

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

It is dark. Candles may be flickering.

An aged hand reaches for an old telephone, picks up a receiver. Fingers slowly dial, number by number, on a rotary style telephone.

INT. DOMINIC SPOSETO'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

A more modern telephone. Multiple buttons indicate several lines. ONE BUTTON LIGHTS UP.

A hand picks up the receiver, it leaves frame as we stay focussed on the telephone and notice stationery that reads DOMINIC SPOSETO LAW OFFICES.

DOMINIC (V.O.)
Sposeto.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Del male non fare e paura non avere.

THESE WORDS IMMEDIATELY GRAB DOMINIC'S ATTENTION.

DOMINIC (V.O.)
Who is this?

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Do no evil, have no fear.

We now reveal, a 30-something, well dressed, handsome man at his desk. This is DOMINIC SPOSETO. His desk is very tidy. Items perfectly placed. He peers forward...

DOMINIC
I asked who is this?

OLD MAN (V.O.)
773 Courtland Drive. You come to my home. Then I will tell you who I am. I may even tell you who you are.

THE LINE GOES DEAD.

A bit unnerved, Dominic opens the top desk drawer. We see lots of CASH. He pushes items around until he finds a RUSTED OLD KNIFE. He lifts the knife. It clearly has meaning. He twirls it around his fingers, wondering...

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY.

It is the 1960's. Cars dot the streets. An OLDER SUDAN pulls up curb side. Dominic sits in the passenger seat. His DRIVER parks.

DRIVER
773 Courtland Drive.

Dominic sighs.

DRIVER
Do you want me to go in with you?

DOMINIC
No. Might be awhile. You be okay waiting here?

The driver lifts a THICK BOOK, pats the cover.

DRIVER
Should take me a couple hours.

The driver exits, races around and opens the passenger door for Dominic. We now realize DOMINIC IS BLIND, but largely independent and self reliant.

DRIVER
Three steps.

Dominic grabs his cane and walks up a pathway to the house, shifting the cane from side to side.

Finally he hits a step. Stops. Measures his way. And up he climbs ONE, TWO, THREE steps and arrives at the front door. He reaches out, rubs the stucco walls, searching for

THE DOORBELL. He rings it.

THE DOOR OPENS and we see

AN OLD WOMAN, gray hair up in a bun, wearing a smock splattered with spaghetti sauce.

OLD WOMAN
Mr. Sposeto?

DOMINIC
You hardly sound like the mystery voice.

OLD WOMAN

That wasn't me. Won't you come
in?...

The Old Woman welcomes him inside, clearing his path.

OLD WOMAN

Do you need me to tell you where
the furniture is?

DOMINIC

Only if I'm about to run into
something bigger than me...

Dominic inhales the powerful aromas.

DOMINIC

Fan of the garlic...

OLD WOMAN

What Italian isn't.

INSIDE.

It's a warm and cozy home. Old Italian. Crocheted blankets. Trinkets dot the tops of the dated furniture. Framed family photographs sit atop a classic black and white television with a broken antenna.

As Dominic moves inside we see a dining room table, the focal point in a large living room. A beautiful chandelier hangs.

Dark stained, high back chairs align the table which is covered in an antique hand made knitted tablecloth. Crystal glassware and exquisite china settings.

Seated at the head of the table is THE OLD MAN, 80's, handle bar mustache, well dressed as if it's a ritual for dinner. HE WEARS A PROMINENT GOLD ITALIAN HORN CHAIN AROUND HIS NECK.

OLD MAN

First we eat. Then we talk.

As Dominic reaches the table we notice several religious figurines adorning pieces of furniture, Saint Christopher, Santa Lucy and a large painting of the Sacred Heart.

DOMINIC

Aren't you going to tell me what
this is about?

OLD MAN

Not yet.

Dominic fidgets with the chair and finally, takes a seat.

On the table are well prepared Italian fixtures: antipasto, olives, peppers, salami, cheeses.

The Old Woman arrives with pasta dishes for the gentlemen. Steam rises from the spaghetti.

DOMINIC
Pasta lenticchia?

OLD MAN
The best.

DOMINIC
Distinctive aroma.

Dominic inhales, taking in all the wonderful Italian scents.

DOMINIC
My grandmother used to make this...

The Old Woman picks up the carafe of wine and pours Dominic a glass and then her husband.

OLD MAN
Deigo red. From the old country.
You know the old country, Sposeto?

DOMINIC
I was born in Des Moines.

Dominic sets his fork down, adjusts his napkin, sits upright.

OLD MAN
And baptized in St. Anthony's
Catholic Church.

DOMINIC
How do you know that?

The Old Woman leaves the two men to eat.

OLD MAN
The important things to us Italians
are the church, our food, our drink
and our family.

DOMINIC
Who are you and why am I here?

OLD MAN
Eat. Enjoy. Then we talk.

And they do. No one says anything. Pasta twirling on forks.
The Old Woman delivers plates of meatballs and sausage.

OLD WOMAN
Meatballs. Sausage. Antipasto
directly in front of you...

DOMINIC
Aren't you going to join us?

OLD WOMAN
This is business.

Dominic, thoroughly confused, returns to his meal.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER. MEAL FINISHED.

OLD MAN
Material success...so infectious.

Dominic sets his fork down. Finally, the point to the meeting.

OLD MAN
Most of us have worked very hard to
get what we have. We came here
with nothing but the clothes on our
backs.

DOMINIC
Sir, if you're trying to lobby a
cause for my political ticket...

OLD MAN
I'm not interested in your
politics, Mr. Sposeto.

DOMINIC
Then what is it you want? "Do no
evil, have no fear?" Those are my
grandmother's words...

OLD MAN
Are they?

Dominic wipes his face with his napkin. Agitated, he stands
at the table. Gathers himself up...

DOMINIC

I can see this is going nowhere.

Dominic turns to leave and knocks over a pitcher of water...it falls to the ground, SHATTERS ON IMPACT.

THE OLD WOMAN rushes beside him.

OLD WOMAN

Watch your step, Mr. Sposeto. Let me help you.

DOMINIC

(really agitated)

No thank you. I can help myself. Send a bill for the damages to my office.

OLD MAN

Arrogant. Uptight. Rebellious.

Still agitated, Dominic makes his way back through the living room. Remarkably, he does no other damage.

OLD MAN

Just like your great-great-grandfather...

Dominic stops just before the door.

OLD MAN

Prosperous gentleman. Inherited much of his wealth from family estates. He, like you, made a fortune as an attorney. But not here...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MINISCARCHI HOME - CATANIA, ITALY - NIGHT.

FLASHBACK. The Old Man's flashbacks appear in SEPIA TONES...with a relic and antique look.

Late 1870's. Old Italy. Inside a well decorated home. DOMENICO MINISCARCHI, older patriarch, sits behind his desk with an abacus.

He lifts his eyeglasses, dabs his pen into a bottle of ink. Peruses documents before him.

KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

Miniscarchi removes his glasses. His sigh tells us he is not looking forward to this meeting.

MINISCARCHI
(in Italian)
Come in.

Entering, PASQUALE, 40, classically handsome, hair slicked back, well dressed.

PASQUALE
Papa...you called for me.

Miniscarchi gestures for Pasquale to take a seat on the nearby bench. Pasquale does.

MINISCARCHI
We have a duty in our family to uphold the traditions of those who have come before us.

Pasquale seems a bit confused, suddenly uneasy.

PASQUALE
For what are you talking, Papa?

INSTANTLY MINISCHARCHI slams his hand FAST ON THE DESK. LOUD. STARTLING.

MINISCARCHI
Do not make a fool of me!

Pasquale attempts to rise, but is quickly shoved back to his seat.

MINISCARCHI
Do you think I am a tired old man who does not pay attention to the wayward ways of my sons?

Pasquale attempts to defend himself...

PASQUALE
But...

MINISCARCHI
I want you to stop courting that servant girl at once!

PASQUALE
But, Papa, I love her.

Miniscarchi raises a fist in Pasquale's face.

MINISCARCHI

You are too old for love. I demand that you stop this insulting tryst. What do you think God makes of you?

Pasquale stands again. Now infuriated.

PASQUALE

You cannot tell me what to do! I love Carina and I plan to ask for her hand!

MINISCARCHI

You do and you will find yourself disowned by this family. Without end.

A long moment. Eyes bulge. Veins pop. Intense.

PASQUALE

You speak to me like you do the judge...

Disparagingly, Pasquale removes A RING from his hand. Must be a family heirloom. He glares his father down. But then respectfully, Pasquale sets the ring on the desk. Stares one last time at his father. And leaves.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

From that day forward, Pasquale would use the last name Esposito. He would have no past to look back on.

INT. PASQUALE'S HOME - DAY.

YEARS LATER. Pasquale, still classically handsome with his slicked back hair, sits at the dinner table with his three children. The oldest, DOMENICO (16), ambitious, ready to take on the world, reads a BOOK while he waits to eat.

CARINA, pretty, but looking worn around the edges, enters the room with a bowl of steaming hot spaghetti and meatballs.

FRANCESCO (12) and ROSA (7) watch on as their mother dishes out the meal.

PASQUALE

Domenico, you like the reading?

DOMENICO

I want to go to school. I want to
learn much more.

Pasquale looks admiringly at his son. Sacrifice. Dream.
He's had his own.

Domenico removes a piece of paper from the book he reads. He
begins unfolding it, somewhat nervously.

Carina takes her seat. The rest of the family eats.

CARINA

Eat... Mangia

Pasquale admires the taste of food. Perfection.

PASQUALE

Glorious. As usual.

Domenico slides the piece of paper in front of Pasquale.

AN ADVERTISEMENT THAT READS "PASSAGE TO AMERICA" "YOUNG
MEN" "STUDY OVERSEAS" "GOVERNMENT PAID".

Pasquale sees the words on the flyer in front of him.

PASQUALE

NO!

DOMENICO

It is the only way I can learn,
Papa...

PASQUALE

You are far too young to be on your
own in a strange land.

Carina appears worried. Caught. Sacrifice. Dreams.

DOMENICO

If I am allowed to go to America, I
will find work. They say there is
great opportunity in this new
country. I can go to school, Papa.

CARINA

Listen to your father, Domenico.
You are too young.

DOMENICO

I am sixteen. Mr. Valenti will
take me there. It's Mafia
approved.

Pasquale SLAMS HIS FIST on the table.

PASQUALE

I said NO!

DOMENICO

Mr. Valenti will teach me to be a
tailor.

Pasquale is caught. Domenico stands...

DOMENICO

There is nothing for me here!

That alone stings Pasquale.

EXT. STEAMLINER - DAY.

A massive ocean liner. PEOPLE BOARDING. LUGGAGE. GOOD-
BYES. HUSTLE AND BUSTLE.

Carina kisses Domenico. Tearful. She cannot bear it and
moves to the side, consoled by FRANKIE and ROSA, who marvel
at the ship.

DOMENICO

As soon as I make enough money, I
will send for you all...

Pasquale hugs Domenico farewell as the big ocean liner BLARES
ITS HORN.

DOMENICO

America...she is our beginning,
Papa.

Pasquale looks into his son's eyes. That determination he
once knew.

Pasquale kisses Domenico on the forehead. He won't let go.

THE OCEAN LINER blows its horn ONCE MORE. And then...

PASQUALE

Go...

Domenico grabs his ONE KNAPSACK, looks back at his parents and races to board the ship.

FRANKIE

Domenico! Wait! I want to go with you!

Frankie runs to Domenico. They embrace.

DOMENICO

(repeating his father)

Frankie you are far too young to be alone in a strange land.

Domenico leaves for the ship.

Pasquale doesn't watch him board.

Frankie does. Heartbroken.

EXT. TOP DECK OCEAN LINER - DAY.

Domenico leans over the side of the ocean liner. Big smile. Excited. Other PASSENGERS wave. So does Domenico...

PASQUALE and CARINA force the smiles.

ANGELO VALENTI, late 50's, stalwart, regal to a certain degree, early Mafia, nestles his way next to Domenico.

Angelo puts his arm around Domenico, indicating safe keeping and an eventual bond.

Domenico waves one last time at his family as

THE OCEAN LINER LEAVES THE DOCK AS THE SMOKESTACKS ERUPT AND THE HORN BLARES.

INT. LOWER DECK - NIGHT.

This is steerage. Smoke filled room. Lots of people move about. Loud. Laughter. Chaos. It is an unsupervised, somewhat uncivilized party.

Drinks are passed about. Domenico and Angelo play cards with TWO OTHER GENTLEMEN. Italian Poker. Chips on the table. Cards in hands.

Angelo studies his hand. Impatience grows.

CARD PLAYER
You gonna play or sit there?

ANGELO VALENTI
Aspette!

Angelo shoots an intimidating glance their way.

ANGELO VALENTI
I give you guys a fresh start in
America and this is the thanks I
get?

CARD PLAYER 2
Either raise or fold...

ANGELO VALENTI
(in regards to plenty of
time)
America...she is two weeks away.

Domenico laughs, liking his "new guardian"...

ANGELO VALENTI
If you don't want to play the
game...go practice your stitching.

The party continues. More drinks. Children race around.
From within the noise emerges

A POWERFUL SINGING VOICE...an ARIA, "O PATRIA MIA". Deep,
poetic, instantly worthy of attention. Within moments, the
children stop racing. Drinks are set down. And the CROWD
settles as all eyes are on

FRANCESCA, 16, beautiful, long dark hair, probably the most
engaging woman in the room. She sings, mesmerizing everyone

INCLUDING DOMENICO, who looks at her, mouth agape, captivated
by her operatic voice.

Angelo, ignoring Francesca, finally drops some chips and
plays. He sees Domenico's gaze. After a couple moments, he
nudges him HARD.

ANGELO VALENTI
Aspette! It's your turn.

But Domenico would rather set his cards down and peer at
Francesca.

ANGELO VALENTI

Why are you looking at her like that?

DOMENICO

Just listen to her... Who is she?

ANGELO VALENTI

(intimidatingly)

My daughter.

Angelo's disapproving look gets Domenico's mind back on the card game.

Francesca's powerful rendition carries us out.

EXT. NEW JERSEY SHORELINE - DAY.

Domenico and SEVERAL OTHER ITALIAN transplants work the docks along the New Jersey coastline. It's grungy work. Sweat. Grease. Hard labor.

Domenico finishes up a task, lowering a sledge hammer to the ground. He wipes his brow. Lifts a canteen to his mouth and polishes off the water inside.

Peering across the dock he sees

A YOUNG LAD, 15-ish. He's draped in an oversized raincoat and almost as dirty as the hard laborers.

DOMENICO

(marveling)

Frankie?

Domenico races from the laborers, leaps across the pipes on the dock.

FRANKIE

This is America?

Domenico, overjoyed to see him, hugs him tight.

DOMENICO

How did you get here?

FRANKIE

I stowed away. Except I got caught. I thought they were going to throw me overboard. I told them I knew Angelo Valenti.

DOMENICO
Does Papa know?

FRANKIE
I'm sure he does by now.

DOMENICO
You didn't tell him you were coming
here?

Domenico slaps Frankie behind his head (as Italians do) and then grabs him again and hugs him tight.

FRANKIE
I thought you were going to be a
tailor?

Domenico wipes his greasy, filthy hands on his clothes.

DOMENICO
We'll send Papa a wire. Let's go
see Angelo.

INT. GARMENT WAREHOUSE - DAY.

Domenico and Frankie, both dirty in their respective ways, approach a large warehouse. A FEW MEN stand outside smoking cigarettes, carousing.

Domenico enters first, Frankie follows. The men snicker.

INSIDE

Numerous TAILORS make clothes. Sewing. Cutting fabric. Measuring. It's a factory of working Italian immigrants.

FRANKIE
You're too filthy to work here...

DOMENICO
I can't sew. Bad eyes.

One by one, the tailors notice the dirty misfits as they weave their way through the factory.

Up ahead, Domenico spots

FRANCESCA and her MOTHER working tediously on a dress, stitching up the sides.

Domenico's interruption eventually catches Francesca's attention, who peers up from her work, immediately disgusted with Domenico's appearance.

Domenico, big smile and excited to see her, waves.
Francesca's repulsed and returns to her work.

A HAND SLAPS DOMENICO BEHIND THE HEAD, just as Domenico did to Frankie.

ANGELO VALENTI

Stop leering at my daughter! And what are you doing here dressed like that? They have no bath where you stay?

DOMENICO

Angelo...you remember my brother, Frankie?

Angelo spins himself into a little frenzy.

ANGELO VALENTI

Where'd he come from!!!

FRANKIE

Italia.

ANGELO VALENTI

I know that. How did you get here? Who approved it? Does your Papa know?

FRANKIE

I stowed away. I did. And no.

Francesca eyes the commotion...her MOTHER smacks her arm to continue sewing.

Domenico smiles again at her. Angelo catches him.

ANGELO VALENTI

Aspette!

INT. CHURCH - DAY.

Elaborate wedding. A PRIEST places a holy water blessing on DOMENICO and FRANCESCA, the bride and groom.

Frankie stands next to Domenico as his BEST MAN.

PRIEST

You may kiss the bride.

Domenico kisses Francesca proudly. Francesca seems less thrilled, going through the motions. They turn and face an applauding AUDIENCE of fellow Italians.

As the couple exit, Angelo kisses his daughter.

ANGELO VALENTI

You will be happy, my dear.

FRANCESCA

I was happy in Italia.

ANGELO VALENTI

This is America. You're a wife.
Make the best of this.

Angelo turns to Domenico...

ANGELO VALENTI

We still have a deal?

DOMENICO

Tomorrow I change my last name to
Sposeto.

Angelo leans into Francesca, whispering.

ANGELO VALENTI

No daughter of mine will have the
name Esposito...means bastard.

They continue to greet their GUESTS.

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND - DAY.

Angelo and a nervous Domenico stand at the receiving dock, ushering NUMEROUS IMMIGRANTS toward the long lines of PEOPLE ENTERING THE STATES.

It is a dank hall. American flags drape from the ceiling. IMMIGRATION WORKERS sit at the heads of several tables, checking identification, orchestrating medical exams, clearing MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN for a new life in America.

ANGELO VALENTI

Domenico lead them all to the south
line...it's quicker. That guard
won't slaughter their last names.

Domenico rushes a MAN up in the line, peering ahead as if looking for someone...

TONY

(worried)

They cannot make me change my name,
no? I am Tony Antonellis.

DOMENICO

So you become Antonelli. What's
the big deal? Look around.
Everyone here wants to walk through
those doors into New York City.

A COMMOTION at the front of line concerns Domenico who's nerves peak as he approaches

HIS FATHER, MOTHER (CARINA) AND SISTER (ROSA) stopped by the GUARDS.

DOMENICO

What's the problem?

GUARD

They cannot enter.

DOMENICO

What? Why? This is my family.

IMMIGRATION WORKER

The lady has tuberculosis.

Domenico understands this severity.

DOMENICO

Mama...are you sick?

CARINA

No. But she says I am.

DOMENICO

Let me find Angelo. He'll get this
straightened out.

PASQUALE

No. I don't go where I am not
welcome.

Devastated, Domenico pleads one last time with the immigration worker.

DOMENICO

I have worked very hard to bring Italian immigrants over here to work in the garment district. To help your country. Please...

IMMIGRATION WORKER

Sir, the line is getting longer. If they do not board the ship to return to their homeland, I will have to call upon the authorities.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

PRESENT DAY. Dominic returns a CANNOLI he was about to taste to a pretty china plate.

The Old Man watches him intently, measuring the impact this information has.

OLD MAN

He was true to his word. He brought them here, but they couldn't stay. Young Rosa became ill on the way back and died at sea. She was sixteen.

Dominic lifts his napkin to his face, dries his lips, clears his throat. Something about all of this strikes a chord...

OLD MAN

When was the last time you spoke to your father?

DOMINIC

Do you know my father?

OLD MAN

You seem to have gotten yourself caught up in a world of greed. Your nightclubs, booking acts, making money hand over fist...

DOMINIC

Are you accusing me of...

The Old Man's temper flares...

OLD MAN

Nothing is so sacred as man's
reputation! Your father taught you
that!

A long beat. Dominic reflects on his past life for the first
time in years.

DOMINIC

My father wasn't always around...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY.

FLASHBACK. DOMINIC, 13, heads to the pool alongside FATHER
JACK, 30's, the priest collar clearly visible.

Other BOYS swim in the pool.

DOMINIC

I'm gonna be a champion, Father
Jack.

FATHER JACK

You'll be anything you put your
mind to, Dominic. Do the work and
make yourself the best you can
possibly be. And then anything is
possible.

Dominic tosses his towel to the side of the pool. He smiles
at Father Jack, who looks at his watch, ready to start
timing.

FATHER JACK

Ready...Set....

Dominic stands poised to dive into the water...

FATHER JACK

Go!

Dominic flies into the pool with gusto. Impeccable form.

MARY SPOSETO, Dominic's mother, 30's, attractive, all smiles,
the positive influence in Dominic's life, enters the pool
area. She immediately notices Father Jack and approaches...

MARY

Thank you so much Father for
getting Dom here today.

(MORE)

MARY (cont'd)
I can't tell you what a busy
morning I've had.

FATHER JACK
No worries, Mary. You know I take
a special interest in Dominic's
well being.

DOMINIC swims with Olympic potential. He reaches the end of
the pool and kicks underneath the water, somersaults and
explodes back like a torpedo.

Father Jack peers at his watch, raises his eyebrow.

MARY
He loves the water.

FATHER JACK
He loves anything he thinks he can
conquer.

MARY
What if he can't cut it?

They both watch...a perfect swimmer, a young boy gliding
effortlessly through water as if he was a fish.

FATHER JACK
Supreme.

MARY
(excitedly)
He is good isn't he?

DISSOLVE TO:

The clock ticks. Dominic continues his swim. Strong.
Father Jack paces the side of the pool. Mary watches.

FATHER JACK
Come on, Dominic! Keep it going.
Keep kicking. It's all about the
legs.

Father Jack peers at his watch, his own legs bouncing up and
down as if he's hurrying Dominic along.

FATHER JACK
Last lap...come on, Dominic! You
can do this!

Dominic, determined and fierce, kicks for the wall.

TIGHT we see his breathing, arm over arm, swimming the final lengths of the pool. Far from breathless.

Mary roots him on...quietly fidgeting.

Father Jack watches the time clock.

THE LAST TWO STRIDES.

AND DOMINIC SPLASHES INTO THE WALL.

He immediately peers up at Father Jack, who sternly glares.

Dominic sees Father Jack's expression. Instantly dejected. Dominic splashes the water, irritated with himself.

DOMINIC

Shit.

Mary intervenes...

MARY

Dominic Sposeto! Watch your mouth!

And then Father Jack smiles.

FATHER JACK

That'll be two Hail Mary's young man...and when you're done I'll tell you HOW FANTASTIC YOU DID!!!

Dominic is elated, splashing water all around.

DOMINIC

How much? How much!!!

MARY

Dominic wait till I tell your father...

DOMINIC

You tell him how well I did.

MARY

I'm going to tell him how you use such horrible language...and in front of Father.

DOMINIC

He don't care. How much, Father Jack...how much?

FATHER JACK

Two seconds.

Dominic hauls himself out of the pool. Grabs his towel.
Wipes off his face.

DOMINIC

Only two damn seconds?

Mary's aghast again with the language.

FATHER JACK

Two seconds is a lot of time.

DOMINIC

Two damn seconds. Crap.

MARY

Again with the words! We don't
teach him these words, Father...

DOMINIC

Ma...we're passed that already.

Dominic drops the towel and walks away from Father and Mary.

DOMINIC

One dive before we go.

Dominic heads across the pool area for the diving board.

MARY

Dominic, no diving. The pool is
closing. We have to go.

DOMINIC

Two damn seconds is worth one
crappy dive.

FATHER JACK

Dominic, your body is too tired.
Dive tomorrow.

DOMINIC

You turning into my Ma, Father?

Dominic makes his way to the diving board.

MARY

Have a solution for that "I'm gonna
rule the nest" attitude he's
adopted?

FATHER JACK

He's a growing boy, who's on the
brink of manhood. Brace yourself.

Dominic stands at the end of the HIGH DIVE. Peers down at
the water. Looks at Mary and Father Jack, thumbs up!

FATHER JACK

I think the Lord has something
special in mind for him, Mary.

Dominic races to the end of the diving board, jumps up and
catapults himself into the air, he somersaults and as he
comes back down

HE HITS HIS HEAD ON THE END OF THE DIVING BOARD.

Dominic falls lifelessly into the pool.

MARY SCREAMS.

Blood dances through the water.

Father Jack dives in.

Mary cries out. OTHER SWIMMERS GATHER AROUND. Father Jack
envelopes Dominic in his arms, they break the surface. Blood
pours out of from Dominic's head.

SEVERAL MEN help Father Jack get Dominic out of the water.

Mary is inconsolable.

MARY

Why did he do that? Why didn't I
stop him! Dom! Dom...speak to me.

Father Jack tends to Dominic's aid.

Dominic lies at the side of the pool. Surrounded.
Unconscious. Blood trickles down his neck.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY.

Dominic lies in a bed. Mary and his father, ANGELO, stand
beside the bed.

DR. RICHARDS, 50's, graying, overweight, family doctor stands
above Dominic shining a light into his eyes.

Once finished, he guides the parents to the side for a
private chat.

Dominic watches them intently. He reads Dr. Richards seriousness as he explains things to his parents, whose reactions Dominic cannot see.

Mary's shoulders quiver.

DOMINIC

You guys want to tell me what the hell is going on?

They turn. Mary can't help but be agitated with his cursing, though tears fall from her eyes, mascara traveling down her cheek.

Dr. Richards arrives bedside.

DOMINIC

Why did you upset my mother, Doc?

MARY

I'm fine, Dominic.

DOMINIC

Then what is it? Dad? Someone tell me what's going on?

DR. RICHARDS

You're going blind, Dominic.

DOMINIC

Blind?

DR. RICHARDS

Sometime in the next few years you won't be able to see anymore.

DOMINIC

Will it get better?

Dr. Richards looks to Angelo. Mary fights back tears. Angelo hugs his son.

ANGELO

No, son. You're going to be blind for the rest of your life.

Dominic stares blankly at them. No words.

EXT. LAKE - DAY.

Neighborhood picnic. Lots of families. Food. Blankets. Dogs chasing sticks.

The Sposeto's share a blanket with The Winslow's, American, 30's, happy couple, somewhat controlling of

THEIR DAUGHTER, EILEEN, pretty, blonde and who has a crush on

Dominic who grabs Eileen's hand and leads her and his sisters TOOTSIE and TOPSY and his closest friend ANDY GRANT, to the giant lake which lays before them.

KATHY WINSLOW

It must not be an easy transition
to go from the seeing world...

Unmistakable uneasiness from the Winslows.

MARY

He's coping.

KATHY WINSLOW

It's just that...

MARY

(ever protective)
It's just that what...

KATHY WINSLOW

Do you think it's wise for him to
spend so much time with our Eileen?

ANGELO

(pointedly)
He's not contagious.

MARK WINSLOW

It's just that...well, what kind of
future could they have?

Their eyes on the kids.

KATHY WINSLOW

What if he gets hurt? Or gets her
hurt?

MARY

He'll figure out his way in life.

Dominic reaches the lake first. Removes his shirt. Time to swim. Andy joins him.

MARY

Just like the veterans I drive
around. They've rebuilt their
lives.

Eileen leans in and kisses Dominic smack on the lips.

The Winslow's have serious concerns.

Dominic dives into the water. The others follow, but without the intensity of Dominic's swim.

Dominic swims like a torpedo. This is his world.

INT. STEAMTRAIN - DAY.

Many of the PICNIC ATTENDEES ride the old steam train as it winds its way through the lush park. Picturesque.

Andy sits beside Topsy and Tootsie.

Dominic slides his arm around Eileen. Across the aisle, Eileen's parents keep a watchful eye.

EILEEN

Can you believe we'll be graduating
in two weeks?

DOMINIC

Summer! More time to do all the
things we want to do.

EILEEN

Like what?

DOMINIC

I can think of a few things...

They share a laugh and then a kiss.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY.

ANDY and SEVERAL OTHER BOYS play TACKLE FOOTBALL.

Dominic finds himself in the midst of the field, listening, sensing, yet struggling to see what's happening.

Andy gets the ball.

ANDY

Dom...go left and deep for a pass.

Dominic takes the direction and breaks for the pass.

THE FOOTBALL FLIES THROUGH THE AIR and smacks Dominic directly in the face. And then he's tackled from all sides.

INT. SPOSETO HOME - BATHROOM - DAY.

Mary holds a bloody tissue to Dominic's nose. We can see her image in the mirror. Concern. Andy stands off to the side.

MARY

I suppose you thought you'd catch
the ball and run it for a
touchdown?

DOMINIC

That's how you play the game.

ANDY

I think you lost it in the sun.

Mary continues to wipe away blood.

MARY

Dom...you have to start realizing
you are going to be different than
your friends. You cannot play like
Andy.

DOMINIC

I can do anything the other guys
can do...Ma...hurry up. I'm taking
Eileen to the movies tonight.

MARY

(exasperated)
The movies?

DOMINIC

I don't need perfect vision to make
out.

Andy and Dominic slap five as they share a laugh.

EXT. WINSLOW HOME - DAY.

Dominic approaches the Winslow home. Dressed well, but taped gauze covers his nose. He RINGS THE DOORBELL.

Dominic fixes his shirt, fluffs his hair.

Mark answers the door.

MARK WINSLOW

Hello, Dominic.

DOMINIC
Hey there, Mr. Winslow.

Mark sees the dangling bandage. Doesn't say anything.

DOMINIC
Is Eileen ready? Tuesdays are
movie night.

Mark's awkward. Kathy peeks around the door to join him.

KATHY WINSLOW
Dominic, what happened to your
nose?

DOMINIC
Oh hey, Mrs. Winslow...football.
You should see the other guy.

The Winslows, now both uneasy. And then...

KATHY WINSLOW
Dominic...Eileen is not here.

DOMINIC
What do you mean?

MARK WINSLOW
She left.

DOMINIC
Left? Left where?

Dominic's concern mounts.

KATHY WINSLOW
She's in Europe.

MARK WINSLOW
She went away to study.

DOMINIC
Without saying goodbye?

KATHY WINSLOW
It was just easier this way.

DOMINIC
You two did this, didn't you? You
sent her there to get her away from
me. "The going blind kid."

KATHY WINSLOW

Dominic, no. That's not how...

Dominic, disgusted, turns away quickly and trips down the stairs, tumbling as he goes. Crashing into the cement.

The Winslow's race out the front door to help him. Mark reaches for Dominic...

DOMINIC

NO! Don't touch me. I don't want your sympathy! I don't want anything from you!

Dominic dusts himself off, his nose bleeds again and leaves the Winslows behind.

DOMINIC

(disgusted)
Europe...

EXT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DAY.

Mary pulls the car curb side. Dominic squints at the sign

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

A moment. Mary sighs. Dominic stares.

MARY

It may be the best thing you ever do for yourself.

DOMINIC

Aren't you coming in with me?

Mary grabs the steering wheel. Tough love. Looks straight ahead and then peers over at Dominic.

MARY

They're waiting for you, Dom.

Dejected, Dominic gets out of the car. Mary so wants to park and go with him, but she knows she can't.

MARY

Listen to them. And remember... I love you.

Dominic slams the car door shut. It stings Mary. Chin up, she drives away. Dominic halfheartedly walks inside the front door.

INSIDE

Dominic notices numerous BLIND ELDERLY PEOPLE. Some walk with canes. Others are led by DOGS. Some sit lazily on the couch staring ahead at oblivion.

ONE ELDERLY MAN, CHARLIE, passes singing a repetitive tune...

CHARLIE

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Dominic quizzically watches him pass, somewhat annoyed, somewhat afraid of what these halls might hold.

CHARLIE

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Dominic follows Charlie down the hall when he hears

ARTHUR JONES

Dominic Sposeto!

Dominic turns around to meet the handshake of the Director of the Institute, stern, tall man, ARTHUR JONES.

ARTHUR JONES

I've been expecting you. Come into my office.

Arthur guides Dominic inside the standard office. Behind a secretarial desk is DESMOND BAILEY, Arthur's assistant, early 20's, also blind.

ARTHUR JONES

This is my assistant, Desmond Bailey. He's also our physical education supervisor.

Dominic extends his hand, but Desmond doesn't move, just peers forward.

ARTHUR JONES

He's blind. You need to communicate through sound.

Desmond now offers his hand.

DESMOND

Arthur tells me you trump me in age! And I hear you're quite an athlete...

Dominic's not buying the sales pitch. But he grabs Desmond's hand and they shake.

DOMINIC

Nice to meet you, Desmond.

Dominic looks up at Arthur's stern face and they enter his private office.

ARTHUR JONES

During your time with us, we will equip you with tools needed to survive in the big city with your affliction.

DOMINIC

I was doing okay.

ARTHUR JONES

Denial is a big boulder that gets in the way. Best advice is to not pretend everything is okay.

DOMINIC

Look, Mr. Jones, I'm here for my mother.

ARTHUR JONES

Hopefully you will realize you are here for you. The real problem with blindness is not the blindness, it's the way it is perceived by those who are sighted.

Arthur hands Dominic A PAIR OF DARK GLASSES.

ARTHUR JONES

Put these on.

Dominic reluctantly does.

DOMINIC

Hey...now I can't see anything.

ARTHUR JONES

From this point forward, you are blind. It's a waste of time to salvage something you're going to lose anyway.

Dominic defiantly removes the glasses.

DOMINIC

But I can still make my way around.
Why are you doing this to me?

ARTHUR JONES

I'm speeding up nature's course for
your own good. You have to learn
what it's going to be like. That
light perception...

A beat as Dominic takes it all in...

ARTHUR JONES

...it is going to leave you.

Dominic stares at the glasses, finally puts them back on...

DOMINIC

What will my friends think?

ARTHUR JONES

Oh...and it is best to discontinue
all of your relationships, other
than your family, with the sighted
world.

Dominic, in protest, stands immediately.

DOMINIC

Are you crazy? This place is
dreadful. I didn't sign up for
cruel and unusual punishment.

ARTHUR JONES

It's only temporary, Dominic. Once
you emerge with the skills we'll
teach you, you can be friends with
whoever you choose.

Dominic detests Arthur's tone and demeanor.

DOMINIC

Mr. Jones, does that sign on your
door say "taskmaster"?

Dominic adjusts his new glasses, boiling inside.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DOMINIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dominic lies on his bed, clearly in an uncomfortable
environment. Bland. White walls. Bare necessities. Simple
navigation for the blind.

DOMINIC

They can't make me stay.

A BOOK ABOUT BRAILLE sits on a night stand almost calling out for Dominic to pick it up. He stares it, it stares back.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Dominic notices the familiar voice.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

DOMINIC

Does this pest sing anything else?

Dominic picks up the BRAILLE BOOK, opens it, inspects it, runs his fingers over the bumps...

CHARLIE

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Charlie enters and delivers some snacks on Dominic's table...

DOMINIC

Rubbed any good books lately?

Charlie doesn't respond, but continues on his way.

DOMINIC

Is that so?

CHARLIE

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Dominic, displeased with everything, throws the BRAILLE BOOK across the room.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY.

SEVERAL BLIND STUDENTS sit at desks, including Dominic.

MR. CLARK, the Braille Instructor, 30's, tall and thin, stands at the front of the room HOLDING UP THE SAME BOOK Dominic just discarded.

MR. CLARK

Respect this book. This is your key to future understanding. It is how you will thrive in this ever progressing world.

Dominic could care less.

MR. CLARK

Today we're going to work with the stylus and slate to write your full name in Braille.

DOMINIC

(to himself)

And I have to have the longest damn name here...

MR. CLARK

What was that, Mr. Sposeto?

DOMINIC

(unconvincing)

Nothing...said I love it here.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DOMINIC'S BEDROOM - DAY.

The sunlight peeks its way into the room highlighting the backboard behind Dominic's head...almost angelic.

Dominic tosses a bit as he awakens. He rubs his eyes, stretches out a bit, twists his neck and then

OPENS HIS EYES.

A moment. He slowly closes his eye lids. And then opens them again and we see

DOMINIC'S POV.

PITCH BLACK. We hear things fumbling around on his night stand as if he searches for something. And then silence. It's very loud.

We see Dominic lying in his bed, staring upward as the sunlight basks above his head.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM Charlie passes by...

CHARLIE

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

...and his singing trails off as he goes.

Dominic continues to stare upward. The moment has come. A tear falls from his NOW BLIND EYES.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

PRESENT DAY.

Dominic rests his coffee cup back down on the table. The Old Man watches intently.

DOMINIC

I haven't thought about that moment
in a very long time.

OLD MAN

Maybe if you thought more about
your past you might be more
inclined to do something truly
productive in the future.

DOMINIC

I still don't know anything about
you. You seem to know everything
about me. And you taunt me like
you're holding me over the side of
a cliff.

OLD MAN

This kind of reflection is good for
the inner soul...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SALOON - NIGHT.

FLASHBACK 1911. Smoke filled saloon. PATRONS sit at the bar, carousing. LADIES parade around flaunting themselves to MALE PATRONS. The BARTENDER makes drinks.

One COCKTAIL WAITRESS with booming cleavage carries a tray of DRINKS over to

Domenico, cigar in mouth, and Angelo as they engage in a CARD GAME with TWO BURLY MEN.

BURLY MAN

Don't trust you Wops. Come over on
the ship and think you're in your
own country.

DOMENICO

I have papers.

Domenico SHRUGS ONE SHOULDER as he verbally vollies with the burly man.

ANGELO takes note, looks UPWARD.

BURLY MAN #2
Papers mean crap. Let's clean out
your wallets and get you two Wops
on the next cruise back.

Domenico COMPLETES his CHEAT SIGNALS to Angelo by REVEALING THE TIP OF HIS TONGUE.

BURLY MAN
(catching on)
You're giving him signals aren't
you?

Domenico shrugs his shoulders again. Drops his cards on the table...

DOMENICO
How you say...GIN!

As Domenico reaches for the winning pot...

BURLY MAN #2
Not so fast, Paisan!

Burly Man stands, removes A GUN from his holster and SHOOTS Domenico almost point blank!

Immediate chaos! Screams. Bar room brawl breaks out.

Domenico's hands cover his wounded neck.

Angelo, in one fell swoop, stands, reveals his own gun and SHOOTS BOTH BURLY MEN straight through the heart.

THE BURLY MAN WHO FIRED LANDS ON TOP OF THE TABLE, dropping his gun, which FIRES AGAIN causing more panic.

Angelo grabs the MONEY and the wounded Domenico.

Burly Man #2 staggers to his feet, holding his heart.

Angelo leads Domenico through the bar. Fighting occurs around them.

Burly Man #2 follows.

Angelo reaches the saloon's exit. Domenico's blood covers his clothing as it oozes in and around his fingers as he holds his neck.

DOMENICO
Angelo, stop.

ANGELO VALENTI
No...keep moving. Gotta get you to a doctor.

DOMENICO
We won...

Just then the town SHERIFF arrives. Draws his gun.

SHERIFF
Hold it right there!

Burly Man #2 emerges from the saloon, staggering with his wound, AIMING HIS GUN AT ANGELO AND DOMENICO.

BANG! HE FIRES AGAIN, BUT MISSES.

The Sheriff spins around and SHOOTS AT

THE BURLY MAN, his eyes grow wide as his feet wobble until he cannot sustain his own weight. He falls to his knees, drops his gun and his hands reach for the ground. He THUMPS INTO THE DIRT.

INT. DOMENICO'S HOUSE - DAY.

A frenzy inside. Domenico's neck is bandaged. Boxes are being packed. Francesca slams things in a storage box.

DOMENICO
Des Moines is a fantastic city.

FRANCESCA
(angry)
Catania is a fantastic city!

DOMENICO
Once we get settled, we'll make a trip to the old country. I promise.

FRANCESCA
Why are we running? The sheriff said it was not your fault! The two bums are dead.

(MORE)

FRANCESCA (cont'd)
 For once my Father did something
 noble and saved your life.

DOMENICO
 Cesca...your father is a good man.
 Look at all the families he brought
 to America...

FRANCESCA
 He robbed me of my life in Italia.
 To come here.

DOMENICO
 But you found me.

FRANCESCA
 I wasn't looking.

They pack. THE YOUNG CHILDREN race through the house.

EXT. DES MOINES, IOWA - DAY.

The Sposeto family arrive in Des Moines. Farmlands. Corn
 fields. Sprawling.

DOMENICO
 This is what we come here for.

More and more...corn fields.

FRANCESCA
 My lucky day.

INT. BOOTLEGGING PLANT - DAY.

Angelo and Domenico scour the machinery inside the warehouse.
 Bootlegging system. Distillery machines. Large stills that
 emit steam as they make WHISKEY.

ANGELO VALENTI
 And when the government bans
 alcohol we'll be ready to deal...on
 the sly of course.

DOMENICO
 You think we'll get deals in
 Michigan and Illinois?

ANGELO VALENTI
 Absolutely. In no time, you'll
 control the bootlegging business.
 (MORE)

ANGELO VALENTI (cont'd)
And I will have built the
nightclubs...

DOMENICO
Where we'll serve our goods to
paying customers.

ANGELO VALENTI
Shh! Word gets out and we'll have
leaches coming from the smallest
nooks for their share. Tell no
one. Trust no one.

Domenico demonstrates how the distillation process begins.

DOMENICO
Frankie's land deal is about to
close.

ANGELO VALENTI
Good. Your brother coming here is
finally paying dividends. He'll
raise the corn. We'll make the
whiskey and we'll bury the goods on
his land.

DOMENICO
What about the families nearby?
Good Italians, Angelo...no?

ANGELO VALENTI
These are local Italians. They are
not our kind of Italians.

EXT. DES MOINES TOWN HALL MEETING - NIGHT.

Domenico and his son, PATRICK (16) arrive in a horse drawn
buggy. Patrick jumps out and ties the horse to the post.

INT. DES MOINES SICILIAN MEETING - NIGHT.

Domenico and Patrick enter a room where TEN LOCAL SICILIANS
sit "Godfather" style around the room. Cigars and booze.
Food. Women.

SICILIAN BOSS
Domenico!

Domenico approaches, Patrick right behind him.

DOMENICO
My son, Patrick...

The Boss pats Patrick on the shoulder.

SICILIAN BOSS

He's as big you now. Thanks for taking the time.

ALL EYES ON DOMENICO. Cigars lowered. Chewing stops.

SICILIAN BOSS

Take a seat.

They grab an extra chair for Patrick.

SICILIAN BOSS

Didn't know you were bringing your bodyguard...

Domenico half smiles. They sit.

SICILIAN BOSS

How's business in Detroit?

DOMENICO

Detroit?

SICILIAN BOSS

Don't play stupid with me.

DOMENICO

I don't know what it is you're talking about.

SICILIAN BOSS

Bootlegging. Whiskey. That Detroit. We know you're dispatching to Michigan. It's no problem. Cut us in, no one gets hurt.

Patrick looks around the room, absorbing all the threatening glares. Intimidating.

DOMENICO

Do I owe you something?

The Boss takes a deep drag off his cigar. Blows smoke rings in Domenico's face.

SICILIAN BOSS

Territory, my friend.
(MORE)

SICILIAN BOSS (cont'd)
 You move here and think you and
 Angelo can conduct business however
 you choose? Des Moines don't work
 that way.

Domenico holds his ground. Patrick watches. The Boss
 stands. SO DOES DOMINIC. FACE TO FACE.

SICILIAN BOSS
 Cut us in on the fucking deal or...

DOMENICO
 The hell with you.

Domenico grabs Patrick and they storm for the exit.

SICILIAN BOSS
 Mr. Sposeto...

Domenico stops and turns back...

SICILIAN BOSS
 Don't spit in the wind, it might
 hit you in your face.

The Boss takes another drag from his cigar, eerily chuckles
 to himself.

Domenico and Patrick exit.

EXT. DOMENICO'S HOUSE - DES MOINES - DAY.

Early. Domenico and his THREE SONS; PATRICK (16), FRANK (13)
 and ALBERT (12) prepare to go to market in the buggy.

The boys lift bags of corn and vegetables into the carriage.

Albert offers the HORSE some water from a bucket.

FRANCESCA carries BASKETS OF EGGS for their trip. YOUNG
 ANGELO (8) plays with a ball by the door.

FRANCESCA
 Mrs. Morielli will buy these.

PATRICK
 She makes the best pastries.

FRANCESCA
 And what's wrong with my pastries?

PATRICK
Nothing, Mama. I love your
pastries more.

DOMENICO approaches them...clearly disturbed.

DOMENICO
Come on, come on...we have a long
day ahead. The longer you hem and
haw...the longer...

PATRICK
We're packed and ready, Papa.

And they are. Domenico can't be upset about that.

ANGELO
I want to go, too!

DOMENICO
Scat, Angelo!

Angelo kicks the dirt.

RALPH STANTON, 30's, burly but handsome, arrives in another
buggy.

DOMENICO
You're late! I said seven thirty!

Ralph looks at his watch.

RALPH
It is seven thirty.

DOMENICO
Then let's move...

Francesca approaches.

FRANCESCA
You wanted to come to Des Moines.

Francesca kisses Domenico good bye, but he clearly has other
things on his mind.

They divide into the two buggy's. Domenico, Patrick and
Frank in one. Ralph and Albert in the other.

Francesca waves them off.

The buggy's travel down the roadway, creating smoke clouds as
the horses lead them away.

INT. DOMENICO'S HOUSE - DAY.

Francesca enters the modest home. Simple furniture. She moves to the kitchen, begins cleaning the breakfast dishes.

She spots a COUPLE DOLLAR BILLS on the kitchen table.

FRANCESCA

How they gonna eat lunch! Now
they'll be twice as hungry when
they get home.

Francesca takes the bills and goes to the SPARE BEDROOM, which doubles as a room for THE THREE BOYS as well as Domenico's office.

Clothes strewn about. Unmade beds. A mess.

FRANCESCA

God couldn't give me girls?

Francesca opens the top desk drawer. Removes a file. Opens it. Cash sits inside. So does another piece of paper which

GRABS HER ATTENTION.

THE NOTE reads

MAKE YOUR PEACE WITH GOD. YOUR TIME HAS COME.

EXT. MARKETPLACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The two buggies approach the General Store. It's early, but several PEOPLE move about. Horses. A couple DOGS.

AN ASSASSIN watches them from hedges.

ASSASSIN'S POV...he emerges walks toward the buggies.

Ralph disembarks, busily tying up his horse to a post.

WE CANNOT SEE THE ASSASSIN'S FACE, it appears covered. He SWIFTLY DRAWS HIS GUN and FIRES ONE SHOT hitting

DOMENICO near the heart.

The horses WHINNY. BOTH SONS, still sitting beside Domenico, react.

Domenico grabs his chest.

Ralph unhesitatingly scrambles to Domenico.

THE ASSASSIN raises the gun again.

WE SEE DOMENICO'S EYES locked in the BULLET'S PATH.

ASSASSIN

Take this you son of a bitch!

He fires POINT BLANK. BETWEEN DOMENICO'S EYES.

Patrick leaps out of the buggy to tackle the assassin, but falls into the ground. The assassin takes ONE SHOT at Patrick, but misses.

FRANK FLIES OUT OF THE BUGGY TO PROTECT HIS BROTHER.

THE ASSASSIN FLEES.

RALPH

Albert, run and get help!

Albert bursts away from the incident.

Patrick tends to Domenico, who's DEAD BULGING EYES are tough to look at.

PATRICK

Papa...Papa...

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY.

The TOWN SHERIFF, older, wiser-type, sits next to a nervous RALPH, who wipes a wet rag over his forehead.

FRANCESCA, controlling her grief, stands a few feet away with Patrick, Frank, Albert and ANGELO.

RALPH

He came out of nowhere.

TOWN SHERIFF

What did he look like?

RALPH

I don't remember. I think his face was covered. But he might have had light hair. I really don't know.

TOWN SHERIFF

You said he shouted at Domenico.

Patrick breaks away from his mother...

PATRICK

He said, "take that you son of a bitch."

TOWN SHERIFF

Did he sound American?

RALPH

Pretty sure. It came so quick.

TOWN SHERIFF

You witness a brutal murder and none of you sees anything?

Francesca walks toward the sheriff. She reaches into her dress pocket, removes THE NOTE and hands it to the sheriff.

FRANCESCA

Not sure when he received it.

The sheriff looks at the note. Ralph lifts his head, wondering what it is. As do the boys.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - LATER.

MONTAGE OF THE SHERIFF'S INVESTIGATION. VARIOUS CLOSE-UPS.

The TOWNSFOLK seem unwilling to assist.

TOWNSPERSON

(broken English)

Me know nothing. See nothing.

INVESTIGATING OFFICER

We found a box containing rifle shells near a clump of weeds. A bottle of water and some footprints confirm he fled South.

NEIGHBOR

I've seen someone late at night shining a flashlight inside the Sposeto home. I thought it was one of the boys...they're always outside.

OFFICER

Got info that there was a Mafia like incident involving a card game some time ago back east.

We recognize the Sicilian Boss from the Town Hall meeting.

SICILIAN BOSS

I liked the guy. Can't imagine why anyone would want to hurt him or his family...

The Sheriff raises an eyebrow.

OFFICER #2

Sources tell us Sposeto ordered the hit on three men in Philly.

TOWN SHERIFF

Motive...vendetta.

TOWNSPERSON #2

The Mafia...they always send a note. Then a man sent to do the deed. Like an agent. He doesn't even know his victim.

TOWNSPERSON

I take me familia. Leave town. No good to stay. They come back.

TOWN SHERIFF

I have a witness who claims Domenico was friendly with your wife...

A disturbed SOLDIER scowls at the Sheriff.

SOLDIER

Wish I could say I did it, Sheriff. But I was no where near the town market. And my wife is my business, not yours.

TOWN SHERIFF

Where is Angelo Valenti!

FRANCESCA

(bittersweet)

They called him back to Italy yesterday. He loved Domenico as if he was his own flesh and blood.

TOWN SHERIFF

The Italians are on the lam...

The Sheriff rubs his forehead. Frustrating.

EXT. CEMETARY GROUNDS - DAY.

Domenico's casket sits atop a grave, covered in a blanket of flowers. A PRIEST sprays holy water and concludes his PRAYERS.

As we turn, we're surprised to find ONLY ABOUT TEN PEOPLE attending the funeral.

FRANCESCA sits in the front row with PATRICK. The other boys are not present. In fact, we recognize no one.

PRIEST

In company with Christ, who died and now lives, may they rejoice in Your kingdom, where all our tears are wiped away. Unite us together again in one family, to sing your praise forever and ever.

Patrick places his arm around Francesca's shoulder.

THE SHERIFF approaches to pay his respects. Removes his hat.

DOMINIC (V.O.)

Was Valenti really called back to Italy?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

Dominic and the Old Man continue their conversation.

OLD MAN

No one ever saw Angelo Valenti again.

DOMINIC

Ever?

OLD MAN

Shady business gets you in trouble. You break the rules and the Black Hand finds you.

Dominic laments. Sips his coffee. Those words ring true.

OLD MAN

Thinking about something?

DOMINIC
Rules.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - NIGHT.

FLASHBACK. Dominic, cane in hand, easily negotiates the steps in front of the building.

A CAR HORN BLARES nearby.

Dominic reacts, expecting this, he makes his way to the curb.

THE HORN BLARES AGAIN.

DOMINIC
Okay! I'm blind, not deaf.

Dominic reaches the car. Opens the door.

DOMINIC
You trying to wake the dead? If they catch me...

INSIDE IS

SHERRY, 20, attractive, red head, vivacious personality, lights up a room...

SHERRY
No one even knows I'm here.

DOMINIC
You didn't tell your mom? Or my sister?

SHERRY
Why would I do that? Just get us both in trouble.

DOMINIC
Thanks, Sherry. You're the best. I just can't be around blind people all day and all night.

Sherry pulls away from the curb.

SHERRY
(playfully)
Yeah...blind people can be so annoying.

DOMINIC
Where are we going?

SHERRY
It's a surprise.

This attraction builds.

DOMINIC
Can I drive?

They both laugh as the car shoots down the road...

INT. SWEET'S BALLROOM - NIGHT.

A JAZZ CLUB in full swing. Tons of PATRONS. Hip and vibrant. AN ELDER SAX SOLOIST plays his heart out.

Dominic sips a cocktail. Sherry sits next to him. Both are enthralled by the music.

DOMINIC
He's an old dude, huh?

SHERRY
How can you tell?

DOMINIC
He sounds old. You can tell if you listen to the way the notes flow from him.

Dominic inhales, taking in the room, the positive energy.

DOMINIC
There's about fifty people in here.

Looks about right.

SHERRY
Very good...

DOMINIC
Mr. Clark's got me painting pictures in my mind. All the sounds and smells I can take in.

SHERRY
Seeing without seeing.

Sherry's smitten with Dominic. She smiles wide.

DOMINIC

Thank you for bringing me here.

Dominic leans over and finds Sherry's lips and
KISSES HER.

DOMINIC

Don't tell my sister.

SHERRY

You don't think she'd fancy us
dating?

DOMINIC

Look...you're her friend in her
mind. For now...

THE BAND BEGINS PLAYING A NEW SNAZZY JAZZ TUNE. It's an
infectious rhythm as SEVERAL COUPLES GET UP TO DANCE.

DOMINIC

Come on! Let's show these amateurs
how it's done!

Dominic grabs Sherry's hand and navigates them to the dance
floor where they begin to dazzle the packed ballroom.

SWINGING AROUND THE FLOOR IN PERFECT FORMATION. EITHER
THEY'VE DONE THIS BEFORE OR THEY'RE MEANT TO DANCE TOGETHER.

Smiles and laughter...a couple falling in love.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - NIGHT.

It's really late. Dominic inches his way back inside the
Institute. He knows the path perfectly. It's dark, as if it
matters. But we're suddenly surprised when

ALL THE LIGHTS COME ON.

ARTHUR JONES

Welcome home, Mr. Sposeto!!!

The BOOMING VOICE startles Dominic who spins around
instinctively with his CANE and KNOCKS OVER A VASE on the
nearby table SHATTERING IT WHEN IT HITS THE FLOOR.

DOMINIC

Shit!

ARTHUR JONES
No respect for rules or
regulations...

DOMINIC
I was in the cafeteria.

ARTHUR JONES
...or for telling the truth.

DOMINIC
Mr. Jones, can we talk about this
in the morning?

ARTHUR JONES
You were out again with your
sighted friends, weren't you?

DOMINIC
I had a date. I'm not in prison.
I can't be expected to be a saint
my whole life.

Arthur grabs Dominic, smelling his smoky clothes.

ARTHUR JONES
You've been in a bar haven't you?

DOMINIC
I was in the cafeteria.

ARTHUR JONES
Chasing girls is unacceptable.
Skipping your classes to go
swimming is unacceptable.
Everything you do, Mr. Sposeto, is
unacceptable.

DOMINIC
But you still take my father's
money...

ARTHUR JONES
The Institute's rules are simple.
Live by them or live somewhere
else.

Jones shuts the lights, heads away. Dominic stands alone in
the entry lobby.

DOMINIC
(to himself, muttering)
Sure...leave me with the vase.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DOMINIC'S BEDROOM - DAY.

Mary sits next to Dominic on his bed. She's brought him some new things, shaving cream, razors, toothpaste, NECESSITIES.

DOMINIC

Couldn't you have brought me a girly magazine?

Mary reacts, smacks Dominic on the side of the head.

MARY

Dom, you better pay attention to the guidelines here or you're going to get kicked out.

DOMINIC

It's not like I'm learning anything here.

MARY

You could always work for your father's cement company.

DOMINIC

That shovel just doesn't fit my hand.

MARY

Your father would love to have you work with him.

DOMINIC

Right. How'd you get in here?
(mocking) No sighted people allowed.

MARY

I'm your mother.

DOMINIC

Where is Pop anyway?

MARY

You know your father, Dominic. He has his work. Has to make the money to afford keeping you here.

Dominic's somewhat dejected, disappointed.

DOMINIC
You're a good cover, Ma. I'm his
liability.

MARY
Dominic don't you ever say that.
You are no one's liability.

DOMINIC
Tell that to Mr. Jones.

Charlie passes outside the hall...

CHARLIE (V.O.)
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Mary reacts, not used to the singing.

MARY
Who's that?

DOMINIC
Nat King Cole.

Mary's use to his sarcasm.

DOMINIC
Ma...I gotta get out of here.

Mary rubs Dominic's hair, nestles him close to her heart.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY.

Dominic glides through the water, stroke after stroke.

FATHER JACK stands at the end of the lane, watching.

Dominic pumps his way through his freestyle swim. Three,
two, one more length and he reaches the lane's end.

FATHER JACK
Still got it, Dom.

Dominic recognizes the voice immediately.

DOMINIC
Father Jack!

Dominic climbs out of the pool, grabs a towel, dries himself.

FATHER JACK
No students today?

DOMINIC
Trained a couple this morning. But
you know, Father, they're not
focussed. It's like I'm talking to
a wall.

Father Jack's eyebrow raises.

FATHER JACK
Kinda like your teacher's at the
Institute?

DOMINIC
My mother has a big mouth!

FATHER JACK
She only wants what's best for you.

DOMINIC
This was God's plan, right Father?

FATHER JACK
None of us knows what the Lord has
in store for us. But there is a
plan.

DOMINIC
And I'm not so sure mine is staying
at the Institute. Maybe I should
join the monastery. What do you
think?

FATHER JACK
I think you like girls way too
much...

They both share a laugh. Then it subsides and Dominic
becomes thoughtful...

DOMINIC
Do you really think God has a plan
for me, Father Jack?

A moment.

FATHER JACK
Don't give up on him just yet.

INT. SHERRY'S CAR - NIGHT.

Sherry lies against Dominic's chest inside her car.

DOMINIC

How about we figure out a way to
make you blind, too?

Sherry laughs and then after a moment, doesn't like the idea.

SHERRY

Why should we do that?

DOMINIC

Well, for starters, we wouldn't
have to sneak around Arthur Jones
anymore... I just don't like...

Sherry puts her finger over Dom's lips.

SHERRY

Not tonight. No complaining, okay?
Let's just enjoy our time together.

DOMINIC

It's a pretty night out there isn't
it?

Sherry peers outside.

SHERRY

Gorgeous.

DOMINIC

Is it in the trunk?

SHERRY

It is.

Dominic lifts Sherry up, gets out of the car.

DOMINIC

Come on...I want to hear you.

OUTSIDE IT IS A GLORIOUS NIGHT. TWINKLING LIGHTS. DOMINIC
PEERS OUT OVER THE HIGH CLIFF DOWN AT THE CITY LIGHTS BELOW.

SHERRY APPEARS WITH HER VIOLIN IN HAND.

THEY BOTH SIT ON THE EDGE OF THE HILL.

SHERRY BEGINS PLAYING.

THE TWINKLING LIGHTS.

THE MUSIC.

DOMINIC SMILES. CONTENT.

SHERRY SLIDES HER BOW ACROSS THE VIOLIN.

THE MUSIC TAKES US OUT.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY.

Sherry's Plymouth flies past a road sign that reads
RENO 60 MILES.

SHERRY

But I don't have proper ID!

DOMINIC

I don't care! Let's do this!

INT. ANGEL'S REST WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY.

Dominic and Sherry stand before a PREACHER. Sherry holds fake flowers. Wedding music crackles from the cheap speaker system. TWO IMPROMPTU GUESTS stand as witnesses.

PREACHER

Marco will be your best man.

Dominic extends his hand for a shake.

DOMINIC

At least you're Italian.

MARCO shakes his hand. Sherry's MAID OF HONOR, who she just met, smiles.

PREACHER

Do you Sherry Kelly take this man
Dominic Sposeto to be your lawfully
wedded husband?

SHERRY

(glowingly)

I do.

PREACHER

For richer or poorer, in sickness
and in health for as long as you
both shall live?

SHERRY

I do.

PREACHER

Then by the power vested in me by
the state of Nevada, I now
pronounce you man and wife. You
may kiss your bride.

Dominic softly kisses Sherry and then embraces her with a
life long hug.

DOMINIC

You won't regret this.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DAY.

Arthur Jones stands above Dominic at his desk...

ARTHUR JONES

You did what?

DOMINIC

I love her.

ARTHUR JONES

Did you even think this through
before you decided to do this very
irresponsible, selfish act of
marrying a sighted person?

DOMINIC

I can do anything I put my mind to,
Mr. Jones.

ARTHUR JONES

You can't even read or write.

DOMINIC

That's why I'm here. To learn.

ARTHUR JONES

How are you going to provide for
her?

DOMINIC

I'm ready to apply myself.

ARTHUR JONES

Wrong. Pack your bags. I want you
out of this facility by the week's
end.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DOMINIC'S BEDROOM - DAY.

Dominic packs his bags. Now that he has to leave, he fears facing the real world.

DOMINIC
I'll teach myself.

Dominic gets increasingly frustrated...finally throwing several pieces of clothing onto the floor. He collapses on his bed. Beaten.

Charlie passes by...

CHARLIE
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

DOMINIC
I'm leaving Charlie!

Charlie inches inside. Reaches the bed. Clothes strewn.

CHARLIE
Good luck, Dominic. Make us proud.

Stunned that Charlie spoke...

DOMINIC
You speak?

CHARLIE
Never judge a book by its cover.

Charlie turns and leaves...

CHARLIE
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Penetrating words, Dominic begins picking up his clothes...

DOMINIC
Well I'll be a son of a...

MR. CLARK
Dominic!

MR. CLARK, the Braille instructor appears bedside.

DOMINIC
Mr. Clark?

MR. CLARK
Excellent. I think you've mastered
voice recognition.

DOMINIC
You're a good teacher, Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark picks up the remaining tossed clothes and places
them inside Dominic's case.

MR. CLARK
I'm sorry to see you go.

DOMINIC
I got married. Apparently that's a
crime.

Mr. Clark laughs...then it subsides. This is serious.

MR. CLARK
What are you going to do?

DOMINIC
Haven't a clue. I can't hold down
a job. Maybe try to teach swim
full time...you know Arthur Jones
is an arrogant son of a...

MR. CLARK
Listen, there is someone I want you
to meet. If you're willing.

Dominic takes this in, twisting the wedding ring on his
finger, no doubt realizing the impact of responsibility.

EXT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - DAY.

Dominic and Mr. Clark stand at the front door of a very
elaborate home. Mr. Clark knocks.

DOMINIC
I can tell by the scent of the
flowers, this is a nice place.

An older woman, HAZEL TENBROEK, answers the door.

HAZEL
Ah, Donald...

MR. CLARK
Hazel...Nice to see you.

HAZEL

And this must be Dominic.

Dominic extends his hand, which Hazel accepts and shakes.

DOMINIC

Nice to meet you, ma'am.

HAZEL

My husband is expecting you.

They move inside and walk a long corridor. Rich furniture. Expensive paintings. Large vases. Fresh flowers.

INT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY.

Hazel drops them off at the study. Bookshelves galore. Massive desk covered with documents, reading material.

Behind the desk on the phone is DR. JACOBUS TENBROEK, 50's, red hair, goatee. He is blind, but Dominic has no idea.

TENBROEK

(on the phone)

Pity is a dreadful trait. I don't like it and never have. If we don't rise above our flaws and learn from the mistakes which have needled their way into our lives, we cannot possibly reach our goals. Stay thirsty for knowledge.

We notice the plaques and certificates dotting the walls. This is an established professional.

DOMINIC

(whispering back)

Does he know I'm blind?

CLARK

(whispering)

That's why we're here.

TENBROEK

Individually we are scattered and inarticulate, subject to oppression. But collectively, as one unit, we are the masters of our domain. Let's speak again at the week's end. Good day.

Tenbroek hangs up the phone. Hazel approaches the desk.

HAZEL

Honey...your guests are here.

Tenbroek's happy to see an old friend. Energized. Eager.

TENBROEK

Donald!

Mr. Clark rises and handshakes Tenbroek.

MR. CLARK

Thank you for taking the time,
Jacobus.

TENBROEK

Well aren't you going to shake my
hand, too, Dominic?

Dominic fidgets. Intimidated.

DOMINIC

Sorry, sir. I've yet to acclimate
myself in this office. I'm blind.

TENBROEK

That makes two of us.

DOMINIC

(surprised)
You're blind?

TENBROEK

Long as I can remember. How about
we meet our hands in the middle of
my desk? Let me see what you're
made of...

Dominic rises toward the desk. Fumbles his way to the
center. Awkwardly finds Tenbroek's hand. They shake.

TENBROEK

Man's man. Firm. Must have a mind
of your own, huh?

DOMINIC

I'm Italian.

Tenbroek laughs.

TENBROEK

So you were removed from the
Institute?

DOMINIC

I guess. I can't speak freely in front of Mr. Clark...he has been a friend, to have brought me here.

TENBROEK

Loyal. I can hear it in your voice.

DOMINIC

Excuse me?

TENBROEK

Loyalty. You stand by it. I will train you to listen for character traits in people's voices. It's amazing what you can see when you can't see at all.

Dominic settles back in his seat. Sighs. He's immediately comfortable. So is Mr. Clark.

TENBROEK

Now...without fear of crucifying Mr. Clark or the Institute...What happened?

DOMINIC

I broke their rules. I refused to cut off the sighted world. I snuck out to see my girl. We eloped. They kicked me out.

TENBROEK

Fantastic! What are you, about twenty one?

Dominic's eyes widen...bull's-eye.

DOMINIC

Exactly.

TENBROEK

How are you with Braille?

DOMINIC

Awful.

TENBROEK

From this day forward...I want you to think of your blindness as a gift.

DOMINIC

A gift?

TENBROEK

A person who loses his clothes is denuded, a man who loses his sight is delighted.

Mr. Clark watches the two men click. Mission accomplished.

DOMINIC

Denuded? Is that even a word?

Tenbroek laughs again.

TENBROEK

You have an instinctive argumentative quality about you.

DOMINIC

I mean you no disrespect.

TENBROEK

None taken. Have you ever considered law?

Dominic laughs aloud.

DOMINIC

My family were bootleggers! We ran from the law.

Tenbroek laughs.

TENBROEK

Dominic, what was my wife's name?

DOMINIC

Hazel.

TENBROEK

Do you remember what I said on the phone?

DOMINIC

You were talking about pity. Being a dreadful trait.

A moment.

TENBROEK

Go on...

Another moment...a mini epiphany.

DOMINIC

Sorry, sir. I was just realizing how your words in some ways sum up my very existence.

TENBROEK

Well...let's change that, huh? You have a sharp memory. A fiery demeanor. The blind could use a lawyer like you.

DOMINIC

I couldn't even keep a job making brooms...

TENBROEK

Society treats blind people as second class citizens. My goal is for them to finally see us. Differently.

Tenbroek rises from his desk and retrieves a book from the shelf behind him and hands it to Dominic.

TENBROEK

Have your new wife read this to you. I wrote it. It's called Prejudice, War and The Constitution. The parallels are staggering.

Dominic opens the book as if he can see it.

TENBROEK

I look forward to the day when you call blindness a gift, Counselor.

The last word resonates with Dominic. Perhaps finally a passion.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY.

Tenbroek sits with Dominic at the back of a packed courthouse as they listen to

LEO SULLIVAN, 50's, graying, three piece suit, slicked back hair, holds a POINTER in his hand as he strides around the courtroom finishing his closing argument to A WIDE EYED JURY.

LEO

Ladies and Gentlemen, I implore you to absorb the facts in this case. The prosecution has done a remarkable job demonstrating how a murder may have taken place. May have! No one has admitted any wrong doing in this case. They want you to believe Mr. Wynn was at the scene of the crime. But did they prove that to you? They want you to believe Mr. Wynn, in a fit of rage, flew off the handle and brutally beat his wife to death. But did they prove that to you?

Dominic noticeably inches forward...absorbing the powerful words. Intrigued.

LEO

He's lost his wife. His children have been taken away. Fired from his job. Friends gone with the wind! Hasn't he lost enough? His freedom...that you can save. No one has listened to him, yet. Won't you be the first ones to answer his call?...I am innocent.

Dominic's hooked.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

SHERRY

A what?!

Sherry and Dom enjoy a simple dinner.

DOMINIC

I'm going to go to law school.

Sherry smiles wide.

SHERRY

Dom...I think that's fantastic.

DOMINIC

(worried)

Do you? Really?

SHERRY

I do.

DOMINIC
I'll need your help.

Sherry leans in and lightly kisses Dominic on the lips.

SHERRY
When do we start?

The kiss grows more passionate. A couple in love. And now a man with a goal. Before long, their kiss leads them away from the table and headed for the bedroom.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

AN OLD FASHIONED TAPE RECORDER MOVES REEL TO REEL. Two glasses of wine sit at both ends of the table. Dominic finishes the last bites of a spaghetti dinner.

DOMINIC
I don't think Grandma Francesca
will ever doubt your culinary
abilities.

Sherry absorbs that, but focusses on an OPEN LAW BOOK.

SHERRY
She hates me, Dom. Let's get back
to work...Torts.

DOMINIC
Ah...dessert.

Sherry stops the tape recorder.

SHERRY
Dom...be serious.

Dominic sits upright. Lifts his wine glass to his lips...
Sherry hits the RECORD button again.

SHERRY
A tort is a negligent or civil
wrong not arising out of a contract
or statute. A tort is an act that
injures someone in some way and for
which the injured person may sue
for damages.

DOMINIC
Dessert's better, no?

Sherry frowns, exasperated with Dominic's games.

SHERRY

Example?

Dominic savors the wine...thinks a bit.

DOMINIC

My grandmother does not hate you.

Sherry slaps Dominic's knee...

DOMINIC

There are four kinds...assault.

Dominic thinks aloud...searching the table for the wine bottle and refilling his glass.

DOMINIC

...battery. False imprisonment.
And...

SHERRY

One more.

Dominic rubs his forehead.

DOMINIC

Napoleon?

SHERRY

Negligence!

DOMINIC

I knew it was an "N".

Sherry leans over and takes the wine away. And the bottle.

SHERRY

Dom...focus. You know this stuff.
If you don't pass the test, no law
school.

Dominic fumbles around for the wine glass...

SHERRY

It's gone. Either study and study
hard. Or...

DOMINIC

I am studying hard.

Sherry is silent. The tape recorder continues to record.
SILENCE. Just as she's about to stop it AGAIN...

DOMINIC

Torts may be committed with force,
as trespasses, which may be an
injury to the person...such as
assault, battery or imprisonment.

Dominic knows it. Sherry's happy, but doesn't let on and retracts her finger from the stop button.

DOMINIC

I'm not this tough on my swim
students.

Sherry won't let up, but secretly smiles at Dominic.

INT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - STUDY

Dominic sits opposite Tenbroek, who smokes his pipe.

TENBROEK

If the party does not fulfill his contractual promise, or has given information to the party that he will not perform his duty as mentioned in the contract or if by his action and conduct he seems to be unable to perform the contract, he is said to be in breach.
Example?

DOMINIC

One of my student's parents decide to drop my swimming lessons without probable cause and renege on our deal...

INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY.

Dominic swims alongside one of his STUDENTS.

DOMINIC

If I can't hear you breathing,
you're not working hard. Kick it
out...a few more strokes.

THE TWO OF THEM SWIM FOR THE WALL.

DOMINIC

Do the last lap on your own...

Dominic stops at the wall. Lifts his head to hear

SHERRY

Defamation.

Dominic sighs. Sherry, sitting poolside, relentless as she refers to a law book for accuracy.

SHERRY

Not going away. Defamation.

Dominic slaps at the water...

DOMINIC

...the act of making untrue statements about another which damages his or her reputation.

SHERRY

(not done...)

If the defamatory statement is...

Another slap at the water...

DOMINIC

...printed or broadcast over the media it is libel and if only oral, it is slander.

THE STUDENT arrives back at the wall from his swim.

STUDENT

How'd I do, Coach?

DOMINIC

As well as I did.

Dominic splashes some water at Sherry.

SHERRY

Slander?

She's not letting up.

INT. LA SALLE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL - EXAM ROOM - DAY.

NUMEROUS STUDENTS take the law entry exam. Quiet. The MODERATOR walks the room and then we see

DOMINIC and SHERRY isolated in the corner. Sherry quietly reads the questions to Dominic who noticeably fidgets.

SHERRY

Name four different kinds of torts.

Dominic's mischievous smirk says he might answer NAPOLEON, but then he gets serious, easily answering the question.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Sherry hustles around the dining room, plates of meatballs in one hand, chicken drumsticks in the other.

Seated at the table are ANGELO, MARY and FRANCESCA (GRANDMA). Dominic sits at the head.

Mary twirls some pasta onto a fork.

MARY

Your sauce is almost as good as mine, Sherry.

Francesca COUGHS inappropriately, obviously disapproving.

DOMINIC

What's a matter, Grandma?

ANGELO

Come on, Mom...it's not that bad.

Francesca has no problem speaking her mind...

FRANCESCA

Americana's.

Mary tries to save the situation...

MARY

(to Sherry)

Took her ten years to like my sauce. Her recipe.

Sherry gets it. She's tough. She places the chicken directly in front of Francesca.

SHERRY

Chicken Marsala, Grandma?

Francesca snarls, returns to her meal...opts for the salad.

THE DOORBELL rings. Sherry places the dishes down and heads for the door.

MARY

I love what you guys have done to the place, Dom.

DOMINIC
It looks great, don't it!

Sherry returns with a TELEGRAM.

DOMINIC
Who was it, darling?

SHERRY
Later, Dom.

DOMINIC
What is it?

Francesca nudges Angelo...

FRANCESCA
(under her breath)
Hides things from the husband...

ANGELO
Ma...stop.

Dominic senses the TELEGRAM.

DOMINIC
Well open it. Everyone can find
out at once that I was rejected...

Sherry opens the telegram...

SHERRY
You passed! You're in!

EVERYONE APPLAUDS as Sherry kisses Dominic and then steps
into the kitchen.

MARY
My son's gonna be a lawyer!

DOMINIC
I'm a long way from there, Ma.

MARY
I've always told you...you can do
anything.

FRANCESCA
(under her breath)
Except find a wife who can cook.

Francesca snarls at the DRIED CHICKEN.

ANGELO
 Ma...aspette! Congratulations,
 son.

Sherry returns to the room holding a plate of TORTES.

MARY
 Napoleon Tortes...

Dominic smiles and laughs a little.

SHERRY
 Dom loves them.

Sherry sets the tortes in the middle of the table and moves to Dominic, kisses him, elated.

DOMINIC
 Ever so poetic...

SHERRY
 Now let me go make the coffee...

FRANCESCA
 Oh God...

A TOAST and the celebration continues despite Francesca's unwillingness.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT.

Christmas Eve. Gloriously decorated Catholic Church. Poinsettias dress the elaborate altar. ALTAR BOYS wear special robes. The PRIEST wears a GOLD VESTMENT. Candles flicker EVERYWHERE.

In the FRONT PEW are DOMINIC, MARY, ANGELO and GRANDMA FRANCESCA. Behind them, TOPSY, TOOTSIE and their HUSBANDS.

A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN on the altar BEGINS SINGING

CHOIR SINGER
 Silent night...holy night. All is
 calm...All is bright.

Dominic appears exhausted from studying.

A VIOLIN DRONES and we see SHERRY beside the CHOIR SINGER, playing beautifully.

Dominic places his hand on MARY'S HAND, proud.

The candles flicker in the background.

CHOIR SINGER
 Round yon virgin, mother and child.
 Holy infant so tender and mild.

Sherry plays, gratified in her musical world.

Other PARISHIONERS listen. Heart warming. Christmas love.

CHOIR SINGER
 Sleep in heavenly peace...

The STAR ATOP THE DECORATED CHRISTMAS TREE SHINES BRIGHT...

THE FAMILY...Dominic, Mary, Angelo, Francesca, Topsy and Toostie.

Sherry slides her bow across the violin...

FRANCESCA mumbles the words to herself...

CHOIR SINGER/FRANCESCA
 Sleep in heavenly peace...

TIGHT ON FRANCESCA'S EYES and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT.

TIGHT ON FRANCESCA'S EYES, only younger.

FLASHBACK. Christmas Eve. Des Moines. Packed church. It's the late 1930's and Francesca sings the same song on the altar in front of the congregation.

FRANCESCA (V.O.)
 Silent night, holy night...

Francesca's powerful voice reverberates through the church.

FRANCESCA
 Shepherds quake at the sight...

In the FRONT PEWS are her sons PATRICK, ALBERT, FRANK and ANGELO. They wear frayed clothes and appear poor.

FRANCESCA
 Glorious streams from heaven afar.
 Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!...

FRANCESCA'S NEW HUSBAND, JOE BENEVUTO, stout, rugged type, stands beside the boys.

FRANCESCA
Christ, the Saviour is born...

JOE places his arm around ANGELO, but Angelo winces away. They exchange a glare. No love loss here.

FRANCESCA
Christ, the Savior is born...

Francesca finishes the song, bows to the PRIEST and returns to her family. Joe puts his arm around her.

She smiles at her boys.

INT. FRANCESCA'S HOME - NIGHT.

A KNOCK at the door. Francesca drops her rag on the counter and heads for the door to find

A SHERIFF with teenage FRANK clutched in his grasp.

SHERIFF
This is the third time I've caught your boy stealing. This time it was coal from the boxcars traveling through town.

FRANK
(defiant)
Just trying to take care of my family...

Francesca wastes no time SLAPPING FRANK across his face.

FRANCESCA
Thank you, Sheriff. I'll be sure it won't happen again.

SHERIFF
I'm afraid this time a judge will have to decide.

Francesca takes Frank from his grasp, her glare alone enough to scare some kids straight.

The Sheriff tips his cap and Francesca closes the door.

Angelo and Albert, doing homework, vacate the coming storm.

FRANCESCA

Were you stealing, Frank?

Frank won't answer. Francesca shakes him from side to side.

FRANCESCA

I asked you a question!

FRANK

What if I was?

Francesca again swings A SLAP DIRECTLY ACROSS FRANK'S FACE.

FRANCESCA

Wait til your father...

FRANK

That bastard ain't my father. He
don't hold a candle to Papa...

Francesca grabs Frank by the shirt and practically drags him
across the room. Tough as nails.

FRANCESCA

Don't you ever talk to me like
that! Do you hear me? I hope that
judge sends you away!

INT. BASEMENT - DAY.

Albert opens a set of curtains in the basement concealing
numerous CASES OF WHISKEY BOTTLES. He finishes counting.

We also see TWO LARGE STILLS. Steam rises from the larger
still, a hundred gallon tank, currently cooking a batch of
whiskey. Albert sniffs the concoction. He moves to a table
where he makes notes on a pad of paper.

JOE inches his way down the stairs, marvelling at what he's
discovered and then catches Albert off guard.

JOE

I had no idea...

Albert panics as if his secret's been exposed.

ALBERT

You're not allowed down here...

Joe sizes up the room...

JOE
So this is where the money comes
from...

ALBERT
This is none of your business.

JOE
Ain't your house. It's your
mother's. And she's my business.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER.

ALBERT
The first time it's cooked, the
whiskey has too much fusel oil in
it.

Joe's amazed by Albert knowledge...

JOE
So you cook it a second time?

Albert points at the second still, smaller fifty gallon size.

ALBERT
In the smaller one. It's really
the difference between corn whiskey
and moonshine. We get more money
for the corn whiskey. I work down
here while you guys are at the
diner.

Joe puts all the pieces together...

JOE
That's why you go to Detroit?

ALBERT
Patrick and I take turns. We have
to be careful because we're under
the watchful eye of the locals.
They've got it in for us as it is.

Joe nods, taking it all in...

ALBERT
I make deliveries when I go visit
Frank at the reform center.

Albert peers at Joe, unsure where his loyalties lie.

ALBERT
You won't tell anyone, right?

Joe nods.

INT. MA'S PLACE - DAY.

Basic diner Francesca and Joe run with SEVERAL CUSTOMERS sitting at both the counter and a few tables. ANGELO works as a bus boy, cleaning off dirty dishes. JOE hovers over the stove tossing hamburgers.

Francesca cuts a slice of cake from the dessert cart and delivers it to a CUSTOMER.

CUSTOMER
Home made, Francesca?

FRANCESCA
(offended)
I should charge you double.

THE SAME TOWN SHERIFF enters the diner, removes his hat...

FRANCESCA
What can I get you, Sheriff?

TOWN SHERIFF
Not here to eat, ma'am.

FRANCESCA
Well Frank can't be the problem...

TOWN SHERIFF
This is awkward...

FRANCESCA
Well what is it, Sheriff? I can't answer you if I don't know...

SHERIFF
(interrupting)
Whiskey. Want to do you know about whiskey? Perhaps you're selling it here at the diner...

Francesca rubs her hands on her apron, digesting his accusations, her prowess as a formidable woman clear.

FRANCESCA

I will have you know I run a legitimate business here. Search the place if you must, but don't come into my establishment and in front of my patrons accuse me of doing something illegal. Ever.

Joe hears the discussion and moves to the front of the diner.

JOE

Everything alright?

Francesca's deep glare paralyzing.

FRANCESCA

The sheriff was just leaving.

INT. FRANCESCA'S HOME - NIGHT.

Angelo sits at the kitchen table working on his homework. Albert bursts through the front door...

ALBERT

Where is he?!

Francesca rushes into the living room.

FRANCESCA

Who?

ALBERT

Your traitor!

Albert searches the place for Joe, frantically and hastily.

FRANCESCA

Albert what's gotten into you?!

Joe enters from the rear door. Tired, he unloads a bag onto the kitchen counter. Within beats, Albert attacks. The two men wrestle to the ground. AN ALL OUT FIGHT.

Angelo tries to separate them. Francesca grabs a BROOM and whacks Albert, trying to get him to stop.

ALBERT

You son of a bitch!

Joe gains control over Albert, getting him into a headlock.

JOE
Who's the big man, now? Huh?

Albert turns his head and spits in JOE'S FACE.

ALBERT
Satan.

With that, Albert manages to jab Joe directly into the gut, which causes him to release Albert.

ALBERT
Watch your back...

Albert bursts away...

FRANCESCA
Albert...you come back here!

INT. DETROIT BAR - DAY.

Albert, SCRATCHES ON HIS FACE, unloads the last of NUMEROUS CASES OF WHISKEY he's delivered to a bar in Detroit. The husky bar owner, cigar in mouth, is eager for more...

BAR OWNER
Put me in for double next
month...holidays round the corner.

The owner hands Albert a stack on money. Albert tips his cap and leaves the establishment.

INT. REFORM SCHOOL - DAY.

Albert waits inside a bare room, almost prison like.

The side door opens and FRANK enters. He's happy to see Albert. The brothers hug.

FRANK
How's Mama?

Albert says nothing. Frank notices Albert's SCRATCHES.

FRANK
What happened to you? What's going
on? Is Mama alright?

EXT. PRAIRIE FIELDS - NIGHT.

It's dark. Quiet. Crickets. And then HUFFING AND PUFFING. Someone is running. Fast. Trying to get away.

Whoever it is, they keep turning and looking back. Running faster and faster.

Finally the moonlight catches a glimpse of JOE'S FACE. Running for his life.

EXT. PRAIRIE FIELDS - NIGHT.

Albert's horse buggy races across the empty plains.

EXT. FRANCESCA'S HOME - NIGHT.

A SUITED MAN knocks at the front door. Albert and the buggy arrive home. Francesca answers. The suited man enters. Albert ties up the horse and rushes inside...

FRANCESCA and THE SUITED MAN sit on the sofa. ANGELO stands nearby.

SUITED MAN

He was involved in your husband's
assassination. That much we know.
He may have even done it himself.

Albert interrupts the conversation...

ALBERT

Who are you? What are you...

The suited man blatantly ignores Albert.

FRANCESCA

Albert...stay out of this.

SUITED MAN

The boys back home did not realize
you married him. They would not
have allowed it.

FRANCESCA

They don't control me.

SUITED MAN

They protect you.

Francesca rolls her eyes as if that's absurd.

SUITED MAN

Do not mourn. Do not wear black.

FRANCESCA

Where is he?

SUITED MAN

In the Detroit River.

Francesca looks at Albert who stands guard over the entry to the basement.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Joe Benevuto was a plant.

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

The Old Man slowly relays the rest of the information...

OLD MAN

He was there to spy on your grandmother by the people who assassinated your grandfather.

DOMINIC

And the Mafia found out?

The Old Man is coy...careful how he reveals the truth.

OLD MAN

Joe tipped off the police about Albert's business. The Mafia, in turn, got a tip from the Sheriff's office. It was an incestuous web of deceit...all the way around.

DOMINIC

My father never told me any of this...

OLD MAN

He was young. He was thirsty to get involved himself. He had good teachers in front of him. Patrick had left to box. Frank eventually went into the army. And Albert taught him how to make money. He was ambitious when he started out. Like you.

Dominic, mesmerized by all this information, sips an empty ANISETTE GLASS.

OLD MAN
More anisette?

Dominic leans his glass forward accepting...

DOMINIC
My life was nothing out of the
wild, wild west...

EXT. SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY - MORNING.

FLASHBACK. Sherry drives Dominic through the entrance of
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

She drops Dominic off for class, gets out and races to help him carry the TAPE RECORDER, his books and a packed lunch.

SHERRY
Don't hesitate to call me if you
need anything...

DOMINIC
We've done the dry run walk. I
know the steps. What's for lunch?

SHERRY
Peanut butter and jelly.

DOMINIC
Peanut butter!!!

SHERRY
Knock 'em dead. Love you.

Sherry returns to the drivers side. She watches Dominic lug his stuff, use his cane and navigate his way to class.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY.

DEAN MCKINNEY, 40's, professor-like, suit, bow tie, dark rimmed glasses, addresses COUNTLESS LAW STUDENTS in a stadium seating classroom.

DEAN MCKINNEY
You are about to engage in the most
intense learning experience of your
life. Most of you will fail.
(MORE)

DEAN MCKINNEY (cont'd)
 But the best of you, will be our
 future lawyers.

DOMINIC sits at an aisle seat. MITCH MADSEN, handsome,
 rugged and intently listening, sits next to Dominic.

DEAN MCKINNEY
 Over eighty percent of you scored
 in the upper six hundreds of your
 law school aptitude tests...

Dominic nudges Mitch.

DOMINIC
 Not me.

MITCH
 Me either.

DOMINIC
 My wife did better than I did!

MITCH
 Maybe we're in the wrong class.

DOMINIC
 This is Cooking 101?

Mitch laughs aloud, creating a disturbance that McKinney
 notices.

DEAN MCKINNEY
 Mr. Sposeto...I'd like to see you
 in my office after class.

Dominic slides in his seat as if to hide.

MITCH
 (under his breath)
 Buy you a drink later...in case I
 got you suspended.

INT. DEAN MCKINNEY'S OFFICE - DAY.

Dominic enters McKinney's office as if he's a third grader
 sent to the principal's office.

DEAN MCKINNEY
 Ah...Sposeto...come on in. Three
 steps to the right and two forward
 and you'll find a chair...

Dominic disregards the instructions, instead he capably finds his way around with his cane.

DEAN MCKINNEY
I wanted to talk to you about something...

DOMINIC
I'm sorry for the disturbance, Sir.

DEAN MCKINNEY
You are no disturbance.

Dominic realizes this isn't about the commotion...

DEAN MCKINNEY
I understand you have an allowance to hire readers.

Dominic's surprised, suddenly

DOMINIC
Yes...but my wife will be able to do most of it.

DEAN MCKINNEY
You are Santa Clara's first blind student. I want to see you succeed.

SIMON AND GARFUNKALS "THE SOUND OF SILENCE" CARRIES US THROUGH A MONTAGE OF DOMINIC'S LAW SCHOOL YEARS...

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY.

COUNTLESS STUDENTS listen to a lecture from Dean McKinney. All take notes, except Dominic who listens as his recorder tapes the lecture. Mitch feverishly writes until Dominic nudges him and points at the recorder as if to say, "Relax, I'll share this with you." Mitch's writing slows.

SONG
*Hello darkness, my old friend.
I've come to talk with you again.
Because a vision softly creeping.
Left its seeds while I was
sleeping.*

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Dominic opens a SECOND BOTTLE OF WINE. Sherry finishes clearing dishes. The sink is already overloaded. Dominic opens another LAW BOOK. Sherry returns to the study session and though exhausted, regroups to work with Dominic.

SONG

*And the vision that was planted in
my brain. Still remains. Within
in the sound of silence. In
restless dreams I walked alone.*

EXT. SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY - PARKING LOT - DAY.

Rain pours down. A CAR RACES INTO THE PARKING LOT passed Mitch and Dominic who dance their way through the puddles, running late. Another car ZOOMS PASSED THEM drenching Dominic. Mitch can help but laugh.

SONG

*Narrow streets of cobblestone.
'Neath the halo of a street lamp.
I turned my collar to the cold and
damp. When my eyes were stabbed by
the flash of neon light.*

INT. ANOTHER LECTURE HALL - DAY.

The class, NOW FEWER, take an exam. THE PROFESSOR administers the test one on one to Dominic in hushed tones.

SONG

*That split the night. And touched
the sound of silence. And in the
naked light I saw Ten thousand
people, maybe more.*

INT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY.

Dominic and Tenbroek sit opposite each other in his office. Law books scatter the desk. Tenbroek teaches Dominic Braille. It's a struggle as Dominic would rather just listen to a tape. But Tenbroek reaches for his hand and MAKES HIM USE THE BRAILLE SYSTEM.

SONG

*People talking without speaking.
People hearing without listening.
(MORE)*

SONG (cont'd)
*People writing songs that voices
 never share. And no one dared...*

INT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT.

Dominic and Mitch swim at the school pool. Stress relief. Dominic surges ahead by almost a body length. Mitch fights to keep up. Dominic now leads by two lengths. He hits the wall first, Mitch finally finishes and SPLASHES WATER at Dominic. Mitch is exhausted, Dominic could go again.

SONG
*...disturb the sound of silence.
 "Fools", said I, "You do not know
 Silence like a cancer grows.*

INT. MARY AND ANGELO'S HOME - DAY.

SUNDAY ITALIAN FAMILY GATHERING. Angelo and Dominic share a laugh about something. TOOTSIE and TOPSY, and their HUSBANDS are also seated. Francesca, in a wheelchair, looks ill. Mary and Sherry serve the meal, including a steaming dish of lasagna. Francesca rolls her eyes. Angelo pours wine.

SONG
*Hear my words that I might teach
 you. Take my arms that I might
 reach you"*

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY.

Dominic addresses the classroom delivering a BRIEF. Dean McKinney watches. NOTICEABLY EVEN FEWER STUDENTS REMAIN. Dominic struggles. Mitch leans forward from the first row...

MITCH
 It's the one about the carrot case.

Dominic settles back down, comfortable again and continues.

SONG
*But my words, like silent raindrops
 fell and echoed in the wells of
 silence.*

INT. MORTUARY ROSARY ROOM - NIGHT.

MOURNERS. Flower arrangements. A open casket. DOMINIC AND SHERRY make their way up to say their good-byes to

FRANCESCA, who looks peaceful in the coffin. Sherry helps Dominic place his hand on Francesca's. ANGELO and MARY follow. Angelo fights to maintain his composure.

SONG

*And the people bowed and prayed to
the neon God they made. And the
sign flashed out its warning. In
the words that it was forming...*

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Dominic battles to stay awake. A THICK BOOK "CONTRACTS" sits before him. Sherry reads from another CONTRACTS book. She fights her own yawns. She dips her hand in a glass and splashes water in Dominic's face. She then leans over and kisses him. Again. Romance blooms. The CONTRACT book falls off the table and they head for the bedroom.

SONG

*And the sign said, "The words of
the prophets are written on the
subway walls...and tenement halls."
And whispered in the sounds of
silence.*

INT. MITCH'S CAR - DAY.

A car travels down a street. As the headlights pass us, we're inside.

MITCH

Slow down! You're going thirty!
Slow down!

Mitch sits in his GRADUATION GOWN.

MITCH

Car coming up on the right.
Steady. The sign says slow.

DOMINIC

Not good with signs...

Dominic DRIVES! Both hands clutch the steering wheel.

DOMINIC

This is a cinch!

MITCH

Okay...slow down...you're gonna
pass the parking lot. Twenty
feet...Easy...

Dominic extends his arm out the window as if he's done this a
million times, looking ever so cool.

MITCH

Brakes...slow...

THE PARKING LOT IS ON THE RIGHT. We see NUMEROUS ARRIVALS,
LOTS OF CARS. THEY BEGIN TO SPOT DOMINIC DRIVING. A COUPLE
ACTUALLY SCATTER AWAY.

MITCH

Right turn...just like we
practiced.

Dominic turns right with amazing precision.

DOMINIC

Are there people around?

Dominic makes it into the parking lot.

MITCH

Everywhere...don't kill anyone.

CAPS AND GOWNS dominate. Family. Dominic laughs out loud.

MITCH

Concentrate!

An OPEN PARKING SPACE appears. AND SO DOES DEAN MCKINNEY,
who cannot believe his eyes.

MITCH

Oh shit...

DOMINIC

What is it?

MORE GRADUATES POINT AT DOMINIC. CHEER HIM ON. "GO DOM!" A
CHANT..."DOM! DOM! DOM!".

MITCH

Just concentrate. Parking space.
Start your turn into it. Shit.

DOMINIC

What is it?

Dominic inches his way into the spot.

MITCH
Just park the damn car!

He does. They park.

DOMINIC
Piece of cake.

DEAN MCKINNEY
Have you no regard for human life,
Sposeto?

Dominic turns the ignition off.

EXT. SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY - GRADUATION - DAY.

The GRADUATES receive diplomas. What started as a HUGE CLASS has dwindled considerably.

Dean McKinney sits next to SEVERAL PROFESSORS.

DOMINIC sits beside Sherry and Tenbroek. Directly behind him we see MITCH and his PARENTS.

Up on the dais is GOVERNOR PAT BROWN conducting the ceremony and passing out diplomas.

GOVERNOR BROWN
Dominic Sposeto.

Dominic and Sherry rise and she leads him to the dais.

WE SEE MARY and ANGELO sitting proud in the audience.

Dominic's big moment. Brown presses the diploma into his hands.

GOVERNOR BROWN
Congratulations, Mr. Sposeto. You
inspire anyone who says they can't.
Do big things in your career...

The ENTIRE CLASS stands in an ovation, honoring Dominic's commitment...no one more proud than SHERRY.

INT. LEO SULLIVAN'S OFFICE - DAY.

Leo smokes furiously as he mentors Dominic, who listens intently as if committing his words to memory.

The ashtray overflows. Their two glasses of SCOTCH are empty. Leo refills both as he pontificates.

LEO

First and foremost...you are a criminal defense attorney. Your job is to defend criminals. The majority of the time they will be guilty. You cannot allow that guilt to influence you in any way.

Leo takes a swig from his scotch glass.

DOMINIC

They can't all be guilty.

LEO

They got arrested. They're in trouble because they found trouble. Trouble does not come looking for them. Drink up, boy.

Dominic does as he's told...enthusiastically.

LEO

People's appearance can many times affect the way they are viewed. High fashion translates money. Dirty clothes can mean welfare. For you, pointless. But you can see with your ears. And the truth always lies in the speech patterns. Remember that.

Leo refills Dominic's scotch AGAIN.

DOMINIC

I'm good, thanks.

LEO

Don't be so uptight. See how you listened to me adding scotch to your glass? Do that in the courtroom. Listen for details. You have sympathy on your side because you're blind. The jury will automatically side with you.

DOMINIC

But...

LEO
(adamantly)
Use it.

Leo polishes off his Scotch. Adds more.

LEO
Insist your clients always tell you the truth. Guilty or innocent, you need the facts. Don't listen to this bullshit that "as long as I don't know my clients are guilty, I can work with them." Screw that. You need to know the whole truth so that you can be ready to react. You might be able to get a case dismissed on a technicality. Maybe the police screw something up. Happens. They withhold evidence. A witness bails. Anything can happen. Say it.

Dominic's speech is slightly slurred.

DOMINIC
"Anything can happen."

LEO
But if I don't know the whole truth I can't react. Say it.

DOMINIC
"But if I don't know the whole truth I can't react."

Dominic burps. Leo lights up another smoke.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Dominic and Sherry lie on the couch. The television is on.

DOMINIC
I'm gonna open a Legal Aid and Public Defender Office in Santa Clara.

SHERRY
That's wonderful, Dom. Much rather hear you talk like that.

Dominic's silence speaks volumes.

SHERRY

I hear your phone conversations. I know the boys from the neighborhood want you to help them.

DOMINIC

I can't turn my back on my people.

SHERRY

They're not your people. They're unscrupulous. Just be smart. Think about the future...our future.

DOMINIC

I have nine months to prepare for the bar. Nine months...

SHERRY

A lot's gonna change in nine months...

These words trip Dominic. A moment.

DOMINIC

You mean...

SHERRY

Yes, Dom. You're going to be a father.

They hug. Sherry rubs Dominic's hair. A joyous moment.

INT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT.

Tenbroek prepares Dominic for the bar.

TENBROEK

Everyone, even the guilty man...especially the guilty man, needs someone to stand with him.

DOMINIC

Even my kind, right?

TENBROEK

You mean the blind?

DOMINIC

No, the Italians.

TENBROEK

The Christian lawyer does not ask himself "how do I get this guilty person off?" Instead, the real question is "Will I stand by this flawed human being and speak a word on his behalf?" Blind. Italian. Black. Homosexual. Perverted.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

A VERY PREGNANT SHERRY and Dominic paint the baby's room a bright yellow. Dominic sits off to the side while Sherry does most of the work.

SHERRY

Okay...so John is fired from his job. Too proud to apply for unemployment benefits, he used all the family savings to feed them and pay the bills he could.

Sherry dips the paint roller back into the paint and continues painting.

SHERRY

One of the kids gets sick, but John cannot afford to get him medical attention and won't go to the state clinic because he won't accept charity.

DOMINIC

And of course...the kid dies.

SHERRY

Tell me what crime was committed and what your defense would be...

Dominic sighs...Sherry paints.

DOMINIC

Well the crime is Voluntary Manslaughter and my defense...

MUSIC overplays as we leave them. Sherry stops painting listening intently to Dominic's convincing words...