

ATLANTA ON FIRE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - ATLANTA 1913 - NIGHT

It's dark. It's dirty. NEWT LEE, a mid-50s, black, night watchman makes his way down a WOODEN LADDER one rung at a time -- a LANTERN in his hand providing the only light.

He MISSES the last rung and SLIPS to the basement floor, hurting his KNEE. Newt LIMPS to the "colored toilet" -- sets the LANTERN on the floor as he take a piss.

Finished, Newt PICKS UP the LANTERN -- TURNS back toward the ladder when something catches his attention.

A PILE OF RAGS in the corner of the room. To get a better look, Newt RAISES the LANTERN. He approaches slowly. Newt's eyes grow big as he spots it: **the BODY OF A DEAD WOMAN.**

EXT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - NIGHT

A POLICE CAR comes to a stop outside the pencil factory. SERGEANT R.J. BROWN, 49, a veteran officer, thorough to a fault, and CALL OFFICER W.F. ANDERSON, 31, a nervous young buck, step out of the car and approach Newt.

R.J. BROWN  
You Newt Lee?

NEWT LEE  
Yes, sir. I'm the night watchman. I was just taking a leak when I found her. She's hurt real bad.

Brown and Anderson follow Newt inside.

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

It's dark in here too. Brown and Anderson follow closely behind Newt and his LANTERN.

NEWT LEE  
I called the boss, Mr. Frank, but no one answered. I didn't know what else to do.

He guides the police toward a small SCUTTLE HOLE in the floor.

NEWT LEE (CONT'D)  
She's down there.

Brown and Anderson PAUSE. It's a LADDER into a PIT OF DARKNESS.

W.F. ANDERSON  
Is that the only way?

NEWT LEE  
There's an elevator on the other side of the building, but electricity is turned off.  
(off their nervous looks)  
I'll go first.

Newt disappears into the hole with the LANTERN. Brown turns to Anderson.

R.J. BROWN  
After you.

Terrified, Anderson follows Newt into the hole. Once he's out of sight, Brown does the same.

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Reunited, Newt points over to where he found the body.

NEWT LEE  
She's over there. In the corner.

He hands Brown the LANTERN. Brown and Anderson make their way over, their feet CRUNCHING something on the ground.

R.J. BROWN  
What's this shit on the floor?

NEWT LEE  
We a pencil company, sir. They shavings. Careful you don't step on her. She comes out of nowhere.

R.J. BROWN  
I'm not going to--

But then his foot HITS something. Brown and Anderson look down at the BUNDLE on the floor. Brown hands the LANTERN to Anderson -- BENDS DOWN to examine the woman -- sees her size. So small.

R.J. BROWN (CONT'D)  
This is nothing but a child.

The body lays on its side, facing away from Brown. He ROLLS her onto her back to get a look at her. Brown GASPS.

It's a young, BLACK GIRL no more than 13. She has a GASH on her forehead, a NOOSE made of WRAPPING CORD around her neck, and BLOOD DRIPPING from her nose and ears.

R.J. BROWN (CONT'D)  
 (re: Newt Lee)  
 Keep an eye on him.

W.F. ANDERSON  
 You think an old timer like him  
 killed a girl just to get us down  
 here and have a go at police?

Tenderly, Brown TOUCHES the girl's DAMAGED FACE. When he pulls back, there's a WHITE SMUDGE where he touched her. He looks at his fingers. They're covered in SOOT.

W.F. ANDERSON (CONT'D)  
 What is it?

Brown LIFTS the girl's skirt. That's when he sees it: **white skin, TORN underwear, and BLOOD around her vagina.**

R.J. BROWN  
 My god...

Anderson moves closer, revealing a PIECE OF PAPER next to the body -- a LEAD PENCIL is near the girl's hand.

The paper reads: **Mam that negro hire down here did this I went to make water and he push me down that hole he did this by his self I wright this while he play with me**

Brown DRAWS his gun -- WHIPS around, AIMING it at Newt.

R.J. BROWN (CONT'D)  
 Don't move!

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

BRITT CRAIG, 19, drunk off his ass, sits in the back as CAPTAIN L.S. DOBBS, 49, drives. OFFICER BOOTS ROGERS, 34, sits in the passenger seat. Britt HICCUPS.

BRITT CRAIG  
 Sure is nice of you fellas to give me a ride home.

DOBBS  
 Didn't have much choice when you passed out in the back of my car. We have to make a quick stop, then we'll drop you.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Where are we headed?

DOBBS  
The Pencil Factory. A young girl's  
been murdered.

Boots Rogers gets quiet, but Britt Craig lights up.

BRITT CRAIG  
You do know I work for the Atlanta  
Constitution.

DOBBS  
And if one word of this ends up in  
print, I'll knock your block off.

BRITT CRAIG  
Hey, hey! I was just making you  
aware that you are chauffeuring a  
member of the press to an active  
crime scene. By the way, do you  
have a pencil I can borrow?  
(off Dobbs' look)  
No matter. They'll have plenty at  
the factory.

Dobbs notices Boots silence.

DOBBS  
What's eating you?

BOOTS ROGERS  
My sister-in-law works at that  
factory.

EXT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - NIGHT

Newt Lee, now handcuffed, gets SHOVED into the back of a  
paddy-wagon by Brown when the police car arrives carrying  
Dobbs, Boots, and Britt Craig.

Boots Rogers LEAPS out and rushes to Newt.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Is it Grace!?!?

R.J. BROWN  
Calm down--

BOOTS ROGERS  
-Is it Grace!?!?

R.J. BROWN  
No. It's not her.

Boots takes a deep breath as Dobbs joins them. Britt Craig LINGERS in the shadows, taking notes on what the men say.

DOBBS  
(re: Newt)  
Is he our guy?

R.J. BROWN  
Think so. He found the body and there's a note next the victim saying the negro hire did it.

DOBBS  
How the hell did she have time to write a goddamned note?

R.J. BROWN  
It says... she says she was writing it as he was raping her.

That *silences* the men.

Anderson sticks his head out of the factory.

W.F. ANDERSON  
Captain? Sergeant? You need to come see this.

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Brown, Dobbs, and Boots Rogers are guided by Anderson. Britt Craig keeps his distance, still taking notes.

W.F. ANDERSON  
Still can't get a hold of the superintendant, but I called the mortuary to come pick up the body like you said and they asked if there was an easy way to move her. I noticed there's a back door here that leads to an alley. That's when I saw this.

He shows them the door. It's been BROKEN. Anderson holds up the LANTERN -- REVEALING BLOOD on the ground and on the DOOR HANDLE. There are DROPS of BLOOD leading outside.

W.F. ANDERSON (CONT'D)  
Newt Lee isn't our guy.

DOBBS

What the hell? Between the note and him finding the body, we've got that Negro cold. We'll have him shot by morning.

R.J. BROWN

You can hold off on the firing squad. Anderson's right. Whoever killed that girl needed a way out. He's covered in blood and couldn't go upstairs because Newt Lee was on night watch. So he broke this door and escaped into the alley.

W.F. ANDERSON

There's also some shit in the shaft.

(off their looks)

In the elevator shaft.

Anderson guides them over to the opposite end of the basement. The elevator is two floors up, but there's a fresh PILE OF SHIT on the basement floor.

W.F. ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Newt said he came down here to take a leak when he found the body.

DOBBS

So?

W.F. ANDERSON

So why lie? Why not just say he came down here to take a shit?

BOOTS ROGERS

People lie all the time.

R.J. BROWN

The man's sixty and docile as they come. That shit's a defiant act.

DOBBS

Come on.

R.J. BROWN

There's a colored toilet right there. What else do you wanna call it?

Dobbs thinks on that a minute.

DOBBS  
I still think the Negro did it.

R.J. BROWN  
Why?

DOBBS  
Gut feeling. He stays under arrest  
for now. I'll question him down at  
the station myself.

Annoyed, Brown turns his attention to Anderson. Without them  
noticing, Britt Craig silently SCURRIES up the ladder.

R.J. BROWN  
You said you still can't get a hold  
of the superintendant?

W.F. ANDERSON  
Mr. Frank? No. I've called twice,  
but there's no answer.

R.J. BROWN  
(TURNS to Boots Rogers)  
Any chance you can get Grace to  
meet you at the mortuary and ID the  
girl? I'd like to notify the family  
before the press gets wind of this.

He looks around. Britt Craig is nowhere to be found.

INT. ATLANTA CONSTITUTION - NIGHT

Britt Craig SITS at his desk -- FEEDS paper into a  
TYPEWRITER. A NIGHT WATCHMAN spots him.

NIGHT WATCHMAN  
You're sure here early.

BRITT CRAIG  
Wake up Mr. Ross. A young girl was  
raped and murdered at the Pencil  
Factory. Someone's going to swing  
for this.

NIGHT WATCHMAN  
How'd you land a story like that?

BRITT CRAIG  
Raw journalistic ambition.

Britt BANGS away at the typewriter. DING!

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - BASEMENT - NIGHT

With the body gone, Brown and Anderson search for clues. Brown finds a BLUE STRAW HAT in the trash and a GIRL'S SHOE near where the body was found.

Anderson locates a BLOODY PIPE near the broken WOODEN DOOR.

INT. ATLANTA CONSTITUTION - NIGHT

MARVIN ROSS, reads over the copy that Britt's just given him. He RAISES an eyebrow.

MARVIN ROSS

All this true?

BRITT CRAIG

Every word.

(he HICCUPS)

Think we can make the morning edition?

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - METAL ROOM - NIGHT

Brown and Anderson enter the dingy factory work room.

ANDERSON

This is where she worked?

BROWN

Yeah.

They look around. Anderson finds some strands of BLONDE HAIR. Near the door, Brown spots something - SQUATS DOWN.

BROWN (CONT'D)

We got blood.

INT. BLOOMFIELD'S FUNERAL HOME - DAWN

P.J. BLOOMFIELD, 65, LIFTS a sheet to REVEAL the DEAD GIRL'S BODY to GRACE HICKS, 16, who's nervous and scared. She takes one look and hides her face in Boots Rogers' chest.

GRACE HICKS

That's Mary Phagan. She works next to me at the factory.

BOOTS ROGERS

Do you know where she lives?

GRACE HICKS

Over on Lindsay Street with her  
Mama and step-daddy. Who... who  
could do something like that???

Boots Rogers comforts her -- NODS to Dobbs, who lights a  
cigarette in the corner.

INT. ATLANTA CONSTITUTION - DAWN

The PRESSES work overtime, CHURNING out the morning edition  
with the notice about the young girl's death at the factory.

WORKERS hand STACKS of PAPERS to NEWSIES who RUSH out on  
bicycles to deliver the shocking news.

INT. JOHN & FANNIE COLEMAN'S HOME - MORNING

FANNIE COLEMAN, 32, sits at a kitchen table in her low income  
home -- tears STREAMING down her face.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Her husband, JOHN, 38, exhausted from  
being up all night, answers the door to find Dobbs.

DOBBS

Sorry to bother you folks. I'm  
Captain Dobbs. Is this the  
residence of Mary Phagan?

FANNIE

(goes to him; *distraught*)  
I'm her mother. Have you found her?  
She's been missing since yesterday.  
We've been searching all night.

DOBBS

Yes, ma'am. We found her.

The looks on Dobbs' face crushes them. Fannie GRABS a copy of  
the morning edition and THRUSTS it at him.

FANNIE

Is this... is this what happened to  
my baby girl?

Dobbs looks at the paper. It's Britt Craig's article. It  
doesn't name Mary, but the gruesome details are all there.

FANNIE (CONT'D)

Funny how a little girl's murder  
makes the papers before the parents  
even know.

DOBBS  
That was a mistake.

FANNIE  
A mistake is forgetting to bring the milk in. What kind of police are you?

DOBBS  
I promise you, Mrs. Phagan--

FANNIE  
-It's Mrs. Coleman. Mr. Phagan's been dead for some time. Like my daughter it would seem.

DOBBS  
*Mrs. Coleman*, I promise you, we will find the man who did this, but I need your help.  
(re: SLIP of paper)  
Is this your daughter's handwriting?

Fannie takes the paper -- her heart BREAKING as she reads it.

FANNIE  
Where did you find this?

DOBBS  
It was... near the body.

FANNIE  
Mary had perfect grammar and penmanship. She didn't write that.

Now Fannie SLAMS the door. Dobbs looks down at the SLIP OF PAPER. *If little Mary Phagan didn't write it, who did?*

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - MORNING

An upper-middle class, tidy home. The DOORBELL RINGS. LUCILLE FRANK, 25, pretty, demure, answers the door wearing a blue housecoat. Boots Rogers GREETs her.

LUCILLE  
Yes?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Mrs. Frank? I'm Detective Rogers. I'm looking for your husband and have been having a little trouble locating him. Is he home?

LUCILLE

Oh, yes. *Please, come in.* He's upstairs. I'll be just a minute.

Boots Rogers enters. Lucille CLOSES and LOCKS the door. She hurries upstairs, *a little nervous*. Boots can hear a bit of their muted conversation.

LUCILLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Leo, there's a detective here to see you.

LEO (O.S.)

A detective? What's his name? Did he say what he wanted? Did something happen?

LUCILLE (O.S.)

I don't know. Should I serve some coffee?

LEO (O.S.)

Yes. With cream and sugar. Do we have any biscuits?

LUCILLE (O.S.)

I think so.

LEO (O.S.)

Good. *Serve those.* I'll be right down.

Boots moves from the stairs, pretending to look at a WEDDING PHOTOGRAPH as Lucille comes back down.

LUCILLE

Leo's just finishing getting dressed. He'll be down in a minute.

BOOTS ROGERS

(NODS)

Is something wrong with your phone?

LUCILLE

What do you mean?

BOOTS ROGERS

Is it broken?

LUCILLE

I don't think so.

BOOTS ROGERS

It's just that a number of people tried calling this morning and no one answered.

LUCILLE

They did?

BOOTS ROGERS

You didn't hear the phone ring at 4 in the morning? At 6?

LUCILLE

I don't think so.

Boots NODS again as Lucille WRINGS her hands.

LEO FRANK, 30, enters, putting on his CIRCULAR GLASSES. He's a sweet, slender, somewhat manic Jewish man dressed in an UNDERSHIRT, SUSPENDERS, and SLACKS. A JEWISH STAR DANGLES from his neck.

LEO

Detective?

BOOTS ROGERS

Mr. Frank.

(they SHAKE hands)

You're the superintendant at the National Pencil Factory?

LEO

Yes, sir. Has something happened? Has there been a fire?

BOOTS ROGERS

No, sir. Not a fire.

LEO

Thank God.

(to Lucille)

Sweetie, how's the coffee coming?

BOOTS ROGERS

Mr. Frank, we really should get down to the factory.

LEO

If there's no fire, there's no need to rush. My wife -- her name's Lucille, but you must know that already -- she makes the best coffee.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

And if you think her coffee is great, her biscuits are even better. Best in all Atlanta. Of that, I assure you.

(to Lucille)

Lucille, the coffee, the biscuits! The Detective will think I'm a liar or, worse, a bad host.

BOOTS ROGERS

Mr. Frank, we really don't have time. We need you down at the factory immediately.

LEO

If you say so, but I can't leave until I find my shirt. Lucille, have you seen my shirt?

(to Boots Rogers)

I can't find my collar and tie either. It's one of those kinds of mornings, but you know how that is. It happens to all of us. I mean, it may not happen to you, but it happens to me all the time.

Luckily, I have Lucille. She's the greatest. She can find just about anything even when I've misplaced it and then POOF there it is. I really am a lucky man. I'm telling you, you absolutely have to try those biscuits!

Something seems very, very off about Leo Frank.

BOOTS ROGERS

Mr. Frank, something tragic has happened. You need to come with me. Now.

His tone is far more stern than it was before. Leo gets the gravity of the situation.

LEO

Well, of course. I just need to find my--

Lucille hands him his SHIRT and TIE. Leo offers a small smile to Boots Rogers.

LEO (CONT'D)

She really is the best.

INT. POLICE CAR - MORNING

Boots Rogers drives while Leo sits -- *now perfectly dressed for the day* -- in the passenger seat, WRINGING his hands.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Everything all right, Mr. Frank?

LEO  
I'm fine. Of course I'm fine. I just don't know what's going on and then a detective is coming to my house and ordering me to go with him. A tragedy has happened and it's not a fire, but I don't know what's going on.

BOOTS ROGERS  
And you'd like to?

LEO  
Yes, yes of course. I'm on pins and needles here and I don't have the constitution for it.

BOOTS ROGERS  
(a beat, then:)  
A girl was found raped and murdered in the factory basement.

LEO  
A *girl*? What girl?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Why don't we wait 'til we get you back to the factory before--

LEO  
-I just don't understand. Why would someone want to do that to a child? Mary's such a lovely girl.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Excuse me?

LEO  
Mary Phagan. I hardly knew the girl, but she was a good worker and well liked. That I can assure you.

BOOTS ROGERS  
That's all good and fine, Mr. Frank, but how did you know she was the victim?

LEO  
Logic, *obviously*.

BOOTS ROGERS  
It don't make much sense to me. You  
mind explaining it?

LEO  
(*huffs*)  
Well, *usually* we pay employees on  
Saturdays, but because of the  
Memorial Day parade, we were closed  
on Saturday and we paid everyone on  
Friday instead. Mary worked in the  
metal room, which is just across  
the hall from my office.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Is that so?

LEO  
That's irrelevant. A shipment of  
metal hadn't arrived, so Mary  
hadn't been able to work this week  
and wasn't aware her pay was  
available earlier than normal.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Yeah, so?

LEO  
So she came by on Saturday to pick  
up her pay. I gave her her envelope  
and she went on her way.

BOOTS ROGERS  
How does that make her the dead  
girl in the factory?

LEO  
Isn't it obvious?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Again, no.

LEO  
(*huffing again*)  
I was the only one in the building.  
Except for Newt Lee, the night  
watchman. So if a girl was found in  
the building, it was most likely  
little Mary, because we aren't in  
the habit of letting employees in  
on days we are closed.

BOOTS ROGERS  
But Mary was let in.

LEO  
Clearly, you're not following.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Oh, I'm following just fine.

LEO  
She needed her pay. That was a special circumstance.

BOOTS ROGERS  
So, what you're saying is: if she was let in due to this "*special circumstance*" chances are no one else was let in.

LEO  
Yes!

BOOTS ROGERS  
And if no one else was let in, it's reasonable to think that no one was let out.

LEO  
That's exactly what I'm saying.

BOOTS ROGERS  
And the only two people in the building were you and the night watchman, Newt Lee?

LEO  
Yes! Finally you're starting to get it! I was honestly beginning to worry about you, Detective. It was like you couldn't figure anything out for yourself.

Boots Rogers eyes Leo suspiciously as he makes a turn.

LEO (CONT'D)  
This isn't the way to the factory, Detective.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Change of plans.

LEO  
Well, then. Where are we going?

BOOTS ROGERS  
The mortuary.

Leo swallows hard.

INT. BLOOMFIELD'S FUNERAL HOME - MORNING

A small crowd has gathered in the funeral home as a MEDICAL EXAMINER gets to work on Mary Phagan. Brown spots Boots Rogers enter with Leo. Brown goes to them.

R.J. BROWN  
Who's this?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Sgt. Brown, this Leo Frank.  
Superintendant down at the factory.

LEO  
I'm still not sure what I'm doing  
here.

R.J. BROWN  
Neither am I.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Still need an official ID on the  
victim. Thought Mr. Frank here  
could help us out with that.

Brown's eyes dart between Boots and Leo.

R.J. BROWN  
You got a minute?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Sure.  
(to Leo)  
Don't go nowhere.

He WINKS at Leo as Brown pulls him off to the side.

R.J. BROWN  
You know damn well we already got  
an ID. What's all this about?

BOOTS ROGERS  
I don't like him. He's been fishy  
the whole time I've been with him.

R.J. BROWN  
Fishy how?

BOOTS ROGERS

Like he's acting all nervous and he knew who it was who died before I even had the chance to tell him.

R.J. BROWN

Maybe someone else told him.

BOOTS ROGERS

No. No one's been able to get a hold of him. He thought I was coming round about a fire.

R.J. BROWN

Then take him down to the goddamned station. Why bring him here?

BOOTS ROGERS

I wanted to get a look at his face when he saw Mary Phagan's body.

They both turn to look at Leo Frank. He's standing in the doorway, watching as the MEDICAL EXAMINER measures the GASH ON MARY'S NECK. Tears FILL his eyes. Leo looks away. Boots Rogers turns to Brown as if that's proof of guilt.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Leo's in the backseat now. Brown is at the wheel with Boots Rogers in the passenger seat.

LEO

Where are we going now?

Neither of the men say a word.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

Leo waits in an interrogation room, *fidgeting*. Boots Rogers WATCHES him through the glass window. Brown joins him.

R.J. BROWN

Just because he wouldn't look at the body, don't mean he did it.

BOOTS ROGERS

You didn't see him before. He's hiding something.

R.J. BROWN

How was his wife?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Meek as a mouse.

R.J. BROWN  
But she backed up his story?

BOOTS ROGERS  
About him being home and not hearing the phone ring in the middle of the night? Yeah, she was real convincing.

Captain Dobbs joins the men.

DOBBS  
We got another one?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Leo Frank. He's the superintendant at the factory. Went over to break the news and the guy is nervous like he done somethin'. He knew who died before I even told him.

DOBBS  
Yeah?

BOOTS ROGERS  
He had some crazy story about her coming to collect her pay when the building was supposed to be closed.

DOBBS  
This was yesterday?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Yeah.

DOBBS  
And the only two people there are this guy and the night watchman?

R.J. BROWN  
We don't know that for sure yet, but that's what it looks like.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Take your pick, Captain. The nigger or the kike?

Dobbs STARES into the interrogation room where Leo continues to fidget. He holds up the LETTER from the factory floor.

DOBBS

Mary Phagan didn't write this. Her mother said she had perfect grammar. *Perfect penmanship*. The superintendant of a pencil factory would also have perfect grammar and perfect penmanship.

BOOTS ROGERS

Unless he was trying to cast suspicion on someone else.

R.J. BROWN

Jesus, you really have it in for this guy. We don't know anything yet. Captain, let me take a run at them. It's my case. I'll get one of them to break and then we can put this to bed. Give that little girl's family some peace.

DOBBS

Is Newt Lee still here?

R.J. BROWN

Yeah. Why?

Dobbs thinks for a moment.

DOBBS

I have a better idea.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Leo LOOKS UP as Boots Rogers HAULS Newt Lee in. He SHOVES him down in a chair across from Leo.

LEO

Excuse me? When can I go home?

BOOTS ROGERS

When I fucking say so.

Boots Rogers SLAMS the door shut -- LOCKS it.

LEO

Looks like we're in a bit of trouble, aren't we, Newt?

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - SAME

Brown, Alexander, and Boots Rogers wait with Captain Dobbs.

R.J. BROWN  
O.K. Now what?

DOBBS  
Now we wait.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

Leo CLEARS his throat as he addresses Newt.

LEO  
Are they treating you alright?

NEWT LEE  
Yes, sir.

LEO  
You can tell me if they're not. I can have a word with them.

NEWT LEE  
No, Mr. Frank. They've been decent.

LEO  
*Good. They've been decent to me, too. Well, mostly. It's inconvenient more than anything else. The idea that I had something to do with little Mary Phagan's murder is, well, it's ridiculous is what it is. I could never hurt a child. I love children.*

NEWT LEE  
I know, Mr. Frank. *I know.*

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION

The men watch Leo and Newt with great interest.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Is he coaching him? Is that what he's doing?

DOBBS  
*Quiet.*

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

Leo continues to babble...

LEO

Now I know I didn't do it. There's no question about that. I left the factory around 6:30 and arrived home just before 7 and had a lovely meal with my wife, Lucille. You haven't met her, but I'm sure you'd like her.

NEWT LEE

I'm sure I would, sir.

LEO

Of course you would. Everyone does. She made the best brisket last night. It was delicious. Then we sat in the drawing room and listened to the radio for a bit. Well, she listened, I read, before we went upstairs to bed.

NEWT LEE

Sounds like a lovely evening, sir.

LEO

It was. So you can see, I couldn't possibly have done what they're thinking I maybe did, because I was at home with my wife having a lovely meal, followed by radio, reading and bed.

NEWT LEE

I see that, sir.

LEO

You were at the factory all night?

NEWT LEE

I was, sir.

LEO

And you didn't let anyone in? It's okay if you did. I know it's against procedure, but this is important, Newt. I promise you won't get into any trouble if you let someone in. If you did, we'll just forget all about that. But you'll have to tell those policemen exactly who you let in -- tell them what you saw. You hear me, Newt?

NEWT LEE

Mr. Frank, I didn't let nobody in. I just kept the watch. Then I went to take a leak and there she was.

LEO

*Mary.* They had the audacity to show me her body at the funeral home. What purpose does that serve? She was mutilated, strangled, *raped*. The poor thing. Any man who did that would be covered in blood. Am I covered in blood?

NEWT LEE

No, sir.

LEO

Not a drop on me. And let me tell you, I saw that body. Her killer wouldn't just have blood on him. He'd have marks on him. Do you see marks on me?

NEWT LEE

No, sir.

LEO

But you can't really see, can you?

Leo starts to STRIP OFF his clothes.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - SAME

Brown, Dobbs, Boots Rogers, and Anderson are in shock as they watch. *What the fuck is going on???*

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

Leo stands before Newt, butt ass naked, showing off his perfectly SMOOTH and CLEAR SKIN.

LEO

Do you see marks? Do you see scratches?

NEWT LEE

No, sir.

LEO

That's right. There's nothing because nothing happened.

He starts putting his clothes back on.

LEO (CONT'D)

Do you have any scratches on you?  
Any marks?

NEWT LEE

No, sir.

LEO

Well, I feel much better about this  
whole *unsavory* situation.

NEWT LEE

Why's that, sir?

Leo sits down, fully dressed.

LEO

Don't you see? We're both innocent.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - SAME

Brown ROLLS his eyes at this.

R.J. BROWN

That was excellent police work,  
Captain. You just gave them the  
opportunity to get their stories  
straight.

DOBBS

I was trying to get a confession.

R.J. BROWN

Well, neither of those fuckers is  
giving up anything now.  
(to Boots Rogers)  
And I think you're right about Leo  
Frank. He acts mighty strange.

W.F. ANDERSON

He's nervous. He ain't even from  
the South. Yanks talk different, is  
all.

BOOTS ROGERS

Yeah, they sure as shit talk  
different after they rape and kill  
little girls.

The PHONE RINGS. Anderson ANSWERS it.

DOBBS

Everyone calm down. One of the two of them knows something. Maybe they did it together, *maybe they didn't*. But my gut tells me that the man that killed Mary Phagan is sitting there in that room.

Anderson CALLS OUT to them.

W.F. ANDERSON

Hey, Captain. Your gut's gonna have to hold on a spell.

DOBBS

Why's that?

W.F. ANDERSON

Got a witness on the line. Says she sees a neighbor of hers burning bloody clothes in his backyard.

R.J. BROWN

Yeah, so?

W.F. ANDERSON

His name is Jim Conley. And he works at the National Pencil Factory.

EXT. JIM CONLEY'S HOUSE - EVENING

A rundown, DILAPIDATED structure. The POLICE pull up -- FLANKING either side of the house. They wait in SILENCE with only the sound of a RADIO coming from the house.

Shotguns ready, Dobbs CALLS OUT.

DOBBS

Jim Conley. This is the Atlanta Police Department. We wanna have a word with you. Come on outta there.  
(no response)  
Don't make this hard on yourself.  
All we wanna do is talk. *Jim???*

Still no response... until the RADIO gets TURNED OFF. Now it's deathly quiet. The POLICE look from one to another.

*Only one thing to do...*

Dobbs NODS to Boots Rogers who KICKS the door in. Brown, Anderson, Dobbs, and Boots Rogers RUSH INSIDE...

JIM CONLEY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It's an even BIGGER MESS inside. No sign of Jim Conley.

Step by step, the police make their way through the house, careful to MANEUVER through doorways.

Anderson STICKS his head in a bedroom. Not much there, but an OLD MATTRESS on the ground. Anderson takes a step inside. *Nowhere to hide.* He TURNS to face a CLOSET with a door that's SLIGHTLY AJAR.

DOBBS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Where'd the fuck he go? You got anything?

BOOTS ROGERS (O.S.)  
No. Sergeant?

R.J. BROWN (O.S.)  
Negative. Anderson?

As Anderson moves closer to the closet. He can see a WIRE HANGER SWINGING on the rod.

W.F. ANDERSON  
Nothing here.

He RAISES his SHOTGUN -- takes another STEP when JIM CONLEY, 27, handsome, charming, chiseled, BURSTS out of the closet, TACKLING Anderson around the waist.

A SHOTGUN GOES OFF...

Jim STRUGGLES against Anderson. He KICKS the SHOTGUN away and RACES out the door only to come face to face with Boots Rogers and a SHOTGUN leveled at his head.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Don't you fucking move.  
(to Anderson)  
You alright?

W.F. ANDERSON  
Yeah. I think so.

Boots Rogers turns his attention back to Jim Conley.

BOOTS ROGERS  
On your knees. *Now.*

Jim OBEYS.

INT. JIM CONLEY'S HOUSE - LATER

Boots Rogers and DOBBS USHER Jim outside. Brown SPOTS some HANDWRITTEN NOTES when Anderson comes in with a BLOODY SHIRT.

W.F. ANDERSON

I found this in a barrel outside.  
You got anything?

R.J. BROWN

Not much. We better get moving.

He GRABS the notes.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Leo SITS calmly with his head against the wall when the door OPENS. Brown stands there.

R.J. BROWN

Mr. Frank?

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Brown walks Leo out.

LEO

I'm glad you got this sorted out,  
Detective. This situation has been  
highly disagreeable.

R.J. BROWN

So you've said. We may have some  
more questions. Do us a favor and  
don't leave the state.

LEO

Now why would I do that?

R.J. BROWN

Just stay local.

LEO

May I ask, who have you taken into  
custody?

R.J. BROWN

I can't reveal that information,  
sir. *Protocol.*

LEO

*That's odd.*

R.J. BROWN

How so?

LEO

You locked me in a room with another suspect hoping to gain vital information and when you failed to do so, you ran out and found a better suspect whose arrest is allowing me to go free, but you won't divulge his name because of *protocol*?

R.J. BROWN

(HUFFS)

It's been a pleasure, Mr. Frank.

Before Leo can leave. Boots Rogers HAULS IN Jim Conley. Jim BRIGHTENS upon seeing Leo.

JIM CONLEY

Mr. Frank, you gotta tell them I didn't do this.

BOOTS ROGERS

Keep moving.

JIM CONLEY

You gotta tell them! *Please!*

Boots Rogers HITS Jim over the head with a BATON -- SHOVING him into an interrogation room.

R.J. BROWN

Do you know that man?

LEO

I can't reveal that information, Detective. *Protocol.*

Leo TURNS on his heels and walks out. Brown SHAKES his head and follows after Boots Rogers and Jim Conley.

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - NIGHT

Leo enters to find a *panicked* Lucille waiting for him. She THROWS her arms around him -- CRYING.

LUCILLE

Leo!

LEO

*Shhh.* Everything's alright.

LUCILLE  
I was so scared.

LEO  
I was too, but they caught the man  
who did this.

LUCILLE  
They did?

LEO  
Yes. It's over now. You can't get  
rid of me that easily.

He WIPES her tears away.

LUCILLE  
O.K. Are you hungry? I can fix you  
something.

Leo NODS. With arms around each other, Leo and Lucille head  
into the kitchen together.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

WHITE FISTS PUMMEL BLACK SKIN. Boots Rogers is doing the  
damage while Jim takes the beating. Brown STANDS in the  
corner, SMOKING a cigarette.

BOOTS ROGERS  
You like raping little white girls?  
Is that what you like?

JIM CONLEY  
No! No, sir!

Another KICK.

BOOTS ROGERS  
She was just too pretty, wasn't  
she? You had to have her.

JIM CONLEY  
I didn't. I've never seen her.

Another PUNCH -- Jim SPITS blood, looks to Brown.

JIM CONLEY (CONT'D)  
You gonna just stand there?

R.J. BROWN  
Tell the man what he wants to know.

JIM CONLEY  
I already told you. I didn't do it!

Boots Rogers PULLS him close.

BOOTS ROGERS  
I don't believe you.

Boots Rogers SPITS in Jim's face. He continues his relentless BEATING -- FIST over FIST. Blood SPRAYS. Jim SCREAMS.

JIM CONLEY  
It wasn't me. It wasn't me. I only  
*helped...*

The BEATING STOPS.

BOOTS ROGERS  
The fuck did you just say?

JIM CONLEY  
I helped him move the body, that's  
all. I swear, I didn't kill her.

R.J. BROWN  
*Who??? Who did you help?*

JIM CONLEY  
My boss. Mr. Frank.

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

Leo and Lucille, WARM in their bed, wake in the early morning light. Leo KISSES his wife before getting out of bed.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

Jim Conley tells his story.

JIM CONLEY  
He's a dangerous man -- that Mr.  
Frank. He don't look like it, but  
he is. I'm not perfect, but I ain't  
never done things like him. I've  
been working at that factory for  
two years and Mr. Frank, *well*, he  
made me a lookout for him.

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - BATHROOM - SAME

Leo LATHERS his face -- uses a RAZOR to SHAVE the CREAM away.

JIM CONLEY (V.O.)  
 He'd call them girls into his office and I'd stand outside until he was done doing whatever he was doing with them in there. He told me once that he wasn't built like other men. He had *urges*.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

Jim Conley continues on.

JIM CONLEY  
 I peaked my head in his office once and I saw he had one of them girls laid out on the desk, legs *spread* wide open. And there was Mr. Frank, *kneeling* right between them. I never knew a man who preferred young girls like that.

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - KITCHEN - SAME

Leo READS the morning PAPER. There's a \$1000 reward for any information leading to the conviction of Mary's killer.

JIM CONLEY (V.O.)  
 On Saturday, he came to find me while I was sweeping. Said something went wrong. That's when he showed me the body in his office...

Lucille SERVES Leo his breakfast -- REFILLS his coffee.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

Boots Rogers and Brown can't believe what they're hearing.

JIM CONLEY  
 I guess that girl started making noise, you know, fighting him off and he had to quiet her. He sure did a *good* job.

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - SAME

It's back to business as usual. Leo -- *looking as dapper as ever* -- sweeps in without a care in the world. He NODS to the FACTORY WORKERS.

JIM CONLEY (V.O.)  
 Once everyone was gone, I helped  
 Mr. Frank move the body into the  
 elevator. We took her to the  
 basement and then he asked me to  
 write a note. I asked why.

He goes upstairs to his office.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

Jim's wrapping it up now -- bringing it home.

JIM CONLEY  
 He told me he wanted the note to  
 look like Mary wrote it and was  
 pointing the finger at Newt since  
 he was on watch that night.

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - LEO'S OFFICE - SAME

Leo puts down his briefcase -- HANGS his jacket. He sits at  
 his desk and gets to work without a care in the world.

JIM CONLEY (V.O.)  
 I wish I could've stopped it, but  
 like I said, Mr. Frank is a  
*dangerous* man.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - MORNING

Brown and Boots Rogers exit the interrogation room just as  
 Dobbs comes in for the day.

R.J. BROWN  
 Captain, we just got a full  
 confession from Jim Conley.

DOBBS  
 No, shit.

BOOTS ROGERS  
 He says Leo Frank did it. That he  
 only helped him move the body.

DOBBS  
 And you believe him?

BOOTS ROGERS  
 He's got a pretty convincing story.  
 Says Frank likes young girls.  
 (MORE)

BOOTS ROGERS (CONT'D)  
 This one just got out of hand.  
 (to R.J. Brown)  
 I told you that Jew was no good.

R.J. BROWN  
 You really think a jury is gonna  
 take the word of a black man who's  
 been in and out of jail his whole  
 life over a white, upstanding  
 member of the community?

BOOTS ROGERS  
*Upstanding???* Did you hear what  
 Conley said? Frank is a danger to  
 every girl in the city of Atlanta.  
 We can't just stand here and do  
 nothing because you don't like the  
 skin color of the witness!

R.J. BROWN  
 You calling *me* a racist? That's  
 rich, Boots. Real rich.

DOBBS  
 Alright, that's enough. Conley went  
 on record? Full statement?

BOOTS ROGERS  
 Signed and sealed.

Dobbs thinks on this a moment -- then:

DOBBS  
 Arrest Leo Frank. Mary Phagan's  
 funeral is later today. Let's go  
 tell her mother we got the son of a  
 bitch who did it.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

MOURNERS STREAM into the small Baptist church. Britt Craig  
SPOTS Dobbs and Boots Rogers. He quickly JOINS them.

BRITT CRAIG  
 Captain! It's a fine surprise to  
 see you here this fine morning.

DOBBS  
 It's a surprise that you're *sober*.

BRITT CRAIG  
 A daughter of Atlanta is dead. Her  
 story needs to be told.

BOOTS ROGERS  
With your byline, no doubt.

BRITT CRAIG  
It's a free country. Any update on  
the suspects, Captain?

DOBBS  
That's none of your business.

BRITT CRAIG  
It's the people's business. This is  
the work of a mad man. All of  
Atlanta is terrified.

Dobbs STOPS walking -- GETS in Britt Craig's face.

DOBBS  
Because you're tellin' them to be  
afraid. And if you ever print a  
piece of police business without my  
say-so, I'll pay you a special  
visit, off the record.

Britt Craig SWALLOWS hard. Dobbs and Boots Rogers head toward  
the church. Boots Rogers SPOTS something.

BOOTS ROGERS  
I forgot somethin'. I'll catch up  
with you inside.

DOBBS  
Leavin' the dirty work to me?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Something like that.

Boots Rogers heads back to the car. Dobbs enters the church.

INT. SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

MOURNERS have packed the church to say goodbye to the SMALL  
COFFIN on the alter. Fannie and John are comforted by PASTOR  
STEVENS, 36, who uses religion for his own personal benefit.

PASTOR STEVENS  
All of Georgia weeps for Mary, but  
she is with her Heavenly Father  
now. She knows no pain, only mercy.

The words are of no comfort. Dobbs joins them.

DOBBS  
Mrs. Coleman? Can I have a moment?

PASTOR STEVENS  
Have you found the man who did this  
to our beloved Mary?

DOBBS  
I'd rather talk to Mrs. Coleman  
alone, Pastor.

Dobbs isn't budging. Neither is Pastor Stevens. Then:

PASTOR STEVENS  
Don't be a stranger on Sundays,  
Captain. We're good people here.

Pastor Stevens moves on. Dobbs takes a breath, not sure how  
to deliver this news.

DOBBS  
Mrs. Coleman, I promised you we'd  
catch Mary's killer. I'm here to  
tell you we're arresting him.

FANNIE  
Today?

Boots Rogers JOINS them.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Within the hour we'll have the son  
of a bitch.

FANNIE  
Who--who is it?

That's when GEORGE EPPS, 15, pops over. He's an angry kid  
with a tear streaked face.

GEORGE  
*Mrs. Coleman...*

Fannie takes one look at his face and HUGS George. He SOBS in  
the comfort of her arms.

FANNIE  
I know. *I know...*  
(still holding him, to  
Dobbs/Boots Rogers)  
Who did this to my baby?

Dobbs and Boots Rogers exchange a glance. *Do they really want  
to say in front of a child?* Then:

DOBBS  
Her boss. Leo Frank.

FANNIE  
The Jew?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Yes, ma'am. He's got a history.

FANNIE  
I don't understand.

DOBBS  
It seems Mr. Frank likes girls...  
*young ones.*

GEORGE  
She was afraid of him.

That gets Dobbs and Boots Rogers' attention.

DOBBS  
What did you say, son?

George breaks out of Fannie's embrace -- WIPES his eyes -- his sadness giving way to rage.

GEORGE  
Mary *hated* him. He was always making passes at her!

DOBBS  
She told you this?

GEORGE  
Of course she did! Mary told me everything. That Jew wouldn't leave her alone. Always staring at her, asking her to stay late, watching her change--

BOOTS ROGERS  
-This is very serious, son. You sure about all this--

Boots Rogers tries to put his hand on George's shoulder, but George JERKS away.

GEORGE  
-You calling me a liar? I know a dirty kike when I see one.

DOBBS  
Calm down, kid--

GEORGE

-Leo Frank strangled Mary on a shitty cellar floor. What are you doin' talking to me?? Arrest him!!!

George STORMS off. Everyone in the church heard what George said. WHISPERS run rampant. Pastor Stevens takes to the pulpit. He RAISES his hands. Everyone QUIETS.

PASTOR STEVENS

*Citizens of Atlanta. Let us pray.  
We pray to the Heavenly Father to  
not hold hatred in our hearts over  
the murder of little Mary...*

EXT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - SAME

SQUAD CARS SKID to a stop. A team of OFFICERS, led by Brown and Anderson, RACE to the entrance with their GUNS DRAWN.

PASTOR STEVENS (V.O.)

*We pray for the detectives of the  
city of Atlanta...*

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - SAME

The door gets KICKED open. FACTORY WORKERS FREEZE upon seeing the POLICE FLOOD in. Brown and Anderson lead their team through the maze of a factory.

PASTOR STEVENS (V.O.)

*We pray they bring the wretch who  
committed this act to justice and  
punish them to the fullest extent  
of the law...*

Brown and Anderson make their way up the staircase. Brown puts his FINGER TO HIS LIPS to silence a YOUNG WORKER as they turn down a...

LONG HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They keep close to the wall -- moving fast...

PASTOR STEVENS (V.O.)

*But even that would be too good for  
the imp of Satan who committed this  
crime...*

They reach Leo Frank's office door. It's closed. Brown looks to Anderson -- HOLDS UP his hand. *On 3. 1, 2, 3...*

Anderson KICKS the door open.

INT. SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH - SAME

Pastor Stevens continues his fiery sermon.

PASTOR STEVENS

*Oh God, I cannot see how even the devil himself could do such a thing. To one of us. To a child. To little Mary. This is the work of an outsider!*

INT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - SAME

Leo's in handcuffs, *in disbelief*, as he's led downstairs -- PARADED in front of his EMPLOYEES.

PASTOR STEVENS (V.O.)

*He is other. He is ruthless. He will come in clothes of the sheep. He will pretend to pay his bills before they're due, tip his hat to you on Sunday, work hard to help his neighbors...*

EXT. NATIONAL PENCIL FACTORY - SAME

A CROWD has gathered to see Leo put in the back of the SQUAD CAR. *Leo's in shock*. He doesn't resist.

PASTOR STEVENS (V.O.)

*This is all so he can get close, make you feel safe. That's when he strikes. Like the snake in the Garden of Eden...*

Brown and Anderson DRIVE Leo away.

EXT. ATLANTA STREETS - SAME

The SQUAD CAR carrying Leo SPEEDS through the streets, gathering attention of the citizens of Atlanta. They begin to follow after the SQUAD CAR.

PASTOR STEVENS (V.O.)

*We will find this imposter. We will root him out and string him up!*

EXT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - DAY

An ANGRY MOB has gathered. NEWS-BULBS FLASH as Brown and Anderson HAUL Leo out of the SQUAD CAR and up the stairs. Britt Craig is among them, taking careful notes.

PASTOR STEVENS (V.O.)

*We will show the people of Atlanta  
that we will not tolerate these  
animals who seek to rape and  
pillage the most fragile among us!  
So says the scripture!!!*

Reporters SHOUT questions at Leo. *Why did you kill Mary? Are you a pedophile? How many other girls have you attacked?*

Leo turns to address them.

LEO

I am not guilty. Such an atrocious crime has never entered my mind. I am a man of good character. I have a wife. I am a home-loving and God fearing man. It is *useless* to detain me.

More NEWS-BULBS FLASH! Brown and Anderson PUSH Leo inside. Britt Craig finishes his notes and RUNS OFF down the street.

EXT. CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

Everyone has gathered around the LITTLE WHITE COFFIN next to an OPEN GRAVE. Fannie approaches with some flowers in her hand -- EYES that hole in the ground.

FANNIE

*It's too big a hole to put you in.  
It's so big... you were so small...*

Fannie lays the FLOWERS on the coffin.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - LEO'S CELL - AFTERNOON

Leo sits in his cell, WRINGING his hands. Maybe for the first time in his life, he doesn't have the first clue what to do.

INT. RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

It's a fancy joint with LINEN TABLE CLOTHES and CRYSTAL WATER GLASSES. NATHANIEL HARRIS, 57, a pompous old man, and HUGH DORSEY, 41, handsome and ambitious, enjoy politics and food.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
Your ambitions are too high.

HUGH DORSEY  
Said the man who was elected to Georgia's House of Representatives when he was only 36. I'm a good five years behind you, Your Honor.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
Not everyone can be me.  
(Hugh LAUGHS)  
You're doing good work as the Solicitor General. Why the hell do you wanna go and give that up for the thankless task of being governor?

HUGH DORSEY  
I'd like to be in the room where it happens.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
Well, John Slaton isn't going anywhere. He's in his second term, everyone loves him, and he's cleaning up the state. You don't have the political capital to take him on.

HUGH DORSEY  
I might with an endorsement from the most respected judge this side of the Mississippi.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
You do flatter me so.  
(a beat, then:)  
Go on.

HUGH DORSEY  
Slaton is weak. He's weak on crime, immigration. The factories in Atlanta are dangerous. Kids are working for peanuts when they're getting paid at all--

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
-No one knows you, son. Slaton is a household name. How are you going to compete with that?

That's when FRANK HOOPER, 33, a torpedo of an assistant, HURRIES over to their tables.

FRANK HOOPER  
Hugh, you got a minute?

HUGH DORSEY  
(*annoyed*)  
Not unless Atlanta is on fire  
again.

FRANK HOOPER  
Captain Dobbs called. They just  
arrested Leo Frank for the murder  
of Mary Phagan.

Nathaniel RAISES an eyebrow -- takes another bite of steak.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
Lunch is on me.

INT. STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICES - AFTERNOON

Busy as a beehive. Hugh Dorsey weaves his way through the  
chaos with Frank Hooper right on his heels.

HUGH DORSEY  
Does anybody have it yet?

FRANK HOOPER  
You kidding? Nobody wants it.

HUGH DORSEY  
What? *Why not??*

A VOICE BOOMS over the noise of the office.

THOMAS FELDER (O.S.)  
Hugh?

Hugh turns to see his boss, THOMAS FELDER, 65, standing in  
the doorway to his office. *Time to talk...*

INT. THOMAS FELDER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Thomas sits behind his desk. Hugh stays standing.

THOMAS FELDER  
You don't want this one, Hugh. It's  
a loser. A big one.

HUGH DORSEY  
A little girl is dead. That's a big  
deal in my book.

THOMAS FELDER

The eye-witness, Jim Conley, is black, confessed to helping Frank move the body. And he's done time.

HUGH DORSEY

How much?

THOMAS FELDER

He's spent more days as a guest of the State of Georgia than not. And Leo Frank is an upstanding member--

HUGH DORSEY

-Of the Jewish Community. *Fuck.*  
(a beat, then:)  
I don't care. I want it.

THOMAS FELDER

You sure?

HUGH DORSEY

Ain't no such thing as a perfect witness. Jim Conley's race isn't on trial here and neither is Frank's religion. This here is a murder trial. A young girl was savagely raped, beaten, and strangled. I'm not letting a murderer go free just because the witness doesn't look like my Aunt Ester.

THOMAS FELDER

Sounds like you've already written your opening statement.

HUGH DORSEY

I'm fairly sure I'm right about this.

THOMAS FELDER

Either way, it's your funeral.

Hugh heads to the door -- turns back.

HUGH DORSEY

Who's Frank's lawyer, anyway?

INT. REUBEN ARNOLD'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

REUBEN ARNOLD, 44, equal parts handsome, charming, and smart, MOANS as he fucks his wife, FRANCES, 35. She GRIPS his SWEATY BODY to her as their CLIMAX builds...

FRANCES

*That's my spot, that's my spot...*

Reuben's rhythm *increases* -- nearly POUNDING into her, but Frances likes it. They cum together... LOUDLY. Reuben ROLLS OFF her as their son CRIES from another room.

Frances LIGHTS a CIGARETTE -- SMIRKS at her husband.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

It's your fault he's up, you know.  
You're too loud.

REUBEN

Yeah, like you're some goddamned church mouse.

(PUFFS off her cigarette)

I got him.

He HANDS her back her cig and goes off into the other room. The phone RINGS. Frances takes another DRAG and answers.

FRANCES

(into phone)

It's a little late, so this better be good.

As Frances listens, something SHIFTS in her face. Whatever annoyance she was feeling is gone. She COVERS the receiver...

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Reuben, Leo Frank is on the phone.

REUBEN (O.S.)

Who?

FRANCES

(*sassy*)

Oh just that man they arrested for murdering that girl down at the pencil factory.

Reuben comes back into the room, still butt ass naked, unsure he heard his wife correctly.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Should I tell him to call back?

Reuben takes the phone from her. A beat, then:

REUBEN

(into phone)

This is Reuben Arnold.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Now dressed in a suit, Reuben is escorted to Leo's cell by a PRISON GUARD. He UNLOCKS the cell. Reuben EYES Leo -- *scared, tired, small...*

REUBEN

Mr. Frank?

Leo looks up -- BLINKS away his tear filled eyes.

LEO

Mr. Arnold, won't you come in?

Reuben enters...

LEO'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

The PRISON GUARD LOCKS him in -- walks off. *Great.*

Reuben turns back to Leo, who's now on his feet. He OFFERS his hand. Reuben SHAKES it without hesitation.

LEO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry to be meeting you under such unsavory circumstances. I can't even offer you tea.

REUBEN

I'm fine. Shall we?

He GESTURES for Leo to sit on the bed. Reuben finds a chair -- PULLS OUT a note pad and pencil to take notes.

REUBEN (CONT'D)

Everyone treating you right?

LEO

So far. They think I did this.

REUBEN

Did you?

LEO

How can you ask me that? You're supposed to be my lawyer. Objective at the very least.

REUBEN

That's not how this works.

LEO  
I'm sorry for my naiveté,  
Counselor, but I've never been  
accused of murder before.

REUBEN  
Rape *and* murder. Mary Phagan was  
raped *and* murdered.

LEO  
Yes... Yes, I heard.

A beat. Then:

REUBEN  
Look, Mr. Frank, I can't represent  
you unless I have all the facts. I  
don't like surprises.

LEO  
You and me both.

REUBEN  
I just need the truth.

LEO  
No one cares about the truth. My  
being in this cell is proof enough  
of that.

REUBEN  
I've represented guilty people  
before. It won't change the quality  
of my defense, if that's what  
you're worried about.

LEO  
Why is that?

REUBEN  
Besides it being unethical, I  
believe that everyone is entitled  
to a robust defense.

LEO  
Even people who rape *and* murder  
little girls?

REUBEN  
Especially them.

LEO  
Oh? And why is that?

REUBEN

It's a crime that inflames the public. Without due process, there's no telling what the people of Atlanta would do to you.

LEO

So you're the only thing standing between me and an angry mob? You think they want to lynch me?

REUBEN

This is Atlanta. And you're a Jewish man from the North accused of savagely murdering a child. Some people won't care whether you did it or not. You're not one of us. You're one of them. People here have been suffering ever since the war and then the Yankees come galloping into town--

LEO

-I did not--

REUBEN

-You already won the war, Mr. Frank. And then you come down here with your fancy clothes, your fancy way of talkin', and your fancy diploma. And I haven't even gotten to the money yet. You make a good living, don't you, Mr. Frank?

LEO

I'm comfortable.

REUBEN

I'll bet you are.

LEO

I don't see what any of this has to do with whether or not I murdered Mary Phagan.

REUBEN

Mr. Frank, it has everything to do with it. These people are going to hate your fucking guts before you ever step foot in that courtroom. So when I ask if you did it or not, I'm not trying to denigrate your good name, sir. I'm trying to save you from a noose around your neck.

(MORE)

REUBEN (CONT'D)

So... did you murder the girl, or not?

A beat. Then:

LEO

No. I didn't.

REUBEN

See, that wasn't so hard.

LEO

It is, though.

(Reuben looks at him)

I woke up yesterday being a boss people respected, a son who doted on his mother, a husband who attended synagogue with his wife every Shabbat without fail. I went from that to being some kind of monster who was capable of... I know you're not trying to denigrate my good name, but I'm still me. And I'm never going to get used to someone asking me if I am a murderer.

Leo takes a deep breath to keep from crying. Reuben CLOSES his notebook.

REUBEN

I need you to do me a favor: Don't refer to yourself in the past tense. People *respect* you, you *dote* on your mother, you *attend* synagogue. Can you do that for me?

(Leo NODS)

Guard!

Reuben gets up.

LEO

So you'll take me on as a client?

REUBEN

You've gotten yourself into a mess of trouble, Mr. Frank. I'll take ya on, but I'm gonna need some help.

LEO

From who?

REUBEN

You let me worry about that.  
Retainer is \$100. See that the  
money gets to my office by the end  
of the week.

The PRISON GUARD comes and UNLOCKS the cell door. Before  
Reuben leaves...

LEO

We make those, you know?  
(off Reuben's look)  
Your pencil.

Reuben sees the PENCIL sticking out of his note pad.

LEO (CONT'D)

Mary worked in the metal room. She  
put on those grips that fasten the  
eraser to the wood. *Funny*. Maybe  
her little fingers touched that  
very one.

*Creeped out*, Reuben backs out of the cell. The PRISON GUARD  
shuts the cell door and LOCKS Leo inside again.

LEO (CONT'D)

I'll be seeing you, counselor.

INT. LUTHER ROSSER'S OFFICE - LOBBY - DAY

Reuben walks into the relatively calm office. SARA, 24, a  
sassy secretary, SPOTS him.

SARA

Oh no. *No, no, no, no, no.*

REUBEN

*What???*

SARA

Don't you "what" me. You can turn  
right back around and go out the  
way you came in.

REUBEN

Is he in?

SARA

Yes. And I don't need you gettin'  
his blood pressure up, so--

That's when a BOOMING VOICE comes from an office.

REUBEN  
Sounds like it's already up.

SARA  
Well if it's all the same to you--

That's when LUTHER ROSSER, 56, tall, fat, bald, thinks he  
god's gift to the world -- THROWS OPEN HIS DOOR...

LUTHER  
*What is all the goddamned racket?!!*  
(SPOTS Reuben)  
I knew I smelled trash.

REUBEN  
Good to see you, too, Luther.

INT. LUTHER ROSSER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Luther shuts the door, *annoyed*.

LUTHER  
Make it quick.

REUBEN  
Why don't we take a walk? We can  
grab a drink.

LUTHER  
It's 10 in the morning.

REUBEN  
Fine. *Two drinks*.

LUTHER  
Dr. McNaughton is in prison because  
of you. They're going to hang him.

REUBEN  
Then he shouldn't have poisoned  
Mattie's husband with arsenic.

LUTHER  
He was in love with her. It was a  
crime of passion.

REUBEN  
That argument didn't work in front  
of a jury 6 months ago and it  
doesn't hold water now. You like  
loser cases, Luther.

LUTHER  
The door's right behind you.

REUBEN  
I got one for you.

LUTHER  
My door works just fine. Get the hell out.

REUBEN  
It's a big, fat juicy case, Luther.

LUTHER  
I don't care.

REUBEN  
We'd finally get to work together.

LUTHER  
I have an ulcer already, thanks.

REUBEN  
It's gonna be front page news.

LUTHER  
That handle works best when you turn it to the left.

REUBEN  
It's Leo Frank, Luther.

That gets his attention.

LUTHER  
No shit. They arrested him?

REUBEN  
Yesterday.

He TOSSES down a paper announcing Leo Frank's arrest. Luther SCANS it while Reuben talks.

REUBEN (CONT'D)  
I took him on, but I can't do it on my own. You're good with juries. Almost had me with Dr. McNaughton. Know why you lost?

LUTHER  
You inflamed the jury with lies about an affair that never took place?

REUBEN  
He was guilty.

LUTHER  
And Leo Frank isn't?

REUBEN  
I didn't say that.

LUTHER  
So he did it?

REUBEN  
Didn't say that either.

LUTHER  
Do me a favor and tell me what the  
fuck you are saying.

Reuben goes to the door -- URNS the handle...

REUBEN  
Look at that. It really does work  
when you turn it to the left.

He WINKS at Luther and leaves. Luther goes back to reading  
the article about the arrest of Leo Frank.

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - DAY

The BELL RINGS. Lucille RUSHES to answer it, finding RACHEL  
FRANK, 54, a solemn, determined woman with her suitcase.  
Lucille THROWS her arms around her, BURSTING into tears.

LUCILLE  
Mrs. Frank...

Rachel HOLDS her tightly -- KISSES her head.

EXT. ATLANTA STREETS - DAY

It's a busy day. Everyone goes about their business, paying  
little attention to Lucille and Rachel Frank. Lucille does  
her best to hold it together.

LUCILLE  
They took him from work. They just  
took him. Leo told them everything  
he knew and they didn't care.

RACHEL FRANK

He will come home. He will. This is all a misunderstanding.

LUCILLE

They put pictures in the paper of that little girl... Her body was... How could they think Leo is capable of doing such a thing?

(SOBBING)

We never should've come here.

Rachel dries Lucille's tears with a handkerchief.

RACHEL FRANK

My mother told me when I was a young girl, "*Never let them see you sweat, never let them see you cry.*" He needs you to be strong now. For however long this lasts, you have to be strong.

They continue on their way when George Epps -- *riding on a trolley* -- SPOTS them. He HOPS off and approaches them.

GEORGE

Y'all better get out of here.

They ignore him, but George BLOCKS their path.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

*What?* Jews can't hear no more? You all ain't welcome here.

LUCILLE

We don't want any trouble.

GEORGE

*Oh, I'm sorry.* Am I disturbin' you? My apologies, ma'am.

LUCILLE

If you'll excuse us...

Again, George BLOCKS them.

GEORGE

You going to visit him?

RACHEL FRANK

That is none of *your* business.

George turns his venom toward Rachel -- *almost* smiling.

GEORGE

And who are you? *The mother?*

RACHEL FRANK

Son, I think it's time you went home.

GEORGE

(SNEERS)

You don't tell me what to do. Not after you birthed that baby killing kike!

George SPITS in Rachel's face -- STORMS OFF. Everyone STOPS and STARES at them. Now it's Lucille's turn to WIPE Rachel's face with that very same handkerchief.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - LEO'S CELL - DAY

Rachel HUGS her son as Lucille stands off to the side, *forgotten*. Rachel releases him, holds his face in her hands.

RACHEL FRANK

Are they treating you well? How's the food? I can cook you something.

LEO

That would be wonderful. I miss your cooking.

That *pains* Lucille, but she hides it.

RACHEL FRANK

Have you retained a lawyer?

LEO

Yes. One of the best in the state. I do need you to do me a favor.

RACHEL FRANK

Anything.

LEO

Can you get his retainer to him?

RACHEL FRANK

Of course. How much is it?

LEO

\$100.

RACHEL FRANK

\$100?? Leo, you can't afford that.

LEO  
We have to.

RACHEL FRANK  
There are other lawyers. Surely  
Lucille's family must know someone.

LEO  
We tried that.

RACHEL FRANK  
Then what is the problem? Tell me.  
Tell me what it is.

LEO  
I don't want you worrying about  
this.

RACHEL FRANK  
Leo, I'm not having some lawyer  
take advantage of you just because  
of your current situation--

LUCILLE  
-Everyone turned us down.

That stops Rachel. She turns Lucille, then back to Leo.

RACHEL FRANK  
Is that true?

LEO  
The factory has agreed to keep  
paying my salary for the time being  
and Lucille can get a job. Reuben  
Arnold wins cases. And more than  
that, I trust him.

RACHEL FRANK  
I see. Well, I look forward to  
meeting him. Now, how is this  
mattress?

She goes about fussing with the pillows and mattress. Leo  
SHRUGS at Lucille. *What are you gonna do?*

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Pastor Stevens and George walk among rows of patient's beds,  
looking for someone. They find WILLIAM SIMMONS, 33, handsome  
and charming as all giddy-up, recovering from a broken leg.

PASTOR STEVENS  
William, how ya feelin'?

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
Like I got hit by a car.

PASTOR STEVENS  
It's dangerous out there. You seen  
this yet?

He hands William the paper. It's all about Leo Frank. William  
looks it over...

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
It's not bad enough those Yankee  
Jews come down from the North and  
take our jobs. They gotta kill our  
little girls too, huh?

PASTOR STEVENS  
I was talking to George here. We  
were thinking the citizens of  
Atlanta could use a voice in this  
matter. Someone with a good  
Christian background.

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
Not sure I'm your man for that. Got  
fired from the Church.

PASTOR STEVENS  
Inefficiency, was it?

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
Somethin' like that, *yeah*.

PASTOR STEVENS  
William, I don't care what anyone  
else says. I always liked you and  
your sermons. You had a way of  
connecting to people that's...  
*special*. I think this here cause  
could show everyone just how  
*effective* you really can be.

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
My leg is broke, Pastor.

*All friendly*, Pastor Stevens PATS George on the back.

PASTOR STEVENS  
That's why I brought along young  
George here. Figured you two could  
talk. Work some things out.

GEORGE  
I can be mighty helpful.

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
That a fact?

GEORGE  
Yes, sir. Mary was my friend.

PASTOR STEVENS  
Well, then. I'll leave you two to  
it. Good seeing you, William.

Pastor Stevens leaves. William looks over the paper, then:

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
You got many friends, George?

GEORGE  
(SMILING)  
Yes, sir. Yes, sir, I do.

INT. REUBEN ARNOLD'S OFFICE - DAY

Reuben's going over paperwork when there's a KNOCK at his door. He looks up to see Lucille and Rachel Frank standing there. Ruben STANDS -- goes to them.

REUBEN  
Mrs. Frank and, Mrs.--

RACHEL FRANK  
-Rachel Frank. I'm Leo's mother. I want to know what your plan is for saving my son's life... if you have one, that is.

REUBEN  
Would you like to take a seat?

RACHEL FRANK  
I'm fine standing.

REUBEN  
*Right.* Well, this case should never make it to trial--

RACHEL FRANK  
-Then Leo can come home. When?

REUBEN  
-It shouldn't make it to trial due to an extreme lack of evidence.  
(MORE)

REUBEN (CONT'D)

But the state's attorney, Tom Felder, wants to make an example out of your husband. Add to it, Tom's got an ambitious Solicitor General in his office, Hugh Dorsey, who wants to make a run at the Governorship in two years if the rumors are true.

RACHEL FRANK

What does any of that have to do with my son?

REUBEN

It means that some very powerful people have a vested interest in seeing Mary Phagan's murderer brought to justice.

RACHEL FRANK

My son did not--

REUBEN

-I know. I'm just saying we have our work cut out for us.

RACHEL FRANK

What are you planning to do?

REUBEN

For starters--

That's when Luther Rosser walks into the office. Reuben BEAMS upon seeing him -- puts his arm around Luther.

REUBEN (CONT'D)

Speak of the devil. This is my co-counsel. Luther Rosser meet Leo Frank's mother, Rachel, and his wife, Lucille.

Luther looks like he might explode. He's got no choice but to SHAKE the women's hands.

LUTHER

Very sorry, ma'am.

RACHEL FRANK

Will you really help us? This one looks a little young.

REUBEN

I take that as a compliment, Mrs. Frank.

RACHEL FRANK

Will you?

Now Luther's really fucking stuck.

LUTHER

It would be my pleasure, ma'am.

LATER

Rachel and Lucille have left. Reuben CLOSES the door behind them -- turns to a FUMING Luther.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Did you plan on them being here when I arrived?

REUBEN

That was just blind luck, Luther. And we're going to need more of it. Hugh Dorsey is going to come at us with everything he's got.

LUTHER

This is a sensitive situation for me, Reuben.

REUBEN

Because I walloped your ass during the McNaughton trial? You're going to have to get over that, Luther.

LUTHER

Hugh Dorsey's wife, Adair, has a sister, Sarah--

REUBEN

(*realizing*)

-who's married to your son. Well, *shit*, Luther. I'm sorry for making things awkward for you at Thanksgiving dinner, but if I have to worry about every Tom, Dick, and Harry with a forth degree connection to this case that makes someone at home *uncomfortable*, we might as well close up shop right now. Now are you with me or not?

Luther HUFFS -- TOSSES down his coat.

LUTHER

Tell me this: if Leo Frank didn't murder Mary Phagan, who did?

INT. HUGH DORSEY'S OFFICE - DAY

STAFF comes in and out of the office freely as Hugh goes over the case file with his co-counsel, Frank Hooper.

HUGH DORSEY

Only one person is responsible for the murder of Mary Phagan. That man is Leo Frank.

FRANK HOOPER

Reuben Arnold and Luther Rosser will point to a number of other potential suspects--

HUGH DORSEY

-I don't care if they deputize the corpse of Billy the Kid. We keep it clean and simple.

FRANK HOOPER

And how's that?

HUGH DORSEY

Never acknowledge another suspect or alternate theory. With one voice, we will repeat over and over again the fact that Leo Frank murdered Mary. The more we say it--

FRANK HOOPER

-The more people will remember it.

HUGH DORSEY

And it will become truth through osmosis.

FRANK HOOPER

We're going to need more than that.

HUGH DORSEY

I have more.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - LEO'S CELL - DAY

Reuben Arnold and Luther Rosser prep Leo Frank.

LUTHER

Mr. Frank, why didn't you answer the phone when the night watch, Newt Lee, called you after discovering Mary's body?

LEO  
He didn't call.

REUBEN  
*No, no, no...*

LEO  
He didn't.

REUBEN  
Leo, you can't go on the stand and point fingers at everyone.

LEO  
What do you want me to do? Lie?

	REUBEN		LUTHER
No.		Yes.	

REUBEN  
We don't need you to lie. Just don't blame everyone else in the room. Ask him again, Luther.

LUTHER  
Why didn't you answer the phone, Mr. Frank?

Leo thinks on that for a moment, then:

LEO  
I'm a heavy sleeper.

INT. HUGH DORSEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Hugh Dorsey reads over a file.

HUGH DORSEY  
What's all this about shit in the elevator shaft?

FRANK HOOPER  
Detectives found a fresh pile down on the basement floor.

HUGH DORSEY  
Under the elevator?

FRANK HOOPER  
Yeah.

HUGH DORSEY

Jim Conley says Leo Frank killed Mary Phagan around noon and he helped Leo take the body down to the basement in the elevator.

FRANK HOOPER

That's what he said.

HUGH DORSEY

So it stands to reason whoever defecated in the elevator shaft did it after Mary's body was moved.

FRANK HOOPER

Yeah, so?

Hugh picks up a new file.

HUGH DORSEY

Is this the doctor's timeline?

FRANK HOOPER

Says she was killed at night.

HUGH DORSEY

*"Victim had cabbage for lunch, which was found in her stomach to be partially digested, indicating she was killed at night. If she was killed during the day, the cabbage wouldn't have been digested at all as the body ceases to produce stomach acid once it is deceased."*

Hugh Dorsey SLAMS his hand down on the table.

FRANK HOOPER

Problem?

HUGH DORSEY

So Leo kills Mary, panics, begs/threatens Jim for help. They take her down to the basement and go back upstairs in the elevator.

FRANK HOOPER

Yeah? So?

HUGH DORSEY

So then one of them went back down to the basement using the ladder to take a shit in the elevator shaft?

(MORE)

HUGH DORSEY (CONT'D)

Then broke the back basement door  
and left through the alley? Leo  
could walk right out the front  
door.

FRANK HOOPER

So could Jim Conley.

HUGH DORSEY

But Mary died at night, not noon.  
Where the hell was she from time  
she was last seen alive in Leo  
Frank's office for those 7 or 8  
hours until the doctor says she  
died?

FRANK HOOPER

Maybe Leo Frank and Jim Conley held  
Mary captive before killing her.

HUGH DORSEY

That's not Conley's story and if it  
turns out Leo Frank has any kind of  
alibi, our star witness is going to  
look like a goddamned liar.

FRANK HOOPER

What do you want to do?

HUGH DORSEY

(a beat, then:)

Don't bring up the cabbage leaves.  
If we don't, maybe they won't.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - LEO'S CELL - DAY

Reuben CLOSES a similar file, smiling.

REUBEN

Cabbage is my new favorite food.  
Yours too.

LEO

I don't understand.

REUBEN

Leo, what time did you leave the  
Pencil Factory that night.

LEO

About 6. I came home and had dinner  
with my wife and her father.

REUBEN  
Lucille's father was with you?

LEO  
Emil, yes.

LUTHER  
And he'll testify on your behalf?

LEO  
Of course he will, but what does that have to do with cabbage?

REUBEN  
Everything. Emil Selig is a very well respected member of Atlanta society. Who else will testify for you, Leo?

LEO  
Lucille has been compiling a list. We have around 200 names.

A beat, then:

REUBEN  
You have 200 people who will testify to your character?

LEO  
Is that too many?

Reuben turns to Luther.

REUBEN  
You tell Hugh Dorsey he can eat in the outhouse next time he comes over for dinner.  
(to Leo)  
I'd like all 200 of those names.

INT. HUGH DORSEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Hugh stares out the window, silent and beyond pissed.

FRANK HOOPER  
So he told the police what they wanted to hear. The Detectives had their sights on Leo Frank and Conley confirmed their suspicions. If the roles were reversed and I was that scared, I'd probably do the same thing.

Hugh Dorsey CLOSES his eyes -- seeing his future political career disappearing before him.

HUGH DORSEY

I want you to have a talk with Boots Rogers. He's the one that took Jim's statement.

FRANK HOOPER

All right.

HUGH DORSEY

Leo Frank murdered Mary Phagan.

FRANK HOOPER

Saying it won't make it so.

Hugh Dorsey turns to him.

HUGH DORSEY

That's not necessarily true.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - LEO'S CELL - DAY

Reuben and Luther pack up their stuff. Leo's not sure what to make of all this.

LEO

You think we can win?

REUBEN

Are you kidding? They have no case. Their evidence actually *proves* your innocence. The lawsuit you'll be able to file against the Atlanta Police will be--

LEO

-I just want to go home.

REUBEN

You will. And soon.

They're about to leave. Leo stops them with...

LEO

You believe me now?

REUBEN

I told you none of that matters. I'd be defending you either way. Try to get some sleep. I want you at your fighting weight tomorrow.

Leo NODS -- trying to stay strong. Reuben and Luther leave.

EXT. ATLANTA COURTHOUSE - DAY

A large CROWD has gathered. REPORTERS SNAP pictures and interview those who've come to witness the day's event. A CAR arrives. Reuben and Luther get out -- followed by Leo Frank.

JEERS come from the crowd as REPORTERS shout questions.

BRITT CRAIG

Mr. Frank, why did you murder Mary?  
Was it for the sex? The money? Some  
sort of religious sacrifice?

Leo stares at him, *dumfounded*, as he's pulled along.

INT. ATLANTA COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

It's 90 degrees and there's not an empty seat in the house. Everyone FANS themselves with the latest addition of the Atlanta Constitution. Hugh Dorsey sits at the prosecution table with Frank Hooper, trying to keep his cool.

Leo enters, flanked by his counsel. Everyone gets very, very quiet as they make their way to the defense table. Leo hears them whispering, "*That's him. That's the Jew that murdered little Mary Phagan.*" Leo sits at the defense table. Lucille and Rachel sit in the gallery just behind him.

JUDGE LEONARD ROAN, 63, a man of strict moral character, enters. Everyone RISES and then SITS as he does. Leo GLANCES at the jury, but not one of them dares to look at him.

JUDGE ROAN

I see we have a number of guests  
this morning. That's fine, but this  
is an important case and we will  
keep order in my courtroom, or I  
will clear it at once. Now, are we  
ready to begin?

Reuben and Hugh Dorsey stand.

REUBEN  
Yes, sir.

HUGH DORSEY  
Yes, your Honor.

JUDGE ROAN

Mr. Dorsey, you're up.

Reuben takes his seat as Hugh Dorsey faces the jury. This is the most important moment of his career.

HUGH DORSEY

As His Honor just said, this is an important case. It's important to society, to the defendant, to me, and to Mary Phagan's family. But it isn't just important. It is extraordinary as a crime -- a most heinous crime, a crime of the demonic. Your job is to listen to all the faces and without prejudice against any man, black or white, Jew or Gentile, deliver a verdict of guilt upon Leo Frank for the murder of Mary Phagan. There have been some rumblings in the press -- small ones, because, *as you know*, we've been doing a wonderful job in preparation of this case -- but there have been small rumblings that this case is somehow tinged with prejudice. Now, I can tell you I am the least prejudice person I know. I can also tell you here and now that the race from which the defendant comes is every bit as good as our race. Just as good, just as good. But that doesn't mean he's innocent, because he isn't. You're going to hear many facts. Many, many facts. Some are more certain than others and that's O.K. This isn't mathematics. There's a gray area. You can be sure of Leo Frank's guilt based on *moral certainty* and you will still be fulfilling your oath.

Reuben and Luther are in complete and utter shock as Hugh Dorsey takes his seat. Leo leans into Reuben.

LEO

Did he just say the jury could ignore evidence based on morality?

Reuben gives him an "*I've got this*" NOD. He STANDS, ready to take Hugh Dorsey on with everything he's got.

REUBEN

Your Honor, Gentlemen of the jury, that was quite a speech, but I take great issue with a number of--

That's when a SOUND comes from outside. It's CHANTING that can't quite be made out yet. Then it becomes clear...

MOB (O.S.)  
 Frank is guilty! Guilty! Give us  
 the Jew!!!

EXT. ATLANTA COURTHOUSE - DAY

A MOB has gathered. It's four times the size of the onlookers who were there at the beginning of the day. These are MEN, WOMEN, and even CHILDREN -- SHAKING their fists in the air.

MOB  
 Hang the Jew! Hang him! Kill him!  
 Let him swing!!!

INT. ATLANTA COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Leo tries to hold his head high as the chanting RADIATES through the building. *Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry...*

JUDGE ROAN  
 Let's get those windows closed.

There's a GROAN from the GALLERY. Hugh Dorsey STANDS.

HUGH DORSEY  
 Your Honor, while I understand the commotion outside might be a little distracting for the defendant--

REUBEN  
 -a little??

HUGH DORSEY  
 It is over 90 degrees and, *sadly*, the ventilation in this room leaves much to be desired.

Judge Roan looks out into the crowd. Literally everyone is FANNING themselves.

JUDGE ROAN  
 Mr. Arnold, why don't you go ahead with your opening statement?

REUBEN  
 Your Honor--

JUDGE ROAN  
 -The sooner you start, the sooner we'll be done with it.

Reuben dives on in as if the chanting isn't happening.

REUBEN  
Leo Frank is an innocent man--

MOB (O.S.)  
-Hang that Jew!!!

Leo STARES ahead, trying not to break.

LATER

Hugh Dorsey gently questions Fannie Coleman, Mary's mother.

HUGH DORSEY  
What time did Mary leave your home  
that morning?

FANNIE  
Around 11. We had some breakfast  
and then Mary left to go pick up  
her pay from the factory.

HUGH DORSEY  
And when did you realize something  
was wrong?

FANNIE  
When she didn't come home for  
supper. Mary was such a good girl.  
Her not coming home just wasn't  
like her. My husband and I searched  
for her all night... but we  
couldn't find her.

HUGH DORSEY  
I'm sorry to do this, ma'am, but...  
do you recognize these clothes?

Hugh Dorsey shows Fannie Mary's BLOODY CLOTHES. Fannie breaks  
down and cries upon seeing them.

FANNIE  
That was what Mary was wearing the  
last time I saw her. Those were her  
Easter Sunday clothes.

HUGH DORSEY  
I'm very sorry for your loss.  
(to Judge Roan)  
Nothing further, Your Honor.

Hugh Dorsey takes a seat as Reuben Arnold stands.

REUBEN  
What did Mary have for breakfast?

FANNIE

What?

REUBEN

You said Mary had breakfast before she left. What did she eat?

Fannie looks to Hugh -- almost like she's looking for help. He does nothing but watch her intently.

REUBEN (CONT'D)

Mrs. Coleman?

FANNIE

Cabbage. Mary had cabbage.

LATER

Hugh Dorsey STANDS at the prosecution table.

HUGH DORSEY

The state calls George Epps.  
(nobody moves)  
George Epps??

Still nothing. There's still some CHANTING going on outside. That's when Hugh Dorsey realizes...

HUGH DORSEY (CONT'D)

(quietly, to Frank Hooper)  
Will you go get that boy outside?

Frank Hooper hurries out of the courtroom while Hugh Dorsey tries to hide his embarrassment behind a smile.

EXT. ATLANTA COURTHOUSE - DAY

It may be 90 degrees, but the MOB isn't giving up, not for a second. George is indeed among them, yelling loudly.

GEORGE

String him up!!! String. That. Jew.  
Up!!!

Frank Hooper GRABS George by the back of the neck -- DRAGS him into the courthouse.

INT. ATLANTA COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

All eyes are on George as he walks to the witness stand. He doesn't mind the attention. He's mad and not hiding it. When he reaches the stand, the BAILIFF swears him in.

BAILIFF

You swear to tell the whole truth,  
son?

GEORGE

(SNEERING)

Yeah.

Hugh Dorsey questions him.

HUGH DORSEY

What was your relationship to Mary  
Phagan?

GEORGE

I was her friend. She was sweet on  
me, I guess you could say.

HUGH DORSEY

When was the last time you saw her?

GEORGE

On the trolley. I rode it with her  
to the factory so she could get her  
pay. She was supposed to meet me  
after for ice cream, but she never  
turned up, so I went to a baseball  
game.

HUGH DORSEY

Did Mary ever confide in you about  
her work life? Her boss?

GEORGE

You mean about Leo Frank? Yeah, she  
complained about him all the time.

HUGH DORSEY

What did she say?

Reuben stands.

REUBEN

Objection. Hearsay, Your Honor.

HUGH DORSEY

I'll rephrase. George, how did Mary  
seem to you when she spoke about  
Mr. Frank?

GEORGE

Afraid. Very afraid.

Hugh Dorsey sits. Now it's Reuben's turn with George.

REUBEN  
Very afraid, huh?

GEORGE  
Yes.

REUBEN  
Yes, *sir*.

George doesn't like that one bit.

REUBEN (CONT'D)  
I'm curious, if Mary was so afraid of her boss -- *very afraid, as you said* -- what did you do about it? I mean, this is your girlfriend we are talking about here. She was sweet on you and there she was pouring her heart out and you did exactly what to ease her pain? Did you tell your friends?

GEORGE  
No.

REUBEN  
Your parents?

GEORGE  
No.

REUBEN  
Her parents?

GEORGE  
No.

REUBEN  
Did you confront Mr. Frank?

GEORGE  
No.

REUBEN  
*Really?* I'm shocked by that with you being such a stand-up guy, hollering all kinds of vicious things at Mr. Frank through that window there. It's easy now, sure, but why didn't you defend Mary when she was alive?

GEORGE  
I... I...

REUBEN

Better run on home to your Mama,  
little boy. Leave the heavy lifting  
to the adults.

George FUMES.

LATER

Boots Rogers sits on the stand being questioned by Hugh.

BOOTS ROGERS

Newt Lee was nervous when we  
questioned him, but lots of people  
are when questioned by the police.  
Leo Frank was altogether a  
different situation.

HUGH DORSEY

How so?

BOOTS ROGERS

He was panic stricken. Manic. I've  
never seen someone so terrified in  
all my life.

HUGH DORSEY

Did you take him to the police  
station for questioning?

BOOTS ROGERS

Not at first. We stopped at the  
mortuary.

HUGH DORSEY

Why?

BOOTS ROGERS

I wanted to see the look on his  
face when he saw Mary's body.

HUGH DORSEY

Which was?

BOOTS ROGERS

Stone cold. Like the killer he is.

Hugh Dorsey sits. Luther Rosser stands this time.

LUTHER

Mighty unusual to take a suspect to  
view a body.

BOOTS ROGERS  
I wanted to be sure.

LUTHER  
And Leo Frank's facial expression  
is what assured you of his guilt?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Among other things.

LUTHER  
Such as?

BOOTS ROGERS  
He was actin' weird.

LUTHER  
How?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Well he stripped naked in the  
interrogation room we put him in  
with Newt Lee.

LUTHER  
You did what?

BOOTS ROGERS  
We put Mr. Frank in a room with  
Newt Lee.

LUTHER  
Who was also a suspect?

BOOTS ROGERS  
Yes. We were tryin' to get a  
confession outta one of them.

LUTHER  
Did you?

BOOTS ROGERS  
No.

LUTHER  
You said Mr. Frank removed his  
clothes. Why'd he do that?

BOOTS ROGERS  
To show he didn't have any marks on  
him. That his skin was clean.

LUTHER  
Was it?

BOOTS ROGERS

Yes.

LUTHER

Let me get this straight. You're saying that Mr. Frank -- *an upstanding member of Atlanta society by all accounts* -- acted weird when police unexpectedly took him from his home, showed him the mutilated body of a dead child, and locked him in a room with a man suspected of murdering that child. Is that your testimony?

BOOTS ROGERS

(HUFFING)

Yes.

LUTHER

Hey I might've removed my clothes to get away from you, too.

LAUGHS come from the gallery. Hugh Dorsey stands.

HUGH DORSEY

Objection. Counsel is testifying.

LUTHER

Withdrawn.

JUDGE ROAN

Let the record show. We are in recess until 9am tomorrow.

Judge Roan BANGS his gavel. It's so hot that everyone gets the hell out of there. Rachel and Lucille approach Leo.

LUCILLE

You all right?

LEO

(NODS)

You?

LUCILLE

I just want all this to be over.

LEO

Me too.

Leo takes Lucille's hand. It's as affectionate as they get.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Boots Rogers and George SPOT Leo and Lucille's moment together. Neither of them are happy, having gotten their asses handed to them today. George SNEERS.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Have you talked to William about tonight?

GEORGE  
Yeah. We're ready.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Good. It's time we took back control of the situation.

They GLARE as Leo says goodbye to his wife and mother.

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lucille and Rachel are in their bed clothes, putting away some dishes.

RACHEL FRANK  
That is not a trial. It's a circus.

LUCILLE  
Leo says it's going to be fine. The jury will see there's no real evidence against him.

RACHEL FRANK  
It never should've gotten this far. He never should've moved here.

*Ouch.*

LUCILLE  
My family is from here, Mrs. Frank.

RACHEL FRANK  
And where are they?

LUCILLE  
My father said he'd testify in Leo's defense.

Rachel realizes she's gone too far -- takes pity on the SHAKING daughter-in-law before her.

RACHEL FRANK  
It's not you. I'm just so... how can people behave like that?  
(MORE)

RACHEL FRANK (CONT'D)  
Shouting horrible things at  
strangers.

LUCILLE  
It's a complicated place.

RACHEL FRANK  
Well, the second this is over, the  
two of you are moving up to  
Brooklyn with Rudolph and me.

LUCILLE  
How's he feeling?

RACHEL FRANK  
Better. He wishes he could be here,  
but--

That's when a BRICK comes SAILING through the window. Lucille  
and Rachel JUMP. Then another BRICK and another...

SMASH SMASH SMASH!

EXT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - NIGHT

Lucille and Rachel Frank RUN out of the house to find CROSSES  
BURNING on the lawn. Men clad in BEDSHEETS and HOODS ride  
around on horseback, SHOUTING and FIRING SHOTGUNS.

*Terrified*, Lucille and Rachel HURRY back inside.

INT. REUBEN ARNOLD'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The phone RINGS. Reuben STUMBLES from the bed to answer.

REUBEN  
Hello?

EXT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - NIGHT

FIREMEN are just putting out the crosses when Reuben arrives.  
He RUNS up the steps and goes into...

LEO FRANK'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Reuben finds Lucille and Rachel in tears on the couch as  
they're being interviewed by the POLICE.

POLICE OFFICER  
How many were there?

LUCILLE

15. Maybe 20. I don't know. All I saw were bedsheets and torches.

RACHEL FRANK

What exactly are you doing to catch these men?

POLICE OFFICER

Without descriptions, I'm not sure there's much we can do.

LUCILLE

They were wearing hoods!

The POLICE OFFICER moves along. Reuben approaches them.

REUBEN

I'm so sorry. Are you all right?

LUCILLE

They were carrying torches, so no, I'm not.

REUBEN

Maybe we should relocate you. Move you somewhere safe. A hotel, maybe.

LUCILLE

And then what? Someone recognizes us and we have to move again?

REUBEN

I want you to be safe.

LUCILLE

And I won't be until I'm out of the state of Georgia, but I'm not leaving without my husband. Do something about that, will you?

Lucille storms off.

INT. ATLANTA COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

The SPECTATORS FAN themselves as the heat continues to overwhelm them. Hugh Dorsey STANDS.

HUGH DORSEY

The state calls Jim Conley.

Everyone turns to the back of court. Boots Rogers ESCORTS Jim Conley -- whose hands and feet are BOUND -- to the stand.

HUGH DORSEY (CONT'D)  
Mr. Conley, what position do you  
hold at the National Pencil  
Company?

JIM CONLEY  
I'm a sweeper, sir.

HUGH DORSEY  
Do you do a good job, sir?

JIM CONLEY  
I show up on time, do my job, don't  
cause any trouble.

HUGH DORSEY  
Ever been in trouble with the law?

JIM CONLEY  
No, sir. I keep to myself, mostly.

HUGH DORSEY  
What happened on April 26th, Jim?

Jim looks to Boots Rogers, who stands nearby. He's clearly  
afraid -- *trying to remember what to say...*

JIM CONLEY  
My boss, Mr. Frank, came to me as I  
was finishing my shift.

HUGH DORSEY  
What time was this?

JIM CONLEY  
Around 6-7pm, sir.

Reuben and Luther look to Leo. *Jim Conley is changing his  
story on the stand.*

HUGH DORSEY  
Then what happened?

JIM CONLEY  
He said something bad had happened  
and he needed my help moving a  
body.

HUGH DORSEY  
Did you help him?

JIM CONLEY  
Yes.

HUGH DORSEY

Why?

Again, Jim Conley looks to Boots Rogers for help. *He's not talking about Leo Frank...*

JIM CONLEY

Because I was afraid. I was afraid he'd pin it on me if I didn't do exactly what he said.

HUGH DORSEY

Are you still afraid of Mr. Frank?

JIM CONLEY

Yes, sir. I'll be afraid of him for as long as I'm breathing.

HUGH DORSEY

You don't have to be afraid anymore, Jim. We got him.

REUBEN

Objection.

HUGH DORSEY

Withdrawn.

Hugh Dorsey takes his seat. Reuben is ready for this one.

REUBEN

You confessed to helping my client move the body of Mary Phagan, is that correct?

JIM CONLEY

Yes.

REUBEN

From where to where?

JIM CONLEY

His office to the basement.

REUBEN

And this was between 6-7pm?

JIM CONLEY

Yes, sir.

REUBEN

When you confessed, you told the police it was at 1pm. Why?

JIM CONLEY

I didn't.

REUBEN

I have your signed confession here.  
This is your signature, is it not?

He shows Jim the signed confession.

JIM CONLEY

It is.

REUBEN

So, illuminate us, Mr. Conley. Were you lying then or now?

JIM CONLEY

*(doesn't know what to say)*

I drink sometimes -- get confused.  
All I know is Mr. Frank did it. I was afraid, so I helped him. I don't know what else to say.

Reuben SHAKES his head, annoyed at the lies coming out of Jim Conley's mouth.

REUBEN

Nothing further.

Jim Conley steps down. Boots Rogers GRIPS his arm as he guides him away.

JUDGE ROAN

Is the defense ready to call its first witness?

REUBEN

Yes, Your Honor. We'd like to call Herbert Schiff.

LATER

HERBERT SCHIFF, 33, mild-mannered businessman type, is questioned by Reuben.

REUBEN (CONT'D)

What position do you hold at the National Pencil Factory?

HERBERT SCHIFF

I'm the assistant superintendant.

REUBEN

So you work closely with Mr. Frank?

HERBERT SCHIFF

Every day.

REUBEN

Do you believe him to be a murderer?

HERBERT SCHIFF

It's not possible.

REUBEN

And why is that?

HERBERT SCHIFF

His wife, Lucille, would show up unannounced. She'd bring him lunch or a clean shirt. And on Saturdays, she would help take dictation. The idea that he was romancing women in his office is absurd.

Reuben sits. Hugh Dorsey takes his turn.

HUGH DORSEY

But Lucille Frank wasn't there every Saturday? She wasn't there on April 26th, was she?

HERBERT SCHIFF

No, she wasn't.

HUGH DORSEY

Then how is it absurd to think that he could romance the factory girls in his office? Just because Lucille Frank never caught him doesn't mean he's not guilty.

HERBERT SCHIFF

That's not why it's absurd.

HUGH DORSEY

Then why is it?

HERBERT SCHIFF

Because my office is next to his.

Hugh Dorsey goes blank. *Stop talking, stop talking...*

HERBERT SCHIFF (CONT'D)

We share a wall. I can hear him walking, talking, breathing. If he'd killed someone, trust me, I would've heard it.

LATER

EMIL SELIG, 66, Lucille's father, sits on the stand.

REUBEN

You had lunch with Lucille and Leo Frank on April the 26th?

EMIL SELIG

Yes. He came home for lunch and we dined from around 1-2:30.

REUBEN

How did Leo seem?

EMIL SELIG

Normal.

REUBEN

Was he nervous? Agitated?

EMIL SELIG

No. Nothing like that.

REUBEN

Did he have any marks on him? Scratches?

EMIL SELIG

No, he didn't.

REUBEN

According to the testimony we heard from the state, Leo had to attack Mary Phagan between 12-12:45pm, subdue, but not kill her, in order for him to make it home for lunch by 1. Does that seem likely to you?

EMIL SELIG

The man I saw at lunch was the same man who married my daughter. He is kind, he is loving, he is good.

LATER

DR. HURT, 47, is on the stand now.

REUBEN

What were the contents of Mary's stomach when you examined her?

DR. HURT

Not much. Fresh cabbage leaves.

REUBEN

What does that tell you about the time of death?

DR. HURT

It had to be in the later evening. I'm guessing around 8 at night.

REUBEN

And we know Leo Frank was home by then.

HUGH DORSEY

Objection.

REUBEN

It's been stated in the record that Leo Frank was at home, having dinner with his wife by 8pm. And the expert witness is confirming that the victim died when my client was at home.

JUDGE ROAN

Overruled.

Boots Rogers doesn't like the way this is going. He high tails it out of the courtroom.

EXT. ATLANTA COURTHOUSE - DAY

The MOB is still there, but they are patiently listening to the testimony. Boots Rogers comes out -- SPOTS George.

BOOTS ROGERS

You better get to it.

Boots Rogers goes back inside. George turns to his friends.

INT. ATLANTA COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Boots Rogers rejoins the gallery.

REUBEN

Doctor, it's also been stated that Mary entered the Pencil Factory just after noon and no one can account for her after she collected her pay. Can you explain how she could've gone missing for so long before her death?

That's when the chanting comes from outside again.

MOB (O.S.)  
Give us the Jew! Leo, Leo, can you  
hear us? We're coming for you!!!

DR. HURT  
Based on the injuries--

MOB (O.S.)  
-Let him swing!

DR. HURT  
The lacerations around her wrists--

MOB (O.S.)  
-He murdered our sister!

DR. HURT  
And on her feet--

MOB (O.S.)  
-she was our daughter!

DR. HURT  
And her throat--

MOB (O.S.)  
-she was our friend!

DR. HURT  
I'd say she was restrained.

The jury can barely hear what Dr. Hurt was trying to get across. It's all too loud. Reuben tries to move on.

MOB (O.S.)  
Give him to us!!!

REUBEN  
Restrained until all the employees  
of the National Pencil Factory had  
left for the night? Perhaps someone  
without an iron clad alibi?

DR. HURT  
That would make the most sense.

MOB (O.S.)  
Let him swing, let him swing, let  
him swing!!!!

Leo can't believe this is happening. He holds his head high,  
as if that hate outside wasn't happening.

LATER

Reuben RISES.

REUBEN

The state calls Leo M. Frank.

All eyes are on Leo Frank as he makes his way to the stand. He's got a notebook with him. *This is it.*

LEO

Gentlemen of the jury: I was born April 17th, 1884 in Cuero, Texas. I grew up in Brooklyn, New York before attending Cornell University where I studied mathematical engineering which lead to an offer to work at the National Pencil Factory. So I moved south and married an Atlanta girl, Miss Lucille Selig.

Leo GLANCES at his wife. Lucille gives him a nod to continue.

LEO (CONT'D)

I did not know Mary Phagan. On April 26th, a little girl, who I afterwards found out to be Mary, entered my office and asked for her pay envelope. I asked for her employee number and she told me. I went to the cash box, found her envelope, and handed it over. She left my office and made it to the door when she asked me if the metal had arrived. I told her no. She continued on her way out and that was it. That was the beginning, middle, and end of my relationship with Mary Phagan. I have heard a great deal, and so have you, in this trial and elsewhere, about my nervousness when Detectives arrived at my home on the morning of the 27th. Gentlemen, I was nervous. I was very nervous. I was completely unstrung, I will admit it. Imagine being awakened out of sound sleep, hardly dressed, taken by police in a car without food or water. I was rushed into a room and presented with that poor little child, who had her life so cruelly snuffed out.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

Of course I was nervous. Any man would be nervous if he were a man. Then I was taken to the police station and put in a cell with Newt Lee, who initially, was whom the Detectives believed was responsible for murdering Mary Phagan. I was told, *"You are his boss and he respects you. We can't get anything out of him. See if you can. Put it to him strong and cough up all he knows about what happened or you'll both go to hell."* Those were the Detective's exact words. I was nervous, so I did what I was told. I'm not a violent man. I'm not intimidating. I was unable to accomplish what they wanted and I can't help but think that is the reason I am standing before you.

Leo tries to hold it together the best he can.

LEO (CONT'D)

I know nothing whatsoever of the death of little Mary Phagan. Some news men have called me "the silent man in the tower" and I have kept my silence until the proper time and place. The time is now. The place is here. And I have told you the truth. The whole truth.

With that, Leo returns to his seat with Reuben and Luther.

LATER

The CHANTING has resumed outside. Judge Roan MOTIONS for Reuben, Luther, and Hugh Dorsey to join him at the bench.

JUDGE ROAN

Counselors.

Then three men do as they're told. Very quietly, he briefs them over the noise.

JUDGE ROAN (CONT'D)

As we turn the case over to the jury, I'm of the mind that Leo Frank should not be present when the verdict is read.

REUBEN

Why?

JUDGE ROAN

If Frank is acquitted, that mob outside could lynch him. They could lynch all of us.

REUBEN

He has a right to face the jury.

HUGH DORSEY

He also has the right not to be killed by an unruly mob.

REUBEN

That you've had part in stoking.

JUDGE ROAN

That's enough. Are we agreed?

The men nod and return to their tables.

JUDGE ROAN (CONT'D)

Gentlemen of the jury...

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The MOB RAGES on -- SCREAMING and THROWING BOTTLES at the courthouse. Luther PASSES R.J. Brown and W.F. Anderson as they stand off to the side, SMOKING cigarettes.

W.F. ANDERSON

How much trouble are we gonna have?

Brown SPOTS William Simmons and George in the center of the crowd -- EGGING everyone on.

R.J. BROWN

Depends on which way they go.

INT. HUGH DORSEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Hugh stands at his large windows, looking down at the ANGRY MOB fighting below. He SIPS a glass of WHISKEY.

INT. LEO'S CELL - DAY

Leo PACES, unable to get a hold of himself. Lucille is there with him. So is Rachel.

LEO

How did I do? I think I did fine,  
but one can never know.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

Did I talk to much? Or too little? Maybe I should've gone into more detail about what I was doing that day. Or about Lucille. I didn't talk about her enough and our life together. They still don't see me as a person. I can see it in their faces. Maybe I can go back in and try it again. I won't let my voice tremble. I'll be strong. They'll see I'm not the monster they think I am...

Reuben says nothing.

LEO (CONT'D)

What do we do now, Mr. Arnold?

REUBEN

We wait.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The MOB continues their angry CHANTS and SCREAMING. Britt Craig is among them, *interviewing* the protesters.

BRITT CRAIG

What brought you here today, sir?

Britt Craig gets PUNCHED in the face -- his nose GUSHES blood as he gets TRAMPLED to the ground by the ANGRY MOB.

INT. JURY ROOM - DAY

Sounds from the ANGRY MOB drift inside... The JURORS sit *silently* -- LISTENING to the HATEFUL SHOUTING from outside. Not one of the JURORS dare to move.

MOB (O.S.)

Murderer! String him up! Shoot him between the eyes! Justice for Mary!

WINBURN, 38, the foreman, looks to his fellow JURORS.

WINBURN

We ready to vote?

INT. HUGH DORSEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Hugh continues to stare down at the CHANTING MOB below when a SECRETARY sticks her head in the door.

SECRETARY

Mr. Felder wants to see you.

INT. THOMAS FELDER'S OFFICE - DAY

Hugh enters. Thomas looks up from his desk -- leans back in his chair. He doesn't look happy.

THOMAS FELDER

Judge Roan called. You need to get back to the courthouse.

HUGH DORSEY

(*panicked*, CHECKS watch)  
It's only been four hours.

Thomas gets up -- goes to Hugh.

THOMAS FELDER

I told you, you didn't want this case. Go face it like a man. Then come back and we'll have a conversation.

INT. LEO'S CELL - DAY

Leo looks out through the iron bars, *waiting*.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Hugh Dorsey makes his way through the ANGRY MOB. Some PAT him on the back as he makes his way up the steps. Britt Craig, with his BLOODY NOSE, joins him.

BRITT CRAIG

You got a verdict, Mr. Dorsey?

HUGH DORSEY

What happened to your face?

BRITT CRAIG

Rough world, but I can take it. How do you feel about your odds?

Hugh ignores him and heads inside.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Everyone's reassembled -- taken their seats. Judge Roan looks over a PIECE OF PAPER just passed to him by the BAILIFF.

JUDGE ROAN

Has the jury reached a verdict?

Winburn STANDS -- faces the packed courtroom. He SHAKES as he speaks. Hugh Dorsey sinks into his chair, horrified by what's about to come.

WINBURN

We have, your Honor. The jury finds the defendant, Leo Frank...

INT. LEO'S CELL - DAY

GUARD

Mr. Arnold?  
(they all turn to him,  
*panicked*)  
You've got a phone call.

Reuben NODS. He says nothing to Leo or Lucille or Rachel. He just follows the GUARD into the...

HALL - CONTINUOUS

The GUARD guides him to a phone. Reuben puts the receiver to his ear, *takes a breath...*

REUBEN

This is Reuben Arnold.  
(a beat)  
O.K. Thanks for the call.

He HANGS UP -- heads back to Leo's cell, but STOPS short. He just needs a second to collect himself.

1, 2, 3...

Then Reuben goes back to the cell. Everyone looks at him.

REUBEN (CONT'D)

Here's where we're at...

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Everyone CHEERS! Winburn and the rest of the JURY MEMBERS hurry out as the MOB lifts a *shocked* Hugh Dorsey into the air. They carry him out of the courtroom.

INT. LEO'S CELL - DAY

Leo's *panicked*, talking to himself rather than his family.

LEO

It just doesn't add up. I'm innocent. Why can't they see that? We had witnesses who said very nice things about me. And why wouldn't they? I'm a kind person. It's this mob law, that's exactly what this is. The jury was clearly affected by it. Intimidated. We'll have to look into that.

REUBEN

We'll appeal -- all the way to the Supreme Court if we have to.

LEO

That won't be necessary. Once this fever subsides, calmer heads will prevail and I'll go home.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The ANGRY MOB CHEERS as they carry Hugh Dorsey on their shoulders from the courthouse. Hats SAIL in the air.

INT. LEO'S CELL - DAY

Leo continues speaking with Reuben.

LEO

Tell me, counselor, what kind of sentence did they give me?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The ANGRY MOB has carried Hugh Dorsey all the way to the center of town where William Simmons awaits on a podium with George Epps. *Overwhelmed*, Hugh shakes William's hand.

Everyone CHEERS as William stands before them.

WILLIAM SIMMONS

What a day! What a day, what a day. It almost makes you believe in the American Dream again -- an America that's safe from those Jews from the North. They will not come here. They will not take our jobs. They will not rape our daughters. They will not murder them and think we will do nothing.

(MORE)

WILLIAM SIMMONS (CONT'D)  
 This is our country. They will not  
 take it from us!!!

The MOB CHEERS.

WILLIAM SIMMONS (CONT'D)  
 But we didn't do this alone. We had  
 a champion on our side. An American  
 hero if you ask me. Citizens of  
 Atlanta. The future Governor of  
 Georgia, Hugh Dorsey!!!

The CHEERING reaches a crescendo as William EMBRACES Hugh.

INT. LEO'S CELL - DAY

Leo can hear the words from his cell. Everyone's silent as  
 Leo moves to the window, staring out through the bars.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Hugh Dorsey has taken center stage. He's *nervous* and humbled  
 to be standing before the crowd. This is his moment to shine.

HUGH DORSEY  
 I am a simple man. I've tried to be  
 a good neighbor, a good husband, a  
 good father. I want my children to  
 be happy and safe. But it's not a  
 safe world anymore, is it?

Nos come from the crowd.

HUGH DORSEY (CONT'D)  
 It can be again, but not with the  
 likes of men like Leo Frank being  
 allowed to roam free. But you can  
 rest easy tonight, because Leo  
 Frank will walk the streets of  
 Atlanta no more!

(more CHEERS)  
 The good people have spoken. Leo  
 Frank is guilty of murdering Mary  
 Phagan and will hang by the neck  
 until he is dead!!!

The MOB erupts into THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. Everyone CHEERS. Men  
 THROW their HATS in the air. Ladies WAVE handkerchiefs. Hugh  
 Dorsey raises a MIGHTY FIST to the sky.

INT. LEO'S CELL - DAY

The CHEERING continues to permeate the scene...

Leo's heard it all -- *every word* -- but just STARES out the window, keeping his back to his family and lawyer.

LEO

They'll change their minds. They'll see it's all just one big mistake. I know they will. *I know it...*

But even Leo doesn't believe his words.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: TWO YEARS LATER

FADE IN:

INT. REUBEN ARNOLD'S OFFICE - DAY

Reuben SLAMS his FIST down on his desk.

REUBEN

Those cowardly sons of bitches!!!

LUTHER

Also known as the Justices of the United States Supreme Court.

REUBEN

I'm not in the mood for your word games, Luther. How could they not hear our case?? Leo Frank is national news. Papers all over the country are covering him.

He TOSSES down one paper after another on the desk.

REUBEN (CONT'D)

22 states have him on the front page. Another 10 have him on page 2. Every civil rights organization is on our side--

LUTHER

-That's why they didn't hear it.

REUBEN

We overplayed it?

LUTHER

200 character witnesses. How long did Leo speak for? People are exhausted and the last thing the Supreme Court wants to do is start another Civil War in the South because they let a child killer out of prison--

REUBEN

-He didn't do it!!!

That's as loud Reuben's ever gotten. He's furious.

REUBEN (CONT'D)

You know we've only got one option left, Luther.

LUTHER

No, no, no, no, no.

REUBEN

Don't give me that shit. A man's life literally hangs in the balance. You're doing it.

LUTHER

He's a partner in my firm. It would be political suicide. He's not going to listen to me.

REUBEN

He'll listen, but not to you, you're right about that.

LUTHER

Then who? Who is going to get through to John Slaton and convince him to save Leo Frank's life?

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BALLROOM - DAY

All of Atlanta's elite attend this fancy party. They DRINK, DANCE, and GOSSIP as they enjoy the glitz and glamour. Luther Rosser guides Lucille into the party.

LUTHER

We only have one shot at this. Do what I say and nothing else.

LUCILLE

I heard you before.

LUTHER  
Be goddamned sure. These people--

LUCILLE  
-I know who they are.

The crowd parts REVEALING GOVERNOR JOHN SLATON, 47, clad in a tuxedo, dancing with his wife, SARAH, 41. They look every bit the happy couple.

The MUSIC ends. This is their moment. Luther heads over. Lucille follows close behind.

LUTHER  
Governor?

John turns toward them -- FLASHES a glowing smile and offers his hand to Luther.

JOHN SLATON  
Luther. Good to see you.  
(re: Lucille)  
This doesn't look like Julia.

LUTHER  
She's at home with the flu.

JOHN SLATON  
Britt Craig is just over there.

John NODS toward Britt Craig drinking heavily at the bar, surrounded by BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

JOHN SLATON (CONT'D)  
It would be quite the scandal if he sees you out with another woman.

LUTHER  
Governor, I'd like to introduce you to Mrs. Frank.

He SHAKES her hand too -- ALL SMILES.

JOHN SLATON  
Pleasure to meet you, Mrs. Frank.

LUTHER  
*Mrs. Leo Frank.*

John's smile DROPS. He looks around, *nervous*. He leans into Luther, his voice *low and threatening*.

JOHN SLATON

You get her out of here and you get her out of here right now.

LUTHER

We just need five minutes.

JOHN SLATON

No.

LUTHER

Five--

JOHN SLATON

-I'm walking away now.

LUCILLE

You take one step and I'll start screamin'.

John Slaton EYES Lucille. She's not fucking around. John's wife, Sarah, SQUEEZES his hand.

SARAH

*John...*

John SWALLOWS his anger, *considers* this.

ON BRITT CRAIG

He's LAUGHING at something one of the WOMEN has said. Through his drunken haze, Britt SPOTS John, Luther, and Lucille head out onto the balcony. *What the hell is going on???*

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BALCONY - NIGHT

Away from the PARTY GUESTS, John Slaton FUMES.

JOHN SLATON

You brought her to my--Do you have any idea what would happen if she were found? There's a goddamned election coming!

LUTHER

There is? Must've slipped my mind.

JOHN SLATON

You think this is some kind of joke?

(to Lucille)

And you, Mrs. Frank! I don't appreciate being blackmailed.

LUCILLE

I don't care!

JOHN SLATON

Remember who you are speaking to,  
little lady.

LUCILLE

No!

JOHN SLATON

Lower your voice or this is over.

LUCILLE

It's already over! We've been to  
the Georgia Supreme Court, the U.S.  
Supreme Court and they all say the  
same thing: my husband has to die.  
Not because he's guilty, but  
because he's a Jew and doesn't look  
like you or pray like you. And  
because a mob of cowards with  
bedsheets over their heads began  
marching in the streets with  
torches chanting my husband's name!  
I'm tired of sitting back and doing  
nothing while you men make all the  
decisions that have landed my  
husband on death row. I will no  
longer be silent!

*I will not cry, I will not cry...*

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

You are all we have left.

John Slaton GLARES at them. He's beyond angry, but Lucille  
going toe-to-toe with him was impressive.

JOHN SLATON

Take her out the back--

LUCILLE

-I'm not leaving--

JOHN SLATON

-Go out back. Leave quietly and  
leave now and I'll review the court  
documents myself.

(to Luther)

You can get them to me?

LUTHER

First thing tomorrow.

JOHN SLATON  
I'm not making any promises.

He moves past them. As he goes, John addresses Luther...

JOHN SLATON (CONT'D)  
Don't ever try this shit again.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

John and Sarah undress for bed.

SARAH  
What did that Frank woman want?

JOHN SLATON  
Clemency for her husband.

SARAH  
I was reading about it in The Jeffersonian. William Simmons really has it out for him.

JOHN SLATON  
Everyone's got to have a hobby.

SARAH  
All that hollerin' and yellin' and screamin' outside that courthouse. Can't imagine what it was like to be on that jury with all that nonsense goin' on outside.

JOHN SLATON  
Now you've got an opinion on this too?

SARAH  
Little old me? *Never*.

She KISSES her husband.

JOHN SLATON  
You don't play fair.

INT. GEORGIA CAPITAL BUILDING - DAY

John Slaton walks through the majestic halls with his chief of staff, MARTIN, 38.

JOHN SLATON  
Confirm dinner with Judge Harris.

MARTIN

Nathaniel Harris? You aren't serious.

JOHN SLATON

I want to scare him off.

MARTIN

Judge Harris doesn't scare easy. If he's gonna run against you, he's gonna do it. No steak dinner is gonna change that.

JOHN SLATON

I'm still Governor, Martin. I'm also not a thousand years old. Set the dinner.

MARTIN

Will do.

JOHN SLATON

Oh and I'm expecting some files from Luther Rosser. Let me know when they get here.

MARTIN

They're here.  
(off Slaton's look)  
Arrived about an hour ago.

INT. SLATON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

TWO DOZEN BOXES line the floors. John Slaton looks at the massive amount of work before him. *Sighs*.

INT. LEO'S CELL - DAY

Lucille explains what happened to Leo.

LUCILLE

I met with Slaton. He's going to look into your case.

LEO

I think it's time we had a real conversation.

LUCILLE

This is a real conversation.

LEO  
I mean about my future.

LUCILLE  
That's what I'm talking about.  
Didn't you hear me? Slaton is going  
to reopen your case.

LEO  
A case that's been denied by every  
court in the land? We lost,  
Lucille.

LUCILLE  
We haven't--

LEO  
-Yes, we have.

LUCILLE  
Did you not hear me?

LEO  
Did you not hear me?

That STINGS Lucille.

LUCILLE  
No, you're right as always. It was  
silly of me. To go and beg for my  
husband's life from the only man on  
earth who can save him.

LEO  
Lucille--

LUCILLE  
-Smart, Leo. You've always been so  
smart. No one else could possibly  
have an idea that might help.

LEO  
That's not what I--

LUCILLE  
-Maybe I should just go home and  
bake those biscuits you love so  
much until the police come and tell  
me you've been hanged.

LEO  
I'm sorry--

LUCILLE

-Crosses are burned on our lawn!  
Rocks are thrown through our  
windows! I get SPAT on when I walk  
down the street!

He tries to touch her, but Lucille BATS his hands away. Leo  
takes the hint. A beat, then:

LEO

You really went to Slaton's home?

LUCILLE

Yes.

LEO

Bet you scared the crap out of him.

Lucille tries not to smile. Then:

LUCILLE

Do you need anything?

LEO

No. I'm all set.

LUCILLE

I'll be back tomorrow.

She GATHERS her things -- heads out. Leo SITS on his bed,  
puts his head in his hands.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

High end as it gets. Nathaniel Harris SHAKES hands with John  
Slaton as the men take their seats.

JOHN SLATON

Thanks for taking the time, Your  
Honor.

NATHANIEL HARRIS

I was surprised to get your call.

JOHN SLATON

I wanted to pick your brain.  
Figured a free meal would do the  
trick.

NATHANIEL HARRIS

A bottle of whiskey wouldn't hurt  
either.

Slaton LAUGHS as he opens his menu.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

A bottle's half gone. Nathaniel SIPS his.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
This about Leo Frank?

JOHN SLATON  
Did someone say something?

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
I'm just a good guesser. What's on  
your mind?

John Slaton eyes Nathaniel for a moment, then:

JOHN SLATON  
I've been reviewing the case file.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
Who got to you?

JOHN SLATON  
The wife.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
Begging for the life of her  
husband? He's innocent, wrongfully  
convicted. Mob influenced the jury.

JOHN SLATON  
Something like that.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
You've got a soft heart. No  
offense.

*Ignoring that...*

JOHN SLATON  
You followed the trial?

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
Every bump and bruise.

JOHN SLATON  
And?

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
And I think a jury of his peers  
convicted Leo Frank.

JOHN SLATON  
Nothing about it bothers you?

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
I can't give you permission, John.  
You wanna do something about Leo  
Frank, it's up to you.

JOHN SLATON  
I'm aware of that. And it's  
Governor. Not John.

That *annoys* Nathaniel, but he NODS, *accepting* the correction.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
People in this city won't react  
well to a commutation.

JOHN SLATON  
I've gotten 15,000 pieces of mail  
begging for one. From state reps,  
college Presidents, even Judge  
Roan. The Governors of North  
Dakota, Nevada, and Arkansas. All  
asking the same thing. It's been  
two years. The fever's broken.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
You also have an election to think  
about.

JOHN SLATON  
That isn't a factor here.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
For fuck's sake.

JOHN SLATON  
It's not.

NATHANIEL HARRIS  
Then why's my ass in this chair?  
You know what you want to do. Who  
knows. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe the  
people of Atlanta will thank you  
for righting a wrong against an  
intolerable injustice.  
(Slaton thinks on that)  
More whiskey?

INT. RESTAURANT - LOBBY - NIGHT

The men head toward the exit together. Nathaniel STOPS short.

NATHANIEL HARRIS

I'm gonna run to the washroom. Was good to see you, Governor.

JOHN SLATON

Thanks for the advice.

The men SHAKE hands. John Slaton exits. Nathaniel turns to a sharp looking MAITRE D'.

NATHANIEL HARRIS

Might I use your telephone for a quick call?

MAITRE D'

Of course, Your Honor.

The Maitre D' hands a ROTARY PHONE over and leaves to give Nathaniel some privacy. Nathaniel SPINS the dial. Then:

NATHANIEL HARRIS

Hugh, Judge Harris here. Do you have a minute?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HUGH DORSEY'S HOME - SAME

Hugh's in his foyer, talking on the phone. His wife, ADAIR, 33, has dinner in the background with their two CHILDREN.

HUGH DORSEY

Of course. What can I do for you?

NATHANIEL HARRIS

I had an enlightening conversation with Governor Slaton just now.

HUGH DORSEY

Is that so? What'd he say?

Hugh LISTENS -- the look on his face says it all. He's *panicked* and *pissed*. Adair calls out to him...

ADAIR

Hugh, your supper is gettin' cold.

Hugh HANGS UP -- puts on his coat and hurries out of the house. Adair gets up -- FOLLOWS after him.

ADAIR (CONT'D)

Hugh! Where on earth do you think you're goin'?

INT. WILLIAM SIMMONS HOME - NIGHT

Hugh Dorsey PACES as William Simmons sits behind his desk. George Epps leans against the door, smoking.

HUGH DORSEY  
Can you believe this? Can you  
FUCKING believe this!?!

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
Calm down, Hugh.

HUGH DORSEY  
Slaton is getting thousands of  
letters a month *begging* for Frank's  
commutation. He's going to be a  
goddamned hero and all the work  
I've done--

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
-we've done.

HUGH DORSEY  
It'll all have been for nothing.  
Goodbye Governorship. I'll end up  
prosecuting kids like him for  
loitering outside the VFW Hall!!!

George continues to SMOKE that cigarette, *pompous as hell*.  
Hugh takes a breath -- still mad as hell.

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
Slaton won't be a hero. He'll be a  
pariah, letting kiddie killers  
loose left and right.

HUGH DORSEY  
And who's going to believe that?

William ignores that -- turns to George.

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
You think our boys got another  
round in them?

GEORGE  
They've got as many as you need.

William turns back to Hugh Dorsey -- ALL SMILES.

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
When's the announcement coming?

HUGH DORSEY

A day or two.

WILLIAM SIMMONS

I think that'll give us enough time  
to be ready.

INT. SLATON'S OFFICE - DAY

Slaton writes at his desk -- writing his decision.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)

*"This case against Leo Frank has been the subject of extensive comments through the newspapers of the United States and has occasioned the transmission of over 100,000 letters from various States requesting clemency, many of those communications have been advocating or opposing interference with the sentence of the court. The people of the State of Georgia desire the esteem and good will of those in every State in the Union..."*

INT. ATLANTA CONSTITUTION - AFTERNOON

A PAGE hands an OFFICIAL DOCUMENT to Britt Craig. He looks it over -- EYES go wide. Britt sits down and starts TYPING.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)

*"To maintain that esteem, it's time to look deeper into the facts of the case. Many newspapers have attacked the State of Georgia, because the conviction of Leo Frank was through the domination of a mob with no evidence to support the verdict..."*

INT. JOHN & FANNIE COLEMAN'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Fannie reads the paper. Her heart breaks with every word...

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)

*"The murder committed was a most heinous one. A young girl was strangled to death by a cord tied around her throat and the offender deserves the penalty of death..."*

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

R.J. Brown, W.F. Anderson, and Boots Rogers sit around the station, reading that paper.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)

*"The only question is as to the identity of the criminal. The responsibility is on the people of Georgia to protect the lives of her citizens and to maintain the dignity of her laws. But what if when maintaining that dignity overrides the protection of the lives of the people of Georgia?"*

INT. HUGH DORSEY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Hugh PACES around as he reads.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)

*"My duty under the Constitution is a matter of conscience. I can endure misconstruction, abuse and condemnation, but I cannot stand a constant, accusing conscience, which would remind me in every thought that I failed to do what I thought to be right..."*

INT. JUDGE ROAN'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Roan SIPS a drink as he reads.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)

*"There is a territory 'beyond a reasonable doubt and absolute certainty', for which the law provides in allowing life imprisonment instead of execution."*

INT. REUBEN ARNOLD'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Reuben, too, is reading the paper.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)

*"This case has been marked by doubt. The trial judge doubted..."*

INT. LUTHER ROSSER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Luther can't believe what he's reading...

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)  
*"Two Judges of the Supreme Court of  
 Georgia doubted..."*

INT. WILLIAM SIMMONS HOME - AFTERNOON

William SNEERS as he reads these words.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)  
*"Two Judges of the Supreme Court of  
 the United States doubted..."*

INT. JIM CONLEY'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Jim Conley sits on his bed with the paper in his hands.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)  
*"One of the three Prison  
 Commissioners doubted..."*

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - NIGHT

Lucille can't believe what she's reading...

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)  
*"In my judgement, by granting a  
 commutation in this case, I am  
 sustaining the jury..."*

With that, she's up and out of her chair and out the door...

EXT. ATLANTA STREETS - NIGHT

Lucille RUNS down the street as fast as she can, DODGING the  
 CITIZENS of Atlanta as she hurries to Leo.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)  
*"I am sustaining the judge and the  
 appellate tribunals..."*

EXT. ATLANTA JAIL - NIGHT

Lucille RACES up the steps -- THROWS OPEN the doors...

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)  
*"And at the same time I am  
 discharging that duty which is  
 placed on me by the Constitution of  
 the State..."*

INT. ATLANTA JAIL - DAY

Out of breath, Lucille accosts the WARDEN MAYCOMB.

LUCILLE  
 I need to see my husband.

WARDEN MAYCOMB  
 He's not here, Mrs. Frank.

LUCILLE  
*What???* Where is he?

WARDEN MAYCOMB  
 The train station.

EXT. ATLANTA STREETS - NIGHT

Lucille is back to running. She KICKS OFF her shoes and RUNS barefoot -- anything that will get her to the station sooner.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)  
*"Acting in accordance with what I  
 believe to be my duty under the  
 circumstances of this case..."*

EXT. ATLANTA TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Lucille ARRIVES at the crowded station. She looks around, desperately trying to find her husband.

JOHN SLATON (V.O.)  
*"It is ORDERED: That the sentence  
 in the case of Leo M. Frank is  
 commuted from the death penalty to  
 imprisonment for life."*

Then Lucille SPOTS two GUARDS with a cloaked Leo. He sees her, too. Tears SPRING from Lucille's eyes as she walks those last few feet and throws her arms around her husband.

LEO  
 You did this. You did all of this.

That only makes Lucille hold Leo tighter.

LEO (CONT'D)  
 (re: cloak)  
 Do you like my disguise? I'm supposed to be sick.

LUCILLE  
 Where are they taking you?

LEO  
 Macon. I'm convict 965 now.

A GUARD steps up to them.

GUARD  
 It's time.

Leo NODS -- turns back to Lucille. *What could he possibly say to her? How could he possibly express his gratitude?*

Instead of words, Leo KISSES Lucille. It's the first time we've seen them be romantic with each another. It's tender and loving; they're totally connected to one another... but then it's over.

Lucille WATCHES as the GUARDS guide Leo to the train. He takes a step on board -- turns back and offers a SMALL SMILE. With that, Leo gets on the train. Lucille bravely watches as it pulls out of the station.

EXT. ATLANTA STREETS - NIGHT

Fifty members of the KU KLUX KLAN march down the streets of Atlanta, clad in WHITE SHEETS. The TORCHES they carry illuminate the night.

KU KLUX KLAN  
 We want the Jew! Give us the Jew!!!  
 We want the Jew! Give us the Jew!!!

They arrive at the jail. The CHANTING continues. Rocks get THROWN, BREAKING windows.

KU KLUX KLAN (CONT'D)  
 We want the Jew! Give us the Jew!!!

Warden Maycomb and his GUARDS come out of the jail, SHOTGUNS in hand. They aren't fucking around.

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
 Turn over Leo Frank!!!

The KLAN CHEERS.

WARDEN MAYCOMB

You boys are making a mistake.

WILLIAM SIMMONS

The only mistake is that son of a bitch Slaton commuting Frank's sentence. The people of Atlanta demand justice.

WARDEN MAYCOMB

Well, no justice is gonna happen here tonight. Frank was transferred.

WILLIAM SIMMONS

To where?

WARDEN MAYCOMB

Funny the governor didn't include me in his thinking. Go on home, boys. Or if you want...

The GUARDS COCK the SHOTGUNS -- AIM them at the KLAN.

WARDEN MAYCOMB (CONT'D)

We can keep discussing the matter.

William Simmons STANDS his ground, but sees that the WARDEN isn't messing around. George Epps SPOTS Boots Rogers among the GUARDS with SHOTGUNS. He gives George a little NOD.

George WHISPERS something to William Simmons. Slowly, William backs away and the KLAN follows. George hides in the SHADOWS while all the others leave. Warden Maycomb turns to a GUARD.

WARDEN MAYCOMB (CONT'D)

Get Governor Slaton on the phone.

The GUARD NODS. Maycomb goes inside along with the others. Boots Rogers LIGHTS a cigarette and talks a walk by himself.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clothes are THROWN into suitcases. It's hurried, *panicked*. Sarah tries to get her jewelry into a box.

JOHN SLATON

Leave it! We don't have much time.

SARAH

These pearls were my grandmothers. I'm not leaving them for a bunch of cowards wearing bedsheets.

JOHN SLATON

Well those cowards are pissed and  
have torches, so lets hurry it--

That's when they hear the CHANTING coming in the distance.  
John and Sarah get very quiet as it gets louder and louder.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

The KLAN has grown. TORCHES as far as the eye can see.  
William Simmons leads the CHANTING.

KU KLUX KLAN

Give us the King of the Jews! Give  
us the King of the Jews!!!

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

John Slaton looks out the window at the massive crowd.

JOHN SLATON

*My god...*

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

William Simmons MOTIONS for the Klan to be quiet.

WILLIAM SIMMONS

GOVERNOR!!!!!!!!!!!!

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

John Slaton JOLTS away from the window as a ROCK comes  
SMASHING through it.

WILLIAM SIMMONS (O.S.)

Give us Leo Frank. Tell us where he  
is and all these fine people will  
go home and leave you in peace.

Martin HURRIES in.

MARTIN

There are a hundred of them. We  
have a car out back, but you have  
to go and you have to go now.

SARAH

This is crazy. This is our home!

JOHN SLATON  
Not anymore.

EXT. ATLANTA JAIL - NIGHT

Boots Rogers SMOKES his cigarette. George comes out of the darkness -- takes off his hood.

GEORGE  
Where is he?

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

Without a response from John Slaton, there's only one thing for William Simmons to do...

WILLIAM SIMMONS  
It's your funeral.

He takes a TORCH and LIGHTS the house on FIRE.

EXT. ATLANTA JAIL - NIGHT

Boots Rogers keeps smoking that cigarette.

BOOTS ROGERS  
Rumor has it he's in Macon. Better get to him right away. You don't want Slaton moving that kike again.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

John Slaton and Sarah, each carrying a sleeping CHILD, RUN down the stairs. Martin follows them with their SUITCASES. FIRE has ENGULFED the FOYER -- SMOKE rises. John and Sarah FLEE out the back of the mansion.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - BACKSIDE - NIGHT

John Slaton and Sarah LOAD their children in the back of the car. They, too, get in. Martin SHUTS the door.

MARTIN  
Go!!!

John Slaton DRIVES the hell out of there as the Governor's mansion BURNS behind him.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

As the mansion BURNS, George RUNS up to William Simmons.

GEORGE

We got him. He's in Macon.

WILLIAM SIMMONS

No kiddin'. I got a buddy doing time down in Macon.

GEORGE

Our lucky day.

That's when SIRENS can be heard in the distance. The KLAN disbands as help arrives.

INT. WILLIAM SIMMONS HOME - NIGHT

William SITS back in his chair -- dials a number. It RINGS once, twice, then:

WILLIAM SIMMONS

This is William Simmons. I'm sorry to bother you so late, but I was hoping to have a word with an inmate of yours. See, his Mama fell ill and--William Creen is his name... *Yes, I'll wait.*

(a long beat, then:)

Bill Creen. Doin' fine, thank you. I need a favor...

INT. MILLEDGEVILLE PRISON - NIGHT

It's a dorm-military barracks style prison. ROWS OF BEDS with INMATES sleeping. A GUARD guides Leo to his bed.

GUARD

This is you. Get some sleep. Lights up at 6am.

Leo NODS. He gets into bed -- closes his eyes and tries his best to sleep.

LATER

It's close to midnight. WILLIAM CREEN, 37, built like a bull, SLIPS out of his bunk -- a PIECE OF METAL in hand. William moves past the sleeping INMATES, arrives at Leo Frank's bed, who's sound asleep by now. William RUNS his FINGER through Leo's HAIR -- PULLING it back to expose his THROAT.

In one SWIFT MOTION, William SLASHES Leo's throat!

Leo SCREAMS as BLOOD SPURTS from his throat. He FALLS to the floor as he tries to STOP the BLEEDING. William takes off RUNNING as NIGHT WATCHMEN come RUSHING into the room, FLIPPING on the LIGHTS.

The other INMATES JOLT up in bed, annoyed at having been woken by the noise and lights. The NIGHT WATCHMAN SPOT Leo in a BLOODY HEAP on the floor.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

*Jesus.*

They go to Leo, *unsure* of what to do. There's too much blood.

MAN (O.S.)

Give me some room.

The NIGHT WATCHMEN part for an inmate JAMES MCNAUGHTON, 46, middle-aged but handsome with kind eyes. James KNEELS down to Leo -- the life is DRAINING out of him... He puts PRESSURE on Leo's neck to stop the blood from FLOWING.

JAMES MCNAUGHTON

Get me a needle and some thread!

Does anyone have a towel!?!

INMATES SCURRY away to get James what he needs. He turns his attention back to Leo.

JAMES MCNAUGHTON (CONT'D)

You're going to be O.K., Mr. Frank.

Leo STARES up into his eyes, *unsure* of how he knows him. *Can this man be trusted?*

JAMES MCNAUGHTON (CONT'D)

I followed your trial. We have a few acquaintances in common.

The NIGHT WATCHMEN return with the NEEDLE and THREAD. An INMATE tries to hand him a TOWEL.

JAMES MCNAUGHTON (CONT'D)

Put pressure on his neck.

The INMATE obeys as James THREADS the NEEDLE...

JAMES MCNAUGHTON (CONT'D)

This is going to hurt. Try not to move.

James gets to work on SEWING UP Leo's neck. He STICKS the NEEDLE into the SKIN -- Leo SCREAMS and THRASHES.

JAMES MCNAUGHTON (CONT'D)

You'll make this so much worse.

(Leo BRACES himself)

My trial was three years ago.  
Luther Rosser defended me while  
Reuben Arnold put me away for the  
rest of my life. Funny how they  
came together to help you and still  
managed to lose. We're almost  
there. Just look right at me, Leo.  
Just one... more... and we... are  
all set.

Leo raises his hand to touch the STITCHES, but James STOPS him from doing so.

JAMES MCNAUGHTON (CONT'D)

I wouldn't do that. It's pretty  
raw, but you'll live.

Tears RUN down Leo's face as the PRISON MEDICS arrive with a  
stretcher. They LOAD Leo's body and CARRY him away.

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - MORNING

KNOCK KNOCK. Lucille answers to find Reuben standing there,  
hat in hand. She tries to hold it together.

LUCILLE

Is he... is he gone?

Reuben SHAKES his head.

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

Lucille SIPS her coffee as Reuben explains.

REUBEN

They got the guy. Put him in  
solitary for a couple months.

LUCILLE

What happens when they let him out?  
He'll just come after Leo again.

REUBEN

One step at a time. Leo's  
recovering in the medical wing.  
It's private. He's comfortable.

LUCILLE

I just... I thought he'd be safe out of Atlanta. We worked so hard and now... it's like it's never going to stop. Can we move him somewhere farther away? No one will know him if we send him to another state. I could talk to Governor Slaton again.

REUBEN

Slaton's gone.  
(off her look)  
He fled the State of Georgia. We are without a governor until the next election.

LUCILLE

So there's nothing we can do.

REUBEN

Mrs. Frank, believe me when I tell you we've done everything humanly possible to help your husband. He'll be O.K. They've got things under control now.

INT. WILLIAM SIMMONS HOME - MORNING

William reads the Atlanta Constitution with the headline: **Leo Frank's Throat Cut By State Farm Prisoner.**

He POUNDS his fist on the paper. George leans against the door, smoking.

WILLIAM SIMMONS

It's almost as if no one takes pride in their work anymore.

GEORGE

Guess we better up our game, then.

WILLIAM SIMMONS

Give those friends of yours a call.

GEORGE

Yeah? How many you think we need?

WILLIAM SIMMONS

10 or 15 should do it.

GEORGE

You want this thing to end?

WILLIAM SIMMONS

I do. I really do.

GEORGE

Maybe a few more then. Just to be  
on the safe side.

George PUTS out his cigarette -- walks out of the house.

INT. MILLEDGEVILLE PRISON - MEDICAL WARD - NIGHT

DOCTOR JEROME, 58, cuddly grandpa type, attends to Leo Frank,  
removing the bandage and inspecting the work done by James  
McNaughton. Leo's in a pissed off mood.

DOCTOR JEROME

You're lucky we have a doctor for  
an inmate. You never would've made  
it if they'd waited for me. Did a  
good job too.

LEO

Will there be a scar? How long  
before the stitches can come out?

DOCTOR JEROME

Normally, I'd say a week or two,  
but with this heat, that cut's  
liable to pop right back open.  
Might be a couple of months before  
you're fully healed.

LEO

A couple months?

DOCTOR JEROME

There a problem?

LEO

Yes. How would you like all these  
pointy things sticking out of your  
neck for months on end?

DOCTOR JEROME

It's better than blood spurting out  
of my throat.

LEO

You doctors are all the same.  
Always making things sound worse  
than they are so your patient has  
to come back again and again and  
you can get paid more.

DOCTOR JEROME

You're in prison. You're not paying me a dime.

Jerome SHAKES his head -- packs up his stuff, *annoyed*.

LEO

You didn't answer my question about the scarring, Dr. Jerome.

DOCTOR JEROME

Contrary to your very insulting assertions, I'm not here to milk the state of Georgia for every penny I can get. I patch you up and send you off. That's it.

LEO

That's not an answer.

DOCTOR JEROME

I don't traffic in vanity, Leo.

LEO

I want to know.

DOCTOR JEROME

Why do you care?!

LEO

Because I don't want to wake up every morning and look in the mirror and have a permanent reminder of when some monster put a knife to my throat!

That sucks the air out of the room. Leo's so mad he can't see straight. *It all just comes flooding out...*

LEO (CONT'D)

They used to chant outside my cell. *Lynch the Jew! Kill the Kike!* I heard it all. Saw the glow of those torches. They wanted my blood so badly, but I believed if I kept my head up, retained an ounce of dignity, that one day the truth would come out. Now I can forget about the chanting, those god awful news headlines, and all the rest of it. I can. I *will*. So when I ask if there's going to be a scar, I'm not trafficking in vanity. I'm asking because I don't want it.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

Not for me, not for my wife. Can you understand that, Dr. Jerome?

Doctor Jerome NODS. He takes a beat, then:

DOCTOR JEROME

My name is not Dr. Jerome. When my family came over from Russia, my father wanted an American sounding name and changed it from Jeromovitz. My son hates this story. See, he's very proud of being Jewish, a bit younger than you, too smart for his own good, likes to argue about anything and everything. So when the time comes for him to apply to college, he wants to use the family name. I try to tell him, "No, no, no," but my son, he won't listen to reason. But he gets in without a problem, so ok. So far, so good. Then he goes to class the first day and they read the names out loud. Then there are boys waiting for him after class. They beat him. Split his lip, blacken his eye. Urinate on him. They tell him to drop out. But my son is stubborn, like you. He is not afraid. He says nothing of what's happened and goes back the next day. After class, the boys beat him again. Day after day this goes on for two years until my son graduates top of his class.

LEO

Good for him.

DOCTOR JEROME

No, it was bad for him. He lost the light in his eyes. He became hard.

LEO

You're telling me he should've kept your American name? Hid who he was?

DOCTOR JEROME

You misunderstand. He hid what was happening from his own father. The shame of that, I think, was worse than the beatings.

(a beat, then:)

We all have scars, my boy.

Dr. Jerome holds Leo's hand -- BENDS down and KISSES his hair. That's when Leo loses it. He's held himself together for so long. And there in the arms of a stranger, Leo weeps.

EXT. ATLANTA STREETS - NIGHT

A string of SEVEN AUTOMOBILES speed out of town...

INT. MILLEDGEVILLE PRISON - MEDICAL WARD - NIGHT

Somehow, Leo has managed to fall asleep...

EXT. MILLEDGEVILLE PRISON - NIGHT

The AUTOMOBILES come to a STOP in front of the prison, which is illuminated by a scant few lights. Twenty-five KLAN MEMBERS (in their SHEETS and HOODS) descend the vehicles -- MOVING very quickly. They GRAB BRICKS to SMASH the lights -- SHROUDING the entire prison in darkness.

Others SLIDE under the POLICE AUTOMOBILES -- CUTTING the gas lines... KLAN MEMBERS PRY open a FUSE BOX with a CROWBAR to CUT the phone lines...

Now there's no light. No one to call for help. And no way for anyone to follow them. It's time to storm the prison.

EXT. MILLEDGEVILLE PRISON - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

TWO GUARDS smoke cigarettes and LAUGH at something unheard to us when the KLAN MEMBERS descend upon them.

Before they can scream, the KLAN BASH their heads with bats.

INT. MILLEDGEVILLE PRISON - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The KLAN march through the halls -- LOOKING for Leo Frank. They TURN a corner... and RUN straight into a GUARD -- he tries to draw his gun, but one of the KLAN KNOCKS him out with the crowbar. They continue on.

INT. MILLEDGEVILLE PRISON - NIGHT

It's the open dormitory where all the PRISONERS sleep (and where Leo Frank was attacked). The KLAN enters -- SILENTLY slipping from bed to bed, CHECKING for Leo Frank. They FAN out, but soon find that he's not there. Furious, one of the KLAN wakes a PRISONER -- PUTS a KNIFE to his throat.



KLAN LEADER

We are the Knights of Mary Phagan,  
Mr. Frank. We're here for your  
confession.

LEO

I... can't do that.

KLAN LEADER

Mr. Frank, you don't understand.  
Mary Phagan had a family, people  
that loved her. They need answers.

Leo EYES a SHOTGUN in one of their hands. He takes a breath  
to steady himself. Then:

LEO

I cannot confess to something I  
didn't do.

KLAN LEADER

You sure about that?

LEO

(trying not to cry)  
Yes. I *am*.

KLAN LEADER

Bring him.

They head toward an old OAK TREE on a hill nearby. Leo holds  
his head high -- unable to sink to the level of these men.

But then:

KLAN MEMBER

STOP!

The KLAN LEADER turns to the dissenter in the crowd. He's  
surprised. Leo's surprised *too*.

KLAN MEMBER (CONT'D)

He don't sound guilty to me.

KLAN LEADER

Is that so?

KLAN MEMBER

You're marching him off to his  
death and he's still sticking to  
his story. I know I'd be singing a  
different tune if I was him and I  
know a few of you would be too.



Again, no one moves. Not one inch.

LEO (CONT'D)

*Please...*

He looks out into the crowd of men in sheets. A sea of hate before him... then:

KLAN MEMBER

I will.

It's the one who tried to get the others to turn back. He goes to Leo -- takes his hand and removes Leo's WEDDING RING.

When the act is over, the KLAN MEMBER steps back into the mob. Leo's breathing quickens...

KLAN LEADER

Mr. Frank, we are now going to do what the law said to do. Hang you by the neck until you are dead.

LEO

(SHAKING)

*I love my wife... I love my wife more than I love my life...*

The KLAN LEADER KICKS the table out from beneath Frank's feet -- Leo's body DROPS, SNAPPING his neck.

The KLAN MEMBERS stand there as the sun begins to rise, WATCHING as Leo's DEAD BODY SWINGS before them. It's a moment of silence, a moment of shock... but then:

The KLAN MEMBERS begin to CHEER and that CHEER turns into a ROAR -- HIGH FIVES and BLACK SLAPPING.

*It becomes a celebration...*

EXT. WILL FREY'S BARN - DAWN

WILL FREY, 48, tends to his horses on his farm, but a NOISE CATCHES his attention. He turns to see FOUR AUTOMOBILES RACING down the road.

Will Frey raises an eyebrow, *curious*.

EXT. FREY'S GROVE - DAWN

The KLAN's gone by now, but they've been replaced by ONLOOKERS, who are there to celebrate. They RIP pieces of Leo's SLEEVES, CUT strands of the ROPE for trophies.

Will Frey ARRIVES in his wagon -- sees the disgusting display before him...

EXT. JUDGE MORRIS' HOME - DAWN

KNOCK KNOCK. NEWTON MORRIS, 67, old timer who's been retired for years, answers the door -- WIPING sleep from his eyes. Will Frey STANDS before him.

NEWTON MORRIS

Will Frey, what can I do you for at this ungodly hour?

WILL FREY

Sorry, Judge, but I got a mob down at my grove by the old oak. They lynched a man.

NEWTON MORRIS

That so?

WILL FREY

Looks like it might be Leo Frank.

NEWTON MORRIS

(a beat, then:)

You got a shotgun?

EXT. FREY'S GROVE - LATER

Will Frey arrives with Judge Morris and his friend, JOHN WOOD, 55 -- SHOTGUNS in hand. They take in the scene: TROPHY COLLECTORS SNAP PHOTOGRAPHS of Leo's SWINGING BODY.

FLASH FLASH FLASH!

They get in the shot, smiling big and bright, like they are taking a selfie.

FLASH FLASH FLASH!

One MAN poses next with Leo with his hand on him -- like he's some kind of big game hunter who's proud of his catch. An OLD MAN WAGS his finger at Leo's dead body...

OLD MAN

Now we've got you! You won't murder any more little girls. We've got you! We've got you now!!!

Judge Morris FIRES his SHOTGUN into the air. Everyone turns their attention toward them.

JUDGE MORRIS

That's about enough. You all are trespassing! Go on home now.

No one moves. *Not one inch.* Judge Morris NODS to Will Frey and John Wood. They get out of the wagon -- WEAVE their way through the mob. Frey and Wood reach Leo's SWINGING BODY. Frey holds on to Leo as Wood uses a KNIFE to CUT him down. Together, Frey and Wood carry Leo's DEAD BODY to the wagon.

The TROPHY HUNTERS are pissed at their fun having been ruined and SPIT on Leo's body.

Frey and Wood quickly LOAD Leo onto the wagon while Judge Morris keeps his SHOTGUN TRAINED on the mob. Without another word, they back the wagon up and get the hell out of there.

But the mob isn't finished. They get on their horses and into their automobiles and give chase...

INT. WAGON - MORNING

Judge Morris WHIPS the horses to go as fast as they can. Frey and Wood have SHOTGUNS ready.

JUDGE MORRIS

They following us?

WILL FREY

You bet your ass.

JUDGE MORRIS

Ain't no way we'll make it to town.

JOHN WOOD

Head to my place. I got an idea.

EXT. JOHN WOOD'S HOME - MORNING

The wagon comes to a HALT. John Wood and Will Frey JUMP out -- CARRYING LEO'S BODY to Wood's automobile, which is hidden in a barn. They LOAD him in before turning back to Judge Morris.

JUDGE MORRIS

Get him to the Coroner. I'll hold that mob off as long as I can.

Judge Morris WHIPS his horses -- SPEEDING off. Frey and Wood hide with Leo's body in the backseat of the automobile as the ANGRY MOB ROARS past, continuing after Morris' wagon. Once they've gone, Frey and Wood speed in the opposite direction.

INT. BLOOMFIELD'S FUNERAL HOME - MORNING

Wood and Frey arrive with the body. Frey JUMPS out and BANGS on the door of the funeral home. P.J. BLOOMFIELD answers.

WILL FREY  
We need your help.

INT. BLOOMFIELD'S FUNERAL HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Leo's body is wheeled down a hallway. Bloomfield and John Wood transfer Leo from a stretcher to a metal table.

WILL FREY  
I need your phone. The mob will come for Leo when they find he's not in Morris' wagon.

P.J. BLOOMFIELD  
My office.

INT. ATLANTA POLICE STATION - MORNING

R.J. Brown answers a RINGING phone.

R.J. BROWN  
This is Sergeant Brown.  
(a beat, then:)  
*Shit...* Yeah, we'll be right there.

He HANGS UP -- PUTS ON his jacket. W.F. Anderson comes in, SPOTS him getting ready to leave.

W.F. ANDERSON  
What is it?

R.J. BROWN  
Leo Frank's at Bloomfield's.

That says it all.

R.J. BROWN (CONT'D)  
A mob's on the way. We gotta go.

W.F. ANDERSON  
Anybody told the wife yet?

INT. LEO FRANK'S HOME - MORNING

KNOCK KNOCK. Lucille answers to find a YOUNG MAN, late 20s, standing on her porch. He's no one we've ever seen before.

LUCILLE  
 Can I help you?  
 (he HANDS her an ENVELOPE)  
 What's this?

The YOUNG MAN NODS, turns, and takes off RUNNING down the street. Lucille WATCHES him go. Then she turns her attention back to the ENVELOPE -- OPENS it up.

It's Leo's WEDDING RING.

Lucille TREMbles as the phone RINGS. It RINGS and RINGS -- like an ALARM going off. Somehow, she makes it to the phone.

LUCILLE (CONT'D)  
 (her voice BREAKS)  
 Yes?

There's a long, long pause. Then:

REUBEN (ON PHONE)  
 Lucille, I'm sorry to call so  
 early... *something's happened...*

She SQUEEZES her eyes tight as the tears begin to flow...

EXT. BLOOMFIELD'S FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The MOB has found them. Hundreds of them. They CHANT and CHEER -- desperate for the flesh and blood of Leo Frank. Fifty OFFICERS stand guard to fend them off. R.J. Brown and W.F. Anderson are among them...

MOB  
 GIVE US THE JEW! THEY WILL NOT  
 REPLACE US! GIVE US THE JEW! THEY  
 WILL NOT REPLACE US!!!

The SCREAMS grow LOUDER and LOUDER until it reaches a crescendo as we...

FADE TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

INT. REUBEN ARNOLD'S OFFICE - DAY

Reuben's going over paperwork -- can't find what he needs.

REUBEN  
 Marta, do you have the Corrigan  
 file...?

He looks up to see Lucille Frank standing in his doorway. He gets up -- goes to her.

REUBEN (CONT'D)  
Lucille. I lost track of the time.

LUCILLE  
I can come back if you're--

REUBEN  
-No, no. This is just fine.

He GRABS his coat -- USHERS Lucille out.

INT. REUBEN ARNOLD'S AUTOMOBILE - DAY

Reuben DRIVES. Lucille STARES straight ahead as they approach Bloomfield's Funeral Home.

REUBEN  
I spoke to Gov. Slaton. He and Sarah... they wish they could be here, but with things as they are--

LUCILLE  
-I understand. Thank them for me.

REUBEN  
You takin' him home?

LUCILLE  
To Brooklyn. Leo never really liked it here, but he stayed for me. Now it's time I go for him.  
(a beat)

I was reading a story in the paper. The same day Leo died, there was a young black man named John Riggins who was shot near Bainbridge. Did you read about that?

REUBEN  
No. I didn't.

LUCILLE  
It seems a white woman accused Mr. Riggins of attacking her. The police brought him before her, she identified him as her assailant, and then he was shot a hundred times. No trial, no appeal, no pleas to the Governor. Gone. Just like that.

(MORE)

LUCILLE (CONT'D)  
 (a beat, then:)  
 Makes you wonder: What the hell  
 kind of world are we living in?

He doesn't have an answer for that. They focus on the road ahead...

EXT. BLOOMFIELD'S FUNERAL HOME - DAY

There's no crowd here today. The fever has died down. Lucille gets out of the car. Reuben does too.

LUCILLE  
 I won't be long.

She goes inside -- SHUTS the door. Reuben SMOKES a cigarette, NOTICES a wagon nearby. It's filled with SUITCASES. A DRIVER tends to the horses.

Another moment and Lucille reemerges with P.J. Bloomfield who's PUSHING a COFFIN on a cart. A couple of his MEN LOAD the COFFIN into the wagon with the SUITCASES.

P.J. BLOOMFIELD  
 I'm very sorry for your loss, Mrs.  
 Frank.

She NODS. Reuben helps Lucille into the wagon, gets in after her. The DRIVER WHIPS the horses to get moving...

EXT. ATLANTA STREETS - DAY

It's a day just like any other. Everyone has gone back to their lives. But not Lucille. She SITS with her head held high. *No more tears left to cry.*

They PASS...

**R.J. Brown** (*Sgt first on the scene*) STANDS with **W.F. Anderson** (*call officer with Brown*) outside of the POLICE STATION with **Captain Dobbs** (*who told Mary's family of her death*).

Lucille looks into the window of the ATLANTA CONSTITUTION. She sees **Britt Craig** (*the ambitious journalist*) and **Marvin Ross** (*Britt's boss*) STARING right back at her.

**Boots Rodgers** (*racist officer*) hangs out with his buddy, **George Epps** (*Mary's radicalized boyfriend*), **William Simmons** (*1915 KKK founder*), and **Pastor Stevens** (*preacher*) outside the VFW Hall. They SNEER at her, but Lucille is beyond caring.

**Newt Lee** (*the first suspect*) SHUFFLES out of the post office.

From above, Lucille SPOTS **Hugh Dorsey** (*prosecutor*) looking down on her from his office with **Frank Hooper** (*Dorsey's right hand man*) and **Thomas Felder** (*states attorney*).

**Adair Dorsey** (*Hugh's wife*) comes out of the GENERAL STORE with her children. **Frances Arnold** (*Reuben's wife*) SHOPS for dresses with some friends.

**Nathaniel Harris** (*Judge who wants to be Gov.*) SHARES a joke with **Warden Maycomb** (*local Warden*) and **Judge Roan** (*Leo's judge*) as they take a stroll. They STOP talking upon seeing Lucille with that casket...

**Jim Conley** (*the star witness*) UNLOADS a wagon. He can't bring himself to look at Lucille.

**Luther Rosser** (*Leo's lawyer*) comes out of his office -- STOPS short upon seeing them. He NODS to Lucille in sympathy.

**Mr. Winburn** (*Leo's jury foreman*) HOISTS his daughter on his shoulders, without a care in the world...

Lucille SPOTS **Herbert Schiff** (*Leo's co-worker*) hitching a saddle to his horse.

**Will Frey** (*grove owner where Leo was lynched*), **Judge Morris** (*ordered Leo Frank's body cut down*), and **John Wood** (*drove Leo's body back to Atlanta*) SHARE a drink outside a SALOON. Lucille NODS to them -- mouths "thank you."

**Dr. Hurt** (*Mary's coroner*) and **Dr. Jerome** (*patched up Leo after attack*) look out at Lucille from the hospital.

And last, but certainly not least, Lucille sees **Fannie Coleman** (*Mary's mother*), **John Coleman** (*Mary's step-father*), and **Grace Hicks** (*friend who identified Mary's body*). Lucille and Fannie LOCK eyes... *they've both lost so much...*

Lucille looks back at everyone. Some have blood on their hands. Others tried to help...

REUBEN  
Lucille...?

LUCILLE  
I'm ready now.

... but today, everyone watches in silence until Lucille and Leo Frank are out of sight...

FADE OUT.