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Before and After

By Ted Tally

Your whole life
can change in a second.
And you never even know
when it's coming.
Before you think you know
what kind of world this is.
And after everything is different for you.
Not bad maybe, not always.
But different.
Forever.
I didn't use to know that.
Until the day it happened to my family.
I didn't even know there
could be such a thing as after.
I didn't know that for us...
before was already over.
T.J., this won't hurt, I promise.
This is my special boo-boo light.
It's magic. Did you ever see
a magic boo-boo light before?
He had no business
being on his brother's sled.
- Darn thing's bigger than he is.
- You're needed downstairs.
T.J.'s a lucky boy, Mrs. Foley,
but I'd keep an eye on him.
If he complains of nausea or dizziness
or if he seems drowsier than normal,
give me a call.
That's not magic,
that's just a flashlight.
Oh, yeah?
Here, blow.
See you later.
She's gone, Trygve.
- No, there's still a chance. Give me that.
- Trygve, she's gone.
She wasn't gonna make it anyway.
We did our best. Break it down.
- What happened?
Some bastard clobbered her up near
Poor Farm Road and left her there.
She was lying in the snow by the pond.
Do we know who this is?

Martha Taverner.

Martha Taverner.

Oh... I've met her.

I even treated her once I think,
when you were on vacation, Trygve.

He's still out there,
whoever did this. Could be anywhere.

Hey, Dad, three ounces
ground cumin seed?

Yuck. What's cumin seed?
that is absolutely
the most crucial, fantastic,
top-secret ingredient of my entire chili.

Hi, Mom.

Hi.

Jacob!

Jake's parking is getting
sloppier than ever.

Man.

There's cars all over the place.

Ben, I swear I could hardly get mine
in the garage.

Parking it right would feel
too much like work.

Let me have some.

Hey, you're trembling.

I'm just cold.

- Dad, the stove's freaking out.

- In a minute.

Carolyn, what...

We had an event at the hospital today.

Event?

Dad, come quick!

- Fred!

- Dr. Ryan.

You haven't called me doctor
since we first moved up here.

Hi, Mom.

Chief, why the uniform today?

What's up?

Uh, sorry to barge in on you like this
right here at suppertime.

Get you something, Fran?

A beer if you're not on duty?

No, that's okay, thanks. Umm...
Is Jacob around?
He's up in his room, I guess,
with those damn headphones on.
You didn't see him come in?
- I was in the studio.
You need him for something?
Do you want us to get him?
I'll go.
Yeah, go on, hon.
Is there something wrong?
Okay, uh...
Something happened out on
Poor Farm Road today, something bad.
A girl got herself killed.
I know, I saw her.
What?
We had her in ER, beyond saving.
I mean, it was... awful.
That's what I was gonna tell you
when I came in.
- God, I'm sorry.
- What does that have to do with Jacob?
I don't want to have to tell you this,
I really don't.
Jacob was seen with the girl.
He picked her up from work.
She works down at Jacey's after school,
making ice cream cones.
He came by in his car and
they went off together like they been doin'.
As far as we know right now,
he was the last person with her.
Are you saying Jacob was dating
that girl, Martha Taverner?
No, what he's saying is...
He's standing here in our kitchen,
saying that he thinks our son was...
- For crying out loud, Fran.
- Ben, hey, hey.
Let's not jump the gun.
I just need to talk to him.
Jacob!
- He's not up there. I looked all over.

- That's crazy.

His car's in the garage.

I just saw it.

Do you have a spare set
of keys for the car?

- Yeah, I think.

- Daddy!

Something's happened but there's
been a misunderstanding.

We'll explain later, okay?

- Wait a minute, you can't do this.

- Do what?

You can't go snooping around
in someone else's car.

Legally, that's my car.

You do not have a search warrant.

Wait, I'm sure there's some very simple
explanation for all of this.

Jacob and the Taverner girl
must have separated somehow
before this even happened.

Maybe he just dropped her off somewhere.

Maybe she got out of the car, walked away.

There's a thousand different...

Fran, how do we know he's all right?

Maybe some madman did something
to both of them.

Maybe Jacob's hurt or he's kidnapped.

Oh, my God.

Carolyn, for his own sake,
that car might give us some answers.

No.

You're his parents, you want to protect him.

I got kids, too.

Ben, is there something that you know
that you're not telling me?

- How 'bout it, Judith? Do you know...

- Hey!

Off limits!

Leave her out of this, okay?

I'll tell you what I know.

I know my son.

- He's just helping us find him, darling.

- I don't want it to be like this.

But if I have to, I will go find Judge Grady
and I will get a search warrant.

- Yeah, well, you do that!

- It's okay.

Sweetie, you looked upstairs?

You sure? You looked every place?

We should've let him look in the car, Ben.

The hell we should have. Not without
a lawyer telling me I have to.

We've got rights here.

And wherever he is, whatever he did,
Jacob has rights too.

We have to take this
one step at a time, okay?

You and I will look in the house.

Top to bottom.

- I'll check out the garage and studio.

- If he's not there, we'll call his friends.

Carolyn, better call Wendell, too.

Oh, no.

Oh, Jake.

I know that, Wendell.

Mom?

- Wait, wait.

When Fran comes back,
we'll be perfectly...

I know it's a small town,
but it's our town too.

He will, I promise.

I promise, just hurry, okay?

- Lawyers.

- Mom?

Yeah?

Jacob was really mad this morning.

Said he might not even go to school.

Why?

What happened?

He and Daddy.

You know, they had another fight.

What?

You know that Jacob wants to rent
a big car for the winter dance
and ride around all night?

So, Daddy goes, "How are you

planning to pay for it?

"We've got rules
about this sort of thing, mister.

"It's time you learn
to pay your own way, Jacob. "
Mom, he knows Jake could never
save up in time. He knows that.
But Jake's such a big dope he already
promised rides to all his creepy friends.
He's already bragged about it to Mar...
Martha?

You knew about this girl?
How long have they been going out?
Since September.

He made me swear I wouldn't tell.
Jake said to Daddy,
"You think 'cause you're this big artist,
"like rules don't apply to you,
but they should always apply to me. "

"You're a hypocrite," Jake said.
Then Daddy just totally lost it.
But it was never that bad.

Mom, I'm so scared.
You didn't see their faces.
You weren't there.

Daddy wants Jacob to be more
responsible, so he challenges his pride.
Maybe too hard sometimes,
but that's love, Jude.
You know, that's love.
All right, let's go.

-Okay.
I'll go on up to the house.
Mom!

What are you doing, Ben?
Having a look at my car.
Don't I have a right
to be in my own garage?
How long you been out here?
- A couple of minutes.
All I did was look around,
and I sure didn't see anything wrong either.
Keys, Ben.
What about the warrant?

Ben...
You are asking for trouble on this.
You're not thinking clear.
How can I help you
if you don't even trust me?
It's all yours.
This always such a mess?
I've got supplies to move around.
Art stuff.
I can't use Carolyn's car
or she has a fit.
And the Jeep's too small.
What about the floor?
Where'd all this sawdust come from?
All these little pieces of new wood.
You think I'm stupid, Ben?
You think I'm quaint?
Okay, so I looked in there.
Maybe some sawdust drifted out.
Is that a crime?
This car is officially impounded.
And I want to tell you something.
If it turns out your kid is in trouble...
Then you are in trouble, too.
Now let's have a look at his room.
- You're searching Jacob's room?
- You're damn right I am.
Hey, if you find his bed, let us know.
- We haven't seen it in years.
- I don't like your attitude.
It's not exactly what I would call decent
under the circumstances.
We haven't had much practice, Fran,
under the circumstances.
All right, I want to look in that closet.
First, I want to look in this trunk.
Check the bottom of this,
including in there.
Let's get the bed.
Put 'em up there.
Finish up in there, will you?
Yeah.
Excuse us.
"The premises, occupant. "

A search...
Now maybe you see
why I didn't just fall into line.
It's so stupid and useless.
Why aren't they out looking for him?
Well, now...
Hidden in his top drawer.
- So?
- So...
That's a link, don't you think?
This proves that they knew each other.
Fran, nobody's pretending they didn't.
Sorry I'm late. I'm so sorry.
If that's even her.
It's her, Wendell.
It is Martha Taverner.
Here's the search warrant.
I want a complete inventory of all
the items you're removing from this house,
with a signed receipt.
Keep going!
Oh, Carolyn...
One more thing.
When did you loan Jacob
your tire jack?
My...?
I'm just wondering why a beat-up
old Chevy has the jack from a '94...
Whoa, hold on.
Don't answer that.
Fran, fishing season starts in April.
Let's you and I go outside and talk.
Look, Jacob may not
even have been there,
but they're puttin' themselves
in front of the law, Wendell.
That does not help anybody.
Carolyn, please.
Please, come here.
- What does he mean?
- Listen to me!
There was blood in the car.
- Blood?
- Her blood on his jack.

How do you know it was her blood?
For God's sake, it might be his.
Show me. I want to see it.
You don't want to. Believe me.
Anyway, it's been taken care of.
- What do you mean, taken care of?
- Whatever would burn, I burned.
The jack, I took apart.
I washed it clean.
There was no time to...
They might find something anyway.
Fibers or some microscopic...
God knows what tests they've got now.
- What are you saying?
- If we just had more time.
You can't just destroy evidence
that might save him.
What if you've destroyed evidence
that would prove he's innocent?
Please, just stop one minute, please.
We have to think.
We have to decide.
What have we got to decide?
Nothing's going to bring that girl back.
I'm sorry, but it's too late.
- We've got to think of Jacob.
- But Jacob's innocent.
Jacob's not a killer.
If anything, he's in danger himself.
How do you know that
they were alone in that car?
Someone else might've been there
and killed that girl and taken Jacob.
You're doing everything you can
to keep the police from finding him.
What if it was just an accident?
And Jacob's off running scared?
We don't know the facts, Ben.
We don't even know
what really happened.
Okay, they're gone. You wanna
tell me whatever it is you know?
Hey, look. I'm your friend.
And I love Jacob, Jesus.

I sat through every damn class play of his.
I gave him \$50 last year for the bike-athon.
I'm on your side.
- There is something you should know.
- Hey.
What is that?
What is that, Ben Ryan?
Are you going to tell me when I can speak
and when I have to be quiet?
You can keep your own tongue
if you want to...
Jacob!
Hello. Yes.
Who is this?
Well, I hope you sleep well tonight.
You're a person of true compassion.
- It's better if you just...
- Yes, it's our first well-wisher.
Yes, you are. Aren't you proud?
Well, you haven't got much of a brain,
but you've got mighty quick reflexes.
It's okay, honey.
It's okay.
It's all right.
It's okay.
Ma'am?
We've been all over this area.
Somebody just buried their dog there.
- Oh.
- We dug it up and put it back.
I'm going back to work.
Wait a minute.
Wait a minute.
This is crazy.
I have to live my life.
And this town has its needs, too.
It doesn't just revolve around us
and our problems.
I'll either be back in 15 minutes
with a black eye or I'll be there all day.
I love you.
I love you.
- Bye.
- Goodbye.

Jacob!

What if we never see him again?

Oh, darling.

Don't lose faith. We just have to believe that somehow he'll...

he'll find his way back to us.

He will.

And there is some other explanation for all this. I know there is.

I know it.

"Dear Folks, took a long time to get to Boston in that big storm.

"Wasn't sure we'd make it.

I might move on.

"I might hang out here a while.

I'll try to write.

"I know you don't pray but pray now. "

Postmarked the day before yesterday.

Carolyn, he's fine.

This is crazy. This isn't Jacob.

- That's his handwriting.

- No, somebody made him write this.

What's the difference? The point is, at least right now, he's okay.

What are you doing?

- I'm calling Fran. I think it's important...

- Fran?

Listen to me.

Will you just listen to me?

If Fran sees this, he'll get a court order to intercept our mail and tap our phones.

Then you can forget about ever hearing from Jake again.

That's just for starters.

They'll slap a manhunt all over Boston.

He'll run again. God knows where.

Think about it.

Do we really want him caught?

I just want my boy back.

I just want to hold him again.

I just want my boy.

Ben Ryan.

Keep your chin up, you hear?

Sorry, Joe, all I need is change.

Good night, Karen.

See you for my 8:00.

Mrs. Weber canceled, doctor.

She said you'd understand.

Okay.

- Night.

- Good night.

Hi, doctor.

- T.J., hi.

- I got a fever.

- You got a fever?

Come on, honey.

Sorry.

St. Louis on March 11th.

That's the third card.

Then he was in L.A.

just two days later.

It's a new one, California.

What's this doing out?

This spoils.

That's it. That's your whole reaction?

You won't show these to Fran, all right.

But you won't even show them to Wendell.

He's our lawyer, he's our friend.

If this gets out, we don't know

how it might be used against him.

In fact, it might come in handy later

that we kept quiet.

Handy?

Wait, wait.

Hello.

Wendell, what's...

Turn on the TV. Channel 3.

Yep, we got it.

.. across America.

Jacob Ryan, the 16-year-old

Highland resident,

who is a suspect in the murder

of Martha Taverner,

was a fugitive for five weeks.

The teenager, as reported moments ago,

was arrested this afternoon

in the building you see behind me.

Apparently he was hiding

in a friend's apartment.

We understand he is being held
in the juvenile detention center.
And it is expected that he will be
arraigned some time tomorrow.

This way.

Jake!

Jake, thank God you're safe.

How are you, son?

Where were you?

Jake, first off...

your sister, she wanted us to ask you,
if the postcards...

Were you really in all those places?

Or were you here the whole time
in your friend Darren's apartment, huh?

Your dad asked you a question.

Honey, are you going to talk to us?

You don't think you'll be able to
hold out like this forever, do you?

The policemen can't hear you.

We have told them nothing.

Are you still mad at me?

- Is that it?

- Your father has stood up for you.

Tell me, please.

- Do you realize that?

- Jake...

- Goddamn it, mister,

have you any idea

what you put us through?

Do you even know why you're here?

Have they told you?

Do you know what happened
to Martha Taverner?

- There's a warrant for you in Highland.

- But you may be able to come home.

First, they just have to have
a hearing in front of a judge.

And Wendell Bye will be
right there with you.

- Daddy and I will be right there.

- You better speak up then. In court.

Jakie?

Can you look at us?
What's the matter with you?
Think about what you're
going to say to Wendell.
Don't waste his time, too.
Let's go.
No bail! Killers in jail!
No bail! Killers in jail!
No bail! Killers in jail!
No bail! Killers in jail!
No bail! Killers in jail!
No bail! Killers in jail!
Look out, please.
Give us some room.
Jacob Ryan, you've heard
the charge against you.
In juvenile proceedings,
we enter a plea of true or not true.
How say you to this charge?
Not true.
Jacob Ryan is a longtime resident,
he's a fine student,
he's always been of flawless character.
And he is still at the moment a minor.
Therefore, we respectfully request
that he be released on bond.
Jacob Ryan is charged with a terrible
and almost unthinkable crime.
Moreover, the People will prove
that he exacerbated that crime after the fact
by his cunning, deliberate,
and cold-blooded destruction of evidence.
No parent in this town,
and surely no daughter,
could feel safe with Jacob Ryan
on the loose again.
The People urge that bail be denied.
Marion, I'm just not persuaded this boy
is a threat to the general community.
Your Honor, I was also thinking
of their threat to him.
Defendant, please rise.
Pre-trial release granted.
Bond set at \$250,000.

You say I feel so destroyed
Now listen, mister,
you can do whatever you want
with your catatonic self.
But don't even think about
opening this door. You hear me?
Jude!
Jacob, I made you some cookies.
Jacob?
Maybe you wanna have some soup first?
A sandwich or something.
Mom, what's wrong with him?
I think we just have
to give him a few days, sweetie.
When we fought that morning,
I raised my fist to him.
I would've hit him.
And we both knew it, Carolyn.
I sent him out into the world
in that kind of rage.
But you didn't, Benny.
You didn't hit him.
And people do fight.
They argue all the time.
If I'm to blame for this,
how can I ever make it up to him?
We don't even know what happened yet.
If we start blaming ourselves
or each other,
how are we gonna get through this?
When he's ready and he's able,
he'll tell us what happened. He will.
Right now, the only important thing
is that we're together again.
And he's home.
He's home.
We've got eyewitnesses.
They're not claiming to have someone
who actually saw the murder.
At least not yet.
What exactly do these people
claim to have seen?
The two of them in his car,
I would guess.

His car stopped, maybe,
up on Poor Farm Road.
Prosecutor says they have proof
that Jacob destroyed evidence.
Well, she has to say that, doesn't she?
Still haven't found the murder weapon.
But surely that helps our case.
You're saying they've got a lousy case.
Circumstantial, yes.
I'm saying that's possible.
Then I don't understand, Wendell,
why are you dropping out on us?
I wouldn't, uh...
It's not that.
Look, I...
I do mortgage closings.
You need an expert now.
A criminal guy.
And believe me, this guy
I'm telling you about, he is the best.
Uh, Panos Demeris.
Greek-American lives over in Springfield.
He's lost maybe one case
in his whole life.
He'll have Jacob's jury
voting for sainthood.
What about the truth of what happened?
Doesn't that matter?
The truth, Mrs. Ryan?
The truth isn't always so simple.
I meant, do you have to believe
someone is innocent to take his case?
A lot of my clients haven't been innocent
of anything since they were 5.
They still deserve a good defense, right?
Do you mind if I eat while we talk?
Is this a late lunch, Mr. Demeris,
or early dinner?
This is breakfast, I think.
I had a pre-trial meeting
that never did stop.
Okay, so. Your son, Jacob.
Now, from what you've told me,
he seems like a pretty regular kid.

I mean, even these silences, you know.
Hoping if he hangs tough long enough
maybe this whole thing will just disappear.
Teenagers, huh? God, help us.
But, uh, let me...
Let me ask you something.
Please take this as a neutral question.
It's not an accusation of any kind.
Anger. Does Jacob have any particular
problem expressing his anger?
Does he tend to keep things bottled up?
Does he ever just explode?
See, I'm asking you because
if there's any history here,
even just a whiff,
I have to hear it from you.
- Not some prosecution witness.
- There's no history.
Jacob's a very kind person.
Decent and caring, you'd like him.
Sure, but you have
to understand, Mr. and Mrs. Ryan.
I'm sorry, is it mister and doctor?
- Ben and Carolyn.
- Okay.
You have to understand,
juries in cases of this nature...
They tend to be very emotional.
They tend to feel that
where there's smoke, there's fire.
Hey, I could be up there arguing that Jacob
is the most perfect kid in the world.
That's one strategy,
but what they'll be thinking,
what they'll see in their mind's eye...
and never forget is this.
You can't... you can't do this.
You can't just sit here and eat a sandwich.
How do you expect us to survive this?
Dr. Ryan, I'm not being unsympathetic.
Don't infer that.
This has got nothing to do with sympathy.
I thought you told me
you'd seen this corpse.

This is not just any corpse,
this is a girl I knew.
That I once treated. Just because
you see this kind of thing everyday...
You spend all your time with violent,
horrible people, but we don't, Mr. Demeris.

- We don't.

- Well, then you're very lucky.
There isn't much I haven't seen,
but this is my son you're talking about.
You may like to remember, Dr. Ryan,
it's always somebody's son.
Don't you patronize me, sir,
because I can...
Hey, hey.
Let's calm down. All of us, Carolyn.
This isn't getting us anywhere.
Come on.
I'm sorry, folks.
If you don't like me now,
what are you gonna say when I have to
get up in front of that jury,
and argue that your son is not guilty
by reason of diminished mental capacity.

- That he was drunk, stoned...

- Hey, hey.

- Wait a minute!

- Bombed out of his skull on crack.

- My son does not do drugs.

- He may be your son, and my client.
And I will not ask for your permission
for how I choose to defend him.
I'm gonna have to do whatever it takes.
And if you don't like my style,
wait till you hear the prosecution.
Listen, Dr. Ryan, you wanna jump
in the trenches with me?
You better muscle up.
And lose your bedside manner,
and trust me to be as good
at my job as you are at yours.
Will you do it, Mr. Demeris?
Will you take our case?
For your son, yeah.

I'll defend Jacob.

Jake?

I know you don't want to talk.

But I just need to see you.

Can I come up? Please?

Can I just ask you one question?

Did you ever really go anywhere, Jake?

Okay.

That's cool. I understand.

But just so you know,

when you were in that jail,

I tried to come.

They wouldn't let me.

Jake, I really wanted to see you.

They act like they have

to protect me from all of this.

Sure, they can't even protect themselves.

And I hear plenty, I know what's going on.

Like... Mom's had to close her office.

She says it's just temporary.

Sure, give me a break.

Well, anyway, that's all.

I just wanted to ask about the postcards.

No big deal.

Jude, wait.

Don't go.

Once or twice a week,

I'd take the train out to Logan Airport.

Then I'd find a flight

that was going where I wanted to go.

I'd find somebody that wouldn't mind

mailing a card for me when they got there.

And I said, "I'm home from vacation

and I forgot to send this.

"I don't want my parents

to think I don't miss them. "

I'd sit in one of those chairs, you know,

in the waiting area at the airport.

I'd shut my eyes like this.

And sit.

I went there with them.

I went to all those places, Jude.

You won't say anything, will you?

Nobody else'd understand.

Wait.
Hello.
Yes, sir, I see.
Oh, that's very biblical.
And I take it you would like
to cast the first one.
I want you listen very carefully.
No, you listen.
I want you to know, you good citizen,
that my son is innocent.
He's a free young man,
legally here on bond.
Nothing has been...
No, no, you're wrong.
Unless he's convicted in a court of law,
he is no more guilty than you are.
So, sleep tight, pal.
Hey, have a wonderful time in church.
Yeah, Dad, you're so cool.
Do you really believe that?
Well, of course I do.
Our whole system for justice...
I don't mean our system,
I mean about me.
Do you believe that I'm not guilty?
Jacob, I don't know, but...
Now that you're here
we can talk about that.
Whatever the truth is,
we're standing by you absolutely.
That's just a bunch of sentimental bullshit.
Hey, not so fast.
Sentimental bullshit?
- Everybody's parents say stuff like that.
- Do they, do they really?
And do they hide the weapon
and destroy evidence?
And lie to the police? Do they indeed?
You know this, for a fact.
How am I supposed to just sit here
and talk about killing somebody?
Jake, stop running, please.
You're home now. Stop running.
If I tell you what happened...

It wasn't me.
It wasn't me, all right?
We hung out a lot this year.
I kept meaning to tell you guys.
I wanted you to know, but...
I told Martha you guys were cool,
but the idea of having to meet you,
having to converse with you,
it just spooked her somehow.
That day we had a terrible argument.
From the moment I picked her up
at the ice cream shop, at Jacey's,
she was on my case about not having
a rental car for the winter dance.
And she was saying it's your way,
ours, of finally saying
she's not good enough for me.
And I tried to explain to her,
but she just kept yelling at me
as I was trying to drive.
So then she said, "Pull over right here. "
And it turns out,
I'm not the one she's mad at really.
She's mad at everyone and everything.
God especially for letting this
happen to her, 'cause it turns out...
I'm pregnant.
It gets even more complicated.
'Cause she didn't think it was ours.
She wouldn't say whose it might be,
but obviously she's been, you know...
getting around.
I never even had a clue.
She figured it wasn't ours
because we were always so careful.
So, she's getting all wound up.
"I hate you.
I never wanna see you again. "
She's even mocking me for, like,
taking care with her, for using...
Like only a wimp
would think ahead like that.
I said, "That's it. Let's go.
"You can have your baby or not.

You can stay with your caveman or not.
"I don't care. "
So, then she got all sort of...
Jake, wait. Don't go yet.
Need any help?
We're all right!
Look...
I didn't mean what I said.
I'm sorry. I really am.
Come here, I'll show you.
We stayed for a while longer.
We sort of made up, and...
It was nice, but...
by now we were both so tired,
so wiped out, and it was
beginning to get late.
So I finally started up the car.
And that was that.
Tried rocking it, pushing it.
First me, then both of us.
We even tried putting floor mats
under the wheels.
See, we just ended up
digging ourselves in deeper.
So finally she says, "Get the jack.
"Pack some snow under the ruts
and jack it up. "
That didn't even work.
- This is the reason I can't be with you.
- Now we're both really pissed off.
- You always let shit like this happen.
- Just shut up, all right?
If I were with Kevin or Matt,
I'd be home by now.
- What the hell? Why are you such a...
- I said, shut up, all right?
Rich kid. Fuckin' pussy.
- Pussy, rich...
- I said shut up!!
I did it.
I slapped her.
I just lost it.
Do I have to do this? Please?
Yes. You have to.

She still had the crowbar.
Why, you!
She just missed me by one inch.
I swear, just one inch.
Just that one word, "murder, "
that sounds so impossible to imagine.
It wasn't even something I was trying to do.
It wasn't even me.
If I had just missed her by one inch.
One inch, just like...
like she did me.
My biggest problem would be
do I say hello to her
when I see her in the school hall.
Here, darling.
Well, now we know.
At least that's something, Ben.
If he tells it that way in court,
the same way he told it to us...
He wouldn't be telling it
to people who love him.
They'll believe him.
They'll see that it was just an accident.
Are you prepared
to bet his freedom on that?
What's the answer then?
Of course, he has to tell them.
Ben... of course he has to tell them.
Let him tell Panos first, okay?
We're not lawyers, Carolyn.
There might be a certain way...
I don't know, presented.
I'll take him in tomorrow morning, okay?
You're up pretty early.
I wasn't going anywhere.
They kept the car.
But it's clean. At least I hope to God.
I don't understand.
Mom said something too, last night.
Oh, Jake, it's not important,
all that stuff.
Trust me, it's not a problem anymore.
But, Dad, you can go to jail, too.
If they have to take one of us,

better it's me.
What are you saying?
Jacob, listen to me.
That night when I came out here,
I didn't even know what I was doing.
Pure instinct.
But maybe I bought us a chance.
They've got no murder weapon,
no physical evidence, no witnesses.
And we never heard your confession.
You understand me?
You never said it and we never heard it.
Jake...
you're not required
to testify against yourself.
Now, that's fair, that's legal,
that's how the system works.
So...
if we all just keep quiet,
maybe they've got no case.
Maybe you'll walk away from this
with some kind of a life still ahead of you.
Yeah, but there were witnesses. People
drove by and they saw us parked there.
You're not denying you were there.
You were stuck in the snow, right?
You had that argument,
and you walked away from her, mad.
Left her with the car and the keys.
So you don't know what the hell
happened when she was alone.
And neither do we.
Wait a minute. But the car was here.
You reconsidered.
You came back and you found her.
You just panicked.
Isn't that possible?
Because you knew you'd be a suspect.
Drove back here, still in a state of shock,
and took off for Boston.
Foolish, yes, but not murder.
I wish there was some other way.
I stayed up all night racking my brains.
Any other way that might be safe.

If I just told the truth...
The fact that you ran away, never went
for help, never came forward at all.
Jake, how's that gonna look?
You don't have to convince a jury.
That's up to Panos.
Let the prosecution take their shots.
All I'm saying is let's just not
make their case for them.
So, I thought, I figured, since
the police were bound to suspect me,
they'd also be looking for the car,
so I thought I better hitchhike.
I know that was really stupid
and dumb of me, but...
You know, all of it is just a blur,
Mr. Demeris.
Everything after I walked back
and found her there.
Well, Jacob, what if I said it seemed
pretty clear to me that you did it?
You hit her on the head with something,
then you just took off.
But I didn't.
That doesn't...
I'm the prosecution now.
And you're the guy who smashed her up.
How are you gonna prove
to me you didn't do it?
- Well, I...
- Oh, no, no!
You don't answer that.
Now, remember, Jacob, you don't have
to answer that question.
They have to answer it.
They have to prove something on you.
You do not have to prove the opposite.
So, how does it look?
Well, the grand jury sits next Monday,
but we've still got
a hell of a lot to prepare.
- My trial starts Monday?
- No, no.
It's not a trial. Not yet.

No, the grand jury simply weighs the facts and decides if there's enough evidence to indict you.

Now if you're very, very lucky, you may not even go to trial.

But I'll have a better idea once I see the final witness list and forensics.

Thanks.

Thanks. See you.

Oh, Jake...

I'm sorry, I'm a little slow sometimes.

I'm just curious.

Let me ask you something.

What were the two of you fighting about?

I mean, what got you so mad?

I can't believe I let this go.

Well, she was pregnant, for one thing.

I think you better sit down again, kiddo.

Come on, son.

This was somebody else's.

At least she said it was.

What? This is good?

Oh, this is very good, my friend.

This is the best news I've heard all day.

And you're convinced that it couldn't possibly have been yours?

What do you mean? I mean...

- ... you know.

- Right. You know?

Well, yeah, but we were always...

Safe. You can say it, son.

And she swore this was somebody else's.

Now, the first thing we do is we go to the medical examiner,

- get a full DNA report.

- I'm already on it.

Panos, I don't...

We still don't understand.

It's called

reasonable doubt, Mr. Ryan.

Suppose Jacob and Martha were followed by someone with a good reason to be jealous?

Suppose the wrong boyfriend got arrested.

So?
So, what?
How do you think it went?
Did he like it, you mean?
Or did I like it?
- Like what?
- Your story.
Well, yes, my story, I guess.
Our story.
Jake, are you all right?
What?
Remember that last morning?
That argument we had?
Remember what you said to me?
You said that it's time
I learned to pay my own way.
And you called me a hypocrite.
Jake, if you're not okay with this,
we can go back there. I mean it.
It's still not too late.
Oh, man. Are you sure this
is the best thing to do?
I haven't been sure of anything in my life
since February 12th,
but it's what we've got, son.
It's what we're down to.
All I'm proposing is that
we save your life first.
Later on we can worry about your soul.
Is that being a hypocrite?
I don't know.
But the worst thing you can be called
in this world
is someone who didn't stand up
for his family.
I...
I really am grateful for everything
you're trying to do for me.
Dad?
I am grateful, okay?
I really mean it.
Come on.
Without a word, Ben?
Not one word?

It's Jacob's choice. Jacob's life.
And you had nothing to do with it.
- We discussed his options, yeah.
- Options?
Benny, he's your boy.
And he's scared,
and he would do anything right now.
He would say anything if he thought
he could win back your approval.
He never lost it.
If you don't know he deserves yours too,
then you've got a serious problem.
How dare you? How dare you?
It's done, Carolyn, okay?
It's taken care of.
Just like you took care of the evidence.
That's right. You never even had
to dirty your precious hands.
Trim a little here, add a little there.
How could I forget how clever
you are at making things?
Well, one of us had to
do something, and fast.
Do you think you've made
it easier on him now? Do you see?
Do you not see that
you have tied his hands?
Now he has you to defend
as well as himself.
What do you want? What?
That he should pay with the next twenty
years, the next thirty years of his life?
For one mistake, for one moment?
That he should come
out of prison a middle-aged man?
Who does that benefit? Who?
Oh, love, sooner or later,
somebody's gonna have to be forgiven.
Him, for what he did,
or us because we did nothing
when we had a chance to save him.
Wouldn't you rather forgive him?
Hey... Jude.
Good news. Okay.

I, uh, stopped at the lab
on the way up here.

Now, they had the M.E.'s
fetal tissue analysis...
and they had that blood sample
that we submitted from Jacob.

- Okay, this gets pretty technical, but...

- Jacob wasn't the father.

Bingo.

Oh, man, listen to me,
telling a doctor what's technical.

But this works both ways, doesn't it?

I mean, they could say he was jealous.

- This gives him a motive.

- This lets us go after the girl.

Attack her character. Martha Taverner
just blew fifty sympathy points.

Look at it this way.

This introduces doubt.

And doubt, kiddo, is our very best friend.

- Excuse me. Pardon me. Mrs. Ryan.

- What happened?

We'll see you day after tomorrow at 10:00.

Yes, that's fine.

Benny? Ben?

Screw them!

Forget the whole bunch of them!

I didn't testify and I won't testify!

So you can print

any damn thing you want to!

- Here, get this one.

- You didn't testify?

There's gotta be some protection,
some immunity, some kind of privilege
so they can't try to make you snitch
on your own flesh and blood.

Why don't you write that?

There's such a thing
as the Fifth Amendment, you know!

- Come on, Ben. Excuse me.

- Yeah. Ask my lawyer!

Stay back.

- What are you hiding?

Weren't you listening to me?

I told you if you had anything to ask me.
I didn't have any questions!
Find me some privilege.
Forget you, "Find me some privilege. "
What, make something up?
There's no such thing
as parent-child immunity.
- There ought to be.
- You know what you're askin' for?
You're askin' to go to jail
for contempt, for starters.
You're askin' for me to go to jail, too.
And I'm not doing any such thing for you!
You're acting as if we got something
to hide about Jacob.
They twisted every word I said.
Tried to trick me into some kind
of conflicting evidence.
Well, I won't play that game with them!
I told 'em so.
I gave them a statement of principle.
Oh, yeah. And what was that principle?
I think I missed that part.
I don't bargain for my son.
And I won't help them to convict him.
Jesus, Ben.
I won't testify, Panos.
Not today, not ever.
If I have to go to jail, so be it.
And if there was any more I could do,
you better believe I'd do that, too.
Tell me.
Gimme a minute, Ben. Please.
Mom, can I talk to you?
Mom, they're lying.
They're completely changing
the truth of what happened.
How can you let them do that?
Well, people don't go to court
necessarily to tell the truth
about everything that happened.
They, um, they go to defend
themselves the best way they can.
But you heard Jacob

and you know what happened.
Are you just gonna do what Daddy says?
Jude, didn't you ever learn something
about a friend of yours, some secret?
But you knew if you told her,
it would just hurt her feelings,
so you didn't tell.
I mean, that's not...
that's not lying exactly.
You just didn't volunteer something.
Just because that's what people do?
Just because they might get away with it?
Does that mean you have to lie?
Sometimes... You're too young
to understand some things.
That's all. I'm just beginning
to learn some of them myself.
- Someday, darling...
- Don't tell me "someday"!
- ... understand what Daddy...
- I can't stand it when you say "someday"!
Mom, this is happening to me right now!
You let Daddy convince you.
It's disgusting.
Nobody even cares what I think.
I'm just a stupid little kid.
Nobody even thinks
that I could go and tell.
What do you mean, tell?
- You figure it out!
- Judith.
- Carolyn, you asleep?
- Mm-mm.
Abraham and Isaac, remember that story?
God says to Abraham, "Prove your faith.
"Take Isaac, your beloved son,
and sacrifice him.
"Why? Because I'm God.
Because I say so. "
And Abraham is willing.
He's very sad, but he'll do it.
He'll cut his own son's throat
if that's what God requires.
Very obedient, Abraham.

Very righteous.

But when they tell that story,
they always miss the point.

Who'd want him for a father?

- Good morning, Carolyn.

- Hi.

- First time you've donated blood?

- Yes, sir.

Mrs. Taverner.

Oh, please...

This has been, for me,
for all of us, it's the hardest...

I've just, I've spent
a thousand hours not sleeping...
thinking about Martha.

And... I just want you
to know how sorry I am.

I am so sorry.

I know it won't change anything, but...

- Oh, God, if you could...

- What? If I could what?

If you could somehow...

Look at us as human,
as a family, I mean,
just as a family
that's also so helpless.

What do you have to be helpless about?

You tell me that.

She was alive in the morning
when I said goodbye to her.

You're a doctor.

You think about this, where she is now.

And nothing you say
is gonna get any pity out of me.

Oh, I'm not asking for your pity.

I'm just...

You're trying to get him off.

With your big shot lawyer
and all your money.

He's free to walk the streets right now.

And you're trying to get him off.

People like you think they own the world.

- Stay inside. Call the police.

- No, Ben!

Dad, don't!

Hey!

Come here, you bastard!

- I did it.

- Let's get out of here!

Ben!

- Jake! Hey, leave him alone!

- Come on, let's go! Come on!

Killer!

Mom!

God.

- Goddamn it!

- Are you all right?

Here! This is your fault!

Both of yours!

- You've turned us all into freaks!

- Shut up, all right?

I wish you'd never come back.

Why didn't you just stay away?

I hate you! I hate you!

It's okay, Jake.

Jacob!

Jake! Get down!

Let's gently get him up.

That's it, sweetheart. Let me look.

Let me see.

That's it, that's it, that's it.

Oh, God.

No, I can't treat this here.

I'm gonna have to take him to the office.

- I'll come, too.

- No, you stay here with Judith.

- Carolyn, I'm...

- Please, Ben.

This won't hurt, I promise.

There you go.

I'm just gonna wrap this up

so we don't have to worry about infection.

Okay?

You may start to feel drowsy now
from that shot.

So, if you do, you just

put your head down, okay, love?

- Mom.

- Hm-mm?

Jude is right.

You'd all be better off

if I just disappeared.

Maybe I still should.

Don't even say that.

I don't mean just you, I mean...

I mean the whole town.

I mean, that's what they want, isn't it?

No.

No, Jake, those men...

those men tonight were cowards.

If you saw them tomorrow in their shops,

they'd smile and nod

while they gave you change.

I'm the coward. I'm the coward.

I feel like I'm being

torn apart, you know?

And if I hold this in, it's like...

a poison, you know? If I tell the truth,

Dad'll go to jail, too.

He'll hate me.

Either way, it's the end of us.

Your dad'll never, never hate you.

Your dad loves you so much, Jacob.

And, right or wrong,

he always gives his whole heart.

Can be pretty overwhelming sometimes

because he just always seems so sure.

But you don't have to be that way.

You know?

It is possible to disagree with someone...

...and still love them.

At a certain point, we just...

We have to make our own decisions.

Yeah, but he risked so much for me.

He didn't even stop to count the price,

he just did it.

How can I let him down?

How can I do that to him?

Yeah.

How can you?

Mrs. Ryan.

Doctor Ryan.

There she is!

Doctor Ryan,

did you also refuse to testify?

- How'd it go, trooper?

- I did it. I told them.

See? What'd I tell you?

No sweat.

No, I mean, I told them

what really happened.

What?

Ben and Jacob haven't been
telling you the truth, Panos.

- I can't believe you haven't known that.

- Whoa, whoa.

I don't know what

you're gonna do about this.

You come with me.

Might we have a statement, please?

Dr. Ryan?

Talk.

It's hard to say. Hey, look,
there's just no story here. Sorry.

- What are they talking about?

- I said, no story.

Okay, my turn.

Jacob doesn't know, does he?

Did you at least tell Ben?

Oh, Jesus Christ.

I hope he doesn't have his son's temper,
because I worry about you.

He doesn't have his son's temper.

His son has his.

This weapon, this car jack
that you say killed her, where is it now?

It'll never surface, I promise you.

But I'm never going to say.

Did you ever see it?

Well, then it's hearsay.

Just like this so-called confession.

It's your word against Ben and Jacob's.

- There's still no proof.

- Panos, it was an accident.

Why can't Jacob just tell the truth?

Jacob is my client.

Not you, not your husband. Jacob.
And there's no way I'm gonna put him
on that witness stand
for Marian Raynor to cut to pieces.
I'm gonna defend your son,
even if you don't.
Even if it means hangin' you out to dry.
Me?
Cold, vindictive.
Full of crazy, paranoid fantasies
about your son and his low class lover.
Honey, by the time I'm done with you,
you'll look like Medea.
Panos, if you try to go on hiding this...
If we don't at some point accept
what actually did happen...
What actually happened? What's it
gonna take for you to get this?
They tell their version of the story,
we tell ours.
And these twelve people
decide the truth.
That's not the truth. You're talking
about a contest between ad campaigns.
- I'm talkin' about savin' your son.
- So am I.
It's absolute why I did this, Panos.
Finally, it's just one true thing.
Absolute.
I didn't ask your permission
because I didn't want it.
We can't afford it anymore.
Oh, my dear doctor.
You and your goddamn absolutes.
You'll see what a shallow
little thing your principles are
when your family's blown to hell.
And you won't be able
to take back one single word.
- Jacob! Jacob! Come on, wake up.
- What?
Come and hear
what your mother's done.
She's done it now, boy.

She just couldn't keep her big mouth shut.

Dad, stop. You're hurting me.

- What is it? What's wrong?

- She'll tell you herself.

Tell him. Tell him.

What kind of a life were we going to have?

Hm? What kind of a life, all of us?

I love you and I wanted to save you.

But save you for what?

As what?

Everything he's been for sixteen years,
everything he is.

That wasn't enough

to make him valuable?

- Oh, Ben.

- You never wanted to save him.

You brought him into this life,

but you're not willing to forgive him.

I forgive us all, Ben.

Jake, for God's sake, don't listen to her.

We can't give up now.

Believe me, there's still a chance!

Don't you have any faith in him at all?

Jake, we can still fight this.

You and me together.

You back off. Back off my son.

Your what? If he's your son, then act like it.

Jacob, Jakie, I did this for you.

For both of you.

I only was trying to help you.

You understand that, don't you?

You're asking a lot if you expect your own
son to understand why you betrayed him!

I didn't...

You can't say that!

Goddamn it, just stop it, all right?!

Both of you.

Hey, Mom!

- Mom, wake up! Jacob's gone!

- Hm?

What?

Jacob!

He's gone. He's gone.

Check the kitchen

and the back of the house.

- I already looked.

- Look again.

The Jeep's gone. He's running again
and he'll never stop.

No, he didn't take any clothes or food.

I'm almost sure, Ben.

Maybe he doesn't think he'll need them.

Maybe he's gonna drive
that thing straight into a tree.

Oh, my God.

No, that can't be true.

Ben, Carolyn, I think
you better come with me.

Do they know?

Oh, Jake.

Were you running to some...

No, I came down here to tell 'em the truth.

Everything. Just like I told you.

But you won't believe this.

It turns out that it's not that easy.

Even if you really want to,
it turns out that my statement isn't legal
unless it's signed by my parents.

Dad.

You want this now.

You think you want this but, Jake,
you're still upset from last night.

- You're not thinking clearly.

- Please, I am.

I am.

I am thinking clearly.

And I'll do my best to leave you out of this,
but you might be in some trouble, too.

And I'm sorry.

Is that what you...

Oh God, Jake.

Is that what you think this was ever about?

For one minute?

I don't care what happens to me.

Why do you think I've been doing all this?

Do you think I'm some,
some kind of a selfish bully?

I've always got to have my own way?

Oh, Jake.
Now, do you remember
what you said to me?
You said the worst thing
you can be called is someone
who didn't stand up for his family.
This is my way.
This is how I've got to stand up.
For us. For our family.
They'll probably take it
with just Mom's signature on it.
But I need you to do this.
I need you to do this, please.
I need this for me, please.
I had to be strong.
I had to act certain because
that's what you needed from me.
All of you.
But I can't do this.
I can never put my hand to anything
that would take you away from me.
I love you too much, Jake.
Nothing can ever take me away from you.
Oh, son. My son.
I wish we could go back.
I never knew how much you loved me.
I never knew that.
Jude.
Jake.
Langdale's a good judge.
He's smart, he's fair.
And I think I may have convinced him
that prison time, in this case
would be completely inappropriate.
I think we've got a real shot.
But you sure didn't leave me
much to trade with.
I guess we haven't been
the most helpful clients you've ever had.
Why didn't you quit, Panos?
I told you I'd defend Jacob.
Or maybe I just wanted to see
what you two would do next.
Hear ye, hear ye.

The third district court is now in session.
The Honorable Henry Langdale presiding.
All rise.
Please be seated.
Having reviewed all the evidence
and testimony in the case
of the People versus Jacob Ryan, juvenile,
this court is now prepared
to render judgment.
Martha Taverner's death
in the opinion of this court,
was neither pre-meditated nor
deliberately caused by the defendant.
There was a heated argument, a mutually
reckless struggle, but no criminal intent.
Young man, I'm also mindful
that you've expressed deep remorse.
That you've made
a full and free confession,
and done so at your own insistence,
without stipulating a plea bargain.
Nevertheless, you have a clear culpability.
By running away,
by covering up your involvement
in the death of Martha Taverner,
you cast grave doubts on your own actions.
And you short-circuited the very
protections afforded you under the law.
Jacob Ryan, please rise.
I find you guilty...
of involuntary manslaughter
in the second degree.
I sentence you to be taken
from this place and confined
at the Juvenile Correction Facility
at Framingham
for a period not to exceed five years.
Still think it was worth it?
My father had to serve
almost a year for destroying evidence.
Jacob was released on probation
after two years.
He has to go to counseling, though.
So we have them back.

But none of us is free.
Each of us is marked forever now.
Before and after.
I look at Jacob now and I think about
how different our lives might have been.
All of us.
And that's the saddest part of all.
Hey, Jude, look.
But lately, sometimes, I can feel
myself starting to come alive again.
And it's scary, kind of.
I don't know if that's even allowed.
Maybe you can't expect to keep
happiness out of your life forever...
any more than trouble.
Your whole life can change in a second.
And you never even know
when it's coming.