

"LAW DOGS"

Written by

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Law Dogs

TEASER

1 EXT. LOS ANGELES - GRIFFITH PARK - DAWN 1

Sky barely pink. Lights of THE CITY still twinkling. An edgy beauty. Quiet.

A lone BIKE RIDER, board shorts, cap on backwards, ascends MT. HOLLYWOOD,

At the pinnacle, he breathes what's left of the air... surveys the L.A. Basin,

POV ends on a single COYOTE, who scurries off into the scrub, *

A last glimpse before,

MUSIC KICKS UP: Rock and roll.

Ushering the morning's synchronized rise of NEWS CHOPPERS,

Our transport DOWNTOWN.

Sleek façades; suits and ties, flip flops and Prada.

L.A.'s hustle spirals to --

2 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 2

JUDGE COLEMAN GENN, 60's, bellicose, presides at trial, as a young, African-American DA (EDWARDS) takes an LAPD Cop through the paces.

EDWARDS

And Officer, at the time you pulled this defendant from his car for D-U-I, there was no question in your mind that he was drunk?

OFFICER

None whatsoever.

EDWARDS

Thank you. Nothing further.

GENN

Mr. Blackwood?

CONTINUED

From the moment he opens his eyes, 'til he closes them at night, HENRY BLACKWOOD (30's), is ready for trial. Lives on the juice. Incapable of separating who he is from what he does. His tombstone's gonna read: Here Lies A Lawyer. Though who's gonna carry out those instructions remains a mystery, with no wife, no kids and no pets.

BLACKWOOD rises from his seat clutching a wad of wrinkled papers, ready to separate this witness from the herd. *

BLACKWOOD

This arrest occurred at a routine drunk driver checkpoint, correct?

OFFICER

Correct.

BLACKWOOD

So, it wasn't my client's actual driving that got him in trouble, it was the fact that he appeared drunk to you?

OFFICER

When I questioned him, his eyes were bloodshot, his speech was slurred.

BLACKWOOD

(smooths papers)

You filled out an intoxicated driver report, is that also right?

OFFICER

Yes.

BLACKWOOD

And I see you checked off that my client's attitude was -- cooperative.

OFFICER

He was cooperative.

BLACKWOOD

(reads the form)

But apparently not-- agreeable? I mean, you didn't check that off.

OFFICER

You gotta pick one.

BLACKWOOD

Like intoxicated or not intoxicated?

EDWARDS

Objection.

GENN

Sustained.

BLACKWOOD

With respect to my client's clothing--
I see you checked "mussed"... You know
what "mussed" means, Officer?

OFFICER

Um... upset?

BLACKWOOD

I'll give you a hint, we're talking
about clothing.

EDWARDS

Objection.

BLACKWOOD

To what? He doesn't know what the word
means.

*

GENN

It means no mas, Mr. Blackwood.

BLACKWOOD

(sighs, then)

How would you describe MY clothing,
Officer?

GENN

It's the same suit you had on
yesterday. Now move on.

Jury laughs.

BLACKWOOD

Officer, with respect to my client's
physical condition, you testified his
eyes were bloodshot?

OFFICER

That's right.

BLACKWOOD

And you said you observed his left eye
and his right eye.

OFFICER

Yes. I observed BOTH your client's eyes. And BOTH eyes were bloodshot.

BLACKWOOD walks to his client, who hands something to him.

BLACKWOOD then turns, HOLDS UP his client's RIGHT EYE!

BLACKWOOD

Now, Officer, would say that THIS eye is in substantially the same condition--

EDWARDS

Objection! Your honor!

BLACKWOOD

(over)

--that you observed on the night you arrested him?

GENN

For godsakes Henry, will you tell your client to put his EYE back in his HEAD!

Gavel BANG!

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

3 INT. COURTHOUSE LOBBY - MORNING

3

Morning's bustle -- as EVAN MARLOWE, 30, ball cap, board shorts, dress shirt (tails out), a pair of Keens on his feet (our BIKE RIDER) chomps on a McMuffin, waits at a metal detector. MARLOWE possesses a certainty and charisma which makes leaders of men, though he remains very much a boy; someone who lets passion dictate decision, as he did when he abdicated a life of privilege to become a Public Defender.

*
*

MARLOWE dumps a Messenger's Bag into a box, passes through a metal detector. ALARM BEEPS. He shoves the McMuffin into his mouth, extends his arms, so a FEMALE DEPUTY can wand him.

*

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

It's probably the metal plate in his head.

MARLOWE turns to see: LISA BENNET, late 20's, tailored suit which only partially conceals a natural beauty.

MARLOWE

Deputy D.A. Bennet.

Wand BEEPS on MARLOWE, as BENNET clears her own checkpoint.

BENNET

(to Deputy)

You might wanna think about performing a cavity search.

*
*

MARLOWE

Hey I'm game, if you guys are.

Deputy can't hide a smile... as BENNET moves to the ELEVATORS. Deputy clears MARLOWE, who then joins BENNET.

*
*

BENNET

(re: McMuffin)

Nice breakfast.

MARLOWE

Well, I don't have you cooking for me anymore, do I?

BENNET

I never cooked for you in my life.

MARLOWE

You microwaved once.

CONTINUED

BENNET

Popcorn doesn't count, Marlowe.

ELEVATOR DOORS open. BENNET steps in, MARLOWE right behind.

BENNET pushes "18" - OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY.
MARLOWE pushes "19" - OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER.

BENNET

I hope you keep a suit in the office.

MARLOWE taps his Messenger Bag.

MARLOWE

Wrinkle free.

*

BENNET

You realize you can reject a life of
privilege without dressing like a
twelve year old.

*

MARLOWE

... So why are you in so early?
Starbuck's run out of soy lattes?

BENNET

You're gonna make fun of me for being
lactose intolerant?

MARLOWE

No. Just generally intolerant.

Elevator Doors open.

BENNET

Forgive me, but I have criminals to
prosecute.

*

MARLOWE

Criminals? Thought a jury was supposed
to decide that... Or have you guys been
illegally tapping our phones again?

*

*

*

BENNET

Don't worry, Marlowe, you're safe...
Phone sex isn't against the law. It
just costs a lot.

*

*

MARLOWE smiles, doors start to close. BENNET holds them.

*

BENNET

And as I recall, you didn't think I was that intolerant, when I showed you that little thing with my tongue, did you?

On MARLOWE; BENNET lets the doors close,

4 INT. PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICE - BULLPEN AREA - DAY 4

ELEVATOR DOORS open. MARLOWE steps out, moves off, as another ELEVATOR opens. Revealing:

MATT HARPER, 25, self-tanned, slightly self-absorbed, in Versace blue; arriving from life in Laguna. Things have come easy to HARPER, but things can change. HARPER hears: *

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

What'd I tell you about calling me?
No, you're not listening. What'd I tell you about calling me here?

HARPER moves to investigate; and as fate would have it finds BLACKWOOD, who motions him into his OFFICE. HARPER hesitates. So, BLACKWOOD's gestures become insistent. HARPER enters, having no idea why.

5 INT. BLACKWOOD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 5

BLACKWOOD

Because we have nothing to say to each other, that's why.

HARPER

Sorry, I was just looking for--

BLACKWOOD motions HARPER to sit on a couch, then uses his hand to mock/simulate someone talking to him.

BLACKWOOD

(into phone)

On your side? No. I am definitely not on your side. You have no side. All you have is a minimum and a maximum.

(abruptly ends call)

How my clients get my phone number I'll never understand... So, who are you? *

(Harper's stunned)

You wanna take out a wallet and check an ID or something?

HARPER

Matt Harper. I'm supposed to start here today.

BLACKWOOD

Yeah? As what?

HARPER

A lawyer?

BLACKWOOD

Really? You don't seem too sure.

HARPER

(gets up)

Look, I was just trying to find out where orientation is... The letter said to be there by nine.

*
*

BLACKWOOD

(puts on jacket)

Nine, huh. Then we better get going.

*

HARPER

Going?

BLACKWOOD's already moving out the door. HARPER trails.

6 EXT. OFFICE CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

6

HARPER

You mean, with you?

Passing CARLY OWEN, late 20's, a woman with a soft beauty and an ease that comes from being raised in a town where everyone knew her name. And maybe that was also the problem: She knew their names, too. Didn't take long to realize that the only way she was ever going to grow was by leaving. She stops by an OFFICE, as HARPER disappears around a corner --

*
*
*
*
*

7 INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

7

Finds MARLOWE at a mirror, finishing his tie. Obviously, the man cleans up well. Beyond the mirror, PHOTOS of the privilege previously alluded to: Grandpa in the Governor's Mansion. Sailing. Safari. Campaign trail with Dad. And of course, on the beach with a Starlet.

*
*
*

CARLY

Who was that?

MARLOWE

New guy.

*

CARLY

Think we should leave him alone with
Blackwood?

*

MARLOWE

D'you see his frosted tips?
(then...)
So, how was the date?

*

CARLY

He had to re-schedule.

*

MARLOWE

Really? Why?

*

CARLY

Some kinda surgery.

MARLOWE

Well, that's fairly original.

CARLY

He didn't have surgery, Marlowe. He
performed it.

As a LAW CLERK, female, early 20's, perky, appears.

LAW CLERK

Marlowe. Boss's looking for you.

MARLOWE

Yeah? What's up?

*

LAW CLERK

I'm just a law clerk.
(then, to Carly)
How'd your big blinder go?

CARLY

What? Does everyone around here know I
had a blind date?

MARLOWE

(to Law Clerk)
Never happened. Dude had surgery.

LAW CLERK

Ewww. That's kinda gross... What's he
like an old guy or something?

CARLY

(shakes her head)

I gotta get to court. I have a third
strike on the calendar.

Moves down the corridor. LAW CLERK turns to MARLOWE.

LAW CLERK

What'd I say? I sorta like older guys. *

On MARLOWE, learning something new.

8 INT. OFFICE - DAY

8

GLORIA FONTAINE'S office. It's kinda hard to tell how old *
she really is -- fact is, no one's got the balls to ask. A *
legend in court -- her walls covered with evidence of legal *
achievements -- FONTAINE bears the scars of a woman who made *
it when it really was a man's world. At the moment, she's *
feeding a large BIRD, an African Gray. *

MARLOWE

Wanted to see me, boss? *

MARLOWE's a bit startled by the sight of the BIRD. *

MARLOWE *

... When did you get a bird? *

FONTAINE

1983... For my kids. Now they're all *
gone and I got left with Maxwell... *
Lately, he's been refusing to eat. *
(to Bird) *
C'mon baby, eat something for Mommy. *

FONTAINE nods to a file on her desk. *

FONTAINE *

I've got a case I need you to handle. *

MARLOWE crosses to it, while she continues to feed the BIRD. *

MARLOWE *

(off file) *

Police Officer Involved Shooting. *

FONTAINE

Cop shot a Latino. Apparently, the kid *
was unarmed. *

CONTINUED

MARLOWE

Lemme guess. Cop's white.

FONTAINE

L.A.'s nothing if not a melting pot. *

FONTAINE makes kissing noises at the BIRD. *

MARLOWE

We're really gonna take this case?

FONTAINE

(sarcastic)

As opposed to the gang bangers we're
used to representing?

MARLOWE

C'mon, it's the cops who bust our
clients in the first place. Now you
wanna actually defend one? *

FONTAINE

Since when do we get to choose who we
represent? *

(off Marlowe)

Going after this Cop's a wet dream for
the DA, Marlowe. It's their one big
chance to prosecute a case where the
Mexican doesn't end up in jail. And it
couldn't come at a better time for them
either. What with the Mexican round-up
they've been planning... See what you
do, Marlowe, is you build a wall down
at the border; keep as many out as you
can. Ones you're stuck with? Find a
case like this and throw 'em a bone...
Hell, I think it might play better than
that Duke rape case. *

MARLOWE

So, we take it 'cause of politics. *

FONTAINE

We take it 'cause it's our job.
And because nine hours after the
shooting, with no sleep, this cop was
ordered by a Sergeant to give an
incriminating statement to Internal
Affairs. What does that tell you? *

MARLOWE

That he did it? *

FONTAINE

Tells me they don't care whether this
cop did it or not. Only last time I
checked, we're supposed to.

(looks at Marlowe)

DA tries to build a case like this,
they're gonna find us laying down IEDs
all the way to the courthouse... Now go
get yourself held in contempt.

MARLOWE nods, closes the file. Done.

FONTAINE

Oh. Lisa Bennet's gonna be the
prosecutor. Is that a problem?

MARLOWE

Probably.

FONTAINE

(shoots a look)

Your client's waiting in a coffee shop
around the corner.

FONTAINE makes more kissing noises trying to feed Maxwell,

9 INT. ELEVATOR - 4TH FLOOR COURTHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER 9

Doors open. BLACKWOOD, HARPER exit into the crowd.

BLACKWOOD

Alright. This is us.

HARPER

What do you mean "us?" I thought you
were taking me to orientation?

BLACKWOOD

Gotta make a stop at court first.

HARPER

Why court?

BLACKWOOD

I don't know, 'cause we're lawyers?
(beat, off Harper)
I need to see a client.

HARPER

What kinda case?

BLACKWOOD
Armed robbery.

HARPER
Is he guilty? *

BLACKWOOD
Think back to law school, Harper. *
Until someone like you gets through *
with him? A criminal charge is merely
an allegation.

(off Harper's look)
Of course he's guilty. *

HARPER
So, what's your defense? *

BLACKWOOD
Only two defenses in this business:
Didn't do it. Didn't happen.

HARPER
Which one is this?

BLACKWOOD
This? This is a guilty plea.

10 EXT. FEMALE LOCK-UP - DAY

10

CARLY with a female client: LYDIA BARROS, mid-20's, Latina,
in a L.A. County jail jumpsuit.

CARLY
Lydia Barros?

LYDIA
Who are you?

CARLY
Carly Owen. I'm gonna be your lawyer. *

LYDIA
How come I can't get out?

CARLY
Court set a high bail because you have
two prior felony convictions. An
assault... and a robbery.

CONTINUED

LYDIA

Those don't got nothing to do with this. I mean, I didn't even know that car was stole, okay?

CARLY sees that LYDIA doesn't know how much trouble she's in.

CARLY

You understand the DA's filed your case as a third strike, right?

LYDIA

Third strike? What's that mean?

CARLY

It means if you're convicted, you're looking at 25 years to life.

LYDIA

Life? No. I told you, I didn't know the car was stole. I got it from my neighbor, okay? I didn't have bus fare and my kid -- Jimmy, he's only four -- he got a real high fever, so she let me use it to take him to the clinic...

CARLY

Okay, look, I'll call the clinic but --

LYDIA

You don't understand. They took my little boy. You gotta get me out.

On CARLY, this job's never easy, is it.

11 INT. LOCK-UP - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

11

BLACKWOOD, HARPER, with a defendant, LESTER, 30's, African-American, muscled up.

LESTER

Told you I wasn't takin' no plea bargains, Blackwood.

BLACKWOOD

The gun was in your pocket, Lester.

LESTER

Don't care. Just go delay it again.

CONTINUED

BLACKWOOD

Can't. DA already announced ready for trial. Court's not gonna give us another continuance.

*
*

LESTER

Then maybe there shouldn't be an "us."

*

BLACKWOOD

... You see what's goin' on here?

*

HARPER

Actually, no, not really.

BLACKWOOD

Lester's about to challenge our attorney-client relationship.

Lester's rolling up his sleeves.

HARPER

What are you talking about?

BLACKWOOD

He's gonna take a swing at me. Aren't you Lester? It's been goin' around the courthouse a few weeks now... Clients heard if they punch out their lawyer, they might buy themselves more time.

LESTER

Ain't nothin' personal, Blackwood.

BLACKWOOD

Oh you throw down with me, it's gonna get real personal... Fact is, you hit me, they're gonna need an ambulance to get my foot outta your ass.

LESTER

What? Y'all think you can hurt me?

BLACKWOOD

No, not just me... Him too.

*

HARPER

Excuse me?

LESTER

You crazy, Blackwood.

*

BLACKWOOD

Oh you haven't heard crazy yet. 'Cause once we're done here? I'm gonna drive to your house and kill your dog Molly.

*

LESTER

Wait. You know my dog's name?

*

HARPER can only stare. Long Beat.

BLACKWOOD

Take the deal, Lester. Otherwise, get some ball bearings put in your wrist, 'cause you're gonna be married to your hand for the rest of your life.

*
*
*
*

On LESTER, shit.

*

12 INT. FUN CITY - COFFEE SHOP - DAY

12

MARLOWE enters. Courthouse crowd. MARLOWE sees no one in a police uniform. Turns to exit, when a Woman, late 20's, nursing a coffee, alone in a booth, gets his attention.

BETH

Mr. Marlowe? I'm Beth Giles.
(off Marlowe)
Officer Beth Giles?

*

On MARLOWE, surprised his Killer Cop is the girl-next-door.

13 INT. FUN CITY - BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

13

MARLOWE sits across from BETH GILES, 20's, soft appearance, looking like she's had a hard time sleeping lately.

BETH

I recognized you from People magazine. You were with your family at some fundraiser or something.

MARLOWE

Pretty sure I ate more than I took in.

*

BETH

Can't imagine what that must be like; all that paparazzi around all the time.

*

MARLOWE opens his file, beat,

*

BETH

Guess it's kinda awkward... you being a public defender and me being a cop.

MARLOWE

I was just wondering why you didn't use the lawyer the police union gave you?

BETH

Because he wanted me to plead guilty.

MARLOWE

Is that right.

BETH

Yeah. Only unlike most of your other clients -- a lot of whom I'm sure I've arrested -- I'm actually innocent.

MARLOWE looks at her, beat, then,

MARLOWE

File says you and your partner were on patrol when the call came in.

BETH

Vehicle Versus Ped... pedestrian. Car hit some kids at a bus stop.

MARLOWE

Report indicates you responded alone.

BETH

My partner was in Denny's, couldn't hear his radio... Kids were hurt, so I slid over to the wheel and rolled on the call... Halfway there, Dispatch issued an update; said the suspect was fleeing 4-17.

(off Marlowe)

He was running away and he had a gun.

MARLOWE

What happened when you got there?

BETH

Crowd had gathered... Three kids were down. Little girl had been thrown twenty feet. There was glass everywhere. And... all this screaming.

13A **ENTER MONOCHROME POV**

13A

Through BETH's WINDSHIELD: Car crashed up on the curb and through a Storefront Window; Bus Bench overturned. Color Streamers from the store's "Going Out of Business" sale fluttering. Glass everywhere. People screaming. A little girl laying in the street, her mother wailing.

MARLOWE (O.S.)

What happened next?

BETH

As I got out of the car, a woman yelled that the guy with the gun was running up the block...

*

MARLOWE

What'd you do?

BETH

I turned in the direction she pointed, chambered a round; yelled for everyone to freeze.

*

MARLOWE

Did they?

*

BETH

Everyone but the man I shot.

MARLOWE

Edward Cordero.

*

BETH looks down at PHOTO of Cordero, dead. Nods "yes."

*

13B **ENTER MONOCHROME POV**

13B

Aftermath: BETH holds an already discharged shotgun; then ON Cordero's body, littered newspaper dancing like tumbleweed.

MARLOWE (O.S.)

What did he do?

*

(beat)

Officer Giles?

BETH

... He dropped to one knee and wheeled on my position.

*

MARLOWE

(surprised)

He turned on you? Without a weapon?

*

BETH

That's right.

MARLOWE

Strike you as somewhat odd? *

BETH

I guess. I don't know. At the time, I thought he had a gun.

MARLOWE

... At what point did you realize he was Latino?

BETH

You think that's why I shot him?

MARLOWE

Doesn't matter what I think. All that matters is what a jury thinks.

BETH

Now you sound like a lawyer.

MARLOWE

And you sound like a cop who needs one.

BETH

What's that supposed to mean?

MARLOWE

You rolled to a crime scene alone in violation of Department policy; drew a shotgun on a street full of innocent pedestrians -- none of whom were white, by the way; then killed an unarmed man who had nothing to do with the hit and run because you thought he had a gun.

BETH

(then, resolute)

I discharged my weapon because he turned on my position. I did what I was trained to do.

(off his doubt)

Sorry to have wasted your time, counselor. *

BETH gets up and leaves. On MARLOWE, that went well. *

END OF ACT ONE *

ACT TWO

*

14 INT. COURT CORRIDOR - DAY

14

HARPER, upset, trails BLACKWOOD down the corridor.

BLACKWOOD

I had a client who was about to blow a perfectly reasonable plea bargain.

HARPER

So you get him to take it by threatening to kill his dog?

BLACKWOOD

Okay Doogie Harper, what would you do?

HARPER

How about going to see the Judge?

*

BLACKWOOD

You think a Judge is gonna help us?

*

(off Harper)

You know what Judges are, Harper?

*

Lawyers who couldn't make a living.

*

HARPER

*

That's not my experience.

*

BLACKWOOD

Your experience...?

*

HARPER

I was at a private law firm for almost a year... I mean, until I got laid off.

*

(off Blackwood)

*

But I had a chance to be around real lawyers.

*

*

BLACKWOOD

Is that right?

*

HARPER

Yeah that's right. And maybe somebody in a polyester suit shouldn't be casting any stones.

*

*

*

BLACKWOOD

You think what you wear makes you a lawyer? 'Cause I look at you and I wouldn't let you try a parking ticket.

*

*

*

(off Harper)

(MORE)

CONTINUED

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)

Until you've stood next to a man the rest of the world would rather pretend didn't exist; until you've been in front of a jury ready to spit in your face, all you are is just another guy in a fancy suit.

(off Harper)

Only one thing makes you a lawyer, Harper. That's your client.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

On HARPER, beat, BLACKWOOD turns, walks away.

HARPER

Where are you going now?

*

BLACKWOOD

I got a *Pro per* in lock-up... That's a man who's representing himself.

*
*

HARPER

I know what a *Pro per* is.

BLACKWOOD

Good. 'Cause now he's yours.

HARPER catches up; BLACKWOOD slaps the file into his chest.

CARLY walks with DEPUTY DA EDWARDS (DA from Teaser).

CARLY

C'mon, Kevin, it's a stolen car. It's not like she's Bin Laden's driver -- Who by the way was offered less prison time than she is...

*
*
*

EDWARDS

Have you seen her record? Armed robbery, assault. And that's just the one's we caught her for.

CARLY

She's been clean three years. Junior college, 8 credits shy of graduation.

*

EDWARDS

I'll give you 5 years. But she has to accept it before the prelim tomorrow.

CARLY

She was taking her kid to a clinic.

EDWARDS

So take your chances at trial. Maybe you can get a jury to believe that Lydia's sociopathic days are over and she's just a regular soccer mom now.

*
*

CARLY

You know, people can turn their lives around. They can change.

EDWARDS

Oh, I know lives can change, Carly. In fact, I'm pretty sure your client's changed a lot of lives.

*

CARLY

You can't really think 25 to life is appropriate for a stolen car.

EDWARDS

How many crimes does she get to commit? How many before she forfeits her right for me to feel sorry for her? Far as I'm concerned? Five years is a gift.

On CARLY, losing the battle.

16 EXT. STREET - BUS STOP - DAY

16

MARLOWE and BLACKWOOD exit a Toyota FJ Cruiser.

MARLOWE

So, you just left him with the *Pro per*?

BLACKWOOD

I figure how much damage can he do?

*

MARLOWE shrugs, turns to take his first real look at the remnants of a tragedy: broken glass, a boarded storefront, streamers, flowers in tribute,

*
*

BLACKWOOD

You know New Year's Eve, cops never even bother to send patrols out here. Too many AKs get fired in the air.

*
*
*

(looks around)

We can pull off regime change in Kabul, but we can't get a Kalishnikov off our own street.

*
*
*

CONTINUED

MARLOWE

I checked her file. She's from Akron, Ohio, two years out of the Academy.

*
*
*

BLACKWOOD

You're thinking she wasn't ready for a gunfight.

*
*

MARLOWE

Maybe she was a little too ready...
Runnin' around East LA with a shotgun
like Xena the Warrior Princess.

*
*
*
*

BLACKWOOD

She had a call of a man with a gun.

*

MARLOWE

I know... I'm just wondering what this
girl's even doing out here?

*
*
*

BLACKWOOD

... Rich grandpa, seat in Congress with
your name practically stenciled on
it... Some people might ask the same
question about you.

*
*
*
*
*

MARLOWE looks over at BLACKWOOD, beat,

*

MARLOWE

She told Internal Affairs she was never
sure this guy even had a gun.

*
*
*

BLACKWOOD

She was grilled for nine hours. Cop
ends up with doubts and this surprises
you?

*
*

MARLOWE

C'mon, how many clients confess to
things they didn't do?

BLACKWOOD

You know for someone who represents
killers for a living, you don't know a
helluva lot about what it's like to
take a life, do you?

*

(off Marlowe)

First time I did, we were doin' door-to
doors outside Kuwait City. All I had
was a split second.

(off Marlowe)

(MORE)

16 CONTINUED (2)

16

BLACKWOOD (CONT'D)

Point is, I knew what I'd done was
right -- until I checked his pockets
and found a picture of his little girl.

*

BLACKWOOD reveals more about himself than MARLOWE's case.

BLACKWOOD

Cop doesn't need you to blame her. She
already blames herself. What she needs
is for you to represent her.

*

*

On MARLOWE, considering,

*

17 INT. LOCK-UP - DAY

17

HARPER steps inside a door leading to the Lock-Up. Speaks
with DEPUTY (#1), 30's, military fade.

HARPER

I'm here to see a client.

DEPUTY #1

Black tank or white tank?

HARPER

Sorry?

DEPUTY #1

We keep 'em all in separate cells.

HARPER

You're telling me the prisoners are
segregated?

DEPUTY #1

Gangs run these jails, counselor. Or
maybe you'd rather be representin' body
parts?

*

HARPER

His name's Mesa. Jorge Mesa.

DEPUTY #1

Mesa. That's the *Pro per*, right?

HARPER

... Why?

18 INT. LOCK-UP INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY 18

Two DEPUTIES (#1, #2) with HARPER look up at JORGE MESA, who's climbed on a table and boosted himself through the DROP CEILING. Unfortunately, he's stuck at the waist, torso dangling into the room, head still above ceiling.

DEPUTY #1
He climbed up, tried to escape.

HARPER
And you can't get him down?

DEPUTY #2
Maintenance says it's gonna be awhile. *

HARPER
Is he alright like that?

DEPUTY #1
I'm sure he's fine.

MESA (O.S.)
What? Who's there? Who is it? I can't hear nothin' up here.

HARPER
He says he can't hear anything.

DEPUTY #1
What would you like us to do about it?

Beat. HARPER looks around, spots a CHAIR --

19 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 19

HARPER on the CHAIR, as the DEPUTIES (#1, #2) boost him up through a section of the drop ceiling.

20 INT. CEILING CRAWL SPACE - CONTINUOUS 20

HARPER's head emerges... turns to Mesa. Talking heads.

HARPER
Mr. Mesa? Hi, I'm Matt Harper.
I'm gonna be your Public Defender.

On Mesa, huh?

21 INT. BAR - DAY

21

Irish LA. Some old timers. And BETH drinking alone.

MARLOWE

Little early in the day to be feeling
sorry for yourself, isn't it?

BETH

Look around, counselor. This is a cop
bar. No lawyers allowed. *

MARLOWE

Not even your own?

(Beth turns away)

You asked me what it was like having
the paparazzi always around...

(Beth turns back)

Some people go looking for fame, mine
was an accident of birth... Which means
for a long time, I tried to pretend I
was someone else. Until I realized
this was my life. And I was never
gonna be able to pretend that long. *

BETH

So what'd you do about it? *

MARLOWE

I did what was important to me. Even
if that made some people unhappy. *

BETH

Your family wasn't pleased.

MARLOWE

Dad nearly choked on his martini. See
in politics, you're supposed to move to
the middle. You're not supposed to do
anything that might suggest you
actually have an opinion... Anyway,
six years later, I'm still here. *

BETH

(beat)

I won't plead guilty. *

MARLOWE

I won't ask you to. *

CONTINUED

BETH

Then I guess I better pay my tab.

*
*

MARLOWE

Hey, don't look at me. My family cut me off when I became a public defender.

On BETH, smiling for the first time.

22 EXT. COURTHOUSE - STREET - DAY

22

MARLOWE hustles to catch LISA BENNET, who's walking.

MARLOWE

She told Internal Affairs she wasn't sure he had a gun 'cause she blames herself.

*

BENNET

Guilty people often feel that way.

MARLOWE

She thought her life was in danger.

BENNET

From a man with no weapon?

(stops, turns)

Look, she's young, she's a woman; maybe she was trying to prove something; how tough she is; how she could do the job as well as any man, I don't know.

*
*

MARLOWE

But that wouldn't be you, right?

*
*

BENNET glares, turns and starts to walk away.

*

MARLOWE

He turned on her, Lisa. What was she supposed to do?

*
*

BENNET

(spins around)

She killed a kid, Marlowe. What part of that are you not getting? Or are you really gonna stand there and tell me you think this happens in another neighborhood?

*
*

MARLOWE

So suddenly you're the champion of East LA?

*
*

BENNET

How many times have you whined to me about how cops profile kids just like this one. Now one of them gets shot in cold blood and you're gonna try to justify it?

*
*
*
*
*
*

(off Marlowe)

You know every time we got together, I knew it was a mistake. Only every time I'd tell myself it was okay... Because you were a guy who actually stood for something.

*
*
*
*

MARLOWE

Thought you hated what I stood for...

*

BENNET

I did. But you were charming and sexy and you smelled good and even though I disagreed with everything you believed in, I loved that you believed it.

*

(off Marlowe)

Turns out, you're as morally flexible as the rest of us... Well, this time you chose the wrong Latino.

*
*

MARLOWE

What are you talking about?

BENNET

This kid was no *Cholo*. He was a war hero. Just back from Baghdad. Purple heart and everything.

*

(beat, off Marlowe)

Try charming your way out of that.

BENNET walks off, leaving MARLOWE's head spinning.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

23 INT. CRAWL SPACE - DAY

23

On HARPER, facing his client, Mesa, in the drop ceiling, matter-of-factly interviewing his client.

HARPER

So when's the last time you reported to your parole officer?

*
*

MESA

Five, six weeks ago -- Look, how come they set my bail so high?

HARPER

Because you have three other burglaries on your rap sheet... Look, I don't mean to be rude, but it doesn't seem like you're really any good at this.

*

MESA

I need to use a bathroom.

HARPER

Pardon?

MESA

I gotta take a leak.

*

Beat. HARPER ducks into the room, as he does, he BANGS his head... then climbs down onto a chair.

HARPER

Sorry. There's no one around.

MESA (O.S.)

C'mon, I really gotta go here.

HARPER surveys; then moves a desk underneath Mesa, climbs up. Grabs Mesa's legs, puts Mesa's feet on his shoulders.

HARPER

Okay, when I push, try to free yourself with your hands. K, now.

As HARPER struggles, DEPUTY #1 enters --

DEPUTY #1

What the hell you think you're doing?

CONTINUED

DEPUTY #1 startles HARPER, who loses his balance, pulls on Mesa's feet for support. As he does, Mesa's RIGHT FOOT comes off in HARPER's hands. On HARPER, with an ARTIFICIAL FOOT,

24 EXT. BETH'S HOUSE - DAY

24

BETH, shorts, t-shirt, washes her car. News hits her hard.

BETH

A war hero?

MARLOWE

Two tours in Iraq.

BETH

(quiet)

... How long had he been home?

MARLOWE

Few weeks.

(off Beth's anguish)

Beth, we're gonna deal with it.

BETH

Deal with it? Deal with it how?

Oh, you mean with one of your legal tricks?

(off Marlowe)

Rape, robbery, murder; doesn't really matter to a lawyer, does it... All that matters is what the jury thinks, right? Well, what's my jury gonna think?

MARLOWE

It's not over.

BETH

My whole life I've been trying to prove people wrong. None of 'em wanted me to become a cop... But if I was told I couldn't do something...

MARLOWE

You can't give up.

BETH

What if they're right? What if I didn't see what I thought I saw? I mean, this kid was a war hero, right? Why would he do something like that?

MARLOWE

I don't know. But if we stick to the truth, we'll be okay.

*

BETH

The truth? How are we gonna stick to the truth when I don't even know what it is anymore.

*

(off Marlowe, then)

You to go back to that DA, you go back and you tell her... I'm gonna plead guilty.

*

On MARLOWE, stunned.

25 INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

25

CARLY stops at "Twin Towers" to see LYDIA.

LYDIA

So what'd the DA say?

CARLY

He's willing to offer five years.

LYDIA

Five years? No. I told you. I didn't know that car was stolen.

*

CARLY

It's not about the car, Lydia. It's about your prior record.

LYDIA

But I'm doin' good now.

*

CARLY

I know how frustrating this must be.

*

CARLY looks at LYDIA's hand. Insert: "gang tats".

CARLY

But sometimes the choices we make when we're young can come back to hurt us.

*

LYDIA

(pulls hand back)

Don't be talkin' to me about choices, okay, bitch? 'Cause ain't no one gettin' hurt here but me...

(MORE)

CONTINUED

LYDIA (CONT'D)

I'm sure it musta been real tough for
you, when you were young... What was
it? Ballet or tap? Barbie or Ken?
Only mine were a little tougher.

(beat, off Carly)

You come in here with your lips all
shiny and your skirt all short like you
got places to be, while my little boy's
in some stranger's house having god
knows what done to him and--

LYDIA starts to cry. CARLY looks at her.

CARLY

Just think about it. Don't make any
decisions tonight.

LYDIA

Know what? Why don't you go wherever
it is you're going. 'Cause after today?
You got one less case to worry about.

(off Carly)

That's right. I just fired your ass.

26 INT. OFFICE -- NIGHT

26 *

HARPER, surrounded by the three Deputies, sits handcuffed to
a chair. Deputy #1 on a telephone.

HARPER

This is ridiculous. I wasn't trying to
help him escape. He needed a bathroom.

DEPUTY #1 hangs up the phone; disappointed:

DEPUTY #1

DA's not gonna charge him.

HARPER

Thank god...

DEPUTY #1

(removing cuffs)

I'm gonna keep an eye on you,
counselor. Take that to the bank.

On HARPER, incredulous. Then from the Interview Area --

MESA (O.S.)

Hey. Could I get my foot back here?

HARPER

Could I at least give my client his
foot back?

*
*

DEPUTIES look impish. HARPER looks around. No foot.

HARPER

Wait. Where is it?

*

DEPUTY #2

Don't know. Where'd you leave it?

HARPER

Where did I leave it? You took it from
me, remember?

*
*

MESA (O.S.)

C'mon. Where's my foot?

DEPUTY #1

Your lawyer lost it, Mesa. What you
get for havin' a public defender.

27 INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

27

MARLOWE's cracking the books, when BLACKWOOD stops by.

BLACKWOOD

How's it goin'?

MARLOWE

Department guidelines on the use of
deadly force.

BLACKWOOD

And?

Hands BLACKWOOD U.S. Army photograph of: EDWARD CORDERO, 20.

MARLOWE

(sardonic)

Doesn't cover war heroes.

*

BLACKWOOD

This is why I prefer when they're
guilty... Screw up, you don't have
anyone innocent sitting in jail.

*

MARLOWE looks at him.

*

CONTINUED

MARLOWE

She wants to take a plea. Only I don't think she should go to prison.

*
*

BLACKWOOD

(jokes, off photo)

Well, way this kid looks, I seriously doubt there's much chance of probation.

*

MARLOWE

What happens if I talk her into a trial and she ends up getting convicted?

*
*
*

BLACKWOOD

Hey, if what we did was easy, people wouldn't ask us how we do it, right?

*

MARLOWE

You never have any doubts, do you?

BLACKWOOD

'Bout the job? Not really.

(off Army photo)

See, the truth is, I can't afford doubts... I killed for this country. Did it 'cause I believe in everything it stands for. And I got no problem with that... What I got a problem with is anyone who's gonna come along now and try to tell me I shouldn't do what the law says; that what I killed for doesn't really exist. I let that happen, I become a murderer.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

(hands photo back)

We push the rules, Marlowe. Sometimes the rules push back. That's how people know the rules are still there.

*
*
*

On MARLOWE, his work cut out for him.

28 INT. CAR - NIGHT

28

CARLY alone in her car. FONTAINE tap's at the window.

FONTAINE

You okay?

CARLY

Actually, I just got fired.

CONTINUED

FONTAINE
Client with the third strike. *

CARLY
DA offered five years.

FONTAINE
Well, just make sure you put it on the
record. I keep telling the City
Council what a great job we're doing
helping the helpless. Gets a little
awkward when they don't actually want
our help. *

CARLY
(then)
She had every right to fire me.

FONTAINE
You didn't create this woman's options,
Carly. She did that on her own.

CARLY
It's just... she's tried so hard to
change her life, you know?

FONTAINE looks at her, beat,

CARLY
Where I grew up, people didn't want you
to change; it was like some kind of
betrayal, like I was judging them. *

FONTAINE
So, you made a run for it. *

CARLY
Only what chance did Lydia have?
(digs for file)
I mean, I had County fax her medical
records for a pre-sentence report? Her
kid's father used to beat her
regularly: broken nose, ribs, even a
skull fracture... Only no one cares. *

FONTAINE
Sympathy's not gonna save Lydia. Fact
is, people don't care. Not unless they
see themselves in her situation. *

CARLY
Yeah, but how do we do that? *

FONTAINE pauses, thinks for a moment, then:

FONTAINE

Where's the guy who beat her?

CARLY

San Quentin. Doing life for a murder.

FONTAINE

And she's been clean ever since...

CARLY looks at her, realizes what she's saying.

CARLY

Does that really explain her past? *

FONTAINE

Once upon a time, maybe not. But thanks to this prick, ladies unlucky in love today have something the Lydias of my generation never did.

CARLY

A battered spouse defense.

FONTAINE

Find the right judge. Then you shove those medical records right down the DA's throat until he gags. *

(off Carly) *

Lydia's already done her time. Why should she have to pay twice for loving an asshole? *

29 INT. BLACKWOOD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

29

HARPER sits at BLACKWOOD's desk. Opens a top drawer: empty, except for pencils, paper clips... and a PHOTOGRAPH of a young girl: Arabic, color fading. *

BLACKWOOD (O.S.)

What the hell happened to you? *

BLACKWOOD enters -- startles HARPER, who shuts the drawer. *

HARPER

There was a problem. *

Off BLACKWOOD, just as LAW CLERK appears with a mail cart.

HARPER

With the *Pro per*. He tried to escape;
only he got stuck in an air vent... So
I interviewed him in the ceiling, only
then he needed to use a bathroom, so I
tried to help him, but --

*

BLACKWOOD and LAW CLERK stare at HARPER. Beat. Blurts out --

HARPER

His foot came off.

BLACKWOOD

His foot...

*

HARPER

Then it got stolen.

*

BLACKWOOD

(incredulous)
Someone stole your client's foot...

HARPER

I was forced to surrender it at
gunpoint.

*

*

LAW CLERK

(hands papers)
DA just filed this.

*

HARPER

What? What is it?

BLACKWOOD

(off papers)
Your foot wasn't stolen, Harper.

HARPER

It wasn't?

BLACKWOOD

The DA seized it as evidence.

On HARPER, where the hell am I? What is this place?

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

30 EXT. STREET - BUS STOP - DAY

30

MARLOWE, BETH, back at the crime scene. BETH reacts to a make-shift memorial of flowers; candles, Cordero's photo.

BETH

I told you, I didn't want to come back out here...

MARLOWE

Well out here's the only place we're gonna figure out what happened.

BETH

We already know what happened... I shot an unarmed man.

MARLOWE

Because you said he turned on you.

BETH

Yeah. But why would he do that?

MARLOWE

You said there was a witness.

BETH

As I got out the car...

MARLOWE

Where did she point? Which direction?

BETH

C'mon, what are you doing?

MARLOWE

In which direction, Officer Giles?

BETH looks at MARLOWE, beat,

30A **ENTER MONOCHROME POV**

30A

Cordero exits a store, holds a newspaper: the dancing tumbleweed from earlier POV. Cordero turns to CAMERA; beat,

BETH

In that direction, okay? I think he must have been coming out of the store.

MARLOWE turns to look at a KOREAN GROCERY STORE.

CONTINUED

MARLOWE

Which store? You mean, that store
right there?

BETH shrugs a "yes." MARLOWE starts to hurry off.

BETH

Wait. Where are you going...?

31 INT. KOREAN GROCERY - MOMENT LATER

31

MARLOWE enters the store; finds an elderly KOREAN MALE, 60's,
working the counter.

MARLOWE

You the owner?

OWNER shakes head "yes."

MARLOWE

So, you were you here when those little
girls were hurt?

OWNER

Always here.

MARLOWE takes out Cordero's Army Photo.

MARLOWE

This guy got shot that day, you
remember?

OWNER

(nods)

I know this kid. Long time he come in
here... since he was little boy.

MARLOWE

Then you saw what happened to him?

OWNER

No, no. Didn't see. Working.

MARLOWE fears an opportunity being lost; looks out at BETH
still at the scene. Until --

OWNER

But I hear.

MARLOWE

You heard? You heard what?

OWNER

The car; when it hit little girls...
Terrible. Everyone screaming. All
that glass went crashing.

(at Eddie's pic)

This one, he hit the floor like bomb
went off or something.

MARLOWE

What do you mean?

OWNER

He go down on ground when glass
breaking. I tell him it's okay. Tell
him we're safe. But, he too scared.

*

On MARLOWE, gears starting to shift,

32 EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

32

MARLOWE rushes out of the Grocery, heading for his Cruiser.

MARLOWE

(on the move)

He heard the glass shatter; heard those
kids screaming. The blood. He walked
right into what you did.

BETH

What are you talking about?

MARLOWE

The shotgun. You were the passenger
that day... You slid over to the wheel
when your partner couldn't hear you try
to raise him on the radio.

BETH

What difference does that make?

MARLOWE

Difference is, you grabbed that gun
'cause it was your job as the
passenger... You did what you were
trained to do without thinking... This
kid was just back from Iraq. When he
heard you rack that gun, he just did
what he was trained to do.

On BETH, trying to see it now,

33 INT. CHAMBERS - DAY

33

GENN presides. CARLY and EDWARDS go at it.

GENN

You're challenging the
constitutionality of your client's
previously entered guilty pleas?

CARLY

Turns out, her baby's father was a co-
defendant in both cases.

EDWARDS

So what.

CARLY

So Penal Code 1195 allows her to
challenge those convictions, if she can
show evidence of her battering might
have resulted in a different outcome.

EDWARDS

That applies to convictions after
trial. Your client admitted her guilt
in open court. Twice.

CARLY

Right. Because she was forced to.

GENN

Using a battered spouse theory to set
aside a guilty plea... You have to
admit, it's a novel approach.

EDWARDS

We're talking about things that
happened over four years ago.

CARLY

This woman lived through abuse none of
us has a clue about. Fact it wasn't
acknowledged doesn't make it less real.

*
*
*

EDWARDS

Exactly how many bites at the apple do
you think your client's entitled to?

CARLY

As many as she needs for us to get it
right.

*

34 INT. LAW LIBRARY -- DAY

34

LAW CLERK, BLACKWOOD, HARPER, CARLY and several (5) other Public Defenders hit the books.

CARLY

Why would the DA seize his foot?

*
*

BLACKWOOD

Cops lifted some foot prints in another burglary... They wanna see if Harper's guy's Cinderella... Speaking of Cinderella, what happened with Doc Hollywood?

LAW CLERK

(reads lawbook)

Probably still in recovery, right?

*

BLACKWOOD

Wait. You're seeing someone in AA? I thought that was a deal breaker when I set you up with my friend Gary?

CARLY

Why do I tell you people anything?
We're having drinks later.

*

BLACKWOOD

Drinks? You really think that's wise?

On CARLY, dear god. Then, off a law book--

LAW CLERK

Okay, here's something... The authorities weren't permitted to retain an inmate's artificial leg... and their decision to retain such prosthetic was a violation of the Eighth Amendment.

HARPER

So, they had to give it back, right?

LAW CLERK

Oops.

HARPER

Oops?

LAW CLERK

This guy was already in prison.

CONTINUED

HARPER

So?

*

BLACKWOOD

So you shoulda let him piss his pants.

Just as FONTAINE appears --

FONTAINE

Okay, which one of you was arrested
trying to help a client escape?

(off total silence)

It was you, wasn't it Blackwood?

BLACKWOOD

Why do you always assume it was me?

FONTAINE

Because if you weren't representing
criminals, you'd be one.

*

*

Laughs. FONTAINE suddenly realizes something's wrong ----

FONTAINE

What are you all doing in the library?

No one says a thing; until --

*

HARPER

They're with me.

*

FONTAINE

With you? Who are you?

*

HARPER

Matt Harper.

FONTAINE

Harper? Where the hell've you been?
You were supposed to start yesterday.

HARPER

I did start yesterday.

CARLY

And he's got the mug shots to prove it.

*

More Laughs.

*

HARPER

I accidentally removed a client's foot.

FONTAINE

Do you have some sort of fetish you failed to disclose, Mr. Harper? Because you know it's not too late to see our pysch consultant. He usually can find an excuse for almost any type of deviant behavior... Isn't that right, Henry?

*
*
*
*
*
*

Off BLACKWOOD, then back to Harper.

FONTAINE

You'll get that foot back won't you.

*
*

HARPER

Yes ma'am.

*

FONTAINE

And in the future? While we all like to see our clients get out, we don't usually try to break them out.

*
*

35 EXT. STREET - EAST LA - LATE DAY

35 *

Green lawns, palm trees, pit bulls and chain link fences. A neighborhood reeking danger.

MARLOWE and BLACWOOD cruise, as small groups of Shaved Heads, in bright XXL white t-shirts, eye them.

BLACKWOOD

Screw the ozone. It's times like this I wish I had a Humvee.

*

(off Marlowe)

*

I'm just saying, be a helluva place to find ourselves in a firefight.

*
*

MARLOWE

We'll be okay.

BLACKWOOD

That's what Reginald Denny said before they dragged him out of his truck.

*
*

(off Marlowe)

What? You think any of these shaved heads out here care we're public defenders?

*
*
*

MARLOWE

Bike helmet's in the backseat if you're scared.

*
*

(MORE)

MARLOWE (CONT'D)
(checks address)
Okay, this is it right here.

MARLOWE pulls to the curb.

BLACKWOOD
You realize they could punch your
ticket for a stunt like this, right?

MARLOWE
Cops follow hunches all the time. *

BLACKWOOD
Then we crucify their asses for it in
court... I'm serious, Marlowe. These
people have no reason to cooperate. *

MARLOWE
Sure they do... They're in that house
right now wondering the same thing I
am: Why'd their son have to die. *

36 INT. RESTAURANT - BAR AREA - LATE DAY

36

CARLY and a SURGEON, late 30's, sharply dressed, have drinks.

SURGEON
So your friend tells me you're a DA.

CARLY
A DA? She said that?

SURGEON
Said you also went to Harvard? *

CARLY
Lotsa student loans. *

SURGEON
Exactly. So how'd you wind up with a
city job? I mean, I woulda thought
you'd have the pick of the litter. *

CARLY
I don't know, I like what I do. *

SURGEON
Sure, for now it's great... But c'mon,
eventually right? *

CARLY
Eventually what? *

CONTINUED

SURGEON

I just mean, why would you wanna be
around criminals everyday?

*
*

CARLY

Why do you wanna be around sick people?

*

SURGEON

Sick people? Me? God no. I'm a
plastic surgeon.

*
*

CARLY

Plastic surgeon.

*

SURGEON

Corrective breast augmentation. Like
to think I'm the guy who takes on the
boobs other doctors won't touch.

*

SURGEON lifts his glass to CARLY, smiles.

SURGEON

Here's to the tough cases, right?

On CARLY, check please.

37 EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

37

MARLOWE stands at a gated door. Knocks again. Looks back at
BLACKWOOD, who's motioning to GANGBANGERS.

Just as -- a GIRL, 10, opens the door. Stands quietly.

MARLOWE

Hey. Your Mom or Dad around?

GIRL

Mommy... There's a cop here.

MRS. CORDERO, 40's, hard-working, comes to the door.

MARLOWE

Mrs. Cordero?

MRS. CORDERO

I thought no one was coming to talk to
us until the preliminary hearing?

MARLOWE

Actually, I'm not a police officer.
I'm a public defender.

CONTINUED

MRS. CORDERO
(realizes)
You're representing that police
officer, aren't you?

Just as -- MR. CORDERO, 40's, appears behind his wife.

MR. CORDERO
Alma? Who is it? What's going on?

MRS. CORDERO
He's a public defender...

MR. CORDERO
You got some nerve coming here.

MARLOWE
Your son was killed, Mr. Cordero... I'm
just trying to find out why.

MR. CORDERO
Then ask the cop who killed him.

CORDERO tries to shut the door. Marlowe puts his hand up.

MARLOWE
I did ask her. That's why I'm here.

On CORDEROs,

38 EXT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

38

CARLY and the SURGEON, 30, exit. Approach CARLY's car.

CARLY
This is me...

SURGEON
You're leaving? C'mon, it's early.

CARLY
I have to be in court in the morning.

SURGEON
Keep up that conviction rate, huh?

CARLY
Look, you know I probably should have
said something earlier but--

*

SURGEON notices a HOMELESS MAN, 40's, beside a JAGUAR.

*

SURGEON

Hey. What're you doing over there?

HOMELESS MAN

Not doing nothin'.

SURGEON

Then how 'bout doin' it somewhere else.

CARLY

What's wrong? What's the matter?

SURGEON

Guy's hanging around my car.

CARLY looks, then reaches into her bag, takes out a bill.
Starts to make her way to the HOMELESS MAN. *

SURGEON

You're gonna give him money? *

(then) *

See, now this is exactly why we have a
homeless problem in this city.

CARLY

I think it's a little more complicated
than me giving someone who's hungry a
dollar, don't you? *

(then to HM)

Use it for food, K?

HOMELESS MAN

Thanks. Hey, I know you. *

CARLY

Oh, dear god...

HOMELESS MAN

You're Miss Owen, right? *

SURGEON

Wait. This guy really knows you? *

HOMELESS MAN

Hell yeah, I know her. *

SURGEON

So I was right. He is a criminal. *

CARLY

What?

CONTINUED

SURGEON

If he knows you, he's gotta be a criminal, right? So, what'd you prosecute him for? What'd he do?

*

CARLY

He didn't do anything. And I'm not a prosecutor, you pompous ass... I'm his lawyer.

*

*

On SURGEON, stunned.

39 INT. CORDERO HOME - DAY

39

Quiet, lived in. Portraits of family on the walls.

MR. CORDERO

My son served his country. But to that cop, he was just another Mexican from East LA.

MRS. CORDERO

Luis...

MR. CORDERO

No. He came to my house... When other kids ran with gangs, my Eddie was in school. We taught him to make his own way. Those medals he won? They were gonna open doors for him. You understand?

MARLOWE

My client says Eddie dropped to one knee, raised his arms as if he was going to fire a weapon.

MR. CORDERO

She's lying. Eddie didn't have a gun.

MARLOWE

I know that. But what she describes is exactly what he would have been trained to do in a combat situation.

MR. CORDERO

Why would you come here and say these things to us? Have you no shame.

CONTINUED

MARLOWE

I'm here because there's another life
at stake, Mr. Cordero...

MRS. CORDERO shoots a look at her husband. MARLOWE sees it.

MR. CORDERO

My son was a hero.

MARLOWE

No one's saying he wasn't. But if he
was having problems, it's gonna come
out.

Long Beat. MRS. CORDERO interrupts --

MRS. CORDERO

He was having trouble sleeping.

MR. CORDERO

Alma.

MRS. CORDERO

He was a different boy when he came
home. He wouldn't smile, wouldn't eat.
He watched t.v. all night long...

MR. CORDERO

(to wife)

Why are you helping him?

MRS. CORDERO

(cries; anguished)

Because I wanna know what they did... I
wanna know what they did to our son
over there.

*
*

MR. CORDERO takes his wife in his arms,

MRS. CORDERO

We were so worried about his future;
what future does he have now.

Dad cries too; consoling his wife, each other;

On MARLOWE, who looks over at the little Girl.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

40 EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

40

MARLOWE holds a brown bag. The door opens. BENNET stands there in a sexy night shirt.

BENNET

Marlowe? What are you doing here?

MARLOWE

My client wants to plead guilty.

*

BENNET

(beat)

I can't make you any promises. Not until I see a sentence report.

*

*

*

MARLOWE

I'm not gonna let her.

*

BENNET looks at him, beat,

*

BENNET

You are such an asshole.

*

MARLOWE

She doesn't deserve this.

*

*

BENNET

According to who? You? Why do you always think you know better than everybody else.

*

*

(beat, shakes head)

This is exactly why things would never have worked out between us.

*

*

MARLOWE

Things never work out between us because you don't think I care.

*

*

On BENNET, beat, MARLOWE then holds up the brown bag.

MARLOWE

Low fat bran muffin... decaf soy latte... One sugar in the raw.

(off Bennet)

I care more than you think.

*

BENNET looks at him.

*

41 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING 41

MARLOWE with BENNET. Naked, in bed. She peruses the file. *

BENNET *

You realize, I could come after you for tampering with my witnesses.

MARLOWE

You wouldn't really put me in jail?

BENNET

In a heart beat.

MARLOWE comes close to her... *

MARLOWE

... Would you come visit me and talk to me on one of those phone things...?

BENNET pushes him away. *

BENNET *

You must think I'm pretty easy. A muffin and latte, and I'm just gonna roll over for you. *

MARLOWE *

It was a Venti. *

BENNET *

I just don't understand you.

MARLOWE

C'mon, forget what you think of me for a minute... Eddie Cordero was afraid to ask for help. Afraid any psychological assistance he got would become part of his permanent record. *

BENNET *

You realize you're throwing away your future. *

MARLOWE

(not going there...)

His mother noticed the changes the first few days he was home. Said he was nervous. Reacted to noise... Look, he heard that car crash and those little girls screaming. *

(MORE) *

CONTINUED

MARLOWE (CONT'D)

He comes out of the store to the sound of a shell being chambered in my client's shotgun... And for the record, I'm not throwing anything away.

*
*

BENNET

No? Then tell me, how many defense attorneys get elected to public office?

MARLOWE

Who said I was running for office?

BENNET

Who you are says it, Marlowe.

(off Marlowe)

Look, you may not think so right now, but one day you might wanna change more than what happens in a courtroom. And being a public defender isn't gonna make that any easier...

*

MARLOWE

I watched my father be crushed trying to please everyone but himself. Until even he didn't know what he cared about anymore.

*
*
*

(off Bennet)

I represent people who need my help. If that hurts me down the road, then that's what happens.

*
*
*

BENNET

You have a gift, Evan. People listen to you. They trust you.

MARLOWE

Then trust me now. Don't make this case 'cause you can. Or because of politics... Sending her to prison won't make her a killer and it won't bring that kid back... It'll just keep you up at night.

On BENNET,

LYDIA on the stand. CARLY questions her. GENN presides. EDWARDS takes notes.

CARLY

You were sixteen when you committed the robbery? *

LYDIA

Yes.

CARLY

And a year later, you also plead guilty to an assault?

LYDIA

I got picked to jump this girl from another gang.

CARLY

Picked?

LYDIA

I was told I hadda jump her.

CARLY

By who?

LYDIA

The father of my baby.

CARLY

Why not just say no to him?

LYDIA

'Cause then I woulda got jumped. *

CARLY nods, sits. EDWARDS rises.

EDWARDS

You're claiming you had no choice in committing these crimes because you felt threatened?

LYDIA

I was threatened.

EDWARDS

Yet you never told the police, never even told your lawyers, did you?

LYDIA

I didn't think it mattered.

EDWARDS

But now you're looking at prison, it matters a whole lot, doesn't it?

LYDIA

I just wanna be there for my son.

EDWARDS

Which is why you're pulling this whole "abuse excuse" thing, isn't that right?

LYDIA

No. That's not right.

EDWARDS

Nothing further.

CARLY

(stands)

Why didn't you tell anyone you were being beaten Lydia? *

LYDIA

(tears, beat, then:)

'Cause I thought it was my fault... I thought I deserved what my baby's father told me I deserved. *

CARLY

What about now? *

LYDIA

Now I know I don't deserve it... What I deserve is to take care of my son. *

Off EDWARDS, GENN, then on CARLY,

43 INT. DA'S OFFICE - DAY

43

BENNET sits behind a desk with a file. MARLOWE sits on the couch, off to the side... The guy in the hot seat's BETH's Sergeant, FRANK NELSON, 40,

BENNET

I appreciate you coming down, Sergeant.

NELSON

Sure, it's just... I'm not real clear what I'm doing here.

CONTINUED

BENNET

I wanted one last chance to go over
Officer Giles' statement before the
preliminary hearing tomorrow.

NELSON

Her statement...

BENNET

Well, you were the first one to talk to
her at the scene, right?

NELSON

That's right.

BENNET

So, what'd she tell you happened?

NELSON

Not sure I understand... I mean, you
got her statement, right?

BENNET

The one she made to Internal Affairs.
... I'm asking what she told you.

NELSON looks over at MARLOWE, who sits poker-faced.

NELSON

Look, I don't know what's goin' on but--

BENNET

(picks up paper)

This is a copy of a radio transmission.
Made by you the day of the shooting in
which you requested that your Captain
order a Unit Level review of the
shooting.

(Nelson fidgets)

Unit Level review means that you wanted
to keep it local... Only somewhere
that order was reversed, wasn't it?

NELSON

Internal Affairs wanted to handle it.

BENNET

In other words, they didn't want anyone
messing with their investigation.

(off his silence)

(MORE)

BENNET (CONT'D)

Which makes me think that maybe Officer Giles had already told you something Internal Affairs didn't want to hear.

(off Nelson: shit)

Sergeant, you'll answer my questions here or in front of a Grand Jury.

*
*

NELSON

It's how Command wants it to come out, okay? They want Giles charged.

BENNET glances over at MARLOWE: uh oh.

BENNET

Why would they want her charged?

NELSON

You're kidding me, right? You got a Latino kid shot. A war hero. No gun recovered. And no disrespect, a female who did it... Look, if it's Beth's fault, the Department's not liable.

*
*

BENNET

Financially...

NELSON

I-A had her for rolling on the call alone -- which by the way anyone woulda done with all those kids injured like that... Only they didn't care. It was a way to nail her.

*

*

BENNET

What did Giles tell you at the scene?

NELSON

(to Marlowe, then)

She said when she raised her gun, the kid assumed a combat position. Spun around, dropped to a knee and caused her to fear for her life.

*
*

BENNET

Did you tell that to Internal Affairs?

NELSON

Yeah. And I was told to squash it.

*

On MARLOWE, then BENNET,

44 INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

44

HARPER and BLACKWOOD, with a DEPUTY DA, female, 30's.

DEPUTY DA

At the time I seized the foot, it wasn't attached to the defendant. It was just lying there.

BLACKWOOD

Which makes it what? Finders keepers?

DEPUTY DA

The point is, your Honor, legally the defendant abandoned the foot.

BLACKWOOD

How does a guy abandon a foot?

JUDGE GENN

I'm a little curious about that myself.

DEPUTY DA

Judge, this defendant attempted to escape. Now if he'd been successful, clearly he would never have returned for his foot. The fact he failed to escape shouldn't be relevant.

HARPER

(interrupts--)

He wasn't trying to escape...

*

JUDGE GENN

You have something to say, counselor?

BLACKWOOD looks at HARPER, beat, then HARPER stands.

HARPER

It's just... in law school they teach you that the Constitution's supposed to mean something. Then I get here and it's all just a game. Clients take punches at lawyers, lawyers threaten to kill their dogs... Prosecutors steal a man's foot.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

(then)

The law isn't supposed to be convenient, your Honor.

(MORE)

44 CONTINUED

44

HARPER (CONT'D)

We don't get to pick and choose whether
to follow it or not. Otherwise, it's
not really the law anymore, is it?

*
*
*

On BLACKWOOD: impressed, beat, then JUDGE GENN to BLACKWOOD --

JUDGE GENN

You killed a dog?

45 INT. OFFICE - DAY

45

MARLOWE enters his Office. BETH's waiting, looking at the
photos and press clippings on the wall.

BETH

So, what'd they say?

MARLOWE

DA's gonna withdraw criminal charges.
(off Beth's relief)
There'll be a Department inquiry, but
in the meantime, I got you this back.

MARLOWE hands BETH a badge. She looks; doesn't take it.

BETH

Nothing else I ever wanted to be. Ever
since I was a little girl... My Mom and
Dad never understood... you know?

On MARLOWE, more than she thinks. Then tears in her eyes...

BETH

I was a really good cop.

MARLOWE

You still are.

BETH

(shakes head "no")
Think you're gonna have to change the
world without me, Mr. Marlowe.

Beat. MARLOWE looks at her.

MARLOWE

I'm not sure I can change the world
without you, Officer Giles.

He takes her hand, presses the badge into it.

46 INT. PD OFFICE - BULLPEN ELEVATORS - DAY

46

MARLOWE at his Office door, watches BETH enter an ELEVATOR, as CARLY exits. CARLY looks at MARLOWE, who then turns back into his Office... CARLY then finds FONTAINE in the Bullpen.

FONTAINE

So how'd it go?

CARLY

Court set aside Lydia's prior two strikes. She's gonna get probation.

FONTAINE

I meant with the doctor.

CARLY

He thought I was a DA.

FONTAINE

What gave him that idea?

CARLY

I did. I think it was just easier to let him think what he wanted.

*

*

FONTAINE

Show me a man who wants to hear the truth.

*

*

CARLY

Said he was the best boob man in L.A.

*

FONTAINE

'Spose that might come in handy...

*

(off Carly's smile)

C'mon, I'll buy you a cup of herbal tea and you can tell me all about it.

*

As they walk passed MARLOWE's Office...

CARLY

Gimme a second, I'll catch up.

47 INT. MARLOWE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

47

CARLY stops in the doorjamb. MARLOWE's at his desk.

CARLY

Give this cop a little time...

CONTINUED

MARLOWE

Yeah.

*

CARLY

Time heals all wounds, right?

*

MARLOWE looks at Cordero's Army photograph. Not all wounds.

48 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

48

HARPER leans against the concrete abutting the courthouse.
BLACKWOOD exits the courthouse holding a gym bag.

HARPER

They gave it back.

*

BLACKWOOD tosses HARPER the bag. HARPER lifts the foot out.

BLACKWOOD

Finally got your foot in the door.

(off Harper, then)

'Bout what you said... 'bout the law.

*

Don't ever stop believing that. No

*

matter what I say.

*

HARPER smiles, just as a SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT BUS full of
prisoners passes the courthouse.

*

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I'm telling you, that's them.

*

CAMERA REVEALS: LESTER (ROBBERY DEFENDANT) ON THE BUS.

LESTER

That's those crazy white boys
threatened to kill my dog.

*

PRISONER 2

Damn. What is that they're holding? Is
that a leg? It is. That's a man's leg.

*

On BLACKWOOD and HARPER, holding the foot, then CLOSE ON
PRISONERS, faces pressed to windows, not believing what they
see... MUSIC UP and over our guys and the life of the
courthouse, spilling out, taking us to,

49 EXT. ROOFTOP PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

49

Vistas of geometrically lit GLASS TOWERS, as MARLOWE finds
BENNET at her car.

CONTINUED

MARLOWE
I wanted to say thanks. *

BENNET
I didn't do it for you, Marlowe. I did
it because it was right. *

BENNET looks at him.

BENNET
And I never thought you didn't care.
We just see things very differently. *

MARLOWE
Not much chance that's gonna change. *

BENNET
No. Probably not. *
(beat)
I guess I should be thanking you too. *

MARLOWE
Really? For what? *

BENNET
Helping me sleep at night.

MARLOWE comes closer. *

MARLOWE
You a little tired now?

BENNET
Why? Got somethin' up? *

MARLOWE
You know I live to nail prosecutors.

She laughs, MUSIC UP; CAMERA RISES, leaving them small,

50 EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - NIGHT

50

MT. HOLLYWOOD; those twinkling lights,

A COYOTE, perched above a City at peace with itself again,

END OF SHOW