CAST LIST

AARON WALKER WALLACE *
SAPIYA MASRY
MARIE (WALKER/WALLACE) WALLACE *
ANYA HARRISON
GLEN MASKINS
FRANK FOSTER
JAMAL BISHOP
JASMINE WALKER WALLACE *
DARIUS JOHNSON
DEZ O’REILLY
HUEY CORNELL (GUARD)
WILD BILL MILLER
BOBBY LATIMER *
ANDERSON (GUARD)
MONTE POWELL
GAVIN
GARRIGUS (GUARD)
MATTEO (KITCHEN WORKER INMATE)
VIC THE FORGER
MONICA
BUS PRISONER
HENRY ROSWELL
REPORTER SALLY BRAVER
ZOE MASRY
JUSTIN MASRY
JOSE RODRIGUEZ
JUDGE JULIE TANAKA
FREDDY DAWKINS
MOLLY DAVISON
JOSE’S ABUELA
ANGRY WOMAN
NIKKI
POLICE COMMISSIONER PAUL MORISSEY
RALPH (PASSERBY)
GUARD 1
GUARD 2
SECURITY GUARD
CRYING WOMAN
FRISKING GUARD
JASMINE (5 Y.O.)
PRISON GUARD

Nicholas Pinnock
Indira Varma
Joy Bryant
Mary Stuart Masterson
Boris McGiver
Glenn Fleshler
Dorian Missick
Tyla Harris
Brandon J. Dirden
Erik Jensen
Sean Ringgold
Peter Greene
Hassan Johnson
Jeb Kreager
Mick O’Rourke
Brendan Burke
Erick Betancourt
Gabe Vargas
Mark Dowey *
Adriana DeMeo
Philip Reid
Todd Susman
Christina Shea-Wright
JoJo Kushner
Cameron Mann
Andrew Casanova
Jade Wu
Matthew James Ballinger
Lizzy DeClement
Irma-Estel LaGuerre
Diany Rodriguez
Elizabeth Baranes
Antoni Corone
George Gerard
Aristeo F. Kardi
Tommy Nohilly
Guy Fortt
D. Dumebi Egbufor
Lawrence Bingham
Amaya Carr *
Sean Weil

* Denotes change
SET LIST

INTERIORS
Aaron’s Home
- Living Room
- Kitchen
- Jasmine’s Bedroom
Country Club
- Foyer
Courthouse (Bronx)
- Bathroom (“Somewhere”)
- Courtroom
- Hallway
- Judge’s Chambers
Hospital
Safiya’s Car
Safiya’s Suburban Home
- Kitchen
- Master Bedroom
Maskin’s Office
Police Interrogation Room
Prison
- Aaron’s Cell
- Administrative Area
  - Bullpen
- Cafeteria
- Factory
- Vic’s Cell
- Freddy’s POD
- Gym
  - Hang-out Area
- Hallway
- Jose’s Cell
- Kitchen
- Loading Area
- Paralegal’s Office
  - Hallway Outside
- POD
- Various (Security, Holding, Halls)
- Visiting Area
  - Security Area Outside
- Warden’s Office
Prison Bus
Tha-Club Trinity Room *
- Downstairs
  - Backroom

EXTERIORS
Aaron’s Home
- Backyard
- Street in front
Courthouse (Bronx)
Henry Roswell’s House
Prison
- Prison Yard
Tha-Club Trinity Room *

* Denotes change
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ACT ONE

INT. SOMEWHERE (COURTHOUSE BATHROOM) DAY (D1)

ECU -- The intensely intelligent, haunting eyes of AARON WALLACE (42, African-American).

AARON (V.O.)
I used to be just like you.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY (2002)

Aaron (25) holds his wife MARIE’S hand as she gives birth...

AARON (V.O.)
I had a wife I loved...

EXT. AARON’S HOME - NEW YORK - DAY (2004)

Aaron pulls up to his middle-class ROW-HOUSE. Marie’s with daughter JASMINE (now 2), greeting him with sweetness.

AARON (V.O.)
I had a family and a home...

EXT. TRINITY ROOM - NIGHT (2007)

The grand opening of TRINITY ROOM. MARIE, dolled up and sexy. A man (slick duds) greets guests, instructs Bouncers. A man in control. With a future.

AARON (V.O.)
I had ambitions and goals...

EXT. AARON’S HOME - BACKYARD - DAY (2007)

Aaron scoops up JASMINE (now 5). Friends eat, drink, watch FOOTBALL. A mixed crew, including an EMPLOYEE. Aaron grabs the SPATULA from best friend DARIUS, mans the BARBECUE.

AARON (V.O.)
I watched sports, paid my taxes, and had friends...

INT. TRINITY ROOM - NIGHT (2010)

Aaron hosts a big eclectic group: some hip-hoppers, some in suits, some a bit more thuggish and edgy...

AARON (V.O.)
Some of them were the kinds of friends you’d be better off without, and maybe I should have done something about that...
POLICE burst in. Aaron is SHOCKED.

INT. TRINITY ROOM - DOWNSTAIRS - BACK ROOM - SAME (2010)  
Cops find BAGS of COKE stashed in the CEILING (or AIR VENT).

INT. TRINITY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (2010)  
Aaron watches in horror as Employee is arrested. And suddenly Aaron’s being pinned against a WALL and CUFFED...

AARON (V.O.)  
...maybe I should have known, maybe I should have listened to my wife...

Marie screams Aaron’s name. Darius, shocked himself, holds her back, as Aaron’s led toward the DOOR in cuffs...

OMITTED

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT (2010)  
A COP interrogates Aaron. ADA DEZ O’REILLY (shirt and tie, sleeves rolled up, no jacket) watches through the WINDOW as DA GLEN MASKINS (wearing a suit) steps into FRAME.

AARON (V.O.)  
The powers that be came down on me.

INT. SOMEBWHERE (COURTHOUSE BATHROOM) - DAY (D1)  
Aaron stares back at us. A reprise of the opening shot. PULL BACK to REVEAL he’s in a SUIT and TIE. Bucking himself up. He smoothes down his BEARD with water. Trying to neaten it.

AARON (V.O.)  
So here I am now, nine years later, for the first time...

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS (D1)  
Aaron limps slightly, trailed by two SECURITY GUARDS, an ACCORDION FOLDER tucked under his arm. COPS, HANDCUFFS, JUMPSUITS. LAWYERS. Cell phones. Texting. Negotiating.

AARON (V.O.)  
...back in the same courthouse where they came to take my life away...

Aaron PUSHES OPEN a SET of DOORS and enters...
INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS (D1)

AARON’S POV: BAILIFF. STENOGRAPHER. Scales of Justice.

AARON (V.O.)
...except today, no matter what anybody
thinks about me...

Aaron makes his way down the AISLE, trying not to show his
nerves as people look up at him.

AARON (V.O.)
...about who I am and how I got here,
today I’ve got a way to fight back. And
you can be damn sure that’s what I’m
going to do.

MONTAGE ENDS as he arrives at JOSE RODRIGUEZ (24, jumpsuit)
talking to his ABUELA and SISTERS (in front row). Aaron
offers his hand to Jose’s abuela, trying to appear confident.

AARON
Mrs. Rodriguez.

She shakes his hand politely, but she has her doubts. Aaron
pulls out a chair for Jose and they sit at the DEFENSE TABLE.

AARON (CONT’D)
Remember, this is just about arguing the
motion to get your retrial. We’re not
even coming out of here today with a
decision on that.

Jose looks like he’s about to vomit. Aaron gets in his face.

AARON (CONT’D)
Hey. You’re innocent, you were
overcharged, you’ve done time you never
should have. We’re going to end that.

Aaron hears a familiar voice. Tracks it to see -- ADA
O’Reilly, 40, hurrying into court on his cell phone.

It’s like TIME FREEZES. Like Aaron’s seen a ghost.

O’REILLY
Yeah! Rookie bailed, his wife’s pregnant,
needed to be at the OB blah blah, I just
cought this eight minutes ago...

Aaron’s eyes register FEAR as he watches O’Reilly settle at
the PROSECUTOR’S TABLE, open his file to review it...
O’REILLY (CONT’D)
...some penny-ann B.S. Order the drinks, give me thirty, I’ll meet you there.

He clicks off, then notices Aaron. Almost does a double take as Aaron manages to shift his fear to anger. O’Reilly rummages through his files, sees under, “Defense Counsel” the name “Aaron Wallace”. Tries to compute this, moves to Aaron. *

O’REILLY (CONT’D)
How are you here?

AARON
Hard work and good will. What’s your method?

BAILIFF (O.S.)
All rise!

As the Judge enters, O’Reilly gives Aaron a hard look and the BANG BANG BANG of a gavel drives us to a TIME CUT:

JUDGE JULIE TANAKA (no-nonsense, blue-collar) looks at Aaron:

JUDGE TANAKA
Mr. Wallace, I understand this will be your first time arguing before the bench.

Jose’s abuela looks at the sisters skeptically.

AARON
It is, Your Honor.

JUDGE TANAKA
I won’t hold it against you. As long as you know what you’re doing.

AARON
I guess we’ll see ‘bout that, Your Honor.

JUDGE TANAKA
Let’s have at it then.

Aaron looks at Jose. At Jose’s abuela. And then at O’Reilly.

AARON (V.O.)
So this is it now. Day One. I wasn’t expecting him to be here, but that’s all right. It’ll only make this sweeter. See, ADA Dez O’Reilly is one of the bastards that put me away...
INT. PRISON BUS - DAY (D1)

We PAN AROUND the BACKS of ORANGE JUMPSUITS (“D.O.C.”).

AARON (V.O.)
That’s right. I, Aaron Wallace...

PAN WRAPS around to the faces of the PRISONERS to find Jose and then Aaron hand-cuffed to the POLES of the PRISON BUS.

AARON (V.O.)
...am under the permanent custody of the State of New York. Serving a life sentence for something I didn’t do...

EXT. PRISON - ESTABLISHING - DAY (D1)

The BUS pulls past the PRISON and enters the GATE...

INT. PRISON - VARIOUS (D1)

HANDCUFFS on wrists. BARS. GUARDS frisk Aaron. Separate him and Jose. Check Aaron’s suit and shoes for contraband. They go into a CLEAR PLASTIC BAG. The BAG given to Aaron.

AARON (V.O.)
So now you’re probably asking yourself how was I sitting in that court, in that fine suit?

Aaron is led through SECURITY, HOLDING, the HALLS...

AARON (V.O.)
But for me, the question isn’t how could I be out there in the world...

INT. PRISON - AARON’S CELL - DAY (D1)

Aaron in his CELL, staring at his WALL: photos of O’Reilly, Maskins, cops, other suspects. Hand-written notes and stickies. BOXES of LEGAL DOCUMENTS stacked in the corner.

AARON (V.O.)
The question is how can I be in here? And how am I ever gonna get out?

And off Aaron’s fiery eyes -- some super bad-ass new 50 Cent song (that he wrote just for this!) smashes to MAIN TITLES.

EXT. BRONX COURTHOUSE - DAY (D2)

O’Reilly walks toward the COURTHOUSE with 50ish cocky prick D.A. Glen Maskins (from the montage).
MASKINS
I don’t want to hear your mea culpas,
Dez. You got ninety seconds to tell me
how the hell this happened.

O’REILLY
So, apparently when he got to prison, he
went to work for the Paralegal
Association, representing inmates in
their internal cases inside prison --

MASKINS
-- I’m familiar.

O’REILLY
-- That got him unlimited access to the
library. From there, college and law
degrees online, then he figured out some
totally insane loophole in the system.

RALPH (PASSERBY)
District Attorney.

MASKINS
Yeah, hey, Ralph.
(then, to O’Reilly)
The loophole?

They enter the COURTHOUSE and get waved through SECURITY...

O’REILLY
First he took the bar in California --
the only state where you can sit for the
exam with a degree from an unaccredited
law school. Then he applied to have his
California license accepted reciprocally
in New York.

MASKINS
But he’s a convicted drug dealer. He
couldn’t have passed the morality test
without someone with serious juice.

O’REILLY
Remember Henry Roswell? State senator,
former public defender (litigator)? Well,
he’s retired now. In his spare time, he
arbitrates prison paralegal cases. Guess
he was impressed with Wallace and
sponsored him.

Maskins stops. Still trying to wrap his head around this.
MASKINS
You know Wallace is still fighting his
own conviction?

O’REILLY
I thought you had that under control.

MASKINS
He’s been quiet for a while, but now --
what’s this case anyway?

O’REILLY
Latino kid in for statutory rape. Plus
the girl OD’ed on drugs he gave her. He’s
serving 20 on the sex charge and
attempted murder.

MASKINS
And they’re looking for a retrial?

O’REILLY
They say the kid never bought the drugs.
Claim the dealer’s changing his story. I
don’t see Tanaka buying it.

MASKINS
I need to give her a call?

O’REILLY
I wouldn’t waste a chit. He’s a joke plus
he’s popping his cherry on this. I’ll run
rings around him if it comes to that.

MASKINS
Awright, but I need to be in the loop.
Second you get Tanaka’s ruling, I want to
know.

O’REILLY
You got it.

Maskins strides away. And off O’Reilly, not as confident as
he just led his boss to believe...

INT. PRISON - POD - DAY (D2)

Aaron (carrying a CARDBOARD BOX) makes his way through the
POD, where fellow PRISONERS socialize, play cards, chess.
MONTE POWELL, an Older Prisoner, intercepts him:

MONTE
Yo Aaron, you review my charges yet?
AARON
I’m on it, Monte. Hearing’s not ‘til next week.

MONTE
‘Cause I can’t do no solitary!

AARON
You stuck a fork in Nineball’s eye. Next time try a spoon.

MONTE
Hey, I know you been breakin’ your ass for Jose! You better still got time for the rest of us!

AARON
All I got is time!

Aaron arrives at Jose and stout guard HUEY CORNELL, waiting in front of AARON’S CELL.

HUEY
No romance in here, hey fellas?

AARON
You welcome to watch.

Huey eye-fucks Aaron, lets them in.

AARON (CONT’D)
(to Jose)
Let’s get to work.

As Aaron opens his BOX and pulls out the files and paperwork, Jose takes in the CELL: Aaron’s family photos near the bed. Opposite that, a WAR ROOM WALL: images of Maskins, cops, the Judge who tried his case, other suspects. Hand-written notes and stickies. In the corner, dozens of BOXES of files.

JOSE
This all for your case?

AARON
Yep.

Jose recognizes O’Reilly’s PHOTO on the WALL.

JOSE
That’s the dude going against us now.

AARON
Uh-huh.
JOSE
So you got his face up on your wall, like, what? For inspiration?

AARON
You could call it that.

JOSE
Yeah, you know, that’s what I was kind of wondering about. What went down in court yesterday, seems like it’s personal -- between you and him.

AARON
It won’t affect how I do anything.

JOSE
‘Cause I was talkin’ to my Grandma, and she was kind of concerned if like -- they got somethin’ against you already, it may make it harder for me.

AARON
They don’t like to lose. No matter who’s on the other side.

JOSE
Yeah, I tried telling her --

AARON
-- She got somebody else lined up? Cause she didn’t do very well by you the first time around.

JOSE
I know, I know, I just...

Jose shrugs. Utterly Hamlet.

AARON
I bet you think what I been doin’ in here all these years -- fightin’ the system that screwed me over. Right? (off Jose)
Wrong. What I do as prisoner rep: that’s the commodity keeps me alive. Becomin’ a lawyer -- that’s how I’m gettin’ out. See, you’re just the first. I’m gonna use your case to attack the D.A. Day by day, case by case. ‘Time I’m done, when he’s soft and his cred’s shot, that’s how I’m gonna prove they worked me over. (MORE)
AARON (CONT'D)
Everything I do, everything I’ve done --
is about gettin’ my freedom and back to
my family. You want another lawyer? Have
at it. But I don’t think you’re gonna
find anyone more motivated than me.

INT. PRISON - SECURITY OUTSIDE VISITING AREA - DAY (D3)
BUZZ. A SECURITY DOOR opens. Marie (now 40’s, weight of the
world on her) steps through the door and enters...

INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - CONTINUOUS (D3)
Marie makes her way through the VISITING AREA. She passes one
WOMAN who’s crying, then an arguing couple --

ANGRY WOMAN
Well, how the hell am I supposed to pay
for that?!

-- a MOM with a shrieking two year old, and approaches Aaron, who SMILES when he sees her. Rises to greet her.

AARON
How you doin’?

MARIE
Good, okay. Long drive.

They sit. She shows him two TIES.

MARIE (CONT’D)
I brought a couple more ties for you.
‘Case you need ‘em for court.

AARON
(taking them)
Thanks.
(them)
Still no Jazz?

MARIE
Sorry. She’s got extra SAT prep today.

AARON
(wounded)
This is three weeks in a row she’s
missed.

MARIE
(evading)
She’s a teenager. She’s got her own life.

He looks at her, wondering if she’s hiding something.
AARON
You got that report card?
(off her look)
I gotta sign it, right?

Marie hesitates, pulls it out of her pocket, slides it to Aaron, anticipating his reaction. His face darkens and he gives her a disapproving look.

MARIE
You can spare me the high and mighty act, awright?

AARON
You okay with these grades? That what you’re sayin’?

MARIE
Kids have ups and downs, Aaron --

AARON
-- She quit gymnastics, she looks exhausted, last time she was here I’m damn near sure she was stoned --

MARIE
-- She was not stoned!

AARON
Well, somethin’s goin’ on and whatever it is --

MARIE
-- It’s on me, right?!

AARON
No, it’s on Darius.

MARIE
Are you kidding me?

AARON
He’s not hard enough on her.

MARIE
He’s not her father!

AARON
Well, if he’s not willing to take on that responsibility, maybe he should get out of your bed.
MARIE
I’d (ALT: I might) kick him out if you came home. Oh wait, you can’t! Because you’re locked up for life!

He looks at her stunned, wounded. He softens, vulnerable:

AARON
You’re not telling me something.

She shakes her head. Maybe he’s right, maybe she’s hiding something, but instead of telling him what it is, she tells him how it’s making her feel:

MARIE
You should’ve taken the plea, Aaron.

AARON
It was twenty years.

MARIE
You’d have been up for parole in twelve. Three years from now...
(heart-broken)
I would’ve waited. And Jasmine would still have her father.

This is a punch in the gut. But instead of anger, he allows his grief to emerge. Reaches for her hand.

AARON
You still remember what I was like? The kind of...

Father. Husband. His eyes meet hers. She does remember. Can feel that. Now he can’t say the words. Fights back the tears.

AARON (CONT’D)
Every day, every second I’m not there for her... For you...

Their eyes connect. The love between them still so raw and palpable. But the loss and pain are too much for her.

MARIE
I’m sorry. I just can’t --

She hustles away. Aaron, reeling, gets up --

AARON
Marie! Marie, come back! Marie!

But she doesn’t. And off Aaron, aching for what he’s lost...
EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY (D3)

Inmates play BASKETBALL and SOCCER. Lift WEIGHTS. Hold unlit cigarettes, chat, play cards. Prison Warden SAFIYA (“Sophia”) MASRY (self-made, super-sharp, ambitious, first-generation American) moves through the YARD with Huey and Captain FRANK FOSTER.

SAFIYA
I don’t want to hear how difficult it is to police the yard. Not when violent incidents are down 23 percent since we started giving them extra time out here.

FOSTER
Violence may be down, but contraband’s way up.

SAFIYA
I haven’t seen evidence of that.

FOSTER
Well, you’re up in your Ivory Tower.

HUEY
I see it myself, Ma’am. My own two eyes every day. More face time you give, more the H and oxy are gonna be passin’ hands.

SAFIYA
Well, Medical reports lower incidence of overdose, suicide attempts, mental illness across every category. I’m not sure what to do with your anecdotal accounts, Huey.

FOSTER
You want to get rid of the contraband, get rid of the contact visits. Go back to the windows.

SAFIYA
And break out the riot gear? You know I’m not doing that.

FOSTER
All due respect, making policy out of fear’s a bad idea, ma’am.

SAFIYA
Reversing my policies because you’re the one who’s afraid of change is never going to happen.

(MORE)
SAFIYA (CONT'D)
So, if what you’re telling me is that old
dogs can’t be taught new tricks, I’ll
just have to find new dogs, Captain.

As she walks away, Foster throws a pissed-off look to Huey.

ANGLE ON Aaron with his best friend JAMAL BISHOP, a reformed
gang-banger, and BOBBY LATIMER, working their BICEPS on a
BENCH. We see another side of Aaron: more street, cocky, wry,
playing to his friends with a smile.

JAMAL
Warden’s down from the Big House today.

AARON
Guess she wants to see how the other half
lives.

JAMAL
She must be trippin’ -- you gettin’ out
to go to court.

AARON
I’m licensed now. Nothin’ she can do
about it.

All eyes turn to see WILD BILL MILLER, White Army prison drug-
dealer, move from his tatted posse toward Aaron.

BOBBY
The hell this bitch want?

JAMAL
(to Aaron)
Douchebag Knox got thrown in the hole.
Looks like Wild Bill wants you to get
into it for him.

BOBBY
You ain’t doin’ any favors for them, yo.

AARON
(pushing the swagger)
Little Hitler wannabes. Hell no!

Prisoners make way for Wild Bill and two of his GOONS. He
arrives at Aaron. (His Goons hang back a bit.)

WILD BILL
A word.

Aaron glances at Jamal, follows Wild Bill.
WILD BILL (CONT’D)
You hear about Joey?

AARON
Brawlin’ with Custody? Can’t say how that’s gonna help anybody.

WILD BILL
I was wonderin’ if maybe it was you ratted him out.

AARON
I think you smokin’ too much crystal.

WILD BILL
You’re up there in the Warden’s office every week. People startin’ to wonder what you talk about.

AARON
I’m the prisoner rep. What I talk about is your rights.

WILD BILL
Then I guess you’ll take Joey’s case? (off Aaron’s reluctance)
What? You don’t like our tats? Law Man ain’t supposed to judge.

AARON
I make certain exceptions.

WILD BILL
Well, I need him out. And I’d hate for folks in the yard to start questioning what does go on between you and the Madame.

A warning. Aaron notes the White Army GOONS, then the AFRICAN-AMERICAN, HISPANIC GANGS -- suspicious of him. Then at Foster and Huey. Off Aaron, caught between the factions --

INT. PRISON – FACTORY – DAY (D3)

Aaron walks through a FACTORY where prisoners work, climbs a set of STEPS, past a GUARD BOOTH to a LANDING. (Behind him, along the long railing over the Factory -- ARMED GUARDS watch the activity below.)

GUARD
Prima donna’s in the house.

Aarons shows them a bunch of FILES. As always:
AARON
Official legal business with the Warden.

ANOTHER GUARD muscles Aaron, frisks him roughly. Aaron sighs, containing his anger, has to take this. When he’s done -- Guard gestures to the DOOR. Aaron enters...

INT. PRISON - ADMINISTRATIVE AREA - CONTINUOUS (D3)

Assistants in the BULLPEN look at Aaron with respect, suspicion, or mistrust. He arrives at the WARDEN’S OFFICE. Knocks on the AJAR DOOR. She signals for him to close it behind him and he enters to find her wrapping up a call...

INT. PRISON - WARDEN’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS (D3)

SAFIYA
If the homework’s due, then there’s no choice, is there?... So next time don’t wait til the last minute... Now I gotta go, but I’ll be home for dinner, okay? Love you.

Aaron registers that: he won’t be home for dinner. She hangs up, pops nicotine gum in her mouth. Looks at Aaron.

SAFIYA (CONT’D)
Captain Foster wants to go back to the booths for visitation.

AARON
Good idea, if he wants to start a riot.

SAFIYA
That’s what I said.

AARON
They don’t like your reforms. They’ll do what they can to undermine them.

SAFIYA
They claim there’s an increase in trafficking.

AARON
Not that I can see.

SAFIYA
But Wild Bill’s still the main mover? (off his non-answer) You were seen talking to him in the yard. Foster thinks maybe you’re forming some kind of alliance.
AARON
And you believe that?

SAFIYA
(devil’s advocate)
You’re in here for dealing. Your best friend Jamal is a gang-banger.

AARON
Who you think my friends are gonna be in here? Come on.

SAFIYA
You know if I get more violence and OD’s because there’s an escalation in the drug trade, it will kill everything I’m trying to do here.

AARON
I told you from the beginning. You get what I know about the guards. Not the prisoners. That’s the only way this can work. Unless you want me dead.

SAFIYA
(relents, shifts)
Then give me what you got.

AARON
It’s been mostly nickel and dime stuff. But I just found out they threw Joey Knox in the hole.

SAFIYA
I didn’t see any paperwork on that.

AARON
Me neither. But give me a shot at finding out what’s going on.

She takes that in, decides to trust him. Then:

SAFIYA
You should know Custody’s really not excited about having to escort you back and forth to court.

AARON
Can’t give ‘em a raise?

SAFIYA
You know how difficult they can make things for you. You should consider if it’s going to be worth it.
AARON
You think I worked this long to back out now?

SAFIYA
I think you can afford to focus on your own case.

AARON
I appreciate the advice, ma’am, but Jose’s innocent and I can prove it.

She reads him. Admires his apparent nobility. Doesn’t know yet that in Aaron’s mind helping Jose is helping himself.

SAFIYA
Well, I suppose I should congratulate you then. I heard from the court. You got your retrial.

AARON
That’s -- great, thank you, ma’am.

SAFIYA
Okay, then. Just watch your back.

AARON
Every minute of every day.

As he heads out of the OFFICE, he subtly pumps his fist. He got Jose’s day in court!

OMITTED

END ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY (D4)

Riding side-by-side in the BUS, in their PRISON GARB, Aaron counsels a terrified Jose.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY (D4)

Aaron and Jose come off the BUS, handcuffed. They move into the ENTRANCE for PRISONERS/DEFENDANTS.

INT. COURTHOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY (D4)

Aaron changes out of his PRISON GARB. We see his ANKLET as he takes his SUIT and TIE out of a CLEAR PLASTIC BAG.

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY / COURTHROOM DAY (D4)

Aaron limps slightly (from the ANKLET) down the HALL toward the COURTHROOM. Trailed by SECURITY GUARDS.

INT. COURTHROOM - DAY (D4)

Aaron rises, leaving a legal pad with notes on the edge of his DESK as he approaches Jose on the witness stand.

AARON
So you’re a high school junior, you got a B average, you got your friends, you’re on the soccer team, you even got yourself a girl... Tell us about that.

JOSE
Molly was like, from a good family, you know? With money. And me, my Dad split, my mom was workin’ three jobs, I was eatin’ frozen waffles for dinner.

AARON
I bet her parents liked you.

JOSE
Not much. They said it was ‘cause I was seventeen and she was only fifteen. But she was a sophomore, we was only one grade apart.

AARON
So what’d you do?
JOSE
Snuck around a couple months, but I knew
I had to break it off before my birthday.
AARON
Because in the state of New York, an eighteen year old and a fifteen year old is considered statutory rape.

JOSE
And they’d for sure call the cops.

Aaron grabs the legal pad, reading off the list of states, playing to the jury:

AARON
Did you know that in Alabama, Kentucky, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, Florida, Pennsylvania and fourteen other states, a boy and a girl can get married and have kids at those ages?

O’REILLY
Objection. If you’re going to challenge the validity of the law, I’d suggest you take it up with the State Supreme Court.

JUDGE TANAKA
Sustained, Mr. Wallace. And I don’t appreciate the grandstanding. *

Aaron puts the pad back on his table, turns back to Jose:

AARON
So you broke up. Then what?

JOSE
She keeps cryin’ and beggin’ and sayin’ she’ll hurt herself if I don’t get back to her. This is like, over a few weeks. Then one day, she promises if I just come over one more time she’d be awright.

AARON
And you went?

Jose fights back the emotions. This still haunts him.

JOSE
She said her parents were going to be out for the day, so yeah -- I went over there. Then after, you know, we were together, I fall asleep. When I wake up, there’s a note next to me, saying she’s gonna kill herself.
O’REILLY
Objection! The police never found this note, the victim herself swore under oath she didn’t write it. This has been hashed and rehashed.

JUDGE TANAKA
Sustained. I’ll allow this line of questioning if and only if you (Aaron) can produce any corroborating evidence of this note.
O’REILLY
Thank you, Your Honor.

Aaron takes in the setback, but doesn’t let it rattle him. He nods to Jose -- *it’s all right. Good job.*

AARON
Let’s get back to that day. You woke up, then what...?

JOSE
I found her in the living room. Next to an empty bottle of Oxy. I tried to wake her, then when I couldn’t, I called 911.

AARON
And you waited for the ambulance?

JOSE
(ashamed)
No.

AARON
Why not?

JOSE
Because I knew her parents would come after me. Which is what they did.

AARON
Even though Molly survived.

JOSE
Guess they wanted to punish me.

AARON
And of course the prosecution had text messages between you and Molly... where you kept promising to buy her Oxy.

JOSE
Yeah, they did.

AARON
Can you explain those?

JOSE
She kept asking me and I just kept stalling. Hoping she’d give up.

AARON
Why didn’t you just tell her “no”?
JOSE
‘Cause I thought she’d just go to the school dealer and buy them herself.

AARON
Were you right?

JOSE
That’s what she ended up doing. The dealer just lied about it six years ago, that’s how I ended up doing all this time.

AARON
Let the record show I intend to call this drug dealer as well as the police officer on the scene who saw that missing suicide note.

Aaron looks at the jury, nods “good job” to Jose and we --

**EXT. COURTHOUSE – DAY (D4)**

Jose and Aaron (once again in JUMPSUITS) make their way, handcuffed, to the PRISON BUS. Aaron feeling good, even cocky.

JOSE
So I did good?

AARON
Nah, man, you did great. We got ‘em right where we want ‘em. Now we bring in Freddy to vouch on the drugs, we’re home free.

A local REPORTER, with CAMERA, comes at Aaron:

REPORTER/SALLY BRAVER
Hi. Sally Braver, Channel 8 News. Are you Aaron Wallace? The prisoner lawyer?

A beat. A decision. The CAMERA looming. Aaron knows if he talks, it will seriously escalate his attack on Maskins.

AARON
Yes, ma’am, I am.

**INT. MASKINS’ OFFICE – DAY (D4)**

A “Glen Maskins for Attorney General” poster leans against the corner. Maskins stands against his desk, watching TV:

SALLY BRAVER (ON TV)
Are you saying the District Attorney’s office is racist?
AARON (ON TV)
I’ll leave that for other people to decide.

(MORE)
AARON (ON TV) (CONT'D)
But there's no question the system's broken for anyone who doesn't have power or money. Overcharging people who can't afford a decent lawyer, then forcing a plea is an epidemic in this country. And if you look at the numbers, the Bronx has been one of the worst under Glen Maskins.

O'Reilly enters under this.

SALLY BRAVER (ON TV)
And what about your own case? Do you have plans to try to overturn your conviction?

AARON (ON TV)
Right now, Jose Rodriguez is my client and that's what I'm focused on.

MASKINS
How the hell did Sally Braver get a hold of this? Was it Wallace?

O'REILLY
Maybe. But you know how she is. Could've gotten a tip from one of the bailiffs.

MASKINS
Well, I don't buy his Dark Knight Robin Hood crap. He's trying to make himself a folk hero so he's got more cred to appeal his own conviction.

O'REILLY
He can't be a folk hero if he doesn't win. Which he won't.

MASKINS
Yeah, well, you said he wouldn't even get a retrial, now I gotta deal with this --

SALLY BRAVER (ON TV)
The timing for this has gotta be difficult for District Attorney Maskins who's in a neck-and-neck battle in the upcoming election for Attorney General against Brooklyn D.A. Anya Harrison...

SPLIT SCREEN: Maskins and Anya Harrison.

Maskins mutes the TV. Turns to O'Reilly.
MASKINS
You drop everything else on your plate, and do not even contemplate losing this case.

INT. AARON’S HOME – KITCHEN – NIGHT (N4)

JASMINE (now 17) sits at the KITCHEN TABLE, staring out the window, lost in thought, anxiously biting her fingernails. Marie, cooking dinner nearby, notes her daughter.

MARIE
You gotta study for that midterm, don’t you?

JASMINE
I want to go see Dad.
(off Marie’s eye-roll)
He has a right to know what’s going on!

MARIE
You know the baggage he has around this. He’s just going to make you feel like you screwed up.

JASMINE
You know, you say you’re protecting me, I think you’re protecting yourself. I think you’re scared he’s gonna say you screwed up.

DARIUS has entered under this.

DARIUS
Hey. What’s going on here?

MARIE
She’s pissed I’m keeping her from seeing Aaron.

DARIUS
Your mother has good reasons --

JASMINE
-- Are you going to start talking to me about this now? Seriously?

DARIUS
Well, I live here and I support you, so yeah --
MARIE
-- Darius.

JASMINE
Just because you’re banging your best friend’s wife doesn’t mean you get to start playing Daddy with me!

DARIUS
We’re married, (ALT: together), Jazz! That ain’t changing and you’re gonna have to start to accept that!

JASMINE
Ah, how about never?! How’s that work for you?

She exits. Door slams. Darius turns to Marie.

DARIUS
You gotta stop acting like you did somethin’ wrong. Child needs to know who’s in charge.

He walks in the other direction. And off Marie, caught in the complicated maelstrom created by Aaron’s absence.

INT. AARON’S HOME – JASMINE’S BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER (N4) 33

Jasmine lies in BED. Staring up at a TV SCREEN mounted there. But no movies or shows. Instead, it’s a SLIDE SHOW of FAMILY PHOTOS. Clearly, Jasmine had this installed so she could see photos of her Dad every night before bed. There’s Dad in HOSPITAL BLUES holding Jazz the day after her birth. Dad at her third birthday party, blowing out candles together. Dad and her with her first bicycle. But the photos of them together stop when she’s about eight. A life abbreviated.

She wipes a tear from her eye as Marie enters. Sits down next to her. Looks up at the PHOTOS. It makes her wistful and sad.

MARIE
If you really think you’re ready, we’ll go see him next week, okay?

Jasmine looks at her mom, softening.

MARIE (CONT’D)
But you can’t talk to Darius like that.

JASMINE
I know... I’m sorry.

MARIE
He knows how hard this is for you. And he wants to help -- however he can.
Jasmine nods, trying to wrap her head around that.

JASMINE
You think he knows you still love Dad?

Marie is taken aback by Jasmine’s insight into the complexity of the situation. Her answer is as much to convince herself as her daughter:

MARIE
I think he understands there are different kinds of love.

Marie sees Jasmine’s anguish. Gently brushes aside Jasmine’s hair. Like when she was little.

MARIE (CONT’D)
I know you think he’s coming back some day, but he’s not. He’s never getting out of there. Sooner we all accept that, the easier it will be to live our lives.

JASMINE
Well, I don’t care about what’s easy. And I’m not giving up on him. I don’t know why you did.

Marie feels the sting of that accusation. Looks up at a PHOTO: Aaron (dressed up as the TIN MAN) twirling Jasmine (dressed as DOROTHY) on Halloween. She’s embroiled with conflict -- about how to live with Aaron’s absence and the fact that she still loves him.

WIDE -- A tableau of mother comforting child. And the absent father who can’t be here.

END ACT TWO
ACT THREE

OMITTED

INT. PRISON - FREDDY’S POD - MORNING (D5)

Aaron shows sympathetic Guard (ANDERSON) some PAPERS.

AARON
Here for Freddy Dawkins. Court order.
(as Anderson peruses)
He’s one of my witnesses. I gotta prep
him ‘fore we head over to court.

Satisfied with the paperwork, Anderson calls out to --

ANDERSON
Yo Freddy!

TIME CUT: Freddy and Aaron sit at a TABLE in a discreet
corner of the POD, practicing Freddy’s testimony.

AARON
And what did you do in high school, when
you weren’t in class?

FREDDY
I sold drugs.

AARON
(showing him)
I have a transcript of text messages
between you and Molly Davison. Do you
recognize these?

FREDDY
Yes.

AARON
So in the days leading up to her suicide
attempt, she arranged to meet with you
and you agreed.

FREDDY
That’s right.

AARON
And what did she want?

FREDDY
(getting up)
To buy Oxy.
AARON
So six years ago, why did you testify
that Jose was the one who bought them?

Freddy pulls out a cigarette, can’t find his lighter.

AARON (CONT’D)
Come on, man -- we’ve been over this.
This is where you tell the court you were
scared because she was a minor and the
D.A. cut you a deal --

FREDDY
-- if I said “I sold it to Jose”! I know,
I got it!

AARON
Then what’s the problem?

FREDDY
I don’t know, man. I just don’t know if I
want to get involved in this.

AARON
You shakin’ me down?

FREDDY
Nah, man, no.

Aaron reads him, figures out:

AARON
What’d they promise you?

Freddy looks down, ashamed.

AARON (CONT’D)
I hope they offered you protection.
Because you’re going to need it when
people find out you rolled again.

FREDDY
So now you’re threatening me.

AARON
Not a threat. A fact. And I won’t be able
to stop it.

FREDDY
This is messed up, man.
AARON
That kid’s been rotting in here for six years because you lied. This is your chance to make that --

An ALARM. The LIGHTS dim on and OFF. Red LIGHTS on the WALL FLASH. Guards rush in.

GARRIGUS (GUARD, ON SPEAKER)
Lockdown in effect! Back to your cells! Repeat: we are in a lockdown!

Aaron follows Freddy to his CELL.

AARON
Freddy! Freddy, I gotta know what it’s gonna be here.

Huey comes at him:

HUEY
Gotta clear out!

AARON
(backing away)
Freddy! Freddy!

FREDDY
I’ll do it, awright? I’ll do it!

Huey grabs Aaron, points a finger in his face:

HUEY
Hey! You want to end up in the hole?!

AARON
I’m cool, man! I’m cool!

Huey pushes Aaron away and he crosses with Anderson:

ANDERSON
Sorry, man. That wasn’t right.

Aaron looks at him oddly: why is Anderson apologizing? He eyes Anderson, then the other GUARDS (all hostile). Has a shitty feeling this lockdown was manufactured to stop him from talking to Freddy.

INT. SAFIYA’S SUBURBAN HOME – KITCHEN – MORNING (D6)

Crate and Barrel aspirational. Safiya packs school lunches while 10-year-old daughter ZOE makes breakfast. 12-year-old son JUSTIN finishes his homework at the kitchen counter.
Safiya’s hard-charging wife (ANYA HARRISON) enters. Kisses Justin on the forehead.

ANYA
Down to the wire, huh?

JUSTIN
I know. “Don’t wait til the last minute”. I get it.

ANYA
We just want it to be your best work.

Any flas a look at Safiya, shows her her cell phone.
ANYA (CONT'D)
You didn’t tell me Aaron Wallace was going scorched earth on the District Attorney.

Safiya sees photos of Wallace/Maskins on a NY Metro Daily story.

ANYA (CONT'D)
We talked about him taking some cases. You didn’t tell me he was gonna grandstand on the news --

SAFIYA
-- This is gonna hurt Maskins, help you.

ZOE
What are you guys talking about?

SAFIYA
Just some stuff about Mom’s election.

ZOE
I’m wearing your pin! Even though Justin won’t!

JUSTIN
I said I’d wear it. Jeez, Zoe!

ANYA
(to Safiya)
I’m up four points. I don’t need Maskins backed into a corner and lashing out.

Safiya pulls Anya in. Affectionate.

SAFIYA
Hey... I’ll talk to Wallace, okay? *

INT. PRISON BUS – DAY (D6)
Aaron and Jose are on their way to COURT. Both a bit amped up.

AARON
So your grandma’s bringin’ a suit, right? Can’t just be a shirt and tie. And no yellow or maroon this (time) --

JOSE
AARON
Okay, good, so first thing I’m gonna call
the cop on the scene, the one who saw
Molly’s pink stationery (suicide note) on
the floor. After him, we got Freddy --
Aaron sees out the window --

AARON (CONT’D)
Hey! Superior Court’s first stop!

DRIVER
What are you -- my navigator?

AARON
(to a BUS PRISONER)
Where are they taking you?

BUS PRISONER
Queens County.

AARON
(to Driver)
Yo, we gotta be in court by nine! This is gonna make us two hours late!

DRIVER
You can take it up with Transport when we get back.

AARON
(to Bus Prisoner)
What time you gotta be there?

BUS PRISONER
Not til noon.

AARON
Yo, you got the wrong route! He doesn’t gotta be in court til twelve.

But the Driver just ignores him. And off Aaron, realizing the guards are fucking him, seething...

INT. COURTROOM - DAY (D6)

Aaron and O’Reilly at the BENCH with Judge Tanaka. Aaron trying to contain his anger.

AARON
Your Honor, I am very sorry, but there was a problem with the Transport --

JUDGE TANAKA
-- I’ll say there was. The Driver says he had to change his route because you were riling up the inmates and he had to get them off the bus for security reasons.
AARON
Now that is just -- (bullshit) -- not true, Your Honor.

O’REILLY
Whatever it is, you’re not getting the witness back.

AARON
Why? We can just call him tomorrow.

O’REILLY
He’s working an undercover case. This was his only opening.

AARON
You got paperwork on that?

JUDGE TANAKA
I have word from his Captain and that’s good enough for me.

Aaron clenches his fists, backs up from the bench, fuming. Trying to control himself. O’Reilly turns to --

O’REILLY
Security.

The Security Guard comes over.

JUDGE TANAKA
Mr. Wallace...?  *

Aaron sees the Guard move toward him. Feels the humiliation. The impotent rage. Manages to get a hold of himself.

AARON
Let’s just move on to the next witness.

O’REILLY
Would that be Freddy Dawkins?

AARON
Supposed to be, yeah.

O’REILLY
Yeah, the thing is --
  (hands Judge papers)
-- Mr. Dawkins is now reverting back to his original testimony from six years ago, Your Honor. Here’s the affidavit.

AARON
How did you get that?!
O’REILLY
His lawyer sent it to us.
(to Judge)
He confirms once again that the defendant
bought the drugs. Not the victim.

AARON
(fired up)
You bought him!

JUDGE TANAKA
Mr. Wallace.

AARON
Bought or coerced, which is it?!

O’REILLY
Whoa! Take it easy.

JUDGE TANAKA
Mr. Wallace --

AARON
(wheeling to Judge)
-- You telling me you don’t get what’s
going on here?! He tampered with my
witness!

JUDGE TANAKA
Can you prove that?!

AARON
It’s what they do! All day every day!
Move people around like they’re pieces on
a chess board!
(re: Jose)
Except that kid right there -- he ain’t
some pawn! That kid had a life and you
took it from him!

JUDGE TANAKA
Mr. Wallace, you need to settle down!

AARON
Settle down?! Know my place?! Is that
what you mean?!

JUDGE TANAKA
-- I am warning you, Mr. Wallace! You are
dangerously close to being in contempt!
Now I’d imagine your hold on your license
is pretty tenuous as it is, so if I were
you, I’d stop this tantrum right now!
Aaron checks himself, glares at O’Reilly, who gloats and --

OMITTED (INCORPORATED INTO 38)

INT. PRISON BUS – DAY (D6)

JUMPSUITS. Chained to the pole of the MOVING BUS. Jose hangs his head. All is lost. And there’s nothing Aaron can say.

EXT./INT. PRISON – LOADING AREA/BUS – CONTINUOUS (D6)

The BUS pulls in. Aaron and Jose get out. Defeated.

INT. PRISON – POD – DAY (D6)

Aaron walks through the PRISON. All eyes on him. Everyone’s heard. He arrives at his CELL, sees Huey. Huey smirks at him. Fucking with him.

Aaron enters his CELL. Doesn’t know whether to sit. Stand. Not a lot of options for venting in this cage. He looks at Maskins’ face on the wall. At O’Reilly. And finally loses it. In a rage, he rips them off the wall and trashes his entire cell. Kicking boxes, pulling his mattress off the bed, flinging it. Tossing files and papers. When he’s done, he falls against the wall -- head in hands, in tears. Staring at his FAMILY PHOTOS. The only thing in here that he’s spared, that he’s left in tact. As a tear trickles down his cheek...

END ACT THREE
“New York Policeman Association” BANNER. A rubber-chicken fund-raising dinner. Cops. Local politicos. Maskins makes his way to Anya, who’s charming Police Commissioner PAUL MORISSEY.

MASKINS
Anya. You’re looking lovely as ever.

ANYA
Still leading with how women look, Glen? In 2019?

MASKINS
Commissioner, would it offend you if I said you looked dazzling in blue?

Commissioner blows him off, turns to Anya:

COMMISSIONER
We appreciate your coming tonight. You can count on our endorsement.

He tips his drink, walks away. Anya gloats.

MASKINS
Save your smug looks. You and I have things to discuss.

ANGLE ON Safiya watching this with concern. **SEE SCENE 43 ADDENDUM AT THE END OF THIS SCRIPT**

ANYA
Maskins is going to turn the tables and use Wallace to attack me.

SAFIYA
He can try, but he doesn’t have anything.
ANYA
Um, how about I’m married to the super-liberal warden who helped the drug kingpin get his law license --
Safiya
But nobody knows that -- and ushers him to court whenever he feels like it --

Safiya
-- He goes to court by order from the Judge! And Roswell’s the one who endorsed him for the bar! I’m clean on all of it.

Anyah
He’s an inmate in your prison, you’re my wife. That’s all anyone needs to paint me as the lesbian D.A. who’s soft on crime.

People enter the BAR AREA. Safiya lowers her voice further:

Safiya
So what are you saying? What am I supposed to do now?

Anyah
Tell Wallace to drop the case and stay out of sight.*

Anyah
downs her drink, heads into the FOYER. Safiya follows:

Safiya
I force Wallace to leave Jose in the lurch, kill his cred with the prison pop, I’ll never get a shred of help from him again!*

Anyah
Then find another inmate.

Safiya
The only reason it flies is because he’s the prisoner rep! I start meeting with anyone else, the guards’ll know I’ve got a mole. Everything I’ve been working on is dependent on him being my eyes and ears.

Anyah
And everything I’ve been working for for eighteen years is --

Safiya
-- Do not start counting years on me. Not when I took off seven to raise our kids --

Anyah
-- You want to hear that I’m grateful. Again?
SAFIYA
Not when it doesn’t mean anything.

Any takes that in. Provoked. But lowers the temperature.

ANYA
What you did for our family was amazing.
But one of us is going to have to give
something up right now, and I’m sorry to
say the stakes are just higher for me.
(off Safiya’s shock)
You know the right thing to do. I don’t
need to belabor it any more.

Any heads up the STAIRS to rejoin the PARTY. Leaving Safiya
furious and hurt. And with a huge decision.

46
EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY (D7)

Jamal and Aaron (furtive, on edge) walk through the YARD.

JAMAL
Saw Jose in the cafeteria. Looked pretty
shell-shocked.

AARON
His grandmother was right. They never
would’ve come after him like this if it
wasn’t for me.

JAMAL
Nobody else was knocking down his door.

Aaron sits down on a BENCH. Upset with himself.

AARON
I was using him. Now I’m out of moves and
I don’t know what to tell him.

Foster saunters over --

FOSTER
Hey, sorry about your case. Guess
Freddy’s already been moved to minimum
security.

AARON
They got him on the cheap.

FOSTER
Heard you had some other troubles last
few days. The lockdown, the bus. Hate for
that kind of thing to keep happening.
Aaron stares daggers at him but keeps cool.
FOSTER (CONT’D)
You probably thought that was the D.A.
(off Aaron’s look)
Nope. We call the shots in here. You want your next case to go more smoothly, we could probably come to an arrangement.

AARON
And what would that be?

FOSTER
I’ll let you know when the time comes.

Foster moves off. Aaron looks at Jamal. Wry:

AARON
Good day just got better.

JAMAL
Gotta be somethin’ to do with Wild Bill. Whatever it is, he’s gonna want you to look away.

INT. PRISON – JOSE’S CELL – LATER (D7)

Huey lets Aaron into JOSE’S CELL. Aaron sees Jose lying in bed, staring up at the ceiling, holding a paper in his hand.

HUEY
Gotta be out for chow time. Twenty minutes.

Huey locks the door. Aaron comes over, sees Jose’s red eyes.

AARON
You high?

JOSE
It’s over, man. That what you comin’ to tell me?

Aaron looks around -- there’s a needle right there on the table. Did Huey see it? Do nothing about it?

AARON
Where’d you get this?

JOSE
Six years... Six years in this hell, I stayed off it...

Aaron pulls him up. (The paper falls out of Jose’s hand to the floor). Slaps his cheeks.
JOSE (CONT'D)
You made me believe, man... I believed...

Aaron goes to the SINK, pours water, sees on the FLOOR, the paper that just fell: PINK STATIONERY. A teenage girl's handwriting. He picks it up. It’s signed “Molly”.

AARON
You never showed this to me. Where’d this come from?

JOSE
She wrote me... after I got in here. Say how sorry she is...

A beat. Aaron’s wheels turning. An idea.

AARON
You once told me you remember every word Molly wrote in that suicide note.

JOSE
Yeah. So what?

INT. PRISON - AARON’S CELL - MOMENTS LATER (D7)

Aaron walks into his CELL. Looks around to make sure no one’s looking. Unscrews the pipe in his sink, takes out a ZIP-UP PLASTIC BAG. Inside the bag is a CELL PHONE.

INT. AARON’S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY (D7)

Jasmine sits on the couch, munching on CARAMEL CORN, doing her SAT prep with friend NIKKI.

JASMINENo, I think you’re supposed to work on this part first.

NIKKI
Ahh, I can’t wait for this test to be over!!

The LANDLINE rings. Jasmine answers. INTERCUT with his CELL:

JASMINENo?

AARON
Jazz?

JASMINENo.

Hey.
AARON
What are you doing home from school?

JASMINE
It’s Columbus Day. We have off.

AARON
Oh, yeah. Right.

He’s so disconnected from her world. Heartbreaking.

JASMINE
I’ve been wanting --

AARON (CONT’D)
I was looking for your mother. I couldn’t get her on her cell.

She was gonna tell him how much she misses him, but he talked over her and now she wonders if he’s too hurt to discuss it.

JASMINE
Um, yeah, hang on a sec.
(calling upstairs)
Mom!

Jasmine hears Marie come down the STAIRS. Has a few seconds to tell her father -- in a small voice:

JASMINE (CONT’D)
I’m sorry I haven’t been to see you lately.

AARON
(aching)
As long as everything’s all right. That’s all I care about.

MARIE
Who is it?

JASMINE
It’s Dad.
(then, into phone)
I’ll see you soon, okay?

AARON
I love you, baby girl.

JASMINE
(choked up, guilty)
Me, too.

She hands the phone to Marie (in nurses’s scrubs). Watches closely as they talk.
MARIE
Hello?

AARON
How you doin’?

MARIE
I’m okay. On my way to work.

AARON
I’m sorry about what happened -- last week.

MARIE
Yeah. Me too.

AARON
Guess we still got some fire if we can go at each other like that.

She turns away from the girls, lowers her voice.

MARIE
Fire was never a problem.

AARON
Darius there?

MARIE
No. He’s at work.

Aaron takes that in. Realizes she’s hiding her feelings from Jasmine. It’s all so painful.

MARIE (CONT’D)
You all right?

He pushes away his yearning to get to the matter at hand...

AARON
I was hoping maybe you could do something for me? You’re the only one I can trust.

This hits Marie. Plus, Jasmine is watching her like a hawk. Feels compelled not to rebuff (give up on) Aaron.

MARIE
I’m listening.
INT. PRISON – HALLWAY / PARALEGAL’S OFFICE – DAY (D7)

Aaron moves through a HALL, passing a little CLINIC, an OFFICE marked CHAPLAIN, and enters the INMATE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION. He shuts the door. Sits down at an old-fashioned WORD PROCESSOR. Begins typing on the PAPER. Old-school.

As he types, we see glimpses of words: “We shouldn’t have done it... It’s been eating at me.... so here it is...”

As he prints the letter, signed: “Anonymous”

INT. PRISON – GYM (HANG-OUT AREA) – DAY (D7)

Jamal saunters by Wild Bill, trying to be discreet.

JAMAL
Yo, Joey Knox still in the hole?

WILD BILL
They ain’t letting him out for Sunday brunch.

JAMAL
Aaron’ll take his case. But he’s gotta have somethin’ from you.

INT. PRISON – VISITING AREA – NEXT DAY (D8)

Aaron crosses past VISITORS, finds Marie waiting for him. She shows him -- old PINK STATIONERY. A bit worn. Similar to what Molly wrote hers on. Aaron inspects it.

AARON
Where’d you get it?

MARIE
Pawn shop. Guy said it was at least ten years old.

AARON
Great. I’ll be back.

MARIE
Aaron!

He stops.

MARIE (CONT’D)
I want to know what this is all about.

AARON
I told you it’s better if you don’t know. Now I gotta go, Marie! Just wait here!
Aaron walks away, leaving Marie off-balance and skeptical, but going along with it against her doubts.

INT. PRISON - CAFETERIA / KITCHEN - DAY (D8)

In the KITCHEN, Aaron watches as Jamal sprays cleaning fluid on a ROLLING PIN. He then takes the ROLLING PIN and rolls it repeatedly over the PINK STATIONERY.

AARON
This’ll wipe ‘em all out?

JAMAL
Partials, man. Partials is what you want.

With his plastic kitchen gloves, Jamal flips over the Stationery. Looks at MATTEO, a kitchen worker.

JAMAL (CONT’D)
Oven at 450?

MATTEO
Yeah, man, but we gotta be out of here.

JAMAL
Three minutes.

Jamal puts the paper into the OVEN -- to dry the cleaning fluid. Aaron throws a look to ANOTHER PRISON KITCHEN WORKER nearby, serving as lookout. So far coast is clear.

INT. PRISON - VIC’S CELL - DAY (D8)

Incredibly detailed, beautiful, precise DRAWINGS and SKETCHES on the wall. Aaron’s behind a White Army forger dude named VIC. Watching him copy... the words scribbled on paper by Jose, inscribe them onto the PINK STATIONERY Marie brought, using Molly’s old letter to perfectly copy her handwriting.

Wild Bill stands outside the cell, imperiously leaning against the bars, watching everything in his kingdom.

GAVIN, standing outside the CELL, warns them:

GAVIN
He’s comin’ up now. From the desk side.
You’ve got sixty seconds.

VIC
Almost.

Vic finishes, hands his work to Aaron. Aaron picks up the old Molly letter, compares them, utterly impressed.
GAVIN
Comin’ up the stairs.

Aaron hustles out. Nods to Wild Bill and rushes away.

INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - LATER (D8)

Marie looks around. The VISITORS are all heading out.

GUARD ON SPEAKER (O.S.)
Once again: visiting time is over. Take all your belongings and move toward the exit.

GUARD 1 comes over to Marie:

GUARD 1
Let’s go, ma’am. Time’s up.

She dawdles toward the EXIT, looking back for Aaron.

At the far end of the expansive VISITING AREA, Aaron rushes in. Looks for Marie. Hurries toward the flow of people.

ANGLE ON Marie by the door. She sees Aaron detained by Guard 2. Pushes back through the crowd, heads toward Aaron.

GUARD 1 (CONT’D)
Hey! That’s the wrong way!

Aaron sees her, tries to get to her. Intercepted by GUARD 2.

GUARD 2
Where you going, Wallace? It’s over.

AARON
I just need to get something to --

GUARD 2
-- Gotta wait til next week. Let’s go!

AARON
Awright, awright!

Aaron throws up his hands in surrender, backpedals. It’s enough of a ploy to get Guard 2 to disperse as Marie fights her way through the CROWD.

Aaron waits for Guard 2 to clear a bit then lunges forward again to converge with Marie. They make the hand-off just as Guard 2 realizes he’s been duped.

GUARD 2
Hey!
But Marie’s got the letter --

GUARD 2 (CONT’D)
I told you --

AARON
It’s just a letter for my daughter!

Guard 2 pushes Aaron back -- hard.

GUARD 2
Back to your cell! Now!

Aaron takes the hit. Satisfied. Locks eyes with Marie, thanking her as we CUT TO --

INT. PRISON - ADMIN. - BULLPEN/WARDEN’S OFFICE - DAY (D8) 57

Safiya’s assistant MONICA greets Aaron.

MONICA
You can have a seat in her office. She’ll be with you in a minute.

Aaron enters. A rare moment where he can look around. First he takes in all of the POSTER BOARDS of the prison. Safiya’s plans to improve and reform. His attention is drawn to her CREDENZA, fraught with personal items. He glances over his shoulder at the door to see if anyone’s coming. Inches toward the Credenza, too curious to resist. He doesn’t dare go all the way, but he moves close enough to see. Bends down to get a better look: a WEDDING PHOTO of Safiya and Anya; photos of Zoe and Justin; a LAW DEGREE from the University of Vermont; some commendations; a SCREENSAVER: Safiya, Anya, Zoe hiking in the Himalayas; a bumper sticker: Anya Harrison for Attorney General; a BOX of nicotine gum.

Safiya enters and Aaron starts, knows she might think he’s violated her space. But she jumps right into her agenda:

SAFIYA
So you decided to go right at Maskins with the media.

AARON
I was approached. I saw an opportunity.

SAFIYA
Well, he’s on the warpath now. Is that what you want?

AARON
It’ll make him reckless. Eventually he’ll do something stupid, expose himself...
SAFIYA  
So that’s your plan? Using these other cases to provoke him --

AARON  
-- and prove a pattern of corruption.

SAFIYA  
Don’t you realize if you push him like this, he’s only going to come back at you harder?!

AARON  
Every time I petition the county clerk for records, or ask for old police reports, they say “no dice, ongoing investigation”. Nine years later! So I got no choice but to play the long game and force him to make a mistake!

SAFIYA  
Well, you’re barely even out of the gate and he’s already threatening to expose our relationship!

AARON  
I thought you said you had that all covered.

SAFIYA  
I did, until you made it look like we weaponized you to go after him.

AARON  
We? You mean your wife.

SAFIYA  
It’s three months before the election. Your tirade to the press looked like a political hit-job!

AARON  
So you want me to what -- drop the case and disappear?

SAFIYA  
Your key witness flipped. You’re going to lose anyway.

AARON  
Maybe (probably). But the kid doesn’t belong in here and I’m not bailing on him.
This arrests her.

AARON (CONT’D)
There’s gotta be a way. Otherwise, I
don’t know what we’re doing here.

Safiya looks at him -- realizes he’s threatening to deny her
access to his intel. He EXITS. And off Safiya, off balance
and caught in a vice --

END ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

INT./EXT. SAFIYA’S CAR/HENRY ROSWELL’S HOUSE – DAY (D9)

Safiya sits in the CAR outside a HOUSE. Hanging off her MIRROR is a little “Harrison for Attorney General” trinket. Safiya’s conflicted. Maybe having second thoughts. Still deciding. She takes a deep breath and -- a DING DONG PRE-LAP creates a TIME CUT which takes her to the FRONT DOOR of the HOUSE. She waits a beat, still anxious when HENRY ROSWELL answers the door. He’s glad to see her. Likes her.

SAFIYA
Hey, Henry.

ROSWELL
I thought I might get a visit from you.
I’m assuming this is about Aaron Wallace?  *

INT. COURTHOUSE – JUDGE’S CHAMBERS – DAY (D9)

Aaron, O’Reilly, Judge Tanaka in her CHAMBERS. She looks over a type-written envelope with address: Aaron Wallace, Bellmore * Correctional Facility, etc. And the anonymous letter Aaron typed.

AARON
Clearly, that letter was sent to me by one of the cops on the scene the day of Molly Davison’s overdose.

She picks up the PINK STATIONERY with the forged note.

JUDGE TANAKA
And he enclosed this in the envelope.

O’REILLY
(handing her a paper)
We’ve had that note analyzed by a hand-writing expert, who’s certified that the note is forged.

AARON
And I got an expert of my own who says with a hundred percent certainty that she wrote the letter.

O’REILLY
Your Honor, the idea that this cop kept that note all this time --
AARON
-- guilty conscience runs on its own
calendar. If you had one, maybe you’d
know that.

O’REILLY
(glancing at Tanaka)
So we’re gonna make this personal now?

AARON
(to Tanaka)
You can see the letter was sent from the
post office half a mile from that
precinct.

JUDGE TANAKA
(to O’Reilly)
Did you run fingerprint analysis on this?

Aaron watches closely as O’Reilly concedes:

O’REILLY
We did, Your Honor. There were multiple
partials, but nothing identifiable.

Aaron breathes a sigh of relief: the rolling-pin gag worked.

JUDGE TANAKA
So we’re at an impasse.

AARON
Not if we subpoena Molly Davison.

O’REILLY
She’s already said she won’t testify.

AARON
But now we got evidence she needs to
corroborate one way or the other.

O’REILLY
And she can corroborate without being
called to the stand.

AARON
That’s true, but if she did write this,
it means she lied six years ago. Defense
should have an opportunity to confront
her on the stand. And I’d appreciate if
she wasn’t tampered with.

And off Judge Tanaka, considering...
INT. COURTROOM - TWO DAYS LATER (D10)

MOLLY DAVISON’s hand is raised in the air, taking the OATH.

MOLLY
I, Molly Davison, promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

Jose watches her closely, but she refuses to look at him. At 21, she looks like an adult. But she has a wounded quality, the damaged girl of her past still very much a part of her.

AARON
Morning, Ms. Davison.

MOLLY
Good morning.

AARON
If you don’t mind, I’m gonna cut right to the chase here. Tell us about your relationship with Jose Rodriguez.

MOLLY
He was my boyfriend, in high school.

AARON
And did you love him?

O’REILLY
Objection. The witness has been called to corroborate a specific piece of evidence.

AARON
The evidence is tied to her feelings for the defendant. I’m trying to establish context, Your Honor.

JUDGE TANAKA
I’ll allow it.

AARON
Thank you.

Aaron sees O’Reilly throw a concerned look to the back of the COURTROOM. Following the look, he spies... Maskins. Hovering.

Aaron and Maskins glower at each other.

JUDGE TANAKA
Mr. Wallace?

Aaron smiles thinly at Maskins but then -- he sees...
...Marie. Also here. In the back.

JUDGE TANAKA (CONT’D)
Mr. Wallace!

* Aaron snaps out of it, turns back to Molly:

AARON
Did you love him?

MOLLY
Yes.

AARON
And did you think he loved you?

MOLLY
(soft, wounded)
Yes.

AARON
Then why did your relationship end?

MOLLY
Jose broke up with me.

AARON
And why’d he do that?

Molly peers into the GALLERY, eyes her anxious PARENTS.

AARON (CONT’D)
Are you looking to someone for answers?

She looks back at Aaron and admits:

MOLLY
He was afraid what my parents might do. If we stayed together.

AARON
And when he broke up with you, did you accept that?

MOLLY
(beat)
No. I tried to get him to change his mind.

AARON
Did he?

MOLLY
No.
AARON
Then how did he wind up at your house the
day you overdosed?

Molly is starting to crumble. Aaron grabs a paper off his
desk, going in for the kill:

AARON (CONT’D)
I have records of text messages between
you and him from that day. Would you mind
reading the one I highlighted?

He hands it to her.

MOLLY
“Just come over one more time. I swear
I’ll be okay after that and I’ll leave
you alone.”

AARON
But that wasn’t true, was it?

O’REILLY
Objection. Leading the witness.

AARON
Because you already had a plan for what
you were going to do.

O’REILLY
Objection!! Coercion!

JUDGE TANAKA
Be careful, Mr. Wallace.

Aaron goes to his desk, pulls the forged suicide note from
his ACCORDION FILE. He allows her to see it from across the
room. To create a sense of dread as he slowly walks it over
to her.

Molly eyes her parents, who brace.

O’Reilly shakes his head. Maskins seethes. Jose is as shocked
as Molly to see the pink stationery. And it all hits Marie
what Aaron’s move was. And how she was involved in it.

Aaron hands Molly the note. Waits a long beat before:

AARON
Would you mind reading that please?

She knows of course that this is not really hers and yet --
on the pink stationery, in what looks exactly like her own
handwriting -- it’s like seeing a ghost.
AARON (CONT’D)
Ms. Davison.

MOLLY
“Dear Jose, You are my light, you are my heart, you are my...
(choking up)
...everything. I hate my parents and I hate my life. If I can’t be with you, I don’t want to live. I’m so sorry. I’ll love you forever. Molly.”

AARON
Do you recognize those words?

She takes a beat. And Maskins realizes what Aaron is doing. Instead of asking her if she wrote that note, he’s merely using the note as a prop. Maskins is seeing a car crash about to happen, but there’s nothing he can do to stop it...

AARON (CONT’D)
Are those the words you wrote to Jose the day of your overdose?

She locks eyes with Jose.

MOLLY
This isn’t the note, but those are the words.

O’REILLY
Objection, Your Honor. She is here to establish the veracity of that particular piece of evidence!

JUDGE TANAKA
Overruled. Continue.

AARON
If those are the words, then where’s the original version of that note?

MOLLY
My parents destroyed it. The day I went to the hospital.

AARON
And why’d they do that, Molly?

Molly looks right at her parents. Defiant now, wanting to punish them for what they did to Jose and to her:
MOLLY
Because they didn’t want anyone seeing what I wrote. And they didn’t want me getting arrested for buying drugs.

AARON
But you testified six years ago that Jose’s the one who bought the Oxy.

MOLLY
(a beat)
I lied. Jose never wanted to get them for me and he never did. He had no idea I even had them with me. And if he did, he would have taken them away. They made me lie about everything.
    (looks at Jose, weeping)
I’m so sorry, Jose. I’m so sorry.

Jose is crying, too. As his head falls into his hands, Aaron turns to O’Reilly, gloating. O’Reilly reacts, knows he’s lost. Then Aaron’s eyes find those of Judge Tanaka. She nods to him ever so slightly with admiration.

INT. COURTHOUSE – HALLWAY – LATER (D10)

Jose hugs his ABUELA and TWO SISTERS. Aaron emerges from the COURTROOM. Stands aside, watching. Proud of himself. Then Jose’s abuela notices him there.

    JOSE’S ABUELA
    I didn’t think you could do it.

    AARON
    I know.

She hugs him, wiping tears away. Cedes the space for Jose. Who grips his hand.

    JOSE
    I can’t ever thank you enough.

    AARON
    Go live your life.

Aaron watches Jose head away with his family then sees Marie waiting for him at the end of the HALLWAY.

    SECURITY GUARD
    Time to get changed.

Aaron holds her look for a beat before he’s escorted away by the Security Guard. As they head for the BATHROOM, Maskins steps into FRAME.
MASKINS
That was quite a maneuver. Manufacturing false evidence, forgery, lying to the Judge, that’s enough to get you disbarred...

AARON
(a threat)
I got bigger things to worry about.

Maskins claps him on the shoulder. Leans into his ear.

MASKINS
You bit off more than you can chew.

Maskins brushes past him and heads away.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER (D10)

Aaron, in his JUMPSUIT, moves toward the PRISON BUS. Four REPORTERS there this time. They ask questions, but he brushes them off, “No comment“, keeps moving.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY (D10)

Aaron rides. In his JUMPSUIT. Handcuffed to the BAR. This time, Jose’s not next to him.

INT. PRISON - GYM (HANG-OUT AREA) - DAY (D10)

Aaron returns triumphantly. Everyone has heard the news. Some nod, Jamal and others shake his hand, pat him on the back. Aaron sees Foster on the fencing above. Foster cocks his head, reminding him the warning, and the deal, are still in place.

INT. PRISON - AARON’S CELL - NIGHT (N10)

Aaron sits on his BED, talking on his CELL PHONE in a low voice, eyeing his FAMILY PHOTOS taped to his WALL.

AARON
It’s Aaron. I ah -- I wanted to thank you again for what you did and for coming to court today. If you could bring Jazz next week, I promise I won’t -- I’d just really like to see her.
He hangs up. Sighs heavily. As he puts the CELL PHONE back in
the PLASTIC BAG and reopens the PIPE, he hears: “Lights Out!”

The LIGHTS in the BLOCK go off and the CELL DOORS clang shut,
ending the MONTAGE.

INT. PRISON – PARALEGAL’S OFFICE – NEXT DAY (D11)

Aaron sits at his DESK in the PARALEGAL OFFICE. A knock on
his door. He sees Safiya in the THRESHOLD.

AARON
Nobody escorted you?

SAFIYA
Tommy and Jim are at the end of the hall.
They think I’m meeting with the Chaplain.

AARON
Clever.

SAFIYA
I heard about Jose. Congratulations.

He indicates a STACK of PAPERS.

AARON
Got a lotta guys coming to me now.

SAFIYA
I got you a hall pass for Jose, but at
this point, you gotta wait. Let things
cool down ‘til after the election.
(off his look)
It’s only three months.

AARON
Easy for you to say when you get to go
home every day.

First time he’s ever spoken to her like that. Nothing
transactional. Just raw. She sees his pain. His humanity.
Feels for him.

SAFIYA
I just want you to think about this: If
he wins the election? Becomes Attorney
General? He’ll take away your license
with one stroke of his pen and crush any
chance you have of getting your own case
to court. I don’t know if you’re innocent
or guilty, but if you’re really playing
the long game, going after him’s not the
smart move right now.
Aaron reluctantly pushes those papers away from him. Nods that he gets her.

SAFIYA (CONT’D)
Thank you. For trusting me. This won’t work unless we have that.

That lands. As she heads out, Aaron decides he has to tell her what he knows. Even at great risk to himself:

AARON
I know what’s going on with the drug trade.

She turns. Holy shit.

AARON (CONT’D)
Captain Foster dangled a deal at me. My guess is it’s my silence he wants.

SAFIYA
What?!

AARON
Why do you think he wants window visits, instead of contact?

Horrified, it dawns on her --

SAFIYA
Inmates can’t get product from the outside, he’s going to bring it in.

AARON
It’s already started.

EXT. PRISON YARD – SAME (D11)

Foster imperiously patrols the YARD. Watches Huey discreetly make deals with prisoners. Looks at Wild Bill. They scowl at each other. A turf war is starting. And it will get ugly.

OMITTED

INT. PRISON – VISITING AREA – DAY (D11)

Aaron makes his way through the VISITING AREA to find Marie and Jasmine. He smiles tentatively. Unsure what their attitude will be.

AARON
Hey, sweetheart.
JASMINE

Hey, Daddy.

He kisses her, but she doesn’t rise to hug him. And her body language is closed off. Putting him off-balance.

AARON

I’m so glad you’re here.

Jasmine nods small. Scared. He looks at Marie. Can feel there’s something loaded that needs to be discussed.

MARIE

What you did in that court -- was amazing.

He feels that deeply -- her approval still so important.

MARIE (CONT’D)

Next time, you gotta tell me what I’m getting into. From the beginning.

He nods, accepting that. And lifted -- there might be a next time. She’s going to help him. Maybe she believes in him again after all. Their eyes meet. Love. Yearning. Connection. Jasmine notices it too. Surprised that her mother has given him this much. Heartened. Hopeful. But it’s almost too much for Marie and she pivots:

MARIE (CONT’D)

Jasmine has something to tell you.

Jasmine looks at him, then at her mother. Marie puts her hand on Jasmine’s, offering her support and strength. The suspense for Aaron is aching. And he can see Jasmine’s terrified.

AARON

What is it, sweetheart?

JASMINE

The reason I haven’t been coming here... (choking up)

The reason I....

AARON

Hey. Whatever it is, I can handle it, okay?

(eyeing Marie)

We can handle it together.

She looks into his eyes, nods. But can’t get the words out. So she opens her COAT and shows Aaron her STOMACH. Aaron takes it in, looks at Jasmine, then at Marie. His eyes fill with conflicted tears.
AARON (CONT’D)
You’re...

JASMINE
Please don’t be mad. I know what it means
and I’ve thought about it a lot --

AARON
I’m not mad, my angel. I’m not mad.

Aaron takes it in. The secret they’ve been keeping from him. What his absence has meant. What this will mean for Jasmine.

AARON (CONT’D)
But... how far along...?

JASMINE
Seventeen weeks....

AARON
And it’s Ronnie’s?

JASMINE
But we’re still together and he’s taking responsibility. And Mom and Darius -- they’re gonna help.

The mention of Darius crushes him. And Jasmine sees it.

JASMINE (CONT’D)
I want you to know -- it’s a boy. And I’m gonna name him Aaron.

This floors him. His eyes go to Marie’s. Everyone on the verge of tears.

JASMINE (CONT’D)
It’s going to be a blessing, Daddy. But you’ve got to get yourself out of here and be a part of it. Okay...? I need you and your grandson’s going to need you.

He wipes away the tears, trying not to lose it, looks at Marie one more time. Her gaze tells him she wants him to fight like mad to get the hell out of here. We CUT TO the next sequence but INTERCUT with the end of this scene...

INT. PRISON - NIGHT (N11)

Aaron walks through the PRISON. Past the JUMPSUITS, the GUARDS, the shit...
AARON (V.O.)
I used to be just like you. I had a family, I had a career, I had friends. I even thought I had time.

INT. PRISON - AARON’S CELL - NIGHT (N11)

Aaron stares at PHOTOS taped to the WALL: Aaron and Marie with Jasmine as a baby, Aaron and Marie with Jasmine at 2 and 4... and then, Jasmine at 6, Jasmine at 9, Marie and Jasmine (in cap and gown) at middle school graduation...

AARON (V.O.)
And then I got in here. The place where time stands still. To get through it, you tell yourself you’ll catch up some day...

INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - DAY - RESUMING (D11)

Aaron’s hand touches JASMINE’S BELLY. A single tear rolls down his cheek.

AARON (V.O.)
But then something happens when you least expect it -- to remind you the world’s gonna keep spinning without you...

INT. PRISON - AARON’S CELL - NIGHT (N11)

Aaron grabs the STACK of PAPERS — that represent potential cases. Other inmates. The ones Safiya warned him not to take.

AARON (V.O.)
The Warden thinks I can afford to wait.

INT. SAFIYA’S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (N11)

Anya’s in bed. Surrounded by files, papers. Stressed. Safiya lies down next to her, shows her a TABLET with a NEWS HEADLINE: Retired State Senator Sponsored Drug Dealer for Law Degree.

Safiya nods: it’s gonna be all right. Anya’s skeptical but accepts it for now.

AARON (V.O.)
But she can never understand what it’s like for me...

INT. PRISON - AARON’S CELL - SAME (N11)

Aaron looks at the files, the potential cases, chooses one.
AARON (V.O.)
For the others in here who don’t belong...

INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - DAY - RESUMING (D11)

Aaron looks at Marie. Their connection through their daughter something that can never be broken. Then again at Jasmine, promising her with his eyes...

AARON (V.O.)
So now there will be no more long game.

INT. PRISON - AARON’S CELL - NIGHT (N11)

Aaron moves from the CASES of his fellow inmates. He picks up the discarded, crumpled PHOTOS of Maskins and O’Reilly (which he tossed everywhere when he trashed his cell). He uncrumples them and tapes them again to the wall.

AARON (V.O.)
No more biding my time. Not one more moment.

Eyeballs Maskins’ arrogant gaze. Grabs a SHARPIE and DRAWS a BULLS-EYE over Maskins’ FACE and then O’Reilly’s.

AARON (V.O.)
Whatever it takes, no matter what I have to do...

He takes a PHOTO from his FAMILY WALL. It’s -- himself, Marie and Jasmine (when she was 8), smiling, arms around each other, the happiest of times. He moves it to his WAR ROOM wall -- taping it in the center of it all.

AARON (V.O.)
…I will get myself home and I will have my life again.

As Aaron stares at the vision of the family he lost but is determined to regain… the rousing 50 Cent theme song which promises fight, hope and redemption crescendoes and we

END PILOT
**ADDENDUM TO SCENE 43 (INT. COUNTRY CLUB - NIGHT)**

TO BE SHOT ONLY FROM SAFIYA’S POV:

MASKINS
What do you think people are going to say when it’s pointed out to them that...
   (glances at Safiya)
   ...your wife’s the one allowing Aaron Wallace to head out to court every day.  

*