

FADE IN:

EXT. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS LAW SCHOOL - DAY (D1)

PAN ACROSS sets of shoes, the bottom of graduation gowns visible at the ankles. A pair of conservative black loafers. A pair of conservative gray pumps. Brown loafers. Black kitten heels. As we PAN across the shoes we hear:

DEAN HAMPTON (O.C.)
Eloise Joffe.
(polite applause, then)
Michael Jurgens.

As the Dean continues to call student's names, we continue to PAN ACROSS the shoes. Each pair is conservative. Muted. Refined. And then suddenly we see: LEOPARD STILETTOS. Tapping impatiently.

Pan up to reveal the owner of said stilettos: DANNI LOWINSKI (31). She's up on the stage with her fellow graduates, getting ready to receive her law school diploma from DEAN HAMPTON (65, grey-haired, conservative). Compared to the rest of the graduates, Danni is...unrefined. Her clothes are just a little too loud, her nails are just a little too long, her hair is just a little too teased. But she is not self-conscious. She's too damn excited! She's about to graduate from friggin' law school!

DEAN HAMPTON (CONT'D)
William Kennilsworth III.

Danni gets closer to the podium. She tries to make eye contact with the conservative girl to her right -- CHARLOTTE. Charlotte is 25 with pin straight hair and an impeccably conservative pedigree. Danni flashes her a "can-you-friggin'-believe-it" smile. Charlotte ignores her.

But Danni's too excited to care! She looks out at the proud parents and friends seated in folding chairs on the great lawn. She scans the crowd until she finds KAZ, her very best friend in the world. Kaz (31) is tough, brassy, and fiercely protective of Danni. She's a little tacky and tends to favor short, tight clothes and spray tans. Kaz grins, snapping a picture. Danni grins back. Then, she sees the empty seat beside Kaz. Her face falls, momentarily, but as she moves closer to the podium, excitement overwhelms her again...

DEAN HAMPTON (CONT'D)
Charlotte Lehman.

Charlotte walks up to Dean, takes her diploma, shakes his hand, then heads off to the right, and down the stairs.

DEAN HAMPTON (CONT'D)
Daniella Lowinski.

And it's her turn! Proudly Danni steps forward. The Dean gives her a mild smile and hands her the diploma. Danni can't contain herself! Spontaneously, she throws her arms around him and gives him a big hug, jumping up and down a little! Dean Hampton is startled and has no choice but to hug her back. Off Danni, exuberant...

EXT. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS CAMPUS - AFTER THE CEREMONY - DAY (D1)

Poised, conservatively-dressed families wait to congratulate the graduates. Kaz waits among them, holding a shopping bag. She cranes her neck, trying to spot Danni. And suddenly, she sees her! Danni's robe is now unzipped, revealing her tight, heavy-on-the-cleavage outfit. Danni spots her as well and starts running. When she reaches Kaz, the girls start to hug, jumping up and down and squealing.

Finally, they stop jumping and look at one another. A beat. Then they start jumping again! As they do, Charlotte walks by with her well-heeled family. As she passes, she whispers:

CHARLOTTE
That's the hairdresser. Clearly.

Kaz whips around, furious.

KAZ
Former hairdresser! She's a lawyer now, you piece of --

DANNI
(calming her)
Come on, not worth it.

Meanwhile, Charlotte rolls her eyes and hurries her family away. Kaz turns to Danni.

KAZ
Dumb snob.

Then, Kaz hands the shopping bag to Danni.

KAZ (CONT'D)
Here. Every lawyer has one of these ugly things.

Danni digs through the tissue paper and pulls out a briefcase. It's not expensive or anything, but it's nice.

DANNI
 (touched)
 Kaz...

KAZ
 (warning)
 Don't get all mushy.
 (then)
 Okay, we need to take a picture!

She takes out her camera and points it at Danni.

KAZ (CONT'D)
 Say "I'm a friggin' lawyer!"

Danni holds up the briefcase triumphantly.

DANNI
 (proud)
 I'm a friggin' lawyer!

Various parents and graduates glance over, but Danni doesn't notice. She grins as Kaz snaps the picture...

INT. DANNI'S APARTMENT -- ENTRY WAY -- NIGHT (N1)

Danni takes off her jacket, hangs it on a coat hook and heads into the living room...

INT. DANNI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT (N1)

The apartment has definitely seen better days. A dreary couch. Cheap light fixtures. An old paint job. Danni has clearly tried to spruce the place up -- there is a colorful afghan, some framed pictures, mall art, etc. But the fact remains -- this is a not a great place to live.

Danni's father AUGUSTUS "GUS" LOWINSKI (50's) is asleep on the couch; a White Sox game is on the tv. There's a full ashtray on the coffee table as well as a half-empty bottle of whiskey and an empty glass. Gus is an alcoholic and has been as long as Danni can remember. Since he's been laid off, it's gotten worse. Danni loves her father, even though she knows he can not be counted on. She approaches.

DANNI
 Dad...

He's snoring. She sits by him, nudges him gently.

DANNI (CONT'D)
 Dad.

Gus opens his eyes. Takes a moment to get his bearings. When his daughter's face comes into focus, he smiles.

GUS
Danielcia...

He sits up. Then:

GUS (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I didn't make graduation.

DANNI
(covering hurt)
No, that's cool.

GUS
Actually had a job interview. They called last minute.

Danni knows this isn't true, but for both their sakes, she plays along and acts interested.

DANNI
No kidding.

GUS
Yeah. They're lookin' for a foreman over in Joliet. Didn't want to say no because it's such a tough market.
(Danni nods as he continues)
Went pretty good. Said they'll let me know Monday, so we'll see what happens. Fingers crossed.

DANNI
Fingers crossed.
(then)
You eat the chicken I left?

GUS
Nah, wasn't hungry. A toast.

He grabs the whiskey and pours it into the glass. Then, raising glass, proud:

GUS (CONT'D)
To my daughter the attorney.

A little reluctantly, she clinks the bottle to his glass and watches as he takes a drink...wishing things were different.

GUS (CONT'D)
So? What happens now?

DANNI
Now? I get a job.

She smiles. And off Danni, optimistic...

INT. ELEGANT LAW OFFICE -- DAY (D2)

Upscale. Danni sits in front of a MALE PARTNER (late 40's, conservative) who looks over her resume. She is dressed in a suit, but it's a little short and tight. She's confident.

DANNI
And I followed that class action
suit you filed against Petra
Pharmaceuticals and --

MALE PARTNER
I'm not seeing any professional
experience here...

DANNI
Right. 'Cause I don't have any
yet. See, I used to be a
hairdresser. Went to law school at
night for seven years. Not the
direct route, I know, but it shows
I know what I want...

INT. A DIFFERENT ELEGANT LAW OFFICE -- DAY (D2)

Danni is now sitting opposite a FEMALE PARTNER (40's, conservative) who is glancing at her resume. She is still upbeat, though a little less confident:

DANNI
And what I want is to practice law.
I've never been afraid of hard
work, trust me, I've been workin'
hard all my life.

She sees the Partner glance down at her resume.

DANNI (CONT'D)
Think of my hairdressing experience
as a bonus. I got great people
skills --

INT. A DIFFERENT, LESS ELEGANT LAW FIRM - DAY (D2)

Danni sits opposite another Male Partner (50's, conservative). She is noticeably less confident.

DANNI

I don't even need to work with people. You can just stick me with the files. I'll do the busy work --

INT. YET ANOTHER DIFFERENT, LESS ELEGANT LAW FIRM - DAY (D2)

Danni sits opposite another Male Partner (late 30's, conservative). She is even more desperate...

DANNI

I got no problem with weekends. And late nights...

INT. YET ANOTHER LAW FIRM -- DAY (D2)

Danni sits opposite a Younger Lawyer (female, late 20's, condescending).

DANNI

I don't need vacations. Or much of a salary.

The Partner is staring at her, unmoved. Beat, then:

DANNI (CONT'D)

I could cut your hair? Layers would really soften that jaw...

INT. CROMWELL, SACHS, AND GILBRAITH - RECEPTION AREA - DAY (D2)

Very imposing. Expensively furnished. A nervous Danni sits, holding her resume, sipping a cup of coffee. A RECEPTIONIST sits behind a desk, fielding phone calls. Danni glances at her resume, wishing it were... better.

WOMAN (O.C.)

Danni?!

Startled, Danni turns, spilling a little coffee on her resume. Crap! She looks up to see Charlotte staring at her. Charlotte stands with another young female lawyer.

CHARLOTTE

What are you doing here?

DANNI
 (flustered)
 I'm interviewing.

Charlotte glances at her co-worker, who stifles a giggle.
 Meanwhile, a SECRETARY (50's) approaches.

SECRETARY
 Ms. Lowinski. Follow me.

CHARLOTTE
 (insincere)
 Good luck...

Danni gets up, glances at her resume...and the coffee stain
 on the top of the page. Damn! She blots it on the inside of
 her jacket as she follows the Secretary...

INT. OLIVER SACHS OFFICE -- DAY (D2)

A flustered Danni follows the Secretary into the well-
 appointed office. Surreptitiously, she fans her resume back
 and forth trying to dry the coffee spill.

RECEPTIONIST
 Mr. Sachs? Your eleven-thirty.

OLIVER SACHS (36) is sitting behind his large, imposing,
 walnut desk, his degrees (Yale undergrad, Harvard law school)
 on display behind him. Oliver is well-groomed and well-bred.
 He is very charming and completely aware of it. He looks up
 and flashes a smile at Danni.

OLIVER
 Oliver Sachs. Very nice to meet
 you.

DANNI
 Danni Lowinski. Daniella,
 actually, but people call me Danni.
 Mostly.
 (stop rambling!)
 Very nice to meet you as well.

OLIVER
 Please. Have a seat.

She sits down, still fanning her resume back and forth,
 willing it to dry already. Oliver smiles. She smiles back.
 A slightly awkward beat. Then:

OLIVER (CONT'D)
 Do you have a resume?

DANNI
I do have one. Yes.

She fans a little faster.

OLIVER
Can I...have it?

DANNI
You can. Absolutely.

He looks at her, expectantly. She stops fanning. Then, reluctantly:

DANNI (CONT'D)
It's just...got a little coffee spill that I'm trying to dry. I kinda saw someone I didn't expect--

OLIVER
Is it legible?

DANNI
(glancing at it)
Um...yeah, pretty much. Just my name is sorta smudgy.

OLIVER
Luckily, you already told me that. Daniella but people call you Danni. Mostly.

He smiles. She smiles back, a little embarrassed.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Don't worry. I won't hold a little coffee spill against you.

DANNI
Thank you.

She hands over her resume. Oliver takes it and starts to look it over. As he does, Danni grows increasingly nervous.

DANNI (CONT'D)
Look, I know that I don't have professional experience but--

OLIVER
A word of advice? In an interview, never point out your flaws.

DANNI

Right.

(then, trying)

Please strike that from the record,
Counselor.

OLIVER

And it looks like you have plenty
of professional experience. You
worked as a hairdresser for eight
years.

DANNI

But not in a law firm.

OLIVER

Very few law firms have in-house
hairdressers.

She smiles again. Charmed by him.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Hairdressing requires good social
skills. I'm assuming you interfaced
with all different types--

DANNI

Oh man, you have no idea. I could
tell you some crazy stories...

(catches herself)

I won't, right now. But I could.

OLIVER

(laughs, then)

I'll bet.

(then, re: resume)

Night school, huh? So you're
obviously a go-getter.

Danni smiles. This is going better than she thought!

DANNI

Yes. Yes, I am.

Before Oliver can reply, another LAWYER (30's slick) enters.

LAWYER

Let's go, Oliver. I've got three
Russians in the conference room and
vodka is not going to take the
edge off their settlement.

OLIVER
Matthew Biblowit, this is Daniella
Lowinski. Daniella's starting
Monday.

Danni reacts. She's been hired?! Oliver sees her reaction.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Unless you don't want to work here.

DANNI
No! I do. I definitely do. I
just...wow, this is awesome!

OLIVER
(to Matt)
Daniella even studied a little law.

Danni looks at him. That's an odd thing to say.

DANNI
Well, I studied a lot of law
actually. Otherwise I would never
have passed the bar.

OLIVER
(surprised)
You passed the bar? Wow.
That's...terrific.

Danni looks at him, still confused by his reaction.

DANNI
Do you usually hire lawyers who
haven't passed the bar?

And suddenly Oliver realizes...

OLIVER
You're interviewing to be a lawyer?

Danni reacts. But she holds out hope that what she thinks is
happening is not actually happening.

DANNI
Yes. Of course. I'm a lawyer.

A beat. Oliver glances at Matthew who is smirking a little.
Then, he looks back at Danni, feeling badly.

OLIVER

I'm so sorry. See, I thought you were interviewing for the assistant position. Ann just told me she won't be back after her maternity leave, so...

DANNI

Oh.

Danni feels like she's been punched in the gut. But she wills herself not to crack here, now, in front of these men.

OLIVER

There was clearly a miscommunication.

DANNI

(she will not cry!)

Right. A miscommunication.

(then, rising)

Okay. Well, thank you for your time.

And with that, Danni stands up and heads out, determined not to let Oliver see the tears that are her filling her eyes.

INT. THE MALL -- FOUNTAIN -- DAY

The hub of the social scene in this blue collar town. There are various kiosks and at the center, a fountain. The mall is Danni's favorite place in the world. Danni and Kaz sit on the ledge of the fountain. Kaz works at Shake 'n Snacks across the way. She's in uniform (and yes, there's a paper hat). She comforts a distraught Danni.

KAZ

Oh, honey. Want a cheesy pretzel?

Danni shakes her head. Kaz reacts. This is really bad.

KAZ (CONT'D)

Aw, geez...

DANNI

Why won't anyone hire me?

KAZ

'Cause they're stupid.

DANNI

They're not stupid. They're smart. With degrees from like Harvard --

KAZ
Harvard people are douchebags.

DANNI
Do you even know anyone who went there?

KAZ
No. But that's by choice. I don't associate with douchebags.

DANNI
(shaking her head)
I can't go back to the salon--

KAZ
True. I heard Sonya rented out your chair.

DANNI
What? To who?

KAZ
Elise something?

DANNI
From Cuts 'n Curls? That girl can't frost a tip to save her life--

KAZ
She's on perms. And it doesn't matter because you are not going back. You're gonna get a job.

DANNI
How? My resume's crap. It took me seven years to finish law school --

KAZ
Well excuse you for having to make a living --

DANNI
I don't have any experience --

KAZ
How are you supposed to get experience if those douchebags won't hire you?

Suddenly, the girls are interrupted by ELLIOT -- a 20 something hippie.

ELLIOT
 You two look like the kind of girls
 who like animals. Am I right?

DANNI
 Excuse me?

ELLIOT
 Animals. Do you like them?
 Because if you do, I'd like to
 encourage you to make a donation to
 PETA.

Danni shakes her head. She's got no money. Elliot won't
 back down. He continues to pester them, condescending:

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
 Think about the animals! Don't you
 have a heart? How can you just sit
 around while --

DANNI
 (had enough)
 I don't wear fur--

ELLIOT
 Well, that's a start. But --

DANNI
 You know why I don't wear it?
 Because I can't friggin' afford it.
 But if I could, I would wear it.
 And leather, I just love leather.
 If I had money, I'd get a custom-
 made leather cat suit. And I'd
 wear it, under my fur, to a nice
 steakhouse where I'd order the
 thickest, juiciest, most hormone-
 pumped steak on the menu!
 (increasingly worked up)
 But I can't eat steaks or get a
 leather cat suit or a fur coat
 because no one's makin' donations
 to me and I only have three dollars
 in my goddamn wallet! And you know
 what that will buy me? Two cheesy
 pretzels. Which I could really use
 right now!

And with that, she heads towards Shakes n' Snacks...

INT. DANNI'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Danni enters, she looks through the mail. Bills, bills and more bills. As usual, her dad is sleeping on the couch, a bottle of liquor on the coffee table. Suddenly Danni smells something...burning. She hurries into the kitchen...

INT. DANNI'S APARTMENT -- KITCHEN - NIGHT (N2)

Danni opens the oven. Smoke pours out. There's a left-over chicken on a baking pan, charred and smoking. Danni turns off the oven and grabs an oven mitt to take out the chicken. The smoke alarm goes off. Damn! She grabs a chair and climbs on it, trying to disable the alarm. Finally she does.

GUS (O.C.)

I'm sorry. I must have forgotten--

She turns, angrily, to find Gus standing in the entry way.

DANNI

What's wrong with you? You could have burned this place down!

She shakes her head, grabs the chicken, dumps it in the garbage. Then, Danni opens the windows, trying to air the kitchen out as her dad watches, feeling terribly...

INT. MALL -- MAIN COURT -- DAY (D3)

A busy morning at the mall. Lots of shoppers. Danni is walking around with her laptop, trying to find the strongest wireless signal. Kaz, in uniform, follows her.

DANNI

What am I gonna do? I can't afford to hire someone to babysit him. What's with the wireless?

KAZ

It sucks.

Danni collapses into one of the massage chairs in the massage kiosk. Kaz sits next to her. Danni looks at her nails.

DANNI

Look at me. I'm so stressed I chewed off two acrylics.

KAZ

You gotta pull it together. Girls with short nails look cheap.

DANNI

Like I don't know that.

(shakes her head, then)

I was thinking maybe I could go out on my own, ya know? I mean, the truth is, I don't fit in at those law firms.

KAZ

Because you don't insert a large stick up your butt every morning.

DANNI

Yeah. So, I just gotta find someplace affordable to rent. And it's gotta be a good location, you know? Lots of foot traffic. Problem is, all those places cost --

LARS approaches, interrupting. Lars (early 30's) is a big, strong masseuse, but his beefy looks are undercut by his new agey predilections. He wears a crystal around his neck. He has an extremely calm presence.

LARS

Sorry ladies, it's a busy morning. Five dollars for five minutes. Namaste.

KAZ

Shut the F up.

But nevertheless, the girls get up. A Woman immediately takes Danni's seat. Danni looks around. The mall is really busy. People everywhere, loaded down with bags, paying for things, chatting, talking... She takes this in. An idea is forming. She looks around at all the kiosks...and all the customers. And then she spots Elliot packing up his kiosk, taking down his PETA posters etc. It's a sign!

DANNI

(a revelation)

The mall. This is where I fit in. It's where I belong. It's my happy place.

And suddenly she knows what she has to do. She hurries towards Elliot, leaving Kaz confused. When Elliot sees her, he looks a little worried:

ELLIOT

Look, I don't want any trouble.

DANNI

Yeah, sorry about yesterday.

She digs in her purse and drops a coin in his donation tin. He smiles. She smiles back. Then:

DANNI (CONT'D)

So...you're moving out?

ELLIOT

On to Skokie, home of the three-pound buffalo burger, god help me.

DANNI

Well, good luck. Kick some butt.

(then)

Question. How does one go about renting this kiosk?

And off Danni, wheels turning...

INT. MALL - ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY (D3)

MRS. BOSE (late 40's, conservative suit, all business) is sitting behind her desk. Danni stands in front of her.

MRS. BOSE

The kiosks are for small businesses.

DANNI

I'm a small business --

MRS. BOSE

Sequined cell phone covers. Clever t-shirts. Silver jewelry --

DANNI

And why not a lawyer?

MRS. BOSE

It's just not a good fit. Lawyers are expensive. Our clientele isn't looking to spend a lot of money --

DANNI

I assure you, I'm very cheap.

(off her look)

My fee, I mean. And I need to be somewhere with a lot of foot traffic.

MRS. BOSE
I don't know...

DANNI
Why not?

MRS. BOSE
(skeptical)
A lawyer in a mall? There's just
no... precedent.

DANNI
You know, you raise an interesting
point, Mrs. Bose. Precedent is
important. Most of our laws are
based in precedent. And without
them, things could get really
wonky.

(this is her shot)
But the real challenge of our great
judicial system comes when
precedents are wrong. When Brown
vs. The Board of Education made its
way to the Warren Court, the
Justices could have said, you know
what? Plessy vs Ferguson
established "separate but equal".
That's the precedent. So we gotta
be cool with it. But were the
members of the Supreme Court cool
with it?

MRS. BOSE
(beat, then)
No?

DANNI
Damn right they weren't! They said
separate but equal blows and it's
unconstitutional and it's over!
And then they overturned that
stinkin' precedent!

She leans in to Mrs. Bose, closing her case with gravitas.

DANNI (CONT'D)
This is your Brown versus the Board
of Education moment, Mrs. Bose.
You're right. There aren't lawyers
in malls. Because people think
lawyers should be separate from
malls. But you can set a new
precedent, right here, right now.

Mrs. Bose takes this in...

INT. MALL -- MAIN COURT -- MORNING (D4)

We see images of the mall opening. Kaz is turning on the milkshake machine. RASOUL at JB'S COMPUTER STORE raises the metal bars, unlocking his store. Lars restocks hand lotion. Danni enters, dragging a cart with her supplies: laptop, pens, legal pads and a large sandwich board sign. She lugs it past the nail salon, where LISA (20's, Korean, a little tough, possibly pierced) is lining up nail polish bottles.

Danni stops in front of the empty kiosk. Then, she lifts the sandwich board from her cart and sets it up. It features a picture of her and the words "Expert Legal Advice. \$1 a Minute!" Danni looks over at Kaz who gives her a thumbs up. Danni grins. And off her, and her new beginning...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MALL - MAIN COURT - MORNING (D4)

Danni has set up her kiosk. There's a table with a chair for Danni and a chair for a potential client. Everything has been arranged, the fake plant placed just so. Kaz is looking at the picture of Danni on her sign.

KAZ

You should have used that picture of us in Cancun.

DANNI

I wanted to look professional.

KAZ

You did. Professionally tan.
(then, excited)
Wanna go to Jezelbel's at lunch?
There are these shoes... bright red, big bows. I can't afford 'em but I want to walk around in them.

DANNI

Hell yeah, I'm so there.
(then, gleeful)
I can't believe I get to work in the mall! It's like a dream come true.

Meanwhile, a CUSTOMER (male, homely, 20's) standing at the empty Shake 'n Snack stands calls over.

CUSTOMER

Hey! Can you help me?

KAZ

Not with your face! There's no helping that!

DANNI

Shut it, Kaz, you wanna get fired again?

KAZ

Yeah, yeah, yeah...

Kaz heads over to her stand. We stay with Danni. She sits down at her table, a big smile on her face. And she waits.

INT. THE MALL - DANNI'S KIOSK -- LATER (D4)

Danni is still smiling. People walk by, looking confused. She takes out a clock. Makes sure the stopwatch part works. It does. A Woman walks by and looks at her. She smiles. The Woman looks confused and keeps walking.

INT. THE MALL -- DANNI'S KIOSK -- LATER (D4)

Danni is struggling to stay upbeat. She takes a pen out of the pen holder and writes her name on the top of the legal pad. "Danni Lowinski." A beat, then she writes: "Esquire."

INT. THE MALL - DANNI'S KIOSK -- LATER (D4)

Danni is considerably less chipper. She adjusts the plant. A GUY (30'S) approaches.

GUY

Excuse me?

DANNI

Yes!

GUY

Where's the restroom?

Danni deflates. She points to the men's room, which isn't far away. She glances at Kaz. Kaz smiles encouraging. Then, she points to the pretzel warmer.

INT. THE MALL - DANNI'S KIOSK -- LATER (D4)

Danni puts out a plate of cheesy pretzels, hoping to entice clients.

INT. THE MALL - DANNI'S KIOSK -- LATER (D4)

Danni is eating the cheesy pretzels.

INT. THE MALL -- SHAKE N SNACKS -- LATER (D4)

Danni leans on the counter, commiserating with Kaz. She's feeling really down at this point.

KAZ

Remember when Valerie Cruikshank blew three guys on prom night and we didn't even hear about it 'til a week later?

DANNI

What's your point?

KAZ
Sometimes it takes time for word to
get around.

Danni shakes her head, dejected.

DANNI
I don't know what I was thinking.
Nobody comes to the mall looking
for a lawyer--

KAZ
Danni...

DANNI
They come here to buy hot clothes
or to eat Chinese and Mexican food
on the same tray--

KAZ
Danni!

Danni looks at her. Kaz points to her kiosk.

KAZ (CONT'D)
Clients.

Danni turns. Indeed, there are people waiting there. Lisa
the manicurist and her mother SO YOON (40'S, Korean). Danni
looks at Kaz, thrilled, then hurries back over...

INT. MALL -- DANNI'S KIOSK -- CONTINUOUS - DAY (D4)

Danni approaches Lisa and So Yoon.

DANNI
Hi, hello.

LISA
Is that true? One dollar a minute?

DANNI
Yes, absolutely. Please. Sit.

Lisa looks at her mom. Then, they sit. Danni sits opposite
them, pleased.

DANNI (CONT'D)
How can I help you?

She presses the stopwatch on the clock, starting the timer.
So Yoon glances at it, skeptical. Lisa starts talking
quickly.

LISA

This is my mother So Yoon. I moved here when I was 18 and I sent for her once I got settled. But I don't make a lot of money. People are really crappy tippers. You spend an hour french manicuring their toes, they leave you three bucks.

So Yoon hits her thigh, urging her to talk faster. She does.

LISA (CONT'D)

I can't pay for everything. Mama had to work as well. So she got a job as a maid.

(leans in, conspiratorial)

Under the table. The Winkler's promised they'd sponsor her, but they never did. Kept saying the paperwork was held up. And then, last week, Mrs. Winkler wanted to rearrange furniture because she's a crazy lady and she had Mama move the couch. By herself, god forbid she help, that woman is so lazy --

So Yoon stops the clock and starts to talk to her daughter in Korean. Lisa argues back in Korean. So Yoon says something sharp. Then, she looks at Danni.

SO YOON

Mrs. Winkler nice lady.

Danni smiles, starting the clock again.

DANNI

Good to know. Continue.

LISA

Mama got a slipped disk from moving that couch! She's not allowed to do any lifting for at least six months. So they fired her! Like a dog!

So Yoon stops the clock and argues with her daughter in Korean again. Lisa replies sharply. So Yoon gives her a slap on the cheek. Lisa reacts, upset. Meanwhile, So Yoon turns to Danni.

SO YOON
 She need someone who can lift. And
 climb up cabinet, dust everywhere.

LISA
 (to her mom)
 You hit me! Unbelievable!

So Yoon starts to berate her in Korean. Lisa argues back.
 They overlap, getting more and more heated! Danni tries to
 get their attention.

DANNI
 Hang on...
 (then)
 Excuse me...
 (then)
 Stop!

They stop, turn to Danni. She pastes on a smile.

DANNI (CONT'D)
 What do you want exactly?

She starts the clock again.

LISA
 Money. They can't just fire her
 like that, can they? Legally?

DANNI
 (tentatively)
 Well, your mom was working
 illegally. Which makes this a
 tough case...

SO YOON
 Okay, we're done.

So Yoon stops the clock.

SO YOON (CONT'D)
 How much we owe?

Danni turns the clock back on...

DANNI
 I said "tough." I didn't say
 impossible. There are things we
 can do. With your permission, I'd
 like to pressure the Winklers a
 little.

So Yoon looks at her, skeptical. Then, she looks at her daughter. Lisa nods. Danni smiles.

DANNI (CONT'D)
Where do they live?

EXT. WEALTHY RESIDENTIAL STREET -- DAY (D4)

Large, imposing houses. Danni walks along the street, searching for the right house. She arrives at a large house with an electric gate. She buzzes...

INT. THE WINKLER'S HOUSE -- DAY (D4)

Expensive. Traditionally, meticulously furnished. KATHERINE WINKLER (early 40's, uptight society wife) nervously arranges flowers, trimming dead leaves.

DANNI
You can't just fire someone when they get hurt on your property --

KATHERINE
(glances at her watch)
I don't know what you're talking about.

DANNI
(annoyed)
So Yoon.

KATHERINE
Who?

DANNI
So Yoon. Your maid.
(off Mrs. Winkler's blank stare)
The woman who's been coming here every day.

KATHERINE
No, I don't believe I know her.

DANNI
(genuinely confused)
You havin' a stroke?

KATHERINE
Like I told you, I want to wait to discuss this with my husband. I told him to hurry.

DANNI

What do you mean you "don't know her?"

KATHERINE

Did I offer you tea?

DANNI

I don't drink tea unless I'm sittin' with the Queen of England. Of course you know her--

KATHERINE

Perhaps I'll put on a pot for myself.

DANNI

Look, Mrs. Winkler. I don't know what kind of game you're playing. Now, we really don't want to sue, but So Yoon's got a legitimate workman's comp claim and --

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Hello?

KATHERINE

Oh good, my husband.
(calling)
I'm in the living room! With the lawyer.

Danni shakes her head, annoyed. This woman is a piece of work. Meanwhile, Katherine's husband, JAMES (40's, businessman) enters with another man behind him. James makes a beeline for Danni.

JAMES

I hope you don't mind, I've asked my lawyer to join us.

Danni looks past James, to his lawyer. She reacts, shocked. It's Oliver Sachs! He reacts as well. A beat, then he smiles.

OLIVER

I see you've found a job, Daniella.

And off Danni, stunned...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Upset, Danni heads towards the bus stop. As she walks away, her heel gets stuck in the street grate. When she tries to yank it out, the heel breaks. Damn! She grabs the heel and continues walking, hobbling a little. A Porsche pulls alongside her and slows down. It's Oliver, looking amused. He is the last person Danni wants to see.

OLIVER
Need a ride?

She ignores him, keeps walking. He drives alongside her.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Come on, you can't walk.

DANNI
Watch me.

OLIVER
Danni...

DANNI
(frustrated)
They're lying to my face!

OLIVER
(amused, facetious)
People lie? Really?

DANNI
And what's even worse, you know it!

OLIVER
I only know what my clients tell me to know.

DANNI
You make me sick.

OLIVER
You're taking this personally.
First rule, take nothing personally.

DANNI
(in no mood for his advice)
Thank you, I'll keep that in mind.

OLIVER
 Second rule?
 (off her look)
 Never say you don't want to sue.
 Once you've said that, you've taken
 away your bargaining chip.

DANNI
 Is that all?

OLIVER
 No. One last thing.
 (then)
 Never refuse a lift when you've
 broken your heel.

Danni reacts to his smug grin. She is boiling with anger now. She stops walking. He stops driving. Danni approaches the car. Pastes a smile on her face. Leans in the car window.

DANNI
 Y'know, that's good advice
 actually.

OLIVER
 I think so.

DANNI
 And it's stupid to say you won't
 sue, huh?

OLIVER
 Even if you don't want to, they
 have to think you want to. Keeps
 'em scared.

DANNI
 Makes sense.
 (then)
 So listen to me very carefully.
 Tell your clients that thanks to
 their arrogant, smug, jerkface
 lawyer -- they're being sued.

With that, she pulls off her other shoe and starts down the street, barefoot.

OLIVER
 Jerkface, huh?

DANNI
 (calling back)
 Don't take it personally.

Danni keeps walking. Oliver smiles, amused by her. Then he starts the car and drives past her. As Danni continues to walk, a GARDENER (Mexican, 30's, rowdy) whistles at her. Danni turns. He's standing with his three co-workers.

GARDENER
 What happened? He didn't offer you
 enough money?

His friends laugh. Danni shakes her head and walks faster.

GARDENER (CONT'D)
 We've got money!

DANNI
 (calling back)
 Screw you!

The Gardeners laugh. Off Danni, pissed off.

INT. MALL -- NAIL SALON -- DAY (D4)

Lisa is filing Danni's acrylic nails as So Yoon looks on. Lisa is agitated.

LISA
 Lying sacks of --

DANNI
 (pulling hand away)
 Ow!

LISA
 Sorry, sorry.

Lisa takes Danni's hand back.

DANNI
 Look, I think we should sue.
 (off their worried looks)
 I know it's ass out. But we'd be
 takin' them to civil court. And
 civil courts probably won't get
 involved with your visa status.

LISA
 (worried)
 Probably?

DANNI

(to So Yoon)

Plus, the Winkler's said they'd sponsor you. That's called "promissory estoppel". They made you a reasonable promise and you relied on it. They didn't fulfill their end of the bargain. Not your bad.

SO YOON

If courts believe me.

DANNI

Look, we just need to prove you worked there. Once we do that, we establish that's where you injured yourself, then bam! We demand workman's comp. Plus damages.

SO YOON

(skeptical)

Bam?

DANNI

(confident)

Bam!

(then)

Isn't there anyone who can prove you worked there? Besides Mr. and Mrs. Winkler?

So Yoon thinks. Then:

SO YOON

Miguel.

(off Danni's look,
clarifies)

The gardener. I give him water when it's hot.

Danni takes this in...

EXT. FRONT YARD OF A LARGE HOUSE - DAY (D5)

Danni approaches an OVERWEIGHT GARDENER who is mowing a well-manicured lawn. She shouts to be heard over the lawn mower.

DANNI

Excuse me!

He doesn't hear her. Danni approaches. Taps him on the shoulder. He turns.

DANNI (CONT'D)
 (still shouting)
 I'm looking for --

He turns off the lawn mower in the middle of her sentence.

DANNI (CONT'D)
 (still shouting)
 A man named Miguel.

Then: in her regular voice.

DANNI (CONT'D)
 Sorry. Is Miguel here?

The Overweight Gardener points to Miguel who is filling a bag with leaves. Danni reacts. It's the guy who solicited her the other day. Danni has no choice. She pastes on a smile and approaches.

DANNI (CONT'D)
 Miguel?

He looks up. A slow, lascivious grin spreads across his face.

EXT. WEALTHY RESIDENTIAL STREET - BACK OF LANDSCAPING TRUCK --
 DAY (D5)

Danni is sitting on the back of the truck next to Miguel. He is still grinning at her. She smiles back, trying to appear professional.

DANNI
 So, I'm sorry I stormed off the other day. I knew you were just kidding....

MIGUEL
 (staring at her cleavage)
 That's right. I was kidding.

Danni's skin is crawling a little. But she's got no choice.

DANNI
 Look, I thought maybe you could help me out...

He inches closer to her.

MIGUEL
 Yeah, I'll help you out...

She inches away, ever so slightly.

DANNI
I appreciate that. See, I'm a
lawyer and --

MIGUEL
(recoiling)
I have my green card now, there
shouldn't be any more trouble --

DANNI
No, this isn't about you. It's
about So Yoon.

MIGUEL
The housekeeper?

DANNI
You know her!

MIGUEL
Yeah, sure. She brings me water
sometimes. Nice lady.

DANNI
Yes! She is a nice lady! That's
great, Miguel, great. Now all I
need is for you to testify that you
know that she works for the
Winklers.

MIGUEL
Testify like...in court?
(off Danni's nod)
I don't want to get involved.

Danni reacts, upset. Then:

DANNI
Miguel, what if it was your mother?
And she got hurt on the job and was
treated unfairly. And there was
someone who could help her, but
that person said "I don't want to
get involved." How would you feel?

MIGUEL
(thinks, then)
I'd want to punch their face in.

DANNI

Well that's how I feel, Miguel. I want to punch your face in.

(re: nails)

And I just got new tips. Don't make me break 'em.

He smiles. She smiles back. A beat, then she leans in, pulling out the final stop. She squeezes her boobs together.

DANNI (CONT'D)

Please. It would really help me.

He smiles. She smiles back...

INT. DANNI'S APARTMENT -- KITCHEN - LATE AT NIGHT (N5)

Danni is sitting at the table, in a good mood, typing away. She finishes. Looks it over, then presses "print", sending it to the printer on the floor. A beat. No paper emerges. She opens up the printer, looks for jammed paper. Nothing. She unplugs it, then plugs it in again. Nothing. It's dead. Off Danni, upset...

INT. THE MALL -- JB'S COMPUTER STORE -- DAY (D6)

Danni enters with her lap top. RASOUL (Persian, early 30's, name tag reads "RANDY") greets her. He is serious-seeming, hard-working and rather humorless. At nights, he works on his novel. But he would be mortified if anyone found out.

As Danni heads over to the printers, Rasoul greets her.

RASOUL

Hello.

Danni reacts. She was hoping to do this without anyone noticing. She regroups, gives Rasoul a big smile.

DANNI

Hi...

(re: nametag)

Randy.

RASOUL

Can I help you with something?

DANNI

Just wanted to look at some printers.

RASOUL
Well, you've come to the right
place. What kind are you looking
for?

DANNI
Um...just...the printing kind.

RASOUL
Black and white? Color? Ink jet?
Laser? LED? Dye sublimation --

DANNI
(re: nearby printer)
This one looks cool.

RASOUL
You have a good eye. That's one of
our top sellers. 66 megahertz
processor, 8 megabyte memory,
resolution enhancing technology --

DANNI
Great. Those things are exactly
the things I'm looking for.
(then)
Mind if I test her out?

RASOUL
(surprised)
Oh. Um, sure. Why not?

Danni smiles, then opens her laptop, plugs it into the
printer and presses print. As her (very long) document
starts to print, Danni makes small talk.

DANNI
I'm Danni. Danni Lowinski. I
actually work right across the
fountain.

RASOUL
The lawyer?

DANNI
(pleased)
You've heard of me?

RASOUL
Passed your kiosk a couple times.
(a little embarrassed)
It's right by the men's room.

DANNI

(upbeat)

Yes it is. Excellent location.
Lots of foot traffic.

RASOUL

Right.

(then)

So, how do you like the printer?

Danni examines a page closely, buying time, as more and more pages spit out.

DANNI

Pretty good. I've seen some printers where the black ink comes out looking dark grey. I hate that. My one printer peeve.

RASOUL

Yeah. It's got a good black.

(then)

So you want to buy it?

DANNI

Depends. How much are you asking?

RASOUL

Two seventy-nine.

DANNI

Ooh. That's a little steep.

Pages are still spitting out. Rasoul glances at them.

RASOUL

How about two-fifty? And how many pages are you printing?

DANNI

Just a couple more.

(then, changing subject)

So Randy, huh. That short for Randall?

RASOUL

Rasoul actually. But people get confused if they see that on a name tag. So? How about two-fifty?

DANNI

No can do.

Danni's document is finally done. She grabs the last page. Rasoul, meanwhile, is getting exasperated.

RASOUL
Well, how much can you afford?

DANNI
Honestly?
(off his nod)
Ten bucks? But something tells me you're not selling this baby for ten bucks. Not with all those megahertz and megabytes.

Rasoul reacts. Meanwhile, Danni backs out of the store.

DANNI (CONT'D)
But if I had money... this would be the model. No question. You need to close a sale, just send them over to the lawyer by the men's room, I'll give an affidavit.
(bright smile)
Thank you so much, Rasoul!

And with that, she dashes out of the store, leaving Rasoul staring after her, annoyed.

INT. THE MALL -- SHAKE N SNACKS -- MOMENTS LATER - DAY (D4)

Danni waves the document at Kaz, excited...

DANNI
My first complaint!

INT. OLIVER SACHS OFFICE -- DAY (D6)

Oliver is at his desk, working on his computer. Danni barges in, Oliver's Secretary following behind.

SECRETARY
Wait, you can't just --

DANNI
I'll only be a minute.

Oliver looks up. Danni slaps the complaint down on his desk.

OLIVER
What's this?

DANNI

A copy of the complaint.

(then)

You were right. One, you have to be prepared to sue. Two, yes people lie. And I even have a three.

(then)

Don't underestimate your opponent.

I'm poor, I got nothing to lose.

(smiles, then)

See you in court.

And off Danni, triumphant...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. THE MALL -- JEZELBEL'S CLOTHING STORE -- DAY (D7)

Kaz tries on the pair of red shoes she's been coveting. They'd look good on a hooker. She loves them. She talks to Danni -- who is in a dressing room.

KAZ

Oh my god, these shoes. They're like hooker hot.

(then)

How's it going in there?

DANNI (O.C.)

I feel like a tool.

KAZ

Come out.

A beat, then Danni emerges. She looks the most conservative she's looked in a pin-striped suit. But she is by no means conservative. Her skirt is still short, her boobs are still there.

DANNI

How do I look?

KAZ

(solemnly)

Like an uptight bitch.

DANNI

(touched)

Yeah?

KAZ

Totally.

Danni grins...

EST. SHOT -- COURTHOUSE

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY (D7)

Danni is seated next to So Yoon. Across the aisle, Oliver sits beside Mr. and Mrs. Winkler. Charlotte is his second chair, looking as condescending as ever. In the galley, Lisa is sitting next to Kaz. Kaz looks very excited. She has her camera. The BAILIFF (male, 30's, clean-cut) is near the stand.

BAILIFF

All rise.

Everyone in the courtroom stands. JUDGE MILES OTTENTHORPE (65, grey-haired, old-fashioned, humorless) enters.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)
The Honorable Judge Miles
Ottenthorpe presiding.

Judge Ottenthorpe sits.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)
You may be seated.
(once everyone sits)
In the matter of So Yoon Rhee
versus James and Katherine Winkler,
we have Daniella Lowinski
representing the plaintiff...

Kaz starts to clap. Danni turns to her, mortified. The Judge glares. Oops. Kaz stops. The Bailiff continues.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)
And Oliver Sachs for the defense.

Oliver stands up:

OLIVER
Your honor, I'd like to move to
dismiss the case. Ms. Rhee is an
illegal immigrant and lacks proper
standing; she can't bring a case to
this court.

DANNI
(standing)
That is so untrue!

The Judge looks at her. Danni sits, embarrassed.

DANNI (CONT'D)
Sorry.

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE
Is your client here illegally?

Danni stands up.

DANNI
Yes, your Honor.

Danni sits down in her chair.

JUDGE
Then she's committed a crime.

Danni stands again.

DANNI
Yes, your Honor. Technically.

Danni sits.

JUDGE
Either sit or stand, you're making
me nervous.

Danni stands, then sits, then stands again.

DANNI
I'm sorry. Which would you
prefer?
(then, still standing)
Nevermind.
(then)
Your Honor, the Winklers told So
Yoon they were sponsoring her which
constitutes a promissory --

OLIVER
Objection your honor. Heresay.
(pointed to Danni)
Obviously.

Danni glares at him.

DANNI
It doesn't even matter.

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE
Excuse me?

DANNI
It really doesn't matter whether or
not they promised to sponsor her.
In a finding in May, 2005, a 2nd
District Court of Appeals in
California said federal immigration
statutes don't preempt state laws
governing workers' compensation.
And they were clearly drawing on
Mendoza v Monmouth Recycling Corp
in which the court found that
illegal aliens are eligible to sue
to enforce contracts and redress
civil wrongs. Which makes sense.
I mean, think about it.

(MORE)

DANNI (CONT'D)

If an illegal immigrant can't sue,
then what are they supposed to do
if someone goes psycho on them?

The Judge starts to respond. Anticipating that he will rule
against her, Danni continues, impassioned:

DANNI (CONT'D)

Your Honor, they'd be powerless,
and our laws need to look out for
the weak, not just the powerful!

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE

Are you done?

DANNI

(a little embarrassed)

Yes. I am.

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE

(nods, then)

Motion denied.

DANNI

(thrilled, shocked)

Are you serious?

(off his look)

Sorry, your Honor. Thank you, your
Honor.

He nods. Then:

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE

Are you prepared to make an opening
statement, Ms. Lowinski?

DANNI

I am. Yes.

She looks at So Yoon, gives her a confident smile. Then, she
takes a deep breath...

DANNI (CONT'D)

This case is about holding people
accountable. So Yoon Rhee came to
America to be close to her only
daughter. Yes, she entered this
country illegally -- like so many
others -- but she was determined to
work hard, pay her way, and
eventually become a citizen of this
great nation.

(MORE)

DANNI (CONT'D)

She got a job as the Winkler's housekeeper and she worked nine hours a day, forty-five hours a week. In two years, she never arrived late. She never left early. She didn't take sick days, she didn't take vacations. And she did all this for less than the minimum wage. Because So Yoon, like so many others, had no choice.

(dramatically)

And then, she got injured at the Winkler's house, moving heavy furniture. And when she told Mrs. Winkler that she was unable to work... what did Mrs. Winkler do?

(heavy pause)

She fired her. Not only is that...

(glaring at Mrs. Winkler)

Totally mean... it's also illegal.

(then)

In Illinois, workers' compensation is not an option. It's a requirement. Which is why we ask that you find for the plaintiff and order the Winkler's to compensate So Yoon for her injuries and lost wages, including medical bills. Furthermore, we ask that you find the Winklers liable for the intentional infliction of emotional distress

(then, with meaning)

And trust me, there's been lots of emotional distress.

A beat, then Danni sits down, feeling pretty good about herself. So Yoon smiles at her.

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE

Mr. Sachs?

Oliver stands up. Then, a little bored:

OLIVER

So Yoon came by the defendant's house a handful of times to water their plants. The defendants didn't employ her as a housekeeper and she did not sustain the injury on their property.

He sits. Danni reacts. That's it? He isn't even taking this seriously enough to make a proper speech!

Oliver smiles at her. Oh, she hates his smug smile!
Meanwhile, the Judge turns to Danni.

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE
You may call your first witness.

INT. COURTROOM -- MINUTES LATER - DAY (D7)

Miguel is now in the witness chair. Danni has started
examining him.

DANNI
And how often do you take care of
the Winkler's lawn?

MIGUEL
Three days a week. I do the whole
street. The Winklers, they like
short grass.

DANNI
Gotcha. And how long have you been
keeping their grass short?

MIGUEL
Um...like four years. Something
like that?

DANNI
Excellent.
(then)
And do you know my client, So Yoon
Rhee?

MIGUEL
Yeah.

DANNI
You saw her at the Winkler's?

OLIVER
Objection. Leading the witness.

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE
Sustained.

DANNI
Where did you see her?

MIGUEL
At the Winkler's house.

Danni smiles. This is going exactly according to plan.

DANNI
And how often did you see her
there?

MIGUEL
Once?

DANNI
(as expected)
Every da--
(then, realizing what he
said)
What?

Miguel glances at Oliver, nervously. Then, he turns back:

MIGUEL
I think she was watering flowers?

DANNI
Objection your honor!

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE
You can't object to your own
witness.

DANNI
But he's lying! Tell them what you
told me. How you saw her every day
--

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE
Ms. Lowinski --

DANNI
He's obviously just scared because
he doesn't want to get fired.
(lowering voice)
I told you, they can't fire you,
it's illegal --

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE
Ms. Lowinski, please!
(to Miguel)
Is that true? Are you afraid
you'll be fired if you tell the
truth?

A beat. Miguel glances again at Oliver; they make eye
contact. Danni sees this. Then:

MIGUEL
No.

DANNI
But you told me you knew her!

MIGUEL
Yeah. Because you were so sexy --

DANNI
(gasps, outraged)
You friggin' pervert! Why don't
you take your short little ding
dong and shove it up your --

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE
Order! Order!

And off his gavel, slamming down...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. BATHROOM STALL -- DAY (D7)

Danni sits on the toilet, her face streaked with tears.

KAZ (O.C.)

Danni?

Danni doesn't answer, just blows her nose loudly.

KAZ (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Danni, you can't stay in there forever.

DANNI

Why not?

We INTERCUT with:

INT. LADIES ROOM -- OUTSIDE THE STALL -- SAME TIME

Kaz is right outside the stall...

KAZ

Come on. It wasn't that bad. I mean, it was bad, but it could've been way worse. Remember in ninth grade when you lobbed all those f-bombs at Mr. Caparelli?

DANNI

I humiliated myself in front of the judge --

KAZ

I'm sure that kinda thing happens all the time.

DANNI

I got a thousand dollar fine. How the hell am I gonna pay a thousand dollar fine?

KAZ

When you win.

Danni takes this in. Then, quietly:

DANNI

You know, all this time I kept telling myself, "you just need a shot, once you get a shot, you'll show everyone..."

(MORE)

DANNI (CONT'D)

(shakes her head, then)
Maybe I'm just not cut out for
this.

KAZ

Hey. You are not a quitter.

DANNI

Maybe I am.

KAZ

You're not. If you were a quitter,
you woulda quit already.

(then, firmly)

I know you better than anyone,
Danni. When your dad got laid off
and you had to go back to work at
the salon and do law school at
nights, did you give up?

No answer.

KAZ (CONT'D)

No. You didn't. And how about
when you couldn't get a law firm to
hire you. Did you give up then?

No answer.

KAZ (CONT'D)

Of course not. And when Mr.
Caparelli tried to get you
suspended for all those f-bombs,
did you accept it?

Danni doesn't answer. Kaz continues.

KAZ (CONT'D)

No friggin' way! You went to
Principal Glassmeyer and told her
how Mr. Caparelli accused you of
cheating. And then you apologized
and you said you shouldn't have
lost your temper, you should have
just sued him for... what was it
again?

A beat. Then, reluctantly:

DANNI

Defamation. And tortious
interference with a contract.

KAZ

Right! And at the end of the day,
that douchebag had to apologize to
you!

Danni smiles a little, remembering. Kaz is firm.

KAZ (CONT'D)

You can do this, Danni. I believe
in you.

Kaz waits for a moment. Has she gotten through to her
friend? Silence. And then, after an interminable beat,
Danni opens the bathroom stall.

DANNI

(vulnerable)

Can you say that again? About
believing in me?

Kaz looks her best friend in the eye.

KAZ

(meaning it)

I believe in you.

And off Danni, touched...

INT. THE MALL -- NAIL SALON -- DAY (D5)

A dejected Danni is sitting with an angry Lisa and an upset
So Yoon.

DANNI

Did you see Miguel staring at
Oliver? It's so obvious he
threatened--

LISA

Who cares. Miguel said what he
said. And now we have to pay the
court costs, plus you! Do you know
how much I make an hour?

DANNI

We haven't lost yet.

LISA

Just guess. I'm serious. You'll
hurl.

DANNI
 (snapping)
 How much do you think I make? And
 you didn't even notice I haven't
 started the clock!

Lisa looks away. Danni composes herself. She turns to So Yoon.

DANNI (CONT'D)
 There has to be someone else.
 Didn't you get to know any of the
 Winkler's friends?

LISA
 Like they would testify--

DANNI
 (ignores her, turns to So
 Yoon)
 I just need you to think. Of
 anything. Anyone --

SO YOON
 I'm tired, Danni.

Danni looks at her. Indeed, she looks wiped out. Danni softens...

INT. THE MALL -- MASSAGE KIOSK -- DAY (D7)

Danni and Lisa sit on massaging chairs while So Yoon lies on a table, getting massaged by new-agey, crystal-wearing LARS.

LARS
 (soothing voice)
 You're very tense. I need you to
 relax.

DANNI
 Not too much. I need her to keep
 thinking.

Lars looks at Danni.

LARS
 You're the lawyer, huh?

DANNI
 (pleased)
 Yeah. You heard of me?

LARS

Passed your kiosk on the way to the men's room.

(then)

Me? I could never be a lawyer. I hate arguing. I like to find things that connect us, not things that break us apart.

DANNI

Good to know.

(to So Yoon)

Did anyone else see you?

No answer. So Yoon is enjoying her massage.

DANNI (CONT'D)

So Yoon!

LARS

Sshh. Spa voice, please.

DANNI

We're in a mall.

LARS

(low voice, calm)

Physically, yes. We are.

Danni looks at him. Physically? She rolls her eyes, then starts speaking in a low "spa" voice to So Yoon.

DANNI

Okay, when I knew Marisa McKutchnik was after my boyfriend but she wouldn't admit it because she's a lying skank, I got her drunk on wine coolers and acted like I didn't think her extensions were all ratty and you know what? Eventually, she came clean.

Lisa and So Yoon are staring at her, confused.

DANNI (CONT'D)

My point is, we just gotta find a way to get Katherine to crack. I'll go back with a Dictaphone and see if I can trip her up --

LARS

(seemingly apropros of nothing)

(MORE)

LARS (CONT'D)

You know, we had a housekeeper growing up. My mom didn't pay her well. Really bummed me out.

DANNI

Interesting.

(to So Yoon)

Maybe if you come with me she'll --

LARS

Used to find these lists all around the house. "Natalia. Dust every surface!" Never a "please", never a "thank you." I kept telling mom she was in a karmic hot zone, but she didn't listen. Then one day, Natalia left her a note. "I love your husband and I quit." And she ran off with my father. Just like that. I'm not gonna lie. It hurt. I loved my dad. And Natalia.

A beat as Danni stares at him. Then:

DANNI

What are you talking about?

LARS

My mom. And her lists.

SO YOON

Katherine leave lists too. No "please!" No "thank you!"

Suddenly, Danni gets it...

DANNI

Wait. She left you notes? With tasks on them?

So Yoon nods. Danni reacts. She glances at Lars who gives a little smile.

DANNI (CONT'D)

That's almost a contract!

(to So Yoon)

Do you have them?

SO YOON

No. I throw away.

DANNI

In the garbage?

So Yoon nods. And off Danni, wheels spinning...

EXT. THE WINKLER'S STREET -- DAY (D7)

Danni gets out of a taxi and hurries towards the Winkler's house. A GARBAGE MAN is dragging the Winkler's trash can towards his garbage truck.

DANNI

Excuse me.

(he stops)

Hi. How are you?

GARBAGE MAN

(confused)

Good.

DANNI

Excellent.

(then, sweet)

There's actually something I need in that garbage can.

GARBAGE MAN

Sorry...

He continues to wheel the trash away.

DANNI

Wait.

(then, a little flirty)

Please. Can I have a little look?

GARBAGE MAN

(not moved)

No.

He keeps walking. Danni is getting increasingly desperate.

DANNI

I'll pay!

Danni opens her purse, checking to see how much cash she has.

DANNI (CONT'D)

Thirty...six dollars. And twenty-seven cents?

(off his incredulous look)

I'm sorry, that's all I have. But I'll pay more. A hundred? I can give you an I.O.U.

(MORE)

DANNI (CONT'D)

And anything you want as collateral, it's just so important, it has to do with my job --

GARBAGE MAN

Look lady, I don't want your money. I just want to do my job. Picking up these garbage cans.

Danni is desperate. A beat, then she pushes the garbage can over; garbage spills out onto the street. He looks at her, surprised.

DANNI

What if there's garbage on the street? Is picking up garbage on the street part of your job?

He stares at her a beat. Then:

GARBAGE MAN

No. It's not.
(then)
Have fun.

With that, he heads away, jumping onto the side of the truck, signalling the driver to drive. As the truck moves towards the next house, Danni begins to look through the trash...

INT. WINKLER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (D7)

Katherine Winkler is in the kitchen. She takes a pot of tea off the burner and brings it over to the counter where she's set out a cup and saucer. As she pours herself a cup of tea, she looks out her kitchen window and spies Danni going through her trash. She reacts, upset, and picks up the phone. After a beat:

KATHERINE

(into phone)
That horrible lawyer is going through my garbage!

EXT. THE WINKLER'S STREET -- SAME TIME - DAY (D7)

Danni continues to furiously root through the Winkler's garbage. Katherine comes out, on the phone with Oliver.

KATHERINE

What are you doing? Get out of here.

DANNI

Not until I've found what I'm
looking for.

KATHERINE

(into phone)

She's looking for something!

(after a beat, to Danni)

That's my personal property and
you're not allowed --

DANNI

(while searching)

Tell Mr. Sachs it was on the
Street. California v Greenwood.
There's no reasonable expectation
of privacy.

KATHERINE

(into phone)

She said something about California
versus Greenwood?

(a beat, then)

Yes, it was on the street! But
it's still mine!

Meanwhile, Danni has found one of Mrs. Winkler's lists.

DANNI

Yes! Yes! With a date even!

(reads)

So Yoon. Clean cupboards. Dust
everywhere. Clean windows --

Katherine realizes what Danni's found. As Danni reads, she
hangs up the phone, advancing towards her...

DANNI (CONT'D)

(reading note)

Change sheets in guest room --

And before Danni knows what's happened, Katherine comes from
behind and rips the note from her hand. Danni leaps to her
feet and runs after, grabbing the note back.

KATHERINE

Give that back to me!

DANNI

Not a chance!

Danni starts off. A beat, then Katherine pounces on her,
physically going after the note!

KATHERINE
It's mine --

DANNI
(shocked)
Get off of me --

The two women start to wrestle with one another; Katherine is trying to grab the note, Danni is protecting it fiercely. Garbage is flying everywhere. Things get increasingly heated...and scrappy.

KATHERINE
You slut --

She bites Danni's hand.

DANNI
Ow!

Katherine tackles her to the ground... Danni tries to free herself.

DANNI (CONT'D)
(huffing and puffing)
You crazy bitch!

KATHERINE
Give it back --

DANNI
No!

She manages to wriggle free of Katherine. But Katherine grabs her leg and won't let go. Danni kicks but Katherine hangs on. Danni's had enough! She leans forward, tackling Katherine! The two women are now rolling back and forth, out of breath, when we hear POLICE SIRENS.

They look up and see a Police Car parked, a STERN OFFICER (30's, no-nonsense) staring down at them. Off Danni... crap.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

EXT. THE WINKLER'S STREET -- MOMENTS LATER -- DAY (D7)

Danni and Katherine are being reprimanded by the officer.

OFFICER

I'm going to let you off with a warning. But I want you two to stay away from each other.

DANNI

We will, absolutely.

KATHERINE

Of course, thank you sir.

DANNI

I'll just be going now. See you, Mrs. Winkler.

She smiles, waving the list a little, and then heads down the street, towards the bus stop. Katherine watches her go, seething... but unable to do anything about it because the policeman is right there. Off Danni, victorious...

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY (D8)

The mood is very different. Danni and So Yoon look happy. Oliver looks serious. Charlotte looks like she wants to vomit. The Winklers look incredibly chagrined. The Judge is sitting on the bench. He addresses Oliver.

JUDGE OTTENTHORPE

It is my understanding that you've reached a settlement.

Oliver stands.

OLIVER

We have, your Honor. My clients have agreed to pay So Yoon's medical expenses, as well as \$8,640 in lost wages and...

He glances at Danni who can hardly contain herself. She mouths the number as he says it.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Twenty-five thousand dollars for intentional infliction of emotional distress.

So Yoon grins. Danni couldn't be more proud.

INT. COURTHOUSE -- HALLWAY -- MINUTES LATER -- DAY (D8)

Danni is walking down the hall with So Yoon and Lisa. She spots Oliver talking to the Winklers.

DANNI
I'll meet you outside.

The Rhees nod. Danni walks over to Oliver.

DANNI (CONT'D)
Oliver. A word?

He looks at her surprised. Then he nods and follows her down the hallway. Once they are out of earshot, Danni stops.

OLIVER
Well done, Daniella.

DANNI
We need to talk.

OLIVER
Agreed. Over dinner?

DANNI
(genuinely shocked)
What? No.
(then)
You knew they were lying. And you let them.

OLIVER
I represented them. They were my clients. And why won't you have dinner with me?

DANNI
'Cause I don't like you --

OLIVER
See, I think you do.

DANNI
Even if I did -- which I don't -- I wouldn't go out with you. Not after the way you handled this case --

OLIVER
Why are you so upset? You won.

DANNI

I'm upset because I believe in the law! I believe laws protect people's unalienable rights. And I believe in presenting facts -- *facts* -- and then letting those facts be interpreted by our judicial system. And it might have taken me a while to finish law school, but I studied really hard. So I know lawyers are not allowed to purposely mislead the court. Which you did.

He smiles, still charmed by her. Then:

OLIVER

Is that all?

DANNI

No. It's not. I'm filing a complaint against you with the state bar for unethical conduct.
(smiles, then)
That's all.

And with that, she heads down the hall, head held high. Oliver watches her go. He looks a little concerned. Perhaps he underestimated Danni after all.

INT. THE MALL -- SHAKE N SNACKS -- DAY (D8)

Kaz is cleaning out the milkshake machine.

DANNI (O.C.)

Excuse me, Miss?

Kaz turns to see Danni standing there, holding a shopping bag. She hands it to Kaz.

KAZ

What's this?

DANNI

Thanks for believing in me.

Kaz reacts, touched.

DANNI (CONT'D)

(warning)
Don't get all mushy...

Kaz grins. Danni motions to the box.

DANNI (CONT'D)

Open it.

Kaz opens it and finds... the red shoes she wanted! She reacts, really excited.

KAZ

Shut the F up!

And off Danni, happy to see her friend so happy...

INT. THE MALL -- MASSAGE KIOSK -- DAY (D7)

Danni approaches Lars who is packing away his supplies.

DANNI

How was your day?

LARS

Massaged a man with more hair on his back than you have on your head. Taught me tolerance. How was your day?

DANNI

Very good actually. I won.

LARS

Hey! Nice job.

She holds out an envelope.

LARS (CONT'D)

What's this?

DANNI

Your cut. It was a good idea.

With that, she walks away. Off Lars, pleased.

INT. THE MALL -- JB'S COMPUTER STORE -- DAY - DAY (D8)

Danni approaches Rasoul. He is standing behind the counter. When he sees Danni, he immediately stiffens.

RASOUL

Paying customers only.

DANNI

Look, I'm sorry about before.

She holds out an envelope. He looks at it suspiciously.

RASOUL
What's that?

DANNI
A hundred bucks.
(then)
I'd like to rent your printer.

RASOUL
I have printers here that cost a
hundred bucks.

DANNI
But not really good ones. With
nice deep blacks. You know how I
feel about gray-blacks.
(then)
Plus, I'm gonna need copies from
time to time. Not to mention a
high-speed internet connection --

RASOUL
(skeptical)
Which you want to rent?

DANNI
Gotta keep my overhead down.
(then)
So what do you say? A hundred
bucks a month.

RASOUL
I'd have to run it by the owner.

DANNI
Okay. You run it by him then.

Meanwhile, the fax machine on Rasoul's desk starts ringing
and a page is spit out.

DANNI (CONT'D)
Oh. That's for me.

She grabs the paper.

DANNI (CONT'D)
And ask him how he feels about the
occasional fax.

With that, she heads out. Rasoul watches her go. And then,
he allows a small smile. It seems, despite himself, he's a
bit smitten by Danni...

INT. DANNI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (N8)

Danni sits with her dad on the couch, watching the White Sox.

DANNI
Man, we just need Carlos Quentin to
have a big rebound year...

GUS
Don't get your hopes up.

A REPAIRMAN comes out of the kitchen, carrying a tool box.

GUS (CONT'D)
You able to fix the stove?

REPAIRMAN
Nah, couldn't. Sorry sir.

Gus shakes his head, annoyed. Meanwhile Danni grabs her purse and leads the Repairman out of the living room.

INT. DANNI'S APARTMENT -- ENTRY WAY -- NIGHT (N8)

Once they are out of earshot:

DANNI
You sure it won't work?

REPAIRMAN
Cut the connection. No power.

DANNI
Great. How much?

REPAIRMAN
Eh, just give me thirty bucks.

She does. He exits. Danni heads back to the living room.

INT. DANNI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (N8)

As she enters:

GUS
You didn't pay him, did you?

DANNI
No, Dad.

GUS
(shaking his head)
So we gotta get a new oven, huh?

DANNI

Yeah, well, we can't afford a new one right now.

She sits back down on the couch. A beat, then:

GUS

Sent out my resume to a few places today. Hopefully I'll get a couple of bites.

DANNI

Yeah. Hopefully.

(then, re: tv)

Gordon Beckham better step up, that's all I'm sayin'. You in the mood for pizza?

GUS

Do big shot lawyers eat pizza?

DANNI

Just don't spread it around.

Danni picks up her phone starts to dial. Gus looks at her.

GUS

Danni?

(she looks at him)

Your mom...she'd be real proud of you.

DANNI

Thanks Dad.

And off this emotional moment...

EST SHOT: the sun rises over the mall...

INT. THE MALL - DANNI'S KIOSK -- THE NEXT MORNING - DAY (D9)

The mall is slowly but surely coming to life. We see our cast of characters setting up. And last of all, we find Danni. She is taping something to her large sandwich board sign. She smooths it down. Then stands back. Her sign still reads: "Expert Legal Advice. \$1 a Minute!" But underneath that it now reads: "100% of Cases Won!"

She looks across the floor to Kaz at Shake 'n Snacks. Kaz gives her a thumbs up. Danni grins. Then, she sits behind her desk. And waits, optimistically, for her next case...

END OF SHOW