

FATAL DISTRACTION

Written by

Not Again...

OVER BLACK

A radio broadcaster's voice -

WEATHERMAN

Temperatures are set to soar in the  
mid-west today -

The radio volume fades. A TV cartoon plays loudly over the  
intermittent sound of a toddler's gleeful laughter -

A cell-phone peals loudly. It's quickly picked up.

BARRY

Ava, Barry Swinton... I thought we  
might be have just one last  
conversation about your testimony  
before -

A sob from Ava. A shriek of delight from THEO in the BG.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Is that little Theo I hear?  
He must be such a comfort.

Ava gulps, struggles to speak.

AVA

My daughter's dead Mr Swinton. Theo  
is not a consolation prize.

BARRY

No. Of course not. My apologies. I  
didn't mean... Um, look... You  
understand tomorrow is not about  
settling scores, right? It's about -

AVA

I know. You said already. Justice.

BARRY

Justice. That's exactly right, Ava.

AVA

Do you have children, Mr Swinton.

BARRY

Yes Ma'am. I do. Three.

BARRY (CONT'D)

If you're asking me if this could  
have happened on my watch? No.  
Never. This is manslaughter pure  
and simple. Don't buckle on that.

Ava's phone beeps.

AVA  
I have to go.

She connects to the second call.

BROOKE  
You're going to stay away from Dan.  
Now. Forever. Right? You can't  
weaken. You'll testify, right?

AVA  
I don't know, I'm so...

BROOKE  
You can't let him get away with  
this, Ava -

AVA  
There's an actual name for what  
happened, Brooke. I've been reading  
about it and -

BROOKE  
Oh, for fuck's sake, wake up, Ava!  
He left her there. He -

AVA  
Don't say it Brooke. Don't -

BROOKE  
- your baby sweltered to death in a  
parking lot strapped to a car seat  
Ava, while your husband took  
business calls in airconditioned  
comfort -

Ava disconnects. Another call beeps. Heckling laughter.

ANONYMOUS FEMALE VOICE  
Hello? Is this Ava McKenzie?

AVA  
Yes. Um... Who's...?

ANONYMOUS FEMALE VOICE  
You and your stupid husband are  
both going to rot in hell, lady!

The connection quickly disconnects. A beeping emits. Ava  
checks her voice mail.

DAN

Ava? It's me. Please, please,  
please just talk to me. I can't do  
this without you. I cannot lose -

Ava disconnects the call.

The sound of another outgoing call kicks in. It rings, gets  
picked up.

MOM

Dan, darling? It's Mom. Dan...?

DAN

I'm here, Mom.

MOM

Okay. Good. I'm here with your  
father and we just want you to know  
we're going to be right there with  
you tomorrow, honey. No one blames  
you, okay? This is NOT your fault.  
You hear me? This is not -

DAN

This is all my fault, Mom. Everyone  
blames me. Cause I did it, Mom. Me.

Beep beep beep. Call disconnects. Another connects.

AVA

Dr Rayment? I'm not sure I can do  
what everyone keeps telling me I  
have to do. I can't sleep... I  
can't think... The nightmares, they  
just won't stop... I just keep  
hearing Dan screaming, and I love  
him you know, but everyone -

DR RAYMENT

I'll be testifying, Ava tomorrow.  
For Dan. Because he deserves it.  
Did you read the information I sent  
you? It's important you understand  
what happened with Dan. It's  
important you think back...

The crackle of a police-radio. White noise. Voices talk over  
each other. The sound of a male voice screaming, keening.

AVA

But, I keep asking myself how could  
he have forgotten her, how could he  
not remember she was there...?

DR RAYMENT

I think you need to ask yourself,  
the more important question, Ava.  
Do you really deserve to lose not  
one but two people you love and  
cherish the most in this world?

A final cell-phone call is heard dialling out. Dan's  
anguished screams voice over the line unintelligible.

AVA

Dan? You're scaring me... Take a  
breath. I'm here, tell me what -

The sound of a siren in the background.

AVA (CONT'D)

Dan... ?

DAN

She's dead, babe -

AVA

Who's dead, Dan? Please tell me  
what's going on! Dan...?

The sound of the phone muffled now, dead air, the sound of a  
police-radio crackles in the background -

POLICEMAN

Hello, Ma'am? This is Officer  
Wilding... I'm so very sorry to  
inform you there's been a fatality  
We're sending a squad car for you.  
Please be waiting outside...

The final sound of another cell-phone ring. It connects.

DAN

Ava...? Is that really you?

A pause, then -

AVA

Yeah. It's me honey. I'm here.