

HEROES AND VILLAINS ENTERTAINMENT

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BUST

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The whole truth and nothing but the truth

Producers: Laura Sheehy, Matt Garland
Bohemian Pirate Productions

CHEAP STOCKS IN A PRICEY MARKET

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The New
AT&T's
Boss

LAWYERS FROM HELL

Slip up and guys like
these can bankrupt
your company—just
ask Dow Corning.

By Joseph Nocera



FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL CEMETERY - DAY

The double headstone of a country grave at sunrise.

Etched on the left side: "Jeanie Wilkes". The right side is blank.

A tired man in a business suit sits alone, drinking whiskey at the grave. Meet JOHN O'QUINN (48), a tortured soul.

John finishes the bottle then lies down on the grass...

On the right side, beneath the blank spot on the headstone.

ATTORNEY (PRE-LAP)
Why are you suing John O'Quinn?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

A conference room lined with law books. DARLA LEXINGTON (58), dressed in black, gives a deposition.

DARLA
He lied to me.

We see QUICK POPS of several other plaintiffs:

-- JULIE JAMES (60), a faded fashion model.

JULIE
Unpaid alimony.

-- MIKE KERENSKY (54), a calm lawyer.

KERENSKY
Withheld wages.

-- RICK LAMINACK (59), a bald business man.

RICK
Wrongful termination...for sexual harassment.

-- MARY HENDERSON (45), a neat professional.

MARY
Hostile work environment.

-- JAMES CUTLIFF (48), a working stiff.

JAMES CUTLIFF
Wrongful death.

-- Back to Darla.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)
And how much money are you
requesting from the O'Quinn estate?

DARLA
Everything.

-- Julie.

JULIE
Nine hundred thousand.

-- Kerensky.

KERENSKY
Five million.

-- Rick.

RICK
He killed my fucking parrot.

-- Mary.

MARY
Forty million.

-- James Cutliff.

JAMES CUTLIFF
Six million. And punitive damages.

-- Darla.

DARLA
I still love John. I really do.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)
For clarity, I need the exact
valuation of "everything."

Darla pauses...and then --

DARLA
One point four billion dollars.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

DARLA LEXINGTON 20 years earlier, seated at the plaintiff
table of a small courtroom.

She's young (36) in a lowcut dress with a "courtesan's hourglass figure and geisha's will to please." [NOTE: All descriptions in quotes are drawn from firsthand accounts.]

JUDGE (O.S.)
We'll now hear the closing argument
from Mr. O'Quinn.

John O'Quinn (48), with "the rugged good looks of the Marlboro Man" and the "genteel accent of Houston's literati," gives Darla's hand a comforting squeeze then stands.

JOHN
Do you believe in Justice?

John lets this ring.

JOHN
Do you believe our *justice system*
can still deliver Justice? Consider
the history of the breast implant...

The speech evokes FLASHES of his imagery:

INT. JAPANESE BROTHEL - NIGHT

A PROSTITUTE leads an American G.I. through a brothel.

JOHN (V.O.)
1945. Japanese prostitutes develop
a new way to please those
insatiable Western soldiers.

They pass a closet, where the MADAME injects a gray substance into a cringing GIRL's breast.

JOHN (V.O.)
By injecting paraffin wax directly
into their chest.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Back to John, holding a small box.

JOHN
1963. Right here in Houston, two
doctors partner with silicone giant
Dow Corning to bring you the Great
American Breast Implant.

He pulls a milky orb out of the box: a breast implant.

JOHN
Dow Corning claims there are no
side effects. But three decades of
women tell a different story.

As his intensity builds, we catch QUICKER FLASHES:

-- A LADY tries on bras, realizing in horror that one breast
is deflated and leaking a clear substance.

JOHN (V.O.)
Rupture...

-- A mammograph X-ray, but two white orbs obstruct the view.

JOHN (V.O.)
Cancer...

-- A WOMAN's feet as she showers, legs covered in rashes. A
clump of hair falls to the drain.

JOHN (V.O.)
Lupus.

John is now in a fit of passion.

JOHN
Dow Corning committed a crime against
our biology. They sold an implant
that gave Darla Lexington lupus.

John points to Darla at the plaintiff's table --

JOHN
But the government didn't punish them.
The Food and Drug Administration
didn't punish them. Our justice system
gives that power to people like you.

John looks right into the JURY's soul.

JOHN
All my chips are down, and I'm
betting our justice system can
still deliver Justice.

SMASH TO TITLES:

BUST

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

The lawyers wait for a verdict. Darla's leg shakes, anxious.

JOHN
You did great.

She smiles, relaxing...

BOOM! A door bursts open and the jury enters. Silence as the foreperson delivers a paper to the JUDGE.

JUDGE
In response to the first question --
"Was Dow Corning negligent in the
creation of their breast implant
device?" -- The jury answers --

Just then, a VOICE interrupts the judge.

VOICE (O.S.)
Japanese prostitutes!

Everyone turns to see --

A grey PARROT in the back of the room...whose shouts are as clear as human speech.

PARROT
Japanese prostitutes!

JOHN
Rick, I swear to God.

The defense lawyer rushes toward the parrot, and we recognize him as a younger **RICK LAMINACK** (39), that balding jester who's both "city-cynical and country-genuine."

RICK
I don't know how she got in here.

Maybe this isn't a real court. John turns to the judge.

JOHN
Get on with it, Mike.

The judge reads. We realize this is a young **MIKE KERENSKY** (34), "the firm's moral compass with an accountant's brain."

KERENSKY
"Was Dow Corning negligent in the
creation of their breast implant
device?" -- The jury answers...no.

JOHN
For fuck's sake. How many votes did
we get?

JUDGE

Zero.

John snaps at the jury.

JOHN

None of you?!

RICK

Slick Rick, baby.

Fuck.

JOHN

Thanks for your time. I guess.
Slick Rick will get you paid.

John packs up his briefcase.

DARLA

It's OK, John.

JOHN

It's not OK.

He stomps to the exit.

PARROT

Japanese prostitutes!

JOHN

I'm gonna kill that parrot.

The judge removes his robe. The bailiff stops a camera. Rick hands cash to the jurors. This was a practice run.

FOLLOW John out the door to --

INT. LAW OFFICE - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A modest law office with a handful of EMPLOYEES in oversized 90's suits. A sign welcomes us to "O'Quinn, Kerensky & Laminack."

John enters, people go quiet. Rick follows.

RICK

Twelve - zero, motherfuckers.

John turns to a female INTERN.

JOHN

VCR in the war room, please.

As John barges into his office, the intern watches in awe...

And we recognize her as young **MARY HENDERSON** (25).

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON: CCTV footage of the jury deliberating.

JUROR (V.O.)

They presented no proof whatsoever
that silicone can cause lupus...

John, Kerensky, and Darla watch the footage in the conference room, which doubles as their mock courtroom. Rick feeds donuts to his parrot.

RICK

We need more dudes on the jury.

KERENSKY

Why?

DARLA

(quiet)

Excuse me...

RICK

They'll think Darla is hot. No offense, Darla.

KERENSKY

Men historically don't rule for female plaintiffs.

MARY (O.S.)

The gender of your audience isn't the problem.

The lawyers turn to see the intern at the door. She holds a box labeled "FIRST CLASS".

MARY

Sorry. The last of the discovery came in.

JOHN

Just put it on my desk.

RICK

Intern girl is right.

JOHN

She has a name, Rick.
(to Mary)
What's your name?

MARY

Henderson.

JOHN
Your first name, you're not fuckin
James Bond.

MARY
Mary.

JOHN
Why do you think we're losing,
Mary?

MARY
You're trying to hang a killer with
no murder weapon. There is no proof
that breast implants cause lupus.

Kerensky points to Darla.

KERENSKY
She's the proof.

MARY
She's the premise. For Dow to be
guilty, you have to prove they were
aware implants *could* have hurt her.

John nods, impressed.

JOHN
Read through that discovery today.

MARY
All of it?

JOHN
Find me a murder weapon and I'll
give you a job.

DARLA
Why don't we just settle?

Everyone goes quiet.

DARLA
We've practiced ten times. We never
win. Let's get the settlement money.

All eyes on John. This is a sensitive subject...

JOHN
Darla. I didn't take your case for
money.

DARLA
I know, but --

JOHN
If we settle, the case gets wrapped
in an NDA, and Dow just keeps right
on giving lupus to young women.

DARLA
But if we lose...

JOHN
I'll find a way to beat them. And
when I beat them, you'll be a hero
for standing up to an evil
corporation when anybody else would
have settled.

John tosses his lasso...

JOHN
I'm asking you to fight with me for
something bigger. You don't let go
of a bronco just because it starts
kicking.

And he ropes her in.

DARLA
OK. Let's beat 'em.

John smiles and turns back to the TV. Everyone relaxes.

Off Mary, impressed at John's passion --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Back to the depositions. Mary is older and less impressed.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)
How would you characterize Mr.
O'Quinn's personality?

She thinks for moment...

MARY
John was five or six different
people. You can't put him in one
dimension.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)
Then how would you characterize his
legal practice?

MARY

The Wild West. The way John saw it,
a plaintiff lawyer was a hired gun.

MONTAGE - JOHN'S DAY

As Mary speaks, we jump back to 1990's Houston:

-- EXT. DOWNTOWN - John bombs his classic "1957 Ford Thunderbird Convertible" through a booming business district.

MARY (V.O.)

Back in the old West, if bad guys
killed your cattle or poisoned your
water, you couldn't defend yourself.

-- EXT. OIL FIELD - John gets out of his car and looks at oil derricks cranking in the red sand. He puts on a cowboy hat and walks toward a nearby trailer park...

MARY (V.O.)

So you'd find some cowboy to fight
for you. But not just any cowboy --

-- INT. TRAILER - John presents a "New Client" contract to a WOMAN and her HUSBAND, who is bald from cancer treatment.

JOHN

You don't want some namby-pamby son
of a bitch. If Chevron obeyed the
law, I'd be the Maytag repairman.

-- INT. JOHN'S CAR - That client contract is now signed in the front seat. John speeds and sips on a whiskey bottle.

MARY (V.O.)

You'd hire someone with a dark past.
Someone crazy enough to wage a war
against impossible odds.

-- EXT. RANCH - John walks toward a barn with a RANCHER. Caution tape at the entrance warns "Pesticides Kill!"

MARY (V.O.)

Maybe someone who used to run with
the bad guys...

JOHN

I started my career at Baker Botts.
White shoe corporate defense. You
know what the lawyers across the
aisle think about you?

(a pause)

They don't think about you.

-- EXT. AUTO SHOP - John gives a client contract to a GUY in a neck brace as his wrecked car gets fixed.

MARY (V.O.)
We all love an outlaw turned hero.
And the best part is --

JOHN
You don't pay me a penny.

-- INT. TRAILER - Back to the cancer patient.

JOHN
You don't pay me a penny.

-- INT. BARN - Back to the rancher signing the contract.

JOHN
You don't pay me a single penny.

-- EXT. HARRIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - John pulls more whiskey as he bounds up the iconic courthouse steps.

MARY (V.O.)
Unless of course they win. Then you
pay your outlaw a whopping forty
percent of the verdict.

-- INT. COURTHOUSE - John files these three new lawsuits with a CLERK.

MARY (V.O.)
And then your hired gun takes his
cut and buys a bigger gun, so he
can fight a bigger bad guy, win a
bigger verdict, buy a *bigger* gun.

-- INT. COURTROOM - John peeks into the courtroom on his way out. Two LAWYERS battle.

MARY (V.O.)
The way John saw it, if he
bankrolled enough lawsuits, tried
enough practice cases, carried a
big enough gun, well, then...

John marvels at this trial on Texas' biggest stage...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Mary marvels at the memory...

MARY
He could beat anybody.

She lets this hang. Like a taunt. Or a threat. Or a curse...

EXT. REC CENTER - NIGHT

A dim parking lot. John sits in his muscle car alone.

He looks at the entrance to a run-down rec center. Something about this place intimidates him...

He steels himself, kills the last of the whiskey, and gets out of the car.

INT. REC CENTER - NIGHT

Alcoholics Anonymous. John sits with PARTICIPANTS in a circle of folding chairs.

JOHN
My name is John. And I'm an alcoholic.

PARTICIPANTS
Hi, John.

JOHN
I've been sober for...six months.

A heavy lie.

INT. REC CENTER - LATER

Meeting over. John grabs coffee at a refreshments table. A black MAN approaches.

MAN
You drive the Thunderbird?

JOHN
My old man left me two things. That car and a very bad habit.

MAN
Well I hope you're not trying to get rid of the car.

John extends a hand...

JOHN
John.

MAN
Johnny.

...and meets JOHNNY CUTLIFF (38), "a good-natured, long-suffering man" who will change his life.

JOHN
You said you were --
(hiccup)
Ten years sober?

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
And nine years addicted to these
sugar cookies.

Johnny grabs cookies from the table.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
The bitch about addiction is you get
so good at lying to other people,
you start lying to yourself.

JOHN
Amen.

John laughs, but Johnny doesn't.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
That must've been some strong ass
whiskey you drank six months ago.

Caught. Johnny claps him on the shoulder.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
Don't crash that car, brother.

Johnny walks off, leaving John alone. Guilty.

EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

John pulls into his driveway in a middle-class neighborhood.
He tosses the whiskey bottle into a bin.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

John searches the dark kitchen until he finds...air
freshener. He looks at a framed portrait on the wall: an
older version of John in a cowboy hat. His father.

*John sees his reflection in the frame's glass, superimposed
on his father. A cowboy. Or maybe...an outlaw.*

John sprays himself with the fresh scent.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

JULIE JAMES (39), the model from the depositions, sleeps.
John creeps into bed, quiet, but --

JULIE
I can still smell it.

John closes his eyes. Exhausted.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

5 AM. John is already up and dressed, making breakfast alone. He listens to his Dow closing argument on a Walkman.

JOHN (V.O.)
Do you believe our *justice system*
can still deliver Justice?

John puts the meal on a tray and leaves it outside his wife's door. An apology...

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

John stops at a newsstand to buy *Fortune* magazine.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

CLOSE ON: The cover of *Fortune*. It depicts a smiling young lawyer, DAVID BERNICK (34), who according to the magazine is "The #1 Lawyer in America."

John listens to his Walkman as he reads the magazine --

INT. LAW OFFICE - LOBBY - DAY

John walks through the empty office until --

Mary turns the corner from the break room and almost spills coffee on him. John jolts, surprised.

MARY
I'm so sorry!

JOHN
Jesus, you scared me. What are you
doing here?

MARY
The discovery.

She points to her cubicle: the files in that "FIRST CLASS" box are now highlighted. The desk cluttered with coffee cups.

JOHN
You worked all night?

MARY
It was a lot to get through.

John pulls \$200 cash from his wallet and shakes Mary's hand, passing her the money.

MARY
What's this?

JOHN
We call it a Houston Handshake.
Find anything?

MARY
Uh, it's mostly fluff, but look --

They go to her desk.

MARY
I just found this file. 800 pages
of internal memos. All dated around
the release of silicone implants.

JOHN
They tried to bury it. Let's dig.

John motions. She gives him half and they start to read. Then Mary notices the lawyer on *Fortune* magazine.

MARY
Who's that?

JOHN
David Bernick.

John tosses her the magazine.

JOHN
Hotshot Ivy League brat who topped
the national rankings this year.

MARY
You ever been ranked?

JOHN
Not yet.

PARROT (O.S.)
Daddy's little whore.

They turn to see the Parrot staring from a cage in Rick's office.

PARROT
Daddy's little whore.

MARY

It said some pretty weird stuff
last night...

JOHN

I try not to think about what goes
on in Rick's office.

John scans the documents. A beat. And then John notices how
intensely Mary reads the *Fortune* rankings --

JOHN

Mike told me you were top of the
class at U of H Law. That's
impressive.

MARY

My professors say they've seen
better. The best was a tall, blue-
collar kid 30 years ago.

JOHN

They exaggerate...it was 20 years ago.

Mary smiles. A bond.

JOHN

So you want to be on that list?

MARY

When my parents got divorced, Mom
paid a cheap lawyer and my dad
hired a...a David Bernick type.

Mary tosses the magazine onto the desk.

MARY

She got nothing. And the rest of her
life, her entire existence, was
defined by the quality of her lawyer.

JOHN

It's a dangerous power we wield.

MARY

Can I ask you a question?

JOHN

It's your witness.

MARY

Why are you wielding that power to
help Darla Lexington? I mean, aren't
there more dire injustices?

JOHN

Any time someone brings me a case, I hear them out. Do the research. And I found that many women who get breast implants are recovering from a mastectomy, or some injury, or they've breastfed four kids and their husband ran off with the nanny.

Mary considers...

JOHN

These women get implants to feel like women. And for that, they don't deserve to get lupus.

Just then, John reads something that stops him cold.

JOHN

Holy shit --

INT. KERENSKY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Early morning. Kerensky sleeps next to his WIFE. Peaceful --

RING. RING. The bedside phone blares. Kerensky answers.

KERENSKY

Yeah.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LAW OFFICE - SAME

John grips the shocking documents.

JOHN

I found it.

KERENSKY

Jesus Christ, John --

WIFE

Language!

KERENSKY

Jeepers Creepers, John, what time is it?

JOHN

Dow purposely waited to send this discovery until the last moment.

KERENSKY

Let's have show and tell when I get to the office.

JOHN

There are internal memos from when they were developing implants.

John reads the documents.

JOHN

"We are hearing complaints from the field. The units bleed profusely after they have been flexed."

KERENSKY

That's in writing?

MARY

There's pages of this stuff.

KERENSKY

The intern's there too?!

JOHN

She's an Associate now.

Mary beams. John reads another document.

JOHN

"I have proposed again and again that we must begin an in depth study of our gel, envelope, and bleed phenomenon."

KERENSKY

Wait...they knew?

MARY

They knew.

KERENSKY

Jeepers Fucking Creepers.

JOHN

That, my friends, is a smoking gun.

Off John, holding his weapon --

SMASH TO:

EXT. HARRIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Trial day. The DOW CORNING LEGAL TEAM stands on the courthouse steps. Wealthy, northeast pricks.

JUDGE (PRE-LAP)
Calling the case of Darla S.
Lexington vs. Dow Corning, Inc.

VROOM! John pulls up in his muscle car and gets out.

John walks right to KENNETH FEINBERG (44), "a cigar-chomping Washington attorney," and hands him the car keys.

JOHN
Park it close. This'll be quick.

The lawyer death squad glowers as John strolls inside --

INT. HARRIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - LATER

The trial. In a series of POPS, John battles Feinberg:

-- Darla on the stand.

KENNETH FEINBERG
What do you do for money, Ms.
Lexington?

DARLA
I'm a stewardess.

KENNETH FEINBERG
Do you like your job?

DARLA
Nobody likes their job.

KENNETH FEINBERG
I like my job.

DARLA
You're not a stewardess. You're not
on your feet all day, leaning over
people. It gets, you know, um --

KENNETH FEINBERG
Claustrophobic.

DARLA
That's the word. Thank you.

KENNETH FEINBERG
These people you're bending over,
are they ever men?

DARLA
Figures as much.

KENNETH FEINBERG
Do they give you tips?

DARLA
On occasion.

KENNETH FEINBERG
On more occasions or less occasions
since you got breast implants?

John objects to the JUDGE.

JOHN		JUDGE
Objection.		Sustained.

-- John cross-examines Darla.

JOHN
Darla, is your primary care
physician a man or a woman?

DARLA
A man.

JOHN
And did he tell you about any
potential side effects of breast
implants?

DARLA
He said they were completely safe.

-- Feinberg cracks open a soda can in front of the jury.

KENNETH FEINBERG
There is no medical study indicating
that silicone causes lupus.

He drinks.

KENNETH FEINBERG
Silicone does absolutely no harm to
the human body. This is why Dow
Corning has used it for fifty years
to make heart valves, pacemakers,
syringes, hell even cans of soda.

JOHN
Objection.

Feinberg tosses up his hands and looks at John.

JOHN
We call it all Coke down here, Ken.
Just trying to help you out.

The jury chuckles. John has them on his side...

-- Feinberg cross-examines Darla.

KENNETH FEINBERG
Are you married?

No. DARLA

KENNETH FEINBERG
Have you ever been married?

DARLA
Three --
I'm three times divorced.
-- Now John.

KENNETH FEINBERG
Into the microphone, please.

JOHN
Do you feel like your doctor
listens to your medical concerns?

DARLA
About as much as my ex-husband did.

The jury laughs.

-- Feinberg.

KENNETH FEINBERG
The day after you got breast implants, Ms. Lexington, did you feel unwell?

No. DARLA

KENNETH FEINBERG
So you were happy with the
operation?

DARLA

At first. But six months later, I
had aches.

KENNETH FEINBERG

A side-effect of pushing forty in a
claustrophobic plane.

-- John narrates as Rick and Kerensky pass gel implants out
to the jury.

JOHN

Squeeze it. Feel that gel inside.
Notice the chemical smell.

John uses scissors to cut open an implant in his hand. Gel
drips all over his nice boots.

JOHN

This stuff will stain my Lucchese.
Now imagine it all over your
organs.

The jury cringes.

-- Feinberg goes for the kill.

KENNETH FEINBERG

Ms. Lexington, you had medical
bills. You were desperate. So you
decided to sue Dow Corning, who did
nothing but create a safe device
that got you tips. Is that a fair
summary of what you do for money?

She tears up.

DARLA

I'm sorry, but...my hair started
falling out...they made me sick...

-- John cross-examines a DOW SCIENTIST.

DOW SCIENTIST

Silicone is an inert substance.
Completely safe for humans.

JOHN

And did you do research to ensure
that silicone does not cause lupus?

DOW SCIENTIST
Why would we research an inert
substance? It'd be like researching
if water gives you psoriasis.

JOHN
Just to be clear, just to be very
clear...

John stares right at him.

JOHN
Are you saying that Dow Corning did
not conduct ANY study on the safety
of silicone breast implants?

DOW SCIENTIST
Not specifically...no.

John looks at Feinberg. Got him...

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Recess. John paces listening to the tape on his Walkman. A
prize fighter amping up. Kerensky and Darla watch him.

KERENSKY
He's obsessed.

DARLA
If my ex-husbands fought for me as
hard as he did, they wouldn't be ex-
husbands.

FIND Feinberg, approaching John.

KENNETH FEINBERG
You're a good bullshitter. You
should be out in D.C.

JOHN
Is that a job offer?

KENNETH FEINBERG
Settle with Dow for two hundred
thousand, and my office will call
you on Monday.

John smiles.

JOHN
I started my career as a corporate
defender.

KENNETH FEINBERG

Don't give me the "I couldn't sleep at night" line.

JOHN

The opposite. It was the best sleep I ever had. Easy money, full meals. These days, I don't make a dime and can't stop working to take a shit. But at least I'm not billing hours to the bad guys.

KENNETH FEINBERG

Please. This is Houston, John. Not Hollywood.

Feinberg laughs, but John ejects the tape and hands it over.

JOHN

In about two hours the Dow board is gonna want to know what the hell happened. Give them this. And tell them if they ever see my name on a lawsuit again...send a real lawyer.

John walks up the steps, head high.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

John's closing argument.

JOHN

Do you believe in Justice? Do you believe our *justice system* can still deliver Justice?

But this time he's got a new angle.

JOHN

Consider the history of the Pinto gas tank...

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

A WOMAN drives a Ford Pinto. Her SON sits shotgun.

JOHN (V.O.)

1972. A Ford Pinto stalled out on a California freeway.

The car rolls to a stop. The woman is confused.

JOHN (V.O.)

And then a second car hit it from behind.

BAM! A car rear-ends the woman and...BOOM! The Pinto explodes into a massive fireball.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

John continues.

JOHN

Fireworks. A jury awarded the woman's family \$665,000 in damages. The price of a life. But then a few years later --

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

CLOSE ON: A gas cap rattling on top of a driving Pinto...then the cap falls off.

The car slows and pulls to the shoulder. A TEENAGE GIRL gets out, realizing she lost her cap. As she goes to pick it up --

A van rear-ends the Pinto. BOOM!

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

John escalates.

JOHN

Three teenagers in Indiana. And suddenly Ford realized they had a problem. The gas tank in their most popular vehicle was liable to combust on impact.

John gestures toward the Dow Corning attorneys.

JOHN

So they gathered up a group of corporate lawyers -- these are men who smell like the perfume aisle at Macy's.

The jury chuckles.

JOHN

And they ran some numbers. It would cost 137 million to recall every Pinto on the road. Which means -- at 665,000 bucks per lawsuit -- it would be cheaper to let 205 people die.

John pauses.

JOHN

Ford liked those odds, so they decided to tell no one about the faulty gas tank. Prioritizing their profits over your life.

He pulls the secret Dow documents out of his briefcase.

JOHN

On April 29th, 1980, a Dow Corning executive wrote "to put a questionable lot of implants on the market is inexcusable. I don't know who's responsible for this decision, but it has to rank right up there with the Pinto gas tank."

Feinberg hangs his head.

JOHN

We live in a country of the corporations, by the corporations, and for the greedy corporations.

He points a pious finger at Feinberg.

JOHN

Dow Corning put a Pinto gas tank into Darla Lexington's body. And you're the only people who can deliver Justice.

John looks right into the jury's soul.

JOHN

All my chips are down, and I'm betting --

CUT TO:

INT. RICK'S CABARET - NIGHT

POP! John cracks champagne at "the most famous topless bar in the world."

JOHN

ELEVEN MILLION DOLLARS!!

He chugs the bubbly, then surveys the club --

FIND Rick, doing a shot from a DANCER's cleavage.

FIND Kerensky, tucking money into a bra.

But when we follow John's delirious POV, we realize he's not fixated on the breasts. He's fixated on the money.

RICK (PRE-LAP)
John had a brilliant legal mind. He
saw what this could be before any
of us.

Everyone in the room disappears until John is alone. The only thing he sees is CASH. Everywhere.

Shooting from toy guns...

Filling tip jars...

Piling up at the bar...

Money. Money. Money.

STRIPPER
You OK?

John snaps out of it. He's getting a lap dance from a STRIPPER. He looks at her breasts...and gets "an idea that changed the justice system."

JOHN
Can I ask you a question?

STRIPPER
Talk dirty, baby.

JOHN
Have you been experiencing any
strange aches or pains?

The woman stops dancing and looks at him --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Older Rick.

RICK
If you can win one verdict, you
establish legal precedent. So the
corporation becomes much more nervous
about a subsequent lawsuit. And
they'll pay to make it disappear.

INT. LAW OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The stripper, now in normal clothes, smokes the last of a cigarette across from John, Rick, Kerensky and Mary.

STRIPPER

A few weeks after I got them, I
started feeling tired all the time.
And then out of nowhere, I got this
pain in my left armpit.

She pulls a fresh cigarette from a box.

JOHN

One more question. How many of your
coworkers have implants?

STRIPPER

Boss pays for it, so...all of them.

The stripper signs a New Client contract.

ATTORNEY (V.O.)

What happened after you filed the
second lawsuit?

CLOSE ON: The cigarette box's FDA Warning Label. "This
product is known to be harmful."

EXT. MBS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

An airplane touches down on a snowy runway. A sign reads
"Welcome to Michigan!"

RICK (V.O.)

Dow invited John up for a meeting.
They wanted to scare him into a
quick settlement.

INT. TAXI - DAY

John looks out the window of his taxi as he passes "an
angular space-age factory." Dow Corning HQ.

RICK (V.O.)

But if you're gonna try and corner
a wild dog, you better make damn
sure it ain't a wolf.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

A YOUNG MAN and YOUNG WOMAN walk through a rainy campus.
(This scene is VT from the October 1985 Dow ad campaign.)

YOUNG WOMAN

Did you decide which job to take
after graduation?

YOUNG MAN

Yeah, I'm going with that
subsidiary of Dow Chemical. I could
actually be helping high risk heart
patients with silicone splints!

YOUNG WOMAN

That's pretty special.

They kiss as a hokey jingle swells and the Dow logo appears.

JINGLE

Dow lets you do great things!

INT. MICHIGAN HOTEL - LOBBY BAR - NIGHT

John sits alone at a hotel bar, watching the Dow commercial
on a TV. He eyes the female BARTENDER.

JOHN

Put a bottle on my room, honey.

The woman takes down a bottle of whiskey, pours herself a
flirtatious drink, then slides it to John.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

The bottle almost empty on the nightstand. John slurs his
speech on the phone. The TV plays the classic Western *Shane*.

JOHN

Rumor is they hired David Bernick.

JULIE (V.O.)

Who's David Bernick?

JOHN

"The #1 Lawyer in America."
Supposedly, he's never lost a
trial.

JULIE (V.O.)

I thought you were there to settle.
No more trials.

JOHN

I've gotta do whatever is best for
the client. These women shouldn't
face crippling medical debt.

JULIE (V.O.)
I liked it better when you were at
Baker Botts.

This stings John. But he doesn't show it...

JOHN
I miss you too. What're you doing?

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Julie puts on lipstick in a low-cut dress.

JULIE
Getting in bed.

JOHN (V.O.)
I wish I was sleeping with you.

JULIE
That would require you to stop
working for five minutes.

JOHN (V.O.)
At least ten minutes, give me some
credit.

JULIE
Goodnight. I love you.

JOHN (V.O.)
I love you too, darling.

She hangs up and pulls on heels.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME

John holds the receiver.

ANGLE ON: The other side of the bed...where that female
bartender is sleeping naked.

John downs the whiskey. As he nods in and out, we go CLOSE ON
that old Western until we slip into a John delusion --

INT. WESTERN SALOON - NIGHT

*Inside the movie Shane. But instead of the original actors,
this is a remake starring John O'Quinn as the hero. (This is
the final duel scene. The set, costumes, blocking and
dialogue mirror the original.)*

John enters a dim saloon alone, gun on hip. Several men flank him. Tense. John clacks his spurs across the bar to --

Dow Corning CEO Dick Hazleton, seated at a table.

JOHN

I came to get your offer, Dick.

CEO HAZLETON

*I got no quarrel with you, John.
You can back out now and no hard
feelings.*

Someone points a rifle at John from the balcony...

JOHN

What's your offer?

CEO HAZLETON

*Everyone gets their fare share and
we all turn in our six pins.*

JOHN

What's a fair share to you?

CEO HAZLETON

Five hundred thousand for the claim.

JOHN

The going rate is eleven million.

MAN (O.S.)

Not anymore.

John turns to a menacing hitman in the corner. This is DAVID BERNICK (38). Bernick stands, hands near his double guns.

JOHN

So you're David Bernick.

DAVID BERNICK

What's that mean to you?

JOHN

I've heard about you.

CEO HAZLETON

*I wouldn't challenge Bernick. He's
never lost.*

John squares up. His draw hand flutters...

DAVID BERNICK

What have you heard, John?

JOHN
I've heard that you're a low-down
Yankee liar.

DAVID BERNICK
Prove it.

BANG! John beats Bernick to the draw! And we SMASH TO --

INT. DOW CORNING HEADQUARTERS - DAY

An angular, space-aged conference table. On one side, Dick Hazleton is flanked by Kenneth Feinberg and several EXECUTIVES. David Bernick stands in the corner.

On the other side, John O'Quinn sits alone.

CEO HAZLETON
Five hundred thousand dollars.

Feinberg slides John a settlement contract.

KENNETH FEINBERG
John...you know as well as I do
that implants don't cause medical
problems.

John looks at David Bernick for a moment. A choice...

And then he signs the contract. The executives exhale.

KENNETH FEINBERG
That's a great decision, son.

John slides back the contract and packs up his briefcase.

CEO HAZLETON
When's your flight out?

JOHN
Couple hours. I won't have time to
discuss the rest.

CEO HAZLETON
The rest?

John pulls a stack of papers out of his briefcase and slaps them on the table.

JOHN
I met twenty more women with some
very suspicious medical problems.

The executives sit up.

CEO HAZLETON

John, we're working on studies
right now to prove these are safe.

JOHN

I look forward to seeing them. So
do my friends at the FDA -- oh, I
hope don't mind, I sent them your
internal memos.

He looks at all the executives.

JOHN

I found your prose rather dry, but
apparently the FDA is riveted.

John slams his briefcase.

JOHN

See you in Texas, boys.

As John storms out, he points a finger gun at young David
Bernick...and pulls the trigger.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Back to older Rick.

RICK

January 6, 1992. Big boobs became
big business.

Off his shit-eating grin --

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

VT of FDA COMMISSIONER David Kessler in front of the PRESS
CORPS on January 6, 1992.

FDA COMMISSIONER

Today, the FDA is asking that
physicians cease using silicone gel
implants.

Shocked whispers ripple through the crowd.

FDA COMMISSIONER

As physicians, our first obligation
is to do no harm. We do not know
exactly what damage these implants
may cause until further research
can be conducted.

As the hands of the press shoot up --

INT. LAW OFFICE - LOBBY - DAY

The office is now buzzing with activity. EMPLOYEES type fresh lawsuits while MOVERS pack the office into boxes around them.

RICK (V.O.)
Dow had committed a tort -- in
layman's terms, they did some bad
shit -- to a fuck-ton of people. So
our strategy was simple: file a fuck-
ton of lawsuits. And "The Machine"
was born.

Rick leans over a new attractive female PARALEGAL, a little
too close as he gives her tips on the computer. John notices.

JOHN
You working on the Chanel No. 5
lawsuit, Rick?

RICK
No? We don't have a Chanel --

JOHN
Then why the fuck are you smelling
her neck?

John strides past.

JOHN
Work wins, people!

FIND a group of strippers in plain clothes lining up for --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Mary points a camera at a stripper CLIENT and presses record.

MARY
This is the recorded deposition
of...state your name for the record.

CLIENT
Sarah --

LATER

A different stripper, CLIENT 2.

CLIENT 2
Carmen.

LATER

CLIENT 3

Katie.

LATER

CLIENT 4

Aaliyah.

RICK (V.O.)

Usually, this many lawsuits get
bundled into a federal class action.

INT. KERENSKY'S OFFICE - DAY

John drops a medical textbook on Kerensky's desk. It's opened
to a black and white picture of two doctors holding implants.

RICK (V.O.)

But John figured out a loophole.

JOHN

Add these assholes to lawsuits.

Kerensky stops packing his moving box and reads.

KERENSKY

"Frank Gerow and Tom Cronin." Are
they even alive?

JOHN

Nope. But they invented implants.
Here in Houston.

KERENSKY

Which means?

JOHN

If the plaintiff and the defendant
are both Texans, the case stays in
the state court system.

KERENSKY

So...no federal class action.

RICK (V.O.)

It was so easy. But it changed
everything.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

CLIENT 5 gives her deposition to Mary.

CLIENT 5

I was shedding like a dog.

LATER

CLIENT 6
I lost all feeling in my torso.

RICK (V.O.)
Dow was settling cases at a half
million a pop.

LATER

CLIENT 7
I had mouth sores.

LATER

CLIENT 8
Chest pain.

RICK (V.O.)
We were printing money.

LATER

CLIENT 9
I saw a gel discharge when I
started breastfeeding.

RICK (V.O.)
And, of course, saving women.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

John, Kerensky, Rick and his parrot brainstorm as they turn
off lights in the now empty office.

RICK (V.O.)
We called it a --

JOHN
Triple tort.

RICK
Tort-nado?

KERENSKY
Tort-illa.

PARROT
Cocksucker!

RICK
Chinese Water Tort-ure.

JOHN

Re-Tort.

RICK

You can't say that, I have a cousin who's a retard.

PARROT

Cocksucker!

KERENSKY

Tort-ellini?

JOHN

Mike, you're just hungry.

KERENSKY

Well, it's lunch time.

RICK

Titty tort. OH! TITTY TORT.

JOHN

I got it.

John opens the front door and kills the last light.

JOHN

We're calling it...
A Mass Tort.

RICK (V.O.)

A Mass Tort.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Older Rick.

RICK

The legal maneuver that's clogged the toilet that is our American justice system every single day since I came up with its name.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)

At that time, how many women in America had breast implants?

Rick smiles.

RICK

2.5 million. We were unstoppable.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S NEW CAR - DAY

John drinks whiskey while driving a new Porsche 911 Carrera. He belts out "Big River" by Johnny Cash at a red light.

JOHN
Now I taught the weeping willow how
to cry...

Tired of waiting, John makes "an illegal left turn downtown."

WHOOOP! Just then, police lights flash in his rearview...but John keeps going, "ignoring the attempt to pull him over."

JOHN
And the tears I cried for that woman
are gonna flood you, Big River...

INT. POLICE CAR - SAME

A "young and insecure officer," S.J. AUGUSTINE (28), picks up his speaker, confused.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
Pull over, please.

But John doesn't give a fuck.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS

Enjoy the slowest car chase in history. John bopping to Cash, the cop completely baffled.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
Stop. Excuse me.

Until eventually, John pulls into --

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

John gets out of his car, whistling toward the elevator.

The cop fumbles from his squad car.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
Hey! Wait!

John holds open the elevator door as the cop jogs to --

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Both men on the elevator.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
 Didn't you hear me?

JOHN
 That's why I held the elevator.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
 No, before.

JOHN
 I wasn't on the elevator before.

John punches the button for the 23rd floor. Doors close.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
 I...I need to see your license and
 registration.

JOHN
 Sure.

But John just whistles.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
 Sure?

JOHN
 They're in my car.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
 Oh. Then...give me your license
 plate number.

JOHN
 Do you know your license plate
 number?

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
 No.

JOHN
 There you go.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
 Well, make and model.

JOHN
 Rolls-Royce. Silver Shadow.

The cop pats his pockets. John hands him a pen.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
 Thanks.

More pockets.

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
I left my ticket book in the car.

John pulls cash out of his wallet. DING. 23rd floor.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

John gives a Houston Handshake to a SECURITY OFFICER posted outside a penthouse marked for "O'Quinn, Kerensky & Laminack." The cop follows.

JOHN
Meet Sergeant Elliot of the Houston PD. He works security for us part time. And this is --

OFFICER AUGUSTINE
Officer S.J. Augustine.

JOHN
Sergeant Elliot...Officer Augustine does not have an appointment today.

John strolls into the penthouse. The door closes behind him. The cop tries it --

Locked. The security guard just smiles.

INT. LAW FIRM - BULLPEN - DAY

FOLLOW John in SLOW-MOTION as he glides through his new kingdom:

-- Past a bullpen, packed with workers cranking out lawsuits.

-- Past a state-of-the-art mock courtroom, where Mary deposes new clients. John gives her a thumbs up. Mary beams.

-- Past a TV studio, where a MAKEUP ARTIST preps Rick for an interview.

-- And finally, John enters a corner office fit for the king.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John sits at a desk "bigger than a dining room table with extensions added for Thanksgiving." Smiling.

Until Kerensky enters to berate him.

KERENSKY

The FDA announced a planned Harvard study on implants.

JOHN

How much does a billboard cost?

KERENSKY

We should settle all the remaining cases. What if that study comes out and says implants don't cause illness?

JOHN

You think all these women are just making up their hair falling out?
(yelling)
Rick!

Rick enters, makeup half done.

JOHN

Can you get me a billboard?

KERENSKY

Jesus Christ, are you drunk?

RICK

For what?

JOHN

We need more clients.

KERENSKY

We don't need more clients.

JOHN

You ever been to a doctor's office, Mike?

KERENSKY

Nine fifteen in the morning and he's drunk.

JOHN

You get there a half hour early and they're still thirty minutes late to see you.

RICK

I hate that shit.

JOHN

It's because doctors are the most self-satisfied lazy fuckers on the planet. That Harvard study has to go through the peer-review gauntlet before it gets published. And every doctor I know spends more time on the golf course than at their desk.

KERENSKY

We can't just call women and ask if they've had a boob job. Soliciting clients will get us disbarred.

JOHN

Hence the billboard.

RICK

What about this Bernick fella?

This makes John pause. He looks at his lieutenants.

JOHN

Settle everything before trial. We don't have to beat him in the court of law. We just have to beat him in the court of public opinion.

Kerensky looks at Rick, unsure...

JOHN

We struck oil. And I want to keep pumping.

A beat.

KERENSKY

Fine.

RICK

Yes!

JOHN

Book a hotel ballroom or something. Let's do a promo event.

Rick rushes out. Kerensky hesitates at the door.

KERENSKY

But John.

JOHN

Yeah.

KERENSKY

Get a driver.

INT. BULLPEN - LATER

Mary works at her cubicle. Rick approaches holding a folder.

RICK
Knock, knock.

MARY
Who's there?

RICK
Oh...I wasn't doing a joke, you
just don't have a door.

MARY
Thanks for the reminder.

Rick leans on her desk.

RICK
I've got a buddy who's a plastic
surgeon. I thought it might
be...good for your career to pay
him a visit.

Mary is taken aback.

MARY
What are you saying?

RICK
We need more clients.

MARY
Oh!

RICK
Oh my God. You thought I was
sending you there because of your --

MARY
Small boobs.

RICK
Just to be clear, Slick Rick is
attracted to all shapes and sizes...

MARY
Just to be clear, I'm not attracted
to any man whose first name is
"Slick."

He tosses the folder on her desk.

RICK
Find out if Dr. Lewy has patients
with any of those symptoms.

MARY
I thought soliciting clients like
that was illegal.

RICK
You've seen what implants are doing
to these girls, yeah?

MARY
Obviously.

RICK
Every client you find is a woman we
can help.

Hesitation...

RICK
Do you want to help or not?

Off Mary, conflicted --

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON: A poster of a well-endowed woman on a car. Text:
"Car by Cadillac. Surgical Sculpture by Dr. Robert I. Lewy."

Mary stares at the absurd image, uncomfortable in a plastic
surgeon's office: boob anatomy sculptures, topless pictures.

DR. LEWY (46), whose degree from Penn makes him an expert in
"talking about his degree from Penn," enters.

DR. LEWY
Are you here to sue me?

MARY
Not exactly.

Dr. Lewy extends a cordial hand.

DR. LEWY
Robert Lewy.

MARY
Mary Henderson.

He sits.

DR. LEWY
What can I do for you?

MARY
How many women have you cut open,
Dr. Lewy?

DR. LEWY
Several thousand.

MARY
And do you follow up with them?

DR. LEWY
Breast implants surgery doesn't
have severe side-effects.

MARY
I've got a hundred clients with
lupus who think differently.

DR. LEWY
Where did you go to med school?

MARY
I didn't.

DR. LEWY
Huh. I went to Penn.

MARY
Which means you took an oath to "Do
No Harm." If this study ends up
saying that implants are killing
these women, don't you feel a
little guilty?

A silence.

MARY
Besides, I'd imagine your revenue
is drying up with the FDA ban.

DR. LEWY
I'm listening.

MARY
I just want you to follow up with
your patients.

DR. LEWY
That's it?

MARY

Call them. If they're feeling sick,
bring them in for a check-up.

DR. LEWY

Why would I do that?

MARY

I have been approved to take on
clients who are diagnosed with any
of these symptoms.

She hands him the folder Rick gave her.

MARY

And we'll give a 1.5% referral fee
to anyone who helps us out.

He opens the folder and reads.

DR. LEWY

"Loss of sex drive, chronic
exhaustion, night sweats, mouth
ulcers, flu-like symptoms, poor
concentration, memory failure,
headaches, asthma..."

(to Mary)

Any of these?

She nods. He continues.

DR. LEWY

"Frequent urination, unexplained
rashes, arthritis, swollen lymph
nodes, dry eyes, gallbladder pain,
weight loss, weight gain."

(to Mary)

Weight loss OR weight gain?

MARY

Sure.

He continues, growing increasingly shocked.

DR. LEWY

"Scleroderma, auto-immune disease,
hair loss, tingling of the breast,
irritable bowel syndrome, redness of
the palms, small areas of muscle that
quiver" -- Who wrote this?! --
"kidney failure, vertigo, multiple
sclerosis, environmental allergies,
lupus, Sjogren's disease, clumsiness,
suicidal depression...or...a cough."

He stops.

MARY
We want to help as many women as possible.

Mary stands.

MARY
And we've been settling cases for a half million each.

DR. LEWY
Wait...I get 1.5% of a half million for every woman with any of these symptoms?

MARY
I'll let you do the math, you went to Penn.

Off Dr. Lewy, intrigued --

INT. REC CENTER - NIGHT

AA Meeting. Johnny Cutliff tells his truth.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
I had a little Matchbox car when I was a boy. A green Jaguar convertible. I slept with that thing, I ate with it, I may as well've had it tattooed on me.

FIND John in the circle, chuckling at the story.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
But one night the old man came home after drinking. And I had left that Jaguar right in the doorway, right in the path of his work boots and...POP.

Johnny gives one loud clap.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
There was this vein in his forehead that used to bulge out when he got angry. And I thought, "Oh shit, here comes." But when he lifted up his foot and seen what he'd done...

Johnny pauses.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF

He broke down crying. Picked me up saying "I'm sorry, son, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to." And right then, I remember noticing that same vein in his forehead.

FIND John, for some reason getting emotional...

JOHNNY CUTLIFF

And now I think...that vein wasn't triggered by anger. It was triggered by shame.

Suddenly, John gets up and walks out of the meeting.

EXT. REC CENTER - NIGHT

John stands by his Porsche as attendees exit the meeting. He scans the group until he finds...Johnny.

JOHN

I want to show you something.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF

You didn't like my story?

JOHN

Just dug up some memories I'd rather not remember.

A truck pulls up and honks at Johnny.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF

My brother's picking me up.

As the man in the front seat waves --

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

James Cutliff, scowling. The same man.

JAMES CUTLIFF

It's funny. If Johnny didn't go to AA, he would've died. But if he didn't meet John O'Quinn...he'd still be alive.

BACK TO:

EXT. REC CENTER - NIGHT

JAMES CUTLIFF (29) waves from the front seat of his truck.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
What do you want to show me?

JOHN
It's down the road.

John gets in his car. The brothers look at each other, wary --

EXT. WEST UNIVERSITY AUTO SHOP - DAY

John, Johnny and James stand outside a shuttered auto shop.

JOHN
Couldn't bring myself to sell the
place after my father died.

John unlocks a garage door.

JOHN
All he loved in the world was cars
and Westerns.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
I don't hear any people on that
list.

John slides the door open --

To reveal seven beautiful classic cars, including the
Thunderbird and...a Jaguar. Johnny is blown away.

JOHN
The wife would kill me if she knew.

Johnny walks around the cars in awe.

JOHN
What do you do for work?

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
Chevron plant.

JOHN
What do they pay per hour?

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
Shit.

JOHN
So...I need to hire a driver.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
What do you pay per hour?

JOHN
Shit plus fifty percent.

Johnny ogles the Jag. But James turns to John.

JAMES CUTLIFF
What exactly do you do for work?

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

High above Houston traffic, WORKERS plaster a billboard for O'Quinn, Kerensky & Laminack: "Are dream breasts to die for?"

JOHN (PRE-LAP)
I am a warrior for truth!

INT. STOUFFER'S HOTEL - BALLROOM - DAY

John stands on stage. A CROWD fills the ballroom: blue-collar folk. Poor women taking notes on hotel napkins. (This scene can be VT from the 2/27/96 episode of *PBS Frontline*.)

JOHN
Dow Corning is engaged in a PR campaign with the most powerful public relations companies to put out...The Big Lie.

FIND Johnny Cutliff in the back, watching with curiosity --

MONTAGE - THE PR BATTLE

-- VT of David Bernick speaking to a press pool (*PBS Frontline*, 2/27/96).

DAVID BERNICK
Scientific evidence has yet to show a connection between breast implants and these kinds of rheumatic diseases.

-- INT. BALLROOM - Back to John's fiery sermon.

JOHN
The Big Lie that this is all about something called "science." And science says you're not sick. And science determines the truth. You can read it in *The New York Times*.

-- INSERT: The article "Legal System and Science Come to Differing Conclusions on Silicone" (*New York Times*, 5/16/95).

-- VT of KATIE COURIC interviewing Dow Corning CEO Dick Hazleton (*The Today Show*, 10/24/92).

KATIE COURIC

You said that this is a PR nightmare, but isn't it more than that? Doesn't this show some unethical behavior by your company?

CEO HAZLETON

Not at all. Not at all.

-- INT. BALLROOM - John.

JOHN

Dow Corning is buying scientific evidence that favors them. So when you see a Harvard medical study published in some fancy journal, don't believe it.

-- VT of MARCIA ANGELL, Editor-in-Chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine* (*PBS Frontline*, 2/27/96).

MARCIA ANGELL

More than half of all the medical research in this country is funded by private industry. If we were to dismiss all medical research that is funded that way, we would decimate science.

-- VT of JENNY JONES standing in her talk show AUDIENCE (*The Jenny Jones Show*, 12/21/93).

JENNY JONES

Raise your hand if you had strange symptoms after getting implants.

Almost every woman raises their hand, including Jenny Jones.

-- INT. BALLROOM - John grows heated.

JOHN

We're not going to stop filing lawsuits, no matter what *The New York Times* says.

-- VT of CONNIE CHUNG's scathing national news report on implants (*Face to Face with Connie Chung*, 12/10/90).

CONNIE CHUNG

Owned by The Dow Chemical Company,
Dow Corning is facing the largest
legal action in American history.
They've hired the best lawyers in
the country, but it may be too late.

-- VT of a female Dow Corning WORKER in a hardhat being
interviewed by the news (*PBS Frontline*, 2/27/96).

WORKER

I think that what's happening to Dow
Corning could kill any company in
this country. These lawyers with
their "Mass Tort" don't care about
all the people who work here.

-- INT. BALLROOM - The crowd cheers. Believers.

JOHN

You stand up and tell Dow Corning:
We are the evidence!

The crowd chants in euphoria...

CROWD

We are the evidence! We are the
evidence!

JOHN

I believe you! I stand with you! I
stand with truth!

FIND Johnny, clapping, swept up by John's charisma.

INT. LAW FIRM - BULLPEN - DAY

A lavish lunch buffet in the buzzing office. The parrot
nibbles lunch meat. Total decadence.

FIND Rick giving a news CREW a tour of the office.

RICK

The deluge of paper is so extensive
we have a dozen people that do
nothing but file all day every day.

He winks at that attractive paralegal as she sorts files. The
crew follows him into --

INT. BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The break room, now full of refrigerators containing hundreds
of ex-planted silicone orbs.

RICK
I advise all my clients to remove
the implants from their body.

Mary sneaks in to grab her lunch Tupperware from a fridge.

RICK
It's probably the most complete
collection of used implants
anywhere in the United States.

We FOLLOW Mary back out to --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She encounters Kerensky in the hallway.

KERENSKY
We got lunch catered.

MARY
I'm not eating parrot shit.

KERENSKY
Just make sure you're not eating a
breast implant.

She laughs.

MARY
There are a lot of Marys in there.

JOHN (O.S.)
MIKE!

Kerensky motions for Mary to follow, and they head to --

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kerensky and Mary enter as John finishes a phone
conversation.

JOHN
(phone)
Thanks for letting me know. Yeah,
you too.

Hangs up.

JOHN
Fuck.

KERENSKY
What?

The phone RINGS again. John ignores it.

JOHN

I got a call yesterday from a judge I know in Nevada. Said breast implant cases are crowding his docket.

KERENSKY

Copycats.

JOHN

As I feared. So last night, I left messages at every major courthouse in the county.

KERENSKY

Do you just hate sleep? Get a waterbed or something.

The phone RINGS again.

JOHN

Look at this.

John points to his phone. Every line is busy.

JOHN

There are hundreds, maybe thousands, of new breast implant lawsuits.

KERENSKY

MARY

Oh shit.

That's amazing!

JOHN

Maybe. Dow launched a national media campaign. *The Today Show*, *Forbes*, *Frontline* --

MARY

I heard *Oprah* next week.

JOHN

Which means he had to know it would give every plaintiff attorney in the country our idea.

KERENSKY

Who?

JOHN

Bernick.

KERENSKY

How does this help him, though?
Facing 100,000 lawsuits.

JOHN

I don't know, Mike. Fuck. He's
playing chess.

MARY

But why is this a bad thing? Women
in other states should get what
they deserve.

JOHN

Mary...you're a saint.

John pulls \$200 out of his wallet and gives Mary a Houston
Handshake.

KERENSKY

My guess is Bernick wants to cut
the pie into 100,000 slices. Dilute
our stake.

JOHN

Which dilutes our power.

The phone RINGS.

JOHN

I want a giant piece of this pie
with a mountain of whipped cream on
top. Without power, we can't help
anyone. You follow?

They nod. John finally answers the phone, flustered --

JOHN

What?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. DARLINGTON - SAME

Darla Lexington talks on the phone from the front porch of a
cookie-cutter home. The door mat reads: "Darlington".

DARLA

Hi, John. It's Darla Lexington.

JOHN

Oh. I...hello, Darla.

In Darla's lap is today's paper.

DARLA
I keep reading about you in the
paper.

JOHN
Which paper?

DARLA
The Chronicle.

JOHN
Good. *The Wall Street Journal*
called me "The Antichrist."

DARLA
Is what they're saying true?

JOHN
Personally, I think I'm more akin
to the actual Christ, but --

DARLA
In *The Chronicle*.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Older Julie reads from a faded newspaper.

JULIE
"April 26th, 1994. Attorney O'Quinn
hiding marital demons."

She looks at the camera and smiles, sarcastic...

INT. LAW FIRM - JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John plays it off.

JOHN
Very powerful people want to
destroy my reputation.

DARLA
And what do you want?

He hesitates...but can't help himself.

JOHN
Are you free tonight?

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

In the feverish bullpen, Mary talks on the phone.

MARY
I need more clients, doc.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. DR. LEWY'S MANSION - BACKYARD - DAY

Dr. Lewy oversees construction of a pool in his yard.

DR. LEWY
Bad news. I've sent you every
patient I have.

Dr. Lewy notices a WORKER drop heavy tiles on his perfectly manicured lawn.

DR. LEWY
Easy on the Saint Augustine, pal!

MARY
Don't you have any friends? Or are
you all nerds at Penn?

A pause, then Dr. Lewy gets an idea.

DR. LEWY
Do I still get my referral fee?

MARY
Depends on the referral...

DR. LEWY
I have a buddy from med school who
runs a biopsy lab at MD Anderson.

MARY
How does that help me?

DR. LEWY
Pay him to do biopsies on all those
implants you're storing.

Mary lowers her voice.

MARY
I can't just hit our clients with
unnecessary expenses to grease your
med school buddy.

Dr. Lewy bends down to pick mud out of his perfect lawn.

DR. LEWY

This guy treats women all over Texas.
I bet if you pay him for 2,000
tests...he could refer many more
clients.

Mary considers...then takes the leap.

MARY

Send me his name.

Off Mary, getting her hands dirty --

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

John and Darla eat at a fancy restaurant.

DARLA

Have you seen it?

JOHN

I rarely find time for movies.

DARLA

We'll have to fix that. John
Travolta reminded me of you.

JOHN

I get that a lot.

They laugh.

DARLA

He plays this guy who uncovers a
big water poisoning scandal and
fights for all these poor people.

JOHN

Someone's gotta do it.

DARLA

No, that's the thing. He didn't
have to do it. No one has to go out
of their way to care about the
little people. He's a saint, John.

JOHN

A lot of these guys have ulterior
motives.

DARLA

So why do you do it? I mean, why
does someone like you, who could
still be at...where?

JOHN
Baker Botts.

DARLA
Why did you quit to fight for us
poor saps?

John considers the question...and opens his mouth to answer --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Julie.

JULIE
He had a hero complex.

INT. THE PALM RESTAURANT - NIGHT

John.

JOHN
I happen to like poor saps. I used
to be one myself.

DARLA
I guess I'm just trying to say thank
you.

JOHN
What'd you do with the money?

DARLA
Bought a house. And named it
"Darlington."

John chuckles.

JOHN
I like that.

DARLA
Makes me feel like a Duchess or
something.

JOHN
To Duchess Darla.

John raises his glass. Darla does the same.

DARLA
I hated lawyers after my divorce.
But...you made me believe there's
still some good guys out there.

Cheers. Off John, feeling loved --

JULIE (V.O.)
John was incapable of love.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

John enters, late and drunk, to see Julie waiting up for him.

JULIE (V.O.)
Love is like a language...

John doesn't hear it when Julie starts shouting at him. He just walks to the counter to pour a whiskey.

But Julie takes the bottle and smashes it on the ground. John doesn't hear the words that he shouts back.

JULIE (V.O.)
If your parents didn't teach it to
you, it'll always feel a little
foreign.

Julie smashes more bottles and glasses, completely raving.

John screams until he's red in the face.

Then Julie rips off her ring and walks out the front door.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

John vomits into the toilet. And then --

He breaks down. Crying on the bathroom floor. Alone.

ATTORNEY (PRE-LAP)
Did you miss anything about him?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Older Julie reflects.

JULIE
I had to buy one of those rubber
jar openers.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)
Anything else?

JULIE
Not really. Actually, it's funny,
it wasn't rubber. It was silicone.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)
Did it give you lupus?

Julie laughs, hard, with a hint of disdain --

SERIES OF SHOTS - OPRAH TEASER

This sequence can be VT from the 10/13/95 episode of *Oprah*:

-- INSERT: An x-ray of an implant inside a human body.

OPRAH (V.O.)
They got breast implants to feel
more beautiful.

-- INSERT: A smiling lady with large breasts in a bikini.

OPRAH (V.O.)
Now they say their bodies are
ticking time bombs.

-- A WOMAN speaks angrily on stage.

WOMAN
They found silicone in my uterus,
my ovaries and my liver.

The studio AUDIENCE is shocked.

OPRAH (V.O.)
Now they don't know who to blame.
Dow Corning? Their doctors? Or
themselves?

-- A female AUDIENCE MEMBER cries while speaking into a mic.

AUDIENCE MEMBER
They tell you it's in your head.
You begin to think you're crazy.

OPRAH (V.O.)
Coming up next.

-- The iconic *Oprah* title sequence begins.

INT. HARPO STUDIOS - DAY

CEO Dick Hazleton on stage with OPRAH.

OPRAH
It's brave of you to come here.
You're the first CEO in ten years.

CEO HAZLETON

Well, thanks. But I'm not brave. I believe in our products.

A graphic appears that identifies him as "Richard Hazleton, Chairman and CEO, Dow Corning".

OPRAH

Not everyone does.

CEO HAZLETON

That's because those lawyers are driving this debate with fear. These aren't good, family people.

OPRAH

But women are scared.

CEO HAZLETON

Be patient. Wait for the science. A study is coming from Harvard -- the most prestigious institution in medicine.

OPRAH

If Dow is innocent, why are you settling so many lawsuits?

CEO HAZLETON

For a company in our position, faced with all these lawsuits, the only feasible way forward is to seek some sort of resolution.

OPRAH

But a settlement feels like an admission of guilt.

CEO HAZLETON

I have employees begging me to fight. To stand up for them. To prove our innocence in a trial.

He looks out at the audience of women.

CEO HAZLETON

But I understand that women are scared. My ask is that you don't let a small group of lawyers drive this debate with fear.

As Oprah nods along, convinced --

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

Morning rush hour. Mary walks the sidewalk drinking coffee.

Suddenly, she stops cold at the newsstand. A magazine catching her attention --

MARY

Oh my God...

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Mary holds the magazine. DING. 23rd floor. She smashes the "Door Open" button.

MARY

Come on, come on...

INT. LAW FIRM - BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

Mary runs through the busy bullpen to --

INT. RICK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Rick, who is letting the parrot bite his nose.

RICK

Give me my nose back, pretty girl.

MARY

That's...so disgusting.

Mary shows Rick the magazine.

MARY

It's out.

CLOSE ON: *Fortune* magazine. The cover is John and Rick. The headline: "Lawyers from Hell" (*Fortune*, 10/16/95).

RICK

Goddamn...I look sexy.

MARY

The national rankings are in here.

RICK

Are we on it?

MARY

I couldn't look.

RICK

Mike!

Kerensky pokes his head in.

RICK
It's out.

Mary shows him the magazine.

KERENSKY
Are we on it?

RICK
Don't know.

KERENSKY
(re: cover)
You look like an idiot.

PARROT
Are we on it?

RICK
We're fucking on it, Mike. You know
we're fucking on it!

Kerensky grins...then rushes out. Mary and Rick follow
excited. The parrot pursues --

INT. BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Kerensky, Mary and Rick rush toward the corner office. The
staff notices and follows...electricity building.

STAFF 1
Is that the list?

STAFF 2
Did we make it?

KERENSKY
Bout to find out.

MARY
We had to make it. Who else helped
two thousand women?

The entire firm arrives at John's closed door. Frothing.

Kerensky lifts a fist to knock...but Rick stops him.

RICK
Wait. What if we're not on it?

KERENSKY
You're the fucking cover girl.

RICK
But that's just good marketing.

Mary knocks on John's door. A silence...anticipation until --

JOHN (O.S.)
Well don't just stand out there
like a bunch of Mormons.

Mary opens the door --

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

At the center of John's office is a tub of champagne on ice...and a giant pyramid of cash.

RICK
It's out.

JOHN
I know.

Everyone stares at the cash.

KERENSKY
Have you looked?

JOHN
Not yet.

John passes out bottles of champagne to everyone.

JOHN
There is one million dollars in this
room. Now, Miss Mary is gonna open
that magazine. And if we're one of
the top ranked law firms in the
nation, then you get the biggest
Houston Handshake of your life.

The staff gawks.

JOHN
You can fight over it or fuck over
it or do whatever the hell you damn
please with it.

KERENSKY
What if we're not on it?

JOHN
If we're not on it --

PARROT
Are we on it?

JOHN
Then we're gonna kill the parrot.

RICK
No!

JOHN
Yes. As an animal sacrifice.

RICK
No!

JOHN
Shake up those cannons.

Everyone shakes their champagne. Pressure building...

JOHN
Alright, Mary. What's the verdict?

She takes a breath...

Then opens the magazine. She flips through...

And flips...

And flips...

MARY
So many ads.

RICK
Capitalism ruins everything.

And then Mary stops. Eyes wide...

She looks up at John...stunned...

JOHN
What?

MARY
We're number one!

POP! Champagne explodes around the room! Everyone cheers and jumps and hugs. Absolute euphoria.

John kisses Rick on his ugly head, then hugs Kerensky.

KERENSKY
Is that the firm's money or your
money?

JOHN
Same thing.

KERENSKY
It's my job to tell you those are
not the same thing.

But John just jumps up on his desk.

JOHN
Hey, hey! Listen up!

The staff quiets down, cash and champagne covering everyone.

JOHN
I'm proud of you savages.

RICK
We're the Lawyers from fucking
Hell!

Everyone ROARS! Like a demon horde.

JOHN
I'm going to throw you the biggest
goddamn party you've ever seen.

STAFF
Lawyers from Hell! Lawyers from
Hell! Lawyers from Hell!

John basks in the praise. Pure ego. An unstoppable force --

JOHN
FUCK IT LET'S KILL THE PARROT!

YAHHH! The raging firm turns to the bird.

PARROT
Are we on it?

RICK

NO!

They throw cash at it, but the bird flies out of the room. As
the rabid staff gives chase, Mary watches in horror --

SERIES OF SHOTS - KILL THE FUCKING PARROT

-- The horde trashes the bullpen, climbing over desks,
lunging for the bird. Fail.

MARY (PRE-LAP)
There's a flaw in the hired gun
mentality of a plaintiff lawyer.

-- The bird shits on the copier as a worker throws a chair at it. Fail.

MARY (PRE-LAP)
John kept trading his gun for a
bigger gun, and a bigger gun, and a
bigger gun...

-- The horde knocks over a breast implant fridge in the break room trying to catch the bird. Fail.

MARY (PRE-LAP)
By the time I realized where this
was headed, it was too late.

-- In the mock courtroom, they have the parrot cornered. John approaches it slowly with an empty file box.

JOHN
Shhhh.

John tip-toes toward the bird...but spooks it! It flies directly into --

John's file box! He closes the lid. PANDEMONIUM.

JOHN
YEEEEAAAAAH!!!!

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

A troubled Mary.

MARY
John had become a weapon of mass
destruction.

INT. ASTRODOME - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A stadium jumbotron. The screen reads "Happy Birthday, John!"

WIDEN to reveal we're in the Astrodome, Houston's premiere stadium and "the Eighth Wonder of the World."

And on the field, O'Quinn's party of the century. The place has been turned into a casino. "56 vintage cars on display, 21 crystal chandeliers, 3 live peacocks."

We wind our way through the party to FIND Kerensky and Mary near first base playing blackjack.

KERENSKY MARY
Do it.

Hit!

The dealer flips a king.

DEALER
Bust.

Everyone at the table laughs. FIND Johnny Cutliff nearby, showing off a car with steer horns to GUESTS.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
'64 Pontiac Bonneville. Originally belonged to Hank Williams Jr.

GUEST
Is that the Batmobile?

Another car: the Batmobile from *Batman Forever*.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
John owns more than two hundred cars. They'll be in his new museum, along with these chandeliers.

FIND Darla talking to Rick on the pitcher's mound.

DARLA
I'm so sorry about your parrot.

RICK
Thanks.

DARLA
John said it died of cancer?

RICK
Pancreatic, yeah. The quiet killer.

Rick notices that attractive paralegal near home plate.

RICK
Batter up!

Rick crushes his beer can and hurls it at her.

JOHN (O.S.)
Strike one!

FIND John in the dugout, ordering drinks from a Vegas-style SHOWGIRL.

JOHN
You know, they say peacocks are
known to breed like cocks...

He pulls a shot of whiskey. She pours another...

INT. ASTRODOME - LATER

John stands on a stage at a microphone. Guests eat at banquet tables on the field.

JOHN
To the best law firm in the
country!

He raises a glass of whiskey and everyone drinks.

JOHN
Every law school grad in the state
is gonna come begging to work for
The Machine. But, I gotta say,
Kerensky background checks everyone
we hire.

At the head table, Kerensky's wife pats him on the back.
Darla and Mary smile.

JOHN
And there is no room for crooked
lawyers at my firm. You hear me? No
room!

Gentle claps...

JOHN
Because all the positions for
crooked lawyers are occupied!

The crowd bursts into laughter.

JOHN
We're full to our fucking eyes with
you savages! Tying off Dow Corning
like a rodeo hog.

The stadium roars with approval.

JOHN
Eat up and get your ass on the
dance floor, because I bought y'all
a present...Dolly Fucking Parton!

DOLLY PARTON and her BAND appear out of the dugout and step onto the stage. Dolly takes the mic.

DOLLY PARTON
Howdy, y'all!

John steps offstage. As the band plays, John chugs whiskey.
At the head table, Mary stands.

MARY
Where's the restroom?

KERENSKY
On the concourse.

DARLA
Oh no, baby, if you don't want to
pee in a trough, go to the dugout.

MARY
Perfect, thank you.

DARLA
Us ladies gotta stick together.

Darla winks and Mary heads off the field --

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

Mary walks down the player tunnel. A TV plays the end of an Astros game broadcast.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
...Astros fall in Cincinnati. Up
next, your late local news...

Mary heads toward a bathroom...

INT. FIELD - LATER

Guests pack a dance floor in the outfield. Dolly plays "9 to 5" as the crowd does a line dance.

DOLLY PARTON
Tumble out of bed and stumble to
the kitchen, pour myself a cup of
ambition...

John dances next to Darla. Next to Kerensky. Next to Johnny.
Right here in the Astros outfield. The top of the mountain.

But he's drunk. That vice gnawing --

INT. RESTROOM - SAME

Mary enters the restroom. She looks in the mirror, but then notices sounds coming from the stall...

RICK (O.S.)
You're Daddy's little whore.

She steps toward the cracked stall door to see --

Rick getting a hand job from that attractive paralegal.

RICK
Use your tits.

PARALEGAL
No, come on, Rick --

RICK
I'll give you fifteen grand.

Rick reaches down and rips open her blouse. Debased, the paralegal uses her breasts to jerk him off.

Mary backs away silently. Horrified...

INT. FIELD - SAME

For drunken John, the song begins to slow down...

DOLLY PARTON
*Workinn nine tooo fiive, for
serrvice and devootion...*

Slower and slower. The dancers move in slow motion. Until they disappear, one-by-one. John keeps dancing, trying to hold on to the happiness --

DOLLY PARTON (O.S.)
*Youu wouldd think that I wouldd
deserrve a faaaat promootion...*

INT. TUNNEL - SAME

Mary exits the bathroom. Stunned.

RICK (O.S.)
Come on, baby. Come on. Come.

Mary keeps her hands on the doorknob. Does she go back in to stop it? Does she walk away unnoticed? A brutal decision...

INT. FIELD - SAME

Deluded John is now line dancing alone in the Astrodome.

DOLLY PARTON (V.O.)
It's enough toooo drive youuu...

Slower.

DOLLY PARTON (V.O.)
Craaaaaazy if youuuuu let ittt.

INT. TUNNEL - SAME

Mary walks quickly up that tunnel. Turning a blind eye...

But she stops when she notices something on the TV.

INSERT: VT of LESTER HOLT reporting (CBS News, 5/15/95).

LESTER HOLT
 Today, Dow Corning -- the maker of
 silicone heart valves, catheters,
 and pacemakers -- has filed for
 Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Mary is shocked.

LESTER HOLT
 Here's Dow's lawyer David Bernick.

DAVID BERNICK
 All claimants will be rolled into
 bankruptcy court to negotiate a
 drastically reduced settlement...

Just then, Rick exits bathroom, pants unbuckled, tucking in his shirt. He freezes when he sees the TV --

INT. FIELD - NIGHT

John has stopped dancing.

Now just standing alone on a baseball field in a stupor.

But then, out of the dugout, he sees --

Rick. Running toward him. Holding up his pants and shouting like the world is over.

John tries to focus. Confused.

Somehow, even in this state, he feels the creeping sense that the fun is over.

SMASH TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Older Kerensky at his deposition.

KERENSKY

Like anyone who strikes oil, we never considered the fact that eventually, the well goes dry.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)

How did you feel when you heard the bankruptcy news?

A long, conflicted silence...

KERENSKY

I was nervous. All our settlements would be renegotiated down to pennies. They filed for bankruptcy, but we were the ones with an upside-down balance sheet.

EXT. WIMBERLY RANCH - DAY

John and Darla (a year older than we last saw them) hold hands at "a rolling river-front ranch."

KERENSKY (V.O.)

Used to be, when a lawyer won a big case, they'd buy a thousand acres in West Texas and just watch their cows grow.

A REALTOR opens the massive front door of the main house.

Darla tries to contain her smile as they step into --

INT. RANCH MANSION - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

A Western palace. Darla gawks as they tour in QUICK POPS:

-- A state-of-the-art kitchen with a wet bar.

-- A private movie theatre.

-- A fully-stocked wine room.

-- A balcony overlooking the gorgeous Texas Hill Country.
John shakes hands with the realtor. Sold.

KERENSKY (V.O.)
But not John...

EXT. WIMBERLY MANSION - DAY

Peacocks roam as WORKERS drive cars off a transport truck into the enormous garage. Johnny Cutliff supervises.

KERENSKY (V.O.)
He bought a ranch, two mansions,
and 300 cars.

"A Ferrari, a Duesenberg, a Maserati, a Talbot-Lago..."

KERENSKY (V.O.)
Even though he owned the number one
law firm in the country, it was
fools gold. And the pressure was
eating at him...

ANGLE UP: To find John watching from the balcony in a ten-gallon hat. He admires his horsepower like a cowboy.

KERENSKY (V.O.)
He had to find another well.

EXT. CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT CENTER - DAY

John and Darla use giant scissors to cut a ceremonial ribbon in front of the brand new John M. O'Quinn Campus.

A female EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR speaks from a podium.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
John O'Quinn has been a defender of
women, and now a defender of
families. This center will protect
thousands of children from abuse.

DONORS clap and REPORTERS flash pictures. John takes the mic.

JOHN
The only things you get to take with
you are the things you give away...

INT. CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT CENTER - DAY

John, Rick and Kerensky drink wine at the donor reception. Nearby, a life-sized painting of John in a cowboy hat...which looks eerily like the earlier portrait of John's father.

JOHN
Bernick's still playing chess.

KERENSKY

It's not a maneuver, John.

RICK

We just sucked all the milk out of that teet.

A donor walks by. The men immediately smile.

DONOR

The portrait is beautiful.

JOHN

I'm even more handsome in person.

She leaves.

JOHN

All the copycat lawsuits. He knew it would give him grounds to file for bankruptcy.

KERENSKY

They make life-saving medical equipment. They didn't go bankrupt just to fuck with you.

RICK

We won.

JOHN

We didn't win.

John drinks.

JOHN

Even when *Fortune* ranked us number one, they ridiculed us with the headline.

KERENSKY

Jesus Christ, shut up about the rankings! We just need to find a new case.

JOHN

No one thinks I'm a better lawyer than Bernick.

KERENSKY

Who gives a shit?!

Donor.

Hi. JOHN KERENSKY
Hello.

RICK
I love your dress.

Gone.

KERENSKY
How much money did you donate?

JOHN
It's a good cause.

KERENSKY
You want my advice?

JOHN
No.

KERENSKY
Stop spending money and enjoy the
rest of your life naked in a river.
Just be happy that you saved
thousands of women from silicone
poisoning.

RICK
Well...the science is pending on
that.

KERENSKY
It's check mate, John. Move on.

John kills his drink, unsatisfied --

INT. CLASSIC CAR - DAY

Johnny drives home from the event. Darla sits shotgun.

DARLA
That was lovely. Right, baby?

But John stews alone in the back seat, hammered. Watching oil
wells pump the soul out of the Texas plains.

INT. LAW FIRM - FRONT DESK - DAY

John steps off the elevator and enters the office to find --
No one. That typical buzz of energy is silent.

JOHN

Hello?

From down the hall, he hears a TV PLAYING. He heads to --

INT. TV STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

John finds the entire staff huddled around a TV.

JOHN

The hell is going on?

MARY

Cochran's closing.

John looks at the TV, which plays Johnnie Cochran's closing argument in the OJ Simpson trial (*Court TV*, 9/28/95).

The entire office is rapt by Cochran's impassioned plea to acquit...but John is watching something else --

His staff. Transfixed. Enamored with a lawyer on TV.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON: The dry erase board. A drawing of a man and a woman with big breasts in front of a TV camera.

JOHN (O.S.)

This is how we counter.

Rick, Kerensky, Mary and other workers look confused.

RICK

A porno?

JOHN

What? No.

John writes on the TV camera: "Court TV".

JOHN

When we beat Dow Corning, nobody was watching. But what if we do it again, right in your living room?

RICK

Try a case on Court TV?

JOHN

We merge our two front war. It's a courtroom drama and a PR battle.

KERENSKY

But who are we suing?

Everyone looks at John. A beat.

JOHN

Dow.

KERENSKY

Dow Corning is bankrupt.

JOHN

Not Dow Corning.

He writes on the board in block letters: "DOW CHEMICAL".

JOHN

Dow Corning's parent company is Dow Chemical.

MARY

But Dow Chemical is...

JOHN

One of the 50 biggest corporations in the world. With an annual revenue of twenty billion dollars.

RICK

And you want to --

JOHN

Bankrupt them.

A stunned silence.

KERENSKY

John...

JOHN

Tell me why not, Mike.

KERENSKY

Our Mass Tort only worked because we had a verdict. We beat them with Darla to establish legal precedent. So they had to settle.

MARY

But we don't have a verdict over Dow Chemical.

KERENSKY

And we're not gonna get one.

JOHN

That's a negative Houston Handshake.
I'm docking your paycheck.

KERENSKY

They don't make breast implants! I
mean, what's even the argument?

JOHN

Lack of institutional oversight.

KERENSKY

These are the people who battled
Agent Orange litigation. They will
bury us in subpoenas, and delays,
and medical studies, and media
attacks. Going to trial against
someone like that will cost us
every dollar we've made.

JOHN

But if we win...If I beat David
Bernick on national television...

KERENSKY

You're willing to bet the entire firm
on a trial against a company that's
done nothing wrong, represented by a
lawyer who's never lost?

JOHN

I am.

KERENSKY

Everyone in this room -- everyone
out there -- every one of our jobs
is on the line for this one trial.
Why?

Silent.

KERENSKY

Why, John?

JOHN

Because I can beat him.

He looks around the room.

JOHN

Anyone who doesn't believe that,
quit now. Everyone else, find me
the perfect client.

John marches out of the room. Off Kerensky, losing his resolve --

INT. KERENSKY'S OFFICE - LATER

Kerensky works. Mary knocks.

KERENSKY

Yeah?

MARY

Can I...talk to you about something?

KERENSKY

As long as it's not about David Bernick.

Kerensky chuckles, then notices Mary seems distressed.

KERENSKY

Sit down. What's going on?

MARY

The other night, at umm...at the Astrodome...I saw Rick in the bathroom...

Kerensky hangs his head.

KERENSKY

So...Rick occasionally pays staff members to...accompany him to Las Vegas.

MARY

I'm not talking about Las Vegas.

KERENSKY

To...take him to *Sin City*.

This hits her hard. Kerensky knows.

MARY

Mike...

A brutal silence.

KERENSKY

For the record...you don't have to attend the pool party this weekend.

MARY

A women's group is organizing a protest in Austin against the bankruptcy decision.

KERENSKY

That's good.

MARY

I thought I'd drive up. Look for that perfect client.

KERENSKY

Great idea.

A beat. Then Mary walks out of the office...

Off Kerensky, realizing it's time for a change --

INT. WIMBERLY MANSION - MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A very drunk John watches the 1969 Western *True Grit*. Darla enters with popcorn.

DARLA

So who's gonna be this star client?

JOHN

Unfortunately, there is only one Darla Lexington.

DARLA

You'll have to convince America to fall in love with someone else.

Darla snuggles under a blanket next to John.

DARLA

I'm taken.

JOHN

Where's the wine?

DARLA

You already have --

He downs his glass.

DARLA

That's probably enough for movie night.

JOHN
I've got more than just a movie
planned.

He winks. Darla laughs, grabs his glass and exits.

ON SCREEN: John Wayne as ROOSTER COGBURN.

ROOSTER COGBURN
You can't serve papers on a rat,
baby sister. You gotta kill him or
let him be.

Darla returns with a fresh bottle...to find John passed out
with a hand in the popcorn.

DARLA
Hey, no, no, I want to watch the
movie.

She tries to rouse him, but he brushes her off.

DARLA
Come on, baby.

But he's out. As the old Western plays across her face, Darla
begins to cry.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mary eats an underwhelming dinner in her sparse kitchen.

RING! Her phone. But she doesn't move. Apathetic.

RING! The answering machine picks up --

MAN (V.O.)
Hello, Ms. Henderson. I'm an
investigator with the Texas State
Bar Association.

Mary perks up.

MAN (V.O.)
We've received complaints about
illegal client solicitation at
O'Quinn, Kerensky & Laminack.

Mary grows nervous.

MAN (V.O.)
You're not in trouble or anything,
but if you have any information,
call me back at 427-1463.

A beat...then Mary jumps up and finds a Post-it note. She scribbles down the number then looks at it. Considering...

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

John showers off a morning hangover. He drinks straight from a whiskey bottle. Hair of the dog.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Darla pours a fifth of whiskey down the sink at the wet bar. Then another. Filling a trash bag with empty bottles until --

She hears the shower turn off. She grabs the one bottle she didn't have time to empty and hides it in her coat.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

John towels off, whistling.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Darla sits on the couch next to Kerensky.

DARLA
Thank you for being here.

Her leg shakes. Nervous.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

John enters in a robe and goes straight to the wet bar...but all his liquor is gone.

JOHN
Darla?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

John enters to find Darla and Kerensky.

JOHN
Where's all the whiskey?

DARLA
No more, John.

JOHN
What do you mean there's no more, I just bought...
(a pause)
What are you doing here, Mike?

KERENSKY
It's time to change.

John notices that Darla is crying.

JOHN
What is this?

DARLA
No more.

JOHN
Uh-uh. We're not doing this. Where
is my whiskey?

DARLA
Baby, I know it's hard...

A realization hits John.

JOHN
What did you do?

John steps down the hall to --

INT. WINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The entire thing, every single cooler, is empty.
And then, from deep within his being, John snaps.

JOHN
WHAT DID YOU DO?

KERENSKY (O.S.)
John...

DARLA (O.S.)
I'll give you two space.

John rushes back to --

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Darla hurries out of the house...

JOHN
Darla!

KERENSKY
Let's just talk about --

But John follows Darla. Heating up.

INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Darla runs past a long row of classic cars.

DARLA

Johnny!

John enters the garage and grabs a golf club.

JOHN

Darla, I swear to Christ.

EXT. WIMBERLY MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Darla runs toward Johnny, who works on a car. Peacocks squawk everywhere amidst the chaos. They've multiplied.

JOHN

We're not fucking doing this!

John pursues, shooing away peacocks with his golf club. His robe falls open, naked underneath.

DARLA

Johnny!

JOHNNY CUTLIFF

Whoa, whoa...

John points the club at Darla.

JOHN

Where is it?

Darla sprints back to the house. John bolts, Johnny chases.

John tumbles over a bird into a garbage bin...and out topples the trash bag of empty whiskey bottles.

John stares for a beat.

JOHN

I'm gonna kill her.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF

John. Cool off.

John turns toward the house.

INT. WIMBERLY MANSION - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

John bursts in the house with a nine iron.

Kerensky grabs his collar, but John runs forward. The robe rips off his body.

JOHN
I'm gonna fucking kill her!

FOLLOW this naked maniac into --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Darla talks into the phone, frantic.

DARLA
I think he needs help --

JOHN
What the fuck is this?!

John smashes the phone receiver with the golf club. Johnny and Kerensky enter.

DARLA
Baby, please.

JOHN
Is that what you think I am? A baby?

DARLA
We can buy more.

JOHN
Who can buy more? You? You can't buy anything without me.

KERENSKY
Let us help.

JOHN
I fucking made you!

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
John.

JOHN
I fucking made all three of you!

John smashes the wet bar with the club. Glass shatters all over the floor.

Kerenksy and Johnny try to wrestle the golf club away, but John steps right on glass.

JOHN
FUCK!

Blood on the floor. The men wrestle. Chaos, until --

DARLA
ENOUGH!!

She's so loud that they stop.

She takes a breath. Tears...

DARLA
Beating David Bernick isn't gonna
make your daddy come out of the
ground and love you. It isn't gonna
make your momma love you. But I'm
standing here, trying to love you
no matter what.

She calms, then pulls that last bottle of whiskey from her
coat and puts it on the kitchen table.

DARLA
If you want to go in the ground and
lay with them, then go.

Pointed.

DARLA
But I'm not coming with you.

She walks away.

A long silence between the men.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
I'm taking today off.

Johnny exits. John looks over at Kerensky, sweating.

JOHN
Mike...

A moment of change?

JOHN
I need a ride to the party.

Nope.

EXT. TEXAS STATE CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

On the Capitol steps, thousands of WOMEN protest. They "wave
garish pictures of mutilated female bodies" and carry signs
like "Dow Shalt Not Kill."

FIND Mary handing out business cards to "women in
wheelchairs, women on crutches, women in bandages."

SYBIL GOODRICH (55), founder of the Command Trust Network advocacy group, shouts into a bullhorn.

SYBIL GOODRICH
Instead of testing their product,
Dow Corning used us as lab rats!

Boos.

SYBIL GOODRICH
We don't need a new research study.
We ARE the study. We ARE the
evidence!

CROWD
We are the evidence! We are the
evidence!

Mary gapes all these people parroting John's slogan.

SYBIL GOODRICH
We fought for years to make these
men pay, and as soon as we win, they
say they don't have money!

CUT TO:

EXT. DR. LEWY'S MANSION - BACKYARD - DAY

A LADY in a bikini with melon boobs jumps off a diving board into "a breast-shaped pool with a nipple-shaped hot tub."

FIND Dr. Lewy in that nipple, soaking with surgically enhanced women.

DR. LEWY
I'm doing ten explants a day.

BIKINI
Can you get me an appointment?

Lewy looks at her cleavage.

DR. LEWY
In your case, I wouldn't recommend
it.

FIND Kerensky, watching John in the pool. John lifts Rick onto his shoulders to play chicken against a pair of MODELS.

RICK
Come on now, chicken legs!

John treads toward the women.

JOHN
Get 'em, boy!

Rick pulls down the model's bikini, exposing her breasts. She yelps and tumbles into the water.

MODEL
No fair!

Kerensky pours out his beer on the Saint Augustine lawn. Disgusted.

EXT. TEXAS STATE CAPITOL BUILDING - SAME

Mary listens as Sybil Goodrich continues her speech.

SYBIL GOODRICH
Just last week, a woman in New Mexico was told her army veteran's insurance wouldn't pay to remove breast implants because it wasn't "medically necessary."

Boos as we catch a FLASH of --

INT. TRAILER HOME - DAY

LAURA THORPE (39), topless, dips a razor blade in rubbing alcohol.

SYBIL GOODRICH (V.O.)
But the woman was desperate to get the Dow poison out of her body.

And then Laura Thorpe "slits her breasts to squeeze out the silicone gel." Horrific.

BACK TO:

EXT. TEXAS STATE CAPITOL BUILDING - SAME

Sybil Goodrich holds up a large poster of Laura Thorpe's bloody, carved breasts.

SYBIL GOODRICH
The government must respect our bodies!

Mary turns away from the brutal, bloody sight.

She breathes quickly, overwhelmed...

And then a "sweet, matronly 57-year-old woman" pushing a walker approaches Mary. Meet GLADYS LAAS, an unexpected star.

GLADYS LAAS
Excuse me, dear. Are you the lawyer?

EXT. DR. LEWY'S MANSION - BACK FIELD - DAY

A clay pigeon flies through the air. BLAM! It's blasted by --

Dr. Lewy, holding a shotgun. A drunk John and a few other MEN load shells into their guns.

DR. LEWY
You know Dr. Tenery? He's head of
the State Medical Board.

Dr. Tenery nods, then aims his gun.

DR. TENERY
Pull!

Dr. Lewy clicks a button. A clay pigeon launches from the skeet thrower and...BLAM! Dr. Tenery destroys it.

DR. LEWY
Give John a go.

DR. TENERY
I don't trust lawyers.

They laugh. John lifts his gun, a little too drunk for this.

JOHN
Load her up.
(aims gun)
Pull!

The machine launches. BLAM! Then...silicone gel rains onto the field below. The men laugh and John turns to see --

Dr. Lewy loaded the skeet machine with a breast implant.

DR. LEWY
I didn't know what to do with the
unused merchandise.

A hound DOG sprints into the field.

DR. LEWY
Shit. Rufus! Heel!

DR. TENERY
It's fine. If he gets lupus, John
will sue and make him a millionaire.

The men laugh. John reloads his gun, but --

KERENSKY (O.S.)

John!

The men turn to see Kerensky, staring at them in disgust.

JOHN

What?

KERENSKY

I quit.

Kerensky storms away.

DR. LEWY

Is he always PMS-ing?

But John realizes this is serious --

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Kerensky walks past a row of luxury vehicles to his sedan. He gets in and starts to drive --

But John runs out in front of him.

JOHN

Mike, hold on. Hey.

Kerensky rolls down his window.

KERENSKY

Move.

JOHN

Don't leave. Please. Don't leave.

KERENSKY

John...if you keep stuffing money
inside that black hole in your
fucking being, everyone is going to
leave.

JOHN

I know, man. I know.

Kerensky hesitates...

And then he drives away. Leaving John alone.

INT. DR. LEWY'S MANSION - DAY

John mixes a drink in the kitchen, angry, then notices a set of Ford keys hanging on a rack near the counter.

A decision...then he grabs his drink and steals the keys.

EXT. DR. LEWY'S MANSION - DRIVEWAY - DAY

John stumbles out the house, clicks a button on the keys --

BEEP. Someone's shiny Mustang convertible unlocks.

INT. MUSTANG - MOMENTS LATER

John wraps his hands around the steering wheel, feeling the purr of the engine. Pure, uncut horsepower.

CLOSE ON: The Mustang logo on the front of the car. The "*True Grit* Theme" by Elmer Bernstein begins to play. Giddyup...

EXT. ALLEN PARKWAY - DAY

John drives Allen Parkway, top down, cocktail in hand.

He "runs the red light at Smith and Bagby around 6:30 PM."

WHOOOP! A squad car pulls out behind him...

JOHN

Shit.

John slows to a stop and kills the cocktail. He looks in the rearview mirror as a COP gets out of his car and approaches.

John rolls down the window.

COP

License, please.

John thinks for a moment...

JOHN

Fuck it.

And then drives away.

COP

Hey! Hey!

MONTAGE - THE DRUNKEN CHASE

-- John swerves through downtown. More squad cars join the sloppy chase.

-- John takes a wide turn, drunkenly bashing a trash can.

-- John hurls his cocktail glass at a pigeon.

-- John heads "west on Memorial at speeds exceeding 80 MPH."

EXT. PRAIRIE STREET - DAY

As the sun goes down, John arrives at a blockade. Barriers obstruct Prairie Street. John whips a U-turn, but --

Four squad cars are facing him. And he's pinned between skyscrapers. No way out.

John stares at the cops. A showdown. He squints his drunk eyes, then suddenly we're --

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY

In the Western True Grit. The iconic showdown between John Wayne and four outlaws on a prairie. In our remake, O'Quinn plays the hero fighting alone. The outlaws are Houston cops.

John holds a rifle on his mustang, staring at the outlaws.

JOHN

Fill your hands you son of a bitch!

John puts the reins between his teeth, grabs a second gun with his free hand, and charges the outlaws.

A one vs. four death joust. BANG! BANG! John fires until --

He splits their formation, then turns and shoots one of the cops in the back.

Two other outlaws regroup and charge, but John blasts them out of their saddles. He's absolutely raving, until --

The fourth man takes aim from a distance and --

BANG! Shoots John's horse. The steed goes down. And John lies trapped underneath.

The fourth man approaches slowly. John stretches for his rifle...but it's just out of reach. He's finished.

The outlaw raises his gun. John looks at him, caked in sweat.

JOHN

What the fuck did I do to deserve this?

BACK TO:

EXT. PRAIRIE STREET - DAY

A cop drags John from his crashed Mustang, caked in sweat.

JOHN
What the fuck did I do to deserve
this?!

As the handcuffs click closed, John vomits.

INT. KERENSKY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kerensky in bed with his wife. Not so peaceful domesticity...
because the bedside phone is RINGING. RINGING. RINGING.

WIFE
Don't.

Kerensky stares at the ceiling, torn.

INT. HARRIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

The judge reads a verdict. John and Rick listen from the
defendant's table.

JUDGE
The defendant is sentenced to a
2,000 dollar fine...and three weeks
of court appointed rehabilitation.

CLACK goes the gavel. John exits with Rick, pissed.

JOHN
Bernick will use this against us.

RICK
Maybe the case isn't your biggest
problem right now.

John barges out of the courtroom --

EXT. MENNINGER REHAB CLINIC - DAY

John stands outside the dreary "Menninger Rehab Clinic."

DARLA (PRE-LAP)
To this day, I don't know what
happened inside Menninger.

Johnny hands him a suitcase.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
John...I'm not sure if you're a
good man or a bad man.

JOHN
Yeah.

Johnny gives him a hug.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF

But you're a great lawyer. So get
yourself right, you can still help
a lot of people.

John breathes...a point of no return...then goes inside.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Darla's deposition.

DARLA

John must've wrestled with
something in there.

INT. MENNINGER REHAB CLINIC - DORMITORY - NIGHT

John, now dressed in neutral whites, sweats and shakes
uncontrollably.

DARLA (V.O.)

Something dark.

He tries to tie his shoe...but the tremors won't let him. He
throws the shoe across the room. Suffering.

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

John sits in a circle with twelve other rehab PATIENTS.

JOHN

My name is John and I'm an
alcoholic.

GROUP

Hi, John.

He is quiet for a moment.

JOHN

I talk for a living, so...you'd
think this would be easier for me.

Nervous. And raw.

JOHN

I was born a ten-pound baby before
C-sections. And I think my mommma
never forgave me for that.

Light chuckles, but we stay on John. As he delivers this
argument, we don't cut away.

JOHN
Jeanie Wilkes. My momma.

He trails off...then John opens up.

JOHN
My momma was a nervous woman. And having a child isn't easy on a nervous woman. So when I was four years old, she took a taxi to her sister's house in Louisiana. And never came back. Ripped from the proverbial teet.

He smiles, then darkens --

JOHN
Daddy was a mechanic. After she left he was an angry mechanic. Then an angry, drunk mechanic.

This part is harder.

JOHN
He used to select which torque wrench to beat me with based on the severity of my crime. Talking back was a six inch. Sneaking out was ten. I lived alone with that man for twelve years -- waiting, patiently, until the day I got my driver's license. And then I stole his brand new Ford Thunderbird.

A pause. Remembering.

JOHN
I rode that rocket due East. Louisiana.

John leans forward.

JOHN
I spent the whole drive trying to piece together my memories of momma, what she looked like, what she smelled like. I wasn't angry. I wasn't righteous. I just wanted to see her again, to wrap her up.

A waiver in his voice...

JOHN

But when I got there...I learned
that momma had died two weeks
earlier. Two weeks earlier. I waited
twelve years to be two weeks late.

And then there are tears.

JOHN

I found her in this country
graveyard. They hadn't even
finished filling the hole.
And...I'll never forget...her
tombstone was a two-part deal. One
side said "Jeanie Wilkes" and the
other side...was blank.

John is silent, until --

JOHN

Maybe she was expecting my daddy
back. Or probably, she just died
before changing the burial plan.
But in that moment, when I saw the
double grave, my first thought was
that she wanted me to come lie next
to her.

A breath.

JOHN

Sixteen years old. And realizing the
hole is already dug for you.

Off John, heartsick --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Darla.

DARLA

Something changed in him. Because I
never saw John drink alcohol again.

A silence...then Darla chuckles.

DARLA

Or maybe it's just because after he
got out, he met Gladys Laas.

EXT. MODEST HOME - DAY

Johnny idles in an SUV, waiting outside a small house.

INT. MODEST HOME - DAY

John, Rick and Mary sit for a homemade lunch. Gladys Laas and her husband, ROBERT, bow their heads in prayer.

ROBERT LAAS
Thank You for the blessings You
bestow. We ask You to guide us and
make us healthy. Amen.

JOHN
Amen.

RICK
Praise God.

They eat. Gladys pours John a refill of iced tea.

ROBERT LAAS
She grows her own tea leaves in the
garden.

JOHN
You can't buy it this good.

GLADYS LAAS
Garden, please. It's a pot in the
kitchen. I used to have a green
thumb, before...

She trails off.

MARY
Ms. Laas, I'd love for you to tell
John your story in your own words.

GLADYS LAAS
It started when the hospital
introduced me to a plastic surgeon.

ROBERT LAAS
This was after the mastectomy.

GLADYS LAAS
The surgeon told me implants were
absolutely harmless. He said,
"Matter of fact, Gladys," he said,
"If you live to be eighty and die,
all your friends are gonna be
envious because when you're in the
casket you may be an old woman, but
you'll have beautiful breasts."

RICK
This casserole is actually good.

Rick reaches for a second helping. John rolls his eyes.

GLADYS LAAS
 Problem is, those implants might be
 the thing that put me in the casket.

JOHN
 It's not right, what Dow did to you.

GLADYS LAAS
 I started having back spasms. Robert
 would carry me in from the garden.

JOHN
 You're fit for an old fella.

RICK
 John couldn't carry his ex-wife out
 of a burning house.

They laugh. Robert stands and grabs a pile of bills off the
 counter. He deals them out like cards.

ROBERT LAAS
 Looky here...30 thousand dollars,
 65 thousand dollars --

MARY
 We're gonna get you reimbursed.

Robert and Gladys look at each other.

ROBERT LAAS
 We read about their lawyer, this
 Bernick fella. Is it true he's
 never lost?

JOHN
 It's true.

A long silence.

ROBERT LAAS
 A public trial like this will be
 hard on her. I don't know if I want
 the press scrutinizing everything --

But suddenly, Gladys stands.

GLADYS LAAS
 Come here, y'all.

They follow her, confused, as she shuffles slowly to --

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Gladys opens a medicine cabinet: it's loaded to the brim with prescription bottles.

GLADYS LAAS
I'm 57 years old, and I take 17 pills
a day.

She pulls out a giant weekly pill planner, like something from a nursing home.

GLADYS LAAS
I don't care none about winning or
losing. I want the whole country to
know what they did to me.

And suddenly, John feels the weight of responsibility...

INT. CORPORATE JET - DAY

A PILOT welcomes BUSINESS MEN onto his jet (This scene is VT from the October 1991 Dow ad campaign.)

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Piloting a corporate jet for Dow
can be rewarding, particularly when
it's an Angel Flight.

The pilot checks his manifest: there are empty seats.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The Corporate Angel Network uses
empty seats on company business
trips to fly cancer kids who need
specialized treatments.

A GIRL in pigtails bounds onto the plane.

PILOT
Welcome aboard, angel!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
This company does great things.

The plane takes off as the jingle swells with the Dow logo.

JINGLE
Dow lets you do great things!

MONTAGE - PRACTICING FOR TRIAL

-- INT. MOCK COURTROOM - John speaks to a practice jury.

JOHN
Dow Chemical had the responsibility
of oversight --

-- INT. MOCK COURTROOM - Rick, in the judge's chair, reads a verdict.

RICK
In response to the first question --
"Can Dow Chemical be held liable
for Dow Corning's breast implant
device?" -- The jury answers...no.

-- VT of a Court TV promo for the case (*Court TV*, 1995).

VOICEOVER (V.O.)
The Undefeated Boy Wonder David
Bernick vs. The Texas Gunslinger
John O'Quinn...

-- INT. MOCK COURTROOM - John cross examines Gladys.

JOHN
Can you afford these medical bills,
Ms. Laas?

GLADYS LAAS
I'm too sick to work.

-- INT. MOCK COURTROOM - Another mock verdict.

RICK
The jury answers...no.

-- VT of Bernick swarmed by PRESS outside a courthouse (*Court TV*, 1995).

VOICEOVER (V.O.)
David Bernick successfully defended
Dow Corning in a Colorado trial
today, the first win for the
beleaguered medical manufacturer.

-- INT. FILE ROOM - Mary and a hundred other workers search through a mountain of discovery boxes. John paces, manic.

JOHN
We've got to find *something*,
people. Work wins. Work wins.

-- INT. MOCK COURTROOM - Another verdict.

RICK
No.

-- INT. TV STUDIO - David Bernick sits for an interview.

DAVID BERNICK
We're expecting the Harvard study
data any day now.

-- INT. MOCK COURTROOM - John rants.

JOHN
These women are the evidence --

-- INT. MOCK COURTROOM - A verdict.

RICK
No.

John rubs his forehead in frustration, then puts a hand on Gladys' shoulder.

JOHN
We'll get him, Gladys.

Suddenly, Mary bursts into the courtroom, excited...

MARY
I found something!

INT. BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

Mary shows John a file, surrounded by curious workers.

MARY
In 1942, Dow Chemical conducted a
series of toxicology studies.

JOHN
Toxicology studies about --

MARY
Silicone.

John lights up.

MARY
They wanted to know if it was safe
before investing in a silicone
company called Corning.

JOHN
So the original sin, the claim that
silicone doesn't harm people --

MARY
Came from Dow Chemical.

JOHN
Great fucking work, Mary. Prepare
an argument. I want you to give the
opening tomorrow.

John marches back to the courtroom. Mary beams, eager --

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

John leads a blindfolded Darla toward a warehouse building.

DARLA
I'm gonna fall.

JOHN
You're not gonna fall.

John trips her...then catches her. A joke.

DARLA
That's not funny!

JOHN
It kind of is though.

DARLA
You try getting abducted in heels.

JOHN
It'll be worth it. You ready?

He takes off her blindfold. Voila! A warehouse!

DARLA
You really are gonna kill me.

She laughs. But then John gets down on one knee.

JOHN
Darla...I don't deserve anything. I
don't deserve your patience. I
don't deserve your loyalty.

DARLA
John...

JOHN
But you deserve everything.

He pulls out a ring box.

DARLA
Oh my God...

He opens. Inside, is...a key. Attached to a necklace.

DARLA

Wow. A key. I feel like a princess.

John laughs and nods to the warehouse door.

JOHN

Open it.

Intrigued, Darla inserts the key --

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She opens and John flips on floodlights...

JOHN

You deserve everything I have.

...to reveal a massive space filled with "more than 300 cars, organized by color, a total value of over \$40 million."

DARLA

You bought a space?!

JOHN

I want you to run the museum.

They walk the room. Twenty one chandeliers hang overhead.

DARLA

The chandeliers from your party!

They pass a stunning lineup: "John F. Kennedy's 1962 Lincoln Continental limo, a 1938 Talbot-Lago, a 1939 Town Car used by Pope Pius XII."

DARLA

John...I don't know what to say.

JOHN

Say yes. Oh damn, I forgot.

John pulls out a "yellow diamond engagement ring."

JOHN

The box came with a ring.

Darla looks at the diamond in awe.

DARLA

Yes. Of course, yes.

She pulls John into an embrace. But then she pulls away.

DARLA

You can't divorce me. I've got a great lawyer.

They kiss. Maybe...maybe John won't end up alone --

INT. LAW FIRM - MOCK COURTROOM - DAY

Mary delivers an impassioned opening argument to the jury.

MARY

Women are tired of being the lab rats of American culture. They poke us, they run tests on us, they tell us what is medically recommended, they tell us what shoes to buy, they change what is medically recommended, they tell us what boobs to buy.

Mary holds up a stack of documents.

MARY

In 1942, Dow Chemical ran these kinds of tests on the safety of silicone. And now, fifty years later, I'm here to let women out of the cage --

She is interrupted by shouting in the bullpen.

WOMAN (O.S.)

I want to see my lawyer!

She looks at John, confused --

INT. BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

John, Mary and Rick enter to a furious WOMAN waiving papers.

SECRETARY

He's not in the office right now --

JOHN

What is this?

The woman sees John and hurls papers at him.

WOMAN

That's a biopsy. I don't have cancer.

JOHN

Congratulations.

She's quiet for a moment. Stunned.

WOMAN

You asshole. You don't know your own client.

RICK

We have a lot of clients.

WOMAN

Do you tell a lot of clients that they have cancer?

Mary realizes something bad is happening...

JOHN

Sorry, I don't --

WOMAN

Mary Klager.

Miss MARY KLAGER (48), a cautionary tale.

JOHN

Of course. So many Marys.

She turns on Mary Henderson.

MARY KLAGER

You convinced me to get my implants removed. You asked me to bring them here. You sent them to get tested.

MARY

That's standard protocol --

MARY KLAGER

And then John O'Quinn called to say I tested positive for cancer.

JOHN

I was trying to help --

MARY KLAGER

I got a double mastectomy. But when they did a follow-up biopsy on the tissue that was cut from my chest, they found no trace of cancer.

Silence.

MARY KLAGER

You told the wrong woman she had cancer.

Mary Henderson's face falls.

JOHN
Sergeant!

The security guard comes into the office.

JOHN MARY
Get her out of here. What?

RICK
We do have a lot of Marys...

MARY KLAGER
You tell women you care about their
bodies!

JOHN
Get her OUT!

John walks away. The security guard intercepts Mary Klager.

MARY KLAGER
But you don't care!

SECURITY GUARD
Ma'am, please.

MARY KLAGER
You're just like them!

The guard tries to pull her out.

MARY KLAGER
O'QUINN!

John turns around...and Mary Klager opens her blouse to
reveal a flat chest mangled by scars. Brutal.

MARY KLAGER
You're just like Dow.

Off Mary Henderson, horrified --

INT. FILE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mary Henderson enters and locks the door. She breathes
fast... overwhelmed...

A panic attack coming on.

She looks at the rows and rows and rows of files. An endless
hell of legal paperwork...

And then she snaps. She throws files off the shelf, completely trashing the room in a righteous fury, until --

INT. BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

At her desk, Mary pulls a Post-it note out of her purse...

The number from the State Bar Investigator's voicemail.

ATTORNEY (PRE-LAP)

When did you first report John?

Mary picks up her phone...and dials the number.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Mary Henderson reflects.

MARY

Just before the Court TV case.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)

What made you call?

MARY

I finally saw the truth.

EXT. HARRIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

John is swarmed by MEDIA as he ascends the courthouse steps.

MARY (V.O.)

The entire build up to that day...we weren't preparing to debate Justice.

At the top, John turns and smiles as the flashbulbs go off.

MARY (V.O.)

We were preparing for a play.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE COURT TV BUILD UP

-- INT. COUNCIL'S CHAMBERS - A MAKEUP ARTIST powders John's face as he listens to his Walkman.

-- INT. HALLWAY - A SOUND MAN clips a mic to Bernick's suit.

-- INT. COURTROOM - A CAMERA OPERATOR focuses his lens in and out, pointed at Rick fixing his hair.

-- INT. COURTROOM - CEO Dick Hazleton drums his fingers, anxious. A GRIP moves his chair a foot to the left.

-- INT. COURTROOM - Gladys Laas sits at the plaintiff table. A CREW MEMBER adjusts a light to shine right at her.

INT. HARRIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Lights. Camera. Action. John holds the floor, taking in the packed gallery...and then it begins.

JOHN

Today is not about science. Today
is about a thing called Justice.

In QUICK POPS, we follow an onslaught of witnesses:

-- First, John questions Gladys. Heartbreaking.

GLADYS LAAS

Twelve weeks of gamimune through an
IV. Then six blood cleansing
treatments called Plasmapheresis.
And after that, three months of
chemotherapy every day, just the
same as a cancer patient.

-- But then Bernick attacks Dr. Lewy.

DAVID BERNICK

Two years ago, you made 300,000
dollars. Last year, after the implant
paranoia, you made two million.

DR. LEWY

These women were very sick.

DAVID BERNICK

Are you being paid to be an expert
witness today? Under oath.

Dr. Lewy squirms.

DR. LEWY

Yes.

-- John presses Hazelton.

JOHN

Are you married, Mr. Hazleton?

CEO HAZLETON

I am.

JOHN

Does your wife have Dow Corning
implants?

CEO HAZLETON
She does not.

JOHN
If she wanted them, what would you say?

CEO HAZLETON
I would advise her to consider the benefits of the product, which are substantial, against the...risks.

-- Bernick interviews scientist Marcia Angell.

DAVID BERNICK
Tell the court what you do, Dr. Angell.

MARCIA ANGELL
I'm the Editor-in-Chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

DAVID BERNICK
A whole career in medical research. So tell us, how could we know if breast implants cause disease?

MARCIA ANGELL
First, you'd rule out coincidence. 1% of the population has implants, and 1% has a connective tissue disease. So if you do the arithmetic, you'd expect about 10,000 women to have both, just by coincidence.

DAVID BERNICK
How do we rule out coincidence?

MARCIA ANGELL
With an epidemiological study. Figure out if these diseases are more common in women with implants than they are in women without implants.

DAVID BERNICK
Has your publication printed such a study?

MARCIA ANGELL
Yes.

This surprises John.

DAVID BERNICK
When?

MARCIA ANGELL
Today.

FIND Mary in the gallery as shock sweeps the courtroom.

DAVID BERNICK
And what did that study say?

MARCIA ANGELL
Connective tissue diseases are *not*
more common in women with implants.

DAVID BERNICK
In plain English.

A pause, and then Marcia Angell puts a nail in the coffin...

MARCIA ANGELL
The Harvard study proves that breast
implants do not cause disease.

JOHN
Objection!

JUDGE
Approach the bench.

John and Bernick rush to the judge.

JOHN
That study wasn't produced in
discovery. It's inadmissible.

DAVID BERNICK
We just got it today.

JOHN
This is trial by ambush.

JUDGE
If it was published today, there's
nothing he could have done.

JOHN
That is horseshit and you know it.

JUDGE
I'll allow the evidence.

DAVID BERNICK
Thank you.

As they walk away, Bernick points a finger gun at John.

INT. COURTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bernick stands next to a box on a table in front of the JURY.

DAVID BERNICK

A study by the most prestigious
medical institution in the world.
Published in the most prestigious
research journal in the world.

He opens the box. Inside, a fresh print run of *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

DAVID BERNICK

As you deliberate, read this study.
It means, incontrovertibly, that
breast implants do not cause
illness. Ms. Laas' condition is
simply a tragic coincidence.

As Bernick hands a copy to each juror, John hangs his head.

INT. COUNCIL'S CHAMBERS - DAY

John sits alone, perusing that medical journal. Loser. Mary taps on the door, but John doesn't look up.

JOHN

Bernick's had this study for months.

MARY

I know it stings to lose...but
there's a silver lining.

JOHN

What, exactly?

MARY

At least now women don't have to
walk around thinking they have a
Pinto gas tank in their chest.

JOHN

We're the ones who told them they
had a bomb in their chest.

MARY

It didn't happen the way we thought,
but we helped them get the truth.

JOHN

Have I taught you nothing? A courtroom isn't a place where you find the truth. It's a place where you create the truth.

John closes the journal.

JOHN

And right now Bernick has created a truth that jury believes in.

A long silence...

And then, finally, Mary speaks her mind.

MARY

You're wrong.

JOHN

What?

MARY

We became lawyers to help people. But now you don't even care if you hurt people, as long as it makes money.

John is taken aback.

MARY

Which is why I spoke to an investigator from the Bar Association.

JOHN

You did what?

MARY

You promised me we would fight for women.

JOHN

What did you tell them?

MARY

Everything. How you solicit cases. How you charge unnecessary expenses.

John looks at her in disbelief.

MARY

You're a corporation. You're not a lawyer anymore.

JOHN
I'm not a lawyer?

MARY
The investigator said...you could
be disbarred.

And then...to Mary's surprise...John laughs.

JOHN
You have no idea, do you?

MARY
What?

JOHN
Every CEO in the country wants me
disbarred. They call me the
Lawyer from Hell, I'm their grim
reaper, do you understand? David
Bernick sent the Bar Association
after me.

MARY
So...the investigation --

JOHN
It's a fucking hit job, Mary!

MARY
Then...I can rescind my --

JOHN
They aren't the cops, you idiot.
They don't give immunity to lawyers
who confess to ethical violations.

Mary is silent.

JOHN
Mary. Did I ever specifically
instruct you to solicit clients?

MARY
I...no, but Rick --

JOHN
Did I ever specifically instruct you
to charge for biopsies?

She's coming to a realization...

JOHN

You still think a lawyer is some sacred ideal? You think the woman out there with 200,000 dollars a year in medical bills gives a damn about my morals? She hired me for my GUN! A lawyer is someone brilliant and belligerent enough to walk into a blood-soaked, drag out, hide-your-wives-and-daughters war for you and -- by any means whatso-fucking-ever -- WIN.

He points at her.

JOHN

You are not a lawyer. You are a mouse.

Mary quakes as John booms --

JOHN

A LAWYER WINS.

He lets this ring, frothing...

Then he looks at that medical journal. And gets an idea --

JOHN

Now watch what I do with your truth.

SMASH TO:

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

John's closing argument.

JOHN

The study came out today.

He holds the journal, baffled.

JOHN

The study that says implants are perfectly safe. Came out *today*.

And then his tone turns dark.

JOHN

Thirty two years of putting implants into women's bodies, and the study came out *today*?

He flips through the journal...

JOHN

Is Gladys Laas a guinea pig? Before they had a shred of evidence that this device was safe, Dow Corning cut open ten million women like frogs in a biology class.

He finds something on the last page.

JOHN

When you read your new books, flip to back page. In fine print, you'll find a list of donors who contributed to this so-called study.
(reads)
"The Dow Chemical Company."

John throws the journal in a trash can and glares at Mary.

JOHN

They acted negligently for thirty two years. And unless you want to be their next lab rat, they must face Justice.

He stares down the jury.

JOHN

The only language they speak is money. Punish them in a way they understand.

INT. HARRIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

The BAILIFF hands the judge a verdict.

JUDGE

There were three charges brought before the jury.

John holds Gladys' hand, nervous...

JUDGE

In response to the first question --
"Was Dow Chemical negligent in the creation of breast implants?" --
The jury answers...no.

John hangs his head. Bernick smiles.

JUDGE

In response to the second question -
 - "Did Dow Chemical operate with
 conscious indifference toward Dow
 Corning's product safety?" -- The
 jury answers...no.

The crowd groans. FIND Rick in the gallery, disappointed.

JUDGE

And in response to the third question
 -- "Did Dow Chemical utilize
 deceptive trade practices toward
 women?" -- The jury answers...yes.

John's eyes go wide!

JUDGE

The court awards Mrs. Laas twenty
 eight million dollars in damages.

The gallery cheers with approval. And John hugs Gladys, who
 cries in joy.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE COURT TV FALL OUT

-- INT. HALLWAY - Gladys beams in front of a press pool. John
 holds her hand, smiling.

GLADYS LAAS

I'm so pleased, so pleased. And so
 very glad it's over with.

JOHN

We're thankful to these twelve
 people from the great state of
 Texas for defending women when
 everyone else in our country
 refused to.

-- INT. HALLWAY - Bernick speaks to the press pool.

DAVID BERNICK

The verdict is illogical.

-- INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - Two of the JURORS give an
 interview to a Court TV PRODUCER. (This can be inserted as VT
 from *Court TV*, 2/14/95).

PRODUCER (O.S.)

Did the evidence prove that the
 implants were actually harmful?

No. JUROR 1 JUROR 2
There isn't enough evidence
for that, no.

PRODUCER (O.S.)
So why did you award Gladys such a
large sum of money?

JUROR 1
She had a couple years left to
retire. We added that up.

JUROR 2
She needs help with the housework.
Her husband has to cook.

JUROR 1
All that was added up.

PRODUCER (O.S.)
So do you think Dow Chemical gave
her lupus?

JUROR 1
No.

JUROR 2
No, no. We just felt bad for her.
That's all.

-- INT. HALLWAY - John walks down a hallway to exit...and
sees Bernick coming the other way. They stop...

JOHN
How's it feel to lose?

BERNICK
We've still got appeals. I'll get
you back.

As John gloats --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Older Mary.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)
When did you get disbarred?

MARY
Just a few months after that. The
investigation was...swift.

She is quiet for a moment...

MARY

The worst part isn't that he took
away my ability to be a lawyer.
It's that he took away my desire to
be a lawyer.

MONTAGE - JOHN'S FUTURE

-- EXT. COURTHOUSE - John is mobbed by congratulatory
reporters on the steps.

RICK (V.O.)

After he beat Bernick, we couldn't
lose.

-- VT of plane crash wreckage (*CNN*, 7/2/94).

REPORTER

A USAir 737 has gone down with
reportedly 56 people on board.

MIKE (V.O.)

He won forty million dollars off a
plane crash.

-- EXT. UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON - An older John and Darla cut a
ribbon at the new "John M. O'Quinn Law Building."

DARLA (V.O.)

The John M. O'Quinn Foundation
became the largest philanthropy
organization in Texas.

-- VT of a report about Fen-Phen diet pills (*WFAA*, 10/9/95).

ANCHOR

Houston lawyers are getting fat off
diet pill lawsuits against Fen-Phen.

MIKE (V.O.)

A billion dollars off diet pills.

-- EXT. GOLF COURSE - A greying John bids at the Concours
d'Elegance Car Auction.

JAMES CUTLIFF (V.O.)

850 cars. 38 Ferraris, 23 Duesenbergs,
a Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow...

-- EXT. STADIUM - John cheers for the University of Houston
football team on "John M. O'Quinn Field."

JULIE (V.O.)
He had to have his name on
everything.

-- VT of Governor GEORGE W. BUSH giving a press conference
with John behind him (*AP News*, 7/28/98).

GEORGE W. BUSH
The tobacco industry has conceded
defeat, and we have a settlement of
historic proportions.

MIKE (V.O.)
3.3 billion off tobacco.

-- EXT. HOSPITAL - Dr. Lewy enters the "John M. O'Quinn
Medical Campus." Outside the front door, a bust of John.

-- VT of aging John in a TV interview (*Dateline*, 8/6/08).

JOHN
Greed is a powerful motive. And
there are many, many honorable
people on Wall Street, thank God.
But there are people who are not
honorable.

Off John's pious smile --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (DEPOSITIONS)

Older Mary.

MARY
I saw on *Dateline* that John was
preparing a case against Wall Street.

She laughs.

MARY
If your hired gun has killed
everybody in town, may as well hold
up the bank.

EXT. HOUSTON AIRPORT - DAY

Rain pours as an ATTENDANT helps John get luggage out of his
black Suburban.

ATTENDANT
Where you headed?

JOHN
New York.

John looks around the empty trunk, confused. He calls up to Johnny in the driver's seat.

JOHN
Johnny?

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
Yeah.

JOHN
Where did I put the briefcase that was on the kitchen table?

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
Sounds like you put it on the kitchen table.

JOHN
Goddamnit.

John checks his watch.

JOHN
Can you hold the flight?

ATTENDANT
No, sir.

John marches to the driver's side door.

JOHN
We gotta go fast. Let me drive.

Johnny hesitates...then scoots over.

JAMES CUTLIFF (V.O.)
I still don't understand why Johnny let Mr. O'Quinn drive that day.

INT. SUBURBAN - DAY

John speeds on a rain-slicked parkway.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
Damn. What's in that briefcase?

JOHN
Day-trading numbers.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
Must be some killer evidence.

JOHN
It's not evidence.

Johnny looks at John as the windshield wipers splash.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
Wait...your day-trading numbers?

John drives faster.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
You're missing a flight to look at
your portfolio?!

A silence.

JOHNNY CUTLIFF
What, are you not making enough
money as a lawyer?

And then John loses control of the SUV --

EXT. ALLEN PARKWAY - DAY

"O'Quinn's SUV jumps the curb and careens over a grassy
median..."

"The hurtling Suburban crosses the eastbound lanes, barely
missing oncoming traffic..."

"Hops a second curb, going airborne before smashing into the
thirty foot oak tree..."

"The breaking of glass and the crushing of metal..."

"The tree cutting the SUV in half..."

"The bowels of the vehicle scattered twenty yards west..."

"Neither O'Quinn nor Johnny Cutliff wearing a seatbelt..."

"Both killed instantly."

SMASH TO BLACK.

BLACK SCREEN

A phone is RINGING. RINGING. RINGING.

INT. WIMBERLY MANSION - GARAGE - DAY

Darla places a number placard on the 1957 Ford Thunderbird.
She checks it off her list, prepping for the museum.

RING. The phone from inside the house.

Darla puts down her list. RING. And walks through the long garage. RING. Past car after car after car. RING.

She notices a smudge on a Bugatti and stops to wipe it.

INT. WIMBERLY MANSION - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

RING. Darla finally answers the phone.

DARLA

Hello?

And then her face falls.

EXT. ALLEN PARKWAY - DAY

The view from a news helicopter as PARAMEDICS swarm the gruesome crash site (VT from the *KHOU* report on 10/29/09).

REPORTER (V.O.)

Famed Houston Attorney John O'Quinn
was one of two men who died this
morning in a tragic accident...

INT. SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

Rick stands at the pulpit in mourning clothes. His hands shake with nerves as he speaks to the packed church.

RICK

In public, John seemed larger than
life. Charismatic, successful.

FIND Kerensky in the audience, hurting.

RICK

But in private, he battled many
demons. And he fought hard.

FIND Mary, conflicted.

RICK

At the end of the story, the
gunslinger rides off into the sunset.
And all we're left with is the hope
that out there he finds peace.

FIND Darla, alone.

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

The FDA Commissioner speaks to the press corps.

FDA COMMISSIONER

Today, after decades of rigorous studies, the FDA will lift its ban on silicone breast implants, making them available for immediate use.

Flashbulbs in the audience.

FDA COMMISSIONER

The shuttling of women back and forth between the legal profession and the medical profession is the most distressing thing to come out of this entire scenario.

As the hands of the press shoot up --

INT. PBS STUDIOS - DAY

Dr. Marcia Angell of *The New England Journal of Medicine* sits for an interview (*PBS Frontline*, 2/27/96).

MARCIA ANGELL

The thing that hurt me personally is the suggestion that if you don't believe breast implants cause connective tissue disease you are anti-feminist or anti-women.

She pauses, angry.

MARCIA ANGELL

I'm a feminist. I believe I've earned my badge as a feminist. I believe very strongly in women's rights in all ways. But this is a scientific matter. It is not a matter of opinion. It is not a matter of legal argument. It is not a matter of debate. And the science is exceedingly clear.

EXT. WIMBERLY MANSION - DAY

Mary brings a casserole to the door of John's mansion. She steels herself, about to knock --

But the door swings open and two MEN in white gloves carry a painting out of the house. Confused, Mary walks inside --

INT. WIMBERLY MANSION - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Mary enters to find "MEN from Sotheby's assessing the value of various possessions." Art, light fixtures, furniture.

DARLA (O.S.)
In here...

Mary steps into --

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The bare living room. All the furniture is gone. Darla sits on a folding chair in a robe, eating salad off a moving box.

DARLA
John always said the only things
you get to take with you are the
things you give away.

MARY
I brought a casserole.

DARLA
Thank you, baby. He left everything
to the John M. O'Quinn Foundation.
Even the pantry.

Mary hands her the dish.

MARY
Us ladies gotta stick together.

BANG! A loud CRACK outside causes Mary to jolt.

DARLA
Animal control is here too.

MARY
Why?

DARLA
The peacocks.

Mary pulls over a folding chair and sits.

MARY
Did he leave you anything at all?

DARLA
No. And these guys from Sotheby's
are ruthless. They took the clothes
out of my closet.

BANG! A quiet beat...then Mary makes her approach.

MARY
I'm sure John wanted you to have
more than *nothing*.

DARLA
He wanted me to have everything. He
just didn't expect to roll over a
median before he changed the will.

MARY
Did he ever tell you that?

DARLA
What?

MARY
That he wanted you to have
everything?

DARLA
Of course he did.

MARY
Did he ever write it down?

DARLA
Why?

Mary shifts in her seat.

MARY
I came because...there are several
people who feel like...like they
are owed something by John O'Quinn.

DARLA
Tell them to get a good lawyer.

MARY
That's exactly what we did.

Mary smiles. BANG!

MONTAGE - THE DEPOSITIONS

-- INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - Darla sits in front of the camera.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)
State your name for the record.

DARLA
Darla Lexington.

-- INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - Julie sits in the chair.

JULIE
Julie James.

-- EXT. MORTUARY - A casket is loaded into the back of a hearse.

-- INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - Kerensky.

KERENSKY
Michael Kerensky.

-- INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - Rick.

RICK
Slick Rick Laminack.

-- EXT. HIGHWAY - The hearse drives along a two-lane highway, past a road sign: "You are now leaving Texas."

-- INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - Mary.

MARY
Mary Henderson.

-- INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - James Cutliff.

JAMES CUTLIFF
James Cutliff.

-- EXT. CEMETERY - In a rural cemetery, an excavator digs a six foot hole.

DARLA (V.O.)
John was just a boy who wanted the world to be a good place.

-- INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - Darla concludes her testimony.

DARLA
But he never grew up and admitted that the world is complicated.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)
Thank you, Darla.

A beat, and then an older David Bernick (58) steps in front of the camera.

DAVID BERNICK
This deposition was recorded at the Bernick Law Office.

David Bernick is the attorney suing John O'Quinn's estate. A bit of revenge.

DARLA

Am I doing the right thing? Maybe
John really did wish for all his
money to go to charity.

As Bernick turns off the camera, he gets the final word.

DAVID BERNICK

We'll let the jury decide the truth.

CLICK.

EXT. RURAL CEMETERY - DAY

The double headstone of a fresh grave at sunset.

Etched on the left side: "Jeanie Wilkes". And on the right:
"John O'Quinn".

At least, in death, John is not alone.

THE END