

# THE BURIAL

*Screenplay by*

Doug Wright and Maggie Betts

*Story by*

Doug Wright

*Based on The New Yorker Article by*

Jonathan Harr

04/22/2022 - GREEN REVISED PAGES

04/13/2022 - YELLOW REVISED PAGES

03/28/2022 - PINK REVISED PAGES

03/11/2022 - BLUE REVISED PAGES

03/02/2022 - PRODUCTION WHITE

© 2021 AMAZON CONTENT SERVICES LLC OR ITS AFFILIATES. All Rights Reserved

This material is the exclusive property of AMAZON CONTENT SERVICES LLC OR ITS AFFILIATES and is intended solely for the use of its personnel. No portion of this script may be performed, or reproduced by any means, or quoted, or published in any medium without prior written consent of AMAZON CONTENT SERVICES LLC.

1 EXT. SERIES OF VAST EMPTY FIELDS - TBD 1

Somewhere in the bygone regions of the South, we see all these vast and beautiful fields. All these glistening sun-kissed landscapes of whistling breezes and tall swaying grass, with such an intensely haunting feeling about them.

Until finally we land on one field in particular, gradually noticing something. Lying all by itself in the grass is an old AMERICAN FLAG. Somehow just left on its own out there.

2 EXT. O'KEEFE FUNERAL HOMES - DAY 2

Along the picturesque coastline of Gulfport, Mississippi, we hold upon the facade of a very old, traditional looking WHITE COLUMNED MANSION. On the lawn out front is a SIGN that reads: **O'KEEFE FAMILY FUNERALS AND GULF NATIONAL INSURANCE CO.**

3 INT. O'KEEFE FUNERAL HOMES/ RECEPTION - DAY 3

Moving inside of this quaint little funeral home, we drift along the walls, seeing all these old and cherished feeling PHOTOS. There are literally walls upon walls of PHOTOS documenting the long history of this proud FAMILY BUSINESS.

4 INT. O'KEEFE FUNERAL HOMES/ SHOWROOM- DAY 4

ANGLE ON: Some kind of abstract and blurred-out shiny surface, at the same time as we hear a voice say:

CASKET SALESMAN 1/ LARRY (O.S.)  
Have a look at this beauty right here, Jerry. Just look at it. Brand new to the market..

We then PULL BACK to find ourselves inside a small SHOWROOM within the funeral home where, perched up on a stand, is also a FANCY LOOKING CASKET with THREE MEN standing around looking at it. Among them is also JEREMIAH O'KEEFE.

CASKET SALESMAN 1/ LARRY (CONT'D)  
This here is what they call the, 'Calypso 7000'. And let me tell you something Jerry, when it comes to burying your loved ones in style, this here is like the Rolls Royce of top of the line caskets. Believe me, it just doesn't get any better than this, Jerry.

CASKET SALESMAN 2/ ARLO  
Gorgeous, just gorgeous. Isn't she a beauty, Jerry.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

CASKET SALESMAN 2/ ARLO (CONT'D)

Go ahead, have a closer look there,  
Jerry. Go ahead...

CASKET SALESMAN 1/ LARRY

We're talking top of the line  
finishes, a rich satin interior- go  
ahead, feel that- and a sleek  
innovative design that's frankly so  
dang pretty, it could damn near  
bring any corpse back to life.

SALESMAN 2/ ARLO

Have another look at those lines,  
Jerry. Such clean, beautiful lines  
on this one. I can't get enough.  
Personally, when I go, this is what  
I plan to be buried in.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

It's a good looking casket fellas,  
that's for sure. But tell me again  
how much it retails for? I'm  
worried it might be a little too  
expensive for some of my customers.

CASKET SALESMAN 1/ LARRY

Well, I suppose that depends.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Depends? What do you mean by that?  
Do you mean there isn't a standard  
retail price on it?

CASKET SALESMAN 1/ LARRY

What I mean is, it kind of depends  
what county you're in. Like I've  
heard of some places, over in  
Clarke for example, where it's  
selling for as low as 899. But then  
in others, like Jefferson, people  
are charging as much as 2,800.

While Jerry just looks at them both, a bit confused.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

But that just doesn't make any  
sense. Jefferson's poor, mostly  
Black folks, why would it cost more  
over there?

5 INT. O'KEEFE FUNERAL HOMES/ RECEPTION AREA - SAME TIME

5

Elsewhere in the home, a SECRETARY - CARRIE ANNE, 35- sits  
behind a desk, reading a MAGAZINE. As her eyes then happen to  
glance toward the window, she notices something unusual...

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

FOLLOWING HER POV: we see a beat-up old SEDAN has just pulled into the parking lot. Two very OFFICIAL MEN then slowly get out, brush themselves off, and stare up toward the building.

6 INT. O'KEEFE FUNERAL HOMES/ SHOWROOM - CONTINUOUS

6

CASKET SALESMAN 1/ LARRY  
So whaddya say Jerry, how about it?  
We gonna make a sale today or what?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
Sorry fellas, I appreciate your dropping by. I'm just not in the market for any new models right now. Business has been a little bit stretched here lately...

CASKET SALESMAN 2/ ARLO  
That's okay Jerry, not a problem, say no more. How'bout some embalming fluid then? I can give-

There's then a quick knock at the door, with Carrie Anne peeking her head in. Turning to Jerry, she makes a discreet motion for him to come over, while whispering.

CARRIE ANNE  
Hey Jerry, so sorry to interrupt.  
But there's two men here to see you, say they're from Jackson...

While Jerry just looks at her a moment.

7 INT. O'KEEFE FUNERAL HOMES - MOMENTS LATER

7

We now follow tightly behind, as Jerry walks down the main hall of the funeral home, then gradually makes his way to...

THE FOYER: Upon entering the foyer, he now looks up to see those same official-looking men- GARY REYNOLDS and JIM LAFONT- just kind of idly standing around and waiting for him.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
Hi there, is there something I can help you with?

GARY REYNOLDS  
Are you Mr. O'Keefe, Jeremiah O'Keefe?

JIM LAFONT  
Owner of Gulf National Insurance company, that Mr. O'Keefe?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I am. What is this about?

JIM LAFONT

Name's Jim Lafont. This gentleman here is my colleague, Gary Reynolds. We're here on behalf of the State Insurance Commission.

On Jerry, he just looks at them, a little nervous.

GARY REYNOLDS

Mr. O'Keefe, as a registered burial insurance broker in the state of Mississippi, I'm sure you're aware that you're required to keep a certain minimum of funds in your reserves at all times.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Of course.

JIM LAFONT

Listen, Mr. O'Keefe, is there maybe somewhere around here where we could talk more privately?

8 EXT. O'KEEFE FUNERAL HOMES - MOMENTS LATER

8

A little later, Jerry stands all alone on the porch, watching the men drive off. Holding on his face, he seems deeply unsettled, even a bit rattled. At the same time, we now hear an unknown VOICE drift in from elsewhere:

WILLIE GARY (O.S.)

How ya'll doin' today? Everybody okay, everybody good? Well all right now! Now, I believe most of you in here know me by now, and you also know my brother, Pastor Albert, sometimes ask me to come on up and do a little preachin'. I mean, if that's okay with ya'all...

9 EXT. SERIES OF VAST EMPTY FIELDS- TBD

9

Returning again to see all those beautiful and great, wide open fields, the voice continues to gently drift over all:

WILLIE GARY (O.S.)

Now there's a subject he asked me to talk about. A subject I'm also pretty sure means a lot to all of us here in this room...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

WILLIE GARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But before I get into that- I gotta question: Can I get a witness ya'all!! Come on now, ya'all heard me, I said, can I get a witness!! Come on now, praise the Lord! Let's praise his holy name together, can we do that please!!

10 EXT. CALVARY OF LOVE BAPTIST CHURCH, FLORIDA - MORNING 10

Inside a small and cramped, but completely JAM-PACKED black church in Florida, a raucous service takes place. Standing behind the pulpit, is also a man called WILLIE GARY (52):

WILLIE GARY

Like I said, I got something I want to preach to y'all about- And what it has do with, well, is *death*. I'm talking about the death of a loved one. I'm talking about the painful experience of losing someone we love. And what happens when we have to say goodbye for good... Y'all know what I mean!? Come on now! Cause I know ain't nobody in this room, hasn't been through it at least once!... And, oh man, losing someone you love, it'll break your heart like nothing else, won't it!?

On the congregation, we see them get more and more animated, more and more worked up- calling and hollering back.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

But still, the way I see it- Is no matter how sad and broken you are. I said no matter how broken!- You still got a choice in how you face it! You can either choose to walk in sorrow, giving up all hope, not caring no more... Or, you can come on home to the church! Hold on, I said, come on home to the church!- *The Black Church*... To find that comfort and solace in community....

11 EXT. REDEEMING LOVE BAPTIST CHURCH, FLORIDA - AFTERNOON 11

With the service over and everybody filing out, we see Willie walking hand-in-hand with his wife, GLORIA, while flanked by two BODYGUARDS- All heading for the parking lot, specifically for a pair of red and blue BENTLEYS. What's more, there's also a large CROWD around Willie.

LITTLE BOY (O.S.)

Excuse me, Sir...

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

Spinning around, Willie then looks down to see an adorable little BOY (8)- standing off to the side, staring up at him.

LITTLE BOY (CONT'D)

I just want to say, you're the best preacher I've ever seen in my life.

WILLIE GARY

Why thank you, young man. But I'm afraid I'm not a preacher....

LITTLE BOY

You're not? What do you mean? Then what are you?

WILLIE GARY

I'm Willie Gary. I'm a member of the legal profession, a lawyer.

BOY'S MOTHER

Say whaaat!? You mean to tell me you got ALL THIS right here, just from being a lawyer- A lawyer!?

WILLIE GARY

What can I say, God is good, baby. I'm thankful for all his blessings.

Turning back to the boy, Willie now bends down eye-level to him, while simultaneously pulling out a BUSINESS CARD.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Take this, young blood. That's my name on the card, right there.

He then leans in and whispers softly into the kids' ear.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Look here, I got something to tell you- Don't ever let nobody tell you what you can and cannot be. You can *do it* young man, you hear me.

MOMENTS LATER: We hear the sound of two BENTLEYS start up. Watching the cars drive off, the boy just stares at their two SIGNATURE PLATES: "**LDY**" and "**JUSTUS**".

11A INT. O'KEEFE FAMILY FUNERAL HOME/ VIEWING ROOM - DAY 11A

Jerry walks by himself down the hall. As he then happens to pass the VIEWING ROOM, he notices a light switched on. Stepping inside, Jerry's then a bit surprised to see a WOMAN sitting alone in the room. Staring ahead at a CLOSED CASSET.

(CONTINUED)

11A CONTINUED:

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Mrs. Cassidy? Is that you? I didn't realize anyone was still in here.

As the woman turns, we can see that she's been crying.

MRS. CASSIDY

Jerry. I'm sorry I'm still here. The viewing ended an hour ago and I know I should probably be gone by now but- I can't seem to leave yet.

Sensing she might need company, Jerry heads across the room.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Now, you listen here to me, if there's anything you need... you just let me know.

MRS. CASSIDY

I appreciate it Jerry, thank you, but there's nothing. Just maybe forgive me for what a complete mess I am right now.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

It's perfectly fine...

MRS. CASSIDY

I somehow managed to convince myself it would be easier. But it's not easy. It's never easy, is it?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Grief is a peculiar thing. What I am about to tell you may not comfort you right now, but it will comfort you in one hour's time--and for every hour to come. I believe in an old cliché--an old saying--popular wisdom: Time heals all wounds. It's going to get better, Sarah. It'll be better.

12 INT. PRIVATE GENTLEMEN'S CLUB, BILOXI - DAY

12

Inside a very traditional, Southern Gentlemen's Club, Jerry sits at a quiet table in the corner, opposite his friend and associate, MIKE ALLRED (60). Both of them sipping Bourbons.

(CONTINUED)



MIKE ALLRED

Insurance regulators? You gotta be kidding me. But what did they say they wanted exactly?

It's quiet for a beat, Jerry suddenly looking a bit scared.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

The truth is I may have gotten myself into some real trouble.

MIKE ALLRED

Trouble?... What do you mean?

Jerry just looks at him.

MIKE ALLRED (CONT'D)

Jerry, I've been your lawyer- what?- coming up on 30 years. Been your friend even longer than that. If there's something going on...

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

About a year ago a fellow came to me with an opportunity to invest in a savings and loan. It sure as hell looked like a safe bet at the time. The only problem was, I didn't have enough cash on hand to meet the buy-in... So, I ended up taking some money out of the company reserves.

MIKE ALLRED

(quietly shocked)

I see... How much?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Enough. Point is, the deal tanked and I lost all of it. Everything... Nobody knows this but you and I, but I've been drowning in debt for years now. I just don't know how to fix it.

MIKE ALLRED

God, Jerry. I really had no idea.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

O'Keefe Family Funerals has been in my family since before the Civil War. I've spent my whole damn life just trying to hold on to the business, to keep it in the family. So I'd have something to leave behind for my kids.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE ALLRED

Well look, let's not panic just yet. I get how stressful this is. But I'm pretty sure we can find a way out of this. Hold up a sec-

As an OLDER AFRICAN-AMERICAN WAITER passes their table, Mike subtly holds out his GLASS, shakes it a bit...

MIKE ALLRED (CONT'D)

Excuse me, son. Whenever you have a chance, could I get another Bourbon over here...

(turning back to Jerry)

Have you considered selling off part of the business?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Forget it. No way. Hell no.

MIKE ALLRED

I'm not talking about all of it, just part of it.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I'm not saying I want to but if I did, where the hell would I find a buyer?

Pulling out his wallet, Mike starts digging around before finding a small BUSINESS CARD and handing it to Jerry.

MIKE ALLRED

Well, Canada, actually. You familiar with these guys?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Loewen Group. Of course I'm familiar... What about them?

MIKE ALLRED

From what I'm told, they've been on a pretty significant acquisition spree. Going all across the country, buying up every independently-owned funeral chain they can get their hands on. These guys are really big players...

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Christ, Mike. You know how I feel about all these big corporations- All they care about is profit and don't give a damn about people, or community.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (3)

MIKE ALLRED

All I'm saying is it's an option  
and it's out there. Tell you what,  
you don't need to decide right now.

13 EXT. O'KEEFE RESIDENCE/ BACKYARD - DAY

13

In a large backyard behind the O'Keefe's home, a FAMILY GATHERING takes place. Three generations all mulling around, happy, cheerful- frisbees, badminton, and touch football...

A LITTLE LATER: Now everybody starts singing as an enormous BIRTHDAY CAKE is brought out over to Jerry at a table. Jerry smiles as his GRANDDAUGHTER (4) comes over with a CARD.

LITTLE O'KEEFE GRANDDAUGHTER

Happy Biiiiirrrfffdy, Granddaddy, I  
made it just for you!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Did you? Well aren't I lucky. Can  
you read to me what it says...

At the same time as his eyes glance over to his wife, ANNETTE O'KEEFE, a sweetly smiling champion All-American Grandma.

A LITTLE LATER: Jerry and Annette now stand off to the side, locked in an embrace, looking on proudly at their family.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

13 children, 24 grandchildren- I'd  
say you done good Mr. O'Keefe.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

And you have done well, Mrs.  
O'Keefe. Very well indeed. Not one  
felon in the whole bunch.

As he continues to watch, however, we notice a very subtle shift in Jerry's expression. Annette seems to notice, too.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

Hey. Hey you...Is everything okay?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

...What?

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

You just made a funny look, is all.  
Just checking in with you. I'm  
still allowed to do that, aren't I?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Of course, but I'm fine. Really. I  
couldn't be happier with this day.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

One of their younger daughters, then comes trotting over.

JODIE O'KEEFE

Hey Mom, Dad- Whenever you want,  
we're ready for the family photo.

MOMENTS LATER: Jerry and Annette now stand smack-dab in the center of their brood, while another child sets the self-timer on a CAMERA. Before 1, 2, 3... 'SAY CHEESE EVERYBODY!!'

14 OMIT

14

15 EXT. AIRPORT/ CURBSIDE - MORNING

15

As a TAXI pulls up in front of the airport, we see Jerry climb out, with a BAG over his shoulder. Just as he looks up again, he sees Mike smiling and walking towards him.

MIKE ALLRED

Jerry, perfect timing. Need a hand with that?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Nope, got it thanks.

MIKE ALLRED

Hey, so listen, you're sure about this, right? No deal's been made yet, you can still back out-

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

No need. I've given it a lot of thought and I believe it's the right thing to do for my family.

MIKE ALLRED

Well, all righty then. Next stop Vancouver! You ready to go inside?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

We need to wait for Hal first...

MIKE ALLRED

Who?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I told you about, Hal. He's this incredibly bright young man, friend of my son's from college, that's just starting out as a lawyer...

MIKE ALLRED

Oh right, I think you mentioned...

(CONTINUED)

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

He recently passed the bar and is hungry to get some experience. So I invited him along, you don't mind... Actually, I think this is him right now.

We then FOLLOW THEIR POV to see a very young, preppy looking African American man- HAL DOCKINS (29)- hurrying down the curb toward them. Mike's expression turns a little shocked.

HAL DOCKINS

Hey there Mr. O'Keefe! So sorry I'm a little late. Would you believe the taxi actually dropped me off at the wrong terminal....

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Don't mention it, Hal. Here, let me introduce you to Mike Allred...

HAL DOCKINS

Great to meet you, Mr. Allred. Very excited to be a member of the team.

Hal reaches out to shake his hand, but Allred's still so shocked it takes him an extra second to shake back.

MIKE ALLRED

Hi there, nice to meet you. So, you're a lawyer...?

HAL DOCKINS

I know, people say I look too young. But- Yeah, guess I can finally call myself a real lawyer. Now that I've opened my own office.

MIKE ALLRED

You have your own... *office*?

HAL DOCKINS

Yes, I do, I have my very own office. Just like you, Mr. Allred.

MIKE ALLRED

Well that's just great, good for you, son. I'll see you guys inside.

As Mike then snatches up his bag and starts to head inside, Hal turns to Jerry and looks at him.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

C'mon, let's go to Canada.

16

EXT. VANCOUVER MARINA - LATE AFTERNOON

16

Looking out across a marina, we see a massive 145 FOOT YACHT parked in a slip, with a long, GOLD PLAQUE: **THE ALULA SPIRIT**. At the same time, we suddenly PUSH IN FAST on the face of a very clean-cut executive- ROBERT SPERRY (42)- as he says:

ROBERT SPERRY  
You must be, Mr. O'Keefe?

We then see Jerry, Hal and Allred there on the dock. Having just arrived at the marina, they all head towards Sperry.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
That's right.

ROBERT SPERRY  
Bob Sperry, we spoke on the phone.  
I work for Ray Loewen. He's really  
looking forward to meeting you.

SECONDS LATER: They now all walk along the dock together, heading towards the yacht. Jeremiah is not impressed.

HAL DOCKINS  
(softly)  
So, we're meeting on a yacht, is  
that right?

ROBERT SPERRY  
That's right. I suppose Ray fancies  
himself a bit of a seafarer. But  
given you guys had never been to  
VC, he thought you'd get a kick out  
of a cruise around the harbor....  
As you've probably gathered, Ray's  
very hands-on. One of the only CEOs  
I know of who takes time to meet  
with every seller personally....

Finally reaching the yacht, they now all look up to see a rather large, imposing MAN, lingering along the deck. This is the infamous RAY LOEWEN (54).

ROBERT SPERRY (CONT'D)  
Hey, Ray. Allow me to introduce Mr.  
Jeremiah O'Keefe, of O'Keefe Family  
Funerals down in Mississippi, and  
some of his colleagues...

Sperry lends a hand, as they all climb aboard and start introducing and greeting one another.

RAY LOEWEN  
Pleasure to meet you all... So  
how'bout it, you guys like the way  
we do business up here in Canada?

(CONTINUED)

Production White (03/02/22) 14.  
16 CONTINUED: 16  
17 OMIT 17  
18 EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT 18

We watch the sleek outline of Loewen's yacht cut across the ocean horizon and see all the lights twinkling from inside.

19 INT. LOEWEN YACHT/ GALLEY/ DINING CABIN - NIGHT 19  
ANGLE ON: The HAND OF A CHEF as he carefully arranges garnish upon a PLATTER OF LOBSTER. We then move into the DINING CABIN, where all 5 men are all seated around a large table.

RAY LOEWEN  
My old man was a small town undertaker- Same as yours, right, Jerry? Who inherited the business from his father, just like yours. Growing up, my dad had about 5 homes, doing a couple hundred calls per year. And he was proud of that. But for me, I don't know, all that legacy stuff never much interested me. Once the industry started to change in the 90s, I saw an opportunity. See, my strategy has always been simple: buy up as many funeral homes as I can, and put myself in position for what I like to call, 'The Golden Era of Death'.

HAL DOCKINS  
Sorry...?

ROBERT SPERRY  
It's when all the baby-boomers across the US are finally going to reach the, '*age of their demise*'.

RAY LOEWEN  
In other words, start dropping like flies. Resulting in a minimum 60% increase in death rates nationwide. Do you have any idea how many people there are living in the US right now over the age of 65?

They all just look around, kind of shrugging, 'No'.

RAY LOEWEN (CONT'D)  
51 million.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

That all seems kind of cynical.  
Don't you ever worry about losing  
sight of the customer?

RAY LOEWEN

The customer? What customer? My  
customers are dead guys...

Beat. Tense, awkward, laughter.

RAY LOEWEN (CONT'D)

Just kidding. Look, the more  
funeral homes I own, the more money  
I make. The more I'm able to meet  
the demands of my customers,  
provide for their growing needs.

MIKE ALLRED

Exactly how many funeral homes is  
it the Loewen Group owns right now?

ROBERT SPERRY

At present, we own 1115 funeral  
homes, 427 cemeteries and 354  
insurance companies.

MIKE ALLRED

My goodness. That must make you the  
largest single owner in death care?

RAY LOEWEN

Second largest. On that note, maybe  
it's time we drop all the chit  
chat, start talking about a deal.  
What do you say, gentlemen?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I'm interested to hear what you  
have in mind, Ray.

RAY LOEWEN

Well, my understanding is you've  
been having a bit of trouble with  
the state regulators down there.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

How did you come to that  
understanding?

RAY LOEWEN

I have sources, Jerry. And then I  
have resources.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



RAY LOEWEN (CONT'D)

Anyway, only reason I bring it up, is because it lets me understand your situation. You own what- 9 homes across the state?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

8. I own 8. Plus my insurance business, obviously.

RAY LOEWEN

So how about this- You sell me 3 of those homes, say at a fair market value to be agreed upon later. Then, not only do you keep the bulk of your assets. But that also should provide you with more than enough fresh cash to deal with those regulators.

HAL DOCKINS

Sorry, but, if he sells you three of his homes, won't that leave you with a monopoly in half the state?

RAY LOEWEN

Oh I'm sorry, is that a problem for you? Last I checked, I didn't get to where I am by making everybody else's lunch for them.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

There's something else I want out of the deal.

RAY LOEWEN

Like what, Jerry? A hand-job in the backseat?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I make most of my profit selling burial insurance and there's no way I can survive if you hold a monopoly on that too.

They all just look around for a moment.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE (CONT'D)

What I'd like is to sell you three of my funeral homes at a fair market value. But you need to also make a promise, here and now, to no longer sell burial insurance in Southern Mississippi.

Another long, tense, pause.

(CONTINUED)

RAY LOEWEN  
Okay. Sure, Jerry....

MIKE ALLRED  
So.. Does this mean we have a deal?

RAY LOEWEN  
We have a deal. I'll have our  
lawyers draw up a contract and  
we'll get it closed immediately.

Ray then reaches his hand over to shake with Jerry.

FADE OUT.

**6 Months Later**

20 INT. O'KEEFE RESIDENCE - AFTERNOON

20

Jerry, Hal and Allred are gathered in Jerry's living room.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
What the hell's taking so long? We  
closed on this deal...

MIKE ALLRED  
Coming up on 4 months now. They  
keep trying to re-trade the terms.  
When we left Vancouver they said  
it'd take 30 days max.

HAL DOCKINS  
I don't know. If you ask me, it all  
makes perfect sense.

Jerry and Mike then both turn to Hal.

HAL DOCKINS (CONT'D)  
What I mean is, have you ever  
considered the possibility that  
Loewen never had any intention of  
closing on the deal at all?

MIKE ALLRED  
Son, with all due respect, you  
really don't have the faintest idea  
what you're talking about.

HAL DOCKINS  
With all due respect, I believe I  
do. Think about it: The longer he  
stalls, the worse you're screwed.  
First the insurance commission  
takes your license, destroying your  
livelihood.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HAL DOCKINS (CONT'D)

Until sooner or later you have to declare bankruptcy. Now not only does Loewen get the 3 homes, but he can actually buy your entire business out from under you at a yard-sale price.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

You really think they're trying to bankrupt me? How can they- We have a signed contract!

HAL DOCKINS

But it was only signed on our end, with no closing date attached. By the way, I heard he never stopped selling insurance either.

MIKE ALLRED

Oh come on, stop with all the conspiracy theories! Son, I'm sorry, but you really are paranoid.

HAL DOCKINS

You know what, would you mind doing me a favor? Would you mind not calling me son anymore. I'm not your son, Mike.

MIKE ALLRED

Woah! Just take it easy, okay! You want to be taken seriously as a lawyer in this town...

HAL DOCKINS

Sorry, who says I'm not!?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

All right, that's enough of that!

Jerry continues to try and process.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE (CONT'D)

Do you really think it's possible... that Loewen has the intent... of running me into the ground?

HAL DOCKINS

I do. Why the hell should they be on our clock anyway?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Jesus Christ, I don't believe this. That's it. I'm going to sue him.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE ALLRED

What?! Come on, that's a really bad idea! Litigation's always a last resort. Especially when you're talking about going up against a huge corporation with a shit ton of money.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I don't care. The guy looked me in the eye, shook my hand, told me we had a deal, then tried to steamroll me. Just because he can, because he's rich and I'm not. So... I am going to sue the sonofabitch!

21 EXT. JACKSON MS, COURTHOUSE - DAY 21

Holding on a facade of a massive courthouse building in the city of Jackson, we see a young MALE PARALEGAL carrying a STACK OF PAPERS go racing up the stairs, two at a time.

22 INT. JACKSON, MS COURTHOUSE/ OFFICES - MOMENTS LATER 22

The paralegal now stands at a window, opposite a bored-looking SECRETARY, who smacks gum loudly.

PARALEGAL IN COURTHOUSE

I'm here to file a lawsuit.

SECRETARY IN COURTHOUSE

That the complaint right there, may I see it please?

As he slides all the PAPERWORK under to her, she takes it in her hands, glancing over the front page.

SECRETARY IN COURTHOUSE (CONT'D)

Jeremiah J. O'Keefe Sr. Vs Loewen Group LLC- *Ooooooh, sounds salty! Who do you think's gonna win?*

PARALEGAL IN COURTHOUSE

Excuse me?

SECRETARY IN COURTHOUSE

(stamping the paper)

Never mind. Have a seat over there, someone will be with you shortly.

23 INT. O'KEEFE RESIDENCE/ DINING ROOM - NIGHT 23

Sometime in the evening, Jerry and Annette sit opposite each other at their dining room table, having dinner.

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

Are you really planning on going through with this whole lawsuit thing?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

We filed the complaint this morning.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

This morning? Well, when were you going to tell me?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Well, Annie, I guess I'm telling you now.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

Just seems so strange to me. You don't sue people. Not you.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Well, so...

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

So you really think 75 years of age is a good time to start? Old men don't file lawsuits.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

The way I see it, if someone tries to take advantage of you, and you know it's wrong, doesn't matter how old you are. This fellow tried to bully me out of business. I don't see why I should stand for that.

Before suddenly they hear the sound of the DOORBELL. Both of them glancing up curiously.

MOMENTS LATER: Jerry now opens the door and is immediately perplexed by the sight of Hal right there on his doorstep.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE (CONT'D)

Jesus, Hal? What are you doing?

HAL DOCKINS

Hi Mr. O'Keefe, sorry to just show up like this, but-

Just as Annette now peeks out from the end of the hall.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

Oh, Hal, honey, is that you? Don't leave yet, I've got dessert coming!

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2)

HAL DOCKINS

Oh hi, no, I'm fine thanks Mrs.  
O'Keefe. Really, thank you...

(to Jerry again)

I know it's late, and I'm sorry.  
But I had this idea for your case,  
and, well... Can I come in?

Just as Jerry's eyes slowly glance down to the peculiar sight  
of a beaten up OLD VHS TAPE clutched tightly in Hal's hand.

24 **MONTAGE UP: LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS.** 24

*Suddenly the screen is overtaken by an old episode of  
LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS, featuring none other than,  
Willie Gary. Various images from the opening, accompany:*

VOICE OF ROBIN LEACH (V.O.)

Good Evening and welcome to  
Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous!!

24A INT. BACK SEAT OF A STRETCH LIMO - DAY 24A

*Seated all alone in the back of his limo, a sharply dressed  
Willie, talks 'all business' into his oversized CAR PHONE.*

VOICE OF ROBIN LEACH (V.O.)

*Tonight we have the ultimate rags  
to riches story! Of a dirt poor  
migrant worker who became a golden  
legal eagle with the Midas touch!*

24B EXT. LAW OFFICES OF WILLIE GARY - DAY 24B

*As the LIMO pulls up in front, we see a hand reach in to open  
the door. Willie then steps out, brushes himself off, reaches  
out his arms so his BODYGUARD can help him into his jacket.*

VOICE OF ROBIN LEACH (V.O.)

*You won't believe the amazing  
journey of famed personal injury  
lawyer Willie E. Gary.*

24C INT. VERY FAKE LOOKING COURTROOM - DAY 24C

*Inside an extremely FAKE TV SET OF A COURTROOM, Willie  
exaggeratedly pantomimes the act of making an argument.*

24D INT. CASA GLORIA/ LIVING ROOM - DAY 24D

*Sitting behind the desk, inside his plush faux mahogany and  
gold-trimmed office, Willie smiles toward camera:*

(CONTINUED)

24D CONTINUED:

WILLIE GARY

*There are two things I believe in  
most in this world: Lady Justice  
and black excellence.*

24E INT. OLD BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO

24E

*In a very dated Ken Burns style move, we rapid SPIN AND PUSH  
IN on an old photo: A RANDOM SHOT OF A VAST EMPTY FIELD...*

VOICE OF ROBIN LEACH (V.O.)

*Born the 6th of 11 children to dirt  
poor Southern sharecroppers, life  
wasn't always easy for Willie Gary.*

24F INT. CASA GLORIA/ LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

24F

WILLIE GARY

*I just always had a burning desire  
to be somebody. I knew I was going  
to make something of myself, man!*

*We PAN along a mantle, seeing all kinds of pictures of Willie  
with various CELEBRITIES...*

VOICE OF ROBIN LEACH (V.O.)

*And make something of himself he  
did!*

24G EXT./INT. CASA GLORIA/ VARIOUS - DAY

24G

*A RAPID PUSH IN on the MASSIVE GOLD DOORS of Willie's  
mansion, as they magically open for us...*

VOICE OF ROBIN LEACH (V.O.)

*Now Willie lives in a fabulous 50  
room mansion along the coast of  
Florida, called, Casa Gloria....*

*We then gently begin to float through all the opulent,  
luxurious rooms of the house.*

VOICE OF ROBIN LEACH (V.O.)

*Together with his wife, and former  
childhood sweetheart, Gloria...*

*Then DISSOLVES to a beautiful, CASINO-style portrait of  
Gloria, lounging sideways against a pearly WHITE PIANO.*

24H INT. CASA GLORIA/ LIVING ROOM - DAY

24H

*Willie and Gloria now sit side by side on a couch, wearing  
MATCHING WHITE VELOUR TRACKSUITS, holding hands.*

(CONTINUED)

24H CONTINUED:

GLORIA GARY

*One thing I've always tried to  
remind Willie, is to never forget  
where he came from. To stay humble.*

WILLIE GARY

*God has been so generous to us, we  
feel blessed everyday for all that  
he's given us. And for each other.*

24J EXT. PRIVATE AIRPORT/ WINGS OF JUSTICE - DAY 24J

*We see a sleek LIMO pull in, in front of a massive GULF II  
STREAM II EXECUTIVE JET: Aka "Wings of Justice".*

VOICE OF ROBIN LEACH (V.O.)

*Blessed indeed! As these days  
Willie no longer rides the bus! But  
travels on his very own Gulf Stream  
jet, called 'Wings of Justice.'*

24K INT. WINGS OF JUSTICE - DAY 24K

*We gently float on our own through the plush, sumptuous  
interior of the plane, GOLD PLATING everywhere...*

24L EXT. PRIVATE AIRPORT/ WINGS OF JUSTICE - CONTINUOUS 24L

*Willie stands before his jet and assumes his SIGNATURE POSE:  
Clasping his hands together, cocking his head to the side.*

24M EXT. CASA GLORIA/ POOL - DAY 24M

*And now he does the EXACT SAME POSE in front of the pool.*

24N EXT. CASA GLORIA/ DRIVEWAY - DAY 24N

*And now the EXACT SAME POSE in front of his TWO BENTLEYS.*

24P INT. WILLIE GARY'S PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY 24P

*And now the EXACT SAME POSE leaning up against the desk in  
the office... Before the video instantly SHUTS OFF!*

25 INT. THE O'KEEFE HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 25

*Together in Jerry's living room, Hal at last switches off the  
TV, before turning to Jerry with an eager expression.*

(CONTINUED)



HAL DOCKINS

Well, what do you think?

While Jerry just stares back in complete shock.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I don't know what to think. Are you suggesting I hire this guy as one of my lawyers?

HAL DOCKINS

I know it's seems like a crazy idea. But the fact is, this guy wins cases. Believe it or not, he's got a flawless trial record. He supposedly hasn't lost a case in over 12 years.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

What does he know about contract law? This is a contract law case?

HAL DOCKINS

Does he really need to know much?

Jerry just looks at Hal curiously.

HAL DOCKINS (CONT'D)

Look, the case was filed down in Hinds County. Which is a 3 to 1 black/white ratio. That means there's a 70% chance we'll end up with a black judge. And if we do go to trial, likely a black jury too.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

So what?

HAL DOCKINS

With all due respect, Mr. O'Keefe, you just can't put a guy like Mike Allred in front of a black jury.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Why the hell not? Mike's been my lawyer damn near 30 years, he knows contract law better than anyone.

HAL DOCKINS

Are you really going to make me spell it out? He literally reeks of self-satisfied good ole' boy Southern bigotry. A black jury sees a guy like that coming...

Jerry doesn't seem to understand.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

HAL DOCKINS (CONT'D)

Have you noticed how many times he's called me, 'son', in the mere three times we've met? Generally, when a white man calls a black man 'son' in the deep South. He doesn't mean son.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I see your point. Still, the idea of us pandering to a jury like that- It's not a discrimination suit. You and I both know, race has nothing to do with it.

HAL DOCKINS

But isn't that the biggest lie of all, Mr. O'Keefe. You ask me, pretty much everything in America has to do with race... If you look at it long enough.

Clearly unsure, Jeremiah's quiet for a moment.

HAL DOCKINS (CONT'D)

I happen to know for a fact that Gary's trying a case down in Florida this week. What if we just went down for a day and tried to meet him in person? It can't hurt.

26A EXT. COURTHOUSE IN KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA - SAME TIME 26A

Just outside the courthouse, we watch a TAXI pull up.

26 INT. COURTROOM IN KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA - DAY 26

Inside a tiny courtroom in Florida, we find a fully packed house. Literally every seat filled by an audience of ALL AFRICAN AMERICANS. While at the front, stands Willie Gary...

WILLIE GARY

Members of the jury, before I begin my closing argument, I just have one small question to ask?- Does anyone mind if I keep things simple? If I just talk in plain, ordinary talk?... Now to be perfectly honest, okay, to be perfectly honest- I don't deny that my no good client- Mr. Clovis Tubbs- was in fact drunk on the day of the accident... Matter of fact, he was drunk as a skunk. He was! No, he was! Pissed. Sloshed. Tanked.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Whatever! Whatever you want to call it! With a blood alcohol level of- excuse me for one second here...

He grabs a piece of paper, quickly reading over it.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

... With a blood alcohol level of .4%. And another thing! Another thing! Because it's also true that on the day of the accident, Clovis was depressed. He was in fact, extremely depressed and what some might call suicidal. Having already made several attempts on his life-

Jeremiah and Hal now discreetly slip in through the back.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

I mean as you yourselves saw in the records, he flat out told the therapist- He told these exact words to the therapist...

(he starts reading)

"I want to die so bad I'd drive my car straight into a tree if I could. Only thing is they revoked my license. So, now I'm going to get me a bicycle and drive straight into oncoming traffic instead."... I know, pathetic right. But thing is folks, that's exactly what he did! He marched straight down to the liquor store that morning, that liquor store over on- where was it again?- liquor store over on Alberta and Vine. Sucked back a bottle of scotch, got up on his bicycle. Then drove right into the middle of the highway without stopping... Which, as we know, is also when a driver for the Finch and Co. Food Services company came around a corner on Elm. And BAM! -- Hit Clovis head on!... Then when he finally wakes up in the hospital about a week later. What does he decide to do?- He decides to sue!

We hear whispers from the jury.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Now, I know! Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury, I know! It really doesn't look good! The man was drunk, drunker than drunk! He was admittedly suicidal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (2)

## WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, I know!- But I still ask you to please open your hearts, and award us the mere 65 million dollars we believe we're rightfully owed in this case. Because poor Clovis, sad as he is, still had one thing going for him in life. Something that can't be denied and we believe proves the defendant's full and complete negligence... My man Clovis had the green light.

Willie gives the jury one last look, then turns to the judge.

## WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Your honor, the plaintiff rests.

Suddenly there's a MASS ERUPTION OF APPLAUSE, all kinds of HOLLERIN', PEOPLE JUMPING FROM THEIR SEATS- INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE JURY, the Judge frantically trying to regain order.

All while Jerry, the lone white guy amidst all these black faces, just looks around. As much confused and bewildered, as he is awestruck and impressed.

28 OMIT 28

29 INT. LAW OFFICES OF WILLIE GARY/ ELEVATOR/ HALLWAY - DAY 29

We hear the sound of an elevator go 'Ding!' as two shiny glistening gold doors open onto the top floor of Willie Gary's law offices. Hal and Jerry gradually step out.

As they then head down a hall toward reception, both men also can't help but seem a little stunned by the sheer over-the-top and gaudy opulence of the place.

30 OMITTED 30

31 INT. LAW OFFICES OF WILLIE GARY/ WILLIE'S OFFICE - LATER 31

As the secretary leads Jerry and Hal into Willie's private office, we PUSH IN FAST on the face of Willie himself.

## WILLIE GARY

Gentlemen, come on in! How ya'll doing, Willie Gary, hope you guys weren't waiting too long...

Rising from his desk, Willie then crosses to shake hands with Jerry and Hal. While seated on a couch across the room, we also notice another man, a slightly younger, sharply dressed Black lawyer who is Willie's partner, REGGIE DOUGLAS (40).

(CONTINUED)

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

It's a pleasure to meet you Mr. Gary, name's Jeremiah O'Keefe.

WILLIE GARY

Jeremiah? Okay, like from the bible, yeah, okay, I like that...  
(then turning to Hal)  
And what about you, young brother?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

My junior counsel, Halbert Dockins-

HAL DOCKINS

Hal's fine, it's an honor Mr. Gary.

WILLIE GARY

Oh, you a lawyer too? Ain't you a little young for that, negro? I'm just teasin', fellas go ahead and sit down, take a seat ya'll...

As Jerry and Hal take seats, they finally notice Reggie.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

This here is one of my partners, Reggie Douglas. Reggie runs point on all my cases, he's my number 1, 2 and 3. Hope you don't mind I asked him to sit in.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Hey there fellas, welcome.

Willie himself then takes a seat, gently easing back in his chair, as we notice a SMALL PLAQUE on the desk: BLACK OWNED.

WILLIE GARY

So- What you got for me today, what you got for Willie Gary? Some kind of P.I. case?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Sorry, what's a P.I. case?

WILLIE GARY

P.I., man. As in: Personal Injury.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Didn't ya'll see the sign on the door, that's the only kind of law we practice around here.

HAL DOCKINS

Well, yes and no. I mean, I guess you could sort of call it a P.I. case, but with a bit of a twist.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

Well, what kind of case are we talking about here fellas?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

It's a contract law case.

WILLIE GARY

Contract law? We don't do no contract law around here.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Contract law- *Yuck!* That's like a nap waiting to happen.

HAL DOCKINS

We recognize it's not your field, but if you could just hear him out. I think you'll find Jerry's got a very compelling story...

Hal then turns to Jerry, gently egging him on.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I am a funeral director from Biloxi, Mississippi. I own a business there, several businesses, actually. 8 funeral homes and one burial insurance company. About a year ago I ran into some trouble financially and decided to sell a few of the funeral homes as a way to raise cash. Which is how I ended up entering a deal with this corporation called The Loewen Group - a very big, very powerful consolidation firm. Point is, they agreed to buy 3 of my funeral homes, and we drew up a contract. But they refused to hold up their end of the deal.

HAL DOCKINS

Basically, Loewen knew Jerry was in trouble, and that if they just ran the clock on the deal, he'd end up going bankrupt. Then they could buy not only his three funeral homes, but his entire company, for yard sale prices... Oh and he's also Canadian.

WILLIE GARY

Canadian? Who's Canadian, Loewen?

(CONTINUED)

HAL DOCKINS

Look, all we want is just to be able to hold Loewen Group responsible for their actions.

WILLIE GARY

No, what you want is to make them pay.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Make em' hurt, make em' pay!

WILLIE GARY

Okay so, how much ya'll suing for?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

6 million dollars. That's fair market value plus damages. I've already filed a civil claim in Hinds County.

Willie and Reggie glance at each other yet again.

HAL DOCKINS

So, what do you think, Mr. Gary? Do you like the case?

WILLIE GARY

Ya'll want my honest opinion?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I'd be much obliged, Mr. Gary.

WILLIE GARY

Look, I'm sorry about what happened to you, Mr. O'Keefe, truly-. But this case just ain't for me, this case ain't for Willie Gary.

HAL DOCKINS

Huh? Why not?

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Case ain't for Willie Gary, cause it's not a *Willie Gary case*.

HAL DOCKINS

But? But why? What's a Willie Gary case then? I don't understand-

WILLIE GARY

A Willie Gary case is one where I can see the upper hand. A Willie Gary case is one where I already know it's going to trial, and I can play the jury like a symphony.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (4)

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

A Willie Gary case is one where I know I can push for that big-dollar cash-money pay-out for my clients.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

In other words, a Willie Gary case is a case we know we can win. Your case, not so much. Matter of fact, your case sounds *iffy*...

WILLIE GARY

Not to mention, full disclosure, I normally don't take on too many white clients. No offense, Mr. O'Keefe. It's just unusual for me.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

No offense taken, Mr. Gary.

32 INT. LAW OFFICES OF WILLIE GARY/ HALLWAY - LATER

32

Jerry and Hal now come back down the hall, on their way out.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

This guy is too rich and too famous for us, Hal.

Hal pauses, a funny expression on his face.

HAL DOCKINS

Yeah, right, Actually, do you mind waiting here a sec...

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

What for?

HAL DOCKINS

I just want to talk to him one more time. Just give me 5 minutes...

Hal then quickly turns and starts heading away.

33 INT. LAW OFFICES OF WILLIE GARY/ WILLIE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS 33 LATER

Back in Willie's office, he and Reggie continue to chat idly.

WILLIE GARY

Hey, how'd you think that green light bit played with that one Latino juror in the back?

(CONTINUED)



REGGIE DOUGLAS

You mean the lady with that,  
whatchacall- striped sweater thing?

Before the door swings open, Hal now marching straight in.

HAL DOCKINS

Look, Mr. Gary, I'm so sorry to  
come back in here like this...

WILLIE GARY

What!?! You back in here? What's up,  
you get lost or something?!

REGGIE DOUGLAS

It's official. This young brother  
has completely lost his mind.

HAL DOCKINS

Maybe so, but if I could have one  
more minute of your time, Mr. Gary,  
please, just a minute that's all-

Hal now hurries back over to the chair and sits down.

WILLIE GARY

Man, you got a lot a chutzpah, you  
know that, barging back in here  
like this.

HAL DOCKINS

Look, I heard everything you said  
before, I did- But still, I think  
you should reconsider our case.

WILLIE GARY

What? Reconsider? Come on, man.  
Why, what in the hell for?

HAL DOCKINS

Just look at it from a jury's  
perspective, Jerry's a great  
client. He's a decorated war hero,  
that was awarded the distinguished  
Flying Cross in World War II?

WILLIE GARY

That's it, that's all you got...

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Wasn't World War II something like  
50 years ago now? Nigga, that  
shit's old news.

(CONTINUED)

HAL DOCKINS

Okay also- In 1976, when Jerry served as Mayor of his home town in Biloxi. The KKK tried to organize a march in his town, and he took a firm stance denied them a permit.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

What's Jerry supposed to be all our white savior now? Man, you sound like you're in love with Jerry.

HAL DOCKINS

Okay, fine. Well, what about-

WILLIE GARY

No, no, no! Let me stop you there. I like you Hal, I do. Which is also why I'm just going to give it to you straight, not pussy foot around- Besides the fact that I already told you I don't do contract law. Besides the fact that I made it clear I'm not particularly partial to white clients. Besides all that... It's just not enough money.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Seriously brother, don't you know where you are? You see all this mahogany wood in here, you see all this gold trim- This is the big leagues baby. We do 40, 50, 80 million dollar cases. Monthly.

WILLIE GARY

We just ain't interested in no 6 million dollar contract dispute between two white guys...

REGGIE DOUGLAS

*Especially* not between two white guys.

WILLIE GARY

...Decorated war hero or not.

HAL DOCKINS

Okay, but how do you know that this case can't be bigger?

Willie and Reggie glance at each other and laugh.

WILLIE GARY

What's that supposed to mean? You know something I don't.

(CONTINUED)

33

CONTINUED: (3)

HAL DOCKINS

The truth is, Ray Loewen happens to sit at the top of one of the biggest secret industries in this country. I'm talking about the nearly 20 billion dollar 'death-care' industry. What's more, there are only two huge corporations out there, that are slowly moving in and taking over everything. And The Loewen Group is one of them. What they did to Jerry is awful, but I have a feeling it's not even the tip of the iceberg...

(another deep breath)

Should I, um, go on?

WILLIE GARY

Sure, go ahead...

HAL DOCKINS

And, sure, you may do all these 80 million dollar cases and have your own plane and all that. But you know as well as I do, that as far as the more 'elite' legal community in this country is concerned- You're still just a glorified ambulance chaser. No offense... But maybe this could be the case that changes all that? Maybe this could even be the case, that one case, that finally puts you on the map. I'm talking about William Kuntsler, Clarence Darrow, Thurgood Marshall-

Pausing, Hal leans in closer, really feeling himself now.

HAL DOCKINS (CONT'D)

I'm talking about *Johnny-Motherfucking-Cochran!*

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Uh oh, he said the 'J' word ya'll.

34

OMITTED

34

35

INT. LOEWEN CORPORATE OFFICES - DAY

35

Within the sleek corporate offices of the Loewen Group, we follow Robert Sperry as he walks briskly down a hall.

36

INT. LOEWEN CORPORATE OFFICES/ CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

36

Inside a glistening white conference room, Ray Loewen sits at the head of a table, flanked by a massive team of ASSOCIATES.

RAY LOEWEN

Someone want to fill me in on where we're at with that 16 home chain in Cleveland? How many calls per year?

ASSOC #1 DAVID SHATTEROCK

About 1600. As for where we are, we made a strong pitch, and they seem committed. Obviously, if we can get there before SCI, we'd have full proprietorship over the region.

RAY LOEWEN

Well then I'll choose to remain optimistic. Until you give me reason otherwise.

There's then a brief knock at the door, Black peeking in.

ROBERT SPERRY

Sorry to interrupt, Ray. But I just wanted to let you know that apparently that guy, Jeremiah O'Keefe, filed some kind of lawsuit against us in the U.S.

RAY LOEWEN

What? Who?

ROBERT SPERRY

Mr. O'Keefe. Jeremiah O'Keefe.

RAY LOEWEN

Forgive me- But am I supposed to know who the fuck that is?

ASSOC#2 ERIC BELL

Isn't he that local Mississippi guy you met with about 9 months ago. He had those 8 homes plus an insurance arm...

RAY LOEWEN

Oh, right. You mean the old guy with all the regulator problems... But hold on a sec, did I hear you correctly? Did you just say he's suinq us? *He's* suinq us? For what?

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT SPERRY

As per the suit: "Breach of contract. Predatory trade practices. Seeking to create a monopoly as a way to seize control over local markets."

They all just look around, kind of chuckling.

RAY LOEWEN

Really, is that all! My goodness, this guy's got quite the set of balls on him. Isn't he like 80!?

ASSOC #2 ERIC BELL

He's 75.

ASSOC #4/ RICK BRONKSY

He claims we had an ironclad agreement to purchase 3 of his homes, that we then reneged on.

ASSOC #2 ERIC BELL

Well but we did, didn't we.

ROBERT SPERRY

Did we what?

ASSOC #2 ERIC BELL

We did have an agreement to purchase his 3 homes.

ASSOC #3 JEEF TOORAY

Yeah but that doesn't mean shit...

ASSOC #1 DAVID SHATTEROCK

We were taking our sweet time to close, so-the-fuck-what.

ASSOC #4/ RICK BRONKSY

Right. Deal with it dude...

RAY LOEWEN

Okay, okay, okay. But what I need to know is: does this guy have any actual case? What's he basing this on? Was there ever a contract?

They all just look around silently for a moment.

ASSOC #1 DAVID SHATTEROCK

There was a document that got floated a few times. But never signed on our end.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

RAY LOEWEN

So there wasn't ever a contract? Or there was? I'm confused.

ASSOC #1 DAVID SHATTEROCK

They're calling it a contract. I'd call it more like, "agreement to agree".

ROBERT SPERRY

What do you want to do, Ray? You want to maybe try and settle, or-?

RAY LOEWEN

Settle? Absolutely not. No way do I want to settle... Not yet at least. No, if Mr- Sorry, what's the name-

ASSOC #2 ERIC BELL

O'Keefe. Jeremiah O'Keefe.

RAY LOEWEN

If Mr. O'Keefe wants to sue, let him sue. Some local mom-and-pop from the middle of butt fuck nowhere actually has the gall to take us on? He's one guy and we're a half a billion dollar corporation

37 EXT. PRIVATE AIRPORT IN BILOXI - DAY

37

We hear the loud roar of a jet engine, just as the mighty WINGS OF JUSTICE comes screeching down onto the runway.

38 INT. MIKE ALLRED'S LAW FIRM/ ALLRED'S OFFICE - DAY

38

Inside Allred's small, cramped, overstuffed office- Jerry, Hal and Allred all linger around talking, mid-conversation.

MIKE ALLRED

Well, I've never heard of him, that's for sure. Willie Gary. Never heard that name before in my life..  
(turning to Hal)  
Was this your idea by the way?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

No, it wasn't his idea, it was mine. Look, Mike, I can understand it probably pisses you off me bringing on additional counsel like-

(CONTINUED)

MIKE ALLRED

Piss me off? Of course not. Hell, it's your money, you can do what you want to with it. I just think you're making a mistake.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

All I'm trying to do is put us in the best position possible, in case we end up going to trial...

MIKE ALLRED

Right, got it. Except we're not going to trial... Seriously, what's so special about this guy?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Hal and I went down and saw him try a case in Florida in front of a jury. And let me tell you, he's got this one-of-a-kind charisma unlike anything I've seen before.

Realizing how serious Jerry is, Mike softens a bit.

MIKE ALLRED

If you really believe in him that much, then sure, okay, I'll work with him. Just as long as it's made clear, I'm still lead attorney.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I appreciate your being such a good sport about this, Mike.

MIKE ALLRED

No problem. So what time's he supposed to get here anyway?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Well, that's what I meant to tell you...

HAL DOCKINS

Actually, I think this is them right now.

Looking down a long hall in Allred's firm, we see Willie together with a small posse of fellow lawyers, all coming straight toward us: Willie, Reggie, 3 other LAWYERS- CHRIS WAKEFIELD, AL JONES, DASHAAN HARRIS- Plus 2 BODYGUARDS.

40 INT. MIKE ALLRED'S FIRM/ ALLRED'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 40

Willie and crew have arrived and are gathered in the doorway. Everybody's shaking hands, while Mike stares in muted shock.

WILLIE GARY

Jerry, how bout it, man, what it is. Good to see you, man...

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Hey Willie, good to see you too.

WILLIE GARY

Hal, what's going on? Hold up now, you get younger since I last saw you? What's that like some kind of Dorian Gray shit?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Willie, let me introduce you to Mike Allred.

WILLIE GARY

Good to meet you, Mike. Heard we gonna be working together...

MIKE ALLRED

Yeah, that's right. How are you doing, Mr. Gary?

WILLIE GARY

Oh and these gentlemen here, these are all the key members of my legal team. This is Chris, Al, Reggie, Dashaan...

MIKE ALLRED

Wow, you brought your...*team*.

Before Willie then turns more directly to Mike.

WILLIE GARY

Look here, Mike. Don't take this the wrong way or nothing- But before we get started, I got one question I gotta ask...

MIKE ALLRED

Sure. Feel free to ask me anything, I'm all ears...

WILLIE GARY

So here it is: Man to man, I just need to know upfront if you've got any issues working with black folk?

(CONTINUED)



MIKE ALLRED

Man to man...?

WILLIE GARY

Man to man. I want to know how you feel about it?

MIKE ALLRED

Okay, well. If you, um, really want an honest answer... Truth be told, I suppose I am a little prejudice.

Just as the room instantly falls silent. Long Beat.

MIKE ALLRED (CONT'D)

I'm not saying I'm proud of it. In fact, I've been working real hard, on trying to overcome it...

HAL DOCKINS

(sotto voce)

Jesus, this really had to come out now...?

MIKE ALLRED

But, yes, since you asked, generally speaking, when it comes to, you know, "black people"- I'm not exactly what you fellas would call a huge fan. Black people tend to make me uncomfortable.

DASHAAN HARRIS

(sotto voce)

Mmm, mmm, mmm. Ain't that somethin'

Even more silence now, with all the black guys just staring.

HAL DOCKINS

Well, okay, now that that's all cleared up. I think the rest of the team are all waiting in the conference room.

Inside a small, disheveled conference room- Willie and co, plus Jerry, Hal and Mike all enter, gradually taking seats beside a handful of other LAWYERS from Allred's firm. After a moment, Mike stands up and is clearly about to speak. Before Willie jumps up too and takes over:

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

Afternoon everybody! For those who don't know, my name is Willie Gary. As you can see, myself and a couple partners from my firm are all up here from Florida. Here to help y'all out with winning this case... Now for some of you in here, who maybe ain't used to the Willie Gary style of litigation, let me break it down- Basically, we about to go to WAR people! Because that's what it is to me! Litigation is WAR! I'm talkin' battle to the death, baby! I'm talkin' some of that Van Damme, Lionheart, ass-kicking shit! No more Mr. Nice Guy!... And y'all need to trust me when I tell you, this case ain't gonna be easy. Because these people we're going up against- big, corporate, giant called the Loewen Group!- you better believe, they got the money! They got the money, they got the power, they got the resources- They got everything we DON'T! But we ain't gonna let that intimidate us. Now, it's no secret I ain't lost a case in 12 years! And there's a reason for that. It's because I HATE losing! Hate it, hate it! In fact, I'd rather DIE than lose! Shit, you show me a good loser, I'll show you a LOSER! Plain and simple... Oh and one more thing y'all need to hear right now: I do not- DO NOT!- have any intention of settling this case.

Dead silence--as all the lawyers from Allred's firm just gaze around in shock, no one sure where to look or what to say.

MIKE ALLRED

Ahhh excuse me, anyone mind if I say something here...?

WILLIE GARY

Go ahead, Mike...

MIKE ALLRED

Mr. Gary, when it comes to the matter of settling, I'm afraid that's not at all the strategy we've developed here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MIKE ALLRED (CONT'D)

In fact, I've already drafted a letter to Mr. Loewen offering to settle at 8 million. Though between all of us in this room, we'd probably be willing to drop to 7 if need be...

WILLIE GARY

Thanks for the update. But unfortunately, that strategy's been changed. Like I said before, we ain't settling this case.

MIKE ALLRED

Regardless of what you said, the discussion is still on the table. And it will remain so, until I've decided what the best course is-

WILLIE GARY

Until you've decided!? Okay hold up, hold up- who's in charge here? No seriously, who's in charge? Because I think it goes without saying, Now that Willie Gary is here we damn well going to trial and Willie Gary is damn well your lead attorney.

MIKE ALLRED

Come again?

DASHAAN HARRIS

What's the matter, you need your ears checked or something?

MIKE ALLRED

Excuse me, no you're not. Believe me, Mr. Gary, you're not lead attorney. Don't forget, you're in my town, sitting in my conference room, across the table from my client.

CHRIS WAKEFIELD

Mmm mmm mm, that prejudice come out real fast don't it.

WILLIE GARY

You know what, Mike man, I ain't here to fight with you.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Gentlemen, please. Let's just take the temperature down a bit...

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (3)

WILLIE GARY

I ain't here to fight with you at all, I'm here to get the job done.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

You heard the man, said he's here to get the job done.

WILLIE GARY

And because last I heard, Jerry's tryin' to actually *win* this case. Not put his ass up in the air and settle for no 8 million dollars. Like a little bitch.

MIKE ALLRED

Jerry...?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

You know what Mike, let's you and I step outside for a minute.

AL JONES

Yeah, why don't y'all do that.

DASHAAN HARRIS

Sounds like a good idea to me.

42 EXT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM - SECONDS LATER

42

Mike and Jerry now stand out in the hallway, WHISPERING to each other, with Mike practically apoplectic.

MIKE ALLRED

Jesus, what the hell is going on!? You're putting me on, right? You're blowing smoke up my ass? Please tell me you're blowing smoke up my ass. You can't honestly be serious about these guys!?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I understand you're upset, but I still think we need to give him a chance.

MIKE ALLRED

Did you hear that speech he gave!? He has no idea what he's doing!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

We don't know that. Don't forget, he's got a flawless trial record.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

MIKE ALLRED

For personal injury cases!? He clearly knows nothing about real law, about contract law... What about lead attorney? You're not seriously considering giving him-

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I think he made it pretty damn clear it's the only way he'll do it.

43 INT. ALLRED'S CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

43

The door to the room opens as Mike and Jerry now return from their little pow wow, quietly heading back to their chairs.

WILLIE GARY

We good? Everybody good...?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Everybody's just fine, Willie.

WILLIE GARY

Great. Now anyone in here don't mind taking a dictation?

MIKE ALLRED

Dictation? May I ask what for?

WILLIE GARY

Because I'm about to draft a new letter to Mr. Loewen. If that's okay with you, Mike?

Mike just glares back, as everyone looks around, confused.

MIKE ALLRED

Cynthia can do it. Cynthia, do you mind taking dictation for Mr. Gary?

Turning to a YOUNG PARALEGAL in the corner, she quickly flips open her 1992 MACINTOSH POWER BOOK, ready to type...

WILLIE GARY

Addressed to Mr. Ray Loewen, Chairman, Loewen Group. "Dear Mr. Loewen. My name is Willie E. Gary, and I have recently been retained as lead counsel in the suit brought against you by Jeremiah O'Keefe..."

MIKE ALLRED

Oh my God...

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

In regards to the prior settlement offer you received, in the amount of 8 million dollars, please consider it hereby rescinded. As of the date of this letter, we have a new offer in the amount of \$100,000,000."

Just as every single jaw in the room drops to the floor.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Boom! That's what I'm talkin' bout!

ALLRED LAWYER #1 WENDELL ALDRIDGE

What? Did he just say 100 million dollars?! As in, 8 zeros!?

ALLRED LAWYER #2 GARNER DUCHAM

That's what he said. 100 million.

DASHAAN HARRIS

Damn, why don't y'all just *relax*. Eat a donut, drink a Seven-Up...

ALLRED LAWYER #3 RICK RIVERRIDGE

It's literally 94 million dollars more than our original claim.

CHRIS WAKEFIELD

Sounds to me like your original claim was about 94 million short.

HAL DOCKINS

Could you maybe walk us through how-

MIKE ALLRED

100 million, it's absurd and you know it! What are you trying to do, destroy this case! It's ridiculous!

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Yo Mike, anybody ever tell you, you got the balls of a garden slug?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Willie, I'm afraid I share everyone's concerns, it's way too much. We throw out a number like that, we'll humiliate ourselves.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

WILLIE GARY

I hear you Jerry, I do. But you just gotta trust me okay. Okay, where was I...

44 INT. LOEWEN GROUP OFFICES/ RAY'S SITTING ROOM - AFTERNOON 44

Inside a luxurious sitting room in his office, Loewen, Sperry and a handful of associates all sit around, as one of them now reads WILLIE'S SETTLEMENT DEMAND LETTER aloud:

ASSOC #3 JEFF TOORAY

*"As for our new demand of 100 million dollars. Please take note that this offer will only remain open for exactly 30 days..."*

Just as they all CRACK UP LAUGHING together!

ASSOC #2 ERIC BELL

No, come on! Does it really say that, 100 million!? 8 zeros...?

ASSOC #1 DAVID SHATTEROCK

There's no way that's not a joke!

RAY LOEWEN

Jesus Christ, this O'Keefe guy is a real piece of work, is he not. And who the hell is this clown he hired as a lawyer?

ROBERT SPERRY

Apparently, some guy by the name of Willie Gary.

RAY LOEWEN

Thank you, Bob, I read the letter too. My question is who *is* he? What's his story? Where did O'Keefe find him?

ASSOC #1 DAVID SHATTEROCK

From what we could dig up, he's some kind of flashy personal injury lawyer out of Florida. Like an ambulance chaser type. But with an exceptional litigation record.

ASSOC #4/ RICK BRONKSY

You honestly believe that?

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

RAY LOEWEN

*Personal injury?* What do you mean, what does that mean, *personal injury?* It's a contract dispute. Why in the hell would he hire a personal injury lawyer for a contract dispute?

ASSOC #2 ERIC BELL

Maybe they just don't have regular lawyers down in backwater Mississippi.

ROBERT SPERRY

I think it's a bit more complicated than that. So, it turns out the case was filed in some remote county in the lower region of the state. Called, Hinds County.

RAY LOEWEN

Yeah, so...

ROBERT SPERRY

So this county also happens to be extremely poor, and about 70% black.

RAY LOEWEN

Oh, so that's why he was hired? Because he's black? Gary's black? He's an African-American man?

Looking around at each other, they all nod silently.

RAY LOEWEN (CONT'D)

And what about our guys? What color are they? Any of our guys black?

45 OMIT 45

46 INT. MIKE ALLRED'S LAW FIRM/ HALLWAY- DAY 46

Holding on the hallway, we see another young ALLRED INTERN suddenly go racing down at top speed, FAST AS HE CAN.

47 EXT. JACKSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY 47

We see a massive 747 come screeching down onto the runway.



48 INT. MIKE ALLRED'S LAW FIRM/ CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER ~~48~~

The same INTERN now bursts into the conference room, where Willie, Hal, Reggie, Chris, Al and Dashaan are in the midst of packing up files. Getting ready to travel.

ALLRED INTERN DUNCAN  
 Sorry, to interrupt. We just got  
 the info you requested on who  
 Loewen appointed to lead counsel..

Hal reaches to grab the paper from the kid's hands.

HAL DOCKINS  
 May I have that please?

WILLIE GARY  
 Who is he, anyone we know?

HAL DOCKINS  
 ... *She.*

WILLIE GARY  
*She?* What do you mean by, *she?*

CHRIS WAKEFIELD  
 Yeah, what does that mean- *She?*

AL JONES  
*She*, as in like... You mean, like-

DASHAAN HARRIS  
 A woman! You saying Loewen hired a  
 woman as his lead counsel? A *woman?*

HAL DOCKINS  
 Yes. Her name is Mame Downes.

49 EXT. JACKSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT/ TARMAC - CONTINUOUS 49

The same PLANE now slowly turns and taxis into the gate...

50 INT. MIKE ALLRED'S LAW FIRM/ CONFERENCE ROOM- CONTINUOUS 50

HAL DOCKINS  
 So, apparently she got her BA from  
 Howard University...

WILLIE GARY  
 Howard? That means she's not just a  
 woman, she's a *black woman.*

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Well, what do you know. We somehow managed to get *out'womaned* and *out'blacked* all in one go.

HAL DOCKINS

... Graduated top of her class at Harvard Law. Jesus! Then went on to clerk 2 years for SCJ Day O'Connor. Then 3 years at Paul Weiss. Now is one of the youngest ever partners at Cranston, Brown and Atwell...

AL JONES

Okay now what that right there tells me, is this bitch gotta be seriously ugly- Am I right?

51 INT. JACKSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS 51

As a group of PASSENGERS file out from the flight, we gradually pick up and track a single PAIR OF HIGH HEEL SHOES.

52 INT. MIKE ALLRED'S LAW FIRM/ CONFERENCE ROOM- MOMENTS LATER 52

Lingering off to the side, the intern raises his hand.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

What is it dude, speak up....

ALLRED INTERN DUNCAN

Sorry, it's just, a friend of mine used to work with her at C, B, and A. And he said her nickname around the office was... *'The Python'*.

They all just stare back, like, "*Huuuuuh? Whaaat?*"

ALLRED INTERN DUNCAN (CONT'D)

On account of her particular style during cross, and how she always strikes when least expected... You know like how a python...

DASHAAN HARRIS

We got it, thanks...

53 INT. JACKSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT/ TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS 53

The music now PUMPS UP, as we at last see the full face of the very formidable and beautiful MAME DOWNES (32).

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

Held throughout in a single, uninterrupted shot- We watch Mame stride through the terminal, pulling a suitcase behind.

53X INT/EXT. CAR/ O'KEEFE FUNERAL HOMES - DAY

53X

Pulling into the driveway, Jerry looks through the windshield, noticing something- Then jumps from the CAR!

Along the entrance, and in the midst of taping some kind of NOTICE to the door, are the same two insurance men. A small handful of EMPLOYEES also stand around and watch.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Hey, hey! What's going on here!  
What are you doing! Stop it! You  
have no right to do that, Sir!

GARY REYNOLDS

Mr. O'Keefe, I regret to inform you  
that as per regulations set forth  
by the Mississippi State Insurance  
Commission, your license been  
temporarily suspended.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

What! No, come on! You can't do  
this! You have to give me more  
time! I need more time!

They side-step Jerry, as he tries to block them on the steps.

JIM LAFONT

No, we don't have to give you more  
time, Sir. We gave you plenty of  
time. You were more than adequately  
warned about your reserves!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I understand, but it's more  
complicated than that! I don't have  
the money yet, but I will soon!

GARY REYNOLDS

Well then as soon as you do, you  
can give us a call and we'll work  
on getting your license reinstated.

54 OMIT

54

55 INT. WINGS OF JUSTICE AIRPLANE - DAY

55

Hal, Reggie, Chris, Al, Dashaan are all seated around a table, with a bunch of CONTRACT LAW BOOKS spread in front of them. While Allred sits further back in a corner.

REGGIE DOUGLAS  
Hey Hal- What's a "Cure Period"?

Glancing up, Hal's about to answer before:

MIKE ALLRED  
Did you just say a Cure Period?

REGGIE DOUGLAS  
That's right.

MIKE ALLRED  
It's like when a default occurs in a contract between two parties, the party in breach will have a certain period of time to "cure" the default before the non-breaching party is allowed to seek remedies.

REGGIE DOUGLAS  
Thanks Mike. Good looking out, man.

We now follow behind a STEWARDESS, who LEADS US from the back to the front, where Jerry and Willie sit facing each other.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
Tell me Willie, how does someone like you end up becoming a lawyer?

WILLIE GARY  
*Someone like me?* Depends, you want the long version or the short...?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
Up to you.

WILLIE GARY  
Back when I was still a young husband, young father- I was making some money running this small landscaping company, and my wife and I decided we wanted to move to a bigger place. So I see an ad in the paper for this nice apartment. 3 bedrooms, in a brand new housing complex in the white neighborhood. Called, Raintree. I call up the owner and I'm like, "Hey man, I'm looking for a place to move with my family, you got vacancies?".

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

He's like, "Sure we got plenty, I'll send you over a lease, ya'll can move in end of the month." So, it finally comes to moving day, and we all pile in the car- me, my wife, our two little boys, plus all our belongings. And you know like, gospel music goin', rocking and rollin', all happy as can be... But then once we show up and I walk in with the lease. Now the guy takes one look at me, one look at the color of my skin... Suddenly they ain't got no more vacancies.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

What did you do?

WILLIE GARY

I went straight back to the hotel we were staying at. Opened up the phone book, wrote down the first law school I saw. Applied, got in, graduated, took the bar... Until I finally got my license to practice. And then I went right back down to that same Raintree Apartments, bitch-slapped em' with a 5-count discriminatory practices suit!!

Jerry laughs, gently touched.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Way I see the courtroom, it's like a boxing ring, you know. A place where I can beat up on and get revenge on everybody that ever treated me like I was nothing all my life.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

So you're a fighter...

WILLIE GARY

Aren't you. Come on, it takes a lot of guts- hell of a lot of guts- to sue a huge corporation like Loewen. Coming from where you come from, small business owner and all... What made you decide to do it?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Because he tried to mess with the one thing that means more to me than anything else.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (2)

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE (CONT'D)

Being able to leave something  
behind for my kids, my grandkids,  
when I go. Being able to give them  
their legacy.

Willie and Jerry just look at each other, a very subtle yet  
tender moment of deep identification between them.

WILLIE GARY

Hey, let's put on some music!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I like music, Willie. \*

Willie then turns to the front where a large AFRICAN AMERICAN  
MAN, one of his bodyguards, STEVE, sits reading a book.

WILLIE GARY

Yo Steve, let's put some music on.

STEVE PLANE GUY

Sure thing Boss, anything in  
particular you feel like hearing?

WILLIE GARY

Know what, put on that one I like,  
by um- whatsitcall-Tony Toni Tone!  
(then back to Jerry)  
You like 'Tony Toni Tone', Jerry?

On Jerry, he looks a bit perplexed, as it's fairly clear he's  
never heard of them. Just as MUSIC- (*TONY TONI TONE/ FEELS  
GOOD*)- now comes BLASTING in! While Willie instantly starts  
bopping to the music, it takes Jerry a beat or two to  
determine how he feels. Until gradually, Jerry starts gently  
bopping too. Bopping together, they smile at each other.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

YOU LIKE IT JERRY?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I DO, IT'S NOT BAD.

WILLIE GARY

FEELS GOOD, RIGHT JERRY?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

IT DOES, IT FEELS GOOD, WILLIE.

56 EXT. VARIOUS ESTABLISHING IMAGES OF JACKSON, MS - DAY

56

Over images of the city.

57 EXT. JACKSON PRIVATE AIRPORT - DAY 57

Along the tarmac, WINGS OF JUSTICE comes screeching down.

58 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL/ LOBBY - AFTERNOON 58

A little later, Hal and Willie now enter this faux grand, very corporate and cheesy hotel lobby, wheeling suitcases behind. They then gradually make their way to the FRONT DESK.

WILLIE GARY

Hi, checking in. Reservation's under the name Gary, Willie Gary.

HOTEL RECEPTIONIST

Sure and welcome to Jackson Mr. Gary. If you happen to have a credit card I can run through, I'll get you set up right away.

As Willie then starts digging around for his wallet, Hal happens to glance across the lobby, before suddenly noticing:

HAL DOCKINS

Oh snap, don't look now. But I think that must be Loewen's legal team over there. It's gotta be.

WILLIE GARY

What? Where?

Hal now motions to a small lounge across the lobby, where we see Mame seated side by side with 5 MUCH OLDER AND VERY DISTINGUISHED LOOKING AFRICAN AMERICAN GENTLEMEN.

HAL DOCKINS

Over there. Jesus Christ, it's like a who's who of every prominent black lawyer in the country.

WILLIE GARY

You actually recognize some of them?

HAL DOCKINS

I read a lot of Harvard Law Review. See that guy there, that's Howard Pfieffer, he's a former state representative and president of the DC Bar association. Then over there is Richard Mayfield, widely regarded as one of the country's foremost experts on antitrust and complex business litigation. And that guy, his name is Walter Bell.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

HAL DOCKINS (CONT'D)

A former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice. Fuck, Loewen must've spent a fortune on these dudes!

Willie then turns to look more closely himself.

WILLIE GARY

I must say, she's a lot better looking than I thought.

HAL DOCKINS

What, who?

WILLIE GARY

Whatsherface, Mame Downes...

HAL DOCKINS

Seriously? *That's* all you have to say about them?

WILLIE GARY

No. Because besides that, they all look like a bunch of chumps to me.

Just as Willie leans over the desk to the receptionist again.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Could you do me a favor and send a bottle of your finest champagne over to that group right there.

HOTEL RECEPTIONIST

Of course, sure thing. Do you prefer Dom, Moet, Cristal...?

WILLIE GARY

Cristal. And if you don't mind adding a note that says: Compliments of Willie Gary.

HAL DOCKINS

Seriously man, please don't...

MOMENTS LATER: Willie and Hal watch, as a WAITRESS arrives at the table, presenting them all with the CHAMPAGNE and pointing toward Willie. We PUSH IN on Mame, just as she turns to look at Willie. Willie waves, she hesitantly waves back.

58X INT. O'KEEFE RESIDENCE/ BEDROOM - MORNING

58X

Early in the morning, Jerry and Annette are together in their bedroom, getting ready for the day.

(CONTINUED)



ANNETTE O'KEEFE

I think we may need to call the cable company. Every time I try and turn on Turner Broadcast, it's just some weird empty screen. I think there's something wrong with it...

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

There's nothing wrong with it. I cancelled the subscription.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

What do you mean, you cancelled it?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Annie, those regulators came back the other day and suspended my license this time, so... I'm going to have to shut down the business for awhile.

While Annette just stares back, silent and stunned.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

What? What are you talking about?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

It's only temporary. As soon as we can get this trial out the way and Loewen makes restitution, I'll be able to-

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

Jerry, do you hear yourself? As soon as Loewen makes restitution- Do you really know that's even going to happen? You still haven't told me how we're paying for all this? That fancy new lawyer you just brought in from Florida-

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

You don't need to worry about that.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

I just don't understand why you're continuing with this ridiculous lawsuit? You can find another buyer for those three homes. Clearly this is about something else for you...

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Well, maybe it is. Maybe I just don't want to let him get away with-

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

Who? Ray Loewen? My God, what is your whole obsession with this man?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

What do you mean by obsession? What do you expect me to do Annie? Just sit back and let him walk all over me, walk all over our family!

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

What I expect is for you to think of me at some point. Me. These were supposed to be our twilight years, spent enjoying each other, enjoying our family! Now you've brought this whole drama into our lives, even putting our finances at risk, without so much as the slightest concern for how it might affect me!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

You don't think we can win...

She just stares back, shocked. As Jerry promptly gets up, and starts heading out of the room.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE (CONT'D)

If you want to know how I'm paying for it- I took a third mortgage on the house.

Inside a large hotel conference room, transformed to a 'Legal War Room'- Willie, Hal, Allred, Reggie, Al, Dashaan, and a few WHITE ASSOCIATES- all sit around. Piles of DOCUMENTS, FOLDERS, BOXES, HALF EATEN LUNCHESES are scattered everywhere.

ALLRED ASSOC/ WENDELL ALDRIDGE

We keep the strategy simple. Stay focused on the contract, on firmly cementing the validity of the document as- 'a contract'- in the jury's minds. Win on points of law.

DASHAAN HARRIS

Aren't you forgetting, that's definitely going to be the defense's strategy too.

ALLRED ASSOC/ GARNER DUCHAM

Except they'll be focused on proving how it's *not* a contract.

(CONTINUED)

HAL DOCKINS

And let's be honest, they'll likely be a lot better at it than we are. Given it's their area of expertise.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Just forget all that contract nonsense, put it out of your heads. All it's gonna do is bog the jury down in a whole lot of technical nonsense- we already know they ain't interested in.

CHRIS WAKEFIELD

Personally, what I think we gotta do, what we gotta prove, rather- is motive. We center our argument squarely on the issue of Loewen Group stalling on closing. And show what they had to gain from it.

WILLIE GARY

We already know what they had to gain- Push Jerry into bankruptcy, buy up the remainder of his business, establish a monopoly in the region. Control the market.

ALLRED ASSOC/ RICK RIVERRIDGE

Hence the, "predatory trade practices". But can we prove it?

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Okay, I see where you're going now, I kinda like this.

AL JONES

Yeah, I think I like it too.

HAL DOCKINS

Actually, I'm not so sure.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

What!? Come again, *Halbert-!?!?*

DASHAAN HARRIS

Yeah, what, Hal-!?!?

AL JONES

This little Urkle-Ass nigga couldn't grow facial hair up until a week ago- Now he's talkin' bout how he's, '*not so sure*'.

(CONTINUED)

HAL DOCKINS

What I mean is, I'm not so sure it's possible to actually prove Loewen Group had motive. Unless we had some kind of memo from within the company, or someone openly *admitting* it. Like how do you actually prove that there was an intention behind stalling?... And by the way, I can grow facial hair. I'm a 29 year old man.

CHRIS WAKEFIELD

Seems to me, if we really want the jury to throw down an Alaskan-Assassin body-blow on the punitive, we also gotta prove Loewen *himself* knew. That Big Man was in on it.

DASHAAN HARRIS

Because otherwise they can always say, '*this was just the rogue actions of some mid-level managers*', and the company itself walks away scot-free.

ALLRED ASSOC/ GARNER DUCHAM

Well, we're obviously *never* going to be able to prove that. No way.

MIKE ALLRED

The truth is we don't have a shot in hell at winning this case. Once again, I think our only real option here is to try and settle.

WILLIE GARY

Goddamnit Mike!? How many times I gotta tell you! We AIN'T settling!

MIKE ALLRED

However many times doesn't change the fact that Jerry's already waist-deep in debt! Personally, I feel that to advise him to go forward with a trial under these circumstances, is not only completely unethical, it could actually destroy a man's life.

WILLIE GARY

For the last time, we're not settling!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (3)

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Settling's the same as losing, and  
I don't lose, you hear me! Ya'all  
just need to work harder, okay!  
Figure it out!!

60 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ HOTEL BAR - LATER

60

A very exhausted and dispirited Willie sidles up to the bar.

WILLIE GARY

Hey, can I get a ginger ale please.

HOTEL BAR BARTENDER

Sure thing, coming right up...

Willie then happens to glance across the room and notice none other than Mame Downes, sitting all alone at a table.

WILLIE GARY

Actually, send it over to that  
table right there when it's ready.

He gets up and starts to walk over.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

You must be Ms. Downes, I'm-

MAME DOWNES

Willie Gary. I'm aware. How are  
you, Mr. Gary. Nice to meet you.

WILLIE GARY

Nice to meet you too. Whatcha doin'  
down here so late?

MAME DOWNES

Huh? Oh you know, just getting a  
little work done...

She then gently closes the top of her NOTES BINDER.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

Just felt like getting out of my  
room for a bit, so...

WILLIE GARY

Mind if I join you for a bit?

MAME DOWNES

I don't know? Do you really think  
that's such a good idea?

WILLIE GARY

Oh come on, what's the harm. Trial  
hasn't started yet anyway...

(CONTINUED)

A LITTLE LATER: They've both settled into their drinks a bit.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

This is kind of nice. I don't think I've ever sat down and had a drink with a member of the opposing council before. Almost feels like we're on a date or something.

MAME DOWNES

Sure, if you say so...

WILLIE GARY

So, where you from Ms. Downes? Wait, let me guess... Hmmm? I'm going to go with Baldwin Hills. Also known as '*The Black Beverly Hills*'. Daddy was a doctor, with 3 separate degrees from Ivy League colleges. And Mommy was a homemaker. Am I close...?

MAME DOWNES

You're close...

WILLIE GARY

Ah see, I knew it! I knew it!

MAME DOWNES

I meant in proximity, not ideology. I'm actually from Compton. And no, mommy was not a homemaker. She was a single mom that worked 6 nights a week for 10 years straight, just to put me through law school.

WILLIE GARY

Okay, well what about Daddy?

MAME DOWNES

I wouldn't know. Never met the man.

WILLIE GARY

I'm sorry to hear that.

MAME DOWNES

What for? I'm not.

WILLIE GARY

You're tough, you know that. I like that about you. I like tough women.

MAME DOWNES

First of all, I'm told I'm immune to flattery, so I wouldn't waste your breath. Second of all, wait til you see me in that courtroom.

(CONTINUED)

He laughs.

WILLIE GARY

So if you from really 'da hood',  
whatcha doin' messing around with  
all these fancy white clients?

MAME DOWNES

All these? For the time being,  
there's just one. And I could ask  
you the same question, couldn't I?

WILLIE GARY

It just so happens that I believe  
in my case, Ms. Downes.

MAME DOWNES

Just so happens that I believe in  
mine too, Mr. Gary.

WILLIE GARY

Guess that's kind of unfortunate  
for one of us, isn't it.

Mame smiles, fiddles with her drink a bit.

MAME DOWNES

But back to what you were saying,  
about my 'white clients'. Why does  
everyone think that just because  
I'm from the hood, I should be  
working in some shitty D.A.'s  
office, doing pro bono? Trying  
eviction cases, *drug busts in the  
old neighborhood*? I worked hard to  
get where I am, why shouldn't I  
enjoy the same opportunities as my  
white counterparts.

WILLIE GARY

Hey, hey! You know what, fine by  
me, I ain't judging.

MAME DOWNES

What about you, what's your  
background, Mr. Gary?

WILLIE GARY

Believe it or not, I grew up poor  
too, dirt poor. Son of migrant  
workers in Florida, already workin  
the fields by the time I was 8  
years old. And now look at me, got  
a garage full of Bentleys and my  
own private jet.

(CONTINUED)

MAME DOWNES

I guess what that means, is we're both living our own little version of the American Dream. Just one with a little less red white and blue, and a slightly more beige complexion.

WILLIE GARY

What you're saying is you think that black people's American Dream is a different American Dream from white people's American Dream?

MAME DOWNES

Obviously, given that black Americans and white Americans are currently living in two separate countries. Case in point...

Mame motions over to a SMALL TV above the bar, where the ever ubiquitous OJ TRIAL COVERAGE continues to play on.

WILLIE GARY

Ah, so we talkin' OJ now! The quote-unquote 'trial of the century'. You really want to go there?

MAME DOWNES

I don't know, do we dare? I'll admit it's murky territory...

WILLIE GARY

Let's take the plunge! All right, which way you leaning- guilty or innocent? What's your gut tell you?

Mame stares at the TV a moment, thinking it over.

MAME DOWNES

What my gut tells me, is that it doesn't really matter, because OJ's not what's on trial. White frontier justice, that's what's on trial. And unfortunately white frontier justice almost always wins.

WILLIE GARY

Ain't that the truth. Okay, well what about this- If someone put a gun to your head...

MAME DOWNES

Gun to my head...?

(CONTINUED)



WILLIE GARY

.... Put a gun to your head, and said you had to take over lead chair for either side, prosecution or defense, which would you choose?

MAME DOWNES

Hmmm? That is a good question...

WILLIE GARY

It is right, I know. It's tough.

MAME DOWNES

But I think in the end I'd have to say the defense?

WILLIE GARY

The defense? Really, why's that?

MAME DOWNES

Just because I've never defended someone I knew was guilty before, and supposedly any lawyer worth their salt's got to try it at least once.... And you, Mr. Gary?

WILLIE GARY

Oh prosecution for sure, definitely the prosecution. No question.

MAME DOWNES

Huh? That's surprising. I wouldn't have expected that from you.

WILLIE GARY

Maybe it's silly, but for so many years now I've had this weird recurring dream, of me going toe-to-toe with Johnny in the courtroom.

MAME DOWNES

And how does the dream usually end?

WILLIE GARY

Usually, with me wiping the floor with ass.

A WAITER then approaches and gently lays a BILL down. Willie and Mame each reach for the check at the same time.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

No way, I got this.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (5)

MAME DOWNES

No, please, allow me. You were so generous to send us over that lovely bottle of what was it- Cristal?- the other day. Let me return the favor, just this once.

WILLIE GARY

All right then. That's very nice of you Mame, thank you very much.

She flips open the check, starts signing.

MAME DOWNES

No problem. Just don't get too used to me being nice to you, okay Willie.

Closing the check, she then rises from her chair.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

Because starting in exactly two weeks time, and once we finally get in that courtroom... *Nigga, I will tear you up.*

She smiles once more at Willie, then walks away.

MAME DOWNES (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Have a good night, Mr. Gary. This was most certainly not a date.

60A INT. PLAINTIFF'S WAR ROOM - AFTERNOON

60A

As the door to the War Room opens, we see a fleet of MOVERS wheeling in piles of LEGAL BOXES, which they then begin to unload and stack against the walls. All by himself in the room, Hal just stands off to the side watching them come in.

MOMENTS LATER: with the movers all gone, Hal just stands there in the middle of the room, staring at all the boxes.

HAL

Shit.

He takes a deep breath, goes and opens the first box he sees, pulls out a big chunk of documents and gets to work.

61 INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

61

Inside the judge's chambers, a stern looking AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN in his 70s, sits behind a desk. While the entire plaintiff's team stand crammed side by side with the defense.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

JUDGE GRAVES

Afternoon, my name is Judge Graves.  
Let me assure you the name is a  
coincidence....

They all fidget and adjust themselves uncomfortably.

JUDGE GRAVES (CONT'D)

Normally, it's my policy to  
encourage both parties to agree to  
a settlement, before we start  
picking a jury...

WILLIE GARY

Sorry, your honor, it's just not  
going to happen.

JUDGE GRAVES

Excuse me? And why is that?

WILLIE GARY

We already made a legitimate  
attempt to settle with the  
defendants in good faith.

MAME DOWNES

Your honor, we received a letter  
sometime back with a request that  
was so ridiculous, we could only  
conclude it was a joke. In other  
words, plaintiff's counsel has yet  
to propose anything serious.

WILLIE GARY

Sorry, your honor I disagree.

MAME DOWNES

Well your honor, I *don't* disagree.

JUDGE GRAVES

Okay, seems I'm not getting through  
here. Let me start again. I don't  
want this case to go to trial, I  
don't see why it needs to. It's a  
commercial case, a contract case,  
should be easy enough to resolve on  
your own. So I'm going to ask you  
one more time, please take the next  
couple of days, do what you can to  
settle this outside the courtroom.

62 INT. COURTHOUSE/ HALLWAY - LATER

62

Sometime later, we find Willie heading down a long hall on  
the main floor of the courthouse. Before he suddenly bumps  
straight into another very handsome older gentlemen - Mr. G.

(CONTINUED)

As they then both look up, it's clear that they know each other.

MR. G

Excuse me, young man... Oh, Willie Gary! What's up, how you doin' man?

WILLIE GARY

Oh, hey! Sorry, I didn't see you coming! What's happening man, what's up with you, how you been?

MR. G

Oh you know- Not bad, not bad at all. What are you doing out of Florida though...?

WILLIE GARY

Huh? Oh yeah, well I'm here trying that O'Keefe vs. Loewen thing, civil case...

MR. G

Right, right. I heard something about that. Man, sure sounds like a tough case. I seriously wish you the best of luck, brother!

WILLIE GARY

Thanks, Doc! Nice to see you! Give me a call soon, okay...

Just as Mr. G starts heading off.

MR. G

Will do! Until next time, keep on keepin' on, partner!

Mr. G then quickly disappears, and just as Mame suddenly emerges, now standing right in front of Willie.

(CONTINUED)

MAME DOWNES (O.S.)  
Hey Willie, got something for you-

Turning around, Willie now sees Mame heading toward him holding a big manilla ENVELOPE, which she then hands to him.

WILLIE GARY  
What's this, a valentine?

MAME DOWNES  
Believe it or not, it's an offer for your client from Mr. Loewen.

WILLIE GARY  
Is it a 100 million dollars?

MAME DOWNES  
No, it's quite pointedly not 100 million dollars. That's absurd and you know it.

WILLIE GARY  
Then what is it, what's in here?

MAME DOWNES  
I'd call it a reasonable basis from which to begin a negotiation.

Holding the envelope right up in her face, Willie then starts to rip it into pieces. While Mame just stares in disbelief.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)  
What the hell are you doing? You can't do that. You're supposed to take it to your client first.

WILLIE GARY  
I already know my client ain't interested in your penny ante charity. We asked you for 100 million dollars.

MAME DOWNES  
You do realize, you can't reject any offer without showing it to your client first.

Leaving the papers all over the floor, Willie just turns right around and starts heading away down the hall.

WILLIE GARY  
(over his shoulder)  
So sue me. See you in court, little lady... Sister be warned: we gonna Clubber Lang clobber your ass!

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (3)

MAME DOWNES

*Little lady!?* Are you fucking  
kidding me right now!

63 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ BAR - EVENING

63

As Willie and Hal sit together in the bar, we hold tight on Hal who's wearing a deeply shocked expression.

HAL DOCKINS

You did what!?! You ripped it up!?  
What do you mean, you ripped it up!

WILLIE GARY

I mean, I ripped it up! And man,  
you should've seen her face. No  
joke, she looked like she was about  
to have a heart attack!

HAL DOCKINS

Okay, but wait a minute. You don't  
even know what was in there, what  
the offer was. It could've been a  
substantial amount of money.

WILLIE GARY

Maybe so. But it wasn't no 100  
million dollars, I know that.  
Besides, what are you all bothered  
about? Ain't you the one that *told*  
*me* this case needed to go bigger.

HAL DOCKINS

Yeah, sort of. But I didn't mean at  
the risk of you getting disbarred.

WILLIE GARY

Disbarred!? Woah, what, disbarred!?  
What the hell you talking about,  
*disbarred?* Whose side are you on?

HAL DOCKINS

I'm not on anyone's side. It's just  
extremely unprofessional. You're  
obligated to take any offer that's  
presented and bring it to Jerry.

WILLIE GARY

Hey, what's that like for you?  
Always being so amenable and  
pleasing to white people. Damn, I  
feel like you the type of brother  
that thinks he should be writing a  
thank you note to Miss Daisy, for  
letting you drive her to the store.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

HAL DOCKINS

You know what that's really low.

Willie just rolls his eyes, as he gets up.

HAL DOCKINS (CONT'D)

I gotta go... Unlike you, Jerry's  
my only client. And you could  
seriously screw that up for me.

64 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ SUITE - EVENING

64

The sound of- (*ISAAC HAYES/ IT'S ECSTASY WHEN YOU'RE LYING  
DOWN NEXT TO ME*)- bumps through, as Willie carefully inserts  
SHOE TREES into his SHOES. Suddenly the PHONE then RINGS,  
Willie turns to look curiously at it, then picks it up.

WILLIE GARY

Hello... Hey Jerry...

65 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ ELEVATOR/ HALLWAY - LATER

65

We hear the elevator go, '*Ding*', as Willie now steps out onto  
the lobby floor. Then continues on his way down a hall and we  
follow...

66 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ WAR ROOM - LATER

66

As the door opens to the war room, Willie steps in to find  
Jerry, Hal and Mike all across the room and waiting.

WILLIE GARY

Hey guys, Mike, Jerry, Hal--how  
ya'll doing? Everybody good...?

MIKE ALLRED

Wow, I don't fucking believe this.  
Is it true Loewen's lawyer offered  
you a settlement today and you  
ripped it up without even showing  
it to us first?

WILLIE GARY

As a matter of fact, it is true.  
I'm just a little surprised ya'll  
know about that.

HAL DOCKINS

Oh come on, man...

MIKE ALLRED

Surprised we know about it!?  
Seriously!?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

MIKE ALLRED (CONT'D)

Do you know how wrong it is to reject an offer without showing it to your client first!

WILLIE GARY

Mike, just watch it okay! And lower your voice! I'm not trying to hear it from you today!

MIKE ALLRED

I'm not lowering my voice, you lower yours! You've been a loose cannon ever since you got here!

WILLIE GARY

Last I checked I work for Jerry, not you partner! And you work for me!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Everybody calm down. Willie, they're right. You can't throw away an offer without discussing it with me. We have no idea how much it could've been. Mike estimates it could've been 14, 15 million...

WILLIE GARY

Even if it was 14 or 15- I still would've told you not to take it! 14 or 15 million, come on, that's a joke to these people!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Maybe so, but it's not to me! It could've made a huge difference to me. You should've consulted me.

67 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ ELEVATORS - LATER

67

Willie steps onto the elevator in a huff. Just as the doors are about to close, Hal then steps on too. Both just standing side by side, refusing to speak, or even look at each other.

WILLIE GARY

You're a little tattle tale, you know that.

HAL DOCKINS

Okay sure, that's really mature.

WILLIE GARY

You ought to be ashamed of yourself, selling another brother out like that. Seriously.

(CONTINUED)



67 CONTINUED:

HAL DOCKINS

*Selling another brother out? You know this whole Sanford and Son wisdom you like apply, gets old. Check the rhyme- It's 1995, bro.*

WILLIE GARY

Tattle tale.

HAL DOCKINS

Got it. Heard you the first time.

Just as the elevator doors open and Hal heads down the hall. He walks completely normal, until halfway down he does a QUICK LITTLE TWO STEP, then goes back to walking normally.

**MONTAGE UP:**

68 INT. WILLIE'S HOTEL SUITE - MORNING 68

*Wearing only boxers and a tee shirt, Willie sits along the edge of the bed, going over his opening argument...*

*We then slowly PAN DOWN along his body to see that his leg is also WILDLY SHAKING, jittery with nerves and pent up energy.*

68A INT. MAME'S HOTEL SUITE- MORNING 68A

*Dressed in a pair of OVERSIZED MEN'S PAJAMAS, with her morning hair all WILD and KINKY- Mame paces the floor of her hotel room, silently rehearsing her own opening statement...*

68B INT. O'KEEFE RESIDENCE/ BATHROOM - MORNING 68B

*Jerry stands over the sink splashing water on his face. He then briefly pauses to stare at his reflection in the mirror.*

68C INT. WILLIE'S HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS 68C

*Back in Willie's suite, he himself runs through a whole series of tried and true HAND GESTURES in the mirror.*

68D INT. MAME'S HOTEL SUITE/ BATHROOM - MORNING 68D

*Back in Mame's suite, Mame stands before her own mirror in the bathroom, carefully running an old school HOT COMB through her kinky hair. Pulling it tight and straight.*

- 68E INT. O'KEEFE RESIDENCE/ BEDROOM - MORNING 68E  
*Jerry and Annette now stand facing each other in the bedroom, as she helps him into his suit jacket, then carefully adjusts his tie, kisses him on the forehead.*
- 68F INT. WILLIE'S HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS 68F  
*Back in Willie's suite, he stands fully dressed in the middle of the room, WILDLY SHADOW BOXING and getting PUMPED!!*
- 68G INT. MAME'S TOWN CAR - MORNING 68G  
*ANGLE ON: A beaten-up old copy of SUN TZU'S ART OF WAR, clutched tightly in a WOMAN'S HAND. We then slowly PAN UP to see Mame alone in the backseat of her town car.*
- 68H INT. STREET OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE - MORNING 68H  
*A few blocks from the courthouse, we see the entire PLAINTIFF'S SIDE- (WILLIE, JERRY, HAL, ALLRED, REGGIE, CHRIS, AL, DASHAAN)- all coming down the street together.*  
*As they all pass a PARKING METER, two of them casually split and walk on the other side. At which point Willie instantly FLIPS OUT, makes them all turn around and start again.*
- 68J INT. JACKSON MS COURTHOUSE/ ELEVATOR - MORNING 68J  
*Squeezed in tight on the elevator are Mame and HER ENTIRE TEAM. She stands dead center, their fearless leader, with all 4 of her fellow male lawyers perfectly framed around her.*
- 68JJ EXT. JACKSON MS COURTHOUSE/ ENTRANCE - MORNING 68JJ  
*The entire PLAINTIFF'S TEAM all head up the stairs together.*
- 68K INT. COURTHOUSE/ PLAINTIFF'S CHAMBERS - MORNING 68K  
*Inside a small private room, the PLAINTIFF'S TEAM all sit in total silence together. Anxiously waiting for the trial to begin. We slowly PAN around, from one face to the next.*
- 68L OMITTED 68L

68M INT. COURTHOUSE/ PLAINTIFF'S CHAMBERS - MORNING

68M

*ANGLE ON: A HAND knocking on the door outside the chambers. Before the door at last opens and a YOUNG CLERK peeks in.*

YOUNG CLERK

*Mr. O'Keefe, Mr. Gary, Mr. Allred-  
Soon as you're all ready, the Judge  
would like to begin.*

Just as Willie JUMPS UP.

WILLIE GARY

*Showtime! Everybody ready! Let's  
get it on Chaka Kahn!*

69 INT. JACKSON MS COURTROOM - MORNING

69

*For the first time ever inside the courtroom- we PUSH IN FAST to a tight CLOSE UP on the BAILIFF, as she LOUDLY announces:*

BAILIFF

*All rise, all rise. The honorable  
judge James E. Graves- Circuit  
court judge of the first judicial  
district of Hinds County,  
Mississippi- presiding. This court  
is now in session pursuant to the  
adjournment. Hear ye, hear ye, all  
persons having business with this  
honorable court draw near, give  
your attention and you shall be-*

70 **MONTAGE UP:**

70

*We now enter a rapid-fire MONTAGE, back and forth  
intercutting Willie and Mame in their opening statements.*

WILLIE GARY

*Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury,  
how you all doing today...?*

CUT TO:

MAME DOWNES

*Members of the jury, thank you for  
being here....*

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

*Let me start off by saying that this case you're about to hear, this case right here, this case is really about the oldest sin known to man- And that's GREED!*

CUT TO:

MAME DOWNES

*Contracts, that's it. Contracts, plain and simple. Mr. Gary would have you believe that this is a case about greed, about evil corporate practices. All of which sounds so entertaining, so dramatic. But the truth is, it's not about any of those things. It's just a case about contracts...*

CUT TO

WILLIE GARY

*We know for a fact, the deal had already been approved by Loewen and his board, and every aspect of it had been carefully outlined and put down in writing! We know that! We know that! That's called a contracts- No two ways about it!*

CUT TO:

MAME DOWNES

*It was never signed. It was never signed. How can it be a contract between two parties, if it was never signed. Ask yourselves that? Because there's a big difference between a binding contract and what many key executives involved simply saw as an, "agreement to agree".*

CUT TO:

WILLIE GARY

*They knew! They knew! That if Jerry were to go bankrupt, they could pick up those same pieces, let's call it what it is folks- the DREGS of what was left of his business- for pennies on the dollar! They had one goal in mind, to stall him out!*

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

*MAME DOWNES*

*For Jeremiah O'Keefe, everything in his life was hinging on this deal. But for the Loewen Group- To be honest ladies and gentlemen, this was one of hundreds perhaps thousands of deals they were involved in that year. I hate to say it, but Mr. O'Keefe was irrelevant. He wasn't a priority.*

CUT TO:

*WILLIE GARY*

*Ya'll, these people LIED! That's what this all boils down to! Just another example of some big, greedy, big-money corporation- A Canadian corporation!- Trying to push around the little guy! AND FOLKS, IT AIN'T RIGHT!!*

*Until at last, we see THE JURY. Though a mix of ages and genders, there are 9 BLACKS and 3 WHITES. Beat.*

## JUDGE GRAVES (O.S.)

Would the Plaintiff's side like to call their first witness...

DISSOLVE TO:

70A LATER: Perhaps a few hours later, a very nerdy, academic ~~MAN~~ in his 50s is now seated in the WITNESS BOX.

## PROFESSOR ROSSENCOMB

In fact there is such a thing as an 'anticipatory' breach of contract. And this is when, though the actual breach has not yet occurred, there's nevertheless been some indication that one of the involved parties, heretofore referred to as the soon-to-be-breaching party, will not fulfill their obligations. Set forth by the terms of the...

As he continues to drone on, we turn to the jury- Seeing how utterly BORED and DISTRACTED they all look. In fact, there's even one guy in the back, who's gone to sleep completely.

71 INT. WAR ROOM - AFTERNOON

71

As the entire plaintiff's team, minus Jerry, are all gathered in the War Room- We hold a tight Close Up on Willie's face.

WILLIE GARY

Goddamnit! We almost two weeks in and this case ain't lining up in our favor at all!! All this contract talk, day-in day-out, is putting the jury to sleep! And costing us our edge with them! I'm making a decision, I'm going to move Jerry up in the schedule, put him on the stand of next week!

Just as everybody in the room now all turn to Willie at once!

ALLRED ASSOC/ WENDELL ALDRIDGE

What? Why...?

ALLRED ASSOC/ GARNER DUCHAM

Yeah, what do you mean, how-?

WILLIE GARY

What's the matter, y'all hard of hearing! I told you why! We gotta shake things up! Come on now, you ask me, Jerry's the perfect witness. He's honest, principled, hard-working, family man, war hero. And, don't forget 'bout all the good things he's done for Civil Rights. Black jury's gonna love that...

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Good ol' white savior Jerry.

WILLIE GARY

Reggie shut your mouth or get out!

MIKE ALLRED

No, no way. Forget it. I'm sorry but I can't endorse this idea. It's much too soon to put Jerry on the stand, much too early in the trial. We don't have all the information yet.

HAL DOCKINS

He's right. There's a reason you wait to put your client on the stand.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

WILLIE GARY

Oh yeah, and what's that?

HAL DOCKINS

Because we don't know anything about Mame. Thus far we've only seen her interact with technical witnesses, which doesn't tell us anything about her real cross-examination style. Or even how dangerous she might be.

AL JONES

Right. *'The Python'*....

DASHAAN HARRIS

I agree. We just throw Jerry up there, without a better read on our opponent. Anything could happen.

WILLIE GARY

Well guess what, I don't care what y'all think! This is the decision I made, and what I need you to do now is get on board! You tryin' to tell me I should be worried about Mame? Mame!? Believe me, I ain't worried about no Mame! She may be one of those slick corporate types, but she ain't no street fighter like me! She's too weak to ever go after a nice guy like Jerry on the stand. She ain't got the stomach for it.

72 EXT. JACKSON MS COURTHOUSE - MORNING

72

We slowly PAN across a long MURAL. Which also happens to feature a scenic rendering of an OLD SOUTHERN SLAVE SCENE. It then dissolves into an enormous PHOTOGRAPH of the O'KEEFE FAMILY. The same photo we saw taken in the beginning.

MAME DOWNES

I'm sorry, your honor, but is this photo really necessary?

WILLIE GARY

I don't know what she's talking about. This here is a photo of the O'Keefe family. It shows what's really at stake for the man...

The Judge just looks at Willie, before pointing a finger into the audience, where we see the ENTIRE O'KEEFE FAMILY sitting.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE GRAVES  
But aren't they all right there...?

CUT TO:

A little later, Willie now stands at the podium, directly opposite Jerry, who's himself seated in the witness box.

WILLIE GARY  
Let's talk about some of your values. Because if I'm not mistaken, Jerry, you're an 8 time decorated war hero, is that right? Shot down planes in World War II...

MAME DOWNES  
Objection! Leading the witness!

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)  
Oh come on now, he already said he was allowing it.

JUDGE GRAVES  
Overruled, continue.

WILLIE GARY  
Served as a lieutenant in the Air Force. Was awarded the Air Medal, the Navy Cross, the Flying Cross, all in gratitude for your sacrifice to this country... That right?

Turning to the jury, we can see their interest pique.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
I don't believe war is anything to celebrate. But I did serve my country, and quite proudly.

WILLIE GARY  
And all your hard work and service to this county, didn't end there. Because after coming back home to take over the family business, in 1973 you decided to run for Mayor of your home town of Biloxi...

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
I ran twice and served two terms as Mayor, from 1974 to 1982.

WILLIE GARY  
I even heard that during one of those terms, the Ku Klux Klan came and hit you with a request to hold a rally in your town. And what did you do...?

(CONTINUED)



72

CONTINUED: (2)

MAME DOWNES  
Objection! Leading the  
witness again!

JUDGE GRAVES  
Overruled!

Judge Graves then turns to the witness.

JUDGE GRAVES (CONT'D)  
(to Jeremiah)  
You may answer the question.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
I denied them a permit to  
demonstrate in the City of Biloxi.

WILLIE GARY  
Why did you do that?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
I am opposed to what they stand for  
-- any decent person would stand  
against them.

Turning to the jury, we can tell they're impressed.

WILLIE GARY  
What are your values, Jerry? What's  
really important to you?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
Simple things. Religion,  
patriotism, hard-work, honesty,  
taking care of my family.

WILLIE GARY  
Jerry, let's just get to it. Tell  
us what happened in this deal gone  
wrong between you and the Loewen  
Group? This guy screwed you six  
ways to Sunday, right?

MAME DOWNES  
Objection! Leading!

JUDGE GRAVES  
Overruled!

CUT TO:

INT. JACKSON MS COURTHOUSE / COURTROOM - LATER

With Jerry still on the stand, Mame rises from her chair.

MAME DOWNES  
Good afternoon, Mr. O'Keefe. How  
are you today, you doing okay?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
I'm doing well, thanks.

MAME DOWNES  
You are, you're doing well? Well  
good, that makes me happy to hear.

Mame laughs gently. Before flipping open her BINDER, glancing  
at pages for a long, silent beat. Then closing it again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

Having just listened to the testimony you gave- It's fair to say the real material substance of the examination, centered on the character... Would you agree?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I'd agree...

MAME DOWNES

Sorry, I'm so sorry Mr. O'Keefe, I couldn't hear that answer...?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I said, yes, I'd agree.

MAME DOWNES

Yes. Good, thank you... So, character. Let's talk about character. Because in the testimony you just gave, we heard a lot about character. In fact, I believe the overall insinuation being made, is that while you are a man of honor, of strong moral principles. According to you, my client is not.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I think Mr. Loewen and I have very different approaches to how we deal with people in business.

MAME DOWNES

In business. Yes, right, in business. I'm glad you brought that up actually.

Mame then heads over to the PODIUM and to her BINDER, and begins flipping pages for a long, long, long time.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

So, I'm a little curious about something- How exactly did you end up needing to sell those three funeral homes to Loewen?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Well... I had run into some financial trouble.

MAME DOWNES

Mr. O'Keefe I'm sorry to hear that. What kind of financial trouble...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He just looks at her, not answering. Turning to the audience, we see Annette staring back, with a scared and troubled face.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

Was that an answer? Never mind, I'll redirect. Because I'm pretty sure the *actual reason*, you so desperately needed to sell, at the time you did- Is because the Mississippi State Insurance Commission was about to revoke your license- Is that right? As a matter of fact your license to sell insurance in the state of Mississippi is currently under suspension. Can we agree that's a true statement?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

No, we can't. What I mean is, it's a bit more complicated than-

MAME DOWNES

Than what? What is it more complicated than? Was your license suspended, or was it not?

WILLIE GARY

Your honor, objection!!

JUDGE GRAVES

Overruled, Mr. Gary!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

My license was suspended. But I've recently petitioned the commission-

MAME DOWNES

The real truth here, is you lost your license because you got involved in some shady savings and loans "business deal" with a man that, if I'm not mistaken, is currently in *jail* now- Right? A man named, Franklin Lewis. And the money you used to finance this deal, did that money belong to you?

He's dead silent.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

No, in fact, because you used other people's money, your *clients'* money, to finance your involvement in said "business deal". With a now convicted felon...

WILLIE GARY

Objection, objection! Your honor!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

That's not how I would characterize-

MAME DOWNES

Is it possible that this entire case for you, stems from jealousy? Mr. O'Keefe? You said that you and Mr. Loewen have different ways of doing business. And you're right, you do. Because just like you, Ray Loewen inherited a business from his father. But unlike you, he was able to take that business and build it into a multimillion dollar empire. Meanwhile, what became of your father's legacy? You've really always just been about a hair shy of bankruptcy. Now you want Ray Loewen to bail you out for all your failures...

We hold on Jerry for a long beat. Then turn to Annette again, looking so utterly heart-broken and devastated for him.

JURY MEMBER

(to another juror)

Serves him right...

74 INT. JACKSON MS COURTHOUSE/ HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 74

Holding on the long central hallway, suddenly Jerry comes storming out of the courtroom, heading down the hall.

74pt EXT. JACKSON MS COURTHOUSE/ STEPS - MOMENTS LATER 74pt

Jerry comes down the courthouse steps.

75 EXT. STREETS OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 75

As Jerry comes charging down the sidewalk, we see Willie coming up behind him, chasing after him.

WILLIE GARY

Hey, hey! Jerry! Wait up, man! Yo Jerry!! Come on, wait up will you!!

Jerry finally stops and turns around.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

My God, what the hell was that!?

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

Huh!? What?! I don't understand,  
why are you angry at me!?

(CONTINUED)

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Why am I angry at you? You were supposed to protect me up there! You were supposed to make sure I was safe under cross examination! Look at what just happened!

WILLIE GARY

Yeah, but it's not my fault! How was I supposed to know she was going to bring all that-

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Because it's your JOB to know!!

WILLIE GARY

Okay, but hold on now! You didn't tell me half the shit she brought up in there! You didn't say nothing about that guy being in jail, or this whole savings and loans thing, that you'd taken money out of the-

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Because I didn't know! I didn't know until now that he was in jail! And as for taking money out of the reserves, I had to! I needed the money! I'm not proud of what I did!

WILLIE GARY

So, it's still not my fault!!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

No, it is. Because right from the moment I hired you, you've tried to turn this whole thing into your own one man circus! I've sunk every last dollar I have into this case, and you're still screwing around!

WILLIE GARY

That's not fair! Come on!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Easy for you to say, you don't have anything on the line! But for me, it's MY LIFE!! My life is what's on the line! And I don't even know how much of it I have left! That's it, I'm making a change.

WILLIE GARY

What? What's that supposed to mean?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I'm replacing you as lead counsel and putting Mike back in.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (3)

WILLIE GARY

What!? Mike!? Come on Jerry, come on it's a huge mistake!? Mike!?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

No, Willie, you were the mistake! What I'm doing now, is trying to correct it.

Jerry then promptly turns and marches away down the street.

MOMENTS LATER: Willie stands alone against the side of a building, lost, paralyzed, confused.

75A EXT. CASA GLORIA - DUSK

75A

Establishing shot on the house.

76 INT. CASA GLORIA - EVENING

76

Alone in her bedroom, Gloria lays sideways along the bed, bopping her head and tapping her ankles to the music as she reads ESSENCE MAGAZINE. After a moment, the PHONE RINGS.

GLORIA GARY

Hello...?

77 EXT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ ROOFTOP - EVENING

77

Up on the roof of his hotel, Willie stares out at the skyline as he talks on his 1994 MODEL NOKIA 2110 MOBILE.

WILLIE GARY

(into the phone)

Hey baby, it's me. Whatchadoin'?

The following conversation is then INTERCUT between the two:

GLORIA GARY

Nothing, doing a little reading, that's all. You sound a little down baby, is everything okay?

WILLIE GARY

Yeah. Yes. Yeah... Well, no... Jerry, um, he replaced me today...

GLORIA GARY

What? Replaced you? Baby, what does that mean...?

(CONTINUED)



WILLIE GARY

Means I got pulled from first  
chair. Means I'm not lead attorney  
on the case no more.

(CONTINUED)

GLORIA GARY

Oh honey, really? I'm so sorry to hear that. But I don't understand, why would he do that?

WILLIE GARY

I screwed up, just screwed up, that's all. I put Jerry on the stand, thinking I had it covered, and then he got annihilated on cross and- I mean it was bad, *ugly*. Now Jerry, he's upset. He's upset. And that makes me upset, to see him so upset.

GLORIA GARY

I see... You know, you sound like you really care about this man.

WILLIE GARY

Who, Jerry? Yeah, of course, I like Jerry. Jerry's cool, he's, you know-

GLORIA GARY

What I mean is, the way you talk about him is different from how you talk about other clients. The way you talk about him is more *sincere*.

WILLIE GARY

I guess, yeah, maybe. I guess...

Beat.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

It's just... Whenever someone gives up on me, whenever someone stops thinking I can do it, stops believing in me... It just makes me feel all *wobbly* inside. Like my legs are gonna buckle or something.

GLORIA GARY

It's because you need all that constant affirmation. All that endless praise and attention and adulation, like fuel to you, from whoever you can get it from... But maybe this time, it isn't only about you and your needs.

Seated in a small booth is a MIDDLE AGED WHITE WOMAN with a very soft-spoken, disposition- LORRAINE MCGRATH (40). After a moment, her eyes glance up to notice Hal entering.

(CONTINUED)

HAL DOCKINS

Are you, by any chance, Mrs.  
McGrath? Lorraine?

She just looks up at him, slightly confused.

LORRAINE MCGRATH

Well, yes, but... I'm sorry, I  
don't mean to be rude, it's just- I  
was kind of expecting a lawyer.

HAL DOCKINS

I am a lawyer. I'm the guy you  
spoke to on the phone, Hal Dockins.

LORRAINE MCGRATH

Oh, I'm so sorry... I hope I didn't  
offend you, it's just... Well, to  
be honest, you look very *young*.

A LITTLE LATER: They're now engaged in a quiet conversation.

LORRIANE MCGRATH

I worked t for a Loewen owned  
funeral home for 13 years. In all  
that time, I saw a lot, you know,  
in terms of how that company  
operates. A lot that

HAL DOCKINS

Before we go any further, I just  
have one question: Would you be  
willing to testify?

Standing alone at the sink, Willie washes his hands. Before  
suddenly one of the stall doors opens, and Jerry steps out.

WILLIE GARY

Morning, Jerry...

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Willie, how are you?

Silence again, as Jerry heads to the sink beside Willie.

WILLIE GARY

I guess you're still mad at me,  
huh?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Yesterday was a very bad day. How  
about we leave it at that.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

WILLIE GARY

All right look, damn, here it is. I screwed up, okay. I screwed up badly. And I'm, um... sorry about that... I'm sorry. I truly am.

While Jerry just looks at him in the mirror for a second.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Sure, okay. Apology accepted.

WILLIE GARY

All right, cool. Glad that's over.

Beat.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Is that the first time you've ever apologized to someone like that?

WILLIE GARY

Ah well, yeah, actually. Matter of fact, if I'm honest, my wife helped with some of the phrasing.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Did she? She did a very nice job. Thank her for me, will you.

Glancing at each others' reflections, they both laugh a bit.

80 INT. JACKSON MS COURTROOM - AFTERNOON

80

A little later, Allred now questions that same woman we saw earlier with Hal, Lorraine McGrath, on the stand.

MIKE ALLRED

Would you mind telling us how long you worked as an employee for the Durbin and Sons Funeral Home in Southaven, Mississippi?

LORRAINE MCGRATH

I worked at that funeral home for about 13 years before I quit.

MIKE ALLRED

And did you witness any transfer of ownership during that time period?

LORRAINE MCGRATH

Durban and Sons was bought by the Loewen Group sometime around 1990. I was there during that time.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE ALLRED

And did you notice any changes in the way the company was run, after the Loewen Group took over?

LORRAINE MCGRATH

The most significant was how they implemented this policy of raising prices on certain items, you know in areas where they held a monopoly and didn't have any competition. Mostly, this turned out to be poor areas.

On the jury, we can see their immediate concern over this.

MIKE ALLRED

Can you give an example of this kind of 'selective' pricing?

LORRAINE MCGRATH

There was this one particular casket I remember, the Wilburt Copper Tribune, that was supposed to retail for about \$750. Which it did, in some places like, say, Madison. But then over in Corinth, which as you know is very poor...

MIKE ALLRED

Yes, of course...

LORRAINE MCGRATH

Over there, they hiked up the price to something crazy, like 3x what it was supposed to cost. Just because they could, because customers didn't have anywhere else to go...

MIKE ALLRED

So basically, if I understand you, the Loewen group was involved in a form of systematic price gouging?

MAME DOWNES

OBJECTION your honor!! How would she possibly know the intentions of people she's never met before...

JUDGE GRAVES

Sustained. I agree.

MIKE ALLRED

Let me ask you this, Mrs. McGrath. In your time at Durban and Sons, were you ever left with the impression that the Loewen Group might've been specifically targeting minorities, in...

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED: (2)

MAME DOWNES  
 OBJECTION AGAIN, SPECULATION!! My  
 God! What is your basis for this,  
 Mr. Allred!

MIKE ALLRED  
 You know what, I apologize. No  
 basis. It was just speculation,  
 that's all. Consider it stricken.

As Mike then looks back at the jury again however, he can  
 tell the insinuation has piqued their interest nonetheless.

80A INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ BAR - LATER

80A

Seated around a table are Mike, Reggie, Al, Chris and  
 Dashaan. Surprisingly, they also seem to all be getting along  
 wonderfully! All of them toasting Mike on a great day, while  
 Mike seems to secretly bask in all their newfound affection.

81 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ DEFENSE'S WAR ROOM - NIGHT 81

Deep in the night, Mame and her boys, Mayfield and Lee, stay  
 up burning the midnight oil. Pouring over pages of documents.

MAME DOWNES  
 You know what I really don't like  
 about this man?

RICHARD MAYFIELD  
 What man is that?

MAME DOWNES  
 Mike Allred... It's like, I look at  
 his face, and I can just *feel* that  
 he's a bigot. You know what I mean,  
 he's got that bigot kind of face.

WALTER BELL  
 I know what you mean, it's  
 something in the expression.

RICHARD MAYFIELD  
 Generations upon generations of  
 white privilege, all encapsulated  
 in a single simpering grin.

MAME DOWNES  
 And to have to sit there and listen  
 to him with that woman on the  
 stand, trying to make himself out  
 like some kind of representative  
 for our people....

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

RICHARD MAYFIELD  
Unfortunately, I think the jury  
seemed to be eating it up...

MAME DOWNES  
Didn't I see his name on a witness  
list at some point?

WALTER BELL  
Supposedly Gary's planning on  
calling him as some kind of  
material witness to the agreement  
between O'Keefe and Loewen.

MAME DOWNES  
Which means I'll have him on cross.

RICHARD MAYFIELD  
Which means you'll have him on  
cross. What are you going to do  
about it?

MAME DOWNES  
You wanna know what I'm going to  
do, Gentlemen. I'm going to dig,  
and I'm going to dig, and I'm going  
to dig. Then once I'm done with all  
that digging, I'm going to dig some  
more... Until I finally find it.

WALTER BELL  
Find what?

While Mame just looks back and shrugs.

MAME DOWNES  
Whatever it is I'm looking for.

82 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ WAR ROOM - DAY

82

Gathered in the plaintiff's war room, we find Hal with his  
two YOUNG INTERNS. Pouring over papers.

HAL'S INTERN/ PETER  
Hey, have any of you guys read  
about this deal that the Loewen  
Group made with something called  
the National Baptist Convention?

HAL'S INTERN/ MILES  
National Baptist Convention? What..  
What is that?

HAL'S INTERN/ PETER  
It's like um, you know, like an arm  
of the black church.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

HAL'S INTERN/ PETER (CONT'D)

But a really big one. Probably the biggest actually.

HAL DOCKINS

Sorry, did you just say that Loewen Group has a deal with the black church? What do you mean? How? How does that make any sense?

HAL'S INTERN/ PETER

I don't know, but it's all right here. Apparently they created some kind of partnership about a year ago. Hard to say why, though?

HAL DOCKINS

Can you get me some more information on that?

83 INT. JACKSON MS COURTROOM - DAY

83

Back inside the courtroom, we turn to Judge Graves.

JUDGE GRAVES

Are the plaintiffs ready to call their next witness?

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Your Honor, we'd actually like to call Mr. O'Keefe's longtime attorney, Mr. Michael Allred, to the stand.

MAME DOWNES

What!? Seriously your honor, the plaintiffs are trying to call their own lawyer as a witness?! This is highly unprecedented and I'm not sure we're comfortable.

JUDGE GRAVES

I'm not sure I am either. What's going on here, Mr. Douglas?

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Your honor, we recognize how unusual this is. Mr. Allred was present as Mr. O'Keefe's lawyer during all of his dealings with Loewen. Therefore, we feel his testimony is essential.

(CONTINUED)



Judge Graves thinks it over, gradually turning to Mame who just shrugs.

DISSOLVE TO:

A LITTLE LATER: Mike himself now sits in the witness box opposite Reggie, looking incredibly uncomfortable.

REGGIE DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

With over 30 years of experience practicing law, specializing in contract law- Did it ever occur to you, Mr. Allred, as you were drawing up the contract between O'Keefe and Loewen- That there could be any misunderstanding about what this document actually was?

MIKE ALLRED

It was extremely clear to everyone exactly what it was. It was a contract.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

And was there anything specifically in the language of the document, that might've suggested that the generally understood period for the deal to close, was open ended?

MIKE ALLRED

No.

CUT TO:

A LITTLE LATER: As Mame now rises from her chair.

MAME DOWNES

Good afternoon, Mr. Allred. How does it feel to be sitting in that chair? Must feel kind of funny right, maybe a bit uncomfortable?

MIKE ALLRED

It's a little uncomfortable, yeah.

MAME DOWNES

Imagine, and we haven't even gotten started yet.

The jury laughs a little.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

So, you've been Mr. O'Keefe's lawyer for quite some time, right?

(CONTINUED)

MIKE ALLRED

I have. I think maybe 25. No, more like 30 years. In other words, yes.

MAME DOWNES

And would you say you're also good friends? Are you and Mr. O'Keefe also close friends?

MIKE ALLRED

Jerry's one of my closest friends. We share a lot in common and I admire him deeply.

Beat. She starts very slowly, methodically, turning pages in her BINDER, taking a very long pause. Looking closely at the pages, we see that it's actually no more than her TO DO LIST.

MAME DOWNES

Mr. Allred, would you say that this is a case about race?

WILLIE GARY

Objection! The question has no relevance!

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Objection! Where's the relevance your honor!

Willie then shoots Reggie a look before Reggie sits down.

JUDGE GRAVES

Overruled! Your side started it, gentlemen. Go ahead Mr. Allred.

MIKE ALLRED

Would I say this was a case about race? No, I wouldn't say it's a case about race.

MAME DOWNES

Oh, but the subject of race does keep coming up, doesn't it? And pretty much exclusively from your side. For example, this whole heroic narrative of Mr. O'Keefe's civil rights record. Denying the KKK that permit and all that...

MIKE ALLRED

I think what that has to do with- It's about Jerry's character. It's more about Jerry's integrity, and-

MAME DOWNES

Because he does so many wonderful things for black people, Jerry does...?

(CONTINUED)



MIKE ALLRED

Hold on... What?

WILLIE GARY

Objection!

JUDGE GRAVES

Overruled!

MAME DOWNES

For example your grandfather? What about your grandfather?

MIKE ALLRED

... My grandfather? What is-

MAME DOWNES

Did you love your grandfather?

MIKE ALLRED

He was my grandfather.

MAME DOWNES

And how do you think he'd feel about you working side by side with all these black attorneys?

MIKE ALLRED

What?

MAME DOWNES

Just remind me- How long was he also a member of the Ku Klux Klan? Your grandfather?

WILLIE GARY

OBJECTION!!! OBJECTION! OBJECTION!!

Judge Graves bangs his gavel.

JUDGE GRAVES

I heard you the first time, Mr. Gary. The objection is overruled-- answer the question, Mr. Allred.

MAME DOWNES

I didn't surprise you with that question, did I, Mike?

WILLIE GARY

OBJECTION!OBJECTION!! I'M  
JUST GONNA KEEP CALLING EM  
OUT JUDGE!

JUDGE GRAVES

Overruled! Please answer!

MIKE ALLRED

Are you asking if I was aware that my grandfather was once a member of the Ku Klux Klan?

(CONTINUED)

MAME DOWNES

I was, but I'm not anymore. No  
further questions.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (6)

On the jury, they look completely horrified.

JURY MEMBER  
(to another juror)  
So he a racist?

Enraged, Al suddenly SLAMS DOWN A PAD, gets up and walks straight out of the courtroom. He's followed by Chris, Reggie and Dashaan and finally the rest of the team.

While Jerry just watches them all, stunned silent. Then lowers his head in his hands in total devastation and defeat.

84 INT. JACKSON MS COURTHOUSE/ PLAINTIFF'S CHAMBERS - LATER 84

The door goes FLYING OPEN! Dashaan, Reggie, Chris, Al, Willie, Hal and Mike, come charging inside.

REGGIE DOUGLAS  
What the fuck man!? So we in bed with the Klan now!? Is that what this has come to!

CHRIS WAKEFIELD  
Wow, this shit is a complete disaster! Unreal!!!!

MIKE ALLRED  
Come on you guys, it was a total fucking ambush and you know it! She had no right to be asking questions like that! It was completely uncalled for!

DASHAAN HARRIS  
Hey Mike, do me a favor, don't start talking about uncalled for...

WILLIE GARY  
Jesus Christ!! Mike, seriously man, what the hell, what's the story?

REGGIE DOUGLAS  
You know the story! The story is this man is a tried and true racist! I mean he literally told us RIGHT TO OUR FACES, right when we first met this nigga!

MIKE ALLRED  
No, that's not true. I never said I was racist! Okay yes, my grandfather was once a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MIKE ALLRED (CONT'D)

But so were a lot of people's  
grandfather's. It's the South!

(CONTINUED)

AL JONES

Mine wasn't... Oh hold on, let me think... Yeah, no, I'm pretty sure, my grandfather wasn't in no KKK.

REGGIE DOUGLAS

For cryin' out loud!! I KNEW we never should've taken this case!

DASHAAN HARRIS

Man, seriously!? Well said!

MIKE ALLRED

Her conduct was unconscionable! You can't hold someone responsible for the mistakes of their ancestors!

WILLIE GARY

THEY JUST DID, MAN!? THE GODDAMN JURY JUST DID!! THEY JUST DID!? AND I DON'T EVEN BLAME THEM!

MIKE ALLRED

But none of it has anything to do with this case!

AL JONES

Does anything that has to do with this case, *actually* have to do with this case?

Willie whips his head around to Hal.

WILLIE GARY

Why you so quiet back there?

HAL DOCKINS

I'm processing...

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Disgusting! Your granddaddy was a disgusting man, you know that Mike!

MIKE ALLRED

Hey, watch it! That's still my grandfather you're talking about! Show some respect!

REGGIE DOUGLAS

Respect!? Your grandfather was a racist, prejudiced, bigoted piece of white Southern fried garbage!!

MIKE ALLRED

WHAT!? SAY THAT ONE MORE TIME!! SAY IT ONE MORE TIME! SAY IT, GO AHEAD!

(CONTINUED)



REGGIE DOUGLAS  
OH YEAH! YOU MEAN IT! COME ON  
NIGGA, YOU WANNA GO! LET'S GO!

Just as Mike makes a move on Reggie, and Reggie moves on him back! With Hal quickly stepping in between!

HAL DOCKINS  
Okay!! Okay!! JESUS!! OKAY!!

Holding on Mike, he looks a bit pensive, almost sad.

MIKE ALLRED  
It's true I used to be a certain way, because it's how I grew up, and was all I knew. But I've been changing a lot, and I don't want to be that way anymore. I like you guys so much.

WILLIE GARY  
You know what Mike, we're not going to crucify you for this. Ain't nobody gonna blame you for-

REGGIE DOUGLAS  
Wait a minute, you *serious*? You're giving him a pass on this? Seriously!?!

Beat. Willie doesn't say anything, as Reggie stares at him.

REGGIE DOUGLAS (CONT'D)  
That's it, I'm out!

HAL DOCKINS  
What? Where are you going?

REGGIE DOUGLAS  
I'm out, I'm done! I'm done with this case! I'm going back to Florida, I'm out!

WILLIE GARY  
What!?? What do you mean-!?

CHRIS WAKEFIELD  
Me too, I'm tired of this shit.  
Case was a lost cause from day one.

AL JONES  
Fuck it, then I'm out too!

DASHAAN HARRIS  
Same. I'm too old for this shit!

(CONTINUED)

Reggie and the others then head straight out, SLAMMING THE DOOR. Leaving Willie, Hal and Mike standing there, stupefied.

MIKE ALLRED

I should probably... I should probably recuse myself, shouldn't I?

WILLIE GARY

Huh, what? Nah Mike, you good. Just forget it. You don't have to-

MIKE ALLRED

No, I should, shouldn't I. If I even dare step foot in that courtroom again, the jury's never going to see me. They'll just see a guy with a sheet over his head.

WILLIE GARY

Come on, you're not going anywhere. Shit, you may be some cracker ass backwater bigot. But you're my bigot. And I need you here, man.

MIKE ALLRED

It's kind of you to say, Willie But we both know if I stay on, my presence is just going hurt the case more. I don't want that.

Mike and Willie just look at each other for a beat before Mike reaches out a hand to shake, Willie instead pulls him in for a hug.

84A

INT. WAR ROOM - EVENING

84A

As an intern lays fast asleep at a desk, we turn to Hal seated at the edge of the conference table. He looks utterly lost and despondent. Hal shoves a stack of papers across the table and they flying off.

85

INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ ROOFTOP - EVENING

85

All alone on the roof again, beneath a gathering twilight, Willie paces and stares out at the city, paces and stares out at the city. He looks so incredibly sad and frustrated

86

INT. O'KEEFE FAMILY RESIDENCE - EVENING

86

Jerry sits on the porch, looking like a man who's been through hell. After a moment Annette comes out to join him.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

Hey, I was looking for you. How's everything going?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

We had another disastrous day in court. This whole sordid business with Mike's family suddenly being brought up out of nowhere...

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

Mike's family? What does Mike's family have to do with anything?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Oh, it doesn't matter. Point is, this thing is really not going the way I hoped, and... Maybe you were right all along. Maybe it's time I throw in the towel. Give up.

Gently turning, she looks him dead in the eyes.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

You're serious? You mean that?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

This whole thing was so stupid of me, wasn't it? To think that someone like me could ever stand a chance against someone like him? I'm sorry Annie. I'm so sorry for everything I put you through....

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

You don't need to be sorry, Jeremiah. Not to me anyway. I know who you are. One of your most admirable qualities has always been your utter inflexibility in the face of injustice. And I love you for that. And maybe a couple other things too... But it's an equally good quality to know when to let go.

(then)

Have you told Willie yet?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Not yet. I feel like I should do it in person, don't you?

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

I think that would be nice, yes. I think that would be the right thing to do.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

It's the weekend tomorrow. I'll go by the hotel in the morning.

Entering the lobby, Jerry heads to the CONCIERGE DESK.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Hi there, would you mind calling up  
to Mr. Gary's room for me please...

Behind the desk, the same HOTEL RECEPTIONIST we saw before.

HOTEL RECEPTIONIST

Gary... Let's see... Oh, sorry Sir,  
I'm afraid he's checked out.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Checked out?

HOTEL RECEPTIONIST

Oh, I see, just for the weekend. He  
did leave a forwarding address,  
somewhere in Florida. But I'm  
afraid I'm not authorized to-

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

That's okay, I think I have it.

88 EXT. CASA GLORIA/ DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

88

We see a TAXI slowly pull into the to massive driveway. Jerry  
then steps out, staring up curiously at the house.

89 INT./EXT. CASA GLORIA - SAME TIME

89

As the SOUND OF THE DOORBELL echoes through, we follow  
tightly behind Gloria, skipping down a staircase to the door.

SECONDS LATER: Gloria opens it and is immediately confused to  
discover this strange older white man on the other side.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Hi there, you must be Mrs. Gary...?

GLORIA GARY

Yes...?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Forgive me for just showing up like  
this, but I'm Jeremiah O'Keefe.

Gloria's still confused, continuing to look at him. Before:

GLORIA GARY

Oh! You mean you're Jerry! *The  
Jerry*. That my husband's always  
going on about...?

She laughs and he laughs too.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

That Jerry, yes. I guess I am. Is Willie home by the way?

GLORIA GARY

Well, no, I'm afraid he's not. He's over at his mother's in Indiantown, where he usually goes on Saturdays.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Indiantown, okay? How far is that?

GLORIA GARY

About 20 miles. Tell you what, if you give me a minute to grab my keys, I can drive you there myself.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Are you sure? I'm happy to take a taxi, I wouldn't want to impose...

She looks at him a little funny, then smiles.

GLORIA GARY

No, no, it's all good. Come on now, I got you Jerry.

90 EXT. LANDSCAPE - DAY

90

In a majestic SUPER WIDE, we look out across the vast Florida landscape, seeing Gloria's little Mercedes, the lone car for miles, cut straight across the horizon.

91 INT. GLORIA'S MERCEDES - SAME TIME

91

Gloria and Jerry sit side by side in Gloria's car.

GLORIA GARY

So, what made you come all the way down from Mississippi? Are you and my husband having some kind of lover's quarrel...?

Confused by the question, Jerry suddenly gets tongue-tied.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Are we-?... Sorry-?... What do you mean by-?

Gloria instantly starts laughing.

GLORIA GARY

Oh no, it's okay, it was a joke. It's a joke my baby, just a joke.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

(laughing too)

Oh, right... Yeah... Of course.

(then:)

There's just something I need to talk to him about, and I thought it'd be best to do it in person.

GLORIA GARY

I see...

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

You know, even though Willie and I have had our differences, I still think he's a remarkable man.

GLORIA GARY

I think he thinks the same.

Jerry's eyes then gradually turn to the window.

GLORIA GARY (CONT'D)

We're just entering Indiantown now.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

This is where Willie's from?

GLORIA GARY

This is where we're both from.

At the same time as Gloria reaches to turn the VOLUME up on the car's stereo, thrusting the music back up, as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

92 EXT. IMAGES OF INDIANTOWN - TBD

92

From the vantage point of a car slowly passing by, we see various vignettes of all the breathtaking poverty and destitution of this place. The music still carrying over...

DISSOLVE TO:

93 EXT. WILLIE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

93

In a very naturalistic, freeform way, we go to all kinds of little beats and moments from this LARGE FAMILY GATHERING.

94 INT. WILLIE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

94

All crammed inside this tiny family room, in front of a TV, are 15 ADULTS and CHILDREN, all members of the Gary Clan. With Willie sitting smack dab in the middle on the couch, all watching THE PRICE IS RIGHT together.

(CONTINUED)

GLORIA GARY (O.S.)  
Hey Willie, you in here, I brought  
a surprise guest...?

Willie's then instantly shocked to see Jerry there. As Jerry  
is equally shocked to see all these faces staring up at him.

WILLIE GARY  
What!? Jerry, what are you doing  
here! Damn, this is a surprise!  
Good to see you here, man!

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
Hi Willie...

WILLIE GARY  
Where are my manners. Let me  
introduce you to my family. Hey  
family, everybody say Hi to Jerry.

ALL THE FAMILY MEMBERS TOGETHER  
HIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII JERRY!!!

Just as an utterly ADORABLE LITTLE GIRL (5) runs over and  
starts yanking Jerry's pant leg, trying to get his attention.

LITTLE GIRL  
Hi Jerry, I'm Shania.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
Hi Shania, I'm Jerry.

MOMENTS LATER: As Jerry sits together with them all, holding  
Shania on his lap, mesmerizing her with some magic trick.

Beneath a radiant late afternoon sun, Willie and Jerry sit  
together with an older woman in her 80s. WILLIE'S MOTHER.

MAMMA GARY  
Did Willie ever tell you he's one  
of 11 siblings? Number 6 out of 11.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
Believe it or not, I have thirteen  
children myself.

MAMMA GARY  
Do you? So you know there's always  
that one baby, that no matter what  
you do won't ever seem to let you  
go. Always wrapped around the  
bottom of your leg, clinging to you  
for dear life...

(CONTINUED)



95 CONTINUED:

Jerry nods, smiles. As Willie looks a little embarrassed.

MAMMA GARY (CONT'D)

And just look where all that  
longing, all that desperation for  
love, has gotten him now...

96 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ WAR ROOM - DAY

96

We see a lot of sad faces, as Hal mulls about in the war room with his two INTERNS. All of them seeming so despondent.

HAL'S INTERN/ MILES

You really think it's over, boss?

HAL DOCKINS

I don't think there's any way we  
can win anymore. My guess is  
Jerry's probably starting to see it  
that way too. Come on, let's start  
packing some of this stuff up.

As they all start piling boxes, Hal's eyes happen to fall on one BOX OF FILES in particular, being carried away:

HAL DOCKINS (CONT'D)

Hold up. What's in that one again?

HAL'S INTERN/ PETER

It's that info you requested about  
Loewen's deal with the National  
Baptist Convention. Remember all  
those statements we took...

HAL DOCKINS

You know what, maybe don't take  
that one away just yet.

A LITTLE LATER: With everyone gone for lunch, Hal sits by himself, pouring over all the NBC DOCUMENTS. We notice him gently run his highlighter over a single name: **Ruben Soames**.

97 EXT. SUGARCANE FIELDS - MAGIC HOUR

97

Beneath a rosy-fingered canopy of clouds, Willie and Jerry walk through the cane fields behind his mom's house. Just walking side by side in silence, before Jerry finally stops:

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

The reason I came all the way out  
here is because there's something I  
need to talk to you about...

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

WILLIE GARY

I already know. You're here to tell me you want to drop the case.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I know how disappointing this must be. If I thought there was any chance we could still...

WILLIE GARY

It's all right, I'm not angry at you Jerry. You gotta do what you gotta do, right. I just wish you would've given me one more shot at it, though. Because I know, I know- *I just know with all my heart*- That you and I together, we could've taken that company down Jerry. We could've taken that company down.

Jerry just looks at him a moment, thinking it over.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I hope you know how much I've enjoyed getting to know you. Even though this one didn't break our way, getting to know you was a highlight.

Before suddenly, they hear the faint sound of a PHONE BUZZ.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE (CONT'D)

Christ, what's that noise?

WILLIE GARY

... Oh wait, is that my phone... I think it's my phone...?

Willie starts patting all his pockets, before finally finding the phone. He answers it.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

(into the phone)  
Hello...Hal?... Hal?...

98 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ WAR ROOM - DAY

98

Back at the hotel, Hal sits on the phone in the war room. With the following conversation now INTERCUT:

HAL DOCKINS

Willie, can you hear me?... Are you there?... Can you hear me?

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

Sort of... I can hear you a little better... Jesus, these things are the stupidest invention ever...

HAL DOCKINS

Listen, are you with Jerry? Whatever you do, don't let him drop the case, okay... I repeat, DO NOT let Jerry drop the case...

WILLIE GARY

What are you talking about, why?

HAL DOCKINS

Just trust me, okay. I may have found something.

Hanging up the phone, Wille stares at Jerry, who stares back.

Off in some vast and beautiful countryside, Hal and Willie walk together with ANOTHER MAN. An older, weathered, yet incredibly tender AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAN, RUBEN SOAMES (75).

WILLIE GARY

So you're a funeral director, Mr. Soames, is that right?

RUBEN SOAMES

That's right. I've been in the business my whole entire life. I suppose tendin' to the dead and all those poor, hurtin' family members they leave behind- is kind of like a special calling for me.

As they continue to walk along, they gradually come to the edge of some great, wide open field. Ruben then stops.

RUBEN SOAMES (CONT'D)

You know what this right here is?

WILLIE GARY

Not sure....

RUBEN SOAMES

What it is, is a cemetery. Though you wouldn't ever know it, from looking at it- On account of the fact they're no headstones.

Hal and Willie just look at each other, he smiles at them.

(CONTINUED)

RUBEN SOAMES (CONT'D)

But that's because this is a different kind of cemetery. An old slave burial ground. And everybody knows slaves didn't have no money of their own to ever bury their loved ones with headstones.

Just as MUSIC, the same- (*SHOSTAKOVICH/ SYMPHONY No 11 Op.103 PALACE SQUARE ADAGIO*)- now gradually fills in again....

RUBEN SOAMES (CONT'D)

All throughout the South, you see big empty fields just like this one-

CUT TO:

100

EXT. SERIES OF VAST EMPTY FIELDS - TBD

100

*In an exact replica of what we saw in the beginning of the movie, we enter into a series of all these vast wild fields.*

RUEBEN SOAMES (O.S.)

And though you'd never know it to look, our entire history, the history of black people in the South, of our slave ancestors, is buried everywhere out here. Deep underground, pretty much everywhere you look, that's where our history is, in all these vast empty fields.

BACK TO:

RUBEN SOAMES

In some places, they even put up all these statues, you know like all these confederate monuments and statues you see all around here....

101

EXT. SERIES OF VAST EMPTY FIELDS - TBD

101

*Cutting away again, we see more beautiful, overgrown fields:*

RUBEN SOAMES (O.S.)

All a lot of them were put up right on top of slave burial grounds. Almost like taking one history and putting it right on top of another. Taking one man's legacy, and putting it on top of another. Til one day the other gets pushed down so deep, buried so deep- Can't no one ever find it no more.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

MOMENTS LATER: As the three of them walk toward Ruben's home, Hal notices something. It's that same AMERICAN FLAG lying all alone in the grass. Confused by it, Hal's just about to say something, but then changes his mind.

102 INT. RUBEN SOAMES' FUNERAL HOME/ LIVING ROOM - DAY 102

Seated around this very tiny living room are Willie, Hal, Rueben, plus two OLDER AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN.

HAL DOCKINS

What can you tell us about the deal between Loewen Group and the National Baptist Convention?

MATTIE THIBODEAU

I can tell you nothing good ever come out of it, at least not for black folks. That's the truth.

RUBEN SOAMES

About a year back, Loewen Group connected with some of the top leadership in the NBC, one of the largest single branches of the black church. Representing some 33,000 churches and over than 8 million members. Anyway, so they propose this deal to the NBC. Told them that if they could convince the black church to endorse Loewen as its '*death-care provider of choice*', they'd help turn some of its members into salesmen. You know like teach 'em how to sell everything from graves, crypts, headstones, burial insurance, straight to their own people.

MATTIE THIBODEAU

And for every product they sold, they could keep the commission.

WILLIE GARY

You tryin' to tell me Loewen managed to convince poor black people to hawk his funeral products to other poor black people. On the promise of some *commission*?

RUBEN SOAMES

Course they *claimed* it was all win-win, way to help folks out of poverty, boost economic empowerment. But it never did much for anyone, except Loewen Group.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

MATTIE THIBODEAU

They were just trying to find another way to exploit black folks in their most vulnerable moments. Get them to pay way more money than they had for things couldn't never afford in the first place.

RUBEN SOAMES

In other words, American Capitalism at its finest.

103 EXT. RUBEN SOAMES' FUNERAL HOME/ DRIVEWAY - LATER 103

About an hour or so later, Hal and Willie now stand alone in the driveway, about to climb back into Willie's rented BMW.

WILLIE GARY

You know, my mamma used to have a saying. Just a very simple, very true saying...

HAL DOCKINS

What was it?

WILLIE GARY

*You don't fuck with the black church.*

MOMENTS LATER: We follow from above, watching their car drive away down the road.

SMASH CUT TO:

104 INT. JACKSON MS COURTROOM - DAY 104

Back inside the courtroom, we now enter a rapid-fire MONTAGE of different WITNESSES in the box. All are African American.

NBC WITNESS 1/ MALE

My child was lying there in the hospital. Dying. You can't even imagine what it feels like. Then suddenly this man from the NBC shows up, asking if I've made any funeral arrangements yet and if I'd be interested in the Loewen burial package. Said I'd get a much better deal if I paid upfront, before my son died...

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

## NBC WITNESS 2/FEMALE

I'd already given all the money I had, when this group from my church tried to convince me I still needed the pre-need burial insurance. Once my husband finally passed, That's when they said the package I bought still didn't cover the cost of embalming or moving the body.

CUT TO:

## NBC WITNESS 3/MALE

He assured the coffin I bought for my mom was the least expensive one. Come to find out the one they sold me was three times more than average. When your own preacher comes to you telling you need something, and you're religious. You believe it.

CUT TO:

## NBC WITNESS 4/ FEMALE

I had heard they were offering some kind of "grief counseling" at the church, and thought it would be worth trying. But rather than give me any comfort, the deacon assigned to be counsellor used it as an opportunity to shove me a bunch of brochures in my face and try and recruit me as a Loewen sales rep.

CUT TO:

## NBC WITNESS 5/ FEMALE

Some of them members came to me and told me the actual cost of burying my father was going to be much more than what they said when I got the policy. They was charging for the embalming, viewing and other services that wasn't included. Then, when I told them I didn't have the extra money and didn't know how long it would take me to come up with it, they said they'd happily, 'keep the body on ice for me', until I did.

Until we finally land on a very different-looking witness. A more polished MIDDLE AGED WHITE MAN (45), executive type.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

You work as a financial analyst overseeing high-level deals for the Loewen Group, that correct?

GORDON METZGER

Yes, it's correct.

WILLIE GARY

You were also one of the principal architects involved in designing the Loewen Group's recent deal with the National Baptist Convention...?

GORDON METZGER

Yes, I was.

WILLIE GARY

Exactly how much money did Loewen Group expect to make, over time, as a result of its arrangement with the NBC? Remember you're under oath-

GORDON METZGER

Our original longterm projections on that deal, were somewhere around 1 maybe 1.2 billion dollars.

WILLIE GARY

And how much money was paid to the NBC by the Loewen Group as compensation for this arrangement?

GORDON METZGER

About 200,000... dollars.

Back in the defense team's war room, Mame is a complete frayed nerve, livid. Pow wowing with Mayfield and Lee.

MAME DOWNES

Fuck! How did we not have this!? Can someone explain how we didn't have this piece about the NBC!! It's embarrassing!

RICHARD MAYFIELD

We had it. We just didn't have it.

MAME DOWNES

We just didn't have it have it. Wow, thanks Richie, that's really helpful. This is such a mess, such a fucking mess! I can't believe it, but I think I've gotta call Loewen!

(CONTINUED)



105 CONTINUED:

RICHARD MAYFIELD

What? You're going to call Loewen,  
now? What time is it in Vancouver?

MAME DOWNES

No, not on the phone, Richie- I  
mean to the stand. I've got to call  
Loewen as a witness, and put him on  
the stand!

WALTER BELL

Woah. Hang on there Downes. You  
know I've respected all your  
decision making thus far. But  
putting Loewen on the stand, sounds  
way risky to me.

MAME DOWNES

You think I don't know that  
already, Walter!? You think this is  
something I want!? We got murdered  
in there today! Look at where the  
fuck we are!

106 EXT. PRIVATE AIRPORT IN JACKSON - NIGHT

106

Late in the night, we see the flickering lights of another  
PRIVATE JET come screeching down onto a runway.

107 INT. RAY LOEWEN'S PRIVATE JET - SAME TIME

107

Seated in the cabin, Ray Loewen happens to glance out the  
window and notice another large JET, parked right beside his.

RAY LOEWEN

Whose plane is that over there?

LOEWEN'S STEWARD

Oh, that? I'm pretty sure that  
plane belongs to Mr. Gary, Sir.

RAY LOEWEN

To who?

LOEWEN'S STEWARD

Willie Gary. He's the lawyer for  
the other side in the case against  
you in court right now.

RAY LOEWEN

The lawyer? You mean to tell me *the*  
*lawyer*, has a bigger plane than I  
do?

108 INT. JACKSON MS COURTROOM - DAY

108

Back inside the courtroom, Ray is now seated in the witness box opposite Mame, who stands across the room, at the podium.

RAY LOEWEN

As a business man of over 30 years, dealing with people honestly has always been important to us. Do we seek to be tough competitors in an increasingly volatile market? Yes. But we don't cheat people, that's not how we operate.

MAME DOWNES

No further questions.

Mame then heads back to her table, just as Willie rises. Seated at the plaintiff's table, we notice Jerry turn behind him to look at Annette in the audience, who nods back at him.

WILLIE GARY

Fair to say, we've heard from a lot of people during this trial- But the one person we really haven't heard from, is you. How about you give us your own version of what went down between you and Mr. O'Keefe in this deal.

RAY LOEWEN

Sure, I can do that. I believe it was roughly a year ago when we received an inquiry from a representative of Mr. O'Keefe's. In fact, I'm pretty sure it was his lawyer, Mr. Allred, who first reached out- wanting to know if our company might have any interest in purchasing a small parcel of funeral homes. My understanding is they were very anxious to sell. So we started looking at the deal, sussing it out, trying to determine if this was something that fit with our business. Sometime after that, is when I invited Mr. O'Keefe and his associates up to Vancouver. If I recall, they all came for dinner on my boat and we discussed things. After that, hard to say. Normally at that stage, I tend to hand things over to my acquisitions team. And am less involved in the day-today...

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

Very helpful, thank you Mr. Loewen.  
And lucky for you, I really just  
have one follow-up question...

RAY LOEWEN

Well, why don't you go ahead and  
ask it then.

WILLIE GARY

What kind of boat?

RAY LOEWEN

Come again?

WILLIE GARY

A moment ago you said you invited  
Mr. O'Keefe and his associates for  
dinner on your "boat". I'm just  
wondering what kind of boat it was?

RAY LOEWEN

I don't understand? Are you asking  
about the particular make, or-

WILLIE GARY

Put it this way, does your boat  
have...

(grabbing a paper)

9 separate sunning decks, 6 elegant  
state rooms, 5 luxury guest cabins,  
a kitchen and dinning galley? Can  
you land a helicopter on top of  
your boat? If you had to choose  
between the two- would you say it's  
more of a boat or a yacht?

RAY LOEWEN

What's the difference?

WILLIE GARY

What's the difference? You don't  
know what the difference is between  
a boat and a yacht? Seriously?

RAY LOEWEN

No. I'm afraid I don't.

WILLIE GARY

Exactly how much does this *boat* of  
yours, cost?

RAY LOEWEN

I really don't know.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

You don't? You don't know? You don't know how much it costs?

RAY LOEWEN

I'm afraid I don't. I'm sorry.

WILLIE GARY

Didn't you buy it?

RAY LOEWEN

Yes, I did.

WILLIE GARY

But you don't remember how much it costs?

RAY LOEWEN

No, I don't.

WILLIE GARY

Let me repeat the question, case you didn't hear me the first time- I asked how much your boat costs?

RAY LOEWEN

Like I just said, I don't know.

WILLIE GARY

I'll repeat the question, listen very carefully, you listening- How much does your boat cost?

RAY LOEWEN

I don't know?

WILLIE GARY

How much does your plane cost, Mr. Loewen? How much, Ray?

RAY LOEWEN

How much does your plane cost, Mr. Gary? I saw it on the runway.

WILLIE GARY

We're not here to talk about my plane right now, we're here to talk about your boat. You wanna tell me how much it costs now?

MAME DOWNES

Objection!!

JUDGE GRAVES

Overruled! The witness must answer the question!

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY  
HOW MUCH DOES YOUR BOAT COST!?

(CONTINUED)

RAY LOEWEN  
I DON'T KNOW!!!

WILLIE GARY  
HOW MUCH DOES YOUR BOAT COST!?

RAY LOEWEN  
I DON'T KNOW!!!

WILLIE GARY  
HOW MUCH DOES IT COST!

RAY LOEWEN  
WHAT IS YOUR POINT!?!?

WILLIE GARY  
MY POINT!? MY POINT!?!... My point  
is this: When you're sitting there,  
sunning yourself, on the deck of  
your 25 million dollar yacht.  
Eating your 30 dollar a head  
lobster- Does it ever bother you to  
know that- ALL OF IT- is being paid  
for by all the poor and destitute  
people your company systematically  
exploits everyday for profit.

MAME DOWNES  
Objection! Argumentative!!

JUDGE GRAVES  
Overruled!!

WILLIE GARY  
People you not only took advantage  
of, and did so in their weakest  
moment! In their blinding fog of  
loss and grief! That it's being  
paid for by all the hardworking  
small business owners, all across  
this country, just trying to keep  
up, trying to stay afloat, while  
huge, greed driven corporations-

RAY LOEWEN  
You know, I think I've had quite  
enough of this...

Furious, Ray starts to get up from his chair, before suddenly-

WILLIE GARY  
SIT YOUR ASS BACK DOWN IN THAT  
CHAIR!! I AM NOT DONE WITH YOU YET,  
SIR!!! NOT BY A LONG SHOT!!

Mame Downes jumps out of her seat.

MAME DOWNES  
OBJECTION, YOUR HONOR!!

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE GRAVES

Sustained! Mr. Gary, language of  
that nature will not be tolerated  
in my courtroom!!

Judge Graves then turns to look at the witness.

JUDGE GRAVES (CONT'D)

Mr. Loewen, you are not allowed to  
leave the witness stand until you  
have been excused by me--do you  
understand?

Stunned, Ray just stares at Willie, slowly sits again.

JUDGE GRAVES (CONT'D)

(back to Willie)  
You may continue, Mr. Gary...

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED: (6)

WILLIE GARY

I just want to know if it ever  
bothered you, that's all?

While Ray just glares back at him.

MOMENTS LATER: As Ray gracefully steps down, he calmly goes  
to shake hands with each member of the plaintiff's team,  
smiling politely, thanking them all...

109 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ DEFENSE'S WAR ROOM - LATER 109

We suddenly see a CHAIR GO FLYING ACROSS THE ROOM! Then turn  
to see Ray in the middle of the room, in an absolute TIRADE!

RAY LOEWEN

MOTHERFUCKER!!! WHAT THE FUCK WAS  
THAT!! I GOT SKEWERED UP THERE!

While across the room Mame sits with Mayfield and Lee.

MAME DOWNES

Are you done? Are you finished?

He just looks at her.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

You know what, Mr. Loewen, I'm no  
fool. We both know why you hired  
me. But I came here to do a job,  
and I'm going finish that job.  
Because it's my professional  
obligation to do so. I'll be back.

110 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 110

We see TWO DOORS OPEN in unison, suddenly realizing that each  
of the 'War Rooms' were adjacent this whole time. Stepping in  
the hall, Mame and Willie walk 10 feet to meet in the middle.

WILLIE GARY

Whadd'up Sister Souljah? What you  
got for me?

MAME DOWNES

I'm here to let you know that we've  
come to a decision.

WILLIE GARY

Really, and what might that be?

(CONTINUED)



MAME DOWNES

Based on the day's events, we feel it would probably be best for all parties involved to reopen a settlement discussion. In other words, we're now prepared to make your client a very generous offer.

WILLIE GARY

All right, I like the sound of that. How generous are we talking?

MAME DOWNES

Obviously, it's not 100 million.

WILLIE GARY

Obviously...

MAME DOWNES

Nevertheless, I'd say it's in a range where neither Jerry, nor his kids, or his grandkids- Should ever have to worry about anything again.

WILLIE GARY

Why don't ya'll meet us over in our room in a couple hours. Oh and don't forget to bring your best negotiator. Cause *oooh child* your ass is gonna need him.

We now find all parties involved seated around a table. Willie, Hal, Jerry, Annette. Mame, Loewen and a couple other lawyers. Plus the defense team's NEGOTIATOR- WHITE MALE (65).

LOEWEN'S NEGOTIATOR

Generally damages in tort are awarded to simply restore the plaintiff back to the position he/she was in, before the tort occurred. However, given how protracted this whole matter has become, we believe it's in all our best interest, to just resolve this once and for all. We'd like to make you what we consider a very generous offer. Obviously, should you decide not to take it, we can all go back into court tomorrow and you can roll the dice with the jury. But frankly, the chances you'll win, or get anywhere close to this number- Is a risk I doubt you'll want to take.

(CONTINUED)

The Negotiator then takes out a small paper, scribbles down a number, folds it and hands it to Mame. She opens it, looks at it, folds it back up and slides it over to Willie.

MAME DOWNES

Here's our offer...

Willie opens the paper, looks at it. Then folds it back up and slides it to Jerry. Who himself opens it, looks at it, shares it with Annette, who looks at it too. Jerry and Annette then silently nod at each other.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

The answer is, No.

MAME DOWNES

Excuse me? Are you serious? Is he serious?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I said the answer is, No.

RAY LOEWEN

You mean to tell me you're really turning that down? Really? You don't want to maybe take a little more time think about it?

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

I've thought about it enough.

RAY LOEWEN

Have you? I think we both know that's more money than you'll ever see in your lifetime.

Jerry stares back a moment, before sliding the paper back.

WILLIE GARY

We finished here? Or ya'all wanna keep wasting more of our time?

Loewen grabs the paper, crumbles it. He then leans over to whispers to Mame, who in turn whispers to the Negotiator, who jots down another number. He folds it, slides it to Mame, who looks at it, before folding it back up, sliding it to Willie.

MAME DOWNES

Consider this our best and final.

Willie has a quick look, folds it back up, slides it to Jerry. Who now opens and looks at it too, shows it too Annette, and they just look at each other again. Long beat.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

The answer's still, No.

(CONTINUED)

RAY LOEWEN

Well this is fucking unbelievable.  
What the hell's the problem,  
O'Keefe? You can't honestly tell me  
it's not enough.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

Oh, it's more than enough for me.  
Just not enough for you. As in, not  
enough to put you out of business.

RAY LOEWEN

Ha! Let me tell you something, pal.  
The amount of money it would take  
to put me out of business- the  
real, actual amount- is a number  
you can't even calculate. Take the  
money. You're 75 years old.

MAME DOWNES

Can you maybe speak to your client?

WILLIE GARY

And say what? He said it's a, No.  
Last I checked, means it's a, 'No'.

RAY LOEWEN

You know something, I gotta ask-  
What does it feel like to be some  
small-time, nobody funeral director  
on the verge of bankruptcy- who  
just turned down his one and only  
chance at 80 million dollars?

Undeterred, Jerry just stares back at Ray, firm and then all  
out of nowhere, he starts very softly SINGING:

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE

(a la Tony Toni Tone song)  
*It feels goooood... Yeeeeeah... It  
feels goooood... Badumbumbum bum...*

Willie smiles and they both start singing together. Just as  
we hear the loud OPENING BEATS OF (FEELS GOOD) COME IN, STAY  
FOR 8 SECONDS, GO OUT. Willie SLAMS his hand on the table!

WILLIE GARY

You heard the man!! No deal! See  
ya'll back in court!!

We hear the sound of a DOORBELL as Willie steps out from the  
bathroom. He heads over to the door to open it... Willie's  
then instantly surprised to discover none other than Gloria  
on the other side. They immediately start laughing.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

GLORIA GARY

Hey there handsome, thought you  
could use some company.

They continue to laugh so sweetly, endearingly, as MUSIC-  
(RALPH TRESVANT/ SENSITIVITY)- drifts in and carries over...

113 EXT. VARIOUS TRANSITIONAL IMAGES - EVENING 113

Various atmospheric transitional exteriors day to night, TBD.

114 INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ WILLIE'S SUITE - NIGHT 114

Music blasts through the suite, as Willie and Gloria dance  
with each other. Him (badly) singing along to the song...

WILLIE GARY

*Giiiiirl, I know it's been hard,  
since he went away... And left you  
so sad, you cry everyday... let me  
kiss your tears, erase all your  
doubts... Cause for you I'm here,  
you won't be without....*

WILLIE AND GLORIA TOGETHER

*Looooooooooooooooooooove!!!*

MOMENTS LATER: Now the music fades off as they fall onto the  
bed together. Lying side by side, staring at the ceiling.

WILLIE GARY

You put a smile on my face today,  
you know that?

GLORIA GARY

I aim to please.

WILLIE GARY

Closing argument's tomorrow...

GLORIA GARY

You think I don't know that?

WILLIE GARY

I done big cases before but- Never  
when I had so many people depending  
on me to make it right. Jerry, most  
of all... I keep thinking, what if  
I lose? What if I screw it up, let  
all these people down...

GLORIA GARY

Well, you're not going let them  
down, so you don't need to worry.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

WILLIE GARY

You know that for a fact?

GLORIA GARY

I don't know 'it' for a fact. I just know you for a fact. I know the man I married. Oh, but one suggestion though, baby...

WILLIE GARY

Yeah, baby...

GLORIA GARY

When you're up there in court tomorrow, doing your thing...

WILLIE GARY

Doing my thing...

GLORIA GARY

Just try not to refer to yourself in the third person, okay...

WILLIE GARY

Huh? What do you mean by that? I don't do that, do I...?

GLORIA GARY

Yeah, you do. Just a little...

WILLIE GARY

Do I? No, I don't think so. I don't think I do...

GLORIA GARY

Trust me, you do. You know what, let's pray on it. Time to take it out of our hands, and put it in God's now baby. Come on...

MOMENTS LATER: They now sit facing each other with foreheads pressed together, intimately whispering their prayers. Beat.

WILLIE GARY (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the jury...

115 OMIT

115

116 INT. JACKSON MS COURTROOM - DAY

116

We find ourselves in a tightly packed, dead silent courtroom. All relevant parties present, everyone looking at Willie.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

WILLIE GARY

Before I begin my closing argument,  
I have one small question to ask?  
Does anyone mind if I keep things  
simple? If I just talk in plain,  
ordinary talk? You won't hold it  
against me, will you....

117 OMIT

117

118 INT. JACKSON COURTHOUSE/ PLAINTIFF'S CHAMBERS - MORNING 118

DEAD SILENCE as Willie, Jerry, Hal, Gloria, Annette all sit  
around staring at the floor, waiting. After a moment, Gloria  
then slowly gets up and walks across the room to Annette.

GLORIA GARY

You must Annette. I just wanted to  
come and introduce myself, I'm  
Gloria Gary.

ANNETTE O'KEEFE

It's so incredibly lovely to meet  
you, Gloria.

118A INT. JACKSON MS COURTHOUSE/ DEFENDANT'S CHAMBERS - MORNING 118A

In the defense's green room, we find much the same scene.  
Mame, Loewen, Sinkfield, Walter Lee and team, all just sit  
around waiting in silence. Utters pins and needles.

119 OMIT

119

120 INT. JACKSON MS COURTHOUSE/ CHAMBERS' DOOR - MORNING 120

ANGLE ON: A HAND gently knocking against the door.

121 INT. JACKSON MS COURTROOM - LATER

121

With everyone returned to the pin-drop quiet courtroom. They  
all stand facing the front, where the JURY FOREMAN- is only  
seconds from reading the verdict.

JURY FOREMAN

After careful consideration, we the  
jury, in case number 9661 of the  
Hinds County District Court, Mr  
Jeremiah J.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

121

CONTINUED:

## JURY FOREMAN (CONT'D)

O'Keefe vs The Loewen Group LLC,  
have decided to side in favor of  
the plaintiff, Jeremiah O'Keefe...  
We have further decided to award a  
verdict of 100 million dollars in  
compensatory damages, to be paid to  
Mr. O'Keefe, by defendant Loewen  
Group LLC. And a verdict of 400  
million dollars in punitive  
damages, to be paid to Mr. O'Keefe,  
by defendant Loewen Group.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED: (2)

Now the room goes silent. Rather than some big, overwhelming reaction, everyone's left frozen in shock. Before finally:

HAL DOCKINS  
500 million dollars. Oh my God,  
it's 500 million dollars....

ENTIRE PLAINTIFF'S TEAM  
500 MILLION DOLLARS! 500 MILLION!

Now the whole room ERUPTS INTO SUCH ELECTRIC ENERGY! The Plaintiff's team weeping with euphoria- Willie, Hal, Gloria, Annette- all of them hugging, kissing, jumping up and down.

JUDGE GRAVES  
(banging his gavel loudly)  
ORDER, ORDER!! Court is still in  
session!

Somewhere in all of the chaos, we then gradually find Willie, who's eyes now gaze all around, looking for Jerry. But he literally doesn't see him anywhere. Willie looks so confused.

121A EXT. SIDE EXIT OUTSIDE COURTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 121A

Coming out an EXIT DOOR, Willie glances around, before seeing Jerry right there, sitting by himself along the steps.

WILLIE GARY  
I was looking for you...

Willie goes to sit beside Jerry, and they're both silent for a long moment. Both so utterly overwhelmed and emotional.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)  
We did it, Jerry. We won.

JEREMIAH O'KEEFE  
I know, Willie.

They're then silent again, both just staring off. Until ever so gradually, Jerry reaches out his hand to grab and squeeze Willie's shoulder. And Willie does the same. And they just stay like that, holding and squeezing each others' shoulders.

121B INT. JACKSON INTERCONTINENTAL/ LOBBY - MORNING 121B

We hear the sound of the elevator go, 'Ding', just as Willie and Gloria step off the elevator and head into the lobby.

(CONTINUED)



121B

CONTINUED:

Pink Revised Pages (03/28/22)

125A.  
121B

GLORIA GARY

Hope we're not too late for the  
early-checkout 20% discount...

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE GARY

Baby, why don't you go outside and check on the rest of the luggage, and I'll square up with the bill.

As Gloria then hurries off, Willie heads to the FRONT DESK.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Hey, checking-out please. Name's Gary, Willie Gary....

MAME DOWNES (O.S.)

Hey Willie...

Spinning around, Willie looks up to see Mame walking toward him. Pulling her own SUITCASE behind.

WILLIE GARY

Ms. Downes! How you doin'? What's up, you coming over to give me one last licking.

MAME DOWNES

No, not quite. I really just wanted to congratulate you before I left.

So surprised, he looks her up and down for a second.

WILLIE GARY

*Seriously?* You actually mean that?

MAME DOWNES

It was a well-earned victory. I can be honest about that.

WILLIE GARY

Well thanks very much, I appreciate that... But come on, 500 million? There's gotta be at least a *tiny little* part of you that thinks it's way too much.

MAME DOWNES

Maybe. Or else there's another tiny part of me that secretly knows it's barely enough.

While Willie looks a little confused.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

I just wonder if it's all going to the right place. The right guy got punished, which is good. But did the *most right* person get rewarded?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

121B CONTINUED: (3)

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

Nothing against Jerry, but all those poor black folks that were the real victims, will probably never see a dime in the end.

On Willie, we can tell this affects him.

MAME DOWNES (CONT'D)

Good luck to you, Mr. Gary. Guess I'll see you around the trail.

WILLIE GARY

Good luck to you too, Ms. Downes. I look forward to that.

Mame grabs her suitcase again, turns and begins to walk away.

WILLIE GARY (CONT'D)

Hey Mame! I just want you to know, you're one of the best lawyers I've ever been up against.

MAME DOWNES

(calling back)

Awww thanks, you too, baby. No doubt Johnny would be impressed.

And now we STAY WITH MAME. Holding her in a single frame, we travel all the way around and across the lobby with her, before she finally pushes through the doors and heads out.

122 EXT. PRIVATE AIRPORT IN JACKSON - AFTERNOON

122

We see the mighty WINGS OF JUSTICE slowly back up into position. Before all of a sudden, it goes charging at top speed down the runway, bursting into the sky and into flight.

123 EXT. VAST EMPTY FIELD - MAGIC HOUR

123

We find ourselves looking once more over one those great wide open fields. In fact it's the same field just beyond Ruben Soames' house. As we gradually notice that same AMERICAN FLAG, all by its lonesome in the grass. We hold on it...

Before all out of nowhere, comes the strident roar of a jet plane overhead, which instantly lifts and blows the flag away. Revealed beneath, is no more than some old and worn-in HEADSTONE, bearing a simple 5-word epitaph:

***Here lies many buried things.***

FADE TO BLACK.