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 <u>SILENCE</u>. Monk is adjusting... and readjusting... and re-re-adjusting a GOOSENECK MICROPHONE.



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...

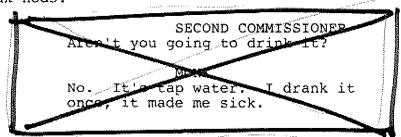
Monk continues to pour... and re-pour. Everyone- the Board, the Lawyer, even the prisoner- watch him, impatiently.

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

PAROLE COMMISSIONER

Is that better?

Monk nods.



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1 CONTINUED:

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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 con more crime than then I sould have the surface and ten. But that s

Monk turns and faces Max Barton.

MONK (CONT'D)

What I saw that morning... in that house... was beyond imagination.

husband had been tortured for hours.
We found the ifa in he back yard.
She had tried to crawl any. He had
beaten her so badly...her own bother

Monk is overwhelmed. He needs a moment.

PAROLE COMMISSIONER Take your time, Mr. Monk.

(UT 70 ->)

NONK
I've tried to forget it. But I can to sure their neighbor Mrs. McNally, who found the bodies, will never forget it either.

Monk indicates another ritness an older woman named McNALLY.
Mrs. McWally nods, scremnly.

MONK (CONT'D)
The man is a monster.
(MORE)

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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

1

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.

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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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.



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