

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #64
TIME FRAME: A FEW
DAYS AFTER [#63](#)

TEASER

EXT: COURTHOUSE
MIDDAY

Establishing shot.

A constant flow of people enters and exits the courthouse through the main doors on a day marked by steady rainfall and the ominous gray tones of the drab sky.

INT: COURTHOUSE (HALLWAY)
MIDDAY

An assortment of members of the press has gathered outside one of the visible courtrooms. While the media tries to catch glimpses of any pre-hearing action that might be going on inside, JASON and BILL enter the courthouse. Seeing the frenzy outside the courtroom, they pause by the entrance.

JASON: I can't believe this is actually happening.

BILL: I know. I never expected Shannon to be facing life in prison for two murders, arson, and all this other stuff.

JASON: She seemed like such a nice girl at first, didn't she?

BILL: She was -- she is -- a master of deception. It's the only way she got as far as she did.

JASON: Good point. (pause) Are you and Mom gonna go upstairs in the middle of things to see what's going on?

BILL: For Tim and Claire's custody hearing? No, I think it's a pretty private hearing. Unless they need us to testify, which I doubt, we'll stay down here with you and Courtney. Speaking of which, where is she?

JASON: She and Helen are at the hospital with Don. They should be coming over here soon.

BILL: It's a shame, what happened to him. Helen says that Courtney thinks he was pushed. What do you

think about that?

JASON: I don't know ... I don't see why anyone would push him off the ladder. Who had any motivation to try to kill Don?

BILL: Damned if I know. Like Courtney said, maybe someone is trying to warn you guys.

JASON: Yeah, but Shannon is the only one with any reason to do something like that, and she's well-guarded in the prison.

Bill is just as stumped as his son by this situation.

INT: COURTHOUSE (UPSTAIRS HALLWAY)
MIDDAY

DIANE is pacing outside a smaller courtroom while BRIAN looks on.

BRIAN: Will you stand still? You're driving me crazy!

Diane continues pacing.

DIANE: I'm too damn nervous to stand still!

BRIAN: Don't worry about it. Whatever happens, happens. All you can do is go in there and kick some ass.

DIANE: I know. I just have this awful feeling ...

BRIAN: ... That Tim and Claire are gonna win custody?

DIANE: Yeah. After all, there is definitely a strong case to be made against me.

Brian nods, acknowledging this.

DIANE (CONT'D): Which means there's only one way to go if I wanna hang onto my daughter -- I'll have to play dirty.

Her trademark sinister grin appears as she mentally goes over the means necessary to retain custody.

ACT ONE

INT: COURTHOUSE (LARGE COURTROOM)

MIDDAY

The stately oak furniture displayed throughout the courtroom, in addition to its ample size, make it obvious that this courtroom is one used for high-caliber cases. A crowd of people has already assembled, most of them standing among the seats and talking in hushed tones.

The doors at the back of the room swing open and a burst of noise pierces the quiet, dignified air of the courtroom for just a few moments as the media calls after JASON and BILL. The two men ignore the madness and step inside the courtroom, and once the doors swing closed, the normal atmosphere of the room returns.

JASON: This is insane!

BILL: Tell me about it ...

Stepping away from a conversation with another woman across the room, PAULA joins her son and husband.

BILL (CONT'D): Hey, hon.

PAULA: Hi, dear. (pause) We're scheduled to start soon, aren't we?

Jason checks his watch.

JASON: Yeah, in a couple of minutes. I wonder where Courtney and Helen are.

PAULA: They're probably still at the hospital with Don.

JASON: Yeah, but Courtney needs to testify.

BILL: I'm sure they'll get here on time. Don't worry.

The doors at the back of the room open again, though much less fanfare is heard this time, as MOLLY steps into the courtroom and approaches her family.

MOLLY: Hey, guys.

As the family speaks, people begin steadily pouring into the courtroom and taking seats throughout.

PAULA: There sure are a lot of people here for this.

JASON: It's a federal case -- big-time murder charges, not to mention all that other stuff. There was bound to be some interest in it.

PAULA: Some? This is far beyond that!

JASON: Yeah, I know.

MOLLY: Hey, at least Shannon did us all a favor and spared us a long, grueling trial by just pleading "guilty."

BILL: Amen to that.

Jason quickly looks around the room.

JASON: Why don't we sit down before there's no place left to sit?

The others nod and they slide onto the bench a row behind the prosecution table. Another round of media noise is heard from outside, and all heads turn to see COURTNEY and HELEN enter the courtroom. Looking embarrassed, they make their way over to the Fishers and slide in beside them. Courtney sits on the end next to Jason.

COURTNEY: I don't know why, but I'm really nervous.

JASON: Don't be. After this hearing, Shannon will be effectively out of our lives for good.

COURTNEY: I hope you're right ...

BAILIFF: All rise!

At the sound of the bailiff's voice, the courtroom rises to its feet. The JUDGE, a man in his sixties, steps up to his seat; the JURY assumes its post.

As this happens, the BAILIFF escorts the defendant, SHANNON, into the courtroom in handcuffs. He leads her to the defense table and leaves her with her lawyer, a weasly-looking man in his forties wearing upon his head what is obviously a toupee.

The judge rattles off that the court is now in session, etc., while Shannon turns her head to her left and looks back slightly. She makes eye contact with Courtney; a wild hate is apparent in the defendant's eyes

as she stares down her rival.

INT: SMALLER COURTROOM
MIDDAY

This courtroom is smaller than the last, with just four rows of plush spectator seats rather than many rows of hardwood benches. It has dimmer lighting and an overall more private setting than the larger room. Neither is there a jury.

Only a handful of people are present. At the front of the room, DIANE is talking quietly with her lawyer, LUCINDA BARRETT, while TIM and CLAIRE are seated at their table with lawyer GREG THOMPSON. In the seats behind, a number of witnesses are seated; these include four DOCTORS, one of whom is DR. SMITH.

The BAILIFF, a large, middle-aged woman with a perpetual scowl on her face, surveys the room once before opening a door.

BAILIFF: All rise!

The few people present rise to their feet as the judge, CAROLYN WILKES, enters. She seems to be a pleasant woman as she calls the court to order.

JUDGE WILKES: This is a custody case, correct?

LUCINDA: Yes, your Honor.

JUDGE WILKES: All right. (pause) We will begin with the plaintiff's case. Mr. Thompson, please proceed with your opening statement.

GREG: Thank you, your Honor.

He rises.

GREG (CONT'D): Two months ago Ms. Diane Bishop gave birth to a daughter, Samantha. If you ask the unmarried Ms. Bishop who the father of that child is, she will gladly inform you that Tim Fisher is the father. Tim, however, is devoted to his marriage, to his wife Claire, and to their young son, Travis. Why, then, did another woman recently give birth to his daughter?

He pauses, using all his dramatic prowess to intrigue the judge.

GREG (CONT'D): The answer, your Honor, is not simple by any means. It involves months of dedicated scheming by Ms. Bishop, months spent manipulating whoever and whatever was necessary in order for her to fulfill her wild dream of stealing Mr. Fisher away from his wife. Yes, it is unfortunate that an innocent child became mixed up in this; however, that is the reason we're all here today. Tim and Claire Fisher rightly feel that they would be much more fitting parents for Samantha than her mother ever could be, and through the course of this hearing, we will show you why.

Greg returns to his seat.

JUDGE WILKES: Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

As Greg returns to his seat, Diane's face is filled with terror. The thought that she could quite possibly lose her daughter has suddenly become a very real possibility.

ACT TWO

INT: LARGE COURTROOM
MIDDAY

The sentencing is now underway. **SHANNON** and her lawyer, **RON FARRELL**, sit behind the defense table; the **ASSISTANT D.A.**, an attractive woman in her early thirties, sits behind the prosecution table. In the bench behind the **A.D.A.**, a group of familiar faces is seated: **COURTNEY**, **JASON**, **HELEN**, **PAULA**, **BILL**, and **MOLLY**.

A **POLICE OFFICER** steps down off the witness stand and the **JUDGE** motions to the **A.D.A.** to call the next witness.

A.D.A.: The state calls Courtney Chase to the stand.

Courtney rises from the bench and makes her way to the witness stand, where the **BAILIFF** is waiting with a Bible. She raises her right hand and places the other on the book.

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

COURTNEY: I do.

The bailiff steps away and Courtney takes her place on the witness stand. Her testimony is seen through a series of brief clips ...

CUT TO:

A.D.A.: Will you please explain how you first met the defendant, Ms. Chase?

COURTNEY: Sure. Jason Fisher and I had been ice-skating together for many years. I was injured on the ice one day about a year and a half ago, and our coach, Sandy James, opted to find Jason a new partner for the competitive season. They chose Shannon, who I met shortly afterward when she visited me in the hospital.

A.D.A.: What did Ms. Parish say to you when she came to visit you, Ms. Chase?

COURTNEY: She cut straight to threatening me, saying that if I got in the way of the relationship she hoped she could have with Jason, there would be terrible consequences.

CUT TO:

A.D.A.: After you identified the hitman as Dave Roberts on the security video, what did you do?

COURTNEY: Actually, a friend and I followed him around town, hoping he'd lead us to some evidence.

A.D.A.: Where exactly did Dave Roberts lead you, Ms. Chase?

COURTNEY: He wound up at this huge house, where Shannon opened the door for him. They talked until they saw me watching them and taking pictures of them together, and then she sent Dave after me again.

CUT TO:

A.D.A.: Can you recall any other instances in which the defendant threatened you?

COURTNEY: One that stands out in my mind is a time when Jason was getting ready for a date with a friend of mine. Shannon went to his house, and when his mother told her that he had a date, she started to leave. She saw me coming up to the house -- to work on a fundraiser with Mrs. Fisher -- and assumed Jason was going out with me. She went ballistic!

A.D.A.: What did she do?

COURTNEY: She screamed at me and taunted me about nearly getting run over a few days before.

A.D.A.: What did she say to you?

COURTNEY: I don't remember exactly, but she said something to the effect that Jason would be hers, and if I was going to get in the way of that, she'd have to "take care" of me.

CUT TO:

RON: The defense has no questions for the witness.

Courtney steps down off the stand. As she makes her way back to her seat, Shannon looks up at her evilly. Courtney averts her eyes and continues walking.

Once she is seated, she turns to Jason.

COURTNEY: (quietly) Did you see the way she looked at me? She's crazy!

JASON: I can tell. The look in her eyes is total insanity.

COURTNEY: It just proves one thing: She's capable of anything -- even having my father pushed off that ladder.

ACT THREE

INT: SMALLER COURTROOM
AFTERNOON

The assembled group looks on as TIM sits down on the witness stand.

GREG: Will you please state your name for the court?

TIM: Tim Fisher.

GREG: Mr. Fisher, how did you first meet Diane Bishop?

TIM: When I joined Vision Publishing two and a half years ago, Diane was my boss. She still is.

GREG: And she is now the mother of your daughter, Samantha?

TIM: Yes.

GREG: Will you describe the circumstances under which Samantha was conceived?

TIM: I was shot about a year and a half ago and was in a coma for a few weeks. When I came out of it, I had amnesia. While I had no memory of my life, Diane led me to believe she was my wife, Claire. She seduced me in the hospital, and that is how Samantha was conceived.

GREG: So Ms. Bishop deceived you into sleeping with her?

TIM: Yes.

GREG: How did you find out the truth?

TIM: Months later, Claire and I found a letter in Diane's apartment that said in fairly clear terms that she had been lying about nearly everything for many months.

GREG: Would you elaborate on exactly what lies Ms. Bishop told you?

TIM: I'd be glad to.

As he begins speaking ...

CUT TO:

CLAIRE is now on the stand.

GREG: Ms. Fisher, explain for us exactly what happened at the Pine Forest Lodge not too long ago.

CLAIRE: Tim and I scheduled a romantic weekend together there while we were trying to work through some--

She loudly clears her throat, looking pointedly at DIANE.

CLAIRE (CONT'D): --stressful times. When I arrived, I was given a message from my husband to meet him in the dining room. I went there to wait. Meanwhile, he arrived and went up to our room. After a while, I checked with the front desk to see if he'd come in and I'd missed him or something. There was a message from Tim saying that he wasn't coming for the weekend and we had a lot to talk about later on.

GREG: What happened then?

CLAIRE: I left the lodge. I went for a drive and then headed home, where I found Diane talking to Tim, who had also left the lodge and gone home. We realized that there had been a huge misunderstanding -- Tim hadn't left either message for me at the lodge.

GREG: Then who did, Mrs. Fisher?

CLAIRE: Diane Bishop.

GREG: How do you know this?

CLAIRE: She admitted it to us.

GREG: Am I correct in saying that another incident occurred at the King's Bay Plaza Hotel on New Year's Eve?

CLAIRE: Yes.

GREG: Would you describe the event?

CLAIRE: Sure. Tim's parents were having a New Year's Eve party. Diane arrived, uninvited, and began making her usual threats. Tim said he'd talk to her on the balcony for just a few minutes.

GREG: So they went out onto the balcony?

CLAIRE: Yeah. Tim came back in, but Diane didn't. A few moments later, we heard her screaming.

GREG: Why?

CLAIRE: We went outside to find out what was going on, and Diane was standing on the ledge, threatening to jump.

GREG: And she was still pregnant at this time, correct?

CLAIRE: Yes.

GREG: Was there anything else noteworthy about her behavior that evening?

CLAIRE: I thought she may have been drinking, to tell the truth. I thought I smelled a little alcohol on her breath.

The JUDGE seems affected by this testimony; her respect for Diane Bishop has been severely lessened after hearing tales of her misbehavior.

GREG: I have no further questions -- and we rest at this time.

JUDGE WILKES: Ms. Barrett?

LUCINDA: I have just two questions for the witness.

She rises.

LUCINDA (CONT'D): Ms. Fisher, you say that you think Ms. Bishop had been drinking. Did you have any proof of this?

CLAIRE: No, I just thought I smelled alcohol.

LUCINDA: All right. (pause) Also, how did you get her down from the ledge?

CLAIRE: We said we'd only ask for joint custody.

LUCINDA: So you tricked her?

CLAIRE: We only wanted to get her down from the ledge.

LUCINDA: No further questions.

JUDGE WILKES: You may step down, Mrs. Fisher.

Claire steps off the witness stand and returns to her seat. The judge turns to Lucinda, who has returned to the table with DIANE but has not taken a seat.

JUDGE WILKES (CONT'D): You may begin your case, Ms. Barrett.

Lucinda moves to the middle of the floor to begin speaking as Diane clutches the sides of her chair anxiously.

ACT FOUR

INT: SMALLER COURTROOM

AFTERNOON

LUCINDA BARRETT, lawyer of DIANE, rises to address the judge.

LUCINDA: Your Honor, I admit that yes, my client has made some mistakes. It would be foolish and a waste of time to try to deny this; however, Diane Bishop is not on trial here. The issue is the custody of young Samantha. On this note, it must be said that, throughout all the incidents described by the Fishers, my client has not shown anything but love for her daughter, never directly endangering her life -- which is more than can be said for the Fisher family.

Everyone present seems stunned by this, especially TIM and CLAIRE.

LUCINDA (CONT'D): What we plan to do, your Honor, is show you exactly how dysfunctional the Fisher family is, and how detrimental it could be to a child to be brought up as a part of such a family.

INT: LARGE COURTROOM
AFTERNOON

ANDY, DANIELLE, and KATHERINE are now also present in the court, although they are seated further in the back of the room.

A.D.A.: The state calls Andrew Fitch to the stand.

Andy rises and makes his way up to the witness stand. The BAILIFF swears him in and he sits down as the ASSISTANT D.A. begins questioning him.

A.D.A.: Will you please state your name for the court?

ANDY: Andrew Fitch.

A.D.A.: What is your relationship with the defendant, Mr. Fitch?

ANDY: Shannon Parish was employed as a maid in my home for a short time several months ago.

A.D.A.: Did you know her as Shannon Parish?

ANDY: No, she used an alias - Lisa Stafford.

CUT TO:

ANDY: ... So we brought the videotape and diary to Brent Taylor, who was commander of the police force at the time. He identified the house in the video as the Powells' house.

A.D.A.: What did you do with this information?

ANDY: A friend and I flew down to Phoenix, where Shannon and Jason were competing, along with Brent Taylor and his wife and Courtney Chase, and we confronted Shannon with the evidence.

A.D.A.: Did she attempt to deny it?

ANDY: At first, but she quickly gave up.

A.D.A.: How would you describe her reaction to having been found out?

ANDY: She was incredibly angry. As I remember it ...

He begins to describe the scene, which is seen as a flashback.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK

PHOENIX

INT: SKATING RINK

AFTERNOON

SHANNON: I swear, he's just a friend of mine. This is all wrong.

BRENT: Actually, we brought those photos down to the jail and paid Dave a little visit.

Shannon realizes her excuse is completely blown.

BRENT (CONT'D): He admitted that you hired him to attack Courtney.

SHANNON: Damn him! He sold me out!

JASON: How could you have done this, Shannon? All of us trusted you -- at some point ... a little.

SHANNON: I did it because I love you, Jason!

Those gathered utter a collective gasp.

SHANNON (CONT'D): It was all for you! I was scared that if Courtney got to skate with you again, I'd lose my only connection to you, and I'd lose you entirely!

Jason makes a disgusted face at Shannon's show of melodrama.

JASON: That's not love, Shannon -- it's an illness.

SHANNON: Jason--

She throws her arms around him desperately. He wiggles out of her grasp.

JASON: The least you could do is try to maintain some dignity. You disgust me -- you absolutely disgust me!

Shannon breaks down into tears.

SHANNON: (screaming through her tears) Fine, I admit it! I hired Dave to go after Courtney! I did it once and I'd do it again, if that's what it would take! All she wanted from the very beginning was to make me miserable!

She stares at Courtney with the fire of hell in her eyes, nostrils flaring with each rapid breath.

SHANNON (CONT'D): I hate you, Courtney!!

FADE TO:

INT: LARGE COURTROOM
AFTERNOON

ANDY is still on the witness stand, being questioned by the ASSISTANT D.A.

A.D.A.: So the defendant showed no remorse?

ANDY: No.

In the seats, COURTNEY turns to JASON.

COURTNEY: (whispering) It's looking pretty bad for Shannon.

JASON: (whispering) Well, she has no one to blame but herself.

Courtney nods. She sees HELEN, sitting next to her, looking extremely preoccupied.

COURTNEY: Are you thinking about Dad?

HELEN: Yeah.

COURTNEY: He's gonna be fine, Mom. I know he will.

HELEN: He has to, Courtney. I don't know what I'd do without him.

INT: HOUSE
AFTERNOON

A WOMAN whose face is unseen is seated in a chair. Opening a newspaper, she scans the headlines and sees one that catches her interest.

The woman quickly reads the article, then reads it again, using her finger to guide her through the words. The short piece reads:

"King's Bay resident Don Chase, 56, fell from a ladder outside his home on Wednesday afternoon. He was rushed to King's Bay Memorial Hospital, where he remains in a coma. Although the incident was originally believed to have been an accident, police are not ruling out foul play."

The woman gasps, again placing her fingers underneath the words "Don Chase."

END OF EPISODE #64

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