

ESQ.

Original Teleplay

by

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TEASER

Fade In:

1 INT. PRISON CELL -- DAY

1

A prison cell crammed with LAW BOOKS. JOHN T. ("Johnny") GILES (29), hard and lean with bright, intelligent eyes, a TATTOO peeking out beneath a rolled up shirt sleeve, sits on his bunk with a freshly-opened ENVELOPE. Stares at the address: John T. Giles, CDC#F77077, FSP, Represa, CA 95671 and the return address: GNL Labs, 100 Chestnut Street, Oakland, CA 94607. RANDALL, an inmate, stops at the door.

RANDALL

Hey, Esquire. You look at my case?

Johnny glances up at a large, frightening man beast.

JOHNNY

I looked at your case before.

RANDALL

But, Esquire. Johnny, sir, it's not right. I don't belong in here.

JOHNNY

You know why prisons are the safest places in the world, Randall?

RANDALL

Yeah, yeah. I know. 'Cause they filled with innocent people. But, that's not me. I got a case.

Johnny returns to his envelope, reaches in.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Esquire. You listening to me?

Johnny removes a single SHEET. Unfolds it. After a passing shadow of reaction, he re-folds it, takes down a LAW BOOK, places the sheet between the pages and the book back on its shelf. He stands, grabs a legal pad.

JOHNNY

The only injustice in your case is that you might get out one day.

RANDALL

Hey, you want me to bust you up?

Randall is significantly larger than Johnny, but Johnny doesn't flinch. Stops at his open door, fronts Randall.

JOHNNY

If you could, you would. Get out of the way. It's time for court.

Randall debates, moves aside. Johnny strides off.

2 EXT. PRISON YARD -- DAY

2

Prison Court in session. Sitting on a TABLE, an inmate JUDGE, another as BAILIFF. Johnny stands with his client, JONAS FREED and another inmate, TERRELL PRYOR, their opponent.

JUDGE

Jonas Freed and Terrell Pryor. This is about a wager on a ball game. Pig Eye says it was a bet and Terrell didn't pay up. Okay, Esquire, shoot.

JOHNNY

Your Honor, this case is over a carton of cigs that Terrell owes Pig Eye. Straight up bet on a ball game. Terrell's team lost. End of story.

JUDGE

Pig Eye, what's your side?

TERRELL

We talked about maybe putting up a carton, but we never made no bet. I couldn't get points so I didn't bet.

JUDGE

Esquire?

JOHNNY

(nods to an inmate)
Plaintiff calls Connor Janick.

JUDGE

Okay. You know the rules, CJ?

CONNOR

Yep. Tell the truth or somebody messes up my pretty face.

JUDGE

That's right. Except the pretty part.

TERRELL

Hey, wait now. Whaz up with this? This ain't right...

JUDGE

You shut up unless I ask you something. That's the rules.

The bailiff moves a half step toward Terrell. Enough said.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

What do you say, CJ?

CONNOR

I was in the back. It was a straight up bet, one carton, winner's choice. Johnny asked if anybody heard or saw anything and I respect the man, you know. I said yeah, I did. That's it.

JUDGE

Any doubt about it?

CONNOR

Nope. I heard what I heard.

The judge turns and stares at Terrell. Who sweats, hard.

JUDGE

This court is for disputes, to keep a little peace. A dispute is where there's a disagreement and you need somebody to figure it out. Looks to me like this is somebody thinking they can get away with something.

TERRELL

Wait... see, it's like this...

JUDGE

Careful. You're about to call two men liars if you keep going.

Terrell stops digging the hole - shuts up.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

(to his bailiff)

Put it in the book. One carton of cigs, Pig Eye's choice of brand. Additional to be determined.

TERRELL

Hey, no, man, come on, I'll pay the cigs, I'll give him two cartons.

JUDGE

Esquire?

JOHNNY

System runs on truth, judge. If you're willing to lie, screws things up.

JUDGE

The court agrees. Put it in the book. Next case.

JOHNNY

Your honor, one more thing, if it please the court.

JUDGE

What you got, Esquire?

JOHNNY

This is my last case before this honorable kangaroo court. I'm leaving the Folsom State Spa & Health Club.

Johnny suppresses a grin as the assembled crowd buzzes.

JUDGE

You transferred, Esquire?

JOHNNY

No, your Honor.

JUDGE

You got your letter? From the lab?

JOHNNY

Not my DNA. If it please the court, I'm outta here.

JUDGE

Whoa, that does please the court. Congratulations, Esquire. I'll miss having a real lawyer around, but congratulations. Court's in recess.

Johnny finally cracks what might, for him, pass as a smile, as the others slap him on the back and Terrell slinks away.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. LAW FIRM OFFICE -- DAY

3

HARRISON R. ("HAL") BRAUN (55), Managing Partner, sits across his polished desk from a nervous lawyer, DONALD.

HAL

The Pro Bono unit is training for new associates, Donald. That's all. If we get PR value, fine. Can't hurt when they hand out the plaques.

DONALD

Right. Of course.

HAL

Bad PR is not acceptable. Innocent client serves 7 years? Bad PR.

DONALD

The decision didn't cite ineffective assistance of counsel, it was...

HAL

I can read, Donald. What's written and what's not written.

DONALD

I'm just saying, that's all.

HAL

A soda can with DNA traces? Some fool drinking a soda while robbing a store? Someone not our client? Did you think I didn't get that?

DONALD

Our guy had the gun. His prints were on the can. The victim was pointing, calling his name as she died.

HAL

She knew him. He took the gun from the guy who shot her, picked the can up. Stupid. But, not guilty.

DONALD

Do you know what those tests cost? The evidence was overwhelming. He plead guilty, for God's sake!

HAL

Because you told him to. Guilty man goes free. Seven Years. Bad.

DONALD

We... okay, in a perfect world...

HAL

He got a law degree in prison. Now he thinks he's a lawyer, fine. Lucky for you. How much does he want?

DONALD

I don't know. I didn't ask him.

HAL

Jeezus, Donald. Okay, I'll handle it. Let's go see Johnny the jailhouse lawyer. I've got a lunch meeting.

4 INT. LAW FIRM CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

4

Johnny Giles, in his cheap suit and tie, across a conference table from Hal and Donald. Nothing cheap on their side.

HAL

No one disputes that you pled guilty to a crime you didn't commit. And I must say, personally, I admire your tenacity. We all do.

JOHNNY

Thanks. And thanks for not helping.

Donald can't help himself.

DONALD

There was no evidence to support the contention that anyone else drank...

JOHNNY

Not a contention; a fact.

DONALD

There was no corroboration of that 'fact' as you call it.

JOHNNY

It's not a fact because I call it. It's a fact because it's a fact.

Hal speaks, to get this back on track.

HAL

Mr. Giles, let's not re-try the trying of the case. You were done an injustice and, while we could dispute the firm's liability, we're not insensitive to the injury and our part in it, however peripheral.

JOHNNY

What's that mean? In English?

HAL

What's your number?

JOHNNY

My number?

HAL

Mr. Giles. I don't take you for stupid. How much do you want?

JOHNNY

Oh, my go away and die number. Sorry. I haven't danced in a while; I'm out of practice.

HAL

No problem. So, what is it?

JOHNNY

I don't have a number.

HAL

You want us to go first? Okay, our number is one dollar.

Johnny's impressed. They're good. Thus all the marble.

JOHNNY

I don't want your money.

HAL

No? What then, an apology? Apologize to the man, Donald.

JOHNNY

No, thanks. That's worth even less.

HAL

What then? I'm at a loss, I'm afraid.

JOHNNY

First, I need your firm to pay the fees for the Bar Exam next month.

Donald can't help himself, again.

DONALD

How can you take the Bar Exam? Your degree's from an internet law school.

JOHNNY

Taft, actually. Approved by the California Bar. I am fully authorized to sit for the Bar Exam.

HAL

You want us to cover the cost for the bar exam? Done.

JOHNNY

And, when I pass, I want a job.

HAL

A job? How can we help with that?

JOHNNY

You dudes are funny. I want a job here. As a lawyer. I don't mind taking your money, but I'd rather earn it.

HAL

Are you aware of the profile of the attorneys hired at Stone-Weber? The top 1% of the top law schools in the United States?

JOHNNY

I can handle it.

HAL

I'm sorry Mr. Giles. We're reasonable but that's not reasonable. File your lawsuit. Working here, in the unlikely event you might actually pass a bar exam? Not happening. Donald screwing up your case is not worth it. Sorry.

Johnny expected nothing less. But, he's not finished.

JOHNNY

I can understand that. I mean a job here is a plum. A coveted prize.

As he hauls a stack of file folders from his bag and drops them on the conference room table.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

But, they do add up.

HAL

And, that would be?

JOHNNY

Other cases handled by your Pro Bono Project. Supervised by Donald here.

DONALD

And I suppose all those are innocent fellows, just like yourself.

HAL

No idea. We're not talking innocence. We're talking gross incompetence. Corners cut. Leads not followed. And nothing done, like lab tests, that might cost the firm. Earning you the nickname "Branch Office" at the DA's office. They rolled you over like a two dollar hooker, excuse the image.

Donald erupts this time.

DONALD

If you think you can walk in here and throw around accusations and get something out of it, you're insane. You're not a criminal? Well, blackmail's a crime, mister.

Johnny removes a sheet from the first folder, reads.

JOHNNY

They were so anxious to get back to the marble palace and away from the unclean, we had a coffee pool, betting on the pleas we could get them to swallow. I never played. I didn't approve. Though it didn't stop me from laughing at them.

Slips the sheet back in the file.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

That's from an affidavit.

DONALD

From whom?

JOHNNY

Somebody with credibility.

HAL

What do you want Mr. Giles?

JOHNNY

I want to work for my supper. But, I want to eat well. I want a job. In the firm that sucked the worst when I needed it the most.

HAL

Can't do it.

Johnny's out of cards. Or is he.

JOHNNY

Wilson Praeger.

Hal is lost. Donald would crawl into a hole if he could.

HAL

Who? What now?

JOHNNY

I guess that note went missing from my file. You want to tell him, Donald?

Donald says nothing.

HAL

Get to the point.

JOHNNY

The old man who saw somebody else go in the store. Somebody he recognized but didn't know his name. That's what I told Donald here. He wrote it down. I watched him.

HAL

Donald? What's he talking about?

DONALD

A phantom witness. I never found any such person.

JOHNNY

Did you look? Nobody can remember seeing you out there, ever. Wilson sat there feeding pigeons almost every day. Not too hard to find.

Hal is a master manager, surgeon or assassin. Depends on who's asking. All he cares about is the firm. The right decision, for the firm. When he knows what that is, he does not hesitate. He rises, buttons his jacket.

HAL

Thank you for coming in, Mr. Giles. Stone-Weber deeply regrets the disservice done to you. We do not tolerate shoddy work in the service of our clients. If you will drop by tomorrow, we'll take care of your bar fees and show you around. I'll walk you out.

(to Donald)

Donald. You're fired.

He heads for the door, Johnny scrambling to follow. Stunned.

DONALD

What? What the hell...

HAL

We'll talk later.

Hal and Johnny walk out. Leaving Donald melting into a puddle.

5 INT. HAL BRAUN'S OFFICE -- MORNING

5

Hal at his desk, marking up a document. His phone buzzes. He keys the speaker. It's his assistant, MARTHA.

HAL

Yes, Martha.

MARTHA

He's on the list.

HAL

You're kidding. Are you sure?

MARTHA

John T. Giles. Yes, sir. He passed.

HAL

How? Uh, never mind.

MARTHA

Is he really coming to work here?

HAL

For now. I'll think of something. Find him a space and desk, will you?

MARTHA

Okay. I'll take care of it.

Hal keys the speaker off. That he did not see coming.

6 INT. MOBILE HOME -- NIGHT

6

Johnny sits on the sofa, nursing a cold beer, talking with his former prison buddy, CASEY STRONG (30's).

CASEY

How much you making again? I like hearing you say it.

JOHNNY

Hey, I told you. It's embarrassing.

CASEY

Not to me. Tell me again.

JOHNNY

Ten grand a month.

CASEY

And you can't find a place? Damn.

JOHNNY

There's this question, last known address. I've got a problem with my last known. They don't get the "I didn't do it" part.

CASEY

Don't they have to rent to you?

JOHNNY

I don't know. I'm checking on it. I'll get out of your hair soon, man.

CASEY

No, hey. I like having you around. I can't hang with ex-cons, which cuts down my pool of available buds. You're not an ex-con, technically. Perfect.

JOHNNY

My options are limited too, since I don't hang with low-lives. You never should have been there, Casey.

A light knock on the door. Casey rises, smiles.

CASEY

Right on time.

JOHNNY

What? Pizza?

CASEY

Call it a welcome back to the world present. And, I thought maybe you needed a little practice in a certain area, get your mojo back.

Casey opens the door to reveal two quite attractive, nicely dressed young women. Attractive, but still hookers.

JOHNNY

I never had any mojo. Oh, dude. You didn't do this.

CASEY

Come on in, ladies. I hope you like beer, vodka and handsome men.

GIRL ONE

You better have a lot of each, considering the neighborhood.

CASEY

Oh, I do, I do. This is my buddy. He's a hot shot lawyer downtown. We're celebrating his release from prison. An actual innocent man. I'll bet you never met one of those.

GIRL TWO

Oh, they've all done something.
(eyeing Johnny)
Well, if the vodka's as fine as the innocent man, we're going to have some fun. I'll take that one.

7 INT. JOHNNY'S OFFICE -- MORNING

7

6:00 a.m. at Stone-Weber. SOLOMON ("SAUL") CLARKE (62) passes an open door. Looks in. Finds Johnny standing at the window.

SAUL

And, you would be?

JOHNNY

(startled, spinning)
Uh, Johnny... Johnny Giles.

SAUL

Ah, the convict lawyer.

JOHNNY

Former convict. And lawyer.

SAUL

Not a criticism. Some of my closest friends are criminals, just haven't been caught yet. Office okay? We weren't expecting you to pass.

Johnny bites his tongue. No point in stirring things up.

JOHNNY

It's great. I was just... I've never been this high up before.

SAUL

It's not as high as it seems. I'm Solomon Clarke - Saul. I run the litigation section at Stone Weber.

JOHNNY

Nice to meet you, sir.

SAUL

Never "sir" another lawyer, regardless of age. We are all equal in the law.

JOHNNY

Doesn't seem like it.

SAUL

You're right. It's a fiction. Just do it. Where's your tie?

JOHNNY

I... spilled something on it.

SAUL

You don't have another one?

JOHNNY

Uh, I haven't gotten paid yet and...

SAUL

I'll get you an advance on your salary. Get another tie.

JOHNNY

Thank you. I will.

SAUL

By the way, if I were you, I'd have taken the cash. Good day, Mr. Giles.

And he's out. A hell of a welcome.

8 INT. BAR -- EVENING

8

Pro-Bono Project associates, MADISON BARNES (30), RHONA CARR (26), NATE GROSSMAN (32) and Johnny, along with the unofficial new supervisor, BRADLEY CORBIN (29) are gathered in a young professional bar. Madison sits with Rhona, Johnny with Nate.

BRADLEY

The monthly meeting of the Pro Bono Project is hereby called to order. Any new or old business? Great. Adjourned. Glad you could join us, John. As you can see, our meetings are fairly informal.

JOHNNY

So, I see.

BRADLEY

Pretty solid group. Nate there, for example, is the smartest person in the world. He knows everything. Literally.

NATE

I don't know everything.
(to Johnny)
Brad and hyperbole are first cousins.

Johnny nods. Silence has served him well so far.

BRADLEY

When was the Treaty of 1812 signed?

NATE

It was The War of 1812.

BRADLEY

Good. Who's buried in Grant's Tomb?

Madison to the rescue.

MADISON

Hey, handsome. Come here.

Bradley pretends not to hear, then a double take.

BRADLEY

Oh, wait, were you talking to me?
The Frozen Mackerel, Madison Barnes wants me to "come here"?

RHONA

Bradley, can you just shut up? You're better looking with your mouth closed.

BRADLEY

And you're really beautiful with your mouth, uh... not closed.

Daggers from both women. Then back to themselves.

MADISON

Why's your boyfriend like that?

RHONA

He's acting out. He thinks it's cute. It's no secret. He tells everybody, you're his as soon as you thaw out.

MADISON

He's just messing with your head.

RHONA

That fine. It's the other parts he messes with that get me in trouble.

Out of the blue, Nate speaks.

NATE

December 24, 1814. The Treaty of Ghent, now known as Belgium. Could be called the "never mind" treaty because it essentially said forget we had a war. We gave back Ontario and they gave back areas on Lake Superior and Lake Michigan, part of Maine and a bit on the West Coast. Barely a war, The War of 1812. Not comforting to those who died in it, especially at the Battle of New Orleans, which was fought after the treaty was signed. No Internet. No cell phones. Too bad for them.

Everyone is stunned, as usual. Bradley heads for the girls, having been more or less body slammed by Nate's brain.

JOHNNY

I wonder why Christmas Eve.

NATE

What?

JOHNNY

December 24th. Just wondering.

Nate is puzzled, and impressed. Hadn't thought of that.

NATE

I don't know. I'll check it out.

JOHNNY

So, what's up over there?

Nodding toward the other table. Nate cuts a quick peek. Bradley sat next to Madison. Rhona frowns. He basks in it.

NATE

First, Rhona Carr. Bradley's lady. J.D. and MBA. Very smart.

JOHNNY

Cute.

NATE

Very cute. Into numbers. A sexy calculator with nice buttons.

JOHNNY

You animal.

NATE

Next, Madison Barnes. The prize. But, the game is rigged.

JOHNNY

How's that?

NATE

The carnival? The little milk bottles? Direct hit, nothing. Ask Bradley.

JOHNNY

Maybe everybody's not as in love with Bradley as Bradley is.

NATE

Doesn't matter. It's Fort Madison. And the drawbridge is up 24-7.

JOHNNY

What's his problem anyway?

NATE

It's the burden of being too perfect.

JOHNNY

Doubtful.

NATE

His dad was an Astronaut. Fighter pilot, one of those guys. Killed in training. I think Bradley thinks winning at everything will bring dad back. That's my ten cent diagnosis.

JOHNNY

Okay. I take it back. Half, anyway.

Nate grins. These two are bonding fast.

NATE

Me next. I'm mister M&A, Mergers & Acquisitions. Consolidation, Buy-outs, restructuring, you name it.

JOHNNY

But, you're in Pro Bono, year two?

NATE

Another year is good for me. I'm afraid of my own shadow in court. Not outside. Stone-Weber is smart. Everybody tries cases for a year. Then you go do your whatever.

JOHNNY

Does Madison have a whatever?

NATE

I'm sure she does. But it's got a big padlock on it.

JOHNNY

Uh, I meant specialty.

NATE

I'm sure you didn't. First in her class at Princeton, First at Harvard Law. Her "whatever" is Litigation. Smart. Tough. Fairly attractive.

JOHNNY

If you're into gorgeous.

NATE

If you are. And aren't a nerd.

JOHNNY

You straight or gay?

NATE

Wow. Aren't we direct?

JOHNNY

Habit, from the joint. Get to the point, before the point gets you.

NATE

Straight. Nerdy girls with big brains can be shockingly filthy.

Madison is heading out. Johnny stands but she's past him without breaking stride. His words bounce off her shoulder.

JOHNNY

Good night.

MADISON

Night all.

As in not you, individually. Johnny watches her. Bradley watches Johnny. Rhona watches Bradley.

BRADLEY

Forget it, John. Not happening.

JOHNNY

Yeah. That's too bad, dude. Maybe I'll have better luck.

Bradley's smile goes hard. Alpha Male reaction. Johnny just smiles. Satisfied with himself. Good one, Johnny.

ACT TWO

9 INT. SAUL CLARKE'S OFFICE -- MORNING

9

Saul behind his desk, studying a document. Johnny knocks.

SAUL

Enter.

JOHNNY

They said you wanted to see me.

Saul looks him over. Same cheap suit. Different tie.

SAUL

Nice tie. That your only suit?

JOHNNY

Yes, sir.

Not a great answer but not that important, at the moment.

SAUL

I'm Saul Clarke. Remember me?

JOHNNY

Born in Brooklyn. Second in your class at Fordham Law. Clerked for Judge Rodman, 2nd Circuit. Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime. Worked on the Gambino cases. Then private practice, white collar crime and civil litigation. Latham & Watkins in New York, then here, Stone-Weber.

SAUL

That isn't all on the web site.

JOHNNY

No, sir. It's not.

Saul observes Johnny with more interest, behind a poker face.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

I mean, no, Saul, it's not.

SAUL

You're assigned to the Pro Bono Project. So, you report to me, indirectly. As long as you're here.

JOHNNY

What's up with this Pro Bono Project?

HAL

Every new associate does a year. Stone-Weber believes, if you've never been in a courtroom, you're not a real lawyer. And, it can affect your handling of matters, regardless of your specialty. Because the courtroom is the place of final resolution, when all else fails. It's all litigation, like your case was.

JOHNNY

Where inexperienced lawyers practice on unimportant clients, like me.

SAUL

You went from unimportant client to unimportant associate. You're moving up. I wouldn't complain.

JOHNNY

I'm only here because I complained. Okay, so I'm in the Pro Bono Project?

SAUL

It's a staff designation. You don't have your own floor, or blazers or secret handshakes.

JOHNNY

That's fine. I don't even have a parking space.

SAUL

Boy, they really don't like you.

JOHNNY

That's okay. I don't have a car.

SAUL

Are you a smart ass, Johnny Giles?

JOHNNY

Probably.

SAUL

Good. It might help. I don't run the group day-to-day. Brad Corbin keeps an eye on it for me, now that we finally got rid of Donald.

JOHNNY

We met already.

SAUL
Okay. Good luck then.

With what? The job or Bradley?

JOHNNY
Thanks.

SAUL
Though luck is seriously overrated.
Thanks for stopping by.

Saul's back to work. Meeting over.

10 INT. HAL BRAUN'S OFFICE -- DAY

10

Saul stands in Hal's office. Looking out the window.

HAL
Lunch? On you?

SAUL
Can't. I've got Hardy Grossbart and
his niece at 2:00.

HAL
As a favor.

SAUL
We rep Grandma Grossbart, for matters
related to her estate.

HAL
Which is sizable.

SAUL
Which is irrelevant. The client's
needs are our most pressing concern.

HAL
You've read our brochure.

SAUL
Yeah. Great stuff. Real inspiring.

Hal, pleased with his joke, heads for the door.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Maybe I'll give it to Giles.

Hal stops, turns back. Question on his face.

SAUL (CONT'D)

He can't screw up if we don't give him any cases.

HAL

Can he screw this up?

SAUL

Probably not. But he can lose. It's a slam dunk for the State.

HAL

You got a soft spot for Jailhouse Johnny, Saul? The pound puppy is a better dog syndrome?

SAUL

I don't have a dog. I wouldn't know.

HAL

Why don't they run cow ponies in the Kentucky Derby, Saul?

SAUL

They're too busy working?

HAL

You're too much for me. Do whatever you think. Just not in my zip code.

They share a laugh as Saul exits.

11 INT. LAW FIRM CONFERENCE ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

11

Saul with Bradley, Rhona and Johnny, a very cute COURTNEY GROSSBART (22), Courtney's lawyer uncle, HARDY GROSSBART (50's), and PHILIP GROSSBART (25), Courtney's brother.

SAUL

The DA has no interest in seeing you in jail, Ms. Grossbart.

COURTNEY

I don't like jail. I've been there.

PHILIP

Just listen to the man, Court.

COURTNEY

Why can't you do it, uncle Hardy?

HARDY

I'm an entertainment lawyer.

COURTNEY

Exactly. Clubs? Entertainers? Cocaine?

HARDY

Funny. Look, these folks are the best. Let's just listen. Okay?

COURTNEY

Fine. Am I paying all these people?

SAUL

You're not paying any of these people, Ms. Grossbart.

COURTNEY

I don't know who Ms. Grossbart is. Could you just call me Courtney?

SAUL

Sure, Courtney. This is a consultation. If we take your case, we'll work out a fee. And later we'll cut it in half because Hardy will beat us until we do. Your uncle is very good at what he does. He's just not a litigator. We are. Okay?

COURTNEY

Okay. I'm just nervous. I don't know how this happened. I'm coming off like a jerk. Sorry.

PHILIP

You are a jerk. Own it.

HARDY

Okay, okay. Enough. Go ahead, Saul.

Johnny's quiet. Watching. Something about this girl. Aside from being hot as holy hell. Something else. Deeper.

COURTNEY

I'm sorry, Mr. Clarke. Philip's acting out because I'm smarter and cuter than him. Please, you were saying?

PHILIP

Not close, on either count.

SAUL

I understand you're at USC?

COURTNEY

Graduate school, yes.

SAUL
Studying, what?

COURTNEY
I graduated summa cum laude with
dual majors, French and Psychology.
I'm taking my masters in Psych
Science. Thus my smarter comment.
The cuter part is debatable I suppose.

Philip starts to start again but Saul cuts him off.

SAUL
You're certainly cute. And smart.
But, in this case, maybe not.

COURTNEY
True.

SAUL
To review, a security employee at
the club called "The Y" took
Courtney's bag to security because
she was dancing and the bag was
unguarded. In doing so, he saw a
glass vial in Courtney's open bag.
The club's on a drugs watch list so
they're very sensitive. He calls an
off-duty officer. Substance seized,
field test is positive for cocaine.
We've opened communication on a plea.
Any questions? Comments?

PHILIP
What about the usual? Rehab, a little
jail time, you know, like last time.

COURTNEY
What if it wasn't mine?

PHILIP
Yeah, right.

SAUL
For now, we start with what they can
prove. It was found in your bag.
Your memory of the evening is, at
best, cloudy. And possession doesn't
require special intent. Possession
presumes intent to possess.

COURTNEY
Okay. What do I do? They gave me a
ticket. A summons.

SAUL

You'll make a brief appearance. Your lead lawyer will be John Giles. John?

The associates all stifle a huge helping of shock. Especially Bradley. He had no hint of this. Nobody did.

JOHNNY

Uh, hi, yes. Hello, Courtney.

COURTNEY

You're my lawyer?

JOHNNY

Apparently. Yes.

SAUL

Backed up by our entire litigation team, if he needs anything.

HARDY

What's your background, John?

COURTNEY

I know you.

Time stops. What?

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

You're that guy. On Crime Stories. I love that show. You're the guy, aren't you? Who got a law degree in prison, did his own appeal and won his case?

JOHNNY

Uh. Yes. That would be me.

COURTNEY

I thought that was amazing.

HARDY

Wait. You just, how long ago did you get out of... prison? Really, Saul?

JOHNNY

My conviction was vacated, actually.

SAUL

John's story is quite remarkable, Hardy. He's a very bright...

COURTNEY

I'll take him.

PHILIP

What?

COURTNEY

I want him. To be my lawyer.

HARDY

Listen, Court, maybe we should...

COURTNEY

I thought they were the best.

HARDY

They are.

COURTNEY

And they said he's the guy. So, I trust their judgment. I'll take him.

Philip and Hardy both are squirming. But, what to do.

SAUL

As I said, John will oversee the case. The firm will handle her case as a group. And, to be honest, it's not a complex matter, unfortunately.

COURTNEY

So, John, what do you think?

Speaking of being put on the spot. Okay. Say what you think.

JOHNNY

Was the coke yours?

COURTNEY

I don't know. Maybe.

PHILIP

Like I said. A few days in the clink, then off to rehab. Right John?

Nobody says anything to help. Fine. Johnny can play.

JOHNNY

As Saul says, this is a consultation. Once we get into it, we'll have a better basis for a decision. We don't need to work out a plea with ourselves. We do that with the DA.

PHILIP

Well, yah, I'm just saying.

JOHNNY

I'm sorry, but what's your interest in this, other than concern for your sister? Were you at the club?

COURTNEY

He was, but he was off somewhere, chasing some impossible tail, again.

PHILIP

I didn't see any of it. I'm here because they took her license.

HARDY

Okay. I have a meeting. I think we're good here. Can I drop you, Courtney?

COURTNEY

Sure. So, I have to go turn myself in and all that tomorrow.

SAUL

John will go with you.

COURTNEY

Okay. Fine. See you tomorrow, John. Nice to meet you.

Courtney is up, meeting Johnny half way, shakes hands. Firm.

JOHNNY

Likewise. See you tomorrow.

COURTNEY

Let's go, Uncle. I'll ride with you. Philip needs some quality alone time with his ego.

Philip smirks. Follows Hardy and Courtney out. Saul follows.

SAUL

Let me get your parking validated.

As Saul hits the door, he stops, barks out orders.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Talk to the DA, get me some options.

JOHNNY

We should interview the security guy. Check him out.

BRADLEY

We've got his statement.

Saul follows the clients to reception, leaving the group.

RHONA

You can go look for clues if you want. Why don't you let us handle this. We've done it before.

JOHNNY

It's my case. You heard him.

BRADLEY

Who knows what that was about. Don't worry. We'll save her from herself.

More words pointless, Johnny fumes. Strides out.

12 INT. JOHNNY'S OFFICE -- DAY

12

Johnny's making notes. Madison enters.

JOHNNY

Hey.

MADISON

Come on. I'm taking you shopping.

JOHNNY

What?

MADISON

Shopping. Buying stuff. In a store.

JOHNNY

Why?

MADISON

Because I've been asked to.

Johnny rises. But doesn't get it. Though going anywhere with Madison does not sound like a bad assignment.

JOHNNY

What are you talking about?

MADISON

Hal Braun? Managing Partner? We're to go buy you a suit, or two.

JOHNNY

I have a suit.

MADISON

Exhibit A. I rest my case.

JOHNNY

I think I'll pass. Thanks.

MADISON

I'll tell Hal. No problem.

JOHNNY

You people really think law is all about the clothes?

MADISON

Law is not about the clothes.

JOHNNY

Okay, I'm supposed to go buy clothes but it's not about clothes. Very logical. Why didn't I see that?

MADISON

You do enjoy the sound of your own voice, don't you? You can't go into court looking like Barney Fife.

JOHNNY

That's severe. Barney? Really?

MADISON

If you look successful, people assume you are successful. To be successful, clients must hire you. If they hire you, you must be good, or they would hire somebody else. So, it's not about the clothes. But it is.

JOHNNY

Got it. We dress up so we can trick people into hiring us.

MADISON

Fine. Wear your Jammies to court, and a sign that says I'm brilliant.

She's half way out the door.

JOHNNY

Hey, wait. Hold up.

She stops, but not for long.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Look, I don't expect you and them to see it that way. I get it.

Edging back into the room.

MADISON

Really. And what do you get?

JOHNNY

Hey, I went from foster care to prison. That's where I come from. Suits are for hustlers and pimps.

MADISON

You're wearing a suit. So, which one are you? Just because it looks cheap, you're above it all? Where do hustlers and pimps shop? We'll go there.

JOHNNY

Look, I'm just saying, things look different from my vantage point. I didn't get a set of Bimmer keys tossed at me when I was 16 and I didn't go to Harvard. Stone walls, yes. But, no ivy. So, I get it. That's all.

Madison should probably just leave but she's too pissed.

MADISON

I'm from Detroit, Michigan. Not Bloomfield Hills. Detroit. I went to public school. I went to college on financial aid I'm still paying off. Worked my way through law school. And busted my ass every step. And I bought this outfit with my own money. Which I made on my feet, not on my back. And I'm damned proud of it. So, no, you don't, at all, get it.

She spins and storms out. Any hope Johnny might have had with this woman just went up in smoke. Smoke blown with his own big mouth. And he knows it.

13 INT. TOWN CAR -- DAY

13

Courtney and Johnny, dressed in a new suit, shirt and tie, head to the jail for Courtney's processing.

COURTNEY

You look nice.

JOHNNY

It's all about the clothes, really.

COURTNEY

Nothing wrong with looking good.

Which Courtney does very well. Johnny's noticed.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

I don't like police stations.

JOHNNY

Try prison. Which you will if you keep this act up.

COURTNEY

I know. It's bad. I've been trying.

JOHNNY

Was that your coke in your bag?

COURTNEY

Like mine-mine? No. But, I run with a pretty crazy crowd. You never know. Depends on which bag I pick up. White powder, brown, red pills, blue, who knows. I do drugs. I need to stop. I get it. So, I don't know.

JOHNNY

You don't know? That's it?

COURTNEY

Well, why wouldn't it be? I like that lyric, by the way, white powder brown, red pills blue.... Did you know I write songs?

JOHNNY

You were high, no doubt.

COURTNEY

(laughing)

Uh, high is a gross understatement.

JOHNNY

The security guy said he didn't see anybody else around your bag.

COURTNEY

So, there you go.

JOHNNY

Okay. We're processing you and you're going home, right? Staying there?

COURTNEY

I'm going to class.

JOHNNY

How do you do it? School and the other stuff? Party time.

COURTNEY

I'm really, really smart. And really, really dumb, at the same time.

JOHNNY

A tune I know pretty well. Okay. I'll do what I can do.

The car makes a turn and approaches the police precinct.

COURTNEY

I'm not worried. I'll be fine, if my lawyer doesn't suck.

Courtney pokes him in the side, laughs, and grabs his arm.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

I can do a few days. Don't worry. If you can't get me off. Oops, from the case, I mean. Ha.

Obvious sex banter. The car stops and Johnny counts to two, opens the door. This female thing needs to get under control, somehow, soon. Or, he's going to do something truly stupid.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

14 INT. THE "Y" CLUB -- NIGHT

14

JOHNNY at "THE Y" - a thumping club. He approaches a large beef man with a coiled-wire ear-bud, STEVE KLEIN (20's).

JOHNNY

Hey, are you Steve? Steve Klein?

Klein continues to scan while dealing with Johnny.

STEVE

You the lawyer?

JOHNNY

Yeah. I represent Courtney Grossbart.

STEVE

I gave a statement.

JOHNNY

I wanted to ask you about that night, what you saw.

STEVE

I gave a statement. I took the bags to security. Saw the dope. Called the cop. Okay? Goodbye.

JOHNNY

You always take customer's bags without telling them?

STEVE

I'm working. You can talk to the manager or the lawyers. I'm going to have to ask you to move along.

Johnny moves in closer.

JOHNNY

Or what? Exactly?

STEVE

Or this, exactly.

Steve grabs Johnny by the front of his shirt and starts to spin him, to lock his arm behind him. But Johnny spins on his own, faster than expected, coming around with a closed fist blow to the side of Steve's neck. Steve staggers a step, raises an arm, but Johnny hits him again, fast, straight to his Adams' apple. He grabs his throat, gasping for air, fumbling for the panic button on his belt. Johnny catches

himself just as he's grabbed from behind by another bouncer and slammed into the wall.

15 LAW FIRM -- DAY

15

Johnny, with a scraped face, sits in his office with Nate.

NATE

He grabbed you first, technically.

JOHNNY

Technically.

NATE

They have cameras. He overreacted.

JOHNNY

But I didn't.

NATE

You want to argue the point? I fixed it. You're welcome.

JOHNNY

Something's not right about this.

NATE

Hey, new guy. There's cases and then there's cases.

JOHNNY

People in that section weren't dancing. He said he took the bag for safety because she was dancing.

NATE

Who knows where the guy stands every night. Besides, to win, you've got to get the coke out of her bag. Possession is possession. She possessed. Or, you're possessed over her. Or both.

JOHNNY

I gotta figure this out.

NATE

You gotta figure you out.

And Nate's out.

16 INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE -- DAY

16

Johnny sits across the desk from SIMONE TURNER, ADA.

SIMONE

You want to help me prove my case?

JOHNNY

I want to satisfy my curiosity.

SIMONE

About the molecular structure of cocaine? You didn't take chemistry?

JOHNNY

You can approve the lab.

SIMONE

We have a lab. It's called the State Crime Lab. They're excellent.

JOHNNY

I want the container analyzed. Not the coke.

SIMONE

To see if it's glass?

JOHNNY

You don't have to be this difficult.

SIMONE

You think this is difficult? Please. I tell you what, I'll sleep on it. Meanwhile, I suggest you folks at Stone-Weber get your act together.

JOHNNY

Meaning.

SIMONE

I've got a plea agreement waiting approval, and you're over here asking to have a lab analyze the container. Does that sound like together to you? You and Bradley need to get your signals straight.

JOHNNY

Bradley Corbin?

SIMONE

I assume you know each other.

JOHNNY

You talked plea with Bradley?

SIMONE

Did I say something you didn't understand? You guys get straight and then give me a call. Okay?

Johnny's fuse lit, needs to get out before he blows.

JOHNNY

I understand. I apologize. I do want the vial analyzed. And I'm lead counsel so we'll get it straight. Sorry to bother you.

SIMONE

No bother. Well, some, but I'll live. Can you find the way out?

JOHNNY

Sure. Take care.

SIMONE

Yeah. You, too.

Johnny leaves. Simone picks up her phone.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Hey, track down Saul Clarke at Stone-Weber for me. Yeah. Thanks.

Simone disconnects.

17 INT. MADISON BARNES' OFFICE -- DAY

17

Madison in her office, finishing an e-mail, as Johnny pokes his head in. She waves him in, finishes, hits SEND.

JOHNNY

Hey.

MADISON

What's up?

JOHNNY

Can I ask you a quick question?

MADISON

Sure.

JOHNNY

First, I want to clear the air. I get that you don't like me.

MADISON

My air is fine. Who says I don't like you? Is that your question?

JOHNNY

I'm just saying...

Madison eyes him.

MADISON

John... Johnny... which is it?

JOHNNY

It's always been Johnny. Now, I don't know. Maybe Johnny's a kid's name.

MADISON

I don't dislike you, Johnny. What I don't like is that I'm working my ass off here...

JOHNNY

So am I.

MADISON

I'm making a life. You're making a statement. I respect your brain, and your ability. But, that's it.

JOHNNY

Okay. I hear you. I can see that.

MADISON

(thrown)

Okay, then. Guess I'll see you later.

JOHNNY

That wasn't my question.

MADISON

Answer one for me, first.

JOHNNY

Okay.

MADISON

Why Stone-Weber? You hate suits and people who wear them. So why push yourself in here, of all places?

Before he can answer, a voice comes over the firm speakers.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Attention, attention. This is a code
 thirteen. The firm is on lockdown.
 Please stay in your offices or your
 current location until further notice.

JOHNNY
 Shit... I mean, what the hell...

Madison is visibly distressed.

MADISON
 That's... it's... shit.

JOHNNY
 What?

MADISON
 Thirteen is a code for me. It's my
 ex, ex-boyfriend. I have a restraining
 order but... he's done this before.

JOHNNY
 Jeezus. How ex is he?

MADISON
 It's from back home, it's... from
 when I was 16. He's older. It's a
 mess, that's all.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Attention, attention, please. The
 situation has been resolved. Please
 disregard the prior message. Again,
 please disregard the prior message.

JOHNNY
 I guess he left. Or they shot him.

Madison does not appear to appreciate the humor.

MADISON
 So, answer the question. Why us?

Johnny looks but there's no trace in her face, no hint that
 anything just happened.

JOHNNY
 I didn't have anywhere else to go.

So bare, so honest, it catches Madison off guard.

MADISON

I see. Uh, good luck, then. I've got to get back to some things. Did I answer your question? At all?

JOHNNY

You sure you're okay with...

MADISON

Anything else? I have work.

Madison's phone beeps. She ignores it.

JOHNNY

I want the vial in my case analyzed.

MADISON

The vial? Not the drugs? Why?

JOHNNY

Because something smells.

MADISON

That's specific. What smells?

JOHNNY

The security guy. It's like he's got a script. I don't buy it.

MADISON

And, you have a built in lie detector.

JOHNNY

Something like that.

MADISON

That must come in handy. File a motion. It will be granted. Easy.

JOHNNY

Bradley's taken the case over. He's already trying to plead it out.

MADISON

Who's lead on it? Counsel of record?

JOHNNY

I am.

MADISON

So, file your motion.

JOHNNY

He'll be pissed.

MADISON

Who's your client?

JOHNNY

Courtney is.

MADISON

Good thing to remember. Whether or not she sleeps with you, you still have to sleep with yourself.

JOHNNY

Been doing that for a while, now. Got it. That helps. Thanks.

MADISON

It was worth a nickel. No sweat.

She gives him a perfunctory smile and goes back to her work.

18 INT. STONE-WEBER -- DAY

18

In the hall near reception, Johnny's met by Hal Braun.

HAL

There you are. Follow me.

JOHNNY

Sure. Where?

HAL

Courtney's grandma is here, Mrs. Grossbart. You should say hello.

JOHNNY

Okay, sure. Why's she here?

HAL

Grandma's fed up with Courtney's bad girl. Time to turn off the faucet.

At the conference room door, Hal knocks, leads Johnny in. Seated at the table are ELISE GROSSBART (70) and Philip.

HAL (CONT'D)

Good morning, Mrs. Grossbart, Philip. Mrs. Grossbart, I wanted to introduce you to the lawyer who's handling Courtney's case. This is John Giles. John, this is Mrs. Elise Grossbart, Courtney's grandmother.

MRS. GROSSBART

Nothing I can do about that. That's pretty much settled. Nice to meet you, Mr. Giles. Good luck with her.

JOHNNY

She's definitely... spirited.

Mrs. Grossbart almost dies on the spot from a laugh attack.

MRS. GROSSBART

Spirited. Yes, I should say so. But, this time, it's going to cost her. Maybe she'll get the message.

JOHNNY

I'm sorry to hear that.

MRS. GROSSBART

I gave her an ultimatum. Maybe she thought it was a suggestion. Or, she wasn't listening, more likely. Well, we'll see how she likes her trust fund adjustment and my new will. Risk and reward. Risk and reward. Right, Philip? That's how it works.

Johnny's not missed Philip's smirk. Only solidifies his opinion of rich kids. Snooty rich kids, at least.

PHILIP

I have that written down, several times. In several places.

MRS. GROSSBART

As well you should. Good luck, Mr. Giles. Get her some hard time this time. Might do her some good.

JOHNNY

I don't know anybody who's gotten any good from doing hard time, but who knows. Maybe she'd be the first.

Mrs. Grossbart does not like being contradicted. It shows.

HAL

Mr. Giles has work to do so we'll let you go, John.

JOHNNY

Good to meet you, Mrs. Grossbart. Philip. Good to see you again.

PHILIP

Yeah, you too. Charmed.

Johnny chuckles to himself on the way out. In the street, Philip wouldn't last two minutes. In here, he's untouchable.

19 INT. HAL BRAUN'S OFFICE -- DAY

19

Bradley fuming, Saul sanguine, Hal mulling options, Johnny feeling good, even if they fire him, which is likely.

BRADLEY

He totally usurped me! And embarrassed the hell out of the firm!

SAUL

Well, technically, you usurped him, and he embarrassed you, not the firm.

BRADLEY

I run the Pro Bono Project!

SAUL

Oversee it. He's counsel of record.

HAL

John, anything to say?

JOHNNY

I quote, "Backed up by our entire litigation team, if he needs anything." I didn't need anything.

SAUL

You have a photographic memory, too?

JOHNNY

Almost. It's not 100%.

BRADLEY

I told you we had this worked out!

JOHNNY

What's that have to do with the truth?

SAUL

Now, hold on, John. Let's not get confused. Our job here is to represent our clients to the best of our ability, based on provable facts. Provable facts and the truth often are two different things. The truth is what the law says it is.

JOHNNY

No, it isn't.

HAL

You just got here, son. Are you determined to get fired already?

JOHNNY

I'm just discussing this. Your version of truth put me in prison. We might not know every fact with certainty, but we have an obligation to look as long and hard as we can until we have no moves left. Then we do the best we can. I learned that inside, too. Some days you fight. Some days you walk away. Knowing which is which can keep you alive. But, you don't ever stop short of that line. You do, you lose respect, and you might as well be dead. Same thing out here. Just nicer clothes. And ties. Which I still can't figure out, what the hell they actually do.

Bradley is half way toward exploding when interrupted by Hal's laughter. Hal can't stop, to the point that everyone is staring at him. What the hell is he laughing about?

HAL

In all my years, nobody's ever...
What do ties do? I have no idea...
Anybody?

SAUL

I despise the damned things. My wife picks them out or they'd never match. That and socks. I'm color blind.

Bradley wants to kill somebody. But, now? How? Even Johnny is off kilter. He was doing battle and now this?

HAL

Okay. That's a conversation for scotch and cigars. But, for now, John... it looks like you're going to win your case. So, you win, for now. That's the way it works around here.
Gentlemen, thank you for your time.

Meaning, dismissed. Saul, Bradley and Johnny wander out, like leaving a restaurant having not gotten to eat the meal.

20 INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE -- DAY

20

Johnny in ADA Simone Turner's office.

SIMONE

Okay, her prints aren't on the vial.
Doesn't matter. It's still her bag.

JOHNNY

Fine, you want to try this case?

SIMONE

Don't get ahead of yourself.

JOHNNY

Okay, I'm right here. Not moving.

SIMONE

Somebody gives her the stuff, asks
her to hold it, whatever, it's her
bag. Same as in a car. Stuff's in
your glove box, not your prints? Too
bad, still your stuff.

JOHNNY

A jury might not agree.

SIMONE

I'm not prosecuting your client.

JOHNNY

Oh. Okay. I hear a but...

SIMONE

She needs to get herself straight.

JOHNNY

I agree. So does she.

SIMONE

We did match the prints, by the way.
Just not to your client.

JOHNNY

Really.

SIMONE

Security guy. He didn't mention
touching the vial, though he might
remember doing an "inventory" if we
ask him again. Not a crime.

JOHNNY

Maybe he'd be lying.

SIMONE

Motive?

JOHNNY

(wishes he knew)

I don't know.

SIMONE

Okay, good luck.

Meeting over. Johnny rises. On the way out...

SIMONE (CONT'D)

So, that's information and a favor.

You owe me, twice.

Not sure which of several meanings to put on that, Johnny does what he does best, keep quiet, smile and exit.

21 JOHNNY'S OFFICE -- DAY

21

Johnny on the phone with his pal Casey.

JOHNNY

Yeah, no furniture yet but it's great.

Look Casey, I know you're clean...

yeah, of course...

(for anyone listening)

"Testing, testing, 1-2-3"... Listen,
if you know anybody who knows anybody,
I need to know what's up with "The
Y" club. Yeah. Like who's running
action out of there. Yes, "official"
business. I don't touch the stuff.
Of course you don't. Who would, right?
Thanks, brutha. Out.

He hangs up.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

22 INT. STONE-WEBER -- DAY

22

Philip Grossbart, seated in the reception area of Stone-Weber, stands as Bradley approaches.

BRADLEY

Hey, Philip, thanks for coming down.

PHILIP

(shaking hands)

No problem, counselor. What's up?

BRADLEY

Let's go to my office. You need anything, coffee, anything?

PHILIP

No, I'm good. Lead the way. You said this was about Gran's estate plan?

BRADLEY

Yeah. I think it is, yeah.

A slightly confused Philip follows Bradley down the hall.

23 INT. BRADLEY'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

23

Bradley leads Philip into his office, where Johnny waits, gazing out the window. Hears them enter, turns.

JOHNNY

Hi there, Philip. How's it going?

PHILIP

What's he doing here?

BRADLEY

Have a seat, Philip. This will only take a second.

PHILIP

I'll stand. What's going on here?

BRADLEY

Okay, well, I'll sit. Johnny?

JOHNNY

I'll stand. Thanks for asking.

PHILIP

What does this have to do with Grandmother's estate?

BRADLEY

You ever had a DUI, Philip?

He stops. Obviously they know, so why ask.

PHILIP

Well, yes. Once. I did. Why?

BRADLEY

When was that, Johnny?

JOHNNY

Three years ago.

PHILIP

Okay, guys. I don't know what you're up to but I have things to do so I'm leaving. And, I'll suggest that our family discontinue doing business...

JOHNNY

You had a bad one, Phil. Went to jail and everything. A 0.17 blood alcohol content? Which, hey, it happens. But, they also take your fingerprints. And those buggers go into the system eventually, after they've got all the rapists and killers in there.

He knows. How stupid could he have been.

PHILIP

I'm sure I don't know what you're getting at.

JOHNNY

My man Steve down at The Y cracked pretty fast for a big guy. He didn't do anything all that wrong, listening to a customer who tipped him off that some girls were holding, agreeing not to mention who told him, in exchange for a little tip. Pretty normal stuff. But, boy, did he give you up fast. Once he saw your picture. Did you know there are party photos of you all over the internet?

Philip looks to Bradley.

PHILIP

Are you going to sit there or what?
Are you in on this insanity?

BRADLEY

Hey, I'm cocky, not crooked. Your own sister? That's just evil, man, purely evil.

PHILIP

You got me down here under false pretenses.

BRADLEY

Nope. I'm almost positive this will affect grandma's estate plan.

JOHNNY

Risk and reward, Philip. Risk and reward. Isn't that how it works?

PHILIP

I'm leaving. I don't have to put up with this.

And he heads for the door.

BRADLEY

I guess you could say we'd hear from your lawyers but, ha, we are your lawyers. I'm not billing you for this meeting, by the way.

And Philip is gone.

JOHNNY

Thanks. I... no, I really appreciate your doing that. You didn't have to.

BRADLEY

I know. So, you owe me.

JOHNNY

I'm not sure I like that.

BRADLEY

I'm almost sure you don't. Too bad. I did you a favor.

JOHNNY

So, what do you want?

BRADLEY

Rhona.

JOHNNY

You've already got Rhona.

BRADLEY

Just some insurance. And Madison.

JOHNNY

I don't have Madison. Neither do you.

BRADLEY

Call it a "get in her pants free" card, for when I do.

Johnny starts for the door, stops.

JOHNNY

You know, I admit it. I almost thought you were human for a second.

And he's out. Bradley is very pleased with himself.

24 INT. LAW OFFICE -- DAY

24

Johnny meets Rhona in the hallway. She looks at him differently. Appraising. Approving.

RHONA

Nice job, counselor.

JOHNNY

Thanks. Pretty simple, really.

RHONA

Yeah, right. We debate the ethical question of getting somebody off who says they did it. You get somebody off who has no idea if they did it. Not bad for your first case.

JOHNNY

It's not my first case.

RHONA

Your first one out here. I'm buying you a drink.

JOHNNY

I'd like that.

RHONA

It's not a proposal. Just a drink.

JOHNNY

I don't believe you.

RHONA

Too bad. What Rhona says goes, whether or not I mean it. Keep Friday open.

Johnny watches her walk. Okay, something's got to give. After all, seven years is seven years.

25 INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

25

Johnny and Rhona share cocktails at a splashy bar-restaurant.

RHONA

Here's to you, counselor.

JOHNNY

I just survived one more day.

RHONA

You're probably right. But, taking on Bradley? Don't show me, but how big are your balls, exactly?

JOHNNY

No time for bullshit, that's all. So, you and Bradley are a thing?

RHONA

We're something, for sure.

JOHNNY

But, you're drinking with me?

RHONA

We're associates at the same firm. You drink with Nate, don't you?

JOHNNY

Nate doesn't have your...

RHONA

Wit?

JOHNNY

Right.

RHONA

My wit's not down my dress.

JOHNNY

Did I do that? Sorry.

RHONA

No problem. That's why I bought it.

Before he can respond, Bradley walks in with Courtney.

RHONA (CONT'D)
Nice, really nice move.

JOHNNY
She's a client of the firm.

RHONA
Right. The only question is, who's
he messing with, you or me.

JOHNNY
It's not me.

Courtney spots them and beams.

RHONA
Check the smile and the outfit. That
is all yours if you want it.

Johnny's phone goes off. He checks it, as Bradley arrives
with Courtney. Johnny holds up a hand, answers the phone.

JOHNNY
Hey, what's up?

His face goes dark as he listens.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
OKay, okay, it's okay. Where are
you? Stay there. I'm coming.

He disconnects. Stands. Flustered

BRADLEY
What's up, hero? We came to help you
celebrate getting Courtney off, or
well, you know.

JOHNNY
I have to go.

RHONA
What... Why?

JOHNNY
It's Madison. I have to go.

BRADLEY
She called you? For what?

JOHNNY

I don't know. Maybe she thinks... I don't know...

COURTNEY

You can't have a drink first? I wanted to surprise you.

JOHNNY

You did. I... I'm sorry...

RHONA

No, you go. If the goddess wants you, you should go.

JOHNNY

It's not like that. She shot somebody.

BRADLEY

Shot... as in shot? Who?

JOHNNY

Her ex. I have to go.

RHONA

The guy from back home? Is he...

Johnny throws some cash on the table.

JOHNNY

He's dead. She killed him.

Johnny bolts, leaving three struck numb, without words.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SHOW