

"Footprints"

Episode #145

[Two Days After #144, Afternoon]

[Previously ...](#)

*Sarah fainted and Brent took her to the hospital. After seeing a doctor, she assured Brent that everything is fine, though it clearly isn't.

*Bill prevented Paula from telling the kids what's been troubling her.

*Andy and a reluctant Danielle set a wedding date for early April. Later, he had to cope with his mother, Katherine's, shooting.

TEASER

POLICE STATION-

A knock on the door of his office draws Brent's head up from his desk. He sets aside the stack of papers in his hand and calls out, "Come in!" He watches the doorknob turn and then Molly entering.

"Hey," she says with a tiny wave. She shuffles into the office and immediately closes the door behind her; Brent can tell from the look on her face that she has business on her mind.

"What's up?" he asks.

"I just talked to Danielle," she announces as if news of some top-secret, earth-shattering discovery is to follow. "Did you hear-"

"About Katherine Fitch? Yeah." He pushes himself away from the desk and rises from his chair. "I just got off the phone with Danielle, actually."

"Oh," Molly responds, like a balloon whose air is quickly gushing out. "So, do you know anything more than your sister did?"

He chuckles. "Sorry, gossip queen, no. I knew some rich lady had been gunned down in a drive-by, but I didn't realize it was her."

"So what's next? Are you going to try and figure out who did it?"

BRENT & SARAH TAYLOR'S APARTMENT-

Meanwhile, two knocks on the door alert Sarah that she has a visitor. She scans the room for the remote control and spots it sitting atop the coffee table. Swiftly she grabs it, turns off the CD player, and answers the door.

The sight of Matt sends a momentarily chill through her system, but she manages a smile nonetheless. "Hey."

"Hey," he says, peeking past her into the apartment. "Mind if I come in?"

Knowing that the question is really, "Is Brent here?," Sarah shakes her head and steps aside. "So what brings you by?"

He looks directly at her. "There's something I think you need to know."

DANIELLE TAYLOR'S APARTMENT-

"How is she?" Danielle asks, ushering Andy inside the apartment and closing the door.

"Same," Andy sighs. "I just don't understand how this could have happened."

"Hopefully we'll find out soon. I got off the phone with my brother a couple minutes ago, and he said they'll turn up the heat on the investigation."

Andy rolls his eyes. "What does it matter? Knowing who did it - especially on the off chance that my mother was the one the bullet was intended for - isn't going to pull her through this."

CHASE HOME-

A chunk of salsa plummets from Courtney's tortilla chip back into the jar before she gets it anywhere near her mouth. She goes back in for another dip and this time the chip, salsa and all, makes it back to her mouth to be obliterated in a crunch.

When she has finished chewing, she asks curiously, "Still no idea what she was gonna say?"

Jason shakes his head. "Not a clue." He reaches across the kitchen table and snatches another chip.

"That's so weird," Courtney muses. "It's not like your mom to act like this."

"I know. It worries me ... I've been trying to nudge her into getting back to the topic, but she's totally avoiding it."

"Did your sisters or your brother have any idea?"

"Not that they mentioned, at least," he says. "It's just ... scary. What if she's sick or something, you know?"

"Your mother?" Helen's voice asks. Courtney and Jason turn their heads and see her at the entrance of the kitchen.

"Yeah," Jason answers, used to sharing concerns with the woman at whose home he spent so many of his childhood days - and now some of his older ones, too.

"What's wrong?" Helen inquires as she comes into the room.

"Your guess is as good as mine." He takes another chip. "She gathered Tim, Molly, Sarah, and I at the house a few days ago, saying she had something to tell us, but then my dad came in and she stopped."

Courtney jumps into the exchange. "Mom, you've known Paula, like, forever. Do you have any idea what this might be about?"

ACT ONE

POLICE STATION-

Brent leans back against the desk, putting his heads behind him for support. "I guess. Danielle was saying that she and Andy really want to know who did it."

"I wonder how Andy's dealing with this?" Molly wonders aloud.

"Didn't you ask?"

"That's why I asked you, genius."

Brent grins. "I don't need to listen to my sister going off on another rampage about that woman, thank you very much."

"I don't think she hates her, Brent," Molly says. "But anyway ... what are you guys doing to solve this thing?"

"We've talked to a bunch of the people who were around when she got shot," he explains. "It's just weird that I heard about this thing without ever hearing who the victim was."

"So are you gonna take over now?"

"I'll definitely get more involved with it," he says.

"Good ... I'm interested to see how it turns out. It's like some TV drama or something."

A little laugh slips out as he responds, "It's not like we haven't had our share of drama, Mol."

The statement's weight settles over them with crushing swiftness as each realizes that what he said is truer than he intended it to be.

BRENT & SARAH'S APT.-

"What is it?" Sarah eyes Matt warily. The tone of his voice - grim but almost apologetic, maybe even a little protective - has ceased the beating of her heart, or at least that's what it feels like.

"I had a talk with Molly." He is proceeding slowly and it's not helping Sarah's nerves. If only she were aware that it's because his mind is frantically weighing the pros and cons of doing this, as it has been doing almost nonstop over the past couple of days.

"And?" Sarah's eyes widen, urging him on.

"We talked for a long time," he says, formulating an approach in his head. "About relationships and stuff-"

"Oh, God." Sarah's face goes white. "You didn't tell her, did you?"

"No! I would never do that ..." The thought burns at his brain for a moment, but he stuffs it behind some faraway wall. "I'm getting to know her pretty well, Sarah."

The comment hangs for a second before another horrified look takes up residence on Sarah's face. "Don't tell me you've got a thing for Molly!"

Matt shakes his head. "No, no ... That's not what I meant. I was just saying, I think I'm getting pretty good at reading her."

"And your point would be ... ?"

"I'm pretty sure she's the one who's got a thing - for Brent."

ACT TWO

DANIELLE'S APT.-

Someplace outside, a car door opens and closes. The sound comes to Danielle and Andy clearly through the walls. They continue to stand there, Andy's gaze focused upon the carpet and Danielle's upon him.

"I'm just sorry this happened," she says, taking a step in his direction. "It's got to be the last thing you want to deal with-"

"Good work, Sherlock!" he booms suddenly with a cry that gives pause to the blood in Danielle's veins. "This is absolutely the worst thing that could've happened."

Danielle is silent, too stunned to respond. Andy continues undaunted. "Not only is my mother about to die, but - Do you know what our last conversation was? When she came over to see me on Christmas Eve and tried to apologize for everything. But do you remember how I acted? I screamed at her, I kicked her out ... I treated her like garbage!"

"You had every right to act like that, Andy! After what she did to you - to us ..." She pauses a moment, but picks up again fluidly. "Who knows? Maybe it's part of some master plan. After all the horrible things she's done, maybe this ... I don't know, just the way it's supposed to be."

Andy stares at her as though she has just slapped him. "Is that supposed to be comforting?" He shakes his head with a sarcastic laugh. "So let's see: My mother's in a coma, she thinks I hate her, and I'm supposed to be getting married in two weeks. Yes, the thing I need most is to be told that my mother should die ... Good one, Danielle."

His cold sarcasm is enough to get her riled up, and she blasts back: "So, what, you're upset because the mother you weren't even going to allow at your wedding can't be there? You want to call it off now?"

Andy takes a deep breath before responding.

CHASE HOME-

"I haven't got a clue." Helen shakes her head, looking dumbfounded. "Maybe I should have a talk with

her."

"Don't," Jason says quickly. Two sets of eyes turn towards him and he explains, "I'm guessing it's some sort of family thing, whatever it is."

Helen gives an understanding nod, but Courtney pipes in, "Yeah, but maybe she can get your mom to open up to you guys about it."

"It's worth a try," Helen offers.

Jason shrugs. "Yeah, I guess so." The agreement is barely out of his mouth before Helen is on her feet, car keys in hand. "Right now?" he asks.

"Why not? Is she at home?"

He nods and that is all the prompting she needs. "I'll be back," Helen declares, "hopefully with some answers."

Jason and Courtney watch her exit. Once the door has closed, Courtney tries to make eye contact with her boyfriend, but has no luck: He's staring off into space.

"You worried?" she asks.

He doesn't need to answer. Instead he inhales deeply through his nose, still not looking at her.

ACT THREE

POLICE STATION-

All at once, both Brent and Molly become aware of a certain awkwardness between them - so, of course, the first thing each of their eyes do is latch onto those of the other.

Molly manages a strained chuckle. "Well, this shooting thing is definitely out there."

"It'll be a bigger deal once the press really jumps on it," he says. "Someone like that getting gunned down on the streets - it'll get everybody worked up about how safe the town is and blah, blah, blah."

"So what do you think it was, some gang thing?"

"I don't know." His hand pushes its way through the thick body of his black hair. "It's perfectly possible. It just seems weird ..." He trails off, consumed by possibilities and scenarios.

"Do you really think it could've been directed at her?"

"Again, it's not impossible," he says. "C'mon, Mol, what do we really know about this woman? That she's filthy rich and a little off her rocker? Not exactly the best combination for innocence."

"No, I guess not," Molly says. "Suddenly, this is getting a lot more interesting ... Think you'll be able to get to the bottom of it?"

"I guess we'll find out, won't we?"

BRENT & SARAH'S APT.-

Sarah doesn't delay in firing back a response, one filled with panic and rage and curiosity all at once. "Did she say that?"

"No, of course not," comes the reply. "But I could tell - the way she was talking, you know?"

Sarah nods. "God, why is she doing this? You'd think she would have gotten over this by now, wouldn't you? It's been more than two years ... It just goes to show how much damage Craig did to her." It sounds like she's talking to herself, thinking aloud, in an effort to convince herself of this.

"Craig - was that the one she was engaged to?"

Sarah looks Matt right in the eye. "She told you about him?"

"She gave me the short version," he explains. "He went nuts and tried to kill her and wound up dying ... ?"

"Yeah," Sarah says, keeping it succinct. Still, Craig's words from his final night flood her head all over again ...

CRAIG: All of this. It's gone too far. This whole charade needs to end -- now. And I think I know just how to do it.

He looks at Molly intensely as he prepares to squeeze the trigger.

BRENT: You wouldn't, Craig! You love her!

CRAIG: Lotta good that's done me, huh?

MOLLY: What are you talking about?

CRAIG: This wedding coming up ... it's nothing but a sham. You don't want to marry me -- you know it, I know it. I've known it for too long. But what could I do?

BRENT: I have no idea what's going on here, Craig. Would anyone care to fill me in?

MOLLY: I don't--

CRAIG: Let me tell him, dear. I'm surprised he doesn't already know what's going on. It seems pretty damn obvious to me.

BRENT: What, Craig? What is so obvious?

CRAIG: She's in love with you, Brent! Duh! It's not that hard to figure out!

"It was a mess, she comments, pulling herself off the porch on the terrible night and back into the apartment. "But I swear, that's what made her so clingy with Brent."

"Can't really blame her for it, can you?" The question goes unanswered. Matt adds, "So that's it? She just has this obsession with Brent?"

"Yeah," is the slightly defensive response. "I just figured she'd get over it eventually." She turns her back to him and begins toying with a pen that has been lying on the desk.

Matt watches her without saying anything more, battling the urge to shake her and scream what is clearly the truth right in her face.

FISHER HOME-

"Hi!" Paula cries happily, giving Helen a greeting hug. "Come in, come in!"

It is only once the door is closed that Paula notices the serious look on her friend's face. "What's the matter?"

"I'm not sure," Helen admits, seeing no point in mincing words. "I was just talking to Jason and he's ... worried about you." She pauses long enough to spot concern - but not anger - rising to the surface of

Paula's face. "Is something going on?"

Paula doesn't speak; her eyes remain focused on the floor.

"Paula? I overheard Jason telling Courtney that you had all the kids come over for some big announcement and then didn't make it ... What were you going to say?"

"It's nothing." Paula waves off the inquiry. "Just ... You can tell him that he doesn't need to worry."

Helen places her hands on Paula's shoulders. "No, I think you need to tell him - and Tim, Molly, Sarah, and Bill. And while you're at it ... Tell them why they don't need to worry. They deserve to know."

Paula considers the words but still shakes her head negatively.

ACT FOUR

DANIELLE'S APT.-

"Do you?" Andy shoots Danielle a challenging stare.

Danielle's mouth opens, closes, and then opens again. "Of course not!"

"Neither do I," says Andy. "But maybe we ought to postpone it."

"No! I know you're upset about your mom, but that ... that would be like letting her win." She shakes her head in disbelief. "The woman is in a damn coma and she's still going to get her way!"

Andy's head fills with the fiery words of his arguments with Katherine and suddenly feels a new resolve. "You're right. Our postponing the wedding isn't going to bring my mother out of that coma, and it's not going to help us, either."

"No, it's not," Danielle concurs. "Besides, my dad and brother are flying in and everything's booked and ... we're getting married."

"Yes we are," Andy chimes, staring at his fiancée as her comments of a few minutes ago swirl in his head.

FISHER HOME-

Helen narrows her eyes in confusion. "So you had something terribly important to tell your family and now you're just not going to do it?"

"It's not like that," Paula demurs.

"Then how is it?" Helen pauses, breathing to refocus herself. "It doesn't have to do with your health, does it?"

Paula shakes her head. "No, it's nothing like that."

"Paula, please," Helen sighs. "It's probably not any of my business, but it seems to me that it is your family's. You've come too far with this to just let it go now."

No response.

"I can tell you want to say something," Helen continues. "Now, I don't you why you haven't yet, or why you feel you can't, but ... you need to. Even if it's not something you think is important - it is. I remember when Sally came to King's Bay and Don didn't say anything to Courtney or me. If we had just known ... A lot of confusion would have been avoided, things never would have gotten as bad as they did."

She finally manages to snare Paula into eye contact.

"You need to tell them."

SARAH & BRENT'S APT.-

Sarah plops down onto the couch. Matt is gone, thank goodness. She takes a deep breath as she reviews their conversation; the pulse quickens on her brain as she does so.

Stupid Molly, she thinks, but immediately realizes that she's oversimplifying everything. Matt was hinting around, trying to get her to say it ... but she doesn't have to. She knows it and she's known it all along.

That solves it, she determines, rubbing her stomach. You're Brent's.

"You're Brent's," she whispers, moving her hand in a circle over the slight bulge in her middle.

END OF EPISODE #145

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