

Boston Legal  
Word Salad Day  
Season 2, Episode 21  
Written by David E. Kelley  
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**Judge Stephen Bickel's courtroom is full and tense. Seated at the plaintiff's table are an African-America man and woman. At the defense table, corporate big wigs and their lawyer, Eric Yavitch. Alan addresses the jury.**

**Alan Shore:** ...and over forty percent of the ground water in the United States, forty percent, is contaminated by industrial, agricultural household pollution. Over the last five years hundreds of thousands of blood tests given to Massachusetts's children have shown elevated levels of lead in their blood. And yet, what is our biggest fear? The dirty bomb, not the dirty water.

**Eric Yavitch:** Objection, Your Honor. Mr Shore is introducing evidence in his closing that was never presented at trial.

**Alan Shore:** Nonsense, Your Honor. I refer you to plaintiff's exhibit number apple.

**Eric Yavitch:** I beg your pardon?

**Alan Shore:** Apple trash can is picked from God.

**Everyone looks at Alan, confused. Alan appears as though everything is okay.**

**Eric Yavitch:** Huh?

**Judge Stephen Bickel:** Mr. Shore...

**Alan Shore:** Not the years sixty when classic electrons are free.

**Eric Yavitch:** Objection! Uh, I think.

**Judge Stephen Bickel:** Mr. Shore, you have a notorious history of courtroom theatrics. If your aim is to force a mistrial, you will be disappointed.

**Alan Shore:** **Under his breath.** Pillow pants join forces over embargo pylons. **He is emphatic.** You aren't sailing past honor for the liking of a room. These questions are birthday basements. To end the blue radish is the upside of luxury and sparking a good lizard can only make tears fall in hindsight. Puddles do not ask for why not? It is cheese! Breath and wind. It is cheese. **He sits down, spent.**

**Everyone from the jury, to the opposing side to his own clients look at him in bewilderment. He looks up at everyone and feigns nonchalance.** What?

**In neurologist Dr Craig Francis's office, Alan, tense, sits at a desk next to the doctor. His MRI readout is on display on the desk computer.**

**Dr Craig Francis:** ...word salad. It's the phenomenon of confused language, seen most often in patients with schizophrenia or another underlying psychosis. Now similar symptoms may also result from head trauma or an invasive tumor.

**Alan Shore:** **He is startled.** And I have...?

**Dr Craig Francis:** None of those. **Alan is relieved.** According to the MRI, your brain looks normal.

**Alan Shore:** **He looks at the computer screen.** I wouldn't know if it didn't.

**Dr Craig Francis:** Also you don't display any symptoms of psychosis or schizophrenia.

**Alan Shore:** Well! We hardly know each other.

**Dr Craig Francis:** The truth of it is the brain is very much a mystery. It's theoretically possible that these symptoms might be brought on by acute anxiety. How are things at home?

**Alan Shore:** I live alone in a hotel.

**Dr Craig Francis:** I see.

**At Crane, Poole and Schmidt, Denny is in his office pours drinks. Alan is with him.**

**Denny Crane:** Word salad?

**Alan Shore:** It's talking in unintelligible gibberish, brought on by anxiety. **He takes out a pill bottle.** He gave me some pills.

**Denny Crane:** Oh? Let me see. **He takes the bottle from Alan and pours some of the pills into his palm.** Oh, blue. I like blue. Something to wash it down with?

**Alan Shore:** I don't know. I rather value my melancholy. Used to be a personality trait one was allowed to have. Like Abraham Lincoln or Lord Byron. Now one is required to grin and say things like, "Great!"

**Denny Crane:** You don't need pills. You need to stop helping people.

Alan Shore: What do you mean?

Denny Crane: You know those old people who were being fleeced by their conservator, the smoker, that gloomy little girl who wouldn't smile. You tried to help those people and don't deny it.

Alan Shore: I don't, but what the hell does that have to do with this episode of word salad?

Denny Crane: Well Alan, the human mind is like a bucket! It can only hold so much. You see all that suffering going on around you and you get involved, it fills up your bucket, and soon it's overflowing.

Alan Shore: The doctor recommended I take a few days off.

Denny Crane: I know just the thing! I'm gonna take you to my spa. I'm gonna empty your bucket.

**At Crane, Poole and Schmidt, Denise is behind her desk in her office. Across from her sit Evett and Alena, Ray Richardson sits between them.**

Alena Richardson: I live at 147 Edgar Street.

Evette Richardson: And I'm at 149 Edgar Street.

Alena Richardson: We baby sit each other's kids.

Evette Richardson: We go to Cost Buy together.

Alena Richardson: Split everything.

Evette Richardson: Toilet paper, paper towels...

Alena Richardson: Jumbo Ketchup Two-Pack.

Evette Richardson: I have the lawn mower.

Alena Richardson: **Raises her hands.** Hedge clippers and weed whackers.

Evette Richardson: And we both share Ray.

**Ray smiles. He's delighted by this.**

Evette Richardson: There's just one problem with this arrangement.

Denise Bauer: It's completely illegal.

Ray Richardson: Afraid so.

Alena Richardson: Well, for six years, everything was fine, but you know how people start to talk.

Evette Richardson: And one day, we came home with the children and Ray was being handcuffed and arrested.

Alena Richardson: Right in front of 147! Denise, we've done nothing wrong. There's no victim here.

Evette Richardson: To the contrary. In this chaotic world we live in where there is no stability, we have found a way to raise a family in a cooperative, loving way. And now we're being punished for it. I think that's wrong.

Alena Richardson: We all do.

Ray Richardson: Especially me.

Denise Bauer: Guys, the law on polygamy has been settled for a long time.

Evette Richardson: So, it's time for a change.

Alena Richardson: Denise. We are all very committed to this.

Ray Richardson: I know I am.

Denise Bauer: Right.

**At Crane, Poole and Schmidt, Shirley Schmidt is in her office with Brad Chase, Paul Lewiston and Chris Mott.**

Brad Chase: Chris Mott. Shirley Schmidt.

Chris Mott: How do you do.

Brad Chase: Paul Lewiston.

Paul Lewiston: Hello.

**Hellos and handshakes take place.**

Brad Chase: Chris is an old buddy of mine from Annapolis right now he's founder and CEO of Alcove Games. Last quarter they posted a profit of five hundred and two mil.

Shirley Schmidt: Very impressive. How can we help you?

Chris Mott: A wrongful death suit.

Brad Chase: Completely frivolous. Filed by the mother of a kid who died while playing their latest video game.

Paul Lewiston: He died?

Brad Chase: Heart attack.

Shirley Schmidt: How is that even possible?

Brad Chase: He played the game for nearly two days. Didn't eat, didn't drink. His heart stopped.

**Chris Mott:** The game is called Hell Born. You start out as a ghost fighting your way out of hell. And when you finally reach the surface, you need to track down your lost soul in order to become human again.

**Paul Lewiston:** Sounds like a typical day around here.

**Brad Chase:** Like I said a frivolous suit. No jury's going to hold a company responsible because a parent let a kid play a game for two days straight.

**Chris Mott:** But there's a glitch. I need this to go away before it goes to trial. We've got a sequel coming out next month and bad press could kill us.

**Brad Chase:** Shouldn't be a problem. I'm thinking we can get this kicked on Summary Judgment.

**Paul, Shirley and Brad head down the corridor.**

**Paul Lewiston:** Five hundred and two million. You've landed your first whale.

**Shirley Schmidt:** Nice work partner.

**Brad Chase:** Thank you. **Paul and Shirley move on. Brad stops Paul.** Paul... how's your daughter doing in rehab?

**Paul Lewiston:** Rachel's doing just fine, Brad.

**Brad Chase:** Tell her I said hello.

**Paul Lewiston:** **Wary.** I will.

**At a spa resort Alan and Denny are having drinks and cigars in a milk bath. An attendant comes over to fill their drink glasses.**

**Alan Shore:** I never took you for a spa person, Denny.

**Denny Crane:** Oooh man. I love it. Feel touched and caressed...

**Alan Shore:** Milked.

**Denny Crane:** **To the attendant filling his glass.** Thank you, Dana. Mmm. Are you still spooked by this word jumble thing?

**Alan Shore:** Word salad. Yes.

**Denny Crane:** Happens to me all the time. You get used to it.

**Alan Shore:** I don't wanna get used to it. It was extremely upsetting to be speaking and to see confusion on the faces of everyone around me. I'm not the most connected individual, Denny. Sometimes words are all that allow me to feel like I'm a part of the world, a part of life. If I don't have words, then I'm alone.

**Denny Crane:** Ashtray, soda pop, dingo? **Alan is startled.** Gotcha. **He chuckles gleefully.** Now relax.

**At Crane, Poole and Schmidt, deposition is taking place in the conference room. Brad, Shirley and Paul sit across the table from plaintiff, Ellen Beller and her attorney John Hoberg. A stenographer records the proceedings.**

**Ellen Beller:** Wes was obsessed with the game. All the kids were talking about it. It was the only thing he wanted for his birthday.

**Shirley Schmidt:** So you bought it for him?

**Ellen Beller:** Yes. He would play before school, after school, in the middle of the night. He played other video games before, but this one? This one was different. He couldn't stop. His grades began to slip. So I took the game away.

**Shirley Schmidt:** How did he react?

**Ellen Beller:** We argued constantly, so he began going to friend's houses after school to play. I realized I couldn't win. So I gave him the game back figuring at least that way I could keep an eye on him.

**Shirley Schmidt:** What happened the weekend your son died?

**Ellen Beller:** I got home after working a double shift at the store. And I only had fifteen minutes to change before I left for my second job. I clean offices. I told Wes it was time to quit. He said he just needed five more minutes to get to the next level. He promised he would go to bed as soon as he was finished. So I kissed him, said good-night and went to work.

**Shirley Schmidt:** What time did you arrive home?

**Ellen Beller:** About five the next morning. I just fell into bed with my clothes on. I woke up at noon and went to check on him. **A beat, emotional.** And that's when I found him He was slumped in his chair in front of the screen and, you know at first, I thought he'd just fallen asleep... **Ellen begins to cry softly.**

**Paul Lewiston:** Would you like to take a recess?

**Ellen Beller:** No. I would rather get this over with.

**Shirley and Paul look to Brad.**

**Brad Chase:** Mrs Beller? How old was Wesley?

Ellen Beller: Fifteen.

Brad Chase: And you're a single parent?

Ellen Beller: Yes. Wes's father is no longer in the picture.

Brad Chase: So you were solely responsible for his care, clothing feeding him, taking care of him when he was sick?

Ellen Beller: Yes.

Brad Chase: And you made sure he ate right, got enough sleep, did his homework?

Ellen Beller: I took very good care of my son.

Brad Chase: I'm sure you did, and yet the coroner's report lists the cause of death as a myocardial infarction brought on by physical exhaustion. Apparently your son did not eat, drink or sleep for over thirty-six hours straight. Now I can't speak to the pain that you must be feeling, but how did this happen?

Ellen Beller: I work two jobs, Mr Chase.

Brad Chase: I understand that, but I can't help wondering that if you had checked in on your son that night instead of falling asleep, that maybe he'd be alive today. Now isn't that correct?

Attorney John Hoberg: Objection. **To Ellen.** Don't answer that.

**At Crane, Poole and Schmidt, Shirley is in her office with Brad and Chris, who is concerned.**

Chris Mott: What's the problem?

Shirley Schmidt: In responding to Ms Beller's production requests, we came across something.

Shirley Schmidt: When your company designed 'Hell Born' you commissioned a study that documented the effects the game had on its players. **She hands the document to Chris Mott.** The report states that playing the game dramatically increases the dopamine levels in the player's brains.

Chris Mott: I'm aware of it. Sure.

Brad Chase: Chris, this means Mrs Beller can argue that Alcove Games knew their games were addictive when they sold them to the public, including minors.

Chris Mott: Oh, that's ridiculous. It's just one study. Besides, it's an established fact that all video games increase the dopamine levels in the brain. At least the good ones do.

Brad Chase: **He takes this in.** Are there any other studies out there? Anything like this that can bite us in the ass?

Chris Mott: No. Just the one.

Brad Chase: Okay. We're required to turn this over to Mrs Beller. As per the rules of discovery; we'll provide it with the other one hundred thousand pages of documents that pertain to this production request.

**Shirley shoots Brad a look, as Chris gets it.**

Chris Mott: So you're going to bury it.

Brad Chase: No, that would be unethical. We'll simply comply... Fully.

**In Judge Jamie Atkinson's courtroom Evette is on the stand. Denise is on direct. Ray is at the defense table. Alena sits in the gallery. A.D.A. Richard Kelton represents the Commonwealth.**

Evette Richardson: It's not religious. It's practical. I'm a dietician at Mercy Hospital. And what does every working mother always plead? "I wish I had a wife." Well, I actually do. Imagine leaving for your job and never having to worry about day care, late baby sitters, nightmare nannies. Your child gets sick; you have someone there you trust, who loves your children. Someone with a warm home, who cooks healthy, homemade meals for your children, and has a lovingly prepared dinner waiting for you when you walk in the door. Someone who bakes.

Judge Jamie Atkinson: **Nods yes; dreamily.** Sounds wonderful. **Denise looks at her. A.D.A. Richard Kelton leans forward. The Judge sees their looks and sits up straight.** Continue.

Evette Richardson: And our kids love it too. At any one time there's a parent to give a hug, some advice, share a story. Families these days are no longer together. Scattered across the country. Ours is simple another form of an old fashioned extended family.

**Alena is up next.**

Alena Richardson: Who are we kidding? It's about the sex. **Ray is nodding.** I'm a stay-at-home mom. I have three kids, ages one to six. This twenty-four/seven breastfeeding, potty training, fevers, solid food, diapers, ear infection, dishes, homework, toys, chaos. Raising children is the single most exhausting job ever, anywhere, anyhow. Did I make myself clear? I'll say it again. It's the most exhausting job ever. **To the Judge.** Don't you think?

Judge Jamie Atkinson: Absolutely.

A.D.A. Richard Kelton: Objection.

Judge Jamie Atkinson: Sustained. **To Court Reporter.** Strike that last remark, even though it's completely true.

Denise Bauer: Alena? You were telling us about sex.

Alena Richardson: Oh, yes. I love my children but by the end of the day, I am bone tired. My husband comes home, he's tired too, but somehow he still has a little energy for baby-making. Now, if we were in a traditional marriage at that moment, we would have an explosive argument. But since we're not, when I am that exhausted, and he has that look in his eye, I simply ship him off to Evette where she satisfies him, and he her... **Ray nods.** And then I draw myself a nice, hot bath and read the paper.

**The Judge lets out a happy sigh.**

**At the spa resort, in the bright morning sun Denny and Alan are wearing housecoats, sitting in lounge chairs, their faces covered with cream. They are attended by masseurs. Denny is getting a foot massage. Alan is getting a foot and shoulder massage.**

Alan Shore: This works for me.

Denny Crane: I knew it would.

Alan Shore: More gobble-de-gook, please.

Denny Crane: Hey! **He reaches over to take Alan's hand.** Take it easy, man, deep breath, just relax.

Alan Shore: Denny, I meant to say, "Gobble de gook", the stuff on my face.

Denny Crane: Oh.

Alan Shore: I think I've decompressed. My word salad days have wilted. May I have my hand please?

**Denny removes his hand. Alan reaches over to clasp Denny hand.** Thank you, Denny. This is almost as good as fishing. **To the masseurs.** Denny's my friend. He takes me to nice places, buys me nice things, we like to dress up.

Denny Crane: Flamingos.

**In Judge Willard Reese's courtroom Brad argues. Chris sits at the defense table with Shirley and Paul. Attorney John Hoberg stands at the plaintiff's table, next to a seated Ellen Beller.**

Brad Chase: Your Honor, there's not a shred of evidence for which a jury would rule against my client. Now, as tragic as his death may be plaintiffs have not shown any causal link between Mr Beller's death and his playing 'Hell Born'!

Attorney John Hoberg: We have the internal dopamine study. **Brad and Paul are surprised to hear they discovered that.**

Brad Chase: **Thinking quickly.** That's one study which shows that playing any video game could raise anyone's dopamine level. That's hardly enough to prove causation.

Judge Willard Reese: I have to agree, Mr Hoberg. If your only evidence is this one study...

Attorney John Hoberg: We have a witness, Your Honor...

Paul Lewiston: **'What the hell'? He jumps on Hoberg.** What witness?

Judge Willard Reese: Dr Samuel Williams. He'll testify that not only did Alcove Games know their games were addictive; they intentionally tried to make them so.

Paul Lewiston: **He gets up.** That is the first we're hearing of this, Your Honor...

Attorney John Hoberg: Dr Williams just came forward.

Brad Chase: Your Honor, they're stalling and wasting the court's time.

**The Judge is not pleased by Attorney John Hoberg's surprise.**

Judge Willard Reese: Before ruling on this motion, the Court will hear Dr Williams. But Mr Hoberg, I don't like surprises. Tread carefully.

Brad Chase: Your Honor, I...

Judge Willard Reese: Your objection is noted for the record, Mr Chase. The Court will hear Dr William's testimony. **Gavel slams.**

**Brad and Mott are in the Witness room.**

Brad Chase: **Heated.** I thought said there was nothing else.

Chris Mott: Dr Williams is a psychologist we hired to consult on how to make our games more appealing to the consumer. It didn't work out and we fired him. It's really not a big deal.

Brad Chase: Chris, we need to get this case thrown out now while we're only in front of a judge. We've got a woman with a dead kid. A jury is gonna wanna make someone pay for that. Now, did you hire Dr Williams to make your game more addictive or not?

Chris Mott: **He pauses, clearly he did.** I started with nothing. I built this company. I employ hundreds of people. I didn't do anything wrong.

Brad Chase: **He knows Chris is lying.** Okay, right.

Chris Mott: You've known me for twenty years and you're doubting me?

Brad Chase: This isn't about friendship; this is about getting rid of this case quickly and quietly. Now, maybe we should consider settling.

Chris Mott: No. No. To me, a settlement is an admission of guilt, and Alcove Games is not gonna to be a scapegoat on this. Even if this goes public.

**In Judge Jamie Atkinson's courtroom. All present. A.D.A Richard Kelton questions Dr Ressa Klaywig.**

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Dr Klaywig, as a historian of family law, could you tell us why laws against polygamy were enacted?

Dr Ressa Klaywig: The origins of course are biblical, but in recent history, there were enacted to prevent a man from abandoning his wife, leaving her with no means of income for herself or her children. They also prevented enslavement and abuse. Before these laws were solidified, elders in certain communities would simply divvy up the young girls, twelve and thirteen years old, among the old men.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Thank you.

**Kelton sits. Denise rises to cross.**

Denise Bauer: Dr Klaywig, would you agree that the Mr and Mrs, and... Mrs Richardson's relationship is unusual?

Dr Ressa Klaywig: Yes, I would.

Denise Bauer: And would you agree that it's unusual because it works?

Dr Ressa Klaywig: Well...

Denise Bauer: All parties are satisfied. The children, as we've proven earlier, are well-adjusted. It does seem to work, doesn't it?

Dr Ressa Klaywig: Yes, I suppose so.

Denise Bauer: And wouldn't you agree that when the polygamy laws were enacted, it was under a different social and economic construct?

Dr Ressa Klaywig: Meaning...?

Denise Bauer: Meaning that women weren't allowed to work. There were in effect less powerful that they are today. Their reliance on their husbands was more substantial.

Dr Ressa Klaywig: One could agree.

Denise Bauer: And for the record, what is the divorce rate in this country?

Dr Ressa Klaywig: Approximately forty-three percent.

Denise Bauer: Forty-three percent. And what are the statistics on extra-marital affairs?

Dr Ressa Klaywig: Conservative estimates say that about sixty percent of married men and forty percent of married women will have an extra-marital affair at some point.

Denise Bauer: So one could argue that we're already practicing polygamy in this country, we just haven't institutionalized it yet.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Objection! Your Honor, Ms Bauer is simply twisting statistics to make a mockery of the institution of marriage.

Denise Bauer: I am simply drawing conclusions based on fact.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: It specious.

Denise Bauer: It's not specious, it's logical. You wouldn't understand, you're not married.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Well, I don't see a wedding ring on your finger.

Denise Bauer: Divorced.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: How long?

Denise Bauer: One year.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Two for me.

Judge Jamie Atkinson: Counselors? The case!

Denise Bauer: Of course.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Right.

Denise Bauer: Nothing further.

**At the spa resort Alan and Denny are taking a stroll around the pool deck.**

Alan Shore: Wow.

**They see a bikini-clad woman from behind. She's placing her towel and on a deck chair.**

Denny Crane: Double wow.

Alan Shore: Go right ahead.

Denny Crane: No, you saw her first.

**The woman takes a book out of her bag and settles down on another deck chair. She is gorgeous.**

Alan Shore: You really don't mind?

Denny Crane: Please. **Alan walks over to the woman.** Wow.

Jessica: Hm. **She points to the chair next to hers.** Nobody's sitting here. **She takes her bag and towel from the chair.**

Alan Shore: Thank you. **He sits on the chair.** My name is Alan Shore. What's yours?

Jessica: Jessica.

Alan Shore: What are you reading, Jessica?

Jessica: Ah, The D'vinci Code?

Alan Shore: Ah.

Jessica: Yeah. It's okay. Have you read it?

Alan Shore: No. It's enough for me that Leonardo was a brilliant painter and engineer without turning him into the Karl Rouge of the sixteenth century.

Jessica: Ha, ha, ha.

Alan Shore: Are you here with someone?

Jessica: Alone. I just, uhm, needed to get out of Dodge, and relax. **A beat.** Only... now I find myself very relaxed.

Alan Shore: **He chuckles.** Well two can play dominoes for gangs allow freedom white.

Jessica: **A beat.** I'm sorry?

Alan Shore: The danger and whistling cannot be undone by hybrid chatter, it's simply orange above all.

Jessica: Is this a joke?

Alan Shore: Zebra!

Jessica: Ha. **To the passing waiter.** Waiter! I'm going to need another mohito. **She throws the mohito in her hand into Alan's face. She gets up, slams her empty glass on to the waiter's tray and marches off.**

Waiter: Should I charge that to your room, sir?

Alan Shore: Paisley.

**All parties present in Judge Willard Reese's courtroom. Dr Samuel Williams is on the stand, Attorney John Hoberg is questioning him.**

Attorney John Hoberg: Dr Williams? You're a clinical psychologist. Why did Alcove Games hire you?

Dr Samuel Williams: Their game was already popular. But the company wanted to take the desire to play the game to the next level, in other words to change the motivation from, "I want to play this game" to, "I have to play this game".

Attorney John Hoberg: And how did they go about doing that?

Dr Samuel Williams: It starts with causing an adrenaline rush. The most effective way to trigger that rush is to make someone think that they're gonna die.

Attorney John Hoberg: How do you know that?

Dr Samuel Williams: We measure the effect in two ways. The first is blink rate. And second, we monitor the amount of dopamine that's produced while playing the game.

Attorney John Hoberg: What's the significance of the dopamine?

Dr Samuel Williams: Dopamine is a neurotransmitter. It's also connected to the reinforcing effects of drugs like cocaine and amphetamines. It's often called the master molecule of addiction.

Attorney John Hoberg: And why is that significance in terms of this video game?

Dr Samuel Williams: Playing this video game is like receiving a jolt equivalent to an injection of amphetamines. And my duty, was to create a game that would maximize dopamine output for the players.

Attorney John Hoberg: You were deliberately trying to make this game physically addictive?

Dr Samuel Williams: Yes.

**Hoberg sits. Brad rises to cross.**

Brad Chase: Dr Williams, who was your supervisor at Alcove Games?

Dr Samuel Williams: Bob Kendall.

Brad Chase: And his title?

Dr Samuel Williams: Vice President of Marketing.

Brad Chase: Of marketing. Not of 'Secret Brain Addiction Research' or something like that?

Attorney John Hoberg: Objection.

Judge Willard Reese: Sustained.

Brad Chase: So you worked in the marketing department at Alcove Games?

Dr Samuel Williams: Yes.

Brad Chase: Now, as a marketer, whether you're selling iPods or breakfast cereal or soft drinks, isn't one of your primary concerns, "How do I get consumers to buy my product?"

Dr Samuel Williams: Of course.

Brad Chase: You ever been employed by a heroin dealer?

Dr Samuel Williams: Excuse me?

Brad Chase: Of course you haven't. Heroin dealers doesn't need to hire a marketing department. Because the product they sell really is addictive, as opposed to video games, which aren't, isn't that correct?

Attorney John Hoberg: Objection!

Brad Chase: Nothing further.

**All parties are present in Judge Jamie Atkinson's courtroom. A.D.A Richard Kelton is giving his closing.**

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Ray Richardson married two women at the same time. No one denies that fact. The defense argues that this polygamous marriage is practical, that it makes sense in today's hectic world. Well the law against polygamy is practical as well. Say you're a man with good health insurance, and a generous nature? Why not go down to a hospice and marry fifty terminally ill women so they can have your health benefits? If a billionaire could marry a thousand women and claim them all as dependants on his tax return, don't you think he would? No. The law against polygamy doesn't just make sense from a moral point of view, it's practical as well. Today the traditional family is under constant assault from every direction. One refuge, maybe the last refuge, against that assault is the law! The law in this case states that marriage is between one man and one woman. Ray Richardson broke that law. Make him pay for it.

Denise Bauer: Decades ago, the nuclear family implied one man, one woman and their off spring, usually of the same race. Today there is no limit to what loving families look like. We have single mothers, single fathers, two mommies, two daddies, ex-wives, ex-in-laws, you name it. If we're going to universally apply a law, we need to look at what it is that law strives to protect. Nobody can say that the Richardsons are not a loving family. They are honest and caring, their children are confident and kind. With so many monogamous couples breaking up, this true family unit should be held in high esteem. Instead, we seek to destroy them simply because they consensually engaged in a loving relationship that all parties wanted. You've heard both Mrs Richardsons, this is a family unit that works! If you put Ray Richardson in jail when all he was, was good husband and a good father, you will accomplish the very harm the anti-polygamy law set out to prevent. You will tear the Richardson family apart.

**Alan and Denny are in their room at the spa resort. Alan is pacing the floor.**

Denny Crane: You need to relax, you know?

Alan Shore: Obviously, Denny. But telling me to do so is like saying to starving man, "You just need money." It doesn't exactly solve the problem.

Denny Crane: We got lots of money. **He picks up the phone.** So if you're hungry, just to order room service, say, "Hello!" **Alan takes the phone out of Denny's hand and puts it back in it's cradle.** Hey! You just touched me, and not in a nice way.

Alan Shore: Could I please have a little privacy?

Denny Crane: So you mix up your words. Make it work for you, that's what I do.

Alan Shore: Denny, leave the room for a moment and let me be alone.

Denny Crane: You're a moody traveler, aren't you?

Alan Shore: Could you please put your narcissism aside for one second and to imagine what's it like for person to be loosing his mind! **A beat. Denny is stunned. Hurt. So is Alan.** I'm sorry. It's just I'd penciled in sex today for five-thirty and since I lost out on Jessica, I'll now have to have it alone, which is fine, just predictable.

Denny Crane: All this time I thought you were empathizing with me. But you were sympathizing. **A beat.** I'm goin' home. **He turns away.**

Alan Shore: Denny.

Denny Crane: Don't talk to me.

**Denny throws an open suitcase on to the bed.**

Alan Shore: Denny! Please don't leave.



**Denny Crane:** I said do not talk to me! **He takes a pile of clothes out of a drawer and throws them into the suitcase.**

**Alan Shore:** It's just that's my suitcase. You're packing my things.

**Denny throws the next pile of clothes on to the floor and stomps out of the room.**

**In the courthouse hallway Brad is approached by Ellen Beller.**

**Ellen Beller:** He was fifteen! He was about to get his learner's permit.

**Brad Chase:** Mrs Beller, I'm sorry, but I can't talk to you.

**Ellen Beller:** He was a scout too. In this day and age. And he was goin' for 'eagle'!

**Brad Chase:** I'm sorry.

**Ellen Beller:** You know that everything that Dr Williams said is true. And the only thing that this should be about is Wes, and the life that was taken from him. But, it's not! It is about lawyers and you're talking and you're arguing. Why are you doing this? You know what the truth is here! You know it! So why are you doing it?

**Attorney John Hoberg:** : Mrs Beller... Mrs Beller...

**Ellen Beller:** You know what the truth is, don't you?

**Attorney John Hoberg:** Come with me. **He takes her by the hand and leads her away.**

**Ellen Beller:** You know! You know!

**In Judge Jamie Atkinson's courtroom a clerk hands her a piece of paper, she reads it, nods and hands it back.**

**Judge Jamie Atkinson:** Mr Foreman, has the jury reached a unanimous verdict?

**Foreman:** We have, Your Honor.

**Judge Jamie Atkinson:** Will the defendant please rise? **Denise and Ray Richardson rise.** What say you?

**Foreman:** In the matter of the Commonwealth versus Ray Richardson, on the count of Polygamy, we the jury, find Ray Richardson... **A beat.** Guilty.

**Judge Jamie Atkinson:** The defendant will be remanded into custody. We are adjourned

**Denise Bauer:** **To Ray as he is lead away by the guards.** This isn't over. **To his wives.** I'm so sorry.

**In Judge Willard Reese's courtroom Attorney John Hoberg is into his closing.**

**Attorney John Hoberg:** When I was fifteen, I smoked cigarettes for a week because a friend of mine smoked. I quit, never smoke again and thank goodness it didn't hurt me. But, tobacco companies have been found liable, assessed penalties in the millions of dollars because cigarettes are addictive and they do kill people. Your Honor, with this case, we're in the same position as the people who brought legal action against the tobacco companies forty years ago. Lawsuit after lawsuit against tobacco was thrown out of court. How many people died as a result? And now we got a boy who died playing a video game. A game scientifically constructed to make him addicted to it. Will everyone become addicted to it? No. But other children will become addicted, Your Honor. There will be other deaths! It's time to let a jury decide who's responsible for the death of Wesley Beller!

**Hoberg sits. A beat. Another beat. Brad gets up.**

**Brad Chase:** Your Honor, I know I'm supposed to be a dispassionate advocate for my client's position, but I have to tell you that this case, it, it just makes me mad. You see, I know someone who is addicted to crystal meth. This is a lethal drug! It would have killed her if she hadn't stopped using it. So when I hear people talk about being addicted to their blackberry, soap operas, video games. Believe me, if anyone who's addicted to crystal meth could suddenly wave a magic wand and be addicted to video games instead, they would do it in a heartbeat. Now you heard testimony that playing this game raises your dopamine level. We don't deny that, but the fact is, anything you enjoy doing raises your dopamine level, sports, chocolate, exercise, sex, on and on and on. When Einstein was developing his theory of relativity I'm sure that his dopamine level was through the roof! But where do we draw the line between addition and passion? The fact is this case is an insult to anyone who has a real addiction to a harmful substance. Now are all said that Wesley Beller is dead, but Alcove Games did not cause his death.

**All parties present in Judge Willard Reese's courtroom.**

**Judge Willard Reese:** After reviewing the papers and the evidence presented, I agree with Mr Chase. The defense's motion for summary judgment is granted. We're adjourned.

**The Judge slams his gavel.**

**Paul Lewiston:** **To Chris.** Congratulations. **They shake hands. To Brad.** Brad.

Brad Chase: Paul.

**Paul nods and leaves.**

Chris Mott: **To Brad.** Man! **They shake hands.** I knew we'd win, but you never really know till it's over. So, Champ, where can I buy you dinner?

Brad Chase: McKloskey's.

Chris Mott: Best steaks in town.

**Chris walks on. Brad stops, looks back at Mrs Beller. She is distraught.**

Brad Chase: **He walks over to her.** Mrs Beller? I'm truly sorry about your son.

Ellen Beller: I'm sure you'll be sorry about the next one too.

**At the spa resort, Denny is lying face down on massage table getting massage.**

Denny Crane: **Groaning.** Lower. A little lower. Oh yeah. Just a little bit lower. **Alan comes in.** Oooh. Not quite low enough. Oh. Lower.

Alan Shore: **He is down on the floor, lying on his back and looking up at Denny, whose face is visible through a hole in the table.** I have always empathized with your mad cow. In a seismic shift of character I was momentarily thinking only of myself. As I said, Denny, words are my friends. To think that I might suddenly...

Denny Crane: Why are you so anxious? Here of all places where people only rubbed you the right way?

Alan Shore: Work. I'm nervous about work.

Denny Crane: Why?

Alan Shore: Denny, they could walk through my door at any given day and just fire me. I've offended everybody there is to offend. I was hoping to at least ingratiate myself with Shirley, sexually, but she rebuffs me.

Denny Crane: **He gets up.** Robe, please. **Alan gets up. To the masseur.** Out please. **She leaves.** Since when have you been afraid of losing your job? You relish the idea of being able to walk. At the drop of hat. Hell, you threatened to

Alan Shore: I guess I just don't feel that freedom anymore.

Denny Crane: Is it money?

Alan Shore: It's not money.

Denny Crane: What is it then?

Alan Shore: I'd miss you, Denny.

Denny Crane: You're a liar. You can't walk because you think you have to be there to protect me. To save me from myself.

Alan Shore: That's certainly not it.

Denny Crane: For the first time in your life you feel trapped. And I'm the reason.

Alan Shore: Why can't we just leave it that I'm miss you, Denny?

Denny Crane: Denny Crane has never needed anybody!

Alan Shore: And that's a tragedy. One for which I empathize as well as sympathize.

Denny Crane: I will never be anybody's charity project. If that has something to do with our friendship, I no longer want it.

**In A.D.A Richard Kelton's office he sits down behind his desk. Denise sits down across from him.**

Denise Bauer: Have you thought for one second about what you're doing to the Richardson children?

A.D.A Richard Kelton: I'm about to make teacher night a lot less awkward.

Denise Bauer: I'm serious. There's a new book out that says that there's no such thing as an amicable divorce. That children are far more traumatized by divorce than they would be by growing up in a house with a bad marriage.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Yeah, well, they didn't grow up in my house.

Denise Bauer: And, there's a study from the University College Dublin that found that the effects of divorce on children are far more damaging than the death of a parent!

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Exactly how much time do you spend on the internet?

Denise Bauer: You're not breaking up some group of freaks here. The Richardson's work. That family unit works.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: And they can remain a family. As long as their not married.

Denise Bauer: I know. I spoke to Ray and his wives and they have all agreed reluctantly to get divorced and live in sin. All they ask is that you recommend probation.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Denise, I... As long as he quits breaking the law, I've no interest in putting him in jail. I'm sure we can make this work.

Denise Bauer: Thank you.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Yeah. **A beat. Denise gets up to leave.** Have, have you had dinner yet?

Denise Bauer: Uhm. It's four o'clock.

A.D.A Richard Kelton: Oh. Yeah. **He chuckles.** I'm sorry. I, I, I haven't dated in so long. Would you like to get some food at a more appropriate time? Today?

Denise Bauer: Sure.

**At Crane, Poole and Schmidt, Brad is in his office. Paul knocks on the open door and comes in.**

Paul Lewiston: Congratulations.

Brad Chase: Oh. Thanks. Looks like Chris wants us to handle all his business from now on.

Paul Lewiston: Good. **He turns to leave.**

Brad Chase: Ah, Paul! You didn't get a chance to say hello to Rachel, did you?

Paul Lewiston: I did. She'll be getting out of rehab in a few weeks.

Brad Chase: Good for her.

Paul Lewiston: Brad. I want you to stay away from her.

Brad Chase: I beg your pardon?

Paul Lewiston: As part of the twelve step program of recovery they strongly suggest that she not be involved in any relationships for a year. This allows her to focus on mending her life and any distractions could jeopardize that process and make her more susceptible to returning to drugs. So! Therefore, I am strongly suggesting that you stay away from her.

**Denny is out on the balcony. Drink in hand, Alan joins him. They are both in housecoats.**

Alan Shore: **He sits down in the chair next to Denny.** Okay. So I worry about you a little. Is that so bad? With my night terror, the clown phobia and now word salad, you don't worry about me? **Denny doesn't respond.** You know, strangers aren't always gonna be there for us, Denny. I'm gonna say this once, I don't want it repeated. I need friendship. I especially need this one. **He looks at Denny. Then leans forward and looks closer. He gets up, stands in front of Denny and pulls an ear headset out of Denny's ear.** Did you not hear a word I said?

Denny Crane: Heard every word. The thing isn't on.

Alan Shore: Ha. **He puts Denny's ear headset back in.** Is it really so horrible for people to need each other? Doesn't it give you comfort that I'm here to cover for you when you slip? That in the end I'll be there to shoot you?

Denny Crane: It comforts me that you need the friendship.

Alan Shore: **He sits back down in his chair.** I've thought about it, I agree, you've survived here a hundred years or so without me, I could leave and you'd go on just fine. But for me to go on, Denny, I need my balcony time whether I work here or not.

Denny Crane: You got it.

Alan Shore: Typically when I get fired I'm banned from the premises.

Denny Crane: **He leans forward and in a stage whisper:** Service elevator. I got the keys.

Alan Shore: You think of everything.

Denny Crane: Denny... **He's forgotten.**

Alan Shore: Crane.

Denny Crane: You got it!

*fin*