

D.C.
"Justice"
written by
John August

8/4/99

TEASER

1 INT. GUEST APARTMENT - 3 A.M. **1**

Pitch black. The phone RINGS.

Lewis GRUMBLES.

SARAH'S VOICE

It's for me. I'm sure it's for me.

Bed CREAKS, then a lamp switches ON, revealing Sarah. A little dazed, she finds the phone, answers.

SARAH

Hello? Mmmhmm.

Lewis looks over. In this golden light, at this quiet moment, Sarah is radiant. The world is good.

SARAH (cont'd)

(on phone)

Okay, he's right here.

(to Lewis)

It's your aunt.

She hands the phone to Lewis.

LEWIS

Hello?

We only hear his side of the call, but clearly it's not good news. He sits up to his shoulders, then further. Sarah looks over with increasing concern.

Interrupting his aunt...

LEWIS (cont'd)

(on phone)

Where is he now? Tell him not to talk to anyone until I get there.

2 INT. D.C. POLICE STATION - NIGHT **2**

A CRACKHEAD IN HANDCUFFS charges toward camera -- and Lewis. The COPS grab their man tight, leading him down the hall.

The hallway is filthy. The lights are flickering. And Lewis walks on. Up ahead --

AUDRA

Lewis!

His cousin AUDRA (22) stands up from the bench she was sharing with AUNT RUBY (60's). Ruby can't get up. It's all just too much for her.

AUDRA (cont'd)

They won't let us see him. They're interrogating him.

LEWIS

What happened? When did he call?

AUDRA

About two-thirty. He said he woulda called you first, but he didn't have your new number.

Ruby takes Lewis' hand.

AUDRA (cont'd)

Something about an electronics store, him and Riggs.

At "Riggs," Lewis looks away. Of course it's Riggs. Spotting a passing DETECTIVE -- his badge on his belt --

LEWIS

Turrell Freeman, which room is he in?

DETECTIVE

(blowing past)
He's in questioning.

LEWIS

I'm his attorney.

3 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

3

Another DETECTIVE pulls the door shut, leaving just Lewis and his shaking cousin TURRELL (19). On better days Turrell is a track champ. Tonight, he's terrified. He keeps rocking back and forth.

TURRELL

I didn't tell 'em anything.

LEWIS

That's good. That's right. Now, you're okay? Nothing's hurt, nothing's broken?

Turrell shakes his head. He's starting to cry. Lewis takes a hand behind Turrell's neck, holding him back up.

LEWIS (cont'd)

You're all right. You got Ruby here, you got Audra, you got your cousin Lewis. Look how many people you've got out here at three in the morning.

Turrell tries to smile, but it pinches his face more.

LEWIS (cont'd)

C'mon. I'm not going to let anything bad happen to you. You know that.

Finally looking up, through sniffles...

TURRELL

You can be my lawyer, right? You can fix all this.

CLOSE ON Lewis. What else can he say?

LEWIS

Yes. I can fix this.

SMASH CUT TO:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

5 EXT. GEORGETOWN LAW SCHOOL CAMPUS - DAY

5

FOUR YOUNG ALMOST-LAWYERS, men and women, various races speak directly to camera. We CUT BETWEEN them:

ONE

Oh, I've heard 'em all.

TWO

What do you call a hundred lawyers on the bottom of the ocean?

THREE

A good start.

ONE

Everyone thinks the world would be a better place without lawyers. But without lawyers, there would be no law.

FOUR

I think Johnny Cochran is a hero.

THREE

Without law, there would be no justice.

TWO

Plessy versus Ferguson.

THREE

Brown versus the Board of Education.

FOUR

Roe versus Wade.

ONE

Wherever there's a "versus," there's lawyers. Modern history -- modern society -- is the product of lawyers.

TWO

"Why would you want to be a lawyer?"

FOUR

Because that's where the real power is.

THREE

Without lawyers, innocent people would die.

ONE

I want to change the course of history.
Is that selfish? Is that vain? Yeah,
fine. Guilty.

TWO

Guilty.

THREE

Guilty.

6 EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

6

MASON

Guilty.

PETE

A beautiful day, an empty course and the
only word that comes to mind is guilty?

Mason, Pete and Finley have the tee to themselves. It's a
very Abercrombie & Fitch-y morning: country club, khakis and
an air of civilized indulgence.

Finley drops a handful grass to see which way the wind is
blowing, but she doesn't know what she's doing.

MASON

A beautiful Monday and an empty course
we're scamming our way onto. The only
thing balancing out my "you-should-be-
working" guilt is my "breaking-the-law"
guilt.

Pete takes his swing. He has great form.

PETE

First, your new job doesn't start until
tomorrow. The other guy hasn't even
cleaned out his desk. In the mean time,
cherish your unemployment. Finley does.

FINLEY

I do.

Sorting through her brother's golf bag, Finley tries to
decide which club to use.

PETE

Second. You're not breaking a law.
You're breaking a rule. A bylaw at most.

FINLEY

What is a bylaw, anyway?

MASON

A rule by which members agree to adhere. Members such as the Sorensens, whose membership we are jeopardizing by being here.

PETE

Question: Who watches over the Sorensens' house? Who takes care of their dog? Their priceless antiques, many of which are still unbroken?
Answer: We do. If they've put their trust in us to guard their tangible assets, why not their intangible assets, i.e. their club membership?

FINLEY

(finally picking a club)
He makes a good point.

MASON

Finley, in America we usually tee off with a wood.

FINLEY

Again with your rules.

7 EXT. IN THE DARK WOODS - DAY

7

Mason and Pete watch with annoyance as Finley searches for her ball.

PETE

Finley, let it go. It's a one-stroke penalty.

FINLEY

I don't want to lose a stroke.

MASON

You're at eight already.

With an "AHA!" she finds her ball. Then from the fairway, a voice...

MAN'S VOICE

Mason Scott.

We turn to find it's NEIL, with two of his fraternity-brother HOUSEMATES. They stand in the sunlight while Mason and friends stand in the itchy woods.

NEIL

How's it going, amigo?

Could it be? Could Neil be nice?

MASON

(wary, but polite)

Neil. Hey. How are things at Abbott?

NEIL

We got Chang doing your job, so it can't be too bad.

(beat)

Hey, I thought you mighta left town. Y'know, after I fired you.

MASON

I got a job working for Owens.

NEIL

Well, hey. Sometime you gotta move down to find your level.

Nope, still a prick.

MASON

Actually, I'm an LA, just like you.

NEIL

I'm Senate, you're House. You gotta take a big discount for that. But hey. Whatever helps you get it up.

(beat)

See ya round.

Mason grits his teeth and waves.

Neil is walking off with his buddies, when he's nearly beamed by a golf ball. Looking back, we see it was Finley who threw it.

FINLEY

Sorry.

Pete smiles to himself.

8 INT. POLICE STATION MEN'S ROOM - DAY

8

Lewis changes into a suit for work. Sarah folds up the garment bag -- she brought him his clothes.

LEWIS

The police caught my cousin inside a locked electronics store at 2:30 a.m. It's not like there's a good alibi.

SARAH

That doesn't sound like Turrell.

LEWIS

It's not Turrell, it's his friend Riggs. I'm sure he was behind all of it. Turrell was just there to help carry things.

He holds up two ties for Sarah to choose between.

SARAH

That one.

He goes with the one she picked.

SARAH (cont'd)

Mason and Finley's father is a defense attorney. I'm sure if you asked, he could help. Mason said he was really impressed by you.

LEWIS

This shouldn't be a big deal. Turrell's 19. He has a good job, no priors. We'll make bail, plead it out as attempted and he gets probation plus community service. It may screw up his scholarship, but that's the price you pay.

SARAH

(a little wary)

And you can handle all this?

LEWIS

I'm a bona fide lawyer. I can practice law in D.C.

SARAH

(fixing his tie)

It's not the lawyer-Lewis I was worried about.

He smiles, a quick kiss.

LEWIS
Don't worry. This is going to be fine.

A doorbell RINGS.

9 EXT. TOWNHOUSE - DAY

9

Mason answers the door, surprised to find THREE UNIFORMED POLICE on the front steps.

MASON
Can I help you?

POLICE OFFICER #1
We have a search warrant for this property.

MASON
Excuse me?

CUT TO:

10 INT. UPSTAIRS TOWNHOUSE / VARIOUS ROOMS - DAY

10

We're HANDHELD through this sequence, which has the quality of a home invasion. Doors are thrown open, boxes spilled out.

Freaked out and horrified, Finley watches as a rubber-gloved officer digs through her closet.

FINLEY
They can't do this can they?

MASON
They have a search warrant.

PETE
Yeah, for a "Turrell Freeman." Is that Lewis's brother?

FINLEY
He doesn't have a brother. It could be his cousin.

INTO THE HALLWAY...

MASON

They said the guy's car was registered to this address.

INTO MASON'S ROOM...

We find another Officer turning Mason's stereo around.

MASON (cont'd)

Okay, hey. That's mine.

OFFICER #1

I gotta check serial numbers.

Looking in one of Mason's turned-out drawers, Pete pulls out an opened box of condoms.

PETE

What are these for?

FINLEY

They're for his penis.

PETE

(checking label)

They've expired. Almost an entire box has expired. That is actually sad.

Mason stares him dead in the eye.

MASON

Think about the last time I touched that box. Now think where my hands were moments before the last time I touched that box.

Pete drops the box, backs away, horrified.

The officer moves on the next room, where the other cops are pulling back the bed.

FINLEY

(back to subject)

The name on the warrant doesn't match anyone who lives at this house. This search has to be illegal.

PETE

(more quietly)

You want to talk "legal?" Technically, only you and Mason are supposed to be living here. I don't think we want the police asking too many questions.

On Mason and Finley. Pete makes a good point.

11 INT. CNL - DAY

11

We catch Sarah walking briskly, in the middle of a very hectic workday.

SARAH

Look, I don't know why the police would come to the townhouse.

Mason and Finley are following her.

MASON

Did Lewis let his cousin register his car there?

SARAH

Why would he do that?

MASON

To lower his insurance rates. It's a better zip code.

SARAH

I don't know.

Reaching the dry-erase assignment board, she smushes out an entry with her hand, then markers in a different line.

MASON

Well, do you think Lewis knew his cousin was doing it?

SARAH

I don't know. I am not Lewis. Contrary to popular belief, Lewis-and-Sarah is not one person. If you have a question for Lewis, why don't you ask him yourself?

FINLEY

We tried. He's not answering his pages. And you can't exactly walk into the Supreme Court.

SARAH

(pointed)

But you can walk into my office, no problem.

Grabbing a stack of tapes, she heads off in a different direction.

MASON

Sarah, this is serious. The police were digging through the house for an hour. What if they'd found something?

SARAH

(turning, aghast)
What, like, stolen electronics? Don't tell me you think Lewis was involved.

MASON

Of course not.

SARAH

Good.

FINLEY

Sarah, the point is, we're all involved. Whatever Lewis's cousin did or didn't do, we now have police going through our laundry. We have reason to be upset.

A beat. Sarah has to admit...

SARAH

You're right. You do have a reason to be upset. But not with me.

Mason and Finley back off a little.

SARAH (cont'd)

Lewis is handling this. That's all I know.

A BUZZZZZZ. BUZZZZZZ.

12 INT. JUSTICE BOK'S CHAMBER - DAY

12

Lewis shuts off his pager. He's standing at JUDGE ELIZABETH BOK's desk. She's not in the best mood today.

BOK

Three hours?

LEWIS

Four at the most. I wouldn't ask, but it's absolutely vital.

BOK

As much as your beeper's been going off, I would assume so.

LEWIS

I've got Kevin up to speed on Brickman.
He can pull research, and I'll be back by
three.

ANGLE ON Bok. It really is an inconvenience.

BOK

This is personal business?

LEWIS

It is.

BOK

(finally)

Alright. Three o'clock. Don't be late.

LEWIS

Thank you. I won't.

13 EXT. DC COURT - DAY

13

To establish...

14 INT. COURTHOUSE PREP ROOM - DAY

14

TURRELL

It was just a one-time thing.

Lewis is alone in the room with Turrell. He's taking notes
on a legal pad.

TURRELL (cont'd)

Couple weeks ago, Riggs went to that
store to buy one of their DVD players.
They had it on sale or something. And
for half an hour, he's trying to get
someone to wait on him, but they keep
putting him off, like "just a minute,"
and then they go disappear. And the
reality is, there's just too many white
people with money. So Riggs finally gets
this brother to wait on him, and the guy
tells him they just sold out of that DVD
player, the one in the ad, but if he
wants, he can buy this one that's just as
good but costs \$80 more.

LEWIS

Tell me how you ended up inside the store
at two a.m.

TURRELL

Riggs is pissed about how they treated him. And the more he's thinking about, the more pissed he gets. So we're talking, and now I'm pissed, because the same thing's happened to me -- and it's happened to you, so don't tell me it hasn't -- and Riggs says, "Fine. They don't want to sell me a DVD player, I'll go and take it."

LEWIS

And he roped you in to help him.

TURRELL

I guess. I mean yeah. I did it.

LEWIS

(a little indignant)
What were you thinking? That this was somehow justified?

TURRELL

(overlapping)
I wasn't thinking! I was just doing. Like I said, it was just a one-time thing.

15 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

15

The courtroom clock reads 4:15 -- Lewis is already late, but he has no choice. He's standing at the defense table with Turrell and RIGGS, Turrell's slack, predatory best friend, and Riggs' PUBLIC DEFENDER.

The contrast between this courtroom and the ivory tower of the Supreme Court could not be more evident. Everything is run-down, crowded and gritty. There are still 10 cases behind this one.

The exhausted JUDGE at the bench is reviewing the charges. The PROSECUTOR starts...

PROSECUTOR

Your honor, Mr. Freeman and Mr. Riggs were arrested at the scene of the crime, where they ran from the police in an attempt to avoid capture. One officer was injured in the chase, and had 11 stitches from broken glass.

Lewis looks to Turrell. He hadn't told him that part.

Sarah enters the court, taking a seat in back near Aunt Ruby and Audra. The latter shakes her head, "why is she here?"

PROSECUTOR (cont'd)

In addition to last night's attempted burglary, these two men are suspects in three other cases, all at the same chain of stores, all with similar details. The total value of the five burglaries exceeds \$100,000.

ON LEWIS AND THE PUBLIC DEFENDER, surprised by this sudden turn. Lewis looks to Turrell -- what's this about? Turrell shrugs that he doesn't know.

Aunt Ruby looks to Audra.

PROSECUTOR (cont'd)

In light of the scope of these charges, and the near-certainty of jail time if convicted, we ask that bail be denied.

Lewis interjects...

LEWIS

Your honor, this is the first we're hearing of these other burglaries.

PROSECUTOR

Our office just became aware of them. We're going to be filing the charges this afternoon.

LEWIS

The question of bail has to be determined on the charges as they stand.

JUDGE

I'm aware of that, counsellor. I've done this before.

On Lewis, knowing he blew that.

LEWIS

Your honor, both of these men are D.C. born and raised, with long-standing ties to the community. Turrell Freeman has a scholarship to the University of Virginia next fall and no prior record. He is no risk for flight.

PROSECUTOR

Mr. Riggs, on the other hand, has two priors. One for shoplifting and one for receipt of stolen property.

JUDGE

I'm denying bail for Mr. Riggs, and setting bail for Mr. Freeman at \$50,000.

He bangs the gavel. It's done. A beat before Lewis leans down to Turrell --

LEWIS

Don't worry, we'll get the money.

Riggs looks over at Lewis and Turrell, pissed.

LEWIS (cont'd)

Anything you're not telling me, Turrell?

TURRELL

No.

The BAILIFFS take Turrell. Preparing to leave, Lewis sees Sarah sitting at the back of the courtroom. Smiles for her.

16 EXT. FRONT OF TOWNHOUSE - DAY

16

Shutting the door behind him, Pete carries his bike down the steps. On the sidewalk, a man named DR. KEPPLER (late 40's) is walking his small dog.

Keppler is a strongly built man, very intimidating except for a kind smile. (That and the little dog.)

KEPPLER

You must be Jason.

PETE

Excuse me?

KEPPLER

No, not Jason. Pason. Gracen.

PETE

Mason?

KEPPLER

I suppose you would know your own name. I'm Dr. Keppler. I live two houses up.

Reaching the bottom step, Pete shakes hands.

PETE

It's good to meet you.

KEPPLER

My wife says you and your sister are watching over the place for the Sorensens.

PETE

Yes. We are. My sister and I.

KEPPLER

Everything okay? We saw police cars here this morning.

PETE

Oh, no. No problem. Just a misunderstanding.

KEPPLER

Good, good.

A long beat. Now for why Keppler is really here...

KEPPLER (cont'd)

Listen, Mason, let me give you the good neighbor spiel here. This is a quiet street, and people pretty much mind their own business. The folks who can afford these houses have achieved a certain amount of success, and with that comes certain expectations. Garbage cans off the street by 10 a.m., that kind of thing. We don't have any other young people on the street, so the neighbors see you and your friends here, they see police cars out front, and they're thinking there's a problem. And you don't want them thinking there's a problem.

ANGLE ON Pete, realizing this is more than just helpful advice.

KEPPLER (cont'd)

This housesitting thing you've got going, it's a pretty good deal. I'd hate to see you lose it over some gossiping neighbors.

A beat.

PETE

Thanks for your advice. We'll keep a low profile.

KEPPLER

Yeah, that's probably the best thing. Have yourself a good evening.

Keppler heads off with his dog, leaving Pete to mull over his threat.

17 INT. SUPREME COURT BUILDING - NIGHT 17

Lewis charges up the empty stairs, running very late.

18 INT. SUPREME COURT HALLWAY - NIGHT 18

Bok is locking her office door when Lewis comes around the far corner, at a near run.

BOK

(calling out)

You're four hours late, Mr. Freeman.

LEWIS

(closing the distance)

I apologize. I can't begin to say how sorry I am.

BOK

Well, you can begin. Whether you'll finish is another matter.

That was a joke. Sort of.

BOK (cont'd)

Every clerk is allowed to make one mistake, and you just made it. The suspense is over.

He walks with Bok, back the way he came.

LEWIS

I'm sorry. I was in a situation where I couldn't call.

BOK

I didn't want a phone call to say you were running late. I'm not the girl you're taking to the movies. I'm your boss.

Lewis doesn't answer.

BOK (cont'd)
Your personal matter, is it resolved?

LEWIS
No. I thought it might be, but it's not.

A beat. It's not the answer either of them wanted.

LEWIS (cont'd)
I'm going to need time this week to handle it. I can come in early, work late...

BOK
You already come in early. You already work late. That's a clerk's job. This position -- your position -- is the single most prestigious place to begin a legal career. Any lawyer in America would kill to have your opportunity.

LEWIS
I know that.

A beat.

BOK
I respect your privacy and I respect your intelligence. So here's all I'm going to ask: Whatever you have to do, is it important enough that you're willing to sacrifice this position to do it?

A beat.

LEWIS
Honestly, yes. I don't want to, but yes. For this, I am willing to risk my clerkship.

BOK
(stopping him)
You misunderstand. You already are risking your clerkship. I'm asking if you're willing to give it up.

She leaves him where he stands, heading down the hallway.
CLOSE ON a troubled Lewis, we...

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

19 INT. LEWIS' FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT

19

An emergency family meeting, about 15 people, including Audra, Aunt Ruby and UNCLE VERNON, who wears an oxygen tube. The family's MINISTER, a black man in his late 50's, finishes a prayer...

MINISTER

Lord, in this time of confusion, we ask you for guidance. May your wisdom see us through this latest challenge, and may the bonds between us...

ANGLE ON Sarah and Lewis.

MINISTER (cont'd)

...grow stronger for their testing. This in the name of Jesus we ask. Amen.

Everyone says "Amen," except Lewis, who wasn't looking down.

We CROSSFADE to Lewis, a few minutes later. He has the floor. He's in control.

LEWIS

Tomorrow morning, we'll start meeting with attorneys. By the afternoon we should have one hired.

AUNT RUBY

I thought you were going to defend Turrell yourself.

LEWIS

If it was just breaking and entering, I could. I've handled cases like that back at Yale. But now that it's three counts of larceny plus possible grand theft, we need a real criminal lawyer.

Throughout this, Turrell sits despondent, helpless as others decide his fate.

LEWIS (cont'd)

I'll be filing all the papers and doing all the legal grunt work myself. That should save us some money.

(MORE)

LEWIS (cont'd)
 But it's going to be expensive. We need
 someone good. If Turrell's convicted, he
 could be facing five years.

A beat. All eyes go to the matriarch.

AUNT RUBY
 If you think hiring a lawyer's right,
 that's what we'll do.

20 INT. LEWIS' FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT / LATER

20

In a corner of the room, Sarah has Lewis to herself. They
 keep their conversation low.

SARAH
 You're already working 60-hour weeks for
 the Court. How are you going to handle
 Turrell's casework on top of that?

LEWIS
 I'll find a way.

She's not letting him get away with that.

SARAH
 Lewis, when you were studying for the
 bar, you decided a keep a full-time job,
 plus work at the clinic. You said, "I'll
 find a way."

He knows where this is going.

SARAH (cont'd)
 You found a way not to sleep for three
 weeks. You found a way to get mono. I
 had to have you hospitalized, Lewis,
 because you collapsed on the stairs. I
 thought you were going to die.

LEWIS
 (trying to lighten)
 But I passed the bar.

Sarah is not amused.

At the door to the backyard patio, the Minister motions for
 Lewis to come outside. Lewis nods, he's coming.

SARAH
 I'm not going to stand by and watch you
 hurt yourself.

LEWIS

That's why I love you.

He kisses her on the forehead, a bit patronizing though he didn't mean it. He goes over to Minister, then outside.

Sarah notices Audra has been watching them while cleaning up. Sarah gives a small nod of acknowledgement, but Audra is pure ice. A beat.

Audra passes on her way to the kitchen.

SARAH

Audra?

She stops, looks over.

SARAH (cont'd)

I'm going to stop trying to be friendly with you. Is that okay?

AUDRA

That would be fine.

She heads into the kitchen.

21 EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

21

Through the sliding glass door, we can see into the family room, where Turrell is sitting on the couch. He's like a turtle retreated into its shell.

The Minister has a private word with Lewis.

MINISTER

I like Turrell. Deep down, I think he's a good kid. But he's not you, Lewis. He was never going to be. I know you want to help him. I know you want to help your family. But this situation will taint everything around it. Don't let it taint you.

LEWIS

I'm not sure I follow you.

MINISTER (cont'd)

I know you try to be modest. Some of that's real and some of it's an act. But you're different. You stand apart from everyone else, and it's noticed. People you don't even know are proud of you.

(MORE)

MINISTER (cont'd)

People in the church. When their kids are complaining about homework, or that the whole system is against them, they say, "Look at Lewis Freeman. Grew up three houses down. Mother was an addict who left him damn near an orphan. Still, he went to Yale. Scholarship, full ride. Now he's working for the Supreme Court." You're the success story. Local boy makes good.

LEWIS

And you think by getting involved, I'm tarnishing that perfect image.

(the Minister nods)

What kind of man would I be if I backed away from my family when they needed me most? You're saying I shouldn't help my own cousin?

MINISTER

I'm saying, watch your pride. Only Jesus Christ can save a man. You start thinking you can do things you can't, and you're going to find yourself humbled very quickly.

22 INT. TOWNHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

22

Mason, Pete and Finley are putting away groceries, labelling each with a marker.

MASON

What did this Dr. Keppler say?

PETE

It wasn't a threat, exactly. More of a warning. Plus, he thinks I'm you, so don't be yourself if you meet him.

MASON

Who should I be?

PETE

Eli the Castrato. I don't care.

MASON

What is this recurring theme about my genetalia?

Lewis enters, Sarah behind him. Seeing all his housemates...

LEWIS

Hey.

FINLEY

We need to talk.

LEWIS

I know. The police were here.

MASON

The neighbors are starting to ask questions.

Lewis grabs one of his Cokes out of the fridge.

LEWIS

I told Turrell he could register his car here. It was \$800 less a year.

FINLEY

How could you do that?

LEWIS

Finley, your car is still registered at Cornell. Don't start lecturing me about ethics.

MASON

Lewis, the point is, your actions have jeopardized the house for all of us.

LEWIS

And I'm sorry. I'm sorry that this happened. But it's done, and I have more important things to deal with right now.

Taking his Coke and his briefcase, he heads out. Sarah holds back, waiting for the stares to inevitably fall towards her.

But Mason's not ready for the discussion to be finished. He pushes past Sarah, following Lewis.

INT. LIVING / DINING ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Lewis is heading for the stairs down to the guest apartment.

MASON

"Sorry" is not good enough. What if the Sorensens find out the police were here? We could lose this place.

LEWIS

(turning on him)

And who's fault is that, really? If you and Finley had gotten a legitimate lease, none of this would be an issue. So stop trying to throw it back on me.

MASON

Lewis, we have to find a way to...

LEWIS

(short)

This is your problem. You deal with it.

He heads downstairs. We look back to the kitchen doorway, where Pete, Finley and Sarah are watching. After a beat, Sarah leaves the group to head downstairs.

23 INT. GUEST APARTMENT - NIGHT

23

Fighting a headache, Lewis highlights case files for work. Sarah takes a seat beside him.

SARAH

Let me help.

(before he can object)

I went to college. I can work a highlighter.

She takes a file and a marker.

LEWIS

Just the dates before July 16, 1993. And then only if the petitioner is the state or an agency of the state.

SARAH

Got it.

She starts marking. A few beats.

LEWIS

How angry are they upstairs?

SARAH

Very.

LEWIS

I didn't mean for it to get that way. I was just blowing off steam.

SARAH

I know.

LEWIS

I'll talk with them.

SARAH

No. You deal with your family. I'll deal with the roommates. Divide and conquer.

(a beat)

We'll make it through this, I promise.

He nods, a half-smile.

24 EXT. DC MONTAGE - THE NEXT DAY 24

VARIOUS SHOTS, now morning.

25 EXT. LONGWORTH BUILDING - DAY 25

To establish...

26 INT. OWENS' OUTER OFFICE - DAY 26

Owen's senior legislative assistant MOLLY (29) shows Mason the office, which is smaller and a lot more claustrophobic than Abbott's.

Molly herself is a pretty, full-figured gal who probably ran every club in high school while keeping a 4.0 -- she's terrifyingly capable. Ever-cheerful and a bit daffy, people constantly underestimate her.

The tour starts in the copier room.

MOLLY

Fax one. Fax two. The copier, which is possessed. It can't be repaired; you have to use voodoo.

(taking him by the arm)

Also, don't try to copy your ass. Not funny, and it's a big pet peeve of mine.

(moving on)

The autopen is broken, but I can sign Owens' name better than he can.

Coming out into...

THE MAIN ROOM.

MOLLY (cont'd)
 Coffee machine. Don't be the person who
 leaves a quarter-inch so you don't have
 to make a new pot. That's why we fired
 the last guy.
 (beat)
 Kidding. He went to finance committee.
 (pointing)
 You remember Janiece?

Mason waves.

MASON
 Good to see you again.

Office receptionist JANIECE waves back, points to her
 headset. She's on a call. Mason smiles, sorry.

Molly is already five steps ahead.

MOLLY (cont'd)
 My desk, Bill's desk, your desk.

Mason's desk is a disaster area, still covered with four
 inches of the previous owner's debris.

MOLLY (cont'd)
 I'll be honest with you. There's kind of
 a funky smell. We think there's a
 sandwich hidden in there somewhere.

A beat. Mason and Molly look at the desk.

MOLLY (cont'd)
 Good luck!

As she heads off, Mason pulls out his chair.

27 INT. OWEN'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

27

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN OWENS gives the marching orders, a
 bewildering number of projects for Mason to track.

OWENS
 Also, get up to speed on the four
 agriculture bills, plus juvie crime and
 highways. We're up to five days
 turnaround on letters, I want to be down
 to three.

As he talks, Owens walks around with a baseball bat. It's
 intimidating, though he doesn't mean it to be.

MASON

We got down to two at Abbott.

OWENS

Then that's your new goal. Get the system working.

He points the bat right at Mason.

OWENS (cont'd)

How many counties are there in Michigan?

MASON

Eighty-three.

OWENS

How many in our district?

MASON

Nine. But some of them are split.

OWENS

Very good. We'll send you out there eventually. In the meantime, try to learn town names. You get Owosso and Ionia confused and I'll have a riot on my hands.

Mason adds to his list.

OWENS (cont'd)

Softball.

MASON

Yes?

OWENS

What position do you play?

MASON

(deadpan)

Umpire.

OWENS

(smiles)

You're now third base. Our office and Piedmont's have an intramural team. We're undefeated in our last one game. Tomorrow we play Abbott.

MASON

My old office.

OWENS

You're not going to go easy on them
because they're friends?

MASON

Actually, I'd like to kick their ass.

OWENS

You'll fit in well.

28 EXT. LEWIS' FAMILY HOUSE / BACK PORCH - DAY

28

Lewis, with Turrell, Aunt Ruby and Audra, meets with VINCENT
HAKIM, the lawyer they've hired.

HAKIM

I think your best option is the divide
the case, split away from your friend
Riggs. He has a record, you don't.

Turrell shakes his head.

LEWIS

Plus, Turrell has an alibi for one of the
other robberies. He was visiting U.V.A.;
they can vouch for him.

TURRELL

(adamant)

I'm not going to give up Riggs.

LEWIS

Your friend is an anchor dragging you
down.

TURRELL

He's done a lot more for me than you
have.

It stings, but Lewis lets it slide.

AUDRA

Turrell, you gotta do this.

TURRELL

No I don't. I'm sticking with Riggs no
matter what you say, and that's it. Why
are you assuming Riggs is behind all
this? We didn't rob those other places.
It was just a stupid, one-time thing, and
you gotta get it back to that.

He heads inside, leaving Lewis to plan his next move.

29 EXT. FRONT OF TOWNHOUSE - DAY

29

With difficulty, Finley backs a rolling trash can out from the service hallway beneath the townhouse. (It's that little door between the units.)

As she's approaching the curb, suddenly a VOICE...

MAN'S VOICE

Are you the sister?

It's Dr. Keppler, without the dog this time.

FINLEY

(wary)

I guess.

KEPPLER

Dr. Keppler. I talked to your brother yesterday.

FINLEY

That's right. He said.

Keppler steps towards her. The way they're positioned, he's boxing her into the cars on the street.

KEPPLER

Listen, we need to have a conversation about what's happening at your house here.

FINLEY

(a little spooked)

Really?

KEPPLER

I know there's more than just you and your brother living here. I've been counting heads. So far, I'm up to five.

FINLEY

Well, we have people visiting...

KEPPLER

Cut the crap. If the Sorensens knew you had five people living here, you'd be out on the street.

A beat. Finley summons her courage and straightens up.

FINLEY

I don't see how that's any of your business.

KEPPLER

It's not hard for me to call the Sorensens and let them know. As their neighbor, I think that's my duty.

As he speaks, he comes closer.

FINLEY

If you take one more step towards me, I will scream.

She's dead serious. Keppler backs off a little.

On the sidewalk, a random PEDESTRIAN walks past. Once he's out of earshot...

FINLEY

What do you want?

KEPPLER

A monthly contribution to the good neighbor fund. Say a thousand dollars. In exchange for my silence.

FINLEY

That's blackmail.

KEPPLER

Think of it as rent.

He backs off.

KEPPLER (cont'd)

Talk to your roommates, and let me know tonight.

He starts to leave, then turns back.

KEPPLER (cont'd)

(pointing)

And make sure the trash cans are off the street by 10 a.m.

He goes. We stay CLOSE ON Finley, trying to figure out what she's going to do.

30 INT. BOK'S CHAMBER - DAY

30

Lewis is going through his work with Bok.

LEWIS

The appeals court sent it back on the question of disclosure, but left the broader issues untouched.

A KNOCK at the door.

BOK

Come!

A sheepish CLERK opens the door a crack.

BOK (cont'd)

Yes?

The Clerk motions for Lewis. Someone needs to see him.
ANGLE ON Lewis, deciding how to handle this.

LEWIS (cont'd)

(to Bok)

I'm sorry. It'll just be a moment.

Bok could not be less pleased.

31 INT. SUPREME COURT HALLWAY - DAY

31

Lewis exits the outer office to find Hakim waiting for him.

HAKIM

(re: the building)

This is nice. I always wondered what it was like in here. Inside the High Temple of Law.

LEWIS

Is there a problem?

HAKIM

Would I be here if there wasn't?

They start to walk slowly down the hallway, stopping at times.

HAKIM (cont'd)

First off, you can forget about convincing your cousin to split off his case. His buddy Riggs already split off.

(MORE)

HAKIM (cont'd)

He's going to try to pin this back on Turrell. Reason being? The police just found the loot from the three other robberies in a storage shed in Baltimore.

LEWIS

Can they trace it back to Riggs?

HAKIM

You ready?

LEWIS

What?

HAKIM

They can trace it back to you.

(a beat)

Storage shed was rented with cash, but they had to put a down a credit card for a security deposit. Guess who's card they used?

ON LEWIS, numb and disbelieving. And remembering...

LEWIS

I let him borrow it to fix his car.

HAKIM (cont'd)

Signatures won't match, but you're going to have to answer for it. And this paints Turrell as being the instigator, not the unwitting accomplice we're trying to sell. Plus it's way over 100,000.

LEWIS

Grand theft.

HAKIM

And jail time, guaranteed. Our best shot is to get your cousin to cooperate with the police, implicate Riggs and throw most of the weight back his way. Give them details, dates, contacts, who they were fencing to.

LEWIS

I don't know if I can. He's too tight with Riggs.

HAKIM

Let me make it simple. Either you get your cousin to plead, or you start explaining to your family why Turrell's going to spend the next three Christmases in jail. Either way, it's all up to you.

Hakim walks away.

Lewis already had the weight on his shoulders. But the world just got a little heavier.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

32 EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

32

A beautiful day for a ball game.

Three BATTERS up. CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! The game is afoot.

ON THE BENCH

Mason's team consists of his office plus Piedmont's -- including KRISTI.

KRISTI

I never got an adequate thank-you for helping you get this job.

MASON

(surprised)

I called and sent a card.

KRISTI

I don't consider that adequate.

She's flirting. Mason was slow to get it, but he's up to speed now.

MASON

What would you consider fair?

KRISTI

Dinner. Tonight.

MASON

It's a date.

A beat.

KRISTI

Is it, now?

She gets up, prepping to bat.

ON THE FIELD

Molly is at bat, wearing a team t-shirt with a skirt. She never wears pants. Never.

Neil is pitching. He yells to the UMPIRE.

NEIL

She's still crowding the plate!

MOLLY

Then hit me. C'mon, hit me!

A beat, then Neil throws it deliberately wide.

MOLLY (cont'd)

Ball four! And I'm walkin', I'm walkin'.

She struts to first base.

AT THE BENCHES

On the far side of the chain-link fence, Owens comes up behind Mason. He's just arrived, still in work clothes.

OWENS

Mason! How are we doing?

MASON

Tied up. Runners on base.

OWENS

Doctor's appointment ran late. Mason, my wife Katie; Katie, Mason.

They finger-shake through the chain-link. KATIE OWENS (30) is astonishingly pregnant.

MASON

Good to meet you.

Owens takes off his shirt and tie, changing into his team t-shirt.

ON RIGHT FIELD

Finley is sitting with Sarah in the grass, watching the game, and Owens in particular, as he changes shirts.

FINLEY

Yowsa.

SARAH

Paging Representative Hottie.

Pete sits down beside them.

PETE

Hey.

SARAH
(to Finley)
Does he know?

PETE
Know what?

FINLEY
We're being blackmailed.

ON THE FIELD

Kristi strikes out. As she hands off the bat to Mason,
there's eye contact that's unmistakable.

OWENS
Mason!

He waves him over.

OWENS (cont'd)
You've got a tie game, bases loaded.
What do you do?

MASON
Bunt? Get the runner in?

OWENS
Knock it out of the park. Always impress
the girl.

Mason smiles, guilty.

AT THE PLATE

Mason digs in. The catcher looks up to him. It's Chang.

CHANG
Kick his ass.

MASON
Thanks, Chang. I think I will.

On the pitcher's mound, Neil gets ready. And we enter SLOW
MOTION. From here to the end, there's nobody in this game
except Mason and Neil. It's all eyes and teeth and sweat.

A look from Neil: I'm not worried.

A look from Mason: You should be.

Neil throws. Mason swings.

And connects with a RING. He knocks it out of the park.

Smiling, Mason flips the bat in his hand, still looking at Neil as he starts to go.

Neil tries to shrug it off. But he's pissed.

33 EXT. LEWIS' FAMILY HOUSE / BACK YARD / PORCH - DAY

33

The back yard is overgrown and BUZZING, beautiful in its disarray.

We slowly PUSH IN on Lewis, standing in the dappled light. A very long quiet moment. He's getting himself ready for what he has to do.

CUT TO:

AT THE TABLE

Turrell sits across from Lewis.

TURRELL

Riggs was moving out of his mother's house. He needed to store his stuff. He couldn't rent a place without a credit card.

LEWIS

So you used mine.

TURRELL

He paid cash. That was just for the security deposit.

LEWIS

When did you know he was stealing?

TURRELL

I told you. Not until that last one.

LEWIS

Don't lie to me.

TURRELL

I'm not lying!

LEWIS

So Riggs was lying to you. The whole story about moving out of his mom's place. All his stuff. He was lying to you.

TURRELL

No.

LEWIS (cont'd)
C'mon Turrell, those are the only options. Either Riggs was lying to you, or you're lying to me right now.

On Turrell, knowing he's trapped.

LEWIS (cont'd)
Who's the liar? You or Riggs?

TURRELL
I didn't know he was stealing until last week. I kind of suspected something, but I didn't know until then.

LEWIS
So it was really only the last one he brought you in on. The rest he did himself.

TURRELL
Yeah.

LEWIS
Do you want to spend the next three years of your life in jail?

TURRELL
No.

LEWIS
Do you think Riggs wants to?

TURRELL
No.

LEWIS
Because right now, he's telling the police exactly what you're telling me. Only he's reversing the names.

TURRELL
He wouldn't do that.

LEWIS
(more argumentative)
Why do you think he split off the case, Turrell? He's turning on you. Are so you so stupid that you can't see it?

TURRELL

I'm not stupid.

LEWIS

Yes you are. You are stupid. Because even if you plead this out -- best case scenario -- you are looking at six months to a year in jail. There goes your track scholarship. There goes college.

Turrell won't look him in the eye.

LEWIS (cont'd)

Now think about your family. Is it fair that they're going to have to worry about you every night in jail? Worry that you got stabbed, or worse? Do you want people talking about them at church? Do you want people to pity them?

TURRELL

I didn't mean for it to get like this.

LEWIS

But it did. And it ruined everything, not just for you, but for everyone around you. Right at this moment, I'm supposed to be at the Supreme Court doing the job I spent seven years getting, and instead I'm here cleaning up your mistakes. So don't tell me it's not fair. I know it's not fair.

(beat)

For once in your life, do the right thing. Turn Riggs in.

A long beat.

Turrell, who had retreated to a far-off country, suddenly reappears behind his eyes. Now calm...

TURRELL

Okay. Okay.

A beat, then Lewis gets up, heads inside. We HOLD ON Turrell, numb and defeated.

He sits alone at the table as we PULL BACK away from him. In OVERLAPPING SHOTS, we keep coming in close, and keep pulling back away.

He's not emotional anymore. He's not anything.

34 INT. LEWIS' FAMILY HOUSE / KITCHEN - DAY

34

Lewis walks past Audra.

LEWIS

It's done.

He just keeps walking. Audra looks back out to Turrell.

36 EXT. D.C. MALL - NIGHT

36

VARIOUS SHOTS, monuments, then finding...

MASON

walking with Kristi. By their expressions, the date is going well.

KRISTI

I think I figured out your problem.

MASON

Really? I hope you'll tell me.

KRISTI

You're too nice.

MASON

I am?

KRISTI

Most women, they say they want the good guy, but really, they want the bad guy. They want the bad guy with that little glimmer that makes you think he could be a good guy if you just did a little work on him.

MASON

They want the rough edges.

KRISTI

It's all about the rough edges.

MASON

I think I know that guy.

KRISTI

I think he's your roommate.

A beat.

MASON

Well. Damn.

KRISTI

I said that's what most women want. I didn't say all women. I didn't say me.

MASON

A-ha.

KRISTI

Keep hope alive.

He smiles.

CROSSFADE TO:

ELSEWHERE ON THE MALL

Still walking...

MASON

...So as a result, we were on again, off again, on again, off again, through four years of college and most of the summer.

KRISTI

This old girlfriend of yours, Lisa?

MASON

Yes?

KRISTI

I hate her.

MASON

Really.

KRISTI

(slowing to stop)
Because she has made you question your own value, through nothing other than her own indecisiveness. I say, in or out. I am a fan of bold action.

MASON

Bold action.

KRISTI

You take a chance. If it works, great. If not, at least you know.

A beat. Mason kisses her. And kisses her well.

It's not a wild grab, but it's surprisingly assured for our Mason Scott. We CRANE UP, leaving them lip-locked against the lights of Washington.

37 INT. GUEST APARTMENT - NIGHT

37

Lewis does all the work that he's left to stack up, case file after case file to prepare. A clock is TICKING.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

that finally finds Lewis asleep at the table.

A hand to his face, Sarah wakes him up. It's after midnight. There are tears in her eyes. She's on the very edge of crying.

He's dazed from sleeping.

SARAH

Honey? Honey, your Aunt Ruby called.

Confused, looks across the room to the phone.

SARAH (cont'd)

No, I spoke with her. We need to go over to the house.

LEWIS

(low)

I still have work to do.

A very long beat. And then the tear falls.

As gently as she can...

SARAH

Honey, Turrell is dead. He killed himself. They found him in the garage. I am so sorry.

He just sits there, not sure if this is really happening. A very long beat.

LEWIS

(quietly, seriously)

Am I still asleep?

SARAH

No, honey. I wish you were.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

38 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY 38

Two of Lewis's NEPHEWS, both about five, play hide and seek behind the tombstones.

At the graveside, Audra reads a Bible passage.

Hiding any emotion behind a stoic facade, Lewis stands with Sarah and the rest of the family. In the background, we find the rest of the housemates, there for Lewis.

39 INT. LEWIS' FAMILY HOUSE - DAY 39

A small reception following the service, just GUESTS and FAMILY.

Lewis comes up to Riggs at the buffet table. Quietly, but firmly...

LEWIS

I want you to leave this house and never come back.

Riggs looks around, disbelieving. All the other guests are looking at him and Lewis.

Mason and Pete come up behind Lewis, ready to help if it comes to that.

A beat, then Riggs sets down his glass. One last look to Lewis, then he goes.

40 INT. LEWIS' FAMILY HOUSE / KITCHEN - DAY 40

Aunt Ruby sits on a stool by the stove. Her dress is scratchy and hot, and she's so very tired.

Sarah comes over to her.

SARAH

Can I get you anything? Some water?

Ruby shakes her head. She takes Sarah's hand in hers, holds it for a beat. Sarah smiles. Aunt Ruby's not afraid to look someone in the eye.

AUNT RUBY
You love Lewis, don't you?

SARAH
I do.

Through the doorway, we can see Lewis in the next room, talking with other FAMILY MEMBERS. Both women look over to him.

SARAH (cont'd)
You raised him very well.

AUNT RUBY
Didn't have to raise him at all. He was one of those people who was born old. He already had the answers to everything. Got frustrated with you if you weren't as smart as he was. And he always had to do everything himself.

Sarah nods. That's familiar.

AUNT RUBY (cont'd)
Honey, I like you.

SARAH
(touched)
I like you too.

A beat. Lewis looks over, sees Sarah and Ruby are talking. Smiles to Sarah.

AUNT RUBY
Funny to say, on account of what happened to Turrell, but of all these boys, I'm most worried about Lewis. He looks strong, but he's fragile as a china clock. Promise me you'll never break his heart.

SARAH
I promise.

41 EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

41

Finley joins Lewis on a bench under the tree. They have a bit of privacy.

FINLEY
I like your family.

LEWIS

Thanks.

A beat. Finley starts digging through her purse.

FINLEY

Did I ever show you this photo? It's from when Mason and I were nine.

He takes a look.

LEWIS

That's you?

FINLEY

I was six inches taller than Mason. It explains a lot about our relationship.

LEWIS

(re: photo)

That's your mom. That's your dad. Who's that?

FINLEY

Our brother, Joe Jr. Joey. He was five years older.

LEWIS

(noticing tense)

He's no longer...

FINLEY

He died the summer that was taken.

LEWIS

I'm sorry. How did it happen?

Of course, Finley meant to get to this story. But now that she's telling it, it's bringing up old emotions.

FINLEY

We rented a house on this lake every summer. Nothing fancy, but it was...Eden, when you're nine. There was a tire swing over the lake, and we weren't supposed to use it, but Joey always did. He was wild, and fourteen, and if my parents said not to do something that meant he had to do it. And I loved him much more than Mason, because he was crazy, and just effortlessly beautiful.

A beat, reframing.

FINLEY (cont'd)

So this one afternoon, he's using the swing he's not supposed to use, jumping into the water. And on the third jump, I heard this crack. It was loud. It echoed. And it wasn't the branch. It was his head hitting something under the water.

(beat)

The worst part was this moment just afterwards, when I realized he wasn't coming up. I couldn't decide whether to swim out to him, or to go get my parents. I was frozen there, with this thought in my head: "They're going to blame me for this."

(beat)

I mean, yes, he was my older brother but I could have stopped him somehow.

Lewis takes her hand. She needs it now.

FINLEY (cont'd)

For the next three or four years, I could never really grieve for him, because that part of me was all filled up with guilt. Not sadness, not love, but guilt. Which is the most useless emotion.

He nods. She tries to calm down.

FINLEY (cont'd)

I'm supposed to be comforting you, and you're comforting me.

LEWIS

It's okay.

FINLEY

My point, the reason I brought up this whole horrible thing, which was clumsy, and I'm sorry: Don't try to not feel this. Don't pretend it's all okay, because it's not. It's horrible. But if you don't feel these bad things, then you won't feel the good things. And then you're not alive. Not really.

Lewis nods, smiles. But her words haven't gotten through yet.

INT. LEWIS' FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

Pete finds Sarah by the punchbowl.

PETE
How are you doing?

SARAH
(a wry smile)
Strangely, you're the first person to ask that.

PETE
Do I ask the follow-up question?

SARAH
Probably better you don't.

A beat.

PETE
We're going home to deal with our blackmailer. You up for it?

SARAH
Count me in.

INT. TOWNHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Pete finishes counting out a thousand dollars on the coffee table. Finley is beside him, glaring at

KEPPLER,

who has a palpable smugness to him. He takes the money off the table.

KEPPLER
How about we say the first of the month?
Just to keep things business-like.

FINLEY
What you're doing is blackmail. It's illegal.

KEPPLER
I break a law, you break a law, it all evens out.

PETE

You don't need the money. Why are you doing this?

KEPPLER

Principles. That and college tuition. I've got two daughters at Swathmore. You'd be surprised how fast that adds up.

Looking up, we see Sarah and Lewis at the second floor balcony, heading downstairs. She's carrying something.

KEPPLER (cont'd)

Just so we're clear, I'm not going to be reporting this on my taxes, so don't you guys do that.

PETE

You're funny.

Mason comes out of the kitchen. Sarah and Lewis enter. Noticing there's now five of them...

KEPPLER

The gang's all here. Come to rough me up?

LEWIS

We don't need to.

Sarah opens up the armoire, revealing the tv inside. There is already a cable hooked up to it, which she plugs into the small videocamera in her hands. She hits play.

ON VIDEO

We're looking down on the living room from a high angle -- Pete's room. It's the same scene, a few minutes earlier. It's framed to favor Keppler -- we can see him very clearly.

FINLEY [ON VIDEO]

How do we know you're not just going to tell them anyway?

KEPPLER

You don't kill the goose that lays the golden egg. As long as you guys keep paying me a grand, I don't tell the Sorensens there's five of you living here.

BACK TO SCENE

The tape continues, but that's the important part.

ON KEPPLER. You motherfuckers.

SARAH

If you call the Sorensens, or even come near us again, that tape goes to the police. And yes, it is blackmail. We checked.

MASON

That tape also goes to your wife, the neighbors, the medical board and every patient of yours we can find.

What can Keppler say?

KEPPLER

You won't get away with this.

PETE

We just want to be good neighbors.

FINLEY

Our money back, please.

A long beat, then Keppler take the money out. Hands it over.

He heads for the front door. In the foyer, he stops. Turns.

In a sudden rush, he throws the side table down, knocking off a Chinese vase that shatters in a hundred pieces.

KEPPLER

I hope that wasn't an antique.

With that, he leaves.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lewis finishes labelling the videotape case, slides the tape in. It's just him and Mason.

LEWIS

We should keep this in a safety deposit box, just in case.

MASON

This was a good idea you had.

LEWIS
Ethically and legally questionable, but
it did the job.

A beat.

MASON
Lewis, I'm sorry we fought, and I'm sorry
about your cousin. If there's anything I
can do to help...

LEWIS
I'm fine.

MASON
...just let me know.

LEWIS
Thanks.

42 INT. JUDGE BOK'S CHAMBER - [THE NEXT] DAY

42

Lewis sits across from Bok.

BOK
And what about the friend?

LEWIS
He got three years, two months on account
of priors.

BOK
Are you satisfied with that?

LEWIS
Honestly, I don't know if I can be.

She nods. A beat, then...

BOK
Lewis, can I ask you why you wanted to
get into the law?

LEWIS
The first time I was in a courtroom was
when I was five. My aunt and uncle were
adopting me away from my mother, who had
drug problems among others. My life to
that point had been incredibly chaotic.

It's there -- a quiver in his voice. Something is coming up
in Lewis. He looks away, trying to reign it back in.

LEWIS (cont'd)

And suddenly, there were these rules, and this ritual to it. And the Judge -- the judge was this wise person who could step in and fix a bad situation. He had final authority. He was like God.

(a beat)

I decided right there that I wanted to be one of those wise people.

Bok smiles. It's time to get back to work, but she goes on.

BOK

About your cousin. As one of those "wise people," I have to tell you that in your situation, I wouldn't have done anything differently. You handled the facts as you saw them, and that's all you can hope to do.

Lewis is starting to tear. The harder he fights it, the worse it gets.

BOK (cont'd)

It's my job to make a hundred tough decisions a year. Things that can change people's lives. And the hardest part of my job is that I'm so often wrong.

He tries to smile, and that's what does it. He can't hold it in any longer. It's a nose-sniffing gasp. It's beyond embarrassing.

LEWIS

(through tears)

I'm sorry. I'm very very sorry.

She puts a hand on his shoulder. That just makes the flow heavier.

BOK

Never apologize for being human. Never.

Holding close on Lewis, we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE