

LEGALESE

Screenplay By
Billy Ray

Director/Producer - Glenn Jordan
Exec. Producer - J. Paul Higgins
Producer - Cindy Hornickel
New Line Television
Turner Network Television

March 24, 1998 - White
April 27, 1998 - Blue Revision
May 6, 1998 - Pink Revision
May 17, 1998 - Yellow Revision
June 4, 1998 - Green Revision
June 6, 1998 - Goldenrod Revision
June 10, 1998 - Buff Revision

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received
4/30/98

1 CONTINUED:

1

INT. ANGELA'S UNIT - 2D - CONTINUING

We push past the .38 on the Living Room floor to

INT. ANGELA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUING

Utterly disshevelled. A broken mirror, a shattered lamp, a phone yanked out of the wall, and:

A BODY ON THE FLOOR

This is, or was, OSKAR TABAK. 35, Polish, a bullet wound in the center of his chest. His face is scratched. He is dead.

CUT TO:

A bank of TV SCREENS in no particular order. Here's how the story gets "spun" on the Evening News. Rapid bursts, interrupting each other:

2 TV SCREEN #1:

2

A photo of OSKAR TABAK, and one of his sculptures:

KTLA ANCHOR

The victim was Oskar Tabak: well-known sculptor, brother-in-law of suspected killer, Angela Beale. In what is shaping up as a steamy triangle of incest, Beale was barely clothed when she was found by neighbors late last night...

*
*
*

3 TV SCREEN #2

3

A TV-COMMERCIAL for the America Apple Board: ANGELA BEALE as EVE in the Garden of Eden, reaching for that forbidden fruit. She is sexy, voluptuous. A dangerous goddess...

CHANNEL 6 ANCHOR (V.O.)

The timing could not be worse for the American Apple Board. Having just launched a massive media blitz featuring Beale, boardmembers huddled all day behind closed doors to co-ordinate their response to the crisis.

*

FADE IN:

1 INT. A BEVERLY HILLS APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

858 N. Palm Drive. Upscale. We're in the 2nd-Floor HALLWAY. It's almost midnight, and nothing stirs.

A DOOR OPENS - UNIT 2D

And we meet ANGELA BEALE. 34, Caucasian. Her blouse and bra are ripped. Her lip bleeds; a welt appears on her forehead. But even after being beaten, she's a natural beauty.

ANGELA STUMBLES DOWN THE HALLWAY

Ten long, frightened steps until she reaches Unit 2B.

SHE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR OF UNIT 2B

Then she collapses.

ANGELA LIES, MOTIONLESS

She needs only to be discovered. So she waits... and waits.

NO ONE IS COMING TO THE DOOR

Her eyes open now, and she checks her watch, irritated. She rises, and moves to the door across the hall.

SHE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR OF 2C

And collapses again, this time in the doorway of 2C. Then: she hears footsteps coming to the first door, 2B. Shit.

SHE SCRAMBLES BACK TOWARDS 2B

Then she hears footsteps about to open 2C as well.

BOTH DOORS START TO OPEN

and Angela is caught between them. With no other options, she faints again, right in the middle of the hallway.

HER FELLOW TENANTS STAND OVER HER - IN SLIPPERS

MR. BLUM lives in 2B. MRS. LUCKMAN in 2C. Both are over 70.

ANGELA
(last gasp)
Ambulance, please... I think I
killed him.

Blum and Luckman look to each other, titillated. This'll make for great gossip. We peel down the hallway, and into:

(CONTINUED)

4 TV SCREEN #3:

4

ON-AIR CHATTER between two CO-ANCHORS. (Picture of Oskar and his wife, MARY BEALE - in happier times - in a video-window over their shoulder.)

K-CAL 9 ANCHOR
(to Co-Anchor)
Angela Beale... I thought she had
died some years back.

*

K-CAL 9 CO-ANCHOR
No... She's just been doing
infomercials.

*

K-CAL 9 ANCHOR
What's the difference?

They share a tv-news laugh...

K-CAL 9 ANCHOR (CONT'D)
In other news, the President today
toured war-torn Somalia...

5 TV SCREEN #4

5

Note: The "tabloid-show" promo's have ominous theme music and distortional close-ups. "Hard Copy" runs clips from Angela's apple commercial.

"HARD COPY" PROMO
She had a smile as American as
apple pie. But what Angela Beale
handed Oskar Tabak turned out to be
forbidden fruit. And this Adam
didn't just fall; he died. Tonight
on "Hard Copy," Garden of Evil.

6 TV SCREEN #5

6

"Scandal Central" also has clips from Angela's ad - but now there is animated blood dripping over the screen.

"SCANDAL CENTRAL" PROMO
Tonight, "Scandal Central," takes
you inside the sibling rivalry that
turned deadly. It was Coveting,
California-Style for an older
sister who was One Bad Apple.

7 SCREEN #6

The Nature Channel: a beaver builds a dam.

NATURE CHANNEL NARRATOR (V.O.)
...but the heavy rains don't
discourage this industrious
engineer...

PULL BACK from the screens and we are...

INT. THE OFFICE OF NORMAN KEANE - DUSK

NORMAN KEANE is tanned and fit, fresh-scrubbed and confident in a way only wealthy L.A. lawyers can be. He points the remote control, and shuts off the six tv's we were just watching. Good-bye 6 o'clock news...

RICA (O.S.)
What'd you turn it off for?

Beside him is RICA MARTIN, (say it "Reeka") his chief Junior Lawyer, 26, with the energy of a bunny-rabbit. Rica always has something in her mouth, (now, it's a pen.)

This office reeks of power and connection. Framed pictures of Norman with the President, the Mayor, Kevin Costner... Norman packs up his briefcase, eager to get out of here.

NORMAN
I've seen enough.

RICA
She's called nine times. We have to tell her something.

Before Rica, 15 natural vitamins, (ginseng, rose-hips, etc.) She swallows them all, washes them down with coffee.

Norman looks at those blank tv's, thinking.

RICA (CONT'D)
Well?

NORMAN
I don't want another high-profile case right now. Last night at the Laker game Shaq came over to say hi and people started booing me.
(she's unmoved)
Don't I ever get to lay low for a while?

(CONTINUED)

RICA
Don't be a baby, Norman.

She gets away with that... Norman rises, looks out the window. L.A.'s just starting to twinkle 11 stories beneath him. And just across the street:

8 A BILLBOARD - FEATURING ANGELA BEALE - AN AD FOR APPLES 8

Angela, bosomy and windswept, in a magnificent garden. In her outstretched hand, an apple. The copy: "Go Ahead... Take a Bite." She looks right at us, irresistible.

We PULL BACK from the billboard, onto Wilshire itself...

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD. - CONTINUING

An '89 Buick Skylark chugs past. It has seen better days.

9 INT. THE BUICK - DRIVING - CONTINUING 9

Driving is ROY GUYTON - 24, ambitious, but unproven, tired as hell from a cross-country drive. Empty fast-food containers on the passenger seat. It was an ugly trip.

He pulls the Skylark into the garage of Norman's building.

CUT TO:

10 INT. THE GARAGE OF NORMAN'S BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER 10

Norman gets into his Bentley, unaware that:

11 ACROSS THE GARAGE - ROY PARKS IN AN UNASSIGNED SPACE 11

The Skylark sits between the Porsches and BMW's. Roy opens a trunk jammed with four BOXES, (law books, mementoes, a basketball.) He'll try to get them all in one trip.

He piles them on, shuts the trunk with his leg, holds the car keys in his mouth. He CAN'T SEE over the boxes, but he begins to cross the garage floor.

12 INT. NORMAN'S BENTLEY - IDLING - CONTINUING 12

Before Norman can even pull out, his CAR-PHONE RINGS. He grabs it. Still stationary:

NORMAN (INTO CAR-PHONE)
(knows who it is)
Yes?

RICA (THROUGH PHONE)
Okay, we have to do this. The
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RICA (THROUGH PHONE) (CONT'D)
world just decided you're
representing her.

(he sighs, put upon)
Since you left the office we've
gotten calls from all the local
channels, plus Connie Chung, Jane
Pauley, and Geraldo.

NORMAN
What about Ted Koppel?

RICA
Nothing.

NORMAN
(that kills him)
Naturally...
(a beat)
Call ya later.

13 A HUNDRED FEET AWAY - CONTINUING

13

Roy stumbles blindly across the garage, those four boxes
blocking his view. He's right behind NORMAN'S CAR.

14 NORMAN'S CAR - RESUMING

14

Still idling, he throws it into reverse, looks down at the
phone to hit "END."

15 ROY CUTS BEHIND NORMAN'S PARKING SPACE

15

Norman backs up without looking up from his phone.

NORMAN'S BENTLEY HITS ROY

The boxes go flying. Books and picture frames and
paperweights slam onto the trunk of the car. Roy falls to
the ground. The basketball rolls.

NORMAN GETS OUT OF THE CAR

Instantly, his mind kicks into "damage control" mode.

NORMAN
You okay?

ROY
My head hurts.
(a beat)
My neck too...

Roy now rubbs his knee as well, making sure Norman gets the
point. Norman doesn't feel like being sued so:

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

If you're thinking about damages,
don't bother. You were trespassing.

(points at a sign:)

This space is my property. I pay
for it. See? My name's clearly
marked. There're lanes in here for
pedestrian use, also clearly
marked.

(in charge now)

The law requires you to use a dolly
or similar apparatus when
transporting heavy materials
through traffic. Can a person cross
an intersection with a blindfold
on?

(no reply)

Then what about walking through a
busy garage with boxes stacked so
high that he can't see above or
around them?

ROY STUDIES HIM

Waits a beat to make certain he's right. Then:

ROY

(with deference)

You're Norman Keane, aren't you?

NORMAN

That depends.

ROY

I can't believe it. Norman Keane!
I've been studying you for the last
three years... Iowa State Law
School.

Now Norman notices what was in that box of Roy's: diplomas,
plaques - Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, Editor of the
Law Review... Good God, a fellow lawyer, and a bright one.

ROY (CONT'D)

In my dorm you were practically a
God.

NORMAN

That's very flattering.

Norman smiles thinly, helps Roy to his feet, surveys the
trunk of the Bentley. Roy seems to be watching Norman's
every move, as if committing this moment to memory.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(re: his car)

Fixing an ashtray in this thing costs a thousand bucks. This is body work and a new paint job--

(a beat)

If I were a jerk I'd stick you for it.

NORMAN RETURNS TO HIS CAR

He has just swarmed the kid, which was his goal. But he seems almost troubled by it.

NORMAN STOPS BEFORE GETTING BACK IN - AND TURNS

He eyes Roy, who is just now retrieving that errant basketball. Norman stands still. Then:

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Hey, Kid.

(Roy looks up)

Were you listening to what I just said?

ROY

Most of it. Every other word I just heard a bell ringing.

Norman walks back towards him.

NORMAN

I just knocked you flat on your ass because I was dialing while I was supposed to be driving. What kinda lawyer's gonna let me get away with that?

ROY

I'm not. I just wanted to watch you work.

(gestures towards:)

There's a camera right over your shoulder. My case was made five minutes ago...

ABOVE THEM - AFFIXED TO THE GARAGE WALL

Sure enough, a video surveillance camera points at them.

NORMAN

Very good.

(Roy shrugs)

Does this mean my insurance man should be expecting a call?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

ROY
I don't believe in frivolous
litigation, Sir.
(Norman's waiting)
...unless it's absolutely
necessary.

He hands Norman a business card.

ROY (CONT'D)
Maybe we could talk business some
day. It'd be a real thrill for me.

Norman reads it, smiles. The kid's got moxie.

NORMAN
Welcome to the Bar, Roy. You've got
the makings of a real barracuda. *

ROY (O.S.)
Thanks, Mister Keane. That means a
lot to me.

Norman extends his hand, and they shake. Mutual respect.

Roy gathers his stuff - it's a struggle - and heads for the
lobby. Norman just watches him go. Then... an inspiration
comes to him, and a smile fans across his face.

16 INT. THE BENTLEY - CONTINUING

16

Norman gets in, reaches for the phone. Dials.

17 INTERCUT WITH/INT. RICA'S OFFICE - SAME

17

Rica, makeshift dinner before her, phone against her ear.
(NOTE: 3 tv's mounted into her office wall.)

NORMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
Are you up for an experiment?

RICA
Always.

NORMAN
Have Angela Beale come in in the
morning.
(that thrilled her)
Might be time to find out how good
we actually are...

Big grin. She slides her dinner aside and pulls out a file
that reads, "Beale, Angela." Rica loves messy cases.

CUT TO:

18 INT. THE LOBBY OF NORMAN'S BUILDING - NEXT MORNING

18

Media pandemonium. 30 NEWSCREWS wait in here. Suddenly, they find their mark:

NORMAN ENTERS THE LOBBY...IN ANOTHER FABULOUS SUIT

He was expecting this onslaught; still, THE LIGHTS NEARLY BLIND HIM. He blinks, squints...

THE HORDE OF REPORTERS DESCENDS ON HIM

All Norman sees are faceless microphones thrust at him. All he hears:

500 QUESTIONS AT ONCE
Is it true you're going to be
representing Angela Beale? When did
she first contact you? Have you
begun discussions with the D.A.'s
Office?

Norman's very comfortable being pounced upon like this.

NORMAN
I think it would be highly
inappropriate for me to comment at
this time. Sorry.

ONE REPORTER STEPS FORWARD

Her name is BRENDA WHITLASS, 40. Her microphone says, "Scandal Central." Behind her at all times is her CAMERAMAN, REGGIE. As Norman presses the elevator button:

BRENDA WHITLASS
Mr. Keene, were Beale and the
victim romantically involved?

NORMAN
Brenda, you know I can't comment on
that.

Flashbulbs popping, questions being hurled by the horde...

THE ELEVATOR OPENS

And Norman steps in. A SECURITY GUARD holds the reporters back. The DOORS CLOSE, shutting out the lights...

19 WE STAY WITH NORMAN AS HE ASCENDS

19

He checks himself in a mirror, frets that his tie wasn't perfectly straight. The elevator OPENS. And we are now...

20 INT. THE ELEVENTH FLOOR OF THE BUILDING - CONTINUING

20

Norman's suite takes up the ENTIRE FLOOR. He steps out into his own LOBBY. (A TV in here carries CNN'S report of the chaos in the lobby downstairs.)

WAITING RIGHT OUTSIDE THE ELEVATOR - RICA

Immediately, they start speed-walking through the suite, as if shot out of a cannon. New cases energize them.

RICA
Nicely done.

NORMAN
My tie was screwed up.

RICA
It looked fine on screen.
(Everyone they pass says,
"Good Morning, Norman.")

NORMAN
Thank you. Run-down, please.

RICA
Three years on "My Two Moms," one
Van Damme movie; Now apples. D.A.
hasn't filed charges yet.

*

21 THEIR POV - ANGELA BEALE WAITS IN NORMAN'S OFFICE

21

There's a bandage on her forehead, another on her neck.

22 ON NORMAN - STUDYING HER

22

A koi pond ripples; a Chagal hangs on the wall; Spanish tile is underfoot, and profit is in the air.

RICA (CONT'D)
(her pep-talk:)
Go make us some money.

He adjusts his tie again. Enters:

13 INT. NORMAN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - CONTINUING

Those six tv's are on, but barely audible. Angela stands by the window, staring at a framed photo of a country singer named BILLY JOE VITTEL. ("Norman, Thanks - Billy Joe.")

NORMAN
Miss Beale. I'm Norman Keane.

She turns, startled.

ANGELA
(re: the horde downstairs)
I'm sorry. They followed me here.

NORMAN
Comes with the territory. Would you like some coffee, or...?

ANGELA
I was in the hospital all day yesterday; then a policeman came in and told me my apartment was a "crime scene."

NORMAN
I understand.

He motions, "Have a seat." She does. He rolls his leather chair towards her, so they're close as he sits.

ANGELA
What do you do when a man beats your sister for two years... Then comes over and tries to attack you?

NORMAN
(soberly)
I don't know.

ANGELA
Mary's grateful. My sister. That's the part nobody knows. She's glad I...

NORMAN
(cuts her off)
Don't finish that sentence... It's more information than I need.

(CONTINUED)

ANGELA

Yes. Okay. I understand.

(jittery)

You'll have to tell me what to do,
Mister Keane. I'm lost.

He was hoping she'd say that.

NORMAN

Would you mind waiting here for a
moment? There's someone I'd like
you to meet.

She doesn't understand, but when Norman Keane tells you to
to wait, you wait. So she nods.

CUT TO:

24 INT. THE OFFICE OF ROY GUYTON - LATER

24

Closet-sized, with a 2nd-floor view of the garage.

Roy, in that same suit, sits across from Norman, floored by
what he's just heard. Norman waits patiently.

NORMAN

The woman needs some help, Roy.

ROY

I can appreciate that, but... I
thought you'd toss me a DUI maybe,
a shoplifting charge on some rich
guy's daughter. This is...

NORMAN

This is a shot at building your
practice... Not that there isn't a
certain folksy charm around here.

Roy looks around, chagrinned. Norman barely blinks.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

How big's your client list?

(Roy's eyes widen)

Do you have a client list?

ROY

I'm, uh, just waiting for it to be
finalized by my secretary.

NORMAN

I see. Do you have a secretary?

(CONTINUED)

ROY
Not at the moment, no.

NORMAN
Do what I tell you, and you'll come out of this thing the highest-profile 24 year-old attorney in the history of the country... Think your old man might like watching his son every day on CNN?

ROY
My father died when I was 8.

Norman makes a mental note of that.

NORMAN
That's okay. I hear Heaven just got cable.

He picks up the phone, dials.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Rica, could you bring Miss Beale down to Mister Guyton's office, please?

Norman hangs up, eyes Roy with complete confidence. But something's amiss...

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Don't look so distraught, Roy. You won't lose. I promise.

ROY
Nobody can promise that.

NORMAN
I'm not nobody; don't you read the papers?

Roy's suspicious: Norman must have an agenda here. But it's buried, invisible.

ROY
Something you're leaving out...

NORMAN
Hmmm?

ROY
Lawyers kill for a case like this. Why would you give it away?

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

Public's seen enough of me in the last six months; it's hard to retain any mystery about you when you're on the tube more than I Love Lucy.

ROY

But why me?

NORMAN

The truth?

(Roy shrugs)

Case is too good to hand over to a legitimate competitor.

(Roy gets the point)

Sorry.

Roy nods, fairly unoffended.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Besides, it's a helluva challenge, don't ya think? Trying to win a case without even being in it?

ROY

A challenge?

Norman nods. Roy weighs it all...

ROY (CONT'D)

All due respect, Sir. This is somebody's life we're talking about.

Norman leans back, smiling.

NORMAN

God Bless You, kid. Not even hired yet, and already you're defending her.

Roy's in; they both know it. Before he can reply:

RICA AND ANGELA ENTER THE OFFICE

Roy stands, a bit ashamed of the cramped space. Angela looks around her, decidedly unimpressed. Rica eyes Roy. Her attraction is instant. Roy's officially overwhelmed.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Angela Beale, this is Roy Guyton,
Attorney at Law.

Roy crosses to her. In the tiny office, Norman has to hold his breath in order for Roy to pass by.

ROY
Pleasure to meet you, Ms. Beale.
Please have a seat.

In the presence of a client, Roy looks pretty confident.
Norman takes note. Rica does too.

NORMAN
And this is Rica Martin. She'll run
interference between us.

RICA
If you got any plans for tonight,
cancel 'em.

ROY
(likes her fire)
I don't.

RICA
Good. Ms. Beale will call a press
conference for noon tomorrow where
you'll introduce yourself as her
counsel. You have any contacts in
the D.A.'s office?

ROY
Not yet.

RICA
You will. After the--

ANGELA
Pardon me but... I don't
understand.
(they wait)
I thought you were...

NORMAN
Angela, the last thing you need
right now is me at your side.

She tries to figure him out; forget it.

ANGELA
I--

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

Do you know where trials are won today?

(she shakes her head)

They're won on television.

He gestures to the tiny ten year-old tv Roy keeps in the corner, complete with rabbit-ear antenna. It's not quite the dramatic image Norman had sought, but it'll do.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Forget about courtrooms, even verdicts. They're secondary now.

ANGELA

(a bit lost)

I saw what you did for Billy Joe Vittel.

NORMAN

Billy Joe Vittel is the reason I can't take your case.

Angela can't hide a reaction - dismay.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

According to the latest polls, 92% of the country - which means 92% of the prospective jurors in your case - think he's a killer. And I just represented him.

ANGELA

But he was acquitted.

NORMAN

And who do you think would pay the price for that? My next client. That's the spin on me right now: "Norman Keane is the guy you go to when you're famous and you did it." And you've got a career to worry about. You have to come out of this looking like the injustice was your being on trial in the first place.

ANGELA

But--

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN
What if you went with Roy here
instead?

The idea just hangs there, unpraised. Roy smiles thinly.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
A kid, right out of law school,
just started practicing. And you
told those reporters out there: "I
went to Norman Keane. I couldn't
afford him." In about five seconds,
you'd become a cause.

She gets it, instantly - Roy can tell. And it's dazzling
watching Norman orchestrate like this.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Now suppose I was in the shadows,
coaching him, showing him just what
I did for Billy Joe, without the
press ever knowing I was
involved...

One last piece she's not clear on:

ANGELA
You'd do that for me?

NORMAN
No. I'd do it for 70% of the
retainer and exclusive
representation of all ancillary and
subsidiary rights to your story,
after we win.

Now she relaxes. They're two of a kind.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Does that make sense to you?

Her confidence in him is total...

ANGELA
Yes. Yes, I think it does.

NORMAN
Good.
(a beat)
Then can we continue?

She nods, content to let him run the show. He nods to Rica,
who addresses Roy again - still smoldering for him.

(CONTINUED)

RICA

After the press conference, you'll take her to Felony Arraignment Court. Bail Schedule for Murder One calls for a million dollar bond, plus 20 grand for the gun. Her sister's posting. She's a minimal flight risk with no priors and strong ties to the community.

ANGELA

Uh, I'm supposed to do a shoot tomorrow. Do I cancel?

NORMAN

Absolutely not. Make them fire you.

NORMAN AND RICA LOOK TO ROY

Time for him to say something intelligent, something to demonstrate that he's up to speed. This is test #1.

ROY

Five minutes after you're cleared we'll sue for "wrongful termination."

Norman smiles broadly, proud of his own instincts.

NORMAN

That's my boy!

CUT TO:

25 EXT. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - DAY

25

Angela's APPLE BILLBOARD has been DEFACED by GRAFITTI ARTISTS. Instead of offering an apple to us, Angela's now pointing a GUN.

SWISH PAN TO:

26 EXT. ESTAB. ROY AND NORMAN'S OFFICE BUILDING - NOON

26

27 INT. THE BUILDING ELEVATOR - DESCENDING

27

Roy's in the same suit as yesterday, fighting nerves. Angela's in a conservative suit and pearls. They descend in silence, still strangers.

(CONTINUED)

Then a few tears starts to well in her eyes.

ANGELA

(re: tears)

I promised myself I wouldn't do
this.

ROY

(handing her tissue)

It's okay.

ANGELA

He was an awful man, Roy. If I
didn't stop him, he would've killed
her... But I don't wanna go to
jail.

(he nods)

I wouldn't do well behind bars. One
time I tried to go without a
massage and a manicure for a week,
I got the shakes.

She offers a wet, self-effacing laugh.

ROY STUDIES HER - FOR THE FIRST TIME

And he is charmed by her. Moved. He takes her hand.

ROY

Norman knows what he's doing,
Angela. You're not going to jail...

She smiles, grateful.

28 THE ELEVATOR DOOR OPENS

28

And they step out. Then Roy freezes.

ROY'S POV - A ZOO OF REPORTERS

Cameras, microphones, huge lights. All that equipment
flipping on at once sounds like knives being sharpened.

ROY LOOKS AT THE WAITING HORDE... AND GOES PALE

Utterly motionless. His heart in his shoes. Finally:

ROY

(barely audible)

Excuse me.

He backs right back into the elevator.

CUT TO:

29 INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

29

Angela waits outside the MEN'S ROOM, helpless and livid.
Rica bursts out of the elevator, and heads right at us.

ANGELA
"This guy's a beauty.

RICA
He'll be fine.

Rica enters the MEN'S ROOM, without pause.

30 INT. THE SECOND FLOOR MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUING

30

We hear the sound of ROY'S RETCHING in a closed stall. A
BUSINESSMAN pees at a urinal.

Rica heads for the stall, and taps on the door.

RICA
F. Lee? Is that you?

ROY (O.S.)
(between spasms)
I'm so sorry.

RICA
It's not a problem. Nobody saw.

ROY (O.S.)
Our client saw.

The BUSINESSMAN is done peeing now. But he's hovering by
the urinal, eavesdropping.

RICA
(to Businessman)
Do you mind?

Intimidated, he moves to the wash-basin. Rica glares.

THE BUSINESSMAN LEAVES WITHOUT WASHING HIS HANDS

Roy and Rica are alone now.

RICA (CONT'D)
C'mon out, Roy. It's okay.

ROY EMERGES FROM THE STALL

He looks green, and fairly ashamed. Her nerve in here only
makes him feel worse. She pulls a pack of gum from her
pocket. Hands it over.

(CONTINUED)

RICA (CONT'D)
Norman and I anticipated this.
We've got a contingency plan.

He eyes her, a pillar of self-confidence. Then he eyes his own reflection - in the midst of a panic-attack.

ROY
I should've warned you about me. I
don't know why I didn't.
(self-loathing)
No, that's a lie; I know exactly
why I didn't - I wanted my shot...
Such an idiot...

RICA
I think you're gonna feel a lot
better when you hear what we...

ROY
It won't help. Nothing does.
(ashamed)
I know this is a bad time to tell
you this, but you have a right to
know: I'm gutless. I mean it.
Everything else is an act.

RICA
You're having an anxiety attack. It
doesn't define who you are.

ROY
It comes pretty damn close.
(she's unconvinced)
You don't understand. This is the
real me, always has been.

RICA
I don't believe that.

ROY
So humiliating...

He leans down, splashes some water on his face.

RICA STUDIES HIS REFLECTION

as the water drips away. There is no pretense to this guy
right now. He is completely vulnerable, and honest...

RICA
I think you're gorgeous.

(CONTINUED)

ROY
I'm sorry, what?

RICA
You heard me.

She nods, confirming it. He looks dazzled, disbelieving.

ROY
After what I just admitted?

RICA
Especially after what you just
admitted...

She has stopped his tailspin. Now she owns him, forever.

THE MEN'S ROOM DOOR OPENS

And Norman enters. Roy braces himself.

ROY
I'm sorry, Norman. I thought I was
ready.

NORMAN
Who says you aren't?
(with certainty)
Stage-fright's normal the first
time you face those piranhas.

ROY STRAIGHTENS UP - SURPRISED

He expected to be scolded; Norman's smarter than that.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Do me a favor: put this in your
ear.

He hands Roy a TINY HEARING DEVICE. It looks like a hearing-aid, without the battery-pack.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Go ahead.

Roy is puzzled. Looks to Rica. She nods, comfortingly.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
It's a receiver, hooked up to a
mike in my office, where I'll be
watching on tv. Somebody throws you
a curve-ball, I'll tell you how to
handle it.
(Roy can't believe it)
Put it in.

(CONTINUED)

ROY PUTS THE DEVICE IN HIS RIGHT EAR
It fits in easily, barely detectable.

ROY
This is pathetic.

NORMAN
This is a band-aid, to get you
through your first press
conference. Now let's go take care
of our client.

NORMAN EXITS

And Roy, awed, is left with Rica. This has been humbling.

ROY
I'll do the prepared statement, but
that's it.
(she's humoring him)
I'm not answering any questions.

RICA
We'll see...

CUT TO:

31 INT. NORMAN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

31

Norman sits at a microphone. Behind him are all six of his
tv's. (Five beam the broadcast; the sixth is always on "The
Nature Channel.") He leans into the mike.

32 INT. THAT ELEVATOR AGAIN - MOMENTS LATER

32

Roy and Angela descend. His finger's on that ear-piece.

NORMAN'S VOICE
(through ear-piece)
Roy, I'm right here. So relax. I
will not let you look bad.

(NOTE: Roy notices that he gets better reception when his
head is tilted slightly to the left.)

NORMAN'S VOICE (cont'd)
If ya feel yourself starting to
lock up, just remember the bottom
line: all your client did was shoot
the bad guy - she shouldn't have to
spend the rest of her life paying
for it.
(a gift:)
You can do this, Son.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

The effect of that last word is palpable. Roy unconsciously touches his ear, as if he'd like to hear it again.

33 THE ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN

33

And Roy steps out into the teeth of all those lights.

34 INT. THE LOBBY OF NORMAN'S BUILDING - CONTINUING

34

Roy and Angela stand at the top of some short steps. A hundred microphones await them.

35 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - SAME

35

He can see the same picture on those five screens, live. RICA ENTERS, pen in mouth as always.

NORMAN

Now introduce yourself. Spell your last name, and go into your statement.

(an afterthought)

And Roy: a little bit of Iowa in your voice couldn't hurt.

36 INT. THE PRESS CONFERENCE - RESUMING

36

Roy stops in his tracks, completely thrown. He tilts his head to the left, to be sure he heard correctly...

NORMAN'S VOICE

(through ear-piece)

Nothing heavy, just a touch of the Midwest. You'll thank me later.

Roy leans into the microphones. His voice cracks a bit.

ROY

(slight Iowan accent)

Good afternoon. My name is Roy Guyton. G-U-Y-T-O-N. I'll be representing Miss Beale in this matter.

(prepared text)

I was notified this morning by the office of the District Attorney that my client has been charged with First Degree Murder in connection with the death of Oskar Tabak. I have advised her to cooperate fully with the D.A. and Police, and will be surrendering her to the custody of the court at one p.m. today.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN'S VOICE

(a lie)

Good. You sound great.

Again, Roy returns to his prepared text:

ROY

But before doing so, I'd like to set straight a few things that have been misrepresented in the past 24 hours:

(surer now)

Oskar Tabak was a monster. For the two years they were married, he abused his wife Mary both emotionally and physically, threatening to kill her if she ever left him. Then he set his sights on Mary's sister: Angela Beale.

Eyebrows rise all around. But these media faces believe him. Angela dabs at a tear.

ROY (CONT'D)

Beginning last Summer, Oskar pursued and harassed my client; he called her repeatedly, sent her everything from poems to pornography. It was a game to him.

37 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - SAME

37

He leans away from the mike. The kid is doing better.

38 INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - RESUMING

38

ROY (CONT'D)

Three nights ago he barged into her apartment in a drunken rage. She asked him to leave, and he attacked her. She dialed 911 - a call you will be hearing in court. Oskar ripped the phone from the wall, and lunged at her. In her bedroom was a handgun, which she is legally licensed to own. She got to it and fired, killing him. Her sister the widow, by the way, will be posting bail. That should tell you all you need to know about the deceased.

*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

He pauses, sips some water. He knows he's doing well.

ROY (CONT'D)
These are the facts, and that is
our case. All else is pure fiction.
Thank you.

He folds his prepared statement into his jacket. Then he
turns, as if it's time to leave, when:

EVERY REPORTER IN THE PLACE YELLS

It's deafening. 500 questions at once. Roy looks swamped.
Then we hear one question squeak through:

REPORTER
Angela, didn't you talk to Norman
Keane yesterday?

She pulls a microphone towards herself.

ANGELA
Yes.

REPORTER
Why isn't he representing you?

ANGELA
I couldn't afford him... Money's
going to be a little tight from now
on.

REPORTER
What about your job?

ANGELA
I was fired yesterday... replaced.

She looks down. A thousand still-photos capture the moment.

39 NORMAN - IN HIS OFFICE - SAME

39

He rocks back in his leather chair, grins at Rica.

40 INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - RESUMING

40

CNN REPORTER (ROD BROOKS)
Roy, have you ever tried a murder
case before?

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

ROY
No.

Lots of murmuring...

CHANNEL 6 REPORTER
What kind of trial experience do
you have?

NORMAN'S VOICE
Just like we talked about...

ROY
Moot Court, Iowa State University
Law School.

The murmuring builds...

CHANNEL 8 REPORTER
Angela, why did you pick him?

Angela turns, studying Roy. Then:

ANGELA
He believes me.

Roy puts his hand on hers, a gesture of warmth, gratitude
for her faith in him.

THE MEDIA MEMBERS ARE UTTERLY CHARMED

All except for one: BRENDA WHITLASS.

BRENDA
What's that in your ear, Mister
Guyton?

ROY GOES A BIT PALE

Caught completely off-guard.

ROY
("didn't hear")
I'm sorry?

BRENDA
In your ear.

41 IN NORMAN'S OFFICE - SAME

41

Norman SHOOTs FORWARD in his chair, and grabs his mike.

NORMAN (INTO MIKE)
(best he can do)
Nerve deafness!

42 INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - RESUMING

41

ROY
Nerve deafness.

NORMAN'S VOICE
You were injured in a grain
elevator, age six.

ROY
(quickly)
Farming accident, from my
childhood.

BRENDA
Just in the one ear?

ROY
Yes. Just in the le...

NORMAN'S VOICE
The right, schmuck!

ROY
Just in the one. It's fine.

Everybody takes notes. Everybody has questions.

NORMAN'S VOICE
Wrap it up. The more questions
they're left with, the better.

ROY
I'm sorry, that's all we have time
for this morning.

500 QUESTIONS AT ONCE:
Angela, did you tell the police all
this? How did you learn you'd been
fired? What's the difference
between Roy's hourly rate and
Norman Keane's?

ROY
I'm sorry.

As they rise, one question pops out: Brenda Whitlass again.

BRENDA
Angela, you just left your sister a
widow. Are you sorry you did it?

Roy looks to Angela. The room is silent.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

NORMAN'S VOICE

Duck that one. You're home free.

ROY

I'm not going to let her answer that.

. NORMAN'S VOICE

Good.

Roy looks around the room. He wants to handle one without Norman's help... And he feels bolstered enough to do it.

ROY

But I can tell you how I feel about it.

NORMAN'S VOICE

What're you doing?

Brenda awaits an answer. All the reporters do.

NORMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Do NOT step on your... *

Roy interrupts him. Angela braces herself. *

ROY

More and more lately, it seems the bad guys are winning. You know who they are; you cover them every day. Drug dealers, car-jackers, wife-beaters; nobody can stop 'em, we barely even try to anymore. It's as if we've all just surrendered. Well, this is one time when the bad guy lost. My client stood up for herself, and her sister.

(silence in here)

If that makes her a criminal, then we all oughtta be sorry... and a little afraid. Thank you.

Roy stands, and leads Angela away. This was a triumph.

REPORTERS

(ad libbed)

Amen... That kid's a natural...
Senator in ten years...

43 IN NORMAN'S OFFICE - SAME

43

Norman says nothing. Rica has been watching as well.

RICA

I hope you don't have any problem
with my banging that boy silly.

NORMAN

Knock yourself out.

CUT TO:

44 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - 10:58 P.M.

44

L.A. twinkles outside. Norman and Rica sit before six blank
tv's. ROY ENTERS. He's been in court all day, but he is
pumped. He lingers in the doorway, milking the moment.

ROY

(has some stripes now)
"Nerve deafness?"

NORMAN

Ever had a moment where God just
whispers something in your ear?
(re: himself)
I guess you have. Nice work, Roy.

ROY

(re: Rica)
She kept me in one piece.

Rica liked that, but she's not going to take a compliment
that Norman wants for himself, so:

RICA

You're just in time. Have a seat.
(to Norman)
What's the prediction?

NORMAN

(casually)
We carried 2,4,5, and CNN. Brenda
didn't buy a word.

Norman clicks on all six tv's:

45 TV MONITOR #1:

45

KTLA ANCHOR

On Day Two of the Beale-Tabak Murder Case, the Southland was introduced to a different side of Angela Beale, a woman who allegedly killed to save her own life, and perhaps that of her younger sister...

*

46 TV MONITOR #2:

46

CHANNEL 6 ANCHOR

Beale took her case to the public today, painting a picture of domestic violence, adultery, and terror...

*

47 TV MONITOR #3:

47

K-CAL 9 ANCHOR

By her side was attorney Roy Guyton, victim of a ghastly farm accident in his youth...

*

48 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - RESUMING

48

Roy looks to Norman, who expected this.

NORMAN

I think your father would've been proud of you today.

ROY

I doubt it. Dad didn't care much for lawyers.

NORMAN

Hell. I'm proud of you.

Norman eyes him so the comment will stick. It does.

49 TV MONITOR #3 - RESUMING:

49

K-CAL 9 ANCHOR

Reaction to the neophyte attorney and his handicap was immediate:

CHANNEL 9 CUTS TO AN INTERVIEW - A WOMAN (30, WHITE)

*

Chyron reads: "Carol Appier - President, Americans with Nerve Deafness" CAROL APPIER signs instead of speaking. Speaking for her is her INTERPRETER (black, male).

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

INTERPRETER

Mister Guyton's courage in revealing his condition today will serve as an inspiration for millions of hearing-impaired citizens both here and around the world...

Roy watches; Appier's reaction pains him.

NORMAN

Better get used to the ear-piece, Roy. It's a fixture now.

Roy nods; he knows that.

50 SCREEN #4 NOW

50

Brenda Whitlass of "Scandal Central," over footage of ROY from today's press-conference, beside Angela.

BRENDA WHITLASS (V.O.)

His words struck a blow for his client, but is Roy Guyton going to bat for an Apple Queen, or a cold-blooded killer? On the next "Scandal Central:" Rotten to the Core.

RICA

Clever...

NORMAN

(unfazed)

She'll come around.

51 SCREEN #5 - CNN

51

A County Courthouse backdrop. ROD BROOKS (40, black, sober), is the CNN correspondent on the story

CNN REPORTER (BROOKS)

Support for Beale poured in from across the country:

52 CNN CUTS TO TAPE: A PRESS CONFERENCE IN AN ATRIUM

52

Chyron reads: LAUREN LEMMING - President A.A.W. (American Alliance of Women)

*
*

LAUREN LEMMING

Angela Beale is not the criminal here. Angela Beale is simply a woman who refused to be a party to male violence and abuse.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

BROOKS (V.O.)

Ms. Beale also found supporters on
the other side of the political
spectrum:

53 CNN CUTS TO ANOTHER PRESS CONFERENCE - IN AN AMMO STORE

53

In this one a 50 year-old man with a hunting jacket on:
CASHEN DEPPS - President of the Association of Riflemen,
Marksmen & Sportsmen.

*
*

DEPPS

Why does A.R.M.S. exist? Why do we
keep fighting to protect the Fourth
Amendment? Angela Beale is the
reason. Imagine a world in which
she could not have obtained the
handgun that saved her life two
days ago. This woman is A.R.M.S. in
its purest form...

*

*

54 NORMAN MUTES ALL THE SCREENS.

54

(Nature Channel, as always, is on #6: A shark attacking a
cage.)

NORMAN

What's Ted Koppel doing tonight?

RICA

"Drought in Rwanda."

NORMAN

Damn that guy's a snob!

He throws the remote. Then he gathers himself.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Okay. Back to business. You have to
go see Mary Tabak tomorrow...
Angela's sister.

Roy looks blank. Again, Norman will let Rica explain.

RICA

In the past ten hours, she's been
approached by "Inside Edition,"
"Extra," and Aaron Spelling. That's
tens of thousands of dollars all
being waved at a woman under heavy
sedation. She's gonna cave.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

Get her on a leash. She doesn't say a word in public unless it's been scripted in this office...

(at Roy)

By the way, neither do you.

Roy had a feeling this might be coming.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Next time I tell you to duck a question, you just say 'no comment.' Okay?

ROY

(humbly)

Of course. Sorry.

NORMAN

Work on it before you get into bed tonight, 100 times in front of a mirror: 'No comment. No comment.'

ROY

Right after I brush my teeth.

NORMAN

Good.

(rises)

I'm going home. I want a draft of a bail reduction motion when I get in tomorrow. Did you get a chance to eat?

ROY

No.

NORMAN PULLS A MONEY-CLIP OUT OF HIS POCKET

Sterling silver, fat with hundreds. Norman peels off a hundred, hands it to Rica. He can feel Roy's eyes on him.

NORMAN

Have some dinner brought up.

RICA

(re: the money)

Show off...

Norman shrugs; he likes it when she busts him. Then he heads for the door, without ceremony.

(CONTINUED)

ROY
Hey, where do you get your suits?
(Norman eyes him)
This is the only one I've got.

NORMAN
Perfect... G'night.

Roy understands. With that, Norman leaves.

RICA WAITS

Norman's footsteps on the Spanish tile grow fainter. Then, the suite-door closes. Rica and Roy are alone.

A LONG SILENT BEAT

Roy is immediately uncomfortable. He's attracted, but he doesn't feel in control.

ROY
(re: work)
Where do you wanna start?

RICA
(re: sex)
Couch is fine for me.

She rises, crosses to the door, and shuts it.

ROY
I meant...

RICA
I know what you meant...

SHE CROSSES TO HIM

And she keeps getting closer. That puts him on his heels, just as she intended. He gets the idea.

ROY
(calm as possible)
I had a very smart professor back at State. He did a whole lecture once on the dangers of relationships in the workplace.

RICA
What do you think I'm proposing here, picnic baskets in a meadow? I'm talking about you and me bent over the Xerox machine when no one's looking.

(CONTINUED)

ROY
Oh. He didn't cover that.

She reads his discomfort.

RICA
You think you don't know me well
enough. That's adorable.
(he shrugs)
Sit down.

She sits him down, and faces him.

RICA (CONT'D)
I'm 26, I love the law, and I spend
most of my nights eating Chinese
food in this very office. I haven't
met a guy worth a second date in
the last ten months... More?

ROY
Please.

RICA
Three of the guys I 86ed over
dinner told me they thought I was a
lesbian waiting to happen. They
might be right; so far I've been
too busy to give it a shot.
(he gestures: go on)
I believe in God but I don't go to
church. I believe in my country but
I don't seem to vote very often;
and I haven't said "I love you"
since we buried the family dog,
eight years ago...
(a beat)
But I do like you, Roy.

She leans in. He hesitates.

RICA (CONT'D)
(inches away)
Hey, it's a kiss... not a contract.

THEY KISS - BUT IT BUILDS IN A HURRY

This one is going to bounce all over the room.

CUT TO:

55 INT. AN UNIDENTIFIED APARTMENT - NIGHT

55

A HOUSTON newspaper lies on a beaten sofa in this meager apartment. Beside it, a 60 year-old man. Call him HARLEY. He has a face that's been creased by a hard life.

Before him, a television - coverage of Roy's press conference. Harley watches, sighs, and grabs his car keys. He's got a long drive ahead of him.

CUT TO:

56 EXT. WONDERLAND AVE. OFF LAUREL CANYON - MORNING

56

A tiny, winding street. ROY DRIVES his Skylark through a phalanx of 20 NEWS TRUCKS: tabloids, radio, the works.

On Roy's passenger seat: a sports page, two Taco Bell breakfast-burrito wrappers, an orange juice carton. He pulls into the driveway of:

EXT. OSKAR AND MARY TABAK'S HOME - 8 A.M.

This is where you'd picture a sculptor and his wife. The house is 70's architecture, hidden behind trees.

Roy gets out, nods to a PRIVATE SECURITY GUARD, and knocks on the door. Behind him? Questions shouted from the street.

AT THE DOORWAY - CONTINUING

Angela answers. Jeans and a sweater. She looks tired, wary. Caring for her sister has that effect on her.

ROY

'Morning.

Angela lets him in. We hear TV in the next room.

57 INT. THE TABAK HOME - SAME

57

MARY BEALE TABAK is on the couch, under two blankets. She hasn't moved or brushed her hair in 72 hours. She's 32, not as pretty or tall as Angela. It's an issue.

Half of the pictures on the mantle are FACE-DOWN.

ROY

(consoling tone)

Mrs. Tabak.

(Mary nods groggily)

Has she been eating?

(CONTINUED)

ANGELA
Only if you count Percodans.

Mary stares at Roy. He feels like he's being X-rayed.

MARY
What happened to your hearing aid?
Roy reaches for his ear instinctively. Shit. He didn't think to wear it today.

ROY
(near stammering)
I, uh, only need it in large rooms.
So I left it home today.

MARY
Right next to your accent, I guess.

MARY AND ROY STUDY EACH OTHER

She's got a radar for bullshit. Damn.

ROY
(you win)
Same drawer, yeah.

ANGELA
Give him a break, Mary.

MARY
(sharply)
Maybe he'd like some coffee, Ange.

The tension between the two sisters is palpable. Roy looks to his client; he wants a moment alone with Mary.

ANGELA
Be right back.

ANGELA GOES TO THE KITCHEN

Now Roy is alone with Mary.

ROY
I know this must be an awful time for you.

MARY
Barbara Walters called me. From her yacht.

(CONTINUED)

ROY

They're all going to call... But if you talk, you hurt our case. You hurt your sister.

MARY

I'm the victim here. I'm the one who's been widowed.

Angela peeks out from the kitchen, concerned.

ANGELA

Black okay?

ROY

It's fine.

Off Mary's glare, Angela pops back into the kitchen again.

ROY (CONT'D)

He would've killed her, Mary.

Clearly, the medication and trauma are unraveling her.

MARY

I know that. It's just that everyone's being heard except me. I mean, Ange was on twenty channels yesterday. And then this morning, some guy calls up and offers me my own 900 line. And I'm supposed to say no?

ANGELA RE-ENTERS. Mary begins to weep. Angela sets down the coffee cups and cradles her younger sister.

ANGELA

Mary, I'm gonna take care of you, I promise. You want another pill, Sweetie?

*
*

MARY

What's it look like?

Angela reaches for the Percodans. We...

CUT TO:

58 EXT. THE ROOF OF ROY'S OFFICE BUILDING - SAME

58

A "Scandal Central" HELICOPTER sets down on the roof of this building. Brenda Whitlass and Reggie emerge from it.

They head for a door reading "Access to Stairwell."

(CONTINUED)

REGGIE
(has to shout)
There's ~~gonna~~ be an easier way into
this place.

BRENDA
I worked the guard for hours. He's
unbribeable.

They disappear inside.

CUT TO:

59 INT. ROY'S OFFICE - 2ND FLOOR - LATER

59

Roy enters. SHAUNA KAPLAN sits in front of a secretary's
desk outside Roy's private office.

Shauna is 25, with dark curly hair. She is the pride of her
Encino parents, (Dad's an orthodontist.) Bright enough, but
unmotivated. She dots her i's with a happy face.

ROY
(who are you?)
Hello?

SHAUNA
(shouting)
Morning, Mister Guyton! I'm Shauna
Kaplan! The agency sent me over!

ROY
It's just the right ear. I can hear
you.

SHAUNA
Oh, I didn't know.
(a beat)
Here's your phone sheet.

She hands him two pages, single-spaced. 90 calls.

SHAUNA (CONT'D)
Somebody named Rica just called to
ask if you could meet her "at the
Xerox machine." Does that mean
anything to you?

As Roy's eyes light up:

CUT TO:

60 INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

61

We ZOOM and TURN, descending as we hear:

RICA (O.S.)
Oh, Roy...

61 INT. THE BUILDING'S FREIGHT ELEVATOR - CONTINUING

61

It's on "stop," because Roy and Rica are having no-frills sex in here, standing. The floor and the walls in this freight elevator are unpainted, scratched steel.

RICA (V.O.)
(coming)
There it is. There it is...

With one last surge, one last grunt, they both finish.

THEY UNTANGLE - AND CATCH THEIR BREATH

She takes the "stop" button off. The freight elevator starts to descend. She pulls her skirt back up.

ROY AND RICA - DESCENDING

Neither has said a word. It's post-coital quiet. Until:

RICA
I'm not planning to make a habit of this, in case you were worrying.

ROY
I wasn't.

RICA
I mean, normally I wouldn't interrupt work for an earthquake. It's just that I decided this morning to give up coffee again, and the first couple days are always a little rocky.

ROY
I'll wear a pager.

She puts her bra back on. He shakes his left arm; it fell asleep while he was supporting her.

62 THE FREIGHT-ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN

62

And just as they step out: Brenda Whitlass and Reggie stare right at him. We are:

(CONTINUED)

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUING

Brenda can't believe her luck. Roy looks utterly thrown.

BRENDA
Reggie... Roll.

He's already up and running. A bright light BLASTS AT ROY.

BRENDA (CONT'D)
Brenda Whitlass, Scandal Central.
Think I could get a minute with
you?

ROY
Not today.

Roy grabs Rica and they hurry out of the elevator, into the
SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY, trying not to look suspicious.

BRENDA
(on their tail)
We've been gathering some
background on you, Roy. There
doesn't seem to be a mention of any
handicap in your records. Would you
care to..?

Roy gets to a stairwell door. Opens it, pulls Rica inside.

63 INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUING

63

He shuts the door, leaving Brenda and Reggie outside it.
Then he catches his breath, looks to Rica.

RICA
She is very good.

Roy knows that already...

ROY
We'd better get Norman.

CUT TO:

64 TIGHT ON A TELEVISION SCREEN

64

Tape: Roy, disappearing into that stairwell. He looks
shifty, guilty. (All we see of Rica is her back.) And over
it all - the voice of BRENDA WHITLASS.

BRENDA (ON TV, V.O.)
He is the Iowa farmboy who will
plead a killer's case in court. But
is he a Legal Eagle? A Hayseed in
over His Head?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

64

BRENDA (cont'd)
(heavily:)
Or something else?

A VIDEOTAPED INTERVIEW:

65 AN UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN, IN A 5TH-GRADE CLASSROOM.

65

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN (ON TV)
That boy never pushed a plow in his
life.

We hear the sound of a CELL-DOOR slamming shut.

65A BRENDA IN SCANDAL CENTRAL SET

65A*

BRENDA (ON TV)
Tonight, a "Scandal Central"
exclusive: the truth about Roy
Guyton and his trumped-up past...
Farm-Boy Phony.

*

The image FREEZES. Pull BACK, and we are:

66 INT. EDITING BAY - "SCANDAL CENTRAL" SET - NIGHT

66

Brenda studies her frozen image on the screen. Then:

NORMAN (O.S.)
You may wanna do that voice-over
again. It sounded a little heavy-
handed.

She turns. Norman stands in her doorway... This is out of
the blue, but it intrigues her...

BRENDA
(never thrown)
Tv can distort things, as you know.

Instinctively, they like each other. Norman smiles...

NORMAN
I was wondering if you and I could
have a chat...

She grins, delighted...

CUT TO:

67 INT. "SCANDAL CENTRAL" SET - MINUTES LATER

67

They cross the set. The Editing Bay is at one end; Brenda's
office is at the other. In between, the ramped set itself.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA
What you're asking is impossible.

NORMAN
Hardly.

BRENDA
We don't "bury" pieces on this
show, Mister Keane. The
Constitution forbids it.

NORMAN
Not the one I grew up reading.

They keep walking, cameras on either side of them ...

BRENDA
And your angle in all this is...?

NORMAN
Kill the piece, Brenda.

BRENDA
Gimme one good reason.

NORMAN
How 'bout an exclusive with his
client?
(she liked that)
The only reporter in America to get
a half-hour alone with Angela
Beale. I can arrange it.

They reach the doorway of her office. She stops.

BRENDA
What else do I get?

Norman eyes her: She's a killer. He likes that.

NORMAN
("reluctantly")
You get me.
(she doesn't get it)
Your show's "legal expert" is
unwatchable, and I'm willing to
replace him for the length of this
case... That puts you behind the
lines.

BRENDA
How deep?

NORMAN

Deeper than you'd get by sneaking
another helicopter on our roof...
The building stuck an extra guard
up there, by the way.

(that scored)

Kill the piece, Brenda.

She studies him, trying to read him.

BRENDA

You must owe this boy somethin'
awful.

NORMAN

I like him. He's gutsy... He's five
minutes into the business and I
don't wanna see him cut off at the
knees.

(a beat)

Do we have a deal?

BRENDA

Ya know, there's something about
being lied to that excites the hell
out of me.

NORMAN

Do we have a deal?

She decided a few minutes ago... They both smile...

CUT TO:

68 EXT. HIGHWAY 10 - DRIVING - LATE NIGHT

68

Harley, the man from Houston, drives a beaten pick-up and
sucks down a drive-thru burrito. It's 11:30 p.m. Coffee has
kept him on the road for 36 straight hours.

In the back seat: wrappers from Burger King, McDonald's,
etc. That's all Harley can afford. But he keeps driving,
west towards L.A.

CUT TO:

69 INT. THE SET OF "SCANDAL CENTRAL" - NIGHT

69

Angela, dressed conservatively, sits for her interview with
Brenda Whitlass. They watch a telemonitor. THREE CAMERAS
capture their reactions to what they now see:

(CONTINUED)

ON THE TELEMONITOR - THE FACE OF DEAN DAVIS, DEPUTY D.A.
Davis is 40, white. A CHYRON under his image i.d.'s him.

DAVIS (ON TV)
Ms. Beale and her attorney are attempting to put the victim on trial here. That's the tactic of someone who doesn't have evidence to lean on.

The image FREEZES. Angela and Brenda face each other.

BRENDA
Is that criticism fair?

ANGELA
I don't have tactics, Miss Whitlass. I have the truth.

WATCHING BESIDE ONE OF THE CAMERAS: ROY

He liked that answer. Brenda hated it...

BRENDA
He labeled your case the "abuse-as-an-excuse defense."

ANGELA
Mister Davis is a lucky man. He's never been raped.

Roy's jaw half-drops. Angela has gone way off-script.

BRENDA
(smells blood)
Have you?

ANGELA
That isn't the point...

BRENDA
Have you?

Angela pauses, as if she hopes the subject will go away.

ANGELA
Can we go to something else?

Roy's eyes say, "What the fuck are you doing?"

BRENDA
Angela, have you ever been a victim of rape?

(CONTINUED)

Roy notices: Cameramen, sound-men, runners... they all lean forward. And Angela is pausing, milking it...

ANGELA

(fighting tears)

-It's too hard to talk about. I'm sorry.

(giving in)

I was sixteen.

BRENDA

Was it someone you knew?

ANGELA

He said if I ever told anyone he'd... I'm sorry...

Brenda gives her a moment. Angela sobs quietly. The camera ZOOMS IN on her, silently. Roy is powerless now.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

(gathers herself)

I knew on the day it happened that I would own a gun as soon as I could. And I knew I'd kill someone before I ever let that happen to me again... But I never thought I'd see it happen to my little sister.

NEAR ROY - WATCHING ALL THIS ON A MONITOR - KURT LEE

30, jeans and wire-rim glasses, Producer of this show. He studies Angela on screen, then he looks around him:

EVERYONE IN THE STUDIO IS PERFECTLY STILL

They can't take their eyes off of Angela. Even Brenda is getting misty... LEE backs away, and finds a phone...

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Every night I had to go to sleep knowing that what had happened to me in the closet of a high-school gym was happening to my sister in her own house, by her own husband, and I was letting it go on!

(Brenda's touched)

I shouldn't say anymore. I guess all this can be used against me if the D.A. wants to twist it...

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA
(genuinely moved)
You've got all America as a
character witness now. Don't
stop...

Bolstered, Angela keeps talking. Roy's chin sinks...

CUT TO:

70 INT. A DRESSING ROOM - LATER NIGHT

70

Angela sits before a mirror, tears gone now. ROY ENTERS. (A
tv sits in here, muted.)

ROY
(agitated)
What was that?

ANGELA
That was me, participating in my
own defense, which is my
Constitutional right.

ROY
Angela, we haven't said a word
about rape, by design. It's not a
part of our case.

ANGELA
I never said Oskar raped me.
(a beat)
Look at the tape. I was careful.

Roy eyes her, and fights back a shiver. For the first time,
he's now seen the engine that drives her. Then:

THE DRESSING ROOM DOOR OPENS

And KURT LEE, knocking as he enters, steps in:

LEE
Miss Beale? Kurt Lee. I produce the
show.

ANGELA
Oh. Hello...

LEE
Mind if I produce yours?

From behind his back: FLOWERS. Angela takes them, thrown
but thrilled. Roy's just thrown.

(CONTINUED)

ROY
I'm sorry?

LEE
I just sold it, in one phone call,
while you were on the set. A
daytime hour: "Taking Back the
Night - With Angela Beale."

ROY
Look, it's been a long day. She's
tired.

ANGELA
(hiding glee)
I'm okay.

LEE
Angela, what you did tonight is
gonna set a lot of women free. If
you're on five days a week, you
could re-define what it means to be
a woman.

ANGELA
I'm on trial for murder. How can I
host a show?

LEE
That's easy. We tape in the
evenings.

ANGELA
No. I mean legally.

LEE
Presumption of innocence. Right now
you're just another citizen like
the rest of us. Correct?
(Roy nods unhappily)
Except, you're not like the rest of
us. You're a symbol of courage, an
inspiration to women everywhere.
Can we have lunch tomorrow?

ANGELA
Tomorrow's no good; I'm being
arraigned.

LEE
Dinner then.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2)

LEE (CONT'D)
 (she agrees to it)
 We're gonna make history, Angela.
 We're gonna save lives.
 (hands her his card)
 Home number's on the back.

Lee backs out. Before Roy can say a word, Angela lunges forward to turn up the volume of the tv on her dressing table. Why? Because it's a PROMO for tomorrow night's show:

VIDEO - A SCANDAL CENTRAL PROMO

Brenda Whitlass, over video of the very interview that Angela concluded only twenty minutes ago:

BRENDA (ON TV)
 On the next 'Scandal Central:'
 We'll take you inside the marriage
 of Oskar and Mary Tabak. A shocking
 tale of anger, abuse, and
 alcoholism. 'Eat, Drink, and Beat
 Mary.'

Roy turns: Angela's grin is a mile wide. She turns the volume down again, and:

ANGELA
 How 'bout them apples?

She laughs. Roy's too flabbergasted to reply...

CUT TO:

71 INT. OSKAR AND MARY'S HOME - LATE NIGHT

71

Mary, on her couch. SHAUNA KAPLAN sits across from her, a steno pad in her lap.

MARY
 Oskar was drunk. He knocked his
 dinner to the floor and yelled
 'Clean it up!'
 (a beat)
 Do you want me to go slower?

SHAUNA
 No. I'm fine.

Shauna smiles politely, but she's obviously a little disappointed - she'd expected all this to be a lot juicier.

Mary can sense it... So she starts to embellish:

(CONTINUED)

MARY
(more menacing)
'Clean it up, You Stupid Cow!'
(Shauna reacts)
He called me that a lot.

SHAUNA
(that's wonderful)
That's awful.

But Mary can sense the glee as Shauna scribbles. So:

MARY
Then he reached for that.

She gestures to something. Shauna turns. In the corner stands a single CRICKET PADDLE. Thick, heavy wood.

Shauna winces, her imagination running wild. Mary nods.

SHAUNA
He... used that on you?

Mary "shudders," as if remembering the blows of too many nights. Shauna leans forward.

MARY
He used to play a game - try and see how hard he could hit me without actually breaking any bones. That way I'd never have x-rays as proof.
(Shauna groans)
Sometimes he'd leave it in the freezer, for that extra sting.

SHAUNA
No!

Mary nods. Shauna keeps scribbling, thrilled/horrified.

MARY
'Course, if he'd been drinking, then things would really get bad...

Shauna's eyes go wide. She turns to a fresh page.

MARY (CONT'D)
Are you sure your father's in publishing?

For the 100th time:

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (3)

71

SHAUNA
I told you: My uncle is. Dad's an
orthodontist.

MARY
(mollified)
Right. Sorry. Anyway...

CUT TO:

72 EXT. ROY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

72*

Roy and Rica walk, carrying files and a PIZZA BOX.

ROY
Ya know, one of these days we're
gonna hafta eat at a restaurant.
Like people.

RICA
(right past that)
Can I tell you what bothers me? We
never "went metric." I mean, they
scared us with it all through high
school, and then - nothing.

Roy doesn't know if she just rejected him, or simply didn't
see where he was going... so he tries again:

ROY
Are you busy Saturday night?

RICA
I'm busy every night.

ROY
I meant for dinner.

A beat.

RICA
Are you asking me out on a date?

ROY
For the past few minutes, yeah.

RICA
(teasing him)
My, my... Whatever happened to that
shy, unassuming guy I met the other
day?

ROY
You put him to bed.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

(HE FREEZES RIGHT IN HIS TRACKS

...because he just saw something he didn't expect:

A MAN WAITS ON ROY'S DOORSTEP - IT'S HARLEY

His suit is years old; his eyes are sunken, and he looks like a man who's been driving for three days without rest.

ROY REMAINS FROZEN

He's pale, as if staring at a ghost.

HARLEY STANDS

Even this tired he's still imposing, broad-chested. He came here knowing he wouldn't get a warm welcome.

HARLEY

Hello, Roy.

ROY

(breathless)

How...did you find me?

(CONTINUED)

HARLEY

I followed the trail of reporters.

Roy swallows hard. He doesn't know what to do.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

(re: Rica)

Aren't ya gonna introduce us?

Roy pauses; his head is spinning.

ROY

(weakly)

Rica, this is Harley Guyton... My father.

Rica tries not to over-react, but it's tough. She studies HARLEY GUYTON. There's some resemblance...

HARLEY

(to Rica)

Evenin'.

RICA

I'm a little confused.

HARLEY

Why's that?

ROY

Because I tell people you died when I was eight.

HARLEY

You weren't too far wrong.

Rica stays silent. Tension hangs.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

I'm not here to win back your affections, if that's what you're worried about...

ROY

I wasn't.

HARLEY

I made the trip 'cause I have some advice for you.

ROY

Something wrong with your phone?

(CONTINUED)

HARLEY

Didn't think you'd take my call.

Harley's right; they both know it. Roy weighs it all.

ROY

Rica, would you mind waiting inside for me?

RICA

Not at all.

He hands her his keys.

HARLEY

Nice to meet you.

Saying it back would be a betrayal, so she smiles tightly and disappears into Roy's apartment.

Roy turns and faces Harley. His father.

ROY

Okay.

Harley takes a breath.

HARLEY

I've been workin' on how to put this for three days now.

(off Roy's impatience)

I spent seven years with your mother, pretending I could be sober. I spent the next ten on the road, pretending I might come home.

ROY

I know all this already.

HARLEY

Then how come you're making the same mistakes?

(that rocked Roy)

Lies don't work. Even the little ones. They make you a fraud. Understand?

Roy is too floored to respond.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

That's as much as I know, but I figured I owed it to ya.

(CONTINUED)

A beat passes. Harley eyes Roy, measuring him.

ROY

So what're we supposed to do now?
Go grab a ball-game together? Start
over?

HARLEY

You're walking among pole-cats,
Roy. Just watch you don't turn into
one...

(a beat)

G'night.

Harley turns, and heads for his pick-up. Roy just watches
him go, immobile.

RICA EMERGES FROM ROY'S APARTMENT

She approaches cautiously, puts a hand on Roy's shoulder.

RICA

(gently)

Hey...

Roy just stares straight ahead as his father's pick-up
disappears down the road.

RICA (CONT'D)

(tension-breaker:)

What's a pole-cat?

In other words: "I've been eaves-dropping." A smile breaks
across his face; he loves her for revealing it. She grins.

ROY

Where I come from, it means "liar."

Rica nods; touches his face. He's still hurting...

ROY (CONT'D)

We're not gonna talk about this,
okay? It never happened. He was
never here.

She nods again, puts her arms around him.

RICA

Let's go inside...

She leads him into the apartment...

CUT TO:

73 INT. THE SET OF SCANDAL CENTRAL - DAY

73

Norman, on the set beside Brenda. A RED LIGHT on Camera B means tape is rolling...

BRENDA

If Angela were your client, what would you be doing?

NORMAN

I'd be working 25 hours a day.

(a tv laugh)

A case like this is a war; you've gotta fight it on several fronts. First I'd assemble my physical-evidence experts: A forensics guy, a blood-spatter guy...

74 INTERCUT WITH/1 - INT. ANGELA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

74

A mess. Chalk outlines mark where Oskar Tabak died. Yellow police tape, fingerprint dust, etc. Roy stands with BERRINGER, expert in forensic evidence.

BERRINGER

What you've got is a classic blood-spatter pattern from a .38. Your shooter was a foot away, facing the victim...

75 INT. THE SET OF "SCANDAL CENTRAL" - RESUMING

75

NORMAN

You've got a Coroner's Report, but you need a Pathologist who can teach a jury without spooking them...

76 INTERCUT WITH/2 - INT. MEDICAL LAB - MORNING

76

Anatomical drawings, a skeleton, microscopes. DR. VIBOR speaks, eating a sandwich throughout. RICA IS HERE AS WELL. She too eats during the interview: double-deck corned beef.

DR. VIBOR

Glass fragments on her right arm and right ankle, contusion on the right shoulder, all consistent with the shattered mirror. Bloody lip and a welt on her forehead.
(wipes mayo off a photo)
Whoops...

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

76

Roy can't eat a bite - not with these photos around. He looks at Rica and Dr. Vibor with wonder.

77 INT. THE SET OF "SCANDAL CENTRAL" - RESUMING

77

NORMAN

I'd canvas the building she lives in, meet her neighbors... Sometimes eyewitnesses emerge after the Police are done taking statements.

78 INTERCUT WITH/3 - INT. ANGELA'S HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

78*

MRS. LUCKMAN and MR. BLUM, Angela's neighbors, old Jews, with Roy.

MRS. LUCKMAN

She was half-naked, flat as a pancake, blood all over her. It was terrible.

MR. BLUM

She looks up at us, and she says: "Ambulance, please. I'm Pinky Spillman."

MRS. LUCKMAN

"I think I killed him." She said "I think I killed him."

MR. BLUM

That's not what I heard.

MRS. LUCKMAN

Does that make sense to you? Her name is Angela but her last words before collapsing are "I'm Pinky Spillman?"

MR. BLUM

He didn't ask me what made sense. He asked me what I heard.

MRS. LUCKMAN

An idiot you are...

Roy hides a smile.

79 INT. THE SET OF "SCANDAL CENTRAL" - RESUMING

79

NORMAN

And I'd hire a Jury Consultant. Essential in a case like this.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA
Is there an "ideal juror" for the
defense?

NORMAN
Absolutely.

80 INTERCUT WITH/4 - INT. ROY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

80

Roy sits with BIB WALLINGFORD. An enormous man, all of it
gut. Bib is the Jury Consultant. We JUMP between Norman on
tv and Bib, who counsels Roy.

NORMAN (CONT'D, V.O.)
Their ideal juror is female,
30's...

BIB
...high-school-educated,
divorced...

NORMAN
...someone who's been dating long
enough to know what it's like to
have a creep come over.

BIB
Victims of rape or assault would be
ideal.

NORMAN
...Tabloid readers, people who
watch a lot of talk shows. African
Americans are...

BIB
...excellent. They distrust cops
and prosecutors. Gay man, maybe.

NORMAN
Gay woman, you'd send a limo for
her every morning. Here's who's
out: Federal employees...

BIB
...anybody who's ever signed a
petition for gun control...

NORMAN
...guys who read "Penthouse."

BIB
This above all else: NO
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BIB (CONT'D)
ORIENTALS. They kow-tow to
authority, always side with the
state. We like to say, "Don't fire
'til you see the slants of their
eyes."

He wheezes. Roy thinks he might pass out.

A81 INT. THE SET OF "SCANDAL CENTRAL" - RESUMING

A81*

NORMAN
Then I'd sit down with a mock jury,
try out my case.

81 INTERCUT WITH/5 - INT. ROY'S OFFICE - DAY

81

TEN MOCK JURORS WEDGE IN around a coffee maker and an open
box of donuts. ROY ENTERS, smiling nervously, led in by
BIB. No room to breathe in here...or sit.

BIB
Jurors, this is Roy Guyton, Lead
Defense Counsel. Can everybody find
their seat please?

Finding seats won't be easy without sitting on laps...which
makes everybody a little cranky, much to Roy's shame.

WE WATCH ONE MOCK-JUROR IN PARTICULAR:

He is RANDY MUCKLAN - 26, white, conspiratorial. Mucklan's
in back, hidden from Roy's view...

*

He edges towards a document on a cabinet. It has a huge
STAMP across it that reads: "CONFIDENTIAL! ATTORNEY-CLIENT
PRIVILEGED INFORMATION." Ten copies within. He grins...

82 INT. THE SET OF "SCANDAL CENTRAL" - RESUMING

82

Norman and Brenda wrap up the segment.

BRENDA (ON TV)
And all this for a client that much
of America still thinks is guilty
of murder.

NORMAN (ON TV)
The only polls that matter are the
ones you take after the verdict,
Brenda.

She nods. Norman's a natural... Pull back and we are:

83 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

83

Roy watches Norman's performance on tv, dazzled by it.
Norman is at his desk, ignoring the tv, writing a brief.

RICA ENTERS WITH A HUGE BOWL OF POPCORN

She sets it down beside Roy, sprinkles some Parmesan Cheese over it, and returns to an open LAW BOOK. The scent of the popcorn is perfect.

ROY TAKES ALL THIS IN

Norman the Legend, Rica the Beauty, the case of a lifetime, all within his reach. A family...

ROY
Norman?

NORMAN
(engrossed in work)
Hmmm?

ROY
Thanks.

Norman looks up now.

NORMAN
For what?

ROY
For this...

Norman gets it. He smiles like you'd dream your father might smile at you: proud, confident, benevolent.... Then Norman returns to his work.

Roy rises, heads for the kitchen with an empty glass.

ROY (CONT'D)
Anybody thirsty?

They each smile, shaking their heads, focused on work. Roy exits.

A beat. Then Rica looks to Norman.

RICA
Ya know, he's gonna come out of this looking like a genius..

NORMAN
Probably.

(CONTINUED)

RICA
The press'll say, "He's Norman Keane, but younger." Are you prepared for that?

NORMAN
Prepared? It'll thrill me.
(she doubts it)
What kind of a father figure would I be if I just handed you over to him without ensuring that his prospects were good?

RICA
Norman. Yikes.

Norman's face is a mask - he might be playing, but we can't tell. Neither can Rica.

NORMAN
Dream-houses don't come cheap, My Dear. Even in the valley. And since you'll obviously be quitting the business to--

RICA
Do I look like the brownie-baking type to you?

NORMAN
I never thought so before, but...

Now she gets it; this is a loyalty test.

A long beat, studying one another. Her antennae are working overtime... to no avail. He's unfathomable.

RICA
The guy makes me hum, Norman. Please don't pervert it into something husband-and-wifey.

He eyes her, satisfied.

NORMAN
Perhaps I've read a little too much into it...

She doesn't correct him, which means he just won. By the time Roy returns, they've both gone back to work...

CUT TO:

84 INT. A DOWNTOWN COFFEE SHOP - MIDNIGHT

84

Randy Mucklan enters this greasy-spoon restaurant, looking for someone. He spots:

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (2)

DAVIS
You got some kinda beef with the
defense team?

RANDY MUCKLAN
I'm a mock juror, Sir. They pay me
ten dollars an hour, plus donuts
and coffee.
(the big sell)
But their goal is to set a guilty
woman free... And it's Norman Keane
who's telling them how to do it.

Davis tries to hide a reaction, but it's impossible.

DAVIS
Excuse me?

RANDY MUCKLAN
It's his case. The kid's just a
front.

That scored. Davis looks out the window. Finally:

DAVIS
Have a seat, Mucklan...

Randy Mucklan sits across from the Deputy D.A. We...

CUT TO:

A85*

A85 INT. ROY'S OFFICE - 2 A.M. - SAME NIGHT

Roy sleeps, some files on his desk. Then, a LOUD RING. He
awakens, answers the phone. He's half asleep.

ROY
Hello.

RICA
It's me.

INTERCUT WITH RICA IN HER BEDROOM.

ROY
Hi.

RICA
I have to say something.

ROY
Okay, let me just...

RICA
(has to ask:)
This "aw-shucks" thing you do;

(CONTINUED)

A85 CONTINUED:

A85

RICA (cont'd)
ya know, the whole "that-Rica-she's-a-real-handful-I'm-just-tryin'-to-keep-up,-Gosh-awmighty" thing... it's mostly just for fun, right? I mean, you're aware that you have an effect on me too... Right?

Roy thinks for a second. His brain's still half-asleep. *

ROY
No. Do I?

RICA
(cuts him off)
I grew up thinking about boyfriends and proms and promise rings same as everybody else, just like Betty Sue or whoever it was you were trying to make out with behind your barn.

ROY
We didn't have a barn.

RICA
My point is, I don't wanna feel like some ride you're taking. Because I'm not... despite how I might advertise myself on occasion. Does that bother you?

A beat passes. He is truly touched. *

ROY
No. I like it.. Can I come over now?

RICA
Hell no, I'm hanging up while I still have a shred of mystery left. G'night...

Roy hears a CLICK. And with that, she's gone. He's left just sitting there. *

85 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - BATHROOM - DAY

85

Roy enters, ear-piece in place. He finds a stall.

INT. BATHROOM STALL - CONTINUING

He drops his pants, lays down a seat cover. First moment he's had to himself all day. But just as he's about to lower himself, an echo from between his ears:

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

NORMAN'S VOICE (THROUGH EARPIECE)
(urgently)
What're you doing? What are you
doing?

Roy JUMPS STRAIGHT UP, startled, thinking Norman must be within a foot of him. Then he remembers: the ear-piece.

NORMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Get up here. Now. The world just
caved in.

(CONTINUED)

BROOKS (V.O. CONT'D)
of all involved is this: If Oskar
Tabak was a wife-beater, adulterer,
and rapist, what was Angela Beale
doing in a cabana with him six days
before shooting him?

90 VIDEOTAPE: EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL L.A. - DAY

90

And we see BITCH-SLAP HARRIS walking from his home to his
car. He is hounded by Brooks.

BROOKS (V.O., CONT'D)
When asked about the name change
Harris told CNN, "I got so used to
being called it in the joint I
figured what the hell?"...
Although, he didn't actually say
"hell." By any name he's now a huge
figure in this case, and a star
witness for the prosecution.

91 RESUME SCENE - NORMAN'S OFFICE - SAME

91

Roy hopes Norman has a plan. Silence. Then:

NORMAN
D.A.'s Office didn't call you about
this? Let you know what they had?

ROY
No.

NORMAN
(loud, to no one)
It's called "Discovery" fellas!
You're supposed to let us know
before CNN!
(at Rica)
What a disaster...

NORMAN TURNS ALL THE SCREENS OFF

Even the Nature Channel - (a roaring lion.) Now, silence.

ANGELA BEALE STANDS IN THE DOORWAY

She doesn't look scared. She looks angry. Roy and Rica eye
her, silent. It's Norman's show.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(to Angela)

Mind telling me what you were doing
at the Beverly Hills?

ANGELA

Our whole family was there for a
wedding; sixty of us.

(Norman has hope now)

He broke into five of our rooms,
including mine. That's where my bag
was.

NORMAN

(to Roy)

I take it back. It's not a
disaster.

(instant Plan B:)

You're going to Superior Court
tomorrow. An immediate Motion in
Limine to exclude the witness on
the basis that under the Evidence
Code his testimony is both highly
unreliable and more prejudicial
than probative. Rica'll help you.

Norman waits for Roy to get what seems obvious. But Roy
doesn't. Neither do Rica or Angela.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(almost patronizing)

Harris breaks into the Beverly
Hills Hotel, robs some wedding
guests. Couple days later he turns
on tv and realizes that he just
burgled the most famous defendant
in the country. Next time he's
arrested - which doesn't take long -
he sits down with the D.A.'s Office
and makes a deal. He'll testify to
finding Angela Beale's purse in
Oskar Tabak's room, in exchange for
a reduction in the other charges
against him.

ROY

What other charges?

NORMAN

Trust me, there're other charges.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: (2)

91

Norman rises, puts on his jacket.

ROY
(panicked)
Where're you going?

NORMAN
(isn't it obvious?)
I'm going on the air, Roy.

Norman leaves. Roy just keeps getting educated...

CUT TO:

*

92 INT. "SCANDAL CENTRAL" SET - SAME EVENING

92*

Brenda & Norman are about to go on the air. Brenda is
FURIOUS.

*
*

BRENDA
What happened to all your magic
sources?

*
*
*

NORMAN
If I saw it coming, I would've
called. You know that.

*
*
*

BRENDA
What I know is that "A Current
Edition" killed us on this story!
Most days those guys can't do
better than "The Poodle Prison" for
a lead, but today they managed to
smoke us by two hours, even without
the great Norman Keane on their
payroll!

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

(She turns to the camera,
smiles, all charm)

*
*

Good evening, and welcome to
Scandal Central.

*
*

93 EXT. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - MORNING

93

Imposing, a block long.

94-95 INT. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - 3RD FLOOR HALLWAY - SAME

94-95*

We see the MEN'S ROOM DOOR, and we hear someone inside, throwing up. Then we hear water running. Then:

ROY EMERGES FROM THE MEN'S ROOM

Angela has been waiting against a wall; she's used to this now. She hands him a Certs. Roy pauses at the door, puts his earpiece in place, they plunge in.

*
*

CUT TO:

96 INT. JUDGE HANDLEY'S COURT - AN HOUR LATER

96

Roy and Dean Davis argue before JUDGE NATHAN HANDLEY, (75, faint of health, irascible.) To their left, a CAMERA beams the proceedings worldwide.

Mary Tabak sits behind Angela, stoically.

DAVIS

Mister Harris will testify that on that date he broke into Cabana Number 3 at the Beverly Hills Hotel, and stole two items from the room: A wallet belonging to Oskar Tabak, and a purse belonging to the defendant, Angela Beale.

(MORE)

*

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

ROY

Hotel records show that Ms. Beale had a room of her own, Your Honor, and it too was burgled. She never even entered Mister Tabak's cabana.

JUDGE HANDLEY

Was Mrs. Tabak also at the wedding?

Roy looks back at Mary. He knows this looks bad:

ROY

No, Your Honor. Mrs. Tabak was ill that night. She stayed home.

JUDGE HANDLEY

Then we have no means of verifying this, do we?

Angela looks back at Mary, and gives her a reassuring look: you can trust me. *

97 INTERCUT WITH/ INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - SAME 97

He watches the pre-trial hearing on five of his six screens. His mike is right before him.

NORMAN (INTO MIKE)

Reliability of the witness... And don't forget your accent.

98 BACK TO ROY 98

Damage control, (with his Iowan accent back in place now.) He tilts to the left, to get Norman's voice clearer.

ROY

Again, we're askin' the court to refer to our brief with respect to the reliability of this testimony. *

JUDGE HANDLEY

The court is familiar with the document, Counsel.

A NOTE ABOUT JUDGE HANDLEY: He has a habit - repeatedly jamming his PENCIL into an electric SHARPENER by his gavel. He likes to get the damn thing to a PIN-POINT...

ROY

This is a career criminal with felony convictions both in and out of California...

NORMAN'S VOICE

...his motive for testifying...

(CONTINUED)

ROY

His testimony in this case would come only in exchange for a reduction from the D.A.'s Office on the other charges against him, which include Aggravated Assault and two counts of Armed Robbery. That has to make his motive in this matter highly suspect.

DAVIS

The Defense would be free to explore the witness' motives during cross, Your Honor.

ROY

Your Honor, we're merely saying that the prejudicial effect...

He stops himself because:

SOMEONE HAS JUST ENTERED THE COURTROOM

It is HARLEY GUYTON. He takes a seat. Roy spots him.

ROY IS SILENT FOR A SECOND

In an instant, he feels emotionally bare, fraudulent.

99 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - SAME

99

Norman watches on tv; he can see Roy freeze.

NORMAN

What's wrong?
(Roy says nothing)
Roy, can you hear me?

100 INT. THE COURTROOM - RESUMING

100

Roy shakes his head. His focus is gone.

ROY

Our argument is with the...
(stumbling)
...reliability of the...

JUDGE HANDLEY

Yes. You said that already,
Counsel.

101 BACK TO NORMAN - SAME

101

getting VERY nervous.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN
Roy, you're losing him.

102 ROY - RESUMING

102

Starting to sweat. He tries not to look back at Harley.

JUDGE HANDLEY
Mister Guyton?

ROY
Returning to his priors...

DAVIS
Your Honor?

MARY
What is he doing?

ANGELA
What're you doing?

NORMAN'S VOICE
Roy, what the hell're you doing?

DAVIS
Your Honor, the State asks that
this motion be denied.

Judge Handley keeps working that pencil sharpener, studying
the sharpness of the lead tip...

JUDGE HANDLEY
Mister Guyton?

ROY
I'm sorry, I...

NORMAN'S VOICE
Okay, you're locking up. Don't
panic. Go back to the brief on
"probative value." It...

Roy looks back at Harley, who eyes him, steady. Then:

ROY REACHES INTO HIS EAR
and pulls out his hearing device.

REACTIONS ALL AROUND

No one understands. But Roy sets the damn thing on the
defense table. He can't wear it with Harley watching.

103 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - SAME

103

Norman eyes the screen, looks to Rica.

NORMAN

He's gonna get us killed.

104 INT. THE COURTROOM - RESUMING

104

The gallery waits, confused, watching Roy. He looks as if a great weight's been taken off his shoulders.

ROY

(re: the ear-piece)

I'm sorry, Your Honor. Too much
feed-back...

Judge Handley puts the pencil down now.

JUDGE HANDLEY

Does counsel need a recess to get
some batteries, or...?

ROY

No, Your Honor, thank you.

JUDGE HANDLEY

Do you have a spare?

ROY

Again, thank you, Your Honor. It
won't be necessary.

The Judge eyes him for a beat, not really understanding.

JUDGE HANDLEY

The Court has been asked to deny
your motion, Counsel. And at this
point I am inclined to do so...

ROY

I don't think you can do that, Your
Honor.

JUDGE HANDLEY

No?

Angela waits. So does Judge Handley. So does Dean Davis,
and the cameras, and the world. Roy clears his throat, and
begins. This is gut-check time:

ROY

Our objection to this witness is a
practical one: How can he offer a
reliable record of which items were
taken from a given room?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

ROY (cont'd)
He hit five that we know of that
afternoon. Did he log each piece as
it was stolen? Did he keep some
kind of official inventory?

DAVIS
(interrupting)
An inventory, Your Honor?

ROY
If he was under the influence of
narcotics during his spree, how
else can we be certain what he took
from each?

105 NORMAN'S OFFICE - RESUMING

105

Norman holds his breath. Roy just jumped off a cliff...

106 THE COURTROOM - RESUMING

106

Silence. Davis is visibly thrown. That's lucky, because Roy
just raised this issue on a hunch. A stab in the dark...
Now he waits. So does Judge Handley. All eyes on Davis now.

JUDGE HANDLEY
That's quite a leap, Mister Guyton.

ROY
(hiding terror)
The witness has a history of drug
offenses, Your Honor. And we know
that his blood was tested after an
arrest on a lesser charge within
six hours of the break-in at the
Beverly Hills Hotel. 'Course, we
don't know the results of that
test, because the D.A. has
neglected to release them to my
office.

Judge Handley looks to Davis.

107 NORMAN'S OFFICE - RESUMING

107

All he can do is hope...

108 COURTROOM - RESUMING

108

Davis squirms a bit; that irritates the Judge.

JUDGE HANDLEY
Mister Davis, does your office have
the records in question?

DAVIS
(wants to die)
We have, Your Honor.

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED:

Roy gulps. He has gambled everything on this...

JUDGE HANDLEY

Would you care to share the results
with The Court?

Davis' eyes search for the floor. Then:

DAVIS

On the date in question, the
witness tested positive for a
controlled substance.

(Handley just waits)
Heroin, Your Honor.

ROY CAN'T BELIEVE IT

That was a jackpot. Davis could not look worse.

JUDGE HANDLEY

Were you planning to make this
information available to the
Defense?

DAVIS

(pure bullshit)
I had ordered it done, Your Honor.
Apparently there was a clerical
error...

Handley just glares. Davis has just stepped in shit.

JUDGE HANDLEY

How nice...

ROY

Your Honor, we ask that the Court
grant the motion, and exclude the
witness.

Handley leans on that pencil sharpener, deeply annoyed.

JUDGE HANDLEY

(crabbily)
So ordered. The motion is granted.
(pounds his gavel)
We're adjourned.

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED: (2)

108

CLOSE ON ROY

Dean Davis blows by him. Angela tugs on his sleeve. Roy is nearly shaking... He has won a huge victory.

He looks back. Harley's gone.

109 NORMAN'S OFFICE - RESUMING

109

This was a win, but he doesn't look pleased...

CUT TO:

110 EXT. THE COURTHOUSE STEPS - MOMENTS LATER

110

Reporter FRANK BUCKLEY "files" for K-CAL 9 on the steps.

BUCKLEY

(into his camera)

Roy Guyton hurled a legal hand grenade today in the Beale-Tabak pre-trial. Eschewing his now-trademark hearing aid halfway through the proceedings, Guyton destroyed the credibility of prosecution witness Bitch-Slap Harris and left Deputy D.A. Dean Davis scrambling.

Roy passes Buckley and the rest of the horde down those steps, accompanying Angela and Mary. She looks radiant. Roy scans the crowd for his father. Harley's nowhere to be seen...

CUT TO:

111 INT. ROY'S TINY OFFICE - LATER - NIGHT

111

Roy enters, tired but on a roll. Then he stops. NORMAN IS BEHIND ROY'S DESK, just waiting. They eye each other.

NORMAN

Ya know, my running you over... That mighta been the luckiest day of Angela's life.

(Roy shrugs)

You were sensational in there.

ROY

I just stayed with the game-plan, Norman.

NORMAN

I know better. So do you.

ROY

Is Rica upstairs?

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN
Seems to be.

Norman slides two things across the desk, to Roy:

INSERT - A ROSE, AND A NOTE

The note reads, "Hurry... Rica."

Roy reads it. Norman just shrugs, "success has its perks."
Roy sets down his briefcase, loosens his tie.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Did you hear what I said? You were
sensational, without any help from
me.

ROY
I almost passed out in there.

NORMAN
But you didn't...
(no reply)
What is this, nobody ever told you
what a smart boy you were before?

Roy thinks back. It's a sore subject:

ROY
My father used to say, "Don't break
your arm patting yourself on the
back."

NORMAN
Can you think of a better way to
break your arm?

Roy shrugs. Norman approaches him.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Gimme this. You won't be needing it
anymore.

The head of that EAR-PIECE sticks out of Roy's breast
pocket. Norman extracts the device, and tosses it onto
Roy's desk... Roy has graduated, and they both know it.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Have a good night, Kid. You earned
it.

ROY
Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

Roy exits. Norman sits on Roy's desk, eyeing that ear-piece with irony. On his face, we...

CUT TO:

112 INT. OFFICE BUILDING PARKING LOT - LATER

112

Norman walks to his car. Passing by him:

A FOOD SERVICES VAN PULLS IN

(The DRIVER waves to the GUARD, familiar.) On the side of the van, the motto: "Enjoy Life! Eat Out More Often!"

113 INT. THE BACK OF THE VAN - SAME

113

Cartons of ketchup, napkins, straws... and BRENDA WHITLASS, who looks out the back window... and REGGIE, who has snagged a sample-bag of Frito's.

CUT TO:

114 INT. NORMAN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

114

The place is empty, except for Rica, who sits on Norman's desk. ROY ENTERS. She grins. Then:

ROY

Ya know, there's something to look at in how much you like doing this on Norman's desk.

RICA

Then let's have a look...

She opens her arms to him. They kiss urgently.

CUT TO:

115 INT. ROY'S OFFICE - SAME

115

Blackness. Then light spills in from the hallway as the DOOR OPENS.

BRENDA WHITLASS AND REGGIE THE CAMERAMAN ENTER

Quietly, they turn on a light, and proceed to Roy's desk. Brenda snoops around.

ON ROY'S DESK

She sees his briefcase, the card from Rica...

BRENDA

If the guy's not even gonna lock this stuff up...

(CONTINUED)

REGGIE THE CAMERAMAN
...then we're obligated to go
through it. I think that's in the
First Amendment.

She eyes him: don't be a wise-ass. Then she stops. She
hears something: VOICES, as if from a radio.

BRENDA
(re: voices)
Do you hear that?

She looks around. No radio. Then she spots something:

ON ROY'S DESK - HIS EAR-PIECE

And it's the source of the voices. She puts it in her
ear... and is startled to hear:

116 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - SAME

116

The MICROPHONE has been pushed to the floor. Rica and Roy
are coupling on the desk.

RICA
(coming)
There it is again!

117 BACK TO ROY'S OFFICE - RESUMING

117

Brenda listens again, then looks at the card from Rica,
then puts it together.

BRENDA
Better find yourself a tux, Reggie.
We're about to win a Pulitzer.

She rushes out. He follows.

CUT TO:

118 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

118

Brenda and Reggie tip-toe over the tile. Ahead of them:
video gold: Roy and Rica, screwing on Norman's desk.

BRENDA
(whispered)
No light.

REGGIE
No kidding.

As they began to capture it all on tape....

CUT TO:

119 INT. RICA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The tv is on, but muted. Rica is awake, in bed. ROY'S STILL ASLEEP. She watches his chest move up and down... brushes a stray hair off his forehead, her eyes filling with him...

It's just a moment, but this looks like love - or something like it... Then it all goes sour.

RICA
(stunned)
Oh My God...

She reaches for the remote control, de-mutes the tv.

120 ON THE TELEVISION SCREEN - A PROMO FOR "SCANDAL CENTRAL"

Video images of Roy and Rica, on Norman's desk.

RICA (CONT'D)
Roy, wake up!

ROY SHOOTS UP - DISORIENTED

She points to the tv. Imagine watching yourself being caught mid-hump by a tabloid-show. He goes pale.

BRENDA
On the next "Scandal Central:" a tale of lust and legal deception. For when Roy Guyton climbed up to the penthouse for this romantic interlude, he left behind the world's most famous ear-piece... which "Scandal Central" has learned is not a hearing-aid at all, but rather a radio receiver.

(a beat)
And who was it receiving signals from? Norman Keane, our own "Legal Expert" on the case, who's been the brains behind the defense of Angela Beale all along. Turns out even "Scandal Central" gets fooled now and then... but we don't stay fooled for long! Tonight, we take an in-depth look at the unholy alliance of these two L.A. Lawyers: "Nerve Deafness? Or Just Plain Nerve?"

Rica stares at the screen, utterly stunned.

(CONTINUED)

RICA
I'm dead... I'm dead!

Roy puts a hand on her shoulder, gently.

ROY
"Rica, it's gonna be...

She PUSHES IT AWAY, and storms out of the room, furious.

CUT TO:

121 INT. LOBBY OF ROY AND NORMAN'S BUILDING - MORNING

121

Roy enters. The GLARE OF THE LIGHTS is unbelievable, like a multi-headed dragon, just waiting for him. He stands still for a moment... then he's SWARMED by the horde.

Presses the elevator button. It can't arrive fast enough.

500 QUESTIONS AT ONCE
Roy, are you planning to excuse yourself from the case? Is it true you might be disbarred? Is there anything actually wrong with your hearing? The part about being from Iowa, was that a lie too? California Bar Association says it's looking into Norman's role in all this. Any comment?

ROY
My money's on Norman...

THEN THE QUESTIONS STOP

Because we hear from within the throng: "THERE SHE IS!" Roy gulps, but the person they're clamoring for is:

BRENDA WHITLASS - NOW ENTERING FROM THE STREET

Reggie by her side. The reporters leave Roy and fall at the feet of Brenda; she's now a hero, a star. She brushes her hair back, and prepares to answer. A reporters' reporter.

Roy is left alone by the elevator... almost.

TWO PEOPLE REMAIN BEFORE ROY - STARING AT HIM

They are CAROL APPIER, the spokeswoman for the Sufferers of Nerve Deafness, and her INTERPRETER.

(CONTINUED)

ROY REALIZES WHO SHE IS

It's all he can do just to meet her eyes, which seem so betrayed and hurt. Carol Appier signs something - it's short, but heartfelt - "you asshole."

ROY
"You jerk?"

INTERPRETER
More or less.

He mouths, "I'm sorry." The elevator opens behind him, and he backs into it, thoroughly ashamed.

CUT TO:

122 INT. ROY'S OUTER OFFICE - 2ND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

122

He enters. Shauna tries to look sympathetic, but she's blushing. She's seen the tape. He just stands there.

ROY
Do you have anything encouraging to say?

SHAUNA
My mom thinks you have a cute butt.
All my friends, too.

ROY
Thank you.

SHAUNA
(re: his office)
Somebody's waiting for you.

ROY
I figured.

He opens his door, expecting to see Norman, but:

123 INT. HIS PRIVATE OFFICE - CONTINUING

123

Waiting for him is Mister Blum, the guy from 2B in Angela's building. Worse, HE'S WATCHING TV - news footage of Roy and Rica on that desk. Roy sags...

ROY
Mister Blum?

MR. BLUM
I know, I know, you need to see me right now like you need prostate trouble. Tough.

(CONTINUED)

ROY
It's not a great time.

MR. BLUM
I want money. Then I'll go.

Roy stops. That came out of nowhere.

ROY
I'm sorry.

MR. BLUM
Miss Apple Pie owes me. She's
still your client, is she not?

ROY
(lost)
I don't understand.

MR. BLUM
It goes like this:

We see BLUM'S FLASHBACK:

124 INT. ANGELA'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

124

Mr. Blum paces in his robe down the quiet hallway.

MR. BLUM (V.O.)
One night about a month ago, I
can't sleep. My back, which is
another story. So I take a walk
down the hallway.

OSKAR TABAK comes out of the elevator, and passes him.

MR. BLUM (V.O., CONT'D)
A guy comes out of the elevator. He
passes me, and knocks on Angela's
door. It's Oskar Tabak. She opens
it.

Angela and Oskar kiss in the doorway. In fact, their
pelvises grind together. Blum watches.

MR. BLUM (V.O., CONT'D)
She kissed him like she was fishing
down his throat for a dime.

125 RESUME ROY'S OFFICE - DAY

125

ROY
(hopeful)
Do you by any chance wear
corrective lenses, Mister Blum?

MR. BLUM
Don't screw with me, Sonny.
(Roy shrinks)
By the way, my hearing's not so bad
either: "Ambulance please. I think
I killed him."

Roy pauses. This guy's full of surprises.

MR. BLUM (CONT'D)
It was the third night in a row he
came over. Like bunnies those two
were humping, right there in the
doorway. Ya getting the picture
now?

(Roy nods, pained)
Four weeks later Angela's lying on
my doorstep, a "victim of attack:"
I told her the next morning what
it'd take to keep me quiet. She
made promises. We made a deal.
(heavy threat)
And I haven't seen dollar one.

On Roy's face; he's reeling...

CUT TO:

126 INT. THE FREIGHT ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

126

Roy ascends in silence. Every time he blinks, images of
what must've happened that night come at him:

127 INT. ANGELA'S LIVING ROOM - THE NIGHT OF THE MURDER
(FLASHBACK)

127*

We take a quick peek around: there's a framed photo from
the Apple campaign, a crayoned drawing that reads "I Luv My
Godmom," a cap that reads "My Two Mom's - 100th Episode!"

...a poster from the 1982 Dino DeLaurentis film, "Fists of
Fire," (Angela had the second female lead)...

...and a dying Polish sculptor: Oskar Tabak.

OSKAR
(pained)
Angela...

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

Blood pours from the bullet wound in his chest.

Angela leaps into action, knocking a lamp and picture frames to the ground...

128 INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR - RESUMING

128

Roy, rising. It's all making horrible sense...

129 INT. ANGELA'S LIVING ROOM - RESUMING (FLASHBACK)

129*

Oskar reaches for the telephone. She beats him to it, and dials 911.

ANGELA

(panicked)

Please. Help me. I'm being
attacked. 858 North Palm Drive.
Please, he's...

Now she RIPS the phone chord from the wall, ending her own call. She looks down at Oskar, who is helpless. He reaches up to her, with his last ounce of strength and anger.

She takes his hand. Using it like a hook, she RIPS THE BUTTONS OFF HER OWN BLOUSE WITH IT. Oskar tries to jerk his hand away. She uses it to rip her bra.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

(re: her breasts)

'Member these?

OSKAR

Angela, please...

She pats his cheek, gently, then DIGS HER NAILS INTO IT. She checks to see that she got a large enough sample.

130 INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR - RESUMING

130

Roy, writhing.

131 INT. ANGELA'S BEDROOM - RESUMING (FLASHBACK)

131

She hurls her body into a mirror on the back of the bedroom door. It comes loose, falls to the floor, and shatters.

She messes up the sheets on the bed, bites down on her lip until it bleeds, and rubs some of the blood on her hands and clothes. She kicks the phone machine over.

Mustering courage, she SLAMS HER HEAD INTO THE DRESSER MIRROR, hard enough that her forehead brightens and bleeds. She gathers herself and turns to Oskar.

*

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

ANGELA
I decide when we stop seeing each
other.

She leaves the room.

*
*
*
*

132 AT THE FRONT DOOR - CONTINUING

132

She drops the gun to the floor, opens her door. The hallway awaits. Ten steps away is Unit 2B... END FLASHBACK.

133 INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR - RESUMING

133

Roy just shuts his eyes tight... The car stops on 11. He gets out. FOLLOW HIM:

134 INT. NORMAN'S SUITE - CONTINUING

134

He looks a bit lost. Everyone he passes hides a snicker. They've all seen the tape. Roy walks past Rica's blushing SECRETARY. Taps on Rica's door, (remember - it's glass).

ON RICA - SEEN THROUGH THE GLASS DOOR

She holds up a hand as if to say: "do not come in here."

ROY IS STOPPED COLD

He doesn't take another step. Just stands there, studying her. She's like steel. He understands, but it's a kick in the gut. He backs away.

INT. OFFICE SUITE - CONTINUING

Now he crosses over the Spanish tiles, past Norman's blushing SECRETARY, then through the door, and into:

135 INT. NORMAN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - CONTINUING

135

Norman's at his desk, his back to us. He doesn't even look up. Just lets the kid wait, which is torture. Finally:

NORMAN TURNS

The silence is deadly. Roy can't take it anymore.

ROY

I know I screwed up. I know I set us back... But we've got a problem.

NORMAN

No, we've got a dismissal.

Roy says nothing, utterly thrown.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

(mechanically)

I made a promise, remember? You wouldn't lose.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN PULLS A TINY TAPE-RECORDER FROM HIS DRAWER

He puts it on his desk, and presses "play." We hear:

RANDY MUCKLAN'S VOICE (TAPE)
"It's his case. The kid's just a
front."

DEAN DAVIS' VOICE (TAPE)
"Have a seat, Mucklan..."

Norman presses "stop," then looks to Roy.

NORMAN
A D.A. buying confidential files
from an employee of the defense?
I'd call that grounds for
dismissal.

Norman tosses the mini-recorder to a guy in the doorway:

IT IS RANDY MUCKLAN

He nods back to Norman, smiles devilishly at Roy...

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Nice work, Randy.

RANDY
Pleasure...

Mucklan backs out of the office, collects a wad of CASH
from the office's BUSINESS MANAGER.

NORMAN
(re: MUCKLAN)
You oughtta take his number. He's
very dependable.

Mucklan leaves the suite, mini-recorder and cash in hand.

ROY
You can't entrap a Prosecutor,
Norman. The Bar'll...

NORMAN
I didn't entrap anyone. Randy did.
Now he'll offer the tape to Judge
Handley of his own volition: a
"friend of the court." And we're
done. Prosecutorial Misconduct. She
walks.

(CONTINUED)

ROY

They can charge her again.

NORMAN

"Unlawful invasion of privacy by the prosecution." Her rights to a defense've been violated. That makes her immune.

*
*

ROY

What if Handley doesn't--

NORMAN

By the time he hears this tape it'll've been in every newsroom in town - we started leaking it an hour ago. So it's "Dismissal with Prejudice," end of story. And you will have earned your 30 percent.

(a machine)

Now. Did you say you had a problem?

ROY

(weak)

His name is Blum...

NORMAN

I know. The guy from 2B.

(Roy's stunned again)

He can tell whomever he likes. Any press is good press from this point on.

Norman returns to work as if he'd just ordered a sandwich.

ROY IS FROZEN

In his hands is the tool he needs to free his client... but he can't seem to embrace it.

ROY

Maybe you should go get the dismissal, Norman... I don't think I'd be too popular with Handley today.

NORMAN

You're still the attorney of record.

ROY

That's a joke. Everybody knows that now.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN
I don't care what everybody knows.

ROY
I do...

He backs out of Norman's office.

STAY WITH NORMAN

He lets Roy go at first. Then he rises, heads for the door.
Roy's horror at all this is pissing Norman off.

136 INT. 11TH FLOOR LOBBY - CONTINUING

136

Roy heads for the door. Norman is right behind him, livid.

NORMAN
Hey.
(Roy doesn't turn)
Hey! Where ya think you're going?

ROY
Somewhere. Anywhere.

NORMAN
What the hell does that mean?
You've got a job to do.

ROY
Forget it.

Norman reaches him. Now everyone in the suite who cares to
will be able to listen in.

NORMAN
(grabs his arm)
I'm talking to you.

A beat. Norman's sizing him up.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
What'd you think when you became a
Defense Attorney, that all your
clients would be saints? Saints
don't need lawyers, Roy.

ROY
I'm not talking about that! You
lied to me!

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

All I did was deliver what I promised: You're the highest-profile 24 year-old lawyer in this country. That was the deal.

ROY

This was not the deal! People are LAUGHING at me.

NORMAN

They'd be cheering if you woulda kept your pants up.

(a beat)

By the way, next time someone gets laid on my desk, I'd appreciate it if it could be me.

Secretaries giggle; they can't help it.

RICA - IN HER OFFICE

She can hear every word. Her eyes are shut tight...

NORMAN (CONT'D)

You go in there and finish this thing, awright? Serve your client, take your fee, and move on. That's what we do.

ROY

This is outta my league now, Norman. Can't you understand that?

NORMAN

No. I can't.

(it's been building)

Look, Roy, I don't mind if you wanna do this farmboy routine while the cameras are on, but don't forget who you're talking to. This is me. I know better. You're not an innocent. You're not some hayseed that just fell off a turnip truck with a law degree in his hand. You're a killer, just like me. That's why you played deaf when we asked you to, and why you slipped into that phony accent the press liked so much... Hell, it's why you came to L.A. in the first place - driving all that way just to be in the same building as me. Sorry, Kid, but I'm having a hard time believing that a guy that ambitious wouldn't know that lawyers have to tell a lie now and then.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN (cont'd)

no reply.
You're as ruthless as me on my
worst day. And you always were. So
let's drop the pretense, okay?

Roy just stands there, utterly humbled. He can't disagree
with a single thing the guy just said - that's the problem.
Finally:

ROY

You're right.

Norman's thrown. Last thing he expected was a confession.

NORMAN

Thank you.

(Roy is silent)

Can we get back to work now?

Roy eyes him, thoroughly ashamed. A long beat.

ROY

No.

(a beat)

The fee's all yours, Norman. I'm
out.

Norman offers no reaction. Roy stares right through him,
then exits.

CUT TO:

137 INT. ROY'S OFFICE - DAYS LATER

137

Roy's at his desk. Beside him is 'Newsweek.' On the cover?
A victorious Angela Beale, emerging from court with her
attorney... Norman Keane.

Roy eyes it. Can't quite open the issue though. He rises.

138 INT. ANTE-OFFICE - SHAUNA'S DESK - CONTINUING

138

Roy passes by. Shauna's just finishing a pencil-sketch.

(CONTINUED)

SHAUNA
Hey. You're the first to see it.

She hands him 200 pages. On top, that sketch - of Mary.
Under it: "IF NOT FOR YOU - THE MARY BEALE TABAK STORY - AS
TOLD TO SHAUNA KAPLAN."

Roy studies it; he can't help but smile.

SHAUNA (CONT'D)
I told you my uncle's in
publishing, right?

ROY
Couple times.

SHAUNA
Where ya going?

ROY
I don't--

But he stops himself, mid-sentence... because something
just hit him. Something huge.

ROY FREEZES

He stares at that door handle. Immobile. Just staring. Then
he throws open the door.

SHAUNA (CONT'D)
Roy?

No reply. He's running down the hall.

CUT TO:

139 INT. ROY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

139

He looks angry, determined. He turns into:

140 EXT. THE WARNER LOT - CONTINUING

140

He passes by a sign that reads "TAKING BACK THE NIGHT -
WITH ANGELA BEALE - Tickets." 2,000 people wait in line
along Barham Blvd. She's a smash, a sensation.

Roy drives past them, awed but not surprised.

CUT TO:

141 INT. SOUNDSTAGE - OFF STAGE - MINUTES LATER

141

Roy heads down a hallway, looking for the right door. He opens one, looking for someone in particular.

KURT LEE IS IN HERE

Not the person Roy was seeking. LEE hurries over, eager to avoid any problems.

(NOTE: in b.g., we hear a WARM-UP COMIC working a studio-audience crowd. The mood in here is up, lively, and Angela's stage is just a few feet from us, partitioned.)

LEE
Can I help you?

ROY
(no time for this)
I'm looking for Norman. His office said he was here.

LEE
He is, but we're taping.

ROY
Kurt, I just...

LEE
(confidentially)
Look, Roy, you really shouldn't be here, ya know? I mean, that business with you on the desk, it's really not the image we're trying to create here. Empowering women, you know.

ROY
Gimme a break, awright?

LEE
Hey, don't make me call security, okay? I mean, how much lousy press do you--

NORMAN (O.S.)
Looking for me?

They turn. Norman has just emerged from a Make-Up room, ready to tape. Rica's right behind him. LEE waits.

Roy looks at Rica; her eyes search for the floor. Then:

(CONTINUED)

ROY

Yes.

Behind them, we hear an AUDIENCE - teeming with energy.

NORMAN

(to Lee)

It's okay. He's harmless.

LEE

On in five, Norman.

NORMAN

Thank you.

LEE backs away, leaving Roy with Norman and Rica.

So there they are, a few feet from Angela's stage - with the sound of that WARM-UP ACT booming, and the energy coming off of the crowd. Norman waits, until:

ROY

You let her in, didn't you?

NORMAN

What're you talking about?

ROY

Brenda. How she found us on your desk that night. You left my office unlocked, and the ear-piece out...

Norman doesn't react at all... But Rica does; this was a bomb. She studies him - he reveals nothing.

ROY (CONT'D)

You set all this up.

NORMAN

In court we'd call that a--

ROY

It was the idea all along, wasn't it? Wait until the case was in the bag, then step out and take all the credit. Norman Keane - the only lawyer smart enough to win a case without even being in it.

Norman remembers saying those very words. But still, he reveals nothing. Rica's speechless.

(CONTINUED)

ROY (CONT'D)

What I can't figure is why you'd
wanna knock her down with me?
What'd she ever do?

Norman pauses, a thousand options running through his head.
He wishes Rica were somewhere else.

But she's right here, staring at him.

RICA

Norman...?

(Norman scoffs)

Did you do this?

NORMAN

(laughing it off)

You guys ever heard of "Slander?"
I'm almost tempted to get myself a
lawyer...

But, finally, that poker face fails him...and in a single
moment, Roy and Rica both know it - they've been lied to.

SILENCE IN HERE

The look of betrayal on Roy's face is total. Hers too.

ROY

What a monster you are...

(Norman shrugs)

You were supposed to be my teacher.
You were supposed to guide me
through this thing. Doesn't that
shame you a little?

NORMAN

I don't have time for this.

ROY

Get your things, Rica. We hafta get
out of here.

NORMAN

Why would she wanna do that?

ROY

Because you don't tell the truth,
Norman.

NORMAN

What's truth got to do with it?

(CONTINUED)

That was said without apology. Behind them we hear, "Cue Announcer" and:

STUDIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Women of America, rejoice! You're
"Taking Back The Night!"

Now we hear THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. Tape is rolling.

142 INT. THE STAGE OF "TAKING BACK THE NIGHT" - CONTINUING 142

The seats are packed, mostly with women, in a cheering frenzy. Theme music blares. And CAMERAS capture it all.

143 INT. OFF-STAGE - RESUMING 143

The noise almost knocks these three over - it's deafening. Norman half-smiles, as if the applause is making his point for him. Roy doesn't say a word.

144 ON A MONITOR NEARBY - VIDEO - THE SHOW'S TAPED INTRO: 144

Women's faces, from all walks of life, as the show's TITLE CARD flashes.

Under the title card is the show's animated LOGO: two APPLES (or are they testicles?) are blown to bits by a gun. Smoke from the barrel forms the words "With Angela Beale."

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
And now, Armed With Attitude and
Then Some, Angela Beale.

Roy looks across the stage, just as:

145 ANGELA RUNS ON TO THE STAGE FROM THE OPPOSITE WING 145

The audience practically EXPLODES - cheering, screaming.

She bathes in the applause, brushing by the audience, touching hands with some of the women who reach out to her.

ANGELA
Thank you, thank you...
(more applause)
Thank you all so much...

As the applause continues:

146 INT. OFF-STAGE - RESUMING 146

Norman and Roy, squaring off over Rica.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

Don't expect her to share your outrage, Roy. She's been at this too long.

ROY

(at Rica)

Is that true? Are you that far gone?

(she's silent)

He's gonna destroy you one of these days. Don't you know that?

147 INT. ANGELA'S STAGE - RESUMING

147

The applause finally starts to die down.

ANGELA

(hams it up)

So. I guess you liked how things turned out, huh?

Another EXPLOSION of applause. She can do no wrong in here.

UNSEEN FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER

We love you, Angela!

ANGELA

I love you right back!

More cheers and applause. Angela milks the moment. She waits for quiet, hoping it never actually comes.

148 INT. OFF-STAGE - RESUMING

148

Roy's making his big pitch. Maybe Rica can be won...

ROY

The second you show some independence, the second you do something that takes a piece of his spotlight away, he's going to crush you. He can't help himself. Or worse, you'll spend your whole career hiding in that office, never daring to find out. Either way, you're a goner.

That rang true to her, but she's trying to fight it.

Angela, with this crowd in the palm of her hand.

ANGELA

I'd like to start, if I could, with a confession.

(laughter erupts)

Not that kind of confession!

(she owns them)

When I was first asked to host this show, I was hesitant. The last thing I wanted was more publicity. In fact it wasn't until I was told the title of the show that I knew I had to be on this stage.

(applause)

Taking back the night is really what my trial was about. For as long as I can remember, women have been threatened, and frightened, and abused. But our days of suffering in silence are over. We're fighting back. If necessary, we're shooting back!

NOW THE ROOF ALMOST COMES OFF

Every woman in here jumps to her feet, out of control. Angela laughs, delighting in all this; she high-fives half the ladies in the front row. It's pandemonium.

Rica hasn't budged yet. LEE approaches.

LEE

On my cue, Norman.

Norman nods.

ROY

(at Rica)

Let's go take a drive, okay? I dunno where. We'll figure it out.

NORMAN

Yeah, that sounds terrific. Giving up a six-figure income for the pleasures of the open-road.

(CONTINUED)

ROY

Norman. Enough.

NORMAN

Maybe I oughtta remind you what just got accomplished here: we started out with a client who was guilty as sin and a D.A. who was determined to bury her. Three weeks later it's the D.A. who's facing charges and our client's got her own talk-show! And all of it done without a single day on trial! Now that is world-class lawyering, Roy, even by my standards... And Rica knows that better than anyone.

(at her:)

Don't you?

Norman, of course, already knows the answer. But Roy still has some hope... until, reluctantly, she nods yes. Norman smiles, immensely pleased.

But Roy's not done trying. One last shot:

ROY

Rica, I know he's the biggest deal in town... But I love you.

(after a beat)

Come with me.

That floored all three of them - mostly Roy.

But before she can answer, we hear a RINGING. It's the CELLPHONE in her purse. LEE almost passes out, concerned about the noise.

Aggravated as hell, she pulls it from her purse. Opens it.

RICA (INTO PHONE)

(in no mood)

What?!

Then her jaw just about drops. The guys don't know why.

151 INT. ANGELA'S STAGE - RESUMING

151

She quiets the crowd. This is going beautifully.

ANGELA

But this is not a show about hating men.

THE WOMEN IN THE AUDIENCE START TO LAUGH AND STOMP

Some of them make the finger-as-gun pose that is the show's logo, pretending to "shoot" the men in the audience.

(CONTINUED)

ANGELA (CONT'D)

I'm serious. In fact, the first
guest we'll ever have on this stage
is a man, the one who helped me win
my freedom...

152 INT. OFF-STAGE - RESUMING

152

LEE is seconds away from giving Norman the tap. But Norman
is suddenly focused on Rica, and that cel-phone.

She lowers it, in disbelief.

RICA

(re: call)

It's Ted Koppel.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

154

NORMAN

He gets the picture. So he wheels around, unaffected, and marches on stage. Applause rings.

155 INT. ANGELA'S STAGE - RESUMING

155

He gives Angela a huge hug, then they raise their hands together like candidates at a convention, drinking in all the adulation. It's a crowning moment of victory...

...and Norman's smile never wavers.

Off stage, Roy and Rica just watch. Now that they've escaped him, they can appreciate him again. As the moment lingers, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

156 EXT. THE WARNER LOT - LATER

156

That line of hopeful FANS stands patiently, awaiting tickets to a future taping of "Taking Back the Night." Roy and Rica walk past them, towards Roy's car.

Then they freeze.

Harley is out here, awaiting them. He leans against that broken old pick-up.

Roy doesn't know what to say. Rica's right at his side.

ROY

You're like a ghost. Ya drift in,
ya drift out.

HARLEY

I'm heading back to Houston now.

ROY

What's there, wife and kids?

HARLEY

My probation officer.

(Roy nods, humbled)

Just wanted to say goodbye.

A silent beat. Roy will never be comfortable with this man, but the anger seems to be gone now. They eye each other.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

You watch your step out here, Son.
There's lots of...

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED:

ROY
...pole-cats. I know.
(Harley smiles)
I've got it under control.

HARLEY
I can see that.
(at Rica)
Ma'am.

She smiles warmly; she likes him. He tips his cap to them both and hops into the pick-up. A moment later, he's gone.

Roy just watches him go.

Rica reaches out, takes his hand, gives it a comforting squeeze... There's affection here; these two might actually make it.

They get into the beaten-up Skylark and Roy fires it up. Then they pull off the lot, leaving Angela's fans behind.

They pass a BILLBOARD: "Taking Back the Night - With Angela Beale!" She looks beautiful, born for such things. We:

FADE OUT...

85 CONTINUED:

85

Roy catches his breath. Norman seems to be everywhere.

CUT TO:

86 INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

86

Roy enters, out of breath from running here. Norman and Rica stare at the tv, pensive.

ROY

What happened?

Norman just points to a tv. Roy turns:

87 ON SCREEN #1 - CNN

87

ROD BROOKS reporting from his County Courthouse backdrop.

BROOKS

According to a source within the D.A.'s Office, an unlikely witness is about to rip the lid off the Beale-Tabak murder case.

88 VIDEO: CNN CUTS TO A MUG-SHOT

88

A black convict, 32, lost look in his eyes. His serial number is a mile long. His name: "Harris, Bitch-Slap."

BROOKS (V.O. CONT'D)

His name - changed legally last Summer - is "Bitch-Slap Harris." And his testimony promises to be the smoking gun the prosecution has been searching for in the case.

89 CNN CUTS TO TAPE OF THE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL

89*

In particular, a CABANA at the Hotel.

BROOKS (V.O. CONT'D)

Harris today confessed that last week he stole a handbag belonging to accused killer Angela Beale. The significance? Harris stole the bag from a cabana at the Beverly Hills Hotel in which Oskar Tabak was staying. Harris has also confessed to stealing Tabak's wallet from the same room.

(a beat)

So the question now on the lips
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)