

FADE IN

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- DAY (PRESENT DAY)

DON CARLSON (24) hustles through pedestrian traffic, bookbag swinging from a shoulder strap, a student in a hurry. He's of medium build, medium height, medium in looks -- nondescript in every way. A RING TONE and he reaches for his belted cell phone. He walks while he talks.

DON
Hey, Dad. What's up?

INT. OFFICE -- DAY

MATT CARLSON (late 50's), white shirt and tie, works from a desk that's awash in papers and files, just on the edge of chaos and still orderly. He hunches forward over the phone.

MATT
I think they found us.

INTERCUT FOLLOWING CONVERSATION AS DESIRED

DON
What makes you think that?

MATT
The last two days. Some guys are always around.

DON
Could be your imagination?

MATT
I hope so. Just keep your eyes open.

DON
What do we do if it's them?

MATT
We'll cross that bridge when it comes.

DON
Yeah. I've got a meeting. I'll stay alert. As always. Call ya.

BACK TO DOWNTOWN STREET

Don closes his cell phone, looks around, and pushes open a glass door to a store front office that says: "San Diego Law School, Free Legal Advice, No Appointment Needed."

DANTE BALLESTRERI (50s), slightly overweight, dressed in khaki pants, plaid shirt and jacket, peers unseen from a nearby corner.

INT. LAW CLINIC -- DAY

Don joins EIGHT STUDENTS (mid 20s), a mix of males and females in a central area the size of a mobile home, with desks and client chairs spread about. A separate room is labelled "Child Care." Individual offices are on the periphery of the central area.

ROSALIE CROTHERS (40s), prim, proper, neat as a pin, exits her office, clipboard in hand, all business. She motions the students to her, and they sit on desks and chairs.

CROTHERS

Welcome everybody. Let's get to it. You volunteered to work in the law school's clinic. You'll get great experience, represent actual clients, and earn three units of credit. I'm your faculty supervisor, and a real attorney

Crothers looks around. The front door opens and JEFFREY LEWIS (45) enters, tie askew, rumpled sport coat, and a look that screams disorganized. Crothers looks annoyed.

CROTHERS (CONT'D)

Here's' Jeffrey Lewis, your supervising attorney.

Don notices fellow student ANN ALEXANDER (24), attractive, attentive. He checks her out and stays interested. Don raises his hand. Crothers nods at Don.

DON

We get to go to court, right?

CROTHERS

Correct. Don Carlson, right? Mr. Lewis will be there with you. But not every case goes to court.

Ann looks at Don. She stays interested. Don smiles at Ann.

CROTHERS (CONT'D)

Above all, we're here to serve the poor. In civil cases. Criminal matters are handled through the Defenders program. So you'll see a lot of landlord-tenant, maybe some contract disputes.

Crothers holds out a paper.

CROTHERS (CONT'D)

I've e-mailed your duty hours. And I'll post them. That's it.

Crothers gestures to Lewis and they head for her office.

Don moves over to Ann.

DON
Aren't you in Alford's Ethics class?

ANN
Yep. You?

DON
Yeah. Ever notice how he looks at
the women's chests?

Ann laughs, checks Don out.

ANN
Interesting opening line. Spend
much time on it?

DON
How's it working?

ANN
Jury's still out.

DON
Cute. I've been waiting for this
clinic course. And this is no line --
really -- I want to help the poor.

Ann sizes him up. They exit together.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Ann and Don leave the clinic.

DON
So I'll blunder on. Coffee?

Ann chuckles.

ANN
Not today.

DON
Something I said? How 'bout tomorrow?

Ann hesitates.

DON (CONT'D)
Walk on the beach? I'll keep asking.

ANN
We'll see. Keep asking.

Ballestreri watches the interaction. Don and Ann leave in separate directions.

TWO MEN (55) join Ballestreri. They walk toward the clinic. PASSERSBY give them a wide berth.

INT. LAW CLINIC -- CONTINUOUS

Ballestreri enters the clinic, looks it over. A FEMALE LAW STUDENT (25) greets him.

STUDENT
Can I help you?

BALLESTRERI
Yeah. I got a legal problem. But I gotta get my papers. When can I come back? Who were those two that just walked out?

STUDENT
Ann Alexander and Don Carlson.

BALLESTRERI
Carlson. Carlson. That's a good one.

Ballestreri has an edginess about him. Though he's courteous, there's an undercurrent of confrontation.

STUDENT
There's a schedule on that wall.

Ballestreri walks over to a posted schedule.

CLOSE ON SCHEDULE

We see "Don Carlson" and his hours of Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Ballesteri's finger traces that line.

BACK TO SCENE

BALLESTERI
Hey, put me down for Tuesday, two.
For that Carlson guy. That's rich.
I'm Dante. Just Dante for now.

Ballesteri exits the clinic.

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

Ann Alexander sits with her UNCLE IVAN (60s), impeccably groomed, redolent of money in a tailored suit. The Starbucks crowd includes TWO CAUCASIAN MEN (30s) at separate tables who look like they played pulling guards in the NFL.

IVAN
So school's OK? Last semester.