

UNTITLED HANK STEINBERG PILOT

Written by

Hank Steinberg

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Full BLUE Draft - March 7th, 2019
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CAST LIST

AARON WALKER WALLACE *	Nicholas Pinnock
SAFIYA MASRY	Indira Varma
MARIE (WALKER/WALLACE) WALLACE *	Joy Bryant
ANYA HARRISON	Mary Stuart Masterson
GLEN MASKINS	Boris McGiver
FRANK FOSTER	Glenn Fleshler
JAMAL BISHOP	Dorian Missick
JASMINE WALKER WALLACE *	Tyla Harris
DARIUS JOHNSON	Brandon J. Dirden
DEZ O'REILLY	Erik Jensen
HUEY CORNELL (GUARD)	Sean Ringgold
WILD BILL MILLER	Peter Greene
BOBBY LATIMER *	Hassan Johnson
ANDERSON (GUARD)	Jeb Kreager
MONTE POWELL	Mick O'Rourke
GAVIN	Brendan Burke
GARRIGUS (GUARD)	Erick Betancourt
MATTEO (KITCHEN WORKER INMATE)	Gabe Vargas
VIC THE FORGER	Mark Dowey *
MONICA	Adriana DeMeo
BUS PRISONER	Philip Reid
HENRY ROSWELL	Todd Susman
REPORTER SALLY BRAVER	Christina Shea-Wright
ZOE MASRY	JoJo Kushner
JUSTIN MASRY	Cameron Mann
JOSE RODRIGUEZ	Andrew Casanova
JUDGE JULIE TANAKA	Jade Wu
FREDDY DAWKINS	Matthew James Ballinger
MOLLY DAVISON	Lizzy DeClement
JOSE'S ABUELA	Irma-Estel LaGuerre
ANGRY WOMAN	Diany Rodriguez
NIKKI	Elizabeth Baranes
POLICE COMMISSIONER PAUL MORISSEY	Antoni Corone
RALPH (PASSERBY)	George Gerard
GUARD 1	Aristeo F. Kardi
GUARD 2	Tommy Nohilly
SECURITY GUARD	Guy Fortt
CRYING WOMAN	D. Dumebi Egbufor
FRISKING GUARD	Lawrence Bingham
JASMINE (5 Y.O.)	Amaya Carr *
PRISON GUARD	Sean Weil

* Denotes change

SET LIST

INTERIORS

Aaron's Home
- Living Room
- Kitchen
- Jasmine's Bedroom
Country Club
- Foyer
Courthouse (Bronx)
- Bathroom ("Somewhere")
- Courtroom
- Hallway
- Judge's Chambers
Hospital
Safiya's Car
Safiya's Suburban Home
- Kitchen
- Master Bedroom
Maskin's Office
Police Interrogation Room
Prison
- Aaron's Cell
- Administrative Area
 •Bullpen
- Cafeteria
- Factory
- Vic's Cell
- Freddy's POD
- Gym
 •Hang-out Area
- Hallway
- Jose's Cell
- Kitchen
- Loading Area
- Paralegal's Office
 •Hallway Outside
- POD
- Various (Security,
 Holding, Halls)
- Visiting Area
 •Security Area Outside
- Warden's Office
Prison Bus
~~Tha Club Trinity Room~~ *
- Downstairs
 •Backroom

EXTERIORS

Aaron's Home
- Backyard
- Street in front
Courthouse (Bronx)
Henry Roswell's House
Prison
- Prison Yard
~~Tha Club Trinity Room~~ *

REVISED PAGES LIST

Revision	Date:	Pages in revision:
Production Draft	03/03/19	Full Draft
1st Revision (Full BLUE Draft)	03/07/19	Full Blue Draft, Cast & Set Lists, added Revised Pages List
2nd Revision (Full PINK Draft)	03/08/19	Full Pink Draft, Cast & Set Lists
3rd Revision (Full YELLOW Draft)	03/11/19	Full Yellow Draft, Cast & Set Lists
4th Revision (Full GREEN Draft)	03/15/19	Full Green Draft, Cast List, added Scene 43 Addendum
5th Revision (GOLDENROD Pages)	03/16/19	6, 29, 29A, 48, 60
6th Revision (2ND WHITE Pages)	03/17/19	6, 7, 29A, 30, 48
7th Revision (2ND BLUE Pages)	03/18/19	21, 22, 31, 61, Cast List
8th Revision (2ND PINK Pages)	03/20/19	1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 19, 19A, 20, 20A, 21, 22, 22A, 35, 35A, 45, 50, Cast List
9th Revision (2ND YELLOW Pages)	03/21/19	9, 12, 25, 30, 30A, Cast List
10th Revision (2ND GREEN Pages)	03/25/19	3, 4, 30, 37, 37A, 54, Cast List
11th Revision (2ND GOLDENROD Pages)	03/29/19	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 20, 22, 23, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 44, 48, 50, 51, 52, Cast & Set Lists, Sc. 43 Addendum

POLICE burst in. Aaron is SHOCKED.

A7 **INT. TRINITY ROOM - DOWNSTAIRS - BACK ROOM - SAME (2010)** A7 *

Cops find BAGS of COKE stashed in the CEILING (or AIR VENT).

B7 **INT. TRINITY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (2010)** B7 *

Aaron watches in horror as Employee is arrested. And suddenly Aaron's being pinned against a WALL and CUFFED...

AARON (V.O.)
...maybe I should have known, maybe I
should have listened to my wife...

Marie screams Aaron's name. Darius, shocked himself, holds her back, as Aaron's led toward the DOOR in cuffs...

7 **OMITTED** 7

8 **INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT (2010)** 8

A COP interrogates Aaron. ADA DEZ O'REILLY (shirt and tie, sleeves rolled up, no jacket) watches through the WINDOW as DA GLEN MASKINS (wearing a suit) steps into FRAME.

AARON (V.O.)
The powers that be came down on me.

9 **INT. SOMEWHERE (COURTHOUSE BATHROOM) - DAY (D1)** 9

Aaron stares back at us. A reprise of the opening shot. PULL BACK to REVEAL he's in a SUIT and TIE. Bucking himself up. He smoothes down his BEARD with water. Trying to neaten it.

AARON (V.O.)
So here I am now, nine years later, for
the first time...

10 **INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS (D1)** 10

Aaron limps slightly, trailed by two SECURITY GUARDS, an ACCORDION FOLDER tucked under his arm. COPS, HANDCUFFS, JUMPSUITS. LAWYERS. Cell phones. Texting. Negotiating.

AARON (V.O.)
...back in the same courthouse where they
came to take my life away...

Aaron PUSHES OPEN a SET of DOORS and enters...

11 INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS (D1) 11

AARON'S POV: BAILIFF. STENOGRAPHER. Scales of Justice.

AARON (V.O.)
...except today, no matter what anybody
thinks about me...

Aaron makes his way down the AISLE, trying not to show his
nerves as people look up at him.

AARON (V.O.)
...about who I am and how I got here,
today I've got a way to fight back. And
you can be damn sure that's what I'm
going to do.

MONTAGE ENDS as he arrives at JOSE RODRIGUEZ (24, jumpsuit)
talking to his ABUELA and SISTERS (in front row). Aaron
offers his hand to Jose's abuela, trying to appear confident.

AARON
Mrs. Rodriguez.

She shakes his hand politely, but she has her doubts. Aaron
pulls out a chair for Jose and they sit at the DEFENSE TABLE.

AARON (CONT'D)
Remember, this is just about arguing the
motion to get your retrial. We're not
even coming out of here today with a
decision on that.

Jose looks like he's about to vomit. Aaron gets in his face.

AARON (CONT'D)
Hey. You're innocent, you were
overcharged, you've done time you never
should have. We're going to end that.

Aaron hears a familiar voice. Tracks it to see -- ADA
O'Reilly, 40, hurrying into court on his cell phone.

It's like TIME FREEZES. Like Aaron's seen a ghost.

O'REILLY
Yeah! Rookie bailed, his wife's pregnant,
needed to be at the OB blah blah, I just
caught this eight minutes ago...

Aaron's eyes register FEAR as he watches O'Reilly settle at
the PROSECUTOR'S TABLE, open his file to review it...

O'REILLY (CONT'D)

...some penny-anny B.S. Order the drinks,
give me thirty, I'll meet you there.

He clicks off, then notices Aaron. Almost does a double take
as Aaron manages to shift his fear to anger. O'Reilly
rummages through his files, sees under, "Defense Counsel" the
name "Aaron Wallace". Tries to compute this, moves to Aaron. *

O'REILLY (CONT'D)

How are you here?

AARON

Hard work and good will. What's your
method?

BAILIFF (O.S.)

All rise!

As the Judge enters, O'Reilly gives Aaron a hard look and the
BANG BANG BANG of a gavel drives us to a TIME CUT:

JUDGE JULIE TANAKA (no-nonsense, blue-collar) looks at Aaron:

JUDGE TANAKA

Mr. Wallace, I understand this will be
your first time arguing before the bench. *

Jose's abuela looks at the sisters skeptically.

AARON

It is, Your Honor.

JUDGE TANAKA

I won't hold it against you. As long as
you know what you're doing.

AARON

I guess we'll see 'bout that, Your Honor.

JUDGE TANAKA

Let's have at it then.

Aaron looks at Jose. At Jose's abuela. And then at O'Reilly.

AARON (V.O.)

So this is it now. Day One. I wasn't
expecting him to be here, but that's all
right. It'll only make this sweeter. See,
ADA Dez O'Reilly is one of the bastards
that put me away...

MASKINS

I don't want to hear your mea culpas,
Dez. You got ninety seconds to tell me
how the hell this happened.

O'REILLY

So, apparently when he got to prison, he
went to work for the Paralegal
Association, representing inmates in
their internal cases inside prison --

MASKINS

-- I'm familiar.

O'REILLY

-- That got him unlimited access to the
library. From there, college and law
degrees online, then he figured out some
totally insane loophole in the system.

RALPH (PASSERBY)

District Attorney.

MASKINS

Yeah, hey, Ralph.
(then, to O'Reilly)
The loophole?

They enter the COURTHOUSE and get waved through SECURITY...

O'REILLY

First he took the bar in California --
the only state where you can sit for the
exam with a degree from an unaccredited
law school. Then he applied to have his
California license accepted reciprocally
in New York.

MASKINS

But he's a convicted drug dealer. He
couldn't have passed the morality test
without someone with serious juice.

O'REILLY

Remember Henry Roswell? State senator,
former public defender (litigator)? Well,
he's retired now. In his spare time, he
arbitrates prison paralegal cases. Guess
he was impressed with Wallace and
sponsored him.

*

Maskins stops. Still trying to wrap his head around this.

MASKINS

You know Wallace is still fighting his own conviction? *

O'REILLY

I thought you had that under control.

MASKINS

He's been quiet for a while, but now -- what's this case anyway?

O'REILLY

Latino kid in for statutory rape. Plus the girl OD'd on drugs he gave her. He's serving 20 on the sex charge and attempted murder.

MASKINS

And they're looking for a retrial?

O'REILLY

They say the kid never bought the drugs. Claim the dealer's changing his story. I don't see Tanaka buying it.

MASKINS

I need to give her a call?

O'REILLY

I wouldn't waste a chit. He's a joke plus he's popping his cherry on this. I'll run rings around him if it comes to that.

MASKINS

Awright, but I need to be in the loop. Second you get Tanaka's ruling, I want to know.

O'REILLY

You got it.

Maskins strides away. And off O'Reilly, not as confident as he just led his boss to believe...

17

INT. PRISON - POD - DAY (D2)

17

Aaron (carrying a CARDBOARD BOX) makes his way through the POD, where fellow PRISONERS socialize, play cards, chess. MONTE POWELL, an Older Prisoner, intercepts him:

MONTE

Yo Aaron, you review my charges yet?

AARON

I'm on it, Monte. Hearing's not 'til next week.

MONTE

'Cause I can't do no solitary!

AARON

You stuck a fork in Nineball's eye. Next time try a spoon.

MONTE

Hey, I know you been breakin' your ass for Jose! You better still got time for the rest of us!

AARON

All I got is time!

Aaron arrives at Jose and stout guard HUEY CORNELL, waiting in front of AARON'S CELL.

HUEY

No romance in here, hey fellas?

AARON

You welcome to watch.

Huey eye-fucks Aaron, lets them in.

AARON (CONT'D)

(to Jose)

Let's get to work.

As Aaron opens his BOX and pulls out the files and paperwork, Jose takes in the CELL: Aaron's family photos near the bed. Opposite that, a WAR ROOM WALL: images of Maskins, cops, the Judge who tried his case, other suspects. Hand-written notes and stickies. In the corner, dozens of BOXES of files.

JOSE

This all for your case?

AARON

Yep.

Jose recognizes O'Reilly's PHOTO on the WALL.

JOSE

That's the dude going against us now.

AARON

Uh-huh.

JOSE

So you got his face up on your wall,
like, what? For inspiration?

AARON

You could call it that.

JOSE

Yeah, you know, that's what I was kind of
wondering about. What went down in court
yesterday, seems like it's personal --
between you and him.

AARON

It won't affect how I do anything.

JOSE

'Cause I was talkin' to my Grandma, and
she was kind of concerned if like -- they
got somethin' against you already, it may
make it harder for me.

AARON

They don't like to lose. No matter who's
on the other side.

JOSE

Yeah, I tried telling her --

AARON

-- She got somebody else lined up? Cause
she didn't do very well by you the first
time around.

JOSE

I know, I know, I just...

Jose shrugs. Utterly Hamlet.

AARON

I bet you think what I been doin' in here
all these years -- fightin' the system
that screwed me over. Right?

(off Jose)

Wrong. What I do as prisoner rep: that's
the commodity keeps me alive. Becomin' a
lawyer -- that's how I'm gettin' out.
See, you're just the first. I'm gonna use
your case to attack the D.A. Day by day,
case by case. 'Time I'm done, when he's
soft and his cred's shot, that's how I'm
gonna prove they worked me over.

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

Everything I do, everything I've done --
is about gettin' my freedom and back to
my family. You want another lawyer? Have
at it. But I don't think you're gonna
find anyone more motivated than me.

18 **INT. PRISON - SECURITY OUTSIDE VISITING AREA - DAY (D3)** 18

BUZZ. A SECURITY DOOR opens. Marie (now 40's, weight of the
world on her) steps through the door and enters...

19 **INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - CONTINUOUS (D3)** 19

Marie makes her way through the VISITING AREA. She passes one
WOMAN who's crying, then an arguing couple --

ANGRY WOMAN

Well, how the hell am I supposed to pay
for that?!

-- a MOM with a shrieking two year old, and approaches Aaron,
who SMILES when he sees her. Rises to greet her.

AARON

How you doin'?

MARIE

Good, okay. Long drive.

They sit. She shows him two TIES.

MARIE (CONT'D)

I brought a couple more ties for you.
'Case you need 'em for court.

AARON

(taking them)

Thanks.

(then)

Still no Jazz?

MARIE

Sorry. She's got extra SAT prep today.

AARON

(wounded)

This is three weeks in a row she's
missed.

MARIE

(evading)

She's a teenager. She's got her own life.

He looks at her, wondering if she's hiding something.

AARON

You got that report card?
(off her look)
I gotta sign it, right?

Marie hesitates, pulls it out of her pocket, slides it to Aaron, anticipating his reaction. His face darkens and he gives her a disapproving look.

MARIE

You can spare me the high and mighty act, awright?

AARON

You okay with these grades? That what you're sayin'?

MARIE

Kids have ups and downs, Aaron --

AARON

-- She quit gymnastics, she looks exhausted, last time she was here I'm damn near sure she was stoned --

MARIE

-- She was not stoned!

AARON

Well, somethin's goin' on and whatever it is --

MARIE

-- It's on me, right?!

AARON

No, it's on Darius.

MARIE

Are you kidding me?

AARON

He's not hard enough on her.

MARIE

He's not her father!

AARON

Well, if he's not willing to take on that responsibility, maybe he should get out of your bed.

MARIE

I'd (ALT: I might) kick him out if you came home. Oh wait, you can't! Because you're locked up for life!

He looks at her stunned, wounded. He softens, vulnerable:

AARON

You're not telling me something.

She shakes her head. Maybe he's right, maybe she's hiding something, but instead of telling him what it is, she tells him how it's making her feel:

MARIE

You should've taken the plea, Aaron.

AARON

It was twenty years.

MARIE

You'd have been up for parole in twelve. Three years from now...
(heart-broken)
I would've waited. And Jasmine would still have her father.

This is a punch in the gut. But instead of anger, he allows his grief to emerge. Reaches for her hand.

AARON

You still remember what I was like? The kind of...

Father. Husband. His eyes meet hers. She does remember. Can feel that. Now he can't say the words. Fights back the tears.

AARON (CONT'D)

Every day, every second I'm not there for her... For you...

Their eyes connect. The love between them still so raw and palpable. But the loss and pain are too much for her.

MARIE

I'm sorry. I just can't --

She hustles away. Aaron, reeling, gets up --

AARON

Marie! Marie, come back! Marie!

But she doesn't. And off Aaron, aching for what he's lost...

20

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY (D3)

20

Inmates play BASKETBALL and SOCCER. Lift WEIGHTS. Hold unlit cigarettes, chat, play cards. Prison Warden SAFIYA ("Sophia") MASRY (self-made, super-sharp, ambitious, first-generation American) moves through the YARD with Huey and Captain FRANK FOSTER.

SAFIYA

I don't want to hear how difficult it is to police the yard. Not when violent incidents are down 23 percent since we started giving them extra time out here.

FOSTER

Violence may be down, but contraband's way up.

SAFIYA

I haven't seen evidence of that.

FOSTER

Well, you're up in your Ivory Tower.

HUEY

I see it myself, Ma'am. My own two eyes every day. More face time you give, more the H and oxy are gonna be passin' hands.

SAFIYA

Well, Medical reports lower incidence of overdose, suicide attempts, mental illness across every category. I'm not sure what to do with your anecdotal accounts, Huey.

FOSTER

You want to get rid of the contraband, get rid of the contact visits. Go back to the windows.

SAFIYA

And break out the riot gear? You know I'm not doing that.

FOSTER

All due respect, making policy out of fear's a bad idea, ma'am.

SAFIYA

Reversing my policies because you're the one who's afraid of change is never going to happen.

(MORE)

SAFIYA (CONT'D)

So, if what you're telling me is that old dogs can't be taught new tricks, I'll just have to find new dogs, Captain.

As she walks away, Foster throws a pissed-off look to Huey.

ANGLE ON Aaron with his best friend JAMAL BISHOP, a reformed gang-banger, and BOBBY LATIMER, working their BICEPS on a BENCH. We see another side of Aaron: more street, cocky, wry, playing to his friends with a smile. *

JAMAL

Warden's down from the Big House today.

AARON

Guess she wants to see how the other half lives.

JAMAL

She must be trippin' -- you gettin' out to go to court.

AARON

I'm licensed now. Nothin' she can do about it.

All eyes turn to see WILD BILL MILLER, White Army prison drug-dealer, move from his tatted posse toward Aaron.

BOBBY

The hell this bitch want?

JAMAL

(to Aaron)

Douchebag Knox got thrown in the hole. Looks like Wild Bill wants you to get into it for him.

BOBBY

You ain't doin' any favors for them, yo.

AARON

(pushing the swagger)

Little Hitler wannabes. Hell no!

Prisoners make way for Wild Bill and two of his GOONS. He arrives at Aaron. (His Goons hang back a bit.)

WILD BILL

A word.

Aaron glances at Jamal, follows Wild Bill.

WILD BILL (CONT'D)

You hear about Joey?

AARON

Brawlin' with Custody? Can't say how that's gonna help anybody.

WILD BILL

I was wonderin' if maybe it was you ratted him out.

AARON

I think you smokin' too much crystal.

WILD BILL

You're up there in the Warden's office every week. People startin' to wonder what you talk about.

AARON

I'm the prisoner rep. What I talk about is your rights.

WILD BILL

Then I guess you'll take Joey's case?
(off Aaron's reluctance)
What? You don't like our tats? Law Man ain't supposed to judge.

AARON

I make certain exceptions.

WILD BILL

Well, I need him out. And I'd hate for folks in the yard to start questioning what does go on between you and the Madame.

A warning. Aaron notes the White Army GOONS, then the AFRICAN-AMERICAN, HISPANIC GANGS -- suspicious of him. Then at Foster and Huey. Off Aaron, caught between the factions --

21 **INT. PRISON - FACTORY - DAY (D3)**

21

Aaron walks through a FACTORY where prisoners work, climbs a set of STEPS, past a GUARD BOOTH to a LANDING. (Behind him, along the long railing over the Factory -- ARMED GUARDS watch the activity below.)

GUARD

Prima donna's in the house.

Aarons shows them a bunch of FILES. As always:

AARON

Official legal business with the Warden.

ANOTHER GUARD muscles Aaron, frisks him roughly. Aaron sighs, containing his anger, has to take this. When he's done -- Guard gestures to the DOOR. Aaron enters...

22 **INT. PRISON - ADMINISTRATIVE AREA - CONTINUOUS (D3)** 22

Assistants in the BULLPEN look at Aaron with respect, suspicion, or mistrust. He arrives at the WARDEN'S OFFICE. Knocks on the AJAR DOOR. She signals for him to close it behind him and he enters to find her wrapping up a call...

23 **INT. PRISON - WARDEN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS (D3)** 23

SAFIYA

If the homework's due, then there's no choice, is there?... So next time don't wait til the last minute... Now I gotta go, but I'll be home for dinner, okay? Love you.

Aaron registers that: he won't be home for dinner. She hangs up, pops nicotine gum in her mouth. Looks at Aaron.

SAFIYA (CONT'D)

Captain Foster wants to go back to the booths for visitation.

AARON

Good idea, if he wants to start a riot.

SAFIYA

That's what I said.

AARON

They don't like your reforms. They'll do what they can to undermine them.

SAFIYA

They claim there's an increase in trafficking.

AARON

Not that I can see.

SAFIYA

But Wild Bill's still the main mover?

(off his non-answer)

You were seen talking to him in the yard. Foster thinks maybe you're forming some kind of alliance.

AARON

And you believe that?

SAFIYA

(devil's advocate)

You're in here for dealing. Your best friend Jamal is a gang-banger.

AARON

Who you think my friends are gonna be in here? Come on.

SAFIYA

You know if I get more violence and OD's because there's an escalation in the drug trade, it will kill everything I'm trying to do here.

AARON

I told you from the beginning. You get what I know about the guards. Not the prisoners. That's the only way this can work. Unless you want me dead.

SAFIYA

(relents, shifts)

Then give me what you got.

AARON

It's been mostly nickel and dime stuff. But I just found out they threw Joey Knox in the hole.

SAFIYA

I didn't see any paperwork on that.

AARON

Me neither. But give me a shot at finding out what's going on.

She takes that in, decides to trust him. Then:

SAFIYA

You should know Custody's really not excited about having to escort you back and forth to court.

AARON

Can't give 'em a raise?

SAFIYA

You know how difficult they can make things for you. You should consider if it's going to be worth it.

AARON

You think I worked this long to back out now?

SAFIYA

I think you can afford to focus on your own case.

AARON

I appreciate the advice, ma'am, but Jose's innocent and I can prove it.

She reads him. Admires his apparent nobility. Doesn't know yet that in Aaron's mind helping Jose is helping himself.

SAFIYA

Well, I suppose I should congratulate you then. I heard from the court. You got your retrial.

AARON

That's -- great, thank you, ma'am.

SAFIYA

Okay, then. Just watch your back.

AARON

Every minute of every day.

As he heads out of the OFFICE, he subtly pumps his fist. He got Jose's day in court!

24

OMITTED

24

END ACT ONE

JOSE

Snuck around a couple months, but I knew
I had to break it off before my birthday.

AARON

Because in the state of New York, an eighteen year old and a fifteen year old is considered statutory rape.

JOSE

And they'd for sure call the cops.

Aaron grabs the legal pad, reading off the list of states, playing to the jury:

AARON

Did you know that in Alabama, Kentucky, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, Florida, Pennsylvania and fourteen other states, a boy and a girl can get married and have kids at those ages?

O'REILLY

Objection. If you're going to challenge the validity of the law, I'd suggest you take it up with the State Supreme Court.

JUDGE TANAKA

Sustained, Mr. Wallace. And I don't appreciate the grandstanding.

*

Aaron puts the pad back on his table, turns back to Jose:

AARON

So you broke up. Then what?

JOSE

She keeps cryin' and beggin' and sayin' she'll hurt herself if I don't get back to her. This is like, over a few weeks. Then one day, she promises if I just come over one more time she'd be awright.

AARON

And you went?

Jose fights back the emotions. This still haunts him.

JOSE

She said her parents were going to be out for the day, so yeah -- I went over there. Then after, you know, we were together, I fall asleep. When I wake up, there's a note next to me, saying she's gonna kill herself.

O'REILLY

Objection! The police never found this note, the victim herself swore under oath she didn't write it. This has been hashed and rehashed.

JUDGE TANAKA

Sustained. I'll allow this line of questioning if and only if you (Aaron) can produce any corroborating evidence of this note.

O'REILLY

Thank you, Your Honor.

Aaron takes in the setback, but doesn't let it rattle him. He nods to Jose -- *it's all right. Good job.*

AARON

Let's get back to that day. You woke up, then what...?

JOSE

I found her in the living room. Next to an empty bottle of Oxy. I tried to wake her, then when I couldn't, I called 911.

AARON

And you waited for the ambulance?

JOSE

(ashamed)

No.

AARON

Why not?

JOSE

Because I knew her parents would come after me. Which is what they did.

AARON

Even though Molly survived.

JOSE

Guess they wanted to punish me.

AARON

And of course the prosecution had text messages between you and Molly... where you kept promising to buy her Oxy.

JOSE

Yeah, they did.

AARON

Can you explain those?

JOSE

She kept asking me and I just kept stalling. Hoping she'd give up.

AARON

Why didn't you just tell her "no"?

JOSE

'Cause I thought she'd just go to the school dealer and buy them herself.

AARON

Were you right?

JOSE

That's what she ended up doing. The dealer just lied about it six years ago, that's how I ended up doing all this time.

AARON

Let the record show I intend to call this drug dealer as well as the police officer on the scene who saw that missing suicide note.

Aaron looks at the jury, nods "good job" to Jose and we --

30

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY (D4)

30

Jose and Aaron (once again in JUMPSUITS) make their way, handcuffed, to the PRISON BUS. Aaron feeling good, even cocky.

JOSE

So I did good?

AARON

Nah, man, you did great. We got 'em right where we want 'em. Now we bring in Freddy to vouch on the drugs, we're home free.

A local REPORTER, with CAMERA, comes at Aaron:

REPORTER/SALLY BRAVER

Hi. Sally Braver, Channel 8 News. Are you Aaron Wallace? The prisoner lawyer?

*

A beat. A decision. The CAMERA looming. Aaron knows if he talks, it will seriously escalate his attack on Maskins.

AARON

Yes, ma'am, I am.

31

INT. MASKINS' OFFICE - DAY (D4)

31

A "Glen Maskins for Attorney General" poster leans against the corner. Maskins stands against his desk, watching TV:

SALLY BRAVER (ON TV)

Are you saying the District Attorney's office is racist?

AARON (ON TV)

*I'll leave that for other people to
decide.*

(MORE)

AARON (ON TV) (CONT'D)

But there's no question the system's broken for anyone who doesn't have power or money. Overcharging people who can't afford a decent lawyer, then forcing a plea is an epidemic in this country. And if you look at the numbers, the Bronx has been one of the worst under Glen Maskins.

O'Reilly enters under this.

SALLY BRAVER (ON TV)

And what about your own case? Do you have plans to try to overturn your conviction?

AARON (ON TV)

Right now, Jose Rodriguez is my client and that's what I'm focused on.

MASKINS

How the hell did Sally Braver get a hold of this? Was it Wallace?

*

O'REILLY

Maybe. But you know how she is. Could've gotten a tip from one of the bailiffs.

MASKINS

Well, I don't buy his Dark Knight Robin Hood crap. He's trying to make himself a folk hero so he's got more cred to appeal his own conviction.

O'REILLY

He can't be a folk hero if he doesn't win. Which he won't.

MASKINS

Yeah, well, you said he wouldn't even get a retrial, now I gotta deal with this --

SALLY BRAVER (ON TV)

The timing for this has gotta be difficult for District Attorney Maskins who's in a neck-and-neck battle in the upcoming election for Attorney General against Brooklyn D.A. Anya Harrison...

SPLIT SCREEN: Maskins and Anya Harrison.

Maskins mutes the TV. Turns to O'Reilly.

MASKINS

You drop everything else on your plate,
and do not even contemplate losing this
case.

32 INT. AARON'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT (N4)

32

JASMINE (now 17) sits at the KITCHEN TABLE, staring out the window, lost in thought, anxiously biting her fingernails. Marie, cooking dinner nearby, notes her daughter.

MARIE

You gotta study for that midterm, don't
you?

JASMINE

I want to go see Dad.
(off Marie's eye-roll)
He has a right to know what's going on!

MARIE

You know the baggage he has around this.
He's just going to make you feel like you
screwed up.

JASMINE

You know, you say you're protecting me, I
think you're protecting yourself. I think
you're scared he's gonna say you screwed
up.

DARIUS has entered under this.

DARIUS

Hey. What's going on here?

MARIE

She's pissed I'm keeping her from seeing
Aaron.

DARIUS

Your mother has good reasons --

JASMINE

-- Are you going to start talking to me
about this now? Seriously?

DARIUS

Well, I live here and I support you, so
yeah --

MARIE
-- Darius.

JASMINE
Just because you're banging
your best friend's wife
doesn't mean you get to start
playing Daddy with me!

DARIUS
We're married, (ALT: together), Jazz!
That ain't changing and you're gonna have
to start to accept that!

JASMINE
Ah, how about never?! How's that work for
you?

She exits. Door slams. Darius turns to Marie.

DARIUS
You gotta stop acting like you did
somethin' wrong. Child needs to know
who's in charge.

He walks in the other direction. And off Marie, caught in the
complicated maelstrom created by Aaron's absence.

33 **INT. AARON'S HOME - JASMINE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER (N4) 33**

Jasmine lies in BED. Staring up at a TV SCREEN mounted there.
But no movies or shows. Instead, it's a SLIDE SHOW of FAMILY
PHOTOS. Clearly, Jasmine had this installed so she could see
photos of her Dad every night before bed. *There's Dad in
HOSPITAL BLUES holding Jazz the day after her birth. Dad at
her third birthday party, blowing out candles together. Dad
and her with her first bicycle.* But the photos of them
together stop when she's about eight. A life abbreviated.

She wipes a tear from her eye as Marie enters. Sits down next
to her. Looks up at the PHOTOS. It makes her wistful and sad.

MARIE
If you really think you're ready, we'll
go see him next week, okay?

Jasmine looks at her mom, softening.

MARIE (CONT'D)
But you can't talk to Darius like that.

JASMINE
I know... I'm sorry.

MARIE
He knows how hard this is for you. And he
wants to help -- however he can.

Jasmine nods, trying to wrap her head around that.

JASMINE

You think he knows you still love Dad?

Marie is taken aback by Jasmine's insight into the complexity of the situation. Her answer is as much to convince herself as her daughter:

MARIE

I think he understands there are different kinds of love.

Marie sees Jasmine's anguish. Gently brushes aside Jasmine's hair. Like when she was little.

MARIE (CONT'D)

I know you think he's coming back some day, but he's not. He's never getting out of there. Sooner we all accept that, the easier it will be to live our lives.

JASMINE

Well, I don't care about what's easy. And I'm not giving up on him. I don't know why you did.

Marie feels the sting of that accusation. Looks up at a PHOTO: Aaron (dressed up as the TIN MAN) twirling Jasmine (dressed as DOROTHY) on Halloween. She's embroiled with conflict -- about how to live with Aaron's absence and the fact that she still loves him.

WIDE -- A tableau of mother comforting child. And the absent father who can't be here.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

34 **OMITTED** 34

35 **INT. PRISON - FREDDY'S POD - MORNING (D5)** 35

Aaron shows sympathetic Guard (ANDERSON) some PAPERS.

AARON

Here for Freddy Dawkins. Court order.

(as Anderson peruses)

He's one of my witnesses. I gotta prep him 'fore we head over to court.

Satisfied with the paperwork, Anderson calls out to --

ANDERSON

Yo Freddy!

TIME CUT: Freddy and Aaron sit at a TABLE in a discreet corner of the POD, practicing Freddy's testimony.

AARON

And what did you do in high school, when you weren't in class?

FREDDY

I sold drugs.

AARON

(showing him)

I have a transcript of text messages between you and Molly Davison. Do you recognize these?

FREDDY

Yes.

AARON

So in the days leading up to her suicide attempt, she arranged to meet with you and you agreed.

FREDDY

That's right.

AARON

And what did she want?

FREDDY

(getting up)

To buy Oxy.

AARON

So six years ago, why did you testify
that Jose was the one who bought them?

Freddy pulls out a cigarette, can't find his lighter.

AARON (CONT'D)

Come on, man -- we've been over this.
This is where you tell the court you were
scared because she was a minor and the
D.A. cut you a deal --

FREDDY

-- if I said "I sold it to Jose"! I know,
I got it!

AARON

Then what's the problem?

FREDDY

I don't know, man. I just don't know if I
want to get involved in this.

AARON

You shakin' me down?

FREDDY

Nah, man, no.

Aaron reads him, figures out:

AARON

What'd they promise you?

Freddy looks down, ashamed.

AARON (CONT'D)

I hope they offered you protection.
Because you're going to need it when
people find out you rolled again.

FREDDY

So now you're threatening me.

AARON

Not a threat. A fact. And I won't be able
to stop it.

FREDDY

This is messed up, man.

AARON

That kid's been rotting in here for six years because you lied. This is your chance to make that --

An ALARM. The LIGHTS dim on and OFF. Red LIGHTS on the WALL FLASH. Guards rush in.

GARRIGUS (GUARD, ON SPEAKER)

Lockdown in effect! Back to your cells!
Repeat: we are in a lockdown!

Aaron follows Freddy to his CELL.

AARON

Freddy! Freddy, I gotta know what it's gonna be here.

Huey comes at him:

HUEY

Gotta clear out!

AARON

(backing away)
Freddy! Freddy!

FREDDY

I'll do it, awright? I'll do it!

Huey grabs Aaron, points a finger in his face:

HUEY

Hey! You want to end up in the hole?!

AARON

I'm cool, man! I'm cool!

Huey pushes Aaron away and he crosses with Anderson:

ANDERSON

Sorry, man. That wasn't right.

Aaron looks at him oddly: *why is Anderson apologizing?* He eyes Anderson, then the other GUARDS (all hostile). Has a shitty feeling this lockdown was manufactured to stop him from talking to Freddy.

36

INT. SAFIYA'S SUBURBAN HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING (D6)

36

Crate and Barrel aspirational. Safiya packs school lunches while 10-year-old daughter ZOE makes breakfast. 12-year-old son JUSTIN finishes his homework at the kitchen counter.

Safiya's hard-charging wife (ANYA HARRISON) enters. Kisses Justin on the forehead.

ANYA

Down to the wire, huh?

JUSTIN

I know. "Don't wait til the last minute".
I get it.

ANYA

We just want it to be your best work.

Anya flashes a look at Safiya, shows her her cell phone.

ANYA (CONT'D)

You didn't tell me Aaron Wallace was going scorched earth on the District Attorney.

*

Safiya sees *photos of Wallace/Maskins on a NY Metro Daily story.*

*

ANYA (CONT'D)

We talked about him taking some cases. You didn't tell me he was gonna grandstand on the news --

SAFIYA

-- This is gonna hurt Maskins, help you.

ZOE

What are you guys talking about?

SAFIYA

Just some stuff about Mom's election.

ZOE

I'm wearing your pin! Even though Justin won't!

JUSTIN

I said I'd wear it. Jeez, Zoe!

ANYA

(to Safiya)

I'm up four points. I don't need Maskins backed into a corner and lashing out.

Safiya pulls Anya in. Affectionate.

SAFIYA

Hey... I'll talk to Wallace, okay?

*

37

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY (D6)

37

Aaron and Jose are on their way to COURT. Both a bit amped up.

AARON

So your grandma's bringin' a suit, right? Can't just be a shirt and tie. And no yellow or maroon this (time) --

JOSE

-- Yeah, man. Grey suit. Blue or white shirt, I told her. Jeez.

AARON

Okay, good, so first thing I'm gonna call
the cop on the scene, the one who saw
Molly's pink stationery (suicide note) on
the floor. After him, we got Freddy --

Aaron sees out the window --

AARON (CONT'D)

Hey! Superior Court's first stop!

DRIVER

What are you -- my navigator?

AARON

(to a BUS PRISONER)

Where are they taking you?

BUS PRISONER

Queens County.

AARON

(to Driver)

Yo, we gotta be in court by nine! This is gonna make us two hours late!

DRIVER

You can take it up with Transport when we get back.

AARON

(to Bus Prisoner)

What time you gotta be there?

BUS PRISONER

Not til noon.

AARON

Yo, you got the wrong route! He doesn't gotta be in court til twelve.

But the Driver just ignores him. And off Aaron, realizing the guards are fucking him, seething...

38

INT. COURTROOM - DAY (D6)

38

Aaron and O'Reilly at the BENCH with Judge Tanaka. Aaron trying to contain his anger.

AARON

Your Honor, I am very sorry, but there was a problem with the Transport --

JUDGE TANAKA

-- I'll say there was. The Driver says he had to change his route because you were riling up the inmates and he had to get them off the bus for security reasons.

AARON

Now that is just -- (bullshit) -- not true, Your Honor.

O'REILLY

Whatever it is, you're not getting the witness back.

AARON

Why? We can just call him tomorrow.

O'REILLY

He's working an undercover case. This was his only opening.

AARON

You got paperwork on that?

JUDGE TANAKA

I have word from his Captain and that's good enough for me.

Aaron clenches his fists, backs up from the bench, fuming. Trying to control himself. O'Reilly turns to --

O'REILLY

Security.

The Security Guard comes over.

JUDGE TANAKA

Mr. Wallace...?

*

Aaron sees the Guard move toward him. Feels the humiliation. The impotent rage. Manages to get a hold of himself.

AARON

Let's just move on to the next witness.

O'REILLY

Would that be Freddy Dawkins?

AARON

Supposed to be, yeah.

O'REILLY

Yeah, the thing is --
(hands Judge papers)
-- Mr. Dawkins is now reverting back to his original testimony from six years ago, Your Honor. Here's the affidavit.

AARON

How did you get that?!

O'REILLY

His lawyer sent it to us.

(to Judge)

He confirms once again that the defendant bought the drugs. Not the victim.

AARON

(fired up)

You bought him!

JUDGE TANAKA

Mr. Wallace.

*

AARON

Bought or coerced, which is it?!

O'REILLY

Whoa! Take it easy.

JUDGE TANAKA

Mr. Wallace --

*

AARON

(wheeling to Judge)

-- You telling me you don't get what's going on here?! He tampered with my witness!

JUDGE TANAKA

Can you prove that?!

AARON

It's what they do! All day every day! Move people around like they're pieces on a chess board!

(re: Jose)

Except that kid right there -- he ain't some pawn! That kid had a life and you took it from him!

JUDGE TANAKA

Mr. Wallace, you need to settle down!

*

AARON

Settle down?! Know my place?! Is that what you mean?!

JUDGE TANAKA

-- I am warning you, Mr. Wallace! You are dangerously close to being in contempt! Now I'd imagine your hold on your license is pretty tenuous as it is, so if I were you, I'd stop this tantrum right now!

*

Aaron checks himself, glares at O'Reilly, who gloats and --

39 **OMITTED (INCORPORATED INTO 38)** 39

40 **INT. PRISON BUS - DAY (D6)** 40

JUMPSUITS. Chained to the pole of the MOVING BUS. Jose hangs his head. All is lost. And there's nothing Aaron can say.

41 **EXT./INT. PRISON - LOADING AREA/BUS - CONTINUOUS (D6)** 41

The BUS pulls in. Aaron and Jose get out. Defeated.

42 **INT. PRISON - POD - DAY (D6)** 42

Aaron walks through the PRISON. All eyes on him. Everyone's heard. He arrives at his CELL, sees Huey. Huey smirks at him. Fucking with him.

Aaron enters his CELL. Doesn't know whether to sit. Stand. Not a lot of options for venting in this cage. He looks at Maskins' face on the wall. At O'Reilly. And finally loses it. In a rage, he rips them off the wall and trashes his entire cell. Kicking boxes, pulling his mattress off the bed, flinging it. Tossing files and papers. When he's done, he falls against the wall -- head in hands, in tears. Staring at his FAMILY PHOTOS. The only thing in here that he's spared, that he's left in tact. As a tear trickles down his cheek...

END ACT THREE

ANYA

Um, how about I'm married to the super-liberal warden who helped the drug kingpin get his law license --

SAFIYA
But nobody knows that --

ANYA (CONT'D)
-- and ushers him to court
whenever he feels like it --

SAFIYA
-- He goes to court by order from the
Judge! And Roswell's the one who endorsed
him for the bar! I'm clean on all of it.

ANYA
He's an inmate in your prison, you're my
wife. That's all anyone needs to paint me
as the lesbian D.A. who's soft on crime.

People enter the BAR AREA. Safiya lowers her voice further:

SAFIYA
So what are you saying? What am I
supposed to do now?

ANYA
Tell Wallace to drop the case and stay
out of sight. *

Anya downs her drink, heads into the FOYER. Safiya follows:

SAFIYA
I force Wallace to leave Jose in the
lurch, kill his cred with the prison pop,
I'll never get a shred of help from him
again! *

ANYA
Then find another inmate.

SAFIYA
The only reason it flies is because he's
the prisoner rep! I start meeting with
anyone else, the guards'll know I've got
a mole. Everything I've been working on
is dependent on him being my eyes and
ears.

ANYA
And everything I've been working for for
eighteen years is --

SAFIYA
-- Do not start counting years on me. Not
when I took off seven to raise our kids --

ANYA
-- You want to hear that I'm grateful.
Again?

SAFIYA

Not when it doesn't mean anything.

Anya takes that in. Provoked. But lowers the temperature.

ANYA

What you did for our family was amazing.
But one of us is going to have to give
something up right now, and I'm sorry to
say the stakes are just higher for me.

(off Safiya's shock)

You know the right thing to do. I don't
need to belabor it any more.

Anya heads up the STAIRS to rejoin the PARTY. Leaving Safiya
furious and hurt. And with a huge decision.

46 **EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY (D7)**

46

Jamal and Aaron (furtive, on edge) walk through the YARD.

JAMAL

Saw Jose in the cafeteria. Looked pretty
shell-shocked.

AARON

His grandmother was right. They never
would've come after him like this if it
wasn't for me.

JAMAL

Nobody else was knocking down his door.

Aaron sits down on a BENCH. Upset with himself.

AARON

I was using him. Now I'm out of moves and
I don't know what to tell him.

Foster saunters over --

FOSTER

Hey, sorry about your case. Guess
Freddy's already been moved to minimum
security.

AARON

They got him on the cheap.

FOSTER

Heard you had some other troubles last
few days. The lockdown, the bus. Hate for
that kind of thing to keep happening.

Aaron stares daggers at him but keeps cool.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

You probably thought that was the D.A.
(off Aaron's look)

Nope. We call the shots in here. You want your next case to go more smoothly, we could probably come to an arrangement.

AARON

And what would that be?

FOSTER

I'll let you know when the time comes.

Foster moves off. Aaron looks at Jamal. Wry:

AARON

Good day just got better.

JAMAL

Gotta be somethin' to do with Wild Bill. Whatever it is, he's gonna want you to look away.

47

INT. PRISON - JOSE'S CELL - LATER (D7)

47

Huey lets Aaron into JOSE'S CELL. Aaron sees Jose lying in bed, staring up at the ceiling, holding a paper in his hand.

HUEY

Gotta be out for chow time. Twenty minutes.

Huey locks the door. Aaron comes over, sees Jose's red eyes.

AARON

You high?

JOSE

It's over, man. That what you comin' to tell me?

Aaron looks around -- there's a needle right there on the table. *Did Huey see it? Do nothing about it?*

AARON

Where'd you get this?

JOSE

Six years... Six years in this hell, I stayed off it...

Aaron pulls him up. (The paper falls out of Jose's hand to the floor). Slaps his cheeks.

JOSE (CONT'D)

You made me believe, man... I believed...

Aaron goes to the SINK, pours water, sees on the FLOOR, the paper that just fell: *PINK STATIONERY*. A *teenage girl's handwriting*. He picks it up. It's signed "Molly".

AARON

You never showed this to me. Where'd this come from?

JOSE

She wrote me... after I got in here. Say how sorry she is...

A beat. Aaron's wheels turning. An idea.

AARON

You once told me you remember every word Molly wrote in that suicide note.

JOSE

Yeah. So what?

48 **INT. PRISON - AARON'S CELL - MOMENTS LATER (D7)** 48

Aaron walks into his CELL. Looks around to make sure no one's looking. Unscrews the pipe in his sink, takes out a ZIP-UP PLASTIC BAG. Inside the bag is a CELL PHONE.

49 **INT. AARON'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY (D7)** 49

Jasmine sits on the couch, munching on CAMEL CORN, doing her SAT prep with friend NIKKI.

JASMINE

No, I think you're supposed to work on this part first.

NIKKI

Ahh, I can't wait for this test to be over!!

The LANDLINE rings. Jasmine answers. INTERCUT with his CELL:

JASMINE

Hello?

AARON

Jazz?

JASMINE

Hey.

AARON

What are you doing home from school?

JASMINE

It's Columbus Day. We have off.

AARON

Oh, yeah. Right.

He's so disconnected from her world. Heartbreaking.

JASMINE

I've been wanting --

AARON (CONT'D)

I was looking for your mother. I couldn't get her on her cell.

She was gonna tell him how much she misses him, but he talked over her and now she wonders if he's too hurt to discuss it.

JASMINE

Um, yeah, hang on a sec.

(calling upstairs)

Mom!

Jasmine hears Marie come down the STAIRS. Has a few seconds to tell her father -- in a small voice:

JASMINE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I haven't been to see you lately.

AARON

(aching)

As long as everything's all right. That's all I care about.

MARIE

Who is it?

JASMINE

It's Dad.

(then, into phone)

I'll see you soon, okay?

AARON

I love you, baby girl.

JASMINE

(choked up, guilty)

Me, too.

She hands the phone to Marie (in nurses's scrubs). Watches closely as they talk.

MARIE

Hello?

AARON

How you doin'?

MARIE

I'm okay. On my way to work.

AARON

I'm sorry about what happened -- last week.

MARIE

Yeah. Me too.

AARON

Guess we still got some fire if we can go at each other like that.

She turns away from the girls, lowers her voice.

MARIE

Fire was never a problem.

AARON

Darius there?

MARIE

No. He's at work.

Aaron takes that in. Realizes she's hiding her feelings from Jasmine. It's all so painful.

MARIE (CONT'D)

You all right?

He pushes away his yearning to get to the matter at hand...

AARON

I was hoping maybe you could do something for me? You're the only one I can trust.

This hits Marie. Plus, Jasmine is watching her like a hawk. Feels compelled not to rebuff (give up on) Aaron.

MARIE

I'm listening.

51 **INT. PRISON - HALLWAY / PARALEGAL'S OFFICE - DAY (D7)** 51

Aaron moves through a HALL, passing a little CLINIC, an OFFICE marked CHAPLAIN, and enters the INMATE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION. He shuts the door. Sits down at an old-fashioned WORD PROCESSOR. Begins typing on the PAPER. Old-school.

As he types, we see glimpses of words: *"We shouldn't have done it... It's been eating at me.... so here it is..."*

As he prints the letter, signed: *"Anonymous"*

52 **INT. PRISON - GYM (HANG-OUT AREA) - DAY (D7)** 52

Jamal saunters by Wild Bill, trying to be discreet.

JAMAL

Yo, Joey Knox still in the hole?

WILD BILL

They ain't letting him out for Sunday brunch.

JAMAL

Aaron'll take his case. But he's gotta have somethin' from you.

53 **INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - NEXT DAY (D8)** 53

Aaron crosses past VISITORS, finds Marie waiting for him. She shows him -- old PINK STATIONERY. A bit worn. Similar to what Molly wrote hers on. Aaron inspects it.

AARON

Where'd you get it?

MARIE

Pawn shop. Guy said it was at least ten years old.

AARON

Great. I'll be back.

MARIE

Aaron!

He stops.

MARIE (CONT'D)

I want to know what this is all about.

AARON

I told you it's better if you don't know. Now I gotta go, Marie! Just wait here!

GAVIN
Comin' up the stairs.

Aaron hustles out. Nods to Wild Bill and rushes away.

56

INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - LATER (D8)

56

Marie looks around. The VISITORS are all heading out.

GUARD ON SPEAKER (O.S.)
Once again: visiting time is over. Take
all your belongings and move toward the
exit.

GUARD 1 comes over to Marie:

GUARD 1
Let's go, ma'am. Time's up.

She dawdles toward the EXIT, looking back for Aaron.

At the far end of the expansive VISITING AREA, Aaron rushes
in. Looks for Marie. Hurries toward the flow of people.

ANGLE ON Marie by the door. She sees Aaron detained by Guard
2. Pushes back through the crowd, heads toward Aaron.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)
Hey! That's the wrong way!

Aaron sees her, tries to get to her. Intercepted by GUARD 2.

GUARD 2
Where you going, Wallace? It's over. *

AARON
I just need to get something to --

GUARD 2
-- Gotta wait til next week. Let's go!

AARON
Awright, awright!

Aaron throws up his hands in surrender, backpedals. It's
enough of a ploy to get Guard 2 to disperse as Marie fights
her way through the CROWD.

Aaron waits for Guard 2 to clear a bit then lunges forward
again to converge with Marie. They make the hand-off just as
Guard 2 realizes he's been duped.

GUARD 2
Hey!

But Marie's got the letter --

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)

I told you --

AARON

It's just a letter for my daughter!

Guard 2 pushes Aaron back -- hard.

GUARD 2

Back to your cell! Now!

Aaron takes the hit. Satisfied. Locks eyes with Marie, thanking her as we CUT TO --

57 **INT. PRISON - ADMIN. - BULLPEN/WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY (D8)** 57

Safiya's assistant MONICA greets Aaron.

MONICA

You can have a seat in her office. She'll be with you in a minute.

Aaron enters. A rare moment where he can look around. First he takes in all of the POSTER BOARDS of the prison. Safiya's plans to improve and reform. His attention is drawn to her CREDENZA, fraught with personal items. He glances over his shoulder at the door to see if anyone's coming. Inches toward the Credenza, too curious to resist. He doesn't dare go all the way, but he moves close enough to see. Bends down to get a better look: a WEDDING PHOTO of Safiya and Anya; photos of Zoe and Justin; a LAW DEGREE from the University of Vermont; some commendations; a SCREENSAVER: *Safiya, Anya, Zoe hiking in the Himalayas*; a bumper sticker: *Anya Harrison for Attorney General*; a BOX of nicotine gum.

Safiya enters and Aaron starts, knows she might think he's violated her space. But she jumps right into her agenda:

SAFIYA

So you decided to go right at Maskins with the media.

AARON

I was approached. I saw an opportunity.

SAFIYA

Well, he's on the warpath now. Is that what you want?

AARON

It'll make him reckless. Eventually he'll do something stupid, expose himself...

SAFIYA

So that's your plan? Using these other cases to provoke him --

AARON

-- and prove a pattern of corruption.

SAFIYA

Don't you realize if you push him like this, he's only going to come back at you harder?!

AARON

Every time I petition the county clerk for records, or ask for old police reports, they say "no dice, ongoing investigation". Nine years later! So I got no choice but to play the long game and force him to make a mistake!

SAFIYA

Well, you're barely even out of the gate and he's already threatening to expose our relationship!

AARON

I thought you said you had that all covered.

SAFIYA

I did, until you made it look like we weaponized you to go after him.

AARON

We? You mean your wife.

SAFIYA

It's three months before the election. Your tirade to the press looked like a political hit-job!

AARON

So you want me to what -- drop the case and disappear?

SAFIYA

Your key witness flipped. You're going to lose anyway.

AARON

Maybe (probably). But the kid doesn't belong in here and I'm not bailing on him.

This arrests her.

AARON (CONT'D)

There's gotta be a way. Otherwise, I
don't know what we're doing here.

Safiya looks at him -- realizes he's threatening to deny her
access to his intel. He EXITS. And off Safiya, off balance
and caught in a vice --

END ACT FOUR

AARON

-- guilty conscience runs on its own calendar. If you had one, maybe you'd know that.

O'REILLY

(glancing at Tanaka)

So we're gonna make this personal now?

AARON

(to Tanaka)

You can see the letter was sent from the post office half a mile from that precinct.

JUDGE TANAKA

(to O'Reilly)

Did you run fingerprint analysis on this?

Aaron watches closely as O'Reilly concedes:

O'REILLY

We did, Your Honor. There were multiple partials, but nothing identifiable.

Aaron breathes a sigh of relief: the rolling-pin gag worked.

JUDGE TANAKA

So we're at an impasse.

AARON

Not if we subpoena Molly Davison.

O'REILLY

She's already said she won't testify.

AARON

But now we got evidence she needs to corroborate one way or the other.

O'REILLY

And she can corroborate without being called to the stand.

AARON

That's true, but if she did write this, it means she lied six years ago. Defense should have an opportunity to confront her on the stand. And I'd appreciate if she wasn't tampered with.

And off Judge Tanaka, considering...

60

INT. COURTROOM - TWO DAYS LATER (D10)

60

MOLLY DAVISON's hand is raised in the air, taking the OATH.

MOLLY

I, Molly Davison, promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

Jose watches her closely, but she refuses to look at him. At 21, she looks like an adult. But she has a wounded quality, the damaged girl of her past still very much a part of her.

AARON

Morning, Ms. Davison.

MOLLY

Good morning.

AARON

If you don't mind, I'm gonna cut right to the chase here. Tell us about your relationship with Jose Rodriguez.

MOLLY

He was my boyfriend, in high school.

AARON

And did you love him?

O'REILLY

Objection. The witness has been called to corroborate a specific piece of evidence.

AARON

The evidence is tied to her feelings for the defendant. I'm trying to establish context, Your Honor.

JUDGE TANAKA

I'll allow it.

AARON

Thank you.

Aaron sees O'Reilly throw a concerned look to the back of the COURTROOM. Following the look, he spies... Maskins. Hovering.

Aaron and Maskins glower at each other.

JUDGE TANAKA

Mr. Wallace?

Aaron smiles thinly at Maskins but then -- he sees...

*

...Marie. Also here. In the back.

JUDGE TANAKA (CONT'D)
Mr. Wallace!

*

Aaron snaps out of it, turns back to Molly:

AARON
Did you love him?

MOLLY
Yes.

AARON
And did you think he loved you?

MOLLY
(soft, wounded)
Yes.

AARON
Then why did your relationship end?

MOLLY
Jose broke up with me.

AARON
And why'd he do that?

Molly peers into the GALLERY, eyes her anxious PARENTS.

AARON (CONT'D)
Are you looking to someone for answers?

She looks back at Aaron and admits:

MOLLY
He was afraid what my parents might do.
If we stayed together.

AARON
And when he broke up with you, did you
accept that?

MOLLY
(beat)
No. I tried to get him to change his
mind.

AARON
Did he?

MOLLY
No.

AARON

Then how did he wind up at your house the day you overdosed?

Molly is starting to crumble. Aaron grabs a paper off his desk, going in for the kill:

AARON (CONT'D)

I have records of text messages between you and him from that day. Would you mind reading the one I highlighted?

He hands it to her.

MOLLY

"Just come over one more time. I swear I'll be okay after that and I'll leave you alone."

AARON

But that wasn't true, was it?

O'REILLY

Objection. Leading the witness.

AARON

Because you already had a plan for what you were going to do.

O'REILLY

Objection!! Coercion!

JUDGE TANAKA

Be careful, Mr. Wallace.

*

Aaron goes to his desk, pulls the forged suicide note from his ACCORDION FILE. He allows her to see it from across the room. To create a sense of dread as he slowly walks it over to her.

Molly eyes her parents, who brace.

O'Reilly shakes his head. Maskins seethes. Jose is as shocked as Molly to see the pink stationery. And it all hits Marie what Aaron's move was. And how she was involved in it.

Aaron hands Molly the note. Waits a long beat before:

AARON

Would you mind reading that please?

She knows of course that this is not really hers and yet -- on the pink stationery, in what looks exactly like her own handwriting -- it's like seeing a ghost.

AARON (CONT'D)

Ms. Davison.

MOLLY

"Dear Jose, You are my light, you are my heart, you are my...

(choking up)

...everything. I hate my parents and I hate my life. If I can't be with you, I don't want to live. I'm so sorry. I'll love you forever. Molly."

AARON

Do you recognize those words?

She takes a beat. And Maskins realizes what Aaron is doing. Instead of asking her if she wrote that note, he's merely using the note as a prop. Maskins is seeing a car crash about to happen, but there's nothing he can do to stop it...

AARON (CONT'D)

Are those the words you wrote to Jose the day of your overdose?

She locks eyes with Jose.

MOLLY

This isn't the note, but those are the words.

O'REILLY

Objection, Your Honor. She is here to establish the veracity of that particular piece of evidence!

JUDGE TANAKA

Overruled. Continue.

AARON

If those are the words, then where's the original version of that note?

MOLLY

My parents destroyed it. The day I went to the hospital.

AARON

And why'd they do that, Molly?

Molly looks right at her parents. Defiant now, wanting to punish them for what they did to Jose and to her:

MOLLY

Because they didn't want anyone seeing what I wrote. And they didn't want me getting arrested for buying drugs.

AARON

But you testified six years ago that Jose's the one who bought the Oxy.

MOLLY

(a beat)

I lied. Jose never wanted to get them for me and he never did. He had no idea I even had them with me. And if he did, he would have taken them away. They made me lie about everything.

(looks at Jose, weeping)

I'm so sorry, Jose. I'm so sorry.

Jose is crying, too. As his head falls into his hands, Aaron turns to O'Reilly, gloating. O'Reilly reacts, knows he's lost. Then Aaron's eyes find those of Judge Tanaka. She nods to him ever so slightly with admiration.

61 **INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - LATER (D10)** 61

Jose hugs his ABUELA and TWO SISTERS. Aaron emerges from the COURTROOM. Stands aside, watching. Proud of himself. Then Jose's abuela notices him there.

JOSE'S ABUELA

I didn't think you could do it.

AARON

I know.

She hugs him, wiping tears away. Cedes the space for Jose. Who grips his hand.

JOSE

I can't ever thank you enough.

AARON

Go live your life.

Aaron watches Jose head away with his family then sees Marie waiting for him at the end of the HALLWAY.

SECURITY GUARD

Time to get changed.

Aaron holds her look for a beat before he's escorted away by the Security Guard. As they head for the BATHROOM, Maskins steps into FRAME.

MASKINS

That was quite a maneuver. Manufacturing false evidence, forgery, lying to the Judge, that's enough to get you disbarred...

AARON

(a threat)

I got bigger things to worry about.

Maskins claps him on the shoulder. Leans into his ear.

MASKINS

You bit off more than you can chew.

Maskins brushes past him and heads away.

62 **OMITTED** 62

63 **EXT. COURTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER (D10)** 63

Aaron, in his JUMPSUIT, moves toward the PRISON BUS. Four REPORTERS there this time. They ask questions, but he brushes them off, "No comment", keeps moving.

64 **INT. PRISON BUS - DAY (D10)** 64

Aaron rides. In his JUMPSUIT. Handcuffed to the BAR. This time, Jose's not next to him.

65 **OMITTED** 65

66 **INT. PRISON - GYM (HANG-OUT AREA) - DAY (D10)** 66

Aaron returns triumphantly. Everyone has heard the news. Some nod, Jamal and others shake his hand, pat him on the back. Aaron sees Foster on the fencing above. Foster cocks his head, reminding him the warning, and the deal, are still in place.

67 **INT. PRISON - AARON'S CELL - NIGHT (N10)** 67

Aaron sits on his BED, talking on his CELL PHONE in a low voice, eyeing his FAMILY PHOTOS taped to his WALL.

AARON

It's Aaron. I ah -- I wanted to thank you again for what you did and for coming to court today. If you could bring Jazz next week, I promise I won't -- I'd just really like to see her.

He hangs up. Sighs heavily. As he puts the CELL PHONE back in the PLASTIC BAG and reopens the PIPE, he hears: "Lights Out!"

The LIGHTS in the BLOCK go off and the CELL DOORS clang shut, ending the MONTAGE.

68 **INT. PRISON - PARALEGAL'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY (D11)** 68

Aaron sits at his DESK in the PARALEGAL OFFICE. A knock on his door. He sees Safiya in the THRESHOLD.

AARON
Nobody escorted you?

SAFIYA
Tommy and Jim are at the end of the hall.
They think I'm meeting with the Chaplain.

AARON
Clever.

SAFIYA
I heard about Jose. Congratulations.

He indicates a STACK of PAPERS.

AARON
Got a lotta guys coming to me now.

SAFIYA
I got you a hall pass for Jose, but at this point, you gotta wait. Let things cool down 'til after the election.
(off his look)
It's only three months.

AARON
Easy for you to say when you get to go home every day.

First time he's ever spoken to her like that. Nothing transactional. Just raw. She sees his pain. His humanity. Feels for him.

SAFIYA
I just want you to think about this: If he wins the election? Becomes Attorney General? He'll take away your license with one stroke of his pen and crush any chance you have of getting your own case to court. I don't know if you're innocent or guilty, but if you're really playing the long game, going after him's not the smart move right now.

Aaron reluctantly pushes those papers away from him. Nods that he gets her.

SAFIYA (CONT'D)

Thank you. For trusting me. This won't work unless we have that.

That lands. As she heads out, Aaron decides he has to tell her what he knows. Even at great risk to himself:

AARON

I know what's going on with the drug trade.

She turns. *Holy shit.*

AARON (CONT'D)

Captain Foster dangled a deal at me. My guess is it's my silence he wants.

SAFIYA

What?!

AARON

Why do you think he wants window visits, instead of contact?

Horrified, it dawns on her --

SAFIYA

Inmates can't get product from the outside, he's going to bring it in.

AARON

It's already started.

69 **EXT. PRISON YARD - SAME (D11)** 69

Foster imperiously patrols the YARD. Watches Huey discreetly make deals with prisoners. Looks at Wild Bill. They scowl at each other. A turf war is starting. And it will get ugly.

70 **OMITTED** 70

71 **INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - DAY (D11)** 71

Aaron makes his way through the VISITING AREA to find Marie and Jasmine. He smiles tentatively. Unsure what their attitude will be.

AARON

Hey, sweetheart.

JASMINE

Hey, Daddy.

He kisses her, but she doesn't rise to hug him. And her body language is closed off. Putting him off-balance.

AARON

I'm so glad you're here.

Jasmine nods small. Scared. He looks at Marie. Can feel there's something loaded that needs to be discussed.

MARIE

What you did in that court -- was amazing.

He feels that deeply -- her approval still so important.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Next time, you gotta tell me what I'm getting into. From the beginning.

He nods, accepting that. And lifted -- there might be a next time. She's going to help him. Maybe she believes in him again after all. Their eyes meet. Love. Yearning. Connection. Jasmine notices it too. Surprised that her mother has given him this much. Heartened. Hopeful. But it's almost too much for Marie and she pivots:

MARIE (CONT'D)

Jasmine has something to tell you.

Jasmine looks at him, then at her mother. Marie puts her hand on Jasmine's, offering her support and strength. The suspense for Aaron is aching. And he can see Jasmine's terrified.

AARON

What is it, sweetheart?

JASMINE

The reason I haven't been coming here...
(choking up)
The reason I....

AARON

Hey. Whatever it is, I can handle it, okay?
(eyeing Marie)
We can handle it together.

She looks into his eyes, nods. But can't get the words out. So she opens her COAT and shows Aaron her STOMACH. Aaron takes it in, looks at Jasmine, then at Marie. His eyes fill with conflicted tears.

AARON (CONT'D)

You're...

JASMINE

Please don't be mad. I know what it means
and I've thought about it a lot --

AARON

I'm not mad, my angel. I'm not mad.

Aaron takes it in. The secret they've been keeping from him.
What his absence has meant. What this will mean for Jasmine.

AARON (CONT'D)

But... how far along...?

JASMINE

Seventeen weeks....

AARON

And it's Ronnie's?

JASMINE

But we're still together and he's taking
responsibility. And Mom and Darius --
they're gonna help.

The mention of Darius crushes him. And Jasmine sees it.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

I want you to know -- it's a boy. And I'm
gonna name him Aaron.

This floors him. His eyes go to Marie's. Everyone on the
verge of tears.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

It's going to be a blessing, Daddy. But
you've got to get yourself out of here
and be a part of it. Okay...? I need you
and your grandson's going to need you.

He wipes away the tears, trying not to lose it, looks at
Marie one more time. Her gaze tells him she wants him to
fight like mad to get the hell out of here. We CUT TO the
next sequence but INTERCUT with the end of this scene...

72

INT. PRISON - NIGHT (N11)

72

Aaron walks through the PRISON. Past the JUMPSUITS, the
GUARDS, the shit...

AARON (V.O.)

I used to be just like you. I had a family, I had a career, I had friends. I even thought I had time.

73 INT. PRISON - AARON'S CELL - NIGHT (N11) 73

Aaron stares at PHOTOS taped to the WALL: *Aaron and Marie with Jasmine as a baby, Aaron and Marie with Jasmine at 2 and 4... and then, Jasmine at 6, Jasmine at 9, Marie and Jasmine (in cap and gown) at middle school graduation...*

AARON (V.O.)

And then I got in here. The place where time stands still. To get through it, you tell yourself you'll catch up some day...

74 INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - DAY - RESUMING (D11) 74

Aaron's hand touches JASMINE'S BELLY. A single tear rolls down his cheek.

AARON (V.O.)

But then something happens when you least expect it -- to remind you the world's gonna keep spinning without you...

75 INT. PRISON - AARON'S CELL - NIGHT (N11) 75

Aaron grabs the STACK of PAPERS -- that represent potential cases. Other inmates. The ones Safiya warned him not to take.

AARON (V.O.)

The Warden thinks I can afford to wait.

76 INT. SAFIYA'S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (N11) 76

Anya's in bed. Surrounded by files, papers. Stressed. Safiya lies down next to her, shows her a TABLET with a NEWS HEADLINE: *Retired State Senator Sponsored Drug Dealer for Law Degree.*

Safiya nods: *it's gonna be all right.* Anya's skeptical but accepts it for now.

AARON (V.O.)

But she can never understand what it's like for me...

77 INT. PRISON - AARON'S CELL - SAME (N11) 77

Aaron looks at the files, the potential cases, chooses one.

AARON (V.O.)
For the others in here who don't
belong...

78 INT. PRISON - VISITING AREA - DAY - RESUMING (D11) 78

Aaron looks at Marie. Their connection through their daughter something that can never be broken. Then again at Jasmine, promising her with his eyes...

AARON (V.O.)
So now there will be no more long game.

79 INT. PRISON - AARON'S CELL - NIGHT (N11) 79

Aaron moves from the CASES of his fellow inmates. He picks up the discarded, crumpled PHOTOS of Maskins and O'Reilly (which he tossed everywhere when he trashed his cell). He uncrumples them and tapes them again to the wall.

AARON (V.O.)
No more biding my time. Not one more
moment.

Eyeballs Maskins' arrogant gaze. Grabs a SHARPIE and DRAWS a BULLS-EYE over Maskins' FACE and then O'Reilly's.

AARON (V.O.)
Whatever it takes, no matter what I have
to do...

He takes a PHOTO from his FAMILY WALL. It's -- *himself, Marie and Jasmine (when she was 8), smiling, arms around each other, the happiest of times.* He moves it to his WAR ROOM wall -- taping it in the center of it all.

AARON (V.O.)
...I will get myself home and I will have
my life again.

As Aaron stares at the vision of the family he lost but is determined to regain... the rousing 50 Cent theme song which promises fight, hope and redemption crescendoes and we

END PILOT

****ADDENDUM TO SCENE 43 (INT. COUNTRY CLUB - NIGHT)****

TO BE SHOT ONLY FROM SAFIYA'S POV:

MASKINS

What do you think people are going to
say when it's pointed out to them
that...

(glances at Safiya)

...your wife's the one allowing Aaron
Wallace to head out to court every day.

*