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FADE IN:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A classic Perry Mason set-up. The gallery empty.

JONES (23), a BLUE-COLLAR DEFENDANT, being sentenced.

A Bailiff in the background, out of earshot.

JUDGE MORT PIERCE 50, presides. Meticulous, strong-willed, and married to his ways.

Moving the microphone closer to himself. He stares out at the court.

JUDGE

Mr. Jones. Look at me, sir.

The Defendant looks up.

JUDGE

I've listened to your so-called apology, and I am not assuaged. You say you're sorry? You say you feel contrition? Those are just words, Mr. Jones. They're hollow. They're meaningless. You showed your victims no mercy. You'll find no mercy here.

INT. JUDGE ROGER'S CHAMBERS - DAY

A tiny judge's chamber.

A half-eaten cake on the desk. Remnants of a party.

NANCY, 30s, sexy, tight clothes, jewelry, a 'Real Housewives of Beverly Hills, pacing, impatiently.

A door opens. And Judge Pierce sweeps in.

Nancy and Mort stare at each other. A second. Then...

NANCY

Well it's about time. I've been waiting 40 minutes in this mausoleum of yours.

MORT

Sorry, I wanted to leave a clean calendar before I left.

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And Mort kisses her cheek, takes off his robes: a jeans and sandals guy.

MORT

Your beautiful as usual.
Have some birthday cake.

NANCY

No, thank you. Happy Birthday.

MORT

It's not mine. The court reporter.

Ah, Nancy nods.

He hesitates, works hard to not show his disappointment.

NANCY

What took you so long? Did you sentence that poor man to lethal injection?

MORT

I gave Jones twenty years to life, the minimum.

NANCY

He shouldn't have gotten anything. It was a crime of passion.

MORT

Crime of passion is a myth. As I read the law. The courts grant no special request for crimes of passion.

NANCY

Yes, you'd be the last person in the world to admit there's anything such as passion.

Mort shoots a pissed look toward Nancy. She shoots one back.

MORT

A coin toss between judge Wesson and myself. His tough luck. The poor sonofabitch got me. If she had been presiding, that feminist bitch would have let him off with a slap on the wrist.

Nancy rolls her eyes.

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CONTINUED: (2)

He chuckles.

MORT

Now let's not start that again...
as my leave of absence begins. The
whole point of this trip is to
rekindle our marriage. I love you.

NANCY

Hearts and flowers don't become
you, dear. You look more natural
pronouncing sentence.

Nancy trades a look with Mort whose cellphone hums.

He answers, listening and uh-huhing. He ends the call,
smiles apologetically.

MORT

Gwendolyn. She wants to see me.
(kisses her good-bye)
I shouldn't be too long.

INT. HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mort lets himself in, drained. Home quiet, lights dimmed.

He uncaps a bottle of scotch, pours himself a drink -

MORT

Honey?

A sound. From an upstairs bedroom. A pounding noise.
Rhythmic. A bed hitting the wall. And then another noise.
A woman's voice. Nancy's. Ecstasy.

NANCY (O.S.)

Yes. Yesssss...

His heart sinks into the pit of his stomach, seething.

He bounds up the stairs, his mood rising with every step.

INT. HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy and JOSH (21). Yep, a bit scuzzy, goatee, hair
combed back are naked on the bed.

Behind them Mort pushes the door open and slips inside.

Nancy rolls off Josh and the two of them lie there
basking in the afterglow.

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Both of them jump with surprise and look. Nancy screams and scrabbles at the sheet to cover herself.

With unexpected speed, Mort grabs Josh by the throat and hurls him across the room! Goes tumbling head over heels.

Meanwhile, Mort strides over to a dresser, opens the top drawer. Half-naked, Josh picks himself up--

Then he sees the gun.

JOSH

Hey, man, wait, wait, wait!

Mort FIRES. Hits Josh. He seems to nearly convulse with the gun, SHOOTING him FOUR MORE TIMES, as he drops to the ground.

NANCY

The hell is wrong with you?

Mort slumps on the bed, keeping the gun loosely trained on Nancy.

She eyes the barrel of the gun and decides not to argue.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Nancy sits at a plain counter in front of a metal-mesh barrier, reacts to the O.S. CRASH of steel doors opening and slamming.

Seconds later, Mort, in an ill-fitted orange jumpsuit, takes a seat on the other side of the mesh.

MORT

No need for you to be there.

NANCY

You think it was wise declining a jury trial?

Mort is half-amused/half-annoyed at her concern.

MORT

No. Judge Cartwright and I go way back. She likes me. So it was best I throw myself at the mercy of the court. If anything, four years probation.

(grins)

I'll be home in time for dinner.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A half-filled courtroom.

Judge GWENDOLYN CARTWRIGHT, 40s, a formidable career woman, the personification of sex - presiding.

GWEN

I find that you don't get it. That you're a danger. You remain a danger. I'm a judge who believes in life and rehabilitation when life and rehabilitation is possible.... I don't find that's possible with you. Therefore, this court sentences defendant...you sir, on count one, I'm giving you forty years which is 479 months. I just signed your death warrant. May God have mercy on your soul.

Bang - hammers her gavel. Mort slumps in his seat.

INT. RESTUARANT - NIGHT

Beads of condensation. Sliding down the side of a chilled martini glass.

Nancy broods over the drink. She checks her watch. Apprehensive but excited.

Finally, Gwendolyn in saunters. She joins Nancy.

NANCY

Who was the bloke you set me up with?

GWENDOLYN

A menace to society. He had a very long rap sheet.

NANCY

I just know I wanna be better...

He kisses her...

It's nice with some expensive furniture but it's messy.

emi, on top, riding away. They're both so engaged, they don't realize Mort is watching in the doorway, a deer in the headlights.

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DEMI

Ohhhhhh...Aaaaahh...

MORT

What the fuck!

Both Popeye and Demi jump with surprise and look.

She screams and scrabbles at her dress to cover herself.

Mort grabs the first thing he can lay his hands on: a chunky perspex plaque with "HERE TO HELP" etched on it -- and bashes Popeye in the skull...

Demi claps her hands over her mouth to stifle her scream.
Oh god NO.

She can hear Popeye getting the life beat out of him, and there are a few instances where we even catch a glimpse of it.

Mort finally stops, exhausted and out of breath:

Mort gasps. Looks at his hands. Blood everywhere. Oh god.

He hauls off and SLAPS Demi in the face, open hand. Demi takes it like a man. But she's marked. Nowhere to go.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Mort adjust his tie in the mirror. Demi puts on her black dress and comes to him to get zipped. As he zips...

MORT

No need for you to be there.

BEVERLY

You think it was wise declining a jury trial?

Mort is half-amused/half-annoyed at her concern.

MORT

Nope. Judge Wesson and I go way back. She likes me. So it was best I throw myself at the mercy of the court. If anything, four years probation.

(grins)

I'll be home in time for dinner.

She looks back at him again, remorseful... vulnerable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEMI

I just know I wanna be better...

He kisses her...

DAWNA LOCKHART (56). A tough, smart feminist. Dresses like a million bucks.

LAUREN YOST (35), a fit, pretty, and elegant Highland Park mom.

A strict, methodical man, who wields his authority with a calm certainty

JOSH MUNDY (21). Yep, a bit scuzzy. goatee, Hair combed back. In uncomfortable suit and tie., ex-roadie, eyes wet. He stands, goes to Caroline

Kalinda smiles, sits there, drinks her drink. The bartender pours her another, unasked. Kalinda looks up. A sexy female bartender with a California smile.

INT. BAR - DAY

A hotel bar. Nice. After work crowd. Alicia and Kalinda sit at a table.

Nancy sees someone at the bar nodding to her. DETECTIVE ANTHONY BURTON. Toasting her with a beer.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

A dark, seedy, drinking men's establishment.

Demi holds down a prime spot at the bar, Her designer "FUCK ME" pumps rest on the bar stool beside her...

A BOOZER with flammable breath chats up Demi. Picks up her pumps, sets them on the bar.

She swivels her barstool back around; returns the shoes to the other stool, rebuffing him. A beat.

She idly looks around. Something catches her eye, a muscled guy, POPEYE.

She holds up her iPhone; studies a mugshot, it's him, POPEYE.

She gulps the rest of her drink, lays cash on the bar, grabs her clutch, slips her heels...

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CONTINUED:

She saunters over to him. *She shoots him a flirty smile.*

POPEYE

You look like you might be feeling slightly promiscuous tonight..?

DEMI

No different than any other night.

A beat,

DEMI

You got a condom?

POPEYE

Sure. Of course. But I'm clean.

DEMI

Yeah? Me too. Put the bloody condom on.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A very drunk POPEYE, 20s, walks Demi back to her house. She's holding her shoes;

DEMI

You sure you're okay?

POPEYE

I've never felt better in my entire life. Ever.

INT. HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

They're making out, pulling each other's clothes off. Finally, Demi pulls Popeye into her bedroom. Even though we can't see them we can still HEAR them as the last of their clothes come off...

INT. JUDGE WESSONS' CHAMBERS - DAY

A desk lamp streaks light across the darkened room. Turn of the century elegance. Decorated with taste, and power.

Demi saunters in, rocking a flattering dress and hotter heels. Casually sits on a comfy sofa, lays her clutch on a coffee table laden with -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A VALENTINE TIMES DAY CARD, A DOZEN ROSES, AND A BOX OF CHOCOLATES.

DEMI

Those for me?

Gwen, in a bra, no shirt, still wearing her skirt, heads to the mini bar. Picks up a tumbler, fills it with ice, splashes some bourbon into it, hands it to Demi.

GWEN

Who else?

There is an unmistakable sexual chemistry between them. Gwen fixes one for herself.

GWEN

How much we talking?

DEMI

With the insurance money, too, two million.

DEMI

What about his appeals?

GWEN

It won't get that far.

(off her look)

Frank Rizzo. He's doing life upstate. That's where Mort's headed. That blind date I sent you on --

DEMI

Oh God, you couldn't have found a cuter guy.

GWEN

He was Frank's brother. Their is no Shiv big enough to stop Frank from killing him.

DEMI

You thought of everything.

They start kissing, groping, getting hot.

GWEN

Happy Valentine times day, baby.

Gwen turns her around so she's facing the desk.

She's behind her, squeezing, kissing.

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CONTINUED: (2)

He flips up her skirt.

Gwen rips down her panties.

She's eating Chinese food from a carton as she pours over a mountain of law books and files.

Finalyl stabs some chopsticks it her food.

WOMAN

Your honor, in light of the late changing circumstances we'd request a continuance--

MAN

Mmm hmm. What I don't understand is this. If there isn't enough evidence to take him to trial, then why should there be enough evidence to take him before the bar association?

WOMAN

Because the laws that govern attorneys is tougher than the laws hat govern other men.

MAN

Two sets of laws.

WOMAN

The fact is an ordinary citizen can get away with a minor infraction, a fine. But a attorney can be suspended and disbarred.

MAN

But that doesn't make any sense. Suppose the bar association don't believe him. How much could they fine him.

WOMAN

Fine him. He's not getting a traffic ticket. His liscnece can be revoked.

MAN

That's unconstitutional I think.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WOMAN

The practice of law isn't a right. It's a privilege. And that's why lawyers are licensed and that why they can revoke that privilege.

MAN

Attorneys got to be like Ceasar's wife beyond suspicion.

BEVERLY

You make him sound stupid.

GWENDOLYN

Have you ever seen one of those contraptions that psychologist use for testing the behavior of mice.

(then)

If the mice wants the cheese then he has to go through a certain tunnel. Manipulate a certain gate. Climb a certain flight of steps. There are no alternative routes. His moves and reactions are all predetermined. And I've arranged the set up in actually the same way.

GWENDOLYN

INT. HOTEL - COCKTAIL LOUNGE - DAY

An opulent bar and restaurant. Not many customers.

A WAITRESS delivers drinks to Gwendolyn and Beverly, sitting in a dark, quiet booth - rather cozily, part of the after work crowd.

As the waitress departs--

WOMAN

The strategy you pitched at the party. Not bad. But the prenup is iron clad. Not to mention the infidelity clause.

WOMAN

I've been dreaming about this moment for so long, I never thought it would actually happen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN

Not if we nail your closing argument.

WOMAN

That's a big "if."

WOMAN

Not with some coaching...

Gwendolyn smiles, nods at the doors -- *let's go.*

MARLA

If we weren't at this party and these people weren't around, I would jump you right now!

WOMAN

So theoretically...

WOMAN

Objection! Calls for speculation.

WOMAN

Your Honor, I haven't even posed the question yet.

MORT

I can't talk right --
What?...When?...Now? Why the hell didn't I ever hear about this?!

Beat. She leans in to kiss Beverly. Beverly lets it happen - for a second - but then quickly pulls back.

BEVERLY

I...uh...sorry, I just...

KAREN

My fault. That was so stupid. I'm sorry. Guess I'm a little drunk.

BEVERLY

Oh, I don't believe that.

WOMAN

I think I'm going up to my room - my private room - and start the long arduous process of repressing the last week and a half.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WOMAN

If you're going up to masturbate just tell me. We're partners. You can't deny that anymore.

She wears a cutesy, church-y dress

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Sunlight gives the room a golden glow.

Demi and Gwen lay in each other's arms. Shallow gasping and panting of post-coitus. Languorous laughter, moans of satisfaction.

Re-firing the stub of a joint, Gwen passes it to Demi. Demi draws hard on the glowing roach. Holding in the smoke until it burns.

Gwen gently strokes her neck. They lay there, face to face. Demi kisses her. It's passionate, deep, sexy.

WOMAN

Your honor, in light of the late changing circumstances we'd request a continuance--

MAN

Mmm hmm. What I don't understand is this. If there isn't enough evidence to take him to trial, then why should there be enough evidence to take him before the bar association?

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(then)

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BEVERLY

Give me a second to catch up. Is this a fight? Are we fighting?

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Mort's buttoning his cuffs. Beverly puts on her black dress and comes to him to get zipped. As he zips...

"TINK" he's got a message: he checks his phone, wonders if he should respond.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORT

I have to run to the office, babe.
With the presiding Judge. I won't
be long.

BEVERLY

I hope to God you're in trouble.

He smiles best he can. With a quick kiss, Mort exits.

INT. JUDGE RATAKOWSKI'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

A desk lamp streaks light across the darkened room. Turn
of the century elegance. Decorated with taste, and power.

Supervising Judge GWENDOLYN RATAKOWSKI, 40s, a formidable
career woman approaches. Firm handshake as -

Gwendolyn sits casually on a couch as Mort brings her a
drink.

There is an unmistakable sexual chemistry between them.

She's eating Chinese food from a carton as she pours over
a mountain of law books and files.

Finalyl stabs some chopsticks it her food.