

WARNER

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"Being 99% honest is no longer enough."
- John Edwards, 2008

"I am Quinn's father. It was wrong for me to ever deny she was my daughter."
- John Edwards, 2010

TEASER

INT. AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY (DAY 1)

An EMPTY BAGGAGE CAROUSEL whirs, making its way around aimlessly. Nearby, a couple of dozen PEOPLE idle with their luggage, bored out of their minds. Some are on their phones, others just stare aimlessly into space.

OUTSIDE in the b.g., we see a BLIZZARD blanketing the airport.

Nearby, Customer Service Reps JESS (30s) and KAREN (40s) are approached by a beleaguered customer, TREVOR (50s).

TREVOR

Is there *anything* you can do?

JESS

I'm sorry, sir; until the storm lifts, we all just have to hunker down. We're trying to get some cookies.

Defeated, Trevor staggers away and sits on his suitcase. Jess and Karen look down at an iPad that Karen's holding.

KAREN

(reading)

Trevor Stanley, 53, divorced accountant. Wants to find romance again.

They look over at Trevor, his head now slumped in his hands.

JESS

Might be a winner. You got it?

Karen nods, walks over to Trevor.

KAREN

Sir, there might be something we can do for you after all.

Trevor perks up, his interest piqued.

As Karen speaks with Trevor, Jess walks over to a nearby wall; subtly, it SHIMMERS as she touches it. Without anyone noticing, Jess walks THROUGH THE WALL and vanishes--

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - DAY

Jess walks through another wall, arriving amidst the seemingly endless series of open plan desks ala the Washington Post in *All the Presidents Men*. No one notices her arrival here, either, but for a different reason--they're too uninterested to care.

All the desks are staffed by office workers going about their perfunctory jobs with a resigned, learned tedium.

Lit by ugly fluros, the work stations are punctuated by the occasional block of closed-off offices with dreary mid-70s brown doors. If you could smell this place, you'd probably catch an unimaginative mix of tepid coffee and *nicorette*.

On the walls, faded motivational sales posters blurt out generic slogans like "Remember - How Can We Help?" and "Remember - Everybody Wants Something."

Near one of the closed offices, we find MITCH (60s) sitting at his desk, wearing business attire that seems off-the-rack and half a size too small. As Jess joins Mitch, we HEAR a FEMALE voice escape the confines of the nearby closed office--

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

I don't want your excuses, just get it done!

Mitch doesn't look up, but Jess is younger, curious.

JESS

What's going on in there?

Mitch gives Jess an 'are you serious' look--

Suddenly the lights CRACKLE and a WOMAN APPEARS in front of the two employees. The Woman speaks--it's the same Female Voice we just heard. (We only see her back.)

WOMAN

You have work to do?
(off their nods)
Then back to work.

The lights DIM just in this area. When they come back up, the Woman is gone.

JESS

How long before I can do *that*?

MITCH

It's not as cool as you think.

Mitch goes back to work. Jess leans in.

JESS

So what was that about?

MITCH

What else? *Warner*.

A beat, then we hear ANOTHER FEMALE VOICE, but not coming from the room, or anywhere in this office space--

JUDGE GRIER (V.O.)

Mr. Warner?

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE CYNTHIA GRIER (50s, stern) stares at ED WARNER (40s, all-American), sitting at the DEFENSE TABLE, in a daze.

JUDGE GRIER (CONT'D)

Mr. Warner?

WARNER

(reflexively)

Call me Ed.

Warner looks around, sees where he is. The Judge *glares* at him. Opposing Counsel *glares* at him.

Even the jury glares at him. That's weird.

JUDGE GRIER

Your Closing Statement...?

WARNER

Sorry, Your Honor.

Warner looks apologetically to his client, ROBERT PRICE (30s, sympathetic), then turns to the jury.

WARNER (CONT'D)

I know you hate me.

An odd way to start, but from the looks on the faces of the jury, it's accurate. *They do seem to hate him.*

Warner clears his throat--stifling the hint of a cold. As he speaks, he's articulate, charming... a little too polished.

WARNER (CONT'D)

But this case isn't about me.

(indicates his client)

It's about Robert. And it's about understanding that things *aren't always as simple as they appear.*

Robert was pulled over, driving a car with drugs in the trunk. Seems clear, but you have to look closer.

The truth was, it wasn't even Robert's car. It was his mechanic's. He had no idea there were drugs in the car.

He's not a user, he's not a dealer.

(MORE)

WARNER (CONT'D)

(beat, lighter)

He's just a guy who should have chosen
a better mechanic.

He looks at the jury, but doesn't get much of a response.
In the Gallery, we get a glimpse of SYLVIA TURNER (20s),
whom we'll meet later. She watches Warner's performance.

WARNER (CONT'D)

Whatever you may think of Robert, I
beg of you--*look closer*. Don't
condemn a man because his
circumstances simply *look bad*. The
truth is always more complicated.
Thank you.

Warner sits. It's a powerful closing, yet seems to be as
much about him as it does the case at hand.

INT. ALISON'S DINER - DAY

A family restaurant. Warner eats alone. He blows his nose
into a monogrammed *EW* handkerchief, his sinuses aching.

Other DINERS occasionally look over at him in disgust; a
couple of them discuss him quietly; we hear the tail end--

DINER #1

...and the whole time she was in the
hospital, he was with the sister.

DINER #2

Unbelievable.

Warner overhears the conversation, and briefly we FLASH TO--

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

One year ago. Warner sits by the bedside of his wife, SARAH
(40s). Sitting with them is Sarah's sister, ELLIE (40s).
Sarah looks at them both weakly, but warmly.

SARAH

I stole him you from anyway, El.

Sarah smiles at her sister. Tears stream from Ellie's face.
Sarah looks at Ellie and Warner.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You have my "blessing."

(with a laugh)

Just don't get caught, okay? People
will *never* understand. You'll just
look like assholes.

BACK TO SCENE

Warner tunes out the other diners. He stares at his phone, gazing at a number for VICKI. Warner hesitates, then CALLS. It rings twice but then diverts to voicemail.

VICKI (V.O.)
Hey, it's Vicki. Leave me a message.

Warner hangs up. He picks at his food.

INT. COURTHOUSE ENTRANCE - DAY

Warner enters the ornate building. In front of him, an old COURT SECRETARY (80s) walks down the hall, greeting other employees with a cheerful disposition--

OLD COURT SECRETARY
Hiya Bill. Alan, you're looking well. See you in Church on Sunday.

Suddenly, the Secretary DROPS her PURSE and almost falls. Warner CATCHES her, then bends down to retrieve her purse.

OLD COURT SECRETARY (CONT'D)
Oh! Thank you, young man.

WARNER
Call me Ed, ma'am.

He smiles broadly. The Old Secretary looks up. She recognizes Warner and SNATCHES back her bag.

OLD COURT SECRETARY
Fuck yourself, Warner.

She hobbles away. Warner nods as pleasantly as he can.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Warner and Robert watch nervously as the jury enter.

ROBERT
Why are they back so early? It didn't happen the way it looks. *They have to understand that, right?*

Warner's nods; his face registers hope, but he says nothing.

JUDGE GRIER
Madame Foreperson, how do you find?

FOREPERSON

(stands)

In the State of Ohio vs. Robert Price
on the charge of possession of a
controlled substance with intent to
distribute, we the jury find the
defendant, Robert Price, *guilty*.

Fuck. The verdict lands on Warner with disappointment, hits Robert like a ton of bricks. The bailiff approaches Robert.

ROBERT

No, please. Don't.

JUDGE GRIER

Bailiff will take Mr. Price into
custody; sentencing next Thursday.
We're adjourned.

BANG. The gavel pounds. Robert melts down.

ROBERT

Please! I didn't do it! This can't
be happening.

Robert looks desperately at Warner as the cold, metal handcuffs snap painfully across his wrists.

WARNER

We'll try to keep your sentence short.

Warner puts a hand on Robert's arm, points to his heart.

WARNER (CONT'D)

You know what's true in there. They
can't take that away from you. Okay?

Robert tries his best to hold it together. Through tears--

ROBERT

(almost a whisper)

Why doesn't anyone understand?

Warner watches as they take Robert away. He has the same question, but no answers.

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. STRIP MALL, KNOX VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

Warner walks past workers as they scrub "Burn in hell, Warner!" graffiti from the sign above his modest storefront office. He nods to them; it's apparently a regular occurrence. Still, the wording gives Warner a moment's pause.

WARNER

Fellas.

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - DAY

A small open-plan space with a couch, assistant desk, file cabinets, drinks cabinet, and a larger desk towards the back.

Warner plonks himself down at the couch. He reaches for a bottle of DAYQUIL and swigs from it imprecisely.

Nearby, Warner's assistant ANGELA "ANGIE" PECK (mid 20s) is glued to her computer, watching a DOCUMENTARY--about Warner.

ON SCREEN:

Footage of Warner, with Sarah by his side, speaking at a huge political rally. "Call Me Ed" campaign signs abound.

DOCUMENTARY NARRATOR (V.O.)

It looked like the sky was the limit for Ed Warner, the trial lawyer turned Congressman turned Ohio's youngest governor.

WARNER

I have some news I wanted to keep to myself... but this is Mount Vernon.

The crowd cheers.

WARNER (CONT'D)

And in the spirit of our nation's beloved founding father, a pinnacle of honesty, who also hailed from a little town called Mount Vernon, folks, "I cannot tell a lie..."

The crowd murmurs with anticipation.

WARNER (CONT'D)

This afternoon I received a call from Senator Evans--

The crowd goes NUTS. They know exactly what's going on.

WARNER (CONT'D)

And with great humility, I agreed to become his running mate and God-willing, the Vice President of these United States!

The crowd goes nuts. In the background, we see a man in his 60s, whom we'll later learn is called TOBY.

BACK TO SCENE.

Warner walks over to Angie's desk. He sees the documentary and stares intently at Toby for a moment, lost in a memory-- an unpleasant one. After a beat, he returns to reality.

WARNER (CONT'D)

You're really watching that?

ANGIE

Hang on, it's getting amazing!

ON SCREEN:

DOCUMENTARY NARRATOR (V.O.)

Then, with his wife dying in the hospital, the world was introduced to the real Ed Warner.

Paparazzi footage of Warner and Ellie, leaving a hotel via the back entrance, and being set upon by news cameras. Totally caught off guard, Warner turns white as a sheet.

The footage changes to Warner giving an INTERVIEW. The CHYRON READS: "Warner admits affair with wife's sister, withdraws as VP nominee."

WARNER

I made a terrible error in judgment, and I apologize. To my wife, to our daughter, to--

BACK TO SCENE.

WARNER (CONT'D)

Angie--

Angie pauses the documentary, landing on a freeze-frame of Warner's glum face.

ANGIE

Shit, dude, that's cold. Her sister?

Warner goes to his desk, blows his nose with some effort.

WARNER
(incredulous)
I assumed you knew when I hired you.
You never followed politics?

ANGIE
I should have. This shit is bananas.

WARNER
(rehearsed)
Well, I'm sorry. I
made a terrible error
in judgment.

ANGIE
(to herself)
My parents don't know what
my new job is. I'll have
to lie. Tell 'em I work
for the mob or something.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Wait, wait--

She rewinds the documentary a few seconds.

WARNER (on screen)
I made a terrible error in judgment.

ANGIE
You seemed more sincere then.

WARNER
(moving on)
Any messages?

ANGIE
Nope. And now that makes sense.
People must really hate you. Why on
Earth did you come back to this
shit hole?

WARNER
Hey, Mount Vernon's not a shit hole.
I grew up here. It's my home.

ANGIE
Mine, too. *It's a shit hole.* All
my high school friends are heroin
addicts.

Warner sighs, anxious to change the subject.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Okay, not *all* of them. A couple are
into meth.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

WARNER

I came back to do the right thing,
to help people.

ANGIE

Right. You win this morning?

WARNER

No.
(re: the door)
Would you mind?

Angie opens the door to SYLVIA TURNER (20s, meek), whom we saw earlier in court. Angie addresses their would-be client--

ANGIE

(with a smile)
Welcome to the office of Attorney Ed Warner. He feels bad about cheating on his dying wife with her sister, but now he wants to help people.

WARNER

Thank you, Angie.
(introducing himself)
You can call me Ed.

Angie giggles as Sylvia takes a seat opposite Warner.

WARNER (CONT'D)

How can I help you?

SYLVIA

It's my father, Joseph Turner.
(beat, heavy)
He's on trial for murder.

ANGIE

Juicy.

Warner shoots Angie a look.

SYLVIA

He's innocent. But we need a lawyer.
The trial starts tomorrow.

WARNER

Tomorrow?

SYLVIA

We had to fire the court appointed attorney. He did nothing, he just played with some app on his phone.

Angie holds up TINDER on her phone screen.

ANGIE
Was it this one?

WARNER
Angie--

SYLVIA
Yes, that was it.

ANGIE
Swiped left on his ass. Good move.

SYLVIA
We're desperate. I saw you in court
this morning. You were very good.

ANGIE
You know he lost, right?

SYLVIA
But he was passionate.
(to Warner)
You believed in your client. That's
what my father needs.

Sylvia hesitates; she has something to add, but it's tough--

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
But we're broke...

Warner nods, considering, but more trying to find a way to
let her down gently. Before he can, Angie chirps up--

ANGIE
Ma'am, Warner's here to help. He'll
gladly take your father's case free.

SYLVIA
Oh my god. Thank you.

Warner shoots Angie a look as Sylvia HUGS him.

OFF Warner, who's suddenly got himself a new client--

INT. COUNTY LOCK-UP - DAY

Warner and Sylvia meet with JACOB TURNER (late 40s, big,
mean-looking, but soft spoken).

JACOB
Mostly I just bounced people. Nick--
my boss--he said I looked tough. So
I acted tough. I was good at it.

SYLVIA
Nick Lim; he runs the bar, but he's
also a loan shark.

JACOB

Yeah, so sometimes Nick sends me to get money from people who owe him.

WARNER

To shake 'em down?

Jacob looks nervously at his daughter.

JACOB

No. Just talk to them. You know, intimidate. 'Cause I can look scary.

SYLVIA

It's an act. My father wouldn't hurt anyone.

Jacob nods, but Warner doesn't look quite convinced.

WARNER

What happened?

JACOB

This guy Victor Alvarez, he owes Nick three Gs. So, you know, I go to his house, I do my thing, talk tough. Alvarez swears he'll get the money next week. So I leave.

SYLVIA

Two hours later, Alvarez's girlfriend came home and found him...

(beat, this is tough)

He was beaten to death.

WARNER

(reading the report)

"With a garden gnome in the likeness of Jesus Christ."

JACOB

He collected them. Weird guy.

(beat)

His girlfriend called the cops. The next day, some neighbor says she saw me there. I mean, I was there, but I never touched the guy.

Sylvia puts her hand on her father's. He chokes up.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Then they were gonna bust Nick for loan-sharking, so he made a deal, he says I did it.

Warner looks over Jacob's file.

WARNER
Murder 1, Murder 2.
(surprised)
They didn't charge Manslaughter?

Sylvia shakes her head. From the look on Warner's face, she knows that's bad.

SYLVIA
What does that mean?

WARNER
Means they're confident.

Warner looks at Jacob again. He plays a hunch.

WARNER (CONT'D)
Hey, Sylvia, can I talk to your father
for a minute, just the two of us?

SYLVIA
Why?

WARNER
(delicate)
There's stuff lawyers have to discuss
privately with their clients.
(reassuring)
It'll just be for a minute.

Sylvia nods reluctantly. She kisses Jacob on the forehead and exits. As soon as she's gone--

WARNER (CONT'D)
Listen Jacob, if you bullshit me,
you're only hurting yourself. Right?

Jacob's taken aback for a beat, but then nods. He gets it.

JACOB
I got a prior. Assault.
(beat)
Nick sent me to get some money, guy
didn't wanna pay. I beat him, busted
his head up pretty good.

WARNER
You serve time?

JACOB
Six months. I never told Sylvia.
(MORE)

JACOB (CONT'D)

Her mom and me split up years ago,
she's been living with her up north.

(beat)

When I was arrested, Sylvia just
drove down here. Never asked me if
I did it. Just wanted to help her
dad. We're closer now than we've
been in years...

(beat, difficult)

She sees me as a good man. I have
to protect that.

That hits home with Warner.

WARNER

She doesn't need to hear about any
of this. Just means we don't put
you on the stand.

(beat)

Your case is circumstantial. You
got a shot, but we've gotta buy you
some time.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE MENDEZ

No way.

We're in court later that day, District Attorney HEATHER
DAVIS (50s, serious) stands at the other desk. JUDGE OLIVIA
MENDEZ (40s, a little too happy wielding power) presides.

D.A. DAVIS

This tactic is as old as the practice
of law itself. Fire your attorney,
get a continuance. Rinse, repeat.

WARNER

I just got this case. You can't
expect me to be ready in five minutes.

JUDGE MENDEZ

It's longer than five minutes. The
sun is still shining on Thursday.
Trial doesn't even start till Friday.
You can count, right, counsel?

Oh yeah, and she hates Warner, too, like everyone else.

WARNER

Respectfully, that isn't enough time.
(MORE)

WARNER (CONT'D)

At a minimum, I'll need a new *voir dire*. Who knows how many people on that jury already hate me?

Mendez guffaws at Warner's sincerity.

JUDGE MENDEZ

Warner, there's no random selection of 12 people in Mount Vernon who *don't* hate you. Trial starts tomorrow.

Mendez BANGS her gavel. Warner's jaw clenches; he takes a deep breath, trying not to let the bitterness overwhelm.

Then, as if he *senses something*, Warner turns around--only to see the door to the courtroom slowly swing shut. If someone was there, Warner just missed them.

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Files are strewn about Warner's desk. He pours over the details of the case, chugs more Dayquil. Angie approaches.

WARNER

The victim owed money all over town. But the cops only looked at Jacob.

ANGIE

What kind of sentence does he get if you lose? Sorry, if *he* loses.

WARNER

Life, or close to it.
(beat, thinking)
This is nuts. There have to be more suspects. A witness. *Something*.

ANGIE

Can you get the police to look?

WARNER

It's way too late for that.
(beat, an admission)
We're gonna need some help.

Angie looks around, like she's looking for the cameras.

ANGIE

Oh, so you just talk like that.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - DAY

Warner and Angie meet with KATE AMBROSE (35, pensive).

KATE

You're not giving me a lot of time on this one, Warner.

ANGIE

In his defense, it was super last minute.

Warner makes a quick introduction--

WARNER

Kate Ambrose, Private Investigator; Angie Peck, my new assistant.

KATE

Did you have an old assistant?

ANGIE

Nice. I like her.

WARNER

Can you dig something up? *Anything* that points to another suspect. I can pay you double--

KATE

Never mind about that. It doesn't sound like you're getting rich off this one.

WARNER

I'm doing it pro bono.

KATE

Court appointed?

Warner shakes his head. Kate looks at him closer. There's a slight crack in the facade of Warner's usual game face.

WARNER

I believe he's innocent.
(beat)
He's got a daughter.

Kate nods. That's enough for her. Angie clocks it.

KATE

I'll see what I can find.

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - EVENING (NIGHT 1)

Warner burns the midnight oil. After finishing yet another page of notes, he sits back for a moment, letting out a well-earned YAWN, followed by a sputtering, painful COUGH.

Suddenly, Warner seems to HEAR something... like a faint *scratching* sound. Cricket-quiet, hard to discern.

Warner walks out the front door (the graffiti now removed) and looks around. The lot is deserted, save for his lonely 2009 Camry. An indifferent wind whistles, but no sign of anyone or anything else. Perhaps a combination of late night exhaustion and paranoia. Then--

SLAM. The office door blows shut with an aberrant GUST of wind. Warner opens it, looks inside; again, it looks like his nerves are playing tricks on him. A draft is his culprit.

EXT. STRIP MALL - LATER

Warner locks up for the night, carrying a vintage briefcase. CAMERA FOLLOWS him hand-held to his car. It's eerie. Once again, Warner feels compelled to turn around--

He does, suddenly. But again, crickets. One of the strip mall LAMPS flickers slightly. Warner doesn't notice.

INT. WARNER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Warner starts the car. Instantly, UB40's *Here I am Baby* BLARES out of his speakers at max volume. Warner JUMPS. He turns the sound down, then glances in the mirror and sees--

TOBY. The political operative we glimpsed briefly in the background of the the documentary footage, at whose face Warner had so intently stared, inexplicably sitting in the back of Warner's car. Warner's startled, but his initial fright gives way to a beleaguered sigh.

WARNER

Toby.

Toby is charming, but with a *yesterday's man* air about him.

TOBY

That's it? No *what are you doing here?* Or *Hey, how'd you get into my car?* I can show you, wanna see?

WARNER

Just get out.

TOBY

Hard on your neck if I'm back here?
All right.

Toby exits the car and walks to the front seat. In these couple of seconds, Warner has an opportunity to drive away, but he doesn't. Toby sits down next to him.

TOBY (CONT'D)

When you walked away from me, Ed,
you walked away from *greatness*.

(NOTE: Toby is the only person who calls Warner by his preferred first name.)

WARNER

Didn't feel great.

TOBY

That's 'cause you walked away! We
can change that. People can come
back from things like this. Stronger
than ever.

Warner looks calmly at Toby.

WARNER

No. I've got a new life. I don't
want you in it, all right?

Toby doesn't push it further. He smiles and exits the car,
unruffled. Before he closes the door, he pauses, looks around
the vacant parking lot, the shabby, small town.

TOBY

I know what you want, Ed. It's not
this.

Warner says nothing. Toby gently closes the door. Warner
drives off.

Toby watches as Warner's car disappears into the distance.
He takes out his cell phone and makes a call.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Hi. Tell admin I'm gonna need a
hotel room and some supplies. This
is gonna take longer than I'd hoped.

Toby hangs up. He calmly walks down the parking lot. Camera
TRACKS alongside him. Toby is obscured for just half a beat
as he walks past a LIGHT POLE and--

--he's gone.

What the fuck is going on?

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - DAY (DAY 2)

Warner and Angie hurriedly sort through paperwork.

WARNER

Grab me the neighbor's statement?

Angie brings over the document, but withholds it.

ANGIE

You still see her? You know...

(whispers)

Sister-in-law?

OFF Warner's look--

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Confession is good for the soul.

That strikes an almost imperceptible nerve with Warner. He looks at the childish game his subordinate is playing but decides the shortest distance between what he needs and getting is to cooperate. Barely.

WARNER

No, I don't see Ellie anymore.

Angie hands over the folder.

ANGIE

Don't you feel better? You gotta talk about this stuff, man. Otherwise you'll turn into a bitter guy with no friends who has no choice but to work himself to death.

Warner looks at Angie again, every bit the picture of the man she's describing. Which was exactly her point.

The PHONE rings. Angie answers it.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Ed Warner, Attorney at Law.

(beat, to Warner)

Judge needs to see you.

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Warner hustles into Judge Mendez's immaculate chambers.

JUDGE MENDEZ

Davis is out with a stomach bug;
Prosecutor's office is sending over
a new D.A.

WARNER

...whom presumably will need time to
prepare, so... continuance?

JUDGE MENDEZ

You wish. They said he's fully up
to speed.

The door opens and we hear a VOICE--

VOICE (O.S.)

Sorry I'm late, Your Honor.

Warner turns to see his new opponent enter... it's TOBY.

TOBY

Terry Krandle. Pleased to meet you.
Sorry for the last minute change.
Only found out about it myself last
night; had to drive down from Akron.

Warner looks Toby, then at the judge, confused as shit.

WARNER

WHAT?

JUDGE MENDEZ

(patronizingly)

I'm sure you're aware that the State
is permitted to change attorneys if
the need arises.

Warner looks at Toby, floored. Toby WINKS at him.

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Warner and Toby step out. Warner immediately lays in--

WARNER

What the hell is going on?!

TOBY

Keep your voice down, will you?

Warner reluctantly walks to a quieter part of the building.
Toby follows, takes a sip from a drinking fountain.

WARNER

I don't know what you're doing, but
I'm not playing.

TOBY

So you'll be getting off the case?

WARNER

No. But I'll tell the judge--

TOBY

Tell her *what*? That I'm not who I say I am? How would you know that?
(whispers)
And if she asks who I *really* am, what on Earth are you going to say?

WARNER

What if someone looks up the real Terry...?

TOBY

Krandle. I know, sounds made up.

WARNER

Is it?

TOBY

Nope. Krandle's taking a nice long *propofol* nap in his condo in Akron.

WARNER

Someone's gonna see you're not him.

Toby smiles, begins walking down the hall. Warner follows.

TOBY

People see what they want to see, Ed. If it makes sense to them, they don't think about it. *You know me.*

Toby smiles as they pass some ND COURT EMPLOYEES.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Them? They don't see anything.

He gets to a door near the end of the hallway.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Shall we?

Toby opens the door, which leads into the courtroom. Toby walks in. Warner watches, incensed, but then follows.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

CAMERA PANS past a table of exhibits, including a blood-stained *Jesus gnome*.

Toby questions DETECTIVE CARL BURROWS (40s). Toby is effective, a work-horse, the picture of a true public servant.

TOBY

Detective Burrows, can you tell us how you came to suspect the defendant, Jacob Turner?

BURROWS

Mr. Turner had worked as an enforcer for bar owner Nicholas Lim--

WARNER

Object to the term "enforcer," Your Honor. It's *kinda* prejudicial.

Warner's good. But Toby volleys back smoothly--

TOBY

I'm terribly sorry. "Muscle"?

WARNER

Jacob Turner was a bouncer who occasionally picked up money for his boss. Let's not get theatrical.

TOBY

As you wish.
(to Burrows)
Detective Burrows?

BURROWS

Witnesses placed Mr. Turner at the scene shortly before the murder took place. His DNA was found in Mr. Alvarez's home, and Mr. Lim had specifically sent him there to intimidate Mr. Alvarez into returning his money.

(beat)

It wasn't hard to connect the dots.

Toby sits down. Warner pauses for effect, then rises.

WARNER

Witness. Right?

BURROWS

I'm sorry?

Warner says nothing.

BURROWS (CONT'D)

I'm not sure I understand--

WARNER

There was one *witness*--singular who placed Mr. Turner at the scene. You said "witnesses."

BURROWS

Yes, correct, there was one witness.

WARNER

Right. See, words are important. They create impressions in our minds. Sometimes we don't even notice, they just go to work on our subconscious. Fill in gaps. Like the other thing you said--that the *witness* saw Jacob enter the victim's house "shortly before" the crime was committed.

BURROWS

That's right.

Warner grabs a couple of reports and reads from them.

WARNER

The witness--a neighbor--said she was putting her trash out when she saw *someone* who fit Jacob's description outside Mr. Alvarez's home at 7:10pm.

(reading another report)

Coroner's report says the time of death was between 8 and 9:30pm... that's a gap of up to two and a half hours. You really consider 7:10 to be *shortly before* 9:30? Or you were just hoping the jury would fill in that *yawning* gap?

BURROWS

The witness might have been off. The time she gave is in the ballpark.

WARNER

In the *ballpark*... how precise. Did the neighbor say she saw my client *leave* or *arrive* at the house?

BURROWS

We assume she saw him as he was arriving at the victim's house.

WARNER

You *assume*? Wow.

Warner heads back towards his desk. Then--

WARNER (CONT'D)

Did you find my client's fingerprints
on the murder weapon?

BURROWS

No. It was wiped clean. But--

WARNER

And the victim, Mr. Alvarez... he
owed money to a bunch of people.
You find any of them to question?

BURROWS

None of them were seen in the area.
(he looks at Jacob)
We knew we had our man.

WARNER

Knew you had your man? Or didn't
bother to look for anyone else?

Burrows can't really answer that. Warner lets it hang in
the air. He doesn't look at the jury; he can feel them
drawing their own conclusions.

WARNER (CONT'D)

No further questions.

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - LATER

The door opens as the room breaks for lunch. Warner walks
out with Sylvia.

SYLVIA

That went well, right?

WARNER

It's a good start. Tell your father
to stay strong.

Sylvia nods and walks away. Warner finds a bench and sits
down; he cradles his throbbing sinuses.

Kate appears and walks over. Warner snaps back instantly.

KATE

Hey. Got something for you.

EXT. MULTI-FAMILY HOME, SANDUSKY STREET - DAY

A super sketchy neighborhood. Warner and Kate KNOCK on the
door. It creaks open warily, just enough for REBECCA CEDENO
(50s) to peer at Kate and her guest.

KATE

It's okay. He's with me.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MULTI-FAMILY HOME - DAY

Later. This house would be considered cramped for one family, let alone the two or three who reside within its walls. Warner and Kate sit with Rebecca.

KATE

Rebecca cleans homes on the same street as where Victor Alvarez lived.
(to Rebecca)
Tell him what you told me.

REBECCA

I was waiting for the 8:15 bus. I saw two men come out of the house.

WARNER

Out of Victor Alvarez's house?

Rebecca nods. Warner looks at Kate--this is huge. Warner takes out his phone, opens a picture of Jacob.

WARNER (CONT'D)

Was this one of the two men you saw?

Rebecca scrutinizes the picture and shakes her head 'no'.

REBECCA

But I cannot say anything. To anyone.

WARNER

You're undocumented...

KATE

She's worried if she testifies, she might be deported.

Warner looks at Rebecca earnestly.

WARNER

I can help you with immigration if anything happens. I promise. Please, a man's life is at stake.

Rebecca hesitates. She looks to Kate for guidance. Kate reaches out and holds her hand. A beat. Rebecca nods 'okay'.

WARNER (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Warner calls Angie, excited.

WARNER (CONT'D)
Angie, I need to add a
witness. Her name is
Rebecca C-e-d-e-n-o.

KATE
(to Rebecca)
You're going to be fine.
Thank you.

WARNER
(to Kate)
Thank you, this is amazing.
(impulsive)
Do you wanna grab a drink tonight?

Kate's taken off guard. She considers, conflicted, but--

KATE
I think it's probably better if we
just keep our eyes on the case.

Warner's a little hurt, but tries not to show it.

WARNER
(back into phone)
It'll be for Monday--
(to Rebecca)
Can you come to court on Monday? I
can pay you for any work you miss.

Rebecca nods.

WARNER (CONT'D)
Great.

OFF Warner, beaming. This could be the break they needed--

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The Prosecution's second witness is up: NICK LIM, Jacob's boss at the bar (20s, sketchy, odd, *Drunk SpongeBob* tattoo on his neck). As Toby questions him, Angie quietly walks in. She slips Warner a piece of paper, whispers--

ANGIE
Your witness was approved for Monday.

Angie takes a seat behind the defense desk, next to Sylvia. Warner stifles a cough into his handkerchief.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
You okay there, chief?

Warner nods, stoically.

In the background, we see Kate enter. She watches the trial.

TOBY

...and Mr. Lim, did you send the defendant to pick up three thousand dollars owed to you by Victor Alvarez?

LIM

Yeah. But I didn't tell him to kill him. That was, like, his idea.

WARNER

Objection.

JUDGE MENDEZ

Sustained. Mr. Lim, don't tell us what was in anyone else's mind.

LIM

Sorry. I just mean, all I said was get the money back. That's all.

TOBY

Mr. Lim, have you asked Jacob Turner to... intimidate people before?

LIM

(rehearsed)

I am ashamed to say I have.

Sylvia glances at her father, surprised, but Warner gives her a reassuring glance. Jacob says nothing.

LIM (CONT'D)

Sometimes when people don't pay, they need a little reminder. Jacob took it too far.

Toby nods, sits down. Warner jumps up immediately.

WARNER

That's shocking... that you told an employee to rough someone up.

LIM

I'm not proud of it.

WARNER

You know that's a crime, right? Conspiracy to commit assault. And if Jacob Turner is convicted of murder, you could be convicted alongside him. It's called felony murder. You could get life.

Lim looks at Toby, a little panicked.

WARNER (CONT'D)

Ohhh right. You cut a deal with the Prosecutor's office. Must be because loan sharking is a crime, too, right?

TOBY

Objection, Your Honor.

WARNER

What are you objecting to, Toby?

The Judge, Jury, and others in the courtroom look at Warner in confusion. *Who's Toby?* Toby grins at Warner, under his skin. Angie clocks this. Warner recovers quickly--

WARNER (CONT'D)

Excuse me... *Terry*. There's no grounds for an objection, unless you want to tell us that the witness *didn't* cut a deal?

TOBY

No, you're badgering the witness.

WARNER

(to Lim)

I'll make it simple. Did you cut a deal with the prosecution to avoid jail time?

LIM

Yes.

That lands with the jury. But unsettling questions remain on the faces of some of our characters. Sylvia looks uncomfortably at her father; Angie scrutinizes Toby.

Kate watches from the back of the courtroom, circumspect.

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Warner and Angie walk in. Warner's tired but upbeat as he puts briefcase to desk and half-falls into his chair.

WARNER

Great work on the witness approval.

ANGIE

Clerk was not happy. I told her it would be a tragedy if she attempted to pervert the course of justice.

Warner laughs, but his laugh soon turns into a coughing fit.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

You sound like death.

WARNER

I'm fine. Did you really say that to the clerk?

ANGIE

Nah, she didn't give a shit.

Warner chuckles. He turns to his computer, pulls up a LAW JOURNAL article--of the real Terry Krandle. Warner scrutinizes the picture: Krandle bears a passing resemblance to Toby, but he can see the difference.

Angie wanders over; Warner closes the article. We're not sure if she saw it.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Couldn't help but overhear you get shot down with Kate earlier.

WARNER

What? No, I just thought it would be nice to show her my appreciation.

ANGIE

Excellent non-answer. Bravo.

WARNER

What?

ANGIE

It's like you've been playing a politician so long you forgot how to be a *normal human person*. I can't tell where the performance ends and you begin. Just admit it--it sucked, right?

A beat.

WARNER

Yes. It sucked.
(a quick smile)
It fucking sucked.

ANGIE

There you go! Okay, consolation prize--a drink with *me*. Actually, let's make it dinner--my stomach's eating itself.

(off Warner's surprise)

Strictly business.

WARNER

Okay. That sounds nice.

ANGIE

It is nice. I'm delightful.

INT. "THE ALCOVE" RESTAURANT - EVENING (NIGHT 2)

A beautiful, revitalized restaurant in downtown: middle class families save up for special occasion dinners and the elites imbibe pricey bespoke cocktails after work.

Warner and Angie sit in full view of the other restaurant-goers. Warner's whole spirit seems elevated, so gratified is he to be seen in public with another person. A SERVER brings them drinks. Angie raises her glass--

ANGIE

Cilantro.

Angie downs her drink in one gulp, signals for another.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Okay, give me the real truth. Why'd you come back?

Warner takes a slow sip of his drink.

WARNER

What happened to 'strictly business'?

ANGIE

It's totally business. I gotta justify working for you.

WARNER

I told you. To... atone.

ANGIE

Not buying it.

Warner laughs: Angie doesn't know the full truth, but Warner knows he's speaking honestly about his motivations.

WARNER

It's true. I screwed up. I need to figure it all out and be better.

ANGIE

Isn't that what politicians do? Get caught doing something, put on that hang-dog expression, apologize, "go back to their roots," and then run for Congress a few years later?

WARNER

(laughs)

I'm never running for Congress again.

ANGIE

That's what this whole thing looks like, man. *Esse quam videri.*

WARNER

Excuse me?

ANGIE

"To be rather than to seem to be."

WARNER

I know what it means. I just didn't--

ANGIE

--you didn't think someone like me would know Latin. Well, you were wrong, bish. "Canis est in horto."

WARNER

The dog is in the house?

ANGIE

Whatever, close enough. You're in the dog house. Everything you do is like, "Hey, look how sorry I am." You want the appearance of redemption without actually learning any of the lessons. Just want people to hurry up and love you again.

WARNER

You think I care what other people think?

ANGIE

Um, yeah. Especially your daughter.
(off Warner's look)
Dude, I know she lives in town. It's on your Wikipedia page. You want her to forgive you for cheating on her mother.

WARNER

No. Not for that.

Warner stops, he's said too much.

WARNER (CONT'D)

Can we stop talking about my family?

ANGIE

Okay.

(long beat)

Who's Toby? Today in court, you--

WARNER

I misspoke.

ANGIE

You misspoke...

Warner's face turns strained. He really wants to say more but has to muzzle himself. Angie sees it plainly.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

What's going on with you?

Warner affects a genial grin, hoping to move on.

WARNER

You wouldn't believe me if I told you. Now, back to business.

He grabs his drink.

WARNER (CONT'D)

With our new witness, maybe we can free an innocent man. To Rebecca.

Angie figures she's pushed Warner enough. She grabs her glass and holds it up. They clink.

EXT. SANDUSKY STREET - NIGHT

Rebecca waits to cross a street near her home. The traffic lights turn red as one solitary car idles expectantly. The pedestrian crossing turns green; Rebecca starts walking.

Suddenly, the car's piercing HIGH BEAMS turn on. Rebecca turns, frightened, blinded--

BLAM. The car SLAMS INTO REBECCA and sends her FLYING.

The car SPEEDS OFF. And behind the wheel, we find TOBY...

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING (DAY 3)

Rebecca lies in a hospital bed, hooked up to monitors, comatose. Kate stands over her. Warner enters.

KATE

They found her near her house. Hit and run. No idea who it was.

Warner looks limply at Rebecca. Kate studies his face.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

Warner nods. He doesn't make eye contact.

KATE (CONT'D)

What are you gonna do?

WARNER

Just... gotta find a way forward.

Warner wanders out. Kate looks back at Rebecca.

INT. TOBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Toby sits at the desk in his makeshift Prosecutor's office. With coffee brewing, he opens a bookmark in a paperback copy of *How to Nail the Sale!* Suddenly, his DOOR swings open--

But it's not Warner who barges in. It's Kate.

KATE

I HAD AN ANGLE.

Toby looks up at her, confused.

TOBY

What?

KATE

Rebecca Cedenó. The woman you took out with your fucking car.

TOBY

She was a witness. She was gonna sway the case.

KATE

She didn't witness *shit*, you idiot. I paid her off.

TOBY

You *what*?

KATE

I told Warner she was going to testify she saw two guys so he'd bet everything on it, then when she got on the stand, she was going to say she saw Jacob Turner leave the house right after the murder.

TOBY

Did she...?

KATE

No, she wasn't even there.

TOBY

How was I supposed to know?

KATE

You were supposed to use your head. Warner hires me and then next thing you know, there's *somehow* a witness who could completely win it for him?

Toby gets up, annoyed. He pours himself a cup of coffee.

TOBY

This is not how it's done.

KATE

With clever strategy? No, you prefer to beat your leads into submission.

Toby holds up the book.

TOBY

He's gotta hit rock bottom. Then you offer him a way out. You don't have any respect for proven methods.

The LIGHTS FLICKER for a moment.

KATE

Great. *Management*.

There's a quick BLACK OUT. Suddenly, standing in front of them, wearing an impeccable bespoke suit, is CINDY. (The Woman from the Teaser, whose back we saw.)

Toby immediately THROWS AWAY the sales book.

CINDY

Okay. Talk to me.

KATE

I had a fake witness--

CINDY

I know all about your screw-ups.
What are you going to do to close?

Toby is about to drink his coffee when Cindy takes it from him and starts drinking it herself.

TOBY

I can still win the case. The more
the world beats him down, the more
likely he re-signs.

Cindy sits down at Toby's desk.

CINDY

When I put the two of you on this,
what did I say? I said work together.
Share information.

TOBY

I don't need her.

KATE

Horseshit. You lost him and now--

CINDY

LISTEN!

CINDY's voice BELLOWS. It's enough to make even Kate and Toby straighten up and shut up.

CINDY (CONT'D)

I've got other agents on standby.
It might be time.

TOBY

Come on, *I got this.*

KATE

A third agent? Seriously?

CINDY

This guy isn't like the others.
He's stronger, better; we might really
lose him. The closer he gets to
redemption, the harder our job is.

This strikes a chord with Kate for just a moment. Cindy removes a FLASH DRIVE from her pocket, tosses it to Toby.

CINDY (CONT'D)

Got this from Research.

TOBY

What is it?

CINDY
Something Ed Warner can't even
conceive is out there. An *Unknown*
Unknown.

Toby looks at the drive with intrigue.

CINDY (CONT'D)
(to Toby)
Stay on him. Win the case.
(to Kate)
Support. Don't get in his way.

They nod sheepishly. The lights CRACKLE and Cindy's gone.

INT. OHIO AVENUE - DAY

Warner drives, almost aimlessly, barely paying attention to the road. He stops at a light, looks at the street signs. A beat, then he flicks on his indicator and makes a right.

EXT. EAST VINE STREET - DAY

Warner parks his car and gets out to walk. He wanders the idyllic neighborhood, the disappearing remnants of Small Town USA. The walk down East Vine is a mixture of nostalgia and solemnity. Warner comes to a stop and looks at a nice home across the street. He takes out his phone and DIALS.

Warner watches the house as VICKI (mid 20s) enters her living room, visible through a large bay window. She picks up her PHONE; she sees who's calling and considers. For Warner, each moment feels like an eternity, as he watches his daughter silently judge him. After a few more rings, Vicki once again sends the call to voicemail.

VICKI (V.O.)
Hey, it's Vicki. Leave me a message.

Warner is about to hang up, but he steels himself, summons up a modicum of courage, and speaks.

WARNER
Hey, it's your Dad. You're probably
sick of hearing "I'm sorry."
(beat)
Let me tell you something different.
I'm working on a case for a good
man, someone who needs me. I feel
like it's a chance for me, Vicki.
I'm trying so hard to do what's right,
and maybe this--

Beep.

PHONE (V.O.)

*You have reached the end of your
message limit. If you'd like to
leave another message--*

Warner hangs up. He looks at the window again, but Vicki's gone. Warner stares at the vacant space, on the verge of tears. A man ready to crack.

INT. ANGIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)

Angie sits in a small living room, smoking a joint. She looks at her phone, which displays picture of Terry Krandle-- the man Toby is impersonating. As far as Angie sees it, the picture is of Toby. Suddenly, it FLICKERS for a moment.

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Warner sits on the floor in the dark, disconsolate. Then--

--he *loses his shit*. He TRASHES his office. Files and furniture go flying, SMASHES a lamp against the front door.

Then, suddenly, the door opens and someone walks in. Warner can barely make out who it is in the darkness.

VICKI

Dad?

Warner looks at the figure of his daughter.

WARNER

Vicki. I'm so sorry...

Warner stops, looks closer at his daughter, obscured in the darkness. Warner stumbles back towards Angie's desk.

VICKI

Dad. What's wrong? Talk to me.

Warner gropes around for a lamp switch and flicks it on. He looks at a faintly-illuminated Vicki. Something's not right.

Vicki begins to laugh, almost a cackle. Slowly, in front of Warner's eyes, his daughter MORPHS into TOBY.

TOBY

Man, I almost had you.

Warner glares at Toby.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Listen, I can talk to Vicki, pretend to be an old friend, convince her to give the old man another shot...

WARNER

Get out.

Toby looks around the trashed office.

TOBY

Ed, Ed... you'd better get your house
in order. Big day tomorrow with
your surprise witness.

(beat)

Oh, right...

Toby walks out, leaving a seething, broken Warner behind.

EXT. STRIP MALL - MOMENTS LATER

Angie walks towards the office, catching Toby as he leaves.

ANGIE

What are you doing here?

TOBY

Just confirming some details for
tomorrow. Good evening.

Angie steps in front of Toby, blocking his path. She's
scared, but defiant.

ANGIE

Who are you?

Toby leans in, a little too close for comfort. His shiny
white teeth slowly emerge as he dons a Cheshire grin. There's
a scary beat; we honestly don't know what he's going to do.

TOBY

Just a friend.

He politely walks around Angie. She doesn't stop him.

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Angie enters, finds Warner on the ground, sitting amid the
debris, vulnerable, *human*--a side of him she's not used to.
Angie came to ask about Toby, but it's clearly not the time.
She helps Warner to the couch.

WARNER

We lost our witness.

Angie sits with that a moment. She looks at her boss: he's
sick, defeated, nearly passed out from exhaustion. His soul
is fatigued. This is so much more than the case.

On the floor, Angie spies Warner's CAR KEYS. OFF Angie--

INT. WARNER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EVENING

Angie walks in with Warner. Warner's awake, but almost catatonic. He collapses onto his bed and fumbles for some pills on his nightstand, on which also sits a bottle of whiskey. Angie watches as Warner takes two Ambiens and pathetically swigs them down with Glenlivet.

ANGIE

Get some sleep. Tomorrow, you figure out how to save your client, okay?

WARNER

Vicki won't talk to me. I miss her.

Angie sits on the bed near Warner.

ANGIE

That must be tough.

Warner lets out a phlegmy COUGH, squints from the accompanying sore throat. He takes another swig of whiskey. He feels Angie's gaze on him and backtracks.

WARNER

Has a dulling effect.
(beat, all business)
Let me give you some cash for a cab.

ANGIE

It's all good. I'll bill you.

Warner nods. Angie glances at him once more, then exits.

INT. ST. VINCENT DE PAUL'S CHURCH - DAY (DAY 4)

Sunday. Warner enters the hallowed chamber, a little worse for wear; services have not yet begun, but FATHER GIBSON is straightening hymn books and preparing. Warner approaches.

WARNER

Hey, Father. Been a while, I guess?

FATHER GIBSON

You're always welcome here.

CONGREGANTS begin to arrive. Gibson notices.

FATHER GIBSON (CONT'D)

Nevertheless, my son, I think one of those pews--
(indicates the back)
--will probably suffice for today.
Don't want to sew discontent with the flock and all that.

Warner finds a PEW up the back. He watches as the church fills up with parishioners, looking for someone. Then, someone sits down next to him... it's Toby.

TOBY

So nice to see you again. I'll save you the suspense. Your daughter doesn't come here anymore.

(beat)

Sad how you made her lose her faith.

WARNER

Go to hell.

TOBY

You know, you say that with irony, but it's not that bad.

WARNER

Yeah? What's it like?

TOBY

Well, the obvious joke is that it's *balmy*. But it's not that. It's clean, carpeted. A world of 'Admin'.

Nearby, SYLVIA enters, alone. Warner watches as she lights a PRAYER CANDLE before taking a seat a few rows away.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Most of us are just folks like you. We made a deal, and now we serve. We recruit more team members.

Toby pulls an iPad out of his briefcase. He opens to an elaborately drawn out CONTRACT. Warner rolls his eyes.

During this, the PROCESSIONAL begins. The Priest and attendants walk to the altar. Father Gibson leads the Congregation in the Penitential Rite.

FATHER GIBSON

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

CONGREGATION

(making the Cross)

Amen.

Toby rolls his eyes. He turns his attention to the contract.

TOBY
You executed a get-out
clause. But people
renegotiate all the
time. Maybe I throw
in some extra perks?

FATHER GIBSON
If we say we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves, and
the truth is not in us.
Let us then confess our
sins to God our Father.

FATHER GIBSON / CONGREGATION
Most merciful God, we confess that
we are sinners by our nature. Forgive
us, renew us, and lead us in your
Holy name. Amen.

The congregation sits. The Priest continues in the BG as
Toby struggles to move the pages on his iPad.

TOBY
Ugh. You ever read a book on one of
these things? I miss paper. There's
something about turning a page, *using
your hands*. Getting involved.

WARNER
Get involved? That what you call
making people do your bidding?

TOBY
We don't *make* anyone do anything.
(indicates upward)
He got one thing right. Free Will.
We're just like you, Ed. Politicians,
lawyers. We persuade, we cajole.
(beat)
I can't make someone dance... but I
can convince them they always wanted
to waltz in the pale moonlight, you
know what I'm saying?

Toby looks around the beautifully appointed sanctuary.

TOBY (CONT'D)
Everyone's gotta serve someone. But
God has so many sycophants already.
What's the point in all this praying
and devotion if you don't get shit
for it? You and I had a good thing
going. *We were this close*.
(earnest)
We can be again. I can throw this
case. Make Jacob a free man. Start
you back on your path.

The Congregation stands to join the choir in *Kyrie*. Warner
brushes off Toby's temptations; he listens to the song.

Toby grins, watching the flock, the folks who fill these halls with their hopes and dreams and fears.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Such a target-rich environment.

Toby opens an APP on his iPad. It has a list of a few names. He watches it as the congregation sings. Slowly, a few MORE NAMES materialize on his list. He looks around for them --

TOBY (CONT'D)

And here... they... come...

WARNER

You're wasting your time. These are good people.

Toby looks at the crowd, hungrily cross-referencing names and pictures as they start to populate on his app. He indicates some of them to Warner--

TOBY

Alan Young--selling his medication to pay his property taxes.

(beat)

Helen Sheen--wants to be President.

(grins at Warner)

Oh man, that takes me back.

Toby looks down at his list and grins as the congregation takes their seats, the hymn now over.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Sylvia Turner--wants her daddy to go free...

Warner bristles. He and Toby look at Sylvia, sitting silently, lost in thought and prayer.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Think it over, Ed.

(dark)

Jacob's running out of time...

Toby squeezes past Warner. On his way to the door, he looks at the PRAYER CANDLE Sylvia lit. Toby WINKS at Warner and BLOWS OUT the candle. Suddenly, Sylvia SHIVERS. Toby leaves. Sylvia looks around, confused; she doesn't see Warner.

Warner's face is steely, resolved. He alone knows with whom he does battle, and why he must win.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY, COSHOCTON ROAD - DAY (DAY 5)

Kate stands over a gravestone, lit warmly by emerging sunlight. There's a light puff of wind, and Toby appears.

TOBY

I think you should come to court today. Find Ed before he goes in, give him some encouragement. He's heading down the gentle slope. Now we want the hammer to fall on him.

Kate nods, deep in thought.

KATE

You were like him once, right? Made a deal, got what you wanted?

TOBY

Weren't we all?

KATE

Did you ever think about backing out, like he did?

TOBY

No. Not really. Too hard, right?

KATE

I came close. Guess you would have hounded me forever if I had, right?

TOBY

Someone would have. You know how it works. We always get 'em back.

(beat)

You're having second thoughts, are you? That's not an option.

KATE

It doesn't matter what I think. You've got him where you want him.

Kate walks away; Toby (literally) disappears into the shadow of the grave in front of which they were standing, and now we can finally see it: SARAH WARNER. 1975-2016.

INT. LOCK-UP - DAY

Warner and Angie sit with Jacob and Sylvia.

WARNER

(to Jacob)

You have to testify. We don't have a witness to throw doubt on the prosecution's theory. You're the only one who can say it wasn't you.

SYLVIA

Good. That's good, right?

(to Jacob)

You can tell them your side of things. Show them you're not the man they all think you are.

JACOB

Sylvia, sweetheart... I don't think you should be there.

SYLVIA

What? Why?

There's an uncomfortable pause. Angie tries to help--

ANGIE

These lawyers, it can get nasty when they go after people. Maybe if you--

JACOB

--if I testify, you'll hear things you don't wanna know.

A beat. That was hard for Jacob. Warner tries to help.

WARNER

Sylvia. I have a daughter who won't speak to me. All I want is for her to believe that I'm a good man.

(beat)

I don't know if I'm a good man. Your father is. He needs you.

Sylvia looks at her father, trying to understand.

SYLVIA

What did you do?

There's a BUZZ and the Bailiff enters, leading Jacob out.

OFF Warner, watching Sylvia's confusion--

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Angie, Warner and Sylvia head into the courtroom. Warner sees Kate standing in the hallway.

WARNER
(to Angie and Sylvia)
I'll see you in there.

Kate puts on her game face as Warner approaches.

WARNER (CONT'D)
Hey. What's going on?

KATE
I just... thought I'd come wish you
luck.

WARNER
Thanks. Fingers crossed.

Warner turns to go. Kate hesitates, almost speaks, but she remembers herself, and the the words die in her throat.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Warner and Jacob are at the defense table; Sylvia and Angie behind them. Sylvia puts a hand on the side of Jacob's arm. Tears well in Jacob's eyes; he wipes them away.

In the back, Kate takes a seat and glances briefly at Toby.

WARNER
The defense calls Jacob Warner.

A flippant smile creeps across Toby's face.

Jacob moves to the witness box. The Bailiff holds up a bible.

BAILIFF
Do you swear the testimony you give
will be the truth, the whole truth,
and nothing but the truth?

Jacob looks at his daughter.

JACOB
I do.

Warner stands; he looks at the jury, then walks to Jacob.

WARNER
Jacob, did you kill Victor Alvarez?

JACOB
No. I didn't.

WARNER
What happened?

JACOB

I went to see Victor about the money he owed Nick. Victor said he'd have it soon, so I left. That's it. I was there, but I didn't kill him.

WARNER

Picking up people's loans, though-- that's a nasty business, right?

JACOB

It can be. The kind of people who borrow money from Nick--they do it because they can't go to a bank.

Toby looks at Warner, wonders where he's going with this. Warner allows himself the slightest grin, knowing he's taking a bullet out of Toby's gun before he can fire it.

WARNER

Jacob, doing this sort of thing... has it ever gotten ugly for you?

JACOB

(long beat)

Yes. A couple of years ago, someone didn't pay. I had to send a message for Nick. Things got out of hand. I beat the guy up. Bad.

Sylvia is visibly shocked by this revelation. Jacob feels her looking at him, though he doesn't look at her.

Warner looks over at Toby, a tiny spring in his step. But Toby's pleasant facade doesn't fade. Warner clocks it.

WARNER

(to Jacob)

What happened? To you?

JACOB

I went to prison for six months.

(beat)

Prison changed me. I mean, I was still in the same line of work, but I wasn't going to do that again. No deadbeat is worth it.

Warner nods, takes his seat. Toby gets up.

Angie watches Toby intently. She looks down at her phone, at the image of the real Terry Krandle. When she looks back at Toby again, for the briefest of moments, his face starts to *change*. His features turn darker. For just an instant, she sees him as he really is, the way Warner sees him.

She gets *chills*, shuts her eyes in terror. When she opens them, everything is normal. *Did she imagine it?*

TOBY

Okay, you knew we were going to bring up your assault conviction. Clever trick you pulled. The problem I have is, you're a big, scary guy.

JACOB

I am more than my appearance, sir.

TOBY

If you say so, but your boss hired you because you can intimidate people.
(beat)
What if I told you that you were heard threatening the victim?

Warner leaps to his feet.

WARNER

Objection! Your Honor what is this??

JUDGE MENDEZ

Counsel, what are you insinuating?

During this, Kate watches with dread.

TOBY

I'm not insinuating. We have a recording of it.

WARNER

WHAT?!

Mendez SLAMS her gavel.

JUDGE MENDEZ

Get up here, you... boys!

Warner and Toby approach as Judge Mendez covers her mic. They're barely at the bench when Warner lights it up--

WARNER

What the hell are you doing?!

JUDGE MENDEZ

Counsel!

(to Toby)

If you have evidence, you had a duty to turn it over before the trial.

TOBY

Jacob Turner just took the stand and put his character into evidence. We're allowed to rebut that with our own. On the day of the murder, someone at Nicholas Lim's bar left a voicemail for a friend. Jacob Turner was nearby; the voicemail picked him up making threats on his phone.

WARNER

You can't possibly allow this!

Warner studies Judge Mendez's face as she considers.

JUDGE MENDEZ

It has probative value.

Warner looks at her, horrified. All semblance of professional conduct fails him, and he's left to simply sputter--

WARNER

This isn't fair...

JUDGE MENDEZ

Life isn't fair, Warner. Step back.

Toby looks at Warner, deflating like a balloon before his eyes. He almost draws strength from it. Toby takes out his phone and presses PLAY on an audio file. We start to make out the faint, distant voice of Jacob Turner.

JACOB (V.O.)

No, there ain't no grace period, Victor. You gotta pay. Today.

From the witness stand, Jacob looks at Sylvia, who's holding back tears--their relationship hangs by a thread. Jacob closes his eyes. He knows what's coming next.

JACOB (V.O.) (CONT'D)

No one is fuckin' playin' around, you hear that? If I have to come over there, I will fuck you up. You hear me, you piece of shit?! Get the fuckin' money!

The recording ends. Jacob looks at his daughter, pleadingly. But Sylvia is heartbroken, and can't look at him.

The room is completely silent. Warner closes his eyes.

JUDGE MENDEZ

Mr. Warner?

Angie prods Warner, whispering--

ANGIE

Hey.

With some effort, Warner looks up at the judge.

JUDGE MENDEZ

Redirect?

WARNER

Yes, Your Honor. Uh, could I have a few minutes to confer with my client?

Judge Mendez looks at the dazed Warner. She considers.

JUDGE MENDEZ

We'll reconvene in thirty minutes.

She BANGS her gavel, taking us to--

INT. WITNESS ROOM - DAY

Warner and Sylvia sit in silence with Jacob. A beat. Warner begins COUGHING uncontrollably. He doesn't try to hide his misery any longer. He's utterly defeated.

Jacob looks achingly at his daughter.

JACOB

Baby, I'm sorry. Sylvia--

SYLVIA

No. You know, I know how people see you, Dad. My whole life, I've defended you. I said you were a gentle giant. But you've threatened people. You've hurt people.

JACOB

That's not who I am.

SYLVIA

I don't know... maybe it's exactly who you are.

Sylvia heads for the door.

JACOB

Sylvia. Baby, please...

SYLVIA

I can't.

Sylvia leaves. Warner blows his nose painfully. He closes his eyes. The entire case is collapsing, but so too is his own struggle. He put everything he had into helping Jacob, fighting for a man he believed was good, and to preserve that image in his daughter's eyes.

Jacob looks at Warner, pleadingly.

JACOB

I swear to you, that's not who I am.

Warner opens his eyes, looks into Jacob's, desperately wanting to believe him--that he's not what others think he is.

WARNER

Then you gotta tell them that.

OFF Jacob, his life about to come down to the next few minutes--

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Later. Warner approaches Jacob on the stand.

WARNER

Jacob, that was... disturbing.

From the gallery, Kate watches Warner. There's a hint of real sympathy in her eyes. She quickly extinguishes it.

Jacob tries to speak. Instead, he starts to cry softly.

JACOB

That's all I got.

WARNER

What do you mean?

JACOB

Being big, scary. All my life I wanted to be more, but I'm not.

(beat)

But at least I'm big. I got that. No one could take that away. So if people didn't respect me, at least they feared me.

(impassioned)

You can't hear the other side of that call... Victor... he didn't take me seriously. He said "I'll pay when I'm ready," and he laughed at me. I wanted to scare him, show him he couldn't laugh at me.

(MORE)

JACOB (CONT'D)

(beat)

When I went there, I didn't threaten him or nothing. I was ashamed. I just asked him for the money, and when he didn't have it, I left. I don't wanna be that big guy who's only good for bein' mean and tough. But that's all I got.

Warner sits. All eyes are on Jacob. What he said had the ring of truth to it. It was sincere. But the damage may already be done.

OFF Warner, processing it all--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - NIGHT (NIGHT 5)

Warner sits at his desk, scratching out his closing argument. In need of a miracle. Angie enters, a little shaken.

WARNER

If this were any other trial, there's no way that judge would have allowed that voicemail to be played. She just hates me. Everyone hates me.

Angie sits down at her desk. She doesn't respond.

WARNER (CONT'D)

Is this the rest of my life? No matter how hard I try, I'm just poison to everyone around me?

ANGIE

Will you give it a goddamn rest?

Warner looks at Angie, speechless.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

You're not innocent in all of this. Don't you get why people hate you? Why no one wants to "call you Ed"?

WARNER

(indignant)

Let me tell you why they hate me. My entire adult life, I was in love with my wife's sister. But--whoops-- I met Sarah first, and that was that. On her *deathbed*, Sarah gave me and Ellie her blessing. But it became a huge scandal, and I lost everything.

(beat)

I've tried so hard to do good. But no one wants to understand.

ANGIE

Warner. Always the victim.

WARNER

Excuse me?

ANGIE

Esse quam videri. You've tried hard?

WARNER

I took this case for free, I came back to a place where everyone--

ANGIE

For once in your life, Warner, tell
the whole goddamn truth.

(beat)

What's your real sin?

(pointed)

Who is Toby?

Warner looks at Angie. Quiet agony creeps over his face.
He's never told a soul what he's about to tell her...

WARNER

Toby is a servant of hell, like the
ones they told you about in Sunday
school. Except... blander. He
offered me a deal. *And I took it.*

Angie takes this in, the confirmation of what she had started
to fear. It's terrifying.

WARNER (CONT'D)

Toby made it possible to do everything
I did. Got me elected to Congress,
governor, almost Vice President.

ANGIE

What happened?

WARNER

I got scared. I backed out.

(shakes his head)

No, I wasn't scared. I was arrogant.

I was on my way to being President
of the United States; I could take
care of myself and save my soul.

(beat)

Toby ruined everything for me. And
still, here he is. They never stop.
You ever think the world's against
you? *Sometimes it really is.*

ANGIE

How could you make...

She can't bring herself to say it, and Warner doesn't either.

WARNER

You don't know what it's like to
feel so completely helpless that you
make that decision.

Warner goes to the drinks cabinet and pours himself a drink.

ANGIE

Helpless? You had a wife, a child.
You were successful.

WARNER

Not like I wanted to be.

ANGIE

Do you know how many people would
kill for the life you already had
before vanity made you want more?

WARNER

You never know what someone's rock
bottom is. Whatever I did... it
just wasn't good enough. For me.
(he laughs pathetically)
I have impossibly high standards.
And I can't meet them. I can never,
ever meet them. So I always wanted
more. And more. *And more.*
(beat)
The day to day disappointments just
kill you. The little things. Until
they become everything.

As Angie listens, it all starts to become a little real for
her. The idea was abstract, but the details are scary.

ANGIE

You turned to the actual Devil...

WARNER

You don't... summon the demons with
blood and they appear. It's not
like that. They're salespeople.
They get you on the margins. I
thought Toby was a political
operative. He helped get me elected.
So I signed his stupid contract.
What did I care? I was miserable.
At least I could be powerful.

ANGIE

I'm sure you want me to feel sorry
for you. But... what you did...

Warner looks at Angie darkly.

WARNER

It's too late to feel sorry for me.

ANGIE

Then what am I supposed to do?

There's a long beat, as Warner makes the decision to push away the last person in his life.

WARNER

I think you should run.

Angie holds her place for a moment, considering whether or not to help this fallen man... Then she simply picks up her bag and exits, leaving Warner to his well earned misery.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY (DAY 6)

Toby is in mid-closing. He's calm, charming, effective.

Warner and Jacob sit at the defense table, but Sylvia and Angie are noticeably absent.

Further back in the gallery, we find Kate.

TOBY

...so there's nothing here you don't know. No reasonable doubts. Jacob Turner, threatened the victim.

During Toby's closing, the door opens quietly in the background; Angie slips in and finds a seat in the gallery.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Then he followed through on his threat-- beat Victor Alvarez *to death*. He committed this heinous crime. Now you can hold him accountable.

Toby sits down, satisfied.

Warner gets up slowly. He paces, a little aimlessly. He's sick, exhausted, isn't even sure what he believes anymore--

WARNER

Appearances can be deceiving. But you expect me to say that; you all know who I am, and what I did. Maybe if I convince you I'm not who you thought I was, you'll look at me differently...

(points to Jacob)

Maybe you'll look at him differently.

Warner catches a glance of Angie in the gallery. He smiles, almost imperceptibly, but meant for her. A *thank you*. And in that moment, he gains strength. He ups his game.

WARNER (CONT'D)

There's a Latin axiom, *esse quam videri*. It means "to be, rather than to seem to be." A friend told me that. I'm begging you. *Look closer*. At how things really are, not how they seem to be.

(beat)

I am what you think of me.

(indicates Jacob again)

He's not. He *seems* like a bad guy. But that's all we have.

Warner ratchets up the rhetoric, gaining momentum--

WARNER (CONT'D)

After all, the police never even tried to find anyone else.

(beat)

But what if there was someone. A *witness*. Someone else who was there? Someone who knows what really happened?

The jury stirs; the crowd murmurs. Toby's puzzled; reflexively, he casts a vague glance at Kate. Angie *just barely clocks it*. But it's not quite enough to mean anything.

WARNER (CONT'D)

And what if, ladies and gentlemen, this witness was about to walk through the door RIGHT NOW?

Shocked, everyone turns to the door. There's a long beat as everyone breathlessly anticipates who might walk through it. Jacob looks, too, but also catches empty chair behind him.

Warner looks at the door, too, waiting... waiting... then--

WARNER (CONT'D)

There isn't anyone coming through the door.

Murmurs from the crowd. The jury looks confused. Warner approaches them slowly.

WARNER (CONT'D)

But you thought there might be. *That's reasonable doubt.*

Warner sits. It's a compelling closing. We see reactions from the jury--maybe, just maybe, he got through to them.

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Warner cleans up his office. Angie enters. Silently, she begins to help Warner put the place back together.

The PHONE RINGS, breaking the ice. Angie answers it.

WARNER

Verdict?

ANGIE

No...

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

JUDGE MENDEZ

The jury has a question...

Judge Mendez shows Warner and Toby a small piece of paper.

WARNER

Manslaughter?

JUDGE MENDEZ

Prosecutor's office never charged it. Just wanted to roll the dice with the murder charges.

TOBY

And we still do.

WARNER

Your Honor, a moment?

The Judge nods. Warner takes Toby aside.

WARNER (CONT'D)

What are you doing? The jury is offering us a way out.

TOBY

It's really better for me if you lose this thing, Ed.

WARNER

You could lose.

OFF Toby, weighing that up--

INT. WITNESS ROOM - DAY

Warner talks with Jacob.

WARNER

You'd plead guilty to voluntary manslaughter, serve around 15 years, depending on parole.

JACOB

No. I won't say I did it.

WARNER

You're not saying that you killed him. Just that you did something, and it occasioned his death.

JACOB

It's the same thing, you're just dressing it up. I didn't do it. I didn't beat him, so I couldn't have "occasioned his death."

WARNER

It's just for a plea--

JACOB

My word matters. I swore to my daughter I didn't do this. I won't say I did.

OFF Warner, a mixture of frustration and admiration--

EXT. KOKOSING RIVER - DAY

Warner stands at the tranquil river. Toby appears.

TOBY

If your client won't take the plea, manslaughter is off the table.

Warner nods. Toby thinks. An idea--

TOBY (CONT'D)

How's this: you re-sign, I disguise myself, find a vulnerable juror, and sway them. Maybe we get a hung jury.

WARNER

No.

TOBY

You're being selfish, Ed. Valuing yourself over an innocent man.

A beat. Warner looks at Toby, resolved.

WARNER

No more deals, Toby.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The Jury files in. Angie sits behind Warner and Jacob, Kate several rows back. Everyone watches with anticipation.

As the jury take their seats, SYLVIA walks into the courtroom. Silently, she sits behind Jacob. She holds his hand.

JUDGE MENDEZ

Madame Foreperson, how do you find?

FOREPERSON

On the charge of Murder in the First Degree, we find the defendant, Jacob Turner... *not guilty*.

Sylvia cries in relief! Jacob closes his eyes tightly and squeezes her hand. He can't believe it. Warner can't believe it. *And in their excitement, they almost don't hear--*

FOREPERSON (CONT'D)

On the count of Murder in the Second Degree, we the jury find the defendant, Jacob Turner, **guilty**.

Warner's gutted; he catches his breath as he turns to Jacob.

WARNER

We... we can appeal. I can represent you at sentencing. We can--

But Jacob faces Warner with a serene visage.

JACOB

Thank you.

Jacob hugs his daughter. There's an understanding: she loves him. That was always more important to him than the verdict.

Jacob is led away, leaving Toby and Warner in direct sight line of each other. Neither says anything.

Kate watches him from a few rows back, surprised at how much she's affected by these events. She exits quickly.

TOBY

See you round, Ed.

Toby leaves. Angie puts a sympathetic hand on Warner's shoulder as we--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. WARNER'S OFFICE - EVENING (NIGHT 6)

Warner tidies files back into their rightful places. Angie tucks her chair into her desk and heads for the door.

ANGIE

You did everything you could. For Jacob. None of it was for you.

WARNER

Thanks.

ANGIE

Goodnight, Ed.

Warner smiles at the small, but meaningful gesture.

INT. WARNER'S CAR - EVENING

Warner drives. His PHONE RINGS--unknown number. He answers.

WARNER

Hello?

SYLVIA (V.O.)

It's Sylvia.

WARNER

Sylvia. I'm so sorry.

SYLVIA (V.O.)

It's okay. I appreciate everything you did for me and my father. The way you kept fighting for him... you made me realize I couldn't walk away.

(beat)

I wanted to see if I could help you.

Warner's confused. There's a beat, and then...

VICKI (V.O.)

Hey... Dad?

WARNER

Vicki. Oh my god, is it really you?

VICKI (V.O.)

What?

WARNER

Nothing, honey. I'm just so glad to hear your voice.

VICKI (V.O.)
Yeah, well I saw you called.

WARNER
Just a couple of times.

They both laugh nervously.

VICKI (V.O.)
Sylvia tracked me down, she told me
what you did for her father.
(beat, this is hard)
I'm not ready to let mine go, either.

Tears well in Warner's eyes. And for a guy who is so fluent
with his words, he can barely manage a sentence now.

WARNER
Thank you. Thank... thank you. I
love you, honey.

VICKI (V.O.)
I'll call again soon. Bye.

Vicki hangs up. Warner smiles through streaming tears, a
man feeling joy for the first time in a long, long while.

INT. VICKI'S HOUSE - EVENING

Vicki ends the call and turns to Sylvia.

VICKI
Thank you for finding me.

Sylvia smiles warmly.

SYLVIA
It's a small town.
(beat, emotional)
I just lost my father for a long
time. I know you'll never forgive
yourself if you lose yours.

Vicki starts crying.

VICKI
I'm sorry, I don't even know you.

SYLVIA
It's okay. It's okay.

Sylvia opens her arms and Vicki leans in. They hug. Vicki
cries on Sylvia's shoulder, finally able to communicate with
someone who understands what she's been through.

Sylvia holds Vicki. Then, from the corner of Sylvia's mouth, the tiniest flicker of an eerie grin begins to form...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. OHIO AVENUE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Crouched behind a car, we see SYLVIA--she WATCHES JACOB go into Victor Alvarez's house, she sees the NEIGHBOR catch a glimpse of them as she puts out her trash can--

We FLASH TO **A FEW MINUTES LATER**--Jacob EXITS Victor's house and walks away... Sylvia WALKS TOWARDS the house--

INT. VICTOR ALVAREZ'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Sylvia walks into Victor's house. He turns to see her--

VICTOR ALVAREZ
Who the hell are you?

Sylvia grabs the JESUS GNOME from the mantle and SMASHES Victor's with it. She proceeds to BEATS VICTOR TO DEATH, then wipes the gnome clean, leaves it, and exits silently.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. VICKI'S HOUSE - EVENING

As before. Sylvia hugs Vicki, and as that narrow grin develops into a devlish, victorious smile, we--

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END