

"MAMBA"

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Based on reports, court transcripts, and police interviews

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EXT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

The street in front of the arena has been taken over. It's a carnival. There's a Ferris wheel with "Bryant" on it.

Fans everywhere in purple and gold. Parents and children, couples on dates. Selfies, smiles, celebration. Everyone here to see or be seen.

SUPER: "Kobe Bryant, Jersey Retirement Ceremony"

We find a KID at a photo booth between two human puppets in Lakers jerseys, #8 and #24.

KID
The mamba! The black mamba!

He points at the puppets, relics from a Nike ad campaign, as his dad gets a photo for the Gram, and we pull back to the event entrance, an aluminum arch draped with a banner:

"The Los Angeles Lakers Welcome You To Kobeland"

Until we're suddenly swept into the past --

EXT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, DAY

An upscale mountain resort in Edwards, Colorado ~20 miles from Vail. 56 rooms, 3 golf courses, indoor and outdoor pools. The county is Eagle.

SUPER: "14 Years Earlier"

INT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, DAY

19-year-old [REDACTED], blonde, open, vulnerable, sits for a job interview with a male HOTEL MANAGER twice her age. He's reviewing her resume.

HOTEL MANAGER
So, you're majoring in...

[REDACTED]
I haven't picked. I don't really have to until I'm a sophomore. But performing is my passion. You know, writing and singing music. I was in choir in high school, and I did theater- don't judge.

HOTEL MANAGER
I'll do what I can.

Then I won't feel bad admitting I
was also a cheerleader.

He smiles, puts down the resume for a second.

HOTEL MANAGER

What we need in terms of summer
help is mainly at reception. This
isn't exactly our busy season-

Skis work better when there's snow.

HOTEL MANAGER

They do. But there'd also be some
light work at the concierge desk.
Giving pointers, securing dinner
reservations, that sort of thing.
Are you a people pleaser?

Definitely.

He picks the resume back up.

HOTEL MANAGER

Can you start this week?

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

The Lakers are playing the San Antonio Spurs. The Laker
Girls are literally crying.

ABC Sports sideline reporter JIM GRAY interviews JACK
NICHOLSON. Gold shirt, sunglasses.

GRAY

Jack, how disappointing is this?

JACK

Well, it's heartbreaking for me,
but we've had a great ride with the
Lakers. It's one of the great runs
in the history of sports. San
Antonio played great tonight. Best
teams win seven game series. But
hats off to the Lakers. They're a
great champion. They deserve
everything. That's why all these
people are standing up for them.
It's heartbreaking, but we're here.

Then a shot of KOBE BRYANT, 24 years old, on the bench. White towel draped over his shoulders. Brooding. Somewhere between anger and helplessness.

There are about two minutes left in the game, and his team is getting crushed, 105-78.

As the reserves play out the remaining time, we hear play-by-play man BRAD NESSLER.

NESSLER (V.O.)

There was a standing ovation that lasted the duration of the timeout for the Lakers, who have given the fans here so many thrills. Three straight championships. But it's all set to come to a close.

The clock winds down. Kobe gets up from the bench. And then it's over. The Spurs win 110-82.

Media on the floor. Players hug their opponents. Jim Gray finds Kobe coming out of one such embrace.

GRAY

Kobe Bryant, down here on the court. Kobe, this is a difficult moment for you. We appreciate your time. How disappointed are you?

KOBE

Well, you know, I just hate losing. It's a tough loss. They played extremely well. We just have to get ready for the offseason. Next season for us starts right now.

GRAY

How much harder will you work in this offseason now for you to get back to the championship?

KOBE

I'll push myself to exhaustion.

And he means it. This is everything to him.

INT. ARENA HALLWAY, NIGHT

Lakers GM MITCH KUPCHAK, gray hair, shirt and tie, 6'9", about to turn 49, passes by a gaggle of REPORTERS in the hall outside the locker room.

REPORTER #1
Mitch, your thoughts on the loss?

He raises an eyebrow.

MITCH
That was... convincing.

REPORTER #2
Do you expect Kobe to sign the extension now that the season has ended?

MITCH
He's already under contract for next year.

REPORTER #2
But beyond that. Do you expect him to remain a Laker?

MITCH
Now's not the time, Tim.

Security opens the door to the locker room.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, CONTINUOUS

Players showering, getting dressed. It feels like a funeral.

Mitch finds Head Coach PHIL JACKSON, 58, only an inch shorter, gray hair and glasses. The Zen Master. He's won nine championships, tied for most in NBA history.

MITCH
Ten wins short of a championship is ten wins too far.

Phil has an eraser. His target is a white board with the number 10.

PHIL
It happens when the group doesn't honor the path.

MITCH
They're going to take the whole thing, aren't they? San Antonio.

PHIL
We couldn't defend the fucking screen roll.

MITCH

We'll get you help. You know this franchise is committed to winning.

Phil knows. But he'd rather let Mitch wonder. He surveys the locker room. Guys packing up.

MITCH

How's your heart?

PHIL

The blood's flowing. It's funny. You'd think I had a balloon shoved into my artery a couple days ago.

MITCH

Dr. Buss cares about your health. We all do. I think you know.

PHIL

He and I will sit down about my contract. For now, I'm summoned to be flogged by the press.

He pads off.

EXT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

The players' parking lot. A Range Rover and a Porsche exit. Only one car left. A Ferrari.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

It's Kobe's car. He stayed behind to get up shots in the darkened, empty arena. A nondescript Lakers staff member rebounds the ball.

His knee is bothering him. His shoulder's fucked up.

He keeps shooting anyway.

LATER

Kobe finally leaves through the tunnel, showered, in street clothes. His wife, VANESSA, just turned 21, and their baby daughter are waiting for him.

Vanessa is quick to hold and kiss her husband.

VANESSA

Oh, baby. I'm so sorry. But you
were awesome.

KOBE

Yeah, 7 turnovers. Only got to the
damn free throw line once. Missed
them both.

VANESSA

You scored 20. This isn't on you.

KOBE

I need surgery. I can feel it.

VANESSA

Where?

He puts his hand on her back. Doesn't want to talk about it.
They walk. He kisses his daughter on the head.

EXT. HONOLULU, DAY

Outside on the deck of a pricey rental home, Phil Jackson
meets with Lakers owner, DR. JERRY BUSS, 70.

Buss has a mustache and auburn hair that must be a toupee.
He goes by doctor because he got a PhD in physical chemistry
when he was 24, but he made his fortune in real estate.

DR. BUSS

We're chasing the Celtics, really,
that's how I see it.

Phil is distracted by the arrival of some very young women
inside the house. Blonde. Possibly teenagers.

PHIL

Are those your guests?

DR. BUSS

They read poetry to each other.

Indeed the women have books. Phil backs up.

PHIL

How many titles do the Lakers have?

DR. BUSS

We have 14, Phil. And I believe we
can tie those bastards from Boston
with you as our coach.

PHIL

No matter how hard I try, Jerry, we can't get two trophies in one year.

DR. BUSS

Which is why I want to extend your contract through '06. That gives us three tries for two more rings.

PHIL

I don't know. One is tough enough.

DR. BUSS

How many does Auerbach have?

PHIL

You know the answer to that.

DR. BUSS

One more puts you ahead of him. You'd be the greatest coach in the history of the sport.

PHIL

Then what the hell do I need two for?

DR. BUSS

Why did Picasso keep painting after Guernica?

Phil looks back at the house. The women are seriously conducting a reading.

PHIL

I'll have my agent start negotiating with Mitch.

DR. BUSS

A good plan.

Phil starts to go then stops to ask one more question.

PHIL

By the way, has anybody talked to Kobe about his knee?

DR. BUSS

His knee or his shoulder?

You could say there's some confusion.

EXT. KOBE'S HOUSE, NIGHT

A U-shaped, 6500-square-foot, two-story mansion in a gated community near Newport Beach.

INT. KOBE'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Vanessa is curled up in Kobe's arms on the sofa. There's a baby monitor on the coffee table.

KOBE

What do you think? Pelinka says we don't have to consult the team.

VANESSA

Well, you didn't trust them on your shoulder, so...

KOBE

I can't miss games.

VANESSA

Where's the surgeon?

KOBE

The best guy we can find from the research is in Colorado.

She massages his right knee.

KOBE

Careful, baby.

VANESSA

It's only tendinitis.

KOBE

'Only tendinitis.' Okay. You try to jump out the gym with it.

VANESSA

What's the procedure called?
Arthroscopic?

KOBE

Just a scope.

VANESSA

I think you already know what you want to do.

KOBE

Oh yeah?

He pulls her in. The baby monitor crackles. She gets up.

KOBE
Vanessa, baby, we can afford a
nanny.

She heads off to the nursery.

INT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, DAY

[RECEPTIONIST], at reception, answers the ringing phone.

[RECEPTIONIST]
Cordillera Lodge and Spa. How may I
help you?

INTERCUT: ORANGE COUNTY TRAVEL AGENCY

A middle-aged woman named PAT, nostalgic for the days when
you could still smoke in the office, on the other line.

PAT
Hi there. I'm calling about a
reservation I tried to make online.
But I'm not sure.

[RECEPTIONIST]
I'd be happy to check. What's the
name?

PAT
It'd be under Javier Rodriguez. For
my client. Do you see anything?

[RECEPTIONIST] works the computer.

[RECEPTIONIST]
And what's your name, so I know?

PAT
Pat.

[RECEPTIONIST]
Pretty. Is it short for Patricia?

Pat mm hmms. [RECEPTIONIST] types again, hits enter.

[RECEPTIONIST]
No, I'm sorry. I don't see anything
under Rodriguez...

PAT

Oh boy. Then what's your availability? This is for tonight and tomorrow. And actually, three rooms. It's very important.

[REDACTED]

We'd be happy to accommodate everybody. Not a problem at all.

(types)

So you said Javier Rodriguez...

PAT

And I'll just tell you so it isn't a surprise. The real name of Mr. Rodriguez is Kobe Bryant. Do you know who that is?

[REDACTED] does.

EXT. VAIL, EAGLE COUNTY REGIONAL AIRPORT, NIGHT

Kobe, two bodyguards, MIKE ORTIZ and TROY LASTER, as well as his trainer, JOE CARBONE, disembark from a private charter.

Ortiz, on his cell phone.

ORTIZ

I wanna expedite things. Get the keys. No loitering, no paperwork.

Two cars are waiting. Their drivers open the rear doors. Kobe gets in one, his entourage in the other.

EXT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

The cars pull up out front. The bellman, BOBBY PIETRACK, is already outside, expecting them. A mall fashion/college prep look. He pushes a luggage cart towards the curb.

INT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

The entourage escorts Kobe into the lobby. [REDACTED] is at reception, smiling.

[REDACTED]

Hey there, all. Where's Mr. Ortiz?

He steps up. She has the welcome materials and the keys ready. Carbone slides in.

CARBONE
Which one's for Rodriguez?

She indicates. Carbone takes it.

CARBONE
Hey, Javier, let's go.

Kobe, who was on his BlackBerry, paces towards the hall.

MOMENTS LATER

█████ leads the entourage to the southwest end of the hotel.
About as far from the front desk as it gets.

█████
Was everything all right for you
guys flying in?

ORTIZ
Par for the course.

█████
Well, I hope you enjoy your time in
Colorado.

She smiles, turns ahead.

Kobe checks her out.

INT. ROOM 35, NIGHT

The door opens. The bodyguards go in first. It's a suite
with a patio.

█████
Take a look around. If there's
anything you need, I'm here.

Kobe pulls her aside as the bodyguards inspect the premises.

KOBE
You could show me around.

█████
The hotel?

KOBE
Where else? There's gotta be more
here than just this room.

Definitely. [REDACTED]

KOBE
Come back in 15 minutes.

Maybe I can. [REDACTED]

KOBE
Okay. I see how it is...

He's flirting with her.

The bodyguards reappear.

[REDACTED]
I can show you your rooms now, if you want.

INT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

Rooms 18 and 20 are open. Laster and Ortiz share one. Carbone gets his own.

Bellman Bobby comes down the hall with their luggage.

INT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

[REDACTED] checks her watch at the front desk. On the computer, we see that only seven rooms in the hotel are occupied.

Bobby comes up, the luggage cart now empty.

BOBBY
They wouldn't let me take him his bags. I had to hand them off.

[REDACTED] peers down the hall. Ortiz and Laster are preventing access to Kobe's corridor.

[REDACTED]
I'll be back.

She leaves through the front doors.

EXT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

[REDACTED] takes a left, walks around the building, and proceeds through a service entrance.

INT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

An employee cafeteria. She walks out and up to the second floor, then takes an elevator back down to the first floor.

She emerges in the same hallway as Kobe's room, having circumnavigated the bodyguards.

Quietly, nerves showing, she knocks on the door.

Kobe answers.

[REDACTED]
Come with me.

EXT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

First the resort in full, then the room on the second floor above Kobe's.

The windows are open.

The couple inside is asleep.

We listen to the night.

INT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

Night auditor TRINA and Bellman Bobby are at the front desk.

All of a sudden [REDACTED] appears.

TRINA
Are you already clocked out?

[REDACTED]
Sure.

TRINA
Can you finish the cash sheet
before you go?

[REDACTED]
I will.

She gets to work. Bobby watches her.

BOBBY
I'll walk you out when you finish.

[REDACTED] nods. Bobby keeps watching her.

EXT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

[REDACTED] and Bobby walk across the dark parking lot. Eventually, she grabs his arm.

BOBBY
What's wrong?

She's visibly shaking.

BOBBY
[REDACTED]-

She starts to cry.

[REDACTED]
Kobe Bryant choked me.

BOBBY
Are you- What? What are you-

He's shocked. She's holding something back.

BOBBY
I'll believe you.

Her lips quiver.

EXT. VERIZON WIRELESS AMPITHEATRE, NIGHT

A Pearl Jam concert. Phil Jackson is here with bookish sports agent DWIGHT MANLEY, 37. They have terrific seats.

Phil's digging the music, but Dwight wants to talk business. Problem is he's pretty soft spoken for a guy at a concert.

PHIL
What?

MANLEY
...Malone...

Or at least that's all that Phil can make out.

PHIL
You promised this was about old times, reliving the glory days when Vedder used to come to Bulls games with Rodman. Not free agency.

Manley gets increasingly louder as we go.

MANLEY

Greatest power forward ever...
wants to play for you.

PHIL

Who's that?

Manley's turn to roll his eyes. Phil knows.

PHIL

How much does he care about
breaking Kareem's scoring record?

MANLEY

He wants a championship. That's it.

Pearl Jam begins to play "Spin the Black Circle". Phil
listens but really he's thinking about basketball.

MANLEY

It can be a package deal, I think.
Karl and Gary.

PHIL

(to himself)

Payton could defend the screen
roll.

MANLEY

What's that?

PHIL

Mitch and I will figure it out
while I'm in Montana.

EXT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, MORNING

Kobe, his bodyguards, and Carbone exit the resort.

CARBONE

How you sleep, brother?

KOBE

Get this shit over with.

He dips inside a waiting car.

INT. STEADMAN HAWKINS CLINIC, MORNING

Kobe is on an operating table under local anesthesia. A
video screen up next to him, facing away.

A surgeon makes a small incision at the joint in his right knee then inserts a very tiny camera.

The video screen comes alive.

The surgeon gets to work.

INT. EAGLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, DAY

The air conditioner is running. A video camera is set up. [REDACTED] sits with two cops, one male, one female, and another woman, a social worker.

DETECTIVE WINTERS, 30s, jet black hair, no sideburns, exceedingly plump, leads the questioning.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

With the air conditioner going here it's kinda loud so I'll need you to speak up. You have a soft voice.

[REDACTED]
Okay.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Can you explain to me why we're here and what happened last night?

[REDACTED]
Last night I was at work, and I was sexually assaulted.

MOMENTS LATER

DETECTIVE WINTERS

And then Mr. Bryant asked you to come back in about 15 minutes?

[REDACTED]
I showed him the spa, the exercise room, the outdoor pool, the outdoor jacuzzi. I took him back up to the lobby and showed him the terrace. And at that point he asked me to take him back to his room.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Then what happened?

[REDACTED]
He invited me in, and I went with him.

(MORE)

[REDACTED] (CONT'D)

He asked me to sit on the couch. He sat on the chair, and we were just talking. Nothing was really happening, just chitchat. He asked if I'd go in the jacuzzi with him later, at which point I told him my shift was over, and I was gonna go home because I was starting to get a little worried.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Well, if you were supposed to get off work at 7 why were you there at 9:30 or 10 when he arrived?

[REDACTED]
Because I was excited to meet Kobe Bryant.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

So you wanted to meet him?

[REDACTED]
Yes, I did. Plus I was trying to make up the extra hours that I missed by not coming in at 11.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Okay. So you're just talking at this point?

[REDACTED]
He tried to convince me to come back in 15 minutes, which I told him I would just so I could get out of there. Then I stood up to leave. He stood up and asked me to give him a hug. So I gave him a hug, and he started kissing me, and I let him kiss me.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

And that was consensual?

[REDACTED]
Yes it was.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

And then what happened?

[REDACTED]
We kept kissing. Then he took off his pants.

(MORE)

[REDACTED] (CONT'D)

That's when I tried to back up and leave. And that's when he started to choke me.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

What were you thinking at the time?

[REDACTED]
I was thinking that his actions were getting physical, and I wanted to get out of the room.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

And what were you telling him during all this? Or did you tell him anything?

[REDACTED]
I told him once that I needed to leave.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Did you ever tell him anything else?

[REDACTED]
No, because when he took off his pants that's when I started to kinda back up and try to push his hands off me. And that's when he started to choke me. He wasn't choking me enough that I couldn't breathe, just choking me to the point that I was scared.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Okay. This is where- this is hard- you're doing a great job, okay? But I need you to describe for me where he was touching.

[REDACTED]
Outside of my underwear. He didn't actually finger me or anything. It was just touching, I guess.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

So he's rubbing. What is he rubbing?

[REDACTED]
My vagina. And during that time I was trying to pull away.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Did he know you were trying to leave?

[REDACTED]

Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

How do you know that?

[REDACTED]

Because I kept trying to back away and move towards the door.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

So he was choking you at one time, and then he let go at some point?

[REDACTED]

He was groping me. I tried to leave, tried to break away- that's when he grabbed my neck. And at that point I was just looking at him. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know what to say. Then he held me by my neck and physically forced me over to the side of the two chairs, and that's when he turned my back to him and...

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Okay. So he was controlling your movements?

[REDACTED]

Yes. He continually had one hand around my neck. And with his other hand he pushed me over to the side of the two chairs, turned me around and bent me over and lifted up my skirt.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Are you telling him anything at this point now?

[REDACTED]

At this point I was just kinda scared, and I said no a few times.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

When you said no- were you bent over when you were saying no?

[REDACTED]
Yeah. When he lifted up my skirt. I said no when he took off my underwear.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
How loud did you say no?

[REDACTED]
About as loud as I'm saying it now.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Did he hear you?

[REDACTED]
Yes, he did.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
How do you know he heard you?

[REDACTED]
Because every time I said no he tightened his hold around me. And then he'd lean real close and ask me questions.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
What would he ask you?

[REDACTED]
'You're not gonna tell anybody, right?'

DETECTIVE WINTERS
What did you say?

[REDACTED]
I said no. And he didn't hear me or asked me to say it louder. He wanted me to turn around and look at him while I said it.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Why did you say no?

[REDACTED]
I was scared that if I said, 'Yes, I'm gonna tell somebody, I'm gonna get out of here now,' that he'd get more physical.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Okay. And then what happened?

[REDACTED]
He lifted up my skirt, took off my underwear and pushed inside of me. He leaned his face toward mine and asked me if I liked it when a guy came on my face. I said no. Then he was like, 'What did you say?' And he grabbed and like tightened his hold on my neck. I said no. He said he was gonna do it anyway. At that point I got a little bit more aggressive and tried to get his hands off my neck. And he was still behind me at that point. He's still choking me. I was not trying as hard as I could have to get away, but I was still trying...

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Was he hurting you?

[REDACTED]
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Had you led him on at anytime during this event?

[REDACTED]
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
At what point?

[REDACTED]
When I was walking to his room and showing him around he was flirting with me, and I was flirting back.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Okay. And why were you doing that?

[REDACTED]
Part of me was excited that he was Kobe Bryant, and he was showing interest in me. And part of me was trying to- I don't wanna say be a good employee- but be nice, I guess.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
And then what happened after he's having sex with you from behind?

[REDACTED]
When I started to get a little bit
more aggressive- when I tried
harder to get away- that's when he
stopped.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Were you crying then?

[REDACTED]
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
When did you begin crying?

[REDACTED]
When he started having sex with me.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Would he have known that this was
not a consensual encounter?

[REDACTED]
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
So it's fair to say that you
allowed him to do everything up to
the point of the groping issue?

[REDACTED]
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
And at that point it was clear that
he knew that you didn't want to go
any further?

[REDACTED]
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
And then you say you got forceful
with him, and that made him stop
all of a sudden. Did he say
anything to you at that point?

[REDACTED]
He didn't say anything until he'd
stopped, and I turned around and
was looking at him, and that's when
he started saying, 'This is just
between the two of us.'

(MORE)

████ (CONT'D)
Nobody is gonna know about this.
You're not going to tell anybody.'

DETECTIVE WINTERS
What did you say?

████
I said no, I wouldn't tell anybody.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
And why did you tell him that?

████
I was scared he'd do other things
to scare me into not telling
anybody. You know, like, become
more physical. Choke me harder, hit
me. Something like that.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Is everything you're telling me
here today the truth?

████
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
And you understand the difference
between a truth and a lie?

████
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Do you understand the allegations
you're making against someone?

████
Yes I do.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
You understand the seriousness of
this allegation?

████
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Do you understand that if through
our investigation it comes out that
this was just a story, and it was
made up, that you'll be charged?

[REDACTED]
Yes I do.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Are you willing to testify in
court?

[REDACTED]
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Okay. We'll just go like we would
with any other case. We're not
treating this any different because
of anybody's stature in the
community. I guess from my
standpoint- it's not that I don't
believe you, it's just that I don't
want to see anybody doing this just
to try and get ahead or anything
like that. Because, obviously, this
is pretty serious with a pretty
serious person. Do you understand?

[REDACTED]
Yes.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
I understand this is hard for you
to go through. It's embarrassing
too. But it wasn't your fault,
okay? If accountability needs to be
held that's what's gonna happen.
But don't blame yourself.

MOMENTS LATER

[REDACTED] exits the interview room. Her MOM and DAD are waiting.
They embrace. It's a lot for all of them.

INT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, DAY

The lounge. Kobe, who has crutches beside him, plays chess
with Carbone. Ortiz and Laster monitor the low stress
environment. They have food, drinks.

KOBE
Check.

Carbone surveys the board.

CARBONE

You got me in a bad spot, man.

KOBE

You think this is bad? Shit...

EXT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, DAY

There are two cars from the Eagle County Sheriff's Office and one from Vail PD in the parking lot.

They're staking out the resort.

INT. ROOM 35, NIGHT

Kobe is sitting up in bed, watching game film on a portable DVD player. He places a call.

KOBE

Hey, I wanna put in for room service. Really? It stopped at 10:30? Come on, you can bend the rules for me... yes, thank you.

He pulls the menu off the nightstand.

EXT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, NIGHT

More cars from the Eagle County Sheriff's Office arrive. Detective Winters and DETECTIVE LOYA, another big guy, 30s, gel in his short, spiked hair, get out and engage Vail PD.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

No movement? He hasn't left?

VAIL PD

He's behind your fucking car.

Sure enough, for some reason, Kobe is in the parking lot, on his crutches, accompanied by Laster.

Winters and Loya seek them out.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Mr. Bryant- I'm Detective Winters from the ECSO.

DETECTIVE LOYA

Eagle County Sheriff's Office. My name's Loya. I'm a detective too.

KOBE

What's going on, fellas?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

We wanted to discuss something from
last night.

KOBE

What do you mean?

Detective Loya has a tape recorder in his shirt pocket. He
activates it.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I don't really wanna talk about it
here. Can we go back to your room?

Kobe looks at them, unsure what's going on, but agrees.

KOBE

Yeah, come on.

DETECTIVE LOYA

(refers to Laster)

Who's this gentleman here?

KOBE

One of my security guards.

DETECTIVE LOYA

Do you mind if he stays with these
officers here while we talk to you?

Laster is siphoned off by the cops from the stakeout.

Kobe and the detectives proceed towards the hotel. They want
to delay any further conversation, but he presses them.

KOBE

What's this all about?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

We received a call earlier today
with an allegation.

Kobe stops and gathers his crutches.

DETECTIVE LOYA

Do you want me to hold those for
you, or are you all right?

KOBE

Just tell me what this is.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

We took a report of a possible sexual assault allegation. So I wanna find out your side of the story.

KOBE

Side of what story? What exactly are you talking about?

DETECTIVE LOYA

Do you wanna have this conversation in front of everybody or do you wanna go into a room?

KOBE

This is my career.

DETECTIVE LOYA

So where's your room at?

KOBE

It's all the way on the other side, man. I can't walk there.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

We'll just take it real slow.

Kobe doesn't move.

KOBE

My biggest fear is my career, my image.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I understand. Very, very much so.

DETECTIVE LOYA

And this is how we work, Kobe. We're not here to destroy your career or your image, but we do have a serious matter at hand we'd like to resolve. And it's all gonna depend on your cooperation.

KOBE

Do I have to?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Well, that's up to you. I mean we'd like to find out your side of the story. That's all we wanna do.

DETECTIVE LOYA

Were you with a female party last night?

KOBE

A girl showed me around, yes. I think her name was [REDACTED]. Something like that.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

That's what we'd like to talk about, okay?

KOBE

Her? Did she say I did something?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I'll be blunt. Did you have sexual intercourse with her?

KOBE

No.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Okay, Kobe, here's what I'd like to do. There's an allegation that unconscious intercourse occurred last night, okay?

Kobe starts to protest.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Hang on, okay? Hang on. I understand you have every right to be upset, but I'm giving you an opportunity to tell the truth if something did happen. Because we're gonna find out.

KOBE

Is there any way I can settle this? Whatever it is, I mean?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

What do you mean by 'settle'?

KOBE

If my wife found out that anybody made any type of allegations against me, she'd lose her shit.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I understand your concerns and frustrations, okay?

(MORE)

DETECTIVE WINTERS (CONT'D)
But what I need to talk to you
about is this allegation. I need to
find out if this actually happened.
I mean it could have been a
complete come-on. She could have
led you on.

Kobe's temper flares.

KOBE
But what if this scenario-

DETECTIVE LOYA
Kobe, Kobe, Kobe. Calm down here a
sec. Let me explain something to
you. She's consented to an exam.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
We've got physical evidence.

KOBE
But listen-

DETECTIVE LOYA
Listen to me first, okay? Be
straight up with me, Kobe. We're
not gonna tell your wife. Did you
have sexual intercourse with her?

KOBE
That's what I need to know, whether
you'll tell my wife, because I did
have sexual intercourse with her.

DETECTIVE LOYA
Okay, was it consensual?

KOBE
It was totally consensual.

DETECTIVE LOYA
What makes you believe that?

KOBE
Cause she started kissing me. Then
she bent over-

DETECTIVE LOYA
Did she tell you-

KOBE
She got up to leave, and she gave
me a kiss.

(MORE)

KOBE (CONT'D)

So I kissed her back, and then I started caressing her, and then she put her hand on my thing or whatever, and it kinda went from there.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Okay, hear me out. It's possible at some point she may have told you, 'No, I don't wanna do this.' Maybe she did lead you on a little bit. She kissed you but then said, 'No, I don't want this to happen.'

KOBE

If she said that I stopped. Nope. There was no semen, no nothing.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

How long did it go for?

KOBE

Five minutes maybe.

DETECTIVE LOYA

During that time, did she ever say anything to you? Did she scream, 'No, stop, I don't wanna do this'?

Kobe hesitates.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

What was she saying?

DETECTIVE LOYA

The best thing is to be straight up. That way we can resolve this.

KOBE

Okay, I'm thinking. I'm thinking.

(beat)

I'm trying to think of the conversation we had.

DETECTIVE LOYA

Did you ever have her from the back of her head or her neck?

Kobe demonstrates that he did.

KOBE

I had my right hand like this and my other hand like that.

DETECTIVE LOYA
How hard were you holding onto her?

KOBE
I don't know. My hands are strong.

DETECTIVE LOYA
Did you ever ask her if you could
cum in her face?

Kobe is adamant.

KOBE
Yes. That's when she said no.
That's when she said no.

DETECTIVE LOYA
Did you get any blood on you or
anything like that?

KOBE
She didn't bleed, did she?

DETECTIVE LOYA
Yeah, she had a lot of bleeding.

KOBE
What? You gotta be kidding me. From
where?

DETECTIVE LOYA
From her vaginal area.

KOBE
Did she cut herself or something?
There's no blood on me whatsoever,
man. Matter of fact, I still have
the boxers. They're all white.
There's nothing on them.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Is it okay if we take those?

KOBE
Alright, can I ask you a question
though? I do not want this to get
to the media.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
We don't either.

DETECTIVE LOYA
That's why we're here so late.

Finally, Kobe begins to move inside.

INT. THE LODGE AND SPA AT CORDILLERA, CONTINUOUS
Winters and Loya escort Kobe through the lobby.

KOBE

I can't believe this girl. What
does she want from me?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I don't think she wants anything.

KOBE

Are you kidding me? She has to have
a motive to do this.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

What do you think it is then?

KOBE

She must be trying to get money or
something.

DETECTIVE LOYA

Are you willing to pay if she is?

KOBE

I got to. I got to. I'm in the
worst fucking situation.
Whatever I need to do without
making this thing public I will do,
man. I don't care what it is.

They turn towards the elevators.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

What kind of surgery did you have?

KOBE

Arthroscopic.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

ACL or NCL?

KOBE

Cartilage.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

You gonna be ready for the season?

KOBE

I don't know, man. I don't even know if I'll be able to play this season with this shit going on. If it becomes public I'll lose my wife. All my endorsements...

They call the elevator.

DETECTIVE LOYA

How long have you been married?

KOBE

My wife and daughter, they mean everything, man. Everything.

DETECTIVE LOYA

Well, did you think about that beforehand?

KOBE

It was consensual with this girl. There was nothing weird.

DETECTIVE LOYA

I don't mean to offend you in any way, but is this a habit of yours, that you cheat on your wife?

KOBE

Um, with one other person. And she could actually testify I do the same thing, the strangling thing.

DETECTIVE LOYA

Who's this other person?

KOBE

Her name's Michelle.

DETECTIVE LOYA

The girl from last night has a bruise on her neck.

KOBE

Yeah, I mean, me and Michelle, that's what- we do the same thing.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

How many times did you have sex with Michelle?

KOBE

A lot. She'll tell you the same.

DETECTIVE LOYA
Obviously, your wife doesn't know
about this.

KOBE
No. Nothing, man. Seriously.

The elevator dings. Opens. They get in.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Would you be willing to take a
polygraph examination?

KOBE
Oh, yeah. I'd do it.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
They're inadmissible in court. But
she's willing to take one, and I'm
just asking if you'd be.

KOBE
Yes, I am.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
What do you think the results of
those tests are gonna be?

KOBE
I don't know. I've never taken one.
I'm nervous right now. My hands are
shaking.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
Would you be willing to consent to
a sexual assault examination kit?

KOBE
I don't believe this, man.

DETECTIVE WINTERS
I have a court order so it doesn't
matter whether you consent or not.

Kobe is disconsolate.

The elevator doors open.

Ortiz, who must have been notified by Laster as to what was
going on, is waiting outside room 35.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Real quickly though, I'm gonna call down and have them bring some bags so we can collect evidence.

As he goes to his radio, Detective Loya engages Ortiz.

DETECTIVE LOYA

Sorry to make this all an inconvenience for you guys.

ORTIZ

You don't even know.

He's right. No one could be prepared for the shitstorm they've just unleashed.

EXT. FLATHEAD LAKE, DAY

A cabin in Montana. A man pulls up on a motorcycle. Once he takes off his helmet, we see that it's Phil Jackson.

INT. CABIN, DAY

Incense burns. Phil meditates.

Upon finishing, he puts out the incense.

Later, his phone rings.

INTERCUT: LAKERS PRACTICE FACILITY

Mitch, on the line, in his office.

MITCH

You're not gonna believe this.

PHIL

Don't make predictions, Mitch.

MITCH

A girl's claiming Kobe raped her.

PHIL

Who?

MITCH

In Colorado, where he went to get this fucking scope done without consulting us. From the hotel.

PHIL

I see.

MITCH

What the fuck? Are you not shocked?

PHIL

Not entirely. I've seen him
consumed by anger plenty of times.

MITCH

This isn't getting pissed off at
you or his teammates. It's a crime.
Possibly. He hasn't been charged
yet, but he has a lawyer in-state,
the same firm that represented
JonBenet Ramsey's parents. The
train is leaving the station.

PHIL

When will we know for sure?

MITCH

After the 4th, I'm told. So try to
enjoy the fireworks.

PHIL

I wonder how this affects Payton
and Malone's decision. Say Kobe
misses significant time...

MITCH

My sense is the players will be on
his side, but there's a lot we have
to see about right now.

PHIL

I'll call him.

MITCH

Don't press his buttons. Worry
about the team.

They hang up.

INT. WHEELER & CLUNE, LLC, DAY

█████ and her mom and dad meet with former Eagle County
prosecutor, JOHN CLUNE, 33, clean-shaven, thoughtful, fluffy
dark brown hair graying prematurely at the temples.

MOM

People tell us the DA's office only
has so many resources.

CLUNE

Well, Eagle is a small county.
Small even compared to an
individual like Mr. Bryant.

DAD

Point being, we understand this
could get messy.

CLUNE

That's a word I'd put at the low
end of the scale.

█████ sees that the door is ajar. She gets up to close it.

CLUNE

█████, what do you think?

█████

What do you mean?

CLUNE

If I come on board to help with the
case, I promise to do whatever I
can to protect you. But we're up
against a very famous person with a
lot of money and a lot of good will
with the public. There are no
guarantees.

█████

He did this to me.

CLUNE

Okay. Then we'll fight.

INT. KOBE'S HOUSE, MORNING

A vaulted room stacked with memorabilia and trophies. Kobe,
cell phone to his ear, looks very small even at 6'6".

KOBE

Fuck, man. Alright.

He hangs up. A long moment of silence. He pulls a book off a
shelf. Their wedding album.

The photos, from two years ago, are somewhat sad. It was a tiny wedding, 12 people, without his parents, sisters, or teammates.

Vanessa walks in. She stays at the other end of the room.

VANESSA
I heard you on the phone.

KOBE
Pamela called.

VANESSA
Who the hell is Pamela?

KOBE
One of the lawyers.

VANESSA
And?

KOBE
They issued a warrant. I gotta go
to Colorado and turn myself in.

VANESSA
To jail?!

KOBE
There's bail. 25-thousand. I'll be
home by tonight.

VANESSA
Am I asleep? Is this a nightmare?

KOBE
Will you come with me?

She glares at him.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, DAY

Mitch is seated in between aging future hall of famers, point guard GARY PAYTON, soon-to-be-35, and power forward KARL MALONE, nearly 40.

A press conference.

MITCH
I'd like to introduce to the city
of Los Angeles, the newest Los
Angeles Lakers, Gary Payton and
Karl Malone.

Claps. Payton and Malone show off their jerseys.

MALONE

I'm honored to be here... I realize this is Kobe and Shaq and Phil's team...

PAYTON

Me and Karl is just gonna come here to help get a championship...

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Flags out front. Brown brick. It could be a high school except for the sign that says "Eagle County Justice Center".

And then there's the media.

TV trucks. Abundant cameras. Reporters smashed together in the parking lot, which is shared by the Sheriff's Department, the DA's office and the courthouse.

A much different press conference. Boyish district attorney MARK HURLBERT at a dais.

HURLBERT

Today I announce the filing of class three felony sexual assault charges against Kobe Bean Bryant. This decision did not come easily. But after a thorough review of the evidence, I strongly believe we can prove this case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Detective Winters is in the background, listening, along with Clune and the other lawyers from the DA's office.

HURLBERT

If found guilty, Mr. Bryant faces 4 years to life in prison or 20 years to life on probation with a fine of up to 750-thousand dollars.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, DAY

There are just as many media members here, out on the floor, which is stripped down to concrete, as if the arena is set for a concert. But it's not. Another press conference.

Kobe and Vanessa come out from behind a black curtain, holding hands, and sit at a table. He's rid himself of his goatee and nearly shaved his head.

Kobe gets the chair for his wife. After they sit, they clasp hands up on top of the table where everyone can see.

Defense attorney PAMELA MACKEY, early 40s, white, brunette, wearing all black, sits by Vanessa. Next to Mackey is lawyer HAL HADDON, a little older, glasses, sandy brown hair.

Mackey reads a statement.

MACKEY

Kobe Bryant is innocent of the charges that were filed against him today. He stands falsely accused of an extremely serious crime. Kobe Bryant did not assault his accuser. Kobe Bryant will plead not guilty. His defense is that what happened on June 30th in Eagle County was a sexual encounter between two consenting adults. We do not intend to try this case in the press. We are confident that a Colorado jury will find that Mr. Kobe Bryant is innocent. Thank you.

Kobe adjusts his mic. Vanessa rubs his hand. His face is clenched. He keeps shaking his head. He appears enraged. Eventually, he starts talking without a script.

KOBE

I'm innocent. I didn't force her to do anything against her will. I'm innocent. I sit here in front of you guys furious at myself. Disgusted at myself for making a mistake of adultery. And I love my wife with all my heart. She's my backbone.

(to Vanessa)

You're a blessing. You're the beat to my heart. You're the air I breathe. You're the strongest person I know. And I'm so sorry having to put you through this, our family through this.

She keeps rubbing his hand, hasn't taken her eyes off him till now.

KOBE

I'm a human being. I'm a man just like everybody else. I mourn. I cry. Just like everybody else. And I sit here before you guys, embarrassed and ashamed for committing adultery.

(becoming more choked up)
You know, I go through the feeling if I could just turn back the hands of time. I love my wife so much. She's so special to me.

(turning defiant)
But I'm innocent. And together, my wife and I, and our family- we're gonna fight these false accusations. We have a lot at stake- I have a lot at stake- and that has nothing to do with the game of basketball. It has nothing to do with endorsements. This is about us. This is about our family. We're gonna fight this all the way to the end. I appreciate everybody out there for the support. We're gonna need the support and prayers now more than ever. Thank you.

He gets up first then helps Vanessa off the stage.

EXT. EAGLE, DAY

A small town of ~3500 that has a Texaco parking lot as its hub of teenage activity. A compact car pulls in, windows decorated with white shoe polish: "Kobe is innocent!"

JANELLE MEDINA, 19, gets out. Boys cheer her.

JANELLE
Go Lakers! Number 8!

She and the boys scribble the same slogan on the car of LINDSEY MCKINNEY, 18, and everyone laughs.

But then Janelle and the boys leave -- and Lindsey squeegees off the shoe polish.

LINDSEY
I definitely don't think [REDACTED] was out to get anyone. Right now, it's impossible to know what happened in that room.

She says this to a reporter, who scribbles in her notebook.

EXT. [REDACTED]'S PARENTS' HOUSE, DAY

In fact, the media has converged on Eagle. Reporters and TV crew are gathered on a suburban street at a house that has white shades in all the windows.

[REDACTED]'s dad emerges on the front porch. Reporters swarm him with questions. He deflects.

DAD

Do you like my new screen door?

But they want to know about the charges.

DAD

You can't say the DA hasn't taken enough time to thoroughly analyze all of this.

He can't discern one question from another. Too many.

DAD

Hey, out-of-towners. You should drive down to Sylvan Lake over the weekend. It's beautiful there.

He's friendly, but he can only be out here so long before being overwhelmed. He dives back inside, finds his wife.

MOM

Can she really stay here?

DAD

That's why we hired John.

They share a resigned, contemplative look.

MOMENTS LATER

The police disperse the crowd; they shut down the street.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, NIGHT

[REDACTED], wearing a ball cap, head down in the middle of a group of friends, enters the theater playing *Bad Boys II*.

Inside, fellow ex-cheerleader, RACHEL YANDLE, blonde hair parted down the middle, sits next to [REDACTED].

RACHEL

Are you okay?

I feel like I'm going to puke.
Otherwise, super great.

RACHEL

Was it the press conference?

I don't know what I expected.

RACHEL

Him crying on TV, holding his
wife's hand...

It's gross.

The lights dim. [REDACTED] takes off her hat, shakes out her hair.

INT. CABIN, NIGHT

Phil places a call that rings through to voice mail.

PHIL

Kobe, it's Phil. I'm sure you've
been inundated with calls. I'm in
Montana for a while. Call whenever
you can.

He hangs up. His adult daughter, ELIZABETH, is lounging,
messing with a fishing pole.

ELIZABETH

Dad, even if he ever responds, you
have to say something publicly.

PHIL

Probably.

ELIZABETH

What'd you think of Mitch's
statement?

PHIL

I'm checked out. What'd it say?

ELIZABETH

Something like the allegations were
out of character. Kobe is an asset
to the team and the community.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
The word 'wonderful' was in there.
Then, of course, no further comment
since it's an ongoing legal matter.

PHIL
The NBA must feel the same.

ELIZABETH
Do you think he'll play this
season?

PHIL
I do.

ELIZABETH
On top of all this he had, what,
two surgeries? His shoulder then
his knee?

PHIL
He only knows how to compete.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR, NIGHT

The shop has been shut down for a private session.

Kobe, his bodyguards, and a TATTOO ARTIST. He's getting his very first tattoos. On his upper arm, "Vanessa", with a crown and two angel wings. Underneath "Psalm XVII".

TATTOO ARTIST
Psalm 17. Which one's that?

KOBE
O Lord, hear my plea for justice.
Listen to my cry for help. Pay
attention to my prayer, for it
comes from honest lips.

TATTOO ARTIST
Tight.

EXT. NEWPORT BEACH HOME, DAY

Two blocks from Kobe's house. Smaller but still big. A "for sale" sign out front. And MOVERS -- which surprises the REAL ESTATE AGENT, who just showed up to switch the sign from "for sale" to "sold."

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Excuse me? When did you start? We
weren't closed until an hour ago.

MOVER

55 minutes ago. Customer said we had to get here while she was still the buyer's mother-in-law.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

Do you know who the buyer is?

MOVER

Duh. Kobe Bryant.

The agent just shakes her head, takes the sign altogether.

INT. RAFINITY JEWELERS, DAY

Kobe and Vanessa are inside a surprisingly quirky store. They wait on owner/designer RAFFI to come out from the back.

Bodyguard Laster is also here. No one seems particularly happy until Raffi appears -- at which point they're suddenly all smiles. He's got a ring box, quite excited.

RAFFI

Mrs. Bryant...

He opens the box. Inside is an 8-carat purple diamond ring worth about \$4M.

She puts it on. And it's like her husband doesn't exist.

INT. COLLEGE STUDENT HOUSE, NIGHT

The home of University of Iowa student/sports fanatic JOHN ROCHE, 22, who was drinking all day at a golf event. His clubs are on the floor. He stumbles on them while he paces, drinking more beer, ranting into a phone.

ROCHE

You fucking slut! You goddamn whore! I'll ram a coat hangar up your little cunt. Do you wanna die?! Do you have a death wish?!

He careens forward, nearly slamming into the wall, where there's a poster of Kobe doing a reverse jam.

INT. [REDACTED]'S PARENTS' HOUSE, NIGHT

The answering machine captures Roche's rant. Dad, Mom, and [REDACTED]. Mom puts her hands over her daughter's ears, but [REDACTED] takes them off.

ROCHE (V.O.)
Because I will fucking kill you!
You stupid idiot. You're dead!

The machine bleeps off.

DAD
I'm calling the police.

He exits into the kitchen. Mom talks to a shaken [REDACTED].

MOM
John can monitor your phone and
email. We'll figure out somewhere
safe for you to go.

EXT. MCKINNEY HOUSE, DAY

Another house in Eagle County. A man in a suit rings the doorbell. He's a REP for *The National Enquirer*.

Lindsey, the girl who erased the pro-Kobe shoe polish from her car, answers the door.

LINDSEY
Dude! I said no three times!

NATIONAL ENQUIRER REP
\$12,500. That's our final offer.

A beat.

NATIONAL ENQUIRER REP
Look, you already told the paper in
Orange County that she OD'd. People
want to hear your thoughts.

LINDSEY
I shouldn't have said it.

Her dad appears and shuts the door. The rep scratches his beard, flummoxed.

INT. TODAY SHOW, MORNING

[REDACTED]'s friend Rachel has found her way onto the *Today* show.

RACHEL
When she saw Kobe speak, she was
really disgusted.
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
It just made her sick to her
stomach, and she couldn't believe
he had the nerve to cry and just go
by, holding his wife's hand.

We skip ahead.

RACHEL
I think she just knows it's going
to be a long process, and that they
are going to try to find anything
they can to use against her.

One more time.

RACHEL
She's not doing this for the
attention or the money. She just
wants to see a consequence and for
him to be behind bars. She's here
for the justice.

INT. LARRY KING LIVE, NIGHT

Law student JAMEIKA WILLIAMS is being interviewed by LARRY KING. The chyron says that she met Kobe in 1997 and that they briefly dated when she was 19 and he was 18.

JAMEIKA
I couldn't believe that he could be
charged with sexual assault. That's
not the Kobe Bryant I knew. He was
always a calm, nice person- a
family person. Never rough, never
aggressive. It's not his character.

INT. MSNBC, NIGHT

Now Rachel and CASEY STRICKLER, a bleached blonde friend of [REDACTED]'s, are in split-screen on *The Abrams Report* with Ivy League law school grad, DAN ABRAMS, who looks the part.

ABRAMS
Janelle Medina, a high school
classmate says, 'I've known her for
eight years. I don't believe she's
telling the truth.
(MORE)

ABRAMS (CONT'D)

She told me once that she'd do anything it took to get famous, and I think this is just a publicity stunt for her, something for her to get money and for her to get fame.' What do you make of that statement?

Casey takes this one.

CASEY

You know, Janelle didn't go to school with us. And in this kind of situation, there are so many people who either pretend to be her best friend or they pretend that they know everything about her just because they want to talk.

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, NIGHT

Clune watches the rest of *The Abrams Report* in a conference room with lead prosecuting attorney INGRID BAKKE, mid-30s, has the look of a tennis player from the 80s.

ABRAMS

Rachel, finally, was anything happening in your friend's life before all this happened that might provide some perspective as to where she was mentally?

RACHEL

She was a little depressed because she lost one of her good friends a little less than a month ago. And her and her boyfriend broke up not too long ago also. So, she was already not doing very well.

Bakke weighs in.

BAKKE

Who the hell needs enemies when you already have friends?

They're pissed. Clune kills the program and turns his attention to newspapers that are all over the table.

CLUNE

So now it's public that she attempted suicide in February and supposedly took too many over the counter pills as a cry for help in May. Plus, was depressed about her friend dying in a car accident.

BAKKE

And we've got these kids claiming she was at a party bragging about how hung Kobe was.

CLUNE

I could see her trying to deflect.

BAKKE

Nobody's even supposed to know who she is.

CLUNE

Eagle is too small.

BAKKE

What can we do?

CLUNE

Make them stop. And I'm sending her out of the country.

INT. █'S PARENTS' HOUSE, DAY

█'s dad has the newspaper with a statement from Phil.

"For the past four years it has been my privilege to coach Kobe Bryant. He has consistently demonstrated responsible behavior to me... I was saddened by the allegations... As his coach and mentor he has my full support. Kobe is entitled to the presumption of innocence, a hallmark of our legal system, and judgment must occur within the Colorado courtrooms."

Meanwhile, his wife is on the phone.

MOM

Rachel, I know you're trying to help, but we need you to stop talking to the media... No, I'm calling all her other friends, too... I realize, but her emotional struggles- they have nothing to do with what happened on June 30th.

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)
It's just catnip for reporters and
ammo for the defense.

EXT. UNIVERSAL AMPITHEATER, NIGHT

The Teen Choice Awards. Kobe and Vanessa on the red carpet. He's got a platinum chain with a cross pendant and an Ali T-shirt. But the cameras are interested in one thing --

Her new ring.

INT. UNIVERSAL AMPITHEATER, NIGHT

Kobe is given the award for Favorite Male Athlete. He walks up on stage to a standing ovation.

KOBE

We've been flying through some dark clouds lately, but soon the sun is going to rise and shine again. As the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.'

He raises the trophy. Thunderous applause.

INT. BAR, NIGHT

██████████ is on "vacation" with a friend in Calgary. A guy buys her a drink with Canadian dollars. He's part of a group.

██████████ and the guy dance together. The group watches them. They start kissing. Some people from the group take photos.

██████████ takes a break, comes over. One of the girls from the group, KYLIE ROBINSON, causes a scene.

KYLIE

We got your picture, girl! We're gonna get paaaaiidddddd!

██████████
What?

She's upset.

KYLIE

Why you gotta be so butt hurt?

The guy shows up and caresses █████'s back. She seems to go to another place.

[REDACTED]
I should get the money not you.

Kylie laughs. [REDACTED] joins her. But it feels like she's doing it just because she doesn't know what else to do.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Kobe, in a cream colored suit, enters the courthouse with his lawyers, Hal Haddon and Pamela Mackey, at his side.

The media is a horde. There's also a handful of fans chanting his name.

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Kobe stands in court in front of JUDGE GANNETT, 50s, bearded, small glasses, shaggy hair. Mackey also stands.

JUDGE GANNETT

The defendant has the right to hear the charges that have been leveled against him read aloud in court.
Where do you stand on that?

MACKEY

We waive the right, Your Honor.

JUDGE GANNETT

Acknowledged. Then on the question of a hearing to determine if there's enough evidence to go to trial, the rule requires that if you request, it be held in 30 days. Any objection to that being voided?

KOBE

No, sir.

JUDGE GANNETT

Then we'll set it for October 9th.

EXT. KOBE'S HOUSE, DAY

Kobe is chauffeured home before sunset.

NIGHT

We hear voices. Kobe and Vanessa arguing at an increasingly loud and feverish pitch, the words indecipherable...

Until the front door slams open and Kobe storms out, furious. Vanessa right behind him, stops in the doorway, ready to shut it on his face.

KOBE
Don't do that.

VANESSA
Don't do that. Me? You're telling
me not to do something?

KOBE
I don't have my keys.

She shoves the door closed and double locks it. He bangs.

KOBE
Vanessa! Let me the fuck in.

She won't. He backs away, makes a call.

KOBE
Man, I need you to set me up
somewhere. Tonight's not fucking
happening at home... Wherever. Some
motel somewhere.

EXT. LAKERS PRACTICE FACILITY, DAY

Phil is back in LA. He parks a Mercedes outside.

INT. VIDEO ROOM, DAY

Phil watches tape of last season's elimination game against the Spurs with his basketball guru, 81-year-old TEX WINTER.

Since it was a blowout, there's not a lot to like.

TEX
Forget two more years. Are you sure
you don't wanna quit right now?

PHIL
Now Todd's negotiating with Dr.
Buss.

TEX
Still negotiating? I could be dead
by the time they finish.

PHIL
You're a young 81.

TEX

Forget about me. What we need is
Karl to be a young 40.

PHIL

And Payton a young 35.

TEX

And Kobe... how's Kobe?

PHIL

Never returned my calls. But he's
supposedly coming in.

INT. PRACTICE GYM, DAY

He's here, doing non-contact drills. We haven't seen him
with a basketball since the playoffs. There's a notable
difference. He's gaunt. Slower. Less explosive. Weaker.

Phil walks out onto the floor.

PHIL

Kobe.

He waves him over. Kobe snarls a little. Keeps working.

PHIL

Just a couple minutes.

Kobe doesn't come right away. Phil heads to his office.

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE, DAY

Phil has been waiting at his desk. Kobe finally shows up. He
flips the chair around to sit facing the seat back.

PHIL

Did you get my phone calls?

KOBE

Yeah.

Nothing else. Phil smiles in an effort to be congenial.

PHIL

We really want you to survive this
thing. Are you getting any help? Do
you have anybody to talk to?

KOBE

No.

PHIL

Kobe, you need someone to talk to.

KOBE

We have a priest.

PHIL

Good. That's a start. Talk to him.

KOBE

What about the team?

PHIL

You want to talk to your teammates?

KOBE

I mean the game. I wanna talk about my game.

PHIL

There will be time for that.

KOBE

I'm not gonna take any shit from Shaq this year. I've had it. I'm not afraid to go up against him.

PHIL

We'll watch what's being said. I can tell you're under a lot of stress.

KOBE

I'm fucking stressed? Okay.

He stands up. Phil looks him in the eye.

PHIL

I'm hoping for the best with your situation.

Kobe looks him back. These two don't trust each other.

INT. KUPCHAK'S OFFICE, DAY

Mitch gets ready to head home early when Phil bursts in.

PHIL

Kobe can't be a part of this team right now, there's no way.

MITCH

It's August, Phil. Shouldn't you be
in Montana?

PHIL

He's underweight. He's rehabbing.
He has no support system.

MITCH

He has people. He has his agent. He
has Nike.

PHIL

Bullshit.

MITCH

Listen to me. They continue to say
he wants to treat this upcoming
season like any other.

PHIL

He's in denial. This season,
fundamentally, cannot be like any
other season.

MITCH

You see how it could work out. The
game will be his escape.

PHIL

No professional athlete has ever
tried to play at peak levels while
fighting for his freedom.

Mitch is silent. Then --

MITCH

What are you suggesting?

PHIL

A leave of absence.

MITCH

I'll take it under advisement with
ownership. Now if you'll excuse me,
my daughter won't be four years old
forever.

He walks out.

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH, DAY

A Ferrari idles outside. A physically fit PRIEST with a laissez faire attitude comes out of the rectory.

He opens the Ferrari. Kobe is in the driver's seat.

PRIEST

We could go into the rectory, you know. It might actually be less conspicuous.

KOBE

I gotta get home. I just- man, I thought I could use your advice.

PRIEST

What's on your mind?

KOBE

Are you kidding me?

PRIEST

It could be more than one thing. But I need to ask... did you do it?

KOBE

Of course not.

PRIEST

Is your lawyer good?

KOBE

Yeah, he's phenomenal.

PRIEST

Then let it go. Move on.

KOBE

How? There are people who hate my guts, thinking I did something.

PRIEST

What's important? Who you are? Or who people think you are?

KOBE

Who I am. Of course.

PRIEST

Then be who you are. God won't give you anything you can't handle.

KOBE

So somehow this is, like, my
destiny? Or fate?

PRIEST

I heard a quote once. 'I was born
for the storm and a calm does not
suit me.'

(beat)

It's in God's hands now. Let it go.

He smiles and shuts the door.

INT. DENVER APARTMENT, DAY

██████████ has been moved into an apartment in the city. She's watching an episode of *American Idol* while her mom cooks.

They get a phone call.

INTERCUT: WHEELER & CLUNE, LLC

Clune, on the line, in his office.

CLUNE

██████████, good news.

██████████

Hang on. My mom's here.

She puts it on speaker. Mom comes over.

CLUNE

The judge ruled that you don't have
to testify in the preliminary
hearing. And your medical history
can't be used either.

MOM

That's great. Isn't it, sweetheart?

CLUNE

That said, the defense typically
waives this hearing altogether. The
burden to go to trial is mostly a
formality.

██████████

Then why haven't they?

CLUNE

The media will be there. Likely, they want to keep building their case to the public. So you should be ready for anything.

[REDACTED]

Okay.

CLUNE

Not to be alarming, but you're still getting a lot of threats. Also, frankly, a number of solicitations. We'll probably have to keep moving you around. Even to other states.

MOM

That might be kinda fun, honey.

She tries to put on a good face for her daughter.

[REDACTED]

I miss college.

CLUNE

This won't go on forever.

He's right but... only to a point.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

A media firestorm, flanked by Kobe fans. Someone holds a sign that reads "Free Kobe" in purple and gold.

You may remember Reporter #1 and #2, who were at the Lakers' season-ending loss to the Spurs. Well, now they're stuck covering the pre-trial. As they walk up to the courthouse --

REPORTER #1

Hey, it's better than filing another story from training camp about a bench guy losing 20 pounds over the summer, right?

REPORTER #2

Did you forget camp is in Hawaii?

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Court is in session. District Attorney Hurlbert has Bakke with him and another attorney, GREG CRITTENDEN. Mackey and Haddon with the defense.

Judge Gannett presides.

Kobe is seated in a navy blazer with a mustard colored collared shirt buttoned to the top, hands folded, jaw clenching and unclenching, staring at the witness.

Detective Winters.

SUPER: "Preliminary Hearing, Day One"

Crittenden handles direct examination.

CRITTENDEN

And during this interview did she ever appear confused or mixed up with the questions you were asking?

Judge Gannett asks for clarity.

JUDGE GANNETT

By 'she' who are you referring to?

CRITTENDEN

The victim. I'm sorry.

DETECTIVE WINTERS

The victim didn't appear to be confused.

CRITTENDEN

Are the victim's initials █.█.?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Yes, those are.

For the record the court allowed the victim's initials to be used, but we'll keep them redacted here.

MOMENTS LATER

DETECTIVE WINTERS

At that point, Deputy Rich and myself- well, we asked her if she'd showered in the meantime.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE WINTERS (CONT'D)

She stated she hadn't, and we asked her if we could collect the clothing she was wearing that night. Which we did.

CRITTENDEN

And how did you obtain that?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Deputy Rich went upstairs with the victim and obtained a black dress, like a black coat that goes with it. It looks like a uniform type outfit. The dress was one piece. A bra, and underwear.

MOMENTS LATER

CRITTENDEN

What did the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, or SANE nurse, tell you about the injuries she observed?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

She stated that there were several lacerations to the victim's posterior Fourchette or vaginal area. And two of those lacerations were approximately one centimeter in length. And there were many, I believe, two millimeter lacerations, too many to count.

CRITTENDEN

Did she describe what those lacerations were consistent of?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

She stated that the injuries were consistent with penetrating genital trauma. That it's not consistent with consensual sex.

MOMENTS LATER

Defense attorney Mackey interjects.

MACKEY

Voir dire, please, Judge. May I approach?

JUDGE GANNETT

You may.

She stalks Winters. She's not taking any prisoners today.

MACKEY

Looking now at Exhibit 2. What's that a picture of?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

The victim's vaginal area.

MACKEY

Who told you that?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

The SANE nurse.

MACKEY

Where's the vagina?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I believe...

MACKEY

You don't know, do you, Detective?

Winters stumbles over his words.

MACKEY

Which side is her tummy? On the top of the picture or the bottom of the picture? Or the side?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

From this photo, I could guess, but I'm not quite sure.

MACKEY

Judge, we'd object. This witness does not have sufficient knowledge about this photograph to have it entered into evidence through him.

Crittenden counters.

CRITTENDEN

Judge, he can get sufficient knowledge through hearsay, which he's already indicated. He has knowledge of it through the nurse.

GANNETT

Though I must admit that it reduces its value if he doesn't know very much about it. Anyway, it's going to be admitted over objection.

MOMENTS LATER

CRITTENDEN

Did the nurse indicate to you any other disclosures that the victim made regarding what had happened that night with Mr. Bryant during the SANE examination?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

The nurse stated one other thing that the victim didn't tell me initially in my interview.

CRITTENDEN

And what was that?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

About performing oral sex on Mr. Bryant.

CRITTENDEN

Did you later talk to the victim regarding this?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Yes, I did.

CRITTENDEN

And what did she tell you?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

She stated that right after sexual intercourse with Mr. Bryant, in her words, he wanted her to kiss his penis before she left.

CRITTENDEN

Did she tell you what her response was to that?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

She stated no.

CRITTENDEN

Did she tell you what he did after she said no to that?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

She stated that he grabbed her and placed her in front of him down at his waist level, and pulled his penis out, and she kissed it. He made her kiss it.

MOMENTS LATER

CRITTENDEN

Did you submit the T-shirt that Mr. Bryant gave you that he indicated he was wearing on June 30th, 2003, when the sexual intercourse occurred, to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I did.

CRITTENDEN

What did they find?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

On the inside of the T-shirt, on the front towards the bottom, they found what appeared to be blood excretions.

CRITTENDEN

And were sero- I can't say it- serological exams conducted on the blood stains?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

They sampled the blood stains, yes.

CRITTENDEN

And what did they determine?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

They determined- well, they developed, according to the reports, a DNA profile that was consistent- or that is the same DNA profile as the victim in this case.

MOMENTS LATER

Mackey goes in on cross-examination.

MACKEY

Detective Winters, let's begin with a discussion about █.█.'s injuries, shall we?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Okay.

MACKEY

You heard this story that she tells about how Mr. Kobe Bryant grabbed her neck and choked her, right?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Yes, I did.

MACKEY

And so being a detective, you immediately look at her neck, don't you?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I did look at her neck for marks.

MACKEY

Sure. You're looking at her neck to see if there's any physical evidence that supports and corroborates this story of choking?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Yes.

MACKEY

And when you look, Detective, you didn't see a single thing, did you?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Not from the front, no.

MACKEY

Now, you're not the only one who examined █ █ on July 1st, 2003, are you? You took her over to the- I'm sorry, you didn't take her. She went over to the Valley View Hospital and was examined by nurses over there, correct?

Bakke angrily interjects. Mackey said the victim's name.

BAKKE

Judge, I'm going to object and ask
the record be stricken regarding
disclosure of the name.

MACKEY

Oh, I'm sorry, Judge. I didn't even
know.

JUDGE GANNETT

Well, it shows all of us that some
are awake and some aren't.

(beat)

The record will be stricken with
regard to the identification of
that name and-

MACKEY

I'll try, Judge.

JUDGE GANNETT

And we'll all need to try harder.

MOMENTS LATER

Crittenden stops Mackey.

CRITTENDEN

Objection. Calls for speculation.

MACKEY

Judge, I'll rephrase.

JUDGE GANNETT

Do it. Thank you.

MACKEY

They conducted an interview of Miss
██████████ where they also heard this
story of choking, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I believe so, yes.

The prosecution reacts. Now she used the victim's last name.

MACKEY

And so they're examining her, and
they also look at her neck, right?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I don't know what part of the
anatomy.

MACKEY

Let's just cut to the chase here, Detective. They don't see any marks on [REDACTED] [REDACTED]'s neck?

She "catches" herself using the victim's full name after stern looks from Judge Gannett and the prosecution.

MACKEY

I'm sorry. I apologize, Judge. This is going to be very hard for me. I don't think of her as [REDACTED].[REDACTED] It's very hard. I-

JUDGE GANNETT

Let me suggest, rather than using the initials, choose another form. That can make the confusion perhaps-

MACKEY

I will. Judge, I've never had to not call somebody by their name. It's very difficult. I will try very hard. May I call her Miss [REDACTED].?

JUDGE GANNETT

That would work with me.

MOMENTS LATER

Winters reviews a document from discovery in a binder.

MACKEY

And as you look at that diagram, you see that there is no indication made by the SANE nurse of any marks on Miss [REDACTED]'s neck, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Not on her neck. Just on the jaw line.

But that's not the point. She did it again.

MOMENTS LATER

MACKEY

Now, you never saw that bruise?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

No, I did not.

MACKEY

You sat with Miss [REDACTED] at her home, correct?

Judge Gannett interrupts.

JUDGE GANNETT

Again, I know it's going to be tough for you, but-

MACKEY

I'm trying, Judge. I'm trying. Let me write myself a big note.

JUDGE GANNETT

Or I could just go get the muzzle.

MACKEY

Yeah, the muzzle would be good.

MOMENTS LATER

MACKEY

And they also look at the rectum, anal opening, right?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Yes.

MACKEY

And that's the one where they say, quote, 'no trauma noted'?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

That's correct.

MACKEY

And in fact that's what you would expect based on the story that the accuser told you, right? She never claims anything other than vaginal sex, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

That's correct.

MACKEY

Now, they do see some- and I want to quote this specifically so I get it correct- multiple small, shallow pinpoint lacerations, approximately one to two millimeters in length on the posterior Fourchette, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

I'm assuming that the area that the arrow is coming from is the posterior Fourchette, then that's correct, yes.

MACKEY

And that area is between the vaginal opening and the anal opening on a woman's body, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

It appears so, yes.

MACKEY

Now, these injuries, as we've been calling them- no one told you they'd need medical attention, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

No one told me that.

MACKEY

I think what you testified on direct was that what you see there is consistent with 'penetrating genital trauma,' correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

That's correct.

MACKEY

Now, you don't have any expertise to make that conclusion, correct? You have to rely on what the nurse told you?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

That's correct. They're trained in that so...

MACKEY

And she told you that it was not consistent with consensual sex, right?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

She stated that it- these types of injuries you wouldn't see in consensual type encounters.

MACKEY

And she said that the injuries were recent, but she couldn't tell you how recent?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

That's correct.

MACKEY

Now, when you rely on that opinion, that it was consistent with penetrating genital trauma, did you ask her if it was also consistent with a person who had had sex with three different men in three days?

The prosecutors rise in unison, shouting objections.

BAKKE

Judge, objection!

CRITTENDEN

Judge, yeah. I'm going to object as to beyond the scope, no foundation, and relevance at this point. And this also- it goes past the limited need for this hearing.

Judge Gannett is furious.

JUDGE GANNETT

Well, what I intend to do right now is to move us back into the next room. Empty this courtroom. We're going to need at least a week.

He gavels. The hearing abruptly ends.

INT. WHEELER & CLUNE, LLC, DAY

████'s parents are in the lobby with heavy heads.

Their daughter is behind closed doors with Clune and Bakke, who have been asking a lot of questions.

I told him no. █████

CLUNE

We agree. This case is only about what happened in that room.

BAKKE

The defense overstepped.

CLUNE

Which is why Judge Gannett reacted how he did. But they did it for a reason.

██████████

To say, what, I'm not a virgin? So I can't be raped?

CLUNE

It's vile, and it's wrong. But there's a perception.

██████ wrings her hair through her hands.

CLUNE

Say we were to end up in a compromised position, where things looked really dire. Is there an alternative to him being convicted that would satisfy you?

██████████

What are you talking about?

CLUNE

For instance, issuing an apology in exchange for you dropping out.

██████ can't believe this. But there's also a part of her that would cherish the relief of everything being over.

BAKKE

It's not something we'd push for.

CLUNE

But to think about. Just in case.

A beat.

██████████

No. Not now, guys.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

And we're back. So are the media and the Kobe fans.

SUPER: "Preliminary Hearing, Day Two"

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

All the same players. Kobe, in a brown suit without a tie. Mackey cross-examines Winters. Today, she's even-handed.

MACKEY

Detective Winters, on July 1st, 2003, when you interviewed the accuser, you asked her when she last had consensual sex. And she told you, 'About three days ago,' correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Yes.

MACKEY

And she told you that during that sexual encounter a condom was used, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

That's correct.

MACKEY

Later on July 1st, 2003, the accuser goes to a hospital in Glenwood Springs for a sexual assault examination, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Yes.

MACKEY

And at that time she's wearing some yellow knit panties, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

From what I was told.

MACKEY

And you submitted both of those panties, the ones that you collected earlier in the afternoon, as well as the yellow knit panties, to the C.B.I. for forensic evaluation, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

Yes.

MACKEY

And the semen and sperm found in the yellow panties collected at the hospital from the accuser did not match the DNA profile of Mr. Bryant, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

In the yellow panties, that's correct.

MACKEY

Stated another way, the accuser arrived at the hospital wearing panties with someone else's semen and sperm in them, not that of Mr. Bryant, correct?

DETECTIVE WINTERS

That's correct.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Things are wrapping up inside. Reporter #1 and #2 exit the courthouse and join the rest of the media, which await a press conference.

REPORTER #2

Now we get why his lawyers didn't waive the hearing.

REPORTER #1

Everything he said to the cops stays sealed. While she gets aired out for sleeping around.

REPORTER #2

They're gonna claim she had sex with someone after Kobe, right? But before the rape exam? That's what Mackey was getting at wasn't she?

REPORTER #1

My sense too.

REPORTER #2

But how do we know she wasn't out of her head, traumatized, and just grabbed some dirty panties?

DA Hurlbert has started his press conference.

HURLBERT

The evidence that Kobe Bryant committed sexual assault is strong. I'm confident in the prosecution and our witnesses.

The reporters look at each other. Not a lot of people in the crowd agree.

HURLBERT

Judge Gannett will rule correctly and send this case to trial.

INT. PRIVATE JET, NIGHT

Kobe flies from Colorado to California with one bodyguard, Ortiz, and his trainer, Carbone. No one's talking. Then --

KOBE

Is there a fucking ball on this plane, man?

ORTIZ

I think there's one outside.

He mocks opening the emergency exit.

KOBE

I'm serious. Is there a fucking basketball?

CARBONE

Actually, there might be.

He goes into the carry-on compartment in the back.

ORTIZ

Why the hell do you need a ball?

KOBE

There are people who fucking hate me, man.

ORTIZ

Always haters.

KOBE

There are people who don't think I can handle the pressure. Think I should take the season off.

ORTIZ

Who? Shaq?

KOBE

Fuck him. I heard from opponents- I heard from C-Webb- before I heard anything from him.

ORTIZ

But what's with the basketball?

Carbone returns. He's got a basketball, alright. A Nerf.

CARBONE

My kid gave it to me as a keepsake.

Kobe laughs, takes the ball.

KOBE

It's for a mental exercise. One man with a basketball, one man without.

CARBONE

Who are you without it?

KOBE

I'm Kobe Bryant.

ORTIZ

Then who are you with it?

KOBE

A motherfucker who destroys everyone.

CARBONE

This guy got a name?

KOBE

Not yet.

He puts a death grip on the ball and enters a zone.

EXT. FLORIDA, DAY

██████████ has been shuttled south. She's on a jet ski.

When she comes in from the water, she passes some college students on the way to meet her dad, Dad.

DAD

John called. The judge ruled for probable cause.

██████████ There's gonna be a trial.

For her, it sinks in.

DAD

He thinks you should stay here for a while. Not so bad, right?

INT. LAKERS PRACTICE FACILITY, DAY

Kobe goes hard, beating up the assistant coach charged with defending him in the post.

Phil and Mitch observe. Mitch is pensive.

PHIL

Suddenly his knee looks good.

Mitch nods, makes a sound.

PHIL

What?

MITCH

I talked to Pelinka. He still wants to opt out of his contract at the end of the season.

PHIL

I suppose the organization hasn't been supportive enough. Not covering all of his travel expenses back and forth to Colorado, only a percentage...

Sarcasm.

MITCH

He wanted a better private jet.

(off Phil's look)

That's not why he's opting out. I'm just complaining. About him complaining.

PHIL

Dr. Buss could always let him walk.

MITCH

He's a superstar in his prime, Phil. He'll sell season tickets and jerseys for the next ten years.

Now it's Phil's turn to grumble.

MITCH

What?

PHIL

He may be facing life in prison.

MITCH

Stop.

Kobe puts his shoulder into the assistant coach, knocks his jaw back, and blows past him on the way to a vicious dunk.

MITCH

What'd I say about our court being his refuge from the other one?

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

MIKE TYSON is in the crowd holding two signs that say "Free Kobe" in different fonts.

Pre-game. The Lakers players form a circle on the floor.

Without Kobe.

INT. PLAYERS LOUNGE, NIGHT

He's in the back, watching on TV. A female STAFF MEMBER who doesn't speak a lot of English stops arranging food and drinks to point at the screen.

STAFF MEMBER

You? No?

KOBE

Nah, man. Knee needs more rest.

Wouldn't keep him from joining the team on the bench but...

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

End of the third quarter. Kobe walks through the tunnel, out to the sideline. Fans shouting support from the stands.

After he sits on the bench, he's shown on the Jumbotron.

He receives a huge ovation. Almost like he planned it.

INT. AMERICA WEST ARENA, NIGHT

In Phoenix. Lakers versus Suns. Kobe is playing in this game. Not shooting well but getting to the free throw line.

But away from home the atmosphere is different. He's booed nearly every time he touches the ball.

Scoreboard. The Lakers win 103-99.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

Pregame intros. The arena is dark. The PA ANNOUNCER says --

PA ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
At guard, number 8, Kobe Bryant!

Kobe runs out onto the floor, slapping hands with teammates. The cheers are deafening.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, NIGHT

Kobe in the scrum with reporters. The stat sheet says he had 21 points, and the Lakers beat the Warriors 87-72.

KOBE
It doesn't really help my game
much, but playing at Staples Center
makes me feel more comfortable.

LATER

He and Vanessa leave the arena holding hands.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Back in court. Today, besides the media, there are about a dozen people rallying in support of the victim.

SUPER: "Procedural Hearing"

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Kobe stands with his attorneys. The prosecution, opposite.

The judge who will preside over the trial, TERRY RUCKRIEGL, 50s, feathered brown hair parted down the middle, glasses, loves his job, enters the court.

JUDGE RUCKRIEGL
Good morning, everyone. Get
comfortable, sit.

The courtroom obliges.

JUDGE RUCKRIEGL
As most of you know, this hearing
has been arranged for the defendant
to submit a plea if he so desires,
as well as scheduling...

The rest is irrelevant. It's all scheduling ephemera. More
noteworthy --

████'s parents are seated in the first row behind Kobe.

There is no love lost.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Press conferences. First, prosecution spokeswoman KRISTA
FLANAGAN. Crittenden, Bakke, and Hurlbert at her side.

FLANAGAN
The family thought it was important
for people to realize that there
really is a victim in this case.
They wanted to show their support.

Then Mackey --

MACKEY
We have decided to follow usual
procedure and not enter a plea as
of today. I fully advised my client
of the charge against him.

ROBIN FINEGAN, one of the people we saw supporting the
victim outside the courthouse, from a victims' assistance
group, is next. She's with reporters off to the side.

FINEGAN
We are here to remind everyone to
treat this sexual assault case as
the serious crime that it is rather
than as fodder for entertainment.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NIGHT

Then, almost seamlessly, we're with Kobe, swarmed by reporters in the visitor's locker room in New York. The Lakers are about to play the Knicks. The reporters are here.

REPORTER #1

How do you stay focused through all the distractions?

KOBE

Faith. I have my good days and bad days, you know what I mean? If I just have faith, God will carry me through.

REPORTER #2

Kobe, has your approach to life changed?

KOBE

Yeah. When you go through something like I'm going through... everybody in this room has something they're going through. Everybody has their breaking point. And I've been there. And it brings you closer to God.

THIRD REPORTER

When you reach your breaking point is it because of things that happen on or off the court?

KOBE

People talking about my family. They have nothing to do with my situation. Dragging them into it and saying false things about them. That really pisses me off.

The session ends. Reporter #1 and #2 have a moment.

REPORTER #1

Sounded like his opening statement.

INT. WHEELER & CLUNE, LLC, DAY

Dad and Mom are in with Clune. They pass around a subpoena.

MOM

What do they think I can tell them?

CLUNE

Well, they're trying to get her medical records from the facility the police took her to in February. I presume they want to use you to say, 'Look, she told her mom she attempted suicide. She gave up her privacy rights.'

DAD

That's ridiculous. It's absurd.

MOM

I'm her mother.

CLUNE

We can fight it. But we don't have to decide right now. Don't worry.

He opens his briefcase.

CLUNE

The other issue isn't yours but-

He tosses them a T-shirt. On the front is a drawing of a hanged stick figure, like the game where you try to guess a word or phrase, with TEES.COM filling in the blanks.

CLUNE

The company that makes these gave a couple to the sheriff's office. Then some folks tried to order more as a 'souvenir'.

Dad and Mom flip the shirt over. On this side, the number 8 is sandwiched between "I'm not a rapist" and "I'm just a cheater" with Kobe's name partially filling in a set of blanks (the O E and the A are missing).

CLUNE

The optics, especially since it can be construed as a reference to lynching, are not... well, I'll just say it- they're atrocious.

A beat.

CLUNE

His lawyers are exceptional. You get what you pay for.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, DAY

Lakers shootaround. They're prepping for a game against Denver tonight. Some light shooting. Phil and the coaches outlining opponent specifics for offense and defense.

No sign of Kobe.

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Because he's in court.

There are also witnesses set to be called. Lindsey McKinney, the young woman who was approached by the *National Enquirer* about [REDACTED]'s suicide attempt, as well as [REDACTED]'s mom.

Mackey addresses Judge Ruckriegle.

MACKEY

My client stands accused of a very serious crime. There is lots of history about black men being falsely accused of this crime by white women. I urge you to focus on the specifics of this case, not the political agenda of the rape crisis center.

Bakke counters.

BAKKE

Judge, we acknowledge your need to determine if the victim's medical history and sexual past should be allowed as evidence in the trial. All we're asking is they not be discussed in an open hearing, for the media and everyone in the world to hear, before that determination is made. It's a simple ask.

JUDGE RUCKRIEGL

I'll grant you that. Let's retreat to chambers.

The attorneys move to the back. Kobe along with them. He looks at his watch.

EXT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

It's early but fans are starting to arrive for the game.

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, NIGHT

Judge Ruckriegle and the attorneys return to court.

JUDGE RUCKRIEGL

Okay, here's what we're going to do. All witnesses for today are dismissed. I'm siding with the prosecution- further evidentiary hearings on this matter will be sealed.

He gavels. A setback for the defense. But it barely registers with Kobe. He can't get out of here fast enough.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, NIGHT

Mackey speaks to the press.

MACKEY

Denying the accuser's sexual past and mental health history would violate Mr. Bryant's constitutional right to a fair trial. These are key pieces of evidence that help explain her motive, scheme, plan, and modus operandi for falsely accusing Mr. Bryant of sexual assault.

Next, it's Bakke's turn.

BAKKE

Our position isn't only about this case. Presenting the victim's personal history in front of a national media audience will discourage other sexual assault victims from coming forward. The defense wants to embark on a humiliating and embarrassing fishing expedition. It's unfair and unjust. Why would anyone want to be put through this?

Mackey again.

MACKEY

Grossly, the prosecution wants you to believe that the only relevant time period in this case is when Mr. Bryant and his accuser were alone in his hotel room.

(MORE)

MACKEY (CONT'D)
We vehemently disagree. And I
strongly believe that in the end
the court will side with us.
Justly.

EXT. VAIL, EAGLE COUNTY REGIONAL AIRPORT, NIGHT

Kobe hustles onto a private jet, accompanied by bodyguards.

INT. PRIVATE JET, NIGHT

Kobe, holding the Nerf basketball, mentally dialing in.

EXT. LAX, NIGHT

Kobe et al moving from the private jet to a waiting van. As he passes the driver he says --

KOBE
Tip off's in 25. Let's fucking go.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

Seats filling. Intros starting. Getting closer to tipoff.

INT. VAN, NIGHT

On the way to the arena. In heavy traffic.

Kobe is in the back -- *riding an exercise bike*.

The van has been specially outfitted. He's pedaling to get his legs warm for the game.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

Which has started. Lakers versus Nuggets. It's halfway through the first quarter.

EXT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

The van pulls into the players' parking lot. Kobe gets out, doesn't bother closing the door, jogs into the arena.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

The second quarter is about to begin. Kobe hustles through the tunnel then walks to the bench. Fans noticing, reactions rolling through the arena.

PHIL
How's your mindset?

KOBE
Let me play.

Phil puts him in the game.

The crowd erupts.

He immediately starts pressing, desperate to show everyone that being in court earlier hasn't affected him.

LATER

Down the stretch, Kobe misses a series of shots, allowing the Nuggets to tie the game at 99 with 2.5 seconds left in the 4th quarter.

The Lakers have the ball. Phil calls timeout.

He and the players huddle. He draws a play on a whiteboard.

PHIL
We'll run Starburst for Gary.

Kobe not thrilled about this. He wants the fucking shot.

MOMENTS LATER

The Lakers run the play from out of bounds, but Payton doesn't get free.

The ball goes to Kobe.

He drills a 20-foot jump shot as time expires.

Lakers win.

The arena explodes.

LATER

In the locker room with reporters --

KOBE

I haven't hit a game winner in a while. I had a good feeling about it.

REPORTER #2

Did you leave for Eagle this morning or fly in last night?

KOBE

Up at 4:30am. Yeah. It's been a long day. That's life. You just have to struggle along with it.

INT. WHEELER & CLUNE, LLC, DAY

Bakke, in with Clune and a new attorney from the county, DANA EASTER, strong build, early 40s. Speakerphone is on. Everyone's stressed.

CLUNE

Ingrid's here with me, and Dana Easter. Dana-

EASTER

Hi, [REDACTED]. I'm the head of the Jefferson County sex crimes unit.

BAKKE

Dana and I have a long history working together. DA Hurlbert added her on for extra support.

INTERCUT: FLORIDA APARTMENT

[REDACTED], on the other end of the line, pacing. Impatient.

[REDACTED]

Well, what's the crappy news?

BAKKE

We're going to need you to testify about your sexual history in an evidentiary hearing.

[REDACTED]

Okay.

BAKKE

It's just for the judge to determine if it will be admissible at trial. Everything you say will be sealed. No one will find out.

[REDACTED]

It's fine. I'll be fine. What else?

The lawyers all look at each other. She's more confident than them.

INT. LAKERS PRACTICE FACILITY, DAY

The players walk out for practice. Phil finds Kobe.

PHIL

How's your knee? You up for doing some running?

KOBE

Sure. Soon as I finish treatment.

Phil happily nods. Kobe proceeds into the back.

LATER

The team is practicing. Phil oversees. But he's distracted by Kobe, who enters from the locker room and sits on the sideline with an ice pack on his shoulder.

Looks like he has no intention of running after all.

LATER

Practice ends. Phil gets to Kobe before he can leave.

PHIL

You lied to me about running. Why?

KOBE

I was being sarcastic.

PHIL

Wrong answer. You need to treat me with respect, not sarcasm.

He walks away. Kobe curses him in the background. Phil becomes incensed but keeps walking.

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE, MOMENTS LATER

He storms in on Mitch.

PHIL

I won't coach this team next year
if Kobe is still here. I've had it.
He won't listen to anyone.

Mitch is silent.

PHIL

Are you listening to me?

MITCH

Dr. Buss wants to put negotiations
for your contract extension on hold
until after the season.

PHIL

I'm shocked.

He isn't. He turns and walks out, slams the door.

EXT. KOBE'S HOUSE, DAY

Another screaming match. Vanessa, coming in and out of the house, throwing Kobe's clothes into the street.

VANESSA

Take your shit and go! Just leave!

KOBE

My car's at the fucking shop!

She throws his stuff faster than he can pick it up.

VANESSA

Is that my problem?!

KOBE

I've got a fucking game tonight!

VANESSA

Basketball. Like basketball's so
important.

KOBE

It bought you all this.

VANESSA

It bought you all this shit, too!

She keeps throwing.

KOBE

All I got is my bike. I can't put
this shit in there.

She goes inside, slams the door. Kobe looks around at all
the stuff...

KOBE

What the fuck do I do with this?

No idea. He walks to the garage.

EXT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

Kobe arrives on a motorcycle. Walking into the arena, he
looks like he'd rather be anywhere but here.

A security guard says what's up? Kobe doesn't respond. He's
disassociated from his environment.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

Lakers versus Orlando. First half. Kobe is listless. He
misses every shot he takes. Tracy McGrady, the Magic's best
player, is showing him up.

We hear the Lakers TV crew, PAUL SUNDERLAND and STU LANTZ.

SUNDERLAND (V.O.)

What a play by McGrady. The Lakers
need more from Kobe tonight if they
expect to stand a chance.

LANTZ (V.O.)

All those heretics who claim that T-
Mac is better will use this half as
exhibit A, that's for sure.

Kobe gets to the foul line. He goes 1-2.

He finishes the half with one point.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, NIGHT

Halftime. Kobe has made his own corner in the locker room.
Guys are looking at him strangely. He's in some kind of
zone, talking to himself.

KOBE

You may lose everything in life because of the situation you put yourself in. You may lose your family, your freedom... but you won't lose fucking basketball. You can control this shit. Remember the priest. Remember two selves. I'm gonna take these motherfuckers out.

He gets up, finds Phil.

KOBE

Let me guard McGrady.

PHIL

We need your offense. No. You'll wear out.

Phil leaves before Kobe can argue. Kobe seethes.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

Third quarter. McGrady dominates again.

At the timeout between quarters, Phil finds Kobe.

PHIL

Okay. Take him.

MOMENTS LATER

The fourth quarter. Kobe is a beast. He locks down McGrady on defense. He gets bucket after bucket on offense.

SUNDERLAND (V.O.)

An incredible drive and finish by Kobe. He now has 22 points in the 4th quarter alone.

LANTZ (V.O.)

The Tracy McGrady fans aren't so loud now, are they, Paul?

Kobe makes another two pointer...

The Lakers pull ahead in overtime and win 113-110.

EXT. KOBE'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Kobe returns on his motorcycle.

His clothes are still in the street.

KOBE
Jesus Christ.

He picks everything up, piles it in the garage then drives.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, NIGHT

Kobe watches *Kill Bill, Vol. 2*. The scene with Michael Madsen and DARYL HANNAH in the trailer. He opens a briefcase full of money -- and gets attacked by a snake.

DARYL HANNAH
Budd, I'd like to introduce my friend, the Black Mamba. You know, before I picked that little fella up, I looked him up on the internet. Listen to this. In Africa, the saying goes, 'In the bush, an elephant can kill you, a leopard can kill you, and a Black Mamba can kill you. But only with the Mamba is death sure. Hence it's handle- death incarnate. Pretty cool, huh?

Kobe is enthralled. This resonates with him.

EXT. LAX, DAWN

The bodyguards guide Kobe and his trainer towards the jet.

KOBE
I got the name for my other self.

Everyone's a little lost.

KOBE
We were on this fucking plane, remember? With your kid's Nerf, Carbone? When I'm not Kobe.

CARBONE
Oh, right.

KOBE
The Black Mamba. That's the name.

They board.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

The usual circus, except we're away from it, somewhere different. A fire exit at the back of the building.

Then suddenly we get why --

████'s here.

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, MOMENTS LATER

She slips inside, joined by her parents and attorneys. But media are in the hallway. The sides converge.

She walks, calm and composed, ignoring their questions on her way into the courtroom --

Which is then closed.

MOMENTS LATER

Easter in charge today.

EASTER

The prosecution calls █████ to the stand.

████ walks up and takes the stand. She faces the defense.

Kobe.

The first time they've seen each other since the incident.

He looks at her like a defender trying to stop him from getting to the rim.

She gives it right back.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Outside.

SUPER: "Four Hours Later"

████, her parents, and her lawyers break from the courthouse through a different door. A quick walk to a waiting car. Clune at her side.

CLUNE

You were great. Really. If we had a jury they would've loved you.

[REDACTED]
I thought she went easy on me.

CLUNE
You can only dodge the bullets they
shoot.

Then they're in the car.

EXT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

Fans flow towards the entrances. Many wear Kobe's jersey.
The highest energy we've seen in this setting so far.

SUPER: "2004 NBA Finals, Game One"

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

The Lakers are pitted against the Detroit Pistons. We hear
announcers AL MICHAELS and DOC RIVERS.

MICHAELS (V.O.)
The Pistons are the rare team to
play for a championship without a
superstar player.

RIVERS (V.O.)
And the Lakers have four future
hall of famers, Al.

MICHAELS (V.O.)
The prognosticators don't expect
Detroit to put up much of a fight.
But in sport, you have to run it
through.

Now the game is in motion. Detroit's defense is stifling.
Tayshaun Prince guards Kobe.

He scores 25 points but needs an inefficient 25 shots.

And the Lakers lose 87-75.

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

Game 2. The Lakers are down 3. The ball comes to Kobe. He
attacks Rip Hamilton and takes a deep three pointer, four
feet beyond the arc, with 2.1 seconds left to tie the game.

The Lakers pull away in overtime.

MICHAELS (V.O.)
Suddenly, the Pistons and that suffocating defense can't stop LA.

Scoreboard: Lakers 99, Pistons 91.

EXT. THE PALACE OF AUBURN HILLS, NIGHT

The arena in suburban Detroit.

INT. THE PALACE OF AUBURN HILLS, NIGHT

This game is all Kobe. He dominates the ball but either can't get his shot, takes an inefficient one, or misses.

MICHAELS (V.O.)
Boy, Bryant is really struggling tonight, isn't he, Doc?

RIVERS (V.O.)
The Pistons are doing a tremendous job showing him multiple bodies, forcing him into a crowd.

Kobe's angst grows. Phil gets him off the floor.

PHIL
Take a break.

Kobe walks to the bench, seething.

Scoreboard: Detroit 88, Los Angeles 68.

MICHAELS (V.O.)
And there it is. Detroit goes up 2-1 in the series with games 4 and 5 here at home.

INT. THE PALACE OF AUBURN HILLS, NIGHT

Kobe responds to his terrible game 3 by taking too many shots, 14 in the first half, even while Tayshaun Prince blankets him.

RIVERS (V.O.)
Kobe can get caught at times trying to do it all when really he needs to rely on his teammates.

MICHAELS (V.O.)

Well, if this continues, the underdog Pistons are going to be one win away from a championship.

Kobe keeps firing, finishing the game 8-25, a god awful 32%.

And the Lakers lose 88-80.

Worse, Malone limps off the court while Kobe complains to Phil about Prince.

KOBE

How can the refs let this fucking guy get to my arm on every fucking shot?

PHIL

You pledged to run the offense.

KOBE

Prince hits me every fucking time.

They go through the tunnel into the locker room.

INT. HOTEL, NIGHT

One of the banquet rooms. The Lakers have arranged a dinner for the team and all the staff that travels with them.

Phil's eating with Tex and the coaches when Dr. Buss walks over from... let's just call it an "eclectic" table. As in Hawaii, there are very young women.

DR. BUSS

I think the weight of this whole ordeal has finally caught up to our young man.

PHIL

Maybe you're right.

He eyes Kobe, who's sharing a table with Malone. Nobody is in a good place.

INT. THE PALACE OF AUBURN HILLS, NIGHT

Game 5. Malone is on the bench in street clothes. The score is 98-72 in favor of Detroit.

MICHAELS (V.O.)

Of all the crazy things in this series, could you have ever figured the Lakers would need a near miracle to win the only game they win, and Detroit would end up in triple figures in a blowout in the deciding game?

Kobe angrily misses shots, 14 total, going 7-21.

RIVERS (V.O.)

What I love though, when they signed Gary Payton and Karl Malone, everybody assumed they'd just won a title. If you're a team sport guy, it gives every kid in the world a message. No matter who's on your team, you still have to earn it.

The clock ticks. Kobe goes to the bench, resigned to defeat.

MICHAELS (V.O.)

The Detroit Pistons have just shocked the Los Angeles Lakers, 100-87, to win the NBA title.

Detroit celebrates. And Kobe leaves the court. The one thing he thought he could control having fallen completely apart.

INT. FLORIDA APARTMENT, NIGHT

██████████ has the game on mute. Her phone rings.

INTERCUT: WHEELER & CLUNE, LLC

Clune, working late.

CLUNE

Did you hear about the game?

██████████

The underdog won.

CLUNE

Yes they did. Sleep well, █████.

They hang up.

INT. KOBE'S HOUSE, DAY

Kobe looks at a framed jersey from his first game as a pro. Vanessa watches from the hall. He looks vulnerable, pensive. Eventually, she comes into the memorabilia room.

VANESSA

Hey.

KOBE

Hey.

They're feeling each other out. She walks over, gently rubs his back.

KOBE

Pelinka filed the paperwork. I opted out. I'm a free agent.

VANESSA

Will I be wearing a different jersey next year?

KOBE

That's an interesting way to put it.

VANESSA

Your jersey but with a different team on the front?

KOBE

It's me or Shaq. Either he goes or I do. That's up to Dr. Buss.

He kisses her.

KOBE

If I stay, the max is 7 years 136.

VANESSA

You mean million.

KOBE

I don't do this shit for thousands, that's for fucking sure.

INT. LAKERS PRACTICE FACILITY, DAY

Phil is in his office when he spots Kobe loitering near Mitch's closed door. He comes out to get him.

PHIL

Fish is still in with Mitch. You can wait with me if you want.

KOBE

Two fucking exit interviews?

PHIL

Just a chat.

Kobe thinks about it then goes with him. They sit.

PHIL

So... Colorado.

KOBE

What the hell, man? It's like that?

PHIL

I'm concerned. I'm concerned how it affects your free agency.

KOBE

I'm the best player in the world.

PHIL

Will you be able to take meetings if there's a trial in July?

KOBE

It won't be in July.

PHIL

Is there still a chance there won't be one at all?

KOBE

Yeah. But it doesn't matter. Either way it'll be the same outcome.

PHIL

How does me coaching this team impact your decision?

Kobe is taken aback.

PHIL

Would my being with the Lakers or retiring have any influence on you re-signing with the team?

KOBE

You gotta do what you gotta do. Independent of me.

PHIL
I'm going to retire.

KOBE
Really?

Phil nods.

KOBE
Or did Dr. Buss not want to bring
you back?

PHIL
I'll be retired next season.

Mitch enters in full salesman mode.

MITCH
Kobe. Sorry, I was with Derek. You
know how he gets.

Kobe stands. Phil speaks to him.

PHIL
A lot has transpired in the past
year. I hope you find happiness in
basketball and life. I hope your
family stays intact.

Kobe, a long look. Mitch senses something's up.

PHIL
We'll talk after.

Mitch leads Kobe into his office.

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

An exhausted and overwhelmed COURT CLERK is putting together
press releases for media outlets.

She attaches a batch of files to an email and presses send.

As it leaves her outbox she notices that one of the files is
labeled "Sealed DNA Transcript".

COURT CLERK
Oh no.

She tries to X out the email, but it's too late.

INT. LA TIMES, DAY

The email lands in the inbox of a PR ASSISTANT at the paper. She reviews the email, looks at the attachments curiously.

PR ASSISTANT
Sealed transcript?

She opens it and hits print.

LATER

Reporter #1 has the document on his desk. He's on the phone.

REPORTER #1
So there's our answer. Or am I not reading it right?

INTERCUT: REPORTER #2'S OFFICE

At a different newspaper, also reading the document.

REPORTER #2
You are. I think that's what the defense's DNA expert said today.

REPORTER #1
That the semen samples on her and her underwear originated *after* the encounter with Kobe.

REPORTER #2
So he allegedly raped her. Then she had sex with another guy. Then she went to the police, had the medical exam. All within, like, half a day?

REPORTER #1
Which means her injuries could've been caused by this other partner. That's reasonable doubt.

REPORTER #2
'Who reacts to getting raped by sleeping with somebody else?' The defense will argue that too. On top of everything.

REPORTER #1
So long as the judge rules her sexual history admissible at trial.

REPORTER #2

He has to now. There's no choice.

REPORTER #1

In the meantime, these transcripts
are gonna leak online, and she'll
be smeared all over the world.

(beat)

Kobe's gonna get off, isn't he?

REPORTER #2

Did you ever have any doubt?
Whether he's guilty or not- did you
ever?

For him, it's rhetorical. For his buddy, a hardening truth.

EXT. FLORIDA, DAY

██████████ is wrapped in a towel on the water's edge. Her mom and dad have her surrounded.

MOM

We're not judging you. That's not-

██████████

Mom, just- I know how it looks.

DAD

Not to us. But to a jury, under the
spell of someone famous-

██████████

Dad, I know. I'm not stupid, okay?
What does Clune think I should do?
Or Ingrid? Or Dana?

DAD

You can file a civil suit anytime.
If it's in the midst of the trial,
the defense will use it to argue
that you made a false accusation
for money.

██████████

No.

DAD

As we've seen, they'll argue what
they want to argue anyway.

MOM

John has somebody really high profile. He helped the man falsely accused of the Olympic bombing in Atlanta.

DAD

I don't think it's giving up at all, honey. I think it's about fighting back.

██████████ has so much to process. Then:

██████████
Fine. But I'm not dropping out.

They nod. She shuts her eyes to hold back tears.

INT. WHEELER & CLUNE, LLC, DAY

Clune is on the phone.

CLUNE

The family has had enough.

INTERCUT: L. LIN WOOD, PC, DAY

The Atlanta law offices of LIN WOOD, 52, a silver-haired attorney with flare, who crushes civil litigation.

WOOD

Then let's file the suit and get her the hell out of this case.

CLUNE

Lin, she wants to stay in it.

WOOD

The criminal justice system is throwing her under the goddamn bus.

CLUNE

I know it looks that way, but she'll be great at the trial.

WOOD

The trial? Is that a joke? She could take the stand with angel wings, it doesn't matter.

CLUNE

Ruckriegle hasn't ruled on her sexual history yet.

WOOD

He can rule however the hell he goddamn wants. These DNA transcripts- the headlines will poison the jury pool. How tiny is Eagle County?

CLUNE

I don't disagree but-

WOOD

I've got visions of Kobe Bryant coming out of court waving the victory sign, saying, 'One down, one to go.' We'll lose the criminal and the civil.

CLUNE

Lin-

WOOD

And our client will forever be the young girl who falsely accused Kobe Bryant of rape.

A beat. His argument is starting to have an effect.

CLUNE

I don't want to go this way unless we have to, but I proposed the idea of getting an apology from him to her in the past...

WOOD

The flames are already on the roof, John. What're you waiting for, the whole goddamn house to burn down?

He might be.

EXT. DR. BUSS'S HOME, DAY

An Italian style villa in Playa del Rey. ~11K square feet. Stained-glass doors with the Lakers logo open to a rotunda.

Mitch and Dr. Buss are out there. As always with Jerry, a bunch of young women are around. One of them is playing classical piano, accenting the scene.

MITCH

The Clippers are a real threat to
steal him.

Dr. Buss breaks into laughter.

MITCH

I'm serious. He's on the one-yard-line. That's not just from his agent. That's from other intel.

DR. BUSS

Then trade Shaq.

(beat)

I already decided to replace Phil.
The franchise will belong to Kobe.

MITCH

Are you worried about the trial?

Dr. Buss waves him off, scoffs. Mitch thinks on it. Then --

MITCH

I'll call Riley.

DR. BUSS

Good. Give him the 32-year-old.
We'll keep the kid.

MITCH

Shaq in a Miami Heat jersey...

Weird to think about. But Buss is focused on something else.

DR. BUSS

#8 in the rafters.

EXT. LAKERS PRACTICE FACILITY, DAY

The sports media has gathered. Our reporters come towards the building from their cars in the parking lot.

REPORTER #1

I was gonna say I wonder what he would've gotten if he hadn't been charged with sexual assault, but he got the full max anyway so...

REPORTER #2

I guess the money still spends if he's in prison.

REPORTER #1
You know he never signed a prenup?

REPORTER #2
I did. You can't say he isn't bold.

INT. LAKERS PRACTICE FACILITY, DAY

Kobe at a table with mics in a Nike USA basketball jacket. Mitch next to him. They look elated.

KOBE
It feels unbelievable to be in Los Angeles playing for the Lakers the next seven years. This is the team I wanna play for, wanna have a chance to finish my career here.

A question from the media.

REPORTER #1
Kobe, do you have any comment on reports that you played a role in Shaq and Phil no longer being here?

KOBE
That angers me. That hurts me. They did what they had to do. That had nothing to do with me. In a perfect world, we would have all come back and won another championship.

Another question.

REPORTER #2
Mitch, how did the risk of the trial factor into your decision to make this deal- or did it?

MITCH
If there is any risk, it was a risk we were willing to take.

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Attorneys all present. The judge offers his ruling.

JUDGE RUCKRIEGL

With evidentiary hearings on the matter now exhausted, I'm inclined to side with the defense- that the alleged victim's sexual activities in the 72 hours before she was medically examined hold significant bearing on this case. Therefore, I rule all activities in those 72 hours admissible for trial.

████████'s parents listen. It's bad. Clune confers with Wood.

CLUNE

I'll talk to her in Florida. Get the civil complaint ready to go.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Kobe and his lawyers come out of the courthouse in front of the media. A barrage of questions on the ruling.

MACKEY

The court has barred us from comment. Thank you.

But they don't need to say anything. The look of victory on their faces.

INT. FLORIDA APARTMENT, NIGHT

Clune and Easter have flown to be with █████. She's not in a good place.

CLUNE

Do you remember my idea about securing an apology from Kobe? What if I worked on that now? What if I used a back channel to the defense?

████████ is thinking.

EASTER

We would stay on track for the trial in case it didn't work out.

████████
Only if he admits I didn't make this up. Or do it for money. I'd want him to say he understands why I told the police.

CLUNE

I think that's smart. We can set
the rules.

He's optimistic. But [REDACTED] is distant.

EASTER

[REDACTED] . . .

[REDACTED]
I can handle the trial.

She's trying to convince herself as much as them.

EASTER

Let's fly you home for practice.

They all agree.

EXT. U.S. DISTRICT COURT - DISTRICT OF COLORADO, DAY

Wood walks through the entrance with a briefcase.

INT. U.S. DISTRICT COURT - DISTRICT OF COLORADO, DAY

At security he asks --

WOOD

Civil suits are filed...?

The guard points the way.

INT. HADDON, MORGAN, MUELLER, JORDAN, MACKEY & FOREMAN, DAY

Clune sits in a conference room with junior defense attorney, TERENCE O'CONNOR, who's very fixated on the pen he's rolling between his fingers.

CLUNE

Get Pam and Hal to get Kobe to sign a formal apology, and I'll get my client to withdraw from testifying against him.

O'CONNOR

But what would the apology say?

CLUNE

She has three stipulations.

O'Connor finally looks away from his pen at Clune.

O'CONNOR
I'll come back.

LATER

Clune, waiting, nearly at the end of his rope, when O'Connor returns and slides a notepad across the table.

Clune reads it. He isn't happy.

CLUNE
This is an apology for what she's been through, not his behavior.

O'CONNOR
Take it to your client.

CLUNE
Do you think she's bluffing?

O'CONNOR
Jury selection begins in a week.

O'Connor opens the door. Discussion over.

INT. FLORIDA APARTMENT, DAY

[REDACTED] and her parents. She's packing for Colorado. Speakerphone. Clune on the line, unseen.

[REDACTED]
It's nothing like what I asked for.

CLUNE (V.O.)
I know. They're betting you'll quit no matter what.

[REDACTED]
They're wrong.

CLUNE (V.O.)
Is that what I should tell them?

A long beat. She's wrestling with this.

[REDACTED]
Yeah, it is. It is.

Her parents are worried for her. She's worried too but...

[REDACTED]
Can it really get any worse?

INT. HADDON, MORGAN, MUELLER, JORDAN, MACKEY & FOREMAN, DAY
O'Connor walks in on Haddon and Mackey prepping for trial.

MACKEY

And?

O'Connor shakes his head no.

MACKEY

Unbelievable.

HADDON

I'll call Clune.

MACKEY

To say what? I'll open his client's soul at trial?

HADDON

Let them draft the statement she wants. So we have it in our pocket. Then if the deal falls apart our hands are clean. We can say we were never interested in an apology.

MACKEY

I can't believe she's going to put herself through this. I don't believe it.

HADDON

Pam, she went to the police 13 hours after the incident. She's not shy. Do we really want to risk prolonging this ordeal if we don't have to? When there's a civil case to worry about too?

He picks up the phone.

INT. JEFFERSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, DAY

The prosecution has borrowed an unused courtroom to run a mock cross-examination of [REDACTED]. A male lawyer acts as a STAND-IN for Mackey.

MACKEY STAND-IN

Alright, let's start now.

He looks at his watch then glares at [REDACTED].

The courtroom is silent.

Bakke and Easter observe along with Clune and Wood. The latter are quietly engaged.

CLUNE

I'm not bringing it up to her.

WOOD

No. Hal getting involved means they're serious. Don't dismiss it.

CLUNE

She went through hell making this decision to testify. She's set. I'm not playing games over an apology unless something drastic happens.

The Mackey stand-in looks back at his watch. A minute has passed. He accosts [REDACTED].

MACKEY STAND-IN

You're still kissing him. You kissed him for four more minutes.

[REDACTED]
That's too long. We didn't kiss that long.

MACKEY STAND-IN

Well, you said five minutes. Did you lie to the police?

[REDACTED]
Maybe it was three minutes. Or two.

MACKEY STAND-IN

So you did lie to Detective Winters. Why?

[REDACTED]
I didn't. It's- hard to remember.

MACKEY STAND-IN

Is it also 'hard to remember' if you ever clearly told the defendant no on the night of June 30th, 2003?

[REDACTED]
No I said it. I said no.

MACKEY STAND-IN

But based on what we just heard, miss, you could change your mind in the future, couldn't you?

[REDACTED]
I wouldn't do that.

MACKEY STAND-IN
You 'wouldn't do that.' Let me ask.
Is it also 'hard to remember' the
number of sexual partners you had
the week of June 30th, 2003?

This one hits her. She fumbles it. All stress.

MACKEY STAND-IN
We'll come back to that. Is it also
'hard to remember' the number of
pills you took when you attempted
suicide on February 25th, 2003?

[REDACTED]
...I mean. Yes...

MACKEY STAND-IN
Would you describe yourself as
unstable, miss?

She can't speak.

MACKEY STAND-IN
Please answer the question.

She crumbles.

Finally, after everything, her breaking point.

Her attorneys are unsettled. Wood leans in to Clune.

WOOD
For chrissakes, is this drastic
enough?

MOMENTS LATER

We're close on [REDACTED]. So close that we can't even tell where
she is. But we know one thing. She's been steamrolled.

It seeps in. Then we hear Clune.

CLUNE (O.S.)
[REDACTED], we think we can still get the
apology you wanted. Would that-

He doesn't need to finish. She's already nodding.

INT. HADDON, MORGAN, MUELLER, JORDAN, MACKEY & FOREMAN, DAY
Kobe in the conference room with Mackey and Haddon. He has
the statement.

KOBE
I'm supposed to sign this.

MACKEY
Unless you want to go to trial.

KOBE
It's necessary? It's the only way?

MACKEY
We think so.

HADDON
Yes.

KOBE
You better be fucking right.

He puts pen to paper.

INT. FLORIDA APARTMENT, MORNING

██████████ is on the phone. Her suitcase in the living room.

INTERCUT: HURLBERT'S OFFICE

Hurlbert, Bakke, Easter, and Crittenden all on speakerphone.

██████████
So I'm... I've decided I don't want
to testify anymore.

The oxygen leaves the room.

EASTER
He agreed to the apology.

██████████
I'm sorry. I-

HURLBERT
No. We understand how much you've
been through.

BAKKE
You're brave. It shouldn't have to
be like this for women like you.
(MORE)

BAKKE (CONT'D)
Hopefully, we live to see the day
when it isn't.

HURLBERT
You're my hero, [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]
Thank you very much.

Her voice trails off, and she puts down the phone. There's nothing else.

EXT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

The media brigade is scrambling.

INT. EAGLE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, DAY

Standing room only. Even the jury box is occupied by reporters. [REDACTED]'s parents have seats in the first row.

Judge Ruckriegle addresses the court.

JUDGE RUCKRIEGL
I grant the prosecution's motion to dismiss.

He gavels. [REDACTED]'s parents are red-eyed but not crying.

MACKEY
Your Honor, I'd like to read a statement from the defendant.

INT. KOBE'S HOUSE, DAY

Kobe is home with Vanessa. They're putting away groceries.

MACKEY (V.O.)
First, I want to apologize directly to the young woman involved in this incident. I want to apologize to her for my behavior that night and for the consequences she has suffered in the past year. Although this year has been incredibly difficult for me personally, I can only imagine the pain she has had to endure.

Kobe kisses his wife goodbye for now.

INT. FLORIDA APARTMENT, DAY

█████ hasn't left the couch. There's music. "Forgive" by Rebecca Lynn Howard.

MACKEY (V.O.)

I also want to make it clear that I do not question the motives of this young woman. No money has been paid to this woman. She has agreed that this statement will not be used against me in a civil case. Although I truly believe this encounter between us was consensual, I recognize now that she did not and does not view this incident the same way I did. After months of reviewing discovery, listening to her attorney, and even her testimony in person, I now understand how she feels that she did not consent to this encounter.

The song ends. The lights on her CD player flash. It's switching discs. She reaches for a college course book on the end table and opens it.

INT. LAKERS PRACTICE FACILITY, NIGHT

Kobe, alone in the gym, competing with unbridled intensity against imaginary defenders.

MACKEY (V.O.)

I issue this statement today fully aware that while one part of this case ends today, another remains. I understand that the civil case against me will go forward. That part of this case will be decided by and between the parties directly involved in the incident and will no longer be a financial or emotional drain on the citizens of the state of Colorado.

Kobe executes a spectacular reverse dunk.

EXT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

We're back where we started, at "Kobeland", the festival to celebrate Kobe's career as a Laker.

We track inside the arena with fans on a date, wearing matching Nike T-shirts.

"Forever Mamba
Forever Legend"

INT. STAPLES CENTER, NIGHT

It's halftime but everyone is in their seats.

Kobe, now 39, in a perfect suit, walks out onto the court.

The cheers are deafening. He responds to the adoration with prayer hands. We've never seen him smile this much.

Dr. Buss's daughter, JEANIE, now the controlling owner and CEO of the team, speaks to the crowd.

JEANIE

Thank you, Kobe. You taught us what happens when you out-work fear with a relentless Mamba mentality, teaching us that failure is a nonexistent concept. You have forever made your mark on this franchise. Your legacy is much greater than basketball.

Jeanie is tearful. Kobe comforts her. Booming cheers are the bridge to the PA Announcer.

PA ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The time has come, Lakers fans. Please direct your attention up to the southeast corner of the arena, where number 8 and number 24 will hang forever, as we honor one of our Laker greats, Kobe Bryant.

Kobe looks up at the rafters as a pair of screens draw down, revealing two jerseys, 8 and 24, with "Bryant" on the back.

He puts his hand on his heart. The fans chant his name. He takes the mic.

KOBE

Thank you so much for tonight. I love you. Mamba out.

Then he drops the mic and we

CUT TO BLACK.