

Cell S27

by
For OWC

INT. CELL DAY

SOPHIA GREGG and the chief prison guard DONALDSON are standing outside a standard prison cell at the end of a row of cells. The contents have been disturbed by a significant struggle and there is a small amount of blood inside the cell. In the hall about ten feet from the door a JANITOR is cleaning a much larger stain off the floor. The door to the cell is open but a steel screen blocks the entrance. It is locked to the bars on either side and a small sign on the screen reads SEALED BY FBI.

Sophia looks at the sign.

SOPHIA

FBI? This is a state facility?

DONALDSON

This is the federal wing. Your client was waiting to be shipped to the federal facility at Cookstowne.

SOPHIA

My client was to be set free this morning. He's an innocent man.

DONALDSON

Last night he was still guilty.

Sophia slips momentarily from professional to angry. She pulls herself together as she speaks.

SOPHIA

JEREMY was never guilty. He was not simply found not guilty yesterday, he was cleared of all charges and found innocent. He was found innocent yesterday and was officially innocent last night.

Sophia pauses and collects herself.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

What happened here last night?

Donaldson begins to explain as the scene melts to the night before.

DONALDSON (O.S.)

The wing had been sealed and the inmates had an hour until lights out. Somehow ROB and THE GIRLS were in the wing after it was sealed.

INT. CELL NIGHT

JEREMY is alone in the cell. The picture of a good man, Olympic swimmer fit he moves and stands with grace and silent power. There are no signs of anyone else using the cell and no signs of anything personal. Just two bunks, a table and two chairs. Jeremy is standing, reading from a file and clearly happy. It is his last night in prison and he's reading the verdict declaring him free. The voices of Sophia and Donaldson become distant.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

Somehow?

DONALDSON (O.S.)

We're investigating the guards on duty. There should have been no way for them to get in here.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

Uh huh... Then what happened?

There is a scuff behind Jeremy and he turns to find ROB and the GIRLS standing at his door. Rob, average sized yet clearly the leader with LEROY a stocky, slow, greasy man in his mid thirties, WILL is tall, bald and very thin while HEAVY is the shortest of the four yet built like a bull, all muscle, all anger. None of them are pretty.

ROB

Ladies, I do think someone is feeling full of himself.

Rob enters the cell and the Girls follow sealing Jeremy into the cell. Jeremy looks around and see's no one. He moves slowly to the back of the cell.

JEREMY

What do you want.

Jeremy's question is flat. He understands what is going on.

ROB

We hear you are leaving us soon. Seems your lawyers managed to spring you so you can go sin some more.

JEREMY

What's it to you?

ROB

Well, we feel somewhat cheated.
Having someone of your fame in our
little part of the world is
frankly, overwhelming and it seems
we might never have had the chance
to get properly acquainted.

Rob moves in further while the Girls stay where they are.

ROB (CONT'D)

I know a man of your refined tastes
may not appreciate it, being as how
we are well beyond puberty, yet we
wanted to show you how it feels to
spend some time with some real men.

Jeremy has moved to the back of the cell and his hand is
resting on a shirt. The sink behind him holds some small
items but most importantly it has a new, very solid, bar of
soap. Rob looks out past the men in the cell. His look not
desperation or fear but a simple hope that the guards may
come and end this.

ROB (CONT'D)

No we are quite alone tonight. The
guards are looking into a problem
in the next wing. It seems someone
is hiding something in their cell.
The search could take quite a
while.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

This isn't the first time a
pedophile has had trouble in this
prison.

INT. CELL DAY

As we move from the events in the cell to Donaldson standing
just outside and in the present.

DONALDSON

There have been other incidents.
The prisoners have their own code
and they tend to look down on
people like your client.

Sophia begins to rise to the bait but pulls back.

SOPHIA

My client... My client was innocent when he came in here and was innocent last night.

DONALDSON

You'd be hard pressed to find someone in here who isn't.

SOPHIA

This code turns a blind eye to the animals like Rob and his gang?

DONALDSON

No, they are marginalized but they have a use, they are tolerated and they were accepted, they function as enforcement and punishment. Animals have a pecking order and your client was at the bottom.

SOPHIA

So where were the guards.

INT. CELL NIGHT

From outside the cell Rob and the Girls are closing on Jeremy.

DONALDSON (O.S.)

They were conducting a search in G2. There should have been two men standing guard here but somehow everyone ended up in G2 leaving your client alone in this wing.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

Alone?

DONALDSON (O.S.)

He should have been.

Jeremy has his back to the sink as he puts the shirt behind him, tying a knot in the end of a sleeve and slipping the soap into it. Rob closes to a couple of feet and smiles.

ROB

Girls. I do believe our man doesn't appreciate what we are offering here. I'm a little insulted.

Rob steps towards Jeremy not caring what Jeremy is doing with his hands behind his back. He steps close so their faces are almost touching.

ROB (CONT'D)

Your choice. We're going to have fun tonight. If you live to see tomorrow is up to you.

Tensed and ready to spring Jeremy stares down into Robs eyes, not blinking.

JEREMY

Or you can turn around and walk out of here.

Faux deflation as Rob turns to the others. Jeremy has the shirt behind him ready as he prepares for the inevitable.

ROB

Ladies, it seems our guest is not interested in enjoying our company tonight. Explain to him how disappointed I am.

Rob steps toward the cell door as the Girls move towards Jeremy, There is quiet as we move into the hall beyond the cell to find.

INT. CELL DAY

Sophia looking into the cell. Trying to imagine what went on.

SOPHIA

But he wasn't. He was trapped and alone with four known killers.

DONALDSON

Two manslaughter, two simple assault.

SOPHIA

All pled down from more serious offences.

DONALDSON

So only your man can be truly innocent. Would we be having this conversation if he hadn't been cleared?

(MORE)

DONALDSON (CONT'D)

Or would you and the others silently be happy that the con's applied justice that the courts are no longer able to dispense. Do you think the mother of the dead boy would have been crying over anything that they did to your client? Or would she be sleeping sounder tonight.

SOPHIA

She knows the real killer is behind bars waiting trial.

DONALDSON

She thought that once before. She thought the animal who killed her boy was locked up. She now has to go through it all again.

SOPHIA

Are you suggesting my clients innocence is inconvenient?

DONALDSON

I'm saying the new outcome will never bring the same closure to that woman.

SOPHIA

That's absurd. Jeremy was a good and decent man who was falsely accused and set up by both the Sheriff and the actual killer. A proven conspiracy that was rooted in the police being too lazy to conduct a proper investigation and unknowingly enlisting the aid of the person who committed the actual crime. Would you prefer KARL TRENT was still free to kill again? You think the boy's mother would sleep better knowing another mother was suffering as she was due to a miscarriage of justice?

DONALDSON

Karl Trent still hasn't had his day in court.

SOPHIA

So you think keeping Jeremy locked in with those animals was justified.

DONALDSON

After what happened last night it would be hard to suggest he doesn't deserve it.

SOPHIA

Why? Because he survived?

INT. CELL NIGHT

The Girls surround Jeremy. Leroy is the first to move. He heads towards Jeremy trying to move him towards Heavy who is moving to attack from the other side while Will holds back slightly. The tone of the girls is confident, mean and experienced. They are playing with their prey. Will takes the lead speaking with a somewhere east European accent.

WILL

Don't struggle. We hurt you and we make you ugly. We don't want you to be ugly. Not until we are done with you. Then you will be like us. If you live you can be one of us.

Leroy lunges and has time to say one word before Jeremy swings the soap filled sleeve of the shirt around first striking Leroy in the head then wrapping around his neck.

LEROY

C'mere!

Jeremy then pushes Leroy towards the wall away from Heavy. Leroy strikes the wall and a loud crack is heard as Leroy's neck snaps.

Heavy moves quickly towards Jeremy.

HEAVY

You bastard! You're dead now. I own you.

His own momentum adds to the force Jeremy puts behind his knee as it strikes Heavy square in the face. Heavy falls and Jeremy steps over him. Facing Will he uses his legs to break Heavy's neck while never taking his eyes off Will.

DONALDSON (O.S.)

Four men died in that cell last night.

(MORE)

DONALDSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Four of the meanest this
institution has to put up with and
aside from being covered in blood
your client came out of it
unharmd.

INT. CELL DAY

Sophia is indignant. She is holding her temper but it is
clearly boiling just below the surface.

SOPHIA
It was clearly self defence. Four
on one and your men nowhere to be
found.

DONALDSON
It started off Four on one.

SOPHIA
And you failed to protect him.

DONALDSON
We don't protect. We store.

SOPHIA
You what? You have a responsibility
to protect these men.

DONALDSON
No Ma'am we don't. We store
criminals. The inmates are removed
from society and stored long enough
until they are too old to be of any
danger. We don't rehabilitate, we
don't convert, we don't train, we
don't have the resources for any of
that. We have just what we need to
contain. At times not even that.

SOPHIA
So your men bear no fault.

DONALDSON
My men will be investigated and if
found to be at fault they will be
disciplined. My men do the best
they can with what they have. They
too deserve their right to due
process. If it was found to be a
mix-up in communication then it was
nothing they could do.

SOPHIA

A well timed mix-up with four men
locked in the wrong cell block.

DONALDSON

My men will be investigated. As
will your client.

SOPHIA

My client has already survived one
miscarriage of justice that has
torn his life apart. You suggest
what happened last night was
anything but self defense?

INT. CELL NIGHT

Will reaches behind his back and pulls a shiv. The makeshift
blade is held back waiting for the opportunity as he reaches
toward Jeremy with other hand.

DONALDSON (O.S.)

Your gentle man killed one man then
another in a struggle. Both were
done efficiently and bloodlessly.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

He was trained to defend himself
against the enemy. He was good at
what he did. He used that knowledge
not to kill after he was discharged
but instead helped train poor kids
to learn respect. They learned self
respect and respect of others. He's
not guilty of being able to
survive.

Jeremy moves aside and takes control of Will's outstretched
arm. He spins Will and dislocates the arm. Will Screams. The
pain distracts Will as Jeremy takes the opportunity to take
control of the arm holding the blade and pulls it behind
Will. When the hand fails to let go of the blade Jeremy
drives it into Will's lower back and cuts across. Will falls
to the ground bleeding.

Jeremy turns towards a stunned Rob.

DONALDSON (O.S.)

He then used a blade to quickly
kill a third.

Rob begins to understand things are spiraling out of control
and grabs for his own blade.

DONALDSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You then had two armed men facing each other. One highly trained veteran and one prison queer out of his depth.

INT. CELL DAY

Sophia can't believe what she's hearing. The argument is as insane as any other part of the experience Jeremy has had to endure.

SOPHIA
What are you suggesting?

DONALDSON
At that point it wasn't self defense. It was slaughter. Your client carved Rob open. One cut opened his gut and everything fell out. When we arrived we needed a body bag to keep everything contained. Your client was locked in with the animals and he was the most dangerous one.

SOPHIA
When you finally showed up what happened.

DONALDSON
Jeremy knelt on the floor and placed his hands behind his head. He was screaming.

JEREMY (O.S.)
Where were you!

SOPHIA
He didn't attack you. He surrendered immediately.

DONALDSON
He was taken to solitary pending an investigation.

SOPHIA
He's to be freed today. He was to get out of here. You have to let him go. Have your investigation but unless you can prove anything other than self defense.

(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Unless you can prove he was acting to do anything but protect himself from an obvious conspiracy to cause him harm I want him to walk out with me today.

DONALDSON

That's up to the Warden. We have to clean him up and the Doc is going to check him out. But we have to be careful.

INT. SOLITARY CELL S27 NIGHT

GUARD ONE looks into a cell. The Label S27 is just above the door. Inside crouching in a corner a bloodied Jeremy sits shaking and wild eyed. Guard One leaves the window open as he walks away.

GUARD TWO is off camera.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

Careful about what?

GUARD TWO (O.C.)

We going to leave him like that?

GUARD ONE

BOSS says let him calm down and hose him off in the morning.

Guard One walks off camera as we close in on Jeremy's face.

GUARD TWO (O.C.)

That ain't right. Leaving a man covered in blood like that.

GUARD ONE (O.C.)

Man? That's the guy who killed the kid. He's nothing more than an animal.

Closing on Jeremy's eyes they are wide with anxiety and fear.

DONALDSON (O.S.)

We have to make sure that he's safe to let out. He may not have been an animal when he walked in here but we have to make sure he hasn't adapted.

Jeremy's eyes flicker as he shifts from stressed and anxious to calm and cold. He has the eyes of someone who would freeze the blood in your veins.