

The Practice
Going Home
Season 8, Episode 13
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At Brenda Wilbur's house, Dr Paul Stewart is in the bathroom just off of her bedroom. He is bent over the toilet, retching. He straightens up, turns and seems startled by what he sees. A motionless body on the floor. He stands in the doorway, breathing heavily. He turns away at the sight of bloodied face. He bends over, his hands on his knees, and then is startled again when the clock radio suddenly comes on.

Talk Show Host 1: On the radio. The Liberal media hates pro-God, pro-country, pro-family values. Because, frankly they don't believe in them!

Talk Show Host 2: On the radio. That's not true. Hold on.

Talk Show Host 1: On the radio. It is true. **Paul walks over to turn off the radio, then stops just before his hand touches the dial.** And it's why media-types, especially in New York City and Hollywood hate the US Military, hate the president, and frankly hate guys like me. What have they got to rush?

Talk Show Host 2: On the radio. Nobody hates the US Military!

Talk Show Host 1: On the radio. Bottom line is...

Paul rushes out of the room, runs the down the stairs and out the door. He gets into his car and quickly drives off. In his wake we see a lady walking her dog; she looks around as she watches him drive off.

At Young, Frutt and Berluti, in the outer office, Alan Shore, Tara Wilson, Jimmy Berluti, Eleanor Frutt, and Eugene Young are there.

Jimmy Berluti: A retreat?

Alan Shore: Yes! A company outing. Where we all to get to know our inner selves. Do people ever get to your core, Jimmy? Or do they stop short at the mantle?

Jimmy Berluti: Did you hear that? 'Fat' joke.

The telephone rings.

Alan Shore: I'm actually being quite serious here. We all work too hard.

Tara Wilson: She answers the phone. Young, Frutt and Berluti.

Alan Shore: How about Tahiti?

Tara Wilson: Alan? Paul Stewart? He says it's an emergency.

Alan Shore: Into the phone. Paul?

Dr Paul Stewart: Alan! I need you to get down to my office, now!

Alan Shore: Did I miss a checkup?

Dr Paul Stewart: I've got an emergency. I've detectives in my waiting room! I need you to get down here; you need to come through my private entrance so they don't see you. Hurry, Alan. I'm in trouble.

In Dedham, in Dr Paul Stewart's office, Alan comes into through the back and walks along a hallway. He knocks on a door.

Dr Paul Stewart: He opens the door. Alan!

Alan Shore: What is going on?

Dr Paul Stewart: Come in, please.

Cheryl Bell: She comes in from in inner door. They're still waiting out there.

Dr Paul Stewart: In a second, Cheryl.

Cheryl Bell: They're about to just wa...

Dr Paul Stewart: I'll be out in second. Just tell them I'm finishing a procedure. **Cheryl leaves. He closes the door.** Listen. I've been having an affair. Brenda Wilbur? Who I believe you know?

Alan Shore: He smiles knowingly. Brenda Wilbur?

Dr Paul Stewart: Yes.

Alan Shore: I've been wanting to have an affair with Brenda Wilbur.

Dr Paul Stewart: Can you shut up? Can you just shut up, please? She's dead.

Alan Shore: He is stunned. What?

Dr Paul Stewart: Somebody bludgeoned her, or something. I saw the body. I was there last night. I walked in...

Alan Shore: Wha - , wait, slow down.

Dr Paul Stewart: I can't slow down. The police are out there. I was there. I had make love to here earlier, and now they're here to ask me questions.

Alan Shore: Okay, let's...

Dr Paul Stewart: Do I talk to the police now? Do I tell 'em I was there? What should I do?

Cheryl Bell: **She opens the door.** They're coming.

Dr Paul Stewart: Just get out. **He pushed her back and closes the door.** What do I do? It's gonna look suspicious if I have a lawyer. How do I even explain you being here?

Outside this room, through the opaque window of a closed door Cheryl is attempting to block detectives Kevin McCarley and Sam Whistler.

Cheryl Bell: He said he'd be right out!

Detective Kevin McCarley: We've been here an hour! **He just barges his way past her and opens the door.** We don't have time for this!

Cheryl Bell: He's in procedure!

Detective Kevin McCarley: So you keep saying. **He walks into the room.** I'm sorry, Doctor, but this is urgent. **Alan is lying on the dentist chair, wearing a bib, his mouth open, while Paul, wearing a mask, is working on Alan.**

Dr Paul Stewart: Would you give me ten more seconds, for God's sake? This patient could sue me. He's a lawyer.

Detective Kevin McCarley: You know a Ms Brenda Wilbur?

Dr Paul Stewart: Why?

Detective Kevin McCarley: This needs to be a private conversation.

Dr Paul Stewart: You need to go back out there and wait. **A beat.** What about Brenda?

Detective Kevin McCarley: She's dead. Do you know her?

Dr Paul Stewart: **He drops his tools on the table and takes off his mask.** What do you mean she's dead?

Detective Kevin McCarley: She was killed. Look, we really need to have this conversation in private. I need to ask you some things.

Alan Shore: Hold on. **He sits up, takes a sip of water, swishes it in his mouth, leans over the mini-sink, spits out the water, then turns back.** Sorry. Heh. But, as a lawyer, I get suspicious when detectives barge asking questions about dead people.

Detective Kevin McCarley: This doesn't involve you, sir.

Alan Shore: Actually it involves you more than you could ever imagine. I'm not only this man's friend. I was a friend of Brenda Wilbur's. How did she die?

Detective Kevin McCarley: Head trauma. **To Paul.** Your car was seen parked outside her place yesterday afternoon.

Alan Shore: Wait a second. Are you questioning this man as if he were a suspect?

Detective Kevin McCarley: Certainly not! We ju...

Alan Shore: Paul, when a detective says certainly not, you can be certain...

Detective Kevin McCarley: Sir!

Alan Shore: It's Alan Shore. I'm sure my client would love to cooperate, but not before I get a little more information.

Dr Paul Stewart: I don't mind talking, Al.

Alan Shore: But I do mind, Paul. **To Kevin.** I know you have his best interests at heart, just the same...

Detective Kevin McCarley: Mr Shore...

Alan Shore: He's not talking. **They have a stare-off. Alan looks to Detective Sam Whistler.** Perhaps you'd like to. You've said nothing so far. **He looks to Kevin, implying him.** I think he did it.

Detective Kevin McCarley: Look, Counsel, this is how it's gonna go, he's either going to talk to us here, or we're going to take him into custody and walk him right out that front door. This is a small town. This man's family has quite a legacy in this small town. I don't think he wants to be seen handcuffed in connection to the murder of a woman that he had a mysterious relationship with. Do you?

Alan Shore: My God, you're Kevin McCarley! Alan Shore! We went to middle school together. How are you? Look at you! Wow! You're still the same pain-in-the-ass you were then!

Detective Kevin McCarley: **To Sam.** Take him.

Dr Paul Stewart: Alan!

Alan Shore: **To Sam.** Just a sec.

Alan and Paul move off to the side.

Dr Paul Stewart: Let me tell him what I know.

Alan Shore: Terrible idea. We don't know what he knows.

Dr Paul Stewart: He is going to arrest me.

Alan Shore: Look at me. First of all. Try not to look so much like a suspect. Can you put something other than panic on your face? **Paul nods.** You were having an affair with the victim. You were witnessed at the scene. Dodging arrest isn't the goal here. It's about preventing a conviction.

Dr Paul Stewart: **He is startled.** A conviction?

Alan Shore: You cannot give any statement to the police. There's a reason for the little jingle. "What say, can and will be used against you."

Dr Paul Stewart: What about Wendy? What about the kids?

Alan Shore: I'll go talk to them. In the meantime, you talk to nobody.

Dr Paul Stewart: I cannot believe this is happening to me.

Detective Kevin McCarley: Look! If I have to arrest him right here! I will!

Alan Shore: Shouldn't you first do that other thing that police do? What's the word? Investigate!

Detective Kevin McCarley: Maybe I should bring you in on aiding and abetting.

Alan Shore: Kevin, it's me, Alan! We played on the same soccer team. We've showered together! You had a very small penis then... has it?

Detective Kevin McCarley: **To Sam.** Take him.

Alan Shore: **To Paul.** Say nothing!

Detective Sam Whistler: Let's go. **He takes Paul away.**

Alan Shore: Do we Mirandise here, Kev? Or is that not done in Dedham?

Outside Brenda Wilbur's house, Alan is getting out of his car. He is taking on his cell phone.

Alan Shore: **Into the phone.** They took him into custody. They didn't make an actual arrest.

Eugene Young: Do they plan to?

Alan Shore: I don't know. It may just be about coercing a statement.

Eugene Young: Where are you now?

Alan Shore: At the scene. I figured I'll at least try and see whatever I can. **A beat.** All right. **He closes the cell phone and goes into the house. Just inside he meets Detective Kevin McCarley coming down the stairs.**

Detective Kevin McCarley: You again?

Alan Shore: What are you doin' here? I thought you were with my client.

Detective Kevin McCarley: We're given him time to think about cooperating

Alan Shore: I'm happy to advise him to cooperate. But, I gotta have some idea what we're dealing with here. I'd like to view the scene.

Detective Kevin McCarley: View the scene?

Alan Shore: Why not?

Detective Kevin McCarley: Because we don't give tours to civilians.

Alan Shore: I'm not gonna contaminate the crime scene.

Detective Kevin McCarley: We haven't even positively ID'd her yet.

Alan Shore: If you want my guy to cooperate. I can ID her! As I told you, I knew Brenda Wilbur.

Detective Kevin McCarley: She's been ID'd.

Alan Shore: Ah. Listen! You wanna talk to Paul Stewart, I wanna let him talk to you. Let me just get a glimpse of what we're dealing with here first. Help me, help you. **Kevin just stares.** You don't want me saying in court you wouldn't let me view the crime scene?

Kevin is undecided, then he goes up to the bedroom where a crime photographer is snapping pictures.

Alan follows Kevin into the room. They both look at the covered body. Kevin looks at the detective standing at the other side of the body. The detective bends down to lift off the sheet covering the body.

Alan Shore: **He looks at the body. The head is covered with dried blood. To Kevin.** She... uh... was found like that? **He swallows.**

Detective Kevin McCarley: Yes.

Alan Shore: **He stares down at the body. He looks to the detective across from him.** I uh... knew this woman. **The detective nods. Alan looks at the body again.**

Detective Kevin McCarley: You okay?

Alan Shore: Yeah. **He continues staring for another moment, then his eyes roll up and falls down in a faint.**

Detective Kevin McCarley: Get him off. Get him off!!

Several detectives lift Alan off of the body.

In Boston, at Young, Frutt and Berluti, Alan and Eugene are in the outer office.

Eugene Young: You fainted?

Alan Shore: Shh. Please. Don't make fun of me, Eugene. I wasn't prepared for what I saw.

Eugene Young: Right on the dead body?

Alan Shore: I'm asking you for advice, not ridicule. Do I let the man speak? Or not?

Eugene Young: Not if he's the suspect.

Alan Shore: But assuming he's innocent.

Eugene Young: We never assume.

Alan Shore: I've known him since childhood. He's...

Eugene Young: Ah... It's the childhood friends you can never trust.

Victoria Stewart: **She comes in.** Alan!

Alan Shore: Victoria?!

Victoria Stewart: What's being done?

Alan Shore: Victoria, this is Eugene Young, he's...

Victoria Stewart: **Looking at Alan.** Hello. What's being done?

Alan Shore: At this point there's...

Victoria Stewart: Is there a place for privacy?

Alan Shore: **He looks around.** Yes. **To Eugene.** Excuse us. **They go into an office. Alan closes the door.** There's been no arrest yet. They can place him at the scene several hours before. I'm assuming... they can establish... **He stops.**

Victoria Stewart: The affair? **Alan looks up.** Paul told me about it.

Alan Shore: Really? I would think his mother would be the last person that he'd want... **A beat.** What else has he told you?

At the police station, Paul is alone in room, waiting. Alan comes in.

Alan Shore: You were extorted by the victim? **Paul doesn't answer.** Paul, if I'm going to help you, you need to share with me at least as much as you tell your mother!

A beat as they stare at each other.

Dr Paul Stewart: Brenda contacted a lawyer who...

Alan Shore: Tried to shake you down?

Dr Paul Stewart: I was veiled. I confronted her over it. She apologized, admitted it was stupid idea. It was not longer an issue.

Alan Shore: No longer an issue? It transpired a week before her head was pounded to mulch.

Dr Paul Stewart: It wasn't a coercive Quid Pro Quo.

Alan Shore: But you perceived it as extortion. And she's currently dead. **Paul sighs.** Okay. Attorneys are divided over whether this next question should ever be posed to a client. But as a childhood friend who grew up with you, did you commit this crime?

Dr Paul Stewart: **He slowly leans forward on the table.** For a childhood friend to have to ask me. The answer is, "No. I did not."

Out on the street, Alan is going towards his car. Catherine Piper approaches him.

Catherine Piper: Hello.

Alan Shore: Hello.

Catherine Piper: Are you his lawyer?

Alan Shore: Sorry?

Catherine Piper: Paul Stewart. Are you his lawyer?

Alan Shore: Mrs Piper! Alan Shore! I grew up here in Dedham. Just three streets over from you!

Catherine Piper: You used to trick-or-treat at my house!

Alan Shore: Yes!

Catherine Piper: Ha, ha. Hello.

She offers her gloved hand for a handshake. Alan takes it.

Alan Shore: Hello! Aah! **He quickly takes back his hand, looks at it, sees something brown and wet on it, then smells it.** Ugh!

Catherine Piper: You once laid a paper bag on my porch. It was full of dog crap. I stomped it out and got stool on my fleece slippers. It never came out.

She offers Alan a handkerchief. He takes it and starts wiping his hand.

Alan Shore: **He shakes his head.** You were a crazy old bitch then. I can see nobody's adjusted you medication.

Catherine Piper: Funny you should mention that! This new Medicare package is gonna strap me. I need money, Alan. So much so, I sometimes see it in my dreams. In fact I see it almost everywhere. Ah... I especially saw it

at ten-thirty last night, when I saw Paul Stewart coming out of Brenda's house. I refer of course to dead Brenda. The slut all of you wanted to screw in high school. Many of you went on to do it, I'm sure. **She chuckles. A beat.** I have yet to go to the police. Tell Victoria if she pays me one point three million dollars, I won't put her precious little baby in jail. **She picks up her dog, smiles at Alan and then walks away.**

Back in the police station, Alan is again in the witness room with Paul. Nobody speaks for a moment.

Dr Paul Stewart: I told you I went back.

Alan Shore: I understand. But the police couldn't place you there at night. Only during the afternoon. This is much more damaging, Paul, to have you spotted leaving at ten-thirty.

Dr Paul Stewart: You're not suggesting that we pay her off, are you?

Alan Shore: No! But things aren't getting any better. We've gotta prepare ourselves. **Detective Kevin McCarley opens the door. Alan turns back to him.** I'm sorry; this is a lawyer/client meeting. Nothing personal.

Detective Kevin McCarley: I thought you'd like to know that we're officially charging your client with the murder of Brenda Wilbur. He'll be arraigned tomorrow in Dedham Superior Court. **He leaves.**

Outside on the street in front of Paul Stewart's house a car drives up. Inside several policemen are carrying computer equipment and boxes down the stairway. Wendy Stewart and her children, Michael and Melissa are watching from the living room. Alan comes in. He goes in to Wendy and her children.

Alan Shore: I'm sorry. There's nothing I can really say at this point, other than... you'll get through this.

Wendy Stewart: Did you know?

Alan Shore: About?

Wendy Stewart: Her.

Alan Shore: **A beat.** No. I haven't really kept in touch with Paul the last few years.

Wendy Stewart: You and me, both.

Alan Shore: **He sits down.** Melissa. Michael. When you were very young I told you a story about my first day at kindergarten? You probably don't remember. **Melissa shakes her head.** I was so scared. To the point of tears. Then this little boy I didn't even know, came up to me and took a hold of my hand and told me everything would be okay. Your dad has held on to my hand through much of our childhood. He was then, as he remains today, the most compassionate, gentle person I know. He did not commit this crime. He did not commit this crime.

At Young, Frutt and Berluti, in Eleanor's office, she and Eugene are there.

Eleanor Frutt: **Into the phone.** Okay. We'll see you then. **She hangs up the phone.** He's still out in Dedham. He'll be here in the morning, and then he's going back to Dedham for the arraignment.

Eugene Young: This was really his best friend?

Eleanor Frutt: Evidently.

Eugene Young: He doesn't seem the type.

Eleanor Frutt: Sorry?

Eugene Young: Alan! To have a 'best friend.'

Eleanor Frutt: Eugene. A lot of values may have passed him by, but friendship, and the loyalty that goes along with it? He lives by that.

Inside the Dedham courthouse, Alan is sitting on one of the benches. He is alone. Deep in thought.

Victoria Stewart: **She comes in.** Here you are! **Alan gets up.** May I ask why?

Alan Shore: Just thought I'd get a look at the room. She if it's how I remember. What are you doing here?

Victoria Stewart: Will he be granted bail?

Alan Shore: Well, he's a trusted life-long member of the community. Which his family half built. Strong roots. Doctor. Poses no threat to society. That, and a million dollars should get him bail.

Victoria sits down. So does Alan.

Victoria Stewart: I'm gonna be candid.

Alan Shore: There's a switch!

Victoria Stewart: However accomplished you are, as a civil attorney, your criminal experience... Would I be wise to look for another attorney, Alan? Please do not be offended.

Alan Shore: Victoria, you will micro-manage whoever tries this case. Best to go with someone who won't be thrown by your interference. **Victoria smiles and looks down.** And if you don't like what I'm doing you can always pull down my pants like old times and give me a spank.

Victoria Stewart: As I remember, you liked that.

Alan chuckles. They sit, deep in thought for a moment.

Alan Shore: Did he do this?

Victoria Stewart: You know Paul. He could never be capable of bludgeoning the life out of a human being.

Alan Shore: People change. If you only knew what I've become.

Victoria Stewart: When you were sixteen, you slept with your best friend's mother. How have you changed, Alan?

At Young, Frutt and Berluti, the next morning. Alan, Eleanor, Tara, Jimmy and Jamie Stringer, are in the conference room.

Alan Shore: ... to have Eleanor join me. Tara too. That should be enough for now. As we get closer to trial we may need to add more. I know I can't monopolize the whole firm...

Eugene Young: Can he pay for all this?

Alan Shore: His mother can. This is a check for seven hundred and fifty as retainer. I told her it'll likely go higher.

Eugene Young: Seven hundred and fifty thousand?

Alan Shore: We should obviously hire a private investigator immediately, since you used to be PI, Eugene, it would be great if you were able to oversee that end of it. Jimmy? Did you use to be anything?

Eleanor Frutt: When's the arraignment?

Alan Shore: This afternoon. Jaime, maybe you should head up the legal research. We may be filing various motions in limonene, the exclusionary rule could be optional with these people. **He hands over an envelope to Eugene.** I'm sure it's good. We should get going; it's a schlep to Dedham.

Eugene Young: Can I make one observation?

Alan Shore: Certainly.

Eugene Young: You seem nervous. Eleanor has criminal experience; maybe she should first-chair.

A beat.

Alan Shore: I'm fine. Shall we?

They leave.

In Dedham just outside the courtroom, Alan, Eleanor, Tara, and Victoria make their way through the hallway filled with a mob of reporters doing live broadcasts.

Female reporter 1: The arraignment itself figures to be short. Basically a reading over the charges, possibly the setting up a trial date.

Male reporter: What we know about the defense attorney, his name is Alan Shore, a prominent civil attorney, primarily known for his anti-trust work.

Female reporter 2: ...hearing now that he grew up with the defendant. That in fact, they were childhood friends.

In Judge Marcus Winnaker's courtroom, all parties present. As Paul is led into the courtroom camera start flashing and there is loud murmuring.

Clerk: Commonwealth versus Paul Stewart, charging one count in violation of general laws chapter two, six, five sub section one. Murder in the first degree.

Judge Marcus Winnaker: **He pounds his gavel.** Quiet down. **The cameras clicking and the murmuring continue.** Quiet down! **There is silence.** You people will have to contain yourself this very instance. Let me tell you members of the media. I don't have much use for the media. I let the media in only so you can get your pictures and be done with it. Now I can be done with you. I won't have the media spew their toxic waste in my room! Mr Shore! I understand you have waived a formal reading of the charges?

Alan Shore: That's correct, Your Honor. I'd also like to enter my appearance along with Ms Eleanor Frutt's at this time.

Judge Marcus Winnaker: So noted. Is there a question of bail?

DA Harvey Clarke: Yes, Your Honor. The Commonwealth opposes bail.

Alan Shore: Dr Stewart has not prior record, Your Honor. He's never even been charged with a crime.

Judge Marcus Winnaker: Well, he sure picked a beaut to start with.

Alan Shore: He poses neither a safety nor a flight risk, he has extremely strong roots in the community.

Judge Marcus Winnaker: How many times have you appeared before me, Mr Shore?

Alan Shore: Why? Does it get old?

Judge Marcus Winnaker: Is that an insult? Sounds like he may have insulted me. **To the court stenographer.** Read that back.

Court Stenographer: **Reading.** Why does it get old.

Alan Shore: Objection to the reading, Judge. It lacked nuance.

Judge Marcus Winnaker: Read that back!

Court Stenographer: Reading. Objection to the reading, Judge. It lacked nuance.

Alan Shore: Renew my objection, Judge. The reporter is flat. Tonally!

Judge Marcus Winnaker: He sounds like smartass. Is he an ass?

Alan Shore: Your Honor. My client poses no danger. He's not going anywhere.

Judge Marcus Winnaker: Two million. Cash! We'll conference on Wednesday at ten o'clock to set our schedule.

He pounds his gavel. We're adjourned.

At a Catholic Church, a choir is singing, Father Tom Dugan is in front. It is a service for Brenda Wilbur. People are still filing in. Alan comes in, he secretly takes out a small camera to take pictures of the guest book pages. He goes in to sit down.

Father Tom Dugan: We of course will have a formal memorial service soon to be scheduled. But considering the enormity of this tragedy, many of you wanted to convene today. And I support that. **Alan looks around to see who is attending this event.** Brenda Wilbur was a beloved member of this community. A life-long resident. And it's at times like these that we as a community come together.

At Victoria's house, in her living room, Alan, Eleanor, Victoria and Paul are having a cup of coffee.

Eleanor Frutt: The first thing we need to discuss is venue. Is Dedham the best place for this trial?

Victoria Stewart: Why wouldn't it be?

Eleanor Frutt: Well. Everybody here knows your son.

Alan Shore: That's a good thing, Eleanor, his reputation is impeccable.

Eleanor Frutt: It can't be impeccable, Alan, he had an affair.

Alan Shore: They know him to be gentle, caring, incapable of...

Eleanor Frutt: And the other potential problem is that everybody here seems to know you.

Alan Shore: Meaning?

Eleanor Frutt: You're not the most upstanding citizen on the eastern sea board.

Alan Shore: My life of indiscretion started after I left Dedham.

Victoria Stewart: The trial will be here. Everybody who knows Paul knows that he couldn't have committed that kind of violence. That has to inure to his benefit with the jury pool.

Eleanor Frutt: Thirdly, people like to see the high and mighty fall. Its human nature

Victoria Stewart: If anything, Paul comes off as meek.

Eleanor Frutt: **She takes a breath.** But you don't. I don't mean to sound rude, but from my cursory check on the pulse of this town the dislike of you runs deep. I'd hate for the jury to convict Paul to vicariously get back at...

Victoria Stewart: What's your name again?

Eleanor Frutt: Eleanor.

Victoria Stewart: You're discharged, Eleanor.

Alan Shore: That's not a good idea, Victoria.

Victoria Stewart: I don't want her part of the defense team.

Alan Shore: Paul, this is your defense, not...

Victoria Stewart: I'm paying for it! I won't pay for her. You're welcome to stay and observe pro bono, but the sound of your voice, that, that would be a deal breaker.

Dr Paul Stewart: Mom.

Victoria Stewart: I know what the people of Dedham response to, Paul. That's how I built my fortune, and they will not respond to this... Eleanor. You're discharged.

Alan Shore: May I speak to you in private?

Victoria Stewart: No. You can either leave with her, or stay without her.

Alan Shore: **He looks at Paul, Paul shakes his head slightly. Alan turns to Eleanor.** I'll see you back at the office. **A beat. Eleanor leaves.** One of the best criminal attorneys of this State just walked out that door. The only reason I don't walk out with her is because of Paul.

Victoria Stewart: That's nice. Let's turn to the most pressing matter, Catherine Piper. How are we arranging to pay her off?

Alan Shore: We aren't.

Dr Paul Stewart: Mom. That will come back to...

Victoria Stewart: If she testifies that she saw you leave the house at ten-thirty in an agitated state...

Alan Shore: I cannot bribe this witness.

Victoria Stewart: Alan. Who do you think you're kidding?

Alan Shore: Look. This woman...

Victoria Stewart: This is one of your most dear friends.

Alan Shore: Victoria...

Victoria Stewart: I'm not letting my only child go to prison. If you wanna walk out now, do it. But Catherine Piper will not be testifying as to what she saw the night Brenda Wilbur was killed.

Outside the house, Alan and Paul are getting into Alan's car.

Alan Shore: I can see you've found great success in holding your own with her.

Dr Paul Stewart: I don't want you committing any crimes on my behalf. I wanna make that clear.

Alan Shore: Yes. You just didn't wanna make it clear in front of your mother.

Dr Paul Stewart: She's still a force. What can I say?

Alan Shore: How about, "No."? **Paul doesn't reply. A beat. A long beat.** I don't mean to judge you.

Dr Paul Stewart: Yes, you do.

They look at each other for a long moment.

At a Catholic Church, Alan walks in; Father Tom Dugan is coming down some stairs.

Alan Shore: Excuse me, Sir, I'm looking for God and the men's room. Could you point me in the right direction?

Father Tom Dugan: It's true. You're really back. **They share a hug.**

Alan Shore: Still in the sin business I see.

Father Tom Dugan: As are you, I'm sure. Aye, it's good to see you. Although not under these circumstances.

Alan Shore: He's in terrible trouble, Tom.

Father Tom Dugan: Are you gonna be able to help him?

Alan Shore: I hope so. I haven't kept in constant touch the last few years. Am I missing anything? Is it possible...?

Father Tom Dugan: Paul? God, no! 'Course not. There are many people who probably had it in for that woman.

Alan Shore: Which is why I'm here.

Father Tom Dugan: Sorry?

Alan Shore: You're her priest. I'm assuming she practiced confession. Did she ever mention anything?

Father Tom Dugan: I can't talk about anything said in confession.

Alan Shore: She's dead.

Father Tom Dugan: The seal survives death. I think you know that.

Alan Shore: Paul's on trial for his life here. If you know something that can help him...

Father Tom Dugan: I can't break the confessional seal.

A beat.

Alan Shore: Perhaps something you thought she said in confession, something she actually said here, or just outside the confessional. You'd be able to share that, wouldn't you, Tom.

Father Tom Dugan: This isn't about skirting a rule, Alan. I have an obligation to God.

Alan Shore: If you know anything you can share, Tom, now's the time. **A beat.** And I'm the person to share it with. **A long beat.** It's good to see you again.

Father Tom Dugan: **They shake hands.** You, too.

Alan leaves.

Outside Victoria's house, Alan is getting out of his car and talking on his cell phone.

Alan Shore: **Into the phone.** Both rule thirteen and rule fourteen. Make sure you get a bill of particulars, and ask them for any evidence in their possession that supports any affirmative defense be it insanity, intoxication, alibi, anything, Jamie. Right. Make it as far reaching as you can. **A tiny dog barks at Alan. Alan recognizes it as Catherine's dog.** Yeah. Ah... I'll get back to you. **He closes his phone. The door is opened by a butler, Alan goes in.** Thank you.

Victoria Stewart: Alan! **She and Catherine are sitting at the dining room table having tea.** I believe you've met Catherine Piper.

Alan Shore: What is she doing here?

Catherine Piper: Why, I'm here to suck on one of Victoria's shriveled nipples, of course. Is that why you're here, Alan? Or is it just to drop some dog crap off at the door?

Alan Shore: Victoria, I need to have a word with you now.

Victoria Stewart: Would you excuse us, Catherine?

Catherine Piper: Why, of course, Honey.

Alan and Victoria go into the kitchen.

Alan Shore: You cannot do this.

Victoria Stewart: I've already made the deal.

Alan Shore: That woman is extremely unstable. She absolutely cannot be trusted. And if this ever gets out...

Victoria Stewart: If it gets out we simply say she's lying. Or like you say, she's unstable.

Alan Shore: This is so dangerous.

Victoria Stewart: What's dangerous would be her testimony.

Alan Shore: Victoria, this could bury your son in the end.

Victoria Stewart: No, I'm made my life trusting...

Alan Shore: This is Paul's life! You seem to keep forgetting that.

Victoria Stewart: You can stay. Or you can go. **She goes out to the dining room.**

Catherine Piper: I thought I heard words. **Compassionately.** Were you two having words?

Victoria Stewart: You will also be available to testify that you saw Paul leave at five PM. **Alan comes out of the kitchen.** And that you saw neither him nor his car after that.

Catherine Piper: Victoria! That would be perjury. **She smiles smugly.** The price goes up for perjury!

Victoria Stewart: You will do it for this price, Catherine.

Alan sits down in the back and listens.

Catherine Piper: It must be awful to be at the mercy of one of the little people. Imagine, Victoria, if I passed you on the street you wouldn't so much as make eye contact for fear of brushing with a commoner. And now I'm in your dining room. Drinking from your china! **She sighs with pleasure.** And you have to look at me. Look at me, Victoria. This is what can happen to vicious, soulless people such as yourself. Little people lay in wait to screw you over. You walk around this town like you own it. And I suppose much of it you do. Well, I guess you don't own its people! Do you?

Victoria Stewart: Don't be silly, Catherine. I'm buying you right now. And that'll be your legacy, won't it? Catherine Piper for Sale.

Outside Paul's house, Alan gets out of his car and is immediately surround by reporters.

Male reporter: Mr. Shore? Mr. Shore. Could you give us a brief statement or two about what's going on?

Alan Shore: Certainly. He never pitches past seven, it was insane to let him return for the eighth, and everybody knew it, and it's equally insane for any of us to ever, ever get sucked in again.

Inside the house, in the living room Paul and Alan are there.

Dr Paul Stewart: Maybe I should stay at my mother's house for a while.

Alan Shore: I'm sure she'd love it. Did you know she's paying off Catherine Piper? If she insists on interfering you're the only with the authority to banish her. If I say do that, Paul, you must.

Dr Paul Stewart: Wendy's leaving.

Alan Shore: I beg your pardon?

Dr Paul Stewart: She's leaving me. **A beat.** She's planning to...

Alan Shore: Where is she?

Dr Paul Stewart: In the kitchen. **Alan goes into the kitchen.** I tried to talk to her!

In the kitchen Wendy is banging around the dishes as she's washing them.

Alan Shore: You need to wait until the trial is over.

Wendy Stewart: Why?

Alan Shore: Because it might and probably will negatively influence the jury. You need to be by his side. At his side.

Wendy Stewart: I can't do that.

Alan Shore: If not for your husband, then for your children's father. **Wendy is furiously wiping a plate.** I'm not speaking as a marriage counselor, Wen... The dish is dry. **She puts down the tea towel, slams the plate on the counter, and crosses her arms defensively as she leans against the counter. Not facing Alan.** Look at me. **She can't make herself do that.** Believe it or not, wives don't statically leave their husbands over infidelity. With the remotest possibility that you walking out could be perceived as you thinking he's guilty of murder, and there is that possibility, you cannot walk out that door now.

Wendy Stewart: Maybe I do think he's guilty of murder! You haven't asked my opinion on that! Alan!

Dr Paul Stewart: Let me ask. **He joins them.** Do you think I'm guilty, Wendy?

Wendy Stewart: I don't know. **Alan turns to look at her.** What? I, I'm supposed to assume that I know you? That...?

Dr Paul Stewart: You know I'm not capable of violence!

Wendy Stewart: I didn't think you were capable... **A beat.** I'll tell you what I'm not capable of. Walking into a courthouse, day after day, by your side, pretending...

Alan Shore: If you don't pretend he could be going to prison for life! For a crime he didn't commit. No matter how angry you are with him right now, you can't possibly want that.

At Victoria's house, in her living room, she and Alan are having a drink.

Victoria Stewart: Will she stay?

Alan Shore: For now. Hopefully her anger will subside and we'll work it out. **A beat.** Victoria, I know how desperately you wanna save your son, but you must, you must let me handle the defense. You're gonna end up hurting him. I promise you.

Victoria Stewart: Just tell me you'll win.

Alan Shore: I can't do that at this point. It's too soon to predict anything yet. The case thus far is circumstantial, I work for perhaps the best criminal defense firm in the Commonwealth, we have every reason to be optimistic.

Victoria looks down. A beat. Alan sits down on the couch with here. Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how was the play? **Victoria gives Alan a look. A beat.** Catherine Piper is a petty, vicious woman, and I'm sorry.

Victoria Stewart: People like Catherine Piper can only shoot spitballs.

Alan Shore: Spitballs sting.

Victoria Stewart: You know, Alan, I've always believed that people regret more the things they don't do, than the ones they do. But one thing I did which I've long regretted... was sleeping with you.

Alan Shore: I'm sorry to hear that. I wasn't a virgin, if it makes you feel better.

Victoria Stewart: Oh, it was quite clear at the time that you weren't a virgin. No, it isn't that, or even that you were young, or even that you were Paul's best friend.

Alan Shore: What is it, then?

Victoria Stewart: I suspected that you'd fallen in love with me. **She touches his arm.** Did I hurt you?

A beat.

Alan Shore: Victoria, I was sixteen. Can a boy even be capable of love?

Victoria Stewart: What I remember most was your kiss. Sixteen-year-olds tend to kiss like they're eating chicken fingers.

Alan Shore: How many teenagers had you been with?

Victoria Stewart: Yours were so soft. Gentle. Loving, I guess.

For a long moment they look at each other.

Alan Shore: It's late. I have a long drive.

Victoria Stewart: Yeah.

Alan Shore: Good night, Victoria.

Victoria Stewart: G'night.

Alan gets up, he looks at Victoria for a moment, then leaves.