

FADE IN:

Microfilm images speed across the screen in a blur.

Stop on the following images. Between each of them, more microfilm speeds by:

The ID photo of a German SS officer, dated 1943.

A handsome blond man, about 25 years old. Penetrating eyes.
Location: Sobibor, Poland.
Name: FRANZ ENGEL.
Signed: FRANZ ENGEL.

A list of names titled: IRO REPORT: DISPLACED PERSONS CAMP,
REGENSBURG, GERMANY. Dated 1943.

One of the names is TOMASZ KOLAKOWSKI.
The signature matches Franz Engel's handwriting.

A U.S. entrance visa application, dated 1944.

Name: TOMASZ KOLAKOWSKI.
The same young man in the photo.
The same signature next to it.

A U.S. certificate of naturalization, dated 1948.

Name: TOMASZ KOLAKOWSKI.
Country of departure: Germany.
Same signature.

A driver's license, dated 2002.

Photo of an old man. Penetrating eyes.
Place of issue: Washington, D.C.
Name: TOMASZ KOLAKOWSKI.
Same signature.

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY

It is a bright, warm day. The synagogue is large and impressive, with oaken doors and stained glass windows. A sign reads: BETH ISRAEL WELCOMES ALL OF WASHINGTON'S JEWISH CITIZENS FOR THE HIGH HOLIDAYS.

A RABBINICAL STUDENT in his early 20's emerges from a side door and locks it behind him before walking away from the synagogue.

Two seconds later, a huge explosion shatters the stained glass.

The rabbinical student looks back in horror.

The oaken doors are blown off their hinges, careening into the street.

The synagogue is engulfed in flames.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A window looks out onto the busy Washington, D.C. street. A fire truck speeds by and a SIREN wails.

JUDGE MARSHALL (O.S.)
The court finds the defendant
guilty as charged and sentences him
to eighteen months probation.

JUDGE MARSHALL, a pinched but authoritative woman in her 50's, BANGS the gavel and looks sternly at counsel.

JUDGE MARSHALL (CONT'D)
And the defense is reminded that I
graduated from Yale Law. Next
case.

BAILIFF (O.S.)
We're goin' out!

JESSE LANDAUER, in his late 20's, stands at the public defender's podium. Despite his ill-fitting suit and the thin sheen of sweat on his forehead, he is strikingly good-looking. He has both the scrappy look of an underdog and the confident bearing of a winner, and it is instantly clear that he is a fighter -- accustomed to resistance, but an absolute stranger to giving up. He is at this moment in a familiar state: frustration.

He turns to the defendant next to him, a tall and well-built DRUG DEALER.

JESSE
Well, I did my best.

DRUG DEALER
Thanks a fuckin' lot, man. The
fuck am I gonna do now.
(He is led away)

JESSE
You can try not dealing drugs.

A FEMALE REPORTER in her 20's sits in the front row of the gallery, dressed casually but conspicuously attractive. She starts to scribble on a reporter's pad.

JESSE (CONT'D)
 (To the reporter)
 What, you're gonna report that?

The reporter gives a curt smile and a shrug.

INT. COURTHOUSE - OUTSIDE COURTROOM - DAY

Jesse emerges from the courtroom through the double doors with JACK, the smug assistant district attorney. They smile broadly at each other with perfect professionalism and complete mutual disgust.

JACK
 That's nine for nine, counselor.

JESSE
 I'll see you on appeal.

JACK
 You always do.
 (He offers his hand)
 Pleasure.

JESSE
 (Shaking Jack's hand)
 Of course.

They nod and walk in opposite directions. Only now does Jesse's smile disappear.

JESSE (CONT'D)
 (Under his breath)
 Motherfucker.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

The faint sound of SIRENS in the background.

Jesse approaches a hot dog stand with FRIEDA, an attractive woman in her early 30's who could be anyone's best pal.

JESSE
 All I said was "That's not what they taught me in law school," and she took it as a personal attack.

FRIEDA

What would you call it, a pick-up
line?

Jesse squirts ketchup on his hot dog, getting it all over his
hand. He slurps it off.

JESSE

It was a textbook Fourth Amendment
violation, the cop should never
have set foot in the place.

FRIEDA

But he saw the deal through the
blinds --

JESSE

He didn't see any drugs, just black
men and dollar bills.

FRIEDA

And automatic weapons.

They start back up the steps to the courthouse. It is all
white marble, with imposing pillars and D.C. lawyers bustling
in and out of its doors.

JESSE

Well, what was he doing looking
through the blinds in the first
place?

FRIEDA

Oh Jesse, why you gotta make
everything Constitutional?

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALL - DAY

Jesse and Frieda make their way through the metal detectors
without a pause in conversation.

JESSE

It wouldn't have mattered.
Marshall hates my ass.

FRIEDA

She doesn't hate your ass.

JESSE

All the judges hate my ass. Gehry,
Hashimoto, Garcia ... everybody
hates me.

FRIEDA

Not everybody hates you.

MARK, the 45-year-old African-American supervisor of the legal aid office, leans out of an office door. If his height weren't intimidating enough already, his tone of voice is sharp.

MARK

Jesse, can I see you for a moment please?

Jesse looks at Frieda, who shrugs.

FRIEDA

Not everybody likes you either.

INT. MARK'S OFFICE - DAY

Jesse follows Mark into his office already talking. Mark signals him to close the door.

JESSE

I didn't mean it as an insult, but she was completely ignoring the law ... on appeal I can just point to the record and I promise you --

MARK

Jesse, hold the coke bust melodramas this morning, we got other fish to fry. Sit down.

Mark sits at his desk. Jesse pulls up a chair.

MARK (CONT'D)

I.N.S. was cleaning house and found some interesting files on an eighty-six-year-old man living alone in Foggy Bottom.

(He checks a document)

Tomasz Kola ... Kolakowski. Brought him in this morning, charged him with immigration fraud. They say he used to be a Nazi ... his name was Franz Engel.

Jesse's eyes widen.

MARK (CONT'D)

You know him?

JESSE

Yeah, I do. Henry Bennett and I busted our asses for three years looking for that guy when I worked at Justice. Does Henry know they've --

MARK

It was just after they arrested him that the Beth Israel synagogue was bombed. They want to try him right away. I had him held without bail; after the bombing, I thought someone might try to ...

He clicks his tongue. Jesse, still awed, nods understanding.

MARK (CONT'D)

Not that he could afford bond anyway. He hasn't got a dime. And he needs a lawyer.

He looks at Jesse. Jesse looks back at him, waiting for more. Mark continues to look him straight in the eye. Jesse gets it, and his surprise turns to alarm.

JESSE

No. No, no way ...

MARK

You're the only one with experience in the field.

JESSE

Experience in the field? Three summers as a Justice Department assistant, that's ...? No. I was there trying to get the bastard -- I didn't become a public defender so I could get him off.

MARK

I don't give a rat's ass why you became a public defender. This is America -- even Nazis have the right to a lawyer. And you're it.

He stands and drops a massive file on the table before Jesse. Jesse stands and drops it right back in front of Mark.

JESSE

Well, I happen to think my religion gives me a legitimate conflict of interest.

MARK

Jesse, if I had to find someone without a legitimate conflict of interest in defending a Nazi, I'd have to hire a Nazi to do it. Besides, you never came to any of my Seder dinners ... how do I know you're a Jew?

(He tosses the file at Jesse, who catches it.)
He's in 3-L.

He walks past Jesse toward the door. Jesse turns after him.

JESSE

Mark. Please. Don't put me in a room with that guy.

MARK

Jesse. If someone told you this job was easy, he owes you your money back.

He walks out, leaving Jesse with the thick file in his hands.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALL - DAY

Jesse looks at the numbers above the doors as he passes them: 3-F ... 3-G ... 3-H ...

He stops, puts down the file, wipes his palms on his jacket, and straightens his tie while looking at his reflection in one of the windows. His hands freeze.

Inside the room is an old man with white hair, hunched over at a table inside an otherwise empty room with grey concrete walls. The old man looks back at him with suspicious, probing eyes.

This is TOMASZ KOLAKOWSKI.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Jesse enters the room and sits down across from him. Tomasz watches him closely, unblinking, without moving a muscle.

Jesse lays out documents on the table and looks through them, avoiding the eyes of his new client. He shifts in his chair and clears his throat. He does all he can to keep it business.

JESSE

The government says you lied on your entrance visa application in 1944. You claimed you were ...
 (He checks a document)
 ... A farmer. But they say you were actually a Captain at the Nazi death camp of Sobibor in Poland ... part of the Third Reich's attempt to ... part of the Final Solution. They claim you served there from March 1943 until the prisoners' uprising that October. Do you understand these charges, sir?

Tomasz says nothing.

JESSE (CONT'D)

They've listed some of the actions you committed -- they're alleging you committed ...
 (He fumbles with the documents)
 Shooting an eleven-year-old girl in the face at point-blank range ... ordering prisoners to cut down a tree which you had ordered other prisoners to climb ... forcing a prisoner to copulate with his mother's corpse ...

TOMASZ

(He speaks with an accent)
 Are they going to shoot me?

Jesse looks up at his client. Tomasz stares at him with piercing blue eyes, his expression unchanged.

JESSE

What?

TOMASZ

Are they going to shoot me?

Jesse looks down at the documents again.

JESSE

Shoot you ... no, sir. This is a denaturalization trial. To strip you of your citizenship. Do you understand?

(Beat. He starts gathering his papers)

If that happens, there will be a hearing on whether to deport you. You'll have your pick of any country in the world ... that is, if they want to take you, which is unlikely ...

(He starts stuffing papers into his briefcase)

... so you will probably stay in the U.S. for the rest of your life ... you won't be able to vote, but you can buy groceries, pay bills, and do everything a good citizen gets to do ...

(Rising)

... so no, Mr. Kolakowski. No one is going to shoot you. Do you understand now, sir?

Tomasz just watches him.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Good. I'll be back tomorrow to discuss how you want to plead. Sleep well.

Tomasz's eyes never leave Jesse as he SNAPS the briefcase shut and walks briskly out the door.

WATSON (V.O.)

He was one of the big kids.

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

Jesse sits at a table across from THOMAS WATSON, an intelligent-looking prosecutor in his 50's. He has glasses, a gray beard and mustache, and a demeanor of quiet but total confidence. A photocopy of the Franz Engel SS ID card lies on the table, and Watson lays out other documents next to it.

WATSON

Maybe the biggest at the Sobibor camp, under the Kommandant. But of course, you knew that already.

Jesse forces a smile.

WATSON (CONT'D)
His letters to the Operation
Reinhard administration in Lublin
are as good as a camp journal ...
here are the translations.

Jesse pages through the documents in his hands.

WATSON (CONT'D)
They include numbers of Jews
disposed of, descriptions of his
own activities ... this one's about
making a little girl eat her own
feces. He really seemed to get off
on it.

JESSE
(Picking up more
documents)
What are these?

WATSON
Apparently he was in charge of
finances and development at the
camp ... these are requests to the
Lublin office for money to build
new barracks ... new gas chambers
... new crematoria ... and so on.
They're all stamped "Gewährt."

JESSE
What does that mean?

WATSON
"Granted."
(Smiling)
Seems he was quite a fund-raiser.

JESSE
These are all photocopies. Where
are the originals?

WATSON
Sobibor documents went into Soviet
archives when the Red Army picked
them up.

JESSE
So they're all locked up in Russia
now?

WATSON

Yes ... but Russia has generously volunteered to provide us with any and all originals we ask for.

JESSE

How kind of them.

WATSON

We've been building this file for some time -- just waiting for the guy to show up. But then, you probably knew that too.

Jesse looks at the documents, then back at Watson.

JESSE

So what's your proof?

WATSON

Well ... we have a document expert who's examined some originals ... claims all the documents, including the ID card, are real ...

JESSE

How do I know this person knows what he's talking about?

WATSON

Well ... it's a she ... and she's highly accredited. I've used her before on my own murder cases.

JESSE

Wait, are you ... you're Thomas Watson? From the van Buren trial?

Watson nods with a curt, professional smile.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Oh. Well. Congratulations.

WATSON

Thank you. Anyway, my expert says everything's in order ... signatures are authentic ... materials are undoctored. Looks pretty open and shut.

(Beat)

What's his story?

JESSE

(Beat)

We're working on it. I'll let you know in a few days.

Watson leans in, putting his hands on the table to talk "man to man."

WATSON

Listen. If his alibi isn't that strong ... it's been sixty years, it's not like ex-Nazis were foremost in anyone's mind ... but with that synagogue being destroyed, I don't think people will be pleased to learn they've had one for a neighbor. I know you haven't been doing this that long, but understand there's no shame in pleading guilty.

Jesse looks back at him. If there's one thing he can't tolerate, it's condescension.

JESSE

Do you have a witness?

A pause. Watson smiles.

WATSON

Like I said, it's been sixty years. Not many survivors left anymore ... but there are a few from Sobibor. We'll find them.

JESSE

Let me know when you do.
(He rises to go.)

WATSON

I had lunch with Henry Bennett the other day.

Jesse stops, his back to Watson.

WATSON (CONT'D)

We studied German law together at the Planck Institute in Heidelberg. Terrific guy -- knows his stuff. Is he aware you've taken up arms on the other side?

JESSE

(Turning to Watson,
smiling)

I haven't talked to Henry in five years. Besides, I think he's too busy rubbing noses at the Berlin Embassy to hunt Nazis anymore.

WATSON

Just let me know how you want to plead. We can make this quick and easy.

Jesse nods with a curt smile.

INT. OUTSIDE MEETING ROOM - DAY

The moment the door closes behind him, Jesse's gleaming mask of confidence vanishes. He takes a deep breath and walks on.

INT. JESSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ON TV SCREEN

THE THREE STOOGES are looking at each other, frozen. Then the antics ensue: they slap each other, tweak each other's noses, poke each other's eyes.

Sitting on his ratty old couch, Jesse bursts into a LAUGH, spilling the broth from his Top Ramen. His eyes don't leave the screen as he picks up a crumpled piece of newspaper and wipes his jaw with it. As he shovels another spoonful into his mouth, he loses a clump of noodles. They splatter onto the coffee table in front of him.

JESSE

Shit.

The noodles lie on the photocopy of the SS ID card. Jesse wipes it up. From the TV, the sounds of the Stooges are replaced by the voice of a female NEWSCASTER.

NEWSCASTER

... More on the explosion at Beth Israel two days ago -- investigators now believe that the act of terror was committed not by a pro-Palestinian organization ...

Jesse looks up at the TV screen. The newscaster is an attractive, serious-looking blonde woman in her mid-30's.

ON TV SCREEN

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
 ... but by a fringe neo-Nazi group
 called the Brothers of America.

Cut to the wreckage of the synagogue. It is a charred,
 blackened brick skeleton.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
 If true, this would be the most
 serious anti-Semitic attack
 committed by white supremacists in
 Washington in years.

The newscaster's voice fades to a murmur. Jesse's smile has
 disappeared. He looks down at the photo before him.

The eyes stare back at Jesse, challenging him.

TOMASZ (O.S.)
 Take off the tie.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Jesse's file folder lies open on a table, papers in disarray.
 The photocopy of the ID card lies on top.

Jesse looks up at Tomasz suspiciously. Tomasz indicates his
 throat, smiling amicably. Jesse fingers the knot at his
 collar.

JESSE
 No. Thank you.

TOMASZ
 You are not warm?

JESSE
 (Eyes on his documents)
 Yes, I am, thank you. Have you
 decided how you want to plead, Mr.
 Kolakowski?

TOMASZ
 (His smile fades)
 Plead?

JESSE
 Yes, plead. Are you guilty or not
 guilty of these charges?

Jesse looks up at him. Tomasz's face is unreadable.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Mr. Kolakowski. Were you a Nazi?

Tomasz looks at the door. Silence.

JESSE (CONT'D)
(Taking out a pad and pen)
All right. We'll start with the
easy ones. When were you born?

TOMASZ
(Beat)
Ten July. Nineteen sixteen.

JESSE
(Writing)
Where?

TOMASZ
Izbica. Poland.

JESSE
(Not looking up)
Język polski?

TOMASZ
(Beat. A small smile)
Tak, mowie język polski.

JESSE
So you do speak Polish.

TOMASZ
I tell you. I am born there.

JESSE
Well, this piece of identification
says you're German.

Jesse slides the photocopy of the ID card across the table to him. Tomasz ignores it, keeping his eyes on Jesse.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Do you know what this paper is,
sir?
(Nothing from Tomasz)
Are you familiar with the term
Operation Reinhard?
(Still nothing)
How about the name Gustav Wagner?
Kurt Bolander? Karl Fleischer?

Tomasz's jaw tightens.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Operation Reinhard was a program establishing three death camps to exterminate the Jewish population in Europe. This is the ID card of a Captain at one of those camps, called Sobibor, and it has your picture on it.

(Still nothing)

Is this you, sir?

(Nothing)

Sprechen sie Deutsch?

Tomasz gives him a sharp look, then looks away.

JESSE (CONT'D)

(Beat)

Sir ...

TOMASZ

Is this for newspaper?

JESSE

What?

TOMASZ

For press. Press will have this story? Will show it?

JESSE

I don't know, sir. That's not up to me. Now --

TOMASZ

I don't want newspaper.

JESSE

Like I said, Mr. Kolakowski, it's not up to me whether the press covers this case. If you want to avoid that, let's finish it as soon as possible. Were you a Captain at Sobibor, sir? If so, then I think you should enter a plea of --

TOMASZ

Listen to me. If I say the truth, you must promise no press.

JESSE
 Sir, I've told you I have no
 control over that.

Suddenly Tomasz breaks into a violent COUGH -- but his eyes
 don't leave Jesse. Jesse is startled.

JESSE (CONT'D)
 Are you all right?
 (Beat)
 Do you need a doctor?

TOMASZ
 Promise. No press.

A beat. Jesse looks down at his papers, trying to quell a
 rising feeling of alarm.

JESSE
 Mr. Kolakowski, where were you
 between March and October of 1943?

TOMASZ
 Promise.

JESSE
 Were you in Izbica?

Tomasz looks at Jesse with urgency in his eyes.

JESSE (CONT'D)
 Or were you at this camp?

TOMASZ
 I did not do these things.

JESSE
 Then you want to plead not guilty?

TOMASZ
 (Looking at him fixedly)
 I am not guilty.

Jesse looks back at him closely, almost surprised by this
 seeming sincerity.

JESSE
 (Beat)
 Is that the truth?

Another COUGH, louder and sharper, rips through Tomasz's
 lungs, startling Jesse. Tomasz doubles over in his chair.
 The coughing becomes uncontrollable. Jesse rises.

JESSE (CONT'D)
I'll get a doctor.

The old man's hand whips across and grabs Jesse's arm. Jesse freezes. A stream of spittle dangles from the old man's withered lips. His eyes are piercing, threatening, steely.

TOMASZ
Nobody can know this.

Jesse pulls himself free.

JESSE
I can't do anything about the
press. I'll send a doctor.

He hurries out, slamming the door shut behind him.

INT. COURTROOM HALL - DAY

Jesse, shaken, walks briskly down the hall, studying the contents of the large folder in his hands. He turns a corner.

CLAUDIA (O.S.)
Excuse me.

Startled, Jesse stops abruptly and papers spill out of his folder onto the floor. He squats to pick them up.

CLAUDIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Sorry.

JESSE
(Sharply)
You know, you don't have to ...
(He straightens up and
sees her, and his tone
changes)
... worry about it.

It's the female reporter from the courtroom. Her bright, searching eyes bespeak a considerable intelligence. She is still dressed casually, but the directness and confidence with which she looks at him make her seem even more attractive than before.

JESSE (CONT'D)
You're from the Washington Courier,
aren't you?

CLAUDIA
We've never been introduced.
(Extending her hand)
Claudia.

Jesse tries to shake it but the papers, clutched against his chest, start to spill and he grabs them back.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
Jesse Landauer, I know. I hear
you're on the Nazi case.

JESSE
News travels fast.

CLAUDIA
It's my job. Wondered if you had
anything to say about it.

JESSE
What, is this a story already?

CLAUDIA
You tell me.

JESSE
(With the slightest glance
back toward Tomasz's
room)
I'd rather not make it one, thanks.
(He starts past her)

CLAUDIA
(Blocking him)
I just thought you might want to
get a word in before everyone else
does. If this blows up, you might
wish you'd been able to frame the
story. Especially once the stuff
about Henry Bennett comes out.

JESSE
What do you mean?

CLAUDIA
When you worked for him. At
Justice.

JESSE
(Growing more and more
tense)
Henry Bennett has nothing to do
with this.

CLAUDIA
 No, but people will be wondering
 why he let you go.

JESSE
 He -- I'm the one who left, and by
 the way -- excuse me.

He brushes past her.

CLAUDIA
 (Calling after him)
 You're sure you have nothing to
 say? Even off the record?

INT. LEGAL AID OFFICE - DAY

Jesse sits at his cluttered desk. He buries his face in his hands and rubs his eyes. He stares at the papers in front of him, then looks up at a framed photograph on his wall.

It is a black-and-white photo of two men smiling victoriously and shaking hands at a press conference, surrounded by small teams of people. Behind the man on the left -- a handsome and smartly dressed man in his 40's -- Jesse stands in the background, looking on with an admiring smile of his own.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - DAY

In front of a wall of imposing stained-wood shelves lined with identical imposing tomes, HENRY BENNETT sits at his oaken desk, talking on the phone. In his 50's now, he is still as handsome and distinguished-looking as he is in Jesse's photo. Although it's not there now, his face shows the capacity for that same winning smile ... and the same passion for the lawyer's hunt.

HENRY (O.S.)
 Paragraph three. Where it says --
 what? No, Johann, that's not --

A BEEP from the intercom.

SECRETARY'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Mr. Bennett, there's a Jesse
 Landauer for you on line two.

HENRY
 (Beat. He presses the
 intercom button)
 (MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

Take a message will you Fran,
thanks.

(On the phone)

Entschuldigung -- sorry. Now look,
no American judge is going to ... I
understand that, but we have a
Constitution that protects our
citizens' rights to ... no, Johann,
I'm not suggesting you would --

Another BEEP.

SECRETARY'S VOICE (O.S.)

Mr. Bennett, your son is on line
two.

HENRY

Entschuldigung, just a moment.

(Pressing a button)

Matthew, what is it?

INT. LEGAL AID OFFICE - DAY

JESSE

(On the phone)

Hey Daddy. How's it hanging?

INTERCUT - HENRY'S OFFICE/LEGAL AID OFFICE

HENRY

Matthew?

JESSE

Nope -- Jesse Landauer. Remember
me?

HENRY

(His tone is not
exuberant)

Hi, Jesse.

JESSE

Listen. How about a drink tonight
at Sarafina's? Nine o'clock. On
me.

Beat. Henry sits back in his chair.

INT. SARAFINA'S BAR - NIGHT

At the door, Henry looks around the bar. The walls and tables are oaken, and a dull lamp hangs over a pool table in the back. There is the low sound of a CROONER on the radio, and muffled CHATTER from other patrons.

Jesse, seated in a booth, waves him over.

HENRY

(As he sits)

Haven't been here in five years.

JESSE

I guess a fancy ambassador like you wouldn't be caught dead in a dive like this.

A waitress appears, sets down a bottle of Rolling Rock for Jesse and a cognac for Henry, and leaves.

HENRY

To what do I owe this unexpected occasion?

JESSE

Well, they say every half a decade you're supposed to revisit the most embarrassing, humiliating, excruciating memory of your life, just to keep yourself from ever getting over it. So I figure I'm right on schedule.

HENRY

(Suppressing a little smile)

They say that, do they?

JESSE

So I hear. Oh, and another thing.

HENRY

What's that?

JESSE

Franz Engel. They got him.

Henry's eyes widen. He sits back in his chair. The SONG fades out, leaving only the low CHATTER.

HENRY
No shit. Who found him?

JESSE
I.N.S. He was right here in the
Beltway.

Another SONG starts up, quieter.

HENRY
I see you keep well-informed on the
old boys.

JESSE
I'm more than well-informed. I'm
his lawyer.

HENRY
(Stunned)
His lawyer? You're representing
him?

JESSE
They stuck me with the case. Said
I'm the only one with experience.

HENRY
Experience? Do they know about
Janovic?

A beat. Jesse looks down, and back up.

JESSE
I didn't want to go over that
again.

HENRY
Then what did you want, Jesse? You
tell me you're defending Franz
Engel, and what am I supposed to
say? What do you want from me?

JESSE
I want you to help me.

HENRY
Help you?
(Beat)
Jesse ...

JESSE
I know, you're busy with your cushy
new job, but I thought you could --

HENRY

Jesse. I'm the U.S. Ambassador to Germany.

JESSE

I know, but --

HENRY

You want me to step in on behalf of Franz fucking Engel? Even if I could help you, legally, which I can't, I wouldn't touch this with a ten-foot --

JESSE

But Henry --

HENRY

And what about you? Weren't you the one who had your sights on Attorney General some day? You're never gonna get past third clerk from the left if you --

JESSE

Henry, I don't know if it's really him.

HENRY

(Beat)

What do you mean?

JESSE

I mean, I don't know. That's what I mean.

Henry picks up his drink for the first time and sits back.

HENRY

What's his story?

JESSE

Says he was a farmer. Some hicksville town in Poland. Farm went south 'cause of the war, he went to a Displaced Persons camp in Germany, filed for an entrance visa to the U.S., got in eight months later.

HENRY

So he was never anywhere near the camp.

JESSE
That's what he says.

HENRY
Any witnesses? Family?

JESSE
(He shrugs)
I've tried to drag it out of him,
but he just shuts down. All he
says is no press, no press.

HENRY
No press, huh?
(He takes a sip)
What does the government have?

JESSE
Payroll, ID, budget requests,
letters. The man's as big as we
thought he was. A real
motherfucker.

HENRY
Witness?

JESSE
Not yet.

HENRY
Who's prosecuting?

JESSE
Just my luck -- Thomas Watson. He
says hi.

HENRY
Oh, that fucker.

JESSE
Henry. You know I've wanted to get
Engel for almost ten years. Ever
since I started in your office. I
think I wanted him more than you
did. But I'm ... I'm just not sure
this is him.

HENRY
And what is it you want me to do,
exactly?

JESSE

Just interview him once, with me.
You're good with that -- knowing
when people are telling the truth.
And I'm ... that's giving me a hard
time right now.

HENRY

(Beat. He takes a drink.)
When I was a capital defender, I
represented a lot of guilty
motherfuckers. And they went
through all the motions -- deny
this, plea bargain that ...
anything to get off, or at least a
lighter sentence. But I defended
innocent motherfuckers too. And
they didn't just go through the
motions ... they put all their life
and breath into making sure they
got the hell out of this. There is
nothing so terrifying as the threat
of ultimate punishment when you
haven't done anything wrong. There
aren't many innocent people in this
world ... but if you've been
nothing but a good farmer, and you
see a life sentence coming at you,
let alone a death sentence ... you
kick and scream like a bleeding
horse, and you don't stop till
everyone knows you're spotless.
That's how I knew.

He shrugs. Jesse looks down at his untouched beer.

HENRY (CONT'D)

So if this guy isn't making his own
case, my guess is he doesn't have
much of one. But you're a smart
guy, Jesse.

Jesse looks up.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You go with your gut on this one.
If you really believe this guy, and
you can find something to back him
up ... well, I'm not making any
promises. But I'll see what I can
do.

Jesse looks out the window, pained and uncertain.

Henry raises his glass.
Jesse, forcing a smile, CLINKS his bottle with Henry's glass.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The sound of SHATTERING GLASS.

An OLD MAN, about 70, sits bolt upright in bed. He listens -- silence. His WIFE turns over next to him. She puts her hand on his leg. He shoves aside the covers and gets up.

On his nightstand is their black-and-white wedding photo. The groom wears a yarmulke.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The old man looks at something offscreen. His wife appears behind him. What she sees makes her GASP.

At the other end of the hallway is a large window, looking out at the night sky. The window is splintered with cracks radiating out from a large hole in the center.

The old man picks something up from the floor and turns it over in his hands. It is a rock, about the size of a fist, soil still clinging to it.

Outside there is a low RUSH OF AIR, and the faintest sound of CRACKLING.

The old man moves toward the hole in the window. We see an orange glow outside, from below.

The old man's face is taut and angry as he looks through the hole, down at his lawn. His wife's face appears behind him. She CRIES out and claps her hands to her mouth.

The bushes are in flames.

A crumpled body lies unconscious and bloody.
Spray-painted in black on their gravel driveway is an enormous swastika.