

# **BOSTON LEGAL**

"You Take The Hymen  
And I'll Take The Low Road"

By  
Nelson Soler

BOSTON LEGAL

"YOU TAKE THE HYMEN, AND I'LL TAKE THE LOW ROAD"

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

TIGHT ON A TV MONITOR --

Featuring a wholesome pop singer, ASHLEY HOPKINS, 18, dancing in a modest wedding dress, belting out her newest pop single.

NEW ANGLE, revealing we are in -

INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - DAY

Brad turns from the flat panel to face Shore.

BRAD  
(doesn't believe it)  
You're representing Ashley Hopkins.

SHORE  
I am.

BRAD  
(really?)  
Pop singer. Bubble gummer. Ashley Hopkins.

SHORE  
Apparently, I skew to a young demographic.

Brad studies the video.

BRAD  
I bought my niece her first two albums. She's good. Wholesome. Which makes me wonder what she'd want with you.

SHORE  
Her mother and I share a sordid past. You wouldn't understand. It's sexual.

BRAD  
Is there a case here, or did you just call to insult me?

SHORE  
 Why can't it be both?  
 (off Brad)  
 Miss Hopkins is being sued by her  
 record label for failing to deliver  
 her third album.

BRAD  
 Not sure I follow. Wouldn't this be  
 her third --

SHORE  
 -- It would. Yet they maintain her  
 performance violates the moral  
 standards set forth in her recording  
 contract.

BRAD  
 A morals clause? For a pop singer?

SHORE  
 It's a Christian record label.  
 Repression seems to be their stock in  
 trade.

BRAD  
 She seems okay to me.

SHORE  
 Watch more closely.

As if on cue, Ashley rips away her costume, revealing a sequined  
 STRING BIKINI that does little to contain her smoking hot bod.  
 Her prim choreography becomes a filthy bump and grind as she  
 launches into the song's chorus --

ASHLEY (FILTERED)  
 -- *Who's your savior now?*

Brad gazes at the screen, slack-jawed.

SHORE  
 In her defense, she did manage to  
 keep the veil on.

BRAD  
 How badly has she violated the terms?

SHORE  
 Completely and utterly. We begin  
 trial this afternoon.

BRAD  
Who's the judge?

SHORE  
Prescott.

BRAD  
The Prude? Oh, she's going to love  
you...  
(getting it)  
Hold on, you think I'm going to drop  
everything to help you ingratiate  
yourself to a conservative judge?

SHORE  
How does two o'clock sound?

Brad eyes him, knowing something else is up.

BRAD  
It sounds like an ambush.

SHORE  
Come again?

BRAD  
It isn't like you to ask for help,  
least of all from me. There's  
obviously something else at play, and  
I'm not helping you until you tell me  
what it is.

Shore takes a breath and settles into his chair.

SHORE  
It's your hair.

BRAD  
My hair? What about it?

SHORE  
Well, it has such body and sheen. I  
feel that it would reflect well on  
our client. As an American.

BRAD  
Goodbye, Alan.

Brad starts for the door. Then --

SHORE  
Brad, wait.

Brad stops.

SHORE (CONT'D)  
We might have a slight conflict.  
It's with the girl's father

BRAD  
What is it? Does he work for the  
recording company?

SHORE  
Nothing like that.

BRAD  
Does he manage her career?

SHORE  
No.

BRAD  
Alan, I can't help you if you don't  
tell me what's going on. What is it  
about this girl's father?

A beat. Another beat.

SHORE  
It's me.

OFF Brad, we:

SMASH TO:

MAIN TITLES

ACT I

FADE IN:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Morning meeting. Lewiston, Schmidt, Lori, Tara and Crane in attendance:

PAUL

Where are we on Bina Singh?

SCHMIDT

It's not going well. Insurance company is refusing to budge.

PAUL

What seems to be the problem?

SCHMIDT

The executive in charge of claims seems to think of himself as some sort of Alpha dog. Problem is, he's mistaken me for his...well, you see my dilemma.

PAUL

Any way I can be of assistance?

SCHMIDT

I've dealt with his type before, Paul. The only way to get past his defenses is to make him feel unthreatened. Lori, how would you like to sit in on this morning's deposition?

LORI

I don't know. Is that your way of calling me subservient?

SCHMIDT

Not at all.

LORI

Good, because I'm already in the middle of --

SCHMIDT

-- Lori. You're handling the deposition.

LORI

Would it be all right if I asked what the case is about?

SCHMIDT

Wrongful death. Commonwealth Mutual Life refused to cover a procedure they claimed was cosmetic and therefore uninsurable.

LORI

What kind of procedure?

SCHMIDT

A hymen restoration surgery.

LORI

Excuse me?

SCHMIDT

Our client's sister wanted one. The insurance company said no. She died as a result.

(before Lori can ask)

It's a long story. I'll let the client explain.

CRANE

I have a question.

SCHMIDT

Yes, Denny.

CRANE

What's a hymen?

Beat.

SCHMIDT

You don't know what a hymen is?

CRANE

(shrugs)

Jewish surname?

Suppressed smiles all around. Tara leans over, whispers in his ear.

CRANE (CONT'D)

Really? Is that what that's called?

(to the room)

And they can repair that?

LEWISTON

It would seem so. Moving on --

CRANE

Why?

LEWISTON

I beg your pardon?

CRANE

Why in God's name would anyone want to repair the seal of freshness?

SCHMIDT

Believe it or not, Denny, there are still some men out there who value a woman's virtue.

LORI

Apparently even if it's bought and paid for.

CRANE

Weenies.

LORI

I'm sorry?

CRANE

-- Who else but an inadequate little weenie of a man would want to deflower a virgin? And a phony virgin at that.

SCHMIDT

Don't tell me you've never had sex with a virgin.

LEWISTON

I really don't think we need to hear about this --

CRANE

-- Emily Marcus. Tiny little thing. Bashful. Like trying to thread a needle with a boxing glove.

LEWISTON

All right, people. Let's focus --

SCHMIDT

One second, Paul.

(to Crane)

Denny, do you have something against virgins?

CRANE

I do.

SCHMIDT

And that would be...

CRANE

They've never had sex.

A beat.

TARA

(helpfully)

It is true.

CRANE

I mean, what's the point? It's like wasting chateaubriand on someone who's never even tasted a hamburger.

SCHMIDT

So you're saying you'd rather have sex with a woman you know in advance is promiscuous?

CRANE

An experienced woman knows when she's been shown a good time. She knows the difference between hamburger and...and --

TARA

-- T-bone?

CRANE

Tube steak.  
(proudly)  
Denny Crane.

LEWISTON

Moving on, Edgar Livingston has asked us to represent his son, Jimmy, in a sexual harassment claim. He's coming in this afternoon. Tara, would you mind handling this?

TARA

Of course not.

LEWISTON

Take good care of him. The Livingston family has delivered this firm millions in government contracts.

CRANE

(still on his own track)

I once had an accountant named Hymen.

(off everyone)

Slippery little bastard.

Off Lewiston, rubbing his temples --

INT. LAW OFFICES - DAY

Brad and Shore stride down the corridor. As they walk and talk --

BRAD

What do you mean, she doesn't know?  
How could you not tell her?

SHORE

I thought it best, given the circumstances.

BRAD

The circumstances being what? That a child would be better served by not knowing who her father is?

SHORE

It wasn't my place. Her mother never actually told me I'm the father.

BRAD

Then what makes you think you are?

SHORE

The timing makes it...colorable.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Uncle Alan!

Whip pan to find ASHLEY HOPKINS, running to Shore, jumping on him, wrapping her arms and legs around him and kissing him square on the lips.

Ashley's mother, LYDIA, 30s, with a piercing intelligence, is close behind.

SHORE  
(noticing her)  
Lydia, you're looking fit.

LYDIA  
I've been doing my squats.

CRANE  
(passing through)  
Denny Crane.

Brad clears his throat, feeling left out.

SHORE  
Ladies, Brad Chase.  
(introducing them)  
Brad, Ashley Hopkins. Her mother and  
business manager, Lydia.

BRAD  
Big fan. Pleasure.

LYDIA  
Alan tells us you're taking the lead  
on my daughter's case?

BRAD  
(rapid-fire)  
I've taken the liberty of reviewing  
the complaint and found that  
Fellowship Records does, in fact,  
have a reasonable cause of  
action. However, I think we have a  
winning play, and if we can all agree  
to the particulars, we can and  
should prevail.

Lydia turns to look at Shore: is this guy for real?

SHORE  
Strangely, his approval ratings have  
never been lower. Shall we?

Shore gestures to his office, leading Brad and Lydia inside.  
Ashley hangs back with Shore, her eyes fixed lovingly on Brad.

ASHLEY  
(transfixed)  
He's like a beautiful Ken doll...  
(MORE)

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
 (to Shore)  
 Can I have him?

Off Shore --

INT. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE - DAY

Lori and Schmidt consult with their clients, ARTHUR SINGH, 30s, traditional, dyspeptic, and his wife, BINA, the picture of an upscale, modern Indian-American woman.

LORI  
 I'm still not sure I follow. How do you get from failure to insure a cosmetic procedure to wrongful death?

BINA  
 We don't consider hymen restoration to be cosmetic. Particularly when compared to circumcision.

SINGH  
 Bina, please --

BINA  
 Insurance companies cover millions of circumcisions every year, even though studies show they serve no medical purpose. In light of that, it's sexist not to cover hymenoplasty.

SCHMIDT  
 Bina, perhaps you should tell Lori what happened.

BINA  
 Two years ago, my sister Satinder was involved in a hiking accident. She was hospitalized with several internal injuries, broken bones...and yes, a torn hymen.

Singh covers his face. Even the word hymen sets him on edge.

BINA (CONT'D)  
 She was engaged to be married a few months later...so, understandably, she had some reservations about her condition.

SINGH

In our culture, a young woman who fails to preserve her virginity for marriage is considered a disgrace to her family.

BINA

Somehow, my sister found a plastic surgeon specializing in the procedure. Unfortunately, the insurance company refused to pay.

LORI

And she couldn't afford to pay on her own?

BINA

Our parents died when we were very young, Miss Colson. Satinder depended on us for everything, including her medical insurance. Unfortunately, she didn't come to us about this.

Bina pulls a letter from her purse and slides it to Lori.

BINA (CONT'D)

The only reason we know as much as we do is because the insurance company sent this. It's a denial of coverage letter. It arrived two weeks after she was already...

She trails off, her voice trembling.

LORI

I know this is hard, but I'm going to need to know exactly how your sister died.

BINA

On her wedding night, Satinder's groom discovered she had been previously deflowered.

(this is hard for her)

He...he raped her. Then he beat her to death with his bare hands. She was only 18.

This visibly tears her apart. Singh quietly takes her hand.

LORI

I'm very sorry for your loss. But, to win, we'd have to show that your sister's death was foreseeable.

SINGH

Honor killings are widespread throughout our culture, Miss Colson. Their existence is common knowledge.

LORI

Yes, but while they may be common in India, they tend not to happen here.

BINA

(growing agitated)

Excuse me, last year alone, a million and a half women were raped or physically assaulted in this country by their own intimate partners. Please don't insult us by saying this doesn't happen here.

SCHMIDT

I think what Lori means is that the courts aren't likely to find an insurance company liable for failing to predict what happened.

Bina takes a breath, appealing to their better nature.

BINA

Look, we understand this is a long shot, but we have to do something. This company had prior knowledge that my sister was in trouble and they did nothing to help her. It was sexist, it was racist, and it sends the message that women in my culture don't matter.

Lori and Schmidt exchange a look.

LORI

(grasping at straws)

Maybe there's some way we can make a case for bias.

BINA

You want bias? Show me one man who was ever killed for failing to be circumcised.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Deposition. Tara sits across from an overweight attorney,

WALT FERRELL, and his African-American client, RHONDA, 40's, high-mileage. Next to Tara sits her own client, JIMMY LIVINGSTON, 30s, handsome in a goofy way.

FERRELL

A contest?

JIMMY

Yeah, the sales rep with the highest monthly revenues wins.

FERRELL

And what exactly was the grand prize in this contest?

Jimmy looks at Tara. She nods, urging him to go ahead.

JIMMY

Breast implants.

FERRELL

And it never occurred to you that this might be seen as inappropriate?

JIMMY

Look, I know in the real world, this wouldn't look good. But we work in the wholesale mortgage business. The reps are mostly women, and the top producers are all lookers. My team begged me to do this.

RHONDA

And that makes it all right to promote a sexually charged workplace?

JIMMY

Hey, none of the hot chicks had a problem with it.

RHONDA

Oh, you did not just call me ugly!

TARA

(interrupting)

Give us a moment, please.

Tara turns to Jimmy, motions for him to lean in.

TARA (CONT'D)  
 (on the DL)  
 What did I tell you about  
 antagonizing her?

JIMMY  
 Antagonizing her? I did a nice thing  
 here and I'm the one being sued.

TARA  
 I understand that, Jimmy. But you  
 need to understand you have no case.  
 The best we can hope for is to settle  
 this before it goes to court, so it's  
 probably not a good idea to harass  
 that woman in front of the  
 stenographer.

Jimmy glances over, sees the STENOGRAPHER.

JIMMY  
 Right. Good. Won't happen again.

They turn back to the table.

FERRELL  
 Okay, Mr. Livingston, when the winner  
 of the grand prize returned to the  
 office after her surgery, can you  
 remember the very first thing you  
 said to her?

JIMMY  
 Well...it wasn't exactly verbal.  
 (to Tara)  
 Okay if I demonstrate?

Tara waves a hand dismissively: *be my guest*. Jimmy shoves his  
 face between Ferrell's large man-breasts and shakes his head  
 rapidly --

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
 Bbbbbbbbbbrrrrrrrrr!!!

FERRELL  
 (recoiling)  
 Are you out of your mind??

Ferrell grabs his briefcase and starts for the door.

TARA  
 Walter, wait.

FERRELL  
 Let's go, Rhonda.  
 (to Tara)  
 And you can forget about a  
 settlement.

They exit. Tara turns to Jimmy. He shrugs, defensive.

JIMMY  
 What?

INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - DAY

Brad updates Shore, Lydia, and Ashley. Ashley hangs on every word, transfixed. Lydia, not so much --

LYDIA  
 Absolutely not!

BRAD  
 All she'd have to do is show up for  
 one session and sing somebody else's  
 music.  
 (to Ashley)  
 Your contract would be fulfilled and  
 you'd be free to release your own  
 album under a new label. It's a good  
 offer.

LYDIA  
 Do you have any idea how much money  
 we have tied up in this new look?  
 I've personally spent thousands in  
 image consultants...choreographers...  
 new wardrobe.

BRAD  
 I'm just trying to keep your  
 daughter's personal life out of  
 tomorrow's episode of TRL.

LYDIA  
 You let me worry about that. When  
 the paparazzi gets wind of this, we  
 want their cameras to see Ashley as  
 the beautiful, sexy, young woman  
 she's become. Not some bubble-gum  
 bible thumper in a Catholic  
 schoolgirl jumper. Tell him, Alan.

SHORE  
 I defer to co-counsel.

BRAD

Thank you --

SHORE

But just for the record, I've always been partial to a good jumper.

BRAD

It's not like there isn't a model for success here. Jessica Simpson, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera. They all started their careers singing wholesome songs with strong family values, and look at them now.

SHORE

Sluts, one and all.

BRAD

Not helping.

Shore puts his hands up, backing off.

LYDIA

Look, I know I'm an obnoxious show biz mom, I get that. But they're calling my daughter a whore, and they're about to do it in public. If we give them a new album now, that's the same thing as admitting they're right. I say we go to court.

Shore exchanges a look with Brad: the woman's got a point.

BRAD

Unfortunately, it's not up to you, or me.

(turning to her)

What do you say, Ashley?

Ashley stares at him, smiling blankly.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Ashley...?

Off her blank, goofy gaze --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Settlement negotiation. Schmidt, Lori and the Singhs on one side of the table. Opposite them, attorney, GREG DEVINE, 40s, bookish, represents his client, JOHN CUTAJAR, 50s, a cold Zen calm.

DEVINE

You're saying my client should have paid to cover up evidence that a girl lost her virginity? We're not in the fraud business.

BINA

My sister never had sex!

DEVINE

We don't know that. We only have your word that she didn't. And even if that's true, so what? My client was acting within his legal discretion.

LORI

Except that his legal discretion could be read as racial and sexual discrimination. Do you really want to go to court and have a jury decide?

CUTAJAR

Do you?

(to Singh, pointed)

Especially when it would bring so much more shame and dishonor to the Singh family name?

Singh shifts in his seat uncomfortably.

LORI

Address your comments to me, Mr. Cutajar.

BINA

Why are you doing this? Your company approves all manner of unnecessary tests and procedures. You knowingly overpay for brand-name medicines to the tune of billions of dollars a year. But if it means saving a young girl's life, the answer is no, and I want to know why.

A beat. Cutajar calmly pours himself a glass of water.

CUTAJAR

I can't imagine the guilt you must be feeling. Allowing your own flesh and blood to marry a violent sociopath.

Bina slams her hands down on the table, enraged. Schmidt places a hand on her arm, restraining her.

DEVINE

Okay, I think we're done for today.  
John?

Devine gets up, grabbing their coats.

DEVINE (CONT'D)

If you think you can prove bias,  
you're going to have to do it in  
court.

Cutajar drinks his water before rising to his feet.

CUTAJAR

I'm really very sorry for your loss.

Cutajar looks to Lori and winks. He's actually enjoying this. She glares at him as he and Devine exit.

BINA

Now what?

SCHMIDT

I'm not going to lie to you. Without  
proof of discrimination, we don't  
have much of a case.

SINGH

So what do we do?

Schmidt shakes her head solemnly, there's nothing she can do.

LORI

We go after him anyway.

Schmidt throws her a look, but Lori holds her ground.

LORI (CONT'D)

We crucify that son of a bitch.

Lori grabs her file and storms out. Schmidt turns to the Singhs, a tight smile, as we --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

FADE IN:

INT. COURTROOM, CORRIDOR - DAY

Brad, Shore and Lydia wait outside the courtroom. Brad checks his watch impatiently.

BRAD  
Where is she?

SHORE  
She'll be here. She had to make a stop in the little pop singer's room.

Ashley rounds the corner, wearing a pastel sweater set complete with pearls. Sexy in a wholesome, preppy way.

ASHLEY  
Are we ready, Freddie?

LYDIA  
What the hell are you wearing?

ASHLEY  
It's for court, Momma. You like?

LYDIA  
No, I don't like. You look like Nancy Reagan. Take it off.

BRAD  
We're on the clock, ladies. We'll have to talk about this later --

Brad and Lydia enter the courtroom. Ashley turns to Shore.

ASHLEY  
Who's Nancy Reagan?

EXT. JUDGE PRESCOTT'S COURT - MORNING

Record producer JONAH McNALLY, sits in the witness box as his attorney, EMILY BIBB, questions him.

MCNALLY  
I met the Hopkins family three years ago at church. I was their minister.

BIBB

Were their minister. So at some point you made the transition to record producer.

MCNALLY

I had made some money producing records for local Christian rock bands. Enough to eventually start my own company.

BIBB

During which time, you signed Miss Hopkins.

MCNALLY

She was the youngest member of the church choir. Voice like an angel. I approached her mother about forming a partnership to launch Ashley's recording career. Three years and two albums later, she's now one of the hottest Christian recording stars in the country.

BIBB

So why are you suing her?

MCNALLY

Well, not to put too fine a point on it, but she turned into a slut.

BRAD AND SHORE

Objection.

PRESCOTT

Sustained.

MCNALLY

She changed.

BIBB

Changed what exactly?

MCNALLY

Everything. Her clothes. Her hair. The way she danced.

BIBB

And you found this --

MCNALLY

Morally repugnant. She'd adopted the manner of a common prostitute.

SHORE

Objection, your honor. Discovery notes make no mention of this witness's expertise with common prostitutes.

PRESCOTT

Sit.

Shore takes his seat.

BIBB

Do you make room for the possibility that Ashley is still a good girl who believes in God?

MCNALLY

Of course I do, but it doesn't make any difference. I specifically set out in the recording contract that she was to dress and comport herself in a manner compliant with decency and strong Christian values.

BIBB

And she agreed?

MCNALLY

She signed the contract, didn't she?

BIBB

Now, Mr. McNally, isn't it true Miss Hopkins was only sixteen when she signed that contract?

MCNALLY

She had legal standing, if that's what you mean. We petitioned the court to declare her an emancipated minor. As a member of the clergy, I personally submitted an affidavit on her behalf.

BIBB

I'm confused. Why go to so much trouble to make sure she could be held to a morals clause.

MCNALLY

Because I'd been down this road before. I'd produced other Christian groups only to watch them betray their faith just to sell a few more records. As a man of the cloth, I wasn't about to let that happen again.

BIBB

Thank you. I have nothing further.

Bibb crosses back to her seat. Brad approaches the witness.

BRAD

You make money from these albums?

MCNALLY

I've managed to turn my hobby into a profitable business, yes.

BRAD

It's more than just profitable. Your company grossed over ten million dollars last year.

MCNALLY

We've done well for ourselves. What's your point?

BRAD

My point is there are other Christian recording companies with talented artists who haven't done remotely as well as you have. What makes your company so special?

MCNALLY

I don't know. Talent? Marketing?

BRAD

I see. And does this marketing target a specific audience?

MCNALLY

If you mean people who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, then yes, everything we do is tailored to attract a Christian base.

BRAD

Did it ever occur to you that my client was simply trying to expand your demographic?

MCNALLY

Yes, by appealing to the lowest common denominator.

BRAD

So it's okay to spread the word of God, just as long as it only reaches the people who share your particular taste in clothes.

MCNALLY

It's kind of hard to spread the word of God when you dress and act like a pole dancer.

BRAD

That's quite a Christian attitude you've got there.

BIBB

Objection!

BRAD

I have nothing further.

Brad heads back to the defendant's table, when Shore suddenly jumps to his feet. Before Brad can stop him --

SHORE

-- You don't like my client, do you, Mr. McNally?

MCNALLY

I like her just fine.

SHORE

"Morally repugnant? A common prostitute?" What must you say about your enemies?

MCNALLY

I was referring to her new image.

SHORE

So you hate the sin, but not the sinner.

MCNALLY

In a manner of speaking.

SHORE

So, for example, if I did this --  
 (pokes him in the chest)  
 -- you wouldn't hold it against me?

MCNALLY

Hey!

BIBB

Objection.

SHORE

Of course you wouldn't. You're a man  
 of God. But just for the sake of  
 argument, let's say I did it again --

Shore pokes him again, this time harder.

BIBB

Objection!

PRESCOTT

MR. SHORE!

Shore ignores the judge. McNally glares at him, Shore holding his  
 gaze. The tension is thick.

PRESCOTT (CONT'D)

(sternly)

Mis-ter Shore!

Another beat. Then --

SHORE

Forgive me, your honor. I have a low  
 threshold for hypocrisy.

Shore returns to the defense table. Off Brad --

INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - DAY

Shore enters, nonchalant. Brad is right behind him, livid.

BRAD

You were out of control in there.

SHORE

I'll send a basket. That is the  
 Christian thing.

BRAD  
You physically assaulted a witness in  
open court.

SHORE  
It was a tap.  
(pokes Brad in the chest)  
Like this.

Brad grabs Shore's index finger, holding it in a death grip.

BRAD  
You need to tell her.

SHORE  
May I have my finger back?

BRAD  
Not until you give me your word.  
When this is over, you tell Ashley  
you're her father.

SHORE  
And what exactly would that solve?

BRAD  
I don't know. Maybe nothing. But  
you have a responsibility.

SHORE  
Of which I was liberated 18 years ago  
when her mother left without telling  
me she was pregnant. My conscience  
is clear.

Brad releases Shore's finger. Locks eyes with Shore.

BRAD  
You need to tell her.

SHORE  
And if I don't?

Beat.

BRAD  
Then I will.

INT. LAW OFFICES, RECEPTION - DAY

Lori and Schmidt shakes hands with the Singhs, seeing them off at  
the elevators, where Crane is just getting off.

CRANE  
 (marking his territory)  
 Denny Crane.

SINGH  
 Yes, sir. We met earlier. Ms.  
 Schmidt introduced us.

CRANE  
 Fantastic.

SINGH  
 (extending a handshake)  
 Arthur Singh. This is my wife, Bina.  
 (off Denny's blank  
 expression)  
 We're suing Commonwealth Mutual --

CRANE  
 Wait a minute, I know this one...  
 (it hits him)  
 You're the hymen people.

Crane yanks his hand away and beats a hasty retreat. He enters the lobby, hurrying past Schmidt, who sees the look on his face.

SCHMIDT  
 Denny? Are you all right?

CRANE  
 Of course I'm all right. Why  
 wouldn't I be all right?

SCHMIDT  
 I couldn't help but notice you just  
 bumped into the Singh family. Is  
 there a problem?

CRANE  
 No. No problem.

SCHMIDT  
 My mistake.

CRANE  
 (as she walks away)  
 What's with you and the hymens?

SCHMIDT  
 I beg your pardon?

CRANE

An insurance company didn't kill this girl. Her husband did.

SCHMIDT

We know that, Denny. But our client is looking to make some noise and, crazy as it sounds, she does have a tenable cause of action.

CRANE

Drop the case, Shirley.

SCHMIDT

I can't do that.

CRANE

Sure you can. Just tell 'em the judge threw it out.

SCHMIDT

You asking me to lie to a client?

CRANE

Yes.

SCHMIDT

Because you have a personal disinclination to virgins.

CRANE

Can you think of a better reason?

SCHMIDT

Denny, even through that dense fog, can you begin to grasp how unethical that would be?

A beat. Another beat.

CRANE

I don't understand the question.

INT. TARA'S OFFICE - DAY

Tara sits at her desk, making notes in a file, when Jimmy pokes his head in.

JIMMY

Hey.

TARA

Jimmy. You're still here?

JIMMY

I just wanted to say I'm sorry about what happened in there.

TARA

I've spoken to opposing counsel. Your little display is going to cost you an extra twenty thousand.

JIMMY

It's only money, right?

TARA

Were that all my clients were so accepting.

JIMMY

So, you ready to go?

TARA

I'm sorry, are we supposed to be somewhere?

JIMMY

I'm taking you out. To celebrate this thing finally being over.

TARA

Once again, Jimmy: we lost.

JIMMY

I was thinking later we could go back to my place, maybe have some victory sex.

Tara pauses, not knowing if this is some kind of joke.

TARA

Did you just say --

JIMMY

Well, I'm not just gonna do you here, for God's sake. I'm not an animal.

TARA

I beg your pardon, but you are not going to "do me" at all.

JIMMY

What's wrong? You sound mad.

TARA

It may have escaped your notice,  
Jimmy, but this is a law firm, not an  
escort service.

JIMMY

Oh come on. You think my father  
would've paid for eye candy like you  
if I had an actual shot at winning?

Tara is stunned, barely believing what she's hearing.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Fine. Have it your way. We'll do it  
here.

Off Jimmy unzipping his pants --

INT. LAW OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

A loud CRASH erupts from Tara's office. Jimmy throws open the  
door and runs out, holding the side of his bloodied head, his  
pants around his ankles.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You crazy bitch! I'm gonna sue your  
ass! You hear me? You're done!

Jimmy stumbles past the receptionist and out into the corridor.  
All eyes turn to Tara as she steps from her office, casually  
tugging a wrinkle from her jacket.

TARA

He fell.

INT. JUDGE WILKINS' COURTROOM - DAY

Cutajar in the witness box, Greg Devine questions him.

DEVINE

Medical necessity. Could you tell us  
what that means?

CUTAJAR

It means the injury would have to  
pose a threat to the patient's life  
or well being?

DEVINE

And would a ruptured hymen qualify?

CUTAJAR

It's a tiny membrane which serves no biological purpose.

DEVINE

Now, Mr. Cutajar, you've heard talk about honor killings carried out against young women found to have lost their virginity.

CUTAJAR

Yes. And we've also heard that young men in the inner city are more likely to be injured by handguns, but there's no law requiring us to give away bullet-proof vests.

DEVINE

Thank you.

Devine crosses back to his table. Lori is already on her feet.

LORI

So you don't pay for preventative medicine.

CUTAJAR

Excuse me?

LORI

Your little analogy. You don't pay for bullet proof vests, so you don't pay for hymenoplasty. Do you pay for say, dental exams?

CUTAJAR

Yes.

LORI

Annual check ups?

CUTAJAR

Of course.

LORI

How about angioplasty?

CUTAJAR

Yes.

LORI

Because...

CUTAJAR

Because those patients are at high risk for heart attack.

LORI

High risk. Meaning some of them haven't had one yet.

CUTAJAR

That doesn't change the fact that they could.

LORI

So, in fact, you do pay for surgical procedures that could prevent future injury.

CUTAJAR

Yes.

LORI

And who, statistically, is at higher risk for heart attack? Men, or women?

DEVINE

Objection.

WILKINS

I'll allow it.

A beat.

CUTAJAR

Men.

LORI

And who, statistically, do you suppose is more likely to die in an honor killing?

DEVINE

Objection!

LORI

Withdrawn. I have an easier question. Who's more likely to require their hymen to be restored? A man or a woman?

DEVINE  
Objection!

WILKINS  
That's enough, Miss Colson.

LORI  
It's okay. I imagine he's too busy  
saving all those men to know the  
answer.

Devine glances over at the jury. He's worried.

INT. BRAD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brad walks up the steps to his brownstone and sticks his key in the lock. A dark figure (Ashley) appears from behind him.

ASHLEY  
I like your house.

BRAD  
(with a start)  
Ashley?? What are you doing here?  
(noticing)  
Have you been crying?

ASHLEY  
I had an argument with my mom. She  
really didn't like my outfit today.

BRAD  
You know she's only trying to protect  
you.

ASHLEY  
And how about you? How would you  
like to protect me?

She removes her jacket, revealing a low-cut halter dress.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
From all the big bad men...

BRAD  
Okay, young lady, I think it's time  
for you to go home now.

ASHLEY  
What's the matter? I thought you  
liked me.

BRAD

Of course I like you. Just not in that way.

ASHLEY

Really? Because I like you in exactly that way.

She falls into him, taking his ear lobe into her mouth, practically sucking it off.

BRAD

(pushing her off)  
Okay, now that's enough!

Ashley stretches her arms out, yawning. She reaches one hand behind her neck. She pops the clasp on her halter, dropping her entire dress to the ground, leaving her STARK NAKED.

ASHLEY

Opsie.

Brad pulls off his jacket and throws it around her. Ashley swings her arms around him, kissing him on the mouth, knocking him backward through the front door.

A gust of wind blows Ashley's discarded dress off the porch steps into the bushes.

INT. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lori enters, finding Schmidt sitting across from Bina Singh, who is wearing a pair of dark glasses and a scarf around her head.

LORI

You wanted to see me?  
(surprised to see --)  
Bina. Is everything all right?  
What happened to your face?

Bina removes the glasses and the scarf, revealing a darkening BRUISE around her eye.

LORI (CONT'D)

Oh my God. Who did this to you?

SCHMIDT

Apparently, Mr. Singh has seen fit to terminate the marriage. He left for India this afternoon and liquidated all their joint accounts.

LORI  
I don't understand. Why would he  
leave?

Bina hands Lori a large manila envelope.

BINA  
This arrived at our home this  
morning, addressed to Arthur.

LORI  
There's no return address.

SCHMIDT  
They're medical records. One guess  
who sent them.

Lori opens the envelope, reads the document, the realization  
dawning on her.

LORI  
You had an abortion?

BINA  
It was ten years ago. I'm sorry. I  
should have told you. I should have  
told Arthur.

LORI  
No. These records were supposed to  
be confidential. Commonwealth  
Mutual had no right to release them.

BINA  
But they did. Now what am I going to  
do?

Off Lori, we --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

FADE IN:

INT. LAW OFFICES - DAY

Pick up Tara, walking down the corridor. She sees Lewiston and picks up her pace, avoiding him. As he catches up to her --

LEWISTON

Tara? Is it true you attacked Edgar Livingston's son?

TARA

I really don't think you want to pursue this with me right now, Paul.

LEWISTON

The man is threatening to pull over three hundred million dollars in business. When exactly would be a convenient time?

Tara stops, turns to him.

TARA

The man's son came into my office, under the distinct impression it was my job to sexually gratify him. Now where do you suppose he would have gotten an idea like that?

LEWISTON

I've known Edgar Livingston for years. I can't believe he'd ever condone --

TARA

-- I was referring to you. If this had been any other client, you would have convinced him to settle.

LEWISTON

But this wasn't any other client.

TARA

No, he was the reprobate son of your biggest cash cow. You couldn't guarantee him a victory, so you gave him the next best thing: an escort.

LEWISTON  
I resent that.

TARA  
And I resent being treated like  
cattle!

LEWISTON  
(taken aback)  
You're right. Of course, you're  
right. It was never my intention to  
compromise you. I'll speak to Edgar.

TARA  
Thank you.

She gives him a curt nod and starts away.

LEWISTON  
And Tara...  
(she stops)  
I don't say this to condone what  
happened ...but if you're so  
dissatisfied with the quality of your  
case load, there is something you can  
do about it.

He places a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

LEWISTON (CONT'D)  
You can go out and make me some rain.

INT. DINER - DAY

Lori walks into this greasy spoon, looking for someone. Spots  
BENNY CAPLETT, 40s, owlsh, jittery, sitting at the bar.

LORI  
Mr. Caplett? Lori Colson. We spoke  
on the phone.

CAPLETT  
I told you I can't help you, now  
leave me alone.

LORI  
I'm sorry but I can't do that.

She slides Bina's medical record across the bar to him.

LORI (CONT'D)

My client's medical records. They were leaked without her permission.

CAPLETT

That's too bad.

LORI

They're not the originals. They're faxes, like when a doctor sends his patient's medical records to an insurance company. Do you know who my client's insurance company is?

CAPLETT

Look, I'd like to help you --

LORI

It's Commonwealth Mutual, Mr. Caplett. These documents came from their records department. You're still the head of that department, aren't you?

CAPLETT

I've done nothing illegal.

LORI

I believe you. But I have a client who's lost her sister, her husband, everything she's ever worked for.

CAPLETT

And if I tell you anything, I'll lose my job. Don't you get it? This isn't about one dirty insurance executive? The entire industry relies on statistical profiling based on race, gender...even zip code. They say it's fair, but how can it be? I open my records to you, and...

He trails off, knowing he's just opened up a Pandora's box.

CAPLETT (CONT'D)

Look, three years ago, one of our competitors lost a class action for unfairly pricing insurance for African Americans. Cost 'em a hundred and sixty million to settle. Compared to what this company's been pulling...they got off cheap.

LORI  
I'm really going to need access to  
your records.

CAPLETT  
And when I get fired, then what? Are  
you gonna feed my kids?

LORI  
I can have a judge compel you to  
testify.

Caplett grabs his coat, gets to his feet.

CAPLETT  
Testify to what? I don't know  
anything.

Off Lori, watching him go --

INT. JUDGE PRESCOTT'S COURT - DAY

Defendant's table. Ashley is dressed in pink Chanel, very Jackie  
O. Brad fidgets, looking supremely uncomfortable.

PRESCOTT  
Is the defense ready to call its next  
witness?

SHORE  
We are, your honor. The defense  
calls Ashley Hopkins.

BRAD  
(bolting to his feet)  
Excuse me, judge. Slight change of  
plans.

Brad pulls Shore aside. As they whisper --

BRAD (CONT'D)  
We may have run into a little hiccup.  
(off Shore)  
I may have accidentally...spent the  
night with her.

SHORE  
With whom?

BRAD  
With our client.

Shore blinks. He is not amused.

SHORE

Really?

BRAD

Never mind really. Nothing happened, but there's a slight chance the paparazzi may have been following her. And if they were, they might have snapped some incriminating photos.

SHORE

Incriminating how?

BRAD

Incriminating naked. On my porch.

Ashley runs her hand up the back of Brad's leg. He jumps.

BRAD (CONT'D)

We can't let her take the stand, Alan. Opposing counsel finds out about this and we're done.

PRESCOTT

Sometime today, gentlemen?

SHORE

(to Brad)

Have you told anyone else?

BRAD

God, no!

SHORE

(to Prescott)

Your honor, the defense won't be calling Ashley Hopkins to the stand after all.

Brad breathes a sigh of relief.

SHORE (CONT'D)

Instead, we call Bradley Chase.

PRESCOTT

And what, Mr. Shore, would occasion you to put your own co-counsel on the stand?

SHORE

The fact that he had sex with our client.

A collective gasp erupts from the gallery. Pandemonium.

PRESCOTT

(banging her gavel)

I'll see all parties in chambers.  
Now!

INT. JUDGE PRESCOTT'S CHAMBERS - MOMENTS LATER

Prescott storms in, followed by the attorneys.

BIBB

You're not actually buying this, your honor. This is obviously some cheap attempt to get a mistrial.

BRAD

Just to be clear, Judge, I never actually had sex with Miss Hopkins. I let her spend the night at my apartment. I slept on the sofa. That's all.

PRESCOTT

Is this true, Miss Hopkins?

ASHLEY

I guess.

PRESCOTT

(to Shore)

And you knew nothing happened.

SHORE

I did.

PRESCOTT

Then why in God's name would you announce to the entire court that they had sex?

SHORE

Because if opposing counsel had found out about this, she would have done exactly the same thing --

BIBB

I object! --

SHORE

She would have been derelict in her duty had she not used this against us.

PRESCOTT

So you deliberately capitalize on it to inflame the jury?

SHORE

What can I say? I hate being upstaged. Motion for mistrial.

PRESCOTT

Denied. I'm going to instruct the jury to disregard.

BRAD

Your honor, the jury has already drawn whatever conclusion --

PRESCOTT

-- I'm also going to refer this little stunt to the ethics committee of the state bar. In the meantime, Mr. Shore, you are forbidden from speaking in my courtroom.

SHORE

You can't be serious.

PRESCOTT

I'm putting a gag order on you. Not one peep for the remainder of this trial or I'll throw you in jail for contempt.

(to Brad)

Are you going to have a problem with that?

BRAD

None whatsoever, judge.

PRESCOTT

Good, then we'll reconvene tomorrow at 9 am.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Lewiston is enraged. He lights into Shore.

LEWISTON

Not only did you fail to get a mistrial, but you've compromised your entire case, forced an ethics review, and exposed this firm to a possible malpractice suit.

(before Shore can respond)

Quiet!

(to Brad)

And you. To sleep with a client --

BRAD

-- I did not have sexual relations with that girl!

LEWISTON

I don't care. You're both off this case. If Lydia Hopkins sees fit to take her business elsewhere, so be it.

BRAD

Paul, I know you're upset, but you pull the both of us now and you guarantee the other side a win. Then we'll definitely be looking at a malpractice suit.

Lewiston pauses, knowing Brad is right.

LEWISTON

What do you suggest?

BRAD

Bring in whoever you want to finish the case, but keep me on as second chair.

SHORE

Why do you get to stay on?

BRAD

Because I didn't do anything wrong!

(off Lewiston)

Nothing actionable anyway.

LEWISTON

All we need is an attorney lacking the good sense to steer clear of this train wreck.

CRANE (O.S.)  
I volunteer.

They all turn to find Crane standing in the doorway.

LEWISTON  
Denny, I really don't think that's  
going to be necessary.

CRANE  
Nonsense. It'll be fun.  
(patting Brad on the back)  
Right, soldier?

LEWISTON  
Do you even know what this case is  
about?

Crane glares at him, not liking the question. After a beat --

CRANE  
Girl in trouble. Girl with a hot  
mother. The mother wants me.

Brad and Lewiston exchange a worried look.

CRANE (CONT'D)  
Lock and load.

INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Shore sits in his chair, gazing out the window. Melancholy.

LYDIA (O.S.)  
This is quite a social life you've  
carved out for yourself.

He swivels to find Lydia standing in the doorway.

SHORE  
Lydia.

LYDIA  
Brad called. He said you're off the  
case.

SHORE  
Not to fear. Ashley remains in good  
hands.

LYDIA  
It's not Ashley I'm worried about.

SHORE  
I'm fine, Lydia. Go home to your  
daughter.

LYDIA  
You nearly beat up a witness in open  
court. And then, when you thought  
Brad had slept with her --

SHORE  
-- I wanted to protect her.

LYDIA  
No, Alan. You wanted to kill him.  
Even if it meant destroying yourself  
in the process.

Shore pauses. She's got his number. He smiles softly.

SHORE  
I had no idea it was so powerful.  
The paternal instinct.

LYDIA  
That isn't paternal instinct. It's  
guilt. And it's unfounded. You're  
not Ashley's father.

SHORE  
Are you sure about that?

A beat. Then --

LYDIA  
No. Would you like me to be?

Off Shore, not having the slightest idea what he wants --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

FADE IN:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

A themed joint in the vein of Bennigan's or TGI Friday's. Shore and Tara sit at a booth.

SHORE

Tara, do you suppose it's possible  
for a man to have a biological clock?

TARA

Is this your way of saying you'd like  
to bear my children?

She reads the vague sadness behind his expression.

TARA (CONT'D)

You're actually considering this?

SHORE

Don't be silly. I'm just making  
conversation.

TARA

Well, you can stop. I think you'd  
make an excellent father.

He responds with a faint smile of gratitude.

TARA (CONT'D)

But...

SHORE

Why does there always have to be a  
but?

TARA

As a man who does what you do for a  
living, Alan...the way that you do  
it...

Tara's expression changes, her mind suddenly elsewhere.

SHORE

Yes...?

TARA

What's she doing here?

Lori pushes through the crowd, joining them.

SHORE

Lori. Funny seeing you here.

LORI

(sitting down)

What are you talking about? You called me twenty minutes ago and asked me to meet you here.

Tara shoots him a look. He shrugs, feigning ignorance.

LORI (CONT'D)

Did you find out anything about my guy?

SHORE

I did. I discovered he's a big fan of the blooming onion.

Shore indicates Benny Caplett, standing at the bar, eating an appetizer.

Lori grabs a menu, uses it to shield her face.

LORI

That's my record keeper!

SHORE

He certainly is. No wife or kiddies in sight. One might even assume he was out doing something untoward.

LORI

So what do we do now?

SHORE

We watch.

Shore indicates a SPECTACULAR BABE, obviously a hooker, approaching Caplett. She says hello to the unsuspecting sap, engaging him in small talk, stroking his arm.

LORI

Is there any chance at all that's Mrs. Caplett?

SHORE

None whatsoever. And that strapping young man over there is not one of his children.

Shore indicates a man in a corner booth, discretely snapping pictures of Caplett and the hooker with a camera phone.

LORI

You're going to blackmail him?

SHORE

Of course not. That would be illegal.

(then...)

You're going to blackmail him.

(off Lori)

Or would you rather have Commonwealth Mutual get away with destroying an innocent woman's life?

He gets to his feet, extending a hand to Tara.

SHORE (CONT'D)

Tara?

TARA

(icy)

I don't think so.

Shore shrugs and walks out. Off Lori and Tara, wondering what to do next --

INT COURTROOM - DAY

Start of the trial day. Lewiston enters, taking a seat in the gallery. Crane first-chairs at the defense table.

BAILIFF

All rise.

The parties rise as Judge Prescott takes the stand. She peers up over her glasses at the defense table.

PRESCOTT

Where's Mr. Shore.

CRANE

Change of guard, your honor. Denny Crane for the defense.

PRESCOTT

Are you ready to proceed?

CRANE

We are. Defense recalls Jonah McNally to the stand.

McNally looks to Bibb. She can only offer a confused shrug. He gets up and grudgingly takes the stand. Crane approaches.

CRANE (CONT'D)

So I hear you're a record producer.

MCNALLY

That's right.

CRANE

Christian?

MCNALLY

Yes.

CRANE

Devout?

MCNALLY

Very.

CRANE

You like girls?

BIBB

Objection! Where's he going with this?

PRESCOTT

Mr. Crane?

Crane raises a hand and snaps his fingers twice, cueing two beautiful BLONDES to enter from the back, each wearing a long coat. Lewiston closes his eyes, not wanting to know.

CRANE

Your honor, the defense enters into evidence, exhibits 1-A and B.

BIBB

Objection. You can't enter a human being into evidence.

CRANE

Good point.  
(to model)  
Sheila?

The first model drops her coat, revealing a SEQUINED BIKINI.

CRANE (CONT'D)  
Defense enters this thong-thing.  
(to McNally)  
Recognize it?

BIBB  
Objection!

BRAD  
(jumping in)  
Your honor, the claimant maintains my  
client's moral fiber was diminished  
by wearing this very article of  
clothing. The jury has a right to  
see it on an actual person so they  
can judge for themselves.

PRESCOTT  
I'm going to allow it.

BIBB  
Your honor!

PRESCOTT  
I said I'll allow it. Mr. McNally?

MCNALLY  
Yes. That's the bikini worn by Miss  
Hopkins in her new video.

CRANE  
Did you try it on?

BIBB  
Objection!

CRANE  
(waving her off)  
Of course he did. But let's get  
back to the point.  
(to model)  
Cathy?

The second model drops her coat, revealing a CATHOLIC SCHOOL GIRL  
UNIFORM.

CRANE (CONT'D)  
How about this? You recognize this  
outfit?

MCNALLY

Of course I do. It's from Ashley's first video.

CRANE

And you approve.

MCNALLY

Of course I approve. I chose it.

CRANE

Why?

MCNALLY

What do you mean, why? Just look at it. It's modest, demure. It leaves some things to the imagination.

CRANE

You like that, don't you?

MCNALLY

I don't understand the question.

CRANE

You like to see grown women dressed as little girls?

BIBB

Objection!

CRANE

Go ahead, admit it. You're a sicko. A pervert. Probably a communist too.

PRESCOTT

Mr. Crane, If you think I won't hold you in contempt --

CRANE

(gesturing to each girl)  
So is it fair to say you're more turned on by this...or this?

MCNALLY

I'm not turned on by either.

CRANE

Would it help if they were redheads?

MCNALLY

No.

CRANE  
Brunettes?

MCNALLY  
No!

CRANE  
What are you, some kind of chubby  
chaser?

MCNALLY  
You're not hearing me. I don't care  
what they look like!

CRANE  
Why not?

MCNALLY  
Because I'm gay!

A suddenly very quiet, very awkward beat.

CRANE  
Oh. Well, in that case, I move for  
immediate dismissal.

PRESCOTT  
On what grounds?

CRANE  
You heard the man. He's gay. A gay  
homosexual. Move for costs.

PRESCOTT  
You actually expect me to dismiss a  
case because the claimant is gay?

CRANE  
Yes. Do I win?

PRESCOTT  
No, you don't win. Now unless you  
have any relevant questions, I'm  
going to ask you to sit back down.

Crane sighs, crosses back to his seat. But just before he sits  
down, he thinks of something.

CRANE  
Oh, there is one more thing. In the  
transcript, you mentioned that you  
(MORE)

CRANE (CONT'D)  
filed an affidavit to help my client  
become an emancipated minor?

MCNALLY  
That's right.

CRANE  
Why you? Why not her mother, or  
maybe a family friend?

MCNALLY  
The rules for emancipation are very  
specific. The affidavit has to come  
from a teacher, a police officer, or  
in my case, a member of the clergy.

CRANE  
Good. Great.

Crane starts to sit down again. Thinks of something else, and  
stands up again, startling McNally.

CRANE (CONT'D)  
So you were an ordained minister.

MCNALLY  
Yes.

CRANE  
What church?

MCNALLY  
Boston Evangelical Lutheran.

CRANE  
And can anyone become a ordained  
minister with them?

MCNALLY  
Anyone who meets the requirements.

CRANE  
And would those requirements include,  
for example, being a heterosexual.

BIBB  
Objection!

CRANE  
Oh, be quiet.

Prescott leans in, suddenly intrigued.

PRESCOTT  
I'm going to allow it. Mr. McNally?

MCNALLY  
Yes.

CRANE  
In fact, they have a rule specifically forbidding gay homosexuals from becoming ordained ministers. Isn't that right?

MCNALLY  
Yes, but it's only a matter of time before that rule is amended --

CRANE  
So, the truth is, your status as a member of the clergy was a fraud. And if that was a fraud, then your affidavit was a fraud. And if that was a fraud, why, that would render my client's emancipation invalid. And you know what that means.  
(can't remember)  
What does that mean?

BRAD  
It means our client lacked the legal capacity to sign the recording contract, your honor.

McNally throws Bibb a pleading look. She shrugs, not knowing what to do. He's fucked.

CRANE  
Now do I win?

Off the judge, rubbing her temples --

INT. LEWISTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Shirley sits at her desk, surprised. Lewiston stands before her, barely believing the news himself --

SCHMIDT  
You're kidding. The judge actually threw it out.

LEWISTON

With prejudice. Miss Hopkins is free to release her album to the highest bidder.

SCHMIDT

So, malpractice averted.

Lori and Bina appear in the doorway.

LORI

A moment?

SCHMIDT

Bina.

BINA

I just came to say thank you.

SCHMIDT

You're welcome. For?

LORI

Commonwealth Mutual just came back with an offer. Two hundred fifty thousand, plus costs, no admission of guilt.

BINA

I don't know what you did, but I will never forget this. Thank you.

Bina hugs Schmidt. Schmidt and Lori exchange a look, neither knowing how the hell this could happen.

SCHMIDT

I'll walk you out.

Schmidt walks Bina out, leaving Lori with Lewiston.

LEWISTON

I don't understand. Yesterday, they were offering nothing. What happened?

LORI

It's possible Alan Shore may have intervened.

LEWISTON

Intervened how?

LORI  
 With pictures of a records clerk.  
 (treading carefully)  
 Incriminating pictures.

Lewiston marches past her, right out of the office --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Shore pulls a bottle of juice from the refrigerator. Closes the door, finds Lewiston standing behind it, glaring at him.

SHORE  
 Some juice, Paul? You look  
 constipated.

LEWISTON  
 I just came to tell you that your  
 services will no longer be required  
 by this firm. Clear out your office.  
 Security will escort you out.

SHORE  
 Might I ask why?

LEWISTON  
 Because I've had it. The only reason  
 I'm not turning you over to the DA is  
 because this firm has profited from  
 your illicit behavior in the past.  
 Leave your parking card at the front  
 desk.

Shore stands there, for once, at a loss for words.

LEWISTON (CONT'D)  
 You'll have to find that clever  
 rejoinder you're looking for at your  
 next place of employment. Now go.

Tara strides in, carrying a towering stack of files. She plants the stack on the counter.

TARA  
 Paul, here you are.

LEWISTON  
 Tara? What's this?

TARA  
 Files for the settlement class.

LEWISTON

What settlement class?

TARA

The fifty-six thousand men, women, and children we believe were the victims of racial discrimination perpetrated by Commonwealth Mutual Life.

LEWISTON

You're filing a class-action lawsuit?

TARA

No, Paul. I am filing a two hundred million dollar class-action lawsuit. With your permission, of course.

Benny Caplett wheels in a dolly stacked with file boxes, each of them filled with hundreds of files.

BENNY

Where do you want the rest of these?

TARA

Paul Lewiston, Benny Caplett. Benny used to be a records clerk at Commonwealth Mutual. He was quite instrumental in winning Lori's case.

LEWISTON

Records clerk?

(bewildered)

So you weren't blackmailed?

CAPLETT

Oh God no. Who would want to blackmail me?

TARA

I hope you don't mind. I've taken the liberty of hiring Mr. Caplett to oversee all the record-keeping responsibilities. Seeing as how he was kind enough to provide us the company files in the first place.

Tara steps right up to Paul, placing a hand on his shoulder.

TARA (CONT'D)

You wanted rain, Paul? I bring you a monsoon.

Lewiston turns to Shore, deeply chagrined. Shore grins, profoundly amused.

INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Shore walks in, finding Lydia and Ashley waiting for him.

SHORE

Ladies.

LYDIA

We didn't want to leave without saying thank you.

SHORE

I'm sorry I couldn't have been more instrumental in your victory.

ASHLEY

Silly rabbit. We won.

Shore smiles, liking this girl immensely.

SHORE

Lydia. Before you go. I uh...there are some things I'd like to say.

LYDIA

Oh, let's not go getting all sappy. We knew each other for a short time, a very long time ago. It's not like we had some great romance.

That's a lie. They both know it.

SHORE

Nonetheless...it would be a mistake to think it didn't mean something. That it doesn't still mean something.

He extends a handshake. She ignores it, kissing him tenderly on the lips.

SHORE (CONT'D)

(to Ashley)

And you...

He wants to tell her, wills himself to say the words. Finally, he settles on --

SHORE (CONT'D)

Be good.

They embrace tightly. Lydia turns away, just to keep her composure. Ashley breaks off.

ASHLEY  
Goodbye, Uncle Alan.

Ashley and Lydia walk out of Shore's office and out of his life, perhaps for the last time.

SHORE  
Goodbye.

Shore takes a seat behind his desk and finds something on his blotter. A large ENVELOPE.

INT. CRANE'S BALCONY - NIGHT

Crane at the rail, staring into the darkness. Shore approaches, a hi-ball glass in one hand, the envelope in the other.

SHORE (CONT'D)  
I hear congratulations are in order.

CRANE  
I outed a man today. Wasn't nearly as fun as you'd think.  
(noticing the envelope)  
What's that?

Shore weighs the envelope in his hands.

SHORE  
This? This is my future.

CRANE  
DNA results. Been there.

SHORE  
Either I am father to that girl, in which case I am compelled to reevaluate my life --

CRANE  
Or you're not and you get to keep having fun.

Shore regards him with affection.

SHORE  
So what's with you and the hymens?

CRANE  
You've been talking to Shirley.

SHORE  
What is it, Denny? Some fond memory  
of a lost love?

Crane turns his cigar, remembering.

CRANE  
Virgins. First girl I ever had sex  
with was a virgin. It was right  
before I shipped out to Panmunjom.  
Knocked her up, first try.

Shore smiles softly.

CRANE (CONT'D)  
I've done a lot to be proud of in my  
life, Alan. Six thousand cases  
undefeated. Name on the letterhead.  
But none of it compares to the  
sensation I got the moment that girl  
told me I was going to be a father.

SHORE  
What happened?

CRANE  
She couldn't go through with it.

SHORE  
I'm sorry.

CRANE  
What, are you kidding? Luckiest day  
of my life.

SHORE  
And the worst --

CRANE  
And the worst.

He turns to Shore, affecting a pleasant front.

CRANE (CONT'D)  
So, you just gonna stand there, or  
are you gonna open that?

Shore studies him, making a decision. He takes out a lighter, sets the envelope on FIRE, and drops it into an empty vase on the end table. As they watch it burn --

SHORE

By the way, how did you know the record producer was gay?

CRANE

The way he caressed me with his eyes. I'm irresistible, you know.

SHORE

Denny...how did you know?

CRANE

I took a shot.

They take a drink.

CRANE (CONT'D)

So...you really think you could be a good father?

SHORE

Someday. God willing.

Crane shakes his head, amused.

CRANE

A Democrat with family values.

SHORE

A Republican with Gaydar.

CRANE

What's next?

The two of them drink their scotch, basking in the glow of the fire, and in the warmth of each other's friendship, as we slowly --

FADE OUT.

THE END