

Our Son
By: Serge Kushnier

Cast of Characters

JANICE KING (40s & 60s) Midwestern suburban mother. Wife of Miles King, mother of Noah King.

MILES KING (40s & 60s) Midwestern suburban father. Husband of Janice King, Father of Noah King.

NOAH KING (18 & 38) Midwestern suburban teenager. Son of Janice and Miles King.

911 OPERATOR, INTERVIEWER, GUARD, CATHY (this actor will play all four roles) (30s-40s) female.

Setting and Time*

Prologue: Duluth, Minnesota. Phone call heard in complete darkness. 1993.

Scene 1: Duluth, Minnesota. Suburban living room of Janice and Miles King. Winter, 1995.

Scene 2: Duluth, Minnesota. Suburban living room of Janice and Miles King. Winter, 1995.

Scene 3: Minnesota. Inside a car on the highway. Winter, 1995

Scene 4: Faribault, Minnesota. Visiting area of Faribault Minnesota Correctional Facility. Winter, 1995.

Scene 5: Faribault, Minnesota. Parking lot of Faribault Minnesota Correctional Facility. Winter, 1995.

Scene 6: Duluth, Minnesota. Suburban living room of Janice and Miles King. Spring, 1996.

Scene 7: Duluth, Minnesota. Suburban living room of Janice and Miles King. Summer, 1996.

Scene 8: Duluth, Minnesota. Suburban living room of Janice and Miles King. Fall, 1996.

Scene 9: Faribault, Minnesota. Parking lot of Faribault Minnesota Correctional Facility. Fall, 1996.

Scene 10: Duluth, Minnesota. Television introduction in complete darkness. 2015

Scene 11: Duluth, Minnesota. Suburban living room of Janice and Miles King. 2015

Scene 12: Minnesota. Inside a car on the highway. 2015.

Scene 13: Faribault, Minnesota. Visiting area of Faribault Minnesota Correctional Facility. 2015.

Synopsis: Noah King has just been convicted of murdering his younger brother, Brady, and is sentenced to life in prison. Noah's parents, Janice and Miles, are steadfast in their belief of Noah's innocence. Friends and family of the Kings are not as certain, isolating Janice and Miles from the rest of the world. As Janice and Miles fight to prove Noah's innocence and find the "true killer" they are also fighting to keep their marriage alive. It's a struggle to live their lives with any sense of normalcy. There is no greater test of a marriage than the loss of a child. How will Janice and Miles survive losing both?

OUR SON

ACT I

In complete black.

911 OPERATOR

You need to listen. Is he breathing?

NOAH

No! I don't... Brady!

911 OPERATOR

He's not breathing?

NOAH

No. He's um... I don't know. There's so much blood. I gotta call my mom.

911 OPERATOR

Stay on the phone with me. Don't hang up.

NOAH

He isn't breathing. What did I do? I need to call my mom.

911 OPERATOR

No. Don't hang up. Did you do something to Brady?

NOAH

I just tried to get the blood out of his mouth.

911 OPERATOR

Is he choking? Is Brady choking on blood?

NOAH

No.

911 OPERATOR

Is there still blood in his mouth?

NOAH

I can't tell anymore.

911 OPERATOR

Okay. Best you don't touch him until we get there.

NOAH

Okay. Sorry.

911 OPERATOR

That's alright. We're almost there. Stay on the phone. What's your name?

NOAH

Noah.

911 OPERATOR

What's your last name Noah.

NOAH

King. I don't think he's breathing. I think he's dead.

911 OPERATOR

Is there anyone else there?

NOAH

I don't see anyone. I don't want to look. He's just lying there.

911 OPERATOR

Okay, Noah. I can hear the sirens. We're almost there. I'm just going to the other line for a minute. Don't hang up. When they come in, let the paramedics do their job, alright?

NOAH

Okay.

911 OPERATOR

They're going to help your brother. Just hold on, Noah.

NOAH

Okay.

LIGHTS UP ON:

SCENE ONE

It's 1995.

MILES KING and JANICE KING sit in their living room on a love seat facing a television camera.

The interview is projected behind them as it would be seen on television.

The INTERVIEWER is only seen on that projection.

INTERVIEWER

That was a portion of Noah King's 911 phone call he placed over two years ago. He was just sixteen years old. Noah was recently convicted of first degree murder of his brother and sentenced to life in prison

Lights up on the upper corner of the stage where Noah KING sleeps on a small cot in his prison cell.

The prison cell is raised several feet above the stage.

INTERVIEWER

Noah and Brady's parents Miles, and Janice were kind enough to speak with us tonight. Mr. and Mrs. King, thank you for having us in your home.

JANICE

You're welcome.

MILES

We're just hoping this will help.

INTERVIEWER

What do you mean "help," Miles?

MILES

Help us find justice. Find the truth.

JANICE

Our son was found guilty of a crime he did not commit. Until he's cleared of all charges and is once again free, justice won't have been served.

MILES

Not too mention finding Brady's killer or killers. This is something people too quickly forget. There's a murderer walking around somewhere right now. Free.

JANICE

We've already begun the process of appealing the ruling and we're confident our son will be out within the year.

MILES

Once they reexamine the minimal amount of evidence the police found.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think the Duluth police department made mistakes in the investigation?

JANICE

Absolutely--

MILES

Whether or not they did isn't what we need to be focused on. We can't go back. We can only work with what they did find.

JANICE

The police did make mistakes but nothing compared with what the media has done.

INTERVIEWER

The media? How so?

JANICE

They spread lies.

INTERVIEWER

That's a strong statement.

JANICE

Brother killing brother. "Cain and Abel in Duluth" was one of the headlines the next day. He hadn't even been arrested yet.

MILES

Presumed innocent is the law. He was labeled guilty from the start.

INTERVIEWER

Are you saying you think the jury was swayed by the media?

MILES

I don't know. But if that's even a possibility then everyone working for those news organizations should be ashamed.

JANICE

They villainized our son before he was given a fair trial.

MILES

The news has become more about spouting off opinions rather than reporting facts. It's disgusting.

INTERVIEWER

I can't speak for my colleagues--

MILES

No. I'm sure you can't.

INTERVIEWER

Why don't you talk directly to the public. What's one thing you'd want them to hear?

JANICE

That we need support. We've lost more people than just our son.

INTERVIEWER

What do you mean by that?

JANICE

We have neighbors on this block who treated this entire thing like a witch hunt. Neighbors we've had over for New Year's believing he was guilty before the trial even began. They knew Noah. They know us and even still they believed what the media was spewing.

MILES

We haven't talked to some members of our family for over a year.

JANICE

They refuse to. That's what happens. This is what happens when people lie. They destroy lives. Families.

INTERVIEWER

You obviously believe your son is innocent but some of the evidence found seems to point toward the contrary. What are your thoughts on the incriminating facts?

MILES

Facts?--

JANICE

The *fact* is Noah was a sixteen year old boy when this happened. He found his younger brother brutally murdered and unknowingly touched the wrong things. That's it.

INTERVIEWER

So Noah unknowingly tampered with evidence?

MILES

Come on--

JANICE

It's words like "tampered with" that make him sound like he did something wrong. He was sixteen. He didn't know what he was doing when he saw Brady bleeding to death. He was just scared.

INTERVIEWER

As anyone would be. What about the 911 phone call?

JANICE

He called 911 immediately. If he was a cold blooded murderer, why would he call the police to try and save his brother's life?

INTERVIEWER

Noah said quote, "What did I do?" Don't you think could that come across as confusing to an outside observer.

MILES

Jesus Chri--

JANICE

At that point he was holding his dying brother and like he said in court and on the recording, he didn't know if he was breathing. This is what our *child* was dealing with. His little brother bleeding to death. He was in shock.

MILES

The only thing that's clear on that tape is Noah was terrified his brother was going to die. He didn't want his brother, who he loved, to die.

(MILES looks at JANICE. She's in tears)

MILES

Could we stop for a bit please. I-- Can we just stop. Please. I'm sorry. We'd like to stop now. If that's alright.

INTERVIEW

Of course. I want to thank you both again for taking the time to speak with us. Mr. and Mrs. King. Thank you and I hope you find peace.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE TWO

LIGHTS UP ON:

JANICE packs a few things into a duffle bag. MILES walks in and watches JANICE.

Noah sleeps in his cell.

MILES
They aren't going to let you give him all that.

JANICE
I'm bringing it.

MILES
We should start moving if we want to get ahead of the snow. Three hours, sweetheart.

JANICE
Did you see the newspaper?

MILES
Yeah.

JANICE
It said we looked like we were covering for him and lying. Lying about what?

MILES
I know, dear. I read it.

JANICE
What part did we lie about? Doesn't even make sense.

MILES
People already believe he's a killer. There's nothing we can do about public opinion.

JANICE
I would never have agreed to do the stupid thing if I didn't think it would help Noah's case. Who's to say we look one way or the other? We were just talking about what happened.

MILES
I told--

JANICE
Don't you dare, Miles.

MILES
I wanted to--

JANICE

I know what you wanted. The attorney thought it was a good idea too. Did you go to law school? I'm sure Karen Lancaster has already written about it in her stupid news letter.

MILES

Who cares? She's obviously starved for attention. Don't give it to her.

JANICE

I'm not giving her anything. I'm just saying they did it again.

MILES

Who did what again?

JANICE

The god damn media. Spinning it, or whatever.

(JANICE packs the newspaper in the duffle bag)

MILES

You read it already. What are you doing?

JANICE

I'm bringing it for Noah.

MILES

Can we get going? Faribault. Come on.

(JANICE searches the closet)

MILES

They have papers at the prison.

JANICE

This way I can give it to him just in case.

MILES

They have access to news. I'm sure if he wanted to read the news he's allowed to read the news.

JANICE

You don't know. Maybe someone else took it and he didn't get it. Maybe he forgot.

MILES

"Forgot." Even if he doesn't get the newspaper, he doesn't need to see that.

JANICE

He can decide.

MILES

It's going to start snowing while we're on the highway. Three and half hours. If we get delayed because of the weather who knows if we'll have enough time.

JANICE

If it's going to snow it's going to snow.

MILES

I'd just like to get going please.

JANICE

I know. Alright... Let me just check his room really quick.

MILES

Janice, visiting time is only for a few hours.

(MILES takes the newspaper out of the
duffle bag and scans it)

MILES

They're not going to let you bring him half of this stuff.

(JANICE runs back in, holding a basketball
trophy)

MILES

They're definitely not going to let you bring that.

(She takes the newspaper back from MILES)

JANICE

I'm bringing it. He should be able to decorate his room.

MILES

Cell.

(JANICE puts the trophy and paper in the
duffle bag)

JANICE

If they don't let me they don't let me. But I'm bringing it.

MILES

Can we please get going?

JANICE

Yes. Alright... I'm just going to go to pee. Three and a half hours. I know you're not going to want to stop.

(JANICE goes to the bathroom)

MILES

Did you pack any pictures?

JANICE (OFF STAGE)

What?

MILES

Pictures.

JANICE (OFF STAGE)

I can't hear you. Hang on.

(Flush. JANICE comes back out)

MILES

Did you pack pictures?

JANICE

PICTURES!

(JANICE runs to the other room.)

MILES

Damn it.

(JANICE flies back into the living room
holding a bunch of framed pictures)

JANICE

Should I leave them in the frame?

MILES

I don't think they'll let him have a frame.

JANICE

"I don't think they'll let him have this. I don't think they'll let him have that." So, he'll tape them up in his room.

MILES

Cell.

(JANICE starts to take the pictures out of the frames)

JANICE

They'll give him tape. I'm sure. What could someone actually do with tape? Maybe there's a ledge or something... Look at this one.

(JANICE holds up a picture for MILES.
MILES is staring out the window. Snow)

MILES

And. It's snowing.

JANICE

The two of them. Think it's Brady's twelfth birthday.

MILES

Mm hmm. Can we go?

JANICE

He didn't want the music to be slow. Kept saying. "No slow music." He was persistent. Do you remember that?

MILES

Yeah.

JANICE

We got him... um.

MILES

Raiders Starter jacket.

JANICE

Right! The jacket. He looks so happy.

MILES

I would have been happier if it was Vikings.

JANICE

He was such a happy little boy. Wasn't he?

MILES

Yeah.

JANICE

I think Noah will like this one.

MILES

Yeah, Hun. We'll bring more next week. We should really get going.

JANICE

It was so weird.

MILES

What was?

JANICE

The music. I remember him screaming at Noah about not playing slow music.

MILES

Didn't want to have to slow dance. He was petrified of having to dance with someone.

JANICE

Right. Well, they look really happy in this picture. I think Noah will be happy to have it in his room.

MILES

Cell, Janice. It's not a room.

JANICE

I KNOW, MILES!

(They put on their coats. JANICE turns off
the light and opens the front door)

JANICE

Cells are for criminals. It's Noah's room. For now until he leaves. Just another room.

(JANICE leaves. Miles follows.)

SCENE THREE

MILES and JANICE sit in their car. MILES drives.
JANICE reads the newspaper in the passenger seat.

MILES

Why keep reading it?

JANICE
It's just so infuriating.

MILES
Exactly. So stop reading it.

JANICE
Whatever.

(JANICE squirms in her seat)

MILES
Really?

JANICE
I'm fine.

MILES
We're not even halfway.

JANICE
Did I say anything?

(JANICE squirms again. MILES simply
glances at her)

JANICE
I'm FINE!

MILES
Why didn't you go when I got gas?

JANICE
I sorry my weak bladder isn't up to your standards.

MILES
I'll pull off at the next rest stop.

JANICE
Thank you. The snow is at least pretty. Don't you think?

MILES
Uh huh.

JANICE
Do you think he has a window? Would he be able to see it?

MILES

Not sure. Probably.

JANICE

I'm sure he does.

MILES

Yeah I'm sure... See that?

JANICE

The sign?

MILES

Yeah. We can stop there and grab a coffee. Can you make 10 miles?

JANICE

I think I'm just nervous.

MILES

I know, dear.

JANICE

I hope we get to hug him. I just really wanna know the rules.

MILES

We'll find out soon enough. I'm sure we can hug him.

JANICE

I'm not.

MILES

Well, you know Noah. He might not want us to.

JANICE

Remember when he was at home for the house arrest and you'd sit too close to him on the couch.

MILES

"Mom, he's doing it again. MOM!"

JANICE

You'd just keep sliding closer and closer the more he'd complain.

MILES

He'd squirm more than you are now.

JANICE

It feels weird to say but I really liked having him stuck there.

MILES

Me too.

JANICE

Knowing we had him all to ourselves. Like when he was little.

MILES

He'll be home again soon.

JANICE

I know. But then he'll move out. He won't just *be there*. Ya know? I really liked it... Maybe he'll get an apartment close by.

MILES

It's Duluth, dear. Where ever he is. He'll be close-by.

JANICE

Come over for Sunday dinner.

MILES

That'll be nice.

JANICE

What do you think the food is like there?

MILES

At the prison?

JANICE

Yeah.

MILES

To be honest. Probably not great.

JANICE

Right. Of course.

MILES

He's fine. He eats anything. I'm sure he's fine.

JANICE

Yeah. You're probably right.

(JANICE squirms)

MILES

8 miles. You can do it!

JANICE

I'll see if I can get a list of the rules for us while we're there. If I can bring food. Ya know?

MILES

I don't know about bringing food.

JANICE

Yeah. But maybe... It doesn't matter though. You're right. It's not for long. He can eat anything. He'll be fine. We'll get him back soon and force him to come over every Sunday for dinner.

MILES

Absolutely.

JANICE

We'll just pretend like this is our Sunday dinner. For now every Sunday when we go see him. Start the tradition now and then he'll have to do it.

MILES

Perfect. I love it.

SCENE FOUR

MILES and JANICE wait at a small metal table wearing stickers that read VISITOR. Noah walks from his cell to the visitor area. When he enters the visitor area a loud steel door closes behind him.

A GUARD stands in the corner.

MILES and JANICE both stand. JANICE hugs Noah for too long.

GUARD

That's enough, King.

(JANICE lets him go. MILES gives him a quick hug and they all sit)

JANICE

How are you feeling, sweetheart?

NOAH

It's... I don't know. It's... bad in here.

(Noah starts to cry. JANICE reaches across the table to hold Noah's hand)

GUARD

No touching the inmate.

(JANICE recoils)

JANICE

I'm sorry. I know, Sweetheart. We're going to get you out soon. I promise.

MILES

Your mother's right. This isn't forever.

JANICE

We've already filed the post trial motion.

MILES

Mom brought some pictures. The guard said you could have pictures.

JANICE

They have to give them to you. I had a bunch of other stuff but they wouldn't allow it. Your division championship trophy. We'll just keep it in your room for when you get home. Did you watch the interview?

MILES

Janice.

JANICE

What? Did you watch it? Could you watch it?

NOAH

I don't have a TV. There's one in the rec room but we're not in there at night.

JANICE

What about the newspaper?

NOAH

Yeah. I read that.

MILES

Janice. We don't have to talk about it.

JANICE

Maybe he wants to talk about it.

MILES

Just let him be, dear.

NOAH

Dad, It's fine. I read it.

JANICE

We just told the truth and they said we looked like liars. It's so ridiculous. Maybe because everything looked fake with the lights and cameras and... I don't know.

NOAH

I don't know why you guys would do an interview at all.

MILES

We thought it would be a good idea.

JANICE

The lawyer said it would be good. For you.

NOAH

The lawyer doesn't know SHIT.

MILES

Son. Take a deep breath--

NOAH

NO! HE SAID HE'D GET ME OUT! WHAT THE FUCK AM I DOING IN HERE!?

GUARD

SETTLE DOWN, INMATE.

MILES

It's hard, Son. I know it's hard. Look at me please... Noah. You need to be strong and we'll be strong. We're going to find who did this and you're going to come home.

NOAH

Yeah.

JANICE

The drive wasn't too bad. Your father even let us stop to get coffee halfway. There's a cute little diner. Reminded me of one of those old movies. The ones with the formica counters and little old ladies pouring coffee for truckers. Very cute. Might stop for a bite on the way home.

MILES

I'll make sure to put more money in your commissary account when we leave. Is there anything else you think you'll need? We'll see if we can bring stuff. If you think of something.

JANICE

I'm sure they allow some stuff. We just need to learn the rules.

NOAH

It's Brady's birthday next week.

MILES

Yeah.

JANICE

Hey. That's the picture I brought.

NOAH

What?

JANICE

The picture the guard's going to give you is from his twelfth birthday. You and him at his first boy-girl party.

NOAH

He got really mad at me when I kept playing slow music.

JANICE

You remember that too. That's so funny. Your father said he didn't want to have people slow dance.

NOAH

Yeah.

JANICE

Must have been some girl there he liked and was embarrassed or something.

NOAH

I don't think so.

JANICE

I wonder what it was then.

NOAH

No, you're right. He did want to dance with someone.

MILES

Noah.

JANICE

I'm confused.

NOAH

He was embarrassed that he wanted to dance with someone but not who you think.

JANICE

I can't remember any of the girls. I wouldn't know even if you told me.

NOAH

Boys, mom.

MILES

Noah. That's enough.

JANICE

What?

NOAH

He wanted to dance with one of the boys, mom.

JANICE

No. What are you saying?

MILES

Noah, stop.

NOAH

How have you still not told her?

JANICE

Told me what? Miles, what is he talking about?

NOAH

Gay. Mom. Brady thought he was gay.

JANICE

No. What are you even saying. He wasn't gay. I didn't raise either of you that way.

NOAH

He came out to Dad after that Thanksgiving and then me. Claimed he was gay.

JANICE

That's a horrible thing to say. Stop this immediately.

NOAH

It's the truth. Ask Dad.

JANICE

Miles?

MILES

There's nothing to talk about. Just... Noah cut it out. We don't have a lot of time here.

JANICE

I don't know why you would say something like that. It's disgusting.

NOAH

Whatever.

JANICE

Your brother wasn't gay.

NOAH

Ok, Mom. Whatever.

GUARD

Visiting hours are over in 2 minutes. Say your good-byes.

MILES

That was too fast.

JANICE

We'll be back next weekend.

MILES

That's right. Next Sunday.

JANICE

I'll ask the guard at the front if there's anything else I can bring. Is there anything you want?

NOAH

No. Not really.

(They all stand and give each other hugs
goodbye)

MILES

We'll bring you something for your room.

NOAH

It's a cell, Dad.

(Noah leaves. MILES and JANICE watch as
a loud steel door closes behind him. MILES
and JANICE put on their coats)

JANICE

What did you say to him?

MILES

What? Who?

JANICE

Brady. When he told you. What did you say? Why did he tell you and not me? And why didn't you say something?

MILES

He made me promise not to say anything.

JANICE

With our sons there are no secrets.

MILES

It didn't feel right. And then everything with the trial and Noah. It wasn't something I thought we needed to talk about.

JANICE

I'm glad you feel like you get to decide what we need to talk about.

MILES

The only thing that's important is getting Noah out of this place.

JANICE

We're not going to be able to if we're lying to each other.

MILES

I've never lied to you. I made a promise to Brady. I was respecting his wishes.

JANICE

What about respecting me?

MILES

He was scared he might lose you. He loved you.

JANICE

So he was scared of me.

MILES

No. That's not what I'm saying-

JANICE

I could have talked to him about it. We could have figured out how to fix it.

MILES

That's not... He didn't need...

JANICE

I just want to go home.

MILES

Ok.

SCENE FIVE

JANICE, wearing shorts and a T-shirt, runs from the front door of her living room to the kitchen entrance while holding a stuffed sleeping bag over her shoulder.

The sleeping bag is obviously very heavy and precarious. She attempts to carry it in different ways. Every time she makes the attempt she stops and writes something in her notebook.

MILES comes in from outside wearing a T-shirt. He sees JANICE in mid run.

MILES

What the hell are you doing?

JANICE

Hi, Hun. How was work?

MILES

Janice, what are you doing?

JANICE

Research. I don't think it was possible to carry Brady from the front door to the kitchen in the time they said Noah did it. It had to be two people.

MILES

What's in the sleeping bag?

JANICE

Wet laundry. I tried just a bunch of blankets at first but it wasn't heavy enough. I put the wet clothes in a bunch of garbage bags and taped them up so I wouldn't get the floor wet, don't worry.

MILES

That's not what I'm concerned about.

JANICE

I know it looks pretty strange but I'm trying to get as much extra information as I can for our meeting with the lawyer.

(MILES walks to the dining room table
which is covered with paper work)

MILES

What's all this?

JANICE

Notes. Information.

MILES

When did you do this?

JANICE

Started this morning when you left for work.

MILES

Did you not go to work?

JANICE

There were no drag marks from here to the kitchen. So the killers had to dead lift him, right?

MILES

Janice.

JANICE

Noah couldn't have done that. Actually lift him alone? Whether Brady was fighting back or completely unconscious. There's no way.

(JANICE attempts different grips for lifting
the sleeping bag up from the ground. MILES
stares in disbelief)

JANICE

A hundred pounds of dead weight? Impossible

MILES

Stop it.

JANICE

Noah heard fighting or a loud bang that woke him up, right? The bang. When Brady's head hit the side table. Then Noah heard that thump in the kitchen from the top of the stairs. They must have heard Noah, dropped Brady, and run out.

MILES

JANICE, STOP!

JANICE

What?

MILES

Did you go to work?

JANICE

No.

MILES

Why not?

JANICE
I quit.

MILES
What?

JANICE
I quit.

MILES
What are you talking about?

JANICE
I called in and said I wasn't coming to work anymore. Charles understood. I think.

MILES
Why would you-- We didn't discuss this.

JANICE
It wasn't up for discussion. I couldn't be there anymore and I needed to focus on this.

MILES
What is this?

JANICE
Research.

MILES
It's not research. This is fucking insane.

JANICE
Miles, don't talk like that.

MILES
We can't afford for you to quit your job right now. The legal bills alone.

JANICE
I'm not going back to work.

MILES
You need to.

JANICE

I can't go back. How do you not see how important this is? Who's going to do this if I don't?

MILES

Our lawyer? And I don't even know what this is.

JANICE

I think we can do more. I'm going to do more.

MILES

What do you think? I'm not doing everything I can?

JANICE

You're doing what you think you can for our son and I'm doing this. I'm not going to waste my time and energy at the office when I can be here. Doing this.

MILES

I'm making money to pay for the lawyer. We need money to pay for our lawyer. You need to make money with me so we can afford to pay our fucking lawyer.

JANICE

I'm not going to talk to you if you speak like that.

MILES

What are we going to do then? We can't afford--

JANICE

I can't go back. I can't see those people. I can hear them from my desk, in the break room.

I can feel them staring.

MILES

I'm sure they aren't staring at you.

JANICE

You don't know. They stare. All the time. I'm sorry, dear. I can't push it away like you.

MILES

It will change. People will come around once Noah is exonerated.

JANICE

I'll go back to work when that happens. Please. I need you to understand.

MILES

I'm not at your office... I want to support you but this... is too much. *This* looks insane... It's not healthy.

JANICE

That's not support.

MILES

I'm scared for you. This black hole you're going down.

JANICE

Anything I can do for my son is helpful. I can't go to work but I can do this. I'm not going to work until this is done. Until our son is home.

MILES

We can't let our emotions get the better of us right now. We have to stay focused on things we can control.

JANICE

You can't tell me how I should be acting. Or feeling.

MILES

I'm not.

JANICE

What makes you believe by going to work and pretending that everything is normal, that you're better off?

MILES

I don't pretend that everything is normal. I go to work and I make money to pay for the lawyer and I miss my sons. That's all I do. I mean, Jesus fucking Christ, Janice.

JANICE

STOP TALKING LIKE THAT!

MILES

You're locking yourself up with Noah.

JANICE

I am with Noah. I'm always with Noah. And I need to figure out how to get us both out. This is how I know how to do that.

MILES

What if this motion isn't granted. What then?

JANICE

How could you say something so horrible?

MILES

I'm being realistic. Noah was sentenced once and the odds of them hearing this and believing they were wrong the first time aren't good. All we can control is having a good lawyer. He'll do all he can.

JANICE

How can you believe something like that?

MILES

How can I be the only one who does? I'm going to follow what the lawyer and his team tells us to do. I'm going to trust that he'll find a way of freeing our son. I'm going to make money to pay a man who knows far better than I do what we can do to get our son out. That's how I know how to deal with this.

JANICE

You're the sane one and I'm a lunatic. I get it now. Thank you for making it so clear. Thank you for being such a realist.

MILES

I am being realistic.

JANICE

You're giving up.

MILES

Fuck you.

(MILES pours himself a whiskey then sits in
the living room and turns on the TV)

JANICE

If we need money I'll find us money. We'll refinance the house if we need more. I'm sorry you can't see what this is for me. I'm warming up last night's lasagna for dinner.

SCENE SIX

CATHY stands downstage behind large window. We can only see her through that window. Behind her is a suburban kitchen. She's doing dishes at the sink.

Blackness completely surrounds the window and separates it from the King's living room. Cathy's phone rings.

JANICE walks into the living room holding a cordless phone.

CATHY dries her hands and answers her phone.

CATHY

Hello?

JANICE

Hello. Hi, is this Catherine?

CATHY

Yes.

JANICE

Hi, it's Janice King.

CATHY

Oh, Janice. Hi! Please call me Cathy.

JANICE

Sorry, Cathy. You always signed your letters Catherine. I just assumed.

CATHY

I just liked the way it looks better in my writing. I'm so vain.

JANICE

No no. I totally understand. When I changed my name to King I couldn't stop singing my maiden name. Just looked nicer, "Janice Johnson." The alliteration of it felt better. King always seemed so short and blunt looking. Miles didn't like that. So that was that. Plus someone rejected a check once.

CATHY

I've actually noticed you like alliteration in your letters. They're really beautiful. Almost poetic.

JANICE

Aw. Thank you, Cathy.

CATHY

I'm so glad you called.

JANICE

Thank you for agreeing to talk. Your letters have just been a God send. You have no idea.

CATHY

Oh, It's so nice to hear you say that.

JANICE

I'm really not exaggerating. Your letters have meant more to me than all the other words of empathy over the past two years combined.

CATHY

And yours. You ask the questions that I've been asking people for years never getting the right answers. But you asking me finally made the answers clear... Like a giant mirror showing me what I needed to hear. Oh God. I sound silly. I'm sorry, does that make any sense?

JANICE

YES!! Our letters make me feel normal. Writing you is the first time since all of this began that I haven't felt completely insane telling someone what I was thinking. I feel like I can just say how I feel and not edit anything, you know?

CATHY

Yes. I feel exactly the same way.

JANICE

It's shown me, since Noah was arrested, that someone could understand what was going on in my head. Of course it made me sad that you were suffering in the same way but commiserating is incredibly therapeutic.

CATHY

I'm smiling right now and for the first time in years it doesn't feel forced. Literally looking at myself in a mirror in the front hall. It feels strange and so great.

JANICE

Me too! I mean smiling, not the mirror.

CATHY

I told you I was vain.

JANICE

Stop. You're too funny. Even talking with my husband. Not the same thing. Does that make me horrible? I love my husband.

CATHY

No. It doesn't make you horrible. How is your relationship holding up by the way?

JANICE

Um...

CATHY

Oh my God, I can't believe I just asked you that. Completely none of my business.

JANICE

What? You're crazy. After everything you've told me in your letters? No. Ask away. I was just trying to figure out how to answer.

CATHY

How so?

JANICE

I'm not really sure I even know. It's just very different.

CATHY

Different?

JANICE

I guess it started right after Noah was convicted and it keeps changing.

CATHY

Right.

JANICE

I love him. I really do love him but sometimes it feels... I don't know. Feels like a layer of our romance has been stripped away. Loving each other is always going to be there at the core. We'll always *love* each other.

CATHY

Yeah. Andrew and I were rocky at the best of times. I can't even say we'd still be together otherwise. We didn't stand a chance when Jason was convicted.

JANICE

I'm sorry.

CATHY

Don't be.

JANICE

I do feel lucky I have Miles.

CATHY

That's great.

JANICE

It is. But it's like what we used to be is on hold or something.

CATHY

I understand.

JANICE

But I can't even really feel sad about it because all my sad feelings are being taken up with missing Brady and Noah. There's no sad left in me. I'm empty for everything else.

CATHY

Mm hmm. That makes so much sense to me. What does Miles think?

JANICE

Think about our relationship?

CATHY

I guess. Yeah. Does he ever talk to you about how he's feeling?

(JANICE laughs)

CATHY

Sorry. Dumb question. He's a man.

JANICE

No. I mean. Yes, he's a man and hides how he's feeling but Miles is a special case. He's practically a ninja about hiding things. I sometimes fantasize. Wait maybe fantasize is the wrong word here. Um. No I'm gonna use fantasize. I fantasize that Miles has an entirely different family where he acts completely opposite. Where he shares everything about how he's feeling with his other wife and tries the opposite with me. Like some kind of social experiment.

CATHY

That's dark.

JANICE

Oh. I'm sorry.

CATHY

What? No. It's hilarious. You don't actually think Miles would cheat.

JANICE

Oh God no. He's not that way. That's why it's a weird fantasy. Fantasy makes it sound like I want it to happen. I don't but it's a funny thing to imagine.

CATHY

I like to imagine Andrew being hit by a car, is that the same thing?

JANICE

Oh gosh.

CATHY

God this feels good to talk like this. I can't joke anymore.

JANICE

You're very funny. I didn't know.

CATHY

Thanks. It's not that I'm not always sad but I sometimes want to make a joke, maybe out of instinct but then I stop because I think someone's going to judge me for having fun. Like they see the mother of that murderer making jokes. "She must be a monster."

JANICE

You think that's how people see you? The "mother of that murderer?"

CATHY

Absolutely. I know Jason is innocent but that's how the world sees me now. No doubt.

JANICE

I try to explain that to Miles. He didn't think it was true or thought I should just ignore it like he does.

CATHY

Push it down. Pretend it's not happening.

JANICE

Exactly. That stiff upper lip crap. Going to work made me feel a thousand times worse everyday, so I quit.

CATHY

I didn't have a job but lord knows I stopped going to the pool and forget about my acting classes.

JANICE

I *knew* you were an actress.

CATHY

No no. I'm not. It was a community acting class for loser adults.

JANICE

Oh geez.

CATHY

We did improv and like sang old musical songs together. Tap danced. Hardly an actress.

JANICE

Well, it sounds fun.

CATHY

It was but when I went back, about six months after Andrew moved out, they all stared.

JANICE

Ugh. The staring. I HATE the staring. And they think we don't know they're doing it.

CATHY

It feels like you're an exotic zoo animal or something. I snapped at a couple of them and they asked me not to come back. Not like I wanted to after that anyway.

JANICE

What do you do now? For work?

CATHY

Well, Andrew pays alimony but I work part time in telecommunications. By the way this call will cost you fifty dollars.

(JANICE laughs)

JANICE

Maybe I need to go to laughing therapy. This feels great. Maybe you could become a laughing therapist. Is that a thing? I think it's a thing. If not you should make it a thing.

CATHY

Ok.

JANICE

I can't stand our therapist. She constantly sides with Miles. He seems level headed to her or something. He always says the calm well adjusted thing. But I think that's worse than saying you feel crazy and mad and paranoid and sad at the same time. I just end up crying and shutting down. She wants me to try and get back to my normal routine.

CATHY

Bitch.

JANICE

Oh lord.

CATHY

Too much?

JANICE

No you're right. She is a... bitch.

CATHY

There ya go. What a crock though. Normal routine?

JANICE

Yeah. What is normal about any of this?

CATHY

Do you ever call Miles out on that?

JANICE

Like how I think he's faking it?

CATHY

Yeah.

JANICE

I used to. I mean. It's not like he isn't emotional at home or when we're with Noah, but then he puts on this weird armor when he walks into the real world. And now he's sometimes like that at home too.

CATHY

I can't imagine living with someone again. Now. Not being able to act how I want in my house. Ugh.

JANICE

I can't stand when he tells me what I say or do is "wrong."

CATHY

Does he say "wrong?"

JANICE

No, but the judgement and the passive aggressive stuff is there. I know he thinks I'm doing it wrong. Whatever that means.

CATHY

That's frustrating.

JANICE

Yeah... And I think that's him pulling up the driveway. I should let you go.

CATHY

We need to talk again soon.

JANICE

I'm calling you tomorrow.

CATHY

Perfect. But let's start a serious conversation about planning a visit. Face to face.

JANICE

I would love that. It was so great to finally talk. Hear your voice.

CATHY

Absolutely. Just lovely.

JANICE

Take care, Cathy.

CATHY

Buh-Bye.

SCENE SEVEN

MILES watches a football game on the TV. He's drinking a beer.

Noah is in his jail cell. He sits on the edge of his cot staring forward. They both seem to be watching the football game.

It's present time and they are in different locations but somehow they are able to talk to each other.

It's a fantasy or day dream.

MILES

I think losing Tony Dungy as our defensive coordinator might be the reason. Vikings just can't get good field position.

NOAH

It's Warren Moon's fault. Not the defense.

MILES

Come on.

NOAH

I know Moon's your guy but you can't argue the stats. He threw three seventy seven for six hundred and six last year. Rushed thirty-three times for eighty-two yards. He'll be lucky if he makes half that this year.

MILES

I don't think it's his fault. We're missing Fernando Smith.

NOAH

I'm telling you dad, it's not the defense. Moon's crapping the bed. He's gone next season. I predict that--

MILES

NO!!

OH!!!

NOAH

NOAH

Not Moon's fault? How many interceptions is that?

MILES

Yeah, yeah. I was thinking, maybe I can get Mr. McClesky to give up a couple tickets for next week's game. He still has season tickets for the family but rarely goes anymore. I'll ask him at work Monday.

NOAH

That'll be fun.

MILES

What about that Jessica McClesky.

NOAH

What about her?

MILES

You know. What do you think about her? She's cute.

NOAH

Not sure you're her type, Dad.

MILES

Why don't you ask her out?

NOAH

I can't exactly take her to a movie right now.

MILES

Right.

NOAH

Pretty sure she's dating that Nick Schmidt guy.

MILES

Nick Schmidt? That sounds made up. Don't be a wimp, you're a King. Everyone wants to be with a King.

SEAN

We're Royalty.

MILES

We're Royalty.

NOAH

Never gets old.

MILES

My team's getting crushed.

NOAH

If they'd just cut the fat and get rid of Moon, we'd stand a chance next year.

MILES

Next year. I'm talking about this year.

NOAH

This year is over.

(MILES cracks open another beer)

MILES

I saw your mother crying at this commercial last week.

NOAH

The McDonald's one?

MILES

Yeah.

NOAH

It's a good commercial.

MILES

It's a commercial. They're selling hamburgers. Who cries at a hamburger commercial? Or any commercial.

NOAH

She has other things on her mind. Don't you think you're being a little hard on her?

MILES

I didn't say anything... when she was crying... At a *commercial*.

NOAH

I don't mean about the commercial. Just in general.

MILES

I'm not being hard on your Mother.

NOAH

When she quit her job?

MILES

That's not something you need to worry about.

NOAH

I just think she's having a harder time dealing with all of this than you are.

MILES

It's no picnic for me either, son.

NOAH

I know. I just don't think she can handle other people like you.

MILES

I don't know. She's a tough woman.

NOAH

Maybe she isn't as tough as she'd like you to believe.

MILES

Remember when the three of us would watch the games in the back yard?

NOAH

Drive-in football.

MILES

Drive-in football.

NOAH

Brady's idea. That kid had strange ideas.

MILES

Yeah. Great ones but always a little weird, you're right. God damn it Moon, don't try to run the ball.

NOAH

It's like he's completely forgotten how to play the game.

MILES

Drive-in football... Ah geez, I miss him.

NOAH

Me too.

MILES

Your mom's out at his grave right now.

NOAH

Why didn't you go with her?

MILES

Sometimes she likes to go alone. I understand. I do the same thing. Gives us a chance to talk to him one on one.

NOAH

Do you ever talk to him about me while you're there?

MILES

Sure. Mostly just to say how you're holding up. I talk to him here a lot more now though. Just around the house. Never when your mom's home.

NOAH

I talk to him too. When I'm out in the yard. You can hear everyone in the cells. Don't want people to think I'm crazy. Well. Crazier than they already do.

(The lights flicker. The TV turns off. Miles turns the TV back on)

NOAH

What was that?

MILES

We're getting these weird brown outs. That crazy wind storm downed a bunch of lines so I think that's it. Damn TV turns off every time it happens.

NOAH

Is it just our house or is the neighborhood?

MILES

Don't know. I haven't asked anyone. I don't exactly talk to the neighbors anymore.

NOAH

What a bunch of assholes.

MILES

I used to think that, then I tried to think how I would be if the tables were turned.

NOAH

What about the Lancasters? They were really good friends of yours. You wouldn't cut your friends out of your life like them.

MILES

It's hard to say. I'd like to think I wouldn't.

NOAH

Their kids are couple dick heads, but you wouldn't think they could kill someone. How can they think I could? Let alone my brother?

MILES

I know. But I've had a lot of time to think about it. I've tried to really put myself in other people's shoes. After everything and as much as I believe your innocence, you're my son. There's a conflict of interest.

NOAH

So you only believe I'm innocent based on a conflict of interest?

MILES

No. I believe you're innocent because you're my son and I know you better than I know anyone on this planet. That's the conflict of interest. No one knows you like I do. I *know* you didn't do it.

NOAH

I guess you're right. Mr. And Mrs. Lancaster didn't exactly know me but--

(The lights flicker. The TV turns off.)

NOAH

Wow. That's really annoying.

MILES

Tell me about it. And I think Moon just threw a complete pass.

(MILES turns the TV on again)

MILES

Nope. He did not.

NOAH

The Lancasters. They didn't really know me but... to believe I could kill Brady?

MILES

I know. It's impossible thing to take yourself out of. How do you separate yourself from knowing your family and look at it from an outside perspective? So I pretend like it's the Lancasters kids who went through this. I try to think about how well I know them. Then I try to think about the lack of evidence in your trial and how they accused you. I take everything from your case and I put it on someone else's family. The Lancasters or the Pitts. Anyone with kids around your age.

NOAH

Yeah and what happens?

MILES

That's the thing. I don't know if I'd be able to completely believe them. Believe they're innocent. I don't know their kids. I don't know what goes on in their houses. Just like they can't be inside my head. They don't know you. Based on that and how there is no other visible evidence that one of the kids didn't do it. I just don't know--

(The lights flicker. When they stop Noah is
lying down in his bunk)

MILES

Does that make me as bad as them?.. Noah?..

SCENE EIGHT

JANICE and MILES sit in the prison visiting room. They seem more depressed than usual both staring into the distance.

Noah slowly walks to the visiting area. The steel door slams behind him. They all sit in silence for an uncomfortably long moment. The GUARD stands in the corner.

JANICE

We brought you a quilt Aunt Carly sewed for you. You told her it can get cold? You wrote her back, she said. That's nice. I gave it to the guard.

MILES

Happy Halloween.

JANICE

We brought some candy too but not sure they'll let that through. That Chavez guard is usually really nice and lets us bring stuff like that but he wasn't here today.

NOAH

They transferred Chavez.

JANICE

Oh. Well I'm sure the new guy will be nice too.

NOAH

Yeah, they're just a bunch of nice guys in here. Everyone's so nice, mom.

(JANICE stares at Noah's wrists. Noah aggressively pulls his sleeves and holds them up for JANICE and MILES to see. He has bandages on both his arms)

MILES

What happened, Noah?

NOAH

Having to explain to you how I feel while I'm in here literally makes me want to throw up. How am I suppose to explain how I felt and why I did it? You're not in here. You have no idea.

JANICE

No we don't. That's why you need to talk to us, dear. We want to hear everything. As bad as it is. We want to hear everything.

NOAH

That's fucking ridiculous. You have no idea what you're saying.

MILES

Son, your mother's right. If you talk to us about stuff we'll be able to say something. Get you help. Figure out how to make something better.

NOAH

You can do jack shit for me in here. I finally stood up for myself and some fucking guard smacked me.

JANICE

What's his name?

NOAH

It was a woman guard and it doesn't matter. I was angry about the appeal. She said some crap and kind of pushed me and I pushed her back and then I got sent to fucking solitary for a month.

MILES

All they tell us is that "inmate King was physical with a corrections officer and was sent to solitary." What you did doesn't sound that bad.

NOAH

This is what I mean.

JANICE

What, dear?

NOAH

You have no idea what it's like in here. Why they do things. How they treat us.

JANICE

Of course we don't but--

NOAH

Jesus. Having to explain to you what I did when I did it makes me more angry than when it's actually happening. You can't understand anything.

JANICE

You hurt yourself, Noah.

NOAH

Who cares?

JANICE

I CARE. YOUR FATHER!

GUARD

Lower your voices!

MILES

Noah. This isn't-- We can't pretend to know what it's like in here but trying to...

NOAH

The fucked up part is if you hurt yourself in solitary they punish you with more solitary. Two weeks for causing physical harm to one's self.

MILES

I'm getting the lawyers involved.

NOAH

No. I don't want the god damn lawyers involved.

MILES

This isn't right, Son. We aren't going to let them do things like that.

NOAH

This is how it works. You can't DO ANYTHING. This is what you don't understand. Why don't you fucking get it? This is my life now. THIS!

(Noah shows his bandages again)

NOAH

Just leave. I don't want you here. Guard?

(Noah stands)

JANICE

Noah, don't go like this. Please sit down.

NOAH

GUARD.

(Noah starts to leave and MILES grabs his arm)

MILES

Son, sit down. Stop and sit down.

NOAH

Let go.

(MILES pulls Noah down quickly and Noah is forced to sit)

MILES

Sit down. You're not allowed to do this. We're you're parents and you're not allowed to do this to us.

NOAH

To you!?

MILES

YES, god damn it. To us!

NOAH

This is my life.

MILES

You are *our* life. If you don't want to talk to us right now. That's fine. We'll just sit here. But you are sitting here until that corrections officer tells us visiting time is over. Then we'll be here next Sunday and every single god damn Sunday until you are out of here.

NOAH

I'm never getting out of here.

MILES

That's your opinion.

(Noah starts to stand. Miles quickly and aggressively pulls him back down)

NOAH

The guards are going to throw you out.

(Noah tries again and again MILES pulls him down)

MILES

So they throw me out.

Let me go. NOAH

Sit. MILES

Dad, let me go. NOAH

I'm not going to let you leave us. MILES

Let go of the inmate, Sir. GUARD

Dad. Stop. NOAH

Let go of the inmate. NOW. LET GO OF THE INMATE NOW! GUARD

(MILES holds Noah down by the arm. Noah can't get up. Noah can see in his father's eyes he's not letting go. He looks over at the guard and back at his dad. Finally Noah stops struggling. MILES puts his hands up)

That is your last warning. GUARD

I'm sorry. Sorry... What you don't understand, Noah. Is I don't care about that guard. I don't care about my life or what happens to me. You don't understand that you are the only thing that matters. They can cut off my god damn right arm to let you go... and make no mistake I'll still be holding onto you with the left one. I'm--We're never letting you go. MILES

BLACKOUT

SCENE NINE

(Projected on a screen) A series of television commercials are shown in a montage as if someone is flicking through different channels trying to pick a station.

The commercials start from products in the early nineties and progressively move forward in time to the year 2015.

Sporadically a news story about a famous murder case will pop up between commercials. I.E. O.J. Simpson, the Menendez brothers, JonBenet Ramsey, Scott Peterson, etc.

The channel surfing stops on The Interviewer in a television studio. She speaks directly to camera.

INTERVIEWER

We continue our "*Where are they now*" retrospective with a story about a family torn apart by murder. It was the story that flooded the headlines back in the winter of 1993, just over twenty years ago. Headlines that read "*Cain and Abel of Minnesota.*" Their real names, of course, were Noah and Brady King. Noah was charged at sixteen with murdering his younger brother, Brady, who was just thirteen. Noah was subsequently convicted two years later. We had the opportunity to talk with their parents Miles and Janice King just after Noah was given a life sentence. Join me now in Duluth, Minnesota and find out "*Where are they now.*"

LIGHTS UP ON:

MILES KING and JANICE KING sit in their living room on a love seat facing a television camera. Their home has been updated and redecorated.

The interview is projected behind them as it would be seen on television. It's 2015.

The INTERVIEWER is only seen on that projection.

Noah's prison cell is empty.

INTERVIEWER

Mr. And Mrs. King. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us again.

JANICE

Of course. Thank you for coming back to Duluth.

INTERVIEWER

A parent's worst nightmare. Losing a child. I can't imagine anything more painful.

JANICE

It hurts everyday. We miss our son everyday.

INTERVIEWER

It's been twenty years since we spoke and I wonder if you could give us a brief idea of what life is like now for your family.

JANICE

I'm not sure how to summarize the last twenty years but--

INTERVIEWER

Of course. Maybe if you could tell us what's changed the most.

JANICE

I would have to say after my book was part of Oprah's Book Club, things definitely changed.

INTERVIEWER

Your book entitled "Locked Up With Noah." Not only part of Oprah's Book Club but a New York Times best seller. Very impressive. And I'm sure bitter sweet.

JANICE

Thank you and yes. It was finally a chance to tell our side of the story. I think it was the first time people really understood what happened to our family. I believe that shifted public opinion to something a lot more positive. Wouldn't you say, dear?

INTERVIEWER

Miles, how have things changed for you personally?

MILES

I retired. So, I'm home now.

JANICE

We have a lot more time for our foundation and that gives us a chance to really be a part of making a difference. Personally helping those we intended on helping.

INTERVIEWER

You're speaking, of course, about the Noah King Foundation. Why don't you tell us a little about that.

JANICE

Noah King foundation dot org. It's our nonprofit aimed at helping families that have, themselves, been victimized by our flawed judicial system. Getting these families the support and funds they need to give their loved ones a fighting chance. Something that we don't think Noah got and many others still aren't getting.

INTERVIEWER

Speaking of Noah. Just for our viewers and those who don't know, where is he right now?

MILES

The same place he's been the last twenty years. F.M.F.C. Faribault Minnesota Correctional Facility.

(Noah enters his cell. He's thirty-eight.)

INTERVIEWER

In our interview in '95 you said "Noah was innocent." Do you still believe that today?

JANICE

Of course.

INTERVIEWER

In your opinion. Why is he still in prison?

MILES

Our lawyer was terrible.

INTERVIEWER

Your lawyer. Richard Caplan? You're blaming him?

JANICE

No but-- I believe Noah's still in prison in large part because of Richard and his team's negligence.

INTERVIEWER

That's a strong statement.

JANICE

We wasted years and unbelievable amounts of money with Mr. Caplan only to have him lose what little chance we had to get our son out.

INTERVIEWER

Did you get a new trial?

MILES

No.

JANICE

Kind of. After years of hard work the judge looked at, but basically rejected, everything that Caplan put together.

INTERVIEWER

(reading)

Failure to establish lack of motive, failure to provide a basis for admission of possibly exonerating and failure to seek nuclear DNA testing of an unidentified hair found on Brady's body.

MILES

Actual facts rejected. It wasn't Noah's hair or Brady's. Not a family member. That's a fact. So whose was it?

INTERVIEWER

Whose indeed. Noah declined to be interviewed but could you tell us a little about his mental state?

JANICE

Well I'd--

MILES

He's alive and has been in prison for more than half his life. That's really all we can say on behalf of our son.

JANICE

He's steadfast in continuing the fight for his innocence. The fight for justice and to be free.

INTERVIEWER

Mr. Caplan passed away fifteen years ago, correct?

MILES

That's right.

INTERVIEWER

In your book you speculate he was ill during the time of Noah's trial and that was partially the reason he failed to get the acquittal?

JANICE

We never knew for sure Richard was sick then but we suspected.

INTERVIEWER

Why would that matter?

MILES

The term is “ineffective assistance of counsel.” Noah was deprived of his constitutional right. Richard made mistakes. Huge mistakes.

INTERVIEWER

Like what?

JANICE

The biggest was not getting certain forms to the court in time. Weeks of work wasted because we missed a due date.

MILES

He missed a due date. Hundreds of billed hours wasted. Once you miss it. That’s it. It’s over. He was a crook.

INTERVIEWER

So you regret trusting him?

JANICE

We made the best decision we could at the time... did our best. We also haven’t given up the search for Brady’s real killers. We’ve enlisted the help of retired NYPD homicide detective Mr. Ken Snider. He’s helped several other families with similar situations to ours.

INTERVIEWER

No one can deny the love you have for your family... We wish the best for you and Noah.

MILES

Thank you

JANICE

Thank you

INTERVIEWER

Thank *you* once again, Mr. and Mrs. King, for having us, and thank you for sharing your unbelievable story. Up next Susan and Sharon; conjoined twins and the surgery that changed their lives forever.

LIGHTS FADE

LIGHTS UP ON:

SCENE TEN

MILES enters from the kitchen drinking a cup a coffee. He slowly makes his way across the living room to his chair by the window. He sits and reads the paper.

JANICE flies in the front door wearing jogging clothes, and earbuds.

Her cell phone rings with a Facetime call. JANICE checks her phone as CATHY enters the *black box* area behind her window.

CATHY'S wearing her pajamas. JANICE answers the call with her earbuds still in.

JANICE

Hi Cat.

CATHY

You just run?

JANICE

You know it.

CATHY

How do you think it went?

JANICE

The interview?

CATHY

Duh.

JANICE

If I was to say... with all honesty? I think we came across great. What do you think?

CATHY

I loved it. So poised. I'm sure Noah is proud.

JANICE

Yeah.

CATHY

Did you see the book numbers?

JANICE

Yeah. There was a huge spike on the Kindle sales.

CATHY

Cha-Ching. Time for a new car.

JANICE

Ha. Yeah right. Maybe enough to buy a new bicycle... It'll be great for the foundation.

CATHY

Absolutely. So great. I've been trying to organize the e-mails a little better. Stuff we need to answer and stuff we can just store for later.

JANICE

Mostly positive or?

CATHY

Totally. Of course there are still some quacks. But...

JANICE

Can you make sure the website has an update about the interview? Put a link or something. I'm sure it's on YouTube.

CATHY

Of course. When do you guys head to Faribault?

JANICE

Later this afternoon.

CATHY

Great. Tell him "happy birthday" from me.

JANICE

Will do. Have you heard from Jason lately?

CATHY

Not for a couple weeks. I saw on Instagram he's at some yoga place in the desert.

JANICE

Great.

CATHY

I guess.

JANICE

Did you ask him about that interview with The Herald? For the foundation?

CATHY

I haven't brought it up yet.

JANICE

Really?

CATHY

I know. It's just. He's just not that interested in talking about that anymore. It's hard you know?

JANICE

Right. Of course. I understand. They've just been asking.

CATHY

He doesn't like talking about the past.

JANICE

I know. Neither does Noah. I don't want to make him uncomfortable...

CATHY

I'll ask though. I'll... Next time he calls I'll bring it up. You know he loves you guys. I know he'd do anything he could to help. It's just...

JANICE

That would be great if you could. It would mean a lot to Noah. I think with all this new press and the possibility of the second book it could really help us raise awareness.

CATHY

Yes. No. Of course.

JANICE

Great. Thank you, Cathy.

CATHY

I was thinking about finding an intern. Maybe a college student. Someone younger who could help our social media presence. And with website stuff.

JANICE

Oh. My. God. I love that idea.

CATHY

I'll post something on Craigslist. I'm sure we could find a ton of people who want to work with us after that interview.

JANICE

You're so right. Perfect. Let's touch base after you do that and see where we're at. I'm gonna go shower.

CATHY

K, sounds good. Love you.

JANICE

Love you too. Bye Cat.

(JANICE hangs up)

JANICE

When do you think you can go pick up the cake?

MILES

We can just get it on the way out to Noah.

JANICE

I spoke with Superintendent Rutledge and they know we're bringing it. Told him I'd give the guards some if Noah could have a piece. They'll have to cut it and stuff but they said he can have a candle on his to blow out. Like last year.

MILES

Okay.

JANICE

That was Cathy on the Facetime. She said the foundation e-mail has been flooded since last night. She was talking about bringing in an intern for all of our social media, and like technical stuff. What do you think?

MILES

Okay.

JANICE

I think having a young person running a Twitter and being in charge of the website. Updating pictures and information. It'll just be cleaner. To have just one person take care of that so we can focus on the bigger picture.

MILES

Uh huh.

JANICE

You should see Twitter today, though. We're trending. I have dozens of new followers. Hashtag Noah King. It was the most action my Twitter page has seen yet. Some bad but a lot of positive support stuff.

MILES

Trending. Great.

JANICE

It just means a lot of people were using that hashtag and linking to other people's posts. It's good because it brings new followers... I was thinking about last night. The twenty years. I think that could really interest people. Or be interesting to people. What do you think?

MILES

I guess.

JANICE

I just mean. People seem to really be interested in a "where are they now" story. Like all those thirty- thirty things you watch on ESPN.

MILES

Thirty for Thirty... What are you saying?

JANICE

I tell our story of where we are now. Like what the interview was but really get into what our lives are like. Talk about how Noah's changed about what could have been. That kind of stuff. What life is like for us.

MILES

Seems kind of exploitative don't you think?

JANICE

I'll talk about it with Noah, obviously. I was just thinking with all this momentum it could really bring some new awareness and much needed funding. Not to mention the new investigation.

MILES

Mr. Snider doesn't need P.R. Don't you think people have heard enough from us?

JANICE

I don't even know what that means, Miles.

MILES

Okay.

JANICE

"Okay." That's quickly become your favorite word. What does it even mean "people have heard enough from us?" People need to hear from us. So they can hear the truth.

MILES

Okay.

JANICE

Obviously you don't think it's "okay" Speak, Miles.

MILES

You don't want to hear what I have to say.

JANICE

Yes. I do. I asked.

MILES

We can search for the truth without it being a circus.

JANICE

Publicity means more support, which means more help with the foundation.

MILES

More publicity means being more popular.

JANICE

I'm not trying to gain popularity.

MILES

Okay.

JANICE

Even if that is a by-product, who cares? My "popularity" and BOOK helped pay for Noah's appeals. Noah's lawyer. It's my job.

MILES

And you love your job.

JANICE

Yes. I do. Because my job helps our son. You've retired and this is a good source of income.

MILES

How ever you want to justify it.

JANICE

Noah loved my last book. It did nothing but make things better for us.

MILES

It made things better for us? Jesus Christ.

JANICE

I'm sorry if you don't see it that way.

MILES

Is it too much to ask for a little normalcy?

JANICE

You can't see the positive side to this at all?

MILES

Another book? No. I can't. What else is there to write about? What could you possibly say people don't already know?

JANICE

I'll write about how we've never lost hope. How we continue the fight for Noah. That we won't stop. Not until we're dead and gone and hopefully the foundation continues long after that. I'm going to write a follow up book to my first book that was a god damn New York Times best seller.

MILES

A follow up. A "*where are they now.*" Where are we now, Janice? Noah is still in Faribault and we're still in Duluth. You're in our old bedroom and I'm sleeping in the basement. That's a good one to talk about. You're all over the god damn internet. Facebook, Intstagram, Twitter and where am I? Some sort of hell, I suppose.

JANICE

Stop being so melodramatic. You think I like this life?

MILES

Tell me you weren't thrilled to be back on television.

JANICE

You're not going to make me feel bad about that. We raised a ton of money.

MILES

I don't want people peering into our lives. It's not what should be focused on. Use your old book as much as you want to find people to donate. But don't write another one. Please. It's not something I want to be a part of again. We have enough problems here already.

JANICE

It's not going to cause problems for us. Public opinion is--

MILES

I'm not talking about the public, Janice. Problems for us. Here.

JANICE

What does that matter? You're always angry at me anyway.

MILES

No. I'm not.

JANICE

Right.

MILES

I'm really not angry anymore. I've been angry but now I'm just... fine.

JANICE

What a dream life. To be "just fine."

MILES

Yeah well, it's the best I get.

JANICE

I'm trying to move forward. You're stuck. I think we'll get Noah out. Do you...?
But by all means. Bury your head in the sand a little deeper.

(MILES opens the basement door but stops before going down)

MILES

Write what you want. Do what you want. But don't you for a fucking second insinuate I've given up on my son. I breathe and I suffer and I wait... For him... Finding a way to do that in peace is all I ask.

(MILES goes downstairs and closes the door behind him.
JANICE goes to the door and sits on the ground beside it.)

JANICE

Hi. I haven't talked to you in a while. I wish I could see where you are right now. Can you see us? I think you can. We fight. Well, today we did. I don't think it's a bad thing. It's days like today that I know he's still in there. Maybe that's why I do it. When you were little you'd always get so upset if you heard anyone in the house yelling. I think that's why you were always such a happy little boy. Never wanted anyone fighting in the house. You probably don't remember this but when you were five you woke up and heard me and your father yelling. I don't know what we were fighting about. Probably about something dumb like the water bill being too high. I know it's scary to hear your parents yelling at each other but you always thought you could fix it.

That night you somehow scooped us both a bowl of ice cream, God knows how, and you carried the two giant bowls all the way upstairs. You pushed the door open, walked in the room and put the ice cream on the night stand. You were so cute. Didn't say anything. We didn't say anything because we were so shocked to see this tiny little person holding two bowls of ice cream the size of his head.. You never looked at us. Just left and closed the door behind you like a little butler or something. Your father and I started laughing quietly. We ate the ice cream smiling at each other and it was so simple. So perfect. You never talked about it and you never did it again. To be fair I don't think we ever fought in our room like that again, so you changed something. You changed something in our family for the better. At five. It's interesting isn't it? A child being able to do that. But that was you. Right away you were a little person. That sounds dumb I guess. Everyone's a person. But I mean. I think some people are just who they are right away. I know you'd be the same kind of person today if you were still here. I know you'd find a funny way for me and your father to stop fighting or some way to make Noah laugh that we couldn't think of. We needed you so many times in Faribault. That doesn't go away either. Needing you. It's not a bad thing we fight. It's usually me who starts it but I want him to fight. I need him to fight cause it shows me he hasn't disappeared. I know he'll never actually leave because I know I never could. We are the only people on earth who will ever understand each other. As much as I try to explain us to people they'll never really understand. How could they? It's like we've been put on a desert island and all we have is each other. A place where we just have to find a way to be together or we'd be stuck here alone. Forever. I talk to you and of course your brother but it's like... you guys are that desert island. We're stuck with no one around to help. That's just the way it is. He's right, though, you know? The publicity does make me happy. It makes me feel like people don't hate me. I'm just a stupid old woman right? Still wanting people to like me. It's pathetic. Why should I care if they like me? I suppose it numbs the pain. You father numbs his in a different way. Who's to say what's right? I don't know, sweetheart. I miss you, Brady. I miss you and my teeth ache from it. Can you feel that? Can you feel your mother missing you? My love? We're here. We'll be here with you and your brother forever.

(JANICE lies down on the ground and closes her eyes.
The sunlight changes from morning to afternoon.
JANICE gets up and goes upstairs.

SCENE ELEVEN

MILES comes upstairs from the basement and gets his coat from the closet.

JANICE walks down the stairs but stops halfway to look at old pictures of her and her family hanging on the wall.

MILES

We should get going.

JANICE

You once said Brady was scared... Of me.

MILES

I did? I'm sure I didn't mean--

JANICE

You were right. He probably was.

MILES

I don't think so.

JANICE

Scared. This woman isn't me though, right?

MILES looks up at her. JANICE is crying.

MILES

Janice, I don't remember saying that. I'm sorry if-

JANICE

I think about who I was and that's the last way Brady would have known me.

MILES

Ok.

JANICE

He knew me as a hateful ignorant person.

MILES

No. He knew you as his mother and he loved you.

JANICE

This person. He knew me as her. But it's different now?

MILES

Of course it is.

JANICE

I never got to show *him*! I could have made him happy. He would have changed my stupid mind and I would have been proud of him-

MILES

You would have.

JANICE

IT'S NOT FAIR!

MILES sits on the stairs. JANICE touches a photo of Brady and Noah.

JANICE

(quietly)

Married. Grand kids. It's... When is anything ever going to be fair?

MILES

I don't know.

JANICE

I'm lost, Miles. I'm running in the dark and I'm lost.

MILES

That's my fault.

JANICE

No.

MILES

Yes... I'm tired. That's not fair to you.

JANICE

I'm tired too.

MILES

You need to know in my heart... I haven't given up. I'll never give up on him.

JANICE

I know.

MILES

Somewhere along the way we separated down two different paths going the same direction. Our goal is the same but we're so far away from each other that we can't understand why the other person does what they do.

JANICE

Yeah.

MILES

I know you. I know our home. I know this. But out there? I... I don't understand why you'd want to write another book, but maybe that will change.

JANICE

No.

MILES

I--

JANICE

It shouldn't change.

MILES

You should keep writing. You're a great writer.

JANICE

Thank you. I want to. But not about us. I've told the world everything they need to know about us and that's enough. It's enough.

(MILES gets up and gets Janice's coat. JANICE walks down the stairs. MILES puts the coat on JANICE and they leave.)

SCENE TWELVE

MILES and JANICE walk into the prison visiting room. They sit at the table. Three pieces of cake sit on the metal table. One has a lit candle in it.

Noah gets up in his cell and comes down to the visiting area. The steel doors slam behind him.

Noah hugs his parents, sits and blows out the candle.

MILES

Happy birthday, Son.

NOAH

Thanks, Dad. Mom.

MILES

I got your drawing in the mail. You could have just given it to me in person.

NOAH

People like getting things in the mail. Thought it would be better.

MILES

You're right. I love it. Need to find a frame.

NOAH

I saw the interview.

JANICE

Oh.

NOAH

You guys looked good. The living room looks so different. I never thought about it but of course it would look different. In my head it still looks like it did twenty years ago. But that would be stupid if you didn't redecorate in twenty years.

JANICE

I can't even remember what it used to look like anymore, unless I saw a picture.

NOAH

It looks way different. To me at least.

MILES

I'll take some pictures of the back yard. I don't think you've seen the new garden either.

NOAH

Thanks. Yeah. Thanks. That would be great... It was good, though.

JANICE

What's that?

NOAH

The interview. I hate hearing that tape, but it was good to hear about the Foundation and spread the word.

JANICE

Oh. I didn't realize they were going to play the tape before talking to us. I should have asked them not to.

NOAH

It's fine. Just good that people hear about the Foundation. Do some good for other families.

MILES

And ours. Did you read the e-mail from Mr. Snider's office?

NOAH

Yeah.

MILES

It sounds like he's ready to start.

NOAH

I don't want to take away from the other families.

MILES

It's not taking away from anything. What are you talking about?

NOAH

I just don't know that this guy can do what he says.

MILES

He's great. You need to meet him in person. We'll set that up.

NOAH

I'd rather not.

MILES

He thinks the forensic evidence could be a game changer.

JANICE

Mr. Snider is flying out next week again. We're going to have a small press thing. Then we can bring him next Sunday.

MILES

You should talk with him, Noah.

NOAH

Why? He has everything he'll need. There's no new information I can give him.

MILES

He's not a lawyer. He's not going to ask you any questions.

NOAH

I'd just rather not.

JANICE

Okay. That's okay.

GUARD

Visiting hours are over in 2 minutes. Say your good-byes.

(They all get up and hug briefly.)

NOAH

Thanks for the cake.

MILES

Happy birthday, Son.

JANICE

We'll see you next week.

Noah nods and walks away. The sound of the steel doors closing behind him. JANICE and MILES stand and watch him walk away. Once he's in his cell JANICE and MILES walk off stage.

Noah stands staring straight forward. He slaps himself in the face twice. Then sits on his bed and continues to stare forward.

FADE TO BLACK.