

FRACTURE

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CREDITS SEQUENCE: EXTREME CLOSE-UPS

An unfinished mechanical device: a scaffold of thin metal pipes, levers, pulleys, wiring, serve-motors.

THOMAS CRAWFORD works on it: in his 40s, well-dressed but in disarray, graying stubble, hair and clothes unkempt. Magnifying glasses distort his eyes, making them huge and strange.

He sets aside a tool, takes a marble-sized ball-bearing and drops it into a slot at the top of the device.

His enlarged eyes follow the metal ball -

- as it rolls and flips and spirals through a Rube-Goldberg-style maze, setting off bells, clicking past turnstiles -

- then missing a leap and clattering across the work-table.

Eyes on the device, Crawford's hand traps the ball.

He stays still, analyzing.

He selects a tiny screwdriver from a neat array of metal-working and electronics tools. Makes a miniscule adjustment to a single joint. Drops in another ball.

It rolls and flips and spirals all the way down.

Crawford doesn't react. Just studies the machine.

Behind him, on a desk: a framed photograph of a beautiful woman in her mid-30s.

His wife.

INT. LUXURY BEACH-HOTEL ROOM - THE SAME TIME

JENNIFER CRAWFORD is just reaching orgasm -

- with ROB NUNALLY: mid-30s, good-looking, aging-boyish.

They clutch each other, shuddering, lost in passion. And then, breathing heavily, caressing each other - Nunally rolls off her - slowly coming back to earth.

Jennifer studies her lover, a quiet play of relief and gratitude and satisfaction on her face -

- darkened by a troubled distance, maybe even fear.

She is, after all, having an affair.

INT. CRAWFORD'S OFFICE - DAY

Crawford stares through the grotesque lenses, motionless, expressionless.

He takes a deep breath and checks his watch. Then he stands, removing the glasses.

We now see his office: large, austere. Decor and equipment related to aircraft engineering. Outside big windows, jets take off from an industrial airstrip.

Crawford gets a brand-new bottle of Jack Daniels from a desk drawer, uncaps it and swigs as he opens the door to a private bathroom.

He gargles, spits into the sink. He pours out more, then puts the half-empty bottle back on his desk.

He collects a home-made device from the workbench: it looks like a PDA connected by wires to a blank credit card.

He puts it in the pocket of his suit jacket, which he sets on the desk. Adjusts the placement of the open bottle, nearby.

Crawford goes to a light-box, studying a set of large X-rays: dark strips of welding in a grayish fuzz of metal.

TINA, his assistant, appears in the doorway.

TINA

The N.T.S.B. guys are here.

CRAWFORD

(Doesn't look up)

Yep.

She hesitates a second, glancing at the bottle.

Crawford ignores her, pulling an x-ray off the light-box and grabbing his jacket -

- which knocks over the bottle. It skitters across the desk, liquor spilling.

Crawford just walks out past Tina.

INT. AIRPLANE HANGER - SOON AFTER

The twisted, torn and burned wreckage of a large private jet is being reassembled on the big empty concrete floor.

N.T.S.B. INVESTIGATORS in shirtsleeves and AIRCRAFT COMPANY EXECUTIVES in suits cluster around work-boards covered with photographs and diagrams of a crash site.

They look up, falling silent, as Crawford comes in carrying the X-ray. A few exchange surprised, concerned glances; this is not a man who skips a shave.

But when he gets to them, Crawford is laser-like - holding the X-ray and pointing to a spot three inches above it:

CRAWFORD

It's here.

He hands a startled Investigator the film and strides off toward the giant open doors out to the airfield.

His foot knocks a piece of the carefully-laid-out wreckage in passing; it clatters across the concrete, but Crawford doesn't slow or look back.

INT. LUXURY BEACH-HOTEL ROOM - SOON AFTER

Rob is still in the bed, naked under the sheet - watching Jennifer adjust the straps of her bathing suit.

ROB

What about dinner tonight?

She looks at him, surprised. Smiles, comes to sit beside him. Gently:

JENNIFER

We go out to dinner - we might never come back.

Beat. Rob nods.

ROB

Okay.

(Beat)

I want to wake up with you. I want to...

He gropes for words, but it's too big and he relents - scales back, sighing:

ROB

...at least see where you live.

She regards him tenderly, feeling the same reckless yearning. But also fear. She rubs his hair.

JENNIFER

I live...here.

She leans over to kiss him delicately on the lips.

EXT. SANTA MONICA STREET - DAY

A black Porsche speeds down a quiet street near the beach, pulls into a parking space.

Crawford gets out, goes to a pay phone. He puts his cell phone on top of it, drops in some change and dials.

OPERATOR (ON PHONE)

L.A.P.D.

CRAWFORD

Lieutenant Nunally, please.

He listens to hold music and checks the time.

OPERATOR (ON PHONE)

He doesn't come on til six. You want his voice mail?

CRAWFORD

No. Thank you.

(beat)

I'll see him later.

He hangs up, grabs his cell, and takes off down the sidewalk.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Crawford enters. He knows where he's going - past the front desk and outside to the -

EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

Jennifer swims laps with strong, even strokes. Rob is enjoying the sun in a lounge chair.

Crawford eyes them as he passes on the other side of a low fence. Unnoticed, he heads upstairs.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

Crawford stops at a room with a DO NOT DISTURB sign on the knob. He takes out his PDA-device and slides its card into the key-card slot of the lock.

The lock clicks to green.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Crawford enters, quietly closing the door behind him.

He just stands there, taking it all in. The unmade bed, the ripped-open condom packet, the clothes on the floor.

He is silent. Very still.

EXT. CRAWFORD'S STREET - LATER

Jennifer drives her Mercedes convertible past expensive houses in the late-afternoon light.

She goes up the driveway of the Crawfords' stark modern home.

Across the street, MR. GIFFORD is playing catch with his GRANDSON. He waves to Jennifer.

She waves back, friendly but distracted, on her way to the front door.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cold. Elegant. Metal planters with bamboo trees. Glass doors out to a back garden. A fire in the fireplace.

In a corner is another of Crawford's Rube Goldbergs - this one the size of a refrigerator. On a coffee table in the center of the room, a big wooden bowl of ball-bearings.

Jennifer hurries in, dropping her keys on a table and -

- freezes, startled.

Crawford waits in the center of the room; despite the outer "disarray", he is calm and focused.

JENNIFER

You're - home early.

CRAWFORD
I just felt a sudden urge.

JENNIFER
Are you...okay?

Crawford shrugs, smiling strangely. He looks pained.

CRAWFORD
I could use a hug.

Jennifer submits guiltily. Crawford embraces her, tight. She waits it out, until:

JENNIFER
Have you been drinking?

He lets go and she steps back. Studying him. Scared.

CRAWFORD
I've been watching you sleep. At night.

JENNIFER
(Gently)
That's creepy.

CRAWFORD
Sometimes when I'm at work, I'll start thinking about you and I'll just get - just - overwhelmed.

JENNIFER
Tommy -

CRAWFORD
It's a dense, crushing - geophysical force. Like I'm pinned. At the core - where things change.
(beat)
You ever get that way about me, Jen?

JENNIFER
What are you talking about?

CRAWFORD
I'm trying to describe my feelings.

JENNIFER
Those don't sound like feelings.

CRAWFORD

No?

(Beat)

What's the sound of one feeling...in a forest?

JENNIFER

You think you're so much smarter than I am. That must make you feel very powerful.

CRAWFORD

Helpless, actually.

Silence.

JENNIFER

Okay. Maybe it's time to really talk.

CRAWFORD

No.

JENNIFER

No?

He shakes his head. Frayed and worn, she sighs.

JENNIFER

Fine. Whatever. I'll make you some dinner.

He watches her turn and head for the kitchen. To her back:

CRAWFORD

I know. Everything.

She stops, exhales. Looking down. Afraid. Grateful it's happening at last.

JENNIFER

I'm so sorry.

CRAWFORD

Don't be. Knowledge is pain. I'm used to that.

Jennifer winces, feeling some sympathy. Preparing herself to turn and end it, to grow, to move on.

CRAWFORD

It's not like I don't let little pleasures, in return for the pain.

She frowns and turns - and her eyes go big with fear.

Crawford is holding a semi-automatic pistol, aimed at her face. Very still.

The gunshot explodes out of the muzzle - bright, harsh, loud.

EXT. GIFFORD HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Gifford and his Grandson turn to look at the Crawford house.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Crawford stands, tilting his head to watch the slow hypnotic curl of smoke leaking from the gun in his extended hand. The hand, we might notice now, wears a surgical glove.

He lowers the gun, bends to pick up the ejected shell-casing from the floor. He wipes it and tosses it aside, on his way to Jennifer.

He stands looking down at her: face-up on the floor, head in a small pool of blood, eyes and mouth open.

The doorbell rings.

EXT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gifford leans on the frosted-glass panel next to the door - hands cupped around his eyes, trying to see in.

GIFFORD
Tom? Jen? Everything okay in there?

INT. CRAWFORD FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Crawford steps in from the living room.

CRAWFORD
Everybody just LEAVE US ALONE!

He calmly aims up at the frosted-glass transom and fires three times - watching Gifford fling himself away.

Crawford collects the shell casings, wipes them, drops them back on the floor.

Peeling off the rubber gloves, he crosses to the fireplace and throws them into the flames. They curl and blacken.

Crawford watches, expressionless - then looks around, satisfied. Waiting.

EXT. CRAWFORD'S STREET - DUSK

Helicopters overhead, SWAT teams setting up. Nearby houses have been emptied, gawking NEIGHBORS and media vans moved back to a block away.

UNIFORM COPS pull aside the barriers as a plain-wrap sedan rolls through. It pulls up by the SWAT Command Truck.

ROB NUNALLY gets out, surveying the scene. The guy who spent his afternoon with Jennifer Crawford in the hotel is an L.A.P.D. Detective.

SWAT COMMANDER
You the Negotiator?

NUNALLY
Yeah. What do we know?

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - SOON AFTER

Crawford waits, with the gun. The phone rings. He picks up:

CRAWFORD
Yes?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. CRAWFORD'S STREET - CONTINUOUS

Nunally is standing by the open trunk of his sedan, wearing a Kevlar vest now - putting on his shoulder-holster over it. Into his cell-phone:

NUNALLY
Mr. Crawford?

CRAWFORD
Who is this?

NUNALLY
My name is Lieutenant Robert Nunally.
I'm a hostage negotiator for the Los -

Crawford hangs up. Thoughtful.

NUNALLY

Mr. Crawford?

Nunally grimaces, shuts his phone, shaking his head. But then he turns - with the SWAT Commander and everyone else -
- as Crawford's front door unlocks and opens a few inches.
Nunally considers this, looks at the SWAT COMMANDER.

NUNALLY

Okay then. Here we go.

He pulls his suit jacket back on, then reaches into the trunk for his back-up gun. He tucks it into the back of his belt, concealed under the jacket.

He takes a walkie-talkie and starts for the house.

The spectators fall silent. Radios crackle and hiss as he heads up the driveway.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Crawford watches Nunally's silhouette appear on the frosted glass, from across the living room.

NUNALLY (O.S.)

Mr. Crawford?

The door pushes open very slowly. Nunally stays in the doorway.

NUNALLY

Hey.

Crawford studies him, staying back.

CRAWFORD

Get rid of the vampires.

Nunally is confused; Crawford gestures at the flood-lit lawn outside. Nunally glances back, sees the SWAT teams and - down the street - the distant barricades, the media.

He nods, steps in and lets the door shut. Careful silence.

CRAWFORD

Do I call you Rob?

NUNALLY

If you want.

CRAWFORD
Not vampires.

NUNALLY
What?

CRAWFORD
Not vampires. Ghouls. Sorry.

Nunally nods, humoring him, glancing around. Sees the small pool of blood where Jennifer fell. Plays it cool.

NUNALLY
Mr. Crawford, what do you say you give me the gun - so I can pay more attention to what you're saying?

Crawford sighs.

CRAWFORD
Is that your best shot?
(Beat)
So to speak.

NUNALLY
I just think - maybe it would -

CRAWFORD
Tell you what: I will if you will.

Nunally frowns, wary.

Crawford moves to the coffee table in the center of the room, holds his gun out over it.

CRAWFORD
We both put down our guns. At the same time.

Crawford gestures to a chair across the room - by the foyer door, near Nunally.

CRAWFORD
We set them down and step away.
(Beat)
Then you can "pay more attention" to what I'm saying.

Nunally studies Crawford...and the gun, hovering above the coffee table. Looking for a trick, a catch. But there isn't one. If Crawford sets down his gun and steps away, he'll be standing in the open center of the room.

CRAWFORD
Happy ending, then.

Nunally stares Crawford in the eyes -

- then slowly takes his gun from his shoulder holster.

Eyes on each other from across the room - moving very slowly -
the two men cautiously set down their guns -

- and step away. Crawford smiles.

Nunally smiles, too, reassuring and false. Begins to edge forward - alert to the possibility of a lunge for the gun or having another weapon. But Crawford stays absolutely still.

NUNALLY
Mr. Crawford, your neighbor mentioned
that your wife -

CRAWFORD
It's Tom.

NUNALLY
I'm sorry?

CRAWFORD
You can call me Tom.

NUNALLY
Tom. Your wife. Is she here?

CRAWFORD
Yes.

Crawford gestures to a library alcove, behind him, out of view.

NUNALLY
Is she all right?

Nunally begins to drift slowly to the side, to see.

CRAWFORD
I don't think she is. I shot her,
Rob.

Nunally's nodding, edging to look into the alcove -

NUNALLY
You shot your wife.

CRAWFORD

It was like I just suddenly - snapped.
We were arguing - and I got the gun.

NUNALLY

- okay - I hear you -

CRAWFORD

And I shot her in the head. I know it
was wrong.

(Beat)

Are you listening to me?

But Nunally is not. He's frozen - staring, shocked, at the
back wall of the alcove - which he can now see.

There's a big framed black-white photograph: a portrait of
Jennifer Crawford.

NUNALLY

Oh Jesus Christ.

Nunally fumbles for his walkie-talkie, rushing past Crawford
toward the alcove -

- kneeling by Jennifer, who lies, face-up in a red puddle -

NUNALLY

(into walkie-talkie)

We need a medic in here! Get the
ambulance up! RIGHT NOW! NOW! NOW!

Nunally feels her neck frantically for a pulse - looking in
her open, vacant eyes for some sign -

NUNALLY

Oh no - God no - I can't - get a -

Nunally desperately starts C.P.R., his hands getting bloody.
He stops to check her neck for a pulse now and then -

- as Crawford slowly approaches from the living room,
standing behind Nunally. Cold.

CRAWFORD

You know, I think I read somewhere
that a good place to find a pulse is
the femoral artery. It's on the inner
surface of the upper thigh. If you
put your fingers - you know, right up
inside her dress -

Nunally turns and lunges up, smashing a fist into Crawford's face. Crawford reels backward with Nunally -

- the two of them falling with Nunally on top, beating Crawford furiously, cursing -

- as SWAT COPS burst in, grabbing Nunally, dragging him back - knocking into PARAMEDICS trying to get to Jennifer -

- Nunally kicking, flailing, spitting at Crawford - who's put face-down on the floor, to get cuffed.

Nunally pulls free from the SWAT cops, distraught, angry - going to retrieve his gun and shove it in his shoulder-holster, struggling to regain control.

PARAMEDIC

Wait a second - she's not dead!

Nunally whirls - everyone freezing, breathless, falling silent.

The Paramedics kneeling around Jennifer work -

- as Crawford lies on the floor, staring at his wife. Like she's a machine that defied astronomical odds and refused to behave according to his calculations.

EXT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - SOON AFTER

Jennifer's stretcher is loaded into an ambulance, doors slamming shut and sirens kicking on -

- as Crawford, cuffed behind his back, is pushed into the back seat of a police car. His eyes on the ambulance as it pulls away, carrying his wife.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - SOON AFTER

A DETECTIVE uses a pencil to lift Crawford's gun from the coffee table and carefully put it in an evidence bag.

Nunally stands back, watching the COPS and TECHNICIANS work the scene - lost in his thoughts, shaken.

SWAT COMMANDER

You all right?

Nunally "wakes" - nods. Absently:

NUNALLY

Yeah. I'm good.

To avoid talking more, he heads out to the glaring lights and chaos outside.

FADE OUT

INT. WILLY'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

The alarm clock shifts to **6:00 am** and pops on to local news and traffic -

- but the narrow futon bed is already empty.

WILLY SLOCUM works at a laptop on his second-hand desk, lit by a solitary lamp.

He is in his late-20s, good-looking. Short hair, office-pale but athletic, wearing mis-matched sweats from Eastern Oklahoma State College.

He jots a final note, sets his yellow legal pad aside. As he goes to the closet-sized bathroom, pulling off his sweatshirt and starting the tiny pre-fab shower, we linger on the laptop screen: rental listings for a new apartment.

TIME CUT

The bare overhead bulb is on, revealing the concrete floor and painted-plywood walls. His clothes hang neatly on a length of pipe suspended by ropes from the exposed rafters. Law school texts fill cinderblock-and-board shelves.

The radio chatters. Willy knots a tie in his crisp white collar.

TIME CUT

Willy methodically packs legal folders from last night's "homework" into his big, battered briefcase. He has to work to stuff all the files in.

He pulls on his suit jacket, settles the shoulders, tugs at his cuffs. Uncaps a pen, leans over a one-sentence letter waiting on the desk. Reads it over.

As he signs, we glimpse:

- hereby give notice that I will be resigning my position at the District Attorney's Office as of Novemb-

Willy savors the moment.

Then he tucks the letter into an envelope, gets the heavy briefcase - goes to shut off the light and open the door -

- which swings about six inches, then clonks into something.

Willy grimaces. Peeks out, goes to pound on a wall.

WILLY

Mrs. Demello?

(Beat)

MRS. DEMELLO! Your CAR!

Silence. He sighs. Shuts the door and presses a button near the light-switch.

There's mechanical grinding noise as the far wall slowly rolls up, letting in daylight and revealing an alley beyond the hanging clothes and cinderblock shelves.

He presses the garage-door-opener button again, and hurries across the apartment to duck out under the closing door.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Willy straightens and takes a breath, re-settling his suit jacket with an irritable glance at his landlady's car, parked sloppily next to the garage, blocking his door.

As he walks away, down the alley, we rise up to reveal the hazy sprawling landscape of L.A. - and the towers of Downtown, rising ahead of Willy like Oz.

WILLY (V.O.)

Come on, Phil: I called you as a courtesy, and you start looking to take advantage?

INT. WILLY'S OFFICE - LATER THAT MORNING

An ancient fluorescent-lit cubby crammed with documents, case files, notes, reference books. Willy on the phone:

WILLY

I'm not knocking it down to a Class C. My backlog of open cases does not mitigate the fact that your client tried to kill his brother-in-law with - oh, right, a "golfing accident"? Your client owns one golf club and no golf

(MORE)

WILLY (cont'd)
 balls - and the "accident" took place
 in the stairway of an illegal after-
 hours gambling club. Yeah, okay -
 I'll see you in court.

His cell phone rings. As he gets it:

WILLY
 Well, I won't see you in court, but
 someone from this office will. You
 take it up with them, I gotta go.
 (switching phones)
 Willy Slocum. Oh - hey, hi, yes.

Assistant District Attorney NORMAN CHANG (mid-30s) throws the
 door open without looking:

NORMAN
 Wooton Sims?!

Willy holds up a finger, talking into his cell:

WILLY
 No, I didn't. Wow. Okay.

Norman mouths "WOOTON SIMS?!" repeatedly during:

WILLY
 No - short notice is...fine. No, I
 can. Black tie. Sure. What time?
 Okay. Yes. Thank her.

He hangs up, exhales slowly. Looks at Norman.

NORMAN
 Wooton Sims?! Wooton - SIMS?!

WILLY
 Please stop saying, "Wooton Sims" over
 and over. It's starting to sound like
 nonsense words.

NORMAN
 You asshole!

WILLY
 Okay: go back to "Wooton Sims."

As Willy gets up and goes out, past Norman -

NORMAN
 How the hell did you get a job at
 Wooton Sims?! I can't even get an
interview!

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Norman follows Willy out to a central bullpen area where the shared ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS work: MONA and GLADYS.

NORMAN

I've been here five years. I'm your supervisor. I graduated USC, summa!

WILLY

We're just going to pretend he's not talking, okay?

MONA

No problem.

NORMAN

I'm serious.

WILLY

I'm really jammed-up all day, and I need to rent a tuxedo - for tonight.

NORMAN

A tuxedo?! Oh, come on! You are so full of shit.

WILLY

(Jotting notes)

There must be a place that does that, right - same day? I'm also gonna need a messenger to bring it here. This is my suit size and my shirt size...I really appreciate this.

Mona nods, taking notes as Willy gets out a credit card. Other DDAs are gathering to soak up some vicarious kicks.

MONA

What's going on?

WILLY

Wooton Sims buys a whole lot of seats to this charity opera thing every year, because Bob Wooton is the chairman of this committee -

NORMAN

"Bob" Wooton?!

WILLY

(Enjoying, mock-helpless)

It's what the man told me to call him.

GLADYS
 You're gonna need to pick out a style,
 Willy.

WILLY
 A style.

GLADYS
 For the tuxedo.

Willy hesitates, in over his head. A DDA helpfully does the Travolta finger-in-the-air pose.

WILLY
 I don't know - I just don't want to
 look like I'm going to the prom.

GLADYS
 You wanna go Classic. Fix him up.

MONA
 We'll get you something Classic.
 (Picks up a ringing phone)
 Willy Slocum's office.

NORMAN
 Make sure it comes with cuff-links and
 knee-pads.

WILLY
 Oh, that's very nice: it's good to be
 back in high school.

MONA
 (Hanging up)
 Willy?

Her tone makes him - and everyone else - turn.

MONA
 God wants to see you.

WILLY
 (Beat)
 Our God?

MONA
 Who art on the Eleventh Floor.

Willy, startled, looks around. Approving nods, raised eyebrows. He tightens his tie and heads for the elevators.

NORMAN

There is no justice! There is no
justice in the city of Los Angeles!

INT. LOBRUTO'S OFFICE - SOON AFTER

District Attorney JOE LOBRUTO, 50-ish, sits behind a massive oak desk, studying a thick file. Doesn't look up as a SECRETARY shows Willy in.

Willy hesitates. Looks around: he's never been here. Flags, wood panelling, leather furniture, windows overlooking the city. Finally Lobluto looks up, takes Willy in.

LOBRUTO

William No-Middle-Initial Slocum.

WILLY

Yes sir.

LOBRUTO

Sit.

(As Willy does:)

Eighty-four-percent conviction rate.
That's remarkable.

WILLY

Thank you.

LOBRUTO

With a case load thirty percent higher
than any other first-year DDA.

(Beat)

Of course - you also swapped more
cases than the rest of them put
together.

Willy considers his options. He always does.

WILLY

I offered my losing cases in exchange
for two or three of anyone else's
possible convictions. They couldn't
handle their workloads, and I prefer
not to lose.

Lobluto knew this; the question was would Willy admit it.

LOBRUTO

You're going to need a middle initial.

WILLY
Sir?

LOBRUTO
You're going to Wooton Sims.

WILLY
In two weeks.

LOBRUTO
You'll be able to afford a better suit. But those guys all play squash and have middle names. They go in for the mother's maiden name a lot.

Beat. Willy doesn't like the implied personal judgement, but the only way it shows is how calm he stays.

WILLY
My mother didn't have a maiden name.

Lobruuto nods, unruffled by Willy's hard calm.

LOBRUTO
So you're a bastard; sometimes I can be a son-of-a-bitch. Maybe you belong here.

WILLY
I didn't work this hard to stay where I belong.

LOBRUTO
You're a street-fighter, Willy. You should be in court. We can move you up to better cases.

WILLY
I appreciate the offer.

LOBRUTO
I didn't think so.
(Closes the file, stands)
Well - you got your litigation experience. Your chops. And your juicy private sector job. Anything else the City of Los Angeles can do for you?

Willy's amused. He stands, too. As they shake hands:

WILLY

No, I think that's everything - thank you.

LOBRUTO

The offer stands. If you get tired of carrying a spear.

Willy nods - but Lobruto notes the tiny flicker in his eyes: not getting it and trying to cover. Lobruto smiles gently.

LOBRUTO

It's an opera joke. Give my regards to Bob.

INT. WILLY'S OFFICE - LATER

Willy's twisting in his rented tux, trying to adjust a buckle on the side of the vest.

The phone rings and he gives up, frustrated - pushing the plastic garment-bag aside to answer -

- knocking a full cup of take-out coffee on to his chair.

Which is where he left his suit.

Willy freezes. Watching the coffee seep into the fabric. Into the phone, distracted:

WILLY

Willy Slocum.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - THE SAME TIME

Norman's looking at a case file.

NORMAN

I've got an Attempted Homicide. Conley caught it last night, but he's hung up in motions with Gardner. Arraignment in Part Seven, at three o'clock.

WILLY

Three o'clock is in fifteen minutes.

NORMAN

Thank you. What's the temperature?

WILLY

I can't do it.

NORMAN

You do still actually work here, Willy, right? I mean, you're still going to be cashing your paycheck for another two weeks and everything?

WILLY

Just get somebody else for this one.

NORMAN

Everybody's booked up. Look: it's not going to trial. There's a weapon with prints, and a confession. Take the arraignment and wait for the plea.

WILLY

(Beat)

A real confession?

NORMAN

Spontaneous and signed. Come on, Willy.

Willy sighs. Looking down at his coffee-soaked suit.

WILLY

Okay. Here's the problem.

INT. NORMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Norman slowly smiles, listening.

NORMAN

You know - I really wish I was going to see this.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Willy slips self-consciously through the double-doors, wearing the tuxedo.

He gets even more self-conscious when he notices a handful of local REPORTERS. He hurries in -

- passing Nunally, in the back row. Nunally is making a good show of keeping it together...but it's only a show.

JUDGE IRENE FELDMAN, 50-ish, looks over her half-glasses.

JUDGE FELDMAN

Mr. Slocum. Nice to see a man who dresses for court.

WILLY

Sorry, your honor. Long story.

Willy, hurrying to Prosecution Table, barely glances at the Defense Table -

- but Crawford, sitting beside his PUBLIC DEFENDER in an orange jumpsuit and handcuffs, never takes his eyes off Willy, intrigued.

JUDGE FELDMAN

Grapevine has it the punch-line is Wooton Sims.

WILLY

Yes, ma'am.

JUDGE FELDMAN

Good for you, double-oh-seven.

(Signaling the Bailiff)

Let's see what public service is offering you by way of a send-off:

BAILIFF

The State of California Versus Thomas Crawford.

The Defense rises; Crawford hardly pays any attention to the Judge - glancing back and noticing Nunally, whose eyes bore into him, haunted and burning.

Crawford stares at him impassively a second, then turns to lean past his P.D. and watch Willy hastily skim the file.

JUDGE

Mr. Crawford, you've been charged with section 664 slash 187 of the California Penal Code: Attempted Murder, with additional allegations of Assault With a Deadly Weapon - Penal Code section 245 dash A2, with Great Bodily Injury, P.C. Section 12022.07.

(Beat)

Do you waive further reading of the complaint and complete statement of rights?

P.D.
(sotto)
You do.

CRAWFORD
I do. But, your honor -

JUDGE FELDMAN
And do you wish to enter a plea at
this time?

CRAWFORD
Not guilty. But I also want to waive
my right to counsel, and represent
myself.

Willy looks up from the file - startled.

JUDGE FELDMAN
Do you have a problem with your
appointed counsel, Mr. Crawford?

CRAWFORD
No. I just want to do it myself. I
believe it's within my rights.

P.D.
Your honor, if I could have a moment
with my client -

CRAWFORD
I'm not your client. Try and keep up,
would you?

The P.D. shuts up, taken aback. The Judge considers
Crawford, thoughtful, then turns to Willy.

JUDGE FELDMAN
Do the People have an objection or a
comment for the record, Mr. Slocum?

Willy hesitates, held by Crawford's strange, amused gaze.
Shakes it off:

WILLY
I'm sorry, your honor: we've got the
weapon and a signed confession. I
really think Mr. Crawford needs a
competent attorney to - frankly -
negotiate a plea.

Crawford reaches up with cuffed hands and adjusts an
imaginary bow-tie. Willy self-consciously touches where
Crawford indicated on his own collar, straightens his clip-
on.

Crawford nods: you're welcome. Willy turns to the Judge.

WILLY

I - can't - this was supposed to be - with a pro se defendant, this is going to drag out for months - and I'm not even going to be here. The People request a continuance to -

CRAWFORD

Excuse me? Your honor? I'm willing to waive my right to a preliminary hearing and go directly to a jury trial.

(To Willy)

Does that help?

JUDGE

You don't need to look out for Mr. Slocum, Mr. Crawford. The District Attorney's office can shift another prosecutor to the case -

CRAWFORD

No, I like Mr. Slocum.

Beat.

JUDGE FELDMAN

Mr. Slocum? He likes you.

WILLY

Terrific.

JUDGE FELDMAN

Mr. Crawford seems to understand his rights and responsibilities.

WILLY

All due respect, your honor, I'm worried this may turn into some sort of a - circus -

JUDGE FELDMAN

I appreciate your concern for the dignity of my courtroom, Mr. Slocum - considering you're making the argument dressed as a game-show host. Unfortunately, the man is a tax-paying citizen, entitled by our Constitution to try and manipulate the legal system, like everybody else.

(turning)

(MORE)

JUDGE FELDMAN (cont'd)
 As for you, Mr. Crawford, I strongly
 urge you to retain counsel. Lack of
 same will not be grounds for appeal.

CRAWFORD
 I understand. Thank you.

JUDGE FELDMAN
 Are the People ready to go to trial
 without a preliminary hearing?

Willy hesitates, irritated. Looks through the file again.
 Checks Crawford - waiting, polite.

WILLY
 Sure. Why not.

Crawford smiles at him, as the Judge opens her calendar.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - LATER

Willy, in his tux, comes out of a staircase and stops. Rob
 Nunally is waiting by Willy's parked car.

NUNALLY
 You're supposed to be good.

Willy takes him in - wary, seeing an edge of anger and fear
 beneath the tough controlled cop manner.

WILLY
 Is that what I'm supposed to be?

NUNALLY
 I asked around. You're supposed to be
 top-notch - but to me it looks like
 you've got one foot out the door, and
 you're wiping the rest of us off the
 bottom of the other one.

WILLY
 I'm sorry to...disappoint you.

Nunally is silent - frustrated. The concrete walls and
 ceilings echo from distant cars.

NUNALLY
 I took Crawford's confession.

WILLY
 And now you want mine?

NUNALLY

I'm here to warn you. Take this seriously, because it's serious. This guy is stone cold - and his wife - is lying in a hospital bed - with brain damage...

He struggles to keep himself under control.

WILLY

Are you all right?

NUNALLY

Are you gonna be on this, or what?

WILLY

Yeah. I'm on it.

(Gently)

You got a confession. You took the gun out of his hand. It's done.

NUNALLY

I'm just - telling you. Is that okay? Or are you too friggin' busy?!

WILLY

No. It's okay.

Willy waits. Watching the tortured cop wrestle with demons.

NUNALLY

Forget it.

(Beat)

It's a lock. We're good. Put him down. Bury him.

Willy nods. Nunally turns and walks away, down a ramp.

Willy watches him go. Sad. Like he's watching Nunally drown. But he's seen people drown before...and he's not about to put out a hand. Might get pulled in himself.

INT. CHANDLER PAVILION - LOBBY - LATER

Willy moves uneasily among clusters of laughing, chatting, sparkling FORMAL-DRESSED PEOPLE.

NIKKI GARDNER joins him, strolling alongside. She's his age, but her elegant dress, unlike his tux, was made for her.

NIKKI

Are you a shark?

WILLY

Sorry?

NIKKI

You've been circling the lobby for half-an-hour now, like if you stopped you'd die.

WILLY

If I stopped, I'd be standing around with no one to talk to. At which point, death would be a relief.

NIKKI

Why don't you talk to Bob?

Willy stops walking, getting a little careful.

WILLY

"Bob" is talking to the Governor.

(Beat)

Do I know you?

She puts a hand out, gently amused.

NIKKI

Nikki Gardner. Senior Associate, Wooton Sims.

WILLY

(Shakes)

Oh - hey, hi. It was your office that called, with the invitation.

NIKKI

On Bob's orders.

WILLY

Listen, I don't...actually know "Bob." I mean, I've only met the man once.

Nikki nods, considering this. And him.

NIKKI

Interesting.

They're each conscious of an unexpected buzz of attraction. The lobby lights flicker, breaking the spell a little. As the CROWD begins to drift toward the auditorium doors:

NIKKI

You like opera?

WILLY
Truth is, I haven't really had that
much expos-

NIKKI
Neither do I.

With a conspiratorial head-tip, Nikki moves toward the plaza doors. Willy follows.

EXT. ARTS CENTER - SOON AFTER

They stroll the emptying plaza, dressed to the nines.

NIKKI
Bob assigned you to my team. I'll
supervise your case-work, steer you
through the office arcana, and
generally keep an eye on you.

WILLY
Kind of like a mentor.

NIKKI
Kind of like a probation officer.

Beat. Willy nods, meeting Nikki's gaze as she looks to make sure he's got it.

WILLY
Okay.

NIKKI
Wooton Sims expects absolute loyalty
and a hundred-and-ten-percent
performance. But: you get to work on
legendary litigation. National,
sometimes global, in scope. It's high-
stakes. And cut-throat - even within
the team. We burn out associates at
an astonishing rate.

WILLY
You're trying to scare me.

NIKKI
Yes.

WILLY
You're going to have to try harder.

She stops walking. Studying Willy.

NIKKI

Can I ask you something personal?

WILLY

Sure.

NIKKI

Who are you?

Willy doesn't answer. Maybe uncertain what she means. Maybe not wanting her to know. Or even not knowing, himself.

NIKKI

We have a guy in our criminal division, fresh out of Yale, named Calvin Tyler. One of our very rich clients gets pulled over, D.U.I. - which is routine bullshit, so Calvin gets it. Against you. Next thing we know, Calvin is fired, and Bob Wooton, who has never even interviewed a junior associate before - let alone hired one - says you're on my team.

Willy weighs his options. Decides to level:

WILLY

It was a good bust, so Calvin came to me for a deal. I told him if he could arrange an interview for me with Mr. Wooton, I would throw the case. I laid out his arguments and evidence for him - and I showed him how I would lose. Calvin set up my appointment for the day after our court date. Then he did what I had suggested in court - and I wiped the floor with him. Your client got the maximum. Next day, I met with Mr. Wooton.

(Shrugs)

Bob.

Beat.

NIKKI

Wow. You know what's brilliant about that?

WILLY

Yes.

NIKKI
You didn't actually do anything all
that wrong.

WILLY
Well - I wasn't entirely honest with
Calvin.

His cell-phone rings. He ignores it.

NIKKI
You gonna get that?

WILLY
Everyone I need to talk to is here.

They are both feeling the electricity in the air between them.
They wait the phone out, enjoying the forbidden insanity of
it. But then:

NIKKI
We need to talk about your transition
timetable.

WILLY
All right.

NIKKI
Bob believes in trial-by-fire. He
wants you up-to-speed two weeks from
Tuesday, because we're getting on a
plane to Chicago for depositions in a
class-action against our biggest
client, Armstead Pharmaceutical.

WILLY
No problem.

She studies Willy, trying to make sure he understands:

NIKKI
That's catch-up on three years' work -
and you haven't closed out your old
job yet.

WILLY
I'm good at trials. Even by fire.

Beat.

NIKKI
You know, a little bit of fear can be
a very healthy thing to have.

WILLY
I'm looking forward to when I can
afford the luxury of having some.

Nikki sighs, smiles. Enjoying him, somewhat reluctantly.

NIKKI
I'll have them put the Armstead
materials in your new office.

WILLY
Thanks. Boss.

He watches her head off into the night. He remains, alone,
in his tuxedo, looking at the elegant glittering arts plaza.

Then he checks his cell-phone. Dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FORENSICS LAB - LATER

MARCHAND, Senior S.I.D. (Scene Investigation Division) Tech,
works as he talks into a speaker-phone. He and Willy have
teamed-up often, and an underlying respect lets them mock
each other.

MARCHAND
Marchand.

WILLY
It's Willy Slocum. What's up?

MARCHAND
Your gun in that Palisades shooting is
no good.

WILLY
How can the gun be "no good"?

MARCHAND
It's a perfectly good weapon. A
Heckler & Koch nine-millimeter. It's
just no good as evidence. It's never
been fired.

WILLY
It's the gun from the scene?

MARCHAND

Yep. Bought by Mr. Thomas Crawford and registered to his wife, about a month ago. Apparently a gift.

WILLY

And between the shooting and arrest, this guy was locked inside his house.

MARCHAND

Is that a question?

WILLY

No, I mean, just: what's the point? Playing games with the gun. He's alone in the house with the victim, and he confessed - it's not like the gun's gonna get him off the hook.

MARCHAND

Do you have a question I can answer?

Beat. Willy shakes the puzzle off, irritated:

WILLY

Look, our weapon is in that house somewhere. Get a team out to search it tomorrow morning.

MARCHAND

Ya think?

WILLY

(Sighs, smiles)

Thank you.

He shuts the phone. Takes a moment, looking around again at where he is. Absently tugs at his tie and vest, lets the case go. Heads in to the opera.

INT. WILLY'S OFFICE - A WEEK LATER

Controlled chaos. A week's work has emptied the shelves and cleared the surfaces, but the file-cabinet drawers are all half-open: Willy sorts folders, neatly marking and packing them. White "trans-file" storage boxes are piled all over.

MESSENGER (O.S.)

Slocum?

Willy looks up, at a MESSENGER with another file box.

WILLY

Yeah.

MESSENGER

Where do you want it?

WILLY

The idea here is we're trying to take boxes out - not bring more in.

MESSENGER

Is that the idea?

Willy sourly gestures to a chair; checks the label as the Messenger sets it down -

WILLY

Whoa - wait a second, this is a screw-up. I already have these documents. I sent this box: to the Defendant, at County.

MESSENGER

I picked up at County. Slip says bring 'em here.

Messenger holds out a clipboard. Willy reluctantly signs. As the Messenger leaves, Willy cuts the tape and takes out a folder. Opens it:

Crawford has scrawled **NO** in red marker across the top sheet.

Willy turns to the next page. A big red **NO** across that, too.

Pulls out more documents - flips through: **NO - NO - NO - NO** - red letters wriggling across the typed pages, like flip-book animation.

Beat. Disturbed, he picks up the phone, dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - THE SAME TIME

S.I.D. TECHS are taking the place apart: opening HVAC vents, pulling books off shelves, upending chairs and tables, removing drawers from cabinets.

Marchand, supervising, answers his cell-phone:

MARCHAND

Marchand.

WILLY

Where are we on this gun?

MARCHAND

We can't find it, Willy.

WILLY

I'm in trial on Monday.

MARCHAND

I know. I don't know what to tell you. I'm there now.

WILLY

You said you'd get a team out a week ago -

MARCHAND

I'm here now. My team has been here twice already.

(Beat)

Do you really need it?

WILLY

Do I need it?! The weapon?!

He takes a second. Sighs, exasperated - but honest:

WILLY

I don't know. Probably not. Defendant's a whack-job.

MARCHAND

He went pro se, right?

WILLY

Yeah. Just when you think they're not really stupid, they defend themselves.

MARCHAND

You've got a confession and an airtight bunch of circumstantial.

(Apologetic)

We've gone over this place top-to-bottom three times now, Willy.

Willy takes a breath. Thinks it through.

WILLY

Yeah, okay. Don't worry about it.

(Beat)

Sorry - got a lot going on.

MARCHAND

Must be rough, figuring out what you're gonna do with all that money.

WILLY

Hey, I had to sit through an opera last week.

MARCHAND

Oh gee - lemme see if I can express how much sympathy I have:

Marchand snaps his phone shut.

Willy smiles, hangs up. But then his smile fades, as he glances down again at Crawford's box of papers.

Hundreds of pages. Every single one scrawled **NO**.

Willy considers them.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

Metal chairs. Bad light. Crawford sits, cuffed, at a table, waiting. Looks up as the door unlocks.

A GUARD lets Willy in, locks the door behind him.

Crawford watches Willy take a legal pad, files, pens from his briefcase, set them on the table.

CRAWFORD

How's my wife?

WILLY

I don't know.

CRAWFORD

I heard somewhere, I think it was on N.P.R., that you're supposed to talk to people in a coma. Play their favorite music. Supposedly it reaches them.

Willy, now ready, lets Crawford study him.

CRAWFORD

You represent Jennifer. The voice of the victim, judicially speaking. But you haven't gone to see her?

WILLY

Not yet.

CRAWFORD

Too busy getting up to speed on
Armstead Pharmaceutical?

Beat.

WILLY

I beg your pardon?

CRAWFORD

I'm not judging you. I think anyone -
coming from...what you came from -
then paying your way through East-Okie
Cowshit College and Tulsa Law by
writing papers for Princeton kids on
the internet - my God, it must have
eaten your liver! Sixty-thousand
dollars in debt, eighty-four percent
conviction rate: you deserve this.

Willy tries to stay in control.

WILLY

What the hell have you been doing.

CRAWFORD

I'm permitted the use of a private
investigator.

WILLY

Not to investigate me!

CRAWFORD

Why not? You're investigating me.

WILLY

You shot your wife.

CRAWFORD

Allegedly. That's how it works,
right? If I can't introduce something
in court as evidence - it doesn't
exist. Legally.

WILLY

Look - I don't want to play games with
you.

CRAWFORD

I'm afraid you have to.

Beat. Willy reconstructs his formal cool. Takes some pages scrawled **NO** from a folder, pushes them across the table.

WILLY

Is this some form of - communication?

CRAWFORD

You sent me a box of papers.

WILLY

It's called Discovery. The State has a legal obliga-

CRAWFORD

There's nothing in it, Willy. You haven't 'discovered' anything. Have you found the gun?

Beat.

WILLY

Not yet.

CRAWFORD

No.

(Beat)

Does it bother you that I call you Willy?

WILLY

(Lies)

No.

Crawford nods. Pleased. Leans forward.

CRAWFORD

I'd like you to consider becoming my lawyer. I'll pay you. A lot of money.

WILLY

I'm - prosecuting you.

CRAWFORD

Yeah, but I'm offering you a chance to get on the right side of this whole mess while you still can.

WILLY

Are you out of your mind?

CRAWFORD

I think - on advice of counsel - I'll decline to answer that one.

Willy studies him. Decides: it's an elaborate act. Begins to put away his papers.

WILLY

I don't need the gun to convict you, by the way.

CRAWFORD

She was cheating, you know.

Willy looks at him, slightly taken aback. He didn't know; it wasn't in the confession.

As he considers whether it makes a difference - he notices Crawford watching, enjoying. Willy shuts his briefcase.

WILLY

It doesn't matter what she did...Tom. What you did is a crime.

CRAWFORD

Perhaps. But - maybe my so-called peers will look at me and see themselves. Betrayed. Frustrated. Humiliated. And you and I both know, Willy, that people have an infinite capacity for believing in their own innocence.

WILLY

Great. Take the stand. Tell your story. I'd appreciate it.

CRAWFORD

Not to mention the fact you have no actual evidence connecting me to the crime.

Willy smiles, gets up.

WILLY

Except your confession.

Crawford watches him go to the door.

CRAWFORD

My grandfather was an egg farmer.

Willy stops, annoyed.

WILLY

Is this gonna be about how you had a rough childhood?

CRAWFORD

I used to candle eggs at his farm. You know what that is? You hold an egg up to a light, and look for imperfections.

(beat)

The first time I did it, he told me to put the ones that were cracked or flawed in a bucket - for the bakery.

(beat)

He came back an hour later and there were three hundred eggs in the bakery bucket. He asked me what the hell I was doing.

(beat)

I found a flaw in every single one. Thin places in the shell, minuscule cracks.

(smiles)

Look closely enough and you'll find everything has a weak spot...where it can break.

WILLY

Looking for mine?

CRAWFORD

No, I've found yours.

WILLY

Illuminate me.

Crawford considers how to put it.

CRAWFORD

You're a winner, Willy.

Silence. Willy pushes the call-button by the door.

WILLY

Huh. Well. Joke's on me then, I guess.

CRAWFORD

Yes. It is.

WILLY

I'll see you in court, Mr. Crawford.

The door unlocks. Crawford winks.

Willy hesitates for a second - then leaves.

INT. WOOTON, SIMS - EMPTY OFFICE - LATER

It's big. It's got a window. It's got a sofa. Undecorated, except for a pile of materials & boxes marked **ARMSTEAD PHARMACEUTICAL**.

Willy is filling out forms - tax, citizenship, benefits. He doesn't notice Nikki when she comes to the door.

NIKKI

Make sure you sign the one with the devil in blood. It's not binding otherwise.

He looks up, smiles.

WILLY

Just want to be ready for Chicago. I'm all closed-out, downtown. Last trial starts Monday.

Beat. Not pleased:

NIKKI

You've got a trial Monday?

WILLY

Yeah: attempted murder.

NIKKI

That gives you three days. You told me - and I told Bob - that you would be ready to hit the ground r-

WILLY

The man confessed. And he's pro se.

NIKKI

Willy, some but acting as his own lawyer - he could drag it out for months!

WILLY

You want to hear his witness list?

Nikki nods. Willy is silent. She frowns.

NIKKI

No witnesses?

Willy leans in, enjoying this part - analyzing, even admiring, Crawford's ploy:

WILLY

It's kind of clever: this guy is trying to provoke the system into declaring him insane. I think he thinks we'll call in the doctors and he can fake 'em out by refusing the defense. He's acting out this really - organized plan to appear crazy.

Beat. Nikki considers Willy.

NIKKI

You're gonna miss being in court, aren't you?

He studies her, confident. Gestures to the stacks of Armstead materials:

WILLY

I'm almost halfway through these. And I think I've already found about six disqualifiers in Delaware, Ohio, and Florida. I have to check case law in each state, but it looks good. I'll get the rest done over the long weekend.

Nikki sighs, smiles a little, against her will. He's won her over...again.

Willy shrugs, grins. In the silence, the impossible electricity returns. After a moment - to defuse it:

NIKKI

You don't go home for Thanksgiving?

Slight beat.

WILLY

No.

She studies him a moment, thoughtful. Careful.

NIKKI

If you want - you're welcome at mine. My family's.

WILLY

Really?

She nods. Smiling a little, knowing her family and starting to know Willy:

NIKKI

I think it would be interesting.

Beat.

WILLY

Yeah. Okay, thank you.

NIKKI

Cool.

Beat. She leaves. Willy doesn't go back to work right away.

INT. COURTROOM - THE NEXT DAY

JUDGE ROBINSON presiding. A mid-sized crowd, including a few REPORTERS. A UNIFORM COP is in the witness box, Willy stands in the Prosecution Table.

UNIFORM COP

We established a perimeter around the house and then waited for SWAT and the Negotiator. It was strictly by the book.

WILLY

So the house was completely surrounded within how long of the first shots?

Crawford sits alone at the Defense Table. He wears an expensive suit and no handcuffs, but two DEPUTIES sit behind him. He's barely listening to the testimony - drawing on his legal pad: intricate, dense complex diagrams of "Rube Goldberg" contraptions.

UNIFORM COP

Maybe ten minutes.

WILLY

And when you arrived at the sc-

Crawford noisily tears a page off his pad. Looks up - sees Willy, and everyone else, turned to him.

CRAWFORD

Sorry.

Willy sighs, returns to the Cop.

WILLY
When you arrived on the scene, was there a crowd?

UNIFORM COP
Oh yeah. Neighbors, came out to look soon as it started.

WILLY
And from what you could ascertain, no one went into or came out of the house until SWAT and the negotiator arrived?

UNIFORM COP
Definitely not.

WILLY
Thank you. No further questions.

JUDGE ROBINSON
Mr. Crawford?

Crawford looks up from his drawing.

CRAWFORD
What?

JUDGE ROBINSON
Your witness, Mr. Crawford.

Crawford takes in the Uniform Cop.

CRAWFORD
No questions for this witness.

Willy watches Crawford return diligently to his doodles.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: THE DEFENSE TABLE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

It's a mess of loose legal-pad pages torn from Crawford's pad, each covered in madly intricate schematics. He works on yet another, head down, intent.

Dr. MARION KANG is on the stand, using a marker on a big diagram of a head:

DR. KANG
 - through the frontal cortex and the temporal lobe, coming to rest against the back of the skull.

WILLY
 So this bullet inflicted serious injury?

DR. KANG
 It inflicted serious and irreparable injury.

Willy nods, allowing the jury time on this. He checks a notecard, glances at Crawford. Considers his options.

WILLY
 Dr. Kang, is it safe to say that someone inflicting this kind of wound intended to kill?

Judge Robinson gives Willy a warning look.

JUDGE ROBINSON
 Mr. Crawford, you might want to object. The witness can't know your state of mind.

Crawford doesn't even look up from his drawing.

CRAWFORD
 No thank you, your honor.

Willy gives Judge Robinson an *I-told-you-so* shrug. Turns to Dr. Kang.

KANG
 I would say so, yes.

WILLY
 Thank you, Dr. Kang.

Crawford tears off the page, starts another.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Nunally on the stand. Focused, professional. Crawford draws, ignoring him.

WILLY
 So after you put down your gun, what did Mr. Crawford do?

NUNALLY

He confessed to shooting his wife.

WILLY

He confessed.

(Beat)

Did Mr. Crawford appear confused or in any way intoxicated, impaired?

NUNALLY

No. Not at all. He knew what was going on.

WILLY

What did Mr. Crawford say?

Nunally looks at Crawford, enjoying the fatal blow:

NUNALLY

He said, "I got the gun and I shot my wife. God help me, I shot her in the head. I know it was wrong."

CRAWFORD

(low, still drawing)

Objection.

Everyone turns, surprised.

JUDGE ROBINSON

I'm sorry - Mr. Crawford, did you say something?

Crawford sets aside his pen for the first time. Looks up.

CRAWFORD

Yes. I want to object.

JUDGE ROBINSON

On what grounds?

CRAWFORD

I don't know.

WILLY

Your honor -

CRAWFORD

I don't know what you'd call it. They - it wasn't the first time, either, but - I don't know the legal term.

JUDGE ROBINSON
 Why don't you just explain it in
 layman's terms.

CRAWFORD
 Fucking the victim.

Uproar in the court.

JUDGE ROBINSON
 Mr. Crawford -

CRAWFORD
 You said layman's terms -

WILLY
 Your honor -

CRAWFORD
 I'm sorry - what would you call it -
legally - when the officer who
 arrested you has been having sexual
 intercourse with your wife?

Utter silence. Willy whirls a look at Nunally. The cop
 meets his eyes - a deer in headlights.

WILLY
 (Low)
 Oh - shit.

CRAWFORD
 I think it's objectionable - maybe I'm
 wrong.

WILLY
 Your honor...

JUDGE ROBINSON
 Detective Nunally?

Nunally looks down, silent. Shaking his head.

CRAWFORD
 Rob?

WILLY
 Your honor, the People request a -

Nunally suddenly launches himself over the witness box rail
 to attack Crawford - as the Deputies leap forward to stop him -
 all of them flailing and cursing in a tangle -

- spectators screaming, fleeing, gawking. Chaos.

INT. JUDGE ROBINSON'S CHAMBERS - SOON AFTER

The Judge grim, Willy panicked, Crawford calm.

WILLY

He had my witness list. He should have filed to suppress.

CRAWFORD

(Shrugs)

My mistake. Sorry.

JUDGE ROBINSON

Mr. Crawford, I warned you about representing yourself.

CRAWFORD

What about the fact that it's true? I mean, isn't that the point here: to get to the truth?

JUDGE ROBINSON

Mr. Slocum - is it true?

WILLY

I don't know. I only heard about it five minutes ago.

CRAWFORD

Put him back on the witness stand if you don't believe me.

WILLY

We can't put him back on now! Not after what the jury just saw. Your honor, I told you this would turn into a circus. First he provokes the witness with an outrageous allegation -

CRAWFORD

My Dick has evidence.

The Judge and Willy look at Crawford like he's truly insane.

JUDGE ROBINSON

Excuse me?

CRAWFORD

My investigator. I call him Dick. I guess I should call him as a rebuttal
(MORE)

CRAWFORD (cont'd)
 witness? He's got phone records,
 credit receipts, photographs,
 videotapes - all documenting the
 affair. In graphic detail.

(Beat. Mildly:)

Dick is good.

The Judge looks at Willy. This is bad. Thinking fast:

WILLY

Okay - um: I'll stipulate that my
 witness was less than forthcoming
 ...and that can more or less cancel
 out the fact that the defendant
 withheld a crucial -

JUDGE ROBINSON

Mr. Slocum - your witness was intimate
 with the victim, and he assaulted the
 defendant during the arrest.

CRAWFORD

Actually, while obtaining my so-called
 "confession."

Willy stares at Crawford, shaken. Understanding the trap.

WILLY

No way. Your honor -

JUDGE ROBINSON

He's got a point. They were alone in
 the house. The confession is no good.

WILLY

Oh - come on!

CRAWFORD

Is this a legal argument? "Oh come
 on"?

WILLY

(Whirls on him)

You want to get into it?!

Crawford raises his eyebrows. Awkward silence. Willy takes
 a deep breath. Turns to the Judge.

WILLY

Sorry.

(Beat)

He dictated and signed his confession,
after that incident.

JUDGE ROBINSON

In police custody. Arguably, in fear for his life. I'm sorry, Mr. Slocum - it's all 'fruit of the tainted tree.' We have to exclude all versions of the confession and any evidence collected by Lieutenant Nunally or by other police officers on the night he was present.

WILLY

This is insane!

CRAWFORD

It's Biblical, isn't it? The fruit and the tree and -

WILLY

He set this up! Don't you see what he's doing?!

JUDGE ROBINSON

Yes, I do. And I don't like it. But it's done, so we have to deal with it.

CRAWFORD

Do you think I could go home today, your honor? With Thanksgiving around the corner -

JUDGE ROBINSON

Don't push it, Mr. Crawford.

(Beat)

What we're going to do is give Mr. Slocum a few days to regroup and come up with new evidence. If he doesn't - then you can go home. That's going to put us into the long weekend. We reconvene Monday morning.

Willy just stands there: blind-sided, shell-shocked. Crawford smiles at him.

INT. WILLY'S OFFICE - THAT EVENING

The end of a bad, bad day. Willy flips on the lights as he comes in, shaken.

A package is on the empty desk. Addressed in red marker. The return address: **TC, County Jail.**

Willy just stands looking at it.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - THE SAME TIME

Crawford sits on the metal bunk in his prison jumpsuit. Alone. Looking down.

INT. WILLY'S OFFICE - RESUME

As Willy takes a letter-opener from the desk drawer - the phone rings. He answers it, eyes still on the package:

WILLY

Willy Slocum.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GLAMOROUS BAR - THE SAME TIME

Crowded with UPSCALE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS. Nikki is on her cell-phone, hand over her other ear:

NIKKI

Well - you've gotta admire the cleverness of it.

Willy begins cutting open the package as he talks:

WILLY

Do I?

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Crawford very slowly raises his eyes, until he is looking directly at us.

NIKKI (V.O.)

Come on, Willy - give the devil his due.

WILLY (V.O.)

Yeah. I'm just trying to figure out what that is.

INT. WILLY'S OFFICE/GLAMOROUS BAR - RESUME

NIKKI

Okay: then listen - I checked with Bob on how he wants you to handle this.

(MORE)

NIKKI (cont'd)
Has LoBruto tried to take you off the case yet?

WILLY
No.

NIKKI
Well, he pretty much has to if he's gonna save any face. So here's the strategy: you let him.

Willy cautiously lifts the box's flaps - pulls aside tissue paper - to reveal:

A single eggshell. Broken, empty.

WILLY
I let him?

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Crawford begins to smile.

NIKKI (V.O.)
Yeah, damage control. Stop getting your face on TV. As it is, I had to talk Bob down from cancelling your contract.

INT. WILLY'S OFFICE/GLAMOROUS BAR - RESUME

Willy is staring down at the broken eggshell, barely listening to Nikki.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
But we've got to move fast and get out from under. Otherwise, and I quote: "Stick a fork in this kid's ass and turn him over, he's done."

WILLY
I can't just - walk away.

NIKKI
Willy: today, you got killed. The issue now is saving your new life.

Willy can't take his eyes off Crawford's "gift."

WILLY
I guess...that would be the smart way of looking at it.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Crawford stares right at us. Smiling. Ice cold.

INT. WILLY'S OFFICE/GLAMOROUS BAR - RESUME

Nikki is sympathetic, misunderstanding Willy's quiet:

NIKKI

You want to come out and get drunk?

WILLY

No. Thank you. I've got some stuff to take care of.

NIKKI

All right. Don't beat yourself up.

WILLY

I won't.

He hangs up. Considering the empty eggshell. But then he looks up:

District Attorney Lobruto is in his office doorway, trying to decide whether to be angry.

LOBRUTO

You don't look into who the victim was sleeping with?

Willy burns, ashamed. But unable to admit it.

WILLY

He - threw me off.

(Frustrated)

Look, Crawford knew he'd be the prime suspect, so he gave us everything - but he made it all radioactive. The night this went down, it was over.

LOBRUTO

But you still walked it into court, Willy. We might not have a case...but it didn't have to be a public humiliation for this office and the police department.

Silence.

WILLY
Are you taking me off?

LOBRUTO
You're leaving anyway.

WILLY
I'm starting to get a sense of this
guy.

LOBRUTO
That's not new evidence.

WILLY
I can take him now: he thinks he's
smarter than I am.

LOBRUTO
It's not about you, Willy.

WILLY
Yeah, it is. He made it that way.
(Shows him the egg)
He likes me.

LOBRUTO
What is that - some kind of Oklahoma
insult?

WILLY
Let me do this. I won't make you look
bad.

Beat.

LOBRUTO
No. You won't. That's what I need to
make sure you understand. I remove
you now: I'm covered, I took some
action.
(Beat)
If you go on with this, when you lose -
blame has to come down. And it'll
come down on you. I'll have to
investigate you for improprieties,
incompetence - anything I can. In
public. I'll hang you out to dry.
For the good of this office.

Silence.

WILLY
If I lose.

LOBRUTO

What?

WILLY

You said "when."

Lobruuto grimaces. He shakes his head. Sighs.

LOBRUTO

All right. It's yours.

Willy nods. Stubborn. Scared.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Local news on the TV: *Willy pushing past media outside the courthouse; official photo of Nunally; footage from the standoff at Crawford's.*

The sound is low, and Nunally isn't watching. He's sitting on the edge of the bed...looking down at his gun, in his hands.

A knock on the door "wakes" him. Beat. He sets the gun aside, goes to peek out the curtains. Lets Willy in.

WILLY

You're not easy to find. I had to call Internal Affairs.

NUNALLY

Yeah - they put me on a desk - 'til this gets...sorted out.

He uncomfortably watches Willy glance around at the half-empty liquor bottle, the mismatched suitcases and paper bags full of balled-up clothes. And the gun on the bed.

NUNALLY

Got home - my wife already took the kids to her folks. Press is all over our front lawn. Friggin' vampires.

He falters, haunted by the echo. Willy doesn't notice:

WILLY

What the hell were you thinking. You're on the job and you get called to your girlfriend's house -

NUNALLY

I didn't know it was her house. I'd never been there.

WILLY

It was her name!

NUNALLY

I didn't know her name!

Willy waits. Nunally explains, reluctant to expose himself:

NUNALLY

No last names. Her rules. We met at the same hotel room, twice a week - no phone calls, no questions. She didn't want us to know too much about each other. She said it was like...travel in a foreign country. No baggage - from our lives. Just us. Escaping.

WILLY

Did you get the feeling she had rules because she had done it before? With other guys?

NUNALLY

No. I don't know. Maybe.
(Thinking, remembering:)
No. It was all just this...crazy thing. For both of us. It was...real. You know? We didn't expect that, when we started. We didn't know where it was going. I had cheated so many times, I was numb - but she was...new. And she made me feel like there was - some chance. To change. We were scared. It was like we were afraid to go forward, but we couldn't go back.

(Beat)

You always think you have time. To work it out. Or make things right.

(Angry)

What was I supposed to do?!

WILLY

You were supposed to tell me!

NUNALLY

I'm married! I have kids!

WILLY

You thought nobody knew - so maybe you could just walk away clean.

NUNALLY

No! I didn't think HE knew! OKAY?!
Even - after. I thought it was just -
massively fouled-up...bad luck. Like -
God - telling me - something.

(Anguished)

I'm there. My mind is going crazy. I
know the confession won't hold if
anyone finds out.

(Beat)

I thought the guy was a whack!

WILLY

Yeah? Well, he's not.

Nunally won't look at Willy. He just sits there, numb.

WILLY

Is there anything else you can give
me. Anything that might get us some
evidence.

Nunally shakes his head. Willy grimaces. Goes to the door.

NUNALLY

I...tried to warn you.

Willy stops. Looks back.

WILLY

You warned me he was smart. You
didn't warn me you were stupid.

Nunally winces. Takes it. Willy feels a little badly. Two
guys in a shabby motel room, in terrible trouble.

NUNALLY

How do we get the confession back in?

WILLY

We don't.

NUNALLY

What are you gonna do?

Willy shakes his head. Walks out.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

A massive search is under way.

Marchand's S.I.D. Team has been doubled, back-up by a dozen SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES -

- passing hand-held metal detectors along the furniture -
- taking pictures down from the walls -
- turning over mattresses - patting-down every item hanging in the closets -
- wriggling into crawlspaces - poking into light fixtures recessed into the ceilings -
- opening the air-conditioning unit, up on the roof -
- ripping out Crawford's high-end home-theater system -
- taking apart the Porsche in the garage.

Willy paces the edges of the action, restless, edgy.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Willy stops in the doorway - watching a DEPUTY shut the stainless-steel freezer, open a wired-glass cabinet and poke around.

WILLY

Shake the boxes.

DEPUTY

Huh?

WILLY

The cereal boxes - shake 'em. And there's a chicken in the freezer. Thaw it out, check inside.

The Deputy stares like he's nuts. Willy doesn't blink. The Deputy goes to shake the boxes, eyes on Willy: *okay?*

Willy nods. Moves on.

EXT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - LATER

Hours have passed.

Willy steps out of the front door, because he's going stir-crazy inside. Stands watching two TECHS walk the lawn and flower-beds with metal detectors.

He notices, past the S.I.D. vans and Sheriff's Dept. black-and-whites parked in the driveway:

Nunally, in his parked car, across the street.

He meets Willy's eyes. Worried.

Willy can't give him any news. So he pretends he didn't see the question in Nunally's eyes, looks away. Takes a breath, turns and goes back in to work.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

It's getting dark out. Techs pack equipment cases, carry them out. The place is a disaster area.

Marchand watches Willy pace the living room.

 WILLY
The garage? Washer-dryer?

 MARCHAND
And the tool shed, and the roof, and the H.V.A.C. ducts.

 WILLY
What about the door frames? The floors?

 MARCHAND
What did he do: rip open a door frame, hide the gun inside and re-plaster the wall before SWAT showed up?

 WILLY
What about the neighbors' property? He could have thrown it over the hedges.

 MARCHAND
We checked.
(Beat)
He might have passed it off to somebody, Willy. Had an accomplice, waiting, out the back.

Willy shakes his head, grim. Pacing.

WILLY

This isn't an accomplice sort of guy.

He slows. Looking across the room at the big Rube Goldberg device. As he moves toward it:

WILLY

This is a...guy who likes to show off.

He examines the intricate workings, eyes travelling the clutter of metal and wires and motors.

Checks Marchand - who shakes his head.

WILLY

You sure?

MARCHAND

I'm sure.

Willy grimaces. Fuming, relentless:

WILLY

It's a physical object. It can't just vanish. We're missing something - some step in the story.

He begins walking through the crime, "the stations of the cross" - re-enacting it, starting from the front door, methodical, reciting it to himself:

WILLY

The neighbor sees her get home. He's already inside. She lets herself in. A minute or two later: blood-pattern says she's standing over there - he's somewhere around here.

Willy stands where Crawford was. Raises a finger-gun.

WILLY

Boom.

As Willy goes to where Jennifer fell:

MARCHAND

But then he carries her back there. Why?

Willy walks along the path defined by the drops of blood:

WILLY

Because he's gonna need time. To confess. When she's alone with the cop.

Willy stops in the alcove, looking down at the dried blood, the discarded paramedic-supply-wrappers.

MARCHAND

Neighbor comes to the door.

Willy nods, comes out - crosses to the foyer:

WILLY

Crawford shouts, "Leave us alone" and fires three more rounds: boom-boom-boom.

MARCHAND

So everybody knows he's dangerous - and she might still be alive.

WILLY

So they'll call the Negotiator.

(Beat)

Now he's got about ten minutes.

And that's it. He stands there with the imaginary gun in his hand. Looking around. Trying to think like Crawford.

He can't.

MARCHAND

I'm sorry, Willy.

Willy won't respond - because accepting the apology means admitting he's got nothing left.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LATER

It's night. The house is empty. Except for Willy, turning on lights as he gets to each room, turning them off as he leaves.

WILLY (V.O.)

Do you dare stay out?

Do you dare go in?

Studying framed photos: Jennifer - now and then with Crawford - in Italy, Bermuda, Colorado. Always a bit posed and formal when they're together.

WILLY (V.O.)
*And IF you go in -
 Should you turn left or right?
 Or right and three-quarters?
 Or maybe not quite.*

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - BATHROOM - SOON AFTER

Checking the contents of the medicine cabinet.

WILLY (V.O.)
*You can get so confused that you'll
 start in to race,
 Down long wiggled roads at break-
 necking pace*

No longer really looking for the gun. He's looking for insight. Contact. A way in.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - DRESSING ROOM - SOON AFTER

Willy wanders through Jennifer's spacious dressing room.

WILLY (V.O.)
*And grind on for miles across weirdish
 wild space,
 Headed I fear, toward a most useless
 place.*

He idly surveys the vanity, cluttered with cosmetics, skin-care products. Lifts her perfume, sniffs.

WILLY (V.O.)
*The Waiting Place...
 For people just waiting.
 Waiting for a train to go
 Or a bus to come, or a plane to go*

Notices a storage box on the floor, left partly-open in the search. He shifts the lid aside.

WILLY (V.O.)
*Or the mail to come, or the rain to go
 Or the phone to ring, or the snow to
 snow*

A high-school yearbook. An old photo album. A teddy bear. A snow-globe. A well-worn book by Dr. Seuss.

WILLY (V.O.)
*Or waiting around for a Yes or No
 Or waiting for their hair to grow.
 Everyone is just waiting.*

Willy stares down at the souvenirs of a lost life.

INT. HOSPITAL - I.C.U. - NIGHT

The room is dim, and silent except for the hiss-click of the respirator, the monotonous beep of the heart monitor.

WILLY (V.O.)
*Waiting for the fish to bite
 Or waiting for wind to fly a kite
 Or waiting around for Friday night
 Or waiting perhaps for their Uncle
 Jake*

Jennifer Crawford lies with her head wrapped in gauze, eyes shut, plastic tubing down her throat held in place with tape.

Willy sits beside her bed, reading Dr. Seuss:

WILLY
*Or a pot to boil, or a Better Break
 Or a string of pearls, or a pair of
 pants
 Or a wig with curls...
 Or Another Chance.*

He stops reading a moment. Watching her:

RESIDENT (O.S.)
 What are you doing?

Willy turns. A work-weary RESIDENT comes past him to check the I.V.'s and monitors. He's about Willy's age.

WILLY
 I heard it might - help - if somebody
 talked to her.

RESIDENT
 Who told you that?

WILLY
 (Reluctantly)
 The man who shot her.

The RESIDENT looks up at Willy - who shrugs, uncomfortable.

WILLY

Is there any chance...she might come out of this?

RESIDENT

Are you a member of the family?

WILLY

(Getting out ID)

Sorry. I'm with the District Attorney's office.

(Beat)

We don't have any other witnesses.

RESIDENT

This woman had a bullet plow through her brain.

WILLY

I know. But you hear about people waking up from comas. After everybody said pull the plug - they wake up.

(Beat)

You hear stuff like that all the time.

RESIDENT

You hear about Elvis and Aliens, too. All the time.

WILLY

It's not impossible, though. Is it? I mean - why else are you keeping her like this?

Beat. The Resident sighs.

RESIDENT

No. It's not impossible. But even if she did, she might not remember how to talk - let alone anything about how she was shot.

WILLY

When I was here alone before, she moved a little.

RESIDENT

Are you just going to keep asking the same question in different ways until you hear the answer you want?

Beat.

WILLY

That's how it works with the law.

RESIDENT

I knew I should have gone to law school.

Willy watches the Resident go out. Then he looks back down at Jennifer. Listening to the machines.

INT. CRAWFORD OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Willy wanders. Tina, the assistant, waits in the doorway.

He's trying to conceal the fact that he's on a fishing expedition.

WILLY

So this is all exactly how he left it.

TINA

Yes.

Browses a wall of framed photos: Crawford at crash sites, universities, engineering test-labs - awards, certificates, articles from industry publications lauding Crawford as the Go-To-Guy for investigating mechanical failures of aircraft.

WILLY

And he was - distraught.

TINA

He was drinking. The past few weeks.

WILLY

But he was working on this.

He stands over unfinished Rube Goldberg device. Tools laid out on the work table - meticulous, organized.

WILLY

All distraught and everything.

It's not evidence.

TINA

Do you want coffee. He said I should ask.

Willy turns, a little rattled. Beat.

WILLY
Tell him I said no thank you.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The room where Jennifer and Nunally met. Cleaned-up now, anonymous, empty. Willy stands looking at it.

There's nothing to see. He grimaces, nods - heads out, past the ASSISTANT MANAGER waiting in the doorway.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

As Willy comes out of the room - he slows, noticing the little gray plastic surveillance-camera-ball in the ceiling.

WILLY
How long do you keep the tapes?

ASSISTANT MANAGER
A month.

Willy considers it. He's got nothing else to try.

WILLY
Can I get a copy of October 9th?

ASSISTANT MANAGER
I'll have it for you Friday.

WILLY
I'm kind of under the gun here.

ASSISTANT MANAGER
We're short-staffed tonight and tomorrow.

Beat. Seeing Willy's confusion:

ASSISTANT MANAGER
Thanksgiving?

Willy nods, trying to pretend he hasn't forgotten:

WILLY
Right. Okay.

INT. GARDNER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

A faux-Tudor Hancock Park dining room. Wealthy, but lived in.

JUDGE LEWIS GARDNER, your basic Henry Fonda/Jimmy Stewart-type patriarch, carves a turkey at the head of a long table, wearing a worn and gravy-splattered apron. Platters circulate in both directions among Nikki's older siblings (BURTON and SANDRA), their spouses, their children.

Willy sits next to Nikki, who is high-stylish despite the fact that she's dressed "casual."

GARDNER
White or dark, Willy?

WILLY
Anything is fine, your honor.

GARDNER
I'm off-duty, you can call me Lew.

While Gardner piles turkey on a plate and passes it:

WILLY
So - is everyone in this family involved in the law?

SANDRA
Well, Nikki's not.

NIKKI
Ha ha.
(To Willy:)
Burton's a counsel for Sierra Club, and Sandra's ACLU - so they use the holidays as an opportunity to give me a hard time, because I can buy and sell them.

SANDRA
We're not actually for sale, Nick.

Nikki gives Willy a *did-I-tell-you?* look.

GARDNER
Nicole decided early-on that black sheep was the most effective role in which to distinguish herself from her siblings.

NIKKI

You know of any other family in America where the corporate lawyer who's going to make partner by thirty-five is the "black sheep"?

GARDNER

Well - you may be lost beyond recovery, but maybe we can still convince Willy that defending giant corporations against injured citizens is not the best use of his skills.

WILLY

I don't think so, sir.
(smiles)
It's where the money is.

GARDNER

(Scolding mildly)
I believe that phrase refers to banks. And it was coined by a thief.

Beat. Willy remains polite, but won't back down.

WILLY

Times have changed.

NIKKI

(To Willy)
You don't have to do this.

WILLY

I don't mind; I get this kind of thing now and then.
(to Gardner)
Almost always from people with money.

GARDNER

Appearances can be deceiving, Willy. I grew up with eight brothers and sisters on a farm up in Fresno, and I promise you I saw my share of hard times.

Willy considers his options.

WILLY

My mom OD'd fairly frequently, so they put me in a Group Home. My younger sister is dead and my older brother is doing twenty-five-to-life.

Awkward silence.

GARDNER

You win.

Beat. Willy looks down, begins to eat again.

WILLY

I usually do.

GARDNER

(Gently)

Yes. I see that.

BURTON

I don't know if you will against the wife-shooter, though.

The click of silverware.

SANDRA

Whoops.

NIKKI

Nice, Burton.

Beat. Willy looks up at Burton, steady. Shrugs.

WILLY

It's not over 'til it's over.

BURTON

That looked pretty over.

NIKKI

Anyway, Willy's been taken off the case.

GARDNER

It might not seem like it now, but that's a blessing in disguise, Willy.

Willy nods. Beat. To Nikki, uncomfortable:

WILLY

I wasn't.

Nikki looks at Willy.

NIKKI

What?

WILLY

Taken off.

NIKKI

That...doesn't make any sense.
Lobruuto has to do some kind of damage
control -

WILLY

I asked him not to.

Silence. Nikki is staring at him. Angry.

NIKKI

You are really stupid, did you know
that?

Willy doesn't know how to handle this; everyone else tries to
be polite, eating and pretending not to notice.

WILLY

I'm - getting new evidence -

NIKKI

Where? The Evidence Store?! Oh,
that's right - they open early the day
after Thanksgiving. You're gonna be
fine!

WILLY

Did it ever occur to you I might be
good enough to still win?!

NIKKI

Win what? Who cares?!

WILLY

The man shot his -

NIKKI

You wanted corporate, right?! You
wanted to play in the big leagues?!

WILLY

Yeah, I'm just -

NIKKI

You go to all that trouble getting
yourself in - and then you just pay no
attention to wh-

WILLY

Look - I'm sorry - can we not talk about this here?!

Nikki stops. Refusing to look around. Ashamed at losing control, turns back to her food:

NIKKI

Fine.

WILLY

Thank you.

Everyone eats in silence a moment - then Nikki tosses down her napkin:

NIKKI

I need to talk with you.

She gets up and walks out of the room. With an awkward glance around, Willy excuses himself and follows her.

EXT. GARDNER HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

WILLY

Look, I'm sorry I didn't tell you -

NIKKI

Did you hear me, when I said Bob wanted you gone as soon as this thing broke?! Did you hear me say I went out on a limb to convince him -

WILLY

Wouldn't it be better than damage control if I actually turn it around?

NIKKI

And what if you don't?

Willy has no answer. He doesn't think that way. And she sees that. She sees a young man from Oklahoma, in way over his head. Desperate to get through:

NIKKI

You don't get it at all, do you?! You pulled a stunt to get yourself this job. Fine: you're a hot-shot!

(Beat)

Wooton Sims does not need hot-shots. Because you don't win. The firm wins. Bob wins.

(MORE)

NIKKI (cont'd)

(Beat)

And you just put yourself head-to-head
in conflict with Bob.

Silence. Shaken:

WILLY

What am I supposed to do?

NIKKI

We told the man you're getting on a
plane to Chicago, Tuesday.

Painful silence.

WILLY

Yeah. Okay.

Nikki watches him dealing with it, sympathetic. The impossible feelings always running under the surface for them have developed a darker, aching tone. If anything, stronger.

WILLY

I think maybe I'm gonna go now.

NIKKI

All right.

(Beat)

Call if you want.

He nods. Neither one moves. Judge Gardner enters cautiously from the dining room - breaking the spell.

Nikki nods goodbye to Willy, and goes out quickly without meeting her father's eye. Awkward pause.

WILLY

I've got some work to do.
I need to call a cab.

Gardner nods respectfully, but doesn't move quite yet. Studying the torn-up young man.

GARDNER

You know what nobody understands about certain kinds of underpaid public service work? Now and then you get to put a fucking stake in a bad guy's heart. We're not supposed to talk about that when we visit a third-grade class on Career Day, and it doesn't get you very far into the country-club locker room - but it's hard to beat when you actually get to do it.

Willy looks at the kindly old judge, a little surprised.

Gardner shrugs: *my two cents*. He goes to a side-table, finds the Yellow Pages.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Empty. Dark. Willy lets himself in.

He looks for the light-switch - finds only a complex computerized dimmer-panel. He tries it.

Accent lights come on, buried in the living room planters. He can't get any other pre-sets to work.

The crime scene is creepy, lit like that. The dried blood is black. Shadows stretch up the walls, strange.

Willy grimaces, moves through it - sees another panel by the French doors to the garden. Goes over -

- and jumps back, startled -

WILLY

Shit!

- by Nunally, on the other side of the glass.

Catching his breath, Willy stares. He unlocks the French doors and Nunally steps in, uneasy, haggard.

WILLY

The hell are you doing here?

Nunally looks around - taking a pint bottle from his overcoat pocket, uncapping it.

NUNALLY

We need to talk.

He drinks, then offers the bottle. Willy hesitates, takes it. As he drinks:

NUNALLY

We have to find the gun.

Willy winces at the liquor and the remark, hands back the bottle.

WILLY

Thank you, Professor Einstein. It would also be good to find a couple of
(MORE)

WILLY (cont'd)
 eyewitnesses. If one could be the
 Dalai Lama, it would be even better.

NUNALLY
 No - Willy: we need to find the gun.

WILLY
 I've had three different teams here -

NUNALLY
 He didn't leave between the shooting
 and when we took him out in cuffs.
 The gun is here.
 (beat)
 So we have to find it.

WILLY
 Well - we can't! You want to move on?

Nunally tosses something from an inside pocket of the coat -
 - Willy catches it. A Heckler & Koch nine-millimeter in a
 plastic bag.

Willy stares down at it. Then at Nunally, who holds up: a
 bullet, deformed by impact.

NUNALLY
 There's a guy in the Evidence Room,
 owes me a favor. Well - it's not so
 much a favor as I know stuff about
 him. He can trade this for the bullet
 from Jennifer, give us a ballistic
 match.

Beat.

WILLY
 It's a crime.

NUNALLY
 So who's gonna get away with a crime -
 this asshole, or us?

Willy sighs. Tosses the gun back.

WILLY
 Go home.

NUNALLY
 What else have you got?!

WILLY
 I'll find a way.

Beat.

NUNALLY

No you won't.

Willy watches Nunally stalk out through the big, strangely-lit room. The front door opens, and slams.

A little worried, Willy takes a deep breath. Gets to work. He still has three days to break this open.

Walking through the crime again.

Playing it out in his mind. Standing in different places, getting different perspectives.

Willy stands in the alcove. Looking around.

There's something here. But he can't get it.

His eye falls on the Rube Goldberg device. Moves closer, peering into the mechanism.

Turns away: no gun. But now he's facing the big wooden bowl of ball-bearings, sitting out in the middle of the room on the coffee table.

Hide in plain sight.

He walks over - pushes his fingers in, feels around.

Nope. He sighs. Takes a ball-bearing, rolls it in his hand. Goes to the device - drops the ball in the slot.

The machine is amazing. The ball rolls and leaps and clatters - lights flash, elevators rise and fall, at one point the ball lifts on a jet of compressed air - then it spirals out of sight and reappears somewhere unexpected -

- until at the end the ball suddenly catapults out and sails across the living room -

- to land neatly back in the bowl on the coffee table.

Willy grimaces. This guy is really good.

INT. MARCHAND'S OFFICE - S.I.D. - SUNDAY AFTERNOON

A mess of courtroom exhibits, copies of evidence, lists, depositions, photos, diagrams, take-out food containers and coffee cups.

Marchand surveys it. The bleary end of a long day - sifting clues, dead-ends.

MARCHAND

Willy. There's nothing here.

Willy has barely slept all weekend. He shakes his head, reviewing the hotel surveillance tapes on a VCR/TV, stubborn.

WILLY

Guns don't just walk out of crime scenes.

Marchand waves copies of Crawford's evidence - stills printed from home-video Dick took at a hostage negotiation: *Nunally doing his job, his methods, his routine.*

MARCHAND

Two months before he shot his wife, this guy had his investigator watching the cop at work. He knew exactly how it would go down - and he didn't leave any loose ends.

WILLY

Then what is this:

Willy uses the remote. On the TV, in black-and-white: *Jennifer and Nunally come out of their room and head for the pool - indistinct figures zip jerkily in and out of rooms on fast-forward -*

- until he slows it: *Crawford comes to let himself in.*

WILLY

Hotel surveillance. From that day. He was there. Why?

Marchand watches over Willy's shoulder. Shrugs.

MARCHAND

Had to see it for himself.

WILLY

See what? They were out at the pool.

MARCHAND

The unmade bed. Her panties. Man's gonna shoot his wife in the head, he needs to get himself all worked up.

Willy stares at the grainy black-and-white figure emerging from the room, walking away down the corridor. Unconvinced:

WILLY

Yeah. Worked up.

Marchand gets his jacket, pulls it on.

MARCHAND

Willy, go home. Tomorrow you go back into court and take your lumps - then you start your cushy new life, and you forget all about this one.

(Hoping to get a smile:)

And then you can lend me money and shit.

Willy says nothing. Runs the tape back and then slow-motions it forward again.

Marchand goes out. Leaving Willy alone, watching Crawford.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WILLY'S APARTMENT - VERY LATE THAT NIGHT

Willy stands over crime scene photos and diagrams spread out on his narrow futon. "Walking the scene" again, on paper. The whole apartment is an array of law books, notes, exhibits, marked-up depositions.

He's staring at evidence he's already stared at a hundred times.

He grinds the palms of his hands into his eye sockets, a dull moan rising into a yell -

- as he sweeps everything off his bed in a storm of paper - throwing books - tearing up printouts - pulling out drawers, emptying them, smashing them on the desk -

- yelling in a frenzy until his throat is hoarse, his shabby garage apartment is trashed, and he's sitting, exhausted, in his chair.

There's a knock on the door.

Willy frowns, checking the clock: it's two-thirty a.m. He goes to open it -

- revealing Nunally, standing in the darkness, a haunted shadow of the boyish confident cop we met making love to Jennifer Crawford.

NUNALLY

It's done. In the tool shed: taped to the blade, inside the lawn-mower.

Before Willy can say anything - Nunally walks away.

Willy doesn't move. Watching the tormented cop disappear down the alley.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - BULLPEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Willy - in a clean suit and crisp suit, carrying his briefcase - hurries through, paying no attention to the SECRETARIES and OTHER D.D.A.s who watch like he's on his way to his own execution.

At his office door, he gestures for Mona to come in with him.

Surprised, she gets up - taking with her an envelope with a messenger-receipt taped to the front.

INT. WILLY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mona watches Willy shut the door behind her.

MONA

You okay?

WILLY

Yeah. Maybe.

(Hesitates)

Can I ask you to do something for me this morning?

MONA

Sure.

WILLY

Write down your cell number.

(As she does)

Once my trial is in session, wait outside. I might call - and just hang up. If I do, I want you to come into court and whisper to me that we got a tip about the murder weapon.

MONA

You found it?

Beat.

WILLY

I haven't decided yet.

Mona studies Willy - then accepts it's don't-ask-don't-tell, hands him her number. Willy nods, grateful.

Turning for the door, she remembers the envelope in her hand.

MONA

Oh: this came for you.

He takes it, and as she leaves, checks the return address:
Wooton Sims.

Willy grimaces, opens it. Inside are an airline ticket to Chicago - first class - and a handwritten note, on Wooton Sims stationery:

**We only win the favor of the Gods
by making a sacrifice**

**See you tomorrow
- Nikki**

He stands in his empty office, considering the ticket and the note.

INT. COURTHOUSE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Willy steps off the elevator, into a crowd of REPORTERS AND SPECTATORS outside the courtroom.

He's startled for a moment: it's worse than he expected - the dense buzz of talk in the marble corridor and all the eyes tracking him like he's walking into an arena - a freakshow performer -

- but he doesn't slow, ignoring the comments and questions, avoiding eye contact -

- until he sees Nunally by the courtroom doors, his eyes fixed on Willy.

Willy meets Nunally's gaze...moving on, giving back nothing.

Nunally watches Willy disappear into the courtroom, stares at the closing doors - uncertain, on edge. Lost, no matter which way this goes.

INT. COURTROOM - SOON AFTER

Mr. Gifford, the Crawford's neighbor, is on the stand. Willy questions him, standing by the Prosecution Table.

Behind him, the court is standing-room-only. REPORTERS, SKETCH ARTISTS, SPECTATORS. Nunally, sitting near the front. Lobruto, standing at the back.

Crawford writes intently on a legal pad, filling pages with dense scribble.

WILLY

So - between the time you heard the first gunshot and called 911, and the time of Mr. Crawford's arrest - you had the Crawford house in view?

GIFFORD

Yes. I was very concerned about Jennifer. She was a lovely woman.

WILLY

No one but Thomas Crawford came in or out?

GIFFORD

That's correct.

WILLY

Thank you, Mr. Gifford. No further questions.

JUDGE ROBINSON

Mr. Crawford?

Crawford glances up at the Judge. Then at Gifford, as if he's just noticed him up there. Beat. Without getting up:

CRAWFORD

Did you see the guy run out the back door?

GIFFORD

What... "guy"?

CRAWFORD

The other guy. The one who shot my wife. Did you see him run out the back of the house, carrying the gun?

Willy closes his eyes. Gifford grimaces.

GIFFORD
I couldn't see the back of the house.
(Trying to salvage it:)
I believe...the police went around
back when they arrived.

CRAWFORD
No further questions.

Willy immediately stands:

WILLY
Re-direct, your honor.

But Crawford is standing too - with his handful of pages:

CRAWFORD
I've also written a motion to dismiss.

WILLY
Objection - I'm on re-direct!

The Judge hesitates. Both men standing.

JUDGE ROBINSON
On what grounds, Mr. Crawford?

CRAWFORD
The prosecutor doesn't have any actual
evidence.

WILLY
I'm in the middle of presenting -

CRAWFORD
All of his witnesses are going to
testify to the same facts: that my
wife was shot and that I was,
tragically, in the house at the time
...a witness - and, in a way, a victim
myself. I'll stipulate to Mr.
Slocum's entire witness list right
now, a request a directed verdict or
dismissal, per *California versus
Collier, 1982*, and the Appellate court
decision, *v. Watrus, 486.19*.

Willy stares at Crawford, stunned. As the Judge reluctantly
nods to the Bailiff to collect Crawford's pages and opens a
law book:

JUDGE

Your legal skills seem to have improved over the long weekend, Mr. Crawford.

While the Judge checks the citations, Crawford glances at Willy. Amused.

Beat. Willy looks down - reaches into his briefcase, moves his cell-phone out from under some papers. To where he can get it easily.

Looks back up at Crawford. Smiles slightly.

JUDGE ROBINSON

Mr. Slocum?

Willy and Crawford turn to the Judge.

JUDGE ROBINSON

Have you got any new evidence?

Beat.

WILLY

May I have a moment, your honor?

The Judge nods.

Willy nods down. Trying to focus. He's got nothing, and everyone in the room knows it. He can hear it, he can feel it. There's a restless, hungry edge to the crowded courtroom.

He stares into his open briefcase: the cell phone.

Next to it: the first class ticket and Nikki's note.

Willy glances back at the gallery. Nunally's eyes burn into him. In the back: Lobruto frowns, concerned.

JUDGE ROBINSON

Mr. Slocum?

Willy turns back to his briefcase. He breathes. Press the **MENU** button - selects **SPEED DIAL**.

On the tiny screen, a list of names. Selected: **MONA/CELL**.

INT. COURTHOUSE - CORRIDOR - THE SAME TIME

Mona sits on a bench, a few steps down the corridor from the courtroom doors. Cell phone in her hand.

INT. COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Willy stands at the Prosecution Table. Hearing his own pulse.

Crawford studies Willy, curious.

CRAWFORD
Your honor? Can we signal the
prosecutor from here on planet Earth?

Willy's fingertip hovers over the cell phone keypad. Press, and a path is chosen. Possibly for life.

Next to the cell-phone, the ticket and the note. **See you tomorrow.**

Nunally sits forward. Lobruto is watching intently.

Willy doesn't move.

JUDGE ROBINSON
Mr. Slocum? Now or never.

Willy won't look up.

Nunally stares, agonized.

Willy grimaces slightly, as if he feels his soul burning up, turning to ash and blowing away -

- nods, closing the cell phone, sliding it under Nikki's note. Shuts the briefcase. Looks at the Judge.

WILLY
I have no further evidence at this
time, your honor.

Crawford begins to smile.

Lobruto looks down. A buzz rises in the gallery -

- as Nunally gets up, furious - stalks to the doors, slams out.

Judge Robinson looks at Willy a moment - then at Crawford, who has been waiting, calm and polite. Very reluctantly:

JUDGE ROBINSON
Motion to dismiss is granted.

Uproar. The Judge bangs his gavel -

JUDGE ROBINSON
Order! The jury is released, with our
apologies -

- practically shouting over the chaos - REPORTERS hastily heading for the doors, pulling out cell phones -

JUDGE ROBINSON
- and the Defendant is free to go.

Crawford gives the Judge a gentlemanly bow of the head.

Willy begins to pack his papers into the briefcase. Refusing to look up.

The Judge and the Bailiff might be saying other things, but no one is listening - SPECTATORS swarm up the aisles, out to the hallway - and the Court starts to close down.

Crawford comes over to Willy, holds out a hand.

Willy looks him in the eye. Doesn't move. Crawford shrugs.

CRAWFORD
Even a broken clock gets to be right
twice a day.

He winks, and heads up the aisle.

As Willy watches Crawford go out the doors into a clamor of lenses, hand-held mikes, white-hot halogen glare and flashes -

- he hears a buzzing noise. Looks down at his briefcase, moves the papers aside: his cell phone is vibrating.

Willy stares at it, as if he'd forgotten the thing could be used for an incoming call.

The caller ID reads: **WOOTON SIMS**. He picks up -

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WOOTON SIMS - NIKKI'S OFFICE - THE SAME TIME

Nikki sits at her beautiful desk with stellar views out the windows behind her.

NIKKI

Hey, you.

WILLY

(It's an effort)

Hey.

NIKKI

What did you think - I wasn't keeping tabs?

WILLY

I don't know what I thought.

Awkward silence. She tries to get past it:

NIKKI

Listen: what do you say I take you out tonight and get you completely trashed? Tomorrow's just a travel da-

- there's a gun shot outside the courtroom.

Willy turns. Shocked. Screams and shouting in the corridor.

WILLY

Hang on -

We move with Willy as he shuts the phone and heads for the doors - faster, pushing out -

INT. COURTHOUSE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

- into the echoing chaos of the corridor - trying to move in the crowd -

- shoving through to where people are yelling and clustered around a figure lying on the floor.

Willy pushes closer, until he catches glimpses of:

Nunally. Lying on the marble floor. His gun in his lifeless fingers. Blood all over, from his head.

Willy stops pushing. Won't let himself look away - the screams and commotion around him retreating into a numb blur.

Then suddenly Willy looks up - as if he's been called -
 - to find Crawford, standing very still, in the crowd, on the other side of the body. Everyone else is moving, talking, gawking at the body or averting their eyes -
 - except Crawford. He's looking straight at Willy.
 Pleased. Triumphant.
 Willy stares into Crawford's eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

The life support system clicks and hisses and beeps. Jennifer is curled into a fetal position, despite the tubes and wires.

Willy sits by her bed. Still in his suit from court, the jacket off, the tie loose.

He's been there a while. But now he speaks.

WILLY

Your husband said something...that I can't seem to shake loose of. He said I'm a winner.

(Beat)

And he's right. I can't lose. I can't stand people who lose.

(Beat)

I may have been working so hard to put some distance between me and...people like you - that maybe I messed up. I don't know if I did anything wrong. Or what I should have done. I really don't know, any more...what I'm supposed to do.

(Beat)

But I feel like I let you down. Somehow in the...process. And if I did, I'm sorry. That's all. I just - I hope you...have...just, some...

(Beat)

Anyway.

He feels stupid. Takes a breath. Looking at her pale, drawn, comatose face.

He stands, goes to get his jacket, lying folded on a table by the door. Pulls it on, settles the shoulders, tugs at his cuffs. Gets his briefcase.

He goes to the door, and as he opens it - he looks back.

Freezes.

Jennifer's eyes are wide open.

She's staring at him. Willy stands, breathless, watching her.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - LATER

Sliding glass doors suck open, Willy walks with the Resident from the other night:

WILLY

She was looking at me.

RESIDENT

Yeah, I understand -

WILLY

No, she was looking at me.

CLOSE UP - JENNIFER'S EYEBALL

A beam of light slides across it.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Resident tucks his flashlight in a pocket, draws a pin from his lapel. Gently sticks Jennifer's cheek. Willy winces, watching.

WILLY

She's reacting.

The Resident ignores him. Pricks her forehead - her chin - her big toe. Each time she twitches. He runs his thumb along the sole of Jennifer's bare foot. It arches up.

WILLY

You see?

RESIDENT

The normal reflex goes downward. Up indicates brain trauma.

WILLY

She's in there. She was looking at me.

The Resident sighs. Sympathetic, but plain:

RESIDENT

Sometimes we have to tape their eyes shut. They all move - they make sounds, they twitch. You think they're dreaming. But they're not. It's just what's left of the system, sending broken signals.

WILLY

Can we do other tests? Like an M.R.I. or something? And I want a coma specialist to see her.

RESIDENT

You're not authorized to order tes-

WILLY

I'll get you authorization. First thing tomorrow.

The Resident studies Willy. Reluctantly:

RESIDENT

You get the paperwork, I'll do what I can.

Willy nods, grateful. As the Resident heads out, Willy sits by Jennifer's bed - protective, intent.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY - THE NEXT MORNING

Crawford comes in through the lobby: rested, well-dressed. A free man. He slows, surprised -

- seeing Willy come off the elevators. Willy hasn't left Jennifer's bedside. He's in the same suit and carrying his briefcase from the courthouse.

CRAWFORD

Mr. Slocum.

WILLY

Just...visiting.

CRAWFORD

This isn't like you at all.

WILLY

No?

CRAWFORD

You haven't got anything to gain.

WILLY

Oh - right. That's my weak spot.

(Beat)

Ever think about what yours might be?

Your flaw?

CRAWFORD

Of course I have.

(Leans in)

The truth about me is, Willy...I'm really not very nice.

Willy nods. Concealing the ace up his sleeve.

WILLY

You sure do know a lot, though. Got everybody all figured out, everything set up, like one of your contraptions. Then you just sit back and watch it all fall right where you want it to. Must be kind of...boring. At that point.

CRAWFORD

Not an ounce of sympathy, Willy?

(Beat)

Imagine it - imagine she was yours.

And you knew you were losing her.

(beat)

Imagine days. Weeks. Going through her desk. Her purse. Her closet. Alone. Staring at her clothes. Her shoes. Knowing this is what it will be like. After.

(beat)

Do you have any idea how hard it was to go on living - with her - every day, knowing?

WILLY

But you had to, right? You needed time to set it all up...your "crime of passion."

CRAWFORD

There are many kinds of passion, Willy.

WILLY
 Yeah. There are.
 (Beat)
 So - thank you.

Crawford frowns. Starting to feel wary. Willy sees it.
 Enjoys it.

WILLY
 For sharing your wisdom. All your
 little helpful bits of information.
 (Beat)
 You were right.

CRAWFORD
 About...?

WILLY
 Talking to her.

Beat. Willy winks. He goes past Crawford and out the doors.

Crawford doesn't move - except to turn and watch Willy.
 Uncertain, for the first time since we've met him.

INT. WOOTON SIMS - RECEPTION - LATER THAT MORNING

Willy - still unshaved, unslept, in yesterday's suit - comes
 off the elevator, fishing out ID as he passes a RECEPTIONIST:

WILLY
 Hi, I'm just -

- going directly to the key-card slot by the glass double-
 doors to the rest of the floor. He swipes his card and pulls
 the handle -

- but it stays locked. Willy swipes his card again. No go.

WILLY
 Excuse me - I'm new, I just started -
 and there's something wrong with my
 card. Can you buzz me in?

RECEPTIONIST
 Who are you here to see?

WILLY
 I work here. Willy Slocum. I'm new -

He stops, realizing how he must look.

WILLY
 Nikki Gardner. Willy Slocum, for
 Nikki Gardner.

As he calls in, Willy sees Nikki through the doors - one of a half-dozen ASSOCIATES trailing in the wake of BOB WOOTON. They all carry expensive business luggage, except Wooton - who is powerful, perfectly groomed, and two decades older.

WILLY
 Wait a second - never mind, here she
 is, thank you.

Willy goes toward the glass doors as Wooton comes through - nodding deferentially to the boss, semi-apologetic:

WILLY
 Hey...Bob -
 (To Nikki)
 Can I talk to you for a second?

Wooton glances back at Nikki, eyes saying: *don't take long.*

She nods as Wooton and the team continue to the elevators - staying back by the glass doors to talk with Willy:

WILLY
 You let him know what happened last
 night?

NIKKI
 I told him.

WILLY
 Great - who do I work with on it while
 you're gone?

NIKKI
 You don't work with anyone.

WILLY
 Nikki: the man has power-of-attorney
 and a health-care proxy, he can
 disconnect her life-support whenever
 he wants. If we don't move fast -

Nikki explodes - but quietly, not wanting the team to hear:

NIKKI
 Jesus, Willy, wake up! It's over!
 What is wrong with you - it's first
 year law: that woman could fully
 recover and swear he shot her and it
 (MORE)

NIKKI (cont'd)
 wouldn't matter. Double jeopardy!
 You can't take him back into court!

WILLY
 I told you - we bring a civil suit -

NIKKI
 You've got no standing.

WILLY
 It doesn't have to stick: we just need
 to get a court order for now - to keep
 Crawford from pulling the plug! With
 all the brain-power here, I'm sure
 somebody can come up with a pretext or
 call in a favor. Then we can tie this
 up in court while we arrange a state-
 appointed conservatorship - so we can
 protect her while we fight him on -

NIKKI
 What's the point, Willy?

WILLY
 The point?!

Willy stares. Because she's drawn a line in the sand. One
 he already crossed, without truly understanding...and now
 he's standing out there alone - feeling the sand slither away
 under his feet.

WILLY
 This man is going to kill his wife.

NIKKI
 Yeah.
 (Beat)
 What does that have to do with Wooton
 Sims?

Willy just breathes. Vulnerable like we have never seen him
 before.

He looks across the big reception area, at Wooton and the
 team of associates. Some look away.

NIKKI
 I warned you.

WILLY
 No, this is insane.

NIKKI
 It's what it is.

Ding! The elevator. Nikki grimaces, frustrated - and sad:

NIKKI

I warned you.

She starts for the elevators, Willy following -

WILLY

You're not really just gonna let this happen, are you?!

NIKKI

Oh I'm supposed to lose my job over your problems?!

WILLY

My problems?! Wait a second - this is not about my anything any more -

Willy grabs Nikki's arm to stop her, turn her around - and she shoves him away, hard, tears welling in her eyes -

- Willy letting her go - as the Receptionist quietly calls for help -

- and Nikki hurries into the waiting elevator. The Associate holding the doors lets them go.

WILLY

This is about taking a couple of goddamn weeks off to try and save a woman's life!

The doors begin to close. Willy stands facing the cluster of lawyers in expensive suits, their expressions ranging from pity to contempt -

- except Nikki, whose eyes are full of shame and guilt and defensive anger.

As the doors shut across them.

Willy doesn't move. Confused, humiliated, frustrated.

He turns when a bunch of OTHER LAWYERS emerge from the offices, ready to act as bouncers. People gawk from behind the glass doors.

Beat. Willy holds up his palms.

WILLY

Don't bother. I got it.

He bangs open the paddle-sign on the stairway door, setting off the fire alarms as he stalks out.

INT. WOOTON SIMS - BUILDING STAIRWAY - SOON AFTER

Willy runs down the stairs furiously -

- the clanging alarm, several floors above now, a little fainter.

He suddenly stops - clinging to the railing, bent over. He sways, dizzy, gasping -

- backs up until he's against the concrete wall. Presses himself against. Listening to his own ragged breathing.

Scared out of his mind.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

Crawford stands by the bed, glancing over a set of forms on a metal clipboard.

DR. LUNT, a senior neurologist, and a HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR wait. The machines hiss and click, keeping Jennifer alive.

Crawford signs the forms, expressionless.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - THE SAME TIME

Willy's walking alongside Judge Robinson, as they leave the building. The Judge is wearing his "civilian clothes."

JUDGE ROBINSON

What do the doctors say?

WILLY

People wake up out of these things.

JUDGE ROBINSON

What did the doctors say, Mr. Slocum?

WILLY

They said...there's no way to really know. I'm trying to get them to run more tests - but I was there, and I'm telling you.

JUDGE ROBINSON
 I'm sorry. I have no probable cause
 to issue a court order against Mr.
 Crawford - and he's protected agai-

WILLY
 WHAT ABOUT HIS WIFE?! WHAT'S
 PROTECTING HER?!

The Judge stops - giving Willy a hard eye: *I'm sympathetic, but yelling at me is not a smart approach.*

Willy looks at the Judge a second - hapless, frustrated, scared - then nods and shakes his head and turns away - hurrying off through the homeward-bound crowds.

The Judge watches him go. Grimaces.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - KITCHEN - THAT EVENING

Crawford is carefully preparing an elegant, solitary meal. Music plays on his state-of-the-art sound system.

He stops, noticing a pair of Jennifer's reading glasses, folded up by a note-pad and pen next to the telephone. He picks them up. Stylish, feminine.

He goes to the trash, steps on the pedal to flip open the lid, and drops the glasses in.

Goes back to cooking.

INT. LOBRUTO HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Lobruto - at the dinner table with his family - looks up, surprised, as the doorbell rings. He excuses himself -

- goes to open the door. Willy's outside: apologetic but urgent, near the end of his rope.

WILLY
 I'm sorry - but nobody else seems to
 give a damn that sooner or later this
 guy is gonna finish what he started.

Beat.

LOBRUTO
 Have you been home at all today,
 Willy?

Willy looks down at himself: he's unshaven, in the same rumpled clothes he wore to court yesterday. Exasperated:

WILLY

No - I've been trying to get some-

LOBRUTO

There's a court order out against you.

WILLY

What?

LOBRUTO

A restraining order.

(Beat)

You were at the hospital? Talking to her doctors?

Willy nods. Lobruto looks out at the confused, frantic young man - truly sorry that he can't help Willy fight his way back toward doing some good in this mess.

LOBRUTO

Crawford hired a lawyer this time. They saw Judge Gorman this afternoon.

WILLY

Against me.

LOBRUTO

You need to stay away from him, and his wife, and the hospital. He can have you arrested if you don't.

(Beat)

I'm sorry.

(beat)

I can't help you. I told you how it would go.

Willy stares a second, slowly understanding his situation.

WILLY

Can you do anything for her?

Beat.

LOBRUTO

I don't see how.

Willy grimaces. But nods. Turns away.

EXT. LOBRUTO HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We move with Willy out to the quiet street. The windows of the houses he passes seem warm and safe - and very far away.

Behind him, Lobruto watches from his lighted doorway.

Willy walks, shaken, determined, into the night.

INT. HOSPITAL - I.C.U. - THE NEXT MORNING

A NURSE checks Jennifer Crawford's vital signs. She then begins to gently wash Jennifer's face, where it's not taped or bandaged.

The monitor beeps, the ventilator hisses.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - THE SAME TIME

Crawford knots his necktie, studying himself in the mirror. Expressionless.

EXT. GARDNER HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - SOON AFTER

Judge Gardner pulls his car out to the street -

- swerving hastily, as Willy's car skids alongside and forces him to the curb, horn honking.

Willy pulls to a stop, blocking Gardner's way, and gets out of the car - holding up both palms: *just wait*.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - LATER THAT MORNING

Dr. Lunt takes a chart from the I.C.U. Nurses' Station.

DR. LUNT
Has Mrs. Crawford been prepared?

INT. CRAWFORD'S CAR - SOON AFTER

Crawford drives, wearing a dark suit, sunglasses. Calm.

INT. JUDGE GARDNER'S CHAMBERS - SAME TIME

Willy watches GARDNER'S SECRETARY bring in a document, fresh off the laser-printer. As Gardner signs:

WILLY
Can I use your fax machine?

GARDNER
These have to be served in person.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DOWNTOWN L.A. - CONTINUOUS

Willy brakes as he drives around a corner and sees a DRIVER wrangling with the BOOTH GUY. He grimaces, looks around -
- backs up, tires squealing, heading for another exit.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Lunt stands by Jennifer's bed, supervising the Nurse and an Orderly as they prepare her.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Crawford walks in, goes toward the elevators.

INT. WILLY'S CAR - INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

He floors it, racing under a light going red - narrowly misses getting broad-sided.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Lunt looks up from making notes on Jennifer's chart, as Crawford enters the room.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Willy pulls into a NO PARKING zone and jumps out, papers in hand - tossing the keys to an ORDERLY smoking a cigarette -

WILLY
Move it if you need to!

- running through the automatic doors.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Standing beside Dr. Lunt, Crawford watches, expressionless -
 - as the Nurse and the Orderly work, efficient and silent,
 disconnecting the oxygen tubes, unplugging the monitor -

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - SOON AFTER

Willy dodges people, coming to the elevators - which open.
 Too crowded.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWAY - SOON AFTER

Willy gasps a little as he hurries up the stairs -

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - SOON AFTER

- comes out of the fire stairs, hurrying toward I.C.U. -

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

- and into Jennifer's room, where he stops. Shocked.
 The bed is being stripped, the equipment rolled out.
 Willy stares, breathless, overwhelmed.

NURSE

You just missed her.

WILLY

What?

NURSE

She just went on up.

Willy struggles to control his emotions. Looks down.

WILLY

How long ago...did she die?

NURSE

What?

(Beat)

The roof.

(Beat)

(MORE)

NURSE (cont'd)
 Medevac transfer. Out to a long-term
 care facility up in Santa Barbara.
 They just left, you can probably still
 catch 'em.

Willy tries to understand her. With growing horror.

WILLY
 He's - moving her by helicopter?

NURSE
 Nothing but the best.

We hear the surge of a jet engine -
 - as Willy runs out of the room.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOF - HELIPAD - LATER

A Sikorsky S-76 Medevac chopper is preparing to take off,
 very loud and windy.

Through the open doorway and the thick windows, we can
 glimpse Crawford sitting beside Jennifer, who is strapped on
 to a gurney. She's connected to life-support equipment.

The MED TECH is outside, checking a few last supplies and
 giving Crawford a moment alone with his wife.

Crawford moves. He may be whispering to her. Or adjusting
 her pillow. Hard to tell.

As he climbs out of the chopper -

- he sees Willy across the roof, arguing with Dr. Lunt, who
 is skimming the court documents, shaking his head.

Crawford, curious, walks toward the two men.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOF HELIPAD - WILLY - THE SAME TIME

Dr. Lunt hands Crawford the court order. As Crawford reads
 them, Lunt and Willy shout over the helicopter engine:

DR. LUNT
 This orders him not to take her off
 life support! He's not! We can't
 stop the man from -

WILLY
 Then just hold it - for a couple of
 hours! Have it inspected!

DR. LUNT

You're talking about a phenomenally expensive delay, Mr. Slocum - when the man has every right to move his wife!

WILLY

She's not gonna get there!

He looks at Crawford: reading - amused, thoughtful.

WILLY

This man is a mechanical engineer with expertise in air crashes! He has access to airfields and he knows exactly how to make it look like an accident! You know what he did! You know why she's like this!

Lunt hesitates, feeling a tiny edge of doubt.

Crawford checks his watch. Looks into Willy's eyes -

- then gestures for Willy to join him, and turns back to walk across the pad to the helicopter. Climbs in.

Willy stares, stunned.

Lunt looks at him: *case closed*. The rotors whirl faster, engine noise rising to a scream.

From the open chopper doorway, Crawford looks at Willy again and gestures for him to get on.

Willy doesn't know how to react. Slowly, he starts to walk toward the helicopter.

INT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

Willy bends, coming to the door - wind-whipped, flinching. Crawford holds out a hand to help him in.

Willy doesn't move. The PILOT glances back.

Crawford's eyes are locked with Willy's.

Willy stares at Crawford, scared. But unable to back down from the crude, plain challenge. Which Crawford is clearly counting on.

Angry, at himself, Willy climbs in without taking Crawford's hand. As he nervously figures out how to buckle himself in -

- the Med Tech secures the door, the Pilot turns to face front - and they lift off.

EXT. ABOVE LOS ANGELES - SOON AFTER

Looking directly down at the Sikorsky as it glides over a picturesque mapscape of streets and freeways, gray and terracotta rooftops, blue kidneys and rectangles of pool.

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME TIME

Willy watches Crawford, who stares back at him. Calm.

Glances uneasily at the Pilot, bug-headed in sun-goggles and headphones. Flying them, calm.

The Med Tech, adjusting Jennifer's portable ventilator. Calm.

EXT. ABOVE LOS ANGELES - SOON AFTER

The Sikorsky glides over cross-hatched parking lots, a pale swath of beach -

- and the white foaming edge of the Pacific.

INT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

Willy looks up from the view. Scared. Yells to the Pilot.

WILLY

Why are we going out over the ocean?

PILOT

Less traffic.

Willy looks at Crawford.

EXT. ABOVE THE OCEAN - SOON AFTER

Deep dark vast blue. The Sikorsky flies over. Small.

INT. HELICOPTER - SOON AFTER

Willy stares into Crawford's eyes.

Then he looks around at the vibrating metal box carrying him hundreds of feet above the earth. The sunlight glare in the scratched windows. The blur of the rotors against the empty sky. The edges of the door frame. The rivets in the roof.

Crawford's eyes. Amused.

Willy unbuckles his seat-belt, lurches toward the Pilot -

WILLY

We have to turn back!

PILOT

Get in your seat!

WILLY

He's doing something - we have to turn back!

PILOT

Who's doing something?

Willy points to Crawford, who's just sitting there -

WILLY

He is! You have to get us DOWN!

PILOT

Get back in your goddamn seat!

CRAWFORD

Willy, I'm not doing anything.
Everyone can see that.

WILLY

I'm TELLING you, we have to TURN BACK!
He's DOING SOMETH-

An alarm begins to shriek - on the ventilator.

Everyone turns as the Med Tech hastily kneels next to it -

WILLY

What's happening?!

MED TECH

I don't know - I'm - there's a -
malfunction -

- Willy whips around to look at Crawford, with fury in his glare: *oh, you bastard.*

Crawford almost smiles.

The Med Tech is flipping switches, checking wires -

MED TECH
I can't do anything with this, up
here.

The Pilot turns - steeply, Willy falling over, the Med Tech's
supplies spilling - as the Med Tech hastily removes
Jennifer's breathing tube and prepares to begin C.P.R. -

CRAWFORD
She's D.N.R.

The Med Tech looks up - startled. Confused.

WILLY
What is it?

CRAWFORD
Check.

Willy watches, wide-eyed, as the Med Tech grabs up his
paperwork, searching it -

WILLY
What?

The Med Tech looks up at Willy, scared.

MED TECH
She's Do Not Resuscitate.

Willy turns on Crawford. He shrugs.

CRAWFORD
It's in her living will.

The Med Tech looks at Willy, paralyzed.

MED TECH
She's D.N.R. She signed it.

WILLY
There's a restraining order - she's
protected - I'm authorizing you to do
it!

The Med Tech turns to Crawford, uncertain -

CRAWFORD
No extraordinary measures.
(Turns to Willy)
Unless your court order specifies
(MORE)

CRAWFORD (cont'd)
 contravening her living will. But I
 don't think it would. I think you got
 one that forbids me from disconn-

Willy throws himself at Crawford - attacking him, as the Med
 Tech grabs him, drags him back -

PILOT
 WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON BACK THERE?!

- the Med Tech holding Willy down on the floor by Jennifer's
 stretcher - Willy struggles furiously -

WILLY
 Wait! WAIT - LOOK!

Willy is pointing at Jennifer - shocked -

- as the Med Tech lets him up and they kneel by her, the Med
 Tech taking her pulse - Willy, staring down at her, intent:

She's breathing.

WILLY
 Yes. Yes.

Willy whirls around to Crawford. Who's frowning.

WILLY
 You messed up. With all your plans
 and games.

Willy turns back to Jennifer. Delicately strokes the side of
 her face. Her eyes flutter open -

WILLY
 Shhhh. It's okay. It's all right.

- she stares into Willy's eyes. He takes her hand. Silent
 awe in her eyes. Yearning. Fear.

WILLY
 You're gonna be okay?

She squeezes his hand. Very weakly.

Crawford is looking daggers: *die, bitch*.

Jennifer's eyes - fixed on Willy - roll back. She fights it.

WILLY
 Jennifer? Hang on.

Something sad in her wordless gaze. As it starts to fade.

WILLY
Jennifer?! JENNIFER?!

She's slipping. Her eyes gone empty. Her hand becoming lifeless in his.

WILLY
No. Come on, Jennifer. Fight back.

Tears well up in Willy's eyes, but he struggles against them - feeling Crawford's gaze, refusing him the satisfaction.

WILLY
Don't let go.

But she's gone. He stares down. Mourning her. Letting his grief slowly burn into rage. He gently reaches up and closes her eyes.

Then he looks up at Crawford, who smiles sympathetically.

CRAWFORD
You pushed it, Willy. We didn't have to be here.

(Beat)

But now you're my witness. You saw: I didn't touch anything, I didn't do anything. The machine went down. Anybody asks - you'll have to tell them. What you saw.

(Beat)

That's really kind of perfect, isn't it?

Willy stares into his eyes. Cold. Then he looks away. Out the window, into the sun-glare.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WILLY'S APARTMENT - A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER

The garage door is open, letting in daylight. We can see the alley especially well, because there are only empty hangers on the clothes-bar, and the cinderblock shelves have been taken apart, stacked on the floor.

Willy is packing. He's wearing jeans, an old t-shirt.

He carries a heavy pile of legal textbooks out to the trash bins, throws them away.

As he turns to go back in - he sees Lobruto coming along the alley, wearing a suit. Surprised, waits.

LOBRUTO
You're not answering your phone.

Beat.

WILLY
That's kind of an answer in itself,
isn't it?

Willy heads back in, starts to pack again.

LOBRUTO
Where are you headed?

WILLY
Haven't decided yet. Just someplace
else.

Lobruto nods. Willy packs.

LOBRUTO
I shouldn't have let it get so far out
of control.
(Beat)
We all lose, Willy.

WILLY
Yep.

LOBRUTO
We just have to live with that, and
keep fighting the good fight.

WILLY
That's not what I was doing.

LOBRUTO
You belong in a courtroom.

Willy packs, thinking about that. Shakes his head.

WILLY
I need to - get to know myself better.

LOBRUTO
You're a good lawyer. All this may
have even made you a better lawyer.
Don't waste it.

Willy turns on him - angry, confused, bitter:

WILLY

I didn't just lose a case! I let a man get away with murder.

Lobruato nods. Respecting his pain. Shrugs, accepts the decision, with regret.

Willy nods his thanks, and turns back to packing.

Lobruato starts to leave. But from the alley door:

LOBRUTO

If it makes you feel any better - technically, you let a man get away with attempted murder.

Willy doesn't respond. Keeps packing.

Lobruato goes out.

After a moment, Willy stops. Looking up. Something turning over in his mind.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Lobruato is walking toward his car when Willy steps out of the garage and calls after him:

WILLY

His wife is dead!

Lobruato turns. Uncertain what Willy is getting at.

WILLY

We can still get him. We can take him back to court.

LOBRUTO

(Gently)

Willy...

Willy comes toward him - excited, insistent:

WILLY

Double jeopardy doesn't apply! We bring a new charge - of homicide.

LOBRUTO

Willy - what happened to you, on the helicopter - we don't even know if we could prove -

WILLY

No: he shot her and she died. The fact that it took time - the fact that he went to trial in between, just for shooting her - doesn't matter. He fired a gun and caused her death, and that's murder.

(Beat)

If he can twist the law around - then so can we.

Lobruato thinks it out. Wary.

LOBRUTO

A second indictment on the same incident?

WILLY

A man burns down a house; we charge him with arson. There were people sleeping upstairs - and after weeks in the hospital, they die. We'd charge him with murder. Right?

Lobruato nods. On the fence, but seeing it now. Impressed with the young man's fervor, and his logic.

But he shakes his head.

LOBRUTO

All your evidence is still toxic. The confession, the arrest - it's all still inadmissible.

Willy grimaces. Looks down. Thinking, intense.

LOBRUTO

I'm sorry, Willy. It was a good idea, but -

WILLY

I'll get something new.

LOBRUTO

How?

Willy looks up at him. Calm now.

WILLY

You don't want to know.

LOBRUTO

Willy, you can't -

WILLY
I don't work for you.
(Beat)
Right?

Beat. Lobruto sighs, as Willy nods and turns to start back to the garage. With work to do.

LOBRUTO
Don't do anything crazy.

WILLY
What else have we got left?

Willy disappears inside.

INT. S.I.D. LAB - LATER

End of the day. Marchand pulls on his coat, shuts down his computer. He turns to go -

- Willy is standing in his doorway.

WILLY
I need a favor.

INT. POLICE EVIDENCE WAREHOUSE - SOON AFTER

Willy follows an EVIDENCE CLERK along an aisle between floor-to-ceiling steel shelves of boxes marked with case numbers.

CRAWFORD
These are from that thing at the courthouse, right?

WILLY
Uh-huh.

The Clerk stops, checking a number against a slip of paper in his hand - pulls down a box for Willy.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

Crawford is building a new Rube Goldberg device, tools and parts laid out precisely on a table.

Eyes enlarged by the glasses, he silently connects two tiny pieces of metal -

- when a French door suddenly implodes, a metal lawn chair hurled in from the backyard smashing through it.

Crawford stands, taking off the glasses -

- as Willy walks in over the broken glass, carrying Nunally's gun.

CRAWFORD

Very dramatic.

Willy crosses the room to the alarm panel on the wall.

WILLY

You ain't seen nothin' yet.

He presses the **POLICE** emergency button, then turns to Crawford.

WILLY

I want the gun.

CRAWFORD

Why? You've already got one.

WILLY

I want the gun you shot your wife with. Now.

Crawford doesn't move.

Willy raises his gun, points it at Crawford's face.

WILLY

One way or another, I'm going to see to it you receive justice tonight.

Crawford studies Willy.

CRAWFORD

You're serious, aren't you.

WILLY

Oh, yes.

CRAWFORD

(A smile dawning)

Willy. You got religion, didn't you?!
You care. That's...priceless.

He laughs. Willy keeps the gun aimed at him.

CRAWFORD

No, it's very sweet. Really.

WILLY

Gonna be a whole lot less funny in about a minute.

Crawford nods. Considering the game. Unruffled.

CRAWFORD

Getting it like this: is that going to hold up in court?

WILLY

I don't work for the D.A. any more. I'm just a guy who broke into your house. When the police arrest me - they'll inventory anything in my possession. If that happens to be crucial evidence in another case, well: some prosecutor just got lucky.

Silence. Crawford studies Willy's eyes, over the muzzle of the gun between them.

CRAWFORD

It takes a very special kind of person to look right into someone's eyes and pull the trigger. It takes a unique kind of strength.

WILLY

I guess you'd know that.

CRAWFORD

Yes. I would.

Willy cocks the gun.

Crawford shakes his head. Eyes on Willy.

CRAWFORD

I don't think so.

Willy doesn't lower the gun. But he doesn't pull the trigger, either.

WILLY

You don't know me.

CRAWFORD

No?

Beat. Crawford smiles slightly.

CRAWFORD
Then I'm in for a - rude awakening.

Willy glares over the gun. Crawford shrugs.

CRAWFORD
Tick-tock.

Willy's angry. Frustrated. Trapped.

His bluff called. Refusing to back down.

CRAWFORD
Where did you even get yourself a gun?

WILLY
(Bitter)
It's Nunally's.

Crawford is thrown by this - but conceals it well.

CRAWFORD
Nunally's. Really.

Willy grimaces, over the gun still aimed at Crawford's face.

WILLY
Yeah. Really.

He has backed himself into a corner, and he's getting scared. Because all of a sudden the threat he came to fake Crawford out with -

- is starting to seem like his only way out.

Even Crawford sees it. In Willy's eyes. The uncertain edge of the idea. He could just do it. End the game. Blow Crawford's brains all over the wall.

WILLY
There I was, with a perfectly good
weapon just sitting in the evidence
warehouse.

It would be so easy. With his life already a shambles. With everything already lost. At least he would have this.

CRAWFORD
Willy. Put it down.

WILLY
I thought you might appreciate the
...irony.

Willy's finger tightens on the trigger.

CRAWFORD
Willy. Think.

And Willy does. Hesitating.

Distracted, by a thought.

Lowering the gun slightly, looking at it - remembering:

INT. S.I.D. LAB - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

*Marchand, on the phone - holding the gun Crawford
surrendered, in its plastic EVIDENCE bag:*

WILLY (V.O.)
"A perfectly good...Heckler and Koch
nine-millimeter."

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (RESUME)

Crawford is getting edgy, watching Willy study Nunally's gun:

CRAWFORD
The police will be here very soon.

WILLY
The exact same type of gun you bought
your wife, a month before.

He looks up at Crawford. Getting it.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (FLASHBACK)

*Nunally setting down his pistol on the chair - as Crawford,
across the room, sets down his on the table.*

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (RESUME)

CRAWFORD
If they see you with a gun in your
hand - they're not likely to ask a lot
of questions.

WILLY
That's why you went to the hotel.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Surveillance-cam view: Crawford lets himself into the room -

WILLY (V.O.)
That's why you went into the room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Crawford quietly closes the door behind him. Stands, taking it all in -

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (RESUME)

Willy looks at Crawford. Stunned.

WILLY
 You took his gun.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Crawford checks the dresser drawers, the night-table - finds Nunally's badge, holster and gun.

WILLY (V.O.)
And you left him yours.

Crawford replaces Nunally's gun with his own matching pistol, which was tucked into the back of his belt.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (RESUME)

Beat. Crawford shrugs - arrogant:

CRAWFORD
 I gave it back.

WILLY
 Yes you did.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - (FLASHBACKS - VERY QUICK)

Crawford fires at Jennifer - Crawford shoots at the transom -

WILLY (V.O.)
 After you'd used it.

Crawford holds out the gun, to Nunally: making the offer -

WILLY (V.O.)
 Then you told Nunally you'd put it
 down - if he put down his.

*Nunally setting down his pistol on the chair, as Crawford,
 across the room, sets down his on the table.*

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (RESUME)

Willy turns, looking into the alcove:

WILLY
That's why you moved her back there -

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (FLASHBACK)

*Nunally rushes past Crawford to kneel by Jennifer - shocked,
 frantic -*

CRAWFORD (V.O.)
 The truth is I could have done it
 right in front of the man and he
 wouldn't have noticed.

- ignoring Crawford behind him.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (RESUME)

CRAWFORD
 He had...other things on his mind.

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

*Nunally's calling for help on the walkie-talkie, desperately
 starting C.P.R. -*

*- as behind him, Crawford picks up the murder weapon,
 (Nunally's gun) from the table -*

*- and walks over to the chair where Nunally left Crawford's
 gun (from his holster).*

WILLY (V.O.)
 And all you had to do was switch the
 guns back - in the commotion -

*Crawford picks up his gun and sets the murder weapon on the
 chair in its place.*

WILLY (V.O.)
 - and then wait -

*He then comes back to put his gun on the table, where it will
 be mistaken for the murder weapon. Straightens, done.*

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACKS)

*Nunally grabs up the murder weapon from the chair, upset,
 distracted - puts it in his holster -*

WILLY (V.O.)
 - until Nunally walked the murder
 weapon right out of the house.

*A Detective drops Jennifer's gun into an evidence bag -
 - as Nunally walks out.*

INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (RESUME)

Willy stares at Crawford. In real wonder.

WILLY
 Brilliant.

CRAWFORD
 You know, this is really kind of fun.
 It's like showing some caveman a
 cigarette lighter.

Willy looks down at the gun in his hand. Thoughtful.

WILLY
 This caveman's gonna put you in prison
 for the rest of your life.

CRAWFORD
 It's still not evidence, Willy.
 There's no prints left by now.
 Nothing ties that gun to me.

Willy smiles, slow... Enjoying himself, at last.

WILLY

No. That would be true. Except for all those eggs.

CRAWFORD

Those what?

Willy nods to himself, going to the wooden bowl of ball-bearings - selecting one, carrying it to the Rube Goldberg machine:

WILLY

With all those little cracks and weak places. Like Nunally. Shooting himself, right there in the courthouse. I didn't think he was going to do that. Did you?

CRAWFORD

(Wary)

No.

Studying the complex device, toying with Crawford:

WILLY

I mean, we all knew he was going to fall apart sooner or later. That was part of your plan, right? Like a bank shot, on a pool table: you kill your wife - and destroy her lover. With one bullet.

(Turns)

Well: four bullets, actually. Right?

Crawford frowns. Trying to see what Willy's getting at.

WILLY

First bullet goes into your wife.

INTERCUT QUICK FLASHBACKS:

Crawford fires at Jennifer -

WILLY (V.O.)

Then three more out the front of the house, to get some attention.

- and fires three times at the transom.

WILLY

Then while you're waiting for the show to begin - you have to reload Nunally's gun.

Crawford pushes new bullets into the clip -

WILLY (V.O.)

I mean, you don't want him wondering where the hell four bullets went, considering he never fired his gun that night.

- and slides the clip back into the gun, pleased.

Willy nods, thinking it out. Sure of himself.

He sets the ball-bearing into the slot at the top of the machine -

WILLY

And I'm betting you didn't worry about fingerprints.

Crawford reacts.

CLOSE: Crawford's fingers, putting the bullets in the clip.

Willy lets the ball go - watching it begin rolling down the ornate tracks.

WILLY

I mean, why would you? Nobody's going to be looking at his gun.

The ball tumbles and clatters - flipping and clicking through the ingenious, precise, heartless machinery -

WILLY

And sooner or later, life goes on, those four incriminating bullets would get used, and be gone forever.

- and Crawford is recognizing, slowly, his one mistake.

The gun in Nunally's limp dead fingers, glimpsed on the marble courthouse floor, through the crowd.

WILLY (V.O.)

Except Nunally only fired one of those bullets. Into himself.

Willy turns from the machine -

- which continues clattering and working, beside him.

WILLY

Which means there are still three left
with your fingerprints on them - Tom.
In this clip.

He holds the gun up. Savoring Crawford's growing fear.

They can hear a car rolling up the driveway. Red and blue
lights sweep the frosted glass by the front door.

WILLY

Everybody has a weak spot, right?
Some place they break.

Without looking, Willy gently pushes the machine, moving it a
fraction of an inch on the floor -

- as the ball catapults out - sailing across the living room
in a perfect, graceful arc -

- that misses the bowl.

Outside, the police car doors open and then slam.

Crawford, going pale, watches the metal ball roll off the
coffee-table and across the floor toward him.

Crawford doesn't move. Trying to focus. His mind working.

The ball comes to rest against Crawford's shoe.

The doorbell rings.

Crawford looks up. Meeting Willy's eyes.

Smiling slightly, Willy tucks Nunally's gun into his belt and
puts his hands in the air.

And gives Crawford a wink.

Crawford is staring at Willy, frozen - panic and hatred and
fear curdling in his eyes -

- as behind him, the police begin pounding on the front door.

- THE END -