

"Past Imperfect"
based on a true story

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story by Todd Hughes and Paul Tullis

First Draft--unfinished
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INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Under the title cards of the CREDITS, SLOW ZOOM to a computer screen on the office desk. The left side of the monitor is a blow-up of a single fingerprint. On the other, the computer rapidly cycles through other fingerprints.

Beneath the print on the left is an 8-digit number. On the right, numbers of various digits change in correspondence with the fingerprints above them. Below both is a box that reads, "n of 40,264,369 Searched."

As the image of the computer monitor begins to fill the screen, CAMERA shifts slightly to center on the left side. As the CREDITS conclude, the single print's whorls fill the screen.

INT. CARLY'S HOUSE - DAY

In a small one-story Craftsman house-- well-tended if a little cluttered-- a family goes about its morning routine. This family is all female and consists of CARLY, 30, pretty and professional; MAMA, 50's, her mother, and LUANNA, Carly's niece, 13 and on the cusp of womanhood.

Carly has a briefcase under one arm, a purse over that shoulder, and an apple in the same hand. With her other hand she scoops up schoolbooks from various surfaces around the house. She is a beautiful woman, but dresses to play that fact down as much as possible, as if denying her own sensuality. Luanna sits at a table in the kitchen flipping channels on a TV two feet in front of her face. Mama cooks.

CARLY

Luanna, I wish you would keep your stuff in one place like I've told you ten thousand times..

LUANNA

I wish you wouldn't be so anal about *my* stuff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

Whatever, Sweetheart, I'm the one that has to go picking it up every morning.

LUANNA

You don't have to pick it up..

CARLY

I do if you're going to be on time for school.

LUANNA

If I'm late for school it's my problem.

CARLY

It won't be when you're a 19-year-old, no-job-having, ignorant, no-skills Latina from the 'hood: then it'll be *my* problem.

MAMA

(accented English)

Too much arguing, too early in the morning!

There's a good-natured bantering to all of this, but at the same time everyone is serious about what they're saying.

CARLY

(approaching Mama and pecking her on the cheek)

Sorry, Mama.

MAMA

When your Papa gets out of jail..

CARLY

He's not getting out of jail, Mama.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAMA

Well, when he does, he's not going to stand for all this yelling that goes on here every morning. Eat some breakfast.

CARLY

I had an apple.

MAMA

Una manzana no es desayuno. Here...

She presents what she's been cooking. Carly's P.O.V. of a frying pan full of butter, eggs, and chorizo. It's not what they're serving at the Canyon Ranch Spa this morning. Carly winces.

CARLY

Mama, you are going to kill my niece feeding her that stuff.

MAMA

I raised you on this food.

LUANNA

I like it.

Mama spoons some out on a plate and gives it to Luanna, who eats ravenously.

Outside, a car HONKS.

CARLY (cont'd)

There's my ride.

MAMA

You know, if you worked at a law firm you wouldn't have to leave the house so early...

CARLY

When I need to learn about growing cut flowers for export in the clayey soils of El Salvador, Mama, I will consult you. But leave the nuances of the Norte Americano legal profession to me, OK?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAMA

...spend some time with your family
once in a while.

CARLY

If I worked at a law firm I
wouldn't get home at night in time
to help you with dinner, or Luanna
with her homework.

MAMA

Make some decent money too you
know. Give me a kiss.

CARLY

(obeying)

I love you Mama.

(doing the same for
Luanna)

Pay attention to your piano teacher
today.

LUANNA

Ugh, I hate that fag!

ANGLE on both of them as they turn around to scold Luanna:

CARLY

Luanna, we do not talk about
homosexuals that way in this
house!

MAMA

Luanna, we do not talk about
fags in this house!

CARLY

Mama...

The car HONKS again. Carly sighs. She collects her things
and walks to the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Carly emerges to the porch and steps down the stairs in her
sensible black pumps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The neighborhood visible from here is decidedly on the edge: houses are small but mostly well-tended with new paint and weedless lawns. A couple are less nice. All have tell-tale bars on the windows (and not the decorative, Spanish Colonial kind either).

Waiting are one MAN in a car in her driveway, and several MEN on a stoop across the street. In the car:

JASON, early 30's, idling in a Navigator with 3-year-old gangsta rap rattling its darked-out windows. On the stoop:

Three young men (early 20's) in pants around their asses and bandana headbands tied in front, like in the famous picture of Tupac. Tattoos, Timbo's... who knows whether they are actual gang-bangers-- they have the dress code down anyway.

As Carly walks around the Navigator they call to her. There is a sense of ritual to this.

NEIGHBOR #1

Good morning, Beautiful.

CARLY

Good morning, Hector. Hi, Armando.

HECTOR

You know you are a perfect woman.

CARLY

Thank you, Hector.

NEIGHBOR #2

I could make you happy, not like your friend with the Navigator.

CARLY

I'll take that under consideration.

She sees they are smoking something.

CARLY (cont'd)

You know that stuff will rot your teeth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They acknowledge her admonition as she gets into the car.

INT. JASON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He turns down the music.

JASON

Why do you talk to those scumbags?

The smile of greeting that was on her face now fades.

CARLY

They are my neighbors.

JASON

(backing out)

You need to get some new neighbors.

CARLY

Well I can't make them move.

JASON

Maybe *you* should move.

CARLY

I can't afford to move.

EXT. NEIGHBORS' STOOP - CONTINUOUS

They drive off, and the neighbors go back inside. They weren't out there because of a no-smoking-indoors policy:

ARMANDO

(stubbing out the joint
and exhaling)

Come on, man, she's gone.

HECTOR

She needs to wear shorter skirts.

ARMANDO

She ain't Ally McBeal, dude: this is, like, real life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEIGHBOR #2

Do you think she wears like a
camisole under her suits? Or a
regular bra?

ARMANDO

Shut the hell up man.

HECTOR

She's kind of busty for a camisole
I think...

ARMANDO

Shut up!

The door SLAMS behind them.

INT. JASON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

A moment of silence between them; the music speaks of
"bitches," "hos" and various weaponry. He catches her
glancing at the stereo.

JASON

If you don't like the music...

CARLY

It's fine.

JASON

I know you don't like it, why don't
you just say so?

CARLY

It's your car, you can listen to
whatever you want.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MORNING

The car moves through the morning traffic.

EXT. OUTSIDE A BUILDING - MORNING

The Navigator pulls up outside an office building on a commercial strip. It's unremarkable in every way: one of those vaguely Stalinist concrete government buildings erected in the '60s. Metal lettering bolted to the wall outside reads "Los Angeles County District Attorney Downey Branch."

INT. JASON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He stops by the curb.

CARLY

Thanks for the ride.

JASON

Sure. I don't know if I can come get you after.

CARLY

That's fine, just let me know.

JASON

OK.

She leans in for a good-bye kiss. He grabs her head and tongues her. Her eyes widen, startled. They part. He looks at her lasciviously. She doesn't know quite how to react.

CARLY

Talk to you later.

JASON

See ya.

She exits the vehicle and walks to the clear plastic double doors of her office building. He checks out her ass as she goes in, then drives off.

INT. D.A. BRANCH OFFICE - DAY

MUSIC OVER:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carly strolls past the receptionist into a room of cubicles where the administrative assistants and paralegals have their desks, greeting various individuals as she goes, and moves into her office.

It has glass on the top half of the wall, same with the door, a couple of chairs facing her desk (all cheap furniture), some pictures along with the usual law books on the wall behind her desk, and a window to the outside. All the windows have blinds, for privacy, though they're now pulled up. Her degrees are displayed somewhere.

The first thing she does after putting down her stuff is tend to a Bonsai plant. She takes some small scissors from a drawer and trims around it a little. CU. on her face through the leaves and branches of the tiny tree as she does this.

There is some COMMOTION outside. Several PEOPLE IN SUITS stride purposefully through the cubicle area.

Carly comes to the doorjamb and looks out. MEDIUM SHOT of one WOMAN in particular who looks to be in her 50's and wears a red power suit. Carly looks left and right to the offices of her associates. Emerging from one is ROB, a hirsute Armenian of about Carly's age, who looks at her. Sees the "what's *she* doing here?" look on Carly's face.
MUSIC DOWN.

ROB

There was an e-mail. Come on.

She follows him down the aisle to a conference room where PEOPLE are gathering.

INT. D.A. BRANCH OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

All the chairs at the big oval table are taken so Carly and Rob stand by the wall by the door with a few others. (The other lawyers in her office are about 95% male.)

At the head of the table is GERARD MOSS, 50's (think the dad in "Six Feet Under," but an asshole). To his left is the unforeseen woman in the power suit, ANN COLLINGS. A couple of her FLACKS sit to her left and stand over her chair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A pile of MANILA FOLDERS is on the table before them. Gerard stands and the BUZZ dies down.

GERARD

Thanks for being on time everyone. District Attorney Collings will be going around in the next several days to the various branch offices in the county with new and specific assignments to all assistants. Downey gets the lucky distinction of being first. Ann?

She rises, he sits.

COLLINGS

Thanks Gerard. As you all know, I'm in the re-election campaign of my life. It's close, and it's bitter. I think I've been a good boss to you, and our record over the last eight years speaks for itself. Nonetheless, my opponent has been hammering away at me-- I'm sure you've seen the ads-- for these cold cases-- an alleged backlog of unsolved crimes, particularly violent crimes. Off the record, the fact is that there are some of these cases and I'm not proud of it and something has to be done about it before the election. Each of you, and every assistant D.A. in the county, is going to get one of these files. A lot have indictments but they fell through the cracks and the perp was never picked up for whatever reason. Some of them are half-put-together cases with no charges brought. Now most of them predate my tenure as District Attorney, but that's politics for you.

(pause)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLLINGS(cont'd)

If he wins, Richmond is bringing his own staff over here from Federal. So you know what that means. In two years he'll be running for Mayor. Richmond is a politician-- and his politics suck.

(a CHUCKLE from the assembled)

Don't quote me on that. He doesn't care about you, or this office, or the people of this county. Success on these cases is critical.

(aside to an aide)

Randy will you start handing these out please?

The aide stands, picks up the files from the table, and starts walking around CALLING out names.

FLACK

Kartajian... Putnam... Trattner...
Rubinstein... Hanrahan... Sanchez...

GERARD

District Attorney Collings and her staff consulted with the heads of the branch offices. They're pre-assigned and there's no trading; you work the file you're given.

Carly raises her hand and he comes around and hands her a thick file. The BUZZ has come up again.

COLLINGS

(raised voice)

One more thing, people.

(the room quiets again)

I already told you what happens to your jobs if I lose. You lose too. Well, if I win, but you don't bring your file to a satisfactory resolution... you still lose. Am I clear?

The assistants eyeball one another with worried looks: if they fail at the task given them, they're fired.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GERARD

This is priority number only for you now unless you're in court today. And if you are in court, make up whatever you need to get a continuance. That is all.

MEDIUM SHOT on Carly; everyone filing out passes before her.
MUSIC UP:

Carly opens the folder. CU. on the first page. Paper clipped to an arrest sheet is a black & white mug shot of RODNEY MARKS. CLOSE IN on it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NICE HOUSE - DAY
MUSIC CONT.

From the mug shot we have dissolved to the same FACE, aged twenty years and come to life-- the eyes blink. The effect is a bit creepy.

A HAND enters frame and rubs the chin. The throat CLEARS. The hand reaches toward CAMERA and there's a CLICK: the hand has opened the medicine cabinet door on which this face has been viewed-- we've been looking at a reflection in the mirror. (The subtext being, this is not the man we think it is.)

As soon as the door opens we CUT TO an ANGLE of this man, RODNEY MARKS A.K.A. CORBIN RUDY. He is in an undershirt in the spacious master bathroom of his house. He gets a bottle of 81 mg. aspirin from the cabinet and pops one.
TITLE CARD: AUSTIN, TEXAS

INT. RUDY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

RIGHT ANGLE to Rudy, now fully clothed, as he checks his tie in the mirror. He's a good-looking man in his mid/late 40's who keeps himself in shape. Satisfied with the knot in his tie, he lifts a sportcoat from the back of a chair and starts downstairs.

INT. RUDY'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - DAY

Rudy trots down the stairs to an entryway and makes his way for the kitchen. This is a nice house: airy and bright, tastefully decorated, and everything put away and just so. It's a marked contrast from Carly's cluttered place.

In the kitchen are Rudy's WIFE, NAME TK, early 40's and a babe, and SON, HANK, 14. She reads the paper at the breakfast table. He plays Game Boy. A SERVANT is also present, doing dishes.

CORBIN

(but cheerfully)

What are you still doing here?

HANK

(not looking up)

I've got a doctor's appointment, remember?

WIFE

I'm taking him in a minute; he just rode home.

CORBIN

(to servant)

Good morning, Rita.

RITA

Morning, Mr. Rudy.

CORBIN

(to Hank)

What classes are you missing for this?

HANK

P.E. and lunch.

Satisfied, Corbin takes a Tupperware out of the fridge and puts it in a shoulder bag that was on the kitchen table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIFE

Can you call Mace and see if he can install those curtain rods soon?

CORBIN

(teasing her)

The curtain rods that have been sitting in the dining room for a month?

WIFE

(indulging him)

The very same.

CORBIN

No problem.

HANK

Dad, what's the pancreas do?

WIFE

Jeffrey's grandmother has pancreatic cancer.

CORBIN

That's terrible.

HANK

(still playing Game Boy--
his eyes haven't left the
machine)

It doesn't respond to chemotherapy,
all they can do is surgery.

CORBIN

The pancreas produces digestive juices, and I think it has something to do with diabetes. I think. For a more thorough answer I suggest you ask your pediatrician when you see him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIFE

(getting up)

Which event is imminent. Come on,
Henry.

HANK

Just a sec.

CORBIN

Ain't no 'just a sec' about it,
son. Do as your mother says.

HANK

(still not looking up)

She's not even ready yet, look at
her.

He's right. She's rummaging through her (tan leather Coach brand) purse. Corbin appreciates his son's heightened skills of perception and anticipation but must weigh this against the need for a son to obey his mother.

CORBIN

Nevertheless...

WIFE

OK, I'm ready.

HANK

OK. Me too.

He shuts off the game.

HANK (cont'd)

Bye, Dad.

CORBIN

Bye, son.

Hank bolts out the kitchen door. Outside there's a basketball net over the garage and Hank picks up a ball from the lawn, turns around, swishes a basket, and runs to collect the ball before it bounces on the hood of the Lexus parked in the driveway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Corbin's wife is at his side now, looking at him look out the window at their son.

WIFE

That's a good kid you've got there.

CORBIN

(putting arm around her)

And a good-looking wife I've got here.

They kiss. Rita, drying a plate, looks over at them, smiles slightly, and rolls her eyes at this treacly scene.

INT. D.A. OFFICE - GERARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Carly knocks on Gerard's open door.

CARLY

Sir?

GERARD

Ms. Sanchez?

CARLY

Sir, I wondered if I could talk to you a moment about the cold case?

GERARD

I told you you work the case you're given.

CARLY

I understand that, sir; I'm not asking for reassignment.

GERARD

What is it then?

She steps inside gingerly. He still hasn't looked up at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

I thought I would track down the original detective on the case-- it is over 20 years old.

GERARD

The Marks thing, right. That's an arena with which you should have some familiarity, isn't it?

CARLY

Sir?

GERARD

You know, drug dealers, and so forth.

CARLY

Sir, not everyone from East L.A. knows about drug dealers and murderers.

GERARD

I realize not everyone does, Ms. Sanchez; I was referring to your father.

CARLY

I was four years old when he was put away, sir.

GERARD

Don't take it personally. We're just putting the best man on each job. Now, we all know you don't have the experience or education of a lot of the other attorneys in this office, but what you do bring to the table is street smarts--

CARLY

Because my father is in jail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GERARD

You have a unique background, Ms. Sanchez, that we believe suits you to the particulars of this case. Now I imagine you want to put the association with your father behind you-- that is why you wanted to work here, is it not?

CARLY

I want to work here because I want to put bad guys in jail. Three years of chasing down county business-tax evaders--

GERARD

Well now you have the chance to prove you can do more, you should be happy. Anything else?

CARLY

I only came in here to get your approval on asking the detective if he would assist.

GERARD

That'll be fine, if you feel you need the help.

She glares at Gerard a moment before realizing she doesn't possess the capital to be rude to him.

CARLY

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

EXT. BANK BUILDING - DAY

ESTABLISH a bank.
TITLE CARD: Austin.

INT. BANK BUILDING - DAY

Standing by the big vault door to the safe-deposit boxes is a LITTLE OLD LADY. She speaks with the BANK MANAGER, unseen inside.

MANAGER

I understand, Mrs. Landau, I often have trouble finding things myself.

MRS. LANDAU

I'm so sorry to have to trouble you.

MANAGER

It's no trouble at all, ma'am.

MRS. LANDAU

I'm just glad you were here to recognize me.

He appears with her box and leads her to one of the little offices where people do their safe-deposit-box business.

MANAGER

Now you come get me when you're through and we'll set you up with a new box and key.

MRS. LANDAU

Thank you so much.

MANAGER

No problem, Mrs. Landau.

He closes the door. She opens the lid on the box and a curious look passes over her face.

MRS. LANDAU

Excuse me, sir?

MANAGER

Yes, Mrs. Landau?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She opens the door and appears holding a small plastic bag with a white powder in it, and in the other hand a passport.

MRS. LANDAU

I don't think you opened the right box.

She hands him the items. He opens the passport. CU. on the picture: it's Rodney Marks/Corbin Rudy.

INT. CARLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Carly at her desk, on the phone. RINGING at the other end.

VOICE (O.S.)

FBI.

CARLY

Fingerprint lab, please?

VOICE (O.S.)

Just a moment.

While she waits some LAWYERS walking down the hall meet outside her (opened) office door.

LAWYER #1

How's yours?

LAWYER #2

Done.

LAWYER #1

Me too. Squad car just picked him up at his last known.

LAWYER #2

Sweet.

They high-five and continue on their ways.

ON CARLY: She SIGHS heavily. Someone picks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINGERPRINT MAN (O.S.)
Fingerprints.

CARLY
This is Carly Sanchez at Los
Angeles County DA?

FINGERPRINT MAN (O.S.)
What can I do for you, Carly?

CARLY
I need a match search.

INT. FINGERPRINT MAN'S OFFICE - DAY

It's a big room full of computers & monitors. F.M is a tired, overworked nerd in wrinkled clothing sitting in a chair on wheels that he rolls with his feet from time to time to check on various stuff. He has the world's longest telephone cord, and a kitten tangles itself playfully in it as F.M. rolls around.

FINGERPRINT MAN
Oh, I don't know...CPU power is
limited today.

I/C at discretion between Carly & F.M. henceforth.

CARLY
It's a murder.

FINGERPRINT MAN
When?

CARLY
It's from the '70s.

FINGERPRINT MAN
You can't be serious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

Look, this is a cold case, the guy disappeared on indictment, the chief investigator is retired, the evidence is God-knows-where-- I've got nothing.

FINGERPRINT MAN

That's what it sounds like.

CARLY

I really need this.

FINGERPRINT MAN

You realize you don't have a prayer.

CARLY

What's your name?

FINGERPRINT MAN

You can't sweeten me up. You're not pretty are you?

CARLY

I'm hideous.

FINGERPRINT MAN

Then you really don't have a prayer.

CARLY

My job is on the line here.

FINGERPRINT MAN

So is mine. Efficiency is what cashes my paycheck.

CARLY

But...

FINGERPRINT MAN

Do you know how many files I need to check your prints against? Forty *million*.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINGERPRINT MAN(cont'd)

Do you have any idea how large a number that is? I've got al-Qaeda to deal with here. I can't be running 20-year-old cases.

Carly is silent.

FINGERPRINT MAN (cont'd)

All right, fine, you convinced me. Give me the digits.

CARLY

(smiling)

Thank you.

She reaches for a sheet of paper and starts READING the relevant info to him.

EXT. RUDY HOUSE - EVENING

ESTABLISH Corbin's suburban charmer. A police cruiser is parked on the street.

INT. RUDY HOUSE - EVENING

DING-DONG. Mrs. Marks is coming down the stairs.

WIFE

I'll get it!

She does. Two COPS stand there.

COP #1

Good morning, ma'am. Is this the residence of Mr. Corbin Rudy?

WIFE

(puzzled)

Yes.

COP #1

Is he available?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIFE

Um, yes, just a moment...

(turning; in a raised
voice)

Honey? There's some...police...here to
see you.

INT. RUDY HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

The cops are sitting at the table his wife & son were at in
the previous scene here. Corbin pours coffee for the cops.

CORBIN

I used to keep a box there, but I'm
pretty sure I cleared it out years
ago.

COP #2

Are you sure?

CORBIN

(thinks)

Well, no, actually.

WIFE

Why don't you check your files,
sweetheart? I'll give the officers
something to eat.

COP #1

Oh, no, we couldn't--

CORBIN

OK, you're right. Will you
gentlemen excuse me a minute?

COP #2

Of course.

Corbin exits. Wife goes to a cupboard; sees DONUTS and
reaches for them; thinks better of it and closes the
cupboard; grabs a bunch off bananas from a bowl on the
counter instead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIFE

Banana?

INT. RUDY HOUSE - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Corbin is riffling through a file cabinet. He's agitated, but it's not clear about what exactly.

CORBIN

Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck
fuck... Here it is!

He cheerily returns to the kitchen, bringing some papers.

INT. RUDY HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He walks in on the two cops with mouths and hands full of banana. They look like a couple of chimps sitting there.

WIFE

Find anything out?

CORBIN

Apparently I do still have the box.
The bank deducts the fee every six
months from our checking account...
Forgive me, it's not an amount we
would notice.

The cops nod their understanding.

WIFE

It's not our regular branch.

CORBIN

I guess I got it there 'cause it's
closer to the university.

COP #1

Anyway. Mr. Rudy, I'm sure you'll
understand that we need to take you
to the station.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORBIN

I can answer your questions here as well as there.

COP #1

(deferential tone)

Of course, sir. But we're going to need to book you.

WIFE

BOOK him?

COP #2

The thing is, ma'am, with the passport that appears to be Mr. Rudy's picture--

WIFE

Well obviously it's not his *picture*--

COP #1

But if it *is*, then there's an issue of forging federal documents.

CORBIN

(after a pause)

Well, this is a bit awkward. I've never been arrested before.

COP #1

I'm sure if it was just the matter of the illegal substance we could work something out, but once we reported the passport to the FBI--

COP #2

We'll get you out of there as soon as we can.

He and his partner stand and start moving Corbin out. Wife follows, unsure of what to do exactly.

CORBIN

Wife, call Omar Hanson and tell him what's going on.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: CORBIN(cont'd)
(to cops)
Where are we going?
COP #1
Tk station

DISSOLVE TO:

MUSIC UP.

INT. FINGERPRINT MAN'S OFFICE - DAY

F.M. tools around with his computer. ANGLE on the screen shows he is initiating the search on the Carly's print. He CLICKS...

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

A flash bulb POPS before Corbin for his mug shot.

INT. JAILHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

EXTREME CLOSE-UP on Corbin's fingers rubbing across the ink pad, then the fingerprint sheet.

INT. JAILHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE UP of a scanner being opened and the sheet placed on it. The WHIRR of the device is heard. CLOSE ANGLES on a COP's hands working the computer and e-mailing the file to the FBI.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FINGERPRINT MAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The credit scene redux. The number 40,264,369 in the box at the bottom of the screen goes up by 1 so it now reads "n of 40,264,370 Searched."

MUSIC DOWN.

EXT. CARLY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Stepping up to the porch Carly can already hear Luanna and her mother SCREAMING at each other from inside.

INT. CARLY'S HOUSE - EVENING

She comes through the door and there is Luanna in tight jeans and a tube top-- quite a contrast from her school-going clothes-- putting on lipstick in a mirror in the living room.

MAMA

You're going to let her go out like that?

CARLY

I don't have the energy to argue that point right now. Where are you going?

LUANNA

Football game. I asked you on Tuesday.

CARLY

You come straight home afterwards.

LUANNA

Of course.

She seems suspiciously agreeable to this notion.

CARLY

Hello, Mama.

MAMA

No daughter of mine...

CARLY

She's not your daughter, Mama. And it's not like when I was growing up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She goes into her bedroom, adjacent. Under her breath:

CARLY (cont'd)

You were always too strict with me,
anyways.

MAMA

I hear you!

CARLY

Fine!

Mama follows Carly to the bedroom, re-focussing her anger.
Luanna goes to the full-length mirror on the bathroom door.

MAMA

Maybe I wasn't strict enough!
Maybe then you would spend time
with your family and not with your
gringo boyfriend all the time!

CARLY

(changing into sweats)

For God's sake, Mama, I was allowed
to go out one night a month! I had
a job and lived at home all through
college and law school! Do you
have any idea what a weirdo I was?

Luanna poses at 90 degrees, on her tiptoes, checking out her
ass in the mirror.

MAMA

I don't care about weirdo.

CARLY

You are an outstanding mother. You
really are. I know you feel guilty
about Papa and Sister (Name Tk) but
not everything is your fault. Now
you have to let me do my job with
Luanna, OK? Keeping her...

She pulls Mama into the room, closing the door on Luanna.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY (cont'd)

(quietly)

Keeping her from going to football games and wearing lipstick through her teens is only going to make her rebel. You need to let them grow up a little.

MAMA

She grows up too fast.

CARLY

Things are different now, Mama, OK? I'll know if she's growing up too fast. Right now I'm going for a run.

She opens the door. Now Luanna is looking at her teeth from a distance of about 4 millimeters.

CARLY (cont'd)

How are you getting to the game?

LUANNA

Lupe's mom is picking me up.

CARLY

Excellent. You come home right after, you understand?

LUANNA

Yes.

CARLY

Give me a kiss.

She does. And with that, Carly jogs out the door.

CARLY (cont'd)

I'll be back in 20 minutes, Mama!

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jason has taken Carly to one of those places in West Hollywood that tries way too hard: lots of blown glass fixtures, blue light, and very tall appetizers.

He struggles with some shellfish. She gesticulates with one hand, a glass of red wine in the other, as she speaks.

CARLY

In 1976 Rodney Marks is indicted for the murder of Lissa Blackwell. She's an associate of his in his drug enterprise. He disappears around the time of the indictment and hasn't been heard from since. A partner of Marks'-- Manuel, Manny Something-- was convicted of conspiracy. Did a murder on the inside, so he's still in jail. The guy he and Marks conspired to kill was Lissa's boyfriend. He wouldn't talk about the murder, but then the investigation didn't get very far after Marks disappeared.

The crustaceans get more of Jason's attention, but she presses on:

CARLY (cont'd)

The detective on the case has retired. There was some evidence from the scene but God knows where it is now. The key was a green towel with some blood that was found in Marks' car-- he apparently abandoned it next to an on-ramp on the 10.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY(cont'd)

So I need to link the car to Marks and the towel to the victim and the scene, but I have no towel, no cop, nothing on the car, who knows where the guy is who ID'd the bloodstains as being from the victim, and no one to corroborate the testimony of the felonious accomplice.

He is signaling for a waiter.

CARLY (cont'd)

Are you listening to me?

JASON

(not looking up)

Of course I'm listening. No one to corroborate... So, what are you gonna do?

CARLY

Mostly I need to find Rodney Marks. But he, like, vanished off the face of the earth 25 years ago. I did DMV, voting registration: nothing. The FBI is searching the database--

The WAITER appears.

JASON

(indicating shellfish)

I can't do anything with this. I need some kind of tool, or something.

WAITER

Umm...

JASON

(increasingly impolite)

I mean, it's impossible. Can you bring me something? Before it gets cold?

WAITER

I'll see what I can do, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JASON

Good.

(pause. To Carly:)

Go on.

CARLY

The FBI *just* went online with this searchable database of prints, it's great. Like last week, literally. He had a minor drug charge from a couple years before.

JASON

Doesn't sound promising.

CARLY

It's tough, you know, but I'm excited. I finally got something *important* to do over there. All they ever gave me was shit until now; I feel like it could be a real breakthrough for me.

JASON

A real breakthrough would be you leaving.

CARLY

Why do you always say that every time you get a chance?

JASON

Because it's true!

CARLY

Come on, Jason, doing the contract for J-Lo's HBO special is just not that thrilling to me.

JASON

You can't argue with the money, though. Luanna is going to need college someday.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

(charmed)

Why all this sudden interest in Luanna?

JASON

(shrugging it off)

Nothing, no. I'm just trying to be practical.

CARLY

Part of that is being a role model to her, and putting money before everything else is just not the image I want to project.

JASON

Why? Everybody else does.

She has no real response to this. She looks off in the distance over her wine glass.

INT. CARLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Carly is on the phone. On her desk is the Marks file with his photo visible.

CARLY

Yeah, I'm trying to get documentation on a car leased by 213 Luxury Lease?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

This isn't 213 Luxury Lease.

CARLY

I know. Your company bought 213 Luxury Lease in 1983.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Uh-hunh.

CARLY

So would you have that information?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

What kind of information?

CARLY

I need some kind of paperwork showing that a certain individual leased a certain vehicle. Ideally showing payment, and with a signature.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Uh-hunh.

CARLY

So if I give you the VIN do you think you can dig around?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Umm...

CARLY

Look, this is a murder investigation. It's very important that the people of the State of California get this information.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Right. 1983 is when it was leased?

This is getting annoying.

CARLY

No, 1983 is when your company bought 213 Luxury Lease.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Right. I don't think we have those records anymore.

She sighs heavily and shakes her head. The other line RINGS.

CARLY

Look, I have to call you back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

OK.

CARLY

Thanks for your help.

She CLICKS over to Line 2.

CARLY (cont'd)

Sanchez speaking.

INT. FINGERPRINT MAN'S OFFICE - DAY

F.M. is on the other end.

FINGERPRINT MAN

I got good news for you Sanchez.
It's Dave Burrows.

INT. CARLY'S OFFICE - DAY

I/C or use O.S. voices at discretion.

CARLY

Dave...?

FINGERPRINT MAN

Fingerprint guy? FBI?

CARLY

(brightening)

Oh, of course! I don't think I got
your name before.

FINGERPRINT MAN

So do you know how this works? How
new are you?

CARLY

I think I need a bit of a tutorial,
Dave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINGERPRINT MAN

No prob. So the computer narrows it down to a list of several possible matches. We look for eleven points of similarity. Sweden uses 15, Israel uses 9, we use 11. No reason. We look at bifurcation, whorls, a bunch of stuff.

CARLY

OK...

FINGERPRINT MAN

Then we eliminate non-contenders based on sex, age, physical characteristics, etc. The remaining go to the experts. All our guys, actually they're not all guys anymore, but all of them are I.A.I.-certified.

CARLY

I.A.I.?

FINGERPRINT MAN

Doesn't matter what it stands for. Point is they're top notch. So coming through your fax right now should be some rap sheets.

CARLY

Any named Marks?

FINGERPRINT MAN

They're not in front of me right now but it doesn't ring a bell.

CARLY

OK, I'll check. Thanks Dave.

She hangs up, stands and goes out to the fax machine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She flips through the sheets there while more come through. Photos of males of Marks' age and race are on each. CU. on the names: no Marks.

As Carly stands there one more photo comes through the fax: the picture looks familiar. It's her man. She looks at the name: "Corbin Rudy". She's confused. The arrest date says three days ago. Now she really can't believe it.

She takes the whole pile back to her office and puts the Rudy photo next to the Marks photo. CU. on them. PAN LEFT to the Marks photo (same move as with the fingerprints in the credits scene). It blurs...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Another blurry CU. of a face. RACK FOCUS and it's the living face of the man in the photograph-- Corbin, 20 years younger.

The setting details for this and subsequent flashbacks largely depend on whether the person playing Corbin/Rodney is white or black. If he's white, think "Boogie Nights"; if he's black, it's less disco, more P-Funk. In any case, the textures, color palette and music are rich and evocative.

Corbin/Rodney is seated on a plush couch. MUSIC plays. It's dark. Opposite sit a young couple, LISSA and TONY. Their manner is deferential to Rodney. Off to the side by a (tiki) bar, is MANNY, a little older than all of them.

Corbin cuts line of cocaine on a coffee table between them. Lissa and Tony snort them when indicated; Rodney, pointedly, does not indulge. He is the epitome of smoothness and control á la Sam Jackson in "Pulp Fiction."

RODNEY

Well, my young friends, I'm sure you didn't think I invited you here to get high on my stash and talk about the Rams.

They chuckle politely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RODNEY (cont'd)

Not that I don't enjoy your company. I do like you. You are a very lucky man, you know that, right, Tony?

Lissa blushes, Tony GRUNTS his agreement.

RODNEY (cont'd)

So when this business opportunity presented itself, I thought, Who among my associates would appreciate such an assignment? Who could be trusted? Now, you're both young: I take it you've not had much chance to see the world outside Southern California?

LISSA

Not really.

TONY

A little.

They are nervous, and the coke doesn't help. The look at Manny leaning against the bar for help. He shrugs. Rodney sees all.

RODNEY (cont'd)

So I imagined. Now: how would you like...

(goes behind bar)

...to go to...

(ducks so they can't see him)

NEW ORLEANS!

He comes up with a Mardi Gras mask on and rattling beads in both hands. LAUGHING hysterically. The dramatic flourish of all this is a little dorky and makes all somewhat awkward.

LISSA

New Orleans!

TONY

Yeah!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rodney takes off the mask and sits down between them.

RODNEY

My good people, here's what I need you to do. Go to New Orleans. My contact's people will contact you. Do the deal that has been already arranged. Come back with what you purchase. ALL of what you purchase. Manny?

Manny walks to a table and picks up a BRIEFCASE and brings it over. Pushes the coke tray aside and plops the case down in front of them.

RODNEY (cont'd)

This is what you will be taking with you. If you return on time, with everything, you will be rewarded with ten per cent of the contents of this case.

He opens it. It's full of cash. Ten percent of this is more money than Lissa or Tony has ever seen.

The look at each other behind Rodney. Obviously they're taking the deal.

INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

Manny rides shotgun to Rodney driving a big-ass Mercedes sedan.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

The car turns off Wilshire in Westwood.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Pulls up to a cheap-looking concrete-block apartment building with the cars parked underneath and parks behind a Honda. They get out.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The door opens to the hallway where Rodney & Manny wait and there is a college-age MAN who looks not dissimilar to Rodney. He smiles.

ERNEST

I knew it couldn't be anyone else
at this hour.

RODNEY

How are you, Baby-bro?

ERNEST

Come on in. What's up Manny?

MANNY

What's up Ernie.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ERNEST'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

It's a small two-bedroom with a living room full of second-hand furniture and a UCLA basketball poster on the wall. Schoolbooks cover a desk with a lamp.

RODNEY

How's college?

ERNEST

College is good. You oughta try
it.

RODNEY

Aww, you know... How the ladies
treating you?

ERNEST

I'm trying to get into law school,
man. Not a lot of time for the
ladies.

MANNY

You gotta make time!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNEST

So what can I do for you, man?

RODNEY

What can you do for me? Man, I'm just here to check on you, see how you're doing. You need any money?

ERNEST

Pops' checks still clear. I'm doin' alright.

RODNEY

25 years at Lockheed Martin. It's crazy.

ERNEST

No, that's normal. What you do is crazy.

RODNEY

Aww, come one, Baby-bro, don't give me a hard time.

ERNEST

I'm not givin' you a hard time, I'm just tellin' it like it is.

RODNEY

Yeah, OK, OK. You let me know if you need anything. Keep studying hard. How 'bout a little pick-me-up if you're burning the midnight oil?

ERNEST

I think I'm good, Bro.

EXT. TRAILER - DAY

Not in a trailer park but out in the desert amid...nothing.
Carly's car drives up.

TITLE CARD: PALMDALE, CALIF.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carly exits her car to the hot, dry dust. She is anticipated: Out of the trailer walks SONNY JUNNET, 60's, the paradigmatic crusty old investigator type. He wears jeans, boots, and no shirt, and carries a book in his hand.

SONNY

Help ya?

CARLY

Mister Junnet?

SONNY

Yeah.

CARLY

Detective Sonny Junnet?

Pause. He motions with her head to come inside and she climbs the stairs and enters. He follows.

INT. TRAILER - LATER

He stands in the kitchen. He still hasn't put on a shirt.

SONNY

Here, let me have that.

She hands him a glass with only ice in it. He pours her more iced tea from a jug.

SONNY (cont'd)

Why don't you just call Austin and have them arrest him on the murder charge?

CARLY

With all that I have to go on?
He'd be out on bail in 5 minutes
and disappear again.

SONNY

Look, anything I did on this case
is in an LAPD warehouse somewhere.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY(cont'd)

You should be looking for that evidence, not talking to me.

CARLY

I've never handles a case like this, Detective. Aren't you from the old school, you know, the guys who spent 20 years working to get to Detective, studying investigative methods, reading novels, *writing* novels?

She's teasing him a little, and he knows it.

CARLY (cont'd)

I mean don't you think the guys today are kinda lame? Think maybe you can show them something? Show me?

SONNY

I've been off the beat a long time.

CARLY

So you're fresh. Listen, I don't know you and you don't know me. But I don't know shit about detective work--

SONNY

You ever worked a murder before?

CARLY

Not as the lead attorney, no. But there's a detective on a murder. Unsolved murders are never closed. So that makes you...

SONNY

I want to be sure you realize what you're getting into. I don't want to get 90% of the way into this and come to a decision that you have to make and find that you don't have the mettle to make a tough decision.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's listening.

SONNY (cont'd)

I was a detective for a long time. I saw a lot of shit go down. And nothing in all those years has given me the slightest speck of belief that there is anything remotely resembling justice in the justice system. Justice isn't a philosophy. Actually, I take that back-- that's all it is, is philosophy. But the system is about personal agendas. The innocent get nailed and the guilty go free. There's no such thing as real justice because people are fallible and it's handed down by fallible individuals with their own agendas, many of them unknowable. Do you understand me? You're going to come to a point in this where you have to do something you don't want to do, that maybe goes against everything you're supposed to believe in in order to nail this guy. So if I come on board with this, it's to nail this guy, and that's all, because I don't give a fuck, and I will do whatever it takes within the bounds of the law to take him down. And that is the last honest thing you're going to hear from anyone's mouth in the course of this investigation, and if you can't deal with that, then tell me now, because I will be pissed if I find out later you lied to me, and I will find out later, because we will come to that point. You see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

If you knew me at all you would know that none of that is news to me, or a problem for me. This is the first decent case I've gotten at this job. Everybody treats me like shit at my office. My father is serving a life sentence at Pelican Bay. Every day I ask myself if the scum I feel all over my body is something I was born with, or if it accumulates at my office, smeared on me all day by my superiors and my so-called colleagues. Well this is my chance to wash it off for good. This is an important case for the D.A., and if I can close it, things will start happening for me finally. So I'm not going to let anything get in the way of that. And as far as your theory of justice? Please. I grew up in East L.A. I saw what those dumb-ass, dirtbag LAPD did every day in my neighborhood. I'm not talking about the detectives so much as the patrol officers, OK? Planting evidence and rigging crime scenes is like a hobby with those guys: you know what I'm talking about. I think they teach it at the academy, in fact. So nothing is going to surprise me in the course of this investigation. Satisfied?

EXT. UNIV. OF TEXAS - DAY

ESTABLISH the 19th Century campus of brick and oaks.

INT. UNIV. OF TEXAS - LECTURE HALL - DAY

Corbin runs PowerPoint from the podium of a lecture hall: projected above are graphs showing the three portfolio utility preference functions (Linear, Concave, and Convex).

CORBIN

But most investors are known to be risk-averse, and their risk-return trade-off is described as convex. Each increment of income or wealth is of *less utility*, than the preceding investment. These wimps, excuse me, these investors...

(class chuckles)

Are willing to take additional risk only with the promise of *proportionally greater* increments in expected return. Unfortunately, this is all theory; we know very little about the actual investment behavior of individuals. We'll get into the why of that on Thursday. Thank you.

A smattering of APPLAUSE that only the really good lecturers are afforded.

As class empties and Corbin gathers his things, he looks up to see a MAN standing to the side. EYE CONTACT. Corbin's face changes, like he had forgotten his troubles during the lecture, but now has remembered.

INT. UNIV. OF TEXAS - CORBIN'S OFFICE - DAY

The man is Omar Hanson, Corbin's lawyer. They sit at a small table in the cluttered office.

OMAR

Anyway it was good to see you in your element.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORBIN

I do enjoy it.

OMAR

I can tell.

(exhaling)

So what are we going to do about your situation, my friend? It's only misdemeanor possession now but when that passport business becomes the top sheet on the desk of some guy at the FBI office in San Antonio, you're going to have a problem.

CORBIN

I know.

OMAR

You need to tell me all about it, my friend.

Corbin is nodding his head but saying nothing.

Card 9.2-- Carly's doubts

EXT. CARLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

She gets out of her car slowly, tired. She sees Armando coming out of his house and about to get into a car with some friends waiting for him. MUSIC comes from the vehicle.

ARMANDO

What's up Carly?

CARLY

Hello, Armando.

ARMANDO

Long day?

CARLY

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMANDO

Hey, can I talk to you a second.

CARLY

Sure.

He trots across the street to meet her on her lawn.

ARMANDO

Hi.

CARLY

Hi.

ARMANDO

I was wondering if you knew anything about my friend's case I asked you about?

CARLY

Armando, I can't help your friends in court because I used to take you to Magic Mountain when we were younger.

ARMANDO

(pause)

Did I say anything about helping anybody? I was just wondering if you knew anything.

He starts walking off.

CARLY

Why don't you go visit him and ask him.

ARMANDO

(over his shoulder)

Because I work during visiting hours. Forget it.

She burns a little with regret and remembrance. He gets into the car. Armando and his friends look like they're going to have a good time together as they drive off. She turns around and starts inside.

FADE OUT.

EXT. I-5 ON SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY - DAY
MUSIC OVER:

Heat swells off the pavement carved through the almond trees.
Carly's vehicle.

INT. FOLSOM COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Simultaneously, the present-day version of Manny leads a
group of grey-clad PRISONERS in a Bible study on The Inside.

EXT. I-5 ON SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY - DAY

TIGHTER on Carly's vehicle.

INT. FOLSOM COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Prison scenes involving Manny. He wears reading glasses and
is apparently afforded respect by PRISONERS and GUARDS alike.

EXT. I-5 ON SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY - DAY

TIGHTER on Carly's vehicle. She and Sonny are visible now.

EXT. FOLSOM COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Manny in the yard. Sees Sonny & Carly exit her vehicle on
the other side of the fence.

INT. FOLSOM COUNTY JAIL - DAY

The duo speaks to Manny through a bulletproof window. He
nods. They look satisfied.

EXT. I-5 ON SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY - DAY

Driving in the other direction.

INT. CARLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Carly removes from the Marks file a PHOTO and sheet of data on CHERYL LA BRANCH and hands it to Sonny, who takes it to an empty cubicle and starts working the phone.

INT. CHEMISTRY BUILDING - DAY

Carly winds her way through the corridors of a UCLA science building. Checks lab numbers on doors against an old sheet of paper in her hand and walks in tentatively.

The place is a disaster: papers everywhere, broken glass on the floor, tipped-over test-tubes on dirty countertops, mold growing in some of them. She turns a corner and finds an OLD MAN standing there with goggles on his forehead, keeping his wild hair back.

She shows him some old paperwork on lab results done there. The Chemist nods and smiles, "OK." They shake hands and she turns to leave. Walking out, she looks skeptical given the state of the lab that he's going to be able to find records on what she's given him.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DAY

Near Mateo Street and the 6th St. bridge in downtown L.A., Carly and Sonny get out of her car and approach a warehouse with the LAPD logo on the door.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Inside, they flash ID to a COP at a desk and show him some papers from the Marks file. He admits them to a large-- cavernous-- room. Like in the last scene of "Raiders of the Lost Ark," it's row upon row of stack upon stack of identical boxes, each with a number stamped on its side. The numbers are not in any kind of order. They look around in awe.

They come back out to the cop at the desk.
MUSIC DOWN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

I don't think we're gonna be able to find what we're looking for on our own.

COP

I don't think you are, either.

CARLY

So what's the protocol?

COP

Protocol?

CARLY

I mean, what does it take to get the evidence box we're looking for found?

COP

You fill out a form. It sits at the bottom of this pile
(indicates pile)
for a few months or till someone decides to do something about it.

CARLY

Someone meaning you.

COP

You're working a 20-year-old case with not a lot to go on. You really think my finding this box is gonna solve all your problems?

SONNY

Look, buddy, we don't have a lot of time here. This is a murder investigation.

COP

Well, I'm sorry, *buddy*, but what you see is what you get.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sonny huffs up, physically showing his distress at this disrespect. Carly intervenes.

CARLY

Say, Detective, could you go and get me that file from the car?

SONNY

File?

CARLY

Yeah, the...file... we were talking about on the way over here?

She's trying to get him out of the way and he gets it.

SONNY

Yeah, sure, OK.

He exits.

With him gone, Carly transforms: from the fairly prim, supremely professional woman we've seen to this point, she loosens up, leans over the desk, gets close to the guy. She offers him a view down her blouse.

CARLY

Officer. I know you have a pretty thankless job here.

He lowers his eyes quickly, then raises them to meet hers.

CARLY (cont'd)

I'm on a tough case. My job is on the line.

COP

Uh-huh.

She takes a pen and paper from his desk and starts writing down her name and a telephone number.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

I'd hate to look back on this after failing and think that I didn't do absolutely *everything* I could to bring this case to a successful conclusion.

She twirls her hair seductively.

CARLY (cont'd)

And I do mean...*everything*.

Without taking his eyes off of her, he reaches into a drawer and pulls out a blank form.

COP

Fill it out. I'll do what I can.

CARLY

(smiling)

Thanks.

And she sashays her way out of there.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Carly goes to the car where Sonny waits. She gets in.

INT. CARLY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

She slides into her seat.

CARLY

He's gonna look for it.

SONNY

For real?

CARLY

Said he'd make it top priority.

SONNY

What the hell did you say to him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

The secrets of a woman are never
divulged, Detective.

SONNY

Uh-huh.

He's amused and impressed: she wasn't lying when she said
she'd do whatever it takes to get the job done.

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD STREET - DAY

Carly drives slowly on a side street lined with jacarondas,
looking for something. Comes up on a van belonging to a
house-painting business. Parks.

She walks up the drive and addresses a MAN on a ladder,
painting a house.

CARLY

Excuse me, I'm looking for Tony
Pajo?

TONY

Who may I say is calling?

CARLY

I'm Carly Sanchez from the L.A.
County D.A. I'm investigating the
murder of Lissa Something.

He wordlessly starts descending the ladder.

EXT. CAFE - LATER

They have coffee at a sidewalk cafe on Santa Monica Blvd.

CARLY

Any chance your memory could be
failing you on that point?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

She only had one set of towels, Ms. Sanchez. We were poor.

CARLY

It was a long time ago.

TONY

Ms. Sanchez...Every day for about ten years, I went over every detail of every moment I spent with Lissa. So it's not like I have that far back to remember.

CARLY

I understand.

TONY

No, you don't. But that's OK, you don't have to understand.

CARLY

I want you to realize that if you do testify, I'm going to do everything I can but there's always a chance that a jury comes back with a not guilty verdict. You might be in danger if Marks is set free.

TONY

I'm not afraid of him anymore. I will testify. You can be assured.

(getting up)

I remember his car, too, if it's any help.

CARLY

It might be, thanks.

TONY

I need to get back to work.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

Thanks for your help. I'll be in touch.

TONY

OK. Nice meeting you.

CARLY

You too.

He walks off. She watches him a moment then her glance moves back to the table. His coffee cup is still sitting there. CLOSE IN on it..

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

In the same position on the screen, another coffee cup on another café table on another sidewalk in another city in another time.

Lissa and Tony soak up the atmosphere of the French Quarter.

LISSA

They sold slaves there, I'm telling you. I read about it. They used to have auctions.

TONY

Read about it?

LISSA

In a book about New Orleans. In the bookstore.

TONY

Look at you!

LISSA

What, because I read?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Forget it, I'm just teasing you.
That shit is fucked up though.

LISSA

It's *really* fucked up. It's like,
it's not history really if it's
still there, you know? Right in
that square.

TONY

I do know. I'm glad we saw it.

LISSA

Me too.

They smile at one another.

LISSA (cont'd)

Don't we need to get going?

TONY

Yeah, probably. Come on.

They get up and walk to a rental car parked nearby.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - NINTH WARD - DAY

The car pulls up on a grimy street in a New Orleans ghetto.

The Ninth Ward lacks the fancy ironwork and balconies of the French Quarter and Garden District. A few unemployed MEN hang outside a corner liquor store; WOMEN lean out of second-story windows, smoking and looking at the street pass by. Everyone ambles slowly through Louisiana's wet heat.

Lissa and Tony get out of the car and consider one house in particular. She looks at him nervously.

TONY

It's gonna be fine. Just be cool,
it'll be fine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LISSA

(breathing deeply)

OK. I should've had a beer instead
of that coffee.

TONY

(chuckles)

Don't worry, you're gonna be fine.

He knocks on the door and they wait a moment. People on the street eye them with a little suspicion, a little hostility. They are the only non-blacks here. At last the door opens a crack. A black MAN (35) in sunglasses.

TONY (cont'd)

It's Tony. Rodney's man.

MAN

What you doin' bringin' your ol'
lady here, man?

TONY

This is my partner. She's Rodney's
partner too. We work together.

LISSA

Shit, Tony, you forgot the
suitcase!

TONY

Huh? Damn, you're right. Go get
it, will you?

He hands her the keys. She walks the few steps to the car and gets out of the trunk the suitcase seen earlier.

The others wait. The man who opened the door, whose name is Baby Brother, shakes his head at Tony's amateurism.

TONY (cont'd)

You glad I brought her now, though,
right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BABY BROTHER

Don't try to be funny with Melvin.
Nigga's got no sense of humor.

TONY

OK, OK, we're cool, man.

Lissa comes back, smiling. Baby Brother admits them.

INT. NINTH WARD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It's like the sun has never shone in this hallway.

TONY

What's your name?

BABY BROTHER

Baby Brother.

TONY

That's your name?

BABY BROTHER

More or less.

TONY

Is it cool to be doing this in the
daytime?

BABY BROTHER

Ain't no cops in the Ninth Ward,
day or night. Black folks here
more afraid of them than the
criminals.

TONY

What about the white folks?

BABY BROTHER

That's complicated.

They've come to a sort of crash-pad/chill-out room. Black construction paper covers all the windows. A film projector plays a porno film on a sheet taped to a wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The RATTLE of the machine is heard under NEW ORLEANS MUSIC (WWOZ-FM) playing from a radio. A COUPLE, oblivious to the porno, plays chess on a card table in the corner, occasionally interrupting their game to do a line of coke. There's a dead plant on a bar stool.

BABY BROTHER (cont'd)

Melvin be out in a minute. Drink?

TONY

I'm cool, thanks.

BABY BROTHER

Lady?

LISSA

Umm...iced tea?

Brother finds this amusing.

BABY BROTHER

Don't know about no iced tea. We got Coke though. A-cola.

LISSA

How 'bout a beer then?

He leaves the room. Tony checks out the chess match. The players have not acknowledged him or Lissa, or anything else.

TONY

I always wanted to learn to play chess.

One of them tilts the head to look at Tony. Today is not the day Tony will learn to play chess.

Lissa, seated in a deep couch, reaches into her purse and pulls out a bottle of perfume. She dabs a little on her neck and décolletage.

TONY (cont'd)

You're gonna get me all distracted.

He leans over her and breathes her in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LISSA
(playfully)
Stop it!

Brother returns now, with Melvin in tow.

MELVIN
Rodney's people?

Lissa hoists herself out of the couch.

SLO-MO and MUSIC begins. A brief montage of words and handshakes and the C.U. exchange of carry-on bags and we are outta there.

INT. NEW ORLEANS - HOTEL - NIGHT

Lissa and Tony have sloppy noisy sex. Beer bottles and a mirror with some coke on it on the bedside table.

ANGLE on the carry-on bag Melvin gave them.

INT. NINTH WARD HOUSE - NIGHT
MUSIC DOWN.

Melvin and Brother are now playing chess. No one moves.

MELVIN
Baby Brother, what was your
impression of the kids from L.A. we
saw today?

BABY BROTHER
I thought they asked a lot of
questions.

INT. THE MAPLE LEAF - NIGHT

Lissa and Tony are boogying down to funky MUSIC inside.

INT. NINTH WARD HOUSE - NIGHT
MUSIC DOWN.

The chess game continues.

MELVIN
Personally I was not that
impressed. Where are all our
people tonight?

BABY BROTHER
Out. Check.

INT. THE MAPLE LEAF - NIGHT
MUSIC UP.

Lissa and Tony do shots at the bar.

INT. NINTH WARD HOUSE - NIGHT
MUSIC DOWN.

The chess game now over, the two men stand.

MELVIN
I bet we could re-acquisition that
package we gave them without too
much difficulty.

BABY BROTHER
Want me to make some calls?

INT. THE MAPLE LEAF - NIGHT
MUSIC UP.

Lissa and Tony play pool on the patio.

INT. NINTH WARD HOUSE - NIGHT
MUSIC DOWN.

Melvin is watching TV and Baby Brother comes in to report.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BABY BROTHER

I got ahold of Kevin and Shoelace.
That's it.

MELVIN

What is needed is a wireless
telephone.

BABY BROTHER

What?

MELVIN

One you could carry with you. So
when people are out I could get in
touch with them.

BABY BROTHER

That would be very convenient.

MELVIN

Why don't you go out in the
neighborhood and get some people to
check some of the popular
nightspots in the Quarter and such.
We could send Shoelace to follow
our young squires home, and do what
needs to be done.

BABY BROTHER

I'm on it.

MELVIN

I'll come too.

MUSIC UP.

INT. THE MAPLE LEAF - NIGHT

Lissa and Tony sway to a slow dance.

I/E NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

JUMP-CUTS from bars and clubs around town: The Black Cat, Tipitina's, The Funky Butt... Melvin's people are on the prowl.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - NIGHT

Lissa and Tony stumble drunkenly in the direction of a cheap hotel.

SHOELACE watches from behind.

INT. NEW ORLEANS - HOTEL - NIGHT

Lissa and Tony are passed out in their clothes.

CLICKING is heard. TRACKING ZOOM to the doorknob. The door opens. Shoelace is there on his knees with a lockpick in his hands. He crawls forward and closes the door behind him, the shaft of light from the hallway narrowing to a slit on the carpet.

He closes in on the carry-on bag, takes it, and crawls back out. The shaft of light opens onto the sleeping couple, then closes.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SANTA MONICA - MORNING

ESTABLISH a nice but not super-deluxe apartment building.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Jason's place. He is walking around getting ready, a necktie draped around his neck, untied. Obvious bachelor pad.

INT. APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

Carly is putting on makeup. The phone RINGS. She finishes and is about to open the door when she hears:

JASON

Hello?...

(suddenly hushed)

Hey, I can't talk right now... Yes,
she's here, I can't talk...

INT. APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE on Jason looking nervously in one direction.

HIS P.O.V. on the bathroom door: white light comes through the crack at the floor.

JASON

You have to call me later... I said
I can't talk... OK... Me too.

INT. APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

ECU on Carly's face showing she's freaking on the inside but maintains stoicism on the outside. She takes a couple of deep breaths and swallows. She opens the door.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She strolls out and puts the makeup she's carrying in a drawer in the dresser.

CARLY

Who was that?

JASON (O.S.)

Telemarketer.

ECU: Carly squints her eyes shut hard: it's the lie she feared. She opens her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY'S POV: a gym bag in the corner.

She looks into the dresser drawer:

CARLY'S POV: her underwear, stockings, make-up.

She looks at the gym bag again. POV of it.

She looks at the contents of the drawer again, and shuts it.

She puts on a happy face as she leaves the bedroom. She lacks the courage to confront Jason.

CARLY

Ready?

JASON

Ready.

They pick up their briefcases and head out the door.

EXT. CORBIN'S HOUSE - DAY

He and his son are getting out of his car in the driveway, with age-appropriate bags indicating that they are coming home from work/school together, and start inside.

CORBIN

You can't be worrying about who's saying what about whom. It's all just politics. The people who like you will show you they're your friends by their actions: honesty, loyalty, shared interests... If someone needs to go around machinating behind your back, they obviously have other agendas. Since those agendas are ultimately unknowable because these people do not deal with you honestly, and because people who do things like that tend to be insecure, and insecure people act unpredictably.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORBIN(cont'd)

So just be yourself and let your classmates do as they will. Their true motives will reveal themselves.

(pause)

And keep studying. Do you know that to this day I have dreams that I haven't been to class in weeks, or done any of the reading, and my fearsome neglect is about to be revealed? Much better to just do the work.

(pause)

And be nice to the girls.

INT. CORBIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corbin and Wife are in low light discussing recent events.

WIFE

Do you think it'll be in the papers?

CORBIN

I imagine it will.

WIFE

Corbin, what is this going to do to us?

CORBIN

I can't help what people are going to think. When it's all wrapped up and over with, hopefully they'll see the "Charges Dismissed Against University Professor" headline, then, too.

WIFE

If the Star-Democrat would run such a headline.

CORBIN

Look, clearly this is a mix-up. Omar is handling it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORBIN(cont'd)

Soon we can put it behind us.
There's nothing else I can tell you
now.

WIFE

OK.

She walks over and kisses him on the forehead.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Lissa and Tony sit stiffly. He stares straight ahead.

TONY

This is insane, to be going back.

LISSA

I have to go back. I told you.

TONY

He's going to kill us.

LISSA

He's going to kill Melvin.

TONY

This is so stupid.

LISSA

What else can we do?

TONY

Anything. This is going to get us
killed, I'm telling you.

INT. RODNEY'S CRIB - DAY

Ominous MUSIC plays. Manny is getting off the phone looking serious. He walks over to where YOUNG CHERYL entwines herself with Rodney on a couch, stands over them and looks down at Rodney.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rodney is chuckling and about to swig from a beer but seeing the seriousness of his partner's expression, he aborts the motion. His smile fades.

INT. CARLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Sonny knocks on the open door. She keeps working.

CARLY

What's up?

He's about to say something then changes his mind.

SONNY

Not much.

CARLY

C'mon, what is it?

SONNY

(pause)

What's your relationship with Gerard like?

CARLY

Not so great, why?

SONNY

Ever try to screw him somehow?

CARLY

Neither literally, nor figuratively, have I ever tried to screw Gerard. Why?

SONNY

Friend at the Bureau told me he's not helping us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He chucks the Cheryl file with her picture clipped to the front on Carly's desk. This gets her attention.

SONNY (cont'd)

Gerard hasn't put in the request to the Witness Protection Program for the whereabouts of Marks's girlfriend.

CARLY

You're kidding. How do you know?

SONNY

Friend at the Bureau. Seemed to be taking awhile so I gave him a call. No record of the request.

CARLY

How good a friend?

SONNY

He's got no reason to lie to me. Gerard have a reason to lie to you?

CARLY

I wonder if he has a reason to protect Marks.

SONNY

(sitting down)

Things like this are seldom that nefarious, in my experience. I would guess he's trying to make life difficult for you.

CARLY

Please, he does that by his sheer existence. He just hates me. He hates that I'm ghetto. And he hates that my father was an El Norteno.

SONNY

I'm a little conflicted about that myself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

Give me a break, Sonny. He was gone when I was four. I have no relationship with him. And no relationship to the life he led.

SONNY

Yeah, I know.

CARLY

(doubts he's convinced)

I mean look at me, for Christ's sake: I've dedicated my life to putting people like him away. I could be litigating from a Century City skyscraper in an office designed by Rem Koolhaas, but I'm not. I'm sitting here with you trying to figure out why my boss is keeping me from doing my job.

SONNY

So, why, do you think?

CARLY

There's only one way to find out.

With that, she gets up and walks to the door, taking the Cheryl file with her. As she passes Sonny:

CARLY (cont'd)

I'm going to do this by myself, if you don't mind.

(pause)

You don't think there's any chance it's like a bureaucratic screw-up do you? This is the federal government we're talking about here.

SONNY

You know, you might be able to track her down through family.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

I shouldn't have to do that. I have every right to that information.

SONNY

You're right. Why don't you ask Macalester's assistant if he put in the request before you go stomping in there all indignant.

CARLY

Good idea.

INT. D.A. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

She walks through the common area toward Gerard's office. Before it is a desk tended by a WOMAN, Gerard's secretary.

CARLY

Hi, Susanna.

SUSANNA

Hi, Carly, what's up?

CARLY

I wonder if you can help me with my cold case.

SUSANNA

Try me.

CARLY

One of the original witnesses went into the Witness Protection Program when the alleged disappeared on indictment. Now, after a few years when he didn't turn up, she left the program, but she's got a new name and only the FBI knows what it is and where to find her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY(cont'd)

I don't have the authority to get that info from the FBI, so I went to Gerard. He said he'd take care of it but the Bureau has no record of the request. Is that the type of thing you would handle or would Gerard have to do it himself?

SUSANNA

What's the name on your case?

CARLY

Marks.

SUSANNA

Doesn't ring a bell, but let me see.

She fiddles with her computer.

SUSANNA (cont'd)

I've handled these requests for him before; what happens is he asks me to get the paperwork for him to authorize. But I'm not showing anything on Mr. Macalester's file of your case, and I definitely would remember doing that.

CARLY

Uh-huh. He never mentioned it to you?

SUSANNA

No.

CARLY

Has he said anything to you about my case?

SUSANNA

Not that I recall, Carly, why?

Carly begins steeling herself for what she must do now. Gerard's door is closed. Susanna sees her looking at it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSANNA (cont'd)

You can't go in there right now.

Carly ignores this.

INT. D.A. OFFICE - GERARD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

She storms in and he's leaning back in his chair, looking very comfortable and yukking it up with a couple of WHITE MALE ATTORNEYS seen previously.

CARLY

Why haven't you called the FBI like I asked?

GERARD

Excuse us, we were having a conversation here.

CARLY

I need that witness if I'm going to bring this to trial.

GERARD

What the hell are you talking about, Sanchez?

CARLY

Cheryl La Branch. Witness Protection Program. I made a simple request and in order to fulfill my duties on this case, I need you to honor that.

GERARD

(to others)

Gentlemen, will you excuse us please?

LAWYER #1

(getting up)

No problem, Gerard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAWYER #2
(under his breath, on his
way out)
Feisty!

Chuckling to themselves, they close the door behind them.

GERARD
All right, Sanchez, you're right: I
didn't file for your request.

CARLY
Were you planning on it?

GERARD
Frankly, no.

CARLY
I don't understand.

He offers nothing.

CARLY (cont'd)
I need this witness to pursue this
case. I need this case to keep my
job.
(dawning)
You're trying to get me fired.

GERARD
I didn't say anything.

CARLY
I have done nothing but kiss your
ass since I got here; I've been
beyond competent from day one; I've
taken nothing but your shittiest
cases, and now you're setting me up
to fail?!

GERARD
Why don't you get the message,
Sanchez?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLY

You file that request with the FBI,
or I'll get District Attorney
Collings to do it. I don't think
she'll be pleased to know you're
trying to lose the election for
her. Or that you're trying to get
the only Latina in this office
fired.

A light bulb goes off in her head.

CARLY (cont'd)

That's it, isn't it? You don't
want me here because of my
background, but you can't fire me
because it wouldn't look good to
can a minority.

GERARD

That is a ridiculous theory.

CARLY

Is it? What do you think
Collings's opinion of it would be?

After a moment, he reluctantly picks up the phone.

GERARD

Susanna, I need you to call the FBI
and get a Witness Protection
Program locator form for me.

Carly stares him down and leaves without a word.
Card 21.1 (if necessary)

INT. CARLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Morning sunlight and SOUNDS of children playing pour through
the open windows-- a beautiful morning. Luanna is going
around stuffing stuff into a backpack. Carly fixes
sandwiches in the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUANNA

Do you have sunblock?

CARLY

It's in the car.

LUANNA

What about shoes?

CARLY

It's not Kenya, honey, it's the San Diego zoo. Just wear whatever's comfortable.

The phone RINGS. Carly gets it.

CARLY (cont'd)

Hello?

SONNY (O.S.)

I got a twenty on Cheryl.

CARLY

I don't know cop code, Sonny: spell it out for me.

SONNY (O.S.)

I have her address. She moved back to in L.A.

CARLY

You're kidding.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Sonny in an undershirt, smoking and pacing around a low-budget but non-dingy motel room.

SONNY

I'm not kidding. I'll meet you there.

CARLY (O.S.)

Today? It's Saturday.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONNY

I know it's Saturday; we need this witness, now get going.

I/C between the two locations at discretion.

CARLY

Sonny, I'm taking my niece to the San Diego zoo. We've been planning it for like, months. No way am I working today.

SONNY

Sanchez, when I agreed to come on board for this, I told you you were going to have to do things you didn't want to do. This is one of those things. Now tell your niece you're sorry, and get the hell out the door.

CARLY

(sighs)

All right.

They hang up. Luanna walks in. The look on Carly's face is enough to tell her what's going on.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Sonny putting on a shirt and getting ready.

EXT. CARLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Luanna follows her to the porch.

MEDIUM SHOT: Carly getting into the car as Luanna watches.

CLOSE-UP: Luanna's POV of Carly giving a look of apology through the windshield.

CLOSE-UP: Luanna is unappeased.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE-UP: Carly turns to look behind her to back up.

MEDIUM SHOT: Carly's POV (through the rear windshield) of Armando and his friends on the porch across the street.

MEDIUM SHOT: They are looking at her house.

CLOSE-UP: Carly facing forward, looking at Luanna.

MEDIUM SHOT: Carly's P.O.V. of Luanna looking across the street.

CLOSE-UP: Luanna looking at Armando.

MEDIUM SHOT: Carly's car stops abruptly. She says out the window to Luanna:

CARLY

Get your stuff and get in.

Luanna runs inside and comes back out with her backpack. She excitedly gets in the car. They smile and drive off.

EXT. FREEWAY - LATER

Carly's car drives along.

INT. CARLY'S CAR - DAY

Carly is on her cell.

CARLY

Sonny? Sonny, look, I'm sorry but I changed my mind. I couldn't leave Luanna...We'll go over there tomorrow...I said I couldn't. One day is not going to matter anyway...I'm sorry...OK, bye.

She looks at Luanna and gives a little shrug. Luanna smiles.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Sonny, fully dressed, sits on the bed. His hand is on his knee and he rubs his forehead.

EXT. SAN DIEGO ZOO - DAY
MUSIC OVER:

Scenes of Carly and Luanna frolicking at the zoo.

INT. BAR - DAY

Sonny is silhouetted by the bright light coming through the door behind him. The bar is dark. RACK EXPOSURE to lighten Sonny and the interior and overexpose the outside. Sonny steps to the bar and signals for the bartender.

EXT. SAN DIEGO ZOO - DAY

Scenes of Carly and Luanna frolicking at the zoo.

INT. BAR - DAY

Sonny drinking alone.

EXT. CARLY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Carly and Luanna drive up at the end of their excursion.

EXT. MOTEL - EVENING

Sonny drunkenly stumbles home.
MUSIC DOWN.

FADE OUT.

INT. CARLY'S CAR - DAY

Carly drives; Sonny doesn't look so hot.

CARLY

Looks like you enjoyed your
Saturday, too.

SONNY

Just give it a rest, alright?

They drive on in silence.

Card

EXT. LAKEWOOD - DAY

The car pulls up outside one of those cookie-cutter ranch
houses in the white-bread part of L.A. known as Lakewood.
Card 22 unfinished

Card 24

Card 25

Card 23