

DEAD IN THE WATER

treatment by William C. Martell
(Based on the Best Selling Novel by
Stuart Woods)

Stone Barrington is a New York criminal defense attorney, who never asks if a client is guilty or innocent. What he believes about a client doesn't matter as much as what he can prove... or what the prosecution can't prove. At home in the courthouse, Stone has little time for a social life. After seven years of cases he's finally scheduled a two week vacation to patch up his relationship with his current girlfriend Suzanne on the sleepy South Pacific island of St. Marks.

A beat up prop plane lands at St. Marks airfield and a dozen passengers deplane, among them Stone Barrington. He is greeted by islander Thomas Hardy, "Where's Suzanne?" Stone says she dumped him a week earlier because he was too focused on his work - the closing argument in a big murder trial. "So it's a vacation for one. Two weeks to forget about her." Thomas tosses Stone's luggage in the back of his Jeep and they take the dirt road to town.

A dozen years ago, Thomas was a New York taxi driver arrested for murder because he matched the description of the killer, had no alibi, and a taxi was seen near the crime scene. Stone took the case pro-bono, proved him innocent, and they've been unlikely friends ever since. After driving his taxi double shifts, Thomas earned enough money to move back to St. Marks and buy the seaside inn that his mother worked in as a maid when he was growing up. The dozen rooms are seldom filled - most of the tourists who come to St. Marks only stay a couple of hours... it's a short stop on the cruise ship lines. The handful of overnight stays are mostly scuba divers and pleasure boaters looking to escape the crowds. Thomas mentions that he has to pay bribes to keep the inn open - everyone on the island has their hand out - if someone doesn't accept a bribe it's because you haven't offered him enough. They drop off Stone's luggage, then Thomas gives him a quick tour of the island.

Stone and Thomas see a luxury yacht coming into port too fast. The yacht CRASHES into the dock. As fishermen on the pier stabilize the boat and tie it down, Stone and Thomas run up. A beautiful American woman, Allison Manning, staggers off the yacht, pleading with the fisherman. "Help me. Please help me." She looks from islander to islander - then spots Stone's American face. She grabs hold of him. "Help me! My husband is dead - he had a heart attack. I had to sail the boat here myself. Please help me." As Stone breaks free of her grip and jumps onto the yacht, a couple of fishermen get the police and Thomas comforts Allison.

Stone searches the luxury yacht for Allison's husband - maybe he's still alive. He finds no body, but does notice a large brownish stain on the aft deck... and the ultra-organized equipment area is missing a spear gun. Stone jumps back onto the pier in

time to see a pair of policemen taking Allison away. Thomas tells him the police are taking her to the station for questioning and a formal statement about her husband's death - any death at sea is handled by the government where the boat comes to port. There will be an inquest hearing - a mere formality.

Stone and Thomas attend the inquest - what else does a lawyer do on vacation? Plus, he was the first person on the yacht and may be asked to testify. St. Marks is an ex-British colony, and the lawyers wear robes and powdered wigs. Allison is escorted in by a pair of policemen and takes the witness stand. A young prosecutor prepares to question her when the courtroom doors open and Sir Winston Sutherland strides in. Winston is the island's Minister Of Justice, a powerful politician running for Governor.

Thomas worries that Sir Winston will use the inquest to stir up the island's anti-tourist sentiments and gain an edge in the upcoming elections.

Winston aggressively questions Allison about her husband's death. A few days into their journey from Hawaii to Brisbane the sail became tangled. Her husband Paul Manning was overweight - about 300 pounds - and was unable to climb the mast to untangle the lines. While Allison untangled the lines, her husband had a massive heart attack on the deck. By the time Allison climbed down the mast, he wasn't breathing. She tried giving him CPR without success. Then she lay on the deck of the yacht and cried. The next day she realized her husband's corpse was going to be a problem in the tropical heat, so she buried him at sea by dragging him to the halyard and pushing him into the water. She had to sail the yacht by herself, and stopped in the first port she came to - St. Marks.

Winston goes over the logbook with her - Paul was meticulous about keeping track of everything that happened on the yacht, she was less-so. There are two days between his last entry and her entry of his death - why the discrepancy? Allison answers that she was in a state of shock - she forgot about the log. Winston grills her about her relationship with her husband - very antagonistic. It's all Stone can do to keep from jumping to his feet and objecting. Allison's husband Paul Manning was a Florida newspaper reporter who wrote a surprise best selling novel that turned him into a very wealthy man. A big bear of a man with a bushy beard. When Winston accuses her of killing her husband for the money, Stone DOES object. Winston wants him thrown out of court, but Stone explains that he's a New York lawyer... and also was there when Allison came to port. She was distraught. This is no way to treat a widow. The judge decides Stone can stay, and warns Winston to take it easy - this is an inquest not a murder trial.

After the hearing, Allison gives Stone a thank you kiss. She's beautiful, and Stone has to remind himself that she just lost her husband. After the kiss she clings to him - she had no idea the inquest was going to be that rough. Stone explains who Sir Winston is, and Thomas explains the island's political climate.

The jury returns a death certificate for Paul Manning and an open ruling - not enough

evidence to rule accidental death or criminal activity... not without a body. Allison puts the death certificate into an envelope with insurance papers, asks if the island has FedEx. Thomas says the only box on the island is at the airfield. Stone, Thomas and Allison drive to the airport... and a police car follows them. Suspense builds. Why are the police following them?

At the airfield Allison drops the envelope into the FedEx box... then a pair of policemen with guns drawn order the three of them not to move. They arrest Allison for murdering her husband and trying to flee the island by plane. She says she's innocent - she didn't murder her husband and Stone explains she came to the airport to mail an envelope. The police don't care - Sir Winston is charging her with murder. As they cuff her and put her in the police car, Stone tells her that he'll defend her.

Only problem - because Stone isn't licensed to practice law on St. Marks they'll need a "front" - a local lawyer who will take the case and let Stone be second chair. Because Sir Winston is one of the most powerful people on the island, and this trial is going to have political ramifications, no sane lawyer would take Allison's case. So Thomas suggests old Sir Leslie Hewitt - once a brilliant lawyer, now a semi-senile old man. When Stone meets Sir Leslie he is non-plussed. The old man's mind keeps wandering from the case to his garden. Stone thinks it'll be impossible to work with him - what if he starts talking about gardening in the courtroom? - but Thomas says there's no other choice. No worthwhile lawyer wants Winston as an enemy.

The police search Allison's yacht top to bottom - who knows what they've found? Island law is different than what Stone is used to in many ways. The prosecution doesn't have to share witness lists or evidence. Stone will have to rely on Sir Leslie to help him navigate the legal system... but the man doesn't have both oars in the water. Before the trial has started the deck is stacked against Stone.

Stone prepares for the bail hearing - he has to borrow a powdered wig and robe from Sir Leslie, and neither fit well. The wig looks as if it may have lice. At the hearing, Stone asks that the charges be dropped - there's no evidence against his client. Winston pulls out Paul Manning's notebook and gives us the victim's own words: how he was afraid that his wife was going to murder him, a murder at sea would have no witnesses, the body could be easily disposed of... page after page that makes Allison look guilty! Allison tells Stone that the notebook wasn't her husband's diary, but his notes on a new mystery novel. Stone points out to the judge that the book is written in third person - like a novel. The judge says a jury can decide if it's a notebook or a diary - she's going to trial. Stone fights to get bail for Allison - using her yacht as collateral. Sir Leslie says he hasn't tried a capital case in over a dozen years... no life in prison on St. Marks, they hang murderers. If Stone can't prove she's innocent, Allison will be executed the day after the trial!

Stone works the phones, calling every newspaper and magazine and TV news service to tell them about the brave American woman on trial for murder on the barbaric island. If he can rally the media, they can turn the trial into an international incident. Create

international public support for Allison and make the trial less attractive to the St. Marks government. Stone promises full access to Allison to every reporter who comes to the island.

Stone has dinner with Allison in his hotel room and asks her to tell him everything that happened on the yacht - leave nothing out. She goes back over the events leading up to her husband's heart attack, and Stone questions her on the details. She is the only witness to Paul Manning's death, and Stone has full access to her. She tells him about the notebook - her husband always wrote down his ideas in a notebook, a habit he picked up as a reporter. Stone asks about their marriage - she says they were together for weeks on the yacht - if their marriage were in trouble, how could they stand to be with each other day after day? Stone asks about the trip - whose idea was it? The yacht was Paul's dream - the best yacht money could buy. After his book became a best seller, the publisher signed him to three more and gave him a hefty advance, which he spent on a mansion, cars, and luxuries. But when it became time to write his next book, he had writers block. He hoped the yacht trip would kick-start his imagination.

Stone asks about how they met - she tells him about her life growing up dirt poor. Her first marriage that failed. Then she met Paul - this was before he'd gained weight - and they fell in love. She cries at the memories - Stone comforts her... and they kiss again. More passion this time. Before Stone can stop himself, they're moving to the bedroom. He knows it's wrong - forbidden - but is caught up in the passion of the moment. When he takes off her clothes, he notices bruises on her body... the signs of a struggle? They make love - two lonely people reaching out to each other. Stone on the rebound from his failed relationship, Allison in need of comfort.

Stone has become romantically involved with his client - who may have killed her husband.

ACT TWO

The next morning - pounding on the hotel door. Stone has Allison hide while he answers the door - it wouldn't look good if they were discovered in bed together by the police. But it isn't the police, it's 60 Minutes reporter Hilary Kramer. She says she went down to the yacht, but Allison didn't answer her calls. Stone wants to get rid of Hilary before she notices the remnants of room service for two... or Allison. Hilary wants to talk about the case - she's the first reporter on the scene because she was in New Caledonia covering another story. Stone says he needs to get dressed and will meet her downstairs in half an hour. When Hilary leaves Allison asks why she had to hide - is he ashamed of what they did last night? Stone explains that it might damage the case.

In the hotel's dining room Stone fills in Hilary Kramer on the case and they set up an interview this afternoon - when her camera crew arrives. Hilary asks a couple of good questions, and Stone worries that Allison's story might not be able to stand up to hardball questions. When Hilary leaves, New York Times reporter Jim Forrester introduced himself to Stone. Forrester is a travel writer drafted to cover the story. He

was actually on Hawaii and had dinner with Allison and her husband - even saw them leave port. Stone realizes Forrester is the last one to see Paul Manning alive. He asks Forrester about the couple's relationship - they seemed very happy. He witnessed a minor disagreement between them, but what couple doesn't have disagreements? Stone asks what it was about, Forrester isn't sure - thinks it might have been about money. While they were in Hawaii someone stole the dinghy off the yacht, and Manning insisted on paying top dollar to have a replacement flown in. Forrester says they seemed to have made up when they left Hawaii. Stone asks if he'll be a defense witness, Forrester agrees... if he can get a one-on-one interview with Allison. Deal.

Stone calls the harbor master in Hawaii and asks about the Mannings. Learns that Manning insisted on an exact replacement of the dinghy that was stolen - a Parker Sportster. It's the best dinghy made. The harbor master thought Allison and her husband seemed in love, doesn't remember seeing them argue.

They set up the 60 Minutes interview on the yacht. Allison wants to wear her favorite dress, but Stone has her wear something more conservative. "Are you ready for this?" Allison says is... but Stone worries about Hilary's aggressive questioning - she's broken Fortune 500 CEOs on camera before. The lights flick on and the interview begins. Hilary starts with soft questions, then throws in some zingers. Stone sits there, helpless, as Allison gets hammered with questions. Moments of suspense when it seems as if Allison's in trouble... but she manages to dig herself out with an answer. The interview ends with Allison breaking down into tears over being persecuted - she's lost her husband, and now she's facing the gallows. Stone thinks it went great. Afterwards he's talking to Hilary about it - she thinks they'll run it as the lead story. Hilary has interviewed hundreds of people accused of murder, and that was the most dramatic interview of them all. "She really can sell it... you'd almost believe she was innocent." Stone is shocked. Hilary says Allison gives off that guilty vibe - but only a handful of people would ever notice it. Stone asks if Hilary is going to mention her suspicions in her story, Hilary says, "No way! Innocent woman accused of murder in a foreign land is a great story. If she's guilty, it ruins the story." Stone doesn't know if he should be relieved or not.

Stone goes to the local boating supply and asks about the Parker Sportster dinghy. Discovers that what makes it special is that it can be sailed long distances - it's not just a dinghy, it's a boat. "Could it be sailed from Hawaii to here?" "Yes." Stone begins to wonder if Manning faked his own death for the insurance money and to dodge his book contract. Why else would he NEED a dinghy that could be sailed long distances? Why not just replace the stolen Sportster with the dinghies available in Hawaii?

Thomas mentions that a couple of plane loads of reporters have arrived. Stone sets up a news conference for the following morning.

Stone and Allison have dinner together on the yacht. Allison is proud of her interview - Stone doesn't mention Hilary's belief that she's guilty... but wants to go over some of the points that Hilary raised. He asks about Manning's writer's block - what would

happen if he couldn't write the 3 novels the publisher had paid him for? "He'd have to give back the advances." Tough to do since he'd spent the money. The more she talks about Paul Manning's financial situation, the more Stone suspects that he needed that Parker Sportster so that he could fake his own death.

Stone says he met Jim Forrester - Allison doesn't remember him at first - then asks about the argument in Hawaii. Allison says it was nothing - Paul was a very stubborn man and delayed their departure from Hawaii for over a week so that he could get the specific brand and model of dinghy that had been stolen. Wouldn't leave port until the yacht was exactly as it had been when they arrived. Stone asks if Paul's weight gain had interfered with their relationship. Allison is evasive, and finally admits they hadn't made love in over a year - he was just too heavy. Stone asks if he ever got rough with her - ever hit her? Again she seems evasive, but says he never laid a hand on her - why would Stone ask such a question? "You have bruises - it looks like you've been in a fight." "Do you think I'm going to sleep with the jury? Strip in court?" "No." "Then the bruises don't matter, do they?" "I need to know where you got the bruises Allison." "You think I killed him? You don't believe I'm innocent?" "What I believe doesn't matter." "It does to me - if you think I'm guilty..." "Allison, just tell me where you got the bruises." She explains she got them climbing the mast and carrying her husband's body to the side of the boat. Stone apologizes. Allison says it's important that he believe in her innocence - Does he believe? Stone says he believes, and she embraces him... kisses him... and passion flares. They make love.

When he's sure Allison is sound asleep, Stone slips out of bed and searches the yacht for the Parker Sportster... and any other incriminating evidence. Suspense builds - Allison may wake up and discover him at any time. Stone finds FAXes from the insurance company to Allison, some paperwork that makes him wonder about Manning's financial situation. While searching for the Sportster he notices that the spear gun is no longer missing in the equipment area... and that brownish stain has been washed away. Suspense as Allison rolls over - will she wake up and discover Stone searching the yacht? Stone opens a cabinet and spots the Parker Sportster - uninflated and unused. So much for Paul Manning faking his own death. Stone slips back into bed, and Allison asks where he went. "To the bathroom." She snuggles against him, kisses him. He feels like he's betrayed her.

The next morning: Stone hold a news conference for two dozen reporters on the pier. He explains the case, the laws on the island, and how Sir Winston seems to be persecuting innocent Allison for his own political gain. Stone allows them to ask Allison some questions, and gives all of the reporters a press package. The press conference goes very well, and several reporters are going to stay for the trial. Then Sir Winston pulls up, followed by a city bus - he'll be holding his own press conference, and the bus will take the reporters to the venue. The reporters file onto the bus, and when it drives away Stone and Thomas follow in the Jeep. The bus ends up at the airport, where a podium has been set up. Sir Winston gives his own press conference - using evidence, conjecture, and rumor to make Allison look guilty. Stone is afraid they may have lost the media war... then the reporters begin asking questions. Sir Winston's distortions are

exposed - and he ends the press conference abruptly... then springs his surprise: Deporting all of the reporters and shipping them out in a couple of waiting planes.

Stone and Thomas don't know if that works in their favor or not - they won't have the reporters on hand for the trial, but maybe anger at being deported will influence their stories. Just when Stone decides they've won the media war, Sir Winston gives his second press conference - to three reporters from island newspapers. Though Stone has influenced the world press - and may create international pressure on the St. Marks government to drop the case, Sir Winston has cornered the market on the local press - which influences the jury pool and local government. Will the government of St. Marks care more about what the world thinks of them, or what the voting public thinks of them?

Stone works the phones, digging into Paul Manning's background and discovering that he was broke - he'd spent every cent of his advance. If he couldn't write the three books he was under contract for, he'd end up in bankruptcy court... probably losing everything he owned. Dragging Allison down with him. Stone calls the insurance company - they won't tell him how much they paid the widow, but it was a substantial amount. And she's already been paid - wire transfer to her bank account. Stone realizes that Manning was worth more dead than alive - a great motive for Allison to have killed him. Did she kill him? Is he romantically involved with a killer?

Stone and Allison drive out to Sir Leslie's to prepare for the trial. Allison acts romantic towards Stone, but he doesn't reciprocate. He tells her he needs to focus on the trial.

At Sir Leslie's they try to discuss the trial, but Sir Leslie keeps losing his train of thought and talking about gardening. Stone is becoming furious. Allison asks Sir Leslie for a tour of his garden - Stone stays inside and works on the case. He expects them to come back in a minute, but when a half hour passes, he storms outside looking for them. Stone finds them involved in some secret conversation that ends as soon as Stone arrives. Stone insists that they talk about the trial - it starts in two days. Sir Leslie begins talking about the trial but gets sidetracked by garden talk. The man is crazy! Babbling about his garden. What if he goes crazy in the courtroom? What if he derails the whole trial by talking about different kinds of fertilizer?

That night: Stone and Allison eat dinner then watch the 60 Minutes report. Stone compliments her on the meal - where did she find time to buy food? She explains that the yacht has a huge freezer - it's designed for long cruises. The 60 Minutes story is very favorable. CNN has a story on the trial, so do other news services. All of the stories are about the innocent widow persecuted by the corrupt government of some backwater island. They've won the international media battle.

Afterwards Stone asks Allison about Manning's financial situation and the insurance payment. She knew her husband spent much of his advance, but they weren't starving - they owned their home, the yacht, cars, and royalties from Paul's first book would cover food and expenses. Of course, all of that was based on Paul writing those three books

he was under contract to write. Allison says she was afraid the royalties would be tied up in probate, so she immediately filed her insurance claim - he was there when she sent the FedEx envelope. Stone is concerned that might be misinterpreted by the jury if Sir Winston finds out about it - did she have the paperwork FAXed to her on the island where there might be a record of it? Allison says she had the materials FAXed to her on the yacht - it has a satellite phone.

Allison asks why Stone is still treating her as if she's a guilty client with something to hide - doesn't he believe she's innocent? Stone says he does, but without much conviction. They have a discussion of trust in relationships. When Allison suggests he spend the night, he tells her he really needs to work on the case... and heads back to the hotel.

At the hotel, Stone and Thomas have a drink together. Thomas is concerned about Stone's relationship with Allison - if she's found guilty, she'll hang. That's enough pressure on Stone winning the trial if she's just a client - but if she's his lover? Even if she's found not guilty, does that make her innocent? Should Stone be in a relationship with a woman who may have killed the last guy she slept with?

MIDPOINT

Early the next morning - someone knocks on Stone's door. Allison? "Who is it?" The police! Stone quickly scoops up all of his notes on the trial, puts them in a garbage bag, opens the window and tosses the bag onto the roof - then he climbs onto the ledge and escapes seconds before the police break down his door. Suspense as Stone creeps around the ledge to a drainpipe and climbs down. He starts running... only to be captured by a police officer. Knocked to the ground, handcuffed, tossed in the back of a police car. In Stone's room the policemen bag every piece of paper with writing on it, then throw it into the trunk of the police car.

The police car takes Stone to Sir Winston's luxurious house. Stone is dumped in a room, handcuffed, while Sir Winston looks over all of the papers... A chance to find out Stone's trial strategy. Except the relevant papers aren't in the bags.

Stone is dragged into Sir Winston's living room, uncuffed, and forced into a chair by the policemen. "Would you care for a cup of tea?" Winston asks. Stone demands to be released. Winston says he's been arrested, but if he cooperates maybe they won't have to press charges. "Arrested for what?" "Murder." Winston notes that there isn't much about the case in Stone's papers. "You have no legal right to look through my papers." "There might be evidence here - surely we can search a suspected murderer's residence for evidence. They even allow that in America." Stone wants to know he's supposed to have killed. "Paul Manning. Look at the facts - on the same day as you arrive on St. Marks, so does Mrs. Manning. You are the only two Americans on the island. Coincidence? Mr. Manning was a big man, Mrs. Manning is a very slender woman - she probably couldn't have killed him without help. Now you're helping her... and sleeping with her. Did you help her murder her husband?" Winston offers him a

deal - plead Allison guilty and he won't charge Stone with being a co-conspirator. Stone says he flew in that day from New York, not Hawaii. If Winston wants to try charging him with murder, he won't get far. Winston tells Stone he needs to win this case and he WILL win the case - there's evidence that Stone knows nothing about - evidence that will prove Allison murdered her husband. "See you in court." The police take Stone back to the hotel with his bags of papers.

Stone goes to the pier to ask Allison what sort of evidence Winston might have... but stops when he sees her on the yacht with Forrester. The two are talking on the deck - but standing very close to each other. The conversation seems intimate. Stone goes back to the hotel before they see him, wondering if Sir Winston is half right - maybe Allison DID have help killing her husband. Is Forrester her lover?

Stone retrieves his papers from the roof, but can't concentrate. Is Allison playing him for a fool?

He goes out to the yacht - Allison is alone. He confronts her. He saw her with Forrester. She thinks he's insane with jealousy - she was trying to do Stone a favor. Forrester is a reporter - he has a notebook - did he write down anything about the argument she and Paul had on Hawaii? Forrester wouldn't tell her - wouldn't show her the notebook. Allison is afraid that Winston might subpoena the notebook. "Why would that matter?" The argument was worse than she first said - much worse.

Stone wants to know what else she has been keeping from him - he no longer trusts her. What about the satellite phone - why not call for help as soon as Paul had the heart attack? She says she tried, but couldn't get it to work. What about that big freezer - why throw her husband's body overboard when she could have put it in the yacht's over-sized freezer so he could be buried in his family plot in Florida? Allison wasn't sure he'd fit in the freezer, what then? Cut him up? If she dragged the body down to the freezer and he didn't fit, she wouldn't be able to drag him back upstairs. And what about HER? If she emptied the freezer for Paul's body, was she supposed to starve while she sailed to port? Why can't he believe that she's innocent? Stone doesn't have an answer for that. Is he so used to guilty clients that he can't comprehend someone actually being innocent? Is he so afraid of a relationship that he has to destroy it by thinking she's guilty? Allison says he has to believe in her. She loves him - doesn't he love her? Was all of that sex just sex? Stone says he believes her, loves her, but isn't sure he means it.

Allison says they need to steal the notebook out of Forrester's room and read the passage for the day she argued with Paul. Make sure there isn't documentation of the fight. Stone thinks it's wrong, but reluctantly agrees. Allison will have lunch with Forrester to distract him...

Stone asks Thomas if he can borrow the hotel passkey for the afternoon. Thomas refuses - this is asking too much of their friendship. Has Stone lost his mind over this woman? Stone pleads with Thomas and ends up getting the key but losing the

friendship.

While Allison has lunch with Forrester, Stone breaks into his room and steals the notebook. He takes it down to the restaurant, where Allison excuses herself and they quickly flip through the notebook by the bathroom doors. A tense scene, like the stolen key in NOTORIOUS. Suspense builds - will they find the page before Forrester wonders what happened to Allison and goes to investigate? They search the notebook, finally finding the day of the argument - a single sentence, not about the argument. For some reason, Allison writes the sentence on a napkin. Forrester goes to find out what's keeping Allison - he's going to discover them! Stone sees Forrester's reflection in a mirror, snatches the notebook out of Allison's hands and dives into the men's room seconds before Forrester turns the corner. Allison apologizes for taking so long - Forrester doesn't go back to the table with her... he goes into the men's room!

Stone hides in a stall as Forrester enters. Forrester begins pushing open stall doors - he's suspicious. He comes to Stone's stall, finds it locked, looks under the door for feet - Stone stands on the commode, notebook in hand. Satisfied that the bathroom is empty, Forrester washes his hands and leaves. Stone waits a minute before leaving the bathroom and returning the notebook to Forrester's room. Did he lose Thomas' friendship for nothing? When he looks out the window of his room, he sees Allison and Forrester behind the inn... kissing.

The next morning, Stone and Allison go to the courthouse for the first day of the trial. Outside - a group of protestors. This trial is going to be the island's version of Rodney King - if Allison is found innocent there will be rioting in the streets.

Inside the courtroom - opening arguments from Winston and Stone. Sir Leslie is completely out of it - he actually begins the opening argument and has to be reminded that's Stone's job. The jury seems confused - is Stone the lawyer or Sir Leslie? The islanders don't seem to like Stone - he's an American, an outsider. Would Allison have been better off with a bad local lawyer than a good New York lawyer? Then Sir Winston drops a bombshell - in his opening he mentions that Allison has a criminal history in the United States. She isn't the innocent the international press makes her out to be.

Winston calls his first witnesses - the two policemen who were first on the scene when the yacht crashed. Stone asks a couple of questions of each to clarify that Allison cooperated fully. The whole time he's wondering about Allison's criminal past. What did she do? What does Winston have on her?

When they break for lunch Stone escorts her back to the yacht and asks her about her criminal record. She says Winston is blowing it out of proportion - she didn't do anything violent. When she was in college she lived with a guy who was involved in identity theft and credit card fraud, and both were arrested. He did hard time, she got probation. Stone wants to know why she didn't tell him about this - why did she hide it? Allison didn't think it was important - it was years ago and had nothing to do with Paul's death. What else is she hiding from him? He grabs the spear gun from the equipment area,

"There wasn't a spear gun in the rack when I first came on the yacht, now there is." Allison takes the spear gun out of his hands, "Do you think I killed Paul with a spear gun? Do you think I aimed it at him like this..." she aims the spear gun at his chest. Stone backs away from her - she follows him with the spear gun. Stone backs into the wall, trapped. "Do you think I could do that? Just pull the trigger and kill a man? Do you?" Stone lies: "No." She lowers the spear gun. "Paul lost the spear gun in Hawaii, I had it replaced." She kisses him, "I wouldn't hurt you, I didn't kill my husband." Stone thinks they should head back to the courthouse.

That afternoon Sir Winston lays more ground work, introduces Allison's criminal record and the notebook into evidence. A local handwriting expert identifies the writing in the notebook as Paul Manning's. Passages from the notebook are read to the jury. Stone cross examines - showing that the passages are all in third person. It's not a diary it's ideas for a new novel. Stone flips through the notebook reading random passages - some even mention chapters! The jury believes Stone rather than Winston. Stone gets to a page at the end of the notebook and DOESN'T read it outloud to the jury... it's Paul Manning's notes on how difficult it is to prove murder without a body. How you could toss someone off a cruise ship and say it was an accident. And a list of islands with St. Marks circled. Stone returns the notebook to the evidence table, wondering if Allison used her husband's idea for a murder mystery to kill him. Did Paul Manning unknowingly plan his own murder?

They break for the day. At the inn Thomas tells him he heard a dinghy washed up on the southern part of the island - a Parker Sportster.

In the restaurant, Stone spots a big bear of a man WITHOUT a beard... Paul Manning? Stone talks to the man, who claims his name is Stendahl, claims he's a tourist on the island, claims many other things.

Stone goes to the yacht to go over Allison's testimony - Sir Winston will call her first thing in the morning. On St. Marks the prosecution can call the defendant as a witness. Stone pretends he's Sir Winston and really lays into her - she never changes her story even when he tries to trip her up by asking about the spear gun... but breaks down and cries. Stone goes to comfort her, but she just wipes away the tears and says: "Was that good? The crying bit? I don't have to do it." Stone tells her it was fine, and when she asks if he wants to spend the night he declines. She killed her husband, and he's going to help her get away with it.

ACT THREE

The next morning, the man claiming to be Stendahl is sitting in the back of the courtroom near Forrester. Stone notices that Allison is making a point NOT to look in that direction.

Sir Winston has two more witnesses to call - first up, Allison. Sir Winston is worse than Stone was - he verbally brutalizes her. Everything that Stone questioned her on is

brought up by Winston - the freezer, the radio, the insurance money, their relationship. Allison keeps her story straight and does the crying bit (which works on the jury) but her explanations sound like unbelievable excuses to Stone. Do they sound that way to the jury? When Winston finishes, Stone asks her if she murdered her husband, she says "No. He had a heart attack." Stone thinks that despite the evidence Winston has dug up, they might win. Then Winston calls his next witness...

Frank Stendahl, from the life insurance company. Stendahl drops one bombshell after another: Manning was insured for \$12 million, the company has already paid Allison - wiring the money to her bank, they didn't know she had been accused of murdering her husband, when the insurance company found out they tried to reclaim the money... but it had been transferred to an account in the Caymans. Everything Stendahl says makes it look like Allison murdered her husband for the money. On cross, Stone asks why the insurance company paid off the claim. Stendahl reluctantly answers that they thought it was a heart attack - Manning had gained a great deal of weight since they wrote the policy. Stone even gets Stendahl to admit that the insurance company was concerned about Manning's health.

The prosecution rests, and Stone calls his one and only witness - Forrester. He asks Forrester about meeting Paul and Allison Manning, having dinner with them in Hawaii, and seeing them leave the island together. Stone picks up the notebook, reads a particularly nasty passage, and asks if he ever heard Allison speak like that to her husband. Forrester says he never heard her say that... but he did witness them arguing. Stone asks if Forrester would categorize this argument as serious or just a typical disagreement between a married couple? Stone smiles at the jury, Forrester is about to win the case for him.

But Forrester says it was a real knock down fight. They were exchanging blows, yelling at each other. "At one point Mrs. Manning screamed that she'd be better off killing her husband and living off the inheritance." Stone's jaw drops. Forrester's eyes are locked on Allison's as he drives the nails into her coffin one-by-one. Stone tries to stop Forrester from saying more, but it's too late. Winston doesn't even want to question Forrester.

Stone tries to save it by recalling Allison and asking about the argument - she testifies that it was a minor disagreement - no blows were exchanged. If Paul had hit her, wouldn't she have bruises? He was a big bear of a man, she's a slender woman. How could she have done her husband harm? Stone rests his case.

They break for lunch before closing arguments. Stone tries to find Forrester, but he's disappeared. Stone asks Allison about Forrester's testimony. "Lies. We had a disagreement over money, nothing big. It may have been loud, but after it was over we still sailed out of Hawaii together, arm-in-arm. We were going to be stuck with each other on that yacht for days. If it was a serious fight, I would have left him. Let him sail away by himself. The yacht was his dream, not mine." This makes complete sense to Stone... maybe despite all of the evidence she really is innocent? Maybe his suspicious

mind, his history of guilty clients, made him only see the worst possibility instead of the best. Allison asks if he believes that she's innocent, and Stone answers "Yes", maybe even meaning it.

After lunch, closing arguments. Winston goes back over the evidence. Stone does a great close - taking each piece of evidence and showing how it's circumstantial. Taking everything Winston said and using it against him. Stone ends by showing how Forrester's testimony doesn't make sense - if they were fighting, why did they sail off into the sunset together? Stone notices jurors nodding at this. They're going to win - there really is no evidence that Allison killed her husband. Sir Leslie shakes Stone's hand, complimenting him on the closing argument.

The police put Allison in a holding cell while the jury deliberates. Stone talks to her through the bars, tells her all they had is circumstantial evidence. He believes the jury will find her innocent... But neither is really sure. She knows there will be photographers outside the courthouse, and doesn't want to leave wearing the bland clothes she testified in. Would Stone run back to the yacht and get her favorite dress? Stone jogs to the yacht and grabs the dress. Outside the courtroom the crowd of islanders is becoming violent - they want Allison to hang! When Stone returns the jury has just reached a verdict. They file back into the courtroom.

Guilty. Allison Manning will hang at dawn!

Stone gives her the dress, tells her he'll put political pressure to have the verdict overturned. Stone uses his cell phone from outside her cell to call Senators, Congressmen, anyone who can apply pressure. Only one person on St. Marks can overturn the verdict - Lord Horricks, the governor. Sir Leslie takes the appeal to Lord Horricks personally - Stone wants to go along, but Sir Leslie says he knows Lord Horricks and this should be islander to islander. Stone continues on the phones until the sun comes up... but he's not sure pressure from outside the island is as strong as the political pressure on the island - the crowd wants her to hang.

The phone rings in the warden's office - Stone, Sir Leslie, and Allison can see the Warden talking on the phone, nodding. The appeal granted? Allison puts on her dress - ready to walk out of the jail cell... to freedom. The Warden and two guards come down the hall, open the cell. Stone asks the Warden if that was Lord Horricks. "Yes." "So he granted the appeal?" "No - we're hanging her." Allison grabs Stone's hand as they drag her away in her pretty dress - she says she loves him. She asks him to remember her. Stone wants to come along, but the warden explains: "We aren't barbarians on St. Marks - we don't have public hangings." The guards hold Stone back as they take Allison to the gallows.

Through the cell window Stone sees them walk her up the 13 steps to the gallows, "No! No!" He breaks free of the guards, runs down the hall, into the courtyard... just in time to see her drop! Pretty dress fluttering. He falls to the ground, the guards drag him back into the jail.

Thomas practically carries Stone out of the jail... past a cart where they're pulling a tarp over the pretty dress on the dead body. Stone can see her feet protruding from the tarp. He breaks down, and Thomas hustles him away.

On the news Hilary Kramer has a special report on the trial: Allison Manning was found guilty of murdering her husband and executed on the island of St. Marks...

Stone turns away from the TV, spots Forrester... looks at the a picture of Manning on the TV, then crosses the restaurant to Forrester. Stone has figured it out. He's unraveled the entire mystery. Forrester tells Stone he only told the truth on the witness stand - he had to. Stone says, "Let's take this outside." Outside, Stone tells Forrester that everything he said on the stand was a lie... starting with his name. Stone has figured out that he's really Paul Manning - and takes it clue by clue.

Forrester/Manning is the real murderer - he used the justice system on St. Marks to murder his wife so that he could have the whole \$12 million to himself. He had already investigated the justice system on St. Marks - it was in his novel notes. He knew an American woman wouldn't be treated fairly and would be arrested. His testimony killed Allison - the perfect murder. Forrester/Manning tells Stone he's wrong - he changed his testimony because Allison wanted the whole \$12 million. She cleared out the Cayman's account - he has no idea how she got the password. Stone knows how - the date Stendahl testified the account was opened was date Allison wanted to see in Forrester's notebook, the date Stendahl says the account was closed was day after they stole Forrester's notebook - Stone helped her steal \$12 million without knowing it! She played him! Forrester says all she had to do was give up the money and he wouldn't have given the damning testimony. Stone says, "So the money died with her?" "No - I figure you have it, Stone. You were the one who stole my notebook." She wasn't supposed to sleep with Stone - that wasn't part of the plan. Forrester/Manning pulls a gun, there's a scuffle. Stone tells Forrester he's already dead (as Manning), so he won't make the news if St. Marks hangs him for fraud... gun discharges killing Forrester. Then the police show up and arrest him for the murder of Forrester.

In jail, Stone breaks out of sleep... "She's alive!"

In the morning, Sir Leslie enters and tosses him the island newspaper, "You're free. They aren't going to press charges... Winston has bigger things to worry about." The newspaper headlines: Manning Fakes Death - Sir Winston Hangs Innocent Woman. "Winston has already lost the election - he railroaded an innocent woman to the gallows." Stone asks Sir Leslie where she is. "Who?" "Allison Manning." "She's dead, sir." "I never saw her body - I saw A body." Once again, Stone has figured it all out. "If someone doesn't accept a bribe it's because you haven't offered him enough. How much did you bribe Lord Horricks?" Stone has Sir Leslie cornered, and he admits to the bribery scheme - \$1 million of Allison's insurance money. The woman Stone saw hang was already dead, Winston got his publicity, and Allison Manning is now officially dead... and \$11 million richer. Sir Leslie says one of his gardening homilies, and Stone realizes it's a metaphor - every time Stone thought Sir Leslie was babbling about his

garden he was actually talking about keeping Allison's neck from the noose - Sir Leslie is crazy... like a fox!

Sir Leslie tells Stone that Winston will only lose the election if Allison Manning is dead. Stone realizes he must keep this a secret to keep Winston from gaining power on the island... and that's when Sir Leslie tells him that Allison left him the yacht in her will.

Stone sails the yacht home - the only thing he has left of Allison. A reminder of his love, a reminder that he was a fool for love, a reminder that he's alone. The ghost of their relationship haunts the boat.

THE END