

Rival Street Gangs Versus The Accused

by

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FADE IN:

INT. PROBATION OFFICE IN LA - MORNING

Sitting at her desk with a plague of her name and title of Probation Officer, LOLA WRIGHT, 33, Black, gutsy with her hair combed straight back, RUSTLES with paycheck stubs and other papers handed to her by MINOR JIMENEZ, 23, bald, 5-10, slightly heavysset, in a dark blue uniform with his name tag.

LOLA WRIGHT
After I copy these verifications,
I'll go over the expiration of your
probation with you. Excuse me.

After Lola gets up and leaves her cramped office cubicle, Minor sits staring blankly at a ton of files on her desk until she gets back from the zerox copier.

FLASHBACK - 405 FWY - END OF ARTESIA BLVD OFF-RAMP - NIGHT

COP #1, 30s, points a gun at Minor, slumped over the steering wheel of a smashed-up 2001 BLUE CAMERO, with COP #2, 40s, nearby.

SUPER: "Four Years Ago"

COP #1
Police... Get out of the car.

Minor opens his door and lands face down on the street. Cop #2 cuffs him, frisks and pulls him up, then throws him in the back of the light-barred LAPD PATROL CAR.

COP #2
You're under arrest--you piece of
shit.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Upon return, Lola plops down the papers on her desk and sits in her chair.

LOLA WRIGHT
Awright, Minor, we can do this the
easy way or the hard way.

He looks at her with furrowed brows as he comes back to reality.

LOLA WRIGHT (CONT'D)
If you don't fuck up, you won't
ever have to see my face again, but
if you do and show up here again--
I will be your worst nightmare.

She hands him back his paystubs, rent receipts, signature form of a 12-step program and probation expiration form.

MINOR

You have my word, Ms Wright. I'm sticking to my 12-step program.

LOLA WRIGHT

Don't BS me. You better stick to what you're good at. By the size of your paychecks--that's fixing cars and not stealing 'em.

MINOR

Yes, ma'am--thank you and bye.

After he leaves and while walking through the probation office, he gets out his cell phone and selects: "ANNA with her Picture on his Favorites Screen". There's a response after TWO RINGS.

ANNA (V.O.)

You reached Anna. Leave a message.

BEEP.

MINOR

Listen, Anna--hope we're still on for tonight? Pick you up 'round five. I love you.

After a beat, there's a DING on his phone, and he opens a text message from Anna: "SORRY BABE AT WORK CAN'T TALK NOW & CAN'T WAIT FOR OUR BIG NITE OUT... XOXO ANNA". After reading, he closes the text message with a huge smile.

MINOR

(mouths)

Thank you God.

INT. EL TEPEYAC CAFE ON EVERGREEN - EVENING

Wearing a sexy traditional dress-costume for El Dia de los Muertos, ANNA VELASQUEZ, 19, slender with long black hair is sitting at a table with Minor, whose pecs bulge in his Lakers T-shirt. While finishing their dinner, they laugh as Minor pushes forward his plate of half-eaten food and pats his belly.

ANNA

Oh, Minor, did you really think you could eat it all this time?

MINOR

Come on, Anna, have some faith in me. Mark my words, One day I'll demolish the Manuel Special Burrito and have my photo hanging up on that wall.

ANNA

I'll believe it when I see it.

LUPE, 40s, waitress, in a black skirt and white blouse, arrives swiftly to their table to clear their plates and drop off the receipt.

LUPE

All done? Well, almost I see--I'm dying to see your face on our wall of fame someday and win the \$100 prize for eating Manuel's biggest burrito at El Tepeyac.

MINOR

Thank you, Lupe, and it's gonna happen--you can count on it.

LUPE

Oh, I believe you Minor. I just hope it's not when I have my day off. Now, you two enjoy El Dia de los Muertos together.

MINOR / ANNA

Happy El Dia de los Muertos-

EXT. EL TEPEYAC CAFE ON EVERGREEN - CONTINUOUS

Standing in a long line of customers are MARIO GUTIERREZ, 24, stocky, wavy black hair, dark complexion, wearing a BRONCO'S Football Jersey, and Angel Bernal, 22, medium-built, brown hair combed back, wearing a FUBU Sport Shirt--their attire represents their East LA gang-affiliation.

ANGEL

Damn, I could eat a fuckin' horse. Wish we got here sooner, but-

MARIO

Yeah, right, but shit happens-

A beat

Just watch your back next time, and keep your head down, cuz Puppet rules Cincinnati Street--them bangers got it out for us, homie.

INT. EL TEPEYAC CAFE ON EVERGREEN - CONTINUOUS

While Minor stands up to head over to the cashier to pay the bill, Anna remains at the table sipping on her drink.

MINOR

Sit tight, I'll be right back, and oh, Anna, you look amazing tonight.

ANNA

(mouths out)

Thank you. I love you.

MINOR
(mouths back)

I love you.

After entering the cramped cafe, Mario and Angel are given a table, and then Lupe places menus down for them.

LUPE
Okay, guys, I'll give you some time to look over the menu, then I'll be back to take your orders.

Angel grabs the menu and looks over it while licking his lips, whereas Mario can't keep his eyes off Anna, who's just a few tables down.

ANGEL
Man, I know exactly wat I want. How 'bout you?

MARIO
Yeah, me too, and she's right over there-

A beat

Dawg, would I like to tap that pretty thing.

ANGEL
(looks over)
Wow, go for it-

Mario gets up, then takes Anna by subtle surprise as he stands above her and introduces himself.

MARIO
Hello, pretty lady--I'm Mario. Can I buy a drink for you on this very special day?

ANNA
Oh, no thank you.

MARIO
(softly in her ear)
Let me guess--how 'bout a nice margarita? Cuz I know what a beautiful woman like you wants.

ANNA
Just go. I'm not interested.

Just as Anna moves back, Minor gets there and grabs Mario away from her.

MINOR
Listen up--do you wanna live? Then back off. Like now, or-

Angel rushes over and stands right behind Mario.

MARIO
Or wat? Chump--I don't see a ring
on her finger-

Angel steps closer, stares at Minor, and defends Mario.

ANGEL
Wat da fuck, man!
Minor swiftly shoves Mario into Angel.

MINOR
You better hope I never see you
around my girl again--like I said,
back off *now* before I destroy you
both.

Minor turns around and puts a tip on the table before taking Anna by her arm and leaving together.

The extreme silence among the customers is broken when Lupe comes over and confronts Mario and Angel.

LUPE
Awright, you fellas gonna sit down
nice-like and order something to
eat, or wat?

ANGEL
Yeah, uh, you got any Pozole today?

INT. RAYMUNDO'S AUTO BODY COLLISION REPAIR SHOP - DAY

RAYMUNDO GARCIA, 65, tall and lanky, moves methodically around a BLACK SILVERADO while Minor, in a face mask, is buffing-out the late model truck with plates of "RAYS ABC".

RAYMUNDO
Good job, Minor. Hey, go ahead and
take off early today--goin' to the
jewelry mart? Ay, wonder why?
Buyin' a ring, maybe? Hey, but,
seriously, we're gettin' a
shit-load of cars, and I'm gonna
need you bright and early on
Monday.

While pulling down his face mask, Minor laughs it off.

MINOR
No problem. You can count on me--
just going over to my sister's for
my niece's birthday.

Raymundo NODS in approval as he walks to his office HUMMING an old standard song. Soon after, Minor cleans up then clocks out.

EXT. RAYMUNDO'S REPAIR SHOP - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

In a dark T-shirt and black jacket, Minor gets in his 1957 TWO TONE PAINTED CHEVY and drives onto the street after he waves to his boss.

EXT. CHRISTINA'S HOUSE IN BOYLE HEIGHTS - DAY

After Minor parks in the driveway and gets out of his car, his sister CHRISTINA FLORES, 28, 5'3" with an athletic build and streaky-colored hair, sprints off the front porch to greet him with a tight embrace.

CHRISTINA

Oh, Minor, get your butt inside.
Josie has been waiting way too long
for you to get here, fool.

MINOR

Oh my God, I can't believe she's
seven now--better hurry on in,
huh?

Minor opens the metal-screened door, and he follows her inside then shuts the door. POPULAR MUSIC is playing while LAUGHTER and HOOTS become louder.

EXT. PERIMETER OF HOLLENBECK PARK - BOYLE HEIGHTS - SAME DAY

While walking together on the sidewalk, Mario and Angel are confiding in one another, just as someone bent down behind a parked car across the street is scoping them out.

ANGEL

Yo, I don't know if I can hang much
longer. I'm paranoid all the time
since Puppet's coming down on us in
our own hood.

MARIO

Dude, like I said, just watch your
back. Won't be long before he's
history. So don't sweat it.
Awright?

A GUNSHOT from across the street is fired and Angel is hit on his right side, then as Mario turns around and ducks down, ANOTHER SHOT is fired and hits Mario in the back of his head. Both have fallen to the ground as the gunman runs away. SCREAMING from a small group of family can be heard in the distance, then SIRENS RING OUT.

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

While the party's still going on and everybody is in the living room, Christina is standing in front of the window that faces the street. Her eyes peer out back and forth through the window as she starts to speak to herself.

CHRISTINA

Minor, where the heck did you go?
You told me you forgot something
and that you'd be right back.

JOSIE (O.S.)

Mommy, when can I open some of my
presents?

CHRISTINA

(over her shoulder)

Pretty soon, sweetheart--pretty
soon.

INT. LA POLICE STATION - GANGS SPECIAL AGENCY OFC. - DAY

Sporting a dark suit and a loosened tie, with a scar on his
cheek below his left eye, DETECTIVE GEORGE RODRIGUEZ, 38,
sits across the table from Angel, his right arm in a splint.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Listen, Angel, we already know that
you and your partner, Mario are
members of the Forever Boyle Avenue
gang--don't pretend. So, you really
don't know who wanted to shoot you
down last Saturday?

ANGEL

Hey, man, I wanna catch the dude
just as much as you guys.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Again--who wants you dead?

ANGEL

(with cockiness)

Huh, wait a minute Detective--
ain't you even gonna ask me what
the bastard looked like?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Right--sure, Bernal, go for it,
describe him.

ANGEL

Yeah, well, I got a damn good
look before he took his first
shot through my arm and chest.
(beat) The fucker was a heavyset
bald Latino about my age, or a
little older.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

What was he wearing?

ANGEL

Like I told you before, a black
t-shirt with some kinda white
letters and a black jacket.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Did you notice any tattoos?

ANGEL
Nah, didn't see any tats.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
(loud and breathy)
Names--give me names of anyone
who's threatened you or Mario
lately. C'mon, think-

ANGEL
Dunno his name, but he was the same
lil' bitch that threatened Mario
and me on Dia de los Muertos when
were at El Tepeyac's on Evergreen.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Ever seen him before? What was he
wearing?

ANGEL
Nah, never saw him before. He was
wearing a dark Lakers t-shirt and
his girlfriend had on a sexy
costume.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Go on--how did he threaten you?

ANGEL
(stammers at first)
Th-th-this girr-rl was sitting
alone--so, Mario goes over to pick-
up on her. Next thing ya know, this
dude shows up, grabs Mario and cr-
cr-rams him into me, then yells to
Mario--you wanna live, and tells us
that he'll kill us if he ever sees
us around his woman again.

While standing up, Rodriguez checks his watch and then
walks away. He glares back at Angel over his shoulder as he
opens the door.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Hang tight, Angel. I'm going to
have you look at some mugshots-

INT. RAYMUNDO'S REPAIR SHOP - OFFICE - DAY

As Raymundo is walking toward his office, Detective
Rodriguez is standing in the open doorway.

RAYMUNDO
Hi, what can I help you with today?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Are you Mr. Garcia, the owner?

RAYMUNDO

Yes, Sir.

They walk into his office together just as Rodriguez pulls out his badge and shows it to him.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

I'm Detective Rodriguez with the LAPD. I understand that Minor Jimenez is one of your employees.

RAYMUNDO

Yes, he's been working here over two years--Detective, what's this all about?

Rodriguez gazes out around the shop then glares back at Raymundo.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

I need you to take me to him now. We have to question him downtown about a recent shooting and put him in a lineup.

RAYMUNDO

Alright, but you should know something: Minor's one of my best workers. My shop's been here over thirty years, and we work on up to ten cars at a time-

A beat

-C'mere, Detective. (points)
He's right over there working on that blue El Camino.

INT. RAYMUNDO'S REPAIR SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Walking out of the office together, Raymundo and Detective Rodriguez approach Minor as he closes a drawer of his tool box. LOUD EQUIPMENT SOUNDS drown out their conversation. Rodriguez shows Minor his badge, he cuffs Minor, then walks him out toward the parking lot.

EXT. RAYMUNDO'S REPAIR SHOP - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A LAPD Officer, 40, is standing on the driver's side of the patrol car and opens the back door as Rodriguez guides Minor to the door, then the officer tilts his head down at Minor.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Okay, Minor, have a seat--it's just a short ride to the station.

MINOR

Yes, Sir.

After Minor gets in the back seat and Rodriguez closes the door, the officer gets in the driver seat and Rodriguez goes to the passenger front door and gets in.

Raymundo stands alone in the parking lot while he watches Minor, with his head bowing down, being driven away out of the driveway onto the street.

INT. LA POLICE STATION - SURVEILLANCE LINEUP ROOM - EVENING

Rodriguez and Angel stand behind the surveillance window in a darkened room as one by one, FIVE INDIVIDUALS walk into the line-up room.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Okay, Angel, each man is going to be called to step forward, one at a time. Now, I want you to really take your time while you look over each one, alright?

ANGEL

Yeah, sure--no problem.

INT. LINEUP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Under bright lighting, FIVE Latino men, including Minor, who are all just under six-foot-tall, somewhat heavysset and bald, are standing in front of a lineup wall that is NUMBERED 1 to 5.

A LOUD VOICE comes through the audible feed from an OFFICER giving verbal instructions over a MIC in a separate room.

OFFICER (O.S.)

Okay, gentleman, please continue to stand under your number on the wall behind you and face forward.

After the men make a few small adjustments, everyone remains quiet as one or two slightly shift their weight around.

OFFICER (O.S. CONT'D)

Now, please turn to your right and continue to look ahead of you.

The men follow the instructions to the letter as the officer pauses before speaking again.

OFFICER (O.S. CONT'D)

Now, please turn to your left and face forward. (beat) And once again, turn to your left and look ahead of you. Thank you--now, turn to your right and face forward, that's fine. (beat) Okay, remain standing.

INT. SURVEILLANCE LINEUP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The audio is now turned off to the line-up room. The only audio operating is that being piped-in and out of the line-up surveillance room and the separate room where the officer continues to speak over the MIC.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
(looking past the glass)
Okay, Officer, can we proceed
with the rest of the line-up a
little slower as each one steps
forward?

OFFICER (O.S.)
No problem, Detective.

INT. LINEUP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

With the audio feed turned back on in the Line-up room, the OFFICER'S VOICE can be heard loud and clear.

OFFICER (O.S. CONT'D)
All right, the first man in line,
walk forward three steps, stop, and
continue to look forward. (beat)
That's good (beat) Now, step back
in line.

After the FIRST man steps back in line, the officer speaks.

OFFICER (O.S. CONT'D)
Okay, the next man in line, please
walk forward three steps, stop, and
continue to look forward.

Minor, the SECOND MAN in the line-up, steps forward and continues to look forward.

INT. SURVEILLANCE LINEUP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ANGEL
(blurts out)
Oh, shit... That's him.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
You sure?

ANGEL
I didn't wanna say anything at
first, but, hey, man, there's no
doubt--that's the fuckin' bastard.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Sure, sure. Just hang tight and
keep looking until we get to the
end of the line-up.

The rest of the line-up continues until the MAN ON THE END

steps back in the line-up with the others. The audio feed is only on between the officer and the surveillance room.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)
Okay, Officer, have the second man
step out again, and have him turn
at a slower pace this time.

OFFICER (O.S. CONT'D)
Yes, the second man--no problem,
Detective.

INT. LINEUP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The audio feed is resumed back into the Lineup room.

OFFICER (O.S. CONT'D)
The man second in line, please,
step forward again and continue to
look forward.

Raising his eye brows, Minor steps out, stops, and
looks forward as he follows the officer's directions.

OFFICER (O.S. CONT'D)
Now, turn to the right... Turn to
your left... And turn facing
forward... That's good. You can
step back in line.

INT. SURVEILLANCE LINE-ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Before Minor steps back into the line, Angel, with clenched
fists, glares at Minor through the glass, then SOUNDS-OFF
to the rather cool detective.

ANGEL
He's gonna pay--ya gonna lock up
that fucka', right?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
(looking forward)
Thank you, Officer--that will be
all tonight.

OFFICER (O.S.)
Yes, sir. Goodnight.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
(draws in a deep breath)
Listen, Angel, it's been a long night.
Go on home but stay close, and we'll
keep you posted.

INT. LA TWIN TOWERS JAIL - VISITING AREA - DAY

Separated by a large plate glass partition, Minor, in blue

prisoner scrubs with the jail's logo, sits in a visiting booth that's equipped with phone receivers on each side. Anna, wearing a floral print dress, sits leaning forward in the booth directly across from him.

MINOR

Everything has been a surreal nightmare over this last week.

ANNA

(trembled voice)

Believe me Minor, we are all praying for you. Please, tell us what we can do?

MINOR

Now that I plead Not Guilty at the arraignment, my public defender told me the trial might start in the next few days. She warned me that the prosecutor's a real hard-ass after she filed my alibi.

ANNA

I know you said you were at Christina's for your niece's birthday that Saturday. Don't worry, Minor--we'll all be by your side at the trial.

A SHERIFF'S OFFICER, 30's, on the inmate's visiting side, walks by all the inmates and LOUDLY ANNOUNCES as he passes.

SHERIFF'S OFFICER

Visiting is over--time to go.

Minor places one of his palms flat on the glass in front of him, and then Anna places her palm flat on her side of the glass against his palm.

MINOR

Don't say goodbye--I love you.

ANNA

I love you.

INT. RUN-DOWN HOTEL ROOM IN WESTLAKE DISTRICT - DUSK

Lying on a double-bed with a gun and a LA TIMES Newspaper, JUAN DIAZ, AKA "TERMITE", 25, bald, slightly heavyset and wearing a CHARGER'S Football Jersey, is smoking a joint.

The LOWER THIRD HEADLINE on the first page reads: "Double Shooting of Two Gang Members in Hollenbeck Park".

TERMITE

(on the cell phone)

Yo, Puppet--just saw the Times,

(MORE)

TERMITE (CONT'D)

looks like da lil' bitch, Bernal's still alive, and Gutierrez's in a coma. Ay, but not to sweat, some other chump's takin' the heat.

He hangs up, takes another hit, exhales, then scratches the right side of his neck that has a TATTOO of letters "C K"--symbols of his gang affiliation.

INT. USC SURGICAL ICU - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Lying in a bed on a ventilator and connected to a cardiac monitor with several intravenous infusions, Mario is unconscious with his scalp wrapped in gauze-bandage.

Away from the foot of the bed, JULIE BULLA, 28, attractive with mid-length light brown hair, green eyes and dressed in a brown dress suit, is conversing with DR CURTIS LI, 39, wearing a white lab coat with NEUROLOGY stitched in blue above his left pocket.

JULIE BULLA

Here's my card Dr. Li, and thank you for meeting with me today. I'm the public defender representing the defendant in the case related to the shooting that took place on November seventh.

DR LI

No problem. You know, if he had been shot in the back of his head with a higher caliber weapon, this patient wouldn't be alive.

JULIE BULLA

I understand. When do you think he will be able to wake up and talk?

DR LI

As of now, we've been able to reduce the high level of intracranial pressure with surgery, medication and a medically-induced coma.

JULIE BULLA

How long are you going to keep Mario in a coma?

DR LI

Possibly three weeks or until he becomes stable. Excuse me, but I'm needed in surgery, soon-

Dr. Li walks away into the hall and Julie steps closer to Mario's side. Looking down at him, she SOFTLY SPEAKS to him-

JULIE BULLA

Mario, I believe you can hear me...
Please tell us who did this to you-

DR LI (O.S.)

Ms Bulla-

She leaves the room as Dr. Li starts to walk down the hall.

INT. CORRIDOR OF ICU - CONTINUOUS

JULIE BULLA

Yes, Dr. Li, and I appreciate all
of your time. Would you please
contact me and Detective Rodriguez
when he's conscious?

DR LI

Sure, I have your cards.

He rushes ahead of her toward the automatic exit door.

INT. LA TWIN TOWERS JAIL - COUNSEL ROOM - DAY

Julie Bulla sits with a thick file in front of her on the
table and a worn leather brief case is on the floor leaned
up against an empty chair. A tall OFFICER, 40's, escorts
Minor through the door and pulls out a chair across the
other side of the table for Minor to sit in.

OFFICER

(to Ms Bulla)

Good morning.

JULIE BULLA

Good morning and thank you,
Officer.

He NODS to her then closes the door as he leaves. He remains
a few feet outside and is visible through the wall window
partition.

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)

Hi, Minor... Now, let's get down to
business. We've got a lot to cover
since the arraignment.

MINOR

Let's do it, Ms Bulla, but first
off--do you know the actual date
of the trial?

JULIE BULLA

Okay, Minor, I know that things
have been moving really fast since
you were placed here after the
line-up, but just recently I was
notified that the trial will begin
after this weekend on Tuesday.

MINOR

My God, after this weekend--that soon? Excuse me, but how the hell-

JULIE BULLA

Now, listen, that means we have to go over everything that happened in your life, starting with the day of the shooting and anything you can remember before or after that day-

He lowers his head and rubs his forehead back and forth, then lifts up his head and looks directly into her eyes as she opens the file.

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)

-Why? Because whatever occurred in and around that time will most likely provide us with some kind of significance in proving your innocence.

MINOR

Okay, I got it. So, where do you want me to start?

JULIE BULLA

Well, let's start with the restaurant; the place that you said you saw Angel and his partner, Mario for the first time. You were with your girlfriend, right?

MINOR

(eyes moisten)

Anna, yes, I was with Anna-

INT. LA TWIN TOWERS JAIL - ACCESS AREA BY COUNSEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The officer looks into the counsel room through the surveillance window then checks his watch followed by POV through the window of Minor talking to Ms Bulla (MOS) as she's taking notes and pulling papers out of her file.

INT. OB/GYN MEDICAL OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

A NURSE, 30s, in pastel scrubs behind the reception counter, walks toward Anna, on the other side, and hands her a bottle of prenatal vitamins with a double-sided instruction form.

NURSE

Sorry to keep you waiting, but it's been so busy today... And congratulations, Anna--Dr. De Silva wrote down your estimated date of delivery on the instruction sheet and wants you back for your check-up in one month, okay?

NODDING in agreement with a slightly forced smile, Anna slowly backs away. While leaving, she looks with widened-eyes at two women in their late pregnancy who are sitting calmly in the waiting room next to a table full of parenting magazines.

INT. SALON MEDUSA - DAY - LATER

Christina's standing over her CLIENT, 40s, wearing a black drape sitting in a salon chair of the mirrored-station.

While blow drying her client's tinted-hair with a styling brush, Christina looks over to Anna that's rushing toward her from the propped-open glass door.

CHRISTINA

Hi, Anna, you okay? Did you want a trim today?

ANNA

Christina, I have to talk to you.

CHRISTINA

What? Huh, can't really hear you, sweetie. Just have a seat and-

ANNA

No, Christina, *now*. I have to talk to you *now*-

CHRISTINA

What?

ANNA

(loud and forceful)

God damn it... I'm pregnant.

CHRISTINA

(under her breath)

Oh, fuck-

Christina turns off the blow-dryer and quickly removes the drape from her client.

CLIENT

(to Anna)

Congratulations, and I'm so happy for you.

CHRISTINA

(to her client)

All done and no charge. You have a nice day, my friend.

In a flash, Christina pulls Anna toward the back, away from the other stylist and customer in the salon. Anna tears up while Christina holds her hand and slowly strokes Anna's long hair with her other hand.

ANNA

Christina, I can't have this baby by myself. What am I going to do?

CHRISTINA

Now, now... You won't be alone.
That's not gonna happen. Look at
me--you love Minor?

ANNA

Of course, I do.

CHRISTINA

And I know Minor loves you. Do you
know how much he loves you?

ANNA

I know he loves me, but how can I
tell him anything now? I can't
believe what's happening. It's
all too crazy.

CHRISTINA

Are you going to tell him?

ANNA

Hell no--I can't, not now. I just
found out today. You're the only
one that knows.

CHRISTINA

Yeah, me and that lady with the
tinted hair. Don't worry. Hey,
trust me, Anna. We're family now,
and I'll be here for you and the
baby every step of the way. We
must have faith and believe that
Minor will be cleared and set free.

ANNA

I believe you, Christina, but
we can't tell Minor, not now.

CHRISTINA

So be it. We won't--I promise.

They both hold onto each other's hands as they make a truce.

INT. LA TWIN TOWERS JAIL - INMATES' ASSEMBLY ROOM - MORNING

A PRIEST, mid-40s, with gray hair on his temples, stands in
front of TEN INMATES that are seated within three short rows
of plastic-molded chairs. With his head bowed, Minor's
holding a thin-paper prayer book during the priest's sermon.

PRIEST

In the days when Christ was in the
flesh, he offered prayers, and
supplications with loud cries and
tears to the one who was able to

(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)
 save him from death, and was heard
 because of his reverence. Son
 though he was, he learned obedience
 from what he suffered; and when he
 was made perfect, he became the
 source of eternal salvation for all
 who obey him. This is word of the
 Lord.

MINOR / INMATES
 (somewhat in unison)
 Thanks be to God.

An INMATE, 20s, with a silver front tooth, turns his head
 and PURSES his lips at Minor, sitting in the row just behind
 him. Minor shows no expression as the Mass continues.

INT. LA TWIN TOWERS JAIL - INMATES LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

It's after chow time in the POD, and most of the inmates
 are sitting at some of the several bolted down circular
 stainless-steel tables with attached circular stools.

The T.V.'s on while Minor's talking on a pay-styled phone
 which is arranged in a series of four other phones fixed
 onto a circular kiosk off to the back.

MINOR
 I just wanted to let you know that
 the trial starts on Tuesday at ten
 o'clock in the morning.

CHRISTINA (V.O.)
 Oh my God, so soon--I will be
 there. How you holding up there

MINOR
 Thanks, Christina. It's no
 picnic, but my public defender's
 pulling for me--listen, I wanna
 know if you've seen Anna, lately?

CHRISTINA (V.O.)
 Yes, she came over to my salon and
 don't worry--she's doing okay.

MINOR
 You sure? I miss her so much. I
 don't want to lose her. I know this
 can't be easy on her.

CHRISTINA (V.O.)
 I can tell you this--Anna loves
 you, Minor, and she's on your side.
 For God's sakes, we're all on your
 side... I am and Mama too. You got
 that?

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(loudly piped-in)
Lock it down. Time for head count.

MINOR
Hey, I gotta go--give Josie a kiss
for me. I love you.

CHRISTINA (V.O.)
I will, and I love you too. Bye.

Minor hangs up and then makes his way through a cluster of
NOISY INMATES as he walks toward his cell door.

EXT. CHRISTINA'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DUSK

After Detective Rodriguez KNOCKS on the door, Christina
opens the front door and SPEAKS through the screened door.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
I'm looking for Mrs. Christina
Flores.

CHRISTINA
Yes, I'm Mrs. Flores.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Hello Mrs. Flores. I'm Detective
George Rodriguez from the LAPD in
charge of the case involving your
brother, Minor Jimenez. I hope I
haven't disturbed you.

CHRISTINA
No, of course not.

After she opens the screen door, he shows her his badge then
places it back inside his coat.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
I'm here to ask you a few questions
that we hope you may be able to
answer for us.

CHRISTINA
Please come inside, Detective.

INT. CHRISTINA LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Once inside Rodriguez stands close to an end table with a
FRAMED PICTURE of Christina with her husband in military
uniform. Christina clears the coffee table of crayons.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)
May I offer you an iced tea or
glass of water, Detective?

RODRIGUEZ

Oh, no, thank you.

CHRISTINA

Then please, have a seat.

Just then, Christina's mother, IRENE MRS JIMENEZ, 50, small built at four-foot-eleven, with short curly black hair and nicely dressed in a skirt and blouse, enters cautiously into the living room.

MRS JIMENEZ

Christina, is everything all right?

CHRISTINA

Yes, Mama. (beat) Oh, this is Detective Rodriguez. He's working on Minor's case, and he's just goin' to ask me a few questions.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Hello, Mrs. Jimenez.

MRS JIMENEZ

Hello, Detective.

CHRISTINA

(to her mother)

Everything's fine--will you please watch Josie in her room, so we can talk?

Her mother looks at her and slowly NODS as Christina gently guides her by the arm away from the living room. Christina then sits on the couch next to the detective in an armchair.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

Okay, Detective what would you like to know?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Were you with your brother, Minor at anytime on Saturday, November seventh?

CHRISTINA

Yes, he was here at my house for my daughter's birthday party.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Now, Mrs. Flores, I want you to please carefully think back starting with the time he first came over to your home that day.

She takes a slow deep breath, leans back on the couch, and closes her eyes. Before she begins to speak, Rodriguez pulls out a small tablet and pen and thinks to himself.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ (V.O. CONT'D)
I hope this doesn't take all night.

INT. LA PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT - FITZGERALD'S OFFICE - DAY

CHRISTOPHER FITZGERALD, 41, dark blond hair with chiseled god-like features, in a three piece suit walks through the door of his office and sits behind the oak-wood desk, while a built-in shelf lined with law books serves as a backdrop.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Hey there, my trusty associate.
Well, Brian, tell me, what do we
have so far on Minor Jimenez?

With a prepared open brief in his lap, BRIAN ECKERLING, 34, tall, tanned with thick light brown hair, rambles off the details as if he were reading from a compiled grocery list.

BRIAN
23, grew up in East LA, was
picked-up for a felony evasion with
a car theft and blew a .08 at the
scene. After convicted, he did a
year at LA county jail. Also, he
just got released from a three-year
probation. Been working at a car
repair shop and living on his own
for the past two or three years.
I'm still working on whether he's
been involved in any gangs.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Not bad--we can have our detectives
check into any possible gang
affiliations. So, what we need is a
slam dunk in this trial. How about
going over his alibi again--are
there any holes in his statement
that will allow me to nail this
guy?

BRIAN
Yes, the statement of his sister
taken by the LAPD detective shows a
notable discrepancy from his alibi.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Go on-

BRIAN
She said he left her house for
almost two hours, essentially
around the time frame of the
shooting.

Leaning forward with his arms and elbows pressed onto the top of his desk, Fitzgerald boasts with an upturned grin.

FITZGERALD

Good job--knew his alibi was
bogus. Let's dig deeper into that.

EXT. STREET CORNER OF BOYLE AVE AND WHITTIER BLVD - EVENING

Walking from RAMIREZ LIQUOR, Angel is headed toward a 1965 metal-fake blue lowered 2-DOOR CHEVY IMPALA parked on the street. He opens the door and hands over a bag of booze to his older brother in the back seat, TRINI, 24, laughs a lot.

TRINI (O.S.)

Dude, hope you got the Cuervo Gold-

ANGEL

Stop with the shit and move over.

INT. 1965 CHEVY IMPALA - ON THE MOVE - CONTINUOUS

A COOL HOMIE, 20s, wearing a black knitted head-beanie in the front passenger seat, readjusts his seat after having lifted it up for Angel. After Angel gets in the back seat, the DRIVER, 20s, donning heavy gold chains around his neck and wrist, pulls into the street while a continuous loop of LOW RIDER BY WAR plays.

DRIVER

(to Angel)

Was Ramirez's son behind the
counter?

ANGEL

Yeah, he was cool and didn't give
me any mouth this time.

DRIVER

Good. That's the way I like it. So,
hey, how you been since wat
happened to you over there at
Hollenbeck?

ANGEL

Shit, man, I don't even know where
to start... All I know is the lil'
bitch that did this to me is locked
up where he belongs.

COOL HOMIE

Dude, that's not wat he asked--how
you doin', is wat he asked you.

TRINI (O.S.)

Go on tell him. Haa, I know ya
still hurt.

ANGEL

(to Trini)

I got your Cuervo didn't I? So,
shut-up.

TRINI
(almost humble)
Awright.

DRIVER
Heard you took one in the chest.

ANGEL
That's right, but it went through
my right arm first. At least I can
breathe awright since they took
that enormous hose out of my chest.

DRIVER
That's fucked up.

COOL HOMIE
No shit--so, who da hell's this lil'
bitch that fucked you up?

ANGEL
His name's Jimenez--some heavy-set
bald mother-fucka, sitting in Twin
Towers as we speak.

Angel looks over at Trini, JABS him in the ribs, and
reaches for the bottle of tequila in Trini's hand.

COOL HOMIE
You sure he's the one-

ANGEL
No doubt-

A beat

Hey genius, pass me the tequila
and quit bogartin'.

EXT. WHITTIER BLVD - 1965 CHEVY IMPALA MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Cool Homie sticks his head partially out of his open window
and SHOUTS OUT to a couple of women dressed in short dresses
that are walking alongside of them on the sidewalk and don't
stop or turn around.

COOL HOMIE
Hey, pretty mamas, wanna take a
little trip with me? (beat)
C'mon, hop in--how bout' now-

There's a series of HONKS coming from the cars behind them
as the driver has slowed down to a near stop in an attempt
to connect with the hot chicks, who keep on walking.

COOL HOMIE
(to Driver)
Fuck it, Dawg--just keep goin'-

INT. HOME OF MR. AND MRS. JIMENEZ - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In front of a BLARING TV SET, sits ERNESTO JIMENEZ, 53, in a worn-out lazy boy with a copy of the LA Times in his lap.

MR JIMENEZ

I can't believe he's my son...
Now that he's up for attempted murder. Why couldn't he go into the military like me and Christina's husband, who's been serving for six years now? But no, instead he started stealing cars at eighteen.

MRS JIMENEZ

He's our son--Ernesto, can't you believe that Minor had nothing to do with what he's been accused of?

MR JIMENEZ

All I know is I can't hold my head up anywhere I go now that his name is all over the papers. Where did I go wrong with that boy?

MRS JIMENEZ

Maybe if you used the belt less and gave me more of your love, things would be a lot different.

MR JIMENEZ

What are you saying? If I didn't use discipline to make a man out of him in a town full of hoods--how different would it have turned out?

MRS JIMENEZ

Right, you didn't have to beat the tar out of him for something like not rolling up a watering hose to your regulations when he was ten years old.

MR JIMENEZ

Oh, yeah, I remember you told me that you would kill me if I laid another hand on him back then. Please, don't remind me-

MRS JIMENEZ

This time is no different... Don't deny your son now because he really could use our support when he needs us the most.

MR JIMENEZ

Yeah, right, I've heard enough.
(MORE)

MR JIMENEZ (CONT'D)
I'm tired. Just go get me another
cold beer out of the mini fridge-

She turns away from him, rips off her apron, and yells out.

MRS JIMENEZ
Go get it yourself--you're all out.

He gets up out of his recliner and walks to the front door.

MRS JIMENEZ (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

MR JIMENEZ
Take a guess--to the corner market
for a six-pack.

EXT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - DAY

Church Bells RING for each hour of the ten o'clock hour
while up to TEN people randomly pass through the archway of
the open double-doors leading into the Spanish-style church.

A couple of cars stop in front and drop off passengers
before driving away.

INT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

In front of the STATUE OF MARY, Mrs. Jimenez is kneeling
down inside one of the pews in the front row. After she
completes the sign of the cross, she sits back down next to
Christina in the pew.

AVE MARIA gradually fades on the organ as FATHER GUILLERMO,
54, and an ALTAR BOY, early teens, holding a large brass
crucifix, proceed to the altar. Facing the congregation,
Father bows then completes the sign of the cross.

CHRISTINA
(whispering)
Oh, Mama, God is on our side. He's
always been there for us. Even in
our darkest hour--remember?

Beat

MRS JIMENEZ
I know Christina. I always taught
you and Minor that--Shh, I must
talk to Father after mass.

CHRISTINA
Yes, Mommy, we will.

EXT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

After Mass, Father Guillermo stands just outside the large
double-door opening and gives brief blessings to those
passing out of the church.

Mrs. Jimenez and Christina are nearly the last ones to leave and Father stays longer to listen to their pleas.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Mrs. Jimenez may God bless you
and your family.

MRS JIMENEZ

Oh, Father, please pray for me and
my family, especially for my son,
Minor. He is in such a terrible
place and in need of God's help.

CHRISTINA

Yes, Father Guillermo, please pray
for my baby brother (a beat) Mommy,
you stay with father, and I will go
get the car.

Christina gives her mother a quick kiss, then becomes
tearful as she rushes away around the side of the church.

All church members have now left as Father remains with Mrs.
Jimenez to console her at the doorway.

FATHER GUILLERMO

I know you are a woman of God and
that your faith will see you
through these troubled times.

MRS JIMENEZ

Oh, Father Guillermo, our family
has had troubles for some time now.
Minor hasn't been given the love
and forgiveness from his own father
in such a long time.

FATHER GUILLERMO

I will go see Minor soon, and we
will pray together again. May God
be with you.

MRS JIMENEZ

Thank you and bless you, Father.

FATHER GUILLERMO

I see Christina coming now. Peace
be with you, Mrs. Jimenez.

Christina pulls up her CAR in front of the church and her
mother walks toward the curb as Father Guillermo waves bye.

INT. LA TWIN TOWERS JAIL - COUNSEL ROOM - DAY

Ms Bulla and Minor are sitting across from each other while
a sheriff deputy stands guard in the access area just beyond
the glass partition wall.

JULIE BULLA

I thought it best we meet to go over what will be happening at the trial tomorrow.

MINOR

I'm all ears, Ms Bulla.

JULIE BULLA

The jury's been selected and will be seated first before the Judge arrives. The prosecutor and his associate will be at the table next to us while we'll remain at our table until the court's adjourned.

MINOR

Will my family be able to be there?

JULIE BULLA

Yes, of course. I spoke to your sister and mother and assured them that they can sit somewhere behind us. (beat) Minor, the main thing I want to stress to you is that I am on your side. There will be opening statements by the prosecutor and by me--You must believe that I'm going to do everything in my power to defend you.

MINOR

You've done this before, right?

JULIE BULLA

(blushes slightly)

Twice before, and I won those cases right here in LA--where I grew up.

MINOR

I thought you were from up north in the Bay Area.

JULIE BULLA

I went to Law School there at Stanford, but my family and friends are all here in a part of LA not too far from where you live.

MINOR

Okay, I believe you've got what it takes. I just don't want to spend the rest of my life in prison.

JULIE BULLA

Like I said Minor, I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure that doesn't happen.

The GUARD, 30s, opens the door and addresses Ms Bulla as he LOWERS THE SOUND coming from his hand-radio.

GUARD

Excuse me, but I gotta get him back to main circulation now.

JULIE BULLA

Is there a problem, Officer?

GUARD

Not really, following a routine order just given out--sorry, let's go, Jimenez.

JULIE BULLA

(to Minor)

See you tomorrow, Minor.

MINOR

Okay, thank you, Ms. Bulla.

Before being escorted by the guard, Minor stares at Ms Bulla as he struggles with his internal thoughts-

MINOR (V.O.)

Dear God, give me the strength to get through this-

INT. LA SUPERIOR COURT BUILDING - CRIMINAL COURTROOM - DAY

Chris Fitzgerald, in a three piece suit sits along his associate, Brian, at the table to the right side of the wood-paneled courtroom. While Minor and Ms Bulla, in a brown dress suit, sit at the table on the left.

Through an open door on the left, the TWELVE JURY MEMBERS enter to take their seats in the raised jury box. A 20-something stenographer pulls at her dress before she sits in front of her machine.

Anna, Christina, and Mrs. Jimenez are seated in the front row behind Minor, while Angel sits just behind the prosecutor. The BAILIFF, 50, faces nearly FIFTEEN others seated in the courtroom as JUDGE LAURA ELLIOTT, 47, mid-length blond hair, enters and sits at the raised court bench desk.

BAILIFF

All rise... Presiding Honorary
Judge Laura Elliott of Los Angeles
Superior Court.

All rise during her entry and remain standing until she sits down and adjusts the MIC on the desk stand in front of her.

She looks over the court case legal document on her desk then STRIKES the gavel three times before calling out.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Criminal courtroom of Los Angeles Superior Court come to order for the trial of the attempted murder of Angel Bernal and Mario Gutierrez vs. the alleged-accused Minor Jimenez. With the occurrence reported as taken place on November seventh at approximately 3:40 in the afternoon at Hollenbeck Park in Los Angeles, California. (beat) With both counsel present in court-

She looks up briefly toward the two counsel that remain standing behind their tables.

JUDGE ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

-Julie Bulla, public defender assigned to the defendant and Christopher Fitzgerald, attorney for the prosecution. If there are no pending issues, we will proceed with opening statements from both counsel, starting with the prosecution.

JULIE BULLA

No pending issues, Your Honor.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

No pending issues, Your Honor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Very well, Mr. Fitzgerald you may begin with your opening statement for the prosecution to the court and jury.

Julie Bulla sits down as Chris Fitzgerald walks closer to the jury. He nods and makes direct eye contact as he speaks.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Thank you, Your Honor. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury. It is for the safety and well-being of all living in our great city of Los Angeles that I, as prosecutor, am here today for this senseless act of violence that occurred in and around a public park, where many families with children gather. None of us can rest easily until those that choose to attack anyone with firearms are rightfully placed behind bars, away from people that deserve to live in a safe community without the fear of leaving their homes on any given day. Through testimonies by the witnesses-

Fitzgerald looks directly at Angel in the first row.

CHRIS FITZGERALD (CONT'D)

And most importantly, by the victim, it will be greatly apparent that the defendant, Minor Jimenez is guilty as charged for the attempted murder of Mario Gutierrez and Angel Bernal. Please, listen carefully to all the evidence, as I'm sure you will make the right decision when it comes time to place your verdict--Thank you, members of the jury and the court; thank you, Your Honor.

After leaving the ledge of the jury box, he walks slowly back behind his table before sitting down.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Thank you, Mr. Fitzgerald. Ms Bulla, would you please give your opening statement for the defense to the court and members of the jury.

Ms Bulla pats Minor's thigh under the table before she rises with her direct response to the judge, followed by walking near the jury box.

JULIE BULLA

Yes, and thank you, Your Honor.
(beat) Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I'm sure that the prosecution would like you to believe that the accused is guilty of two counts of attempted murder even before all of the evidence has been fully presented and weighed here in this court of justice.

She looks at Minor, whose gaze shifts from the jury to her.

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)

--As Minor Jimenez's defending attorney, I am here to prove that, in fact, Mr. Jimenez is an innocent man and that he's been falsely accused of the charges placed against him. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, before you place your final verdict, I must implore that all of you keep an open mind as the evidence in its entirety unfolds through the duration of this trial. Thank you, members of the jury, members of the court, and thank you, Your Honor.

Ms Bulla, now behind her table, bows her head slightly

toward the jury while she stands beside Minor with her hand over his right shoulder.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Thank you, Ms Bulla, for your opening statement for the defense, and once again, thank you, Mr. Fitzgerald for your opening statement for the prosecution. Both of your statements have now been heard, accepted, and recorded here in the Criminal Courtroom of Los Angeles Superior Court.

Each counsel remains standing and looking directly at the judge at this point, as others in the court are sitting forward in their seats.

JUDGE ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

We will reconvene with further court case proceedings this Friday at ten A.M.--with the presented list of witnesses having been noted. Court is adjourned.

She STRIKES the gavel twice before rising to depart. Others in the court are speaking among each other as the bailiff escorts the jury members out of the court.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

(to Brian)

Another Slam Dunk case under our belts, soon--check it out, and take a good look over there at Jimenez--what a piece of work.

JULIE BULLA

Minor--we will fight this together.

Before being escorted away, he NODS his head at Ms Bulla then places a hand over his heart as he looks at Anna, who is sitting behind him.

INT. COURTROOM CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

After entering the hall from the courtroom, Julie Bulla walks briskly to catch up with Mrs. Jimenez, Christina, and Anna while they're walking several feet down the way.

JULIE BULLA

Hello, Christina, Mrs. Jimenez. Please, can we talk over here for a few minutes?

She guides them to a bench positioned against a wall. Most of the court has emptied out of the hall by now.

CHRISTINA

Oh, yes, of course, Ms Bulla--and this is Minor's girlfriend, Anna.

JULIE BULLA

(to Anna)

Oh, it's so nice to finally meet you, Anna.

ANNA

Thank you, Ms. Bulla, and I want you to know it means so much to us that you are fighting for Minor.

JULIE BULLA

(standing over them)

I'm glad I'm able to confide in you, now--I know this isn't easy on all of you, but I want you to know I'm here to answer any concerns you have, day or night.

CHRISTINA

Ms Bulla, our main concern is, will you be able to prove that Minor is innocent. We just can't bear to see him locked up.

JULIE BULLA

Listen, I'm not going to sugar-coat the situation. Today was the first day of the trial, and you heard the opening statements from me and from the prosecutor. Mr. Fitzgerald is what you call, a hard-ass. He has a high rate of conviction wins under his belt, and this is just another trial that he wants to turn into an open and shut case.

MRS. JIMENEZ

Oh, please, Ms Bulla--you are not going to let that happen... Not to my son.

CHRISTINA

(holding onto her)

Of course not, Mama. We need to keep listening to what Minor's lawyer has to say-

JULIE BULLA

Mrs. Jimenez, that's the last thing I want to happen to your son. I'm here to tell you that I'll be doing everything in my power to bring forth the evidence needed to clear Minor and to bring him back home to all of you--but I need your help.

ANNA

Please, tell us--what can we do?

JULIE BULLA

I know Christina and Mrs. Jimenez have my card, but I also want you to have my card, Anna. If any of you has anything, I don't care how small, pop-up in your mind that might have some significant bearing to Minor's case (beat) Please, please, call me, okay?

They all stand up as Ms Bulla hands her card to Anna.

CHRISTINA

So, what's next? The trial continues this Friday, right?

JULIE BULLA

That's right, a list of witnesses was submitted to the Judge and we will start placing witnesses on the stand to testify on Friday morning at ten o'clock.

CHRISTINA

Thank you, and we'll be there.

JULIE BULLA

That's good. Minor needs your support and we will see you, soon.

After Ms Bulla steps away, Christina, Mrs. Jimenez, and Anna remain holding hands and bowing their heads down.

CHRISTINA

We must stay strong for Minor from this day forward.

All of them NOD in misty-eyed agreement.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Criminal courtroom of Los Angeles Superior Court come to order for the continuation of the trial of the attempted murder of Angel Bernal and Mario Gutierrez versus the alleged-accused Minor Jimenez.

She looks up briefly toward Julie and Fitzgerald that remain standing behind their tables.

JUDGE ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Noted, both counsel are present. If there are no pending issues, we'll proceed by calling the first witness to the stand.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
No pending issues, Your Honor.

JULIE BULLA
No pending issues, Your Honor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
Very well, Mr. Fitzgerald, we
will begin with swearing in your
first witness for examination.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Yes, Your Honor, I wish to call
Detective George Rodriguez of the
LAPD as my first witness.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
Bailiff, please call forth the
first witness.

BAILIFF
Detective George Rodriguez, please
step forward to the witness stand.

Detective Rodriguez, dressed in a brown suit and tie,
swiftly steps forward to the stand. While the Bailiff holds
a bible, he directs the following protocol to the detective:

BAILIFF
Are you Detective George Rodriguez?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Yes, I am.

BAILIFF
Raise your right hand and place
your other hand on the bible.

He places his hand on the bible and raises his right hand.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)
Do you swear to tell the truth, the
whole truth, and nothing but the
truth in this court of law, so help
you, God?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Yes, I do.

BAILIFF
You may be seated.

The bailiff leaves his side, and as Detective Rodriguez sits
in the witness box, Fitzgerald approaches him at the stand.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Detective Rodriguez, will you tell
the court and the jury about your
position in the LAPD and how long
you have been employed there?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

I am a detective with the LAPD and I have been working as a special agent in the Gangs Division for the past ten years. I began working as a police officer five years before becoming a detective.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Now, Detective, you have been assigned by the LAPD to investigate the case involving the shooting of Mario Gutierrez and Angel Bernal that took place at Hollenbeck Park on November seventh--is that correct?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Yes, that is correct.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

As detective and special agent in the Gangs Division, did you determine the accused, Minor Jimenez, as being the key suspect through your investigation? If so--why?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Yes, it was determined that Minor Jimenez, the accused, became the prime suspect in the shooting through the questioning of the victim, Angel Bernal, as the sole witness, and by Mr. Bernal's positive identification of Minor Jimenez in his mugshot, and in a lineup--it's unclear at this time whether the case is gang-related.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

I have no further questions, Your Honor. The prosecution rests.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Thank you, Mr. Fitzgerald. Ms Bulla, do you wish to cross-examine the witness for the defense.

Ms Bulla rises from her seat as Mr. Fitzgerald returns to his table.

JULIE BULLA

Yes, Your Honor. I would like to cross-examine the witness.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Please proceed, Ms Bulla.

JULIE BULLA

Thank you, Your Honor.

A Beat. Walking toward Detective Rodriguez, Ms Bulla tilts her head toward the jury and then to the witness.

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)

Detective Rodriguez, may I be so bold as to ask you how old you are?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

I'm 38 years old.

JULIE BULLA

And did you grow up here in Los Angeles?

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Objection on the grounds of relevancy, Your Honor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Counsel, where are you going with this inquiry?

JULIE BULLA

Your Honor, I'm simply attempting to establish a baseline as to the witness's expertise dealing with his specialty related to the numerous gangs of Los Angeles.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Objection over-ruled. You may proceed.

JULIE BULLA

Detective, did you grow up in Los Angeles?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Yes, I grew up in East LA.

JULIE BULLA

I would imagine that you know of just about all the gangs that are in operation here in our great city. About how many gangs are there and for about how long have they been in existence, Detective?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

More or less 450, the last 50 years.

JULIE BULLA

Those are astounding numbers. I don't mean to dispute your knowledge, Detective, but do you happen to know if the key witness and victim, Angel Bernal, has any affiliation with a gang?

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Objection, the defense is leading the witness, Your Honor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

You don't have to answer that, Detective Rodriguez. (beat) Counsel for the defense, can you show probable cause for your question?

JULIE BULLA

Yes, Your Honor, I can. Please allow me to continue.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Objection over-ruled on the basis that the defense has logical probable cause--may I remind you Counsel, that you are treading on murky waters right now.

JULIE BULLA

Thank you, Your Honor. Detective, please give us your expert opinion on whether or not the key eye-witness, Angel Bernal, is in a gang?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

I cannot fully answer that question since any affiliation with gang activity in regards to the victim has not been verified and remains under LAPD's investigation.

JULIE BULLA

Thank you, Detective and no further questions--the defense rests.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

You may step down, Detective.

After the detective steps down, Judge Elliott picks up the gavel while announcing-

JUDGE ELLIOTT

We will adjourn for a brief recess of one hour and reconvene in the court to resume with testimony from a witness for the defense.

She STRIKES the gavel three times before rising to leave.

Minor turns around to see Christina and his mother sitting together and looks around the back with a puzzled look.

MINOR

Where's Anna?

CHRISTINA

Oh, she just went to the restroom.

MINOR

What? Is she all right?

CHRISTINA

Yes, it's just a little hot in here. We'll all be back soon-- don't worry.

While looking back, Ms Bulla notices Dr. Li just entering through the court's double door.

JULIE BULLA

Minor, I'll see you back here after the recess--are you all right?

MINOR

Yeah, sure. No problem.

Ms Bulla meets Dr. Li in the back, then they walk out into the hall together.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

JULIE BULLA

Dr. Li, I'm so glad you're here-- There's a brief recess before the trial starts back up again.

DR LI

I wasn't sure I could make it, but I will be due back in surgery in about three hours.

JULIE BULLA

I'm sure we'll be able to free you up quite some time before then. See you back in one hour, Okay?

DR LI

Sounds good--I'll just go out to get some air until then.

They part ways for now, he heads to the elevator, and she goes to the nearby women's restroom.

Anna, looking very pale, comes out of the restroom as Ms Bulla walks toward her.

JULIE BULLA

Hi, Anna--you feeling all right?

ANNA

Oh, hi, Ms Bulla. I'm okay. It's just a little warm in there, and I had to freshen up.

Down the hall near the courtroom doors, there's a LOUD VOICE

coming from Chris Fitzgerald, who's in front of Detective Rodriguez and JUROR SEVEN, 65, with glasses and gray hair.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

(to the woman)

Excuse me, ma'am--I'm sorry but you better stop speaking to the detective, right now.

JUROR SEVEN

I'm afraid I don't know what you're talking about-

Ms Bulla steps away from Anna to get closer to Juror Seven, standing next to Mr. Fitzgerald.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Listen, I know that you're one of the jurors for the trial that's going on in that courtroom-

JULIE BULLA

Is there a problem here?

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Yes, obviously, this juror from the trial has been talking with Detective Rodriguez, a witness.

JULIE BULLA

(somewhat taken back)

Oh, boy... Listen ma'am, let's get you back to the juror's room and--

JUROR SEVEN

Oh, I'm so sorry if I did anything wrong. I didn't-

JULIE BULLA

Ah, don't worry and we'll take care of matters after the court recess.

Ms Bulla takes her by the arm, and as she guides her back through the courtroom door, she NODS to Fitzgerald, then WINKS at the detective. Rodriguez then frowns at Fitzgerald

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

All she said was she respects detectives for all our service.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

How freaking nice--you know the rules, Rodriguez-

While walking away toward the elevator, Rodriguez looks down at his watch.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Yeah, you don't need to remind me.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTROOM - DAY

Both counsel are standing at the bench speaking with the judge while the rest of the court and the jurors are in their seats. Then Julie and Chris Fitzgerald walk back to sit behind their tables.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

It was just brought to my attention by both counsel that there was an incident that occurred during our short recess which involved one of our jurors. Mr. Fitzgerald, would you please relay to the court what happened at that time?

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Yes, Your Honor--shortly after recess was called, I saw and overheard juror seven speaking to the witness, Detective Rodriguez, in the hall outside of courtroom doors. What I overheard was brief in nature. I immediately interrupted the juror and instructed her to stop talking to Detective Rodriguez.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Thank you, Mr. Fitzgerald. Ms Bulla, I understand you were also present. Would you please tell us what occurred?

JULIE BULLA

Yes, Your Honor, I overheard Mr. Fitzgerald in a rather loud voice telling juror seven to stop talking to Detective Rodriguez. She appeared a little startled. After Mr Fitzgerald interrupted the juror, who briefly spoke to the detective, she attempted to apologize. I did not hear or see the detective speak at any time.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Thank you both for bringing this matter to the attention of the court. I must remind all members of the jury that it is never permissible to speak with any of the witnesses during the full duration of this trial because the selection of the jurors becomes greatly compromised. Reselection or mistrial can be the end result-

Judge Elliott looks directly at Juror Seven, who has removed her glasses to wipe her eyes with a tissue.

JULIE BULLA

Your Honor, may I please be allowed to speak on this matter?

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Yes, continue.

JULIE BULLA

I have spoken to Mr. Jimenez about what occurred in the hall, which myself and Mr Fitzgerald witnessed, and we feel that the juror's brief comment to Detective Rodriguez was innocent in nature. At this point, we believe resorting to reselection of the jury won't be necessary.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Very well, if you and the defendant have discussed this situation in full, then I will accept your decision--And of course, I must allow Mr Fitzgerald to voice any further input on this matter.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Yes, Your Honor, if the defense willingly accepts this matter as closed with no further need for intervention, then I've no further input other than I concur that the juror's brief remark to the detective was innocent in nature.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

After receiving dual acceptance on this issue reported by both counsels, I will deem this matter involving juror seven as resolved and closed. (beat) We will now proceed with this trial by calling the next witness, who is Dr. Curtis Li. Ms Bulla, are you ready to call your witness to the stand to testify?

JULIE BULLA

Yes, Your Honor. I wish to call Dr. Curtis Li to the stand.

BAILIFF

Dr Curtis Li please come to the witness stand to be sworn for testimony.

After Dr. Li arrives to the stand, the bailiff swears him in, then the doctor sits in the witness stand.

JULIE BULLA

Doctor, will you please state your full name, your title, and where you practice.

DR LI

My name is Dr. Curtis Li. I'm a neurologist and surgeon at USC Medical Center and have been in practice there for ten years.

JULIE BULLA

And Mario Gutierrez, the victim of the shooting on November seventh, has been under your care in the ICU--is that correct?

DR LI

Yes, that is correct.

JULIE BULLA

Dr. Li would you please state the condition of Mario Gutierrez since he was shot in the back of his head and while he's been under your care at USC Medical Center?

DR. LI

He's unconscious and in critical condition that requires close surveillance. I performed a craniotomy shortly after he was admitted to remove the bullet from the parietal-occipital area and to evacuate the subdural hematoma.

As Angel sits in a second row seat behind the prosecution's table, his eyes mist-up and his lower lip quivers.

JULIE BULLA

Are his vital signs stabilizing? Do you expect him to recover after he becomes conscious?

DR. LI

His pupils are equal and reactive to light now, but his vital signs remain touch and go. To reduce the energy requirements of the brain, which in turn reduces blood flow and intracranial pressure, recently he's receiving a continuous IV infusion of Propofol, a form of anesthetic sedation--we may need to keep him in this induced-coma up to three weeks. Mario's consciousness could return with some deficits in his speech and vision if the tissue damage remains compromised.

JULIE BULLA

Thank you, Dr. Li. No further questions. The defense rests.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Thank you, Ms Bulla. Does the prosecution wish to cross-examine

Mr. Fitzgerald stands up while looking directly at Dr. Li.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

You may proceed.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Thank you, Your Honor.

A beat. He walks up to the witness stand and faces Dr. Li.

Dr. Li, during your ten years of practice at USC Medical Center have you dealt with many other cases such as that of Mr Gutierrez?

DR. LI

Yes, I have.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Can you give us an estimate of the number of cases--over a hundred or less than that?

DR. LI

I have treated well over a hundred patients involving gunshot wounds to the head.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Dr. Li, can you give us another estimate of patients you've treated with similar gunshot wounds such as that of your patient, Mario Gutierrez--how many patients have survived following surgery and treatment over the last several years?

DR. LI

Every patient is different in response to medical and surgical intervention, but I have documented most of my cases through our system known as Utilization Review. The patient survival rate have been revealed as high as 50 percent over the last 5-10 years.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

And of the 50 percent of patients that survive--do they recover back to normal lives without, as you mentioned earlier, so-called physical deficits?

DR. LI

Again, every patient responds differently, but yes, many who survive may have residual deficits in vision, speech, or possibly paralysis of part of their bodies.

Fitzgerald looks directly at the jury and then at Minor as he continues with his next question.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

And would it be safe to say that your patient, Mario Gutierrez, may have only a fifty-percent chance of survival and may possibly die?

JULIE BULLA

Objection, Your Honor. Counsel is leading the witness through speculation.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Sustained. Strike counsel's last question to the witness.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Thank you, Dr. Li. No further questions, Your Honor. The prosecution rests.

As Mr. Fitzgerald returns to his table, and Dr. Li steps down from the stand, beads of sweat drip down Minor's face. When he grips onto his chair, Julie pats his hand.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

We shall end this court session with the testimony of the witness for the prosecution. Mr. Fitzgerald, please call your next witness to the stand.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Your Honor, I wish to call Angel Bernal to testify on the stand.

Angel Bernal enters the witness stand after being sworn in by the bailiff. Fitzgerald looks all around the court before he begins to question Angel.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Mr. Bernal, would you please state
if you were shot on November
seventh in the Hollenbeck Park
area.

ANGEL
Yes, I was shot in Hollenbeck Park
on November seventh.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Can you identify the gunman if he
were here in front of you?

ANGEL
Yes, I can.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Is the gunman here in this
courtroom?

ANGEL
Yes, he is.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Will you please identify the gunman
by pointing him out to us now.

Angel turns his head toward Minor and points to Minor.

ANGEL
He's over there in a white shirt
next to his public defender.

Minor glares back at him as Angel turns his head back.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Let it be recorded by the court
that the witness has identified the
defendant, Minor Jimenez, who is
seated next to Julie Bulla, his
defense attorney.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
Yes, the identified is noted. Thank
you, Mr. Fitzgerald.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
I have no further questions, Your
Honor. The prosecution rests.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
Ms Bulla, do you wish to cross-
examine the witness?

Julie stands up.

JULIE BULLA

No, Your Honor, but I wish to reserve the right to call Mr. Bernal for cross-examination at a later date.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Very well, Counselor--Mr. Bernal, you may step down. (beat) Court will reconvene next week on Tuesday morning at ten o'clock, and I move that court be adjourned after all members of the jury are removed from the court.

Both Julie Bulla and Minor bow down their heads as Angel holds his head high and passes by them.

MINOR

(to Ms Bulla)

Wat the fuck? Am I doomed or wat?

JULIE BULLA

Believe me, Minor, we will see this through together in the next phase.

MINOR

Yeah, whatever you say, Ms Bulla--my life is in your hands. (beat) Why couldn't you grill that guy on the stand?

JULIE BULLA

The time is not right--please believe me, as I gather more evidence, I will call him back on the stand.

The gavel STRIKES three times before the courtroom begins to empty out.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTROOM - THE WITNESS STAND - DAY

Mr. Garcia is seated on the witness stand as Ms Bulla begins to question him during of the court processing.

JULIE BULLA

Mr. Garcia, you mentioned that Minor Jimenez has been employed at your auto body repair shop for nearly three years--would you please describe to us his character as your employee?

RAYMUNDO

Of course. I first met Minor about three years ago while I was at a

(MORE)

RAYMUNDO (CONT'D)

Car Show. I was impressed with the 64' Impala that he restored and with his Can-Do attitude from the get go. I told him if he needed a job to come by my shop. A week later, I hired him, and he's turned out to be the best employee I've had in years. Hey, I can see how they're trying to paint an ugly picture of him--sure, he did something stupid over four years ago. Hell, I went through similar pitfalls before I learned from my mistakes. In fact, in his 12-step program, Minor has the same sponsor I had years ago. Minor would never resort to the violence that he's been accused of today. He's disciplined and has excellent work ethics. He'd have too much to lose... He's gained much respect from his family and friends.

Fitzgerald rolls his eyes, shakes his head, and SIGHS.

JULIE BULLA

And Mr. Garcia, since Minor has been working at your shop, have you ever seen him become violent while interacting with you, the other employees or any of the customers?

RAYMUNDO

No, I have never seen him angry or violent since I've known him. And he's always been very agreeable with the customers and the other guys on the job.

JULIE BULLA

No more questions Your Honor. The defense rests.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Thank you Counselor. Mr Fitzgerald do you wish to cross-examine?

CHRIS FITZGERALD

(remains at his desk)

Yes, Your Honor. (Beat) Mr. Garcia, How long has your shop been in operation?

RAYMUNDO

I'm proud to say for thirty years.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Well, now, have you ever hired an ex-con before to work on your cars?

RAYMUNDO

As a matter of fact, I have, on a few rare occasions.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Were you aware that Mr. Jimenez had been arrested for a car theft with a DUI after a high speed pursuit by police about four years ago?

RAYMUNDO

I always run a background check on all new hires--yes, I was aware.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

And you hired him regardless of his criminal record?

RAYMUNDO

That's right--when you've been in business as long as I have, you sometimes have to go with your gut feeling before judging a human being. Minor and I came to an understanding that as long as he's working for me, he'd have to keep on attending his 12-step program. So that's the story in a nut-shell.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

No more questions, Your Honor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Thank you Mr. Garcia, you may step down. (BEAT) Ms Bulla, I have the defendant, Minor Jimenez listed as the last witness for today's trial. I think it best that we take a ten minute recess now.

JULIE BULLA

Yes, Your Honor, agreed. I choose to remain in court to consult with Mr. Jimenez until court is resumed.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Very well, the bailiff will also remain here until we reconvene. Court is adjourned for a ten minute recess.

As the jury and members of the court depart, Ms Bulla places a legal pad in front of them and writes: "Stay Cool" then points it out to Minor before speaking in low tones.

JULIE BULLA

Minor, we need to go over our Q and A before you're called up there.

MINOR

Ms Bulla, no offense, but I'm ready to give them my side of the story.

JULIE BULLA

Just remember what I told you earlier, this prosecutor is known for his dog-eat-dog approach, so he'll try to break you. He's out to be the next DA.

MINOR

I can see that he would love to convict me for murder-- I think he's actually banking on Gutierrez not making it out alive.

JULIE BULLA

Please put that out of your head, right now--just stay focused. When Mario comes out of this and possibly becomes a viable witness, that is what we should be hoping for at this point. (beat) Okay, Minor, here's your Saint Christopher medal that you asked me to bring to you today.

She hands the ST CHRISTOPHER MEDAL to him under the table. As Minor holds it, he keeps his head bowed in silence. Then Judge Elliott and the others begin to enter the court.

SMASH CUT TO:

MINOR ON THE STAND WITH HIS PUBLIC DEFENDER MONTAGE --

JULIE BULLA

Mr. Jimenez, did you shoot Angel Bernal and Mario Gutierrez on November seventh between 3:30 and four o'clock in the afternoon?

In the first row seat behind the defense table, Mrs Jimenez holds onto a ROSARY while tears run down her cheeks.

MINOR JIMENEZ

No, I did not.

JULIE BULLA

Are you in a gang or have you ever been in a gang?

INSERT - THE SERENITY PRAYER ON THE COVER OF A 12-STEP BOOK:

Raymundo has the book in his lap with his finger under the word, "Courage" in the Inscription that reads, "God Grant Me The Serenity To Accept The Things I Cannot Change, The Courage To Change The Things I Can, And The Wisdom To Know The Difference".

MINOR JIMENEZ

No, I am not in a gang, and I never have been in a gang--my dad made sure of that when I was growing up.

SMASH CUT TO:

HARD-ASS PROSECUTOR'S CROSS-EXAM MONTAGE --

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Were you at your sister, Christina Flores's, home in Boyle Heights on November seventh from 2:30 in the afternoon until 6:30 in the evening? Answer yes or no.

MINOR

Yes.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

In Detective Rodriguez's report, your sister confirmed you were there but that you left at 3 o'clock and returned at 4:30. Can you explain your whereabouts during that time.

MINOR

I drove to Little Tokyo to pick out a present for my niece's birthday from a street vendor.

INSERT - SAINT CHRISTOPHER METAL:

On his lap, Minor touches the medal in his right open palm.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Sounds sweet--can anyone verify that? Do you have a receipt with a stamped date and time to prove it?

MINOR

No, I didn't know the vendor and, I didn't get a receipt.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Well, Mr. Jimenez, I'm trying to do the math as to why you were gone over that period of time just to purchase a gift.

Uh, let's see, I understand Christina Flores's home is located less than a mile from Hollenbeck park and that Little Tokyo is about a fifteen minute drive from her house--is that right?

MINOR

Yes, more or less.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Okay, for the benefit of the doubt, let's say it took you a little more time to park--still, I find it hard to believe that it took you over an hour and a half just to buy a gift--but I believe that would give you more than ample time to swing by the park to shoot the two victims and make it back to the house party.

JULIE BULLA

I object, Your Honor. Counsel is using speculation as a means of placing the defendant at the scene of the crime.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

I withdraw the question, Your Honor--but, isn't it true, Mr. Jimenez, that, in fact, you threatened both Mario Gutierrez and Angel Bernal with their lives openly in a local restaurant just less than a week before the shooting took place. Answer the question--yes or no?

Minor SQUEEZES his saintly medal and hesitates to answer.

END OF TESTIMONY MONTAGE

INT. TWIN TOWERS JAIL - VISITING AREA - DAY

Since the trial, Minor has reached a real low. Father Guillermo sits at a booth as Minor arrives to sit with him on the other side of the clear partition. Each one picks up a phone receiver with a brief exchange of smiles.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Hello, Minor, how are you?

MINOR

Hello, Father, thank you for coming. I'm doing okay, or as well as can be expected under these circumstances.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Minor, how long have I known you now?

MINOR

Oh, Father G, since my First Holy Communion.

FATHER GUILLERMO

You always were a resilient lad. Your family is very concerned over what you are going through, and I had to come see you to listen to your hopes and fears.

MINOR

Father, I appreciate all your thoughts and prayers and for being in the court the other day.

FATHER GUILLERMO

I know that this is the biggest life hurdle that you are going through, right now... Please know that I'm here if you need me to pray with you.

MINOR

Yes, Father... Could you please quote something from the bible that will offer me some strength.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Let us bow our heads and close our eyes to pray together. (beat) From the Holy Scripture of Second Corinthians in the New Testament-- Our Lord's message to the faithful: In the time of meeting with our greatest adversities, He will not give us more than we can bear--we pray this together for your son, Minor, follower of Jesus Christ. Please provide him with Your strength during this time while his faith is being challenged by wrong-doers. O Dear Lord, we believe that You will not allow him to experience trials and tribulations beyond what he can bear. We pray this, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

After opening their eyes, both maintain a brief moment of silence together.

MINOR

Thank you, Father--

FATHER GUILLERMO

God bless you, Minor and know that our thoughts and prayers will be with you. (beat) Listen, on a lighter note before I leave--is Raymundo's shop in the same spot it's been for 30 years?

MINOR

It sure is.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Think I need to pay him a visit. A couple of young boys crashed their skateboards into the back fender of our car parked near the rectory

MINOR

Oh, go on over, Father--he'll take good care of you there.

FATHER GUILLERMO

I'm sure he will.

EXT. RAYMUNDO'S REPAIR SHOP- DAY

Father parks his 2001 BLACK HONDA ACCORD in the parking lot of the shop as Raymundo is standing just outside the garage opening. While getting out of his car, he waves to Raymundo, and they meet together.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Hello, Mr Garcia, I'm looking for an estimate on a fender-bender.

RAYMUNDO

You came to the right place, Father. Let's take a look.

They walk to the driver's side rear fender to check it out.

RAYMUNDO (CONT'D)

Let me guess? Someone in a bad mood took a hammer to it.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Not quite--a couple of hyperactive skateboarders got off track.

RAYMUNDO

(chuckles)

Makes sense. Well, it shouldn't cost much--when do you want it back?

FATHER GUILLERMO

Uh, I could spare it for a week.

RAYMUNDO

That's no problem, and we can have it back to you before then if you want to bring it back tomorrow-- (beat) So, Father, are you sure I can't help you with something else?

FATHER GUILLERMO

From what I've seen, you have been of tremendous help to the Jimenez family, and I hope we can discuss more helpful things that we could accomplish together--but, first things first. Let's see you perform a little tender loving care on old Bessie here, Okay?

RAYMUNDO

I catch your drift, and no problem, Father--just stop by tomorrow.

Father slips into his car, shuts the door then speaks through the open window before driving away.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Knew we could count on you. See you tomorrow, Raymundo.

EXT. LA SUPERIOR COURT/PARKING LOT - DAY

After another grinding day, Julie is walking with her bulky briefcase, then catches up with a fellow Stanford grad lawyer, ANDREA LIFTON, 35, five-foot-five redhead, and notorious for being outspoken, and one of the best-dressed women in the courtroom. In an off-white Chanel dress suit, she's loading a file into the trunk of her RED LEXUS.

JULIE BULLA

Hi, Andrea, Boy, I'm swamped with a caseload that's a hand-full right now. How are doing in court lately?

ANDREA

Hi, I'm coming along fine and just finished clearing a client in a criminal case. I heard about the tough case you've taken on--listen, Julie, I think you're really taking the whole thing way too seriously.

JULIE BULLA

I can't help it--I thought I'd die the other day in court when my defendant told me... Whatever you say--my life is in your hands.

ANDREA

Go on, really? Well, he's not too far off--why do you think they call it the Practice of Law. We keep at it until hopefully we get it right.

After Andrea closes her trunk and walks to her front door, she offers a farewell advice to Julie.

ANDREA

You know what you need?

JULIE BULLA

What, Counselor?

ANDREA

A good lay--and don't gimme that innocent look-

JULIE BULLA

Oh, come on-

ANDREA

I mean it. I know you haven't been getting out much, and it's high time you have some fun for a change.

JULIE BULLA

Yeah, right. I gotta get going-

Andrea gives her the PEACE SIGN as she opens her door, and Julie is grinning from ear to ear while she walks toward her SILVER VW BUG.

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Christina rushes in to pick up the phone after it RINGS.

CHRISTINA

Hello? (a beat) Oh, hi Father.

FATHER (O.S.)

Christina, I hate to bother you this evening, but I need to ask a favor of you.

CHRISTINA

Oh, sure, what is it?

FATHER (O.S.)

Well, my car just got repaired and I can't seem to find anyone available to give me a lift to pick it up tomorrow at the shop. And well, I wasn't sure if you or your mother would be willing to drop me off if you're not too busy?

CHRISTINA

Oh, Father, I sure would if I could, but we've been non-stop at our Hair Salon due to the holidays.

FATHER (O.S.)

I hear you--same here at the church. Is your mother or father doing anything tomorrow?

CHRISTINA

Oh, my mother doesn't really drive anymore, but wait, I'm sure my dad can help you out. He's usually free in the morning. I'll give you a call back after I check with him, Okay, Father?

FATHER (O.S.)

That would be great. Thank you and bye for now.

CHRISTINA

Bye, Father.

She hangs up and dials, then waits after TWO RINGS.

INT. 2010 WHITE FORD BRONCO CAR - MOVING - DAY

Ernesto Jimenez is driving Father Guillermo in his Bronco en route to Raymundo's Repair Shop.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Can't tell you how much I appreciate you giving me a lift to the shop today.

MR JIMENEZ

Oh, don't worry about it, Father. So, how much farther to make a right, did you say?

FATHER GUILLERMO

Oh, yes, let me see--we're getting close. Okay, now, don't turn at this light, but at the next light make a right then you can't miss it. His shop will be just a couple of driveways down on the right.

MR JIMENEZ

Hope they took good care of your car for you.

FATHER GUILLERMO

Oh, sure, he's one of the best in town when it comes to body repair.

MR JIMENEZ

Is this it?

They are right in front of the driveway to Raymundo's shop.
Father responds with vigor to Ernesto

FATHER GUILLERMO

This is it. Just pull in, and would
you mind accompanying me into the
office if you have a few minutes?

Ernesto NODS in agreement as he parks in the lot, and then
they both get out of the car and walk to the office.

INT. RAYMUNDO'S REPAIR SHOP - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Raymundo's standing at his desk talking on the phone with a
customer. He waves as Father walks in with Ernesto.

While they're waiting for him to finish his call, Ernesto
looks around, then stares up at a FRAMED PHOTO of a young
man in an Army uniform with a SMALL PLAQUE on the wall.

RAYMUNDO

Yes, sir and I look forward to
seeing you. Oh, by the way, we're
open till six o'clock--Bye now.

A beat. After he hangs up, Raymundo's all smiles.

Hello, Father. Happy to see you
again and how are you?

FATHER GUILLERMO

I'm just fine, Raymundo and guess
you know why I'm here, right?

RAYMUNDO

Of course, your vehicle is ready
and waiting for pick-up. Want
to check her out?

FATHER GUILLERMO

Sure, sure, but first I want to
introduce you to an old friend--
This is Ernesto Jimenez and Ernesto
this is Raymundo Gardea.

RAYMUNDO

Nice to meet you, Ernesto-

He looks again at the FRAMED PHOTO overhead and points
to it, then speaks directly to Raymundo.

MR JIMENEZ

Is that a portrait of your son?

RAYMUNDO

Yes, it is.

MR JIMENEZ

I knew your son, Private Ruben Gardea while he served in our squad in Iraq. He was a fine young man and brave soldier. I'm so sorry for your loss.

Ernesto removes his Army baseball cap from his head and places it over his heart.

RAYMUNDO

Thank you for your condolences. He used to write to me about how he respected you as his superior. I gotta say that I think of Ruben as though he's still here.

BETO, 30, in work uniform, comes in to address his boss.

BETO

Excuse me, Raymundo. Did you want me to drive Father's car out, now.

RAYMUNDO

Yes, Beto. Just park it in front of the lot, please. (beat)
Father, I'll be glad to walk you out to inspect your Honda, Okay?

FATHER GUILLERMO

Sure, I'll meet you over there.
Take your time.

After Beto and Father leave, there's a brief interaction between Raymundo and Ernesto.

ERNESTO

I had no idea that Ruben was your son, until stepping in here today.

RAYMUNDO

And I had no idea that Minor was your son until a year or so after I hired him--We must remain strong for both our sons. Don't you agree?

Ernesto puts his cap on his head and agrees with a NOD.

INT. DR DE SILVA'S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - DAY

Anna's in a patient gown lying on a exam table as DR DE SILVA, 45, with jet black hair, is at her side.

DR DE SILVA

Anna, I'm glad you came in after you reported that you've had some spotting of blood... For how many days now?

ANNA

About two days.

DR DE SILVA

And you said it was very light in color and not bright red?

ANNA

Yes, Doctor, It's pinkish-red and just a few spots here and there.

DR DE SILVA

I must ask you if you've been under much emotional stress lately-

ANNA

Doctor, you know that I'm not married-

DR DE SILVA

Are you in a relationship with the father? How do you both feel about the baby?

ANNA

He doesn't know that I'm pregnant. I couldn't tell him-

DR DE SILVA

Anna, I need to ask you, why?

She begins to cry and is unable to speak. He comes a little closer to hold her hand as she starts to open up.

ANNA

I love him and I know that he loves me, but everything has changed since he was arrested-

DR DE SILVA

Oh, Anna, I'm sorry. What was he arrested for?

ANNA

I still can't believe it, but he was accused of shooting two men-- And I know he didn't; he would never do such a thing.

DR DE SILVA

Anna, Do you want this baby?

ANNA

(bawling to no end)

Yes, yes--I want our baby.

Dr. De Silva holds her by the shoulders for a beat then opens the door to call in NURSE JUDY, 40, with light brown hair in a floral scrub top, who's just down the hall.

DR. DE SILVA

Judy, please come in here now-

The Nurse arrives, walks over to Anna and helps her turn onto her side as HER CRYING LESSENS.

DR DE SILVA

Anna, please know that we need to watch your condition closely, right now. Sometimes light bleeding can happen early in pregnancy, but just to be on the safe side, I want you to go on bed rest.

A beat

Is anyone here with you, today?

ANNA

Yes, Minor's sister, Christina.

NURSE JUDY

She's in the waiting room, Doctor.

DR DE SILVA

Please go and bring her in, Judy.

Judy leaves and until she arrives back with Christina, he's at the counter writing out his doctor's orders.

CHRISTINA

Hello, Doctor, is Anna going to be all right?

DR DE SILVA

Yes and no--I want Anna to stay on bed rest for a week while we monitor her light spotting. Can you or anyone in the family help in her care right now?

CHRISTINA

Yes, I will stay with her and watch over her.

DR DE SILVA

I'm going to order a visiting nurse to come out for home health visits to monitor her condition.

He turns to his nurse and quickly hands her his orders.

DR DE SILVA (CONT'D)

Judy, please go over all the instructions with both Anna and Christina and get their address info before they drive home.

NURSE JUDY

Yes, Dr. De Silva--I will.

DR DE SILVA
(to Christina and Anna)
Family support is most important.
(beat) Anna, I believe you will
find a way to work through this,
but you must stay in bed for now.

CHRISTINA / ANNA
Thank you, Dr. De Silva-

He pats Anna's hand and NODS at Christina before leaving.
Christina NODS back to the doctor.

INT. LA SUPERIOR COURT BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

After a grueling morning, Julie is on her way out of the building when she receives a call and pulls out her cell phone from her blazer pocket.

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Anna is lying propped-up in bed as she just finishes dialing the phone number on Julie Bulla's card. Julie answers her cell phone after TWO RINGS.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

JULIE BULLA
Hello?

ANNA
Hello, Ms Bulla, this is Anna
Velasquez, Minor's girlfriend.

JULIE BULLA
Oh, hello, Anna--how are you?

Julie walks away from the heavy amount of foot-traffic and stands by a window.

ANNA
Ms Bulla, I've been very worried
about Minor. I know that you are
doing everything you can to defend
him, but I had to call you-

JULIE BULLA
Okay, take a few deep breaths and
try to tell me what's on your mind-

ANNA
(in a trembled voice)
I just can't hide it from him
anymore--and when you gave me your
card, you told me to call you if
anything pops up and uh, well-

JULIE BULLA
Anna, let's take this one step at a
(MORE)

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)
time--what is it that you're
worried about? And what is it that
you've been hiding from Minor?

ANNA
Remember when you saw me coming out
of the restroom a while back-

JULIE BULLA
Yes, and you looked very pale that
day--I remember.

ANNA
Well, I was having morning
sickness. I haven't been able to
tell Minor that I'm pregnant
because of his trial just starting.
I just didn't know how-

JULIE BULLA
Oh, Anna, I understand, but please
tell me if you're alright? Have you
been seen by a doctor?

ANNA
That's why I'm calling you now--I
left the doctor's office and he
ordered me to stay on bed rest
right now because I had a little
blood spotting lately--so, I'm
staying at Christina's this week.

JULIE BULLA
Okay, now listen--Minor is very
strong and the truth shouldn't be
hidden from him anymore because he
loves you very much. I can meet
with him soon to break the news to
him, but you must rest and
shouldn't get stressed-out.

ANNA
I know you're right. I'm so sorry
about having to call you like this.

JULIE BULLA
I'm glad you turned to me. Thank
goodness that Christina is there
with you--we'll stay in close
touch from here on out, and I'll
call both you and Christina soon.

ANNA
Thank you, Ms Bulla

JULIE BULLA
You're welcome, Anna. Bye for now.

ANNA
Bye, Ms Bulla.

After Julie hangs-up, she paces and dials on her phone.

ANDREA (V.O.)
Hello?

JULIE BULLA
Hi, Andrea.

ANDREA (V.O.)
Well, well, Julie! What's up?

JULIE BULLA
Hey, listen, I'm near your office right now and just wondering if I can take you out for lunch.

ANDREA (V.O.)
Well, just so happens I'll be freed up within an hour. How about sushi?

JULIE BULLA
I know the place, just across the street from your office, right?

ANDREA (V.O.)
You read my mind. Anything in particular you want to discuss?

JULIE BULLA
To be honest, I could use some sound advice about this case that's turning into a handful. Uh, by the way, do still assist with legal cases on a pro-bono basis?

ANDREA (V.O.)
All depends on the case. Perhaps we can talk it through over a little sake.

JULIE BULLA
I love your idea. Thanks, Andrea, and I'll see you soon.

ANDREA (V.O.)
Alright, see you there.

Julie hangs-up, talks to herself.

JULIE BULLA
Yes! How am I going to prove Minor's innocence--I just can't do it by myself.

MEDICAL CENTER - ICU PATIENT ROOM - DAY

A RELIEF STAFF RN, 25, in blue scrubs, walks into Mario's room and presses the CODE BLUE ALARM BUTTON above the head of his bed. The cardiac monitor wavelength displays Ventricular Tachycardia at a rate of 250. She checks for a pulse then yells out into the hall. The CHARGE NURSE, 35, wearing a white lab coat rolls the Crash Cart into the room as other staff members also respond.

RELIEF RN
Code Blue room six-

OVERHEAD ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Code Blue, Surgical ICU--Code Blue,
Surgical ICU.

In one minute, an INTERN, 25, and SURGICAL RESIDENT, 30, also run in the room. Orders are given as the patient's assessment is rambled off by the CHARGE NURSE, 35.

RESIDENT
Nurse, give me a patient assessment,

CHARGE NURSE
Mario Gutierrez, 24, went into V Tach with no pulse. Patient's been on the vent then placed on continuous IV propofol nearly three weeks ago. Evacuation of subdural hematoma by Neurosurgeon Dr. Li was on November seventh post gunshot wound to the head.

RESIDENT
Call Dr. Li stat. Continue chest compressions and O2 ventilation via Ambu bag--BP? Intracranial pressure?

RELIEF NURSE
40 systolic, ICP within normal past 24 hours.

RESIDENT
Turn off IV propofol. Stop compressions, check for pulse.

RELIEF NURSE
No pulse.

RESIDENT
Continue CPR--charge defibrillator to 300 watts/sec. Any meds given?

CHARGE RN
IV bolus of lidocaine with lidocaine IV drip started--Dopamine IV drip just started.

The respiratory therapist draws blood from Mario's arterial line and the Intern applied gel pads to Mario's chest

RESIDENT

Give a milligram of Epi now then
two amps of IV Bicarb. Get an
Arterial Blood gas stat and a full
chemistry panel with a CBC-

A beat. Defibrillator is fully charged and ready.

RESIDENT

Stop CPR, remove 02--all clear
from the bed.

Everyone steps back from the bed. The relief nurse delivers the charge to his chest then checks for a pulse. She shakes her head NO. Cardiac wavelength changes to Ventricular Fib.

RESIDENT

Give another milligram of
epinephrine and continue CPR. Give
another bolus of lidocaine and up
the IV drip to 60 cc an hour.
Titrate the dopamine to bring up
his BP. Up the charge to 360
watts/sec.

A beat

All Clear... Defib at 360, *now-*

MONTAGE OF MARIO'S NEAR-DEATH DREAM:

Bird's eye view of Mario looking down on his body as the health team continue resuscitation efforts with SOUNDS OF: beeping alarms and the doctor and nurse dialogue becoming more echo-like then discernible.

Mario floats through the ceiling away from the ICU room and is now walking through a darkened tunnel-like space that becomes more lit as he walks forward. As Mario turns his head, he looks at Angel, who is walking alongside him.

MARIO

Angel, what are we doing here?

ANGEL

I dunno, Mario--I think I really
fucked up-

MARIO

What do you mean?

Angel is no longer by his side. Mario walks closer to the light bursting in front of him as MARIO'S FATHER, who died three years ago at the age of 44, appears IN FRONT OF HIM.

MARIO

Pop? Is that you?

MARIO'S FATHER

Mario, I miss you--go back and do
what is right, my son-

MARIO

Don't go, Pop-

Mario is gradually being pulled back then quickly comes to a halt as a LATINO SOLDIER resembling Private Gardea appears.

MARIO

Who are you?

LATINO SOLDIER

It doesn't matter, Mario--I fought
for freedom and we need you to
fight for justice. Go back and do
the right thing for our brother.

END OF NEAR DEATH DREAM - BACK TO SCENE:

INT. USC MEDICAL CENTER - ICU PATIENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

RESIDENT

Give him calcium chloride IV push,
run in IV fluids then hang a liter
of ringers lactate and stop CPR-

INTERN

He's in bradycardia

A beat. The Intern places his fingers over Mario's neck.

INTERN (CONT'D)

I feel a pulse-

INT. TRINI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Several empty beer bottles are scattered on the floor as Trini, wearing a wife-beater shirt, stumbles in from the hall while yelling out to Cool Homie, who's asleep on a worn crush-velvet sofa.

TRINI

Hey, wake the fuck up... Help-

COOL HOMIE

(just roused)

Wat the hell?

TRINI

Call 911--it's Angel. I don't
think he's breathin'.

INT. TRINI'S BACK BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

After Cool Homie jumps up and runs into the back bedroom, he get down on the floor next to Angel. He vigorously SHAKES AND SLAPS him several times. Angel remains unresponsive.

COOL HOMIE

Angel, wake up--come on, wake up-

Cool Homie rips off his head-beanie then presses his ear against Angel's chest. He delivers a FORCEFUL POUND with his fist onto Angel's chest.

COOL HOMIE

I said, wake the fuck up-

He gives Angel a couple of deep mouth-to-mouth breaths then HITS his chest again.

TRINI

(dials on his cell)

I'm calling 911--Oh God, lil' bro, wat kinda shit did you score?

COOL HOMIE

--And ya better get rid of any fuckin' stash ya got here-

911 DISPATCH (O.S.)

911, what's your emergency?

INT. LA TWIN TOWERS JAIL - COUNSEL ROOM - DAY

Minor is sitting across from both Julie Bulla and Andrea Lifton as the Guard, who observes through the glass partition in the wall, stands nearby in the access area.

MINOR

So, Ms Lifton, you say you want to help Ms Bulla in my case--well, how will you be able to clear me?

ANDREA

Minor, I'd like nothing more than to see you cleared, but I'm here to make myself available to help your attorney with necessary checks and balances--in order to help your case, more or less, so that nothing gets overlooked.

JULIE BULLA

Listen, this won't break our lawyer-client privilege--that is to say, our communications will remain confidential and not leave this room. It's so I'm better able to provide candid advice and effective representation. I hope that makes sense to you, Minor.

He leans back in his chair and shifts his eyes on them.

MINOR

Yeah, I guess--sort of like two heads are better than one.

ANDREA

Mr. Jimenez, I'm glad we're starting to see more eye to eye, and that's a very good way of expressing it.

JULIE BULLA

Minor, one of our big hurdles is dealing with your alibi--the prosecution did their homework and was very close to ripping your alibi apart on the stand.

MINOR

Yeah, I know that, and I got really upset when you didn't try to do the same to Angel Bernal when he was on the stand.

ANDREA

We all need to be on the same page before you ever get back on the stand to testify, and before we cross-examine Mr. Bernal, who's the only the eyewitness at this point.

JULIE BULLA

So, is it agreed that Ms Lifton will assist me in representing you?

MINOR

Yes, you both have my consent.

ANDREA

Thank you, Minor. We'll stand by you to clear you as innocent.

She stands to extend her hand to Minor, and he stands to shake her hand. After they both sit back down, Julie briefly CLEARS HER THROAT before speaking.

JULIE BULLA

Minor, there is something that your family has confided in me to talk to you about. It's a very personal matter that Anna has asked me to discuss with you.

MINOR

Anna, asked you to talk to me about something? What is it--honestly, I've been worried about her lately.

JULIE BULLA

There's no easy way to tell you
(MORE)

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)
this, but Anna is pregnant, and
she's been very hesitant about
telling you because of the trial.

MINOR
Oh my God, really? Please tell me
that she's not going to get an
abortion-

JULIE BULLA
No, she's not--she loves you; but
she was told by her doctor to take
it easy for a while, and that's why
she won't be coming to your trial
for now.

He gets up and paces back and forth a few times, Julie rises
up and gestures for him to sit back down as the GUARD in the
access area steps forward and peers through the glass.

MINOR
Wow, this is unbelievable. How the
hell did this happen?

JULIE BULLA
Please sit down. I know this is
something both of you must not have
planned out--just so you know, her
IUD was removed, and she's staying
at your sister's house right now...
She'll be okay.

MINOR
(after slow breaths)
Thank God--I think this is all I
can take-in for today, Ms Bulla.

GUARD, 40, opens the door and pokes his head in.

GUARD
Everything okay here?

A beat. After Julie looks down and sees a message from Dr.
Li on her SILENCED cell phone, she looks up at the Guard.

JULIE BULLA
Thank you, Officer, Our session
was just ending.

GUARD
Fine, let's go, Jimenez.

MINOR
Sure, no problem. Bye, Ms Lifton
and Ms Bulla.

ANDREA / JULIE BULLA
Bye, Minor.

After Minor is escorted out of the room by the guard, Julie picks up her phone to dial the missed call from Dr. Li.

ANDREA

Well, that went as well as can be expected-

JULIE BULLA

-I'm calling back Dr. Li--he just left me a message. (Beat) Hello, Dr. Li, this is Julie Bulla--sorry I missed your call.

DR LI (O.S.)

Hello, Ms Bulla--I think it best to get right to the point. Mario Gutierrez went into cardiac arrest, and we nearly lost him.

Julie shakes her head as her jaw drops.

JULIE BULLA

Oh my God, I thought he was stabilizing--when did this happen?

DR LI (O.S.)

Just today and he was improving, but there was an ICU nurse that turned off his alarms before leaving her post for a break. Another nurse came in when he was going into cardiac arrest, most likely brought on by hypoxia.

JULIE BULLA

Oh, I can't believe it--I hope that nurse was fired.

DR LI (O.S.)

Well, the nurse was from the registry and won't be able to work here again. But due to nursing shortages--doubt that her license will be revoked.

Beat

The family is considering changing his Code status to No Code if his overall condition doesn't improve.

JULIE BULLA

You mean No more resuscitation?

DR LI (O.S.)

His older sister is acting as head of the family and seeking power of attorney to make that decision.

JULIE BULLA

Was Detective Rodriguez notified?

DR LI (O.S.)

Yes, he's on his way over to review the situation.

JULIE BULLA

Thank you, Dr. Li--I appreciate you keeping us updated.

DR LI (O.S.)

No problem. Sorry to break the news; I suppose it's somewhat of a game changer.

She hangs up in a daze and looks at a frowning Andrea.

ANDREA

Sounds like things have taken a bad turn at the hospital-

JULIE BULLA

Affirmative--Mario's condition has just gone south. I've got to get in touch with Rodriguez by tonight.

INT. USC MEDICAL CENTER - ER - NIGHT

Angel is on a respirator and being cared for by the ER team.
DR RAVELO, 35, talks to Trini about his brother's prognosis.

DR RAVELO

Angel's toxicology report showed high levels of Fentanyl in his blood stream while his EEG shows very little brain activity.

TRINI

I don't want to see my brother like this, doctor--just take him off that breathing machine right now, if he's gonna be a vegetable for the rest of his life-

DR RAVELO

Are you his only living relative?

TRINI

Yeah, that's right--it's just him and me.

DR RAVELO

We're going to transfer him to ICU now, and someone from the nursing team will talk to you later.

TRINI

For God's sake, let him go-

Trini curls up in a chair in the corner of the room while he HITS his head with his fists. After the doctor leaves, an orderly comes into the room to escort him back into the crowded ER waiting room next to Cool Homie.

INT. ER WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

COOL HOMIE

(on his cell)

Hey, gotta go, call you later-

TRINI

For fuck sake--he ain't ever coming back.

COOL HOMIE

Dawg, that's fucked up-

TRINI

I gotta get out of here for a while--is Driver around?

COOL HOMIE

Yeah, man, he's on his way. Ay, and don't worry--he cleared out your place, so I'll put you up, awright?

TRINI

Where the hell did Angel pick up that shit that took him out?

Homie stands up, takes Trini by the arm, and exit the ER.

COOL HOMIE

C'mon... Tell ya one thing, pretty sure I know the dude-

TRINI

Who?

COOL HOMIE

You know who... Termite.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTROOM - DAY

The court has just come to order, and Judge Elliott is addressing both counselors, while Julie and Andrea, with their briefs placed on the table, are sitting next to Minor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Are there any pending issues before we proceed with this trial?

JULIE BULLA

Your Honor, may I please be allowed to approach the bench?

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Ms Bulla, do you have any pending issues?

JULIE BULLA

Yes, Your Honor--I have critical changes to report to you related to this case.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Please come forward.

After Ms Bulla walks to the bench, Judge Elliott leans forward over the bench.

JULIE BULLA

Your Honor, there's a major change in the condition of Mario Gutierrez that needs to be addressed.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Are you the only one aware of this change? Is Mr. Fitzgerald aware?

JULIE BULLA

Your Honor, I'm fairly sure that the prosecution also has some knowledge of the recent situation.

A beat.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Mr. Fitzgerald would you please approach the bench?

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Yes, Your Honor.

The judge and both attorneys have formed a huddle with one another as they start consultation; Meanwhile, everyone in the court waits it out with bated breath.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

All right, counselors, what's this critical issue?

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Honestly, your Honor, I was just made aware that Mario Gutierrez had a critical change in his condition, which Detective Rodriguez has notified me of.

JULIE BULLA

Yes, Your Honor, my witness, Dr. Li called and gave me a full medical account of Mr. Gutierrez. He went into cardiac arrest and was resuscitated. He also remains on the ventilator in the ICU under the care of Dr. Li.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Since this issue we're discussing is a new development, I believe today's court proceedings will have to be postponed until the necessary witnesses will be in attendance at our next session-- Can we concur on my proposal as the plan of action?

JULIE BULLA

Yes, Your Honor.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Yes, Your Honor, but may I interject that if Mr Gutierrez does not survive, the conviction will change to one count of murder in addition to an attempted murder.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Mr. Fitzgerald, I'm sure you know I am aware, and we will cross that bridge only if we come to it-- thank you both, and you may return to your tables while I prepare to make an announcement to the court.

JULIE BULLA/CHRIS FITZGERALD

Yes, Your Honor.

All are seated as Judge Elliott STRIKES her gavel while scattered speaking is going on in the court.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Order in the court. I must address to members of the court that both counselors have brought to my attention a new development related to the victim, Mario Gutierrez, and his condition, which requires further assessment and investigation. We will reconvene this trial and its proceedings after the list of necessary witnesses is made available--until that date, the court is adjourned.

She STRIKES the gavel three times and looks sternly at both Ms Bulla and Mr Fitzgerald before rising up to leave.

Ms Bulla and her associate speak hurriedly with Minor before he is taken away by the officer, who's starting to approach.

JULIE BULLA

I'm not going to lie to you Minor-- the odds have been stacking up against you during these court proceedings, but we do have one last hope.

MINOR

I don't see how it can get much worse--go on, give it to me-

JULIE BULLA

Mario Gutierrez has been taken out of the induced coma--Dr. Li informed me that his level of consciousness is improving somewhat, but he's still unable to verbalize anything. If he does start to speak again, there's a good chance that he'll identify the real gunman.

MINOR

Time's not been on my side. How long can we wait for a miracle?

JULIE BULLA

It's a Hail Mary pass, but Detective Rodriguez is ready and waiting for that day at the hospital when Mario's able to cooperate in finding the SOB that shot him down.

MINOR

Wow, I know a hi-tech dude from LA City College who's been working with video transmissions in legal cases when a witness isn't able to be in court. His name is Roberts. We should look him up.

ANDREA

Great idea. I can follow-up on that and check on the court's capability to arrange for such a set-up before the next court session.

JULIE BULLA

Super, we'll be on it, and I've heard of such set-ups being allowed in unusual court cases.

The officer comes forward and starts to escort Minor away as Julie and Andrea stand by his stand.

INT. LA PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT - FITZGERALD'S OFFICE - DAY

Behind his desk, Chris Fitzgerald POUNDS his fists down at random as he RAISES HIS VOICE to his associate, Brian, who's making calls on his cell phone.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

I can't believe it--what the hell do you mean that Angel Bernal is nowhere to be found?

BRIAN

Just that--I've called his number,
there's no answer.. I checked out
the address he lives at with his
brother--it's empty.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

We can't lose track of our key
witness for this case. For God's
sakes, get hold of Detective
Rodriguez right away--and who the
hell is his brother?

BRIAN

His older brother is Trinidad.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Well, go and get on it, *now*.

BRIAN

(on his cell)

Hello, I'd like to speak to
Detective Rodriguez please-

A beat. Brian gets up and walks toward the door.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

This is attorney Brian Eckerling
from the prosecutor's office.

A beat.

Can you have him call me as soon as
available? It's urgent-

INT. USC SURGICAL ICU - DAY

Detective Rodriguez stands next to a CHARGE RN as he looks
into the wall window where Mario remains in his ICU bed.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

So, how's Mr. Gutierrez doing
since the cardiac arrest?

CHARGE RN

Well, since Dr. Li ordered to keep
him off the IV propofol, he's
responding to painful stimuli and
his intracranial pressure and heart
rate have been normal.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

I see you still have him on the
respirator--any chance he'll be
breathing on his own?

CHARGE RN

We're in the process of weaning him
off the ventilator, but time will
tell as we keep checking his
arterial blood gases.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Thank you, Nurse. You've been of great help, and please call me for updates as he improves, okay?

CHARGE RN
Of course, Detective. We have your information. By the way, you mentioned something about placing a police officer outside his door?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
The department is working on it, but I'll keep your supervisor posted if we get the green light. You have a good day now.

CHARGE RN
Thanks--you too.

He walks down the hall then out the double door exit.

INT. LA CITY COLLEGE FILM AND VIDEO CHECK-OUT ROOM - DAY

NICK ROBERTS, 23, is checking out video equipment to Rocky, a student, as Andrea walks in.

NICK
There you go Rocky--the equipment is due back in two days.
The student NODS as he leaves his student ID on the counter right before taking a video camera. Then Andrea steps up.

NICK
Hi, how can I help you?

ANDREA
Hi there, Are you Nick Roberts?

He gives a quick NOD to her.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
Listen, I'm not a student, but I was referred to you by Minor Jimenez.

NICK
Oh, yeah, I haven't seen him in a while--how is he?

ANDREA
Well, it's kinda of a long story. Do you have a minute?

NICK
Sure-

ANDREA

I'm representing him in a legal case, and we are in need of someone who knows about video transmissions for court cases when the witness is unable to be in court to testify.

NICK

Yes, I've assisted in such cases. How soon do you need my help?

ANDREA

It could be as soon as next week. Can our legal team count on you?

NICK

Of course, I'm there, especially if it's going to help Minor out.

ANDREA

I'm Andrea Lifton. Here's my card, so when can we discuss the in's and out's with you in detail?

NICK

My day off is tomorrow--is that soon enough for you?

ANDREA

Yes, thank you, Nick, and let's do it tomorrow. How about in the morning at my office?

Nick NODS in agreement as he looks at her card again, and she grins as they shake hands.

INT. LA POLICE DEPARTMENT - OFFICE OF DET. RODRIGUEZ - DAY

Brian Eckerling is standing next to Detective Rodriguez, who's going through his file cabinet while he's being hounded by Brian.

BRIAN

Detective, what the hell's going on with Angel Bernal? He's nowhere to be found. Can't you give us any information on his whereabouts?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Really haven't kept tabs on him lately. I know he was staying with his brother. Did you try calling him? You guys should have his address.

BRIAN

Yeah, no answers--we looked around, and the place has been vacated. Better get an APB out on him-

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
We'll check it out. For now, we're
keeping close tabs on Gutierrez and
his condition, so you and
Fitzgerald will have to hang tight.

He SLAMS the file drawer shut then heads out of his office.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTROOM - DAY

The courtroom is in full attendance as Judge Elliott has
called the court to order.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
Any pending issues before we begin
with court proceedings?

JULIE BULLA
Your Honor, Detective Rodriguez is
not here. He's been in and out of
the ICU room of Mr. Gutierrez, as
we speak. Your Honor, due to the
current situation I would like to
make a proposal since we are
nearing the phase of closing
arguments soon.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
What are you proposing, Ms Bulla?

JULIE BULLA
I propose we arrange for video
transmission through our technology
department in order to present the
improving condition of Mario
Gutierrez and his possible
testimony to members of the court.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Your Honor, I object--is there
even a reliable means of
something of this nature to be to
be allowed in our court? It could
takes weeks for such transmission
to be approved.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
Well, Ms Bulla, please enlightens
us as to how and when such an
arrangement can be implemented
before I sustain the prosecution's
objection.

JULIE BULLA
Your Honor, there is an approved
system in place that has been in
use throughout several

— (MORE)

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)
courts over the last five years.
Our technology department just
needs YOUR approval before it can
be instituted--and can be started
as soon as today through their
assigned outsourced technicians.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
Under these unusual conditions
related to this court trial, I will
approve your proposal today,
Counselor. Mr. Fitzgerald, your
objection is overruled.

JULIE BULLA
Thank you, Your Honor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
We will reconvene this trial as
soon as the court is fully equipped
for video transmission from the ICU
room of Mario Gutierrez. The court
is adjourned until further notice
of that date.

Juror Seven SPEAKS IN HUSHED-TONES to a jury member
next to her as all the members are being escorted away.

JUROR SEVEN
Oh, my--this is one heck of a
trial. Who knows what's going to
happen next-

BAILIFF
Come along, and no talking, please.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTROOM - DAY

Nick Roberts, dressed like a geek squad guru from Best Buy,
repositions a wide screen TV with an image of Mario
Gutierrez sitting up in his ICU bed to face the court.

Mario's eyes are open with his left hand on a bible held by
a Sheriff Deputy, 30s, who stands off to his side.

JULIE BULLA
Mario, Do you remember being shot
on November seventh?

ON THE COURTROOM TV SCREEN:

Mario NODS YES.

JULIE BULLA
Do you know who shot you?

MARIO ON COURTROOM TV SCREEN:

While NODDING YES again, Mario struggles to speak-

MARIO

Te - ter - ter - mye - ite...

JULIE BULLA

Mario, are you trying to tell us
the name of the person that shot
you?

MARIO ON COURTROOM TV SCREEN

MARIO

Yee - Aaah...

When the screen turns black and the AUDIO CUTS-OUT, Nick
Roberts rushes to adjust the settings, with no improvement.
Everyone TALKS IN HUSHED-TONES among each other, and then
Fitzgerald stands up with his fists clenched on his desk.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Your Honor, I object, on the
grounds that his testimony can't
possibly be submitted-

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Overruled--I call for an hour
recess before we reconvene.

The judge STRIKES the gavel three times while the voice
level of the courtroom increases.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

The court has been reconvened after a lengthy recess.

JULIE BULLA

Your Honor, I'd like to call
Detective Rodriguez back to the
witness stand.

Detective Rodriguez swiftly comes to the stand.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Detective, I must remind you that
you are still under oath.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Yes, Your Honor.

As he sits in the witness box, Ms Bulla's eyes meet with
Minor's intense stare before she focuses on the detective.

JULIE BULLA

Detective, were you in the ICU room
with Mario Gutierrez moments ago as
he testified under oath?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Yes, I was.

JULIE BULLA

Will you please give us your opinion of his testimony and whether you were able to question him further?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

In my opinion, Mario Gutierrez is now considered a credible eyewitness. His testimony is crucial to this case. I questioned him further--when I showed him mugshots, he identified Juan Diaz, AKA Termite, a gang member of the Cincinnati Street Kidz, as the gunman.

JULIE BULLA

Are there other clues or motives that lead you to believe that Juan Diaz attempted to murder Mario and his partner Angel.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Mario pointed to a tattoo with the letters "CK" on the right side of Diaz's neck in his mugshot, and he wrote the same letters on a drawing of a shirt when asked what the suspect was wearing... These are gang related signs affiliated with the Cincinnati Street Kidz of Boyle Heights. My gut tells me the motive stems from gang rivalry revenge against the Forever Boyle Avenue gang--that Mario is a member of.

JULIE BULLA

Thank you, Detective. No further questions, and at this point in time, I will make my request to call Angel Bernal back to the witness stand as soon as possible, Your Honor.

Before Detective Rodriguez is asked to step down from the stand, he faces the judge to SPEAK OUT.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Excuse me, Your Honor, but we haven't been able to locate Angel Bernal lately, and an All Points Bulletin was just put out for him.

Fitzgerald and Brian look up at the judge as though their tails are between their legs; whereas, at the defense table, Ms Bulla, Minor, and Andrea look as surprised as hell.

INT. LA POLICE DEPARTMENT - OFFICE OF DET. RODRIGUEZ - DAY

The next day, Rodriguez receives a copy of the APB report on his desk with the whereabouts of Angel Bernal as the missing person of interest. He grabs his coat and is about to rush out of his office while dialing on his cell phone before speaking to Fitzgerald's receptionist on the other line.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Hi, Chris Fitzgerald please. (beat)
This is Detective Rodriguez--would
you please have him call me as soon
as possible? It's urgent--he has my
number-

Before hanging up, he slips in additional input to the receptionist on the line.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

-Or have his associate, Brian
call me, OK? (beat) Thank you.

INT. USC MEDICAL ICU - DAY

Detective Rodriguez is standing next to Angel's PRIMARY NURSE, 30, in light blue scrubs, near the counter, in front of several cardiac monitors.

PRIMARY NURSE

His brother, Trini, was here
yesterday, and he appears to be
the only next of kin listed on our
Kardex.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

We are going to need to talk to
him. Do you expect him to be back?

PRIMARY NURSE

I'll have to refer to our charge
nurse if you want more information,
Detective. She'll be back in the
unit in about an hour.

There's a RING on his cell phone. He silences it and then excuses himself out of the unit.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Thank you, Nurse, and I'll
return soon to speak to her.

PRIMARY NURSE

Ok, no problem.

INT. ICU WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

After he leaves the ICU, Detective Rodriguez looks down at his cell phone and returns the missed call to Brian. Brian picks up after ONE RING.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Hi, Brian, it's Detective
Rodriguez. Thought you should know
that we located Angel Bernal.

BRIAN (V.O.)
No shit, really? Where?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
He's just down the hall from Mario
Gutierrez here at the USC Medical
ICU--and he's in real bad shape.

BRIAN (V.O.)
What do you mean?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
He's been diagnosed as clinically
brain dead due to an overdose.

BRIAN (V.O.)
How the hell did that happen?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Don't know, but we need to figure
out how to get hold of his brother,
Trini, in order to question him--
that could take a while.

BRIAN (V.O.)
Thanks, Detective--this changes
everything. Surely, we'll know more
sooner or later.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
No doubt, I'll keep you posted as
I believe his hospital bed may
turn into a stake-out to locate
his brother.

BRIAN (V.O.)
Yeah, he's another person of
interest, now--Chris isn't going
to believe this one.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Gotta go--

BRIAN (V.O.)
Okay--

INT. WESTLAKE DISTRICT - A SEEDY HOTEL - NIGHT

Termite walks past the lobby and then upstairs to his
room on the second floor. After opening the door, he
walks past a couple of .38 SPECIAL GUNS on top of a chest
of drawers, then to the window and looks down into the
street below. He turns and walks over to STROKE THE ASS
of his girlfriend, LYDIA, 18, slumbered in bed wearing a
black bra and panties from Victoria Secret.

TERMITE

Hey, Mama, I missed you like
you can't believe.

LYDIA

Mmmm, where'd you go?

TERMITE

Just out to do wat I do--ya know
how I have ta hustle so we can have
our fun together.

He lays down a LINE OF COKE on a small mirror on top of the
end bedside table and then SNORTS UP with a straw.

LYDIA

Ohhh, let's do it before we go out
tonight.

He pulls off his jacket and black CALVIN KLEIN T-SHIRT.
After dropping his jeans, a TATTOO above his pubic area is
revealed that has the text of: "LOVE MUSCLE" with an arrow
pointing downward. He mounts himself on top of her, and-

LOUD MOANS from both of them quickly follow after the bed
frame KNOCKS back and forth against the wall, then a MAN'S
VOICE LOUDLY SHOUTS OUT along with FISTS RAPIDLY BANGING
on the wall from next door.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hey! Knock it off over there.

Termite lifts up his head then looks over at the GUNS on top
of the chest of drawers. Lydia pulls him down as she comes.

INT. USC MEDICAL ICU - NIGHT

Undercover Officer, CRYSTAL KENDAL, 35, Black, in a
navy-colored smock pushes a housekeeping cart past Angel's
patient room. Before entering a staff restroom, she parks
the cart nearby.

INT. STAFF RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

OFFICER KENDAL

(on her cell phone)

Officer Kendal here, and there's
no sign of Trini Bernal, yet. No
telling if he'll show.

A beat. She momentarily FLUSHES the toilet and TURNS ON THE
FAUCET before she finishes her call.

OFFICER KENDAL

Yes, sir, I'll alert you the minute
he appears... Out for now.

INT. OFFICE OF DET. RODRIGUEZ - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The ON-DUTY OFFICER, 45, enters to report to Rodriguez.

ON-DUTY OFFICER
Detective, thought you should know
the latest from our undercover
officer over at the USC ICU.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Yes, how's it going since this
morning--any luck?

ON-DUTY OFFICER
No sir, no sign of Trini Bernal,
not yet.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Thanks Officer, we'll give it some
more time in hopes that he shows-

ON-DUTY OFFICER
No problem, Detective. Good night.

INT. PATROL CAR - MOVING - NEXT DAY

Detective Rodriguez is in the front passenger seat as a
LAPD OFFICER, 40, is driving with SIREN and LIGHTBAR
activated. They park near the ER entry. The officer's
communicating with Officer Kendal as he opens his door.

LAPD OFFICER
Okay, Kendal, just keep Trini
Bernal detained. We're coming up
through the ER right now.

INT. USC ER AND MEDICAL CENTER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Detective Rodriguez and the LAPD Officer rush through and
are given no flack by medical staff that are present as
Rodriguez flashes his badge before getting in an open
elevator door.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Let's go-

After they both enter the elevator, the officer reaches over
to push a button, and then the door closes.

INT. USC MEDICAL ICU - AN ENCLOSED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Officer Kendal is standing over Trini, who is sitting
slumped over in a chair. The door is partially open as
Rodriguez rushes in with his badge still in his hand, while
the LAPD officer stands near the doorway.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Trini Bernal, I'm Detective
Rodriguez from LAPD--how you
doing?

TRINI
C'mon, ya have to be like this? Ya
gonna interrogate me, right before
they pull the plug on Angel?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Nah, nah, Trini--it's nothing like that. Believe me, we just want to get to the bottom of why your only brother ended up like this. Someone's behind it, and I think you know who it is-

TRINI
(tears running down)
Wat's it to you--he's my brother, so why should you care. You think I wanna put my life on the line for you? Just so you can get a promotion for solving this case.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Listen, nobody's going to twist your arm here, but you must know that the head gang members behind this will be coming after you next--as Angel's brother you need our protection because most likely you're on their hit list.

TRINI
Shit, ya don't think I know that. So, wat the fuck's your plan?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Help us find these bastards, and we'll set you up with the U.S. Marshal in their Witness Protection Program. They've had a 100 percent success rate of protecting 9,000 witnesses and 10,000 of their family members for 50 years.

TRINI
Let me go back in to say goodbye to my baby brother first, Detective. And then we can talk, awright?

A beat. Trini wipes away the tears then glares up at him.

TRINI
I just signed-off for the doctors to take him off that breathing machine--there's nothing more they can do to bring him back.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Officer Kendal, please take him over to his brother. I'll go out to talk to Angel's nurse.

OFFICER KENDAL
Yes, Detective. (a beat) Come on, Trini, let me take you to your brother now.

Detective Rodriguez opens the door wider, and then SPEAKS QUIETLY to the LAPD officer near the doorway as Trini stands up and is slowly led out of the room by Officer Kendal.

LAPD OFFICER
Okay, Detective, I'll watch
over them closely.

INT. MEDICAL ICU IN ANGEL'S PATIENT ROOM - DAY CONTINUOUS

Trini is kneeling over Angel in his bed with ANGEL'S NURSE, 30, in blue scrubs, and the detective in the room. A respiratory therapist in a white lab coat turns off the alarms on the ventilator, and Angel's nurse turns off all the alarms on the overhead wavelength monitor.

ANGEL'S NURSE
(touching his back)
Trini, we are going to turn off the
respirator, so Angel will only be
receiving a low amount of oxygen
right now.

TRINI
(his gaze on Angel)
I know, I know--hey, Angel, I'm
here--it's Trini. I'm not leaving
you, baby brother-

The wavelengths on the monitor change in rhythm and rate over the course of a few minutes as Angel's respirations cease. After he's in asystole, the nurse feels for a pulse, then she bends down to hold Trini's hand before speaking.

ANGEL'S NURSE
He's gone--I'm so sorry, Trini-

Trini UNCONTROLLABLY BAWLS his eyes out while still positioned over Angel's body. Detective Rodriguez BOWS his head while the two officers watch through the wall window.

TRINI
My God--No, no, you're gone--I
can't believe you're gone-

INT. LA PROSECUTION DEPARTMENT - FITZGERALD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A LOUD heated argument is going on between Detective Rodriguez and Chris Fitzgerald. Both are standing face to face as it gets LOUDER.

CHRIS FITZGERALD
Come on, Rodriguez, you want me to
call on the U.S. Marshal to have
Angel Bernal's brother receive
protection just so he can discredit
my only credible witness's sworn
testimony--you out of your mind?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Listen, Fitzgerald, I know you want to win another case so you can move up the ladder, but hey, sometimes what appears to be the truth on the front end doesn't always pan out in the end.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

What the hell does that mean? Get real--this theory of yours about Angel being manipulated by rival gang members is way up in the air. Now, that Angel's dead from an overdose, and believe me, it looks pretty accidental. You want me to throw out his signed sworn affidavit and court testimony. (A beat) Not gonna happen, not on my watch. You got that?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Alright, alright, but I will continue my investigation because this case is beginning to open up more and more as we speak-

CHRIS FITZGERALD

And Mario Gutierrez can't be trusted, not only can anyone decipher his speech--he's got a record longer than the LA river.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

While we're working on leads to locate Diaz, as a probable suspect, I'm trying to get Trini Bernal to agree to a polygraph-

Rodriguez starts to bow out of the office while Fitzgerald LOOSENS HIS TIE as he places a call on his desk phone.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

You better inform me if and when that's on the schedule, Detective-

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Sure thing, no problem. Bye.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

(on his phone)

Hi, Brian, I need you to do some ground work with the U.S. Marshal-

BRIAN (O.S.)

All right. Why?

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Rodriguez, is in the middle of screwing up things--he's requesting to place Bernal's brother in the Protective Witness Program as an informant. (a beat) That's right--so, get on it now.

INT. OFFICE OF DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ - DAY

Trini and Rodriguez sit in chairs next to one another on the other side of his desk. The sun shines brightly through the venetian-blinds of the window in front of them.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Okay, Trini, this is how it works--in order for us to give you protection through the U.S. Marshals, we gotta have you agree to a polygraph, but I want you to know that I believe you've been honest with me.

TRINI

Yeah, man, this is never gonna end till these fuck faces get put away. Can you promise me you'll do that?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

If we arrest him and get him convicted, I will work closely to have him prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, but for starters we need some leads on where we can find Termite--do you know where he hangs out?

TRINI

I can tell you this, he's a Nomad, and nobody really knows where he is any day of the week--but I do know that he checks into a lotta hotels.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

How about we begin with a list of some of those hotels? What district is his favorite?

TRINI

Uhh, try the Westlake district first. I know he does big drug runs from there.

Clouds moving in cut out the sun through the window then it starts to RAIN. Rodriguez gets up and walks to the window.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Looks like the storm's coming like they reported today-

INT. JUDGE'S COURT CHAMBERS - DAY

After Judge Elliott, who's seated behind her huge oak desk, is handed a form by Detective Rodriguez, she looks it over.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Judge Elliott, this is the signed sworn affidavit by Trinidad Bernal.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

All right Detective, I suppose you'll be requesting a warrant in the near future.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Yes, we're planning a stake-out close to an area where the suspect has been reported as frequenting.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Good luck, Detective Rodriguez, and I'll await your call in the meanwhile.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Thank you, Judge Elliott.

INT. WESTLAKE DISTRICT - A SEEDY HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

In plain clothes, Rodriguez walks into the hotel and approaches the CLERK, 50, with glasses, reading a book behind the counter.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Is the manager available?

CLERK

Yes, he's in his office, down the hall.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Thanks-

The clerk goes back to reading his book as Rodriguez walks down the hall and KNOCKS on the Manager's door. The MANAGER, 50, of short-stature and balding, opens the door.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - DAY

MANAGER

Yes, who are you?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

I'm Detective Rodriguez, LAPD. I have a few questions I hope you can answer.

He strokes his fingers through his thinned-out hair and lets Rodriguez into the office after he looks at his badge.

INT. HOTEL MANAGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MANAGER

Oh, yeah, is this about the gun shots heard here the other night? Listen, we're keeping an eye out in case that customer shows up, again.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

(with raised brows)

Say, can you describe the individual or do you have his name?

MANAGER

You must know, Detective that in this part of town, there are many who don't use their real names.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Where exactly were the shots heard? Any bullet holes in the hotel?

MANAGER

It was in one of the rooms on the second floor. I'll take you up there now if you like.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Sure, let's go- But first, can anybody give a description?

MANAGER

Sure, our clerk said the guy who was in that room was a bald Latino with a bunch of tattoos. Kinda the usual around here.

Rodriguez eyes widen as they leave the office to head down the hall together.

INT. HALLWAY SECOND FLOOR OF HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The manager UNLOCKS THE DOOR then they enter together.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Manager walks over, points to a bullet hole in the wall above the bed, then Rodriguez follows him to look.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Can you open up the next room?

The manager pulls out the keys from his pants-pocket, then walks toward the door and opens it.

MANAGER

Sure, follow me-

INT. HALLWAY IN FRONT OF THE NEXT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rodriguez follows the Manager, and after he UNLOCKS AND OPENS THE DOOR, they enter the room together.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HOTEL ROOM NEXT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Rodriguez steps into the room and goes directly to the bullet hole in the wall, then looks downward to follow an invisible trail that leads to A BULLET on the carpet below. He stares at it, bends down to look closer, then stands up.

MANAGER

Did you find something?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Yes. I'm going to have to ask you to close off these two rooms for a while, okay?

MANAGER

Sure, I guess so-

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Thanks, and please keep quiet about this for now--we don't want to create any disturbances with your business as usual (Beat) I'll be calling another officer to help gather up some of this evidence soon-

MANAGER

Whatever you say, Detective.

INT. LAW OFFICE OF ANDREA LIFTON - NIGHT

Andrea and Julie are sitting on a leather couch sipping on white wine.

ANREA

Listen Julie, I know you asked me to give you some of my expertise assistance in this case, but I must tell you what you really need is an over-all makeover in order to win back your client's freedom-

JULIE BULLA

(a little buzzed)

Oh, yeah, then go ahead and enlighten me with your magic plan--pray, tell, if you please-

ANDREA

This is no joke--you've got to stop getting behind the eight ball and put more spin in your serve when you get up to present your evidence.

JULIE BULLA

What evidence?

ANDREA

That's what I mean--you better get the hell out there and shake it up to gather whatever evidence you can, then fiercely present it before that hard-ass Fitzgerald does. Please move on. You should be sticking like glue to Detective Rodriguez--I'm sure he's out there right now looking for other leads or suspects. How about Angel, now that he's MIA? I'm sure that's not sitting well with the prosecution-

JULIE BULLA

God damn it, I know you're right. I've gotta get Rodriguez to give me more of the inside information of what's really going on out there.

Andrea fills up their glasses then takes Julie's hand.

ANDREA

Also, we are going to get you into a more dress for success wardrobe. And oh, don't forget--you still need to get laid.

JULIE BULLA

I know, I know.

As Andrea to leaves the room, Julie gazes at the sunset.

FANTASY SEGMENT IN A DARKENED COURTROOM:

Julie, HALF-DRESSED AND MOANING, is lying on the defense table while having hot sex with a MYSTERIOUS MAN, on top.

INT. OFFICE OF DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ - DAY

Detective Rodriguez is at his desk as Julie walks in. She zeroes in on his scar, just below his eye on his left cheek.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Hi Ms Bulla. What can I do for you? Sorry, but I'm swamped and was just on my way out. Can't really talk-

JULIE BULLA

Well, heard you're really hard at work on our case. You must be building up a ton of leads by now. Can you please share any information about Angel Bernal? Has he been located yet?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

As a matter of fact, Angel Bernal was brought in to USC ER with an overdose of opioids, and his brother consented to have him taken off life support. It's tragic; there was nothing they could do--he was brain dead.

JULIE BULLA

Oh my God. Do you think it was a suicide or accidental?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

It could be any number of things, but I'm questioning his brother, who happens to be cooperating right now. Hopefully, we can get to the bottom of it soon.

JULIE BULLA

Please contact me about anything of significance. I know you have to work closely with prosecution, but I know you have your gut instinct and you must know I have mine.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Okay, Ms. Bulla. By the way, I'm sure you know that Mario was placed in a step-down critical care unit. Maybe his mental status will continue to improve over time.

JULIE BULLA

That's what I heard, and I know it will take more rehab before his speech returns. Thank you, Detective. I don't want to keep you and good luck.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Yes, I must get going now, thanks.

INT. LA POLICE DEPARTMENT - POLYGRAPH TESTING ROOM - DAY

Trini is HOOKED UP TO A POLYGRAPH MACHINE while he is seated next to the technician who's performing the test as Rodriguez poses questions from his list.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Are you Trini Bernal?

TRINI

Yes-

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Who is your only brother?

TRINI

Angel Bernal-

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Were you told by your brother,
Angel, that Termite shot him and
Mario Gutierrez on November
seventh?

TRINI

Yes-

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Did your brother tell you that he
lied in court about Minor Jimenez
shooting him and Mario?

TRINI

Yes-

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Can you state the reason Angel had
lied and didn't admit who really
shot him?

TRINI

Because he didn't want Termite
coming back to kill him.

INT. POLYGRAPH SURVEILLANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Very little wavelength changes can be seen by Chris
Fitzgerald and Brian, who are standing next to the two-way
glass mirror partition.

They continue to stare at Trini as the polygraph machine is
stopped by the technician.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Well, I guess we'll get the results
in due time-

BRIAN

Yeah, I suppose Rodriguez really
bit his teeth into this one.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

What do you mean?

BRIAN

He's working on some leads to bring
in this so-called Termite.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

For Christ's sake--what the hell
is he up to next?

Fitzgerald give a swift KICK to the wall in front of him.

EXT. WESTLAKE DISTRICT STREET NEAR THE SEEDY HOTEL - NIGHT

Wearing a CHARGER'S football jersey, Termite walks down the street then opens the door and enters the hotel. Across the street, Detective Rodriguez and AN UNDERCOVER OFFICER, 35, are in a parked RENTED FOUR-DOOR SEDAN with tinted windows.

INT. RENTED FOUR-DOOR SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

That's him, Juan Diaz-

He opens his door, then, after directing his partner, he begins to walk across the street toward the hotel entry.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Come over after you connect with
backup-

UNDERCOVER OFFICER

I'm on it, right now-

INT. HALLWAY NEAR ROOM 28 - CONTINUOUS

Rodriguez tails Termite up to the second floor. After a couple of police officers come upstairs with Rodriguez's partner, Rodriguez KNOCKS on the door as the others file in.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Police! Open the door-

When there's no response, Rodriguez TURNS the knob, then KICKS open the door. Termite FIRES A SHOT through the doorway as Rodriguez stands away from the door. He SHOUTS-

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Give it up, Diaz--we've got a
warrant for your arrest. Don't be
stupid. Throw out your weapon then
put your hands up, and nobody has
to get hurt.

A gun comes flying out past the doorway. Another officer in bullet proof protection with his gun pointed forward cautiously scopes through the door.

INT. ROOM 28 - CONTINUOUS

Termite, with his hands fully raised, is covered by the armed officer, as Termite's forced face down to the floor, then the other officer CUFFS AND FRISKS him.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Juan Diaz, you're under arrest for
the attempted murder of Mario
Gutierrez and Angel Bernal... You
have the right to remain silence-

While Rodriguez continues with the Miranda Rights, the OFFICER, 30, frisking Termite pulls out a large bag of white

pills and a packet of white powder tucked under his clothes. He throws it to the undercover officer.

OFFICER

Better get that shit secured for evidence.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTROOM - DAY

Judge Elliott makes her announcement to the court and jury members while Chris Fitzgerald and his associate, along with Julie Bulla, Minor, and Andrea, are seated at their tables.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

The time has arrived in which both legal counselors will present their closing statements to all of you-

The spectators in the courtroom include Minor's family: Christina, Mrs. Jimenez, and his boss, Raymundo, who are all seated behind the defense table in the first row.

JUDGE ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

Members of the Jury, you have been presented all of the existing evidence related to this case. You also heard the testimonies from the witnesses that both the defense and the prosecution brought forward for examination and cross-examination. We will now listen to the closing statements of the trial in which the defendant, Minor Jimenez, has been accused of attempted murder of Mario Gutierrez and Angel Bernal-

A beat. Judge Elliott turns her head to face Fitzgerald.

JUDGE ELLIOTT (CONT'D)

We will begin with the prosecution. Mr. Fitzgerald, would you please proceed with your closing statement?

Fitzgerald stands up and then steps forward.

CHRIS FITZGERALD

Yes, thank you, Your Honor-

A beat. He walks up to the jury box to address each member.

CHRIS FITZGERALD (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you have been presented with a simple fact during this trial--two men, Mario Gutierrez and Angel Bernal, were shot down by a gunman. The defendant, Minor Jimenez, was

(MORE)

CHRIS FITZGERALD (CONT'D)
allegedly accused of the shooting of both victims. Now, the time has come to review the facts that have been presented to you during this trial. Forget about what you've seen on TV, and in the movies... Fact, Angel Bernal, one of the victims, gave a sworn eyewitness account on the stand that the defendant shot him, then fled the scene... Fact, Detective Rodriguez arrested Minor Jimenez and placed him in a lineup where Angel Bernal again confirmed that Minor Jimenez was the gunman... Fact, Minor Jimenez, was in a public restaurant where he openly threatened both of the victims with their lives during a fight just days prior to the shooting. And on the actual day and time of the shooting, Mr. Jimenez was unable to confirm his true whereabouts during his testimony on the stand-

Fitzgerald looks over the jury then points to Julie Bulla and Minor, who's holding onto a St. Christopher metal.

CHRIS FITZGERALD (CONT'D)
And what has the defense provided as facts? Well, they brought forward last-minute surprise witnesses to confuse you in an attempt to distract you from arriving at a decisive verdict. The condition of Mario Gutierrez continues to hang by a thread in the critical care unit. His testimony from a poorly transmitted video should have been thrown out of court. You saw how he could barely communicate. He's not a credible witness, and who knows if he'll ever be able to testify due to the sustained injury to his brain. Using Trini Bernal as a witness and who has recently been brought forward to discredit his recently deceased brother Angel, is nothing but a cheap trick to get the defendant off the hook. Both Mario Gutierrez and Trini Bernal have long criminal records, whereas Angel Bernal had no history of breaking the law. I implore each of you to take a close look at the

(MORE)

CHRIS FITZGERALD (CONT'D)
credibility of the witnesses and to
search your conscience about whose
testimony you should honestly trust
as you collectively determine your
verdict.

Fitzgerald glares at Minor and walks back to his table.

CHRIS FITZGERALD (CONT'D)
Thank you, members of the jury for
your dedication--and thank you,
Your Honor.

The judge addresses Ms Bulla after Fitzgerald sits down.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
Thank you, Mr. Fitzgerald. Ms
Bulla, would you please proceed
with your closing statement for
the defense?

Julie Bulla, in a VERSACE blue dress-suit, stands up, then
walks forward to the jury box after responding to the judge.

JULIE BULLA
Yes, and thank you, Your Honor, and
ladies and gentlemen of the jury,
here is no doubt that all of you
have demonstrated a great deal of
dedication through your valued
service during this highly volatile
attempted murder trial--and now,
it's time to get down to the brass
tacks, or, rather, the meat and
potatoes of this entire trial. You
just heard the prosecution
re-hashing the initial phase of the
trial, which concentrated on one
victim's sworn testimony and an
insufficient alibi provided by my
defendant, Minor Jimenez--all the
while as the other victim, Mario
Gutierrez, remained unresponsive in
an ICU bed. Please bear with me as
I recap with each of you the
tremendous amount of evidence
presented in this court through the
in-depth investigation by Detective
Rodriguez and the LAPD since then.

Julie Bulla gains the attention of the jurors, the
prosecution, and her client--she happens to be on a roll as
Detective Rodriguez, in the back row, looks at his watch.

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)
All of you viewed the video
transmitted testimony of Mario
(MORE)

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)

Gutierrez as he regained consciousness from his hospital bed--that was not staged, and he was not coaxed. And Detective Rodriguez testified that he questioned him further to determine a possible suspect other than the alleged Minor Jimenez. Next, the other suspect, being Juan Diaz, was determined through his mugshot and the gang-related tattoo, as pointed out by Mr. Gutierrez. Secondly, Angel Bernal, the initial sole eyewitness, is now deceased due to a drug overdose. Now, through a polygraph test, it has been confirmed that his only brother, Trinidad Bernal, came forward to confirm that his brother had confessed to him and that Angel had lied about Minor Jimenez being the gunman--why did his younger brother lie in court? Because he feared for his life and because if he told the truth, the rival gang members would make sure he'd never squeal or utter another word again--please, rest your minds because Juan Diaz is now in custody thanks to the LAPD and Detective Rodriguez. Also, during Termite's arrest, two .38 special guns that were in his possession and the bullets fired by him were recovered as evidence. Both of the victims just so happened to have been shot with bullets from a .38 special gun. Whether Angel's death was a suicide, an accidental overdose or an actual homicide is questionable at this point, because this investigation remains ongoing. Just let me leave you with this--the drug Fentanyl, which showed up in Angel's toxicology report before his death, was also the drug seized in a sizable quantity in the possession of the suspect, Juan Diaz, during his arrest.

A beat. Julie Bulla steps away then stands behind Minor.

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, as you weigh of all the evidence brought forward and you decide your

(MORE)

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)
verdict, I strongly urge that you not conclude this trial without first and foremost taking into consideration that Minor Jimenez was wrongly accused--for it would be a travesty to convict an innocent man of such a serious crime that he did not commit. Thank you, members of the jury and thank you, Your Honor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT
Thank you, Ms Bulla. Members of the jury, you have heard the closing arguments from the prosecution and the defense. At this time, the jury will be allowed to deliberate over the next two weeks. This court trial will reconvene when the verdict has been reached, and the pending trial session is scheduled for their announcement.

The judge STRIKES the gavel three times before she rises up.

JUDGE ELLIOTT (CONT'D)
Court is adjourned-

Everyone rise up before departing the courtroom, and the jury members are slowly escorted out.

INT. LA SUPERIOR COURT DELIBERATION ROOM - DAY

SUPER: "Two weeks later in the Jury Deliberation Room"

HEAD MARINE JUROR, 40, clean-cut, and the other jurors are sitting around a table in a room with tall grimy windows.

MARINE JUROR
Well, I believe that we can't place a verdict of Not Guilty until it's unanimous-

Everyone looks over to A SCHOOLTEACHER JUROR, 29, petite, in a conservative dress, who is seated next to Juror Seven.

SCHOOLTEACHER JUROR
I really don't know whether he did it or not, but something tells me, he's guilty-

JUROR SEVEN
But why? Is it because you were convinced by the prosecutor that he did it from the start?

SCHOOLTEACHER JUROR

Well, yes, maybe so-

JUROR SEVEN

I know all of you thought I screwed up when I did something stupid and spoke to a witness a while back, and gosh, I felt so ashamed. I just believe in my heart and my head that this detective really knows his stuff. (Beat) My God, with all the evidence that he recovered, I can't help but be convinced that Minor Jimenez is innocent-

INT. CRIMINAL COURTROOM - DAY

All of the jurors have been seated in the jury box and after Judge Elliott has called the court to order, she LOOKS at the HEAD JUROR.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Members of the jury, have you reached a verdict?

The head juror, rises to his feet.

HEAD MARINE JUROR

Yes, we have, Your Honor.

Judge Elliott turns her head and looks at Minor.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

Will the defendant please rise?

Minor stands up and faces the jury, and then the judge turns her head to face the jury members.

JUDGE ELLIOTT

What is your verdict?

HEAD MARINE JUROR

We, the jury, find the defendant, Minor Jimenez, Not Guilty in the crimes of attempted murder of both Angel Bernal and Mario Gutierrez.

THE ENTIRE COURTROOM BURSTS INTO AN UPROAR.

Julie and Minor have a huge embrace, then Andrea rushes forward PATTING her and Minor on their backs. Minor's family members hug him and hug each other.

MINOR

(to Christina)

Where's Anna? Is she okay?

CHRISTINA

(with tears)

Oh, Minor--yes, Anna's fine. She wants you to know that she loves you and that she just can't wait to have your baby.

In the back of the courtroom, Detective Rodriguez gives a thumbs up to Julie as she looks back at him then smiles.

As Minor also looks back at the detective, he notices his dad standing off to the side in the back row--Minor hurries over to him.

MINOR

Dad, you're here-

MR JIMENEZ

Yes, Minor, I'm here--how could I not be here for the bravest son any father on earth could ever have.

MINOR

God, how I missed you, Dad

MR JIMENEZ

Oh, my son, I missed you too--please forgive me, Minor-

Minor and his father exchange a mutual sturdy hand shake, then give each other an enormous long-overdue embrace. Minor's mother and Christina rush back to them, and then his mother cries and kisses Minor--he hugs her.

MINOR

I can't believe I'm really free.
Thank God, you're all here now.
You'll never know how much your belief in me kept me hanging on every day-

Raymundo and Ms Bulla come forth to give Minor more hugs and pats on the back.

JULIE BULLA

We never stopped believing in you-

MINOR

I know you had my back, Ms Bulla.
Thank you with all my heart-

RAYMUNDO

Okay, enuf, now--Minor, your chariot awaits. I'm here to escort you in my Silverado and deliver you to Anna, your lady-in-waiting, who anticipates your presence at your sister's home as we speak-

MINOR

All right, just lead the way,
Raymundo--I'm right behind you.
Let's go-

INT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - BAPTISMAL CHAPEL - DAY

SUPER: "One Year Later"

Mario and Anna, who is holding their infant daughter dressed in a long white christening, are standing next to Father Guillermo at the baptismal area.

The Godparents, Christina and Raymundo, are right behind the parents while several close friends and family members, including Julie Bulla and Detective George Rodriguez surround them as the priest pours holy water over their baby's head.

FATHER GUILLERMO

With the powers vested in me by
the Holy Catholic church, I
baptize this child, Julie Anna
Jimenez, in the name of the
Father, the Son, and the Holy
Spirit, Amen.

Everyone in attendance performs the sign of the cross. Minor's mother and father start to tear-up while their granddaughter doesn't cry at all.

FATHER GUILLERMO (CONT'D)

Good will to all and please join me
in the church rectory for on this
glorious day of the baptism of the
daughter of Minor and Anna Jimenez.

INT. ST. MARY CHURCH RECTORY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Upon arrival to the crowded reception hall, Minor has his arm wrapped around Anna, who is carrying their baby. Then Christina took her godchild in her arms and carried her to the grandparents, Ernesto and Irene Jimenez.

Julie and Detective Rodriguez walked over to Minor and Anna, then Julie presented a wrapped gift to them.

JULIE BULLA

I'm so happy for both of you, and
I hope that your family will be
blessed with many years of
happiness.

MINOR

Ms Bulla thank you. You were such
a godsend to us during a very dark
time in our lives. You will always
be in our hearts.

Christina carries over her goddaughter, and grins as she sees Julie Bulla bowing her head with tears on her cheeks.

CHRISTINA

Hi, Ms Bulla. Here she is, Julie
Anna Jimenez. Isn't she beautiful?

MINOR

We hope that someday our child will
be as conscientious toward justice
as the woman that helped free me,
her father.

Detective Rodriguez steps in closer to Julie, who's
speechless, and squeezes her shoulder before he speaks.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Congratulations. Your child is
beautiful, and you must feel like
the luckiest parents on earth at
this moment.

ANNA / MINOR

Oh yes, thank you.

Soon, the others gathered around little Julie Anna;
Raymundo stands in front of everyone and clears his
throat to make a speech to everyone.

RAYMUNDO

I'd like to make an
announcement while we are here
celebrating little Julie Anna's
baptism, if I could. As you
know, my business is a little
more than I can handle lately,
thanks to all the great work
that my employees provide to
our growing number of
customers. So, I am now
promoting Minor to manager of
my auto body repair shop,
effective as of next week.

There are several hoots and pats on Minor's back from
friends and family members following the news. Julie and
Detective Rodriguez clap alongside everyone.

EXT. CHURCH - ON A PATHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Both Julie and Detective Rodriguez leave the rectory,
and then walk down a pathway with each other.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ

Well, Julie, I believe you have
touched the lives of many of
these people in a very special
way.

JULIE BULLA

Listen, George, you must know

(MORE)

JULIE BULLA (CONT'D)
that I wouldn't have been able to
represent Minor as effectively to
prove he was not guilty without
the amazing detective work you
headed.

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Don't discount yourself, Counselor.
It was you and your dedication to
prove Minor's innocence that
motivated us to give it our all in
his defense.

JULIE BULLA
Well, I know you can't tell all,
but did everything work out okay
with Angel's brother, Trini, and
Mario Gutierrez through the
Witness Protection Program?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
I can tell you this: they are in
a place where the East LA gang
members will no longer endanger
them. Both Trini and Mario have
started new lives under different
identities, and believe me, they
made the right choice to
cooperate with us in arresting
and convicting the real gunman.

After taking a deep breath, she leans on him, places her
arm under his arm, and speaks to him with a sly grin.

JULIE BULLA
Hey, George, how about you and I
find someplace to have a drink?

DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ
Sure, I hear there's a local
Mexican café on Evergreen that
serves up a killer margarita.

Before they walk any farther, Julie kisses him on his left
cheek, just below his scar, and smiles again.

JULIE BULLA
Sounds very inviting. Lead the
way. Let's go.

THE END