

# **the adversaries**

pilot

written by

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FADE IN:

ON A SCULPTURE OF LADY JUSTICE -- scales held aloft. Inside one of the pans, A PIGEON bathes -- looks left, right, flaps its wings, flies off. The DIN of urban bustle takes us to...

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN - JUSTICE DEPARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

From the imposing edifice emerges JESS FISHER (mid 30's), in a sharp ensemble. Hard-charging, naturally sexy. A Justice Department badge on a lanyard around her neck. She rushes down the steps, towards an FBI AGENT by a government sedan.

AGENT

Airport this morning, Counselor?  
What route are you thinking?

JESS

Your call, Bobby.

AGENT

I figure, FDR to the Queensboro,  
then hop on the LIE.

JESS

Sure. OR, pop across the bridge  
here, jump on the BQE, get off two  
exits before JFK and bypass the  
Flushing bottleneck.

(off his flat look)

...Totally your call.

(off his look again)

But my way might be better.

(once more)

...But you choose.

EXT. NASSAU AIRPORT TERMINAL - BAHAMAS - DAY

Paradise. Emerging is CHARLIE FISHER (60's, sleek, worldly). He moves to a limo, a Chauffeur he's met before --

CHARLIE

Take the scenic route, Henri. I  
could use a little ocean breeze.

INT. JETLINER - BUSINESS CLASS - DAY

Tourists file in -- floral shirts, boogie boards, Raybans. FIND JESS in her seat. Her crossed leg bopping up and down, impatiently. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT passes with a drink tray.

JESS

How late are we running here?  
Because boarding didn't really get  
going until 10:17, and it's now  
10:32, so I'm just wondering...

The Flight Attendant smiles, thinly, and holds up a tray --

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Orange juice or water?

BEN (O.S.)

Another road trip, eh, Counselor?

Handsome good-time boy FBI AGENT BEN BRADSHAW (30's) moves to  
a seat beside her.

BEN (CONT'D)

I love me some extradition! Like  
that drug bust in France? We had  
us some fun there, didn't we?

JESS

We'll always have Strasbourg.

She's not into him but he's trying. He leans in, flirty.

BEN

I know a place outside Nassau, we  
can lie on the beach, eating conch  
from the shell, and drinking Bahama  
mamas right out of the coconut.

JESS

Tell me again why they kicked you  
out of the Secret Service.

(off his look)

Big case, Ben. Eye on the ball.

BEN

Yeah, yeah. I got the memo. The  
suspect has himself a fancy lawyer.  
Some sort of man of the people.  
Human rights hero, protector of  
small animals. Kung fu grip.

JESS

No. What he's got is a competent  
attorney, with a resume of notable  
achievements, who has of late  
developed a leaky moral compass.

BEN

I'm just glad the dude is flying down to facilitate the surrender.

JESS

Ha! I know the 'dude.' I've met the 'dude.' And the 'dude' does not *facilitate* anything.

EXT./INT. BAHAMIAN ESTATE - DAY

\$35 million of fabulous; the servants have servants. Charlie stands in a lavish living room with an ocean view.

CHARLIE

Cooper..?

He looks over his shoulder to a maid, MARGUERITE.

MARGUERITE

No good, Mr. C. He won't go.

CHARLIE

Cooper! Please come out so we can discuss this.

Behind him, fast as a shadow, a figure DARTS across the hallway and sprints out of sight. Charlie turns...

EXT. BAHAMIAN ESTATE - POOL DECK - SAME

Charlie comes out to find a MAN, sitting at the edge of the pool, looking into the water -- a slumped posture of defeat. The man is COOPER LANDINGS (60's) -- distraught, a bit manic.

COOPER

I could just dive in there and disappear forever.

CHARLIE

It's a pool, it has a bottom.

He looks up at Charlie, with a tragic childlike face.

COOPER

Charlie... I never even learned to swim. Olympic size, solar-heated, Fijian turquoise tile. For what? Not even the doggy paddle.

CHARLIE

As a stroke? Grossly overestimated.

COOPER

Help me! You're my lawyer,  
goddammit! And my oldest friend!

CHARLIE

I'm here as always, Cooper, to save  
you from your lapses. But you need  
to pull yourself together. We  
agreed to a peaceful surrender --

COOPER

How could you let it come to this?

CHARLIE

You let it come to this. I warned  
you, you were playing the margins --

COOPER

All I did was maximize the  
opportunities available to me.

CHARLIE

You ripped people off.

COOPER

Who knew Azerbaijan was gonna  
renege on privatizing its oil  
industry? Who knew bitcoin was  
gonna be so hard to keep track of?

CHARLIE

The money just disappeared? I find  
that a bit hard to believe.

MARGUERITE (O.S.)

The bad people are here!

Charlie leans in to Cooper, more intense and personal now.

CHARLIE

Cooper, please, I need you to tell  
me: is it safe?

COOPER

Huh? Is what safe?

CHARLIE

*Firebrand.* Is it safe?

Cooper looks at him, a lost man, as they are interrupted by  
the arrival of Jess, Ben and two other agents.

JESS

Okay, gents, here we go.

CHARLIE  
Hello, Jess.

JESS  
(curt)  
Counselor.  
(then, to Cooper)  
As per your agreement with the  
Justice Department...

COOPER  
(moving away)  
...I won't be bound!

JESS (CONT'D)  
And on behalf of the FBI,  
you, Cooper Landings...

CHARLIE  
...Is all this necessary?  
Really, why the cuffs?

JESS (CONT'D)  
...are now placed in the  
custody of Federal Marshals.

The Agents try to wrangle Cooper; he backs away. It's messy.

BEN  
Easy now, Mister Landings!

COOPER  
No! No, no, no, no!

CHARLIE  
I'd argue this show of force is in  
violation of the agreement --

JESS  
You'd argue the earth was flat if  
someone would pay your hourly.

CHARLIE  
Watch it, young lady --

JESS  
Instruct your client to  
submit or we'll arrest you.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
No matter how old you are,  
you don't talk like that.

JESS  
Excuse me? This is a prisoner  
surrender, not Sunday dinner --

CHARLIE  
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT DATE IT IS?!

FULL STOP. Cooper, the agents and servants look on,  
wondering what this overly-emotional lawyer throw-down is  
about. Jess takes in Charlie, uncharacteristically ruffled.

JESS  
September 23rd..? Oh shit.

CHARLIE  
Not even a call.

He shakes his head: *tsk, tsk.*

JESS  
I'm sorry, okay? Happy birthday!

COOPER  
Um... hello? What's happening?

CHARLIE  
Cooper... This is my daughter,  
Jessica? You may recall her as the  
precocious little girl with the  
Linda Blair tantrums. She's an  
Assistant US attorney now.

COOPER  
(avuncular)  
Oh my god. Jessie! I haven't seen  
you since you were yea high.  
(then, pitifully  
plaintive)  
Please -- don't let them do this.

JESS  
I'm sorry, I really am...

The whirring of CHOPPER BLADES pulls their attention to the sky, where there is a media helicopter with camera circling.

COOPER  
What?! We said, no media!

He suddenly takes off and sprints away, agents in pursuit --

JESS	CHARLIE
(to Ben)	Cooper! It's just a mistake!
Get local to get that chopper	(then, to Jess)
out of here!	That is what you promised.

Like a madman, Cooper heads right for the pool -- SPLASH! -- he's in, sinking like a stone. BUBBLES RISE. The agents stand there looking down, baffled. Charlie looks at Jess.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
He uh... he doesn't swim.

JESS  
Fish him out, boys. And then cuff  
the bastard.

Jess shoots a sideways look at Charlie as we SMASH TO TITLE:

**"the adversaries"**

INT. SUBWAY (MOVING ACROSS THE MANHATTAN BRIDGE) - DAY

Jess is crammed between a snoring fat guy and a Goth girl.

JESS (ON PHONE)

They can depose McGoldrick without  
me, I'll catch up with Pete later.  
Yeah, my never-ending trial goes to  
jury today.

She looks across at a NY Post being read: **"FAMILY FEUD!  
Daughter v. Father in Bitcoin Battle - Landings Extradited"**

JESS (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

When I'm done, we'll dig in on  
Landings. ...Sorry? The boss wants  
to see me? ...What kind of change?

And then further down, Jess sees a photo of herself with the  
caption: *"Daddy's Little Girl No More."* She winces, with  
distaste. The train SCREECHES on the tracks as we PRELAP:

EMMA (PRELAP)

Dad's gonna hate his picture.

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - MAIN RECEPTION - DAY

A medium-sized law firm that reflects dignified class. New  
paralegal EMMA FISHER (24), downtown lost girl/hip -- think  
Lena Dunham -- studies the Post. She's with LYDIA (55), the  
receptionist here since 1987. A stack of tabloids.

LYDIA

That toothy thing again.

EMMA

Makes him look like a Cheshire cat.

DING. The elevator lets out Charlie. Seemingly blithe.

CHARLIE

Shame on you, reading those rags.

She hides them away -- the Times, Daily News, Wall Street  
Journal, Observer. Emma trails Charlie, holding the Post --

EMMA

This looks terrible.

CHARLIE

I know, Cheshire cat.

EMMA

I meant for the firm.

CHARLIE

Not as terrible as it looks for that pathetic excuse of a US attorney -- turning daughter against father for a press release.

EMMA

Jess probably volunteered.

CHARLIE

Your sister loves me; I love her. We are just *feisty* in the same way. -- Don't roll your eyes at me.

AISHA (PRELAP)

I don't know, that's all it said!

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - CONFERENCE ROOM

DANNY HERRERO (40ish, Latino, caffeinated, straight out of Queens) and AISHA IRBY (32, African-American, lovely, cool under pressure) are at it as Charlie and Emma enter.

DANNY

Then call his office, Aisha!

AISHA

I tried that, *Danny!*

CHARLIE

Squabbling? In front of my impressionable baby daughter?

EMMA

I'm 24, Dad -- my role models are all either dead or discredited.

Aisha and Danny snap to; Charlie is their fearless leader. While Danny is the devoted acolyte, Aisha is more of the truth-teller -- younger, newer, looking to make her mark.

DANNY

We're in the weeds on the Bernstein settlement, Sean Penn's calling about that village in Haiti and Reverend Sharpton has a delicate matter he'd like to discuss.

CHARLIE

The one with the thing, or..?

DANNY

No, we took care of the first thing. This is a new thing.

CHARLIE

I'll call Sean, you know how he gets. The rest can wait.

AISHA

(to Danny)

Are you gonna tell him?

DANNY

I'm not telling him, you tell him.

CHARLIE

Tell him what?

AISHA

Cooper fired us. In an email.

CHARLIE

...Fired? On the worldwide web? I've been e-terminated?

DANNY

You should tweet-blast him.

EMMA

Sure, if my Dad knew what twitter was.

Charlie is quietly reeling. Danny pats his shoulder.

DANNY

No worries, *el jefe*, case is a loss-leader anyway, it'll plead out. I have to get downtown for my trial.

CHARLIE

I'll go too, I need to see Cooper.

DANNY

Don't see Cooper. Fuck Cooper.

CHARLIE

And talk to Jess about what the hell's going on.

DANNY

She's busy, wrapping up Bajrami.

CHARLIE

That case isn't over yet?

DANNY

Nope. Good thing is, me and Jess?  
She may be an uptown girl -- me,  
I'm a bridge and tunnel guy -- but  
we're connecting, like on a  
spiritual level. She *gets* me.

JESS (PRELAP)

He's a liar. A big fat liar.

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - DAY

Jess and Danny huddle at the bench with JUDGE MURPHY. At the defense table: ZAMIR BAJRAMI (35, stone-faced, imposing).

JESS

At 8PM the night before we go to jury, he turns up a new eyewitness?

DANNY

What can I say? I'm dogged.

JESS

Where was this witness before now?  
Why wasn't he produced?

DANNY

The witness is very... shy.

JESS

*Shy?! Your Honor, the government has established that Mr. Bajrami - a known member of a group of Albanian thugs - assaulted a federal employee doing his job -*

JESS (CONT'D)

...beat him within an inch of his life, in broad daylight, with no provocation.

DANNY

(singsongy, to annoy)  
Neither sleet nor rain nor a presumption of innocence...

DANNY (CONT'D)

Your Honor -- my witness is good. Very good. The model of moral impunity in an immoral world.

JESS

So, what -- Gandhi was standing on Pavelich Avenue the day your client went 'postal' on a postal worker?

DANNY

Ooh, wordplay -- I like that.

JUDGE MURPHY  
I'm going to allow it.

Jess resumes her place by her colleague, MARCUS TANG (29).

JESS  
What crap. Probably one of Zamir's  
flunkies. Look and learn -- I'm  
gonna rip this witness a new one.

A Bailiff leads in an unbelievably angelic little girl in her  
church clothes -- ADELIA (9). Tang and Jess take this in --

TANG  
You got a plan B, right?

INT. FEDERAL HOLDING - DAY

Charlie stands at a counter with an unhelpful GUARD.

GUARD  
The prisoner declines to see you.

CHARLIE  
Try again.

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - AS BEFORE

Angelic Adelia on the stand.

ADELIA  
I was on the sidewalk when I saw  
the mail truck back into a car.

DANNY  
And you were doing what there?

ADELIA  
Jumping rope. Eating candy.

An overweight LADY JUROR smiles at this sweet girl. Jess,  
deep in thought, reaches over for a document as Adelia points  
to Danny's client, Bajrami, the defendant.

ADELIA (CONT'D)  
And then that man, he asked what  
happened to his car, and the  
mailman got all mad.

Jess looks at the paper -- "LIRIDONA HARZAD." Curious.

TANG  
Something wrong?

JESS Little Miss Dimples there has the same last name as a woman who co-signed his bail bond. A woman who happens to be engaged to Zamir's brother.	ADELIA He got a baseball bat and wouldn't back off, so that man - he defended himself. I was scared what would happen. I'm glad he's okay.
--	---

TANG  
(to Jess, sotto)  
Whatever you got, make it fast.  
Drag this out, they'll hate you.

Danny grins as he invites Jess, with a gesture, to cross. As she steps forward, Charlie slips into the courtroom and takes a seat, watching unobtrusively but intently, studying Jess.

JESS  
Adelia: do you know Mr. Bajrami?

ADELIA  
From the neighborhood. Just to say  
'hi/bye,' that's all.

JESS  
So you didn't really know him then  
on the day you saw his car get hit?  
Is that what you're saying?

DANNY  
Asked and answered, Your Honor.  
Adelia has ballet in an hour.

JESS  
You have an older sister? Liridona?

ADELIA  
Yes. She's 22.

JESS  
Is she engaged to be married? To a  
man named... Hazim Bajrami?  
(off her slow nod)  
Zamir's brother?

And now the girl starts to turn more street, ferocious, the charm draining away as she becomes defensive and angry.

ADELIA  
So what? That don't mean nothing.

JESS

Isn't there about to be a big  
wedding, a party at the church?  
(off the girl, stewing)  
Are you gonna be in the wedding,  
Adelia? Flower girl maybe?

ADELIA

I'm the maid of honor! And that  
don't got nothing to do with it!  
(full-on devil child)  
I ain't lying! I said exactly what  
I was supposed to say!

LADY JUROR

Lordy, lordy!

JESS

The government rests.  
(yawns, to Danny)  
So sleepy.

She spots Charlie, grinning at her courtroom savvy.

DANNY

A brief recess, Your Honor?

INT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie and Jess walk down the hall.

JESS

Is this what it's come to? Your  
chosen protege has a little girl  
perjuring herself in defense of a  
common street thug?

CHARLIE

Danny has his own methods, I admit.  
Times have changed, the firm can't  
be a charity. We're... 'maturing.'

JESS

In law school, my torts professor  
practically bowed down when he  
heard I was your kid. You think  
that would still happen today?

CHARLIE

Your torts professor was Mel Gerber  
-- he's in a wheelchair now so I  
doubt he's bowing down to anything.  
(off her steady look)

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Some clients we take on to keep the lights on. So we can continue doing the things that matter.

JESS

They used to be the *only* things.

That hurts -- he absorbs it. Suddenly vulnerable.

CHARLIE

I came to tell you, I've... I've been terminated. Cooper fired me.

JESS

He did? Weird. Join the club, I guess -- my boss took me off the case. 'Conflict of interest.'

CHARLIE

Well. It'll make Thanksgiving less awkward. Kudos on breaking the ballerina. Coffee soon? We'll talk about why you're so mad at me.

Snap. As Charlie walks away, she can't follow up because --

DANNY

OK, firstborn, we'll take the deal.

JESS

That is so yesterday, Danny. Let's revisit the terms.

FOLLOW CHARLIE -- a gaggle of REPORTERS pursuing him out --

OLD SCHOOL REPORTER

Mr. Fisher! Mr. Fisher!

EXT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE STEPS - CONTINUOUS

As Charlie tries to evade the media, two FBI AGENTS approach.

CHARLIE

Not me, guys, Cooper's retained separate counsel --

OLD SCHOOL REPORTER

Do you feel your reputation is sullied by this?

CHARLIE

That's just guilt by association.

CUB REPORTER

Can you speak to how the idealism of the '60s and '70s has given way to the materialism of today?

Charlie ponders that for a moment when --

FBI AGENT # 1  
Mr. Fisher? FBI.

CHARLIE  
Ah, gentlemen, to the rescue.

FBI AGENT #2  
Sorry, sir. We're actually placing  
you under federal custody.

CHARLIE  
You're what? There must be some --

FBI AGENT # 2  
No mistake, sir. Seven counts.

He hands over a form; Charlie peruses it, shocked. SMASH TO:

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS: -- FINGERPRINTS taken. -- PERSONAL  
ITEMS turned in. -- A khaki JAIL UNIFORM issued. -- MUG SHOT:  
**Charles K. Fisher, Federal Prisoner #312469-55.**

INT. US MARSHALS SERVICE PRISONER DETENTION AREA/HOLDING CELL

A MARSHAL swipes an ID. Jess, a list of charges in hand,  
rushes in, trailed by Danny. They hurry past a cell where  
the bad Albanian Bajrami sits, dejected. He sees them --

BAJRAMI  
What, you two are BFFs now?! Isn't  
that a fucking beautiful thing!

They pass him, spot Charlie, in a cell, staring into space.  
Danny is genuinely distraught. Jess is calmer.

JESS  
Mail fraud, wire fraud, money  
laundering, lying to the SEC... -

DANNY  
What the..?! Say it ain't so,  
*papi*, say it ain't so.

Finally, Charlie looks up, baffled, stricken. What a mess.

CHARLIE  
I'm gonna need a lawyer.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

ON A TV SCREEN -- Charlie being hauled in by the Feds.

TV NEWSCAST (ON SCREEN)  
*...Fisher faces multiple charges in  
the financial crimes of hedge fund  
maestro Cooper Landings...*

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS/INT. TAXI CAB (MOVING) - THE NEXT DAY

KATHERINE FISHER (late 50s), Charlie's wife, watches an in-car monitor. Sexy, strong, sensitive -- with a tough veneer. Her wit and savvy attitude cover a certain amount of pain.

KATHERINE  
Ugh, always with that toothy thing.  
(to the cabbie)  
Excuse me, why Fifth? Take 57th to  
Lexington, Lex to 14th Street... --  
Oh, never mind. It's your call.

TV NEWSCAST (ON SCREEN)  
*Asked if the arrest of the noted  
activist and public interest lawyer  
marked the fall of a great man...*

INT. U.S. ATTORNEY PANICALI'S OFFICE - DAY

TV NEWSCAST  
*Southern District U.S. Attorney Ted  
Panicali had this to say...:*

The image switches to a tuxedoed TED PANICALI (40's, slick) -- a sound bite caught on his way into a gala; his lovely, elegant wife SOPHIE (40's) on his arm. She's hard to miss.

PANICALI (ON TV)  
*Depends on how you define 'great.'*

The TV blips off as we WIDEN TO Jess seated alone in her boss' sedate office. Her boss, Panicali, bursts in, harried.

PANICALI (CONT'D)  
Uh-oh, I see that look in your eye--

JESS  
He's capable of many things, Ted --  
but not criminal conspiracy.

PANICALI

Landings was feeding investors' money into a bogus fund for years, Charlie helped create the fund so --

JESS

No way. And even if there's a case, the way this went down? It's hinky, Ted, I feel played.

PANICALI

Look, you come from a high-powered family. That puts you in an unusual position. And yeah, back in the day, your dad did some great stuff, but it's 2015, and there are some things about him you may not know. What I love about you, Jess, is how you always keep your eyes on the prize. Now, we've got a cyber-terrorism case coming up --

JESS

How am I supposed to keep working here when you're doing everything you can to send my father away?

PANICALI

Jess: you could be sitting where I am someday, I've discussed it with DC. Don't throw that away just because you had the genetic misfortune of being Charlie's kid.

She gazes out the window, ponders the mess of the situation.

INT. JESS'S OFFICE - DAY

A WOODEN CARVING -- AN ELEPHANT. Jess holds it up, studying it; she feels stuck at a strange crossroads, where her family life and professional aspirations are in direct opposition.

KATHERINE (O.S.)

I got a cake with a shiv in it for your father, don't tell the feds.

(as Jess turns, sees her)

Oh darn it, you ARE the feds!

JESS

Why not kick him to the curb, mom?

KATHERINE

The curb keeps kicking him back.  
Want to come with? As a belated  
birthday celebration?

JESS

What I want is to feel like I'm on  
a path that's not constantly being  
derailed by my DNA.

KATHERINE

Oh honey, give us some credit for  
setting you on that path in the  
first place, okay?

(as Jess broods on that)

We need to find your father a  
lawyer, we could use your help...

JESS

What about El Bandido? If he  
loses, he can always sneak Dad  
across the border.

KATHERINE

Danny doesn't do cases like this.

JESS

Well, I know an excellent litigator-

KATHERINE

No, no -- I haven't argued in a  
courtroom since people ate gluten.  
I prefer being a beloved and highly-  
compensated consigliere. I consult  
over espressos or a bottle of  
Chablis. Trial law's a grind, a  
young person's game... *Right?*

She peers at her daughter. Beat. Jess is onto her.

JESS

Something wrong with your eye?

KATHERINE

I'd rather not give you the 'but  
he's your daddy' speech --

JESS

No, Mom. I really can't do  
this...

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

And I know you've worked hard  
to get where you are, but --

JESS

Yes, I have!

KATHERINE

Your own office betrayed you. They went after your father behind your back. What could be more impressive to a jury than a daughter -- one who's often been in conflict with her father -- coming back into the fold to save him?  
(off Jess, stoic)  
He's in trouble, babe. We're in trouble.

She touches Jess's head, gently. Maternal. As she goes, she is given pause by a FRAMED PHOTO of Jess at 25, arm around A BOY, 17, in cap and gown. A graduation shot. A brother..?

JESS

We never talk about him anymore.  
We can, you know. If you want.

KATHERINE

Talking doesn't help.

She smiles, sadly, goes. Beat. Jess ponders the Elephant.

CHARLIE (PRELAP)

I know what unconditional love is.

INT. FEDERAL HOLDING - VISITING AREA - DAY

Katherine sits across from Charlie, in prison issue khaki.

CHARLIE

...There's a large cockroach in my cell -- he looks at me with eyes that hold no judgment.

KATHERINE

I'm sure you'll be very happy together. Now tell me, Charlie -- what's this all about?

CHARLIE

Cooper was looking to make a deal, he needed to give them something...

KATHERINE

So he gave them you? Sonuvabitch.

CHARLIE

(nostalgic)  
We met on a voter registration trip to Mississippi.  
(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Two gawky kids with bad haircuts,  
out to change the world. What  
happened to them?

KATHERINE

They got better barbers. And you  
helped make him rich.

CHARLIE

I guess you never really know  
what's going on in somebody's head.

KATHERINE

...No, you never do.

CHARLIE

Well, this gives you an even better  
cause for divorce -- incarceration.

KATHERINE

It's a no-fault state. I'm waiting  
on the money men to stop being  
mysterious and open up the books.

CHARLIE

What's the hurry?

KATHERINE

We've been separated for 7 years!  
Why the mystery?!

CHARLIE

It's part of the allure. And our  
separation has not been continuous -  
- there have been breaks. I recall  
a notable summer in Sag Harbor.

KATHERINE

We're done with all that, Charlie.  
It doesn't mean I don't love you --  
I just can't live with you.

She seems resolute -- he seems unconvinced. Ambivalent.  
Then he looks up and notices Jess approaching...

JESS

Hi, Dad.

CHARLIE

Don't look so glum.

JESS

I can't. I can't do it. I mean,  
our relationship alone... --

CHARLIE

-- Will make you a more passionate advocate.

JESS

(not so sure)  
...Are you guilty?

CHARLIE

Guilt is a relative term.

KATHERINE

Darling, only guilty people say things like that.

JESS

You're accused of multiple counts, lying to the SEC, perpetrating a con for your own enrichment --

CHARLIE

No defense attorney worth her salt--

JESS

I'm not a defense lawyer.

CHARLIE

Yes! Okay? Yes! I'm guilty!  
...Of drinking to excess, driving too fast, loving too deeply.

KATHERINE

Well, the first two, maybe.

CHARLIE

Of course I'm not guilty! Cooper swindled people and used me to do it. Now he's framing me and your idiot boss is eating it up.

JESS

I don't get it, Dad. You used to be cautious, circumspect. You'd never have gotten caught up in something like this.

CHARLIE

Like what? The betrayal of a friend? Prosecutorial malfeasance?

JESS

You weakened -- you compromised your ideals. And now you've put yourself in a vulnerable spot --

CHARLIE

News flash, kiddo -- every time a lawyer represents a client and puts himself on the line, he's in a *vulnerable* spot. It's not like representing the government.

JESS

But now I'm the one who's supposed to get you out of it?

CHARLIE

You don't want to? Don't! I've been unable to talk sense into you since you gave up the piano...

JESS

That was in fifth grade!

KATHERINE

Charlie -

CHARLIE

You had promise! Everyone said so!

JESS

Oh my god, you are nuts.

CHARLIE

First you suspect me of being a criminal, driven by petty greed, then you characterize me as some obsolete wreck in need of saving --

JESS

Did I say that?

KATHERINE

She didn't say that.

CHARLIE

I'm not a crook and I'm not a relic.

JESS

And I'm not gonna be forced out of a job I spent 7 years working for.

CHARLIE

It's beneath you, okay? Our government sold out decades ago to the loudest screamers and the deepest pockets. Even Obama couldn't change that. So stop being a shill for them --

JESS

I prosecute criminals! I put away bad guys! You call that *shilling*?!

CHARLIE

Let someone else do it!

Beat. Tense silence descends. Katherine reaches in her bag.

KATHERINE

Ricola, anyone?

CHARLIE

I... I didn't mean that. The work you've done is good work. I'm proud of you, I am. I just... wish you felt the same about me.

KATHERINE

She does.  
(to Jess, tenderly)  
You do, tell him.

Jess is at a loss. Awkward. Katherine checks her PAGER --

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Well, uh, Danny's threatening to dismiss the support staff and sell all the computers, so...  
(kisses them both)  
Be nice, you're scaring the hardened criminals.

She goes. Jess stands, thinking about leaving. Beat.

CHARLIE

What I don't understand is why you've been so mad for so long.

JESS

Don't. Let's not do this now.

CHARLIE

It's about Kyle?

JESS

Oh, man.  
(off his stern look)  
We lost him, Dad.

CHARLIE

Who says? We don't *know* that.

JESS

It's been ten years! He was in with bad people. He crossed a line, he killed somebody.

(MORE)

JESS (CONT'D)

And so they got rid of him, made the whole thing go away. I know how these things work.

He nods, trying to concede the point. It's not easy for him.

CHARLIE

It was difficult. We got over it.

JESS

I didn't get over it. *Emma* didn't get over it. And whatever she may say -- *Mom* didn't get over it.

CHARLIE

And that's all my fault?

JESS

Yes! You pushed him too much. Chased him away.

CHARLIE

I *expected* a lot, from *all* my kids, I don't apologize for that --

JESS

Dad! It was hard enough being your daughter, but it was way harder for Kyle trying to be your son. He was a sensitive kid, he was struggling. So he got out. And did what kids do -- he found trouble...

CHARLIE

And you blame me for that. Which explains... everything, I guess. Your wholesale disavowal of me.

JESS

What happened -- it changed me, okay? All of us -- we were never the same. *YOU* were never the same.

CHARLIE

But unlike you, I never gave up.  
(long beat, Jess  
pondering)  
I've spent my life fighting the good fight, as honestly as I can. A big reason for that was to make you -- all of you -- proud. Of me, of our family name. And now they want to turn me into the cliché of a bad lawyer: a scoundrel.

(MORE)



KATHERINE

If only you'd had these study habits before going through four boarding schools in three years.

(as Emma rouses)

So. Did you find anything for Dad?

EMMA

Nope. But I think I figured out a chord progression on this new song.

(off her mother's look)

It's therapeutic, don't worry. I'm getting the whole musician thing out of my system. How is he?

KATHERINE

Enigmatic. What a mess.

EMMA

He'll be all right. He always is.

(then)

It's not your fault, you know. I don't blame you for this.

KATHERINE

You mean, unlike everything else?

EMMA

He's gotten cagier, colder... I don't know. He became the kind of guy people want to see taken down.

KATHERINE

And when did all that happen?

EMMA

After you left him.

KATHERINE

I never 'left' him. We... evolved. Separately. I believe your people call it "conscious uncoupling."

EMMA

Do you really believe Gwyneth Paltrow is my people?

Katherine regards the guitar as Emma strums.

EMMA (CONT'D)

It was because of Kyle, wasn't it? That's why the marriage fell apart?

Katherine searches for an answer, parses her words carefully:

KATHERINE

...I wouldn't draw a causal line  
between one thing and the other.

The skilled evasion of a trained lawyer. Then:

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

You don't have to give it up. I  
never wanted that, I just... I  
think it's great that you've come  
to work here. Made a mature choice  
about your life. An *adult* choice.

EMMA

Gotta pay the bills, right?

The moment is interrupted by --

AISHA

Danny's having a meltdown.

Katherine leads them out --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

KATHERINE

We need to stick together, Aisha.

AISHA

Like one big, happy family, right?

EMMA

If we can pretend, so can you.

AISHA

Except this is a business, and some  
of us are *employed*, not *entitled*.

EMMA

Whoa, do NOT sing it, sister.

KATHERINE

Honey, that might be racist.

EMMA

It's *racial*, Mom, it's not *racist*.

AISHA

You know what you sound like? A  
couple of ignorant honkeys.

EMMA

Now *that's* racist.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Danny sits looking frazzled, head in hands, surrounded by worried employees. The pressure is getting to him.

DANNY

I don't wanna say the roof's on fire... but it's super hot up there, lots of smoke, flames all over the place. And, like, lava.

KATHERINE

Breathe, Danny, breathe.

He looks up at her and whispers, hiding his anxiety --

DANNY

I can't... I can't be his lawyer.

KATHERINE

No one wants you to. We'll find outside counsel.

He breathes, relieved of that burden. Re-gathers himself.

DANNY

Good. Then my job is to save the business. Now: we need to forget all the righteous pro bonos you bleeding hearts keep taking on and focus on clients that actually pay.

KATHERINE

This firm is what it is --

AISHA

It was what it was. The question is, what's it gonna become?

LYDIA

(pops in, winded)

Just got off the phone with Lacy and Edith, the discrimination case? They're seeking new counsel.

DANNY

Oh no -- the destitute unemployed lesbians! How will we go on?

EMMA

What a dick.

DANNY

Our new creed is: WWCD. "What would Charlie do?"

EMMA

Danny, he's not Jesus.

KATHERINE

And he's not *dead* either!

DANNY

He's in the pokey, the big house, *el calabozo!* We need to step up!

DANNY (CONT'D)

We are already two hundred k in debt. Clients are jumping ship, even the charity cases!

AISHA

We all love Charlie, but if he's guilty, or even *seems* guilty --

KATHERINE

(exasperated)  
...A little faith please!

AISHA (CONT'D)

If we don't save this firm, we're all gonna be screwed --

BAM! BAM! BAM! the LOUD BANGING of the WOODEN ELEPHANT -- gavel-like -- interrupts the squabble, turns attention to Jess. She's got a box of her office stuff on the table.

JESS

Once when I was little, I didn't see Charlie for almost a year. He got detained in South Africa, where he was working to free a judge who was wrongly imprisoned by the apartheid government. He ended up getting the guy released. When he came home, he brought me this...

(re: the Elephant)

But I was so angry at him, I couldn't even...

(drifts off a moment)

You're all here because of him, and my mom, and this firm they built. Now, I'm used to putting people away, not getting them exonerated. But I do know who we're up against and I also know we can beat them. But I need your help. It's win or go home. So let's win.

Katherine smiles: "That's my girl." Off the group --

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. STREETS/INT. TAXI CAB (DRIVING) - DAY

Jess rides with Emma and Katherine, with a sheaf of papers.

KATHERINE

As soon as she signs it, I'll get  
it to you at the courthouse.

The cab stops; Emma hands Jess a bunch of folders, redwelds.

JESS

Come on, you did the research.

EMMA

Not my thing, you know that.

KATHERINE

Go, it'll be like when you were  
little -- like the Drew sisters,  
Nancy and... who was the other one?

EMMA

There wasn't another one, Mom.

KATHERINE

Oh yeah. I made that up, didn't I?

EMMA

To make me feel better when Jess  
played girl detective.

KATHERINE

...Did it work..?

Emma shakes her head and goes with Jess. Katherine smiles.

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - PRETRIAL HEARING

JUDGE NATALIE ALORRO before the court -- poofy hair. At a  
table, Charlie with Danny; at another, Tang with Panicali.

JUDGE ALORRO

Has the defense reached a bail  
agreement with the Government?

DANNY

Not yet, waiting on co-counsel...  
(then, stalling)  
(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Meantime, Your Honor, let me say  
how much I dig the new do.  
Stylin', Judge, stylin'.

JUDGE ALORRO  
Settle down, son. Let's proceed.

DANNY  
Right. Okay. Well, uh... color  
us mystified by the government's  
utter dearth of evidence --

TANG  
Your Honor, there is a substantial  
trail of documentation connecting  
the defendant to the counts...

JESS (O.S.)  
Let's see it then.

They turn to find Jess stepping up to the defense table.  
Charlie smiles. Panicali is shocked and appalled: WTF?!

JESS (CONT'D)  
As far as I can tell, this case  
falls into 'malicious and deceptive  
prosecution' as defined in... uh...

EMMA  
(whispers, aside)  
Hollander v. New York State, 1979.

JESS  
Hollander v. New York, '79.

Jess shoots Emma an impressed and appreciative nod.

JUDGE ALORRO  
Are you co-counsel on this?

PANICALI  
May Ms. Fisher and I approach?

CHARLIE  
(pulls Jess in, coaching)  
Immediate dismissal -- if not,  
speedy trial, no bail, ROR.

JESS  
Let me handle it, okay?

Jess joins Panicali and the Judge at the bench.

PANICALI

What are you doing, Jess? You still work for me.

JESS

Not as of this morning.

PANICALI

This is absurd, Judge! She's had access to investigatory materials --

JESS

What's absurd is my own boss doing an end-run around me.

JUDGE ALORRO

Okay, clearly, the love is gone. But I got a barrel full of lawyers here, so let's do some lawyering.

JESS

I'm moving for a speedy trial.

PANICALI

No way. We are gonna need time...

JUDGE ALORRO

You indicted him, Ted. Let's go.

INT. A FANCY VESTIBULE OUTSIDE A HOTEL ROOM - THE PLAZA - DAY

Katherine sits waiting. Touches up her make-up in a gilt mirror on the wall. A well-dressed woman ASSISTANT emerges.

ASSISTANT

Katherine! We haven't seen you since the ACLU dinner!

KATHERINE

Those Commies sure know how to throw a good party, don't they!

ASSISTANT

Come in. Hillary's waiting.

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - AS BEFORE - DAY

TANG

The government cooperator, Cooper Landings, has confessed to feeding investor money into a vacuum fund.

(MORE)

TANG (CONT'D)

As his attorney, Mr. Fisher supervised the creation of that fund and served as legal adviser --

Charlie can't believe Jess has let him go on, unchallenged.

CHARLIE

Utterly circumstantial, Your Honor: meritless, baseless, bogus --

JESS

There are a number of assumptions in the government's case...

CHARLIE

Assumptions? Fabrications. Obfuscations. Lies!

JESS

(shoots him a look, then)  
My client had no official role in Mr. Landings' corporate matters --

TANG

He was aware of the deception --

JESS

He has a long-standing reputation of philanthropy --

TANG

-- Which he capitalized on in order to bilk a bunch of people who believed that if Charlie Fisher was involved, it must be righteous.

CHARLIE

Where the hell's the fraud?

JUDGE ALORRO

Sir, you are not a lawyer here. Your job is to act dignified, look innocent, and shut the hell up.

Charlie concedes, some frustration; Danny leans into him.

DANNY

Let us do this. And by 'us,' I mean 'her.'

CHARLIE

They're our adversaries, not your office pals. Take off the gloves.

Jess absorbs that as the Judge moves on --

JUDGE ALORRO  
Let's discuss bail.

TANG  
Risk of flight, Your Honor.

JESS  
He's a prominent citizen, no record, community ties -- release on his own recognizance.

TANG  
ROR? Absolutely not --

JUDGE ALORRO  
Okay, bail set at a million. He's remanded to custody.

JESS  
A million?! Your Honor, sidebar?

JUDGE ALORRO  
You can revisit it later.

JESS  
On behalf of the government, I'd like to take an immediate appeal...

TANG  
Um, she's not the government, Judge -- we are...?

Awkward. As Jess realizes her own dislocation, Katherine pushes in with a set of bound documents.

JUDGE ALORRO  
Well, look who the conspiracy charges dragged in.

KATHERINE  
Nice to see you, Natalie. I wish the circumstances were different.

JUDGE ALORRO  
Oh, this is a special one. What do you got for us?

KATHERINE  
A bond package in which we put up multiple assets, including our home. Co-signed by the Clintons.

DANNY  
(at Tang, all flash)  
Yeah, punk, *those* Clintons.

JUDGE ALORRO  
Well. Let's get Mr. Fisher free.  
But any violation, any breach at  
all, sir? Back to the slammer.  
(with a wink, to Jess)  
Welcome to the other side.

She bangs the gavel. Off Jess, pondering that.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Charlie and the rest emerge.

JESS  
We need to head back to the office  
and strategize. I have a plan.

CHARLIE  
Let's see if it lines up with mine.

KATHERINE  
Now, now -- easy, tigers.

As Katherine and Charlie walk ahead, STAY WITH EMMA AND JESS.

JESS  
Thanks for the case citation. But  
I gotta say: this new arrangement?  
Emma the hipster paralegal? I  
mean, you killed at that club in  
Williamsburg last month... --

EMMA  
Were you even there?

JESS  
No, I was in the middle of the  
Espinoza trial, but I heard about  
it.

EMMA  
Please, let's not.

JESS  
I'm on your side, Ems. I don't  
want to see them strong-arm you.  
What they want doesn't have to be  
what you want --

EMMA

Know what? I'm good with it. It's actually kinda cool, paying rent.

Beat. Jess absorbs that, disappointed a bit.

JESS

All right, your call. But then this can't be just a paycheck. Like that summer you worked at the courthouse and got stoned every day with that hot clerk from Yale.

EMMA

Benny Zelman. Baddest bar mitzvah boy ever to make law review.

JESS

Well, Benny Zelman's not here now, and if this is gonna be a career choice for you -- well, you gotta pay your dues. Earn it. Can't just coast on the family thing.

EMMA

Wow, I haven't got a pep talk from you since my 3rd grade spelling bee. Are you gonna buy me an ice cream after this?

(off her smile)

At least I have the best possible mentor, right? ...You.

There's a sweet look between them, as Danny breaks in --

DANNY

What's the plan?

JESS

Get into the discoverables, Aisha's digging into precedents and suppressed docs. Emma -- coffee? A triple non fat decaf no whip for me and get them whatever they want.

Jess hands Emma a \$20 dollar bill. Annoyed, Emma lets the others pull away. Danny lingers with her. They walk.

DANNY

Some mentor, huh?

EMMA

Sure, for a *barista*.

DANNY

Stick with me, kid. Your sister's a wild card and your folks... well, I love 'em, I do. But they're fragile, you know. Delicate. They're like Hummel figurines.

(off her look - huh?)

Quaint, classy things from a bygone era. Brilliant, passionate, refined. But out of date and easily broken.

EMMA

Who even has those anymore?

DANNY

Exactly. Let me ask you this: for 25 years, the firm was called what?

EMMA

Um... Fisher & Fisher?

DANNY

So why after all that time is the only other person who got his name up there some spic out of Flushing who worked his way through Cardozo Law as a squeegee guy outside the Lincoln Tunnel? Because they needed a millennial rainmaker. And that's what I am -- the future and the money. Now, they been good to me, for reals --

(pats his heart)

But once in awhile, they still look at me like I'm the squeegee guy...

EMMA

I'm still stuck on Hummel figures.

DANNY

Point being: you can be very beloved, you can even have your name up on the wall, and you might still get perceived like...

EMMA

The non-existent sister of Nancy Drew.

DANNY

Not what I was going for, but sure. -- I'll drop you off at Starbucks.

As we hear a SWEET, SAD SONG on the soundtrack, we FADE TO:

EMMA'S VOICE (SINGING)  
*...boots in the attic... your  
favorite chair...*

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE/INT. F, F & H - INTERCUT - NIGHT/DAY

Day turns to evening turns to night turns to morning as we move through a series of shots:

-- In the Law Library, JESS AND AISHA glancing at bindings on the shelves, cherry-picking relevant texts.

EMMA'S VOICE (SINGING)  
*...an empty fishbowl... but you're  
not there...*

-- EMMA studies a brief, while strumming her guitar -- she looks over at ANOTHER PHOTO of their lost brother, 'Kyle.' In this one, he's 13 with Emma at 9, running on the beach. Unnoticed, DANNY pauses outside the door, listening and watching her for a moment. Then, he continues on.

EMMA'S VOICE (SINGING) (CONT'D)  
*...we keep trying to get through...  
...never say we're missing you...*

-- KATHERINE, CHARLIE, EMMA AND JESS -- the reconstituted family -- confab around a table. All business, at first, but then Katherine laughs at something, and the ripple spreads... Charlie, then Emma, then Jess. All laughing, silly and giddy, like a happy moment out of their shared past.

EMMA'S VOICE (SINGING) (CONT'D)  
*...but we do... we always do...*

INT. F, F & H BREAK ROOM - DAY

Jess asleep on a couch, a brief splayed out across her chest. A coffee is waved before her, the scent wafting, which slowly opens her eyes... Aisha stands there, with the mug.

AISHA  
Don't keep a judge waiting.

JESS  
Long night. Thanks for staying.

AISHA

I looked into those correspondences  
-- came up with this memo Charlie  
wrote to Landings. Three weeks  
before the Feds came swarming.

Jess looks at the memo, pleased.

JESS

That's good for cross. Nice catch.

AISHA

Danny's gonna mind the store back  
here. I think you scare him. So I  
guess you'll need a second chair?

JESS

I don't scare you?

AISHA

I don't scare easy.

JESS

Are you married?  
(off the raised eyebrow)  
For the next few weeks, there'll be  
a lot of late nights, and if you  
have a husband, kids...

AISHA

('nope')  
Gelato in the freezer -- 'Game of  
Thrones' on the DVR.

JESS

I'm a bit of a lone wolf, not so  
good at relying on people.

AISHA

After that big speech you gave?  
You need to get better. I'd like  
the opportunity.

A smile between them -- a tentative chemistry setting in.

JESS

Let's track down that Swiss group  
and the Firebrand Fund. We need a  
full accounting of who lost what.

AISHA

I'll get someone on it. We're due  
downtown in an hour. You might  
wanna do something with...

(MORE)

AISHA (CONT'D)  
(adjusts Jess' hair)  
...This.

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - SERIES OF CUTS

On the stand, an SEC REGIONAL DIRECTOR (male, 50's).

SEC REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
We'd looked into the fund a number  
of times at the SEC. But during  
the last inspection, the numbers  
were just not supportable.

On the stand, an INVESTOR RELATIONS MANAGER (female, 30's).

INVESTOR RELATIONS MANAGER  
I was in charge of dealing with  
prospective investors, I never  
imagined I was helping perpetrate a  
massive swindle. It makes me very  
angry -- at both of them.

An investor named MARY - elderly, African-American.

MARY  
It wasn't only rich people -- there  
were lots like me. I knew about  
Charlie Fisher -- all the good work  
he'd done. I saw this as a way of  
investing with a conscience. But  
everything I had... it's gone now.

On the stand is Cooper Landings.

COOPER  
It's hard when you've known someone  
all these years to have it end like  
this. But we have to answer for  
our actions. I came to see that.

Tang nods, resumes his place at his table, as Jess steps up.

JESS  
Sir: you claim you two made a  
cabal -- an unspoken agreement --  
to rip off investors? Is that so?

COOPER  
Sadly, yes.

JESS  
And what was the end game?  
(off Cooper's look)  
(MORE)

JESS (CONT'D)

Eventually, your children or grandchildren would have to answer. Someday, someone was going to pay the piper. Did you decide it just wasn't your problem?

COOPER

We were greedy, no two ways about it.

JESS

But there are, sir: *your way* and my client's. That's why we're here.

Aisha hands the memo to Jess -- who takes it. But then, on second thought, she gives it back to Aisha. She's uncertain.

JESS (CONT'D)

You're not scared, are you?

Aisha flashes her a grin, catching the callback and perhaps a double meaning. A secret smile exchanged, then she steps in.

AISHA

What you're looking at is a memo from Mr. Fisher to you. Read the highlighted portion, please.

COOPER

'...Cooper, this conduct is unacceptable and perilously close to being in violation of the law. If the fund is getting too large for you to manage competently, you must either reduce its size or hire suitable general counsel.'

AISHA

The words of a co-conspirator?

COOPER

He was covering for himself.

AISHA

No. He had detected irregularities and was urging you to correct them.

COOPER

So why didn't he do something then?

AISHA

When you were arrested, were Mr. Panicali and his team already on the trail of Mr. Fisher?

COOPER

They were *interested* in him.

AISHA

And you wanted to be helpful, so you started making accusations?

COOPER

Statements of fact, not accu... -

AISHA

That's up to the jury.

TANG

Is there a question?!

COOPER

He wrote a check for a hundred K to some woman in Nairobi, that's a fact! I never knew what shady business he was up to -- !

Charlie can take no more, rises, vibrating with indignation.

CHARLIE

How good a deal did you get, Cooper? Is it worth it?

All heads turn to Charlie -- uncharacteristically raw.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

All these lies for a little less jail time?

JUDGE ALORRO

Mister Fisher.

CHARLIE

You sold out for a house in the Bahamas, now you'd sell me out for nothing?!

JUDGE ALORRO (CONT'D)

Mister Fisher! Sit down and stop talking! You're out of order!

CHARLIE

Everything I've worked for?

JESS

Dad, sit down!

It's become an unseemly, untenable fracas.

JUDGE ALORRO

We're adjourned! Ms. Fisher, find a way to control your father... I mean, your client... I mean, whatever the hell you call him!

She bangs her gavel and storms out. Jess looks at Charlie, who is out of breath and spent. He shrugs.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. WITNESS ROOM - DAY

Charlie with Aisha and Jess.

JESS

Making a spectacle of yourself is  
not going to help anything!

AISHA

You're looking at years behind  
bars, Charlie.

JESS

And you don't have so many to give.

CHARLIE

Thanks for the motivational speech.

JESS

This is no game, Dad -- !

Aisha puts a hand lightly on her arm, to calm her. It has a  
surprisingly soothing effect. Which Charlie clocks, curious.

AISHA

What about the check, Charlie? Did  
you have a girlfriend in Kenya?

CHARLIE

I don't write checks to my female  
companions. Pierra Ndanu is a  
children's advocate in Africa.  
The money was a loan to her from a  
pocket account I had access to --

JESS

Oh god, that sounds so lame.

CHARLIE

Forget the check, let me address  
the memo. Put me on the stand.

JESS

Absolutely not. Worst idea ever.

CHARLIE

I know how to woo a jury.

JESS

Who's trying this case? You or me?

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM

ON CHARLIE on the stand, holding the memo; Jess examines.

CHARLIE

I wrote this to Cooper as soon as I had an inkling something was amiss.

JESS

Why didn't you report that then?

CHARLIE

It didn't strike me as fraud -- it looked like simple mismanagement. Sloppiness, nothing criminal. Two weeks later, the SEC shut him down.

In the back, Panicali leads in his wife Sophie, whom we saw earlier. Jess looks over her notes as Aisha, studying the jury's flat affect, leans in and whispers to her.

AISHA

We have an empathy deficit. He's a fancy rich dude accused of bilking regular folks out of millions.

EMMA

They need to see the real Charlie.

JESS

Are you sure? Because he can be damn unlikable.

AISHA

He can also sell shoes to a snake.

EMMA

Ask him if he's a rich man.

(off Jess' doubt)

I know how he'll answer. Ask him.

Jess is reluctant, but Aisha's prompting look induces her to proceed. She turns back to Charlie on the stand --

JESS

You consider yourself a rich man?

CHARLIE

The accumulation of wealth hasn't been a high priority for me...

(MORE)



Titters from crowd; a snarl from Panicali.

PANICALI

Have you ever committed acts you  
deem immoral? Acts of immorality.

Charlie takes a moment, the two guys locked into each other.

CHARLIE

Is this what we're here to discuss?

PANICALI

We're here to discuss hypocrisy.  
It is one thing to be a crook --

CHARLIE

You're on a witchhunt,  
pursuing a personal agenda to  
advance your career goals.

PANICALI (CONT'D)

Quite another to be a  
hypocrite, hiding in a cloak  
of righteousness --

CHARLIE

That is why I'm here.

Panicali is intense, direct, almost private in his focus.

PANICALI

We both know why you're here.

Emma and Aisha follow Charlie's quick look to Sophie in the  
gallery; embarrassed, evasive. She doesn't want to be there.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Aisha, Emma, Charlie and Jess are walking out.

AISHA

Tell her, Charlie.

JESS

Tell me what?

EMMA

About Sophie Panicali.

They look at Charlie sternly. Jess processes this.

JESS

What? No. No, you didn't...

EMMA

It's so disgusting, Dad.

JESS  
Sophie Panicali is half your age!

CHARLIE  
Well, that's just bad math.

JESS  
Why would you do that?!

CHARLIE  
Have you seen her?

AISHA  
You have impeccable taste, Charlie.  
-- But shame on you.

CHARLIE  
It was brief and discreet. I never  
thought old Teddy found out.  
Probably should have guessed it.

JESS  
Really?! You think?!

EMMA  
Can we argue, um -- *malfeasance*? A  
prosecutorial vendetta?

JESS  
'Your Honor, my father's innocent  
because he screwed my boss' wife?'

CHARLIE  
Hm. I'd like to brainstorm a  
little on how to phrase that.

INT. F, F & H - MAIN RECEPTION/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

DING! Jess and Charlie rumble in, trailed by Emma and Aisha.

CHARLIE  
I'm a free and virile man, she's an  
attractive woman...

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
...unhappily married to a  
political stooge...

EMMA  
(covers her ears)  
...Lalalalalalalalalalalala...

They are met by Katherine, with a head of steam going.

KATHERINE  
You couldn't stick to models and  
cocktail waitresses?!

CHARLIE

An unfortunate personal foible...

JESS

*Foible?!*

KATHERINE

I am so ready to shove this  
Blackberry up your ass.

EMMA

This is all so gross.

AISHA

I'm, uh, gonna wait outside.

CHARLIE

What Cooper and that pinhead of a  
prosecutor have done -- well, it's  
ethically bankrupt in a way that I  
cannot begin to fathom.

JESS

Really? *Even you?*

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Aisha shuts the door behind her. Danny is there, peeking in.

AISHA

White folks be acting crazy again.

DANNY

It's like a train wreck -- you  
can't look away.

INT. JUDGES' CHAMBERS - DAY

The Judge peruses a document as Jess and Panicali look on.

JUDGE ALORRO

Oh, my. Well well well.

PANICALI

Your Honor, please --

JUDGE ALORRO

Shh. I'm at the good part.

Finished -- or, 'sated' -- she uses the paper to fan herself.

JUDGE ALORRO (CONT'D)

Okay: this is sealed. No need to  
make it public.

JESS

That's why I suggested we do it in chambers, take care of it quietly.

JUDGE ALORRO

I am certainly disappointed.

PANICALI

If I may say, in my own defense --

JUDGE ALORRO

Not you, Ted -- them! I take those commandment thingies seriously!

JESS

Of course. Still, in light of the indications that this is a frivolous, vindictive litigation --  
(off her dubious look)  
He's prosecuting my father for sleeping with his wife, Your Honor. And he's going after him like he's an Al Qaeda terrorist.

JUDGE ALORRO

In all fairness, your father's been terrorizing courtrooms for years.

JESS

The case is misbegotten.

JUDGE ALORRO

Prosecutor's a cuckold -- defense counsel's a disaffected daughter. Even Steven. See you in court.

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Aisha and Jess study piles of documents, as Emma enters.

EMMA

I listened to all those super-boring recorded conversations -- nothing damning there.

AISHA

Still can't track down any details on those unidentified investors.

JESS

The whole thing's like a perfect storm -- with an ideal target.

EMMA

No one made Dad paint that big X on his back.

As Emma moves away, Jess, frustrated, slams down a file.

AISHA

You have a temper, don't you?

JESS

I know, it's not attractive.

AISHA

...I wouldn't say that.

Jess wonders: *is she sending the message I'm receiving?* But Danny enters, with an herbal tea. Sips it, seems to like it.

DANNY

Mint chamomile. Who knew? There was no one to send for coffee.

For Emma, who smiles.

AISHA

This fund -- Firebrand -- was the biggest loser, but it's set up in Bermuda -- we can't get at it.

DANNY

Firebrand? What's a firebrand?

JESS

Somebody who starts a movement. Like Gandhi or Malcolm X --

Ding, a bell goes off in her head. She's putting it together. And she takes off, leaving the others curious.

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jess scans photos on the wall. Her parents with the Clintons -- Charlie receiving an award from Amnesty International. And: A CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CLINIC - ZIMBABWE. Doctors, nurses, NGO volunteers, children. A dedication plaque: February 4, 2005 -- Harare. **"Charlie Fisher, We owe you everything. You were our firebrand."** Jess takes it in.

INT. CHARLIE'S CORNER OFFICE - NIGHT

Charlie is on the phone as Jess barges in.

CHARLIE

No, I need the money sooner... I'll call you back.

(re: Jess, hangs up)

I'm trying to cobble together some funds in case we run into trouble.

JESS

What is 'firebrand'?

Jess glares at him. Charlie turns stone-cold sober.

CHARLIE

We're not going there.

JESS

Why the hell not?

CHARLIE

I won't put myself up for public humiliation --

JESS (CONT'D)

...It's no time to get hung up on perception --

CHARLIE

You have to be able to get me off without exposing me in a way that basically destroys me.

JESS

You've spent years berating me for my 'idealized' image of the process--

CHARLIE

The 'government' not the 'process!'

JESS

...and now you want to equivocate like that?

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Our system of justice should be better than that --

JESS

Dad, you didn't do anything wrong!

CHARLIE

You want me to testify to this?

JESS

Yes. I want you to tell the truth.

Charlie weighs it... shakes his head, definitively: 'no.'

CHARLIE

Find another way.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE ALORRO

Ms. Fisher? Does the defense rest?

Jess and Charlie exchange a stony look. Then, Jess turns looks back into the gallery at Katherine, who gives a nod.

JESS

The defense recalls Charlie Fisher.

Charlie takes a beat, unpleasantly surprised.

CHARLIE

Uh... I'd rather not, Your Honor.

JUDGE ALORRO

You've taken the stand, sir, you're compelled for re-direct.

CHARLIE

(sotto, to Jess)

What do you think you're doing?

JESS

Exactly what you'd do.

Charlie rises, begrudgingly, and takes the stand.

JESS (CONT'D)

Defense document 301-a submitted into evidence. Can you tell us what that document is?

CHARLIE

Financials.

JESS

For what?

CHARLIE

An offshore account.

JESS

What is the account called?

CHARLIE

'Firebrand.'

JESS  
And what is Firebrand composed of?

CHARLIE  
I don't know.

JESS  
You don't know? Please answer.

Charlie's stonewalling. Jess is annoyed, looks to the Judge.

JESS (CONT'D)  
Permission to treat the witness as  
hostile, Your Honor.

JUDGE ALORRO  
Hostile? He's your client!

JESS  
He's also my father, so I know how  
hostile he can be.

JUDGE ALORRO  
(assenting)  
When do the fire-eaters get here?

JESS  
Is it true that Firebrand is a fund  
that you control?

CHARLIE  
Yes, but --

JESS  
And is it true that Firebrand was  
invested with Mr. Landings?

CHARLIE  
Yes, but --

Now Jess is running roughshod over Charlie.

JESS  
What money is the fund composed of?

CHARLIE  
I don't feel that...

JESS  
Answer the question.

CHARLIE  
I really don't see how...

JESS

Answer the question!

The fierceness with which it comes out startles the courtroom, not least of all Charlie. He starts to succumb --

CHARLIE

First and foremost it contains a charitable trust established to support a children's medical clinic and temporary housing in Zimbabwe.

JESS

And what else?

CHARLIE

My firm's pension fund. As well as a family trust for my children... and my grandchildren-to-be.

There is devastation in Charlie's voice and demeanor.

JESS

Over the years, it did very well with Mr. Landings? But now? What is the status?

(off Charlie's hesitation)

Dad, you need to answer.

CHARLIE

It's been decimated. Wiped out.

JESS

Money for a philanthropic cause. Money that was the hard-earned retirement fund for you and the people you work with. Money set aside to leave your descendants?

Charlie tries to suppress some emotion.

CHARLIE

...Yes. ...All gone.

JESS

Can you illuminate why, when faced with the charges against you, you continued to withhold this fact?

CHARLIE

I wanted to get it back. I thought I could replenish the fund before any real damage was done.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

To my firm, to my family, to my reputation. To the clinic -- which I feared would be destroyed. That's why I wrote that check to Miss Ndanu. To help tide her over. I never understood just what Cooper was up to -- playing on the international privatization of oil industries, new currencies like bitcoin. It was all a smokescreen, but it escaped me. I failed colossally in my fiduciary duties. And I felt that revealing this... would have a devastating impact on how I'm perceived in the community, my ability to continue doing the things I've strived to do for my whole career. Hurt my family. Debilitate my firm. And that seemed to me, after years of arguing the fine points of the law, to be the definition of 'unjust.'

Sad and surprising to all. In the gallery, Panicali sinks.

JESS

Your Honor? It is not possible to be a perpetrator and a victim of the same criminal act. My father, like many others, was conned and then betrayed by Cooper Landings, an old friend and compatriot from a purer time in his life. And the government -- for its own reasons -- jumped on the opportunity to prosecute without sufficient evidence. I move that pursuant to rule 28, the court dismiss all charges as being without cause.

Jess and Charlie hold a look as we HARD CUT TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Charlie's before a phalanx of microphones and cameras. From a distance, Jess looks on. Sophie Panicali steps up.

SOPHIE

Restored to his rightful place.

JESS

I was surprised to see you in court, Sophie.

SOPHIE

Ted and I are working out a custody agreement -- he gave me Christmas with the kids if I would watch him eviscerate Charlie. Your re-direct kind of threw a wrench in the deal.

JESS

You should have told me.

SOPHIE

I didn't know what Ted was up to until Charlie got indicted.

JESS

I mean, you should've told me you slept with my father before...

SOPHIE

...Before you and I got that room at the Pierre last summer?

Rut-roh, what? Jess nods.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Something was happening between us.... Something *interesting*. I didn't want to scare you off. I mean, in college, I experimented - who didn't? - but with you...

JESS

Sophie, come on...

SOPHIE

It's a lot less complicated now.

JESS

Not gonna happen. Really. I'm involved... in something else.

Sophie goes up to Jess, very close, alluring. Their bodies in dangerous proximity. She's powerfully sexy and knows it.

SOPHIE

You're more like Charlie than you realize.

JESS

That's just icky.

Sophie winks and walks away. Jess watches her go.

AISHA (O.S.)  
Pyrrhic victory.  
(as Jess turns to see her)  
Did they teach that at Stanford?

JESS  
'A victory at too great a cost.'

AISHA  
He's the lion in winter. Mortality  
is hounding him -- betrayal,  
frailty, defeat. But he's not  
backing down. Maybe he can save  
his legacy. Maybe he can save the  
firm. And you? What will you do?

JESS  
If you're so interested, why don't  
you let me buy you dinner?

AISHA  
...Dinner?

JESS  
As a way of saying thanks?

AISHA  
Hm. Dinner.

JESS  
Traditionally known as the last  
meal of the day.

Aisha smiles, enigmatically. Laughs. Starts walking away.

AISHA  
Another time. I gotta get home.  
'Winter is coming.'

As Jess watches her walk away, her CELL PHONE RINGS. She  
checks the incoming screen: **"Attorney General's Office."**

EXT. STREETS/INT. HIRED TOWN CAR (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Charlie and Katherine.

CHARLIE  
You put her up to it?

KATHERINE  
No. She called me. She was upset.

CHARLIE

And you said...?

KATHERINE

'Save him from himself, Jess.'

(then)

So, this is what's been holding up  
the divorce papers?

CHARLIE

I didn't want to let you down. I  
thought I could fix it on my own.  
...And maybe... part of me doesn't  
want the divorce.

KATHERINE

Oh, that ship has sailed, honey.  
We gotta face up to it.

CHARLIE

Through it all, over four decades,  
you know what the best part of us  
has always been? Each other.

KATHERINE

So sweet. Is that what you were  
thinking while you were schtupping  
the US Attorney's wife?

CHARLIE

Yes, in fact. But not only then.

She smiles, dryly. Amused, sardonic.

KATHERINE

When we met in law school, I knew  
you were A LOT. From the minute  
you got kicked out of mock debate  
for making the judge cry. But you  
turned out to be even more than I  
imagined. Which I love about you.  
And sometimes hate. But I know we  
are gonna be so happy together. As  
soon as we're divorced.

(to the driver)

This traffic's a mess! Will you  
try Madison instead?

INT. ELEVATOR/FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - NIGHT

Jess rides up the elevator, staring at the floor indicator,  
deep in some mental conundrum. Wrestling with a dilemma.  
DING! She snaps to attention, emerges from the elevator.

INT. EMMA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Emma strums her guitar, playing through THE SONG we heard before. She's got a bottle of tequila on the desk.

DANNY (O.S.)  
Damn, little sister. Pretty good.  
(as she sees him)  
Who knew you had talent?

EMMA  
That's the million dollar question.

DANNY  
What's it about, that song?

She weighs it, then makes an impulsive decision... to share.

EMMA  
My brother. He ran away, I was 12  
at the time. He was trouble. One  
of those kids. God, I loved him.

DANNY  
That shit will mess a person up.

EMMA  
A whole family, in fact.

Beat. He nods thoughtfully, absorbing that.

DANNY  
Your sister... she's all right. I  
hope she comes aboard. We could  
use her. And I know it may not  
feel like it... but she loves the  
hell out of you. It's obvious.

EMMA  
Oh yeah, we Fishers are experts at  
backhanded love.

Danny moves up, pours two shots as he speaks:

DANNY  
You're a trip, that's for sure.  
But your folks... I'd kill for  
them, you know that? Without them,  
I'm some *abogado* shyster with my  
poster all over the subway, doing  
low-end personal injury suits...  
(then, upon further  
review)  
Actually, doesn't sound so bad.  
(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

But this is better. So, here's to Charlie being free. And the hope that, between all of us, we can save this bitch.

EMMA

One thing about dad -- he never gives up hope.

They clink glasses and shoot their tequila.

INT. CHARLIE'S CORNER OFFICE - NIGHT

Empty. Jess looks in a moment, then steps in. Looking around, taking in the artifacts of her Dad's life. Including the graduation PHOTO OF KYLE. She's got a box in her hands.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

You did a good job.  
(as she turns to see him)  
Given the givens. Thank you.

JESS

I wish it didn't have to come with all the fighting.

CHARLIE

The law is an adversarial system.

JESS

I don't mean the law.

CHARLIE

We're meeting a prospective client tomorrow, right up your alley --

JESS

Dad...

CHARLIE

It's a dissident Syrian group suing a multi-conglomerate that's supporting the dictatorship there --

JESS

Wait, Dad, listen...

CHARLIE

Short story is, it's a populist cause against a company with deep pockets. The retainer alone should keep the clinic afloat, at least until we can rebuild Firebrand.

JESS  
I'm not staying.

Charlie pauses a beat, then ploughs on, oblivious.

CHARLIE  
And then later we can discuss how  
to go after your old office for  
malicious prosecution.

JESS  
It's not my 'old' office. It's  
just... 'my office' now.  
(Charlie stops, faces her)  
The AG called, asked me to fill in,  
now that Panicali's resigning.  
It'll start out as temporary, but  
who knows..? I'll be the youngest  
US Attorney in the country.

CHARLIE  
So... instead of bringing us all  
back together, you'd rather return  
to the office that would ruin me --  
and lead the way for them. Wow.

JESS  
I took an oath to uphold the law.  
That's what I'm gonna keep doing.

CHARLIE  
You used to dream about working for  
me. We dreamed about it together.

JESS  
Life happens. You grow up. And  
sometimes, so do your dreams.

CHARLIE  
And when do you outgrow blaming me?

She has tears in her eyes. No words. Charlie reaches over,  
PICKS UP THE WOODEN ELEPHANT, tosses it to her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
I found this in the conference  
room. I think it's yours.

They hold a long, sad look. She turns to go. We STAY ON  
HER, as she goes, stricken, with him looking on behind her.

INT. HIGH RISE BUILDING ELVATOR - NIGHT

Katherine rides up the sleek elevator, towards the top.

INT. DOWNTOWN TRAIN - NIGHT

Jess sits rocking back and forth with the sway of the train, as the lights flit by. A box of office stuff on her lap. Brooding, a far-away look.

INT. KATHERINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Swank, above a glittering skyline. Katherine, silky nightgown, a glass of Chablis, lounges on a sofa. She picks up a nondescript cellphone - A BURNER. She activates it.

INT. US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - JESS' NEW OFFICE - NIGHT

Unadorned, but better than what she had before. A CORNER OFFICE, like her dad's. Jess stands with a box of stuff.

INTERCUTTING:

KATHERINE in mid-conversation. Is she chatting with a lover?

KATHERINE (TO PHONE)

...It went well enough, he's not going to prison at least... Yes, sweetie, I miss you too...

JESS starts unpacking, setting up the office as her own.

KATHERINE (TO PHONE) (CONT'D)

...I know, I didn't think it'd go on this long either... but it's still not safe for you here...

JESS pulls out THE WOODEN ELEPHANT, places it down.

KATHERINE (TO PHONE) (CONT'D)

How's Portugal? I've never been... Oh. Well, tell me when you get to Spain then... I love you, Kyle...

JESS pulls out the PHOTO OF HER AND KYLE, studies it, places it beside THE ELEPHANT. Deep in thought. PULL BACK SLOWLY until she is small in the frame, a power player at a desk, a Justice Department logo on the door, the Brooklyn Bridge and lower Manhattan sparkling out the windows behind her.

END OF PILOT