

PRISM

by

Daniel Barnz

December 9, 2018

First Network Draft

Carol Mendelsohn Productions
We're Not Brothers

*We don't see things as they are,
we see them as we are.*

- Anais Nin -

1

OVER BLACK:

A BUZZING NOISE. Sandpaper on our ears. Slowly crescendoing.

POP OPEN ON:

A woman's mouth open, screaming, without sound.

This is the first of a series of dreamlike images, color so vivid and intense it almost hurts the eyes. They're too disturbing to be beautiful, but somehow they still are:

*- a serrated blade pressing against alabaster flesh, tiny pinpricks of blood appearing...
- red red blood escaping in angry rivulets...
- a POV looking up at moths circling a chartreuse-green fluorescent light...*

It's this light that BUZZES - louder and louder, over -

*- a blood-stained glove shoved into women's lace underwear...
- blood lazily pooling on the concrete floor near a silk blouse sleeve, ruby red seeping into the ivory...
- a knife falling in slow-mo to the ground, the silver blade dancing with the light as it falls, just as it hits...*

2

INT. HOME OFFICE - DUSK

EYES POP OPEN: a woman wakes from a nightmare, disoriented. She's fallen asleep in her clothes, drenched in sweat from the oppressive heat, surrounded by law books and trial notes.

This is RACHEL LEWIS (40s), an Erin Brockovich force of nature, you will fall in love with her passion - everyone does; as empathetic as she is ruthless, and underneath it all a pain she Will Not Give In To. [Note: Every episode begins with a different character's eyes opening, we'll continue that episode through their eyes.]

The BUZZING NOISE now a VIBRATING PHONE. Rachel answers, listens -

RACHEL
Be right there.

3

EXT. STREETS/ PHOENIX, ARIZONA - NIGHT

Rachel speeds through Phoenix - a city so putty-colored, so man-made it spits in God's face. And hot. In this show, the heat is a character: it lives in your clothes, in your hair, you can feel your dreams evaporate as you sleep. On the radio, we hear -

RADIO ANNOUNCER

- after an explosive opening to the murder trial of TV host Jessica Wren, proceedings have been delayed amid rumors of new evidence -

Rachel turns it off. Through the windshield, she sees a LIGHTNING STORM, brilliant shocks of white forking through the sky.

4 EXT. SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR COURTHOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Late, after-hours. Rachel races into the monumental six story, two city block Richard Meier-designed steel and glass behemoth. So much glass reflecting and refracting: sometimes it feels like you can see everything, *so clearly* - sometimes the glass twists and distorts...

5 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Rachel sees prosecutor EDUARDO GUATY (40s). A study in contradictions: Guaty is *yes, aggro* (massacres that stirrer straw in his mouth), but also *positively tender* with his six-month-old baby - the one gurgling in the carseat next to him.

GUATY

He only falls asleep if I drive him around. I got the call and didn't have time to take him home, so.

RACHEL

He's beautiful.

Rachel smiles at the baby, who smiles back. To the baby:

GUATY

Dash, this is Rachel. Once upon a time, Rachel and Daddy went to law school together, where Rachel was ranked number two. And guess who was number one?

RACHEL

(grins, to the baby)

Dash, it's very nice to meet you. I'm Rachel. Sometimes your daddy can be very silly, like when he holds on to his law school ranking twenty years after the fact. And if it makes you feel a little sad for him that's okay, it makes me feel sad for him too!

Now Guaty grins. Theirs is a totally winning rivalry.

GUATY

I think the real reason Rachel feels sad is because she's the defense attorney in a murder trial Daddy is prosecuting and she knows she's going to lose.

(to Rachel, pointedly)

And that's why, even though the trial has only just begun, Rachel is trying to get some very tricky and misleading evidence admitted so the jury will be confused and she can win.

Rachel smiles, unruffled.

RACHEL

I will win. Because my client is innocent. And I can prove it.

GUATY

(shrugs)

Whatevs. Judge won't admit the evidence. Trust me, we're going to walk in that door, that's what he's going to say.

RACHEL

So nothing to worry about -

GUATY (CONT'D)

I'm not worried -

RACHEL

Then why're you slaughtering that straw in your mouth?

Rolling his eyes, Guaty tosses the straw on the floor. Rachel looks at him, *for real?* She throws away the straw. To Dash:

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I know you won't ever litter, sweetheart. But let's just say, one day, when you're older, Daddy accuses you of littering when you *definitely didn't*. You come find me, and I will make sure you don't get wrongly convicted and sent to jail for the rest of *your* life -

Suddenly the door opens, Rachel and Guaty (and baby) launch inside, fully serious now, professional, in it to win it -

6

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Rachel and Guaty talking over each other, barely taking in the POLICE DETECTIVE hovering in the background:

| | |
|--|---|
| RACHEL | GUATY |
| Judge, if there's compelling evidence someone else committed this murder - | She's pointing fingers in an unabashedly cynical attempt to distract the jury - |

JUDGE HENLEY (50s), a beefy Colorado type, iron-fisted, but also surprisingly human. Judicially tolerant, personally intolerant, and trying to course correct on that front (like the rest of the world he too meditates!)

JUDGE HENLEY
I'm not ruling on the evidence admissibility. I called you here for a different reason.

Rachel and Guaty stop, confused. Henley gestures to a small box on his desk. And wait - *he's agitated* -

JUDGE HENLEY (CONT'D)
This was delivered this afternoon - we don't know who it's from. The note says - "I didn't send to the cops cuz they always screw it up. I just want what's right."
(to the Detective)
Apologies.

RACHEL
What is it?

JUDGE HENLEY
We'll need to confirm, but -
(exhales)
It appears to be the scarf missing from the murder victim. And -
(pause)
There's a bloody thumbprint on it.

Off Rachel and Guaty, fully sucker-punched -

SMASH TO:

MAIN TITLE: In the space of a second, thirteen different sets of eyes pop open, the last set of eyes morphing into the "I" in PRISM.

7 EXT. MARICOPA COUNTY TOWERS JAIL - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A beige windowless monolith bakes in the hundred degree heat.

8 INT. JAIL - DAY

CLANG! Rachel and junior colleague LUCIUS (20s), sharp mind and dresser. Like everyone who works for her, Lucius thinks

Rachel is brilliant, but he's not afraid to call her on her shit. As they make their way through jail security, a RHYTHM of closing doors, alarm bells, footsteps.

TITLE: THREE MONTHS EARLIER

LUCIUS

The host of a true crime show gets murdered. What is that? Really bad luck? Karma?

RACHEL

I don't believe in karma.

LUCIUS

I'm not surprised. I mean, don't take this the wrong way, but nothing about you screams zen.

RACHEL

I think people invented karma to make them feel better about a fundamentally unjust world.

LUCIUS

That's really cheery. Fortunately only like me plus like five hundred million Buddhists in the world disagree with you.

RACHEL

I don't have a problem picking fights with large numbers of people.

LUCIUS

I know this about you.

Rachel laughs. Spotting a heads-up penny on the floor, she automatically picks it up (this reads as winningly quirky).

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

How're you sleeping?

RACHEL

I don't.

As they arrive outside the Attorney Visit Room, Rachel looks at the YOUNG MAN inside, the wire in the glass distorting her view ever so slightly. She inhales sharply - something about him startles her. Lucius looks at her.

LUCIUS

Rachel?

Rachel ignores it, already pushing open the door to -

9

INT. ATTORNEY VISIT ROOM/ JAIL - CONTINUOUS

MICHAEL JAMISON (20s) looks up. A lost boy if ever there was one, no formal education but smart as shit, and *vulnerable* - you want, need to take care of him. (And this may be incidental right now, but he's also Gosling-sexy.)

RACHEL

Good morning. I'm Rachel, this is Lucius. We're from the Public Defender's office -

MICHAEL

You think I did it?

You gotta admire his straight-up ballsiness, and Rachel does. Still, she has a guarded skepticism, honed over years of meeting so many guilty clients:

RACHEL

Jessica Wren was stabbed in a parking garage. She had previously complained about you stalking her. Security footage *and* an eyewitness put you at the crime scene right after the murder. The witness observed you running out quote *like only a guilty dude does* unquote. So. You tell me.

She leans back in her chair. A beat. Michael nods.

MICHAEL

I'm not as good a person as I should be, no question. And if y'already made up your mind, I get it, I wouldn't blame you one bit. I know what it looks like, me being in the garage.

Rachel - intrigued. Not how the guilty ones typically start.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I work nearby - at the Conoco - that's where she'd fill up, 'cause it's one of the last full service gas stations in Phoenix, you know? And she was always so nice - that's how I knew she wasn't fake, like people on TV seem. You ever watch her show?

RACHEL

No.

MICHAEL

Oh. Too bad. With all those messed-up criminals, it was like she could see past the surface stuff, could see deep down they weren't all bad, you know? Anyway, one time she drove off, I saw her tires were too low on air, so later I went to tell her, waited till she was done with work. But me being there got her nervous. And um, I shouldn't've done this, but I went back one more time just to explain and say I was sorry, but um - that was the night -
(pause, this is hard)

When I heard the scream, my first thought was - *just run*, it's gonna look bad for you. Someone else was running too, and I told the cops that, but I don't think they believed me.

Rachel now rapt: he's raw, vulnerable, totally sincere.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Like I say, I done bad things, you ask my mother, she'll tell you all sorta stories about me growing up, and I deserved all those beatings -

LUCIUS

Going back to that night -

But Michael starts to shake, getting emotional.

MICHAEL

That night, yeah. Every minute of every hour of every day since that night I've been asking myself - *why'd I run?* She wasn't dead yet, maybe I could've helped her, saved her even. So, um - aw man -

Raw emotion catches up. He's crying now. Rachel leans in.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

- *I didn't kill her, but I did run... so maybe her dying is still kinda my fault?*

(looks in Rachel's eyes)

I'm just looking for someone -

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

anyone - to hear me, you know - and
um, believe me?

Rachel is too professional to show emotion. *But she is moved.*

SMASH TO:

CLOSE ON: a bloody body, female, 40s (Jessica Wren). For a second we might think this is a flashback to the murder - until we PULL BACK TO REVEAL that it's a crime scene photo. Which Rachel is looking at in -

10 EXT. PARKING GARAGE/ CRIME SCENE - LATER THAT DAY

Dark, shadowy, atmospheric. Those fluorescent lights BUZZING. As Rachel ducks under the crime scene tape, she looks at a close up photo of Jessica Wren's underwear -

POP-FLASH: SNAP! Underwear snaps back after the bloody glove is shoved into it -

Think of these as Rachel's sleep-deprived mind triggering her imagination. She rubs her eyes, chugs a Red Bull, forces herself to look through more of the photos: *blood stains... the knife wounds... the serrated knife...*

POP-FLASH: SCRRT! The nails-on-chalkboard sound of the metal knife scraping the concrete floor -

Rachel shakes it off. As she surveys the scene -

GUATY (PRELAP)

*What secrets does that parking
garage hold...?*

SMASH TO:

11 INT. COURTROOM - DAY - THREE MONTHS LATER

A packed courtroom, big media presence. At the defense table, Rachel, Michael and Lucius watch Guaty deliver his opening statement, masterfully playing to the jury:

GUATY

*...it will be your job as jury to
decide. Your job to connect the
dots in the simplest, clearest way -
this man stalked the dead woman,
this man was in the parking garage
when she was killed, this man ran.
Now there will be other people in
this courtroom -*

(glances at Rachel)

- who will say, but look at these

(MORE)

GUATY (CONT'D)

dots over here, and if you went up to those dots there and zig-zagged down here and leap-frogged over there then maybe, *just maybe* you could think Michael Jamison didn't kill Jessica Wren. But he did. And the evidence will prove it.

Rachel eyes the jury; we highlight two in particular: TANEESHA JACKSON (30s, black, trans) and alternate SUSANNAH LIGHT (50s, white, Gucci-ed out.) They listen to Guaty, rapt - reacting in all the right places, in his palm. *Shit.*

Rachel looks down at her shoes, which are black. For some reason, this bothers her.

GUATY (CONT'D)

Sure, there are other dots. There's a teeny tiny one way up over there. A rapist-murderer Jessica Wren profiled on her TV show, he always said he wanted to get back at her.

On Rachel, stiffening - something's very wrong. Lucius quickly scribbles: How'd he know?

GUATY (CONT'D)

But do we see that guy on the security footage? *No.* Did an eyewitness ID that other guy? *No.* Is there evidence proving that guy could not have killed Jessica Wren? *You better believe it.*

Lucius scribbles: He's destroying our whole case. Rachel is poker-faced, but underneath she is fully imploding. Next to her, she feels Michael getting nervous. Under her breath:

RACHEL

Show. Nothing.

GUATY

Michael Jamison was an obsessed fan who lived in a fantasy world where Jessica Wren loved him. When he found out she didn't, he grew angry and brutally stabbed her.

(pause)

I was never great at math, but I do remember this - the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. *And there is a straight line of evidence proving that man -*

(MORE)

GUATY (CONT'D)
 (points at Michael)
 - *that man killed Jessica Wren.*

Triumphant, Guaty sits. Beat. Rachel steels herself, she's so fucked - and she can't let anyone see it.

JUDGE HENLEY
 Ms. Lewis? Your opening statement?

Rachel stands, beat.

RACHEL
 Your honor, I know you like to stay on schedule - I don't want to take us over today. Given the lateness of the hour, I'd prefer to do my statement tomorrow.

As Henley considers, Rachel surreptitiously knocks on the wood tabletop. *And then -*

JUDGE HENLEY
 Fine. Tomorrow 9 AM sharp. A Tibetan monk once said, "If you miss the present moment, you miss your appointment with life." I say, "If you miss my start time, you'll wish you were living in Tibet."

12 INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO THE COURTHOUSE JAIL - DAY

As Guards lead Michael back to the court jail cell, he is freaking out, scared to death; Rachel impressively keeps it together, radiates calm -

MICHAEL
 How'd he know you were gonna say it was that rapist guy? The lawyer said he got evidence *proving* that guy couldn't have done it -

RACHEL
 Guaty is probably bluffing -

MICHAEL
 But you told me juries make up their mind during opening statements and *then vote that way in the end.* You told me that.

RACHEL
 Yes, that's statistically true, *but-*

MICHAEL
Then we're screwed -

RACHEL (CONT'D)
No. Listen to me -

RACHEL (CONT'D)
It's a broken system, but I know how to work it. That's why I win acquittals in an extraordinary percentage of my cases and that's why I will win yours. And also - *you're innocent*. It doesn't matter as much as it should, but it matters *some*. More importantly, it matters to me. Michael. *Trust me*.

She looks at him, exuding confidence, she's got this -

RACHEL (PRELAP) (CONT'D)
How. In the hell. Did this happen?

SMASH TO:

13 INT. PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Now Rachel loses it. Her scrappy four-person team - which includes Lucius and investigator SOPHIE (20s), driven, smart, worships Rachel - weathers the storm:

RACHEL
How did Guaty know our argument? He knew exactly who we were planning to blame for the murder, that's not coincidence. So either someone in this room is a colossal jackass who didn't cover their investigative tracks very carefully or one of you told him, either of which is bad, and one of which is fire-able.

Even now, when Rachel is this hard on them, her team admires her - this all-in-ness, this is what makes her *so good*.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
The truth is, there's no hard evidence proving Michael committed this murder. But in the courtroom, as in our world, the truth is shit. I see white, you see black, I say you're lying, you say you're not, *and everyone stops caring. The. Truth. Is. Shit.* All that matters is who can tell the best story. We had a good story. Then Guaty scooped us, and brilliantly, because he knew that if I objected
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 and started whining about him
 stealing my argument, guy-jurors
 numbers 4,6,9 and 12 would write
 off the paranoid hysterical woman-
 lawyer from the get-go.

In Sophie's eyes, especially - sheer admiration, Rachel is
 her personal RBG.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 In the .1 percent chance Guaty
isn't bluffing, we need to look
 back over *all* the evidence, *all* the
 suspects - and come up with a new
 story. And we need it *before* I give
 my opening statement tomorrow
 morning - where the jury will make
 up their minds about whether
 Michael is guilty, even if that's
 yes, *so depressingly unfair* - so we
 have a little less than sixteen
 hours to figure out how to keep
 Michael from spending the rest of
 his life in prison.

14 INT. RACHEL'S HOME - NIGHT

Rachel rushes in, sees husband DIEGO (40s), in scrubs. He's
 wry, *so damn appealing*, her rock, knows her better than
 anyone, maybe even herself. And for some reason, Rachel is
 surprised to see him, not unhappily so, but still... As
 Rachel tornados through the house, a fast, loving rhythm -

RACHEL
 Just picking up some notes I left -
don't ask, total disaster.

DIEGO
 Got it. I know you, so you're
 probably thinking it's because you
 didn't throw salt over your
 shoulder or hang one lemon with six
 green chilis or whatever
 superstitious thing you think you
 didn't do properly.

RACHEL
 (lightly, *half-joking*)
 I didn't wear blue shoes.

DIEGO
 But you know you don't *actually*
 exert that kind of control over the
 universe, right?

RACHEL
 (smiles)
 I won't concede that, no.
 (a half-beat, then)
 Where do you stand on karma?

DIEGO
 Are you surprised to see me here?

RACHEL
 I just need to find these notes -

DIEGO
 - I thought you might be surprised.
 Since I don't live here anymore.

Their eyes meet. This look doesn't last long, but suggests volumes - that he is emotionally direct, that she's not, *that she wishes she could be*. Rachel looks away, her eyes land on a MINIATURE ZEN SAND GARDEN, she stares at it (this feels a bit odd, and should). She moves on -

RACHEL
 Somehow Guaty knew my whole case -

DIEGO
 We have to sell the house.

Because he won't be deflected, despite Rachel's best efforts:

RACHEL
 I'm trying to figure out if someone
 on my team *told* him or -

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>DIEGO You do remember agreeing to sell the house?</p> | <p>RACHEL (CONT'D) - it was just too strange... wait, did I?</p> |
|--|--|

DIEGO
 Like ten times, but always in that
 noncommittal way you do.

RACHEL
 (noncommittal)
 Huh.

DIEGO
 Yeah, like that.

Whirlwind Rachel still on the move, searching. Diego follows.

DIEGO (CONT'D)
 Because *most* doctors and lawyers
 earn salaries that can pay the
 (MORE)

DIEGO (CONT'D)
 mortgage. Unless you're dumb idealists like us and end up working in free clinics and as public defenders - in which case a mortgage like this just - *hurts*.

RACHEL
 Diego, of all days -

DIEGO
 (anticipating this)
 No, I totally get it. Today's not the day. But when you're in trial it's a "really bad time," and when you're prepping for trial it's *also* a "really bad time," and these mortgage bills keep coming -

RACHEL
 (wasn't listening)
 It's just a really bad time.

DIEGO
 I'll do it all. I'll move out the junk. I'll clean it up. I'll get it repainted, interview the realtors -

RACHEL
 - yeah I just -

DIEGO
 - because we both thought I should move out, and this house doesn't make sense for one person. It barely made sense for three -

RACHEL
 - *found it*.

She grabs the notes. But when she turns, Diego is there. He says this in the most sympathetic, gentle, loving way he can:

DIEGO
 It's time.
 (pause)
 There are all those statistics about how many marriages don't make it after a child dies. I really didn't want to be one of those statistics. I know you didn't either. *But*.

Despite his lovingness, a glimpse of Rachel's pain. It's deep, but she won't - *can't* - indulge it.

RACHEL

I have to get back.

AT THE DOOR Rachel grabs her bag. Unwillingly her eyes move to a photograph. It's a TEENAGE BOY - obviously their son. He looks happy, that's what first hits us.

But it also hits us how much he looks like Michael. And now we understand Rachel's reaction when she first saw Michael. She gazes at the photo, full of emotion.

15 INT. RACHEL'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel in her car, staring at the house - she feels vulnerable, probably remembering happier times. A beat, then she starts the car.

16 INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Rachel texts furiously, two double espressos in front of her.

WOMAN'S VOICE

No wonder you can't sleep.

Rachel looks up, sees ALEXIS BODEN (30s), old friend - but maybe not fully trustworthy, always a juicy who's-playing-whom dynamic between them. If we're paying attention, we'll also remember seeing her in the courtroom.

ALEXIS

Did you call because Guaty
obliterated your argument in court?
(off Rachel's look)
I'm a journalist, I deduce shit.

RACHEL

You've been closely following the
Wren murder, and are *so good* at
telling stories, what's your gut?

ALEXIS

Sorry, been focused on something
else. See a waiter? I need a drink.

RACHEL

Oh c'mon. This trial's a news
frenzy *and* Jessica Wren was your
friend, what else could you
possibly be focused on?

ALEXIS

Sexual harassment expose. And
Jessica was really more a frenemy
who I inconveniently crushed on.

RACHEL
(ears perking up)
Did she crush back?

Alexis smiles appreciatively. Theirs is a fun Dangerous Liaisons dynamic, which they both enjoy:

ALEXIS
Are you seriously about to fish for a sordid unrequited love angle with me as jealous killer?

RACHEL
If I thought the jury would buy it.

ALEXIS
(laughs)
Oooh fun, go for it. And she did have a thing for hot younger guys, so maybe that can be part of your conspiracy theory too - *where is the waiter?*

RACHEL
What have you uncovered about Wren?
(Alexis shrugs, nothing)
You know why I'm good at my job? I can tell when people are lying. What if I offer you an exclusive with my client?

ALEXIS
Are you offering me an exclusive?

RACHEL
Depends what I get in return.
(as Alexis mulls)
Aha. I *knew* there was something.

ALEXIS
Three interviews, 90 minutes each. You'll be present, of course. No restrictions on questions.

RACHEL
Besides the obvious legal ones, done.

Alexis smiles, doesn't believe her for a second.

ALEXIS
That was too easy, I don't trust you. I get the first interview before I give you anything.

RACHEL

Nope. Need it before tomorrow.

ALEXIS

What I have you couldn't use
tomorrow anyway, trust me. But I
negotiate better after a martini -

Alexis turns to look for the waiter. Which is when her phone lights up with a text. Rachel glances at it (oh c'mon, we all do). In the text, we'll see the name "Wes Williams." Rachel leans in, interested. *Intensely interested*. When Alexis turns back, Rachel is already up, rushing out -

RACHEL

What makes this friendship truly
beautiful is we're both ambitious
workaholics so you'll understand me
needing to bail *I'll call you* -

And she's out.

17

INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Red Bull and coffee. Rachel on her computer, rubbing her eyes, burning the midnight oil. (Outside, her team does the same.) Rachel stares at her screen, on which we see:

Google images of "Wes Williams" - 40s, Justin Trudeau-hot, oh so decent-looking. Rachel stares at him. From the door -

LUCIUS

I'm not loving any of the plan B's.

RACHEL

Nor am I. But we agree Michael
didn't do it -

LUCIUS

(doesn't miss a beat)
- three months, his story's never
changed, it's all circumstantial
evidence -

RACHEL

- but someone did kill her.
(looks at the computer)
I have pieces of a puzzle. I *know*
they fit together. I just can't see
how yet.

LUCIUS

Even you, mover of mountains, can't
come up with a new case overnight.

(MORE)

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

And worse than an opening statement with no story is an opening statement with the *wrong* story. I know you're not a play it safe gal, but please Rachel - *play it safe*. Just say the evidence'll show he's innocent and leave it at that. Go home, pretend to nap for an hour, get to court early. Judge wasn't kidding about the start time.

Rachel exhales. He's right. And yet, *and yet...*

18 INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Rachel digs through a pile of shoes on her closet floor. Finally she finds them - blue shoes. Relief. Still feels appealingly offbeat - and c'mon, *why tempt fate?*

19 INT. HALLWAY/ RACHEL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

On her way out, Rachel pauses in front of a closed door covered in skateboard stickers. *His room*. She breathes deeply, softly exhales.

20 INT. COURTROOM ANTECHAMBER - DAY

Rachel readies Michael for court - ties his tie, fixes his hair (he can never look like a criminal to the jury). It's sweet, intimate - *like a mother getting her son ready for an interview*. Which is why this is a complicated moment. Also:

MICHAEL

You know what you're gonna say?

RACHEL

(resolutely)

I do. The sensible approach is to play it safe.

She's a rock, but it rips her up. Michael, scared:

MICHAEL

Okay. I trust you. You say play it safe, we play it safe.

She looks at him. His raw faith isn't what drives the decision she makes in this moment. What drives it is guts and killer instinct, pure and simple. So fuck "playing it safe" -

SMASH TO:

21 INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Guaty stares at Rachel in disbelief. Whatever she just said rattled him to the core.

GUATY

That's. *Bullshit*. I'm not falling for that.

RACHEL

Your call.

22 INT. COURTHOUSE BATHROOM - DAY

Rachel gazes at her watch - *it's 9:13*. She looks up in the mirror - eyes on fire, adrenaline surging, *feel the juice*. We don't know yet why she's playing with dynamite, but she is, and it fuels her. The door flies open -

SOPHIE

There you are. Judge is going crazy, *what're you doing?*

RACHEL

Think he'll excuse the jury for me to make a motion?

SOPHIE

When you just made him wait? *Not a chance.*

RACHEL

(smiles)

Good. Let's do this.

23 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

As Rachel confidently walks in, Henley stares daggers. Michael looks panicked. The whole courtroom is silent, just the SOUND OF HER FOOTSTEPS. As she passes Guaty, he whispers -

GUATY

Your funeral.

JUDGE HENLEY

What's your excuse?

RACHEL

I don't have one.

JUDGE HENLEY

(spitting mad)

Do the rules not apply to you?

ACT TWO

24 INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Henley mid-stream ripping into Rachel, Guaty watching -
equally furious.

JUDGE HENLEY
- stunt, unethical bordering on
illegal, *and in front of the jury* -

GUATY
That's *why* she did it -

RACHEL
I alerted the prosecution, he opted
not to look into it -

GUATY
You told me six seconds before -

RACHEL
I found out six seconds before that-

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>GUATY You can't unring that bell with the jury -</p> | <p>RACHEL (CONT'D) (to Henley) I asked you to excuse them -</p> |
|---|---|

JUDGE HENLEY
- after showing up late enough to
make it very unlikely I would.
(pointedly)
Ms. Lewis, you know from past
dealings how unwise it is to
provoke me. And despite my newfound
meditation practice, you *really*
don't want to provoke me.

(In one of these scenes, we probably noticed a meditation
stool in the corner, now we understand why.)

JUDGE HENLEY (CONT'D)
Motion denied, obviously. And if I
could yank you off without risking
a mistrial I would.

RACHEL
Judge, while we've had our
disagreements in the past, the one
thing I know is you are absolutely
committed to seeing justice served.
Hours before court began today, I
discovered that Wes Williams -

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Jessica Wren's producing partner - is being investigated for sexual harassment, something I did not and could not know during discovery, because, unsurprisingly, sexual harassment investigations are kept heavily under wraps.

(over Guaty interjecting)

Here are the facts. Williams was a person of interest during the investigation, and was interviewed by the police because co-workers heard him arguing with Wren in the days leading up to the murder - *now we might have a clue as to why.* His alibi, which is soft, was never confirmed, *plus* if anyone knows how to cover up a crime, it's the guy who produces a crime show -

GUATY

Nancy Drew, hi, I'm a lawyer -

RACHEL

Then you'll recall *State v. Machado*, which allows evidence suggesting third party culpability to be admitted into trial -

GUATY

Evidence, not conjecture -

RACHEL

And all I need is a day to get it -

Henley about to shut her down, so Rachel barrels over him -

RACHEL (CONT'D)

- if I'm wrong I'll take myself off the case.

(off their shock)

If that's what it takes, but please don't destroy Michael Jamison's life because I was fifteen minutes tardy and you're cranky about it.

Henley's eyes narrow. Even Rachel knows she went too far.

JUDGE HENLEY

Okay. I'll give you until four to connect Williams to the murder.

(off Rachel's surprise)

And I'll accept your withdrawal

(MORE)

JUDGE HENLEY (CONT'D)
 from the case if you can't. *Four sharp*, Ms. Lewis.

On Rachel, *fuck* - what did she just agree to?

25 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

As Rachel slips through the milling journalists, she overhears the tail end of Sophie griping to Lucius -

SOPHIE
 - she should've given *us* the heads up. Obviously I'm glad she's off pills, but she's a gazillion times more paranoid now -

Now she sees Rachel. Who stares at her. Less annoyed than curious - how far does Sophie's backstabbing go? *Could she have been the one to tip off Guaty?* Rachel keeps walking - fast - Lucius and Sophie trying to keep up.

RACHEL
 We have until four today to prove a connection with Williams.
 (steamrolls over groans)
 Williams must be the person Michael saw running out that night -

SOPHIE
 Michael never gave a detailed description -

RACHEL
 (ignores her, rattles off)
 What evidence from the crime scene can we use to point to Williams? He said he was at his son's football game - who saw him, what time? And what women have quit working for him in the last year?

LUCIUS
 (catches up, low)
 You could've warned us last night.

RACHEL
 So someone could tip off Guaty?

Rachel glances over her shoulder at Sophie.

26 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Rachel inhales coffee, studies notes, drops visine into her eyes. On the wall behind her we see quotes (mostly from RBG,

a la: "I do Canadian Air Force exercises almost every day,")
 Rachel glances at the clock - 1:30 PM. She walks into the -

27

MAIN AREA - CONTINUOUS

RACHEL

What do we have?

LUCIUS

Just the two cigarette butts from
 the crime scene with Williams' DNA,
 but he never denied they were his,
 and it *is* the parking garage where
 he works -

RACHEL

But two? You're rushing to your
 son's football game and have time
 to smoke *two* cigarettes? Or do you
 smoke two cigarettes because you're
 nervously waiting for the woman you
 want to kill?

Out of the corner of her eye, Rachel sees Sophie look down.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

What?

SOPHIE

It's thin.

RACHEL

(ice)

I appreciate your input. All I need
 is a good story.

SOPHIE

Judge will need more.

RACHEL

Yes Sophie, that's what we're
 working towards.

SOPHIE

Leanna Greenberg abruptly quit
 working for Williams six weeks ago.
 I don't have anything more than
 that. She's not responding to calls
 or texts, but she is reading them.

An awkward moment: Rachel equal parts pissed and grateful.

RACHEL

Good work.

28

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Rachel KNOCKS. Checks her watch. 2:15. Swallows and knocks again. LEANNA (30s), harried, opens the door. In the bg, Beyonce's *Run the World (Girls)*, the SOUND OF A BLOW DRYER.

LEANNA

Generally speaking, when people don't respond to multiple calls and texts, what does it say to you?

RACHEL

Not much, but I'm lacking in social skills. I do know not everyone finds my determination winning.

LEANNA

I have a teenage daughter going to college and I'm negotiating a severance package to pay for it. I don't want to talk to you.

From inside the house - the blow dryer turns off.

GIRL'S VOICE

Who is it?

LEANNA (CONT'D)

No one.

Even pushing hard, Rachel manages to stay *so sympathetic*:

RACHEL

I have two hours - less now - to convince the court that there could be a connection between Wes Williams and Jessica Wren's murder.

LEANNA

Good luck.

RACHEL

I have to think going through something like this makes you care about justice.

LEANNA

Oh? And what is "justice" for *me*?

A loaded beat. Leanna starts to close the door -

RACHEL

As a public defender, I work with people who, for all kinds of reasons, feel it's better to shut up than speak up. I get that. But whether for you or your daughter -

LEANNA

Please don't preach, do you have a kid?

Rachel flinches imperceptibly, then it's gone.

RACHEL

You argue enough murder trials, you start to get cynical. Everyone always claiming they're speaking for the dead. So sanctimonious - "the victim has been silenced, I'm giving the victim a voice."

(passionate)

But you actually could.

Leanna stares. For a second, it looks like she might help. Then she shuts the door. Rachel exhales, rubs her eyes.

29 INT. RACHEL'S CAR - DAY

HONK! Rachel stuck in gridlock. The heat shimmers, distorts the world around her. "Must talk to you" texts pop up from Alexis; Rachel deletes them. Rachel glances at the clock: 3:22, and she's got jack. Plus it's four hundred fucking degrees. She slams the steering wheel: *MOTHERFUCKER!*

30 INT. VARIOUS/ COURTHOUSE - DAY

Despite her anxiety, Rachel puts on a good front, greets everyone she encounters, *by name* - security guards, cafeteria workers, the stenographer...

RACHEL

Hi Big J... How's it goin', Juan...
Angel, you try that sleep tea I gave you...?

...because that's the kind of good egg she is.

31 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Rachel sees Guaty listening to *HARDCORE RAP* on his earbuds. He can tell from how Rachel walks she doesn't have what she needs. He pulls out his earbuds, smirking:

GUATY

Found your replacement yet?

Rachel stone-faced, ignores it. Re: earbuds -

RACHEL

Wouldn't have pegged you for Big Scoob.

GUATY
Because I'm gay it has to be Gaga?

RACHEL
(beat)
I know it was you who ripped the pages out of the casebooks.

GUATY
What?

RACHEL
In law school. The night before our third year exams. You ripped them out so I couldn't study those cases. Then I end up number two.
(as Guaty rolls his eyes)
It's not paranoia if it's true.

An Assistant opens the door - Rachel stands, ready to fight for her life. Suddenly a nervous YOUNG WOMAN materializes -

YOUNG WOMAN
Excuse me -

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Sorry, bad time -

YOUNG WOMAN
I'm Leanna Greenberg's daughter.
(as Rachel freezes)
I think my mother should've said something. But if she won't...

SMASH TO:

32 INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel, emboldened, faces off with Henley and Guaty.

RACHEL
I have the proof. Wren was going to publicly accuse Williams of sexual harassment just before she was murdered. So we'll need to get into that, because how I see it - Lady Justice might be blindfolded, but she's no dumbass.

As Henley and Guaty look like they might both explode -

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

A SERIES OF POP-FLASHES, sharp-as-shrapnel:

POP-FLASH: Wes Williams in the shadows, the smoke from his cigarette curling up into the green light...

POP-FLASH: SCRRT! Williams' boot heel crushes the cigarette

POP-FLASH: Williams snaps the rubber glove on - POP! as

Rachel blinks in -

33 EXT. PARKING GARAGE/ CRIME SCENE - DUSK

In the can't-think-straight heat, Rachel again re-walks the scene with the crime photos. As she entertains a possible Williams scenario, she wants to see it -

POP-FLASH: Williams holding a knife to Jessica's skin - the first prick of blood; Jessica's GASP becomes -

Rachel's exhale, *feel the terror*. But something is also nagging at her. To herself -

RACHEL

Why do you leave the knife but take
the scarf?

She bites her lip.

34 EXT. ALLEY OUTSIDE BAR - DUSK

Across the street from the parking garage, Rachel and Lucius interview a dishwasher, ELLE KEENAN (20s), deaf, blunt - she's the witness who saw Michael running out. Elle reads Rachel's lips and signs back; Lucius translates. As Rachel shows Elle a picture of Wes Williams, Elle shakes her head.

RACHEL

You definitely didn't see him
leaving the garage?
(as Elle shakes her head)
Or his car? A Porsche Cayenne?
(as Elle shakes her head)
You're sure?
(Elle nods - quite sure)
Is there any chance -

To us, Rachel just seems appealingly determined, but Elle sees it differently. She starts signing, clearly irritated. Lucius signs back: *Really?* Elle nods.

LUCIUS

She says hearing impaired doesn't mean brain-impaired.

RACHEL

No, she said something else.
(repeats a sign)
What's this mean?

LUCIUS

(reluctantly)
Watching you talk makes her want to drive a forklift back and forth over her left foot.

RACHEL

Got it. I'm just doing my job.

LUCIUS

(as Elle signs)
She wishes you luck doing your job. She wants you to know that she is sure of what she saw. She saw Michael - *only Michael* - and he looked guilty as hell. And that's what she's going to swear to in court.

Rachel grits her teeth. Lucius turns so Elle can't see him.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

She's not going to give us what we want.

RACHEL

Williams testifies tomorrow, we need as much ammo as we can get.

Lucius shrugs, as frustrated as she. Rachel repeats a sign:

RACHEL (CONT'D)

And what does that sign mean?

LUCIUS

(a bit reluctant)
She thinks you're human sandpaper.

35 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Just as Rachel walks in, Sophie enters, puts her laptop on the desk, plays cell phone footage from a football game.

SOPHIE

This is 8:21 PM.

It's video of the game, but happens to catch Williams showing up in the bg. He kisses his wife (who looks pissed).

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

In his statement he said he arrived at 7:10. His wife confirmed it.

RACHEL

(triumphant)

Great. Work.

Sophie just sort of nods - she doesn't appear very happy. She leaves. Rachel watches her, then follows her into

36

SOPHIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

RACHEL

What?

SOPHIE

Nothing. I'm glad you're pleased.

RACHEL

Why aren't you?

SOPHIE

Lucius says you're set on implicating Williams.

RACHEL

Sorry, did we not just find out he lied about his alibi? Why are you the only person on this team who thinks Michael is guilty?

SOPHIE

I don't think he's guilty, I just want to make sure we're covering all the bases -

RACHEL

There's the two cigarette butts, Williams' false alibi, his clear motive, that's a lot of bases -

SOPHIE

But are you fitting narrative to facts or facts to narrative? Because you'll be accusing Williams of murder *and* sexual harassment. Absent a thorough investigation, is it kosher to drag him into court, smear his reputation? Like forever?

RACHEL

I'm not making up the sexual harassment, it happened. And I know this'll come as a shocker - but when you're poor, like Michael - the criminal justice system screws you. And when you're rich, like Williams - you get away with everything. So if we need to nudge the scales of justice just a bit, so be it. Is it "kosher" to put Michael away for a crime he didn't do? *Like forever?*

A *CLANG!* brings us to -

37 INT. JAIL - NIGHT

That rhythm of CLANGING GATES, FOOTSTEPS, ALARM BELLS as Rachel and Lucius pass through security, holding clear bags containing notes, vending machine quarters, etc. Mid-conversation:

RACHEL

- I haven't told Michael anything about Williams. I want to see if he can give details about the person he saw in the garage -

LUCIUS

He'll say anything you want.

RACHEL

That's the problem. You'll take the reins, I don't want to lead him.

LUCIUS

In court, they'll say we coached him.

RACHEL

Yeah but *we'll* know the truth.

Before Lucius can answer, the metal detector BEEPS at Rachel. To the Guard:

RACHEL (CONT'D)

It's the wire in my bra.

But the Guard gestures to her to go back through. Annoyed:

RACHEL (CONT'D)

It's just going to go off again.
(Guard shrugs. To Lucius:)
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Even if it does turn into he said-
he said in court - if Michael can
say it better, louder, *more*
convincingly - all we need is that
one juror to doubt...

As Rachel goes through, the detector BEEPS. Rachel rolls her
eyes. The Guard pulls her aside, scans his wand over her -

RACHEL (CONT'D)

The wand's going to beep too. I
don't know why this works, but the
only way it won't beep is if I grab
my tits really hard, like this.

Which she does, while staring at the Guard. Taken aback, the
Guard waves her on. To Lucius -

RACHEL (CONT'D)

So I'm not really a crier, right?

Lucius snorts - as if. Rachel shoots him a look, *ouch*.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Anyway, if I - human sandpaper -
almost cry the first time I hear
Michael's story, think about the
eight women on the jury -
(off Lucius' look)
- not sexist, just statistically
likely.

LUCIUS

Guaty will crucify him.

RACHEL

Let him try. Jurors *always* think -
if I were on trial, and I were
innocent, I'd get up in court and
say it. Really loudly. And Michael
is innocent. And he should say it.
Really loudly.

(still eating at her)

And why is it that all of us -
including the psychiatric expert
who evaluated Michael *for months* -
why is it we can all see Michael is
innocent and Sophie can't?

LUCIUS

She just wants to make sure we're
not leaving any stone unturned.
You're too hard on her... And she

(MORE)

LUCIUS (CONT'D)
 didn't tip off Guaty. She's way too
 ambitious to sabotage you.

RACHEL
 (shrugs, unconvinced)
 Something about her gets under my
 skin, I can't put my finger on it.

LUCIUS
 Please. She reminds you of you.

They enter -

38 INT. VISIT ROOM/ JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Rachel and Lucius walk in to see Michael's mother, BEC JAMISON (40s), volatile, a hot mess, loves her son but *man*, does she make shitty parental choices. We sense hostility between Rachel and Bec; Bec might feel a little "replaced."

BEC
 How come he's not pleading out?

MICHAEL
 'Cause I didn't do it.

Bec shoots Michael a look. We could read it like she knows something we don't. Or we could read it like she pities him for being so naive.

BEC
 Don't matter if you did or didn't.
 Ain't how the system works. All
 about money, and we don't got any.
 (to Rachel)
 So, can he still plead out?

RACHEL
 He doesn't need to. He didn't do
 it. *And* he has a good team working
 for him.

BEC
 Michael's no angel.

MICHAEL
 (to Rachel)
 Ignore her. If the cookie's
 missing, she's gonna say I took it.
 Everything bad she thinks I did.
 (to Bec)
 Can you go now, I gotta talk to my
 lawyer. She's gonna tell me who
actually killed her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

you some questions. Partly to see what you'll be like on the stand, partly to see if you can remember anything else about who you saw that night. And he's going to be tough like Guaty will. Okay?

Michael nods, still a bit rattled by Bec. He picks at the tab on the unopened soda can.

LUCIUS

You say you saw someone in the parking garage the night Jessica Wren was murdered?

MICHAEL

Yeah, he was running away.

LUCIUS

So it's fair to say, you didn't get a very good look at him?

MICHAEL

No, I got a look -

LUCIUS

But you didn't give details in your original statement?

MICHAEL

I said he was 5' 10", give or take, light brown hair, white, maybe light-skinned Latino.

LUCIUS

You just described 75% of the male population of Arizona. Can you give us any other details?

Michael looks at Rachel. She is expressionless. Michael still picking at the soda can tab - *tap tap*.

LUCIUS (CONT'D)

Mr. Jamison, did your lawyer tell you what to say?

MICHAEL

No.

LUCIUS

So why do you keep looking at her?

MICHAEL
 (riled)
 She didn't say nothing.

LUCIUS
 Can you give us any other details
 about the man in the garage?

MICHAEL
 (staring at Rachel)
 He was uh -

LUCIUS
*Why do you keep looking at your
 lawyer?*

MICHAEL
 (blurts)
 He was wearing boots -

Rachel imperceptibly leans in.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 I think... like cowboy boots?

LUCIUS
 Mr. Jamison, isn't it true you'd
 say *anything* to get yourself off?

MICHAEL
 No! I know what I saw -
 (to Rachel)
 Why's he all up in my face?

RACHEL
 Okay, okay, let's take a break -

Lucius surprised. Rachel pulls him aside, whispers, excited:

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 He said he saw the cowboy boots -

LUCIUS
 He guessed, and your face lit up -

RACHEL
 No, Williams was wearing cowboy
 boots. *He saw Williams in the
 garage.* Also, how you're going at
 him, I would've objected ten times -
 (as Lucius tries to argue)
 He's young, poor, uneducated and on
 trial for murder. His life is a
 symphony of betrayal and neglect -
 (MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

look at his mother - the guy has been screwed over and over *and over*. Of course he gets riled, he's a fighter, he has to be -

LUCIUS

Then we need to know that now. Because Guaty will be ten times harder. This is for his own good.

Resuming his earlier intensity, Lucius turns back to Michael (antsy, agitated, didn't like this sidebar conversation, may have overheard parts). Still picking at the tab on the soda - the *TAP TAP* incessant, makes us feel so on edge -

MICHAEL

What were you saying about me?

LUCIUS

Nothing. So Mr. Jamison, while you sit there, refusing to take responsibility -

MICHAEL

For what? I didn't do nothing -

LUCIUS

Pointing fingers at everyone else -

MICHAEL

You shut it now, just shut it -

LUCIUS

Making stuff up -

MICHAEL

I'm not making anything up -

LUCIUS

Did you kill Jessica Wren?

MICHAEL

No -

LUCIUS

Did you kill her?

MICHAEL

NO!

Snapping, Michael HURLS the unopened soda can at the glass wall, the soda explodes - sounds like a GUNSHOT - Rachel and Lucius jump back - a Guard rushes in - everything happening at once, everyone shouting over each other, utter CHAOS -

ACT FOUR

40 INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

POP OPEN ON: A SHARP GASP - Rachel wakes up from a nightmare. She exhales, this is why she hates falling asleep.

41 INT. KITCHEN/ RACHEL'S HOME - DAY

Rachel eats breakfast, looking over trial notes. She reaches for the salt, when something catches her eye in the living room. Distracted, she knocks over the salt, automatically throws some over her left shoulder. She walks into -

42 THE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where she sees paint swatches on the wall, some moving boxes - Diego getting the house ready to sell. That's what distracted her. Rachel looks around, all the emotions connected to moving beginning to catch up with her.

In one box, Diego started to pack several framed photos. Rachel looks at their wedding photo - Diego dipping her on the dance floor, her laughing. Rachel looks at them, so happy. She puts the photo back.

On her way out, her eyes land on the ZEN SAND GARDEN we saw earlier. She gazes at it for a moment.

43 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Rachel and Guaty at their respective tables. Besides the Bailiff and Stenographer, there's only two other people in the courtroom, WES WILLIAMS (40s) and his ATTORNEY. In person, Williams is as handsome as his photo, and sincere - radiates Good Guy-ness, but of course looks deceive...

A door opens and Michael is led in. He won't meet Rachel's eyes. Like a little kid, he's embarrassed by what happened, acts out by giving her the silent treatment. Rachel is unflustered, totally calm, very gentle:

RACHEL

You know what? It's okay.

Michael is used to people yelling at him, not nurturing patience. He trembles ever so slightly. Rachel puts her hand on his arm. And suddenly it hits us -

Rachel was a really good mother. A long beat.

As Judge Henley enters, everyone stands -

JUDGE HENLEY

So we're all clear, here's how this will go. Mr. Williams will give his sworn testimony, without the jury, but with his attorney present. After, I'll hear arguments on admissibility, then I'll go away and meditate on it. Literally.
 (glances at Rachel)
 No jury, so I assume we'll keep theatrics to a minimum.

44 INT. COURTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wes Williams on the stand, his Attorney in a chair nearby.

WILLIAMS

Jessica was a great friend. I'd do anything to help.

He smiles: *so charming*. Rachel smiles back: *a bit fuck you*.

RACHEL

Oh I think you'll be a great help. Now the night of Wren's murder you were at your son's football game?

WILLIAMS

Do you mind if I stop you right there? I mean - I'm pretty sure I know where this is going, and I'm worried I might've gotten the sequence of events a bit jumbled when I spoke to the police. See, after I left the parking garage, but before I got to the football game, I stopped at the Royal Palms Resort and Spa for a meeting.

Everyone leans in, surprised. Rachel too. She knew his alibi was false, but never expected him to give this up so easily:

RACHEL

Who were you meeting?

WILLIAMS

A colleague. To discuss their future on the show.

RACHEL

(senses something)
 What's her name? It is a "her" I assume?

WILLIAMS
Regen Lynn.

RACHEL
(pointedly)
At the Royal Palms Resort and Spa?

WILLIAMS
That's correct.

RACHEL
But you didn't tell the police?

WILLIAMS
I was in shock when I spoke to
them, the meeting wasn't a secret -

RACHEL
Even from your wife?

WILLIAMS' ATTORNEY
Objection.

WILLIAMS
Are you asking me about the state
of *my* marriage?

But his expression is neutral, so *is* this a dig at her
marriage? If so - *how would he know?* Ignoring it, Rachel goes
in for the kill.

RACHEL
Mr. Williams, are you aware of any
accusations of sexual harassment
against you?

Like that, William's warmth evaporates, he obviously didn't
see this part coming. His Attorney jumps out of his seat -

WILLIAMS' ATTORNEY
Objection.

RACHEL
Let me reframe. Did you have sex
with your colleague at the hotel?

WILLIAMS' ATTORNEY
Objection.

RACHEL
Goes to his whereabouts at the time
of the murder.

Like watching some amazing footage of a lioness killing a
gazelle. Michael, Lucius and Sophie watch in awe.

JUDGE HENLEY

I'll allow.

RACHEL

Mr. Williams?

WILLIAMS

I'm not answering that question.

RACHEL

Does that mean you're exercising your fifth amendment right?

Williams, feeling more and more like a cornered animal -

WILLIAMS

It means I'm not answering the question because it has nothing to do with the murder of Jessica Wren.

RACHEL

You were heard arguing with Ms. Wren in the days leading up to the murder.

WILLIAMS' ATTORNEY

Objection.

WILLIAMS

(waves him off, *wants to answer*)

So? I bet you argue with people in your office.

RACHEL

That's true, but I'm not on trial for murder.

WILLIAMS

Neither am I.

RACHEL

Yet. Were any of these arguments because Miss Wren was about to accuse you of a pattern of sexual harassment?

WILLIAMS' ATTORNEY AND GUATY

Objection!

Williams stares at her, if looks could kill.

45

THE SAME - LATER

Williams and his attorney gone. Guaty finishes a fiery argument to Henley -

GUATY

- we *know* how this will play out. She'll introduce the cigarette butts as evidence, then call Williams to the stand, and quick as quick accuse him of sexual harassment. As soon as she accuses him, the jury will assume he *did it*, because that's how sexual harassment accusations work in our world, and then the jury will think, well, if he's guilty of that, maybe he's guilty of murder too. Your honor, if you allow this testimony it will *significantly* alter the outcome of this trial.

RACHEL

(also blazing)

For once, Mr. Guaty and I agree on something. This will tip the balance - *and it should*. The prosecution's case is built on circumstantial evidence, and what we've established here today is that Mr. Williams *lied* about his alibi, that he *has* motive -

GUATY

He took the fifth, we didn't establish anything -

RACHEL

Then he can take the fifth in court and the jury can decide.

JUDGE HENLEY

I don't want this murder trial to get sidetracked into a sexual harassment circus -

GUATY

That's exactly what she wants -

RACHEL

Thanks, I'll speak for myself. And I'll let the law speak for *itself*. Evidence suggesting third party culpability is admissible. My

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 client is innocent, someone else is
 guilty, the jury deserves to hear
 it.

JUDGE HENLEY
 Thank you. I'll let you know when
 I've made a decision. Keep your
 phones with you for the next twenty-
 four hours.

A GAVEL HIT overlaps with -

46 INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

A DOOR CLOSING. Rachel emerges from the bathroom, walks to the elevators. When the door opens, she sees Sophie and Guaty - both smiling at something. When Sophie sees Rachel, her smile disappears. As Rachel enters, they exit - *and no one says a word.*

The SOUND OF RUMBLING THUNDER brings us to -

47 EXT. COURTHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

A BRILLIANT FLASH of lightning - another electrical storm. As Rachel exits, a voice from behind her -

VOICE (O.S.)
 I wasn't suggesting anything.

Rachel turns. Wes Williams smiles at her.

WILLIAMS
 About your marriage, I mean.
 (as she keeps walking)
 You can see my predicament. I avoid
 one crime by incriminating myself
 in another, when I'm guilty of
 neither.

RACHEL
 I have nothing to say to you.

WILLIAMS
 No I get it. You're just doing your
 job. Totally get it. I don't always
 love my job either. Producing a
 crime show, you spend so much time
 digging up dirt on people - their
 pasts, all their dirty laundry.
 It's awful.

He sounds so friendly, so why does it feel like a threat?
 Rachel swallows uneasily.

48 INT. PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Entering, Rachel heads for Sophie's office - but then sees Diego, waiting. He looks upset. Confused, she walks into -

49 HER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DIEGO

I got a call today. From the state medical licensing board. Someone tipped them off that I used to prescribe you excessive amounts of Oxycontin. Now I'm under "review."

So Williams was threatening her. Rachel reels. Diego vibrates with anger.

RACHEL

I'm sorry. I poked a bear in court. He's obviously trying to get to me through you. I am so sorry.

DIEGO

Back off of him.

RACHEL

(this wrecks her, but:)
I can't. He's my best chance to save Michael.

DIEGO

Right, and I save people too. But I need a license to do that.

RACHEL

You didn't even know. I stole your prescription pad. You have to tell the licensing board that.

DIEGO

And they'll say, you're a doctor, *you didn't know your wife was taking Oxy?* And they'll be right. Because I did know. I hated seeing how much pain you were in after he - after he died. I knew you were taking the pills and I turned a blind eye.

RACHEL

It's not your fault. Please don't blame yourself for me betraying you.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

see what you want to see. You literally bend reality to your will. You're doing it with Michael, you're doing it with Williams, and now you're doing it with me. You know what the craziest irony of this whole thing is? You are your own worst jury member - the one who comes up with a verdict before the trial's even begun.

Sophie is at the door. And now she explodes the bomb:

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

It wasn't me who tipped off Guaty, but I'm pretty sure I know who did. And if you ever figure it out, you'll know why I can't tell you.

With that she walks out. Off Rachel, shell-shocked -

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN on a desert, waves of rippling sand - a cosmic-karmic vibe, *we're all so small*. And then we PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

51 INT. LIVING ROOM/ RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Rachel staring at the MINIATURE ZEN SAND GARDEN (it's all how you look at things). In the bg, more moving boxes. We can see Rachel battling an onslaught of emotions - about Diego and the house sale, about Sophie's bombshell, about the anxiety of waiting for Henley's ruling. Then Rachel pushes aside the sand, revealing

SEVERAL PILLS. We might assume they're Oxy. We'd be assuming correctly. Rachel stares at them.

HARD CUT TO:

52 EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Rachel rushing out into the scorching heat, on the phone:

RACHEL

Sophie's just covering her ass
pretending someone else tipped off
Guaty, right?

(met with silence)

Lucius? Say you agree with me.

(off his unsure "sure")

Okay. So while you work on your
reassurance skills, can you push
the psych eval meeting, I have four
hundred urgent messages from
Michael and I have to go to court-

Rachel sees Alexis waiting on the street. She stops.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Call you back.

ALEXIS

(as Rachel hangs up)

I texted you, but you've been
ignoring me. Probably because you
knew I'd yell at you for screwing
up the expose I've been working on
for six months.

RACHEL

No, I ignore everyone's texts.

ALEXIS

So you also didn't see that my cat died.

RACHEL

No. I'm sorry.

Alexis tries hard not to let Rachel see how angry she is.

ALEXIS

I heard you dragged Williams in.
 (Rachel says nothing)
 My two cents? He's a vindictive scumbag who does way too much coke but he didn't kill her.

RACHEL

That'll be up to the jury.

ALEXIS

Who was it who said that when you go to court you put your fate in the hands of twelve people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty - *you're not listening to what I'm saying. Williams didn't do it.*

RACHEL

Do you *actually* know something? Or are you just trying to stop me from wrecking your super splashy story?

Ouch. Alexis stares at Rachel, quietly furious -

ALEXIS

For better or worse, I knew he was at the hotel. It's almost impossible for him to have been at the garage when Jessica was killed.
 (before Rachel interjects)
 By almost, I mean definitively next to impossible. That said, I do think he's capable of murder... I'm pretty sure my cat didn't die of natural causes.

She waits for this to land. Which it does. Rachel swallows.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

And you're going after him really hard. Rachel, this is me being a friend - *please be careful.*

53 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

As the sun beats down, Rachel hurries up the steps of the gargantuan glass building. (At some point, here or later, it will hit us - with all the glass - *this building looks like a giant prism.*)

54 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Rachel waits outside Henley's office. As he emerges -

JUDGE HENLEY
I said I'd let you know.

RACHEL
I'm not here about that. I owe you an apology. For the Smithers case last year, asking you to recuse yourself. I stepped over a line. It was wrong and - and I'm sorry.

Henley watches her carefully.

JUDGE HENLEY
Are you a chess player?

RACHEL
Judge?

JUDGE HENLEY
Why this apology, at this moment?

RACHEL
To clear the air. I feel bad.

JUDGE HENLEY
(doesn't believe her)
I don't hold grudges.

RACHEL
That's great to hear.

JUDGE HENLEY
Ms. Lewis. Our past interactions have zero bearing on this case. And if you were ever to suggest - at any point - that I was incapable of impartiality -
(over Rachel)
- say for example, because you didn't like a ruling I made on the admissibility of certain testimony -

RACHEL

Oh God no.

But yeah, she's totally playing chess here. And they both know it. She gazes evenly at him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I just wanted to say I was sorry.

55

INT. ATTORNEY VISIT ROOM/ JAIL - DAY

As Rachel enters, Michael is already agitated -

MICHAEL

Someone got to Bec.

RACHEL

What're you talking about?

MICHAEL

It means someone's trying to get dirt on me from her - and you know how she is. She'll screw it up just aiming *not* to screw it up.

RACHEL

It's Williams. He's getting desperate. I'll talk to her.

MICHAEL

Don't do that. She already thinks you're trying to be my mother.

(before Rachel can answer)

Least you'd be good at it.

(pause)

You okay? You look tired.

RACHEL

I don't have a very amicable relationship with sleep - Michael, waiting for the Judge's decision is hard on all of us, but you could've told me about Bec on the phone, so why'm I here? Because I'm supposed to be meeting with the psych expert right now -

MICHAEL

(nervous)

What's he say about me?

RACHEL

Oh he fully supports us - he knows you didn't do it. But Guaty will

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 comb his report for anything
 damaging, which is why I need to be
 going over it *now* before he gets it-

MICHAEL
 (blurting out)
 If you need to walk away, you can.
 (raw, wide-open)
 I know I'm not easy, so I wouldn't
 blame you for a minute if you had
 to bail - folks like me, we're not
 meant to get off, even if we didn't
 do anything. Anyway, that's why I
 wanted you to come, so I could tell
 you that. That um - if you had to
 go - I'd totally get it.

As Rachel stares into his eyes - so lost, so defenseless, so
 used to everyone walking away -

RACHEL (PRELAP)
*When you look in his eyes you
 know...*

56 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Rachel with the psychiatric expert, JAY KERSHAW (40s), way
 too hot to be a shrink. Despite that, he's a good one, and
 only a little fucked-up (we'll see why in his episode).

RACHEL
 ...you know he's telling the truth.
 Even so, I don't think he can take
 the stand. Too many demons, too
 ready to fight.

Rachel slides Kershaw's evaluation across the desk.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 I put some check marks. I'd love
 for you to take another look, see
 if these parts of Michael's
 evaluation are really relevant.

Kershaw flips through the document. Looks up. Troubled.

KERSHAW
 What are you asking?

RACHEL
 Just if these parts are relevant.

KERSHAW

(looking hard at her)

Okay. But if you're asking me to take out things that looked bad for him, that would be, um - you know. Irregular.

RACHEL

Illegal, actually. But Jay, we've known each other a long time, we're friends. All I'm asking is whether these parts are *relevant*.

But is that all she's asking? Kershaw stares, concerned.

KERSHAW

I'm worried about you.

(as Rachel looks away)

I didn't know your son well, but something about Michael reminds me of him.

Rachel, struggling, this touches too deep a nerve. So she doesn't answer.

RACHEL

Do you think people just see what they want to see?

KERSHAW

More often than not.

RACHEL

(pause)

Do you think there's a chance Michael did it?

She hates that she's even asking. Kershaw gazes at her.

KERSHAW

What I think is - Michael has issues, but he's not a killer. And in his whole life he's never had a fair shot. And you're giving him one.

57 INT. PARKING GARAGE/ RACHEL'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Dark, not well-lit. As Rachel leaves her office and walks to her car, she mulls Kershaw's words, totally lost in her thoughts. Suddenly - a muffled CLANGING NOISE.

Rachel looks up. She doesn't see anything, but it hits her - the poorly lit garage, how very alone she is. She walks a bit

faster. She's sure she hears something else, but it could be the case fucking with her mind, or the heat, or the -

Wes Williams steps out of the shadows. Time stops. He looks ragged, his eyes bloodshot (drugs?) *And he's standing too close to her.*

WILLIAMS

It's just a case for you. But for me, it's my life.

Rachel swallows. She can't tell if Williams' desperate energy is that of a killer or a man determined to keep his name in the clear, but -

Does it matter? Because either way he's cornering her alone - *in a parking garage* - and her recurring nightmare is now

Reality.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

58 INT. PARKING GARAGE/ RACHEL'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Exactly where we left off, Williams uncomfortably close to Rachel. The scene intercuts between:

1. SHAKY CELL PHONE FOOTAGE of Rachel with Williams. It's taken from far away - the bad sound and poor video quality make it all the more frightening to watch. (We'll understand why we're watching this footage in a moment.)

2. RACHEL'S POV FLASHES - which have a terrifying, fragmented quality, just as Rachel experiences it:

- Williams hisses at Rachel to "stop, just stop"
- Fluorescent lights BUZZ in the parking garage
- Williams shouts something about "Renboy"
- Williams' eyes, dark pits of fury
- A silver blade FLASHES in the light
- "Renboy" again
- A woman's YELL, Rachel turns to see -
- Sophie (!) runs toward her, yelling, WHILE FILMING EVERYTHING ON HER CELL
- Rachel turns back to Williams - that SILVER FLASH again - only now it's Williams' watch (was it ever a blade?)
- Sophie closer, Williams backs away, then is gone
- Sophie holds Rachel's arm, guides her to her car; on her way Sophie picks up a box with items from her office (she dropped it when she ran to Rachel)

59 AT RACHEL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Back to real time. Rachel breathing fast, trying to calm herself - half-traumatized, half-euphoric - the feeling you get when you've just escaped a brush with death. Comforting:

SOPHIE

It's okay. It's okay now.

RACHEL

Thank you.

Part-apology - Rachel smiles gratefully. Sophie smiles back.

SOPHIE

Glad I chose now to clean out my things.

(pause)

I'm sending you the video I took of Williams threatening you. It's a game-changer. If the jury were to see *that*...

Rachel nods, glances at the box Sophie carries, we can see her re-thinking her decision to fire Sophie...

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
What's Renboy?

On Rachel, wondering the very same thing -

MICHAEL (PRELAP)
Renboy?

60 INT. ATTORNEY VISIT ROOM/ JAIL - DAY

Michael looks at Rachel uncertainly. Rachel watches him closely - he's nervous, doesn't want to disappoint, trying to deflect -

MICHAEL
When's Henley gonna make up his mind - I'm goin' crazy - he says yes to us, it changes everything -

RACHEL
Michael, what is "renboy?"

MICHAEL RACHEL (CONT'D)
I don't know. *Michael.*

Beat. Michael looks away. Then swallows.

MICHAEL
It was for Instagram - like my handle. For um - a private account - like I was Miss Wren's "Renboy." It was just a dumb thing, like a joke -

RACHEL
How could you not tell me?

MICHAEL
It wasn't a big deal, just a joke. I deleted it, it's gone - nobody knew about it -

RACHEL
Except somebody did.

Beat. Abruptly Michael starts to sob - heaving, racking sobs -

MICHAEL
I would never hurt her, I didn't do it - I swear I didn't do nothing to her. I just need someone to believe in me -

On and on his sobs go - so intense. Despite her frustration, Rachel reaches to hug him, he weeps on her shoulder.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Please don't give up on me.

When he eventually sits back, Rachel looks at him, overcome - but trying very, very hard not to give into emotion.

RACHEL

My son's name was Nate.

(pause)

He died of a heroin overdose. He started using after - after he got hooked on Oxy. *My Oxy.*

(choked up)

So that's - on me.

This wrenches her heart - and Michael's - and ours - but also something cathartic about saying it out loud. Rachel takes Michael's hand, looks in his eyes. A long beat.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I will never give up on you.

Each in their own way, just trying to stay afloat. And maybe - *just maybe* - they can be a life raft for each other...

61 INT. HALLWAY/ RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Bone-tired, Rachel walks down the hall to the closed door with the skateboard stickers. She gazes contemplatively, debates whether to go in. She sits on the floor, leaning against the wall. While she's sitting there, Rachel hears Diego enter. She waits for him to find her, and he does. Sweetly - so sweetly - he sits down on the floor next to her.

RACHEL

You never answered if you believe in karma.

(pause)

Like if him dying was justice for something we did in some life a thousand years ago?

DIEGO

No. I think bad things just happen. And there is no reason.

RACHEL

I don't like that.

DIEGO

I know. So you wear blue shoes and knock wood and pick up pennies. But you can't control all of it, you know.

RACHEL

(bittersweet)

Why not?

(beat, softly:)

Do we have to take the stickers off his door?

Diego takes her hand; Rachel rests her head on his shoulder, closes her eyes, so spent. In a minute, she'll be asleep. As a low BUZZ starts to crescendo -

DISSOLVE TO:

62 INT. RACHEL'S HOME OFFICE - DUSK

Rachel wakes up alone, drenched in sweat, surrounded by notes, her phone BUZZING -

And we're back at the moment where the pilot began.

SMASH TO:

63 INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Rachel with Guaty and Henley, first learning about the scarf with the bloody thumbprint. As before:

JUDGE HENLEY

- I'm not ruling on the evidence admissibility. I called you here for another reason...

He points at the package with the scarf -

SMASH TO:

64 INT. LOBBY/ FORENSICS LAB - NIGHT

Rachel and Guaty in the lobby, crawling out of their skin waiting to find out whose thumbprint it is. As Rachel paces, her eyes land on Guaty's baby sleeping in the carseat - her expression so tender. Then, next to the carseat, she sees a penny on the floor, heads-up. Just before she can pick it up, a police DETECTIVE emerges from inside -

DETECTIVE

There's a match for the print.

A second, an eternity -

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
The thumbprint belongs to Michael
Jamison.

Rachel lets out a strangled cry. Can't breathe. It feels like she's underwater, and trying to suck in air, but only filling her lungs with more water. As the world collapses around her, we expect to fade out...

But we don't.

HARD CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: a pair of closed eyes. A CLOCK TICKS.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Michael?
(no answer)
Michael?

Suddenly Michael's eyes POP OPEN and we are in -

65 INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

TITLE: TWO MONTHS EARLIER

For the first time, we are not in Rachel's POV. This is a moment between Michael and Kershaw (the psychiatric expert), during one of their early sessions - Michael's hair is longer. After Michael opens his eyes -

MICHAEL
Sorry. I was just thinking.

Beat. We hear the CLOCK TICK. Kershaw nods - go on. Slowly:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
If I *was* guilty - not saying I am -
but if I *was*, and people saw me
like, you know, a victim - like
they felt sorry for me... would
they still lock me up?

The question hangs there in silence - as the TICKING CLOCK crescendos louder and louder and louder until we abruptly -

POP TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT