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The Trial of Trayvon Martin

A Speculative Drama in Two Acts

by Gary Earl Ross

Based on his short story

“The Trial of Trayvon Martin”

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Member Dramatists Guild

CHARACTERS

TRAYVON MARTIN, 17, African American, tall and slender

GEORGE ZIMMERMAN, 29, Neighborhood Watch captain, white, shorter and heavier

IMANI FAIRCHILD, middle-aged, African American, Trayvon's lawyer

ANITA CORDAY, middle-aged, white, prosecuting attorney

BILLY HOOKS, middle-aged or older, white, seasoned homicide detective

TRACY, middle-aged, Trayvon's father, African American

MICHELLE (MICKEY), late 20s, George's wife, white

RACHEL, 18, Trayvon's school friend, African American

OFFICER MATHER/BAILIFF, gender neutral, OFFICER doubles as BAILIFF

JUDGE NORA WESTLAKE, white, age neutral

ASSORTED VOICES for voiceovers in or between scenes can be prerecorded

TIME and PLACE: February through December, 2012, Sanford, Florida.

NOTE: The play requires a multiple set with movable benches or chairs and other incidental props—potted plants and the like—shifted as needed for scenes.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE: The February 2012 shooting death of teenager Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, and the acquittal of shooter George Zimmerman remain controversial. A fatal confrontation between two leaves a single person to explain what happened. This stage play—using information from the much publicized case—is a wholly fictitious exploration of what might have happened if Martin had been the one to tell the tale. All the characters in this play are fictitious, even those who share names with the living and the dead.

The Trial of Trayvon Martin was first performed April 6, 2017 in Buffalo, New York, at the Manny Fried Playhouse by the Subversive Theatre Collective. The production had the following cast and crew:

TRAYVON MARTIN	Brian Brown
GEORGE ZIMMERMAN	Rick Lattimer
IMANI FAIRCHILD	Shawnell Tillery
ANITA CORDAY	Kunji Rey
BILLY HOOKS	Lawrence Rowswell
TRACY	Leon Copeland
MICHELLE (MICKEY)	Brittany Bassett
RACHEL	Kajana Stover
OFFICER MATHER/BAILIFF	Michael Mottern
JUDGE NORA WESTLAKE	Anna Kay France
VOICEOVERS	Cast members, plus Victoria Perez, Joyce Carolyn, John F. Kennedy, Victor Morales, Michelle Meer, and Kurt Schneiderman
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DIRECTOR	Kurt Schneiderman
STAGE MANAGER	Michelle Meer
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	Mike Doben
SET DESIGN	Chris Wilson
SET CONSTRUCTION	Chris Wilson and Dan Toner
SET PAINTING	Chris Wilson and J. Tim Raymond
COSTUME DESIGN	Maureen Caputo
SOUND DESIGN	John Shotwell
LIGHTING DESIGN	Hasheen DeBerry
DRAMATURGY/PUBLICITY	Justin Smith
ADDITIONAL PUBLICITY	Joshua Smith, Brandon Absher, Mike Fanelli, Austin McLaughlin

Act One

Scene 1

(Lights rise downstage to half to suggest night. There is the sound of light rain falling. In a burnt orange jacket, GEORGE enters upstage, moves through the darkened court room past the bar and sits in a chair midstage right. He looks about, as if watching for something. In a gray hoodie, TRAYVON enters upstage and heads down past the bar to midstage right. He has a bag of Skittles and a can of AriZona watermelon drink in a black plastic bag. He puts the bag into the pocket of his hoodie and takes out a cell phone attached to an earphone. He paces about slowly. GEORGE watches with keen interest.)

TRAYVON

Yeah, I left 7-Eleven. Uh huh. I told you, ten days. No big deal. It's all bullshit.

(Pause.)

Hate that fuckin' school!

(Continuing to talk in pantomime, TRAYVON moves about center stage, smiling, gesturing, and laughing. Meanwhile, GEORGE takes out a cell phone and makes a call.)

GEORGE

Hey, we've had some break-ins in my neighborhood, and there's a real suspicious guy . . . uh . . . Retreat View Circle. Um, the best address I can give you is 111 Retreat View Circle. This guy looks like he's up to no good, or he's on drugs or something. It's raining and he's just walking around, looking about.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Okay, and this guy is he white, black, or Hispanic?

GEORGE

He looks black.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Did you see what he was wearing?

GEORGE

Yeah. A dark hoodie, like a gray hoodie, and either jeans or sweatpants and white tennis shoes. He's . . . he was just staring . . .

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Okay, he's just walking around the area . . .

Looking at all the houses.

GEORGE

Okay . . .

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

(TRAYVON has stopped pacing and is now looking across the stage at GEORGE.)

Now he's just staring at me.

GEORGE

Okay. You said it's 1111 Retreat View? Or 111?

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

That's the clubhouse.

GEORGE

The call dropped.

TRAYVON

I know. Why I call you back.

RACHEL (v.o.)

There's this guy looking at me.

TRAYVON

What guy?

RACHEL (v.o.)

Guy in his truck.

TRAYVON

In his truck? What he look like?

RACHEL (v.o.)

Creepy-ass cracker.

TRAYVON

(Begins to move toward GEORGE.)

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

That's the clubhouse. Do you know what the – he's near the clubhouse right now?

GEORGE

Yeah . . . Now he's coming toward me.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)
Okay.

GEORGE
He's got his hand in his waistband. And he's a black male.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)
How old would you say he looks?

GEORGE
He's got a button on his shirt. Late teens.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)
Late teens. Okay.

GEORGE
Something's wrong with him. Yup, he's coming to check me out. He's got something in his hands. I don't know what his deal is.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)
Just let me know if he does anything, okay?

GEORGE
How long until you get an officer over here?

DISPATCHER (v.o.)
Yeah, we've got someone on the way. Just let me know if this guy does anything else.

GEORGE
Okay. These assholes, they always get away . . .

TRAYVON
Look like he talking on the phone.

GEORGE
When you come to the clubhouse, you come straight in and make a left.

RACHEL (v.o.)
Walk away, Tray. He might be a rapist.

GEORGE
Actually, you would go past the clubhouse.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)
So it's on the left hand side from the clubhouse?

GEORGE

No, you go in straight through the entrance and then you make a left...uh, you go straight in, don't turn, and make a left. Shit, he's running!

(GEORGE stands as if about to follow as TRAYVON moves downstage left.)

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

He's running? Which way is he running?

GEORGE

Down towards the other entrance to the neighborhood.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Which entrance is that that he's heading towards?

GEORGE

(Moving down as TRAYVON moves upstage and off.)

The back entrance . . . fucking punks.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Are you following him?

GEORGE

Yeah.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Okay. We don't need you to do that.

GEORGE

Okay.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

All right, sir. What is your name?

GEORGE

George . . . He ran.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

All right, George. What's your last name?

GEORGE

Zimmerman.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

And, George, what's the number you're calling from?

GEORGE

321-555-3425.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

All right, George, we do have them on the way. Do you want to meet with the officer when they get out there?

GEORGE

Yeah.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

All right. Where you going to meet them at?

GEORGE

If they come in through the gate, tell them to go straight past the clubhouse, and uh, straight past the clubhouse and make a left, and then they go past the mailboxes, that's my truck.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

What address are you parked in front of?

GEORGE

I don't know. It's a cut through so I don't know the address.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Okay. Do you live in the area?

GEORGE

Yeah . . . I . . .

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

What's your apartment number?

GEORGE

It's a home. It's 1950 . . .

(Looking about.)

Oh, crap! I don't want to give it all out. I don't know where this kid is.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Okay. Do you want to just meet with them right near the mailboxes then?

GEORGE

Yeah, that's fine.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

All right, George. I'll let them know to meet you around there okay?

GEORGE

Actually, could you have them call me and I'll tell them where I'm at?

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Okay, yeah. That's no problem.

GEORGE

Should I give you my number or you got it?

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Yeah, I got it. 555-3425.

GEORGE

Yeah, you got it.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

Okay. No problem. I'll let them know to call you when they're in the area.

GEORGE

Thanks.

DISPATCHER (v.o.)

You're welcome.

(Pocketing his phone, GEORGE moves off in the direction TRAYVON has gone. After a moment, TRAYVON enters upstage from the opposite side and looks over his shoulder.)

TRAYVON

Nigger still following me. Gotta try to lose him.

(Looks one way, then the other as GEORGE appears behind him.)

Nigger still behind me.

RACHEL (v.o.)

Run to your daddy's place.

TRAYVON

(Turning to face GEORGE.)

What you following me for?

GEORGE

(An edge to his voice as he grips TRAYVON's arm.)

What are you doing around here?

TRAYVON

(Wrenching free.)

Get off! Get off me, you creepy motherfucker!

RACHEL (v.o.)

Trayvon! Trayvon!

(His grasp broken, GEORGE opens his jacket to show the gun in his belt. TRAYVON swings and connects with GEORGE, who goes down on his back. Skittles, AriZona can, and cell phone hitting the ground, TRAYVON jumps on GEORGE and begins to fight for his life. As they grapple, they roll back and forth, both screaming for help as GEORGE fumbles for his gun and TRAYVON tries to stop him. Lights drop to half, then a quarter. They are close when we hear the shot and see a flash of red light. For a moment neither moves. Then TRAYVON slides off and gets to his feet, breathing hard. GEORGE is gasping for breath, looking wide-eyed and stunned. TRAYVON grabs the cell phone and replaces his earpiece. Momentarily he looks about as if for the drink and Skittles, then just takes off.)

(Blackout.)

RACHEL (v.o.)

Tray!

TRAYVON

(Breathless, fighting tears.)

I'll call you back!

Scene 2

(Lights rise to suggest a home interior. Downstage holds a chair that faces the audience. There is the sound of a door opening, and TRAYVON enters, pulling his hoodie over his head. Balling it up, he crosses and heads off on the opposite side. We hear doors opening and closing, then, after a brief silence, the sound of water running into a sink. Momentarily, TRAYVON reappears. He wears a T-shirt and has a towel around his neck. For a time he paces about, obviously anxious, occasionally wiping his eyes and trying to control his breathing. Then he exits again and the lights fade for a time. When they rise again, he is sitting in the armchair, a glass of water in his hand. We hear the sound of a television program as he stares at the audience. Pointing a remote at the audience, he pushes buttons, and we hear snippets of different programs. Finally, he sets the water on the floor and picks up a video game controller. Briefly, we hear the sound of a shooting game, but he shuts it off quickly, drops the controller, and begins to cry. He uses the towel still around his neck to wipe his eyes. After a moment, he picks up the TV remote and pushes a button. Then we hear the same program we heard at first. TRAYVON simply stares ahead. Presently, he is startled by a doorbell and for a moment just freezes. The doorbell rings again and he rises to go answer it, moving offstage where he entered.)

TRAYVON (v.o.)

Who is it?

HOOKS (v.o.)

Police. We're canvassing the apartment complex because of a shooting.

TRAYVON (v.o.)

I don't know nothing about no shooting.

HOOKS (v.o.)

May we come in, sir? It's important. The shooter may still be in the neighborhood and I need to give you information.

TRAYVON (v.o.)

Just leave it outside the door.

HOOKS (v.o.)

That's not how we do things, sir. We need to know the shooter's not inside and holding you hostage so we can go to the next unit. We're doing this for everybody.

TRAYVON (v.o.)

I'm here all by myself.

HOOKS (v.o.)

I need to verify that for myself, son. If I think you're in danger, I'll have to call for SWAT.

(We hear the sound of a door being unlocked and opened. TRAYVON returns, followed by BILLY HOOKS, in a wet raincoat, and a uniformed POLICE OFFICER. TRAYVON can barely maintain eye contact in the following scene. HOOKS studies him briefly.)

HOOKS

(Taking out a pocket notebook and jotting notes.)

I'm Detective Hooks. What's your name, son?

TRAYVON

Trayvon. Trayvon Martin.

HOOKS

Do you live here?

TRAYVON

Just visiting. My father's fiancée lives here. They went out to dinner.

HOOKS

There was a shooting not far from here about two hours ago.

TRAYVON

I been here since this afternoon, just watching TV.

HOOKS

So you didn't see or hear anything?

TRAYVON

No, sir.

HOOKS

And you're alone now.

TRAYVON

Yes, sir.

HOOKS

People who looked out their windows said they saw the shooter run this way.

Lotta places he could go . . . sir.

TRAYVON

Mind if we look around?

HOOKS

He ain't here. I'll show you the bedrooms and everything.

TRAYVON

Lead the way, please.

HOOKS

(TRAYVON leads HOOKS and the OFFICER offstage, and we hear doors opening and closing. A moment later they all return.)

Thank you. When we go, you make sure you put that chain on the door till your dad and his fiancée get back.

HOOKS

I'll do that, sir.

TRAYVON
(Showing a sliver of relief.)

Excuse me. May I use your bathroom?

OFFICER

I guess.

TRAYVON
(A beat.)

Thank you.

OFFICER
(Goes off.)

A serious thing, this shooting.

HOOKS

Who got shot?

TRAYVON

A man who lives in this complex.

HOOKS

Is he . . . hurt bad?

TRAYVON

HOOKS

Lived in this complex. I'm afraid he's dead. But the killer dropped his gun, so it's only a matter of time till we catch up to him.

TRAYVON

His gun?

HOOKS

Fingerprints. DNA. All that will be on the gun, and if he's in the system . . . Of course, we got a good description from the witnesses.

TRAYVON

Witnesses?

HOOKS

The people looking out their windows after the shot. They saw a guy in a gray hoodie.

TRAYVON

Oh.

HOOKS

And we have a surveillance tape.

TRAYVON

A . . . a tape?

(Just then the OFFICER returns and holds up a blood-stained gray hoodie.)

HOOKS

From the 7-Eleven.

(Removes from his raincoat two clear plastic baggies, one holding a bag of Skittles, the other an AriZona can.)

OFFICER

It was on the bottom of a laundry pile in one corner of the smaller bedroom.

HOOKS

I think you better come with us, son.

(Blackout.)

TRACY (v.o.)

Ms. Fairchild?

IMANI (v.o.)

Yes.

TRACY (v.o.)

My name is Tracy Martin. One of my co-workers gave me your number.

IMANI (v.o.)

What can I do for you, Mr. Martin?

TRACY

A man got killed tonight in my fiancée's apartment complex, and neighbors say police just took my son away in a squad car.

IMANI (v.o.)

How old is your son?

TRACY (v.o.)

Seventeen.

IMANI (v.o.)

Jeez. Where are you calling from?

TRACY (v.o.)

Twin Lakes, in Sanford.

IMANI (v.o.)

All right. I'll need half an hour to get there but you go right to the station and demand to see your son. I'm on my way.

Scene 3

(Lights rise. Downstage left is a simple chair. TRAYVON is seated and looking about. Downstage right are BILLY HOOKS in shirtsleeves and ANITA CORDAY, standing as if outside an interrogation room with a two-way mirror. Throughout the following exchange, they look at him from time to time.)

And he hasn't asked for a lawyer?	ANITA
Not yet.	HOOKS
But he's been talking.	ANITA
Quite a lot. He's seventeen and on suspension from his high school in Miami-Dade. His dad brought him here because he thought it would be better for him.	HOOKS
Only seventeen? He looks older.	ANITA
They usually do. He was talking to his girlfriend when—	HOOKS
What was he suspended for?	ANITA
A marijuana pipe and a plastic bag with residue in it.	HOOKS
He hasn't asked for his parents yet.	ANITA
No.	HOOKS
Mirandize him again. He looks confused, and he's still a minor. I don't want any screw-ups.	ANITA
If you wish.	HOOKS

ANITA

The vic's wife came to the scene and got hysterical. Apparently her husband was some big Neighborhood Watch guy—a captain—so this will be high profile. And you're sure the search was good?

HOOKS

With all due respect, Ms. Corday, I've been doing this since you were in middle school. Yes, the search was good.

(Shows her a picture on his cell phone.)

The bloody fingerprint on the doorknob gave us probable cause, but the boy himself let us in.

(Puts phone away.)

Once we saw him we knew he was the guy on the 7-Eleven surveillance tape. The only thing missing was the gray hoodie.

ANITA

How did you find it?

HOOKS

He led us through the apartment to show us nobody was hiding there. We both noticed a bit of gray material sticking out from the bottom of a laundry pile in a corner. Officer Mathers went back for a closer look. By the way, the candy and drink can are both being checked for latents.

ANITA

All right. Mirandize him again and let him talk. I could use a slam dunk.

(HOOKS crosses to TRAYVON, and ANITA watches.)

HOOKS

Sorry it took so long but my boss can be a real pain in the ass. So where were we? Oh, yes . . . I need to tell you again that you have the right to remain silent and that anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney and if you can't afford one, one will be appointed by the court. Do you understand what I've said?

TRAYVON

Yeah.

HOOKS

And you wish to keep talking, to get your side out there so we understand.

TRAYVON

Yeah. I just want to get everything over with so I can go home.

HOOKS

(Looking toward ANITA and nodding.)

Okay, then tell me again what happened.

TRAYVON

I was coming back from the store and I was talking on my phone and this dude started following me.

HOOKS

For no reason.

TRAYVON

For no reason. I wasn't doing nothing.

HOOKS

Why do you think he was following you?

TRAYVON

I don't know. Maybe he was racist. Or maybe he was some kind of pervert.

HOOKS

So you thought he might pose a danger to you of . . . sexual assault?

TRAYVON

Yeah.

HOOKS

What if I told you he was married?

TRAYVON

That don't mean nothing. Married guys can be perverts.

HOOKS

True enough. So, you tried to get away from him . . .

TRAYVON

And he kept coming, like that old movie.

HOOKS

What movie?

TRAYVON

Terminator.

HOOKS

So he was like a robot?

TRAYVON

Not like a robot but he just wouldn't stop.

HOOKS

So you decided to confront him?

TRAYVON

I stopped and looked at him and said, “What you following me for?”

HOOKS

What did he say?

TRAYVON

He grabbed my arm and said, “What you doing around here?”

HOOKS

He grabbed your arm, and that’s how the fight started.

TRAYVON

Yeah.

HOOKS

Tell me about the Tec 9.

TRAYVON

The what?

HOOKS

The gun. How did you come to have it?

TRAYVON

Wasn’t mine, it was his.

HOOKS

It was his.

TRAYVON

Yeah. He pulled back his coat to show it to me, like he was some kinda cop. That’s why I hit him. I figured if I ran he’d shoot me in the back.

HOOKS

If the gun was his, why didn’t he have a holster?

TRAYVON

I don’t know. It was stuck in his belt.

HOOKS

What if I told you he was a Neighborhood Watch captain? They don’t carry guns.

TRAYVON

Then nobody told him ‘cause he sure as fuck had one! Gotta be registered somewhere.

HOOKS

It’s illegal to maintain a firearms registry in Florida, so unless something else ties the gun to him, it’s yours.

(TRAYVON looks stunned, and HOOKS continues to go at him in pantomime as the OFFICER enters and goes to ANITA.)

OFFICER

Ms. Corday, a man out here says he’s the suspect’s father. He’s demanding to see his son.

ANITA

Stall him for a few more minutes. We’ve almost got everything we need.

(Nodding, the OFFICER exits.)

TRAYVON

(Screaming, scared, crying.)

No, I didn’t try to rob nobody! He was following me! I told you, he was following me!

HOOKS

(Shouting.)

Killing somebody in the middle of a robbery is felony murder in this state! First degree, punishable by death!

(Pauses to regain his calm but is firm.)

It doesn’t matter that you’re seventeen. You can be direct-filed, which means you’ll be tried and convicted as an adult. Then the choice of lethal injection or electric chair will be yours.

(Pauses again, his voice growing softer.)

But if you confess now, before everything goes to total shit, we can do a deal. Save your life.

TRAYVON

(Breaking down, head in his hands, crying.)

I want my father! I want my father! I want my father!

(HOOKS pulls away, leaves him crying, and goes to ANITA.)

ANITA

You almost had him, Billy. His father’s out front. We can get the dad back here and explain the situation and maybe still tie this whole thing off tonight.

HOOKS

What if the boy won’t confess?

ANITA

Then I'll damn well direct-file, and there's a needle in his future.

HOOKS

Be careful of overreach. I've warned you about that before.

ANITA

This is nothing like the Hillenberger murder.

HOOKS

Doesn't matter. A capital case means a jury of twelve instead of six. That's a lot more work. We don't have evidence yet to support felony murder. We still don't know if it's a mugging.

ANITA

The vic called the police to report this thug. Thought he was a robber looking into houses and such. A car was already on the way.

HOOKS

But what if he's just a visiting kid who was trying to find his way back to the right apartment in the dark? What if the gun belonged to the victim? That will make the kid's story plausible.

ANITA

Oh, he saw the gun and decided to take a swing at the guy holding it?

HOOKS

Most people wouldn't do that, but some might. Self-defense is big around here. Stand-Your-Ground is for everybody, not just scared white people.

ANITA

Whose side are you on?

HOOKS

Book him on suspicion and upgrade later, when forensics ties him to the gun. And if you have to direct-file, go for murder two, or manslaughter. It's easier to convince six than twelve.

ANITA

(A beat.)

I'll take it under advisement.

HOOKS

And we need to look into Zimmerman. What else do we know about him?

ANITA

Nothing yet. Get on it, but remember, he's the victim here.

(Just then the OFFICER leads in a casually dressed TRACY and smartly dressed IMANI onstage. IMANI crosses directly to ANITA.)

IMANI

Ms. Corday, Mr. Hooks, this is my client, Mr. Martin. His son's interrogation is over.

ANITA

Nice to see you too, Ms. Fairchild.

IMANI

And I expect a copy of any audio or video recording of this interview—with a minor—delivered to my office by eight tomorrow morning.

ANITA

Of course. And you will see for yourself young Mr. Martin was duly Mirandized but chose to tell his story. In fact, he asked for his father only a moment ago, and the questioning ended.

(A beat.)

Anything else?

IMANI

An attorney-client meeting room.

(Blackout.)

TRACY (v.o.)

Sybrina, it's Tracy. I hate to call so late but there's been some trouble . . .

SYBRINA (v.o.)

Trayvon! Is Tray okay?

TRACY (v.o.)

He's not hurt but he got in a fight and . . . and the man he was fighting . . . is dead.

SYBRINA (v.o.)

Oh, Jesus Lord! My baby!

TRACY (v.o.)

It was an accident. I didn't want you to hear it from somebody else or the morning news.

SYBRINA (v.o.)

What happened? Where is he? You with him?

TRACY (v.o.)

I'm here with him at the police station and I got a lawyer.

What lawyer?
SYBRINA (v.o.)

Imani Fairchild.
TRACY (v.o.)

Fairchild? I heard of her. Ain't she that woman whose husband and son—
SYBRINA (v.o.)

Yes.
TRACY (v.o.)

She'll be expensive.
SYBRINA (v.o.)

We'll work all that out later.
TRACY (v.o.)

I need to get dressed.
SYBRINA (v.o.)

No. There's nothing you can do right here, right now. I'll call you soon as I know something definite.
TRACY (v.o.)

What am I supposed to do in the meantime?
SYBRINA (v.o.)

As I recall, you put a lotta heart into your praying. Might be good to do that right about now.
TRACY

Scene 4

(When lights rise the interview chair is now center stage, with another chair added. TRAYVON and TRACY are seated as IMANI paces about.)

TRAYVON

That's everything I told him. Sorry I said so much, Miss Fairchild. I didn't know.

IMANI

That's all right, Trayvon. It's not your fault. If schools taught civics the way they used to, you'd understand your basic rights.

TRACY

What now?

IMANI

I won't know how much we're hurt until I see the video.

TRAYVON

All I did was tell the truth. That dude was following me, and it was his gun, not mine.

IMANI

Even if it was, that may not be enough. From this point on, you talk to nobody about this but me.

TRAYVON

Okay.

IMANI

And, Mr. Martin, that includes you. No talking to police or the press. *No comment* is now your daily affirmation. Say it like it's your favorite prayer. And that goes for your fiancée and your former wife. Clear?

TRACY

Clear.

IMANI

If the gun was his it shouldn't be too hard to prove. His DNA should be all over it, and traces of gun oil should be on his hands and belt. Somebody should remember him from a shooting range. I'll put my investigator on it.

(A beat.)

Trayvon, people who *can* talk to the press would be your friends and classmates and teachers, people who can start to build a picture of you as a typical teenager. If there are any old ladies who had you carry their groceries or cut their grass, that would be great. Mr. Martin, maybe you can check out some of your son's friends. Get them ready to talk after your *no comment*.

TRACY

Will do.

IMANI

Now the girl you were talking to on the phone . . .

TRAYVON

Rachel.

IMANI

Rachel. I'll interview her too, but *she* can't talk to the press because she can testify about what she heard. If she visits you, you'll be watched so neither of you can talk about what happened.

TRAYVON

I understand . . .

(Seems worried, uncertain.)

I don't want Rachel to testify.

IMANI

Why not?

TRAYVON

She kinda country. Creole. Some people think she talk funny.

IMANI

I don't understand.

TRAYVON

She always had trouble in school. People make fun of her. People *like* to make fun of her. I don't want that.

IMANI

She may be the only one who can support your story.

TRAYVON

Rachel is my friend. I don't want nobody to hurt her feelings.

IMANI

Trust her to tell the truth and trust me to protect her as much as possible.

(For a moment no one speaks.)

TRACY

How long will it take to go to trial?

IMANI

I hope it won't come to a trial. Trayvon hasn't been charged yet, but they have to get him before a judge within 24 hours. He's a juvenile, so it's called a detention review hearing. But they may charge him as an adult. There's a chance—probably slim—that the evidence will support a claim of self-defense or accidental death, which might make this all go away.

(TRAYVON chuckles.)

IMANI

What's so funny?

TRAYVON

You said slim. That's what they call me, on Twitter. Slimm, with two m's.

IMANI

You on Facebook too?

TRAYVON

Yeah.

IMANI

I'll have to check out how you come across on social media. I just hope there's nothing there that'll make you look bad if we do go into court.

TRAYVON

I got a right to get online.

IMANI

Now you know something about rights. Where's your phone?

TRAYVON

I left it charging by the TV.

IMANI

Nobody brought it in?

TRAYVON

Not that I know of.

IMANI

Who pays the bill?

TRACY

I do. I got it so I could talk to Tray while I'm on the road.

IMANI

Okay, Mr. Martin, when we're done here, get the phone and call me. We need to go through the pictures and texts.

TRAYVON

Hey, that's my stuff!

IMANI

Your stuff might help them kill you.

(A beat as that sinks in.)

They'll want to paint a picture of you as a tough street kid that doesn't give a shit about life. They don't have to paint a masterpiece to make the jury see you that way. But if you give them pictures and texts that fit the scenario, their job's as easy as painting by numbers. That's why I want your father to delete anything that might be prejudicial.

(To TRACY.)

Do the same with any computer your son used.

TRACY

But isn't that tampering with evidence or something?

IMANI

You've been watching too much *Law and Order*. Technically, it's your phone and it hasn't been tagged as evidence in a crime. It would be obstruction if you removed something you knew was pertinent. If you saw a text that says George Zimmerman must die . . .

TRACY

Was that his name? George Zimmerman?

IMANI

Yes. Either one of you ever hear of him before?

TRAYVON

Unh uh.

TRACY

No.

IMANI

Then I don't expect you to find a text or a picture relevant to the case. Delete the things a prosecutor would *like* to be relevant: obscene gestures, nude pictures, any talk about sex or drugs or drinking, and other things that would shock great-grandmothers, like song lyrics and gun pictures and excessive tattoos and piercings. Keep the call logs and any pictures taken at school. Keep any goofy pictures of kids as long as they don't look high.

TRACY

Won't I have to testify about that? Won't they have experts who can tell stuff was deleted?

IMANI

Right now they're so busy trying to put the gun in your son's hand they haven't thought about what actually was in his hand. They don't know yet what Rachel heard. She's the ace up our sleeve. I can't do anything about Facebook or Twitter but as of this moment *we* control the phone. And you can use his contact list to reach out to his friends.

TRACY

What's the password, Tray?

TRAYVON

74866.

IMANI

(Looking at her own phone and smiling.)

Seven-four . . . S-L-I-M-M. Slimm.

TRACY

Back to the evidence of self-defense. Why wouldn't it be enough if the gun belongs to the dead man?

IMANI

Because your son is a tall black kid who was wearing a hoodie.

TRACY

He's a child who had a fight with a grown man who followed him, a man with a gun.

IMANI

In Florida, which charges more children as adults than any other state in the union.

(Pause.)

Look, while you may see an adolescent making a fashion statement, a lot of people, black and white, will see a young *gangsta* who was probably up to something. Did you know the dead man was a Neighborhood Watch volunteer? A cop told me that the minute I hit the station.

TRACY

Really?

TRAYVON

The detective told me. So what?

IMANI

So it means somebody will think he had a reason to follow you. They'll think you were casing houses to rob or looking for someplace to use drugs, even if you had no drugs on you.

TRAYVON

I wasn't doing nothing but walking.

IMANI

In America, *people* are white and *other people* are not. *People* have to prove they're bad to get *into* trouble. *Other* people have to prove they're good to stay *out of* trouble.

TRACY

She's right, Tray. It's like I always told you. When you go in a store or face a cop, keep your hands where people can see them and always be respectful. White kids don't have to get that talk.

IMANI

Maybe you just wandered while you talked to Rachel or maybe you got confused about how to get back to the apartment because those boxes all look so much alike. Once you go to trial, you'll be the scary black guy trying to hide his face inside a hoodie.

TRAYVON

But it was raining!

TRACY

It doesn't matter!

IMANI

It doesn't matter!

IMANI

No offense, Trayvon, but I wish you'd been wearing glasses, a bow tie, and a sweater vest. Right now, if they file charges, our best chance to end this is a pre-trial immunity hearing.

TRAYVON

What's that?

IMANI

This state has a Stand-Your-Ground law, which means you don't have to be backed into a corner to kill someone in self-defense. You don't have to retreat if you're threatened.

TRAYVON

I tried to get away from him but he kept following me so I turned and stood my ground?

IMANI

Something like that. We present our evidence at the hearing and the court could declare you immune from prosecution. But there's a racial disparity with how well that law works.

TRACY

Figures.

IMANI

According to one study I read, if a white person kills somebody black while standing his ground, there's about a one in six chance the case will be dismissed.

TRACY

And if a black person kills a white person the same way?

IMANI

About one in a hundred.

(A beat as that sinks in.)

I'll file a motion for a pre-trial hearing as soon as he's charged. Could take a couple days. If that doesn't work, we go to trial, which could take several months to more than a year.

TRAYVON

You mean I gotta be in jail all that time?

IMANI

The judge will decide bail at your first hearing. Mr. Martin—Tracy—be prepared to find a bondsman. You'll need cash or property to secure the bond.

TRACY

And I gotta pay you. I'm just a truck driver, Ms. Fairchild. Jesus God! What am I gonna do?

IMANI

Let's worry about that later. We can work something out. First let's see if they have a case.

(Blackout. Lights rise downstage center, where TRAYVON faces the audience. GEORGE is behind him, gun pointing at the back of his head, as the following words are heard.)

JUDGE (v.o.)

In the matter of *Florida v. Trayvon Martin*, having considered both the seriousness of the charge of second degree murder against the defendant named in this complaint and the degree of risk that said defendant may pose to the community at large, the court hereby denies bail and remands the defendant into custody until further action is taken.

(Sound of a gavel banging like a gunshot as GEORGE's hand jerks upward and TRAYVON's head falls forward. Blackout.)

Scene 5

(Lights rise. Downstage left are two chairs occupied by IMANI and RACHEL. Downstage right are two chairs occupied by ANITA and MICKEY. ANITA and IMANI both have legal pads and pens in hand and take notes throughout the interviews they are about to conduct. During this scene action shifts back and forth between locations. Lighting should as well, with actors freezing or pantomiming during opposite side action.)

ANITA

How have you been holding up, Mrs. Zimmerman?

MICKEY

Call me Mickey, please.

ANITA

All right, Mickey. Call me Anita. How are you?

MICKEY

Good as can be expected, I guess. Better, now that the little bastard isn't getting out before trial. My family's been great and so has Georgie's.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

IMANI

So the last thing you heard was the man saying, "What are you doing around here?"

RACHEL

And Tray saying, "Get off me." Then the phone cut off.

IMANI

How long did you wait to call Trayvon back?

RACHEL

I ain't wait, miss. I call him right back.

IMANI

How many times did you try before he answered?

RACHEL

Three or four.

IMANI

And when he answered, what did he say?

RACHEL

He say he call me back. But he never did.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

MICKEY

I was wondering—*we* were wondering—when Georgie’s body will be released. I can’t stand the thought of him in a cold drawer somewhere. I want to give him a good Christian burial.

ANITA

It shouldn’t be too long now. I know that’s not specific, but maybe it would help to think of it as George doing one last service, giving us all the information we need to convict his killer.

MICKEY

He would like that.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

IMANI

You’re doing fine, Rachel. Everything you say lines up with what Trayvon told me. It fixes the time of the fight and the time of death. But the phone log says you called four times.

RACHEL

Sorry.

IMANI

No need to be sorry. You weren’t sure. You just know you called him back several times.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

ANITA

I need to ask you some questions about your husband. If we have a clearer picture of him, we can make the right choices going forward.

MICKEY

Choices?

ANITA

Right now George’s killer is being held for second degree murder as we work the case and gather evidence. More information will help me decide whether to amend the charges.

MICKEY

Does that mean you can seek the death penalty?

ANITA

If I have evidence to support it. If this boy killed George while trying to rob him. We're still investigating that. So, tell me about your husband.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

IMANI

Why?

RACHEL

Why what?

IMANI

Why did you call Trayvon back?

RACHEL

(Looking at IMANI as if she has two heads.)

Cause something was going down and it ain't sound good.

IMANI

Then why didn't you call the police?

RACHEL

I don't know.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

ANITA

And it was George's gun?

MICKEY

Yes. He always carried it when he went on patrol.

ANITA

On patrol?

MICKEY

When he went out for Neighborhood Watch.

ANITA

Neighborhood Watch means keeping an eye out and calling police if you see something. It doesn't mean going out on patrol.

MICKEY

Whatever. He always had his gun with him. He was finishing up a degree in criminal justice, and he did some ride-alongs with the police.

ANITA

So he was thinking about becoming a cop?

MICKEY

Maybe. He said police work had to be better than selling insurance.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

IMANI

The lawyer who wants to put Trayvon in prison? She's going to ask you why you didn't call the police. And she could twist it all kinds of ways. You didn't call 911 because you knew Trayvon was up to no good. Or maybe he told you not to. Or maybe he was high and you didn't want him to get in trouble.

RACHEL

Maybe I thought Tray could handle his own business. Maybe I ain't think police would do nothing. I don't know.

(They freeze as the light shifts.)

ANITA

Let's get back to the gun. Why didn't he have a holster?

MICKEY

The belt clip snapped off at the range a couple weeks ago. He decided he would get a shoulder holster but the one he wanted was expensive. He found it cheaper online and ordered it.

(A beat as she wipes her eyes.)

It came yesterday.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

IMANI

How long have you known Trayvon?

RACHEL

Since second grade.

IMANI

You've been friends all that time?

Pretty much.

RACHEL

He's cute, isn't he?

IMANI

Yeah.

RACHEL
(Smiling as if embarrassed.)

(They freeze as light shifts.)

ANITA
There are a couple ways the defense could spin this. One, they'll play the race card. They'll say George profiled the subject and went after him because he's black. Did George have a problem with black people?

MICKEY
Heavens no! George is part black . . . or was.

ANITA
He was?

MICKEY
He's half Hispanic.

(A beat as ANITA processes what she's been told.)
I know—Zimmerman, right? But his mother's from Peru. Her grandfather was black. So if George isn't black himself, he has black in his family. His partner in his old insurance office was black. George even went to City Hall to protest when a homeless black guy got beat up by a cop's son. And he voted for President Obama! Trouble with blacks? Christ!

ANITA
I had to ask.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

IMANI
Are you more than friends now?

RACHEL
What you mean?

IMANI
Are you like boyfriend and girlfriend?

RACHEL
(Suddenly wary.)

She gonna ax me that too?

IMANI

She might.

RACHEL

And I got to answer?

IMANI

Yes.

RACHEL

Why? None of her damn business!

(They freeze as light shifts.)

ANITA

Another thing they might use is the domestic violence restraining order his old girlfriend filed on him in 2005. And then there's the run-in he had with an undercover cop that got him sent to anger management classes.

MICKEY
(Fidgeting a bit.)

All that was before my time.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

IMANI

How close are you?

RACHEL

Like, do we have sex and stuff? She could ax me *that*?

IMANI

Could.

RACHEL

And my family be right there in court and all?

IMANI

Yes, and . . . How old are you again?

RACHEL

Eighteen.

IMANI

(Smiling.)

Then if she asks you about sex, just tell her you want to plead the Fifth.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

ANITA

What about during your time? Did George get into fights? Were there any incidents of domestic violence? Did he ever shove you or hit you or threaten you in any way?

MICKEY

(Hesitates.)

No.

(A beat.)

Who says he did?

ANITA

Nob—

MICKEY

Anybody says he did is a goddam liar!

(Beginning to cry.)

(ANITA puts an arm around her. They freeze as the light shifts.)

IMANI

If all goes well, the judge will see that Zimmerman started this whole thing and died because Trayvon refused to back down.

RACHEL

And then it be over?

IMANI

If the judge agrees with us, yes.

RACHEL

If he don't agree?

IMANI

She. That means we'll go to a full trial.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

MICKEY

Georgie was a good man and he loved me very much.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

RACHEL

Could Tray die?

IMANI

Only if they convince the jury he killed this man during a robbery. You and I are going to show he didn't.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

MICKEY

He was a good man . . . a real good man.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

RACHEL

He could go to jail for the rest of his life?

IMANI

Prison. Yes.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

MICKEY

He was a good man and he loved me very much.

(They freeze as light shifts.)

RACHEL

I think that be worser than dying.

IMANI

You might be right.

(Blackout.)

MALE VOICE (v.o.)

Those are pretty nasty bruises, son. Who did this to you?

TRAYVON (v.o.)

I didn't see them. It was dark. They . . . they came outta nowhere.

MALE VOICE (v.o.)

I know it can be pretty scary in here, especially for somebody so young. I want you to—

TRAYVON (v.o.)

(Too assertive.)

I'm not scared!

MALE VOICE (v.o.)

Course you're not.

TRAYVON (v.o.)

I can take care of myself.

MALE VOICE (v.o.)

Course you can, even if the hair riding your top lip is soft as cotton candy and you weigh about a buck and a half soaking wet.

(A beat.)

If you don't tell me who did it, they'll just do it again.

Scene 6

(Lights rise upstage on the courtroom, with the bench and witness stand as far upstage as possible and the counsel tables facing each other across the stage. A U.S. flag and a Florida state flag may stand on either side of the bench. There is a gap in the center of the bar, which permits participants to pass from downstage to the action of the courtroom. Attorneys must rise whenever they address the court, question witnesses, or object, and sit when finished. ANITA, with a briefcase, and HOOKS, with a notepad, enter and head to the prosecution table, near the witness stand.)

ANITA

(Placing her briefcase on the table.)

Remember, your testimony is pivotal.

HOOKS

(Opening his notebook.)

I'll recount the canvas that led to Martin and discuss the lies he told in the beginning, lies that suggested a full understanding of his culpability.

ANITA

That's right. If it was an accident because he fought a man who threatened him, why didn't he just stay there to meet the police?

HOOKS

Because he was a scared kid who didn't think—but it's not my place to say that.

ANITA

Damn right it's not.

(A beat.)

So what do you think their play's going to be?

HOOKS

It's gotta be Zimmerman himself. Most of the people I interviewed liked him and thought he was a nice guy, but he did have his moments, bar confrontations, road rage, and the like.

ANITA

So much for the anger management class.

HOOKS

Most of those didn't amount to much. Ah, but then there's his history of calls to police.

ANITA

So he made a few 911 calls. That's what Neighborhood Watch is supposed to do. And I understand Twin Lakes had a series of break-ins over the last year or so.

HOOKS

But Zimmerman was making calls to both 911 and the non-emergency number since before he was Neighborhood Watch, even before he moved to Twin Lakes.

ANITA

How many calls are we talking about?

HOOKS

About 45 since 2004.

ANITA

That many? In eight years he calls the cops more than most people do in a lifetime?

HOOKS

Yes.

ANITA

What did he call about?

HOOKS

(Flipping through notes.)

Mostly suspicious activity. Strange cars, strange people, strange things, like open garage doors and loud parties and trash in the roadway. He complained about a pit bull and reckless drivers and kids climbing fences and playing in the street and doing wheelies on bicycles . . .

ANITA

He wasn't yet thirty and he'd turned into that crotchety old get-off-my-lawn guy?

(Sighs.)

Don't tell me. The strange people and the kids weren't white, were they?

HOOKS

A large number of the suspicious people were black males, including one master criminal whose age he put somewhere between seven and nine.

ANITA

And he was probably in kindergarten.

(Sighs.)

So Zimmerman was a nut job who maybe profiled the defendant and caused the whole thing.

HOOKS

So it would seem.

ANITA

Do you know if Fairchild has got hold of any of this?

HOOKS

I can't imagine she hasn't. She still has friends with the police. Jimmy Perez, her investigator, is an ex-cop. And before you ask your next question, things haven't changed since yesterday. I can't find anything to support the possibility the boy was trying to rob Zimmerman.

ANITA

And you're sure about this Rachel?

HOOKS

Not especially bright. Terrible grades. But she'll testify to what she heard, and carrier records will verify she was on the phone with Martin when the fight started. It's a time stamp.

ANITA

You think there's a chance the judge might find Martin immune from prosecution.

HOOKS

I do. You could move to dismiss before things go south. Of course, that's your call.

(HOOKS goes downstage as ANITA sits and begins to remove files and legal pads from her briefcase. IMANI, briefcase in hand, enters and exchanges nods with HOOKS as he exits. The low buzz of courtroom chatter begins and gradually increases. TRACY enters and follows IMANI upstage to her table.)

TRACY

Ms. Fairchild?

IMANI

(Setting her briefcase on the defense table and turning.)

Hi, Tracy. How are you holding up?

TRACY

I'm not gonna lie. I'm nervous as hell. I just want to point out where we're sitting—me and Tray's mom and brother and cousins, their minister, my fiancée. We're all right back there.

(Points to the area behind him, toward the audience.)

IMANI

Close but not too close. Good.

TRACY

Not so close we all start crying. We don't want nothing to screw this up. And Rachel's waiting in the hall. Thank you for everything. Good luck.

IMANI
(Shaking his hand.)

Thank you, and you're welcome.

(Courtroom chatter increases. IMANI, TRACY, and ANITA all look downstage. The OFFICER, now dressed as BAILIFF, and TRAYVON, in white shirt and dark slacks, enter. Holding his arm, the BAILIFF enters with TRAYVON in a jail jumpsuit. We see the defendant with a large bandage above one eye. He is limping. TRACY and IMANI exchange looks as TRAYVON, face taut, reaches the bar. The courtroom becomes quieter.)

TRACY

Tray, what happened?

TRAYVON

Fight. I don't want to talk about it.

TRACY

If somebody hurt you—

IMANI
(Holding up a hand to cut short a confrontation.)

I'll deal with it.

(The BAILIFF has TRAYVON sit, then releases him and moves upstage near the bench. IMANI reverse-nods at TRACY, who moves downstage and off. Then she sits beside TRAYVON as courtroom chatter resumes.)

IMANI

Tray, tell me what happened.

TRAYVON
(Bitter, defiant.)

I said I don't want to talk about it.

IMANI

We damn well *will* talk about it! If you take that face and that attitude to the witness stand, you are seriously fucked. So tell me what happened. Now.

(TRAYVON stares ahead with stony defiance for a moment. Then his face begins to soften. He begins to shake, struggling not to have a full-on cry. He wipes his eyes as IMANI slips an arm around his heaving shoulders as if to steady them.)

IMANI

(More gently.)

Tell me about the fight, Trayvon. If you can't testify, I need to request a continuance.

TRAYVON

(Shaking.)

I don't want my father to know.

IMANI

He's far enough away he can't hear us. Please tell me. *I* need to know.

TRAYVON

Last night . . . late . . . these two men . . . in the shower . . . t-they . . . they held me down . . .
(Buries his face against her shoulder, crying but trying to hide it from the gallery.)

IMANI

I got you, baby. It's okay. I got you.

(Fighting her own tears.)

I got you.

BAILIFF

All rise.

(ANITA rises, and IMANI helps TRAYVON to his feet.)

BAILIFF

Court is now in session, the honorable Nora Westlake presiding.

JUDGE

(Entering and taking her seat at the bench.)

Be seated.

(A beat as all sit.)

Now, in the matter of *Florida v. Trayvon Martin*, we are gathered for an evidentiary hearing on immunity from prosecution under Sections 776.012 and 776.013 of the Florida Statutes, commonly called Stand-Your-Ground. You're up, Ms. Fairchild.

IMANI

(Releasing TRAYVON and standing slowly.)

May we approach, your honor?

JUDGE

Please do.

(IMANI and ANITA both move downstage and face the audience, looking up slightly as if at the JUDGE's bench.)

IMANI

Judge, I'm afraid I have to request a continuance.

ANITA

Your honor, this hearing was at the defense's request. They've had plenty of time to prepare.

JUDGE

I'm inclined to agree with Ms. Corday, Ms. Fairchild. I bent over backward to allow this hearing in the absence of compelling circumstances, and you're unprepared?

IMANI

Preparation is not the issue. I just learned my client was injured in an assault late last night.

JUDGE

I assure you his bandage will in no way influence my ruling.

IMANI

My plan was to put my client on the stand and then corroborate his testimony with the young woman with whom he was talking on his phone when the alleged crime occurred.

ANITA

The state is prepared to face all witnesses, your honor.

IMANI

But now my client's testimony may be compromised, even incompetent.

ANITA

A fight in lock-up is no reason to delay, your honor. We have witnesses who'll testify that the defendant was no stranger to conflict and fighting at school.

IMANI

(Snapping but fighting to keep her voice from rising.)

Will they also testify he was raped in the shower there?

(For a moment no one speaks.)

ANITA

This is a serious allegation, judge. The state would like some assurance it's not a legal ploy to delay justice.

IMANI

Assurance? It happened on your watch. How about we sue your ass for child abuse?

JUDGE

Careful, Ms. Fairchild.

IMANI

Ms. Corday is so eager to try Trayvon Martin as an adult she forgot he's really a child.

ANITA

This is what I was afraid of, your honor. Mr. Martin may well be the victim of a crime but the state is concerned his status as such may influence the impartiality of the court.

JUDGE

Are you suggesting my . . . *maternal instinct* would interfere with my reasoning?

ANITA

No. I only wish . . . After due consideration, the state has no objection to a continuance.

JUDGE

But perhaps the court is concerned about its time. Continuance denied.

IMANI

Your honor, my client is humiliated. He doesn't want his family to know what happened.

JUDGE

We could proceed in-camera. I'll have the bailiff clear the courtroom of all but the principals.

ANITA

The state has no objection to proceeding in-camera.

JUDGE

Take a moment to confer with your client, Ms. Fairchild.

(IMANI goes briefly to TRAYVON, who shakes his head.)

IMANI

My client is unable to continue, even in-camera. I cannot put him on the stand like this.

(A long beat.)

We withdraw the hearing request and ask that my client be transferred to a juvenile unit.

JUDGE

For his own safety. Granted. See to it, Ms. Corday. Immediately.

(Voice rising for the whole court.)

The request for an immunity hearing has been withdrawn. This case is now on the docket, and a trial date will be set. Court dismissed.

(Blackout underscored by chatter and the loud bang of a gavel.)

Act Two

Scene 1

(Lights rise to full. Upstage is still set for court. Downstage center is the chair in which MICKEY sat in Act One. She enters in a huff. Wearing slacks and a simple top, she paces about. In T-shirt and jeans, GEORGE storms on after her.)

GEORGE

Don't walk away from me when I'm talking to you!

MICKEY

(Turning to face him but stepping back.)

I walked away because you're being ridiculous.

GEORGE

I see you at an outdoor café with a man I don't know and I ask his name. That makes me ridiculous?

MICKEY

Yes, because I know where you're going with this. Where you always go.

GEORGE

Where's that?

MICKEY

Jesus, Georgie! Why are you so jealous?

GEORGE

I wouldn't be like that if you didn't give me cause.

MICKEY

When have I given you cause? We go to a party and I talk to a guy for three minutes and here you come with your crooked smile and I know what's gonna happen when we get home.

GEORGE

It's the way they look at you, Mickey. Makes my blood boil.

MICKEY

And that's my fault? That makes it okay for you to act crazy when we get home?

GEORGE

Mickey, no.

MICKEY

Who was he? Where do you know him from? How long have you known him? Is he married?
And no matter what I say you'll keep picking and picking and picking—

GEORGE

Mickey—

MICKEY

Till you get up enough steam to ask me your real question: *Are you fucking him?*

GEORGE

That's not how it goes.

MICKEY

That's *exactly* how it goes. *Are you fucking him?*

(A beat.)

It was lunch, Georgie, lunch! You could've stopped and joined us.

GEORGE

By the time I found a place to turn around, you were gone.

MICKEY

And you thought what? We went back to his place to bump uglies all afternoon? I went back
to work, like I always do, to bump off bills. We all went back to work.

(A beat.)

If you'd looked, you'd have seen I wasn't the only one with him. Two other girls from the
shop were there—Tina and Sally, stylists, like me. Like Ramón.

GEORGE

Ramón.

MICKEY

Yes, Ramón. The new stylist I told you about.

GEORGE

He seemed tall.

MICKEY

He is.

GEORGE

And good-looking.

MICKEY

Which is why Rose gave him the chair by the window, to encourage walk-in traffic. Those dark eyes and that thick black hair make women of a certain age just want to sit in his chair.

GEORGE

Do you ever think about sitting in his chair?

MICKEY

Of course I do, because he's a hell of a stylist and he'd make me look really good. He'd make me look good for you.

GEORGE

I bet he has an accent.

MICKEY

Yes, he has an accent. But we live in Florida. If a Spanish accent was all it took to get me off, I'd be in a wheelchair.

GEORGE

Stop it!

MICKEY

(Hesitates, then comes a bit closer.)

Why are you so unhappy, Georgie? You didn't like the car business. You didn't like the mortgage business. Now you hate selling insurance.

GEORGE

I need to . . . I need to do something more important with my life. I need to be somebody.

MICKEY

You are somebody. You're my husband.

(Comes closer and slips her arms around him.)

You're on your last course now. When this semester is over you can use your degree, maybe get that police job you've always wanted. Then maybe . . .

GEORGE

(Stiffening.)

Maybe what?

MICKEY

Maybe you wouldn't be so miserable all the time. So nervous. So worried about every little thing being in its place. So jealous when there's nothing to be jealous of.

(She tries to kiss him but he turns his head away.)

You're hopeless. Don't you want to be happy again, the way we were in the beginning?

GEORGE

(Snatching her back roughly as she tries to pull away.)

The way you could be with somebody else? The way you could be with Ramón?

MICKEY

(Wrenching herself free.)

Ramón's gay, you idiot! He'd be more interested in *your* goodies than mine.

GEORGE

So I'm queer bait?

MICKEY

Oh my God! A blind man could see he's gay from the other end of a football field. But not you. No, you're so worried about being somebody that you can't see all the other somebodies around you. Everything isn't always about you, George Zimmerman! Grow the fuck up!

GEORGE

(Drawing back a hand to slap her.)

You bitch!

MICKEY

(Refusing to cower.)

Go ahead. Remember what my father said he'd do to you if he saw another mark on my face. You aren't the only one who knows how to shoot a gun.

(GEORGE makes a fist and punches her in the gut, catching her as she sags, lowering her into the chair. As she gasps, he exits and returns, holding his gun and pulling on his orange jacket.)

GEORGE

I got nothing to lose.

(Jamming his gun into his belt.)

One word to your old man and I'll put you both down like dogs.

(Exits.)

MICKEY

(Sniffing, fighting back tears.)

Stupid son of a bitch! Sometimes I wish you were dead.

(Blackout. Lights rise. MICKEY is on the witness stand and ANITA is standing at the prosecution table. IMANI and TRAYVON, in shirt and tie, are seated at the defense table.)

ANITA

You didn't have to ask?

MICKEY

No. Georgie was always doing things like that, thoughtful little things to make me feel better. It may sound silly to anybody but a hair stylist who stands all day, but I think that's what I miss the most. There's nobody to rub my feet at night while I watch television.

(Wipes her eyes.)

ANITA

Thank you, Mrs. Zimmerman. Your witness.

IMANI

Good morning, Mrs. Zimmerman. Your husband sounds like a wonderful man.

MICKEY

He was.

IMANI

Thoughtful, considerate, patient . . .

ANITA

Your honor . . .

JUDGE

Please ask a question, Ms. Fairchild.

IMANI

Of course, your honor. Mrs. Zimmerman, did your husband ever get angry?

MICKEY

Sure. Sometimes. He was as human as the next guy.

IMANI

What kinds of things made him angry?

MICKEY

The usual things. You know, backed up toilets. Flat tires. Drivers who cut him off. The stuff that makes anybody mad.

IMANI

What about people who, to him, didn't seem to do much with their lives?

MICKEY

Sometimes.

IMANI

What did he do when he . . . got mad?

MICKEY

Stomp around. Shout. Maybe . . . swear.

IMANI

Did he ever threaten anybody with his gun?

MICKEY

N-no. He was a responsible gun owner.

IMANI

Did you two ever argue?

MICKEY

What married couple doesn't?

IMANI

The night before your husband died, you went to stay with your father.

MICKEY

Yes . . .

IMANI

Did you do so because you and your husband argued?

MICKEY

No . . . well, we had an argument, but I was gonna spend some time with my dad anyway.

IMANI

Did the argument become physical?

MICKEY

No!

IMANI

When you married him, did you know that in 2005 George took an anger management class to avoid a felony charge?

ANITA

Objection, relevance.

IMANI

Your honor, the police dispatch tape we just heard raises the possibility that the victim himself precipitated the fatal confrontation. I wish to explore whether anger pushed him toward that critical moment.

JUDGE

Overruled. The witness will answer. But be careful, Ms. Fairchild. The victim is not on trial.

MICKEY

Yes, I knew about the class. He passed with flying colors.

IMANI

Were you also aware that later in 2005, your husband's then fiancée alleged domestic abuse and filed a detailed restraining order?

ANITA

Objection! Exceeds the scope of proper cross-examination.

JUDGE

Sustained. That's enough fishing, counselor. If you must poke around in the past, make sure it has a direct bearing on the case at hand.

IMANI

Of course, your honor. Mrs. Zimmerman, we just heard the recording of the call your husband made to police. Had you heard it before?

MICKEY

Yes. Detective Hooks played it for me so I could identify Georgie's voice.

IMANI

Was that the first time he called the police?

MICKEY

Uh . . . no, I don't think so.

IMANI

So he called police before, both 911 and the non-emergency number?

MICKEY

Sometimes.

IMANI

What did he usually call to report?

MICKEY

Suspicious people. Noisy parties. That sort of thing.

IMANI

How often did he call?

MICKEY
(Shrugging.)

Not that much.

IMANI
Would it surprise you to learn he made 45 calls since 2004, more than thirty of them after your marriage?

MICKEY
That can't be right.

IMANI
(Holding up a stack of papers.)
I have more than forty pages of call logs right here. Generally speaking, he went from a few calls a year early on to twelve in 2009, nine in 2010, and eight in 2011.

(A beat.)
Why do you think he called the police so much?

ANITA
Objection. Calls for a conclusion.

JUDGE
Sustained.

IMANI
You moved into Twin Lakes in 2009. Did you feel safe living there?

MICKEY
I did at first. Then there were a few break-ins . . . and attempted break-ins.

IMANI
Your husband joined other neighbors in forming a Neighborhood Watch.

MICKEY
Yes, and he called police whenever he saw suspicious people.

IMANI
Do you remember a call he made on April 22, 2011?

MICKEY
Not really.

IMANI
Your honor, I'd like the court's permission to read to the witness the details of the call to jog her memory.

JUDGE

Granted.

IMANI

This was a call to the non-emergency number about suspicious activity. The subject was described as a juvenile black male approximately seven to nine years old, four feet tall with a skinny build and short black hair, last seen wearing a blue t-shirt and blue shorts. Do you remember the call now?

MICKEY

(Quietly, almost embarrassed.)

Yes.

IMANI

Can you tell the court what that child was doing that made him seem suspicious?

(A long beat as no answer comes.)

Was he breaking windows or tipping over garbage totes or scratching cars with a rock?

MICKEY

I . . . I don't know.

IMANI

What about the call August 6, 2011—two black teenagers, one in a black tank top and shorts, the other in a white T-shirt and jeans. What were they doing?

MICKEY

I don't know but I'm sure George had a reason for making the call. He took his Neighborhood Watch job very seriously.

IMANI

According to a *Miami Herald* article that appeared not long after his death, you said George had taken part in a police ride-along program.

MICKEY

Yes. He said he saw good things and terrible things.

IMANI

You also said he was close to finishing a degree in criminal justice and was thinking of becoming a police officer.

MICKEY

Yes, he was.

IMANI

Did you know ride-along programs require a fair amount of paperwork?

MICKEY

I didn't know that.

IMANI

Did you know the Sanford police have no record of your husband's participation in a ride-along program? In fact, no nearby police agency has such a record.

MICKEY

I don't know why he'd say he did if he didn't.

IMANI

A moment ago you said he took his Neighborhood Watch duties very seriously.

MICKEY

Yes.

IMANI

So seriously he always took his gun with him when he went on patrol?

MICKEY

Yes.

IMANI

Is that what he called it, going on patrol?

MICKEY

Well . . . he'd drive around the neighborhood to keep an eye on things.

IMANI

Please answer my question. Did he call it going on patrol?

MICKEY

Yes.

(Blackout. Lights rise on GEORGE in profile, gun hand extended and jerking with each shot as the following is said. Visibly frustrated, he finally holds the gun with both hands.)

MALE VOICE (v.o.)

George? A good guy but wrapped a little too tight, like a rubber band waiting to snap. I used to go with him to the range. He always seemed to enjoy it but had a tough time controlling his recoil. Got mad when most of his shots landed outside the target. But he was kinda corny too. When I asked about driving around for Neighborhood Watch instead of just keeping his eyes open, he said *somebody* had to protect his neighborhood, like he was Batman.

Scene 2

(When lights rise HOOKS is on the stand, notebook in hand.)

ANITA

During your canvas you were told a young man fitting the shooter's description was visiting an apartment not far from where the body was found.

HOOKS

Yes.

ANITA

What did you find when you reached the apartment in question?

HOOKS

I shone my flashlight at the door and saw a smear of bloody fingerprint on the knob.

ANITA

Which would have given you probable cause for a forced entry. Did you make a forced entry?

HOOKS

No. I called for back-up and stationed two uniformed officers near the windows. Then Officer Mathers and I stood on either side of the door and I knocked.

ANITA

Did the occupant open the door immediately?

HOOKS

No. I insisted through the door that I had to make sure he was all right before I checked the next apartment, and he let us in.

ANITA

What did you notice when you stepped inside?

HOOKS

First, that the young man who opened the door matched the description we'd been given and the subject on the 7-Eleven surveillance tape. But he was wearing a T-shirt, not a gray hoodie.

ANITA

And he identified himself as Trayvon Martin?

HOOKS

Yes. When I explained there had been a shooting, he told me he knew nothing about it because he had not gone out.

ANITA

Did he give you permission to search the apartment?

HOOKS

He led us through the apartment himself. Officer Mathers and I both noticed a ribbed gray sleeve at the bottom of a laundry pile. That turned out to be the blood-stained hoodie entered into evidence earlier.

ANITA

The blood on the hoodie belonged to the victim?

HOOKS

Yes.

ANITA

Whose fingerprints were on the bag of candy and the can of fruit drink you recovered from the scene?

HOOKS

The defendant's.

ANITA

Were his fingerprints also on the victim's gun?

HOOKS

Yes, they were.

ANITA

Thank you, detective. Your witness.

IMANI

Detective Hooks, at first you took in my client, a minor, just for questioning. Is that right?

HOOKS

Yes. We Mirandized him twice, the second time on video.

IMANI

Did he willingly cooperate and offer an explanation of how Mr. Zimmerman died?

HOOKS

Yes. He said Mr. Zimmerman followed him and confronted him. Then they fought and Mr. Zimmerman's gun went off.

IMANI

The tape suggests Mr. Zimmerman did follow my client, against the dispatcher's advice.

HOOKS

Yes.

IMANI

You said my client's fingerprints and DNA were on the candy and the drink can found at the scene, as well as the murder weapon.

HOOKS

Yes.

IMANI

Where on the gun did Mr. Martin's fingerprints appear?

HOOKS

Where?

IMANI

On what components?

HOOKS

Well, they were on the slide.

IMANI

Were they on the trigger?

HOOKS

No.

IMANI

Inside the trigger guard at all?

HOOKS

No.

IMANI

On the pistol grip?

HOOKS

Often textured pistol grips make fingerprint ID difficult.

IMANI

But not DNA. Was my client's DNA on the grip?

HOOKS

No.

IMANI

So the only part of the gun Mr. Martin touched was the slide?

HOOKS

Yes.

IMANI

What does that suggest to you?

ANITA

Objection, calls for a conclusion.

JUDGE

Overruled. These are the kinds of conclusions the citizens pay the detective to reach.

HOOKS

It suggests Mr. Martin tried to grab the barrel of the gun.

IMANI

Which is consistent with his explanation of events.

ANITA

Objection. Counsel is testifying.

JUDGE

Sustained.

IMANI

If Mr. Martin managed to get a good hold on the slide, would that have prevented the gun from firing?

HOOKS

It could have.

IMANI

If he had a light grip and the gun did manage to fire, would his fingers have sustained superficial burns from the heat of the explosion?

HOOKS

Possibly.

IMANI

Were his fingers checked for burns or gunshot residue when he was taken into custody?

HOOKS

No.

IMANI

In your investigation, did you find anything that contradicted my client's story?

HOOKS

He didn't stay at the scene. He lied about not having left—

IMANI

That's not what I asked, detective. Any parent understands a scared child will run and lie.

ANITA

Your honor . . .

JUDGE

Defense counsel's last sentence will be stricken. The jury will disregard it.

IMANI

Did you find anything that contradicted my client's explanation of events?

HOOKS

No.

IMANI

You could have released him into his father's custody, yet you held him through the night.

HOOKS

Yes. A man was dead. The investigation had to be thorough.

IMANI

Thorough enough to fingerprint candy and soda but not enough to check for burns and GSR?
Who tries to rob somebody with Skittles in one hand and AriZona fruit drink in the other?

ANITA

Objection!

IMANI

Withdrawn. Detective, did find any evidence that my client was attempting to rob the victim?

HOOKS

No.

IMANI

The prosecution made a point of saying my client threw the first punch. Did he tell you that?

HOOKS

Yes.

IMANI

Did he tell you why?

HOOKS

He said the victim pulled back his jacket to reveal his gun.

IMANI

Would such a gesture on the part of the victim constitute a threat or implied threat?

HOOKS

It could.

IMANI

Did he tell you he threw the first punch because he thought he'd be shot in the back if he ran?

HOOKS

Yes.

IMANI

Yet here he sits, on trial for second degree murder. And you tried to make it murder one. If my client had been killed, would Mr. Zimmerman have been set free if nothing contradicted his story?

ANITA

Objection. Calls for speculation.

JUDGE

Sustained. The jury will disregard defense counsel's last remark.

(Blackout.)

ANITA (v.o.)

Mrs. Zimmerman, you heard the 911 tape. Who do you think was crying for help?

WOMAN'S VOICE (v.o./Spanish accent.)

That's my son, George. That way he is screaming, it describes to me anguish, fear, terror.

IMANI (v.o.)

Ms. Fulton, can you identify the voice you heard crying for help on the 911 recording?

SYBRINA (v.o.)

That was my baby, Trayvon. Lord, that was my baby!

Scene 3

(When lights rise, RACHEL is on the stand and IMANI is standing. RACHEL's clothing may be outlandish without being revealing.)

IMANI

So you heard the man say, "What are you doing around here?"

RACHEL

Yes, miss.

IMANI

How did the man sound?

ANITA

Objection, calls for a conclusion.

JUDGE

Sustained. Rephrase, counselor.

IMANI

How would you describe the man's voice?

RACHEL

Hard breathing.

IMANI

Hard breathing?

RACHEL

Like he mad.

IMANI

Then what happened?

RACHEL

I heard Trayvon say, "Get off me, get off me!" Then the phone went dead.

IMANI

Did you try to call him back?

RACHEL

I try four times 'fore he answer.

IMANI
What did he say?

RACHEL
He say he call me back but he never did.

IMANI
When did you learn the man had died and Trayvon was in jail?

RACHEL
The next day on the news. Day after that you come to my house.

IMANI
Thank you. Pass the witness.

ANITA
Good afternoon, Ms. Jeantel.

RACHEL
Afternoon, miss.

ANITA
I'd like to clarify a few points you made in your testimony.

RACHEL
Okay.

ANITA
You said you were on the phone with Mr. Martin when he was in the 7-Eleven.

RACHEL
Yes.

ANITA
We've seen the store surveillance tapes from several angles. Mr. Martin is not on his phone.

RACHEL
He went in and say he call me back and we hung up and he did.

ANITA
I couldn't quite hear that. Would you please speak up, just a bit?

RACHEL
(Louder, with a touch of annoyance.)
He say he call me back and he did.

ANITA

How long was it before he called you back?

IMANI

Objection. Your honor, cell phone records and the surveillance video time stamp have already helped establish a timeline. The only reason to walk this ground again is to discomfit the witness and undermine her testimony.

JUDGE

Sustained.

ANITA

Please repeat the words Trayvon used to characterize the man he claimed was following him.

RACHEL

He call him a creepy-ass cracker.

ANITA

Isn't that term racist?

RACHEL

What you mean?

ANITA

So far the defense has been saying Mr. Zimmerman racially profiled Mr. Martin. Do you think the term creepy-ass cracker was Mr. Martin's way of profiling Mr. Zimmerman?

RACHEL

He call him a nig—the N word, too. It just slang.

ANITA

Slang? What kind of slang?

RACHEL

American slang. People call each other out they name all kinda ways.

ANITA

So you told him to run, to go to his father's place.

RACHEL

Yes.

ANITA

Miss Jeantel, I have here a copy of a letter you wrote to Mr. Martin. I ask the court's permission for you to read it aloud.

JUDGE

Granted.

(ANITA takes the letter to RACHEL, who stares at it for a long time, frustration increasingly visible on her face.)

ANITA

Whenever you're ready.

RACHEL

I can't read this.

ANITA

You don't have to read the whole thing, just the first two sentences of the second paragraph.

RACHEL

I can't read it 'cause it's in cursive. I can't read cursive too good.

ANITA

Didn't you write it?

RACHEL

My friend Karen wrote it for me. I told her what to say.

JUDGE

Young woman, are you telling the court that at eighteen you can't read cursive writing?

RACHEL

Yes, Miss Judge.

JUDGE

But that is the letter, correct?

RACHEL

Yeah.

JUDGE

Then Ms. Corday, read the paragraph you wish and ask your question.

ANITA

(Taking back the letter.)

"I wish you would've run when I told you. If you did, none of this would've happened."

(A beat.)

But he didn't run that time. He turned and asked why he was being followed, right?

IMANI

Objection. The witness can't know whether Mr. Martin turned or Mr. Zimmerman cut him off. She can testify only to what she heard, and that question was asked and answered.

JUDGE

Sustained.

ANITA

Did he say anything else between your telling him to run and the sound of the fight starting?

RACHEL

Like what?

ANITA

Anything.

RACHEL

Like he was 'bout to fight?

ANITA

Yes.

RACHEL

No. That'd be retarded, miss.

ANITA

Did he at least tell you he wouldn't run, that he was making a choice to face his pursuer?

RACHEL

No, miss.

ANITA

He said nothing about standing his ground against this creepy-ass cracker?

RACHEL

He ain't say nothing like that.

ANITA

But then you heard what sounded like the start of a fight.

RACHEL

Yeah . . . yes.

ANITA

Then why didn't you call the police?

RACHEL

First, I never been there so couldn't tell them where to go. Second, I figure they just blame it all on Tray anyway.

ANITA

You say you've known Mr. Martin since second grade and have been friends all that time. Are you more than friends now?

RACHEL

What you mean?

ANITA

Do you go out with each other?

RACHEL

We hang out. Get food. See movies. Play video games.

ANITA

Are you boyfriend and girlfriend?

RACHEL

I don't wanna answer that.

ANITA

You have to answer. Your honor.

JUDGE

Miss Jeantel, you have to answer.

RACHEL

(Uncertain but satisfied when she nails it.)

But I plead . . . I plead . . . I plead the Fifth.

ANITA

I'm not suggesting you committed a crime.

(To the JUDGE.)

Perhaps she's confused and thinks boyfriends and girlfriends enjoy spousal privilege.

IMANI

Your honor, Mr. Martin is seventeen, below the age of consent. Ms. Jeantel is eighteen and no longer a minor.

ANITA

I didn't ask if they'd had sex. The Romeo-and-Juliet exception—

IMANI

But you asked if they went out and she answered. Why continue a line of questioning that is both irrelevant and intrusive and improper for cross examination?

JUDGE

Move on, Ms. Corday.

ANITA

Have you visited Mr. Martin since he was arrested?

RACHEL

Yes, miss.

ANITA

How many times have you visited him?

RACHEL

Five or six.

ANITA

Did you bring anything to him during any of your visits?

IMANI

Objection. All my client's visitations have been observed. Any exchange with evidentiary value should have been made available to the defense during discovery.

JUDGE

What about it, counselor? Are you looking for something in particular?

ANITA

One of the observers reported the witness hugged the defendant on two separate occasions.

JUDGE

Was Ms. Jeantel searched before each visit?

ANITA

Superficially.

JUDGE

By superficially, I take it you mean there was no detailed body search.

ANITA

No, there wasn't.

RACHEL

Body search? You mean—that's nasty! It just be a hug. What kinda person y'all think I am?

JUDGE

Has Mr. Martin ever been found with contraband?

ANITA

No, your honor.

JUDGE

Then you're poking around in the dark. Let it go.

ANITA

(Visibly frustrated.)

No further questions.

(Blackout.)

Scene 4

(Lights rise. TRACY is on the witness stand and IMANI is standing. ANITA scribbles notes on a legal pad as she prepares for cross examination.)

IMANI

So your legs were burned and you could barely move them. Then what happened?

TRACY

Tray happened. That's what. Nine years old and he grabbed me and started pulling. It was hard for him because I couldn't move a lot. But I did what I could to help and he got me out.

IMANI

He pulled you out of the fire?

TRACY

Yes, ma'am, he did. He saved my life that day.

IMANI

Thank you, Mr. Martin. I pass the witness.

ANITA

And your son was nine years old when he performed this remarkably heroic act?

TRACY

Yes.

ANITA

But children are different at nine from how they are at seventeen, aren't they?

TRACY

Some are, I guess.

ANITA

Is your son different?

TRACY

Course he is.

(Chuckles.)

Now he thinks about girls a lot more.

(Muted laughter in the courtroom.)

ANITA

Has he gotten into more trouble as he's gotten older?

TRACY

Some. Teenage rebelliousness, I expect.

ANITA

Two earlier witnesses described a young man who was angry most of the time, someone who hated his school, smoked marijuana, got into fights. How do you reconcile that young man with the Trayvon in those fishing trip photos and the boy who pulled you out of a fire?

TRACY

No need to reconcile anything. Tray is just as complicated as anybody else, which is why four other witnesses said he was a happy, well-adjusted kid.

ANITA

Did you ever talk with your son about things like drugs?

TRACY

Course I did! What kinda father doesn't? I talked with my son about everything. Always have. Always will. As he got older, we didn't talk about Disney World and cartoons and dinosaurs anymore. We talked about life choices and making plans. And his mother talked with him too.

ANITA

What sort of plans?

TRACY

School, for one. He talked about becoming a pilot or maybe an airplane mechanic, and his mother put him at Krop High School because she thought it would be better for him.

ANITA

Did you ever tell him that using marijuana would interfere with his ability to fly?

IMANI

Objection, your honor. We've already established that the defendant used marijuana on occasion. The prosecution's continuing return to the subject is a none-too-subtle attempt to prejudice the jury.

JUDGE

Knock off the *Reefer Madness* posturing, Ms. Corday. With the last three presidents having to face marijuana questions, the jury is more sophisticated than you imagine.

ANITA

Of course, judge. Mr. Martin, in your father-to-son talks, what did you tell Trayvon about fighting?

TRACY

The same thing most of us were told growing up. Don't start it and try to walk away, but if you can't walk away, defend yourself. Tray is a walk-away kind of guy.

ANITA

I know your family's active in the church. Have you ever discussed with your son the idea of turning the other cheek?

IMANI

Objection! Your honor, surely the very state that passed the Stand-Your-Ground statute is not implying that Mr. Martin is negligent in his son's religious training if he didn't tell him to accept a beating.

ANITA

Your honor, this has nothing to do with religion *per se*—

IMANI

If a state full of evangelicals can pass such a law, it has *everything* to do with religion. In my Sunday school, Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek," not "Turn the other cheek so you can lock and load."

JUDGE

(Banging her gavel.)

Quiet, both of you! Objection sustained. Rephrase your question to remove religion from the mix or move on.

ANITA

Yes, judge. Mr. Martin, according to Facebook and Twitter, your son was involved in several fights outside of school. Did you know of these fights?

TRACY

Do you believe everything you read on the internet?

ANITA

Please answer my question, sir.

TRACY

Ma'am, I meant no disrespect. The internet is full of folks who make stuff up, and sometimes Tray is one of them—like that picture of him wearing a grille in his mouth. Fake gold teeth like he's some kinda rapper? But yes, I knew about a couple fights he said he didn't start.

ANITA

There are also social media pictures of your son holding what looks like a variety of guns, real or replica I can't say for certain. Is he fascinated by firearms?

IMANI

Objection, relevance. I find it odd a state so enamored of guns that it won't have a firearms registry is suddenly concerned about an adolescent's attraction to weapons. Why shouldn't he share the fascination held by so many Floridians?

JUDGE

Sustained. And, Ms. Fairchild, if you get back on that soapbox, I'll hold you in contempt.

ANITA

Mr. Martin, did you suspect at all that your son might be troubled?

TRACY

He's not troubled! He's a child who hasn't found his way yet. His mother's done her best. I've done my best. That's parenthood. We try to do our best. And I always told my son he had to be extra careful. He's a boy, but he doesn't have the luxury to be a boy.

ANITA

I don't understand.

TRACY

You can't. I told him *boys will be boys* doesn't apply to him. If he smokes a joint or runs a red light, he won't be dragged in front of a town justice who plays golf with his old man and lets him off with a warning. If he mouths off to a cop, he could get beat or shot dead. That's the Talk, something—

JUDGE

You've answered, Mr. Martin. We don't need a speech.

TRACY

But, your honor, the Talk is something all black parents have with their children. Especially their sons. I guess now the Talk's gotta include Dirty Harry wannabees who get in your face.

(Glares at ANITA as JUDGE begins banging gavel.)

You stand there asking me all these stupid questions about my son, all the time implying that there's something wrong with him when he's just a child. What kind of grown man packs a gun and stalks a child and gets in his face without saying, "I'm from Neighborhood Watch. Are you lost? Do you need help?"

JUDGE

Ms. Fairchild! Please control your witness!

IMANI

Mr. Martin, please.

TRACY

(Beginning to cry.)

I expect my son to act like a fool sometimes because he's *seventeen*. Grown-ass men are supposed to know better. What you need to ask is what kind of man George Zimmerman was.

(Blackout.)

REPORTER (v.o., with background noises)

Once again, it's quiet outside the courthouse as the Trayvon Martin murder trial enters its fifth day. Martin, viewers may remember, is the man on trial for the murder of Neighborhood Watch volunteer George Zimmerman last February in the Twin Lakes housing complex. In a confrontation the prosecution says was an unprovoked attack and the defense says was caused by the victim himself, Zimmerman died after being shot with his own gun. The defense rested yesterday, and closing arguments are set to begin within the hour. Reporting live from the courthouse in Sanford, Florida, I'm Leslie Starkly for WFTL News. Back to you, Marty.

Scene 5

(Lights rise. IMANI and ANITA are both past the bar and downstage almost as far as possible. Each is on the same side as her counsel table. Their summations will be in alternating sections, like a debate. They face the audience as the jury.)

ANITA

Ladies of the jury, I admire you but I do not envy you. The task before you is not complicated but it is weighty. I am asking you to find a young man guilty of murder, to send him to prison for a minimum of 25 years. I do not do this lightly but with great sadness.

IMANI

Members of the jury, the case you are about to decide sits squarely in the middle of a six-way intersection that has no traffic signal, no stop sign, nothing to guide the traveler. The first road that crosses the intersection is race, the source of so many social concerns. The second road is the second amendment, the right of gun ownership. The third road is fear.

ANITA

It is a hard thing, to remove from society a person full of promise, especially one so young. But sometimes it is necessary. While I admire you for the duties you will undertake, I do not envy the choice you will have to make. In the end, you will bear your decision for the rest of your lives. So I ask you to remember that everything about this case hinges upon choice.

IMANI

Fear of harm, fear of those who are different, fear of being deprived of our rights. You will have to decide how the unregulated traffic pattern on each road meshes with the patterns of the other two. I ask only that you remove yourself from all the traffic before you decide, especially from fear.

ANITA

George Zimmerman had a choice. He could go out and discharge his duties as a captain of Neighborhood Watch or he could stay at home. He chose to go out to keep his neighborhood safe. He chose to carry his gun, though Neighborhood Watch doesn't recommend firearms. It was his constitutional right to do so. When he saw something he thought was amiss, he chose to call for assistance.

IMANI

George Zimmerman went on patrol, like a real cop, saw a black kid in a hoodie, and thought he was up to no good. Why? Fear. Black people are seen as a threat, sometimes even by other black people. So George followed Trayvon. What stopped him from asking if the boy needed help getting somewhere? Why were his first words, "What are you doing around here?" Did fear make him posture and act macho? Did fear make Trayvon throw the first punch? Yes.

ANITA

Trayvon Martin also had choices. He chose to smoke pot and get himself suspended from school. When he saw George Zimmerman looking at him, he chose not to hurry home. Had he done so, Mr. Zimmerman would be alive. But Trayvon Martin chose to profile him as a threat. Chose to confront him. Chose to throw the first punch. Trayvon Martin chose to try seizing the victim's gun and in so doing caused it to fire.

IMANI

So why was Trayvon Martin afraid? Could it be the prospect of getting shot? February 4, 1999. Amadou Diallo, 23, is shot nineteen times outside his Bronx apartment by police who fire 41 shots because they think his wallet is a gun. September 1, 2000. Prince Jones, 25, is shot eight times by police in Fairfax County, Virginia, who think he is someone else. May 22, 2003. New York City. The night before his wedding, Sean Bell, 23, unarmed and attempting to get away from a tense situation, is shot dead by police who fire 50 bullets into his car. July 22, 2007. West Memphis, Arkansas. DeAunta Farrow, 12, is shot dead by police as he holds a toy gun. January 1, 2009. Oakland, California. Oscar Grant, 22, is shot in the back by a transit cop as he lies on his stomach. The cell phone video goes viral.

ANITA

Trayvon Martin chose not to stay by the body and explain what happened. He chose not to seek help that may have saved George Zimmerman's life. He chose to run. To hide his blood-stained hoodie. To lie when police questioned him. Trayvon Martin incriminated himself as he embellished the story of George Zimmerman's pursuit and their face-off.

IMANI

October 19, 2011. Miami, Florida. While walking near his home with his son, 45-year-old black police officer Rick Callahan, still in dress uniform from a police funeral, is shot dead by the man robbing the convenience store he enters. The killer flees. The first officer on the scene sees Callahan's son Nico, 15, kneeling over the body of a cop, mistakes the boy's cell phone for a gun, and puts a bullet between his shoulder blades.

ANITA

Yes, he is young but his age is no excuse. Trayvon Martin's choices put him on the path to prison.

IMANI

Yes, police have a dangerous job that sees far too many of them killed too. But this is about fear that flows through the veins of society like venom, fear of black men, fear of police, fear of criminals. A fear that puts guns in our hands and an itch in our fingers.

ANITA

For the life that was lost and the public servant that might have been. For the woman who now cries herself to sleep alone each night. For the victim's parents who will never hold grandchildren.

IMANI

The fear continues and slithers beneath our skin. How many more children will be shot holding toy guns? How many men while holding a wallet or a cell phone? How many will be shot in the back or die from mistaken identity? Malice, incompetence, corrupt policing, a thoughtless love of guns? It doesn't matter. Fear is the cause.

ANITA

For the crime of murder in the second degree, I ask that you find the defendant, Trayvon Martin, guilty.

IMANI

We have to end the fear somewhere. I ask you to start ending it here and now by finding Trayvon Martin not guilty.

(Blackout. Lights rise on TRAYVON, seated alone at the defense table, head down as if asleep. GEORGE, unarmed, enters and taps him on the shoulder, startling him awake. TRAYVON reacts to GEORGE, rising and moving away as GEORGE points a finger at him and follows him about the stage as the following exchange is heard.)

JUDGE (v.o.)

Madame Foreperson, has the jury reached a verdict?

WOMAN'S VOICE (v.o.)

We have, your honor.

JUDGE (v.o.)

What say you?

WOMAN'S VOICE (v.o.)

On the charge of second degree murder, we find the defendant, Trayvon Martin, guilty.

JUDGE (v.o.)

So say you all?

WOMAN'S VOICE (v.o.)

So say we all.

(Blackout.)

Scene 6

(Lights rise. IMANI, TRAYVON, and ANITA are at their respective counsel tables and the JUDGE is seated at the bench. The BAILIFF is near the bench.)

JUDGE

Will the defendant please rise.

(IMANI and TRAYVON stand.)

JUDGE

Mr. Martin, have you anything to say before sentence is passed?

TRAYVON

(Shaking, unsteady.)

Yes, your honor. I want to thank Miss Fairchild for believing in me and trying so hard. I'm sorry for this whole mess, sorry I just didn't run home that night. God knows I never meant to hurt George Zimmerman. I only wanted him to leave me alone. Sometimes, when I can't sleep and I see his face floating above mine, I wish I was the one died. Then maybe I could have got some justice.

(A long beat.)

JUDGE

Trayvon Martin, having been found guilty of murder in the second degree, you are hereby sentenced to a minimum of 25 years in prison to a maximum of life and are commended to the Florida department of corrections to begin serving the sentence forthwith. Court is adjourned.

(Bangs the gavel, rises, and leaves the bench, exiting.)

(The BAILIFF approaches. IMANI holds up a finger.)

TRAYVON

All-woman jury. For a while I was kinda hoping they might look at me like maybe I could be their kid. Guess I was wrong.

(A beat as he fights back tears.)

Thank you, Ms. Fairchild. I know you did your best. I appreciate it.

IMANI

(Holding him by the shoulders, fighting her own tears.)

No need to thank me, Tray. We're not done yet. We still have grounds for an appeal because the judge wouldn't give us a continuance for that hearing. I'll file a notice first thing in the morning. So don't give up.

(To the BAILIFF.)

Please give him a moment to see his family.

(Nodding, the BAILIFF leads TRAYVON downstage and off as ANITA crosses to the defense table. For a moment the two women look at each other without speaking.)

ANITA

What I don't understand is why you're still in the game at all. Why aren't you teaching in a law school far away from here? Or why aren't you off on an island somewhere? If my son were shot dead by police while kneeling over his father's body, I'd never set foot in a police station or a courtroom again. Especially if I got a wrongful death settlement as big as the one you got from Miami.

(A beat.)

Why do you do it?

IMANI

(After a pause.)

Ever read a book that beautifully describes all the characters without saying they're white, then mentions the black man at the bus stop without giving any other description?

ANITA

(Shrugging.)

Sure. What's your point?

IMANI

People are white unless otherwise specified—black or Hispanic or Asian. The writer isn't prejudiced, just part of a culture that sees white as normal and non-white as something else. We're not something else. We matter too. Rick and Nico and Trayvon—we all matter.

ANITA

(After a pause, sticking out her hand.)

See you around, counselor.

(They shake hands. ANITA exits upstage. We hear a ringtone. IMANI takes the phone from her briefcase. GEORGE enters downstage, crossing from stage left toward stage right. Like the gun barrel sequence that opens James Bond movies, he pivots to the left and points his gun at the audience, making a shooting noise, then humming the James Bond theme. Then, in a series of motions and poses, he mimics gun moments from movies.)

IMANI

(Scribbling notes as she talks and reacting to what she hears.)

Imani Fairchild . . . Yes . . . Oh, I am so sorry to hear that . . . When did this happen? You have my deepest sympathy . . . How old was your son? . . . Oh, dear God . . . Yes . . . Where are you? . . . No, I have GPS in my car . . . Stay there. I'm on my way.

(Putting her phone away, IMANI takes her briefcase and exits upstage. GEORGE ends his pantomime by running a hand over his hair as if admiring his reflection in a mirror. Then he fondles and the gun and smiles as he points it at the audience.)

GEORGE

Cool!

(Blackout. Gunshot with a flash of red light.)

END OF PLAY

Property List:

Small automatic pistol
Police pistol, holster, and badge
Evidence bags, latex gloves
Two briefcases
Legal pads and papers
Gavel and block
Notepad and loose leaf paper for letter
Skittles
AriZona Watermelon Drink can
Plastic bag
Three cell phones, one with an earpiece
Two gray hoodies, one blood-stained
A glass or bottle of water
TV remote
Game controller
Towel
A burnt orange jacket
Movable chairs
File folders
Bandages
Stack of printouts
Orange jumpsuit

Sound Effects:

Moderate rainfall
Gunshot
Gavel sounds
Numerous voice-over recordings with a wide variety of voices
Courtroom chatter

Gary Earl Ross is a retired University at Buffalo professor. He is author of the books *The Wheel of Desire*, *Shimmerville*, *Blackbird Rising*, and *Nickel City Blues*, the first Gideon Rimes mystery. His plays—performed in various American cities, as well as in Canada, England, India, China, and Kazakhstan, include *Sleepwalker*, *Picture Perfect*, *The Best Woman*, *Murder Squared*, *The Scavenger's Daughter*, *The Guns of Christmas* (winner of the Emanuel Fried Outstanding New Play Award), *The Mark of Cain* (winner of the Emanuel Fried Award), and *Matter of Intent* (winner of both the Emanuel Fried Award and the Edgar Award from Mystery Writers of America). A member of the Just Buffalo Literary Center, Mystery Writers of America, the Dramatists Guild of America, International Thriller Writers, and the National Writers Union, Ross lives in Buffalo.

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