

LAW & ORDER: "HUBRIS"

by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. PARKING GARAGE -- EVENING

A.D.A. JACK MCCOY strides through a nearly empty parking level, casually dressed in jeans and leather jacket, carrying his motorcycle helmet and backpack.

As he approaches his motorcycle, a cell phone RINGS from inside the backpack. He rests the backpack on the seat of the motorcycle and fishes out the phone, answering it.

MCCOY

Jack McCoy.

He's not keen about what he hears, checking his watch.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Look, bring it down to the front of
Hogan Place. It's faster that way.
I'll meet you there.

He ends the call and stuffs the phone back into the backpack.

EXT. ONE HOGAN PLACE -- EVENING

The sound of the motorcycle engine cuts out.

Inside, a harried PARALEGAL scurries to the doors of Hogan Place, clutching a large envelope. Once outside, she glances left and right looking for McCoy.

McCoy strides toward her.

PARALEGAL

I'm really sorry, Mr. McCoy. But
you did say you wanted this file as
soon as--

MCCOY

Don't worry. It's fine.

He opens the envelope and glances at the contents, as the Paralegal waits. Another LAWYER comes out of the building.

PARALEGAL

Is it what you needed?

MCCOY

Yup.

LAWYER

'Night, Jack.

MCCOY

Good nigh---

BOOOOOM! A blinding white flash sweeps the area.

All three are thrown to the ground by the explosion.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF HOGAN PLACE -- NIGHT

A large police perimeter has been set up around the entrance of Hogan Place. The flashing lights of police cars and fire trucks splash the area. Cops keep the public back.

DETECTIVES JOE FONTANA and ED GREEN walk toward the scene.

GREEN

Hogan Place. What's that great Shakespeare line about lawyers?

FONTANA

You mean, "first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers"?

GREEN

That's the one. Looks like someone took it to heart.

FONTANA

Couldn't happen to a nicer bunch of people.

They enjoy their amusement as they meet a UNIFORMED COP.

FONTANA (CONT'D)

So what's up here?

COP

Bomb. CSU is still checking it out. Three injured. One guy's got a mild concussion. The other two look serious. They're unconscious right now.

He steps aside, so that they can see the PARAMEDICS wheeling one gurney to the ambulance.

Jack McCoy lies on it, unconscious. His right side is injured, jacket sleeve shredded and bloody. The Paramedics load him into the ambulance.

Fontana looks at Green.

3.

GREEN
Not so great anymore.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. SQUAD ROOM, THE 27TH PRECINCT -- NIGHT

Green drags into the Squad Room. Fontana still looks crisp and cool. Another detective, BOB GILLETTE, heading out at the end of shift greets them in passing.

BOB GILLETTE

'Night, Green.

GREEN

'Night, Gillette.

Green sinks into his chair.

LT. ANITA VAN BUREN comes up to them, definitely on edge.

VAN BUREN

What did you find at the scene? The press are already on this. It's going to get messy.

GREEN

Going to get?

Fontana snorts. Van Buren just gives Green a warning look.

GREEN (CONT'D)

Best that CSU could tell us is that it was a bomb. Apparently planted on McCoy's motorcycle.

FONTANA

Now in little pieces in front of Hogan Place. They're collecting every bit they can find, to try and reconstruct the bomb. It's gonna take them a while.

VAN BUREN

What about the trigger? Could they at least determine that?

GREEN

Nope. And the one witness who was conscious when we got there has a mild concussion. He doesn't remember anything.

VAN BUREN

We don't have a lot of time, fellas. When someone comes after a prosecutor, everyone wants to know why. Is it connected to a case?

FONTANA

This could take a long time,
Lieutenant. A D.A. makes a lot of
enemies.

INT. OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE A.D.A. JACK MCCOY -- DAY

The concerned A.D.A. ALEXANDRA BORGIA leads Fontana and Green
into McCoy's office.

FONTANA

All we're saying is that a prosecutor
like McCoy must get a few death
threats.

She pulls open a file drawer and takes out a folder that's
at least two inches thick.

BORGIA

"Few" is an interesting way of putting
it.

GREEN

That's all of them?

She looks at the date on the most recent (top of the file)
letter.

BORGIA

For this year. So far.

She hands the file to Fontana.

D.A. ARTHUR BRANCH cruises into the room, behind the
detectives, in full crusader mode.

Fontana hefts the file, gauging the weight.

FONTANA

Popular guy.

BRANCH

It's not a subject fit for humor,
detective.

Fontana doesn't flinch, but just turns to face Branch.
Neither intends to give ground to the other. Green
intervenes.

GREEN

Any chance we can get a log of McCoy's
incoming calls?

BRANCH

Why would you need that?

Fontana's happy to respond, all business.

FONTANA

To check against the LUDs of suspects.

BRANCH

When you've actually got some solid suspects, you let me know.

Green decides to head out of the tense atmosphere.

Branch spots the folder in Fontana's grasp.

BRANCH (CONT'D)

That shouldn't leave this office.
We can make copies for you.

Green would be happy with that. Fontana just oozes cool.

FONTANA

Evidence. You know we can't process copies for trace evidence.

He starts for the door.

Green lingers slightly, working his way up to the thing that's really on his mind.

GREEN

Any news on how McCoy is doing?

Fontana waits for the answer at the door.

Branch deflates a bit.

BRANCH

We haven't heard anything new from the hospital. He lost a lot of blood.

INT. SQUAD ROOM, THE 27TH PRECINCT -- DAY

Fontana drops the threat file on his desk. Green hauls out a pad of paper as he sits down.

GREEN

I really want to nail this psycho.

FONTANA

Letting this get personal, aren't you?

GREEN

I like McCoy. So shoot me.

Van Buren makes a beeline for the detectives.

Fontana sees her coming and gives Green a "heads up" glance.

FONTANA

We got this year's file of death threats from McCoy's office.

VAN BUREN

Well, don't slow down now. The mayor wants something he can feed the press sharks.

Green makes a try for some humor.

GREEN

The mayor? Gee, Leu. Is the mayor calling you?

VAN BUREN

Very funny.

(not)

You know how the food chain works, Ed. The press bites the mayor, the mayor bites the chief, the chief bites the captain, the captain bites me, I bite you. And I'm really hungry right now. Hit the pavement.

She heads for her office.

GREEN

Ouch.

FONTANA

You asked for it.

He hands Green part of the file.

FONTANA (CONT'D)

Sort for the most recent ones first.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ANDREW FANECHKA'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Fontana raps on the door of the apartment. Green glances over some copies in the folder he's carrying.

GREEN

Reading this guy's letter gives me a headache.

FONTANA

Tell me about it. He's got a real hate on for McCoy. Out on bail. Someone must have coughed up major bucks for him.

Fontana raps impatiently again.

Finally the door opens. KATYA FANECHKA, in her 30s, greets them.

Her leotard, the towel draped around her neck, the pulled back hair, all indicate she's been working out. She looks over the detectives coldly.

KATYA FANECHKA

Yeah? What do you want?

Green's a bit taken aback by her.

GREEN

We're looking for Andrew Fanechka.

KATYA FANECHKA

I'm his sister, Katya. What do you want?

They pull out their badges.

FONTANA

We need to talk to your brother, Ms. Fanechka.

She laughs bitterly.

KATYA FANECHKA

Talk to him? Good luck.

She steps aside to let them in.

KATYA FANECHKA (CONT'D)

Will this take long?

INT. FANECHKA APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- DAY

The spare furnishings have been arranged to leave a clear floor space. A pair of free weights and a work-out pad sit on the floor.

By a window, in a comfortable chair, ANDREW FANECHKA, also in his 30s, sits staring listlessly out at the city.

Katya walks over to him and grasps his shoulder firmly.

KATYA FANECHKA

Andy. These cops are here to talk to you.

Slowly, he pulls his attention away from the window and to her face.

ANDREW FANECHKA

Cops?

She looks at Fontana and Green.

KATYA FANECHKA

Well, here he is. Talk to him.

Fanechka transfers his attention to the cops. He lives in a thick molasses world.

Green holds out a photocopy of a handwritten letter.

GREEN

Mr. Fanechka, is this your writing?

Fanechka looks at the page, frowning over it. He puzzles at the sentences.

FONTANA

Come on. You should know your own handwriting.

Katya defends her brother.

KATYA FANECHKA

You cops just don't get it, do you?

ANDREW FANECHKA

Did I write this?

KATYA FANECHKA

He's sick.

GREEN

(to Andrew)

That's what we want to know.

Fanechka continues trying to read.

FONTANA

(to Katya)

Sick?

KATYA FANECHKA

I believe your esteemed colleagues called him a psycho.

GREEN

Colleagues?

KATYA FANECHKA

The cops who investigated his case.

Fanechka reads a word that catches his attention.

ANDREW FANECHKA

McCoy?

He looks up. Deep down inside a tiny spot of anger fires up.

ANDREW FANECHKA (CONT'D)

Is this about McCoy?

Katya immediately turns into an angry porcupine, glaring at the cops.

KATYA FANECHKA
Is this about McCoy?

GREEN
 You saw the news, then?

She gives him a "do I look stupid" glare.

FONTANA
 We're checking everyone who threatened McCoy.

KATYA FANECHKA
 You think he's a threat? He's been like this - on his meds - two months now. Tagged and tracked like a wild animal.

Fontana glances down and notes the electronic anklet on Fanechka's leg.

KATYA FANECHKA (CONT'D)
 Waiting for trial. Whenever your precious McCoy gets around to it.

GREEN
 We have to check everything.

KATYA FANECHKA
 You know, I think it's time for you to leave. Now.

The detectives start to go.

Fanechka gets to his feet and the others all look at him. He grasps Green's arm. Green wants to pull away, but stays still instead.

ANDREW FANECHKA
 McCoy. He was hurt bad? Right?

GREEN
 Yes.

ANDREW FANECHKA
 Good.

Now Green pulls away. He heads for the door, leaving Fontana to make his own exit.

FONTANA
 You have a real good day, then.

EXT. CITY STREET -- DAY

Outside the apartment building, Fontana catches up with Green.

FONTANA

You okay there, sport?

GREEN

That psycho attacked three people with a knife. One woman-- He left her blind in one eye. And he's sitting up there all nice and comfortable.

FONTANA

And doped to the gills.

(pause)

You okay with this? You want Van Buren to put someone else on it? I mean, if you're gonna trip on the personal baggage....

Green digs in his heels.

GREEN

Let's get on with this. Who's next?

INT. STAIRWELL OUTSIDE THE PIOGGIA APARTMENT -- DAY

The place tries not to be seedy, but can't quite get over that line.

Fontana's suit is definitely out of place. He's checking something in the folder.

Green knocks loudly on the door. A couple of times.

FONTANA

Think anyone's home?

They hear someone on the other side of the door.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA (O.S.)

Who are you?

GREEN

Police detectives. We need to talk to you.

The door opens. MICHELLE PIOGGIA, mid-30s, a short Italian spitfire, glares at them.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Let's see your ID.

The cops hold up the badges.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA (CONT'D)

What do you want?

FONTANA

Are you Mrs. Pioggia? We need to talk with you about your husband.

Her glare gets harder.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Talk.

GREEN

Can we come in?

She almost refuses them, but then she steps aside and lets them enter.

INT. THE PIOGGIA APARTMENT -- DAY

The tiny apartment is neat and precise. On a cheap dinette table are a couple of piles of carefully folded men's clothes. On an ancient sofa, two cardboard boxes partly filled with more folded men's clothing.

Michelle really doesn't want the cops there, but she's cooperating for now.

Green gives a quick glance at a collection of photographs on a short bookcase. The Pioggias, Howard and Michelle in the park; a wedding photo; Howard holding up a largish fish; Michelle in Army desert fatigues with a couple of other soldiers.

Green focuses his attention on Michelle as Fontana takes another letter copy out of the folder. He hands it to Michelle.

FONTANA

Did your husband write this?

She looks at the letter. It's the first time she's seen it. As she reads through it, her emotional upset gets laid bare.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Oh, Howard. Stupid.

FONTANA

So he did write it?

She's not bothering to wipe the tears. She thrusts the letter back at Fontana.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Yeah. What does it matter now?

Her reactions confuse the detectives.

GREEN

What does it matter? If he wrote that, we need to find him. The prosecutor on his case was attacked last night.

Now she's angry, explosively so.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

And you think Howard did it? How dumb are you cops anyway?

FONTANA

We have to check. He's not in Rikers anymore.

She laughs with a hysterical edge.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Not in Rikers! That's a good one! Get out! Now!

GREEN

Calm down, Mrs. Pioggia. We have to find him.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

You stupid cops! Go away! He's dead! Because McCoy kept him at Rikers! Now get the hell out of my home!

The startled detectives let her anger push them out of the apartment.

INT. STAIRWELL OUTSIDE THE PIOGGIA APARTMENT -- DAY

Michelle slams the door shut behind Fontana and Green.

GREEN

Woo.

Fontana checks something in the file.

FONTANA

Call Gillette. He was the detective on the Pioggia case.

EXT. ANOTHER CITY STREET, BESIDE THE DETECTIVES' CAR -- DAY

Fontana looks through the file on the hood of the car, while Green finishes the call on his cell phone.

GREEN

Four days ago? Okay, thanks Bob.
(MORE)

GREEN (CONT'D)

(pause)

Yeah. Well, it would have been nice to know before we upset the widow.

He ends the call. Fontana looks up.

FONTANA

Well?

GREEN

Howard Pioggia walked into the middle of a fight at Rikers four days ago. Shivved. Accidentally, apparently. He's dead, all right.

FONTANA

Okay. Who's next on the list then?

EXT. LOADING DOCK -- DAY

NICHOLAS TUCKER, in his late 40s, a big, well-muscled man with a military style haircut, directs the loading of shipping boxes onto a panel truck. He's giving the detectives only a fraction of his attention.

NICHOLAS TUCKER

So that bastard McCoy got blown up. What's that got to do with me?

GREEN

You did write him a threatening letter last month.

That gets Tucker to actually look at Green - with contempt.

NICHOLAS TUCKER

I said that those who chose to be the minions of oppression will receive their just reward.

FONTANA

So that bit about killing him was just a colorful phrase?

Tucker's co-workers are curious about why the cops are there, but other than glancing at the trio, they studiously stick to their work.

GREEN

What is it with you militia types and oppression, anyway?

NICHOLAS TUCKER

You don't think the tax laws of this so-called government are oppressive?

FONTANA

Where were you yesterday, Mr. Tucker?

NICHOLAS TUCKER

I don't have to tell you anything.

Green's impatience surfaces. He gets in the guy's face.

GREEN

Are you obstructing a police investigation?

Tucker sneers at the detective.

NICHOLAS TUCKER

You need to bone up on your Constitution, copper. I don't have to tell you squat. I don't have to bear witness about myself if I don't want to.

He turns away from the pair and ignores them, getting back to work.

The detectives can't do anything except leave.

But before they're completely out of the work area, a smallish, whip of a guy, early 50s, DELORENZO, motions them into a nook.

DELORENZO

You gotta cut Nick some slack.

GREEN

Why?

DELORENZO

He's still angry about that trial. Even though he was acquitted. His wife left him. He blames that D.A.

FONTANA

I kind of got that from his letter.

DELORENZO

You want to know about yesterday?

They do.

DELORENZO (CONT'D)

He was here all day at work. Then some of us grabbed a bite to eat, before heading off to our bowling league. That didn't break up until, oh, I guess it was about ten.

This takes the wind out of the detectives' sails.

GREEN

Where?

DELORENZO

Soho Lanes.

GREEN

Thanks.

The detectives leave, frustrated.

INT. LT. VAN BUREN'S OFFICE -- DAY

Fontana looks through the file while Green recaps their investigation so far. Van Buren focuses on the Detectives' report, sorting options.

GREEN

So far, we've had one murder accomplice - excuse me, alleged accomplice - who was with his mother in the hospital all day in front of plenty of witnesses. He's out. We've got a schizo pumped to the gills with meds and barely capable of starting his breakfast. So forget about him building a bomb and planting it.

FONTANA

There's that militia guy who was acquitted. He blames McCoy for his wife dumping him. And the embezzler, but he was killed in jail.

GREEN

It's a mess, Leu.

VAN BUREN

So, what about this militia guy?

GREEN

Got an alibi.

VAN BUREN

Did you verify it?

The detectives exchange a glance. Green wearily shakes his head "no."

Van Buren hands Fontana a page.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

Follow it up. And talk to forensics. They've finally got a preliminary on the bomb. And apparently some video from the parking garage.

INT. FORENSIC UNIT -- DAY

The Lead Criminalist, SYMENS, a fussy sort, briefs Fontana and Green as he brings up a video display.

SYMENS

Looks like the trigger was connected to the ignition of the bike. Had a timer on it. If McCoy hadn't stopped like he did, he'd have been blown to kingdom come. From what I can piece together of the bomb, it was very neatly constructed. I'd almost say it was done with military precision.

FONTANA

Can we quote you on that?

SYMENS

(amused)

Just an impression, detective. It's not evidence.

GREEN

(impatient)

So what is evidence?

Symens isn't used to Green being this snappish.

SYMENS

Coming up.

On a monitor, black & white surveillance video from a locked position: a motorcycle sits in a spot in the garage, occasionally obscured by passing cars.

FONTANA

That McCoy's machine?

SYMENS

Yup.

Symens speeds up the tape.

SYMENS (CONT'D)

Here you go.

He pauses it when a mini-van momentarily obstructs their view of the motorcycle, then advances it slowly.

As the van passes, a figure crouches beside the motorcycle, wearing an Army style jacket/parka with hood, trousers, hiking boots and gloves. The figure's back is to the camera.

FONTANA

Tell me you've got a shot of his face.

Symens hates to deliver the news.

SYMENS

Sorry. No.

GREEN

Give us a print out of the best view.

FONTANA

For all the good it'll do us.

EXT. 27TH PRECINCT -- DAY

Fontana and Green come out. Green's steaming ahead, Fontana on his cruise control.

A REPORTER lurking around spots them and makes a beeline for the detectives.

FONTANA

Slow down, Ed. What's the rush?

Green turns to his partner.

GREEN

Every minute we screw around, the colder the trail gets.

REPORTER

Say! You're the cops working the attack on that D.A., aren't you? Any news? Was it personal, or about a case?

Fontana ignores the gnat. He and Green push on toward their car.

GREEN

Buzz off.

REPORTER

Come on. This guy. Maverick. Ladies man. Been investigated for ethics charges. He's news. Is he crooked? Gimme an insider's point of view!

Green rounds on the Reporter, startling the intruder and Fontana.

GREEN

(snarling)

How about a curb level point of view?

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SOHO LANES -- DAY

The detectives' car stops abruptly. Fontana gets out on the passenger side, watching Green warily as he gets out.

FONTANA

Does the phrase "bat out of hell"
mean anything to you?

GREEN

Give it a break! I never touched
that guy! Can we get on with checking
out Tucker's alibi?

INT. SOHO LANES -- DAY

Fontana and Green talk with the well-worn manager, STANOS ALEXANDROS, over the clatter of pins and bowling balls. They show him a picture of Tucker.

STANOS ALEXANDROS

Look, when a guy's running a tab,
you'd better believe I make sure
he's here the whole time. I get
enough jerks who try and skip out on
me.

The detectives turn away, disappointed --

To encounter Tucker, and three of his friends, including Delorenzo, as they come in. The quartet are all carrying bowling gear.

NICHOLAS TUCKER

Well, lookee here, boys.
(sneering)
New York's Finest.

GREEN

You got that right.

Fontana pulls out the photo of the figure at McCoy's motorcycle.

FONTANA

We're just making sure this perp
isn't you.

Tucker glances at it and sneers again.

NICHOLAS TUCKER
Whoever that is, they're way smaller
than me. Has the police department
taken to employing the blind now?

GREEN
Your tax dollars at work.

He gets satisfaction as Tucker reacts to having his "Tax
Button" pushed. Fontana hustles Green out.

EXT. CITY STREET NEAR THE SOHO LANES -- DAY

By their car, Fontana sticks the picture of the bomber into
the folder.

Green opens the driver's door.

FONTANA
You really need to chill out, Ed.
The kamikaze act doesn't help us.

GREEN
We've only eliminated what? Four
suspects so far? Tucker's right.
The guy on that video is smaller
than him. And I think we need to
look for someone with a military
background.

INT. SQUAD ROOM, THE 27TH PRECINCT -- DAY

The detectives both work their way through a stack of
correspondence, checking for military records on any of the
names. Green gets a sudden flash.

GREEN
You know, we've been assuming the
bomber is a letter writer.

Gillette comes up with a couple of mugs of coffee. He sets
them down, one for each detective.

FONTANA
Are you trying to depress me, sport?

Green notes the mug of coffee and gives Gillette a feeble
smile.

GREEN
Thanks, Bob.

Gillette looks at the computer screen.

BOB GILLETTE
Military records?

FONTANA
Cross-checking a possibility. To
quote Symens, military precision was
used in making the bomb.

Green remembers something.

GREEN
Wait a minute!

He starts shuffling through papers in the file. He pulls
out one set and skims through it. Fontana watches, puzzled.

FONTANA
What's up?

GREEN
That Pioggia case.

He tries calling up a record.

BOB GILLETTE
But he's dead.

FONTANA
And he wasn't in the military.

GREEN
But his wife was. There was a picture
of her at their apartment. In
fatigues. We need her military
records.

He's not finding what he wants.

GREEN (CONT'D)
Damn. She wasn't in the army as a
married woman.

BOB GILLETTE
No. She and Pioggia met while she
was working at the bank with him.

Fontana and Green give him "you know this how" looks.

BOB GILLETTE (CONT'D)
It came up during the embezzlement
case.

FONTANA
(to Green)
Let's take it to the bank.

INT. BANK MANAGER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Manager HAYDEN CABOT is surprised by what the detectives
want.

HAYDEN CABOT

Michelle? You want to know about Michelle Pioggia? Is this connected to Howard's embezzlement?

GREEN

We just need to find out a bit more about Mrs. Pioggia.

INT. BANK BREAK ROOM -- DAY

Vending machines and a counter with a coffee maker on it are the key elements of the decor.

Fontana and Green question THERESA LOCKHART, a tidy woman in her 50s, her ID with her name on it clipped to her jacket.

THERESA LOCKHART

Michelle? Well, yes, she is hot-tempered. She used to joke about it being her Italian background. But she was always very up-front and honest. She quit when she got pregnant.

FONTANA

She was pregnant?

THERESA LOCKHART

Yes. It's all rather sad. She miscarried after being very sick for ages. She and Howard were devastated. And then this business about Howard and the embezzlement.

GREEN

And Mr. Pioggia, what about him?

She hesitates. Fontana moves in with the sympathy act.

FONTANA

Come on. You can tell us.

THERESA LOCKHART

I didn't believe it.

FONTANA

You were surprised to find out he did it? Sounds like they needed the money.

THERESA LOCKHART

No. I mean I don't believe he did it.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK BREAK ROOM -- LATER

Now DeNYSE CROWLEY faces the detectives. In her early 30s, she seems a bit vague, her thoughts someplace else entirely. Fontana is amused when he sees her name spelled on her ID.

DENYSE CROWLEY

It was so shocking when we found out about Howard.

GREEN

And his wife, how did she take it?

DENYSE CROWLEY

Michelle? Well, of course, she was no longer working here by then. But she always was flying off the handle about things. If you ask me, she's not entirely in touch with reality. She used to screw up on the computer.

INT. BANK BREAK ROOM -- LATER

JAMAL THORNE, an ambitious 30-something black man, dressed for success, faces the detectives, giving them close attention.

JAMAL THORNE

Michelle a screw-up? Who said that?

GREEN

One of your co-workers.

JAMAL THORNE

No, really, who said it?

FONTANA

Does it matter?

JAMAL THORNE

You tell me who, I'll tell you why.

GREEN

You've already got an idea, don't you?

JAMAL THORNE

At a guess, DeNyse Crowley.

The detectives exchange glances.

GREEN

You sound pretty sure.

JAMAL THORNE

Yes.

(MORE)

JAMAL THORNE (CONT'D)

Well, if you knew that Howard Pioggia had dated DeNyse before he met Michelle, would that explain things?

FONTANA

The light begins to dawn.

JAMAL THORNE

Besides, if ever there was a computer screw-up in our department, it would be DeNyse. She once infected our system with a virus, just because she couldn't follow protocol about email attachments. Took the system down for a day and a half. Michelle, on the other hand, was a sharp cookie.

He stands up.

FONTANA

(on impulse)

The embezzlement case. What's your take on it?

It catches Thorne off guard. He's not keen to talk about it.

JAMAL THORNE

It didn't make sense to me. I just don't see Howard doing it.

GREEN

Mrs. Pioggia, how'd she take it?

JAMAL THORNE

Uh, not well.

FONTANA

You mean, explosively.

JAMAL THORNE

You've met her.

Green folds up his notes.

GREEN

We've met her.

Thorne leaves.

INT. LT. VAN BUREN'S OFFICE -- DAY

Van Buren tries to track what the detectives are telling her while sorting through some papers.

VAN BUREN

So what you're saying is that you
still don't have any direct evidence.

GREEN

Well, yeah, that's true.

She finds what she's looking for, pulling out a file from
the military, handing it to Green. He starts looking through
it.

VAN BUREN

Well, you asked for her service
jacket. You'll be happy to know
she's trained in demolition.

FONTANA

And?

VAN BUREN

Forensics is still processing physical
evidence. I think you'll have to go
talk to the D.A. He's the one to
evaluate the circumstantial evidence.

INT. SECRETARY'S DESK OUTSIDE D.A. ARTHUR BRANCH'S OFFICE --
DAY

The detectives approach the SECRETARY'S desk. Green gestures
at Branch's closed door.

GREEN

He in? We need to talk to him.

SECRETARY

This about Jack?

GREEN

Yup.

She points at the door opposite Branch's, the panel door to
McCoy's office.

SECRETARY

In there. Enter at your own risk.

She goes back to work, as the detectives exchange puzzled
glances. Green raps on the door.

BRANCH (O.S.)

(sharp)

Come in!

INT. OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE A.D.A. JACK MCCOY -- DAY

Fontana and Green come into the middle of the storm. Branch
is the exasperated thundercloud.

McCoy sits at his desk, defiant and immovable. A bit in pain, his right arm in a sling, but determined.

Borgia stands off to the side, watching the clash with interest.

Branch whirls on the detectives.

BRANCH

What are you doing here?

GREEN

Whoa.

FONTANA

We've reached a point where we need to consult a D.A.

MCCOY

You've found out who tried to kill me?

BRANCH

You! Are out of this! You can't be involved. You shouldn't even be here right now!

MCCOY

Not involved? I'm the victim!

BRANCH

Exactly! You can't have any part of the investigation.

MCCOY

But if Alexandra is going to--

BRANCH

I'll be handling the case!

BORGIA

You, sir?

BRANCH

I have prosecuted a trial or two in my day.

McCoy starts to see the humor in the situation and begins to relax a little.

Fontana uses the opening.

FONTANA

If that's the way it's going to be, sir, perhaps we should talk in your office.

Branch's gaze sweeps over his subordinates, who wisely stay silent. He turns on his heel and leads the detectives out toward his office. He pulls the door closed behind them.

McCoy opens a file on his desk.

MCCOY

Do you think we can get an additional continuance on the Harkness case?

BORGIA

Aren't you even curious?

MCCOY

Insatiably. But he's right. I shouldn't know anything about the investigation.

She gets back to business.

INT. OFFICE OF D.A. ARTHUR BRANCH -- DAY

Branch leads the detectives into his office, and takes his power position at his desk.

BRANCH

All right. You have my attention. What's up?

FONTANA

What we've got is a possible suspect, a Michelle Pioggia. But no physical evidence tied to her yet.

BRANCH

So it's circumstantial?

GREEN

So far, yes, sir. Given the publicity on the case we wanted to proceed cautiously.

BRANCH

What you wanted was to be sure your asses were covered.

Fontana gives him a bland stare-down.

BRANCH (CONT'D)

Never mind. Understandable. So what do you have?

GREEN

We have motive. And the suspect has the ability to have carried off the bomb attempt.

FONTANA

But right now, we don't have anything directly linking her to the crime. The one photo we have of the perp isn't distinctive. It could be anyone.

BRANCH

And yet you're certain you've got the right person?

GREEN

Yes, sir.

BRANCH

Pull your suspect in for questioning. I'll bring the full weight of this office into the case. See what happens.

The detectives turn to head out.

FONTANA

(to Green)

Sounds like a declaration of war.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM -- DAY

Green leans against the wall while Fontana sits at the table. Across from Fontana, Michelle Pioggia simmers beside KELLY TANNER, the Public Defender, who's a bit green and fierce.

FONTANA

Why'd you bring an attorney, Mrs. Pioggia? You're not under arrest.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

After what my husband went through, you think I'd trust any of you?

GREEN

All we want to know is what you did four days ago.

Michelle glances at the P.D., with a "what did I tell you" look.

KELLY TANNER

Now, see, that sounds to me as if you consider her a suspect in a crime.

FONTANA

We're just clearing up details here.

KELLY TANNER

Then clear up something for me.

(MORE)

KELLY TANNER (CONT'D)

What is this related to? My client was never implicated in anything connected to her husband's arrest.

GREEN

This doesn't have anything to do with that case.

KELLY TANNER

Oh, really? What are we here for then?

The door opens and Branch walks in. Tanner immediately recognizes him and straightens up.

BRANCH

What we're here for is the attempted murder of Executive Assistant District Attorney Jack McCoy. And your client is the prime suspect.

FONTANA

Now you're under arrest.

Tanner barely manages to keep from saying "Oh, shit!" out loud.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

The hustle and bustle of arraignments.

Michelle and Tanner take their places before the ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE. Borgia is at the prosecution stand.

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

Next.

BAILIFF

People versus Michelle Pioggia.
Three counts of assault with a deadly
weapon, one count of attempted murder.

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

What's the plea?

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Not guilty.

BORGIA

The People request remand, your honor.

KELLY TANNER

Remand? My client is an upstanding
member of the community. She's no
flight risk. And this is the first
criminal charge ever made against
her. We request release on her own
recognizance.

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

Ms. Borgia?

BORGIA

Your honor, these charges stem from
the attempt on the life of Assistant
District Attorney Jack McCoy. Given
the violence of the attack, we feel
that Ms. Pioggia represents a
continuing threat.

The Judge looks at Michelle with interest.

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

So. You're the one that tried to
eliminate Jack McCoy?

KELLY TANNER

My client has already pled not guilty,
your honor.

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

So she did. Bail is set at five hundred thousand dollars.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

But... but I don't have that kind of money!

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

Then it looks like you'll be enjoying lodging at the county's expense. Next!

The bailiff takes Michelle in charge and leads her out.

Borgia gathers her papers and heads toward the doors. Then she sees that McCoy has been watching from the back of the room.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, WOMENS' JAIL -- DAY

Branch and Borgia take position on one side of the table as Michelle and Tanner settle in at the other. Tanner intends to fight like gangbusters.

KELLY TANNER

I've been going over the discovery material, and I don't see how you imagine there is enough to go to trial, let alone keep my client under arrest. It's all circumstantial!

BORGIA

Circumstantial evidence does not mean it isn't evidence.

KELLY TANNER

If the victim were anyone other than a D.A. we wouldn't even be here. You wouldn't have charged my client.

BRANCH

But the victim was a D.A. And as sure as God made little green apples, we're not going to ignore that.

Borgia takes a report from her file and lays it on the table in front of Tanner like a poker hand.

BORGIA

Besides, Forensics finally finished examining the remains of the bomb.

Tanner takes the report warily. After the initial shock of what it means, a theatrical anger appears.

KELLY TANNER

And how long have you had this?
Wouldn't it have been appropriate to
get it to me before this meeting?

BORGIA

You've got it now.

BRANCH

(to Tanner)

What was it you were saying about
circumstantial evidence? Fingerprints
are direct evidence.

KELLY TANNER

I'm not going to dignify that with a
comment until after I've thoroughly
examined this report, Mister Branch!
And consulted with my client. If
you were expecting some sort of
collapse in the face of your heavy-
handed tactics, you've got another
think coming.

Michelle sits back, pleased with the lawyer's attitude.

Branch has been getting a dawning respect for the Public
Defender.

BRANCH

Fine. You let us know when you are
ready to talk again.

He stands up and Borgia follows suit.

Tanner leans close to have a private exchange with Michelle
as the D.A.s leave the cage.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE JAIL CONFERENCE CAGE -- DAY

BORGIA

I thought Tanner would fold once
they saw what was in the report.

BRANCH

Never underestimate the opposition.

(pause)

By the way, when exactly did you get
that report from Forensics?

BORGIA

This morning. About 11. Why?

BRANCH

You didn't have the defense copy
messengered to them immediately?

BORGIA

I checked the schedule for our couriers. If I'd messengered it, the report would have arrived at Tanner's office--

(checks her watch)

--just about now.

This amuses Branch.

BRANCH

It could have left us open to a possible judgment of withholding evidence from the defense. But you seem to have documented that the alternative was slower. Good job anticipating a possible complaint.

INT. D.A.'S CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Tanner and Michelle enter, Michelle in a subdued suit.

Branch and Borgia have already taken up positions at the table.

BORGIA

(to Michelle)

So you made bail.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

It turns out that I have friends.

BRANCH

Let's get down to business.

They all sit.

BRANCH (CONT'D)

I take it you've read the fingerprint results?

KELLY TANNER

You're relying on that single piece of evidence? One fingerprint?

BORGIA

It's good enough for the FBI.

KELLY TANNER

Which has been known to be wrong. Like the guy accused in the Madrid train station bombing? This case is weak and you know it. Besides--

(to Branch)

Where's McCoy? I asked that he be present for this.

McCoy comes in, curious about what's going on. His arm is still in a sling. Michelle glares at him as he sits down.

MCCOY

And why are we all here?

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Because I want some answers!

BRANCH

You?

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Me. Like why you people are so certain I'm the one you're after.

BORGIA

Well, your husband's death certainly gives you a motive.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

(to McCoy)

He was arrested on your trumped up evidence! You threw him in jail! I'll bet you were thinking - oh, just a little bit of pressure and he'll crack and confess!

That's exactly what McCoy did think, but he won't admit it.

MCCOY

The evidence against your husband is rock solid.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Oh, really, Mr. High-and-Mighty? Why couldn't we pay all the hospital bills? Why couldn't Howard even make bail?

The prosecutors all pause at that.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA (CONT'D)

Ha. See? If he'd embezzled all that money you said he did, why are we -- were we penniless?

BORGIA

He could have hid---

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Howard? He was the most honest man I ever met!

MCCOY

You're his wife. You're biased.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Oh, really? Well, you tell me where
the money went, and I'll--

KELLY TANNER

(stopping her)

Michelle!

McCoy is starting to be less sure about the embezzlement case. Branch sees it and decides to end the conference before leverage is lost.

BRANCH

We'll have to discuss this.

Tanner and Michelle stand.

KELLY TANNER

You do that.

INT. OFFICE OF D.A. ARTHUR BRANCH -- EVENING

McCoy wanders to the window while Branch pours out drinks.

BORGIA

You aren't seriously considering
offering her a deal, are you?

MCCOY

Tanner's right, you know. If a
fingerprint is the only direct
evidence you have linking Pioggia to
the bomb...

BRANCH

You are not supposed to know even
that much about the case!

McCoy gives him a "I have my spies" grin.

MCCOY

How can it hurt us to go over the
embezzlement case again? We stopped
when Howard Pioggia died. What if
we hadn't? What if she's right?

BORGIA

You're going to concede that you
were responsible for the death of an
innocent man? Publicly?

McCoy has been avoiding that point.

MCCOY
(to Branch, after a
pause)
I think we have to consider the
implied offer.

BORGIA
She tried to murder you, Jack!

MCCOY
Emotional duress.

They both look at Branch.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Well?

Branch surrenders.

BRANCH
It's your life.

INT. OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE A.D.A. JACK MCCOY -- DAY

Green, Fontana and Gillette sit around the table in front of McCoy's desk. Borgia hovers to one side. Gillette regards the others with defensive hostility.

McCoy has the case file spread out in front of him. He's shuffling papers awkwardly with one hand, the other arm still in a sling.

BOB GILLETTE
There's nothing wrong with the case.
Pioggia stole the money.

BORGIA
So where did it go?

Gillette doesn't know, and starts to realize that he should, which makes him even more defensive.

BOB GILLETTE
That didn't come up in the
investigation.

MCCOY
Well, it has now. The investigation
isn't complete until we know that.

BOB GILLETTE
So what happens now, then? You want
me to pick up the threads?

Green looks uncomfortable -- he knows what's coming.

MCCOY

I want Green and Fontana to take over the case.

BOB GILLETTE

Hey, wait a minute! It's my case. I did all the work on it.

BORGIA

We need fresh eyes on it.

BOB GILLETTE

Fresh eyes, my foot. You're looking for someone to blame for Pioggia's death.

MCCOY

It's about being certain we know the truth concerning a major crime, detective. Don't make it personal. I want you to brief Fontana and Green on everything you covered. And then I want them to re-interview everyone.

Borgia leads the detectives out of the office, but Green pauses at the door. After the others are out --

GREEN

That bit about not making it personal? Isn't that like the pot and the kettle?

McCoy doesn't really want to get into his own motivations.

MCCOY

You turning into a shrink, Ed?

GREEN

Just making sure I know where we stand.

McCoy nods.

INT. LT. VAN BUREN'S OFFICE -- DAY

The three detectives crowd into Van Buren's office. Gillette still carries a grudge. Green thumbs through the file while the others argue.

BOB GILLETTE

El-tee, it was my case! McCoy's just throwing his weight around.

VAN BUREN

Look at it this way, Bob. Are you certain that Howard Pioggia committed the embezzlement?

BOB GILLETTE

Yes.

VAN BUREN

Then where did the money go?
According to your own reports,
Michelle Pioggia is still heavily in
debt, what with medical expenses and
lawyer fees. If her husband stole
the money to pay the medical debts,
why didn't he pay those off?

BOB GILLETTE

We caught him before he could do it?

Even he isn't really convinced by this. He turns to head
out.

BOB GILLETTE (CONT'D)

My sympathies are with the bomber.

The others stay silent until the door closes behind him.

FONTANA

McCoy has a real gift for making
friends, doesn't he?

Van Buren's amused by the sarcasm.

Green looks up from the folder.

GREEN

Leu, there may be something here.
We need to talk to a computer expert.

She waves them off.

VAN BUREN

What are you waiting for?

INT. POLICE COMPUTER LAB -- DAY

Green has spread the file, with computer printouts in front
of CARRIE RYAN, computer geek in her late 30s.

GREEN

Tell me I'm wrong, that I'm not on
to something.

CARRIE RYAN

Nope. You're right. This printout
from the bank was made the day they
discovered the embezzlement.

FONTANA

And that means what?

CARRIE RYAN

See, most major institutions will copy their system regularly. For a permanent record. Every night.

FONTANA

Like a bank, for instance. Okay, I see that. So?

CARRIE RYAN

If someone altered the records in some way, before the embezzlement was discovered, this printout isn't going to show it.

GREEN

So, this record might not really show which employee changed the information?

CARRIE RYAN

Exactly. I'm guessing that someone very computer savvy may have changed the codes on who it was that transferred the funds, making it look like Howard Pioggia did it.

GREEN

That jibes with what his co-workers were saying about him. None of them believed he would have done it.

INT. BANK MANAGER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Hayden Cabot frowns over what the detectives have been telling him.

HAYDEN CABOT

If Howard didn't -- my God, we could still be hemorrhaging money! The auditor needs to look further.

He reaches for his phone.

FONTANA

We really will need access to your archive records.

Cabot pauses.

HAYDEN CABOT

Now we've hit the difficult spot, detective. I can't allow you unlimited access. You'll need a warrant.

GREEN

Sounds like what we'll need is a
D.A.

INT. BANK COMPUTER ROOM -- DAY

Cabot, McCoy and the detectives confer with the bank's outside Auditor, KEN GLYER. Through an open door in the background, we see employees moving about, including those we've met before.

KEN GLYER

That's the problem, Mr. McCoy. We're still trying to verify all the accounts that were affected. Legally you can't have blanket access to all the accounts. Only the specific ones affected.

MCCOY

So how long will it take to determine that? Can we at least get a list of those you already know about now?

KEN GLYER

I don't see a problem giving you the names of the accounts we know to be affected. Mr. Cabot?

HAYDEN CABOT

Of course. We do want to help.
This whole thing is a nightmare.

DeNyse Crowley comes into the room with a form on a clipboard. She heads for Cabot, oblivious to the rest.

FONTANA

How did you get on to the embezzlement in the first place?

DENYSE CROWLEY

(to Cabot)

Sorry to interrupt, Mr. Cabot. But we need your authorization on this immediately.

Cabot looks over the form as he answers Fontana.

HAYDEN CABOT

One of our long time - and elderly - customers came in to see me. A Mrs. Kronski. Widow.

He signs the form and hands it back to DeNyse.

HAYDEN CABOT (CONT'D)

She'd been unable to access her funds.
When we checked, they were gone.
She was so upset she dropped dead
right there.

DeNyse had begun to leave, but when she hears this she starts. McCoy notices and looks her directly in the face, curious. She recovers, as if remembering some lovely secret, and she sails out of the room. McCoy shakes his head over the curiosity.

MCCOY

Then the Kronschi account should be
first on the list of warrants.
(to Glycer)
You never did tell me how long it
will take.

KEN GLYER

Oh. Right. I should be able to
give you a list of the accounts
affected by end of business today.

GREEN

At least, the ones you know about.

Everyone turns their glum expression on him, except Fontana.

FONTANA

Just a ray of sunshine, ain't he?

INT. OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE A.D.A. JACK MCCOY -- NIGHT

Green and Fontana, sans jackets and with loose ties sit at the table with reams of printouts in front of them. McCoy at his desk also has printouts.

Cartons of Chinese food, and beverages containers are scattered about indicate they've been at it for some time. Borgia comes in carrying a pot full of coffee. The outside office is mostly dark.

BORGIA

Anyone need a fresh caffeine boost?

McCoy holds up his coffee mug without looking up from the printout he's checking. Borgia fills it.

Green stretches. Fontana picks up his paper cup and downs its dregs.

FONTANA

If we're going to keep at this, I'll
have some.

Borgia fills the cup.

FONTANA (CONT'D)

Thanks.

GREEN

We really need a rest.

MCCOY

Keep at it. It's here somewhere.

Fontana flips a page, as he sips his coffee. Then something catches his eye.

FONTANA

Hello.

Borgia has set the pot on top a pile of discarded printouts on a side table. She turns at Fontana's comment.

BORGIA

You got something?

Fontana points out a line in his printout to Green. Green compares it to a couple of his pages and finds something similar. Borgia reads it over his shoulder.

BORGIA (CONT'D)

Oh, man.

GREEN

(to McCoy)

Check for the 25th.

McCoy flips a few pages and runs his finger down the page.

GREEN (CONT'D)

You see it?

McCoy flips back a page and compares a similar line. He looks up, finally relaxing. He even manages a smile at the others.

MCCOY

We've got her.

INT. BANK MANAGER'S OFFICE -- DAY

McCoy hands a document to Cabot, while Fontana and Green stand by.

MCCOY

Assuming we correctly understand your bank's procedures -- it's right there.

HAYDEN CABOT

It doesn't seem possible.

FONTANA

Probably why it was successful. And not to sound like a crank, but can we get this show on the road?

HAYDEN CABOT

She's on her way.

He sits down, looking over the document.

The door opens, and DeNyse Crowley comes in. She pauses for a moment at the sight of McCoy and the detectives. But she quickly redirects her attention to Cabot.

DENYSE CROWLEY

You wanted to see me, Mr. Cabot?

HAYDEN CABOT

Sit down, please.

She does, keeping her blissful calm.

DENYSE CROWLEY

What's this about?

FONTANA

Where's the money, honey?

DENYSE CROWLEY

Money?

Cabot slides the document toward her. She picks it up and reads.

DENYSE CROWLEY (CONT'D)

I don't understand.

McCoy nods to Green.

GREEN

It means you're under arrest for embezzlement, Ms. Crowley.

She looks directly at McCoy, serenely confident.

DENYSE CROWLEY

You can't do this to me.

GREEN

You have the right to remain silent.

Fontana touches her shoulder and indicates she should stand.

MCCOY

I not only can, I have to. You are indirectly responsible for at least two deaths.

GREEN

Anything you say can and will be
taken down and used against you.

DENYSE CROWLEY

(to McCoy)

You are so wrong.

Fontana puts the handcuffs on her.

GREEN

You have the right to an attorney.

The detectives hustle her out of the office as Green continues
the Miranda litany.

McCoy and Cabot watch silently. Once they're out, McCoy
turns to pick up the document.

HAYDEN CABOT

It's still hard to believe. You are
certain about this, aren't you?

McCoy reacts sharply. A sudden flash of doubt, but he shoves
it away.

MCCOY

I have to be.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

DeNyse Crowley stands serenely beside her defense attorney, CALVIN BRODUS, a hungry shark. Borgia's all business.

BAILIFF

People of New York versus DeNyse Crowley, four counts grand larceny in the first degree.

BORGIA

It's an embezzlement case, your honor.

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

Running away with the boss's money?

BORGIA

She made off with three million from the bank she works for, your honor. The people also believe that she's a flight risk and request remand.

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

How does the defendant plead?

DENYSE CROWLEY

Not guilty.

CALVIN BRODUS

Calvin Brodus for the defense, your honor. My client is an upstanding member of the community. And may I remind the court, innocent until proven guilty. The prosecutors still have to prove she took the money. In fact, they'd previously arrested someone else in this case, someone who died in jail.

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

Is that so, Ms. Borgia?

BORGIA

Your honor knows that it's not unheard of that someone is arrested who is later proven to be innocent of the charge. The prosecutor's office is ready to move forward to trial against Ms. Crowley.

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE

Very well then.

(MORE)

ARRAIGNMENT JUDGE (CONT'D)

Bail is set at two hundred and fifty thousand.

(raps the gavel)

Next.

Borgia collects her papers, but finds Brodus in her path.

CALVIN BRODUS

You can tell McCoy we'll come in to his office for the usual fencing match tomorrow.

He turns and leads DeNyse out before Borgia can respond.

INT. OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE A.D.A. JACK MCCOY -- DAY

Borgia closes the door to the office after Brodus and Denyse. She takes a seat on the opposite side of the table from them.

McCoy has no intention of giving any ground.

MCCOY

What can I do for you today, Calvin?

CALVIN BRODUS

Concede.

BORGIA

You've got to be kidding.

MCCOY

Your client is indirectly responsible for at least two deaths. There's no way I'd drop the charge. In fact, by the time we get to trial, it's possible there will be additional grand larceny charges. The auditor hasn't finished yet.

CALVIN BRODUS

Then you'd better be careful not to drop your guard. You've got some vulnerable spots in this case, Jack, and you know it.

(to DeNyse)

Let's go.

They get up to leave.

MCCOY

You've read the discovery material, Calvin.

Brodus pauses at the door.

CALVIN BRODUS

Touche. But one touch doesn't make the match, Jack.

He and DeNyse leave.

BORGIA

What was all that about?

MCCOY

He likes to get a sense of how the opposition feels about the case before going into the courtroom. A habit he developed as a fencer in college.

BORGIA

Was he any good?

McCoy looks at a page in the file before him, before answering.

MCCOY

National champion three years running.

BORGIA

Ouch.

INT. D.A.'S CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

McCoy sits down with Michelle Pioggia and Kelly Tanner.

MCCOY

Mrs. Pioggia, you implied that you would plead guilty if we uncovered who actually committed the embezzlement.

KELLY TANNER

That was never explicitly stated, Mr. McCoy.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

Oh, give it a rest, Kelly.

(to McCoy)

Sure. I implied that. Are you saying you've uncovered the truth now?

MCCOY

Yes.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

And?

MCCOY

DeNyse Crowley.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

DeNyse? DeNyse? I... I don't believe it.

MCCOY

An in-depth audit of the bank's computer records indicates that she's the one that changed the codes to put the blame on your husband.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

But... but she's the world's worst computer moron.

KELLY TANNER

You are certain about it this time?

MCCOY

Very.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

But why? And where did the money go? If she took three million, why's she still working at the bank?

MCCOY

We're still working on that. But she did it.

Michelle's anger resurfaces.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

I hope you cut her into little pieces to find out then. After all Howard did for her! After all the times he covered for her! After all----

She has a complete breakdown of fury and grief. Tanner comforts her.

KELLY TANNER

(to McCoy)

I'll get back to you about the plea agreement.

He gets up to leave them.

MCCOY

I'll make sure you have this room to yourselves for a while.

KELLY TANNER

Thanks.

INT. CORRIDOR IN THE D.A.'S OFFICE -- DAY

McCoy comes out of the Conference Room and finds Branch waiting expectantly.

BRANCH

Well?

MCCOY

She'll plead guilty to the assault.

BRANCH

Is that on paper yet?

He reads in McCoy's expression that it is not. He shakes his head over this.

BRANCH (CONT'D)

Now is not the time to get soft, Jack. And what about the Crowley case? Have you found out where the money went?

MCCOY

Not yet.

BRANCH

You'd better nail that down. Or you're going to find your hide nailed to the barn door.

MCCOY

By you?

BRANCH

Of course not. Calvin Brodus will be happy to oblige.

He moves off. McCoy's reaction shows he knows how true that comment is.

INT. BANK COMPUTER ROOM -- DAY

Borgia, Fontana and Green meet with Glycer. He's spread out some documents on a table for them.

KEN GLYER

This is the best I can do. It doesn't take you to the final destination.

BORGIA

But you've tracked the transactions beyond the Caribbean.

KEN GLYER

Oh, yes. Indeed.

FONTANA

And?

KEN GLYER

Nigeria.

GREEN

Nigeria? What's in Nigeria?

Glyer shrugs. But Fontana's getting a brainstorm. Borgia notes it and catches up with his train of thought. She starts pulling out her cell phone.

FONTANA

We're going to need a warrant for Ms. Crowley's home computer.

BORGIA

Oh, yeah.

INT. DENYSE CROWLEY'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Police technicians disconnect an older model computer from power and phone lines. Fontana and Green supervise them.

DeNyse stands in the center of her modest apartment, watching everything with concern.

DENYSE CROWLEY

You can't do this! My lawyer --

FONTANA

Will tell you that we can. It's all there in the warrant.

DENYSE CROWLEY

But... my privacy! You can't--

GREEN

We can.

Brodus shows up at the apartment entrance.

CALVIN BRODUS

Engaging in storm trooper tactics, are you? Intimidating witnesses?

GREEN

Just one of the consequences of a life of crime.

CALVIN BRODUS

Be careful there, detective. Innocent until proven guilty, remember.

The technicians head out with the equipment.

FONTANA

That's what we're working, sport.

INT. POLICE COMPUTER LAB -- DAY

Carrie Ryan hands the detectives a printout many pages long. As Fontana reads a page, he hands it to Borgia.

CARRIE RYAN

There's some email and instant messenger communications that I think will interest you greatly.

BORGIA

What are the highlights?

CARRIE RYAN

Long distance romance of the most pernicious kind. From someone called Dr. Peter Oyibo.

BORGIA

Pernicious. Interesting.

FONTANA

Here it is.

(reading)

You've got to be kidding me.

He looks to Ryan.

FONTANA (CONT'D)

Is this for real?

CARRIE RYAN

It seems to be. He really milked her -- spinning a tale about the good he'd do once he had the funds.

Fontana hands the page to Borgia, pointing out the crucial point.

FONTANA

You've seen one of these before, haven't you?

BORGIA

(reading, nodding)

Surely she knew this was a scam. Do people really fall for these?

GREEN

Are you telling me she was suckered by one of those Nigerian email scams?

FONTANA
Looks like. And, say,
(holds up another
page)
Judging by this email, we're going
to need a subpoena for her cell phone
records as well.

He hands that crucial page to Borgia, who nods as she reads it.

BORGIA
I'll talk to Jack. This is it.

INT. OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE A.D.A. JACK MCCOY -- DAY

Borgia has two sets of printouts spread on McCoy's table. He's making notes on a pad in front of him.

BORGIA
It's all here, Jack. International
calls on her cell phone that coincide
with times when she was changing
records on the bank's computer.

He sits back, musing.

MCCOY
Usually the scammers cut the
communication line once they've gotten
some money from their fish.

BORGIA
Judging by her emails, I'd guess
that the scammer realized he'd hit a
jackpot. She's so obviously eager
to please. And lonely. An easy
mark.

MCCOY
Don't feel too sorry for her,
Alexandra. She's no victim.

BORGIA
Not even of this Oyibo, whoever he
is?

MCCOY
She stopped being a victim the moment
she decided to steal from others.
The moment she decided to frame
someone who only wanted the best for
her.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

McCoy is wrapping up his opening statement.

At the defense table, Brodus takes notes, while DeNyse sits calmly, although she barely pays any attention to McCoy.

MCCOY

-- and the People intend to prove that Ms. Crowley embezzled these funds and framed her co-worker without the least bit of remorse for the damage she could cause. For the damage that she in fact did cause.

McCoy sits down. Brodus takes the floor to address the jury.

CALVIN BRODUS

This case will require you to follow and understand many highly technical matters. Take great care that the technobable the prosecution inflicts on you does not obscure what is really going on. Mr. McCoy needs to find someone to blame for this crime, and he's chosen my client. His first suspect died on him and cannot refute anything that--

MCCOY

Objection! Mr. Brodus is presuming to evaluate evidence before it has even been presented to the jury.

JUDGE

Sustained. Stay on track Mr. Brodus.

CALVIN BRODUS

Of course, your honor. In that case, I'll waive further comment.

He abruptly turns and sits down.

Borgia and McCoy exchange wary glances at this.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

Ken Glycer is on the stand, responding to McCoy's questioning. On an easel beside the witness stand is an enlargement of a printout of computer code.

KEN GLYER

-- so these codes make it clear which computer and which operator enters a bit of data.

MCCOY

Thank you, Mr. Glycer.

McCoy sits down. Brodus takes up the battle.

CALVIN BRODUS
Mr. Glycer. Would the printout reveal whether or not someone else was using, say, Mr. Pioggia's computer?

KEN GLYER
Well, under certain circumstances--

CALVIN BRODUS
Yes or no, Mr. Glycer.

KEN GLYER
Uh. Well, no. But--

CALVIN BRODUS
That is all, thank you. Nothing further.

McCoy dives right back in.

MCCOY
Redirect, your honor.

JUDGE
Proceed.

MCCOY
Mr. Glycer, please tell us how you would distinguish between users on the basis of these codes.

KEN GLYER
Okay. If someone used Mr. Pioggia's computer while he was still at work and logged onto the system, it's true that these records would make it look as if he'd made the changes.

MCCOY
But that's not what happened in this case, is it?

KEN GLYER
No, sir. These records clearly indicate that Pioggia had logged off the system. Then later, someone, using his computer, but not his password, made the changes.

MCCOY
The password would give you an indication of who the probable user was, wouldn't it?

KEN GLYER
Well, most people don't tell others their passwords, so yes.

MCCOY

And whose password was used?

KEN GLYER

That of the defendant, Ms. Crowley.

Brodus tries to bury his frustration. But DeNyse continues to sit blissfully calm.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

Another day. With Carrie Ryan on the stand. McCoy chooses to stand where he can look at DeNyse as he questions Ryan. DeNyse won't look at him.

MCCOY

And did you find in Ms. Crowley's emails anything especially significant?

CARRIE RYAN

Oh, yes. A few days before the embezzlement began, she received an email from Nigeria with an offer to supposedly give her a large sum of money, if she gave the sender some help in a financial matter.

A few sniggers are heard in the court. Even one of the jurors shakes his head wryly.

MCCOY

This form of scam is fairly well known, isn't it?

CARRIE RYAN

You'd think so, but according to federal authorities who track such things, people still fall for it. Particularly those who are not very sophisticated about the internet.

MCCOY

Did Ms. Crowley respond to this email?

CARRIE RYAN

She did. And the scammer, using the name Dr. Peter Oyibo, began a correspondence loaded with romantic overtures.

DeNyse shifts a bit uncomfortably at this. McCoy notes it.

MCCOY

Anything else?

CARRIE RYAN

Well, she asked for instructions on how to get funds to him. After a couple of exchanges that apparently coincide with her first thefts, the scammer suggested that they use her cell phone. He said that when they talked on the phone he could explain what she needed to do to--

(checks a note in a notebook in front of her)

--to quote keep her from getting in trouble end quote.

MCCOY

Nothing further.

He sits down.

CALVIN BRODUS

This person Ms. Crowley was communicating with, the one you call the scammer, he didn't specify what sort of trouble he wanted to keep her from, did he?

CARRIE RYAN

Well, no. But it's kind of obvious--

CALVIN BRODUS

Please stick to the evidence, Ms. Ryan. Do not presume to interpret it. Move to strike the witness's comment about it being obvious, your honor.

JUDGE

So ruled. The jury will disregard the comment.

CALVIN BRODUS

In this correspondence, does Ms. Crowley's friend tell her anywhere that she should steal money from work?

CARRIE RYAN

Uh. No.

CALVIN BRODUS

Does he tell her to frame Mr. Pioggia?

CARRIE RYAN

Uh, not in these emails. I don't know about--

CALVIN BRODUS

Thank you. That will be all.

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR -- DAY

By the elevator doors, McCoy and Borgia talk.

BORGIA

Brodus is making points, Jack.

MCCOY

But not enough to sink us.

BORGIA

You're sure?

The doors open, and he steps in. The doors close on his determined expression.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

DeNyse is on the witness stand. Brodus treats her gently. McCoy pays close attention.

CALVIN BRODUS

Your co-workers have testified that you are not very adept with computers. Would you consider this a fair evaluation?

DENYSE CROWLEY

I guess so. I know how to use the main programs in our department. But after that, I get lost easily.

CALVIN BRODUS

In fact, you were responsible for infecting the bank's system with a virus, weren't you?

DENYSE CROWLEY

Uh, yeah. I felt so bad about it afterwards. But it was an accident.

CALVIN BRODUS

When Howard Pioggia was arrested for the embezzlement, how did you feel about it?

McCoy stays silent. But it's obvious that both Borgia and Brodus expected him to object. McCoy gives Borgia a small shake of his head: he has something up his sleeve.

DENYSE CROWLEY

I... I felt sad about it. Howard was nice to me.

CALVIN BRODUS
In fact, the two of you had dated
for a while, hadn't you?

DENYSE CROWLEY
Yes.

CALVIN BRODUS
And stayed friends after he got
married, isn't that correct?

DENYSE CROWLEY
Yes.

CALVIN BRODUS
Thank you. No more questions, your
honor.

JUDGE
Mr. McCoy?

McCoy gets to his feet. He starts the cross examination
softly.

MCCOY
So you stayed friends with Howard
Pioggia?

DENYSE CROWLEY
I just said so.

MCCOY
Did you like his wife Michelle? She
was your co-worker.

DeNyse doesn't like talking about Michelle.

DENYSE CROWLEY
Michelle was okay.

MCCOY
But you don't call her a friend, do
you?

DENYSE CROWLEY
I... She was okay.

MCCOY
And about that virus you let loose
in the bank's system. Howard Pioggia
kept you from getting into serious
trouble over that, didn't he?

DENYSE CROWLEY
Yes.

MCCOY

And yet, when it came time to hide the fact that you were the one stealing money from accounts, you chose to put the blame on him.

DENYSE CROWLEY

No! I didn't!

MCCOY

You didn't what?

DENYSE CROWLEY

Frame Howard. Steal. Any of it.

MCCOY

Ms. Crowley, have you ever told anyone at work your password?

Brodus realizes this will be a problem, but he can't stop her answer.

DENYSE CROWLEY

No, of course not. I'm not completely dumb.

MCCOY

No, of course not. But if you didn't give anyone your password, then how did you explain that someone using your password did steal the money?

DENYSE CROWLEY

I didn't steal! It wasn't stealing!

Brodus has a "god help me" moment. McCoy closes in on the opening.

MCCOY

It wasn't stealing? What was it?

Her secret life of bliss is cracking. She tries to hold on to her righteous cause.

DENYSE CROWLEY

You just don't understand! Peter needed the money! He needed my help! He needed me!

MCCOY

He needed you?

DENYSE CROWLEY

Yes!

MCCOY

Tell me, Ms. Crowley-- Tell the court,
the jury-- Since you were arrested
have you heard from this Dr. Oyibo?

Reality starts to break through her shell.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Have you had even one email? One
phone call?

DENYSE CROWLEY

(almost a whisper)

No.

MCCOY

Have you tried calling him?

DENYSE CROWLEY

Yes.

MCCOY

And?

DENYSE CROWLEY

No answer. The number's dead.

MCCOY

You stole money from bank customers.
You framed a friend for embezzlement.
And what did you get for all this?

She just stares at him, and tears roll out.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Nevermind. Nothing further, your
honor.

McCoy sits down. Borgia leans over to murmur to him.

BORGIA

Don't alienate the jury, Jack. That
was harsh.

He's unrepentant.

MCCOY

Tell that to Mrs. Kronski and Howard
Pioggia.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

Another day. DeNyse and Brodus stand waiting to hear the
verdict. The Judge reads the verdict page impassively. He
hands it to the Bailiff.

JUDGE

Jury Foreperson, what is your verdict?

FOREPERSON

We the jury find DeNyse Crowley guilty
of four counts of grand larceny in
the first degree.

DeNyse wobbles. The Judge raps his gavel.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

DeNyse sits impassively at the defense table listening to
victim impact statements. Her attorney isn't comfortable,
though.

Hayden Cabot stands before the bench.

HAYDEN CABOT

-- and in spite of federal insurance
on most of the affected accounts,
the damaged done to our bank's
reputation has been considerable.

JUDGE

Thank you, Mr. Cabot.

Cabot turns to leave and glares at DeNyse. She just stares
straight ahead.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Last victim impact statement.

Guards escort Michelle Pioggia in from a side door. DeNyse
glances at her and for the first time looks down.

McCoy watches Michelle with interest, but she ignores him.
She faces the judge with determination, her passion and fury
held in tight discipline.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA

If not for this woman I would not be
in prison. If not for this woman my
husband would not be dead.

She turns suddenly to face DeNyse, a military pivot. The
guards start, but immediately realize she's not going to
physically attack DeNyse.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA (CONT'D)

You framed Howard for your theft.
Why? Just because he chose me?
Howard was a good man. Even after
we got married, he treated you with
care and concern. It was one of the
things I loved about him.

She starts to lose it.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA (CONT'D)
He didn't want anyone ... not even
you ... hurt by his actions. Ever.

DeNyse won't look up. This makes her uncomfortable.

Michelle regains control of herself.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA (CONT'D)
You put him in a situation that killed
him. You. If not for you Howard
would be alive and I wouldn't be in
jail. You.

She turns again and faces the judge.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA (CONT'D)
That's all, your honor. Thank you.

The judge nods. She turns toward the guards and they lead her out.

McCoy watches her with a touch of admiration.

INT. COURTROOM -- LATER

The judge reads his sentence. DeNyse slowly disintegrates.

JUDGE
After due consideration and the
defendant's apparent lack of remorse,
I'm imposing the sentence of no less
than 5 years and no more than 25 for
each count, to be served concurrently.

The rap of the gavel rocks DeNyse.

The guards lead her away.

The D.A.s gather up their things.

BORGIA
It's over, Jack.

McCoy watches DeNyse being led out.

BORGIA (CONT'D)
Jack?

He heads out the back of the courtroom without looking back.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, WOMENS' JAIL -- DAY

McCoy stands in a corner of the room as Michelle is brought in.

She's hostile and curious.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA
I shouldn't see you without my lawyer.

MCCOY
So why did you agree?

She sits down. He sits opposite her.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA
What do you want?

MCCOY
I'm writing a letter to go in your
files, recommending clemency when
you come up for parole.

She stares at him for a moment.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA
Am I supposed to thank you for that?

MCCOY
I just wanted you to know.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA
Why are you here?

MCCOY
I just told--

MICHELLE PIOGGIA
No! That's your excuse for being
here. I want to know the reason.

They stare at each other. He doesn't want to articulate his reasons and she's trying to read them.

Then she realizes what it is: absolution. She fills up with a quiet fury. She gets up and bangs on the door.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA (CONT'D)
You are really in the wrong place!
I'm not your priest!

She turns her back on him.

MCCOY
You chose murder as a solution.

She whirls to snap back.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA
And you chose--
(she cuts herself off)

The guard opens the door. She pauses to look back at him.

MICHELLE PIOGGIA (CONT'D)

I accepted my punishment. I know
what my sins are. Do you know yours?

She walks away, never looking back.

The door clangs shut. The guard and Michelle go off into the distance, as McCoy watches them through the fencing of the cage.

FADE OUT:

THE END.