

SAWGRASS WARS

"A Place in the Car"

Episode 14 - Season One

Written by

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Based on the Sawgrass Wars novella series
by Kurt Weichert

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FADE IN:

EXT. GOLD COAST BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTORS - NIGHT

An abandoned warehouse stands beside a dead stretch of the Miami River.

Faded lettering above the loading bays reads: GOLD COAST BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTORS.

The parking lot is cracked. Windows painted black. Rust consumes the corrugated loading doors facing the water.

Willis's black Cadillac stops beneath a broken security light.

Two MEN wait near the entrance. Neither appears armed.

INT. WILLIS'S CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

Bones peers through the painted windows.

FOUR SHADOWS move inside. Maybe five.

BONES

There's more than two.

Willis looks toward the building.

WILLIS

How many?

BONES

Four inside. Maybe five.

WILLIS

You see guns?

BONES

No.

SUDS

They got guns.

Teddy leans forward from the back seat.

TEDDY

This is the address they gave me.

WILLIS
That supposed to make me feel
better?

TEDDY
No.

WILLIS
Good.

A BLACK VAN enters the lot and stops behind them.

Bones turns.

Two more men climb out.

BONES
They closing the exit.

Willis checks the side mirror.

WILLIS
They making sure nobody interrupts.

TEDDY
That is not better.

Willis opens his door.

WILLIS
Meeting ain't supposed to feel
good.

Suds reaches beneath his seat and removes a pistol.

Willis stops him.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
They said one man.

SUDS
They also said twenty percent.

WILLIS
Leave it.

Suds returns the pistol beneath the seat.

Willis looks at Bones.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
You remember what I said?

BONES
Stay in the car.

WILLIS
Even if you hear gunfire.

BONES
I remember.

WILLIS
This ain't Dawber County. You don't
know these streets. You don't know
these people.

BONES
I said I remember.

WILLIS
You didn't say you'd do it.

Bones meets his eyes.

BONES
I'll stay in the car.

Suds smiles.

Willis points at him.

WILLIS
Don't start.

SUDS
I ain't said nothing.

WILLIS
Your face did.

Teddy remains seated.

Willis opens his door.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
Move.

TEDDY
I thought I was staying with Bones.

WILLIS
You arranged this.

TEDDY
They know me.

WILLIS
That's why you're going first.

EXT. GOLD COAST BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTORS - CONTINUOUS

Teddy climbs out.

Willis and Suds follow him toward the warehouse.

Bones watches them enter.

The metal door closes.

The two men from the black van remain outside.

One lights a cigarette.

The other looks directly at Bones.

INT. ABANDONED BEVERAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The place reeks of mildew, old syrup and river water.

Empty bottle crates rise in crooked stacks. A conveyor belt crosses the warehouse beneath hanging fluorescent lights.

LUCIEN BAPTISTE waits beside a folding table.

Dark suit. Black shirt. No tie. Shaved head. A gold cross at his throat. He carries the calm of a man who allows other people to become emotional for him.

Six HAITIAN GANG MEMBERS stand nearby.

Willis stops.

WILLIS
You said I could bring one.

Lucien looks toward Suds.

LUCIEN
You brought enough for three.

Suds smiles.

SUDS
Thank you.

Lucien's men do not smile.

Teddy steps forward.

TEDDY

Lucien, I told Willis about the terms.

Lucien raises one hand.

Teddy stops talking.

LUCIEN

I was disappointed when you left us.

TEDDY

I didn't leave.

LUCIEN

You took our product and returned to the Maroons.

TEDDY

They found out.

LUCIEN

Yes. I saw what they did to your face.

Teddy touches the fading bruise.

Lucien looks at Willis.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

Was the bag necessary?

WILLIS

Worked.

LUCIEN

Fear usually does.

WILLIS

It ain't fear if you prove you'll do it.

Lucien smiles slightly.

LUCIEN

Then we understand each other.

He motions toward the folding table.

A MAP OF MIAMI has been divided with red and blue lines.

Lucien places one finger on the wealthy neighborhoods south of the university.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

Teddy's customers remain yours. The clubs along the beach remain open to both organizations. Little Haiti and the river remain ours.

WILLIS

And you get twenty percent of my business.

LUCIEN

For protection.

WILLIS

From who?

LUCIEN

Us.

Willis laughs.

Lucien remains still.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

You find something amusing?

WILLIS

I already got protection from you.

LUCIEN

What protection?

WILLIS

Suds.

Suds smiles wider.

Lucien looks toward him.

LUCIEN

Does he always smile?

WILLIS

Even at funerals.

Suds's smile disappears.

SUDS

Not Deon's.

Lucien nods respectfully.

LUCIEN
Your brother's death was
unfortunate.

WILLIS
Don't speak his name.

LUCIEN
I meant no offense.

WILLIS
Then get to the business.

Lucien folds the map.

LUCIEN
The business is larger than
marijuana.

WILLIS
Not mine.

LUCIEN
You received two million dollars
from Johnny Malone.

Teddy looks at Willis.

Willis turns toward him.

TEDDY
I didn't tell them.

LUCIEN
Money creates sound. Men hear it
moving.

WILLIS
Who told you?

LUCIEN
A corrections officer spoke before
the federal agents found him.

WILLIS
Waylon?

Lucien does not answer.

Willis scans the warehouse.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
This ain't a territory meeting.

LUCIEN

No.

WILLIS

What do you want?

LUCIEN

One million dollars.

Suds laughs.

Lucien glances at him.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

He still finds this amusing.

SUDS

Numbers get funny when they stupid.

Lucien looks back at Willis.

LUCIEN

You bring one million tomorrow. In return, the Maroons may continue operating in Miami.

WILLIS

And if I don't?

LUCIEN

You return to Dawber County and remain there.

Willis steps toward the table.

WILLIS

My people been selling in Miami longer than half these boys been alive.

LUCIEN

Your people sell to students and country clubs because we allow it.

WILLIS

You didn't allow shit.

Lucien sighs.

Two men move behind Willis.

Suds notices. His smile returns.

SUDS

Willis.

WILLIS

I see them.

Lucien places both hands on the table.

LUCIEN

Where is Johnny Malone?

Willis says nothing.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)

Does he still possess the other
three million?

WILLIS

Ask him.

LUCIEN

We would if we could find him.

WILLIS

That sounds like your problem.

LUCIEN

Where are his Swiss accounts?

Willis looks at Teddy.

Teddy raises his hands.

TEDDY

I never said anything about
Switzerland.

Lucien's expression changes.

Willis realizes the mistake.

Lucien turns to Teddy.

LUCIEN

Switzerland?

Teddy steps backward.

TEDDY

I heard a rumor.

LUCIEN

From whom?

TEDDY

Nobody.

Lucien's men SEIZE Teddy.

Willis reaches beneath his shirt --

A pistol presses against the back of his neck.

Suds lunges.

Three men strike him at once. A blow to the temple. A fist into his ribs. A chain wraps around his throat and drags him backward.

Suds remains standing.

It takes two more men to bring him down.

Lucien watches.

LUCIEN

I wanted this conversation to remain civil.

Willis is forced onto his knees.

WILLIS

You asked for a million dollars.

LUCIEN

And you refused.

WILLIS

I laughed.

LUCIEN

That was the refusal.

Two men drag Teddy toward the conveyor belt.

TEDDY

I didn't tell them anything!

Willis looks at him.

WILLIS

For once, I believe you.

Lucien removes his jacket and folds it across the back of a chair.

LUCIEN

Where is Johnny Malone?

Willis smiles through clenched teeth.

WILLIS
Switzerland.

Lucien studies him.

LUCIEN
You are lying.

WILLIS
No. He's opening a chocolate shop.

One of Lucien's men strikes Willis across the mouth.

Blood runs down his chin.

Lucien looks toward Suds.

LUCIEN
Perhaps your friend is more
reasonable.

Suds sits on the floor, hands bound behind him. Blood covers
one side of his face.

He smiles.

Lucien shakes his head.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)
I find that deeply irritating.

EXT. GOLD COAST BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTORS - NIGHT

The dashboard clock marks EIGHT MINUTES.

The men outside smoke another cigarette.

One walks to the Cadillac and taps on the passenger window.

INT. WILLIS'S CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

Bones lowers the window two inches.

HAITIAN GUARD
You Malone?

BONES
Maybe.

The man smiles.

HAITIAN GUARD
You got his face.

BONES
You knew him?

HAITIAN GUARD
Everybody knows Johnny Malone.

BONES
Then you know better than to lean
against his car.

The guard looks at the Cadillac.

HAITIAN GUARD
This his?

BONES
No.

HAITIAN GUARD
Then why you care?

BONES
I don't like you.

The guard's smile fades.

HAITIAN GUARD
Stay inside.

Bones raises the window.

The guard returns to the entrance.

The dashboard clock marks TEN MINUTES.

No one comes out.

Bones finds Teddy's silver flip phone beneath the rear seat.

He calls the number Willis gave the Maroon vehicles following
them.

No answer.

He calls again.

Nothing.

Bones looks behind the Cadillac.

The black van blocks the exit. One of its rear doors stands open.

The dashboard clock marks ELEVEN MINUTES.

Bones climbs into the front seat and reaches beneath it.

His fingers close around Suds's pistol.

He checks the magazine. Full.

Bones glances toward the trunk. He saw Suds place a pump shotgun inside before they left Dawber County.

EXT. GOLD COAST BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTORS - CONTINUOUS

Bones opens the driver's door.

Both guards turn.

BONES
Bathroom.

HAITIAN GUARD
Use a bottle.

BONES
I need a big bottle.

HAITIAN GUARD
Get back in the car.

Bones raises both hands.

BONES
All right.

He returns to the driver's seat and closes the door.

The guards watch until he appears to settle.

Bones reaches beneath the dashboard and pops the trunk.

He waits.

The guards turn toward the warehouse again.

Bones slips out the passenger side, circles behind the Cadillac and lifts the trunk just far enough to reach inside.

He removes the SHOTGUN.

The trunk closes.

The guards turn.

Bones FIRES into the broken security light above them.

Glass EXPLODES above them.

Darkness swallows the parking lot.

One guard reaches beneath his jacket.

Bones smashes the shotgun stock across his face. The man collapses against the Cadillac.

The second guard draws a pistol and FIRES.

Bones drops beneath the shot and drives his shoulder into the man's waist.

They crash onto the pavement.

The pistol slides beneath the car.

The guard punches Bones behind the ear.

Bones catches his arm, rolls and locks it against his chest.

The guard reaches for the shotgun.

Bones tightens the hold until the elbow SNAPS.

The man's scream carries across the parking lot.

Bones strikes him with the shotgun and leaves him unconscious beside the car.

He retrieves Suds's pistol and moves toward the warehouse.

The front door is locked.

Bones circles the building.

EXT. BEVERAGE WAREHOUSE - RIVER ALLEY - NIGHT

A narrow alley separates the warehouse from the Miami River.

Wooden pilings support a rear loading platform over the water. A rusted service ladder climbs to the second floor.

Bones tucks the pistol into his waistband and climbs.

At the top, he finds a window painted black from inside.

A crack near the frame gives him a narrow view.

Through the crack, Bones sees Willis on his knees.

Teddy has been strapped to the conveyor belt.

Suds is tied to a support column as a man presses the heated end of a metal tool against his shoulder.

Suds SCREAMS.

A sound escapes Bones. Not quite a word.

He looks toward the roof.

INT. ABANDONED BEVERAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Lucien stands before Willis.

LUCIEN
Your brother believed the law
protected him.

Willis spits blood onto the floor.

WILLIS
My brother believed people could be
better than they were.

LUCIEN
And you?

WILLIS
I know better.

Lucien nods toward Suds.

The heated metal touches him again.

Suds strains against the rope. His smile is gone.

LUCIEN
Tell me where Malone went.

WILLIS
I don't know.

LUCIEN
Where is his son?

Willis glances toward the entrance.

Lucien catches it.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)
The boy in the car?

Willis says nothing.

Lucien turns to one of his men.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)
Bring him inside.

The man moves toward the front door.

The warehouse lights CUT OUT.

Darkness.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)
What happened?

A red emergency light flickers above the loading bays.

The man near the front door draws his pistol.

A CRASH from above.

Something smashes through the skylight.

A TEAR-GAS CANISTER hits the floor and rolls beneath the conveyor.

White smoke floods the room.

Teddy coughs.

Lucien covers his mouth.

LUCIEN (CONT'D)
Find him!

High above, Bones descends through the broken skylight and lands on the upper catwalk.

The emergency canister on the roof actually worked.

A gunman below FIRES at Bones.

Bullets tear through the metal railing.

Bones FIRES the shotgun.

The blast destroys the light above the shooter and showers him with glass.

Bones runs along the catwalk.

A second man charges up the stairs.

Bones drops the shotgun, catches him at the top and drives his head into the railing.

The man tumbles backward down the steps.

Bones retrieves the shotgun and jumps the final six feet to the warehouse floor.

Lucien's men fire through the smoke.

Bones rolls behind a stack of bottle crates.

Rounds shred the plastic.

Willis throws himself sideways, knocking his guard off balance.

Suds drives both feet into the knees of the man holding the heated tool.

The man falls.

Suds pulls his bound hands beneath his legs, loops them forward and seizes the man by the throat.

Bones emerges from behind the crates.

A gunman turns toward him.

Bones FIRES.

The man spins into the conveyor belt.

TEDDY
Behind you!

Bones turns.

The man who fell down the stairs charges with a knife.

Bones catches his wrist.

The blade stops inches from Bones's chest.

The attacker forces it closer.

Bones drops the shotgun, steps inside the man's reach and throws him over his hip.

The attacker SLAMS onto the concrete.

Bones drives a knee onto his arm and tears the knife free.

Across the warehouse, Willis reaches the pistol beneath his shirt.

He FIRES twice.

His guard collapses.

Willis cuts the rope around his wrists with a jagged piece of metal and tosses the pistol to Suds.

Suds catches it.

His smile returns.

SUDS

Now it's a meeting.

He SHOOTS the man who burned him.

Lucien races toward the rear loading doors.

Bones sees him.

BONES

Willis!

Willis turns.

Lucien FIRES.

The bullet strikes the conveyor beside Teddy's head.

Teddy screams and pulls against the straps.

Willis returns fire.

Lucien disappears through the loading doors.

Bones runs after him.

WILLIS

Leave him!

EXT. BEVERAGE WAREHOUSE - RIVER LOADING PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Bones reaches the platform as Lucien LEAPS into a waiting speedboat.

The engine ROARS.

The boat pulls into the river.

Bones raises the pistol.

Willis grabs his arm before he can fire.

WILLIS

Too far.

BONES

I can hit him.

WILLIS

You hit him, the boat keeps going
and everybody on the river hears
the shots.

BONES

He tried to kill you.

WILLIS

He'll try again.

At the rear of the speedboat, Lucien looks back.

He points two fingers toward his eyes.

Then toward Bones.

The boat vanishes beneath a bridge.

INT. ABANDONED BEVERAGE WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Suds cuts Teddy free.

Teddy slides from the conveyor belt and collapses onto the
floor.

WILLIS

You knew.

Teddy looks up.

TEDDY

I swear I didn't.

WILLIS

You arranged an ambush.

TEDDY

I arranged a meeting.

WILLIS

They knew about Switzerland.

TEDDY

I heard people at a club talking about Malone's Swiss accounts. I repeated it to one of Lucien's people before Willis brought me back. I thought it was another Dawber County legend.

Willis raises his pistol.

Bones steps between them.

BONES

He warned me.

WILLIS

What?

BONES

When the lights went out, he yelled that somebody was behind me.

WILLIS

That don't make him innocent.

BONES

No. It makes him useful.

Teddy nods rapidly.

TEDDY

I can fix this.

Willis stares at him.

WILLIS

You said that before.

TEDDY

I know who carries money for Lucien. I know which clubs wash it. My father's company handles performers at half the places he uses.

Suds presses one hand against his burned shoulder.

SUDS

He might be useful.

Willis looks at him.

WILLIS

You need a hospital.

SUDS
I need a sandwich.

WILLIS
You just got burned.

SUDS
Still hungry.

Bones picks up the shotgun.

Willis scans the warehouse.

Three men are dead. Two are wounded. The rest escaped through the loading bays.

SIRENS sound in the distance.

WILLIS
We need to move.

They collect their weapons and hurry toward the front entrance.

EXT. GOLD COAST BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTORS - MOMENTS LATER

The two guards Bones disabled remain beside the Cadillac.

Suds looks down at them.

SUDS
You do this?

Bones opens the passenger door.

BONES
They wouldn't let me use the bathroom.

Suds bursts out laughing, then clutches his burned shoulder.

Willis stops beside the car.

WILLIS
You disobeyed me.

Bones looks at him.

BONES
You're alive.

WILLIS
That ain't the point.

BONES
Feels like the point.

WILLIS
I told you to stay in the car.

BONES
I stayed as long as I could.

Bones checks the dashboard clock.

BONES (CONT'D)
Eleven minutes.

Willis stares at him.

WILLIS
You counted?

BONES
Yes.

WILLIS
You came into a warehouse alone
against eight armed men.

BONES
You brought Suds.

Suds nods.

SUDS
That was insulting.

Willis looks at the broken security light, the unconscious men and the shotgun in Bones's hand.

WILLIS
What did your father tell you?

BONES
To deliver the message and stay out
of trouble.

WILLIS
How'd that work?

BONES
About like it worked for him.

The sirens grow louder.

Willis opens the driver's door.

WILLIS
Suds can't drive.

SUDS
I can drive.

WILLIS
You got one working arm.

SUDS
I only use one.

WILLIS
Get in the back.

Teddy climbs into the rear seat beside Suds.

Bones moves toward the passenger side.

Willis stops him.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
From now on, Teddy goes somewhere,
you go with him.

Teddy looks horrified.

TEDDY
What?

Willis points at him.

WILLIS
I don't trust that rich little
bastard. He makes a call, you know
who answered. He goes into a club,
you stand beside him. He meets a
customer, you count the money.

Bones looks at Teddy.

BONES
What if he tries to run?

WILLIS
Break something he needs.

Teddy shakes his head.

TEDDY
This is ridiculous.

Suds places his good arm around Teddy's shoulders.

SUDS

You two gonna be great friends.

Bones climbs into the Cadillac.

INT. WILLIS'S CADILLAC - MOVING - NIGHT

Willis speeds away from the warehouse.

Bones looks back toward the Miami River.

Lucien Baptiste is gone.

BONES

They know about Switzerland.

WILLIS

And your father doesn't know they know.

BONES

Not yet.

Bones touches the envelope inside his jacket.

BONES (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

First rule: survive.

Willis glances at Bones.

WILLIS

You ain't one of us.

BONES

Didn't ask to be.

WILLIS

Suds likes you.

BONES

Suds likes everybody.

WILLIS

Not like this.

Bones looks toward the back seat.

Suds smiles despite the blood and burned flesh covering his shoulder.

Teddy sits trapped beneath Suds's arm, staring at Bones with equal parts fear and resentment.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

You saved our lives. That earns respect.

BONES

What does it earn me?

WILLIS

A place in the car.

Bones looks through the windshield at the Miami skyline.

For the first time since Johnny returned, Bones is not following his father.

He is building a reputation of his own.

INT. MIAMI OFFICE TOWER - NINETEENTH-FLOOR LOBBY - MORNING

Deon's name remains on the directory: CHILDRESS LEGAL GROUP.

TIANA ROSS stands beneath it, staring at the letters.

She wears the same black suit she wore to Deon's funeral. Different blouse. Different shoes. The faint memory of incense still clings to the fabric.

A MAINTENANCE WORKER pushes a ladder past her. An empty cardboard box sits on his cart.

Beyond the glass doors, telephones ring and lawyers hurry between offices. The firm continues.

Tiana steps into the elevator.

INT. OFFICE TOWER - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Her reflection stares back from the brass doors.

The elevator rises.

INT. CHILDRESS LEGAL GROUP - RECEPTION - MORNING

The doors open on nineteen.

DENISE, the receptionist, rises when Tiana enters.

DENISE

Tiana.

TIANA
Morning, Denise.

DENISE
I didn't know you were coming in.

TIANA
Neither did I.

DENISE
There's a partners' meeting.

TIANA
I know.

Denise lowers her voice.

DENISE
They're discussing the firm.

TIANA
They've been discussing the firm
since before we buried him.

DENISE
They want to know what happens
next.

TIANA
So do I.

Tiana moves toward the hallway.

Flowers fill the reception area. White lilies from judges.
Roses from clients. An enormous arrangement from a
professional football player Deon represented after an arrest
in South Beach.

Beside it sits a smaller basket from Pastor Bubs and Millie.

A handwritten card reads: THANK YOU FOR LOVING OUR BOY.

Tiana looks away.

Denise steps from behind the desk.

DENISE
Do you want coffee?

TIANA
No.

DENISE
Tea?

TIANA

No.

DENISE

Anything?

Tiana stops.

TIANA

I want everybody to quit looking at
me like I'm going to fall apart.

Denise nods.

DENISE

I can do that.

TIANA

Thank you.

Tiana continues down the hallway.

Every conversation stops as she passes.

INT. CHILDRESS LEGAL GROUP - DEON'S OFFICE - MORNING

A strip of black ribbon has been tied around the closed door
handle.

Tiana removes it and enters.

The office looks exactly as Deon left it.

His jacket hangs behind the door. A yellow legal pad lies
open on the desk. Coffee has dried into a dark ring beside
the telephone.

Photographs cover the wall behind his chair instead of legal
awards.

Deon graduating from law school with Bubs and Millie.

Deon outside Gethsemane with a teenage Eileen.

Deon and Willis as children, arms around each other.

Tiana and Deon outside the courthouse after winning a civil-
rights case. Tiana holds the files. Deon smiles as if the
victory belongs entirely to her.

Tiana closes the door.

She touches the back of his chair.

Then sits.

She opens the yellow legal pad.

Deon's handwriting covers the first page: Demand private medical examination. Obtain Kinder visitor logs. Ask Kenny about Malone money. If anything happens, call my brother.

The final line has been underlined twice.

Tiana presses her fingers against it.

TIANA
I called him.

Her voice breaks.

She lowers her head and cries.

Not the restrained tears she allowed at the funeral. This is anger.

Tiana snatches Deon's coffee cup and HURLS it against the wall.

It SHATTERS beneath his law-school photograph.

Tiana stands, breathing hard.

A KNOCK at the door.

She wipes her face.

TIANA (CONT'D)
What?

The door opens.

HOWARD COLE, 62, silver-haired and permanently dressed for court, looks at the broken cup.

HOWARD
The partners are waiting.

TIANA
Let them.

HOWARD
We have decisions to make.

TIANA
You started without me?

HOWARD
You're not a partner.

Tiana looks at him.

Howard immediately understands the mistake.

She gathers the JOHNNY MALONE FILE from her bag.

TIANA
No. Not yet.

INT. CHILDRESS LEGAL GROUP - CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Five people sit around the conference table.

Howard takes the chair at the head.

Tiana remains standing.

MARIANNE RIVERA, head of criminal defense, looks toward the file beneath Tiana's arm.

MARIANNE
Is that the Malone matter?

TIANA
It is.

Howard folds his hands.

HOWARD
Before we begin, I want to express
how deeply --

TIANA
Don't.

He stops.

MARIANNE
We all loved Deon.

TIANA
No, we didn't.

MARIANNE
Tiana.

TIANA
Some of you loved him. Some
respected him.
(MORE)

TIANA (CONT'D)

Some resented that his name came first on the door. Right now, none of that helps us.

Howard glances toward the other partners.

HOWARD

We agree. That's why we need to discuss an orderly transition.

TIANA

Who takes Deon's clients?

HOWARD

They will be divided according to specialty.

TIANA

And his office?

Howard hesitates.

HOWARD

We haven't decided.

TIANA

You have. You just haven't told me.

Marianne leans forward.

MARIANNE

Tiana, nobody expects you to deal with this today.

TIANA

You scheduled a meeting about replacing Deon on the morning I returned.

MARIANNE

We did not know you were returning.

TIANA

That makes it worse.

Tiana places the file on the table.

Howard looks at it.

HOWARD

Johnny Malone is not currently a client of this firm.

TIANA
Yes, he is.

HOWARD
Did he sign an engagement
agreement?

Tiana removes the document.

TIANA
Yesterday.

Every partner looks toward it.

Marianne reaches for the agreement.

Howard takes it first.

HOWARD
He signed this?

TIANA
In front of two witnesses.

HOWARD
Where?

TIANA
I'm not disclosing my client's
location.

HOWARD
We need to perform a conflict
check.

TIANA
Already completed.

HOWARD
Source-of-funds review?

TIANA
Required before accepting any
retainer. Mr. Malone agreed.

Howard reads the agreement.

HOWARD
What assets does he claim?

TIANA
Domestic real estate held through
corporations, investment accounts
and substantial overseas holdings.

HOWARD
How substantial?

TIANA
Eight figures.

The room goes quiet.

One partner removes his glasses.

PARTNER
Verified?

TIANA
Verification is part of the
engagement.

Howard looks at Tiana.

HOWARD
You met with Malone after
Gethsemane?

TIANA
I have been with him several times.

HOWARD
You understand his history.

TIANA
Better than anyone at this table.

HOWARD
He financed a cocaine operation.

TIANA
He entered a federal cooperation
agreement in 1991 and was never
charged.

HOWARD
He disappeared with millions.

TIANA
Allegedly.

HOWARD
The DEA believes he recovered drug
proceeds from the swamp.

TIANA
The DEA did not seize any money.

Marianne opens a second copy of the agreement.

MARIANNE

What does he want?

TIANA

Representation involving federal criminal exposure, asset protection, international banking, corporate acquisitions and estate planning.

Howard looks up.

HOWARD

Estate planning?

TIANA

He has a son.

HOWARD

The boy involved in the Gethsemane shooting?

TIANA

The young man who survived the attack.

HOWARD

We cannot allow you to turn this firm into a defense operation for Dawber County criminals.

Tiana places both hands on the table.

TIANA

Deon represented Kenny Gregory.

HOWARD

That was different.

TIANA

Why?

HOWARD

Kenny was already incarcerated.

TIANA

So convicted criminals are acceptable, but uncharged clients are morally troubling?

HOWARD

That isn't what I said.

TIANA

It is exactly what you said.

Howard closes the file.

HOWARD

Even if the firm accepts Malone,
you are not qualified to control a
matter of this size alone.

TIANA

I survived an assassination attempt
ordered by a prison warden. I
uncovered Deon's murder and the
conspiracy that staged Kenny's
death. I obtained Guard Daly's
confession. I kept Johnny Malone
from being arrested without
probable cause, and I forced the
DEA to recognize his federal
agreement.

HOWARD

Tiana --

TIANA

I brought you the largest private
client this firm has ever
represented.

HOWARD

You brought us a potential federal
indictment.

TIANA

I brought both. That's why he needs
lawyers.

Marianne conceals a smile.

Howard notices.

HOWARD

What are you asking for?

Tiana looks toward Deon's empty chair at the opposite end of
the room.

TIANA

I take control of Malone's
representation.

HOWARD

Subject to oversight.

TIANA

No.

HOWARD

You're an associate.

TIANA

I become an equity partner.

Another partner laughs in disbelief.

Tiana turns toward him.

TIANA (CONT'D)

Something funny?

LAUGHING PARTNER

You have been here four years.

TIANA

And in four years, I have tried more cases than you have in twelve.

Howard raises a hand.

HOWARD

Enough.

TIANA

No. Not enough. I inherit Deon's litigation docket, his office and authority to assemble my own team. Nobody communicates with the DEA, DHS, FBI or any other agency concerning Johnny Malone without my approval.

HOWARD

You cannot prohibit partners from responding to federal inquiries.

TIANA

I can require that counsel for the client be present.

HOWARD

What else?

TIANA

The firm represents Pastor Bubs and Millie regarding any civil claims arising from the attack on Gethsemane. Pro bono.

Howard leans back.

HOWARD
That could become extensive.

TIANA
Kinder's estate, the prison system
and the state will all be
defendants.

HOWARD
Which makes it expensive.

TIANA
It also makes it important.

HOWARD
Tiana --

TIANA
I'm not finished. We advise Eileen
Scully, Alex Gregory, Billy Dawber
and Bones Malone if they are
questioned regarding Gethsemane or
the missing money.

MARIANNE
Willis Childress?

Tiana looks at Deon's photograph on the credenza.

TIANA
If Willis asks for help, we give
it.

Howard shakes his head.

HOWARD
This is emotional.

TIANA
My client list is emotional?

HOWARD
Your judgment.

TIANA
Deon's brother is alive because
Johnny Malone and Willis stopped
Kinder.

HOWARD
Willis executed Kinder.

TIANA

According to Sheriff Dawber's report, Kinder turned with a weapon.

Howard looks around the table.

Every partner understands the choice.

Johnny Malone brings enormous risk. He also brings money, attention and access to one of Florida's most closely guarded fortunes.

If they refuse, another firm will accept before the elevator reaches the lobby.

Marianne closes the agreement.

MARIANNE

I move that Tiana be made temporary lead counsel pending verification of Malone's assets and completion of our compliance review.

TIANA

Temporary?

MARIANNE

And admitted to the partnership.

Howard looks at her.

HOWARD

You cannot be serious.

MARIANNE

Deon trusted her.

HOWARD

This is not a memorial vote.

MARIANNE

No. It's a business decision.

The partner who laughed earlier raises his hand.

LAUGHING PARTNER

I second.

Howard stares around the table.

HOWARD

You are allowing a criminal to purchase control of this firm.

Tiana sits in Deon's empty chair.

TIANA

No. You're allowing his lawyer to
earn it.

INT. CHILDRESS LEGAL GROUP - DEON'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Four raised hands. Howard's remains down.

The vote is four to one.

Tiana now occupies Deon's office with control of his
litigation files and a conditional equity interest in the
firm.

Her telephone shows three voicemail messages from the DEA.

Two from OSCAR FUENTES.

One from MACK DONNELLY.

Tiana deletes Mack's without listening.

Denise enters carrying a cardboard box.

DENISE

I thought you might want this.

Inside are replacement coffee cups.

Tiana laughs for the first time since the funeral.

TIANA

I broke one.

DENISE

I heard.

TIANA

Did the whole floor hear?

DENISE

Only the east side.

Denise sets the box on the desk.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Someone is waiting to see you.

TIANA

Who?

DENISE
She wouldn't give me her name.

TIANA
Then she can make an appointment.

DENISE
She has a DEA badge.

Tiana's smile disappears.

TIANA
Send her in.

AISHA REYES enters with her wounded arm supported by a sling.
She closes the door.

Tiana remains seated.

TIANA (CONT'D)
If you're here officially, contact
the firm's general counsel.

REYES
I'm not.

TIANA
That creates a different problem.

Reyes looks at the stain where Deon's coffee hit the wall.

REYES
Bad morning?

TIANA
Bad month.

REYES
Can we speak privately?

TIANA
My office. My privilege.

REYES
I'm not your client.

TIANA
Then assume I will repeat anything
relevant to mine.

Reyes sits across from her.

REYES
I read Mack's report.

TIANA
And?

REYES
It doesn't make sense.

TIANA
I could have told you that.

REYES
He says Malone fled after Willis
attacked him.

TIANA
That is what he told everyone.

REYES
Mack's wrist was bruised on both
sides.

TIANA
Handcuffs.

REYES
Yes.

TIANA
You think Johnny arrested him?

REYES
I think someone did.

Tiana says nothing.

REYES (CONT'D)
Mack claimed Malone stole his
service weapon, phone, radio and an
evidence bag containing the
lighter. The gun appeared in the
trunk of Mack's government car the
next morning.

TIANA
Convenient.

REYES
The phone was beneath the passenger
seat.

TIANA
More convenient.

REYES

The radio was still attached to his belt.

Tiana leans back.

TIANA

What are you asking me?

REYES

What happened on that dock?

TIANA

I wasn't there.

REYES

Malone told you.

TIANA

Anything he told me would be privileged.

REYES

So he did tell you.

TIANA

I did not say that.

Reyes looks toward Deon's photograph.

REYES

Mack left me bleeding inside that church.

TIANA

He was pursuing Johnny.

REYES

That's what he says.

TIANA

You don't believe him?

REYES

I saw his face. He wasn't chasing an escaped suspect. He was chasing something he needed.

TIANA

The money.

REYES

Maybe.

TIANA
What else?

REYES
That's why I came.

Tiana studies her.

TIANA
You want me to help investigate
your partner?

REYES
I want to know whether he is going
to get me killed.

TIANA
Mack's obsession with Johnny is not
new.

REYES
No. But something changed.

TIANA
Reno?

Reyes's expression sharpens.

REYES
What do you know about Reno?

TIANA
Enough to know his career ended
there.

REYES
It didn't end.

TIANA
It came to Miami to die quietly.

Reyes glances toward the closed door.

REYES
Mack owes money.

TIANA
To whom?

REYES
I don't know.

TIANA
Then how do you know?

REYES
I ran his credit after Gethsemane.

TIANA
That sounds official.

REYES
It wasn't.

Tiana smiles slightly.

TIANA
We all seem to be working outside
our job descriptions.

REYES
His salary disappears within hours
of every deposit. Cash advances.
Wire transfers to Nevada. One
payment routed through a company
linked to Russian organized crime.

TIANA
The stripper.

Reyes looks at her.

REYES
You know about her too?

TIANA
Johnny knows things.

REYES
Does Malone have money in
Switzerland?

Tiana's face reveals nothing.

TIANA
That sounds like a question for my
client.

REYES
If he accesses it, financial crimes
may see the movement.

TIANA
Is that a warning?

REYES
Yes.

TIANA

Why?

REYES

Because Mack believes that money
can solve whatever happened in
Reno.

TIANA

And you think he'll go after Johnny
again.

REYES

I think he never stopped.

Tiana rises.

TIANA

Then control your agent.

REYES

He was a legend before I finished
high school.

TIANA

So was Atticus Shelton. Legends
still bleed.

Reyes stands.

REYES

You think Malone has something on
him.

TIANA

I think Mack Donnelly lied about
what happened at the dock.

REYES

That isn't an answer.

TIANA

It's the only one you're getting.

Reyes moves toward the door.

REYES

Tiana.

TIANA

What?

REYES

If Malone contacts you, tell him
Mack is watching every airport,
bank and known property connected
to him.

TIANA

I thought you said this wasn't
official.

REYES

It isn't.

TIANA

Then why help?

Reyes looks at her wounded shoulder.

REYES

Because next time Mack abandons his
partner, I want to know why.

She opens the door.

TIANA

Agent Reyes.

Reyes turns.

TIANA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Neither woman smiles.

INT. CHILDRESS LEGAL GROUP - DEON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The telephone rings shortly after six.

The office floor is empty.

Tiana sits alone reviewing Johnny's 1991 FBI agreement. Whole
sections remain classified. His name appears only twice,
identified as a confidential cooperating witness.

She answers.

TIANA

Childress Legal Group.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)

How does it feel?

TIANA
How does what feel?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Sitting in Deon's chair.

Tiana looks toward the photograph.

TIANA
Wrong.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
It won't always.

TIANA
You don't know that.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
No. But Deon knew you'd get there.

TIANA
You don't get to tell me what Deon
thought.

Silence.

Johnny's voice softens.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
You're right.

TIANA
Where are you?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Somewhere warm.

TIANA
That describes half the world.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
How was the partners' meeting?

TIANA
You already know.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
I know they voted.

TIANA
How?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
I'm an accountant.

TIANA
That explains absolutely nothing.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Did you get the office?

TIANA
Yes.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Partnership?

TIANA
Conditional.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
We'll fix that.

TIANA
You will not tell me how to run my firm.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Wouldn't dream of it.

TIANA
You've done nothing but tell people what to do since I met you.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
That's leadership.

TIANA
That's narcissism.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Can't it be both?

Tiana looks at the clock.

TIANA
What do you need?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
International banking counsel in Switzerland. Someone outside Geneva.

TIANA
Why outside Geneva?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Because everyone looks in Geneva.

TIANA
Tax attorney?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Two. One here, one there.

TIANA
Corporate acquisitions?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Florida, Nevada and Delaware.

TIANA
Why Nevada?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Old business.

TIANA
Mack?

Johnny does not answer.

Tiana leans forward.

TIANA (CONT'D)
Agent Reyes came to see me.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Is she all right?

TIANA
She thinks Mack is hiding something.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
She's right.

TIANA
What?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Something he'd kill to protect.

TIANA
What happened on the dock?

Johnny remains silent.

TIANA (CONT'D)
I'm your lawyer.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
That's why I'm not telling you over
this telephone.

TIANA
Is the line compromised?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Assume every line is compromised.

TIANA
Where are you going?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
I'll call tomorrow.

TIANA
Johnny.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
I also need aviation counsel.

Tiana looks at her growing list.

TIANA
Commercial?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Private.

TIANA
Domestic?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
No.

The connection crackles.

An AIRCRAFT ENGINE turns over in the background.

TIANA
Who is flying you?

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
An old friend.

TIANA
What exactly do you want this firm
to do?

Johnny pauses.

JOHNNY (FILTERED)
Help me turn everything they call
dirty into something they have to
call legal.

The line goes dead.

Tiana slowly lowers the telephone.

Outside her window, Miami glows beneath the evening sky.

EXT. MIAMI OFFICE TOWER - NIGHT

Nineteen floors below, MACK DONNELLY sits inside an unmarked
car with a cigarette burning between his fingers.

He watches the lights in Deon's office.

INT. MACK'S UNMARKED CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mack lifts a cellular telephone and makes a call.

MACK
She heard from him.

The NEVADA MAN answers in Russian.

Mack closes his eyes.

MACK (CONT'D)
I told you I'll find the money.

He listens.

His grip tightens around the telephone.

MACK (CONT'D)
Leave my daughter out of this.

The Russian disconnects.

Mack looks up at Tiana's window.

He watches like a hunter who knows his quarry is about to
move.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE FOURTEEN