

**THE LINCOLN LAWYER**

**Screenplay by John Romano**

**From the novel by Michael Connelly  
Lakeshore Entertainment**

**Draft of 29 MAY, 2009**

BANG IN FROM BLACK, HAND-HELD, ON THE MOVE-- ENTERING--

INT. CORRIDOR, LANCASTER COURTHOUSE, MORNING--

OVER THE SHOULDER of MICK HALLER, lawyer, as he hustles through SECURITY, electric wand quick-scans his suit--

SECURITY GUARD

You're good, Mick--

And slips him through-- Mick grabs his brief-case without missing a beat--

Heads into the throng of ATTORNEYS, CLIENTS, FAMILIES, UNIFORMS-- Greets a few, checks his watch (The Lancaster Courthouse is 80s-built and already ratty)--

Mick shoulder-bumps his way into the crowd jamming the doors to: **DEPARTMENT 2A, CRIMINAL, Hon. Orton A. Powell**-- but before he enters the courtroom he's intercepted by--

VAL

Mick, I jus' called your office, need to talk to you--

MICK

Then stay with me--

FERNANDO VALENZUELA, the bail bondsman not the pitcher, rough, stocky, follows Mick into--

INT. COURTROOM, CONTINUOUS--

As Mick breaks through the people-jam, Val on his heels--

VAL

How long you here today?

MICK

Depends when the Judge calls my client.

VAL

'Cause I got somethin' big for you in Van Nuys.

Reaction Mick, he's heard it before... He's already moving towards the front-- where there's no judge yet but a PACK OF LAWYERS surround the BAILIFF'S DESK checking on their cases... Val keeps after him...

VAL (CONT'D)  
 This guy could be money. But he  
 goes before the judge at noon.  
 (insistent)  
 Listen to me...

Off his tone, Mick finally slows, half-turns...

VAL (CONT'D)  
 This client, his mother's lawyer  
 meets me in my office Eight A.M.--

MICK  
 So he's already got a lawyer--

VAL  
 Will you listen? Just real-estate,  
 not criminal. I told them about  
 you. They need you like crazy.  
 They're ready to put up their  
 Malibu beach house against a  
 million.

MICK  
 (reacts to the sum)  
 Bail's a million? What'd they book  
 him on?

VAL  
 Cops say he beat up a girl pretty  
 bad. They want Aggravated Assault  
 with G.B.I.--

MICK  
 Has the D.A. filed?

VAL'S VOICE  
 Not yet. See? I'm gettin' you in on  
 the ground floor.

Makes a money sign between his fingers. Mick's tempted but...

MICK  
 Van Nuys by noon, don't know if I  
 can make it...

VAL  
 If you do, take care of me, Mick.  
 Get them off the beach house, tell  
 them to go for my bond.

That's the deal. Mick, yields, digs out a notebook--

MICK  
Give me the name.

VAL  
Louis Roulet...  
(pronounced roo-lay)  
R-O-U-L-E-T, like the wheel.

MICK  
That's not how you spell the wheel  
but okay.

Sees a BREAK in the line of lawyers in front of Bailiff,  
darts for it, Val grabs him--

VAL'S VOICE  
If it works, remember: I steered  
him to you.

MICK  
(going, agrees)  
You'll get a little better gift  
from me at Christmas.

Mick leaves Val and keeps going, muscles his way through to--

THE BAILIFF'S DESK, right behind the bar-- Bailiff's a  
DEPUTY SHERIFF with the nameplate, R. RODRIGUEZ, at which  
Mick *carefully glances*, then asks re: the clipboard of cases:

MICK (CONT'D)  
Roberto, you see my guy on there?  
Harold Casey?

Bailiff looks at him dolefully, then runs his finger down the  
list-- *Lower and lower--*

MICK (CONT'D)  
C'mon, is he that far down?

BAILIFF  
(without looking up)  
Reynaldo.

MICK  
'Scuse me?

BAILIFF  
My name's Reynaldo not Roberto. Us  
bailiffs all look alike, right?  
And your guy's third from the  
bottom.

MICK  
 (reacts, *Shit...*)  
 I've got a case in another  
 courthouse...

Reynaldo blinks at him. Tough luck. Mick leans over the desk.

MICK (CONT'D)  
 Look. *Reynaldo*. Accept my  
 apologies. I didn't forget you at  
 Christmas-time, remember?  
 (jogs his memory)  
 Jar of nuts with a surprise inside?  
 "Happy Holidays, Your friend Mick?"

Remembers. But.

BAILIFF  
 Went through those pretty fast. Two  
 jars this year.

MICK  
 You got it. Thank you, *Reynaldo...*

BAILIFF  
 Your guy's second up.

Bailiff nods to the HOLDING PEN, wood & glass, where  
 defendants are brought. Then picks up a phone...

Mick goes through the gate towards the pen, greets a few  
 attorneys on the way... After a moment a GROUP OF FOUR  
 PRISONERS are led out. Among whom Mick SEES:

MICK  
 Harold.

HAROLD CASEY, 30s, lanky, with a ponytail and skull & halo  
 tattoo. He's heard Mick but doesn't look over, avoiding him.

MICK (CONT'D)  
 Don't hide from your lawyer, it's  
 bad form. You know what I want to  
 talk about.

Caught, Harold slouches towards him.

MICK (CONT'D)  
 Listen. When Judge Powell comes in  
 he's going to want to know if we're  
 ready for trial...

HAROLD

We are.

MICK

We're not and you know why not. You haven't paid me. Rule One, remember Rule One? I get paid or I don't work.

HAROLD

Don't worry, I have your money...

MICK

Right, you have my money, I don't.

HAROLD

It's coming. I talked to my boys.

MICK

Harold. I looked at the list of people I trust, and you're not on it.

HAROLD

The law says you can't just quit. The Judge won't let you. I looked it up.

Mick's about to react to this jailhouse lawyering-- when a hush falls, and the JUDGE comes out: ORTON POWELL, 60...

MICK

Pay close attention.

Goes to his seat...

INT. COURTROOM - MINUTES LATER

Harold's case has been called, Mick stands--

MICK

Michael Haller for the defense, your honor. If I may, I'd like to carry this over.

JUDGE ORTON

Do you have a reason, Mr. Haller?

MICK

I'm having trouble locating a witness, your honor. An indispensable witness. A Mr. Green.

With emphasis. A look goes between the Judge and Mick.  
Meantime Harold stares from the pen. The Judge, to Mick--

JUDGE ORTON

How much time do you need? Would a  
week be enough?

MICK

I hope so. As your honor knows, Mr.  
Green can be hard to track down.

A look of understanding. Judge nods--

JUDGE ORTON

I'm holding this over pending  
notification from counsel...

Then gavels down, for the next case-- As Casey's led off,  
Mick joins him along the rail--

HAROLD

That was bullshit--

MICK

Judge Powell used to be a defense  
lawyer, he knows all about having  
to chase "Mr. Green"-- so he  
doesn't look kindly on defendants  
who don't pay their attorneys...

Casey won't look him in the eye, but--

MICK (CONT'D)

I expect to hear from you, Harold.

RAP MUSIC IN-- TUPAC'S "*LIFE GOES ON*"-- *CONTINUES OVER*--

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY, MINUTES LATER...

ON THE CUT a BLACK LINCOLN pulls up by the employees  
entrance, neatly swooping to the curb to pick up MICK as he  
gets in back, almost without breaking stride...

INT. LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

The HARD RAP's coming over the car's sound system, the  
DRIVER's a young black man, dark suit, EARL--

MICK  
 (OVER THE RAP)  
 Get back on the five, Earl, we're  
 going to Van Nuys. Thanks.

The thanks is for the STYROFOAM-COFFEE which Earl hands him  
 over the seat while *one-handed PULLING THE LINCOLN BACK OUT  
 INTO TRAFFIC...*

MICK sips it hot, surrounded by LAPTOP, STACKS OF FILES,  
 NEWSPAPERS, ELECTRIC SHAVER... THE CAR, THE BACKSEAT, IS  
 MICK'S ROLLING OFFICE...

EXT. THE LINCOLN (MOVING) - DAY

Cruising South, down the "5," past dry brown hills... over  
 which CELL-PHONE RINGS....

INT. BACK SEAT OF LINCOLN (MOVING) - SAME TIME

MICK  
 Earl-- buds.

A command. Up front Earl puts in earbuds, RAP OUT. Into cell--

MICK (CONT'D)  
 This is Haller.

LORNA'S VOICE  
 And this is your office.

INTERCUT: LINCOLN (MOVING)/ INT. LORNA'S CONDO -DAY

It's a one-bedroom in Studio City, Lorna's 33, redhead,  
 pretty as hell, works at her kitchen table in her bathrobe,  
 among breakfast dishes...

MICK  
 Actually I'm *in* my office. On my  
 way to court in Van Nuys.

LORNA  
 Then Val reached you about his  
 customer?

MICK  
 Oh yeah: "Got somethin' big for  
 you, Mick." Every time.

LORNA

He could be right. I checked up on Roulet? The family has a real estate business in Beverly Hills. Listed for some heavy-duty sales, houses to movie stars...

Mick stirs, like maybe he ought to believe. Has an idea...

MICK

Sounds like the media might be interested. You know who to ring. Any other calls?

LORNA

Odds and ends. Some DUI's, I quoted them the house number. And...

MICK

And what?

LORNA

I shouldn't even tell you. Gloria Larson called from County Lockup.

MICK

(groans)  
She get popped again?

LORNA

The usual with a complication. Cocaine possession.

MICK

Something new.

LORNA

First appearance is right after lunch...

MICK

Tell her I'll try.

Under which Mick sees Earl indicate something on the road... Lorna reacts to what Mick said re Gloria, *exasperated*...

LORNA

Why do you waste your time, Mickey?

Mick sees where Earl's pointing: SQUAD OF MOTORCYCLES, HARLEYS, IN THE SIDE-VIEW MIRRORS... They pull up alongside: gang jackets, black leather vests... Big guys...

EARL  
 Want me to do somethin' about this?  
 'Cause I *can*.

MICK  
 Ignore them, you're doing fine.

*FACE OF THE LEADER OF THE MOTORCYCLES*, leers at Mick through window, as Mick ignores, answers Lorna re "Glory":

MICK (CONT'D)  
 What can I say, Lorn, I've got a soft spot for redheads. Why do you think I married you?

LORNA  
 The divorce papers called it temporary insanity.

MICK  
 Lucky for you there was a cure.

When-- Earl interrupts, *insistent* now--

EARL  
 Mr. Haller?

Calling his attention to-- THE MOTORCYCLES HAVE PULLED IN FRONT. The leader signals Earl to pull off. Mick sees they're surrounded. *Shit*.

EXT. OFF-RAMP FOR VASQUEZ ROCKS STATE PARK - CONTINUOUS

The Lincoln follows the Harleys off, PULLS TO A STOP in a lot at the crest of the exit. Jagged rocks, craggy peaks.

The leader approaches: EDDIE VOGEL. Skull & halo on his leather vest. "Road Saints." Mick lowers a window.

EDDIE  
 Counsellor, how's it hanging?

MICK  
 A little to the left, Eddie. And you?

EDDIE  
 (casual)  
 Our boy Harold called me from the pen. Said you're stalling on his case til you see more green?

MICK

You want me to work you've got to pay me.

EDDIE

We paid you. Five thousand.

MICK

That's long gone. I *could* tell you half went to the aerial-photo expert. He's going to blow the state's case by showing that the DEA violated the air space over Harold's farm by flying too low. I could also tell you how I have to bring him in from New York to testify, put him in a hotel and all. But you don't need to know that. What you need to know is, we had a deal. Time to refill the tank.

Eddie smiles. Taps the side of the Lincoln.

EDDIE

Sure, gas-guzzler like this. I heard you got three more. What's one man need with four Lincolns?

MICK

They keep each other company.

EDDIE

What? You want another five grand?

MICK

Ten. I'm flying the guy in from Kodak in New York, he wants business class...

EDDIE

And I want Harold back on the farm. He's the best farmer we got, if you know what I mean...

MICK

I don't and I don't want to. Either pay me or go with a Public Defender. Of course he won't know much about air space, but...

He lets it hang. A beat, and Eddie reaches into his vest with his big hand. Envelope.

Mick takes it, removes a tight-bound stack of bills. He feels it, squeezing it pincer-like between thumb and forefinger, puts it away... Eddie's surprised.

EDDIE  
Ain't you gonna count it?

MICK  
I just did.

Window rolls up...

INT. LINCOLN (MOVING) - FREEWAY - MINUTES LATER

Heading South again. No music. Earl overheard, wonders--

EARL  
This expert flyin' in from New York, you need me to get him at the airport?

MICK  
No one's coming in. The best camera experts in the world are right here in Hollywood.

Earl glances in the mirror. Figures it out, impressed...

EARL  
Know what, Mr. Haller? You'd'a done all right on the street.

MICK  
Where do you think I *am*, Earl?

And gives a wry grin. Earl pops on his music again, more BAD-ASS RAP-- Mick LOOKS OUT, SEES-- the SIGN over the Freeway: The cloverleaf for the valley, and Van Nuys. *CUT TO--*

INT. VAN NUYS COURTHOUSE - HOLDING CELL - DAY

CAMERA MOVING ON: EIGHT MEN, prisoners in grey jumpers. Six are black. Of the two white men, one's a wet-eyed, skanky JUNKIE, 40s. The OTHER is a tall young man, somehow polished even in prison outfit, definitely out of place here--

MICK  
Louis Roulet?

LOUIS turns: the proverbial deer-in-the-headlights: Scared.

MICK (CONT'D)  
My name is Michael Haller.

LOUIS  
Yes-- Mr. Haller-- I called you  
because I need someone--

Mick is behind a painted line 3 feet from the cell. Signals Louis to come close to the bars. Louis approaches, scared.

MICK  
You want me to represent you for  
your first appearance. I get twenty-  
five hundred for that. We can work  
out what comes next.

LOUIS  
This is a set-up, Mr. Haller-- I  
made a mistake with that woman, she  
was setting me up--

MICK  
Keep your voice down. And don't say  
anything about the case til I've  
got you out on bail. Okay?

*Mick's voice, as always, is easy and calm. Louis nods.*

MICK (CONT'D)  
I understand your family lawyer's  
in court?

LOUIS  
That's him. Cecil Dobbs.

Points to-- DOBBS, balding dignified WASP, a few rows in. Mick nods, noting the tinge of desperation in Louis's voice. Takes out a notebook...

MICK  
Okay, tell me about yourself. How  
old are you?

LOUIS  
Thirty-two...

MICK  
Ties to the community? You grow up  
here?

LOUIS  
Beverly Hills, went to UCLA, I work  
for my mother's business...

MICK

How much did you make last year?  
 (when Louis hesitates)  
 If I'm going to get you out I need  
 to know everything.

LOUIS

My taxes said six hundred thousand.

Just then, the White Junkie lurches forward towards Mick--

JUNKIE

I want a lawyer too, you got a  
 card?

MICK

They'll have one for you out there.  
 I need you to back up and leave us  
 alone, pal. Can you do that?

Junkie backs off, does just what Mick says. Impressing Louis.

MICK (CONT'D)

Listen. They've put some heavy  
 charges on you. The DA will  
 probably ask for No-Bail...

LOUIS

(freaks)  
 No bail?

MICK

I said they're going to *ask* it.  
 When was the last time you were  
 arrested?

LOUIS

Never.

MICK

So if I checked your record--

LOUIS

You'd find parking tickets.

Mick looks briefly into the younger man's eyes-- he's scared,  
 fragile-- but sincere. He sputters--

LOUIS (CONT'D)

This whole thing is--

MICK  
 (cuts him off)  
 We're not talking about the case,  
 remember? Not even to the judge.  
 Today's about setting arraignment,  
 period.

LOUIS  
*Are you going to get me out?*

MICK  
 I'm gonna try, Louis.

Off Mick, *GO TO,*

AN 8 X 10 PHOTO OF A WOMAN'S BEATEN-UP FACE. CLOSE.

Right eye bruised, swollen shut. Nose broken. Bloody gauze protrudes from her nostril. Lip cut and swollen like a plum. Gash over the right eye. *Fear in her expression...*

Studying it is ASSISTANT D.A. MAGGIE McPHERSON, 30s. We're:

INT. ARRAIGNMENT COURT - PROSECUTOR'S TABLE - LATER

Maggie's in a navy suit: smart, strong, a *beauty*. Behind her--

MICK  
 Are you the prosecutor who *used to*  
 have the Roulet case?

She starts to smile-- until his emphasis registers.

MAGGIE  
 Don't tell me. Son of a bitch,  
 Haller.

MICK  
 Rules are rules.

MAGGIE  
 I wanted this one...  
 (yields)  
 Alright I'll go quietly. But *after*  
 today's hearing, if you don't  
 object.

MICK  
 Depends. You going for no-bail?

MAGGIE

That won't change with the prosecutor. Not with what your guy did.

With which she shows him the photo: *gruesome*.

MICK

*If* he did it.

MAGGIE

Sure. "If." They only picked him up in her home with blood all over him...

MICK

I love it when you're sarcastic. Can I at least see the arrest report?

MAGGIE

Get it from whoever takes over. No favors on this one.

Mick looks admiringly at Maggie. At her passion.

MICK

How's Hayley today?

A beat. Off the sudden shift in topic, Maggie starts putting away the things on her desk...

MAGGIE

She's good.

MICK

I'll pick her up the usual time on Saturday.

MAGGIE

Why's it always so darn early?

MICK

It's the pancake guy at Dupar's. He loses his touch after eight.

Mimes a short-order cook flipping. Maggie can't hide a smile--

MAGGIE

She'll be ready.

--but the smile's GONE when we *BANG TO*,

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

On the cut, they're WRANGLING IN FRONT OF THE JUDGE...

MICK

Judge, there is no way the state  
can claim my client is a flight  
risk--

MAGGIE

With resources like this man has,  
flight is *always* a risk--

JUDGE

Then I'll reduce the risk by  
ordering him to wear a tracer  
anklet-- and setting bail at a  
million dollars.

MAGGIE

But Judge--

JUDGE

Bail is set, Ms. McPherson.

Mick wins, Maggie loses... Meanwhile, in the b.g., a TV  
CAMERA is trained on LOUIS in the HOLDING AREA...

INT. DOORS TO THE COURTROOM/CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Mick bangs out, *always moving*. VAL's waiting there, *excited*--

VAL

What'd I tell you, this one's  
money...

MICK

We'll see, Val...

VAL

(indicates Dobbs)  
There's the lawyer-guy. Don't  
forget our deal.

MOVING from Val, Mick HEADS through the BUSY CRUSH of  
attorneys & clients, to--

MICK

Cecil Dobbs?

DOBBS

Mr. Haller.

(They shake hands.)

It was depressing to see the boy  
caught up in that cattle call...

MICK

Boy?

DOBBS

I've represented the family a long  
time.

MICK

My advice is, let Mr. Valenzuela  
fix you up with a bond and take  
"the boy" home.

DOBBS

But we were thinking of putting up  
property, Mrs. Windsor's beach  
house...

MICK

Her name's Windsor?

DOBBS

Her second husband's name. He's  
dead now.

MICK

Assessing the house will take days.  
By then Louis might be carrying  
someone's child.

(before Dobbs can argue)

So tap Val, and take Louis to your  
office. I'll meet you there at 4.

And heads off again. Dobbs follows him out, to...

EXT. VAN NUYS COURTHOUSE, DAY - MICK AND DOBBS

Sunlight. Where Dobbs suddenly TENSES as he SEES: A TV  
CAMERAMAN coming out with camera. Off Dobbs's reaction--

MICK

Yep. Media's already picked us up.

DOBBS

Mrs. Windsor's sensitive about the  
press. I don't suppose there's  
anything we can do about that--

MICK  
We'll see.

Mick, calls the cameraman over. When he comes--

MICK (CONT'D)  
Saw you in there filming. What's  
your name?

CAMERAMAN  
Rob Gillen. They call me "Sticks."

MICK  
You freelancing on this, Sticks?

STICKS  
Yeah. Your client's got profile, I  
figure I can sell it to local news.

MICK  
How much?

STICKS  
'Scuse me?

MICK  
*How much* will they pay you for what  
you shot today?

STICKS  
That depends. Seven, seven-fifty.

MICK  
Suppose we take it off your hands  
for eight.

Sticks hesitates, like it's not the legit thing to do.

MICK (CONT'D)  
Or do we make it a thousand.

Sticks hesitates no longer. Takes the tape from the camera  
and hands it to Mick... who's already counting out money from  
the roll of cash Ted gave him. To Dobbs--

MICK (CONT'D)  
I can expense this, right?

DOBBS  
Of course. Absolutely.

Sticks takes the money, goes. Dobbs, impressed, *beaming* now--

DOBBS (CONT'D)  
 I must admit, Mr. Haller, you  
 weren't my choice. You were  
 Louis's. Frankly I'd never heard of  
 you. But maybe I should have.

Mick, backs up a beat...

MICK  
 Wait, did you just say I was  
 Louis's choice?

DOBBS  
 Yes. Louis came up with your name,  
 he said he read about a drug case  
 you handled...

At which Mick looks toward Val waiting at a distance. Unaware  
 he's just been busted. Mick makes a face, goes on to Dobbs--

MICK  
 I'll need a hundred thousand in  
 front.  
 (before Dobbs can reply)  
 Working off five-fifty an hour,  
 it'll be a second hundred if we go  
 to trial, more if it goes past a  
 week. Appeals, we start over.

Mick's Lincoln pulls up smoothly to fetch him at the curb.  
 Mick, hand on the door--

MICK (CONT'D)  
 I take it none of that's a problem.

Reaction Dobbs-- hesitates but has no choice. *As MICK GETS  
 IN, we GLIMPSE THE LINCOLN'S LICENSE PLATE: **NT GLTY**-- CUT TO,*

INT. LINCOLN (MOVING) - *RAP PLAYS, EARL DRIVES, AS:*

LORNA'S VOICE  
 How'd it go?

MICK  
 (into his cell)  
 The case is ours.

LORNA'S VOICE  
 Just in time. I'm doing the books,  
 you're a couple'a months behind on  
 the house, the garage...

MICK  
 (cuts this off)  
 This one'll get me well. But I  
 still need to know the state's  
 case, what they've got on him...

LORNA'S VOICE  
 Isn't that the usual--

MICK  
 (mostly to himself)  
 ...Something about the way Maggie  
 sounded.

He gazes out the window. Then:

MICK (CONT'D)  
 I've got an hour til they release  
 Louis. I'll be with Gloria.

Hangs up on Lorna. Then, seeing Earl's turned the corner--

MICK (CONT'D)  
 Stop here.

Mick rolls down the window as Earl glides to the curb. To  
 where the CAMERAMAN, "STICKS," is waiting. Sticks hands him  
 back his thousand dollars. Mick gives him back two hundred.

MICK (CONT'D)  
 Thanks, Sticks.

CAMERAMAN  
 Anytime.

As the car starts to pull away--

CAMERAMAN (CONT'D)  
 Hey, my tape!

Mick tosses it out the window. Cameraman catches it.

INT. VISITING AREA, COUNTY DETENTION CENTER, DAY - ON:

GLORIA  
 Mickey Mantle. You're going to bat  
 for me again?

GLORIA, redhead, 27 but good looks already fading-- greets  
 the arriving Mick in a client/attorney booth.

MICK

You don't even know who the Mick was. You don't look good, Gloria.

GLORIA

Thanks. For coming, not for the compliment.

Mick's already paging through her arrest-sheet, sees...

MICK

Something new for you, getting booked on possession of coke, along with the usual.

GLORIA

Dumb, I know. A guy paid me with it, I had it on me when I went to my next.

MICK

And your next was a cop.

She shrugs/nods. Mick keeps turning pages, looking for a break... while...

GLORIA

Can't you get me into one of those rehab places where they get you straight?

MICK

We *did* a pre-trial rehab, last time. The D.A. won't go for it again. You may have to do some jail here.

GLORIA

I can't.

MICK

Yeah you can. They've got programs in jail, too. Look, you've had a long run. Maybe after this you can finally get out of the life.

GLORIA

And do what? Have kids and plant flowers? Look at me.

Mick doesn't have an answer. Opens a notebook, gets to work.

MICK

Okay, go.

GLORIA

I did a guy at the Travel Lodge on Santa Monica...

MICK

The one who paid you coke instead of money?

GLORIA

He had a *shitload* in there. I saw.

Which gets Mick's attention. His wheels suddenly turning...

MICK

You know who he was?

GLORIA

He reached me on my website. He was Mexican or something.

MICK

(writes, *likes* this--)  
Did you screen him?

GLORIA

Don't I screen 'em all?

MICK

Off what, his driver's license?

GLORIA

No, his passport. I think his name was, Hector, or--

MICK

Hector what? Last name. *Think*.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING, L.A. - D.A.'S OFFICE - DAY

MICK

Hector "Arrande" Moya is what you get if you run a trace. He's a fugitive from a Grand Jury down in Florida. The DEA wants him for drug trafficking.

The D.A.'s LESLIE FAIRE: a woman, well-dressed, humorless.

MICK (CONT'D)  
Leslie? They want him a lot.

LESLIE FAIRE  
And your girl's looking to trade?

MICK  
She'll give you his hotel and room number.

LESLIE FAIRE  
She'll also have to testify on the coke.

MICK  
No. Location only. Your guys take it from there. My investigator says Hector hasn't checked out yet.

LESLIE FAIRE  
(as she weighs it)  
And in exchange?

MICK  
You drop charges, all she does is a Pre-trial Rehab. The facility at USC-Med would be nice.  
(when she hesitates)  
Or do I take this to the Feds?  
They'll cut this deal in a minute.

Which, though veiled, is a threat. Leslie hates this.

INT. DOBBS'S CENTURY CITY LAW OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

HIGH FLOOR, TALL WINDOWS, VAST VIEWS all the way to the Pacific. DOBBS, ON THE CUT, lets in MICK. With another man at his side, whom we haven't seen before. Mick finds LOUIS there, well-dressed. Louis greets him, re his freedom:

LOUIS  
Thank you.

MICK  
(nods, but)  
It's just a start.

Then his look goes to the TRACER-ANKLET Louis wears.

LOUIS  
A present from your friend Mr. Valenzuela, by order of the court.  
(MORE)

LOUIS (CONT'D)

As if I'd go anywhere before this  
is over.

As Mick's about to reply, ANOTHER PERSON enters: MARY WINDSOR (Louis' mother, very put together, 60). Her manner is intelligent and reserved. Dobbs makes the introductions...

DOBBS

This is Mrs. Windsor, Louis's  
mother... Mr. Haller...

Mick presents the guy he's brought with him...

MICK

Mrs. Windsor, this is Frank Levin.  
Mr. Levin's my investigator.

Accepting this, everyone takes their place at the long, blonde-wood conference table. Mick can't help run his hand over the surface, everything's a contrast to his own on-the-fly office... Dobbs, to Mrs. Windsor...

DOBBS

Mrs. Windsor, I can't commend Mr.  
Haller highly enough for his  
performance in court this morning.

Mary Windsor nods, provisionally pleased.

MARY WINDSOR

I have a check for you, Mr. Haller.

And slides it towards him in an envelope. Mick, tries not to seem too much in a hurry as he glances inside--

ANGLE, we glimpse the amount, the zeroes... \$100,000... BUT:

MICK

I'm going to need this to come from  
your son, Mrs. Windsor.

(slides it back to her)

You can give him the money so he  
can write the check. But he's my  
client and that's got to be clear  
from the start.

She *is* offended-- but takes back the envelope, nods to LOUIS. He takes out a checkbook, writes. Mick continues to Mary--

MICK (CONT'D)

Thank you. I'll expect you to  
support your son through this in  
other ways. If you're willing.

MARY WINDSOR

Don't be silly. I'll back my son  
come hell or high water. These  
ridiculous charges. That ridiculous  
woman.

MICK

It's good to know you'll be there  
when we need you.

MARY WINDSOR

But not now, is that it?

MICK

The D.A. could make you testify  
about what you hear. Attorney  
privilege doesn't cover you.

Mary Windsor's motionless a moment. Rather than respond, she  
simply rises. To Louis--

MARY WINDSOR

I will see you at dinner.

And goes. Dobbs gets the door for her. When she's gone:

LOUIS

She's not used to being told what  
to do.

MICK

I can believe that.

All sit. Mick starts up--

MICK (CONT'D)

Our first call's whether we waive  
our right to a speedy trial.

LOUIS

No. I want this behind me.

MICK

You sure? You can stretch things  
out, enjoy your freedom. Most  
clients...

LOUIS

Guilty clients, you mean.

Mick's struck by how firm.

MICK

Alright, then we insist on going to trial right away...

DOBBS

Or perhaps it never goes to trial at all.

(They look at him.)

Our firm can bring considerable pressure to bear--

MICK

Don't kid yourself, Cecil.

(to Dobbs and Louis)

No way the state's dropping these charges. In fact they've already *upped* them, to improve their negotiating position.

LOUIS

There won't be any negotiating.

(before Mick can speak)

No plea bargain, no nothing. I'm not going to jail for something I didn't do. I'm innocent and if there's a trial I want to get on the stand and *tell* the jury I'm innocent. If that's a problem, we can part company right now.

Mick looks at the young man. Evaluating. Then...

MICK

Time to tell me what happened.

Louis. Removes his Ray-Bans. *SUDDENLY:*

*WE'RE IN A BAR (MORGAN'S, STUDIO CITY)... NIGHT...*

*CAMERA MOVES* among L.A. yuppies, night-players. The scene's low-key but sexy, expensive... Waitresses roam...

*LOUIS (V.O.)*

*I was having a drink at Morgan's, Ventura Boulevard...*

*MICK (V.O.)*

*Morgan's, that's a singles bar...*

*Camera finds LOUIS at the bar, checking out the action...*

LOUIS (V.O.)  
*Right, good for pick-ups. I was  
 there to get laid, pure and simple.*

BACK TO, LAW OFFICE

Mick, to Frank, who's holding a dark blue file:

MICK  
 Frank, what's the file say about  
 the girl?

FRANK  
 (reads-- Chicago accent)  
 Regina Campo, goes by "Reggie."  
 Twenty six. Part-time actress, part-  
 time office temp.

DOBBS  
 And hoping to retire after suing my  
 client.

MICK  
 (ignores Dobbs; to Louis)  
 Did you know her before last night?

BACK TO, MORGAN'S, NIGHT... HAND-HELD, CLOSE ON...

REGGIE CAMPO, mid-20s, the finest sexual kitten imaginable,  
 humor enlivening her face and eyes and mouth, moving...

LOUIS (V.O.)  
*I'd seen her around, but never  
 spoke. She was always with a guy.  
 Last night, too.*

She slows as she passes Louis, whispers, her lips brush his  
 face as she discreetly hands him something...

LOUIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*She just laid her address on me. On  
 a napkin.*

MICK (V.O.)  
*But she was still with a guy?*

Reggie returns to: THE GUY at the bar: 40s, hard like a vet.

LOUIS (V.O.)  
 I got it that she wasn't too into  
 her date. She told me she could get  
 rid of him by ten.

BACK TO, LAW OFFICE

LOUIS (CONT'D)  
 I didn't keep the napkin. I work in  
 real estate, I remember addresses.

MICK  
 Frank. Check that file and see if  
 the Police report has any of this.

While Frank looks, Mick explains to Louis and Dobbs, can't  
 hide some professional pride in Frank Levin's work--

MICK (CONT'D)  
 Frank's already worked us a little  
 miracle. He's managed to score a  
 copy of the discovery file,  
 everything the D.A.'s got. They'd  
 have to turn it over eventually but  
 it could have been weeks.

Under which, Frank's checked the blue file, and...

FRANK  
 Nope. They don't have the other  
 guy. They don't even have the bar.

MICK  
 So all they've got is, Louis shows  
 up at her apartment and beats the  
 crap out of her?

LOUIS  
 That is such bullshit--

MICK  
 Just keep telling me your story,  
 Louis.

EXT. PARKING LOT, REGGIE'S APARTMENT COMPLEX... NIGHT...

LOUIS is sitting in a Porsche Carrera...

LOUIS (V.O.)  
 I got there early...

His POV, shadow-figure of Hard-Guy approaching in the dark...

LOUIS (CONT'D)  
I waited til the guy came out.

MICK (V.O.)  
You see what he was driving?

LOUIS (V.O.)  
A Corvette. Yellow.

Hard-Guy gets in the Corvette, pulls out.

MICK (V.O.)  
So he leaves, and you go in...

INT. HALLWAY/ DOOR TO REGGIE'S APARTMENT... HAND-HELD...

Arriving up the stairs is Louis, knocks. A little while, and the door opens a crack. Reggie, part of her face, peers out.

LOUIS (V.O.)  
She saw it was me...

CONTINUOUS AS LOUIS ENTERS HER APARTMENT...

LOUIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The hallway was tight. I had to walk past her, y'know, so she could close the door. So I had to turn my back...

We SEE this, she's behind him... as we hear, simply...

LOUIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Then, that was it.

BACK SUDDENLY TO, LAW OFFICE. MICK, SURPRISED.

MICK  
What was what?

LOUIS  
She hit me with something and I went down. It got black fast.

SUDDEN POP TO, LOUIS STRUCK FROM BEHIND... Blacking out as he tumbles... BACK TO,

INT. LAW OFFICE

Conference table's silent. All looking at Louis.

LOUIS

Next I know two guys are sitting on me. Holding me down.

*QUICK CUT TO, REGGIE'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM...*

TWO GUYS straddle Louis who is face down on the floor.

*LOUIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)*

*Couple of faggots from next door.*

*BACK TO, LAW OFFICE*

FRANK

Police report has them, homosexual couple from down the hall...

LOUIS

Like I said. Faggots.

To which Frank says nothing. After a beat--

MICK

Go on, Louis.

LOUIS

I was still foggy when the cops came...

*BACK TO, LIVING ROOM...* Louis is cuffed by now, hands behind him, COP looms over...

*LOUIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)*

*She was on the couch telling all these lies...*

PARAMEDICS work on Reggie's bloodied face while, to a FEMALE COP (MAXWELL), through sobs, still frightened--

REGGIE

...he was an *animal!* He said he'd rape me and kill me... then rape me again when I was dead...

*Louis looks around at his left hand in a plastic bag. Bloody.*

*LOUIS (V.O.)*

*That's when I saw she'd set it up.*

*BACK TO, LAW OFFICE.*

MICK  
Set it up how?

LOUIS  
Put blood on my hand. My *left* hand.  
But I'm right-handed, I'd use my  
right if I was going to... *punch*  
someone...

Louis mimes throwing a punch, in the air. Inept.

MICK  
You said she opened the door a  
crack. Did you see her face?

LOUIS  
Not all of it...

*CUT TO, DOOR OF REGGIE'S APARTMENT... OPENING AGAIN...*

It open a crack. Enough for her to look out, half her face...

*LOUIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)*  
*Mainly her eye...*

*FRANK (V.O.)*  
*Her left eye.*

*BACK TO, LAW OFFICE.* Frank... has figured it. Mimes the opening of the door, to demonstrate what he just worked out:

FRANK (CONT'D)  
She already had the injuries, on  
the right side of her face. So she  
hides that from him, lets him step  
in.... then she clobbers him.

MICK  
So our case is, she beat herself  
up?

Mick takes the file, takes the 8x10s, REGGIE'S BRUISED  
FACE...

MICK (CONT'D)  
...She belted herself in the face a  
coupl'a times or had her boyfriend  
do it, hoping some far-off day a  
jury would give her a big fat  
reward?

DOBBS

She must have. She saw Louis's Porsche, his Rolex, it's known the family has money... I'll wager she'll file in civil court, the moment this is over.

Mick. Thinks. Then, to Frank--

MICK

Let's hear the police report. Let's hear how Reggie tells it.

*CUT TO, INT. DOORWAY TO REGGIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT*

She's opened a crack, peering out... *Frank reads...*

*FRANK (V.O.)*

*"According to the victim, she was at home alone when the suspect presented himself at the door as someone she knew..."*

Louis is there, talks MOS. Reggie opens the rest of the way.

*FRANK (V.O.) (CONT'D)*

*"Upon letting him in, she was immediately struck..."*

*WHICH WE SEE: The vicious repeated pounding of her face, bloodying her, but it's too fast & jumbled for details...*

*MICK (V.O.)*

*Does it say he knocked her down?*

She falls... Louis flies down on top of her...

*FRANK (V.O.)*

*Yeah, then straddled her. "Held the victim by the neck until she agreed to cooperate..."*

Louis does as described, strangle-hold... Eventually lets her up, turning her toward the bedroom. And...

*FRANK (V.O.) (CONT'D)*

*"The suspect maintained a position behind her, holding a knife against the left side of her throat..."*

*CLOSE, HAND-HELD, KNIFE-POINT TO NECK, SLIGHT CUT, BLOOD...*

RESUME, INT. LAW OFFICE.

Frank takes something new from the file: PHOTO OF A BLOODY KNIFE. Sharpened to a point. Louis looks at it. Seethes.

LOUIS  
This isn't my knife.

MICK  
Frank, are his prints on there?

FRANK  
Stands to reason, if she put blood on his hands she'd put prints on his knife.

LOUIS  
*I told you, it's not "my" knife!*

Mick ignores, still intent on Frank's reading...

MICK  
Okay, how's she say he went down?

FRANK  
"As Ms. Campo entered the hallway, she pushed the intruder backwards into a large floor vase..."

GO TO, INT. REGGIE'S APARTMENT - LOUIS FALLING...

And Reggie scurrying free... STAY ON the fallen Louis as...

FRANK (V.O.)  
*"Realizing her attacker would catch her at the front door, she ducked into the kitchen and seized a bottle of vodka..."*

Louis, struggling to his feet, HIT ON THE HEAD from behind...

MICK (V.O.)  
*And clonked him when he got up?*

FRANK (V.O.)  
*That's how she tells it.*

RESUME, INT. LAW OFFICE

LOUIS  
Those are all lies, this is bull--

MICK

If everything she said is a lie,  
this will be the easiest case ever.  
*But Louis...*

(He moves closer, for:)

You swear it's *all* lies? Is there  
anything you aren't telling me?

Mick's eyes burn into him. Louis answers simply.

LOUIS

Nothing.

MICK holds LOUIS in a long hard assessing stare, we PRE-LAP--

MICK (V.O.)

Rich kid, spoiled as shit, never  
heard the word "No"...

INT. BAR (SMOKEHOUSE) - NIGHT - THE ENTRANCE

MICK

...but the damn thing is, the way  
he tells it? It's just quirky  
enough.

Mick and Frank coming out, they've had a few-- it's a  
lawyer's hangout-- Frank mulls the meaning of Mick's words  
with surprise--

FRANK

*Jeezus*, so you think he might be  
*innocent...?*

MICK

Just might. And you know what my  
father always said about an  
innocent client...

Among the lawyers exiting the bar is MAGGIE... overheard this  
last & answers it...

MAGGIE

He said it's the scariest client  
you can ever have.

Mick, seeing her, smiles and continues...

MICK

Right. Because if you screw up and  
he goes to prison? You won't be  
able to live with yourself.

(MORE)

MICK (CONT'D)

So there's only one verdict you can put on the board, and that's an N.G...

(adds, tipsy)

Hey Mags...

She reads his condition... To Frank Levin:

MAGGIE

Frank, if you let a man drive in his condition I think I can charge you both.

The guys look at each other. Maggie swipes the keys--

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I'll drive him to his house.

MICK

And how will you get home?

MAGGIE

My friends brought me. I'll keep the car, he can pick it up at my place in the morning.

(to Mick)

Get in.

And she gets in the driver's side, waits. Mick to Frank--

MICK

Okay, you know the moves, make the rounds on Louis's story, check on everything he said. Start with Morgan's Bar...

FRANK

And Mr. Corvette. Anything else?

MICK

Yes. Miss Regina Campo. The way Louis says she came on to him. I get the feeling she's a pro.

Mick gets in and closes the door. Maggie starts it up and pulls away... We SEE the PLATES again: **NT GLTY**.

INT. LINCOLN (MOVING) - NIGHT

Ride in silence. Then Mick, mischievous, turns on the RAP.

TUPAC

"God bless the dead and buried  
nigga,  
Don't worry if you see God first,  
Tell him shit got worse..."

MAGGIE

You've got to be kidding me.

MICK

Earl lays this stuff on me.

MAGGIE

Where *is* Earl tonight?

MICK

I never keep him this late.

MAGGIE

Hasn't he worked your fee off yet?

MICK

Yeah, he's on the payroll now.

MAGGIE

Hope he doesn't charge you for this  
music.

Sarcastic. He yields, snaps the rap OFF. But--

MICK

You get used to it. Besides, Tupac,  
he helps me understand my clients.  
Most of them go to school on his  
lyrics--

MAGGIE

Not Roulet.

MICK

Not Louis, no. Louis is one of the  
others, the ones who pay for all  
the rest...

After a beat... Office gossip...

MAGGIE

I heard Smithson assigned Ted  
Minton to your case.

MICK

Never heard of him.

MAGGIE

He's brand new. Smithson's  
protegee. *Naturally*. Georgetown,  
buys his suits at Brooks, above all  
he's a *guy*...

Mick looks over at her, as she flares, calms... Moonlight  
lines her profile. Made self-conscious by his watching her,  
she moves her hair from her face. Beyond pretty: Beautiful.

EXT. MICK HALLER'S HOUSE, LAUREL CANYON - DARK - NIGHT

Lincoln pulls up. Mick gets out but is still looking at her.

MAGGIE

(off his look)  
What?

MICK

Moonlight becomes you.

MAGGIE

That's not doing me any good,  
Haller.

And *pulls away*. Mick's smile fades as he looks up at his dark  
lonely house.

INT. MICK HALLER'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - ON:

AN ANSWERING MACHINE, he's just hit Play. *BEEP*.

VOICE OF A CHILD (HAYLEY)

*Daddy, Mommy said I could call and  
say G'night. Sorry you're not  
there. G'night, Daddy.*

MICK

Me too, baby.

Then Mick hits "Play" again. *BEEP*.

VOICE OF HAYLEY

*Daddy, Mommy said I could call...*

Off a FRAMED PHOTO: HAYLEY, 8, curls, Irish eyes...

EXT. LATER - NIGHT - VIEW FROM MICK'S PORCH

Mick's got a drink in his hand. Below: L.A. is spread out: Wide, white scattering of lights. Above: Stars.

INT. FRONT DOOR, MICK'S HOUSE - MORNING - ON:

FRANK, stands there knocking-- til Mick answers, half-dressed.

MICK  
(finding him there)  
What couldn't wait, Frank?

FRANK  
Wanna see a movie?

CUT TO, *FULL SCREEN: B&W VIDEO PLAYS, SHOWS: MORGAN'S, NIGHT,*

FIXED DOWNWARD ANGLE on the bar, near the cash register. Tending bar, two hot young women, jeans, white t-shirts... FRAME-COUNTER ticks off, bottom right: **8:11 P.M., MARCH 6.**

FRANK'S VOICE  
We caught a break. The owner had a camera installed to watch his register after he caught the help dipping in last year...

MICK'S VOICE  
And here comes Louis.

Said as LOUIS enters frame, sits. MOS, orders a drink. *We're:*

INT. MICK'S HOME OFFICE - *WATCHING A DVD ON HIS TV...*

Mick and Frank... Coffee cups... Frank points out the action while he works the remote...

FRANK  
I had the security tape transferred to disc, so I could manipulate...

Frank starts to ZOOM... Shows Mick, on the SCREEN...

FRANK (cont'd) (CONT'D)  
I'd like you to meet Reggie Campo.

*FULL SCREEN VIDEO IMAGE AGAIN - MORGAN'S, NIGHT*

ZOOMING IN on REGGIE AND HER GUY, over drinks... FREEZES.

FRANK'S VOICE

And Mr. X. The Corvette-man.

MICK'S VOICE

Are you sure?

FRANK'S VOICE

Wouldn't have popped a grand for  
the tape if I wasn't. Now watch...

STARTS PLAYING IMAGE AGAIN, widen to full shot...

FRANK'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Nothing for like a half-hour...

He RACES THE TAPE FORWARD... Time code FLIES... He slows it  
as it reaches 8:40, 41, 42...43.

FRANK'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Then... Here.

Mr. X gets up, with pack of cigarettes, goes...

MICK'S VOICE

I know the place. They got a  
smoking porch out front.

FRANK'S VOICE

That's where he goes. Giving Reggie  
her chance. Watch her.

She passes behind Louis, trails her hand along his  
shoulders... keeps going out of frame...

MICK'S VOICE

That's not how he said it went  
down. He said she gave him her  
address, on a napkin...

FRANK'S VOICE

Whoa, wait, she just went to the  
little girls'. But she's gotta come  
back, no?

And NOW HE FAST-FORWARDS TAPE AGAIN... And this time she  
stops by Louis, speaks into his ear, presses her body against  
him... Louis nods, takes something from her...

Reggie kisses his cheek quickly, continues on... Rejoins X at the bar. Frank speeds the tape...

FRANK'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
Now watch... Reggie and X decide to split...

Reggie rises, guy takes a final swig... they exit frame.

FRANK'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
Check out his hand, his watch.

MICK'S VOICE  
It's on his left. That's no good...

INT. MICK'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MICK  
It means he's right-handed. But the facial blows were from the left...

FRANK  
Slow down. You said you knew Morgan's. So you oughta realize...  
(as Mick stares)  
This image is in the mirror over the bar. That's how the owner set the camera to watch his register.

MICK  
*So everything's backwards...*

FRANK  
And X punches with his left.

Nice.

MICK  
Proud of yourself?

FRANK  
Yeah. But not just for the tape.  
(Also:)  
That "feeling" you had about Regina? That she sells it? You were right.

Mick sits back. Enjoying the way it's coming together.

MICK  
You're saying the cops don't have this?

FRANK

How can they? I get the one and only. It ain't a copy.

MICK

Then *make* a copy.

FRANK

You taking it to the prosecutor?

MICK

(nods)

Young hot-shot named Ted Minton. He wants to give me the discovery file.

FRANK

Poor guy won't know what hit him.

Off Mick--

INT. VAN NUYS CIVIC CENTER - D.A.'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY

Mick in a chair. Impatient, among legal secretaries, prosecutors, cops... A guy Mick recognizes approaches.

KURLEN

Well, look who's come callin'.

MICK

Detective Kurlen.

Kurlen gives the World's Shittiest Grin.

KURLEN

Been to San Quentin lately? To see our boy Martinez?

Mick bristles at the name. Turns to a passing secretary:

MICK

Is D.A. Minton back yet?--

SECRETARY

He'll be a few more minutes, sir.

Kurlen, seeing he's drawn blood, continues to needle.

KURLEN

How's *Martinez* doin' up there, anyway? He make the pucker-up-and-kiss-me team?

MICK  
I haven't talked to him.

KURLEN  
I guess once they plead guilty and go down, they're not much use to you.  
(rubbing it in)  
He's away forever, right?

MICK  
He got life.

KURLEN  
So he'll be out in fifteen. Too bad. 'Cause his victim, Donna Renteria? She's dead forever.

Mick has no reply. Kurlen sits.

KURLEN (CONT'D)  
How's a guy like you sleep at night? With the scum you represent.

Mick, had enough. Moves closer. To tell Kurlen a story.

MICK  
I had a client once, he decapitated his ex-wife, then kept her head in the refrigerator.

KURLEN  
(disgusted)  
Naturally you got him off.

MICK  
The D.A. got greedy. Tried to pile on two unsolved murders, trick up evidence to stick my guy with them. It's called the *justice* system, that's not the way it's supposed to happen.

KURLEN  
So your guy's out walkin' around. Fuck you, Haller.

MICK  
(The point:)  
No. Fuck the D.A. And fuck the cop who helped him.

Kurlen leans forward. The gap between them, like creatures from two different species. Pure hate. But before Kurlen speaks, TED MINTON arrives. Fresh-faced, Ivy League, 30.

TED

Mr. Haller? Sorry you had to wait.

Mick stands. Minton gives him a thin white-covered file.

TED (CONT'D)

Hope it'll be worth your while.

Under which, the still-sneering Kurlen goes. Mick taps Ted's file with his finger.

MICK

This your discovery? Looks thin.

TED

We can talk about it in my office.

Sure, but first Mick takes something from his pocket: The DVD Frank gave him.

MICK

You have something to play this on?

INT. TED MINTON'S OFFICE - AT HIS DESK - MOMENTS LATER

ANGLE the young prosecutor's face as he watches the bar-tape. And Mick watching him for his reaction...

When it's done, Ted clicks it OFF. Not much reaction at all.

TED

What else do you have?

The simple, polite question throws Mick.

MICK

Look Ted, let's cut the bullshit. Not only is your so-called victim a prostitute, but we've got her soliciting my guy on tape! You think a jury's gonna see that and believe he'd have to rape her at knife-point to have sex with her - Are you listening to what I'm saying?

TED

Yes and it hasn't changed the offer  
I'm prepared to make.

MICK

*Offer? You're going forward?*

*Not the way Mick thought it would go. Ted goes on...*

TED

We'll drop down to Assault with a  
Deadly and Attempted Sexual  
Battery. The guidelines put that at  
seven years, maybe he'll do four.

Mick, uncertain now, doubts himself for the first time...

MICK

...What am I missing here?...

Ted stays innocent. Blank.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE THE VAN NUYS CITY CENTER - LATER - WHEN  
MICK COMES OUT...

...holding the file Ted gave him. Wondering what hit him.

When he gets to his parked Lincoln, there's no Earl, and a  
parking ticket's stuck beneath the wiper. Insult to injury,  
the way he's feeling...

Earl comes trotting up, carrying coffee. Sees Mick dully  
holding the ticket. Before Earl can apologize--

MICK

It's coming out of your pay, Earl.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - KID'S AREA, PONY RIDES - SATURDAY

MICK and his daughter, HAYLEY HALLER, 8... Mick's ON A BENCH,  
right where Hayley waits on line for a free pony...

EARL approaches from the refreshment stand with an ice-cream  
for Hayley and one for himself. Kids playing everywhere, a  
MINIATURE TRAIN chugs past...

*But Mick's lost in thought, has his beat-up briefcase open,  
working... Hayley jumps with anticipation of the ice-cream...*

EARL

Got you the good stuff, Hayley...

HAYLEY

Thank you, Earl.

But just then a little girl gets OFF a pony and the attendant holds it for Hayley.

EARL

Man's got your ride ready...

MICK

Go on, I'll hold your ice cream.

Excited, Hayley goes. The attendant lifts her up and on, and the pony carrying Hayley joins the others in the wide ring... Mick watches her for a moment, waves-- then, balancing the ice cream, returns to his files--

MICK (CONT'D)

There's something right in front of me and I'm not seeing it.

On his lap he's spread out: PAGES from the TWO FILES: the blue-covered one Frank gave him. The white-covered from Ted.

Mick starts turning pages, compares... The same, the same... When he turns the next one over:

It's the page Frank gave him showing the PICTURE OF A KNIFE, the picture we saw in Cecil Dobbs' office.

Turns to the matching page from Ted's file. Reaction Mick...

*HARD CUT TO, EXT. LINCOLN (MOVING) - COUNTRY CLUB - LATER*

In the parking lot, pulls up. Louis is in front of the club, golf-clothes, waiting. Comes out to meet the Lincoln...

INT. LINCOLN, BACK SEAT - SAME TIME

MICK

Daddy's got to talk to somebody, Hayley. You stay here with Earl.

Mick gets out, Hayley stays...

EXT. LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

Louis hurries over, as far from the clubhouse as possible, in order not to be seen or heard-- eager--

LOUIS  
What happened? Did you see Minton?

MICK  
Oh I saw him...

Mick's in his face. Low but angry--

MICK (CONT'D)  
You lied to me, Louis. You didn't  
tell me you were paying Reggie  
Campo for sex.  
(off Louis's reaction)  
Don't look surprised. You could'a  
told me that in Cecil's office...

LOUIS  
(red-faced)  
I didn't want my mother to know,  
Cecil tells her everything...

MICK  
So you keep from me the one thing  
that could have made the trial go  
away?

Louis reacts to this, suddenly hopeful...

LOUIS  
Is that what Minton said? No more  
trial?

MICK  
I said *could* have. If that had been  
the only lie you told me.

LOUIS  
What do you mean?

Mick shoves a sheet at him: PICTURE OF A KNIFE, but DIFFERENT  
from the knife-picture we saw before. Mick, bitter--

MICK  
Recognize it? It's a picture of  
*your* knife, the one you had on you  
when you went to Reggie's. The one  
the cops have. Look at the blood on  
the blade. The *initials*.  
(grabs it back from him)  
That's why Ted Minton didn't fold  
his tents. Why should he, when he's  
got a knife with *her* blood and *your*  
*initials*?

LOUIS  
This wasn't the knife in the file--

MICK  
That's right, it wasn't.

He scowls, sore. Then explains.

MICK (CONT'D)  
The file Frank got us was a loaded deck. The cops used it to set us up so we'd think they had nothing. When in fact they have enough to put your Hugo Boss, golf-playing ass away for twenty years.

Mick looks back to the car, parked 20 yards off. He sees HAYLEY in the backseat looking out. So does Louis. Mick sees him looking her way...

Feeling the man's look, Hayley sits back. Out of sight. A *moment...* then Mick resumes. Cold and firm.

MICK (CONT'D)  
Why'd you lie about the knife?  
Christ, why'd you lie about *anything*? Everything you tell me's confidential, attorney-client privilege--

LOUIS  
I didn't lie! I said the knife in the picture wasn't mine.  
(off Mick's look--)  
I said it twice! Nobody listened!

MICK  
What are you now, a lawyer? A third-rate fucking lawyer? "You said it wasn't yours." What you *should* have said was, "I had a knife but this isn't it!" What did you think, it would just go away?  
(closing in on him)  
You brought a weapon to a meeting with a prostitute! How am I supposed to make that look like she set you up?

LOUIS  
*I. Did. Not. Do this.*

Off which, Mick stares hard at Louis. Then tries-- slowly-- as if for the last time--

MICK

It's custom-made. With a serrated tip and "LR" engraved on the blade.

LOUIS

I always carry it.

Mick, takes this in. Waits. For the explanation.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

We show homes, to people we don't know. This one time...

He stops. Like it's difficult. Then goes ahead...

LOUIS (CONT'D)

My mother was showing a place. It was in Bel-Air, so she thought it was okay to go alone, even though there was a man at the time who had raped some women that way. He was there.

MICK

Who was there?

LOUIS

The man. He raped her. When she didn't come back, I went to the house and found her.

Mick. Stirs. Like he's seeing a possibility...

LOUIS (CONT'D)

That's when she stopped showing property. I do the selling now. And I started carrying a knife. Always.

Mick turns it over. Finally...

MICK

That's quite a story, Louis.

(beat)

Your mother will have to testify.

LOUIS

I don't want that...

MICK

(cold)

I don't give a damn what you want.  
You want to stay out of the shit-  
house you do exactly as I tell you.  
From now on.

Louis is silent. Mick looks off. Towards Hayley, in the car.

EXT. STREET OF HOUSES (DICKENS) - NIGHT

LINCOLN pulls up ON THE CUT. Mick climbs out of the back seat carrying the sleeping Hayley...

INT. DOOR OPENING TO: MAGGIE'S HOUSE, STUDIO CITY - NIGHT

MAGGIE OPENS TO MICK WITH HAYLEY IN HIS ARMS, we now see that though's she's asleep she clutches a bag of movie popcorn...

INT. LIVING ROOM, LATER - MICK AND MAGGIE

Having dropped off Hayley, he's at the door about to go.  
Awkward, for both of them. She gives a look to Hayley's room.

MAGGIE

At least we did one thing right.

Meaning Hayley. Mick nods, amends--

MICK

We did a couple.

A beat. She surprises him by smiling. *CUT TO,*

INT. LAWYERS' BAR - MONDAY AFTER WORK

Noisy, drinking CROWD of legal types-- We're MOVING through it-- Don't realize it at first but it's--

MICK'S POV-- he's trying to shoulder his way through towards--  
A BOOTH OF WOMEN from Maggie's office--

Maggie sees him, lights up a little--

MAGGIE

Haller! Let him in, girls! Buy you  
a beer?

MICK  
You won't make it to the bar...

MAGGIE  
Then let's share this.

They fight to a table for two, edge of the crowd. When he balks at sipping from her glass--

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
We've had a taste of each other before.

He laughs a little, drinks.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
You look a little ragged.

MICK  
(can't hide the  
bitterness)  
If you wanna know why, just ask  
your buddy Minton...

MAGGIE  
Who said he's my buddy...

MICK  
He sandbagged me but good...

MAGGIE  
...with that guy Corliss, right?

A tipsy guess. It takes Mick off-guard but he hesitates only a second before taking advantage...

MICK  
Yeah, how'd you know?

MAGGIE  
...I told them using that dirtbag  
was a bullshit play. But you'll  
take the the guy's head off on the  
stand...

MICK  
Hope so...  
(to keep it alive)  
So Ted talked to you about Corliss?

MAGGIE

Huh? It was me who sent him to Ted.  
Corliss thought it was my case  
because I handled first appearance.

(sees Mick is too eager,  
catches herself with a  
giggle)

I shouldn't be talking to you about  
this...

MICK

Nah, no, I knew... Guy like Minton,  
I knew he wasn't above using a  
jailhouse snitch...

(when she doesn't bite)

That's what Corliss is, right?

MAGGIE

(clams up, with:)

Can't we forget work and have a  
friendly Guinness?

MICK

How about we go somewhere to eat?

(before she objects)

So we can talk about our daughter.

Which works on Maggie. Like a charm.

MAGGIE

Let me tell my friends I'm leaving.

She goes. Mick, quick-writes the name CORLISS on a napkin.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT - AT A TABLE:

MAGGIE

I'll bet you didn't know sponge-boy  
movies could be so much fun.

MICK

The fun's watching her.

MAGGIE

(likes this)

Join the club.

They touch glasses. After a quiet moment, she realizes...

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You didn't know Minton had Corliss  
til I blabbed, did you.

MICK

I knew he was hiding something.

She looks at him, as if inclined to argue, then waves it off.

MAGGIE

Screw it, I'm not defending Minton.  
He fights too dirty, he's in mud up  
to his Georgetown ears...

MICK

This from Maggie McFierce?

MAGGIE

There are lines I won't cross.

He feels something. ANGLE, her hand on his knee...

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Hayley's probably asleep...  
(looks at him)  
Give me a lift?

He covers her hand with his own. *CUT TO,*

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - THE BED - MORNING

ANGLE HAYLEY, sleeping between her two parents. Mick opens his eyes...

Finds Maggie awake and staring at him. Grim.

MAGGIE

This is not fair to her.  
(Mick stirs--)  
Waking up and finding you here.  
She'll get her hopes up.

MICK

How'd she get in here?

MAGGIE

She comes in when she has  
nightmares. She has nightmares.

MICK

So she sleeps in here a lot?

MAGGIE

Don't start. You have no idea what  
it's like raising a child alone.

He can tell by her voice: *All last night's tenderness gone.*

INT. GUEST BEDROOM DOWN THE HALL - MOMENTS LATER

He's dressing-- she enters to him in a robe--

MICK

Look-- I'll leave-- then come back  
in an hour. We'll go together to  
get your car then I can take her to  
school--

MAGGIE

Just like that? You're gonna start  
taking her to school?

MICK

Don't you remember what we talked  
about last night?

MAGGIE

I thought you were just trying to  
get into my head on your case-- or  
get me into bed--

MICK

(getting angry now)  
I can't win with you--

MAGGIE

Not when you're being a defense  
lawyer! Do you know how crazy we  
were to think we could ever make  
it? Me trying to get dirtbags off  
the street, you keeping them there--

MICK

Alright Maggie--

MAGGIE

Just go!

INT. DINER (DUPAR'S) - MORNING - MICK AT THE COUNTER:

Unshaven. Edward Hopper drabness. To lose himself in work,  
looks down at his files:

An 8x10 OF REGGIE CAMPO'S BATTERED FACE.

WAITRESS, 50s, pours coffee. Recoils as she glimpses the  
picture, the gruesome wounds, Mick didn't mean her to see.

MICK

Sorry. It's work.

WAITRESS

I just hope you catch the bastard  
who did it to her.

And goes. Mick tucks the picture under some papers, to hide it-- but finds that he's only hid it halfway. *Leaving half her face exposed. The good half.* Something about this... He picks it up again, *folds* it...

INT. MEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Leaning over the sink, Mick holds the folded photo against the mirror, the unhurt left side showing. Creates a full image of a face. He stares a long time. Then, to himself:

MICK

Donna Renteria.

INT. ANGLE ON A WAREHOUSE-GARAGE DOOR RISING - FROM WITHIN

Mick, enters. THREE LINCOLNS LINED UP along a wall. Mick's "fleet." Walks past.... to some battered file cabinets. He turns on a single-bulb lamp...

DRAWER OPENING ON FILE CABINET... Mick's fingers fly through the tabs of old files, stops at: MARTINEZ.

*Cut to, MARTINEZ FILES ON DESK, MOMENTS LATER:* Mick examines them: Police reports, printouts. Until he finds...

Autopsy report. Name: **Renteria, Donna.** Takes out...

8x10 PHOTO: WOMAN DEAD ON A BED, NAKED. Dark bloodstains.

NEXT PHOTO - TIGHTER: Knife-wounds. And bruises.

NEXT PHOTO - HER FACE: BEATEN: Injuries to the left side (opposite of Reggie's.) Dark-haired, large brown eyes.

MICK. Folds this one in half. Takes the folded shot of Reggie, fits them together, crease to crease: *So alike, they form what could be the face of one woman.*

Mick. Not wanting to face the memory: a VOICE in his head:

MICK'S VOICE

*I wish you'd called me before you  
talked to the cops, Jesus...*

GO TO, INT. VAN NUYS JAIL, ATTORNEY/PRISONER ROOM - DAY

FLASHBACK OF MICK WITH JESUS MARTINEZ, 20s, who's stalking around, in a panic, while Mick is laying out the bad news...

MARTINEZ

(Mexican accent)

I seen my picture every place! They was gonna bring me in, so...

MICK

But you told Kurlen you were in her apartment. He didn't have that, he doesn't even have any prints...

MARTINEZ

That shit I tol' is true, man! I seen her at the Cobra Room, she said if I paid her more than the other guy we could go to her place...

MICK

Nobody saw any "other guy"...

MARTINEZ

There was another guy, big guy...

MICK

Plus the coroner says her vagina was brutalized...

MARTINEZ

Are you my lawyer, man?  
(insists, crazy now)  
When I left that chick was fine! I fucked her but I didn't hurt her--  
You ain't even listenin'--

MICK

Three people saw you throwing a knife into the L.A. River...

MARTINEZ

'Cause I had that knife in my car!  
I knew they was gonna find it!...

MICK

If all you did was fuck her then why didn't you leave any prints?  
The place was wiped down...

(MORE)

MICK (CONT'D)

*But your semen was on the towel,  
you forgot about the towel...*

MARTINEZ

*I didn't forget nothing! I jus'  
used that towel, then I give the  
chick the money and I left!*

MICK

*(reluctant but clear)  
That defense won't make, not a  
chance...*

MARTINEZ

*Don't say that!*

MICK

*Jesus they want the death penalty!  
I can see to it that never happens,  
but not if you don't plead.*

MARTINEZ

*You want me to say I did this?*

*Mick hesitates but stays level. Unbending. No choice.*

MICK

*Jesus, there's a deal to be made. I  
can do that. I can get you Life.  
(Martinez crumples...)  
Life means you'll do fifteen...*

MARTINEZ

*I'm innocent! Inocente! You know  
what that means?*

*Mick looks at him. Martinez begins to cry. Like a kid. Weeps.*

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, SAN FRANCISCO BAY - DAY

Not much traffic rolling out of the city, mid-morning...

INT. CAR NORTH OF THE BAY - DAY

Mick at the wheel. Beside him, his briefcase. SEES OUT ON THE WATER: the prison-fortress of SAN QUENTIN.

INT. VISITOR'S ROOM: GLASS-DIVIDED - SAN QUENTIN - LATER

ON THE CUT, JESUS MARTINEZ sits. 29, only a few years older than when we saw him but he looks bad. Hard. All trace of the "crying kid" are gone. A glass wall divides them.

MICK

I'm not going to ask you how you are because I know.

Martinez glares at him. Stone hatred.

MICK (CONT'D)

Look. I need to ask some questions.

MARTINEZ

You didn't have no questions then. You never ask me, Did you kill that girl?

MICK

I am trying to make it right.

Martinez is silent. Cold.

MICK (CONT'D)

Tell me again about the Cobra Room.

*CUT TO, INT. COBRA ROOM - NIGHT*

A black-light Latina club, music, smoke-- In the middle is a pit with a BIG COBRA BASKET, out of which a girl in a snake costume emerges-- DONNA. Watching is MARTINEZ--

MARTINEZ (V.O.) (cont'd)

*She was workin'. Dancin'.*

*LATER, AFTER THE ACT--* Camera finds Renteria half-curling herself around MARTINEZ--

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

*Then she came and talked to me...*

She's whispering, Martinez is loving it--

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

*She tol' me I could take her home. I did, but I didn't kill her.*

MICK (V.O.)

*You said there was another guy...*

Disentangling from Martinez, Donna slides toward a MAN, TALL, his back to us...

*MARTINEZ (V.O.)  
Si, she talk to him too, but she  
come back to me.*

Though she's with the other man, she glances back at Jesus...

*RESUME, INT. VISITING, SAN QUENTIN*

Mick opens his briefcase, takes out a stack of photos. One by one holds them against the glass with his fingers... WHEN:

*SPEAKER (GUARD'S VOICE)  
GET BACK FROM THE GLASS. OR THE  
INTERVIEW WILL BE TERMINATED.*

Frustrated, Mick complies-- but calls--

*MICK  
Guard!*

Long beat. Guard enters. Clean-Marine. Mick shows the stack.

*MICK (CONT'D)  
I need him to look at these.*

*GUARD  
You can't give him anything.*

*MICK  
But if you won't let him close to  
the glass, how can he see them?*

*GUARD  
That's not my problem.*

*MICK  
All right, but can you stay a  
minute? If he IDs one of these mug-  
shots I need you to witness it.*

*GUARD  
Don't drag me into your bullshit.*

And goes.

*MICK  
Godammit.  
(then, to Martinez)  
Try. See if one is the guy.*

Mick holds up one after another. Martinez shakes his head no--

Then the booking photo of Louis Roulet.

Mick holds it up. Off Jesus, as his eyes narrow...

EXT. AIRLINER LANDING, BURBANK AIRPORT - DAY

PRE-LAP the *YELPING/SNARLING* of a small/fierce dog... We're:

INT. FRANK LEVIN'S BUNGALOW, GLENDALE - EVENING

Frank in shorts, lets Mick in over the barks of his Shih-Tzu.

FRANK

Cool it, Ahab... C'mon in, Mick...

Leaves Mick alone while he puts out the dog--

Mick looks like hell, like never before. As he pours himself a vodka, we take in Frank's place: Cubs pennant, Frank's old peaked policeman's cap, photo of a YOUNGER GUY, its frame hung with the "Fight Aids" ribbon. But Mick's distraught, sees nothing but the bottom of his glass. Frank re-enters and reacts at once to his friend's condition.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You okay?

MICK

I gotta tell you a story.

FRANK

A story?

MICK

About Jesus Martinez.

At the unexpected name, Frank sits.

MICK (CONT'D)

It's about what happened after he left Donna Renteria's apartment.

FRANK

After he killed her?

MICK

He didn't kill her.

FRANK

He *what?*

MICK

He went there, had sex, flushed the condom-- Wiped his prick on the pink towel-- And then went home. He never killed her, Frank. The story starts after he left.

Frank gets it, where Mick is going.

FRANK

The real killer.

MICK

The real killer. She lets him in.

*CUT TO, INT. DONNA RENTERIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT*

MICK

*Maybe he fakes like it's still  
Martinez and he forgot something.  
Or maybe it was an appointment...*

We see the door open but we don't see who enters...

FRANK (V.O.)

*The other guy from the club?*

MICK (V.O.)

*Right. He comes in, punches her a  
few times to soften her up...*

Renteria staggers as she's suddenly pummeled, then spun...

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

*Then takes out a knife and holds it  
to her neck while he walks her to  
the bedroom...*

We SEE the knife-tip against her throat...

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

*Only she isn't lucky like Reggie  
Campo will be. He climbs on top,  
puts on a condom, rapes her...*

*CUT TO, BEDROOM, as Mick gives us the action...*

MICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*And when he's done he stabs her  
 over and over, fifty-two times,  
 while he works out something in his  
 sick fucking mind.*

We SEE, the stabbing, bleeding, then--

RESUME, INT. FRANK'S BUNGALOW

MICK  
 Do I have to tell you what kind of  
 knife it was?

FRANK  
 A short-blade folding knife.

MICK  
 Just like Roulet's.

And takes another drink. Re which--

FRANK  
 Better take it easy on that.

Mick ignores. Frank's dog barks outside. Mick goes on--

MICK  
 The rest of the story's about the  
 lawyer Martinez gets himself, it's  
 about *me*...

FRANK  
 You're beating yourself up...

MICK  
 Martinez *told* me he didn't kill  
 her, but there was the DNA and I  
 wouldn't believe him, couldn't  
 believe he was actually an *innocent*  
*client*, like my father warned me  
 about...

FRANK  
 They all say they didn't do it, you  
 know that...

MICK  
 (over)  
 ...So what do I do?  
 (MORE)

MICK (CONT'D)

I get him to plead, I get his sister to beg him to plead, because he's got no case... then I get him the best deal I can. And I feel pretty good about it, 'cause it keeps him off Death Row...

He stops.

MICK (CONT'D)

I saw him up there today.

That's all he says. And pours himself another drink...  
But he does not drink it. Because a purpose takes hold.

MICK (CONT'D)

I gotta make it right.

Reaction Frank... not sure what this means, but...

FRANK

I'll tell you what you "gotta" do, you gotta bring in the cops...

MICK

I can't. He's my client.

Which stops Frank. He begins to see.

FRANK

You can't take it to the DA, you'd lose your license...

MICK

Worse: Anything I gave them, they couldn't use it anyway. It'd be inadmissible, it'd ruin any case they made against him. Don't you see? That's why he hired me. He's got me in a trick bag...

FRANK

(seeing it)

One client in prison for what our other client did...

MICK

(over)

Listen to me, here's what you gotta do for me.

(intense, lays it out...)

Roulet said all we'd find on him was parking tickets. I don't buy that anymore.

(MORE)

MICK (CONT'D)

There were others, other girls he did, there *must* have been. He has a type, Latina, 20s... Dig into it, Frank...

Before Frank can object...

MICK (CONT'D)

Find it and we'll bury him.

Off Frank-- Off Mick's command--

*CUT TO*, EXT. MICK HALLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

Lincoln in front. Mick, deep in thought... Trudges up the steps. PHONE RINGS before he gets in, he fumbles keys--

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN... AS HE ANSWERS...

MICK

This is Haller.

MAGGIE'S VOICE

Did you get my messages?

MICK

Maggie, no, I was out of town... had to go up to San Quentin to see a client...

MAGGIE'S VOICE

I won't ask which one.

MICK

(sips milk from a carton...)  
Is Hayley okay?

MAGGIE'S VOICE

You know she's got soccer this weekend...

But, under this, he sees, DOWN THE HALLWAY, light from a room. *Sudden chill*. Angling to see, keeping a normal voice...

MICK

...Saturday, right? I look forward to it.

And hangs up before she can say goodbye... and Stops. Freezes. *Eyes on the LIGHT at the end of the hall.*

Carefully, Mick begins to move down the hall... Pauses at the door he comes to first, bedroom, dark...

Kicks it-- Nothing. Starts walking again, when: there's a SOUND. Then silence. *What was it?...* Mick continues-- to--

The LIT ROOM: SIDE ANGLE, we see it's the den-- Mick braces-- And *BURSTS IN SUDDENLY*:

INT. DEN - *LOUIS IS THERE...*

Sitting with his leg up on Mick's desk. The leg with the tracer anklet. Very much at home.

Mick just stares, cold.

LOUIS  
If you're wondering how I got in,  
I'm in real estate. If I want to  
get into a friend's house--

MICK  
(interrupts)  
We aren't friends.

Mick's moving towards him, steady, threatening...

MICK (CONT'D)  
You're my client, I'm your  
lawyer...

LOUIS  
My lawyer. Exactly what I wanted to  
remind you of.

The way he says it, Mick stops. To hear.

LOUIS (CONT'D)  
I'm about to go on trial for my  
life, and yet I couldn't reach  
you... And now I found out where  
you were all day. I heard you tell  
"Maggie."

Mick reacts quietly to Louis saying her name.

MICK  
You shit.

LOUIS  
You went to see Jesus Martinez, and  
I know what you talked about. Donna  
Renteria.

(MORE)

LOUIS (CONT'D)  
 (Mick waits. For:)  
 You're right, Mick. I killed her.  
 There now: No reason I shouldn't  
 tell my own lawyer.

After a beat:

MICK  
 Time for you to go, Louis.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Mick, behind Louis, moves him along towards the front door... past family photos...

LOUIS  
 I like it here, Mick, it's homey...  
 Pictures of your daughter Hayley...

MICK  
 (flat)  
 Don't.

LOUIS  
 Don't what?

MICK  
 Listen, dickhead. You think you're  
 the first client to threaten me or  
 my family?

LOUIS  
 (still provoking...)  
 All I said was she's pretty, I saw  
 her the other day...

Louis turns-- and can't go on. Because he finds himself  
 looking into Mick's eyes. Cold and without a flicker.

MICK  
 Are you scared, Louis?

Simple. But it turns the tables.

LOUIS  
 Am I scared?

MICK  
 Because where you are now, you're  
 in a dangerous place.

Mick, couldn't be calmer. Louis is suddenly off-balance...

EXT. FRONT DOOR, PORCH - CONTINUOUS...

As Mick watches, Louis takes himself down the fucking steps and away.

INT. DUPAR'S, STUDIO CITY - NEXT MORNING

Mick stares into a cup of coffee, newspaper unopened...  
Lorna, arrives, reads his look.

LORNA  
Whoa, what's wrong with you?

MICK  
Just about everything.

LORNA  
Let's see if this helps.

She takes papers from her bag and slides in opposite him.

LORNA (CONT'D)  
You asked me to run that witness's name?

MICK  
Corliss?

LORNA  
Dwayne Jeffrey Corliss, right. He's this low-life hype, not much came up. But sometimes he goes by DJ, no punctuation?  
(tries to show)  
And when you run it *that way*...

...but Mick's too sour to look.

MICK  
Tell me.

LORNA  
He's played the courtroom snitch a lot, here and in Arizona. Each time it got him early release...

MICK  
Details are here?

LORNA  
I'm still digging, but yes.

He looks them over... rallies a little...

MICK

This could be good. All I've gotta do is get to him.

LORA

That'll be tough. They've put him in pre-trial rehab at USC.

Mick, hears this-- can't believe it, but he just got lucky.

INT. USC-COUNTY LOCK-UP - MOVING WITH MICK...

GUARD leads him DOWN A HALL, to a ROOM, and leaves him there.

With GLORIA. "GLORY." In prison jumper. Faint smile.

MICK

Gloria I'm not here about you. I need you to do something for me.

*FADE OUT.*

FADE IN: LOUIS ROULET - INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

Lanky, graceful-- seated at the DEFENSE TABLE. MICK is beside him, busy with papers. There's a glance between them. A deep and wordless reserve... AS:

TED

What this case is about...

TED has just begun his OPENING STATEMENT to the court. ON THE BENCH is JUDGE HELEN FULLBRIGHT, 50, no-nonsense... as...

TED (CONT'D)

...What this case is about, is a predator. On the night of March Sixth, Louis Roulet was out stalking his prey....

Angle Louis, Mick, looking over the listening JURY...

TED (CONT'D)

You are going to hear from the victim herself about her lifestyle, one that we would not condone.

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)

But remember that anyone, *anyone*,  
can be the victim of a violent  
crime.

(approaches the jury box)  
The case is clear. Straightforward.  
A man attacked a woman in her home  
in order to rape and kill her.  
It is only by the grace of God that  
she's here to tell you the story.

Over Ted,

MICK (V.O.)  
Ladies and gentlemen...

INT. COURTROOM

MICK  
My name's Michael Haller, and I'm  
representing Louis Roulet.  
(glances at Ted)  
Mr. Minton doesn't want to use the  
word prostitute for the woman who's  
supposed to be Louis's victim. He  
needn't worry, this case isn't  
about how she makes her money...  
But it *is* about her actions. How  
she saw a young man with signs of  
wealth, and chose to target him...  
(closes in on the jury...)  
What she didn't count on, was you.  
The fact that you'd put two and two  
together, and let your common sense  
tell you who was the real predator.

And Mick-- after a successful opening-- returns to his seat  
beside Louis. Who is pleased. Calm. And thoughtful. When:

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
Court will adjourn until Monday,  
when the state will call its first  
witness...

She rises, all rise... Off the commotion--

*SUDDEN CUT TO, EXT. ON HAYLEY: SOCCER MATCH IN PROGRESS*

Hayley, defending, scrambles to get in the way of another  
girl, a forward, dribbling towards her...

ANGLE MICK, on the sideline... among other parents...

MICK  
That's it, Hayley, get in her way!

Hayley isn't quick enough, the forward dribbles round her, goes in for the score. Hayley looks despondently at Mick--

MICK (CONT'D)  
It's okay, honey!

When-- he SEES MAGGIE approaching down the sidelines. Heading towards him. Everything about her says she's bringing bad news.

MICK (CONT'D)  
What is it.

MAGGIE  
I'll take Hayley home after the game. You have to go somewhere.

MICK  
Go where? Why? What's happened?

Off her look-- unwilling to say--

*CUT TO, EXT. FRANK'S BUNGALOW - DAY*

*MOVING ON THE CUT, WITH MICK, onto the short skirt of lawn in front of Frank's little house... through a CRIME SCENE in the crowded space, it swarms with cops, forensics, technicians...*

Mick moves as if through heavy water. Finds, on the scene, DETECTIVES LANKFORD, 38, clean-marine-- and HEIDI SOBEL, 30. Lankford knows him, not glad to see him...

LANKFORD  
Lawyer Haller...

MICK  
What happened?

Lankford and Sobel look at each other.

LANKFORD  
Sure, show up and start asking questions, see how that goes. Who let you this close, anyway...?

MICK  
Frank Levin was my friend.

Lankford's looking at him, hard. But Mick hardly notices, he's looking confusedly around-- makes a move toward the house, but, stepping in his way--

LANKFORD  
No you don't.

MICK  
I'd like to see where he died.

SOBEL  
(somewhat less of a prick)  
He was shot in his office, his papers were tossed, there's not much to see...

LANKFORD  
All I saw was pictures of a guy.

SOBEL  
(translates)  
My partner's asking if Frank Levin were gay...

MICK  
I know what he's asking. Is that relevant?

SOBEL  
It's all relevant, you know how it is...

LANKFORD  
So was he a fruit or wasn't he?

Mick looks at him. Pissed.

MICK  
He was an ex-cop, is what he was. Crimes Against Persons. In *Chicago*. That butch enough for you, Lankford?

LANKFORD  
Maybe you too, maybe you were a couple of fruits outa the same basket.

Sobel steps between the two... change of subject...

SOBEL  
There's nothing for you here, Mr. Haller--

LANKFORD  
 You know all about staying where we  
 can find you?

MICK  
 I'm a *suspect*?

Off Lankford's shit-eater-- Off Mick--

EXT. MOVING ANGLE ON: SUBURBAN HOUSES (VALENCIA) - EVENING

Seen from the POV OF--

INT. LINCOLN (MOVING) - MICK AT THE WHEEL - SAME TIME

He drives the street, full-throttle, his focus pumped...  
 comes to a RANCH HOUSE: vintage 80s. Bland but nice.

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Mick stands there KNOCKING at the door. It's opened by:

VAL  
 Mick!

Val's surprised. Sees that Mick's stressed, stern. Reacts...

VAL (CONT'D)  
 What're you doin' here, man?

MICK  
 Frank Levin was murdered.

Val's struck. Mick watching his reaction.

VAL  
 Frank?

Val's struck. Mick still watching, assessing, as he asks--

MICK  
 Listen, Val--

VAL  
 How'd that-- But like, who did that  
 thing, man--

MICK

(over)

There's something I have to ask  
you. Straight up.

With an edge. Off Val, wondering what that's about--

INT: VAL'S HOME, FAMILY ROOM/HOME OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

He's got a half-ass home office on a table, a LAPTOP... Kids'  
toys around, domestic mess...

VAL

See? This is him...

Referring to the LAPTOP'S SCREEN, where a GPS shows the  
PULSING CURSOR OF THE TRACER on a MOVING STREET MAP...

VAL (CONT'D)

What time'd you say, early this  
morning...?

MICK

Any time from last night...

VAL

No.

MICK

No what?

VAL

No, he wasn't nowheres near Frank's  
place, this is Frank's house over  
here...

ZOOMS OUT, highlights the difference, the COURSE OF THE  
TRACER'S in a whole other quadrant... Val POINTS TO:

VAL (CONT'D)

Roulet...Frank...See? No cross, no  
contact...

And he looks at Mick, at his unyielding features...

VAL (CONT'D)

What else can I tell you?

MICK

You telling me all of it?

VAL  
 What the hell does that... Yeah I'm  
 telling you, I'm *showing* you,  
 you're seeing it same as me...

Mick ignores the screen, presses...

MICK  
 And there's no way anybody beats  
 that thing...

VAL  
 Nobody, nothing takes off that  
 tracer 'cept me...  
 (confused)  
 And I don't even get it, why would  
 Roulet, I mean ain't you guys  
*defending* him, so...?

MICK  
 I know you lied to me, Val.

Val stops dead. Hard. Mick persists.

MICK (CONT'D)  
 You lied about sending me Roulet's  
 case. He *asked* for me.

VAL  
 (stifles anger)  
 Hey Mick. Y'know?

MICK  
 And if you lied to me once--

VAL  
 So I'd lie about this?

MICK  
 What did you do, Val?

VAL  
 What do you think? I cut Roulet  
 loose so he could beat the trace?

MICK  
 Did you? Because he beat the trace  
*somehow*. He killed Frank.

Cold. Val just stares.

VAL  
 I want you to leave.

Mick doesn't look like he'll move. His look *burns*...

VAL (CONT'D)  
 Won't fucken ask you again.

INT. FOUR GREEN FIELDS - NIGHT - MICK AT THE BAR...

Drinking, CAMERA moves on him, he taps the glass for another.

Bartender comes over like he's going to pour one. Mick's keys are on the bar--

Instead of pouring the bartender swipes the keys. Mick looks at him, uncomprehending.

BARTENDER  
 That's it. You're done here, pal.  
 And you're not driving either.

Off Mick,

INT. MICK HALLER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

MAGGIE, lugs him into his room, he's on his own too feet, but he's unsteady, a mess...

MAGGIE  
 Being married to you sucked but it  
 beat being your car service...

She gets him to the bed. He looks at her.

MICK  
 Maggie--

She helps him yank off his shoes--

MAGGIE  
 What.  
 (thinks she knows)  
 I'm not staying.

But that's not it. Instead:

MICK  
 Did I get Frank Levin killed?

She looks at him, tries at once to reassure...

MAGGIE

You can't blame yourself, he used  
to be a cop, he knew what he was  
getting into...

MICK

(ignores this)  
*Did I?*

And now Maggie stops. Sees how torn up he is. Softens.

MAGGIE

How do you do it, Haller?

She rolls him onto the bed, straightens his pillow...

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You're a sleazy defense lawyer with  
two ex-wives and a daughter, and we  
all still love you.

We STAY ON HIM as, after a beat, Maggie leaves the room.

*CUT TO, INT. MICK HALLER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING*

He comes out of the bedroom. Stares at the light pouring in  
from the glass doors onto the porch. And:

The MESSAGE LIGHT ON HIS PHONE is ON.

MOMENTS LATER: He's pressed the button, listens to...

MACHINE VOICE

Message received: YESTERDAY, ELEVEN-  
SEVEN A.M.

FRANK'S VOICE

Mick, it's me. Guess I missed you.  
Wanted to get you so I wouldn't  
have to interrupt your day with  
Hayley... but you asked me to dig  
on Roulet...

Presses STOP. Frank's voice: Mick's not sure he can deal. But  
pulls the pencil & pad near him, and presses START again...

FRANK'S VOICE (CONT'D)

...Remember you said you didn't buy  
it, that all he had was parking  
tickets? Well I mighta found  
*Martinez'* "ticket," Mick, his  
ticket out of the Q...

Then Frank's voice stops for a second when he hears (and we hear on the tape) a DOG BARKING... and a DOOR BELL...

FRANK'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
 Uh, somebody's at the door...  
 Look, go have a good time with your  
 kid, I'll fill you in when it's for  
 sure. Gotta go, boss.

And MESSAGE goes OFF. Mick thinks a moment. Tries to clear his head. Then pulls out a card and dials a number...

*INTERCUT/* INT. HOMICIDE DIVISION, GLENDALE: SOBEL AT HER DESK

SOBEL  
 (answers)  
 Detective Sobel.

MICK  
 (into phone)  
 It's Mick Haller. Look, I-- just  
 checked my phone messages. It turns  
 out Frank called me-- just before  
 he was killed-- I didn't know--  
 (she reacts)  
 The message came at Eleven-oh-  
 seven. He said he found something,  
 something that could get an old  
 client of ours out of prison.

SOBEL  
 Who's the client?

MICK  
 Jesus Martinez. He's in San  
 Quentin.

SOBEL  
 (writing)  
 Did he say anything else?

MICK  
 No, that's it. He just made a joke,  
 about finding "Martinez's ticket  
 out of the Q"... then someone was  
 at the door, so he hung up. Whoever  
 came to the door, that's who killed  
 him.

SOBEL  
 You get me that tape.

MICK  
 Right away.  
 (off her silence at this)  
 Sobel?

SOBEL  
 (non-committal, but)  
 I'm here.

MICK  
 Tell me you guys are getting  
 somewhere on the case.

Sobel, hesitates... then makes a decision to tell him.

SOBEL  
 We did catch a break. We found a  
 bullet casing in the room, from a  
 .22.

MICK  
 Levin owned a .22, you'll find it  
 registered to him...

SOBEL  
 We did. But it wasn't a Woodsman,  
 like the gun that killed him.

To which, Mick reacts...

*CUT TO, MOMENTS LATER - MICK MOVING QUICKLY THROUGH THE HOUSE...*

Down the hall, to... the DEN where Mick found Louis. He goes to a high cabinet, above the desk where Louis was sitting... Opens it, tossing files and papers out of the way... FINDS:

AN OLD WOODEN BOX. Takes it down. It's a GUN box from the shape of it. The top has a brass plate: COLT "WOODSMAN."

Mick, *in a cold sweat*, opens it. It's EMPTY. *CUT TO,*

INT. USC COUNTY-LOCK UP - CAFETERIA - DAY

Where the prisoner/patients in the Drug Rehab facility are filing through the lunch counter. A loose team of guards move them along, holstered weapons showing--

GLORIA is among those getting her tray loaded with food. Turns now, searching for a face among those seated...

She has to hurry to be sure she gets the seat she wants:  
Along side CORLISS. The junkie who was in the holding cage at  
Louis's first-appearance. They're both in n.d. sweats.

When Gloria settles in, though, Corliss is finishing, about  
to rise...

GLORIA

Wait.

He stops, wonders who she is, what she wants.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Corliss, right?

He sits again.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

I'm gonna say this real quiet.

(He draws closer.)

You don't know me, but I talked to  
the D.A., and he gave me a way to  
get us both out.

Off Corliss--

INT. THE COURTROOM - DAY - MOVE WITH MICK...

...through a hum of preparations on both sides of the aisle,  
for the resumption of the trial.

LOUIS

'Morning, Mick.

Mick doesn't greet Louis, doesn't look at him. Sets down his  
briefcase... Roulet, *easily*...

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Too bad about Frank Levin.

Mick sits without comment. Opens his briefcase and sets to  
work. But Louis, once again...

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Got any idea who did it?

At which Mick finally turns to him. Without emotion:

MICK

Yeah I'm pretty certain that I do.

Louis is thrown ever so slightly... but won't let it show.

*CUT TO, INT. COURTROOM, LATER - ON THE STAND:*

FEMALE COP (MAXWELL)  
I'd describe Ms. Campo when we got  
there as... hurt and frightened...

TED  
Frightened?

OFFICER MAXWELL  
She kept asking us if she was safe,  
even after Roulet was taken away.

*INT. COURTROOM, LATER*

Mick has Maxwell on cross... Clerk hands her pages...

MICK  
Officer, would you read from your  
arrest report where it's marked?

OFFICER MAXWELL  
"The victim does not know the man  
who assaulted her or why she was  
attacked."

MICK  
Why did you write that she didn't  
know him?

OFFICER MAXWELL  
Because that's what she said.

MICK  
So, she just opened the door at ten  
o'clock to a stranger?

OFFICER MAXWELL  
She didn't put it like that...

MICK  
Was there blood on his right hand?

OFFICER MAXWELL  
(confused by the shift)  
No, his left. Or we would have  
bagged his right one, too.

INT. CAMERA TRAILS THE JURY...

As a new witness is on the stand, Ted's witness...

TED

Mr. Talbot, you were with Miss Campo on the night of March Sixth?

CHARLES TALBOT, 48, the customer from the video. Blurred tattoos on muscled forearms, dyed blonde hair.

TALBOT

Yep. Had a date with her at Morgan's. Then from there we went to her place and had *another* date, if you know what I mean.

Air of a sleaze-ball sex-player, but calm and good-humored.

TED

Had you known Miss Campo before?

TALBOT

Nope. Just called her up.

TED

How did you know to call her?

TALBOT

From her website. She's got a real good website.

Jury laughs a little. Fascinated but repulsed by this guy... but Fullbright stirs, disliking Talbot's tone...

TED

Did you have sexual relations?

TALBOT

Four hundred bucks worth. And she earned every cent.

Angle a male JUROR, red-faced with disapproval. Mick catches his reaction, likes it. Ted goes on...

TED

And what time did you leave?

TALBOT

About five minutes before ten.

TED

She say she had another engagement?

TALBOT

No, she acted like she was done for the night...

MICK

Objection, I don't think Mr. Talbot's qualified to interpret Ms. Campo's thinking or plans...

TALBOT

I just mean she acted *satisfied*...

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

(offended--)

Sustained! Go on, Mr. Minton.

TED

When you left, what condition was she in? Was she hurt?

TALBOT

No, she was fit as a fiddle. I know because I'd just played her.

(before Fullbright bursts)

Sorry, your honor. She was fine.

Minton goes, lifts a sheet over an easel, REVEALS the blown-up PHOTOS of the Reggie's battered face.

TED

She didn't look like this?

TALBOT

Man. What kind of bastard does something like that?

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Answer the question.

TALBOT

No. We made consensual and pleasurable love. Which is what life is all about. Then I paid her.

CUT TO, MICK HAS TALBOT ON CROSS...

MICK

Mr. Talbot, are you right or left-handed?

TALBOT

Left.

MICK

Left. And isn't it true that before you left Regina Campo asked you to strike her repeatedly in the face?

TED

(objecting)

Your honor, Mr. Haller is just muddying the waters with outrageous statements.

Fullbright looks to Mick for a reply. Mick half-shrugs...

MICK

Part of the defense theory, Judge.

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

The witness can answer.

TALBOT

I never hit her or any other woman.

MICK

Do you know a prostitute named...  
(checks his sheet)  
Shaquille Barton? "Shaquilla Shackles" is her work name.

TALBOT

Okay, yeah. I seen her one time...

MICK

And if I brought her here and she said you had struck her with your left hand...

TALBOT

She'd be lying. I tried Shaquilla, that rough stuff's not for me. I'm a missionary man.

MICK

With a strong left. Thank you.

And Mick sits-- drawing a nasty look from Ted for this last--

And a pleased look from Louis when he sits down. A look that says, "Great job, you really got him." To which Mick reacts.

MICK (CONT'D)  
 (quietly, to Louis)  
 Like my friend Frank used to say.  
 "Sonny, don't start licking your  
 balls just yet."

INT. COURTHOUSE - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Where Mick, as he exits the courtroom for the day, is  
 SURPRISED TO FIND: DETECTIVES LANKFORD AND SOBEL WAITING FOR  
 HIM. Sobel holds documents. Reaction Mick: *Oh shit.*

CUT TO, INT. BACK SEAT, DETECTIVES' CAR (MOVING) - LATER

Mick looks over the pages Sobel hands him. Lankford drives.

MICK  
 This warrant is bullshit--

LANKFORD  
 Good enough to search your house.

She turns around: The good cop, but she's hurt:

SOBEL  
 It would have been better if you'd  
 told me that you had a Woodsman.  
 There's one registered to you.

MICK  
 I don't have it anymore. It was  
 stolen.

The worst yet. Lankford laughs: "How convenient..."

INT. MICK HALLER'S HOUSE - LATER - ON:

The BOX FOR THE WOODSMAN: Sobel in gloves, examines, while--

LANKFORD  
 We got the history on the piece.  
 Turns out it belonged to Mickey  
 Cohen the gangster, in the forties.

MICK  
 I know. My father represented him.  
 He got him off for using it in self-  
 defense, so Cohen made him a  
 present of it. Nice present, pearl  
 handle, collector's piece...

Sobel, careful, opens it... It's empty. Like Mick said.

SOBEL

Why didn't you report it stolen?

MICK

Because I knew who took it.

(They look at him.)

A client. He told me, so I couldn't turn him in without breaking a trust. They do that.

LANKFORD

(doesn't buy this)

Still and all, mind if I look around? Just in case you haven't had time to toss it off a pier?

MICK

Go crazy. You've got the warrant.

Lankford sneers, starts for the next room. To Sobel--

LANKFORD

Bag the box.

He leaves. Mick watches as Sobel bags it up. He wonders why.

MICK

You can't do ballistics on a box.

She glances, seeing Lankford's gone-- explains.

SOBEL

That old Mickey Cohen shooting? It's kind of famous. It turns out the county still has the evidence in storage. The bullet.

MICK

You can match casings to a slug that's fifty years old?

SOBEL

It'd be easier with the gun, but yeah.

She goes to join her partner. Mick stops her with--

MICK

Detective? How long will ballistics take?

SOBEL

Careful. You'll make me think  
you're worried what we'll find.

She leaves. Mick's gaze, in the mirror: *Fear*.

INT. COURTROOM - NEXT MORNING - ARRIVING...

Mick and Ted, at the same time. As they move to the front...

TED

Morning, Haller. Word is, you had  
interesting visitors last night...

MICK

Worry about yourself, Ted. You're  
dying the death of a thousand  
razors up there and you don't even  
know it.

They peel off-- Mick to the defense table, where Louis  
waits. Louis is about to speak to him, but Mick's angry look  
tells him not to bother. Not interested in a thing Louis has  
to say. Off them--

INT. COURTROOM, LATER - *TED RISES...*

TED

One last witness, your honor. The  
prosecution calls Regina Campo.

INT. COURTROOM, LATER - *REGGIE ON THE STAND...*

Diminutive, conservative dress, dark curls around her pretty  
face-- none of the aggressive sexiness. Hesitant but frank.

REGGIE

It's true that I lied. I knew him  
when he came to the door.

TED

In fact, you'd arranged his coming.  
Miss Campo: why did you lie?

REGGIE

I was scared. I wasn't sure the  
police would believe me and I  
wanted to make sure they arrested  
him... because he's an *animal*...

She looks tentatively at Louis, as if still scared-- then she looks away. Louis is blank. Mick takes it in. Ted follows up--

TED

Do you regret that decision now?

REGGIE

Yes. If it helps him to get free and do this to somebody else.

MICK

Your honor, prejudicial--

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Sustained.

But ANGLE THE JURY: the damage is done. Reggie's moved them.

TED

I have no further questions for Regina, your honor.

Ted sits.

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Your witness, Mr. Haller.

Mick's about to rise-- Louis engages his look for just a moment. *Then all at once, to surprise her-- Mick jumps into the cross-examination--*

MICK

Ms. Campo have you engaged an attorney to sue Mr. Roulet for the events of March Sixth?

Regina didn't see it coming. Tries to recover, "Uh..."

REGGIE

...No I haven't.

MICK

But have you talked to an attorney?

REGGIE

I haven't hired anybody or--

MICK

I asked if you talked to one. About a possible lawsuit.

Mick's crisp like he knows for sure. She wilts a little.

REGGIE

It was nothing more than talk...

MICK

Did you ask if you could sue Mr. Roulet for damages?

REGGIE

I thought what you say to lawyers is private.

MICK

If you wish, you can tell the jurors.

Faces her. Ted squirms, seeing the box she's in.

REGGIE

I think I want to keep it private.

Ted squirms again. Wrong answer.

MICK

Okay, let's go back to the night at Morgan's. Had you ever seen Louis Roulet before that night?

REGGIE

Yes. There and other places.

MICK

Never noticed he wore a Rolex watch?

REGGIE

No--

MICK

Or that he drove one of two cars, a Porsche or a Range Rover?

REGGIE

I never saw him driving.

MICK

And what made you approach him?

REGGIE

I knew he was in the life. You know. A player. I had seen him leave with girls who do what I do.

MICK

With prostitutes. To go to a hotel,  
or their apartments...?

REGGIE

I don't know where.

MICK

So how do you know they left? Maybe  
they just went out for a smoke...

REGGIE

Because they got in his car and  
drove away.

MICK

But you just testified that you  
never saw Mr. Roulet drive! Now you  
saw him leave with a prostitute  
like yourself. Which is it?

The contradiction rings round the room. Reggie, tries...

REGGIE

I saw him get in a car but I didn't  
know what kind it was.

MICK

Do you know the difference between  
a Porsche and a Range Rover?

REGGIE

One's big and one's small, I guess.

Reactions... Reggie shakes her head, knows she's not making  
it... But Mick, like he's *just getting started*...

MICK

The women he left with, when you  
saw them again, had they been  
beaten or injured?

REGGIE

I don't know, I didn't ask.

MICK

But girls in your profession talk  
about customers, don't you? Warn  
each other if someone's a freak...

REGGIE

Yeah, usually...

MICK  
And how many had warned you about  
Louis Roulet?

REGGIE  
None. No one.

MICK  
So you believed you'd be safe?

REGGIE  
I, thought he was a known quantity  
and I needed the money, so...

MICK  
So you thought he could solve your  
need for money?

REGGIE  
No--

MICK  
No? Isn't that why we're sitting  
here? Because you zeroed in on him?

REGGIE  
No! I mean yes, but not like that--  
*(looking round, a plea to  
be believed)*  
*He attacked me, I swear!*

*CUT TO, INT. COURTROOM, LATER - ON A VIDEO PLAYING:*

*The BAR TAPE, blown-up projection, SHOWS REGGIE PASSES LOUIS  
SITTING AT THE BAR, LEANS HER BODY INTO HIM SEXILY...*

*ANGLE COURTROOM, ON REGGIE watching the tape. Also JURORS,  
reacting, enthralled, and Mick watching them...*

*RESUME ANGLE SCREEN, REGGIE HANDS LOUIS A NAPKIN, PASSES BY.*

*RESUME COURT, Mick signals the TECHNICIAN. It goes OFF.*

MICK  
What did the napkin say, Ms. Campo?

REGGIE  
My name and address...

MICK  
And your price?

REGGIE

Yes. Four hundred dollars.

MICK

(after a beat)

It's a hard line of work...

REGGIE

Yes. And dangerous.

MICK

In fact, haven't you told friends you were looking for a way out?

REGGIE

Yes. I'm not proud of what I do--

MICK

And so, isn't it true-- nothing would be easier to understand-- that you saw Louis Roulet and his money as a way out?

REGGIE

No! That's not what this is about! *That man hit me and tried to kill me!*

MICK

Yes, we've heard you say that--  
(to Fullbright)  
Judge may I ask the witness to stand up?

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

(surprised, but)

The witness will stand. I hope you're going somewhere with this, Mr. Haller.

Reggie stands.

MICK

Now if you please, walk over to my client.

She goes, stands before Louis. Who rises on cue from Mick.

MICK (CONT'D)

This is the man you *broke free from, overpowered, knocked out?*

REGGIE

Yes-- you can do things when you're afraid--

MICK

How much do you weigh, Ms. Campo?  
Because your website *REGGIE-FOR-FUN-  
DOT-COM* says one hundred three...

REGGIE

That's right.

A beat. Louis sits. Reggie stands there... suddenly cries.

MICK

I've got no further questions for  
the witness, your honor.

Reggie returns to a seat behind the prosecutor's table. Where we pick up TED MINTON. Staring at Mick, hiding the sense of damage as best he can... He's *startled* when:

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Mr. Minton? Do you have another  
witness for us?

Ted rouses, summons confidence, rises...

WHILE, ASIDE, Louis to Mick, re Ted...

LOUIS

He looks worried.

Mick says nothing, watches Ted, waits, tense...

TED

The state rests, your honor.

Mick's disappointed: *No Corliss.*

MICK

Not worried enough.

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

(raises a gavel...)

Then the defense will call its  
first witness after lunch.

And the gavel comes down.

INT. COURTROOM, AFTER THE BREAK - MICK, ON DIRECT, HAS...

MARY WINDSOR

Yes, I recognize this knife.  
 (holding an evidence bag)  
 It's the one my son carried with  
 him for protection for the last  
 four years. Almost exactly.

MICK

Why would he need protection?

MARY WINDSOR

Because realtors alone in a house  
 are sometimes robbed or hurt...  
 Even raped or murdered.

MICK

But has Louis ever been the subject  
 of such a crime?

MARY WINDSOR

No. But he knew someone who...  
 (hesitates...)

MICK

Go on, please.

MARY WINDSOR

She was raped and robbed by a man.  
 Louis found her. It was terrible.  
 The first thing he did afterwards  
 was get himself a knife to carry,  
 at all times.

(looks at Ted Minton)

March Sixth would have been no  
 different.

INT. COURTROOM, LATER - TED HAS MARY WINDSOR ON CROSS...

TED

Mrs. Windsor, you seemed pretty  
 exact, about when your son started  
 carrying around this, this weapon,  
 a five-inch folding knife...

MARY WINDSOR

I am. The incident took place on  
 June ninth, two-thousand-one.

Mick watches Ted, carefully... Cat and mouse...

TED  
Was it in the newspapers?

MARY WINDSOR  
No.

TED  
Or, do you somehow remember because  
the police came to talk to Louis...

MARY WINDSOR  
There was no police investigation.

TED  
Then how can you remember the exact  
date so well?  
(sly look at Mick)  
Were you given the date before  
testifying here?

MARY WINDSOR  
I know the date because I'll never  
forget the day I was attacked.

The news falls on Ted. She goes on before he can rally...

MARY WINDSOR (CONT'D)  
Louis will never forget it either.  
He found me in that house, tied up.  
My clothes were torn... It was  
traumatic for him.

\*

She's perfect: a strong woman, unused to showing emotion.  
Mick smiles, impressed. When, with some sarcasm:

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
Mr. Minton-- is there anything else  
you wish to ask?

Ted, stares down at his notes. Off Mick, admiring, *GO TO,*

INT. COURTROOM - POST-ADJOURNMENT, END OF DAY...

A worn-down Ted approaches Mick, who's packing his stuff.

TED  
(shame-faced)  
I've been thinking about the  
thousand razors.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Louis waits on the steps for Mick. Mick comes out.

MICK

We've had an offer. You can spend  
six months in county jail.

LOUIS

I told you from the beginning, no  
deal, no bargaining, I'm innocent--

MICK

Save it. You make the call. I don't  
give a shit.

LOUIS

You've got my answer.

MICK

Yeah I do. I'll pass it on.  
(starts to go)  
By the way, I'm putting you on the  
stand tomorrow.

Mick leaves Louis and continues down the steps to the  
Lincoln.

INT. LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

Earl in the front seat.

MICK

There's something I need you to get  
me, Earl.

A tone Earl never heard him use before. Earl turns around.

*CUT TO, INT. COURTROOM - NEXT DAY - CRISP...*

MICK, TO THE JUDGE:

MICK

The defense calls Louis Ross  
Roulet, your honor.

INT. COURTROOM, LATER - LOUIS ANSWERS ON DIRECT...

LOUIS  
I turned toward the living room,  
the way she pointed...

ANGLE MICK, has a FLOOR PLAN of the apartment on an easel...

MICK  
And what happened when you turned?

LOUIS  
Something hit me and I blacked out.  
I don't know for how long.

MICK  
That was all?

LOUIS  
Then when I woke up these guys were  
on me, telling me not to move. I  
couldn't anyway. I was too scared.

Mick moves toward Louis, as if determined to find flaws...

MICK  
But, there was blood on your jacket  
and your left hand...

LOUIS  
Someone put it there because I  
didn't.

MICK  
You didn't strike Ms. Campo with  
your left fist?

LOUIS  
No!

MICK  
Threaten to rape her, or kill her?--

LOUIS  
No!  
(erupts, passionate--)  
Do you know what it's like to be  
accused of something like this? To  
listen to people tell lies about  
your having done something so sick  
and awful?

(MORE)

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I, I understand I had to be quiet and wait my chance and not say anything-- but if guilty people have rights, what about innocent people? I am innocent!

Mick. Briefly meets Louis's eye... turns to the Judge.

MICK

Nothing further, your honor.

Ted already up & moving, passes Mick as he takes his seat--

TED

According to you, Ms. Campo punched herself or had a man she never met before punch her lights out as part of a set-up?

LOUIS

All I know is that I didn't.

TED

And this knife you always carry, how did she know she'd find it on you as part of the set-up?

LOUIS

("honest")

She couldn't, could she? I mean, I never took it out or showed it to anybody-- so she must have just found it when she went into my pocket for the money I had that I was going to pay her with, isn't that right?--

TED

I'd prefer it if *I* ask the questions!

(then calming himself)

Would you look at this, please.

Goes to the easel, REVEALS: PHOTO of Reggie's beaten face.

TED (CONT'D)

*Tell us again if you think Regina Campo would or could have done this to herself.*

LOUIS

I don't know *who* did it, but it wasn't me. Nobody deserves that to happen.

TED

(seizes on this)

What do you mean by "deserves?" Do you mean crimes of violence come down to a whether a woman gets what she "deserves?"

LOUIS

(right back at him)

I mean no matter what she does or who she is, no woman deserves that.

Ted keeps staring at the photo: Wants the jury looking there.

TED

I have no more questions.

*At which, suddenly there's a wave of movement-- SLOW-MOTION--*

*Louis dismissed from the chair-- Ted returning to his seat, passing Mick as Mick rises-- Mick and Ted hold each other in a gaze-- Mick's face in a kind of smile, Ted grim--*

As Mick brings out, speaking to the Judge but his smiling eyes fixed on the unhappy Ted-- RESUME NORMAL SPEED for Mick's *confident, fateful words:*

MICK

Your honor, the defense rests.

Ted hears this, sets his jaw-- *Thinks-- then--*

TED

Before deciding to rest its case, the state would like to take the night, your honor.

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

For what purpose?

TED

To-- consider a rebuttal witness.

Ted shows a touch of nervousness as he glances sidelong at Mick. Meanwhile Louis is suddenly nervous, too. To Mick--

LOUIS

What witness is he talking about?

Mick's tone is innocent, simple, as he answers:

MICK

I have no idea.

EXT. MICK'S HOUSE - THE DECK, THAT NIGHT...

He nurses a drink. Looks out at stars, dim-lit hills...

There are papers spread behind him, picture of Hayley propped nearby. He's not looking at any of it.

He's sleepless: Anticipating the fateful morning. Sips, thinks.

INT. COURTHOUSE, NEXT MORNING - SECURITY - MICK ENTERING...

His briefcase being checked, a wand passed over him...

INT. COURTHOUSE - CORRIDOR - ON MICK'S BACK...

As he moves down the hall. *Everything counts today.* Enters:

INT. COURTROOM - EMPTY, EARLY - CONTINUOUS

Ted prepares at his table. Look at each other without greeting-- as Mick moves to the CLERK, who shuffles papers...

MICK

Bill, I'm getting coffee. Any for you?

CLERK BILL

No man, I'm off caffeine...

MICK

Hey, is that the custody list? Can I see if any of my no-good clients are on it?

Bill lets him have it. Mick, casual, *looks over the names*...

INT. COURTHOUSE - COFFEE COUNTER - DAY

LORNA, she's paying for a take-out coffee, when Mick scoops her up by the arm, urgent, he's been looking for her--

MICK

Minton's putting on Corliss.

LORNA

(relieved)  
Great...

MICK  
 He's already in lock-up...  
 (over)  
 How'd you do, did you serve Kurlen?

Moving her OUT OF THE CAFE, DOWN THE HALL-- hushed & fast--

LORNA  
 Yes but I didn't like forging the  
 judge's signature...

MICK  
 Yes you did.

LORNA  
 Yes I did.

Just then, approaching, he sees SOBEL & LANKFORD: Are they coming for him? No, they turn into the courtroom along with others showing up for the trial's last day. Relieved--

MICK  
 Now go, and be ready for my call.

Lorna starts to go-- then pauses.

LORNA  
 I'm crazy about the power suit.

Extra flip to her hips as she goes because Mick's watching.

INT. COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

No sooner enters than KURLLEN's in his face, waves a document.

KURLLEN  
 What shit is this, Haller? I got  
 nothing to do with your case!

Mick, "innocent," inspects the papers. With surprise--

MICK  
 Subpoena to appear as a witness?  
 You'll just have to wait and see.  
 It's a legal document, Detective.

Cursing, Kurlen takes himself off to a corner. Leaving Mick with the "legal document." He tucks it away-- He's about to head to the front when-- MAGGIE enters. Before moving to a seat in one of the pews-- Mick sees her--

MICK (CONT'D)  
Glad you made it.

MAGGIE  
Something up your sleeve,  
counsellor?

He smiles, "Could be." She slides into an aisle. Mick continues to the front-- past CECIL DOBBS and MARY WINDSOR--

To LOUIS, at the defense table. The two men look at each other. OVER WHICH, *PRE-LAP*:

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT (V.O.)  
*Mr. Minton--*

INT. COURTROOM, MINUTES LATER - COURT'S IN SESSION...

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
Does the state have any rebuttal?

TED  
(rises, ready)  
The state calls Dwayne Jeffrey Corliss as rebuttal witness.

MICK  
Judge? Who is this witness? Why wasn't I told before now?

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
A fair question. Mr. Minton?

TED  
Dwayne Corliss is a cooperating witness who spoke with Mr. Roulet in custody, following his arrest.

LOUIS  
(shouts, suddenly--)  
Bullshit! I didn't to talk to--

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
Quiet, Mr. Roulet! Mr. Haller, control your client!

Mick bends over, to Louis, *sotto voce*--

MICK  
Good. Now leave it to me.  
(to the court)  
(MORE)

MICK (CONT'D)

I share my client's outrage, your honor. I'd like to know how long the state has been sitting on this testimony...

TED

Mr. Corliss did not come forward until yesterday.

MICK

(outraged)

This is incredible...

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Do you want to go back and talk to him? Given the timing I'd allow it.

MICK

No, Judge, we all know what this is, this is a jailhouse snitch, and anything he'd say would be a lie--

TED

That's groundless, your honor--

MICK

--just want my objection noted.

Judge Fullbright considers-- during which we GLIMPSE REACTIONS-- MAGGIE in the seats-- LOUIS at the bench beside Mick, as--

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Then I'm going to rule he can testify.

MICK

Can I ask one indulgence? Can I step into the hallway and make a call to an investigator? For whatever good it will do at this late date.

INT. COURTHOUSE - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM

Mick already dialling-- Lorna answering--

LORNA'S VOICE

Yep, here.

MICK

Put your watch at quarter of. At ten fifteen you enter the room.

LORNA'S VOICE

Got it.

MICK

With the printouts.

LORNA'S VOICE

Mickey, I know the moves!

He snaps shut his cell-phone.

INT. COURTROOM, MINUTES LATER - DWAYNE CORLISS ON THE STAND

Prison jumpsuit. We recognize him: the holding-cell junky.

TED

Mr. Corliss, are you incarcerated  
at this time?

CORLISS

Um, no, now I'm just in the  
courtroom.

Dumb answer draws laughs. ANGLE LOUIS, seething...

TED

But you are currently held in the  
jail-ward at USC hospital?

CORLISS

Yes. Since I got arrested.

TED

For burglary and drug possession?

CORLISS

That's right.

TED

Now. Do you know the defendant?

CORLISS

Yes. I met him in lock-up. We was  
bussed over from jail, and then we  
was together in the tank when we  
came for first appearance.

TED

And did you talk at that time?

CORLISS

Yes... we talked about how bad we needed cigarettes.

TED

Anything else?

CORLISS

You know, "what are you in for?" Like that.

TED

Did he say what he was "in for?"

CORLISS

He said, "For giving a bitch exactly what she deserved." Those were his words.

Reaction Louis, stirs like a caged animal. Mick steadies...

TED

I have only one more question. Have I, or has anyone, made you promises to get you to testify?

CORLISS

No. It's the right thing to do.

Ted sits. Judge turns to Mick-- who's just staring, angrily.

Then rises. Like he doesn't know what to do. LOUIS, the others, watch anxiously. Mick crosses to the front, steals a glance at the rear, SEES MAGGIE, watchful... SEES KURLEN standing against the wall, LANKFORD AND SOBEL seated in front of him. Then...

MICK

How many times have you been arrested, Mr. Corliss?

CORLISS

About seven in L.A. Couple of times in Phoenix if you count those.

MICK

So you know how the system works?

CORLISS

I try to survive...

MICK

And sometimes that means ratting  
out fellow inmates?

TED

Objection, your honor...

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Take a seat, Mr. Minton. I gave you  
leeway bringing this witness in.

MICK

Thank you, your honor. But I'll  
rephrase: How many times have you  
snitched on an inmate? Testified  
against one for the prosecution?

CORLISS

This makes my fourth.

MICK

(looking surprised)  
Four times? People just come up and  
tell you they committed crimes so  
you can testify against them--

CORLISS

People talk to me. I'm a friendly  
guy.

Mick, walks toward Louis, indicates him.

MICK

So you and my client were friends--

CORLISS

We was friendly--

MICK

And he just said what you told us,  
about the woman getting what she  
"deserved," and then you went back  
to talking about cigarettes?

CORLISS

Not exactly. He was like, bragging.  
He told me he did it before...

Mick freezes... Like he's in a mine field and can't move...

CORLISS (CONT'D)  
 He said the other time he killed  
 the bitch. He got away with it then  
 and he'd get away with it now.

MICK  
 (staring at Corliss)  
 You... Wait...

All eyes on Mick. Reactions around the courtroom while Mick acts like he's unsure of his next move.... so long that the Judge finally prompts...

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
 Mr. Haller?

MICK  
 ("deciding")  
 No more questions, your honor.

TED  
 Re-direct, your honor.

Fullbright nods permission. While Mick sits, and Louis leans over to him...

LOUIS  
*What the hell is this?*

MICK  
 You tell me! What did you say to  
 this guy?

LOUIS  
 (through gritted teeth)  
 Nothing! This is a set-up! You're  
 doing this!

MICK  
*How? How am I doing this?*

But Louis has no answer. Meanwhile Ted's taken the floor...

TED  
 You said he was bragging. How?

CORLISS  
 Well, like, he told me the details.  
 About the other one, that he  
 killed. He called her a snake  
 dancer. She danced in some joint  
 where she was like in a snake pit.

ANGLE, REACTION DETECTIVE KURLEN, he leans forward at this...

REACTION MAGGIE, TOO, as her look goes between Mick and Kurlen, who's tense as a drum.... While, at the defense table: Mick's gazing at Louis. Low--

MICK

How does he know this, Louis?

Louis looks at Mick, whose look is inscrutable. Louis is quietly panicked... *hisses*...

LOUIS

Do you think I know?

MICK

Well if you didn't tell him this shit somebody did. Start thinking who it could be.

Louis hears the trace of sarcasm in this, as Mick looks away from him...

...to TED, who's moving closer to Corliss.

TED

Is there anything else he told you?

CORLISS

No, that snake-girl stuff was it.

TED

(after a beat)

Then no further questions, your honor.

Ted sits. The look he gives Mick in passing is one of abounding confidence. Mick stews... Swivels around...

Covert glance, MICK'S POV, looks to see if Kurlen is where he was, against the wall. He's not. He's gone. So is Lankford. And the courtroom door still swings slightly, as if they've just left... Mick is noting this, HIS POV, as he also sees Maggie, connecting with his look, sees what he sees: that the two detectives have hurried off in search of something. While *IN FRONT:*

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Any re-cross from the defense?

Mick rises to answer, hesitates-- and just then turns to see Lorna enter and approach down the aisle.

MICK  
A moment with my staff, Judge?

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
Be quick.

He meets Lorna at the gate. Brings his head close to hers--

LORNA  
This is where I whisper in your  
ear, tell you stuff...

MICK  
(takes a file from her)  
It's all here, right? You go now, I  
don't want anyone asking you  
questions.

Disappointed, she goes, and he goes back to the table. But  
before Louis can speak to him, Mick returns to the witness--

MICK (CONT'D)  
Dwayne, if I can call you that--

CORLISS  
It's what people call me.

MICK  
Don't they also call you D.J.? For  
example, down in Phoenix?

CORLISS  
Maybe.

He's a bit wary. Mick looks through the file Lorna brought--

MICK  
Because you know, my assistant, she  
was reading on the internet about  
D.J. Corliss-- arrested in 1989 on  
drug charges-- Hometown of Mesa,  
Arizona?

CORLISS  
That'd be me. But--

MICK  
You remember Fred Bentley, right?

Corliss, darkens, stumbles at this-- Ted's quick--

TED

I object, your honor, where is the defense going with this?

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Make a connection soon, Mr. Haller. But the witness will answer.

CORLISS

I don't remember any Bentley--

MICK

Sure you do. You testified that he confessed to you the crime he was charged with-- rape of a ten-year-old girl-- even though he denied it in court. Am I ringing any bells?

CORLISS

Uh-- 1989, I was high a lot, there's not much I recall--

MICK

Then I'd like you to read this to us. It's a news story from the Arizona Star, 1997, that's eight years after he was convicted. I ask that it be admitted into evidence--

TED

Your honor? A news report?

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Let's see where it takes us. The state can object later.

Mick hands printout to the bailiff, who gives it to Corliss.

MICK

I've marked the paragraph.

CORLISS

I'm not good at reading...

(clears his throat)

*"A man, Frederick Bentley, wrongly convicted of rape, was released Saturday after con--*

*(hesitates)*

*--conclusive DNA results cleared him of the crime. The case was bolstered at trial by testimony from an informant, D.J.*

(MORE)

CORLISS (CONT'D)  
*Corliss of Mesa, who claimed Bentley had-- bragged to him about the rape while together in a holding cell--"*

MICK  
 That's enough.  
 (takes it from him)  
 Were you charged with perjury for that incident, D.J.?

CORLISS  
 No I was not.

MICK  
 Was that because the prosecution was complicit in your confession?

TED  
 (rises, angry--)  
 Judge--

MICK  
 (ignores, over--)  
 Were you promised the same deal here, Mr. Corliss? To say that Louis Roulet "*bragged*" to you in the "*holding cell*?"

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
 Alright, Mr. Haller, that will do!

MICK  
 (Ceases. Angry.)  
 Sorry. I have no more questions.

And Mick sits. Courtroom's hushed. Until--

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
 I'm excusing the jury for an early lunch. Bailiff, see them out.

Maintains a smile as the jurors leave. Then her smile dies. She looks at Mick, and, more pointedly, *AT TED*:

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT (CONT'D)  
 Counsellors. My chambers.

The tone is unmistakable. As the Judge steps out, trailed by Mick and Ted... Angle Maggie, watching the trio disappear through the chambers doors...

INT. JUDGE FULLBRIGHT'S CHAMBERS - MOMENTS LATER

No sooner through the door-- *than Fullbright wheels on Ted:*

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

Mr. Minton do you know what you have done? You've put a documented liar on the stand, a man with a record of putting innocent people in prison--

TED

Your honor, I--

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT

*Shut the fuck up when I'm talking to you!* I can think of nothing more prejudicial or corrupt than what I just saw out there! *Do you realize what you've done to my trial?*

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

As Mick and Ted exit into hall-- Ted hurrying off, angry-- Mick to LOUIS, DOBBS, and MARY WINDSOR-- tells them re Ted:

MICK

He's going to see his boss. To decide what to do before the judge comes down with a directed verdict.

LOUIS

What's a directed verdict?

MICK

She takes it out of the jury's hand and declares an acquittal.

MARY WINDSOR

(glad/hopeful)  
Oh my god...

MICK

We'll know in a few minutes.

And heads off. Louis's cold stare, watches him go...

INT. COURTHOUSE - MEN'S ROOM

Mick at the urinal. Louis enters in and slides behind him.

LOUIS  
I want to know how Corliss got that  
shit he's saying.

MICK  
Maybe Frank Levin told him. Maybe  
he found something and gave it to  
Corliss and that's why you killed  
him.

When-- DOOR OPENS -- the courtroom CLERK enters. \*

CLERK  
We're back.

*CUT TO, INT. COURTROOM, AT THE BENCH - MINUTES LATER - ON...*

TED  
I just spoke to the District  
Attorney. The state wishes to  
dismiss all charges. Here's a  
motion....

Mick, Louis, watch Ted hand it to Fullbright.

JUDGE FULLBRIGHT  
This is a motion to dismiss *with*  
*prejudice*. No coming back. Ever.

Glances at Mick. Before getting it out, with difficulty:

TED  
Yes, your honor.

Louis starts abruptly, a look of relief but still some  
uncertainty, how it's all happening...

Mick casts a look back at the courtroom, looking for-- (HIS  
POV)-- MAGGIE. She's risen, looking back at him with  
something like pride. As the courtroom STIRS, aftermath of  
Ted's surrender, we *CUT TO*,

*INT. COURTHOUSE, CORRIDOR - LATER - MARY WINDSOR...*

...tearful at the news of victory, grips Mick's hand...  
Maggie's nearby, but giving Mick room... as Mary Windsor and  
Cecil Dobbs press him closer...

MARY WINDSOR  
Mr. Haller, thank you for my son...

DOBBS  
You were splendid...

Louis is standing apart. Private, a few feet away. Mick draws near. Separate from everyone except Louis.

MICK  
I want the gun...

LOUIS  
Of course you do...

No more can be said, because Mrs. Windsor-- descends on Mick--

MARY WINDSOR  
Mr. Haller, this time I insist you  
come to Orso for a celebration--

MICK  
I don't think so.

Mary's about to repeat her offer, but before she can, OUT OF THE ELEVATOR comes KURLLEN-- with LANKFORD AND SOBEL. They move around Roulet and close in on him.

KURLLEN  
Louis Roulet, you're under arrest.  
Turn around and place your hands  
behind your back.

Kurlen cuffs him and reads him rights-- REACTIONS from everyone-- while Mrs. Windsor rushes Kurlen--

MARY WINDSOR  
No! Take your hands off my son!  
(To Mick)  
And you! You're letting this  
happen?

LOUIS  
Keep quiet, Mother.

Louis' cold voice controls her. Mary gives up. Then-- as Kurlen starts to take Louis---

DOBBS  
What's the charge?

KURLLEN  
(takes Louis elbow--)  
The murder of Donna Renteria.

DOBBS

That snake-dancer? But everything  
that man said was a lie...

Kurlen just grins: at the give-away:

KURLEN

Then how'd you know I meant the  
snake-dancer?

Dobbs sees his mistake. Too late. The whole while LOUIS is  
glaring with hatred at MICK. Mick looks back steadily, their  
eyes meet-- MAGGIE watching the look that passes between  
Louis and Mick-- Kurlen's about to haul off Louis--

MICK

Give me a moment with him,  
Detective.

Kurlen nods, why not. Maggie watches as Mick leads Louis a  
few steps away. Private...

MICK (CONT'D)

This is it, Louis. I got you off.  
Now get yourself a new lawyer.

LOUIS

I've still got your gun...

MICK

Yeah and you'll have to explain how  
you got it. But you know what? I  
don't give a shit. All I care about  
is that you're going down, and  
Martinez is getting out. When they  
stick that needle in your arm, that  
will be me.

LOUIS

And what if I *don't* go down?

Mick looks at him.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Because I don't think they even  
have enough to hold me, I could be  
out by tomorrow.

*At this, Mick's head snaps to him, angrily...* but Kurlen's  
waited long enough, takes Louis from Mick and heads up the  
stairs with him...

Mick stands there, absorbing Louis's last remark... Watching the hall clear around him.... Everyone's going... Only Maggie stays near Mick, watching him...

As Lankford and Sobel pass by on their way out, Lankford stops for a word--

LANKFORD

You're one fucked up son of a bitch, Haller. You get your client off on assault, then you burn him for murder...

MICK

Just tell me they've got enough to hold him.

LANKFORD

(shrugs)

They've got enough to fuck with him. No way Minton was letting Roulet walk out of here, not after today...

(then, quizzical)

Whose side are you on, anyway?

Lankford goes without waiting for Mick's answer. Followed by Sobel.

At once, Mick turns to see Maggie standing there.

MICK

Hear what he said?

MAGGIE

That they've got enough to bring him in...

MICK

Meaning not enough to keep him there. Louis is right. But there's more, they're missing something...

MAGGIE

How do you know?

MICK

Because Frank found it, that's why Louis killed him. And if Frank found it, I can.

\*

Turns and goes. She watches him.

\*

EXT. RAIN - SIDEWALK OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE - DIRECTLY AFTERWARDS

Mick, grim, comes out and hurries through the downpour towards his Lincoln, parked there with no Earl, no driver...

MICK  
(under his breath...)  
Dammit, Earl...

Referring to the ticket, another ticket for parking that Earl's got, it's tucked under the windshield-wiper...

But as he reaches for it, a *thought* stops him, a thought the ticket has given him. A *realization*.

Mick's still standing there, thinking and getting soaked, as Earl rushes up with a Starbucks container in each hand...

EARL  
(re the ticket...)  
Sorry, Mr. Haller, I jus' left it  
half a minute, you can take the  
ticket outa my pay...

Mick's already dialling a number on his cell...

MICK  
That's alright, Earl, this one's on  
me.  
(INTO CELL)  
Maggie, listen: Call Lankford. Tell \*  
him to pull Roulet's driving \*  
record, every ticket he ever got... \*  
just like Frank did.... He said he  
found Martinez's "ticket out" of  
the Q, I just never realized what  
he *meant!*...

Earl holds the door open but Mick stands there getting wet...

MICK (CONT'D)  
(INTO CELL)  
Please, just do it! \*

And hangs up, gets in the Lincoln. \*

INT. LINCOLN (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS \*

Soon as the door's closed-- Earl from the front:

EARL  
Mr. Haller?

\*

And he hands Mick something wrapped in a towel: A GUN.

EARL (CONT'D)  
Guy I know picked it up on the  
street. Real clean.

His eyes and Earl's meet. Silent thanks.

Mick-- quietly puts the gun away, inside his suit jacket.  
Earl pulls out, popping in a CD, TUPAC...

TUPAC  
*"To be a man in this wicked  
land..."*

INT. LATER: HOME - PHONE RINGING IN THE FAMILY ROOM OF--

"VAL" VALENZUELA. He's got a half-ass home office on a table  
there, laptop... Kids' toys around, domestic mess...

Val STEPS OVER his black-curly-haired 3-yr-old SON to get to  
the ringing phone... calls, over his shoulder to his wife...

INT. MICK HALLER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- SAME - INTO LAND-LINE:

MICK  
Val, it's Mick Haller.

INTERCUT: MICK'S KITCHEN/VAL'S HOME

VAL  
I should hang up. The crap you  
talked to me...

MICK  
I know, I know, it was Frank dying,  
I was upset. I'm sorry, I called to  
apologize.

VAL  
(accepts, gruffly)  
Well... it's over now, anyway.

MICK  
Except that they got him now on a  
whole other murder.

VAL  
 (realizing)  
 I guess you ain't heard. They  
 kicked him.

MICK  
 They *what?* Already?

VAL  
 D.A. let him go this afternoon.

Mick, cursing the D.A. under his breath, is trying to  
 compute.... mind racing...

MICK  
 Listen... Is he still wearing his  
 ankle-tracer?

VAL  
 Yeah.

MICK  
 Are you sure?

VAL  
 I'm sure. I got a message, he's  
 coming by in the morning. I'm the  
 only one who can cut it off.

MICK  
 Then I need you to do me a favor.  
 I need you to track him for me.

VAL  
 What? On the screen? I'm home,  
 man....

MICK  
 I need you to do it *now*, Val.

There's a SILENCE. When it's long enough, Mick takes it for a  
 yes. And hangs up... Then dials another number. When it's  
 answered:

MICK (CONT'D)  
 (INTO PHONE)  
 Maggie....

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE, SAME TIME - MAGGIE

*Rain* pounds the windows...

MAGGIE

Mick?

INTERCUT: INT. MICK'S KITCHEN/ INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE

MICK

Roulet's been released.

Maggie's stunned... he goes on...

MICK (CONT'D)

They let him go... Maggie? \*

MAGGIE

Yes, I'm here, I hear you...

MICK

Where are you calling from? Are you with Hayley?

MAGGIE

I'm home... Maggie's coming home on the bus, she'll be here soon...

MICK

You can't stay there. Find the bus and take her off it. Then go to your sister's place.

Maggie's anxious, breathless, as she gets it -- \*

INT. MICK'S KITCHEN --

Mick clicks off, then thinks less than a second.

He grabs only his suit jacket. Moving fast now... *CUT TO,*

*CUT TO,* EXT. LAUREL CANYON - MOMENTS LATER - MICK...

Mick, in the Lincoln, pulls from his drive, hitting the road without stopping. He accelerates down the hill, all we see are tail lights.

INT. LINCOLN -- SAME

Mick watches the road slope down as he speeds.

POV: Up ahead -- stoplights turn green at Ventura Blvd.

INT. LINCOLN (MOVING) - MICK...

Mick tries his CELL. As he crosses the boulevard.

MICK  
Val?

INT. VAL'S HOUSE -- SAME

Val's now at a computer screen.

SCREEN, CURSOR travelling....

VAL  
I've got him. He's coming over the  
canyons, going north...

INT. LINCOLN -- SAME

VAL  
Looks like he's heading for your  
house.

MICK  
(declares)  
Bullshit.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE -- SAME

Val reacts.

VAL  
What do you mean? Yeah, he's going  
down Coldwater...

INT. LINCOLN -- SAME

MICK  
But he's not going to my house.

Keeps driving, faster. *CUT TO,*

INT. CAR (MOVING) -ANOTHER STREET, SAME TIME, SAME RAIN

It's MAGGIE'S CAR-- through windshield wipers she's shooting  
past on-going cars--

ANGLE her face, the anxiety, she's looking for the schoolbus--  
SEES IT, AHEAD, it's at a stop--

But the DOORS are closing, in a moment it'll turn back into traffic and pass her going the other way...

Maggie TURNS THE WHEEL AS IF TO CUT THE BUS OFF BEFORE IT ACCELERATES, *HITS HER HORN...*

*BACK TO*, INT. VAL'S HOUSE - SAME

Val's riveted to the screen, on the phone, says--

VAL  
Mick you're right. He shot right by  
your street.

INTERCUT: VAL'S HOUSE/ INT: MICK'S LINCOLN (MOVING)

VAL (CONT'D)  
He's not going to your house.

Mick knew. *Knows.*

MICK  
I know where he's going.

VAL  
He hasn't turned yet...

MICK  
He will.

Hangs up again. Off him, *CUT TO*,

EXT. ROAD DOWN THE CANYON, RAIN, NIGHT - LOUIS'S PORSCHE...

Descending on the valley side...

INT. PORSCHE (MOVING), SAME TIME - LOUIS...

As he *accelerates....*

*CUT TO*, EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME TIME - MICK...

MICK'S LINCOLN pulls down a residential street. We recognize Maggie's neighborhood. A few cars parked on the street.

Mick straightens up....looking for a side street.

*CUT TO, INT. LOUIS' PORSCHE - RAIN, NIGHT - LOUIS...*

Louis, eyes level, driving....*accelerates*....

*CUT TO, EXT. STREET (DICKENS) - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER*

As LOUIS turns his Porsche down the street. Row of houses:  
We've been here before: Street where Maggie lives. Louis  
slows... stillness except for rain....

Pulls over in his Porsche.

He gets out. The rain's let up....

He SEES: someone sitting in the shadowed front porch of  
Maggie's house....

Louis approaches. It's MICK. Mick rises.

MICK  
Hey, Louis.

Louis nods, glances up at the house... Seeing his look:

MICK (CONT'D)  
My family's here. You got your  
knife?

Louis smiles.

LOUIS  
Maybe.

MICK  
Good. I brought this.

Mick pulls out his gun, from inside his jacket. Louis reacts.  
Then laughs.

MICK (CONT'D)  
You get one chance to turn around  
and leave. Right now. \*

LOUIS \*  
And then what? Are you going to \*  
come here every night? Every day? \*  
Are you going to send me to San \*  
Quentin, like Jesus Martinez?... \*

Off Mick's reaction, Louis smiles. A mocking smile that comes from inside, from his enjoyment of his vacancy and evil... \*

...when Mick's CELL rings. Mick sees who it is and answers. \*

MICK \*  
Yeah, talk to me. \*

INT. MAGGIE'S SISTER'S HOUSE - SAME INSTANT \*

Hayley is glimpsed in the background as MAGGIE, INTO PHONE-- \*

MAGGIE \*  
You were right. He got a ticket \*  
outside Renteria's apartment the \*  
night she died. The police have him \*  
on the tracer, they're on their way \*  
now. \*

BACK TO, EXT. STREET, SAME INSTANT - AS MICK HEARS THIS... \*

MICK \*  
Thanks. \*

Hangs up. Still holding his gun. \*

LOUIS \*  
Well? \*  
(when Mick says nothing) \*  
What do you plan on doing with that \*  
gun? Are you going to shoot me? \*

MICK \*  
Maybe I won't have to. \*

When: A *SUDDEN SHATTERING SOUND* from the street.

Louis, startled, turns to see--

His PORSCHE, its windshield being smashed-- Louis can see from here-- by TWO GUYS ON HARLEYS, wielding baseball bats--

*SECOND SMASH:* Louis, rushes to the street-- He *halts*--

The guys are in leather jackets, THREE MORE wait nearby, motors in a low purr. The Road Saints Motorcycle Club.

Louis, slightest hesitation-- "Hey!"-- begins to move toward his battered Porsche...

*ANGLE,* as the SAINTS DISMOUNT, start towards Louis. Louis, takes a step back--

Mick walks easily from the house.

Louis stands facing the Saints who are in a half-circle around him. His look tries for boldness-- but he is speechless and terrified.

One of the Saints calmly steps forward. SMASHES Louis in the face, ONCE. Pause. No hurry. SMASHES HIM AGAIN. Pause. AGAIN. The others close in. Louis is being pummelled, drops to his knees... Now the blows come faster...

Mick gives a farewell look to Louis as he passes him... also passes on his way EDDIE, the Saints' leader, who looks on.

MICK (CONT'D)  
(without slowing)  
The hospital, not the morgue.  
You've only got five minutes

\*  
\*

Eddie nods. Mick keeps going...

Camera LIFTS and goes with him, we *MOVE*, AWAY FROM THE ACTION... as Mick heads back to his car. Gets in.

*CUT TO*, EXT. MICK'S HOUSE - NIGHT, LATER

As he pulls up in front, gets out of his Lincoln. The rain's abated. Mick, takes half a second to calm... Gets out: returning to his darkened house, alone. Trudges up the steps, fumbles with keys...

EXT. MICK'S HOUSE - OUT FRONT, LATER - NIGHT, STILLNESS

As Mick pulls up. Gets out, after a beat.

INT. MICK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

He lets himself in. Closes the door behind him. Moves through towards the kitchen, where the only light's coming from.

\*  
\*

He loosens his shirt, as if to relax, when, he *HEARS A NOISE*: *He's not alone in the house...* Before he can react:

\*  
\*

MARY WINDSOR STANDS BEFORE him in the kitchen door. Filled with hate.

\*

MICK  
You.

\*

He sees that she is holding a gun.

MARY

Frank Levin was trying to destroy  
my son. And so are you.

She raises the gun and FIRES. BRIGHT FLASH. It rips a hole in  
Mick's side. He staggers once but doesn't fall over.

She raises the gun to fire again. But MICK FIRES FIRST FROM  
INSIDE HIS SUIT-JACKET. Her body jerks back... she falls...

Mick is stunned at it all. Staggers towards her... until he  
stands over her dead body. He SEES:

THE GUN SHE HOLDS IS AN OLD PEARL-HANDLED WOODSMAN.

Somehow he gets himself back to the phone. Dials. Holds  
himself together while it rings and rings.

*FADE OUT.*

FADE IN:

INT. LINCOLN AT THE CURB - OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL - DAY

...as, ON THE FADE, it's pulling out, with MICK in the back  
seat, just released from the hospital... Mick looks tired--  
in a suit, but with his arm in a sling, some side-bandages.

EARL

(driving)

Feel okay, Mr. Haller?

In answer, Mick feels his side. He still can't believe it... \*

They're rolling through traffic...

EARL (CONT'D)

I been by the courthouse, they say  
Jesus Martinez is out. That right,  
Mr. Haller?

MICK

Yeah it is.

EARL

And Roulet: They goin' for the  
death-penalty?

Mick doesn't answer, still savoring the other question...

MICK  
Martinez is free.

But before Earl can ask more, his *ATTENTION IS DRAWN BY A PURR OF ENGINES OFF-CAMERA...* Looks in his REAR-VIEW:

The ROAD SAINTS are back again, flanking the Lincoln.

EARL  
Mr. Haller...

...Mick, reacts, as EDDIE THE LEADER pulls up along-side and motions them to the curb, traffic-cop style.

EXT. STREET, CONTINUOUS - THE LINCOLN...

...stops. The Saints, too. Eddie approaches, Mick lowers a window.

MICK  
Eddie.

EDDIE  
(re Mick's wound)  
Took one for the team, huh...

Mick nods. Then Eddie, with wonder, can't help asking-- \*

EDDIE (CONT'D) \*  
You really shoot a guy's mother? \*

MICK \*  
She shot me first. \*

Eddie looks at Mick with new respect. \*

EDDIE \*  
Well, glad you're better, because \*  
Harold... old Hardcase...

MICK  
Don't tell me.

EDDIE  
Got found with fifty kilos in his  
girlfriend's mini-van...

MICK  
Didn't think they still made those.

EDDIE  
Girlfriend was some cop's wife...

MICK  
That won't help.

EDDIE  
Nope, you're the only help he's  
got. Counsellor.

Mick, finds he's back in his office.

MICK  
Alright, call me with the  
details...

EDDIE  
(one more thing)  
Gotta tell you, though, the way  
things went down? I think we earned  
a little discount. Say, half your  
fee?

MICK  
What do you say to free?

Eddie smiles. Taps the window goodbye. Watches as... Mick  
raises the window and the Lincoln pulls out...

INT. LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

We're on MICK in the back seat... Earl catches his eye, gives  
him a wry look re: the generosity of the deal he heard Mick  
cut Eddie. Mick reassures, "Don't worry..."

MICK  
Repeat customers, Earl. We'll stick  
it to 'em next time.

Earl nods understanding, pops in a *tape*, *MUSIC*, *vintage  
Gangsta rap*, *TUPAC*...

And they roll like old times.

**CUT TO BLACK.**