

TEASER

1 INT. PAROLE HEARING ROOM -- DAY (DAY 1) 1

A CONFERENCE ROOM. A PAROLE HEARING is in progress. The PAROLE BOARD- three stern, middle-age officials- is presiding.

Facing them: the prisoner, MAX BARTON- a dangerous, hardened convict. Tattoos. Years of pent-up anger. Barton is sitting, handcuffed, in a prison jumpsuit, beside HIS LAWYER.

At another table: Monk. Monk is the first witness. He's preparing to speak.

We open on 30 seconds- a SOLID HALF A MINUTE- of SILENCE. Monk is adjusting... and readjusting... and re-re-adjusting a GOOSENECK MICROPHONE.

START →

PAROLE COMMISSIONER  
Mr. Monk...?

Monk gestures "one minute". He isn't quite ready.

In front of Monk: a PITCHER OF WATER and a GLASS. The glass is half full. But it's not exactly half full. Monk pours some water into the glass. But now there's too much. He carefully pours some water back. Now there's too little.

PAROLE COMMISSIONER  
Is everything all right?

MONK  
Just... trying to... it should be halfway... exactly...

Monk continues to pour... and re-pour. Everyone- the Board, the Lawyer, even the prisoner- watch him, impatiently.

Finally... finally... Monk's glass is exactly half full.

PAROLE COMMISSIONER  
Is that better?

Monk nods.

~~SECOND COMMISSIONER  
Aren't you going to drink it?  
MONK  
No. It's tap water. I drank it once, it made me sick.~~

"MONK"  
—  
PAROLE COMMISSIONER

# "PAROLE COMMISSIONER"

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1 CONTINUED:

1

PAROLE COMMISSIONER

Let's continue. As you know, Mr. Monk, the prisoner, Max Barton, is eligible for parole in three weeks. Eleven years ago, you were the chief investigator on this case. It was your testimony that put Mr. Barton behind bars.

The prisoner- Max Barton- glares at Monk, hatefully.

PAROLE COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

I understand you wanted to address the Board before we made our decision.

MONK

Yes sir. Thank you. I've been a homicide investigator for more than 20 years. ~~I've seen more crime cases than I could possibly count, well, four hundred and ten. But that's not the point.~~

Monk turns and faces Max Barton.

MONK (CONT'D)

What I saw that morning... in that house... was beyond imagination. ~~What he did to those people. His husband had been tortured for hours. We found the wife in the back yard. She had tried to crawl away. He had beaten her so badly... her own mother could not recognize her.~~

Monk is overwhelmed. He needs a moment.

PAROLE COMMISSIONER

Take your time, Mr. Monk.

(CUT TO →)

MONK

~~I've tried to forget it. But I can't. It haunts me. I'm sure their neighbor, Mrs. McNally, who found the bodies, will never forget it either.~~

Monk indicates another witness an older woman named McNALLY. Mrs. McNally nods, solemnly.

MONK (CONT'D)

~~The man is a monster.  
(MORE)~~

(CONTINUED)

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# "PAROLE COMMISSIONER"

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1 CONTINUED: (2)

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MONK (CONT'D)  
Putting people like Max Barton away  
is the reason I became a cop. In my  
opinion he should never be released.  
He should never be considered for  
release...

During this, a YOUNG FEMALE LAWYER enters the room, carrying  
a legal document. She's very excited. She whispers something  
to Barton and Barton's Lawyer.

SECOND COMMISSIONER  
Mr. Lawrence? Is there a problem?

Barton's Lawyer rises.

(Pick-up) →

BARTON'S LAWYER  
Excuse me. Commissioner. Members  
of the Board. Mr. Barton would like  
to withdraw his application for  
parole.

PAROLE COMMISSIONER  
Withdraw- ?!

BARTON'S LAWYER  
Yes sir. It's just been rendered  
moot. ~~This is Denise Crosby from  
the Freedom Project. We've just  
received word that the Federal Appeals  
Court has agreed to issue a complete  
exoneration. Mr. Barton will be  
released within the week.~~

The Lawyer hands the Parole Commissioner the document.

MONK  
What's going on?

PAROLE COMMISSIONER  
(reading document)  
It's a new DNA test.

MONK  
DNA...?

PAROLE COMMISSIONER  
They've retested the crime scene  
evidence. Apparently the blood at  
the scene, and under the victim's  
fingernails, doesn't belong to Mr.  
Barton. It appears a mistake has  
been made.

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# "PAROLE COMMISSIONER"

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1 CONTINUED: (3)

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MONK

A mistake?

PAROLE COMMISSIONER

A big mistake.

(beat)

It looks like you got the wrong man,  
Mr. Monk.

// END

From across the room: Max Barton glares at Monk, accusingly.

Monk is so stunned- so upset- he unthinkingly pours a big sloppy glass of tap water and gulps it down.

END OF TEASER

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