FINAL

Library

BLIND FAITH

by

Frank Military

Final Draft

May 16th, 1997
Rev. May 20th, 1997 White
Rev. May 22nd, 1997 Blue
Rev. May 29th, 1997 Pink
Rev. June 3rd, 1997 Yellow
Rev. June 10th, 1997 Green
Rev. June 12th, 1997 Goldenrod
Rev. June 13th, 1997 Salmon
Rev. June 16th, 1997 Buff

BLACKNESS.

1 INT. TITLE SEQUENCE - DAY 1

SILENCE

In the quiet of this black void, a definition appears--

faith (fayth) n. 1. a belief which is not based on proof.

After a moment or two, the definition simply fades away, leaving us again in a piercing, empty, quiet void.

THEN ABRUPTLY-- THE LOUD, HARSH, VIOLENT SOUNDS OF HATRED. "FUCKIN' SPOOK!!", "DIE, MOTHERFUCKER", "FUCKING NIGGER COCKSUCKER!", "YOU WANT A WHITE WOMAN!!?", "STAY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FUCKIN' N TRAIN!!"

NIGHT. A BLURRY IMAGE OF FIVE OR SIX BASEBALL BATS COMING DOWN ON US. FIVE WHITE FACES, FIVE ITALIAN-AMERICAN FACES, VICIOUSLY BEATING US. THE IMAGES ARE JERKY, BLACK AND WHITE, HIGH CONTRAST. LIKE MOVING NEW YORK POST PHOTOS.

A HARSH, WHITE TITLE ABRUPTLY APPEARS:

1A EXT. BENSONHURST 1989 - NIGHT 1A

BENSONHURST
Wednesday, August 23, 1989

AS ONE OF THE BATS COMES DOWN RIGHT ON TOP OF US, THE TITLE IS GONE AND WE REVEAL:

A .32 CALIBER SEMI-AUTOMATIC HANDGUN. THE WEAPON IS POINTED AT A FRIGHTENED BLACK KID. HIS EYES ARE WIDE WITH FEAR. HIS FACE SWOLLEN FROM THE BATS.

THE ITALIAN BOYS' BROOKLYN ACCENTS ARE THICK AND UGLY. "NO, NO, NO, NO, STUPID. LET ME SHOOT HIM!!!", "GIVE ME THE FUCKING GUN, I WANNA DO IT!"

THE ITALIAN KID WITH THE GUN TAKES AIM.

THE BLACK KID, SCARED OUT OF HIS MIND, TRIES TO MOVE AWAY.

BOOM!!!! THE BLACK BOY'S BODY JERKS FROM THE EXPLOSION.

HE STAGGERS BACKWARD, HIT IN THE CHEST, AND BEFORE HE EVEN FALLS TO THE GROUND--

BOOM!!!!! THE ITALIAN KID SHOOTS HIM AGAIN. ONE OF THE OTHER ITALIAN BOYS JOYFULLY SCREAMS OUT: "HE SHOT THE FUCKIN' SPOOK!!!" *

(CONTINUED)

The black boy's body lies still in the dark street. Twisted. His young eyes open. Silence. Sadness. And then the question: Why did this have to happen? Why... Fade to white.

1B EXT. COURTHOUSE 1990 - DAY 1B

Slowly the sound of an on-the-scene newscaster's voice grows in volume.

NEWSCASTER
The verdict is in...less than twelve minutes ago the judge read the verdict. All the young men were found innocent of the more serious felony charges of assault, riot, aggravated assault, conspiracy and murder. One of the young men was convicted of weapons possession and one of inciting to riot and unlawful imprisonment. (Extra) The way it was explained to me was that riot and unlawful imprisonment carry a prison term of up to 15 months. Attorneys for two of the young men said that they would challenge the ruling in the Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court. The jury was dismissed, but they have not yet left the Brooklyn courthouse. We have no indication if any of the jury members are going to speak to the press.

1C INT. JOHN'S LAW OFFICE 1989 - DAY 1C

The image of the newscaster appears through the whiteness on a small television set.

Tight on JOHN WILLIAMS, African-American, 69, watching. Really watching, intently focused. His eyes are red, bloodshot, tired. John is quiet and thoughtful. At 69 he has the scars and the wisdom of a man who has lived several lifetimes. We hear his thoughts.

JOHN (V.O.)
I watched the young men who murdered that young boy that day walk away...just walk away.

John sits in the middle of a conference room in a large law office. It's his practice. The room is filled with attorneys, paralegals, secretaries. Most are African-American or Hispanic. It's a midsummer weekday afternoon. The newscast continues to drone in the background.

(CONTINUED)

John leans back in his chair and stares down the hall at the young man.

JOHN (V.O.)
Hold on, son... Find it somewhere in you... This is when you need it... Find that faith...

John looks back at the television. Several of the parents of the Italian boys are crying with joy.

JOHN (V.O.)
There was a time when it was worse...for me...when it was darker... I couldn't find it then because it was so goddamn black...

John looks up at the woman attorney. She dries her tears and stares at the carpeted floor, shaking her head back and forth in disbelief.

JOHN (V.O.)
It was like God had abandoned me and left me in a steel drum on the bottom of a cold, dark ocean. This is the story of my escape from that drum... Of my thirty-year swim to the surface of that ocean. This is the story of my faith's execution and resurrection...

SMASH CUT TO:

2 EXT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE - DAY 2

John, who is now 35, sits in a rusted car from the 1940's, honking the horn. He is dressed in a three-piece blue pinstripe suit. *

JOHN
Carol! Where are those kids?! I'm late!!

The top of the hill is made up of beautiful, large, turn-of-the-century, middle-class homes. The streets are paved with cobblestones. A title appears:

Friday, 5th of July, 1957

HONK!!! As John hits the honking pad in the middle of the wheel, the pad falls off into his lap. Disgusted, he tries to reattach it.

JOHN
Carol!!! Where are those kids!!

CAROL
Don't play with it. Your uncle is waiting in the car!

BETTY
I'm too tired to eat.

DAVID
I'm going to throw up...

CAROL
That's fine, just eat the food first. I don't care what you do with it afterwards...

Charlie, Jr. gets up and whispers in his mother's ear as she heads back toward the sink and starts to wash the egg skillet.

CHARLIE, JR.
Mama, I need the money for the art class... It's five dollars. *

She just stares at him. Charlie, Jr. doesn't want his brother and sister to hear him. He pleads with her.

CHARLIE, JR.
I need it today or I can't sign up!

6 EXT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE - DAY 6

Charles, Sr. leans into the window of John's car.

JOHN
I don't know why I have to drive them to day camp!?!

CHARLES, SR.
You're their Godfather... That's what Godfathers do...

JOHN
Oh, so that's it! Godfather really means bus driver!

CHARLES, SR.
Hey!! Who helped you pay for this car?...

JOHN
That's how it works, huh!?

Both brothers start to laugh.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
You want me to drive you to work?...

CAROL
No... You're too late as it is... I'll take the train...

8 EXT. JOHN'S LAW OFFICE 1957 - DAY 8

John runs out of his car and through a door next to a green grocer. *

9 INT. JOHN'S LAW OFFICE 1957 - DAY 9

John's office is rundown. The windows face Broadway and look out onto the El tracks. John is assaulted by six or seven people as he walks in the door.

WOMAN
Mr. Williams, I can pay you well but you have got to get my son out of jail. This would be the second night he's in there.

JOHN
Just give me a minute.

ANOTHER WOMAN
My name is Mrs. Hankins. I'm in a hurry.

JOHN
So am I... Just give me one minute...

MAN
The same with my boy... They say you can get anybody out of jail...

JOHN
That's not true...

ANNA HUGGINS, 29, African-American, sits in the outer office. Her eyes are beautiful-- smart and direct. *

JOHN
Who are all these people?

ANNA
Fourth of July residue, fireworks. Their kids have been in jail since yesterday. The court called. They had to reschedule a lot of dates because Judge Eaton is in the hospital.

She hands him a stack of messages.

MR. HARRIS
You don't like criminal law?

JOHN
There's no money in it. And it means that most of the people I represent are...well, criminals. I don't intend spending the rest of my life around those types of people.

MR. HARRIS
What do you intend on doing?

JOHN
Well, like yourself, I intend on making money...lots of money.

MR. HARRIS
Interesting, but before we go any further...

JOHN
Please, let me finish. I would like to be a full-service law firm for your company. There are several attorneys that I have been interviewing in hopes of expanding my practice.

MR. HARRIS
Look, Mr. Williams, I'm not here for that.

JOHN
No?...

MR. HARRIS
I'm here because my son was lighting off firecrackers in Marble Hill Park. The police held him in jail all of yesterday.

John visibly deflates.

MR. HARRIS
I've heard you're the best...

The El thunders by again. Mr. Harris pauses.

MR. HARRIS (cont'd)
...You're the best at criminal law... I want my son home tonight. Can you do that?

John is completely disappointed.

JOHN
Yes... I can.

CHARLES, SR.
Carol, where was he?!

Carol comes in with another gigantic plate of food for her husband.

CAROL
I have no idea...

She heads back into the kitchen.

CHARLES, SR.
I don't know what kind of family dinner this is... My son is not here. Carol, come in here and sit down!

She comes in with a small plate for herself.

JOHN
Nothing's perfect, big brother...

CHARLES, SR.
Well, it should be.

He means it. They all eat in silence for a moment.

JOHN
Maybe next Sunday you can have Eddie come back up for dinner.

Charles shoots John a cold stare. Carol looks up at her husband hopefully.

JOHN
Just a suggestion... Carol, this is really delicious.

CAROL
Thank you.

CHARLES, SR.
You better not have given him money for that painting class. 'Cause he's not going there. He's taking the police exam.

CAROL
I didn't give him anything...where is the salt...?

Carol gets up and crosses into the kitchen. Charles reaches out and grabs her hand as she moves by him. Their eyes meet. She smiles. He pulls her close to him and tenderly kisses her hand.

(CONTINUED)

CAROL
Charles... It's Captain McCully...

Charles looks disappointed. He whispers to himself.

CHARLES, SR.
He's going to ask me to come in, do a midnight to eight.

Charles takes the phone. Carol whispers to him as she takes the coffee cups into the kitchen.

CAROL
Tell him you're sick...

CHARLES, SR.
You know that's the last thing I'd do.

Charles speaks into the phone.

CHARLES, SR.
Captain McCully...? What is it...?

CHARLES SUDDENLY BECOMES VERY STILL. HE SWALLOWS.

CHARLES, SR.
Are you sure?

Tight on John, his eyes flicking up to his older brother. Something is wrong. Carol comes in from the kitchen, she stares at her husband.

JOHN
What's going on, Charles?

SUPERTIGHT ON CHARLES.

CHARLES, SR.
Where is he now? Look, Captain...you keep them off my son!

SUPERTIGHT ON CAROL. Her voice is weak and quavering.

CAROL
What's wrong with Charlie?!

CHARLES, SR.
I know what they do... Just keep them off him!

John gets up and moves to his brother. He holds Carol, bracing her.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
Oh my God, Charles. Look over there.

In front of the doors of the station there is a crowd of fifteen or twenty white men. Several have baseball bats.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Step on it! Just go by!

Charles speeds by the station before any of the men can see inside the car.

CHARLES, SR.
We'll go in on 237th, through the back.

15 INT. 50TH PRECINCT - NIGHT 15

Charles and John move in through the back door of the station. The buzz of the active station suddenly becomes silent. They stare at the black men. A big Italian cop, MIKEY VACCARO, 42, stops Charles.

VACCARO
Charles, I'm sorry about this.

CHARLES, SR.
Where is he?

VACCARO
Look, I just want to tell you... Nobody touched him... He looks pretty bad...

CHARLES, SR.
Where is my son, Mikey? *

Then, from down the hall--

CAPT. MCCULLY
He's in here.

Charles and John look up and see CAPTAIN MCCULLY, 49, standing in the hall. His Irish eyes are fixed and mad.

CHARLES, SR.
Yes, sir.

Charles and John head down the hall toward McCully, who stops them before they go into the room.

CAPT. MCCULLY
He killed an Irish boy, Charles...

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES, SR.
What happened here, boy?

Long silence. Charlie, Jr.'s swollen eyes fill with tears.

CHARLES, SR.
I said, what happened here, boy!?

Charlie, Jr. begins to weep openly.

CHARLIE, JR.
Don't hate me, Daddy...

Charlie, Jr. breaks down completely and buries his head in his hands.

CHARLES, SR.
Stop crying!

GREY
Maybe I could explain...

Charles, Sr.'s voice becomes powerfully quiet.

CHARLES, SR.
Stop crying NOW...

Almost instantly, Charlie, Jr. pulls himself together and stares at his father, the tears subsiding. Charles, Sr. stares at him, his eyes fixed and angry.

GREY
Mr. Williams, it seems that Charlie has killed another boy.

Charles, Sr. doesn't take his eyes off his son.

JOHN
Look, that can't be right. Charlie is not that kind of boy. He does good in school, he's a quiet kid, his father's a cop.

GREY
Well, what happened was pretty clear, and Charlie admits trying to rob the young man.

CHARLES, SR.
You robbed somebody, son!?

Charlie, Jr. is silent.

(CONTINUED)

GREY
He had told them so much already, and since his father is a police officer, I thought the best tack would be to give them a confession. Their case was open and shut already...

JOHN
Are you saying that Charlie signed a written confession!?

GREY
I was trying to save his life...

John, dumbfounded, stares at Grey. He suddenly puts it together.

JOHN
You're not working for Charlie, YOU'RE WORKING FOR THEM!!

John grabs Grey, pushing him against the wall. Instantly several cops, including Charles, Sr., pour through the door to the room and are on John, pulling him off Grey.

JOHN
You're not his lawyer! You're fired! Get out of here!!

John goes after Grey again as Grey gathers his papers. The cops pull John back.

JOHN
Did they pay you off!??

Charles, Sr. gets in his brother's face.

CHARLES, SR.
John, stop it! STOP IT!!

Grey escapes out the door.

JOHN
That man just signed your son's life away!

CHARLES, SR.
I know... I know...

Charles, Sr. hands Charlie, Jr.'s signed confession to John. The cops release John. He takes the paper and reads it. He looks at Charlie, Jr. John is completely bewildered.

JOHN
Why did you sign this...?

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES, SR.
You know how long it took me to be a cop!!? And you brought reefer into my house!!! You stay out of my home, you stay off my block, you stay the hell out of the God damn Bronx!

EDDIE
You with him, Johnny? You divorcing me, too?

JOHN
Go home, Eddie.

Charles heads back inside. Eddie has tears in his eyes. John feels for his brother, but can't bring himself to say anything to him.

EDDIE
You always did follow your big brother. I thought you guys were supposed to look out for me... Big deal! He Uncle Tom-ed his way into the police force, fuck him! No white man respects him, no colored man respects him.

JOHN
I respect him...

EDDIE
Yeah, well... Everything was always real cool with you, John... Except you had your head up your ass.

Eddie puts up his collar and starts to head down the street. He stops and yells back to his brother.

EDDIE
How's Charlie, John?

JOHN
He's in a lot of trouble...

There are tears in both brothers' eyes.

EDDIE
I'm here, man... Just call me...

Eddie turns and heads down the hill. John watches him, then turns and heads back into the house. As he turns he runs right into Anna.

ANNA
You sent him away.

(CONTINUED)

18B INT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE-LIVING ROOM-LATER - NIGHT 18B

(CONTINUED)

ANNA
Not to mention the fact that Charlie signed a confession.

(CONTINUED)

Charles sits on the steps a moment and thinks. And then, after a beat, he looks up at his brother, his eyes red and desperate. Charles' stare places the weight of the task ahead firmly on John's shoulders. Charles whispers to his brother.

CHARLES, SR.
Save him...

SMASH CUT TO:

19 EXT. RIKERS ISLAND ESTABLISHING - DAY 19

20 INT. RIKERS ISLAND-INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY 20

John sits in a maximum security cell with Charlie, Jr. John reads from the police report. He's reading Charlie's confession.

JOHN
You were in the park...looking to rob somebody? Go ahead, Charlie, tell it to *me*.

Charlie hesitates a second.

CHARLIE, JR.
I saw that boy and I saw his shoes and shirt, I thought he had money.

JOHN
What do you need money for, Charlie?

CHARLIE, JR.
I just wanted it, that's all...

John continues to read from the report.

CHARLIE, JR.
So I went after him. I didn't mean to kill him...

JOHN
Really... Pat Sullivan was with six other boys that night... Why would you rob seven white boys?... *
*

CHARLIE, JR.
I didn't see the others, I only saw him.

JOHN
You didn't even have a weapon!

CHARLIE, JR.
I had a knife...

(CONTINUED)

21 AND 22 OMITTED 21 * AND 22

23 EXT. GUNHILL ROAD-O'NEILL - DAY 23

It's murderously hot. John wipes the sweat from his forehead as he knocks on the door of an old wooden house. MARGARET O'NEILL, 42, answers the door. There are children behind her eating lunch at the dining room table. John hands her a card. *

MARGARET
What do you want?!

JOHN
My name is John Williams. I'm an attorney. I represent Charlie Williams... I would like to speak to your son...

MARGARET
No, he's not speaking to you.

JOHN
Charlie Williams is my nephew. I don't think he killed Pat Sullivan. Charlie is a good boy.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
I want to ask you a couple of questions about the night Pat Sullivan died.

BOBBY
You a lawyer for the colored kid?

JOHN
Yes. What happened that night?

BOBBY
The police asked me a million questions already.

JOHN
I know, but I think something else was going on that night...

HENRY DOLMAN, 49, Bobby's father, comes striding into the garage.

HENRY
Can I help you?

JOHN
I'm the uncle of the boy who's accused of killing Pat Sullivan. I just want to ask your son a couple of questions.

HENRY
You want to speak to this man?

Bobby thinks about it and then shakes his head "no."

HENRY
I'm sorry. My son doesn't want to talk to you. Unless there's anything else I can help you with...

John tries to think of another tack. Henry starts to move the boy out of the garage and into the office. John is desperate.

JOHN
I just want to know what happened!

Suddenly Bobby stops and turns back to John, his face sad.

BOBBY
No you don't...

SUPERTIGHT ON JOHN. He's found something.

JOHN
What are you saying!?...

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
Damn it...

This is bad news.

IRATE WOMAN *
Mr. Williams!?

John is starting to lose it.

JOHN
Damn it!

26 INT. JOHN'S OFFICE 1957 - PAST MIDNIGHT - NIGHT 26

John sits at his desk. He's lost and exhausted. Anna sits reading some of the statements. It's dark except for two reading lamps.

JOHN
Anna...

ANNA
Huh?

JOHN
Anna...I can't do it.

She stops reading and looks up at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I'm going to lose my practice. I can't keep it. This is the only case I can handle.

ANNA
I understand. I want to stay on and help as much as I can. I'll work at my father's part-time.

JOHN
I'm really, really scared. If he dies, Anna...I'll die.

ANNA
You got to find that belief, John Williams... That might be all you have right now.

John thinks about this. He stares out the window.

ANNA (CONT'D)
That and me... I'll be here every day after three, and before three, if you need it.

(CONTINUED)

29A INSIDE, JOHN'S OFFICE - DAYS LATER - DAY 29A

John, Anna, Rose, Timothy, Philip and Frank all are squeezed into John's office. John, his jacket off, his shirtsleeves rolled up, paces back and forth.

JOHN
We got two weeks until the first hearing. *
What we need are eyewitnesses...
Prosecution's got'em, we need to
counter...

FRANK
But you said most of those boys aren't
talking.

JOHN
That doesn't mean we stop asking.

TIMOTHY
What about character witnesses?

ANNA
We got three of Charlie's teachers from
school, his dad and two neighbors.

JOHN
Character witnesses don't amount to
anything, especially if they're all
colored.

ROSE
Afro-American.

JOHN
Excuse me?

Aggravated, John stares at her.

ROSE
The proper term is Afro-American.

JOHN
Miss Walker, why don't you leave right now
and go down to Arkansas and help those
little *colored* children trying to
integrate into that school down there...
'Cause I don't have time for this
political nonsense. Trial's right around
the corner!

Rose looks at John defiantly. John turns and Anna is staring at him disapprovingly.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE
She's eighty-two, but she said she saw it that night. It took me fifteen minutes to get her to open the door...but wait till you see this.

Out of breath, they get to the top of the stairs. Rose knocks vigorously on the door.

ROSE
Mrs. Barry!

The door swings open. MRS. BARRY, 82, black, stands in the doorway. Behind her are four large windows that give an amazing aerial view of Van Cortland Park.

ROSE
This is Mr. Williams. He's representing Charlie Williams.

MRS. BARRY
Nice to meet you.

John shakes her hand, but keeps walking toward the windows. He stares out as Rose introduces Anna and Timothy. John turns back to Mrs. Barry.

JOHN
What did you see that night...?

29D (NOTE: THIS SCENE WAS SHOT AS 61B AND WAS THEN MOVED TO THIS POSITION IN THE SCRIPT.) INSIDE, MRS. BARRY'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Mrs. Barry sits, staring out the window. Her old, crooked finger points down at the park, indicating where things happened. John sits in front of her. Timothy sits behind her, out of her sight line, checking the police reports against her story. Anna is taking down what she is saying, word for word.

MRS. BARRY
It was down there, near the fountain.

JOHN
What time?

MRS. BARRY
Roughly... Ten forty-five...

John checks with Timothy, who has the reports in his hand. Timothy nods to John; she's got the time right.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
What was the boy wearing?

MRS. BARRY
It was a powder-blue shirt...long-sleeved.

John looks at Timothy, who looks worried. He shakes his head, "no."

JOHN
I might have led you astray, Mrs. Barry. I meant the Negro boy... What color was his shirt?

MRS. BARRY
Like I said, powder-blue...long sleeved.

Timothy, John, Anna and Rose share a look.

MRS. BARRY
Don't act like I'm crazy. The shirt was powder-blue. My mind is good. I'm the one that saved the damn boy!

JOHN
What are you talking about?

MRS. BARRY
I'm the one who called the police.

JOHN
Called the police?

Timothy starts pouring through the papers in the file.

TIMOTHY
Shouldn't that have been in the police report...

Timothy can't find it. Anna looks at John.

ANNA
Somebody didn't want us to find this woman.

John looks worried. He looks at Mrs. Barry.

JOHN
Would you testify in court, tell the Court what you just told us?

MRS. BARRY
As sure as I'm sitting here.

(CONTINUED)

30 OMITTED 30

30A OMITTED 30A *

CHARLES, SR.
John...

JOHN
Start again... I was in the park...go ahead.

Charlie, Jr. starts to break.

CHARLES, SR.
John... That's enough...

Charlie, Jr. looks at his father.

JOHN
He's not going to save you. This is you and me...

CHARLES, SR.
John, stop.

JOHN
Relax, Charles... Tell me the lie again, Charlie.

John moves right into Charlie, Jr.'s face.

JOHN
I'M NOT BACKING DOWN!!

John grabs Charlie, Jr. and lifts him out of his chair. He pushes the boy against the wall.

JOHN
WHAT HAPPENED THAT NIGHT!?

CHARLES, SR.
John, stop it!

JOHN
STOP CRYING, DAMN IT, AND TALK!!!

Charles, Sr. grabs John and pulls him off Charlie, Jr.

CHARLES, SR.
I said it's over!!

John looks at his brother. After a beat he turns back to the boy.

JOHN
If that's what happened, Charlie...then you better start thinking about something to make up, 'cause we're not going to trial with that...

(CONTINUED)

PAGE 36A OMIT

41 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - DAY 41

A hearing on the admissibility of Charlie's confession is in progress. JUDGE EDWARD AKER, 58, a taciturn man with an ever-questioning look in his eye, presides over the hearing.

FRANK MINOR, 39, the Assistant District Attorney, sits at the prosecution table, watching John. Minor wears a custom-made shirt and a Brooks Brother suit. Minor's defining feature is his eyes--deadly, competitive, always playing the game, consumed with winning--

JOHN

Your Honor, my second motion to suppress the confession is based on a violation of the 14th amendment, which says that Charlie Williams is entitled to due process, which means a *fair* process. How can it be fair if Mr. Grey was working for the police? That confession was coerced by Mr. Grey and the police, possibly using brutality... I move this photo of Charlie Williams into evidence... *

John hands a photo of Charlie to the clerk.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
Well then, is it *prudent* for an attorney, seeing that his client has been severely beaten, to assume that his client's confession came of free will? Or should a *prudent* attorney stop and consider that the confession was coerced!?

GREY
The boy was sure of himself. He didn't indicate that they beat him.

Grey gives John a small smile.

44 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - LATER - DAY 44

Judge Aker is reading his decision.

JUDGE AKER
If the defense could have shown evidence that there was collusion between Mr. Grey and the police, I would have ruled that the confession was inadmissible... As to the photo you've shown that your client was beaten, what you failed to show was that he was specifically beaten by the police. The signed confession will be admissible in the trial.

Tight on John, he shakes his head.

JOHN
I move for a continuance... Your Honor, I am having an incredibly difficult time getting crucial witnesses to speak to me. Your Honor--

JUDGE AKER
If they haven't come forward by now, I don't know why this Court would believe that they're going to. Motion denied, trial will go forth...

Aker looks at the docket.

JUDGE AKER
Twenty-ninth of this month.

45 INT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE - AFTER MIDNIGHT - NIGHT 45

John sits in the dining room, going over the police reports. Carol comes in from the kitchen and puts a large bowl of chicken soup in front of him. John looks up at Carol and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA *
Really? That's so nice to hear, John *
Williams. *

John doesn't even turn around. *

JOHN *
You knew she was back there, didn't *
you...? *

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
Is that the offer, life?...

Minor continues to stare at John, who becomes more desperate.

JOHN
Talk to me, Frank... Is that the offer?

MINOR
No.

A chill runs through John as he realizes what Minor is saying.

JOHN
Even if you win, you're not going to get the death penalty.

Minor starts to smile.

JOHN
This is my nephew... I'm the boy's godfather.

MINOR
Personally, I apologize and I feel badly for you... But part of the law is giving the public a sense of retribution. They want him to be punished to the full extent of the law. They want...electrocution. I'm sorry.

Minor starts to head out of the bathroom. John grabs his arm. He begs.

JOHN
Please... As a favor... Offer me a life sentence with no parole... Please?

MINOR
I can't, John...

Minor walks out of the room. John is left in the bathroom, alone.

SMASH CUT TO:

48 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - MINUTES LATER - DAY 48

John stands, speaking to Anna. Charlie, Jr. sits at the defense table. The courtroom is filled with spectators and some press. Charles, Sr. and Carol sit amongst the rest of the spectators, staring straight ahead. Charlie, Jr. tugs on John's jacket.

CHARLIE, JR.
Do I look okay?...

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
It's not in this case. I do need more time. Especially since this is a capital case.

JUDGE AKER
We will begin, Counselor. Let's begin the voir dire.

Aker hits his wooden hammer with a sharp crack.

SMASH CUT TO:

49 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - ONE WEEK LATER - DAY 49

Tight and moving across the faces of the jury: It's an all-white, all-male jury. John stares at them. He's not happy. Minor is in front of them.

MINOR
Charles Williams, Jr. saw a young man in the park that night alone... He saw an opportunity to rob somebody. And how I wish we could be trying Charles Williams for robbery today. But that's not why we're here. We're here because Pat Sullivan didn't let Charles Williams rob him, and so... Charles Williams killed him. And I'm telling you now, the defense will not put one witness on the stand that will tell you differently. I will put six people on the stand who were eyewitnesses to the crime.

Minor walks back to the prosecution table and picks up a sheet of paper.

MINOR
That will be enough for you. But we will give you more. We're going to give you a confession. Signed by Charles Williams, Jr. Gentlemen, your job is going to be very easy.

50 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - MINUTES LATER - DAY 50

John is in front of the jury.

JOHN
This will be very far from easy, and that's the way it should be because we are talking about a capital crime. This case is not simply twelve boys seeing one boy murder another. No, no, no...

(CONTINUED)

MINOR
So my witness can't identify him for the jury? Mr. Williams should get a handful of Negro boys and put them in the gallery.

JUDGE AKER
Overruled.

MINOR
Could you point to the boy you saw on top of Pat Sullivan?

Hagan points to Charlie. *

HAGAN
Yes, sir, that's him right there.

MINOR *
Let the record indicate that Mr. Hagan has * identified Charles Williams, Jr... (he * turns back to Hagan) What happened then? *

HAGAN
We held the kid, and the cops showed up.

MINOR
Did you see Pat?

HAGAN
Yeah, I walked over to him, you could tell he was dead.

Minor turns to John.

MINOR
Your witness.

JOHN
Did you or anybody else ever hit this Negro boy you saw that night?

HAGAN
No.

JOHN
Ever chase him?

HAGAN
No.

JOHN
Any of the boys there chase him?

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
Did the Negro boy have a weapon?

HAGAN
No...

JOHN
Isn't it odd that this Negro boy would rob Pat with no weapon?

MINOR
Objection. Calls for speculation. *

JOHN
Your Honor, I am trying to show that there was no robbery that night. This witness is not merely here to identify my client, but to tell us what happened that night.

JUDGE AKER
I'll allow it... I'd like to hear the answer.

JOHN
I'll repeat... Would anybody rob Pat with no weapon? Does it make sense? Yes or no?

HAGAN
No... It doesn't make sense.

JOHN
Thank you.

JUMP CUT TO:

51A INT. BRONX COURTROOM - DAY 51A

Another white kid on the stand. Pointing at Charlie.

WHITE KID #1
It was him...the Negro.

JUMP CUT TO:

51B INT. BRONX COURTROOM - DAY 51B

Another white kid on the stand.

WHITE KID #2
He was on top of him, gripping his neck.

Tight on John. He knows he's getting beat, but he stoically tries not to let the jury see it.

Still another white kid on the stand. John stands next to him.

WHITE KID #3
No, we never hit him. We never touched him.

JUMP CUT TO:

51D INT. BRONX COURTROOM - DAY 51D

And another white kid on the stand. John is right in front of him.

WHITE KID #4
No, we never chased him. The cops got there quick.

John accepts this.

JOHN
Thank you.

SMASH CUT TO:

52 EXT. JOHN'S CAR, TRAVELING - EARLY EVENING - NIGHT 52

John, Anna, Rose, Timothy, Philip and Frank are all squashed into the car. John drives up Broadway. *

TIMOTHY
Maybe we could just take a shot and subpoena a couple of the kids that aren't testifying. Under oath they might tell the truth.

ROSE
If they would reinforce his case, Minor would have them on the witness list.

John, annoyed, stops the car.

JOHN
Now you're going to tell me why we can't do that, 'cause I need the sense that I've got professionals on my side and not third-year law students!

ANNA
John, calm down.

Several cars behind John's start to honk.

FRANK
But we are third-year law students.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
What did you mean, I wouldn't want to know?... *

BOBBY
I didn't mean anything...

He runs into the mens room and locks the door. John yells through the door.

JOHN
You're lying, Bobby... You don't have to take the stand. Just get me going in the right direction...

There's no answer. After a beat, Henry Dolman appears. John looks at him. The conversation is over. John nods to himself and walks * back to his car.

56 EXT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER THAT NIGHT - NIGHT 56

John gets out of his car and walks through the dark, empty * streets toward his brother's house.

A dark blue Studebaker begins to move behind him. John doesn't notice it at first. He stops and turns around and looks at the car. Which stops. John doesn't need anymore--

TIGHT ON THE STUDEBAKER'S TIRES PEELING OUT. JOHN TAKES OFF. THE * STUDEBAKER DRIVES RIGHT UP ONTO THE SIDEWALK, CRUSHING SEVERAL * ROWS OF TRASH CANS. JOHN RUNS FOR HIS LIFE. *

TIGHT ON THE FRONT BUMPER OF THE STUDEBAKER JUST INCHES FROM * JOHN'S FEET. IT'S ABOUT TO RUN HIM OVER. *

JOHN SUDDENLY CUTS INTO-- *

56A OMITTED 56A *

56B EXT. AN ALLEY, CONTINUING 56B *

THE STUDEBAKER SCREAMS BY. *

JOHN RUNS TO THE END OF THE ALLEY WHICH DEAD ENDS. JOHN * DESPERATELY TRIES TO FIND A WAY OUT. THERE IS NO SIGN OF THE * STUDEBAKER. JOHN TRIES TO CATCH HIS BREATH. *

SUDDENLY THE STUDEBAKER APPEARS AT THE END OF THE ALLEY. IT * SCREAMS TOWARDS HIM IN REVERSE. THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO. *

TIGHT ON THE STUDEBAKER'S BACK BUMPER ABRUPTLY STOPPING INCHES * FROM JOHN'S LEGS. *

(CONTINUED)

57 INT. WILLIAMS' HOME - LATER - NIGHT 57 *

John has awakened Charles and is whispering to him in the hall.

JOHN
Why are the police involved in this?

CHARLES, SR.
The police wouldn't do this, they know you're my brother!

JOHN
Maybe that's why they didn't hurt me.

This suddenly makes sense to both of them.

CHARLES, SR.
You want me to get you a gun?

Charles' question hangs in the air.

JOHN
No...

John nervously smiles.

JOHN
I'll just try and stay close to you, big brother.

John's smile fades. Both men stare at each other.

DR. PONTI
Probably, at a minimum, four minutes, sometimes as long as eight or nine...

JOHN
So the killer would have to hold onto Pat Sullivan for four minutes or more...?

DR. PONTI
To kill him... He would go unconscious after a minute and a half, two minutes.

JOHN
Really. If Charlie were robbing Pat Sullivan, why *wouldn't* he let go after two minutes, take Mr. Sullivan's wallet and run?

MINOR
Objection, Dr. Ponti is an expert forensic witness. Why question him concerning the motivation of the accused?

JOHN *
I'll rephrase, Your Honor. Physically, as you are an expert in anatomy, why *couldn't* Charlie have *let go* after two minutes?

DR. PONTI
There is no reason why he couldn't have.

60 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - LATER - DAY 60

Minor has a SERGEANT SIDELLO, 39, from the police force, in full uniform, on the stand.

SERGEANT SIDELLO
We asked him if he wanted to tell us what happened, and he started talking. He confessed to the whole thing. So I asked him if he wanted a lawyer, so we could make it official. The kid said that he did.

Minor moves back to the prosecution table and takes a piece of paper from one of the other attorneys.

MINOR
Is this that statement?

JOHN
Objection!

(CONTINUED)

MINOR
Objection! Your Honor, why is Sgt. Sidello answering questions as to motive...?

JOHN
He is a percipient witness of the crime scene. If the physical evidence creates a picture that makes no sense...that is a valid line of questioning.

JUDGE AKER
Overruled. Proceed.

MINOR
It might not make sense. Who knows why this boy did this, maybe he was a drug addict and he was desperate!!!

JOHN
Objection!!! Please, Your Honor!!

JUDGE AKER
Strike Mr. Minor's statement from the record. The jury will do its best to forget Mr. Minor ever said that. Proceed.

John turns back to Sidello.

JOHN
Does it make sense that such a small boy...

MINOR
Objection. This is not a boy on trial, he's eighteen, he's a man.

JUDGE AKER
Sustained.

JOHN
Does it make sense that such a small *man* would rob such a large man?

SERGEANT SIDELLO
If he had a weapon, it would.

JOHN
But no weapon was found, yes or no.

SERGEANT SIDELLO
No.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK
Who wants spare ribs?

TIMOTHY
Gimme some.

JOHN
Forget about the food!

As Frank passes the ribs to Timothy, he spills an entire carton of hot and sour soup on the table. It soaks into all the legal papers. Anna quietly starts to sop up the mess. John turns on Frank.

JOHN
Get out of here... I don't want to hear it. Just get the hell out.

FRANK
Mr. Williams, I'm really sorry...

JOHN
No... Just leave.

Frank looks like he's on the verge of tears. He gets his coat and heads out the door. Anna and Rose continue to try to clean up the mess.

JOHN
Forget about it! Look at me! Everybody! Look at me! Do we put him on the stand?!

There is a silence.

JOHN
Come on, people, think!! Charlie is going to die!!!!

They all stare at John.

JOHN
...And you're worried about Chinese food...

John starts to cry.

JOHN
Do you know what Charlie is eating in prison tonight!? You know how many days in a row he's been alone in there!? You know what I wish?... I wish you could spend * some time with him. 'Cause he's a great * kid... I mean this kid smiles...

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
...And your heart breaks. If you knew him, you wouldn't worry about the goddamn Chinese food.

Everyone continues to stare at John. Who suddenly senses there is somebody behind him. He turns and sees--

Charles, Sr. and Carol standing on the steps looking at him. Carol has tears streaming down her cheeks.

CAROL
You said Charlie is going to die!?

John doesn't know what to say.

JOHN
No... I just...lost my temper... He's not going to die.

Tight on Carol. She doesn't believe him. John smiles and tries to cover it up.

JOHN
He's not going to die... I just had a bad day... It was a stupid thing to say.

She doesn't buy it. John continues to stare at her, helplessly.

61A OMITTED 61A *

61B OMITTED 61B *

61C OMITTED 61C *

62 INT. RIKERS ISLAND VISITORS ROOM - THE WEEKEND - DAY 62

John and Charles sit, waiting for Charlie to be brought into the room.

JOHN
Charles, you got to help me... Why don't you talk to him?

CHARLES, SR.
I've tried.

JOHN
Try again. He'll do anything you say. He's scared of you... He's not scared of me...

Charles finds this ironic.

(CONTINUED)

PAGES 62B, 62C, 62D OMIT

John is interrupted by steel doors opening. A prison guard shows Charlie into the visitors room. Charlie, Jr. sits down opposite the two men. He doesn't look his father in the eye.

CHARLES, SR.
How you doing, son?

CHARLIE, JR.
I'm okay... How's it going, Uncle John?

JOHN
I'm okay.

CHARLES, SR.
You eating?

CHARLIE, JR.
Yes, sir... How's Mama?

CHARLES, SR.
She's fine.

Silence. John looks at his brother. Charles, Sr. really doesn't know what to say to his son. Charlie, Jr. stares at the floor. John doesn't know what to do. The silence is endless.

SMASH CUT TO:

63 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - DAYS LATER - DAY 63

Tight on Minor.

MINOR
Your Honor, the prosecution rests.

JUDGE AKER
Is the defense ready?

Tight on John. He looks scared.

JOHN
We are, Your Honor.

JUDGE AKER
Call your first witness.

Tight on John. He slowly turns around and stares at the gallery in the court. It is a sea of angry white faces. Their eyes are focused on John. John turns and looks at Charlie, who sits, nervously tapping his foot. He looks so scared.

JUDGE AKER
Counselor Williams, are you going to participate in this trial?

(CONTINUED)

MRS. BARRY *
It's against the law, isn't it? *

Tight on John. This is against everything he believes in.

JOHN
Yes.

Tight on the old woman. She's completely confused.

SMASH CUT TO:

MRS. BARRY
They were white.

(CONTINUED)

MINOR
So they could have been playing tag, you didn't really know if they were trying to hurt Charles Williams.

MRS. BARRY
I've seen children playing, and I've seen Negro boys run for their lives. I know the difference.

John is doing all he can to keep from smiling. Minor starts to walk back to the prosecution table.

MINOR
No more questions... Actually, one more question. If you saw this all so well, what was Charlie wearing that night?

Tight on Mrs. Barry. She hesitates.

MRS. BARRY
He had on tan pants...

John stares at her. Minor checks the police report.

MRS. BARRY (CONT'D)
...And a red shirt.

Minor accepts this.

MINOR
No more questions, Your Honor.

John turns around and looks at Anna. Both of them breathing a little easier now.

67 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - LATER - DAY 67

John has SISTER BENEDICT, 34, Irish, on the stand. *

JOHN
You've been Charlie's teacher for how long?

SISTER BENEDICT *
Two years.

JOHN
Tell us about him.

SISTER BENEDICT *
He is a quiet boy. Very friendly. Very well spoken. He could go to college if he wanted.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES, SR.
Yes, it's his police department application. He just finished high school and wanted to join the police force.

JOHN
Did you ever have any trouble with him?

CHARLES, SR.
Never. He always did his chores. Always did very well in school.

JOHN
Is he a good son?

Tight on Charles, Sr.

CHARLES, SR.
The very best a father could ask for.

JOHN
Is Charlie a murderer?

Tight on Charles, Sr. He addresses the entire court, his voice filled with restrained passion and rock-hard conviction.

CHARLES, SR.
My son is not that.

Charles, Sr.'s words ring in the quiet courtroom.

JOHN
Could he do something like this?

CHARLES, SR.
Charlie is incapable of doing something like this.

JOHN
Why?

CHARLES, SR.
Because he is my son. I raised him. I know him.

John lets the words hang in the air, and then--

JOHN
Your witness.

Minor eyes Charles, Sr.'s imposing presence.

MINOR
No questions, Your Honor.

VACCARO
He might.

JOHN
Maybe just because he was Negro?

VACCARO
There are cops like that.

John picks up an envelope from the table and heads back to Vaccaro.

JOHN
Did you hit Charlie that night?

VACCARO
No.

John opens the envelope and removes several 8"x10" photos.

JOHN
I move these photographs into evidence. These are photos taken the night Charlie was arrested.

John hands one of the photos to Vaccaro.

JOHN
Now, you're honestly going to sit here and tell me, Officer Vaccaro, that the cops didn't do that to Charlie?

VACCARO
No, no police officer did that.

John really attacks him. *

JOHN
Come on. You just said that a Negro could get beat up just for being Negro. You had to hit this boy!

MINOR
Objection!

JUDGE AKER
Counselor Williams!

VACCARO
We didn't hit him!!

JOHN
Why!? Why didn't you hit him!!?

VACCARO
Because I knew him! He was the son of a cop! We wouldn't do that!!

Silence. That's what John wanted him to say.

JUDGE AKER
I will not have you conduct your examination like this!!

JOHN
I apologize to the Court and to the witness.

Aker's eyes remain fixed on John for a long beat. *

JUDGE AKER
Proceed.

JOHN
Of course. He was the son of a cop...the son of a friend. That makes a lot of *sense* to me. None of the police hit Charlie, did they...?

VACCARO
No...

John pauses. He glances at the jury. He needs them to get this next point.

JOHN
So how did he get hit?

Tight on Vaccaro. *

JOHN
How did he get hit, Officer Vaccaro? Or, more specifically, *who* hit him?

Vaccaro is reluctant to answer. John turns and walks right up to the jury. * *

JOHN
Did you ever *consider* that Mr. Sullivan and the other young men hit Charlie, causing these bruises, and then Charlie killed Mr. Sullivan in self-defense, yes or no? * * * * * *

MINOR *
Objection! Calls for speculation. *

(CONTINUED)

70 EXT. BRONX COURTHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON - DAY 70 *

As John, Anna, Rose, Philip, Frank and Timothy walk down the steps of the courthouse, John sees Eddie, who is wearing dark sunglasses. Eddie smiles a big, warm grin and hugs his brother. John doesn't smile.

EDDIE
How you doing, man?

JOHN
How you doing, Eddie?

EDDIE
Anna, you looking beautiful as always.

ANNA
You look skinny, Eddie. You eating at all, down there in (mispronounces) Green-wich Village?

EDDIE
It's called Greenwich, baby. You got to get a little cool in that school of yours.

Anna laughs.

ANNA
Oh, you're cool now... Is that what you call it?

Eddie laughs at himself.

EDDIE
Always was!

JOHN
Eddie, you better get out of here before Charles sees you.

(CONTINUED)

As Carol walks away with Charles, she squeezes John's hand.

CAROL
Bye-bye, John.

JOHN
You take care, Carol.

ANNA
I'll see you later, Carol...

Carol nods shyly and follows her husband. As Charles walks away, John sees him toss Eddie's phone number into a trash can. After a beat, John walks over and takes the number out of the can. He stares down at the piece of paper, thinking. *

FRANK *
Should I meet you at the office, Mr. Williams? *

JOHN *
Where are you going? *

FRANK *
I'm going to the police station to get copies of the records I spilled food on. *

JOHN *
All right. *

Frank starts to walk away. John looks up from the phone number. *

JOHN (CONT'D) *
Frank... *

FRANK *
Yes...? *

JOHN *
Thanks. *

Frank nods shyly. *

FRANK *
You're welcome. *

Frank turns and walks away. John takes the phone number, folds it neatly and puts it into his pocket. Anna watches him. After a beat, she smiles sadly. *

71 OMITTED 71

John takes the file from Anna.

ANNA (CONT'D)
It's probably just an extra case...

JOHN
Who the hell is David Mercer? What did you do, Frank? *

John yells at Timothy.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Look in there and see if they gave us Charlie's file!

Timothy, Rose and Philip start searching through the documents.

JOHN (CONT'D)
What did you do, Frank? You didn't look at these before you left?

The kid is too afraid to say anything.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You go back now! Get up!

FRANK
I'm sorry, Mr. Williams...

JOHN
What were you thinking, son? WHAT WERE YOU THINKING!

FRANK
I forgot to bring the case numbers...

JOHN
YOU COULDN'T PICK UP THE DAMN PHONE? HOW STUPID ARE YOU?!!

FRANK
I was scared...

John stops and stares at the kid. His rage melting. Frank stares down at the floor.

JOHN
I don't understand. So what did you say? You just took any case they handed you?

Tight on Anna. She looks at the file on the chair.

(CONTINUED)

73 OMITTED 73

73A INT. JOHN'S CAR, TRAVELLING - LATER - NIGHT 73A

Tight on John, sitting in the passenger seat. We hear--

EDDIE
So you want to go to Brooklyn.

Eddie is sitting in the driver's seat watching his brother.

JOHN
I don't know it very well...

EDDIE
You got to get out of the Bronx more...
There's a whole world out here...

Eddie smiles, John doesn't.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I'm glad you called...

John and Eddie share a look. Eddie has missed him terribly.

JOHN
Don't tell Charles about this...

EDDIE
Don't worry. He doesn't call.

As Eddie drives through the city, John stares out into the night. Eddie gets up the nerve to say something to John.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I know you and Charles are really caught up in your careers, tryin' to be somebody... But you've never even come down and heard me play...not once... It's been four years...

John, for the first time, realizes how he has hurt his brother. Eddie reaches into his pocket and takes out a wrinkled scrap of newspaper.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
It's a review...

John takes the paper and reads it. It's clear from John's expression that the review is really good. John, sad and confused as to how he could have missed what his brother was doing all these years, looks up into Eddie's eyes. He never knew...

74 OMITTED 74

Eddie sees something.

Tight on a picture of David Mercer hanging on the wall. The young man is in a cap and gown, graduating from high school. Eddie knows this kid. *

78 EXT. BED-STUY BROWNSTONE - SAME - NIGHT 78

As John and Eddie move down the steps of the brownstone, John stops and shows the picture to some of the kids hanging out on the stoop. Eddie watches his brother.

JOHN
Can you guys help me out a minute?...
Take a look at this picture, anybody know this kid?

One TOUGH-LOOKING KID, 22, takes a quick look at the photo and gives a small, quick, bitter laugh.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Excuse me, you know this boy...?

The tough-looking kid stares at John, his eyes bloodshot and drunk.

EDDIE
John, let's go.

JOHN
Wait a second... Do you know this kid?

TOUGH KID
You just spoke to my mom?

JOHN
You're David Mercer's brother? *

The tough kid looks away.

TOUGH KID
Yeah, I'm his brother...

John puts out his hand.

JOHN
I'm John Williams...

The tough kid just stares at John's hand.

EDDIE
Come on, John, let's get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

John stares at the kid.

JOHN
What...!?

TOUGH KID
They were queer, man. Get your fuckin' hands off me!

John looks at the other kids; they're all laughing. Eddie pulls John, who is in shock, away from the kids. The tough kid takes a long drink from his bottle.

JOHN
What's he talking about...?

Eddie pulls his brother down the street toward John's car.

EDDIE
You know what he's talking about. Let's get out of here.

They walk in silence for a moment.

JOHN
It's not true...

EDDIE
Yes it is, John.

Eddie stops and looks his brother in the eye.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I recognized the kid from a picture on the wall... Charlie and David were coming down to the club, they came to hear me sing.

JOHN
You knew about them...

EDDIE
Yeah... Nobody ever said anything about it... It's different in the Village, man. People just accept things...

JOHN
Well, they don't in the Bronx... They kill you for things like that.

79 OMITTED 79 *

CAPT. MCCULLY
Come with me.

John is reluctant. They start to pull him.

JOHN
Get your hands off me...!

They grab him and start to drag him down into the stairwell.

JOHN
What the hell are you doing?!!!

80A INT. POLICE STATION HALLWAY - DAY 80A

They pull him down into the bowels of the police station.

JOHN
GET OFF ME!!!

They pull John out of the stairwell and through a dark basement corridor. He sees where they're taking him. A small, dark room at the end of the hall.

JOHN STARTS TO PANIC. HE TRIES DESPERATELY TO PULL FREE FROM THE MEN WHO DRAG HIM CLOSER TO THE ROOM. JOHN PULLS HIS WAY OUT OF HIS WINTER COAT! HE TRIES TO RUN, BUT THE COPS HAVE HIM BY HIS JACKET, WHICH RIPS AS THEY HOLD HIM. THEY DRAG JOHN TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE ROOM AND TOSS HIM IN. HE FLIES ONTO THE FLOOR, HEAD FIRST! HE HEARS THE DOOR SLAM BEHIND HIM!

80B INT. POLICE STATION BASEMENT ROOM - DAY 80B

Silence. John slowly starts to move, when he hears--

CHARLES, SR.
Get up, John...

JOHN GETS UP AND SEES HIS BROTHER SITTING AT A SMALL TABLE, STARING AT HIM.

CHARLES, SR.
Have a seat...

John, confused, gets to his feet and sits opposite his brother. He stares at Charles.

JOHN
You know about this?

CHARLES, SR.
About what?

Long pause.

(CONTINUED)

Charles is silent.

CHARLES, SR.
You have to understand one thing... My son is not *that*.

JOHN
Look, I don't know exactly what happened that night, but this is going to have to come out...

CHARLES, SR.
I TOLD YOU MY SON IS NOT *THAT!*

JOHN
Charles... Did you tell McCully not to let anybody know about the David Mercer murder? *

CHARLES, SR.
Captain McCully did not feel there was a connection between the two cases. And I agreed with him.

JOHN
But there is a connection! I know how hard this is for you, I can't believe it myself...

CHARLES, SR.
IT'S SIMPLY NOT TRUE, IS WHAT IT IS!!

JOHN
But it is true! Eddie knew about it. He knew about the boys, he'd seen them together.

Charles shudders slightly when he hears the word "together."

CHARLES, SR.
My brother is a drug addict...

JOHN
So what? What are you saying? Charlie is a murderer!?

CHARLES, SR.
He is not *that*!

JOHN
Then he's involved with David Mercer. *

CHARLES, SR.
He is not that either!!!

(CONTINUED)

81 INT. RIKERS INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT - NIGHT 81

John sits opposite Charlie, Jr. A prison guard stands silently in the shadows. Charlie is holding a picture of David Mercer. He stares at it. John is fixed on Charlie. *

CHARLIE, JR.
I knew David for nine months...and he never saw our house... He never saw where I lived. I wanted to show him. I had him walk by the house while I waited on the corner. He said it was a "grand place." I never heard anybody speak the way he did.

Tears fill Charlie's eyes. John doesn't understand the tears.

JOHN
How did you get to the park?

CHARLIE, JR.
I walked him down to the train so he could go home...and...

Charlie looks away from his uncle.

CHARLIE, JR. (CONT'D)
I wanted to...to kiss him good-bye.

John turns away from the boy. It's hard for him to hear this.

CHARLIE, JR. (CONT'D)
We went into Van Cortland, into the woods there, and we sat on the ground... We never had anywhere we could go... We could never be alone in a room... We started doing stuff. You know, I thought it was beautiful there with the trees and stars. And that's when I heard those boys. They were standing there, laughing at us.

FLASH CUT TO:

82 EXT. VAN CORTLAND PARK - NIGHT 82

Six white boys led by PAT SULLIVAN are looking at Charlie and David.

BACK TO RIKERS:

82A INT.RIKER'S INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT 82A

Charlie, for the first time, becomes consumed with hate.

CHARLIE, JR.
We pulled up our pants, and we ran.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
David was wearing the blue shirt?

FLASH - VAN CORTLAND PARK: David runs through the woods as several of the boys chase him.

BACK TO RIKERS:

CHARLIE, JR.
Yeah. And that kid, Pat Sullivan, grabbed David. And he began to beat him. I could tell they were drunk.

It's hard for Charlie to go on. The memory is too much for him.

CHARLIE, JR.
And they pissed on him. And they put cigarettes out on him. And I kept praying he was dead. He was so beautiful, and then I couldn't even recognize him...

FLASH - VAN CORTLAND PARK: One of the boys rolls David's body over with his foot. David's face is unrecognizable from the beating.

BACK TO RIKERS:

Charlie begins to weep. His eyes a mixture of hate and sadness.

CHARLIE, JR.
And then I knew he was dead 'cause they all took turns trying to twist his neck to see who could break it. And then they turned me loose so they could chase me... They wanted to chase me like an animal. All I kept hearing was, "Kill the nigger queer!! Kill the--"

FLASH - VAN CORTLAND PARK: Pat Sullivan drunkenly finishes Charlie's words.

PAT
--nigger queer!!

Tight on John. He's able to look at Charlie again. He's horrified by the boy's story.

CHARLIE, JR.
And they let me go, and I ran like I've never ran. And that kid Pat Sullivan caught me first.

CHARLIE AND FALLS DOWN. CHARLIE, INSANE WITH RAGE, WRAPS HIS FOREARM AROUND THE IRISH BOY'S NECK.

BACK TO RIKERS:

82C INT. RIKER'S INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT 82C

CHARLIE, JR.
He was big, but he was drunk. And I just kept thinking, I'm going to take one of them with me. And I squeezed his neck with my forearm as hard as I could. And I felt him die. And when the rest of them showed up, they had to beat the hell out of me before I'd let go. And you know what, Uncle John...?

John stares at the boy. He's never seen anger in Charlie, Jr. like this.

CHARLIE, JR.
I'm glad I did it!

John hands Charlie a tissue. Charlie stares at the picture of David.

CHARLIE, JR.
Can I keep this...? This is the first time I've seen a picture of him since that night.

John nods.

JOHN
Sure... You're going to have to tell this story on the stand...

Charlie suddenly becomes frightened.

CHARLIE, JR.
No, I won't.

JOHN
You're going to have to.

John stares at him. Charlie becomes as impenetrable as a brick wall.

CHARLIE, JR.
I'm telling you here and now... I won't tell what happened that night again.

JOHN
Why?

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
You're going to die if you don't!

He's silent.

JOHN
Answer me!

CHARLIE, JR.
I won't do that to my father.

The two men stare at each other.

JOHN
You're going to have--

CHARLIE, JR.
I said, I won't do that to my father.

83 INT. WILLIAMS' HOME LIVING ROOM - EARLY NEXT MORNING - DAY 83

John is in the living room, packing his briefcase for the day in court. Charles comes down the stairs, dressed in his police uniform. John stops what he is doing and stares at his brother. Charles refuses to look at him. Charles heads out the front door of the house. After a beat, Carol comes out of the kitchen and starts to clear the dishes from breakfast. John stares at her as she works.

JOHN
Carol?

CAROL
Yes...?

JOHN
I need your help...

John doesn't know how to start.

84 INT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE LIVING ROOM - LATER - DAY 84

Carol sits staring at John, her face stoic. Tears run down her cheeks.

JOHN
The only way for Charlie to live, is for this to come out. I don't know if it'll work... It's hearsay, but there are exceptions to the hearsay rule. We'll tell the judge that Charlie told you what happened that night. And then you could tell it on the stand... Would you do it?

(CONTINUED)

PAGE 93A OMIT

JOHN (CONT'D)
to be introduced and the evidence is *
crucial to the determination of guilt--

JUDGE AKER
(cutting him off) *
No, it doesn't, Counselor. If your client
chooses, he can take the stand. *There is* *
another way for the evidence to be *
introduced. *

JOHN
Your Honor, my client cannot bring himself
to talk about this on the stand. Please
consider the circumstances.

JUDGE AKER
It's hearsay...

JOHN
Your Honor, please...

JUDGE AKER
I can't.

JOHN
(above a whisper) *
This is not a tactic, this is the truth! *

JUDGE AKER
Then you're going to have to find a way to *
introduce it at an appeal.

Aker taps his gavel and turns his attention to the court. Minor *
returns to his seat. *

JOHN *
(whispering) *
Please reconsider... I am begging you... *

Aker sternly stares at John. *

90 OMITTED 90 *

91 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - MINUTES LATER - DAY 91

Aker, stares down at John, who is sitting at the defense table. *

JUDGE AKER
Do you have any witnesses to call?

John slowly stands up.

JOHN
No... The defense rests.

MINOR
How much evidence is enough? Confessions, police, six eye-witnesses? If you can't convict Charles Williams, then there is something grossly wrong with our legal system.

93 INT. BRONX COURTROOM - LATER - DAY 93

John is in front of the jury, giving his closing arguments. He holds the photo of Charlie taken right after the arrest.

JOHN
Somebody beat this young man. You can't doubt that. But the question is, who did it? If the police did it, then that confession could have been coerced. If Pat Sullivan and his friends did it, then Charlie could have been acting in self defense. *One of them is lying*. Can you trust a witness who lies? Or, more importantly, can you convict Charlie Williams of murder in the 1st degree on the testimony of a liar!?

John pauses, the tone of his argument changes. He moves very close to the jurors. He tries to keep his emotions under control as he speaks, but it's a losing battle.

JOHN (cont'd)
I am Charlie's uncle. I've seen him grow from a beautiful little baby into the young man he is today. I know him like I know my own face... He is a wonderful, kind, gentle kid... I know he's not a kid in the eyes of the law, but he *is*... And I am telling you as sure as I am standing here... He didn't do this... Please, don't convict him. Please...

The fourteen white men stare back at John. Their faces unmoved.

94 INT. BRONX COURTHOUSE, HALLWAY - NEXT DAY - DAY 94

John, Eddie, Carol, Betty, David, Anna, Rose, Timothy, Philip and Frank all sit, drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes. Eddie kneels in front of his sister-in-law.

EDDIE
My place is big enough for all of you. Staying in that hotel is stupid.

A court officer walks up the hall. Everyone turns to him.

(CONTINUED)

Aker leaves the bench. Minor calmly packs up his briefcase. John turns to the press, who surrounds Minor.

JOHN
There was evidence that was not heard! *

(CONTINUED)

99 EXT. JAZZ BAR - LATER, ESTABLISHING - NIGHT 99

Eddie, carrying his tenor sax case, opens the door for John and escorts him into the jazz club.

Eddie's sax takes over the melody. John looks up and watches his * brother play. How could he have missed this all these years? John * sadly looks down into his still unsipped drink.

SINGER (SINGING)
If I should paint a picture, too,
That showed the loveliness of you,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
Then let's have a retrial and see who's lying...

Tight on the judge; the request for a new trial is denied. His gavel cracks down. John continues to argue until he is finally restrained by the court officers.

JOHN
Please, Your Honor... Please reconsider... I'm begging the Court! Where is the justice when evidence is not heard!? He is an innocent man!!

Eddie's music continues.

SINGER (SINGING)
If I should find a twinkling star
And wonder where you are,
That star would be
Like my heart and me
Dedicated to you.

102A INT. JAZZ BAR - CONTINUING - NIGHT 102A *

Eddie's last notes trail off. Overwhelmed, he stops playing and whispers to himself-- *

EDDIE
Dedicated to you...Charlie...

102B INT. APPEALS COURT - CONTINUING - DAY 102B *

The last notes of the song play out. John, who has completely lost his temper, continues to ardently argue as he is dragged from the court. * *

103 EXT. WILLIAMS HOME - NIGHT, SUMMER 103

A white title burns through the dark, empty street--

11 MONTHS LATER

The white characters fade away as John's car pulls up outside the big, old house. Eddie and John get out of the car and stare at the house for a moment. There is a lot of history there for them. They take a breath and then John knocks on the door.

JOHN
Charles! It's John!

There's no answer. John slowly opens the door and moves into the house.

police jacket is draped over the back of the chair, his powder-blue shirt is open at the collar.

Charles stares at the two men.

JOHN
How you doing?...

CHARLES, SR.
I don't want him in this house.

EDDIE
I'm not leavin', big brother...

Charles' eyes lock onto Eddie's.

CHARLES, SR.
If I want you out...you're going out.

JOHN
I got to talk to you, Charles...

Long pause. Charles continues to eat as if his brothers aren't even in the room.

JOHN
Your son is going to die... My options are running out.

Charles stops eating and listens.

JOHN
You could still make a plea to the Governor... You could explain what you did...what McCully did. Being a cop, it would mean a lot...

CHARLES, SR.
I spent eight years getting to where I am in the police force.

EDDIE
You spent eighteen years raising Charlie.

Charles explodes.

CHARLES, SR.
AND I DID NOT RAISE A HOMOSEXUAL! NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY!!!

EDDIE
What are you!? Too damn proud!? You turn your back on your blood for that stupid badge?! *

CHARLES, SR. *
As close as I'm going to get!

Eddie and John stare at Charles. This is a frightening revelation. The hate Eddie has for Charles suddenly turns to a * profound sadness. Eddie's eyes filled with tears. *

EDDIE *
I'm sorry... I didn't come here to argue *
with you... I came here to ask you...to
beg you to please help Charlie...

CHARLES, SR.
I see Charlie in jail. He isn't a damn
queer.. He's a good boy.

Charles won't look at his brothers.

JOHN
We're begging you, Charles... I'm getting
on my knees. Please...

CHARLES, SR.
He carries my name, that boy...

EDDIE
Remember when we were little?... How you
always protected us?...

CHARLES, SR.
That boy is my seed.

John and Eddie both have tears rolling down their cheeks.

JOHN
Please, Charles...

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
CHARLES!! PLEASE!!!

Charles easily starts to drag them to the door of the house. They plead with all their hearts for Charles not to throw them out.

EDDIE
DON'T DO THIS!!! CHARLES, PLEASE DON'T DO THIS!!!

JOHN
CHARLES, WE'RE YOUR FAMILY!!!

Charles gets them to the door.

EDDIE
BIG BROTHER, I'M BEGGING YOU!!!

JOHN
HE'S YOUR SON!!! HE'S YOU, CHARLES!!!

CHARLES TOSSES EDDIE A FEW FEET OUT THE DOOR, AND THEN JOHN. CHARLES SLAMS THE DOOR BEHIND THEM.

After a beat, Charles turns and walks back to the table, his eyes wide and frozen, staring at nothing. And then, after a beat, he slowly, catatonically, begins to eat.

105 EXT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE - NIGHT 105

John and Eddie sit on the stoop. Tears slowly roll down their cheeks. A lone street light illuminates the two brothers.

106 EXT. OSSINING PRISON - WEEKS LATER - DAY 106

John's car moves through the massive, stone guard towers of Sing-Sing prison. John drives. Eddie sits next to him. Carol and the two kids are in the back. John's car pulls up to the gate. After a brief conversation with a guard, John pulls the car into the prison. *

107 INT. OSSINING, MEETING ROOM - MINUTES LATER - DAY 107

Charlie sits on a chair in the center of the room. David and Betty stand next to an old couch, staring at their older brother. Carol sits across from her son. Tears run down her cheeks. She would give anything to hold him, but she is not allowed. *

John stares at the tortured boy.

108 EXT. UPSTATE N.Y. MOTEL - FOUR HOURS LATER - DAY 108

John and Carol have rented four rooms adjacent to each other. All of the doors are open. Inside one, John is on the phone. He's sweating. He's on hold. Somebody picks up.

JOHN
Yes. I'm still here... The execution is scheduled for Monday... I'd like to speak to the governor before the weekend... I just need five minutes of his time. Yes, I'll stay holding...

In the room next door, Anna is on the phone. Rose and Frank stand, watching her. She is sweating, her eyes are fierce, she hasn't slept all night.

ANNA
What I'm telling you is that there is a new statement... Our assistant is outside Judge DeFranco's home... All the man has to do is open the door and take the paper from Counselor Williams' assistant.

109 EXT. JUDGE DEFRANCO'S HOUSE - SAME - DAY 109

Timothy stands in the driveway of the large home with an envelope under his arm.

110 EXT. UPSTATE N.Y. MOTEL-CAROL'S ROOM - LATER - DAY 110

In another room, the door open, Carol and Eddie sit staring out the window. The only sound is the relentless tick of the alarm clock.

Betty sits on the floor playing with her little brother.

111 EXT. UPSTATE N.Y. MOTEL-JOHN'S ROOM - DAY 111

John is still on the phone.

JOHN
I'm still holding... I don't know your name... Mrs. Evans, thank you... Mrs. Evans, I'm appealing to you, I'm begging you here for the life of a young man. Please do what it takes to let the governor know I'm here, Mrs. Evans...

112 INT. OSSINING PRISON, THE DEATH CHAMBER - LATER - DAY 112

The chair waits ominously in the center of the room.

TIMOTHY
Yeah, he said he was definitely going to look at it. He was really nice, he said not to worry.

118 INT. UPSTATE N.Y. MOTEL JOHN'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER - DAY 118

John waits, still on hold.

119 INT. UPSTATE N.Y. MOTEL CAROL'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER - DAY 119

Carol and Eddie sit catatonically. Their eyes are wide, frozen and frightened. The clock incessantly ticks.

120 INT. DEATH ROW, CHARLIE'S CELL - OSSINING - SAME - DAY 120

Tight on Charlie, tears are now freely flowing down his face.

In the hallway, the three guards continue to speak in hushed tones. One of them mentions a fishing trip, another talks about his kids.

121 INT. WILLIAMS HOME LIVING ROOM - SAME - DAY 121

Charles sits, still in the middle of the living room. Still staring at the telephone. He turns from the phone and stares into-

The dining room, imagining scenes from long ago.

FLASH CUT TO:

122 INT. WILLIAMS HOME DINING ROOM - FLASHBACK- DAY 122

A dinner is in progress. Carol, Charles, Sr., Charlie, Jr., Betty, David, Eddie and John are all eating. It's their traditional Sunday night dinner. They smile, talk and laugh. Carol chides the children.

Tight on Charlie, smiling, his eyes alive and shining. He jokes with his little brother and sister. Laughter fills the house.

FLASH CUT BACK TO:

123 INT. WILLIAMS HOME LIVING ROOM - PRESENT - DAY 123

Dead silence. Charles, haunted by his vision, stares at the empty, dirty dining room.

124 INT. OSSINING PRISON, DEATH ROW-CHARLIE'S CELL - DAY 124

TIGHT ON CHARLIE'S FACE. HIS LIPS ARE QUIVERING. HE CAN'T CONTROL HIS TEARS.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE, JR. (V.O.)
My sickness tempted me, and it destroyed everybody's life... I'm so sorry for my sickness, I'm so sorry for who I am.

Carol reaches over and picks up the receiver. We hear no words. She says hello.

128 INT. UPSTATE N.Y. MOTEL JOHN'S ROOM - SAME - DAY 128

John is still on hold.

HIS THOUGHTS ARE SUDDENLY BROKEN. HE TURNS TOWARD CAROL'S ROOM AND SEES--

Carol is bent over, wailing, hysterical, the phone still in her hand. She screams and wildly swings her fists in an insane rage. Eddie tries to hold her.

Because of the lack of sound the images are surreal and dreamlike...like a memory. Anna and Rose come running down the hallway. John asks what happened. Eddie tells him.

CHARLIE, JR. (V.O.)
I guess I deserved what happened, but I know that you didn't...and Daddy didn't.

John's face suddenly becomes filled with shock and pain. After a beat, he stares at the phone and slowly hangs it up.

CHARLIE, JR. (V.O.)
Maybe if I have the courage to do this, it might prove something to Daddy.

John gets up and crosses the hallway to Carol's room. He leans against the wall and begins to weep. Tears roll down his cheeks. His head shakes back and forth, "no... no..."

129 INT. OSSINING PRISON, DEATH ROW-CHARLIE'S CELL - SAME - DAY 129

Still void of sound-- The guards lay Charlie's flaccid body down on the floor. One guard sees a neatly folded note on the bed. He picks it up. He reads it, his face expressionless.

CHARLIE, JR.(V.O)
It might prove that I did something it took being a man to do.

TIGHT ON CHARLIE'S FACE, THE SALTY RESIDUE FROM HIS TEARS STILL VISIBLE ON HIS ROUND, SOFT, CHILDISH CHEEKS.

CHARLIE, JR. (V.O.)
It might make my father proud.

JOHN
And in that moment, I saw no escape, no light, no hope...no God...

Tight on Charlie's face. It's beautiful, angelic, a pure incarnation of innocence. We slowly dissolve from Charlie, Jr.'s face to:

Charles, Sr.'s face. We're now inside--

133 INT. WILLIAMS HOME, LIVING ROOM - HOURS LATER -NIGHT 133

Tight on Charles' face, tense and lost. The pride is drained out of it. The phone lies on the floor, the receiver off the hook. Charles has clearly heard the news about Charlie, Jr.'s death. Charles knows he's destroyed everything that was of any value to him. Then, although he fights it, his eyes fill with tears. For the first time he begins to weep. He can't hold back.

JOHN (V.O.)
My brother Charles died of a stroke three years later.

Slowly, we pull back and see that Charles is sitting on the floor with his back against the wall of his large, empty living room.

JOHN (V.O.)
I've thought a lot about him lately. He was a man who never took pride in who he was, only in who he wanted to be. Slowly over the years, I've lost my anger toward him... I feel so sorry for him now...

SLOW, LONG DISSOLVE TO:

134 EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL - YEARS LATER - DAY 134

We move through the beautiful, well-manicured, emerald green grass, past several small, delicate, beautiful trees. The ambient sound slowly comes back.

JOHN (V.O.)
But life went on in its relentless way. I married Anna two years later.

We see John and Anna walking through the grass and the trees.

JOHN (V.O.)
Carol never remarried...

Carol, we see, is walking next to John and Anna. All are dressed up. It's a glorious, sun-filled day.

(CONTINUED)

the wide avenue in a parade. The air is filled with joyful cheering and smatterings of applause. John looks a little lost, a little unsure of what he is supposed to do. John, Anna and Eddie have a touch of grey in their hair. Betty and David are full-grown adults. As they march, they wave tentatively.

JOHN (V.O.)
In 1972 we all went to this parade, and we marched for Charlie... He only needed to be born later... Or maybe we only needed to see clearer.

Tight on John's lapel. He wears a button with a smiling black and white photo of Charlie. A young, black boy, 18 or 19, comes up to John and Carol. He pushes a flower into John's lapel and another into Carol's. It's clear he's gay.

We pull back to reveal that they are marching in a gay pride parade. The street is filled with gay men and women. They're celebrating, chanting and protesting. The rhythms and lyrics of "What's Going On" float through the hot summer air.

The gay black kid looks up at John and Carol; he's smiling and happy.

GAY BLACK BOY
Gay is beautiful... Have a good day.

John and Carol don't know what to say. The kid runs off down through the parade, handing out flowers. John watches him.

JOHN (V.O.)
It's odd what clouds your vision.

John continues to stare at the kid. After a beat, he turns to Anna, who looks as beautiful has she did fifteen years ago.

JOHN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Anna became a lawyer after we got married. We had one son and one daughter. They both followed us and became attorneys as well... My children see so clearly...

SLOW LONG DISSOLVE TO:

136 EXT. BENSONHURST STREET - 1990 - DAY 136

Tight on John, now 69, marching through the street with Anna. * He now looks like the man we met in the beginning. His hair is white, his skin wrinkled, but his eyes are clear. Next to him are a young man and woman, his son and daughter. All * are older and more frail...but somehow stronger. *

(CONTINUED)