

The Standard of Truth

by

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1.

THE STANDARD OF TRUTH  
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EXT. AERIAL SHOT OF MANHATTAN - NIGHT TIME

Gradually focused on one office building and then on the window of a particular office. It is the only office lit up.

INT. OFFICE OF ADAM GOODMAN - AROUND 9.30PM

POV of MAN lying on his back watching a hand holding a blunt block like object hovering above. Object is out of focus. POV is shaking from side to side.

MAN

(whimpering and  
speaking through a  
gag)

No...no...no...please don't...Please..

The block is brought down on the man's face. A horrible CRUNCH is heard.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE - AROUND 1AM

ALICE HEILSHORN and JEREMY COKE, two junior associates in the firm of Goodman and Makin, are crunching numbers at their computer screens and picking over leftover Chinese takeout.

ALICE

You sure the IRR is right?

JEREMY

I think so. I ran a couple of sensitivities and the numbers are trending the right way. So unless we missed something totally, we're ready to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

OK. I am putting that in the presentation. I'll take one final look and we can slip it under his door so he'll see it when he gets in.

JEREMY

What a fucking tyrant. Making us work Sunday night. You know he won't read it. He'll just ask us to brief him and then he'll go in and wing it.

ALICE

(looking at the computer screen)  
Whatever. He sells well on his feet.

JEREMY

Well he's got a hell of a sell in front of him with the SEC breathing down his neck.

ALICE

You reckon the SEC's got something?

JEREMY

I don't know. But a hundred million in client's funds? That's a lot of moola, even for a billion dollar fund.

ALICE

Did you see those guys come in the other day? It was so Bud Fox.

JEREMY

Let's hope it was all some whistleblower fantasy. You know how hard it was for me to get this job. It's a wasteland out there.

ALICE

You're right there. I went through six interviews just here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JEREMY

Really? And I thought you just slept  
with him.

ALICE

Fuck off and go to the printer for me.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF OFFICE OF ADAM GOODMAN - MOMENTS LATER

ALICE and JEREMY are walking to the office with the presentation in their hands. There is a sliver of light coming out from underneath the door.

JEREMY

Shit. He's still there. He is going to  
be impressed.

Jeremy knocks on the door. No answer. He opens the door and they are in an ante chamber to the office where the receptionist normally sits. It is empty. Jeremy walks across the ante chamber and pushes the door of the office slightly open and peers inside. There is a body in casual clothes lying face up on top of the coffee table. The glass top of the coffee table is smashed. The face is all bloody and mashed. The carpet is covered in bloody shoe prints.

ALICE

Well?

JEREMY

Oh shit Oh shit! Don't look.

ALICE

What do you mean don't look? At what?

Alice pushes Jeremy aside and looks. She SCREAMS.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT TIME

Emerging from the bar: Detective FRANK MCNAB NYPD. He is a grizzly veteran. A fat mean head. With him is detective NEIL O'SHEA, a young intelligent looking man: his junior partner. Frank immediately lights a cigarette.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Wanna head home or one more down at  
Junior's?

NEIL

I think that's quite enough for a  
SUNDAY night Frank. Wife will be  
wondering where the hell I am.

They are now at Frank's car. Opening the car doors.

FRANK

That's why I'm not married.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

FRANK starts to drive off. Cigarette burning. NEIL next to him.

NEIL

The reason why you're not married is  
because no one wants to marry a 55  
year old cop who smokes 60 a day.

FRANK

Your wife didn't seem to mind me  
smoking when I was fucking her ass.

NEIL

I'll fuck you up the ass if you don't  
get me home soon.

The police radio comes on.

RADIO

Calling all units. 10-24. Possible  
homicide reported at 501 Park Avenue.  
25th Floor. One unidentified deceased  
male.

Frank suddenly does a U turn. Tyres SCREECH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEIL

Whoa. We're off duty FRank. What are you doing?

FRANK

I want to check this one out. It's a high class address. Its gotta be more interesting than your average dead dealer on the street.

NEIL

Come on man. I need to get home.

FRANK

Don't fucking worry about it alright? You now have an excuse. Just tell her that the call came in at eleven when we were still on duty and you've been tied up since. Its perfect.

NEIL

Frank....

FRANK

Be a good boy and call Bamford for me. Tell him I'm taking this one. He should be ok with it, the lazy bastard.

INT.OFFICE OF ADAM GOODMAN - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

FRANK and NEIL are there, with a number of policemen, surveying the scene. They have their forensic gloves on. The police photographer is busy taking photos. JEREMY and ALICE are sitting in one corner being interviewed by a policeman, JOHN MANNING.

FRANK

Jesus, when your luck runs out it really runs out.

NEIL

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK  
(just a drip of  
sarcasm)

Oh I forgot... you don't read the Wall Street Journal, do you? Our friend here, Mr Goodman, was just accused a couple of days ago of misappropriating money. Over a hundred million dollars. Can you even fucking comprehend that?

NEIL  
(looking unimpressed)  
Well there's your motive. Whose money was it?

FRANK  
The list is probably a hundred long.  
Let's hope we don't go there.  
(beat)  
So what do you see?

We see the badly smashed head. A Yankee baseball cap lies on the ground.

NEIL  
Man. Looks like a fucking deflated basketball. Murder weapon has to be something blunt and solid.

Neil slowly walks around the room. POV showing all the objects around the room. We see a row of lucite blocks in various shapes commemorating deals done by the firm. There is a row of three identical blocks. They each commemorate the closing of a fund of the firm. \$100m. \$250m. \$300m.

The wall has a number of photos. We see Adam shaking hands with various dignitaries. We see Adam in cocktail parties. We see Adam giving a speech. Then we see frames of his qualifications. Harvard MBA. Then framed press clippings. "Ex-Lehman trader leaves to form bond hedge fund with college roommate." "Second Goodman and Makin fund over subscribed." "Billionaires Club: Hedge Fund managers with over \$1 billion of funds under management".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NEIL

Wonder how they managed to join that club?

FRANK

What club?

NEIL

The billionaires' club. Right here. You only get your name in it if you manage over a billion dollars.

FRANK

What makes you think...

NEIL

They're three hundred and fifty million dollars short.

FRANK

How do you know that?

NEIL

I can count.

Neil walks back to the three lucite blocks.

NEIL

Add them up. They only come to six fifty million.

(turning to Alice and  
Jeremy)

Hey. How much money do you guys manage?

JEREMY

Just over a billion.

NEIL

How many funds?

JEREMY

Four.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NEIL

You know why there's only three of these blocks in the office?

JEREMY

They're called "tombstones". There should be four. Vincent's got four in his office.

NEIL

There you go Frank. There's your murder weapon.

(picks a tombstone up)

Blunt and heavy.

FRANK

Very good. I knew there's a reason to have an egghead on the team. Bag one of them and tell forensics to run the tests. What else?

POV scanning the floor. It is covered with bloody footprints.

NEIL

There's only one perp. All the footprints look the same. The prints are weird looking though. They don't have a defined pattern. The blood is smudged. We should have forensics look into this too.

FRANK

Good. What else?

NEIL

I would say crime of passion. Takes a lot of hate to bash a face in like that. So the vic most likely knows the killer.

FRANK

Not the two kids in the corner?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

NEIL

Highly unlikely. They're still hyperventilating. But they did confirm there was no one else on the floor.

FRANK

(holding one of the tombstones in his hand)

Tombstones. That's fucking irony for you. Killed by a fucking tombstone.

Frank walks over to John who is still interviewing Jeremy and Alice. Frank motions John to have a one on one conversation.

FRANK

Listen up, Manning. I want a full search of all the trash from this office. Trace the trash to the bins downstairs. You are looking for one of these things.

Frank holds up the tombstone.

Hurry up before the garbageman comes. And report straight to me with anything you find. Got it?

JOHN

Got it boss.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - LATER IN THE DAY

The corpse is lying on the slab. Its face and the body is covered. The coroner, ALAN WAKES, FRANK and NEIL are there. There is a knock on the door. CHARLOTTE GOODMAN comes in, escorted by a POLICEMAN. Charlotte is blond, 35, very beautiful even if she has no make up on and is wearing a tracksuit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Mrs Goodman. Thanks for coming down so quickly. We'll try and get this over as soon as we can. Are you ready?

CHARLOTTE

(in tears)

Do I have a choice?

Frank gestures to Alan to unveil the face. The face has been cleaned and looks more grotesque because now you can see the deep gashes and the crushed bone structure. Charlotte covers her mouth in horror. She is speechless. She can only nod and then collapses into the arms of the policeman escort.

EXT. FUNERAL OF ADAM - MIDDAY

Large crowd. The TV crews are here. VINCENT MAKIN, the other senior partner of Goodman and Makin, is just finishing his eulogy. Vincent is the classic tall, dark and handsome type. Impeccably dressed. 40 years old bachelor. A large photo of Adam Goodman is displayed next to the coffin. Adam has sandy blond hair. Beefy. With piercing blue eyes.

VINCENT

I remember Adam said to me, many years ago, when we were in college, after a few too many beers: "man, we've gone through so much, and we're only twenty five years old. I just can't imagine going through this twice as much again. It's going to be one crazy ride". Well Adam, you and I, we had a crazy ride. I enjoyed every moment of it. Life was a great adventure with you. And I am so very sad that you had to get off so unexpectedly and tragically. I will miss you. We will all miss you.

INT. POLICE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

FRANK and NEIL are sitting in the car, which is parked at the end of a line of cars at the funeral. Another police car is behind them. Frank is finishing a packed lunch.

NEIL

Should we go now?

FRANK

A bit of respect for the dead, my friend. Let's wait till they start heading back to their limos. The TV crew will still be around. So best behaviour please. And don't forget to get your wife to record the news. This is going to be good.

EXT. FUNERAL OF ADAM - HALF HOUR LATER

The mourners are heading for their limos. From the distance we see FRANK, NEIL and two other policemen approaching. CHARLOTTE and VINCENT are still talking to some of the mourners. VINCENT is about to duck his head to go inside his limo. A hand reaches out to stop him.

FRANK

Vincent Makin?

VINCENT

Yes?

FRANK

You are under arrest for the murder of Adam Goodman.

VINCENT

You must be joking....

FRANK

You have the right to remain silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT

Are you fucking crazy? I was his best friend.

FRANK

Not as crazy as the TV crew is about to get.

Vincent is cuffed by Neil. The TV crew suddenly realizes what is going on and rushes over.

FRANK

Better come with us to the squad car and I can finish the Miranda there. Or do you want to say hello to your mother on TV?

Vincent is rushed away by the police. Everyone is in shock. Charlotte, who was already in her limo, sticks her head out in total disbelief.

INT. POLICE STATION INTERVIEW ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

VINCENT is sitting down at a table. His demeanour is very cool and calm. FRANK is sitting across him. NEIL is standing in the corner. The tombstone is in an evidence bag on the table. Frank pushes the tombstone towards Vincent.

FRANK

Recognize this?

VINCENT

Sure. How can I forget? What about it?

FRANK

This is the murder weapon.

(beat)

You see, your best friend's face was smashed in. And this was found in the rubbish bin downstairs from your office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT

What does that have to do with me?

FRANK

Well Mr Makin, if you had properly wiped all the prints off then it would have nothing to do with you. But then, you just killed someone, and it was probably your first time, right? So your heart was going at a thousand miles an hour and you were rushing everything, just to get out of there, right? And guess what, we found a partial print. So we ran it against the SEC records of everyone in your firm, and guess whose print came up as a match.

VINCENT

That's convenient isn't it.

FRANK

Well it was also convenient that you were caught by the security camera scurrying away shortly after the time of death.

(beat)

And it was also convenient that your best friend just stole a hundred million from your firm. You must have been very very pissed at him right?

(beat)

Or maybe...maybe it was you who stole the money, he found out and you were trying to silence him?

VINCENT

(raising his voice for  
the first time)

Look, I didn't know anything about it until the SEC turned up. Of course I was pissed at him but that doesn't mean that I would crush his skull.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VINCENT (cont'd)

He was my best friend for Christ's sakes.

FRANK

Of course he was. You did give the eulogy at his funeral. Real class act Mister.

VINCENT

I think it's about time I exercise my right to remain silent. My lawyer should be here very soon.

INT. BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

The cell phone alarm goes off: loud and annoying. MARIA ROSA is lying on the bed. Fully clothed from a late night at the office. Her brief case is lying on the ground next to the bed. Documents are spilling out. The cell phone starts buzzing again. About ten times. Each buzz is an email coming in. She grabs her glasses from the bedside table. Fumbles for the phone. Starts checking the emails. Gets up. Still checking the emails. Grabs a towel and walks out of the bedroom to the shower.

INT. KITCHEN - HALF HOUR LATER

MARIA is having breakfast with her younger sister, ISABELLA, and her mother, FATIMA and father, JORGES. The kitchen is tiny. The apartment is in the Bronx. The family is a Latino family from Colombia. Maria, who is a second year associate in the white shoe law firm of Henderson, Clay and Henderson, is in a business suit with hair tied up and glasses. She is 28 years old, short and curvy, pretty but trying hard to hide it. Her complexion is brown. She looks like she is suffering from a hangover: but really only a late night at the law firm. Isabella is 26, a police woman and in her uniform. She is short and heavier built. Also pretty. Definitely a tom boy type. The TV is blaring in the corner. Isabella's police issue gun is on the table next to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA

Do we have to look at that thing while having breakfast?

ISABELLA

(channeling Scarface)

You mean my little friend here? I never go anywhere without it. Here, say hello to my little friend.

MARIA

Izzie, get that thing out of my face. I'm warning you.

FATIMA

(in Spanish)

Stop it Isabella. What's wrong with you.

JORGES

(in Spanish and loud)

What's wrong with her? What's wrong with her is that you dressed her up like a boy when she was young. And you let her go join the police. Now look what we have. A five foot two Clint Eastwood.

ISABELLA

Al Pacino Dad.

Jorges, Fatima and Isabella start arguing in Spanish. Maria picks up her bag, grabs a piece of toast, kisses each of them on the forehead, and runs out of the house.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA is in the very crowded car trying to read some legal papers and getting jostled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PA SYSTEM  
(cracking and barely  
audible)

Ladies and gentlemen. The train ahead  
is having mechanical problems. We have  
been asked to stay at this station  
until further notice.

An audible groan from the passengers.

INT. ELEVATOR - AN HOUR LATER

MARIA bursts out of the crowded elevator and runs towards the conference room at the law firm of Henderson, Clay and Henderson.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA reaches the conference room door at the same time as CHARLES BARWICK, a senior partner of the firm, 65, tall and patrician, and his senior associate, JAY GREERSON. Jay is 30 years old, blond and athletically built. Both of them very WASPish. There is a bit of confusion as they all try to enter the same time. Charles is slightly annoyed. In the room are a number of other associates. Maria is fumbling to find a seat and Charles waits till she sits down.

CHARLES

I am sure you all watched the news last night and saw Vincent Makin get arrested for the murder of his partner. Vincent's firm has been with our securities law practice from the very beginning. He has asked us to represent him in this case. I saw him last night at the police station and the bail hearing is in two hours' time. I am personally leading this one, with Jay as wingman. We also need a bag carrier for the courts. Who wants to volunteer?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nearly all the associates put their hands up. CHARLES motions JAY to step out.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JAY

I would say Constance. She is solid.  
Two year associate. Harvard girl.

CHARLES

Aren't they all?

JAY

Not all. Maria is SUNY. We got some program going on.

CHARLES

Let's take her then. There'll be lots of publicity and she's good for the profile.

They go back into the room.

CHARLES

We'll take Maria. You run fast young lady. And the rest of you, start organizing for the trial. I want you to start briefing the PR consultant, jury consultant, forensic expert etc etc etc. It is time for our little criminal practice group to shine.

INT. LIMO - LATE AFTERNOON

The stretch limo is waiting outside the court house. CHARLES is sitting on one side next to MARIA. There is an awkward silence between them.

CHARLES

So you were on the Farrelly case?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA

Yes. I was working for Lance on that one.

CHARLES

That was a good win for us.

MARIA

Yes. It was a good win.

More awkward silence.

CHARLES

You know I had a good Mexican friend once. He lived in Cabo.

MARIA

Cabo. Nice place.

CHARLES

Yes. Have you been?

MARIA

No. Never been to Cabo.

The door opens and VINCENT comes in, followed by JAY. Vincent has an electronic ankle bracelet on him and is wearing the clothes from the funeral. He shakes hands with Charles.

CHARLES

Finally!

VINCENT

Charles, thanks again for getting me out.

CHARLES

Don't mention it. Sorry about the bracelet but it could have been worse.

VINCENT

Don't worry about it. I'm just glad to be out.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VINCENT (cont'd)  
(turns to Maria)  
Hi. Vincent Makin.

MARIA  
Maria Rosa. Pleased to meet you.

Vincent settles in on the other side of the limo, and Jay sits next to him. Vincent immediately checks out Maria, who feels slightly uncomfortable. Charles notices it too.

VINCENT  
(to Maria)  
Better hurry up and get me home. I have an hour right? Before they set the zone up.

MARIA  
Don't worry. We'll get you back in good time.

VINCENT  
Thank goodness its football season.  
Now I can catch all the games.

Nervous laughter from Charles and Jay. Maria gives a half fake grin.

INT. LIVING ROOM PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - AN HOUR LATER

CHARLES, JAY and MARIA are sitting in the living room. Papers are strewn on the coffee table. The apartment is tasteful, masculine and modern. VINCENT enters the room, wearing a bathrobe and toweling his hair.

CHARLES  
You ready to start?

VINCENT  
Sure. You guys want some coffee?

CHARLES  
That would be great thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT

(yells out)

Maria, can we have some coffee please.

Maria looks up startled that her name was called.

VINCENT

(impishly to Maria)

Sorry. Common name.

CHARLES

OK let's start. Let's see what the prosecution has first. Jay?

JAY

So far they have the partial print on the tombstone, and the fact that there was no one else in the office at the time of death other than our client, and two junior associates. And the motive of course.

CHARLES

Well that's enough to get them started but not quite enough to get to the finishing line.

JAY

I agree. No eye witness. Big negative.

CHARLES

Vincent, I have to ask you this so don't be offended.

VINCENT

Ask away.

CHARLES

You have nothing to do with the missing money right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VINCENT

Nothing. The SEC was after Adam. They could probably say that I didn't set up the proper controls and all that. But other than that, all the paper trail leads back to Adam. You can check with them.

CHARLES

Why would your finger print be on the murder weapon?

VINCENT

I don't know.

JAY

The good news is that your finger print could be all over the place in Adam's office. I mean you worked together for so long. You must have been in that office a million times.

VINCENT

That's absolutely right. And come to think of it, I was the one handing out the tombstones when we closed that fund. Might have my finger prints over all of it.

CHARLES

Good. So far their case is not a great one. Now what about the fact that there was no one else in the office? Did you see anyone else there? It was late Sunday night right?

VINCENT

Nope. Didn't see anyone. I didn't even know the two associates were there.

JAY

Maria, can you check out the two associates.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JAY (cont'd)

Also, can you get hold of the security tapes and try and figure out whether anybody else could have been there.

MARIA

Sure.

The maid, MARIA ABAJO, comes in with a tray of coffee. She is 50 years old and frumpy. She eyes the other Maria: what are you doing here?

VINCENT

Maria, I should have introduced you earlier. This is Mr. Barwick, Mr Greerson and.....

MARIA

Miss Rosa. Maria Rosa.

Maria Abajo nods as each of them is introduced but does not speak. The evil eye is again given to the other Maria.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF MARIA ROSA'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

MARIA is sitting on the floor of the living room with a stack of security tapes. JORGES and FATIMA are sitting on the couch. Maria is going through them on the television. We see a freeze frame of a man in jeans wearing a baseball cap. We see Maria jotting down notes and then continuing with the tape. ISABELLA comes in, still in her uniform.

MARIA

(distractedly speaking  
while watching the TV)

Hi. How was your day?

ISABELLA

Fine. Collared a white boy peddling dope to his rich class mates. You should see him shit his pants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Isabella sits down, reaches for the remote control and switches off the VCR and turns on the cable station.

MARIA

What are you doing? I was working.

ISABELLA

Work? You were watching some stupid tape. I wish I could watch TV and call it work.

MARIA

No Izzie. It's important work. I am reviewing security tapes for a case I am working on.

Maria takes the remote control back and switches it back to the VCR.

ISABELLA

What case?

MARIA

Can't tell you. Especially since you are a cop.

ISABELLA

Well then you can work after I finish my show.

MARIA

(in Spanish and still looking at the TV)

Mama. Can you please tell Izzie to go away. I am trying to work here.

FATIMA

(in Spanish)

Isabella. Listen to your older sister. She is trying to make money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ISABELLA

(in Spanish)

Why are you always siding with her?  
What does making money have to do with  
it? I am making money too.

JORGES

(in Spanish)

You are making money by doing a man's  
job. Risking your life on the streets.

ISABELLA

(in Spanish)

And what's wrong with that?

Maris gets up from the floor and crawls towards the TV. She has pressed the freeze frame. It is the picture of two delivery men carrying food. The rest of the family continues arguing in Spanish.

MARIA

Will you please all shut up. Please. I need to get this done tonight. Just go to bed.

Isabella gets up and storms out of the living room. Maria continues with watching the tapes.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

MARIA is there with CHARLES and JAY. There is a TV showing the security tapes.

MARIA

This is our client. 8.32 pm Sunday night.

Maria fast forwards the tape.

MARIA

This is the victim. He's got a Yankee cap on but Jay checked with the wife.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA (cont'd)  
The cap and the clothing description  
matches. Time is 9 pm.

Maria fast forwards the tape.

MARIA  
And these are the two food delivery  
men. Time is 9.10 pm. This is where it  
gets interesting. I went through the  
rest of the tapes and they show  
Vincent leaving at 9.45 pm. They also  
show one of the delivery men leaving.  
But there is no sign of the second  
delivery man leaving.

JAY  
You're kidding.

MARIA  
I'm not. I went through them carefully.  
We know that the two associates  
ordered the food from the first guy.  
There was no other delivery orders. So  
who's the second guy?

CHARLES  
Well well well. This could put a hole  
through their case. Well done Maria.  
We need to follow through on this and  
make it a huge hole.

MARIA  
Yes this.....

JAY  
(interrupting rudely)  
This will be our disgruntled investor  
theory. I can run through with Vincent  
the list of the investors who lost  
money and come up with a few possible  
names and hopefully tie it to this  
second guy. We just need reasonable  
doubt.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAY (cont'd)

This could send the jury going in all sorts of different directions.

CHARLES

Good idea Jay. But I think we should send Maria.

JAY

But....

CHARLES

I have a feeling that Vincent may open up more to Maria. You fine with that Maria?

MARIA

Sure. I think I can manage that.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE AT POLICE STATION - EVENING

FRANK is sitting at his desk and talking on the phone. He has a cigarette burning. NEIL walks in.

FRANK

(to Neil)

Just wait a sec.

(back on the phone)

Hey, I gotta go. We'll talk later.

Frank hangs up the phone.

NEIL

You know you're not supposed to smoke in here.

FRANK

Well. There's only the two of us here. So if you don't tell, I promise I'll stop fucking your wife.

NEIL

Ahhh. That's why she's been complaining about pin pricks lately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Alright. What do you want Neil?

NEIL

Got time to talk about the Goodman case?

FRANK

Sure.

NEIL

How do you think we're gonna go in court?

FRANK

It'll be tough. I've seen far stronger cases bite the dust. This one is as weak as piss. A motive and a partial print: that's about it.

NEIL

You're right there. It's all circumstantial.

(beat)

BY the way, I finally got the results on the clothes and shoes that he wore that night.

FRANK

About fucking time. Anything?

NEIL

Nothing. Not a trace of blood. And you saw the crime scene. There was a lot of that sprayed around.

FRANK

Did you check the clothing against the security video?

NEIL

Yes. Identical.

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

Hmmm.

NEIL

Forensics figured out what happened though.

FRANK

Tell me.

NEIL

The killer was wearing something over his shoes. That's why the shoe prints looked so funny. And he may have been wearing something over his clothes too.

(beat)

You know the more I think of it, the more this doesn't look like a crime of passion. You wouldn't be wearing that kind of stuff unless you planned it all along.

FRANK

So what are you saying? We got the wrong man?

NEIL

I just don't know Frank.

FRANK

I tell you what. I reckon they were both in on the missing money. I reckon they got into a fight, who the fuck knows why. Maybe it was over the money. Or maybe he was blaming the vic for screwing up and letting the SEC come in. They are both guilty, just that one is dead. So keep on digging for something. We need a stronger case otherwise we are going to be fucked in court. You understand me?

INT. LIVING ROOM PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY

MARIA is at the door and MARIA ABAJO opens the door. Maria has her hair down and an extra touch of make up. Again Maria the maid has a dirty look for the other Maria.

MARIA

(acting cute)

Hi. I was hoping to catch Mr Makin at home. Is he in?

MARIA ABAJO

(in Spanish)

Where else do you think he would be.

MARIA

That's what I thought. I would like to see him. To go through a few things.

MARIA ABAJO

(in Spanish)

So you are really a lawyer?

MARIA

(in Spanish)

Yes.

MARIA ABAJO

(in Spanish)

Where are the others?

MARIA

(in Spanish)

The others. You mean Mr. Barwick and Mr Greerson? They are....Wait. Can you just let me in please.

MARIA ABAJO

(in Spanish mumbling to herself)

Mr Makin is in deep trouble and they send a woman.

(CONTINUED )

CONTINUED: (2)

VINCENT  
(OS)  
Maria, who is that?

MARIA ABAJO  
The lady who says she is a lawyer.

VINCENT  
(OS)  
Well let her in.

Maria the maid gives Maria one last dirty look and lets her in.

MARIA  
Hello again.

VINCENT  
Hello again. You bring news from the front?

MARIA  
Yes. Some good news. We found a delivery man on the security tape footage who should not have been there. And he never left the building.

Maria takes out a photo of the delivery man taken from the security tape.

MARIA  
You know him?

VINCENT  
Can't say I do.

MARIA  
Fine. In that case, I want to go through the list of investors who lost money. I want to see what connections we can make.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

VINCENT

(smiling)

Well I can assure you that there are no delivery man on that list.

MARIA

(smiling back)

Really. I should go then.

Maria motions to leave.

VINCENT

(smiling)

Well you never know. Let's go through it anyway. Something might jump up at us.

Maria and Vincent are sitting side by side at the coffee table going through the list on a computer.

MARIA

Let's focus on those who would take this personally. So cut out the pension funds. Cut out the institutional investors. Just concentrate on the individuals and the family offices.

VINCENT

Well here's the redacted list. About twenty five.

MARIA

And they are all pissed?

VINCENT

I have spoken to all of them. And to tell the truth, some of them were congratulating me.

MARIA

DO you think any of them would actually go as far as killing Adam?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

VINCENT

Are you asking what I really think or  
what the jury should think?

MARIA

I just need you to be honest.

VINCENT

Ahh honesty. Something in short supply  
in my profession.

MARIA

Some would say mine.

VINCENT

Are you honest?

MARIA

Always.

VINCENT

If I ask you a question, you will  
always tell the truth?

MARIA

Yes Mr Makin. But then I am here to  
ask the questions.

VINCENT

Vincent please.

MARIA

Ok. Vincent.

VINCENT

So my question is: why is your hair  
down today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MARIA

(turns all red and  
hesitates for a  
moment)

I may answer that after we go through  
the list.

VINCENT

Of course. I can wait.

Vincent looks at the computer closely.

VINCENT

Most of these are long time clients.  
Old money. Can't see them hiring a hit  
man.

(beat)

Hmmm. There is the Fantacci family.  
Adam and I did wonder where their  
money came from.

MARIA

Not all Italians are mobsters you  
know.

VINCENT

I'm sorry. I didn't mean it that way.

MARIA

I'll get it checked out anyway.

VINCENT

OK.

MARIA

Can I ask you a question now?

VINCENT

Sure.

MARIA

I am just curious as to your attitude  
to the whole thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

VINCENT

My attitude?

MARIA

Yes. You are about to be put on trial for murder. But you seem so blasé about it. Most people would be out of their minds by now.

VINCENT

I'll let you in on a secret. I used to be a bond trader. Sometimes we would do big scary trades. Millions of dollars. And I will be talking to this guy on the phone. I will listen for the faintest sign of fear in his voice. Just the smallest hesitation and I know I can make a point more off him. But I know he is trying to do the same to me. So I worked really hard to keep my voice as calm as possible. Like a poker face, even if we are not, you know, sitting across the table. Believe me, I used to get scared, but I will never show it. Once you do, you're dead. And over the years, it's become a second nature to me.

MARIA

That explains a lot...I wouldn't like to be the other guy on the phone though.

VINCENT

(smile)

So we are done?

MARIA

Yes I think so. I better get back to the office. Don't forget to email a copy of the investor list to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

Maria stands up and starts walking towards the door. Vincent walks with her.

VINCENT

By the way, did they find anything else in the trash other than the tombstone?

MARIA

Not that we know. But we'll find out soon enough during discovery.

VINCENT

OK.

MARIA

See you then. Thanks for sitting down with me.

VINCENT

My pleasure Maria. And the answer is?

MARIA

(pauses to figure out  
what Vincent is  
talking about)

Oh. That.

(beat)

Do you speak Spanish?

VINCENT

Unfortunately not. Maria understands enough English.

MARIA

(in Spanish and fast)

The reason is because I look pretty hot with my hair down.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

MARIA (cont'd)

Why I am doing it for you is that  
despite your trappings of wealth and  
your oily smoothness, things that I  
don't have a natural affinity with,  
and despite the fact that you may be a  
crazy murderer, reasonable doubt  
notwithstanding, I feel a slight and  
superficial attraction to you.

VINCENT

(shouting for Maria the  
maid)

Maria. Better come quick.

MARIA

See you soon Vincent.

Maria closes the door and leaves.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - OVER A PERIOD OF DAYS

MARIA, CHARLES, JAY, VINCENT and the rest of the legal team  
are seen preparing for the trial. Exhibits are debated over,  
strategies discussed. Late nights. Delivered food cartons. Jay  
talking over Maria. Maria and Vincent exchanging glances.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

MARIA, CHARLES, JAY, VINCENT are all in court. The prosecuting  
attorney, JACK SPROULL, is there with his team. CHARLOTTE is  
also in court watching. The court room is packed with  
spectators and journalists. The judge is JUDGE CARTER. He is a  
small but formidable 65 year old man with a Napoleon complex.  
A witness is on the stand. She is GLORIA MASHBURNE, a personal  
assistant at Goodman and Makin. Jack is on his feet.

JACK

Miss Mashburne, you are the deceased's  
PA at Goodman and Makin?

GLORIA

Yes.

CONTINUED:

JACK

Can you tell us what you were doing on Wednesday, 12 October, this year?

GLORIA

I was at work.

JACK

Where is your...uh....work station?

GLORIA

It is in the sitting area or antechamber just outside of Adam's... the deceased....office.

JACK

Anything unusual happen that day?

GLORIA

Yes. The SEC paid a visit with half a dozen people.

JACK

Who were they targetting?

GLORIA

Well they were all in Adam's office.

JACK

What were they doing?

GLORIA

They were taking files and computers and asking Adam questions.

JACK

And where was the defendant during that time?

GLORIA

He was watching from outside the office.

CONTINUED: (2)

JACK

WHat happened after the SEC officers left?

GLORIA

I saw the defendant go into the office.

JACK

What were they saying?

GLORIA

I couldn't hear everything because the door was almost closed. But there was a lot of shouting. I did hear him say "How can you be so stupid? This will destroy the firm"

JACK

Did the defendant sound angry?

GLORIA

Yes. I have worked there for many years. I have never seen him so angry.

JACK

Anything else you may have heard?

GLORIA

Something like "the only way to end this is for you to drop dead".

JACK

No further questions Your Honour.

JUDGE

Mr Barwick?

CHARLES

Just a few Your Honour.

(beat)

Miss Mashburne

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHARLES (cont'd)

I presume you were seated at your desk  
all this time?

GLORIA

Yes. Of course.

CHARLES

Busily working away I hope.

GLORIA

Well yes but...

CHARLES

How far is your desk away from the  
door of the deceased's office?

GLORIA

Ummmm...I don't know.

CHARLES

Would it surprise you if I said it's  
more than twenty feet?

GLORIA

Uhh no.

CHARLES

In fact Miss Mashburne, we had it  
measured. It's twenty seven feet from  
where you were sitting, busily working  
away. And when you say that the door  
was almost closed, did you mean that  
the door was touching the frame but  
not shut into the frame?

GLORIA

Yes that's what it looked like...from  
where I was sitting.

CONTINUED: (4)

CHARLES

And would it surprise you that with the door almost closed, the two of them would almost have to scream for you to hear them? You can listen later to Mr Fielding, our acoustic expert, on this topic.

GLORIA

Umm.... I suppose so.

CHARLES

No more questions Your Honour.

JACK

The prosecution would like to call its next witness. Charlotte Goodman.

Charlotte walks up the witness stand. She is in all black but still very beautiful. The jury is captivated. She is sworn in.

JACK

Mrs Goodman, how are you today?

CHARLOTTE

Fine thank you.

JACK

Mrs Goodman, you had a conversation with your husband, the deceased, in the afternoon of Sunday 17 October this year. Can you tell us about it?

CHARLOTTE

Adam told me that he was meeting Vincent that night in the office. He told me that he was going to explain everything and hopefully he will be forgiven.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JACK

What else did the deceased say?

CHARLOTTE

He said that he wanted to take a gun  
to protect himself.

JACK

Does the deceased own a gun?

CHARLOTTE

Yes he does. It's properly licensed.

JACK

And what did you say to him?

CHARLOTTE

(voice trembling)

I said he and VIncent were best  
friends and they will work this out. I  
talked him out of carrying a gun.

JACK

So did he listen to you?

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

JACK

Why do you think he wanted to carry a  
gun?

CHARLES

Objection Your Honour. Speculation.

JACK

I'll withdraw that. No more questions  
your honour.

CHARLES

No questions from the defense Your  
Honour.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

JUDGE

Perfect timing Mr Barwick. I think it's time we all go home. See you tomorrow morning.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

VINCENT, MARIA, CHARLES and JAY are having dinner after the court case. Vincent is studying the wine menu. A WAITER is standing nearby.

VINCENT

I can't believe this. I get to eat out. You guys are brilliant.

CHARLES

You have to be home by ten though.

VINCENT

Well then what are we waiting for.  
Waiter.

WAITER

Yessir.

VINCENT

I think we'll have a bottle of the 1996 Robert Chevillon. And a bottle of the 1996 d'Angerville. If you can hurry up please. I turn into a pumpkin by nine.

INT. RESTAURANT - 5 MINS LATER

CHARLES

I think it went well today.

JAY

Yes. Definitely. But can I ask why you didn't question the wife?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

She was five seconds away from a total meltdown. I wanted her off the box and away from the jury. Frankly I thought she would do more damage.

MARIA

(to Vincent)

Does she think you did it?

VINCENT

I tried to catch her eyes when she was in the box. She would not look at me. What does that tell you?

Maria nods and takes a sip of her drink. VIncent's cell phone rings.

VINCENT

Hello? Maria? What's up?

(listens to Maria the maid)

It's alright Maria. You did the right thing to let them in. Are they still there?

(to the people around the table)

The police are at my place. They are turning it upside down.

CHARLES

Sorry about the wine. But we need to get up there now. I don't understand why they are doing this a second time. But something is not right.

They all start standing up. At that time the waiter arrives with the two bottles of wine. Vincent grabs the two bottles from him and tucks them under his armpits. They walk out of the restaurant.

INT. LIMO - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

VINCENT, MARIA, CHARLES and JAY are in the limo. They see two police cars outside Vincent's apartment. FRANK, JOHN and two others each carrying a bag. They quickly get into the cars and leave before the limo arrives.

INT. LIVING ROOM PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

VINCENT, MARIA, CHARLES and JAY burst into the apartment. MARIA the maid is standing in the middle of a huge mess. Every drawer and cupboard have been opened and furniture turned upside down. MARIA the maid is crying.

VINCENT  
(screaming)  
Motherfuckers.

VINCENT doubles over with his hand on his knees. Maria puts a gentle hand on his shoulders.

CHARLES  
(to Maria the maid)  
Maria, did you see what they found?

MARIA ABAJO  
No. There were too many of them. Going here. Going there. I did not know where to look.

CHARLES  
Vincent, any idea what they were looking for?

VINCENT  
No idea. THE last time they spent hours. This time far less and far rougher.

CHARLES  
Well we will find out tomorrow. No point in wondering now.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES (cont'd)  
We should all get some sleep.

Vincent uncorked one of the two bottles he took from the restaurant.

VINCENT  
Not until I finish these bad boys.  
Anyone care to join?

INT. COURTROOM - THE NEXT DAY

MARIA, VINCENT, CHARLES and JAY are in court. JACK and his team are also there. FRANK is also there. CHARLOTTE is also there. JUDGE is presiding. Charles and Jack are up at the Judge's bench.

CHARLES  
Your honour. I am appalled with the police conduct during this search. The whole place was turned upside down. We were not informed beforehand and frankly, I think they timed it so that the search can take place without my client being present. Because of the conditions of his bail, he has been at home all this time, and the only time he is not there, the police comes barging in. Terrorizing the maid I may add.

JUDGE  
I hear you. But is there a point in what you are saying? The search is covered by warrant. So they made a mess. I need better grounds than that Mr Barwick and you know it. So if you would please sit down, I am going to let Mr Sproull call his witness and we can all find out what the police found. Then you can object as much as you like.

Charles returns to his seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

Thank you, your Honour. I would like to recall Detective McNab.

CHARLES

(whispering to Vincent)

Here we go.

FRANK walks to the witness stand.

JUDGE

I would like to remind the witness that he is still under oath.

JACK

What did you do last night Mr McNab?

FRANK

I went to search the defendant's apartment with three other officers.

JACK

What did you find there?

FRANK

We found a pair of plastic covers for shoes and also a plastic raincoat.

Jack holds up two packages wrapped in clear plastic.

JACK

Are these the covers?

FRANK

Yes.

JACK

Your honour, I would like to admit these as exhibit F.

JACK

What did you find on them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

We found dried blood. Lots of it.

JACK

And whose blood is it?

FRANK

We are doing DNA tests at the moment.  
But its type AB negative. Very rare.  
And it matches the blood type of the  
victim.

There is a commotion in the court. CHARLOTTE stands up.

CHARLOTTE

You bastard. You killed him. How  
could you? He was like a brother to  
you.

Two court officers quickly usher Charlotte out of the courtroom.

JUDGE

Order please. Otherwise I am going to  
clear the court. Order, now.

(beat)

Sorry Mr Sproull. You do realize the  
explosive nature of this testimony.  
But please continue.

JACK

I am finished Your Honour.

JUDGE

Your witness then Mr Barwick.

CHARLES

Your Honour. We are hearing and seeing  
this for the first time. I would like  
to ask for an adjournment so we can  
consider the new evidence.

CONTINUED: ( 3 )

JUDGE

Happy to give it to you Mr Barwick. I think you need it.

CHARLES

I would like to ask just a few limited question before we adjourn.

JUDGE

Ask away Mr Barwick.

CHARLES

Mr McNab, you have already searched the defendant's apartment before, am I right?

FRANK

Yes.

CHARLES

And you did not find anything then?

FRANK

No.

CHARLES

Where did you find these items?

FRANK

Taped behind the bed head in the defendant's bedroom.

CHARLES

And you did not think of searching there the last time?

FRANK

It's a very very large apartment sir.

There is laughter in the courtroom.

( CONTINUED )

CONTINUED: (4)

CHARLES

And what made you go back a second time?

FRANK

I don't know. Just a hunch I suppose.  
I just didn't feel like we spent enough time in there last time.

CHARLES

Thank you. No more questions for now.  
But I would most likely be questioning this witness again tomorrow.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

MARIA, VINCENT, CHARLES, JAY and a number of other associates are in there. Vincent is far less glib now.

CHARLES

I don't buy this. I don't buy this at all.

MARIA

(to Vincent)

Do you know anything about this?

VINCENT

You might as well ask me whether I killed him. No I don't.

MARIA

So someone planted the evidence.

JAY

And that must be the police themselves. Nobody else had access to the apartment.

MARIA

I presume Maria...the maid... is not a suspect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT

Maria. No way. She's been with me for years. What's the motive anyway? If I get put into the slammer, she loses her job.

CHARLES

It is easy to accuse. But we need proof. I know the police are capable of many things, but this is a murder case. It's not like planting dope on a dealer. People, we are missing something here. We need to review everything again, starting now.

(turns to Jay)

And start thinking about a plea bargain, just in case.

VINCENT

No plea bargains. I am not going to serve a single day in prison.

CHARLES

At this point, you should worry about how many days you have out of prison.

The conference room becomes a hive of activity again.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - A FEW HOURS LATER

Everyone in the conference room looks exhausted. MARIA is looking at her lap top computer.

MARIA

Vincent, can I borrow you for a second.

VINCENT

Sure. Found anything?

MARIA

This is the spreadsheet you sent me with the investors.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA (cont'd)

I just unhid a column. It shows the addresses of the investors, right?

VINCENT

Yes. Sorry I didn't show you before. I just printed out the hard copy when we went over it and forgot that some of the columns were hidden. So what's so interesting?

MARIA

See the Maton Family Trust?

VINCENT

Yeah.

MARIA

See the address?

VINCENT

Yes?

MARIA

I know that address. It is near my place. In the Bronx.

VINCENT

So?

MARIA

It's a project block. Don't you think it's a bit strange for someone living in a project to invest a million dollars in your fund?

VINCENT

You got me there. Maybe the delivery man got lucky.

CHARLES

You should check it out Maria.

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIA

I better go now. We're running out of time.

VINCENT

Want me to come with you?

MARIA

(gesturing at his ankle bracelet)

Not unless I want the whole NYPD coming along too.

EXT. PROJECTS - EVENING

MARIA gets out of a taxi. She was going to press the security com but then decides against it. She waits by the entrance to the block until a large rough looking man is buzzing the SECURITY COM to get in.

SECURITY COM

Who's that?

MAN

It's me.

SECURITY COM

You sorry ass motherfucker. You're three hours late. What the fuck?

MAN

Just open the fucking door.

SECURITY COM

You better have a good reason.

(beat)

Motherfucker.

The door buzzes open. The man gets in. Maria walks in behind him. The Man turns around and looks at her menacingly. He is puzzled by a well dressed woman in the neighbourhood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA  
Forgot my keys.

The man does not say anything. They walk to the elevator together. There is a sign that says that it is under repair.

MAN  
Motherfucker.

The man opens the stairwell door.

MAN  
Ladies first.

MARIA  
Thank you.

They both start climbing the stairs. The man gets a good look at Maria's ass as they walk up. Maria gets to the sixth floor and pushes the stairwell door open. The man continues going up.

MARIA  
(sultry voice)  
Was it worth it?

The Man turns around.

(beat)  
Motherfucker?

MAN  
(starts walking,  
smiling to himself )  
Ummmmhmmmmmm.

INT. PROJECTS CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA is walking down the corridor looking for the apartment. She has the address in her hand. Only one light is working. Very dim. She looks around nervously. Passing door after never ending door. There is shouting from behind one of the doors. Banging behind another.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Finally she gets to the right apartment. There is light coming out from underneath the door. She hesitates, then knocks. No response. She knocks louder. No response. She knocks again. Then she tries the door knob. The door opens.

INT. PROJECT APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA walks in. The place is poorly lit. There is a baby crying and the TV is blaring. Maria sees MARITZA RUBA, a 19 year old Latino girl, sitting on the couch, drugged out.

MARIA

Hi. Sorry but the door was open. I knocked.

MARITZA

(slurring her words in  
a drugged state; eyes  
half closed)

Who the fuck are you?

MARIA

I am Maria Rosa. I am an attorney from Henderson, Clay and Henderson.

MARITZA

What trouble is he in now?

MARIA

You mean Victor?

MARITZA

Who else would I be talking about.  
What has the motherfucker done now?

MARIA

No trouble. I just need to talk to him.

MARITZA

He's not in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA

Do you know when he will be back?

MARITZA

I don't know. Maybe an hour. I don't know.

(beat)

I don't know who you are but I want you to leave now. Hear me?

MARIA

He's not out looking for his money is he?

MARITZA

(looking a bit more awake)

What money?

MARIA

Well according to our records, he has quite a large investment with a firm called Goodman and Makin.

MARITZA

You shitting me? A large investment with Goodman fucking Makin? He just got out of jail.

MARIA

Which jail?

MARITZA

(noticing Maria's clothes and briefcase)

Hang on. You're not some attorney. You the parole officer. Everything is cool here you know. Everything is just cool.

MARIA

I'm not the parole officer. You know what. Maybe I will come back later.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIA (cont'd)

Just let Victor know that I called and  
I'll be back later.

MARITZA

Wait a minute. You can't just come in here, talk some bullshit about money, and investments, and then leave. Who says you can leave?

Maritza stands up unsteadily. Maria backs away. Then walks to the door.

INT - PROJECTS CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA is walking away from apartment fast. She hears MARITZA shouting out, and then shouting for someone. She hears Maritza talking to someone. She hears footsteps. The corridor feels endless. She finally rushes into the stairwell.

INT. - PROJECTS STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA is running down the stairs. She almost trips. Her heel is broken. She takes both shoes off and throws them into a corner and starts running. Then she stops. Goes back to retrieve the shoes. Then starts running down the stairs again. She can hear the door to the stairwell opening. Heavy foot steps are following. She reaches the ground floor door and pushes it. Then changes her mind and hides underneath the stairs. Seconds later the heavy foot steps arrive. The door opens and the pursuer goes outside. Maria stays in the dark, huddled up. Sweat pouring down her face. Still clinging on to her shoes.

INT. -PROJECTS STAIRWELL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

MARIA decides that she has waited long enough. She slowly gets up, opens the stairwell door slightly and peers out. The foyer is empty. She walks quickly through the foyer and out onto the street. A hand grabs her shoulder. She turns around in shock. Ready to strike with her shoes. It is JAY.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA

Oh my God. You scared the shit out of me.

JAY

Charles had second thoughts about letting you come here by yourself so he sent me after you. The car is just parked around the corner.

MARIA

Let's go then.

JAY

What happened?

MARIA

I'll give you a full debrief in the car. I just need to make a call right now.

Maria takes her cell phone out and makes a call.

MARIA

Izzie? Are you on duty? Good. Can you do me a very very urgent favour?

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE COURTROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

MARIA, CHARLES and JAY are having a discussion just before going in to court.

JAY

I think this can blow up in our faces.  
Too risky.

MARIA

We have nothing else. We gotta try it.

JAY

Look I am not saying that we are sitting pretty.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)  
But it could be even worse if this  
doesn't work.

MARIA  
Listen. The only thing worse than this  
would be if they turned up with a  
photograph of him posing over the body  
with the bloody tombstone.

JAY  
(sick of arguing with  
Maria)  
Charles, what do you think? It's your  
call.

CHARLES  
I am not a hundred percent convinced  
either way. But let's go for it. It  
might just work.

INT. COURTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA, VINCENT, CHARLES and JAY are in court. JUDGE presiding.  
JACK is there with his team. FRANK and CHARLOTTE also there.  
ISABELLE is also there. She is whispering something to Maria.

JUDGE  
Mr Barwick, are you ready to continue  
your cross of Mr McNab?

CHARLES  
Yes, if I can have one minute Your  
Honor

JUDGE  
One minute it is Mr Barwick.

CHARLES  
(whispering to Maria)  
I think you should take the cross.

MARIA  
Me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

Maria. You came up with the theory and the strategy. I am not entirely convinced and one needs to litigate with conviction. Since you have the conviction, you need to go for it. It's all we got.

MARIA

You know I have never done this in a live court before.

CHARLES

The first time I crossed examined a witness, I had never done it before either. There is always the first time. Just remember: conviction.

MARIA

Not sure whether I should thank you or curse you for the opportunity. But ok. I'll do it.

CHARLES

I believe we are ready Your Honour. My colleague, Ms Maria Rosa, is going to take the cross.

(turns to Maria)

Good luck.

JUDGE

Very well. Always need to give the young lions and lionesses a go.

(turning to Frank)

Again Mr McNab, you are still under oath.

FRANK

Understood your Honour.

Maria gets up but stays behind her bench. She looks flustered.

(CONTINUED )

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIA  
Mr McNab.

FRANK  
That's me.

MARIA  
Mr McNab. Do you know a person by the name of Victor Manzuela?

JACK  
Objection your Honour. Relevance?

JUDGE  
A bit too early Mr Sproull. How can we tell whether it is relevant until Ms Rosa here spins us more of the tale.  
Overruled.

FRANK  
Yes. I know a Victor Manzuela.

MARIA  
Were you his arresting officer back in 2008 for a drug trafficking charge?

FRANK  
I was.

MARIA  
And that resulted in a prison sentence of seven years for Mr Manzuela?

FRANK  
Yes I believe so.

MARIA  
It is now three years later. Is he in prison now?

FRANK  
No. He is out on parole.

CONTINUED: (3)

JACK

Your Honour. I must object. I just don't see the relevance.

JUDGE

Ms Rosa. It seems you may have mixed up a drug trial with a murder trial. But just in case you haven't, I am giving you just a little bit more leeway before I start stomping on this line of questioning. Now if there is a point, please try and get to it quickly.

MARIA

I will your Honour.

(turning to Frank)

And he is out on parole because you recommended it, correct?

FRANK

Strictly speaking, the parole officer recommends it to the Board. But I did speak for Mr Manzuela.

MARIA

How long have you been in the force Mr McNab?

FRANK

30 years.

MARIA

And is this the first time you have ever recommended parole for someone you have arrested and put in jail?

FRANK

(looking a bit flustered)

I can't say for sure.

CONTINUED: (4)

MARIA

Do you want me to show you your record over the course of fifty three parole hearings?

FRANK

OK. I don't believe I have.

MARIA

Why this one Mr McNab?

JACK

Your Honour. Objection. Please. This is going absolutely nowhere.

JUDGE

I don't know Mr Sproull. I am now slightly intrigued by the story of Mr. Manzuela. But I warn you again Ms Rosa, this better have a good ending.

MARIA

It will your Honour.

(turning to Frank)

So why this one?

FRANK

I looked at all the facts. And his behaviour in prison. And I thought finally there is someone who deserves a second chance.

MARIA

Really. I believe Mr Manzuela almost killed another inmate about two years ago. So he must have reformed himself pretty quickly.

JACK

Your Honour. Is there a question in that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MARIA

I am sorry. Mr McNab, have you heard about a trust called the Maton Family Trust?

JACK

Your Honour. Now where are we going?

JUDGE

Ms Rosa, you are just about running out of rope. But I do like to hear the answer.

FRANK

Can you repeat that?

MARIA

The Maton Family Trust, Mr McNab. It is an investor in the fourth fund of Goodman and Makin. For a million dollars. Most of it is missing now. Have you heard of it?

FRANK

No.

MARIA

I suppose you also don't know that Mr Manzuela is trustee of the trust and his home address is used as the address of record for Goodman and Makin?

FRANK

No.

MARIA

Are you sure?

FRANK

Yes I am.

CONTINUED: (6)

Maria pauses. She closes her eyes. Takes a deep breath. And reaches for a stack of documents on her bench.

MARIA

Your Honour. I would like to tender as exhibit N bank records relating to transactions of the Maton Family Trust.

JACK

Your Honour. We don't know anything about this.

MARIA

Your Honour. I only just received the records this morning.

JACK

We would like some time to examine the new evidence.

JUDGE

Of course counsellor. You can have all the time you want. But Ms Rosa can tender this as evidence now and continue with the witness. You can always bring the witness back.

Maria approaches Frank. Frank is looking nervous.

MARIA

Mr McNab, does the money in the Maton Family Trust belong to you?

There is a murmur through the courtroom. The jury perks up.

JUDGE

I think it's time to remind the witness again that he is under oath.

Frank looks around nervously.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

FRANK

I don't think I can answer that.

JUDGE

Mr McNab. You need to answer that.

FRANK

I can't your Honour.

JUDGE

Maybe Mr McNab would like to consider pleading the Fifth Amendment.

Frank takes a long pause.

FRANK

Yes....I think .... I would like to plead the Fifth...Your Honour.

More murmurs around the courtroom. Charles and Vincent exchange raised eyebrows.

MARIA

Mr McNab: did you plant the evidence in the defendant's apartment?

FRANK

I would like to plead the Fifth.

MARIA

If the defendant went to prison, is something bad going to happen to him in there?

JACK

Your Honour, she is fishing....

FRANK

I am pleading the Fifth.

MARIA

No more questions your Honour.

CONTINUED: (8)

CHARLES

Your Honour, I would like to move for all of the evidence found in the apartment of the defendant to be struck from the record.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF MARIA ROSA'S APARTMENT - THREE DAYS LATER

MARIA, ISABELLA, JORGES and FATIMA and about ten other relatives are sitting around the TV. The news is on and it is showing the reporter, LESLIE MAYS reporting on the case. The TV then shows VINCENT, CHARLES, JAY and Maria emerging from the courthouse to a crowd of spectators and reporters.

LESLIE

Vincent Makin, multi millionaire co-founder of the firm of Goodman and Makin, has been found not guilty of the murder of his partner, Adam Goodman, following a two week trial at the Supreme Court here in downtown Manhattan. This follows the sensational accusation by the defence team that the detective in the case, Frank McNab, had planted crucial evidence in order to obtain a conviction.

Leslie runs towards the defense team followed by the other reporters and their cameramen.

LESLIE

Mr Makin, how does it feel to be finally vindicated, after all the negative press the last couple of weeks?

VINCENT

Feels great. I am just glad it's over. And I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart my great defense team here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The TV camera pans to Charles, Jay and Maria. The Rosa household erupts with cheering. Isabella puts her arms around Maria.

JORGES

(moves to the TV and  
says to the gathering  
in Spanish)

My daughter. On TV. Can you believe it? On TV. The first in our entire family history to make it on TV. American TV: it's great. America is great. I am very proud of you Maria.

Jorges starts wiping away the tears. Fatima goes up to embrace him.

CHARLES

(on TV)

.....and I would encourage the District Attorney to take a close look at the issue of evidence planting uncovered at the trial. The integrity of the justice system is at stake here.I should also remind the press that we have released footage of an unidentified person who could have been at the crime scene that night. It is likely that this person has something to do with the crime.Now if you can excuse us, we had a very tiring couple of weeks.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE AT POLICE STATION - EVENING

FRANK has been put on leave without pay pending investigation by internal affairs. He is packing up his office. He has aged ten years. NEIL walks in.

FRANK

Hi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEIL

Hi. I've been asked to keep an eye on you...just making sure you only take the personal stuff you know. I'm sorry.

FRANK

Sure. Wanna pat me down.

NEIL

I think we can do without that.

FRANK

So you think I'm fucked?

NEIL

I think so. Your bitch Manning's been talking. Just following orders he says.

FRANK

I thought he would.

NEIL

What made you do it Frank? You've been in the force...what....thirty years? That's just so fucking stupid.

FRANK

Best you not know, my friend. Let's just say I have a million reasons why I want him in the slammer for a hundred years.

Frank has finished putting everything into a box. He is about to leave. Neil does not move from the doorway.

NEIL

Sorry Frank, but I need your badge and service revolver.

Frank looks at Neil: anger, then resignation. He puts down the box.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: ( 2 )

Neil is expecting Frank to hand him the badge and gun but he leaves his badge and gun on the desk. Then walks out with the box. He turns back suddenly.

FRANK

You know how I carry on about your missus.

NEIL

What about it Frank?

FRANK

You know I'm just joking.

NEIL

I know Frank. I know.

FRANK walks out of the police station with his box in one arm. He stops to light a cigarette and walks into the darkness.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

MARIA and VINCENT are having dinner. Maria has her hair down again. And finally no glasses.

MARIA

Now that you have your life back,  
what's next?

VINCENT

Well, we're winding down the funds.  
It's too hard to do business with all  
the bad press.

MARIA

It wasn't your fault.

VINCENT

I know. But still. We were partners  
and I got to take some responsibility  
for it.

( CONTINUED )

CONTINUED:

MARIA

Are you going to start again?

VINCENT

Not for a while. I'm going to take a break. I have a place in Key Largo. I think I'll hide out there for a couple of weeks.

Vincent leans forward.

So why did you say yes?

MARIA

Yes to what?

VINCENT

To dinner.

MARIA

I don't know. Maybe because you passed my first test.

VINCENT

What test?

MARIA

The race test.

VINCENT

The race test? How did I pass?

MARIA

You passed because all this time you never once mentioned anything related to my ethnicity. You never asked what sort of food I eat at home. You never asked whether I saw an Almadovar movie.

VINCENT

And that's good?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIA

Well it is. But it depends on whether you pass the second test.

VINCENT

The second test being?

MARIA

The second test is the sex test.

VINCENT

I think I like this test.

MARIA

You need to show me that you did not pass the first test simply because you want to sleep with me and you really didn't give a shit about my ethnicity.

VINCENT

How do I pass the second test?

MARIA

(smile)

By failing the first one I suppose.

VINCENT

Spoken like a true lawyer.

MARIA

You know I am not even Mexican. Everybody just assumes that I am. My family is from Colombia.

VINCENT

Colombia. Have you seen Romancing the Stone? That was set in Cartagena you know.

MARIA

Alright alright. DON't even go there.

CONTINUED: (3)

VINCENT

By the way, did I say how magnificent you were in court the other day?

MARIA

You didn't see me trembling? I was petrified. It was the first time I ever cross examined a witness. I had plenty of mock trials at law school but that's different.

VINCENT

Glad I didn't know that beforehand. And the way that detective just crumbled after you produced the bank records. That was amazing.

Maria lowers her head and thinks for a few seconds.

MARIA

Can you keep a secret?

VINCENT

Sure. I am full of secrets.

MARIA

The bank records. They were totally useless. Didn't prove a thing.

VINCENT

What do you mean?

MARIA

We got the records but none of them actually traced back to the source of the cash. The cash trail runs cold somewhere in the Cayman Islands.

VINCENT

So you bluffed him? Are you kidding me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARIA

I bluffed him. I wouldn't have done it but for the fact that we were going down big time. We had no other choice. It was a Hail Mary.

VINCENT

More like a Hail Maria! But wouldn't he have known that you had nothing?

MARIA

He might have. But then he's a cop. Not a financial expert. He wouldn't know all the ins and outs. So I thought he might just panic enough if we just produce a stack of records. And the money must have been dirty in the first place. Frank would never have a million dollars like that. So he was probably scared of what else would come out in court if it continued.

VINCENT

Why would Frank let a drug dealer control all that money?

MARIA

Victor really couldn't do much because all correspondence gets copied to a PO Box and I am sure that box belongs to Frank, although it would be impossible to prove. And my guess is that Frank will have all sorts of dirt on Victor.

VINCENT

What if he called your bluff?

MARIA

I would have looked like a total fool. That's why Charles pushed me to do the cross rather than doing it himself. Careerwise, not a good move.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

VINCENT

And you did all that just for me.

MARIA

I would have done it for any client.  
So long as I think they're innocent.

VINCENT

(in Spanish)

So my life was saved with a dangerous  
bluff. Thank you Miss Rosa.

MARIA

But I thought you didn't....oh my God.  
. .I am so embarrassed.

Maria buries her head in her hands in shame, remembering what she had said to Vincent earlier in Spanish.

INT. VINCENT'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

Close up of the profiles of MARIA and VINCENT. Profiles moving closer as dialogue continues.

VINCENT

You sure you want to do this?

MARIA

We're not breaking any ethical rules  
The case is finished.

VINCENT

I don't mean....

MARIA

I know what you mean. The answer is yes. I think there is something in you that's more than a cool apartment and a fast car. I would like to find it.

They kiss.

INT. VINCENT'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA and VINCENT are making love in bed. Vincent starts off more dominant, even rough. He is on top of her. Pinning her arms down. Maria responds to the dominance. She pulls his hair and they roll over together. Now she is on top and pinning his arms down.

INT. VINCENT'S BEDROOM - HALF AN HOUR LATER

Camera view from the top. MARIA and VINCENT collapse in exhaustion. They lie next to each other in silence. After a few moments, Maria reaches out to hold Vincent's hand.

INT. DEN IN VINCENT'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

VINCENT is asleep. MARIA takes a wander around the apartment while wearing Vincent's shirt. The lighting is dimmed halogen. She tried to turn up the lighting but could not figure out the high tech switches. She gets a glass of milk from the kitchen. She wanders into the den. There are photographs: the life of Vincent is on display. Photo with his parents. Photo of him and Adam. Photo of him and Adam and Charlotte. Photo of him when he was on the high school basketball team. Photo of him at some function with some girl friend. Maria is intrigued by the glimpse into the background to this man she just slept with. After a while, Maria settles in the den with the glass of milk to watch some news on TV. She sees a news item relating to the case. She turns the volume up. The TV ANCHORMAN is talking. ANCHORWOMAN is next to him.

ANCHORMAN

....McNab, 55 years old, was under investigation for planting evidence in the Adam Goodman case. Police sources say that his death was an apparent suicide.

Maria puts her hands up to her face in shock.

CONTINUED:

ANCHORWOMAN

And in yet a further twist to this very strange tale, the mysterious delivery man whom we have been showing you on tape the last few days, has now been found. His name is Dwight Cameron and earlier this afternoon, Leslie Mays interviewed him at his home in Queens.

TV shows DWIGHT CAMERON at his small apartment with LESLIE sitting across him. Dwight is black, very laid back and mellow. Dwight's lawyer, CAROLINE GONSKI, is sitting next to him.

LESLIE

So tell me, Mr Cameron, how come you didn't come forward to the police earlier to identify yourself?

DWIGHT

I have been away. Back in Jamaica. My mother was very sick you know.

LESLIE

SO when did you first realize that you were the mystery delivery man?

DWIGHT

Two days ago. I was watching TV and they were showing that video. I thought: hey that's me.

LESLIE

One of the mysteries of the case is that while they showed you going in to the offices of Goodman and Makin, they never saw you leave. What happened?

DWIGHT

It was the wrong delivery. I got it wrong.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LESLIE

SO you delivered the food to the wrong address?

DWIGHT

Yeah. Wrong place altogether. The other place was way downtown.

LESLIE

So why didn't you leave right away?

DWIGHT

The football.

LESLIE

Football?

CAROLINE

If I could just elaborate for my client. He got into the offices because he arrived downstairs at the same time as another delivery man and the security desk just let the both of them up. He waited for about ten minutes. Then realized that it was the wrong address. He then saw that someone left the big screen TV on in the conference room, and the football was on. So he went into the room, which was empty, and started watching the game.

LESLIE

What happened after the game?

DWIGHT

I dunno. I think I fell asleep.

LESLIE

Until when?

CONTINUED: (3)

DWIGHT

I woke up around, I dunno, around 1 am maybe. Then I just got up and left.

LESLIE

And you have told this to the police?

DWIGHT

Yeah yeah.

CAROLINE

I should add that the police have accepted his story.

LESLIE

And a strange story it is. But at least it solves the mystery of the missing delivery man in this case.

(beat)

Can I ask what food it was that you were delivering?

DWIGHT

(sheepish grin)

Mexican. It was good.

LESLIE

Thank you very much Mr Cameron. It's Leslie Mays signing off for New York 1. Back to you Kirk and Sharon.

Back to the news studio with the ANCHORMAN and ANCHORWOMAN, each with a bemused look on their face.

ANCHORMAN

Mexican food.

ANCHORWOMAN

And it was gooood.

Maria turns off the TV. Thoughts are swirling in her head. She had always presumed that Vincent was innocent because there was the mystery deliveryman. Now it is no longer a mystery.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: ( 4 )

Who killed Adam?

VINCENT  
Couldn't sleep?

Maria almost jumps off the couch. She realizes that Vincent has been standing by the door of the den and that he was watching at least part of the same news program.

MARIA  
You scared me. How long were you standing there?

VINCENT  
Enough to know what happens to all those deliveries that you order but never show up.

MARIA  
The mystery deepens.

VINCENT  
Sure does.

MARIA  
I am so stupid. I should have checked the security tapes for the next day. But I only got the tapes up to midnight. Just didn't think that the killer would be content to stay at the crime scene rather than leaving right away.

VINCENT  
Well nobody else checked.

MARIA  
Fair enough.

VINCENT  
So where does that leave us?

CONTINUED: (5)

MARIA

Same place as before. You had your trial. Doesn't change a thing.

VINCENT

You sure it doesn't?

MARIA

(iciness creeping into her voice)

I don't know Vincent. Should it change anything?

VINCENT

You have a third test don't you?

MARIA

I do?

VINCENT

Yes. You need to believe in my innocence.

MARIA

Yes that would be an obvious test.

VINCENT

I feel that I am starting to fail that test.

MARIA

Let's just say I am still marking the paper.

Vincent pauses and looks down at his feet. He is about to make an important decision.

VINCENT

I want to show you something.

Vincent crosses the room slowly and walks over to the desk at the corner. Maria watches him warily and draws her knees up to her chest. Vincent slowly opens a drawer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

There is a gun in the drawer. His fingers linger over the gun. Then he unhinges a hidden compartment in the drawer. He takes out a small digital recorder.

MARIA

What's that?

VINCENT

Just listen. Please.

Vincent starts playing the recorder. Two voices are heard. Vincent and ADAM GOODMAN.

ADAM

Hey buddy.

VINCENT

Hi.

ADAM

Glad you can come.

VINCENT

How bad is it?

ADAM

Just over a hundred million.

VINCENT

Why Adam? I gave you free rein on Fund Four. Just to help your track record. Now you've gone and fucked it up royally. Did you lose it or did you steal it?

ADAM

A bit of both. I was taking side pockets next to the fund. So I needed money to cover my own losses too.

VINCENT

You are a fool, man. You should have come to me earlier.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

ADAM

I am coming to you now. You gotta help me find a way out. The SEC is this far up my ass. And clients are getting worried. They're asking for their money.

VINCENT

I've got liquidity in the other funds. Let me see whether there is a way to cover it up before it all blows up. If I help you, I am only doing it to save the goodwill of the firm. I am saving myself. You don't deserve it.

ADAM

Thanks,. Please just look into it asap. I'm sorry buddy. I really am.

VINCENT

Just like the time I bailed you out in college.

ADAM

Yes. Less was at stake then.

VINCENT

You're fucking right about that.

ADAM

See you tomorrow then.

VINCENT

Yeah see you. Hopefully I will figure out something by then.

There is silence.

VINCENT

I am going to fast forward this.

The recorder is put on play again. There is Adam's voice on the recorder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

ADAM

Who are you?

There is no response.

ADAM

Hey. Just put the gun away. We can talk about it. You want money? Is that what you want?

There is sound of Adam falling over things. A blood curdling SCREAM. And the THUD of some blunt object hitting him.

VINCENT

That's it.

MARIA

I don't get it. You had this all along. Why didn't you tell us?

VINCENT

Believe me if I thought we were going to lose, I was going to give this to you. But think about it. On the recording, I am implicated. Not in the original fraud, but in the cover up. I would have beaten the murder rap. But the SEC will have enough to go after me.

MARIA

How did you get the recording?

VINCENT

I knew Adam habitually recorded his business conversations. Comes from the old days when we were bond traders. Everything gets recorded. So when I found out he was murdered, I sneaked into his office and found the recorder. I did it just before I was arrested.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

MARIA

So you had a get out of jail card all along? No wonder you were so smug.

VINCENT

You can say that. But it wasn't perfect.

MARIA

And to think that I almost blew my legal career to save your sorry ass.

VINCENT

I am so sorry Maria. But I trusted you. You guys were great. I knew you would get me off.

Maria storms out of the den.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF PENTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA is now fully dressed. She is walking towards the door.

VINCENT

Maria, please.

MARIA

DOnt talk to me.

VINCENT

I didn't mean to.

MARIA

Mean to what? Use me?

VINCENT

I want to see you again.

MARIA

I don't know Vincent. This is just way too complicated. I just want to be home. Things are simpler there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Maria opens the door and leaves. There are tears in her eyes.

EXT. RESTAURANT - LUNCHTIME A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER

MARIA is at the restaurant having lunch with ISABELLA.

MARIA

Izzie, you look so different without your uniform.

ISABELLA

Pretty hot huh. Now and then I can scrub up.

MARIA

It's good to do something with you outside home. It's been awhile. We used to be so close.

ISABELLA

It's hard you know. With both of us working. Hard to find the time.

MARIA

How's your boyfriend?

ISABELLA

Him. Gone. Turns out he was two timing.

MARIA

Really?

ISABELLA

Yep. I shot his balls off.

MARIA

Wish I had a gun. WOULD've done the same thing.

ISABELLA

To your handsome white boy? He's too good looking to be missing a testicle.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ISABELLA (cont'd)  
How's it going with him anyways?

MARIA  
Not going anywhere at the moment.

ISABELLA  
You like him a lot no?

MARIA  
I did. And maybe I still do. But its just too complicated.

ISABELLA  
He called a few times at home you know.

MARIA  
And at the office. And on my cell phone.

ISABELLA  
You should give him another chance. He is rich AND good looking. A good catch sister. Most of us would settle for one out of two.

MARIA  
Izzie, the reason I took up being a lawyer is that I don't have to go around looking for a catch. If I go out with someone, it's because I like him on my own terms.

ISABELLA  
You like him on your own terms then?

Maria suddenly notices CHARLOTTE, sitting by herself in the corner of the restaurant. Charlotte is wearing dark glasses.

MARIA  
Izzie, you see that woman over there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ISABELLA

Yeah. Isn't she the wife?

MARIA

Yes she is. You know, I meant to reach out to her. I need to know how she felt about the whole trial. Do you mind if I go over and talk to her for a few minutes.

ISABELLA

Go ahead sis. I got my phone.

Maria walks over to Charlotte.

MARIA

Hi. Mrs Goodman. It's Maria Rosa. From the trial.

CHARLOTTE

Yes. I saw you sitting over there.

MARIA

Do you mind if I sit down and have a minute with you?

CHARLOTTE

Sure. Go ahead. I was eating alone anyway.

MARIA

Thanks.

Maria sits down.

MARIA

Mrs Goodman...

CHARLOTTE

Please. Just Charlotte.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARIA

Charlotte, you were the one who lost the most out of this whole thing. You lost a husband. And because you were a witness for the prosecution, I never really had the chance to say how sorry I am.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you. That's very kind of you.

MARIA

I felt strange because I thought I was helping us get to the bottom of this, and yet we ended up with a mystery that may never be solved.

CHARLOTTE

It would have been cleaner for everyone if Vincent was found guilty.

MARIA

But he isn't. I know you may still have doubts, but believe me, he did not do it.

CHARLOTTE

Why are you so sure? I mean, the evidence was clearly planted, but then if he didn't do it, who did?

MARIA

That I don't know. But you need to believe me about Vincent.

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. I would like to believe you. Vincent and I were very close friends. And I haven't spoken to him since he was arrested. Not only have I lost a soul mate, I also lost a good friend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARIA

Please. Reach out to Vincent. I am sure he wants to speak to you too.

CHARLOTTE

I just might.

MARIA

I better go back to my table. My sister is getting agitated. Maybe we can have lunch some time. Will you be around in the next few weeks?

CHARLOTTE

No. I am going to be in Key Largo for the next three weeks. But after that, sure. Here's my cell number.

Maria is startled but she keeps her composure.

MARIA

Alright then. Good talking to you Charlotte.

Maria walks back to her table. She is quite shaken.

MARIA

Izzie, I need your help again.

ISABELLA

What is it now?

MARIA

I need you to find Vincent's address for me in Key Largo.

ISABELLA

Wow. You're answering a booty call all the way down there? So not you big sis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MARIA

Look its not that. I'll explain it all later. But can you please do it for me. You know people who can trace those things right?

ISABELLA

Not a problem. Let me make a few calls. But you better give me all the juicy details.

EXT. AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

MARIA is in a rental car pulling out of the driveway. We follow her car as it heads towards Key Largo.

EXT. OUTSIDE VINCENT'S KEY LARGO HOUSE - HALF HOUR LATER

MARIA is in her rental car parked fifty yards from the house. The house has a security gate.

EXT. OUTSIDE VINCENT'S KEY LARGO HOUSE - TWO HOURS LATER

The sun is setting. MARIA is still waiting in the car. The security gate opens. She sees VINCENT and CHARLOTTE come out in a sports car. Maria follows their car.

EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING

MARIA is still following VINCENT and CHARLOTTE. The night is dark. We see miles and miles of flat Florida landscape. Going from medium density commercial (car dealers, chain restaurants) but gradually thinning out. The sports car turns off the highway into a single lane dirt road. The road is going through eerie swamp land.

EXT. SINGLE LANE ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA notices that another car is now behind her. As she checks in the rearview mirror the sports car in front of her suddenly stops. Maria slams on the brakes. Now Maria's car is trapped between the two cars.

INT. MARIA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA is blinded by the head light of the car behind her. Suddenly her passenger door opens and a large STRANGER with a baseball cap, a beard and a gun jumps on the passenger seat. Maria gasps and covers her face with her arms.

MARIA

Don't shoot. Don't shoot.

STRANGER

I am not going to shoot if you tell me why you are following that car.

MARIA

Just put down the gun then.

The Stranger lowers the gun. He hits a stored number on his cell phone.

STRANGER

It's under control. One of you go back and take my car. I'm staying here until I find out what's going on. Keep driving.

(to Maria)

Better start talking. And start driving when my friend takes off.

Charlotte gets out of the first car, walks past Maria's car, sees Maria and has an astonished look on her face. She quickly walks past and gets into the last car.

MARIA

It's a long story.

STRANGER

Try starting with your name.

MARIA

Maria Rosa.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STRANGER

Maria Rosa. The super lawyer? My my.  
You look way better in the flesh. No  
wonder Vincent has the hots for you.

MARIA

You're....oh my God...

Maria's eyes widen in shock. She recognizes the piercing blue eyes. It is ADAM.

ADAM

Bingo. Now start driving and talking.

MARIA

(looking ahead and very  
scared)

You're dead. I don't understand.  
What's going on? What the fuck is  
going on?

ADAM

You're the smart lawyer. You figured  
out enough to come all the way here.  
Why don't you tell me.

Maria is gathering her thoughts and trying to focus at the same time. She is in tears.

ADAM

(yelling and pushing  
the gun at Maria's  
temple)

Tell me!

MARIA

OK OK. Just let me focus.

Adam slowly lifts the gun away from Maria's temple. It is clear to Maria that Adam is on some sort of drug, because he is very hyped up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARIA

You're still alive.

ADAM

Tell me something I don't know.

MARIA

Which means the body in the office is somebody else's. That's why the face was smashed in. To make the ID harder.

(beat)

Which is where Charlotte comes in. The police were relying on her ID.

ADAM

Not bad.

MARIA

Which means you, Vincent and Charlotte are all in this. You are all in it for the money. With you officially dead, the SEC will stop investigating.

(beat)

But you didn't plan for the police to arrest Vincent. You didn't think they would find the murder weapon.

ADAM

You're right there. I told him to get rid of the stuff properly. I suppose he just panicked. Without the weapon they would never have gone to trial.

Mysterious delivery man or not.

(beat)

But you. You were great in court. You nailed that detective real good. He deserved it too, the lying sack of shit. By the way, did you hear he just offed himself?

MARIA

Yes I heard on the news.

CONTINUED: (4)

ADAM

He must've been into some bad shit:  
turned out ok for us though.

MARIA

Who did Vincent kill then?

ADAM

Ooops. Don't expect you to know that one. He was just a rent boy. Thought he was going to get paid for some late night action in my office. He even agreed to wear my clothes. Thought it was all some kinky set up.

MARIA

And you made up that recording?

ADAM

Yep. That was pretty good wasn't it. You were so hot for my man.... you bought it hook line and sinker. Wish we had thought of making the recording earlier but then who would have guessed they would find the murder weapon. With his fucking prints. Can you believe that. So by the time we had the recording ready, it was too late for ol' Vince to just produce it in court. People would ask too many questions. We'd do it if he really got into trouble. But he sold you on it real good.

MARIA

You are all fucking crazy. You think you're going to get away with this?

ADAM

I must say we had to do some quick improvising with the SEC breathing down our necks. But yeah. Sure. It's almost perfect.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ADAM (cont'd)  
(Adam suddenly goes all  
serious)  
Except for you.

EXT. SHACK ON THE EDGE OF THE SWAMP - NIGHT TIME

The three cars are parked outside. The swamp surrounds the shack. Eerie sounds. The lights in the shack are on.

INT. SHACK - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA is bound and gagged and sitting in a corner. VINCENT and CHARLOTTE are sitting around a table. They are drinking whiskey. ADAM comes out from his bedroom with a brief case. He takes out a pile of bearer bonds. He also takes out some cocaine and starts cutting it.

ADAM  
You know, we trade every day in  
hundreds of millions but I gotta say,  
having the stuff right in front of you  
is an awesome sight.

VINCENT  
Have you verified them?

ADAM  
Yep. I presented a sample for payment  
and got my money.

VINCENT  
You know we're bound to get screwed  
when we try to unload these. The Feds  
are all over bearer bonds so we gotta  
go international. May have to deal  
with the Russians.

ADAM  
I assumed a 20% discount. That still  
leaves more than eighty million my  
friend. Tax free.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Adam takes a snort of the cocaine and reels back as the drug hits him. He offers some to Vincent.

VINCENT

No thanks. You should try and stay off the stuff too.

ADAM

I got a ton of this stuff. Can't travel with it so might as well have a party before we go.

VINCENT

Where are you and Charlotte off to?

CHARLOTTE

Venezuela first. We got friends there.

VINCENT

What are you going to tell them?

CHARLOTTE

Don't think they much care. Their money is not very clean either.

VINCENT

You know. It's a pity the funds didn't work out. We were unlucky.

ADAM

Even if we were lucky. DO the numbers. We needed to hit the ball out of the park for all four funds to make this much. In hindsight, this was much easier.

VINCENT

(staring into his empty glass)

I just can't believe we got ourselves into this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ADAM

The money part came naturally,  
wouldn't you say? The killing part, I  
got to hand it you, brother. You were  
"baaaaad".

VINCENT

Listen, I did what I had to do. I'd  
rather not talk about it.

Vincent takes a deep swig of his whiskey. Motions to Maria in  
the corner.

What are we going to do about her?

ADAM

Your girl. Your problem. Just make it  
quick. We should get out of here soon.  
I'm sick of hiding out in this place.

CHARLOTTE

I don't want any part of this. Just  
take her outside and do what you have  
to do.

VINCENT

Yeah sure.

Vincent walks over to Maria. He cuts the rope around her  
ankles and roughly lifts her up. Then pushes her outside.

EXT. SWAMP - MOMENTS LATER

MARIA is walking ahead of VINCENT. They reach the edge of the  
swamp. Maria turns to face him. Vincent takes out a large  
serrated knife. Maria is screaming through the gag. VIncent  
cuts the rope around her wrists. He then ungags her. He takes  
a gun out and, BAM, shoots it into the swamp.

VINCENT

Run as fast as you can. The road is  
over there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA

What about you?

VINCENT

Me? What do you think? I'll be running, but not in the same direction.

(beat)

I'm sorry Maria. For getting you into all this. For betraying your trust.

MARIA

There are parts of you...

VINCENT

Yes there are parts.

MARIA

I suppose you have your pact with the devil.

VINCENT

Indeed I do.

(beat)

You're going to give us a head start aren't you? Makes it more fun.

MARIA

I don't even know where you're going.

VINCENT

I don't know either. The original plan says that I get to stay put and live happily ever after.

MARIA

(a teary smile)

Just don't tell me you're running to Tiajuana.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VINCENT  
(a sad smile)  
You better go. Before they get  
suspicious.

Maria takes one last look at Vincent. She turns and starts running. We see Vincent's face in close up, watching her recede into the distance. A SHOT is heard. There is a stunned look on Vincent's face. He falls down, dead. Behind him is Adam, smoke coming out of his shot gun. Maria turns around. She sees Adam standing over Vincent. Look of fear comes across her face. She starts running again. Adam is after her. He fires a SHOT. A tree gets SPLATTERED with shot gun pellets. Maria SCREAMS. She changes direction. Runs into the swamp. She finds a place to hide amongst some mangrove, semi submerged.

ADAM  
(distraught)  
I know you're out there bitch. I know  
you're out there.

Adam has a torchlight in one hand. He is scanning the swamp.

ADAM  
I knew he couldn't do it. But I had to  
let him try.  
(he continues walking  
and scanning)  
He was my best friend. My brother.  
Funny isn't it. He was supposed kill  
me. Now I've killed him. All because  
of you Maria.

Adam suddenly lunges into the swamp and swings his gun around a clump of mangrove. Wrong clump. He struggles back up and continues searching.

ADAM  
(singing)  
Maria...I just met a girl called  
Maria...and suddenly that name, will  
never be the same....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Adam is very near Maria now. Almost on top of her. She can see his muddy shoes. Adam's torchlight is illuminating the swamp just in front of Maria. She suddenly notices two big menacing eyes just above the water. Alligator. She SCREAMS. Adam sees her. The alligator is approaching slowly.

ADAM

An alligator. You are fucking kidding me. This is great. I don't even have to kill you myself....So long bitch.

The alligator opens its very large jaws and lunges for Maria. She SCREAMS. Three quick SHOTS are heard. The alligator collapses. Dead. The smoke clears and we see ISABELLA in a crouching position. Adam turns around and points his shot gun at her. BAM. Isabella lets off one more round and hits Adam dead center in the forehead. He falls into the swamp.

EXT. SHACK - A FEW MINUTES LATER

ISABELLA is walking back to the shack with MARIA clinging on to her. In the foreground we see the dead body of VINCENT. In the distance we see police cars. Two policemen are escorting CHARLOTTE to their car.

ISABELLA

Lucky I planted the tracker in your bag, big sister. Would never have found you out here.

MARIA

I'm glad you did. What made you come after me?

ISABELLA

Normally I wouldn't have. But this time, I can see you were like a dog on heat. And I thought, that's really going to fuck her head up and she won't think straight. And I was right. Tailing cars. Playing detective. Wrestling gators. Sheeeeet. What's wrong with you girl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA

I guess I just had to know the truth.

INT. TV SCREEN SHOWING KITCHEN- TWO WEEKS' LATER

JORGES is sitting. FATIMA is next to him. LESLIE the reporter is sitting in front of him. On the wall there are the photos of Maria and Isabella (in uniform). Above the photos is the massive head of the alligator.

LESLIE

Here I am at the apartment of Jorges and Fatima Rosa, the parents of Maria and Isabella Rosa, the two sisters who were involved in that bloody shootout in Key Largo two weeks ago.

(to Jorges)

How do you feel about your two daughters Mr Rosa? They were real heroines weren't they?

JORGES

(finally in heavily accented English)

I am very proud of both of them. My Maria, they should make her a partner at the law firm. Everybody knows about Henderson, Clay now. And my other daughter, Isabella. You know, I pushed her to join the police. They trained her well.

(he counts them off with his fingers)

One alligator. One man. Four bullets. Just like Clint Eastwood.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF MARIA ROSA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The entire Rosa clan, all ten of them, is there watching that interview. When it is finished, the whole clan erupts with cheering. The arguments start in Spanish with Fatima saying that it was she who suggested Isabella join the police and not Jorges. In the confusion, Maria slips away.

## EXT. ROOFTOP OF THE APARTMENT BLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

The sun is slowly setting. Close up on MARIA at the edge of the rooftop looking at the view. The view is out of focus. She is wrestling with the elation of solving the case and the loss of Vincent. At the same time, she is thinking: do I belong in that world or will I always be the Other. Her cell phone buzzes. Four emails have arrived. She looks down and starts scrolling through them. The camera pulls back until she is a tiny figure, offset against the Manhattan skyline, slowly coming into focus.

THE END