Kendall did that tragic night.

She steps out on the ROAD. Measures the distance in her head to the bridge and walks to it, counting her steps.

And then she looks OVER IT.

She winces, imagining it. Dazed, she turns back, steps on to the road as a car drives by and shakes her out of her trance.

72

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - DELIBERATION ROOM - DAY

72

MOVE ACROSS the faces of the jurors as Denice reads their written ballots aloud.

DENICE

Guilty. Guilty. Not guilty. Not guilty. Guilty. Not guilty. Not guilty. Guilty. Guilty. Not guilty. Not guilty. Guilty.

ELI

Six to six. We're deadlocked.

A collective sigh from the room. Patience waning.

COURTNEY

So what do we do now?

VINCE

Feels like the more we talk, the less we know.

BRODY

I'm tired.

NELLIE

You're stoned, dear.

BRODY

That, too.

KEIKO

Let's go back to the beginning.
Rebuild the case piece by piece.

Marcus KICKS the table in frustration.

MARCUS

Let's stop wasting our damn time!

This quiets the room. Justin steps in.

JUSTIN

How about we all just take a breath.
It's been a long day. But votes
have changed, right? The process is
working.

YOLANDA

No it's not. You're wearing people
down. Talking loud and saying
nothing. You go over anything
enough times, you'll start to
question it.

COURTNEY

Which shoes to wear...

YOLANDA

Exactly. We've got all these
theories... but no new evidence.

JUSTIN

Well, those theories are making some
of us question James Sythe's guilt.

MARCUS

You can question it, but I KNOW he's
guilty. Just look at his neck.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(to Eli)

My man. I KNOW you got a picture of him in that book of yours.

Eli pulls out his sketch book. Flips to a close-up drawing of Sythe at the defense table. His tattoo is clear as day. A snake wrapped around a crown with the WC lettering.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Snake and a crown; that's The Westside Crowns. Biggest drug pushers in the city.

VINCE

How do you know that?

MARCUS

'Cause I run the Boys & Girls Club. They're poisoning their own community!

Justin takes this in.

JUSTIN

This case is personal to you.

MARCUS

You're damn right it is. My little brother was fourteen when he got inked. Didn't even graduate middle school. Two years in, he was making more money on those corners than I'll ever see in my lifetime.

(matter of fact)

Month before his seventeenth birthday, he was dead. Caught a stray bullet in some tit-for-tat turf bullshit.

JUSTIN

I'm... sorry. I had no idea.

MARCUS

That's right. You have NO idea.

Justin nods. Fair enough.

JUSTIN

Sythe did say he left that life behind, though.

MARCUS

Only one way you leave that crew.

This hangs.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

So go ahead and keep talking about your "theories."

JUSTIN

People can change.

MARCUS

Keep telling yourself that.

JUSTIN

I do. Every day.

YOLANDA

Well I drive a bus. See the same faces every morning. And they do not change.

JUSTIN

Then how am I sitting here?

YOLANDA

What do you mean?

JUSTIN

I should be dead.

The room perks up.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Little over three years ago I wrapped my car around a tree with a blood alcohol level that probably should've killed me before I even got in the car. And somehow, I walked away with barely a scratch.

MARCUS

Lucky you.

JUSTIN

Part of my sentence was community service. I spent three days a week at an elementary school, teaching kids how to write. Alcoholics, we can charm anybody. But the teacher I was reporting to, she was teflon, saw right through me. Made me finally want to own my shit and take responsibility for myself.

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I'm still not sure what I did to get a woman like her to give me a chance, let alone be my wife, but believing I could change was the first step.

He lays his AA 3 year chip on the table.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

The journey never ends, I know that. But am I a different man today than I was three years ago? Absolutely.

YOLANDA

She sounds like quite a woman. I would've kicked your ass to the curb.

Laughter from the room. Nellie looks at Justin.

NELLIE

I hope you're taking care of her.

JUSTIN

Doing my best.

LUKE

She got a sister?

Justin shakes his head. Sorry.

MARCUS

I get it now. You changed.
(shakes his head)
Guys like James Sythe don't change.

JUSTIN

Think back to his testimony. It was raw and real... and I believed it.

Marcus doesn't flinch. So Justin pivots to Yolanda to get the group back on his side.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I'm sure you see all sorts of people in your job. Some are kind, some are mean, and some LIE. You told the Judge James Sythe rode your bus, right?

YOLANDA

That's right. Like Marcus said, he ran with a bad crowd. He was bad news.

JUSTIN

Did he ever lie to you?

YOLANDA

Not that I remember.

JUSTIN

Do you think he lied on the witness stand?

YOLANDA

(hates to admit it)

I'm not sure.

Justin gives her a sympathetic look.

JUSTIN

Not sure is reasonable doubt.

YOLANDA

Yeah.

JUSTIN

Yeah?

YOLANDA

(surprised as anyone)

Yeah.

The room is shocked. It doesn't sit well with Luke.

LUKE

If Sythe didn't do it, who did?

JUSTIN

We don't need to answer that.

LUKE

So nobody pays for what happened to that girl? I'm not okay with that.

JUSTIN

Someone will pay.

LUKE

How do you know?

JUSTIN

Because somebody always does. And I get how you feel, I do, but you can't let feelings sway you.

LUKE

You don't know anything about me.

JUSTIN

(nods, then)

How old is your daughter?

(Luke fumes)

That's her on your keychain, right?

He motions to Luke's KEYS on the table. A plastic laminated photo of a **GIRL** in her cheerleading uniform dangles from it.

LUKE

She turns sixteen in March.

JUSTIN

How often do you see her?

LUKE

Not often enough.

JUSTIN

That must be tough.

LUKE

Like I said, you have no idea.

JUSTIN

Not exactly, no. But during the trial, my seat was right in Kendall's parents' eye-line. I saw their pain. And each day I'd ask myself: "What if she were my daughter?"

LUKE

I'd want justice. Eye for an eye.

JUSTIN

Okay.

(nods, then)

James Sythe's family was also in court each day. His Grandma, his niece. What if he were your son? Wouldn't you want justice for him, too?

Luke picks up his keychain, looks at it.

LUKE

I suppose I would, yeah.

JUSTIN

Well then?

LUKE

All right. You got me.

Surprised looks from the room. Denice steps in.

DENICE

Well, okay. Does anyone else want to change their vote?

She looks around to see if anyone else wants to change their vote. No takers.

DENICE (CONT'D)

By my count, looks like we currently stand at eight votes to four, in favor of "Not Guilty".

The momentum's turning. But Marcus laughs it off.

MARCUS

Doesn't matter anyway.

DENICE

What do you mean?

MARCUS

I'm not changing my mind.

JUSTIN

Let's just keep talking...

MARCUS

I'm DONE talking, man.

IRENE

So what, you want to tell the Judge we can't reach a verdict?

YOLANDA

If that's what it is, then that's what it is.

DENICE

Come on, we're making progress.

YOLANDA

If we're not gonna reach a verdict, what's the point of continuing? We've already been here for days. My kids need me.

DENICE

Well, I'm open to hearing more.

YOLANDA

Your kids are away at college!

DENICE

I'm just trying to do my job here.

(to Courtney)

Courtney, what do you think? Should we keep going?

COURTNEY

I don't know. He... yelled at her. Grabbed her arm and called her "a dumb bitch." He was possessive and temperamental...

VINCE

No. He was abusive. Screw him.

He looks at her. Courtney finally "sees" him.

COURTNEY

Yeah. Screw. Him.

The pain in her voice suggests she's projecting. Perhaps onto her ex-husband?

DENICE

Great. So for the third time, I get to go home and tell my husband: "Guess what, Honey? I did nothing!" He'll get a real laugh out of that.

COURTNEY

I'm not changing my vote.

And neither is Vince. Denice shakes her head, exasperated.

NELLIE

Neither am I.

BRODY

Right on. So what do we do then?

And then SILENCE. No one's sure where to go from here.

But then Irene's eyes light up as an idea strikes.

IRENE

There is one thing we could try.

All eyes go to her.

IRENE (CONT'D)

True-crime juries do it sometimes...

OFF the curious looks of Justin and the other jurors...

The Judge holds a LETTER from the jury. They sit in the jury box, while Faith, Resnick and Sythe sit at their tables.

THE JUDGE

Madame Foreperson, sending the jury to visit the crime scene, once deliberations have begun, is not something I would typically allow.

DENICE

With all due respect, Your Honor, this has not been a typical deliberation.

The Judge can't argue that. Neither can Faith.

DENICE (CONT'D)

I think it will be extremely valuable in helping us reach a verdict.

THE JUDGE

I see.

(nods, weighing
this)

Mr. Resnick. Any objections?

RESNICK

No, Your Honor.

THE JUDGE

Is you client good with this?

Resnick motions for Sythe to answer for himself.

SYTHE

Yes, Your Honor. I agree.

THE JUDGE

Okay, Miss Killebrew?

FAITH

The state's fine with it.

THE JUDGE

Okay, then here are the rules:
During this visit you are not to
speak to anyone outside of your jury
panel nor are you to speak to each
other about anything outside of this
case. You are there to view the
locations in and around where this
crime took place and are not to
collect evidence of any kind. Does
everyone understand these rules?

JURORS

Yes.

THE JUDGE

Court adjourned.

74

EXT. SUPERIOR COURT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

74

Justin exits the courthouse and dials his phone.

JUSTIN

Hey, it's me. Can we talk?

(listens)

Yeah, an hour's fine. I'll meet
you there.

75

INT/EXT. KEMP HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

75

Allison lays on the couch, feet up, AirPods in, listening to
the audio book of "Raising Good Humans" by Hunter Fields.

There's a KNOCK at the door. But she doesn't hear it.

Then, a LOUDER KNOCK. This time she does, and struggles to
her feet to get to the door.

But when she opens it, there's NO ONE THERE. Hmm. Weird.

FAITH

Allison Crewson?

Faith stands across the street, about to get into her car.

ALLISON

That's me.

FAITH

I'm Faith Killebrew a prosecutor
with the District Attorney's Office.
Can we talk?

Hearing "prosecutor" gives Allison pause for some reason.

ALLISON

I was just about to lay down.

FAITH

It'll only take a minute.

ALLISON

Of course. Come on in.

INT. KEMP HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Allison's on one sofa. Faith sits across from her.

Over Faith's shoulder --

Is a framed WEDDING PORTRAIT of Allison and Justin.

FAITH

Sorry for the intrusion. I won't be long. I'm following up on a possible hit and run from last October, just doing a routine check on any cars that were serviced for major body damage around that time.

ALLISON

Okay.

FAITH

On October 25th of last year did you own a 2014 green Toyota 4Runner?

ALLISON

Yes.

FAITH

Do you remember having body work done on it around that time?

ALLISON

Sounds right.

FAITH

And how was your car damaged?

ALLISON

Justin hit a deer.

Allison regrets saying it the minute the word "Justin" leaves her lips. And even more so as Faith scribbles down his name.

FAITH

Any idea where?

ALLISON

Up on Brimstone Pass.

FAITH

You're sure?

ALLISON

Yeah.

FAITH

Could it have been Old Quarry Road?

ALLISON

No. It was Brimstone Pass.

FAITH

You're positive?

ALLISON

Positive.

FAITH

Great. Then that's all I have.

(puts cap on her
pen)

Thank you very much for your time,
Mrs. Crewson. And congratulations.
When are you due?

ALLISON

Any day now.

FAITH

Well, good luck. Is there anything
I can help you with before I go?

ALLISON

No, I'm fine. Thank you.

FAITH

I'll just show myself out then.

Faith turns and walks right past the portrait without noticing it. She exits. Closes the front door behind her and walks to her car, playing the conversation over in her mind.

Something's off about the whole encounter with Allison, she just can't put her finger on what.

Back inside, Allison steadies herself. Her watch BEEPS faster.

77 **EXT. SQUARE - AFTERNOON**

77

Larry and Justin in a tree lined town square.

LARRY

Sorry I couldn't meet sooner.
What's on your mind?

JUSTIN

The trial.

LARRY

I had a feeling.

JUSTIN

It's headed for a hung jury.

WAITER

(yells out)
Justin.

Justin and Larry head to grab there coffees.

WAITER (CONT'D)

Enjoy.

JUSTIN

Obviously I want to acquit the guy.
But if the jury hangs, it's a
mistrail, right?

LARRY

That's right.

JUSTIN

So, problem solved?

LARRY

With the amount of press on this
case, the public will demand they
retry it. They'll either do it
again with Sythe or, if they decide
he's not the guy, they'll find the
guy.

Justin turns his AA coin over and over in his hand.

LARRY (CONT'D)

This case will not end until there's
a verdict. But once there is,
that's it. It's over.

77 CONTINUED:

77

JUSTIN
So you're saying I need a verdict.

LARRY
I'm just giving you the facts.

78 **INT. FAITH'S DEPUTY DA OFFICE - AFTERNOON**

78

Faith, review case files. She makes a decision. Dials her phone.

FAITH
Hey, can you meet me at county?

79 **INT. KEMP HOUSE - GARAGE - AFTERNOON**

79

Justin pulls the 4Runner into the garage. Closes the garage door with the clicker.

He gets out of the car. Shuts the driver's side door. The HUMMING of the engine cooling down grabs his attention.

He looks at the hood and then kneels down and runs his hand along the front quarter-panel onto the grille and bumper.

Feeling EYES on him, he rises and turns around to see Allison standing in the doorway between the garage and the house.

JUSTIN
Ally, hey.
(reading her)
Everything all right?

ALLISON
Whatcha doing?

JUSTIN
Nothing. Just inspecting the car.

She enters the garage. But she's still blocking Justin's pathway back into their house.

ALLISON
Where'd you hit that deer again?
Brimstone Pass?

JUSTIN
Yeah.

ALLISON
You sure it wasn't Old Quarry Road?

JUSTIN
Positive.

She lets out twisted laugh.

ALLISON

That's exactly what I said when the prosecutor from your trial just interrogated me in our living room.

JUSTIN

What...?

ALLISON

I looked her up. She wanted to know about your accident.

JUSTIN

(thrown)

Why would she want to know about that?

ALLISON

She said she's looking into a possible hit and run.

Shit. He tries to remain calm.

JUSTIN

Okay... And what did you tell her?

ALLISON

The truth. You hit a deer up on Brimstone Pass.

JUSTIN

Good.

ALLISON

That is the truth, right...?

JUSTIN

Ally...

ALLISON

You took the shortcut home through Old Quarry that night, didn't you?

Silence. Her face falls.

JUSTIN

Yeah.

ALLISON

You stop at Rowdy's Hideaway?

JUSTIN

It was a one-time thing. I ordered a drink, but I didn't touch it.

ALLISON

Why should I believe that?

JUSTIN

Because it's the truth. It was their due date. And I couldn't deal with it. The feelings I was having... I couldn't bring that into our home, to put that on you. So, I went somewhere else.

ALLISON

You could've talked to me.

JUSTIN

No.

(the hard truth)

You were in too much pain already.

It crushes her to hear that. Tears welling now.

ALLISON

I was lost. I kept thinking that somehow I was responsible for what happened.

JUSTIN

No...

ALLISON

They were my babies.

And there it is. It was twins that they lost.

JUSTIN

Ally...

She bites her lip to stop it from quivering.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

We were both hurting.

(no holding back
now)

I'm still hurting.

ALLISON

Me, too.

She looks at him.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

But now we're about to have our family.

JUSTIN

Yeah.

They're both overcome with emotion. She's trembling.

ALLISON

I can't lose you. I can't do this alone.

He takes this in. Making a decision in this moment.

JUSTIN

I'll protect our family. I promise.

They embrace.

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Faith pulls up. Resnick is waiting for her.

RESNICK

What the hell is this about?

FAITH

I need to see him.

RESNICK

Really? For what possible reason?

FAITH

So he can look me in the eye and say he didn't do it.

RESNICK

So, I'm right. You have doubt.

FAITH

I'm not sure.

RESNICK

You know something isn't right here, hell, even the jury knows it.

FAITH

Can you prove that's what happened?

RESNICK

Can you prove it didn't.

81

INT. COUNTY JAIL - MEETING ROOM - AFTERNOON

81

Sythe is escorted in. He sees FAITH sitting there as Resnick stands in the corner.

SYTHE

What are you doing here?

FAITH

Have a seat.

SYTHE

I shouldn't be talking to you.

Resnick nods "it's okay" to his client.

He sits.

SYTHE (CONT'D)

Okay, What do you want?

FAITH

Same thing as you. Justice for Kendall Carter.

SYTHE

Then go find the guy who did it.

FAITH

No jury, no Judge, no cameras. Tell me what happened that night.

SYTHE

I told you. I went home.

FAITH

But first you followed her, right?

SYTHE

She was wasted.

FAITH

And you were angry and sick of getting played.

SYTHE

It wasn't like that. She just needed to Chill out. That's how "Kenny" was. She'd get all worked up and talk this big game and then the next day it was like nothing happened.

(bites his lip)

(MORE)

81 CONTINUED:

81

SYTHE (CONT'D)

Our relationship wasn't always perfect, but we loved each other.

She tries to read his face. But it's unwavering.

SYTHE (CONT'D)

I've done a lot of things in my life I'm not proud of. But I didn't do this. The biggest regret of my life is not going after Kendall in my car that night. Because if I had, she'd still be alive.

He stands up. Looks to Resnick.

SYTHE (CONT'D)

I'm done here.

Pounds on the door to summon the GUARD.

Faith watches them lead Sythe away as we CUT TO:

82 **EXT. CITY HALL - PARKING LOT - MORNING** 82

The jurors board the bus. The Bailiff checks them in.

83 **INT. COUNTY BUS - FREEWAY - DAY** 83

Moving around the bus we see: Keiko chatting with Nellie; Eli sketching; Vince and Courtney sitting next to each other.

Irene twirling her hair. Brody takes a nap. And Justin looks out the window, unaware Marcus is watching him.

84 **INT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - DAY** 84

The jury does a walk-through, taking in the atmosphere.

They pass the high-top table where James and Kendall sat.

Brody picks up a salt shaker, inspects it for some unknown reason (he's baked.)

BAILIFF

Look but don't touch.

He puts it back. Justin takes in the place. He looks at the bar, then to the booth he was sitting at on October 25.

85 **INT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT** 85

His MEMORY of that night.

Sitting in that booth. Staring at the tumbler of bourbon before him. Eyes red, heart heavy. A shell of a man.

He reaches for the drink. Just feeling the glass in his hand sends a jolt through his system. He comes alive. The bourbon like a siren calling.

But then with whatever strength he has left, he pushes the glass AWAY. Stands. He needs to get out of here. NOW.

And does. He rushes past Sythe and Kendall as they yell at each other.

BACK TO SCENE

86 INT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - DAY

86

The jury finishes their "tour" of Rowdy's.

BAILIFF

Ok, we all done in here?

DENICE

Everyone good?

Denice leads the jury outside. The **BARTENDER** (who testified at trial) stacks glasses for the evening shift. She catches Justin's eye as he passes by, shoots him a nod of recognition.

Justin nods back at her to be polite. Which Marcus notices.

As does Faith, who hangs back with Resnick and the Bailiff, monitoring things from afar. But doesn't think much of it.

87 EXT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - DAY

87

The jurors walk around the outside of the bar, surveying the crime scene.

DENICE

(under her breath)

That's where Sythe and Kendall fought.

Justin takes it in, looking past the patio to the lot where his 4Runner was parked on October 25th.

88 INT/EXT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY / JUSTIN'S 4RUNNER - NIGHT

88

Justin sitting in the driver's seat. He tries to put the key in the ignition, but his hand trembles so hard he drops it.

He reaches down to pick it up. Sits back upright and catches his reflection in the rearview mirror. Sees the hurt in his own eyes.

In the safety of his car now, he lets his emotions go. He POUNDS the steering wheel in frustration, anger and pain.

Outside, RAIN comes down. Justin takes a deep breath, steels himself and starts the car.

EXT. ROWDY'S HIDEAWAY - DAY

Justin steadies himself as Denice leads the jury to the road.

Faith, Resnick and Sythe with Sheriff's deputies stay behind as the jury moves ahead.

DENICE

... She flips him off and leaves.

COURTNEY

And then he follows her.

EXT. OLD QUARRY ROAD - CRIME SCENE - DAY

The jury stands beneath the "DEER X-ING" sign.

DENICE

(to herself)

This is where it happened.

EXT. OLD QUARRY ROAD - NIGHT

Justin at the wheel of the 4Runner, exits Rowdy's parking lot onto Old Quarry Road.

Justin sees a car pull in front of him at Mile Marker 217.

EXT. OLD QUARRY ROAD - CRIME SCENE - DAY

Justin SWEATS. Pulse racing. He turns his AA coin over in his hand, trying to stay focused. Marcus comes over to him.

MARCUS

You okay?

JUSTIN

Yeah, fine.

Justin looks at the home across Old Quarry Road.

MARCUS

Nah, man. You haven't been "fine" since the start. I think you've been playing us this whole time.

JUSTIN

I don't know what you mean.

Marcus gets next to Justin, so he can speak under his breath without attracting too much attention.

MARCUS

The day you got on the jury, you're puking in the bathroom. All that stuff with the flower-man-cop and those papers. You claim to be the voice of reason, but you're really just telling us what we wanna hear.

CLINK! Justin's coin slips out of his hand and hits the gravel. Marcus locks in on it as Justin picks it back up.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I saw the Bartender back there look at you. She knows you. I don't know your game, man. But I see you.

Justin looks away. Sees Yolanda survey the side of the road, testing her footing. Keiko counts her steps to end of bridge.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Do I know exactly what happened that night? No. But neither do you. You can't be any more sure that James Sythe got in his car and drove home than I'm sure he picked up one of these rocks, smashed that poor girl's head in and dumped her body in the creek.

He picks up a large rock and tosses it over the edge. Watches it drop into the creek.

It hits the water with a SPLASH. Its ripples MORPHING into Kendall Carter's face in Justin's mind.

It shocks his system and he goes limp -- like he's out of body -- and nearly TOPPLES over the edge himself, only for Marcus to GRAB HIM by the jacket to pull him back.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Jesus, man. You nearly slipped.

JUSTIN

Maybe the Hiker was right.

MARCUS

Maybe. Doesn't matter, though.

He looks at Sythe, standing off aways. Staring into the horizon.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

That piece of shit left her there that night. To die alone, in a ditch. Her death's on him. Which is why I will not acquit James Sythe. Ever.

ON JUSTIN --

His mind races. What to do? How can I get out of this?

MARCUS (CONT'D)

This trial only ends two ways: with a conviction or a hung jury.

Justin turns as Denice and the rest of the jurors approach.

DENICE

Are you okay?

JUSTIN

Yeah. Fine. Thanks.

DENICE

Good. Everyone ready to head back?

Nods and murmurs of "yes." Denice motions to the Bailiff, who nods and radios it in.

Beside her, Faith scans the home across Old Quarry Road. Sees the drapes move in the window of the ELDERLY MAN'S HOME.

Sythe is put into an unmarked car. He looks at the jury, stoic, holding it in. Clearly being back here is emotional for him.

And for them. They return his look as the car door shuts behind him. The cruiser drives off and flips a U-turn.

Justin shudders. His mind FLASHING TO --

Where we left him last on October 25th, turning out of Rowdy's parking lot onto Old Quarry... only to PUMP THE BRAKES as a car up ahead flips a U-TURN in front of him.

And it passes the other way, Justin sees James Sythe behind the wheel.

Justin keeps driving, past Mile Marker 217. The rain's DUMPING now so he cranks the windshield wipers to maximum speed, but it's still a fight to see anything until the DEER X-ING sign comes into view and --

PING!

Justin gets a TEXT... reaches for his cell... reads the text from "ALLY" --

You ok?

WHAM!!! BOOM!!! CRACK!!!

It happens that fast.

94

EXT. OLD QUARRY ROAD - CRIME SCENE - DAY

94

Justin, shaken, watches the sheriff's cruiser drive away.

95

INT. ELDERLY MAN'S TRAILER - DAY

95

The Elderly Man refills Faith's cup of tea. They sit in his living room, discussing his testimony.

ELDERLY MAN

... It's like I said at the trial. The police came over and showed me a picture. Asked if he was the man I saw that night.

FAITH

Did they show you any other pictures?

ELDERLY MAN

Oh no, they knew it was him. They just wanted me to confirm it.

FAITH

Right.

ELDERLY MAN

I was glad to help. Everyone was so grateful. And if I do say, it felt pretty good. To be needed again.

FAITH

I'm sure it did.

The judgement in her voice is not lost on him.

ELDERLY MAN

Right. Well, if there's anything else I can do, just give a holler. Tea's always hot.

Faith nods, stands up. Interview over.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)

James Sythe did kill that girl, right?

They share a look. Faith leaves.

96

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - DAY

96

Judge Stewart enters. The Bailiff stands to announce her.

Everyone in the courtroom rises. Resnick and Sythe on the defense side. Resnick looks to the prosecution's table.

Faith's ASSOCIATES are seated but her lead counsel's chair is EMPTY.

But then, in the nick of time she enters the courtroom and slides into her seat, out of breath. Smooths out her blouse.

To her right, THE JURY. We move across their faces -- stoic, nervous, antsy, scared -- until we arrive at one EMPTY SEAT.

97

EXT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE - DAY

97

Justin sprints from the 4Runner, into the hospital lobby.

98

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - DAY

98

Judge Stewart looks to the foreperson.

THE JUDGE

Madame foreperson, has the jury reached a verdict?

DENICE

Yes, your honor.

THE JUDGE

And is your verdict unanimous?

DENICE

Yes.

98 CONTINUED:

98

Denice hands the VERDICT to The Bailiff, who gives it to the Judge.

She opens it.

Reads it silently. Her face giving nothing away.

99 INT. HOSPITAL - MAIN FLOOR- DAY

99

Justin runs down the hall.

100 INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - DAY

100

Faith TENSES UP. Resnick, too.

The JUDGE reads the verdict aloud.

THE JUDGE

In the matter of State V. James
Michael Sythe, Case No. CR2021-
1715532, Count 1, Malice Murder

101 INT. HOSPITAL - MATERNITY FLOOR - DAY

101

Justin talks to the Nurse at the check-in desk.

She motions down the hall and around the corner.

102 INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - DAY

102

The Judge continues reading the verdict. The music drops out just long enough to hear:

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

"We the jury find James Michael
Sythe GUILTY of Malice Murder."
Dated and signed this day, Denice
Aldworth, foreperson.

Sythe goes numb, legs buckling. Resnick has to hold him up.

Faith's Associates pump their fists under the table, trying to celebrate inconspicuously. She just sits there, unsure how to feel.

Judge Stewart turns to Denice in the jury box.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

Madame Foreperson, to the best of
your knowledge, was that your
verdict in the jury room, was it
freely and voluntarily given, and is
it still your verdict?

102 CONTINUED:

DENICE

Yes, Your Honor.

THE JUDGE

Very well. I hereby remand the defendant, James Michael Sythe, to the custody of the state.

(to the JURY)

Thank you for your service; it is now concluded.

(to all)

This court is now adjourned.

The Bailiff leads Sythe away in handcuffs. Resnick looks like he might be sick. Faith regards this.

103 INT. HOSPITAL - MATERNITY ROOM - DAY 103

Allison gives birth. The DOCTOR holds up a crying **BABY GIRL**.

104 INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - DAY 104

Faith stares straight ahead, at the State Seal behind the Judge's bench. She traces the letters with her eyes.

"IN GOD WE TRUST"

105 INT. HOSPITAL - MATERNITY ROOM - DAY 105

Justin approaches Allison. She looks at him, exhausted.

He squeezes her hand -- everything's all right. She sighs, relieved. Hands him the baby. He rocks her in his arms.

MUSIC ends as we FADE TO:

106 INT/EXT. KEMP HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 106

Justin walks Larry to the door after his meet-the-baby visit.

JUSTIN

Thanks for dropping by. And for the gift.

LARRY

Thirty-six bucks for a tiny rubber giraffe. But my daughter swore by it when my grandkids were teething.

JUSTIN

I'll keep you posted.

They're in the doorway now. Larry's about to go but feels compelled to ask --

LARRY
You doing all right?

JUSTIN
What do you think?

Clearly it's weighing on Justin.

LARRY
You're a father now. Let it go.

Larry pats Justin on the shoulder and walks to his car.

OFF Justin, standing on his front steps, processing what Larry just said.

107 **INT. KEMP HOUSE - NURSERY - NIGHT**

107

Justin passed out in nursery. Everything peaceful until he stirs and wakes up in a cold sweat.

Hears POLICE SIRENS in the distance.

He checks to see that the Baby's okay. Miraculously, she's sleeping through the noise, which is getting LOUDER. The sirens closing in.

Red and blue lights whirl from the window, bearing down. Approaching fast. Justin bracing himself for the worst but --

WHOOOOOOOSH!!!

They pass right by. False alarm. But Justin's frazzled.

JUSTIN
Jesus.

108 **INT. KEMP HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING**

108

Justin enters room checks his watch as Allison squeezes the rubber giraffe for the baby.

ALLISON
What time does it start?

JUSTIN
Soon. I should probably head out.

ALLISON
You sure you want to go?

Allison sees the pain on his face. She picks up the baby and goes to Justin with all the compassion she can muster.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
He wasn't a good guy.
(pleading almost)
It's not your fault.

Justin bites his lip. Searches for how to put this.

JUSTIN
I didn't stand up for him. I told
them what they needed to hear and
said he couldn't change.

He looks away in shame. Allison reaches for his hand but he
just needs to get out of there.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
I'll be back in a bit.

He grabs his coat and leaves. Allison watches him go. Hugs
their baby tight.

109 **INT. FAITH'S DEPUTY DA OFFICE - MORNING** 109

Faith's about to head out when her **ASSISTANT** comes in with a
bouquet of flowers and a card.

ASSISTANT
These came for you.

Faith nods thank you and sets down the flowers. Takes the
card and exits.

110 **INT. SUPERIOR COURT - COURT ROOM 304 - DAY** 110

Sythe's SENTENCING HEARING. Faith and Resnick (with Sythe)
sit at their tables. The Carter and Sythe families and
various court-watchers fill the gallery.

And Justin. He sits alone, somber. Watches the proceedings.

There's a lull in the action as the Judge has a side-bar
conversation with The Bailiff.

Faith uses this time-out to open the card that came with the
flowers. Personal stationery with a short, simple note.

**"Thank you for bringing us peace. And finding justice for
our daughter. Fondly, Linda Fraser and Terry Carter."**

Faith looks to the gallery at Kendall's parents, Linda Fraser
and Terry Carter. Then back at The Judge as court resumes.

THE JUDGE

The murder of Kendall Carter was violent and senseless. The Jury has found you guilty of that murder for which this court sentences you as follows. Count 1, Malice Murder, life in prison without the possibility of parole...

Cries and groans throughout the gallery. Sythe just sits there, a broken man. His eyes are blank. No fight left.

Faith glances at him, takes this in and immediately looks away --

Her eyes landing ON JUSTIN. His face pale and anguished.

This is a stronger reaction than she'd expect from a juror. From the only one who bothered to show up, no less.

And that's when something dawns on her. Holy. Shit.

She takes out her phone, holds it under the table and types "Allison Crewson husband" into the search engine.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

The defendant is remanded to the custody of the Department of Corrections to serve the rest of his life in prison. This court is now adjourned.

DEPUTIES take Sythe away. People funnel out of the courtroom.

Faith's eyes go wide as she gets her search results. She stands up and looks back to where Justin was sitting.

But he's already gone.

EXT. CITY HALL - COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Justin exits the courthouse and heads down the steps, his heart pounding.

He hears the clacking of heels moving in on him and picks up his pace. But the clacking just gets louder. Either he makes a break for it, or turns around to see who's following him.

He's turns around. It's Faith.

FAITH

Hi.

JUSTIN

Hey.

FAITH

We need to talk.

She motions to an L-shaped bench off to the side of the stairs. Above it, a magnificent statue of the blindfolded Lady Justice.

Justin follows her to the bench and they sit, face to face.

FAITH (CONT'D)

I'm surprised you came today.

JUSTIN

I wanted to see this through.

FAITH

Me, too.

JUSTIN

(tries to read her)
You look tired.

FAITH

Likewise.

JUSTIN

I have a new baby at home.

FAITH

That's not what I meant.

A wry smile from Justin. He puts things back on her.

JUSTIN

Congratulations on winning your election. I saw it in the paper.

FAITH

Thank you.

JUSTIN

Pretty big deal. Must've worked hard for it.

FAITH

I did.

JUSTIN

There's a lot of good you can do in that job I'd imagine.

FAITH

Sometimes. It's not as easy as you'd think, though.

JUSTIN

Never is.

FAITH

Sometimes you try and do the right thing, only to realize you got it all wrong.

JUSTIN

Yeah, that's tough.

FAITH

And when you figure things out, you realize the guy you're after isn't some psycho, he's not even really a criminal. He's just a regular guy.

JUSTIN

What if it was an accident?

FAITH

This is no accident.

JUSTIN

(shrugs, true)

It's impossible to prove either way. Just like him not realizing at the time that he hit someone with his car. You'd just have to trust him.

FAITH

And why would I do that?

JUSTIN

Because he's a good person. Caught in terrible circumstances.

FAITH

You're right, that is a tough one.

JUSTIN

He has a family depending on him. Just like you have people depending on you.

FAITH

What about justice?

JUSTIN

Sometimes the truth isn't justice.

FAITH

Do you really believe that?

JUSTIN

You keep going and the press will eat you alive; the case will follow you forever. In the meantime, some politician will take your job, a criminal goes back on the street and a good man and his family will be destroyed.

(a long look)

Where's the justice in that...?

She considers this as Justin stands up and walks away. His mind racing as he contemplates where things go from here.

112 INT. "LIFE ROSE ON" FLOWER SHOP - DAY

112

We see Harold cleaning up the main flower case.

HAROLD

Honey, I'm taking this to the back.
You go ahead and lock up.

Harold heads to the back.

The **CASHIER** (female, 60's) heads to put her closed sign up. Just then Justin comes running up and opens the door.

CASHIER

We are closing up for the day.

JUSTIN

Oh please, I need flowers.

CASHIER

What's the occasion?

JUSTIN

Sympathy flowers.

Our cashier can see in his eyes, he needs these flowers.

CASHIER

I am so sorry for your loss.

Justin sits with her words. He is sorry for it all.

JUSTIN

Me too.

She nods. Grabs some pre-wrapped flowers in butcher paper as Justin hands her some cash and starts to heads out.

112 CONTINUED:

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

The door chimes as he exits. Just as a light from the back turns off. HAROLD comes out keys in hand ready to close up.

HAROLD

Come on lets get out of here honey.
The kids are coming over tonight.

Harold grabs his wife's hand to head out for the evening.

113 **EXT. CREST LAWN MEMORIAL CEMETERY - DAY** 113

Justin lays the flowers down in front of a headstone. The inscription reads:

KENDALL ALICE CARTER**April 6, 1999 - October 25, 2021****"OUR DAUGHTER"**

He bows his head. Closes his eyes. Says a silent prayer.

114 **EXT. CREST LAWN MEMORIAL CEMETERY - DAY** 114

Justin walks past a **GROUNDSKEEPER** raking the leaves on his way to the parking lot.

GROUNDSKEEPER

Looks like it's gonna rain.

He looks up at the sky. Then back at The Groundskeeper.

JUSTIN

I think the storm has passed.

And with that rain will come Justin's proverbial baptism. His new life. He hopes.

He walks away as dark clouds move in on the horizon.

115 **EXT. CITY HALL - PARKING LOT - MORNING** 115

Faith parks. The SIGN before it reads:

RESERVED - F. KILLEBREW**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

She shuts the engine off. Checks herself out in the mirror.

115 CONTINUED:

She takes a deep breath, psyching herself up for her first day in her new role. Opens her car door as we CUT TO:

116 **INT. FAITH'S FANCY NEW D.A. OFFICE - DAY** 116

Boxes and file crates everywhere. Faith at her desk, staring into nothing. Thinking.

She's so lost in thought she doesn't notice RESNICK enter. He hands her a PLANT.

RESNICK
For the new digs.

FAITH
Thanks.

She sets it down as he looks around the office.

RESNICK
Well, you did it.
(a well-placed
arrow)
Hope it was worth it.

This hangs. He turns to go.

RESNICK (CONT'D)
Ale House later. You're buying.

He leaves. Faith sits, weighed down by the burden of her conscience.

117 **EXT. KEMP HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - AFTERNOON** 117

Drop down from a cloudless, vibrant Autumn sky onto Justin and Allison's home.

118 **INT. KEMP HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON** 118

The sound of the front door closing precedes Justin entering the living room where Allison and the Baby lie on a blanket.

JUSTIN
And the 4Runner is officially sold.

He holds up a CHECK. Allison smiles, motions to him.

ALLISON
Get over here. We just started.

JUSTIN
Yes, Ma'am. I love me some "tummy-time."

He lies down beside Allison, with the Baby between them.

Allison shakes a rattle to get the Baby's attention.

ALLISON

I think she has my eyes.

JUSTIN

Really? I think she has mine.

ALLISON

She has your elbows.

He laughs. Leans over so he can see the Baby's face.

JUSTIN

My mouth! She has my mouth.

ALLISON

Let's hope not.

They're both laughing now. Basking in this moment. The three of them, lying on the floor, together. A family.

Justin leans over and gives Allison a kiss. Lifts the Baby up and gives her one, too.

JUSTIN

My girls.

It's perfect. His heart is full. Of happiness. And gratitude. He could stay like this forever, except --

They're interrupted by a loud KNOCK at the door.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

Justin hops to his feet and goes to the front door. He unbolts the deadlock.

He takes a moment to compose himself. Looks back one more time at his wife and child. And then he turns the handle, pulling open the door to reveal FAITH there.

She looks at him. He looks at her. Her glance is unwavering but his eyes give her nothing. There's a long silence between them, as they prepare to cross the point of no return and we --

BLACKOUT:

THE END