

DEL MAR STRIP MALL

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**INT. THERAPIST MOLLY WALDEN'S OFFICE - DAY.**

Somewhere in Central Del Mar California.

RAY FRANKLIN, 28, 6'1, is sitting in the Therapist office with MOLLY WALDEN, 72, 5'2.

MOLLY

So, how was your last 2 weeks?

RAY

Thinking of all the legal professions I could have chosen, divorce was the obvious worse choice.

MOLLY

It is the one that pays the most.

RAY

Its non stop anger, yelling and misery of two people who used to be in love and now. They want to kill each other. Love becomes, who gets what in the divorce. Paying the lawyer times two.

MOLLY

So after 3 years, you have had enough?

RAY

I still live in Del Mar, which is a fortune. Training for some other Law job, will not be easy.

MOLLY

You have your whole life ahead of you. Maybe give it a little more time? From our last sessions, it seems that the people you work with are OK?

RAY

One bald guy who is a few years older than me, is a real egomaniacal jerk. Most of the other people are OK. Odds are the bald one will be fired. Nobody can stand him.

MOLLY

Your boss is OK?

RAY

He started the firm with his twin brother. His brother died in a car accident ten years ago. The other firm next to us in this strip mall, is criminal defense.

One line I remember from a movie "A Marriage Story" from 2019 was said by the late actor Ray Liotta.

"Criminal lawyers see bad people at their best, divorce lawyers see good people at their worst." Very true.

MOLLY

What a great line.

RAY

The screaming matches take a toll. The money does not seem to heal the wounds anymore.

MOLLY

Why would you think that being a defense lawyer would be better than this?

RAY

Less screaming matches.

Witnesses the final end, the destruction of true love. It drains you.

It could mean that based on all I have seen within depressing conference rooms, that I will always be too afraid to ever get married.

MOLLY

Does any other kind of law interest you other than defense?

RAY

I only considered defense as my only option.

MOLLY

You have more than enough time to make the right decision.

(MORE)

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Money is not everything. If you have a high paying job and you are miserable, what good is your life?

RAY

This is why I started seeing you a month ago. I can't seem to sleep or make any decision about what the hell I want to do.

MOLLY

The problem with being young and trying to pick a career path is that many of us are too young to make the right decision.

RAY

My problem will be, starting at the bottom again.

MOLLY

Get a great deal of sleep, that way you will be strongest when you are ready to make this decision.

You work out regularly, so that is good for the brain as well as the body. There is nothing easy about making a major life decision.

RAY

I have been agonizing over this for 4 months now.

MOLLY

Anyone would understand your desire for a change.

RAY

You would not believe what I have seen.

**INT. LAW OFFICE. FLASHBACK - DAY.**

Roland and Ferris Divorce Law firm.

Almost three years ago, Ray is sitting in a conference room with 2 colleagues, ROSS WILSON, 52 and AMY DOUGLAS, 39. They are discussing alternatives with a couple in the early stages of their divorce. The couple is JOHN DONOVAN, 42, and his wife ANN DONOVAN, 39. They have been married for 9 years. They have one five year old son.

AMY

Thank both of you for coming. This is our first meeting to determine if we can resolve your differences.

We do this here because we believe in trying to save the marriage first. Divorce should always be the last option.

Ross is in charge of mediation, and this is what we do in this firm that most other firms do not. To see if there is any way to resolve your problems without escalation. Ross?

ROSS

Thank you Amy. I am the mediation attorney with Roland and Ferris. We will all take notes to decide based on your discussion today if there is anyway to avoid a costly escalation.

Ray has just started in this firm, in our divorce department. He will be our note taker and recorder today.

RAY

Nice meeting everyone.

ANN

Nice to meet you.

RAY

You too. I hope we can help you today.

JOHN

We both hope that. Thanks.

Ann glares at John.

AMY

So to start. Ann, can you give us a short summary of what has been happening to bring you here to us?

ANN

He never listens to me, he is overly paranoid and jealous. For starters.

JOHN

I am not jealous. She just thinks I am. I listen to her all the time. Sometimes I come home so tired from work as a software developer, that all I want to do is sleep.

Sleeping because of hard work all day is not the same as not listening to someone. I have asked her to wait until I am alert and awake.

AMY

You are jealous that I make more money than you do as a registered nurse.

JOHN

Her job pays more, but I am not jealous.

ANN

You are jealous. I can see it on your face.

JOHN

So I make faces that your job is pays more?

ANN

Yes.

JOHN

What face?

Ann tries to make the face that John makes when he is jealous.

ANN

Its like he just ate a huge lemon.

JOHN

Really, is that what I do around you? Eat lemons because I think your job is better than mine?

ANN

We never have sex anymore.

JOHN

We don't for two reasons. I am too tired and when we both are not too tired, you never want to.

ANN  
That is not true.

JOHN  
Come on. Its been something like 5  
times in a row.

ANN  
It was twice.

JOHN  
Five.

ANN  
Two.

JOHN  
Five.

AMY  
This kind of thing, gets us nowhere  
close to a resolution.

ANN  
He called me an Ocean Buoy.

AMY  
Excuse me?

ANN  
I heard him talking on the phone to  
one of his asshole friends. He said  
I had a body and an ass like an  
Ocean Buoy.

AMY  
(To John). Did you?

JOHN  
No, not really.

AMY  
Not the answer we were looking for.

JOHN  
(To Ann). You should have told me  
you heard this.

ANN  
Why, so you could lie about it?

JOHN  
It was a stupid joke between guys.  
It meant nothing.

ANN

You are not exactly in perfect shape yourself.

JOHN

I have not let myself go. Like you have. Two years into our marriage and you gained 20 pounds at least.

ANN

That is not true.

JOHN

Did you even weigh yourself during this time?

ANN

No.

JOHN

Then how do you know? I can tell by looking at you. I offered to walk outside after dinner and you always said no.

ANN

Always my fault. And now I am an Ocean Buoy.

AMY

As you both know, if at the end of this meeting you both decide that this marriage is not worth saving, then one of you have to decide who stays with our law firm. We cannot take both of you, it is a conflict of interest.

ANN

I will leave then. I will find someone else.

JOHN

No that is OK. I will find someone else. Are we all done here? I have somewhere else to be. Anywhere else would better than here.

ANN

You got that right.

John gets up from the table and leaves the conference room.



END FLASHBACK.

CUT TO:

INT. THERAPIST MOLLY WALDEN'S OFFICE - BACK TO PRESENT.

RAY

That was three years ago. People who were so much in love and now so much hate. They didn't even try to stay together.

It has ruined by belief in true love.

MOLLY

Its time to talk to your boss. At the very least attending those divorce meetings with an angry couple is no longer for you.

RAY

I know already that there is no way I can go through a divorce. I don't have the emotional makeup.

MOLLY

Breakups and divorce are two of life's biggest challenges.

RAY

Divorce is an emotional and financial horror show. Either way, I would die of a stroke or a heart attack, even at my age.

MOLLY

Make a slow decision, nothing quickly. Take your time.

RAY

I have been reading books on defense law for a few months. This will not be easy.

My manager might not let me slowly transition. They have invested money in me. A comment I have heard far too often.

MOLLY

Being so depressed at work, is a recipe for failure and poor work performance.

RAY

One way or another, I am doing something next week.

MOLLY

That is our hour today Ray.

RAY

I will let you know what happens.

MOLLY

See you next time.

RAY

Two weeks?

MOLLY

Two weeks.

**EXT. DIVORCE LAW FIRM. DAY.**

Ray exits his car and walks up to a huge and very impressive series of office buildings, all connected as part of an outdoor strip mall.

**INT. DIVORCE LAW FIRM. DAY.**

8 AM. Ray walks into the law offices of Roland and Ferris. He is greeted by the office secretary, LAURA HAINES, 29.

LAURA

Hi Ray. Don is waiting for you.

RAY

Thank God I am on time.

LAURA

You are always very prompt.

RAY

Thank you.

They both smile at each other.

Ray walks into DON HAROLD'S office, Vice President, 51, brown hair, mustache. Don is sitting at his large mahogany desk.

DON  
Ray. Sit down.

Ray sits across from Don.

RAY  
Thank you.

DON  
I think I know why you wanted this meeting.

RAY  
You do?

DON  
After close to 3 years you want some divorce court experience. Even though normally this step takes two years, you have performed well enough so far for the next step early.

After talking with Herman, we both agree that you should have your shot at a court appearance in front of a Judge.

RAY  
I appreciate your confidence in me. But that is not my concern.

DON  
What then?

RAY  
It is the couples arguing, the anger and screaming matches and the petty nastiness. It has turned me off on love.

DON  
You are kidding? Why the fuck did you decide to take the legal divorce path in your career then?

RAY  
Two words. Young and stupid.

DON  
So what do you want to do now? Work at Walmart as a greeter?

RAY

I want to go across the isle to the other law office.

DON

Defense attorney?

RAY

Yes.

DON

So you think that dealing with white collar and criminal lowlife would be better than handling divorce cases?

RAY

Yes.

DON

We also get the occasional murderer you know. And sometimes they are guilty.

RAY

Yes I know.

DON

You need more legal education and certifications.

RAY

I have already started studying for that. It is something I will do regardless.

DON

Regardless of what?

RAY

Regardless of the decision here.

DON

Don't get me wrong. I have been where you are son. What are you 28?

RAY

Yes, just turned.

DON

I worked through it. The anger and rage you see from all of those divorcing couples is temporary.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

It fades eventually. Many of them find love again.

RAY

I cannot understand anyone who goes through that even one time, and then turns around and wants to go through it again.

DON

These are people who cannot stand to be alone, or care too much about what other people think.

I will talk to Steve in our neighbor firm, and see what Herman says. You are valued here. I will let you know.

RAY

Time frame?

DON

I would say a week. Send me an e-mail about your certification progress. And what you are studying. I assume, all online?

RAY

Yes.

DON

Thanks for letting me know. If your this miserable on your job every day, your job performance will degrade.

RAY

That is the main reason why I am here. The other reason is what I mentioned. Killing my belief in love.

DON

Do me a favor? Take today off, go home and just sleep OK?

RAY

I will do that.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE LAW FIRM. DAY.**

Some 10 minutes later.

Ray sees his friend ROSS REYNOLDS, 33 entering the building.

RAY  
John. Hi how are you?

ROSS  
Great! How are you?

RAY  
Can I talk to you privately about something?

ROSS  
Sure.

They walk over to a private area in the parking lot.

RAY  
Aren't you sick of these couples and all the depressing divorce. Screaming matches?

ROSS  
Its the job Ray. Part of what we do. Its a hard part of life and also the highest paying part of the legal profession.

RAY  
I know it is.

ROSS  
So, what problems are you having?

RAY  
It will be 3 years for me here in 3 months. I am getting very sick of this. I now know I made the wrong decision choosing this part of the legal profession.

ROSS  
You want to go over to criminal law, next door right?

RAY  
Yes.

RAY (CONT'D)  
What do you think?

ROSS

The reality of working for a living in this world is that if you are fucking miserable all day, over time, you will not be able to do a good job.

RAY

For me that is one reason. The other reason is Olivia. This job is making me scared of ever getting married.

ROSS

Never get married then. I have pretty much decided that myself. Seeing the fucking downside first hand inside that building.

The world is changing. People are learning from the bad experience of other people. If Brad and Angelina were a disaster, considering their luck money and top of the line good looks. Then is there hope for anyone?

RAY

I still hope there is. That is part of the problem.

ROSS

I like you man. We have had beers together, watched a few games. I wish you luck in this decision. However, tread very lightly.

As a lawyer we are taught to never ask a person on the stand, a question that you do not already know the answer to.

RAY

That is very good advice. Thank you.

Ray and Ross shake hands.

**INT. LOCAL RESTAURANT. NIGHT.**

It is Friday night, after work.

Ray is waiting in the lobby of a local restaurant. His girlfriend OLIVIA WATTS, 26, walks in.

Ray goes to hug Olivia

RAY  
How are you?

OLIVIA  
I am fine, how are you?

RAY  
I will say there is much to talk about.

OLIVIA  
You have me curious.

An attractive waitress walks over, KAREN SULLIVAN, 24.

KAREN  
Same as last time?

RAY  
Yes definitely.

Karen walks Olivia and Ray over to their table.

RAY (CONT'D)  
You look great as always.

OLIVIA  
I think I know what this dinner is about.

Ray turns to Karen.

RAY  
Our favorite bottle of red please.

KAREN  
You got it.

RAY  
Thank you.

OLIVIA  
Well?

RAY  
I had the big conversation.



OLIVIA

Its been about 4 months of deciding.

RAY

I just could not make a decision. It will be almost like starting over. I will have to be recertified and retrained.

OLIVIA

But you are miserable in divorce law?

RAY

Going for the money, was the wrong move three years ago. I learned this the hard way.

What good is making great money while being unhappy all the time.

OLIVIA

At least you made the move. What did Don say?

RAY

He said he would talk to Herman, and if all goes well, I will be working in Steve's firm.

OLIVIA

Are you sure this is where you want to be?

RAY

It better be. Changing my direction a 3rd time would be career-lawyer suicide.

OLIVIA

We spend a high percentage of our lives at work. Being miserable all of that time, is not an option.

RAY

The anger and arguments, the screaming. It was effecting my outlook on love.

OLIVIA

Nobody wants to see that every day.

I know divorce is a part of life,  
but this constant daily reminder  
was too much.

KAREN  
Are we ready to order?

Yes. I will have the chicken and pasta and a side salad.

I will have the same.

Will be right out.

Thank you.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Its been too long between dates.  
Over a week?

We are both so busy with our jobs.

How is the hospital?

The same, overly busy. More drug incidents than normal. Two long nights on emergency room duty.

Sorry to hear.

I have had my share of regrets and second thoughts. There have been many nights when I lose a great deal of sleep, thinking about something bad that happened at work.

I have huge respect for you, your profession and what you do all day to help people.

OLIVIA

You too.

RAY

Odds are you will have much more respect for what I do, after I move to criminal defense.

OLIVIA

Becoming a lawyer. The bar exam. So very hard Ray.

RAY

Being a nurse so rewarding and so important. I am so proud of you, all the time.

Ray leans over and kisses Olivia on her forehead.

OLIVIA

Please don't make me cry in public. Last time that happened, they had to clear the restaurant.

They both laugh.

RAY

Onward and upward. For both of us.

They click water glasses, as the waiter comes over with the wine and food.

RAY (CONT'D)

Wow, this looks. Pretty much like last time.

OLIVIA

Ray. We ordered the exact same thing last time.

RAY

That was my pathetic attempt at humor.

They both laugh.

Ray raises his wine glass.

RAY (CONT'D)

To us.

OLIVIA

Olivia clinks glasses with Ray.

Rays cell phone rings. He has a text message.

RAY

Wow.

OLIVIA

What is it.

RAY

Both Herman and Steve want to see me in Steve's office tomorrow at 8 AM.

OLIVIA

Is that good news or bad news?

RAY

I have no clue. Both of those guys? The meeting is in the criminal defense law firm, not my divorce firm.

OLIVIA

I think it sounds positive. They want to bring you along to the other side?

RAY

If they ask me legal questions about criminal law, I honestly don't know how much I will remember.

OLIVIA

They have to give you some time.

RAY

To be honest, I am nervous about Monday morning.

OLIVIA

The solution is to drink more wine.

RAY

Lets do that. The whole bottle?

OLIVIA

Maybe two.

They clink glasses.

**EXT. CRIMINAL LAW OFFICES. DAY.**

Monday morning, 8:30 AM.

Ray exits his car in front of the criminal law offices at the Del Mar Mall Law Offices.

**INT. CRIMINAL LAW OFFICES. DAY.**

Ray enters the mail lobby and is greeted by ALICE JONES, 39, the company secretary.

ALICE

Ray. Right on time. Nice to finally meet you. I have heard good things.

They shake hands.

RAY

Thank you. I have heard good things about you as well. I guess we keep missing each other.

ALICE

Herman and Steve are waiting for you in the Blue conference room. Right down the hall.

RAY

The good news is. Blue is my favorite color.

ALICE

I am sure that is good luck then!

Alice smiles as Ray walks down the main hallway.

Ray enters the Blue conference room and is greeted by Steve and Herman.

STEVE

Ray. Come in. Nice to finally meet you.

Ray and Steve shake hands.

HERMAN

Nice to see you again, Ray.

RAY

You too sir.

Ray and Herman shake hands.

STEVE

Have a seat.

Ray sits across from Herman and Steve.

STEVE (CONT'D)

So Don tells me that after over 2  
1/2 years you have figured out that  
being a divorce attorney is not for  
you?

RAY

Over time the horrible divorces,  
arguments and hatred has slowly  
degraded my belief in love.

STEVE

That being the case, why did you  
choose this end of the law then?

RAY

I had no way of knowing when I  
started that things would be as bad  
as this.

HERMAN

We both think you should have  
realized this day one. Divorce is a  
horrible business, but a big part  
of real life and it also happens to  
be just about the highest paying  
part of the legal profession.

RAY

I chose money over career  
satisfaction after the bar exam.

STEVE

So criminal defense law now?

RAY

Yes.

HERMAN

Are you sure?

RAY

Yes.

HERMAN

What would make us think that one or two years from now, once you interviewed some lowlife who committed some kind of a white or blue collar crime. You will have another change of heart?

RAY

With divorce very often these are good people turned into bad people because of the divorce. Criminal Defense Law is the reverse.

STEVE

Can you understand that from our perspective, this does not sound good.

RAY

It makes sense to me sir.

STEVE

The problem is, this is our law firm for the last 15 years.

We hired you to be a divorce attorney. Now you want to change over to Criminal Law after almost 3 years.

We have also invested a great deal of time and money to train you in Divorce Law.

HERMAN

The decision you made in law school after passing the bar exam is critical.

RAY

I was only 24 then. I think I was just too young to make that decision.

HERMAN

That is unfortunate.

STEVE

Don told us that you have been taking criminal law online courses.

RAY

Yes.

STEVE

For how long?

RAY

About six months.

STEVE

You started taking these courses when you decided that you want to switch to a different part of the legal profession?

RAY

Yes.

STEVE

Why did you wait this long to talk to us?

RAY

I wasn't sure.

STEVE

This is a problem. Can you see?

RAY

No sir.

STEVE

You make this decision. Then you contact us. Then we direct you about how long, the cost, etc?

RAY

I procrastinated because I knew it would be a huge change.

STEVE

This indecision worries us. It shows a level of immaturity.

RAY

Immaturity?

STEVE

How do we know that will not happen again? How do we know after a few bad meetings with a few bad people that you want to switch into some other law?



RAY

I am still finding myself. Some of those divorce arguments really threw me at times.

STEVE

At 28, still finding yourself?

RAY

Yes.

STEVE

Finding yourself, should be done when you are 24, when you passed the bar.

RAY

With all due respect. That is your opinion.

HERMAN

Did you expect to just take a few criminal justice online courses and be hired into a completely different law firm, that specializes in white collar criminal defense?

RAY

I thought that based on my years of outstanding work in the other firm that I would be a known quantity that would easily learn the ropes and succeed.

Many people change careers in their lives. What I know is that I find the work of a divorce attorney too depressing to continue.

HERMAN

You talk this over with your girlfriend?

RAY

Yes, and she agrees with this decision.

STEVE

You both should have thought this through. Changing direction in this profession is never easy.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

Unfortunately my company right now is not looking to hire beginning criminal defense lawyers.

HERMAN

You should have thought about this move longer. When you stick your neck out like this, its a good idea to know where your neck is going.

One of the fundamentals rules of being a lawyer. Never ask a question you do not already know the answer to.

RAY

Lets say this was a mistake. What are the alternatives?

HERMAN

Normally I would say, go back to what you were doing in my firm. But now we know that you hate this job. It depresses you and you are thinking it is hurting your relationship.

RAY

I will get over that. Continue to study criminal law for another year.

HERMAN

So for a year, you will be lagging in your job.

RAY

I have never lagged.

HERMAN

Don and I have both noticed that you are depressed, and not doing as well as a year ago.

RAY

I will fix that.

HERMAN

Exactly what anyone in your position would say.

RAY

What do you want me to say?

STEVE

You may have blundered your career away, along with the last almost 3 years.

RAY

Can we put this on pause? Think about this for a day or so?

STEVE

Herman and I will let you know.

HERMAN

Meeting over. I will call you in a day. For today, you have your job.

RAY

OK. Sorry about all of this.

Ray gets up and walks out of the conference room.

STEVE

One of the dumbest things I have ever seen a young lawyer do. Jesus Christ.

HERMAN

Some people in their 20s are just not mature enough to be adults.

Life is tough. Much of the legal profession is tough. Just passing the fucking bar exam, much less getting through college.

STEVE

What are we going to do here?

HERMAN

Honestly I do not know. Lets not make any decisions today, lets talk tomorrow. This is a young man's life and career.

STEVE

By making this rash move, based purely on emotion. It shows that his decision making is probably suspect.

HERMAN

I like the kid.

STEVE

I like him too. But we have cases  
to try and money to make.

HERMAN

I agree.

**INT. RAY'S APARTMENT IN DEL MAR. DAY.**

Some two hours later. Ray is looking out the window into the  
parking lot of his apartment building.

Ray's girlfriend Olivia is entering the building.

Ray presses the button for Olivia to enter.

Olivia quickly enters Ray's apartment.

OLIVIA

Ray. I came here as soon as I got  
your text.

RAY

It did not go well.

OLIVIA

What do you mean?

RAY

Herman and Steve. They seemed angry  
and at times, it looked like I  
might be fired.

OLIVIA

Fired?

RAY

Yes.

OLIVIA

My God. I knew we should have  
thought more about this.

RAY

What?

OLIVIA

Ray. You are a nice guy, and young.  
You don't seem to know sometimes  
how bad other people are.

RAY

I thought because my work was so highly regarded.

OLIVIA

They just probably don't want to train a new person. They want lawyers to hit the ground running. All people like this care about is making money.

RAY

I am really feeling bad.

Ray tries to hug Olivia.

Olivia pulls away.

RAY (CONT'D)

What are you doing? I really need a hug here. This is what being in love is sometimes. Being there for the other person.

OLIVIA

I just don't feel like hugging right now. Sorry Ray.

RAY

Sorry? I could lose my job.

OLIVIA

I told you from the beginning you should have thought this through.

RAY

You never said that. You were supportive when I brought this up a long time ago. Now, I don't know who you are.

OLIVIA

I did say that. You just were not listening.

RAY

I would have remembered. You said, many times that if I was so unhappy dealing with these horrible divorces then I should move to the other company.

OLIVIA

I said many other things too.

RAY

And now, when I need you desperately. I cannot even get a hug from you?

OLIVIA

I am sorry. I cannot just hug someone when I don't feel it.

RAY

Jesus Christ. If the shoe were on the other foot, I would be hugging you and giving you all the support I could give.

OLIVIA

You would?

RAY

Yes of course! I think you would know enough about me by now. You know I would.

OLIVIA

So you are saying, I am not a nice person like you?

RAY

That is not what I am saying.

OLIVIA

It sounds like you are. You messed up your career and now you want me to say it is all OK. That you did the right thing.

RAY

All I wanted was a hug.

OLIVIA

In this case, I don't think a hug will fix a mistake like this.

RAY

A mistake?

OLIVIA

Yes. A mistake.

RAY

We both agreed that because I was so depressed meeting all these divorced couples that.

OLIVIA

That what? I never said wreck your career.

RAY

The irony here.

OLIVIA

What irony?

RAY

You don't see it?

OLIVIA

See what?

RAY

I am afraid that living with so much divorce all day at work would destroy my relationship with you and when I try to save us by doing the right thing.

I find out who you really are. Your attitude when I need you most. This is what I get after all of the dates and love I thought we had?

OLIVIA

Irony? That is just stupid Ray.

RAY

Stupid? I see you who really are now. Someone who would have eventually shown me these true colors.

OLIVIA

Is that right.

RAY

Yes. That is right.

OLIVIA

I have other appointments today. I have to leave.

RAY

You do that. But do not ever come back. We are so obviously done.

Olivia gives Ray a glaring angry look.

OLIVIA

Fuck you!

Olivia leaves the apartment and slams the door behind her.

RAY

True colors. Maybe something good  
came out of this after all.

Ray goes to his kitchen and pours himself a Vodka.

**INT. THERAPIST MOLLY WALDEN'S OFFICE - DAY.**

One day later.

Ray is in another therapy session with Molly Walden.

RAY

I have not heard yet. Its been 2  
days. I am taking a few day off  
until Friday.

MOLLY

Why are they taking so long?

RAY

They are torturing me, is my guess.  
Its some kind of sick game to ice  
me, so I will be weaker when they  
make their decision.

MOLLY

Will you call them?

RAY

I can't. I have too much pride and  
aside from that. I am terrified. I  
just could have blown up my entire  
legal career.

MOLLY

They cannot fire you just for  
wanting to change your legal  
career.

RAY

I have looked into that. It is a  
card I will play if the time comes.

MOLLY

What about Olivia?



RAY

We broke up.

MOLLY

Ray. I am so sorry. Why?

RAY

Rather than supporting me in a decision we both decided. She ran for the hills when I told her I could be fired.

We discussed it many times. Then a screaming match and I ended this relationship.

The irony of me wanting to leave Divorce law for fear of ruining my relationship, ruined my relationship anyway! Its almost funny when you think about it.

MOLLY

So you think she showed you her true self?

RAY

Exactly what I said to her. This is why so many people get divorced. You can know someone for years and never fully know who they are.

MOLLY

Sometimes, the other person can be a bit too good at hiding who they really are. Maybe you got lucky.

RAY

I had to find out this way. That the woman I thought I loved for a year, was not who I thought she was. So much for love and support.

MOLLY

You may have dodged a bullet. When do you think you will hear from them?

RAY

They may be waiting until the end of my vacation on Friday and then lower the boom.

Ray starts to lose his composure.

RAY (CONT'D)

I have savings. If the worst does happen. How long will it take me to get another job?

MOLLY

I know you did the right thing. You wanted to do something else with your career.

RAY

I thought they would have reacted positively and helped me, because that is what I would have done. All of my reviews for almost 3 years were good or great.

MOLLY

In this case, you had to think like two CEO's of two law firms.

People like this, only care about the bottom line. Not about the problems of the people who work for them.

RAY

Where were you two weeks ago with this advice?

MOLLY

You had to learn this for yourself.

RAY

I have learned too much in the last few days. None of it good.

MOLLY

You have to think positively.

RAY

Losing my girlfriend, finding out who she really is. Possibly losing my job. I feel like I am falling off a cliff.

MOLLY

Very often life can seem overwhelming.

RAY

Sure seems that way.

MOLLY

This decision, opened your eyes to who your Olivia really is. Before you married her.

Ray looks at Molly for a long time.

RAY

I do feel better after hearing that.

**INT. RAY'S APARTMENT IN DEL MAR. NIGHT.**

Ray calls his friend Ross.

ROSS

Hello?

RAY

Ross, its Ray.

ROSS

I have caller ID Ray. How are you?

RAY

How would you be?

ROSS

Probably afraid that I am going to lose my job.

RAY

That is what I been thinking for 2 days. I think they are trying to get me to panic by stalling.

ROSS

That would be my guess.

RAY

I think if I am terminated, I would have unlawful termination on my side.

ROSS

Herman and Steve are huge big time lawyers, with hands in everything. Odds are that going after them for something like unlawful termination will not work. The have too many favors in the bank.

RAY

I did not think of that.

ROSS

I wish I had some magical thing to tell you but I don't. I have heard nothing about any decision positive or negative. I am not surprised they are taking a long time.

RAY

I thought I had some leverage because my reviews were always so good.

ROSS

They would rather hire an experienced criminal lawyer. Pay him less than they pay you. You will have to retrained in criminal defense law.

This will cost them money, and money is all they care about.

RAY

Can you recommend a lawyer for me, in case I lose my job?

ROSS

I wish I could, but if I do that, I might get into trouble and lose my fucking job. I am a nice guy Ray. Not an idiot.

RAY

I would do that for you.

ROSS

You think you would until you find yourself in my position. I have busted my ass for this firm for 8 long years. I cannot risk losing it all. I am afraid to even talk to you right now.

RAY

Are we still friends man?

ROSS

Yes, we are still friends.

RAY

Really?

ROSS

Yes. Really. All I can do right now is wish you the very best. If worse comes to worse, I would be very happy to give you a reference.

RAY

Thanks.

ROSS

You are welcome. I will call you soon, OK?

RAY

OK. Bye

ROSS

Bye.

Ray hangs up the phone, and starts to talk to himself.

RAY

Odds are. I will never hear from this guy again. You know who your true friends are when things are at their worst.

There should be a test for rock bottom. My girlfriend. Ross. My job. What is next?

Several minutes later.

Ray dials his phone. Laura, the company secretary answers the phone.

LAURA

Hello?

RAY

Hi Laura. This is Ray.

LAURA

Hello Ray. How can I help you?

RAY

Can I talk to Don?

LAURA

I will see if he is available.

A minute goes by.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
He says he is in a meeting, he will  
get back to you.

RAY  
OK. Thank you.

LAURA  
You are welcome.

**INT. ROLAND AND FERRIS DIVORCE LAW FIRM. DAY.**

Some 30 minutes later.

Ray walks into the main lobby.

LAURA  
Ray? I thought you were on vacation  
until next Monday?

RAY  
I just really have to talk to Don.

LAURA  
I will see if he is available.

Laura calls Don.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
I am sorry he stills says he is in  
a meeting?

Ray leans over to see that Dan is sitting in his office  
alone, through a reflection in an outside window.

RAY  
Laura. I see he is sitting alone in  
his office.

LAURA  
It is an online meeting Ray.

RAY  
Come on. He is not in a meeting.

LAURA  
Ray. Please go home, I don't want  
this to get nasty.

RAY  
We have known each other for almost  
3 years now. Can you do me a huge  
favor?

LAURA

What?

RAY

Don't call security when I go in there? I will tell Don I waited until you went to the bathroom.

LAURA

I will go to the bathroom then, OK?

RAY

Thank you.

Laura gets up and exits towards the ladies room. Ray makes his way into the main offices.

Ray knocks on Don's door.

DON

Yes?

RAY

Its Ray Don. May I come in?

DON

Didn't Laura tell you I was in a meeting?

RAY

This won't take long. I waited until Laura went to the bathroom.

DON

Fuck. OK. Come in.

Ray walks into the office.

RAY

Hello.

DON

You know I can have you fired right now?

RAY

Its Wednesday, I have heard nothing about my status from either Herman or Steve. I was getting frantic about my future.

DON

This is all your fault. I hope you get that.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

You put your neck in a noose. That is a fundamental rookie lawyer mistake and you are a 3 year guy.

RAY

The divorces were getting me very depressed.

DON

Why the fuck did you chose this line of the legal profession in the first place. Did you think this job would be a happy love fest or something?

RAY

At first I thought I could help people, but then it was the money.

DON

It is always the money. Divorce is all about money.

RAY

Ironically.

DON

What ironically?

RAY

My girlfriend Olivia and I broke up.

DON

So you were worried about constantly seeing horrible divorce at work. So you want to change to a new part of the legal profession, and you break up anyway?

RAY

Yes.

DON

That is both ironic and fucked up at the same time. Sounds like a bad movie of the week, in the 70s.

RAY

She was not the person I thought she was.



DON

When it comes to making a living.  
My massive divorce experience tells  
me. If you are the man and there  
are bumps in the road in your job.  
Too often that is the end of the  
line.

RAY

As you said. It all comes down to  
money.

Have Steve or Herman told you  
anything about their decision?

DON

I gave you a glowing  
recommendation. No word yet.

RAY

All my reviews were at the highest  
band.

DON

Steve wants seasoned criminal  
lawyers to hit the ground running.  
You will require much more training  
costing him money.

Do not, look at me as if I am in  
charge of this decision. I am  
trying to make a living, just like  
you.

RAY

I know.

DON

In case they call me before Friday.  
Is there something you want me to  
tell them?

RAY

I wish I knew. What would you  
suggest.

DON

They already know that you want to  
work for Steve's company, but the  
problem is you said you hate  
divorce law. You have no viable  
retreat. You stuck your neck out  
too far.

RAY  
I did not think this through.

DON  
Do me a favor?

RAY  
What?

DON  
Do not contact Herman or Steve and  
do what you did today. OK?

RAY  
OK.

DON  
Trust me. I know this much. They  
will fire your ass.

If you want empathy or compassion.  
Go to your fucking therapist or a  
priest.

These guys are ruthless. They only  
care about how much money they  
clear every month and every year.  
This is how the cruel world works.

RAY  
I know that much. Thanks for seeing  
me today.

DON  
If I hear anything I will let you  
know.

RAY  
OK. Thanks.

Ray and Don stand and shake hands. Ray, visibly shaken walks  
out of his office.

DON  
Ray.

RAY  
Yes?

DON  
Try like hell to get some sleep.  
You look like shit.

RAY

Thanks.

Ray leaves Don's office and enters the main foyer.

Laura stands in front of Ray.

LAURA

Ray. I know you are in a bad way.  
But I have to make a living too. Do  
not ever put me in that position  
again.

RAY

I won't. Sorry. I am not doing well  
today.

Laura hugs Ray, as he looks like he is about to cry.

RAY (CONT'D)

Its like I am losing everything.

LAURA

Don't worry. Everything will work  
out.

Ray looks at Laura a long time.

RAY

How can you know? Thanks though.

Ray slowly walks out of the front door as Laura looks on.  
Close to tears.

**EXT. LAW OFFICE. DAY.**

As Ray leaves the building, Herman and Steve are walking in.

STEVE

Ray. What are you doing here?

RAY

Talking with Don.

STEVE

About what?

RAY

What he may have heard.

STEVE

We both told you we would get back  
to you, and to not contact anyone.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)  
Don knows nothing about our  
decision. No way he would.

RAY  
I was getting nervous.

STEVE  
Do you realize that this is what  
put you in this position in the  
first place? Making a rash  
decision before thinking it  
through?

RAY  
Yes I realize this now.

HERMAN  
Ray, come into the office with us.  
We were going to make the final  
decision on Friday, but think we  
are ready.

Steve nods his head at Herman.

RAY  
OK.

They all walk back into the main lobby.

LAURA  
Hello. Hello again Ray.

RAY  
Hello again.

STEVE  
When are the clients coming?

LAURA  
In exactly 30 minutes.

STEVE  
OK, that gives us enough time. We  
will be having a conference with  
Ray in the same room.

LAURA  
Its open and ready.

STEVE  
Thank you. Good work.

LAURA  
Thank you.

Laura watches as Ray looks back at her. Ray is nervous and sweating. Laura smiles at him.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. LAW OFFICES. DAY.**

As they all walk into the conference room, Ray's friend Ross is sitting and taking notes.

HERMAN

Ross?

ROSS

Herman. I was just sitting here to get some more quiet time.

HERMAN

Its not quiet in your office?

ROSS

Some tree cutting is going on outside.

HERMAN

We need the office now OK?

ROSS

Sure.

Ross fist bumps Ray on the way out of the conference room.

Ross leaves the room and closes the door.

HERMAN

Friends?

RAY

Yes, we are.

STEVE

Lets all sit down and get started.

Ray sits across from Steve and Herman.

STEVE (CONT'D)

We were going to wait until Friday to iron out the details, but we know enough now.

RAY

OK.

STEVE

We are sending you to West Oakland.

RAY  
Northern California Oakland?

STEVE  
Yes. That one. We want you to work in the Public Defenders office for six months as a trainee, learning the ropes on how to be a public defender.

RAY  
West Oakland is one of the worst crime cities.

STEVE  
It is in the upper echelon of bad, not the worst. You will be dealing with middle of the road and hardened criminals. Burglary, assault and even murder. DUI's are huge there. People are so fucking depressed, they drink.

HERMAN  
You will be a trainee at first, learning the ropes at 45 an hour. Far less than the 150K you make here.

STEVE  
Hopefully you have savings to get an apartment there, because the rents in that area are insane. Failing that, find a roommate or ten.

RAY  
Why is this happening?

STEVE  
Because there is no fucking way you get to make a mistake like this and just float into another company and a completely different practice of law.

I only hire experience lawyers with experience, who have appeared in court in front of the judge. I have no room for a trainee in my firm.

HERMAN

You did not think this through Ray. West Oakland is your alternative to stay with us. Otherwise you can leave if you want.

STEVE

I have a close friend in Oakland who is running the office there. He owes me a favor and he is doing you a huge favor.

RAY

Six months?

STEVE

Consider it like college only for real. A trial by fire.

HERMAN

None of this will be easy Ray.

RAY

When do I start?

HERMAN

On Monday if you want. Or you can start the following Monday.

RAY

I will drive up there and start this Monday.

STEVE

So you accept our offer?

RAY

Yes.

HERMAN

You realize that your position here will be on hold until you go through the year in Oakland. You will not be paid of course.

STEVE

Do you have a lease on your apartment here?

RAY

Yes.

STEVE

Dump it immediately. No need to maintain two apartments.

RAY

I will do that when I get home.

HERMAN

Any other questions?

RAY

No. Thank for giving me this chance.

STEVE

Everything you want in life that is considered good or even great. Comes with a price.

HERMAN

Good Luck.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Good Luck.

Ray stands up and they all shake hands. He turns to leave the conference room.

RAY

I will do my best. Thanks again.

STEVE

I know you will. We are counting on you to come back here in a year as a great criminal defense attorney.

RAY

I am looking forward to coming back.

Ray leaves the conference room.

STEVE

You think he will make it?

HERMAN

I have no idea. Its fifty-fifty.

Ray enters the main lobby and sees Laura at the front desk.

LAURA

How did it go?

RAY

See you in a six months.



LAURA  
What do you mean?

RAY  
I am going to West Oakland for a  
year to work at the public  
defendants office.

LAURA  
Is this a good thing?

RAY  
I honestly don't know. I hope it  
is.

LAURA  
Keep in touch and let us know how  
you are doing. We all care about  
you here Ray.

RAY  
I will do that, thanks for all your  
help. I care about people here too.

LAURA  
I will miss you.

RAY  
I will miss you too.

Ray leaves the lobby and walks into the parking lot.

Ray turns to look at Laura once last time and smiles. Laura  
smiles back.

**EXT. RAY IN HIS CAR, PARKING LOT. DAY.**

Ray leaves the parking lot and heads down the road, with a  
tear in his eye.

**EXT. WEST OAKLAND CALIFORNIA MUNICIPAL CENTER. DAY.**

Seven Days later.

Ray exits his car in a run down parking lot in West Oakland  
California and makes the long walk into the main lobby.

**INT. WEST OAKLAND CALIFORNIA MUNICIPAL CENTER. DAY.**

Ray enters the Municipal Building, exactly at 8 AM, and walks  
up to the desk secretary, ALICIA RIVERS, 50.

RAY

I am Ray Franklin. It is my first day of work.

ALICIA

You are.

(Alicia looks at her schedule.)

Surprisingly right on time. What a concept. Promptness.

RAY

Is that unusual here?

ALICIA

Aliens camping out on the front steps would be more likely.

Ray laughs a little.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

So you have some kind of a sense of humor young man?

RAY

Yes a little. I think.

ALICIA

We will remove that from your brain in a week.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

I will call the guys. Take a seat over there.

Alicia points to run down lounge area.

RAY

OK. Ray sits down on a worn couch and winces.

ALICIA

Comfy?

RAY

Its a little worn. Maybe damp a little?

ALICIA

Where are you from?

RAY

Del Mar.

ALICIA  
Where?

RAY  
Del Mar, its near San Diego.

ALICIA  
Why the hell are you here?

RAY  
To learn the ropes.

ALICIA  
Lesson one. Filthy damp old  
couches.

RAY  
Ray looks around at the other  
chairs.

ALICIA  
I just sent them a text. Five  
minutes.

Ray grabs a magazine.

ALICIA (CONT'D)  
The magazines here are from the  
1980s and fucked up. There is hand  
sanitizer on the table.

Ray rubs his hands on the sanitizer.

RAY  
Thanks.

ALICIA  
You have allergies Ray?

RAY  
None that I know of.

ALICIA  
Take a shower when you get home.

Ray smiles.

ROBERT LOFTIN, 55, 6'1 and HARVEY GLANCE, 61, 6'0 walk  
towards Ray down a hallway leading into the lobby.

ROBERT  
Hey. You Ray?

RAY

Yes.

ROBERT

This is my partner, Harvey.

Ray stands up and shakes their hands. They all start to walk down the hallway towards a series of conference rooms, and stand near Alicia's station.

RAY

Nice you meet you.

Harvey, Robert and Ray all shake hands.

ROBERT

Steve told me all about you. He and I go back to law school. As you can see, we both took different paths in the law profession.

You want to learn the ropes of being a defense attorney?

RAY

Yes.

ROBERT

The cases we see here are some of the worst. Poor, fucking up, messed up, drugged up, coked up, armed robbery, assault and battery, domestic abuse and our favorite DUIs.

Ray laughs a little. Robert looks at Alicia.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Is this guy a laugher?

ALICIA

I sure hope not. For his fucking sake.

Harvey laughs a little and Robert gives him an annoyed look.

ROBERT

We try to keep laughing at a minimum around here. This is not Saturday Night live. Come back with us.

Ray follows Robert and Harvey down the hallway to the main offices. Ray glances at Alicia, who is smiling while looking at Ray walk down the hallway.

ALICIA  
(Whispers) Good Luck Kid.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. MUNICIPAL OFFICES.**

Ray, Robert and Harvey enter a drab old looking conference room.

ROBERT  
Want some coffee? Vodka?

RAY  
No that is OK. I am good. Vodka?

ROBERT  
We have it around, just in case we need it. If you know what I mean.

HARVEY  
I will get some coffee for Robert and I.

Robert leaves the room.

ROBERT  
Harvey?

HARVEY  
Yes?

ROBERT  
Cream, no sugar this time.

HARVEY  
Sure thing.

To Ray.

ROBERT  
I am type 2 Diabetic. No sugar.

RAY  
I think we all might be Type 2 at some point.

Harvey returns with the 2 coffees.

ROBERT

We are both here to fill you in on your job for the next six months.

This will be down and dirty, as you learn the ropes of criminal law and being a public defender. In the end, we hope you will be seasoned enough to stand in front of a judge.

HARVEY

You will be required to sit in courtrooms and learn the ropes. Consider any courtroom your classroom. I sure hope you own a few suits.

RAY

Three.

HARVEY

Buy three more.

RAY

I will do that. Sounds both interesting and challenging.

ROBERT

The other parts, including grunt work. Talking to witnesses. Going to the coroner office, collecting documents, seeing dead people.

Gathering information that can be used to defend a client. These are all parts of your job for the next six months.

RAY

I know.

ROBERT

You sure about that? Some lowlife comes in here looking like he killed his whole fucking family and on the way, ran over three kittens.

We still have to defend him. That is our job. If we do not do our job that is stipulated in the legal system then the law does not work.

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

The legal system is binary, no gray areas, no emotion. Any other way and the system breaks. Are you clear on all of this?

RAY

Yes.

ROBERT

Its one of the hardest parts of this job. Following the law as we have sworn to.

The innocent can sometimes go to jail or the guilty get off on some fucked up technicality. Or there is some idiotic mistrial reason.

HARVEY

The track record in this office is extremely important to us. Our numbers are reviewed by the higher ups and people can lose their jobs if our end of quarter numbers are fucked up.

RAY

Every quarter?

ROBERT

They are called reviewable metrics. Its all computerized and calculated in reports that are printed here every day.

RAY

I understand.

ROBERT

There is nothing easy about this job. The hours are long, sometimes 12-14 hour days.

Dealing with difficult clients, judges, other lawyers, people who are living in a hell hole somewhere who would rather punch you in the face than answer your questions.

HARVEY

Steve from your firm, believes in you and wanted to give you this chance. This is hard knocks training for six tough months.

ROBERT  
Where are you living now?

RAY  
The Rose Twenty Motel, over on  
Sunset.

ROBERT  
That shit hole?

RAY  
That shit hole.

ROBERT  
Go see Alicia on your way out. She  
will find you a slightly better  
shit hole to stay in. With  
roommates, who probably work here.

HARVEY  
Alicia will get you on the  
roommates list we have. You may be  
able to room with someone or  
several people, because the rents  
are ridiculous. Even at the  
entrance to hell.

RAY  
Thank you.

HARVEY  
You can have today off. Go talk to  
Alicia and get set up.

RAY  
OK. Thanks.

Robert hands a paper to Ray.

ROBERT  
This is the list of phone numbers  
and e-mails for Harvey and I, and  
several other contacts. Try not to  
call us at some ungodly hour OK?

RAY  
What is ungodly?

ROBERT  
What do you think?

RAY  
1 AM, 2 AM?



ROBERT

Any time after 9 PM can wait until tomorrow morning. Even if the Japanese decide to attack again.

RAY

Got it.

ROBERT

Do you have any questions?

RAY

Can't think of anything now. Thank you for this opportunity.

ROBERT

You are welcome. However challenging may or may not be a good description of what is ahead for you.

HARVEY

We like you. Good luck.

ROBERT

Harvey. We just met this kid. How do you know if we like him yet?

HARVEY

Instinct. Experience with people.

ROBERT

Harvey got me punched in the face with some repeat felon last week. So much for fucking experience.

Ray laughs a little.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Laugh? I lost a fucking tooth.

**INT. ALICIA'S STATION FRONT COUNTER. DAY.**

Ray walks by Alicia's station 5 minutes later.

RAY

They told me to see you about finding a place to live.

ALICIA

Yes I expected you. Forget that Hotel you are in, it is a hell hole.

RAY

How did you know where I was staying?

ALICIA

I know everything about what is going on around here.

Ann looks through a document on her desk.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

You are in luck. You can room with two other trainees that started last week. One woman and a man.

RAY

Good. Is it close?

ALICIA

Three blocks away, the county owns the building. Your end would be 2000 a month.

RAY

Six thousand a month for an apartment?

ALICIA

First time realizing the nightmare of living in this area of the world?

RAY

I have heard rumors.

ALICIA

What the hell do you pay to live in Del Mar?

RAY

Three thousand for a studio.

ALICIA

This is a 2 bedroom. Its nice but small. Want it?

RAY

Can I see some pictures?

ALICIA

No. If I were you I would take it. There are no bugs or damp couches in this place.

RAY  
OK. I will take it.

Ann hands Ray the address.

ALICIA  
You can walk it from here.

RAY  
OK. I will let you know how it goes.

ALICIA  
Ray, your day starts tomorrow at 7:30 AM.

Ray looks at Alicia for a few seconds.

Ray smiles and laughs a little while walking out of the building. Alicia looks at Ray leaving, smiles and shakes her head.

**EXT. RAY OUTSIDE. DAY.**

Ray leaves the municipal complex and makes his way down the street. He looks up at the big buildings and busy streets.

**INT. FIFTH FLOOR APARTMENT COMPLEX. DAY.**

Ray rings the bell for Apartment 5K.

DAVID ANDERS, 32, 5'11, and KAREN JOHNSON, 31, 5'2, answer the door.

DAVID  
You are Ray?

RAY  
Yes, nice to meet you.

KAREN  
You too. You are at the Muni Center like us?

RAY  
Yes. First day.

DAVID  
First day is normally find a place to live day. I am a trainee, like you. Angela is a legal secretary for our department.

They all shake hands.

RAY

Nice meeting the both of you. I understand you need a roommate.

DAVID

A common need for everyone in this town. A roommate, or a lottery win.

RAY

The rents are insane.

DAVID

Your end will be 2150 a month.

RAY

I can handle that. Can I look around.

ANGELA

Yes, let us show you. Its a two bedroom. It has a small den, small kitchen, two bathrooms. You have a choice of rooming with David or the roll out couch.

RAY

Looks good.

Ray looks out the window.

RAY (CONT'D)

Nice view of a large brick wall.

DAVID

You want a view? Its another 1000 a month.

RAY

Not surprised by that.

DAVID

You have stuff coming?

RAY

Not too much. I will call to have it delivered tomorrow.

DAVID

OK, sound good. Angela and I are going out to lunch and coffee, want to join us?

RAY

Yes sure. I will take the couch by the way.

DAVID

Sounds good.

ANGELA

Its right down the street.  
Everybody in the office goes there.  
If we get there by 11:00 AM we can actually sit down.

They all walk out of apartment 5K. David locks the door.

**INT. LOCAL RESTAURANT. DAY.**

30 minutes later. Ray, David and Angela are sitting at a table.

DAVID

Ray. How old are you?

RAY

Twenty Eight. Just turned.

DAVID

Have a girlfriend?

RAY

We broke up.

ANGELA

So sorry. What happened?

RAY

It is very complicated. I would rather not elaborate right now.

DAVID

The hours are long. The stress is high and you will have to deal with some bad people. People fighting to survive. People trying desperately to stay out of prison.

RAY

Hopefully, I will get the hang of it.

DAVID

Around three months should be enough time.

Ray looks at Angela.

RAY  
You like it?

ANGELA  
Honestly. I don't know.

DAVID  
Most people do not like their jobs.

RAY  
I was in Del Mar for almost 3 years  
as a divorce attorney and I really  
hated it, which is why I am here  
now.

DAVID  
What did you hate about it?

RAY  
The horrible arguments mostly. From  
the movie "A Marriage Story" from  
2019, the famous Ray Liotta line.

ANGELA  
"Criminal lawyers see bad people at  
their best, divorce lawyers see  
good people at their worst."

DAVID  
I remember that line. Best line in  
the movie. Too bad about Liotta.

RAY  
He was a solid actor. You two  
together?

ANGELA  
Romantically? No.

ANGELA (CONT'D)  
No, we are more like brother and  
sister. Been rooming for about a  
three months.

RAY  
How is the apartment, the building?

ANGELA  
Security is OK. It can be noisy at  
night.

RAY  
Losing sleep noisy?

ANGELA  
Afraid so. Not every night.

RAY  
David, do you like your job?

DAVID  
It can be hell. The hours, the clients we get. Potential violence, and the bosses can be pretty rough, for us young guys.

I hope this will result in something great for me in the future.

RAY  
After three months. Is it worth it?

DAVID  
It puts a spotlight on the bad parts of being alive for so many people. I find it very depressing some days.

RAY  
What have I gotten myself into anyway?

DAVID  
There is no better training for being a real lawyer, than right here man.

RAY  
I will take your word for that.

Robert and Harvey suddenly walk over to Ray's table.

ROBERT  
Ray.

RAY  
Robert. Hello.

ROBERT  
Amazing meeting you all here.

RAY  
These are my two new roommates. David and Angela.

ROBERT  
See you both at three.

ANGELA  
See you there.

DAVID  
See you there sir.

ROBERT  
Harvey, you have the paper.  
Harvey hands a piece of paper to Ray.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Go see this guy.

RAY  
OK. Who is this?

ROBERT  
He is a crook, drug dealer, and he  
might be a witness to a break in.

The questions are listed. Either  
record this guy, or keep great  
notes.

RAY  
I will use my cell phone.

ROBERT  
This is your first disgusting  
assignment. Do a great job. This is  
a good part of your future working  
life for the next six months.

RAY  
Is this local?

HARVEY  
Walking distance. Eight blocks from  
here. Make a right.

ROBERT  
We need your report back by end of  
today. Good luck.

Robert and Harvey walk out of the restaurant. Ray looks at  
Angela and David.

ANGELA  
Welcome to the club.

RAY  
Should I be worried about this  
meeting?



DAVID  
Its your first day. Is there a  
phone number for this guy in the  
paper they gave you?

Ray looks at the paper.

RAY  
No.

DAVID  
Here is a tip. Knock on the door  
lightly. Do not use the doorbell.

You never want to startle a guy who  
may have a gun, or is high on PCP  
or Cocaine or God knows what.

RAY  
Jesus.

**INT. NEARBY RUN DOWN APARTMENT COMPLEX. DAY.**

Some 2 hours later. Ray knocks on an apartment in the 3rd  
floor of a run down apartment building. Ray knocks lightly.

Inside is a drug pusher, LEON DEEDS, 44, 6'2, heavily  
tattooed, long beard.

LEON  
Who the fuck is out there!

RAY  
This is Ray. From the public  
defenders office. Robert sent me to  
ask some questions.

LEON  
Who the fuck is Robert. Questions  
about what?

RAY  
A recent break in sir.

LEON  
The one downstairs last week?

RAY  
Yes.

LEON  
I don't know nothing about that. Go  
away.

RAY

Sir, may I come in? It is my first day of work, and I have to get this list of questions answered. If you don't mind.

LEON

I do mind. I am busy.

RAY

Just five minutes of your time.

The door suddenly slams open. Ray is startled.

LEON

Give me the list of questions asshole.

RAY

Ray hands over the paper.

Leon grabs a pen and scribbles answers and throws them back at Ray. Leon slams the door hard.

LEON

How either go away or I will kick your ass!

Ray walks away down the hallway.

RAY

OK.... Thanks..... Bye.

**INT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING. DAY.**

One hour later.

Ray walks into Robert's office. Robert is sitting at his desk, talking to Harvey.

RAY

He just grabbed the paper and put I don't fucking know anything on all your questions.

ROBERT

What did you do?

RAY

Nothing. He was not only bigger than me, but he was probably on about 20 different drugs.

ROBERT  
So you walked away?

RAY  
Yes. I thought I had no choice.

ROBERT  
This was Leon in the apartment?

RAY  
Yes.

ROBERT  
He is an identified witness, he saw  
the robbery.

RAY  
What should I have done?

ROBERT  
Not walked away so quickly. Guess  
what.

RAY  
What?

ROBERT  
Harvey and I are going back there  
and you are coming with us to learn  
how getting a fucking witness on  
the record.

Robert and Harvey stand up.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Lets go now. How the fuck else are  
you going to learn?

Ray follows them out of Robert's office.

**INT. NEARBY RUN DOWN APARTMENT COMPLEX. DAY.**

Some 30 minutes later. Robert and Ray arrive at Leon's  
apartment.

Robert knocks hard on Leon's door.

ROBERT  
Hey Leon. Open the door now!

Leon rips open his door.

LEON  
What the fuck do you want?

ROBERT  
You were identified as a witness to  
a burglary and shooting on the  
first floor of this building. We  
need your statement.

Leon looks at Ray.

LEON  
I already gave that asshole over  
there my statement.

ROBERT  
Where you wrote, I don't know  
anything on every question?

LEON  
I saw nothing, I know nothing.

ROBERT  
You have a rap sheet a mile long.  
I could call the police on you  
right now for any number of things  
you either have done or will do.  
Fucking let us in now asshole!

Leon opens the door.

Robert and Ray walk into the apartment.

LEON  
This is bogus shit man.

ROBERT  
Bogus shit is most of the job  
description around here.

Robert looks around at the rotted furniture and horrific  
conditions.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Sit down. SIT!

Leon looks back at Robert.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Sit the fuck down!

Leon sits down.

LEON  
Fuck you man.

ROBERT  
We can have you arrested and in  
jail inside of 3 hours.

Robert looks at Ray.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Ray! Read off the questions! Are we  
on vacation or something?

RAY  
Question #1. Who and what did you  
see on the night of January 5th,  
this month, on the first floor at 8  
PM.

Ray starts to take notes.

LEON  
Two guys.

RAY  
Can you describe them?

LEON  
One was a tall white guy, the other  
a short black guy. They had masks  
on so I did not see their faces.

RAY  
Approximately how tall was each  
guy?

LEON  
Black guy 5'7, White guy, 6'2.

RAY  
What were they doing?

LEON  
Running down the hallway and into  
the stair well.

RAY  
Were they carrying anything?

LEON  
Each guy had a gun, and the white  
guy had a bag of something. I did  
not see what he had inside the bag.

HARVEY

For the record, it was about ten thousand dollars of jewelry and cocaine.

LEON

Is that it? Do you have enough now? Can you fucking people leave my shit hole apartment?

RAY

Did you know these 2 guys?

LEON

No. I just saw two guys wearing masks running carrying guns and one bag. That is all I saw.

HARVEY

We got a tip that you might know these 2 guys.

LEON

You have no fucking tip. From who? How would I know two random guys? Just because they robbed this place?

ROBERT

That is all for today.

Robert stands up to leave, followed by Ray. Leon slams his door behind them.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Ray. This is how its done.

RAY

Much easier with two guys interviewing that criminal.

ROBERT

You get some idea about what it all takes. If you are intimidated or afraid even a little, then you will not be able to do your job.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

The answers he gave, have to be entered into our evidence system, for the case number at the top of that paper. You do that when you get back. Harvey and I are taking and UBER back to the office.

Robert hands Ray another paper.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Same deal. This guy is three blocks away, another case. When you get back to the office, enter this one in the system too.

RAY

OK.

ROBERT

See you back at the office.

Robert and Harvey flag down the arriving UBER. Ray glances at his next assignment and walks down the street.

**INT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING. NIGHT.**

Some 3 hours later. 7PM.

Ray enters the building with a large black bruise on his right eye.

Alicia is sitting at the front desk

ALICIA

What the fuck happened to your eye?

RAY

Some witness didn't like me or my questions and punched me in the head.

ALICIA

Looks like one hell of a left hook. What did you do?

RAY

Just got up and walked out of his apartment. He was far bigger than just about everybody on this planet.

ALICIA

Smart move.

RAY

Do you have makeup?

ALICIA

Makeup? For what?

RAY  
To cover my black eye.

ALICIA  
Stupid alert! You never noticed  
that I am a black woman?

RAY  
I just thought that you would have  
something generic.

ALICIA  
Bozo the clown would not have  
anything to cover that eye. How  
fucked up are you anyway?

RAY  
Hard first day.

Alicia hands Ray a piece of paper.

ALICIA  
Its 7:00 PM. In 15 minutes, they  
want you on the 4th floor.  
Conference room 5.

RAY  
What about?

ALICIA  
It might be show and tell for your  
new eye.

Ray laughs a little.

RAY  
I get the feeling. I will need your  
humor over the next six months.

ALICIA  
You need a bag of peas?

RAY  
A bag of what?

ALICIA  
Peas for that eye. Its now blacker  
than my eye.

RAY  
It doesn't hurt that much.



ALICIA

It might swell up. On the 4th floor there is a small cafeteria, they have a refrigerator. If you're lucky you might find some ice. Or just put your whole head in the freezer.

RAY

Thank you.

Ray heads towards the elevator.

**INT. MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE ROOM FIVE. 4TH FLOOR. NIGHT.**

Ray walks into the conference room, where Robert and Harvey are sitting.

Robert notices Ray's black eye.

ROBERT

Was that Marvin?

RAY

He looked somewhat sane when I sat down. Did not last.

ROBERT

So you got a little too aggressive?

RAY

Same as you with Leon.

ROBERT

Should have told you. Marvin is crazy. I talked to him last week.

RAY

Why no warning?

ROBERT

This job involves talking to the desperate and poor, end of life disaster people. They have nothing to lose.

HARVEY

There is no workaround. Someone has to talk to witnesses in these neighborhoods.

RAY

Maybe the solution is to always go with a backup person? Someone preferably large? A police officer? Someone with a gun. A tank?

ROBERT

You know what? You are right. However, no witness is going to talk with a cop sitting next to you.

RAY

Should I get self defense training? Can I carry a gun?

HARVEY

We are not allowed to have any concealed weapons.

RAY

I meant that as a joke.

HARVEY

My weapons comment was no joke.

ROBERT

Do you have notes? A recording?

RAY

I recorded our conversation on my cell phone.

ROBERT

Did you tell Marvin you were recording him?

RAY

(Long pause.)

No sir. I forgot to tell him.

ROBERT

So that means that this entire recording is inadmissible.

RAY

Yes. Sorry.

ROBERT

Have you ever seen any TV show, about anything?

RAY

It was a long day. I am sorry.

ROBERT

No excuses for a fuck up like this.  
This means that you have to go back  
there again tomorrow and get his  
statement recorded.

Harvey hands Ray 3 more assignments.

HARVEY

So now you have 4 witnesses for  
tomorrow.

RAY

OK, no problem.

ROBERT

Ray. Go home. Sleep. You start your  
second day tomorrow at 7:30, when  
we have our group meeting.

RAY

I will be there.

Ray starts to stand up.

RAY (CONT'D)

Can I leave?

ROBERT

Yes. This mistake today, is a one  
time deal, or you will not last. We  
only keep people who learn from  
their mistakes, not repeat them. Is  
that clear?

RAY

Yes, very clear.

ROBERT

Great. The good news is that two of  
your witness interviews tomorrow  
are with women in their seventies.

You have Marvin again, and some  
other drug dealer. Rick will be  
going with you.

RAY

Rick?

ROBERT

Rick is 6'4 and he has Mike Tyson's  
face before the face tattoo.

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

The belief that you will get the  
shit kicked out of you and or  
arrested is why Rick is going.  
Then you get your questions  
answered.

RAY

I thought you said no bodyguard on  
the payroll?

ROBERT

We have Rick. He doubles as a clerk  
and he is large. Harvey and I will  
be talking about you when you  
leave.

Ray smiles, and leaves the conference room.

HARVEY

What do you think?

ROBERT

What do you think?

HARVEY

He is touch and go. He has a great  
deal to learn.

ROBERT

He fell into the deep end of the  
pool on his first day.

HARVEY

His girlfriend agreed he should get  
out of divorce law. Then when he  
makes the move she ran away.  
Ironic? Or stupid?

Harvey stands up and heads towards the door.

ROBERT

See you tomorrow man.

HARVEY

See you.

**INT. RAY'S WEST OAKLAND APARTMENT. NIGHT.**

8 PM and Ray is sitting on the couch watching TV. His cell  
phone rings. It is Olivia Watts, Ray's former girlfriend.

OLIVIA  
(into phone)  
So you moved out of your apartment?

RAY  
(into phone)  
I am living in West Oakland now.

OLIVIA  
Why?

RAY  
Training to be a defense lawyer.

OLIVIA  
In West Oakland? A bad area like that?

RAY  
Yes.

OLIVIA  
This sure did not go the way you thought.

RAY  
This was our decision. You thought that because I was so unhappy that I should switch to a different part of the law. As soon as it looked like I might not have a job. You know the rest.

OLIVIA  
The rest?

RAY  
Couples in love should support each other. I needed you and you were nowhere to be found.

OLIVIA  
That is not true.

RAY  
Were you drunk the night I told you I wanted to move to the other firm?

OLIVIA  
No.

RAY  
Why don't you remember our last conversation?

OLIVIA  
I supported you.

RAY  
You supported my decision at first.  
Then when push came to shove.

OLIVIA  
I did not realize you might lose  
your job then!

RAY  
What difference does that make? You  
love me only when I am employed?

OLIVIA  
No. Of course not.

RAY  
Of course not? It sure seemed that  
way. I needed your help and support  
and you ran away.

OLIVIA  
We had a fight. I did not run away.  
I will support you.

RAY  
You want to drive or fly up here  
and see my new life?

OLIVIA  
I can't Ray. I am way too busy at  
work.

RAY  
And there we are again.

OLIVIA  
If that is how you feel?

Its simple. I know how I would  
behave if you were in my situation.

OLIVIA  
Your just always right. Always the  
good guy. I am the creep.

RAY  
This time, for sure.

Olivia hangs up.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Not for me. Never was.

Ray hangs up his phone.

Angela and David walk into the apartment.

DAVID  
Ray. How are you? Too bad we missed each other. We went out to Joseph's Bar tonight for some beer.

RAY  
Lately I am more of a Vodka drinker.

DAVID  
Women problems?

RAY  
How did you know?

ANGELA  
What happened?

RAY  
Nothing really. It really ended weeks ago. She was not the person I thought she was.

ANGELA  
You are lucky. You found out before you got married. By the way, what is with the black eye?

RAY  
Some drunk drug dealer, punched me in the eye today.

DAVID  
Looks like one hell of a shot.

RAY  
I am zero for two so far. I knew this would be hard, but Jesus Christ.

DAVID  
I have been where you are about six months ago. It gets better.

RAY  
I sure hope so. I only have two eyes.

ANGELA  
This is not San Diego.

RAY  
I got that hint, several times  
today.

DAVID  
More witnesses tomorrow?

RAY  
Four more including revisiting  
Marvin. The eye puncher. I will  
have a very large escort for  
tomorrow.

DAVID  
Rick?

RAY  
Yes.

DAVID  
Nobody fucks with Rick. Things will  
go better tomorrow.

ANGELA  
We are going to bed now. See you  
tomorrow. That couch folds out very  
nicely. However, no sudden  
movements.

RAY  
I will take the couch.

ANGELA  
Good luck tomorrow.

RAY  
Thanks.

Angela and David go to the other bedroom.

Ray looks at his severe black eye in the mirror.

RAY (CONT'D)  
I should have stayed where I was.  
What the hell am I doing with my  
miserable life?

Ray pulls out the couch and gets into a bad bed and tries to  
sleep.



**INT. MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE BUILDING. DAY.**

Next morning. 8 AM.

Ray walks down the 4th floor hallway to the municipal court conference room 5.

Ray enters the conference room, holding a briefcase for a laptop.

Robert and Harvey are sitting in the conference room.

ROBERT

Is that a company laptop in there?

RAY

Yes.

ROBERT

You can bring the briefcase, the laptop stays here for all excursions outside the office.

RAY

I was going to leave it in my office. If this is lost or stolen, proprietary information might get into the wrong hands.

ROBERT

Very good.

RICK MUNIZ, 32, 6'4, muscular, 260 pounds walks into the conference room.

HARVEY

Ray, this is Rick.

Ray stands up and shakes Rick's hand.

RAY

Nice to meet you.

RICK

You too man. Looks like we have some work to do today.

RAY

Yes we do.

ROBERT

Most likely this will be an all day event guys. Do your job, and Ray?

RAY  
I will tell everyone that I am  
recording them.

ROBERT  
Glad we are past that hurdle.

HARVEY  
Marvin is first, and then the last  
three should be easy.

Ray and Rick leave the conference room. Ray smiles at Harvey.

HARVEY (CONT'D)  
So what do you think?

ROBERT  
This guy has been living a charmed  
life on the coast of San Diego. He  
might not be tough enough for this  
job.

HARVEY  
Should we teach this guy how to  
fight?

ROBERT  
One or two basic self defense  
courses would not hurt. I will talk  
to Rick.

**INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX. DAY.**

One hour later, 8:30 AM.

Rick and Ray walk up to the apartment of Marvin Harrison, on  
the 3rd floor of a run down apartment.

RICK  
Should we knock or ring the bell?

RAY  
The bell does not work. Knock  
lightly.

Rick knocks on the door. MARVIN HARRISON 50, 6'2, overweight,  
black man, looks like a retired NFL linebacker.

MARVIN  
Hey man, didn't I punch you in the  
head yesterday. What the fuck are  
you doing here again?

RAY  
I never finished my interview.

MARVIN  
Do I look like I give a fuck?

RAY  
I don't know, may we come in?

MARVIN  
Who the fuck is this asshole?

RAY  
This is Rick, my colleague.

MARVIN  
So Rick is the bodyguard?

RAY  
Just a colleague who works in my office.

MARVIN  
You don't look like shit to me man.

Rick smiles.

RICK  
Opinions vary.

Rick and Ray make their way into the apartment. Marvin and Rick stare at each other angrily.

The apartment is a mess, a total disaster.

RICK (CONT'D)  
Nice to meet you sir.

Rick offers his hand.

MARVIN  
Sit down assholes.

RAY  
I want you to know that I will be recording this conversation on my cell phone.

MARVIN  
OK, who the fuck cares.

RAY

On the morning of October 22, the year 2024, at the Quick check at the corner of 5th avenue and Chestnut, there was a robbery. One man was shot. The cashier at the Quick Check identified you as a possible witness.

MARVIN

What the fuck. We covered this yesterday.

RAY

I made a mistake yesterday. I did not notify you that I was recording the conversation.

MARVIN

Not admissible?

RAY

Correct.

MARVIN

I saw something, like I told you yesterday, not that much.

RAY

Can you describe what you saw please?

MARVIN

Two white guys, wearing masks, both had guns, holding up the cashier.

RAY

Where was the cashier?

MARVIN

Where the fuck do you think? Behind the counter.

RICK

Foul language is not necessary. Ray is trying to do his job.

MARVIN

Fuck you man.

RICK

We don't want problems today.

MARVIN

You want a black eye like this asshole?

Rick smiles at Marvin.

RAY

Is there anything else you can add about what you saw? You are one of the few witnesses we have identified. The victim is still in a coma three weeks.

MARVIN

I know him.

RAY

You know him how?

MARVIN

Just a friend from the old days. The streets. Something you two assholes know nothing about.

RICK

I came from a poor family in the Bronx.

RAY

My parents were lower middle class.

MARVIN

I was 11 years old. On the fucking streets selling drugs. No parents. I lived in abandoned buildings. Should be dead. You fucking guys don't know shit.

RAY

You are right. We don't. Not compared to you. My sincerest condolences. You are lucky to be alive sir.

Marvin seems visibly moved by what Ray said.

MARVIN

First thing you got right in two meetings. Sorry about your eye man.

RAY

I tried too hard yesterday, and lost track of what I was doing. I am still very new with this job.

Marvin offers his hand to both Ray and Rick.

MARVIN  
Is that all?

RAY  
Do you have anything else you can  
tell us?

MARVIN  
Talk to this guy. Joe, somebody.  
Joe Riley. He lives down the street  
to that Quick Check. He may have  
seen something.

RAY  
Joe Riley? Thank you.

Rick and Ray stand up and shake hands with Marvin again.

They leave the apartment and walk down the apartment hallway  
a few feet. Rick turns to Ray.

**INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY. DAY.**

Minutes later.

RICK  
What the hell happened there?

RAY  
I showed him empathy. That is what  
all humans want. Someone to listen  
to them. To care.

RICK  
Sure worked on that guy.

RAY  
From my experience, especially  
working in divorce law. It works on  
everybody.

RICK  
Want to try and find Joe Riley?

RAY  
Yes.

BANG! Marvin darts out of this apartment, shooting a gun, and  
misses both Ray and Rick.

MARVIN

Trying to show me some compassion  
asshole! You don't know nothing  
about my life! I will kill both of  
you!

Rick is hit with a bullet in his shoulder, and falls to the ground, he is able to grab his gun and shoot back, missing Marvin several times as he advances. Rick fires 3 more times and hits Marvin in his forehead and chest. Marvin falls back with a groan and dies.

RAY

My God. What the hell happened?  
Rick! Are you OK?

RICK

Call 911, now. I can't stop the  
bleeding.

Ray dials 911.

RAY

I thought we were not allowed to  
carry a gun?

Ray tries to stop the bleeding while dialing his cell phone.

RICK

Nobody told you I am a professional  
bodyguard?

RAY

No. Thank God you had a gun.

Ray looks back at Marvin and tries to control Rick's bleeding shoulder.

RAY (CONT'D)

So much for showing empathy.

**EXT. OUTSIDE APARTMENT COMPLEX. DAY.**

Some 25 minutes later Rick is being lifted into an ambulance.

Ray grabs Rick's hand.

RAY

Thank you. For saving my life man.

RICK

Both of our lives.

RAY  
I cannot believe he did that.

RICK  
Marvin was probably on PCP, or some  
other fucked up drug.

Robert and Howard walk up to Ray and Rick laying in the  
ambulance.

ROBERT  
You guys OK?

RAY  
Rick got shot.

RICK  
I am OK. It was in the shoulder. I  
lost some blood.

AMBULANCE WORKER  
He lost a good deal of blood. He  
will be OK.

HARVEY  
Take him away. Glad you are OK  
Rick.

The ambulance takes off down the street. Harvey looks at Ray  
who is shaking.

HARVEY (CONT'D)  
You OK?

RAY  
I am OK. Shaken though. Marvin is  
dead.

ROBERT  
We heard.

RAY  
Rick thinks it may have been PCP.

ROBERT  
That guy either sells and uses PCP  
or is on every fucking drug on  
these streets. We will find out in  
the toxicology report. You sure  
you are OK?

RAY  
Is it too soon to ask for a day  
off?



ROBERT

You better not be a pussy and opt out of this. This is life on the streets. You want to learn about the bad side of the law or not?

RAY

I am not giving up.

ROBERT

Good man. Harvey called you an UBER. Go to the Hospital and get checked out.

RAY

I am OK.

ROBERT

This is not an optional request. This is an order. I expect you at the 3 PM meeting today in 4 hours.

RAY

I will be there.

Harvey and Robert walks away, while both of them look at Ray who is shaking and sitting on a bench.

ROBERT

If he makes it past today. He has a shot.

HARVEY

He looks pretty bad.

ROBERT

Yes he does.

**INT. KAISER PERMANENTE OAKLAND MEDICAL CENTER. DAY.**

One hour later. Ray is sitting on an examining table, with a doctor and nurse. The Doctor JOSH RIDING, 66, and nurse JANET SCHMIDT, 62.

JANET

What did you see Ray?

RAY

This huge man rushing at us. Down a hallway, with a gun pointed at us. Shooting. Rick shooting him. Killing him. I saw a man die.

Doctor Riding has a stethoscope on Ray's chest.

DR. RIDING

Ray. Try and calm down, your heart rate is too elevated.

Janet removes Ray's blood pressure device from his arm.

JANET

He is at 160 over 100 Doctor.

DR. RIDING

Try and lay back on the table. Take a deep breath. Raise your arms. Janet, wait about 5 minutes and take his pressure again.

Dr. Riding leaves the examination room.

JANET

Deep breaths Ray.

RAY

I saw a man die.

JANET

I know. Try and relax, think about something nice, like a little kitten purring.

RAY

I am replaying the shooting and him falling in my head.

JANET

Close your eyes Ray.

Ray closes his eyes.

JANET (CONT'D)

Deep breaths, in and out, relax, you have no problems, you are floating in the air.

RAY

Ok, this is working a little. I feel a little better.

Janet puts the blood pressure monitor back on Ray's arm.

Doctor Riding comes back into the room.

DR. RIDING

How is it going?

JANET

He is better, now around 140. Still a little too high.

DR. RIDING

Ray. Due to your intense job working in the public defenders office. In this neighborhood. You better learn how to relax. Have you tried meditation?

RAY

No.

DR. RIDING

You should. I will be prescribing Xanax for now. You have been through a traumatic experience.

I happen to know that your office has meditation classes. Take a few of those if you can.

RAY

I will.

DR. RIDING

No job is worth your health. You are only 28 years old.

Now in one the most dangerous cities in this country. If you think it is too much, then do something else. No sense in dying from stress over a job.

RAY

I will make a decision today. Got a meeting in two hours. I will call you.

DR. RIDING

Here is my card and the script for Xanax.

RAY

Thanks.

Ray starts to leave the examining room.

DR. RIDING

Ray. Stay in touch with us. We care about you.

Ray is emotional, with a small tear in his eye as he turns to leave as Janet and Dr Riding look on.

RAY  
I will call you. Thank you.

Ray walks down a long hallway, and out to his car.

**EXT. RAY WALKING DOWN THE STREET. DAY.**

Ray starts to cry as he walks towards the municipal offices.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. MUNICIPAL OFFICE. DAY.**

3 PM. One hour later. Harvey, Robert are sitting in the conference room. Ray walks in.

ROBERT  
Ray. How are you doing?

RAY  
I went to the hospital. My heart was racing. Blood pressure high. He put me on Xanax.

ROBERT  
Riding?

RAY  
Yes.

ROBERT  
Good guy and an ever better doctor.

RAY  
How is Rick?

ROBERT  
He lost a great deal of blood, it was touch and go. We just got the word, that it looks like he might be OK.

HARVEY  
He is in a coma.

RAY  
A coma? My God.

HARVEY

They are not overly concerned. The doctor said a coma is common after so much blood loss. You called 911 at the exact right time.

RAY

The exact moment he was shot.

HARVEY

Looks like you were in time.

ROBERT

How are you feeling?

RAY

I am better. I can continue.

ROBERT

You will be going back to the dangerous, witness training later.

Phase 2 is courtroom training. You will be paired one of our court assigned defense lawyers.

These guys are good, they are solid lawyers. This guy graduated from Harvard, and just turned 30. Loaded with bleeding heart liberal guilt. Here is his number.

Robert slides the paper over to Ray.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You will be seeing some sad people in bad situations, on the fringe of living or dying.

Going to jail. Murder, suicide, armed robbery, drug possession, selling, and DUI's. Can you handle this?

RAY

Compared to what I have been through?

ROBERT

Good. See Alicia after this meeting, she will be filling you in on some additional info.

RAY  
OK. Thank you.

Ray stands and starts to leave the conference room as he awkwardly stands up.

ROBERT  
Ray! You sure you are OK?

RAY  
Yes. The Xanax is helping, but it makes me tired.

HARVEY  
Cut each pill in half, they all have this line in the middle.

RAY  
I will. Thank you.

Ray leaves the conference room.

HARVEY  
He was shaking. This does not look good.

ROBERT  
The next few weeks. We will find out who he is.

HARVEY  
He may just land on his face.

ROBERT  
Not the end of the world if he does. This job is not for everybody.

**INT. ALICIA'S STATION. NIGHT.**

Ray walks by Alicia's station, near the front entrance.

ALICIA  
Hello. Heard you almost died today.

RAY  
Rick was shot.

ALICIA  
Where?

RAY  
In his left shoulder.

ALICIA

He OK?

RAY

It is touch and go, he is in a coma, but the doctors think he will be OK.

ALICIA

Marvin shot him?

RAY

How did you know?

ALICIA

I know almost everything about what goes on in this fucking place.

Tomorrow you see Jason in court.  
8AM. You know where the courtroom is?

RAY

Yes.

ALICIA

You have to be on time. Jason is defending a repeat DUI guy. 31, two kids, divorced, a disaster. Which is why he drinks.

RAY

I will be there at 8AM. Thirty minutes early.

ALICIA

Take notes. Record the session.

This is how you are going to learn to be a defense lawyer.

The DUI laws here are as tough as anywhere.

RAY

Will his kids be there?

ALICIA

They are with his wife. He barely gets to see them, due to his drinking. Ironically, he drinks because he cannot see his kids and he cannot see his kids because he drinks.

(MORE)

ALICIA (CONT'D)

Good luck tomorrow kid.

RAY

Thank you.

ALICIA

Ray. You OK?

RAY

I was not for a good 2 hours after the shooting. I am on Xanax.

ALICIA

Don't combine that drug with drinking.

RAY

You on it?

ALICIA

Everybody in this nightmare building is on Xanax. Zoloft. Another big hitter.

RAY

Zoloft?

ALICIA

For depression.

RAY

See you tomorrow.

Alicia hands Ray her phone number.

ALICIA

If you need me. Call me.

Ray gets emotional over this gesture.

RAY

What time can I call?

ALICIA

You call me any time before 1 AM. Any other time I will kill you next day.

RAY

Understood.

Ray smiles.



ALICIA  
Good luck.

Ray slowly walks out of the building. He looks back at Alicia and nods. She smiles as he leaves.

**INT. MUNICIPAL COURT ROOM. DAY.**

Next Morning.

7:30 AM, Ray walks into the courtroom. Ray is greeted by JASON GRANT, 30, 6'1. Standing next to Jason is GEORGE WILLIAMS, 32, 6'4. The prosecutor is ALLAN EDWARDS, 60, 6'2.

JASON  
Nice to meet you. George is our client today. George, Ray is here to learn and record.

GEORGE  
OK.

George and Ray shake hands.

The court bailiff, RICHARD ROBINS, 55, and JUDGE HAROLD DAVIS, 70 walk into the courtroom.

BAILIFF  
ALL RISE! The honorable Richard Robins presiding. Court is now in session!

The courtroom rises as Judge Davis seats at the judge's desk.

JUDGE DAVIS  
Be seated please.

The judge starts to read the Williams brief.

JUDGE DAVIS (CONT'D)  
Second DUI, in the last 2 months?

JASON  
Yes Judge.

JUDGE DAVIS  
Not good. How do you plead?

JASON  
Not guilty.

JUDGE DAVIS  
Really?

JASON  
Circumstances are extenuating.

JUDGE DAVIS  
Not for the last DUI. He plead guilty.

JASON  
Yes. This time we have proof that my client was on a drug called Carbamazepine, because recently he has been having seizures. This drug was prescribed by his doctor.

JASON (CONT'D)  
This drug has been known to cause problems with the breathalyzer test, and can give false positive readings.

ALLAN  
We have no knowledge of this effect on the breathalyzer test.

Jason hands the copy of the doctor's script to the bailiff.

The bailiff hands the document to the Judge.

Jason hands another copy to the prosecutor.

JASON  
I would like to offer this document as exhibit A.

JUDGE DAVIS  
The other issue is the police officer and his opinion as to the state of your client when he was pulled over. Did your client tell the police officer he was on this drug?

JASON  
No, he did not, because he could not have known that this would have any affect on a test for alcohol.

JUDGE DAVIS  
Is the police officer here today?

JASON  
Yes he is judge.

JUDGE DAVIS  
You may call him as your first witness.

JASON  
Your honor. I call officer John Alden to the stand.

JOHN ALDEN, 32, walks to the stand. As John sits at the stand the bailiff has him place his hand over a bible.

BAILIFF  
Do you promise to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

JOHN  
I do.

Jason stands up and walks towards the officer.

JASON  
John, do you recognize my client?

Jason points to George.

JOHN  
Yes I do.

JASON  
Can you describe what happened when you pulled him over and the reason why you pulled him over?

JOHN  
He was driving erratically.

JASON  
How so?

JOHN  
Back and forth a little. Seemed to stop when there was no reason to slow down or stop.

JASON  
Back and forth a little?

JOHN  
It was in the realm of what I considered erratic driving.

JASON  
Was it?

JOHN  
Yes it was.

JASON  
Then you pulled him over?

JOHN  
Yes.

JASON  
Did he cooperate?

JOHN  
I had no problems with him. License and registration, car insurance. No issues.

JASON  
When you talked to him. Did you notice that he was drunk?

JOHN  
I was not sure, I suspected he might be drunk due to his driving. So I had him step out.

JASON  
Step out of his car?

JOHN  
Yes. He seemed a little dizzy.

JASON  
How so?

JOHN  
Swaying.

JASON  
Any alcohol on his breath?

JOHN  
No.

JASON  
Why the breathalyzer then?

JOHN  
Experience.

JASON

I see. So you saw a little swaying and no other obvious signs of someone who might be drunk? Nothing more?

JOHN

Yes.

JASON

Your honor, at this point, I would request that these charges must be thrown out. This officer had no clear cause to give the breathalyzer in the first place.

Then we contend this test was not accurate due to the drug my client was taking for his seizures.

JUDGE DAVIS

John. You know better. You have been in front of me before. Shoddy police work. I am throwing out the charges.

ALLAN

Your honor! Are you kidding?

JUDGE DAVIS

Have I ever kidded in this courtroom?

ALLAN

All the time!

JUDGE DAVIS

Not this time. SIT DOWN!

JASON

Thank you your honor.

JASON (CONT'D)

Thank you your honor.

John leaves the stand and gives a bad look to Jason.

Ray leans over to talk to Jason.

GEORGE

Thank you! You saved my life!

JASON

This was your lucky day. I do not want to see you ever again. Understood?

GEORGE

Yes.

RAY

That was amazing.

JASON

George. You are free to go. Remember what I said. Next time they will throw you in jail for a long time. You will not be able to drive for a long time.

GEORGE

You will not see me again. Thank you.

JASON

Ray. We have another big one tomorrow at 8AM. Interested?

RAY

Hell yes.

**INT. MUNICIPAL COURT ROOM. DAY.**

Next morning.

Ray rushes into the Municipal Court at 7:45 AM. Jason is seated waiting for the judge.

RAY

Sorry late.

JASON

You are 15 minutes early Ray.

RAY

I always like to be 30 minutes early. I consider this late.

JASON

Our client is arriving shortly. In jail for attempted murder. It was a work thing. Did you read the case?

RAY

Yes. An amazing story.

JASON  
This is not attempted murder. It  
was a fist fight inside of a  
workplace. Nothing more.

DAN ROLAND, 50 arrives from the temporary jail area.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Our argument is Dan was provoked  
for many years.

RAY  
From what I read, I would agree.

JASON  
Ray this is Dan.

RAY  
Hi.

DAN  
Hello.

Dan and Ray shake hands.

JASON  
This is a preliminary hearing. Same  
prosecutor as yesterday.

Judge Harold Davis briskly enters the courtroom, followed by  
the Bailiff Richard Robins.

BAILIFF  
ALL RISE! Honorable Judge Harold  
Davis presiding. Court is now in  
session.

The courtroom rises. Judge Davis looks at Jason as he sits  
down.

JUDGE DAVIS  
You may be seated.

You again?

JASON  
Me again.

JUDGE DAVIS  
And you again?

RAY  
Me again.

RAY (CONT'D)

We have to stop meeting this way guys.

Some in the courtroom laugh.

JUDGE DAVIS

This is an attempted murder case.  
An IT contractor provoked?

JASON

For almost 7 years sir.

ALLAN

We contest that defense strategy  
your honor.

JUDGE DAVIS

SHOCKER! How do you plead?

JASON

Not guilty by reason of self  
defense. Also this case is not  
categorized correctly. This is a  
battery case after a fair fight  
between two men.

JUDGE DAVIS

You have precedent?

JASON

There is precedent, however the  
prosecutor is using his personal  
problems with me, to turn this case  
into attempted murder.

ALLAN

Your honor. The defendant beat up  
another man at work so badly he was  
in the hospital for a week.

JASON

This is about a fair fight between  
two men after 7 years of goading  
and abuse.

He was in the hospital for a week  
to make this case look better for  
attempted murder.

We will prove that his injuries  
were not conducive to a week in a  
hospital or an attempted murder  
charge.



ALLAN  
You are a doctor now?

JASON  
No, are you?

JUDGE DAVIS  
Enough of this back and forth crap.  
I have reviewed the medical record.

The employee got his ass kicked  
after a fight. I am reducing this  
case to aggravated assault.

ALLAN  
Your honor!

JUDGE DAVIS  
I have made my ruling, you are free  
to appeal. You are also free to sit  
down and shut up!

Allan and Jason both sit.

JUDGE DAVIS (CONT'D)  
This is a preliminary hearing. I  
want to hear both opening  
statements. Mr. Prosecutor, you  
first.

Allan Edwards stands to face the Judge.

ALLAN  
Your honor. Members of the  
courtroom. This case is about a  
software contractor, temporary  
worker within an Information  
Technology firm attacking and  
almost killing another employee.

We reject the defense's statement  
of self defense or justified  
assault brought on by years of  
abuse.

We are now seeking the full penalty  
for Felony aggravated assault, four  
years and a ten thousand dollar  
fine.

Allan sits down.

Jason stands to face the Judge.

JASON

We have hard facts, and witnesses of 7 long years of abusive behavior by another employee towards my client.

This includes non stop provoking comments and actions designed to get my client to lose his temper and then lose his contract.

One clear example is purposely wrecking my clients applications, and inserting bad code into my clients applications as part of a 7 year long vendetta.

We have a long list of outrageous issues that resulted in an unavoidable physical confrontation and fight that my client won easily.

We will prove that under the conditions of any human being trying to make a living under constant harassment for seven years that my client was justified in striking back in the only way that was available at the time. This was AFTER my client was violently shoved by the employee. That is our case sir.

JUDGE DAVIS

I am finding that there is enough evidence and justification for this to go to trial.

As always both parties can negotiate a settlement prior to this proceeding further. Court is in recess until 2:00 PM.

BAILIFF

ALL RISE.

The courtroom rises. Judge Davis leaves the courtroom.

Ray leans over to whisper in Jason's ear.

RAY

What is next?

Allan walks over to Jason and Ray.

ALLAN  
Want to talk?

JASON  
Yes we are available. Can Ray join us? He is learning the ropes.

ALLAN  
Sure.

Ray, Jason, Dan and Allan walk to a conference room across the hallway from the courtroom.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. MUNICIPAL COURT. DAY.**

JASON  
Where is your client?

ALLAN  
He did not want to come today. It is not required for him to be here. He was the victim of violence.

DAN  
He is a victim of his own actions and stupidity. He probably did not want see me again, because of what happened last time.

Jason angrily turns to Dan.

JASON  
Dan do not talk. I am your lawyer let me do my job.

DAN  
Sure thing. Sorry.

ALLAN  
He wants two million dollars to settle this.

JASON  
I want to be the first man to urinate on Mars. No way. We will give you 1 dollar, how's that?

ALLAN  
Looks like we are going to court.

JASON  
That it does.

Allan rushes out of the conference room, angrily.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Dan we discussed this. No talking  
to the other side, please.

DAN  
A one time mistake. Will not happen  
again.

RAY  
I guess we go to trial.

JASON  
Want to attend?

RAY  
Yes!

JASON  
I will clear it with Harvey and  
Robert. I will text you.

RAY  
That was very impressive in there.

JASON  
This will be a tough one.

DAN  
Will I make bail today?

JASON  
Yes. I will take you to the  
bondsman. Ray, you should see where  
this is, come with us.

They all leave the conference room.

**EXT. MUNICIPAL COURT. DAY.**

One week later. 8:00 AM.

Ray, Jason and Dan are sitting in the courtroom, and Allan  
and his client MARK SWENSON, 47 are sitting at the  
prosecutors table.

Judge Davis enters the courtroom, followed by the Bailiff.

BAILIFF

ALL RISE! The honorable Judge  
Harold Davis presiding! Court is  
now in session.

The courtroom rises.

DAN

(Leans over and whispers  
in Jason's ear.)  
I see that little freakish wimp  
decided to show up today.

JASON

He had no choice. I am calling him  
to the stand. Just do not say  
anything in court. Our case is  
precarious enough as it is.

DAN

It is not precarious. This lowlife  
tried to ruin my career for almost  
seven long years.

JASON

This is about what we can prove,  
not your emotions and  
understandable outrage.

Jason stands to face the Judge.

JASON (CONT'D)

Your Honor. I call Mark Swenson to  
the stand.

Mark stands up and walks slowly to the stand.

BAILIFF

Please raise your right hand.

Mark raises his right hand.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)

Do you promise to tell the truth  
and nothing but the truth so help  
you God?

MARK

I do.

JUDGE DAVIS

You may sit.

Mark sits on the stand, not looking at the defendant table.

Please state your name, and your position with the company in question.

MARK

I am Mark Swenson, a developer with Parrot technologies for 15 years.

JASON

You are an employee of Parrot, not a contractor correct?

MARK

Yes.

JASON

What is your main job responsibility?

MARK

Developing and maintaining new and existing applications using several different Microsoft technologies.

JASON

What is your current title?

MARK

Senior software developer and manager.

JASON

So you are also a manager?

MARK

Yes.

JASON

How many people do you manage?

MARK

None right now, its a high level decision making position.

JASON

What percentage of your job is software development and management?

MARK

Right now, about 70% development, the rest management.

JASON  
You recognize my client?

MARK  
Yes.

JASON  
You worked together for about how long?

MARK  
Seven fucking years.

JASON  
Your honor, I respectfully request.

JUDGE DAVIS  
Sir. I order you to not use foul language in my courtroom.

Do that again and you are in my jail with a 500 dollar fine taped to your face. Is that understood?

MARK  
Yes.

JUDGE DAVIS  
I hope you mean that. Because I put people in jail in this courtroom all the time. I actually enjoy it. It makes me happy. Is that understood?

MARK  
Yes OK.

JUDGE DAVIS  
Watch your language.

MARK  
I will.

JASON  
During those seven years, what was your working relationship?

MARK  
He was working separately on his own projects most of the time. The other times I was the employee and he was the contractor.

JASON

Meaning?

MARK

I gave him things to do.

JASON

By things you mean software development projects?

MARK

Yes.

JASON

Were there problems or conflicts? Disagreements?

MARK

That is always the case with software development. Everybody has opinions.

JASON

Did arguments escalate?

MARK

Rarely.

JASON

What happened within the incident in question. That escalated into violence?

MARK

He disrespected my authority as project leader.

JASON

How so?

MARK

He called me a moron.

JASON

Did you say anything to provoke this comment?

MARK

No. I did not.

DAN

Your honor! The witness is lying!



JUDGE DAVIS

Can you please instruct your client to not yell out comments during a cross examination. This is not a Zoo!

JASON

Dan. Please. No talking. Let me handle this. I will be calling you next.

JUDGE DAVIS

You do that again, and you are going back to jail with more fines. There is no rule that you have to be here during trial. Keep your mouth shut.

DAN

OK your honor.

JUDGE DAVIS

The jury is instructed to disregard the last outburst.

JASON

So you are saying that my client just called you a moron for no reason at all.

MARK

That is correct.

JASON

On a scale if 1 to 10, how would you rate the working relationship between you and my client during the entire time my client was employed as a contractor.

MARK

About a two.

JASON

Only two?

MARK

Yes and that is pushing it.

JASON

Would you say that this poor relationship is more because of him or you?

MARK

Of course its him. He is a nightmare to work with.

JASON

Mark. How long have you been employed at Parrot Software?

MARK

Fifteen years.

JASON

Your standing in the company? Your reviews?

MARK

Always outstanding. Every year.

JASON

How about the software applications you have been responsible for? All the opinions polls were high?

MARK

Yes.

JASON

Have you worked with other contractors in the past?

ALLAN

Your honor. Relevancy?

JUDGE DAVIS

Obviously. I will allow the question. Are you crazy? Sit.

Allan sits down.

MARK

Yes I have.

JASON

How many would you say?

MARK

About 7 over the years.

JASON

All positive experiences?

MARK

Yes, except that asshole over there.

JASON

Your Honor, I move to strike the witness's last statement as inflammatory and irrelevant.

JUDGE DAVIS

Granted. You will watch your language in my courtroom. I will now fine you 500 dollars for that last comment.

Three strikes and you are in my jail. The A-word is considered bad language in my courtroom. Do you understand?

MARK

Yes Judge.

JUDGE DAVIS

Do you?

MARK

Yes!

JASON

I have no further questions at this time, but I reserve the right to recall this witness in the immediate future.

Mark starts to leave the stand.

JUDGE DAVIS

You were not dismissed. Remain seated.

Allan stands to cross examine Mark.

ALLAN

So, your reviews have all been top of the line?

MARK

The best in the company. Yes.

ALLAN

Co workers would agree that you are great to work with?

MARK  
Yes they would.

ALLAN  
I have no more questions your  
Honor.

JUDGE DAVIS  
We recess for 90 minutes, for lunch  
and so I can pour cold water on my  
head.

Jason leans over to Dan and Ray.

JASON  
This is known as, opening the door.

BAILIFF  
ALL RISE!

The courtroom rises as the judge leaves the courtroom.

Jason, Ray and Dan leave the courtroom.

**INT. COURTROOM CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.**

Five minutes later.

JASON  
By opening the door, we have this  
case won. I have documented proof  
that Mark Swenson has had many bad  
reviews and people complaining  
about him for years.

He also receives bad opinion polls  
for his software.

DAN  
I know of a few people there. Can  
we get them to testify?

JASON  
So far I have his manager. He knows  
enough for now.

RAY  
Why did his own lawyer open the  
door like that?

JASON  
Easy. Mark lied to him and he  
believed the lie.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)  
He did not check and double check.  
A fundamental lawyer error.

DAN  
So we have it made then?

JASON  
Unless the Judge makes all of this inadmissible.

RAY  
How can he do this? The other side opened the door.

JASON  
What you will learn as a defense lawyer is that there are surprises and injustice all the time.

DAN  
Then I can countersue that lowlife scumbag?

JASON  
Or you can let it go and move on with your life. You did beat the hell out of this guy.

I hope that is enough for you. I will not be interested in pursuing that Civil Lawsuit.

DAN  
I will think about it.

**INT. MUNICIPAL COURT ROOM. DAY.**

90 Minutes later.

JASON  
Your honor. The defense calls, Dalton Fredrick to the stand.

DALTON FREDRICK, 60, 5'9 approaches the stand.

Mark looks at Dalton as he walks towards the stand.

MARK  
(Whispers to Allan)  
What the hell is he doing here?

ALLAN  
Something you did not tell me?

MARK

I told you everything.

BAILIFF

Your right hand over the bible. Do you promise to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God.

DALTON

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

JUDGE DAVIS

You may be seated.

JASON

Can you tell the court your name and title at Parrot Systems?

DALTON

I am Dalton Franklin Executive Director of Parrot Systems.

JASON

Just curious. Why Parrot Systems?

DALTON

The owner likes Parrots. Has several Parrot Pets. Never did like the name.

JASON

How long have you been an employee of this company?

DALTON

22 years.

JASON

The title of Executive Director. Were you recently promoted?

DALTON

Yes from Senior manager about three years ago. Not that recently.

JASON

So you were the manager over the project that was being worked on by my client and Mark Swenson?

DALTON

Yes.

JASON

Did you notice conflicts and problems.

DALTON

Sometimes yes. At meetings it appeared that Mark was trying to make points at the expense of Dan.

JASON

Were any of the points valid?

DALTON

Most of Mark's points looked like Mark was trying to get under Dan's skin, nothing more than that.

JASON

Did you do anything to alleviate this problem?

DALTON

Dan was a contractor and in this case, I hoped that whatever problems there were, would resolve themselves over time.

JASON

Did they?

DALTON

Not really.

JASON

What did you do?

DALTON

I thought at the time there was nothing I could do. I was stunned the way things turned out in the end.

JASON

You mean my client beating up Mr. Swenson?

DALTON

Yes.

JASON

Were you there for this event?

DALTON

Yes. I could barely pull Dan off of him. By then it was too late.

JASON

What did you see?

DALTON

Mark laying on the floor holding his face, and Dan ready to continue the beating. Had I not been there it would have been much worse.

JASON

What did you do then?

DALTON

I just said STOP! Then Dan stopped. Mark was bleeding and holding his head. The fight was over very quickly and very one sided.

JASON

Did you ever anticipate that something like this would happen?

DALTON

I knew there were problems, for years. But not this bad. Turns out that Dan introduced a far better way and obvious way to code database access. Mark was copying and pasting the same code over and over again for years.

JASON

Are you familiar with the acronym DRY?

DALTON

Yes. It stands for "Don't Repeat Yourself", its fundamental rule of software development.

JASON

Why did you not stop the repeating of code from the beginning?

DALTON

No code reviews. That part is my fault. I am too hands off. I have since corrected this error.

(MORE)



DALTON (CONT'D)  
Unfortunately rather than embracing something that was obviously better, this caused resentment, jealousy and anger.

JASON  
If Dan were an employee, would this had been a better situation?

DALTON  
Yes. The issue with all contractors in the IT field is that because they are not employees, they have no leverage. They are expendable.

I am sure this caused problems with Dan, who realized early on that there was anything he might have done, including coming to me about this, may have cost him his job.

JASON  
You did nothing to alleviate this or the other problems?

DALTON  
No. Again, I admit when I am wrong and when I make mistakes.

JASON  
Your honor. No more questions at this time. I reserve the right to recall this witness.

JUDGE DAVIS  
Mr. Prosecutor do you have questions for this witness?

Allan stands and approaches Dalton.

ALLAN  
Dalton, from an earlier statement you stated the Mark had stellar reviews.

DALTON  
Never stellar. There were times he received bad opinion polls for his applications and that created some knocks on his reviews over the years.

ALLAN  
No more questions at this time.

Allan goes back to his seat and leans over to Mark.

ALLAN (CONT'D)  
Something you should have told me  
before. Too late now man.

MARK  
I had no idea.

Allan rolls his eyes and does not look at Mark.

ALLAN  
Do not lie to me. I am your lawyer!

JASON  
Your honor. I call Dan Roland to  
the stand.

Dan walks towards the stand and puts his hand on the Bible.

BAILIFF  
Do you promise to tell the truth  
and nothing but the truth? So help  
you God?

DAN  
Yes I do.

JASON  
Dan. State your name and job  
responsibilities for the jury.

DAN  
I am Dan Roland, an IT contractor,  
and software developer.

JASON  
How long were you working at Parrot  
Software?

DAN  
About 7 years.

JASON  
The contract ended after the fight,  
is that correct?

DAN  
Yes.

JASON  
Can you describe some of the many  
incidents with Mark Swenson that  
eventually led to this altercation?

DAN

I was working on my own from the beginning with projects I was in charge of. When I was forced to work with Swenson, that is when things started to go south.

JASON

Why is that?

DAN

His code was so astoundingly bad and stupid that there was no way I could code using his idiotic methods when the entire software world knows of well known ways to develop software.

ALLAN

Your honor, I object to the insulting commentary.

JUDGE DAVIS

Dan, please try to use more professional language.

DAN

How can I do that? He is by far the worst developer I have ever seen.

ALLAN

Your honor!

JUDGE DAVIS

Use the word inadequate, inaccurate instead. OK?

DAN

I will try your honor.

JASON

So during the times you worked together, can you list some of the incidents?

DAN

He would spy on me, to see when I arrived after lunch, and when I arrived in the morning. When I would talk to my friends in the building, he would follow me around.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

He had a long standing vendetta that went on for the entire seven years I worked at the company.

JASON

Over what?

DAN

Like any developer with any level of common sense I had a better method of database access, with one routine used for all points of entry. Not repeating the same code hundreds of times for so many years.

One point of entry, using stored procedures wherever possible. He was copying and pasting the same code over and over again since the day he started. He finally admitted I was right after doing this for eight long years.

As a vendetta to get even with me. He went into one of my completed applications in production and put in his garbage code for database access. Copying and pasting over and over again.

Then, he broke the application in an important area, and had no idea he broke it. I was contacted by one of our users.

JASON

Did you report him to the manager?

DAN

No.

JASON

Why not?

DAN

Based on my previous experiences with sick people in the IT field, I knew that as a contractor there would be a huge argument and I would be forced to leave. The employee always wins in situations like this.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

The manager would have discovered that there was a huge impasse, hatred and dangerous anger. With a potential for a major work blowup.

This could be what Mark wanted all along. A meeting, a blowup argument and I lose my contract with the company. I just could not risk this happening, due to how much I loved the contract and the money I would lose.

JASON

Did you think you were thinking rationally when you decided to not report this outrage to the manager?

DAN

I was under tremendous amounts of life threatening stress almost the entire time I was working at this company.

I could not think of a way of having a huge blowup meeting and still have my high paying contractor job.

JASON

On scale of 1-10, how would you grade Mark Swenson's software development skills.

DAN

If zero were in your list I would pick zero. Otherwise one.

His code is an embarrassment to the IT field. They have no code reviews at Parrot, like most other companies do, so he was allowed to create monstrously bad software for many years.

Think about the stupidity. Copying and pasting the same code in hundreds of routines for eight long years.

This was a very small IT department, so someone this incompetent was employed for software development. I have never seen anything like this in all my years of working.

JASON

Finally, what caused the physical altercation?

DAN

One day, I just had enough of the stupid remarks and back stabbing. He made an idiotic comment about hoping my online chess playing was better than my code, and considering how laughably bad his code was, I made a comment about his code, and he shoved me. I shoved back and he came at me and I knocked him out.

JASON

One punch?

DAN

It was one straight jab to this face and he was out. As you can see he is a pretty wimpy scrawny guy.

MARK

Fuck you!

JUDGE DAVIS

Mr. Prosecutor, instruct your client to keep his mouth shut in my courtroom. You have now earned one day in my jail and a one thousand dollar fine. Want to try for two?.

ALLAN

Yes your honor.

(Allan whispers to Mark.)

Are you crazy? Keep your mouth shut.

JASON

I have no more questions your honor at this time. I reserve the right to recall this witness at a later time.

JUDGE DAVIS  
Allan, your witness.

Allan gets up to question Dan.

ALLAN  
Are these your opinions or in  
agreement by all IT professionals?

DAN  
Anyone, in the IT field for more  
than 1 day would look at Swenson's  
embarrassingly bad code and know  
immediately that he has no business  
being a software developer.

All we have to do is print out the  
code and have any IT professional  
look it over.

ALLAN  
That is of course, your opinion.

DAN  
That is fact. Coding is in many  
cases an exact science like Math.  
His code is so bad any person in  
the IT field would know how bad it  
is immediately.

Jason stands up to address the court.

JASON  
Your honor. Along the lines of  
having a coding expert to review  
relevant code, I could have that  
scheduled immediately.

ALLAN  
I object to this. We would all have  
to agree to an expert witness who  
has no bias.

JUDGE DAVIS  
I will consider this and make my  
ruling tomorrow.

ALLAN  
Your honor!

JUDGE DAVIS  
I will make my ruling tomorrow.  
SIT!

ALLAN

I have no more questions at this time, but reserve the right to recall this witness in the future.

JUDGE DAVIS

You may step down.

As Dan steps off of the witness stand, Mark gets up, runs and then dives right towards him. A huge fist fight ensues and Dan easily pushes Mark away and knocks him out, but not before Mark accidentally hits Ray in the face, giving him another black eye.

JUDGE DAVIS (CONT'D)

Bailiff! Get this guy in cuffs!  
Right now. I want him arrested.  
That is a week in jail now moron.

Two security guards join the bailiff in subduing Mark and he is in handcuffs very quickly.

MARK

I cant your honor! Not a week.

JUDGE DAVIS

Should have considered this before you attacked the defendant! Now you have a week to think about it! Get him OUT of here!

Jason goes to help Ray, who is holding his face and eye.

DAN

That guy just never learns.

JASON

Looks like another black eye man.  
You will be a racoon at this rate.

Ray holds his hand over his left eye.

RAY

I know.

JASON

You OK?

RAY

Yes. I am used to this now.

JASON

Dan, you OK?



DAN

Never been better. I have grown to love punching that guy in the face.

JASON

Your honor. Under these extreme circumstances where Mr. Swenson has shown himself to be the aggressor, attacking my client again, we move to an immediate judgment in our favor.

JUDGE DAVIS

As with the software code idea earlier, I will also take this into consideration and make my ruling tomorrow. Court adjourned!

Jason, Ray, Allan and Dan leave the courtroom.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. MUNICIPAL COURT. DAY.**

Ten minutes later in the conference room across the hall.

JASON

I am pretty sure we have this won. After that moron attacking us and hitting Ray in the eye, the Judge has no choice.

DAN

Can I sue him now?

JASON

He did attack you, but once again you easily kicked his ass. We can look into the 7 years of stress dealing with that asshole, but that will be a hard road.

No lawyer with take a case like this on contingency. You already know I am not that kind of a lawyer. I will email you some references.

DAN

OK. Thanks for your help with all of this.

JASON

We have not officially won yet.  
Ray, I hope you learned a lot from  
this?

RAY

I sure have. I have to learn how to  
duck.

Dan and Jason both laugh.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. MUNICIPAL OFFICES. DAY.**

Two Days later. 10 AM. Ray enters the conference room. Robert and Harvey are seated. Jason follows Ray into the conference room.

ROBERT

Be seated guys. First major news is  
that Rick is out of his coma, of  
about 2 weeks and will be OK.

RAY

Thank God.

JASON

Yes thank God. Rick is a good guy.

HARVEY

We heard you won your case.

JASON

It was an easy one. Dan was  
justified. He was not only harassed  
and provoked for seven years, but  
he was attacked by the employee in  
front of the entire courtroom. A  
man has to do, as the saying goes.

ROBERT

Does Dan want to sue?

JASON

I gave him three references. I  
recommended that he let this one  
go.

ROBERT

Nice black eye Ray. A matching set.  
Congratulations!

RAY

Thank you.

ROBERT

Ray, did you learn something on this case?

RAY

I learned a lot from Jason.

ROBERT

Your old boss called me this morning from Del Mar. Its been 90 days, he was checking in.

JASON

What did he say?

ROBERT

He wanted to know your status. All that has happened since you have been here.

RAY

What did you tell him?

ROBERT

I told you have been doing well, and have been through hell at times. But you come back for more. You do not quit.

RAY

Glad you told him that.

ROBERT

He also said, if you want to come back for a job at the end of your six months here you can.

RAY

For the next 3 months I want to learn much more and get a shot in front of a Judge.

HARVEY

I knew you had character from day one. You are tough, despite coming from a rich part San Diego.

We do real lawyering, and deal with the bottom end of the world.

RAY

Sure beats handling divorces, which is how all this started.

HARVEY

I for one, am impressed.

JASON

I have a case coming up. Another DUI. At some point an opportunity to stand up in front of the judge will come up. Interested?

RAY

Yes I am.

JASON

Great.

HARVEY

Ray. Where are you leaning?

RAY

Three months. I honestly don't know yet. I will be able to make my decision in 3 more months.

ROBERT

We have two interviews for you, next few days.

Harvey hands over the paperwork to Ray.

RAY

Dangerous neighborhood again?

ROBERT

These two are older ladies in their 70's in a relatively nice area. Odds are high you will not be punched in the face. I hope.

RAY

Sounds doable.

ROBERT

Both of them might be solid witnesses to a recent bank robbery. They were in a Starbucks across the street. They might have seen something.

RAY

OK. I will get right on that.

ROBERT

The report is due at the end of the day.

RAY  
OK.

ROBERT  
Good luck.

RAY  
Thanks.

Ray leaves the conference room.

HARVEY  
Why didn't you tell him?

ROBERT  
That they are former sex workers?

HARVEY  
Yes. That.

ROBERT  
What they did before they retired  
is not relevant. What they saw a  
week ago is.

JASON  
I would have told him.

ROBERT  
Let him find out on his own. At  
least he won't get punched in the  
face again.

JASON  
He might get punched in the nuts.

Jason, Robert and Harvey laugh.

**EXT. OUTSIDE A TYPICAL OAKLAND CA. NEIGHBORHOOD. DAY.**

Two hours later. Ray exits his car, and walks up to the house  
and rings the doorbell.

Two women, MOLLY HENDERSON, 72 and JILL CONLON, 73, answer  
the doorbell.

RAY  
Hello. I am Ray Franklin from the  
public defenders department.

MOLLY  
Hello, nice to meet you.

JILL  
Nice to meet you.

RAY

You too.

They all shake hands.

RAY (CONT'D)

My office called?

MOLLY

No they did not. What is this about?

RAY

The bank robbery you two called in about last week? You were both at a Starbucks across the street?

JILL

Oh that.

RAY

I am here to take a recorded statement. You might be called to testify.

MOLLY

Please take a seat, would you like some tea?

RAY

Yes. Thank you.

Ray and Jill sit in the living room as Molly gets the tea.

JILL

What a lovely young man. Have you been with the public defenders office long?

RAY

Almost four months now. It has been something.

Molly returns with three cups of tea. She sits and they all start drinking.

RAY (CONT'D)

Is this lemon I taste?

MOLLY

Yes it is dear.

RAY  
Some other taste. I cannot  
identify.

MOLLY  
Its the tea dear.

RAY  
What kind is it?

MOLLY  
Its organic sage.

RAY  
I don't think I have ever had sage  
tea before. Takes some getting used  
to.

JILL  
Its good for the sexual endurance  
dear.

RAY  
Sexual?

JILL  
Yes. Longer lasting erections.

Ray blushes.

RAY  
Good to know. As far as what you  
saw at the Starbucks across the  
street?

JILL  
We would rather not talk about that  
now dear.

RAY  
That is why I am here.

JILL  
Aren't you feeling a little calmer  
now? Life is so hectic. Don't you  
think?

RAY  
Ladies this is my job.

JILL  
We have jobs too you know. Even at  
our age. We own a brothel in town.

RAY

A what? I think I better leave. I am feeling weird.

JILL

Don't go. We are just getting started.

RAY

Exactly what I am afraid of.

Ray staggers out the front door, and makes it to his car.

Harvey pulls up in his SUV.

HARVEY

Ray?

RAY

What are you doing here?

HARVEY

Get in my car.

RAY

What about my car?

HARVEY

We will have it towed.

Ray staggers into Harvey's car.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Did you drink something?

RAY

Yes. Some tea.

HARVEY

We got a call about these two women. The cops are coming. They probably put something in your tea. Are you going to pass out?.

RAY

That and something else.

HARVEY

What else?

RAY

I think I am getting exited.



HARVEY  
Excited how?

RAY  
You know how.

HARVEY  
That is what I was afraid of.

Two police cars pull up.

HARVEY (CONT'D)  
They are still inside guys.

Two police officers knock on the door of the two women who answer the door as the two police officers walk inside.

Harvey gets out of the car.

HARVEY (CONT'D)  
GUYS!

OFFICER #1  
What?

HARVEY  
Whatever you do. Don't drink anything.

OFFICER #1  
You got it.

Harvey gets back into the car with Ray.

HARVEY  
Turns out these women saw nothing. They just like company, so they trick people to come to their house.

RAY  
I don't feel sick but, should I see a doctor?

HARVEY  
On the tip we got this morning about those two, what you drank is just something to make you relax. If you want to doze off on the way back...

Harvey sees that Ray is sleeping and smiles.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. MUNICIPAL OFFICES.**

One hour later.

Ray staggers into the conference room, following Harvey.

Jason and Robert are sitting at the large conference room table.

ROBERT

You OK man?

RAY

Dizzy and tired is all.

ROBERT

Want to go home? To an emergency room?

RAY

I just need two large cups of coffee.

Jason brings over a large cup of coffee.

RAY (CONT'D)

Thanks.

ROBERT

In all my years of doing this job. You have to be either the most unlucky or accident prone new lawyer we have ever had. Jesus Christ, what is with you?

RAY

I don't know.

HARVEY

Is the coffee helping?

RAY

A little. What the hell did they put in my tea?

ROBERT

It was a drug to make you drowsy and give you an erection.

RAY

Almost gang raped by two older women in their 70s?

HARVEY

Pretty much.

ROBERT

There should be an award for this much bad luck.

JASON

Well, at least he got an erection out of this.

They all laugh. Ray still seems very drowsy.

RAY

This stuff really works.

JASON

Ray. In three days. You will be stepping in front of a judge for a DUI case. I will be prepping you starting tomorrow.

ROBERT

For today. Go home. Take an UBER.

RAY

I cant drive anyway. My car is still at their house.

HARVEY

Its being towed right now to our lot. I just got the text.

ROBERT

Have Alicia call you an UBER OK?

RAY

OK I will do that now.

Ray gets up and slowly walks to the conference room door and leaves.

JASON

He is quite a likeable guy.

ROBERT

He might just decide to go back to San Diego.

HARVEY

Especially after so much of this unbelievable crap.

ROBERT

In two months we will ask if he wants to stay or go back to his easy life in San Diego.

HARVEY

Care to make this interesting?

ROBERT

250 dollars if he goes back?

HARVEY

I will take that action. I think he is going to stay.

JASON

Working here is real life. Helping the poor and the desperate. He may just find out that there is more to life than getting rich people acquitted of white color crimes.

HARVEY

We have a bet?

Harvey and Robert shake hands.

**INT. ALICIA'S STATION FRONT COUNTER. DAY.**

ALICIA

Hey Ray. Heard what happened. Congrats on your erection.

Ray laughs as he walks by.

RAY

UBER coming?

ALICIA

UBER coming. Take care of that erection when you get home.

RAY

No problem.

**INT. MUNICIPAL COURT ROOM. DAY.**

Three days later. 8 AM.

Ray walks into the courtroom and shakes hands with Jason and DAVID SANDERS, 60. Jason nods at the prosecutor Allan Edwards.

JASON  
You ready?

RAY  
I think I am.

JASON  
I think you will be fine. This is David Sanders. The good news is that this is his first DUI offense. He is getting divorced, then got drunk, and here we are.

RAY  
I guess that is common? Divorce and DUI.

JASON  
For the acronym DUI, the D should stand for divorce. That is how often this happens. More so for men.

Ray shakes David's hand.

RAY  
Nice to meet you. Sorry about what are going through man.

DAVID  
Thank you.

JASON  
Ray, you can give the opening statements as we discussed last night. We have another possible extenuating circumstances. Our goal is to reduce the penalty. Divorce, first time, etc.

JUDGE STEVEN MACDONALD, 72, enters the court room.

BAILIFF  
ALL RISE!

The courtroom stands.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)  
The honorable Steven MacDonald presiding. Court is now in session!

JUDGE MACDONALD  
You may be seated. Jason. Hello again.

JASON  
Nice to see you your Honor.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
About a month?

JASON  
Yes about that.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
First time offender?

JASON  
Yes your Honor.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
How do you plead?

JASON  
Not guilty. Your honor, my  
colleague Ray Franklin will be  
giving the opening statements.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
Your first time for this son?

RAY  
Yes your Honor.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
OK. Go ahead.

Jason whispers into Ray's ear.

JASON  
Like we discussed. Nice and easy,  
no reason to be nervous. You will  
be fine.

RAY  
Thanks for your help.

JASON  
No problem, I know you will do  
great.

Ray stands up in front of the judge.

RAY  
Thank you, your honor.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
You are welcome.

RAY

More than just a case of a 60 year old man, getting a divorce after 35 years of marriage and 3 kids. This is a situation that is all about understanding and empathy.

Our client David Sanders has been a great dad, provider and husband for most of his adult life. Then about 3 months ago, he found out his wife wanted a divorce.

She was in love with someone else. David was at first in a state of extreme shock. Sought therapy. Was taking Zoloft and Xanax. He was not sleeping for weeks and unfortunately lost his job as a high school English Teacher.

David was never a drinker. Not even casually.

David now sees his kids twice a week, they are 17 and 20 years old. Living in an apartment he hates. One depressing night, David stopped off at a bar and drank three beers. Then David drove into a police road trap to catch people drinking and driving. David failed the test.

With circumstances are so extreme we have to realize exceptions sometimes. Show some empathy to another person.

There has to be a penalty here. Your Honor, we are asking for something humane, something less than the extreme penalties of loss of license for six months. David is actively trying to get his life back together, and is trying to get a new job. Loss of his driving privileges for that long and time in jail might hurt his future employment.

We ask for a more lenient sentence in this case.

Ray takes his seat next to Jason.

JASON  
Great job. I am proud.

RAY  
Thank you.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
Prosecutor? Your comments?

ALLAN  
Under these extreme circumstances,  
we will go along with lesser  
penalties at your Honor's  
discretion.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
I have been down this road before,  
and divorced myself. Twice. It can  
be sheer hell for all involved, but  
the reality is, in most cases it is  
worse for the man.

My sincerest condolences to you  
sir. Mr. Franklin is right about  
empathy and compassion. In this  
case of a good man, going through  
an extremely tough time, I will  
warrant no jail time and no mark on  
Mr. Franklin's personal record.

I will require only 1 month of loss  
of driving privileges, but you can  
drive to any job interview you  
might receive during this time.

You will be required probation for  
3 months and you will have to pay  
the \$1500 dollar fine. We will have  
to sure that you are making  
progress in your recovery and will  
never drink and drive again. That  
is my ruling.

JASON  
Thank you. Your honor.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
Mr. Franklin. Please stand.

Ray stands in front of the judge.

JUDGE MACDONALD (CONT'D)  
Young man. For your first time out.  
I am very impressed.  
(MORE)



JUDGE MACDONALD (CONT'D)  
I think you have a future. You are  
a natural. Congratulations.

Ray blushes.

RAY  
Thank you, your Honor.

Jason whispers into Ray's ear.

JASON  
Way to go man.

JUDGE MACDONALD  
We are in recess until 1 PM.

BAILIFF  
All rise! Court is now adjourned.

They all rise and Jason and Ray shake hands and they both  
shake hands with Allan.

David walks over to Jason.

DAVID  
I don't know how to thank you man.  
You were incredible.

RAY  
Were it not for Jason, I would not  
have been able to do stand up  
there.

DAVID  
Thank you both. I feel reborn. Like  
I have some of my life back.

JASON  
If you are in therapy, keep going.  
It is the best option for someone  
going through what you have.

DAVID  
I know. Thanks again, to both of  
you.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM. MUNICIPAL OFFICES. DAY.**

Some two months later.

There is a huge party with cake and balloons in conference  
room #5 and a banner, "GOOD LUCK AND GOOD BYE RAY!".

Robert, Harvey, Jason, Rick, Alicia and about 20 others are there.

Ray walks in, completely unaware of the party being thrown.

HUGE CHEERS as Ray enters. He is shocked, unable to know how to react.

RAY

Wow! What is this?

ROBERT

Ray. Congratulations on your six months here!

RAY

Thank you guys. I sure did not expect this.

HARVEY

Hard work and dedication is respected around here Ray.

RAY

It has been some ride.

ALICIA

Shot at, punched in the face twice. Witnessed a murder, drugged by two old women. Got a huge boner. Did I miss anything?

Many in the crowd laugh.

RAY

Life is so different here. Its all about hard work and helping people.

JASON

So sorry to hear you are going back to San Diego next week. We will miss you.

RAY

Who told you I was going back?

JASON

Alicia did.

ALICIA

What? I never said a word.

ROBERT

I for one was sure you had enough  
and would be going back.

RAY

With nothing but respect for you  
sir. I am staying right here.  
Where I belong.

ROBERT

Why?

RAY

It is much less money, so much more  
dangerous. Staying here, makes me  
believe I am accomplishing  
something meaningful.

Going back to San Diego, is easy.  
This job has real meaning.

Robert hands 250 dollars to Harvey. Harvey smiles broadly.

ROBERT

Do me a favor. Don't gloat!

HARVEY

We are all proud of you young man.

ROBERT

I second that.

ALICIA

I liked you from day one. And I  
don't like anybody.

Several laugh.

JASON

Welcome.

RICK

Welcome man.

Rick and Ray shake hands.

RAY

So glad you are OK.

RICK

Me too.

Several shake hands and hug.

**THE END.**