

"FOOTPRINTS"
EPISODE #66
TIME: SHORTLY AFTER [#65](#)

TEASER

INT: COURTHOUSE -- SMALLER COURTROOM
NIGHT

In the empty courtroom, TIM and CLAIRE stare at DIANE inquisitively.

TIM: You just said "we" worked so hard, didn't you?

DIANE: No--

CLAIRE: Yeah, you did.

DIANE: I didn't mean-- What I meant was that Lucinda and I worked so hard on this case. You know how important it was -- how important it is -- to me to be with my daughter.

CLAIRE: I don't buy it. Something's up, Diane.

TIM: This makes so much more sense. If you had an accomplice, everything you pulled would've been much easier.

DIANE: I didn't have anyone helping me!

TIM: (as if he didn't hear her) I always wondered how you set up the thing where Claire came into the conference room just in time to hear you tell me you were having my baby. Obviously, you needed someone to call her to tell her to come to the office, right?

DIANE: No -- I did it myself.

CLAIRE: As I remember it, a guy called me.

They both look at Diane, whose face practically reveals what she refuses to admit.

TIM: Come on, Diane. You can retain maybe the slightest bit of dignity by answering one question for us. We both know that someone helped you out; the real question is, who was it?

**INT: COURTHOUSE -- LARGE COURTROOM
NIGHT**

The sentencing has resumed. The JUDGE turns to the JURY.

JUDGE: Has the jury reached a conclusion?

The FOREPERSON of the jury, a woman in her fifties, stands, holding a folded piece of paper.

JURY FOREWOMAN: We have.

SHANNON turns to her lawyer, RON.

SHANNON: (whispering) They're not really looking at me. Is that good or bad?

RON: Don't buy into any of that stuff, Shannon. It's purely coincidental when those kind of things turn out to be true.

JUDGE: Would you please read the sentence?

The forewoman opens up the piece of paper as Shannon turns to her lawyer. For the first time since any of this came to light, there is actual fear in her eyes.

ACT ONE

**INT: SMALLER COURTROOM
NIGHT**

DIANE looks as if she is going to burst, a million different emotions and plots racing through her mind and body as she prepares to answer the question posed by TIM and CLAIRE.

DIANE: I ...

She pauses. Part of her is compelled to reveal the truth to Tim and Claire, hoping to save face in some way. Yet another part of her wants to remain loyal to Brian, who has been her friend and stuck by her through so much.

CLAIRE: Answer the question, Diane.

TIM: Please!

CLAIRE: This is something we need to know. What if it's someone we trust? We've had enough problems already with trusting "fake" people -- my father, you. (pause) So just tell us who the hell it is already.

DIANE: Why should I?

TIM: Because it'll make you look like a halfway decent person, maybe. At least your daughter will have a shot at having some respect for you.

At the mention of her daughter's name, Diane's attention is caught.

DIANE (THINKING): This is a chance to earn some major brownie points with Tim and Claire. Maybe they'll even let me spend more time with Samantha ...

She takes a deep breath, staring into the faces of the people who hold her future with her child in their very hands, and then begins to speak.

DIANE: (blurting it out quickly) It was Brian!

Tim and Claire quickly look to one another, surprised that Diane actually confessed this piece of information, and even more surprised by the actual answer.

INT: LARGE COURTROOM
NIGHT

The JURY FOREWOMAN is on her feet, opening the folded piece of paper. The JUDGE looks on, eager to hear the outcome. RON looks on hopefully, the fingers of his right hand crossed on the table.

Sitting next to him, SHANNON stares directly at the jury. She appears almost entranced by the power they hold, yet somewhat terrified by it at the same time. Even the thought of the death penalty does not seem to scare her greatly; she knows the extent of the wrong she has done. Still, there is no apparent remorse within her. The young woman continues to feel as if everything she did was for a reason.

Meanwhile, JASON and COURTNEY are holding hands as they await the reading of the sentence. They look at each other.

JASON: (quietly) Don't worry, Courtney. She's not gonna get off without some serious time behind bars.

(pause) I just hope she doesn't get the death penalty.

COURTNEY: (quietly) She won't. (pause) Still ... Serious time isn't enough. I'm not gonna feel safe unless she's in jail for the rest of her life.

JURY FOREWOMAN: We, the jury, have sentenced Shannon Parish for the following crimes: one count of arson; one count of assault; and two counts of first-degree murder. She has been assigned the following sentence.

The entire courtroom practically takes a deep breath as she prepares to read it.

JURY FOREWOMAN (CONT'D): Ms. Parish will spend an undetermined amount of time in a mental institution. At whatever point that authorized professionals decide she has received as much care as she can be given, Ms. Parish will then be transferred to a prison, where she will spend the remainder of her life.

Shannon jumps out of her seat.

SHANNON: What?!?

RON: Shannon, sit down.

He begins to pull her down as the judge bangs his gavel.

JUDGE: Order! Order!

Shannon sits down.

JUDGE (CONT'D): This court is adjourned. Bailiff, please escort the defendant out.

BAILIFF: All rise!

The courtroom comes to its feet as the judge exits.

SHANNON: I have to go to a nuthouse?!?

RON: Calm down.

He puts his hands on her shoulders, trying to quiet her.

RON (CONT'D): Listen to me. Just stay in the mental home as long as you can. It'll be much better than

life in prison, okay?

SHANNON: (dejectedly) Fine.

She turns and looks behind her, spotting Courtney and Jason not far away among the mingling crowds. She makes a face at Courtney and waves sarcastically.

COURTNEY: Will you just cut it out and leave us alone?

SHANNON: Sorry, no can do.

COURTNEY: Well, you're not gonna have much time to screw with our lives anymore, huh? (pause) Don't you feel at least a little regretful that you have to spend your life locked up for all the stuff you did?

SHANNON: My only regret is that you're still alive.

RON: Shannon!

SHANNON: You butt out. (beat) But believe me, Courtney, you haven't seen the last of me.

The bailiff arrives and slaps handcuffs on her, though her attention is still focused on Courtney.

SHANNON (CONT'D): This is just the beginning, Courtney!

She begins cackling maniacally.

JASON: Will you cut it out, Shannon?

SHANNON: ... Just the beginning!

She continues laughing as the bailiff leads her away.

Jason and Courtney turn to each other, recognizing that Shannon has finally gone off the deep end completely.

ACT TWO

INT: HOSPITAL ROOM

NIGHT

A comatose DON lay in the bed. Enter HELEN, COURTNEY, and JASON.

HELEN: We're here, honey.

She makes her way over to the bed and kneels down beside Don.

HELEN (CONT'D): I wonder if he can hear us.

COURTNEY: I don't know, Mom.

JASON: Maybe we should tell him about the sentencing.

HELEN: That's a good idea, Jason.

COURTNEY: Well, Dad --

She steps closer to the bed, leaning over her father.

COURTNEY (CONT'D): -- you'll be glad to know that Shannon is gonna be locked up for the rest of her life. She's supposed to stay in a mental institution for however long the doctors say is necessary, and then after that, she goes to jail.

JASON: I still can't believe this thing is finally over.

COURTNEY: It's not.

Both Helen and Jason look at Courtney in confusion.

INT: CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE
NIGHT

KATHERINE enters and is immediately stunned. Looking around, she sees a woman on stage singing quietly and strumming a guitar. People are sprawled across couches and mingle informally. The culture shock is evident in Katherine's face.

Unsure of what she is supposed to find out here, she again scans the room. This time, she notices a familiar person seated at a table. After doing a double take, she realizes it is, in fact, her son ANDY. Since he is seated with his back to the door, he does not see her.

KATHERINE (THINKING): Andrew comes here? I never knew that ... I wonder why Shannon told me

to come here.

MAN: Hey, lady, you gonna move?

Katherine snaps out of her thoughts to find a man standing behind her as she blocks the doorway.

KATHERINE: Oh, excuse me.

She moves aside as the man enters. Katherine remains by the entrance, unsure of what to do, for several moments before finally walking over to Andy, who is seated alone, quietly drinking coffee and reading.

KATHERINE (CONT'D): Hello, Andrew.

Andy looks up and is stunned to find her here -- he is expecting Danielle any minute!

ACT THREE

INT: HOSPITAL ROOM
NIGHT

As DON lay in the bed, unconscious, JASON and HELEN stare at COURTNEY in regards to her last cryptic comment.

JASON: What are you talking about, Court? Shannon's gonna be locked up forever. She has no chance of getting out.

COURTNEY: It doesn't matter where she is, Jason. She's crazy-

JASON: Hence her being sentenced to a mental institution.

COURTNEY: No, I'm serious. She won't let the fact that she's locked up stop her from coming after us.

She looks over at her unmoving father.

COURTNEY (CONT'D): After all, it didn't matter last time.

HELEN: Are you still on this kick about Shannon having your father pushed off that ladder, dear?

COURTNEY: It's not a "kick," Mom. It's what happened.

HELEN: We don't know that ...

JASON: Your theory makes sense, Courtney. But ...

COURTNEY: But what? What reason do you have not to believe it? It can't be that you trust Shannon, because I know you don't. (pause) No, you're just scared.

JASON: Of Shannon? Yes, I am.

COURTNEY: Not of Shannon - of what she represents.

Her boyfriend looks at her quizzically.

COURTNEY (CONT'D): Look at it, Jay. If Shannon can do things like this, then it means that evil really does exist. What it means is that you can never really, truly trust anyone you don't completely know ... and that makes the world a very scary place.

Jason doesn't speak. He merely rests his chin on his fist, his focus down on the ground.

COURTNEY (CONT'D): Are is it that you actually trust Shannon and don't wanna believe she can do things like this?

This catches Jason by surprise.

INT: COURTHOUSE -- SMALLER COURTROOM
NIGHT

TIM and CLAIRE are shocked that DIANE has just confessed.

CLAIRE: Brian?!?

Diane nods, upset with herself.

CLAIRE (CONT'D): I don't understand ... Why'd he do it?

TIM: She probably threatened to fire him if he didn't help out.

Diane suddenly goes on the defensive, not wanting her reputation ruined even further than it already has been.

DIANE: No, I didn't! I swear!

TIM: So he just decided to help you ruin the lives of how many other people?

DIANE: Yeah-

TIM: That's utter crap, and we all know it.

DIANE: Ask him yourself. I swear I didn't blackmail him!

There is now a hint of desperation in her voice.

CLAIRE: So he just thought it would be fun?

DIANE: Hey, maybe he needed a little excitement. I don't know.

TIM: That's blackmail, Diane. I'm gonna find out from Brian what's going on.

He heads for the door.

TIM (CONT'D): Come on, Claire.

Claire follows her husband and they leave the courtroom.

Diane stands where she had been, trying to quickly formulate some sort of plan that would allow her to not be accused of blackmail and still not get Brian into too much trouble. She appears to not be having much luck.

INT: COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY

NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

TIM and CLAIRE burst through the doors and immediately begin walking down the hallway.

TIM: I can't believe that Brian has been in on this all along!

CLAIRE: I know ... It's just another case of trusting someone who had a total ulterior motive. (pause) I just wonder why he did it.

TIM: I hope Diane is blackmailing him with the threat of firing him ... for his sake. Otherwise there's gonna be hell to pay.

ACT FOUR

INT: CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE
NIGHT

ANDY gazes up at KATHERINE, surprised to see his mother in this unusual setting.

ANDY: Mother - what are you doing here?

KATHERINE: I was told to come here for some important information.

ANDY: What? (pause) Who told you that?

KATHERINE: Shannon Parish.

Andy is puzzled.

ANDY: How did the jury sentence her?

KATHERINE: She has to spend time in a mental institution, and when the doctors say she's stable enough, they'll transfer her to a regular prison.

ANDY: Well, it's nice to know she won't be able to cause any of us any more trouble.

He turns, a look of perplexity on his face.

ANDY (THINKING): Could Shannon have found out about everything that's going on between my mother, Danielle, and me? That's the only thing I can think of ... At any rate, I have to get Mother out of here before Danielle arrives.

He stands up.

ANDY: Come on, Mother. Let's get out of here. Obviously, Shannon decided to set you up - somehow.

KATHERINE: I don't understand what's going on.

ANDY: Quite frankly, neither do I. Let's go home, though.

He begins leading her to the door.

KATHERINE: Andrew, why were you here?

ANDY: I just came here to-

His lie is interrupted by the appearance of DANIELLE in the doorway, just several feet from Katherine and Andy. The three stare into each others' faces, only Andy truly understanding what is going on.

INT: HOSPITAL ROOM
NIGHT

HELEN watches as JASON and COURTNEY discuss the recent happenings.

JASON: Trust is the last thing I feel for Shannon Parish, Courtney! (pause) And I think you're right - I am scared of her and everything she's capable of. All I'm saying is this: I don't understand how she could have engineered this whole plot to have your father knocked off that ladder and have that thing at the cabin done.

COURTNEY: And all I'm saying is that I wouldn't put anything past her, outlandish as it might sound.

HELEN: More and more, I'm starting to believe that something fishy is going on here.

COURTNEY: I've been saying it all along, Mom.

HELEN: But we shouldn't lose focus of what's really important here.

She gestures to the comatose DON.

COURTNEY: I know. I want Dad to get better more than anything else in the world.

JASON: Do you two wanna be alone with him for a while?

COURTNEY: Yeah, that would be great.

JASON: I'll be in the waiting room, okay?

COURTNEY: Don't worry about it. Head on home - you must be exhausted.

JASON: Are you sure?

HELEN: Yes, she is. I'll drive her home. Don't worry.

JASON: Thanks a ton. I'll see you tomorrow, Court.

He pulls her closer and gives her a peck on the lips.

COURTNEY: Bye, Jason!

With a final wave, Jason is gone.

Courtney and her mother stand silently over Don, full of despair.

EXT: COURTHOUSE - PARKING LOT
NIGHT

TIM and CLAIRE step outside and look around. They spot MOLLY and BRIAN standing by Brian's car and head over to them.

TIM: Brian, there's something we need to talk about.

MOLLY: Tim, wait. How did the custody hearing turn out?

CLAIRE: We got full custody. Diane got some visitation rights.

MOLLY: That's great!

TIM: Yeah, it is. Now, Brian, we need to talk.

Brian can tell immediately from Tim's tone that something is wrong.

BRIAN: What is it?

TIM: We just heard something very interesting.

MOLLY: What are you talking about, Tim?

TIM: You should probably hear this too, Molly.

MOLLY: Hear what?

CLAIRE: Just listen. This should be quite enlightening.

DIANE: Tim! Claire!

All four people turn to see DIANE standing near the entrance of the courthouse, her cell phone in hand. She rushes over to them.

CLAIRE: What is it now?

ACT FIVE

INT: CASSIE'S COFFEE HOUSE
NIGHT

KATHERINE and ANDY have come face-to-face with DANIELLE.

DANIELLE: Andy ... Mrs. Fitch ...

Andy winks at her, trying to be sure she doesn't spill about their date.

DANIELLE (CONT'D): ... What are you two doing here?

ANDY: I was, uh, I was having a cup of coffee when Mother showed up. Apparently Shannon told her to come down here to see something very important.

He flashes her another look.

DANIELLE: That's strange. (pause) Did you tell him about the sentencing, Mrs. Fitch?

KATHERINE: Yes, I did. So why are you here, Danielle?

She glances back and forth between her son and Danielle for a few moments.

KATHERINE (CONT'D): Andrew ... can I talk to you for a moment?

ANDY: Why don't we just head home, Mother?

KATHERINE: No, this will just take a second.

She pulls him aside without waiting for a response.

KATHERINE: (quietly) You were going to meet her here, weren't you?

ANDY: (quietly) What?!? Mother, I think that's a little presumptuous of you.

KATHERINE: (quietly) I don't think it is, Andrew.

ANDY: (quietly) Mother-

Filled with rage, Katherine disregards formality and raises her voice to an above-normal level.

KATHERINE: I have told you on more than one occasion that I do not want to see this go any further!

DANIELLE: See what go any further?

Danielle is now standing beside them.

KATHERINE: I really don't think this is any of your business, Danielle.

DANIELLE: Well, I think it is.

Katherine is stunned by her maid's bold responses.

KATHERINE: Oh, really? How so?

DANIELLE: Don't act like we both don't know exactly what's going on here. It's pretty clear that you don't want Andy and me together.

KATHERINE: (flustered) I didn't say-

DANIELLE: You don't have to.

She turns to Andy.

DANIELLE (CONT'D): I'm sorry I kinda blew up, Andy, but I've had it with sneaking around.

She looks back at Katherine.

DANIELLE (CONT'D): And I've pretty much had it with life in your fabulous mansion, too. I quit.

KATHERINE: Danielle-

She makes a halfhearted motion for Danielle to stay, but it is more out of embarrassment at the scene being made than it is out of genuine compassion, or even guilt.

DANIELLE: Goodbye, Katherine.

She emphasizes the woman's first name, her voice rich with contempt.

DANIELLE (CONT'D): And as for you, Andy, we'll see what happens.

She turns and heads for the exit, which is not far away.

ANDY: Danielle! Stop!

She halts in her tracks and faces him.

DANIELLE: What?

ANDY: You're not going anywhere without me.

Danielle smiles widely as Andy rushes to her, giving her a gigantic hug. They begin heading for the exit.

KATHERINE: Andrew, what are you doing? Where are you going?

ANDY: (with disregard for her panic) I'll see you later, Mother.

He and Danielle walk out the door, arm in arm. Katherine merely stands there, staring after them in utter disbelief and disgust.

EXT: COURTHOUSE - PARKING LOT
NIGHT

The eyes of TIM, CLAIRE, BRIAN, and MOLLY are fixed on DIANE as she approaches them.

CLAIRE: What do you want now, Diane? We're kinda busy ... as you already knew.

DIANE: I just talked to the babysitter on the phone. Apparently Travis is refusing to go to sleep. He's just screaming his head off.

TIM: How's Samantha?

DIANE: She's fine - sleeping sound. But maybe you guys should get over there to see what you can do with Travis.

CLAIRE: Yeah, you're probably right. Why don't we go, Tim?

TIM: That's a good idea.

MOLLY: Wait - Didn't you need to talk to Brian about something?

TIM: We'll do it later. Why don't the four of us meet for lunch at Dad's restaurant tomorrow? How about 12:30?

MOLLY: Is that okay, Brian?

BRIAN: (hesitantly) Yeah ... it's fine.

MOLLY: Then it's set. Now you guys go on home, okay? We'll see you tomorrow.

They say their goodbyes. Tim and Claire leave.

MOLLY (CONT'D): I'm gonna go, Brian. I'll see you tomorrow at the restaurant, okay?

BRIAN: All right. Good night.

They hug and Molly heads off. Diane watches, waiting until Molly is out of earshot, before talking.

DIANE: We've got a problem, Brian!

BRIAN: Yeah, I know. You lost custody.

DIANE: No, it's worse than that.

BRIAN: You mean the thing with Tim? What the hell is going on?

DIANE: They found out about you helping me!

Brian, though he had been expecting this, explodes with surprise, a bundle of nerves.

BRIAN: What?!? How?!?

DIANE: I slipped ...

BRIAN: How could you?

DIANE: I didn't mean it! I just slipped!

Brian rubs his temples.

BRIAN: Don't worry about it. (pause) So is that why you came rushing out here?

DIANE: Yeah. Hey, at least I bought you some time.

BRIAN: Thanks, I guess. (pause) But they're still gonna tell Molly tomorrow at lunch.

DIANE: And that, my friend, is why we need to do some serious brainstorming.

INT: HOSPITAL ROOM
NIGHT

HELEN and COURTNEY are standing over DON'S bedside.

HELEN: God, please give us the strength to pull through this awful time as a family. I understand that everyone has to face challenges, and this is just another of ours; but please let Don wake up and be all right. We love him and we need him. Please don't take him away from us, Lord.

She silently makes the Sign of the Cross and Courtney follows suit.

In the background, DR. SMITH can be seen through the window, peering in on this scene.

INT: HOSPITAL HALLWAY
NIGHT

DR. SMITH is peeking into the hospital room. He takes note of the CHASE FAMILY praying.

DR. SMITH: God, forgive me for what I've done. I realize it was wrong, but ... but I had no choice. I'm sorry.

He continues to look somberly into the room, distress all over his face.

END OF EPISODE #66

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