

MOTHER & SON
ESQ. & P.I.
PILOT

by

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3rd DRAFT FOR NETWORK
STAGE 29
CBS STUDIOS

TEASER

EXT. NICE SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

MOVERS empty this house and load a big truck. Boxes and furniture litter the porch and a short front lawn.

MOVER

We wrappin' this couch in plastic?

FOREMAN

Dunno, ask the owner. Where is he?

Amidst the commotion, homeowner HARRY (60s, gray) simply walks straight out of the house with a small suitcase and heads down the street. He has slight difficulty walking, as if sore. He seems strangely disconnected to this house and the movers.

FOREMAN

There he is. 'SCUSE ME SIR? WE WRAPPIN' *THIS* COUCH? HELLO? Where's he goin? Aw, forget it, c'mon, let's go.

Harry walks off towards the horizon, growing smaller...

INT. SMALL COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A TIRED WOMAN (42) works the counter. TODD (30, scruffy, "disguised" with glasses) observes and whispers into his beat-up Apple watch (his vibe is very "high-tech *but grungy*"):

TODD

12:15, COFFEE MAFIA, 3rd and Broadway.
Subject "Betty Hogenson" at work as expected - but *behind* - a counter. HA.
Approaching in 5, 4, 3, 2...

He walks up to the counter with a dorky smile, and lies:

TODD

Hi so sorry to bother you, it's me triple half-caf soy latte? I think the wifi is down? (points) Your router was beepy and flashing, could you...?

MRS. HOGENSON

(wiped) Oh yeah, hang on...

She pops the counter up, walks out, and reaches up for the router. Todd quickly pushes a button on his watch, activating his laptop (open on table) and phone (in jacket hung near door): both snap photos of her legs. She hears the click, and turns: what's going on? Todd drops the act (and the glasses):

TODD

Thank you very much, you have been
"assessed and photographed" for Aetna
insurance, and this is your receipt.

MRS. HOGENSON

What's going on? Are you a lawyer?

TODD

Uh no, private detective. Well, I *was*.
Now I'm working for your health
insurance, you are not wearing your
knee braces, you're not limping, but
you're still collecting disability
from the car accident last year.

MRS. HOGENSON

(genuine) Wait, wait no. I really need
that money. Don't-- Please, I...

TODD

I'm sorry! It's just my job! I need
money too! You can call Aetna at...

Two YOUNG KIDS (clearly hers) pop up behind the counter. A
THIRD CHILD sits back there holding a cracked iPad:

CHILD IN DIRTY CLOTHES

Mom, the cartoons stopped.

Todd looks at the grimy kids, at the mom's desperate face:
she's barely scraping by, has to bring her kids to work. Todd
sighs deeply: she got him. He rolls his eyes, and gives in:

TODD

You got the braces with you?

QUICK INSERTS: PHOTOS of the woman wearing both braces, and
making faces of agonizing pain (read: Todd helped her out).

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - DAY

MEANWHILE: JOAN (late 50s, coiffed) moves through a law firm,
all business, sending texts to her husband, Harry:

JOAN (TEXT MSGS ON PHONE)

Are the movers being CAREFUL?
Did they wrap the gray couch? Hello?

Joan's assistant FRANCEY (50s, crunchy, brash) approaches:

FRANCEY

They're in conference room B. The
father is *very crotchety* today.

JOAN

Of course he is, they've been stewing
for 2 weeks...

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

JUMP TO: Joan sits with client KIM (30, fragile, house arrest
anklet). Joan, empathetic, places her hand on Kim's hand:

JOAN

How are we doing?

KIM

I'm OK, I guess. Stressed. I just want
this whole thing to be over with.

Kim's father WALTER (60s, angry) and mother ELEANOR (50's,
meek, extremely worried) sit nearby:

WALTER

This delay has been awful! It's
killing us! Kim is falling apart!

KIM

Dad, will you please stop?

Kim's girlfriend NIKI (35, gothy, controlling) butts in:

NIKI

Did the Prosecutor recover from his
thing? The concussion?

JOAN

The trial will resume on Monday
morning, as planned. Just 3 more days.
But right now, we need to refocus, and
go over all of our testimonies. Kim?
Are you ready?

KIM

(big sigh, hands pressed over eyes) I
didn't kill him...

JOAN

Let's prove that to the jury.

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - LOBBY - DAY

LATER: Joan escorts her clients out of the office. Eleanor
stops and turns back to speak to Joan, nervously:

ELEANOR

My daughter's life is in your hands,
Joanie. You promised me you could--

JOAN

I said I would clear her name. And I will. Anything for a Kappa sister.

Eleanor (smiling weakly) exits. Niki and Walter squabble as they go. Then BETH (38, hugely pregnant) waddles up.

JOAN

Beth, Dear God, you shouldn't be here.

BETH

I don't want to leave you in the lurch with these bus passengers...

JOAN

You can work from home!

BETH

It's comin' up thin, Joanie. I don't trust these two witnesses to give reliable testimony. They claim they saw Kim on the bus but they're dodgy with the details. I think it's drugs.

JOAN

I'll look it over. Go home, please.

Beth waves her hand "Yeah, yeah" as she waddles off.

FRANCEY

We could ask Lyle to assist Beth. We *do have* two investigators, ya know.

They spot LYLE (40s, persnickety) across the floor, dealing with someone in a very high-maintenance, difficult way.

JOAN

(frowns) Not worth the headache. (as Lyle approaches) Good morning, Lyle.

LYLE

It's 2 p.m. (exits)

JOAN

No thank you. Beth can handle it.

FRANCEY

You really need to get going. Here's your bag, give me those files.

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - ELEVATOR - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

As they step onto the elevator, SUSAN (30, stylish legal bombshell in Clark Kent glasses) jumps on with them:

SUSAN

Joan, the forensics guy is still ready to testify. But I need a new timeline.

Susan carries papers for Joan to approve:

JOAN

Susan, ride down with us. Defense won't begin for another week, at least, but I don't want forensics up there until the end. *I love this suit.* We'll start with the H.R. woman, Kim's complaints about the boss, the other women he assaulted, then the witnesses from the bus, her parents, and *then* forensics. That's our strongest piece. *I am exhausted.* Thank God Harry is handling the move. Wait swap bus and parents. Yes, like that. Oh, these bus witnesses are going to fall apart...

As the elevator opens onto the parking garage, Francey produces a be-ribboned bottle of champagne for Joan.

FRANCEY

Don't work *all* weekend. Go enjoy your new home. And give my love to Harry.

JOAN

Francey, this is lovely but totally unnecessary. Car keys. Goodnight.

SUSAN

Thanks Joan. G'night!

They watch as Joan exits the elevator. And we hold on her walking off into the distance for a very long, odd moment. It creates a strange tension: *is something bad about to happen?*

EXT. BACKYARD - SUNSET

Todd and sister ALLISON (34, distracted) talk in her yard:

ALLISON

Look, if you don't pay *some* sort of rent I'm gonna get grief from Mom. This is how you rake leaves?

TODD

It's a pile. And why is a tiny little room above *your* garage *her* concern?

Todd's phone rings: "MOM". He silences it. She calls again.

ALLISON

She doesn't want you "freeloading" off me and Chuck.

TODD

That's why I'm paying rent! Or why I will. Next week. Half. A third.

Now Allison's phone rings: "MOM". Allison answers:

ALLISON

Mom hello.

JOAN (ON PHONE)

Give the phone to your brother.

Allison shoves the phone into Todd's face:

TODD

NO! Allison! Say I'm not here! I uh hello, what. I am not speaking to you.

INT. JOAN'S CAR - SUNSET

Joan is headed home from work. She is lividly measured:

JOAN

You are coming to my new condo, tonight. And you are picking up all the boxes of crap you left in your old room that I have now paid good money to haul across the city.

EXT. BACKYARD - SUNSET

TODD

(angrily cheeky) Yeah, tonight's not great actually. And, as you well know, I don't have a lot of room over here.

ALLISON

You could jam stuff in our basement?

JOAN (ON PHONE)

No! NO! You are not turning her home into a dump like you did with mine.

TODD

I turned your home into a dump - with three boxes.

JOAN (ON PHONE)

It is FOUR boxes. And your sister and her husband have done enough for you!

Todd's phone beeps, he looks at it. Joan appears (driving, and completely unaware she is on camera). She rants:

JOAN (ON PHONE SCREEN)
Dear God, careening through life,
making the rest of us pick up the
pieces. You still owe me \$9000!

TODD
Mom you hit the FaceTime button.

JOAN (ON PHONE SCREEN)
I did not! I can hear you perfectly!

TODD
And I can see you. You're on video.

Joan turns to her phone (in dashboard phone holster):

JOAN (ON PHONE SCREEN)
No I am-- Oh. Well. I would like you
to put together a *real plan* for living
an adult, *financially solvent* life.

TODD
And I think that plan begins with not
talking to you when things are super
crappy for me. *Jesus, I lost my job.*

JOAN (ON PHONE SCREEN)
TWO YEARS AGO. And that's a mess you
walked right into.

TODD
How is this helpful? And should you
really be FaceTiming while driving?

JOAN (ON PHONE SCREEN)
I AM IN THE PARKING LOT OF BEST BUY
PICKING UP OUR NEW TELEVISION.

TODD
Oh, congrats. Must be nice. Guess you
don't really need that \$9000 back.

JOAN (ON PHONE SCREEN)
YOU WILL PICK UP YOUR BOXES TONIGHT.

Todd deflates (exhale, eye-roll) as Joan hangs up on him. And Allison darts away across the yard to her car.

ALLISON
Look, why don't you just clean the
driveway. As rent, OK? I DON'T CARE!
(MORE)

ALLISON (CONT'D)

I gotta go to work. But don't do it
with the hose that wastes water.

She drives off and Todd sighs. His life is in shambles.

EXT. SHINY CONDO - NIGHT (9:50 P.M.)

A quiet, mysterious night... Todd walks up to a new building: a gleaming high-rise in the ritzy "South Waterfront" area. He grimaces. He doesn't want to see Joan. He hesitates...

INT. SHINY CONDO - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Todd steps off the elevator, impressed. This place is swank. He approaches #900, but hesitates: he does not want to knock. UGH. Instead, he tries to slide an envelope under the door...

But suddenly the door FLIES OPEN: Joan is WILD-EYED, and IN SHOCK. Very different than the woman we saw earlier. They stare. Finally, Todd holds up the envelope, awkward:

TODD

Uhhh... I'm paying you back? I can
give you \$1000 a month for 9 months.
But don't cash that 'til wait what is
going on? Seriously. Mom. Are you OK?

Joan is MUTE, SLACK, STUNNED. She turns slowly and goes back into the condo. Todd (mystified/concerned) follows...

INT. JOAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Gorgeous condo, great view. Boxes dot the empty space:

TODD

Hey what is happening? Mom. MOM.

JOAN

Harry has... I think Harry has... he's
left me.

Todd makes a baffled face: *WHAT?*

JOAN

I came home, I came here, after work.
And Harry wasn't... but I thought
maybe he was back at the house, or...
I don't know. But he never came. It's
10 o'clock?

TODD

Maybe he's - been in a car accident!
We should call the police or--

JOAN

He disconnected his phone. And deleted his facebook page. I got to looking and he only took one small suitcase. And his laptop. And his - toothbrush.

TODD

(pause) Where's he going without the rest of his stuff?

Joan, at a complete loss, just stares at him. And Todd, intrigued, gently slides into "investigator mode":

TODD

When did you last - talk to him?

JOAN

I was texting him, today, about the move. And at 3 - or 4? - they stopped going through. But I just thought...

She casually looks into a smaller box - and SHRIEKS:

JOAN

OH MY GOD!! ALL HIS MEDICATIONS ARE GONE!! I packed this box myself! This box was full of his pills! I--

Todd looks: the box is EMPTY. He looks at Joan, suspicious:

TODD

(deep pause) What medications?

Joan can't bring herself to answer. She takes a breath, goes outside onto the balcony. Todd follows.

EXT. JOAN'S CONDO - BALCONY - NIGHT

Joan stares at the distant bridges for a long time.

JOAN

(grim) Isn't the view wonderful.

TODD

Mom. What is this? You're moving here, together. You and Harry. I mean, unless, are you fighting? Did he leave a note? (long beat) Is he - sick?

Joan reluctantly spills the beans:

JOAN

Harry has Parkinson's Disease. He's had it for years. But he manages it.

(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)

Mostly. With the medications. We didn't tell a lot of people, because, well, his *pride*... Then, recently, his hand was... So he went to get some routine tests. I've been so busy with this case, I lost track of... But Parkinson's does progress. And I...

Todd is silent, processing. Joan exits to hide her emotions:

JOAN

(quietly) I need to use the - where is our new - the powder room. Excuse me.

Joan goes back inside. Then Todd frantically dials his phone:

ALLISON (ON PHONE)

Todd I can't talk I'm going into surgery. I don't care about the rent!

TODD

(hushed) No no no, Mom, Harry - listen, Harry has disappeared. Maybe he's, he's left Mom? She's - *did you know Harry has Parkinson's disease?*

ALLISON (ON PHONE)

(pause) Yes. I knew. He disappeared?

TODD

He disconnected his phone and - wait *you knew?* You knew and I didn't?

ALLISON (ON PHONE)

You have been fighting with Mom for 2 years. How long has he been gone?

TODD

5 or 6 hours?

ALLISON (ON PHONE)

(pause, dark) Todd. Harry's Father killed himself. Like 20 years ago. He was diagnosed with brain cancer and couldn't deal with it so he - he jumped off the Fremont Bridge.

Todd, aghast, turns to see the majestic gleaming white Fremont Bridge in the distance.

ALLISON

I - I really can't talk. I'll call you as soon as I can.

They hang up. Todd doesn't know what to do. He goes inside:

INT. JOAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Todd passes the EMPTY MEDICATION BOX and something occurs to him. He mulls this thought as he looks for Joan.

INT. JOAN'S CONDO - MASTER BATH - NIGHT

He finds her in her huge new bathroom, staring out the glass wall/window at... *the Fremont Bridge*. Long pause:

JOAN

(softly) I haven't lived alone since your father died.

A single tear slips down her face. *And despite their fight it is too distressing for Todd to see his mother like this. Something inside of him snaps/clicks/powers-on:*

TODD

OK no. This is not happening. *This is crazy this is bananas!!* He is not just going to disappear on you.

JOAN

Todd. Harry may have gone off to...

TODD

No. He's not - this isn't that. Why take ALL your medications if your plan is to off yourself? *And his laptop?* NO. This is - something else. And we're not letting him get away with it. I'm not. Alright, Mom, get out of the bathroom. Let's get-- Stop weeping. Mom. Come here. Mom. MOM.

Todd has taken control. He shoos wobbly Joan along.

INT. JOAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Back in the main room, Todd hunts for pen and paper:

TODD

OK, OK, he - he has *his wallet?* Does he have a credit card that is *just his?* We need a receipt for something he bought with *his* credit card.

JOAN

(beat) The new TV. Best Buy. He bought it - online. It's - there. The receipt should be taped to the top?

Todd crosses to the box, finds the receipt, quick study:

TODD

5452 OK this is an Amex card. (holds up phone) Hey Siri, call "American Express" from my address book.

SIRI

Are you calling "Amex Late Payment Department"?

TODD

(embarrassed) No no no, just call regular "Amex Customer Service."

His phone dials. And Todd shrugs off Joan's judgey look:

TODD

What? OK Mom, I need Harry's social security number, date and city of birth, and his mother's maiden name. Now. Write it here. Right here. Now.

JOAN

But why? What are we...

TODD

Just do it!

Joan writes the info onto a box - as Todd cruises expertly through the Amex touch-dial menus (on speaker). Finally:

MALE AMEX OPERATOR

Good evening, American Express.

TODD

(pro) I need to speak to a supervisor immediately about the pending authorizations on my account.

MALE AMEX OPERATOR

Just a moment, sir.

Just then, *Joan's phone rings*. She answers without thinking:

JOAN

Hello?! Oh, Francey. I - I can't talk right now, I - Beth? She did?? Well, if her water hasn't broken then it could be several more days, I--

TODD

(hushed hiss) *Mom get off the phone!*

JOAN

I really can't talk. Just email whatever info you have to my phone--

TODD

You don't have to say email it to my phone, if you get email on your phone it just goes to your phone!

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

Good evening, American Express, how can I help you?

Joan, startled, falls silent (and hangs up her call).

TODD

Yes good evening hello, this is Harry McDonald and I need information about my recent purchases. Where my card has been used *today*. Trying to keep track of where I've been lately ha ha ha ha.

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

Of course, Mr. McDonald, just give me a moment...

JOAN

(soft) *Todd this is illegal! This is identity theft!*

TODD

You want me to play by the rules or you want me to find your husband?

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

I see you've entered your 16 digit account number, but it appears you're calling from a blocked number...

TODD

I am? (winks at Joan) That's unusual.

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

So I'll need to verify some information before we continue. Can you give me your birthdate and mother's maiden name?

TODD

(reads) Yes, 8/21/59. And *Bottlethwaite*. (makes face: srsly?)

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

Thank you. (pause) And can I get you to verify your home address?

TODD

Of course. Oh. But I just moved, so...

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

Yes, I see a recent address change here. Can you give me the new address?

TODD

The *new address*? Of course... (reads as Joan writes) 2206. West - Curry. Avenue. #900. Portland Oregon. 97236. Sorry, 23g. My 8 looks like a 6.

Joan scowls at Todd: her 8 does not look like a 6.

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

(pause) Hmmm, no I'm afraid that's not the address I'm looking for...

TODD

Really? Well, perhaps you have - my home address from before? On Belmont?

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

No... that's not it either. Mr. McDonald, you changed your address with us (leading tone) 3 weeks ago? To an address in... Gresham, Oregon?

JOAN

(whisper) Gresham?

TODD

I called and changed my address to Gresham, 3 weeks ago?

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

Yes.

TODD

Well, there's clearly been some mistake. I did not move to Gresham. That's 45? Minutes? From here? (grabs pen) What is the address you have for me in Gresham?

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR

Mmmm, I'm sorry, I can't give you that information. (pause) Unless you can verify that you are, in fact, Harry McDonald...

TODD

(beat, reads) Goddammit I am Harry McDonald born in Tucson Arizona social security number 551-04-8872! And - I bought a TV! Online! From Best Buy! For (balks at receipt) \$1147? Not sure why I need such a nice TV when my wife only watches Ellen and 60 minutes but I am me! Harry McDonald! C'mon now!

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR
 (pause) Yes, that all - checks out.
 The new address I have for you is...
 1683 S.E. Carnola Way, Gresham, 97131.

Todd writes it down. Joan shakes her head: no idea.

TODD
 I don't know that address.

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR
 Mr. McDonald, I'm afraid you *have* been
 the victim of identity theft. And we
 need to close this account.

TODD
 OK, yes, OK! Wow. (aside) Wait, before
 we do that - would it be possible to
 use this card to pay off the balance
 of *another* AMEX card? My wife's son is
 overdue on his recent payments and...

JOAN
 Todd, no. NO.

FEMALE AMEX OPERATOR
 Mr. McDonald, first we need to bring
 on one of our security advisors, then--

TODD
 Oh that's not necessary. I really have
 to go. My wife has just fallen - to
 her death. But thank you. Goodnight.

Todd hangs up the phone. And Joan panics:

JOAN
*Todd!! But now they'll... They'll
 contact the police!! Or--*

TODD
 Great! Let them! Harry is missing! And
 they can help us find him!

Joan considers this course of action. Is he right?

JOAN
 So then - so then what do we do now?

TODD
 NOW we drive out to 1683 S.E. Carnola
 Way to find your husband.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT./EXT. TODD'S CAR - 11:25 P.M.

Joan sits in Todd's (ramshackle) car staring in confusion at a small YELLOW HOUSE on a quiet cul-de-sac in Gresham. Todd dashes away from the house and gets back into the car.

TODD

It's empty. Looked in all the windows, no furniture, nothing. I could probably pick the lock in back, but...

JOAN

No Todd, no. That's criminal. 6 months, minimum.

They stare at the house - pondering. Joan is sombre, quiet.

JOAN

While you were gone I was staring at that garage and imagining Harry inside there. Dead. What if he - hung himself - in that garage. Like Bradley Coopman in that Madonna movie. Starborn.

TODD

(beat) *Like Bradley COOPER in the LADY GAGA movie A STAR IS BORN?* Mom. What is it with you and titles? And why would he send his bills to a house where he's dead? That doesn't make any sense. (phone rings) It's Allison.

JOAN

No, do not answer. I don't want anyone in the family to know what's going on.

TODD

I'm in the family.

JOAN

DO NOT tell your sister. HANG UP.

Todd silences the call. Joan is frustrated, agitated.

JOAN

So now - what? We sit here and wait?

TODD

We don't have his phone, his laptop, any of his passwords, we have no other leads, *he has a link to this house...* and he has to sleep somewhere tonight.

They both stare at the house. And wait...

INT./EXT. TODD'S CAR - 12:33 A.M.

JOAN

(frazzled) This is insane, this is awful. We should have come in my car. This seat is filthy. And what is this junk at my feet? Is this a telescope?

TODD

It's a lens. For a camera. A long lens.

JOAN

(pause) Todd, without your license, you are not allowed to work as a private detective in the state of Ore--

TODD

Yes I know that thank you Mother. I'm just freelancing for insurance companies. Finding people and taking pictures. Pays the bills. Almost.

JOAN

(disgruntled) I had hoped you were getting out of this field altogether. Considering the amount of trouble you got yourself into. (pause) Is it maybe time to reconsider - law school?

TODD

Jeeesus Chriiiiiist, MAHHHHHM.

JOAN

Todd, your sister is a *surgeon*. And your brother is the General of the National Guard of Oregon! Couldn't you find something more dignified than "medical insurance bounty hunting"?

TODD

MOM - I am a private detective. I am VERY good at it, it is ALL I've EVER wanted to do, YOU gave me that copy of Harriet the Spy when I was NINE, and I am NOT having this conversation with you EVER AGAIN. (pause, then cuts off her rebuttal) AND IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME you'd be back in your empty condo right now, alone, with no idea of where your husband is.

JOAN
(pause, quietly) As opposed to
where we are. Which is nowhere.

They both fume.

INT./EXT. TODD'S CAR - 1:34 A.M.

Todd is tired but focused - and Joan is *bleary*. She has
reclined her chair, taken off her coat and earrings.

TODD
Who was having a baby? On the phone.

JOAN
A baby on the phone? Oh, oh. She
hasn't had it yet, Beth, the
investigator on my current case. You
remember my sorority sister, Eleanor.

TODD
No.

JOAN
And her daughter, Kim.

TODD
No.

JOAN
Todd. *Kim*. She went to a private high
school. We tried setting you up back
then but she thought you were - *odd* -
and you were busy pining for that
"Gretchen," with the face. Well, Kim
is now in a relationship with a - non-
binary? Un-gendered? *Person*? And she's
been accused of murdering her boss.

TODD
Everything you just said is insane.

JOAN
He sexually assaulted her, the boss.
She didn't report it, and then at the
office Christmas party he tried to
assault her again. So she left, she
walked out, and took the bus home.
Although that's been difficult to
prove.... Anyway, the boss leaves the
party a few hours later, goes to the
rooftop of a nearby parking garage...
And is shot to death sitting in the
driver's seat of his car.

TODD

Oh. (beat) But she didn't do it.

JOAN

No. No forensic evidence, no gunpowder, nothing. But the D.A. found text messages on her phone that said "I COULD KILL HIM." And she *did* own a gun once, but lost it 2 years ago when she moved back in with her parents. In any event, we're trying to nail down some witnesses who saw her on the bus before the case resumes - on Monday.

TODD

Resumes? What'd it stop?

JOAN

Yes. The State Prosecutor fell down the stairs at home and gave himself a serious concussion, so the judge granted them a two week continuance.

TODD

He has a "serious concussion" and he's coming back to work - in two weeks?

JOAN

Yes.

TODD

(beat) That's quick. I've tracked down a few concussed people and if you've really got one, you're on strict bed rest for a month, minimum, guaranteed.

JOAN

So the State Prosecutor *is* a liar.

TODD

If he really hit his head hard enough to get that diagnosis, he wouldn't be back in two weeks. I'm telling you.

JOAN

You don't know what you're talking about.

TODD

Mom which one of us is working as a Health Insurance Claims Investigator?

JOAN

You said you were only taking photos.

Todd (miffed) grabs his phone, determined to prove her wrong:

TODD

What's his name. This concussion guy.

JOAN

Frederick Barrett. You're going to look him up on your phone? Wonderful. Your generation is addicted to your devices. Trying to solve everything with "apps" and "beepMo" and *podcasts*.

TODD

He has - a daughter? Brittany? And she's on - Tik-Tok - of course...

JOAN

I don't know. Yes? Maybe Harry is in a seedy motel somewhere. I can't keep my eyes open. How do you ignore the odor in this car?

TODD

(getting warmer...) Uh-huh. Uh-huh. OK. Yes. Oop. There. Yes. Oh hello Mr. Serious Head Injury. Mom, take a look at this. MOM.

In a Tik-Tok video, the State Prosecutor's daughter Brittany does a complicated dance routine into the camera.

JOAN

(confused) What is this? What is she doing? What is Tok-Tok?

TODD

Look in the background. There.

In the background, a big window faintly reflects SOMEONE on a LifeCycle, doing vigorous exercise (unaware of the camera).

TODD

Is that him? That's him, exercising, 6-7-8 days ago? Looks fine to me.

JOAN

That's Frederick Barrett? And that's his... 8 days ago? This can't be real.

TODD

It is. Obviously didn't know *Brittany* was broadcasting to the world. Fool.

Joan sits up straight in her chair. Her mind racing:

JOAN

Then they - then this - is a lie. If he's not injured, then this is an intentional delay. They're stalling.

TODD

Can't you like, report them for that?

JOAN

Yes, if I wanted a mistrial and to start all over again. They must be - waiting for something. Some piece of evidence or proof they don't have yet. Something is coming...

Joan is WIDE AWAKE and ON FIRE now:

JOAN

We need to go down to the Courthouse. Right now. Todd, start the car. It's almost 2 a.m.! *OH but who's going to watch this house for Harry?! I can't leave you here, you'd catch your death of cold. We have to go! How do we--?!*

Todd reaches into his cluttered backseat and takes 2 BURNER PHONES from a full box of same. He quickly sets them up.

JOAN

What is that? What are you doing?

TODD

Burners. *Disposable camera phones.* We'll let them be our eyes. Hold this:

He gives his phone to Joan. Then he gets out and hides the burners in trees facing the yellow house. Joan watches the feed on his phone, impressed. He gets back into the car.

JOAN

Can you really afford a whole box of phones?

TODD

MOM.

The cars starts (with great difficulty). And they drive off.

EXT. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

Joan leads Todd towards a back entrance (glass service door) in this enormous, stately - and deserted - cement building.

TODD

This place is closed.

JOAN

Yes Todd. But by law, the Records Room has to be *attended* 24 hours a day.

(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)

And if you play your cards right, you can sometimes get in there. (tries door) Stay here, I'll try up front.

Joan walks off. Shortly thereafter, a BOOKISH YOUNG FEMALE CLERK (29) appears at the glass door (but keeps it closed):

CLERK JENNY

(through glass) Can I help you? I heard someone rattling the door.

Todd falls back on instinct: LIE to get what you want.

TODD

Oh... Yes, I'm Inspector Bink with the Portland Gas Company and someone has reported a leak? In the Records Room. And I need access to check that out.

CLERK JENNY

(cracks door) A gas leak? Are we in danger? I didn't smell any...

TODD

Yes, you should evacuate while I--

Joan appears in the hallway behind the clerk.

JOAN

Todd. What are you doing?

CLERK JENNY

(turns) Joan?

JOAN

How are you, Jenny dear. The new guard let me in, Edgar. I have a pressing matter - and this is Todd, my son. Can you let us into the Records Room?

Clerk Jenny gives Todd a very slow, dry look - now realizing that he was trying to lie his way past her. He smiles.

INT. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - RECORDS ROOM - NIGHT

JOAN

And how is your mother? The bank let her back into her home?

CLERK JENNY

Yes, I can't thank you enough. But I really need to go back upstairs now. Let me know if you need anything. Or if you smell any *dangerous gasses*.

She exits, giving Todd a dry look. He is amused/smitten:

TODD

Is she--

JOAN

She has a boyfriend. Alright, I need you to go down to those red, red-ish, file cabinets, right there. And in the one marked G-M, pull the file for State of Oregon vs. Marquette, Kim.

TODD

They actually keep paper records down here? Shouldn't this all be digitized?

JOAN

During an active trial, original hard copies have to be available for... Wait, where's the outgoing file log?

TODD

This is like being in the 1800's.

JOAN

I must've spent months of my life down here, filing and sorting briefs, back when I was a legal secretary. Once I passed the bar I got my nails done and swore I would never break another one pulling files in dark basements. But, if you know the system, you can read between the lines of the paperwork...

TODD

I found it. Right here. Here...

They each place one HUGE FILE on a tabletop. And Joan cross-checks one set of bureaucratic forms against the other.

JOAN

So. This is us. Kim Marquette, accused of murder. This is Mr. Barrett. They added the continuance, here... Flip through to the evidence log in back.

TODD

These are *actual court documents*? Should I be touching these? "Log."

JOAN

No this is just paperwork. Now, bottom right, red box. How many pieces of evidence have been logged and tagged?

TODD

9?

JOAN

(cross checks) Hmm. Same here. So maybe *not* new evidence... Grey box top left. On the back. How many witnesses?

TODD

Witnesses... 15.

JOAN

15? Fif-*TEEN*?

TODD

FIF-TEEN ONE FIVE.

Joan counts out forms. She has 16. This is SERIOUS to her:

JOAN

They're introducing - a new witness.

TODD

Aren't they allowed to do that?

JOAN

Yes but they're required to file weeks in advance and inform me. (deducing) They must have found - *someone* - after the start of the trial. And they're filing late, and in secret, because they don't want me to - to find out and block them? They must think - whatever they have - is a slam dunk...

TODD

So like, someone who saw her kill him.

JOAN

She didn't kill him, Todd.

TODD

Someone who THINKS they saw her kill him.

JOAN

(reads further) Witness in possession of... Xbd800-MP9? What is--

TODD

MP9's a kind of digital video file. Like from a security camera.

Joan and Todd lock eyes, ponder, and piece it together:

TODD

So they have a witness - who has video - of something *bad* - *for you*.

JOAN

Something bad enough for them to fake an injury and slow down the case.

TODD

Are you sure she didn't kill him?

JOAN

TODD. We should go. I need to--

Suddenly, an alarm blares. A LOUD KLAXON. They jump:

JOAN

What did you touch??

TODD

It's not me! Wait no, it's my phone!
The burners! The cameras we left!
There's activity at that yellow house!

Todd opens his phone and Joan huddles close. They stare at a small black-&-white NIGHT VISION screen. We see SOMEONE'S feet as they walk in the front door of the yellow house:

JOAN

WHO WAS THAT?

TODD

They left the door open...

Then the person reappears, backing out of the house as they shut and lock the front door (Todd toggles back and forth between two camera views).

JOAN

It's a man. Is it...

TODD

He's locking the door. What does he have in his hands? What is that?

Joan peers in closer. And she just knows (a mother knows):

JOAN

It's a baby.

Indeed, the MAN (30s, bearded and clearly not Harry) has a small INFANT bundled in his arms. He cradles the baby closer, and then turns and saunters away down the street.

TODD

Who the hell was that??

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - MORNING

Todd and Joan walk into her (busy, active) firm.

TODD

If that was Harry's "secret boyfriend and baby," which I seriously doubt, then why wouldn't he stay inside the house? He went in - he came out.

JOAN

(angry) Maybe he was a... prostitute.

TODD

In *flip flops* - carrying a *newborn*. Yeah, no. (looks around) Whoa, the new offices are *fancy*.

JOAN

Yes, and you look like a criminal.

TODD

I have been up all night chauffeuring you around the city. And I have to dress like this. I'm a detective. I need to blend in and disappear.

JOAN

You're sticking out like a sore thumb.

INT. JOAN'S OFFICE - MORNING (CONT'D)

They enter Joan's office. Todd sees photos on her desk.

JOAN

Our in-house investigator, *Lyle*, is at the end of this hall. He can get you access to the RMLS website.

TODD

So... You have photos on your desk of Allison and Jon. But none - of me.

JOAN

These are *wedding photos*, Todd. Get married and I'll gladly include you.

TODD

Who's this one?

He turns a larger photo: Joan & Harry's wedding. Joan's armor suddenly cracks, and she stifles a cry (rattling Todd):

JOAN

Just going back to work, pretending like nothing is wrong, feels so - strange. My husband has - disappeared, and I...

Panicked that he has upset her, Todd moves to comfort Joan:

TODD

And I'm gonna find him. I promise.

But Joan resists his comfort, and pulls herself together:

JOAN

No I - I have work to do. (motto) *And I don't let my personal life interfere with my career.* Alright. Enough. Kim will be coming back in any minute...

She marches out, stiff-upper-lipped. And Todd sighs: Joan's emotional rebuff is familiar, but still painful.

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - DAY

Todd struts through the office like he owns the place. People stare after him: *who is that?* He swipes a donut from a box.

INT. LYLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Todd finds Lyle fastidiously organizing objects on his desk:

TODD

(munching donut) Hey there, you Lyle? I need access to the RMLS property info database. Cool office. Super clean. So can you just give me the logins or you want me to do my search from your computer or what?

LYLE

(beat, extra dry) And you are?

Todd pauses, smirks, thinking he has power over Lyle:

TODD

Todd. *Enright.* My mother Joan is your boss? Probably signs your paychecks?

Lyle stands, calmly. He is a lion in a snail's shell:

LYLE

Your mother is not my boss. I am an employee of the firm, answering only to the bylaws of the corporation.

(MORE)

LYLE (CONT'D)

And I do not share investigative database access with non-employees. *Nor with former private investigators stripped of their licenses following criminal charges related to illegal wire-tapping and forgery.*

Todd is taken aback, chagrined. He gulps, defends himself:

TODD

I had nothing to do with the forgery.

LYLE

Oh, I remember your defense. You were "seduced and deceived" by your "mentor." You thought you were equal partners in your little detective agency. And you had "no idea" she was making you the fall guy for her criminal activities.

TODD

(indignant) Yeah. That's right.

LYLE

Well, your mother can keep you out of jail but she can't force you into my office. Good day.

TODD

Look, this is not company business. I just need information about a house. *It's personal. For my Mom.*

LYLE

Use of company equipment for personal searches is strictly forbidden. And so is eating in my office. (points) Crumbs. Get out.

Lyle closes his door in Todd's face (then vacuums: Dyson Stick).

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - DAY

Stunned and insulted, walking back to his mother's office, Todd happens to notice a doorplate and doubles back: SUSAN LEE? He peers inside the office. Is that really her?

TODD

Susan??

SUSAN

Oh My God - Todd. Hi.

TODD

You work - for my Mother?

SUSAN

I work *with* her. Wow, I haven't seen you since we broke - since we, I - ended things. Maybe that's why she didn't... Um. But, nice to - see you.

TODD

(points to ring) You're engaged.

SUSAN

Oh. Yes. Last month, actually. We just bought a house. But uh, how are you?

TODD

Not engaged. Haven't bought a house.

SUSAN

I have to tell you, your mother is such a wonderful woman. She has been so encouraging and supportive...

TODD

Hmm. OK.

Todd spies Lyle in the background - and hatches a plan:

TODD

Say... Would you be willing to do *my Mom* a favor? You're an employee here. See, there's this house. In Gresham...

A FEW MINUTES LATER:

Todd watches from afar as Susan approaches Lyle (in Todd's stead). While he waits, Todd settles into a (divided) waiting area. And he overhears a (mostly) hushed argument:

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Niki, the courts put her into our care. In our home. Changing her house arrest would be very complicated.

NIKI (O.S.)

(furious) She should be with me! She says YOU cry and HE'S yelling ALL DAY!

WALTER (O.S.)

Who the hell do you think you are?

KIM (O.S.)

Can everyone please stop fighting?

ELEANOR (O.S.)

Walter. Go fight somewhere else. Now.

Curious, Todd spies Walter and Niki trudging off together. They close themselves into a glass conference room. *And suddenly their demeanor changes, drastically.* Walter puts a hand on Niki's shoulder and they whisper, co-conspirators.

Todd is intrigued: he wants more info. He heads towards the conference room, but looks back at Eleanor: she is oddly stoic now, dead-eyed, staring at the floor.

Todd finds he can't hear Niki and Walter inside the glass room. So he improvises a fix: inserts ear buds, activates his phone and deftly slips it under the door (it slides behind a plant, unnoticed). He ducks for cover and listens:

WALTER

And that is our secret.

NIKI

I only wanted to protect her. You said it was the right thing to do. But what if she--

WALTER

Let's just calm down and get through this. If anyone can get her off, it's this bitch lawyer Eleanor hired.

Todd is ALARMED to hear that: *bitch?!* Just then, Joan arrives leading Kim and (a suddenly warmed up, smiley/needy) Eleanor into this very same conference room.

JOAN

Oh, here you are.

WALTER AND NIKI

Good morning, good morning!

Todd scowls at Walter and Niki being fake-nice to his Mom.

JOAN

Thank you for coming back in on such short notice. So. I've discovered that the Prosecution has a new witness.

TODD

Oh, you discovered this? By yourself?

JOAN (CONT'D)

And this witness may possess security camera footage incriminating Kim.

NIKI

(panicked) I thought the parking lot cameras weren't working? You said--

JOAN

They weren't. Now Kim. We've been over this many times - but when you left the party - did you go straight to the bus stop? Did you go near or into the garage? Or anywhere else?

KIM

(end of her rope) I was drunk. I don't know. I remember it was cold in the bus shelter. And I was crying. And then, I was on the bus...

ELEANOR

But she was home by 12:30! I heard her come in. And she was fast asleep by 1.

JOAN

(very gently) And Kim, there's no chance anyone saw you that night - with a gun. You lost your gun--

KIM

2 years ago! *My God, what is happening?! I'm the victim! Not him!*

Joan backs down, stays focused on Kim. But Todd (peeking into the room) notes Niki and Walter trading nervous looks.

KIM

Look, I can't remember every detail. I was drunk. *But I did not kill him.*

Just then, Susan finds Todd in his corner and interrupts, surprising him. He hastily pulls out his earbuds:

SUSAN

Oh, here you are. I got the info you wanted. That house is a rental, owned by RentSafe LLC. This is their info. (beat) Was this really for your Mom?

TODD

Yes! Absolutely. I'm helping her with--

SUSAN

You just needed me to get around Lyle, didn't you. Kinda put me in an awkward position with him.

TODD

I'm sorry. It's just that I (pained) I lost my P.I. license so I can't run my own municipal searches. And he...

SUSAN

He's difficult, I know. But, I - I
kinda like to play by the rules.

Todd fumbles, drops his earbud - and Susan picks it up. She can hear Joan's voice coming from it. She turns to see Joan in the conference room and realizes: Todd is eavesdropping?

TODD

No no, I'm not... This isn't...

The whole thing makes Susan uncomfortable. She smiles awkwardly and walks away. Todd cringes at how this looks. But he is quickly engrossed in the info/paper Susan handed him...

INT. JOAN'S OFFICE - DAY

LATER: Joan re-enters her office, finds Todd working:

TODD

Hey, so I got info on that yellow house. The man we saw, "Tomas," is the landlord. He lives down the street, he is *married* - to "Rosia" - and she's on instagram holding *their* newborn baby.

JOAN

He was probably out for walk... Trying to get the baby back to sleep...

TODD

Yeah and maybe dropping off something for his new tenant. *Harry*. Anyway I've contacted this "Tomas" and I'm waiting to hear back.

JOAN

Your sister called me 4 times while I was in my meeting? What is going on?

TODD

Oh. Um. Well. She - knows. She knows. (beat) *I told her about Harry last night before you told me not to tell anybody*. I'm sorry.

JOAN

(cold pause) You told your sister that my husband has disappeared and she didn't drop everything to rush and be by my side? That's lovely.

TODD

She was working all night in the E.R.! Probably getting a chainsaw out of somebody's mouth or whatever.

JOAN

Good Lord, *Todd*. I should call her...

TODD

Actually, I just spoke to her. And I think instead of calling, she wants, she'd like - something else.

Joan looks at Todd, curious: what does Allison want?

INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A big family dinner. Todd and Joan eat with Allison, her husband CHUCK (35, very good-looking dolt), brother-in-law CHET (38, black, stylish) and his daughter CLEM (3, Asian).

ALLISON

Mom, again, we are so sorry to hear this crazy, awful news. And we will do whatever we can to - support you. I would've come last night but this teen girl had a ski pierce her back and go straight through to her...

Todd recoils "eeek" (horrified but also delighted). Chuck laughs and tosses a roll at Todd's head:

CHUCK

Ha, welcome back to family dinner, nutso. Whole gang's together again. *Sah-weeet*. (to Joan) Wait, so Harry just disappeared in the night to kill himself? *So freaky*.

ALLISON

Chuck.

Joan gives a sharp side-eye to Todd, blaming him for Chuck's knowledge of her situation. But Todd is quietly quizzing Clem (an oblivious toddler):

TODD

Have you guys been having family dinner without me? Without Uncle Todd? You - no me? Dinner?

Joan addresses the situation, smoothing it over:

JOAN

Well. I appreciate your concern. And it's nice to have my whole family here, at this time. (beat) Is your brother coming? Chet, is Jon...?

Jon (Allison and Todd's brother) is Chet's absent husband.

CHET

No, unfortunately, he's still in Hood River. Dealing with the flooding.

JOAN

Of course, of course. His job is very important. (proud) He's the General of the National Guard of Oregon.

Todd and Allison exchange a look: "Oh boy." They all eat.

JOAN

(pause) Hmmm, you know, this wine is not very good. What about that cabernet I gave you for Chuck's birthday? And can we please get some nicer napkins? These are so - thin.

ALLISON

OK, sure, of course. Chuck, get the wine.

CHUCK

(whiny) That's my cabernet!

ALLISON

CHUCK.

Todd notes Allison's sigh and head-shake as Chuck goes to get the wine. Allison seems unhappy with Chuck. Todd ponders this (as he continues to drink up the red wine...)

ALLISON

And how is Eleanor's case going? I mean, her daughter. The one that thought Todd was "odd."

JOAN

Kim. We've had some bumps as of late. The Prosecution is playing dirty and trying to slide a surprise witness into the...

TODD

(ever so SLIGHTLY buzzed) Niki and the dad, they have solid alibis, right?

JOAN

Yes, Todd. And they are not suspects.

TODD

But you checked them out, right?

JOAN

The police cleared them, along with everyone else involved. And we, of course, did our due diligence and found nothing of concern. As I was saying, the Prosecu--

TODD

But just for fun, what were they? Their alibis?

JOAN

(icy) Walter was in bed, asleep. With his wife, Eleanor. He has a c-pap machine which connects to the internet to let his Doctor know he is using it. He was hooked up all night. And Niki was at a work conference. In Seattle.

TODD

Hmmm. And she has proof of that? Real proof she couldn't fake?

ALLISON

What are you so suspicious of?

TODD

I just don't trust this Niki person. Or the Dad. They were acting really weird today and frankly I didn't like how they were talking about Mom.

JOAN

When were they talking about me?

TODD

Before your meeting, they were huddled up, talking about "their secret" and "protecting Kim" and he called you--

JOAN

How do you know all this? Were you in the room with them before I got there?

TODD

No. (beat) But, I was - listening in. My phone was in... I "heard" them...

JOAN

YOU WERE RECORDING MY CLIENTS' PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS??

TODD

No, Mom, relax. I wasn't recording them. *Though I should've.* I was just... digitally eavesdropping. It's not a big deal.

JOAN

Didn't your little girlfriend go to JAIL for something like this??

CHET

I think I'm gonna take Clementine upstairs for a bit. She's tired, and...

ALLISON

Yeah, Chuck, why don't we finish this up in the other room, I...

Everyone else clears out, wanting to avoid this argument.

JOAN

Todd how could you be so stupid! Do you know how many lines you've crossed? How many ethical barriers you've breached?

TODD

I happened to see something and I was collecting information - for you!

JOAN

After all I have done. Defending you in court. Loaning you money. And you are still hell-bent on destroying yourself.

TODD

No I'm not! What is this a German opera? I was curious! And he called you a bitch, OK? God, I have been by your side for two whole days while Allison's "at work" and Jon isn't even here! But I am! I'm here! Looking out for you when you're "heartbroken" and in trouble. (aside) Which is a lot more than you ever did for me...

JOAN

Excuse me? What did you just say?

TODD

I said I AM HERE FOR YOU in your TIME OF NEED even though you didn't quite do the SAME FOR ME - when DAD DIED. Did you.

Joan is mortified, heartbroken, furious.

TODD

"I don't let my personal life get in the way of my career." Yeah, very clear, very clear. Dad dies - suddenly POOF gone - you throw yourself into your job, they're off in college, and I'm at home - ALONE. While you're what - taking the bar exam? Filing briefs and *breaking nails* in the court-house basement? I was all alone. And devastated. And now you're all "What is wrong with you, what happened to you? Why is your life always a mess?" *WELL...* I mean, seriously, honestly - back then? It was like BOTH my parents had di--

Joan stands swiftly, cutting him off: SHE WILL NOT HEAR THAT. She walks out of the house - SLAM - and she's gone. Todd sighs - then looks up to see Allison in her kitchen shaking her head at him. BIG FAIL. He shrugs, glum, palms up:

TODD

It just came out.

He sighs, and drinks. Just then a VOICEMAIL alert pops up on his phone: BING! Todd clicks the button and plays the message on speaker. Allison turns back to listen:

TOMAS

Hello, uh, I'm returning a call to Todd *Mankiewicz*? Of the FBI? I'd um, I'd really like to help you with this terrorism situation, um, it sounds awful. But all I can tell you is our new tenant is not this Harry McDonald you're looking for. Yeah, our new tenant is definitely not a terrorist. Um, he's actually a Magician? "Newton the Magnificent"? And he moves in - next week.

Allison and Todd stare at each other in confusion.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT./EXT. JOAN'S CAR - MORNING

Joan, upset, drives to her office. To make herself feel better, she tries calling her oldest child JON:

JON (VOICEMAIL GREETING)
(stern) You've reached General Jon
Enright, Oregon National Guard (beep!)

JOAN
Yes hi, it's Mom. Just calling to say -
hello. Not urgent. I know you're busy.
You don't have to call me back. Bye.

She hangs up. Pause. She mutters bitterly to herself:

JOAN
Not that you would anyway...

INT./EXT. ALLISON'S CAR - DAY

Allison drives Todd through downtown.

TODD
Thanks for driving me. My car just
needs a new - engine.

ALLISON
Why are still looking for Harry if
you're so mad at Mom?

TODD
I am not looking *for her*. I am looking
for me. I just want to know where he
is and what the hell he's doing.

ALLISON
You never liked him.

TODD
Neither did you!

ALLISON
I liked him *for Mom*. She liked him.
They were - happy. I guess.

TODD
He was always watching "apocalypse"
specials on the Nature Channel. And
buying "crypto coin." Like some kinda
doomsday prepper. *Not to mention he
has disappeared on our Mother.*

ALLISON

Well. Marriage is... complicated.

Todd gives her a concerned side-look.

TODD

Are you OK? I mean, you and Chuck?

ALLISON

(pause) Yeah. Why?

TODD

You seemed upset with him last night when Mom was ordering you around.

ALLISON

Chuck is - Chuck. And it's just easier to let Mom have her way. You should have learned that by now.

TODD

Yeah but once you let her choose the wine and *napkins*, then she's choosing your career, your clothes, your house. I mean, where do you end up?

ALLISON

(wry tinged with sad) You end up as an E.R. surgeon, married - to Chuck.

Todd gives her another concerned look. Pause.

TODD

Well, I'm not doing this for her. I'm doing it for me. I'm gonna find Harry. I've had it with father figures dying and *mysteriously exiting stage left*.

Now Allison gives Todd a concerned side-look. Then:

TODD

Hey, this is it. Right there.

EXT. SMALL MAGIC SHOP - DAY

They walk up to a small, rundown, storefront Magic Shop. A cluster of old candles and long-dead flowers sit in front. Todd reads a notice posted beneath the CLOSED sign:

TODD

"Newton the Magnificent was *declared dead??* On *August 1st??* His final disappearing act, may he Rest In Peace." What?? He died 2 months ago?

They are both stumped. A dead end. Todd gazes around this abandoned area. Allison looks at the notice for herself:

ALLISON

"Declared dead" - "disappearing act."
Maybe this is all a big scam. Maybe
they're off - faking their deaths -
together?

Todd frowns: he doesn't like that theory.

ALLISON

Fine, you figure it out. I really have
to get going to the hospital.

Todd notes an AMAZON FRESH delivery van round the corner,
headed this way. He watches it:

TODD

You can leave me here. I'm gonna watch
this place for a while...

ALLISON

Don't break into that shop.

TODD

You sound like Mom.

Allison drives away - and Todd watches as the AMAZON driver
jumps out, tosses a flat box towards the Magic Shop doors,
then zooms off. Todd goes to look at the box, addressed to
NEWTON MAGNIFICENT INC. and marked: PERISHABLE.

TODD

Well, *someone's* coming to get *that*.

Todd settles onto a trash can across the street. He folds his
arms and watches, harumph, determined to solve this mystery.

INT. JOAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Joan's firm is mostly deserted. Francey works at her desk
outside Joan's office. And inside, at her computer, Joan
scrolls through information on the bus passenger witnesses.

But... Joan's eyes keep drifting over to Kim's case file.
Something is nagging Joan. Finally she flips the file open,
and pulls out Niki's statement. She scans a few pages - then,
exasperated, she stands and exits:

JOAN

Francey, can you pull up Niki
Esposito's deposition for me? (aside)
She was in - Seattle.

EXT. SMALL MAGIC SHOP - DAY

Todd reads from his phone, narrating into his watch:

TODD

3:55, absolute ghost town here at the shop of the "Beloved Local Magician *Presumed Lost - At Sea.*" If you can believe that. "Disappeared off cruise ship after terminal cancer diagnosis. Suspected suicide." (beat) Dude killed himself. And now he's renting a yellow house in Gresham. That *is* magic.

Todd turns, stretches... And notices a sign rising in the distance, about 3 blocks away. He continues narrating:

TODD

"Multnomah Garage"? Isn't that...?
That's where Kim's boss got shot.
Right? *Multnomah Garage.* That's it.

He stares, intrigued, then looks back at the AMAZON box. Hmmm. He darts across the street, fishes a small WHITE SQUARE OBJECT from his pocket, punctures the box, and slips the white square inside. Then he hustles off down the street.

EXT. MULTNOMAH GARAGE - ROOFTOP - DAY

Elevator DINGS! And Todd steps out onto the deserted roof of this parking garage. He notes a few broken security cameras. He paces slowly, trying to deduce where the Boss' car was:

TODD

Gets off the elevator, he's parked -
here? Doesn't see who's hiding behind -
there? Gets into his car. Blammo.

Todd considers the murder. Then he turns and looks out over the city. And just a few blocks away, he spots the majestic glass towers of the PORTLAND CONVENTION CENTER. He ponders, intrigued, and then exits, headed towards those towers.

INT. JOAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Joan reviews Niki's videotaped (nervous, shifty) deposition:

NIKI

Yeah, we broke up a few times. Once 'cuz I took her phone and read all her texts and emails. But, I was worried about her. She gets so depressed and I thought she might - hurt herself. Or do something, you know - drastic...

Joan ponders this. Suddenly, Todd bursts into the room:

TODD

Mom!!

JOAN

Todd. How did you know I was here?

TODD

I used Find My Friends on your iPhone. You didn't have it activated before but now we can locate each other. See? MOM. WORK. (points at her) HERE.

JOAN

You have no principles whatsoever.

TODD

Yeah whatever. Listen, I know who the surprise witness is! Or might be. I went by the Convention Center and spoke to "operations manager BOB." Night of the murder? Huge expo. Company that makes the little cameras that go on your dashboard. Police cars have them here but everyone has them in like Russia and overseas. Anyway, buncha people in town from *foreign* factories. So maybe some *Russian* came to town, put the device in his rental car - *very common to take them on trips to the "litigious" U.S.A.* - but Convention Center Parking was FULL that night. So he had to park in the OVERFLOW lot. *The Murder Lot*. And his little dashcam - WHICH USES MP9 FILES LIKE IT SAID ON THAT FORM - happened to catch footage of - the murderer?!

JOAN

How many cars in that lot that night?

TODD

852! Huge job to contact all those drivers! So maybe they don't hear back *from Russia* until *after* the trial starts. And then, oops, gotta stall 'cause suddenly here's footage - of *Niki - blazin' away - with Kim's gun!!*

JOAN

Todd. If the Prosecution had video of *Niki* murdering someone they wouldn't proceed with a case against *Kim*.

TODD

(snaps, points at Joan) You're right.
That theory was half-cocked.

JOAN

Everything about you is--

TODD

But I'm telling you Niki and the Dad
are guilty of *something!* I can feel
it! Anyway, shouldn't you "move to
block" this surprise witness now? I
mean I'm worried they might really
have something good. *For them.*

Steely, Joan reasons through her strategy:

JOAN

Blocking the witness makes us look
weak, guilty. And these Prosecutors
will clearly go to any length so
they'd just cause a mistrial and
bring that witness right back in
the next round. It's better to face
this head on. *And I need to see
what they have!* I can't fight -
what I don't know. Whatever it is,
they're wrong. Kim didn't shoot her
boss. (mimics him) "I can feel it."

TODD

But Mom! What if she did kill
him? What if--

JOAN

TODD. I'm the lawyer! And I
know what's best for my cli--

They are interrupted by Joan's computer BEEPING.

JOAN

What is that? What is that sound?

TODD

(intrigued) It's the tile. A "TILE." A
little tracking device. I put it
inside that box. And it's - moving.

JOAN

Why is it beeping on MY computer?

Todd rushes to her computer, opens up the TILE tracking map:

TODD

My Tile account was closed for non-
payment so I had to reactivate it
through... you really shouldn't store
credit card numbers on your laptop.

JOAN

TODD.

TODD

Look, it's going up Vista. It's turning on Fairmount. Mom! Look! It's the Amazon box of the dead Magician who's renting the yellow house!

Joan stares at Todd like he's insane.

INT./EXT. JOAN'S CAR - DAY

Joan pulls out of the office parking garage and heads uptown. Todd navigates, watching the TILE map on his phone.

TODD

OK, turn here and go up Broadway.
(pause, softly) And you can speed up, this is technically a car chase.

Joan glowers. Long silence. And then Joan opens a discussion she has been mulling all day (as Todd listens nervously):

JOAN

Todd. About your *statements* last night. When your father died, I was - frightened. That I wouldn't be able to support two children in college, and another a few years behind, on my salary as a legal secretary. So I had to work. To keep us all alive. *Turn here?* We pushed your brother and sister so hard to succeed. And then you grew up, your father died, and - I was gone. *You were alone.* And when you got into trouble two years ago, I think I - I helped you too much. Trying to make up for before. And then you pushed me away--

TODD

Because you were trying to run my whole life! I mean look, I'm sorry about what I said last night, I am. And yes, you did help me out some two years ago. But then you're like railroading me into law school, and--

JOAN

I didn't trust that you could - that you can - lead your life! Successfully! Some of the decisions you've made, the women you've--

TODD

I chose one very bad woman. But I am an adult! I can lead my life!

JOAN

Can you?

Just then, they catch up to the TILE tracker outside a modest home - where MOVERS are loading up a large truck.

JOAN

It's moving day.

TODD

Yeah, into a yellow house in Gresham. OK, I'll go in there, find this dead Magician, and - *I'll say we're buyers.* Interested in *this* house. Yeah. Then you come up, with like a limp, and--

JOAN

No, Todd. No. No more lies. It feels - fraudulent. We will tell them who we are and what we need. The truth.

Todd rolls his eyes, disappointed. They get out of the car.

EXT. PORTLAND HEIGHTS HOUSE - DAY

They approach, dodging boxes and MOVERS. And they find a MAN (40s) in the open garage, with his back to them, wearing a dramatic bejeweled CAPE (over normal, everyday clothes).

JOAN

Oh. Excuse me? Hello? Are you - are you "Newton the Magnificent"?

The man turns: dorky and emotional, tears in his eyes:

TOM NEWTON

Yes?

TODD

You're Newton? But - you're dead.

TOM NEWTON

Oh, no, you must mean my Father, the original Newton. He - he passed - but I'm taking over the family business.

TODD

(quiet aside) There's two Magicians! The dead one is dead *and this one, Newton Jr.,* is moving to Gresham.

TOM NEWTON

How can I help you? (cries) Do you need a Magician for a party?

Todd struggles to respond. *Without lying, he's tongue-tied:*

TODD

Oh. Uh. No. Actually, we um, well... me and - this woman here - we uh...

JOAN

(cuts in, impatient) I believe you know my husband, Harry McDonald?

TOM NEWTON

(baffled) Harry who? (to Mover) Please be careful with this box, these are my father's things...

Newton puts the cape in a box. And Todd notes (closely) some college swag in that box: "REED COLLEGE!" "CLASS OF '68!"

JOAN

Harry *McDonald*. He's having his mail sent to your - new home? In Gresham?

TOM NEWTON

I don't think I know any Harrys...

Just then, Tom's wife LESLIE (40s, nerdy, efficient, mean) enters the garage. She carries the now-open Amazon box:

LESLIE NEWTON

Tom? The carrots you ordered were delivered to the shop. Oh. Who's this?

TOM NEWTON

They're looking for a Harry McDonald?

Leslie freezes, on high-alert, and clams up.

LESLIE NEWTON

I'm sorry, I can't divulge client information.

TODD

Client? Client for what? Who are you?

(Joan notices an overflowing box marked "GOODWILL." She recognizes some items, and discretely moves towards the box).

LESLIE NEWTON

I'd like to help you, but - I'm sorry, attorney client privilege...

TODD

What kind of attorney?

LESLIE NEWTON

(beat) End-of-life. Estate planning. I really shouldn't say anything more...

TODD

Where is he? Is he already dead?

Joan cuts in, very forcefully, and shuts this all down:

JOAN

We're sorry to have bothered you.
Thank you very much. Todd, let's go.
Todd.

TODD

What? Mom! But, wait, I - hey...

Joan forcibly hustles Todd back into her car.

INT. JOAN'S CAR - DAY

Joan starts the car and ROARS away: NOW SPEEDING. Todd is terrified/surprised. And then, Joan pulls from her coat...

JOAN

It's Harry's laptop!! It was in a box marked Goodwill! It was there with a pair of his shoes and a shirt I recognized! They're giving all his things away!

TODD

So, you don't want me LYING - but it's OK for you to STEAL from the GOODWILL?

Joan makes a quick stop, and thrusts the laptop at Todd:

JOAN

Open it! Find out where he is! Track him! Do it! Do your thing!

TODD

Mom. It's a laptop, not a crystal ball. And he probably already... See, he deleted all his files. (beat) *But I'll bet he forgot to wipe his stored passwords...* OK wait, what email does he use?

JOAN

HMCD123@aol.com.

TODD

Loser. Yeah, here we go, still has his passwords... But - he deleted all his emails too. See. *Maybe his junkmail folder...* (reads) Walk-in-bathtub, increase libido, goodbye belly fat...

JOAN

(points) United Airlines?

Todd clicks the email, opens it, reads it. PAUSE.

TODD

He booked a flight. With points.

JOAN

What?! When?! How do you--

TODD

"Mileage Plus Points redeemed: 97,000." He's flying... tomorrow.

JOAN

He is?? Where's he going??

TODD

It doesn't say.

JOAN

What are all these numbers - right here - by the barcode?
UAL928221010AMPST...

TODD

That's - the date. Of the flight. Monday, 9/28/22. And 1010AM must be - his departure time? He'll be at the airport - tomorrow morning - at 10:10 a.m.. (pause) Mom, we've got him.

Joan stares at Todd - grave, upset:

JOAN

I have to be in court tomorrow morning. The trials resumes at 9 a.m.

They sit there, stumped. Then Todd looks at Joan, squinty, as he hatches a plan:

TODD

I might have a way for you to be in both places at once...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

The trial has resumed. Court is warming up for the day. Kim sits with Joan (who is oddly still). We ZOOM IN and discover that Joan's perfectly coiffed hair is concealing - *one of Todd's tiny ear buds*. She listens to...

INT. PORTLAND AIRPORT - MORNING

Todd stalks the airport. And talks softly into his watch:

TODD

Concourse B now. Still no sign of him.
How can there be eight different
flights all leaving at 10:10?

Todd checks a huge airport clock: 10:04 a.m.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

Court called to order. The CLERK hands the Judge a note:

JUDGE

Alright, Prosecution has made a motion
to introduce... What is this, Barrett?
And how are you feeling, by the way?

FREDERICK BARRETT (40s, State Prosecutor) wears a big bandage
on his head. Joan gives him a deep side-eye: *oh really?*

FREDERICK BARRETT

Thank you, your honor, I'm feeling -
OK. But we *have* filed to insert a
crucial new witness into the lineup...

He continues, but Joan's focus is drawn to a nervous CHINESE
BUSINESSWOMAN (37) entering the Court. She is led to a front
row seat. A TRANSLATOR (52) sits with her. Joan narrows her
eyes at this woman: this is who she's up against.

INT. AIRPORT - MORNING

Todd scans another lounge: nothing. An announcement blares:

AIRPORT P.A. SYSTEM

Attention, flight 719 departure to
Iceland, final boarding. Gate 47.

INT. COURT - MORNING

Joan tenses, ALARMED, overhearing that announcement. She
quickly (clandestinely) texts Todd: "ICELAND. BUCKET LIST."

INT. AIRPORT - MORNING

Todd sees the text, turns to the droning speaker, riveted:

TODD
Gate 47. ON IT.

INT. COURT - MORNING

The Judge and Prosecutor talk in hushed tones at the bench, while Kim and Joan stare at the Chinese Woman, and whisper:

KIM
Joan, I'm scared. What does she...?

JOAN
It's OK. We'll see what she has.

Joan and Kim size each other up: *Joan is strong, Kim is innocent.* They clasp hands. The Judge signals his approval, and the Prosecutor points to the Chinese Woman: "You're up."

INT. AIRPORT - GATE 47 - MORNING

Gate 47 is mostly empty. Todd looks out at the plane:

TODD
Crap! Maybe he's already onboard. I gotta... I gotta...

On instinct, Todd pushes open an alarmed door. The (lazy but loud) alarm sounds. The frazzled GATE AGENT goes to shut it off, and Todd slips down the gangway onto the plane.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

FREDERICK BARRETT
Mrs. Lin, can you tell the jury why you were here, in Portland, on the night of December 10th, last year?

The Translator stands next to the box. Mrs. Lin sits in the box, speaking quietly (in Chinese):

TRANSLATOR
I was here for - a work conference - sorry, convention. New product launch. I work for - the manufacturer.

INT. AIRPLANE - MORNING

Todd boards the plane on high alert. He walks slowly down the aisle, peering into every seat...

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

TRANSLATOR

My son, was in hospital - very ill -
when the Prosecution contacted me. I
was not able to respond - in time.
China is - very far. I apologize.

FREDERICK BARRETT

And Mrs. Lin - *this* - is the portable,
travel dashboard camera that you had
with you on your trip? Your company
builds this device. Is that correct?

Impressed, Joan texts Todd again: "YOU WERE RIGHT."

INT. AIRPLANE - MORNING

But Todd has reached the back of the plane: no Harry. Crap!
Must be the wrong flight. Todd turns - and then - he spots
HARRY stepping out of a restroom at the front. IT'S HIM.

TODD

Got him.

(IN COURT: JOAN ONLY ALLOWS A SLIGHT *POP!* OF HER EYES).
Surprisingly, Harry seems to be in a great mood. He lifts a
glass of champagne and chats gaily with a fellow passenger.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

FREDERICK BARRETT

The video you are about to see is
from Mrs. Lin's dashboard camera.
And first, we're going to show you
the raw footage of her driving out
of the lot. Is the projector...?
Sorry, this may take a moment.

Joan notices that Niki and Walter look extremely nervous.
They look at each other, then to Kim. *It seems they are
worried that KIM will actually appear in the video.*

INT. AIRPLANE - MORNING

CAPTAIN (P.A. SYSTEM)

Please fasten your seatbelts and...

The doors shut, the plane rolls... And Todd slowly leapfrogs
up to a seat across the aisle and one row behind Harry.

TODD

Harry. Harry McDonald. HARRY.

(IN COURT: SHAKY VIDEO FOOTAGE PLAYS: MOSTLY ROUTINE PARKING LOT TEDIUM. BUT JOAN IS WIDE-EYED, LISTENING TO TODD.)

Harry turns, and his face drops. Todd smiles:

TODD

Hey, whaddaya know? Iceland is on my bucket list too.

Todd jumps to the aisle seat across from Harry, and sneers:

TODD

You're not dying.

HARRY

(stammers) I, I never meant to hurt her, Todd. She doesn't need to know about any of this...

TODD

You stupid coward, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

HARRY

I am leaving your mother.

TODD

Yeah, way ahead of you.

HARRY

I am leaving the whole world behind. My doctors, they told me I have - I only have 7 to 10 years left to live.

TODD

7 TO 10 YEARS?

HARRY

But I don't want to live it with your Mother. I can't take it anymore. She's too controlling. She would never let me be who I want to be! I don't care about status and money like she does. I'm going off the grid. When I found out how long I had left - I knew this was the only way. *It's the only way...*

Todd is oddly sympathetic and furiously mad at the same time.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

Joan's face reacts: sad, angry, ashamed, chastened.

FREDERICK BARRETT

And now we'll look at just one frame,
taken from that same footage. Hang on.
We have to switch hard drives...

INT. AIRPLANE - MORNING

Todd chews Harry out, piecing the whole mystery together:

TODD

You knew that dead Magician, didn't you? (points at him) Reed College, class of '68. His suicide gave you the idea to disappear. What'd you meet his daughter-in-law the estate planner at his funeral? You hire her to handle your affairs, to make your exit nice and clean, because you want us to think you're dead. *So we won't come looking for you.* But HA! You don't empty your junk mail, you booked this flight with points, United Airline's blackout dates are MASSIVE, and you couldn't fly out until today. Am I right? AM I RIGHT? I AM. Jesus Christ, you idiot, you couldn't just TELL HER?

HARRY

No! She would never accept it! She would never let me go to Iceland to live in a hut and farm and fish and be naked under the stars. It's my life! And this is how I want to spend it.

CAPTAIN (P.A. SYSTEM)

*We're being flagged by security.
Apparently someone on board is not...*

HARRY

I know this will be hard on your Mom. But she has you, her kids. And Todd, honestly, it's time for you to resolve this ridiculous fight with her.

TODD

Are you kidding?? YOU'RE telling ME how to deal with my mother? YOU--

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

The VIDEO/STILL IMAGE appears: a blurry FIGURE in a blue coat is seen in a stairwell, going up, and holding - a gun? The blurry figure could almost be Kim. Niki gasps quietly...

INT. AIRPLANE - MORNING

HARRY

She loves you, Todd. Why do you think she spent two years fighting with the city to get your license reinstated?

TODD

Wait she what?

HARRY

Because she's a mother. She'd do anything for you. Anything.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

JOAN HEARS THOSE WORDS, and realizes something. She looks at Kim - then at Eleanor. They have the same hair, a similar build and face (and Eleanor's face is tellingly stricken right now).

Joan realizes - with a shock - that the blurry figure shown is NOT KIM - it is her lookalike MOTHER, ELEANOR.

Everyone else in the court believes Kim has been unmasked as the killer: but only Joan knows the truth.

INT. AIRPLANE - MORNING

SECURITY OFFICERS enter. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT points Todd out.

TODD

Don't ever come back here. You *better* die in Iceland in 7-10 years. You're dead to us. Me and my whole family!

Security Officers roughly pull Todd from his seat, drag him from the plane and up the gangway. Harry, ashen, watches him go. Out on the gangway, Todd talks directly to Joan:

TODD

I'm sorry, Mom. I'm so sorry...

An Officer finds Todd's phone and shuts it off. CLICK.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

Joan is still for a moment. She removes the ear bud.

JUDGE

Ms. Enright? Your witness.

Joan looks up, steels herself (*a personal issue will not stand in the way of her career*). She looks at Kim, makes a split decision, and leans in close to her:

JOAN

(whisper) *Don't say a word. No matter what I do. Trust me.*

Kim (in shock) can only stare back. Joan presses down firmly on Kim's hand - and stands.

JOAN

Your honor, in light of this overwhelming new evidence, my client would like to change her plea. To guilty.

ELEANOR

What?!

The courtroom ERUPTS. Kim's eyes pop: Joan presses her hand - and rolls right past the Judge's baffled confusion:

JOAN

And while we recognize that first degree murder in the state of Oregon carries a *mandatory life sentence...*

JUDGE

What are you doing? This is not--

Eleanor is sick, tormented, dying. Joan lays it on, thick:

JOAN

I would ask you to consider my client's assault, and perhaps reduce her prison sentence to *50 or 60 years?*

ELEANOR

NO!! NO!!

Eleanor's outburst gets the court's attention. This was Joan's plan. Eleanor is a wretched mess, sobbing in her seat:

ELEANOR

She didn't do it!! That's not her!! That's... I only... She's my daughter. Joan... I only meant - to scare him...

GASPS rise. Eleanor shakes her head, the jig is up. Kim stares at her mother:

KIM

Mom? You didn't... (cries) *Mom.*

Joan gently puts her free hand on Eleanor's hand (now connecting her to both mom and daughter). And it's over.

INT. COURTHOUSE - LOBBY - DAY

Kim is released from her handcuffs, her name cleared. She embraces Niki. They are relieved, but utterly shell-shocked. Walter is also flabbergasted, he can't believe it.

INT. COURTHOUSE HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Eleanor is handcuffed. Joan sits across from her, listening.

ELEANOR

Niki took Kim's gun, and Walter helped her hide it. They thought I didn't know. They were worried Kim would hurt herself. And, when she came home - on that terrible night - she was so upset. I looked at her phone, I'd done it before, out of worry. I saw the texts to Niki. He raped my little girl, Joan. And I knew where the gun was hidden. But he - he tried to take it from me - it happened so fast... (cries) I would have told her - I would have told you! I never realized they would try to blame *her* for this! I didn't tell her because... Because she would never forgive me. For reading her texts, for meddling in her life. *But I'm her mother.* I'd do anything to protect her. Anything...

This resonates with Joan. She thinks it over. Eleanor sighs:

ELEANOR

I didn't think I had to come forward. I thought you could save her. No matter what. (bittersweet) And you did...

Joan takes Eleanor's hand, and leans in close:

JOAN

He was a bad man - who did terrible things. And I know I can get a jury to understand that you - are her mother. I'll take care of you. I promise.

They clasp hands, and Eleanor smiles through her tears.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY OFFICES - DAY

Todd sits in a cell. But he has convinced the LAZY GUARD to swivel his laptop around so Todd can see local news coverage of the trial/verdict: his Mom won. He looks up as she enters:

JOAN
You're in jail.

TODD
Worse. Airport jail.

Joan sees the laptop/news, and smiles at Todd.

JOAN
I couldn't have done it without you.
You are - good - at your job.

TODD
I know. (beat) And so are you.

JOAN
Maybe I just need to (quoting Harry)
let you be who you want to be.

TODD
Yep. Yeah. Maybe so.

JOAN
But there is one thing I could do. To
help you get back on your feet. To
help us both, actually. If you'll let
me...

Todd gives his mother a look: what is she planning?

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - DAY

Joan's firm is bustling as usual. Todd rounds a corner, freshly shaven, wearing a shirt and tie. He looks grown up, professional, like an adult. He goes into the bathroom.

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - BATHROOM - DAY

Todd looks at himself in the mirror. Who the hell is that? No longer scruffy, or an outsider. He narrates into his watch:

TODD
It's gonna be fine. You're a
detective again. This is what you
want. This is - the way back.

A PARALEGAL comes out of a stall and gives Todd a weird look: who's he talking to? He exits. Todd stares into the mirror.

TODD
You're an investigator. You'll be
investigating. That's all that
matters. OK? OK. OK.

INT. JOAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Joan and Francey prep for Todd's first day:

JOAN

He'll need a keycard too.

FRANCEY

Is this a permanent hire?

JOAN

No no, he's just filling the in-house investigator slot. Until Beth gets back. Twins! Can you imagine? She's taking a whole year off. And I don't think Todd would even want to stay that long. (beat) *No expense account.*

FRANCEY

(smiles) Understood.

INT. FANCY LAW FIRM - HALLWAY - DAY

Todd walks to Joan's office. He runs into Susan. She is still wary of him, but startled (in a good way) by his new look:

SUSAN

Oh - Todd. You look - wow, I... Oh and, congratulations. I heard you were coming on board. To work for your Mom.

TODD

Thanks, thank you. (beat) But I'm not just working for her. I'm the new in-house investigator. I'm working - for everyone. (beat) Did she say...?

SUSAN

Oh, I don't know. I didn't, um... well, anyway. See you around. I guess.

She walks off - leaving Todd leery. But Susan glances back at him in disbelief a few times: he cleans up good!

INT. LYLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Lyle enters his office to find (to his great horror) many SECRETARIES and PARALEGALS eating donuts and bagels out of a large gift basket. CRUMBS everywhere. Lyle is speechless. He discovers a sign on his door: "BAGEL & DONUT PARTY!" He sees more signs with arrows in the hallway. He is aghast.

Lyle approaches the gift basket and finds a small card: "HAPPY FIRST DAY, PARTNER. LOVE TODD."

INT. JOAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Joan is just going out to lunch with Allison as Todd enters:

JOAN

You look so handsome! Todd!

ALLISON

You look like an accountant.

TODD

Oh thank you, thank you. Wait. Are you guys going out to lunch? Without me?

JOAN

You have far too many cases to catch up on. I'll bring you back something. Oh Todd, you look wonderful. This is going to be great for you. A big step up.

TODD

Up?

JOAN

I'm sorry, not up. Forward. We can rehabilitate your career and you can - move forward.

Allison gives Todd a look: are you buying that?

JOAN

Now, the ties, socks and belt in this bag are more professional than the ones you're wearing. We can take the cost out of your 1st paycheck. And this is your new bus pass because you're not driving that jalopy into the building. No discussion. (smiles)
OK. Be back soon.

Allison gives Todd a dark smirk as she and Joan exit. Todd is ashen-faced: Joan is already controlling his life, again.

Then he notices on the desk: Joan has replaced the Harry/Joan wedding photo with a photo of herself holding TODDLER TODD. She smiles, cradling him close: they are both so happy. Todd half-smiles. And points at his reflection in the window:

TODD

You are an adult. You can lead your life. And she will not - destroy you.

END OF PILOT