

LEGAL SENSE

PILOT - "BUT THE TRUTH"

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Legal Sense
Pilot: "But the Truth"

TEASER

FADE IN:

Over black.

BRIAN (V.O.)
Everything's crashing down around
me.

INT. BRIAN & LAUREN'S NY APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

An upscale Manhattan apartment: polished wood floors, a view of the city. It's a contrast to the emotional chaos we're witnessing. LAUREN OLSON, 30s, moneyed, blonde, is doing her best to stay calm. BRIAN FULTON, 30s, bespectacled, attractive, is yelling.

BRIAN
YOU WEREN'T AT THE GYM!

LAUREN
I was!

BRIAN
Don't lie to me.

LAUREN
I'm not.

We see a YOUNG INDIAN BOY, 8 - let's call him RAJIV, suddenly standing next to Lauren. He was NOT there a moment ago. Though he's cute, his expression is blank. There's something other-worldly about this kid - *he almost glows, and seems completely out of place in this situation*. Rajiv wears a white t-shirt with a single word across the front in red letters: "LIAR". He's looking at Brian.

BRIAN
What machines did you use?

LAUREN
I was on the elliptical, then I
switched to the bike and after that
the free weights and then the
sauna.

Brian stares at Rajiv. *We sense Brian's sadness that Rajiv is still here.*

(CONTINUED)

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BRIAN
You're lying.

LAUREN
What's wrong with you?

Brian turns away from her, dizzy. He's sweating.

BRIAN
I want to trust you. Tell me the truth. Who were you with?

LAUREN
At the gym?

BRIAN
YOU WEREN'T THERE! Who was it? You smell like sex. Give me a name! Is it a him? A her?

LAUREN
I can't have this conversation -

Brian turns back to her, wide eyed.

BRIAN
You have to! Was it someone I know?

Lauren's mouth hangs open: *How did he guess that?* Her expression is all he needs. His eyes well up, he swipes a jacket from somewhere and heads to the door.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
I should have had a drink tonight.
I could have -

LAUREN
Where are you going?

Brian stops short. Thinks. Opens the front door. There's no place to go.

BRIAN
TELL ME WHO IT IS!

Lauren stares at him. She's shaking! A moment. Then -

LAUREN
Allen.

Bingo. Brian's face falls, he tries to catch his breath. Lauren starts crying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRIAN (V.O.)
My boss. They'd met at our
Christmas party.

Brian swipes a glass from a table. SMASHES it against the wall. Lauren screams.

BRIAN
Get out.

LAUREN
Brian -

BRIAN
Get the fuck out. Go be with him -
AND his wife. Go!

LAUREN
No. I can't - I didn't mean it. I
just - couldn't help -

She sinks to the floor. Brian searches the ceiling for answers. Wipes his brow. He opens the door. Leaves, slamming it behind him.

INT. HALLWAY BRIAN & LAUREN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

He's stumbling down the hall, dazed - his world rocked.

BRIAN (V.O.)
I should have had a scotch and
soda. That's all I could think
about.

The door opens behind him. Brian stops and turns back. Lauren is in the doorway in tears. *Rajiv is still beside her.*

LAUREN
I'm sorry.

Brian locks eyes with Rajiv.

BRIAN
Sorry's what you say when you bump
into somebody on the subway. When
you're late for dinner. Not when
you have sex with someone's boss.
If I'd been drunk I wouldn't have
suspected. I wouldn't have *seen the*
signs. But I wasn't drunk. Yet.

INT. BAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Brian, looking like shit, stares into space at the bar. Though the place is crowded, everything is muffled to Brian - like he's underwater. We hear the rumbling of a drink sliding across the counter. It stops right in front of him. Brian's feeling no pain as he looks at it.

BRIAN (V.O.)
But that could be remedied.

He gulps it down like a man dying of thirst.

INT. NY OFFICES OF LEGAL AID - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Brian tears through the office like a tornado, a walking temper tantrum, knocking things from desks as he goes. He heads for a room at the end of the hall. The door has a large frosted glass window with a name on it: Allen Gaines. Brian grabs the doorknob.

ALLEN
Bri - what are you doing here so late?

Brian turns, to ALLEN, 40s, momentarily startled. After a dazed moment, he PUNCHES Allen. The man goes down.

BRIAN (V.O.)
I beat the shit out of him. I think.

INT. BASEMENT OF CHURCH OF THE ANGELS - NIGHT

A 12 step meeting in progress. Men and women in a circle of chairs, some nursing coffee. They hang on every word.

BRIAN
I don't remember. The rest was a blur. Until the police came.

INT. HALLWAY / NY OFFICES OF LEGAL AID - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Two BURLY POLICE OFFICERS drag Brian down the hall in handcuffs. He's spent. Allen, woozy and bleeding, gives him the evil eye.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Brian's pushed in. SIX OTHER DRUNKS are in the cell, sleeping it off. One opens an eye to see what's happening.

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BRIAN

There's nothing like a little jail time to get you to look at things. My relationship: over. Job: over. And after trying to reinvent myself, I'd turned into my mother: a jailbird. That's when I realized I can't trust the people I came from. I can't trust the people I know. Or myself.

(beat)

I was too embarrassed to make my one phone call.

INT. CHURCH OF THE ANGELS / NEW YORK - NIGHT

BRIAN

I thought my life was over. Kinda was.

(beat)

I moved into a hotel - not even a nice one. And I drank and felt like shit.

(beat)

But then a head hunter called me - out of the blue. A job interview on Skype. It went ok. And now I've got a second interview - in Baltimore, my home town. I haven't seen my crazy family in years, except for my dad. And I don't want to. But the job is calling me. So -

EXT. MCNEAL HOUSE - BALTIMORE, MD - NIGHT

It's raining. Brian's soaked. He approaches a beautiful three story brownstone. He knocks.

The door opens. SEAMUS MCNEAL, 30s, a bear of a man with vibrant red hair, is smiling at him on the other side.

BRIAN (V.O.)

I'm going to see if I can make this work.

INT. MCNEAL HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Brian lies in bed wide awake. We hear SEX SOUNDS: MOANING and GRUNTING. Deeply felt. Passionate. It's getting LOUDER. WTF?

We pull back and notice Brian's wearing PAJAMAS and he's in bed ALONE. The SEX SOUNDS are coming from *inside the house*.

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CONTINUED:

Brian sits up, pissed, snatches his iPhone from the nightstand: 4:25am. There's a missed call from *Lauren Olson* on the home screen. Brian THROWS the phone across the room. Grabs his glasses.

INT. MCNEAL HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brian stares at the LIQUOR CABINET. He eyes the RUM.

INT. MCNEAL HOUSE - KITCHEN - HOURS LATER - DAY

Brian, now in a suit, comes down the stairs and enters the state of the art kitchen.

Daylight streams in - pooling in one corner where Seamus is kissing and groping a SEXY WOMAN in painted on jeans. Seamus is wearing a robe, and nothing else. The robe is open. Brian looks away in disgust.

BRIAN

Good morning. Good morning!

Seamus looks over.

SEAMUS

Hey Bri.

He gives the woman a few more kisses and a swat on the ass.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

Brian, Gretchen. Gretchen, Brian.

GRETCHEN

Hey.

One more kiss. He growls at her. She growls back, then steps away, air-kissing in Seamus' direction, heading out the door. Seamus stares off after her, his robe is still open.

BRIAN

Robe!

Seamus ties his robe.

SEAMUS

Oh yeah.

(to Brian)

How's it going, buddy?

BRIAN

Can you make more noise?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAMUS

You could hear that?

BRIAN

They could hear that in Delaware.

Seamus smiles.

SEAMUS

Sexuality needs no apology, Bri.
You have this interview, I get it.
And you're going to ace it.
Gretchen and I put the mojo in the
air. We set you up for greatness.

BRIAN

You're a terrible host.

SEAMUS

You're cute when you're mad. You
need some good shit to happen in
your life. Go land this job.
You were the man at NYU. Half the
time you were drunk, but you were
brilliant!! Besides, I'm a magnet
for goodness and I'm passing it on
to you. You're welcome.

BRIAN

Narcissist.

SEAMUS

Relax, man. I know what you're
nervous about. Baltimore's the
largest city in Maryland. You're
not gonna run into your family.

Brian's considers this. Seamus is right. He gets up. Opens
the fridge. Grabs a yogurt and a spoon.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

How about some weed?

BRIAN

With breakfast?

SEAMUS

It's not alcohol.

BRIAN

Nothing is.

Brian ignores this. Starts eating.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRIAN (CONT'D)

What are you working on today?

SEAMUS

Same old same old. Saving the world
once client at a time. It's tough
to be a lawyer with a solo law
practice. It's hard!

(beat)

That's what she said!

Seamus cracks himself up. Brian tries to resist, but smiles
anyway. He walks out the door with his yogurt.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

Show 'em what you got, buddy. Trust
me, we'll celebrate later.

INT. LOBBY - SIMPKINS & JONES - DAY

The entranceway of a boutique law firm in a beautiful
brownstone. Afrocentric art on the walls. Brian enters.
Across the space - CLARICE WILSON, 20s, Black, is behind a
reception desk. She zeroes in on Brian.

BRIAN

I'm here to see -

CLARICE

Harrison Jones, I know. You're
Brian Fulton. He's expecting you.
You're early - points for you!
He'll be with you in a sec. Can I
get you - water? Coffee?

BRIAN

I'm fine.

CLARICE

Yes you are. Sorry, that just
slipped out.

Brian smiles.

BRIAN

It's alright.

CLARICE

You're the only person they
interviewed for this position. You
got connections? How come you're so
lucky?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Brian shrugs.

CLARICE (CONT'D)
You married?

BRIAN
No.

CLARICE
Well I'm not offering. We just met!
(beat)
Sorry. Sometimes my mouth just
keeps going when my brain says
stop.

BRIAN
You can't trust yourself. I relate
to that.

CLARICE
I trust me. If you don't trust you -
that's a character flaw. You better
work on that.

Brian stares at her.

CLARICE (CONT'D)
Sorry, I just did it again.

BRIAN
Don't be sorry. It makes me trust
you.

CLARICE
For real?

He nods. She smiles. The intercom buzzes. Clarice heads back
to her desk, picks up.

CLARICE (CONT'D)
Ok.

She cocks her head toward a door off to one side: *This way*.
Brian stands.

CLARICE (CONT'D)
Good luck.

INT. HARRISON'S OFFICE - DAY CONTINUOUS

Brian enters. HARRISON JONES, 60s, distinguished, warm, is
standing in front of the desk flanked by DOUGLAS JONES, late

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

20s, skeptical, and BARBARA CARAWAY, 40s, officious. All of them are Black.

HARRISON

Mr. Fulton, welcome. This is my son, Douglas, and Barbara Caraway - a consultant.

Greetings all around. Harrison crosses behind his desk. He gestures: *sit*. Brian sits. The other two share a couch.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

So -

DOUGLAS

What do you know about what we do here?

Harrison shoots Douglas a look.

BRIAN

You do a wide range of civil and criminal cases. You've won several community awards and Mr. Jones has distinguished himself in the Maryland State Bar Association.

HARRISON

I think my son wants to know if you realize this is a historically Black law firm.

BRIAN

The African art in the lobby gave it away.

Brian smiles. Harrison's amused. Douglas is all business.

HARRISON

As I said last time, we're looking for someone who can help with the case load - and bring in new clients.

DOUGLAS

Is *that* why he's here? *New clients?*

Douglas and Harrison lock eyes.

HARRISON

Douglas, would you give us a moment?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Douglas is confused, Harrison is asking *him* to step out?

DOUGLAS
You mean - ?

HARRISON
Leave. You and Ms. Caraway.
Thanks.

Douglas opens his mouth to speak, but says nothing. He and Barbara stand. Brian stands. They go. The door slams.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
Apologies. My son has his methods.

BRIAN
No problem. I'm not going to assume any of that is a reflection on you or on the firm.

HARRISON
Good. Let's talk about you.
(beat)
Have you been drinking?

Brian didn't expect that.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
My guess: you had one. Then half a dozen Altoids and some mouthwash. I can smell the mouthwash.

Brian's shocked.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
You're like me, back in the day.
Right?

Brian's busted.

BRIAN
Yes, I - yeah.

HARRISON
Honesty's good, but here's the problem. I didn't like me back then. I couldn't be trusted. So I can't hire you.

BRIAN
What? You don't know me.

HARRISON
I was you. After the way things went at your last job -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRIAN

I'm starting over.

HARRISON

Only a drunk would think starting over means opening another bottle. At least you showed up.

(beat)

Check out the inner harbor before you head back to New York. You'll like it.

Harrison holds out his hand to shake.

BRIAN

Wait. I can do this job.

HARRISON

Not in between drinks you can't.

BRIAN

Then I won't drink.

What? Harrison studies Brian, amused.

HARRISON

What happens when you're in court and stressed?

BRIAN

I'll - go to meetings.

HARRISON

In the middle of a trial?

BRIAN

I'll push through it.

HARRISON

If you can.

BRIAN

I'll get a sponsor. I want this job.

HARRISON

Because you can't have it?

BRIAN

Because there's nothing left for me in New York.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

HARRISON

Then go to Philly or D.C. - start over somewhere else.

Brian mulls that over.

BRIAN

No! When you were ten your father was arrested on suspicion of burglary. He didn't do it. But he served 6 years. You started this firm to help the little guy. You see every client that way. That's what's cool about you.

(beat)

Right now, I'm the one who needs help. And if you hire me, I'll fight ten times harder for my clients than I'm fighting right now.

Harrison takes this in. He crosses behind his desk, lost in thought. He sits. Brian's watches him like a hawk.

HARRISON

Three meetings a week. Get a sponsor. You screw up and you're gone.

BRIAN

Wow. That was one weird job offer.

INT. LOBBY - SIMPKINS & JONES - MOMENTS LATER

Brian steps from Harrison's office, dazed and delighted. Clarice stares at him.

BRIAN

I got it.

Clarice shrieks, begins a dance of joy. She sidles up to Brian offering a high five. He smacks her hand awkwardly. Douglas approaches.

DOUGLAS

He hired you?

BRIAN

Yeah.

DOUGLAS

Don't be surprised if he changes his mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARICE

Oh, come on.

Douglas shoots Clarice a look. She shrinks. He takes Brian aside.

DOUGLAS

He's acting out of grief. My brother Sherman died six months ago. He was an amazing attorney - and about to be partner. And it's the three year anniversary of my mother's death. Dad's not - himself. When he changes his mind - don't take it personally.

Harrison's door swings open. He steps out.

HARRISON

Clarice, get Brian the "start paperwork", please.

DOUGLAS

I need a moment with you.

HARRISON

Not now, I've got a conference call.

Brian watches as Douglas smolders.

EXT. THE OFFICE OF SIMPKINS & JONES - LATER

Outside the firm, Brian ambles down the stairs to the sidewalk. He's on the phone.

SEAMUS (O.S.)

You have me to thank for talking you into taking the Maryland bar. Tell you what - I'll let you treat me to an expensive dinner.

BRIAN

Aw, thanks!

Brian's watching an attractive WOMAN, a few years older than he is, coming up the steps to the firm. Brian gazes at the Woman, and she at him as they pass.

They both stop. A moment of recognition. Brian's face goes slack. He DROPS his phone. It hits a step and bounces to the sidewalk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The woman comes back down, looking at Brian as if seeing an alien life form.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Jane?

JANE

Oh my god. My prodigal brother returns!

Off Brian, facing his worst nightmare.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER