

GAME OF SILENCE

Pilot Episode

By David Hudgins

Based on the Turkish series "Suskunlar"

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Careful the man who confuses justice with revenge, for he digs
two graves. One is for himself.

-- Marcus Aurelius

TEASER

INT. FULTON COUNTY JAIL - ATLANTA, GA. - DAWN

PUSH IN slowly on **SCRUB NOLAN**, 36, slumped on the floor of his empty cell. His breaths are short and shallow. His face is contorted in pain. Our hero **JACKSON POGUE**, whom we'll meet shortly, begins speaking in voiceover:

JACKSON (V.O.)

Sometimes I dreamed about them. Other times, it was the smallest of things. The smell of fresh-cut grass. The sound of the cicadas at night. That's when the memories came rushing back.

Scrub grimaces, clutching at his side. Hurting.

JACKSON (V.O.)

There were four of us. We were best friends.

EXT. BELLFLOWER GARDENS - DALTON, GA. - FLASHBACK (1988)

ANGLE ON the faces of **YOUNG JACKSON POGUE**, 14, and **YOUNG GIL HARRIS**, 13. Their hair whips in the wind as they move down the street of this subdivision of wood-frame homes.

YOUNG GIL

Come on, Jackson! Floor it!

YOUNG JACKSON

It is floored!

REVEAL: Jackson is driving and Gil is riding double behind him on a tiny HONDA 50 dirt bike, the engine straining. A ROPE wrapped around Gil's waist trails behind, and as we PAN BACK, we see **YOUNG TONY REID**, black, 13, being towed on his bike. He has two sidesaddle baskets. One is stuffed with FIREWORKS. The other has a JAMBOX, blasting the hit of the summer. Tragically, it's Def Leppard. Tony sings gleefully-

YOUNG TONY

Pour some sugar on me/In the name of love!/ Pour some sugar on me...

PAN BACK further to find **YOUNG SCRUB NOLAN**, 12, his little legs pumping his bike furiously as he struggles to maintain his balance and manage the tail end of the tow rope. He's the youngest of the group, and always trying to keep up. Gil turns and yells at Tony and Scrub:

YOUNG GIL

Car!!

Tony and Scrub let go and veer right, as Jackson and Gil veer left. A CAR splits the middle and lets out an annoyed HONK.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DALTON, GA. - FLASHBACK (1988)

Jackson bangs on the door of a mobile home as our boys wait. **YOUNG JESSIE WEST** answers. She's 14, sweet, and pretty. *INSIDE*, we catch a quick glimpse of her mom ALICE ANN (40s, rode hard), passed out drunk on the couch.

Jessie grabs her towel and a paper sack, steps out, and kisses Jackson. These two are in love. She grabs her bike, comes over with Jackson, and hands Tony the paper bag. He opens it to find a half-full bottle of pink rosé wine.

YOUNG TONY

Wine? What the heck?

YOUNG JESSIE

It's all she has. I'm surprised there's any left.

Tony shrugs and stashes it in his basket. Beggars can't be choosers. Jackson ousts Gil from the motorbike and hands him Jessie's bike. Gil passes it right on down to Scrub, who frowns.

YOUNG SCRUB

Why do I have to ride it? It's a girl's bike.

YOUNG GIL

Exactly.

Gil takes Scrub's bike, and Jessie gets on the Honda 50 behind Jackson. As they take off into the woods:

YOUNG TONY (PRELAP)

Chick-en on the high board!

EXT. SWIMMING HOLE - SUNSET - DALTON, GA. - FLASHBACK (1988)

Tony floats on an innertube drinking the wine, as Jessie treads water nearby. They're looking up at Scrub and Jackson on a bluff. Scrub is poised on the ledge, but scared to jump.

YOUNG JESSIE

C'mon Scrub, just do it!

PFFT... POW! Gil fires a bottle rocket at them from shore.

YOUNG SCRUB

Cut it out, Gil!

YOUNG GIL

Stop being a baby! Jump!

Gil fires a few more, cracking up, and finally Jackson takes Scrub's hand. They jump together, and then surface, amid whooping and yelling. Gil cannonballs in, tumping Tony over, and they start horseplaying and dunking each other, etc.

JACKSON (V.O.)

We were just a bunch of innocent kids from Dalton, having the summer of our lives.

(beat)

We had no idea what was coming.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DALTON, GA. - FLASHBACK (1988)

Young Jackson, Gil, Tony and Scrub walk four abreast down the dirt road. They're wearing their version of church clothes.

YOUNG SCRUB

I don't even know what a baptism is.

YOUNG JACKSON

It's where they dunk you in water and then you're saved.

YOUNG TONY

Well why do we have to go? She's your girlfriend.

YOUNG GIL

Would you stop? Jackson does stuff for us all the time. We have each other's backs, so just shut up and let's do this, okay?

Jackson appreciates that, and hi-fives him. Then, as they round a corner and land at Jessie's trailer... it's an ugly scene. Jessie's mom ALICE ANNE (40s, rode hard) is drunk and angry and dragging Jessie toward her CHEVY NOVA.

YOUNG JESSIE

Mom, stop--!

ALICE ANNE

Get in the car!

YOUNG JESSIE

You're drunk, you can't drive! Jackson!

YOUNG JACKSON

Let go of her!

ALICE ANNE

You stay out of this! You're the whole reason she needs Jesus!

Alice Anne stuffs Jessie screaming into the passenger seat and slams the door. As she comes around the trunk, Jackson leaps into action. He runs up, shoves the mom aside--

ALICE ANNE (CONT'D)

You little bastard!

-- and climbs behind the wheel. He starts it, guns it, and fishtails in a circle, stopping for Gil, Tony, and Scrub.

YOUNG JACKSON

Get in!

Alice Anne pounds on the driver's side window as the gang climbs in and Jackson takes off. They fly down the road, wheels SCREECHING as they swerve wildly out of the park--

INT. CHEVY NOVA (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

They ride a bit in stunned silence, eyes wide and heads turning as they look around to see if anybody's seen them.

YOUNG GIL

I can't believe this! When did you learn how to drive?

YOUNG JACKSON

I didn't! I have no idea what I'm doing!

A beat, as they all realize he's serious. Then, LAUGHTER.

YOUNG SCRUB

Her mom's gonna be so pissed!

YOUNG GIL

Who cares? She got what she deserved!

Jackson grins at that, and looks over at Jessie.

YOUNG JACKSON

You okay?

(she nods; then)

Guys, we did it! Everybody in!

He extends his fist, and they all pile their hands on.

YOUNG JACKSON (CONT'D)

1, 2, 3...

THE BOYS TOGETHER

Bellflower Boys!

EXT. BELLFLOWER MIDDLE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Empty and closed for summer. Our group flies by in the Nova, heads out the windows, screaming and shooting the bird. It's a JOYRIDE, exhilarating and freeing, and they're loving it--

INT. CHEVY NOVA (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

We're gunning down a residential street now, the radio playing, as a CAR comes toward us going the other way. Suddenly, a DOG darts out from behind a parked car--

YOUNG JESSIE

Look out!

Oh fuck! Jackson yanks the wheel right, clips the dog, but then oversteers back the other way. Honking. Screaming. Brakes SCREECHING, and then... SMASH! A head-on collision.

A stunned beat. That awful moment you never forget.

They're all in shock. They climb out, and Gil goes to the DOG-- it's dead. Jackson goes to the car they hit, and stares in agony. The DRIVER inside is covered in broken glass and blood, and unconscious. It's scary and awful beyond words. Jessie watches him, sobbing.

YOUNG JACKSON

Oh my god...

YOUNG JESSIE

Is she okay?

YOUNG JACKSON

(reeling, thinking)

Jessie. You have to get out of here.

YOUNG JESSIE

No! I'm not leaving you!

YOUNG JACKSON

You have to! You were never here, okay?

YOUNG JESSIE

Jackson, please--

YOUNG JACKSON

*Just go! Run as fast as you can and don't
come back! Go!*

*A beat, as they look at each other. Jackson pleading.
Finally, she turns and runs off down the street. Gil, Scrub
and Tony come over and join Jackson. A beat. Trembling.*

JACKSON (V.O.)

Our lives would never be the same again.

Off Little Scrub, staring in horror, MATCH CUT back to:

INT. FULTON COUNTY JAIL - RESUME PRESENT DAY

Scrub, all grown up now. He struggles to stand. Unsteady.

JACKSON (V.O.)

*Nobody knows what happened to us next. I
left Dalton forever, and our story was
over. But then?*

Scrub looks down at his hands. They're covered in blood.

JACKSON (V.O. (CONT'D))

25 years later, it all began again.

JAIL GUARD (O.S.)

Nolan! Out of your cell!

JACKSON (V.O.)

And Scrub's the one who started it.

Scrub takes two steps, and collapses. We see he's been
STABBED just above his right hip, near his liver. Someone
knew what they were doing. As his blood pools on the floor,
and the JAIL GUARD discovers him... FADE TO WHITE.

EXT. SOARING OVER ATLANTA, GEORGIA - MORNING (D1)

To establish. Traffic courses the freeways encircling the
gleaming downtown skyline. Vibrant. Pulsing. Alive.

JACKSON (V.O.)

*When we were kids, Atlanta existed only in
our imaginations.*

The State Capitol, the Millenium Gate, midtown skyscrapers--

JACKSON (V.O.)

*It's barely 80 miles from Dalton, but to
us, it seemed like a world away.*

Continuing north, into the rolling estates of Buckhead--

JACKSON (V.O.)

That's exactly why I went there. I needed to escape my past and forget about what happened. Start a new life.

And finally, landing on JACKSON'S HOUSE: a gorgeous two-story Colonial with a perfect yard. Two BMWs are parked out front.

JACKSON (V.O.)

It seemed to be working.

SUPER: FOUR DAYS EARLIER

INT. JACKSON'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

JACKSON POGUE, now 39, is dressed for work. He stands in the door, watching his fiancée **MARINA NAGLE**, 39, who sits at her vanity. She is gorgeous, sexy, and successful-- just like him. She's admiring her new engagement ring in a mirror.

JACKSON

I can take it back. If you don't like it.

MARINA

Are you kidding? No way are you taking this back. You are stuck, my friend.

Jackson smiles softly. A beat, and she turns to him.

MARINA (CONT'D)

You okay?

JACKSON

Yeah. I just see that big wedding you're planning in your head.

She smiles, gets up, and comes over. Takes him in her arms.

MARINA

Relax. You won't have to do a thing.

A kiss, and she goes downstairs to make coffee. As Jackson stands there, looking at his reflection in her mirror...

INT. ATLANTA COURTROOM - DAY (A BIT LATER)

A murder trial is in progress. Jackson, an attorney, sits with his client **FRANK COX**, 50s, a businessman accused of throwing his wife into a lake and letting her drown. He's taking notes as **D.A. TOM BELL** questions the female **CORONER**.

ON A SCREEN is a gruesome AUTOPSY PHOTO of Cox's wife. It's hard to look at.

TOM BELL

How long does it take a person to drown?

CORONER

In fresh water, a person loses consciousness within three minutes, and dies within seven.

TOM BELL

So if this were an accident like the defense claims, and Mr. Cox ran down to that dock as soon as he heard the splash, he would have had at least seven minutes to rescue his wife?

CORONER

Yes. Assuming he wanted to.

TOM BELL

Thank you. Pass the witness.

Cox looks stricken. But Jackson is calm and in control.

JACKSON

According to the toxicology report, on the night she died, Mrs. Cox had a blood alcohol level of .26 percent. And also the prescription drugs Xanax and Valium in her system. Correct?

CORONER

I'm aware.

JACKSON

So here's a woman who's been drinking heavily-- she's more than 3 times the legal limit-- and she's also taken Xanax and Valium. Could she have passed out unconscious from all that?

CORONER

I suppose. But we don't know that's how it happened.

JACKSON

Well you can't rule it out as a possibility, can you?

CORONER

No.

JACKSON

So if she passed out, and she was already unconscious when she hit the water, how long would it have taken her to die?

A beat, as she glances apologetically at the D.A.

CORONER

Thirty to forty-five seconds.

JACKSON

Thirty to forty-five seconds. Huh. Not much time to make a rescue, is it?

Jackson sits, and the JURY looks at him admiringly.

EXT. WAREHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Remote and sketchy. Gil and Tony are in Atlanta too, but things haven't turned out so well for them. They've just sold a bunch of stolen construction tools out of the back of Gil's pickup to a guy named KYLE, and now Gil's arguing over the price. He has Kyle by the throat, pinned up against Kyle's van.

GIL

A deal's a deal, Kyle. I want my forty-five hundred.

TONY

Gil, take it easy--

GIL

Shut up Tony! I want my goddamn money!

Gil slugs him, and Kyle crumples to the pavement. Gil starts kicking him, and as Kyle covers up, Tony goes over and gets between them. Gil backs off, and Tony reaches into Kyle's pocket. He pulls out a wad of cash and hands it over to Gil, who stands there counting it, out of breath.

KYLE

Assholes...

Gil hands Tony his cut, and heads off for his pickup truck. Tony pockets the cash, pulls out a prescription bottle, and pops a Vicodin with a hit from his flask. Then joins Gil.

EXT. SCRUB'S HOUSE - DALTON, GA. - DAY

A mid-size MOVING VAN idles at the curb at the modest house where Scrub lives. The driver, DONNY, is honking the horn.

The front door opens, and Scrub emerges in his work uniform with his wife **ANNIE NOLAN**, 36. She is very, very pregnant. Scrub kneels down and addresses the baby inside her belly.

SCRUB

Listen, you. Daddy has to go to Atlanta for work today, but I'll be home later. Don't get any ideas, okay?
(then, to Annie)
Love you.

ANNIE

Love you too. Call me later.

Scrub kisses her goodbye, and gets in the van with Donny.

INT. MOVING VAN - I-24 TO ATLANTA (MOVING) - DAY

Scrub rides with Donny. A SIGN reads: "Atlanta - 36".

JACKSON (V.O.)

I've always wondered what would have happened if Scrub hadn't gotten in the van that day. But fate, like life, is unpredictable. You never really know where you're going. And you never know who you're gonna meet.

INT. ROSWELL PARK APARTMENTS - DAY

DARRYL WILLIAMS, white, 37. You'd avoid him at a rest stop. Cut, tattooed, mean as a snake. High up in a powerful Atlanta gang. He sits on his coffee table, PISTOL in hand, glaring at a guy on his couch: **MARCO**, Hispanic, 40s. He's a baggage handler at Atlanta's airport. And he's very scared.

DARRYL

It took two years to get that place wired.

MARCO

I know. I'm sorry.

DARRYL

Sorry don't mean shit. It's all about execution and delivery. I wanna know who's been talking to the TSA, I wanna know everything they said, and then I want you to take care of it. Permanently.

MARCO

Darryl, come on. That's not my--

Darryl jumps up and jams the pistol into his forehead.

DARRYL

You think I'm screwing around, Chico?
Cause we can go for a little drive if
that's what you prefer. Huh?

Tense. Marco manages to shake his head no, sweating profusely, as Darryl hovers over him. A beat, then:

DARRYL (CONT'D)

Get the fuck outta my house.

EXT. ROSWELL PARK APARTMENTS - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

One of those typical suburban cookie-cutter complexes. You wouldn't expect a gangster to live here and that's kinda the point - hiding in plain sight. Scrub is unloading the moving van, stacking boxes and a set of GOLF CLUBS on the sidewalk. A door opens one unit over, and Marco hurries out of Darryl's apartment and down the street. A few beats later, Darryl emerges. He glances briefly at Scrub as he lights a cigarette.

Scrub keeps working, but his eyes are on Darryl. Something about him seems familiar. Or is he just imagining things? Darryl pulls out his CELL and punches in a call.

DARRYL

Hey, it's Darryl. Is he in?

Scrub freezes when he hears the name. It's clear now he thinks he recognizes this man. He can't help himself. He starts walking over. Drawn to him.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

No, this is just for him. Have him call me back.... Yeah, cell's good.

Darryl hangs up to find Scrub standing there looking at him.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

The hell you looking at?

Scrub says nothing. Transfixed.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

Hey! Outta my face!

As Darryl steps forward and roughly shoves Scrub back:

QUICK FLASH - YOUNG DARRYL, age 14, coming at camera and shoving us, head shaved and wearing prison clothes--

YOUNG DARRYL
You got a problem?

RESUME PRESENT DAY as Darryl glares menacingly.

DARRYL
Freak. I will mess you up.

Darryl turns and starts walking away, and Scrub just snaps. He yanks a GOLF CLUB out of the bag, charges forward, and as Darryl turns back around, his eyes wide with surprise--

Scrub attacks him. It's a vicious flurry of blows, one after another, as Scrub unleashes whatever demons are inside him. A GIRL screams. Donny runs out of the adjacent apartment, in total shock. When it's over, Darryl lies still in a broken, unconscious heap on the sidewalk. And Scrub doesn't run.

As he stands there out of breath, spattered in blood...

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. ATLANTA STREET - SAME DAY (D1)

JESSIE WEST, now 37, wears baggy pants, clogs, and a white smock with her name embroidered on it. She's a chef now. And she's also dating Gil, who stands behind her with his hands cupped over her eyes. He's excited. She's impatient.

GIL
Jessie, relax.

JESSIE
I *am* relaxed. What is this?

GIL
You ready? Voila...

Gil removes his hands, as Jessie gets a look: it's a vacant restaurant. With a "For Lease" sign in the window.

INT. VACANT RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Gil is like a kid in a candy store as he shows her around. The place is kinda run down, so he's spinning hard.

GIL
It's incredible, isn't it? You got your bar, your patio space. Great lighting.

JESSIE
How did you find it?

GIL
Just been keeping an eye out. You've been dreaming about doing this forever so--

JESSIE
Whoa, what happened here? It looks like a bomb went off.

She's holding a door open, peering into the kitchen.

GIL
Yeah, that needs a little TLC. The last tenant bailed on their lease so the landlord hasn't done much. I can fix it.

JESSIE
(skeptical)
Gil. This is crazy.

GIL

Why?

JESSIE

Because it just is. Number one, we can't afford a lease--

GIL

I'm working on that--

JESSIE

-- and number two, I don't know anything about running a restaurant. And neither do you.

GIL

Jesus, Jessie! For once can you just pretend that I might actually know what I'm doing? Not everything I touch turns to shit, okay?

Some damage there. She softens as she realizes how hard he's trying. She goes over to him. Takes him in her arms.

JESSIE

I'm sorry. It's really sweet and I don't mean to be a naysayer. I just can't help it sometimes.

It's a tender moment, and we notice, Gil seems uncomfortable. Intimacy is hard for him. Just then, his CELL RINGS. It's "Tony", and Jessie sighs. Tony is a presence in Gil's life and she accepts that. But she worries he's a bad influence.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

It's okay. Just take it.

Gil moves off, and Jessie watches as he has a hushed conversation. When he comes back, he looks shaken.

GIL

I have to go. Can you take a cab?

JESSIE

All the way to work? What's wrong?

Gil pulls out his cash from before, and gives her a \$100.

GIL

Nothing. Sorry, I just... I gotta go.

He hurries off, as Jessie looks at the \$100 bill he gave her. She doesn't even wanna know.

INT. FULTON COUNTY JAIL - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Tense. Scrub sits at a table, still in shock from what he did earlier. **DET. MARIO FUENTES**, 30s, earnest, is across from him. **DET. LIZ WINTERS**, early 40s, brittle but savvy, sits next to Fuentes, quietly studying Scrub.

DET. FUENTES

You wanna tell us what happened? How did you know this guy?

Scrub just stares at the table. No eye contact.

DET. FUENTES (CONT'D)

Look son, Detective Winters is with the gang unit. She knows all about this guy. Did he provoke you? Was he moving in on your customers? Tell us who ordered the hit and maybe we can help you.

They've got it all wrong. It wasn't a gang thing. But Scrub's not saying a fucking word. Det. Fuentes sighs.

DET. FUENTES (CONT'D)

I don't think he wants to talk.

A beat, and Winters gets up from her chair.

DET. WINTERS

Alright. I guess we'll just have to ask Darryl.

Scrub finally reacts, and looks up at her. Thrown.

DET. WINTERS (CONT'D)

Yeah, he's still alive. I'm guessing you didn't know that.

INT. EPPS & NAGLE, P.C. - DAY

This is the downtown firm where Jackson works. Maybe 25 attorneys, busy and active as we move down a hallway toward a spacious CORNER OFFICE. Inside, Jackson is updating his bosses on the Cox case. One is **AARON EPPS**, 50s, black. He's smart, well-connected, and Jackson's longtime mentor. The other is Marina. Jackson's fiancée whom we met earlier.

JACKSON

(confident)

My toxicologist was great. He had the whole jury convinced she must have passed out before she fell in the lake. I put his report in and rested my case.

AARON

You didn't put your guy on the stand?

JACKSON

Didn't need to.

Aaron and Marina exchange a questioning look.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Guys, relax. I know what I'm doing. I'm gonna win this case and then you're gonna make me partner. All part of the plan.

AARON

Well. Just because you're sleeping with one of us doesn't make it a lock.

MARINA

(drolly)

Sure didn't last time. Kidding, babe.

Jackson grins, as a nervous ASSISTANT knocks at the doorway.

ASSISTANT

Jackson? Sorry. There's some people here to see you.

JACKSON

What people?

ASSISTANT

They wouldn't give me their names. They just... I think you should come. Sorry.

That's weird. Jackson excuses himself, and FOLLOWS HER TO--

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Gil sits in Jackson's chair, nervously tapping his feet on the desk. Tony paces, looking antsy too. Jackson enters, and the moment he sees them, his heart skips. His old best friends. Here in his office. What the fuck is this about?

GIL

So this is how the other half lives.

It's tense. Jackson's guard is up as he looks at them both.

GIL (CONT'D)

Been a long time.

JACKSON

It has.

GIL

Twenty-five years, right?

Still tense as Gil gets up and comes around. He regards Jackson up close. Jackson holds his ground. Then:

GIL (CONT'D)

How you doing, brother?

A beat. Then, a smile. Then, a hug and some relieved laughter.

JACKSON

Tony. Get over here, man.

Jackson hugs him too, and then steps back. It's dicey. On the one hand, he's glad to see them. On the other, they've invaded his office, they look a little unstable, and just seeing them could unpack memories he'd rather keep at bay.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

So... wow. What are you guys doing in Atlanta?

GIL

We live here. And we need your help with something.

TONY

It's Scrub.

JACKSON

Wait-- you live here?

TONY

He got arrested this morning.

So much for the niceties. They're barreling ahead with the business at hand, and Jackson is a little thrown.

JACKSON

Guys, slow down. Scrub got arrested? What for?

GIL

Assault with a deadly weapon. He's in jail down at county and he needs a lawyer. We have to get him out.

Oh, man. Jackson takes a beat, as they watch him process. It's hard, but this is a web he so doesn't want to enter.

JACKSON

Guys, I'm sorry. I love Scrub but I'm in the middle of a huge trial right now. There's no way I can leave.

Gil's eyes narrow. He steps in close. Upset.

GIL

Look. You walked out on us once, and we dealt with it. But this isn't about you right now. It's about us. Me, you, Tony and Scrub.

JACKSON

I don't even know what you're--

GIL

Just listen! The guy Scrub attacked? It was Darryl.

The name hits Jackson like a ton of bricks.

JACKSON

Darryl Williams?

GIL

Yes. Now you get what I'm saying?

Unfortunately, he does. He collapses into his chair, his head spinning. Gil doesn't relent.

TONY

This is happening, Jackie. Scrub is our brother and we can't just leave him there. You know that.

INT. EPPS & NAGLE, P.C. - MOMENTS LATER

Jackson has his coat on, hurrying with Gil and Tony toward the elevator lobby. Marina steps out of her office.

MARINA

Hey, what's going on? Who are those guys?

JACKSON

Just some new clients. I need to go see their friend

MARINA

Don't forget we have that bar association thing tonight.

JACKSON
Yeah yeah, I know.

MARINA
Is everything okay?

JACKSON
It's fine. I'll see you later.

Jackson scrambles for the elevator. Marina looks concerned.

INT. FULTON COUNTY JAIL - HALLWAY - DAY

A DEPUTY leads Jackson, Gil and Tony to the door of a small room. We see Scrub sitting forlornly inside. Jackson turns.

JACKSON
You need to wait here.

GIL
What for?

JACKSON
I have to meet with him alone or it waives attorney-client privilege. Don't worry.

They don't like it. But just like in the old days, Jackson's the one in charge. He opens the door and heads inside.

INT. FULTON COUNTY JAIL - MEETING ROOM - A BIT LATER

Jackson sits with Scrub. He's reassuming his role as Scrub's protector, and that's great. But underneath, he just wants to get this handled quickly so he can get back to his life.

JACKSON
You doing okay?

SCRUB
I've been better.

JACKSON
Well you don't have to worry, cause I'm here now. And I'm gonna take care of you, okay? You say anything to the detectives?

SCRUB
No.

JACKSON
Good. You have a lawyer now, so they won't bother you anymore.

He's oddly subdued. Jackson studies him for a moment.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Scrub. I know you're scared--

SCRUB

I'm not scared.

JACKSON

-- but I told you, I'm gonna take care of this. I'm gonna talk to the D.A. and I'm gonna get the arrest report and we're gonna figure out a way to fix this mistake, alright? Trust me.

SCRUB

It wasn't a mistake.

JACKSON

(beat)

What?

SCRUB

You're sitting there acting like you don't know who it was. It was Darryl. I saw him on the street and I recognized him and I just... snapped. And I'm not sorry I did it, either. As far as I'm concerned, he had it coming. They all do.

Jackson's face grows dark. His jaw clenches. A beat, and he leans across the table and stares Scrub directly in the eye:

JACKSON

Don't ever say that again. Understand?

INT. DOWNTOWN ATLANTA HOTEL - BAR - DUSK

Jackson, Gil and Tony at a table. Not much of a crowd yet. Jackson agreed to come here to be polite, but he doesn't want to get pulled into Gil and Tony's orbit any more than he already has. So he's trying to keep this as short as possible.

GIL

You really can't tell us what he said?

JACKSON

No.

TONY

Is he getting out?

JACKSON

I don't know yet. Arraignment's tomorrow.

Jackson sucks down his scotch, and looks for the waiter.

GIL

Jesus. What's the hurry?

JACKSON

I told you. One drink.

Just then, Jessie enters the bar. As she makes her way over, Jackson sees her. His heart skips. His spine tingles. She finally sees him too, and stops short at the table.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Jessie? What are you doing here?

JESSIE

Gil invited me...

She's as shocked as he is. They both look at Gil.

GIL

Pretty great, huh? It's been too long.

Gil's agenda is to draw Jackson in, and he figured inviting Jessie so Jackson could see her could only help. An awkward beat. Finally, Jackson stands and gives her a hug.

JACKSON

You look good.

JESSIE

You too.

Off the both of them, covering the tension they feel, we go:

INT. DOWNTOWN ATLANTA BAR - TEN MINUTES LATER

Gil and Tony are telling old stories as Jackson and Jessie smile gamely and play along. But both of them are elsewhere. Jackson can't help looking at her. Remembering...

INT. COLLEGE BAR - ATHENS, GA. - FLASHBACK (1993)

19-YEAR-OLD JESSIE and **19-YEAR-OLD JACKSON**. They're slow-dancing to a country song - maybe "The Chair". In Jackson's slide show, this is his go-to image of Jessie. Twirly. Romantic. She smiles her beautiful smile. It's magic.

RESUME THE BAR as Gil orders another round. More stolen looks between Jackson and Jessie. Now she's remembering...

INT. JESSIE'S APARTMENT - ATHENS, GA. - FLASHBACK (1993)

That night only got better. 19-year-old Jessie and Jackson are making love in Jessie's bedroom. Intimate, sensual.

RESUME THE HOTEL BAR - PRESENT DAY

Jackson is looking at her. Mesmerized. No one knows they saw each other when they were 19, and that's not the only secret they share. Right now, it's all too much for Jessie.

JESSIE

You know what? I should go.

GIL

What for? We're just--

JESSIE

I have stuff to do at home. It was nice seeing you, Jackson. I just, I gotta go.

And just like that, she gets up and hurries out. A beat. Gil stirs his drink. And then, the pot:

GIL

Now we can talk about it.

JACKSON

About what?

GIL

About what. "About what". That's good.

Gil looks at Tony, who looks away. Then back to Jackson.

GIL (CONT'D)

The game is *on*, brother. It's time to finish what Scrub started.

Shit. Jackson figured that might be where he was going.

JACKSON

Gil. We're not having this conversation.

GIL

The hell we aren't. I say we start with the Warden and that son-of-a-bitch Red Berry. They're probably still at Quitman. Terry and Dennis are gonna be harder, but that's where your resources come in.

(MORE)

GIL (CONT'D)

You find them, you get me close to them,
and they'll be the next to go.

JACKSON

Are you insane? I'm not doing that.

GIL

We need a *plan*, Jackie. I've been waiting
for this for a long time.

JACKSON

I have a life now. I'm a lawyer for god's
sake. Do you even realize what you're
saying?

GIL

We didn't start this, *they* did. You're
saying you don't want revenge?

JACKSON

Not that way! You're talking about
committing a crime.

GIL

I'm talking about justice! For everything
they did to us!

JACKSON

The past is the past, Gil! I left Dalton,
and I worked my ass off, and I built
everything I have from scratch. I have a
fiancee now. I'm not gonna throw it all
away just because you think--

GIL

Did you forget what happened?

JACKSON

Yes! And you should too!

GIL

How you slept on a concrete floor in a
pool of your own blood? How we begged and
screamed and cried and the Warden just
left us there with those assholes?

JACKSON

Nothing happened! I put it all away a
long time ago and I'm over it.

GIL

You're lying! You know you remember.
That's why you sleep with the lights on.
That's why you have the nightmares.

(MORE)

GIL (CONT'D)

That's why your heart aches every time you see a little kid.

JACKSON

You need to stop.

GIL

I'm never gonna stop! You think you're better than us? You think your big house and your fancy job and your fancy friends makes you different? This thing will haunt you, Jackie. Whatever they did to us in that prison, we're still there. And we're never getting out until we do something about it.

JACKSON

You've lost your mind.

GIL

Yeah? Well you've lost your balls.

Jackson just stares at him. Incredulous. He gets up.

JACKSON

Look. I told you I'd help with Scrub, and I will. But that's it. Understand?

TONY

Jackson, come on--

JACKSON

Just stay away from me. Both of you!

He slams money on the table, and storms out. Reeling. First Scrub, then Jessie, and now fucking Gil. His carefully constructed world has been rocked.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. EPPS & NAGLE - SAME DAY, 30 MINUTES LATER (D1)

Jackson sits with Aaron and D.A. Tom Bell. He's trying to focus on a plea offer he's just received in the Cox case, but his anxiety is making it hard. He finally looks up:

JACKSON

I don't know. I see this, and I'm thinking the state must be pretty worried about their chances.

TOM BELL

Two years on a murder charge is a damn good offer.

JACKSON

Sure it is. Because you know you can't prove your case.

TOM BELL

Not true. We've got motive, opportunity, and a witness who says she saw Frank Cox throw his wife off that dock.

JACKSON

From a hundred and fifty yards away. At night. The jury's not buying it.

TOM BELL

Here's what the jury knows. Your guy was in financial trouble and his wife was pissed. The cops had already been out there three times that week. So they have some drinks, they get in another fight, and he snaps. He throws her in the lake and he lets her drown. And since he didn't get on the stand to say otherwise, I'd say that's plenty for a conviction.

A beat. Jackson looks over at Aaron.

AARON

He's looking at 25 years to life. Maybe enhancements. It's a huge risk, especially with that Judge.

Jackson considers. Pragmatic enough to know he's right.

JACKSON

Alright. Lemme talk to my client.

Bell says goodbye and goes. Beat, as Aaron studies Jackson.

AARON

This is a win, Jackson. You've done your job.

JACKSON

How about the fact that he says he didn't do it?

AARON

Clients say that all the time.

JACKSON

(emotional)

Yeah, but I believe him. I hate this. The whole reason I became a lawyer was to keep people out of jail, not put them in.

AARON

I understand, and that's very noble.

(then)

Take the plea.

INT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Darryl looks awful. Broken and bruised, on a ventilator, barely conscious. With him are **TERRY SUGGS**, black, 37, and **EDDIE SUAREZ**, Hispanic, 37. These are powerful, ruthless men. Connected criminally at the highest levels. These three met in prison and they've been together ever since. Terry is the boss. He's furious about what's happened to his friend, and he's trying to get some answers.

TERRY

Have you ever seen this guy before?

Darryl shakes his head no.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Was anybody else with him?

Darryl tries to answer, struggling with the ventilator, but it's no use. A monitor starts beeping, and Terry gets up and slams a water bottle off the table in frustration.

EDDIE

(beat, to Darryl)

Just take it easy. We're gonna find who did this. Don't worry.

As Darryl looks at them, agonizing, CUT TO:

INT. TERRY'S RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - MINUTES LATER

Terry drives, Eddie rides shotgun. Terry is stewing.

EDDIE

I talked to Marco. He's scared shitless but he swears to god he wasn't there when it happened.

TERRY

This guy could have followed him there. And waited for him to leave.

EDDIE

You think it's a set-up?

TERRY

How the fuck should I know?

Terry's pissed. He pulls out his CELL. Hits a speed dial.

TERRY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hey, it's me. We got a problem.

INT. DOWNTOWN HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

More crowded now. Gil and Tony are still here. Gil is drunk and sullen, as Tony worries over Jackson.

TONY

We lost him.

GIL

Shut up. We didn't lose him.

TONY

How do you know?

GIL

Because he remembered.

A beat. Gil slams down his drink and yells at the WAITER.

GIL (CONT'D)

Hey! We need another round!

A GUY at the next table makes the mistake of looking at Gil.

GIL (CONT'D)

What's your problem?

A beat, and Gil FLIES OUT OF HIS CHAIR and starts PUMMELING THE GUY in a fury. Tony leaps up to pull him off, to the rescue again. Gil has some serious anger issues.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Pre-dinner cocktails for the Atlanta Bar Association dinner. Loud and lively as LAWYERS chatter in groups. Marina stands with one group, wine glass in hand, when her CELL BUZZES.

She excuses herself, steps away, and sees she has a VOICEMAIL from Jackson. She hits play and puts the phone to her ear.

JACKSON

(voicemail)

Hey, it's me. I'm working late so I'm not gonna make it. Sorry. I'll see you at home, okay? Love you.

Off Marina. Downing her wine. Trying not to be upset.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

Jackson sits alone in the dark, his cell phone in his lap. He's struggling. Doesn't want Marina to see him like this. He takes a deep breath, puts the phone away, and opens up Scrub's file. Fuck. The first thing he sees is the arrest report, and Scrub's BOOKING PHOTO. As he stares at it...

INT. GEORGIA CORRECTIONS BUS - DAY - FLASHBACK (1988)

Young Jackson, Gil, Tony and Scrub ride in silence, gazing out at desolate swampland. They look terrified.

JACKSON (V.O.)

The woman we hit didn't die, but there was hell to pay. We each got six months. At one of the worst places on Earth.

EXT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - DAY - FLASHBACK (1988)

The bus pulls up to the gate of a ratty, run-down facility. Barbed wire. Decrepit buildings. A rusted out SIGN over the GUARD HOUSE reads: "Quitman Boys Camp".

*As the bus waits to enter, INMATES in the yard turn. One group approaches the fence to check out the fresh meat: **YOUNG TERRY (17), YOUNG DENNIS (18), YOUNG EDDIE (17), and YOUNG DARRYL (16)**. They stare calmly at our boys inside.*

JACKSON (V.0.)

We were like lambs to the slaughter.

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - DAY - INTAKE ROOM - FLASHBACK (1988)

Our boys are stripping to their underwear and putting their clothes and belongings on a table. Guard **RED BERRY** watches them. 30s, ignorant and cruel, on a redneck power trip.

RED BERRY

Let's go! I ain't got all day!

He grabs them and shoves them roughly against a wall. Then goes to the table. And starts sorting through their stuff. He throws some things away, and takes whatever else he feels like. Including a bottle of Tony's pills.

YOUNG JACKSON

Sir. That's his medicine.

Red stops. He comes over, slaps Jackson across the face, and then grabs him up in a tight chokehold.

RED BERRY

Did I ask you to talk? Ain't nothing here that's yours anymore.

As Jackson struggles to breathe, and Red leers, ANGLE ON **WARDEN ROY CARROLL**. 40s, paunchy, just riding this gig out. He watches through a window. Smoking a cigarette.

RED BERRY (CONT'D)

Don't y'all worry about the Warden. He knows how we run things around here.

The Warden crushes out his smoke, exits frame, and we go:

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - INFIRMARY - DAY - FLASHBACK (1988)

Jackson, Gil and Tony sit in chairs against a wall. Their heads are shaved and they wear prison whites. **NURSE AMY**, late 20s, kind and not yet jaded, is taking Tony's blood pressure.

NURSE AMY

Just hold still. I'm almost through.

She notices them all watching Scrub. He sits in a chair, as **YOUNG DARRYL** shaves his head. He's crying. She puts her chart down, goes over, and squats by him.

NURSE AMY (CONT'D)

Honey, listen to me. This is the last time you're gonna cry, okay?

(Scrub sniffles)

You have to be strong. Tell him, Darryl.

YOUNG DARRYL

She's right. You can't do this when you get inside. Just get it out.

As Darryl keeps shaving, and Scrub nods, trying his best--

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - BUNKROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (1988)

Quiet and dark. Metal bunkbeds in rows. Scrub lies awake, looking tortured. Finally, he gets up, as Jackson, Gil and Tony all sit up. What the hell? They're motioning to him to stop, and suddenly, Terry is up and standing in Scrub's way.

YOUNG TERRY

Where you think you're going?

YOUNG SCRUB

I have to pee.

YOUNG TERRY

Bathroom belongs to me. You wanna go, you gotta pay.

Dennis, Eddie and Darryl join Terry. Jackson looks at Gil and Tony. What the fuck do we do? Jackson gets up--

YOUNG JACKSON

Leave him alone.

YOUNG TERRY

What you gonna do about it?

The LIGHT bangs on as Red Berry enters. Everyone scrambles back to their bunks except Jackson, Terry and Scrub.

RED BERRY

The hell's going on?

YOUNG TERRY

(re: Jackson)

Caught him trying to steal my stuff.

YOUNG JACKSON

No I wasn't! He's lying!

RED BERRY
(to Scrub)
Back in your bunk.

YOUNG JACKSON
He has to go to the bathroom!

RED BERRY
(grabbing Jackson)
You're gonna be the problem, huh?

YOUNG JACKSON
I didn't do anything!

Red drags Jackson out, slamming the LIGHTS OFF on his way. He deposits Jackson on the floor, removes his belt, and WHIPS HIM mercilessly. As Jackson's screams echo...

RESUME JACKSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Jackson closes his eyes, fighting his emotions. Gil was right. He *is* remembering.

INT. GIL AND JESSIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jessie and Gil sit quietly at the kitchen table. She's tending to some cuts on his hand from his bar fight.

GIL
I'm sorry. Please don't be mad.

JESSIE
I'm not mad, I just think you need to grow up. You're lucky you didn't get arrested.
(beat)
Okay, you wanna know why I'm mad? Because you invited me for drinks and you didn't tell me Jackson was gonna be there.

GIL
I thought you'd like it. You haven't seen him in 25 years.

Jessie's reaction says that might not exactly be true.

GIL (CONT'D)
Am I wrong? Have you two been in touch?

JESSIE
No. I just think it's weird that all of a sudden he's back in our lives.

GIL

Jessie, it was one night of drinks.

JESSIE

It was weird. Is something going on?

GIL

No. He just missed us, and he reached out. I don't get why you're so upset.

JESSIE

I'm upset because you obviously didn't tell him we're together. He needs to know.

GIL

(a beat, thoughtful)

Jackson's my brother. I'm not gonna lie to him.

JESSIE

So you'll tell him?

GIL

Yeah. When the time is right.

Jessie goes back to his hand. She looks troubled.

INT. JACKSON'S HOUSE - FOYER/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jackson enters quietly. He sets his things down and goes to the guest bathroom. Closes the door, turns on the water and stares at himself in a mirror. Trembling. Haunted.

JACKSON

It's okay. You're okay.

He's not.

INT. GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

On a glass door with a SIGN: "Office of the Lt. Governor". A light goes off inside, and **ROY CARROLL** emerges. The former warden at Quitman is 65 now. Lieutenant Governor of Georgia. Looking to go even higher. And crooked as hell.

EST. DOWNTOWN ATLANTA STREET - NIGHT

Carroll walks, with the GEORGIA STATE CAPITOL behind him. He spots Terry in his Range Rover down the street. Heads over.

INT. TERRY'S RANGE ROVER (PARKED) - NIGHT

Terry sits with Carroll. A gangster and a politician. In Atlanta these days, there's not much difference. It's tense.

TERRY

He stepped outside for a smoke and the guy just jumped him. Darryl said he's never seen him before.

CARROLL

Fucking Darryl. He's always been weak.

TERRY

(insulted, angry)

Hey. This wasn't his fault. I'm trying to do you a favor here, Warden. If these guys know enough to come after Darryl then you might be next.

CARROLL

Darryl's an idiot. They don't know shit.

TERRY

Do you even know what he runs for us? The airport, the truckers, the hotel unions--

CARROLL

I don't give a crap about all that drug stuff. It's window-dressing.

TERRY

Yeah? Well it sure has made you fat and happy over the years.

(that lands; then)

Look, I'm gonna handle it. But this is your problem too. I need you to help me find out who this guy is working for.

CARROLL

How the hell should I know?

TERRY

Because that's what you do. Because that's how this arrangement works.

Carroll fumes. Cursing the bedfellows he's made.

CARROLL

Goddamit, Terry. This is the last thing I need right now. I'm about to make my announcement.

TERRY

Your what?

CARROLL

For my campaign. They're gonna run me for Congress. Jody Miller's seat.

TERRY

(a beat, as if)

You? Running for Congress?

CARROLL

Why not? I paid my dues.

TERRY

Yeah, and I know how.

A beat. Carroll can't believe what he just heard.

CARROLL

Is that some kind of threat?

TERRY

I'm just saying, you and I been together a long time. And you don't get to pick and choose when we're in business. Don't go soft on me now, Warden. Ain't the time.

Hold on the tension. Then, Carroll climbs out, and SLAMS the door shut. Off Terry, watching him walk angrily away, as we:

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SUGGS NURSERY & LANDSCAPE - SAME NIGHT (D1)

A large property with acres of (wholesale) plants and trees, and lots of parked delivery trucks. This is Terry's "legit" business-- and a good cover for what he really does.

In the WAREHOUSE, a group of WORKERS moves quickly and efficiently, taking BRICKS OF DRUGS from crates, hiding them in large planters, and then loading them onto trucks for distribution to stash houses around town. Terry is in damage control mode, and the large amount involved indicates how big his operation is. Lights are on in the office nearby...

INT. SUGGS NURSERY & LANDSCAPE - TERRY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Terry paces, drinking booze, as Eddie reads from the back of an envelope.

EDDIE

His name is Clark Nolan. Georgia driver's license, Dalton address, never been arrested before.

TERRY

Who does he work for?

EDDIE

Some moving company. Rodney's girl said she saw a van out front when she--

TERRY

Goddamit that's not what I mean. I need to know who he's running with!

EDDIE

I don't know! Nobody's ever heard of the guy!

A beat. They're both frustrated and pissed. Terry takes a long pull of booze. Calculating. Then:

TERRY

Have Dooley take care of it.

EDDIE

T, are you sure? Maybe we should wait for the Warden.

TERRY

Fuck him! I don't have time to sit around and wait.

EDDIE

I know, but--

TERRY

Somebody is screwing with us, genius. They went after my number two, and if I don't hit back everybody in town's gonna be coming. Do I need to do it myself?

Just then, a NOISE OUTSIDE. Eddie scrambles for the corner. Terry whips his GUN out and hugs the wall, aiming it head high, parallel to the door. A GUY enters, and stops when he realizes there's a gun pointed at his head.

DENNIS

I heard about Darryl. Do you mind?

Meet **DENNIS MEEKS**, bi-racial, 38. Terry's half-brother (same mother). Dennis was in prison with these guys when he was younger. But he turned his life around, and now he runs a small church and youth ministry in town. He's in jeans, with a COLLAR and a CROSS necklace underneath his windbreaker.

EDDIE

Damn, Dennis. Don't come up on us in here like that.

Dennis enters and turns. He knows what his brother does. And stays quiet about it. But always keeps a close eye.

DENNIS

What happened?

TERRY

He got jumped. Some white boy on the street.

DENNIS

Is he okay?

TERRY

He will be.

We notice, Terry is putting the booze and his gun away.

DENNIS

Was he working at the time?

TERRY

You mean for me? No. Didn't have anything to do with that.

It's likely Dennis doesn't believe that.

DENNIS

Listen. People in the neighborhood are already talking and I don't want you--

TERRY

It's under control.

DENNIS

Is it? Because I've seen how you react in these situations before. Don't make this into a war. We don't need that.

TERRY

Ain't no "we". This doesn't have anything to do with you. Hasn't for a long time.

DENNIS

We're family, Terry. Everything about this has to do with me.

TERRY

(beat)

Tell you what. You're feeling for Darryl? Then go down to Grady and say a prayer with him or something. Cause I got some real problems to deal with.

Dennis doesn't rise to the bait. A whole adult life about taking the high road. A beat. Then, as he walks out:

DENNIS

Don't forget to call mom tomorrow. It's her birthday.

INT. JACKSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's late. Jackson sits at a table with a whiskey. He's going over the plea agreement in the Cox case, trying to keep his mind off his old friends. Work usually centers him.

As he flips pages, he lands on the pre-sentencing memorandum. The letterhead reads: "Georgia Department of Corrections". The LOGO is seared into his memory. As he stares at it--

JACKSON (V.O.)

There were a lot of ways they could break you at Quitman.

EXT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - PRISON YARD - DAY - FLASHBACK (1988)

Young Jackson rolls a 50 lb. rock, sweating in the hot sun. It's torturous. He's almost to the end, where Red Berry waits. When he gets there, Red spits.

RED BERRY

Again.

YOUNG JACKSON

But I thought you said--

RED BERRY

I changed my mind! Again!

Red kicks him savagely in the gut. A beat, and Jackson turns. Wipes his bloody hands. Starts rolling it back...

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - MESS HALL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (1988)

Tuesday Night Fight. Tables are pushed aside to create a makeshift ring. INMATES cheer, and the Warden, Red and other GUARDS watch, as Young Gil and Dennis fight each other in their underwear. Jackson, Tony and Scrub cheer him on.

YOUNG TONY/YOUNG SCRUB

C'mon!/Get him! etc.

Gil has Dennis cornered, just killing him, and finally a GUARD calls it. Cheering. Booing. Bets being paid up.

YOUNG JACKSON

Yes! Way to go Gil!

As Gil raises his arms in triumph, the Warden is watching him. He turns to Red. Who calls Young Darryl over. They whisper something to each other, looking at Gil. Uh-oh.

EXT. FIELD NEXT TO QUITMAN - DAY - FLASHBACK (1988)

A huge expanse - half pine trees, half stumps. Our boys are on their knees in the blazing sun, working alongside a dozen other inmates. Their job is to clear the field. They don't know why, but it's not like they can complain. Jackson, Gil and Scrub drill holes into the tree stumps. Tony follows behind, packing chemicals into the holes with his bare hands.

Scrub stops, looking at the Warden, who observes from afar while standing next to a man named **GREY CAMPBELL**, 40. He wears a suit and horn-rimmed glasses. They chat casually.

YOUNG SCRUB

Who is that guy? I see him here all the time.

YOUNG JACKSON

Scrub, forget it. Just keep working before Red sees you.

Red is looming nearby. Scrub goes back to work. ON TONY: scratching at his arms. The chemicals are affecting him.

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - BUNK ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (1988)

Young Jackson asleep in his bunk. A muffled noise, and his eyes open: Darryl has Gil in a chokehold, hustling him out. Gil has DUCT TAPE over his mouth. Jackson bolts up, but out of nowhere... THWUMP! Red Berry floors him with a stick blow to the gut. He leans down as Jackson gasps for air:

RED BERRY

You leave this room tonight you won't come back. Hear me?

Red is drunk, holding a beer. His eyes are red from smoking pot. Between that, and his wicked sneer, Jackson is cowed.

MOMENTS LATER

Jackson, Tony and Scrub stand at the window, stricken, looking out through the bars. MUSIC plays in the distance.

THE BOYS' P.O.V.: Red and Darryl dragging Gil across the yard toward the Warden's house. It's the only source of light in the whole compound. That's where the music is coming from.

YOUNG TONY

Jackie, where are they taking him?

YOUNG JACKSON

I don't know.

Which only makes it worse. Off their scared faces--

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - WARDEN'S HOUSE - LATER (1988)

Music thumps, booze flows, and people mingle - civilians, guards in half-uniform, a few inmates, and women who must be hookers. It's a fucked-up scene. Gil sits on a couch, downing a cup of special punch as Darryl monitors him.

YOUNG DARRYL

There you go. That's good.

Gil looks woozy. A door across the room opens, and Red Berry steps out. Shirtless. He searches around, spots Darryl, and nods at him. Darryl turns to Gil.

YOUNG DARRYL (CONT'D)

Hey. The Warden likes you. You play your cards right, you're gonna be able to get whatever you want around here. Alright?

Gil manages a nod. Darryl grabs him, ushers him through the crowd, and into THE ROOM past Red. Inside, it's fucking weird. Bare walls and a bed. A video camera on a tripod. In the corner, the Warden sits in a chair smoking a cigar, with a WOMAN on his lap. Young Darryl steps out. Red Berry steps in. As the door closes, and Gil stands there...

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - BUNK ROOM - 4:00 A.M. - (1988)

Gil lands in a heap on his bunk. Red Berry wobbles off, bumping into a post and cursing. Wasted. Once he's gone, Jackson rolls over and whisper-yells at Gil in the dark:

YOUNG JACKSON

*Hey. What happened?
(no response)
Gil! Are you okay?*

Jackson crawls out of his bunk, goes around, and kneels. And his heart breaks. Gil's face is painted with mascara and lipstick. The mascara has run from his tears, and his eyes are completely dead. Off Young Jackson, anguished--

RESUME THE KITCHEN - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

Where present-day Jackson sits at the table, overcome. Eyes shut, hunched over, the empty whiskey bottle next to him. REVEAL MARINA in the doorway, wearing her nightgown. She's taking in this tableau. Frightened. She enters and sits.

MARINA

Jackson. What is going on?

He looks up. Does his best to gather himself.

JACKSON

Nothing. It's okay.

MARINA

It's not okay. You wake up in the middle of the night screaming, you lock yourself in the bathroom for hours.

(MORE)

MARINA (CONT'D)

I've been trying to give you space, but you're really scaring me. Did something happen to you?

JACKSON

I can't talk about it.

MARINA

Honey, I'm going to be your wife. You can tell me anything.

He looks at her. So tortured. But he can't do it.

MARINA (CONT'D)

Please don't do this. Please don't shut me out. Just tell me what's wrong.

JACKSON

There's nothing to tell! Okay? I'm fine, and it's over. I promise.

Marina looks at him. Upset. Her lip trembling.

MARINA

No, it's not.

She gets up and walks out, choking back her tears.

INT. GIL AND JESSIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gil lies in the dark, staring at the ceiling. Jessie is next to him, on her side, watching him. They've just tried to have sex, but it didn't go well. Gil has trouble in this department, and feels ashamed. But Jessie is understanding.

JESSIE

It's okay.

(Gil keeps staring up)

Babe, we had a crazy day. You're just tired. I am too...

She snuggles in close to him, and rests her head on his shoulder. He lets her, for a while. But then, he gently moves her hand, and slips out from under the covers.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

GIL

I'm okay. Just get some sleep.

As she watches him pull on his clothes in the moonlight:

JACKSON (V.O.)

We all suffered in our own way.

INT. TONY'S APARTMENT - 3:00 A.M.

Tony is asleep in his undershirt on a chair in his living room, the TV playing. There's an almost-empty bottle of Jack Daniels in his hand. And bottles of pills on the side table.

JACKSON (V.O.)

For Tony, it was the booze and the drugs. That's the only way he could figure out to numb the pain.

For the first time, we see his forearms: blotchy, pale and scaly in spots. The exposure to the tree stump chemicals at Quitman scarred him forever.

INT. JACKSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - 4:00 A.M.

Marina lies in her bed in the dark, watching through the open bathroom door as Jackson stands motionless in the shower, letting the hot water wash over him. She looks sad.

JACKSON (V.O.)

For me, it was about trying not to sacrifice the ones I loved. For sins they'd never know about.

INT. DINER - 5:00 A.M.

Gil sits alone, eating pancakes. He's watching a group of UNIFORMED COPS in a nearby booth, also eating. One of them is telling a story, and the others are laughing loudly.

JACKSON (V.O.)

Gil had his own demons. Everywhere he looked he saw ghosts.

QUICK FLASH - Red Berry and another guard, in uniform, laughing and talking as they lead Young Gil across the Quitman yard to another one of the Warden's parties--

RESUME THE DINER - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

Gil looks away from the cops. Continues eating.

JACKSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In the end? I think we all knew what was coming. We just didn't know when.

PRELAP: the sound of a LOUD BUZZ, METAL CLANGING, SHOUTING.

INT. FULTON COUNTY JAIL - 6:00 A.M.

ON SCRUB in his cell bunk: his EYES OPEN, and he jolts up. He takes a moment to orient. Hears INMATES talking shit in the corridor outside their cells. A JAIL GUARD passes by, running his baton along the bars of the cells--

JAIL GUARD

Here we go, everybody out. Breakfast!

Scrub goes to the door of his cell - it's been electronically opened. Inmates start filing past, following the guard. None of them seem to notice him. Scrub watches for a moment. Not really wanting to go out there, but knowing he has no choice. A beat, and he slides the door back, and steps out as casually and low profile as possible. As he falls into the procession--

An inmate - DOOLEY - steps out of the cell next to Scrub's. Scrub makes it maybe three or four steps before Dooley catches him. In one swift and efficient motion, Dooley covers Scrub's mouth with one hand, and hooks his elbow around Scrub's neck with the other--

Scrub panics, and he struggles as Dooley pulls him backward. Two inmates walk right by and see everything, but just keep going--

At the door to Scrub's cell, Dooley pulls out a shank, STABS SCRUB in the hip near his liver, and shoves him back into the cell. Dooley takes off, and as Scrub crumples to the floor, where we found him in the teaser:

JACKSON (V.O.)

There were four of us. We were best friends.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. JACKSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING (D2)

ON JACKSON, asleep in his bed. Birds chirp. Morning light filters in. On the bedside table, his CELL BUZZES. He stirs. It buzzes some more, and finally he sits up.

He looks over-- Marina is already gone to the office. Shit. He's got some work to do with her.

Another buzz, and Jackson answers--

JACKSON
Hello?... Speaking... Yes, I'm his
lawyer...

As a look of shock comes over his face, SMASH TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS - FAST-PACED, ALL ADRENALINE

-- Jackson backs down his driveway in his BMW, slams it into drive, and screeches off down the street.

-- Scrub, unconscious and bleeding on a gurney, is rushed down a hospital hallway by PARAMEDICS and NURSES.

-- Jackson flies down I-85, weaving through traffic. He brakes hard to a stop, hitting a morning commute traffic jam.

JACKSON
No. No no no!

He cuts through stalled traffic. Angry DRIVERS are honking.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Out of my fucking way!

He guns it up the shoulder, flashers on, kicking up debris.

-- In the hospital operating room, Scrub is transferred to the table as DOCTORS work quickly to prep him for surgery.

-- In the hospital parking lot, Jackson rushes from his car and into the building, past an AMBULANCE and COP CARS.

INT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - E.R. WAITING - CONTINUOUS

This is the county public hospital, so the room is large and full. Det. Liz Winters is here. She sees Jackson enter, and heads over as he cuts the line at the reception desk.

JACKSON

Clark Nolan. Did they bring him in?

NURSE RECEPTIONIST

Sir, these people are in front of you--

JACKSON

Just tell me where he is!

DET. WINTERS

Counselor! Jackson...

(he turns)

Your client's up in surgery. No one can see him right now.

JACKSON

(knows her; surprised)

What is Gangs Squad doing here? Is this your case?

DET. WINTERS

I'm not sure yet. I tried to interview your guy yesterday but he wouldn't talk. I was hoping maybe we could.

JACKSON

Liz. Now's not a good time. And it's not my job to help you with your investigation so just--

DET. WINTERS

Look, all I'm trying to do is figure out if this is gang-related. If it's not, I'll leave you alone. Just think about it, okay? You know where to find me.

GIL

Jackson!

He turns and sees Gil. He's by some chairs across the room, where Tony sits with Scrub's wife Annie. Jackson excuses himself, and as he heads over, Det. Winters watches for a bit, clocking who he's with. Gil and Tony give Jackson the curt yet meaningful hug men do in crisis situations.

GIL (CONT'D)

(sotto, angry)

Can you believe this? I told you.

JACKSON

Just take it easy.

ANNIE

Who are you?

Jackson now sees Annie. Very pregnant Annie. He's thrown.

TONY

This is Annie. Clark's wife.

Jackson feels terrible. He didn't know Scrub had a wife. Much less that she was pregnant.

JACKSON

I'm Jackson. I'm your husband's lawyer.

The guys glance at each other. At least that's half true.

ANNIE

Do you know what happened?

JACKSON

Not yet. But we'll find out.

Annie's trying. But she's a bundle of emotion about to blow.

ANNIE

He called me last night. He said he was in jail, and I just... oh my god...

She loses it. Just, loses it. As Tony comforts her...

EXT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DAY (TWO HOURS LATER)

Gil sits alone, brooding on a bench outside the E.R. Jackson comes out, spots him, and heads over.

JACKSON

I just talked to the doctor. He lost a lot of blood, but he's alive.

GIL

Is he gonna be okay?

JACKSON

They don't know. His liver was damaged, so we just have to wait.

(that lands)

Gil, it's gonna be fine. Tony's in there with Annie, and I need to go take care of a few things. I'll be back later, okay? Call me if anything happens.

Gil nods, and watches Jackson walk off. He thinks for a minute. Stewing. Then gets up, and we go:

INT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - FIFTH FLOOR - MINUTES LATER

The elevator opens and Gil emerges. He walks down the hall, keeping as low a profile as possible, glancing at the names on the rooms. When he reaches Darryl's room, he pauses. He does a quick walk-by to see if anyone's there. They're not.

He circles back, stops at the door, and looks inside at Darryl asleep in his bed. Just stares. A million thoughts running through his mind. Murder in his heart. Finally...

FLOOR NURSE

Sir? You need help finding somebody?

GIL

Huh? No, I uh... I'm good. Thank you.
Just having a moment.

FLOOR NURSE

(sympathetic)

I understand.

She moves on, and when Gil turns back, Darryl has been awakened by this exchange. He's groggy, but just as he rolls over and glances up, Gil vanishes before he can see him.

INT. EPPS & NAGLE, P.C. - JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson's alone in his office with the door closed, working on his computer. Montage through a SERIES OF POPS as he does research on Quitman and Warden Carroll:

-- A 1988 newspaper article from The Valdosta Daily Times:
"Guard Troops Restore Order After Quitman Riot".

-- A 1989 piece from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution:
"Governor Approves Sale of Quitman To Private Operator".

-- The website of that private company, CSA. Jackson clicks on Board of Directors. Photos and bios come up. One is Roy Carroll. Another is Grey Campbell, in his horn-rimmed glasses.

-- A 2015 article coming out of the printer: "Lt. Governor Considering Run for Congress". There's a photo of Carroll giving a speech at a Rotary Club.

Jackson scans the article. Tucks it in a file, pulls out Det. Winters' card, and dials the phone.

DET. WINTERS (ON PHONE)

Detective Winters.

JACKSON

Hey, it's Jackson Pogue. So here's how we're gonna do this. You talk, and I listen. I can't promise you anything. But I'm willing to see where it goes.

DET. WINTERS (ON PHONE)

Fair enough. You wanna start with Darryl Williams?

INT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - MAIN LOBBY - NIGHT

Jackson enters, heading for the elevator. It opens, and Jessie comes out. Upset and crying. Oh shit. He stops.

JACKSON

Hey... Are you okay?

She walks right past him. Jackson turns and follows her.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Jessie, stop. Why are you avoiding me?

JESSIE

(turns)

Gil told me what happened. He didn't just run into you, he asked you to be Scrub's lawyer. And you didn't tell me. Why is everybody lying to me?

JACKSON

Jessie, I'm not. And I promise, this doesn't have anything to do with you and me. Can we just go somewhere and talk?

JESSIE

(blurts it out)

I'm with Gil.

JACKSON

What?

JESSIE

For almost a year now. He makes me feel safe. And he didn't abandon me.

That stings him. But she forges ahead.

JESSIE (CONT'D)

I don't know why he didn't tell you. And I don't know why you're back, or what you're doing, but I can't handle this right now. I have to go. I have work.

She turns and starts walking off again.

JACKSON

Jessie, come on. Jessie!

She keeps going, as Jackson slumps. This is complicated.

INT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - SCRUB'S ROOM - NIGHT

Scrub is unconscious, hooked up to a ventilator. A heart monitor beeps. Annie sits with him, exhausted, emotionally spent. Jackson, Gil and Tony enter. They watch for a moment in respectful silence. Tony quietly goes over.

TONY

Annie, you need to get something to eat.
For you *and* the baby. Okay?

(she nods)

Come on. I'll take you.

Tony leads her out, as Jackson and Gil stand there. It's hard seeing their friend like this. Finally, Jackson gathers himself, crosses to the bed, and takes Scrub's hand.

JACKSON

Hey buddy, it's Jackson. I'm not saying
goodbye because you're not going anywhere.
We're getting you out of here, okay? You,
me, Tony and Gil. Just like the old days.
We're here for you, kid.

(beat)

You need to be strong. You need to fight
with everything you have. For your wife,
and your baby...

Jackson's a wreck. Tears are flowing. He presses on.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

I want to tell you something. I didn't
forget. I'll never forget. What they did
to you, me, all of us.

Angle on Gil for his reaction to that.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Scrub. I'm so sorry. All I
ever wanted to do was protect you...

EXT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - KITCHEN - FLASHBACK (1989)

Young Jackson and Gil are alone, doing dishes. They look different now. Bruises, scars, hardened by six months here. But there's also hope-- they're getting out tomorrow.

YOUNG JACKSON

First thing I'm having is a cheeseburger.

YOUNG GIL

I just want my own bed. And a TV. What time are we supposed to be--

He stops mid-sentence. Outside, through a window, they see SMOKE rising from the dorm buildings. What the fuck?

EXT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - YARD - FLASHBACK (1989)

They run out into the yard. Louder, chaotic. Windows are being shattered. A RIOT is in progress. They run to the barbed-wire fence, where Red Berry and other GUARDS are filing quickly into a VAN waiting near the gate.

YOUNG JACKSON

Red! What's happening?

He glances up, but keeps on going. Then, a door bursts open from the dorm side and a yelling mob of INMATES comes out. They're following two kids who are fighting savagely, egging them on as one draws blood. Jackson looks at Gil, panicked:

YOUNG JACKSON (CONT'D)

Where's Tony and Scrub?

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - DORM BUILDING - FLASHBACK (1989)

A free-for-all. Mattresses on fire, alarms going off, boys gleefully smashing the guard station to bits. Jackson and Gil work through the maelstrom, and spot Scrub down the hall. He's flailing wildly as Eddie drags him into the bunk room.

YOUNG JACKSON

Scrub!

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - BUNKROOM - FLASHBACK (1989)

Jackson and Gil rush in, then freeze. Young Terry and Darryl have Tony strapped to a bunk post with a belt around his neck. He's crying and bleeding. Eddie has Scrub on the ground as Dennis cuts a lamp cord to tie him up.

YOUNG GIL

You son of a bitch!

YOUNG JACKSON

I'll kill you!

They charge, but the other boys are bigger and stronger. Darryl takes out Gil and Terry levels Jackson, knocking him to the floor and putting a knee on his back. Just then--

Warden Carroll appears in the door. He's scared, but calm, brandishing a SHOTGUN as chaos reigns in the hallway behind.

YOUNG JACKSON (CONT'D)

Warden! Help us!

YOUNG GIL

Warden, please! We're getting out tomorrow! You owe me!

A beat, and the Warden moves on. Holy fuck. Dennis goes over and shuts the door. Terry smiles, looking at Gil.

TERRY

Looks like sugar daddy don't love you anymore.

YOUNG JACKSON

Get OFF me!!

Jackson struggles out from under but Terry stays with him and slams him up against the wall in a sitting position.

TERRY

Who's the smart one now?

JACKSON'S P.O.V.: Terry in his face. Behind him, Darryl is dragging Scrub toward the bathroom. Their first rape victim. Scrub is fighting and kicking and screaming for his life--

YOUNG JACKSON

Scrub! No! Scrub!!!

As the bathroom doors closes, we FADE TO:

INT. QUITMAN BOYS CAMP - BUNKROOM (DAWN) - FLASHBACK (1989)

Our four boys, on the floor in a corner. Broken. Numb. Dehumanized. Tony whimpers. Jackson stares blankly.

YOUNG JACKSON

This never happened.

YOUNG TONY

I just want to go home.

YOUNG JACKSON

I mean it. Nobody knows. And we're never talking about this to anyone. Ever. You all understand? It's over.

On our four boys. Their vow of silence.

RESUME SCRUB'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

Jackson is spent. He rests his forehead on the bedrail. Gil stares silently at the floor. A machine makes a noise, and Gil looks up. The ventilator bellows has stopped.

GIL

Something's wrong.

Now Jackson looks up. Suddenly an ALARM goes off.

JACKSON

Scrub? Get the doctor--

GIL

What's happening?

JACKSON

Just get the doctor!

No need. The ATTENDING and TWO NURSES come hurrying in--

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Scrub, don't do this!

NURSE

Sir, you need to step away.

JACKSON

Don't die! Please don't die!

ATTENDING

Sir! She needs to get to the cart.

Jackson backs away and lands on the wall next to Gil. JUMP CUT through the code: an epi push. Chest compressions. The defibrillator. More chest compressions. But it's no use.

Scrub flatlines, and Jackson and Gil are devastated. As the drone echoes, they look over and see Annie and Tony watching from outside the window. Annie is sobbing, and Gil can't fucking take it. All of a sudden, he bolts from the room.

INT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Gil speed-walks down the stairs as Jackson chases after him, way behind and not exactly gaining--

JACKSON

Gil! Just stop!

EXT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

-- and heads straight for his truck. He yanks open the door, and reaches under his seat. Jackson arrives, out of breath.

JACKSON

Gil! What are you doing?

GIL

What I should have done yesterday.

He turns, and jams a clip into his Colt Defender pistol.

JACKSON

No. No way.

GIL

He's here, Jackie! Right here in the same goddamn hospital where I just watched my friend die!

JACKSON

What are you gonna do, just walk in there and shoot him in his bed?

GIL

Yes! Eye for an eye, brother. That's exactly what I'm gonna do.

Gil starts to go, but Jackson slams him against the truck.

JACKSON

Listen to me. I know you're upset about Scrub, and I am too. But this is a lot bigger than you know.

GIL

What the hell are you talking about?

JACKSON

I talked to a detective in the Gangs Squad today. She said Darryl works for Terry and Eddie and they run drugs and guns and god knows what else and she's pretty sure they're hooked up with the cartels.

GIL

So they're here. All of them.

JACKSON

That's not the point! These guys are hard core, Gil. They're dangerous and they're connected and they're obviously killers. This is not the way to do this.

GIL

It is for me. And I'm not stopping until I find the Warden either.

JACKSON

No! It's like you said, we need a plan. We have to be smart about this--

GIL

We have to fight.

JACKSON

Just listen! I've been doing some research on the Warden and Quitman. Remember the night of the riot, when all those guards walked out? They said they lost control of D House and they were scared for their safety. But it was all bullshit. The whole thing was planned.

GIL

Who the fuck cares?

JACKSON

I do! You do! A year later the state sold Quitman to a private company and guess who ended up on the Board? Warden Carroll. Ten years later, guess who's running the state parole board? Warden Carroll. They made him Lt. Governor, and now he's gonna be running for Congress for god's sake. You can't just shoot him on the street!

Gil knows this instinctively. But he's thirsty for blood.

GIL

It doesn't matter. None of it matters--

JACKSON

We can do this, Gil. The way to get these guys is to use the police and the system and expose them for what they are. Get them all arrested and let them spend the rest of their lives in prison.

GIL

That's justice to you? After everything they did to us?

JACKSON

Yes! You've been there! You know what it's like!

Gil hates the logic of that. He's getting more distraught.

GIL

It's not good enough.

JACKSON

Yes it is. I'm gonna figure this out and we're gonna do this the right way. You just have to trust me.

GIL

Don't you get it? I don't want the cops asking questions. I'd rather be dead than have anyone know what happened to us!

JACKSON

You don't mean that.

GIL

I swear to god, Jackie!

He puts the pistol to his head.

JACKSON

Gil. Come on.

GIL

Why not? I already died a long time ago.

Hold on the tension. And then, Jackson goes over, and calmly takes the gun out of his hand. Gil slumps to the pavement. Tortured. A beat, and Jackson sits down beside him. As they sit there, both lost in their pain...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. EPPS & NAGLE, P.C. - CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING (D3)

Frank Cox sits alone in his coat and tie at the end of a long table. The plea agreement is in front of him, ready for his signature. Jackson walks in. He looks tired.

FRANK COX

Morning...

Jackson sits, and pulls out a legal pad. He's been up all night thinking about what Gil said, and he gets to it.

JACKSON

Don't take the plea.

FRANK COX

What?

JACKSON

I wanna fight. I think we can win this case.

FRANK COX

(thrown)

I thought you said--

JACKSON

I know what I said. Two years on these charges is a good deal. But you're not a murderer, Frank. And if you sign that agreement, you let them make you into something you're not.

Cox looks at the agreement. Processing. Jackson continues.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

It's up to you, and I'll respect whatever decision you make. But I want you to know something. Two years in prison, for a man like you? It's gonna feel like twenty-five. Especially for something you didn't do.

Jackson would know. A beat, as Cox thinks, and Jackson looks at him. He's struggling with his emotions a bit.

FRANK COX

I loved my wife, Mr. Pogue.

JACKSON

I know.

FRANK COX

But honestly? I didn't like her.

(then)

She started drinking after our son died. Wine with dinner, wine after dinner, vodka 'til she passed out every night. The doctor said she was depressed, but the pills just made it worse. There wasn't a day I didn't come home the last two years when she wasn't out of her mind.

JACKSON

I'm sorry.

COX

I wanted to help her. I really did. But every conversation turned into a fight, and I was busy at work, and I just... I was weak. And selfish. And now she's gone and I feel so...

JACKSON

Guilty.

COX

(tearing up)

Yes. I knew she was in bad shape. I shouldn't have left her on that dock.

JACKSON

Frank. You didn't know what was gonna happen. You feel responsible, and I get that, but this wasn't your fault. You don't have to punish yourself.

Jackson could easily be talking about himself and Scrub. Cox lets out a big exhale. Looks up at Jackson.

FRANK COX

You really think we can win?

JACKSON

I wouldn't have spent all night working on my closing if I didn't.

As he indicates the handwritten outline on his legal pad:

JACKSON (PRELAP) (CONT'D)

Nobody's perfect.

INT. ATLANTA COURTROOM - DAY

Jackson in front of the JURY. Making that closing argument.

JACKSON

You've heard testimony in this case that Frank Cox was a flawed man. Having trouble in his business. Arguing with his neighbors. And yes, even fighting with his wife. But you're not here today to judge this man's character. You're here to judge his actions.

INT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - MORGUE - DAY

Scrub's body lies on a gurney, as a MALE CORONER suits up for the autopsy. We're pushing in slowly on his face.

JACKSON (V.O.)

When you put the past under a microscope, it's easy to second-guess ourselves. Are there things we did that we regret? I think the answer is yes. For all of us. But that's not the question here.

INT. GIL & JESSIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Gil sits alone in his undershirt on his bed, staring out the window. The Colt Defender pistol is on the nightstand.

JACKSON (V.O.)

The state wants you to believe that my client got so upset with his wife that he threw her off that dock and watched her drown. But you know what? People fight all the time. They get angry, and they get upset, but they don't commit murder. They just walk away. And that's exactly what happened here.

INT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - LABOR & DELIVERY - DAY

Annie is in the stirrups, pushing hard. Tony is with her.

JACKSON (V.O.)

Mr. Cox had gone inside the house. The moment he heard that splash, he came running out to try to save his wife. But he couldn't. She was already gone. And the only thing that could possibly be worse than that would be convicting him of a crime he didn't commit.

INT. ATLANTA COURTROOM - DAY

The jury is rapt, as Jackson speaks directly at them.

JACKSON

You took an oath, ladies and gentlemen.
To decide this case on the facts. And the
facts are, this was nothing more than a
terrible, tragic accident. So I ask you
to return the only just verdict, which is
not guilty. It's time to let this man get
on with his life.

Jackson sits, looking like he has the weight of the world on
his shoulders. If they only knew...

INT. GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DARRYL'S ROOM - DUSK

Darryl is asleep, no longer on the ventilator. Det. Liz
Winters sits with him, waiting for him to wake up so she can
interview him. A knock, and ROY CARROLL enters.

DET. WINTERS

Mr. Carroll?

CARROLL

Sorry. Do I know you?

DET. WINTERS

Detective Winters. We met when you were
running the parole board.

CARROLL

Right... Good to see you.

Awkward. Carroll wasn't expecting to see her here, but he
plays it cool as he comes over. Like a concerned uncle.

CARROLL (CONT'D)

Just checking on this young man. He spent
some time with me at Quitman back in the
day. How's he doing?

DET. WINTERS

Sleeping a lot, but he's better. The
doctor might let him go home tomorrow.

CARROLL

It's a damn shame. I'm sorry this
happened to him.

(she nods; then)

If he wakes up, tell him I said get well
soon. Okay?

DET. WINTERS

Yes sir.

Carroll nods and exits, and we're off Liz. That was odd.

INT. EPPS & NAGLE, P.C. - NIGHT

On Aaron, a glass of champagne raised high:

AARON

Everybody! Listen up!

The WHOLE FIRM is gathered, and they quiet. Jackson leans against a desk next to Marina, who puts her arm around him.

AARON (CONT'D)

First, to a job well done, and a not guilty verdict in State versus Cox--

ASS-KISSING ASSOCIATE

The man is an animal!

AARON

And second, to our newest partner, who will now be working not for, but *with* his future wife. Congratulations, Jackson.

Applause, hear-hears, and backslaps. Marina beams.

INT. EPPS & NAGLE, P.C. - A BIT LATER

It's a party, but Jackson is preoccupied. His CELL vibrates. He excuses himself from the chit-chat, moves down the hall, and checks the screen: "Blocked". Huh. He answers it.

JACKSON

Hello?

MALE VOICE (ON PHONE)

You really don't want to kick this rock.

JACKSON

Who is this?

MALE VOICE (ON PHONE)

You better be careful, Counselor. I know what you did.

Click. The line goes dead. A beat, as Jackson stands there. Spooked. Shaken to his core. He pockets his phone, glances around, and then bolts out the back door, unseen.

EXT. SERVICE ALLEY - NIGHT

Jackson and Jessie. This is the back of the restaurant where she works. She's frantic, and Jackson isn't far behind.

JACKSON

Jessie, calm down. It's gonna be okay.

JESSIE

(crying)

I don't understand why this is happening.

JACKSON

I need to ask you something, and I want you to be completely honest. Did you tell Gil?

JESSIE

What? No.

JACKSON

I mean it. If you did, just tell me. I can handle it but I need--

JESSIE

Jackson, I didn't tell him! I've never told anybody! I don't want to go jail.

JACKSON

Nobody's going to jail! I have a life now and so do you! Don't say that. *Please.*

As he looks at her pleadingly, utterly haunted--

EXT. FIELD NEXT TO QUITMAN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (1993)

THUNDER and RAIN. 19-YEAR-OLD JACKSON holds a ROCK, while furiously kicking a MAN in the mud. The man manages to hoist himself to his knees. A LIGHTNING FLASH-- we see it's RED BERRY. We also see: Quitman looming in the background, and 19-YEAR-OLD JESSIE standing behind Jackson. Terrified.

RED BERRY

You think you scare me?

(spits, then)

How's your little friend doing? The one with the cute cheeks and the--

19-YEAR-OLD JACKSON

You bastard--!

19-YEAR-OLD JESSIE

Jackson, no--!

SMASH! Jackson brains him with the ROCK, and Red keels over, his head bouncing off a stump. Off his lifeless eyes--

RESUME THE SERVICE ALLEY - PRESENT DAY (NIGHT)

Jessie is really losing it now, and it's killing Jackson. All of his guilt. All of his fear. She's so vulnerable.

JACKSON

Jessie, we're not those people anymore. I'm sorry I got you into this and I'm sorry I left but you have to be strong. We both do. We'll figure this out.

He grabs her and holds her. She lets him for a moment. So vulnerable and scared. But she's completely conflicted.

JESSIE

I can't do this.

JACKSON

Yes you can.

JESSIE

(pushing away)

I mean it. I'm with Gil now. I'll never say anything but you can't do this to me.

JACKSON

Jessie--

JESSIE

Just leave me alone! I'm begging you.

A beat as they look at each other. All so fraught. Then, as she turns and heads back inside, wiping away her tears:

JACKSON (V.O.)

There are lies we tell to make ourselves feel better. About who we love...

INT. JACKSON'S CAR - NIGHT (LATER)

Jackson is parked in his driveway, looking out the windshield at his house. He sees Marina inside, framed in the light of the kitchen window, sitting alone at the island.

JACKSON (V.O.)

About who we are...

INT. GIL'S PICKUP TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

Gil and Tony ride in silence, lost in their thoughts.

JACKSON (V.O.)

About what we're capable of.

Tony glances at Gil. He just stares straight ahead.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING (D4)

Scrub's graveside funeral service. Jackson, Tony, Gil and Jessie sit with other MOURNERS under a tent, as a PRIEST finishes intoning the Lord's Prayer. Annie is then brought forward in her wheelchair. As our guys watch her bend her head over Scrub's casket, saying her emotional goodbye:

JACKSON (V.O.)

We all wanted to move on with our lives.
To forget what happened to us. But the
past is never the past. If it were, there
would be no tragedy.

EXT. CEMETERY - A BIT LATER

The service is over, and Jackson, Gil and Tony are standing off to the side, talking quietly. A CAR pulls up, and Det. Liz Winters gets out. She spots our guys, and as she comes over, Jackson stiffens a little. What's this about?

JACKSON

Detective. What's going on?

DET. WINTERS

Darryl Williams died this morning.

A beat.

JACKSON

I'm sorry to hear that.

DET. WINTERS

He wasn't in the hospital, he was at home.
We found him on his kitchen floor with
three bulletholes in his chest, and I'm
wondering if you gentlemen might know
anything about that?

Jackson look at Gil. Gil looks right back. Off this--

BLACKOUT.

END OF PILOT EPISODE.