

TESS

INT. CITY HALL - DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES - DAY

CLOSE ON A GLASS OFFICE DOOR, stenciled with "Assistant District Attorney Victor Bonotto".

RACK FOCUS THROUGH the door to find --

VICTOR BONOTTO flipping through a BLUE BINDER of trial notes and case photos as he talks to Sam and Tess.

VICTOR BONOTTO

The Oxford Riggins jury selection was totally by the book. Only three African Americans in the pool; judge removed two because of connections to the case.

SAM

The third?

Done with his review, Bonotto lays the binder on the desk.

VICTOR BONOTTO

Had a kid Oxford's age; I didn't want to risk her identifying with him. Used a pre-empt.

TESS

(re: upside-down binder)
You didn't pre-empt Keith Johnson; he had a 17 year-old child as well, but he was white--

VICTOR BONOTTO

Are you looking at my notes--

TESS

Reading upside down; trick I picked up in law school.

(gentle, but insistent)
White jurors are more likely to incarcerate blacks; all white juries convict black defendants sixteen percent more often than--

VICTOR BONOTTO

Your command of statistics is impressive, however--

TESS

Additionally, your case was based largely on a single eyewitness... Much like over 70 percent of overturned convictions --

SC. I
START

CONVICTION

1/4

SAM

Tess -- enough. ADA Bonotto was
doing what it took to win the case.
That's a prosecutor's job.

Tess reacts, chastened by her boss's rebuke.

TESS

Of course.

(can't help herself)

But what if the person you're
prosecuting is innocent?

Off this...

END

2/4

SC. II
START

TESS

INT. CARTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Tess sits across from Carter.

TESS
Just to get this out of the way,
I'm a huge fan. I basically
worshipped you when I was a kid.

CARTER
You're still a kid.

TESS
All that pressure, growing up in
the White House. When Senator
McCale made that mean remark about
you... I've hated him ever since.

CARTER
You mean, when he called me the
town bike?

Tess nods, a little embarrassed.

CARTER (CONT'D)
He wasn't wrong.
(then, studies Tess)
Have we met? You look familiar...

TESS
(a little nervous)
Oh no. I would remember.

CARTER
Where'd you work before this?

TESS
The Innocence Project.

CARTER
Why leave there to do the same
thing for us?

TESS
The Innocent Project take months,
sometimes years on a case. Here, I
can make a bigger impact; work
more cases, inside the system...

CONVICTION

CARTER

So basically you've got a hard-on
for wrongful convictions?

TESS

It's been the focus of my work--

CARTER

What got you interested in it?

Tess is a little taken aback. A beat and then she lies--

TESS

...I read Barry Scheck's book. It
really spoke to me.

CARTER

That's all.

TESS

Yes.

CARTER

You sure this didn't have anything
to do with it?

Carter slides TWO NEWSPAPER ARTICLES across the desk to Tess.
We don't see the image, just Tess's shocked reaction to them.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Same standard applies to you as
everyone else: don't use this job
to settle a score.

TESS

...I won't.

CARTER

Changing your name was smart. Have
you seen him since he got out?

TESS

(shakes her head 'no')
...Are you going to tell everyone?

CARTER

Depends if it's useful.

Off Tess, reeling, her secret exposed.

END

4/4