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Friday, Feb. 17, 2006, 1:51 PM Pacific

SHARK  
Pilot  
1 Hour Pilot  
Imagine Television  
20th Century Fox Television  
CBS

Executive Producers: Brian Grazer, Ian Biederman,  
David Nevins  
Director: TBD  
Writer: Ian Biederman  
Casting Director: Rick Millikan  
Casting Associate: Helen Geier  
N.Y. Casting Director: Marcia DeBonis  
Start Date: March 20  
Location: Los Angeles

**SUBMIT ELECTRONICALLY****SUBMIT HARDCOPY**

RICK MILLIKAN CASTING  
20TH CENTURY FOX  
10201 WEST PICO BLVD.  
BUILDING 71  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90035

**ABSOLUTELY NO PHONE CALLS!****To download the script, go to [www.screenplayonline.com](http://www.screenplayonline.com) and use script key code: 216shark10**

[DISTRICT ATTORNEY JESSICA DEVLIN] 42 years old, attractive, ambitious, and smart as hell, Devlin is Sebastian's new boss at the District Attorney's office. Having been beaten flat by Sebastian on innumerable occasions, she's coldly furious to have to deal with him as a new hire, and she's intent on seeing him publicly humiliated by failure, the same way he's humiliated her. Jessica sends Sebastian a crew of bright but difficult ADAs as his team, and assigns him a high profile case she's convinced will lose. Jessica, a stickler for legal procedure and protocol, believes that Sebastian lacks professional ethics and integrity - and is intent on driving him out of the D.A.'s office. Jessica is dismayed when Sebastian pulls victory from the jaws of defeat, winning a conviction and securing his new position...SERIES REGULAR (1)

[MADELEINE POE] 28 years old, one of the Assistant District Attorneys with Sebastian's High Profile Crime Unit, Madeleine graduated cum laude from Stanford Law, clerked for the 9th Circuit, and has led the D.A.'s office in convictions for the last 2 years. Ambitious and a bit of a suck-up, she wants to become a defense attorney, and wants to learn the tricks of Sebastian's trade from "the best." Willing to stifle her ego in exchange for a masters class in courtroom tactics, she's regarded by other ADAs as obnoxious and hyper-ambitious - but acknowledged as probably the best young lawyer among them...SERIES REGULAR (7)

[CASEY FLYNN] 28 years old, a JFK Junior-esque hunk, one of the Assistant District Attorneys with Sebastian's High Profile Crime Unit, Casey is weak on the facts and infamous for his sloppy preparation. A hottie who excels at charming juries, particularly the female members, Casey needs to drop the pretty boy routine and change his priorities if he ever hopes to earn Sebastian's respect...SERIES REGULAR (6)

[RAINA ALI] 29 years old, female, any ethnicity, smart and tough, one of the Assistant District Attorneys with Sebastian's High Profile Crime Unit, Raina is brilliant, but she has authority issues, and is a "contempt citation waiting to happen." Ticked off beyond belief when Sebastian verbally eviscerates her work in front of her peers, Raina is ready to quit the unit...SERIES REGULAR

[MARTIN SOLOMON] 32 years old, an African-American from South Central Los Angeles, one of the Assistant District Attorneys with Sebastian's High Profile Crime Unit, Martin is smart and aggressive, and got a full scholarship to UCLA -- but his take-no-prisoners attitude alienates jurors...SERIES REGULAR (6)

[JULIE STARK] The 16 year old (prefer 18 to play 16) daughter of high-profile defense attorney Sebastian Stark, Julie has her father's steel-trap mind and sharp wit, which she uses to cover the vulnerability of a daughter who craves her busy father's love and attention. She's been in Karen's custody ever since her parents divorced, and she's about to decide which parent should get final custody of her until she reaches adulthood. Aware that her

mother is about to move to New York, and equally aware that her father is a workaholic careerist who has never had time to be a parent, and whose every hour of "quality time" is interrupted by ten or twenty business-related cellphone calls, Julie knows that this is her last chance ever to know Sebastian as a parent, rather than a talking head on Court TV. To everyone's surprise, she chooses to give final custody to Sebastian, hoping to force him to be a parent for once in his life...SERIES REGULAR (10)

[MARGARET POOL] 60 year old, Sebastian's long-time legal assistant, Margaret is very British, competent to the point of being officious, and is not thrilled with her boss's new gig. Displeased to be banished from Century City to the wilds of Downtown Los Angeles, she wishes that Sebastian would reconsider his decision to work as a prosecutor, and sometimes acts as a belligerent judge during Sebastian's mock trials... RECURRING OR POSSIBLE SERIES REGULAR IN FUTURE EPISODES (10)

[MAYOR JOSE DELGADO] In his late 40s, slick, savvy, an expertly smooth politico, Delgado is a career official who has risen to the top of Los Angeles political life. Delighted for the photo op offered him by Sebastian's defection to the prosecutorial side of the aisle, Delgado loves to have his picture taken next to successful celebrity lawyer Sebastian Stark, and hopes Sebastian will make him look like a genius... RECURRING OR POSSIBLE SERIES REGULAR IN FUTURE EPISODES (1)

[KAREN STARK] In her early 40s, Karen is Sebastian's ex-wife, the mother of their daughter Julia, of whom she has custody. Ready to get married to her boyfriend Larry, an anesthesiologist, Karen breaks the bad news to Sebastian: she and Larry will be moving to New York, and she expects to take Julia with her. She gets an unpleasant surprise when Julia grants her final custody to Sebastian, not to her mom...RECURRING ROLE (18)

[ANITA TAYLOR] 42 years old, African-American, Anita is the top female defense lawyer in Los Angeles, and Sebastian's bitter rival. His ex-lover as well as his opponent in the Jennifer Dennison case, Anita is looking forward to a chance to annihilate Sebastian in front of a jury, and she's not above using a few tricks out of "The Shark's" rule book -- especially the one about rewriting the rule book as you go along. But to her surprise, she gets trounced as Sebastian forces her client to make one damaging admission after another...RECURRING ROLE (26)

STORY LINE: Famous, wealthy Los Angeles defense attorney Sebastian Stark (known as "The Shark") has a change of heart and opts to try his hand as a prosecutor -- a choice that disrupts his personal and professional life, and threatens to give the D.A.'s office a taste of something fresh, something different, something called victory...

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**SHARK**

Written by

Ian Biederman

Imagine Television  
20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Television

Revised Network Draft  
12/18/05

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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

EXT. L.A. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - MORNING (DAY 1)

ANGLE ON the storied edifice, bathed in hazy L.A. sunshine.

The camera PIVOTS, gazes down Hill Street. In the distance, a gleaming black Mercedes sedan approaches. At once elegant and ominous, it glides to a stop in front of the courthouse.

A striking man steps from the car. Custom Brioni suit. \$600 loafers. Rolex you could swap for a three bedroom in Reseda.

Meet **Sebastian Stark**, 45, defense attorney extraordinaire -- brilliant, charismatic, controversial. Staring at a felony? Got some serious cash? This guy's your one phone call.

The sun glints off his private collection Persol shades. Warren Zevon's "Mr. Bad Example" begins to pound. As Sebastian heads inside, the gaggle of court personnel and litigants spot him and reflexively clear a path.

Is it respect? Is it fear? Does it matter?

INT. L.A. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY

As the music continues, Sebastian strides down the hall like he owns the place. He stops at a door marked "District Attorney Jessica Devlin." A beat, then he steps inside --

INT. L.A. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - JESSICA'S OFFICE - DAY

A small group of city officials chat with members of the press. **L.A. Mayor Jose Delgado**, late 40's, slick, savvy, crosses to Sebastian.

DELGADO

Wasn't sure you'd show, *hermano*.

SEBASTIAN

That makes two of us, Mr. Mayor.

DELGADO

Let's get this party started.

L.A. District Attorney **Jessica Devlin**, 42, attractive, ambitious, smart as hell, approaches, offers her hand.

JESSICA  
Welcome to the District Attorney's  
Office, Mr. Stark.

SEBASTIAN  
Thank you, D.A. Devlin.

The officials and press form a semi-circle around them.

DELGADO  
For a long time, it's been clear  
that justice for rich citizens is  
often very different than justice  
for the poor. Nowhere has this  
been more evident than here in Los  
Angeles. We can do better.

(beat)  
So I was thrilled when the District  
Attorney decided to create a High  
Profile Crime Unit within her  
office to prosecute cases involving  
rich and powerful defendants. From  
now on, when such individuals go to  
trial in Los Angeles -- they'll get  
something they don't expect. A  
fair fight. Jessica?

JESSICA  
In order for this new unit to  
succeed -- we needed to find an  
attorney intimately familiar with  
high profile trials. As a top  
defense attorney, Sebastian Stark  
has been involved in many such  
trials -- with more success than  
I'd care to admit. We're happy to  
have him on our side now.

Sebastian, Jessica, and Delgado shake hands, pose with big  
smiles as photographers record the moment.

REPORTER #1  
Mr. Stark, what prompted your  
switch from defense attorney to  
prosecutor?

SEBASTIAN  
I suppose it was just time for a  
new challenge.

REPORTER #2  
Did Deena Beck's death influence  
your decision to switch sides?

Sebastian keeps smiling, but there's a barely perceptible flinch. Jumping in --

DELGADO

I know these two are anxious to get to work. Thank you all for coming.

As the group files out, to Sebastian and Jessica.

DELGADO (CONT'D)

This feels good.

Delgado and his aids head out. To Sebastian:

JESSICA

Right this way.

Jessica directs him to her inner office. Sebastian enters.

INT. L.A. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - INNER OFFICE - MORNING

The moment the door shuts, Jessica's smile vanishes.

JESSICA

Just what the hell are you trying to pull you sleazy son-of-a-bitch?

SEBASTIAN

Now that's more like it.

JESSICA

If you think you can waltz in here and cleanse your conscience by putting away a few felons, you're even more pathetic than I thought.

SEBASTIAN

The Mayor said it was your idea.

JESSICA

The Mayor's a liar -- probably why you two get along so well.

SEBASTIAN

Sounds like he's sick of watching you hand out acquittals to the rich and famous.

JESSICA

Those acquittals paid for your \$5000 suit.



SEBASTIAN

It's true -- I built a career humiliating this office on a daily basis. But it was never personal.

JESSICA

That's because the legal system is a toy to you -- a game to be manipulated for fun and profit.

SEBASTIAN

You make it sound like a bad thing.

JESSICA

No matter how many criminals you put away -- Deena Beck's blood will still be on your hands.

SEBASTIAN

If you could mount a competent prosecution -- her husband would be in jail and Deena would be alive.

JESSICA

Bottom line -- her husband bludgeoned her to death five hours after you got him acquitted of attempted murder. You screwed up.

(beat)

We both know that's why you're here.

They glare at each other. So much for detente. Jessica picks up a file, hands it to Sebastian.

JESSICA

County of L.A. v. Jennifer Dennison.

SEBASTIAN

Are you serious? That's a dog.

JESSICA

Accused is a 25-year-old singer --

SEBASTIAN

-- charged with 2nd degree murder of Terrence Royce at the Chateau Marmont Hotel. She says the victim raped her and she stabbed him in self defense. You say it's murder.

JESSICA

Am I supposed to be impressed?

SEBASTIAN

Up to you. It's unwinnable. Next.

JESSICA

The Mayor may have forced me to hire you -- but in my office, you prosecute the cases I choose.

(beat)

Forensics show no sexual assault -- no defensive wounds. These two had sex, then this kid Royce said or did something to piss off little Miss MTV -- and she killed him.

SEBASTIAN

I agree. But she's got no record, she's white, female, articulate, sympathetic and well-financed. No jury will convict. Why bother?

JESSICA

Because a murder was committed. And someone has to answer for that. It's about justice -- I'm sure you've heard of it.

SEBASTIAN

And when I lose?

JESSICA

The Mayor finds out his white knight's got a limp sword.

(beat)

Break a leg, counselor.

On Sebastian, knowing she means it --

FADE OUT:

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. HIGH PROFILE CRIME UNIT - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Four young prosecutors sit around a long table: **Casey Flynn**, 28, JFK Jr.-esque hunk; **Raina Ali**, 29, smart, tough; **Martin Solomon**, 32, African-American from South Central L.A.; **Elena Morales**, 30, attractive but way uptight.

CASEY

I hear he bribes jurors.

RAINA

God knows he can afford it.

ELENA

Word is he got Judge Moran's kid into Berkeley.

MARTIN

Definite player. They don't call him The Shark for nothing.

ELENA

I won't work for a corrupt jerk.

CASEY

Relax. You think a guy with Stark's ego will last in a job where he's set up to fail?

SEBASTIAN (O.C.)

That's the \$64,000 question.

They turn to see the devil himself staring at them, a bemused smile on his face.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

You must be my dream team -- and I use the term advisedly.

(beat)

It's clear you think you know me. Let's see what I know about you.

Sebastian approaches Casey.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Richard "Casey" Flynn, back-up QB at USC, dad's a state senator. Charming, good with a jury.

(MORE)

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)  
 (off Casey's smile)  
 Weak on the facts. Sloppy  
 preparation. No rocket scientist.

Casey's smile vanishes. Sebastian turns to Elena.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)  
 Elena Morales. Loyola law review.  
 Great on paper. Freezes on her  
 feet. Couldn't close a window.  
 (to Martin)  
 Martin Solomon. Full ride to UCLA.  
 Smart, aggressive. Take-no-  
 prisoners style alienates jurors.

Sebastian settles in front of Raina.

RAINA  
 Take your best shot.

SEBASTIAN  
 Raina Ali. Brilliant. Tough.  
 Major authority problem. Contempt  
 citation waiting to happen.

RAINA  
 Screw that.

SEBASTIAN  
 I rest my case. Never rely on  
 rumors. I keep a file on every  
 prosecutor in this building. Know  
 thy enemy.

MARTIN  
 Aren't we on the same side now?

SEBASTIAN  
 Jury's still out. If Devlin  
 assigned you to me -- you're on her  
 shit list. I consider that a badge  
 of honor. You're damaged goods.  
 We have that in common.

Just then a striking young woman in a sharp suit enters.  
 This is **Madeleine Poe**, 28, slightly out of breath.

MADELEINE  
 Sorry I'm late. Madeleine Poe.

SEBASTIAN  
 You're not on the list.

MADELEINE

I just volunteered for the unit.

SEBASTIAN

I appreciate that, but --

MADELEINE

I graduated cum laude from Stanford Law, clerked for the 9th Circuit, and I've led this office in convictions for 2 years.

SEBASTIAN

But can you juggle?

MADELEINE

I intend to become a defense attorney one day. I'm here to learn from the best.

The others roll their eyes. Sebastian takes a beat.

SEBASTIAN

Flattery. Effective tactic. Sit.

She does. Sebastian begins to slowly circle the table.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

People say high-priced defense attorneys beat prosecutors because it's easier to prove reasonable doubt than certain guilt. Go with that if it helps you sleep.

(beat)

Truth is -- guys like me beat guys like you for one reason. I refuse to lose. I work harder. I'm better prepared. I know my case cold -- and, more importantly, I know yours. When I'm at trial I live and breathe my case. I am my case. So when I step into a courtroom -- it's not just my client's ass on the line. It's mine. If I lose -- I have nothing. I am nothing.

RAINA

So it's all about you?

SEBASTIAN

Exactly. And until you're willing to make that commitment -- to put yourself at risk -- you'll lose.

Sebastian lets this sink in for a beat.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

I live by three simple rules. My Cutthroat Manifesto. These rules underpin every decision I make on a case. I suggest you jot 'em down. Rule 1: Trial is war -- Second place is death. Rule 2: Truth is relative -- create one that wins. Rule 3: In a jury trial -- only 12 opinions matter.

(beat)

Forget everything you think you know about being a lawyer. Every case we try will be David vs. Goliath -- and we're holding the slingshot. For this to work, you must accept that winning is the only thing that matters.

ELENA

What about justice?

SEBASTIAN

If you learn anything today, learn this: Your job is to win. Justice is God's problem.

(beat)

Anyone who can't live with that -- leave now.

Nobody moves. Sebastian looks at his young team.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

We've inherited the Dennison case from one of your lamer colleagues. Judge won't grant an extension. We go to trial in 48 hours with a lousy jury against a defendant with unlimited resources. And as a tasty bonus -- we've got no case.

(beat)

Let's go to work.

On the new team, preparing for battle --

INT. HIGH PROFILE CRIME UNIT - SEBASTIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A small room separated from the bullpen by a wall of battered glass. Sebastian sits at an ancient wooden desk marked with coffee mug rings from before he was born. Enter **Margaret Pool**, 60, Sebastian's long-time legal assistant. Very British, less than thrilled with her boss's new gig.

MARGARET

Good Lord. This place is a less cheerful version of death row.

SEBASTIAN

And the Governor's not calling in any last minute reprieves.

MARGARET

Well your partners have been calling -- hourly -- begging you to reconsider. May I humbly add my voice to the chorus?

SEBASTIAN

Say the word, Margaret -- I'll set you up with one of my former colleagues. A good legal secretary's hard to find -- especially a condescending Brit --

MARGARET

You'd be lost without me.

SEBASTIAN

I'll buy a compass.

MARGARET

How's the help?

SEBASTIAN

I'm reserving judgment.

MARGARET

That bad?

SEBASTIAN

Worse.

**Julie Stark**, Sebastian's 16-year-old daughter, enters. Julie got dad's brain; luckily the rest comes from mom.

JULIE  
Some guy in leg shackles just asked  
for my number.

SEBASTIAN  
What are you doing down here?

JULIE  
I made Margaret bring me. Kind of  
a long way from Century City, dad.

SEBASTIAN  
That's exactly the point.  
(hands documents to  
Margaret)  
File these, find out what  
Dennison's lawyers are up to.

Margaret takes the documents, as she goes, to Julie.

MARGARET  
Try not to touch anything.

And she's gone. Staring through glass at the team.

JULIE  
Who's the hottie?

SEBASTIAN  
I beg your pardon?

JULIE  
The guy with the shoulders.

She points to Casey.

SEBASTIAN  
Trust me -- not a gene pool you  
want to wade into.

JULIE  
So it's none of my business, but is  
this some kind of mid-life crisis?

SEBASTIAN  
Right. It's none of your business.

JULIE  
'Cause after the Deena Beck thing,  
it would make perfect sense for you  
to overcompensate out of guilt --



SEBASTIAN  
The white teen Oprah speaks.

JULIE  
The scars of a broken home have  
made me wise beyond my years.

SEBASTIAN  
You and your mom constantly whine  
about me defending the -- what does  
she call my clients again?

JULIE  
The degenerati.

SEBASTIAN  
Right. Well, it finally blew up in  
my face. Satisfied?

JULIE  
I can't deny there's a certain  
cosmic justice to it.  
(beat)  
I really came by to remind you  
about the custody hearing.

SEBASTIAN  
I don't handle custody cases.

JULIE  
Custody of *me*, dad. I turned 16  
last month -- thanks for the card --  
which means I get to choose who  
gets final custody, you or mom.

SEBASTIAN  
That judge was a major putz.

JULIE  
I'm gonna find Margaret.

She crosses behind the desk, kisses Sebastian's forehead.

JULIE  
I know this is gonna be great.

SEBASTIAN  
Are you lying?

JULIE  
Yes.

As she goes, on Sebastian, sharing her doubts --

INT. HIGH PROFILE CRIME UNIT - BULLPEN - LATE DAY

Our lawyers are arrayed around a cramped, bare bones office suite, a single small window affords a lovely alley view. The desks are littered with laptops and fast food containers. Sebastian, jacket off, tie loosened, commands the war room.

SEBASTIAN

Jenny Dennison gets a 5am wake-up call at the Chateau Marmont -- town car picks her up at six, drops her at a Culver City soundstage where she spends the next 15 hours shooting a music video.

MARTIN

Has anyone ever heard of this girl?

RAINA

I saw her at a club in Hollywood last year. Early Liz Phair meets Nora Jones. Really intense.

CASEY

Total chick music.

ELENA

She's a prodigy -- started writing songs when she was in grade school. Completely driven. And she rocks.

SEBASTIAN

Apparently the executives at Sonic Records agree. Jenny's video was part of a big money p.r. campaign to launch her first album.

MADELEINE

How'd she meet the victim?

SEBASTIAN

Terrence Royce was Assistant Cameraman on the shoot. Witnesses say he and Jenny got chummy between takes, went out for cocktails that night -- ended up back in Jenny's hotel room around 2:15am. From there, all we have is Jenny's statement to the cops. She says they had another drink, listened to some music -- then she asked Terrence to leave.

(MORE)

SEBASTIAN (cont'd)  
He refused, became sexually aggressive, pushed Jenny onto the bed and raped her.

ELENA  
Her medical exam showed no evidence of forced intercourse.

MADELEINE  
Or any defensive wounds to indicate a violent struggle. But something made her grab that room service knife and slash Terrence Royce's carotid artery.

CASEY  
So if Royce didn't rape her -- why'd she kill him?

SEBASTIAN  
(withering)  
Gosh, you're right. We should probably figure that out.

MADELEINE  
We've got Judge Rinaldi. Bleeding heart -- hates prosecutors.

MARTIN  
Especially Raina.

RAINA  
He's a misogynistic moron.

MADELEINE  
We could paper him -- try to get him removed.

SEBASTIAN  
Judge Rinaldi's being honored at a judicial retreat in Miami -- he's recusing himself from the case.

ELENA  
When did that happen?

SEBASTIAN  
Tomorrow.

A loaded beat. Madeleine smiles, impressed.

MADELEINE  
How'd you manage that?

SEBASTIAN  
 (feigned innocence)  
 Manage what?

It's clear Sebastian engineered the Judge's recusal -- and equally clear that they're not in Kansas anymore.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)  
 Our strategy is simple. Refute Jenny Dennison's story point by point. Terrence Royce never raped her. Terrence Royce never threatened her. These two got into a drunken argument and Jenny Dennison settled it with a knife. Are we clear?

(off their nods)  
 Assignments. Madeleine, I need everything you can dig up on Jenny Dennison -- friends, relatives -- especially boyfriends. Raina, same deal on Terrence Royce. Elena -- forensics. We need alternative theories of the crime. Martin, hit the Chateau, ask for Reid. He's the assistant manager. Tell him you work for me -- give him this.

Sebastian pulls a wad of bills from his pocket, peels off a hundred, balls it up, tosses it to Martin.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)  
 Reid will get you into the room where the murder happened. Walk through Jenny's version step by step. And if there was a room service knife, it stands to reason there was room service. No one interviewed the waiter.  
 (to the team)  
 Clock's running. Let's move.

As the team starts to spring into action:

CASEY  
 Wait -- what about me?

SEBASTIAN  
 Oh, right. Casey. I need you to go down to Jensen's on Alvarado and get a double order of cheese fries.

CASEY  
Cheese fries?

SEBASTIAN  
Yeah. Then find Jurors Bailiff Ray Sabado. He eats lunch in the second floor security office. Give him the fries.

(off Casey's blank look)  
Sabado's in charge of the jurors on this case -- loves to chat them up. A bag of cheese fries buys us more insight than 10 jury consultants.

ELENA  
But isn't that unethical?

SEBASTIAN  
(to Elena, faux earnest)  
I remember the day my brother told me there was no tooth fairy. It broke my heart. Be brave.  
(to room)  
This is the way the game is played. Win or go home. Our job is to demonstrate that Terrence Royce was the victim of murder. We need to make that jury hear his voice --

ELIZABETH ROYCE (O.C.)  
I can help with that.

All turn to see **Elizabeth Royce**, 50's, in the doorway.

ELIZABETH ROYCE (CONT'D)  
Terrence was my son.

INT. HIGH PROFILE CRIME UNIT - SEBASTIAN'S OFFICE - LATE DAY  
Sebastian sits across from Elizabeth Royce.

SEBASTIAN  
Thanks for coming down, Mrs. Royce. I'm truly sorry for your loss.

ELIZABETH ROYCE  
I've seen you on television.

SEBASTIAN  
Occupational hazard.

ELIZABETH ROYCE

You represent criminals, abusers.  
Terry wasn't like that.

SEBASTIAN

You raised him on your own?

ELIZABETH ROYCE

From the time he was three. We  
never had much money -- but we did  
okay. We laughed a lot -- made a  
life. He had so many plans...

SEBASTIAN

Tell me -- did Terrence have an...  
active social life?

ELIZABETH ROYCE

My son was handsome, charming --  
but I taught him to respect women.

SEBASTIAN

Sorry if this sounds harsh, but I  
have to ask -- was Terrence in the  
habit of having one night stands?

ELIZABETH ROYCE

Do you have children, Mr. Stark?

SEBASTIAN

A 16-year-old daughter.

ELIZABETH ROYCE

Then you know -- once they start to  
grow up -- they don't tell you  
everything. And you don't want to  
know. You just pray they're safe.

Actually Sebastian doesn't know this -- which strikes guilt

SEBASTIAN

I believe this girl murdered your  
son. But I won't lie to you --  
it'll be tough to convince a jury.

ELIZABETH ROYCE

I understand. The thing is --  
Terry was a beautiful boy. He  
could never do what that girl says  
he did. In order to keep on living  
-- I need the world to know that.

On Sebastian, absorbing her pain --

INT. SEBASTIAN'S BEL AIR HOME - STUDY - NIGHT 1

Sebastian, in shorts and a UCLA sweatshirt, simultaneously pores over files, conducts on-line research, and views taped media reports on the Dennison case. Into hand-held recorder:

SEBASTIAN

On the issue of sexual battery, see Kendall v. California regarding admissibility of sexual history --

KAREN (O.C.)

The shark in his native habitat.

Sebastian turns to see his ex-wife, **Karen Stark**, 38, looks 28, staring at him ruefully.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I always thought you hid up here to avoid having sex with me.

SEBASTIAN

I'm obsessive -- not crazy. Julie with you?

KAREN

Downstairs. I understand congratulations are in order.  
(off his blank look)  
Your new job?

SEBASTIAN

Oh, yeah. Probably the worst move I ever made.

KAREN

Next to letting me go, of course.

SEBASTIAN

That's a given. How's Larry?

KAREN

He's great. He just got a new gig himself. Head of anesthesiology.

SEBASTIAN

Can he put me out of my misery?

KAREN

He's about to. You've cut your last alimony check. We're engaged.

Karen holds up her left hand, shows off a sizeable diamond.  
 Sebastian smiles, crosses to Karen, hugs her warmly.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Is it my happiness or the alimony?

SEBASTIAN

Yes.

(beat)

Seriously, I wish you all the best.

KAREN

Thanks. There's more.

SEBASTIAN

Don't tell me you're knocked up.

KAREN

Cute. The thing is -- Larry's new job... it's in New York.

SEBASTIAN

(off balance)

Oh.

KAREN

I know this is sudden, but there's this great private school for Julie that starts in early October -- the custody hearing will be behind us -- the timing seems really good.

Sebastian just stands there, overwhelmed.

KAREN (CONT'D)

So -- what do you think?

SEBASTIAN

I... it sounds like you've thought everything through... Obviously you know what's best for Julie.

Karen hugs Sebastian.

KAREN

This'll be great for her. We always talked about moving to New York one day, remember?

SEBASTIAN

This is a slightly different version, but yeah.



KAREN

Thanks for being supportive.

Karen exits. Sebastian tries to process this bombshell. It's not like he sees Julie that much. But her impending absence -- the finality of it -- is jarring. Julie enters.

JULIE

Pretty freaky, huh?

SEBASTIAN

Your mom looks happy.

JULIE

Larry's cool. Not the most exciting guy in the world.

SEBASTIAN

Seems appropriate for a man who sedates people for a living.

JULIE

So you'll come visit, right? I know you're always swamped...

SEBASTIAN

You kidding? We'll hit the theater, watch the Knicks lose -- it'll be great.

Awkward pause. They both know that's a pipe dream.

JULIES

Good. Okay -- get back to work.

She starts to go. Calling after:

SEBASTIAN

Julie?

There's a lot he wants to say. But all he can manage is:

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Good night.

She nods, exits. On Sebastian, alone with his work.

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. HIGH PROFILE CRIME UNIT - BULLPEN - DAY 2

Sebastian addresses the troops. He's not happy.

SEBASTIAN

Maybe I failed to make myself clear  
-- we're fighting the clock --

RAINA

It's only been 24 hours.

SEBASTIAN

Also known as half your allotted  
time. This stuff on the victim, I  
could've gotten off his resume.

(to Elena)

Your forensic overview reads like  
every science class I ever failed.  
I need a murder theory -- not a  
criminology seminar.

(to Martin)

You interview the room service  
waiter but you don't ask about the  
rest of Jenny Dennison's stay?

(to Casey)

And what happened to Bailiff  
Sabado?

CASEY

He was sick yesterday.

SEBASTIAN

So naturally you went to his house,  
right?

(off Casey's silence)

Interviewed him on the phone?

CASEY

(weakly)

He had a fever.

Sebastian rolls his eyes, turns to Madeleine.

SEBASTIAN

Your stuff on Jenny Dennison is  
good -- forging doctor's notes to  
cut school so she could make it to  
gigs. Undermines her credibility.

MADELEINE

Thanks.

SEBASTIAN

We'll need a lot more stuff like  
that if we're gonna win this case.  
(to the room, withering)  
That *is* why we're here.

Sebastian stalks into...

INT. HIGH PROFILE CRIME UNIT - SEBASTIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Sebastian slams the door, slumps behind his desk. Margaret types into her laptop.

SEBASTIAN

Don't.

MARGARET

I didn't say a word.

SEBASTIAN

They deserved it.

MARGARET

Their work was unacceptable. But  
I'm not sure brutalizing them is  
the best way to raise the bar.

SEBASTIAN

If you have any suggestions, I'm  
all ears.

MARGARET

A bit of encouragement might help.  
Perhaps an attitude adjustment.

SEBASTIAN

I agree. Their attitude sucks.

MARGARET

Actually, I was referring to yours.  
After all, it's not their fault  
Julie's moving to New York.

Sebastian's eyes flash.

SEBASTIAN

That has nothing to do with it.

MARGARET  
Are you certain?

SEBASTIAN  
I'm completely focused on the trial.

MARGARET  
If that's true -- you have considerably bigger problems than this murder case.

Margaret exits. On Sebastian, stewing --

EXT. HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL - DAY

Julie exits, flanked by several friends, stops dead in her tracks: Sebastian leans against his Mercedes, waving to her. Julie approaches, freaked out.

JULIE  
Is Mom okay?

SEBASTIAN  
Why wouldn't she be?

JULIE  
Why else would you be here?

SEBASTIAN  
I was in the neighborhood. Is it so bizarre for me to stop by?

JULIE  
Considering you haven't visited me at school since third grade -- I'd have to say it falls under the bizarre category, yes.

SEBASTIAN  
Yeah, well -- I was thinking we could get a bite to eat --

JULIE  
What about your case?

SEBASTIAN  
Evidenciary hearing got bumped till 5. I've got a couple of hours.

Julie stares at him for a long beat.

JULIE

Are you sure Mom's okay?

SEBASTIAN

Look -- I just thought, with you leaving soon -- we could hang out a little. If you'd rather not --

JULIE

I didn't say that. It's just -- I was heading down to Melrose --

SEBASTIAN

Perfect. I need a new pair of studded leather chaps.

JULIE

Right. The thing is...

Just then a cute guy, **Jared**, 16, walks up. To Julie:

JARED

Hey -- ready to go?

Sebastian stares at Jared with an admixture of emotions: shock, jealousy, but mostly -- embarrassment.

JULIE

Jared, this is my dad.

JARED

Wow. Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Stark.

SEBASTIAN

Hey, Jared.

JARED

I followed the Beck trial on Court TV -- killer cross on that neighbor chick.

SEBASTIAN

Thanks.

JULIE

Jared, my dad and I --

SEBASTIAN

That's okay. You two go on. I'll see you later.

JULIE

You sure?

Sebastian nods. As Julie and Jared go, on Sebastian, knowing he got here way too late.

EXT. LOS ANGELES DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

As Sebastian steps out of his car, a sleek, chauffeur-driven SUV pulls up next to him. The back window rolls down -- reveals the smiling face of Mayor Delgado.

DELGADO

Jessica gave you a parking spot?

SEBASTIAN

I figure it's just so she knows where to plant the car bomb.

DELGADO

So you're up and running?

SEBASTIAN

It's more like a spirited crawl.

DELGADO

Apparently Sonic Records is worried enough to bring in a big gun -- your old pal Anita Taylor.

SEBASTIAN

That's bad.

DELGADO

She as good as they say?

SEBASTIAN

Better.

DELGADO

Didn't you two...

SEBASTIAN

Once.

(beat)

Twice, actually.

DELGADO

How'd it end?

SEBASTIAN

Not well.

Delgado takes a beat, shrugs:

DELGADO  
So -- good luck with that.

As the window goes up, on Sebastian, worried.

ANITA (PRE-LAP)  
You want to settle?

INT. L.A. WOMEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Sebastian sits across from **Anita Taylor**, 42, African-American, top female defense lawyer in L.A. -- and Sebastian's bitter rival. Next to Anita sits an orange-jumpsuited **Jenny Dennison**, 25, beautiful, scared.

SEBASTIAN  
Involuntary manslaughter. 5 years -  
- she'll be out in 2.

ANITA  
You run this past the D.A.?

SEBASTIAN  
I fly solo. It's a great deal.  
You should take it.

JENNY  
Are we talking about *jail jail*, or  
Martha Stewart jail?

SEBASTIAN  
We can work something out.

JENNY  
The idea of going to prison...

ANITA  
The offer is declined.

SEBASTIAN  
(seizing on Jenny's fear)  
Sure about that, Jenny? If you're  
convicted, you could *die* in prison.

ANITA  
The offer is declined. Jenny, I  
need to speak with Mr. Stark.

A Guard escorts Jenny out.

SEBASTIAN

You're taking a hell of a chance.  
I'm no state school prosecutor with  
30 cases in the fire.

ANITA

I know. It'll be much more fun  
kicking the *shark's* ass.

SEBASTIAN

No one calls me that.

ANITA

Oh come on. It's not like I  
haven't seen your fin.

SEBASTIAN

You'd reject a primo deal just to  
settle an old score?

ANITA

Don't flatter yourself. You've got  
squat, or you wouldn't be dealing.

SEBASTIAN

Maybe your client deserves a break.

ANITA

And you're the prosecutor with a  
heart? Please. You're a disgrace.

SEBASTIAN

Look -- I admit it. I should've  
called. But that doesn't mean --

ANITA

You hopped the fence -- like being  
a defense attorney is something you  
need to rehab from --

SEBASTIAN

Maybe it is.

ANITA

A client went bad and you melted  
down. You sold out your partners.  
You sold out your profession. Now  
I'm gonna beat you like a drum.

Anita stands, starts to exit. Calmly:

SEBASTIAN

You've got something big. Right?



ANITA  
(beat, smiles)  
See you in court.

As she goes, on Sebastian, concerned --

INT. HIGH PROFILE CRIME UNIT - BULLPEN - LATE DAY

The team is assembled. Sebastian paces --

CASEY  
You offered a phony deal?

ELENA  
What if Taylor took you up on it?

SEBASTIAN  
We say the D.A. got cold feet, pull  
it off the table.

MADELEINE  
Nice.

RAINA  
That's hard core.

SEBASTIAN  
And the best way to gauge the  
opposition's case. Anita's got a  
tough client to convict -- but  
there's always a risk. If she  
didn't have something huge up her  
sleeve -- she would've jumped at a  
deal that good. She never blinked.

MARTIN  
Maybe they found an eyewitness to  
corroborate Jenny's story.

SEBASTIAN  
They'd have to be on the list.

MADELEINE  
New forensics?

ELENA  
There's been no outside expert  
hired by the defense.

Just then Sebastian's cell phone rings. Into phone:

SEBASTIAN  
Yeah? Wait -- what? You're sure?  
(hangs up, to Margaret)  
Sexposition.com.

CASEY  
I love that site.

Margaret types into her laptop.

RAINA  
We taking a porn break?

SEBASTIAN  
Unfortunately, yes.

MARGARET  
God save the Queen.

Margaret turns the screen to face the lawyers.

CLOSE ON COMPUTER SCREEN

A naked, handcuffed woman has sex with a handsome young man.

BACK TO SCENE

They all lean in toward the screen.

MARTIN  
Hel-lo.

ELENA  
Oh man. Is that...?

MADELEINE  
Jenny Dennison and Terrence Royce --

RAINA  
Minutes before she killed him.

SEBASTIAN  
Something tells me this isn't the  
video Sonic records had in mind.

As they stare at the computer bombshell --

FADE OUT:

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON: Jenny Dennison and Terrence Royce: butt naked, hot and heavy -- REVEAL we are:

INT. HIGH PROFILE CRIME UNIT - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATE DAY

Sebastian and the team watch the sex tape -- a tad awkward in mixed company. Head cocked at an angle:

RAINA

Whose leg is that?

MARTIN

That's the top of the headboard.

CASEY

Impressive.

SEBASTIAN

Turn it off.

The tape cuts off, the lights come on.

MADELEINE

So much for Jenny looking like an innocent victim.

ELENA

That sex was definitely consensual.

CASEY

This thing's a slam dunk.

SEBASTIAN

This thing's a train wreck.

(off their confusion)

Before that tape, we faced a rape defense with forensics we could question. Now we're up against Paris Hilton 2 -- a woman scammed by a sleazy Romeo with a video camera looking to get rich off a sex tape.

ELENA

But she lied to the police about being raped.

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, but the jury will view the tape as a different form of rape. And this time we can't refute the evidence.

MADELEINE

Will the jury buy a sex tape as grounds for justifiable homicide?

SEBASTIAN

Anita will claim Jenny was horrified at the prospect of her loved ones watching her knock it out on the six o'clock news. She panicked -- she was protecting her honor. No jury can resist that.

(beat)

We're screwed.

Sebastian walks out. On the team, stunned --

INT. GLOVER, WEYLAND, FOXX - ANITA'S OFFICE - NIGHT 2

Sebastian stalks in one step ahead of her Assistant.

SEBASTIAN

That was a cheap stunt.

ANITA

Does the prosecutor have an appointment?

SEBASTIAN

Releasing that tape on the internet violates every rule of discovery.

ANITA

(to Assistant)

It's okay, Andrew.

(to Sebastian)

I assume you're referring to the images of my client having intercourse with the deceased?

SEBASTIAN

He definitely wasn't deceased yet.

ANITA

I have no idea where that tape came from.

SEBASTIAN

You expect me to believe that?

ANITA

What you believe is immaterial.  
It's about what the judge believes -  
- now, which judge did you  
manipulate onto this case again?

Sebastian takes a beat -- his hands aren't exactly clean.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Now let's say -- hypothetically --  
that I did release the tape. That  
would be reprehensible, right?

SEBASTIAN

You bet your ass.

ANITA

People vs. Campanelli.

SEBASTIAN

What about it?

ANITA

Big win for you. Sticks in my mind  
since you stole the case from me.

SEBASTIAN

What's your point?

ANITA

Remember those scandalous pictures  
of the victim that mysteriously  
found their way into the L.A. Times  
and won the case for you?

SEBASTIAN

Yeah. So?

ANITA

So this is what it feels like when  
it happens to you.

Sebastian absorbs this for a beat, then turns, heads out.

ANITA (CONT'D)

It looks good on you.

Sebastian turns back.

SEBASTIAN

What?

ANITA

Fear. See you in court tomorrow.  
Get some sleep -- you'll need it.

As Sebastian exits --

EXT. SEBASTIAN'S BEL AIR HOME - DECK GYM - NIGHT

Overlooking hills to the ocean, a sweat-drenched Sebastian, hands taped, takes his frustration out on a heavy bag as Julie obsesses over the Jenny Dennison sex tape.

JULIE

It's all over school. Everyone's talking about it.

SEBASTIAN

You watched it?

JULIE

Of course. Super creepy. One second they're going at it, the next --

SEBASTIAN

You're too young to be watching stuff like that.

JULIE

Please. That was PG-13 compared to the porn floating around the web.

SEBASTIAN

So you're telling me you know all about sex?

JULIE

I know enough.

SEBASTIAN

Enough for what?

JULIE

Are you asking me if I'm a virgin?

Sebastian almost misses the bag with a punch. Flustered:

SEBASTIAN

What? No. I didn't --

JULIE  
'Cause if you wanna know --

SEBASTIAN  
I don't like to pry into your  
affairs -- I mean, your life --

JULIE  
My friends' dads are all  
sphinctered out about it --

SEBASTIAN  
I guess I figure you've got your  
mom, your shrink...

JULIE  
So in other words -- knowing would  
totally wig you out.

SEBASTIAN  
Exactly. Towel.

Julie tosses him a towel; he wipes his face.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)  
Just promise you won't be alone in  
a hotel room with a man until  
either you're married or I'm dead.

JULIE  
There is one guy I wouldn't mind  
going out with. Super hot.

SEBASTIAN  
You know, I really don't need --

JULIE  
Dad -- will you have dinner with me  
tomorrow night?

SEBASTIAN  
(beat)  
You want to go out with *me*?

JULIE  
Make-up date for the other day.

SEBASTIAN  
Sounds good. But I warn you -- I'm  
not cheap and I'm not easy.

JULIE  
That's not what mom says.

On Sebastian, as she goes --

INT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY 3

Opening arguments are concluded. Anita sits next to Jenny at the defense table while Sebastian questions Elizabeth Royce.

SEBASTIAN

Mrs. Royce, was your son Terrence someone prone to violence?

ELIZABETH ROYCE

Absolutely not.

SEBASTIAN

To your knowledge, did he ever physically abuse any of his girlfriends?

ELIZABETH ROYCE

Never. Terrence would never strike a woman. It wasn't in his nature.

SEBASTIAN

But he did have a reputation as something of a ladies man, right?

ELIZABETH ROYCE

I suppose. But if you ask anyone he ever dated, they'll tell you Terry was a perfect gentleman.

(beat)

My son wasn't a criminal. He was a victim.

Sebastian lets this linger with the jury for a beat, then sits as Anita rises for cross-examination.

ANITA

Mrs. Royce, first let me extend my deepest sympathy for the loss of your son.

ELIZABETH ROYCE

Thank you.

ANITA

Would you describe Terrence as a stable young man?

ELIZABETH ROYCE

Absolutely.



ANITA

Despite the fact that he spent  
three weeks at the New Roads drug  
treatment center in June of 2001?

Sebastian, shocked, glares back into the front row of the  
gallery at Raina -- her assignment. She avoids his eye.

ELIZABETH ROYCE

Terry had a problem with alcohol  
and painkillers. We dealt with it.

ANITA

Your son's record shows he was  
physically abusive to a nurse --

ELIZABETH ROYCE

That was a misunderstanding --

Sebastian stands.

SEBASTIAN

Objection. Hearsay.

JUDGE

Overruled.

ELIZABETH ROYCE

She tried to take away his journal -  
- he pulled it back -- it wasn't --

ANITA

Terrence was subsequently moved to  
a ward with exclusively male  
attendants, is that correct?

ELIZABETH ROYCE

(beat)  
Yes.

ANITA

Thank you, ma'am.

Anita sits. On Sebastian steaming --

INT. L.A. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY OUTSIDE COURTROOM - DAY  
Sebastian, surrounded by his team, gets in Raina's face.

SEBASTIAN

You missed rehab?

RAINA

It was a voluntary commitment. If I'd had a little more time --

SEBASTIAN

Anita's been on the case for 30 hours and she came up with it.

RAINA

(anger rising)

I'm not the one who interviewed and prepped the mother. That was you.

ELENA

This isn't constructive.

MADELEINE

Grieving mothers protect the memories of their children -- that's why we do our own research.

RAINA

Stay the hell out of this.

MARTIN

So she messed up -- let's move on.

RAINA

Don't defend me.

SEBASTIAN

She's right. There's no defense for mediocrity.

(beat, to the group)

Cases like these are won or lost on passion. If you don't have it -- don't show up tomorrow.

As Sebastian walks away --

EXT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY COURTHOUSE - ROOF - DAY

A frustrated Sebastian lights up a cigar, stares out across downtown L.A., struggles to re-group.

JESSICA (O.C.)

Helluva an appetizer. Can't wait for the main course.

Sebastian doesn't turn around -- he knew this was coming.

SEBASTIAN  
Temporary setback.

JESSICA  
Few more of those, I may sign off  
on that phony plea deal.

SEBASTIAN  
It's not like you surrounded me  
with the best and brightest.

JESSICA  
What do you expect for 60 grand a  
year?

SEBASTIAN  
A pulse would be nice.

JESSICA  
Inexperienced prosecutors, limited  
resources, superior opposition --  
and somehow you've gotta lead 12  
strangers through a maze of  
confusing, contradictory evidence  
to the same airtight conclusion.  
(beat)  
And to think -- you volunteered.

Sebastian takes a drag off his Cuban.

JESSICA (CONT'D)  
Let me put you out of your misery.  
Your "team" can finish this thing  
up. Go back to your million dollar  
retainers and cherry-picked cases --  
pretend this never happened.

Sebastian takes a beat, turns to face her.

SEBASTIAN  
Thanks. But I never walk out in  
the middle of a movie.

JESSICA  
Seen this one. You die in the end.

SEBASTIAN  
The hero never dies.

JESSICA  
You're not exactly hero material.

SEBASTIAN  
I promised Elizabeth Royce I'd  
clear her son's name.

JESSICA  
Well -- you're off to a flying  
start.

Jessica walks away. On Sebastian, pissed --

INT. HIGH PROFILE CRIME UNIT - BULLPEN - LATE DAY

An irate Raina shoves her computer into her bag.

CASEY  
You can't just quit.

RAINA  
Watch me.

MARTIN  
He was just blowing off steam.

RAINA  
That guy's a major league asshole.

ELENA  
No argument there. But you can't  
leave in the middle of a case.

RAINA  
Why not?

ELENA  
Because we're getting killed and  
there's a ton of work to do. We  
need you.

RAINA  
Not according to Stark.

CASEY  
Forget Stark. If you walk --  
Devlin's gonna fire you.

RAINA  
So I'll get a new job. L.A.'s one  
big lawsuit -- I'll find something.

MARTIN  
You're a great prosecutor --

Madeleine's been working on her computer, apparently oblivious to the drama, until:

MADELEINE

Oh for God sake, let her go.

Everyone turns to face Madeleine.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Pardon me if I don't join the pity party -- but Stark was right. You blew it. Royce's friends knew he had a drug problem. You didn't ask the right questions.

RAINA

Could you repeat that? With your head so far up Stark's ass, your voice is kinda muffled.

MADELEINE

I'm doing my job. Give it a try.

ELENA

We all know you're God's gift to litigation, Madeleine --

MARTIN

And if we forget -- you're always right there to remind us.

MADELEINE

You guys really don't get it, do you? The fact that Devlin stuck you here to screw over Stark doesn't matter. Despite your glaring deficiencies -- or rather because of them -- you've got an incredible opportunity to prosecute every high profile case in this city. If you'd stop whining for two minutes -- you'd realize there isn't a lawyer in this building who wouldn't trade places with you in a heartbeat.

As this lands on her colleagues, the phone rings. Answering:

CASEY

Hello? Yeah, everyone's here.  
Okay. Got it.

Casey hangs up, jots down an address.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Stark wants us at his place. Now.

Everyone grabs coats and bags. Raina takes a beat, torn.  
Madeleine walks out. Elena, Martin and Casey turn to Raina.

ELENA

She's an obnoxious, hyper-ambitious  
twit --

MARTIN

She also happens to be right.

CASEY

C'mon, Raina. How much worse can  
it get?

MARTIN, ELENA & RAINA

(in unison)

Don't ask.

As they all head out together --

INT. SEBASTIAN'S BEL AIR HOME - NIGHT 3

Sebastian leads his awed team through his opulent home.

MADELEINE

Is that a real Rodin?

SEBASTIAN

Gift from a very satisfied client.

RAINA

So crime really does pay.

MARTIN

Sauna, home theater, wine cellar --  
this place has everything.

ELENA

Except a conscience.

SEBASTIAN

Let me show you my favorite  
feature.

Sebastian leads them down a set of stairs to a large door.

CASEY

Lemme guess -- indoor court?

SEBASTIAN

Exactly.

Sebastian opens the door, leads them into...

INT. SEBASTIAN'S BEL AIR HOME - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The lawyers stop short. They're standing in a perfect replica of an L.A. courtroom: -- bench, gallery, witness box, chandelier. Margaret sits in the jury box. The lawyers look around, stunned:

MARTIN

Damn.

CASEY

Let me guess -- you call it the  
Shark Tank --

(off Sebastian's glare)

Guess not.

SEBASTIAN

It's the real thing -- right down  
to the burnt okra floor tiles.

MADELEINE

It's spectacular.

RAINA

You don't get enough of the  
courtroom during trial?

SEBASTIAN

Not surprisingly, you miss the  
point. Before I ever set foot in a  
real courtroom -- I try my case in  
this one.

ELENA

I suppose you hire Hollywood extras  
to play all the parts?

SEBASTIAN

Better. Between the maids,  
gardeners, construction workers,  
UPS guys -- I've got a perfect L.A.  
jury pool right in my neighborhood.  
And Margaret makes a damn fine  
judge -- officious, belligerent.

MARGARET

You flatter me.

SEBASTIAN

I never make an argument in open court before I've perfected it in this room. If it doesn't fly in here -- it won't fly in there.

(beat)

We've got one shot to win this case: convince the jury that Jenny Dennison is a manipulative, predatory slut who lured Terrence Royce to her hotel room, willingly allowed him to film them having sex -- then, realizing the tape could ruin her career, killed Terrence to cover up its existence.

MADELEINE

How can we be sure the defense will put Jenny on the stand?

SEBASTIAN

After today's debacle, Anita smells blood. She'll put Jenny up to play damsel in distress. That's our chance to tear her apart on cross.

RAINA

I know you're the man and all -- but attacking the victim in a sex trial can backfire -- especially if the prosecutor's a guy.

SEBASTIAN

For once, you're dead right. Which is why I'm not going to question Jenny Dennison.

(beat)

You are.

RAINA

Come again?

SEBASTIAN

You, Elena and Madeleine. Her peers -- levels the playing field.

ELENA

I'm not going after a defendant without factual foundation in order to prejudice the jury.



MADELEINE

I'll do it. I have no problem  
tearing Barbie's head off.

ELENA

This is a big mistake. A smart  
defendant like Jenny Dennison isn't  
going to get rattled on the stand.

SEBASTIAN

Really? Why don't you step into  
the witness box.

Elena reluctantly complies while the others join Margaret in  
the jury box. Sebastian approaches Elena.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Consider yourself sworn. You're  
charged with killing a man you just  
had sex with.

Sebastian turns away. When he turns back, it's a different  
Sebastian: intense, intimidating, full attack mode.

SEBASTIAN

Ms. Morales, how old are you?

ELENA

29.

SEBASTIAN

How many men have you had sex with?

ELENA

What?

SEBASTIAN

Your honor?

MARGARET

Witness will answer.

ELENA

I have no idea --

SEBASTIAN

More than 50?

ELENA

Of course not --

SEBASTIAN

30? Am I getting warm?

ELENA  
I really don't --

SEBASTIAN  
Ever contracted a venereal disease?

ELENA  
No -- well, I guess once, in college --

SEBASTIAN  
So you enjoy unprotected sex?

ELENA  
No -- I was 20 years old --

SEBASTIAN  
Ever engage in anal intercourse?

ELENA  
I won't answer that --

SEBASTIAN  
Sex with another woman?

ELENA  
(stands)  
I'm done --

SEBASTIAN  
One more question. That cross around your neck suggests you're a practicing Catholic. How do you square the teachings of the church with your wanton promiscuity?

This touches a nerve. A livid Elena rips into Sebastian.

ELENA  
You arrogant prick -- what gives you the right to humiliate me? You may live in a mansion -- but you're still a low-rent ambulance-chasing asshole --

Sebastian smiles. Elena realizes she's been had. To group:

SEBASTIAN  
Any questions?  
(beat)  
I'll be gone for about 2 hours.  
(MORE)

SEBASTIAN (cont'd)  
 When I get back -- I expect to see  
 Jenny Dennison's vital organs  
 hanging from the chandelier.

EXT. BEL AIR HOTEL - NIGHT

Sebastian and Julie dine on the patio. The conversation's  
 lively -- between Sebastian and his cell phone. Into phone:

SEBASTIAN  
 No -- tell them to lead with her  
 early sexual history -- stay  
 chronological -- tell a story.  
 (hangs up; to Julie)  
 Sorry. Big day tomorrow.

JULIE  
 I understand.

Sebastian holds up a 3" by 5" school portrait of Julie.

SEBASTIAN  
 Thanks for the picture.

JULIE  
 Sure. So what do you think?

SEBASTIAN  
 About what?

JULIE  
 Honors french, remember?

SEBASTIAN  
 Right. Well -- it seems to me --  
 if you want to learn french -- we  
 rent you an apartment in Paris --

JULIE  
 Dad -- I'm talking about looking  
 good on my college applications --

Sebastian's cell phone rings.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)  
 Sorry.  
 (into phone)  
 Yeah? Better. Use the stuff from  
 the ex-boyfriend. Be back soon.  
 (clicks off; to Julie)  
 So where were we?

Julie puts her napkin on her plate.

JULIE  
We should go.

SEBASTIAN  
But we haven't even --

JULIE  
You're busy. It's okay.

SEBASTIAN  
Julie --

JULIE  
Dad -- I'm not mad. In fact, I  
couldn't think of a more  
appropriate way to say goodbye.

SEBASTIAN  
Don't say that. I didn't mean to --

JULIE  
Look -- I never fit into your life.  
Now I can finally stop trying.

Julie stands, put on her jacket.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
When that lady died -- and you lost  
it -- I really thought you changed.  
(beat)  
Turns out you just changed sides.

Julie goes. As a devastated Sebastian follows --

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. UPSCALE BEVERLY HILLS HOME - MORNING (DAY 4)

Sebastian approaches the front door, slips a robin's egg blue box through the mail slot. As he starts to go:

KAREN (O.C.)

Tiffany, huh? Must've been quite a dinner.

Busted, Sebastian turns to face his ex-wife.

SEBASTIAN

I'm an imbecile. But then -- you already knew that.

KAREN

She'll get over it.

SEBASTIAN

She shouldn't have to.

KAREN

Julie understands what you do for a living.

SEBASTIAN

For years, I let myself believe I put my career first for you guys.

(off her look)

I know, I know -- but I can be pretty persuasive. After you left, I figured, well -- I'm just not cut out for a family. Problem is -- I still have one. I still have Julie. This terrific kid -- thanks to you -- and now...

KAREN

It's a five hour flight, Sebastian. You don't have to lose her.

SEBASTIAN

I already have. She finally got tired of waiting for me to grow up.

KAREN

You're overreacting. You hurt her feelings --

SEBASTIAN  
That's my specialty.

KAREN  
Look -- we're having some people  
over on Saturday -- kind of a bon  
voyage party. You should come.  
Julie will want to see you --

SEBASTIAN  
No. The best thing I can do for  
her is stay the hell away --

As Sebastian walks away, on Karen, watching him go --

INT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Sebastian sits next to Madeleine at the prosecution table.  
Jenny Dennison is on the stand being questioned by Anita.

ANITA  
I know this is difficult, Jenny.  
But can you please describe for the  
jury the events that led to the  
death of Terrence Royce?

Jenny gathers herself, tries to hold it together.

JENNY  
After the video shoot, Terrence and  
I went out for a few drinks --

ANITA  
How many?

JENNY  
I had two shots of tequila. I  
think Terrence had a few more --

MADELEINE  
(stands)  
Objection. No foundation.

JUDGE  
Sustained.

JENNY  
Later, we went back to my hotel.

ANITA  
Is this is when you decided to have  
sex with Mr. Royce?

JENNY

Uh -- yes. He seemed like a totally sweet guy -- really cute. And I guess -- I was lonely...

ANITA

What happened after you had sex with Mr. Royce?

JENNY

He said -- 'I just made you a star.' I had no idea what he meant...

(beat)

Then he showed me the camera.

ANITA

Mr. Royce filmed your love-making?

JENNY

Yes. He said I'd be the next Paris Hilton when he sold the tape.

ANITA

You had no idea what he was up to?

JENNY

God, no. It's totally humiliating.

Jenny's eyes well as she struggles for composure.

ANITA

What happened next?

JENNY

I told Terrence to give me the tape. He laughed in my face. So I grabbed for it -- we struggled...

(beat)

He was a lot stronger than me. He pinned me down on the bed... his hand was on my throat. I was afraid he might kill me... I should've just let him have the damn tape -- but I kept thinking about my parents -- how much this would hurt them... That's when I spotted the knife on the tray...

ANITA

What did you do?

Jenny wipes away a tear -- her voice trembling:

JENNY

I grabbed the knife... and I swung it... He started to bleed -- then he fell over.

ANITA

Did you call 9-1-1 right away?

JENNY

Yes.

ANITA

Why didn't the police find the tape?

JENNY

Before the paramedics came, I went down the hall to my manager Amy's room. I gave her the tape. I couldn't risk people seeing it.

ANITA

But now it's on the internet.

Jenny nods, begins to cry softly.

JENNY

Someone in Amy's office found the tape. Now -- it's everywhere...

Jenny lowers her head in abject humiliation. A beat.

ANITA

Nothing further.

JUDGE

Does the prosecution wish to cross-examine the witness?

Madeleine leans in to Sebastian. Sotto:

MADELEINE

I'll start with the high school stuff, build from there --

But Sebastian isn't listening. Instead he's staring at the school photo of Julie which rests on his legal pad.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

You okay?



JUDGE

Mr. Stark -- do you wish to question this witness?

Sebastian looks from the photo of Julie to the distraught Jenny Dennison. Madeleine stands to begin her assault. But before she can start:

SEBASTIAN

We have no questions, Your Honor.

MADELEINE

(shocked)  
What?

Anita is surprised but clearly pleased. In the gallery, Jessica shakes her head. Our team looks on, mystified by Sebastian's decision. Only Margaret seems to understand where this is coming from.

JUDGE

The witness may step down.

As she does, on Sebastian, staring at Julie's picture --

INT. SEBASTIAN'S BEL AIR HOME - BASEMENT COURTROOM - DAY

Sebastian speed-skips rope like a boxer, his sweats soaked with perspiration. The rhythmic slaps resound across the empty courtroom. Piles of evidence from the Dennison case are scattered on the floor. Sebastian is focused on a large TV monitor: an amateur concert video featuring a younger Jenny Dennison playing guitar in a coffeehouse. Margaret enters with a bag of take-out, absorbs his foul mood.

MARGARET

Sweet and pungent shrimp.

SEBASTIAN

(re: video)  
Made it when she was 17. Saved up for the camera. I bet her friends laughed when she said she was gonna be a star. But look at her now.

MARGARET

She's on trial for murder.

SEBASTIAN

The point is -- she knew what she wanted. She was driven by ambition -- nothing else mattered.

MARGARET

You make that sound like a virtue.

SEBASTIAN

It is. All I ever wanted to be was the best lawyer in the world. And for a long time -- I came pretty damn close.

(beat)

But when you lose that drive -- that consuming ambition -- you're finished. Mine died along with Deena Beck.

MARGARET

What happened in court today --

SEBASTIAN

Was unforgivable. I looked at Jenny on the stand -- and I didn't see a guilty defendant who needed to be destroyed -- I saw a troubled young girl -- I saw --

MARGARET

Julie.

Sebastian takes a beat -- begins to pace.

SEBASTIAN

No matter what I've screwed up in my life -- letting down my old man, trashing my marriage, degenerate gambling, women half my age -- the second I got in here -- I was in control. In this room -- I could do no wrong.

MARGARET

Even masters of the universe have the occasional off day.

Sebastian stares around the room. Quietly:

SEBASTIAN

You don't understand. If I can't tune out the world -- walk into a courtroom and -- by sheer skill and force of will -- find a way to win -- then what am I?

MARGARET

A fallible human being? There are worse things to be.

SEBASTIAN

Not for me.

Sebastian approaches the TV monitor.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

To be the best -- to win -- you need to be in complete control. You need to create the conditions for success -- leaving nothing to chance, never allowing yourself to be vulnerable -- never --

Sebastian stops short, stares the image of Jenny on the screen. Several beats, then, a gleam of recognition.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Obsessive control. Never letting anyone gain the upper hand. Never being a victim --  
 (beat, a dawning recognition)  
 That's it.

Sebastian pops the tape, hands it to a confused Margaret, grabs the bag of Chinese food.

SEBASTIAN

Get this to the LAPD crime lab. Full analysis -- ASAP.  
 (looking into the bag)  
 What -- no egg roll?

He starts to go, turns back, smiles broadly, once again his old arrogant self.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

I am great -- and yet I am humble.

As Sebastian walks out, on Margaret, rolling her eyes --

INT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Full house. Jenny Dennison on the stand. In the gallery, D.A. Devlin, Elizabeth Royce, Sebastian's team.

JUDGE

So am I to understand that the prosecution now wishes to cross-examine the witness?

MADELEINE

Yes, your honor.

Madeleine starts to rise -- again, Sebastian grabs her arm.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

What now?

SEBASTIAN

Watch and learn.

As Sebastian stands, approaches Jenny:

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Ms. Dennison, when did you first decide you wanted to be a pop star?

JENNY

I guess it was the first time I saw Madonna on TV -- I was 7.

SEBASTIAN

And you never wavered from that ambition?

JENNY

Not really. I just -- knew.

Under this, Julie quietly enters, sits in back.

SEBASTIAN

Besides Madonna, what other performers did you emulate? J. Lo, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera?

JENNY

Definitely.

SEBASTIAN

Those singers all incorporate explicit sexuality into their performances. But according to publicity material from Sonic Records, you're the next Nora Jones -- 'wholesome, spiritual, family-friendly.' Did that bother you?

JENNY

Sonic signed me -- they decide the best way to sell my music.

SEBASTIAN

But you've been planning your career for 18 years. You're smart enough to know sex sells. Why wouldn't they listen?

Anita stands.

ANITA

Objection -- is there any possible relevance to this line of inquiry?

JUDGE

I was wondering that myself.

SEBASTIAN

I'm just trying to figure out why Ms. Dennison filmed herself having sex with Terrence Royce at the Chateau Marmont minutes before she killed him.

As this allegation explodes across the courtroom:

ANITA

Move to strike --

SEBASTIAN

The thing is, Jenny, I watched some of your old videos. They bear a striking resemblance to the video of you and Mr. Royce having sex --

ANITA

I move these comments be stricken and Mr. Stark be held in contempt.

Sebastian picks up a videotape from the prosecution table

SEBASTIAN

This is a video you made four years ago on a Sony XD 200 Cam Corder. A forensic analysis confirms that this tape bears the precise striation pattern as the videotape of you and Terrence at the Chateau.

(beat)

(MORE)

SEBASTIAN (cont'd)

In other words -- the two tapes  
were made by the exact same camera,  
Jenny. Your camera.

The courtroom's buzzing. Jenny's in shock.

ANITA

We move for an immediate mistrial,  
Your Honor -- no foundation --

SEBASTIAN

The defense has this tape, Judge.

JUDGE

Motion is denied.

SEBASTIAN

Why'd you make the tape, Jenny?

Jenny looks to Anita, who can't help her now.

JENNY

It was all a big misunderstanding --

SEBASTIAN

Do you deny making the tape?

JENNY

No... I made it -- but it was just  
supposed to be for fun --

SEBASTIAN

Did you tell Terrence Royce you  
were taping your sexual encounter?

JENNY

Well, no, but --

SEBASTIAN

Why not?

JENNY

I didn't think he'd care --

SEBASTIAN

But he did care -- right?

JENNY

When Terry spotted the camera -- he  
got really mad. He was scared his  
mom would see the tape --

SEBASTIAN

So you intended to make the tape public?

JENNY

No -- I didn't say that --

SEBASTIAN

Clearly Terrence thought that was your intention. Why?

Jenny doesn't answer.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Is it possible you thought that releasing the tape would cause a scandal that could actually help launch your career?

JENNY

No --

SEBASTIAN

C'mon, Jenny. You didn't give the tape to the cops. You slipped it to your manager. Then *somehow* it found its way onto the internet. Now everyone's talking about it. About you. Do you expect us to believe that was an accident?

Jenny's starting to crumble, tears in her eyes.

JENNY

Look. I didn't mean... No one was supposed to get hurt --

SEBASTIAN

Why did you kill Terrence Royce?

JENNY

Things... got out of hand --

SEBASTIAN

(more emphatic)

Why did you kill Terrence Royce?

JENNY

(beat, quietly tearful)

Terry tried to grab the tape -- he wrestled me onto the bed. His knee was on my chest. I should've just given it to him --

SEBASTIAN

Why didn't you?

JENNY

I don't know... It happened so fast -- I couldn't breath. I got scared -- I was still kinda drunk.

(beat)

Next thing I knew I had the knife in my hand -- and Terry was bleeding...

(beat)

I swear to God -- I never meant to hurt him...

Jenny starts to cry. We survey the shocked expressions of our people as they absorb Sebastian's coup. Heartfelt:

SEBASTIAN

Your plan cost a young man's life. It cost Elizabeth Royce her only child. There is no greater loss.

Angle on Julie, staring at her father, moved. Then back to Sebastian, victorious -- but not happy.

INT. L.A. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY OUTSIDE COURTROOM

A distracted Sebastian accepts congratulations from his team. Elizabeth Royce approaches, embraces Sebastian. Emotional:

ELIZABETH ROYCE

Thank you -- for giving me back my son.

Sebastian watches her go, feeling her pain. Suddenly there's a familiar arm around his shoulders.

DELGADO

Let me get a photo with the man of the hour.

Sebastian turns, poses for photographs with the Mayor, who spots Jessica exiting the courtroom.

DELGADO (CONT'D)

Madame District Attorney -- join us, please.

Jessica would rather be set on fire -- but she observes protocol, poses with Delgado and Sebastian. Through her phony smile she whispers to Sebastian:



JESSICA  
You got lucky.

SEBASTIAN  
It's called winning. Don't worry --  
you'll get used to it.

Jessica goes. Sebastian and Delgado walk down the hall.

DELGADO  
I knew you'd make me look like a  
genius.  
(off his silence)  
You just won a huge case. Why do  
you look like you just lost your  
best friend?

SEBASTIAN  
I'm about to lose a hell of a lot  
more than that.

As Sebastian walks away --

INT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY COURTHOUSE - FAMILY COURT - DAY 5

Sebastian enters. Small courtroom, less formal. Karen and Julie are seated with a man we intuit is Karen's fiance. The judge recognizes Sebastian, who takes a seat in the gallery.

JUDGE  
I see we're all here. Case A-1876,  
custody of Julie Grace Stark. Ms.  
Stark, please take the stand.

A grim Julie stands, makes her way to the witness box, sits.

JUDGE (CONT'D)  
As stipulated in your parents'  
divorce decree, having reached the  
age of 16, you must designate which  
parent will act as your custodian  
until your 18th birthday.  
(beat)  
Have you made a decision?

JULIE  
Yes.  
(beat)  
My mother has been everything to  
me. My protector, my conscience --  
my friend.  
(MORE)

JULIE (cont'd)  
 When my parents split up -- I  
 thought the world was coming to an  
 end. My mom made sure it didn't.  
 She was a mess -- but she pretended  
 everything was okay -- so I  
 wouldn't be scared.

An emotional Karen smiles at Julie.

JULIE (CONT'D)  
 It wasn't always easy. I could be  
 a royal pain. But my mom taught me  
 it's not enough to love people when  
 it's easy -- you've gotta love them  
 when it's hard. When they don't  
 deserve it. When they're in  
 trouble. That's what family does.  
 (beat)  
 Which is why I choose to live with  
 my dad.

On Sebastian, in total shock --

EXT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY COURTHOUSE - STAIRS - LATE DAY

Karen, Julie and Sebastian stand together. Karen is beyond  
 incredulous. She stares at Julie:

KAREN  
 I'm just trying to understand --  
 When exactly did you decide this?

JULIE  
 Mom --

KAREN  
 And why wouldn't you discuss it  
 with me in advance? I have to find  
 out like this?

JULIE  
 You would've tried to talk me out  
 of it --

KAREN  
 You got that right.  
 (to Sebastian)  
 Did you know about this?

SEBASTIAN  
 I'm as surprised as you are --  
 maybe more.

JULIE  
I didn't mean to hurt you --

KAREN  
I'm not hurt.  
(beat)  
Okay, fine, I'm hurt. But mostly --  
I'm scared. I mean -- no offense,  
Sebastian, but you're unbelievably  
self-absorbed --

SEBASTIAN  
No offense taken.

KAREN  
Seriously -- do you have any idea  
what it takes to raise a teen-age  
girl on your own in Los Angeles?

SEBASTIAN  
No.  
(beat)  
But if this is what Julie wants --

KAREN  
She's 16. She wants a Porsche and  
a date with Prince William and  
world peace. She's a child --

JULIE  
Uh, hello -- I'm standing right  
here?

KAREN  
If this is what you want, Jul -- I  
can't stop you. I just hope to God  
you know what you're doing.  
(to Sebastian)  
This is the biggest case you're  
ever gonna get. Don't blow it.

Karen walks away. An exhausted Julie sits down on the steps. Sebastian takes off his jacket, sits down next her. After a long beat, Sebastian turns to Julie.

SEBASTIAN  
Why?

Julie doesn't look at Sebastian as she speaks.

JULIE  
For better or worse -- you're the  
only father I'm ever gonna have.  
(MORE)

JULIE (cont'd)

And -- if there's a God -- I'm the only kid you're ever gonna have...

(beat)

Mom's really mad right now -- but she'll get over it. We'll always have each other. But if I go to New York -- you and I will exchange birthday cards, Christmas presents -- but we'll end up strangers. You may prefer that -- I don't.

SEBASTIAN

The last thing I want --

JULIE

(cuts him off)

For once -- don't talk. Just listen. I've gone to the shrink long enough to know I'll be screwed up for life if I don't get some closure on you and me.

Sebastian absorbs this for a long beat: when did this kid grow up?

JULIE (CONT'D)

But there's another reason I chose you -- something you probably won't understand. Maybe you never will.

(beat)

You need me.

As Sebastian and Julie sit together in silence, it dawns on Sebastian that -- for the second time in six weeks -- his whole world has changed. Only this time it doesn't feel like an ending.

It feels like a beginning.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW