

Boston Legal
Over the Ledge
Season 3, Episode 9
Written by David E. Kelley
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Denny Crane's Office

Denny Crane is watching TV.

Reporter (on TV): The latest report is that Ms. Jane is conscious; she will survive. Police are not commenting on whether she was able to provide any information on her assailant—

Paul Lewiston: Denny—

Denny Crane: Can you believe it? Somebody actually tried to take her out.

Paul Lewiston: Have you seen Shirley?

Denny Crane: Naked?

Paul Lewiston: *Lately.* She hasn't come in; she's not answering her calls; she's, uh, just disappeared.

Lincoln Meyer's Basement

Lincoln Meyer is strumming a ukulele, serenading a bound and gagged Shirley Schmidt.

The Chipmunk's Christmas Song

Christmas, Christmas time is near,

Time for toys and time for cheer.

We've been good but we can't last.

Hurry, Christmas, hurry fast.

Lincoln Meyer puts his ukulele in its case, and rips the duct tape off Shirley Schmidt's mouth. Shirley Schmidt gasps.

Lincoln Meyer: Would you like to scream? It's okay. The room is completely soundproof. It's my little safe room.

Shirley Schmidt: Listen, if I agreed not to press charges—

Lincoln Meyer: Do you think I'm stupid?

Shirley Schmidt: Certainly twisted.

Lincoln Meyer: The police would press charges regardless of your wishes; and, besides, this is the room where the only *relevant* wishes are mine. From the first moment I saw you, do you know what I wanted to do?

Shirley Schmidt: **shrugging** Pave my driveway?

Lincoln Meyer: I wanted to suck on your right earlobe. I'm sure people tell you, you have soft, supple lobes.

Shirley Schmidt: **chuckling** It gets old.

Lincoln Meyer: Is mocking me really an exercise of your most sound judgment, Shirley? After all, I do have in my possession a loaded firearm.

Shirley Schmidt: Let alone a ukulele.

Lincoln Meyer: I might do you harm, Shirley Schmidt. Do you not think I will?

Shirley Schmidt: Lincoln?

Lincoln Meyer pauses, giving his attention to Shirley Schmidt.

Shirley Schmidt: Suck my lobe.

[main credits]

Alan Shore's Office

Alan Shore: I'm just saying, as circumstantial cases go, it's a strong one. Erica, there's nobody else being there but you.

Erica Dolenz: What about her husband? He was there. Cameras clearly show him.

Alan Shore: The video also shows him *leaving* the apartment building four minutes after entering. Erica, it's not too late to amend our plea.

Erica Dolenz: You think I'm insane, don't you?

Alan Shore: Well, there's the 2-hour black-out—

Erica Dolenz: Caused by trauma.

Alan Shore: You hear voices.

Erica Dolenz: No, no, no.

Alan Shore: You snap.

Erica Dolenz: **snapping** Hey!

Alan Shore: Case in point.

Erica Dolenz: **smiling** I see what you're doing. You're deliberately antagonizing me to see how I'll respond in cross.

Alan Shore: Actually, that wasn't it. A little help, Jerry.

Jerry Espenson: **rises, hands glued to thighs** Erica, we really need to consider insanity. The evidence, we feel, excludes suicide. The *only* one there was you. We need to at least consider a diminished capacity plea, if for no other reason than to give us some plea-bargaining leverage.

Erica Dolenz: Let's hug for luck. **hugs first Jerry Espenson, then Alan Shore** I know you two will take care of me. **exits**

Alan Shore: Any thoughts?

Jerry Espenson: None.

Alan Shore's Office—Later

Alan Shore: **putting on his overcoat** Ready?

Jerry Espenson: I'm ready. I actually feel . . . calm. Of course, I'm medicated, but— **smirks at his own joke**

Alan Shore: Look at me. This is a murder trial, Jerry, a particularly difficult one at that. If at any time you feel—

Jerry Espenson: Why?

Alan Shore: Sorry?

Jerry Espenson: Why is it a particularly difficult one?

Alan Shore: Well, surely you've considered our client may be guilty.

Jerry Espenson: I don't believe that. She's innocent, Alan. I'm going to win this trial.

Alan Shore nods. Jerry Espenson picks up his briefcase and turns to exit. Denny Crane enters; sits heavily on the couch.

Alan Shore: Everything all right, Denny?

Denny Crane: I'm depressed.

Alan Shore: Okay. Why?

Denny Crane: My murder case went away. You've still got yours. It just doesn't seem fair.

Alan Shore: Nutty Lincoln didn't whack the judge?

Denny Crane: I need a case, Alan.

Alan Shore: You'll get a case. This country has the most homicides of any Western, industrialized nation.

Denny Crane: Even so.

Alan Shore: Sixteen thousand a year, Denny. That's about five times the number of American soldiers killed in Iraq. Sooner or later, one of these slaughters is gonna end up your lap.

Jerry Espenson: Chin up! **smiles**

Denny Crane glares at Jerry Espenson, who wipes the smile off his face very quickly in response.

Paul Lewiston's Office

Denise Bauer: What do you mean that she's missing?

Paul Lewiston: Nobody's seen her since the night before last. Did she cancel the dinner?

Jeffrey Coho: No, she just didn't show up.

Brad Chase: Have we thought about calling her family?

Paul Lewiston: I think it's about time we start doing that. Let's try not to alarm them.

Claire Simms: Are we really sure she's missing? Sometimes old people just slip off to have some work done.

Paul Lewiston: It may be premature, but I'm going to call the police.

Judge Paul Resnick's Courtroom

Detective John Stephenson: We feel this was a staged suicide.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Why?

Detective John Stephenson: Well, there were rope burns on the victim's wrists, indicating she had been tied up. There was an aborted 9-1-1 call from the apartment. People don't generally call 9-1-1 before they hang themselves.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Who made this call?

Detective John Stephenson: Nobody spoke; it was just a hang-up. We know the call came from the victim's apartment.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Detective, what leads you to believe the defendant committed this crime? She claims she walked in to discover the dead body.

Detective John Stephenson: Well, if so, then why did she wait 2 hours before calling anybody?

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: What else?

Detective John Stephenson: Her fingerprints were found all over the place. Fibers of the rope used to tie the victim up were found on the defendant's clothing.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Would she have a motive?

Detective John Stephenson: She and the victim were lovers. She had recently been dumped for another woman. We accounted for every person entering that apartment building. She's the only one who could have conceivably committed this murder.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Thank you, sir. *sits*

Jerry Espenson is busily writing his notes, as Alan Shore is paging through his brief.

Alan Shore: *low voice* Jerry, this would be your time.

Jerry Espenson rises abruptly, takes a few steps toward the judge, then makes a sharp 90-degree turn and walks to face Detective John Stephenson. He folds his hands.

Jerry Espenson: *rapidly* The surveillance cameras indicate the husband went to the victim's apartment that morning, did they not?

Detective John Stephenson: There's no way he could have gone in, rigged the nose, and hung her that quickly.

Jerry Espenson: Your testimony is it's *impossible*?

Detective John Stephenson: Extremely unlikely.

Jerry Espenson: You mentioned there were no other fingerprints at the scene to suggest the husband or anybody else being present. In your experience, have you ever known killers to wear gloves?

Detective John Stephenson: Yes, but—

Jerry Espenson: Thank you. The building has a rear entrance, which is not monitored by cameras—am I correct?

Detective John Stephenson: Yes, a service entrance.

Jerry Espenson: Thank you. As far as people who reside in the apartment building, you have no way of monitoring or accounting for their activity in the complex, do you?

Detective John Stephenson: No, but we interviewed almost—

Jerry Espenson: Thank you. You mentioned motive. Did you consider a financial motive?

Detective John Stephenson: We did.

Jerry Espenson: Mrs. Wilkes left an estate valued at roughly \$600,000. Who gets that money upon her death, if you know?

Detective John Stephenson: I'm informed it's her girlfriend, Renee Winger.

Jerry Espenson: Ah, yes; the new girlfriend that— **his hands are clenched so tightly, he cannot unclench them—that— unclenches and points at Renee Winger**—that woman sitting right there. She inherits. Can we be positive she did *not* go into the building through the service entrance—?

Detective John Stephenson: If she had gone in the apartment, your client would have been there at the time.

Jerry Espenson: Unless Ms. Winger went in before my returned from her hike.

Detective John Stephenson: Well, then why would your client wait 2 hours to call you, if—

Jerry Espenson: Because she suffered a traumatic black-out which led her into a catatonic stupor—

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Objection.

Judge Paul Resnick: Sustained.

Jerry Espenson: You connected fibers used in the rope used to tie the victim's hands to my client's clothes. Any fibers from the rope used to *hang* the victim traceable to my client.

Detective John Stephenson: No.

Jerry Espenson: Thank you. Going back to movie: In addition to the will, is there a million-dollar life insurance policy in play here?

Detective John Stephenson: Yes, there is.

Jerry Espenson: Who's the beneficiary there?

Detective John Stephenson: The husband.

Jerry Espenson: So we have two people with financial motive, neither being my client. **retraces his steps back to the defendant's table.**

Lincoln Meyer's Basement Hidey Hole

Gracie Jane (on TV): It takes more than a stiff whack on the head to keep me down, folks. Trust me: I get hit harder during sex. I'm only sorry the creepo didn't have at me with a shovel during sweeps.

Lincoln Meyer: **slaps the TV off** I knew I should have plunked her a second time! I just knew it.

Shirley Schmidt: Are you telling me you're the one who assaulted her?

Lincoln Meyer: I say that in confidence, of course.

Shirley Schmidt: Lincoln, why are you so determined to have people believe you're dangerous? You're not dangerous, are you?

Lincoln Meyer: You don't think I can be violent?

Lincoln Meyer rises, walks to an object on a table covered with a sheet, and throws back the sheet, revealing a spring bow, armed and aimed at the door.

Shirley Schmidt: What in God's name?

Lincoln Meyer: This room is my little Waco. If somebody should try to break in here to rescue you while this lock is set, it triggers the spring bow to go off. I bet now you're convinced I'm sinister.

Shirley Schmidt: Lincoln, what are you doing?

Reception Area of Crane, Poole & Schmidt

Elevator arrives, dings. Erica Dolenz, Alan Shore and Jerry Espenson exit elevator into the reception area. Alan Shore and Renee Winger barely miss colliding with each other.

Alan Shore: Ah—

Renee Winger: My apologies.

Alan Shore: Renee, looking well.

Renee Winger: I'm glad. It's a goal.

Alan Shore: Coping okay with your tragic loss?

Renee Winger: I see you've put me on your witness list. It has me flummoxed.

Alan Shore: I just thought, by that point in the trial, the jury could use a good laugh, and you're funny!

Renee Winger: I certainly won't have anything to say that could help her.

Paul Lewiston's Office

Detective Wade "Russell" Spindle: You check local hospitals?

Paul Lewiston: All of them, and we've called family.

Detective Wade "Russell" Spindle: And you're thinking she was abducted?

Paul Lewiston: I don't know what to think. I want the police to investigate.

Detective Wade "Russell" Spindle: It's too soon to officially declare her a missing person.

Paul Lewiston: It is not like this woman to just fall off the earth, Russell. Something has happened.

Denise Bauer: Can I just throw one name out there? Lincoln Meyer.

Detective Wade "Russell" Spindle: Well, who is that?

Jeffrey Coho: You investigated him in the murder of Judge Potts. We considered him a possible killer of Marcia Hooper.

Denise Bauer: He has a grudge against this law firm, and he's always talking about his "special relationship" with Shirley. Remember what the shrink said when we were exploring Lincoln as Marcia Hooper's killer? When somebody becomes addicted to being the object of entertainment, which *clearly* Lincoln is, they can develop pathological desires and, eventually they act on them.

Lincoln Meyer's Basement Hidey Hole

Lincoln Meyer: **brandishing a spoon with foo on it** You need to eat.

Shirley Schmidt: I told you, I'm not hungry.

Lincoln Meyer: Here comes the airplane!

Shirley Schmidt: Yeah, right. Instead of the plane, why don't you reach into my purse and give me my cell phone.

Lincoln Meyer: Zooming in. Getting closer; closer. Getting ready to land. One little bite for Daddy!

Shirley Schmidt gives Lincoln Meyer quite the head butt instead, resulting in a bloody nose for him.

Lincoln Meyer: I'm not sure we can be friends after *that*.

Judge Paul Resnick's Courtroom

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: When was the last time you spoke to your wife, sir?

Sean Wilkes: The day before her death.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Would you describe her as suicidal?

Sean Wilkes: Absolutely not. Paula would never have taken her own life. She's a devout Catholic. Suicide went firmly against her religious convictions.

Jerry Espenson: Wouldn't homosexuality go against her Catholic beliefs?

Sean Wilkes: Well, yes.

Jerry Espenson: Your wife was being treated for depression, was she not?

Sean Wilkes: That is true, but I—

Jerry Espenson: Thank you. Did you know, Mr. Wilkes, that Paula had recently superseded her will to leave everything to that—**again, has difficulties unclenching his folded hands to point**—Alan!

Alan Shore points at Renee Winger.

Jerry Espenson: *That* woman?

Sean Wilkes: I learned this, yes.

Jerry Espenson: Lucky there was a life insurance policy naming you as sole beneficiary.

Sean Wilkes: If you are suggesting that I could harm my wife . . .

Jerry Espenson: Your business recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

No answer from Sean Wilkes

Jerry Espenson: Your wife's death relieves you of a dire financial situation; does it not? Please answer the question, sir.

Sean Wilkes: Whatever evil I may be capable of, Mr. Espenson, I could never harm another human being, especially one I spent the better part of eleven years loving.

Jerry Espenson: Your response implied that you are indeed capable of evil. Could you list six examples, please?

Balcony

Alan Shore: You have been truly, truly great, Jerry.

Jerry Espenson: Really?

Alan Shore: You pushed just the right amount; you made your point without alienating the jury. Brilliant!

They both chuckle.

Jerry Espenson: My feeling is we need to have Erica testify. It's risky, but I'm not sure we have any other choice.

Alan Shore: Have you considered this aborted 9-1-1 call? How do we account for that?

Jerry Espenson: Erica, upon discovering the body, began to call 9-1-1, and that's when she went into the black-out.

Alan Shore: *nods* That could work. *pause* What about Renee? Do we call her?

Jerry Espenson: I think so. To the extent we want the jury to see her as a potential killer, we should expose them to her odd demeanor.

Alan Shore: Okay. First, we'll call Erica. Save Renee for last. Is—? *turns to face Jerry Espenson, who is becoming tearful* Jerry, what's wrong?

Jerry Espenson: *shaking his head* Nothing.

Alan Shore: Jerry—

Jerry Espenson: *sighs* When I was in law school, my dream wasn't so much the big trial as . . . well, I guess *this*. Having a drink at the end of the day with co-counsel, battle-weary, rehashing the day, discussing strategy—the whole socialization of lawyering that . . . well, until now, I've never experienced. It's a rich feeling, whatever it is.

Alan Shore: It's called friendship.

Jerry Espenson *nods*.

Alan Shore: To friendship, my colleague.

They click glasses in a toast.

Denny Crane: Right on my balcony?!

Alan Shore: Denny! *shaking his head* It's not what you think.

Denny Crane: I saw you. I heard you.

Alan Shore: We were just . . . talking.

Denny Crane *turns on his heel, and strides out.*

Alan Shore: Oh, dear.

Acura commercial

It's the most magical time of the year. Experience advanced performance and technology at Acura's "Drive Home for the Holidays" sales opportunity. Take advantage of special financing on select Acura models for well-qualified customers.

Upscale Chinese Restaurant

Bella Horowitz: Exchanging intimate thoughts?

Denny Crane: On my own balcony. I—I never saw it coming. Things have been so good between us lately.

Bella Horowitz: Well, Denny, it doesn't really sound like he was necessarily being unfaithful.

Denny Crane: Of all the times—I'm feeling vulnerable as it is over my law practice.

Bella Horowitz: You mean not getting the big cases?

Denny Crane *is so tied up in knots, he is speechless.*

Bella Horowitz: Yeah. I would really encourage you, Denny, to fill this void with something deeper, more meaningful. It's time to come home to Bella.

Denny Crane: I don't know, Bella.

Bella Horowitz: I'll let you crawl into my warm spot. Come home to Bella.

Paul Lewiston's Office

Paul Lewiston: If he does have her, her life could be in danger.

Detective Wade "Russell" Spindle: I realize that, but I can't get a warrant just with what you're telling me.

Brad Chase: You could at least pay him a visit.

Detective Wade "Russell" Spindle: We could, but it might be better if you guys did.

Brad Chase: Us?

Detective Wade “Russell” Spindle: Well, if he loves attention as much as you’re saying, then he might invite you in. And maybe you could hear or see something I could take to a magistrate and *get* a search warrant.

Paul Lewiston: Jeffrey?

Jeffrey Coho: He’s not gonna let me in; I’m Mr. Dirty-Mouth.

Claire Simms: Well, he still likes me.

Brad Chase: I’ll go.

Jeffrey Coho: Oh, now we’re safe.

Brad Chase: What did you say?

Paul Lewiston: All right! **holds Brad Chase back from getting into a fight with Jeffrey Coho.**

Police Officer: Detective, we found something. It’s a little sordid.

Detective Wade “Russell” Spindle: What?

Another Police Officer carries Shirley Schmidt-Ho to the doorway, and sets her down.

Exterior Lincoln Meyer’s House

Lincoln Meyer’s house is unmistakable. His lawn is heavily decorated for Christmas, and he is, of course, the STAR of the Christmas pageant, with multiple cut-outs of himself dressed as Santa Claus arranged among the candy canes and gingerbread men and a snowman. “Jingle Bells” blares from a speaker within a Christmas-Land carousel. Brad Chase pulls up in his car, accompanied by Claire Simms.

Brad Chase: You gotta be kidding.

Claire Simms and Brad Chase walk to the door, and Brad Chase rings the doorbell.

Lincoln Meyer: **opens door** Claire! Braddy-boy! What a surprise!

Claire Simms: Hello, Lincoln. Listen, evidently the police are still questions about you on the Judge Potts murder? They want another statement, so we thought we’d best have a little conversation. Uh, can we come in?

Lincoln Meyer: Why didn’t you call and have me come into the office?

Claire Simms: Well, we thought we’d just head right over.

Lincoln Meyer: I don’t believe you.

Claire Simms: Can we come in, Lincoln?

Lincoln Meyer: No. **slams door closed**

Judge Paul Resnick’s Courtroom

Erica Dolenz: I walked through the door. I saw her hanging.

Alan Shore: She was dead?

Erica Dolenz: [CC: “Yes.”] Her hands were tied behind her back. I got on a chair and cut the rope off. I couldn’t reach the noose part. That’s the last thing I remember, actually—trying to reach up and cut the rope around her neck.

Alan Shore: And then what happened?

Erica Dolenz: The next thing, it was . . . two hours later. That’s when I called for help.

Alan Shore: You have no memory of those two hours?

Erica Dolenz: I’ve been treated for a psychiatric disorder. I’ve had some black-outs on occasion.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: When you say you called for help, you mean you called your lawyer.

Erica Dolenz: Yes.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Why didn’t you call the police?

Erica Dolenz: I suppose I was afraid, especially since I had no memory of the previous two hours.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: What were you afraid of? That maybe you *had* killed Paula Wilkes? She left you for **points** that woman, Renee Winger.

Erica Dolenz: Yes.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Did you go to confront Renee Winger two nights before Mrs. Wilkes’ death?

Erica Dolenz: I—I beg your pardon?

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: Ms. Winger says you confronted her in a hotel lounge and started screaming at her. Many people witnessed this. You told her she’d regret it if she continued to see Paula Wilkes.

Erica Dolenz: I have no memory of that.

A.D.A. Otto Beedle: You have no memory of that?

Erica Dolenz: No. I—I swear. I swear.

Lincoln Meyer’s Basement Hidey Hole

Lincoln Meyer: I hope they don’t go running to the police. I would hate to have the police barge in here while my spring bow is cocked. I mean, somebody could get hurt.

Shirley Schmidt: Lincoln—I have one question for you. Why? You’ve lived your whole life within the bounds of the law, Lincoln. Now you display a desperation that . . . What’s happened in your life, Lincoln?

Lincoln Meyer: Well, this whole global warming thing—

Shirley Schmidt: Was it Marcia Hooper?

That gets Lincoln Meyer's attention; he looks sad.

Shirley Schmidt: **nodding** You were in love with her, weren't you? I think it's hard for you to live without her.

Lincoln Meyer: I don't need Marcia Hooper. I have *you*, Shirley. **near tears** She really *did* like me. Her husband made her get that restraining order. She was kind to me. **nods** She liked me.

Shirley Schmidt: We—we all live our lives out on a ledge, Lincoln. It takes surprisingly little to push us over. This was a devastating tragedy for you, losing her. Add to that, people denying your relationship—

Lincoln Meyer: I don't want to talk about it anymore.

Shirley Schmidt: **nods; looks at the spring bow** Lincoln, how does this end?

Lincoln Meyer: I don't know. I never meant to harm you when I took you, Shirley. Of course, I didn't. But I suppose I've painted myself into a bit of a corner.

Shirley Schmidt: If this *is* a game, Lincoln, you win. I'm afraid.

Hallway of Crane, Poole & Schmidt

Alan Shore: I mean, maybe she doesn't remember doing it, but what other possible explanation could there be?

Jerry Espenson: Maybe Renee somehow got into the building without being detected. Maybe the husband did it inside of four minutes. Maybe somebody else who lived in the building.

They enter:

Alan Shore's Office

Jerry Espenson: Alan, I'm like a human polygraph. I can sense the truth. Erica's telling the truth when she says it's not in her to commit murder. Renee is *not* a truthful person. And the husband—he *is* a truthful person, but there's something . . . Well, I-I don't think he's being entirely truthful *here*.

Alan Shore: You're a human polygraph?

Jerry Espenson nods, smiling.

Alan Shore: I never knew this.

Jerry Espenson: It's one of the reasons why I so implicitly and immediately trusted you. I was drawn to your honesty.

Alan Shore: Jerry, I think one of the reasons I'm drawn to you—

Denny Crane is standing in the doorway. He looks, angry/hurt, at Alan Shore, then turns and walks away.

Alan Shore: Oh, dear.

Denny Crane's Office

Denny Crane is standing at the balcony door, looking out, alone. Alan Shore enters; closing the door behind him.

Denny Crane: Don't talk to me.

Alan Shore: It's not like I went fishing with him.

Denny Crane: And don't make fun of me. I don't know whether you know this, not many men take the time every day to have a cigar, a glass of scotch, to talk to their best friend. That's not something most men have.

Alan Shore: No, it isn't.

Denny Crane: **turns to face Alan Shore** What I give to you, what—what I share, I do with no one else. I like to think what you give to me, you do with nobody else. Now that—that may sound silly to you, but here's I think is silly—the idea that jealousy or fidelity is reserved for romance. I always suspected that there was a connection between you and *that man*. That you got something you didn't get from me.

Alan Shore: I probably do. But gosh, what I get from you, Denny . . . **takes a few steps forward to stare out the door to the balcony** People walk around today calling everyone their best friend. **shakes his head** The term doesn't have any real meaning anymore. Mere acquaintances are lavished with hugs and kisses upon a second or at most third meeting. Birthday cards get passed around offices so everybody can scribble a snippet of sentimentality for a colleague they've barely met. And everyone just loves everyone. As a result, when you tell somebody you love them today, it isn't much heard. I love you, Denny. **turns to face Denny Crane** You are my best friend.

Denny Crane's demeanor softens.

Alan Shore: I can't imagine going through life without *you* as my best friend. **turns back to the window** I'm not gonna kiss you, however.

Denny Crane: **turns to the window and wags his finger** I don't want you on my balcon—on *ANY* balcony—*alone* with *that man*.

Alan Shore: Okay.

Courthouse Corridor

Elevator dings, and Alan Shore, Jerry Espenson, and Erica Dolenz exit. Alan Shore nearly walks into Renee Winger.

Alan Shore: Ah.

Renee Winger: Déjà vu. That's French.

Alan Shore: All set for your testimony, Renee?

Renee Winger: I'm nervous. I'm not as funny when I'm nervous.

Judge Paul Resnick's Courtroom

Alan Shore: Let's cut to it, Ms. Winger. You and the decedent, Paula Wilkes, were involved romantically.

Renee Winger: Yes. We'd met about a month prior to her death. We began dating, and it quickly became exclusive.

Alan Shore: Well, uh—by—when you say “exclusive,” that's understating it a bit, isn't it?

Renee Winger: I don't know. It certainly escalated quickly. Whether it would have sustained is hard to say. She died so early in the relationship.

Alan Shore: Well, she must have thought it would sustain. After all, she redid her will rather suddenly in her own handwriting, leaving everything to *you*.

Renee Winger: Um, I'm a little embarrassed about that. We were in Las Vegas.

Jerry Espenson is slowly leaning rightward, so he can see Renee Winger around Alan Shore.

Renee Winger: We were, I guess, in the throes of new love where people can be prone to doing crazy things.

Alan Shore: And a month later, she shockingly turns up dead, hanged.

Renee Winger: Mr. Shore, I'm very happy to answer your questions, but I would appreciate it if you'd be a little less flippant about Paula's death.

Alan Shore: **taken a bit aback** Ms. Winger, I'm s—I—it—I—e—I can't help but notice your demeanor seems *remarkably* different today than in *all* my prior encounters with you.

Renee Winger: Well, I—I guess I—I'm—I'm a little n-nervous to be in court.

Alan Shore gestures at her, nodding his head, ironic look on his face.

Judge Paul Resnick's Courtroom Corridor

Jerry Espenson: I don't think she came off a killer.

Erica Dolenz: I'm going to prison. Blessed are the merciful for they are—

Alan Shore: Erica, she didn't really hurt our case here; she said nothing to incriminate you. We just lost her as a red herring.

Erica Dolenz: Do we even have anything else to offer?

Alan Shore: Well, just one of my overwritten closing arguments, but they've been known to work in the past.

seeing Renee Winger approach Ahh.

Renee Winger: Was that helpful?

Alan Shore: That was quite a performance, Renee.

Renee Winger: Maybe that was the real me, and all this time I've been performing with you. **turns and exits**

Alan Shore: Any thoughts?

Jerry Espenson: None.

Paul Lewiston's Office

Brad Chase: He's got her. I can feel it. She's in that house.

Claire Simms: Yeah. He practically baited us.

Brad Chase: I say we just charge in there, police or no police. I can do it.

Denise Bauer: Brad, the last time you did that, you chopped off a priest's fingers.

Paul Lewiston: We are not trained to storm.

Brad Chase: I was a Marine! I'm trained. I'm practically a Navy SEAL.

Jeffrey Coho rolls his eyes.

Brad Chase: And I saw that.

Claire Simms: Did the detectives say what it would take to satisfy reasonable suspicion?

Paul Lewiston: Something more than a hunch, which is—let's face it—all we have.

Alan Shore: **enters** What's going on? A party?

Brad Chase: This is not a time for your nonsense; okay, sport?

Alan Shore: **rustling around in a bowl of candy on the cocktail table** Typically, you're a fan of my nonsense, Brad. What's the matter?

Brad Chase: We think that Lincoln has kidnapped Shirley. At least, we think it's possible.

Alan Shore: What?

Paul Lewiston: He may have her in his house.

Alan Shore: Well, why don't the police just go get her?

Paul Lewiston: Because we don't have anything to go on, and the police can't get a warrant.

Alan Shore: Well, Lincoln told me in a phone call, he *did* have Shirley. I'll say as much in an affidavit. You'll take it to the police and get your warrant. I'll go have that phone call now. You'll have my sworn statement in a minute.

Alan Shore turns and walks out, leaving the others to stare at each other.

Police Station

Detective Wade "Russell" Spindle: He just told this Alan Shore he had Ms. Schmidt?

Paul Lewiston: Apparently. Let's assume a mistake is going to be made here, Russell. Which side do you want to err on?

Detective Wade "Russell" Spindle: Okay, let's go see the magistrate.

Scenes of police getting into cars and hastening into action are interspersed with Jerry Espenson's mad dash—hooting and hopping—from the elevator in the courthouse, through the corridor and into the courtroom.

Judge Paul Resnick's Courtroom

Alan Shore: Jerry, what's wrong?

Jerry Espenson: I was going through the life insurance policy in my typical meticulous fashion, and look what I found in the fine print! I highlighted it.

Judge Paul Resnick: Okay, Mr. Beadle, we'll hear your summation.

Alan Shore: Actually, your Honor, the defense would like to call one last witness.

A.D.A. Beadle: You said you rested.

Alan Shore: We don't. The defense would like to recall Sean Wilkes.

Scene of police cars rushing to Lincoln Meyer's house, sirens blaring.

Judge Paul Resnick's Courtroom

Alan Shore: Mr. Wilkes, you've met my colleague, Jerry Espenson, have you not?

Sean Wilkes: I have.

Alan Shore: Ah, Jerry, it turns out, is a human polygraph. He has a nose for who's telling the truth, and for who's a truthful person in general, and the thing is, you struck him as one of those generally truthful people **pause while Sean Wilkes smiles** who's not telling the truth here.

A.D.A. Beadle: Objection. Does counsel have a question?

Alan Shore: My question is: Have you been honest with this court, Mr. Wilkes?

Sean Wilkes: Yes.

Alan Shore: Paula Wilkes' life insurance policy, for which you are the sole beneficiary, has a settlement value of \$1 million. Are there any exclusions under your late wife's policy, sir?

Sean Wilkes: **crossing his arms** Uh, uh, I think there are certain exclusions, yes.

Alan Shore: One being suicide. The policy doesn't cover suicide. **picks up the policy from the table** It says right here, uh, highlighted in yellow.

Alan Shore starts to had the policy to A.D.A. Beadle, then walks it over to the court clerk instead. The court clerk hands it to Judge Paul Resnick.

Alan Shore: I am sure it must have been . . . an unimaginable shock when you entered Paula's apartment to see her hanging there. And as you picked up the phone and dialed 9-1-1, another shocking reality hit you, one with crippling monetary consequences. It was you **pointing** who aborted the 9-1-1 call, and then you did something foolish. You tried to make her tragic death look like a murder. I'm sure charges of perjury are swirling around in your head about now. Fortunately, by law, if a witness retakes the stand and corrects his false statements, he can avoid those charges. So, here's your chance, Mr. Wilkes, to set the record straight. Did you go into that apartment, discover that your ex-wife had committed suicide, and proceed to tie her hands, move a chair, do whatever was necessary to make it look like somebody had killed her?

Sean Wilkes: I was in shock. I wasn't thinking clearly. **to Erica Dolenz:** I'm so sorry.

Alan Shore: Your Honor, the defense rests.

Judge Paul Resnick: Mr. Wilkes, you may step down. The bailiff will remand the witness into custody. At this time, I'm dismissing the charges against Ms. Erica Dolenz. The defendant is free to go. **bangs gavel**

Jerry Espenson: **doing a happy dance** Oh, my God!

[CC: Judge Paul Resnick: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury—]

Alan Shore: Jerry, you realize what you've done? You've secured the freedom of an innocent person.

Jerry Espenson launches himself at Alan, giving him a huge bear hug!

Alan Shore: Let's hope Denny doesn't walk in.

Exterior Lincoln Meyer's House

Police cars, lead by an unmarked vehicle, and trailed by an SUV carrying Brad Chase, Paul Lewiston, Jeffrey Coho, Claire Simms and Denise Bauer, arrive, brakes and sirens squealing.

Brad Chase: Hey, may I join?

Detective Wade "Russell" Spindle: I'm sorry, no.

Jeffrey Coho: Why didn't you tell him you were practically a Navy SEAL?

Lincoln Meyer's Basement Hidey Hole

Lincoln Meyer is once again strumming his ukulele, serenading Shirley Schmidt.

Chipmunk's Christmas Song

Want a plane that loops the loop,

Me, I want a hula-hoop,

We can hardly stand the wait,

Please, Christmas, don't be late!

Doorbell rings.

Shirley Schmidt: Aren't you going to answer it?

Lincoln Meyer puts down his ukulele, stands, walks out the door and up the steps, arriving upstairs just in time to see the police battering in the door. He turns to run back downstairs.

Lincoln Meyer: Your little friends called the police. **bolts the door** That was a mistake!

Shirley Schmidt: Lincoln—

Lincoln Meyer: They've escalated the situation before I had a chance to work out my exit plan.

A SWAT Team is searching the main floor of the house.

Shirley Schmidt: Lincoln, I can hear them. They're going through the entire house.

Lincoln Meyer: From the outside, this room looks like a pantry.

Shirley Schmidt: It's a locked room in a basement! You think they'll skip it?!

Now, the SWAT team is searching the basement.

Shirley Schmidt: Lincoln—

Lincoln Meyer: **singsong** Shut u-up.

Shirley Schmidt: There's no way out of here. They're right outside the door, Lincoln. Wait a minute. This room isn't soundproof. **shouting:** Help! Help!

Lincoln Meyer: Hey! One more scream like that, **brandishing a handgun** and I will shoot you dead!

The SWAT team is breaking the door in, and one blow triggers the spring bow, letting fly an arrow which goes through Lincoln Meyer's body, felling him.

SWAT Officer: **covering the fallen Lincoln Meyer with his automatic rifle** Don't get up! All secured!

Exterior of Lincoln Meyer's Home

Paul Lewiston: There she is!

Shirley Schmidt: Before you all start hugging me, did any of you have the presence of mind to bring vodka?

Lincoln Meyer: **being wheeled out on a gurney** A little antiseptic. A Band-Aid. It's just a flesh wound.

Alan Shore's Office

Alan Shore: So, she's all right.

Denise Bauer: Completely. She wouldn't even go to the hospital.

Alan Shore: Ah, thank goodness. Thank you for telling me, Denise.

Denise Bauer: Sure.

Alan Shore: Denise. It's news worth celebrating, don't you think? **puts his newspaper down next to him**

Denise Bauer: Don't you ever give up?

Alan Shore: I do, actually. **rises, buttons his jacket (!) and starts sauntering toward Denise Bauer** It's just you don't *really* want me to. I must say, Denise, when I look at you, I see one of those little Catholic schoolgirls, running around in her plaid skirt, always to class on time, the first to raise her hand, the neatest of . . . penmanship. And then, when I look closer, I see . . . Shirley.

Shirley Schmidt: Well, I'm glad to see things haven't changed here.

Denise Bauer: **seeing her way out** Shirley, are you okay?

Shirley Schmidt and Denise Bauer hug.

Shirley Schmidt: I am. Thank you. Lincoln was actually a very charming host when he wasn't threatening to kill me. Alan, it's been brought to my attention that you falsified an affidavit and committed a fraud on the magistrate.

Alan Shore: Did I?

Shirley Schmidt: As senior partner, I cannot tolerate this kind of behavior—

Alan Shore saunters back to his couch, unbuttons his jacket, and sits.

Shirley Schmidt: —and if it happens again, you will be fired.

Alan Shore: No doubt.

Shirley Schmidt: Thank you. You very likely saved my life.

Alan Shore: **rising—and sauntering—again** I must say, Shirley, when I look at you, I see one of those little Catholic schoolgirls—

Shirley Schmidt: Oh, get a *life!* **exits**

Denise Bauer gives him a hurt look, and exits behind Shirley Schmidt.

Balcony

Alan Shore: I'll sleep with her one day.

Denny Crane: No, you won't. **chuckles**

Alan Shore: **laughs** You know, the brain supposedly confuses fear with passion. She should be ripe with passion, for God's sake. Denny, what ever happened to that doll?

Denny Crane: The police took her in for questioning.

Alan Shore: Shirley Schmidt-Ho?

Denny Crane: Yeah. She'll be back. Alan— **shakes his head** I'm sorry I doubted your feelings. It was just seeing you on the balcony with *that man*. Alan, what is it about *out here*?

Alan Shore: We're out on a ledge—14 floors to a spectacular death. It probably gives us a sense of our mortality, which in turn . . . There's nothing so life-affirming, I suppose, as a little death tucked in the back of our mind.

Denny Crane: When I die, I want my remains **tapping cigar ashes over the ledge** sprinkled off of here. You?

Alan Shore: The balcony?

Denny Crane: Could there be any place more fitting?

Alan Shore: I suppose not. But since I don't want to be cremated, somebody should at least yell, "Look out below!"

Denny Crane: **walking to his chair and sitting down** Ah, the simple pleasures: A clear night, a scotch, a friend,.

Alan Shore: Even if he is high-maintenance. **also sits; toasts** Ah. To simple pleasures.

They click glasses.