

Popular: Summer School  
"The People v. Nicole Julian"  
by  
The Wild Pikachu

POPULAR: SUMMER SCHOOL

"THE PEOPLE V. NICOLE JULIAN"

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. BROOKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Brooke is sitting up in bed, looking bored. She breaks into a grin when Harrison comes in, carrying a bag.

HARRISON

Hi, you.

BROOKE

Hey. What's that?

Harrison sets the bag in Brooke's lap.

HARRISON

I stopped at the magazine stand on the way.

Brooke reaches in and pulls out a bunch of women's magazines. She picks one up and flips through it idly.

BROOKE

Ah, yes—the latest fashions for the glam hospital patient.

HARRISON

Hey, I think you do a lot with that gown.

Brooke rolls her eyes.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

No, I mean it, white with little blue splotches, it really...brings out your eyes.

BROOKE

Oh, stop.

She giggles, then winces.

HARRISON

(concerned)  
What??

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Brooke takes a couple of careful breaths.

BROOKE  
 Ribs. It hurts when I laugh.

HARRISON  
 (contrite)  
 Oh. Well...I can be depressing.  
 Actually, I'm pretty good at  
 depressing.

He sees a grin playing at the corners of her mouth.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
 (wagging his finger)  
 Don't laugh.

Brooke tries, but finally lets out a snort, and then winces again.

BROOKE  
 Owww... I can't help it.

Harrison points to her hip.

HARRISON  
 What about that?

Brooke raps on the spot with her knuckles, hitting hard plastic beneath the gown.

BROOKE  
 This? I can't feel anything  
 there.  
 (sighs)  
 I'll probably spend my senior year  
 in a wheelchair.

HARRISON  
 (wagging his finger)  
 Hey—there'll be no defeatist  
 attitude while I'm in the room.

Brooke breaks into another grin.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
 You're not gonna start laughing  
 again, are you?

BROOKE  
 No, I'm not laughing. I'm  
 just—glad I have you here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HARRISON

Hey, as long as you need me.

BROOKE

Don't say that—you might wind up stuck with me for longer than you think.

(beat)

So, where's Sam? Finally decided to take a day off from hospital duty?

HARRISON

(hesitating)

Ummm...

The smile finally fades from Brooke's face.

BROOKE

Oh. It's today, isn't it?

HARRISON

Yeah. It's today.

CUT TO:

INT. A COURTROOM

None of the principal players have arrived yet, but the spectator gallery is filling up. Sam and Mike walk in through the open doors and look around. A moment later, a side door opens, and the bailiff leads Devenport and Nicole to the defense table. As they glare at her, she gives Sam a smug look.

There is a touch on Mike's arm, and he and Sam turn to see a short, fresh-faced young woman standing behind them. She holds out her hand to Mike.

JONES

Mr. McQueen?

Mike looks at her, puzzled, and throws Sam a questioning glance.

MIKE

I'm sorry...are you a friend of Nicole's?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONES  
(smiling patiently)  
I'm Alicia Jones. I'm prosecuting  
Ms. Julian.

MIKE  
(taken aback)  
Oh— I didn't mean...

JONES  
It's all right. I'm sorry that  
you've only been able to meet with  
my assistants up to now, but fast-  
tracking this case has about  
doubled my workday.  
(to Sam)  
You're Ms. McPherson?

SAM  
Yes.

Sam shakes Jones' hand.

JONES  
You do realize, because you're  
both witnesses, you can't stay  
once I start presenting my case.

SAM  
(nods)  
We've been told.

MIKE  
Miss Jones... I—I don't want to  
seem rude, but—

JONES  
I'm twenty-five. This is my  
eighth murder trial, and I'm seven-  
for-seven so far.

MIKE  
(embarrassed)  
Again, I'm sorry...

She touches his arm reassuringly.

JONES  
(emphatically)  
It's all right. I will get her  
for you.

Jones catches a signal from the bailiff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JONES (CONT'D)

Excuse me—they're about to bring  
the jury in.

She goes and sits behind the prosecution table, while Mike and Sam find seats in the gallery. Meanwhile, the side door opens and the jurors file in, taking their places.

BALIFF

All rise!

Everyone stands as the judge emerges from his chambers and takes his seat behind the bench.

BALIFF (CONT'D)

Be seated.

Everyone sits.

ANGLE: NICOLE

watching impassively.

BALIFF (CONT'D)

Superior Court of the State of California is now in session, the Honorable Roger Holmes presiding. Case number oh-one-two-five-five-seven-two, the People of the State of California versus Nicole Julian, on the charge of attempted vehicular homicide in the first degree...

WHITE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EST. THE INSTITUTE FOR OCEANOGRAPHIC STUDIES - DAY

A long, low building overlooking the Pacific.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB ROOM

Essentially a large, open space, broken up by various pieces of equipment. Along one wall is a large window on an aquarium. The other walls are haphazardly lined with counters, desks, etc. At one of these Josh sits, tapping away at a keyboard.

Tina Bennett, a tall, thirty-ish brunette, walks into the room.

BENNETT

Good morning, Josh.

JOSH

(turning)

Oh— Good morning, Dr. Bennett.

Dr. Bennett strolls over to Josh and idly flips through a stack of papers on the desk.

BENNETT

Well, you seem to be making short work of this. The security guard said you checked in at seven?

JOSH

Yeah, I kinda want to double-check everything. I was never really very good at this computer stuff.

The computer beeps accusingly.

JOSH (CONT'D)

See?

Dr. Bennett leans over his shoulder and looks at the screen.

BENNETT

(tapping keys)

You have to clear the response field first.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSH  
Right—I keep forgetting.

BENNETT  
Hey, don't be so hard on yourself.  
I made plenty of mistakes when I  
interned here.

JOSH  
You did? I mean, you interned  
here?

BENNETT  
(chuckles)  
That was back during the first  
Bush administration. And the  
reporting software wasn't nearly  
so forgiving—I used to have to  
clear the whole section and start  
over.

Their conversation is interrupted by Lloyd Rutherford, the head scientist at the Institute, an imposing, greying man in his late fifties, who walks in impatiently.

RUTHERFORD  
Mr. Ford! Are you finished with  
the quarterly migration reviews?

JOSH  
Oh—yes, sir! It's right here,  
sir.

Josh picks up a stack of printouts and hands it to Rutherford, who takes it with a grunt and walks off without another word. Josh watches him as he leaves.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
I don't think he likes me.

BENNETT  
(shakes her head)  
It's not you, personally. Dr.  
Rutherford just doesn't approve of  
the Institute using EX-TEAM  
interns.

JOSH  
Why not? Is he afraid I'm going  
to break something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BENNETT

We've...had some problems before.  
But don't worry about it. You're  
doing just fine.

JOSH

Well, I'm trying. Just—I'm glad  
I don't have to know what any of  
these numbers mean.

Dr. Bennett chuckles and claps him on the shoulder.

BENNETT

Don't worry about that, either. I  
had to get a doctorate to learn  
that.

CUT TO:

INT. LILY'S LIVING ROOM

which is, to put it mildly, a mess: stacks of flyers are piled everywhere, along with picket signs and other protest paraphernalia. Lily is sitting in one of the few clear spaces, scribbling on a clipboard, when the doorbell rings. She gets up and answers it, surprised when she opens the door to find Mary Cherry standing on her stoop.

LILY

Mary Cherry! Uh—

MARY CHERRY

Lil Lily, I come to you painfully  
impaled upon the horns of an  
ethical dilemma.

LILY

Ah, uh, come in.

Lily shows Mary Cherry inside, then rushes ahead and clears off a chair.

LILY (CONT'D)

Sorry about the mess. I'm trying  
to keep busy while Josh is away.  
So I'm helping organize a rally  
against rising electricity prices  
next week.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY CHERRY  
(throws up her hands)  
You see?! That's exactly my  
problem!

LILY  
(puzzled)  
Rising energy prices?

MARY CHERRY  
(waving dismissively)  
No, not that! Mama's got stock in  
half the energy companies in  
Texas—she's makin' millions off  
this whole blackout thing.

She spreads her arms out to encompass the entire room.

MARY CHERRY (CONT'D)  
I mean THIS!

Lily shakes her head, lost.

MARY CHERRY (CONT'D)  
This protestin' thing!

LILY  
You want to protest something?

MARY CHERRY  
Exactly! Yes, I do!

LILY  
(cautiously)  
All right...what do you want to  
protest?

MARY CHERRY  
I don't know.

LILY  
You don't know what you want to  
protest?

MARY CHERRY  
That's my dilemma!

LILY  
(slowly)  
You want to protest something, but  
you don't know what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARY CHERRY

See?! I knew you would understand!

Lily rubs her eyes.

LILY

Okay. Sit down...

She leads Mary Cherry to a chair and firmly sits her down, then sits down herself.

LILY (CONT'D)

All right...why don't we start again, from the beginning. When exactly did you get this feeling that you wanted to protest something?

MARY CHERRY

Well, Lil Lily, I've been thinking.

Lily rolls her eyes briefly at that, but does her best to look attentive.

MARY CHERRY (CONT'D)

I thought, and I thought, and then, bam!—it hit me like a bolt outta the blue! That whole thing that happened last month, it was a cosmic wake-up call from above. And it was sayin', "Mary Cherry, you best do something with yourself, girl!"

LILY

You are still in high school. I don't think you have to worry about it yet.

MARY CHERRY

No, I have to do something now!

(confidentially)

I'm ashamed to admit this, Lily, but—since I've come to Kennedy High, I have fallen under the spell of the evil Nicole Julian. Now I see that, unless I mend my ways, I will be doomed to follow in her wayward footsteps.

(wailing)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARY CHERRY (CONT'D)

AND I DON'T WANNA GO TO THE BIG HOUSE!!

LILY

Well, first of all, I really don't think that's a possibility, but—all right. Let's say you want to change your life. Why come to me?

MARY CHERRY

Why, I asked myself, "Mary Cherry, who do you know who can help you lift the Julian curse from your poor, misguided soul?" And then I answered myself, "Why, Lil Lily, of course! She's got that whole do-gooder thing down pat—she'll be able to tell me what to do!" And then I told myself—

LILY

(interrupting)

Okay—hang on, Mary Cherry. If you've decided to become a better person, then, I applaud that—but I can't give you a road map to what you have to do.

MARY CHERRY

You can't?

LILY

No. Activism...is a deeply personal experience. To work, to, to sacrifice, to raise your voice in protest—it has to be for a cause you care passionately about. You can't have someone else tell you what that cause should be.

MARY CHERRY

You can't?

LILY

(smiling)

No, you can't. Now, why don't you tell me something that you think is really wrong and needs to be changed.

MARY CHERRY

Well—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LILY  
(hastily)  
Something unrelated to fashion or  
celebrity style.

Mary Cherry mulls that over for a few moments.

MARY CHERRY  
(perplexed)  
Well...I—I don't know.

Lily gets up, and Mary Cherry reflexively stands up with her.

LILY  
Well, that's what you need to  
think about, before you do  
anything else.

MARY CHERRY  
But—

Lily ushers her towards the door.

LILY  
(philosophically)  
You've made the decision to  
change—that's a big step. You  
don't need to do everything in one  
day. Just keep your eyes open,  
and you'll see the injustices of  
the world around you.

As they reach the door, Lily opens it.

LILY (CONT'D)  
Look, why don't you come to the  
rally? We'll be at the Civic  
Center at noon on Tuesday. You  
can see what activism looks like  
close up...and maybe we can figure  
out what the best thing for you to  
do is.

Mary Cherry takes Lily by the shoulders and hugs her.

MARY CHERRY  
Oh, thank you, Lily! I knew you  
were the right person to come to!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

She flounces out the door. Lily closes the door, shakes her head, and goes back to work.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. BROOKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NOON

Brooke is sitting up in bed picking at her lunch tray when Harrison comes in.

BROOKE  
Hey, stranger. I haven't seen you  
in, oh, a couple hours.

HARRISON  
Are you trying to tell me I've  
already worn out my welcome?

BROOKE  
Never. Sit.

Harrison sits by Brooke's bed and looks over her lunch.

HARRISON  
Okay, there is definitely  
something wrong here. When I was  
in here, all I ever got to eat  
were unidentifiable green lumps.

BROOKE  
(playfully)  
Well, the answer is obvious—I'm  
prettier than you are.

HARRISON  
That's definitely true.

Brooke takes a bite of her sandwich.

BROOKE  
Hey—do you happen to know what  
the first animal was?

Harrison furls his brow in thought.

HARRISON  
Sorry—I got a C-minus in biology.  
Why?

Brooke reaches down and pulls up a large crossword puzzle book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE

Jane thought I might get bored.  
Anyway, I need an eight-letter  
word for "first animal" that ends  
in "K".

HARRISON

Sorry. Aren't the answers in the  
back?

BROOKE

Harrison! That would be cheating!

HARRISON

Somehow, I'm glad you weren't with  
us when we had our chemistry  
final.

BROOKE

I still can't believe you guys did  
that.

HARRISON

Hey, it was survival of the  
desperate. Besides, I'd much  
rather be here than in summer  
school every day.

BROOKE

Well, I'm glad you'd choose me  
over Miss Glass.

Harrison takes her hand and squeezes it, and for a moment they  
share a look—and then Sam breezes into the room, and he pulls  
his hand away awkwardly.

SAM

Hey, guys.

Sam takes a seat on the opposite side of Brooke's bed.

SAM (CONT'D)

(pointing)  
What's this?

Brooke takes another bite of her sandwich.

BROOKE

(munching)  
Tuna fish.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Eww. You sure you don't want me to smuggle in a pizza or something?

BROOKE

It's actually not bad.

Sam and Harrison glance at each other across the bed.

HARRISON

I guess her taste buds were injured.

SAM

Obviously.

Brooke looks from one to the other, groaning.

BROOKE

Come on, you guys aren't gonna get on me for liking tuna fish, are you?

Sam and Harrison look at each other again. Finally he shrugs.

HARRISON

I guess we'll let it pass.

BROOKE

Thank you.

(to Sam)

So...I guess you were at the courthouse this morning.

SAM

You should see the prosecutor—she barely looks any older than we do.

BROOKE

I know. She came to see me a few days ago. She might look young, but she's really smart.

SAM

Yeah—her opening speech was dead on. She really had the jury going.

HARRISON

(suddenly)

Aardvark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The girls look at him strangely.

SAM/BROOKE

What?

HARRISON

The first animal. Like in the dictionary. Aardvark.

BROOKE

Oh!

Brooke takes a pencil, pulls up the book and fills the word in.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

(grinning)

Thanks.

SAM

Mom got you that, didn't she?

BROOKE

Uh huh.

SAM

(reminiscing)

Mom and Dad used to do the puzzle in the paper every morning at breakfast.

Brooke touches Sam's arm sympathetically.

SAM (CONT'D)

She always wanted to pass on the interest...but, crosswords just aren't my thing.

HARRISON

You know, I never understood that. You're such a wordy person.

Sam gives him a deadpan look.

SAM

Gee, thanks, Harrison. I guess I just like my words in complete sentences.

Just then, Alicia Jones, the prosecutor, knocks on the open door and walks in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BROOKE  
Hi, Miss Jones.

JONES  
Good to see you again, Brooke.  
(to Sam)  
And good morning again, Ms.  
McPherson.

BROOKE  
(gesturing)  
This is Harrison John.

Harrison hastily gets up and offers his hand.

JONES  
(shaking Harrison's hand)  
Ah, so you're Mr. John. I was  
hoping to find you here.

HARRISON  
(surprised)  
Y-you were?

JONES  
(to Brooke)  
I was in the building—I have a  
couple of your doctors on my  
witness list, testifying about  
your injuries—and I just wanted  
to stop by and let you know that  
things started well for us.

BROOKE  
Thank you, Miss Jones. I'm really  
sorry that I can't do more—

JONES  
I already told you, don't sweat  
that. I have more than enough to  
hang Ms. Julian with.  
(to Sam)  
Ms. McPherson, I'd like you to be  
ready to come down to the  
courthouse...oh, in two or three  
days. I should be through with  
the technical witnesses by then.

SAM  
Technical witnesses?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JONES

The doctors, forensic specialists,  
other experts... Anyway, my  
office will give you a call  
beforehand.

SAM

(nodding)

Sure.

Finally she turns to Harrison.

JONES

And Mr. John, I'd also like you to  
be ready to come down sometime in  
the next few days. Even though  
you didn't witness the crime, or  
anything leading up to it, I'm  
still going to try to get you in  
as a kind of character witness—  
that is, to help paint a picture  
of Ms. Julian's character. I'll  
need you to be ready for a call  
from my office, too.

HARRISON

Uh, yeah. Of course.

Jones nods in satisfaction and turns back to Brooke.

JONES

Well, that's all I wanted...I'll  
let you get back to your friends  
now.

She leans over and takes Brooke's hand.

JONES (CONT'D)

And remember—you just concentrate  
on healing. Let me sweat the easy  
stuff, like putting Ms. Julian  
away for the next decade or two.

BROOKE

(smiling)

Thank you, Miss Jones.

Jones nods acknowledgement to Sam and Harrison, and walks out.

HARRISON

You weren't kidding about her  
looks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

SAM

But she really seems to know what she's doing.

(checks her watch)

Listen, Brooke, I hate to bail on you so soon, but I promised lunch to Lily. She's got some demonstration she wants me to help her with—

BROOKE

(waving)

Go.

Sam leans over and hugs Brooke.

SAM

I'll be back later. Is there anything you need?

BROOKE

Naw—I've got Errand Boy here if I think of anything.

Harrison puts up his hand gamely.

HARRISON

That's me.

Sam walks around the bed, and Harrison rises long enough to kiss her goodbye. After she leaves, he settles back into his chair and looks curiously at Brooke, who is staring off into space.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Brooke?

Brooke starts.

BROOKE

Hmm? Oh...

(shakes her head)

There's just...something I can't get out of my head.

HARRISON

Look, if you're still feeling guilty about not being able to ID Nicole, don't. It was dark, you were blinded by her headlights... Plus, there was the whole getting hit by the car thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

BROOKE

I know, I know. The thing is...I knew it was Nicole.

HARRISON

(shaking his head)

What do you mean?

BROOKE

When I woke up here in the hospital... I knew it was her, even before you told me.

HARRISON

(shrugs)

Maybe you just figured she was the most likely suspect.

BROOKE

(laughs shortly)

I still can't really believe Nic would stoop to murder, even stone drunk.

(reflectively)

And yet...I knew it was her. I knew it—but I don't know how I knew. Isn't that weird?

Harrison shrugs helplessly.

CUT TO:

INT. LILY'S KITCHEN - LATER

Lily and Sam are eating at her tiny kitchen table. At least, Lily is eating—Sam is in the middle of a giggle fit.

LILY

Stop laughing—I'm serious!

SAM

I'm sorry, Lily, I just—I can't picture Mary Cherry as some kind of sign-toting militant demonstrator.

LILY

Well, maybe she won't be. But, frankly, I think pretty much anything would be an improvement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

True.

A couple of moments later, Lily catches Sam looking at her strangely again.

LILY

What???

SAM

I don't know—are you sure Mary Cherry isn't becoming, like, some kind of project for you?

LILY

No! Look, she needs my help, that's all.

SAM

Yeah, she seems to be in that position a lot lately.

LILY

Better she turns to me than to Nicole, like she used to.

SAM

Okay, okay, yeah, but still... How much do you really think you can do?

LILY

Hey, do you remember when I asked you to demonstrate against clear-cutting in the Sierras? You said that there'd always be more trees, and there was no way you were going to march around with a bunch of enviro-freaks.

SAM

(defensively)

I was eleven years old! What did I know?!

Lily folds her arms and cocks an eyebrow at Sam.

SAM (CONT'D)

(throwing up her hands)

All right, I give. If you can turn Mary Cherry into a socially conscious person, more power to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She takes a sip of her drink.

SAM (CONT'D)  
I'll still believe it when I see  
it.

CUT TO:

EST. THE INSTITUTE - EVENING

The sun setting over the Pacific.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB ROOM

Josh is still at the computer, making just a little better  
time. Dr. Bennett walks in.

BENNETT  
You know, you can call it a day  
now. Especially considering how  
early you got here.

JOSH  
Yeah, I'm almost done.

The phone rings, and Dr. Bennett picks it up.

BENNETT  
(into the phone)  
Hello...? It's me... I'm  
wrapping up... I'll send him  
over.

She hangs up the phone and turns to Josh.

BENNETT (CONT'D)  
Dr. Rutherford wants you.

JOSH  
Oh, ah, all right.

Josh taps a few more keys, and stands up.

BENNETT  
Well, I'll see you tomorrow.

JOSH  
Good night, Dr. Bennett.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENNETT  
Good night, Josh.

Josh and Dr. Bennett walk out different doors.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. RUTHERFORD'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Rutherford, working at his desk, looks up when Josh raps on the open door.

JOSH  
You wanted to see me, Dr.  
Rutherford?

RUTHERFORD  
(putting down his papers)  
You used to be a football player,  
Mr. Ford?

JOSH  
(cautiously)  
Ah—yes. Used to be.

RUTHERFORD  
Can you lift forty pounds?

JOSH  
(shrugs)  
Sure.

RUTHERFORD  
Good. There are a few boxes  
marked "testing equipment" that  
the delivery people left in the  
garage, by the service entrance.  
They need to be put in the  
crustacean studies center—

JOSH  
(puts up his hand)  
No problem. I'll get on that  
right now.

Dr. Rutherford grunts, and goes back to his papers. Josh waits for a moment, possibly expecting a "thank you", then backs out of the office.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE INSTITUTE PARKING LOT

Dr. Bennett, carrying a briefcase, walks to her car, opens the trunk, and puts her briefcase in. As she closes the trunk, a convertible pulls into the lots and screeches to a halt behind her. Inside are three kids: Jake Carlin and two of his friends. All of them are cut from the same rich, spoiled, suburban cloth. They all jump out of the car and approach Dr. Bennett, who looks at them severely.

BENNETT

You're not supposed to be on  
Institute property, Jake.

JAKE

(snidely)

Aw, c'mon, Doc. We were just  
cruisin', and happened to end up  
here.

He leans in and leers threateningly, as his friends loosely encircle her.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You know, you used to be a lot  
friendlier, Doc.

BENNETT

(accusingly)

You're high.

JAKE

Naw, a little E. Want some? Make  
you friendly again.

ANGLE: THE INSTITUTE DOOR

Josh comes walking out, and eyes the scene.

JOSH

Hey!!

He jogs over, as the kids turn to look him over.

JOSH (CONT'D)

(to Dr. Bennett)

Are you okay?

JAKE

(sneering)

Yo, prep. You weren't invited to  
this party.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Josh turns to Jake and matches his expression of contempt.

JOSH  
Yo, scrub. Your mouth is too big—you oughta watch where you open it.

JAKE  
(snorts)  
You don't know what you're lettin' yourself in on, prep.

JOSH  
Yeah? From what I see—it's not much.

Jake takes a threatening step towards Josh.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
Step off, man. You don't wanna make me open up a can on you.

JAKE  
Let's roll, then.

JOSH  
You wanna do this mano a mano?  
(nods towards Jake's friends)  
Or you need them to even the odds for you?

Jake takes another step forward, but then one of his friends grabs at his sleeve and points. They turn to see a security cruiser turning into the lot, and Jake and his friends back away towards his car.

JAKE  
(pointing at Josh)  
Later.

They jump into the convertible and roar off; a moment later, the cruiser pulls up. The passenger-side window rolls down, and the security officer leans across the front seat and peers at them suspiciously.

OFFICER  
Everything all right, Doctor?

BENNETT  
Everything's fine now. Looks like Jake's still determined to cause trouble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OFFICER

I'll tell the other shifts to keep  
an eye out.

The window rolls back up, and the cruiser moseys away.

JOSH

You know those clowns?

BENNETT

Jake Carlin was an intern here  
last summer.

JOSH

(sniffs)

He doesn't seem like the type.

BENNETT

So we discovered. Dr. Rutherford  
fired him after a month.

JOSH

That's the problem you were  
talking about before?

BENNETT

(nods)

After that there was some  
vandalism, but we couldn't prove  
it was him. That's why the  
security cameras were installed in  
the labs.

JOSH

And that's why he doesn't like me.

BENNETT

Josh, I know Dr. Rutherford.  
Ultimately, he's a fair man.  
He'll come to see that you're not  
another Jake.

Josh claps his hands together.

JOSH

Well... I'd better get out to the  
bus stop.

Dr. Bennett puts her hands on her hips.

BENNETT

Oh, I don't think so. The least I  
can do is give you a ride.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOSH  
Dr. Bennett...

BENNETT  
Besides, you don't really want to  
be standing out there if Jake and  
his pals decide to come around  
again.

JOSH  
(considering)  
Yeah, you're right. Okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. A MOTEL - LATER

Dr. Bennett's car pulls up in front of a low-rent, ramshackle  
motel.

BENNETT  
(thumbing)  
This is where you're staying?

JOSH  
(embarrassed)  
Yeah, well, it's cheap.

BENNETT  
Josh, I pass right by here every  
day! There is absolutely no  
reason why you should be wasting  
your money on the bus. From now  
on, you're hitching a ride with  
me.

JOSH  
Dr. Bennett, I don't want to be a  
bother—

BENNETT  
Hey, did I not just say that I  
pass right by here?

JOSH  
Well—

BENNETT  
(firmly)  
No arguments. I'll see you in the  
morning, right here. Quarter to  
eight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSH

Okay.

Josh climbs out of the car, and Dr. Bennett drives off.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EST. THE COURTHOUSE - MORNING

CUT TO:

INT. THE COURTROOM

Mike is sitting on the witness stand.

JONES

Mr. McQueen, did you in fact encounter the defendant on the night in question?

MIKE

Yes, I did.

JONES

Where was that?

MIKE

At my house. Nicole stopped by about seven-thirty.

JONES

And what was the defendant's condition when she appeared at your home?

DEVENPORT

Objection. Calls for speculation.

JONES

I'll rephrase. Mr. McQueen, did you notice anything unusual about the defendant's demeanor?

MIKE

I smelled alcohol on her breath.

JONES

Faintly? Strongly?

DEVENPORT

Objection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE HOLMES

I think the witness is capable of making that distinction—  
overruled. Answer the question, Mr. McQueen.

MIKE

It was very strong.

JONES

And what action, if any, did you take when you smelled the alcohol?

MIKE

I took her car keys away from her.

JONES

And did the defendant say anything to you at that time concerning the victim?

MIKE

She asked if Brooke was home, and I told her that she'd already left for the Moonlight Cafe. She said—she said that Brooke had ruined her prom plans, and that she was going to pay.

JONES

Do you recall her exact words?

Mike looks down and swallows hard; then fixes his eyes squarely on Nicole.

MIKE

Her exact words were, "I hate that bitch, and that bitch is going to pay."

SLIDE CUT TO:

THE COURTROOM - LATER

With Sam now on the stand.

JONES

Now, Ms. McPherson, where were you at the time the crime was committed?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

I was outside the Moonlight Cafe.

JONES

And how far away were you from the victim?

SAM

(shaking her head)

Ten feet. Less.

JONES

And you saw the car hit Ms. McQueen?

SAM

Yes.

JONES

And did you hear anything in particular before the car struck Ms. McQueen?

DEVENPORT

Objection, leading.

JUDGE HOLMES

Overruled.

SAM

I heard her gun the engine before she hit Brooke.

JONES

So the car was accelerating as it hit Ms. McQueen.

SAM

That's what it sounded like.

JONES

Thank you—nothing further.

Jones sits down, and Devenport stands up.

DEVENPORT

You just characterized the driver as "she"—"she hit Brooke". However, in the police reports from the scene, you called the driver "he".

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEVENPORT (CONT'D)

The fact is that, at the time of the accident, you couldn't tell who was driving the car, could you?

SAM

No. It was too dark.

DEVENPORT

Just wanted to be clear on that. Now, Miss McPherson, you just testified that you were outside the restaurant when the accident occurred?

SAM

That's right.

DEVENPORT

What were you doing there?

SAM

I'm sorry?

DEVENPORT

What were you doing outside the restaurant? Waiting to go in? Just loitering?

SAM

I...I had just come outside.

DEVENPORT

(nodding)

Ah...isn't it true that you followed Miss McQueen outside?

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

So, both you and Miss McQueen were inside just prior to the accident.

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

Why were you both at the Moonlight Cafe that evening?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JONES

Objection. What they were doing prior to the crime is irrelevant.

DEVENPORT

Your Honor, this goes directly to how Miss McQueen's state of mind affected her actions leading up to the accident.

JUDGE HOLMES

I'll allow it.

(to Sam)

Answer the question, Ms. McPherson.

SAM

It was the night of the Junior Prom. We were meeting Harrison before going there.

DEVENPORT

That would be Harrison John, another student at Kennedy High?

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

And you were BOTH meeting him?

SAM

We were all going to go to the prom together.

DEVENPORT

And how did this unusual arrangement come about?

JONES

I'd like to renew my objection to this whole line of questioning.

DEVENPORT

I'm building a foundation, Your Honor.

JUDGE HOLMES

(severely)

Build it quickly, Mr. Devenport.

(to Sam)

Go head, Ms. McPherson.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SAM

We—Brooke and I—we both wanted to go out with Harrison. But we didn't want to fight over him. So...we decided to ask him to the prom together.

DEVENPORT

But something changed, didn't it?

SAM

We talked it over, and we decided it wasn't going to work.

DEVENPORT

(nodding)

And so when you met with Mr. John that night, you asked him to make a decision, didn't you?

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

You asked him to choose between the two of you—to date one of you, and discontinue his involvement with the other.

SAM

That's what we wanted.

DEVENPORT

I want to make it clear that this wasn't simply a hypothetical decision—both you and Miss McQueen had invested a great deal in your romantic relationships with Mr. John, isn't that true?

SAM

I—I guess you could say that.

DEVENPORT

And whoever was left out in the cold, so to speak, was bound to be disappointed, to put it mildly.

JONES

Objection—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

DEVENPORT  
(overriding)  
Who did Mr. John choose, Miss  
McPherson?

SAM  
(uncomfortably)  
He chose me.

DEVENPORT  
And how did Miss McQueen react to  
that? Was she upset?

JONES  
Objection, calls for speculation.

DEVENPORT  
Your Honor, these two have lived  
together for two years. They've  
described themselves as virtually  
family. If she's not qualified to  
make that observation...

JUDGE HOLMES  
Overruled.

DEVENPORT  
Miss McPherson?

SAM  
Yes, she was upset.

DEVENPORT  
In fact, she was so upset that she  
got up from your table and rushed  
out of the restaurant.

SAM  
Yes.

DEVENPORT  
And you followed her?

SAM  
Yes.

DEVENPORT  
Isn't it true that once you were  
outside, you asked her to stop?

SAM  
Yeah, I did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

DEVENPORT

And isn't it true that not only did she ignore your request, but that she walked out into the street without looking?

SAM

I...she...

DEVENPORT

(pressing)

She was less than ten feet away from you and she was the person you were focused on. Isn't it true, Miss McPherson, that Miss McQueen was so upset that she walked right out into the middle of the street without ever looking to see if there was any oncoming traffic?

SAM

(reluctantly)

Yes.

DEVENPORT

(for the jury)

So the only reason my client's car hit Miss McQueen is that Miss McQueen put herself directly in the car's path.

JONES

Objection!

DEVENPORT

Withdrawn.

Devenport walks back to his table and shuffles some papers to allow his point to sink in.

DEVENPORT (CONT'D)

How are you related to Brooke McQueen? Legally, that is.

SAM

Legally...our parents are engaged.

DEVENPORT

Your mother and her father.

SAM

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

DEVENPORT

And, not only are they engaged, but they have been living together for a year and a half, and just recently had a child together, is that correct?

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

So you and Miss McQueen and your respective parents are basically one household?

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

And how do you think of Brooke McQueen?

SAM

(shrugging)

She's my sister.

DEVENPORT

She confides in you? Just as if you were blood-related?

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

And how would you characterize her relationship with Nicole Julian?

JONES

Objection. Relevance?

DEVENPORT

The prosecution's entire theory of my client's motive rests upon the supposed estrangement in the relationship between her and Miss McQueen. And since Miss McQueen's doctors have attested to the court's satisfaction that she is unable to appear, I'd like some leeway to explore that relationship via Miss McPherson.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

JUDGE HOLMES

Overruled. You can answer the question, Ms. McPherson.

SAM

They...I know they were best friends until recently.

DEVENPORT

You say "until recently"?

SAM

They had a fight a couple days before...before she got hit.

DEVENPORT

I see... And as far as you know, they had never fought before?

SAM

Sure, they fought sometimes.

DEVENPORT

Last year, Miss McQueen was involved with a certain Josh Ford?

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

Do you recall an occasion when it was revealed that, while Miss McQueen and Mr. Ford were having...difficulties, Miss Julian had been intimate with him?

SAM

Yes, I remember that.

DEVENPORT

How did Miss McQueen react to learning that?

SAM

She said she never wanted to speak to her again.

DEVENPORT

Ah... And did she?

SAM

Excuse me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

DEVENPORT

Did she never speak to Miss Julian again?

SAM

No— It...blew over. Nicole apologized, I guess, and Brooke forgave her.

DEVENPORT

So the friendship between Miss McQueen and Miss Julian was strong enough to survive this serious issue between them?

SAM

I...suppose you could say that.

DEVENPORT

So you really have no idea whether or not this latest disagreement between them was simply going to "blow over" as well.

JONES

Objection—the witness can't read Brooke McQueen's mind or predict the future.

DEVENPORT

Withdrawn. Nothing further, Your Honor.

Devenport turns and sits down.

JUDGE HOLMES

Redirect, Ms. Jones?

JONES

(standing)

Yes, Your Honor.

(to Sam)

Ms. McPherson, do you know what precipitated the argument between Ms. McQueen and the defendant?

SAM

Nicole tried to come between me and Brooke. She told me that Brooke planned to do whatever it took to get Harrison.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

SAM (CONT'D)

I confronted Brooke about it, and when she found out what Nicole had said, she was furious.

While Sam is talking, Nicole leans over and whispers in Devenport's ear.

JONES

And that's when she argued with the defendant?

SAM

Yes.

JONES

That's all. Thank you.

Jones sits back down.

JUDGE HOLMES

Mr. Devenport?

Devenport turns away from his whispered conversation with Nicole.

DEVENPORT

(rising)

Thank you, Your Honor.

(to Sam)

Miss McPherson, we've already established that both you and Miss McQueen were romantically linked to Mr. John. That's a fairly recent development for both of you, isn't it?

SAM

Since spring break.

DEVENPORT

And didn't there come a time shortly after spring break when both of you were angry with Mr. John?

SAM

Yes...we found out that he'd deceived us.

DEVENPORT

In other words, he neglected to inform either of you about his relationship with the other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

And after you discovered this, you and Miss McQueen decided to join forces to enact revenge upon Mr. John for deceiving you?

SAM

Yes.

DEVENPORT

And what form was this revenge to take?

SAM

We...just wanted to hurt him. We wanted him to feel as betrayed as we did.

DEVENPORT

Specifically, isn't it true that, as part of this revenge, you enticed Mr. John into a formal dinner date at an upscale restaurant?

SAM

(quietly)

Yes.

DEVENPORT

And you intended to stand Mr. John up, thus humiliating him, isn't that right?

SAM

(reluctantly)

That was the plan.

DEVENPORT

And isn't it true, Miss McPherson, that while pretending to go along with that plan, Miss McQueen in fact intended to go to Mr. John, expose your scheme, and establish her own relationship with him at your expense?

SAM

Well...she...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

DEVENPORT

Isn't it true that, after being assured by you that you were going to stand up Mr. John, Miss McQueen did in fact show up at the restaurant and attempt to do just that?

SAM

But...

DEVENPORT

(pressing)

Isn't that what she did, Miss McPherson?

SAM

(hanging her head)

Yes. That's what she did.

DEVENPORT

So when my client told you that Miss McQueen would do anything necessary to have Mr. John for herself, she was simply warning you that Miss McQueen would repeat the behavior she had just displayed a few days before!

SAM

(flustered)

No...that's different...

DEVENPORT

Isn't it entirely possible that, rather than being furious that Miss Julian was trying to "come between" you and her, Miss McQueen was simply annoyed at having her plans for Mr. John revealed?

SAM

No! It wasn't true. Brooke and I, we talked it all out. It was all a vicious lie.

DEVENPORT

Really? You never had any reason to believe Miss Julian?

SAM

(defiantly)

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

DEVENPORT

Let me ask you, then—if you were so sure that my client was lying to you, why did you confront Miss McQueen at all? Why didn't you just shrug it off?

SAM

I...

DEVENPORT

Isn't it true that you confronted Miss McQueen precisely because you thought that there WAS a possibility that Miss Julian's warning was valid? That Miss McQueen was planning to repeat her past behavior?

Sam looks away.

DEVENPORT (CONT'D)

Miss McPherson? Isn't it true that's what you thought?

SAM

All right! I was stupid, okay? I thought maybe—

DEVENPORT

You thought maybe Miss Julian was right after all.

(to the judge)

Nothing further, Your Honor.

Sam looks miserable as she climbs down from the witness stand. Mike tries to flag her down as she passes, but she just shrugs him off and walks out the courtroom doors. He gets up and goes out after her.

JUDGE HOLMES

Ms. Jones?

JONES

Your Honor, the People would like to add a name to our witness list.

JUDGE HOLMES

(beckoning)

Counsel, approach.

Jones and Devenport step up to the bench.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

JONES

The People want to add Harrison John as a character witness.

DEVENPORT

A character witness for what?

JONES

Defense opened the door to the defendant's past behavior, Your Honor.

JUDGE HOLMES

That you did, Mr. Devenport. So ordered.

DEVENPORT

In that case, Your Honor, I'd like a recess until tomorrow morning to prepare.

The judge nods and waves them back.

JUDGE HOLMES

(loudly)

This court is in recess until tomorrow at nine a.m.!

He bangs his gavel, and everyone rises as he stands and walks back to his chambers.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM HALLWAY

Sam is sitting on a bench with her face buried in her hands when Mike comes up to her.

MIKE

Hey.

SAM

I ruined everything in there. I let Brooke down, I let you down...

He sits down next to her.

MIKE

Sam...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM  
(turning away)  
How can you even look at me? You  
must hate me now—

MIKE  
Hey, hey...

He gently pries Sam's hands away from her face and turns her head towards him.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
I could never—ever—hate you.

SAM  
But—

MIKE  
Listen to me. You may be Jane's  
daughter, but you are every bit as  
much my little girl as Brooke is.

He pauses for a moment to gather his thoughts.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Look, I don't know if this is  
exactly the right time, but...

He reaches into his jacket and pulls out a set of folded papers.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
I—I know you weren't exactly...  
thrilled...with this idea the last  
time, but— After coming so close  
to losing Brooke, I...I just—

He hands the papers to Sam, who unfolds them. As she reads, she gasps and her hand flies to her mouth. She looks up him, eyes brimming.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
I mean, only if you want.  
I'm—I'm not trying to pressure  
you into anything...

In response, she throws her arms around his neck.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
(hopefully)  
Does...that mean yes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Still unable to speak, she finally manages to nod happily. Mike lets out his own breath and holds her tight.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Oh, honey...

He stands up, pulling her to her feet.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go visit Brooke. I haven't seen her since this morning.

They walk off down the hall, with Mike's arm tightly around Sam shoulder.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EST. THE INSTITUTE - DUSK

Sunset again.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB ROOM

Josh is in his usual place when Dr. Bennett walks in, studying an open folder.

BENNETT

Josh, what's wrong with these correlations?

Josh looks up, and shrugs helplessly.

JOSH

They're all just numbers to me, Dr. Bennett.

BENNETT

(sighing)

It's just—I don't understand these results. They're just...almost gibberish.

She closes the folder and walks over to his terminal.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Let me see what you're doing.

Josh slides back to let her in, and as soon as she sees the screen she gasps.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Josh! This is the wrong template!

JOSH

(confused)

It's just like the ones I did before.

BENNETT

No! These have to be done on the d-dot template! Didn't you see the directions?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She starts flipping through the stack of papers Josh was working from.

JOSH

There weren't any directions, Dr. Bennett. Just a note from you to get it done ASAP. And the forms look exactly like the other ones.

Dr. Bennett finishes her shuffling, obviously not having found what she was looking for.

BENNETT

Rodriguez was supposed to show you the d-lot template and get you started.

JOSH

Oh—he was here for a second this afternoon. But then he got called out to one of the beach sites. I haven't seen him since.

BENNETT

(under her breath)  
Ay, Miguel...

JOSH

(embarrassed)  
I'm sorry, Dr. Bennett. It's my fault—I should've checked...

BENNETT

No, it's not your fault, Josh. There was no way you could've known.

JOSH

But...

BENNETT

Please, don't start taking responsibility for things you aren't responsible for.

JOSH

But I still feel bad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BENNETT

(pacing)

Oh, God, if these reports aren't in Fish and Game's mailbox when they walk in the door in the morning, we're going to be in a world of trouble.

JOSH

Look, just show me what to do, and I'll redo it.

BENNETT

Josh, that would take hours.

JOSH

Come on. You said it had to be done by morning, right?

BENNETT

(sighs)

You know, if I didn't really, really need your help, I wouldn't let you do this.

JOSH

Well, if you really, really need my help, we'd better get started.

BENNETT

(shaking her head)

All right.

She leans over and starts tapping keys, while Josh looks on.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Okay, here's the template...

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Brooke is reading when Mike and Sam come in, arm in arm.

BROOKE

(looking up)

Dad! Hey, Sam.

SAM

Where's Harrison?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROOKE

I sent him to eat. I had to threaten to get his old nurses up here before he'd go.

When they get to Brooke's bed, Mike leans over and kisses her forehead.

MIKE

How are you holding up?

BROOKE

Besides going stir crazy from not being able to get up, just fine.

(to Sam)

How'd it go?

Sam's face falls at the memory, and she sits down heavily in a chair.

SAM

I tanked.

MIKE

It wasn't that bad.

SAM

(shaking her head)

I so tanked. It was just awful.

BROOKE

(concerned)

What happened?

SAM

The defense lawyer made it look like Nicole was just minding her own business, and everything was our fault.

BROOKE

(grimacing)

If I could get outta this bed...

MIKE

Don't worry. The jury isn't going to buy Nicole's Little Miss Innocent act.

(to Sam)

Sam?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM  
(brightening)  
Oh!

She leans forward and hands the papers to Brooke, who looks them over.

BROOKE  
(gasps)  
The adoption papers! You're really going to—?

MIKE  
(nods)  
If that's all right with you...

BROOKE  
Dad!

Sam gets up and hugs Brooke.

BROOKE (CONT'D)  
Oh my God, Sam, this is just...  
We're really going to be sisters.

SAM  
Yeah...wow.

EFFECT CUT TO:

MONTAGE

INT. LAB ROOM

Scenes of Josh pecking away, Dr. Bennett walking around and doing various things, and a wall clock, which progresses from 7:30 to 12:45.

DISSOLVE INTO:

THE LAB ROOM

Josh taps in his final entry, turns the last paper over, and then leans back in his chair, blowing out his breath.

JOSH  
Done!!

Dr. Bennett rushes by, a palmtop computer in her hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENNETT

Hang on, hang on...

She leans over another terminal, tapping keys and looking between the screen and her palmtop. Finally she straightens up, smiling.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Now, that's more like it.

She walks over to Josh's terminal and enters a few commands.

INSERT: THE COMPUTER SCREEN

A box pops up with the message "Transferring to Dept. of Fish and Game" and a progress bar which rapidly fills up.

Dr. Bennett leans on the edge of the desk and stretches.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

And we're done. Thanks to you,  
Josh.

JOSH

It wasn't any big deal, Dr.  
Bennett.

BENNETT

What do you say we get the hell  
out of here?

JOSH

Sounds good to me.

Josh gets up and they head for the doors together.

BENNETT

I have a good idea: let's both  
take the morning off.

JOSH

Can we do that?

BENNETT

Yeah, I think we can do that.  
I'll leave a message for Dr.  
Rutherford.

Dr. Bennett flips the lights off as they walk out.

For a few long moments there is only silence in the darkened lab. Then comes the sound of the door swinging open, and footsteps padding across the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGLE: ONE OF THE MONITORS

exploding in a shower of sparks as a baseball bat is put through it.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END