

THE TRAIL

Written By

Jeff Astrof & Matt Miller

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COLD OPEN

OVER BLACK:

The following plays out with subtitles:

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
911, what's your emergency?

We hear a man's voice, frantic, panicked. The kind you'd hear at the start of a murder mystery...

MAN (O.S.)
It's my wife... There's blood everywhere... I think she might be dead. You need to send an ambulance right away--
(SFX: call waiting beep)
I am so sorry. I need to grab that.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
Sir?

MAN (O.S.)
It's the cable company. I've been waiting for them all day. They're impossible to pin down. But my wife is genuinely injured, maybe dead -- I just really need to take this.
(he CLICKS OVER; less panicky more irritated)
This is ridiculous. I was promised someone would be here between 12 and 5-

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
Still 911.

MAN (O.S.)
Uck. This day is turning into a total disaster. Just send an ambulance.

Click. Dial tone.

FADE IN:

EXT. LARRY HENDERSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

NEWS VANS are parked outside the tasteful colonial home of LARRY HENDERSON. Local newscaster BRITTANY HOPPER (30s; attractive) reports from the scene.

BRITTANY

Larry Henderson, a local poetry professor at Carolina's own, East Peck Community College was arrested today for the brutal murder of his wife, Margaret, who was found dead in front of a plate glass window. The murder has sent shock-waves through this otherwise sleepy --

The front door opens and LARRY HENDERSON (50s; harmless) steps out escorted by several POLICE who guide him to a police car. He holds a MALTESE DOG in his cuffed hands.

BRITTANY (CONT'D)

There he is!!!

HAND-HELD CAMERA FOLLOWS as Brittany and a SLEW of REPORTERS race over to Larry and thrust their microphones in his face.

BRITTANY (CONT'D)

Brittany Hopper, WPEK news. Mr. Henderson, do you have anything to say?

LARRY

Yes. Please watch him. He's all I have left.

Larry hands the dog to Brittany as he is placed in the back of the police cruiser. Brittany cradles the dog in her arms.

BRITTANY

Aww. What's your name little fella?

The Police car takes off with the leash still stuck in the back door. The dog is YANKED from Brittany's hands. We hear a DOG SCREECH and someone yells, 'CALL 911!'

We FREEZE on Larry's horrified look out the back of the police car.

TITLE UP: "THE TRAIL"

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. JEREMIAH JEFFERSON DAVIS HOUSE/ PLANTATION - DAY

JEREMIAH JEFFERSON DAVIS (60s; Southern) and his wife JOSIE (60s; always silent, always with a drink) sit side by side on a couch in their enormous living room, talking to CAMERA. Jeremiah holds a long lit cigarette.

CHYRON: MARGARET'S PARENTS

JEREMIAH

Larry Henderson isn't capable of murder. He loved our daughter and she loved him. Unfortunately, folks in this town are not as open-minded as we are.

An AFRICAN-AMERICAN in maid's uniform, DOTTIE approaches with a jug of tea.

DOTTIE

More sweet tea, Mr. Davis?

JEREMIAH

Thank you, Dottie. And when you're done pressing my trousers have Marvin take you down to the end of the driveway to get your bus.

DOTTIE

Thank you, sir.

JEREMIAH

(back to CAMERA)

Because we believe in Larry's innocence, we have agreed to finance his defense. As my grandpappy said when you find yourself on the wrong side of the law, hire yourself a...
(gestures to his nose)

Northeasterner. They seem to be slyer than the rest of us.

INT. EAST PECK REGIONAL AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

CLOSE ON JOSH SIMON (25; good-looking; energetic; slightly Northeastern) having a heated legal debate.

CHYRON: JOSH SIMON -- DEFENSE ATTORNEY, "NORTHEASTERNER"

JOSH

We have a number of potential legal issues here: gross negligence; loss of property; possible malfeasance--

PULL BACK TO REVEAL -- he's talking to a slow-talking TEENAGE AIRLINE REP who stands behind the customer service desk.

AIRLINE REP

Am I in trouble?

JOSH

No. I just want my luggage back.
Look, I just got off a twelve hour flight from New York --

AIRLINE REP

We don't offer service to New York.

JOSH

Technically it was 12, 1-hour flights.
Last time I saw my bag was on the tarmac in either Canton, Ohio or Sacramento, it's all kind of a blur, but it has very important legal documents, along with a clean suit and prescription pills that help me fly. Which I will definitely need before I head back to New York.

AIRLINE REP

Sir... we don't fly to New York.

Josh takes a deep breath and forces a smile.

JOSH CONFSSIONAL:

JOSH

No. Never been to this part of the South before. *Slightly* slower pace than I'm used to. My boss sent me down to prep the case because... well, he's a huge attorney and he didn't want to. I'm totally up for it, though. I'm 6 and 0 as a trial lawyer. Nothing huge, biggest win was probably The People versus Wang.

INSERT CLIPPING- of Josh beside MR. WANG in front of a CHINESE restaurant, health department tape across the window.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I wouldn't eat there, but the point is, Mr. Wang is not doing jail time. Anyway, a murder trial is a whole other level for me. It's a great opportunity and I'm super excited to be here.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

I get my own team, an office,
apparently they're sending a car for
me. I've gotta be honest, kind of
feels like I've arrived.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Josh exits and glances around the empty airport. A lone guy holds a handwritten sign on a piece of cardboard that reads, "LAWYER." This is DWAYNE REED (30s; military type; loyal puppy dog). Josh waves. Dwayne nods back, continues to hold the sign, oblivious this is the person he's meeting.

JOSH

Think that's me. Josh Simon.

DWAYNE

Oh hey, Dwayne Reed.

JOSH

Funny there's a drugstore called Duane
Reade in my building in New York.

DWAYNE

Guess there's something for me to see
if I ever get to New York.

JOSH

Few other points of interest, but the
drugstore is nice.

DWAYNE

Got any bags?

JOSH

They're somewhere in the Midwest.

DWAYNE

What a drag. You'll probably need
some essentials. Like underpants.

JOSH

Good idea. Thanks, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

What size are you? You can borrow
some of mine.

JOSH

Generous offer. I think I'll be okay.
Mind if we swing by the office? I'm
supposed to meet the lead
investigator. New York said they hired
East Peck's finest.

DWAYNE

That quote was from me. About me.
I'm your lead investigator. I know
everyone down here. Used to work for
local PD until I retired.

JOSH

You look kind of young to be retired.
How long were you on the force?

DWAYNE

Four days. There was an incident.

DWAYNE CONFSSIONAL:

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

That half week on the force was the
best time of my life. I was in the
show. Then I responded to a domestic
disturbance and I suppose the rest is
YouTube history.

*YOUTUBE FOOTAGE, SHOT FROM A PHONE, OF A CHILDRENS' BIRTHDAY
PARTY. DWAYNE ARRIVES AT THE SCENE, IN UNIFORM.*

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

*Okay folks, we need to shut down this
party, there's been a noise complaint -*

*THEN- BANG!! DWAYNE'S GUN ACCIDENTALLY DISCHARGES. PEOPLE
SCREAM, HIT THE GROUND AS THE BOUNCY HOUSE DEFLATES...*

EXT. MAIN STREET - EAST PECK - DAY

Josh and Dwayne step out of his truck onto Main street in the
small quaint town.

DWAYNE

You being from New York and all, I
figured you'd want to be in the
hubbub. So, I rented us a place smack
dab in the center of Main street.

They stop in front of a storefront.

JOSH

Okay. This is kind of... charming.

A MAN exits holding a stuffed DEER HEAD.

JOSH (CONT'D)

We're next door to a taxidermist?

DWAYNE
(smiling)
Even better.

INT. LAW OFFICE/ TAXIDERMIST - DAY

Josh and Dwayne stand in the middle of an office that is the converted storage room of a taxidermist. There are still DEAD STUFFED ANIMALS scattered about.

DWAYNE
Real estate is a little tight in East Peck but I pulled some strings and got us this place provided we keep it down and don't make a mess. Whattaya think?

JOSH
Not as corporate as I pictured, but we can make it work. What is that noise? Sounds like a saw cutting through bone.

DWAYNE
Yep. You get used to it. I don't even hear it anymore. Let's meet the rest of the team.

They approach ANNE FLATCH (40s; friendly; a laundry list of psychological disorders) who stands behind her desk.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
Josh, this is your assistant and head researcher and intern, Anne Flatch. She's the best of the best.

JOSH
Great to meet you, Anne. I have to be at court in an hour for the bail hearing. Can I get all the files we have on the Henderson case? Also, could you please check with the airline about my luggage and... maybe lose some of these dead animals? You're just staring at me.

ANNE
Sorry. I like the way you talk.

JOSH
Maybe we start slower. Can I get some pencils?

She smiles at him. Josh smiles back then heads into his small office. Closes the door. Finds himself face to face with a stuffed bear.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Jesus!

Josh collects himself and takes off his jacket.

JOSH (CONT'D)

(to CAMERA)

You know what? This is going to be fine. Look, finally got my corner office. With a window.

He yanks open the blinds revealing -- a TAXIDERMIST sawing open Larry's DEAD MALTESE. Josh drops the blind.

JOSH (CONT'D)

We're gonna keep that closed.

Josh steps out of his office and approaches Anne.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Anne, I'm getting a strong formaldehyde vibe, is there a fan --

ANNE

(as if seeing him for first time)

May I help you?

JOSH

Josh. We met forty-five seconds ago.

ANNE FLATCH CONFSSIONAL:

ANNE

I suffer from a condition called facial blindness. I can't recognize anyone by their face. It's completely blank. Does have its perks. With my husband it's like sleeping with a different man every night.

(she smiles; then)

I do recognize penises though.

(uncomfortable)

Did I tell you this already?

BACK TO SCENE:

Josh takes this all in.

JOSH

Dwayne, when you said 'team' before,
is this the whole lineup...?

DWAYNE

Yep. Me, you and Anne.

JOSH

Great. I'm gonna head to court to
meet Mr. Henderson.

DWAYNE

Want me to come for protection? Guy's
a killer.

JOSH

No, Dwayne. He's not.
(to Camera)
Our position is that he is not.

INT. COURTHOUSE - CLIENT MEETING ROOM - DAY

LARRY HENDERSON sits across the table from Josh, while Josh
pulls legal folders from his briefcase.

JOSH

Mr. Henderson, we're gonna get you out
of here as soon as we can. How you
holding up? They treating you okay?

LARRY

It's certainly been an experience. My
cell mate is a serial rapist. That
said, he keeps an immaculate bunk,
stays to himself, and is gluten-free
so he gives me all of his pastries.

Both Josh and Larry realize they're being filmed.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Let me clarify. Terrible human being.
Terrific roommate.

JOSH

So... What's happening now is the
arraignment. This is not the trial--

LARRY

You realize, of course, I'm innocent.

JOSH

This is not about guilt or innocence.
This is just about setting bail. Now,
what's going to happen is--

LARRY

This whole thing is absurd. I loved my wife. I had just made us a nicoise salad with a mango chutney--

JOSH

Sounds delicious. Again, let's concentrate on the arraignment, so we can get you back home--

LARRY

Of course. So after lunch I was waiting for the cable guy to show, so I went into the yard to roller-cize --

JOSH

You mean roller-skate?

LARRY

No. Roller-skating is for children. Roller-cizing is a very graceful form of self-expression.

Larry tries to stand, but he's shackled to the table.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Much easier when you're not shackled to a table. And when I came back inside I found Margaret dead.

JOSH

I am so sorry for your loss. And we'll get into all that before you testify on the stand --

LARRY

And the icing on the cake? Cable guy never showed.

JOSH

Or maybe you won't take the stand.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

CHYRON: *"Bail Hearing; People vs Larry Henderson."*

The courtroom is packed. Larry and Josh sit behind the defendant's table. Behind them JEREMIAH studies Josh.

JEREMIAH

I was expecting someone older.

JOSH

I'm just prepping the case. My boss, Mr. Mankowitz will be down here for the actual trial. Don't worry, I graduated first in my class from Columbia. And I'm undefeated, 6 and 0.

JEREMIAH

But you are, in fact, *Northeastern*?

JOSH

Well, I'm from New York.

JEREMIAH

Mm hm. And your parents, they're also... *Northeasterns*.

JOSH

(getting it)

Ah. Yes. My father was born *Northeastern* and my mother was from Arizona but converted to... *Northeastern-ism*.

JEREMIAH

(satisfied, to Larry)

You're in good hands.

A stack of files is dropped down on the prosecution table by the Assistant D.A., CAROL ANNE KEANE (30's; Southern; tough as nails; hair pulled back into a tight bun.)

JOSH

Hi. Josh Simon, defense counsel.

CAROL ANNE

(quickly without looking up)

Carol Anne Keane.

JOSH

Sorry. CarolAnne Keane? Or Carol Anne Keane?

CAROL ANNE

(faster)

CarolAnneKeane.

JOSH

Still not getting it. Is it two names or three?

(Carol Anne stares daggers)

I'll call you, "Counselor."

CAROL ANNE KEANE CONFSSIONAL:

CAROL ANNE

This case is a big opportunity for me. I'm running for District Attorney of East Peck. And some in this town might not be ready for a female DA, so I need to be a touch more assertive. That way people will remember my name.

BACK TO SCENE:

Hearing is in session. Carol Anne Keane rises.

CAROL ANNE (CONT'D)

Your Honor, the state requests bail be set at ninety-three million dollars.

JOSH

What! That's absurd, Caroline King.

CAROL ANNE

Carol Anne Keane! And we are talking about a double homicide, Your Honor.

JOSH

I have no idea what she's talking about. Mr. Henderson is only being falsely accused of one crime--

CAROL ANNE

He killed his wife and that poor little doggy.

Josh looks at Larry who shakes his head.

LARRY

Great dog. I'm just glad Margaret wasn't alive to see that...

Josh flashes Larry a look; *please stop talking*.

JOSH

Your honor, clearly my client is under duress. He's not a flight risk. We request bail be set at a reasonable number. Say \$10,000? As a gesture to a man who has been a perfect citizen.

Josh smiles confidently at the judge.

INT. LAW FIRM / TAXIDERMIST - DAY

Josh addresses the team, pacing back and forth.

JOSH

So bail was set at \$7 million, which considering we started at \$93 million I'm putting it in the win column.

Anne stands in front of the white board.

ANNE

Should I make a win column?

JOSH

No. But we are going to crack this case. Write down 'The Trial.'

DWAYNE

Here we go!

Anne writes "The TRAIL" on the board.

JOSH

Great. So first--
(notices board)
I think you spelled 'trial' wrong.

ANNE'S CONFESSIONAL:

ANNE

I also suffer from dyslexia.

BACK TO SCENE:

ANNE (CONT'D)

I'm so stupid! I'll change it--

JOSH

No, no. It's fine. Dyslexia is a very common disorder, certainly more so than your face thing. Let's leave it.

Anne draws an arrow between the 'I' and the 'A.'

JOSH (CONT'D)

The victim was found by a shattered plate glass window. We need to come up with a plausible story for what could have happened.

ANNE

Why don't we just ask Larry?

JOSH

Defense attorneys don't really do that. We need to stay objective and build a case based on the evidence.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

So, let's go. Fire away. No such thing as a stupid suggestion.

ANNE

Suicide!

JOSH

Good pitch. But let's focus on plausible ideas--

She writes 'SUICIDE' on the board.

DWAYNE

That was my first thought too. But I tested the theory.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

IPHONE FOOTAGE OF DWAYNE TALKING DIRECTLY TO CAMERA.

DWAYNE

Dwayne Reed testing suicide theory of Margaret Henderson. Take 1.

DWAYNE DISAPPEARS FROM FRAME. A BEAT LATER HE RUNS FULL SPEED INTO A PLATE GLASS WINDOW. THE WINDOW SPIDERS, DWAYNE BOUNCES OFF, ROLLING ON THE FLOOR IN INCREDIBLE PAIN.

BACK TO SCENE:

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Woman of Margaret's size couldn't get the velocity to off herself. Took me four tries to even break glass.

JOSH

Appreciate the commitment, Dwayne.

ANNE

Dang.

She crosses a line through 'Suicide.'

JOSH

Okay, what else could have happened --
(hands go up)
Except Larry throwing his wife through the window.
(hands go down)
Anything. First idea that pops into your head.

DWAYNE

Bird!

JOSH
I'm not following...

DWAYNE
Birds fly into windows all the time.

ANNE
Good answer. Should I write it down?

JOSH
Sure. Just to get some momentum going. Other ideas? Gotta be a million things that could've happened.

They think... and think... and think.

CHYRON: TWENTY MINUTES LATER

They stare at the words '~~Suicide~~' and 'Bird' on the board.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Maybe we should get some lunch.
That'll get the juices flowing.
What's everyone feel like?

CHYRON: TWO MINUTES LATER

Anne is scribbling furiously. On the board a long line of options; Pizza; Thai; Chinese; BBQ; etc...

JOSH (CONT'D)
Okay! How about I choose? Thai.

TARIQ (O.S.)
Um... I had Thai for dinner last night. Can we get something else?

CAMERA PANS TO -- the director, TARIQ (20s; ambitious, hipster) standing behind one of the cameras, headphones on.

TARIQ CONFSSIONAL:

TARIQ (CONT'D)
I was making a student film about the roller-cizing community.

INSERT: *Student film of LARRY and OTHERS, rollercizing.*

TARIQ (CONT'D)
Truthfully, it kind of sucked. Then I caught an amazing break when Larry Henderson brutally murdered his wife.
(beat)
Allegedly.

BACK TO SCENE:

Empty pizza boxes on the table as the team finishes eating. Nothing new is written on the board.

LARRY
Knock, knock.

Larry peers in from the doorway.

JOSH
There he is! Everyone, this is Larry.
Larry meet the dream team.

LARRY
Just wanted to pop by and see how it
was going. I hear they may go for the
death penalty. Should I be concerned?

JOSH
Not at all. That's legal posturing.
Trying to get in your head. We're
working on your defense as we speak.

LARRY
Fantastic. Let's see what we got.

Larry puts on his glasses and reads the board. Sees 'Bird'
and ~~'Suicide'~~ and lunch options.

LARRY (CONT'D)
I'm going to die, aren't I?

Josh takes him by the shoulder and leads him back out.

JOSH
Nooooo! It's the first day. We're
actually off to a great start. Trust
me, you are not going to die.

Larry gives Josh a hug and leaves. Josh re-enters.

ANNE
(no idea who he is)
Can I help you?

JOSH
(to Camera)
He may die...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. LAW FIRM / TAXIDERMIST - NIGHT

Josh is at his desk talking to CAMERA. In the background we see Dwayne and Anne playing hangman on the white board.

JOSH

It's been a long first day, couple of unforeseen speed bumps but good news, the airline narrowed down the lost luggage search to either Edmonton or El Paso. Definitely an 'E' city.

(he sneezes)

Also learned that I have a bear allergy. Something that hadn't come up in New York. But the big take-away is that the team is bonding.

ANGLE ON -- Anne writing on the board. A nearly completed hangman is next to the partial words, "L_RRY H_ND_ROSN."

DWAYNE

Hm... B?

As Anne completes the Hangman, Josh collects his stuff.

JOSH

Guys, I'm gonna take a walk.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Josh studies the menu in this small town diner. The WAITRESS (40s) lingers.

JOSH

I'm looking for something light.

WAITRESS

Biscuits and gravy?

JOSH

Even lighter. Any vegetables?

WAITRESS

Potatoes and gravy?

JOSH

I'll have a cup of coffee. Hold the gravy.

Josh rubs his eyes. Stares at some legal documents, a stress crease runs down the center of his forehead.

AUTUMN (O.S.)

I can fix that for you.

Josh turns to see AUTUMN (20's; quirky; cute, free-spirited) in the booth behind him.

JOSH

Fix what?

AUTUMN

Your face.

JOSH

Wow. That's surprisingly mean.

AUTUMN

You have a stress crease down the center of your forehead. Here.

She rubs her thumb down the center of Josh's forehead.

JOSH

Okay, I'm not great with other people's fingers on my-- Wow. That feels so good.

AUTUMN

I'm studying to be an acupressurist. You should come by my office.

JOSH

Where do you work?

AUTUMN

Bangor, Maine.

JOSH

I think I may have flown through there on my way down from New York.

She smiles. A small connection.

AUTUMN

I'm Autumn.

JOSH

Josh. Can I buy you a cup of coffee?

AUTUMN

No, thanks. I just read that coffee has mycotoxins that can kill you.

The Waitress arrives, dropping off Josh's coffee.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

But, if you want, I'll sit down and watch you slowly die.

JOSH

I'd like that.

AUTUMN

(sitting)

Can I ask you a question?

She leans in, intimately. Josh leans in, expectantly.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

What's with the cameras?

Josh turns, remembers they're being filmed.

JOSH

Oh, right.

(to Camera)

Guys? Tariq? Do you mind?

TARIQ (O.S.)

Sure, bro. Fellas, power down. We're on a five. Do what you gotta do...

CAMERAS PULL BACK, BUT CONTINUE TO RECORD THEM.

TARIQ (CONT'D) (O.S.)

(whispers)

Keep filming.

AUTUMN

So what are you doing in East Peck?

JOSH

I'm a lawyer and they're filming a documentary about my client. You get used to the cameras.

AUTUMN

You're very humble for a celebrity.

JOSH

It's easy because I'm wearing my lead investigator's underwear.

AUTUMN

(laughs)

I'll assume there's a good reason for that. So what's the case about?

JOSH

I can't really get into it but my client is accused of murdering his wife.

AUTUMN

Huh... Do you think he did it?

JOSH

With this stuff you never ask because you don't want to get emotionally attached. Between you and me, he's kind of a kook but this is my first murder trial so either way, it's a huge opportunity for me. How about you? What brings you down here?

AUTUMN

Well, I came to help my dad who is accused of killing his wife, but his lawyer's never tried a murder case and between you and me, he thinks my dad's a kook.

JOSH

(oh, shit...)
Hmm. What an incredible coincidence.

AUTUMN

Enjoy your coffee.

Autumn leaves. Josh sits alone feeling like a total a-hole.

TARIQ (O.S.)

(whispers)
Push in. Push in...

JOSH

(bleeped)
Shit.

TARIQ (O.S.)

Beautiful...

EXT. CAROL ANNE KEANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A lone house in the woods. A light is on in the kitchen.

INT. CAROL ANNE KEANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Carol Anne Keane talks to CAMERA as she chops vegetables and tosses them into a pot. On the table is one place setting, one candle and a single glass of wine.

CAROL ANNE

I think this young lawyer is in way over his head, is what I think. Losing is not an option for me. To be elected DA in these parts you need to prosecute a death penalty case. And unfortunately, you cannot ask for the death penalty every time someone shop lifts antihistamine from the drugstore. Believe me, I've tried. Truth is, I had my chance when I was just starting out, but let's just say I was not as refined as I am today.

COURT TV FOOTAGE: IN TRIAL -- A YOUNG CAROL ANNE KEANE WITH BIG HAIR AND TOO MUCH MAKE-UP TOTALLY LOSES HER COOL.

CAROL ANNE (CONT'D)

This piece of human filth--

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Objection, your honor!

CAROL ANNE

(turns to Attorney)

Objection? You motherf--

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! As Carol Anne snaps and needs to be restrained by bailiffs...

BACK TO SCENE:

CAROL ANNE (CONT'D)

But I've learned from my mistakes and I am not gonna let this one get away.

THWACK! She slams the cleaver down, chopping a chicken in half and tosses it into the pot.

INT. LARRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Autumn, Josie and Jeremiah are gathered around the kitchen island drinking wine and laughing as Larry cooks.

LARRY

Ooh, maybe a guillotine? That's not a bad way to go. Quick and French.

JEREMIAH

How 'bout a good old fashioned hanging?

AUTUMN

Okay, stop it. No one is dying.

LARRY

Honey, it's just gallows humor. This whole thing is absurd. We need to find some levity. I can't remember the last time we all laughed this hard.

Josie stoically drinks her gimlet. The doorbell BUZZES.

LARRY (CONT'D)

(re: doorbell)

Ooh, electrocution? That's not bad.

Larry mimics being zapped. Jeremiah laughs. Autumn rolls her eyes and goes to answer the front door. We FOLLOW HER--

Autumn opens the door to find Josh.

JOSH

(fumbles)

Oh. Hey. Glad you're here. I have a twin who is in town and a really bad guy, not on his meds and saying awful things I'm sure he really regrets. In summation: I'm an ass.

Larry peers around the corner. Apron on, knife in hand.

LARRY

There he is! The man who holds my fate in his hands. Josh, have you met my daughter, Autumn?

JOSH

Actually we --

AUTUMN

Nice to meet you, Josh.

Josh, confused, shakes her hand.

LARRY

Come on in. I made a delightful paella and we're talking about how I'm going to die. Hey, you'll know this. Can you make your own final meal? I'm on a low sodium diet.

JOSH

I'll... file a motion.

LARRY

That's my guy!

Larry heads back into the kitchen.

JOSH

(quietly to Autumn)

Look, I'm sorry. We had a rough first day and I'm still getting used to my team. But we'll get there. Trust me, your dad is going to get the best defense possible, but until my boss gets here, you're stuck with me.

(he smiles)

Anyway, thanks for covering for me.

AUTUMN

I didn't do it for you, I did it for him. He's been through enough with Margaret dying.

JOSH

Why do you call your mom, Margaret?

AUTUMN

She wasn't my mom. He married her like five years ago. Larry adopted me from an orphanage when I was little girl. He practically raised me himself. He supported everything I've ever done: he paid for me to go to Colombia--

JOSH

You went to Columbia? So did I. When did you graduate?

AUTUMN

I worked for a hemp co-op in Bogota. You don't really graduate, you kind of get arrested.

JOSH

Different Columbia.

AUTUMN

When I decided to go into acupuncture, he was my Guinea pig. Three trips to the emergency room and he still hasn't regained feeling in his left hand, but not once did he complain.

ANGLE ON -- Larry pulling a sizzling hot pan off the oven with his left hand, laughing while he talks with Jeremiah.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

You know why? Because he loves me, just like he loved Margaret, and there is nothing more important to him than family...

Josh watches as Larry offers Josie a taste of paella from a wooden spoon. Autumn crosses to Larry and kisses her father.

JOSH (V.O.)
That's our defense...

JOSH'S CONFSSIONAL:

JOSH (CONT'D)
This case is about family. Larry Henderson is a devoted husband and father. He loved his wife. There's no motive. A lawyer's job is to paint a picture. To tell a story. I'm actually feeling very good about this right now.

Dwayne POPS his head into FRAME.

DWAYNE
Hey!

JOSH
Dwayne, we're kind of in the middle of something.

DWAYNE
It's urgent. I just found out from my brother who works for the police department there's been a big break in the case.

JOSH
Why didn't you call me?

DWAYNE
I wanted to keep it private.

Josh eyes the CAMERA. He pulls Dwayne aside. CAMERA PANS with them, recording their conversation from a distance.

JOSH
What's the big break?

DWAYNE
I don't know. My cousin wouldn't tell me.

JOSH
Thought you said he was your brother?

DWAYNE
He is. He's also my cousin. My dad messed around with my mom's sister.

JOSH

Did your brother-cousin give you any idea what it was?

DWAYNE

No. He's kind of a dick. He's a cop, I used to be a cop. Family reunions are the worst. This is why they tell you not to sleep with relatives.

Josh looks at him, baffled. Then --

AUTUMN (O.S.)

Dad! You're on TV!

Josh and Dwayne head into the living room where everyone is gathered around the TV.

ON TV: News reporter Brittany Hopper talks to camera.

BRITTANY

There's been a twist in the Larry Henderson murder investigation. Apparently Mr. Henderson wasn't the faithful husband he appeared to be.

All eyes look to Larry.

LARRY

That's nonsense. Sensational journalism. Baseless slander. There's your lawsuit, Josh.

BRITTANY

WPEK has learned that Larry's cell phone contained over 200 texts to this man... Alfonzo Prefontaine.

ON TV: a photo of ALFONZO PREFONTAINE (30s; African American; ripped).

LARRY

Well, of course, he's my trainer. You know how important fitness is to me.

BRITTANY

We caught up with Mr. Prefontaine at his gym.

NEWS FOOTAGE: Alfonzo leaving his gym, surrounded by the PRESS. Brittany jams a microphone in his face.

BRITTANY (CONT'D)

Mr. Prefontaine, is it true you had sexual relations with Larry Henderson?

ALFONZO

Absolutely not. We never had sex.

LARRY

See?

ALFONZO

We made love. Intense love.

LARRY

There are a lot of ways to love. Love can be spiritual, emotional, metaphysical. Very easy to explain.

BRITTANY

We also obtained these photographs from the gym's security cameras.

ON TV: BLACK AND WHITE STILLs of Alfonzo holding up Larry, his legs wrapped around the shirtless Alfonzo as they kiss.

LARRY

That's a bit harder to explain.

This bombshell changes everything. Autumn looks befuddled, she never knew this about her dad; Josie slowly shakes her head in disapproval; Jeremiah looks pissed and takes his arm off of Larry's shoulder. Dwayne then turns to Josh:

DWAYNE

(aside to Josh)

You think that's the big break?

JOSH

Yes, Dwayne. I do.

As Josh rubs the stress crease on his forehead, we...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. LARRY HENDERSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

LARRY'S CONFESSIONAL:

LARRY

Am I gay? No. I loved Margaret. She was my best friend. It's just that sexuality is fluid... And sometimes my fluids go towards men.

Larry shrugs. What are you gonna do?

EXT. MAIN STREET - EAST PECK - DAY

Josh and Dwayne walk down the street.

JOSH

Our "family man" angle took a hit. On the plus side, the airline found my bag and they're shipping it here. So, we're going to build on the luggage news and get some positive momentum going. What do ya think?

DWAYNE

Sounds great. But what do we do about the gay murderer?

JOSH

Dwayne, not a murderer. Remember...
(gestures to Dwayne and him)
Defense!

INT. LAW FIRM / TAXIDERMIST - DAY

Anne sits behind her desk as Josh and Dwayne race in.

ANNE

Can I help you--

JOSH

Josh and Dwayne. And we are building on positive momentum here!

ANNE

Oh, good. Something horrible has happened.

JOSH

Excellent timing, Anne. What?

ANNE

A man stopped by, he was very angry.

JOSH

Did you get his name?

ANNE

No. He was yelling and I got nervous and I'm so stupid!

JOSH

Anne, you're not that... nervous. Do you remember what he looked like?

ANNE

Of course. I can draw him for you.

Anne sketches on a pad. Dwayne tilts his head to watch.

JOSH

Okay, great. Let's calm down. Everyone calm down. Nice and calm.

ANNE

Here ya go!

Anne turns the pad around to reveal -- a sketch of a FACELESS MAN, holding a long lit cigarette.

DWAYNE

Well, we know he has no face.

INT. JEREMIAH JEFFERSON DAVIS HOUSE/ PLANTATION -DAY

Josh paces while Jeremiah holds a long lit cigarette and Josie sips with her usual gimlet.

JEREMIAH

Look, son. I was in the army. So I know a thing or two about male camaraderie.

CAMERA PANS across a row of black and white photos of a YOUNG JEREMIAH and other ARMY BUDDIES, in their underwear, arms around each other.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

What Larry and this other fella did was more than just horseplay. I've never seen my wife this upset.

Josie stoically sips her drink.

JOSH

I understand and I empathize, but you can't pull your money out of the case--

JEREMIAH

Oh, I'm not pulling my money out of the case.

JOSH

Good. So it was a misunderstanding.

JEREMIAH

I'm donating it to the prosecution. When you've been in the tobacco business for as long as I have, you know a thing or two about killing people. Larry Henderson is gonna pay for what he did.

INT. DINER - DAY

Josh joins Autumn at a booth where she sits sipping coffee.

JOSH

Hey. Thanks for meeting me--
(noticing)
I thought you didn't drink coffee?

AUTUMN

I just read coffee contains diterpenes which can make you live longer.

The WAITRESS approaches.

WAITRESS

Coffee no gravy, right?

Josh gives her a thumbs up as the waitress leaves.

JOSH

So, I just spoke to your... step-grandfather, I guess. Turns out, not a nice man.

AUTUMN

Hold on, your face is doing that thing again...

JOSH

It's okay, you don't have to--
(she rubs his forehead)
Oh my god, that's so good.
(then)
I have bad news.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

Jeremiah has stopped financing your father's defense, so... I have to go back to New York.

AUTUMN

When are you coming back?

JOSH

I'm not. My firm is no longer being paid, so I'm off the case.

AUTUMN

So, we'll find a new way to pay you. My dad has some money, and... you're clearly stressed out so I'll work it off with massages. I'm doing this new acupuncture thing where I insert a needle in the taint, I'm getting incredible results.

JOSH

I don't think you understand how hard it was for me to let you touch my face. My taint is kind of a no-fly zone. Besides, there's no way you can afford my boss.

AUTUMN

We don't need your boss. We have you.

JOSH

I appreciate your confidence, but Autumn, I can't do it myself. I've never tried a murder. My biggest case before this was defending a guy who was serving mu-shu rat. Trust me, your dad can do a lot better than me.

AUTUMN

With who? The court appointed lawyer from a town that has already basically hung him? He'll never get a fair trial. He needs someone who believes in him. Like you! You do believe he's innocent, right?

JOSH

(avoiding the question)
That's not really the point. It only matters what you can prove.

AUTUMN

It matters to me. Do you believe he's innocent?

Josh stares at her. She's not going to let this go.

JOSH
I... don't know.

Autumn stands. Grabs her bag.

AUTUMN
You're right. He can do better than
you.

She leaves. Josh watches as Tariq takes Autumn's seat.

TARIQ
Dude, that's rough. You mind if I
call her about that taint business?

INT. LAW FIRM / TAXIDERMIST - NIGHT

The mood is somber as Anne and Dwayne help Josh pack up the office.

ANNE
(with difficulty)
I just want to say... this is the best
job I ever had and... Shoot, I
promised myself I wouldn't cry.

JOSH
You're not crying.

ANNE
I am. I was born without tear ducts.

JOSH
Thanks, Anne. I'm sure I'll never
forget you.
(off her look, re: himself)
Josh.

ANNE
(sad)
I know.

Anne crosses off. As they pack up, Josh notices a file folder with CRIME SCENE PHOTOS.

JOSH
What are these?

DWAYNE
Crime scene photos. Got here today.
(as Josh looks through them)
(MORE)

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Hey, there's something I've always wanted to ask you.

JOSH

You've known me for two days. Go on.

DWAYNE

As a Hebrew, how come you can work after the sun goes down?

JOSH

Well, today is Wednesday and that's only on weekends. Plus, I wasn't really brought up that way, so...

DWAYNE

Gotcha. But you can't work when the sun comes up, right?

JOSH

You're thinking of vampires.
(then off photo)
Look at this. What are these stripes on the floor around Margaret's body?

DWAYNE

(looking at photo)
Oh, those are Larry's roller-skating tracks through her blood.

From the other room ANNE giggles. Josh and Dwayne peer into the other room, where Anne looks back, sheepishly.

ANNE'S CONFESSIONAL:

ANNE

I also suffer from involuntary emotional expression disorder. Sometimes I react inappropriately when something awful happens. I found out when I was a little girl and my grandmother fell off the balcony and landed on our car.

She giggles.

BACK TO SCENE:

JOSH

So when the police arrived, Larry had on his skates, but in this picture...
(shows one photo)
There's a bloody print on the wall across the room.

Off-camera, Anne giggles.

ANNE (O.S.)
Sorry. I'll close the door.

JOSH
But the skate marks end here. So, either Larry killed her, took off his skates, walked across the room, then put them back on and skated through her blood. Or... someone else was in that room. Which means... I don't think he did it... He didn't do it!

DWAYNE
Way to go, Hebrew!

INT. CAROL ANNE KEANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh paces while Carol Anne, in a bathrobe, examines photos.

CAROL ANNE
What is this supposed to mean to me?

JOSH
Means you don't have a case.

CAROL ANNE
All I know is Larry Henderson is a known homosexual.

JOSH
Um... yeah. As far as I know, being gay isn't a crime.

Carol Anne drops an old dusty law box down onto the table.

CAROL ANNE
Perhaps you should brush up on the law in this county.

She thumbs through pages then stops, presenting it to Josh.

CAROL ANNE (CONT'D)
The Buggery Act of 1789 has never been repealed.

CLOSE ON a law book. Under '*Buggery Act*' is an ink drawing of a man in a powdered wig, trousers around his ankles, peeking back over his shoulder with a guilty, naughty look.

JOSH

Huh. Come on, Carol... Annekeane.
You're not going to convict him on a
225 year old law.

CAROL ANNE

It's an issue of character. And I'll
bet I can find twelve men and women
that feel the same way.

JOSH

If you're saying he's not going to get
a fair trial, we'll motion for a
change of venue.

CAROL ANNE

"We?" You're off the case. Why do you
even care?

JOSH

Because we're talking about a man's
life! Sure, he's... kooky: the roller-
cizing and this odd sort of detachment
from the murder itself, but I think
he's innocent.

CAROL ANNE

Doesn't matter what you *think*, it
matters what you can prove. An
experienced lawyer knows that. Go back
to New York, counselor. Not your
problem anymore.

Josh takes this in. He doesn't move.

CAROL ANNE (CONT'D)

Or, you're welcome to spend the night.
(whispers)
You should know, the Buggery Act is
seldom enforced.

JOSH

No.
(considers, then)
No.

EXT. MAIN STREET - EAST PECK - DAY

Josh heads down the steps of the law office. He turns and
waves to Anne, who waves back from an upstairs window. She
squints, clearly not recognizing Josh.

JOSH (V.O.)

Any good attorney will tell you the first rule of law is to be prepared for any and all surprises.

Josh walks past TWO MEN dragging a dead moose up the stairs. He gets into Dwayne's pick up truck and they drive off.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Dwayne pulls up to the airport. Josh nods goodbye to Dwayne and heads into the terminal.

JOSH (V.O.)

The second rule is to never get emotionally involved in a case.

A few beats later, Josh walks out of the airport wheeling his beat up luggage.

JOSH (V.O.)

And the third rule... well, what's the point of the third rule if I didn't follow the first two?

He tosses his suitcase into the back of Dwayne's truck and climbs in. Dwayne pats Josh on the shoulder. Josh smiles. They drive off and the suitcase falls off the back and is immediately run over by another car.

INT. LAW FIRM / TAXIDERMIST - DAY

Josh and Larry look through the window at the taxidermy office, as the Taxidermist holds up Larry's stuffed Maltese. Josh puts a supportive arm around Larry.

JOSH (V.O.)

I may not have the most experience. But it turns out, I'm Larry's best hope for a fair trial. So, I told my boss I wanted to stay. He said, if I did, I'd be on my own. Then I realized, I'm not on my own...

Dwayne and Anne enter, struggling to carry the six foot bear back into the office, knocking files over as they go.

JOSH (V.O.)

I'm working with East Peck's finest...

Josh bends over to pick up a file. Autumn helps him, then smooths out a crease on his forehead. They lock eyes as Josh smiles.

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

And I actually see a lot of potential here...

DWAYNE'S CONFESSIONAL:

DWAYNE

The six hours I was off this case was the hardest time of my life. I love Josh. I'd take a bullet for that guy.

(then)

I really hope I get to take a bullet for that guy.

ANNE'S CONFESSIONAL:

Anne writes NAMETAGS as she talks to camera:

ANNE

It's nice to work at a job where you feel like you make a difference.

BACK TO SCENE:

Anne puts nametags on everyone. '*Dwayne: Investigator*', '*Josh: Lawyer*', '*Larry: Murderer*', and the tag on the bear simply reads, '*Bear.*'

Josh quickly rips the tag that says '*Murderer*' off Larry's chest and addresses the team:

JOSH

Okay, we're back in business. Larry, if we're going to win this case we can't have any more surprises. Think. Is there anything else that might incriminate you?

LARRY

Nope. Can't think of anything.

Dwayne hangs up and enters, slightly panicked.

DWAYNE

Hey! I just spoke to my brother/cousin who said there's a new break in the case. Turn on the news.

Anne turns on the office TV. They all gather around.

ON TV: Brittany Hopper stands in front of the East Peck Police Department.

BRITTANY

In a WPEK exclusive, we have just learned that Larry Henderson's first wife was killed after being thrown through a plate-glass window...

BACK IN ROOM -- All eyes turn to Larry.

LARRY

Okay, I can think of one thing...

As the CAMERA PUSHES IN on Josh's creased forehead...

TARIQ (O.S.)

This just got really good...

END OF PILOT