the adversaries

pilot

written by
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FADE IN:

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

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN — JUSTICE DEPARTMENT BUILDING — DAY

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

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

JESS
Your call, Bobby.

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

JESS
Sure. OR, pop across the bridge here, jump on the BQE, get off two exits before JFK and bypass the Flushing bottleneck.
(off his flat look)
...Totally your call.
(off his look again)
But my way might be better.
(once more)
...But you choose.

EXT. NASSAU AIRPORT TERMINAL — BAHAMAS — DAY

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

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

INT. JETLINER — BUSINESS CLASS — DAY

Tourists file in -- floral shirts, boogie boards, Raybans. FIND JESS in her seat. Her crossed leg bopping up and down, impatiently. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT passes with a drink tray.
JESS
How late are we running here?
Because boarding didn’t really get
going until 10:17, and it’s now
10:32, so I’m just wondering...

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

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Orange juice or water?

BEN (O.S.)
Another road trip, eh, Counselor?

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

BEN (CONT’D)
I love me some extradition! Like
that drug bust in France? We had
us some fun there, didn’t we?

JESS
We’ll always have Strasbourg.

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

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

JESS
Tell me again why they kicked you
out of the Secret Service.
   (off his look)
Big case, Ben. Eye on the ball.

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

JESS
No. What he’s got is a competent
attorney, with a resume of notable
achievements, who has of late
developed a leaky moral compass.
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BEN
I’m just glad the dude is flying
down to facilitate the surrender.

JESS
Ha! I know the ‘dude.’ I’ve met
the ‘dude.’ And the ‘dude’ does
not facilitate anything.

EXT./INT. BAHAMIAN ESTATE – DAY

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

CHARLIE
Cooper...?

He looks over his shoulder to a maid, MARGUERITE.

MARGUERITE
No good, Mr. C. He won’t go.

CHARLIE
Cooper! Please come out so we can
discuss this.

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

EXT. BAHAMIAN ESTATE – POOL DECK – SAME

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

COOPER
I could just dive in there and
disappear forever.

CHARLIE
It’s a pool, it has a bottom.

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

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

CHARLIE
As a stroke? Grossly overestimated.
COOPER
Help me! You’re my lawyer, goddammit! And my oldest friend!

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

COOPER
How could you let it come to this?

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

COOPER
All I did was maximize the opportunities available to me.

CHARLIE
You ripped people off.

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

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

MARGUERITE (O.S.)
The bad people are here!

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

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

COOPER
Huh? Is what safe?

CHARLIE
Firebrand. Is it safe?

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

JESS
Okay, gents, here we go.
CHARLIE
Hello, Jess.

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

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

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

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

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

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

BEN
Easy now, Mister Landings!

COOPER
No! No, no, no, no!

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

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

CHARLIE
Watch it, young lady --

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

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

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

CHARLIE
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT DATE IT IS?!

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

JESS
September 23rd...? Oh shit.

CHARLIE
Not even a call.
He shakes his head: tsk, tsk.

JESS
I’m sorry, okay? Happy birthday!

COOPER
Um... hello? What’s happening?

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

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

JESS
I’m sorry, I really am...

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

COOPER
What?! We said, no media!

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

JESS
(to Ben) Get local to get that chopper out of here!

CHARLIE
(then, to Jess) Cooper! It’s just a mistake! That is what you promised.

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

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

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

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

“the adversaries”
INT. SUBWAY (MOVING ACROSS THE MANHATTAN BRIDGE) - DAY

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

JESS (ON PHONE)
They can depose McGoldrick without me, I’ll catch up with Pete later.
Yeah, my never-ending trial goes to jury today.

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

JESS (ON PHONE) (CONT’D)
When I’m done, we’ll dig in on Landings....Sorry? The boss wants to see me? ...What kind of change?

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

EMMA (PRELAP)
Dad’s gonna hate his picture.

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

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

LYDIA
That toothy thing again.

EMMA
Makes him look like a Cheshire cat.

DING. The elevator lets out Charlie. Seemingly blithe.

CHARLIE
Shame on you, reading those rags.

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

EMMA
This looks terrible.

CHARLIE
I know, Cheshire cat.
EMMA
I meant for the firm.

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

EMMA
Jess probably volunteered.

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

AISHA (PRELAP)
I don’t know, that’s all it said!

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - CONFERENCE ROOM

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

DANNY
Then call his office, Aisha!

AISHA
I tried that, Danny!

CHARLIE
Squabbling? In front of my impressionable baby daughter?

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

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

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

CHARLIE
The one with the thing, or..?
DANNY
No, we took care of the first thing. This is a new thing.

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

AISHA
(to Danny)
Are you gonna tell him?

DANNY
I’m not telling him, you tell him.

CHARLIE
Tell him what?

AISHA
Cooper fired us. In an email.

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

DANNY
You should tweet-blast him.

EMMA
Sure, if my Dad knew what twitter was.

Charlie is quietly reeling. Danny pats his shoulder.

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

CHARLIE
I’ll go too, I need to see Cooper.

DANNY
Don’t see Cooper. Fuck Cooper.

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

DANNY
She’s busy, wrapping up Bajrami.

CHARLIE
That case isn’t over yet?
DANNY
Nope. Good thing is, me and Jess? She may be an uptown girl -- me, I’m a bridge and tunnel guy -- but we’re connecting, like on a spiritual level. She gets me.

JESS (PRELAP)
He’s a liar. A big fat liar.

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM – DAY

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

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

DANNY
What can I say? I'm dogged.

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

DANNY
The witness is very... shy.

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

JESS (CONT’D)
...beat him within an inch of his life, in broad daylight, with no provocation.

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

DANNY (CONT’D)
Your Honor -- my witness is good. Very good. The model of moral impunity in an immoral world.

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

DANNY
Ooh, wordplay -- I like that.
JUDGE MURPHY
I'm going to allow it.

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

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

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

TANG
You got a plan B, right?

INT. FEDERAL HOLDING - DAY
Charlie stands at a counter with an unhelpful GUARD.

GUARD
The prisoner declines to see you.

CHARLIE
Try again.

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - AS BEFORE
Angelic Adelia on the stand.

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

DANNY
And you were doing what there?

ADELIA
Jumping rope. Eating candy.

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

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

Jess looks at the paper -- "LIRIDONA HARZAD." Curious.
Something wrong?

JESS
Little Miss Dimples there has the same last name as a woman who co-signed his bail bond. A woman who happens to be engaged to Zamir's brother.

ADELIA
He got a baseball bat and wouldn't back off, so that man - he defended himself. I was scared what would happen. I'm glad he's okay.

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

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

JESS
Adelia: do you know Mr. Bajrami?

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

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

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

JESS
You have an older sister? Liridona?

ADELIA
Yes. She's 22.

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

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

ADELIA
So what? That don't mean nothing.
JESS
Isn't there about to be a big
wedding, a party at the church?
(off the girl, stewing)
Are you gonna be in the wedding,
Adelia? Flower girl maybe?

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

LADY JUROR
Lordy, lordy!

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

She spots Charlie, grinning at her courtroom savvy.

DANNY
A brief recess, Your Honor?

INT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie and Jess walk down the hall.

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

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

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

CHARLIE
Your torts professor was Mel Gerber
-- he’s in a wheelchair now so I
doubt he’s bowing down to anything.
(off her steady look)
(MORE)
CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Some clients we take on to keep the lights on. So we can continue doing the things that matter.

JESS
They used to be the only things.

That hurts -- he absorbs it. Suddenly vulnerable.

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

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

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

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

DANNY
OK, firstborn, we’ll take the deal.

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

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

OLD SCHOOL REPORTER
Mr. Fisher! Mr. Fisher!

EXT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE STEPS – CONTINUOUS

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

CHARLIE          OLD SCHOOL REPORTER
Not me, guys, Cooper’s retained separate counsel -- Do you feel your reputation is sullied by this?

CHARLIE
That’s just guilt by association.

CUB REPORTER
Can you speak to how the idealism of the ‘60s and ‘70s has given way to the materialism of today?
Charlie ponders that for a moment when --

FBI AGENT # 1
Mr. Fisher? FBI.

CHARLIE
Ah, gentlemen, to the rescue.

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

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

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

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


INT. US MARSHALS SERVICE PRISONER DETENTION AREA/HOLDING CELL

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHARLIE
I'm gonna need a lawyer.

END OF ACT ONE
FADE IN:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JESS
He's capable of many things, Ted -- but not criminal conspiracy.
PANICALI
Landings was feeding investors’ money into a bogus fund for years, Charlie helped create the fund so --

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

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

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

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

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

INT. JESS’S OFFICE – DAY

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

KATHERINE (O.S.)
I got a cake with a shiv in it for your father, don’t tell the feds.
(as Jess turns, sees her)
Oh darn it, you ARE the feds!

JESS
Why not kick him to the curb, mom?
KATHERINE
The curb keeps kicking him back.
Want to come with? As a belated birthday celebration?

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

KATHERINE
Oh honey, give us some credit for setting you on that path in the first place, okay?
(as Jess broods on that)
We need to find your father a lawyer, we could use your help...

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

KATHERINE
Danny doesn’t do cases like this.

JESS
Well, I know an excellent litigator-

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

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

JESS
Something wrong with your eye?

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

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
And I know you've worked hard to get where you are, but --

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

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

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

KATHERINE
Talking doesn’t help.


CHARLIE (PRELAP)
I know what unconditional love is.

INT. FEDERAL HOLDING - VISITING AREA - DAY
Katherine sits across from Charlie, in prison issue khaki.

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

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

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

KATHERINE
So he gave them you? Sonuvabitch.

CHARLIE
(nostalgic)
We met on a voter registration trip to Mississippi.
(MORE)
CHARLIE (CONT’D)
Two gawky kids with bad haircuts, out to change the world. What happened to them?

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

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

KATHERINE
...No, you never do.

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

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

CHARLIE
What's the hurry?

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

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

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

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

JESS
Hi, Dad.

CHARLIE
Don’t look so glum.

JESS
I can’t. I can’t do it. I mean, our relationship alone... --
CHARLIE
-- Will make you a more passionate advocate.

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

CHARLIE
Guilt is a relative term.

KATHERINE
Darling, only guilty people say things like that.

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

CHARLIE
No defense attorney worth her salt--

JESS
I’m not a defense lawyer.

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

KATHERINE
Well, the first two, maybe.

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

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

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

JESS
You weakened -- you compromised your ideals. And now you’ve put yourself in a vulnerable spot --
CHARLIE
News flash, kiddo -- every time a lawyer represents a client and puts himself on the line, he's in a vulnerable spot. It's not like representing the government.

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

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

JESS KATHERINE
That was in fifth grade! Charlie -

CHARLIE
You had promise! Everyone said so!

JESS
Oh my god, you are nuts.

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

JESS KATHERINE
Did I say that? She didn't say that.

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

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

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

JESS
I prosecute criminals! I put away bad guys! You call that shilling?!
CHARLIE
Let someone else do it!

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

KATHERINE
Ricola, anyone?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHARLIE
It's about Kyle?

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

CHARLIE
Who says? We don't know that.

JESS
It's been ten years! He was in with bad people. He crossed a line, he killed somebody.
(MORE)
JESS (CONT'D)
And so they got rid of him, made the whole thing go away. I know how these things work.

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

CHARLIE
It was difficult. We got over it.

JESS
I didn’t get over it. Emma didn’t get over it. And whatever she may say -- Mom didn’t get over it.

CHARLIE
And that’s all my fault?

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

CHARLIE
I expected a lot, from all my kids, I don’t apologize for that --

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

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

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

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

(MORE)
CHARLIE (CONT'D)
A hypocrite. Our name vilified, 
disgraced. Like Boesky, or Madoff, 
or Skilling. Are you really 
willing to let that happen?

As Jess and Charlie take each other in --

LYDIA (PRELAP)
Fisher, Fisher and Herrero -- 
pardon me? Yes, we're still open!

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - RECEPTION - DAY

The phones RINGING like crazy; Lydia tries to roll calls, 
along with another receptionist, CINDY (20's). Chaotic.

LYDIA  CINDY
Try back tomorrow, please. You'll need an appointment.

DING! As soon as Katherine emerges from the elevator --

AISHA
I spoke to my judge -- he won't 
push my trial dates.

KATHERINE
Well, we don't have the resources --

AISHA
To handle our case load? We need 
to figure it out, Katherine. This 

is the biggest litigation I've ever 
had -- we shouldn't give it up...

As they pass the desk, Cindy holds out a receiver to Lydia --

CINDY
He wants to know how much it costs 
to buy out Charlie Fisher?

LYDIA
(grabs the phone)
You again, Hannity? Shove it where 
the sun don't -- ! ...He hung up.

KATHERINE
Where's Emma?

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - LAW LIBRARY - DAY

ON EMMA asleep, with a bunch of open legal tomes spread out 
before her. A guitar cradled in her hands.
KATHERINE
If only you'd had these study
habits before going through four
boarding schools in three years.
(as Emma rouses)
So. Did you find anything for Dad?

EMMA
Nope. But I think I figured out a
chord progression on this new song.
(off her mother’s look)
It’s therapeutic, don’t worry. I’m
going the whole musician thing
out of my system. How is he?

KATHERINE
Enigmatic. What a mess.

EMMA
He’ll be all right. He always is.
(then)
It’s not your fault, you know. I
don't blame you for this.

KATHERINE
You mean, unlike everything else?

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

KATHERINE
And when did all that happen?

EMMA
After you left him.

KATHERINE
I never ‘left’ him. We... evolved.
Separately. I believe your people
call it “conscious uncoupling.”

EMMA
Do you really believe Gwyneth
Paltrow is my people?

Katherine regards the guitar as Emma strums.

EMMA (CONT’D)
It was because of Kyle, wasn’t it?
That’s why the marriage fell apart?

Katherine searches for an answer, parses her words carefully:
KATHERINE
...I wouldn’t draw a causal line between one thing and the other.

The skilled evasion of a trained lawyer. Then:

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

EMMA
Gotta pay the bills, right?

The moment is interrupted by --

AISHA
Danny's having a meltdown.

Katherine leads them out --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

KATHERINE
We need to stick together, Aisha.

AISHA
Like one big, happy family, right?

EMMA
If we can pretend, so can you.

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

EMMA
Whoa, do NOT sing it, sister.

KATHERINE
Honey, that might be racist.

EMMA
It’s racial, Mom, it’s not racist.

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

EMMA
Now that’s racist.
INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

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

KATHERINE
Breathe, Danny, breathe.

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

DANNY
I can’t... I can’t be his lawyer.

KATHERINE
No one wants you to. We’ll find outside counsel.

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

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

KATHERINE
This firm is what it is --

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

LYDIA
(pops in, winded)
Just got off the phone with Lacy and Edith, the discrimination case? They’re seeking new counsel.

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

EMMA
What a dick.
DANNY
Our new creed is: WWCD. "What would Charlie do?"

EMMA
Danny, he’s not Jesus.

KATHERINE
And he’s not dead either!

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

DANNY (CONT'D)
We are already two hundred k in debt. Clients are jumping ship, even the charity cases!

AISHA
We all love Charlie, but if he’s guilty, or even seems guilty --

KATHERINE
(exasperated)
...A little faith please!

AISHA (CONT'D)
If we don’t save this firm, we’re all gonna be screwed --

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

JESS
Once when I was little, I didn’t see Charlie for almost a year. He got detained in South Africa, where he was working to free a judge who was wrongly imprisoned by the apartheid government. He ended up getting the guy released. When he came home, he brought me this... (re: the Elephant)
But I was so angry at him, I couldn’t even...
(drifts off a moment)
You’re all here because of him, and my mom, and this firm they built. Now, I'm used to putting people away, not getting them exonerated. But I do know who we're up against and I also know we can beat them. But I need your help. It's win or go home. So let's win.

Katherine smiles: “That’s my girl.” Off the group --

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

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

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

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

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

JESS
Come on, you did the research.

EMMA
Not my thing, you know that.

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

EMMA
There wasn’t another one, Mom.

KATHERINE
Oh yeah. I made that up, didn’t I?

EMMA
To make me feel better when Jess played girl detective.

KATHERINE
...Did it work..?

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

INT. FEDERAL COURTHROOM – PRETRIAL HEARING

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

JUDGE ALORRO
Has the defense reached a bail agreement with the Government?

DANNY
Not yet, waiting on co-counsel...

(MORE)
“the adversaries” - zabel - third network draft - 1/22/15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EMMA
(whispers, aside)

JESS

Jess shoots Emma an impressed and appreciative nod.

JUDGE ALORRO
Are you co-counsel on this?

PANICALI
May Ms. Fisher and I approach?

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

JESS
Let me handle it, okay?

Jess joins Panicali and the Judge at the bench.
PANICALI
What are you doing, Jess? You still work for me.

JESS
Not as of this morning.

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

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

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

JESS
I’m moving for a speedy trial.

PANICALI
No way. We are gonna need time...

JUDGE ALORRO
You indicted him, Ted. Let’s go.

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

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

ASSISTANT
Katherine! We haven’t seen you since the ACLU dinner!

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

ASSISTANT
Come in. Hillary’s waiting.

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - AS BEFORE - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

CHARLIE
Assumptions? Fabrications. Obfuscations. Lies!

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

TANG
He was aware of the deception --

JESS
He has a long-standing reputation of philanthropy --

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

CHARLIE
Where the hell's the fraud?

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

Charlie concedes, some frustration; Danny leans into him.

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

CHARLIE
They're our adversaries, not your office pals. Take off the gloves.
Jess absorbs that as the Judge moves on --

JUDGE ALORRO
Let's discuss bail.

TANG
Risk of flight, Your Honor.

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

TANG
ROR? Absolutely not --

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

JESS
A million?! Your Honor, sidebar?

JUDGE ALORRO
You can revisit it later.

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

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

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

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

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

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

KATHERINE
A bond package in which we put up multiple assets, including our home. Co-signed by the Clintons.
DANNY  
(at Tang, all flash)  
Yeah, punk, those Clintons.

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

She bangs the gavel. Off Jess, pondering that.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Charlie and the rest emerge.

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

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

KATHERINE
Now, now -- easy, tigers.

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

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

EMMA
Were you even there?

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

EMMA
Please, let’s not.

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

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

Beat. Jess absorbs that, disappointed a bit.

JESS

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

EMMA

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

JESS

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

EMMA

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

(off her smile)
At least I have the best possible mentor, right? ...You.

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

DANNY

What’s the plan?

JESS

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

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

DANNY

Some mentor, huh?

EMMA

Sure, for a barista.
DANNY
Stick with me, kid. Your sister’s a wild card and your folks... well, I love’ em, I do. But they’re fragile, you know. Delicate. They’re like Hummel figurines.
(off her look - huh?) Quaint, classy things from a bygone era. Brilliant, passionate, refined. But out of date and easily broken.

EMMA
Who even has those anymore?

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

EMMA
Um... Fisher & Fisher?

DANNY
So why after all that time is the only other person who got his name up there some spic out of Flushing who worked his way through Cardozo Law as a squeegee guy outside the Lincoln Tunnel? Because they needed a millennial rainmaker. And that’s what I am -- the future and the money. Now, they been good to me, for reals --
(pats his heart)
But once in awhile, they still look at me like I’m the squeegee guy...

EMMA
I’m still stuck on Hummel figures.

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

EMMA
The non-existent sister of Nancy Drew.

DANNY
Not what I was going for, but sure. -- I’ll drop you off at Starbucks.
As we hear a SWEET, SAD SONG on the soundtrack, we FADE TO:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. F, F & H BREAK ROOM - DAY

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

AISHA
Don’t keep a judge waiting.

JESS
Long night. Thanks for staying.
AISHA
I looked into those correspondences -- came up with this memo Charlie wrote to Landings. Three weeks before the Feds came swarming.

Jess looks at the memo, pleased.

JESS
That’s good for cross. Nice catch.

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

JESS
I don’t scare you?

AISHA
I don’t scare easy.

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

AISHA
(’nope’)
Gelato in the freezer -- ‘Game of Thrones’ on the DVR.

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

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

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

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

AISHA
I’ll get someone on it. We’re due downtown in an hour. You might wanna do something with...
  (MORE)
INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - SERIES OF CUTS

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

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

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

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

An investor named MARY - elderly, African-American.

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

On the stand is Cooper Landings.

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

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

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

COOPER
Sadly, yes.

JESS
And what was the end game?
(off Cooper's look)
(MORE)
Eventually, your children or grandchildren would have to answer. Someday, someone was going to pay the piper. Did you decide it just wasn't your problem?

COOPER
We were greedy, no two ways about it.

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

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

JESS (CONT'D)
You’re not scared, are you?

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

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

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

AISHA
The words of a co-conspirator?

COOPER
He was covering for himself.

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

COOPER
So why didn't he do something then?

AISHA
When you were arrested, were Mr. Panicali and his team already on the trail of Mr. Fisher?
COOPER
They were interested in him.

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

COOPER
Statements of fact, not accu... -

AISHA TANG
That’s up to the jury. Is there a question?!

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

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

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

All heads turn to Charlie -- uncharacteristically raw.

CHARLIE (CONT'D) JUDGE ALORRO
All these lies for a little less jail time? Mister Fisher.

JUDGE ALORRO (CONT'D)
You sold out for a house in the Bahamas, now you’d sell me out for nothing?!

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

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

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. WITNESS ROOM - DAY

Charlie with Aisha and Jess.

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

AISHA
You're looking at years behind bars, Charlie.

JESS
And you don't have so many to give.

CHARLIE
Thanks for the motivational speech.

JESS
This is no game, Dad -- !

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

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

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

JESS
Oh god, that sounds so lame.

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

JESS
Absolutely not. Worst idea ever.

CHARLIE
I know how to woo a jury.
JESS
Who's trying this case? You or me?

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM

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

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

JESS
Why didn't you report that then?

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

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

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

EMMA
They need to see the real Charlie.

JESS
Are you sure? Because he can be damn unlikable.

AISHA
He can also sell shoes to a snake.

EMMA
Ask him if he’s a rich man.
(off Jess’ doubt)
I know how he’ll answer. Ask him.

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

JESS
You consider yourself a rich man?

CHARLIE
The accumulation of wealth hasn’t been a high priority for me...
(MORE)
but I’ve done fine. Can’t complain. More important to me, though, is that I've managed to do some things I'm proud of -- that allow me to leave a legacy for my children. Not of material things, but of reputation, engagement, integrity.

(looks at Emma and Jess)
What happened here, what Cooper did... it’s inexcusable, unconscionable. I'd never risk my legacy by being complicit in it. For what? A few extra shekels?

Jess nods, takes her seat. The jury is impressed. Tang rises, but Panicali usurps him, stepping up. A bit amped.

PANICALI
Your legacy, huh. Does that include a drifter son who became a bagman for the mob and a person of interest in a homicide case --

As one, Jess, Aisha and Emma all stand up --

PANICALI (CONT'D) JESS/AISHA/EMMA
-- a fugitive from justice -- Objection! Your Honor!

PANICALI
-- Who was murdered himself by the same people he’d been working for?

AISHA
His son is dead! Your Honor!

Panicali has fire in his eyes; Charlie shakes his head, sadly. Jess is rattled. Emma stares down at the table.

JUDGE ALORRO
Enough, Counselor. Get off it.

Calmness is restored, tensely.

PANICALI
I think it’s possible for a man to compartmentalize, don’t you? To, on one hand, do 'good deeds' and on the other, be a fraud, a phony.

CHARLIE
Well, you should see a therapist about that -- I can recommend one.
Titters from crowd; a snarl from Panicali.

PANICALI
Have you ever committed acts you

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

CHARLIE
Is this what we're here to discuss?

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

PANICALI (CONT'D)
You're on a witchhunt,
pursuing a personal agenda to
advance your career goals.

CHARLIE
That is why I'm here.

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

PANICALI
We both know why you're here.

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

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Aisha, Emma, Charlie and Jess are walking out.

AISHA
Tell her, Charlie.

JESS
Tell me what?

EMMA
About Sophie Panicali.

They look at Charlie sternly. Jess processes this.

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

EMMA
It's so disgusting, Dad.
JESS
Sophie Panicali is half your age!

CHARLIE
Well, that’s just bad math.

JESS
Why would you do that?!

CHARLIE
Have you seen her?

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

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

JESS
Really?! You think?!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EMMA
(covers her ears)
...Lalalalalalalalalala...

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

KATHERINE
You couldn’t stick to models and cocktail waitresses?!
CHARLIE
An unfortunate personal foible...

JESS
Foible?!

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

EMMA
This is all so gross.

AISHA
I’m, uh, gonna wait outside.

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

JESS
Really? Even you?

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO – HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS
Aisha shuts the door behind her. Danny is there, peeking in.

AISHA
White folks be acting crazy again.

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

INT. JUDGES' CHAMBERS – DAY
The Judge peruses a document as Jess and Panicali look on.

JUDGE ALORRO
Oh, my. Well well well. Your Honor, please --

JUDGE ALORRO
Shh. I’m at the good part.

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

JUDGE ALORRO (CONT’D)
Okay: this is sealed. No need to make it public.
JESS
That’s why I suggested we do it in chambers, take care of it quietly.

JUDGE ALORRO
I am certainly disappointed.

PANICALI
If I may say, in my own defense --

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

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

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

JESS
The case is misbegotten.

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

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT
Aisha and Jess study piles of documents, as Emma enters.

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

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

JESS
The whole thing's like a perfect storm -- with an ideal target.
EMMA
No one made Dad paint that big X on his back.

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

AISHA
You have a temper, don’t you?

JESS
I know, it’s not attractive.

AISHA
...I wouldn’t say that.

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

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

For Emma, who smiles.

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

DANNY
Firebrand? What’s a firebrand?

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

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

INT. FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS


INT. CHARLIE’S CORNER OFFICE - NIGHT

Charlie is on the phone as Jess barges in.
CHARLIE
No, I need the money sooner... I'll call you back.
(re: Jess, hangs up)
I'm trying to cobble together some funds in case we run into trouble.

JESS
What is 'firebrand'?


CHARLIE
We're not going there.

JESS
Why the hell not?

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

JESS (CONT'D)
...It's no time to get hung up on perception --

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

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

CHARLIE
The 'government' not the 'process!'

JESS (CONT'D)
...and now you want to equivocate like that?

CHARLIE
Our system of justice should be better than that --

JESS
Dad, you didn’t do anything wrong!

CHARLIE
You want me to testify to this?

JESS
Yes. I want you to tell the truth.

Charlie weighs it... shakes his head, definitively: ‘no.’

CHARLIE
Find another way.

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. FEDERAL COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE ALORRO
Ms. Fisher? Does the defense rest?

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

JESS
The defense recalls Charlie Fisher.

Charlie takes a beat, unpleasantly surprised.

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

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

CHARLIE
(sotto, to Jess)
What do you think you're doing?

JESS
Exactly what you'd do.

Charlie rises, begrudgingly, and takes the stand.

JESS (CONT'D)
Defense document 301-a submitted into evidence. Can you tell us what that document is?

CHARLIE
Financials.

JESS
For what?

CHARLIE
An offshore account.

JESS
What is the account called?

CHARLIE
'Firebrand.'
JESS
And what is Firebrand composed of?

CHARLIE
I don't know.

JESS
You don't know? Please answer.

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

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

JUDGE ALORRO
Hostile? He's your client!

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

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

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

CHARLIE
Yes, but --

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

CHARLIE
Yes, but --

Now Jess is running roughshod over Charlie.

JESS
What money is the fund composed of?

CHARLIE
I don't feel that...

JESS
Answer the question.

CHARLIE
I really don't see how...
Answer the question!

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

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

And what else?

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

There is devastation in Charlie's voice and demeanor.

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

(off Charlie’s hesitation)

Dad, you need to answer.

It's been decimated. Wiped out.

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

Charlie tries to suppress some emotion.

...Yes. ...All gone.

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

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

SOPHIE
Restored to his rightful place.

JESS
I was surprised to see you in court, Sophie.
SOPHIE
Ted and I are working out a custody agreement -- he gave me Christmas with the kids if I would watch him eviscerate Charlie. Your re-direct kind of threw a wrench in the deal.

JESS
You should have told me.

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

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

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


SOPHIE (CONT’D)
Something was happening between us.... Something interesting. I didn’t want to scare you off. I mean, in college, I experimented - who didn’t? - but with you...

JESS
Sophie, come on...

SOPHIE
It’s a lot less complicated now.

JESS
Not gonna happen. Really. I’m involved... in something else.

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

SOPHIE
You're more like Charlie than you realize.

JESS
That’s just icky.

Sophie winks and walks away. Jess watches her go.
AISHA (O.S.)
Pyrrhic victory.
(as Jess turns to see her)
Did they teach that at Stanford?

JESS
'A victory at too great a cost.'

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

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

AISHA
...Dinner?

JESS
As a way of saying thanks?

AISHA
Hm. Dinner.

JESS
Traditionally known as the last meal of the day.

Aisha smiles, enigmatically. Laughs. Starts walking away.

AISHA
Another time. I gotta get home. ‘Winter is coming.’

As Jess watches her walk away, her CELL PHONE RINGS. She checks the incoming screen: “Attorney General’s Office.”

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

Charlie and Katherine.

CHARLIE
You put her up to it?

KATHERINE
No. She called me. She was upset.
CHARLIE
And you said...?

KATHERINE
'Save him from himself, Jess.'

(then)
So, this is what’s been holding up the divorce papers?

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

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

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

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

CHARLIE
Yes, in fact. But not only then.

She smiles, dryly. Amused, sardonic.

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

(to the driver)
This traffic’s a mess! Will you try Madison instead?

INT. ELEVATOR/FISHER, FISHER & HERRERO - NIGHT

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

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

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

EMMA
That’s the million dollar question.

DANNY
What’s it about, that song?

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

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

DANNY
That shit will mess a person up.

EMMA
A whole family, in fact.

Beat. He nods thoughtfully, absorbing that.

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

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

Danny moves up, pours two shots as he speaks:

DANNY
You’re a trip, that’s for sure. But your folks... I’d kill for them, you know that? Without them, I’m some abogado shyster with my poster all over the subway, doing low-end personal injury suits... (then, upon further review)
Actually, doesn’t sound so bad. (MORE)
But this is better. So, here’s to Charlie being free. And the hope that, between all of us, we can save this bitch.

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

They clink glasses and shoot their tequila.

INT. CHARLIE’S CORNER OFFICE – NIGHT

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

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

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

CHARLIE
The law is an adversarial system.

JESS
I don’t mean the law.

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

JESS
Dad...

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

JESS
Wait, Dad, listen...

CHARLIE
Short story is, it’s a populist cause against a company with deep pockets. The retainer alone should keep the clinic afloat, at least until we can rebuild Firebrand.
JESS
I’m not staying.

Charlie pauses a beat, then ploughs on, oblivious.

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

JESS
It’s not my ‘old’ office. It’s just... ‘my office’ now.

(Charlie stops, faces her)
The AG called, asked me to fill in, now that Panicali’s resigning. It’ll start out as temporary, but who knows...? I’ll be the youngest US Attorney in the country.

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

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

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

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

CHARLIE
And when do you outgrow blaming me?

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

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

They hold a long, sad look. She turns to go. We STAY ON HER, as she goes, stricken, with him looking on behind her.
INT. HIGH RISE BUILDING ELEVATOR - NIGHT
Katherine rides up the sleek elevator, towards the top.

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

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

INT. US ATTORNEY’S OFFICE - JESS’ NEW OFFICE - NIGHT
Unadorned, but better than what she had before. A CORNER OFFICE, like her dad’s. Jess stands with a box of stuff.

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

KATHERINE (TO PHONE)
...It went well enough, he’s not going to prison at least... Yes, sweetie, I miss you too...

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

KATHERINE (TO PHONE) (CONT’D)
...I know, I didn’t think it’d go on this long either... but it’s still not safe for you here...

JESS pulls out THE WOODEN ELEPHANT, places it down.

KATHERINE (TO PHONE) (CONT’D)
How’s Portugal? I’ve never been...
Oh. Well, tell me when you get to Spain then... I love you, Kyle...

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

END OF PILOT