

What's the Truth?

INT. COURTROOM - DAYTIME

Julia Diaz gets up from the table while adjusting her suit.

JULIA DIAZ

I'd like to bring the defendant's mother, Mrs. Hayley King, to the stand.

JUDGE NGUYEN

Mrs. King

Hayley King walks to the bailiff and takes her oath.

JULIA DIAZ

Mrs. King how was your relationship with your late husband?

HAYLEY KING

It was a loving one. Victor was a great husband.

JULIA DIAZ

You two did fight often, didn't you?

HAYLEY KING

What marriage doesn't have arguments? Victor and I had been married for 25 years. We argued about what shows to watch-

JULIA DIAZ

Yes, but did your fights ever become intense? More on the physical side.

JOHN ROSETTI

Objection! That question has nothing to do with this case.

HAYLEY KING

My husband never laid a hand on me!

Hayley has a firm look on her face.

JULIA DIAZ

That's not what your neighbors said when we searched your house. They said the two of you chased each other around the house and -

JOHN ROSETTI

Objection, your honor! Attorney Diaz is leading the witness!

Judge Nguyen bangs gavel.

JUDGE NGUYEN

Overruled.

HAYLEY KING

Was it the Werringtons? Diane has had a problem with me ever since my orchids won best prize for lawn of the year. That woman is a pain in my -

JUDGE NGUYEN

Mrs. King.

Hayley King goes silence and looks back at Julia Diaz.

JULIA DIAZ

Your children, Mrs. King, Thomas is fifteen and Emily is eight years old if I'm correct.

HAYLEY KING

Yes

JULIA DIAZ

Thomas is a protective big brother to Emily and extremely protective over you as well. But his relationship with Mr. King was not as loving. Would Thomas and Mr. King argue often?

HAYLEY KING

Tommy is a teenager. What teenager doesn't argue with their parent?

Julia Diaz pulls out a photo of Tommy. She walks past the jury slowly presenting the photo then hands it to Judge Nguyen. He looks at it thoroughly then looks at Hayley King for an answer.

JULIA DIAZ

Teenage angst should never lead to physical abuse. Thomas has a faded bruise on his cheek.

HAYLEY KING

Tommy is the catcher on his baseball team. He probably got hit by a ball or a -

JULIA DIAZ

I doubt that the bruise would be that large if he had a mask on! His teammates stated that Mr. King was tough on Thomas after losses.

HAYLEY KING

Victor loved baseball and always wanted our children to do their best. He might would get a little passionate sometimes, but what parent doesn't?

Hayley King takes a quick look at Tommy at the defendant table, who stares blankly back at his mother, then back at Julia Diaz.

JULIA DIAZ

So, you're saying Mr. King abused your son regularly?

Julia Diaz walks closer to the witness stand.

HAYLEY KING

No, how dare you? I never said that!

JULIA DIAZ

You never denied it.

Whispers circulate around the courtroom. Gavel bangs.

JUDGE NGUYEN

Order in the court. Order in the court. Ms. Diaz continue.

JULIA DIAZ

Mrs. King, where were you the evening your husband was murder?

HAYLEY KING

I ran next door to the Dwight family to collect their money for the upcoming school raffle and going over the catering order with Sharon.

Hayley King's face softens.

JULIA DIAZ

So, Mr. King and your children were inside the

home alone?

HAYLEY KING

Yes.

JULIA DIAZ

So, this gave Thomas plenty of time to stab his father and bleach his hands clean.

JOHN ROSETTI

Objection! Your honor there is no foundation for this statement!

Julia Diaz walks to the clipboard with images of the crime scene. She points at the picture with Victor King lying face down stabbed in the back.

JUDGE NGUYEN

Sustained.

HAYLEY KING

My son did not kill my husband!

Hayley King begins to tear up.

JULIA DIAZ

According to the on scene first responders and forensics, Mr. King was stabbed with a butcher's knife multiple times until he bled out. If it was not Tommy, then children would have heard Mr. King's screams from pain. They would have discovered his body and not you.

Camera pans to jury who slightly whisper then look at Hayley King for a response. Camera then cuts to Thomas who still has a blank look on his face then shifts his hair. Camera goes back to Hayley King.

HAYLEY KING

We have a spacious home Ms. Diaz. It is hard to hear each other sometimes -

JULIA DIAZ

The neighbors said they did not see anyone besides your family at your house. The murder was already there, and I believe that murder was Thomas.

HAYLEY KING

Why would my son murder his own father?

The bailiff places a box of tissues on the stand. Hayley King takes one and daps her eyes.

JULIA DIAZ

Mrs. King you already know why Thomas would murder Mr. King. Thomas resented his father for constantly abusing him verbally and physically and hated he did the same thing to you too. The protective big brother that he is, he did not want Emily to continue to grow up in the same abusive household that he did. That's why he made sure Emily was safely in her room watching videos and proceeded to the kitchen and took the butcher knife and stabbed Mr. King -

JOHN ROSETTI

Objection! There is no proof that Thomas stabbed Mr. King!

Julia Diaz turns to John Rosetti who proceeds to walk towards her.

JULIA DIAZ

He hid the knife and locked himself in his room to cover his tracks.

HAYLEY KING

That did not happen! My son is not a murder. He is a great kid who loves his family and friends.

JUDGE NGUYEN

Order in the court!

Hayley King cries very hard.

I lost the love of my life!

Camera cuts to Emily who breaks down as her mother cries. Her aunt pulls her in and covers her face. Quickly camera cuts to the defense table and defense attorney, John Rosetti jumps up.

JOHN ROSETTI

I object your honor! She's badgering the witness!

Julia Diaz turns to John Rosetti and points to Hayley King.

JULIA DIAZ

Your client's mother is lying on the stand!

Judge Nguyen slams gavel and adjust his glasses.

JUDGE NGUYEN

Order in the court! This is my court and there will be no fighting. Are we done here Ms. Diaz?

Julia Diaz stares at Hayley King.

JULIA DIAZ

Yes, your honor.

Julia Diaz returns to her seat at the plaintiffs table. She grips her pen tightly and watches Hayley King. Camera cuts from her glare to an up-close shot of Hayley King looking back at her. Camera cuts to Judge Nguyen.

JUDGE NGUYEN

Would the Defense like to question the witness?

John Rosetti stands up and adjust his suit.

JOHN ROSETTI

Yes, we would your honor.

John Rosetti walks closer to Hayley King.

Mrs. King, please tell the court about your son Thomas.

HAYLEY KING

Tommy is a great son and brother. So smart all A's in school and loves his baseball team. Baseball really helps him open up because he's so shy.

JOHN ROSETTI

Baseball, America's favorite pastime. It allowed Thomas to make friends and grow an even closer relationship with his father, right?

HAYLEY KING

Yes, he had a hard time making friends until he joined the team. Victor was so excited when Tommy made the team. We went to dinner to celebrate then they played catch until I had to make them come inside.

Hayley King wipes some tears.

Victor was so proud seeing Tommy in uniform for his first game.

John Rosetti hands Hayley King more tissues.

JOHN ROSETTI

You are a strong mother, Mrs. King.

HAYLEY KING

Thank you.

JOHN ROSETTI

The tragic night of your husband's murder you were out the house and your children were in their rooms. When you arrived back in the house what do you recall?

HAYLEY KING

I walked back from next door. I was calling for Victor to tell him that I finally collect all of the raffle tickets, but he - he wasn't responding. Then when I step into kitchen I -

Hayley King lowers and shakes her head then raises back up.

I saw Victor laying on his stomach in a pool of blood. All - all I could do was scream.

JOHN ROSETTI

Then the children heard you scream?

HAYLEY KING

Yes, I told Tommy to cover Emily's eyes and go to the Dwight's house while I called the police.

Hayley King cries.

Tommy never left her side and held her the whole  
ti -

JULIA DIAZ

Objection, the witness is committing perjury!

JUDGE NGUYEN

Do you have any evidence?

JULIA DIAZ

No, your honor, but -

JUDGE NGUYEN

Then the defense continues. Now sit.

JOHN ROSETTI

If there are no more interruptions, then I would like to continue. (pause) The loving brother that he is I would not expect anything less.

John Rosetti turns to the jury then walks around. Julia Diaz crosses her arms.

The court is grieving with you Mrs. King. Thomas is a great kid who loves his family, good grades, and playing baseball. Finally started high school and making friends. He had also finally got the "I'm proud of you" nod from dad. The nod that we all probably strived for as a kid looking up to our parents as role models.

John Rosetti smiles at jury then turns to plaintiff table with a stone-cold face.

Sadly, after receiving that nod Thomas's father was taken away from him by a murder who is still out there somewhere. Selflessly ignoring his own pain to comfort his sister and mother during the darkest moment for their family. None of these qualities exhibit deviant behavior as Ms. Diaz and the rest of the plaintiff team is trying -

JULIA DIAZ

Your honor! I -



JUDGE NGUYEN

Sit down Ms. Diaz! It is not your turn to speak.

JOHN ROSETTI

Thomas King is not a murder! The plaintiff team has no evidence against my client.

The whole courtroom starts a loud whisper. Thomas cuts his eyes at Julia Diaz while gripping his handcuffs. Judge Nguyen bangs his gavel.

JUDGE NGUYEN

This court will break. Please report back here in exactly one hour.

Long shot of the camera showing everyone standing up preparing to leave. Camera follows Julia Diaz out the door. John Rosetti trails behind her.

INT. HALLWAY - DAYTIME

JOHN ROSETTI

What did you think you were doing back there Ms. Diaz?

Camera shoots a medium shot of Julia Diaz with heavy focus on her. Julia Diaz continues to walk forward at a steady pace.

JULIA DIAZ

Convicting a murder.

JOHN ROSETTI

You mean trying to convict an innocent child.

Julia Diaz stops and turns to face forward to John Rosetti. Camera shoots their side profiles.

JULIA DIAZ

Cut the bullshit Rosetti. You and I both know Thomas King murdered his father. You have his mother trying to cover for him to protect your weak case.

JOHN ROSETTI

You have no physical evidence that links my client to his father's murder.

JULIA DIAZ

Because you client hid the evidence, but I will find and close this case.

JOHN ROSETTI

What a feisty woman. Too bad you're wasting your energy Ms. Diaz. My client is innocent.

John begins to walk away.

Here's a rule to keep rookie. Never get your feelings involved when it comes to cases. You'll only get them hurt especially against me.

John walks down the hallway and turns the corner. Camera pans out for a long shot of the whole hallway with Julia Diaz making a fist. Julia Diaz walks out the door. Cuts to next scene.

INT. ROOM IN COURTHOUSE - DAYTIME

Close up on door. John Rosetti walks in and sits across from King family.

JOHN ROSETTI

I apologize for being late. Ran into the vicious Ms. Diaz on the way here. Is everyone okay?

HAYLEY KING

Yes, we're fine.

Hayley King squeezes Emily.

Just ready for this to be over.

JOHN ROSETTI

It will soon be over Mrs. King. The prosecuting team has no physical evidence that could convince the jury or Judge Nguyen that Thomas committed any crimes.

Hayley King grows pale. Camera pans on Thomas who is looking out the window then back to John Rosetti.

JOHN ROSETTI

Aren't you excited Thomas? You'll be out of here in no time.

Thomas looks at John Rosetti then back out the window. John Rosetti looks at Thomas's profile and slowly goes back to Mrs. King.

Now Mrs. King, is there anything you can tell the jury that could really push this case. It would help-

HAYLEY KING

I don't want to back on the stand.

John Rosetti looks confused.

JOHN ROSETTI

But Mrs. King, it would help your son's case.

HAYLEY KING

Will Ms. Diaz be questioning me again?

JOHN ROSETTI

There's a chance there could another cross examination if the prosecuting team wants -

HAYLEY KING

I won't do it.

John Rosetti

There's nothing to hide, Mrs. King, so what's the problem?

Hayley King squeezes on Emily a little tighter.

HAYLEY KING

It's just too much for me. I'm trying to grieve, and my child is facing murder charges. I - I just can't take all this.

Hayley King wipes her tears.

Emily shouldn't have to see all this.

John Rosetti reaches for Hayley Kings hand.

JOHN ROSETTI

There's no way I can understand what you are going through. I couldn't imagine losing my wife. Let alone trying to prove to the world my child is innocent of a crime they did not commit. You're a strong woman and mother, Mrs. King. I just want to make sure you go home with both of your children today.

Hayley King looks at Emily then Thomas who looks at her back then turns away.

HAYLEY KING

I want both of my children home with me, but I don't think I would be able to compose myself. Ms. Diaz wants to see my son behind bars and will ask me anything to make him look guilty.

John Rosetti lets go of Hayley King's hands and sits back in his chair.

JOHN ROSETTI

I understand Mrs. King.

John Rosetti takes a deep breath.

But we need something to bring to court before the end of this break. The prosecuting team is going to be ready and we need to be too.

HAYLEY KING

What can we do?

Camera slowly zooms in on John Rosetti. He removes his glasses and rubs his eyes. Putting back on his glasses, John Rosetti looks at Emily watching her feet dangle from her chair.

JOHN ROSETTI

Emily could take the stand.

Hayley King frowns.

HAYLEY KING

Why the hell would I put my 8-year-old on the stand? Have you lost your mind?

Camera cuts to Emily who looks at her mother then John Rosetti.

John Rosetti

Hear me out. Emily will be fine. She is only a young child. Ms. Diaz will not question her like she did you. Emily will give us leverage.

HAYLEY KING

I'm not putting my child through this. There has to be another way.

Hayley King stands up and paces around the room.

JOHN ROSETTI

This is our best bet. Emily is a loving little sister who wants her big brother to come home. Children are known for being honest and pulling emotions. The courtroom will eat it up.

Hayley King shakes her head while leaning against the wall. The camera turns back to John Rosetti who turns to look at Emily.

Hello Miss Emily, do you want your brother, Thomas, to come home?

Emily nods her head.

Do you believe your brother hurt your dad?

Emily looks at her brother and Thomas looks back at her then she looks back at John Rosetti. Camera starts at Emily then cuts to her perspective of Thomas. Camera still in Emily's perspective cuts to John Rosetti. Medium shot of Emily

EMILY KING

No.

JOHN ROSETTI

Will you tell the rest of the people in the courtroom that? If you do your brother could come home.

Hayley King rushes to the table.

HAYLEY KING

You will not force my daughter to take that stand.

JOHN ROSETTI

It is the only way Mrs. King!

John Rosetti looks at Hayley King then back at Emily.

Miss Emily will you tell the courtroom your  
brother is innocent?

Hayley King crouches down to Emily's eye level and brushes her  
daughter hair.

HAYLEY KING

Emily, sweetie, if you don't feel comfortable you  
are allowed to say no. Mommy will find another  
way to help Tommy.

Emily looks at her brother again then at John Rosetti

EMILY KING

I want to help Tommy.

John Rosetti smiles with satisfaction. Hayley King slowly shakes  
her head.

HAYLEY KING

You better protect her! I mean it so help me God,  
I will -

Hayley points her finger in John Rosetti's face.

JOHN ROSETTI

Emily will be fine I promise you. Mrs. Diaz will  
be nothing to worry about Mrs. King.

John Rosetti lowers her finger out his face.

Emily is our only chance of Tommy being able to  
come home instead of calling a cell his new home.

Hayley King crosses her arms and look at both of her children.  
She sighs and walks across the room. Emily looks at John Rosetti  
who is watching Hayley King.

EMILY KING

Mr. Rosetti.

John Rosetti changes his expression quickly then looks down at Emily. All of the from Emily's perspective. Camera cuts back to a medium close up shot of Emily.

JOHN ROSETTI

Yes Miss Emily.

EMILY KING

So, if I tell the judge that Tommy didn't hurt daddy he can come home today?

Emily looks at Tommy as he flips his hair.

JOHN ROSETTI

Yes, if the judge believes what you say I know for sure your brother will be able to go home.

EMILY KING

Then we can go back home, and Mommy will stop crying?

John Rosetti smile weakens.

JOHN ROSETTI

Yes.

John Rosetti looks at the clock.

Come on family. It is time to head back to the courtroom.

John Rosetti exits the room.