

Hell is an Innocent Man

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. DODGE CHARGER - DAY

GRAYSON "GRAY" COLLINS (50s, attorney) is in the driver's seat, his eyes fixed on his phone.

He's stocky with graying hair.

They focus on a name: "Tyson Mallory"

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Super: One Month Ago

Chicago sports team apparel is all over.

A photo of college-aged Gray playing football as a University of Southern California quarterback is on the wall.

A law degree from UCLA is prominently displayed next to it.

Awards for jurisprudence from the LA County District Attorney's office are in a box on the floor.

Gray goes through film production paperwork.

Across from him is VICTOR HANCOCK (50s), a movie producer with lots of obvious plastic surgery.

VICTOR
Drexel insisted but--

Gray grabs a pen and marks something on the paperwork.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Oh, come on!

Gray marks two more things.

GRAY
You managed to misspell first dollar gross into two years of deferred compensation.

VICTOR
My budget is tight!

GRAY
Then cut your fee.

Gray pushes the paperwork back.

INT. SUPER MARKET - NIGHT

MARK MORRIS (20s, screenwriter) stares at some fruit.

He's short, very thin with a bushy beard.

Mark's roommate EVANDER STUCKO (20s, screenwriter) pushes a mostly full shopping cart behind him.

Evander is a giant man in an obscure anime t-shirt.

EVANDER

Are you sure you can afford this?

MARK

I just got a bonus for another job well done. Why not enjoy the fruits of his spoils, you know?

EVANDER

It'll suck when Cyrano finds true love, at least fiscally.

MARK

(tosses fruit into cart)
And when it's ready, it's going to get me an agent. I can see it on the marquee of the Beverly.
(beat)
"The Secret Life of Chad" slaps.

EVANDER

It kind of sounds like a failed Nickelodeon TV show.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A crime scene is across the street from the supermarket.

Mark exits, spots it.

MARK

Holy shit.

Evander exits the supermarket behind him, pushing the cart full of bagged groceries.

Mark focuses on the crime scene.

Evander coughs.

Mark turns to him.

EVANDER

A guy writes one script about a serial killer and all of a sudden he thinks he's Elmore Leonard.

MARK

It'll be a quick look, that's all.

EVANDER

That cop recognized you last time.

MARK

There's more than one homicide detective in this city.

Evander sighs.

EVANDER

This time might be different. What if they think one thing and--

MARK

He probably thinks I'm just some weirdo who likes crime scenes. This is Los Angeles, you know.

EVANDER

I'll meet you at the car.

Mark walks to the crime scene.

Evander pushes the cart toward a parked SUV.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The corpse of a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN is on the ground.

A crowd of onlookers is separated from the scene by UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS and yellow police tape.

Mark gets to the front.

His eyes focus on her.

STAN (30s, Medical Technician) takes photos of the body.

Detective FRANK CHAN (50s) looks at the corpse and then into the crowd.

Frank is a big, burly man with a five o'clock shadow.

STAN

Her purse was in the dumpster. A
bloody fingerprint is on it, just--

FRANK

Like the last three.

Mark's breathing accelerates. He sweats profusely.

Frank spots Mark.

His eyes focus on him.

Mark's eyes land on Frank staring back at him.

A cold sweat breaks across Mark's face.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Serials sometimes return to admire
their handiwork, right?

Mark turns around and sprints away.

Frank takes off after him.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Evander loads groceries into the trunk of the SUV.

FRANK (O.S.)

Los Angeles police, stop!

Evander looks up and sees Frank tackle Mark to the ground.

INT. GRAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Large, immaculate with expensive furniture and a massive
television mounted on the wall.

The TV news is on.

The Chyron reads "Suspect in K-Town Slasher case held for
questioning by LAPD."

Framed photos from thirty years of being together are on the
wall of Gray and his wife IRIS (50s).

She's a classic American blonde who has aged gracefully.

Iris walks into the room with expensive silverware, carefully
placing it next to similarly colored plates.

Gray walks in.

IRIS
You're late.

GRAY
Guess who's paying for Paris?

Iris smiles.

IRIS
How's Drexel doing?

GRAY
It was one of his flunkies.

Gray walks over and kisses his wife.

Iris spots the TV.

Her eyes focus on the chyron.

IRIS
I was hoping they would have a
photo of the guy.

GRAY
They won't show his face unless he
gets arrested, that way they don't
get the "you ruined my life" bit.

She grabs the remote and turns it off.

IRIS
Mistakes happen, right?

GRAY
It's pretty rare.

IRIS
I found a recipe for a great
spinach and chicken salad.

He groans loudly.

GRAY
This used to be steak night and I
could go for a ribeye.

IRIS
The doctor said your cholesterol
was too high last month.

Gray takes a deep breath.

GRAY

One meal--

IRIS

What about your blood pressure?

He takes a deep breath.

GRAY

Spinach sounds lovely tonight.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Mark is handcuffed to a table, his face bruised.

Frank sits across from him.

A pair of coffee cups are in front of the detective.

Frank pushes one over to Mark.

FRANK

Help me and I'll help you.

MARK

I'm invoking my right to silence.

Frank looks at Mark for a long moment.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm invoking my right to counsel.

FRANK

This doesn't help anyone, Mark. In my line of work the only sort of people who want a lawyer are very, very guilty.

Frank stares him down.

MARK

Silence.

Frank angrily slaps the cup in front of Mark off the table.

MARK (CONT'D)

Lawyer.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Mark looks around the room, exhausted.

His foot taps impatiently.

The door opens up revealing attorney TYLER MINSHAW (50s).

He's short, balding, and in a cheap suit.

Tyler walks in and sits down across from Mark.

MARK

Are you the one who's going to tell me what's going on here?

TYLER

Your mother says hello.

MARK

I tried calling her.

TYLER

I'm Tyler Minshaw and she asked me to represent you.

MARK

This is all a mistake. All they have to do is find a guy named Jericho Hardcastle and this all goes away.

Tyler takes out a form from his briefcase and hands it to Mark. A pen follows.

TYLER

I'm going to need you to walk me through all of this, Mark. If this is as simple as she says, one call to the district attorney and I'll have you back at Trader Joe's with a hell of a story to tell.

Mark looks at the form.

MARK

What's this?

TYLER

This allows me to work for you. It's all fairly standard and once you're done signing it, you fall under attorney-client privilege.

Mark quickly signs it.

TYLER (CONT'D)
 You are officially my client.
 (beat)
 Now you can tell me everything they
 have told you up until the minute
 before I walked in here.

MARK
 I don't know where to start. I saw
 a crime scene and--

TYLER
 Why would you go there?

MARK
 I was curious and then I saw her.

Tyler motions for him to continue.

MARK (CONT'D)
 She had a small role in a show I
 was writing for. I asked her out
 and she declined for trailer time
 with Drexel fucking Stern.

TYLER
 So why'd you run?

MARK
 I freaked out. It was someone I
 knew, you know?
 (beat)
 That big ass cop chased me down and
 arrests me for murder for god knows
 what reason. After that, my name
 just becomes K-Town Slasher. They
 said first-degree murder and it all
 blurs after that.

Tyler's face changes to one expression: Oh Shit!

MARK (CONT'D)
 You're the first person who hasn't
 looked at me like I'm sort of a
 monster since I've been here.

TYLER
 Let's start from the top and you
 walk me through why they think
 you're this Slasher fellow.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

A pristine 1969 Dodge Charger is parked in front of a small storefront.

"Gray Collins, Attorney at Law" is on the sign.

A foreign luxury sports car is parked next to it.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray stares at a news story.

His eyes linger on Mark's mugshot and a headline: "K-Town Slasher suspect arrested!"

The faint sound of a toilet flushes.

BRAD JAMES (20s, client) walks in.

Brad is tall, athletically built, and covered in tattoos. He looks at Gray's things, curious.

BRAD
Anything important?

GRAY
They just arrested the K-Town
Slasher, if you can believe it.

Gray closes the browser.

BRAD
So how bad is it?

GRAY
A year in county.

BRAD
He fucked around and found out.

GRAY
There's a reason why hockey and the
State of California have penalties
for instigating, Mister James.

BRAD
I want my day in court.

GRAY
You'll need a good litigator.

BRAD
Why can't you do it?

GRAY
Litigation is a young man's game.

BRAD
I don't want a new attorney.

GRAY
How much of the rest of your life
do you want tied up with this?

Brad sighs.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Let's say you want your day in
court. Every day from here until
the trial you'll be waiting. Your
wife wants a kid? Now comes the
part where you might be in jail for
their birth. Imagine trying to
explain this in a job interview.
(beat)
I can keep going, if you want.

BRAD
I'm not guilty.

GRAY
Plenty of guys plead guilty to shit
they didn't do because a brief time
in county is easier than losing
everything for not guilty.

Brad takes a deep breath and looks around.

GRAY (CONT'D)
As you said, when you fuck around
they decide to make you find out.

BRAD
It's bullshit.

GRAY
This is a time situation right now
and you need to think about how
much more you want to lose.

Brad turns to Gray and nods.

INT. PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Mark looks around.

Tyler's eyes look elsewhere, stunned.

MARK

So how fucked am I?

Tyler takes a deep breath.

TYLER

It's not scientific but I'd guess somewhere between a female porn star in a gang bang and Hitler in the bunker.

MARK

I'm innocent. The police have got the wrong guy, I swear to you. All they have to do is pull my PayPal and they'll see it. It'll prove I'm innocent, I swear.

TYLER

That'll be the first thing I do when I get back to my office.

MARK

What do I do until then?

TYLER

Keep your head down.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Frank walks in, handcuffs out.

He arrests Mark and reads him his rights.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Don't say anything to anyone without me present!

MARK

I'm innocent, I swear!

FRANK

That's what they all say.

Frank escorts Mark out of the room.

Tyler looks around in shock.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - AN HOUR LATER

Gray stares at a plea agreement.

Brad signed it.

DREXEL (O.S.)

You deserve better than this.

Gray looks up to see--

DREXEL STERN (40s, movie star) walking in.

He's tall, jacked, impossibly handsome and looks younger than he is. Charisma oozes off of him.

A tailor made Tom Ford suit fits him perfectly.

A book titled "Framed: My Life On Death Row" is in one hand.

On the cover is a mugshot of PATRICK DRISCOLL (50s).

Patrick is tall, handsome with oodles of sleazy charm radiating off of him.

A bottle of impossibly expensive wine is in the other.

Drexel places both on Gray's desk.

Gray's eyes focus on the book.

A scowl comes across his face.

Drexel sits down.

DREXEL (CONT'D)

The script is fantastic. I take this and my career changes.

GRAY

Did you watch the trial or just the TV show? They aren't the same.

DREXEL

I'm looking for your blessing on this one, old friend.

(motions to the wine)

It's heart healthy.

Gray sighs.

GRAY

Let me think about it.

INT. TYLER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Tiny, cramped and dirty.

Tyler glares at his phone.

TYLER

I'm not asking for the stars but--

(beat)

Hello?

He groans loudly.

Tyler's eyes turn to his speed dial.

His fingers pull up Gray's information.

Tyler calls him.

INT. GRAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Iris and Gray sit at the table.

The wine bottle is mostly empty.

A TV is mounted on the wall, turned to the local news.

Gray's phone rings with Tyler's call.

Iris glares at Gray.

Gray sends it to voicemail.

IRIS

Drexel called me.

GRAY

And?

IRIS

He never calls, just texts.

GRAY

I read the book. I'd be signing off
to be the villain in it.

IRIS

Can they change your name?

GRAY

Christian Bale is in talks for it.

IRIS
I could live with that.

GRAY
Patrick Driscoll is guilty as--

IRIS
Language.

Gray shakes his head.

GRAY
He's a conman and Drexel is the
latest mark in his game.

IRIS
You're preaching to the choir, not
the congregation, with me.

GRAY
I spent three years of my damn life
trying to put him in prison. I know
the case against him in every
single direction you could take it.

The TV news changes.

GRAY (CONT'D)
The one thing the TV show does not
say is that twelve people sat in
that courtroom, saw every single
piece of evidence both sides were
able to present, and came to two
conclusions. He did it and he
deserves to die for it.

Mark's mugshot comes up.

IRIS
What if you did miss something? I
know you always like to think you
are 100 percent right but--

The Chyron changes to "K-Town Slasher Revealed To Be
Struggling Screenwriter."

GRAY
The TV show didn't have a smoking
gun, just conjecture and cherry-
picked evidence.

Iris spots it out of the corner of her eye.

She turns her attention to it.

IRIS

Holy cow.

Gray's eyes follow her.

GRAY

I saw his mug shot this morning.
I'm surprised Nick wasn't there to
extend his fifteen minutes of fame.

IRIS

Where's his lawyer?

GRAY

If he's smart he's replaced his
public defender by now.

IRIS

Would you represent him?

GRAY

I'd ask you first.

IRIS

Thank you.

GRAY

This is the sort of case that can
make or break your career. If this
guy is smart he pleads it out as
quickly as humanly possible.

She chuckles.

IRIS

I remember the guy who couldn't
wait to get in court.

GRAY

Litigation is long and brutal. If
you can save all of that, and get
the perp to give you a guilty plea
that gives the victim some remote
semblance that justice was done,
then I call that a massive win.

IRIS

What about justice?

GRAY

Sometimes justice is about what you
can afford, not what you want.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Yellow police tape separates the PUBLIC from a half dozen UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS.

Stan takes photos of a dead WOMAN (20s, blonde).

She's in a tight red dress and has been stabbed to death.

Detective Chan walks through the crowd, his badge in the air.

The Uniforms nod and let him through.

Frank makes a beeline to Stan.

FRANK

You should've called the detective on duty, Stan.

STAN

The victim is Karen Ransom, an actress who lives in the Valley.

Stan points to the body.

Frank looks at it. He mutters a profanity.

FRANK

It could be a coincidence.

Frank looks to the crowd and then back to Stan.

STAN

I know what a pattern is.

FRANK

Slade isn't going to like this. The old man will hate it. And now--

Stan motions for Frank to come close.

STAN

(hushed)

I can tell Doc Jeff to take his time but this won't stay quiet.

FRANK

Thank you.

Frank walks over to the garbage dumpster.

He looks inside.

Karen's purse is in there.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray finishes up some paperwork.

TYLER (O.S.)
Hollyweird never shows how boring a
lawyer's life is.

He looks up to see Tyler walking in.

Gray smiles.

GRAY
You make filling out a Form 1040
into something that wins an Oscar
and you can leave this life behind.

The men embrace.

TYLER
I need your help.

Gray points to a chair.

Tyler sits down.

GRAY
What did you get yourself into?

TYLER
This kid's mother calls and says
her kid is in a jam, how much would
it cost to get him out of it?

GRAY
Are you still doing the two-for-one
deal?

TYLER
I knew those ads were a bad idea.

GRAY
When you advertise to the set that
needs a Saul Goodman, don't be
shocked if your clientele
accurately reflects it.

TYLER
Well, guess who's now representing
the K-Town Slasher?

Gray sighs loudly.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - DAY

CONVICTS of all ages and races as far as the eye can see, walking slowly in line.

Mark is in the middle, looking around.

LEWIS FRANK (40s, covered in Nazi tats) is behind him.

LEWIS FRANK
Hey Slash.

Mark ignores him.

LEWIS FRANK (CONT'D)
I said, hey Slash.

Mark turns to him.

MARK
I'm not who you think I am.

LEWIS FRANK
I can keep you safe, for a price.

Mark looks at his ink and then at several BLACK CONVICTS.

MARK
(loudly)
Black Lives Matter.

The Black Convicts look at him angrily.

LEWIS FRANK
Out there, maybe.

Mark turns away.

MARK
I don't want your help.

LEWIS FRANK
What you want and what you need are
two different things, K-Town.

A PRISON GUARD glares at Lewis.

PRISON GUARD
Move along, convict.

The line moves in silence.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray takes a deep breath.

GRAY

Why didn't you Google him?

TYLER

She offered ten grand for what is supposed to be a misunderstanding. Usually, that means drugs.

GRAY

If you need the money, I can write you a check right now.

TYLER

It's not about that. He claims some guy named Jerry Castle will set him free but--

GRAY

They perp-walked him.

TYLER

How many guys did you perp-walk and then kick?

GRAY

Not a high-profile serial killer.

Tyler looks around.

His eyes settle on Gray's college photo.

TYLER

The kid's innocent and I'm trying to muster all the resources I can.

GRAY

This is lawfare and you're looking at a minimum of six hundred grand in billables before you even sniff a trial.

TYLER

The kid says he has twenty grand.

GRAY

That's a nice start.

TYLER

I wouldn't be here if I had a war chest, Gray.

GRAY

Gee, thanks.

Tyler grabs the photo.

TYLER

This guy would believe him!

GRAY

That guy didn't know Nick Stone. Nick doesn't charge someone with this sort of crime for fun.

Tyler puts the photo down.

TYLER

I never thought I'd see you back down from a challenge.

GRAY

Getting a DUI reduced to a speeding ticket is a challenge, Tyler. This is ice-skating uphill during a snowstorm while getting shot at.

TYLER

The two of us can win this case.

GRAY

Against Nick Stone and the five hundred-pound gorilla of the City of Los Angeles? They have a war chest in the *hundreds* of millions. Right now you need to focus on getting the needle off the table.

TYLER

What if I can get you the whole of the prosecution's case?

GRAY

Do you remember what Professor Stevens told us on the first day of law school? The bigger the case, the bigger your balls have to be. Nick Stone doesn't OK this unless he's got giant brass ones.

TYLER

I'm meeting with Mark in prison tomorrow morning. Just meet him once and if you don't feel it, I understand.

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Dead Body from earlier is on a slab.

Detective Chan has his notepad out.

Los Angeles County Assistant District Attorney AURORA SLADE (50s) angrily looks it over.

She's short and curvy with long dark hair.

AURORA

That is reasonable doubt in every courtroom in America.

FRANK

That kid is good for the others.

AURORA

Then how do we explain this?

FRANK

It's a famous case and, in this town, fame breeds all sorts of copycats.

(beat)

Or he's not good for it.

AURORA

Or someone wants us to make us think he's not good for it.

FRANK

Every single thing about this kid screams I am a serial killer.

AURORA

And I want to keep it that way.

FRANK

So what do you want me to do?

AURORA

Run down any lead you can that is not connected to this before you even think of talking to him.

FRANK

I'll grab her phone and see who last texted her. Maybe there's something there worth a damn.

Frank nods.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray pulls up an internet search engine on his laptop.

He types in "K-Town Slasher" into it.

An ungodly amount of results from the news comes up.

The second is a Reddit post marked "Mark Morris is FUCKING GUILTY and we all know it!"

Gray spots Mark's IMDB profile.

He clicks on it.

Gray grabs a notepad and writes "Mark Morris, writer" on it.

Gray goes through his credits.

He writes a number of them down.

Gray pulls up an internet search engine and types in "Mark Morris, screenwriter"

Mark's Script Revolution account is the first result.

Gray's eyes focus on it.

His mouse clicks on the website.

A script called "The Secret Life of Chad" has been favorited three dozen times.

Gray clicks on it.

A PDF of a movie script comes up.

Gray grabs a pen and quickly writes "Secret Life of Chad" on the notepad.

He reads it for a long moment.

Underneath it, he writes "Things not to have the jury see."

He takes a deep breath.

Gray writes "Chad slaps the ho because she deserved it."

He presses page down.

"Chad texts the slut."

Gray groans.

EXT. SPORTS ALLEY - DAY

Gray looks at his phone.

A news story labeled "K-Town Slasher: Going Back Through Mark Morris's Kill Spree" is on his phone.

His fingers scroll through.

A photo of a footprint by a dumpster comes up.

It's listed as a size ten.

Gray spots the dumpster and walks over to it.

His eyes spot the footprint.

He takes his shoe off and looks inside.

Gray wears a ten.

He places it on top.

It's the right size.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

A mural of the Beautiful Woman is on a wall.

Local crime reporter MIKE BROWN (50s) takes photos of it.

GRAY (O.S.)

Don't they have college students
who take that for the file?

Mike turns to see Gray approach him.

They shake hands.

MIKE

Our newsroom is a fifth of what it
was ten years ago.

GRAY

You're still standing, at least.

MIKE

I heard a rumor.

GRAY

How about we do a little bit of
horse-trading?

Mike nods.

MIKE

They're making a movie about Patrick Driscoll. Rumor is you said you were OK with it.

GRAY

Drexel and I are going to chat about it in the future. So far, I have not made my decision.

Mike motions for Gray to talk.

GRAY (CONT'D)

(motions to the mural)
Do you think he did it?

MIKE

I feel sorry for whoever the putz is that took the case.

GRAY

What makes you say that?

MIKE

I have a copy of Morris's Amazon order history. He bought a knife that matched the slash wounds.

GRAY

They didn't mention that on the news, Mike.

MIKE

Aurora reached out to the FBI and they matched it to one they bought from it.

GRAY

They don't have it, though.

MIKE

You are thinking like a lawyer, not a juror.

Gray shrugs.

MIKE (CONT'D)

If you want an inside scoop, find Chad Richards. He's a rookie patrolman who loves Chicago hot dogs... two of them and he gave me a juicy off-the-record statement.

EXT. HOT DOG STAND - DAY

Rookie Patrolman CHAD RICHARDS (20s) eats a Chicago-style hot dog. A soda is in his other hand.

Gray walks up to him.

GRAY
Officer Richards, right?

CHAD
Can I help you?

GRAY
Gray Collins.

Chad thinks for a moment.

CHAD
I heard stories about you.

GRAY
We share a mutual friend, Mike Brown from the Times.

Chad gulps.

GRAY (CONT'D)
A friend of a friend is curious, I thought I'd have some gossip no one else does.

Chad looks in either direction.

CHAD
I need this job.

GRAY
We're on the same side here.

Beat.

CHAD
I arrived ten seconds after the first murder. The little fucker ran from me... but I saw the same black hoodie on the killer that the little shit was arrested in. Had the same stripes and everything.

GRAY
Would you testify to that?

Chad nods.

INT. DODGE CHARGER - NIGHT (DRIVING)

Gray drives.

The California seaboard casually goes by.

Drexel FaceTimes him.

Gray answers.

DREXEL (FACETIME)
They made an offer.

GRAY
I don't want any part of it.

DREXEL (FACETIME)
It'll be the easiest check you have
ever made, Gray.

GRAY
You'll be pissing on the work of a
lot of good people.

DREXEL (FACETIME)
This is my chance at an Oscar.

Gray takes an exit and goes towards a small beach house.

GRAY
Since when have you cared about
that kind of stuff?

DREXEL (FACETIME)
My agent wants me to do another
sequel to "Justice Rain."

Gray pulls into a driveway.

GRAY
Are you free tomorrow? I'll be down
that way for a potential client.

DREXEL (FACETIME)
Is it anyone I might know?

GRAY
Unfortunately.

Gray parks the car.

EXT. GRAY'S HOME - NIGHT

Gray exits the car and walks to the front door.

DREXEL (FACETIME)
I've got a standing appointment at
Shaldovski's at noon.

GRAY
I'll see you there.

DREXEL (FACETIME)
Say hi to Iris for me.

GRAY
Take it easy.

Gray hangs up.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Mark's cellmate ZED GODFREY (30s) lies on the top bunk.

Zed is tall, heavily inked, and dangerous.

Mark walks in.

ZED
You shouldn't turn down help.

Mark lays down on the bottom bunk.

MARK
I marched with--

ZED
Have you noticed the brothers are
not exactly on your side?
(leans down, hushed)
Watch yourself in the chow line
tomorrow, you hear me?

MARK
(hushed)
What?

Mark looks around, unsure, and then back to Zed.

ZED
(hushed)
Paco from H Block has a niece who
was one of your girls.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - LATER

Mark is escorted by Prison Guard RICK DENTON (30s).

Denton is tall, overly muscular with a permanent scowl affixed to his face.

MARK
Guard Denton.

RICK
Yes, convict.

MARK
I need to be protected.

RICK
Who made the threat?

MARK
Call it a feeling.

RICK
Unless you tell me who--

MARK
You know I can't.

RICK
The only way to be safe from your fellow inmates is in solitary.

MARK
How do you get into there?

Rick stops Mark and slams him against the wall.

RICK
Tell me who and no one finds out.

MARK
And snitches get stitches.

Rick lets go of him.

RICK
The quickest way to get in the hole is to punch a guard, convict.

MARK
That doesn't end well for me, huh?

Rick nods.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Tyler stands in front of a luxury car, tapping his foot.

Gray's Charger pulls up and parks.

Gray exits.

GRAY

My wife is going to use your name
as a profanity for the next week.

TYLER

She loves me.

Gray walks to the front doors.

Tyler follows him.

INT. PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Gray and Tyler sit, waiting.

TYLER

I wonder what's taking so long.

GRAY

Is your guy in the hole?

TYLER

Not as far as I know.

Rick brings Mark into the room and uncuffs him.

Mark sits down.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Mark Morris, meet Grayson Collins.

Mark looks in the opposite direction.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Everything you say to him is as if
you said it to me; it is all under
the power of privilege.

Mark looks over at Gray.

MARK

Hi.

GRAY

So you're a writer.

MARK

Throw a rock in this city and you will hit someone with a script.

GRAY

You invoked your rights as soon as they cuffed you. That was smart.

MARK

The one thing I hated about that show was every time a criminal was getting grilled, they always said the worst thing right before they asked for their lawyer. The cop said it's what guilty people did, so I figured it was the right thing to do at the time.

GRAY

How have you slept?

MARK

Not well.

GRAY

Eventually, you get used to it.

Mark looks around, agitated.

MARK

Just ask the damn question.

GRAY

Everything online makes it look like I don't have to.

MARK

It's all easily explainable.

GRAY

You have a script about a serial killer who attacks beautiful women on your Script Revolution account. It was a real... page-turner.

MARK

My agent told me to expand my writing horizons and I did.

GRAY

An uneducated man might say you were laying out the groundwork for what was to come.

MARK

Or I was a dramedy guy who didn't get read and then became a horror guy who did.

GRAY

Do you know how this all looks?

MARK

Like I wrote about what I knew best, right?

(looks around, takes a deep breath)

It isn't true, I swear to God.

(motions to Tyler)

He told you my story, right?

Gray and Tyler look at each other.

Tyler nods.

GRAY

I went through Ty's outline. It sounds out of a bad Agatha Christie rip-off, no offense.

MARK

The truth can be that way.

GRAY

Craigslit and a mysterious handsome billionaire?

MARK

I'm not creative enough to make it up, I swear.

GRAY

I Google Imaged the guy. It was stock photos.

MARK

I was desperate for the money, so I didn't do my due diligence.

GRAY

Who's Evander Stucko?

MARK

He's my roommate. Was my roommate.

GRAY

Evander told TMZ that you showed him photos of some of the victims. Some of them were explicit.

MARK

I was a P.A for a movie she was on.

GRAY

So why would you talk to her on a dating app?

MARK

She was hot.

(beat)

I got a bonus if I got nudes before the date, too.

TYLER

This is a bit much.

MARK

I just thought this guy was the Chad of Chads.

(beat)

It got me inspired to write a script about a guy like this.

Gray takes a deep breath.

GRAY

What was the worst thing you'll have to admit to in court?

Silence.

MARK

One girl made a video where she, ahem, adjusted herself.

Gray looks around, concealing his disgust.

TYLER

Wait a second... what's a Chad?

MARK

Like a handsome dude who just owns the world, you know?

Tyler turns to Gray.

Gray doesn't know, either.

MARK (CONT'D)

Well, I got to cosplay this dude who had a yacht and millions to throw around. You'd be amazed at what these women would do to have a shot at that life.

GRAY

Do you have a photo of him?

MARK

I had access to his profile through a third-party app on my phone. It wouldn't let me take a screenshot, either, in case you were wondering.

(beat)

I know how it looks but this is just a series of coincidences that look awful in a certain light.

Gray and Tyler look around.

MARK (CONT'D)

The truth is just unreal.

GRAY

How desperate were you for money?

MARK

I came out here after film school and I thought I'd be repped and working full-time--

(snaps fingers)

--like that. Turns out it's a lot harder than it looks.

TYLER

Why would you do any of the sex stuff? It's a little, you know.

MARK

It was a job.

Gray sighs.

MARK (CONT'D)

That sounds pretty bad, right?

GRAY

I've heard worse.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Awards and degrees are all over the walls.

Los Angeles County District Attorney NICK STONE (70s) sits behind a massive executive desk.

He's well over six feet tall with broad shoulders. An air of dignity and elegance surrounds him.

Nick's eyes are focused on his laptop.

A crowd-raising website is on a web browser.

The page title reads "Save an innocent man from a blood-thirsty government coward!"

A news website is in the tab next to it.

The title reads "Local woman brutally murdered."

Aurora walks in with a court summons.

NICK

He made a GoFundMe for the K-Town Slasher. I want it taken down.

AURORA

That'll take a court order.

NICK

One thing at a time.

(beat)

I saw there was another body.

AURORA

It's off their radar but--

NICK

Do you have reasonable doubts?

AURORA

He did it and I know it.

(tosses the summons onto
Nick's desk)

Guess who is the co-counsel?

(beat)

Grayson Collins.

NICK

I'll see if he's looking to fight
or make it go away.

INT. PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Gray and Tyler look around.

MARK

I need to get out of here.

GRAY

There is zero chance of that happening in this or any other lifetime you have until you get a not-guilty verdict.

MARK

Everyone in here looks at me like I am the Devil.

GRAY

Welcome to life as a celebrity inmate, Mark. It's not going to get any better for you, either.

MARK

Someone is going to hurt me, soon. I need you to get me out so I can--

GRAY

Do you have any friends here?

MARK

Just my cellmate.

GRAY

I'm assuming Tyler has told you to shut your mouth in here but I will remind you to do the same.

MARK

What if I need to talk to someone?

GRAY

Then call me and make sure you let the guards know you are calling your attorney. They know all about maintaining privilege.

(beat)

Everyone in here is going to look at you like their only shot at freedom. Act accordingly.

Mark nods.

EXT. PRISON - DAY (LATER)

Tyler and Gray exit.

GRAY
Settle this, please.

TYLER
Do you think he did it?

GRAY
The jury will be full of people like my wife and she'd want to throw the switch after hearing him talk about it.

TYLER
His story is plausible.

GRAY
Any reasonable person is going to look at him and think he used some model's photos to play out some twisted fantasy where the beautiful women who turned him down gave him everything he wanted under false pretenses. I bet he's connected to more than one of the victims, too.

TYLER
I spoke with ADA Slade and--

GRAY
Aurora Slade?

TYLER
With the stripper voice.

Gray groans.

GRAY
She doesn't lose capital cases.

TYLER
The Red Baron didn't pick fights he couldn't win, either.

GRAY
This is high profile in all the wrong ways and now he's got the Grim Reaper looking to bury him.

Tyler gulps loudly.

TYLER

So maybe this is a tougher case
than I sold it as.

GRAY

Just a little bit.

TYLER

That's why you need to be here.

GRAY

You need to plead this as soon as
you possibly can.

TYLER

I don't think he did it.

GRAY

Thinking and knowing are two
entirely different things.

TYLER

You kept asking questions. You
never do that unless you feel
something in your gut.

GRAY

That's called doing your job.

TYLER

Do you think he's a serial killer?

GRAY

It's not what I know, it's what I
can prove. And right now I can't
prove anything good for him.

TYLER

Then help me get through discovery
and see if there's anything.

GRAY

It's a waste of time.

TYLER

Give me ten billable hours and if
you don't see a case, I'll shove a
plea agreement down his throat.

Gray nods.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - DAY

A-LIST CELEBRITIES and WEALTHY PEOPLE are all over.

Drexel and Gray sit in a corner booth.

Appetizers and expensive beers are in front of them.

GRAY

Next time let's just get a hot dog
and a coke. There's a great place
that does a proper Chicago Dog.

DREXEL

That sounds so unhealthy that Iris
would not be my friend.

GRAY

But they're so good when you have
all the right toppings.

Drexel takes out a manila folder. He places it by Gray.

DREXEL

This waives your conflict.

GRAY

Why do you want this so bad?

DREXEL

My father called me the other day.

GRAY

What did he want? Besides money.

DREXEL

He told me I wasn't an actor. I
just play myself in movies.

GRAY

So you're doing this to spite him.

DREXEL

It's a hit book, the script is good
and every director who's won an
Oscar is begging to make this film.
I'm in the driver's seat to change
my career overnight!

GRAY

Have you looked at the evidence?

DREXEL

I saw the TV show.

A WAITER comes up to their table.

Drexel motions him away.

GRAY

They didn't do anything remotely resembling research on it.

DREXEL

Are you still mad they didn't reach out to you? They probably figured out your opinion of him.

GRAY

A jury of his peers saw every piece of evidence, including everything that the movie doesn't show.

DREXEL

He's said--

GRAY

His story changes depending on the time of day, Drexel.

DREXEL

The jailhouse snitch lied.

GRAY

His prints were on the weapon, his alibi didn't check out, and three people spotted him at the scene.

DREXEL

His lawyer says he didn't do it.

Gray takes a bite of an appetizer.

GRAY

His second lawyer.

(beat)

Did you ever notice that no one talks to the guy who defended him the first time?

DREXEL

His original attorney retired because he did such a bad job!

GRAY

Jason Branka was a top-of-the-food chain criminal defense attorney. It was a long day in court with him.

(beat)

(MORE)

GRAY (CONT'D)

He also had a heart attack right after the trial. It's why I walked away from the D.A's office.

DREXEL

If that's true, why don't they ever mention it?

GRAY

Patrick Driscoll had the best defense money could buy and now he says this. Ask yourself why.

DREXEL

Because he's innocent.

GRAY

Or he'll say anything possible to avoid a needle in his arm.

Drexel takes a drink.

GRAY (CONT'D)

The only way the conspiracy to make him look guilty works is if you take out all of the evidence that makes him look guilty.

DREXEL

Did you offer him a deal?

GRAY

I did... life without any hint or possibility of parole. He would've stayed off death row if he had taken it.

DREXEL

Hell of a deal to offer someone. Either your life or the rest of it.

GRAY

This is the wrong guy, Drexel.

DREXEL

I just have a gut feeling about it.

GRAY

Your gut is wrong.

INT. DODGE CHARGER - NIGHT

Gray gets in.

His hands take out his cell phone.

He pulls up Tyler on his speed dial and calls him.

GRAY

If this goes to trial, you bring in
someone else.

TYLER (V.O.)

Deal.

Gray hangs up. He signs the form.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - DAY

CONVICTS as far as the eye can see.

PRISON GUARDS are all over.

Mark is in line, eyes looking everywhere.

A handmade prison knife is discreetly passed up the line.

Mark looks around.

His eyes spot the prison knife.

It's ten prisoners away from him.

Panic seizes a hold of him.

Mark spots Rick.

MARK

Hey, pig!

Rick turns to Mark, angrily.

Mark punches him in the face.

Several Prisoners laugh.

Rick shakes his head.

WHAM!

Mark gets cracked across the skull with a baton.

The Guards swarm Mark, beating the ever-loving shit out of
him.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray eats a salad.

KNOCK KNOCK!

Nick walks in, a large evidence box in his hands.

NICK

Aurora got a counsel notice.

GRAY

You could've called.

Nick places the box on Gray's desk.

NICK

My wife wants to retire out here
and I figured two birds, one stone.

They shake hands.

GRAY

It's good to see you, Nick.

NICK

So what inspired you to get back
into this dirty world?

GRAY

I'm just consulting on this.

NICK

Have you seen that he's raising
funds for the psycho?

GRAY

It's well within his rights to
raise money for a defense.

NICK

He called my office a Gestapo that
wants to put an innocent man behind
bars to cover up their sloppy
casework.

Gray laughs.

Nick isn't amused.

GRAY

Tyler is an... acquired taste.

NICK

He said I have a blood-lust for the death penalty, too, and that I get an erection whenever I convict an innocent man of a heinous crime.

GRAY

A very acquired taste.

NICK

Fifteen to life and an Alford Plea.

GRAY

Did you become Santa Claus and I was not told? The Nick Stone I worked for would fight a dozen men to the death to avoid an Alford Plea for the K-town Slasher.

(imitating Nick's voice)

If a man is willing to do the time, he should say exactly what and why he's doing it.

NICK

I hate the way you do my voice.

GRAY

You want this to go away.

NICK

Let's avoid a circus.

GRAY

You mean a trial.

Nick taps the box.

NICK

This is our whole case. It's not pretty, either.

GRAY

I'll discuss it with the client once we've done our due diligence.

NICK

The Reaper sends her regards.

GRAY

I'll see her in court.

Nick leaves.

Gray opens up the evidence box.

INT. SOLITARY HOLDING UNIT - DAY

The door opens up.

Mark is tossed in.

His face is freshly bandaged up.

Mark looks up and sees Rick.

MARK

I'm sorry.

RICK

You better have a good reason.

MARK

I saw something.

RICK

Give me a name and this gets easy.

Mark looks away.

Rick slams the door shut.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray, Tyler and KENT ANNAI (40s, Samoan) go through the evidence box.

Kent is well over six feet tall and very large.

GRAY

Tyler, what was the name of the guy Mark said we should find?

TYLER

Jerry Castle, I think. I wrote it down but--

KENT

Are you sure it's Jerry Castle? In a case like this, details matter.

Tyler takes his notepad out.

He goes through it.

TYLER

Jericho Hardcastle, I think.

Gray's ears perk up.

TYLER (CONT'D)

(to Kent)

Have you done this before?

GRAY

Kent and I worked together at the district attorney's office. We nailed Patrick Driscoll.

KENT

I hate to be that guy but--

GRAY

(to Tyler)

He's part of my ten.

Tyler grumbles.

GRAY (CONT'D)

Grumble all you want but if there's a case to be made, he's going to be the guy that helps make it.

KENT

I'm going to need a list of his e-mail passwords and accounts.

Tyler goes through his notes.

TYLER

I didn't get those.

GRAY

He said something about a third-party app on a phone, too. Call the detective on the case and either get it or get it cloned.

TYLER

It's probably wiped by now.

GRAY

Do it anyway, just to be sure.

KENT

I still have some friends down that way. I'll see what I can do.

TYLER

What if we find out he did it?

KENT

Then I'll make sure he gets the chair, personally.

Tyler gulps.

GRAY

Nick dropped this off today. He never handles this sort of stuff.

(beat)

It's fifteen with an Alford Plea.

TYLER

I can sell that.

GRAY

He fights tooth and nail for every deal... and then he gifts this.

KENT

There's something we don't have that he does.

GRAY

And that's reasonable doubt.

TYLER

You two can go through this and--

GRAY

I need you and Kent to go through the box and see what you can find.

TYLER

Mark and I have a connection.

GRAY

I want to see if our stories match.

TYLER

You talked to him once--

GRAY

And I want to talk to him again, see if anything changes.

TYLER

Why would it change?

GRAY

How many murder cases have you been on either side of?

TYLER

This is my first, OK?

Kent shakes his head.

TYLER (CONT'D)

My lane is usually the drunk tank
and I tend to stay in it.

GRAY

We got Patrick Driscoll because his
story kept changing. If his story
changes to me, then it'll change
when he's on the stand.

TYLER

So you're going to penalize him for
misremembering things?

KENT

Or he's lying to us, which means
he's either hiding something or he
is guilty as fuck.

GRAY

And both of those things mean
something in a capital case.

Tyler nods.

Gray leaves.

KENT

I need a whiteboard and some dry-
erase markers.

INT. PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Gray and Mark sit around the table.

Gray has a notepad in front of him.

GRAY

They made you an offer. Fifteen to
life and all you have to do is say
"I'm Guilty" when the judge asks.

MARK

But I didn't do it!

GRAY

The good news is that assaulting a
guard is a fairly minor offense. I
spoke to the warden. He says you
need to give up whoever threatened
you or protective custody is not
going to happen.

MARK

I can't but--

GRAY

We can worry about that later. I want to start at the top.

MARK

I already told Tyler everything. Do you two not talk or what?

GRAY

I want to make sure he didn't miss anything about your case.

Mark takes a deep breath.

Gray takes notes.

MARK

I was looking for some quick cash and saw this ad on Craigslist.

GRAY

Did you ever talk to this guy in person? Face-to-face or even over something like Zoom.

MARK

He insisted I use an app called Satellite, which wipes everything after an hour. It was all texting.

GRAY

Tyler said he thought you told him his name was Jericho Hardcastle.

MARK

He said it was Jericho Hardcastle but I couldn't find anything about him on the web.

Gray pauses.

GRAY

Repeat that name.

MARK

Jericho Hardcastle.

GRAY

Are you sure?

Mark nods.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Gray walks in.

A whiteboard is in one corner.

Photos of beautiful women stabbed to death on a timeline are arranged on the top.

Mark's life for the last year is underneath.

Several points between them have red x's marked.

Kent stares at it.

KENT

Your friend doesn't have the
stomach for what's in there.

Gray closes the door.

GRAY

Not too many people do.
(looks at the whiteboard)
Break that down for me.

Kent points to the first photo.

KENT

Taylor Spenser. Twenty-five. Came
here from Ohio to act. She matched
with the defendant on a dating app
where he used a pseudonym. Instead
of trying to make a love
connection, he made a deadly one.

GRAY

Just the facts, Kent.

KENT

They put the wrath of God into
Tinder because they gave it all up.

GRAY

How bad is it?

KENT

Do you remember our group texts
from way back when?

GRAY

None of those were good.

KENT

I'd rather have those out there on the front page of the L.A Times then read some of these.

Gray curses under the breath.

He motions for Kent to continue.

KENT (CONT'D)

There's a pattern. They match, he love bombs her, they set up for a date, and then murder.

(beat)

She's going to point out he has social media posts indicating he was within a twenty-minute walk from each crime scene, as well. Detective Chan will testify he was at multiple crime scenes, too. It is impossibly consistent and they have statements from someone worth a damn putting him there. Each one gives him just enough time to pull off every single murder.

GRAY

And they'll put on someone from the FBI Behavioral unit, too, who will explain that serial killers do this to admire their work.

KENT

They don't have a murder weapon but they have everything but.

GRAY

At this point, it feels like it'll show up during the trial with his goddamn prints on it.

KENT

Everything on this board says he's the K-Town Slasher, Gray, and that is my professional opinion.

Gray takes a deep breath.

GRAY

What about the kid's story? If we don't have anything the judge might stop me from presenting it.

Kent takes a deep breath

KENT

LAPD said his phone was wiped by remote while he was in custody.

GRAY

Do they know who did it?

KENT

It was reset to the factory, so any data was completely nuked.

Gray sits down behind his desk.

Gray sits down at his desk.

He takes an expensive bottle of Scotch and two glasses out.

GRAY

What do you know about an app called Satellite?

KENT

The cartels use it to communicate.

Gray pours two glasses mostly full.

KENT (CONT'D)

End-to-end encryption that the NSA can't hack their way into. If you are doing something illegal, odds are it starts on Satellite.

GRAY

The client says it wipes everything within an hour.

KENT

Kind of convenient to use an app like that in a case like this.

Kent grabs a glass.

Both men take a drink.

KENT (CONT'D)

There's a couple of holes in this I want to try to open up but it's a little late for that.

Gray nods.

Kent leaves.

Gray takes his phone out and calls Drexel.

DREXEL (V.O.)
Hey Gray, what's up?

GRAY
Do you remember Jericho's Landing?

DREXEL (V.O.)
I remember the lawsuit.

GRAY
That was Hancock Films, right?

DREXEL (V.O.)
If you'd have told me back then
that I'd work with Victor after
that, right?

GRAY
Right.
(beat)
Take it easy.

Gray hangs up.

He opens a file drawer.

His hands quickly pull out a file marked "Patrick Driscoll."

Gray takes his laptop out and pulls up a streaming service.

His fingers pull up a documentary named "Framed."

Gray takes out a notepad and pen.

He writes "Discrepancies" on the top of it.

His hands open the file folder.

Gray's finger presses play.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

Packed with REPORTERS and OBSERVERS.

Tyler and Gray sit at the defense desk.

Aurora and her ASSISTANT are at the prosecution's desk.

She turns to Gray.

AURORA
The offer expires ten seconds after
they ask him to plead.

Gray nods.

Mark is escorted to the defense desk by SECURITY.

Gray motions for Mark to sit down.

TYLER

We need to talk.

Mark sits down.

Note: Next conversation is hushed.

MARK

I'm not going to survive in there.

TYLER

One thing at a time.

GRAY

The offer stands.

MARK

I don't want any deal.

GRAY

Fifteen years and you don't even have to say you did it.

MARK

I didn't do it!

GRAY

They can ask for the death penalty at any point.

MARK

I won't stand up in court and say I did it. I am innocent and I thought you believed me.

TYLER

The state has a good case.

Gray glares at Tyler.

Tyler shrugs.

GRAY

Technically you're not saying you did anything. You're just pleading guilty to the crime, nothing else.

MARK

That's the same as saying I did it.

GRAY

You could get out in fifteen years.

MARK

Do you think they'll let a
confessed serial killer out?

TYLER

It's technically not confessing.

Aurora motions Gray over.

He stands up and walks over to her.

AURORA

(hushed)

Nick said I can go to ten to life.

GRAY

(hushed)

He's not taking a deal.

AURORA

(hushed)

Once the judge asks--

GRAY

(hushed)

I'll run it by him.

Gray walks back to Tyler and Mark.

The COURT CLERK walks in.

COURT CLERK

ALL RISE!

Everyone stands up.

The JUDGE walks in and sits down.

COURT CLERK (CONT'D)

Court is now in session. The People
versus Mark Morris on six counts of
murder in the first degree.

AURORA

Aurora Slade for the people.

TYLER

Tyler Minshaw and Grayson Collins
for the defense, your honor.

JUDGE

How does the defendant plead?

Gray turns to Mark.

GRAY

(hushed)
They'll go to ten years.

MARK

(hushed)
Not taking it.

Gray turns to Aurora.

He mouths the word "No."

Aurora turns to the judge.

GRAY

(hushed, to Mark)
Tell the judge how you plead.

Mark looks around the courtroom.

His eyes land on the press.

Cameras snap pictures of him.

He takes a deep breath.

MARK

Not guilty, your honor.

The courtroom explodes.

The Judge hammers the gavel.

INT. DIVE BAR - DAY (LATER)

Gray and Tyler sit at the bar.

Mostly empty glasses of cheap Scotch are in front of them.

GRAY

Jericho Hardcastle.

TYLER

Is that the name of a drink or--

GRAY

It was the name of a character for a film that Drexel Stern was involved in. Mark says the guy called himself that.

TYLER

And?

GRAY

You'll want to talk to Victor Hancock, who was producing it. He found the script and the writer. It's an actual lead to an alternate theory in the crime.

TYLER

We're a team!

GRAY

And what did I say about a trial?

TYLER

I can't do this without you!

GRAY

I can recommend a half dozen guys with deep litigation experience.

TYLER

This isn't a civil case.

GRAY

Maybe you can get them to give you a deal for the exposure.

TYLER

Do you think I didn't try?

GRAY

A high profile trial might change someone's mind.

NICK (O.S.)

You don't want a trial, Gray.

Nick sits down next to them.

He looks over at Tyler.

TYLER

We haven't been formally introduced, Mister Stone.

NICK
(to Gray)
If he utters another word to me--

GRAY
(puts his hand on Tyler's
shoulder)
If you wouldn't mind.

Tyler walks out.

Nick watches as he leaves.

NICK
The nerve.

GRAY
He means well.
(takes a drink)
Did you have someone follow me?

NICK
I took you here after we convicted
Patrick Driscoll, remember?

Gray smiles.

GRAY
And I quit, right here.

NICK
And I'll take you here when I talk
a jury into putting the needle into
Mark Morris's arm, too.

Gray's smile disappears.

GRAY
Aurora hasn't said a word.

NICK
Normally I leave it up to them, as
a discretionary decision.

GRAY
The kid swears he's innocent.

NICK
Prisons are full of innocent men.

Gray takes a long drink.

GRAY
So the offer is what?

NICK
Life without the chance of parole.

GRAY
Aurora said ten.

NICK
Offers expire, remember?

GRAY
I'm just here for the pre-trial
stuff. Ty will be handling all of
the rest from now on. I'll write
out a motion for you tomorrow.

NICK
I was looking forward to you and
the Reaper in there.

GRAY
Give him twenty, for me.

NICK
There aren't any more offers coming
from this office.

GRAY
So it's the needle or else?

NICK
With a full allocution.

GRAY
This is going to be a circus.

NICK
And I've got my ringmaster ready.

Nick nods, leaves.

INT. GRAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gray walks in.

Iris is seated at the dining room table.

A pair of thick, perfectly cooked Rib eye steaks and several
side dishes are on it.

An expensive bottle of wine and two mostly full glasses are
in the middle of the food.

GRAY
I forgot how awful traffic is.

IRIS
How's Ty doing?

GRAY
He's not my biggest fan right now.

Gray spots the food.

IRIS
Thank you.

GRAY
What's this for?

IRIS
In celebration of your temporary
venture into criminal defense.

He sits down.

GRAY
I'm OK with that.

They eat.

INT. GRAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gray and Iris are in bed, sleeping.

The house phone in the living room rings.

Both wake up.

GRAY
I got this.

Gray gets out of bed and walks into the living room.

INT. GRAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The clock reads 1 am.

Gray walks in and up to the phone.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
You have a call from a California
state prisoner. Do you accept?

GRAY
Sure.

MARK (V.O.)
Gray?

GRAY
Speaking.

MARK (V.O.)
Ty isn't answering my calls.

Gray yawns.

GRAY
He and I talked before this and--

MARK (V.O.)
I'm sorry to call you this late but
I don't know what to do.

GRAY
Technically he's your lawyer, I was
just assisting on the case.

MARK (V.O.)
I need someone to talk to and you
said if I needed anything to call.

Gray looks around.

GRAY
I'm awake but a little drunk.

MARK (V.O.)
What'd you have?

Gray yawns.

GRAY
Are you a Scotch guy?

MARK (V.O.)
Not really.

GRAY
An old friend got me this amazing
bottle of Macallan 30.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The clock reads 3 am.

Iris walks in and looks around.

Gray has the phone pressed to his ear.

MARK (V.O.)

Thank you, Gray.

GRAY

I'm your lawyer, it's what I'm here for. Just go to sleep, if you can, and we'll talk about this later.

Gray hangs up.

He turns to see Iris glaring at him.

IRIS

It was supposed to be over.

GRAY

Ty's not doing his job.

IRIS

That's not your problem anymore.

Gray thinks for a long moment.

GRAY

He's going to lead this kid into the gas chamber without a fight.

IRIS

He's the K-Town Slasher.

GRAY

An old professor said something I can't stop thinking about.

(from memory)

Hell is an innocent man in the cell you put him in.

IRIS

You're not putting him there.

GRAY

If I let Ty do what he'd do in every other case, I'm just as guilty as he is.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

Offices for low-rent attorneys, porn studios, and other sleazy businesses are all over.

Mark's mother HELEN (50s) waits by a door marked "Tyler Minshaw, Attorney at law."

She's short with thick glasses.

Gray walks up to it and knocks on it.

HELEN
He's not answering.

Gray turns to her.

GRAY
What did he promise you?

HELEN
That he'd get my son out of jail.

Gray thinks for a moment.

GRAY
You're Mark's mother.

HELEN
I'm Helen.

GRAY
Gray Collins.

HELEN
Mark called last week and said you
are his attorney or one of them.

GRAY
Ty was the lead but--
(knocks on door)
--I was assisting.

The door opens a sliver.

Gray pushes it open a little bit more and looks inside.

GRAY (CONT'D)
Give me a moment.

He looks around.

INT. TYLER'S OFFICE - DAY

Small, claustrophobic.

Tyler lies on his desk, dead.

A pool of blood is underneath him.

Gray walks up to him.

GRAY

Hey buddy.

Nothing.

He spots the blood.

His eyes spot a dozen stab wounds in Tyler's body.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

An Ambulance is parked up front.

Gray and Helen exit.

HELEN

I don't know what to say.

GRAY

Mark called me last night because Tyler wasn't answering. I assumed it was him avoiding me but--

HELEN

Tyler never called me back after he cashed my check.

GRAY

How long are you in town for?

HELEN

Two days.

GRAY

Let me buy you a cup of coffee.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP TERRACE - DAY

Helen and Gray sit at a table.

Cups of coffee are in front of him.

HELEN

They talked about him on the news.

GRAY

I don't mean to insult you, Miss Morris, but Mark--

HELEN

He's a fucking idiot.

GRAY

I miss the Midwestern plainness of using the language.

HELEN

Where'd you grow up?

GRAY

Evanston, Illinois.

HELEN

At least Mark has someone who can be honest with him.

GRAY

I can't talk about specifics but--

HELEN

My son may be a lot of things, most notably an idiot, but he's not the kind of man who'd do this.

GRAY

We're looking at a trial date of next year, at the earliest.

HELEN

We don't have a lot of money but--

GRAY

No one does, not for this.

HELEN

How much will this cost me? I sent Tyler our life savings but I can take a second mortgage out, too.

GRAY

Please don't do that.

HELEN

You think he's guilty.

GRAY

I don't but it's a hard sell based
on what the city has on him.

Helen looks around and then deeply into Gray's eyes.

HELEN

My son isn't this man, you have to
believe me.

GRAY

I do.

HELEN

So what happens from here?

GRAY

Go visit him but just remember that
what you both say is going to be
monitored, too.

INT. SOLITARY HOLDING UNIT - DAY

Mark looks around.

Most of a prison tray dinner is in the corner.

The door opens, revealing Rick.

RICK

Your time in here is up, convict.

Mark moves away from the door.

MARK

Do I have to?

RICK

Most guys want out of here as soon
as they possibly can.

MARK

I'll punch you again if--

RICK

We tossed a couple of cells on H
block yesterday. I get it.

MARK

No, no you don't.

RICK
You don't think I haven't seen a
high-profile convict get shanked?

MARK
I'm a dead man walking.

RICK
Do you want some advice?

MARK
I'll take whatever you can give me.

RICK
If someone wants to get to you
here, they will.

MARK
I'll take my chances.

RICK
Suit yourself.

Rick closes the door.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Gray stares at his laptop.

A news website is up.

A large photo of him, Tyler, and Mark in court is front page
news with the headline "K-Town Slasher arraigned!"

KNOCK KNOCK!

Kent walks in.

KENT
Ty isn't calling me back.

GRAY
It's because he died last night.

KENT
I'm sorry for your loss.

GRAY
I'm staying on and I need you.

KENT
The kid refused three deals and he
has a weak case at best.

GRAY

I'm assuming Tyler's ex-wives will take everything he has left so I'll handle the money end.

Kent nods.

GRAY (CONT'D)

What cracks are there in the case against him?

KENT

Not many.

GRAY

Think of it how we used to.

KENT

I haven't dived into the financials of it yet. Might be something there we can use.

GRAY

Mark mentioned Jericho Hardcastle.

KENT

That's from the Driscoll case.

GRAY

It's from a script a client of mine was attached to years ago. Drexel Stern was attached.

KENT

It was name number nine.

Gray looks at him oddly.

KENT (CONT'D)

It was listed as Jerry Hardcastle on the banking form but the ID he used said Jericho.

GRAY

I'll track this one down myself.

KENT

I can do that.

GRAY

The money trail is our best shot at finding something that proves our story beyond conjecture.

KENT
You got it, boss.

Kent nods.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - NIGHT

A DEATH ROW PRISON GUARD stands at the door.

Rick escorts Mark to the shower.

Patrick exits, freshly showered.

The years haven't been kind to him.

The door slams behind him.

Rick grabs the handle and yanks on it.

It's locked.

PATRICK
They said it was for my safety.

Rick looks at the death row guard.

DEATH ROW GUARD
Smitty has the key.

RICK
You mind?

The Guard nods.

Rick walks away.

Patrick looks Mark over. He smiles.

PATRICK
Looks like you'll be in the cell
next to mine sooner than later.

MARK
I don't want any issues.

PATRICK
I'm a big fan of your work, K-town.

Mark shudders.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

The guards let me watch your arraignment on their phone the other day. It was a pleasant surprise to see the two people responsible for my incarceration fighting over you right now.

MARK

My lawyer said--

PATRICK

You got yourself a dandy of a defense attorney.

MARK

Excuse me?

PATRICK

Grayson Collins looked me right in the eyes and said he'd smile when they put the needle in me.

MARK

No, he didn't.

PATRICK

You should ask him. He smiled and said that the case was airtight, that no matter what I said I would get the needle unless I took his deal. Magically it went from around fifteen to life to twenty-five--

RICK (O.S.)

Enough, convict.

Rick walks over.

The Death Row Guard takes Patrick away.

PATRICK

Did he promise you fifteen if you only said you did it right then and there, Mister Morris?

Rick opens the shower door.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Say hi to the Reaper for me.

Patrick smiles and waves to him.

Rick points to the shower.

RICK
Now or never.

Mark walks into the shower.

INT. GRAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A pair of salads are on the table.

Iris stares at the TV.

A photo of Tyler is up.

"K-Town Slasher Attorney Found Dead" is on the Chyron.

Gray walks in.

He spots the salads and then the TV.

GRAY
I hate saying this but he finally
got his fifteen minutes of fame and
didn't get to use them all.

Iris turns the TV off.

IRIS
Do you know when the funeral is?

GRAY
No clue.

IRIS
Do I have to ask?

Beat.

GRAY
Mark's mother came into town.

IRIS
So?

GRAY
I can't walk away right now.

IRIS
A sane person would.

GRAY
This kid has nothing left.

IRIS

I understand but this was Ty's case, too.

GRAY

Ty would quit but that's not me.

INT. POLICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick and Aurora stare into an interrogation room through a one-way mirror.

Frank interrogates a SUSPECT (male, 20s)

AURORA

What do you think?

NICK

Forget about that for a moment.
Does Frank think he's good for it?

The Suspect quakes in fear.

Note: We can't hear the conversation in the interrogation room between Frank and the suspect.

AURORA

Frank wouldn't put him in the box if he didn't.

Nick watches for a moment.

He taps on the window.

Frank nods and exits.

FRANK

He'll confess to killing Tupac to get out of there right now.

NICK

Has he even mentioned an attorney?

FRANK

Not yet.

NICK

Has he invoked?

FRANK

Absolutely nothing.

NICK
Are you sure?

Frank thinks for a moment.

FRANK
He wanted me to call his agent.

NICK
That's a first.

FRANK
He probably thinks he can wave his
hands and make this all go away.

NICK
Is he famous?

FRANK
TMZ wasn't waiting when I took him
into custody.

Nick looks at the Suspect.

NICK
What do we have on him?

FRANK
It's mostly circumstantial.

Aurora looks around.

AURORA
Book him.

FRANK
(to Nick)
You wouldn't be here if--

NICK
Do what she said.

Frank nods and goes inside.

AURORA
Are you sure about this?

NICK
I trust his judgment.

AURORA
What about the Morris case?

Frank arrests the suspect.

NICK

Take a run at his roommate to make sure we didn't miss a connection between him and this clown.

Aurora nods.

INT. MOVIE STUDIO SET - DAY

Victor observes a production from afar.

GRAY (O.S.)

Jericho's Landing.

Victor turns to see Gray approaching him.

VICTOR

Fox wanted to give me ten million to make a fifty million dollar movie with your boy.

GRAY

They assumed Drexel would take scale for that, too.

VICTOR

He wasn't a star... yet.

They shake hands.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Missed this life, huh?

GRAY

Your secretary said you were here.

VICTOR

The child I hired got arrested last night so I had to find another one.

Gray observes the set.

His eyes land on a young DIRECTOR.

GRAY

They get younger every year.

VICTOR

He's the same age as my kid.

Gray observes the set for a long moment.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
How can I help you?

GRAY
Who was the writer on Jericho's
Landing? I want to chat with him.

VICTOR
You'll need to do a fucking séance
for that one, chief.

GRAY
Excuse me?

VICTOR
Two years after that whole debacle
I tried to set it up at Paramount.
The rights had expired and the
kid's agent wasn't calling me back.

GRAY
And it wasn't a reputational
reason, I gather.

VICTOR
The kid got stabbed to death.

GRAY
Are you sure?

VICTOR
I saw it in the Times.

Gray takes out his phone.

GRAY
What was his name again?

VICTOR
Millard Smith.

Gray searches for "Millard Smith" in an internet browser.

A dozen results come up.

The first one is his obituary.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Is Drexel interested in that again?

GRAY
Can't talk about it.

VICTOR
Does he need someone to--

GRAY
It was good seeing you, Victor.

Gray walks away.

EXT. HOT DOG STAND - DAY

A line is outside the door.

Gray looks around.

WILLIE (O.S.)
You're a scumbag.

Gray turns to see WILLIE (20s), a handsome actor.

GRAY
Pardon me.

WILLIE
You're representing the guy that
killed my girlfriend!

GRAY
Look, I think--

WILLIE
Mariska was perfect and he took her
from me!

GRAY
I don't think we should talk, sir.

Gray walks away.

Willie eyeballs him.

Gray takes his phone out.

He pulls up a web browser and types in "Mariska, K-town."

A news story with the crime scene photo of actress MARISKA
(20s) comes up.

She's tall with dark hair and piercing eyes.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - DAY

Gray walks in and looks around.

His eyes look at the crime scene photo and then the alley.
They match.

A mural of Mariska is in a corner.

A chalk outline of a woman's body is near it.

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY

Gray exits the alley and looks around.

His eyes spot a video camera pointed at it.

He walks towards it.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

The results of broken dreams and empty promises are all over the walls and in two large glass cases.

A PAWN SHOP OWNER (70s) is behind the counter, watching daytime TV.

Gray walks in and looks around.

PAWN SHOP OWNER
Can I help you?

GRAY
Do you own the cameras outside?

The Pawn Shop Owner turns to Gray.

PAWN SHOP OWNER
Who's asking?

Gray places his State Bar of California card on the counter.

GRAY
I need all of the footage you have
from October fifth.

The Pawn Shop Owner looks at it and shrugs.

PAWN SHOP OWNER
That isn't a badge.

GRAY
My client--

PAWN SHOP OWNER
Come back with some cops and a
warrant and maybe I'll give a shit.

GRAY
I really should. I bet there's a
lot of stolen goods--

PAWN SHOP OWNER
Hey!

GRAY
I'm not saying you're directly
involved but if there's stolen
property here, it should be
returned to its rightful owners.

The Pawn Shop Owner glares at him.

GRAY (CONT'D)
I mean you lose whatever you paid
for it but you want to do the right
thing and help people out, right?

The Pawn Shop Owner looks around.

PAWN SHOP OWNER
A girl died across the street on
October fifth.

GRAY
And you have a camera pointed right
at the alley.

PAWN SHOP OWNER
The police didn't give a shit about
it back then.

Gray smiles.

GRAY
Well, I do.

The Pawn Shop Owner grabs a tablet computer and pulls up a
security camera application.

He quickly pulls up the night of October 5th.

Gray looks at it.

The Pawn Shop Owner presses fast-forward and then stops.

Gray's eyes focus on the tablet.

He watches as Mariska walks into an alley.

A DARK FIGURE is behind her.

He's tall with broad shoulders.

Gray watches as the Dark Figure walks in the alley.

PAWN SHOP OWNER
And no one ever comes out, not
until the cops show up.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Gray exits.

His eyes look around.

There are no other cameras.

He walks into the alley.

EXT. OTHER LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY

Gray exits the other side of the alley.

He looks around.

His eyes spot the front entrance of a Sports Bar.

INT. SPORTS BAR - DAY

Large, very corporate, and mostly empty.

Gray walks in.

He spots a BARTENDER (20s) cleaning a glass.

Gray sits down at the bar.

BARTENDER
How can I help you?

Gray takes his phone out.

He pulls up a photo of Mark and shows it to him.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
He's famous.

GRAY
Even by this town's standards.

The Bartender thinks for a moment.

BARTENDER
Journalist?

GRAY
Lawyer.

Beat.

BARTENDER
I told the cop everything.

GRAY
You can tell me now or on the
stand, son.

The Bartender looks at the phone.

GRAY (CONT'D)
October fifth.

BARTENDER
He was here with a big fellow.

Gray looks around.

He spots an emergency exit in the rear.

GRAY
Is there any other way to get out
of here besides the obvious?

BARTENDER
Through the kitchen.

GRAY
Do any of your customers ever leave
that way?

BARTENDER
Not willingly.

Gray walks over to the emergency door.

He presses it open.

Nothing.

INT. MARK'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Evander looks around.

A cold sweat comes down his face.

GRAY (O.S.)

Did he ever leave for anything?

Evander looks at Gray glaring at him.

EVANDER

He took a half hour to take a shit.

GRAY

Hell of a shit.

EVANDER

Mark didn't believe me when I told him the wings were that hot.

GRAY

When he came back, was there anything different?

Evander shakes his head.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray pulls up a map of Los Angeles.

He types in "Shifty's Sports Bar."

The map shifts to it.

Kent walks in with a large box marked "Financials."

KENT

Have you spoken to the kid yet?

GRAY

He's still in the shoe so getting time requires patience.

KENT

It's probably the safest place for him at this point.

Gray points to the whiteboard.

Kent's eyes follow it.

GRAY

Shifty's.

KENT

Victim number four.

GRAY

The rear exit doesn't have an alarm on it. I spoke with the roommate. The only time he left his side was to use the bathroom. He was gone for about half an hour.

Kent walks to the whiteboard.

His eyes focus on a map.

They spot #4 written in red.

GRAY (CONT'D)

The quick path is through the alley, so that's maybe ten minutes to kill the girl and get back. But we have video of someone coming in the other way, so he had to have taken an alternate route.

KENT

He'd walk past about a dozen cameras to get there.

GRAY

How much video footage did you get from the DA?

KENT

None from there.

Kent places the box on Gray's desk.

GRAY

Does the name Millard Smith ring any bells for you?

KENT

I worked the case.

GRAY

You were at the D.A's office when it happened.

KENT

There was malfeasance and the rat squad wanted an independent voice in the room to look it over.

GRAY

What do you remember about it?

KENT

Some kid in the wrong place at the exact wrong time.

GRAY

So why'd the rat squad take over?

KENT

Someone wanted to place this on the ledger of a psycho to add some more black ink to the board. It almost torched the whole case.

GRAY

Did they ever arrest someone?

KENT

They didn't have anything on it, hence some plucky assistant district attorney trying to add it onto someone else's pile.

GRAY

Who was the primary?

KENT

Frank Chan.

Gray thinks for a moment.

KENT (CONT'D)

The same.

GRAY

Are you friendly with him?

KENT

The only thing I remember is that he likes the hot dog stand on Fifth and Main.

(beat)

Tread lightly.

GRAY

I need to talk to him anyway.

KENT

He's one of the good ones.

GRAY

Let me know if anything comes up.

EXT. HOT DOG STAND - DAY (LATER)

Frank eats a hot dog with ketchup on it.

GRAY (O.S.)

Does anyone in this city know what
to put on a hot dog?

Gray sits down across from him.

FRANK

Counselor.

GRAY

I'm glad we can save ourselves the
whole introduction bit.

FRANK

Your partner claims I framed your
client. I take that personally.

Gray curses under his breath.

GRAY

It's just pro wrestling with him.

FRANK

If you want to talk to me about the
Morris case, I'll see you in court.

GRAY

Mariska Tolliver.

FRANK

What about her?

GRAY

There's a pawn shop that has great
video of someone who decidedly is
not Mark Morris following her into
the alley.

FRANK

How can you tell?

GRAY

How tall is Mister Morris?

FRANK
Decidedly not.

GRAY
The person who followed her was
over six feet tall. Built like a
linebacker, too. He never walked
out that way, too.

FRANK
He said those cameras didn't work.

Gray takes out his phone.

He presses a button.

Video footage from the pawn shop comes up.

GRAY
He emailed it to me. I forwarded it
to your boss about an hour ago.

FRANK
What do you want?

GRAY
Millard Smith. You were primary on
that unsolved case.

FRANK
We had nothing and then some clown
decided "What's one more, right?"

GRAY
What happened after that?

FRANK
Six months after that shit show we
had zero leads and now it's beyond
cold. So, that was fun. Anything
else will have to be on the stand.

Frank leaves.

INT. MARK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Everything is cheap, falling apart and potentially found in
alleys before being placed in here.

Anime posters are tacked onto the wall.

Evander sits on a couch.

Aurora shows him a photo of Frank's Suspect.

AURORA
Have you ever met him?

EVANDER
Never seen him before today.

AURORA
Do you think Mark would know him?

EVANDER
Mark has three friends and I'm one of them. The other two are from his high school chess team.

AURORA
What about college?

EVANDER
He's been my roommate since we were eighteen. I know everyone he does and that guy isn't someone I can guarantee that he'd know.

Aurora hands him a piece of paper.

Evander's eyes look at it.

The paper is titled "Immunity Agreement."

EVANDER (CONT'D)
This feels a bit... much.

AURORA
You're a writer, correct?

Evander nods.

AURORA (CONT'D)
Consider this an indication of whom I care about and who I don't.

EVANDER
That makes me feel a certain way.

AURORA
I don't care if you downloaded a copy of Final Draft that you two shared. Or that you didn't pay a parking ticket.

(MORE)

AURORA (CONT'D)

Your friend is a serial killer and this is a get out of jail for any of the penny ante bullshit you're worried you might say on the stand.

EVANDER

I won't say I think he did it.

AURORA

I'm not asking you to lie. Far from it. I just want the truth and I do not want you to hide a single fact because you're scared it's a crime.

Evander looks at the agreement.

EVANDER

It was just a phase.

AURORA

Did you read his script?

EVANDER

I gave him notes.

AURORA

They will be read in court.

EVANDER

It was fiction, nothing more.

AURORA

You know I have to ask.

Evander takes a deep breath.

EVANDER

It was a bit fucked up but it's a horror movie script, it should be a little fucked up.

AURORA

Detective Chan said he spotted him at several crime scenes before the one where he was arrested.

EVANDER

He had an anime phase and went to a convention dressed as Naruto, too.

AURORA

Do you think he'd have gone too far with this?

Evander thinks for a moment.

EVANDER

I don't know. Wait, no.

AURORA

You hesitated for a reason.

EVANDER

There was something he wrote in an early draft of the script.

(thinks)

How well do you think you know someone?

AURORA

Where was it from?

EVANDER

It was a character-building moment, nothing more. Don't use it against him, please.

AURORA

You're a friend for a very long time and yet you have doubts.

EVANDER

I just keep thinking did he finally cross the line or is this just the worst possible misunderstanding?

AURORA

And that's all I'm asking you to talk about.

EVANDER

He's a good guy and--

AURORA

As you said... how well do you think you know someone?

Evander looks at the form for a long time.

He signs it.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Nick is behind his desk, a newspaper in his hands.

"K-Town Slasher Trial scheduled" is the front page headline.

Aurora walks in.

Nick looks up.

He places the newspaper down and takes out a bottle of obscenely expensive Scotch.

Nick places two glasses down and fills them.

Aurora grabs one and takes a long drink.

NICK

Tell me you've got this.

They clink glasses and take a drink.

AURORA

When you have the law on your side,
you argue the law. When you don't,
you just pound the table and this
is just lots of table pounding.

NICK

Get this kid to plead it out.

Nick takes a drink.

AURORA

Easier said than done.

INT. CITY RECORDS OFFICE - DAY

Filing cabinets as far as the eye can see.

Kent's eyes are focused on an old file.

He takes a photo.

His phone rings with a call from Gray.

Kent answers it.

KENT

You have a shot at this.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray takes a deep breath.

GRAY

Tell me you have a name.

INTERCUT BETWEEN GRAY AND KENT

KENT

Five companies going back to around the seventies or so. Everything and everyone about them is hidden or very obscured.

GRAY

We can always try to pierce that corporate veil.

KENT

The first three trustees I found are people who don't exist. They've got the pedigree info but they do have different addresses.

GRAY

I saw that in The Shawshank Redemption when I was a kid.

KENT

Someone's been doing it for long enough that some of those records might not exist anymore.

Gray curses under his breath.

KENT (CONT'D)

I'll see if the addresses listed are anything substantial.

GRAY

And what, we'll have a name?

KENT

All it takes is for someone to make one mistake and we've got grounds for at least a hung jury.

GRAY

What if this is a wild goose chase?

KENT

Someone did real work to obscure a PayPal account.

GRAY

And real work is reasonable doubt.

KENT

I've got some driving to do.

GRAY
I'll cover your gas, too.

KENT
You don't have to.

GRAY
I drug you into this.

KENT
It's fun, like the old days.

GRAY
Be careful.

Both men hang up.

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

HOMICIDE DETECTIVES are all over.

A large whiteboard mounted onto the wall lists every homicide for the last 12 months.

A column for Frank is mostly red.

Frank writes Karen Ransom in black.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)
Good to see some black in there.

Frank turns to his CAPTAIN behind him.

FRANK
I should be happy, right?

CAPTAIN
If he said he did it, he did it.

FRANK
Part of me--

CAPTAIN
I can make that red if you want.

FRANK
My review is next week.

CAPTAIN
Then take the win.

The Captain walks away.

Frank looks at the whiteboard for a long moment.
He walks over to his desk.
Frank focuses on his laptop.
He pulls up a database and searches for Grayson Collins.

INT. SUV - DAY

Kent watches a small bungalow intensely.
The same envelope from the first scene is on top of a dozen other similar envelopes.
"Tyson Mallory" stands out.

INT. GRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gray stares at the whiteboard.
Gray's office phone rings.
Gray's eyes turn to it.
The number is blocked.
He answers it.

GRAY
Gray Collins.

FRANK (V.O.)
I've got something on the Morris case that's worth your while. If you are interested, I'll be having a drink at McCool's.

Frank hangs up.
Gray sprints outside.

INT. SOLITARY HOLDING UNIT - DAY

A plastic dinner tray with a stomach-retching meal is in a corner, untouched.
Mark stares at it.
KNOCK KNOCK!

The eyehole opens, revealing Rick.

RICK

You got a visitor, convict.

MARK

I hate to be that guy but you keep calling me a convict. I'm not a convict, I'm just charged with a crime I didn't commit.

RICK

Everyone says that, convict.

The door opens.

Mark exits.

INT. PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Aurora is at one end of the table.

A large bag of fast food is in front of her.

Two ice-cold drinks are next to it.

Mark walks in and sits down.

His eyes focus on the bag.

AURORA

Evander said you were a fan of the number two with a--

MARK

Large spicy onion ring.

She pushes the bag towards him.

AURORA

Consider this a peace offering.

Mark looks at it for a moment.

MARK

Gray--

AURORA

Doesn't know I'm here.

MARK

This is wrong and maybe illegal.

AURORA

I'm just talking. All I'm asking you to do is listen and have a good meal. I'm pretty sure you haven't had one in a while.

He sniffs.

It's impossibly appealing.

MARK

This has to be a trick.

AURORA

Do you think that I'm that clever?

Mark tears the bag open and devours the food.

She pushes a drink towards him.

He takes a long sip.

It's the best drink he's ever had.

MARK

This is amazing.

AURORA

See?

He stops, looks around.

MARK

So how does this work?

AURORA

Enjoy the meal and listen to what I have to say. Afterwards, it can remain between us or you can discuss it with Gray.

Mark nods, resumes eating.

AURORA (CONT'D)

Tomorrow morning I'm going to file a motion that we're seeking the death penalty in your case.

He pauses.

AURORA (CONT'D)

And if this goes to trial, I'm not going to settle for anything less.

Mark looks around.

A cold sweat comes down his face.

AURORA (CONT'D)

The moment that trial starts is the moment all offers are off the table. Right now, if you asked, we will go with life in prison and I will make sure you wind up in Pelican Bay.

MARK

I've never been there.

AURORA

It's a Super Max, so you'll be in a cell for twenty-three hours a day with one hour by yourself to get some fresh air.

Mark gulps.

AURORA (CONT'D)

Gray and I go back a long way. Ask him about what they nicknamed me. Then ask him what he thinks your chances are at trial.

MARK

It has to be fifty-fifty, right?
(beat)
Right?

She stands up.

AURORA

Enjoy your meal. On Death Row, you will have it one more time.

Aurora leaves.

Mark turns back to the food.

INT. DIVE BAR - DAY

Frank is at the bar.

A glass of cheap whiskey is in front of him.

The bottle is next to it.

A manila file folder marked "Police evidence" is next to it.

Gray walks in and spots him.

He sits down next to Frank.

His eyes spot the bottle.

Gray looks around.

No one is around but them.

FRANK

I was never here.

Gray reaches behind the counter and grabs a glass.

He pours himself a drink.

Frank finishes his.

Gray pours a drink for himself and then Frank.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Say it.

GRAY

This is off the record and if anyone asks, you asked for legal counsel so you're covered by all sorts of privilege.

FRANK

Thank you.

Frank takes a drink.

Gray spots the folder.

GRAY

If that's something Aurora didn't turn over--

FRANK

Karen Ransom, a young actress.

GRAY

Throw a stone and you'll hit a dozen of them in this town.

FRANK

A very dead actress.

Gray thinks for a moment.

GRAY

Mark wasn't charged with this one.

FRANK

I think you should read the file.

GRAY

I don't have the time.

Frank pushes the folder over to Gray.

FRANK

Right now a young Tarantino clone is in a jail cell, hoping this is just a case of a bad day that a lawyer can undo because he said something he shouldn't have.

Gray looks at the folder.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Look at the date.

Frank slams his drink and leaves.

Gray watches him exit.

He takes his wallet out and places some cash on the counter.

Gray opens the folder up.

Crime scene photos from the second murder are paper-clipped to one side.

Police crime scene reports are inside.

Gray goes through them.

Millard Smith's crime photos come up.

His eyes look at the stab wounds.

He goes back and looks at Karen Ransom's.

His hands push the photos close to each other.

They look identical.

Gray looks at the dates.

He takes his phone and pulls up an internet browser.

Gray searches for "Mark Morris, murder."

News stories come up about the first murder.

His eyes look at the date.

GRAY

Holy shit.

His phone buzzes with a call from Mark.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

You have a call from a California state prisoner. Do you accept?

GRAY

Yes.

(beat)

I've got good news for you, kid.

MARK (V.O.)

Can we talk... in person?

GRAY

I'll be there in an hour, tops.

MARK (V.O.)

Thanks.

Gray closes the folder and leaves.

INT. SUV - DAY

Kent goes through some junk mail.

A box of it is on his passenger seat.

His eyes spot something.

He takes his phone out and calls Gray.

Straight to voicemail.

INT. PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (LATER)

Gray walks in, Frank's folder in his hand.

Mark sits at the table, his foot tapping impatiently.

Gray spots it.

GRAY

We've got something that--

MARK
What's her nickname?

GRAY
Who her?

MARK
The Prosecutor.

Gray takes a deep breath.

GRAY
When we worked together a young
assistant called her the Grim
Reaper and it stuck.

MARK
Why?

GRAY
Focus on--

MARK
(screaming)
Why?

Gray looks around.

GRAY
She never lost a death penalty
case. Ever. If she was assigned to
it, someone was going to Death Row.

Mark closes his eyes.

GRAY (CONT'D)
It was gallows humor, that's all.

MARK
I want a deal.

Gray places the folder on the table.

GRAY
We've got something.

MARK
Is it a get-out-of-jail card?

Gray's phone buzzes with a text from Kent.

He ignores it.

GRAY
It's reasonable doubt.

MARK
Is it?

Gray opens the folder.

Mark looks at it.

GRAY
Same knife wounds, same everything.

MARK
So why haven't I been charged with
the murder of--
(looks at file tab)
--Karen Ransom.

GRAY
Because she was murdered after you
were arrested. There was no chance
you could've done it.

MARK
Holy shit.

GRAY
We still have to get it admitted
into evidence but--

MARK
She stopped by with food.

GRAY
Nothing you said can be used
against you because I wasn't there.

MARK
She said they were going to pursue
the death penalty.

Silence.

GRAY
She's just trying to scare you.

MARK
Well, it's working.

GRAY
If I can get this admitted into
evidence, everything changes.

MARK

What happens if they say no?

GRAY

You said you didn't want a deal.

MARK

So you're going to go one on one with the goddamn Grim Reaper?

GRAY

If that's what you want, we can talk about a trial.

Silence.

MARK

I can't afford that.

GRAY

Don't worry about the money.

MARK

She said I can go to Pelican Bay and be safe from the people here.

GRAY

That's up to the state Department of Corrections, not the D.A.

MARK

So where would I wind up?

GRAY

You plead guilty to murder and they aren't going to ship you to Club Fed. It'll be more like federal pound me in the ass prison.

MARK

But I'll be safe.

GRAY

We can win this case.

MARK

How long will that take?

GRAY

The trial is six months away and then it'll be a bit before we have a verdict. That's a lot of time.

MARK

If I'm going to be locked in a box
for the rest of my life, I'd rather
get it started now.

GRAY

You can't think of it like that.

MARK

Where's Tyler?

GRAY

He passed.

MARK

How come you didn't call me?

GRAY

I've been trying but getting in to
see you here is difficult.

MARK

You won't have to do it again.

GRAY

Mark, you have a genuine case here.

MARK

(yelling)
Guard!

The door opens.

A Prison Guard walks in.

Mark walks out.

Gray looks at his phone.

He spots the text from Kent: "Found something. McCool's."

EXT. DIVE BAR - DAY

LAPD and FIRST RESPONDERS are all over.

Gray walks up.

His eyes look inside.

Kent's body is on the counter.

A bullet wound is in his head.

He sprints up to the yellow police tape.

A PATROLMAN stops him.

GRAY
That's my friend!

PATROLMAN
Sir, this is a crime scene.

Gray takes his bar card out of his wallet and shows it to him.

The Patrolman shakes his head.

Gray spots Kent's car in the distance.

A DETECTIVE opens the trunk.

Gray sprints to it.

EXT. DIVE BAR PARKING LOT - DAY

The Detective looks inside the box of mail.

GRAY (O.S.)
Put that down, now!

The Detective turns to him.

Gray takes his bar card out and shows it to him.

DETECTIVE
Just because you're a lawyer--

GRAY
He works for me.

DETECTIVE
It's evidence.

GRAY
It's all covered by privilege and you know this, detective.

They look at each other.

DETECTIVE
What do you want me to do?

GRAY

Give me ten seconds to look and confirm, please.

DETECTIVE

I think I should call someone at the D.A's office first.

GRAY

Call Aurora Slade and tell her it's about the K-Town Slasher.

The Detective puts the box down.

He looks in both directions.

Gray looks inside the box.

His eyes spot a piece of junk mail.

GRAY (CONT'D)

Jericho Hardcastle.
(to detective)
This is for our case.

The Detective grabs the box.

DETECTIVE

And you can pick it up when we release it.

GRAY

I'll have your badge for this.

The Detective shrugs.

Gray takes his phone out and takes pictures of the inside.

The Detective walks away.

Gray looks at the photos.

GRAY (CONT'D)

Woodstock Tyson.
(beat)
Raylan Fitzsimmons, Junior.
(beat)
Bailey Wells.
(beat)
Jericho Hardcastle

Gray sprints to his car.

INT. DODGE CHARGER - DAY (DRIVING)

Gray turns the key.

The engine roars to life.

Gray's foot presses down on the gas.

INT. AURORA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A clone of Nick's office with a smaller mini-bar.

Aurora types on a laptop.

Gray walks in, phone in hand.

The photos of the mailbox are up.

She looks up.

AURORA

I'm working on Mark's plea deal.

Gray looks at the photos.

AURORA (CONT'D)

I'll email it to you tonight.

Gray places the phone on Aurora's desk.

She spots the photos.

GRAY

We need to talk about Tyson
Mallory.

Aurora motions to the mini-bar.

Gray walks over and looks over the bottles.

She discreetly takes out a pistol from her desk

Gray grabs a bottle of impossibly expensive Scotch and two glasses. He pours two glasses.

AURORA

Nick gave me that bottle.

GRAY

He's got good taste.

AURORA

So what does Tyson Mallory have to do with the K-Town Slasher?

They clink glasses and take a drink.

Gray motions to the phone.

GRAY

There were nine names Patrick Driscoll used for his graft.

Aurora takes a drink.

GRAY (CONT'D)

That was an eyes-only file for me, you, and Kent. We never entered that name into evidence, either. Even Nick didn't know about it. Just the three of us.

Aurora finishes her drink.

AURORA

What do you want me to say?

GRAY

I just want to know how you sleep at night, knowing an innocent man is going to plead guilty to murders that you committed.

Aurora takes the pistol out and points it at Gray.

AURORA

You're supposed to use alleged if there isn't an actual conviction.

GRAY

It's good to hear the truth.

AURORA

And?

GRAY

I was expecting more than that.

AURORA

As soon as you said Tyson Mallory you knew what was coming.

GRAY

You could've tried to play it off, too, like you didn't know.

AURORA
Why do you think I picked the name?

GRAY
Kent caught it.

AURORA
His death is on you.

GRAY
At least give me the courtesy of a confession. I'd appreciate that.

AURORA
I was hoping you'd tell me to give it up because the police will be here any second.

Gray takes a drink.

GRAY
I'm not that clever.

AURORA
I killed every woman Mark Morris is going to say he killed, just like the other five guys who took the fall for things I did. The best part is that they all said they did it, so who'd look in my direction?

GRAY
And the money?

She groans.

NICK
You convict enough money launderers and you learn how they do it. I wound up buying the old files of a scumbag I convicted, to make anyone who looked into it think this has been happening for a century, not a decade or so.

Gray takes a drink.

His eyes measure the distance between him and Aurora.

AURORA
Is there anything else you want me to say before it gets erased?

GRAY

At least try to make a deal for my silence.

AURORA

There's nothing I can give you that you'd want.

GRAY

How about why you did it? That's the only thing I couldn't square up with this.

AURORA

The more I convicted the worst of the worst, the more I envied them. They did these things with impunity and so I got curious. Curiosity is a hell of a thing, old friend.

GRAY

You could've just written a book about it, you know.

Gray grips the glass tightly.

His body tenses up.

His breathing slows down.

Gray's eyes focus on Nick's face.

AURORA

You never asked what I'll do with your body.

GRAY

Everyone will hear the gunshot.

AURORA

All I need is to put a knife in your hand and say you threatened to kill me if I didn't drop the charges against Mark Morris.

GRAY

A good cop will see it coming.

AURORA

And that cop will be far away from this case because they'll take my word over a pair of dead men.

GRAY

Tyler didn't deserve it.

AURORA

That Saul Goodman wannabe had it coming and we both know it.

Aurora's finger moves to the trigger.

Gray throws the glass at her face.

WHAM!

Aurora's gun goes flying.

Gray lunges for it.

Aurora spots it and jumps after it.

The two get to the gun at the same time.

They struggle for it.

BANG!

Aurora slumps over, dead.

EXT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

First Responders take Nick's body out on a stretcher.

Gray watches from a distance.

NICK (O.S.)

Now this is a genuine cluster fuck.

Gray turns to see Nick approach him.

NICK (CONT'D)

Are you OK?

GRAY

I just want to call my wife.

Beat.

NICK

I heard she confessed.

GRAY

Aurora claimed she set up six people.

NICK

Every case he ever touched is going to come back into play.

GRAY

Speaking of.

NICK

Once we dump the laptop, if we find something you'll be notified.

GRAY

I've still got friends at the Times. An innocent man with a case in limbo because of--

NICK

He'll be on my list of things to do after I get ready to brief the Mayor about this shit show.

GRAY

Every day he's in there adds to the lawsuit he might file.

NICK

He'll be first, I swear.

GRAY

Good luck with the mayor.

Gray walks away.

EXT. PRISON - DAY (THREE WEEKS LATER)

Gray stands outside, tapping his foot.

Mark emerges in the same clothes he was wearing the night of the arrest.

GRAY

You are a free man, Mark Morris. What are you going to do with the rest of your life?

MARK

I'm going home and getting a job.

GRAY

If you need anything in the future, let me know.

MARK

How much do I owe you for this?

GRAY

Nothing.

MARK

You saved my life. That's not free.

GRAY

Drexel Stern is going to call you.
I think you should listen to him.

They shake hands.

Gray walks inside.

INT. PRISON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Patrick Driscoll sits at the table.

Gray walks in and sits down across from him.

They glare at each other for a long moment.

PATRICK

You told me the next time I saw you
would be when they put a needle in
my arm, counselor.

Gray reaches into his briefcase and takes out his notepad.

He places it on the table.

Patrick's eyes look at it.

They focus on one word: "Discrepancies."

GRAY

Do you know what Hell is?

PATRICK

I think I'm living in it.

GRAY

Hell is knowing that maybe, just
maybe, someone you convicted is
innocent.

Patrick smiles.

FADE OUT.