

THE BOYS CLUB

A drama in 2 acts
by
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CHARACTERS

RANDY CLOONEY, age 45 Founder of the Clooney Clubs, a number of boys clubs that provide training in the fine and performing arts in addition to the usual sports and tutoring activities associated with boys clubs.

JILL BENNETT, age 31 A lawyer

THE SETTING

A jail cell in solitary confinement.

THE ACTION

The action of the play takes place before, during and after Randy Clooney's murder trial.

(The stage is dark. A single spot illuminates JILL BENNET, a lawyer in her early thirties. She wears a dark suit, and could be very attractive, but she does little to highlight her good looks. She is on her way to meet with a client and carries a briefcase, which she sets down as she speaks.)

JILL

When I was a kid, I saw this old movie on late night TV. It was called, “Mr. Lucky.” Cary Grant played this guy who runs a gambling ship and thinks he knows all the angles ... has all the luck. The story takes place during World War II, and our hero wants to avoid the draft. So he steals another man’s identity, but that man is wanted by the mob. He tries to score big with a con...and falls in love with his mark. When he tries to help her, he puts his life in danger again.

Every time he sees an angle or tries to give himself a break, it all falls apart. See? He’s not “lucky” at all.

(Pause)

But he is resourceful. Sort of like me.

I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth, but Daddy snatched it out as fast as he could. Hocked it for booze, probably. He liked to play the piano – and drink – not necessarily in that order, so Granddad cut him off without a cent.

When Mom died, Dad split and left me and my brother Jack alone. That’s when I made my own luck. I got my brother into a program for talented kids at this local boys club, and they got him a scholarship. Got myself into City College and then into law school. I got a job in the Public Defender’s office. Then moved on to the Lawyers Defense Project where I thought I could do more good – and maybe make a name for myself.

Now the man who founded that club is accused of murder. Fourteen murders to be exact. Each one committed on the 14th of the month starting on Valentine’s Day – which just also happens to be his birthday.

His trial is being called the “trial of the century.” It has the potential to make the defense attorney as notorious as the accused. It’s not a job that’s going to get you a reputation for “nobility.” But my boss is telling me I have to take it ... or find a new place to work.

All the luck, right?

(BLACKOUT. End of Prologue.)

(A jail cell. There is a metal door with a barred window in the upstage wall just right of center and a window in the stage right wall, also barred. Sunlight shines through the window casting shadows on a bed, which sits against the upstage wall. On the stage left wall, there is a sink with a mirror above it and a toilet. Shelves above the toilet hold towels, soap, toothpaste, etc.

There is a desk downstage right piled with books, and a small table down left. Each has a hard-backed wooden chair. Above the bed are more shelves which hold books and other personal items.

As the curtain rises, RANDY CLOONEY is bustling about the room. Moving items, straightening others and then standing back as if to judge the effect. He is an attractive man in his late 40s, graceful with a charming manner and winning smile.

The door slides open. JILL BENNETT stands in the opening. JILL hesitates in the doorway, then nods to whoever is holding the door open for her and steps inside. The door closes behind her and locks with a loud clang.)

RANDY

Hello! You must be my attorney. I'm so glad you're here. I'm Ran...

(JILL gives him a look of disbelief.)

RANDY

That was stupid.

(He smiles ingratiatingly.)

You're my lawyer, right? You know who I am. These days, everybody knows who I am. I'm famous ... or maybe I should say infamous?

(JILL says nothing. She is still standing just inside the door and clearly uncomfortable. She sees the clear table and starts as if to go there and set down her things. RANDY anticipates her move.)

RANDY

Here, let me help you with that.

JILL

No. Thank you.

(JILL moves to the table and sets her briefcase and the files on it. She quickly takes a seat and begins organizing the paperwork. As Randy continues to hover nervously, she becomes more and more uncomfortable.)

RANDY

Is the chair comfortable? I cleared the table for you. It's roomy, so figured it would be the easiest place for you to work. There has to be a lot of paperwork involved in a murder trial, so I figured ... but if you'd rather sit at the desk, I could ... there's a lamp on the desk. It might make reading easier. Or I could bring the lamp over –?

JILL

Mr. Clooney, I am perfectly all right as I am. I just want to get down to business. We don't have any time to waste.

RANDY

Oh, well ... let me say how glad I am that you're here. I had no idea who they were going to send to defend me... and you seem nice. That's what I wanted ... Someone nice. It's why I contacted The Lawyers Defense Project. You people care about what you do. And...well...you hear stories about lawyers who work in the public defender's office.

JILL

(Not looking up)
Just what stories do you hear?

RANDY

Oh! Well...Sometimes they say the lawyers there aren't –

JILL

Competent? I have worked in the public defender's office so I can tell you from personal experience that this city's Public Defenders are extremely competent. They are simply overworked. But then, so are all the attorneys at The Lawyers Defense Project.

(Pause. She looks directly at him.)

You are a very rich man, Mr. Clooney. How much was in that trust fund you wrested away from your father? Surely, you don't have to worry about the competency of the lawyers at the Public Defender's Office or the competency of me or my colleagues at the LDP. You have the cash to hire any lawyer you like.

RANDY

Yes, I have the cash to hire someone, but who is going to take my case? You've read the papers. Who is going to defend the "monster" who's supposed to have killed 14 boys?

JILL

Mr. Clooney, there are plenty of lawyers who would simply love to take your case – especially because you are notorious. Defending a person whose name is splashed across the headlines is a great way to make a name for yourself. You are quite the sensation these days. I understand that “Execute Randy Clooney” has almost a million followers on Twitter.

RANDY

That’s comforting.

JILL

I don’t mean to upset you. I’m simply trying to demonstrate that your situation does give you options.

RANDY

But what kind of a name will a lawyer make for himself defending me?

JILL

I’m sure I don’t care.

RANDY

Maybe you should. You seem to have that job.

JILL

You think I volunteered for this? That I want to be here? Mr. Clooney, I assure you, I am not here because I want to be. I am here because I was ordered to come.

RANDY

(Deflated)
Oh!

JILL

I am here because I am – as my boss, said – “low man on the totem pole.” So I can’t afford to say no.

RANDY

I’m sorry. I wouldn’t want to put you in an impossible situation.

JILL

You didn’t put me here, Mr. Clooney. My boss did. I find it embarrassing to be defending a man who would have no trouble hiring the best lawyer money can buy. Still I am only assigned to you for the arraignment, and as long as I am here, I will do the best job I can.

(Pause)
Now why don’t you take a seat and let’s get to work.

RANDY

Work?

JILL

You are entitled to a defense, Mr. Clooney. That's why I am here. You do want one, don't you?

RANDY

Want one?

JILL

Are you planning to plead guilty?

RANDY

Does it matter?

JILL

Matter? Of course it matters? You're an intelligent man, whatever else you are, Mr. Clooney. So please, don't play games with me.

RANDY

Wait just a minute. I'm not playing games. I'm in a game-free zone. Being awakened by the police at 3.a.m. Getting dragged into court and held without bail for the murder of 14 boys ... boys who were members of my Boys Club ... who were my responsibility ... who were abducted on my watch ... boys I actually knew and liked. That put an end to games.

JILL

Mr. Clooney...

RANDY

I am being kept in solitary, but I know what's been going on out there. The guards bring me the daily papers. They like to see my reactions to the headlines. Watch me wince when I'm referred to as the "Architect of Death." Like to remind me that all 14 boys were found on building sites run by my family's construction company. They like to tell me what's on TV, too. How every two-bit talking head on every cable station across the country is demanding a speedy trial and a speedier execution.

(Pause.)

I've been tried in the media and found guilty. Why shouldn't I be found guilty when I go into court?

JILL

The media is not the legal system.

RANDY

Don't patronize me! I am in a hell of a fix. After the media got hold of this story and ran with it 24 hours a day, I became toxic - too vile to defend, too rich to get a public defender. Instead, I had to go to my old college buddy Greg Rossi – founder of The Lawyers Defense Project – beg for help and make a million-dollar donation to get him to bend a few of his rules and “force” you to come here.

JILL

(Disbelieving)

That's some story. There are a lot of lawyers who would jump at–

RANDY

(Pause)

They are not the kind of lawyer I need.

JILL

Sure. Even OJ Simpson was able to hire Johnnie Cochran and...

(She counts them off on her fingers)

F. Lee Bailey, Robert Shapiro, Alan Dershowitz, Robert Kardashian...shall I go on?

RANDY

I get your point. But if I hire a who's who list of famous lawyers, I'm sunk.

JILL

What?

RANDY

Sure. Maybe those lawyers could get me a not-guilty verdict. But the world would say that I'm just another rich man who “bought” it. I'd always be the murderer who's walking around free because...

(Pause, he struggles to compose himself)

Hell! It's all beside the point anyway! What would you say my chances are going to be in front of a jury?

JILL

In all honesty? Not very good.

RANDY

So I ask you again, Miss ... Bennett, right?

JILL

Yes, Jill Bennett.

RANDY

Now I ask you, Miss Jill Bennett, if am already “toast” as the saying goes – already tried and convicted in the court of public opinion, what difference does it make how I plead?

JILL

(Seriously)

If you plead not guilty, you get a trial. The state has to show its evidence, bring witnesses and prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt. You and your legal representative get the opportunity to refute the state's charges, evidence and witnesses. If you plead guilty, there is no trial. The judge will go straight to sentencing. Then we will only have the opportunity to mitigate your sentence. The choice isn't appealing – life in prison ... or death.

(Pause.)

So I suggest that you –

RANDY

Plead not guilty.

JILL

No matter what the situation, it's the prudent thing to do.

RANDY

No matter what the situation –?

(Pause.)

Well, I guess that tells me what you believe.

JILL

Whether I believe you to be guilty or innocent has no bearing on my ability to represent you at all – let alone just during the arraignment.

RANDY

That's the second time you've said that you're just here for the arraignment. Who told you that?

JILL

Told me what?

RANDY

That you're only here to handle the arraignment?

JILL

Mr. Clooney, I am from the *Lawyer's Defense Project*. I defend people who do not have any other access to a lawyer. People whom the even the Public Defender's office are unable to help.

RANDY

I believe I am included in your description.

JILL

Look, Mr. Clooney–

RANDY

No. You look, Miss Bennett. I don't have any other alternatives. The noble-minded lawyers don't consider me a "cause." The "rich man's" lawyers can't exonerate me. The state won't give me a public defender. So tell me? What's left?

JILL

I told my boss I'd only do the arraignment. I never signed on for–

RANDY

No, I suppose you didn't, but as you said, you are low "man" on the totem pole ... and here you are.

JILL

Well, whether I am representing you for the arraignment or for the entire trial, my professional advice is that - no matter what you believe your situation to be – it is in your best interest to plead not guilty.'

(Pause)

So if you've decided to play the martyr, I think I'll leave now. I came here to offer you a professional defense, not to be a party to a court-assisted suicide.

RANDY

Maybe you should leave.

JILL

What?

RANDY

I said, "Go ahead and go." I'm not looking for a "professional" defense. A "professional defense" will put me in the same place as pleading guilty – staring at life in prison or death. Don't you see? A reluctant defense, a "professional" defense won't be good enough. I need a spirited defense. A defense mounted by someone who is defending me because she believes wholeheartedly in me and in my innocence. And, Miss Jill Bennett ... you certainly don't.

(Pause)

So, if the only lawyer I can get is here because she couldn't find a way out of taking my case ... because she thought she could hold her nose, speed walk me through the arraignment and hurry back to the safety of the Lawyers Defense Project ... why should I bother making a defense? I mean why prolong the agony? Why not get the inevitable over with?

JILL

(Looks Randy in the eye.)

You haven't provided me with a reason to believe in you, Mr. Clooney.

RANDY

What?

JILL

From the moment I walked in here, you've been nervous, self-righteous, and defensive. You've ranted and raved about the impossibility of your situation. You played the outraged do-gooder, the high-handed autocrat *and* the innocent victim in quick succession. But you haven't provided me with a single reason to believe that you're innocent of the charges.

RANDY

Would you believe me if I *had* given you a reason?

JILL

What kind of a question is that?

RANDY

I repeat. Would you believe me if I had tried to make you believe I was innocent?

JILL

Let me ask you a question in return. Do you know who I am?

RANDY

You're my attorney. Low man on the totem pole at the Lawyers Defense Project.

JILL

Well, you listen. That's something.

RANDY

You haven't answered my question.

JILL

I'll get around to it. Have a little patience. Humor me.

RANDY

Humor you.

JILL

That's right. I'm here to defend you. I think it's the least you can do.

(Pause)

There's a very good reason why I don't want to be here today – over and above the obvious. A reason I think you'll find could put me in an impossible situation. At the very least it could keep those 24-hour TV news stations busy for a very long time.

RANDY

Look, Miss Bennett, I don't –

JILL

(Interrupting)

About 10 years ago, a young woman – a girl, really – walked into one of your Boys Clubs with her little brother in tow. She wanted to put him in an after-school program. She was desperate to do it. But she couldn't even pay your tiny fees. So she wound up in your office looking for a scholarship. Remember her?

RANDY

I've seen hundreds ...

JILL

Maybe you'll remember her little brother. He played the piano extremely well. So well, in fact, he went on to Julliard. So well, that he played the piano at the White House when you received the Medal of Freedom for your work on behalf of America's youth.

RANDY

Oh my God! Jack! Jack Bennett!

(He laughs. As he speaks he laughs harder.)

You're Jack Bennett's sister! You were such a stiff-necked, stubborn little thing! You're not a skinny kid in T-shirt and jeans now. But you haven't really changed. I should have known you the moment you walked in.

JILL

(Bristling)

I don't see what's so funny.

RANDY

It's not you. It's me. What a stupid, self-centered jerk I've become. I guess prison does corrupt a man. If I'd paid the least bit of attention to you, instead of wallowing in my misery, I would have known you instantly. No wonder you're so pissed off!

JILL

I am not pissed off.

RANDY

Oh, yes you are. You are! I don't blame you.

(He gives her a quick once-over.)

Look at you. Back ramrod straight. So self-righteous. Just the way you used to get when we'd try to make you see reason about your little brother.

(He controls the laughter, wipes his eyes.)

Oh, don't look at it that way. I'd be angry, too, if you hadn't recognized me ... even if I had changed as much as you have.

(Assessing her)

RANDY (cont.)

You've really grown up. And a lawyer! I should have known that's what you'd do. You really did love rules. You were practically obsessed with rules. I was afraid you'd be too hard on yourself because you had such a long list of rules you thought you had to follow.

(Pause)

I'm glad you did so well. I was afraid you'd sacrifice yourself for your little brother.

JILL

This meeting is not about me. It's about you, the charges against you and how you are going to respond. Now I asked you a direct question, which you have not yet answered.

(Pause)

How are you going to plead? Guilt or not guilty?

RANDY

I'm not going to answer that question, Jill.

JILL

How do you expect me to –?

RANDY

(Cutting her off but quietly, patiently)

I'm not going to answer it, because it doesn't matter how I answer it.

JILL

I don't understand.

RANDY

You won't believe me, simply because I say I'm innocent. Who wouldn't try to claim innocence in my position? And if I were to insist I was guilty – could you really trust that answer? Wouldn't you be wondering – just a little – if I were overly dramatic? Suicidal? Just plain crazy? You've already told me off for simply asking, what's the point of pleading not guilty? And you were right. I was nervous, defensive ... and more than a little self-righteous.

JILL

So what am I supposed to think?

RANDY

Look at the facts. Take a hard look at me – what you know about me, and what you'll discover by getting to know me better. Then decide for yourself if you think I'm capable of killing those boys. I'm not going to ask anyone – especially not my lawyer – to *believe* in my guilt or innocence. They're going to have to discover the truth for themselves. That's fair isn't it?

BLACKOUT.

(The jail cell immediately after RANDY's arraignment. The angle of the light coming through the window has shifted. The door is opened and RANDY enters followed by JILL who is carrying a brief case. RANDY is amused, obviously holding back laughter. JILL does not share in RANDY's amusement. RANDY drops into one of the chairs at the table. JILL slams down her briefcase. RANDY can contain himself no longer and bursts out laughing.)

JILL

You... You are...
(She begins pacing.)

RANDY

(Trying to control his laughter.)
I'm what?

JILL

The most infuriating man I have ever met! How could you? This is a fight for your life, not a prolonged practical joke!

RANDY

You're telling me?
(He laughs harder.)
That was...that was...the most ridiculous thing...

JILL

It certainly was! And it was all your doing! Contempt of court! At your own arraignment! How could you?

RANDY

C'mon, the judge was dying to do it. He needed to punish somebody. Why not me?

JILL

Why indeed?

RANDY

Did you see the look on his face when he heard my plea? I don't think I've ever seen anyone look both horrified and delighted at the same time before.

JILL

Delighted?

RANDY

Dee-lighted! I've just handed old Judge Collier his ticket to the big time. Here I am the most notorious serial killer since Jeffrey Dahmer...and I pleaded "not guilty!" He's got to be upset, because if there's a God in his heaven, I'm guilty and I should have the decency to declare it, beg for forgiveness and take my punishment.

(Pause)

But then again...I'll bet he's already hired a publicist. I'll bet the district attorney's got one too! They're thrilled! I could see it in their eyes. They're both anticipating book deals ... and maybe a whole new career as on-air legal consultants with CNN, CNBC – or even Fox News! But first, there will be months and months of screen time!

JILL

There's still no excuse –

(Pause)

It was an arraignment, not a trial. You'll get the opportunity to defend yourself. You were simply supposed to stand there and keep silent... As your legal advocate, I am supposed to answer for you.

RANDY

I couldn't help myself. I saw that look when you said "not guilty" and I just had to say something.

JILL

That was contempt of court!

RANDY

I am on trial for my life. Contempt of court doesn't scare me.

JILL

But to say that – to a Judge –

RANDY

I simply told him the truth...It's just not in his best interest for me to plead guilty.

JILL

You caused an uproar and you didn't help yourself at all. You need to appear humble – wronged – if you want to get the sympathy of the jury. You can't act like an arrogant prick!

RANDY

Even if I *am* an arrogant prick?

JILL

Especially because you are one!

RANDY

Well. That tells me what I need to know. Shall I call the guard to come and let you out?

JILL

Would you just shut up for once?

RANDY

What?

JILL

Just shut up! I'm the last hope you have, buster. You better not piss me off!

RANDY

(Beginning to laugh again)
You're *pissed* off?

JILL

Damn straight!

RANDY

Swearing! Shame on you!

JILL

Goddamn it, shut the fuck up!

RANDY

Scatological *and* religious. In a single sentence. Little Jill Bennett is breaking rules right and left!

JILL

You want me to leave? Or are you just testing me?

(Pause)

No. I know what it is – buyer's remorse now that you've discovered that your fate is in my hands! Well, you better watch it, or you're going to lose your lawyer!

RANDY

(Laughing)
If I had known that all I had to do to GET a lawyer was to make you angry, I would have done it sooner.

JILL

Sit down.

(Randy looks at her)

I mean it. Get your butt in that chair.

(He sits.)

Starting now, you are going to behave.

JILL (cont.)

(Pause.)

Or I walk out that door. And if I do, I just might not come back.

(She stands over him.)

Now, you are going to stay there, and you're going to cooperate. My patience isn't limitless. Got it?

(Randy nods.)

Good.

(Pause)

Now I've taken a really good look at the state's evidence and you're right. It's circumstantial. They have no witnesses. No DNA. But what they do have is compelling. So we have to find ways to make it look less so – starting with alibis. We've got to demonstrate that it would have been impossible for you to have committed any of those murders at the times the state claims they happened.

RANDY

Good luck. I was in and out of those clubs every day. I saw those boys all the time.

JILL

But no one can be everywhere at once, so all we have to do is show you were somewhere else when each of those boys died.

RANDY

So what do we do now?

JILL

We go over everything. Every incident. Every shred of evidence, and then you tell me what you know.

RANDY

Does this mean I have a lawyer?

JILL

I am not here to prove myself to you, Mr. Clooney.

RANDY

Does it?

JILL

I spent all night reading these files ... and it does seem like you're being railroaded.

RANDY

So you believe in my innocence?

JILL

I believe you're getting a raw deal.

(She stares at him.)

Isn't that enough?

RANDY

If it has to be.

JILL

It has to be.

RANDY

So! Somebody else is jumping on the Fame Train!

JILL

What?

RANDY

Judge Collier, District Attorney Daugherty and now Do-Gooder Attorney, Jill Bennett all discover their big chance for fame and fortune is me – Randy Clooney!

JILL

My patience is not endless and you are trying it at every turn.

(Pause)

Want to know why I'm not walking out the door this very minute, Mr. Clooney? Do you?

(She waits for an answer. Gets none.)

I'm not walking out because I feel sorry for you. I can't stand to see anyone abandoned the way you've been abandoned. But keep this in mind. What I'm doing for you, I'd do for a lost dog.

(Changing the subject.)

Now, how about we start at the beginning? February 14th, two years ago. That's when the first boy was killed.

RANDY

Abducted. That's when Andrew O'Donnell was abducted. He died days later. He was found at Clooney Construction's Foster Avenue building site. They didn't break ground on that one until February 18th.

(Pause)

Four days later.

(Pause)

Can you imagine what could have happened in those four days? How many times he was beaten? How many times he begged for his life? Cried and called for his mother? Can you?

(Pause)

I can. I've seen every minute of it – imagined it – I mean, I –

JILL

I was only going to ask –

RANDY

What?

JILL

I was going to ask what *you* were doing on that night.

RANDY

What night?

JILL

Your birthday. Two years ago.

RANDY

Oh, that. It's not important.

JILL

It's essential. I need to know if you have an alibi for each of these 14 nights. I thought I'd start with the easy one – your birthday. What were you doing two years ago on your birthday?

RANDY

Good Lord. It's been in the newspapers a hundred times. There was a party at the downtown club. We have over 400 people in attendance. The mayor was there. We had three state representatives and a state senator. Our biggest donors were there, too. And lots of boys. Representatives from all eight clubs. All the TV stations sent reporters and camera men, because that was the announced my goal to take the Clooney Clubs national.

JILL

Yup. That's quite an alibi.

(Pause. Casually.)

What time did the party end?

RANDY

Let's see. There were cocktails and hors d'oeuvres ... punch for the kids, of course ... birthday cake ... some entertainment ... and lots of speeches. It started at about 5:30 and was over around 8 p.m.

JILL

And after?

RANDY

After?

JILL

Andrew was at his job until 9:30. He didn't disappear until after your party ended. I need to know what you were doing then.

RANDY

Do we really need to go into this now? The arraignment only ended an hour ago.

JILL

Discovery begins immediately after the arraignment, Mr. Clooney.

(Pause. She looks him in the eye.)

Besides, didn't you say I must be "totally convinced" of your innocence before I can take on the judge and jury?

(Pause. RANDY just stares.)

So ... what did you do after the party?

RANDY

I went home, took a shower, changed clothes and went out.

JILL

Where?

RANDY

To a bar.

JILL

With friends?

RANDY

No. I went alone.

JILL

Didn't anyone from the club want to come along?

RANDY

I told them I was going home. I didn't mention going to a bar.

JILL

Why would you do that?

RANDY

Because I didn't want anyone tagging along.

JILL

Why?

RANDY

Because I didn't.

JILL

Where did you go?

RANDY

To a bar.

JILL

If you want to win my trust, Mr. Clooney, you have a very strange way of going about it. Why are you so unwilling to tell me where you went after the party?

RANDY

(Pause)

Because I went to "The Closet." That's why.

JILL

The closet?

RANDY

Yeah, "The Closet." It's a gay bar over on Simpson. The owners named it that, so that their patrons could be seen "coming out of the closet." It's a joke.

JILL

Why did you go there?

RANDY

C'mon. You know why I went there.

JILL

Maybe I do, but I have to hear it from you. I can't surmise.

RANDY

I went there to meet someone... and ... Well, I'll leave the rest to your imagination.

(Pause. Jill waits, looking him in the eye.)

Makes for a great alibi, doesn't it? Founder of The Clooney Clubs claims he met someone up in a gay bar and perhaps took him home for sex on the same night the first of his boys was abducted.

JILL

Did you?

RANDY

What?

JILL

Have sex with him?

RANDY

Jill, I'd been having sex with him. He and I were – well – involved...

JILL

What's his name?

RANDY

What do you need that for?

JILL

Do I have to warn you again?

RANDY

Look. If I tell you ... I – I ruin it all for him – his reputation – you know? He's a nice man. I care about him.

(Pause)

It won't do me any good anyway.

JILL

His testimony could save your life.

RANDY

You really think that? You think the District Attorney, the parents of those boys, the newspapers and television are just going to give up because one man says he had sex with me while Andrew was being kidnapped and killed. After they get their jollies hearing about all the gory details, what's it all going to mean? What about all those other boys? I've got a lot of nights to explain away.

JILL

(Exasperated)

All right, then. We'll move on for now. What were you doing when the next boy was taken? That would have been March 14th, right? I'll need to know everything you did that day ... and I'll need to know exactly who –

RANDY

(Cutting her off)

Last Thursday. What did you do? How many meetings did you attend? What time did you take your first call? Who was at the security desk when you walked into City Hall? What time were you due in court? Were you in court? What color blouse did your secretary wear? Don't hesitate. Spit it out!

JILL

Mr. Clooney!

RANDY

C'mon! Tell me everything. Give me all the details!

JILL

This is ridiculous. How am I supposed to remember all that?

RANDY

C'mon. Thursday was less than a week ago. You expect me to look back two years and tell you what color socks I put on?

JILL

Do you want to get out of here? Do you want to live? If you do...you'd better spend some time doing some serious remembering or you won't stand a chance.

RANDY

Isn't there something else we can talk about?

JILL

There is. But you won't like it any better.

RANDY

Shoot.

JILL

What can you tell me about the first victim?

RANDY

What would you like to know?

JILL

Why are you making this so damn tough?

RANDY

Look, nearly 10,000 boys belong to the eight Clooney Clubs in this city alone. Then there are the four across the river – 3,500 there – and the two that just opened upstate. I don't know how many kids have joined up there. I haven't been to my office in a while.

(Pause.)

I wasn't being evasive about Andrew. I just wanted to know what you wanted to –

(Pause.)

Forget it. Just hit me with the questions. I'll do my best.

JILL

Did you know him?

RANDY

Personally?

JILL

Yes.

RANDY

No. Not personally.

JILL

What about any of the others.

RANDY

No. Yes. I met some of them – around the club or at functions – but I’m so busy running the clubs, I don’t have time to work closely with the boys anymore.

JILL

So ... as far as you know ... there’s nothing but their club membership to tie any of them to you.

RANDY

What do you mean?

JILL

Most murders are crimes of passion. So if you didn’t know these boys at all ... It’s just coincidence. Do you see what I mean?

RANDY

But, Jill, I do know these boys.

JILL

You just told me ...?

RANDY

I may not have met all of them ... or worked with them ... or had deep personal discussions with them ...but I know them. All 14 of these boys were in my arts program. They didn’t participate in sports. They didn’t hang out in the computer lab surfing the web or playing video games. They belonged because they had nowhere else where they could express themselves. I was just like them at their age. So I know them.

JILL

You’re saying they were gay?

RANDY

No! No. That’s not it at all. I’m saying these were the boys with the special talents. These were the boys who didn’t fit in at school ... whose parents – if they had parents – didn’t understand them. These were the boys for whom I really built my clubs.

(Pause.)

Don’t you remember what it was like for Jack? Did he have many friends?

JILL

Not really. There were a couple of girls who came around.

RANDY

Exactly. Boys shunned him, didn't they. Called him "Fairy" or "Faggot."

JILL

Some did, but ... I don't see the point.

RANDY

My adolescence was a nightmare. My father, the "great" Patrick Clooney, self-made billionaire was a man's man. Believed in heroes. Wanted his sons to be tough guys – the kind of men who lived life the way he saw it in the movies. And he did everything he could to see that each of us was brought up that way...to live by his own rigid, narrow, impossible code.

(Pause.)

It got Gary killed in Vietnam. It turned John into the prize jerk that he is today. And me, well, it may not have made me a man's man the way Daddy wanted, but it had its effect.

(Pause)

Anyway, I certainly understand those boys.

(Pause.)

You know they were killed in alphabetical order, don't you?

JILL

What? That's not true. I have all the names here ... and they certainly were not–

RANDY

(Cuts JILL off)

Oh, yes they were. It's been right under everybody's nose. The cops haven't noticed because they're too busy congratulating themselves on getting me behind bars. The press hasn't noticed because they've been too busy vilifying me. But I noticed. It's easy to see if you pay attention. And I have paid attention, because they are my boys.

JILL

Randy –

RANDY

(More and more emotional)

There was Andrew O'Donnell and Ben Levin, Cole Whittier and David Braun, Edward Jones, Frank Morton, George Ramirez, Hank Schultz, Isaac Mayer, Jamal Wilson, Kyle Patterson, Lowell Ritchie, Mark Axelrod and Nathan Jackson. Only one was over 17 years old ... none of them had a father present in the home ... or any friends – until they came to my club. I thought I was helping them. Giving them the chance they wouldn't have –

(Pause)

But I killed them. I did it as sure as if I was the one who–

JILL

Randy, please –

RANDY

(Holding back tears)

I put them all in one place. Called attention to their differences. I did it. I led them to that monster. You see? The gay man who started the club with the program for the weird boys is responsible for 14 deaths. It's my fault. I might as well pay for it. That would be justice – wouldn't it? Wouldn't it?

(BLACKOUT)

(The jail cell on a Saturday morning one month later. RANDY is standing at the table which is covered with case files. He picks up a multi-page form, staples an additional sheet of paper to the back and drops it into a box.

He selects a photo from the table and looks at it for a moment.

The lock on the door to his cell clangs open. and he shoves the photo in his pocket and flushes the toilet just as JILL enters. She is agitated and not really aware of what RANDY is doing.

RANDY

(Turns on the water and washes his hands.)
Welcome back.

JILL

(Distractedly)
What?

RANDY

If you had come in a moment sooner you'd have had quite a shock.

JILL

I would?

I figured as long as you were answering a call of nature, I might do so as well. After all, I really can't – in front of a lady, I mean.

JILL

What?
(She catches herself, realizing what Randy has said.)
It wasn't that kind of call.
(She pulls a cell phone from her pocket and waggles it.)
One of the miracles of twenty-first century technology.

RANDY

So?
(Pause. Jill doesn't answer.)
What could be so important on a Saturday?

JILL

You need to get yourself a new lawyer.

RANDY

I what? You're quitting? Again? What did I do this time?

JILL

No. I'm not "quitting." You've been fired as a client. No more help from the Lawyers Defense Project.

(Pause.)

I'm being taken off the case.

RANDY

What?

JILL

Evidently, people don't take it kindly when a serial killer who's worth millions buys himself a lawyer from an organization dedicated to helping the poor and downtrodden.

(Pause. RANDY stares at her.)

Well, you did make a really big donation to my boss' non-profit organization.

RANDY

It could be worse.

JILL

How?

RANDY

I could have made a really big donation to your boss!

(RANDY laughs)

JILL

You have a very strange sense of humor.

RANDY

(Trying to control himself)

But it's funny. I can't believe you're not laughing. .

JILL

It wasn't that funny!

(JILL's comment sets RANDY off again. JILL ignores RANDY'S outburst and begins angrily tossing files into a box. Eventually, her actions get RANDY's attention.)

RANDY

What are you doing?

JILL

Packing up. The prosecution gets the files on Monday. Your new lawyer will have to petition to get them back. Oh, and make sure he asks for a continuance.

RANDY

But –

JILL

He'll need all the time he can get for discovery. You're not particularly forthcoming.

RANDY

But—

JILL

(Continuing to pack.)

He'll have my notes of course ... and the transcription of your testimony so far. But it's always better to hear for yourself. You get a better idea of what you're working with.

RANDY

I'm not going through all of this again.

JILL

Oh, yes you are. And you'll have to be a lot quicker about it this time. They won't want to push the trial back very far.

(Pause. Continuing to herself.)

Boy, he's going to have his job cut out for him.

RANDY

He? Him? Greg's picked out a new lawyer for me?

JILL

Huh? No. It's your job to find a new lawyer. "He" is just a figure of speech. I suppose you could look for another "girl" to take over.

RANDY

Now you've lost me.

JILL

When I was on the phone with my boss, he said that he only put me on the case because you said you'd even settle for a girl.

RANDY

Jesus Christ!

JILL

Did you? Or didn't you?

RANDY

Do we have to fight about his now?

JILL

Did you or didn't you?

RANDY

(With great patience.)

I said, I'd take anyone. I didn't say, "Even if she's a girl." Why would I? Do you think I knew who Greg has on staff? I thought you were low *man* on the totem pole, anyway.

JILL

(Shrugs acceptance.)

It doesn't matter. I'm through, one way or the other. Out of here today. Or I lose my job.

RANDY

You're kidding? Why?

JILL

Haven't you been paying attention?

(Pause.)

Everybody knows that you pulled strings to get me. The media got hold of your little "charity" stunt. They broke into the Saturday morning kiddie cartoons with a special news bulletin.

RANDY

Bet the parents loved that!

(Pause.)

So I'm out in the cold?

JILL

Absolutely! Greg evidently "forgot" to tell the governing board that the LDP's latest donation came with some serious strings attached. They're not happy. They say our reputation has been dealt a serious blow. So the LDP is out and your trust will be receiving a check in the amount of your "donation" on Monday morning.

RANDY

What did you say? What did you do?

JILL

What could I do? Greg told me I'm through. He's my boss.

RANDY

You're leaving. Just like that.

JILL

I need my job!

RANDY

Yeah, I wouldn't want you to lose your job.

JILL

Look, I am not to blame. What do you want me to do?

RANDY

Defend me. You can always get another job.

JILL

Oh, really? And who's going to hire the lawyer who quit her job to defend the most notorious killer in the history of this city?

RANDY

You could open your own practice. Infamous lawyers get just as much business as the famous ones.

JILL

Yeah, that's just how I want to earn my living.

RANDY

(Cutting JILL off.)

All right. All right. I get the picture. I guess I'll help you pack up.

JILL

I'm surprised. I never thought you'd give up that easily.

RANDY

It's quite apparent that you don't want to defend me.

JILL

What!?

RANDY

This is your easy way out. Just following orders. Seems I've heard that one before.

JILL

How dare you!

RANDY

If the shoe fits ...

(JILL throws the file she is holding at RANDY, showering him and the space between them in papers.)

JILL

You know, sometimes I think you deserve to die!

(JILL stops in shock. She drops into the chair by the table.)

JILL

Oh my God! I can't believe I said that.

RANDY

It does come as a shock.

(Pause. He resumes with a smirk.)

And I thought you loved me.

JILL

Mr. Clooney, you are not any easy man to love.

(There is a pause. RANDY begins to pick up papers. JILL joins in. But she can't seem to look at RANDY. RANDY uses this moment to slip the photo out of his pocket and into a book by the bed.)

JILL

Look. I'm sorry. I never meant – This is way too serious...

RANDY

It's all right, Jill. I know. We're both a little upset right now.

JILL

What are you going to do?

RANDY

Oh, I don't know. Maybe I can get OJ's defense team to take me on. They said they were too busy with their TV gigs and book deals. But I could ask again. Those lawyers like a challenge. They're pretty successful, too. I bet they could convince the jury I'm a nice guy.

JILL

Can't you stop joking for a minute.

RANDY

I could – if it would do me any good.

(Pause.)

Jill, isn't there any way you could stay? I can pay you.

JILL

And after the trial? What then?

(Pause)

Look I just can't afford to take the chance.

RANDY

You're young. You're single. You can't have many expenses.

JILL

I have college loans. Mine and Jack's.

RANDY

You're paying off your brother's loans?

(JILL nods her head.)

Wait a minute. He had a scholarship! I know. I helped to arrange that.

JILL

Ten thousand dollars a year. But tuition was close to forty thousand. And then – well, you have to live in New York if you want to attend Julliard.

RANDY

I get it. But Jackie Bennett's a big boy now. He can support himself and pay his own damn student loans.

JILL

Contrary to popular belief, jazz pianists don't earn a lot of money.

(RANDY looks at her.)

Even jazz pianists with a well-received first solo album.

RANDY

So what you're saying is that your little brother is all grown up ...but he's still dependent on you. That's not fair, Jill.

JILL

What business is it of yours? Why do you care if it's fair or not?

(Pause.)

Or are you just trying to keep your lawyer?

RANDY

Of course, I want to keep my lawyer. I'm going on trial for my life! But that has nothing to do with this. Your brother is what? Twenty five, twenty six? He should be able to stand on his own two feet by now. It's time for you to stop taking responsibility for him.

JILL

Why? So I can start taking responsibility for you?

RANDY

No. For yourself. I'm telling you this as a friend, Jill, you have to live your own life, not your brother's.

JILL

Look, you are not my friend. And I am certainly not yours.

(Pause.)

You want to know why I came here? Why I've kept coming here?

(Pause)

Well, do you?

RANDY

I think you're going to tell me whether I want to hear or not.

JILL

I'm here because my boss promised me a promotion. With that promotion comes a raise. It's not a lot, but I need the money.

RANDY

Oh, Jill.

JILL

All the *men* got it long ago. I *deserved* to have it long ago. I left the Public Defender's office because I was just a "girl" there. Then I discovered that I was in the same spot at the Lawyers Defense Project. I could see that the only way I was going to get that raise was to come here and defend you. And that's why I've put up with you and your moods, your stubbornness, your infuriating little jokes!

RANDY

Is it? Is that really why you stayed?

JILL

Yes!

RANDY

I don't believe you.

JILL

What do you know about it? What do you know about my life? You're this big shot! You've had life handed to you on a silver platter. You've got a trust fund stuffed with

JILL (cont.)

millions. You can buy anything you want –even my boss. You’ve never been left out in the cold. Your family never refused to help you – even to meet you – just because your father was a no-good drunk. You know nothing! So why don’t you just shut up for once?

RANDY

I know exactly how you feel. You think money buys you anything important? My father gave me that trust fund and locked me out of the family business because he thought my being gay meant I was incapable of making a logical decision. My brothers – my half-brothers – hated me because they thought my mother took their mother’s place. Half the city has tried to lynch me for years because they thought a gay man would have only one reason for starting a boy’s club – and we both know what that reason is.

(Pause. RANDY continues sympathetically.)

I’ve always been an outsider, Jill. Just like you. So yes, I understand exactly how you feel. I know exactly what it’s like to spend your life pressing your nose up to the candy store window knowing you’ll never get to walk through the door. I know. I do.

(JILL slumps into a chair, dejected. She shakes her head.)

JILL

I can’t afford to lose my job. Not over this. Not now.

RANDY

I know. It’s okay.

JILL

No, it’s not okay. But what else can I do. I have to walk away. I have no choice.

RANDY

(Suddenly energized and excited.)

Yes, you do! You’ve got a helluva choice! I know just what you should do.

JILL

What?

RANDY

Come to work for me. For the Clooney Clubs, I mean.

JILL

Are you crazy? How can I do that?

RANDY

Why didn't I think of this before? It's so simple. I'll hire you as the Club's "Chief Counsel." You'll be a one-woman law department and your first project will be defending me.

JILL

Are you nuts? The Clooney Clubs Board of Directors will never allow that.

RANDY

They can complain. They can yell. They can stamp their well-shod feet. But they can't stop me!

JILL

Can't they?

RANDY

No they cannot! I have a trust fund – as you recently pointed out.

JILL

So?

RANDY

I donate the annual payment from my trust fund – currently \$6 million dollars – to the Clooney Clubs in its entirety. Out of that I am paid an annual salary and I am given \$750,000 per year to spend on any project I deem fit. Can you live on, say \$400,000 a year?

(Pause. JILL stares at RANDY as though he is insane.)

I can make it \$500,000 a year ... but I really should leave some money for the kids.

JILL

I, uh, I –

RANDY

If you're worried the job will disappear, when I'm convicted, I could sign you to a multiple year contract.

(Pause. No response from JILL.)

Or...I know...I could set you up in your own law firm. The Clooney Clubs could be your first client. You could go out and get others. Then you wouldn't be dependent on me for anything. I'd still pay you the \$400,000.

JILL

How could I? Who'd want to work with me? After?

RANDY

You'd be surprised, Jill. Money can buy a whole lot of respectability. In a couple of years, after a couple of big donations to the right charities, everybody would forget.

RANDY (cont.)

Besides, you're already on the outside looking in. Wouldn't life be a whole lot better if you knew you could buy the candy store? Or part of it anyway. \$400,000 only goes so far.

JILL

I have to think about this.

RANDY

Think all you want. Take until tomorrow.

JILL

Gee, thanks.

RANDY

It's all the time I've got. All this stuff needs to be delivered to the District Attorney on Monday. So we have to spend tomorrow completing discovery ... or packing up.

JILL

How can you be so... so dispassionate? Don't you ever get frightened? Nervous?

RANDY

I'm scared right now! Terrified! Why do you think, I'm even considering taking hundreds of thousands of dollars away from my kids? I'm in a fight for my life and I don't want to die.

JILL

At last. You finally admitted it.

RANDY

What? That I'm scared? I had to *tell* you that?

JILL

Yeah, you did. I needed to know that you're capable of honest human emotions. It's so hard to tell most of the time.

RANDY

Gee, thanks.

JILL

You're welcome.

RANDY

Then you'll do it? You'll come to work for me? You'll continue to defend me?

JILL

I'll think about it.

RANDY

You'll *think* about it?

JILL

It's a life-changing decision. And you did say I could take until tomorrow.

RANDY

Would it help you to make a decision if I told you I've discovered something – something that could help my case?

JILL

(Suddenly alert and very interested.)
What? What is it?

RANDY

Uh, uh! This is my bargaining chip. I'll tell you tomorrow *when* and only *when* you tell me you're going to be my lawyer.

JILL

Can you at least tell me if it's important?

RANDY

I think it might be.

JILL

Then you *can't* withhold it. Not if it's information pertinent to your defense.

RANDY

Are you willing to say, "Yes," now?

JILL

I –
(She hesitates, torn.)
I can't. I need time to think about this – all of this.

RANDY

Then you'll have to wait until tomorrow.
(Pause)
I'll see you tomorrow?

JILL

Yes.

RANDY

9 a.m?

JILL

Yes.

RANDY

Then you'll find out what I discovered tomorrow, when you tell me –

JILL

(Cuts RANDY off.)

If I tell you I'll do it.

RANDY

(Offers his hand to JILL.)

Deal?

JILL

(Taking RANDY's hand.)

Deal.

(Blackout. End of Act I)

(JILL stands in a spotlight.)

JILL

I was always a competitive kid. Maybe I was born that way. Maybe it's in the family genes. After all, my Granddad started out with nothing and built one of the largest fortunes in the country.

Or maybe I just felt I had to prove that I could make it on my own. That I didn't need the rich Bennetts ... all those uncles, aunts and cousins living off the old man's cash. If they thought they were superior because they had it made, well I'd show them! I was just as good as they were – better! I'd be a success. The best at whatever I chose to do, and someday ... well someday I'd be the rich and famous Bennett. Then see if I'd help them!

Of course, I didn't know how I would wind up rich and successful ... and find them in the gutter so I'd be able to ignore their cries for help ... But that ridiculous hope fueled my dreams.

I worked hard to make that dream come true. I was the little girl with straight As ... the Girl Scout who sold the most cookies. In high school, I was captain of the swim team, the yearbook editor and the valedictorian. I was first in my class in law school.

But whenever I did something well, whenever I was the best, everyone said, "You know they gave it to her, don't you? She's a Bennett." Not once did they even consider that maybe I'd worked hard...maybe I'd done it all on my own.

Now here I am being offered the "trial of the century" and a job that pays a salary that ends with a whole lot of zeros. Fame and fortune all in one shot.

What if I say, "Yes?" I wonder what everyone will say then.

(RANDY's jail cell the next morning. Boxes are packed up and sealed. RANDY is looking at the photo he hid earlier. The cell lock clangs. RANDY slips photo back into book and drops the book back on the bedside table.

The door opens. JILL steps in.)

RANDY

You took your time.

JILL

(Checking her watch)
It's 9:20.

RANDY

We said 9 a.m.

JILL

It's Sunday.

RANDY

And the Sunday traffic held you up?

JILL

I took my time. I read the paper.

RANDY

Even though you knew I'd be waiting.

JILL

Yeah – even then. Because I wanted some more time. To make up my mind

RANDY

I guess this was all a big mistake then. You know where the door is. Maybe you should use it.

JILL

So the deal's off? I'll call my boss and tell him I'll be back at my desk first thing tomorrow. It's a nice Sunday. Maybe I'll go to the park. I could use a little R and R.

(Pause.)

It's a shame you don't want to know what I decided.

RANDY

(Without turning around.)

Didn't you just tell me?

JILL

No, I don't think I did. Why don't you tell me what my decision is – since you already know?

RANDY

Just leave. And tell the guard I'm going to need access to a phone – immediately.

JILL

Not only are you the most stubborn, conceited, infuriating man I've ever met, you are also the most stupid.

(JILL reaches for one of the boxes, breaks the seal and starts pulling out files.)

RANDY

What are you doing?

JILL

Going to work. We've got 24 more hours with these files and I don't plan to waste another minute.

RANDY

You –

JILL

You jump to conclusions.

(Pause. As she pages through a file, makes a note and sets it aside.)

Now, didn't you promise to share a discovery with me today?

RANDY

So you were just leading me on?

JILL

It was fun.

(Pause.)

There was an accident on the 12th Street bypass. I got caught between exits. Nothing to do but wait until the road was clear.

RANDY

Why didn't you just say something?

JILL

First of all, you never gave me a chance. Second it was fun to see you sweat. Now! Tell me what you found.

RANDY

It's in that box over there. The one on top.

(JILL jumps up, goes to the box, breaks the seal and peers into the box.)

JILL

What am I looking for?

RANDY

Mark Axelrod's file.

JILL

He was the last boy killed, right?

RANDY

No, he wasn't.

(Introspectively.)

It was Nate. Nate was the last one to die.

JILL

Who?

RANDY

Nathan Jackson. Nate – that's what I – uh, *we* called him – the boys, I mean.

JILL

(Preoccupied)

Oh.

(Pause. She digs for the file.)

I've got it.

(Looks at RANDY)

Now what?

RANDY

(Collecting his thoughts)

There's a report in there. They did a DNA test on some blood that was on Mark's shirt.

JILL

Wait a minute. I saw that. There was quite a lot of blood, but it was all Mark's

RANDY

Not all of it.

JILL

That's not possible. I read that report.

RANDY

Did you read the last page?

JILL

What?

RANDY

There's another page to that report. His mother's deposition is in there, right? There's something stapled to it ... at the back.

JILL

It's a blank page.

RANDY

Flip the deposition over, Jill.

(JILL flips the papers over and begins to read. Then she reaches for the DNA report scans it and goes back to the back of the deposition.)

JILL

Those SOB's! They didn't want me to see this.

RANDY

Now, now. It was probably just a collating error.

JILL

Collating error, my ass.

RANDY

You can't prove anything ... and it doesn't matter anyway.

JILL

Doesn't matter? They're hiding evidence from me!

RANDY

Not very successfully it seems.

JILL

Do you know what this says?

(Pause.)

It says not all the blood on that shirt was the victim's.

RANDY

I know.

JILL

It also says that the second person's blood – the murderer's blood – and your blood don't match.

RANDY

It seems I'm not the only one who is jumping to conclusions this morning.

JILL

Well, where did that blood come from – if not from Mark's murderer?

RANDY

It's a good question, Jill, and the District Attorney's already working on a good answer.

JILL

As long as we don't know whose blood is on that shirt, it doesn't matter what "answer" the DA comes up with.

RANDY

Really?

JILL

Look at the facts. The boys' bodies were all found at Clooney Construction sites ... but nobody saw anything, so anyone could have put them there. You met the boys, knew the boys or had access to them ... but so did just about anyone who walked into a Clooney Club. You have no motive to kill them...outside of the obvious one...

RANDY

What?

JILL

That you're a "perv".

RANDY

That's harsh.

JILL

Yes, it's harsh ... and that's why they're going to run with it. They want to get folks angry. Get them reacting with their emotions and not with their heads. You've been reading the papers. What are they full of?

RANDY

I don't need any reminding.

JILL

Okay, then. With this report, all I have to do is keep telling the jury that there is absolutely no forensic evidence to tie you to any of these crimes ... but there *is* forensic evidence that ties someone *else* to one of those murders. Furthermore, the D.A. has chosen to harass you rather than following up on this – very real – physical evidence.

RANDY

You think that's enough?

JILL

Don't you?

(Pause.)

I think we have plenty to hit the prosecution with. First – they have forensic evidence that someone else is involved in one of the slayings that they're not pursuing. Second – they have no forensic evidence that you were involved in *any* death. Third – they've been carrying on a smear campaign ...

RANDY

Fine, you can say all that, but ... They'll say that the circumstantial evidence is overwhelming – and they'd be right. They'll say that I could have had an accomplice and the blood is his. They'll say that they haven't said anything about me that hasn't already been said – for years.

(Pause.)

And where are you then?

JILL

You forget. I found evidence essential to my case removed from a report and inserted into a deposition – backwards – where I was unlikely to find it. Can't say anybody *hid* it exactly. Can't get a mistrial.

(Pause.)

But that's what makes it so great!

RANDY

What are you talking about?

JILL

I can hammer on this fact in court.

RANDY

The prosecution will object.

JILL

Of course they will. And the judge will sustain.

RANDY

And there we are back at square one.

JILL

Absolutely not. Sure, the judge will tell them to disregard my accusation. But they won't forget it. And they won't be able to disregard the evidence. So we have what we need! Reasonable doubt – a lot of it!

RANDY

But what about —?

JILL

We simply make a plan. First, we really work them over on the lack of DNA evidence against you. If you didn't kill the one boy ... then it's possible that you didn't kill any of them.

RANDY

I didn't.

JILL

I know.

RANDY

(Smiling)

Really?

JILL

I'm here aren't I? On a sunny Sunday morning in June – when it's very nice in the park.

RANDY

(Bigger smile)

Smart ass.

(Pause. JILL smiles back.)

So – how long have you *known*?

JILL

I've had my suspicions for a while. I figured you wouldn't be so irritatingly uncooperative if you *had* done it.

RANDY

Why is that?

JILL

You would have been a lot more worried about getting off and a lot less worried about your injured pride. Innocent people are usually too angry at the fact that no one believes them to get scared until it's too late. And you've been pretty angry.

RANDY

Where'd you come up with that theory?

JILL

Experience.

(Pause)

But we're wasting time.

(Pause. She thinks for a moment, assessing.)

Okay...here's what we've got to do. First – we have to scour all these boxes for another missing DNA report. I can't have them surprising me with the evidence that they've tested that second blood sample. We can't have them waving a report under my nose that says the blood belongs to Mark's little brother ... and then get Mom to testify that Mark gave him a bloody nose the day he went missing.

RANDY

You think that's possible?

JILL

Anything's possible. So we'll start digging. We can't afford to look the least bit sloppy. Especially, if sloppiness on the part of the prosecution is a major part of our defense.

(Pause. JILL is thinking.)

You know ... there should be more blood. We've got fourteen murders ... and there's almost no blood. Can that be right? Surely somebody struggled, scratched or something?

Maybe this is an avenue we need to pursue? We're going to have to review all the reports on cause of death again from this angle. And then I want to go over your testimony again. I'm going to want to put you on the stand.

RANDY

Whoa! Slow down. Wait a minute!

(JILL stops. Looks at Randy. She's irritated at being interrupted.)

JILL

What now?

RANDY

Does this mean you're taking me up on my offer?

JILL

What?

RANDY

My offer of work. Your boss – Greg Rossi – did tell you to cease and desist or you’ll be fired. Didn’t he? Just yesterday?

JILL

So?

RANDY

So do you accept my offer of employment? Will you – officially – become my private defense attorney, and later take up a position as Chief Counsel of the Clooney Clubs. I believe we talked about an annual salary of around \$400,000.

JILL

Look, we’ve got a lot to do here.

RANDY

I insist. I’ve even drawn up a little contract.

(RANDY reaches for a sheet of paper and a pen.)

Here, I’ve written it all out. You can correct me if I did something illegal.

(RANDY reads)

I, Randolph Clooney, agree to hire Jill Bennett in the position of Chief Counsel of the Clooney Clubs, a not-for-profit organization chartered in this state, and to pay her the sum of \$400,000 per annum. In return Jill Bennett will act as my defense attorney during my murder trial. The position of Chief Counsel will begin immediately following the end of the trial, regardless of the verdict.

(Pause. While RANDY finishes writing.)

There.

(He pushes the paper to JILL.)

Sign it.

(JILL hesitates)

Isn’t it legal?

JILL

It’s legal enough.

RANDY

Then put your John Hancock right there.

JILL

Do we have to do this now?

RANDY

Nothing like the present.

(He holds out the pen.)

JILL

Why don’t we just go back to work? I don’t need a signed contract. After all, you gave me your word.

RANDY

I could break it.

JILL

I could leave.

(RANDY and JILL stare at each other.)

RANDY

Okay, you can sign it before you leave.

JILL

All right, then. Let's get down to work. I want to start by interviewing you again. I want to go over your testimony with a fine-tooth comb so that you're rock solid on every detail.

RANDY

Why do I need to be rock solid on every detail?

JILL

I'm going to put you on the stand. Now that we have a DNA report with a mystery blood sample, it's important that the jury get to know you. I need –

RANDY

(Interrupting)

No. I'm not getting on the stand. I don't have anything to say that's going to sway the jury's mind. I don't want to face the prosecution.

JILL

Why?

RANDY

Because they'll make me angry and I'll wind up saying something stupid.

JILL

That's ridiculous. You're a smart man. You can see through a ploy like that.

RANDY

Maybe I can, but I don't want to take the risk.

(Pause.)

You just want me to defend myself. I have no intention of doing that.

JILL

That's a lie!

(Pause. RANDY looks at her stunned.)

You have every intention of defending yourself. You always have. It's just another one of your little games and I'm not going to stand for it any more.

RANDY

I'm not playing –

JILL

(Interrupting)

You've been playing me from the beginning. But that's going to stop right now because it just doesn't work.

RANDY

Doesn't it? You're here aren't you?

JILL

You think you're so smart. You think you have everything figured out. But I've seen your games before. You're my sixty-sixth defense. I told you I had experience.

RANDY

Yeah, then what took you so long?

JILL

Who said it took long? My instincts told me that they had the wrong guy as soon as I had a chance to look at the evidence. But –

RANDY

But –?

JILL

But I had to be sure. Not just that you were innocent ... but that there was a good chance I could get you off.

RANDY

Nice way to put it.

JILL

That I could get a verdict of not guilty. And that's why you are going on the witness stand. You have got to show the jury who you are and how you feel about these kids. They have to see you the way I see you.

RANDY

I'll be in court. They can see me just fine.

JILL

The way to win – the only way – is to counteract the innuendos. They have to see you for what you really are – a man who has dedicated his life to helping boys and who has suffered a lot to do it.

(Pause)

There's only one person who can introduce them to that man. That's you.

RANDY

Me? I thought I was overbearing, infuriating, stubborn, impossible...

JILL

Shut up.

(Pause.)

I'm not going to let them see that side of you. You are going to be the strong, dedicated, caring person I believe you to be under all the crap you keep shoveling at me.

RANDY

Yeah, but the fact is...

JILL

You are one irritating son of a bitch. But the jury doesn't need to know that. Facts and the truth are not always the same thing. Facts demonstrate that you can be one hard man to like. The truth shows that you've done a wonderful thing for the boys of this city.

(Pause.)

So how do you want to be seen when we go into court?

RANDY

All right! I'll go along with you – on one condition.

JILL

Can't you just be straight with me for a minute?

RANDY

I am being straight. Just sign my little contract, Jill, and I'm all yours.

JILL

Why is it so important to you that I sign this thing?

RANDY

I'm thinking of you and your future. You're walking away from a good paying job with a career track.

JILL

Yeah, some career.

RANDY

And I'm just trying to make sure that you don't lose out.

(He picks up the pen and holds it out to her.)

So sign already ... and let's get to work.

JILL

I still figure you're just playing me.

RANDY

I'm opening the door to the candy store for you. It's time you stopped pressing your nose up against the window, and walked through that door. It's the least I can do for the only person in the world who is on my side. The person who is going to save my life.

JILL

Is that who you think I am?

RANDY

I know that's who you are. Now sign our little contract ... and even if things don't work out for me, they'll work out for you. I want that. More than anything. Okay?

JILL

(Takes the pen.)

Okay!

(She signs,)

(BLACKOUT.)

(RANDY's jail cell weeks later. The sealed evidence boxes are gone and the room is Spartan in its neatness. Papers are put away. The books are back on their shelves, except for one book which remains near the bed.

The room is empty at curtain's rise. Then the door lock clangs and the door swings open. RANDY and JILL enter.

RANDY seems quietly pleased with himself. JILL is ebullient.

JILL

Well! That was quite a show you put on today, quite a show. Randy, the noble. Randy, the selfless. Randy the morally outraged. You sure know how to play to an audience!

RANDY

I was simply following the orders of my counsel. Did I do wrong?

JILL

No, you did exactly what I told you to do, but I had no idea you'd be so good at it.

RANDY

I was just being myself.

JILL

Really? Then how come I never saw that side of you before?

RANDY

I've been very nice to you.

JILL

You have not! You've been perfectly horrible.

(She grins)

But you were perfectly wonderful on the witness stand today!

RANDY

I just followed orders. It was all your doing.

JILL

Really?

RANDY

Oh come on. Since the day we found that misplaced DNA report, you haven't missed a beat. Your strategy has been flawless.

JILL

(Enjoying the flattery)
How so?

RANDY

First, you used my datebook to demonstrate that I had very strong alibis for over half of the murders. Then you got some very powerful people to corroborate those alibis — including my big brother John. He wasn't at all happy to admit that I was with him at a meeting of the Clooney Trust that went very late into the evening of September 14th.

(Pause.)

You know, the fact that good ole' John Wayne Clooney got angry certainly didn't hurt. I tell you, I —

JILL

Wait a minute! Did you just call your brother John WAYNE?

RANDY

Yep!

JILL

And your oldest brother? Gary? The one who was killed in Vietnam? Could he be named —

RANDY

Gary Cooper.

JILL

(Starting to laugh)
And that would make your middle name —?

RANDY

Scott.

JILL

(Laughing hard.)
John Wayne, Gary Cooper and Randolph Scott. Oh...my...God! How could I have not known this?

RANDY

I think your current reaction to my father's naming habits might give you a clue.

JILL

Cowboy stars! You're all named after —
(She laughs harder.)
How could I have not known this?

RANDY

Nobody knows it. Carefully hiding our middle names was the only thing my brothers and I could ever agree on.

JILL

(Affecting a thick western drawl.)

C'mon pardner, let's round up those ornery, no good name callers and haul 'em in to town fer some frontier justice. See here, Marshal, I need these men arrested on account of they been callin' me by ... my name!

RANDY

It's not that funny.

JILL

Oh, yes it is. And it's so wonderfully ironic, too!

(She continues to laugh.)

RANDY

I would think a woman whose parents named their offspring "Jack and Jill" would be able to show a little more compassion.

JILL

Nope! All compassion was beat out of me on the playground.

(Pause.)

You know, some parents show absolutely no sense when it comes to naming their kids. But your father –

RANDY

I know. I know. He did a bang up job.

JILL

Absolutely! He couldn't have picked a better name for you if he tried.

RANDY

What?

JILL

Yeah. Randolph Scott. Tough, strong, noble, fearless and ...gay!

(She doubles over in laughter again.)

RANDY

Very funny!

JILL

You really can't take a compliment, can you?

RANDY

Compliment?

JILL

I think I just called you, “Tough, strong, noble and fearless.” I learned that about you these past weeks.

(Pause. With a smirk.)

I already knew you were gay.

(Pause. Soberly.)

Seriously, you did a great job today.

RANDY

I think I called D.A. Daugherty a sonofabitch.

JILL

You did.

RANDY

Judge Collier threatened to hold me in contempt –

JILL

On several occasions.

RANDY

And you call that a great job.

JILL

You were perfect. Maybe the best part was that you never tried to make anyone like you.

(Pause.)

Of course, I don’t know if you have it in you to make anyone like you...but your natural irascibility worked in your favor. You were the perfect picture of a hostile witness. You even refused to answer some of *my* questions and I’m your defense attorney.

RANDY

You were smart enough to move on.

JILL

It served my purpose. Especially when you refused to name that “nice man” you met at on your birthday. It was obvious to everyone that you were trying to protect him.

RANDY

You think so?

JILL

Joe Daugherty, saw it. That's why he was so tough on you. Questioning your alibis... talking about "holes" in your defense

(Pause)

And then you exploded! Fired questions right back at him! What did you shout at him?

(JILL takes a deep breath and then gives a fair imitation of RANDY when angry.)

JILL

"Last Thursday. What did you do? How many meetings did you go to? What time did you take your first call? What color blouse did your secretary wear?" Is that right?

RANDY

(Laughing)

Something like that.

JILL

And then you said, "If you can't remember something that happened last week – how can you expect me to remember something that happened two years ago?"

(Pause)

You threw that same kind of stuff at me the first time I questioned you, remember? What do you do? Practice this stuff in front of a mirror?

RANDY

I simply allow myself to get caught up in the moment.

(Changing the subject.)

You know, you weren't so bad yourself. I particularly liked the way you entered that DNA report into evidence.

JILL

I simply followed established procedures.

RANDY

Uh huh. From where I sat, you had plenty of opportunities to bring it up when you cross examined the prosecution's witnesses.

JILL

They didn't give me any openings.

RANDY

So you waited until the prosecution rested and it was time to present our case.

JILL

So?

RANDY

So they didn't know what hit 'em. First, you recalled the cop who was first on scene when they found Mark's body – and with no mention of blood or a DNA report –you get him to tell you about the blood on the shirt. But you don't ask him about the testing.

JILL

He's not the one who would order the testing?

RANDY

Then you surprise them by calling the technician who performed the test.

JILL

It wasn't a surprise. I had to subpoena him just like everyone else.

RANDY

Well, they sure acted surprised. And when you asked about the second blood sample, it was great! First, he had to admit that blood wasn't mine ... then he had to say they didn't test it any further!

JILL

You know that testing it further doesn't mean a whole lot –

RANDY

Except that it shows they were more eager to nail me than to look for the truth.

JILL

That's only what I want the jury to believe. I can't prove their motive for not testing. I can only insinuate. And that's why I called in Iris Cohen, the paralegal who packed and shipped the reports and the depositions to me.

RANDY

But she couldn't explain how the one page in the DNA report that could possibly link someone else to these murders got misplaced.

JILL

I never thought she could. But it got that little mix up entered into evidence and her nervousness on the stand also helped to cast doubt.

(RANDY looks at JILL, confused,)

JILL

It's not easy to defend yourself when someone accuses you of *not* doing so you get worried. Worrying that you won't be believed makes people nervous ... and when you look nervous, you look guilty.

RANDY

You are smart, Jill! .That's why you're my lawyer. I'm so glad I chose you

(RANDY's eyes pop open as he realizes in surprise what he's just said. JILL turns on him, caught between anger and shock.)

JILL

What did you say?

RANDY

I said that I'm glad you're my lawyer.

JILL

I thought you said you *chose* me.

RANDY

Chose you?

JILL

(Interrupting.)

Yes. Chose. You know, pick, single out...

RANDY

Jill—

JILL

Decide on, settle upon—

RANDY

You're making too much of this! It was a simple slip of the tongue.

JILL

Freudian slip, maybe?

RANDY

I just meant I was glad circumstances led me to you.

JILL

You mean the circumstances that kept you from obtaining counsel anywhere, but that also gave you the opportunity to pick and choose so that you could opt for me?

(Pause.)

I distinctly remember being told that no private defense attorney would take your case ... being ordered to show up here by my boss... and your friend. You didn't even know who I was when I walked in here.

(Pause.)

Or did you?

RANDY

Now wait just a minute–

JILL

You did know who I was. It was all just a big lie, wasn't it?

RANDY

Shut up! Give me a minute to explain.

JILL

Try and cover up your “slip of the tongue” you mean!

RANDY

You seem to forget a Saturday morning a few weeks ago when a certain lawyer walked in here and told me she was being pulled off my defense. I had a choice to make, but I didn't go looking for that high-priced, high-powered attorney. Instead, I chose to offer you the chance of a lifetime. Now why would I do that, Jill, if I didn't want you? If I didn't choose you?

JILL

Maybe you just wanted a patsy. Somebody you could manipulate.

RANDY

How have I manipulated you?

JILL

You got me to feel sorry for you... to believe in you... to want to fight for you!

RANDY

C'mon? Why wouldn't I want a smart, stubborn, passionate, aggressive young woman fighting on my side? Do you see people lining up to help me?

JILL

That's bullshit. You can stop feeding it to me right now.

(Pause.)

Right from the beginning, you've been working on me – just like you worked on the DA. That little speech to him was exactly what you told me when I started questioning you, wasn't it?

JILL

What handy-dandy zinger are you going to pull out now, huh? C'mon, let's hear it!

RANDY

I haven't got one.

JILL

Surely, you can come up with one more bon mot for an emergency like this one?

(Pause.)

You made me think that I was your last and only hope.

RANDY

You were my best hope.

JILL

That's not exactly the same thing, is it?

RANDY

No, it's not.

(RANDY stares JILL down. She starts to make a rebuttal. RANDY raises a hand to silence her.)

RANDY

You want the truth? All of it?

JILL

Yes.

RANDY

Okay. I knew who you were when you walked in here that first afternoon. I saw your name on the list of attorneys that Greg Rossi gave me, and I remember thinking, "So, skinny little Jill Bennett's an attorney now. I always knew she had grit."

JILL

Right. More like you thought here's a chump I can take advantage of.

RANDY

How? How have I taken advantage of you? By giving you a job that pays almost half-a-million dollars a year and that you can keep for as long as you like?

(JILL doesn't respond.)

I'm being candid. The least you can do is listen, okay?

JILL

So, my name jumped out at you.

RANDY

Yeah. I was surprised and impressed to see your name on that list, so I asked Greg for you.

JILL

Just like that?

RANDY

Just like that.

JILL

So why the big act when I walked in here that first day? “Hi, I’m Randy, and who are you?” How do you explain away that?

RANDY

Cold feet.

JILL

You’ve never had cold feet in your life.

RANDY

I did that day. I planned on telling you right from the beginning. But you walked in looking so defensive, so angry, so miserably unhappy that I immediately thought, “Randy, what have you done?” and I chickened out. I pretended not to know you so you wouldn’t think I brought you here.

JILL

Nice try, but you’re forgetting something.

RANDY

What?

JILL

Your big performance. Randy as the noble hero willing to sacrifice his life unless he found one person who would truly believe in him.

RANDY

Okay. I tested you. But you came through with flying colors. You were smarter, more inventive, and more tenacious than I imagined you could be. You are the perfect choice. For this particular job, nobody could be better than you.

(Pause.)

Jill, if I had a daughter, I’d hope she’d be like you. If I have a best friend, I hope it is you. Can you ever forgive me for being a stupid manipulative lying old queer.

(Pause. After a moment, JILL goes to
RANDY and embraces him.)

JILL

Of course, I can you stupid, manipulative, lying old queer.

(RANDY smiles as the lights fade to
BLACK.)

(JILL stands in a spotlight center stage. She is addressing the jury.)

JILL

Ladies and Gentleman of the jury, fourteen boys were murdered right here, in our city. Fourteen promising young lives were cut off just as they were about to flower. Fourteen mothers mourn for the sons who will never marry ... never have children of their own ... never grow old.

Fourteen boys died because some monster took pleasure in their suffering. Can you imagine that? I can't. Yet somewhere in our city is a person who takes pleasure in seeing young men die. Unfortunately, that person is not in this courtroom today.

How do I know? For a number of reasons: first there's the fact that, despite his oratory, Mr. Daugherty has only be able to provide circumstantial evidence. Even though all the boys belonged to Clooney Clubs...even though there was ample opportunity for Mr. Clooney to meet and befriend the boys ... even though all the boys were fund on Clooney construction sites ... Mr. Daugherty has not been able to provide a single shred of physical evidence that ties Randy Clooney to these deaths. Not one fingerprint...not one drop of blood.

Second, there *is* physical evidence –a shirt covered in blood – the victim's and someone else's. But it's not Randy Clooney's blood. A DNA test proved that conclusively. A DNA test that provided clear evidence that he should look further than Randy Clooney. A DNA test that the District Attorney did *not* bring into evidence. A DNA test I only found by accident.

Finally, there's Randy Clooney himself. Here's a man – a rich man – with a trust fund that earns him an income of \$6 million each year. That's an amount most of us could live on comfortably for the rest of our lives and still have plenty of money left over – and he gets it paid to him every year without having to lift a finger.

So what does he do? Does he sit back and enjoy his good fortune? No. He gives every penny – to his Boys Club. Then he works 50, 60, 70 hours a week for a salary that's less than two percent of his trust's annual income.

Could you do that? Could you be that selfless, that dedicated? And do you really believe that a man who could make that kind of a sacrifice ... could also murder fourteen boys just for the pleasure of seeing them die?

Neither do I.

(BLACKOUT)

(The jail cell on the afternoon following the verdict and end of the trial. The door is open.

(The bed is stripped and a few carton boxes are scattered around. JILL stands in the middle of the room surveying it. She is wearing jeans and a shirt and looks younger and more defenseless than before.

RANDY enters. He too wears casual clothes – khakis, golf shirt and sports jacket. In contrast to JILL he seems more confident – a rich man in total control of his world.)

RANDY

(Surprised)
Jill! What are you doing here?

JILL

Doesn't the criminal always return to the scene of the crime?

RANDY

That should be my line.
(Pause.)
Why would you ever want to set foot in this place again?

JILL

What about you? I wasn't forced to live here in solitary confinement contemplating my imminent doom.
(Pause)
So ... why did you come back?

RANDY

To pack my things and haul them away.

JILL

Surely, the prison staff would take care of that for you?

RANDY

(Smiling)
Maybe there are things here I don't want anyone else to see. Maybe I'm worried some over-enthusiastic employee will hunt for something incriminating ... and find it.

JILL

Maybe you're forgetting about a little thing called "double jeopardy."

RANDY

Let me ask you something. Do you really think the person who murdered all those boys will ever be brought to trial?

(Pause. JILL just stares at RANDY.)

Neither do I. This thing will follow me for the rest of my life. That means I've got to be careful. So, I'm packing and sealing the boxes myself, and I'll watch the guards who carry them out like a hawk until their safely deposited in the trunk of my car.

(Pause.)

Now! That settles the question of why I am here. What about you?

JILL

I wanted to see you.

RANDY

You can see me anytime.

JILL

This is the place where I know you best, where we're on an equal footing. Out there – the noise ... the media ... it's overwhelming. Out there ... you're famous –

RANDY

Infamous –

JILL

In here, you're just –

RANDY

I see. What you really mean is that here in this cell *you're* still plain old Jill Bennett ... and out there, you're a media star.

(Pause)

Better get used to it. Your performance in that courtroom took you from up-and-coming young non-profit attorney to one of the best-known defense attorneys in the nation.

JILL

I noticed.

RANDY

So, now that you've seen me – what?

JILL

(Laughing)

I don't know. Nothing I guess.

RANDY

(Shrugging off his jacket and draping it over a chair back.)

Good! Then get to work. You can help me sort and pack this stuff. We're sure to find things that belong to you, too.

JILL

I'm only supposed to stay a minute. I – you – we are not supposed to be here anymore.

RANDY

All the more reason to get busy.

(RANDY grabs a leather portfolio off the table and tosses it to JILL.)

RANDY

Here. This is yours. Drop it in that box over there.

(JILL catches the object, locates the box and looks inside.)

JILL

Hey, this is all my stuff!

RANDY

I know. I started collecting it Sunday night.

JILL

You were packing *before* closing arguments?

RANDY

I figured the outcome was in the bag.

(JILL regards him skeptically)

All right! I *hoped* the outcome was in the bag. And I couldn't just sit here being eaten up by suspense ... so I started packing.

JILL

I would have thought waiting for the jury's verdict would have been far more suspenseful.

(RANDY begins picking up files, paper, pens, etc. and dumping things in various boxes, using his movements for emphasis as he speaks.)

RANDY

Nah! That's when I *knew* the outcome was in the bag.

(Pause)

If you could have heard yourself! You won the case right then.

JILL

Hardly --

RANDY

You were brilliant, Jill. You sympathized with the victims, empathized with their families, and then you humanized me.

(Pause.)

RANDY (cont.)

Although you could have left out the \$6 million.

JILL

(Interrupting)

I wanted them to see the true extent of your dedication, your generosity.

(Pause.)

You really are quite something.

RANDY

You were ballsy, too. Bringing up the DNA again. Making it sound like Daugherty was leading a lynch mob.

JILL

(Changing the subject)

Greg Rossi called to offer me my old job back, OR rather a better job. It's a pretty good job. Better than the promotion I'd hoped to get.

RANDY

Jill honey, right now there isn't a job anywhere in the legal profession that you *couldn't* get. But I've got a contract – in writing – so you're coming to work for me.

JILL

It's too much money – a non-profit shouldn't pay anyone \$400,000 a year.

RANDY

The non-profit gets its money from my trust fund. Don't worry. I'll make you earn every penny. Accept another job and I'll pay it to you anyway.

(JILL smiles)

Now, are you going to help me pack this stuff?

JILL

Sure.

RANDY

Grab those books by the bed...those two big books over by the desk ... and those on the floor. They can all go in that box near the door.

(JILL begins to collect books. RANDY watches for a moment. Then turns to his task whistling softly as he works. JILL now has an armload of books and they seem to be getting too heavy for her.)

RANDY

Whoa! You don't have to work that fast. Let me help you with that.

(RANDY takes some of the books from JILL but the switch off is clumsy and a couple of books fall to the floor exposing the photo of RANDY and the young man that RANDY had removed from evidence and kept. RANDY reaches for it and causes the rest of the books to fall as well.

JILL drops to her knees to begin scooping up the books and sees the photo. RANDY starts to grab for it, but stops himself. JILL looks at it for a moment.)

JILL

What's this?

(She picks up the photo.)

Where did you get this?

RANDY

It's mine.

JILL

Well, it's certainly a photo of you...

(She continues to look at the photo)

Who's that with you? Nathan Jackson? My God it is! I recognize him from the --! And you've got your arm around him!

(Pause)

When was this taken?

RANDY

The date's on the photo. Lower left corner.

JILL

Two fourteen... February 14th ... Valentine's Day! This picture was taken on Valentine's Day two years ago. And you've got your arm around Nate Jackson – the victim.

RANDY

Nate wasn't the victim.

JILL

What?!

RANDY

Nate didn't die that night. Why are so getting upset.

JILL

Because you didn't tell me about this!

(Pause.)

What else didn't you tell me?

(RANDY says nothing. He simply stands and stares at JILL.)

JILL

Why didn't you tell me about this.

(Pause.)

Is he? Was he?

(Pause)

Is *Nathan Jackson* the nice man you were protecting?

RANDY

Yes.

JILL

You lied to me.

RANDY

No, I just didn't...

JILL

A lie of omission is still a lie. The truth. The whole truth. And nothing but the truth. Remember?

(Pause.)

You didn't just lie to me, Randy, you lied to everyone.

(RANDY says nothing. He looks away)

JILL

Oh, so there's more? How much more?

(Pause.)

How much more, Randy?

(Pause.)

Did you kill those boys?

RANDY

How could you think that?

JILL

You're making it pretty easy!

JILL (cont.)

(Pause.)

I've been so stupid!

(Pause.)

Look at this photo, Randy!

RANDY

I've seen it.

JILL

The way you look at him. You and Nate were ... He was 17 years old and you were having sex with him.

RANDY

It wasn't like that.

JILL

Oh, yeah? Then what was it like, Randy. Nate's in this picture. You have your arm around him! And you're looking at him the way a man looks at his lover.

(Pause. JILL is getting worked up.)

How could I fall for your act? Even after I discovered you lied about not knowing me ... I just kept on going ... so sure of myself. And now I've set a pedophile free.

(Pause)

Are you a serial killer, too, Randy? Did you go after those other boys too? Seduce them? Keep them around for a while. Then kill them so they couldn't talk?

(Pause)

And now that you're free? Are you going to kill more, Randy? Give me an idea of how many so I'll know how much blood I have on my hands.

(RANDY grabs JILL by the shoulders and shakes her to stop her hysterics.)

RANDY

Stop it. Just stop it. You're hysterical! There's an armed escort just down the hall. Do you want to bring those prison guards in here with their guns drawn?

JILL

(Struggling free of RANDY's grasp.)

Why not? It just might solve my problem for me.

RANDY

I'm not a pedophile.

JILL

You just admitted you had sex with an underage boy!

RANDY

Well I'm certainly not a serial killer. It doesn't take much to get you to jump to all sorts of ridiculous conclusions. I help troubled young boys. I save them. I don't abuse them.

JILL

(Slapping the photo)

Then how do you explain what you did to Nate Jackson.

RANDY

What's the date on the photo, Jill? You read it out to me a moment ago? Still say February 14th?

(JILL nods.)

That was taken at my birthday party – at the club – 14 months before Nate died. In fact, nobody had died when that photo was taken. *Nobody*. It didn't mean anything – then.

JILL

But it means something now.

RANDY

You think I lied to you? Well maybe I did. Maybe I hid my relationship with Nick because of how it would make me look.

(Pause)

And here's the truth, Jill. I didn't lie because I abuse boys. I lied so I could go on helping them. For God's sake, I've dedicated my life to boys. I went on trial for my life because I am a gay man who help boys. Do you really think I could coldly kill those boys – one after another?

JILL

If – as you say – there's no blood on your hands, then why did you lie? Huh? Why? Come on, Randy! Tell me. Let's see if you can get me to trust you again.

(Pause)

I nearly quit when I caught you in your first lie. Instead, I stupidly decided to believe in you anyway. I thought, "This man's flawed alright, but he's no killer. He made a mistake." But it wasn't a mistake, was it, Randy? It was all just part of your plan.

RANDY

Yes.

JILL

And you figured \$400,000 was enough to buy my silence if I found out the truth.

RANDY

No!

(Pause)

Jill, will you please listen ... while I tell you the truth ... the whole truth?

JILL

Do you have it in you to do that?

RANDY

First, I never lied. I simply withheld information that you didn't need to know to defend me.

JILL

Like why you killed those boys?

RANDY

Listen, Jill. I bear the responsibility for those deaths. And I'll explain why. But I did not commit a string of murders. I ended them ... and I paid a price to end them. A price that will haunt me as long as I live.

JILL

Really.

RANDY

Jill, have you ever fallen in love?

(Pause.)

I have. I fell hopelessly, impossibly in love. I found myself so obsessed that I didn't think – couldn't think. That feeling set all *this* in motion.

JILL

Oh come on!

RANDY

A few months before that picture was taken, I met a beautiful young man in a bar – The Closet – to be exact. I couldn't believe my luck when he talked to me ... danced with me ... went home with me. Just turned 21 – or so I thought – and quickly in love with me, too! You can't believe how I became obsessed with him. I thought about him every minute ... started planning a life with him.

JILL

So Nate was the “nice man.”

RANDY

I was such a fool; it never occurred to me that the object of my affection was not who he said he was. When I saw him at my birthday party at the club, I thought – well it doesn't matter what I thought because they called his name, brought him to the dais to make a presentation. He was one of my boys – a scholarship winner, one of my successes – and not yet 18.

JILL

The picture?

RANDY

Taken before the presentation.

JILL

(Interrupting)

All the hearts and flowers are very sweet ... but what's the point of this tender story.

RANDY

You want the point? You want to know where all this is leading? Then let me lay it out for you right now.

(Pause.)

Nate killed those boys. It was Nate's blood on Mark's shirt.

JILL

You couldn't possibly know that.

RANDY

Couldn't I?

(Pause)

I ended it that night – right after the party. I took Nate aside and told him it was over. That I couldn't – a man in my position couldn't – love him anymore. Nate was hurt, furious. He told me I'd pay. I ignored him. What could a 17-year-old do to me?

JILL

You expect me to believe this?

RANDY

I didn't believe it. Not even as the bodies piled up ... until Nate came to me one night. I wasn't going to let him in, but he was hurt, bloody. He claimed he had nowhere else to go. He said he'd been attacked, so I treated his wounds, gave him a clean shirt and sent him on his way. He pleaded to stay – pleaded for me to take him back. Said crazy things I didn't believe. It was only later that I realized he'd come to me on November 14th, and all the boys...

JILL

Died on the 14th? How convenient.

RANDY

When I made the connection, I was sick. I realized that I'd met all those boys – at least once. I talked to them casually at a club. Presented them with a trophy or an award, shook their hands when they won a scholarship ... and soon after ... they were dead.

(Pause.)

RANDY (cont.)

I realized then that Nate had set me up. I didn't know what to do, but I knew I had to do something.

JILL

Like call the police?

RANDY

If I called the police, do you think they would have believed me and arrested a 17-year-old boy? Or would they have tossed the old pedophile in jail? What would have happened to my clubs – my boys – then? I had to find a way to stop him.

JILL

You killed Nate? Come on, Randy. He died a month to the day after Mark. On the 14th. His body was found just like everyone else's...

RANDY

Because I put it there. I planned it that way.

(Pause)

I studied those murders... discovered the boys were being killed in alphabetical order and decided to wait until the time was right. After Mark was killed, I told Nathan that he could have what he wanted. I praised him for his smart plan. I asked for some time – a month – to set things up so that we'd have everything we'd need to start life over. I told him we'd go to South America and live on a beach – that we'd leave on March 15th.

(Pause.)

On March 14th, I cooked a special Bon Voyage dinner and shared it with him, made love to him, and strangled him with the belt from my dressing gown while he slept. I'd drugged his wine to make sure he wouldn't awaken, wouldn't struggle. Then I dressed him, drove him to the newest job site and left him to be found.

JILL

You waited? You waited! You let three boys die!

RANDY

But I protected so many more. Waiting was the only thing I could do. Nate's death had to fit the pattern. I couldn't afford to be caught.

JILL

So you became judge, jury and executioner?

RANDY

I did. And damn the cost.

JILL

To whom, Randy? To whom?

RANDY

You don't think I suffered? You don't think I mourn for those boys? You don't think I ask God every day why it couldn't have been different?

JILL

What about me, Randy? Why'd you make me part of it?

RANDY

I didn't plan to. But then I saw the DNA report and I guessed whose blood was on Mark's shirt. Then when you left me alone with the evidence boxes —

JILL

I never did!

RANDY

You did. That Saturday morning Greg Rossi called to tell you to drop the case or resign. You were gone for more than five minutes. Plenty of time to remove the last page and staple it to something else.

JILL

You did that? But that became the whole basis of my case! Everything I said — did — was a lie.

(Making up her mind.)

I've got to go to the judge —

RANDY

And tell him what? That I'm not guilty?

JILL

I'd tell him how you tampered with the evidence. I'd tell him how you confessed to killing Nate.

RANDY

I've already been tried for killing Nate. Double jeopardy, remember?

(Pause, RANDY goes to JILL and takes her hand.)

I didn't kill 13 of those boys, and I didn't murder Nathan. I executed him for his crimes. I'm a damn hero. I should get a fucking parade.

JILL

No, wait! I could still go to the DA. I'll tell him about the new evidence...about how you confessed to me. How you murdered Nate and were accessory to murder three more times. He'd listen. He wanted you.

RANDY

You made him look crooked and you made him look foolish. Why on earth would he listen to you — especially, when he couldn't do anything about it. Double jeopardy, Jill.

JILL

Then I'll go to the judge.

RANDY

There's no legal reason in the world to get him to listen. Besides how would you explain waiting until after I was acquitted to come forward?

JILL

But I didn't know!

RANDY

You think he'd believe you?

JILL

It's the truth.

RANDY

But you signed a contract. To come work for me. For a \$400,000 a year.

(Pause.)

Muddies the waters, doesn't it?

(Pause.)

Look, Jill. You saved my life and I'm grateful.

(Pause.)

Just come to work for me. Take the money. Enjoy your fame. Make a good life for yourself. You deserve it.

JILL

Why me? Why did it have to be me?

RANDY

Because I knew you. Because you were stuck in a dead-end job and you deserved more. Because you were smart, tenacious and a little naïve. Because we had a past and I could make you believe me. Because I was in a position to give you what you wanted.

JILL

What do I want?

RANDY

Money, position, power.

JILL

But not this way!

RANDY

I never meant for you to find out, Jill. I should have destroyed that photograph. It was stupid of me to keep it. But it was the only one of the two of us that was ever taken ... and I couldn't bear to part with it. Sentimental, foolish ... and now I guess selfish, too.

(Pause.)

RANDY (Cont.)

It'll be all right, Jill. You'll see. It won't seem so terrible tomorrow. And before you know it, you'll see that I was right. That I did the only thing I could do.

JILL

No.

RANDY

I've been here long enough. I think I'll tell the guards to go ahead put the junk in the incinerator. I don't want it ... except for

(Pause. He digs a sheet of paper out of a box.)

This. It's our contract.

(He walks over to JILL and takes the photo out of her hands.)

And this.

JILL

You want that? Why would you want that?

RANDY

Because I love him and it's the only photo ever taken of the two of us.

(Pause,)

I love you, too, Jill. See you at the office Monday.

(RANDY slips on his jacket, slips the photo into the pocket and leaves, JILL slumps into a chair and sits staring at nothing as the lights fade to black.)

THE END