

DIAGNOSIS MURDER

"Many Happy Returns"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL – ESTABLISHING – DAY

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL – DAY

as MARK MARK enters, scowling, though not far from his usual, cheery/ebullient self. He's holding RAGGED, BULGING BROWN GROCERY BAGS each arm. Jack catches up to him and flashes a smile.

JACK

Brown-bagging it today, Mark?

Jack tries to peer into a bag but Mark jerks away, snapping:

MARK

It's Doctor Sloan. Where's the Marshall work-up?

Jack's smile evaporates. He offers Mark his clipboard.

JACK

Right here.

Sloan snatches it, almost dropping his bags. He gives it a cursory glance and shoves it back into Jack's hands.

MARK

Sloppy! Very sloppy.

Sloan marches on, Jack trailing after him, bewildered.

JACK

What do you mean? I ran all the tests, I even double-checked them myself. What could possibly be--

That's when Amanda joins them, interrupting Jack with:

AMANDA

Good-morning, Mark.

MARK

It's Doctor Sloan. Have you got the Turlington autopsy?

AMANDA

I was just taking it to your office.

She hands it to him. He gives it a cursory glance, Jack peering over his shoulder, then hands it back to her.

MARK

Sloppy! Very sloppy!

(then:)

This is a hospital. Lives are at stake. We can't afford to be--

JACK

Sloppy.

Mark glares at him.

MARK

Exactly!

And he marches on, Jack and Amanda staring after him.

AMANDA

What was all that about, Jack?

Jack shrugs, then gives her a stern look.

JACK

It's Doctor Stewart.

She swats him with the file and goes on her way.

INT. SLOAN'S OUTER OFFICE – DAY

Sloan storms into his outer office, and before a smiling DELORES can say more than:

DELORES

Good--

MARK

(interrupts:)

Hold my calls. I don't want to be disturbed.

He continues into his office, slamming the door shut with his foot.

DELORES

--morning.

The phone rings. She snatches it up.

DELORES

(into phone:)

Dr. Sloan's office.

(then:)

I'm sorry, Mr. Briggs, he's unavailable right now. I'll have him call you as soon as he's free... yes, I'll remind him not to park in your space.

She hangs up the phone. The door to Sloan's office flies open.

MARK

Who was that?

DELORES

Norman Briggs.

MARK

Why didn't you put him through? I need to talk to him stat. Get him on the line!

He slams the door again. She shakes her head, picks up the phone, and dials. After a moment:

DELORES

(into phone:)

Hello, Mr. Briggs. Dr. Sloan's returning your call. If you'll hold one moment please...

She sticks him on hold, and is about to buzz Sloan, when she thinks better of it. She sets the phone down, goes to the door, and is about to knock, when she reconsiders. Instead, she suddenly throws open the door.

DELORES

Mark?

INT. SLOAN'S OFFICE – DAY

Mark, startled, jumps up from his seat, sending STACKS OF ITTY-BITTY RECEIPTS flying off his desk.

MARK

Ahhh!

Delores stands in the doorway, watching as Sloan scrambles on his hands and knees to collect the scattered papers.

DELORES

What's going on?

He chases after the receipts, gathering them together in clumps on his desk.

MARK

Sloppy. They say my record-keeping is sloppy. Can you believe that?

DELORES

Who?

MARK

I'll show them sloppy. I've got every single receipt right here. Except for that one under your foot.

She lifts up her foot and picks up the receipt.

DELORES

You bought a Slim Whitman box set?

MARK

(snatches receipt:)

Business expense. I play it in the operating room to relax me.

DELORES

(realizing:)

You're being audited.

MARK

How did you know that?

DELORES

I recognize the symptoms from my last boss, Doctor Wallengren.

Nice guy.

MARK

Don't know him.

DELORES

No, but you know his work. He made your license plate.

(off his look:)

Just kidding.

Before Sloan can respond, the door flies open and Norman Briggs huffs in. He marches over to the desk and picks up Sloan's phone.

BRIGGS

(into phone)

Norman, terribly sorry to keep you on hold for so long. Next time, I'll make an appointment like a civilized person.

He slams down the phone and heads for the door.

MARK

Hold it right there.

BRIGGS

I've been holding. How much longer do you expect me to wait for you?

DELORES

How about ten-to-twenty?

MARK

Good-bye, Delores.

She leaves.

BRIGGS

What's got into you?

MARK

The sharp claws of the IRS.

BRIGGS

Playing fast and loose with the rules again, Sloan? I always said it would catch up with you someday.

MARK

The only thing that's caught up with me is listening to you. And that idiot accountant you recommended.

BRIGGS

Stan Goldstein? I hear he's great.

MARK

You hear? He isn't your accountant?

BRIGGS

I do my own taxes. And I'm proud to pay every penny I owe.

MARK

Then where did you find this guy?

BRIGGS

My shrink spoke very highly of him.

MARK

Your what?

BRIGGS

Not that there's anything wrong with me. Just a few insignificant phobias. Heights. Spiders. Cheese.

Sloan sinks into a chair, realizing he may be in worse trouble than he knew.

MARK

I'm staying calm. After all, your shrink's not in jail.

BRIGGS

Of course not.

MARK

So Goldstein's done a good job for him.

Briggs looks confused, then realizes.

BRIGGS

Goldstein isn't my shrink's accountant. He's a patient.

MARK

Thanks so much, Norman.

Sloan gets up, grabs his paper bags, and marches out. Briggs looks after his retreating back.

BRIGGS

I hear he's a very good patient...

But Sloan is gone. Briggs shrugs.

EXT. GOLDSTEIN'S HOUSE – DAY

A modest suburban home. Mark Sloan's car is parked out front.

MARK'S VOICE

Are you sure you know what you're doing?

INT. GOLDSTEIN'S HOUSE – DAY

Stan Goldstein's office/den is cluttered with papers and teetering stacks of bulging files. Goldstein, 40s, a short, balding man in a cardigan sweater, is busily preparing a tax return while Sloan examines the crooked, framed degrees on the wall.

GOLDSTEIN

Of course I do. Don't worry about it.

There's a KNOCK at the front door. Goldstein yells out at his bombshell secretary NADINE, 30s, who is at her desk outside the den, accepting a BOX from a DELIVERYMAN from BENTON OFFICE SUPPLY.

GOLDSTEIN

You wanna get that?

Nadine goes to the door, where a CHINESE FOOD DELIVERY MAN is waiting. She steps outside on the porch.

MARK

If there's nothing to worry about, I wouldn't be getting audited.

GOLDSTEIN

You don't think they actually look at each return, do you? You were picked at random out of a slush pile of millions.

MARK

Really?

Sloan mulls that comforting thought a moment, beginning to feel a bit relieved.

MARK

So it doesn't mean you or I did anything wrong. It's just bad luck I'm being audited.

GOLDSTEIN

Exactly. Pure chance. So relax. I've been through hundreds of'em.

MARK

(gulp:)

Hundreds?

Goldstein yells out to Nadine.

GOLDSTEIN

I know you're smoking out there.

Sure enough, Nadine is out on the front porch, stealing a smoke.

She sets the cigarette in a flower pot and marches in with the bag of Chinese food.

NADINE

What do you care, I was outside wasn't I?

GOLDSTEIN

You have no idea where those carcinogens are going. They could be sucked in by the air conditioner and blown right into my face.

Nadine unceremoniously drops the sack on Goldstein's desk.

NADINE

Here.

MARK

Everything on my tax return is on the up and up, right?

GOLDSTEIN

Sure. Just the creative accounting you pay me for.

(to Nadine:)

No MSG, right?

NADINE

No MSG.

MARK

"Creative accounting?"

GOLDSTEIN

I got to leave my mark, don't I? Each tax return that comes out of here is a reflection of my personality.

(sniffs bag:)

I'm definitely smelling MSG. Take it back. And while you're out, pick up my laundry. Make sure they put a crease in my slacks.

She snatches the bag and leaves in a huff. Goldstein turns to Sloan.

MARK

You're coming to my office at 10 a.m. sharp to explain your accounting methods to the IRS agent.

GOLDSTEIN

Can't get away. You'll have to come here.

MARK

I have a hospital full of patients who need my attention. So you'll be there, or it won't be the second hand smoke that kills you, it'll be me.

(then:)

And you can't smell MSG. It's odorless!

Sloan leaves. Goldstein looks after him, concerned.

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL – ESTABLISHING – DAY

INT. SLOAN'S OFFICE – DAY

Mark paces nervously back and forth, then grabs the phone and punches in a number. He listens, then:

MARK

Same message I left before. Only doubled!

He slams down the phone and snatches up a stack of receipts.

That's when Jack and Amanda rush in.

AMANDA

What is it, Mark?

Mark whirls around, surprised, and once again his piles of receipts go flying.

MARK

Aaaah!

JACK

You said there was an emergency!

MARK

There is -- the IRS agent is due here any minute and my accountant hasn't shown up. I need your help!

(then:)

Well, don't just stand there. Give me a hand.

Jack and Amanda get down and help him gather up the receipts.

AMANDA

You called us down here to help you pick up your receipts?

MARK

No--

There's a knock at the door. Delores opens it a crack and sticks her head in.

DELORES

There's an Agent McCord to see you.

MARK

Send him right in.

Mark grabs Jack and pleads.

MARK

If Goldstein isn't here in five minutes, you desperately need me in ER. Understand?

JACK

No.

MARK

Just do it!

Then, just as GRETCHEN McCORD, 40s, comes in, Sloan turns professorial:

MARK

That will be all, doctors. And remember, I want to those reports written in explicit detail. I won't tolerate any sloppiness.

Jack and Amanda nod and leave, passing McCord, who's soul as tightly wound as the bun on her head. She comes in, flashing her ID like Steve McGarrett.

GRETCHEN

Gretchen McCord. IRS.

MARK

Mark Sloan. MD. And may I say, you look much too young to be an IRS agent.

(off her stony look:)

Which is not to imply that you're anything but supremely qualified for this job. Or for any job. Would you like a job? Of course not, you have one. And a damn fine job it is.

He checks his watch, feeling himself sinking.

GRETCHEN

There's no need to be nervous, Doctor.

MARK

Nervous? Me? Not at all. Just poised for action. In a bustling hospital like this, you never know when you'll have to drop everything of personal importance to solve that next life-or-death emergency.

(to himself:)

Although sometimes you can predict it pretty well...

INT. SLOAN'S OUTER OFFICE – DAY

Jack checks his watch.

JACK

Two more minutes.

Amanda nods. That's when both their beepers go off. They exchange a look. Uh-oh.

INT. SLOAN'S OFFICE - DAY

She eyes the stack of receipts.

GRETCHEN

Please have a seat, Doctor. And try to relax.

He sits. Stiffly. Checks his watch.

MARK

Relax. Right. Why wouldn't I be relaxed? My accountant should be here any second. I'm very relaxed.

GRETCHEN

I know it sounds crazy, but some people get quite agitated during an audit.

MARK

No...? Really?

GRETCHEN

So I always try to make clear to the subject that this is not a criminal investigation, it's a simple accounting procedure, and I'm an accountant, not a police officer.

(pulls out a notebook)

Now, you have the right to remain silent...

(off his look:)

A little IRS humor there, just to break the ice.

MARK

I feel myself melting already. Excuse me.

He jumps up from the chair and marches to the door, which he flings open.

INT. SLOAN'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Mark's face falls when he sees that Jack and Amanda are gone.

MARK

Where are they?

DELORES

Medical emergency. Imagine that happening in a hospital.

MARK

If they don't call me in five -- make that two -- minutes, you call.

DELORES

About what?

MARK

A medical emergency!

INT. SLOAN'S OFFICE - DAY

He slams the door, then goes back to Gretchen, who is studying his pile of receipts.

GRETCHEN

Interesting accounting method.

MARK

Pays to be organized.

She picks up a receipt and reads it.

GRETCHEN

Rollerblades, \$149.

MARK

Ah, yes. You see, this hospital is so big and I have to get around it so fast, I found that roller-skating instead of walking allows me to perform my job much more efficiently.

GRETCHEN

Interesting. Unique. Disallowed.

She makes a note in her notebook. He nervously checks his watch, drums his fingers on the desk. McCord take two calculators out of her case and set them on the desk in front of her.

MARK

Two calculators?

GRETCHEN

I'm ambidextrous.

MARK

Did you hear a knock? I distinctly heard a knock.

Sloan sticks his head back out the door.

INT. SLOAN'S OUTER OFFICE – DAY

Mark sticks out hsi head just as Delores hangs up the phone.

MARK

What happened? Did you watch stop?

DELORES

The phones have been ringing off the hook.

MARK

That's a good place to leave them -- now I want you to buzz me in 30 seconds!

He pops back into his office.

INT. SLOAN'S OFFICE – DAY

Gretchen picks up a receipt, looks at it, and shakes her head. She makes a calculation.

MARK

What? What?

GRETCHEN

A \$1000 leather recliner?

MARK

It's where I read all my medical journals. Got to keep up on the latest innovations in medicine, you know. My accountant assured me it was legal.

GRETCHEN

Of course it's legal. Just not deductible.

He settles into his seat like a man being strapped into the electric chair. That's when the door flies open -- it's Briggs. Sloan bolts out of his chair.

BRIGGS

Sorry to interrupt, Mark, but--

MARK

You have a crisis that demands my immediate attention.

(to McCord:)

This will have to wait. A life is at stake.

Before McCord can respond, Sloan dashes out of the office, taking Briggs with him, slamming the door behind them.

INT. SLOAN'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Sloan turns to Delores, who is stuck on the phone. She shrugs helplessly at him.

MARK

Traitor.

(to Briggs:)

What can I do for you, Norman.

BRIGGS

You parked in my space again!

MARK

Because someone parked in mine.

BRIGGS

That's not my problem, Mark.

MARK

It is if I park in yours.

Sloan hurries out. Briggs glares after him. CUT TO:

EXT. GOLDSTEIN'S HOUSE - DAY

as Sloan marches up to the house and knocks insistently on the splintered door, which is slightly ajar.

MARK

Open up, Goldstein. Your days are numbered!

He pounds on the door again, harder this time.

MARK

I'm warning you. If you don't open up right now, you're a--

The door swings open to reveal:

HIS POV

Goldstein lying on the floor, a suitcase beside him, a STEAK KNIFE in his chest. Mark leans down and takes his pulse.

MARK

Dead man.

Uh-oh. That's when someone SCREAMS. Sloan whirls around to see Nadine standing behind him, horrified.

NADINE

Oh my God -- you've killed him!

And on Sloan's look, we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. GOLDSTEIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Cops swarm everywhere, collecting evidence. Mark and a hysterical Nadine are giving their statements to a UNIFORMED OFFICER.

NADINE

--so I came in late and I found him...

(motions to Mark:)

..hovering over the body.

MARK

I was leaning, leaning!

NADINE

Admiring his handiwork.

MARK

Examining the wound!

NADINE

His hands wrapped around Mr. Goldstein's throat.

MARK

Taking his pulse!

(to the officer:)

Why would I strangle him if I stabbed him?

OFFICER

So you're admitting you stabbed him?

MARK

No!

That's when Mark sees DETECTIVE CLAIRE VAN SICKLE, 30s, striding through like a drill sergeant inspecting a barracks. He jumps up in front of her.

MARK

You're in charge. You've got to listen to me.

CLAIRE

Have we met?

MARK

Well, no, not yet--

CLAIRE

Have I asked to question you yet?

MARK

Actually, no--

CLAIRE

Then you can wait until I'm ready.

MARK

It's just that I'm a doctor and I have patients...

CLAIRE

Good. Use it.

MARK

I didn't mean patience, I meant patients --

Too late, she has walked away to examine a telephone answering machine, turning her back to him and leaving him in anxious frustration. Just then Steve rushes in.

STEVE

Dad! I got here as soon as I heard. Are you okay?

MARK

Not even close. In another five minutes I could be on death row. Can you get me out of here?

STEVE

No problem.

They both look at Claire, who taps the "play" button of the machine with a pencil. Steve recognizes her and is immediately filled with dread.

STEVE

Uh-oh.

MARK

Uh-oh what?

They reach her as the machine spits out its first message:

NADINE'S VOICE

(on the machine:)

Stan, this is Nadine, I overslept. I'm really, really sorry. I'll be in as fast as I can.

STEVE

Hello, Claire.

CLAIRE

That's all you can say after what you did to me?

MARK

(to Steve:)

Perhaps we should leave the detective alone. She's very busy--

DECKER'S VOICE

This is Alan Decker calling. You can't duck me forever, Goldstein. I know where you live. And you know something? Most fatal accidents happen at home. Think about it.

STEVE

I tried to call.

CLAIRE

It was a cozy bed and breakfast, right by the sea. I got us their best room, with a stone fire place, four-poster bed, and a view of the crashing surf.

STEVE

I was going out the door and they dragged me into a drug raid. What could I do?

CLAIRE

I waited all night, watching the candles melt, the caviar rot, and the champagne go flat.

MARK

(to Steve:)

I think we've taken enough of this young lady's valuable time--

JOE KOVE'S VOICE

(on the machine:)

I warned you once, Goldstein. And Joe Kove doesn't repeat himself. Now you gotta pay, and Joe Kove is gonna collect.

STEVE

I called -- there was no one registered under your name or mine.

CLAIRE

Of course not, it was supposed to be a secret!

STEVE

Well it worked!

CLAIRE

Admit it -- you never intended to show up.

STEVE

We can discuss this later.

(glances at Mark:)

But not in front of my father, okay?

CLAIRE

He's your father?

STEVE

He's also a medical consultant to the police department. So I'm sure you won't mind if he leaves now.

(to Mark:)

Bye, Dad.

Mark starts to go, but Claire blocks his way.

CLAIRE

He's also a possible suspect in a brutal murder.

STEVE

What about all those threats on the answering machine? Aren't those people your suspects?

CLAIRE

I'll look into them in due time. But none of those people were found hovering over the body.

MARK

Leaning, leaning.

STEVE

C'mon, what possible motive could my father have?

SLOAN'S VOICE

(on the machine:)

Goldstein, this is Mark Sloan.

All heads turn to the answering machine.

MARK'S VOICE

If you're not in my office in five minutes, I'll kill you.

MARK

(off their looks:)

It's just a figure of speech. I didn't mean anything by it.

MARK'S VOICE

(on the machine:)

Same message I left before. Only double.

CLAIRE

Detective Sloan, I never want to see you again. And Dr. Sloan, I advise you to call your lawyer.

MARK

Now wait a minute--

CLAIRE

I'll do better than that. I'll wait until ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

Be in my office when I get there.

GRETCHEN

I'm afraid he already has a ten o'clock.

They turn to see Gretchen behind them, flashing her ID.

GRETCHEN

Gretchen McCord, IRS. We were in the middle of an audit when Dr. Sloan had a "medical emergency." So I went looking for his accountant instead.

(to Mark:)

Imagine my surprise when I got here.

CLAIRE

A criminal investigation takes precedence over a tax audit.

But if you want him immediately afterwards, I can hold him for you.

MARK

Hold me?

GRETCHEN

I'd be grateful. But perhaps it would be beneficial for both of us to pursue my investigation first.

MARK

What investigation?

CLAIRE

You think the murder may be tied into Dr. Sloan's finances?

GRETCHEN

It's certainly possible. Of course I'd share any relevant data with you immediately.

Mark pulls Steve aside, out of earshot of the two women.

MARK

I feel like a Thanksgiving turkey here. Can't you do something?

STEVE

As long as you're a suspect, my hands are tied.

MARK

You should have called!

STEVE

I tried!

The two women, their business complete, walk toward them.

CLAIRE

Then it's settled. You can meet with Dr. Sloan tomorrow morning, and I'll see him in the early afternoon. Then we can compare notes and coordinate our attack.

MARK

Attack?

GRETCHEN

Fine. I think it's going to be a pleasure working with you, Claire.

CLAIRE

Likewise, Gretchen.

They shake, firm friends, and walk off in separate directions, leaving the Sloans to themselves.

MARK

(to Steve:)

When two women shake hands, it's never a good sign.

And on Mark's grim look, we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL – ESTABLISHING – DAY

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL – LUNCH ROOM – DAY

Steve sits alone at a table, picking at a piece of toast and looking around nervously. Sloan comes up and pulls up a chair.

MARK

Glad you changed your mind, son. I really need your help on this one.

STEVE

Sssh! I'm not here to help you.

MARK

You're not?

STEVE

If I were to aid a possible suspect in a murder investigation, I could be fired. Or worse.

MARK

Then...

STEVE

I came for breakfast. I love the food here.

MARK

Ah.

STEVE

And now that I'm done, I'm going to bus my tray. I'll just leave the file I borrowed from Claire Van Sickle here on the table until I come back. I don't think anyone will disturb it, do you?

He slides a case file over to Sloan and gets up. That's when Jack comes by, beaming.

JACK

I knew you couldn't turn your back on your own father.

MARK

Sssh!

STEVE

Sssh!

MARK

He's not helping me. He's eating.

JACK

Got it.

Jack picks up the file and reads. Steve tries to grab it, but he's too late.

JACK

Hey, did you know Goldstein got his accounting degree from a correspondance school? Probably had to draw Sparky to get in. That's when Amanda comes up. She grins at Jack.

AMANDA

That's ten bucks you owe me.

(to the others:)

I told him Steve wasn't such a worm he'd turn his back on his own father.

STEVE & MARK & JACK

Ssshh!

Amanda takes the file from Jack before Steve can get it.

AMANDA

Isn't there a forensics report in here?

Steve makes a grab for the file, but Amanda holds it away.

AMANDA

Says here Goldstein died from a stab wound in the heart with a steak knife. The report also says there's a bruise on his stomach, probably from a kick or a punch.

MARK

Isn't there anything about the two guys who left threatening messages on the answering machine?

Jack grabs the file and reads.

JACK

Yeah, one's an attorney named Alan Decker and the other is Joe Kove, a karate instructor. Both were Goldstein's clients.

MARK

Detective Van Sickle did say I should contact an attorney. You don't have Decker's address in there, do you?

STEVE

Oh, no, Dad. Don't do this.

AMANDA

I've been interested in learning some self-defense, maybe Joe Kove has an open class.

STEVE

Now hold on--

JACK

No one knows more secrets about a guy than his secretary. I wonder if Nadine could use some treatment for her cold.

STEVE

Stop!

Steve blocks the door so they can't get out.

STEVE

I only shared this information with you to satisfy your curiosity. Claire Van Sickle is handling this case, and if you get in her way, she'll mow you down. And me with you.

MARK

Don't worry, son. If you don't want us to get in her way, we won't.

STEVE

Thanks Dad. I knew you'd understand.

Steve grabs the file and leaves. Sloan turns to Jack and Amanda.

MARK

So if you see her when you're talking to Kove and Nadine, run.

They step into

INT. HALLWAY – DAY

and have only gone a few steps when Agent McCord grabs Sloan by the arm.

GRETCHEN

You and I have an audit to conduct, remember?

MARK

Agent McCord, can't this wait a few days? My accountant has been murdered.

GRETCHEN

And you're a suspect.

SLOAN

Possible suspect.

GRETCHEN

What if you did it? Should I reward you by stopping the aud—
Just as she says the "ah" in "audit," Sloan sticks a tongue depressor in her mouth and peers into her throat.

MARK

Say ahhh.

GRETCHEN

Ahhhh?

MARK

When was the last time you had a check-up?

GRETCHEN

Ahhhh!

Sloan motions to Jack and Amanda without taking the tongue depressor out of her mouth.

MARK

Doctors? What do you think?

GRETCHEN

Ahhhh!

Jack shines a flashlight into her eyes.

JACK

Look at how her pupils are dialating.

Now she's seeing spots and gagging on the stick.

GRETCHEN

Ahhhh...

AMANDA

She seems disoriented to me.

MARK

This woman needs to be admitted immediately.

Sloan pushes her into a wheel-chair, and gives Jack an order.

MARK

I want a full work up. If she's got something wrong, I want to know about it.

Jack rushes her away, Mark and Amanda make their escape.

Gretchen tries to get out of the chair, but Jack is pushing her way too fast.

GRETCHEN

Wait! Stop!

JACK

This won't hurt a bit.

EXT. KARATE SCHOOL – DAY

The windows are adorned with posters of JOE KOVE, who looks like a menacing mountain of muscle and sweat. Amanda gets out of her BMW and goes inside. As she does, we see Joe's FACE peek at her car through the window.

INT. KARATE SCHOOL – DAY

A class is practicing their moves with an instructor in front of a mirror. Amanda comes in, looking at even more posters. Clearly, Kove is an awesome, towering fellow to be reckoned with.

KOVE

May I help you?

Amanda turns to see Joe Kove -- all 5'2" of him, tops.

AMANDA

You're Joe Kove?

KOVE

In the flesh.

She steals a quick glance at the posters, then back at him.

KOVE

Would you like to see more of it?

AMANDA

Excuse me?

He motions to a display case of Joe Kove memorabilia.

KOVE

I've got Joe Kove videos. Joe Kove posters. Joe Kove active wear. Or perhaps you'd like to join the Joe Kove fan club?

AMANDA

Actually, I'm interested in private lessons.

KOVE

Of course you are. Everybody wants to learn from the master. But Joe Kove is a martial arts superstar. His time is very valuable.

AMANDA

If I couldn't afford it, I don't think my trust fund manager would have recommended you.

KOVE

Trust fund? Why didn't you say so? You don't want lessons.

AMANDA

I don't?

KOVE

What you want is a Joe Kove prospectus.

He takes a brochure from the display case and hands it to her.

KOVE

Now's your chance to join the elite few lucky enough to own shares of Deathkicker, Joe Kove's new powerhouse motion picture.

He spins on his feet and delivers a powerhouse kick to a punching bag. Amanda makes a mental note.

AMANDA

I didn't know you were a movie star.

KOVE

No one knew Steven Seagal was either, until he made a movie.

People who didn't invest back then are kicking themselves today.

(laughs to himself:)

Get it? Kicking themselves? See, Joe Kove has a lighter side, too.

Makes him very appealing to women.

He gives her his best suave grin.

AMANDA

It's all very interesting, but I don't make any investments without talking to Stan Goldstein first.

KOVE

Stan Goldstein manages your money?

AMANDA

As a matter of fact, yes--

Kove snatches the prospectus away from her.

KOVE

You're wasting my time.

AMANDA

But what if I want to invest?

KOVE

If Stan Goldstein is your accountant, whatever cash you had is long gone.

He walks away. And on Amanda pondering what she's learned, we CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING – ESTABLISHING – DAY

INT. OFFICE BUILDING – HALLWAY – DAY

Mark emerges from the elevator, sees a sign reading ALAN DECKER, A PROFESSIONAL LAW CORPORATION on a door. He opens the door and

HIS POV – DECKER'S OFFICE

The waiting room is CROWDED with INJURED PEOPLE, wearing makes-shift neck braces, leaning on crutches, their arms in home-made slings, etc.

INT. DECKER'S OFFICE – DAY

Mark, bewildered, winds his way to ROLAND, a beefy receptionist.

MARK

Excuse me, I'm Dr. Mark Sloan. I'd like to see Alan Decker.

ROLAND

One moment please.

(into intercom:)

There's a Dr. Sloan to see you, sir.

Suddenly the door flies open behind Roland and ALAN DECKER, 30s, Corbin Bernsen's evil twin, bursts out.

DECKER

It's about time you got here!

MARK

(startled:)

It is?

Decker grabs Mark by the arm and leads him across the room.

DECKER

I've been waiting for you all morning.

MARK

You have?

DECKER

Take a look around you.

MARK

It's like a train wreck.

DECKER

I wish it was. Think how much easier it would be filing the claim. Decker opens a door to reveal A SMALL EXAMINATION ROOM that adjoins the waiting area. There's a stack of FORMS on one of the counters.

DECKER

You'll find everything you need right here. You know the drill. When you finish the exam, send the patient back and we'll process them right away. If you need more insurance forms, let Roland know.

And with that, he gives Mark a shove inside, turns around and yells:

DECKER

Number 118. You're up.

NUMBER 118, a young man with what seems to be a sore ankle and a pinched nerve in his neck, hobbles into

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM – DAY

and closes the door. Number 118 hands Mark his number-stub and hobs up on the exam table. Mark looks between the stub, the closed door, and the stack of claim forms, then approaches 118 with a smile.

MARK

So, what happened to you?

NUMBER 118

I was rear-ended by a truck.

MARK

Where does it hurt?

NUMBER 118

Everywhere.

Sloan examines the man's knee, and gently moves the man's head from side-to-side as they talk.

MARK

Do you feel a tingling in your toes?

NUMBER 118

Oh, yes.

MARK

Shooting pains in your nose, cramps in your thumbs and itchy underarms?

NUMBER 118

Night and day.

MARK

I see. There's nothing wrong with you.

NUMBER 118

Then how am I gonna get the insurance settlement Decker promised me?

MARK

You aren't.

Mark opens the door and ushers the man out.

INT. WAITING ROOM – DAY

The door to the examination room flies open and Number 118 marches out furiously..

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM – DAY

Sloan takes the last of the gauze off the woman's head.

MARK

No wonder your head hurts -- you're wearing this useless bandage too tight. Take two aspirin and you'll be fine.

The woman scowls at Sloan and leaves. Sloan grabs a few of the insurance forms and sticks them in his bag, then opens the window. He's about to climb out on the fire escape when the door flies open. He whirls around to face...

GRETCHEN

I don't recall seeing anything about a private practice on your tax return.

MARK

What are you doing here?

GRETCHEN

Following a tax cheat. You can't get rid of me that easily, so-- That's when DECKER comes in. Sloan jams a tongue depressor in her mouth to shut her up.

DECKER

What the hell is wrong with you?

MARK

Please. That's no way to talk to a patient.

McCord tries to pull Sloan's hand away, but Sloan grabs her wrist.

As they struggle, Decker goes into a tirade:

DECKER

These people were in terrible car accidents -- no treatment, no expense, should be spared. I want to see this woman leave here on a stretcher!

Decker storms out. Sloan removes the depressor from McCord's mouth.

MARK

Now do you understand? This is a scam!

GRETCHEN

It certainly is. And you're not getting away with it anymore.

She grabs him by the arm and

INT. DECKER'S OFFICE – DAY

drags Sloan out, much to the surprise of Decker and Roland. No sooner are they out the door, than in comes a MAN WITH A DOCTOR'S BAG.

MAN

I'm Dr. Westphal, is Mr. Decker in?

DECKER

You're the doctor I asked for?

DR. WESPHAL

I'm sorry I'm late, but traffic was hell.

Dr. Westphal grins sheepishly. Decker, furious, pulls Roland aside.

DECKER

Follow "Dr. Sloan." See that he takes whatever he learned about us to the grave.

(then, with a grin:)

And don't forget our company motto.

ROLAND

(grins back:)

Make it look like an accident.

EXT. TRAILER PARK – DAY

Jack wanders through the park, checking the lot numbers against a paper in his hand. He stops at a double-wide unit with plastic flamingos sprouting around it, then knocks on the door. After a moment, Nadine appears, furious.

NADINE

I told you, I already made that payment!

She shoves a receipt at him. Jack smiles innocently and hands her his card.

JACK

I'm Doctor Jack Stewart. Mark Sloan asked me to look in on you.

She looks puzzled, then breaks into a big smile.

INT. NADINE'S TRAILER – DAY

It's classy, it's tasteful, it's elegant -- if you're Tonya Harding.

Nadine pours hot water into two mugs and carries them over to the leatherette couch, where Jack sits.

NADINE

I hope you don't mind flavored coffee. I love the Bavarian Marshmallow Mint, myself.

JACK

Very continental.

She beams as she sits and hands him a mug.

NADINE

It's so thoughtful of Dr. Sloan to think of me. I mean, with the troubles he's going through.

JACK

He was worried about you. And I can understand why. This must have come as quite a shock to a woman as delicate as yourself. She sneezes, then blows her nose loudly.

NADINE

Why couldn't I ever get a job with someone sweet like Dr. Sloan instead of that... I'm sorry, my mother taught me not to speak ill of the deceased.

JACK

Stan Goldstein didn't understand you?

NADINE

I'm no dummy, you know. I took two accounting courses in junior college. And you know what I did for him? Errands. Pick up this. Deliver that. Get me Chinese.

JACK

All that education wasted.

NADINE

Exactly what I told him. He said if I know so much, why can't I ever get the change right when I go to the store for him!

JACK

Appalling.

NADINE

I think he was afraid I'd figure out he was a crook.

(then, low:)

The day before Dr. Sloan's audit, he had me book him a one-way ticket to the Caymen Islands.

JACK

You don't say.

The phone rings. She picks it up and her face turns angry.

NADINE

No, I'm not alone. I've got the entire World Wrestling Foundation in bed with me.

(then:)

Sure come on over. I won't be here.

She slams down the phone, then turns sweetly to Jack.

NADINE

Sorry, that was my ex-boyfriend. He thinks he owns me. You should have seen him when he thought Stan Goldstein was hitting on me.

JACK

Maybe I should leave.

NADINE

Only if you promise to come back for dinner.

And on Jack's winning smile, we CUT TO:

EXT. SLOAN'S HOUSE – DAY

Steve screeches up to find SEVERAL POLICE CARS out front. He marches to the front door, only to be stopped by Van Sickle, who is wearing plastic gloves.

STEVE

What are you doing here?

CLAIRE

Searching for a murder weapon.

STEVE

You're joking.

CLAIRE

You're right. So was Judge Harden when he signed the warrant.

(shows him paper:)

Get in my way again, I'll have you up on charges.

STEVE

Go ahead and try. My father had no reason to kill his accountant, and you know it.

CLAIRE

Goldstein was skimming from his clients -- including your father. Dr. Sloan caught him just as he was about to skip to the Cayman Islands to enjoy your father's money. We law enforcement professionals call that "motive."

Steve is stunned by the revelation, but he soldiers on.

STEVE

You're on a wild goose chase.

That's when an officer comes out from the backyard.

OFFICER

Sergeant? I think we found something.

The officer holds up a baggie containing a very long, very sharp, knife. She gives Steve a smug grin.

CLAIRE

Looks like I just caught myself a wild goose.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL – ESTABLISHING – DAY

INT. SLOAN'S OFFICE – DAY

Gretchen has fired up her calculators again. Mark paces, a man condemned.

GRETCHEN

I don't think this is the right time to go through your receipts.

MARK

My very thought.

GRETCHEN

We'll need the laughs later. For now, I'd like to concentrate on your sources of income.

She takes out sharpened pencils, fresh note pads. That's when Jack comes in, then starts to leave.

JACK

Oops -- I didn't realize you were busy.

MARK

I'm not. She is.

JACK

Nadine booked Goldstein on a flight to the Cayman Islands. One-way. A lot of my relatives do their laundry there, if you catch my drift.

MARK

Maybe he just needed a vacation after a hectic tax season.

JACK

Joe Kove told Amanda if Stan Goldstein is your accountant, your cash is long gone.

MARK

Let's not jump to conclusions.

GRETCHEN

Excuse me, Dr. Sloan, but could you explain this \$30,000 transfer to the Cayman Islands?

MARK

This is a nightmare.

GRETCHEN

You wouldn't be trying to hide the income from your private practice, would you?

JACK

I didn't know you had a private practice.

MARK

I don't.

Delores comes in and speaks in a low voice to Sloan.

DELORES

There are some police officers outside. They're towing your car.

Sloan dashes out of the office. McCord is so caught up with her adding machines that she doesn't notice.

GRETCHEN

(to herself:)

Sloppy. Very sloppy.

That's when she looks up and notices Sloan is gone.

GRETCHEN

Where's Dr. Sloan?

Jack shrugs, Mr. Innocent. She bolts out the door. CUT TO:

EXT COMMUNITY HOSPITAL – DAY

Sloan runs out of the emergency room, past a parked AMBULANCE (it's rear door ajar), to see his car being hitched up to a tow truck by what appears to be FORENSICS OFFICERS. Overseeing it all is Claire Van Sickle. Sloan flattens himself against the ambulance to avoid being seen as she passes on the other side with another detective.

CLAIRE

We're just bringing Sloan in for questioning, but we'd better play it safe and read him his rights. We don't want his neck slipping out of the noose on a technicality.

Sloan rubs his neck uncomfortably. As soon as she's gone, he climbs into the ambulance and starts it up. As the ambulance pulls away, McCord runs out of the hospital and jumps into the back of the ambulance, closing the door softly behind her. The ambulance drives off into traffic, after a moment, we move

TIGHT ON A PARKED CAR

as it pulls out and follows the ambulance, we get a good look at the driver. It's ROLAND, Decker's henchman. This can't be good. CUT TO:

INT. SLOAN'S OFFICE – LATER

Claire and some officers, all wearing plastic gloves, search Sloan's office. Delores watches, horrified, from the outer office as Steve rushes in.

DELORES

Thank God you're here. Look what they're doing to Dr. Sloan's office.

STEVE

Don't worry, Delores. I'll take care of it.

He marches in, furious, and confronts Claire.

STEVE

That's it. This has gone far enough.

CLAIRE

It certainly has. Now your father is a fugitive from justice. He can only make things worse.

That's when she discovers the SHEAF OF INSURANCE FORMS in his black bag.

CLAIRE

Though not by much.

STEVE

So he has messy medical bag. If that's a crime, maybe we should take a look at your purse.

CLAIRE

It's a mess, but you certainly won't find any phony insurance forms from Alan Decker.

STEVE

What?

She holds the forms out for him to look at.

CLAIRE

Bunco has been on to Decker for months. He stages accidents and gets his pet doctor to file false medical reports. Now we know who the doctor is.

STEVE

I'm sure there's a reasonable explanation for this.

CLAIRE

Of course there is. Dr. Sloan did the fake exams, Decker filed the phony documents, and Goldstein laundered the cash. Goldstein got greedy and was about to skip out with the cash. So your father performed open-heart surgery on him with a kitchen knife.

STEVE

That's insanity.

CLAIRE

He can plead it, but I don't think the judge will be fooled.

She drops the papers into an evidence bag. And on Steve's frustration, we CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD – DAY

The ambulance is tooling down the street, Sloan at the wheel, unaware that Roland's car closing in from behind.

INT. AMBULANCE – DAY

Sloan takes a deep breath and relaxes.

MARK

(to himself:)

What am I gonna do now?

GRETCHEN'S VOICE

Turn yourself in to the police.

Startled, Sloan swerves, almost hitting a car in the next lane. He recovers, looking over his shoulder to see Gretchen in the window to the rear of the ambulance.

MARK

This is all a big misunderstanding. If you'll just give me a chance to explain --

GRETCHEN

You're a tax cheat, a felon, and common crook. What more do you need to know?

Suddenly, they're SLAMMED FORWARD as someone rear-ends them!

MARK

For one thing, who's trying to kill us.

Sloan looks in the rear-view mirror and sees

HIS POV

Roland's car closing in for another -- BASH! They are jerked forward again.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Roland swerves into the next lane and SLAMS against the side of the ambulance, forcing it towards a COLLISION with a parked car.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Sloan swerves to avoid certain doom and:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The ambulance flies off an EMBANKMENT and ROLLS down a hillside. Roland drives off, tires peeling rubber. And on the battered ambulance, dirt and dust settling around it, we CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Steve is walking to his desk when Claire pulls him aside.

CLAIRE

We've put an APB out on your father. He's wanted for questioning on insurance fraud, tax evasion, and murder.

STEVE

What do you want from me, a thank you note?

CLAIRE

Don't fight me on this. Do yourself and your father a favor. Bring him in. I would hate to see your career flushed down the same toilet as his.

STEVE

How thoughtful.

He walks away and sits down at his desk. Despite his bravado, this is clearly eating at him. His PHONE RINGS. He snatches it up.

STEVE

Homocide. Sloan.

MARK'S VOICE

Hi son, how's business?

Steve lowers his voice, stealing a quick glance at Claire across the room as his whispers:

STEVE

Dad! Where the hell are you?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. PHONE BOOTH – DAY

Sloan and McCord are dirty, with a few cuts and bruises, but are otherwise all right.

MARK

Well, that's kind of difficult to say.

Claire passes within earshot. Steve quickly covers.

STEVE

(loud:)

But we had chinese last night. How about Italian?

(then, low:)

You've got to stop running.

MARK

I can't.

STEVE

Why not?

MARK

People are chasing me!

Steve groans. Notices Claire.

STEVE

Fine, we'll have chinese. But I draw the line at Mooshu Pork. I'm Mooshued out.

MARK

You're what?

She passes. He whispers into the phone:

STEVE

As long as you're on the run, you make yourself look guilty.

Meanwhile, no energy is spent investigating other suspects.

MARK

I'm investigating -- and Alan Decker is on the top of my list. I think he just tried to have me killed. Can you look into it?

Claire passes again. Steve covers:

STEVE

Okay, let's compromise. Let's have Thai.

(then, low:)

That's one more reason to turn yourself in.

MARK

Sorry son, I can't do that.

I'll let you know what I find. In the mean time, get yourself something to eat. You must be starving.

Sloan hangs up. Steve stares at the phone for a moment, hangs it up slowly, and comes to a decision.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH – DAY

Sloan turns to McCord.

GRETCHEN

I thought you said you were calling the police.

MARK

I did. My son is a crack homicide detective.

GRETCHEN

Aren't you getting ahead of yourself? We aren't dead yet. What we need is protection before that happens.

MARK

I'm the one they want. You could be in danger if you stay with me. I want you to go.

GRETCHEN

I got the message the first two times you tried to ditch me. I'm not letting you out of my sight until we finish the audit.

MARK

All right, then you're going to have to help me solve this murder first.

GRETCHEN

What do you have to go on?

MARK

Absolutely nothing. But I'm working on it.

GRETCHEN

How comforting, coming from a man who tried to write off his underwear.

MARK

If it's good enough for the President, it's good enough for me.

EXT. NADINE'S TRAILER – NIGHT

A shadowy form skulks outside, watching the romantic lights flicker from within.

INT. NADINE'S TRAILER – NIGHT

Nadine, in a frilly dress and frillier apron, pulls a steaming Pyrex casserole out of the microwave. Jack looks on dubiously.

NADINE

I hope you like tuna noodle casserole.

JACK

My favorite.

She puts a heaping plate in front of him. Food should not look like this.

JACK

Looks wonderful. But food isn't the only reason I came tonight.

NADINE

I didn't think so.

She moves in close to him.

JACK

I'm trying to help Mark Sloan and --

NADINE

Help me, first.

She puts her arms around him and moves in for the kiss. That's when the trailer door splinters open. Joe Kove stands in the doorway, muscles flexing angrily.

JOE

Nobody two-times Joe Kove. I thought you learned that when I took care of your boss.

JACK

Joe Kove is your boyfriend?

NADINE

Ex-boyfriend.

(to Kove)

Leave him alone.

Kove flings the table out of the way.

KOVE

So you've heard of me.

Jack tries to back away, but there's not much backing room.

JACK

I'm your biggest fan. Did I mention what an honor it is to meet you?

KOVE

Great. After I'm done, I'll autograph your casts.

Kove flexes into kung-fu position and prepares to launch himself at Jack. Jack looks around for a weapon. Spotting the casserole. He picks it up and drops it on Kove's foot, Kove doubles over in pain, and Jack pinches his neck, paralyzing the brute.

NADINE

What are you doing?

JACK

Nerve pinch. Very simple. Incredibly painful.

KOVE

That's not fair!

JACK

Neither is a knife in the heart, but that didn't stop you from killing Goldstein.

NADINE

(gasps:)

Joe killed Goldstein?

JACK

(to Joe:)

Well?

Jack gives Kove's neck a squeeze. Kove squirms in pain.

KOVE

I went over, told him to come out and fight like a man. The coward wouldn't come out, so I went in after him. I gave the sissy one kick and he was out, but he was alive.

JACK

Why should I believe you?

KOVE

The knife. Joe Kove does not use weapons. Joe Kove is a weapon.

Jack thinks about that, then lets Kove go.

NADINE

Not so fast.

She rushes over and grabs Kove exactly where Jack did. Kove writhes in pain.

NADINE

Who's gonna clean up this mess?

INT. VIDEO ARCADE – NIGHT

The place is full of kids playing video games. Dr. Sloan and Agent McCord come in, looking very out of place.

GRETCHEN

You picked a strange time to visit the Super Mario Brothers.

MARK

Don't know them, but I'm sure if you hold them in such high regard, they must be great guys.

GRETCHEN

Then what are we doing here?

MARK

Meeting Jack and Amanda. They think this is the last place anyone would look for me and they have some leads.

GRETCHEN

Might as well enjoy myself. Got a quarter?

Sloan hands her a quarter.

MARK

Can I write this off?

She gives him a cold look and sticks a quarter in a machine marked STREET SLAUGHTER and starts playing with gusto to the sounds of electronic carnage. That's when Jack and Amanda show up.

AMANDA

You are in big trouble, Mark. The police are all over the hospital and your house and Briggs has gone ballistic. He's garnishing your wages for the next year to pay for the ambulance you wrecked.

MARK

(to McCord:)

Can I write that off?

GRETCHEN

No.

JACK

Get this -- Joe Kove and Nadine were lovers. Kove thought Goldstein was making moves on Nadine, so he went over there to beat him up. Only Goldstein wouldn't come out of the house.

AMANDA

So Kove broke in, and gave Goldstein one of his famous spin-kicks. That's how Goldstein got the bruise on his stomach.

MARK

Which leaves us right back where we started.

JACK

With a dead accountant, a plane ticket to the Cayman Islands, and all the clues pointing to you.

MARK

(realizing:)

The plane ticket!

GRETCHEN

Don't get too excited, you can't write it off, either. It's not a business expense.

MARK

But it's a killer's confession.

CLAIRE'S VOICE

And I'll be glad to take yours right now.

Our heroes turn to find themselves surrounded by police, led by Claire Van Sickle.

CLAIRE

But before we talk, you should be informed of your rights. Steve?

STEVE

He knows his rights, Claire.

Steve steps out from behind her, a dour look on his face. Sloan is astonished.

STEVE

Sorry, Dad.

And on Sloan's shock, we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. VIDEO ARCADE – NIGHT

Sloan glares at Steve.

STEVE

I knew if I stayed on Jack and Amanda, they'd lead me to you eventually.

MARK

How could you? You're my son.

STEVE

I had to -- it's for your own good, Dad.

Claire takes Sloan by the arm.

CLAIRE

And now you're coming downtown with me.

McCord grabs Sloan by the other arm.

GRETCHEN

Not so fast.

CLAIRE

(tugs on his arm:)

We're bringing him in for questioning.

GRETCHEN

(tugs on his arm:)

After I'm through with him, which will be in about 20 years.

She snatches the handcuffs from an officer, snaps one end on Mark and the other to her own wrist..

GRETCHEN

Dr. Sloan is under arrest for Federal Income Tax evasion.

(to Mark:)

Come with me.

And to Mark's horror, and everyone else's surprise, she drags him out:

EXT. VIDEO ARCADE – NIGHT

as Sloan and McCord, handcuffed together, walk down the street and around the corner, out of sight of the police.

MARK

I thought you said you weren't a criminal investigator.

GRETCHEN

You're right, I'm not.

She pulls him aside and unlocks his handcuffs.

MARK

I'm very confused.

GRETCHEN

And a sloppy record keeper, but I don't think you're a murderer.

Besides, this is the most exciting audit I've ever conducted.

MARK

I'm flattered.

GRETCHEN

Don't be -- when this is over, you're gonna pay every penny you owe, plus penalties and interest.

MARK

It's a deal.

GRETCHEN

So, what's our next step?

MARK

You're going to finish your audit.

GRETCHEN

And what are you going to do?

MARK

Leave the country, of course.

And on her confusion, and Sloan's smile, we CUT TO:

INT. NADINE'S TRAILER – DAY

as Nadine answers the door, a cigarette in her hand.

NADINE

Yes?

Gretchen McCord flashes her ID.

GRETCHEN

Gretchen McCord. IRS. I'd like to talk with you.

NADINE

Sure. I'd invite you in, but I have a terrible cold.

She sneezes, underscoring the point, then continues smoking.

GRETCHEN

This will only take a moment. I'm here to ask for your cooperation.

We're going to need your help building our case against Dr. Sloan.

NADINE

What did he do?

GRETCHEN

The police believe he killed Stan Goldstein. And I bet if we dig deep enough into Goldstein's books, we'll find his motive.

NADINE

Oh my God. I don't believe it. Dr. Sloan seemed like such a nice man.

GRETCHEN

If you feel up to it, I'd like you to come down to Goldstein's office first thing tomorrow.

NADINE

What for?

GRETCHEN

To help me make sense of the books. Together, we're going to go over each transaction in every account for all the client's that Goldstein handled.

NADINE

You can count on me. It's the least I can do for Stan.

GRETCHEN

Thanks, I appreciate it.

Gretchen leaves. Nadine closes the door, waits a beat, then rushes to her bedroom, pulls a suitcase out from under her bed, and starts to pack. CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT – DAY (STOCK)

To Establish.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

TransContinental flight 223 for the Cayman Islands, now boarding at Gate Seven.

INT. AIRPORT GATE SEVEN – DAY

as Nadine rushes to the gate, holding her suitcases. The sign at the gate says "Flight 223 – Cayman Islands." She gives her boarding pass to the attendant and hurries on board.

INT. AIRPLANE – DAY

as Nadine hurries in, sticks her bags in the overhead bin, slams it shut, and settles into her first class seat. Whew. She takes a deep breath, and starts to light a cigarette. The stewardess politely admonishes her.

STEWARDESS

No smoking until we're in flight.

NADINE

Sorry.

Nadine puts the cigarettes back in her purse.

MAN'S VOICE

Does flying make you nervous?

Nadine looks up, shocked to see Mark Sloan sitting across the aisle, a smile on his face.

MARK

Or are you worried about going to prison?

NADINE

Dr. Sloan --

(then, getting a grip:)

You should be asking yourself that question, not me. You're the guy who killed him.

MARK

I didn't kill Stan Goldstein, you know that. You did. You admitted it the moment you booked him on this flight.

NADINE

Something wrong with Stan wanting to get a tan?

MARK

Stan Goldstein would never go to the Cayman Islands. Or anywhere else. He was agoraphobic.

NADINE

That's ridiculous. No one wears angora on the Cayman Islands. It's a tropical resort.

MARK

Agoraphobic. Stan Goldstein was afraid of open spaces.

NADINE

Maybe he was afraid of spiders, too. But we'll never know, unless he's speaking to you from beyond the grave.

MARK

Why do you think he worked out of his home, earned his degree through the mail, had all his food delivered, and sent you off for anything else he needed?

NADINE

Because he was a fat, lazy bum who thought I was his personal slave.

MARK

He was afraid to leave the house. That's why he wouldn't meet me at the hospital... and why he was talking to a psychologist who specializes in phobias.

(then:)

He wouldn't take a walk to the curb, much less a flight to the Cayman Islands.

NADINE

Maybe he was trying to conquer his fear.

MARK

Perhaps. But he would have done it from the non-smoking section. He hated cigarette smoke, remember?
Gotcha. She abruptly bolts for the door, only to find Steve Sloan and Claire Van Sickle blocking the way, Gretchen McCord and a uniformed officer behind them.

STEVE

You can forget about any frequent flier miles, Nadine. You won't be needing them where you're going.

The OFFICER takes Nadine away, the others come in to see Mark.

MARK

(to Gretchen:)

I think you'll find Nadine was the one skimming the accounts, not Goldstein. She booked Goldstein on the flight to make him look guilty -- instead, she did it to herself.

CLAIRE

I guess I owe you an apology, Dr. Sloan.

MARK

Not to me, you don't.

He motions to Steve. Claire reluctantly turns to Steve, who is grinning from ear to ear.

CLAIRE

(gritting her teeth:)

I'm sorry, Steve.

STEVE

Excuse me, could you speak up? I couldn't hear you over the din of the engines.

CLAIRE

Don't push it.

She marches out. Steve shoots a smile at his Dad and follow, leaving Sloan and Gretchen alone.

MARK

Well, that's that.

GRETCHEN

Not quite. There's still the matter of your taxes.

MARK

I just solved a complex murder. Can't the audit wait?

GRETCHEN

Sure -- I'm not the one paying the mounting interest and penalties.

MARK

We don't have a moment to lose.

And on Sloan taking her by the arm and hustling her off the plane,

we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY HOSPITAL – DAY

To Establish.

INT. SLOAN'S OFFICE – DAY

Gretchen and Sloan are at his desk. All his receipts are neatly stacked. McCord does one last computation on her adding machine, makes a notation on a form, and closes her file, to Mark's obvious trepidation.

MARK

Well, what's the diagnosis?

GRETCHEN

The good news is we were able to recover the entire \$30,000 Nadine skimmed from your account.

MARK

That's wonderful.

GRETCHEN

Which will just about cover your \$30,000 tax liability.

MARK

That leaves me with just enough money to take the two of us to dinner.

Sloan grabs his jacket and leads Gretchen to the door.

GRETCHEN

No, dinner is on me. I've taken enough of your money for one day.

They share a smile and walk out together, and we follow them

INT. HALLWAY – DAY

as they walk down the hallway to the exit.

MARK

Fine, I'll drive.

GRETCHEN

Wait a minute -- I thought you said you only used your car for business.

She does an abrupt about-face for his office, and on Sloan's dismay, we FREEZE FRAME.

THE END