

TREATMENT: SO HELP ME GOD

Producers: Ed Hayes & Ray Hayes

Written by C. Neil Davenport

U.S. Copyright Office

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FORMAT: Feature Film

TITLE: *So Help Me God*

LOGLINE: A young NYC lawyer, grieving his previous loss, takes on a seemingly winnable case to reestablish his reputation. However, he finds his faith challenged when the Venue is moved to the countryside hometown of his previous client who committed suicide.

CIRC: 1990s

GENRE: Faith-based, Courtroom Drama

TONE: Realistic / Motivational

STORY TYPE: Rites of Passage

THEME: It is best to seek the Lord's truth instead of your own

COMPS: A Christian version of *The Judge* – A young attorney, dealing with past grievances, is reluctantly taken on a spiritual journey by his older client who he is trying to prove innocent.

AUDIENCE: Men & Women / 25 & Up

PAGES: 100 - 110

CHARACTER SYNOPSIS

<p>ATTY. HENRY BALDWIN Suggested Actor: <i>LaKeith Stanfield</i></p>	<p>Male / 30s / Any ethnicity</p> <p>Protagonist: Eager young lawyer for Dr. Asa Sloan, who is looking to revamp his tarnished reputation within the firm. His nickname is ‘Maverick.’ Professes to be a Christian, but is not actively practicing. New husband and soon-to-be father. Has a big ego which makes it difficult to face reality.</p>
<p>DR. ASA SLOAN Suggested Actor: <i>Michael Stuhlbarg</i></p>	<p>Male / 60s / Jewish</p> <p>A nervous nelly defendant in Courtroom. Husband and father of five foster kids. Celebrator of his Jewish culture, but actively practicing Christianity: Completed Jew. He supports his community through his profession. His office is almost a charity as his more concerned about the patient that the profit.</p>
<p>CHARLOTTE BALDWIN Suggested Actress: <i>Hailee Steinfeld</i></p>	<p>Female/ late-20s / Any ethnicity</p> <p>Henry’s wife and soon-to-be mother (six months pregnant). Dedicated to the church – practicing Christian. Wants the best for her husband, even if he does not know what it is yet. She is a also a Broadway director who is hired to build a stage play during Henry’s court case.</p>
<p>ATTY. BEN MORDECAI Suggested Actor: <i>Dustin Hoffman</i></p>	<p>Male / late-60s / Jewish</p> <p>Dr. Sloan’s personal attorney (retired) and friend. He owns a local market store in the city. Good friends with Patrick Snyder of Synder & Hayes Law Firm. Does not get along with Henry as he wanted Patrick to take Asa’s case.</p>
<p>JEROME TUMULT Suggested Actor: <i>William Baldwin</i></p>	<p>Male / 50s / Any ethnicity</p> <p>Antagonist: Plaintiff in case has sued Asa for medical malpractice – had bladder removed due to cancer. Lies to get money: He is a disbarred attorney for embezzling funds from previous clients. Husband to Bonnie.</p>

<p>BONNIE TUMULT Suggested Actress: <i>Kathy Bates</i></p>	<p>Female / 50s / Any ethnicity</p> <p>Plaintiff's (Jerome's) wife. She is the brains of the whole plot to sue Dr. Sloan.</p>
<p>ATTY. TERESA PANTHER Suggested Actress: <i>Drew Barrymore</i></p>	<p>Female / 40s / Any ethnicity</p> <p>Jerome's ruthless attorney who is willing to lie and cheat her way to a win in the courtroom. Friends with the judge.</p>
<p>ATTY. PATRICK SYNDER Suggested Actor: <i>Nicholas Cage</i></p>	<p>Male / 60s / Any ethnicity</p> <p>Managing Partner of Synder & Hayes. Boss of Henry. He wants to see the young lawyer reach his potential. Good friend of Ben Mordecai.</p>
<p>JUDGE CARMICHAEL Suggested Actor: <i>Jack Nicholson</i></p>	<p>Male / 80s / Any ethnicity</p> <p>Nearing retirement. Is a product of his community. Cares about the law and is the definition of strict.</p>
<p>SYLVESTER Suggested Actor: <i>Ben Foster</i></p>	<p>Male / 50s / Any ethnicity</p> <p>Local fly fisherman and his hound dog, ELVIS</p>

RACHEL SLOAN Suggested Actress: <i>Dorris Collier</i>	Female / 50s / Jewish Asa's wife
DR. COLDSTONE	Male or Female / 40s / Any ethnicity Jerome's Urologist.
DR. WINSLOW	Male / 50s / Any ethnicity Sunday School Teacher and town's doctor
JAMES	Male / 60s / Any ethnicity Henry's previous client
WAITRESS	Female / Any Age / Any ethnicity
MAILMAN Suggested Actor: <i>Ray Hayes</i>	Male / Any Age / Any ethnicity
MEMBER of JURY Suggested Actor: <i>Ed Hayes</i>	Male / Any Age / Any ethnicity 'Foreman' – person who reads verdict
Other characters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry's Intern – Any gender / 20s / Any ethnicity • Jewish Mother and Son • Jury • Asa's 5 foster kids

TREATMENT

Over Black: We hear a boy deeply inhaling/exhaling followed by a gritty series of coughs.

Text fades in: "... for such a time as this." – Esther 4:14

Text fades in: A fictional story inspired by true events.

Fade to:

Two necklace charms: the star of David and the crucifix, dangle below the neck of DR. ASA SLOAN (60s), Jewish, as he tends to a sick Jewish BOY (10). His Jewish MOTHER (40s) bites her nails in the corner of the doctor's clinic. He listens to the boy's lungs with a stethoscope, says he will be okay and gives the boy a lollipop. Asa writes a prescription, discovers the mother cannot afford the medication and tells her of a holistic solution. Asa writes a list of ingredients, "Find Ben, the market owner in Brooklyn, and tell him I sent you." Asa explained to the mother, "He has a slight sinus infection, but sometimes we need to let it run its course." The mother hugs Asa and promises to cook his favorite dessert: Sufganiyah (Jewish jelly donuts). He says, "Maybe one. Must watch the old ticker." – gestures to heart. She asks if Asa's family is excited about Purim, the upcoming holiday – Asa says yes and they share their goodbyes.

In the waiting room, paintings of Christ healing the sick line the walls as ill people wait for their name to be called. Everyone waiting is predominantly Jewish. Asa enters and announces the next person: a sickly-looking Caucasian MAN (30s) stands. Asa does not know him nor is he of Jewish descent, but welcomes him nonetheless. The man asks if Asa is in fact, "Dr. Asa Sloan." Asa nods and is handed an envelope. "You are served!"

Insert title: SO HELP ME GOD

Car honking is heard...

Cut to:

Early the next morning, HENRY BALDWIN (30s), a red-blooded American runs out of Central Park into the hustle and bustle of Upper East Side. Soon after jogging through the city, he enters a building and runs up flights of stairs. Inside a one bedroom, one bath apartment where books and stage plays are stacked along the window seals, Henry enters to find CHARLOTTE (late-20s), his six-month pregnant wife in her pajamas making breakfast for two. She clears off the breakfast table by moving a large blueprint layout of a proscenium stage with colored arrows on it and sets the breakfast down. Henry kisses her on the cheek – she wants a real kiss, but takes what she can get. Charlotte, "Have a good run?" Henry, "Yeah." [Side note: Henry has a habit of saying, "Yeah."] Charlotte shares that she just got paid her advance to start directing another stage play which they can use as a down payment on a house. Henry inhales the food, "A house – what happened to a bigger apartment?" Charlotte holds his hands to pray. "Amen." Henry inquires again and finds out Charlotte wants to move upstate! She does not think the city is a proper place to raise a child, "Kids need room to run, and there is a church out there I'd like to visit." Henry, "I'm from here, I turned out fine, and there is a church on every corner in the city." Nonetheless, Charlotte has scheduled an appointment with a real estate agent. Henry states that

the firm he works for is here... “What do you want me to do, buy a car and commute to work?” Charlotte nods, “You can get your driver’s license, too.” He points out how her job as an off-Broadway director requires her to stay in the city. Charlotte informs Henry that they both need a break from the rat-race. “What are we going to do about the apartment? It’s going to cost a fortune to break the contract.” Charlotte says, “We can just keep it.” Henry, “With what money?” Henry exclaims... “We will figure it out. Have faith.” Henry rolls his eyes, realizes the time, and informs Charlotte he cannot go look at houses with her today anyway because he must go into the office... Charlotte, “But you’re on break for another week.” He forgot to share that Mr. Synder, his boss, called yesterday and wants to talk. Charlotte does not like the sound of this... “Like another case?” Henry shrugs, “Maybe.” Charlotte, “Are you okay to take on another case considering how the last one turned out?” Henry is triggered, “We will go look at larger apartments later this week.” He exits.

Later at the Hayes & Synder law firm, everyone stares at Henry as he walks through – whispers are heard amongst the employees such as, “It’s Maverick.” “Why is he back?” and “The nerve of this guy.” “I can’t believe he’s back after what happened last week.” An INTERN (early-20s) rushes up to Henry welcoming him back from what was supposed to be a long holiday... Intern, “No one was expecting you to return until a week from now, Mr. Baldwin...” The intern tries to have Henry avoid seeing his office, but fails. A paper bullseye is taped to his door which reads, ‘Danger Zone’ alongside a collection of paper airplanes at the foot of it. Henry gives the intern a look – They clean it up. PATRICK SYNDER (60s), calls Henry into his office from afar.

Patrick’s office is lined with numerous law books. On his desk is a Newton’s cradle desk toy. Patrick and Henry have small talk... but Henry itches to get to work. Patrick inquires on how he is coping with the results of his previous case... Henry says he is fine, but Patrick sees that the young man is still affected by it. Patrick reenforces that the action of his previous client was not Henry’s fault. Henry, “Yeah, I know.” Patrick further explains that in their line of work... “Proving the truth has a tremendous effect on people and causes them to do strange things.” Patrick pulls back the ball of Newton’s cradle desk toy, the balls lob left and right. “But at the end of the day, a jury’s verdict is not a result of your performance, Henry.” Henry stops the balls from lobbing, “You called me about a case?” Patrick, “Litigation was filed six months ago, Discovery has been completed and the case is ready for mediation – something to ease your way back into the saddle.” Patrick hands over the *Tumult vs. Sloan* file.

Cut to:

Text fades in: 1 Week Earlier...

In the local Jewish market, Asa consults his friend and retired attorney, BEN MORDECAI (late-60s) as he stocks the shelves. Asa talks about the lawsuit and shakes. Ben calms him down, “Consider your heart, Asa.” He takes a pill and explains the case: The person suing is named, “Jerome Tumult.” In 1995, three years ago, Jerome came in for a general physical. It was a one-time visit – Jerome never returned. Asa said he discovered blood in Jerome’s urine, called and was told Jerome was out on business... So, he told Jerome’s wife, Bonnie, to have Jerome schedule a visit with a urologist... and he also had high cholesterol. Ben looks at the file and

finds out it states Jerome had his bladder removed this year, 1998, by urologist, Dr. Coldstone. Ben inquires if Asa has the documentation of the conversation with Bonnie... Asa says he will search for it – Ben, “We will need the documentation regard this discussion.” Ben acknowledges that Asa operates his clinic like that of a third-world charity center on a shoe string budget... “If this goes to trial and you lose, Asa... you could lose everything such as your clinic and possibly your home.” Asa, “But what if it goes to court?” Ben, “We will make sure it gets settled.”

Cut to:

Henry’s office looks like a detective’s workshop during a murder investigation as sticky notes cover the walls. They read, “Coverage issue?” / “Good standing” / “Claim of ‘altered record’” / “Addendum?” / “High cholesterol” / “Other lab results?” and so on. Henry evaluates the file and the lab report of Jerome’s general physical. In the corner is a scribbled short sentence... Henry tries to make it out but cannot read it. He sticks a note on the report, “?”, and finds a picture of Asa. Henry sees his double charmed necklace and writes, “Jewish.” His flip phone rings – he picks it up and gets an idea... Henry calls in the intern and tells them to search for a phone record of Asa calling the patient. Intern, “Why?” Henry, “C.Y.A.” Intern, “What’s that?” Henry, “Cover your ass. Doctor’s keep records not just to inform their patients, but to protect themselves. Now go!” The phone continues to ring, but Henry writes another note...

Later at the breakfast table, Henry continues to review the file and nibbles at his dinner. Charlotte shares a list of names she is considering for the baby if it is a boy, but Henry is not listening. She cleans the table, “So, my new play is about –” Henry, “Sorry, just give me one sec.” She dumps his food in the trash... “So, what did Synder want to talk with you about?” Henry, “A Mediation.” His wife likes this... Henry continues, “But it has potential.” Charlotte, “What do you mean by that?” Henry gives her his full attention, “Hypothetically, if this case went to trial, it would be a win-win. Everything looks good on paper... Dr. Sloan is a well-respected member of his community, he does not have any prior lawsuits, he is handsome, which helps with his presentation as a witness, and he is Jewish.” Charlotte, “So what if he is Jewish?” Henry explains when the trial is conducted in the city, he will likely obtain a jury of Jews... there are 1.6 million of them in the city, which is around 20% of the city’s population... “The odds are in my favor!” Charlotte, “But it is not going to trial?” Henry, “No.” Charlotte, “Good.” Henry is disgruntled about this and Charlotte inquires. “The firm still calls me, ‘Maverick.’ I just need a second chance...” Charlotte comes over to comfort him, “And He will provide it to you. It’s just in His timing.” Henry pulls away, puts on his jacket, and nears the door. Charlotte, “Where are you going?” Henry, “On a run.”

The following day, Henry in his office stares at the desk toy... a gift from Patrick. He pulls a ball back and lets it lob left and right...

Cut to Memory:

A Mercedes drives down a neighborhood street at night and pulls into a driveway of an elegant house. The car sits there with the engine running. In the car, JAMES (late 50s) wearing a tailored three-piece suit stares at the house and starts to cry. He leans over... Knocking is heard –

Cut Back To:

Henry opens his office door to find the intern handing over a phone record of Asa calling Bonnie. Henry, “Who is Bonnie?” Intern, “The wife of the plaintiff.” – there is no audio recording, but it proves the doctor called the plaintiff. Henry takes it and barges in on Patrick to accept the job. Patrick likes seeing this in Henry, but makes note, “Do not let this go to trial. We do not need another ‘Maverick’ situation on our hands.” Henry nods, “I will dig into the Tumults.” – Urinating is heard...

Cut to:

In a lavish bathroom, JEROME TUMULT (50s) puts a tube into his urostomy pouch, which is attached to the front of his abdomen, to empty it into the toilet bowl. He stares at the dark yellow liquid for a moment and then flushes. Jerome raises his sweatpants to cover his pouch and exits without washing his hands. He walks through his big house to a dark theatre room. A football game is projected on a huge flatscreen TV... Jerome pops the dog out of his giant leather recliner, plops down and reaches over to grab a beer while knocking over a few empty ones in the process. Beer spills on the hardwood. The dog licks it up. Jerome takes a swig, burps. BONNIE TUMULT (50s) bursts into the room, flings on the lights. With a flip phone in her hands, she instructs Jerome to get dressed – they are late for their appointment. A verbal altercation between the two gives the impression there is no love in this house and this is their normal way of communicating... He does not know what she is talking about as he is clearly drunk. Bonnie turns off the TV and tells her good-for-nothing husband she was just on the phone with Dr. Coldstone, “He wants more money to corroborate their story.” Jerome retorts, “Why do we need to pay him again?” Bonnie says we need him to lie under oath... “Pay him what he wants as we have the money.” Bonnie retorts that they are almost broke... ever since Jerome’s disbarment, she has been doing the heavy lifting. So, Jerome can either go work at Home Depot or take the Jew to court...

At an elegant country club, TERESA PANTHER (40s), the Tumult’s attorney smiles when she sees a FATHER (40s) yelling at his DAUGHTER (15) on how to hit the ball at the driving range. At the table, Panther educates the Tumults on her plan to bankrupt Asa, “He has funds to settle via insurance, but there is more money in his clinic, as well his house, which could be yours when he loses in Court. So, no matter what number he puts in front of you, we will not settle.” Tumults inquire on how Panther can ensure the win if they go to Court... Panther explains the process of Court – it is no different than the game of golf, “It is all about manipulating your opponent. They are both a ‘head game’, and if you can psych your opponent out, you win.” Jerome, “And how do you plan on psyching out our opponent?” Panther, “Tell me, what are your thoughts on the city of Roscoe?”

Cut to:

Henry waits outside the New York city Courthouse. A taxi pulls up with both Asa and Ben. Henry introduces himself. Ben thinks he is the assistant to Patrick’s recommended guy, but Henry says he is here to represent the doctor as his attorney. Ben is disgruntled as Patrick sent a ‘young blood’ to a Mediation. Asa shakes Henry’s hand while drenched in sweat and pops a pill,

“Mr. Baldwin, Let’s make this quick, yeah?” Henry, “Yeah...” At the table in the Mediation conference room, the Tumults and Panther sit across Henry, Ben, and Asa during the discussion. The plaintiff demands 10 million dollars. Henry writes a number on a piece of paper, shows it to Asa who nods as sweat pours from his forehead, and slides it to Panther, who then shows it to Jerome. Jerome says Asa’s offer is insulting, given what the doctor has done to him. Asa whispers to Ben, talks to Henry who writes on another piece of paper, and Jerome blows his nose into Asa’s counter offer. Asa shakes, grabs his chest. Henry says this is as high as they will go. Panther abruptly tells Henry if Asa cannot meet their demand, they will see them in Court. She stands, as does Henry, who without consulting Asa, accepts the challenge. Panther, “I hope you hit straight, Mr. Baldwin because where we are going there’s a lot of trees.” Henry does not understand... Panther tells them she has filed a Motion to have the trial moved to Roscoe, New York. Henry, “What!?”

Outside the courthouse, Ben helps a subdued Asa into the taxi. He turns to Henry to inquire on what happened in there – for he was given strict instructions not to let this go to trial... “You didn’t even take a moment to consult your client!” Henry responds with confidence, “I have this under control.” Ben, “And was that what you said to your previous client?” This triggers Henry, but he heads over to the cab to hand Asa a business card. “We need to prep for trial.” Asa inquires if Henry is married...

A few days later, Henry and Charlotte ride in a taxi – they have been invited to Asa’s house for dinner. Charlotte looks amazing. She makes a comment about looking fat in the dress which Henry does not acknowledge as he studies the file... Charlotte comments, “Since the trial is held upstate, I set up a rental... a cabin in the woods and a car for us.” Henry, “A cabin? A car? Us?” Charlotte explains that it would be better if Henry stays in the town where the trial is held instead of hiring a driver to commute to and from the city... “So, you’re going to stay here while I’m out in the country?” Charlotte – No. She will house-hunt in Roscoe while Henry is at work, which is why she rented a car. Henry, “You do realize the significance of Roscoe, right?” Charlotte nods, but Henry goes on to say that it is the same city of his previous case... the judge despises Henry and the townspeople want to skin him for what happened to James... this was a setup by Panther for sure! Charlotte, “Maybe they’ve forgotten about you.”

Asa’s house is beautiful, Hebrew is found imprinted along the doorframe. Henry rings the bell and identical twin African American BOYS (both 14) open the door. Henry, “Sorry wrong house.” The boys finish the other’s sentence... “So, you’re the mouthpiece / going up to bat for Pops.” Asa enters and excuses the boys. He comments on Charlotte’s beauty – she lights up. Asa gives them the tour. It is charming and spacious with musical instruments and plants everywhere. An Asian BOY (16) plays the piano; a Hispanic GIRL (11) sits on the floor reading a book; and a Middle Eastern GIRL (10) wants Charlotte to play dolls. RACHEL (50s), Asa’s Jewish wife, wearing an apron, enters to introduce herself and pulls Charlotte into the kitchen. Rachel calls her kids to help set the table. They all follow. Henry says they are all so well behaved. Asa says they have been blessed with six... right now. “One just left for the military.” Asa shares that Rachel and he could not have children of their own so they became a part of a foster care system. They are doing the Lord’s work by providing a home for the kids. Asa’s theory of life is that the world is like a pond and we are merely pebbles... Henry does not understand – Asa, “When you

drop a pebble – the smallest of all rocks into a large body of water, it has an amazing effect. Ripples are created and the discernment of energy in the form of tiny waves clean the water, and over time, a tremendous change occurs.” As an example, Asa points Henry’s attention to a bookshelf full of thank you cards, letters, and photos from his patients over the years. “One man’s small action of the heart can move mountains.” Asa asks Henry what they will name his baby – Henry does not even know the sex yet...

At dinner, Asa prays over the food. Once it is portioned out, the girl makes funny faces at Charlotte who plays along. Rachel tells her daughter to behave. The table is quiet, but one of the kids bring up the case – “How are you going to prove Daddy is telling the truth?” Henry, “It is a swearing match, really.” Boy, “Like with curse words?” Henry, “No, it means the truth doesn’t matter.” Girl, “But the truth does matter!” The kids race to their father’s defense and Henry goes into lawyer mode... Rachel interrupts, “No business talk at my table.” She explains that the Jewish culture recognizes a meal as a time for intimacy, fellowship, and significant conversation. Henry says prepping for trial is important and necessary. Rachel makes a comment about them not being at this point if Henry had stuck to the plan... Asa asks Rachel to just leave it alone... Henry retorts, “Based on how much money the plaintiff was demanding, this would have gone to trial regardless of who the defense attorney was... and besides, you aren’t really Jewish.” Silence... Charlotte tells Henry to stop talking by placing her hand on his hand. Asa inquires on why Henry said that. He explains his understanding of the culture that Jews do not accept Jesus Christ as their Savior... “and yet, you act like practicing Christians.” Asa pulls out his necklace and explains they are ‘Completed Jews,’ otherwise known as “Messianic.” They embrace their culture, but believe Christ is the Son of God... The kids clamor and ask Henry if he is a Christian, to which he says yes, but then is unprepared for the question, “Then, why don’t you wear a cross like Daddy?” ...

Later, at the door, Asa apologizes for the evening... Henry advised he needs to set up a meeting with Asa to prepare for trial, but the doctor responds that he cannot carve out the time due to work and family. Henry tries to reply, but Asa says “I have faith in you, Henry.” Henry begrudgingly shakes Asa’s hand, “See you in Roscoe.” Asa stops Henry and tells him he is going to participate in Purim. Henry, “What is that?” Asa, “Jewish holiday.” Henry, “Yeah, sure. Whatever.” He exits.

Cut to:

In the rental car, Charlotte drives while Henry rides in the passenger seat. He looks in the side mirror and sees the city in the distance... Nearing upstate, they travel through endless trees and countryside until they arrive to the small town. A sign with the giant fish on it reads, “ROSCOE, NY – population 500 – Trout Town, USA.” As they drive through, the town is lively as people load up in their trucks ready to go fishing. Families walk out of the local diner and school kids are let across the road by an OFFICER. Charlotte drives over the Beaverkill bridge, where Henry sees FLY FISHERMAN (50s) and his hound dog.

Soon after, they pull up to the cabin – a two-story beautiful cabin in the woods. Charlotte cannot get over how gorgeous everything is, “Why would you want to live in the city when you can have this?” Henry unloads the luggage. He slaps his neck, waves the bugs away, and puts one

finger on his nostril to blow out the other side... The furnished cabin is quaint. Charlotte tours it with delight as Henry lugs two large suitcases up the stairs. In the bedroom, he throws the suitcase and leaves it lopsided as he goes to search for a room... He finds a room with a desk. Henry unzips the second suitcase, pulls out and plops down heavy law books, the file and the desk toy which is now mangled. Henry sets it on the desk with the balls twisted. Charlotte is hungry and wants to go into town... Henry, "But we just got in..."

Henry and Charlotte walk into the local diner, which is busy around lunchtime – they look like they are from the city... the locals look at them including the fly fisherman with his dog... Henry dislikes this place, "I think the whole town is here..." and wants to go someplace else. Charlotte, "This is nice." She asks a passing WAITRESS to be seated in a less noisy spot, "I'll do the best I can, miss." She looks at Henry, "You look familiar, do I know you, mister?" Henry says no. They are seated and glance over the menu... Henry notices a few locals eyeballing him as the waitress seats them. He raises the menu to hide... A man in a golf shirt comes near the table. This is JUDGE CARMICHAEL (60s). He is friendly to them both, as he recognizes Henry and shakes his hand, and extends an invitation to visit his office after lunch. Judge exits and Charlotte tells Henry, "See, they've gotten over it!" ... Henry blows his nose. Charlotte inquires about his health. Henry says he is fine, but DR. WINSLOW (50s) overhears the conversation from the neighboring booth and tells him to get some rest. They learn the doctor is a Sunday school teacher at the local church. He invites them next Sunday – Charlotte lights up and accepts the invitation, whereas Henry says, "Yeah, we will see."

Cut to:

In the waiting room of Judge Carmichael's office, Henry blows his nose and tries to clear his throat – apologizes to RECEPTIONIST. Judge opens his door... In the meeting, Judge Carmichael sits on his desk and peers down at Henry – his walls are covered with trophies of trout fish and volumes of law books... He is a completely different than he was in the diner – stern and blunt. Judge tells Henry he could not believe it when he heard Henry was coming back to Roscoe for another trial. "Henry, you are a stain on the good town of Roscoe, and I want you out of here as quick as possible. Another Mediation should be done before trial. Panther is an animal in the Courtroom, and if she wins, it will not look good for my town." Henry responds with is confident that he can hold his own... Judge refers to Henry's previous trial in Roscoe, and says, "I lost a good friend after you came into town, boy." Henry is triggered but keeps silent. Judge thinks and develops an idea, "I want this to stay quiet, Mr. Baldwin..." Judge instructs Henry there a Pre-Trial Mediation... Henry, "A what?" Judge Carmichael, "I'm giving you an opportunity tomorrow to prove to me that this will not go to trial. Can you do that?" Henry, "Yeah, your honor!" Judge, "Yeah, is not an affirmation, boy."

Cut to:

In the bedroom, Charlotte sits on the floor with her stage play and theatre blueprint – the baby kicks! She calls for Henry who is heard in the bathroom hacking and spitting. He comes out shaking his head, grunting, and blowing his nose... it is clear to Charlotte that her husband is sick. Henry denies this as he sets the timer on his watch for 5am – his plan is to go on a run before the pre-trial mediation. Charlotte does not think that is a good idea... "I think I can handle

a Podunk town.” Curled up in bed, Charlotte is snuggled up against Henry, who is wide awake. He hacks and touches his throat... raises out of bed and heads to the bathroom down the hall to spit out whatever is congesting his sinuses. In his office, still blowing his nose, Henry sits at the desk and reviews the file... it is 3am. The watch alarm goes off. Henry jumps awake, still at the desk with the file as a pillow. His neck is cramped and he continues to hack, but jogs through the town nonetheless. The town of Roscoe is asleep. Henry enters the woods and takes the trail. He crosses the bridge and comes up to a pond. Henry picks up a rock and tosses it into the water... watches the ripples –

Cut to Memory:

Within a cemetery, a black coffin is lowered into the ground with a large photo of James beside it... A crying family: a mother and her two sons all dressed in black walk away. Henry standing beside Charlotte who is not pregnant walks up to the grave and looks down inside it... – “Bud!”

Cut Back to:

Back at the water, Henry looks over at the fly fisherman alongside his dog casting a line, “You’ll scare the fish.” Henry continues his run, back down the bridge, along the trail and stops to cough... he unknowingly travels on a different path and finds himself lost... Henry checks the time on his watch – 6:00AM. He tries to call Charlotte on his flip phone, but there is not any cell service... Back at the cabin, Charlotte is dressed and getting her things as she is heading back to the city... Henry runs in another direction... nothing is familiar. He runs in another direction... all the trees are the same now... he is in the middle of nowhere. “Bud!” Henry turns to find the fly fisherman and his dog in an old rusty pickup truck... “Need a ride?”

Henry rides in the passenger seat and tries to call Charlotte as the hound dog, ELVIS, has his nose in Henry’s face. SYLVESTER at the wheel tells Elvis to get back – he minds his owner. Sylvester talks like a good-old boy, “My friends call me, ‘Sly.’” Sly finds out where Henry is staying and knows the cabin... “My wife used to love tending to that place.” He realizes the time and turns on the radio as Henry continues trying to call his wife. On the radio, “The story of Esther: Chapter 6. That night the king could not sleep. So, he ordered the book of the Chronicles, the record of his reign, to be read to him. It was recorded that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s officers who guarded the doorway...” Henry finally gets ahold of Charlotte – he learns she is on her way towards the city and tells her that she needs to turn around. “Meet me at the courthouse with my suit – I don’t have time to shower.”

Outside of the courthouse, Charlotte sits in the rental car and waits. She notices Asa standing by the grass with Ben by his side... he throws up. The truck drives in like a bat out of hell...

Later in the courtroom, Henry sits beside Asa, at the defendant table, in a wrinkled suit. He clears and rubs his throat – Asa takes notice. Panther sits beside Jerome at the plaintiff table, geared up for the game. The gallery is practically empty except for Ben, Sly, his dog and Bonnie. BAILIFF (60s) jumps up, “All rise for the Honorable, Judge Carmichael.” The Judge enters, everyone stands, even the dog, Elvis. Soon after, Judge begins the Proceeding – Henry sneezes, blows his nose, and apologizes to the court. Panther explains to the Court why her client, Mr.

Jerome Tumult, is suing Dr. Asa Sloan. Judge asks Henry, “What is your response, Mr. Baldwin?” Henry hacks up some gunk and asks for a recess for personal reasons... denied. The procedure of the Pre-Trial Mediation begins...

Panther brings the first witness to the stand, the plaintiff: Mr. Jerome Tumult – Bailiff brings the Bible and tells him to swear to tell the truth. Jerome swears he will. Panther asks him to share how his life has changed since the recent cystectomy (the bladder removal). It has destroyed his confidence, impacted his ability to lead a normal life, changed his method of doing business, and greatly affected his love life... Judge sees Ben leaning over the gallery rail whispering to Henry... Calls him out, “Is he co-counsel?” Henry says no. Judge, “Then sit down, sir.” Panther continues with Jerome, “And you’re in this new alteration of life because Dr. Asa Sloan didn’t do his job correctly?” Jerome, “Yes.” Henry stands for cross examination and asks if Jerome is a practicing Jew – Panther, “Objection – relevancy.” Sustained – Henry clarifies that Dr. Sloan’s clinic caters predominantly to the Jewish community within the city and given that Mr. Tumult is not Jewish, why Jerome got a general physical from Dr. Sloan’s clinic is unclear. Jerome explains he was working in the area. Henry, “What type of business brings you to that area of the city?” Panther objects – her client’s business has nothing to do with his medical issue – Sustained – Henry coughs harshly – No questions. Ben pops the railing...

Next on the stand, Panther puts up the plaintiff’s urologist: Dr. Coldstone. He speaks about what a cystectomy is and how it can affect the patient. Panther asks about record keeping – Dr. Coldstone describes in detail how he keeps his records – she presents him with *exhibit A*: Jerome’s lab results from Dr. Sloan and asks what he thinks of the report. Dr. Coldstone says the scribble in the corner looks suspicious. As well, it appears Dr. Sloan keeps his records the same way he treats his patients... poorly. Asa jumps up shouting, “That is a lie!” Judge strikes his gavel and tells Asa to not interrupt. Henry settles him down. Ben fidgets with his pen and notepad as Panther smiles... She inquires on the timing of when her client came to see Dr. Coldstone. “A year ago.” And what stage was Mr. Tumult’s cancer when he came to see you, Dr. Coldstone?” – Extreme to the point, which caused us to remove the bladder immediately... “And would you say the cancer advanced due to negligence of Dr. Sloan?” – Yes, the doctor responds. Panther concludes, “If you treated Mr. Tumult and found the first stages of cancer, what would you have done?” Dr. Coldstone, “If I was Mr. Tumult’s general physician and he came to me with symptoms of possible cancer, I would have notified him, monitored his symptoms and watched him like a hawk.” Henry – objects – argumentative – coughs up gunk and spits in another tissue... Overruled.

The last person on the stand is Mrs. Bonnie Tumult, the plaintiff’s wife. Panther asks Bonnie to share how Jerome’s situation has altered their marriage – Bonnie states it has put a strain on them economically as Jerome has lost business since the surgery. She is asked about the phone call from Dr. Sloan. Bonnie confirms it, “But I was only told of my husband’s high cholesterol and nothing about the cancer.” Henry sneezes and hacks during his cross examination – He asks about the phone call – “Let us assume Dr. Sloan did not know about the bladder problem until later... did he call you a second time?” No, Bonnie states. “Then, why do you think he wrote it down?” Panther objects – arguing with the witness – Sustained. Henry changes his direction, “Your husband eventually developed cancer, but, when he started having symptoms, why didn’t he go back to Dr. Sloan about this?” Bonnie said that Jerome visited Dr. Sloan three years ago,

and Dr. Sloan was too busy treating clinic patients, which resulted contacting Dr. Coldstone, but by then the cancer had grown and it was too late. Ben throws his legal pad on the defense table – Judge strikes gavel and instructs the Bailiff to remove Ben. Henry reads the legal pad, “ONLY VISITED ONCE! CHECK FILE, DUMMY!”

Judge Carmichael concludes the Pre-Trial Mediation. As the settlement demand remained at \$10 million, the defense made no further offer, and the Judge sets the trial date for Tuesday morning of next week. Asa shakes as Henry sits there stuffed up. Court is dismissed. Panther walks by Henry, “Get ready for the long eighteen, Maverick.” Asa takes notice of this... Judge calls Henry to the bench... As soon as Henry comes up, Judge gets a whiff of the body odor from him, “Did you think what I said to you yesterday was a joke, boy?” No, Henry says, why? “When you come into my courtroom unclean as you are and causing a disturbance like you have and are clearly unprepared, it is a sign of disrespect.” Henry tries to explain himself, but ends up sneezing in the Judge’s face. Henry is charged with a contempt of court – Bailiff escorts Henry out the side door!

Later in the car, Ben has a private conversation with Asa about how he should fire Henry and let Ben represent him. Ben will step out of retirement to handle this since Henry clearly does not appear to be prepared for trial. “Think of your family, Asa and if not that, your health.”

Henry sits within a holding cell looking worse than before. He coughs, hacks and sneezes. Bailiff gives him a box of tissues and lets him out to make his phone call...

Panther, in her hotel room, pours herself a drink, picks up the phone, dials and requests the operator to connect her to the Roscoe Journal as she has a story for them worth printing...

Back in the city, Charlotte sits in a chair along an empty stage – listening to a YOUNG ACTRESS audition. Charlotte gives her some direction and listens to the delivery. Her ASSISTANT enters, “Sorry, Mrs. Baldwin, but you have a phone call...”

In the passenger seat of the rental car, heading back to the cabin, Henry stares out the window and sneers at the town. It is a quiet ride until he shares that he had waited in the cell all day long. Charlotte reminds him of her work. He asks how she paid for bail – Charlotte used her advance money. This hurts Henry. They pull up to the cabin and Ben and Asa are waiting for them...

In the living room, Asa treats Henry like a patient. Conversation between the two occurs about what happened in the Pre-Trial Mediation... it was not Henry’s intention to let this go to trial, as he says it with a slurred voice and droopy eyes. Asa examines Henry’s sinuses... “How much sleep have you been getting?” Charlotte says she found him sleeping at his desk the night before. Henry says, “I’m fine.” Asa tells Ben to find a few items in the kitchen for a hot-totty. Henry says he cannot get drunk right now. Asa tells Henry he needs to sleep and let his body work out this sinus infection. As Asa helps a ‘drunk’ Henry up the stairs, he says he wishes he had the same level of faith as the doctor. Henry shares his frustrations of being a lawyer where the truth can be manipulated. Asa gets Henry in bed and right before he goes to sleep, Henry says, “Thank you, James.” Asa looks at Henry and closes the door behind him. He talks with Charlotte and Ben in the living room – “Let him rest and take it easy tomorrow.” Charlotte invites Ben and Asa

to stay with them for the night, but Asa says he must head back to the city to treat his clinic patients. She asks about Henry's performance in the Pre-Trial Mediation... Ben speaks up, but Asa interjects to ask, "Who is James?"

The following afternoon, birds chirp, the sun shines and Henry wakes up well rested. He explores the cabin to find Charlotte on the phone with her assistant in the kitchen about which actors she likes... She made him some breakfast and coffee. "Take it easy today, doctor's orders." Henry is willing to follow them as he believes he is fired; Charlotte reassures him that he is not... As Henry goes back into work mode, Charlotte stops him. After tomorrow, he needs to schedule a time with Asa and Ben to prep for trial. Henry is still on, but Ben is now co-counsel. "Why call the day after tomorrow?" Charlotte responds that Purim is coming, the Jewish holiday.

Later in the day, Henry and Charlotte look at houses with a real-estate agent. One house is white with blue shutters, another house is a spread-out brown ranch, and the last one has a wraparound rocking chair porch... Charlotte looks at a room which could be turned into a nursery while Henry journeys into the kitchen. On the refrigerator a sticky note with cursive handwriting reads, "Don't you worry. I'll return soon. – Jesus." At first Henry rolls his eyes and then he pays attention to the penmanship... he gets an idea. Henry steps outside to make a call...

Later around lunch, Henry and Charlotte at the diner, he asks how her play is going... She starts to talk about it and is interrupted by his phone going off. It is his intern. Henry leaves the booth – the waitress comes to Charlotte and hands her a newspaper...

Intercut: Outside the diner Henry talks on his phone with his intern at the law firm – Henry needs the firm's handwriting expert to evaluate *exhibit A* – Specifically, the handwritten 'chicken scratch' in the corner. Henry needs authentication of the document to support the doctor's credibility that it was written at that time and not later when the cancer was diagnosed. We know that Asa called the Tumults and the wife confirms it, now we just need additional proof for the jury... Intern, "How's that coming by the way?" Henry says that the jury selection will start day after tomorrow and they will have a list ready for the judge... he gets an idea. "I need you to go to the clinic and make a copy of their sign-in book..." A truck speeds up, a YOUNG REDNECK in the bed yells, "Yo Maverick!" Henry looks up and gets pegged by an egg! The truck speeds off... Charlotte comes outside with the newspaper in hand and finds Henry covered in yoke...

The newspaper is slammed on the table – it showcases a photo of Henry with a headline reading, *Maverick Returned: How Much More Pain can Roscoe Endure?* Henry showers as Charlotte reads aloud the story featuring Henry and his failed attempt at proving the innocence of a Roscoe native... Henry says this is Panther's doing and how she is manipulating the jury pool.

On Monday, Charlotte uses the rental car to travel back to the city. Henry is picked up by Sly and Elvis. They listen to the Christian radio where the pastor reads a new chapter on the story of Esther as they head towards the courthouse. Henry offers to pay Sly, but he does not accept. Honestly, ever since his wife passed away, he does not have that much to do anyway, except walk Elvis and fish. Sly simply enjoys helping a friend out.

Henry and Ben begin the jury selection. Henry tells Ben if the case were in the city, we would have had a jury of Jews – people who would understand Asa... Ben, “But we aren’t in the city, kid.” So, what do salt-of-the-earth country people and the Jewish culture have in common? Tradition. Henry stands and asks the group of potential jurors, “Who here has a special tradition with their family? Several people raise their hand – JUROR no. 4 (50s) shares that he and his boys go out hunting after New Years... Henry signals Ben behind his back, “No good.” He picks JUROR no. 8 (80s) who shares that she and her husband travel on their anniversary to St. Augustine and kiss under the love tree... Henry signals Ben, “Good.” Afterwards, Panther gets up and asks the jurors, “Who here has been given horrible news from a doctor?”

On Tuesday, the courtroom is somewhat full of townspeople. The jury sits quietly as the judge looks at his watch. Henry asks Ben where Asa is at? Ben says, “You’ve known about the Purim holiday – we spoke about this before.” Henry, “That’s today?” Judge Carmichael inquires with Henry on where his client is at... Henry asks to approach. Judge allows and Henry explains due to Asa’s culture and religious views, he allowed him to be absent on this day. Judge tells Henry if he permitted the defendant to miss his first day of court, they will proceed without Dr. Sloan, but it will not look good on his case. Henry nods.

Opening statements are made to the jury by Panther first describing Jerome’s horrible condition and inability to live a normal life for the next thirty years due to Dr. Asa Sloan’s negligence – a doctor – a person we inherently trust with our wellbeing and yet he is absent today! Henry’s opening statement pertains to the credibility of Dr. Sloan as both a doctor and that of a God-fearing family man who helps his community – “I pray you can see the truth.”

Panther puts Jerome on the stand to garner sympathy from the jury. Henry cross examines and establishes that Jerome only came into the clinic one time over the course of three years. “Objection – there is no way, Mr. Baldwin would know this information, your honor.” – Henry requests evidence: *exhibit C* be admitted: the sign in book of Dr. Sloan’s clinic... Panther objects, but the Judge allows it as evidence. “The record shows Mr. Jerome Tumult had one office visit over three years ago even though he alludes in his testimony he and Dr. Sloan had a long-term doctor-patient relationship... How many other doctors have examined you over the course of the past three years, Mr. Tumult?”

Panther puts Bonnie on the stand to bolster her husband’s testimony and garner empathy from the jury. She also discusses the phone call of Dr. Sloan not notifying her of Jerome’s cancer. Henry cross examines Bonnie and calls attention to the phone call. He wants her to recollect their conversation. She cannot remember the exact verbiage due to it being three years ago... Henry presents *exhibit B*, the phone record, and has her confirm that it shows Dr. Sloan’s clinic calling her. He then directs her attention to the time stamp of the phone call: 15 seconds... “How much can you say in 15 seconds?” – Nothing, because you know what happened – it was a message. “Objection – speculative.” What’s your point, Mr. Baldwin? – Henry gestures to *exhibit C*. again... he asks Bonnie to read and confirm a name listed on the sign-in log... Bonnie reads her name beside the date, which matches that of the phone call, and confirms she went to the clinic... “So, your testimony changes now, Mrs. Tumult?” Bonnie, “I remember now it was a message to come in and speak to Dr. Sloan about Jerome’s lab results. But he did not tell me about the cancer.” Henry did not ask what was said or not said during their meeting because the

truth is Bonnie was just caught lying on the stand... “I’m not lying.” Henry points out her previous testimony during the hearing where she directly states that she spoke to Dr. Sloan on the phone and was given the medical information then... The credibility of both her and her husband is beginning to be questioned by the jury.

Finally, Panther calls Dr. Coldstone onto the stand. He testifies that a good doctor would have immediately notified the patient when cancer is found as there was clear indication that something was wrong. “Anyone under Dr. Sloan’s care should seek outside help if he practices medicine like this.” Henry cross examines... he presents both exhibit B and C. “Are these typical record keeping practices of your or any other general clinic?” Dr. Coldstone says yes. “Then how can you say that Dr. Sloan has poor record keeping skills if this is the standard of care?” Objection – treating witness as hostile – Sustained. Henry changes his direction and brings forth *exhibit A*. He asks why doctors write in chicken scratch – given that they have the responsibility for the healthcare of the patient, one would think doctor’s handwriting would be clear and precise... Dr. Coldstone, “What’s your point?” Henry asks the doctor to read the note written on the report, but Dr. Coldstone cannot make it out. No more questions, your honor. Judge calls the court for recess for day and states, “Henry, your client better be here tomorrow.”

Sly’s truck enters the congested city of New York and gets stuck. Sly does not like it here as Elvis barks at the person raising his fist at the truck... Henry watches people walk by wearing costumes such as biblical wisemen, cowboys and other elaborate get-ups! Sly, “It’s like Halloween in February!” Henry gets out and tells Sly to find a parking space... Someone in costume comes up to Sly with a gift basket of Jewish cookies...

Henry enters Dr. Sloan’s clinic... asks where he is at and is told by a NURSE that Asa is at the church. Henry, “Which one?” Nurse, “It’s Purim...” Back outside, Henry follows the crowd of costumed people into the synagogue... a congregation of costumed people listen to a RABBI read aloud in Hebrew from a scroll. Actors on stage dressed in biblical outfits play out the scene too... When he says the name, ‘Haman’ they all boo and when he says the name, ‘Esther,’ they cheer while spinning groggers! “Henry?” The young lawyer turns to find Asa dressed in a crazy costume coming up to him. “What are you doing here?” Henry pulls Asa aside to a quieter area to explain the procedure of tomorrow. Asa is called to be on the stand... the doctor starts shaking... his make-up drools off his face due to the instant sweat... Asa is clearly nervous, but Henry says that’s why he is here – we need to prepare for your testimony. Asa says that he will tell the truth. Henry exits and enters the truck to find both Sly and Elvis chowing down on hamantaschen... Sly says this is the story of what the pastor on the radio is talking about. Henry, “Yeah, Sly. I really don’t need a lesson right now.”

Cut to:

Later, outside the cabin, Henry steps out of the truck – Sly, “See you tomorrow, bright and early, bud!” Henry steps inside the cabin to find it empty... Charlotte left him a note saying that she was called back to the city. She loves him too.

In court the following day, Asa shakes at the defense desk. Panther calls Asa on the stand. Asa looks at Henry who nods that he will be okay. Asa stands, swallows a pill, and wipes the sweat off his brow as he nears the stand... Bailiff has Asa put his hand on the Bible, “Do you swear to

tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?” Asa, “So help me God.” Panther questions Asa and paces back and forth like a cat ready to pounce. With each question used to set-up and discredit the good doctor, Henry objects. At one point, Panther implies that Asa is a confused man because he is wearing a necklace which represents two religions which contradict. Asa tries to explain what a completed Jew is to the jury, but Henry objects on account that Panther is referring to Asa’s religious ideologies which is not relevant to his profession as a medical practitioner – sustained. Panther takes the Bailiff’s Bible and quotes a piece of scripture to prove her point of how Asa did his job incorrectly... this riles Asa... Henry sees how the jury sees Asa – a less than agreeable person outside of their community... Asa is sweating bullets and his heart is racing... Panther has him right where she wants him...

She turns to tell him she has one last question... she brings forth *exhibit A* with the chicken scratch highlighted. “What does this say?” Asa, “Blood in urine – consult urologist.” The jury leans in and listens. Panther, “And why does it say ‘blood in urine,’ Dr. Sloan.” Asa explains the physical process of when blood is found – it is a sign worth noting. “So, you knew of the cancer after Mr. Tumult’s physical?” No, Asa says – Blood does not mean you have cancer – it could mean several different things... Panther, “So, because it was not cancer at this particular point, you didn’t feel the need or the obligation to tell your patient?” Asa, “No... I mean, yes.” Henry objects. Arguments ensue... Judge calls for order – Panther asks, “Dr. Sloan, did you or didn’t you tell Mrs. Tumult about finding blood in her husband’s urine after the point of discovery?” Asa shakes – clearly trying to recall the memory from three years ago when it was known. (Asa wants to go home – everything is spinning for him...) Panther, “That is not my question, sir.” Asa shakes his head, “I can’t say.” Panther, “You can’t or you won’t because you are hiding something from us?” Henry calls for a recess – denied – Judge, “Answer the question, doctor.” Asa, under the gun, “I don’t know. Sometimes things fall through the cracks.” The people in the room gasp. Judge slams his gavel calling for order. Panther smiles. Henry covers his face with his hands. The court concludes for the day. Asa stands as the jury is dismissed and clenches his chest... Henry, “Doc?” Asa collapses. People rush over to help Asa... Panther sits and smiles.

Henry sits in the waiting room of the hospital – head drooped. Henry’s phone rings. He answers – In the side wings of the theatre, Charlotte inquires on how things went in Court... Intercut: Henry briefly shares a what went down and where he is presently. She asks about Asa... Henry tells her that Asa has a heart condition which was never made aware... Henry rambles, “We have to rebuild his credibility... if there was some way, we could show the jury who Asa is...” Ben walks up informing Henry that Asa is awake and wants to talk. Charlotte hangs up and ponders... she is then called back to the stage.

Henry speaks briefly to Ben about a plan of action in Court and gives an assignment, “Find dirt on Jerome.” Henry enters Asa’s room and finds him in bed with wires and tubes attached to the doctor... Henry asks Asa why he did not tell him about his medical problem. Asa, “It slipped through the cracks.” Henry states, “That is not funny.” Asa, “That lawyer is contorting God’s word.” Henry says you cannot argue scripture in a courtroom. “Why not?” Henry shares it can be interpreted numerous ways... Asa, “So can the law.” Asa’s point is if she is willing to contort the word of God, what else is she willing to lie about? “Henry, you’ve read a mountain of thick books to be the success that you are now, but you haven’t read the most important one! Henry,

“You know what Doc, you can buy be a Bible after we’re done, alright?” As Henry exits, he finds Asa’s family in the waiting room... they are all praying. Rachel sees him and does not want Henry to be there as he is the cause of all of this. Ben separates them. Rachel, “You’re not going to kill my husband like your last client!” This triggers Henry which causes him to abruptly leave – Ben calls for Henry to come back. They still have a trial to finish.

Cut to:

In the country club, Panther and the Tumults clink and drink long-island ice-teas as a celebratory victory. They highlight what they will spend the money on after the win... Panther says we have one more day to go.

Cut to:

Charlotte and the theatre team break for lunch and when her troupe of actors walk down one street, Charlotte walks down another... She enters Asa’s clinic. Charlotte meets the Jewish mother holding the dessert she made for Asa... a conversation sparks between the two and learns how connected the mother is to many of Asa’s patients. Charlotte asked the mother, “Do you have a moment to grab a coffee?”

Cut to:

Henry is walking down the road of trees... trucks flyby honking their horns, “Get out of the road!” Henry is mentally in another place... He thinks about James, the friendship they established, the case, and the outcome... Henry steps over to the side, sits on a fallen tree... “Hey bud...” Henry looks up to find Sly in his truck with Elvis. Sly invites Henry to go fishing.

Sly wearing the proper fishing attire stands beside Henry still in his suit casting a line out into the water. It is quiet between the two for a bit. Henry breaks the silence and asks what chapter the radio pastor is on. Sly, “Oh he finished Esther’s story and he’s onto the next.” Henry, “I remember reading that the story of Esther is the only book in the Bible where God is never mentioned. Is that true?” Sly, “That’s right, bud.” Silence. Henry, “Why is that?” Sly, “You’re scaring the fish away.” Henry, “Sorry.” Sly sighs and recasts his line in the water. He shares that it is his late wife’s birthday... he lost her to cancer. Dr. Winslow preformed her surgery and continued to treat her until her death. Henry gets an idea and asks if he would introduce him to Dr. Winslow. Sly, “You want his help, go to church.” Henry looks out at the water and casts his line again...

The following day, the gathered townspeople enter the church as Henry follows... he is the last to enter. Henry is embraced and his hands are shaken by many as he asks for directions to the Sunday school taught by Dr. Winslow. He travels through the church and enters the room.

Henry finds the class of townspeople sitting in a circle. Dr. Winslow waves him in to take a seat as he talks about the story of Esther, “She was a Jew and was the wife of a king who was about to commit genocide of her race through political manipulation. In the discovery of this, she put her life on the line to save her people. Theologians say, if Esther had not done this, Jesus Christ would not have been born. Although God is never mentioned in her story, the Christian

interpretation of the story reveals the Lord in between the lines... through the brave actions Ester takes, God is present in the outcome. We all have choices to make and the question we all must ask ourselves is, 'Are we making choices for us or for Him?'"

Later as the group exits to go to morning service, Henry pulls Dr. Winslow aside and states he needs his help – specifically regarding the stages of cancer... Dr. Winslow says he read about Henry in the newspaper... "Are the stories they say about you true?" Henry avoids the question. Dr. Winslow, "You didn't answer my question, son." Henry shares the story of James:

James was a Wall Street guy who came from nothing and built a personal empire through the years. James made his fortune, moved to Roscoe, and ran his own brokerage firm which garnered very specific clients. He did well up until one of his clients went bankrupt. James was sued for conspiracy of embezzlement, it went to trial, and though all the evidence proved James' innocence, the jury disagreed and Henry lost the case. Dr. Winslow recalls hearing about this... He inquires, "Was James telling the truth?" Henry, "The truth does not factor into anything. My job is not to prove you're telling the truth. It is to convince the jury my client did their job." Dr. Winslow, "But if we don't have truth, what else do we have?" Dr. Winslow, "What happened to James?" Henry looks at Dr. Winslow.

Cut to Memory:

James cries while sitting in the driver's seat of the Mercedes. He leans over, opens the glove compartment, and removes a small handgun. James puts the barrel of it in his mouth... Bang!

Cut Back To:

Dr. Winslow asks if Henry feels responsible for James' death. Henry nods, "I'm petrified history will repeat itself." Henry continues to share that the court proceedings of Dr. Sloan are following the same pattern as James'... he is presenting all the evidence and trying to prove the plaintiff is lying... and if he loses Asa will lose everything... Henry elaborates on Asa's character, his love of his community and family... Dr. Winslow, "May I give my two cents?" Henry, "Please." Dr. Winslow explained that Henry should focus less on proving lies and instead search for the truth. Henry had never considered this perspective... Henry, "Can you do something for me?" Dr. Winslow, "What is it?" Henry, "Could you pray for me?" Dr. Winslow puts his hand on Henry's shoulder and prays for the Lord to relieve Henry of the past burden as well to give him the guidance and courage to search for the truth in Court.

Meanwhile at the firm, the Intern throws a paper airplane at the target and hits it dead on. Patrick comes up and tells the Intern to go home as everyone else already has... The intern cannot as they are waiting on the results of the handwriting expert to come in. Patrick sits next to the Intern and plays the airplane game. Intern, "Do you think Mr. Baldwin has a chance?" Patrick throws an airplane, "He needs more help than what we're able to give him." Intern shares a story: Boy goes to college and asks dad for help with tuition. Dad gives him a Bible and says, 'If you read this from the beginning to the end, you'll find what you need on the last page.' Boy goes back to his dorm, tosses the book aside and finds ways to pay tuition. Years later at graduation, dad inquires on if his son read the book. Boy says no. Dad opens the Bible to the last page which

holds a check for the full tuition – Patrick chuckles. The fax machine ignites! Patrick and the Intern jump up and review the document...

Charlotte drives up to the cabin late at night and enters to find the lights off... She walks a bit further and finds a candlelit dinner table set up... She walks a bit further to find Henry busy in the kitchen. Charlotte calls for him, Henry turns and apologizes to Charlotte. He explains how he realized his behavior has been unacceptable – everything is on the line if he loses this case – Asa’s reputation, his clinic and the people he serves as well his family... everything has become real for Henry. He then talks about how he is undeserving of her... “Any other woman would have walked out on him...” Charlotte says this is the first time she has seen him expressed concern for someone else other than himself... He kisses her lips and asks for her help...

Henry studies the trial document and suddenly, he looks at the tangled balls of the Newton’s desk toy, closes the file and untangles the strings...

In the hospital, Charlotte teaches Asa theatre acting exercises to loosen him up. She hands him a page of dialogue and has Asa read it out loud. She has him read it out loud again and then again, and again, and again...

At a restaurant in the city, Ben is interviewing a BUSINESSMAN and takes copious notes. Ben is shocked at this information and asks if the businessman would testify...

In the firm, Patrick and the intern stand by the fax machine trying to send over their material, but the machine is not working. Patrick looks at the intern, “You have your driver’s license, right?”

Henry has all the balls of the desk toy untangled. He pulls one back and lets the gadget lop left and right.

The next day outside the courthouse, Ben and Asa wait by the curb alongside Charlotte. Asa speaks to himself quietly as he recites his lines... Charlotte tells Asa, “You got this.” Sly’s truck pulls up and parks. Henry walks up to his team, says good morning and goes to shake Asa’s hand. Asa ignores him by turning around and walking into the courthouse – Ben tells Henry that Asa does not want to mess up his lines. They all walk up the stairs, but Henry races back down to the grass. He throws up, “I’m good. Just give me a second.”

Henry walks into the courtroom and finds the entire space filled with people... and they are all praying. He comes up to Charlotte to inquire who these people are and learns how she convinced most of Asa’s patients to come support him. Judge Carmichael enters and the last day of court begins. He asks Dr. Sloan about his health and if he can handle the court proceedings. Asa, “Yes, your honor.” Judge instructs Henry to bring forth his first witness. Henry calls Jerome to the stand and asks about Jerome’s occupation – Panther objects due to relevancy as well this subject was covered last time – Henry responds that he is trying to establish motive – Sustained, but Judge, “Son, you are treading on thin ice.” Jerome speaks vaguely about his career as an attorney managing the finances of his clients... “And what was the reason for your disbarment?” Panther objects – Judge wants Jerome to answer the question. Jerome says he was disbarred due to embezzlement. The jury chatters. Judge calls for order. Henry, “And is this the man you stole money from?” points to the businessman in the gallery. Jerome, “I did not steal money.” Henry,

“Isn’t the definition of embezzlement – stealing money?” Jerome, “Yes, but –” Henry, “And Lord knows along with everyone in this town that I know what embezzlement means, so did you unlawfully take this man’s money?” Objection – harassing the witness! Jerome, “It was mine to begin with!” Jerome goes into a short story about his dwindling finances and how Bonnie convinced him to steal... Henry, “And so you concocted a plan to take that man’s money just like you concocted the story about Dr. Sloan lying, is that right?” Jerome now heated shouts and jumps up – causing the bladder pouch to leak and saturate Jerome’s pants. Judge dismisses the plaintiff from the stand.

After the stand is cleaned, the Court continues and the judge instructs Henry to call his next witness. Henry, “I would like to call Dr. Coldstone.” Dr. Coldstone swears in... Henry asks him to recall his prior testimony. He doesn’t, so it is read aloud... Henry notes the part where the doctor keeps referring to ‘the discovery of cancer.’ “Now, Doc, tell me again at what stage was the cancer when Mr. Tumult came to see you?” – Stage three. “Really? Because I remember you saying ‘an extreme form’ of cancer.” – Well, it’s the same thing. “To my understanding there are stages of cancer, so how do you define extreme?” – It was stage three from what I recall... “And what year was it that you found this stage three cancer in Mr. Tumult’s bladder which you removed?” – 1998. “And you thought the cancer had started developing from the year 1995 when Mr. Tumult visited Dr. Sloan, correct?” – Yes. “One last question, you said you would have watched him like a what? A hawk, right?” – Objection. “No further questions.” Judge turns the witness over to Panther for cross examination – she has no questions.

Henry’s next witness is Dr. Winslow. Objection – Panther pleads with the judge for a recess to prepare for this witness. Henry advised that Dr. Winslow is an expert in the treatment of cancer. Judge is irritated that Panther is not prepared for this and overrules, but will allow her to question Dr. Winslow’s expertise on cross examination. Dr. Winslow shares his resume, years of service as a medical professional and the story of a patient... Sly tears up as he watches from the gallery. Henry asks Dr. Winslow to discuss Dr. Coldstone’s findings regarding Jerome... “They are incorrect.” Jury gasps. “Why is that?” Dr. Winslow, “If Mr. Tumult in fact had stage three cancer of the bladder in 1998 this would mean he had untreated stage three cancer in 1995 and if that were true, Mr. Tumult would have been dead before he went to visit Dr. Sloan.” The room starts buzzing with excitement. Judge gavels for order. Henry, “What makes you say this?” Dr. Winslow continues explaining that most tumors in the bladder are considered low-grade which means they are slow-growing and take a long time to develop. “How then would bladder cancer be discovered if it slow-growing?” Dr. Winslow, “Typically there are signs of trouble urinating, pain when urinating, or there is blood in the urine.” Henry, “Then why do you think Dr. Coldstone is stating this?” Objection – speculation – Sustained. Dr. Winslow, “Either Dr. Coldstone does not understand the stages of cancer or he’s lying.” The room explodes with a roar. Judge gavels... Henry, “One last question, doctor. If you treated Mr. Tumult and discovered cancer, would you watch him like a hawk?” Dr. Winslow takes a minute to collect his thoughts... Judge, “Doctor?” Dr. Winslow looks up at the judge, “Sir, I have a back problem. Would you mind if I stand?” Judge, “Go ahead.” Dr. Winslow stands and puts his hands on his hips, “Would you repeat the question, sir?” Henry once again asks, “Would you have watched him like a hawk?” Dr. Winslow, “No. I would watch him like a urologist.” The whole courtroom explodes

with laughter! Henry, “No further questions, your honor.” Judge invites Panther to cross... she asks for a brief recess... Judge breaks for lunch.

The diner is packed, but Henry hangs out in the courthouse as he reviews the file... his flip phone rings. He exits and walks down the hall to meet with his intern who presents him with a document about the findings of their handwriting expert. Henry looks at it and realizes the significance of this information... they hear voices down the hall and hide... Henry looks over and finds Panther coaching Bonnie...

Later, in court, Henry puts Bonnie on the stand and asks about her in-person meeting with Dr. Sloan, “For clarity, you said Dr. Sloan did not tell you about the cancer, correct?” – Yes. “Did Dr. Sloan tell you about the discovery of blood in your husband’s urine?” – No. Henry nods and presents a document to the court, “Your honor, I would like to submit this into evidence, exhibit D: *a decipher of chicken scratch* found on exhibit A: Jerome’s physical. Panther objects but the judge allows it. Henry has Bonnie read it out loud... “Blood in urine – consult urologist.” The room rumbles... Henry, “Mrs. Tumult, did you write this when you had your in-person meeting with Dr. Sloan?” – Bonnie looks at Panther – No, I did not. Henry pulls out exhibit C: the sign-in book, presents it to Bonnie and points to her signature. “Now our handwriting expert pointed something out to us... if you look at the letter B in both Bonnie and Blood, they match.” Panther objects – argumentative, but Henry continues to point out how all the letters in her name match the shape and penmanship of the decipher... Judge hits his gavel for order... Bonnie is in tears. “Did you write this while in the presence of Dr. Sloan!?” Bonnie continues to cry... “Did Dr. Sloan do his job!?”

Charlotte screams, “Henry!” Everyone turns to her... water is on the floor – “The baby is coming!” Charlotte is helped by the Jewish mother and others as they escort her out of the room. Henry explains to the Judge that that is his wife and he must go – Ben will take over from here! Asa grabs him and tells him to stay... Henry, “I have faith in you, doc.” Henry exits and Ben calls Asa to the stand...

Intercut: Courtroom and Hospital – Asa gets up and walks to the stand. Judge, “You do realize you are still under oath, doctor?” – Yes, sir. Charlotte is sat on the bed and goes into labor... Ben asks Asa to talk about himself. Asa describes how long he has been a doctor, and has an office practice which has a clinic providing medical care for patients who cannot afford it... Charlotte holds Henry’s hand as the hospital staff conduct the delivery of the baby... Ben asks Asa if he told Bonnie about the discovery of blood. Asa takes a moment, his legs shake. Charlotte’s legs shake... Asa breathes, Charlotte exhales... Asa says, “I am uncomfortable here as I am a doctor, not an attorney. I don’t know what else to say, other than to look the jury in the eye and testify under oath, so help me God, I told Mrs. Tumult about the blood in the urine which she then wrote down on her husband’s report.” Charlotte screams... Judge gavels...

As everyone awaits the jury, Ben flips open his phone under the defense desk... on the other line is Henry. The jury enters, reads the verdict, and finds in favor of Dr. Asa Sloan! The gallery jumps and cheers. Asa hugs Ben and Panther exits the room, Ben asks Henry on the phone if he

heard it? Henry has a sigh of relief, hangs up, and is told by a NURSE that he can go see his baby. He exits the waiting room...

Fade to: Sunrise over Beaverkill bridge... Text fades in and out: Six Months Later

Henry runs through the bridge, waves at Sly fishing along the river with Elvis, and past the forest of trees... He runs through downtown; the townspeople and Dr. Winslow say good morning to him as Judge Carmichael reads a newspaper with Henry featured with the headline: *Local Lawyer Saves NY Doctor!*

Cut to:

Down the street of the quaint looking neighborhood of kids playing baseball and couples walking their dog, Henry runs up along the curb of a house saturated by trees. A MAILMAN walks from the house who nods at Henry as he loads up in his mail truck. Henry nears the front door, sees a small box along a 'welcome home' mat, and opens it. Inside is a beautiful Bible with his name, 'HENRY BALDWIN' imprinted onto the cover's corner. He removes it and finds Asa's necklace marking the chapter of Esther. He smiles. Charlotte comes out with a BABY BOY in her arms. She asks what he got. Henry simply turns and passionately kisses Charlotte. She tells him breakfast is ready. Henry follows her in the house with the book and closes the door behind him.

Fade to black: The end.

Text fades in: "This is a work of fiction. Any similarity to persons living or dead, settings or actual events is purely coincidental."