

The Good Wife

"Slippage"

by

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TEASER

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

ALICIA FLORRICK and her mother-in-law JACKIE stand in front of open cupboards. GRACE, Alicia's teen daughter, eats cereal in the background behind them. Muffled voices come from behind the closed dining room door.

JACKIE

The trash bags are here. The lunch bags go over there. And the dish detergent is up here.

ALICIA

You really don't need to show me around, Jackie. This is my home.

JACKIE

Yes, but I had to reorganize when I arrived. It just didn't make any sense where things were.

ALICIA

Yes, you made me aware of that.

JACKIE

(exasperated sigh)
This is silly. I can't leave.

ALICIA

It's your reunion. You should go. We'll be fine around here for a couple of days.

Alicia's teen son, ZACH, enters.

ZACH

Hey Mom, John's coming over tonight to play video games. Can we order pizza?

Grace CHOKES on her cereal.

ALICIA

It's a school night.

ZACH

Dad said yes.

ALICIA

Well--

GRACE

No way! Dad already told me Sally could come over to watch TV.

ALICIA

Peter!

The voices in the dining room stop. Alicia's husband PETER opens the door and peeks into the kitchen. Behind him, his his entire political team stares into the kitchen.

PETER

Yes? We're a little busy.

ALICIA

Talk to your children.

ZACH

Dad, you said I could play video games with John tonight.

GRACE

You promised my friend and I could have the TV.

PETER

I said what when?

Peter looks overwhelmed. Alicia turns back to Jackie.

ALICIA

We'll be fine.

Jackie looks doubtful.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

The firm isn't too busy right now, and Peter's here all the time -- literally -- so it will be no problem for him to pitch in.

She shoots a look at Peter. He gives her a reassuring smile.

PETER

(to kids)

Okay, look, I'm sorry. I messed up. I wasn't paying attention when I agreed. You know we don't normally have guests over on school nights--

GRACE

But you promised!

PETER

Which is why your friends are still invited over tonight to have dinner with all of us.

A beat as Zach and Grace share a horrified glance.

ZACH

You want us to bring our friends to a family dinner?

GRACE

If you're going to say no, just do it.

The kids storm off.

PETER

(to Alicia)

See, that worked out.

He closes the door, and the voices start up again. Alicia gives Jackie a tight smile.

JACKIE

At least let me show you where I moved the china.

ALICIA

I doubt I'll need the china.

But she follows Jackie into...

LIVING ROOM

...where State's Attorney GLENN CHILDS appears on TV.

JACKIE

Ugh, that horrid man.

She reaches to turn off the TV, but Alicia stops her.

CHILDS (O.S.)

Tanya Neecht left her baby to bake to death in her car -- a horrible, unforgiveable crime. She will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Parents need to understand that taking care of their children is a duty and a responsibility that we take seriously. We will...

Childs continues ranting in the background as the news cuts to footage of TANYA NEECHT (mid-30s) being put into the back of a police cruiser. She holds her head high; hard, stoic, unreadable -- not the grieving mother you would expect.

JACKIE

Well, for once I actually agree with that man. Can you imagine forgetting your own child? And she doesn't even look sorry. She deserves whatever she gets.

The program cuts over to a REPORTER on the scene.

REPORTER

Earlier today, Tanya Neecht's defense attorney gave this statement.

DIANE LOCKHART, a partner at the law firm where Alicia works, appears on screen.

DIANE

The second degree murder charges the State is calling for are outrageous and politically motivated. Tanya is a good mother who made a mistake and suffers terribly as a result. What good does it do to cause her family more suffering?

Alicia's phone rings. She picks up.

ALICIA

Alicia.
(beat; she frowns)
I'm on my way.

JACKIE

Well, now I definitely can't go.

ALICIA

Leave.

Alicia grabs her jacket and heads out the door.

INT. POLICE STATION - PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Alicia exits her car and walks to the elevator. KALINDA SHARMA, the firm's no-nonsense in-house investigator, appears beside her carrying a file folder.

KALINDA
Everyone already hates this one.

Alicia jumps slightly, then regains her composure.

ALICIA
I know. I saw the news. So how do
we make them like her?

KALINDA
Maybe they shouldn't.

Alicia shoots Kalinda a look. She hands Alicia the file.

ALICIA
(reading)
She's military.

KALINDA
Very. Trains soldiers how to repair
Apache attack copters.

They enter...

INT. POLICE STATION - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Alicia presses a button, and the doors close.

KALINDA
No priors, always pays her bills on
time -- she doesn't even have
parking tickets.

ALICIA
(rifling through the file)
So she's organized and by the book.
Husband also military, on a tour in
Afghanistan. They have a teen son.

KALINDA
Both also model citizens.

ALICIA
This is all good. So what's the
problem?

KALINDA
If she's so organized and together,
how does she forget her baby in a
hot car for an entire work day?

Good question. The elevator doors open, and they exit into...

INT. POLICE STATION - FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS

Through the glass of a security door, Diane waves to Alicia and motions for her to follow.

KALINDA
Good luck.

ALICIA
Thanks.

As Alicia walks off, a MAN approaches Kalinda.

MAN
Kalinda Sharma?

KALINDA
Yes?

MAN
You've just been served.

He hands her an envelope. She opens and begins to read, then frowns. As Alicia enters through the security door, CARY AGOS exits, shrugging.

CARY
Diane just asked me to babysit.

Alicia nods and continues past him. Cary comes up behind Kalinda and reads over her shoulder.

CARY (CONT'D)
Cell phone tampering charges?

Kalinda doesn't even look at him.

KALINDA
(quietly)
They're after my investigator's
license.

Cary opens his mouth to reply, but Kalinda walks off, leaving Cary standing there uncomfortably.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Diane, Alicia, the accused mother Tanya, the prosecutor MATAN BRODY, and his Associate sit around the table.

DIANE

I think we can both agree that the second degree murder charge here is unfounded. There was clearly no intent on the part of the defendant, and no felony was committed.

MATAN

You're forgetting felony child neglect. And I think intent is for a jury to decide.

DIANE

Good luck with that. Drop second degree, and we'll start talking about a plea deal.

MATAN

Don't you watch the news? Local polls have people saying second degree murder isn't harsh enough. The public is calling for first degree.

DIANE

They can call for whatever they want. It won't hold up in court.

Matan chews on this for a second.

MATAN

She pleads guilty to manslaughter and felony child neglect. Five years.

DIANE

Probation?

MATAN

Jail time. She killed her baby--

DIANE

Unintentionally--

TANYA

No.

Everyone in the rooms turns to her. Her face is cold, emotionless, matter-of-fact.

TANYA (CONT'D)

No deal.

DIANE
(to Matan)
Perhaps if you can give us a few
moments to--

TANYA
I don't need a few moments. I don't
want a plea deal.

Beat.

MATAN
Fine. Second degree murder it is,
then.

He gets up and leaves. Diane's face falls. Alicia looks at
Tanya quizzically.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. LAW FIRM - DIANE'S OFFICE - DAY

Diane sits at her desk. WILL GARDNER, the other partner at the law firm, paces in front of her.

WILL

Do you really think now's the time to take on your pet political issues? The press is killing us on this.

DIANE

They're using this woman's mistake to teach bad parents a lesson. It's not right.

WILL

We're sinking! We can't afford "right!" Not when it involves convincing a jury who thinks second degree murder isn't a harsh enough punishment.

DIANE

What do you want me to do, Will? She won't plea.

Will stops pacing suddenly.

WILL

Kalinda's being charged with cell phone tampering.

DIANE

What?

WILL

The Donnelly case.

DIANE

She cloned his phone.

WILL

How do you think we tracked down the witness?

DIANE

Are they using this to derail our case?

WILL
Charges are totally separate. But they want Kalinda's license revoked.

DIANE
Jesus.

WILL
You know what's worse? I had to find out from Cary. She didn't come to me.

DIANE
You're surprised? It's Kalinda we're talking about.

Will chews on that, then:

WILL
The mother, she really won't plea?

DIANE
Alicia's talking to her right now.

Will nods and leaves.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Alicia faces Tanya across the table. As always, Tanya is calm, steady, emotionless.

TANYA
I don't know why you didn't leave him.

ALICIA
Excuse me?

TANYA
Your husband. A man cheats on me, he's gone. I won't put up with it.

ALICIA
It's always more complicated than it looks.

TANYA
Wasn't when my first husband did it to me.

Alicia and Tanya stare each other down. Alicia wins.

TANYA (CONT'D)

You think going to trial is a mistake.

ALICIA

I think that people in this city are up in arms over the rash of dumpster babies -- the same people who will end up on your jury.

TANYA

Those women are murderers who deliberately abandoned their children.

ALICIA

Some people are saying the same thing about you. And others won't see a difference.

TANYA

They're wrong.

ALICIA

The prosecution will do everything in their power to make you look like a neglectful mother.

TANYA

They'll fail, because I'm not.

ALICIA

Well, the State is arguing that you were, and it's probably going to be difficult to convince a jury that leaving your baby in a parked car all day doesn't constitute neglect.

TANYA

I've made up my mind. I don't believe I'm guilty of these charges, so I won't say that I am. Now, can you get me out on bail? I need to be home for my son.

ALICIA

There's no way we can get you out tonight. We'll see who we can get to watch him for the evening. In the meantime, you've just been through an incredibly traumatic experience. Is there anyone you'd like to talk to?

TANYA

Not really. I don't see the point.

Alicia frowns and closes up her briefcase.

INT. LAW FIRM - HALLWAY - DAY

Alicia and Diane walk toward Diane's office.

ALICIA

I wouldn't recommend putting her on the stand. I don't think she'd... come off well.

DIANE

No kidding. Okay, first step, get the judge to drop the second degree murder charge. Let's look at the bigger picture. Find me other cases to show that the prosecutor's charges are way out of line.

Alicia nods and heads off as Diane enters her office. She passes Will in the hall.

WILL

Alicia. Listen, I'm sorry for putting you on this case. As a mother, you must feel strongly about it.

ALICIA

Yes, I do.

He pauses, not sure what her answer means, then nods and enters his office.

INT. LAW FIRM - HALLWAY - DAY

Alicia can barely see as she lugs boxes of legal files to her office. HANDS grab the top box, and Kalinda's face appears.

KALINDA

Need some help?

ALICIA

Kalinda! I heard about what happened. Are you okay?

KALINDA

How did you--?

She notices Cary coming their way. He sees them and immediately changes direction. Kalinda shakes her head.

KALINDA (CONT'D)

Nothing to worry about. I'm taking care of it.

ALICIA

In that case, want to read a few hundred files?

KALINDA

I thought you'd never ask.

They enter Alicia's office and close the door.

INT. LAW FIRM - ALICIA'S OFFICE - LATER

Alicia and Kalinda sort through piles of documents.

ALICIA

(groans)

Listen to this one. His motion-detector car alarm went off three separate times. But he didn't see anyone tampering with the car, so he remotely deactivated the alarm and went back to work.

KALINDA

I can beat that. This woman drove all the way to day care to pick up her daughter, who was lying dead in the backseat the whole time. I just don't get it. What kind of person forgets their baby?

Alicia gestures to the files.

ALICIA

Apparently just about every kind.
(pointing to files)
Dentist. Postal clerk. Social worker. Police officer. Electrician. Protestant clergyman. Even a rocket scientist. All accidental. All hyperthermia. They all forgot their baby in the car seat.

KALINDA

But how is it possible? What's wrong with people?

ALICIA

What's interesting is there seems to be a significant increase starting twenty years ago.

KALINDA

What does that say about where society has gone in the last two decades? Any idea why?

DIANE (O.S.)

Air bags.

They turn to see Diane in the doorway.

KALINDA

What?

ALICIA

(realizing)

Safety recommendations say to move car seats to the back because air bags can kill infants.

DIANE

Making them less visible and easier to forget. A safety measure that solves one deadly problem, but causes another.

KALINDA

Wait, you're not trying to say car companies should be held responsible for these babies' deaths, are you? The parents still forgot their own children.

DIANE

No one is saying that. But I also find the charges the State's Attorney is bringing against Tanya Neecht reprehensible. This isn't one bad parent, it's a phenomenon. I wasn't planning to go to court, but if it's going to happen, we might as well use the opportunity to publicize the issue and expose the car companies' part in this. What did you find in similar cases?

ALICIA

The only parents charged with second degree murder were chronic criminals who had a history of drug or child abuse before the incident.

DIANE

Good work. Precedent established.

KALINDA

Great. We can stop reading these.

Kalinda shivers.

EXT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Alicia stops on the stairs outside and dials on her phone. It rings, then:

PETER (O.S.)

You've reached the voicemail of Peter Florrick. Please leave a message at the tone.

ALICIA

It's me. Just calling to remind you to sign Grace's permission slip for the museum trip. And don't forget Zach has to finish his project this afternoon -- no excuses. Call me if you have any trouble.

Click. She ends the call. Her brow furrows, but she pulls herself together and heads inside.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURT ROOM - DAY

Diane presents to the JUDGE at the front of the courtroom. Alicia sits next to a stoic Tanya. And Matan and his associate sit on the other side, confident.

DIANE

Your Honor, we would like to request a pre-trial motion that you reduce the charges to involuntary manslaughter. There was no felony here, and no intent.

(MORE)

DIANE (CONT'D)

This is not the case of one negligent parent, but a horrible phenomenon that has exploded in the past twenty years, ever since car-safety experts in the early 1990s recommended that child seats be moved to the back of the car because airbags can kill children. If anything killed Scottie Neecht, it was Tanya Neecht's over-concern for his welfare.

MATAN

Your Honor, this is a clear case of felony child neglect. This little boy's life did not have to end this way, on a hospital gurney. Mrs. Neecht was so concerned with her own life that she forgot her baby! It is only because of that negligence that he was left to bake in the sun.

DIANE

This is simply a tragic human error.

MATAN

Human error? A baby's life was lost.

DIANE

Your Honor, with the charges the prosecution is seeking, Mrs. Neecht could lose her teen son. Hasn't she already been punished enough by the loss of her baby?

JUDGE

Based on the facts of the case, I'll reduce the charge of second-degree murder to involuntary manslaughter, but the charge of felony child neglect stands. This is an issue for the jury to decide.

DIANE

Mrs. Neecht requests bail, Your Honor. With her husband serving in Afghanistan, there's no one to take care of her teenage son.

MATAN

Your Honor, as an alleged child abuser, she poses a risk to society -- not to mention the son Ms. Lockhart keeps bringing up in a misguided attempt to warrant sympathy. The State asks that you deny bail.

DIANE

A risk to society? This is preposterous! Tanya has no prior record. In fact, she's served our country honorably with her years of military service.

JUDGE

I agree. Mrs. Neecht is not a risk to the public at large. I grant bail in the amount of \$25,000. However, until this case is resolved, we cannot be certain of the risk she poses to minors. She is prohibited from contact with children outside the family, and may only have supervised contact with family members.

DIANE

Your Honor, her son is 14. Surely they don't need a court-appointed chaperone to be together?

JUDGE

Those are my conditions. Court adjourned.

He bangs his gavel and exits.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Diane and Alicia stand over Tanya, who sits on a bench, looking confused.

TANYA

What does this mean for me?

ALICIA

You can go home, but to see your son, you'll need someone from child services there with you. We'll arrange someone for you.

TANYA
I'm not a negligent mother.

DIANE
I'm sorry, Tanya.

Diane turns away, angry.

INT. LAW FIRM - HALLWAY

Cary rushes to catch up to a fast-walking Kalinda.

CARY
Hey, Kalinda! Wait up.

Kalinda turns, annoyed.

CARY (CONT'D)
Will and Diane assigned me to defend you.

KALINDA
I'm fine, Cary. I don't need help. Especially from a smug law school grad who thinks he can go around telling everyone my business.

CARY
Ouch. Words hurt, Kalinda.

She rolls her eyes and walks to the elevator. Cary follows.

CARY (CONT'D)
You know, you're gonna have to be nice to me after I save your ass. I just need you to talk to--

KALINDA
There's nothing to talk about. I'll take care of this myself.

She enters the elevator and pushes a button. As the doors begin to close, Cary grabs them.

CARY
You could lose your license, Kalinda! And Mr. Graymore is here now to discuss a plea with you.

She looks past him through the conference room window where DONALD GRAYMORE (40s), modern Chicago mafioso, sits back with his feet up on the table. His balding LAWYER is next to him.

KALINDA
(smiling mischievously)
Plea? Sure, I'll talk to him about
a plea.

Kalinda marches past Cary and into...

INT. LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Graymore sits up and smiles smugly.

KALINDA
Mr. Graymore, it's so lovely to see
you.

GRAYMORE
(looking her up and down)
The pleasure is all mine.

KALINDA
(sweet and seductive)
Maybe it could be... if you weren't
a sadistic, drug-dealing scumbag.

GRAYMORE
Hey!

KALINDA
I just came here to warn you --
back off now before you make your
current situation even worse.

Kalinda pivots and leaves.

LAWYER
(to Cary)
Mr. Graymore did not come here to
be insulted.

CARY
I... just one second.

Cary follows Kalinda out into the...

INT. LAW FIRM - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He races toward her as she gets in the elevator and holds the
doors before they can close.

CARY
I'm just trying to help you.

KALINDA

Don't worry, Cary, I'll make this
charge disappear myself. You'll
still get to look good for Will.
Watch how things are done in the
real world.

Kalinda pushes Cary out of the elevator and the doors close,
leaving him shaking his head.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. POLICE STATION - EVIDENCE AREA - DAY

Kalinda stands by as DETECTIVE ANTHONY BURTON, her semi-shady cop buddy, talks to LASKY, an evidence cop, in hushed tones.

BURTON

Come on, she's a friendly. What do they have on her? A few fingerprints on the phone? How clear are they?

LASKY

You wish this was fingerprints.

KALINDA

Worse than fingerprints?

He motions for them to follow him.

INT. POLICE STATION - EVIDENCE AREA REAR - DAY

Lasky pops a tape into a VCR and steps back to join Kalinda and Burton. On screen, we see Kalinda grab a phone out of a jacket, copy a SIM card, then put it back in the jacket.

BURTON

(quietly to Kalinda)
You missed a camera? You're slipping.

She glares at him. Lasky ejects the tape, sets it on a shelf.

LASKY

Pretty irrefutable.

Ding!

COP (O.S.)

Lasky! What did I tell you about leaving the desk?

LASKY

Crap.

Lasky rushes out to the front. Kalinda looks at her tape, then over at a box of video tapes labeled SANCHEZ.

KALINDA

There cameras in here?

BURTON

On our budget? What do you think?

She smiles.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Kalinda's phone rings as she exits.

KALINDA

Kalinda.

INT. ALICIA'S CAR - DAY

Alicia gets into her car and closes the door.

ALICIA

Hey, can you meet me? I can handle today alone if you need to concentrate on your... thing.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

KALINDA

Don't worry about my thing. Where are you?

INT. TANYA'S HOUSE - DAY

Alicia and Kalinda sit across from Tanya on sofas.

TANYA

But I already told the police what happened.

ALICIA

I'm sorry to put you through this again. We just need you to show us what happened, step by step, so we can prepare for anything the prosecutor might throw at us, or see if there's anything we can use to our advantage.

Tanya nods and sighs, a little annoyed.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

So that morning--

TANYA

Really, it began the night before.

KALINDA

I don't understand.

TANYA
 My neighbor called to see if I
 could watch her toddler. She had to
 rush her dog to the vet.

ALICIA
 (not understanding)
 I see.

TANYA
 And Scottie wasn't feeling well. He
 had a cold. So because of both of
 those things, we were up later than
 usual. The next morning, we were a
 little groggy.

Kalinda eyes Alicia, but Alicia just listens intently.

KALINDA
 What happened next?

INT. TANYA'S HOME - GARAGE - DAY

Kalinda sits in the driver's seat and Alicia in the passenger
 seat. Tanya talks to them through the driver's side window.

TANYA
 He dozed the entire drive to work,
 so I didn't hear him when I left
 the car later.

KALINDA
 You don't look in the mirror to
 check the car seat?

TANYA
 Well, normally he's in the
 passenger side car seat where I can
 see him, but that day, he was in a
 car seat directly behind me.

Kalinda checks the mirror -- it's true, she can't see
 directly behind the driver's seat from this position. She
 turns her head to look in the back seat. No dice. She still
 can't see directly behind her.

ALICIA
 Why was he behind you that day?

TANYA

Well, I'd just taken my car to the fire station to have the car seat professionally installed, so I was driving my husband's car.

ALICIA

You didn't notice that the baby's things were still in the car? A diaper bag?

TANYA

They were also in the back instead of on the passenger seat, like they usually are, because I was driving my husband to his base across town that day.

KALINDA

I thought he was in Afghanistan.

TANYA

He is now, but last month he was home to train cadets. It was the first time in a year we got to see him.

Tanya looks away, her tough facade cracking. Alicia frowns.

EXT. TANYA'S WORKPLACE - DAY

Alicia, Kalinda, and Tanya exit the car and walk towards Lynn's building. An MP waves them by when Tanya shows her ID.

ALICIA

So you dropped your husband off at his the base and then drove here to your workplace?

TANYA

(nodding)

Sometimes I wonder if I was so used to dropping her at the sitter and coming directly here that dropping Kurt off at his job is what made me think she was safe and sound. You know, drop off complete, mental checkmark made?

Alicia nods. She knows.

KALINDA

But when you didn't drop your baby off, the babysitter says she called and you didn't answer.

They enter a huge hanger which houses...

INT. MACHINE SHOP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A CREW OF MEN operate loud machinery to fix a damaged Apache helicopter.

TANYA

My cell was in my purse on vibrate. We're not supposed to have them ring at work during the morning meeting. But that shouldn't have mattered anyway, because Debra always called my work line.

She leads them into her...

OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

She closes the door.

KALINDA

Debra's the sitter?

Tanya nods, and Kalinda writes the name down.

ALICIA

But she didn't call your work line that day? Why?

TANYA

She forgot to program my office phone number into her new cell phone. She just had my cell number.

ALICIA

But you said in your testimony that you did call her back after the meeting?

TANYA

I saw that she'd called my cell, but there was no message. So I called her back and left a message on her voicemail.

ALICIA

It didn't strike you as odd that she called?

TANYA

We were friends. We talked all the time about all sorts of things.

ALICIA

It sounds like every possible thing that could go wrong did so at the same time.

KALINDA

The holes aligned.

They both look at her quizzically.

CUT TO:

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Diane interviews PROFESSOR JOHN STOWADAY, a memory expert.

PROFESSOR

It's called a Swiss Cheese Model. Small weaknesses align -- like holes in a stack of Swiss cheese -- leading to a breach of the entire system. It's often used to describe how someone is able to break through a defense grid, but many studies have shown that the human brain works the same way. One or two failures are no big deal, but when everything fails at the same time, there's a breach. The brain gets overloaded, and we start working on autopilot.

DIANE

Can you give us an example of this?

PROFESSOR

Well, when our prefrontal cortex and hippocampus are planning our day on the way to work, the ignorant but efficient basal ganglia is operating the car.

DIANE

And what does that mean in layman's terms?

PROFESSOR

It's why you'll sometimes find yourself having driven from point A to point B without a clear memory of the route you took, the turns you made, or the scenery you saw. Happens to all of us all the time.

DIANE

Isn't there a way to prevent the brain from doing this or shock it back to paying attention?

PROFESSOR

Of course. Entire industries have been built around that very thing. The most popular safety nets to prevent lapses would be things like alarms, meeting reminders, even other people -- but when those things all fail at once, as in this case, there's a system failure.

DIANE

No further questions.

Diane returns to her seat beside Alicia and Tanya. Matan gets up and approaches the witness stand.

MATAN

So you're saying it's not her fault that she left a child to bake -- for seven hours -- in the hot sun?

PROFESSOR

Actually, yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. Memory is a flawed machine. Our conscious mind prioritizes things by importance, but on a cellular level, our memory does not. As horrible as it is, sometimes the human brain just has lapses like this. They are tragic, but no one's fault.

MATAN

It's just an accident?

PROFESSOR

No, that's an imperfect word. The word "accident" makes it sound like it can't be prevented.

Matan smiles.

MATAN

So you're saying this could have been prevented? How?

PROFESSOR

For one, the auto manufacturers could include sensors that would sound an alarm if a child's weight remained in the seat after the ignition is turned off. A NASA engineer who lost his child in this very way invented such a sensor, and has been lobbying for it to be put in cars for years. But no standard has been set, and this problem goes largely unrecognized.

MATAN

(annoyed)

No further questions.

Diane smiles -- a win.

DIANE

That went well.

ALICIA

It should have, but look at the jury.

Diane turns to them. All twelve men and women seem unmoved. In fact, many of them glare at Tanya's stoic demeanor. Diane's face falls.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Matan interviews an older bearded man, DR. RAMOS MARQUEZ, at the witness stand.

MATAN

Dr. Marquez, can you describe what typically happens to infants who die in hot automobiles?

MARQUEZ

When death ensues, the core body temperature reaches 108 degrees. The abdomen becomes green and discolored, and the lower half of the body turns red or purple. Sometimes there's skin slippage.

A stifled sob comes from the audience.

MATAN
Skin slippage?

MARQUEZ
The skin basically sloughs off in the direction of gravity. There can even be what is known as degloving. For example, in a case last week, the skin around the ankle and foot slipped off in such a way that it was hanging off the toe inside out. Like a snake shedding its skin.

Two distraught SOCCER MOM TYPES in the audience leave the courtroom, holding each other.

MATAN
Would you say that deaths like this are painful?

MARQUEZ
Extremely.

MATAN
How do you know?

MARQUEZ
Well, in one particularly gruesome case, the baby ripped out all of her hair she was in such pain.

Jury members appear horrified. Diane and Alicia look worried.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Alicia, Diane, Kalinda, and Tanya wait outside a courtroom. Cary approaches Kalinda.

CARY
I was hoping I'd catch you here. We need to go over my counterproposal.

KALINDA
I'm pretty sure there won't be a need for that.

CARY
Yeah, funny thing. I got a call this morning about a tape disappearing from evidence.

KALINDA

That is funny.

CARY

Luckily, the "scumbag" accusing you is a bit of a security nut and the cops have three more copies.

KALINDA

What?

CARY

Now, can we discuss your plea?

Kalinda pauses, then walks over to Diane.

KALINDA

I have to take care of something.

Diane nods. The court room doors open, and she goes inside. Kalinda turns and strides right past Cary, who gives an exasperated chuckle.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Diane interviews COMMANDER DAVIS on the stand.

COMMANDER DAVIS

Tanya is an amazing worker. One of the best I have.

DIANE

What are some words you would use to describe her as an employee?

COMMANDER DAVIS

Great at multi-tasking, very detail-oriented. She doesn't shy away from a challenge. She's always ready and willing to take on more.

DIANE

She handles responsibility well?

COMMANDER DAVIS

Very well.

DIANE

No further questions.

Diane returns to her seat. Matan approaches the stand.

MATAN
Would you also describe Tanya as a
workaholic?

COMMANDER DAVIS
No. I wouldn't say that.

MATAN
Really?

Matan grabs a paper from his table and brings it to Davis.

MATAN (CONT'D)
Because that's what you wrote on
her last performance review.

COMMANDER DAVIS
Well, she is definitely someone who
enjoys her work. Yes.

MATAN
And would you agree that she was
juggling not just her work life,
but also her personal life?

DIANE
Objection. This description could
fit any working parent.

MATAN
Withdrawn. Commander Davis, the
other working parents at the
Reserve Training Center, did any of
those mothers leave their children
to die in a parked car?

DIANE
(horrified)
Objection!

JUDGE
Sustained. Watch your line of
questioning, counselor.

MATAN
Withdrawn.

But the damage is done. Diane looks over the jury -- another
point to the prosecution.

INT. KALINDA'S CAR - DAY

She watches a swanky restaurant across the street. As Graymore exits with a much younger Sexy Woman, Kalinda grabs her camera and shoots furiously:

-- His hand against the small of her back.

-- The two of them laughing.

-- Kissing.

-- Getting into a cab together.

They drive off, and Kalinda puts down her camera and smiles.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Court is in session. Matan stands.

MATAN

We'd like to call to the stand a surprise witness, Mrs. Jennifer Brown.

Tanya turns, surprised, as a prim housewife, JENNIFER BROWN (30), approaches the witness stand.

DIANE

Objection. Why weren't we notified about this witness before now?

MATAN

Ms. Brown was kept out of the list to prevent witness tampering by the defense.

DIANE

I see no grounds for that.

MATAN

The "grounds" will come to light in the interview.

JUDGE

I'll allow it.

Jennifer Brown takes the stand. Alicia turns to Tanya.

ALICIA

Who is she?

TANYA

My neighbor. I babysat for her the night before the accident.

ALICIA

Can you think of any reason why she'd be on the prosecution's list?

Tanya shakes her head.

MATAN

You saw Mrs. Neecht on the night before the incident took place?

BROWN

Yes, she was looking after John, my 2-year-old.

MATAN

Why was she watching John?

BROWN

My dog had eaten a box of chocolates, and I had to rush him to the vet. I called several friends, but no one was home. So eventually I went to Tanya's house, and she agreed to watch John.

MATAN

So you left your child with Tanya. You must have trusted her.

BROWN

I didn't know her well, but I knew she had kids of her own, so I figured I could trust her to watch John for a few hours.

MATAN

Can you tell us what you saw when you came back from the vet?

BROWN

A beer bottle was open on the counter, her eyes were bloodshot, and she seemed drowsy.

MATAN

Do you think Mrs. Neecht was drunk?

DIANE
Objection. There was no way for the
witness to know the level of
Tanya's intoxication.

MATAN
Withdrawn.

Tanya whispers to Alicia, who writes onto a note.

MATAN (CONT'D)
After Scottie's death, did Tanya
speak to you about that night?

BROWN
Yes, she asked me not to mention
the beer to the police.

People MURMUR throughout the courtroom.

MATAN
No further questions.

Alicia passes Diane the note. She nods, and Alicia stands and
approaches the witness.

ALICIA
Mrs. Brown. When did you leave your
child with Mrs. Neecht?

BROWN
Around 9 pm.

ALICIA
And what was she doing at that
time?

MATAN
Objection. Relevance?

DIANE
(standing)
As we weren't prepared for this
witness, I'd ask for a little
leeway, Your Honor.

JUDGE
Overruled. Answer the question.

BROWN
I don't remember.

ALICIA

Wasn't she caring for her own sick baby?

BROWN

Yes, you're right, Scottie had a cold, and she was trying to get him to sleep.

ALICIA

And at what time did you return from the vet?

BROWN

After midnight. Maybe around 1 am.

ALICIA

You must have been tired.

BROWN

Exhausted.

ALICIA

Of course you were. Mrs. Brown, don't you think it's possible that the symptoms you noted in Mrs. Neecht might have come from her being tired as well? After all, she was caring for two children, one of whom had a cold.

BROWN

All I know is that I saw a beer bottle.

ALICIA

Yes, that single beer bottle you mentioned. No further questions.

Matan stands.

MATAN

Mrs. Brown. Assuming she was sober, would you ever allow Mrs. Neecht to babysit for your child again?

BROWN

(shaking her head)

After she murdered her baby? No. Of course not.

DIANE
Objection! Mrs. Neecht is not being
charged with murder.

JUDGE
Sustained.

MATAN
Withdrawn.

The jury members frown at Tanya. Diane passes a look at Alicia: Uh-oh.

EXT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alicia stops outside her door. She breathes deep, opens it.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's so clean inside it sparkles. A homemade dinner is ready on the table. The kids sit on the living room couch doing their homework. Peter watches TV.

Alicia drops her bag in shock. Zach looks up briefly.

ZACH
Mom's home.

GRACE
(not looking up)
Hi, mom.

ALICIA
Hi.

Peter comes out to meet her.

PETER
You hungry? We waited for you to
eat dinner.

ALICIA
Okay.

PETER
Are you all right?

Much to his shock, she kisses him. The kids smile.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. LAW FIRM - DIANE'S OFFICE - DAY

Alicia stands while Diane sits at her desk frowning.

DIANE
This isn't working.

ALICIA
Maybe we need to narrow our focus.

DIANE
Go on.

ALICIA
We keep trying to make this about
the phenomenon, but the prosecution
is winning because they're
attacking Tanya personally.

Diane thinks for a second.

DIANE
You're right. I was overreaching.
We need character witnesses.

Alicia nods and walks away, already dialing on her phone.

ALICIA
Kalinda, I need your help.

She exits.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Kalinda, holding an envelope, paces and watches the building
as she talks into her phone. Graymore exits.

KALINDA
I'm finishing some business, but
I'll call you back soon.

She puts her phone away as she approaches him.

KALINDA (CONT'D)
Mr. Graymore.

He turns to her and frowns.

GRAYMORE
I'm pretty sure I shouldn't be
talking to you without my lawyer.

KALINDA

I'm pretty sure you shouldn't be cheating on your wife.

GRAYMORE

Excuse me?

She passes him the envelope. He opens it and sees the pictures she took of him with the Sexy Woman.

KALINDA

She doesn't have to see these. Just like I don't have to lose my license.

He shoves the envelope back into her hands.

GRAYMORE

My wife is divorcing me. She already knows. Nice try.

He walks off, leaving Kalinda standing there, defeated.

INT. TANYA'S WORKPLACE - TANYA'S OFFICE - DAY

Alicia sits at Tanya's desk across from MACHINE SHOP GUY.

ALICIA

I'm trying to talk to people to get a sense of what Mrs. Neecht is like and how people felt about her. Can you help me with that?

MACHINE SHOP GUY

Sure, absolutely.

ALICIA

Great, let's get started. Did you like Tanya?

MACHINE SHOP GUY

What do you mean by "like"?

EXT. TANYA'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Alicia interviews a FEMALE NEIGHBOR from her front porch.

FEMALE NEIGHBOR

She was kind of pushy.

INTERCUT BETWEEN TANYA'S OFFICE AND NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE

MACHINE SHOP GUY
Always on our butts about deadlines
and efficiency.

FEMALE NEIGHBOR
Just so blunt and forward.

MACHINE SHOP GUY
Never cut us any slack.

FEMALE NEIGHBOR
Did you know that she made us cut
down our apple tree because it was
ten inches onto her property?

MACHINE SHOP GUY
She told me I wasn't "striving for
excellence" because I'm just
meeting my quota.

ALICIA
What about her relationship with
her kids?

FEMALE NEIGHBOR
What relationship?

MACHINE SHOP GUY
What kids?

END INTERCUT

INT. ALICIA'S PARKED CAR - DAY

Alicia leans her head back in frustration. Her phone rings,
and she picks up.

ALICIA
Hi Kalinda. No, no luck. She
doesn't seem to have many fans.

She listens, then bolts upright.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
The babysitter.

She hangs up and drives.

INT. BABYSITTER'S HOUSE - DAY

Alicia, Kalinda, and the sitter, DEBRA (20s), perch on chairs
sipping tea.

DEBRA

Most of my clients just drop their kids off in the morning and pick them up in the evening, that's it. But Tanya, we were on the phone constantly.

ALICIA

Why?

DEBRA

At first, it was mostly her calling to ask questions and make sure I was doing things "right."

She makes air quotes.

KALINDA

That had to be a bit insulting.

DEBRA

You have to get to know Tanya. She's very demanding and particular, and not afraid to tell you what she's thinking.

KALINDA

Is there a "but" coming?

DEBRA

Tanya called to tell me new baby safety techniques she'd read about. She would recite the latest studies on learning through classical music and how much TV kids should watch.

ALICIA

She cared.

DEBRA

Exactly. I'm amazed how much time she put into those kids with her husband always away and a full-time job.

ALICIA

Would you be willing to testify tomorrow?

Alicia and Kalinda give the sitter big smiles.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

The Sitter is on the witness stand. Diane stands nearby, smiling and nodding as she listens. The jury members seem to be liking what they hear too.

DEBRA

She was always so on top of things and prepared. The diaper bag had extras of everything. She always called if she was going to be late or plans changed. I have several clients, and I can't think of a better, more caring mom than Tanya.

DIANE

Thank you, no further questions.

Diane returns to her seat as Matan passes her on his way to the witness stand.

MATAN

Ms. Shane, how often did you watch Mrs. Neecht's baby?

DEBRA

Every day while Tanya was at work.

MATAN

And weekends?

DEBRA

Once in a while, for a few hours.

MATAN

In fact, it looks like she paid you to watch her baby every single weekend last month. Is that right?

DEBRA

That was unusual. Her husband was home for the first time in a year.

MATAN

Still, for an entire month you watched her baby almost every single day. You saw the baby more than she did. Is that how a good, caring mother acts?

DIANE

Objection. Conjecture.

JUDGE

Sustained.

MATAN

Withdrawn. No further questions.

Alicia and Diane share a look: they can't catch a break.

INT. LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Alicia and Kalinda sit while Diane paces.

DIANE

We need to find a way to hear her side of this. They're winning by making the jury think she's a bad mother. They need to see she cares.

KALINDA

How? We can't put her on the stand. The jury won't sympathize with her. She's too matter-of-fact, too cold.

A long pause while they think.

ALICIA

Then let's remind them that Scottie wasn't Tanya's first child. That she's been a good, responsible mother for years.

Diane nods and smiles.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Diane stands by her table.

DIANE

Your Honor, the defense would like to call Martin Neecht to the stand.

MATAN

Objection, he's not on our witness list.

DIANE

A character witness, Your Honor, to refute the prosecution's attempts to besmirch Mrs. Neecht as a mother.

JUDGE

I'll allow it.

MARTIN NEECHT, 14, enters and takes the witness stand. The BAILIFF approaches with the Bible and swears him in.

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MARTIN

I do.

The Bailiff leaves, and Diane approaches.

DIANE

Do you understand how serious this is, Martin?

MARTIN

I think so.

DIANE

Could you talk about having Tanya as a mother?

MARTIN

Sure, but what do you mean?

DIANE

Your mom works. Is she out of the house so you have to fend for yourself a lot?

MARTIN

Well, I mean, she works, so obviously she's gone for that time, but mom is always going to my games, helping me with school projects. And she still cooks all our food, even though sometimes I wish she wouldn't.

A few people in the jury and audience CHUCKLE. Diane smiles.

DIANE

Fair enough. So you don't feel forgotten or neglected by her?

MARTIN

Are you kidding? She's always riding me, making me study, making me practice basketball. I'm 14, and she still makes me go to bed at 10.

More jury members chuckle.

DIANE

And did your baby brother get the same treatment?

MARTIN

Oh yeah. She was always reading baby books or baby proofing something in the house or finding the newest, safest car seat, so... so nothing happened to...

Martin chokes back tears. So do a few Jury Members. Tanya bows her head.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Sorry.

DIANE

It's okay. Let me ask you a different question. Does your mom drink, Martin?

MARTIN

Not really. Maybe a beer once in a while with dinner.

DIANE

So you've never seen her drunk?

MARTIN

Mom? No, that'd be weird.

DIANE

Thank you, Martin. No more questions.

The jury members smile as Martin leaves. Alicia looks at Diane, who nods. Slam dunk.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Alicia has her phone to her ear, ringing.

PETER (V.O.)

Hello?

ALICIA

It's me. I just wanted to say thank you again for all your help this past week.

PETER (V.O.)
Hey, it's my job too.

ALICIA
Still, thank you. I was thinking
maybe you could defrost the salmon
for tonight.

Peter laughs.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT - SAME

He's in the kitchen, salmon in front of him.

PETER
Already thawing on the counter.
It'll be ready for the oven in an
hour.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Do you want me to change the sheets
on the bed?

Peter cringes.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - SAME

Alicia stands frozen on the phone. Seconds pass. Finally:

ALICIA
Well, it sounds like you've got
everything under control then.

She hangs up, then calmly and coolly walks into the...

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She braces herself on the sink and leans over, staring at her
reflection in the mirror. She calms down, slowing her
breathing, then exits.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Alicia emerges from the bathroom and almost runs into Tanya.

TANYA
How is it going?

ALICIA
I'm sorry?

TANYA
Do you think we're winning?

ALICIA

It's hard to say. The law is supposed to be impartial and focused on facts, but with a case like this, it's about winning the jury's emotions. I think we've made up ground, but I'm just not sure.

TANYA

Thanks. For being honest.

Tanya turns away, and Alicia takes a deep breath.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Kalinda waits at a table. She looks up as someone we cannot see approaches.

CHILDS (O.S.)

You want to tell me why I'm suddenly getting a call to have lunch with you?

REVEAL Glenn Childs, the State's Attorney we saw ranting against Tanya on TV earlier, standing across the table.

KALINDA

Sit down. Please.

He does.

KALINDA (CONT'D)

I need a favor.

Childs leans back and takes a second.

CHILDS

The cell phone tampering charge?

Kalinda nods.

CHILDS (CONT'D)

You want me to make it go away?

Another nod. Childs strokes his chin in contemplation.

CHILDS (CONT'D)

Should I speak directly into your recorder when I agree?

KALINDA

What?

CHILDS

I just want to make sure Peter gets clear audio.

KALINDA

You think I'm recording this?

CHILDS

I think that you could be.

KALINDA

Childs--!

He laughs ruefully.

CHILDS

After you betrayed me?

KALINDA

I warned you not to put me on the stand.

CHILDS

(sobering)

You're right. That was my mistake, and I've had to live with it. And now you have to live with yours. Good luck, Ms. Sharma.

Kalinda glares, then storms out of the restaurant.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Alicia opens the front door quietly and sneaks inside. She tiptoes toward the kitchen and peeks around the corner. A YOUNG BLOND WOMAN stands at the refrigerator.

ALICIA

Who are you?

The Woman jumps, startled.

YOUNG WOMAN

(flustered)

What? Me? I'm just--

Peter enters.

PETER

It's alright, Johanna. We're caught red-handed.

Alicia just glares.

PETER (CONT'D)
(to Johanna)
Uh, maybe you had better leave for
the day. See you tomorrow.

He walks her to the door and closes it behind her.

ALICIA
See you tomorrow?

PETER
They wouldn't let me alternate
days. I had to get her for the
week.

ALICIA
What?

PETER
The maid service.

Alicia exhales and shakes her head. Peter shrugs.

PETER (CONT'D)
Things were getting a little hectic
around here, and my work is picking
up, so I hired her to help out.
It's no big deal.

ALICIA
You think hiring a maid is no big
deal, Peter? You tried to hide her
from me. And, by the way, wasted
money that we don't have anymore.

Peter is speechless.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
I have to get back to work.

Alicia shakes her head and leaves the apartment again.

INT. LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Alicia pours over the evidence. Kalinda arrives.

KALINDA
Thought you were going home.

ALICIA
I wanted to give it one last shot
here. Solve your problem?

KALINDA

I seem to be better at solving other people's problems. Besides, this is good experience for my exciting potential new career as a paralegal.

Alicia smiles as Kalinda sits and dives into the evidence.

INT. LAW FIRM - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Will and Diane talk in her office, but we can't hear them. Cary knocks on the door and pops his head in.

CARY

Sorry to bother both of you--

DIANE

Nonsense, Cary. Come in.

WILL

What's on your mind?

CARY

It's about Kalinda.

The door closes, and we don't hear the conversation.

INT. LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Alicia digs through files. Kalinda flips through a folder.

KALINDA

All this, and still nothing that makes her seem more human.

Alicia pulls out a CD.

ALICIA

What's this?

KALINDA

911 tape. But it's no good. It's not her on the tape. Someone else called them.

Alicia pops it in anyway. A WOMAN'S VOICE, tense but precise, comes through the speakers.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
She left him in the car. All day.
He's not breathing, and his body is
all discolored. I'm pretty sure
he's dead.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
What is your location right now?

In the background, someone HOWLS.

SHRIEKING WOMAN (V.O.)
OH, MY GOD, NOOOO!

Alicia and Kalinda look at each other questioningly.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
We're at the Westside Army Reserve
office. Near the lake.

DISPATCH
7400 Kedzie?

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Right.

SHRIEKING WOMAN (V.O.)
NO, NO, PLEASE, NO!!!

It's almost unendurable. Alicia stops the tape.

KALINDA
What was that?

Alicia shakes her head, stunned.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

The unholy SHRIEKING pierces through the courtroom as we again hear the 911 tape. Everyone -- people in the Audience, Jurors, Judge, even Matan -- looks horrified and uncomfortable. At the defense table, Tanya lowers her head and struggles to keep her composure.

SHRIEKING WOMAN (O.S.)

OH, MY GOD, NOOOO!

(pause)

NO, NO, PLEASE, NO!!!

(pause)

PLEASE, GOD, NO, PLEASE!!!

Diane stops the recording.

DIANE

What you're hearing is the 911 tape from the date of Scottie's death. Tanya grabbed a woman walking by and had her call in as she performed CPR on her child. Each time she came up for air, she lost it. Tanya says it felt like two people occupying one body: the efficient combat lifesaver and the mother who would never again know happiness. It was all she could do to just keep counting her breaths and compressions as she tried to revive her child. And that's exactly how the paramedics found her when they arrived twenty minutes later -- hunched over, performing CPR, refusing to give up on a baby that was long dead.

Alicia turns to the jury: not a dry eye among the bunch. She turns back to Tanya. Tears roll down her cheeks too.

INT. LAW FIRM - DIANE'S OFFICE - DAY

Diane sits at her desk. Will enters.

WILL

Nice job today.

DIANE

I honestly don't know if it's going to be enough to win.

WILL
 If you go down, might as well go
 down swinging, right? You ready to
 do this?

Diane nods, and they exit.

INT. LAW FIRM - HALLWAY - DAY

Alicia types on her computer. Kalinda enters.

KALINDA
 I hear the tape went over well.
 That was a nice find.

ALICIA
 Guess we'll see how nice tomorrow.

KALINDA
 You know, I still don't get it. I
 just don't understand how someone
 can forget their child like that.

ALICIA
 Me either. And I've done it.

Kalinda looks at her, uncomprehending.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
 Zach was a baby. Peter was having a
 party, which meant that I was
 planning a party. I dragged Zach
 all over town, and on the ride
 home, he just passed out. I got
 home and immediately started
 cooking, cleaning, decorating.

KALINDA
 And you forgot Zach in the car.

ALICIA
 I was rushing, frantic -- that's
 the only explanation I have.

KALINDA
 What happened?

ALICIA
 A neighbor noticed him and told me.
 Mrs. Peal.

Alicia grabs her bag, and she and Kalinda head into...

INT. LAW FIRM - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kalinda shakes her head.

KALINDA

I can't believe you would do something like that, Alicia. It doesn't seem like you.

ALICIA

I bet it didn't seem like Tanya to a lot of people either.

Cary pops his head out of the conference room.

CARY

Kalinda, I really need to talk to you about your case.

Kalinda frowns at Alicia and nods towards Cary.

KALINDA

I should...

ALICIA

Want me to wait for you?

Kalinda waves her off, and Alicia heads to the elevator.

INT. LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Kalinda enters the conference room where Cary sits filling out some paperwork.

KALINDA

I hope this is about exciting new career opportunities.

CARY

Career opportunities?

KALINDA

You were right. I couldn't fix the charge, so my license is as good as gone. You win.

CARY

What are you talking about? Of course you're not losing your license.

Kalinda's eyes narrow.

KALINDA

How?

CARY

How do you think? I came to a settlement agreement. All you need to do is sign.

KALINDA

But he was set on taking my license.

CARY

Because you were belligerent and abusive to him.

KALINDA

He's a drug dealer.

CARY

Who has feelings.

Kalinda lets herself smile slightly.

KALINDA

So how'd you do it?

CARY

I told you I was good at negotiating. You forget how persuasive I can be.

He hands her the document. She reads, and her eyes go wide.

KALINDA

How persuasive you can be?

CARY

That, and I offered a lot of money.

KALINDA

Cary, you know I can't pay this.

WILL (O.S.)

But we can.

REVEAL Will and Diane standing in Cary's doorway.

DIANE

Cary got us to agree to a settlement, too.

KALINDA

I can't let the firm pay for my mistake.

WILL

Do you know how many cases you've helped us win? Losing you would end up costing us way more in the long run. This is a purely financial decision.

DIANE

Purely.

Kalinda allows herself a little smile, looks back to Cary.

CARY

You're welcome.

She nods, grateful, and signs the paper.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Alicia, Diane, and Tanya sit at their table. Matan walks the room, in the midst of his closing argument.

MATAN

The simple truth is that this baby's life didn't need to end this way, and parents must be shown that their negligence won't be tolerated any longer. No one is claiming anyone did anything intentionally...

Diane rolls her eyes. Then why charge second degree murder to begin with?

MATAN (CONT'D)

...but when Tanya Neecht inexplicably left Scottie in her car for over seven-and-a-half hours, she had a duty of care. It was the manner of her care that is willful neglect. Mrs. Neecht had an uninterrupted 31-minute cell phone conversation that morning driving into work, and if she'd had a wreck because she was distracted, that would have constituted willful neglect. This incident is criminal conduct -- an accidental death in felony circumstances.

(MORE)

MATAN (CONT'D)

It is gross and it is willful. Scottie died in the first four hours. He literally baked in a car that became like an oven. This type of crime needs to be taken seriously. Show how seriously you take it by sentencing Mrs. Neecht to the maximum the law will allow.

Matan lingers for a second, then sits back down. Diane immediately launches into her close.

DIANE

The prosecutor is right, this does need to be taken seriously. Your vote will decide whether a mother will be locked up for her one horrifying mistake, or whether she'll be allowed to finally grieve her loss in peace. Nothing about the evidence presented in this case shows a callous disregard for human life. In fact, what we have here is the exact opposite. A mother who frequently called her babysitter to check in. Who cared enough to have a baby seat professionally installed in her car. To stay up all night when he was sick with a cold. In short, a caring, responsible mother who made one horrible mistake. She's already going to have to live with the pain and guilt you heard on that 911 recording for the rest of her life. Does she really deserve further punishment that would take her away from her living son? This was a failure of memory, not love.

Diane lets that sink in. The Jurors appear to be really contemplating her words.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Tanya paces by a bench, looking anxious. In the background, Alicia talks to the two Soccer Moms we recognize from leaving the trial audience earlier.

Alicia nods, and they all approach Tanya.

ALICIA

Tanya, these women would like to speak to you for a moment.

TANYA

...Okay.

Without even a greeting, the First Woman grabs Tanya close and whispers in her ear. Tanya starts sobbing uncontrollably and folds onto the bench, and the Second Woman holds Tanya's hand to steady and comfort her.

Diane enters and comes to a complete stop. Tanya sobbing?

DIANE

(to Alicia)

What just happened there?

ALICIA

They're two mothers whose babies died the same way. They said they just wanted to tell her that they know she's a good, loving mother, and she must not be ashamed.

They turn back to Tanya and the Women and watch, both wearing slight, sad smiles.

Kalinda enters.

KALINDA

The verdict is in.

DIANE

Already? It's only been 90 minutes.

Alicia approaches Tanya. They start making their way into...

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY

Tanya has regained her composure as she waits alongside Diane and Alicia. Matan and his associate look confident across the aisle. The Bailiff opens the door for the Judge.

BAILIFF

All rise.

The Judge motions for everyone to sit as he approaches the bench, then does so himself.

JUDGE

Do you have a verdict?

The JURY FOREMAN stands.

JURY FOREMAN

We do, your honor. On the charge of voluntary manslaughter, we find the defendant... not guilty.

A wave of relief crosses the defense's faces, but it's not over yet.

JURY FOREMAN (CONT'D)

On the charge of felony child neglect, we find the defendant...

Tanya holds her breath.

JURY FOREMAN (CONT'D)

...not guilty.

Tanya exhales but doesn't quite smile. Alicia hugs her.

ALICIA

Congratulations.

Tanya nods slowly, taking it all in.

DIANE

Now you can finally leave courtrooms behind and start moving past this.

TANYA

Not quite.

Diane and Alicia give her quizzical looks.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Marybeth and Cecily are starting a campaign to include a new safety feature in cars, so this doesn't happen to other children. I think I'm going to join them. I can't fix what happened to Scottie, but maybe it will mean he didn't die in vain.

ALICIA

Good luck.

Tanya nods and goes over to hug the two Women.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alicia enters to find the apartment spic and span again, and hears a woman HUMMING in the kitchen. She bristles with anger and stomps into the:

KITCHEN

ALICIA
Peter, I told you--

She does a double-take. Jackie and Peter are washing dishes.

PETER
Mom's back.

ALICIA
I see.

JACKIE
Not that you need me. Peter did
such a fine job while I was away.
Wouldn't you say, Alicia?

ALICIA
(swallowing her anger)
Glad you're back, Jackie.

Off Alicia's forced smile...

END OF EPISODE