

A WOMAN'S TURN

By,

JJ Flowers

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EXT. THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN CAMPUS. 1950. DAY.

JESSY BROWNER, young, beautiful and voluptuous, who has a slight southern lilt to her voice, kisses a young man, DAN in a secluded area off from the main path in the park like setting of the campus. Books, paper and folders surround them.

DAN  
(Panting:)  
Marry--

JESSY  
What?

DAN  
Marry me. I love you, I love you--

JESSY  
Marry you?

DAN  
We can get married the day after commencement! We can be on our honeymoon the next day... No more condoms. God, I can't get enough of you--

JESSY  
No more--

Jessy pulls away and sits up.

JESSY  
(continuing)  
Danny, I never said anything about getting married, let alone having babies.

(Laughs lightly:)  
Where do you get these notions?

DAN  
But... But my parents are coming up for commencement next month, and--

JESSY  
Oh lord, what time is it? I have

that old codger, Cromwell's class at  
one thirty--

Jessy lifts up his wrist, checks the time and leaps to her  
feet, hurriedly smoothing her skirt and grabbing her books.

JESSY

(continuing)

Shoot! I have to run! Don't you be  
talking anymore about marriage and  
babies, Danny.

(Whispers:)

I've got bigger plans than that...

EXT. A UNIVERSITY BUILDING. SAME TIME.

Jessy meets up with MIRA SHEPPARD and they walk together to  
class, passing only male students, occasionally greeting some.

JESSY

You look tired, Mira. Burnin' the  
midnight oil?

MIRA

Till two this morning. My husband's  
finally beginning to wonder if it was  
wise after all, putting me through  
this hell.

JESSY

He'll see the wisdom just as soon as  
we graduate and he has the only law  
partner in the country who not only  
works for free, but does the laundry  
and cooks to boot.

MIRA

Not to mention all the other benefits  
he gets...

INT. HALLWAY IN BUILDING.

Laughing, Mira and Jessy make their way down the hallway.

INT. LECTURE HALL.

Jessy and Mira file inside the lecture hall. They assume seats in the middle. Over a hundred white, male students fill the hall, with the single exception of HENRY NELSON, a young, black man who sits in the back.

MIRA

Ready for the next round of criminal humiliation?

JESSY

I swear if Cromwell picks on you or me or that poor colored fellow one more time--

PROFESSOR CROMWELL, a distinguished older gentleman, enters the lecture hall and the room immediately quiets.

JESSY

(continuing)

I'll scream.

Mira nods with a grimace.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

Good day class. Well-

He opens a thick book and adjusts his reading glasses.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

(continuing)

Before we begin on the infinitely more arresting crime of forcible rape, let us conclude this weeks adventure with assault. Hilton vs. Grady. Mr. Peterson, explain the particular strategy of the prosecution...

EXT. LECTURE HALL. LATER.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

Miss Browner, why don't you start by

presenting us with the legal  
definition of rape?

Startled, Jessy stands up nervously, blushing as she glances around. Many students smirk, while the professor barely attempts to hide an expression of amused condescension.

JESSY

Rape. Rape is the forcible  
penetration of a woman by a man.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

And how far must the penis penetrate  
the vagina to satisfy this definition?

The question surprises Jessy and she blushes more. She doesn't know the answer.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

(continuing)

Yes, Miss Browner?

Jessy's embarrassment turns to indignation.

HENRY

There is no legal numerical  
definition or measurement of  
penetration, sir.

Professor Cromwell drops his reading glasses and glares angrily.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

I don't believe I called on you for  
an answer, Mr. Nelson?

HENRY

Excuse me, Professor Cromwell. I  
thought your look was a request to  
supply the answer.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

Rest assured, you will hear your name  
in that situation, Mr. Nelson.

Jessy casts him a grateful look and sits down.

HENRY

Yes sir.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

Very well then. In Edgar vs the State of New York, what became the critical issue in Mr. Edgar's defense, Mrs. Sheppard?

Mira stands.

MIRA

Miss Hane's provocative behavior, as represented in her attire. The defense successfully claimed her attire provoked their client, that in fact incited--

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

You mean invited. Watch your words here, Mrs. Sheppard.

And was it just the woman's particular attire that lured Mr. Edgar into making what the prosecution claimed was a forcible violation of Miss Hane's imagined chastity?

MIRA

No sir. The defense also claimed that Miss Hane's smoking and drinking in a bar substantiated Mr. Edgar's reasoned opinion that Miss Haynes would welcome his advances--

JESSY

Oh right.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

Miss Browner, do you have a comment you'd like to share with us?

Jessy fumes silently a moment before standing.

JESSY

Yes sir. It seems to me... well, it seems to me that the prosecution failed to focus on the relevant facts of the case. Specifically, that Miss Hane was waiting for her boyfriend in that bar, that witnesses testified she turned down Mr. Edgar's advances flatly and in no uncertain terms before she left the establishment. Furthermore, Mr. Edgar came through an open window of her private home and brutally assaulted Miss Hane--

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

As a third year law student, Miss Browner, you should be fully cognizant that behavior and circumstances leading to a crime are indeed relevant, especially when formulating a defense.

JESSY

But this case makes it seem like a man has a license, or at the very least justification, to violently assault a woman because she's wearin' certain clothes or likes to smoke. It doesn't seem right.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

Miss Browner, you're sounding the impotent wail of a plaintive child.

The students laugh nervously.

PROFESSOR CROMWELL

(continuing)

And I say impotent, Miss Browner because the legal system will neither heed nor hear such feminine outbursts. Women should be cautioned before acting with a want of propriety or stepping outside of the standards of decency established by the community. Otherwise a good

defense attorney will use her  
provocative behavior for the  
successful defense of forcible rape...

EXT. LECTURE HALL. SAME TIME.

The students file out of class. Jessy stays behind,  
lingering before making her way out the door. She stops in  
front of Henry Nelson.

JESSY

Thanks for rescuing me.

HENRY

It was nothing.

JESSY

Oh! Congratulations on coming in  
first in constitutional law. That's  
quite an accomplishment.

HENRY

Thanks. I'm hoping to work in that  
field someday--

JESSY

Well, you're off to a good start,  
beating out all the white boys!

Jessy's easy declaration draws Henry back before he chuckles,  
too.

JESSY

(continuing)

So, will you be going to the  
commencement?

HENRY

I don't think so. The dean made it  
pretty clear that I wouldn't be  
welcome.

JESSY

I'm sorry to hear that.

HENRY

He said that at least half the board were segregationists. He felt it would be best if I missed the ceremony.

JESSY

If it makes you feel any better, Mira and I heard the same thing. He had the nerve to suggest my degree is wasted since he's just certain I'll be married soon and making little munchkins any day now. He made me so angry, well, if Mira hadn't saved me from myself, I might be facing assault charges myself.

Henry smiles at her frankness as they head outside.

HENRY

I sympathize with the sentiment, Miss Browner.

JESSY

It just isn't fair, is it? I mean we worked as hard as anyone and why, you even have third place standing! My father always said that this country would never be civilized until folks transcend their hateful prejudice and gave equality to the Negro race for good. It seems like every time you folks take a step up, someone's waitin' to knock you down two.

HENRY

I wish more people felt like he did.

EXT. UNIVERSITY BUILDING. SAME TIME.

Henry pauses as he holds the door open for her and they move outside.

HENRY

You had second place standing in  
Torts and Civil law, didn't you?

JESSY

It's going to be my specialty. It  
was my father's specialty as well; he  
had a thriving practice before he  
passed away.

HENRY

You seem to be doing very well in  
this class, too.

JESSY

Me?

(She laughs.)

This class just about killed me.  
Lord, I'm the kind of person whose  
blood boils if I spot a jay walker.  
Real crime-- robbery and murder and  
all-

(She shudders:)

Is quite beyond my comprehension.

HENRY

(He smiles.)

Have you got any job offers yet?

JESSY

No. And I need one real bad. My  
sister, you see. Her husband died in  
the war; she has three darling kids.  
They need my help. She barely gets  
by on the government check, even  
living in our old house in Louisiana.

Jessy sighs, while Henry listens sympathetically.

JESSY

(continuing)

I applied to every law firm in the  
county but got only two interviews.

HENRY

How did they go?

JESSY

Not very well, that is unless you count a marriage proposal and a date Saturday night. I just don't understand it. Just because I happen to wear a skirt rather than slacks.

Everyone else has had offers, good offers too. What about you?

HENRY

One offer for a public defender in DC.

He removes his business card and hands it to her.

HENRY

(continuing)

My wife is excited though; she has family there.

JESSY

That's nice for her. Lord, the PD's office. You'll really be in the muck of things--

TWO OTHER MALE STUDENTS, one of them MIKE, approach, lighting up with enthusiasm as they spot Jessy.

MIKE

Jessy, I've been looking everywhere for you! Are you going to Paul's bash tomorrow night?

JESSY

(Flirtatious manner:)

No one special has asked me yet.

MIKE

Will you go with me?

JESSY

Why I thought you'd never ask!

MIKE

Great. Pick you up at six.

They wave and part company. Jessy resumes walking with Henry.

JESSY

I started sending out my resume to  
New York and Boston.

HENRY

You might want to try DC. Half the  
firms in the country are there.

JESSY

I just might do that, if nothing else  
turns up. Here, this is where I turn.

She hands him back his card.

HENRY

Keep it, Miss Browner. Well...

They stare at each other, laugh awkwardly and finally shake.

HENRY

(continuing)

Good luck.

EXT. A MANSION. NIGHT. TWO YEARS LATER.

Revolving red lights of three police cars and an ambulance  
shine over the surroundings. MRS. ALEXIS PAYNE, a stunningly  
beautiful woman, stands naked, wrapped in police blankets and  
hiding as she cries in MR. PAYNE'S arms. JIM MICHAELS, tall,  
muscular, dangerous looking, appears from inside the house,  
led out by four other policemen, two of whom aim guns at him.  
His bare chest, arms and face show deep, bleeding scratches  
and bruises. Mr. Payne rushes at him.

MR. PAINE

I'll kill him! I kill him!

The police hold Mr. Payne back as they force Jim Michaels  
into one of the squad cars. Mrs. Payne watches with tear  
filled eyes and an unnerving intensity.

INT. SWITCH BOARD AT THE PHONE COMPANY. DAY

TWO WOMEN, one of them, CLAIR sit at the switch board. Jessy rushes in late. Swinging into her chair, Jessy manages to appear as if she is working just as a stodgy, older looking MAN passes by and glances in at the doorway. The woman work as they talk.

CLAIR

For a split second I thought you were finally going to get caught.

JESSY

I might not be disappointing you. I've got another appointment at ten--

CLAIR

Not again? When are you going to face the fact that there's just no place for a lady lawyer?

JESSY

Never. I admit it has taken longer than I hoped but I'll find my place. I know I will.

(She brightens:)

This one might be it, too. The firms suppose to be as liberal as a Saturday night drunk. Will you cover for me?

CLAIR

Do I have a choice?

JESSY

You're a doll!

Jessy leaps up, kisses Clair and heads to the door. Clair and the other woman appear torn between irritation and amusement. Jessy cautiously looks in both directions.

JESSY

(continuing)

I promise to be back by ten thirty. Wish me luck!

Jessy disappears through the doors.

EXT. A CROWDED WASHINGTON STREET. DAY.

Jessy leaves an office building, pushing dejectedly through a turnstile. She glances up just in time to see Henry Nelson pushing through the same turnstile. He spots her as well and surprised, he meets her outside on the street.

JESSY

Why if isn't Henry Nelson!

HENRY

Miss Browner! My word! It's been over two years, hasn't it? Are you working here in Washington?

JESSY

I am, but at the phone company.

HENRY

Oh. Well, I'm sorry--

JESSY

How about you? Are you still at the PD's office?

HENRY

(Nods, smiles:)

I like it, too. The pays not so good, but the work is honest and I might add, interesting--

JESSY

I bet it pays better than phone company.

(Pause:)

Say you wouldn't have any job leads, would you, Mister Nelson?

HENRY

Can't say I know of anything. Once the administration changes, it seems like half the lawyers in the country are out pounding the pavement.

JESSY

Chances are I've been turned down by the other half. I hate to admit it but I'm getting desperate. I think I'd take any kind of legal work now. What about where you are?

HENRY

The public defenders' office?  
(Alarmed:)  
We're always under staffed but--

JESSY

(Excited:)  
Are you?

HENRY

Well, yes but the PD's office is no place for a lady. My boss is a good man, but I don't think he'd ever hire a woman--

Jessy removes an appointment book and pen from her purse.

JESSY

What's his name?

HENRY

Whose name?

JESSY

Your boss?

HENRY

Jack Mason. But I really don't think he'd consider hiring a lady--

Undeterred, Jessy withdraws a thick pile of business cards from her purse, circled by a rubber band. She shifts through these until she finds Henry's business card.

JESSY

I've got the address right here.  
Thanks Mr. Nelson!

She steps out on to the street to get a cab.

HENRY  
Oh no, Miss Browner! I don't think  
this is a good--

A cab stops, sweeping Jessy away.

INT. THE PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE. SAME DAY.

Jessy enters the office. A dozen desks fill the large space. Six of these are vacant. CAROL and DEBBIE, two secretaries, occupy two desks up front. A glass office occupies one corner of the room.

CAROL  
May I help you, Miss?

JESSY  
I'm here to see Mr. Mason.

CAROL  
Do you have an appointment?

JESSY  
No, I don't.

CAROL  
Oh. Is a relation in some kind of  
trouble?

JESSY  
I hope not! Actually, I'm looking  
for a job. Mr. Nelson told me to  
speak to Mr. Mason.

CAROL  
I don't think we need anyone right  
now, but I'll inform Mr. Mason you're  
here, Miss...Miss?

JESSY  
Miss Browner.

Carol makes her way back to the glass enclosed office. Three

men discuss a case: LOU ROBERTS, a heavy set, middle aged man, BARRY SIMON, younger but gaunt and bent over as if weighted by thankless burden of his job and JACK MASON, a handsome, thirty year old man, slightly disheveled, and rough looking: a crooked, loosened tie, rolled sleeves that reveal tattooed arms and a dramatic black patch that covers one eye. Carol informs Jack of Miss Browner's mission. With papers in hand, Jack looks through the glass, shakes his head and returns to work.

JACK

We don't need a secretary. Have her leave her name and number.

CAROL

Oh, and your wife called again.

Jack grimaces and nods as Carol exits. Lou and Barry stand at the glass, staring at Jessy. Lou whistles appreciatively.

LOU

Now, that's the kind of secretary who doesn't need to know how to type.

BARRY

That's some looker all right.

LOU

Fills a man with regrets. Those darn marriage vows again.

JACK

That won't be your only regret if we don't cut our losses here and cop a plea on this case...

Chuckling, they turn back to their work. Across the office, Jessy stands up and shakes her head. Withdrawing her resume from a large purse, Jessy hands this to the startled Carol. Debbie looks up with surprise, an inquiring lift of brow as Carol scans the resume with a glowering look of disapproval. Carol marches back to Jack's office.

CAROL

Mr. Mason, that woman says she's a lawyer.

LOU

A lady lawyer?

(He chuckles.)

I ain't never seen a lawyer who  
looked like that.

Carol hands Jack the resume.

BARRY

You know Mark Taylor--that new kid in  
the DA's office? He had a lady in  
his class at Yale. Said she married  
a classmate, dropped out the second  
year and popped a kid by graduation.

JACK

Tell her we have no position open.  
Not for a woman anyway.

Carol marches back. Confronting Jessy, she shakes her head. Jessy looks at the clock, which reads eleven o'clock and she realizes she's lost her other job. Jessy speaks back firmly and with exaggerated emphasis, she sits back down. Carol and Debbie exchange disapproving glances before Carol marches back to Jack's office just as Lou and Barry are leaving.

CAROL

Mr. Mason, she says she's not leaving  
until she speaks with you.

JACK

(Irritated:)

She's got a long wait then.

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

The clock reads eleven forty five. People in the office move about busily as Jessy waits. People come and go, consulting with lawyers. Jack flies from one desk to another.

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

Twelve thirty. Lou and Barry leave for lunch, tipping their hats and chuckling at Jessy as they exit.

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

One thirty. Lou and Barry return. Surprised to still see Jessy, they tip their hats again and shaking their heads, amused, they return to their desks. Jack appears.

JACK

I need the Clark briefs--

Carol hands these to him.

CAROL

The DA's office called again. They're very anxious about the Michaels case. Mr. Ross wants to know who you've assigned it to.

JACK

No one yet. Is he still coming for dinner?

CAROL

Said he'll bring his best cognac. Mr. Leif called and oh--Mrs. Mason again.

JACK

You call Leif. Tell him there's no deal. We'll see him in court.

CAROL

What about the Ramsey boy?

JACK

Oh right. See if Lou can go down there--

CATHY

Lou's in court this afternoon.

JACK

Put them off until tomorrow then and tell my wife--

(He looks at his watch:)

Tell her I'll try to call her about

three thirty.

JESSY

Mr. Mason, may I just have a moment of your time?

JACK

I don't have a moment.

(He stops:)

Look Miss--

JESSY

Miss Browner.

JACK

Miss Browner. I'm not going to hire you. I can't. This office is no place for a lady.

He heads back to his office. Jessy rushes after him.

JESSY

Why I see two ladies right there!

He enters his office, Jessy follows. He scans briefs as he speaks.

JACK

That's different. I would never expose a lady to the disreputable characters--

JESSY

Why, I wager I have more experience with the disreputable members of your sex than you do!

Surprised by this, Jack stops and finally looks at Jessy.

JACK

You're sadly mistaken if you think fighting off the unwanted advances of an enthusiastic lover is in anyway similar to sitting across from a man and listening to him explain just why he beat and killed his wife yesterday

morning and then, going on to  
formulate a defense for the bastard.  
I believe it's another ball park  
altogether.

JESSY

(Embarrassed pause:)

Touche,' Mr. Mason. It was probably  
ill-advised to equate the two. But  
I got through law school as well as  
the other fellows, better even. I  
had a fifth place standing at  
Michigan. I know I could do it. All  
I'm asking for is a chance--

JACK

Miss Browner, you are asking me to  
parade a beautiful young woman in  
front of murderers, rapists,  
mobsters, thieves and belligerent  
drunks, to name just a few of our  
regular customers. It's conceivable  
I'd be putting your life in danger--

JESSY

I'm aware of the risks and I'm  
willing to take them. It's my life  
Mr. Mason. Look, I just lost my job,  
trying to get this one. I'm so  
desperate that I'm just going to  
plant myself on your doorstep--

The phone rings. Jack picks it up.

JACK

Mason here.

Jessy has trouble meeting the intensity of Jack's stare.

JACK

(continuing)

Fine Susan. Apple pie will be great.  
What ever you think...

Jack picks up a file on his desk and hands this to Jessy. He  
covers the receiver with his hand and speaks to Jessy.

JACK  
(continuing)  
Take a good, hard look, Miss Browner.

Jessy slowly opens the file and stares at gruesome pictures.  
Jack speaks into the phone:

JACK  
(continuing)  
No, no, I'm just damn busy. I've got  
a city full of criminals to defend.  
I'll try to be home by six thirty.

He hangs up, watching the look of horror on Jessy's face as  
she examines the photo's.

JACK  
(continuing)  
Do you honestly believe you can sit  
across from the man who did that and  
listen as he describes the  
particulars, the details of it?

JESSY  
Well, I--

JACK  
And God knows, it's not just  
listening. You'd be his confidant,  
doctor and priest all rolled up into  
one. Look at those pictures and tell  
me you could do it.

Jessy looks up from the pictures. She hesitates briefly  
before rallying her determination and resolve.

JESSY  
I confess I'm not likely to ever feel  
friendly toward that man, or any one  
like him but I could provide him a  
defense. And that defense will be at  
least as good as any provided by a  
man. All I'm asking for is a chance  
to prove it.

JACK

A chance, a chance.

He measures her a moment more before leafing through files and withdrawing the Jim Michaels file. This is tossed in front of her. Still unable to break their stare, she reaches down and picks it up timidly. She opens it and reads.

JACK

(continuing)

Can you even say rape, Miss Browner?

Upon comprehending the question, anger fills Jessy's eyes but, she blushes.

JACK

(continuing)

I mean without blushing. Assault, battery, rape. Your first case. If you want this ah, chance.

Jessy stares intently at the file.

JACK

(continuing)

Not your run of the mill victim either. The wife of one Mr. Payne.

JESSY

Payne... Payne lumber?

JACK

Just the one. He also happens to be one of the financial backers for the DA's run for Mayor. The DA will be trying it himself.

JESSY

The DA? Himself?

JACK

That's right. And just so you understand perfectly why I'm giving you this ah, chance,' when Pat's done hanging this bastard, he won't forget who assigned the case to a naive,

young woman who has probably never  
seen the inside of a court room.

Chuckling at her response, Jack starts ushering her out of  
the office.

JACK

(continuing)

Not only do I get you out of my  
office, apparently a formidable feat  
itself, but I'll wager Ross will pick  
up my next five lunch tabs. Well, go  
on, Miss Browner.

Jessy marches angrily out of the office but stops. She bites  
her lip, struggles a moment before turning back inside.

JESSY

Mr. Mason?

JACK

Yes?

JESSY

I'm just not clear on what the first  
step might be?

JACK

I thought you said you were smart?

JESSY

There's no need to keep insulting me!

JACK

It's too damn easy anyway.

JESSY

Mr. Mason, I am so grateful for this  
opportunity, I'm determined to bite  
my tongue and refrain from answering.

JACK

I count my blessings, Miss Browner.  
Now, go get the man's statement.  
Then, formulate a defense. Assuming  
there is a defense to formulate.

JESSY

And this man. This Mr. Michaels? I can probably find him?

JACK

County lock up. Where all our clients tend to hang out. Ask Carol for a badge on the way out.

(He whispers:)

And don't say I didn't warn you...

EXT. BUSY STREET OUTSIDE PD'S OFFICE. SAME TIME.

Jessy stands at a public phone.

JESSY

Mira, Mira guess what? I got a job. A real job!

Jessy lifts phone away from ear as Mira screams.

JESSY

(continuing)

I'm the first woman PD in the country... No, you heard right... It is possible. Well, I know it's dangerous; I just hope it's not too dangerous...

EXT. THE COUNTY JAIL. SAME TIME.

Standing uncomfortably in front of a desk, Jessy struggles not to be intimidated by the oppressive room. TWO UNIFORMED GUARDS stare at her, then the badge. One of the guards talks on the phone, checking. He hangs up.

GUARD

Jack said to let you in. I just never seen no lady PD before. Let alone one that... Well, looks like you, Miss. It don't seem right.

JESSY

I'll be sure to make a note of your opinion, officer. Now, if you can be so kind as to show me to my client.

GUARD

(To the other guard:)

You stay with her the whole time. Make sure that bastard don't get any ideas lookin' at her.

The other guard nods and leads Jessy out.

INT. PRISON HALL.

The guard unlocks doors, leading Jessy through the dismal place. Jessy's frightened gaze darts to and fro, yet she appears determined as well. The guard opens the door to an interrogation room.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM.

The room has only a table and three chairs. Jessy sits in a chair. She removes a notebook and pen from her large purse before lowering her hands beneath the table to hide their tremble. Led by a guard, Jim Michaels arrives handcuffed. He appears tall, strong and menacing and taken aback by the sight of a woman.

JIM

You someone's secretary?

JESSY

I'm your new lawyer, Mr. Michaels. Miss Browner.

JIM

A woman lawyer? Geezus, just my kind of bad luck.

Her anger abruptly overcomes her fear.

JESSY

Look Mr. Michaels, you need a lawyer somethin' fierce and the fact is, you

can't afford to be picky. It's the luck of the draw; I'm just going to have to do.

JIM

Have you ever got anybody off before?

Jessy pauses uncomfortably.

JESSY

You're my first defendant.

JIM

Your first... You mean you've never defended anyone before?

Jessy shakes her head. He collapses with sudden hopelessness.

JIM

(continuing)

Shoot me now and save me a trial.

Emotion overcomes Jessy's exasperation; she's had it.

JESSY

Mr. Michaels, I am going to see that you have a fair trial and defend your actions to the best of my ability. Now, I hate what you did to that poor woman--

JIM

Poor woman?  
(He scowls with disgust.)  
Christ, you don't know nothin'.

JESSY

What do you mean?

JIM

I didn't do it, that's what I mean.

JESSY

You're innocent?

JIM  
I ain't never been innocent but I  
sure as hell didn't rape anybody...

INT. PD'S OFFICE. SAME TIME.

Henry pops into Jack's office.

HENRY  
I got an acquittal, Jack.

JACK  
(Busy:)  
Good work, Henry.

HENRY  
Thanks. I'm going over to see

Carpenter now.

Jack nods, picking up the phone. Henry stops on his way out  
and turns around, remembering.

HENRY  
(continuing)  
Oh by any chance did a Miss Browner  
come to see about a job? We went to  
law school together and after the  
deposition, I happened to meet her on  
the street. I guess she's still  
looking for work. I told her you  
would never hire a woman but, she  
didn't seem to be listening-

JACK  
  
What a coincidence! She wouldn't  
listen to me either. I gave her the  
Michaels case--

HENRY  
You... The Michaels case! You  
didn't?!

JACK

I'm afraid I did, Henry. Desperation drives a man to extremes. There just didn't seem to be any other way to get her the hell out of my office--

Henry rushes out.

JACK

(continuing)

Where are you going?

HENRY

To rescue Miss Browner...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. SAME TIME.

Henry Nelson appears in the window at the door just as Jessy stands up and begins gathering her pages of notes, preparing to leave. Jim Michaels has buried his face in his hands, almost crying. Jessy reaches over and pats his arm. The guard starts to escort Michaels out but Michaels stops and nods gratefully to Jessy.

HENRY

Miss Browner! I got here as soon as I could, as soon as I heard Mr. Mason gave you the Michaels case--

JESSY

You won't believe what happened to that poor man--

HENRY

What happened? He assaulted and raped--

JESSY

He's innocent! He didn't do it--

HENRY

Miss Browner, you didn't believe him, did you? They all say they're innocent.

JESSY

Of course, normally that's true but his story--

HENRY

Lies. All of it.

JESSY

I'm not so sure--

HENRY

Miss Browner, please.

Henry takes Jessy's arm as they make their way through the prison.

HENRY

(continuing)

Trust me on this. Walk into any penitentiary in the country and all you'll hear is a collective wail of innocence.

JESSY

But his story--

HENRY

Every one of them has a story to prove it. Thankfully, you don't have to believe your client's innocent to provide a defense.

JESSY

Wait a minute. Let me tell you what happened to him: You see, it all started when Mr. Michaels was fixing the Payne's roof, minding his own business...

EXT. PAYNE'S RESIDENCE. DAY.

Jim Michaels bends over on the mansion's roof, repairing it. Alexis Payne emerges pool side from inside the house. Wearing a bathing suit, she settles into a lounge chair. She stretches, reaches behind her and unclasps the top of her bathing suit. She rolls over seductively. Jim stares for a

long moment, shakes his head with a grin and continues  
working...

EXT. SIDEWALK ON BUSY STREET. LATE AFTERNOON.

Lost in their conversation, Jessy and Henry continue walking.

JESSY

That didn't work but there was no  
stopping that woman. So next, she  
got all dolled up like a Christmas  
package and showed up at the bar he  
had stopped in after work. She tells  
him her husband won't be home until  
tomorrow, she's lonely and she wants  
him...

INT. BARROOM. NIGHT.

Jim Michaels and Alexis Payne sit at the bar. Finished drinks  
sit in front of them. Alexis Payne leans over to Jim,  
soothing his hair with a seductive promise. Jim takes his  
last sip and stands up, smiling as he offers his hand.

EXT. BUS STOP. LATE AFTERNOON.

Henry and Jessy sit on a bench, waiting for a bus. An older  
white woman and another black woman also sit waiting for the  
bus, listening to this.

JESSY

He couldn't resist, you know. Some  
men have more trouble keeping their  
pants on than a dog has waiting for  
dinner.

The two women roll their eyes, nod, as if to say isn't that  
the truth. Neither Jessy or Henry notice them.

JESSY

(continuing)

So, he went home with her.

The older woman shakes her head...

EXT. THE PAYNE'S RESIDENCE. NIGHT.

Jim and Alexis laugh as she opens the door for him. He playfully sweeps her into his arms and carries her inside...

EXT. BUS STOP. LATE AFTERNOON.

More people arrive at the bus stop where Jessy and Henry sit.

JESSY

Everything went pretty much as God intended until the end. Okay. This is where it gets strange. Just as he's thinking of leaving, she turned to him and asked...

INT. PAYNE'S RESIDENCE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The bedroom setting appears luxurious and slightly ostentatious. Alexis lays in the crook of Jim's arm, naked, among the rumbled sheets of a large bed after making love.

ALEXIS

Tell me. Have you ever played rough?

EXT. BUS STOP.

The two women exchange shocked glances before looking quizzically at Jessy and Henry. A bus approaches. The two women seem to lean closer to hear.

JESSY

Okay, so he's all tied up and feeling as foolish as a groom late for church, and everything changes.

HENRY

What do you mean?

JESSY  
She went wild!

The older women gasp. They stare openly.

JESSY  
(continuing)  
Like a maniac. She grabbed a wooden  
hair brush and she beat him with it,  
then her nails...

The bus stops. Jessy and Henry stand to get on behind some others. As they climb up the steps of the bus, the black woman casts a pitying, disparaging glance at the white woman, shaking her head.

BLACK WOMAN  
White folks...

INT. BUS.

Jessy searches through her purse, while Henry shifts through his pocket for the right change.

JESSY  
The poor man was terrified. He  
thought she was going to kill him!  
Suddenly it was over. Or so he  
thought.

INT. PAYNE'S RESIDENCE. BEDROOM.

Tied to the bed post, Jim breaths heavily, his body revealing bad cuts and bruises. He furiously tries to escape the bonds that hold him. Examining her handiwork wordlessly, Alexis stares in some horror before exiting hurriedly. Jim finally manages to get a hand free, then the other, just as Alexis returns. She lunges to him, desperately trying to keep him there. Jim pushes her away, frantic to escape. She throws herself on him again.

INT. BUS.

Jessy and Henry sit between black people in the back of the crowded bus, Jessy oblivious to the obvious color divide on the bus.

JESSY

And then her husband and the gun and the police.

HENRY

Good heavens!

JESSY

I know it sounds, well, far fetched to say the least but that's just it! If he were going to make up a story, don't you think he would have made up a more believable one?

HENRY

(Pause; dismayed consideration:)

I suppose it's possible. Her husband might have surprised her, she panicked and cried rape--

JESSY

That young man's life is in my hands. I need your help.

HENRY

Me?

INT. BUS.

Jessy furiously scribbles notes. The bus stops and barely interrupting her writing, they make their way off the bus and begin walking.

EXT. WASHINGTON STREET.

HENRY

If they agree to it, you can take the prosecution's witnesses statements

but unfortunately, they almost never agree.

She nods.

HENRY

(continuing)

Normally, you build with the evidence but since this case doesn't have any to speak of, you've got to use witnesses--that bartender to start. But don't be surprised if the bartender remembers a completely different story.

JESSY

If he remembers anything at all.

HENRY

Right. And keep foremost in mind everything old Cromwell said about trying this kind of case--

JESSY

You mean destroying the reputation of the prosecution's witnesses...

(Lost in the thought:)

I really hated that.

HENRY

Sometimes it's all you have, though.

JESSY

I suppose so.

Henry notices her perplexed expression.

HENRY

Now what?

JESSY

I have just one more question.

HENRY

Yes?

JESSY

Why in the world would a man and a woman tie each other up during intimate relations?

INT. JACK MASON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Jack and PATRICK ROSS, an attractive and distinguished man in his early forties, sit in the dining room at the table as SUSAN, Jack's wife, twenty nine and pretty, begins clearing the dishes. A cotton apron covers Susan's evening dress, dramatically accenting a painful thinness. The house appears meticulous, even sterile, for Susan devotes excessive energy to her home's cleanliness.

PATRICK

That was an excellent dinner, Susan.

SUSAN

Oh, I...I thought the pot roast was a little under cooked---

PATRICK

Best pot roast I've had in years.

Susan pauses, noticing a small stain on the table cloth. Anxiety marks her face before she abruptly realizes what he has said.

SUSAN

Well... I have an apple pie coming right up.

INT. KITCHEN. SAME TIME.

Susan carries the plates into the kitchen, rinses them, dries them and puts them away.

Jack and Susan's two children, LISA, four and JIMMY, six sit at the kitchen table. Jimmy wears a baseball cap and his glove rests on the table. He blows bubbles in his apple juice and Lisa laughs wildly.

Susan opens the oven and using two pot holders, she removes

the pie. As she sets it to cool, crumbs fall on the counter. She gets a sponge and wipes these up. Still not satisfied, she moves the pie very carefully, takes out a spray cleaner and sprays the counter, wiping it clean again. Once done, she washes her hands.

INT. DINING ROOM.

Patrick and Jack sit at the dining room table after dinner. Laughter erupts between them.

PATRICK  
You hired her!

JACK  
Better than that. I gave her the  
Michaels case.

PATRICK  
You--My God! A woman?

JACK  
Definitely a woman.

He laughs again as Jack gets up, retrieves two glasses and pours the cognac. Susan appears with two plates and coffee and goes about setting the table for desert.

JACK  
(continuing)  
She's never tried a case. Hell,  
she's never seen the inside of a  
courtroom. I'll be surprised if she  
lasts the week, so I'll probably be  
reassigning it--

SUSAN  
Who are you talking about?

PATRICK  
(With humor:)  
Jack hired a woman attorney at the  
office.

SUSAN

You hired a woman lawyer?

JACK

Yes, I did.

SUSAN

I never heard of a woman lawyer before.

JACK

She's the real thing. Apparently, she placed fifth at Michigan.

SUSAN

What does her husband say?

JACK

She's not married.

SUSAN

Not married? She must be homely, then.

JACK

No. I wouldn't say that.

PATRICK

She's gotta to be a hell of a lot better looking than Lou or Barry--

The men laugh. Disturbed by this, Susan retreats into the kitchen. The doorbell rings. Lisa and Jimmy rush from the kitchen, through the dining room.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL.

The children open the door.

JESSY

Hello! I'm Miss Browner.

JIMMY

I'm Jimmy.

JESSY

Please to meet you, Jimmy.

They shake hands.

JESSY

(continuing)

Lord, you've got a strong grip. You must be as strong as your Daddy.

This thrills Jimmy. He nods proudly.

JESSY

(continuing)

I see you play baseball, too. Let me guess: I bet you play first base!

JIMMY

How did you know?!

JESSY

I played first base too, for the Louisiana Bluebirds--

LISA

My name is Lisa.

JESSY

Lisa?

(She kneels down:)

Why that's the name of princesses.

This information excites Lisa.

LISA

I want to be a ballerina.

JESSY

That's amazing coincidence! I wanted to be a ballerina, too.

LISA

Are you?

JESSY

No, my daddy wouldn't let me. He made me play baseball. And you know what? Baseball was more fun--

Susan comes to the door, startled by Jessy's appearance.

JESSY

(continuing)

Why hello. You must be Mrs. Mason.  
My name is Jessy Browner. Mr. Nelson  
assured me that I might interrupt  
your husband for a moment. It's kind  
of an emergency?

Startled by Jessy's beauty and vivaciousness, Susan hesitates  
before opening the door.

SUSAN

Won't you come in? Mr. Mason's in the  
dining room.

JESSY

I don't want to interrupt any one's  
dinner--

SUSAN

We were just finishing.

JIMMY

I never knew girls could play  
baseball?

INT. DINING ROOM.

The two children escort Jessy into the dining room.

JESSY

Why sure they can. Not only that but  
I have season tickets to the  
Washington Senators home games.

JIMMY

So do we!

JESSY

I know every all star player's  
batting average in the country.

JIMMY  
Joe Dimaggio.

JESSY  
330. Most consecutive games hit in,  
too.

JIMMY  
Ted Williams.

JESSY  
Best percentage hitter.

She laughs at Jimmy's surprise as they enter the dining room.  
Jack and Patrick stand up.

JACK  
Miss Browner. I was just talking  
about you.

JESSY  
Already? And to think I just  
started. That must be some kind of  
record.

The men laugh at this.

JACK  
Miss Browner, now that you've met my  
children, I'd like you to meet Mr.  
Ross, our DA.  
(To the kids:)  
Let's get ready for bed, all right?

Lisa tugs on Jessy's skirt.

LISA  
You're pretty enough to be a  
ballerina.

JESSY  
Why thank you! I think that's the  
nicest compliment I've ever had.

SUSAN  
Lisa, you heard your father. Right

now.

The children wave good--bye.

PATRICK

Jack, if she uses charm on the jury,  
I am in trouble. Miss Browner, won't  
you join us--

JESSY

Well, is consorting with the enemy  
allowed, Mr. Mason?

JACK

I guess so.  
(With an edge:)  
We save the guns for the courtroom  
and pretend to like each other after  
hours.

JESSY

Will I be expected to develop this  
facility for pretense?

JACK

Part of the job, I'm afraid. Please  
have a seat, Miss Browner. I'll get  
Susan to fetch some coffee--

JESSY

I just came to ask a quick question.  
I borrowed my friend's car to go  
interview a witness and I just came  
to ask--

PATRICK

You came to ask Jack for a little  
cash to aid your discovery  
process, right?  
(He laughs:)  
Well, Jack will tell you he doesn't  
have any money, and that's because we  
don't give him any.

Jessy looks alarmed, casts an inquiring glance at Jack.

JESSY

Not even a small, rainy day fund?

JACK

Maybe we can discuss this some other time--

PATRICK

In the meantime, please join us and start at the beginning.

JESSY

The beginning?

PATRICK

How a beautiful woman such as yourself came to know all the major league stats?

They laugh...

INT. KITCHEN. LATER.

Susan vigorously cleans the kitchen, wiping the legs of the kitchen table, while listening to the conversation from the dining room. Laughter punctuates the conversation.

JESSY

I just haven't met the man I couldn't live without and as for children, well, as much as I love the little darlings, I've always felt such a sweet relief handing them back...

The men laugh but Susan is disturbed by this dismissal of domestic life as she continues to clean. She puts crayons back in the box, paying special attention to the order of the crayons before placing them in a spotless drawer.

She examines the shine on the counter and concerned, she begins wiping it again but stops as a particularly loud burst of laughter comes from the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM.

Susan appears to clear the pie plates.

JESSY

Mrs. Mason, my compliments. Your pie was delicious.

Susan looks surprised, pleased.

SUSAN

Would you like the recipe?

JESSY

Oh don't bother, Mrs. Mason. I'm the kind of woman who has trouble putting together a cheese sandwich. But won't you sit down with us? I feel dangerously outnumbered.

JACK

You haven't sat down since dinner was served--

Susan looks anxiously at the plates she holds and then to the kitchen.

SUSAN

Perhaps, in a few minutes...

Susan carries the plates off.

PATRICK

Jessy, you are delightful.

(Pause; suddenly serious:)

For the life of me though, I just don't understand how a beautiful young woman like yourself could possibly stand... well, defending a man like Jim Micheals?

JESSY

Everyone's entitled to a defense, Mr. Ross. It's the very foundation of our constitution.

PATRICK

But a man who brutally beat and assaulted an innocent woman! I, for one just can't stomach the idea of you, so new and well, young, defending that man.

JACK

(As warning:)

Patrick...

PATRICK

No, I mean it, Jack. Here's what I'm going to do to. I'm willing to drop the rape charge to forcible entry, assault and battery.

JESSY

(Stunned:)

You what?

PATRICK

He'll get ten instead of life. Hopefully, it'll be enough to teach him a lesson.

Surprised, Jack sets his cognac down.

JACK

Pat, your generosity surprises me. That's more than fair--

JESSY

Still, I'm afraid I can't accept that.

JACK

Hold it right there. Patrick, if you'll excuse us a moment.

Jack stands up, motioning to Jessy to follow him into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY BETWEEN KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM.

Jessy leans against the wall, Jack leans intimately over her,

one arm braced against the wall above her as they speak in heated whispers.

Susan listens from the kitchen where she carefully wipes smudges from a recipe box.

JACK

Take it.

JESSY

Take it?! I can't. My client is innocent.

JACK

Innocent? Oh please. I know you don't have any experience but Jesus, anyone with half a simpleton's wits--

JESSY

He's innocent.

JACK

Okay, okay, I don't believe for a second that's true, not with the damning police report, the witness statements, the man's record but let's assume he is innocent. It

doesn't matter--

JESSY

Innocence doesn't matter!?

JACK

No, because I've never heard Patrick Ross offer a plea before. You've either impressed the hell out of him or he's so sentimental about your sex, it's clouded his vision. Take it.

JESSY

But Jim Michaels told me he's innocent. That's what I have to go on and that's what I have to fight for.

Jack chuckles with exasperation.

JACK

Look: Patrick Ross has only lost one case in a very long and distinguished career. He will kill you in court. Your client will never see the light of day again.

Jessy pauses, trying to rally her strength.

JESSY

He's a young man. Ten years is forever, especially if he didn't do it. I'm willing to ask him but I won't force him.

JACK

(Frustrated;irritated:)  
I could fire you--

JESSY

(Alarmed:)  
Don't.

Jessy gives him back his stare, her eyes pleading. Something passes between them and Jack pulls away. Jessy returns to the dining room. Patrick stands up just as Susan enters.

PATRICK

You make sure that boy understands he's looking at life.

Jessy nods solemnly.

JESSY

It was a pleasure, Mr. Ross, Mrs. Mason.

Susan nods. Jack escorts Jessy to the door.

JESSY

(continuing)  
Mr. Nelson says I need at least twenty dollars to get the bartender

talking--

Jack removes his wallet and hands her forty dollars.

JACK  
What bar is it?

JESSY  
The Bears Club over on first.

JACK  
Geezus, that's no place for a lady--

JESSY  
I know and isn't it odd, cause that's  
where Mrs. Payne followed my client  
and picked him up.

Taking this in, Jack suddenly laughs. Jessy turns and walks away. He returns inside to Patrick.

PATRICK  
There's an interesting young lady.

JACK  
I ought to call down to the Bear Club  
and talk to Guy.

PATRICK  
Don't bother. She deserves what's  
coming.

JACK  
(He chuckles:)  
Actually, I was thinking of warning  
Guy...

INT. PAYNE'S MANSION. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Alexis Payne sits against the head board, curled in a ball with a drink in her hand. Burt Payne stands, pouring himself a healthy shot of whiskey. Alexis appears frightened.

ALEXIS

Patrick says he'll get life in prison. That's enough, Burt--

BURT

That bastard deserves a hell of a lot more.

ALEXIS

Burt, please. I... I just couldn't live with myself if I thought...

Burt turns to her upon hearing this. Alexis looks alarmed. He slowly approaches the place where she sits on the bed. He grabs her chin, to force her to look at him.

BURT

What the hell is this?

She starts to shake her head. Sudden suspicion appears in his expression.

BURT

(continuing)

You wouldn't lie to me, would you, baby? Tell me you didn't do anything to lead that bastard on?

ALEXIS

No, no. How can you even ask that?

BURT

Don't ever lie to me.

(With feeling:)

I couldn't take that. We'd both go down in flames. I'd see to it...

INT. BEAR CLUB. BAR ROOM. NIGHT.

Jessy enters the large, darkened room. Music sounds in the background. Hard drinking MEN crowd the place. The FEW WOMEN present are obvious prostitutes. A huge, beefy middle aged man, GUY WALKER laughs with a group of patrons over a race track story.

Jessy seems entirely out of place as she self consciously

approaches the bar where she takes a seat. The bartender, HAL, an older, gruff looking man, interrupts his conversation with two patrons at the bar and looks at Jessy suspiciously before approaching.

HAL

So, what'll it be, lady?

JESSY

I'm interested in some information about a man and a woman who were in here two nights ago. The man was tall and kind of handsome, in a rugged sort of way. Young. He's twenty three and--

HAL

This ain't an information booth, lady.

JESSY

(Startled:)

Yes, of course. Oh... Wait a minute.

She searches her purse, finds her wallet and withdraws a twenty dollar bill.

JESSY

(continuing)

Here--

Hal takes the twenty, and leans back against the bar. The men at the bar all stop talking and turn to watch the spectacle.

HAL

I don't remember any fellow a couple of nights ago.

JESSY

Oh but he was here! He was sitting right here with a lady--

The bar patrons laugh at this.

JESSY

(continuing)

One twenty isn't enough? Jack gave

me another one but I think one ought  
to do it--

Drawn from the table by this, Guy Walker approaches the bar.

GUY

Lady, how about I give you another  
twenty, if you tell us what you did  
to this here Jack for the first  
twenty?

Jessy colors sharply as the bar erupts into laughter. The  
attention triggers sudden nervousness and she abruptly rises  
and storms out....

EXT. BEDROOM OF JACK NELSON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Half naked, Jack sits on the bed and appears deep in thought.  
Susan enters the bedroom and stops, startled to see him still  
up.

SUSAN

Oh! You're still up.  
(She appears nervous:)

It's so late...

Jack stares without comment as she opens her ordered and neat  
closet and withdraws a plain night dress, over coat and empty  
hanger from the closet.

SUSAN

(continuing)  
Miss Browner. Is she always like  
that?

JACK

Like what?

SUSAN

So forward. Forthright. The way she  
talks to men like she was one of them.

JACK

She does manage to hold her own.

SUSAN

I just shutter to think what my mother and father would say about Miss Browner. They would never approve of such hard manners.

JACK

(Sarcastically:)

She'd be in good company. The number of people who have earned your parents approval is one hell of a small club.

Seeing how this has hurt Susan, Jack becomes contrite.

JACK

(continuing)

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that.

Susan removes her shoes and sets these neatly in the closet, while putting on a pair of slippers. She disappears in the bath room, shutting the door. Upon watching the ridiculousness of his wife's modesty and her elaborate nightly preparations, Jack suddenly gets up and opens the bathroom door. Startled again, Susan, wearing only a slip, shields her body with the dress.

JACK

(continuing)

What is this with you? You're my wife, Susan. My wife. You don't have to hide yourself from me.

Anxiety floods Susan.

JACK

(continuing; Gently:)

Susan, look at you. Geezus, I'm scaring you.

Jack removes the dress from her hands and throws it over a hanger before taking her by the shoulders. Susan's arms cross over herself.

JACK

(continuing)

Something's wrong Susan. You never leave the house any more. You refuse to learn to drive. Now you won't even go shopping and the food bills. It seems like the higher the food bill, the thinner you get. Something's wrong--

SUSAN

Nothing's wrong.

JACK

Nothing? Look at yourself. Your own husband is scaring you.

SUSAN

You're not... scaring me...

Jack places his hand against her breast.

JACK

Your heart is racing.

SUSAN

I'm... just tired.

JACK

You're always tired. You haven't let me make love to you in six months. I try so hard to be gentle and--

SUSAN

(Distressed; desperate:)

I don't want to talk about it. I just can't... I--

She stops and Jack stares at her a long minute before turning around and storming out.

EXT. HENRY NELSON'S HOME IN A BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD. MORNING.

A neatly tended garden and well manicured lawn surround the

house. Jessy rushes through the gate and up the steps, knocking on the door. LAURIE, Henry's wife, an attractive woman, answers the door.

JESSY

Mrs. Nelson? Hi, how do you do? I'm Jessy Browner--

LAURIE

Miss Browner, please to meet you. The first woman PD! I think it's so exciting.

JESSY

You do? Why Mrs. Nelson! I do believe you are the first person I've met with those sentiments. Refreshing sentiments, I might add.

LAURIE

Won't you come in?

INT. HENRY'S HOME. KITCHEN.

Jessy and Laurie sit at the kitchen table, coffee cups in hand.

JESSY

You teach fifty six children?

LAURIE

Fifty six and counting. But I do get a lot of help from the parents these days--

Henry's young daughter, BECKY, appears and smiles at Jessy.

JESSY

Why you must be Becky! Your daddy said you were the prettiest and smartest girl in school. I can see you must be the prettiest but are you the smartest, too?

Delighted, Becky looks to her mother for confirmation.

BECKY  
My teacher says I am...

The women laugh.

LAURIE  
Becky, it's not polite to brag like that.

JESSY  
Your mother has to learn the difference between bragging and simply stating a fact, isn't that right?

Becky looks triumphantly at her mother, who smiles back.  
Laurie hands Becky her lunch, just as Henry comes in.

HENRY  
Why Miss Browner.

JESSY  
I was hoping I might walk with you to work and tell you what happened last night...

EXT. BUSY WASHINGTON STREET. MORNING.

Jessy and Henry walk to work, deep in conversation.

HENRY  
Something's wrong. I never heard of Ross offering a plea in this kind of case.

JESSY  
Mr. Mason thinks he's just so sentimental about my being a woman--

HENRY  
Ross is many things but one of them is not sentimental. Michaels would be crazy not to take it--

JESSY

Crazy is taking ten years when you're innocent but he just might have to if I don't have better luck with that crusty old bartender....

HENRY

Even if you do get him to testify, you'll need something more, something incriminating about Mrs. Payne...

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PD OFFICE BUILDING.

Jessy writes notes even as she and Henry enter the building.

JESSY

I've got a lot of work ahead of me, I'll say that.

HENRY

That's not the half of it. If Jack is serious about hiring you, you'll be getting two or three more cases today.

Jessy stops, stunned by this. Henry keeps walking.

JESSY

What?

She rushes after him...

EXT. PD'S OFFICE.

Jack and Lou heatedly debate an issue as various men wait at desks, one of these men appearing disreputable. Phones ring. One secretary talks on the phone, while the other hangs up and flies to Henry's desk. Jessy sits at her desk on the phone. She hangs up, crosses a name off a list. She starts to dial again but stops and looks up, finding Jack at her desk, staring down at her. He motions for her to come into his office.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE.

JACK

Here.

He hands her two files. He continues to work as he speaks.

JESSY

What's this?

JACK

Your cases. Assaulting a police officer and grand theft. Some idiotic priest put up the thief's bail. So, don't be surprised if the bastard's gone by the trial date--

JESSY

You can't be serious! Henry said that I might get another case but I felt certain considering the magnitude of the Michaels case--

JACK

Magnitude? Miss Browner, see Lou out there? He's got three felonies and a murder one. Berry, he's got two felony cases, one manslaughter, two DUI's and one arm robbery--

JESSY

Oh but--

JACK

I guess no one told you but we have a rule at this office: Any complaints about the work load automatically places you on probation. Considering you're still in a probationary period, I advise you to refrain from complaining.

Resigned, she opens the files and starts to leave.

JACK

(continuing; Changed tone:)

There's one more thing, Miss Browner--

JESSY

Jessy, please.

He acknowledges this with a sly grin.

JACK

That perfume you're wearing.

JESSY

...My perfume?

Jack speaks absent mindedly as he still works.

JACK

It's the exact same perfume Nina  
Turco wore.

JESSY

Nina... Turco?

JACK

The first girl to show me what comes  
after flirting. And you see, I'm  
finding it distracting.

Jessy stares for a moment, blushing before she marches  
quickly back to her desk.

JACK

(continuing)

Just thought I'd mention it...

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

Jessy speaks on the phone, shaking her head. Law books and  
scattered papers clutter her desk. She appears exasperated.

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

Jessy hangs up the phone angrily, looks around and heads over  
to Lou's desk.

JESSY

I need help.

LOU

What a surprise.

JESSY

I just don't know how to handle my new cases, considering the court dates are rushin' up this week and I haven't begun on the Michaels--

LOU

Work your closest court dates. Get rid of the light wood first--

JESSY

But what about Mrs. Payne's statement? They said this afternoon and I--

His phone rings, he picks it up. Jessy turns away.

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

Armed with a case file, Jessy rushes over to Henry's desk for advice but he, talking on the phone, waves her away. She looks to Jack in his office, who also appears busy.

She hesitates, and decides against asking for his help. In frustration, she returns to her desk and consults a book...

INT. DA'S OFFICE.

The office reveals a plush interior. Jessy sits across from Mr. and Mrs. Payne and Patrick Ross. Mrs. Payne's beauty adds to a air of extreme fragility.

JESSY

You left shortly after Mr. Michaels finished working, at about six thirty. Where were you going, Mrs. Payne?

ALEXIS

To the Newcastle Wives club.

JESSY

And then, you stopped at the Bears  
Bar to meet Mr. Michaels--

PATRICK

Objection. Mrs. Payne has not  
stipulated at any time she entered  
the establishment in question to meet  
Mr. Michaels.

JESSY

Then why did you stop there?

ALEXIS

I...I needed to use the phone.

JESSY

Yes? Why?

ALEXIS

Well, I just realized I didn't have  
the directions with me. I thought to  
call Brewer residence--

JESSY

Brewer?

ALEXIS

Mrs. Samuel Brewer. She was hosting  
the club that night. I needed  
directions.

JESSY

You had never been to this wives club  
before?

ALEXIS

Well, yes I had but it was being held  
at a different house than it normally  
is.

JESSY

I see. Now, is it true that you sat

down with Mr. Michaels and had a drink?

ALEXIS

No, I did not.

JESSY

Did you speak to him?

ALEXIS

I said hello.

JESSY

Just hello?

Alexis nods.

PATRICK

Alex, you have to answer outloud for the recorder.

ALEXIS

Yes. Just hello.

JESSY

Mr. Michaels claims you joined him at the bar and propositioned him, that you invited him to your home--

ALEXIS

No, no, that's not true!

JESSY

All right then. What happened?

ALEXIS

I couldn't reach Mrs. Brewer, so I just went home.

JESSY

And then what happened?

ALEXIS

I was fixing myself a drink. I went in the bedroom and I turned around and he was standing there.

He came in through the open window.  
I was so... so scared, I... He  
grabbed me and... and I tried to  
fight him but he carried me up the  
stairs and into the bedroom and he  
ripped my clothes off and he...

She collapses with emotion. Both Patrick and Mr. Payne move to comfort her. Uncomfortable, Jessy is taken aback by her testimony. She withdraws photos of Jim Michaels the night he was arrested.

JESSY

I know how hard this is Mrs. Payne.  
We could do this some other time--

ALEXIS

I just want to get it over with.

JESSY

Could you look at these photos?

She looks at them.

JESSY

(continuing)

Mrs. Payne, Mr. Michaels claims that  
after you had intimate relations, you  
tied him up in a pretense of ah, sex  
play and then began beating him, that  
he tried to defend himself but--

Mr. Payne stands up in fury, helping his wife to her feet.

MR. PAINE

That's enough! We don't have to  
listen to this garbage--

ALEXIS

He's lying! He's lying! I fought  
him. I fought him with all my  
strength but...I--

She collapses again. Her husband tries to help her up and to the door. She faints half way. Mr. Payne catches her up in

his arms before turning back to Jessy.

MR. PAYNE

Look at what you've done! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! A woman defending a rapist! A brutal rapist!

Watching them depart, Jessy trembles with emotion.

INT. JESSY'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM.

This is tastefully decorated, clean and warm. Jessy arrives home late at night. She shuts the door and falls to the floor, clearly exhausted.

INT. JESSY'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM

As she gets ready for bed, she confronts her image in the mirror and stops. She looks perplexed, exasperated.

JESSY

Handle the light wood first, then tackle the big stuff.

Jessy's fists clench, her expression changes with renewed determination.

JESSY

(continuing)

I can do it. I can do anything they can...

INT. JAIL. INTERROGATION ROOM. DAY.

Jessy sits in the chair. A young man, GREG CLINE, young, muscular, handsome sits across from her.

GREG

The bail was so steep. I couldn't afford it.

JESSY

People get real nervous when someone

punches out a police officer.

Greg's expression reveals both shame and anger.

GREG

I know it was wrong but... He made my  
blood boil and the next thing I knew--

JESSY

Okay, tell me what happened. Let's  
see what kind of defense I can work  
up for this one....

EXT. CHURCH. DAY.

Getting out of a cab, Jessy looks around at the spacious  
garden surrounding a church.

THREE haggardly MEN work in the flower gardens. She dashes up  
the front steps and opens the large wooden door.

INT. CHURCH.

It is empty.

JESSY

Hello? Is anyone here?

A PRIEST appears from behind the alter and moves towards her.

PRIEST

Yes? May I help you?

JESSY

I'm looking for Mr. Frank Quinn?

PRIEST

Oh yes. You should find him outside,  
tending to the garden.

Jessy nods and thanks him before heading back out.

EXT. CHURCH.

Jessy finds the thirty year old man, FRANK QUINN, who is six three and very thin, pulling weeds from a flower bed.

JESSY  
Mr. Quinn?

FRANK  
Yes?

JESSY  
Miss Jessy Browner. I guess I'm your lawyer.

Frank stands up and wipes his hand on his pants before offering it to Jessy.

FRANK  
Please to meet you, ma'am. I ain't never heard of a woman lawyer before.

JESSY  
I get that a lot. Can we talk now?  
I've got to figure out how to defend you real quick.

INT. CHURCH.

Jessy and Frank sit in one of the pews, deep in conversation.

FRANK  
If I hadn't lost my job when the plant closed, it would never have happened. I was looking for work for three weeks when my rent came up and boom, there I was out on the streets. I kept trying to get my checks from the VA. I got my papers right here.

Frank produces these from his shirt pocket. He holds them up.

FRANK  
(continuing)  
They say I'm dead. I'm standing right there with my metal of honor and they say I'm dead.. I lasted as

long as I could ma'am but it got so  
my hunger shook me right down to my  
toes and--

JESSY

Wait a minute. Let me get this  
straight...

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE.

Laurie waves good-bye from the porch as Jessy and Henry,  
arguing heatedly, swing Betsy between them.

INT. JESSY'S APARTMENT.

Jessy lays in bed, surrounded by law books and papers. She  
dozes off, wakes with a start and begins reading again.

INT. LIBRARY. NIGHT.

Jessy and Henry sit across from each other buried in books  
and in a heated discussion.

INT. PD'S OFFICE. DAY.

Henry and Jessie, seated at their desks, both on the phone,  
take notes. Jack sits at desk as well, buried in paper work.  
Lou and Barry, headed for lunch, begin making their way out,  
but Barry stops at Jessy's desk, noticing her. He motions to  
Lou.

LOU

Jessy, how about some lunch?

Jessy's surprise turns quickly to pleasure that they asked.

JESSY

I can't. Fridays my very first court  
appearance and...

(She stops, suddenly  
smiles:)

Oh why not? I suppose it will all be

here when I get back.

The men smile as Jessy stands up, swinging on her jacket. She notices Henry.

JESSY

(continuing)

Let's ask Henry too, shall we?

Barry and Lou exchanged confused glances but Jessy never waits for their approval.

JESSY

(continuing)

Henry, how about coming to lunch with the gang?

Henry looks up and stiffens visibly. He suffers a moment's confusion before realizing Jessy had asked but neither Barry nor Lou would feel comfortable.

HENRY

Thanks but ah, I think I'm going to have to pass.

Lou and Barry shift uncomfortably before Lou shrugs and he and Barry suddenly smile.

LOU

Come on, Henry. They don't pay us enough to skip lunch.

Henry's expression reveals how meaningful this is to him and he rises. The four depart. Having watched the entire interaction, Jack smiles, shakes his head with amazement.

JESSY

So Lou, Barry mentioned you left a good position at Stone and Hartman to come back to the PD's office? That you might have even made partner--

LOU

If only I could stay awake long enough.

JESSY

That boring?

LOU

Oh sweetheart, you don't know the half of it. I'll take the down and dirty trenches of the PD'S office to a foot high stack of paper titled: Contracts and Regulations any day...

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

Jessy speaks into the phone. She has a list of names and phone numbers. Many of the numbers are crossed out.

JESSY

Hello, I'm inquiring about a Mrs. Payne... Sure, I'll wait.

Appearing rushed, Jack sets two files on her desk and starts to move away. He stops suddenly.

JACK

You changed your perfume?

Jessy nods slowly. He drinks in the faint scent.

JACK

(continuing)  
It's not helping...

Jessy's worried eyes follow him as he leaves.

INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY.

Jessy approaches two policemen, RICK CARLTON and PETE NEVINS who sit at a table, eating lunch. Pete, the younger man, has a black eye. Jessy approaches.

JESSY

Officers Carlton and Nevins?

Surprised, Rick and Pete stop eating. Jessy adopts a

flirtatious manner; her accent becomes thick.

JESSY

(continuing)

My name's Miss Jessie Browner. I'm from the PD'S office and I'm defending Mr. Greg Clines.

RICK

Geezus, a lady PD? Next thing you know, these gals will be running for president.

PETE

You've got my vote, lady.

JESSY

I'll be countin' on it. Mind if I join you boys a moment?

They make room and Jessie takes a seat.

JESSY

(continuing)

I'm here to ask you officers to drop the assault charge against Mr. Cline.

RICK

You're dreaming! Look at the shiner he put on my partner.

Jessy examines this with an exaggerated pretense of concern.

JESSY

My heavens, that does look bad.

PETE

It feels worse. That son of a bitch-- excuse me ma'am--is gettin' locked up.

JESSY

Wait a minute now. You fellows haven't looked at it from his point of view...

INT. COFFEE SHOP. LATER.

A waitress clears the plates just as Rick and Pete laugh with abandon. Jessy goes for the kill; she leans forward.

JESSY

So you see?

Rick and Pete consider this, exchange glances. Rick starts to shake his head but Jessy interrupts.

JESSY

(continuing)

Haven't you all known a woman who just made your heart pound and your blood rush just by lookin' at her? That's just how Mr. Cline felt. Just before you pulled him over, they were parked for hours a mile back yonder, working up that sweet sweat of anticipation. Why he was half out of his mind all ready when you pulled him over for running the stop sign, then you made that comment about his girl and the tight sweater and the view causin' accidents...

INT. PD'S OFFICE. DAY.

Jack, Barry and Lou discuss a case in Jack's office. The phone rings.

JACK

Mason here... How the hell did you do that? But... Unbelievable... Right.

Jack hangs up.

JACK

(continuing)

You know Jessy's assault case? She got the police to drop the charges.

LOU

The man's released?

JACK

Paperwork is on its way.

LOU

The lady could talk the pope out of  
his robes...

INT. KITCHEN OF JACK'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Jack has Lisa hiked on his back, who laughs wildly with this fun, while Jimmy reads a book at the table. Susan gathers plates to set the table. The phone rings. Jack answers it.

JACK

Mason here... Jessy.

Susan listens intently. Smiling, Jack sets his daughter down and motions for quiet. Lisa reaches for her color crayons.

JACK

(continuing)

Wave his right to a jury? That'll  
never work. Well, no judge would buy  
it for one thing....

Susan appears troubled as she listens to the easy banter between Jessy and Jack.

JACK

(continuing)

I don't know. It will depend on the  
judge you get. Any sob--and there's  
a lot of those--would sink him.

(He laughs:)

Who am I do argue with women's  
intuition? But don't do anything  
until I have a chance to review it...

Chuckling, he hangs up.

SUSAN

I thought you said she wouldn't last  
the week?

JACK

I'm beginning to think that not only  
is she lasting but she's thriving...

Susan begins to dry the sink with quick, nervous motions.

SUSAN

I just can't believe a single woman  
would refuse to get married and have  
children and instead spend her time  
with criminals.

JACK

(With an edge:)

Criminal law can be a worthwhile  
life, Susan.

SUSAN

I'll never understand it. How you  
could choose criminals over my  
father's law practice--

JACK

Susan, God knows, we've been over  
this territory before...

Jack exits. Susan stops with visible tension before resuming  
her housework...

INT. PD'S OFFICE. DAY.

Jessy sits on the edge of Barry's desk in a heated argument  
with him. She calls Henry over. Henry agrees with Barry.  
Jack comes out. They all participate in a discussion that  
erupts in shared laughter. Jessy's phone rings and she picks  
it up, listens for a moment.

JESSY

Mr. Quinn got the job!

BARRY

He won't keep it when he's in the pen.

Carol rushes up.

CAROL

I got bad news, Jessy. The judges  
rotations just came in. You drew  
Hartman for Quinn's case. JR Hartman.

The men groan, shake their heads, appearing disheartened by  
this bad news.

BARRY

The names a misnomer.

HENRY

Heartless Hartman.

JESSY

He can't be that bad?

HENRY

It couldn't be worse. He hates us.  
He hates all PD's and the people we  
represent. I've never come out good  
in his court.

JACK

It will be your first lesson on  
waving the right to a jury...

EXT. PD'S OFFICE. MORNING.

Jack heads into the building, appears troubled. Henry waits  
for him outside.

JACK

Henry?

HENRY

Jack, ah, I was wondering. I don't  
have to be in court until this  
afternoon and well, seeing how it's  
Jessy's first time at bat--

JACK

Go ahead, Henry. She's going to need  
all the support she can get facing  
Lock.

Grateful, Henry rushes off. Jack proceeds into the building.

INT. PD'S OFFICE. ELEVATORS. SAME TIME.

Jack meets Lou and Barry as they are rushing out.

JACK

Hey! Lou where are you going?

(He looks at his watch:)

We've got the investigator meeting  
and--

LOU

(Guiltily:)

Ah, Harris can't make it until  
afternoon.

Jack suddenly understands what's happening.

JACK

And you, Barry? Don't you have the  
deposition at ten?

Berry looks anxiously at Lou.

BARRY

That got put off, too. Something  
came up with ah, the other side.

(He nods.)

LOU

And well, seeing how we had an extra  
hour or so, we thought we'd go watch  
Jessy plead her first case.

JACK

Get out of here.

Jack chuckles as he proceeds into the elevator.

INT. PD'S OFFICE. SAME TIME.

Debbie and Carol toss a coin. Winning, Debbie claps her  
hands in excitement just as Jack enters.

JACK  
What's this?

Carol and Debbie exchanged guilty looks.

DEBBIE  
Oh we were just...ah, we tossed a  
coin to see who had to take this ah,  
(She finds a file:)  
file over to the courthouse. I won.  
I mean, I lost.

JACK  
I give up. I have an idea. Let's  
all take the file over to the  
courthouse, and while we're there, we  
might as well step into to old Lock's  
court and see how Jessy's doing.  
Shall we?

The women happily stand up and follow Jack to the door.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME DAY.

The doorbell rings. Susan rushes to put on rubber gloves before opening the door. She picks up the milk, left by the milkman and carries it into the kitchen. She turns on the hot water and begins scrubbing the milk bottles.

Lisa plays with two dolls at the kitchen table. She watches her mother a moment before picking up the big doll.

LISA  
Wash your hands, baby. They have  
germs. Germs are bad... I said wash  
your hands!

Susan doesn't notice.

INT. COURTHOUSE. SAME DAY.

Jessy sits with Frank Quinn at the defense table. Jessy pats Mr. Quinn's hand. MARK BUTLER, an attorney from the DA's

office, sits with Patrick Ross at the prosecution's table. A baliff is present. Henry, Lou and Berry sit behind the defense table. A lone woman sits off to the side. Jack, Carol and Mary rush in. Jack is surprised by Patrick's presence.

JACK

(Under his breath:)

Well, look who's here...

Carol and Debbie take a seat with the others. Jack stands by the back doors. An older man, JUDGE HARTMAN appears from the judges chambers.

BALIFF

All rise for the honorable Judge  
Hartman.

They rise, sit back down as the judge takes his seat at the bench. The judge looks around the room, stops on Jessy.

JUDGE

You're the defense counsel?

Jessy stands up.

JESSY

Yes, your honor. Miss Browner.

JUDGE

I heard the PD's office hired a  
female attorney. Well, I must say  
this is an interesting change. Very  
interesting.

Surprised glances and nudges all around. Concern at the prosecution table.

JUDGE

(continuing)

A word of warning though, Miss  
Browner. Do not expect any leniency  
from this court just because of the  
unusual fact of your sex.

JESSY

No your honor!

JUDGE

Good. Now explain the reasoning behind this ah, highly unorthodox move to waive your client's right to a jury, Miss Browner. That man is facing a very serious charge.

JESSY

Yes, he is, your honor. However, I decided against a jury because his guilt is not in question.

JUDGE

Is that right, Mr. Quinn? How do you plead?

Frank Quinn stands.

FRANK

Guilty, your honor.

JUDGE

I see. Miss Browner, give me one reason not to move to sentencing?

JESSY

Why I haven't presented the desperate circumstances that led Mr. Quinn to this crime!

JUDGE

(With condescension:)

Miss Browner, the world is packed full of sorrows. The circumstances that led your client to crime are irrelevant to this court.

The prosecution looks pleased, amused.

JESSY

It can't be irrelevant! Justice is nothin' without the truth and truth comes not just from facts but from the circumstances that surround those facts. I'm sure that after hearing of

Mr. Quinn's circumstances, any reasonable and intelligent person such as yourself, your honor, will be sympathetic to his plight.

JUDGE

Reasonable and intelligent? Are you trying to flatter me, young lady?

JESSY

Why no! I was rather hopin' I stated a fact.

To everyone's surprise, the judge chuckles. The courtroom laughs nervously.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME DAY.

The radio sounds through the house. Lisa plays in the yard, while Susan makes Lisa a sandwich.

Susan takes a clean plate, a knife, the peanut butter and jelly jars and arranges them on the counter. She cleans all of them with hot water and soap before proceeding to make a sandwich.

Susan finally sets the sandwich on the table and calls Lisa inside.

Lisa comes running in from outside.

Susan looks at the carpet Lisa runs over and gets out the vacuum as Lisa disappears in the kitchen.

LISA

I'm hungry, mommy!

Lisa reaches for the sandwich just as Susan passes with the vacuum cleaner.

SUSAN

Lisa! You didn't wash your hands!  
Now I'll have to make a whole new sandwich!

Anxious, in a panic, Susan throws the sandwich away before grabbing Lisa by the arms. Lisa starts to cry.

LISA  
I'm hungry, mommy! I'm hungry...

INT. COURT HOUSE. SAME DAY.

Frank Quinn sits on the witness stand. Jessy addresses the judge.

JESSY  
After being decorated not once but twice for bravery in the Pacific, you had a solid employment record before the plant closed and you lost your job. Tell us what happened after that?

FRANK  
I applied for my VA benefits while I looked for work but it turned out the VA had me listed as dead. It didn't matter none that I was standing there lookin' at them. I kept trying to fight them--

JESSY  
But bureaucracies are all papers and forms wrapped in red tape, movin' slower than a sun baked snail. So, there you were, out on the street, with no means to get by. And what shape did your troubles take then?

FRANK  
(Embarrassed; softly:)  
Hunger.

JESSY  
Hunger. Mr. Quinn, let me ask you this: how much do you weigh right now?

MR. BUTLER  
Objection, your honor. Mr. Quinn's

weight is irrelevant, even considering we're forced to listen to the rather banal story of his troubles.

JESSY

Your honor, I believe this matter will dramatically present the severity of Mr. Quinn's troubles. I know it did for me.

JUDGE

You may answer the question, Mr. Quinn.

FRANK

150 something.

Jessy produces his military record.

JESSY

I have here your military record. It says here that you weight 210 pounds, Mr. Quinn? You lost over sixty pounds during your ordeal?

FRANK

Yes ma'am. I wasn't thinking any more...

JESSY

Your honor, I believe these life threatening circumstances could have overwhelmed any of us in this courtroom, including yourself--

JUDGE

(Disgruntled:)

Miss Browner, disparaging assessments of my ability to face adversity will not get you far--

JESSY

Oh but sir, I only meant...

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME DAY.

Susan sits in a chair, rocking. She appears exhausted. Her hair has become dishevelled. Her hands rest on her lap, red from washing. She wipes a tear, then looks at her hands and her face changes with anxiety. She stands up and heads toward the sink.

EXT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Lisa sits crouched alongside of the house, holding a stuffed bear, a blanket and sucking her thumb as she rocks back and forth.

INT. COURT ROOM. SAME DAY.

JESSY

...not only has Mr. Quinn found a good union job and had his VA benefits reinstated but he is now engaged to Miss Parker, sittin' right there, whom he met in the very church that's been helping him since his arrest.

Jessy indicates the lone woman sitting in the court room...

JUDGE

Humm. I see.

JESSY

So, considering Mr. Quinn's changed fortune and rosy prospects, his remorse and especially his restitution to the store owner, I am hoping your honor will realize no good would come from a prison sentence. Instead, I urge you to find mercy.

JUDGE

(Considers this:)

Well... This is highly unusual, Miss Browner. It appears as if you've

acted less as a lawyer and more as a social worker. I must say, to considerable credit to your part. However, I'm interested in the prosecution's response to this.

To everyone's surprise, Patrick Ross himself stands.

PATRICK

Your honor, I believe this charitable presentation of the defendant's misfortunes is not just misguided but dangerous. Society has numerous ways of aiding its more unfortunate citizens but the fact is we do not invite the poor among us to help themselves to the cash registers. We have laws against it. Mr. Quinn broke that law. Still, the defense is asking us to excuse his felony simply because we might sympathize with the circumstances that led to it. Using such reasoning, I dare say Hitler himself could be excused, if not forgiven--

Jessy comes out of her seat.

JESSY

Objection your honor. The prosecution is comparing my client to the most vile criminal ever to walk the earth, a comparison that is especially grievous in light of Mr. Quinn's military service.

The judge looks irritated by the interruption but resigned to Jessy's idealism, he sighs.

JUDGE

Substained.

PATRICK

The point, your honor, is that we, as deputies of the justice system, must punish the guilty.

Without that retribution, the very fabric of society unravels: the invitations are extended not just to the Frank Quinns of the world but to anyone who can rationalize stealing what is not rightfully theirs...

The judge contemplates this, his gaze going from Patrick Ross back to Jessy and Frank Quinn.

INT. COURTROOM.

The judge emerges from his chambers and all rise as he resumes his seat.

JUDGE

Are you ready to face sentencing, Mr. Quinn?

Jessy and Frank Quinn stand.

FRANK

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE

In light of both sides: the facts, the circumstances and the philosophy, especially keeping in mind the defendant's admission of guilt, but also his restitution and service to his country, I hereby sentence the defendant to three years probation.

Jessy looks alarmed.

JESSY

But sir, a probation period isn't necessary! My client will never repeat an offense; he's promised me. I'd stake my life on it--

The judge slams gavel, interrupting her.

JUDGE

Miss Browner, I would remind you that all arguments proceed sentencing. In case you've forgotten any argument that comes after is considered contempt of court!

Furthermore young lady, I want this sentence to serve as a warning to you about waving a client's right to a jury. Twelve honest men would no doubt be far more sympathetic to your unorthodox presentation of Mr. Quinn's trouble than an onery old man who has spend the whole of his life listening to the tired excuses of criminals. Keep in mind that as a defense lawyer, those twelve jurors are always your client's best hope. In other words do not push your luck like this again. It's.... unnerving.

And I'd like to see you in my private chambers...

A tearful Mr. Quinn embraces Jessy. Patrick Ross heads towards the door but stops when he spots Jack.

PATRICK

(He is upset:)

She has a lot to learn, Jack but she's good. She's damn good.

JACK

Yes, she is...

EXT. COURTHOUSE.

Barry, Lou and Henry wait outside. Jessy appears.

BARRY

I'd never get away with that in front of Locke! Never. I'd be in jail with the bastard.

LOU

Damn right. But then your contempt  
isn't delivered in an irresistible  
southern twang!

JESSY

I didn't want probation. It will go  
on his record--

HENRY

It's better than a prison sentence.

JESSY

Well, I learned my lesson. There's no  
short cuts in this field. I have to  
start learning all I can about jury  
selection.

The men nod solemnly as they descend the steps.

LOU

I can sum it up in three words: Never  
pick Baptists.

BARRY

Or any strict religious person.

HENRY

Catholics and Jews are better bets.

BARRY

The more broad minded and liberal the  
better.

LOU

If they've been in trouble once or  
twice--all the more sympathetic...

INT. ELEVATOR AT PD'S OFFICE.

Jessy scribbles notes as the three men continue to advise her  
on jury selection.

BARRY

Also, read Darrow's law review  
articles on jury selection. That'll

be a good start.

HENRY

By the way what did Lock 'em up say to you in chambers?

JESSY

Oh.

(She smiles.)

He has a daughter in college. She wants to go to law school and follow in his footsteps. He had been discouraging her. He said they argue about it all the time but well, suddenly, he's rethinking his position.

Laughter follows this into the office...

INT. PD'S OFFICE. LATE.

Alone in his office, Jack hands Jessy two more bills.

JACK

Ask for Guy Walker and tell him Jack sent you. And, take my advice Sherlock, show the money but do not give it to him until he coughs up some information.

JESSY

I guess that was kind of stupid.

She pauses for a moment, studying his face before she reaches over and lightly touches the patch over his eye.

JESSY

(continuing)

What happened?

Jack catches her hand and holds it, staring intently.

JACK

A well aimed torpedo.  
(Upon seeing her look of alarm:)

I only lost an eye. Most of the men  
weren't so lucky.

JESSY

Does it bother you?

Jack shakes his head, still holding the tip of her hand.  
Sudden self consciousness floods her, she pulls her hand away.

JESSY

(continuing)

I better be going.

Jack watches her leave.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Jack arrives home. He meets Susan in the kitchen. She sits  
at the table, rocking, upset, gloves on her hand but hidden  
beneath the table.

JACK

Susan?

For a long moment she doesn't answer...

EXT. JACK'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

A back porch light floods the darkness. Jimmy and Lisa  
huddled together in their tree house. Jimmy's arm wraps  
around his young sister. The ladder has been pulled up, so no  
one can climb up. On the back porch, Jack calls up to them.

JACK

Jimmy? Lisa?

Jimmy pops his head over the side, sees his father and rushes  
down to him. Jack swings him up to his arms as he carefully  
takes Lisa, who cries, in his arm to help her down too.

JACK

(continuing)

It's okay. I've got you sweetheart.  
I've got you. Jimmy, what happened?

JIMMY

I came home from school and Lisa was crying. She's scared. Mom hurt her. She wouldn't go back inside. So I hid with her in the tree house.

Jack takes this in with alarm and sets Lisa down to her feet.

JACK

Sweetheart, what's wrong? What did mommy do?

LISA

She wouldn't give me a sandwich...

JACK

(Confused:)

Did you ask her for one?

Lisa nods, trying to stop crying.

JACK

(continuing)

I just don't understand this? Your mommy will give you a sandwich whenever you ask for one.

Lisa nods...

JACK

(continuing)

Come on. Let's go back inside and I'll fix you both a giant sandwich. The biggest darn sandwich you've ever seen...

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. LISA'S BEDROOM. LATER.

Lisa falls asleep; Jack quietly leaves the room.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM.

Jimmy listens from his bed to his parents' conversation.

JACK (VO)

It just doesn't make sense, Susan.  
Lisa was scared, really scared.... It  
is not a stage! Susan, listen to  
me! Will you stop that scrubbing just  
for a moment? I can't stay home  
right now to make sure everything's  
all right. I want you to call your  
parents and tell them you and the  
children are coming for a visit.

SUSAN

I can't leave! I don't want to--

JACK

Don't argue with me about this. And  
when you get back I'm going to  
arrange for you to see a doctor...

INT. BAR ROOM.

Jessy walks into the crowded bar. Guy Walker stands behind  
the bar with the bartender, Hal. Guy smiles when he spots  
Jessy, who approaches the bar and sits down.

GUY

Back to amuse us some more? Got  
another twenty?

JESSY

Is Mr. Guy Walker around?

GUY

What do you want with him?

JESSY

Mr. Mason said--

GUY

Jack Mason?

Jessy nods.

GUY

(continuing)

Here's some advice, Miss. Drop those names right off the bat.

Jessy acknowledges this with a relaxed smile.

JESSY

I need some information about my client, Mr. Michaels. He came in here about two weeks ago and met a woman.

Guy motions to Hal, the bartender.

GUY

Start remembering Mr. Michaels, Hal.

HAL

He comes in after work once or twice a week. You know him, Guy. That roofer?

GUY

Yeah, Jim, isn't it?

JESSY

Did you see the lady he met here?

HAL

Couldn't miss her. A class act.

Hal motions towards some women at the other end of the bar.

HAL

(continuing)

Not our usual kind of talent. She sat down next to him. He seemed startled at first but he knew her-- you could tell that. And then, well, he seemed to get used to the idea real quick.

JESSY

Did they leave together?

Hal nods and starts to walk away.

JESSY

(continuing)

Wait. Would you be willing to testify to this in a court of law?

Hal looks at Guy, who nods.

HAL

Sure. Why not?

Hal moves down the bar and Guy turns to a very pleased Jessy. He removes a bill fold and hands back a twenty.

GUY

So tell me. What the hell is Jack doing, having a lady do his dirty work?

JESSY

He hired me. I'm Jim Michaels' lawyer.

GUY

(Chuckles;)

I'll say this about Jack--the man is forever treading in dangerous waters. Geezus, a woman PD...

EXT. THE BAR'S PARKING LOT. NIGHT.

Guy escorts Jessy to her car. As she's getting in, another car pulls up at the end of the parking lot. The head lights go out. The driver's face appears in dark shadows as he stares intently at Jessy and Guy Walker.

JESSY

How do you know Jack?

GUY

Everyone knows Jack. Or about him. For me, it's a family thing. Jack saved my little brother's life in the Pacific and believe me, my brother wasn't the only one. The man will always have currency with me...

Guy turns away.

JESSY

Thanks! You were a big help.

GUY

Anytime, sweetheart.

EXT. BREWER'S MANSION.

An extravagant mansion in a Washington suburb.

INT. SITTING ROOM OVERLOOKING GARDEN.

MRS. BREWER, a thirty five year old woman, attractive and wearing a beautiful silk day dress and MRS. THAYER, a forty year old woman, similarly attired, sit across from Jessy.

MRS. BREWER

The whole affair was unpleasant--  
beginning to end.

MRS. THAYER

Alexis Payne didn't really belong. We  
knew that the moment we saw her. The

introduction meeting at the garden  
club--

MRS. BREWER

She wore a black cocktail dress--

MRS. THAYER

Trimmed in scarlet!

MRS. BREWER

Quite a sight. I don't believe she  
would have gotten a single vote, if  
it weren't for Patrick--

An older WOMAN, wearing a maid's uniform, appears with a tea tray and begins serving. Jessy accepts the cup of tea.

JESSY

Patrick?

MRS. THAYER

Patrick Ross. He passed the word through our husbands, insisting Mrs. Payne be admitted to the club. We all know, of course, that Mr. Payne is aiding Patrick's political ambitions but still--

The maid exits.

MRS. BREWER

It didn't seem right.

JESSY

No? Why was that?

MRS. BREWER

(Conspiratorially:)

Catherine Ross, Patrick's wife. She's a lovely dear, we all care for her and you could tell how much it upset her. She never said anything but--

The two women exchange glances.

MRS. THAYER

Well, it was a relief for everyone involved when Alexis Payne never made another appearance.

JESSY

Never? And she never called that night?

The women shake their heads. Jessy falls silent as she contemplates this but abruptly realizes both women stare at her, smiling.

MRS. BREWER

This is so exciting! I know hundreds of lawyers--my own husband included--

MRS. THAYER

Mine as well.

MRS. BREWER

But not one of them is a woman. Did you really finish law school, Miss Browner?

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

Jack calls Jessy inside his office.

JACK

So what have you got?

JESSY

Not much.

JACK

Let me hear it.

Jessy opens a notebook.

JESSY

Mrs. Payne started life as Alexis Stone.

She was raised by her grandmother. Attended school here in Washington. Her classmates--and I've spoken to a dozen--all remember her as a shy and quiet girl who did date a lot but who stopped at third base.

This elicits a smirk from Jack.

JACK

If my memory serves me right--the very definition of a nice girl. What about her husband?

JESSY

She met him at a convention of some kind. She was a model or something. That was the only employment history. They married two months later. He's twenty two years older but from what I hear he's crazy about her.

Jack stares at her a moment before he picks up the phone, hands it to her.

JACK

Call Pat. Tell him you've changed your mind.

JESSY

Two more days! I still have people to--

JACK

The trial is next week--

JESSY

I just know I'll find something, one thing to cast doubt on the veracity of her testimony. She picked him up in that bar. She was lying to me. She never went to any of those wives club meetings. We know that now. She wanted intimate relations with him and then, her husband came home and caught her--

JACK

None of that matters. Pat will have her on the stand, explaining how, as she was baking a cake for the church social, our lecherous villain, Mr. Michaels appears. You're doomed, Jessy. I'm telling you he'll kill you in front of a jury.

JESSY

Two more days.

JACK

I hope it's not too late by then.

Jessy nods, starts to leave but stops.

JESSY

By the way you never did tell me about the one case Ross lost. What

was it?

JACK

Murder one. A young intern. He and his wife had a history of domestic disturbances that went back years. The wife turns up dead. He claimed she had come at him with a knife. He shoved her, she hit her head and died.

JESSY

The autopsy?

JACK

Inconclusive. Pat was very good--

Lou enters and picks up the story.

LOU

But Jack was brilliant. Played up reasonable doubt. The jury never had a choice.

Jessy's surprised gaze turns to Jack before she turns away.

INT. BAR ROOM. DAY.

Jack rushes in. Police swarm in and out of the establishment. Guy Walker stands in the back room, staring at the sight. Jack comes to his side.

JACK

Murder?

GUY

The detectives think suicide. Hal was never a cheerful fellow, you know. It's his own gun there and I don't know anyone who might want him killed.

JACK

His bookie?

Guy shakes his head.

GUY

That's just it. He scored two grand playing the ponies last week. Paid off his bookie. I think it was the first time he actually was happy...

Jack stares at the body of Hal.

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

Jessy, Jack, Henry and Lou assemble in Jack's office.

LOU

God knows, we see enough mayhem from irritated bookies.

BARRY

It could be a suicide--

JESSY

I don't buy it for a minute. Gamblers don't kill themselves after a big score and bookies don't start eliminating customers after they pay their debts. I know it was Payne! He's means to put my client away for good.

JACK

I just don't see Payne as a murderer.

JESSY

He isn't, the coward. He hired someone to do it for him--which is worse.

JACK

Jessy.

(This is a warning:)

Get over it.

Jack hands her the phone. Upset, hesitating still, Jessy tries to think of another way out.

JESSY

I can't let him win like this!

LOU

Cut your loses, sweetheart. It's the name of the game. We all have to do it.

JACK

You've got no choice, Jessy.

Jessy reluctantly takes the phone. Jack dials.

JESSY

Mr. Ross, please. This is Jessy Browner at the PD's Office....

She stares at Jack, her eyes full of anguish.

JESSY

(continuing)

Mr. Ross. It's me, Jessy Browner. Yes. I'm calling to take that plea bargain for Mr. Michaels.

Jessy's face changes dramatically as she listens and she hangs up.

JESSY

(continuing)

He withdrew it.

JACK

That son of a bitch.

JESSY

What do we do now?

JACK

We play hardball.

INT. PAYNE'S RESIDENCE. LIVING ROOM.

Burt Payne stands in front of the mantle of the fireplace. Alexis Payne stands with her back to him, crying. Burt swallows his drink whole.

BURT  
Geezus, I can't believe it.

ALEXIS  
Neither could I... But then, I--

BURT  
(Softly:)  
I'll find a nice family...

ALEXIS  
No Burt. Please. I...

She approaches him.

ALEXIS  
(continuing)  
You know I've always wanted children,  
a child.

(She pleads:)  
You don't know what it's like with  
nothing to fill my hours. I get so  
lonely waiting, always waiting for  
you and oh Burt--

BURT  
Baby, I know but--

ALEXIS  
Couldn't you think of it as me? Don't  
you love me enough?

BURT  
You know I do but--

ALEXIS  
Think of it as mine, ours. Let me  
have this, baby...

EXT. RACETRACK. DAY.

Guy and Barry approach a small, short man, STILTS, who is  
flashily dressed and wearing two inch heels. Stilts stands

in the midst of two other men.

A race concludes and Stilts and his friends slap each other on the back as the loudspeaker announces the winner.

Guy points Stilts out and he and Barry approach. The men shake hands. Barry holds up a picture of Alexis Payne.

STILTS

Sure, I seen her that night. The  
looker with a price tag. No one knew  
how high.

Stilts shakes his head disparagingly.

STILTS

(continuing)

The broad picks up this poor bastard,  
takes him home and then when Daddy  
pops in, she cries rape. Broads.

BARRY

Would you be willing to testify?

STILTS

Testify?

(Enlightened:)

Geezus, am I swift. Ain't that what  
got Hal killed?

BARRY

We don't think so.

STILTS

Yeah right. You don't think so.

(He scoffs:)

And I'm like the fucking king of  
sheba. Take a hike, Mister. I ain't  
ready to cash out now...

EXT. BUSY STREET.

Lou approaches a MAN, eating a hot dog at a stand. He shows a picture of Alexis Payne. The man looks alarmed, shakes his head and rushes away, bumping into a passerby.

Lou calls after him but he disappears.

INT. A CROWDED BAR. NIGHT.

Smoke fills the place. The patrons look like a rough bunch of drinking, gambling MEN. Barry approaches two MEN at the bar. He orders drinks for them, motioning with his hands as he sets four twenties on the counter alongside Alexis Paynes picture. The men take one look, toss down some cash to pay for their drinks and exit.

INT. HALLWAY OF APARTMENT BUILDING.

Barry knocks on door. A middle aged WOMAN answers. She calls her husband, MARTY, who comes to the door.

MARTY

I got nothin' to say to you.

BARRY

You and the rest of the world. Things are locked up so tight, I couldn't get directions to a diner. Come on Marty, you owe me.

MARTY

I owe Jack--

BARRY

Same difference. Just tell me who put the word out.

Marty looks down the empty hallway.

MARTY

You remember, Dick Chasin--

BARRY

Chasin? I got him off racketeering charges last year--

MARTY

(With contempt:)

I thought you just looked dumb. You

got him off?

BARRY

Well, the DA lost some witnesses--

Barry stops with sudden comprehension; he looks distraught.

BARRY

(continuing)

Are you trying to tell me--

MARTY

I ain't trying to tell you nothing  
but that Chasin' says the next time  
it won't look like suicide. And if I  
was trying to figure this thing out,  
I would understand real clear that it  
ain't the PD's office that Chasin  
feels friendly towards.

(With a sarcastic  
pretense:)

Now, if you don't mind, me and the  
wife got things to do.

WIFE

Don't get me excited...

INT: PD'S OFFICE. LATE.

Alone with Jack, Jessy hangs up the phone and claps her hands.

JESSY

Lou found someone willing to testify!  
A man who saw them at the bar.

JACK

Finally!

JESSY

I should meet him tomorrow. Now, I  
just need one more thing...

Jack stares at Jessy, who seems lost to thoughts of the case.  
She abruptly perceives his stare. Her breath catches.

JESSY

(continuing)  
Jack... I--

JACK  
Here, it's getting late. I'll give  
you a lift home.

INT. JACK'S CAR. NIGHT.

Jessy stares at him as he drives.

JESSY  
I have to ask. I'm tryin' like the  
devil to resist somethin' here and I  
think if I know it will help.

JACK  
(Quietly:)  
Shoot.

JESSY  
Why did you marry Susan?

Jack pulls the car over and stops the engine as he struggles  
to answer.

JACK  
Susan's father was one of my  
professors at Harvard.

JESSY  
Oh?

JACK  
(nods:)  
I started working for him after  
school, before I really knew what I  
wanted to do. I would see Susan at  
dinners and parties. She was so shy  
and quiet and well, awkward somehow.  
I felt sorry for her.

JESSY  
You... married Susan because you felt  
sorry for her?

JACK

Not exactly... It was shortly after  
my mother died.

Jack's pause conveys his love for his mother.

JACK

(continuing)

She had raised me alone and I guess  
she was nothing special to anyone  
else--

JESSY

But you loved her.

JACK

I was so wracked with grief, I wasn't  
thinking. I tried to keep working,  
to bury myself but... I stopped off  
at Susan's house to drop off some  
paper work. No one was home but  
Susan and somehow... She was so  
sympathetic. I shouldn't have...

Jack pauses, this is painful.

JACK

(continuing)

When she told me she was pregnant, I  
thought it wouldn't matter at first,  
that in time I would come to care for  
her.

JESSY

And do you?

JACK

(He nods:)

Very much.

Jessy stares quietly at him.

JESSY

It didn't help.

JACK

Jessy, don't lead me here if--

She shakes her head.

JACK

(continuing)

I have nothing to offer you--

JESSY

If only that were true.

They kiss.

INT. JESSY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Jessy and Jack lay in bed after making love, wrapped in an intimate, sleepy embrace.

JESSY

(Dazed;)

How did we get here? I don't remember getting here.

JACK

I think I carried you most of the way.

(pause:)

I remember this one night. On the front lines. Things were looking pretty bad, I guess and a couple of the guys started questioning this old reverend. He tried to explain his faith, this one religious experience he had, hoping, I guess to restore our faith. He finally decided it was impossible to put a religious experience into words, that any attempt would only fail. I never knew what he meant until now...

Jack turns her over, kisses her.

JESSY

Jack, what are we going to do?

JACK

Savor every blessed moment...

INT: JESSY'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Jack holds Jessy as they sit at a window seat, wrapped in blankets, staring at the moon. Two glasses of cognac stand on the window sill.

JACK

...a neighborhood dog knocked over our garbage can and I went out to pick it up. Inside were dozens of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, all this unwrapped meat, butter, a half dozen eggs, flour mix.

JESSY

I don't understand?

JACK

Neither do I. She must think something's wrong with food, so she throws it out. So many warning bells. Lisa was getting these red splotches all around her head--it finally came out that Susan was washing her hair three times a day.

JESSY

Oh Jack.

JACK

It seems like every other night I wake up and find her mopping a clean kitchen floor in the middle of the night. She'll say she can't sleep, that she just thought she'd work until she got tired.

JESSY

I knew there was something wrong but... I just never imagined. You always seem like you're coping--

JACK

Inside I'm scared. No, terrified. I think I'd rather face enemy platoons again than open my own front door.

JESSY

She needs help, Jack. A doctor--

JACK

(He nods.)

I've made arrangements. As soon as she returns tomorrow.

JESSY

I'll help you through this.

Jack kisses her.

JACK

You already have...

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE. DAY.

Jessy sits at the kitchen table, drinking coffee as Laurie clears the breakfast dishes.

JESSY

Jack thinks it's Payne who has that

man, Chasin threatening all my potential witnesses. We've got a detective working with Barry, trying like the devil to get a lead on this fellow.

LAURIE

Anything so far?

JESSY

Nothing. I'm meeting the man who finally agreed to testify but Lou says he's a drunkard and somehow he just hasn't heard the rumors about Hal yet.

LAURIE

Henry says you still need something more.

JESSY

If you were on the jury, would you believe Mrs. Payne? That she just happen to stop in there and see the fellow who had been fixing her roof, say hello and then leave? Or would you believe the questionable testimony of--

LAURIE

An old drunk man? The truth?

Jessy nods as Laurie clears the breakfast dishes.

LAURIE

(continuing)

I think I'd believe her.

JESSY

Shoot. You and everyone else.

(To herself:)

If I could just find one other person to give me the details. Something that would prove my client is tellin' the truth.

LAURIE

You know where I come from, if you want the down and dirty on folks, you have only to talk to their servants.

JESSY

Servants?

Jessy suddenly sets her cup down, grabs her briefcase and jumps up. She takes Laurie's arm, clasping it with affection.

JESSY

(continuing)

You just saved my life!

Henry finally comes in.

JESSY  
(continuing)  
Henry, Laurie is a living doll!

Jessy rushes out the door, leaving a confused Henry looking at his wife.

LAURIE  
I like her. I like her a lot.

EXT. THE PAYNE RESIDENCE. DAY.

Jessy knocks on the door. The Payne's housekeeper, ROSA FRANCIS, an older Italian woman, opens the door.

JESSY  
Hello, my name is Jessy Browner. I'm  
an attorney. I was wondering if I  
might--

Rosa starts to shut the door. Jessy stops it with her foot.

ROSA  
Senora, no home right now.

JESSY  
Actually, I was hoping to speak to  
you. You see, I'm representing Jim  
Michaels, who Mrs. Payne has claimed  
assaulted her--

ROSA  
No, no...

Rosa casts an anxious glance behind her.

ROSA  
(continuing)  
This is no good. I cannot be talking  
to you.

Rosa slams the door. Jessy knocks again and again but Rosa doesn't answer.

INT. PAYNE'S RESIDENCE. SAME TIME.

Rosa stands at the door, nervously listening to Jessie call her from outside, glancing back through the hall.

EXT. PAYNE'S RESIDENCE. SAME TIME.

The door suddenly opens. Alexis Payne stands there.

ALEXIS

What do you want?

JESSY

I want what every lawyer wants, Mrs. Payne. A fair trial. You were lying about your women's club. You were lying about meeting Mr. Michaels. It makes me wonder what else are you lying about--

ALEXIS

Get out of here! Get out of here!

She slams the door shut.

JESSY

An innocent man's going to go to jail Mrs. Payne! Don't you care about that?

Jessy kicks the ground in frustration and turns away.

EXT. PAYNE'S RESIDENCE. A HALF HOUR LATER.

Alexis Payne opens the door and all dressed up, she heads for the garage. Jessie watches from a hiding place as Alexis Payne leaves. Jessie heads for the house again and knocks on the door. Rosa answers, takes one look and starts to shut the door. Jessie stops her.

JESSY

I need help, Mrs. Francis. An innocent man is going to go to jail

for the rest of his life if you don't help me!

ROSA  
I cannot help you--

JESSY  
You know things, maybe you know everything. He's innocent, isn't he? How can you let him go to jail, maybe for the rest of his life, knowing you might have saved him?

ROSA  
I... I don't want nobody to go to jail but I cannot help!

Rosa slams the door on Jessy...

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. LISA'S BEDROOM.

Jack puts Lisa to bed, tucking her in. He kisses her cheek.

LISA  
Daddy, you won't send us away again?

Taken aback by this, Jack shakes his head, smiles.

JACK  
Never again. Not until you want to go. From now on I'll let you decide, okay?

She smiles and falls asleep. Jack leaves the room and stops in Jimmy's room.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM.

Jimmy lays in bed, staring out his window. Jack sits down on his bed, removes Jimmy's baseball cap and sets it on the table.

JIMMY  
Is mom in trouble?

JACK

I don't know. I think.... I think something's wrong. We're going to go visit a doctor and he'll help us understand what's wrong and what we can do to fix it, okay?

Jimmy nods and Jack kisses him.

JACK

(continuing)

I love you, Jimmy...

INT. KITCHEN. SAME TIME.

Susan sits at the kitchen table, hugging herself and rocking slightly. She forces a smile as Jack comes in but there is a nervous edge to her voice.

SUSAN

You were absolutely right, Jack. I needed to get away for a few days, to put things in perspective. I feel much better now.

JACK

Susan, I want you to see this doctor--

SUSAN

But I'm fine now. Really. All I want to do is get the house straightened up and go back to normal. I don't need to see a doctor.

JACK

Susan, even your parents are worried now--

With escalating emotion, Susan snaps.

SUSAN

I can't bare the idea of telling perfect stranger details of my life, I just can't bare it! I can't bare

even going to his office!

She hugs herself, clutching her sides tightly.

SUSAN  
(continuing)

Please Jack, don't make me. Give me another chance. It's just that I'm more strict with the children than you are. You don't know what it's like here. They're always getting into things, getting dirty and all their chatter--

Jack takes her by the shoulders. Susan looks to where he's touching her, unable to control the look of horror on her face. Jack follows her gaze. His hands drop. He stares. She backs up, hugging herself.

JACK  
You need help, Susan and I'm going to get it for you.

Jack leaves Susan in the kitchen. Desperation marks Susan's face and manner as she turns on the hot water and starts washing her hands...

INT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

People pack the courtroom. Mr. Payne sits on the witness stand. Patrick Ross questions him.

MR. PAYNE  
I heard her crying from outside. I pulled out my gun and ran inside, up the stairs to the bedroom. There he was on the bed, getting dressed, while my wife laid crumpled in the corner, hysterical. I should have shot the bastard!

INT. COURTROOM. LATER.

A police sargent sits at the witness stand, pointing to Jim

Michaels.

SARGENT

I recognized Michaels right off from  
a past arrest. Grand theft auto...

Jack sinks with dismay, shaking his head. He and Jessy  
confer in heated whispers.

JESSY

He took his step father's car! It  
was just a kid thing. The charges  
were dropped--

JACK

Unfortunately, the jury didn't hear  
that part...

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE. TWILIGHT.

Rain hits the window outside. Jack sits across a desk from  
a middle aged doctor, distinguished by his white coat.

DOCTOR

Your wife is suffering from what we  
call obsessive--compulsive illness.

JACK

I'm not sure I understand exactly  
what that means?

The doctor stands, paces as he explains.

DOCTOR

Basically, we all have  
characteristics of this disease to  
varying degrees: The compulsion to  
organize a desk drawer, or to read a  
newspaper in a certain order, the  
regimented order with which we go  
about personal grooming habits. These  
are all normal means people use to  
reduce anxiety.

JACK

But what Susan does is not normal?

DOCTOR

No, it's not normal at all. Your wife suffers from an inordinate amount of anxiety. She uses the obsessive cleaning as the only means she knows of reducing it, of gaining a measure of control over the anxiety. And Susan's compulsions have been escalating for some time. Right now, she's reached the point where the cleaning has stopped reducing her anxiety. Which, in turn, forces her to repeat it and repeat it, until pain or exhaustion overcome the compulsion.

JACK

But she has to stop--

DOCTOR

I'm afraid she can't. Let me put it this way: it has become her only means of maintaining what is a very poor grip on her sanity. She needs help, Mr. Mason and even with help, I'm afraid the prognosis is not good for someone suffering the severity of her illness...

EXT. JESSY'S APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT.

Rain pounds the pavement. Two middle aged men, CHASIN and JC wait under an awning.

JC

You ever rough up a woman before?

CHASIN

Once or twice.

JC

Doesn't sit right with me.

CHASIN  
(Smiles:)  
Geezus, a conscience.

Chasin removes his gun, checks it.

CHASIN  
(continuing)  
Haven't seen one of those in years.

JC  
We just scare her, right? Put her  
away for a bit, right?

CHASIN  
Yeah, yeah. Come on. No one's pays me  
to talk about it...

INT. POLICE CAR. NIGHT.

Pete and Rick pull up to the curb and get out, laughing.  
Rick carries a bag of food, while Pete carries three coke  
bottles.

INT. JESSY'S APARTMENT BUILDING.

Rick and Pete climb the stairs to Jessy's apartment.

RICK  
All I'm saying is if I were in  
trouble I'd want her on my side.

PETE  
Well sure. If only to look at while  
you was waitin' for the noose...

INT. LANDING ON STAIRS.

Chasin and JC spot the cops and duck inside a doorway as Pete  
and Rick pass.

INT. JESSY'S BATHROOM.

Wearing peddle pushers and a sweater, holding a law book and a file, Jessy runs a bath. The doorbell rings. She turns off the water and goes to answer the door.

INT. JESSY'S APARTMENT.

Jessy opens the door to see Rick and Pete.

JESSY  
Hi fellows!

RICK  
You're suppose to ask who it is  
before you answer, young lady!

JESSY  
Why should I when I know my favorite  
officers are around, watching out for  
me?

Rick and Pete smile at this vote of confidence.

PETE  
Here, we brought dinner.

JESSY  
Grilled cheese sandwiches, fries and  
cokes. What dolls!

A nosy NEIGHBOR opens her door and peers out.

JESSY  
(continuing)  
Hi, Mrs. Hall!

The neighbor quickly shuts the door in embarrassment.

JESSY  
(continuing; laughs:)  
I get the distinct feeling she  
doesn't approve of young ladies  
livin' alone.

INT. JESSY'S LIVINGROOM.

Jessy, Rick and Pete eat the sandwiches at the small table, discussing Jessy's case.

PETE

This reluctant witness. You sure she knows something?

JESSY

I'm almost positive. She just won't tell me.

PETE

There's a reason.

RICK

Scared, maybe. Try to find out what's stopping her.

Jessy contemplates this.

PETE

Take care of that and you've got yourself a witness.

INT. JESSY'S LIVINGROOM.

Jessy says goodbye to Pete and Rick as she eats the sandwich.

RICK

Now, we aren't going until we hear this door lock.

The door shuts. Jessy locks it before turning away.

INT. JESSY'S LIVINGROOM.

The water runs. The door knob jiggles ever so slightly. The door opens.

INT. JESSY'S BATHROOM.

Pulling off her sweater for the bath, Jessy stops upon hearing the doorbell.

JESSY  
Grand Central Station...

She makes her way into the livingroom. Chasin and JC hide in the shadows. She starts to open it but stops.

JESSY  
(continuing)  
Who's there?

JACK  
Jack.

JESSY  
Jack!

Jessy swings open the door and Jack steps inside. They fall into an embrace. Emotionally desperate after the visit to the psychologist, Jack kisses Jessy passionately. Jessy breaks the kiss but remains close.

JESSY  
(continuing)  
Wait. Wait. Let me get the bath water.

Jessy disappears into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM.

After stopping the bath water, Jessy starts to come out of the bathroom but takes one look: Jack's arms raise in the air and Chasin has a gun to his back. Jessy meets Jack's gaze, a message passes between them in the instant and Jessy slams the bedroom door shut, locking it. She runs to the closet. A mitt, bat and ball sit neatly beneath her clothes. She grabs the bat and rushes back to the door just as JC busts it open.

Jessy swings the bat against his head. A sickening crack sounds. JC falls to the floor.

Jack simultaneously turns on Chasin, sending his elbow hard into Chasin's stomach and doubling him over. Chasin's gun

drops. Chasin goes to retrieve his gun. Jack smashes his hand and punches him. Chasin tackles Jack's legs and sends Jack to the ground. Chasin goes for his gun again, retrieves it and aims to shoot Jack. Coming from behind him, and with bat firmly in hand, Jessy slams the bat against Chasin's head. Chasin goes down.

Jessy's door bursts open and officers Pete and Rick appear, guns drawn.

INT. HOSPITAL. NIGHT.

Henry and Jessy wait impatiently outside the hospital room. Jack and Barry finally appear with Rick.

JESSY

Did you get anything?

BARRY

Nothing. He says it was all Chasin's

plan, that he has no idea who hired the bastard. And with Chasin in a coma--

RICK

He also claims they were just going

to scare you a little--

Jessy's distressed hand goes through her hair.

JESSY

Well, it worked.

JACK

Are you all right?

JESSY

As much as I can be after... after that.

BARRY

The funny thing is we'll probably end up having to defend the bastards.

Provide this bastard, Chasin ever ah,  
recovers.

JESSY

What do the doctors say?

JACK

They don't know. Could go either  
way. I doubt we're get anything out  
of him if he does recover.

JESSY

If only we could link him to Payne...

While Jessy ponders this, Jack looks to the other men,  
motioning to leave. Barry, Rick and Henry step away.

JACK

I'm taking you off the case.

JESSY

What?

JACK

It's too dangerous.

JESSY

Oh but Jack--

JACK

Maybe you didn't get their message  
but I did.

JESSY

The only reason Payne decided to give  
me a message is because I am doing a  
damn good job.

JACK

They could have killed you!

JESSY

But they didn't! And do you think for  
one moment Payne wouldn't have done  
the same thing to Barry, or Lou or  
Henry?

JACK

It's not the same, Jessy.

JESSY

It's exactly the same.

(Pause:)

It just doesn't feel the same. And  
that's something you have to get over.

Jack struggles to accept this.

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Patrick and KATHERINE ROSS, an attractive forty year old woman, Bert and Alexis Payne sit at a table in the upscale restaurant. Jack stands at the bar, watching, waiting for the ladies to leave. Alexis and Katherine get up from the table and in a pretense of shared laughter, they head for the restroom together. Jack approaches the table.

PATRICK

Jack!

JACK

Pat.

PATRICK

Well, what a surprise! Burt, this is  
Jack Mason from the PD's office.

Jack nods but says nothing.

BURT

The PD's office?

(With scorn:)

Where that woman works.

JACK

Just the subject of my visit. That  
woman. I came to pass some  
information about her to you, Mr.  
Payne.

BURT

Believe me, I know everything I need

to know about her.

In one swift movement, Jack swoops down and lifts Burt Payne from his seat, choking him.

JACK

No, you don't. You know what we call a pop and lock case?

Patrick looks alarmed, Burt confused.

JACK

(continuing)

Tell him what that is, Pat.

Patrick hesitates.

JACK

(continuing)

I said tell him.

PATRICK

A pop and lock is murder one with no ambiguity, no defense. Defendant goes straight to jail.

JACK

And it's exactly what will happen to me, if anything happens to her. Anything--so much as a misplaced hair on her head, because, you see, I will kill you personally.

Jack releases Burt, who is red faced and outraged.

JACK

(continuing)

This is not a warning. It's a fact. We'll see you both in court tomorrow.

Jack exits and as he leaves he overhears:

BURT

What the hell is wrong with those people? They're fucking crazy...

INT. COURTROOM. DAY.

People pack the courtroom. Mrs. Payne sits on the witness stand. Patrick Ross questions her. Jim Michaels sits along side Jessy and Jack at the defense table. Henry, Carol, Debbie and Barry sit behind the defense table. Mr. Payne holds his head in his hands as his wife tells her story.

PATRICK

You were in the kitchen of your own home and you looked up and saw the defendant, Mr. Michaels. What happened then?

ALEXIS

He startled me! At first I thought there must be a mistake, that he must have forgotten some tools or something... but--

Alexis covers her mouth with a hand, visibly distraught.

PATRICK

We know this is very difficult, Mrs. Payne. What happened then?

ALEXIS

He grabbed my arm! I screamed and he covered my mouth and I couldn't breathe... I couldn't breathe and he--

Alexis breaks down.

ALEXIS

(continuing)

He raped me.

Patrick turns to the accused.

INT. COURTROOM.

Jessy stands before Alexis Payne in the witness stand.

JESSY

Mrs. Payne, would you mind telling the jury what you were doing as the defendant repaired your roof that day?

ALEXIS

I don't know. I suppose... well, I was helping Rosa, my housekeeper.

JESSY

Is that all? Did you take a swim at all, perhaps take a break to sunbathe?

ALEXIS

Well, I--

She looks to Patrick, who nods almost imperceptibly.

ALEXIS

(continuing)

Yes, I seem to recall that.

JESSY

And did you remove the top portion of your swimsuit?

ALEXIS

I did not!

JESSY

I would remind you, Mrs. Payne, you are under oath--

PATRICK

(Jumps up.)

Objection!

INT. COURTHOUSE. SAME DAY.

Jessy continues interrogating Alexis Payne.

ALEXIS

He carried me up the stairs to the bedroom.

JESSY

You were screaming then?

ALEXIS

I... yes. I don't remember.

JESSY

Which is it, Mrs. Payne?

ALEXIS

(Distressed, emotional:)

It's all a nightmarish blur in my mind. I must have been screaming...

JESSY

Yet, your housekeeper Rosa, never heard you?

ALEXIS

She was in her apartment. It's away from the house...

INT. COURTHOUSE. SAME DAY.

Jack rubs Jessy's leg under the table, a gesture of sympathy as the judge slams the gavel and adjourns the court. Jessy angrily watches Mr. Payne rush forward to help his wife down. Everyone rises. Two policemen lead Jim Michaels away in handcuffs. Jessy's co-workers gather round her and Jack, all shaking their heads in obvious dismay.

JESSY

That woman ought to get an academy award! I've never seen anyone so competent at delivering perfectly manicured bold faced lies! I almost believed she just happened to find herself in the bar to make a phone call.

JACK

She was... believable, to say the least.

Lou rushes in from outside and quickly approaches the group.

LOU

Bad news. I lost the bastard.

JACK

Our only witness? Our only living witness?

Lou nods guiltily.

LOU

The man was running pretty scared when he finally heard, I mean the rumors about Hal. Word on the street--

BARRY

How did you lose him?

LOU

He hit the can. Never came out.

BARRY

The oldest trick in the book--

JESSY

(Confused:)

But he'll testify, won't he? He's under subpoena...

They shake their heads. Jessy absorbs this and abruptly slams her briefcase shut.

JESSY

(continuing)

They can't do this. I won't let them. Payne came after me. He wanted to scare me. Because...because I was getting close.

Jessy leaps up and rushes out.

BARRY

Hey! Where you going?

JESSY

To talk to the only one who can save

me now, the whole reason they're afraid.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF PAYNE'S RESIDENCE. TWILIGHT.

Jessy gets out of a cab. Looking both ways for any sign of the Paynes, she hurriedly makes her way up the long, tree shaded driveway and slips down a path that leads to the servant's quarters. Opera music sounds from inside. Jessy knocks on the door. Rosa answers. Rosa tries to shut the door but Jessy pleads. Rosa looks in both directions and pulls Jessy inside.

INT. THE SERVANTS QUARTERS. SAME TIME.

Rosa steps inside the small kitchen, putting her back to Jessy.

JESSY

If you don't testify an innocent man is going to jail for the rest of his life! How could you live with that?

ROSA

I no like what she did but I will lose my job--

JESSY

I'm sure you can get another job. I could find you another job. How much do they pay you?

ROSA

Huh! Marguerite works for the Monroes, next door. She gets twice as much and they treat her like she is a human being.

JESSY

(Confused:)

But I don't understand, Rosa. If the Paynes don't deserve you--

ROSA

This is the truth! She is a bad one,

Mrs. Payne. Last month, before this trouble happen, I ask real nice for a week off to be with my daughter, Tina, for her first baby--I no even ask for pay!--but Mrs. Payne say no. I try to say eve the first baby. She says she will re pry daughter needs her mama when she hasort me and I will be deported. Then, I will never see Tina and her little Rosa--

JESSY

Report you? You mean...

ROSA

I no have papers to be in this country. I feel bad for that young man. I feel bad for Mr. Payne. She is a bad woman but I can not help him--

JESSY

What did she do to Mr. Payne?

Frightened, Rosa waves her hands in dismissal.

ROSA

I say too much already.

JESSY

Listen to me, Rosa. I can help you. First of all, those papers you need, immigration papers. I know just how to get them. Well, I can find out...

EXT. PATRICK ROSS'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Rain falls over an old style mansion. Lights appear in the downstairs. Jessy and MRS. ROSS, an attractive forty year old woman, appear through a window, sitting in a parlor. Jessy holds a tea cup, Mrs. Ross a drink. Jessy listens intently, disturbed as they finally rise.

EXT. PATRICK ROSS'S HOUSE. FRONT ENTRANCE. SAME TIME.

The front door opens. Jessie steps outside and opens an umbrella. Mrs. Ross hugs her drink as she stares into the rain filled night.

MRS. ROSS

I love the way the rain washes away  
the dirt and grim and dead leaves.  
Things always look better after a  
good storm.

Jessie pauses upon hearing this and nods.

JESSY

Thank you so much for confiding, Mrs.  
Ross, and for understanding what I  
have to do.

Jessie starts away but stops and turns.

JESSY

(continuing)

Why have you stayed with him all  
these years?

MRS. ROSS

He's all I have. He's all I ever had.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Susan sits at the kitchen table. She appears anxious, pale, thin. Her clasped, gloved hands rests on her lap beneath the table. She stares at a tiny spot on the table top as Jack speaks.

JACK

Is there any way I can help you,  
Susan? Maybe if we get some help  
with the children--

This startles Susan but her eyes quickly return to the spot on the table.

SUSAN

I think I can manage my own children.

JACK

Well, okay. I'll--

Lisa appears in her pajamas. Sleepily, she goes to Jack, who picks her up and kisses her.

JACK

(continuing)

Hi, sleepy head.

LISA

I had a nightmare...

JACK

What kind of nightmare?

LISA

Monsters. You can't see 'em but they were all over.

JACK

The bad monsters are gone now. I chased them away.

After kissing her, Jack sets Lisa down and looks at his watch.

JACK

(continuing)

Shoot, I've got to go. We've got a big court day today, a real doomsday.

You be good for your mother, all right? Susan call me, if you need anything...

Jack rushes out. Lisa watches as her mother rises and gets a bucket. Susan removes the bleach and mixes bleach and hot water. She begins scrubbing the table top. Lisa slowly slips from the kitchen.

EXT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

Jessy and Henry race up the steps late, where Lou and Barry wait.

HENRY

Disclosure could be a problem. The judge might not let her testify. I've got all the case law going in your direction but there aren't many--

Henry hands her sheets of paper, which Jessy takes without missing a step as they rush into the court building.

JESSY

She has to testify, she just has to.

INT. COURTROOM. DAY.

People fill the courtroom.

JUDGE

Is counsel prepared to present the defense?

JESSY

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE

Very well. You may call your first witness.

JESSY

The defense calls Mrs. Rosa Francis.

The prosecution team, including Patrick Ross, turn in shock. Mr. Payne absorbs this, before casting a questioning look at his wife. Alexis Payne shoots an uncertain, frightened gaze to Patrick as Rosa makes her way to the stand.

PATRICK

Objection, your honor! The defense failed to list this witness--

JUDGE

Counsel will approach the bench.

Jessy and Patrick approach the bench.

JESSY

You honor, the witness was there the day Mrs. Payne accused my client of this heinous crime. She must be allowed to testify--

PATRICK

I object--

JUDGE

This is highly unorthodox, Miss Browner. Why wasn't the witness brought forward earlier?

JESSY

She just came forward last night. She's Italian. She was afraid to testify, afraid it would lead to expulsion from the country. Once I assured her that it would not, she agreed to testify.

JUDGE

Seems reasonable to me, Pat.

PATRICK

Your honor, the courts have stipulated in Nolan vs--

JUDGE

For God sake, Pat, don't you go quoting case law to me. The law cuts both ways on this issue and you know it.

PATRICK

But your honor--

JUDGE

I don't see what your problem is anyway, Patrick. If she was there it seems she can only collaborate Mrs. Payne's testimony.

The judge slams gravel.

EXT. JACK'S HOUSE. DAY.

Lisa sits in the backyard. Three dolls and stuffed animals sit behind her, appearing to watch as Lisa makes a sail boat out of a paper cup and sets this in a puddle. She spots the hose and jumps up. Her hands and knees are dirty. Excited, she runs to the facet and turns the hose on to make more mud.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Susan cleans the kitchen, attacking imagined germs. With disheveled hair and pale coloring, she methodical scrubs the floor...

INT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

Jessy question Rosa on the witness stand.

JESSY

Mrs. Rosa, were you working at the Payne residence the day the defendant, Mr. Michaels repaired the roof?

ROSA

Yes.

JESSY

And did you see Mrs. Payne sunbathing that day at the pool in full view of where Mr. Michaels might see her?

ROSA

Yes.

JESSY

And what was Mrs. Payne wearing then?

ROSA

A bathing suit. I come out to ask her about lunch, and she has taken

the top off. She is naked for all eyes to see.

Courtroom rustles. Mr. Payne looks furiously at his wife, who stares straight ahead, numb to the waiting disaster.

JESSY

And then what happened?

ROSA

I do not know. I do not want to know. I go inside and do my work. Later Mr. Michaels leaves. Mrs. Payne got all dressed up and she leaves, too.

JESSY

Did she say where she was going?

ROSA

She only says I am all through. I ask what about dinner for Mr. Payne? She tells me he will be home at nine o'clock that night, and she will not be needing me for dinner.

JESSY

So, Mrs. Payne knew exactly when her husband was going to come home?

ROSA

Yes.

JESSY

Then what happened?

ROSA

Mrs. Payne waits in her car until he leaves and then, she follows him.

JESSY

What do you remember after that?

ROSA

They come back together, maybe a hour and half later. First Mrs. Payne's car and then Mr. Michaels' truck. She is happy and laughing like a school girl and Mr. Michaels carries

her inside like they are newly married.

Courtroom erupts nervously. Alexis hides her head. Mr. Payne stares stonily ahead, trembling with barely restrained rage.

JESSY

Mrs. Francis, are you telling us that Mrs. Payne invited Mr. Michaels back to the house?

Rosa stares at Mrs. Payne, Mr. Payne and suddenly Patrick Ross.

EXT. JACK'S HOUSE. DAY.

SUSAN

Lisa!

Lost in her play, immersed in mud, Lisa looks up with alarm. She looks down to see the mud covering her head to foot. The little girl's alarm changes to fear. She tries washing it off on her dress...

INT. COURTROOM. SAME TIME.

ROSA

She has a baby coming. The baby is not Mr. Payne's! She planned it, so she could blame her baby on the rape. So, Mr. Payne never knows about her and, and... Mr. Ross.

(She points to Patrick Ross:)

So, she can keep the baby--

Mr. Payne leaps to his feet. The judge slams the gavel furiously but it is too late. Mr. Payne removes a gun, leveling it on Patrick Ross. People scream and dive for the cover. Shots fire in quick succession. Patrick Ross falls. Mrs. Payne screams and rushes to her dead lover. Mr. Payne turns the gun on his wife. Jack leaps from behind to tackle him and they both go down. The gun shoots in the air. The bailiff rushes over to help Jack...

EXT. JACK'S HOUSE.

Lisa screams, terrified as she stands in her panties, while she is hosed off. The water turns off. A gloved hand grabs Lisa's hand and jerk her toward the house.

SUSAN  
You're filthy, you're filthy...

Susan leads Lisa to the front porch of the house.

SUSAN  
(continuing)  
You stay right there. Don't touch anything, don't touch anything!

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME TIME.

In a panic, Susan runs through the house to the laundry closet.

The closet doors are flung open, revealing immaculate shelves. She removes a half dozen carefully folded towels. These she carefully sets on the carpet, creating a trail from the front door into the bathroom.

EXT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Terrified, Lisa shivers and cries in huge gulps. Susan grabs her hand.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Susan pulls Lisa over the towels to the bathroom. There she closes the door, locks it. The sound of rushing water mixes with a little girl's cries.

EXT. COURTHOUSE.

The police swarm in and out of the building. Ambulance

attendants lift Patrick Ross's body, now wrapped in a body bag, into an ambulance. People collect on the steps. News photographers snap pictures. Reporters, Henry, Lou and Barry surround Jessie and Jim Michaels. Jack stands with a group of policemen, who lead Mr. and Mrs. Payne away. Jack approaches Jessie and whispers.

JACK

I'll go down to the police station with the detectives, to clear up all their questions about Patrick Ross... I still can't believe Patrick did all that.

JESSY

Be sure to link Hal's murder to Mr. Ross and that Chasin fellow--

Jack nods.

JACK

I'll meet you back at our den with a bottle of champagne. Congratulations counselor.

Jack gently squeezes her arm and leaves. The reporters continue to question Jessie.

REPORTER

Miss Browner, was this your first case?

JESSY

My first big case--

Appearing upset, Carol dashes from across the street. She rushes up to Jessie and the group.

CAROL

Jessy, where's Jack? Little Jimmy's on the phone, crying. There's something terrible going on at his house--

EXT. STREET. POLICE CAR.

Jessy sits in the back seat of the police car with sirens blazing. Pete and Rick rush Jessy to Jack's house. The police car screeches to a stop in front of the house.

EXT. JACK'S HOUSE.

Jessy, Pete and Rick rush up to the house as Jimmy rushes out. Jessy gently grabs him by the shoulder and kneels down.

JESSY

Jimmy, darling, what's wrong?

JIMMY

Lisa is locked in the bathroom with mom. Lisa was screaming and now I don't hear anything. Mom won't answer me--

INT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Jessy, Pete and Rick dash into the house, rushing down the hall to the bathroom. Jessy pounds on the door.

JESSY

Mrs. Mason?! Mrs. Mason?!

Jessy stands back and the officers force open the door. Steam shades the view. The hot water still runs. Lisa lays unconscious on the floor, her red and blistered hands curled into a ball. Susan crouches in the corner, hugging herself. Jessy swoops down and lifts Lisa into her arms.

EXT. JACK'S HOUSE. SAME TIME.

Jack arrives by police car. He rushes inside.

INT. HOSPITAL.

Jessy holds Lisa on her lap as Lisa studies the bandages wrapped around her burnt hands. Jimmy sits at her side, baseball glove in hand.

JIMMY

What's wrong with my mom?

JESSY

I don't know. Exactly. She... well, lost her mind. You know what that means?

Jimmy shakes his head.

JESSY

(continuing)

It's like... well, it's like if you took someone's thoughts, and you stirred them all up. All your mom's thoughts are mixed up. It made her do something that she didn't really mean to do.

Lisa stares intently at Jessy.

LISA

My mommy didn't mean it...

Jessy hugs her before gently brushing Lisa's hair from her face.

JESSY

No, she didn't. You must always remember that. She never meant to hurt you.

JIMMY

My dad said we're going to move now.

With sympathy and and sadness both, Jessy slips an arm around him and nods.

JESSY

To Boston. Your mother needs the best doctors. The best hospital. So she can get better.

JIMMY

But my dad has to go to work at his office?

JESSY  
(Distantly:)  
He'll go to work at another office.

JIMMY  
I guess we'll have to be Red Sox fans.

Jessy smiles at this.

JESSY  
They're a great team.

JIMMY  
(Tentatively:)  
Are you going to come, too? To help  
us?

JESSY  
Well, I...

INT. DOORWAY. NIGHT.

Light shines from behind the figures of Jessy and Jack as they say good--bye. Jack holds Jessy intimately, as he lovingly brushes his lips across her forehead.

JESSY  
I want to go with you. I feel like I  
ought to be going with you.

JACK  
Miss Browner, that's a most  
unexpected and I must say,  
uncharacteristic sentiment coming  
from you.

JESSY  
Don't tease me now, Jack.

JACK  
(Smiles sadly:)  
If you were to pack up and leave  
everything you've worked so hard for,  
everything you love so much and

follow me to Boston, I would never  
have fallen so desperately in love  
with you.

JESSY

But I can't say good--bye, Jack. I  
can't.

JACK

Don't then. Just kiss me, Jessy.  
Kiss me as if it's the last time you  
ever will...

INT. PD'S OFFICE.

Jessy rushes to Lou's desk, a law book in hand. She sets it  
in front of him, pointing something out. Lou appears  
surprised and comes to his feet as Henry and Barry join them.  
The four lawyers begin a lively discussion, interrupted when  
Jessy's phone rings and Debbie places two new files on her  
desk...

INT. LIBRARY.

Jessy and Henry sit a table, talking in heated whispers, law  
books spread open in front of them.

INT. SMOKE FILLED ROOM. NIGHT.

Jessy, Lou, Barry, Henry, Judge Hartman and two other  
gentlemen sit at a table playing cards.

INT. JAIL. DAY.

Jessy rushes through the jail, briefcase in hand. She  
exchanges a warm and friendly greeting with the guards. One  
guard leads her through to the interrogation room.

INT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

People crowd into the courtroom. The judge slams the gavel,

everyone sits. Jessy sits with a young man at the defense table.

JUDGE

How does the defendant plea?

Jessy and the defendant stand.

JESSY

Not guilty, your honor...

THE END

