

WORKING THE ENGELS

Pilot

Written by

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ACT ONE

1

INT. UPSCALE TORONTO LAW OFFICE BOARDROOM - DAY

1

A prominent case has just been settled in the boardroom. CLOSE ON JENNA ENGEL - 28, one of the plaintiff's legal team. She is well dressed, pulled together, in command of her surroundings. Everything about her is effortlessly stylish. Everything says this young woman is on her way.

JENNA (V.O.)

In life, there's what you hope for
and what you get. You hope for a
great, exciting career--

GRAY HAIRE D LAWYER

Then we have a deal.

Jenna pushes her chair back about to shake hands with the plaintiffs, when suddenly THREE GIANT BINDERS and a stack of loose papers are clumsily dumped on the boardroom table in front of her.

ROCKIN MUSIC UNDER (KELSI LUCK "THAT'S WHAT I LIKE") CAMERA zooms in on JENNA ENGEL AND FREEZES:

Superimpose - '**JENNA**' in stylish block letters. It's like an image from a hipster English action film.

WORDS ON THE SCREEN then appear under her name - '**Mover. Shaker. Go-Getter.**'

A 40ish woman (CHARISSE) who looks like Diane Sawyer's drunk sister, stands over Jenna like a black cloud that smells of Altoids and Hermes perfume. Her tone is as warm as if she was talking to a vending machine.

CHARISSE

(off binders and papers)
Jenna get these filed and I want
the rest of the minutes from the
settlement meeting on my desk
tomorrow morning.

JENNA (V.O.)

But you get 80-hour work weeks and
Diane Sawyer's drunk sister for a
boss.

JENNA

Sure. Of course.

CHARISSE

And did you get those files from
The Minden Corporation lawsuit?

JENNA

The...?

CHARISSE

How many times do I have to tell
you things?

JENNA

Sorry, Charisse. I remember now..
I'll find them for you.

Jenna looks at another put-upon-looking new to the firm
lawyer, HECTOR.

JENNA (CONT'D)

(mouthing silently)

"The WHAT?"

HECTOR

(also silently)

"I have no idea..."

CHARISSE

(like a girlfriend)

Ask me about that case I'm working
on - the Miller divorce.

JENNA

Oh, how is that going?

CHARISSE

There. We talked about it. Now bill
for an extra two hours.

Jenna looks horrified. Unfortunately Charisse isn't finished
with Hector.

CHARISSE (CONT'D)

Hector, I need to see you in my
office. Those billing statements
you did for me are complete and
total shi-

(saved by an important

PARTNER coming up to her)

Hi, Daniel...

She takes him by the arm and walks away.

Hector and Jenna exchange a look. Jenna begins collecting the
binders.

2 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

2

Jenna and Hector make their way down the hall.

JENNA

I worked til 2 last night. You?

HECTOR

What time does Starbucks open in the morning? I worked til then, then wished I worked at Starbucks.

She hands off one of the binders and some papers.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

You hear how many hours Kathryn Fraisson logged last week? A hundred and sixty seven.

JENNA

What? Is that possible? Are there a hundred and sixty seven hours in a week?

HECTOR

Bitch ate and slept here. Had an hour off to go to the gynecologist. No doubt with something she picked up showering at the sink in the ladies room.

JENNA

Well, I have to get it in perspective. It's not all ridiculously long hours and -

At that moment an important looking associate walks by and plunks his finished coffee cup on top of the stack of binders and papers Jenna is carrying.

JENNA (CONT'D)

...bad treatment. Where is Kathryn by the way?

HECTOR

Oh she started hallucinating in the lunchroom after not sleeping for seventy seven hours. Charisse had her fired.

JENNA

That's nice.

They round the corner.

JENNA (CONT'D)

At least I have my nice offi-

3 INT. JENNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

3

She comes into her TINY office at the moment she sees two burly janitors, hefting a desk that they plunk down, right next to the other desk. It was already tiny and cramped and windowless. Now it's also crowded. A meek looking, pert blond 24 year old articling student (LAUREN) smiles hopefully.

LAUREN

Hi, are you Jenna? We're sharing.

4 INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - NORTH YORK, ONTARIO

4

CEIL ENGEL, mid 50's, a blousy, brazen, bull in a china shop sits across from her accountant, (MILES).

JENNA (V.O.)

I live in the real world. My mother Ceil, she likes to live in her own world.

CEIL

So...Miles. Tell me.

MILES

I just did.

CEIL

...In words I like better.

MILES

When your husband died, he left the books in disarray. The whole business is in the can.

CEIL

Can you put that nicer?

MILES

You're broke and in debt \$153,000.

CEIL

I said nicer.

MILES

Ceil, do you want me to sugar coat this?

CEIL

No, of course not.

(beat)

(MORE)

CEIL (CONT'D)

Maybe. Let me hear it that way. NO.
I need to know the truth. I raised
my kids that way, I live my life
that way, and that's how I'm gonna
face this. Head on. The truth.

Miles regroups. Begins a new explanation gingerly. One point
at a time.

MILES

Your husband died.

CEIL

This I know. So far we're okay...

MILES

He left you this business.

CEIL

Okay, fine. We're good. Keep going.

MILES

He owed some people some-

CEIL

Let me stop you right there.

They just look at each other. Miles doesn't know what to say.

MILES

(finally)
Ceil-

CEIL

I'll think of something...I always
do. I've got my kids to think of.
(brightly)
Did I tell you Jimmy got a new job?
He's in public relations.

5

EXT. STRIP CLUB - TORONTO - DAY

5

Strip clubs have become trendy. This one isn't. It's gross. *
The doors fly open and JIMMY ENGEL, 32, a bad boy with a good *
heart exits, 'escorting' two burly BUSINESSMEN in a headlock. *

JIMMY

What'd I tell you? Don't touch the *
dancers. What did you do? *

BUSINESS MAN

I just touched her shoe. *

JIMMY

Get out of here! Don't come back!

He gives them a shove. As the businessmen start to walk away -

BUSINESS MAN

(noticing)

Hey, that guy took my watch!

They turn and chase JIMMY, who takes off running.

JIMMY

Haaa! I don't even work here!

Jimmy runs into traffic - EXPERTLY SLIDES ACROSS A CAB HOOD -

FREEZE FRAME - 'JIMMY'

And the words - '**Small time criminal. Voted most popular at juvie hall. Afraid of bees**'.

CEIL (O.S.)

My children are my life.

6 INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

6

Ceil is getting ready to leave. Getting her things together - tells the story as if she's the Kennedy matriarch.

CEIL

I love them with everything I have.
There's Jenna - she's made a big
success of herself in Toronto as a
big-time lawyer. Her life is
glamorous, that's for sure.

CUT TO:

7 INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

7

Jenna is standing on a packed subway car. Arms outstretched all around her like a really not fun game of Twister. Finally she gets an inch of space when someone gets off. A moment later, her look of relief at an inch of space for her face to be in is broken when a giant GUY with an overcoat covers her entire face with his arm as he grabs on to the rail. Jenna's eyes are visible. And they are not reading "I'm comfortable"

8 INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

8

BACK ON CEIL

CEIL

Big lawyer, a great apartment in
downtown Toronto. A lovely
roommate.

CUT TO:

9 INT. JENNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

9

Jenna comes into her apartment after a long day. She turns a light on in her dingy kitchen. Her roommate SHIRL, who looks like Jessica Chastain in a windstorm, is sitting there in the dark, naked eating macaroni and cheese.

JENNA

Shirl...Clothes?

SHIRL

The light was off. Who's gonna see?

JENNA

The light is now ON and me. We've talked about this.

SHIRL

You've talked. I've just listened.

JENNA

In the nude.

(really can't do this)

Look, whatever...

(off the chair)

Could you at least put some pants on? Those are our kitchen chairs.

SHIRL

What? I put a doily down.

JENNA

Oh, God...

10 EXT. TORONTO STREET - NIGHT

10

WE SEE a big silver SUV come screeching to a halt in front of a Bed Bath and Beyond. There is a tiny parking space.

11 INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - DAY

11

Miles is walking with Ceil down the hall.

CEIL

And there's Sandy-

MILES

Yes, you've told me about--

Ceil talks as if she is being interviewed by Barbara Walters - not ignored by Miles.

CEIL

My wonderful daughter Sandy. She had a rough time - her husband left her. She took it hard but she's on an upswing. Doing a lot of work on herself. She's taken up the bible. Which has really toned down some of her recent addictions of which I'd rather not speak.

(a whisper)

Cocaine...pills...you know.

CUT TO:

12 INT. CAR - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

12

SANDY ENGEL, 35, jewelry, tight clothes, could be a 'Real Housewives of North York' if she was still married, is listening to the BIBLE as a book on tape while on the phone.

SANDY

I got it as a book on tape, baby.
It's Leviticus read by Danny Glover. I love it. He really brings it to life. I mean if we can all find the peace in our heart--
(looks out her back window)
What the freak??

13 EXT. CAR - SAME TIME

13

We see a crappy red Hyundai is now inching into the parking space frontways as Sandy backs up into the space.

Suddenly Sandy flies out of her car. Waving a finger.

SANDY

Uh uh! Back the hell up, Freakshow!

The car lurches forward another few inches. Sandy looks like she's going to explode. She stops herself. Looks at her WWJD bracelet. Takes a deep breath and walks towards the window.

Sandy indicates 'Roll your window down' to the bald, paunchy GUY behind the wheel. He does.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Sir...I believe we can work this out in a mutually acceptable way. You see...I was clearly indicating my intention to-

BALD GUY

Get outta my way, bitch.

With lightning fast reflexes, Sandy punches the guy in the face, swings his door open, pulls him out and throws him on the street.

FREEZE ON SANDY: '**SANDY**'

Then words - '**Former pill popper. Occasional shoplifter. Life coach.**'

Back to action:

Sandy gets in the car. She lurches it backwards out of the parking space. Then she gets out, walks over to hers and backs it effortlessly into the space. As the guy gets up. Sandy gets out of the car and presses the alarm which beeps a couple of times.

SANDY

I told you we could work this out.

14 INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - DAY 14

Miles and Ceil at the elevators.

CEIL

I love my family more than anything. Which is why I can't do this to them. I can't put them through this.

The rest of her dialogue continues, O.S.

CUT TO:

15 INT. ENGEL'S FAMILY HOUSE - DAY 15

We see CEIL now walking, a glass of wine in her hand. She walks down the hall, determined as she pumps herself up with her positive affirmations.

CEIL

I'm like a bull in a Candy store when it comes to my kids. I'll protect them. I've been through way worse than this.

*

She throws open french doors to the light-- takes a step out.

16 EXT. ENGEL'S FAMILY - DECK OUTSIDE FRENCH DOORS 16

Without breaking stride, Ceil walks outside, sun hits her face.

CEIL
Nothing is going to keep me down.
Nothing!

She climbs over the balcony - and jumps off the roof.

MID AIR - AS SHE IS FLAILING TO THE GROUND - FREEZE ON CEIL.

'CEIL'

Then words - '**Momma Bear, Adventurer, Dog Owner**'.

Back to action as CEIL PLUMMETS TO THE GROUND.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FROM BELOW - The brick patio and the large family Barbecue - Ceil lands hard on the bbq. Beat. It collapses. That was nasty.

CEIL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Goddammit.

Ceil's body is in a heap on the bbq which itself is now a twisted heap. Blood is next to her head. She is barely conscious. The light changes - the twilight between life and the afterlife. We HEAR HER THOUGHTS:

CEIL (V.O.)
Am I dead? I think I'm dead. Do you
smell dog piss in heaven? Why
didn't I hose off this patio...

With those last words - Ceil closes her eyes. She's gone.

END OF ACT ONE

*

ACT TWO

17 INT. NORTH YORK HOSPITAL - DAY

17

Jenna comes bursting through the doors. She makes her way down the hall to the nurse's station.

JENNA
(to the NURSE)
I'm looking for my mother, Celia Engel.

NURSE
(checking a board)
She's in exam room 12. But you can't go in there-

Jenna rushes down the hall.

JENNA
Whatever...

As she rushes towards the exam room she passes the waiting room. She hears a voice.

SANDY (O.C.)
Jenna...

Jenna stops, turns to the waiting room where she sees Sandy standing and pacing. And Jimmy sitting on a chair looking shaken. Jenna hugs Sandy.

JENNA
Hey...

SANDY
Hey baby...It's terrible.

JENNA
What happened?

SANDY
Honey, I think she tried to off herself.

She stops hugging Sandy. Jimmy goes to stand up.

JENNA

Oh, God. I'd say, 'Look who the cat dragged in' but it would make me hate cats.

JIMMY

Fair enough. Just thought we should hug.

JENNA

We're not gonna hug, Jimmy. Try paying Mom back that 12 grand you stole from her, then I'll hug you.

JIMMY

You guys. It's me. We used to be close. Jenna, who beat up those kids that were stealing your lunch money?

*

*

Jenna nods, acknowledging.

JENNA

You beat up the wrong kids.

JIMMY

It was the thought... And Sandy, who sat with you the time you ate four pot brownies and thought you were two people?

*

SANDY

Those were good times.

JIMMY

I love you guys. I'm different. Okay?

*

JENNA

I don't believe you.

SANDY

Okay, no. No fighting. Mommy tried to kill herself-

(starting to crescendo)

And we can't turn this whole thing into a SHITSHOW!

Sandy is twirling out. Jenna clearly realizes this isn't the time.

JENNA
 Okay...fine... *
 (looks to Jimmy,
 softens)
 Is she going to be okay? *

JIMMY
 We don't know anything yet... *

Jenna actually looks worried. Jimmy hugs her. She lets him. *
 Sandy gloms on, holding on to both of them. *

JIMMY (CONT'D) *
 (as they hug) *
 I hope so. I'm not ready for Mom to *
 fall off her perch. I'm just not. I *
 mean we just lost...you know...

A beat. The following is said while they are still in their *
 family embrace: *

JENNA
 (finally)
 DAD?? *

Jimmy doesn't let go - they're now fighting while hugging. *

JENNA (CONT'D) *
 Did you forget his name when you *
 were in jail for embezzling from *
 our parents?

SANDY *
 (off hug) *
 This feels good. *

A DOCTOR (DR. LOWELL) comes in to the waiting room. *

DR. LOWELL
 Are you the Engels family?

JENNA
 Yes...

SANDY
 Doctor...is she going to live?

They all turn to the doctor.

SANDY (CONT'D)
 Break it to us. We can take it.

DR. LOWELL
 Well -

SANDY

I think I just peed my pants.

JENNA

Some of us can take it better than others.

DR. LOWELL

(plowing on)

She's alive. But...It seems that your mother did attempt suicide.

JENNA

Oh my God...

Sandy puts her arm instinctively around her little sister. The reality of this news hits all of them hard. Jimmy looks shaken too. He comes over and takes Jenna's other hand. They're going to get through this together.

DR. LOWELL

She's very lucky...When she jumped -

SANDY

Oh my God, she jumped...

The doctor continues gravely.

DR. LOWELL

When she jumped, she landed on the barbecue.

There's a beat of stunned silence.

JENNA

...The what?

DR. LOWELL

The barbecue.

SANDY

Come again?

(trying to put it together)

Doctor - what did she jump off?

DR. LOWELL

She jumped off the roof your house.

JENNA

(trying to put it together)

(MORE)

JENNA (CONT'D)
 Our house...which is one STOREY
 TALL?

SMASH CUT TO:

18 EXT. CEIL'S BACKYARD - DAY (FLASHBACK) 18

Flash back to scene where Ceil jumps off the roof. FROM ANOTHER ANGLE - We see how low the sloping roof goes. Ceil jumps - goes about six feet and lands on the bbq.

CUT BACK TO:

19 INT. HOSPITAL - PRESENT 19

DR. LOWELL
 She could have been seriously
 injured. Thankfully the barbecue
 broke her fall.

He waits for them to say something. None of them can speak.

DR. LOWELL (CONT'D)
 She has some lacerations.

JENNA
 (who cares)
 Uh huh...

DR. LOWELL
 Broke her fibula.

JIMMY
 So...she can't have sex again?

JENNA
 Gross. And go back to school.

DR. LOWELL
 You can see her if you'd like.

JENNA
 (absently)
 Yeah, great. Thanks...

The doctor walks away. The three of them just stand there for a stunned moment. Finally, Sandy breaks the silence.

SANDY
 Let's get some answers from that
 crazy bitch.

20

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

20

The three of them are now standing facing the bed. Ceil wakes up, as if she'd been sleeping. She's over dramatic.

CEIL

You're all here...

JENNA

Oh, we're all here. I left my office in the middle of the day and got a train out here and a cab from the station - only to discover that my mother jumped off the low sloping roof of a single story ranch style house and landed on the bbq. I wouldn't have missed this for the world.

SANDY

Seriously...what the hell?

CEIL

I did it for you three.

JENNA

What are you talking about?

CEIL

For the -
(whispers)
Insurance money.

JENNA

Mom, we don't need insurance money.

Ceil looks away. Then notices Jimmy. She holds her hand out to him.

CEIL

How's my baby boy?

SANDY

Oh Jesus...The fall didn't affect the part of her brain that favors our screw up brother. I'M HERE TOO, MOTHER.

As usual, no one notices. Jimmy takes his mother's hand.

JIMMY

Seriously, Mom...Why'd ya do this?

JENNA

And don't give us this insurance money B.S. We don't need-

SANDY

You know what I need? I need to pop down the hall and help myself to something from the pill closet. This stress is making me relapsey.

JENNA

(holding Sandy's arm)
Don't you go anywhere.

SANDY

Don't tell me what to do. The only one who I listen to to help me make my decisions is Jesus.

JENNA

Oh for fu- What?

SANDY

Got the book on tape in the car.

CEIL

She's improving herself.

JIMMY

Cool. 'You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.'

SANDY

Ah ah. Don't ruin it. I haven't gotten to that part.

JIMMY

Was that the bible or Star Wars? *

CEIL

(certain) *

It was that Yodel.

JENNA

Yoda? Mom?

CEIL

(more certain) *

Star Wars. With Judas the Hut.

JENNA

Okay, no one speak.
(shakes her head)
(MORE)

JENNA (CONT'D)

I have to get back to work.. If I haven't been fired.

CEIL

The money...Daddy's law practice.
He left it to all of us.

*
*

JENNA

And we agreed we'd sell it as soon as--

*
*
*

CEIL

Daddy left it in debt.

*
*

JENNA

How much?

CEIL

\$153,000.

*

JIMMY

Whoa...

SANDY

Visualize love and light!
I gotta smudge.

JENNA

Sandy. Pull it the eff together.

Sandy pulls out some sage, lights it and starts smudging the room, swirling a feather around.

CEIL

I just didn't want to saddle you
three with that - I didn't know
what else to do?

This hits Jenna. It almost seems real.

JENNA

We'll figure something out.

Sandy goes by her with the smudge stick.

CEIL

(feigning bravery)
We've got each other.

Jenna looks at the FAMILY TABLEAU in front of her - Sandy smudging the room and taking hits off the smudge stick like it's something more potent, Ceil literally practicing "a brave face" in the mirror and Jimmy playing with the IV pole and unsnaps something on it that looks important with a quiet "oops." It causes a beeping sound.

JENNA

Yeah, that's what concerns me...

22 EXT. STREETS OF NORTH YORK - DAY 22 *

Establishing - JACK ENGEL LAW OFFICE, est. 1989. *

22A INT. JACK ENGEL LAW OFFICE - DAY 22A *

Jenna is looking around her father's law office. An open plan loft space on the ground floor of an old store front. Exposed brick, hardwood floors. A one-man operation with a reception desk and a couple of offices and a small board room. Mementos of his life with his family. A very different vibe than Jenna's downtown law office. *

Jimmy is in the BG packing up a box. *

JIMMY

We can probably sell a lot of what's here...might make a dent in what we owe. I put stickers on things we could sell. *

JENNA

(noticing)
My baby picture? *

JIMMY

Someone could want to buy a picture of a baby. It's not like it's Sandy's. I mean, she turned out okay but look at that... *

JENNA

(looking at picture)
That's a full head of mens hair. *

JIMMY

It's like a Sharpei in a wig. *

A girl about 22 (AMBER) enters the storefront - she is Christina Aguilera-esque, tight jeans, a blinged-out baseball hat. *

AMBER
 I called. Amber Brosetti. Your Dad
 was working for me. So sorry for
 your loss.

In the BG Jimmy is running packing tape over the box. Every
 time he does it makes a screeching sound, drowning out parts
 of the following:

 AMBER (CONT'D)
 We all loved him here in town...he
 (PACKING TAPE SCREECH)...And when
 he (PACKING TAPE SCREECH)...we all -
 -(PACKING TAPE SCREECH).

 JENNA
 Jimmy!

 JIMMY
 Sorry.

Jimmy tries to do it quietly in short staccato bursts.

 AMBER
 Anyway...

 JENNA
 Right - you're suing Colleen's
 house of hair for negligence and
 damages incurred from...incident.
 (looks at her)
 What "incident?"

Amber takes her hat off. Her hair is half straightened and
 half curly almost afro-ish.

 AMBER
 Bitch walked out in the middle of
 straightening my hair...Like just
 quit.

 JENNA
 (reading the file)
 "Plaintiff - Amber Brosetti,
 defendant, 'That bitch.'" Okay,
 well your deposition needs some
 work. I know you were Dad's client,
 we'll find you another lawyer.

 AMBER
 I don't want another lawyer.

JENNA

But yours is dead. That puts a crimp in the legal proceedings.

Jimmy puts a box of case files down near Jenna. Spots Amber's bad haired head. *

JIMMY

Yowsa!

(badly covering)

HOT! *

Jenna shoots him a look. Jimmy starts looking at the files. *

JIMMY (CONT'D)

All these are ongoing cases? Dad had a lot of business. We could work with these. *

JENNA

Right after you go to Kinkos and print up a law degree?

JIMMY

(to Amber, not without charm)

What happened to you, hit and run?

JENNA

Not helping.

JIMMY

(to Amber)

Go see my friend Japanese Sheila. She'll take care of you. She does hair straightening.

He grabs a piece of paper and starts writing a number down.

JENNA

(to Jimmy)

Really? Japanese Sheila?

JIMMY

What. I know two Sheila's. Japanese Sheila and stripper Sheila. Sorry, *dancer*.

JENNA

Because it's offensive to call a stripper a stripper but nothing about calling someone Japanese Sheila?

Front door JINGLES. A 50ish MOBSTER-looking guy (SAL) enters. *

SAL
Hey. You the daughter?

JENNA
(to Sal)
We're closed. Even though no one
seems to be paying attention to the
sign.

AMBER
(flirting w/ Jimmy)
You wanna walk me to my car?

JENNA
I don't think that's such a-

JIMMY
Why not?

JENNA
Oh, great. *

They exit. Sal stares at Jenna. *

SAL
I know you're planning on selling
the business - I want my money. *

JENNA
(unnerved) *

...Were you a client?

SAL
Yeah...your dad helped me with
some....business.

JENNA
Could you have just said
'business?' Did you have to pause
so I'd know you didn't mean
business you meant something
illegal? I don't want to know this.

SAL
I think you already know this.

JENNA
Look -

SAL
Sal...Sal Dimeo.

He holds out his hand. She hesitates, then shakes it. *

JENNA
You're Trina's Dad.

SAL
You two were in high school
together. You been to my house...
(menacingly)
And I've been to yours. *

JENNA
Is that a threat?

SAL
No, it's just unpleasant. Your
mother could clean a carpet or pick
up some cat hair once in awhile.
And once she made me and my wife
Donna some cheese puffs. Donna had
the trots for-

JENNA
Why are you here?

SAL
I helped him pay off a little
gambling problem. He owes me 10
g's.

JENNA
Oh my god. I'm about to jump onto
the barbecue.

Jenna's phone buzzes. She looks down, sees the name
'CHARISSE' on the screen.

JENNA (CONT'D)
Oh no...hang on.
(presses speaker on phone) *
Hi, Charisse, sorry. I had to go to
the hospital my mother had an
accident.

SPLIT SCREEN OF CALL BETWEEN JENNA IN HER OFFICE AND -- *

22B INT. CHERISSE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

22B *

Charisse on phone in her corner office. *

CHARISSE
(robot would be warmer)
I'm so sorry. That's terrible. Is
she alive? *

JENNA

Yes. She is...

CHARISSE

You left the office in the middle
of the day for a non life
threatening accident? Did she lose
a leg?

JENNA

No.

CHARISSE

Or an arm? Did she lose her sight?

JENNA

No...Nothing like that.

CHARISSE

Then get your ass back here in one
hour or I'll fire it. Jenna, ask me
about our client Pretty Lady Waxing
Strips...

JENNA

Charisse I'm not going to answer
that, so you can illegally bill
them.

CHARISSE

There, we talked about it.

Cherisse hangs up on Jenna. Beat.

SAL

Well, that was unpleasant. Not
cheese puffs-unpleasant, but close.
That's your boss? The big lawyer
your dad told me you worked for?

JENNA

That's her.

SAL

You might want to reconsider a more
joyful line of work.

JENNA

I'm way ahead of you. You'll get
your money, Mr. Dimeo. Okay?

SAL

Before you sell.

JENNA
We're not selling.
(beat. Determined)
I'm taking over.

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*

ON JENNA, not at all sure with her own decision.

*

END OF ACT TWO

*

*

ACT THREE

24 EXT. KING ST. TORONTO - DAY 24

Jenna walks along, talking on her cell.

JENNA

(into phone)

Jimmy, remember when I was running that cross country race at school. You came to support me? I stopped midway, I was out of breath and totally wearing the wrong bra...

INTERCUT WITH:

25 EXT. ENGELS BACKYARD - SAME TIME 25

Jimmy is smoking and trying to fix the mangled BBQ. His phone to his ear. (CALL IS INTERCUT BETWEEN JIMMY IN BACKYARD AND JENNA ON STREET):

JIMMY

Is this going somewhere?

JENNA

Yeah. You said something to me. I'll never forget. You said, 'Be brave, Jenna. Finish the race. Even if you're last, finish the race.' Every time I have wanted to back down from something, I have thought of that.

*
*

JIMMY

Why are you telling me this? Are you dying? I can't take another--

JENNA

No, dude. I'm about to finish the race.

26 INT. TORONTO LAW OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 26

Jenna breezes into her old office. She waves at the receptionist. She picks up a coffee mug someone's discarded. Marches down the hall - the same jerk who plunked his coffee cup on top of her things. She plunks the mug down on the papers he's carrying.

JENNA

You like that, Tim? Neither did I.

She breezes down the hallway. Goes into her VERY CROWDED OFFICE - where Lauren the perky articling student sits now looking like a shell of herself, exhausted and with dark circles under her eyes.

LAUREN

Morning, Jenna.

JENNA

Lauren, if you want a better job.
(slips her a card)
Call me.

She goes over to her desk, takes a picture off it, opens her desk and takes out her pen, her stapler and a tiny bottle of booze.

She drops the booze off on Lauren's desk on her way out.

JENNA (CONT'D)

You'll need this sometime...You'll know when.

She makes her way out of the office and down the hall again. Hector rushes up to her.

HECTOR

Hey, where you been - Charisse is-

JENNA

Hector, be strong. It's just you now.

HECTOR

You're leaving?

JENNA

Something like that.

27

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

27

Jenna comes in to the boardroom where Charisse is sitting with about 12 important looking partners from the firm.

Charisse looks up and sees her.

CHARISSE

Jenna, this is a partners' meeting.
If we wanted coffee or danish we'd have asked for it.

She walks over and plunks down a bottle of pills.

JENNA

Here's the pills you asked me to pick up to treat that Chlamydia problem. But that's what you get when you sleep with a married client, Charisse. Take care!

She walks out cheerfully. As Charisse looks around horrified and covering and furious and helpless with the rattly bottle of pills on the table.

CHARISSE

You're fired.

Jenna stops at the door.

JENNA

(laughing)

Seriously...If you couldn't tell that was me QUITTING you're an even worse lawyer than you are an illegal overbiller.

(to a woman taking notes)

Yeah. Have a look through her billing statements. You're welcome.

28 INT. JENNA'S APARTMENT - DAY 28

Jenna is packing a bag in her room. She's got everything she needs. Zips up the bag.

29 INT. JENNA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 29

Jenna comes into the living room where Shirl is naked playing Wii tennis.

JENNA

Okay, that's me then.

SHIRL

You sure you're leaving?

JENNA

We've had such fun...but yes.

SHIRL

I'll have my boyfriend move in. It's a big step. He's never seen me in the morning without makeup.

Jenna hoists up her bag.

JENNA

Oh, he's gonna see a lot more than that. It's all well and good and sexy in the bedroom - but not so much leaning over in the bathroom cleaning the tub...

She exits.

21 EXT. ENGEL'S FAMILY HOUSE - DAY 21 *

Jimmy pushes Ceil up the walk in a wheelchair. That goes well until he bumps her up the stairs front ways. It's not pretty. And looks painful. But it gets done. *

30 INT. ENGEL'S FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT 30

Sandy is on the phone. She looks out the window, summons courage.

SANDY

(into phone)

It's Sandy Engel. Is this Maxine Vanderhees? Look I know in school we all called you 'Maxi-pad Venereal Disease' and I want to say I'm sorry...That was wrong. And it's wrong that it still makes me laugh a little.

(defensive)

I'm calling because you're on the list between George Gayhoffer and Vivian Dick...That's not very nice. Look, Maxi-pad, I'm just trying to make amends, bitch!

She hangs up. Does some calming deep breaths. Ceil wheels into the room.

CEIL

Sandy, how good of you to be here...

SANDY

Mother, spare me the thing where you talk like someone from Downton Abbey, okay? You jumped off the roof, you landed on the bbq, you broke your leg, you're home.

(makes a farting noise with her lip)

End of story.

Jimmy enters, holding a messy haired black and white Shihtzu (This is MAHTZU).

CEIL
My darling Mahtzu.

SANDY
(looking up at him)
Darling. He bites everything in sight. A kleenex box with eyes.

JIMMY
Those aren't his eyes. He's just talking.

Jimmy places him down on Ceil's lap.

CEIL
Yes, Sandy. You have to understand he was abused.

Mahtzu starts attacking the pillow in Ceil's lap. Sandy and Jimmy ignore it. It happens all the time.

JIMMY
If you're good, I'm gonna take off.

SANDY
Whaddya you mean if she's good? No she's not good. And I'm not lifting her into the frickin' bathtub and stuff...You stole our parent's nest egg they'd been saving all their lives - you're gonna stay and make good, douchebag. That's what Jesus would say.

Jenna enters from outside.

JENNA
Maybe not in those words.

CEIL
Jenna, is that you?

JENNA
Mom...you broke your leg, you're not blind. No one's going anywhere. We need to talk. Sit down.

CEIL
(trying to be funny)
I'm already sitting.

JENNA

Mom, let's not do cute. We're still not happy about your cannonball onto the bbq.

CEIL

I'm all ears.
(Mahtzu bites her. She's unfazed)
Ow.

31 INT. LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

31

Jenna hands out a business plan to each of them.

JENNA

Here's what's going to happen. I quit my job.

CEIL

(like someone just broke into the house)
Oh my God, NO!

JENNA

I'm coming back here to run Daddy's law firm.

CEIL

(about face, bright and cheery)
Wonderful!

SANDY

(to Ceil)
What're you on, woman?
(beat, interested)
Seriously...like Ativan?...
Klonopin?...Vailium?
(a misty memory)
An oldie but a goodie.

A cell phone rings. Jimmy casually reaches into his breast pocket and stops it.

JENNA

(ignoring Sandy and the cell phone)
So I'm going to keep the business going. There's all these clients who need a good lawyer, someone who can make a difference in their lives.

*
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(MORE)

JENNA (CONT'D)

And it may sound cheesy but it's
why I became a lawyer in the first
place. We can pay down the debt.
And I guess this has always been a
dream of mine.

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*

CEIL

You can't do it alone, honey,
we'll help you.

*
*

JENNA

Okay, less of a dream.

*
*

CEIL

Daddy left the business to all of
us, we can all chip in to help.

*
*
*

JENNA

No, really - fine. Dream over.
Nightmare. Something's happening.

*
*
*

CEIL

Sandy could come and work for you
as your receptionist!

*

JENNA

What? God. No!

SANDY

What's wrong with me? I trained as
a secretary when I finished college
and before I joined that cult.

*

JENNA

Ugh...I guess I do need a
receptionist.

*
*
*

Another cell phone rings. This time a different ring tone.
Jimmy casually reaches into a different jacket pocket and
stops it.

CEIL

(to Jenna)
I'll help you, too.

*

JENNA

(Can't stop the train.)
Okay, no...no.

*
*
*

CEIL

I've got paralegal training and I
remember a thing or two -
(almost to herself)
(MORE)

*
*

CEIL (CONT'D)

Like when your father couldn't remember the name of a case and I'm like, "Who doesn't remember Howard vs. Cornwall board of education? Case law established by the precedent set by Johnson vs. Premier Secondary School in which search and seizure in school with reasonable suspicion is allowed."

SANDY

Klonopin. That's definitely Klonopin.

JIMMY

I can work for you too.

*

SANDY

Because she'll need someone to steal all her money. Thank goodness you volunteered.

JIMMY

You gotta give me a chance. I'm sorry for the stuff I did. I never got to say sorry to Dad. I mean, he forgave me which made it even worse. I know I messed up - I know I did....I can do investigations and stuff. I've done that. I worked for a guy--

JENNA

--Don't tell me anymore. You know, Jimmy...even though I didn't...Dad did forgive you.

CEIL

And so did Mommy.

SANDY

Uch...now there's a surprise.

JENNA

(finally)

You can make it up to me. You can make it up to Mom and Dad.

Another cell phone rings. This time Jimmy reaches into the back pocket of his jeans, without taking his eyes off his sister, and stops it.

JENNA (CONT'D)

And you can make it up to whoever
you stole those cell phones from.

JIMMY

(as if it's poignant)
I will...

They all stand there. This is a significant moment.

CEIL

This is so wonderful all my-

JENNA

-Oh God-

SANDY

-Did you have to ruin it-

JIMMY

-Always with the too much-

CEIL

Fine then! I'll just wheel myself
into the kitchen and make myself a
gin and tonic.

JENNA

We can do this. We can work
together and help each other.

A big show as Ceil squeaks and squacks the wheel chair an
inch at a time into the kitchen, making a big production
number out of how hard it is. But they all just ignore her
histrionics which are BEGGING for reaction.

CEIL

...Who can help me?

No one moves.

JENNA

...Aaand we're off to a good start.

As Mahtzu attacks the pillow on Ceil's lap again, WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

32 INT. JACK ENGEL LAW OFFICE - DAY 32

Jenna comes in with some boxes. Setting up the law office. She sees her mother now on crutches making her way along. Suddenly there is a small crash as a car hits another.

33 EXT. STREET - DAY 33

Jenna comes out and watches. Ceil is somehow over at the scene like her crutches are bionic. Both drivers are now out and surveying the damage. Ceil goes up to one of the guys whose car was involved.

CEIL

(holding out a card)

I saw the whole thing, my daughter is a lawyer. Call her. I saw it, he hit you.

DRIVER

Actually I hit him.

CEIL

(handing the other guy the card)

Same thing...

Jenna watching, she shakes her head and smiles.

JENNA

(calling her over)

Ma...that's good for today.

Jenna looks down the street - the small street in North York. The stationery store, the candy shop, the women's auxiliary clothing store, the donut shop, the deli. The place she knows all too well.

JENNA (V.O.)

In life there's what you hope for and what you get. I'm hoping this was a good idea. Let's see what I get.

She laughs. Goes inside.

THE END