

CONVICTION

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FADE IN:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

OPEN ON an immaculate pair of MEN'S DRESS SHOES striding briskly over the worn linoleum floor.

As the man moves deliberately down the empty hallway, we don't see his face. Instead GO CLOSE ON --  
-- DETAILS of his TOM FORD SUIT,  
-- his PRESSED SHIRT AND PERFECTLY-MATCHED TIE.  
-- BACK TO his SHOES as we MATCH CUT TO --

INT. A ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

A WOMAN'S FOOT as she slips it out of her Louboutin heel and languidly rubs it against her calf. She's bored, not anxious as she --  
-- Runs her hands through her hair...  
-- Face-unseen, she stands, stretches...  
-- Starts moving to a tune in her head and we CUT TO:

EXT. LOCATION UNKNOWN - SIMULTANEOUS

-- A hand setting up a MICROPHONE on a PODIUM.  
-- ON a series of MICROPHONES being put in place, each featuring different NEWS OUTLET CALL LETTERS.

An announcement is coming; CUT BACK TO:

The MAN, we see a little more - but still not his face, as he continues his stride. OVER HIS SHOULDER, see several COPS offer respectful nods his way as we realize we are in --

DOWNTOWN LAPD PRECINCT - NIGHT

As the Man steps up to the desk outside the HOLDING CELL AREA. The Uniformed Cop motions to the clipboard where visitors sign in, when--

BUZZ. Reveal a SENIOR OFFICER has pressed the button, letting the Man through the gate (without signing in). The Senior Officer motions to the Cop not to worry.

BACK TO THE ROOM --

ON the woman, face unseen, singing quietly as she grooves:

WOMAN  
...I know when that Hotline bling,  
that can only mean one thing...

BACK TO THE LAPD PRECINCT --

The MAN passes through the gate; FINALLY, we see his face.  
Boy, was it worth the wait --

WAYNE WALLIS leaves handsome in the dust on his way to  
magnetic. He radiates charm, smarts and political power.

As Wallis steps up in front of the HOLDING CELL, CAMERA  
STARTS TO WRAP AROUND and we're --

BACK TO THE ROOM -- SIMULTANEOUS

As CAMERA COMPLETES its orbit around the woman to REVEAL--

She's in the holding cell that Wallis now stands outside.

Meet CARTER MORRISON as she spots Wallis and stops dancing;  
Carter is a stunning, off-the-charts brilliant, mess of a woman.  
The dynamic between these two is equal parts lust and hatred.

WALLIS

Good song.

CARTER

Come to gloat?

WALLIS

Hoping to talk to your lawyer.

CARTER

(re: herself)

Already here.

WALLIS

Your lawyer's hot.

CARTER

Too bad she hates you.

WALLIS

I've got an offer.

CARTER

Plea deal?

Off this question --

WALLIS (PRE-LAP)

Thank you for coming. Today, Los  
Angeles begins a new era of  
justice...

EXT. CITY HALL STEPS - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

Through a labyrinth of NEWS VANS, SEE a packed press conference. FIND Wallis at the PODIUM -- confident, assured, his political future as clear as his million-dollar smile.

WALLIS

Marked by the formation of my Conviction Integrity Unit. This revolutionary group will be--

START INTERCUT AS WE GO --

BACK TO THE HOLDING CELL --

Carter isn't buying the pitch Wallis just made.

CARTER

-- The fox guarding the henhouse. The D.A.'s Office put those people away in the first place but now--

AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE --

WALLIS

-- these elite lawyers, investigators and forensic professionals will examine claims of innocence made by incarcerated individuals. In the wake of--

BACK TO THE HOLDING CELL --

CARTER

A couple of big, embarrassing settlements on busted guilty verdicts. But hey, why not make the city's loss into your political gain, using--

AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE --

WALLIS

-- my position as District Attorney, part of my job is to secure convictions. But the true mission of my office is justice--

BACK TO THE HOLDING CELL --

Carter continues to give Wallis hell.

CARTER

--This isn't about justice, it's about selling yourself as caring, compassionate... electable.

AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE --

WALLIS

(compassionate, electable)

We must remember that people's lives are at stake; that there is no peace for the victim when the wrong person is incarcerated. If a mistake has been made we must correct it, no matter what embarrassment may arise--

BACK TO THE HOLDING CELL --

CARTER

By going back into old cases? That's guaranteed to piss off every cop, prosecutor and judge while you hide behind --

AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE --

WALLIS

(in full oratory stride)

The leader of this unit needs a tenacious and brilliant legal mind...

BACK TO THE HOLDING CELL --

CARTER

I'd rather drink bleach--

WALLIS

I heard Stanford has you on probation. Something about sleeping with a student--

AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE --

WALLIS (CONT'D)

An unwavering commitment to the truth...

BACK TO THE HOLDING CELL --

CARTER

(zero shame)

Students.

AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE --

WALLIS

Ironically, it took a nationwide search to find someone I've known for a long time.

(then)

We all have.

BACK TO THE HOLDING CELL --

Carter lies down on the bench. Closes her eyes --

CARTER

Bye, Wallis.

(re: the cell)

I want to soak up the Orange is the New Black vibe; maybe rub one out...

WALLIS

This could crush your mom's poll numbers. Put you at the center of another Morrison family crisis.

(then)

Unless I make it all go away.

Carter's EYES OPEN - now he's got her attention. Off this --

AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE --

WALLIS (CONT'D)

This individual has been a renowned defense attorney, a professor at a top law school... as well as our country's former first daughter.

A rumble of excitement as the press puts it together...

WALLIS (CONT'D)

Ladies and Gentlemen, the director of Los Angeles County's Conviction Integrity Unit: Carter Morrison.

Wallis motions to the nearby STAGING AREA where --

Carter, now wearing a Celine suit, steps out. The press goes nuts, YELLING QUESTIONS and SNAPPING PHOTOS as Wallis shakes Carter's hand, then puts his arm around her. Carter's smile is at full wattage -- no sign she was blackmailed. As the cacophony builds, CUT TO OUR TITLE CARD--

**CONVICTION**

EXT. CITY HALL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Wallis and Carter walk and talk at good clip as they cross away from City Hall; they're followed by several PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS. The cops keep the reporters back a bit, but Carter and Wallis are forced to keep smiling as they talk--

WALLIS

You get a week--

CARTER

For each case?

WALLIS

Budget's too small, caseload's too big. You've got a team--

CARTER

Of people I pick--

WALLIS

Sorry; they're already hired--

CARTER

By whomever you originally promised this gig to?

WALLIS

One of my top ADA's - Sam Sullivan.  
(then)

Submit your recommendation by weeks' end: advise the conviction be reversed, let it stand, or suggest a retrial.

CARTER

I pick the cases.  
(still smiling)  
Goddamnit, Wallis--

WALLIS

(relenting)  
Fine -- but on this first one, give me a happy ending.

Carter nods, getting his point. By now, they're in front of the steel and glass LAPD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. Wallis offers a SECURITY ID/KEY CARD.

WALLIS (CONT'D)

Your team is waiting. Suite 517.

Off Carter, grabbing the key card, heading out to --

INT. LAPD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - LOBBY/ELEVATOR - DAY

FOLLOW Carter as she steps onto the ELEVATOR crowded with COPS and other LAPD EMPLOYEES. There are a few bodies in between her and the control panel so --

CARTER

Five, please.

Nobody moves a muscle. Carter looks around: seriously? She leans over the cop by the panel, hits the button.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Bite me.

Off Carter: this job is already a pain in the ass.

INT. CIU OFFICES - ENTRY/COMMON AREA - MINUTES LATER

ON Carter as she enters. The space is modern, with sparse furnishings and a great view of Los Angeles.

SAM (O.S.)

Carter Morrison--

She turns to see SAM SULLIVAN (mid 30's, handsome, could be in a toothpaste commercial) emerging from one of the offices. As they shake hands --

SAM (CONT'D)

Sam Sullivan.

CARTER

Wallis's golden boy? I took your job?

SAM

(surprised)

...Yes, you did.

CARTER

Sorry about that.

(reflects, realizes)

I actually am sorry about it.

SAM

It's everyone's first day; we're all settling in. Guys--

TESS THOMPSON and FRANKLIN (FRANKIE) RIOS emerge from their respective offices, excited to meet Carter...

SAM (CONT'D)

This is Tess Thompson and Franklin Rios. Tess is our paralegal...

TESS is young and blonde and comes across as a bit naive... until the underlying dark sadness emerges. It hasn't yet.

TESS

Ms. Morrison, it's a pleasure. I'm a huge fan of--

CARTER

Have we met?

TESS

No. I would remember.

CARTER

You look familiar...

Carter studies her, making Tess a little nervous, then--

CARTER (CONT'D)

You remind me of Alison Bradley, from sleep-away camp. Good kisser.

Carter turns to FRANKIE, whose street-savvy reserve co-exists with boyish excitement for science. Wearing an inexpensive suit and a new shirt (still creased), he greets Carter--

FRANKIE

Call me Frankie. I'm in charge of Forensics.

CARTER

Nice shirt, Frankie; very first day of school.

FRANKIE

(self-conscious)  
Thanks.

MAXINE (O.S.)

I did not vote for your father.

Carter - and everyone else - turn to see --

MAXINE BARTON in the doorway of her office. 2nd generation LAPD, Maxine (mid 40s) has a spine of steel and a soul that requires carbon-dating.

CARTER  
 Me neither.  
 (offers hand)  
 Carter Morrison.

MAXINE  
 (shakes)  
 Maxine Barton, lead investigator.

With that, Carter heads into--

INT. CIU CONFERENCE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tess, Frankie, Sam and Maxine tail Carter in. Carter passes the seat at the head of the table, heads for the back of the room where the credenza is piled with CASE SUMMARIES.

CARTER  
 (to Sam)  
 Plans for the first case?

SAM  
 I assumed you'd want to select it--

CARTER  
 Think of me as a figurehead.

Carter casually snags a handful of files, then plops down in the chair. The team reacts, surprised, as she turns to Sam --

CARTER (CONT'D)  
 Seriously -- take the helm.

Sam rallies, glad for the opening --

SAM  
 I'd been considering two options.  
 (takes a file from Tess)  
 Jeremy Baln, convicted for the 1993  
 rape and murder of Sharon Levy.  
 Case came in through Baln's  
 original attorney. Eyewitness ID'd  
 Baln, but evidence suggests he was  
 actually in lock-up at a local  
 precinct for burglary.

TESS  
 (handing him the 2nd file)  
 Over 70 percent of overturned  
 convictions involve eyewitness  
 testimony; it's extremely unreliable.

SAM

(re: new file)

Tess's old boss at the Innocence Project has been sniffing around this one. Pamela Addison, 15 years into a 35 year bid for the kidnapping and murder of 7 year-old Ricky Sanchez. The cops held Addison, who has a functional IQ of 78, for a day and a half without an attorney. She confessed, later recanted. Both interesting cases--

CARTER

We're not touching either of them.

(off Sam's look)

You want to exonerate a guy whose alibi is another crime? Or sell that someone confessed to a murder they didn't commit?

SAM

What happened to "think of me as a figurehead"?

CARTER

That was before I realized you might be a moron.

Sam and the others react to the insult; Carter keeps rolling.

CARTER (CONT'D)

First case, we need to get a good guy out of prison; give Wallis his happy ending. So--

(re: file she's looking at)

Oxford Riggins, 7 years into a life sentence for murdering his girlfriend Maria Sanchez with a bullet to the back of the head.

(referring to file)

No motive, some physical evidence against him, but no DNA. Oxford just turned 25, has no other criminal record...

(re: photo)

And he looks like this.

She holds up a PHOTO of Oxford in his football uniform. He's a handsome, strapping young black man.

TESS

(confused)

That matters?

CARTER

Unless his release is broadcast  
only on radio.

(re: file, this is useful)

Conveniently, Oxford's jury was all  
white; seems like the prosecutor  
put his thumb on the scale.

\*  
\*  
\*

SAM

(now he's confused)

Why is that a good thing?

Carter's a little frustrated; she expects them to keep up  
with her thought process --

CARTER

Best way to establish we're not the  
fox guarding the henhouse -- beat  
the crap out of another fox. Makes  
Wallis look committed.

FRANKIE

(now he's confused)

But if we expose the D.A.'s  
mistake, and Wallis is the D.A.--

CARTER

He wasn't the D.A. when the case  
was tried.

MAXINE

(now she's annoyed)

You plan to go through this  
political nonsense every case?

CARTER

No. A win now while everyone's  
watching means freedom later. Most  
importantly, freedom for me to  
"consult" from a beach in Hawaii,  
while you guys tackle hard cases.

Having addressed everyone's questions, Carter digs into her  
purse for some Visine. As she puts drops in her eyes --

SAM

Good strategy.

(to Tess)

Which ADA prosecuted Oxford?

TESS

Victor Bonotto.

SAM

Good guy; decent lawyer. I'll talk to him about the jury.

TESS

I need to get the full case file; mind if I come along?

Sam nods: that's fine. Maxine has been perusing Oxford's file. She turns to Carter, with an edge --

MAXINE

No disrespect, but the only thing that matters to me -- did he do it?

CARTER

Go talk to Oxford. Take Frankie with you.

FRANKIE

Is there a forensics issue, something about the evidence...?

CARTER

Oxford's in prison, you've been in prison; could be useful.

This is news to Tess and Maxine. Stunned, Frankie looks at Carter who points to the tip of a prison tattoo peeking out from the wrist of Frankie's dress shirt.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Your new shirt doesn't cover all of your old tattoo.

(standing, to group)

Call if you need me, but remember, I strive to be purely decorative.

As Carter picks up her purse, she notices an empty (seemingly ordinary) PLASTIC BAG inside. Carter tosses it in the trash and saunters out. The team starts moving, except for--

Maxine, who's fixated on that plastic bag. Off this--

INT. PRISON - DAY

Maxine and Frankie head for the visiting sign-in. Maxine carries the CASE FILE with OXFORD'S PHOTO clipped on it. Frankie's tense, on edge...

MAXINE

Roll up your sleeves so Oxford gets a good look at--

FRANKIE

(blurts out)

I stole a car. Sentenced to 4  
years, out after 2 on good behavior--

MAXINE

Okay.

FRANKIE

I was gonna tell everyone. Just  
not on the first day--

MAXINE

The guys you were inside with?  
They guilty or innocent?

FRANKIE

Mostly guilty--

MAXINE

(re: Oxford)

You think this guy could be a  
murderer?

FRANKIE

Doesn't matter what I think,  
matters what the evidence says--

MAXINE

You planning on stealing my car?

FRANKIE

No--

MAXINE

Let's go find out if he killed her.

As Maxine sets down the FILE to sign in, PUSH IN on the PHOTO  
of Oxford, massive in his football uniform and MATCH CUT TO:

INT. PRISON - VISITING ROOM - DAY

OXFORD RIGGINS (25), a shadow of his former self (much  
smaller, leaner) as he sits across from Maxine and Frankie.  
Frankie's sleeves are rolled up to reveal his tattoo.

OXFORD

I didn't kill Maria.

(then)

My mom and I, we've written over 150  
letters, trying to get someone to  
take another look at my case.

(MORE)

\*

OXFORD (CONT'D)

The Court of Appeals denied my petition for rehearing, which means I'm down to my last shot.

(a big, winning smile)

It means a ton, you two joining the team.

FRANKIE

Sure thing.

MAXINE

We're not on your team.

An awkward moment as Maxine and Frankie exchange a look--

MAXINE (CONT'D)

The CIU isn't the Innocence Project. We're not committed to exonerating you.

OXFORD

Then why'd you come see me?

FRANKIE

To look at both sides of the case, figure out if your conviction has merit.

OXFORD

Then apologies for contradicting you, Ma'am, but you are on my team. Because I don't belong in here. I didn't kill Maria. I loved her. That's the truth.

MAXINE

(all business)

Walk me through what you did on the day she died.

OXFORD

I went to school, left at 3:20, went home to get ready for the Banning game. Came back for warm-ups at 5:00 PM.

FRANKIE

Did you see anyone, even talk to them on the phone in between?

OXFORD

(no)

Usually Maria and I would hang out before games. But a USC recruiter was coming that night. Maria didn't want to distract me. We were supposed to meet after.

(MORE)

OXFORD (CONT'D)

(then, sorrow welling up)  
 Played the game of my life that  
 night: 3 sacks, 10 tackles, an  
 interception. I played for her;  
 the whole time, thinking, "Maria is  
 gonna be so proud of me." When she  
 wasn't there at the end, I knew  
 something was wrong.

Oxford's plea is raw, sincere... completely compelling. He  
 reigns in his emotion a bit, continues on --

OXFORD (CONT'D)

I've made good use of my time in  
 here: earned my Associate's degree.  
 I get out, I'm gonna finish college  
 and graduate.

MAXINE

(impressed, re: his file)  
 You should be eligible for parole.

OXFORD

I don't go before the board anymore.  
 (to Frankie re: his tattoo)  
 What's their first question?

FRANKIE

..."Do you regret your crime?"

OXFORD

I can't say I regret something I  
 didn't do; can't walk out of here  
 with people thinking I killed the  
 girl I loved. That I still love.

FRANKIE

Good for you, man.

Oxford appreciates the support, but, with some desperation--

OXFORD

My mom's getting older; my niece,  
 she's 3 -- I've only seen her in  
 pictures. Life is slipping through  
 my fingers in here... Please, you  
 gotta get me out.

Even Maxine is impacted by Oxford's sincere appeal.

MAXINE

Did your attorney canvas your  
 neighborhood? Maybe someone saw  
 you through a window--

OXFORD

(leaning forward, excited)  
Here's something my lawyer didn't  
take seriously: the park where  
Maria got killed is over 100 miles  
round trip. I couldn't have gone  
there, been back at school by 5.

Frankie is intrigued by this notion, but Maxine notices -- \*

SMALL SCARS on Oxford's chest at his collar line.

Distrust reappears in Maxine's eyes. \*

MAXINE

Oxford -- how'd you get those scars  
on your chest?

OXFORD

Had some acne. Why?

MAXINE

(to Frankie, like ice)  
We should go.

Maxine's phone rings. She steps away to answer --

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Anything on that case number?

Off Maxine, listening with interest.

INT. CITY HALL - DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES - DAY

CLOSE ON A GLASS OFFICE DOOR, stenciled with "Assistant  
District Attorney Victor Bonotto". \*

RACK FOCUS THROUGH the door to find -- \*

VICTOR BONOTTO flipping through a BLUE BINDER of trial notes  
and case photos as he talks to Sam and Tess. \*

VICTOR BONOTTO \*

The Oxford Riggins jury selection  
was totally by the book. Only  
three African Americans in the  
pool; judge removed two because of  
connections to the case. \*

SAM

The third?

Done with his review, Bonotto lays the binder on the desk.

VICTOR BONOTTO

Had a kid Oxford's age; I didn't want to risk her identifying with him. Used a pre-empt.

(then, to Sam)

Tough break, getting demoted in public on your first day--

TESS

(re: upside-down binder)

You didn't pre-empt Keith Johnson; he had a 17 year-old child as well, but he was white--

VICTOR BONOTTO

Are you reading my notes--

TESS

White jurors are more likely to incarcerate black defenders--

SAM

Tess -- ADA Bonotto knows the stats on jury diversity. We all do.

Tess looks down, embarrassed by the rebuke.

VICTOR BONOTTO

Johnson had a teenage daughter. I hoped he'd identify with the victim, Maria Sanchez.

SAM

Straight story: any doubts about this one?

VICTOR BONOTTO

(no)

The kid had no alibi. Meanwhile, a solid eyewitness and physical evidence place him at the scene around time of death.

(then)

We've all had cases that keep us up at night. This wasn't one of them.

Off Sam and Tess, taking that in--

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - HALLWAY -- DAY

Tess and Sam step into the hallway, head for the exit.

SAM

Bonotto's a good prosecutor--

TESS

If he wanted Oxford to have a fair trial, a diverse jury--

SAM

Bonotto wanted to win; all prosecutors do, because we stop crime. The cops catch the bad guys, we put them away. We make sure whatever terrible thing they did doesn't happen to anyone else. And the stakes don't get any higher than a murder trial. So we use experts and manipulate jurors' emotions and wear a simple blue tie that conveys trustworthiness. Whatever it takes.

We just got a peek at what Sam was like in court: impressive.

TESS

But what if the person you're prosecuting is innocent?

SAM

(good point, but)  
If there was a problem with this case, it wasn't Bonotto.

Across the office, Sam sees Wallis, stepping into a meeting.

SAM (CONT'D)

Get the rest of Oxford's files.  
I'll meet you back at the office.

Tess nods, moves off. Off Sam, on a mission to see Wallis.

INT. HIGH END LAW OFFICES - DAY

FIND JACKSON, a tall, good-looking if heavysset man in his early 30s walking on his treadmill desk, as he watches the CNN coverage of Wallis and Carter's press conference. Carter blows into his office, unannounced.

CARTER

Get me out of this job.

JACKSON

They'll charge you immediately.

CARTER

How long can Wallis hold this over me?

JACKSON

He has three years to file.

Bummed, Carter eyes Jackson on his treadmill desk --

CARTER

You look like a douchebag on that,  
Pigs.

(as he steps off)

Hmmm -- wasn't the desk.

JACKSON

(ignores jab, turns off TV)

Good news: in light of your new  
"professional opportunity",  
Stanford is willing to move you  
from probation to unpaid leave.

CARTER

Uptight tools. My classes had a  
waitlist every semester; male law  
professors hook up with students  
all the time--

JACKSON

At campus parties?

(off her silence)

This job requires cage-rattling and  
disregard for authority. It's a  
perfect fit--

CARTER

(not just a dig)

Too bad I'm not a natural suck-up  
like you.

(then)

Have you talked to Mom?

Now the oddly familiar dynamic between lawyer and client  
makes sense. Jackson Morrison is Carter's younger brother.

JACKSON

My first call.

CARTER

Figures. How mad is she?

JACKSON

(pretty mad)

...She'll be fine by the Gala. But  
wear whatever dress she wants.

\*

Off Carter, deflated, as she kisses her brother good-bye.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - WALLIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Wallis closes the door behind Sam as --

WALLIS  
Sam, good to see you--

SAM  
I want to go back to the Gang Unit.

WALLIS  
Sanderson's taken over your old job.

SAM  
(with an edge)  
...Clearly, these things are  
subject to change.

WALLIS  
Carter Morrison becoming available  
was an opportunity I had to  
capitalize on; don't make it  
personal.

Wallis turns away, signaling the discussion is over. But--

SAM  
You asked me to leave Gangs to run  
CIU. That was a step up. Give me  
something else. Or I go private  
sector, triple my salary.

WALLIS  
...Pushy and ambitious. My backers  
tell me I'll need people like you  
on my team when I run for Mayor of  
LA next cycle.

A beat, as he lets that land, knowing Sam will be intrigued.

WALLIS (CONT'D)  
Right now, I need you to keep an  
eye on Carter. Make sure she  
doesn't go from an asset to a  
liability.  
(then)  
Your loyalty will be rewarded.

Off Sam, intrigued as he considers this...

SAM (PRE-LAP)(V.O.)  
No sign of misconduct by the  
prosecution.

INT. CIU OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

ON A PHOTO of Maria Sanchez's CRIME SCENE. PULL BACK to reveal Tess is tacking it up on the board. It's surrounded by photos of MARIA SANCHEZ (the victim), OXFORD, PHYSICAL EVIDENCE, MARIA'S AUTOPSY. KEEP PULLING BACK TO INCLUDE --

OTHER LAPD INVESTIGATION PHOTOS including ones of MARIA'S ROOM and BELONGINGS; in one, a MAN can be seen in the hall, looking into Maria's room. In another, we see a piece of his back. These photos and the Man's presence are not featured prominently. Finally INCLUDE the rest of the team, arguing--

FRANKIE

That doesn't mean Oxford's guilty--

MAXINE

And just because you bonded with the guy doesn't make him innocent.

TESS

The prosecution case is heavily dependent on the eyewitness--

Carter breezes by the door, coat on, purse in hand...

CARTER

Bye, guys.

She turns, heads for the exit. Maxine follows her out to--

INT. CIU OFFICES - ENTRY/COMMON AREA - CONTINUOUS

Maxine tails Carter; keeps her voice low, but she is pissed -

MAXINE

We're going in circles; someone's got to lead this team--

CARTER

Knock yourself out, Detective--

MAXINE

You seen this--

Maxine steps in front of her, holds the plastic bag from the trash up in the light. A tiny row of numbers in the corner--

MAXINE (CONT'D)

These numbers correspond to a LAPD case file. The file's vanished... but this personal effects bag hasn't. A friend said it was issued out of Downtown Precinct last night.

(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)  
 I wonder what else I can find out...  
 (then, a threat)  
 Go be the boss, boss.

Carter glares at Maxine. A beat, then she heads for--

INT. CIU OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carter and Maxine walk back in. Carter takes a beat, seemingly summoning herself to rally the troops.

CARTER  
 (not excited at all)  
 Excited to hear what you've got...  
 (meets Maxine's eyes, then)  
 But first, funny story -- last night I was busted for cocaine possession. Wallis dropped the charges in exchange for me taking this job. Working these pointless cases, with you people -- that is my prison; minus the freedom to go bra-less and finally read *Infinite Jest*. All so I can protect my mother's Senate run...  
 (then)  
 On the case, if this isn't slam dunk jury tampering, then Oxford's a pass; prison is full of good-looking black posterboys...

Carter notices everyone is staring over her shoulder. She turns around to see -- A BLACK WOMAN (50s) in the doorway.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
 Can I help you?

WOMAN  
 My name is June Riggins.  
 (re: the board)  
 That good-looking black posterboy, Oxford Riggins? He's my son.

Off Carter, realizing the extent of her screw-up...

FADE OUT.

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

ON A NUMBER "4" IN LIGHTS, A CHYRON COMES UP to read --  
4 DAYS REMAINING.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL the "4" is part of 401, the NUMBERS on  
top of a GRAND BUILDING in the DOWNTOWN LA SKYLINE.

JUNE RIGGINS (O.S.)  
Black posterboy?! You've got a lot  
of nerve...

CONTINUE PULLING BACK to reveal we are --

INT. CARTER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

As Carter closes the door behind JUNE RIGGINS, Oxford's very  
angry mother. Sam is there as well.

CARTER  
I'm so sorry--

JUNE RIGGINS  
Drop his case, I'll go to the press  
with that. And your coke bust.

SAM  
You'll have the Unit's full  
attention and resources, Ms.  
Riggins.  
(then)  
If you'd prefer, I could take over  
the investigation...

Carter takes note of Sam's power-play. But --

JUNE RIGGINS  
Thank you, but she's got the juice  
around here.  
(to Carter)  
After the verdict, they wouldn't  
let me hug him. 8 years since I've  
held my son; 8 years that place has  
been sucking the life out of  
Oxford. He puts on a brave face  
for me, but a mother knows.... You  
get my boy out or your mother might  
learn what that feels like--

\*  
\*

CARTER

You believe your son is innocent,  
but I'm not there yet--

JUNE RIGGINS

You will be--

CARTER

I won't promise you he'll be  
exonerated. I can't.

(then)

All I can do is try to find the  
truth.

JUNE RIGGINS

...That will have to do.

June heads out. A beat as Carter and Sam collect themselves.

CARTER

Nice move, trying to take control  
of the investigation.

Sam looks at Carter; he's surprised to realize she's serious--

CARTER (CONT'D)

You might not be a moron after all.

(beat, then)

Unless you plan to take Wallis up  
on his offer and spy on me. In  
exchange for a "key role in his  
political future..."

Stunned, Sam tries to cover --

SAM

...He didn't--

CARTER

Every decent politico plays that  
card. My father used it  
constantly. He wasn't loyal to  
anyone. Not even my mother.

(then)

Stabbing me in the back makes sense.  
But do it for yourself, not Wallis.

\*

With that, she heads out. Off Sam, impressed, we CUT TO:

ANGLE ON the a LAPTOP SCREEN showing an old (7 years)  
INTERROGATION VIDEO. Oxford Riggins sits, hulking and  
muscular as he's questioned by two (mostly) O.S. Detectives  
(JIM MCNALLY is one.)

MCNALLY (O.S., ON VIDEO)  
 Here's what doesn't make sense to  
 me. According to her mother--

Oxford leaps to his feet, yells--

OXFORD (ON VIDEO)  
 How many times I gotta say it --  
 I didn't see Maria that day --

The video stops. PULL BACK to see we are--

INT. CIU OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

Maxine has just paused the video. Frankie, Tess and Sam are  
 gathered around watching. Frankie isn't impressed --

FRANKIE  
 He's angry; maybe because he's  
 being accused of a murder he didn't  
 commit.

MAXINE  
 Or maybe he went ballistic with  
 Maria like he did with the cops.

TESS  
 Oxford had no history of violence.

MAXINE  
 But he has acne scars on his chest.  
 (to Frankie)  
 Remember? That's a common side-  
 effect of anabolic steroids.

A beat as this lands for the others.

MAXINE (CONT'D)  
 Oxford didn't tear through the  
 opposing team fueled by love for  
 Maria; he was pumped up on rage-  
 inducing drugs.

SAM  
 (nods, to Tess)  
 Put "steroids" up for the prosecution.

FRANKIE  
 That's a theory...

TESS  
 (for Frankie's benefit)  
 I'll add a question mark.

The BULLETIN BOARD is now filled with two columns of photos and documents. One column under the heading "PROSECUTION", the other labeled "DEFENSE". Under Prosecution, Tess adds "STEROIDS?" to "EYEWITNESS", "TAMARISK WEED" and "NO ALIBI" (which has "at time of death" in smaller letters underneath).

Carter enters, having just arrived for the day. An ASSISTANT with a wheeled rack of ELEGANT DRESSES (with a MIRROR on the end) hovers in the doorway.

CARTER

Put them in my office; I'll pick one for the Gala later.

(to Team)

Anyone informed the victim's mother we're on this case? I'd like to avoid another drop-in disaster.

TESS

(checking her notes)

I've left messages for Lupe at home, and the salon where she works.

ASSISTANT

(I'm still here)

Your mother insisted I stay while you tried them on.

Annoyed, Carter motions him in as she says to Sam, re: board--

CARTER

What've you got?

SAM

Eyewitness was Burt Chambers, who lived just outside -- whoa there --

REVEAL Sam is reacting to Carter peeling off her shirt (Agent Provocateur bra underneath). The others are also shocked--

CARTER

Like you didn't see the paparazzi shots of me on that nude beach in Ibiza.

SAM

(looking away from Carter)

Chambers reported a black man driving a tan car quickly out of Veteran's Memorial park around 4pm.

TESS

Was Chambers white? Cross-racial ID's are especially problematic--

CARTER

I hate single-issue candidates.  
 (then, to Sam)  
 But we should talk to Chambers.  
 (re: her dress, in mirror)  
 I look like Joe Pesci in this.

She moves on to the next dress. Sam moves down the Prosecution Column to "TAMARISK WEED". One PHOTO shows small PIECES of TAMARISK WEED in a car interior; another, tamarisk plants at the crime scene.

SAM

Chambers is dead. But his testimony is supported by the plant fragments found in Oxford's car. They were tamarisk weed, found in that park around the crime scene, but otherwise rare in Southern California.

CARTER

Oxford's attorney missed an opening there; stipulate the kid was at that park the previous week, the evidence goes away.

TESS

You can't stipulate to a lie.

CARTER

(to Sam, re: Tess)  
 Is she for real?  
 (checks the mirror)  
 This color makes me look like I have HPV.

Carter starts peeling off that dress. Frankie steps up to the board, taps the "NO ALIBI" label.

FRANKIE

Oxford might not need an alibi. The trip between his house, the park and back to the school is 117 miles. He wouldn't have made it back for warm-ups.

MAXINE

(jab at Frankie)  
 That's a theory...

FRANKIE

I need to drive the route, but no car...

CARTER

(to Tess)

Take Frankie, try the route.

(to Sam)

Talk to Oxford's defense attorney.  
Make sure he didn't miss more  
openings.

\*

SAM

I will. Most of their case  
consisted of what the prosecution  
didn't have.

(re: the board)

No motive, no history of violence,  
no murder weapon. The gun that  
killed Maria was never found.

MAXINE

If Oxford was on steroids that  
takes away two of those.

FRANKIE

(dig at Maxine)

Only if you can prove he was  
juicing at the time of the murder.

Maxine glares at Frankie. Meanwhile, Tess stares at Carter--

TESS

That's beautiful.

REVEAL Carter now has on a complete stunner of a dress.

ASSISTANT

This is your mother's favorite.

Carter studies herself in the mirror. With no enthusiasm:

CARTER

This is the one, then. Show's  
over, people. Get to work.

(looking at her nails)

I need a manicure.

The team and Carter start into motion.

INT. LAPD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - LAPD FLOOR - DAY

CLOSE ON a ROUGH LOOKING MAN, seated on a hall bench, shirt-  
sleeves rolled up to reveal some serious tattoos. Suddenly a  
TAKE-OUT COFFEE appears in front of his face --

MAXINE (O.S.)

Mocha, Tolfo?

PULL BACK to FIND Maxine is offering the coffee to OFFICER RICK TOLFO, a Vice lieutenant. He smiles, takes the coffee--

TOLFO

Maxine, aren't you supposed to be in Florida kickin' back?

MAXINE

(sits beside him)

Turns out retirement isn't really my thing. I went back to work.

TOLFO

Good for you.

MAXINE

For the D.A.'s Conviction Integrity Unit. I need a favor--

Tolfo sets down the coffee undrunk, slides it back to Maxine.

TOLFO

Sorry -- no favors for the enemy --

MAXINE

(offended)

I'm the enemy? After 20 years on the force, a cop from a cop family; I bleed blue.

(then)

I'm here trying to keep a murderer in jail.

She slides back over the mocha.

TOLFO

...Whipped cream?

MAXINE

Damn right.

(off his look)

Need to know who sold anabolic steroids at Carson High in 2008.

Tolfo takes his mocha and heads off. Off Maxine, hopeful.

INT. TESS' PRIUS - DAY

Tess is behind the wheel while Frankie rides shotgun.

FRANKIE

This road was widened in 2010. Used to be a major congestion point. Get over to the slow lane.

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

(back to conversation)

So much of what used to be  
considered irrefutable scientific  
truth is up for grabs right now;  
working at CIU, I'll be at the  
center of figuring it out. What  
about you; why leave the Innocence  
Project?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Tess pulls over to the right. HEAR a cacophony of HORNS -  
which continue throughout - as she slows the car to a crawl.

\*  
\*

TESS

There we take months, sometimes  
years in a case; thought I'd make a  
bigger impact working more cases,  
inside the system...

(then, vague)

I got interested in wrongful  
convictions after reading Barry  
Scheck's book.

(eager to change topics)

How'd you get interested in  
forensics?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

FRANKIE

C.O. Peter Diggs at Lancaster. He  
was in charge of the TV in my cell  
block, never missed an episode of  
"Forensic Files"; got me hooked--

\*

TESS

(reacting to HORNS)

I need to speed up--

FRANKIE

Don't -- Oxford wouldn't have hit  
30 miles per hour through here.

(back to his story)

I did some correspondence courses  
inside. Got my masters after.

TESS

That's a great story...

(re: behind them)

I hope he likes it.

\*  
\*  
\*

A MOTORCYCLE COP, LIGHTS FLASHING is signaling for Tess to  
pull over. So much for that attempt at Oxford's route.

\*  
\*

INT. STRIP MALL NAIL SALON - DAY

Wearing sunglasses, Carter walks into the tacky-tacky nail salon - hardly the upscale place one imagines Carter visiting. She goes to the woman at the counter.

CARTER

My friend recommended Lupe...

The Salon Manager gestures to a middle-aged Latina manicurist. Carter selects her polish (to match her Gala dress), then crosses to LUPE SANCHEZ'S station and we PUSH in on the PERSONAL PHOTOS on Lupe's wall to FIND --

A PHOTO of our young victim - MARIA SANCHEZ - an image we recognize from the CIU wall. Lupe is the victim's mother.

Lupe speaks English with a fairly heavy accent.

LUPE

Hello, miss.  
(re: polish)  
Your color?

Carter sits, removes her sunglasses, hoping for recognition.

CARTER

Yes, thank you.

No such luck. Lupe goes back to work. A beat, then...

CARTER (CONT'D)

You are Lupe Sanchez, right?

LUPE

Yes, miss.

CARTER

I'm Carter Morrison. My father...  
(still no reaction, so)  
I'm with the District Attorney's  
office in the --

LUPE

(shakes her head)  
Sorry, Miss. My English...

Carter slips into fluent Spanish. The following conversation is in subtitled Spanish (*as indicated by italics*).

CARTER

*Apologies for disturbing you at  
work; my team has tried calling.*  
(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)  
*We're conducting a review of your  
 daughter Maria's case--*

LUPE  
*(sits up, stops working)*  
*Why? Her killer is in jail, where  
 he belongs.*

CARTER  
*It's possible Oxford Riggins is  
 innocent, in which case--*

LUPE  
*No. Oxford is guilty. There was a  
 trial, and an appeal--*

CARTER  
*Questions have come up--*

Lupe is shaking, raw, her heartbreak fresh all over again. She backs away from Carter. The whole salon is watching as --

LUPE  
*No -- this is wrong. Coming here --  
 it's like you're killing my  
 daughter all over again--*

Lupe starts to cry; Carter is paralyzed by this display--

LUPE (CONT'D)  
*Maria wanted a dress for Christmas  
 that year -- it's in my closet,  
 where Raoul put it, tags still on.  
 I'll never get to give it to her,  
 never feel her arms around me...  
 And you tell me that monster gets  
 another chance?*  
*(sobbing)*  
*No - Oxford is guilty. He murdered  
 my little girl--*

Carter realizes she can't joke, deflect or smile her way out of this situation. The Salon Manager approaches --

LUPE (CONT'D)  
*I can't do this. Get her out --*

SALON MANAGER  
*(to Carter)*  
*Ma'am, please leave.*

CARTER  
*(to Lupe)*  
*I'm sorry. For everything...*

Carter hands the Manager some cash and we FOLLOW her out to--

EXT. RUNDOWN NAIL SALON - CONTINUOUS

Carter exits, totally rattled by Lupe's outburst. As she stops, trying in vain to compose herself. Off this --

EXT. CARSON CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

ON Maxine, sitting in a mini-van. The side door slides open, revealing salesman GENE REYNOLDS (30s, former muscle man, now slightly gone to seed).

GENE

I understand you're interested in this mini-van--

MAXINE

Anabolic steroids, actually. According to Oxford Riggins, you sold the best in town.

GENE

(shutting down)

I'm not in that line of work any more.

(turning away)

If you'll excuse me, I need to--

MAXINE

Tell me about the nav system.

GENE

(turns back)

It's a fully integrated GPS with --

Maxine holds up a PHOTO of Oxford Riggins.

MAXINE

Did he buy from you in the fall of 2008?

(he turns to go)

What's the engine horsepower?

(he turns back, photo comes up)

The sooner we talk, the sooner you get back to selling cars. \*

It's clear Maxine isn't giving up, or going away, so --

GENE

Oxford bought a few rounds that fall. The last time he came by was a week before the girl died...

(MORE)

GENE (CONT'D)

(then)

But that wasn't for drugs.

Off Maxine's questioning look: what was it for?

MAXINE (PRE-LAP) (V.O)

Not only was Oxford on steroids...

INT. CIU OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

FIND Carter painting her nails (badly); a glass of Scotch nearby. Maxine and Sam enter.

MAXINE

He tried to buy a gun from his dealer. Not looking so good for Posterboy.

SAM

...Or Wallis's happy ending.

Carter absorbs the dig and the news; after her encounter with Lupe, she's rocked. Sam and Maxine move off. Off Carter, draining her glass...

EXT. VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK (CRIME SCENE) - LATE AFTERNOON

Tess and Frankie move quickly through the woods (moving through numerous Tamarisk plants), using the CRIME SCENE PHOTOS to guide them to the right place...

FRANKIE

The altercation started here.  
Maria ran that way--

He points deeper into the park. Tess moves that way, "playing" Maria while Frankie "stalks" her. Tess passes a TREE and as it WIPES FRAME --

*FLASHBACK TO MARIA SANCHEZ fleeing through the forest, trying to escape her (mostly) UNSEEN MALE ATTACKER. She's terrified, her breath ragged. A scared girl, running for her life. Another tree WIPE takes us back to --*

Frankie, still on the move as he explains --

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Her pant cuffs were wet from crossing that stream...

As Tess moves that direction, we WIPE FRAME and --

*We're back with Maria as she scrambles across the stream --*

*FRANKIE (V.O.)*  
*Left, then veering right at the*  
*rock, where she tripped.*

*Maria trips over a branch, falls--*

LOW ANGLE -- Tess drops INTO FRAME, falling right next to --

A DEAD SQUIRREL, flies buzzing around him.

Tess reacts, disgusted. Frankie looks at the squirrel, wheels turning...

TESS  
 Frankie?

FRANKIE  
 (snapping out of it)  
 She made it past this tree.

FOLLOW Frankie's gaze to a TREE a few feet ahead and --

*MARIA runs THROUGH FRAME in FLASHBACK. HOLD FRAME as a GUN rises and FIRES --*

*FRANKIE (V.O.)*  
*BAM. You're dead.*

BACK TO FRANKIE AND TESS -

He has his finger pointed at Tess's head like a gun. She drops to the ground. (Note: we don't call attention to it, but Tess and Frankie now have TAMARISK DEBRIS on their clothes.) Tess checks the stopwatch on her phone.

TESS  
 Oxford was wrong; he had plenty of  
 time to get back for warm-ups.

FRANKIE  
 Let me see--

She shows him the phone. He sags--

TESS  
 We still need to drive back; maybe  
 we try again...

Frankie shakes his head, crushed--

FRANKIE  
 ...I really wanted this to work.

Off Tess: her too.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - WALLIS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Wallis enters, spots Carter, at his desk. She's a little buzzed, and he's not terribly surprised --

CARTER

I hate this job. Fire me.

WALLIS

Let me guess: rough day, someone had feelings, which you hate so--

Wallis freezes, because he's just noticed --

A WHITE LINE OF POWDER on his desk. Carter is working it over with a RAZOR BLADE.

CARTER

I will screw it up. Fire me --

WALLIS

(re: powder)  
That can't be here --

CARTER

(re: herself)  
Remember, up close, fun and wild and transgressive is actually messy, destructive and dangerous.  
(then)  
This Unit could do some good, I can't. Fire me.

WALLIS

No --

Carter shrugs and SNORTS THE LINE OFF WALLIS' DESK.

CARTER

What about now?

Wallis quickly crosses to his desk. Carter stands, ready for a confrontation. Wallis grabs her hand, his face inches from hers. Are they going to kiss? But then...

WIDER ANGLE REVEALS Wallis sliding Carter's fingers across the powder remnants as he looks into Carter's eyes.

He raises her finger, licks the powder off. As he expected:

WALLIS

That's not cocaine.

CARTER  
...Benadryl.

They stare at each other for a long, lustful, furious beat...

WALLIS  
Go do your goddamned job.

Carter turns, strides out. Stay with Wallis. Off him, still feeling the heat from being that close to Carter.

EXT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

On Carter, walking away. Still spinning as well.

FADE OUT.

**END OF ACT TWO**

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON the number "3"; a CHYRON comes up to INFORM US --  
"3 DAYS REMAINING".

PULL BACK TO REVEAL the "3" is on a clock and we are --

INT. CIU OFFICES - DAY (NEXT DAY)

Sam, Tess, Frankie and Maxine are gathered. Everyone seems a bit down as Carter enters, reinvigorated. (A MANILLA ENVELOPE is tucked discreetly under her arm.)

CARTER

You know what's also a happy ending? The system worked; bad guy gets his due. Wallis looks fair but firm because we prove Oxford Riggins is a murderer who belongs behind bars.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

FRANKIE

That's it? We just bury him?--

CARTER

As deep as we can. Which means kicking the tires, hard, on every element of the prosecution's case.

FRANKIE

We should at least ask Oxford why he wanted a gun--

CARTER

(ignoring, to Tess)  
 First thing to check, Tess's favorite tune...

Frankie is clearly unhappy as the team continues --

TESS

(jumps at the opportunity)  
 The eyewitness. A challenge, since he passed away.

MAXINE

Who was the lead detective?

TESS

Jim McNally.

MAXINE  
McNally trained under my dad. I'll  
talk to him.

CARTER  
Take Tess with you.

MAXINE  
Why?

CARTER  
How many friends do you have that  
aren't cops?

MAXINE  
...Several.

CARTER  
Take Tess. See if the witness was  
solid.  
(to Sam)  
What was your read on Oxford's  
attorney? \*

SAM \*

Guy didn't have a ton of money to  
dazzle the jury with experts, his  
defense was totally solid. \*

FRANKIE \*

(re: himself) \*

As the in-house expert, I'd like to  
"kick the tires" on the physical  
evidence? \*

(then, re: photos)  
Only 2 pieces of tamarisk weed were  
found in Oxford's car. Tess and I  
were covered in it from the scene;  
left leaves all over her car.

MAXINE  
So Oxford brushed himself off--

FRANKIE  
Or maybe the cops planted it.

Maxine steps towards Frankie; things start getting hot -- \*

MAXINE \*

You've got zero justification for--

FRANKIE

(re: Carter)

Boss said verify the prosecution's case--

CARTER

(challenging)

Is that what you're doing? Because it seems like--

FRANKIE

Like I care about leaving a potentially innocent man to rot? In a place...

(words fail, then)

You don't come out the same as you went in.

CARTER

Stop taking this personally--

FRANKIE

(gaining steam)

Or how about you start taking it personally. You haven't even laid eyes on the guy. Because then you'd have to confront that this job matters and your refusal to commit to it doesn't make you cool; it just makes you a jerk--

\*

CARTER

(snaps)

Take a walk, Frankie.

Frankie goes silent, realizing he overstepped. He heads for his office. Not missing a beat, Carter turns to Sam--

CARTER (CONT'D)

Mistakes outnumber conspiracies. Check out the lab that processed the evidence. I gotta go get ready for the Gala.

(then)

Tess, a moment...

Off Tess, following Carter into --

INT. CARTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Carter hands Tess the MANILLA ENVELOPE. Puzzled, Tess opens it, pulls out PRINT OUTS of TWO NEWSPAPER ARTICLES. We don't see the image, just Tess's shocked reaction.

CARTER

Same standard applies to you as to  
the Detective and Frankie: don't  
use this job to settle a score.

(then)

Changing your name was smart. Have  
you seen him since he got out?

TESS

(shakes her head 'no')

...Are you going to tell everyone?

CARTER

Depends if it's useful.

Carter exits, leaving Tess completely stunned.

INT. CIU OFFICES - ENTRY/COMMON AREA - CONTINUOUS

As Carter heads for the exit, she spots Frankie headed for  
his work area. Their eyes meet; Carter looks away.

CLOSE ON Carter, her expression troubled... then we hear --

JACKSON (O.S.)

Curriculum hours California schools  
devote to science and technology?

And reveal we are now --

INT. LIMO - AFTERNOON

Carter, fully done-up (though not in the dress she planned to  
wear) sits in the limo with Jackson, who's decked out in a  
tux, reviewing flashcards. Carter looks at him, blankly --

JACKSON

Only 2-point-6 per week. We need  
this for interviews.

(then, re: her distraction)

You okay?

CARTER

Work stuff.

JACKSON

(that's a first)

Maybe this job is a good fit--

\*

CARTER

(re: his flashcards)

Still studying for parties; no  
wonder you're single, Pigs.

JACKSON  
Stop calling me that.  
(re: her nails)  
I see your manicurist came from  
drinks with Bill Cosby.

Off this.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Maxine chats with DETECTIVE JIM MCNALLY (early 50s, puffy from years of drinking) as Tess hovers nearby.

MCNALLY  
I live in a shoebox. Most of my  
stuff is still at the house. Lisa's  
real understanding about that.

MAXINE  
Divorce brings out the prick in  
everybody.  
(then)  
We need to talk to you about the  
Riggins case; the eyewitness...

MCNALLY  
The guy was solid, Maxine--

TESS  
Then why didn't you take a full  
statement from him until November  
17th? He came forward 4 days  
earlier at the scene--

MCNALLY  
People show up at crime scenes all  
the time, claiming they saw  
something. They aren't all legit.

MAXINE  
How'd you decide Chambers was?

MCNALLY  
Forensics came back on Maria's time  
of death. It was right around the  
time Chambers said he saw a black  
male, matching Oxford's description  
driving away from the crime scene.  
So we had Chambers come in, give a  
statement. The details of what he  
saw never changed.

MAXINE

Be a big help to us if we could get  
a look at your street files,  
confirm his initial description.

TESS

Street files?

MCNALLY

(patronizing)  
That's cop-talk for handwritten  
case notes. If I took 'em, they'd  
be in the prosecution's files.

TESS

There's nothing there.

MCNALLY

Sorry. Wish I could be more help.

MAXINE

Thanks for your time, Jimmy.

As Maxine and Tess head out, a hint of wariness on Maxine's  
face. Off this...

INT. GALA BALLROOM - NIGHT

Carter works the room, smiling, shaking hands. During a  
break, Carter surveys the crowd, stopping at the sight of --

Wallis, handsome turned up to full wattage. This man may  
have been born in a tux. As he approaches with a confident  
smile, Carter feigns indifference. Sort of pulls it off.

CARTER

Sale at Men's Wearhouse?

WALLIS

Wanted to support your mother.  
(then)  
Join me.

He offers his hand, leads Carter out onto --

THE DANCE FLOOR

Wallis pulls Carter close, they sway to the music.

WALLIS

...I'd forgotten what a good dancer  
you are.

CARTER

I remember... kicking your ass in court.

WALLIS

We were two-and-two -- even record.

CARTER

My victories were way more decisive than yours.

WALLIS

Ever wonder what might've happened if you hadn't left Chicago?

CARTER

No.

(then)

I was fired, I had to--

WALLIS

(you weren't fired)

You self-destructed; like what you tried last night.

(off her look)

What else would you call outing a Senior Partner as an adulterer at a staff meeting?

\*  
\*

CARTER

Taking an ethical stand.

(then)

Screwing an associate is one thing, but don't promote her--

WALLIS

You deserved the promotion; You were their top associate;--

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Aren't you two a lovely couple.

REVEAL GLENYS MORRISON approaching. Glenys is a brilliant, formidable woman; she's spent her adult life pushing (without crossing) boundaries for women. It's toughened and hardened her. She eyes Carter's dress - not the one she chose.

GLENYS

Such a beautiful dress.

WALLIS

(kissing Glenys' cheek)

Glenys, congratulations on tonight.

GLENYS

Thank you, Wayne. May I steal my daughter for a moment?

Wallis nods, of course. Glenys leads Carter away. Off the dread in Carter's eyes.

INT. BARTON FAMILY HOUSE - DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

The end of a totally unglamorous family dinner. Maxine's MOM and adult BROTHER can be seen chatting in the b.g. FIND MAXINE heading for the kitchen where --

Maxine's DAD, MAXWELL BARTON, also former LAPD, does dishes.

MAXINE'S DAD

...Towel's on the counter.

Maxine picks it up, moves into drying position. And waits for what her dad wants to talk about...

MAXINE'S DAD (CONT'D)

Jim McNally called today.

(beat, then)

He said you were asking him a lot of questions.

MAXINE

I was doing my job.

MAXINE'S DAD

You're digging around in an 8 year-old collar. Every case you work as a cop has something you wish you'd done differently. Something that can get easily turned into a "mistake"--

MAXINE

I took this job because I know that; because these days, good cops need someone looking out for them.

MAXINE'S DAD

Then "look out" for McNally; he was one of the best cadets I ever worked with. I gave him 5 stars on his evaluation.

\*

Done with the dishes, Maxine's dad moves off. Off Maxine, struck by what he just told her, although we're not sure why.

INT. BALLROOM BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

Glenys and Carter overlook the dance floor. Glenys's SECRET SERVICE AGENT makes sure they have privacy.

GLENYS

Just because Wallis came to our rescue doesn't mean you have to sleep with him.

CARTER

I'm not.  
(then)  
Our rescue?

GLENYS

The other night when I learned about your "predicament", I called Wallis; we worked out a deal. \*

CARTER

(annoyed, not surprised) \*  
Thanks for consulting me--

GLENYS

(spare me)  
I saved you -- again. Secured a new job after you screwed up the last one -- again. But this is the last time, Carter.

CARTER

Bold statement for an election year.

GLENYS

That's what talk shows are for. Oprah's been dying to have me on. I'd play it for sympathy, discuss my shortcomings as a mother...

(looks Carter in eye)

And I'm aware I wouldn't be lying... \*

(real regret creeping in) \*

I'd talk about how you always had a harder time than your brother, growing up in the public eye. How you used to say you had a series of photo ops instead of a childhood. \*

(then, completely sincere) \*

And how loving your children sometimes means making tough choices. \*  
I do love you, Carter. You are... so smart, and brave, and funny; \*

(MORE)

GLENYS (CONT'D)  
 imagine what you could accomplish if  
 you actually tried? If you worked as  
 hard at anything as you do at showing  
 all of us how little you care?

Carter tries not to show how much her mom's comment stings.

GLENYS (CONT'D)  
 I, for one, would like to know. So  
 I'm removing other options.  
 (then)  
 Lose this job, you'll go to prison.

CARTER  
 For possession as a first offense?  
 I don't think so --

GLENYS  
 As D.A., Wallis can upgrade to  
 possession with intent to distribute.  
 (off Carter's shock)  
 Considering all of your infractions  
 we've made disappear over the  
 years, it's really only fair.

CARTER  
 Why would you do that?

GLENYS  
 Because you've had a lifetime of  
 second chances. And I can't stand  
 to watch you throw any more away.  
 (then, sincere)  
 Good luck, darling. Do your best.  
 For once.

Glenys walks away. Off Carter, reeling, SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PRISON - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A CORRECTIONS OFFICER playing a game on his phone as  
 he sits at the sign-in gate. Suddenly, a GOVERNMENT ID gets  
 slapped on the counter.

CARTER (O.S.)  
 I need to see Oxford Riggins.

ANOTHER ANGLE REVEALS a fiercely determined Carter standing  
 in front of the CO, out of place in her elegant Gala  
 ensemble. Off this --

FADE OUT.

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON A "2" A CHIRON APPEARS: 2 DAYS REMAINING AS WE REVEAL THE "2" IS PART OF OXFORD'S INMATE # (ON HIS INMATE ID CLIPPED TO HIS SHIRT) AND WE ARE --

INT. PRISON - VISIT ROOM - DAY

Oxford, wide-eyed in amazement, sits down across from Carter. He's totally dazzled by her, and who wouldn't be...

OXFORD

This is crazy. Carter Morrison, here to see me. Looking--

CARTER

You tried to buy a gun - there's the murder weapon. You were on steroids - there's motive--

OXFORD

I didn't--

CARTER

Lies do not work on me. I'm immune; childhood over-exposure.

OXFORD

...You're right - about the gun; and the 'roids. But I didn't kill Maria.

CARTER

Then why'd you want the gun?  
(then)  
Tell me the truth. Make me care.

OXFORD

The truth isn't gonna...  
(then, embarrassed)  
I was 17 and stupid... I thought it'd be cool to have a gun.

CARTER

...That may be the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

And, in that way, a lot like things Carter's done. The things her mother just went after her about.

CARTER (CONT'D)

What about the steroids?

OXFORD

My mom couldn't afford college tuition. I wanted a better shot at a football scholarship.

CARTER

That's why you went off in the detectives brought you in?

OXFORD

(nods, ashamed)

I shouldn't have done that. I made a mistake--

\*

CARTER

You made a lot of mistakes--

OXFORD

(desperation building)

Doesn't mean I deserve this. I'm innocent; and I'm not that stupid lost kid anymore. But I need a second chance, so I can be the man my mom raised me to be.

(then)

You're my chance.

Carter stares at him for a long beat.

CARTER

...So, no pressure.

Off this, SMASH CUT TO --

EXT. PRISON - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER (NIGHT)

Carter is on her cell phone as she moves quickly for her car.

CARTER

I saw you called; anything on the crime lab?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED WITH --

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Sam is on his phone; all of downtown LA is lit up behind him.

SAM

The lab that handled the evidence in Oxford's case closed 4 years ago; cost cutting started as early as 2008...

CARTER

Meaning it could have impacted  
Oxford's case...

SAM

The first reduction was the laundry  
budget; lab coats were washed every  
other day.

(then)

I tracked down the lab tech that  
examined Maria's clothes - which  
were covered in tamarisk weed. She  
also processed Oxford's car... The  
next day. Clear cut contamination.

CARTER

That discredits the evidence.

By now, Carter has reached her car. Her DRIVER (for the  
evening) is holding the door open, she gets in --

CARTER (CONT'D)

Sam... you're not a moron.

And as the Driver CLOSES the door, CUT TO --

INT. CARTER'S HOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

ON THE ELEVATOR DOOR OPENING. Carter steps off, turns  
towards her room to see... Maxine, waiting in the hallway.

CARTER

...Booty call, Detective?

MAXINE

Didn't want to get into this on the  
phone. My dad gave McNally 5 stars.

(off Carter's puzzled look)

My dad's a stickler about  
documentation. 5 stars means  
McNally takes notes in every  
meeting. Including his first one  
with Oxford's eyewitness.

CARTER

He's hiding the notes because they  
undermine the case against Oxford.

(off Maxine's nod)

Can we get ahold of them?

MAXINE

McNally's going through a nasty  
divorce. I'll go see his ex-wife,  
tomorrow--

CARTER  
She's probably home now.

Off this --

EXT. MCNALLY'S (FORMER) HOUSE - NIGHT

Carter (no longer in her gala gown) and Maxine get out of Maxine's car. They conspire as they walk towards the house --

CARTER  
Ex-wife's name?

MAXINE  
Lisa; she and I always got along.  
I'll handle her.

CARTER  
(re: driveway)  
And what about him?

In the driveway, REVEAL Jim McNally, service weapon visible on his hip, carrying several BANKERS BOXES to his car.

MAXINE  
What're you doing, Jim?

McNally wasn't expecting Maxine... but he's not rattled--

MCNALLY  
Getting my stuff out of the attic.  
Lisa's been nagging me to...

MAXINE  
This sudden urge have anything to  
do with my questions about your  
street files?

MCNALLY  
Total coincidence.

It's bullshit, and they all know it.

CARTER  
I can get a warrant for the  
contents of those boxes. Unless  
you'd like to turn them over now...

MCNALLY  
Why would I do that?

CARTER

Hand-job?  
 (off Maxine's look)  
 It's worked before.

MAXINE

(conciliatory tone)  
 Jim, I get it: the witness made an  
 initial statement. Then Oxford  
 becomes a suspect, you go back,  
 "help" the witness "remember",  
 tweak a few details to--

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

MCNALLY

Imagine someone going through your  
 old cases, Maxine. We both know  
 they'd find some dirt--

\*

CARTER

(turns away, dialing)  
 I'm calling for a warrant.

MAXINE

Do the right thing, Jim, turn over--

MCNALLY

I did the right thing -- when I put  
 Oxford away. He killed that girl.  
 I know it. I knew it when he went  
 nuts during the interview; I knew  
 it when I broke the news to the  
 girl's mother and she mentioned the  
 kid right away. The eyewitness  
 recognized Oxford's picture,  
 because Oxford Riggins is a  
 murderer.

\*  
\*

(in Maxine's face, menacing)  
 And you want to set him free.  
 Screw that; screw you.

McNally lights a MATCH, turns, and drops it into the file --

Carter turns back to see the box go up IN FLAMES.

Maxine moves to rescue the papers, but McNally sets his hand  
 on his hip near his gun. Doesn't draw it, but the  
 possibility of escalation is clear.

Off the notes, burning away and Carter and Maxine, stunned --

TESS (PRE-LAP)(O.S)

He just set fire to them?

INT. CIU OFFICES - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

ON CARTER'S HAND as she slashes a line through "EYEWITNESS" on the board. ("TAMARISK WEED" has already been crossed out.) Carter is on her feet, pacing, and her drive is contagious--

TESS

McNally can't get away with that--

CARTER

We'll deal with him later. Right now, we focus on Oxford.

(to Frankie)

I think he's innocent.

FRANKIE

So go ahead, recommend overturning his conviction--

CARTER

(not yet)

This isn't about what I believe; this is about what we can prove.

TESS

But the lab contamination, McNally sabotaging his files--

MAXINE

(getting Carter's point)

Neither of those rules out Oxford having killed Maria. It's possible to frame a guilty man.

SAM

The legal burden isn't proof of innocence--

CARTER

Screw the legal burden; we need an undeniable case that Oxford doesn't belong in prison.

(then)

Either we prove he didn't do it, or find another solid suspect.

A Delivery Guy steps in carrying a LARGE, LONG PACKAGE wrapped in Butcher paper and a BUCKET.

DELIVERY GUY

Someone here order a pig?

FRANKIE

That's me. On the table is good.

DELIVERY GUY

The blood, too?

Frankie nods. Everyone is baffled...

SAM

Frankie, what the hell?

As the Delivery Guy leaves, Frankie points to the "NO ALIBI" label on the board.

FRANKIE

I've been so hung up on his lack of alibi, I forgot about this --  
 (re: "at time of death")  
 What if Oxford's alibi was the football game?

SAM

You think the prosecution was wrong about time of death?

FRANKIE

They might be; that's what I want to figure out. I'll take the carcass--

CARTER

Grab the pork and go. We're running out of time.

Off Frankie, picking up the pig, MATCH CUT TO --

EXT. VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK - CRIME SCENE - DAY

ON THE WRAPPED PIG. PULL BACK to INCLUDE -- Frankie spraying pesticide from an industrial-size container on the grass as Tess looks on, holding the bucket of blood.

FRANKIE

Remember that dead squirrel you almost landed on the other day? He was covered with flies so I knew he'd died during the day; at night, flies get too cold to fly. They hibernate unless they're already at a food source.

(re: package)

Help me unwrap Wilbur...

(then)

I combed through the forensic reports: no mention of flies on her body, no larvae found at autopsy.

(re: pig)

Take the right side.

\*

\*

\*

TESS

That was never brought up? That she could've been shot after dark?

FRANKIE

The prosecution's experts insisted that the lack of flies was explained by the pesticides sprayed in the park.

By now, they've hauled the half pig to where Frankie sprayed the grass. He pours some blood over it.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

This will prove if they were right. We'll do the same thing with the other half after the sun goes down.

TESS

(getting it)

Then we wait and check for flies.

Frankie nods as they sit down, looking at the pig...

REVERSE ANGLE on Frankie and Tess.

*But now in the foreground lies Maria's motionless body.*

TESS (CONT'D)

...Maria was only 17. Her whole life was ahead of her.

Frankie reaches over, squeezes Tess's hand, more in comfort than in romance. Off these two, hit again by this loss.

INT. CIU OFFICES - CARTER'S OFFICE - DAY

ON MARIA'S YEARBOOK PHOTO on Carter's desk. PAN ACROSS case documents and PHOTOS strewn across the desk to Carter, hard at work, studying the photos of MARIA'S HOUSE + BEDROOM. Sam and Maxine enter, discouraged --

MAXINE

Talked to as many of Maria's boyfriends and male acquaintances as I could track down. No leads.

SAM

I reviewed all violent serial offenders at large in 2008. No one whose M.O. matched Maria's death.

CARTER

Maria's Dad wasn't around. She didn't have any brothers, right?

SAM

No. Why?

CARTER

See these LAPD photos of Maria's house; they're from the day after Maria's body was found...

Carter holds up the PHOTOS of Maria's BEDROOM where the Man (whose name, we will soon learn, is Raoul Esparia) can be seen in the background.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Who's that? He's in a bunch of these...

SAM

Someone close enough to the family to be there right after a tragedy.

\*

CARTER

Lupe mentioned someone named Raoul.  
(to Maxine)  
Does Jim McNally speak Spanish?

MAXINE

No.

CARTER

Remember McNally said he spoke to Maria's mother at her house? There's no record of an interpreter being present; Lupe barely speaks English--

MAXINE

(getting her point)  
That was when McNally first started to suspect Oxford.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

CARTER

Who the hell translated that conversation? We need to find out.

\*  
\*  
\*

Off this crucial question --

\*

FADE OUT.

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

OPEN ON A "1" as a CHYRON TELLS US --  
1 DAY REMAINING. PULL BACK TO SEE the "1" was part of a  
 beaten up APARTMENT NUMBER "17", but the "7" DANGLES UPSIDE  
 DOWN and we are--

INT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

As Maxine knocks on the apartment door. Carter paces behind  
 her. CINDY ROSARIO (late 20s, no fan of cops) opens the door.  
Cindy bears a distinct resemblance to Maria Sanchez. Maxine  
 displays the photo of RAOUL ESPARIA from Maria's house.

MAXINE

We're looking for Raoul Esparia.

CINDY

(starts shutting the door)  
 He doesn't live here anymore.

\*  
 \*

CARTER

It's important we find him. Do you  
 happen to have an address or--

CINDY

No.

Carter turns to leave, surprised at getting shut-down when--

CINDY (CONT'D)

Hey, you're that President's  
 daughter--

CARTER

(smiles, turns on charm)  
 Carter Morrison; this is my  
 colleague Maxine Barton. You are...

CINDY

Cindy. Cindy Rosario.

CARTER

Cindy, could we come in?

INT. CINDY ROSARIO'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Carter and Maxine are sitting in the ratty living room.  
 Cindy puts chipped, mismatched mugs of water before them.

CARTER

Raoul was a friend of the Sanchez family. He was living with them about 8 years ago, when Maria was murdered. He translated for the police when they interviewed Maria's mother.

\*  
\*

Maxine puts a photo of Maria on the table.

\*

CINDY

She... looks like me.

MAXINE

Apparently Raoul asked Maria out a few times, but she turned him down.

\*  
\*  
\*

CINDY

Raoul's not big on "no." He's got a real temper...

\*  
\*  
\*

CARTER

Did he ever get violent with you?

Cindy looks down, ashamed.

MAXINE

Cindy, whatever happened isn't your fault.

(then)

Especially if Raoul should've already been locked up; since we got the wrong guy for Maria Sanchez's murder.

Carter looks to Maxine, noting her admission. It's a significant moment.

CINDY

He broke my arm once. I should've called the cops, but...

(a long beat)

...Once he pulled a gun, told me to behave or he'd shut me up for good.

\*  
\*

Off Carter and Maxine, taking in this promising lead.

PRE-LAP: AN ALARM ON A PHONE --

EXT. VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

Frankie's phone wakes him with a start. He gets to his feet; Tess is already standing over the pig halves.

FRANKIE

It's 12:04.

TESS

Exactly when Maria's body was found  
by the police.

Frankie walks over, joins her. One half of the pig is covered with buzzing flies. But as we PAN to the other half - marked "after dark" - things get quiet. There are no flies. CUT TO--

INT. CIU OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

ON Carter, answering her cell phone on speakerphone. Maxine and Sam join her.

CARTER

How's it going, Frankie?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED WITH --

EXT. VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK - CRIME SCENE - CONTINUOUS

Frankie and Tess, giddy with discovery, on speakerphone.

TESS

We proved it. Maria died after dark.

FRANKIE

Which, September 2nd in 2008, was  
after 6:35 pm.

(then)

Oxford's game had already started.

CARTER

Oxford doesn't have an alibi. He  
has hundreds of them.

(then)

He's innocent. He didn't kill Maria.

And there it is. Victory. Thrilled, Carter puts her arms in the air. Sam and Maxine join in the celebration. Off Carter, liking how this feels.

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE - WALLIS'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Carter updates Wallis --

CARTER

We discredited the eye-witness, the  
physical evidence, and proved  
Oxford had an airtight alibi.

\*

WALLIS  
I'll call the Judge, ask him to  
vacate the conviction immediately.

CARTER  
LAPD is bringing in a suspect for  
questioning now.

As Carter and Wallis continue their discussion, CUT AWAY TO --

INT. DARKENED APARTMENT - SIMULTANEOUS

ON THE DOOR as it is opened to REVEAL A DETECTIVE flanked by  
2 LAPD COPS. The Detective flashes his badge as --

DETECTIVE  
Raoul Esparia? We need to ask you  
a few questions?

CUT AROUND to REVEAL RAOUL ESPARIA, looking very busted.

BACK TO WALLIS AND CARTER --

WALLIS  
Good work.

CARTER  
Team effort.

WALLIS  
I told you you'd be good at this.

CARTER  
And I told you I'm dangerous.  
Turns out we're both right.

WALLIS  
(calm, casual)  
Self-destruct and you're the one  
who pays the price.

INT. PRISON VISITING AREA - DAY

ON FRANKIE. PULL BACK to REVEAL he's sitting across from a  
TOUGH, TATTOOED INMATE.

CARTER (V.O.)  
You mean prison? Not happening.

And as we notice Frankie's expression is one of love, of  
longing, PAN DOWN to REVEAL -

UNDER THE TABLE, Frankie reaches out, finds the Inmate's  
hand... and takes it. Off their hands, joined.

BACK TO WALLIS AND CARTER --

CARTER

If you press charges, I'll reveal  
the deal you brokered, forcing me  
to take this job.

WALLIS

That arrangement was made with your  
mother. You can't expose it--

CARTER

Without exposing her.  
(then)  
I know.

Wallis eyes Carter, unafraid... but curious.

WALLIS

What do you want?

CARTER

I want... to do this job.

WALLIS

Then we're on the same page--

CARTER

For real. My way.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - THE BULLPEN - MCNALLY'S CUBICLE

ON A PHONE playing video. PULL BACK to INCLUDE Maxine who's  
discreetly showing it to an unhappy McNally.

CARTER (V.O.)

No more politics or rules or happy  
endings...

MAXINE

Lisa gave me access to the security  
footage.

(off McNally's glare)

Take an early retirement or I'll  
show this to your Captain.

Off Maxine, leaving, ignoring any cold shoulders she gets...

BACK TO WALLIS'S OFFICE --

CARTER

I don't care who the D.A. was when  
the case was prosecuted--

WALLIS  
 (covering his discomfort)  
 I've got nothing to hide--

CARTER  
 I wonder what Sam will say about  
 that.

WALLIS  
 You think his loyalty is to you?

INT. HIGH-END ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

As Sam, file in hand, greets a HIGH-END ATTORNEY.

CARTER (V.O.)  
 I think people are complicated...

HIGH END ATTORNEY  
 That's the Riggins file?

SAM  
 (not offering it yet)  
 I've told Oxford's mother to expect  
 your call about a civil suit.  
 (then)  
 Let's talk about my percentage on  
 any settlement...

BACK TO CARTER AND WALLIS --

CARTER  
 I think I usually get what I want...

INT. CIU OFFICES - BATHROOM - DAY

ON Tess's worried expression as she studies the newspaper  
 ARTICLES that Carter gave to her. PAN AROUND TO SEE --

A HEADLINE READING "MAN EXONERATED IN MURDER AFTER 11 YEARS  
 IN PRISON; the other article has a PHOTO of a 13 year old  
 blonde captioned "13 YEAR-OLD EYEWITNESS, THERESA ROHN".  
 Tess TEARS THEM TO PIECES and flushes them down the toilet.

BACK TO CARTER AND WALLIS --

CARTER  
 I think, why be the fox guarding  
 the henhouse...  
 (intense)  
 When I can be the wolf who mauls  
 the fox and anyone else who gets in  
 her way. See you around, Wallis.

Off Wallis, watching her go, torn between fear and arousal.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

ON CARTER'S LOUBOUTINS as she strides towards the LAPD Building. We don't see her face as we START INTERCUT WITH --

INT. PRISON - HALLWAY - DAY

-- ON A MAN'S VERY WORN SHOES walking down the hallway --

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

On Carter's heels, moving confidently across the street--

INT. PRISON - DAY

ON the MAN'S WORN SHOES and HIS BACK as he nears the door--

INT. LAPD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - ELEVATOR - DAY

ON CARTER'S SHOES and OVER HER SHOULDER as she steps on, hits the 5th floor button without a glance at the cops around her.

INT./EXT. PRISON - DAY

As the MAN steps through the door and we CIRCLE AROUND to REVEAL OXFORD. He turns his face up to the sun and the wide-open sky. To the light and the warmth...

A moment of simple, pure joy. Of freedom. The happiest of endings. That gets even more emotional as--

Oxford's mother, June, hugs him fiercely. His sister, too, with Oxford's young niece. A family, finally reunited.

Oxford shakes Wallis's hand. Wallis stays with him, basking in the victory as the PRESS peppers him with questions.

And in the CROWD, FIND Frankie, standing with Maxine and Sam. All three are happy, but Frankie is ecstatic. A huge smile on his face. A victory for our team.

INT. CIU OFFICES - DAY

ON Carter's back as she enters, heads for the CONFERENCE ROOM, passing Tess who's juggling three ringing phone lines. It's been a busy morning.

FOLLOW Carter into the CONFERENCE ROOM. While the board has been cleared, the ENTIRE TABLE is now covered with NEWLY DELIVERED FILES, LETTERS, all varieties of CASE DOCUMENTATION. CIRCLE AROUND to see Carter, taking this in --

CARTER  
What the hell is all this?

TESS  
Possible cases. We've been getting  
deliveries all morning.

A beat as Carter considers the table. She's annoyed,  
overwhelmed... but underneath all that, a little bit excited.

CARTER  
Who's next?

Watch out, people: this is gonna be awesome.

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF PILOT**