

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

EXT. PRISON - DAY

The exterior of a prison is shown; the austere red brick walls of the building and perimeter are foreboding.

JILL, woman in her early thirties, of smart appearance, is standing near the visitor's entrance to a prison. She looks nervous and paces a little, hesitant to go in.

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY.

Jill is being escorted by a guard into a prison visiting room. She nervously looks round the large room for a seat.

The room is soulless; the decoration is tired, there is little colour except for the odd mismatched plastic chair. Jill subtly takes in the appearance of the eclectic mix of visitors and inmates as she walks to a seat.

She shifts uneasily in her chair. LEE a man of similar age in prison clothing, enters the room few minutes later, escorted by a burly guard. Lee sees Jill and walks quickly over and sits. He is gaunt, his hair is thick and unkempt.

LEE
Thank you for coming.

Jill nods.

LEE
I didn't think you would.

JILL
Why?

LEE
I felt it was a long shot.

JILL
Why did you want me to come?

Lee looks at his hands.

LEE
I need some answers.

JILL
To?

LEE
Why Lauren did it.

Jill huffs and fidgets uneasily.

JILL
Haven't you got this the wrong way round?
Lauren didn't do anything.

Lee leans forward, arms on the table, head lowered. He slowly raises his head.

LEE
(WITH SARCASM)
Didn't she?

Jill leans back and shakes her head.

JILL
How could she? She was practically comatose,
by your hand.

Lee slams his fists on the table. The guard moves forward, Jill draws away, but is restricted by the constraints of sitting.

LEE
NO!

Lee raises his hands in a show of no danger. The guard retreats. After a few moments Jill sits forward cautiously.

LEE
Why did she believe it was me?
I didn't do anything. It's all a lie.

Jill is angry.

JILL
Are you trying to claim some type
of insanity, that you were possessed by
an evil spirit that made you do it?

Lee feels helpless, he lowers his head into his hands; rubs his face, then looks up and stares directly at Jill.

LEE
I was hoping you could help me find
out who did it. Please hear me out.

JILL
I'll listen, even it's just for the
comedy factor.

EXT. POOL SIDE - DAY.

Beneath a glorious blue sky, surrounded by palm trees, with the sounds of the sea on nearby shore, LAUREN, thirty, is reclining on a sun bed. Her athletic body glows with the start of a tan and allows her to get away with a skimpy bikini; her light brown hair is tied up in a casual topknot.

An empty plate and cocktail glass are on the table next to her. She lowers her sunglasses and smiles at a waiter as he collects the empties. He's good looking, she watches him as he moves away. She replaces her sunglasses and lies back again.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT.

Lauren is dressed for dinner wearing a long, lightweight strapless dress with a vivid pattern; she is sitting in a comfortable seat at a small table with an aperitif. A man, STEVEN, mid-thirties, approaches her. He is tall, tanned and dressed smartly for evening in warm climate.

STEVEN
Excuse me, please forgive the cliché,
but you look familiar.

LAUREN
Do I?

Steven gestures to a spare seat at the table.

STEVEN
May I?

Lauren is a little unnerved, but he is attractive, so she nods. Steven sits.

STEVEN
I saw you earlier by the pool.

LAUREN
Another cliché?

Steven exhales a laugh.

STEVEN
Yes sorry, I'm full of them.
(PAUSE)
I've been racking my brain, I'm sure
I've seen your picture in the media.

Lauren looks away then reaches for her drink and makes a move to stand.

LAUREN
If you'll excuse me, my dinner
reservation is in a few minutes.

STEVEN
I only wanted to say it's nice to see
you looking so well after your ordeal.
It must have been terrible.

Steven has a sudden moment of doubt and rushes to finish his sentence.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Assuming you are Laura.

Lauren lowers back into the chair.

LAUREN
Lauren, my name is Lauren.
(PAUSE)
Thank you. It was a terrible ordeal.

STEVEN
What actually happened?

Lauren paused for a moment deciding whether or to tell Steven.

LAUREN
Well....

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK, TEN MONTHS/YEAR PREVIOUSLY

The room is dark, Lauren is asleep. A whistling in the pipes suggests a tap is on somewhere; Lauren is no longer alone in the house. She stirs as her subconscious picks up the new sounds.

A few minutes later the bedroom door squeaks as it opens slowly. Lee, looking happy and healthy, smartly dressed in shirt, loosened tie and suit trousers, pokes his head round the door; he sees her move and steps into the room.

LEE
(ABRUPTLY)
Hi, how you feeling?

Lauren raises her head, her light brown hair is lank, her eyes are sunken with dark bags underneath. She has a grey pallor.

LAUREN (V.O.)
..I started feeling unwell and initially thought nothing of it. Gradually the sickness seemed to take over, affecting my whole body.

Lee is seen placing a jug of what looks like water next on her bedside table. Lauren is asleep.

LAUREN (V.O.)
I felt useless, couldn't do anything for myself so became utterly reliable on Lee, my husband.

Lauren is turning in bed, restless, as though she can't get comfortable.

LAUREN (V.O.)
Lee just told me it was flu and I'd get over it.
When my friend visited, she suggested it was time to get help.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lauren is dozing. There is the distant sound of a door opening and being closed carefully, followed by the creak of a stair.

JILL (O.S.)
Hellooo, Lauren.

Lauren stirs, she is sleepily pushing herself up on her pillows as the bedroom door slowly opens and Jill enters cautiously.

LAUREN
(feebly)
Hi,

Lauren pushes herself up onto the pillows.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming.

JILL
Least I could do.

Jill looks round the dark room.

JILL (CONT'D)
A bit stuffy in here, could do with
some fresh air.

Jill opens the curtains, Lauren flinches at the increase in light. Jill turns to Lauren; she is taken aback at her appearance. Not wanting to show her shock she casually straightens the bedcovers.

JILL,
Well, you're the palest I have ever seen
you, lost a bit of weight too. Not that you
needed to. What's the diagnosis?

LAUREN
There isn't one.

JILL
The doctor doesn't know?

LAUREN
I haven't seen one.

JILL
What do you think it is?

LAUREN
Don't know but I feel like shit!
Weak, headachy, and continually tired.

Jill pauses, trying to keep the concern from her voice

JILL
Definitely time you saw the doc.
Lee should have arranged it.

Lauren struggles to push her-self up more. Jill watches Lauren's effort.

JILL (CONT'D)
TSK.
This could be anything, the sooner it's sorted
the better.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's early evening, Lauren wakes. She becomes aware of a loud voice downstairs. She listens in.

LEE (O.S.)
I haven't, I ...
(Pause)
That's easy for you to say, you're not
living with her.

The tension in his voice becomes apparent as the volume increases.

LEE (O.S.)
You seriously think I haven't bothered
with...

There is a longer pause, when Lee speaks again, he seems calmer.

LEE (O.S.)
Ok Jill, I'll try again and see if I
can arrange something tomorrow.

Lauren smiles as the conversation comes to an end. There is silence in the house.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

It is early morning, Lauren wakes. She cautiously swings her legs over the side of the bed then pauses to get her balance, gathering strength to stand. Her movements show she is aware of her tiredness and every muscle in her body aching.

Her legs shake as she tries to stand unaided. She doesn't want to wake Lee. Each step is difficult, she realises she hadn't been conscious of the pain before now. Her legs fail her near the bedroom door, she falls to the floor in a heap.

The thump wakes Lee, he starts looking to where Lauren should be then turns on the light.

LEE
What the f...
What are you trying to do?

LAUREN

Go to the bathroom before I embarrassed myself. Looks like I failed on more than one account.

LEE

You should have asked for help!

Lee goes to her and helps her get to the bathroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Lee comes in with coffee and toast. He looks down at the sorry figure in the bed.

LEE

You must eat.

He places the small plate and mug on the bedside cabinet.

LEE (CONT'D)

I've phoned the surgery, someone will call in this morning, hopefully about eleven.

Lauren nods and starts on the toast. She chews slowly, struggling to swallow, she sips the coffee then grimaces. Lee watches.

LATER

The doctor is standing by the bed. He is putting things back in his bag. Steven is at the end of the bed, watching.

DOCTOR

Well, I can't say for sure what it is until you've had more investigations. If you can get to the surgery tomorrow morning for bloods we can start there. It's too late to get them sent off today.

LAUREN

Do I need to go to hospital?

DOCTOR

I could call an ambulance, but chances are you'd have a long wait before it arrives and not knowing what we're dealing with an even longer wait at the hospital.

(MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
You'd be better here in comfort until
we know more.

Lauren lies in bed, tired and too weak to argue. The doctor
looks at her.

DOCTOR
If you are worried, or there is any change,
call 999.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Lee enters and looks at Lauren.

LEE
See, doesn't seem to be anything
too urgent.

LAUREN
You probably wouldn't say that if
you were feeling like I do right now.
I hope the doc's right about no
urgency.

Lauren slides under the covers.

INT. LOUNGE- DAY.

Lauren is sitting on the sofa, examining the bruises on her
arms from the attempts of getting blood. Lee enters and puts a
tray with a sandwich and drink on a side table then helps
Lauren sit up. He places the tray on her lap.

LEE
Doctor's orders, food and drink to
build you up.

He looks over at Lauren, watching her. There is a pause.

LEE
Is it ok?

LAUREN
Tastes a little funny.

LEE
Have a drink, might take the taste away.

Lauren takes a drink then pushes the plate with a half-eaten sandwich away and leans back.

LAUREN
I'm tired now. think I'll sleep.

LEE
OK. I'm going to the office.

Lee moves forward and takes the tray off her lap and goes out.

LATER:

Steven returns, he now wears a suit. Lauren's eyes are closed, he puts the phone within her reach. There is a sound of the front door closing, Lauren opens her eyes and sits up.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

The light has changed in the lounge, it is late afternoon. Lauren is asleep when the phone rings; she wakes, her hand fumbling toward the sound of ringing.

LAUREN
Hello.

JILL (V.O.)
Lauren?

LAUREN
(WEARILY)
Yes, who is this?

JILL (V.O.)
Jill. I was surprised you answered. thought Lee would be there.

LAUREN
He's gone into the office.

JILL (V.O.)
He told me you fell night before last.
Poor you, it must have been frightening.

Lauren bursts into tears.

LAUREN
What's happening Jill?
(BEAT)
I don't like feeling like this, I'm scared.

JILL (V.O.)
It must be awful; I can't imagine it.
At least now the doctor is on the case.

LAUREN
I hope so, I am beginning to think I
can't take much more of this.

There is as an awkward silence. Lauren's sobs start to ease.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
It must be two weeks or so now.
I didn't expect tremors, or to feel so
weak. NO, not weak, bloody helpless.

JILL (V.O.)
Do you want me to come over again?

LAUREN
Not today. Perhaps tomorrow afternoon.
I'll ask Lee to leave the key somewhere.
Thank you.

Lauren puts down the phone. Her face is tear stained, she her
tilts her head back and stares up at the ceiling.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

It is afternoon. Lauren is watching television, she hears a
key in the door, she looks at the clock, 3.15.

JILL (O.S.)
Hello oo

LAUREN
I'm in the lounge.

Jill enters.

LATER:

A small table in front of the sofa has empty plates with cake
crumbs and mugs on it.

JILL
How are things between you and Lee?

LAUREN
Ok I suppose. Why do you ask?

JILL
He doesn't seem to be very attentive.

Lauren takes a little time before she answers.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
We did have a bit of a falling out recently.

JILL
Why?

LAUREN
Our usual contentious issue.

Lauren adjusts her position on the couch.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
We had had a lovely weekend away then on the way home he mentioned the baby thing again. He wondered why I still wasn't pregnant. I let it slip that I was still taking the pill, so he got really agitated.

Lauren looks away momentarily.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
He said he thought we'd agreed to start trying for a family so accused me of lying to him. When said I still didn't feel ready, he called me deceitful.

JILL
Bet that was awkward.

LAUREN
It was about week later I started feeling odd. I've slowly been getting worse.

JILL
Are you suggesting it may not be flu?

Lauren looks down and shrugs.

LAUREN
Lee told me it was probably flu, I thought it could be stress. Things have been hectic at work lately.
(PAUSE)
The row didn't help.

LATER:

Jill is leaning forward putting things onto a tray. A little red light catches her eye from across the room.

JILL

You have a phone message. Shall I check it?

LAUREN

Please. I must have slept through the ringing.

Jill presses the play arrow. A clipped voice delivers a message.

ANSWER PHONE

Hello Mrs Lebrock, this the surgery, can you please ring us regarding your blood results. Thank you.

Lauren is biting her lip and quiet, Jill notices her anxiousness. Lauren dials.

LATER:

There is a click as the other person ends the call. Lauren holds the phone a little longer then slowly replaces the receiver.

JILL

What did she say?

LAUREN

Nothing definite, want some more tests. They seem a little worried.

JILL

Can't be too bad, otherwise they'd be Getting you in to hospital; or prescribing something.

LAUREN

I suppose so.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Lauren is on the phone.

LAUREN

Hello. Mr. Long, It's Lauren Lebrock.

(PAUSE)

Much better thank you. I've just spoken to the doctor and he thinks I should be ok to return after another week's rest.

(PAUSE)

Yes, a week on Monday.

(PAUSE)

Thank you. Have a good weekend. Bye.

INT.OFFICE - DAY.

MONTAGE: Series of images with a much healthier looking Lauren at work. Lauren shaking hands with a Mr. Long, a man in his mid-late fifties smartly dressed.

Other images over a few days as she settles back in. She's standing talking to a colleague; at the photocopier with documents in hand; busy at her desk; in a large meeting room with other colleagues. Last few images she is looking less energetic and beginning to look tired and drawn.

MONTAGE ENDS.

INT.OFFICE - DAY.

Lauren is on the phone to Jill.

LAUREN

Thought I was doing ok, but last week took it out of me.

JILL (V.O.)

Do you think you've gone back too soon?

LAUREN

I felt so much stronger then, gradually, the weakness returned. Lee said it was to be expected as I'd been off for a while.

JILL(V.O.)

So, has he been keeping an eye on you?

LAUREN

He's making sure I take these tonics and doing some meals. Mind you I'd rather I was, he's not the best cook and his seasoning is off, everything tastes weird again.

Lauren laughs to make light of the situation. Jill doesn't respond.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

I'd better go Jill, need to look as though I am working. Mr. Long has been very understanding about all my time off.

JILL (V.O.)

Make sure you take care.

LAUREN

Of course.

INT.OFFICE - DAY.

Lauren is in a meeting with colleagues. Mr. Long is standing at the front of the room; people are starting to get up from the large table, collecting papers/laptops and leaving the room.

Lauren is waiting for others to leave. When most people have left she slowly stands up, placing a hand on the table to steady herself. She is slow and wobbly as she leaves the room.

We hear a female's voice shriek offstage.

INT. HOSPITAL A&E - DAY

Paramedics are wheeling a woman on a gurney into a curtained area. She has an oxygen mask on and seems unconscious. Doctors and nurses are busy around her checking equipment.

PARAMEDIC

This is Lauren Lebrock, twenty-nine Years old.

(BEAT)

Lauren was at work today when she collapsed. Colleagues stated she had only just returned to work after a period of illness.

(BEAT)

ECG shows an abnormal heart rhythm; BP is 80/40, she is drifting in and out of consciousness and is slow to respond. Husband Lee has been contacted and is on his way in.

LATER:

A doctor is talking to SGT. LASCELLES, a man in his fifties, thick set, wearing neat sports jacket and trousers. They stand just outside the cubicle area.

DOCTOR

She's stable for now and we are waiting for toxicology results.

(BEAT)

She's lucky she wasn't alone when this happened. Any delay and it's likely she wouldn't be with us.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Lauren and Steven are sitting at the dining table, empty plates in front of them.

STEVEN

I'm afraid to admit I did follow some of the court case. I was completely baffled.

(PAUSE)

Why did he do it?

Lauren sighs and looks down at the table.

LAUREN

I have no idea.

EXT. HOTEL VERANDA - NIGHT.

Lauren stands on the veranda, looking out at an unobstructed view to the calm sea. A practically cloudless sky is given a glow by a half moon which is also reflected on the dark surface of the water.

Steven approaches Lauren as she turns from the view.

LAUREN

Thank you for your company, Steven, it makes a nice change. Always nicer to share such a beautiful location.

STEVEN

You're welcome. I hope it wasn't too painful reliving things.

LAUREN

A little. Still can't fathom it out.
I thought we had a good marriage. Now
I feel so lonely.

Lauren looks away and bites her lip, looking a little emotional.

STEVEN

Why did you come here on your own?

Lauren sighs, she stares to a space over Steven's shoulder.

LAUREN

People don't want to be associated with
damaged goods. They seem unable deal with the
awkwardness.

STEVEN

Your friend seemed very supportive at the
trial.

LAUREN

You can't rely on anyone. I think it must
have been show for the media. She's not
been in touch since; not returned my calls.
(BEAT)

Enough self-pity. Good-night Steven.

Without waiting for a response, Lauren leaves Steven on the veranda.

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY

Jill is visiting Lee who is a little less gaunt.

JILL

You look a little brighter than when we
last met.

LEE

Thanks to you, I feel more positive. I have
been looking into an appeal.

Jill shows a little uneasiness. She draws herself up and repositions herself in her seat.

JILL

Hang on Lee. I didn't say I'd help you.

Lee closes his eyes and scrunches his face up.

LEE

Why are you here again then? You came to me this time.

Jill draws a breath then lets out a long sigh.

JILL

I don't know.

(BEAT)

There's something not quite right.

LEE

Why don't you ask Lauren, does she know we've met?

JILL

No.

LEE

You didn't tell her?

JILL

I can't. I've no idea where she is. I thought by some strange quirk you might know.

Lee shakes his head in amazement.

LEE

Are you suggesting that from the confines of a prison I've managed to finish the job I am supposed to have started?

Jill feels awkward. She sighs heavily and responds in an agitated way.

JILL

I don't know Lee. My best friend almost dies, you're found guilty of attempted murder -

LEE

(EMPHATICALLY)

Which I DID NOT do.

Jill carries on, ignoring the outburst.

JILL
And now she seems to have disappeared.

They both sit in silence for a few moments. Lee looks around the room, Jill stares at Lee watching his reaction.

JILL (CONT'D)
Did she have any enemies at work?
Perhaps someone wanted her out of the way.
(BEAT)
Or a stalker who wanted you out of the way!

LEE
She's never talked about her colleagues.
Anyway, how could they plant evidence to frame me? You're the only one whose been to the house.

Lee's expression changes as he has a thought.

LEE
Perhaps it's you! Jealous of Lauren's success and lifestyle.

Jill is angered by the insinuation.

JILL
PLEASE! This is getting silly.
Much as I love my friend I have no desire to expend the energy she does in her drive to achieve success in the corporate and sporting worlds.

Jill, pushes her chair back and gathers her things.

JILL (CONT'D)
If you can't help, I might as well go.

LEE
If you do find anything out, please let me know. It might help my case.

JILL
Maybe.

INT. SHOP - DAY

Jill is behind the counter in a home accessories shop. She is surrounded by quality cushions, throws, ornaments, and similar items. She is on the phone.

JILL
Hello, Mr. Long? My name is Jill Squires,
I'm a friend of Lauren Lebrock.
(PAUSE)
Has Lauren been at work? I haven't heard
from her for some time and I'm a little
concerned.
(PAUSE)
Oh, I see. Thank you. Sorry to have troubled
you. Good-bye.

Jill ends the call and thinks for a moment. She scrolls down
her contacts list and presses an entry that says 'Lauren's
aunt'. She fidgets at the counter while it rings.

JILL
Hello, Miss Noble?
(PAUSE)
I don't expect you remember me, it's
Jill, Lauren's friend.
(PAUSE)
I'm fine thank you.
I was wondering if you've heard from
her lately.
(PAUSE)
Oh, not since the last day of the trial.
(BEAT)
That's surprising.
(PAUSE)
I'm sure you are, me too.
(PAUSE)
Of course, as soon as I do.
Goodbye.

EXT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - DAY

Jill rings the doorbell. As she waits, she notices folded
cardboard boxes in the drive and evidence of work being done
on the house.

She turns back to the door as she hears a noise. A woman opens
the door. She is dressed casually indicating she's cleaning
or working on the house.

JILL
Hello, I'm sorry to trouble you.
I'm looking for Lauren.

WOMAN

I'm sorry, she's not here.

JILL

When will she be back?

WOMAN

I've no idea. She doesn't live here.

The woman's forthright tone surprises Jill. The door begins to close, quickly Jill raises her hand to catch her attention.

JILL

I'm sorry, I'm a bit confused. Are you renting the house for a while?

The woman holds the door half closed, she is precise and short in her reply.

WOMAN

The house is ours, we completed on the sale a few weeks ago. Goodbye.

Jill is left facing the closed door. She's shocked.

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Lee is in a room with his solicitor. There are papers on the desk, Lee refers to some of his notes while the solicitor jots things down on a pad.

LEE

There have been various things that don't seem to add up and I feel they support my claim for appeal.

(BEAT)

Jill, Lauren's friend, hasn't been able to contact her so she contacted Lauren's boss.

Lee sifts through papers and studies a page.

LEE (CONT'D)

Mr. Long said she'd left the company a few months ago.

He tried to contact Lauren as she'd left some things behind, but the phone number wasn't recognised, and a letter came back 'gone away'.

SOLICITOR

Perhaps she wanted to make a new start. She had a traumatic time, it may be her way of healing.

LEE

Yes, I could understand that, but her aunt hasn't heard from her either.

(PAUSE)

Oh, and another thing, it seems our house has been sold. How can that be, without my knowledge?

SOLICITOR

How do you think all this is relevant?

Lee is taken aback at the comment. He takes a minute to consider his response, trying not to let an increasing frustration show.

LEE

Surely a disappearance could point to a follow up on a failed murder attempt! Seeing I'm in here, it could go a long way to proving my innocence. I had a good marriage and I care about my wife.

SOLICITOR

I'll see what I can do. It's likely that more evidence will be needed to warrant further investigation. For an appeal you'd need new information.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Steven is just going into reception. He approaches the desk to get his room key, then saunters outside to the bar near the pool. He hears laughter and looks toward the pool. He sees Lauren having fun, flirting with a man.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

Steven is walking across reception toward the dining room. Lauren is walking quickly in his direction, the man she was with at the pool is in playful pursuit. She is not looking where she is going and bumps into Steven.

LAUREN
OOPSEY.

Steven notices she is a little tipsy. He smiles at her.

STEVEN
Hello Lauren. Glad to see you've
found company.

LAUREN
Jealous?

Steven laughs quietly.

STEVEN
Not in the slightest. Just pleased
you seem to have your mojo back.

MAN (O.S.)
(AMERICAN ACCENT)
Come here my little firecracker!

Steven raises his eyebrows in surprise. Lauren looks at Steven
with a broad, smug grin.

STEVEN
Have fun.

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY

Jill is visiting Lee again.

LEE
Can't keep away, or are you reveling
in my unjustified incarceration?

Jill is surprised at the acerbic greeting from Lee.

JILL
What's brought about this turnaround
of attitude? You're looking ill again.

Lee hangs his head looking dejected.

LEE
It's ironic that I'm in here for
attempted murder but am the only one
concerned about the person I allegedly
wanted out of the way.

JILL
Why do you say that?

LEE
The solicitor allocated to me for my appeal seems as useless as the 'boy' that defended me at my trial.
(PAUSE)
Rather than being interested in the information and hypothesis I have put forward, he seems to think I am wasting my time.

Jill takes a breath and moves forward. She looks down at the table, not making eye contact with Lee.

JILL
It pains me to say this, but I am starting to question my friendship with Lauren.

Lee's interest is sparked.

JILL (CONT'D)
I've gone over a lot of things since I lost contact with her and I'm starting to query her behaviour.

LEE
Like what?

JILL
Well, only little things but..
(PAUSE)
The first thing I remembered was immediately after the court case ended.

Jill pauses, continues as flashback.

EXT. COURT - DAY - FLASHBACK

A Crowd is gathered on the pavement outside court. There are photographers and cameras crowded round Lauren and Jill.

Lauren looks worn out as she faces the interviewers. She lowers her head slightly and wipes her nose with a tissue; she eyes look moist as he looks up. Jill puts her arm around Lauren as they move off.

INT. PUB - DAY

Lauren and Jill are walking toward the bar; there are a few people in the pub. Lauren seems more composed, she opens her bag and takes out her purse. Handing over some money to Jill, Lauren starts to move away.

LAUREN

Can you get me a large white wine.
I'll be back in a mo.

Jill accepts the money and moves to the bar. Lauren goes in the direction indicated for the toilets.

LATER.

Jill is looking at her watch. She is uncomfortable waiting at the bar alone. She spots Lauren coming back, she picks up the wine glasses on the bar and moves toward Lauren. Jill notices a change in her mood and appearance.

LAUREN

Right then. Cheers.

Lauren raises her glass to Jill's and lets out a sigh.

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY - PRESENT

Jill finishes what she has been saying to Lee.

JILL

When she came back she'd put on
make-up and was so relaxed.

LEE

I expect relieved that it was over.

JILL

Yes, but to be so casual? It was like
we were out for a drink on a Friday night.

(PAUSE)

Then there was my visit.

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Jill was standing in Lauren's lounge. The once homely room was looking sparse. There was less furniture, leaving room for several boxes in the corner.

Jill is shocked by the change in the room and Lauren's blasé approach.

JILL
Well,
(BEAT)
This is, . . . quite a change.

LAUREN
Yes, it is, isn't it. You know the saying,
"out with the old, in with the new."

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY - PRESENT

Jill continues.

JILL
I thought I'd give her some space,
but things went so quiet I popped
round.
She was surprised to see me, and the atmosphere
in the house was . . . , well
there was no atmosphere. It was like
a tornado and ripped through.

LEE
Probably reasonable if she thought
I'd try to kill her. We know how driven
Lauren is. Once she sets her mind to
something, it's all go. Don't get
in front of the steam roller.

JILL
She hadn't even tried to get in touch.
All this time I was readying myself for
the analysis of it all, "why did Lee do it?",
"I thought he loved me", "How could he?",
Those type of questions.

(BEAT)
If it were me, I would have wanted
someone for moral support while I came
to terms with it. I certainly wouldn't
be cheerful.

Lee sat staring ahead. A few moments pass then he comes out of his stare and shakes his head.

LEE
This is all so bizarre.

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Sergeant Lascelles is with Lee in the interview room. Lee looks happier as he listens to the sergeant.

SGT. LASSCELLES
We've looked at the information you've provided and a couple of things have been followed up.

(BEAT)

We talked again with Mr. Long, who explained Lauren had worked her notice period, so no sudden disappearance. He did say that they were surprised she left but she had hinted to colleagues she had just come into some money.

(BEAT)

Did you know anything about that?

Lee looked shocked and shook his head.

SGT. LASCELLES (CONT'D)
They had also found a small holdall in a cupboard, almost hidden, that turned out to be Lauren's. It contained a large water bottle that he recognised as hers, and

Lascelles opens a file as he talked, withdrawing a once crumpled piece of A4 paper in a plastic wallet.

SGT. LASCELLES (CONT'D)
This piece of paper with some odd notes.

He hands the paper across the table. Lee takes it, glancing at it as he draws it close.

LEE
(SURPRISED)
That's my laptop password.

He looks at the other notes.

LEE (CONT'D)
These may be dates when I was away with work.

Lascelles hands over a picture of the water bottle.

SGT. LASCELLES
Do you recognise this?

Lee leans forward to look at the picture in Lascelles hand. He shakes his head as he pulls back.

LEE
No. Not her usual gym bottle.

SGT. LASCELLES
Ok, thank you.

Lascelles stands.

LEE
Have you looked into the house sale?

SGT. LASCELLES
Not yet. I haven't decided if it's relevant.

LEE
Not even if it was done without my knowledge, isn't that suspicious? Especially as my agreement and signature would have been needed.

SGT. LASCELLES
I'll give it more thought.

EXT. NEWSAGENT - DAY.

Steven is walking along a road, past a row of shops. He sees the A board outside with a newspaper headline.

POISONING CASE REOPENED.
LOCAL GIRL DISAPPEARED.

He walks into the newsagent and buys the paper.

INT. POLICE STATION INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Steven is sitting behind a table opposite Sgt. Lascelles.

LASCELLES
I believe you may have some information about the Lebrock case.

STEVEN
Possibly.
(BEAT)
The newspaper article says she has
disappeared. I know where she is.

Lascelles leans back on this chair and breathes in. He looks
away from Steven as if disinterested.

LASCELLES
And where might that be?

STEVEN
The Bahamas.

Lascelles looks back at Steven, taking in his appearance and
general manner.

LASCELLES
Good holiday, was it?

STEVEN
Work actually, but yes, it was good.

LASCELLES
So, you think you saw her?

STEVEN
I know I saw her. We had dinner together.

Lascelles' surprise is evident. He tries to hide a mischievous
smirk. Steven notes the expression.

STEVEN
No sergeant, nothing happened between
us. I approached her because I recognised her
and wanted to acknowledge what she had been
through.

LASCELES
And how did she seem?

STEVEN
Very much recovered I'd say.
Full of energy and enjoying life.
(PAUSE)
Although she didn't act like it when I first
approached her.
(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

When she knew I was aware of the court case she seemed to play it down slightly, acted the victim, abandoned by everyone.

(PAUSE)

She'd had recovered by the next day, judging by her activities.

LASCELLES

So, you saw her again?

STEVEN

Not directly, only observed. She seemed to avoid our first meeting.

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Sgt. Lascelles is sitting opposite Lee, who is tidier in his appearance and seems brighter. PC EVANS, a younger police officer is with him.

The desk has a couple of files on it. Sgt. Lascelles leans forward to put a tape in the recorder, then presses a button. There is a 'beep'.

SGT. LASCELLES

Tuesday seventeenth June 2019,

Ten forty-three.

Interview with Lee Lebrock.

Sgt. Lascelles and PC Evans present.

(PAUSE)

Mr. Lebrock, as you are aware, a decision has been made to review your case in light of your appeal and the additional information that has come to light.

(BEAT)

I appreciate your statement has been given once, but I'd be grateful if you could give an account of the events, as you recall them.

Lee nods in agreement.

LEE

I had no idea that's Lauren's illness was out of the ordinary, so was taken aback when I was taken in for questioning.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK, JULY 2018.

Lee is in a hospital waiting room. He is dressed in a work suit, and sits anxiously waiting, his head in his hands. A doctor comes in.

DOCTOR
Mr. Lebrock?

Lee stands nervously; his hair sticks up where he has had his hands holding his head,

DOCTOR
Your wife is stable for now, but she's not in a good way. We understand she has been unwell lately, can you tell us more about this?

Lee sighs heavily as he fidgets. The doctor signals him to sit, they both do. Lee's right knee moves up and down as he nervously bounces his foot.

LEE
It's been about six or seven weeks. We thought it was flu, but she just seemed to get weaker. I tried to get her to keep eating and take plenty of fluid, but it didn't seem to help.
(PAUSE)
She wouldn't see the doctor when I suggested it, kept saying she be ok.
(BEAT)
In the end she agreed and called the GP.

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY - THE PRESENT

Lee pauses as he reflects on events. He stares blankly at the table for a moment, Sgt. Lascelles wants to keep the interview going.

SGT. LASCELLES
Tell me more about the GP's visit.

LEE
I don't think Lauren would have agreed to it had it not been for her friend Jill. I'm grateful for that.
She'd seen Lauren and how bad she was, then urged her to see the doctor; in fact, Jill gave me a bit of a hard time over the phone.

SGT. LASCELLES
Why was that?

LEE
She seemed to think I wasn't bothering with Lauren. I assured her I'd call the surgery in the morning.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK, June 2018

It is early morning; Lee is asleep and wakes on hearing a noise. He looks up and sees Lauren sprawled on the floor.

LEE
Lauren love, what's happened?

Lee gets up quickly and helps her to the bathroom. Later he is helping Lauren into clean nightwear.

LEE
I'm calling the doctor first thing, this is obviously more than flu.

LAUREN
If you think so.

LEE
(EXASPERATED)
I do. I have been urging you for days.

Lauren doesn't reply immediately.

LAUREN
(FEEBLY)
Have you? I can't remember.

INT. HALL - DAY

Lee is at the front door seeing the doctor out.

LEE
I have been trying to get her to eat and drink but she's reluctant. I even prepared her favourite foods, but she just left everything.

DOCTOR

I didn't want to say anything in front of Lauren but she doesn't look good. How long do you think she's been going down-hill?

LEE

I don't know. She exercises regularly and has been at the gym as usual, until the about ten days ago.

(BEAT)

Lauren would think she could work through and conquer the illness. She is rather stubborn and independent.

DOCTOR

Ok. As I said, any change for the worse, dial 999. I'll get the blood tests marked as urgent.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

There are plastic cups on the table now, Sgt. Lascelles takes a drink; PC Evans is sitting back from the table. Lee is looking weary at the reminiscing.

LEE

I was pleased she was finally getting help.

SGT.LASCELLES

Is there anything about her behaviour leading up to this?

Lee pauses while he considers the question.

LEE

Not that I can think of. I had been working away a bit, and had a weekend jolly with the lads from the football team. I took Lauren away to make up for it. That was about a week before she started feeling ill.

SGT. LASCELLES

Did you have a good time, no falling out?

Lee shrugs and shakes his head.

LEE

Everything was fine. We touched on baby plans but she said not yet and I was ok with that.

SGT. LASCELLES

The work trips, were they connected to the dates on the paper I showed you?

LEE

I think so.

SGT. LASCELLES

Nothing else you can think of?

LEE

Perhaps there was the odd moment when she was snappy and impatient, I just put it down to her frustration at being unwell. Although . . .

Lee pauses for a moment to think.

LEE (CONT'D)

Lauren is independent, she generally doesn't let things get to her. When she's been ill before, she just thought it an inconvenience.

There is a pause in the conversation. PC Evans hands Sgt. Lascelles a folder, he opens it and takes out some photographs.

SGT. LASCELLES

Do these mean anything to you?

Lee looks at the photos. One is of a small cardboard box that looks as if it had been reassembled, the other of a printed address label.

LEE

(WITH A DEGREE OF IRRITATION)

I think I said at my first interview I didn't recognise these.

SGT. LASCELLES

Yes, that was recorded.

(BEAT)

Humour me, just for clarity.

Lee sighs and pushes the photos away.

LEE

I still don't recognise the company on the label, and don't recall receiving anything of that size being delivered.

SGT. LASCELLES

So how would you explain why only your fingerprints are on them?

LEE

I can't. If they were in the recycling I would have handled them. Same would have applied to anything in the recycling. Lauren never bothered; she left it all to me.

Sgt. Lascelles nods slightly and places the photos back in the folder. Lee is thoughtful, then continues.

LEE (CONT'D)

Sergeant, wherever the packaging had come from, surely they would have some fingerprints on them. They would have been handled several times before arriving at our house. They must have been wiped before I handled them.

A smile comes over Sgt. Lascelles face.

SGT. LASCELLES

That's a fair point Mr Lebrock. One that will be considered.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY.

Sgt. Lascelles is at his desk, he is on the phone waiting for it to be answered.

SGT. LASCELLES

Hello, this is Sgt, Lascelles, Thames Valley Police. I was wondering if you could help us with our investigation.

INT. LOS ANGELES AIRPORT - DAY - MONTAGE

A tanned and healthy Lauren, dressed in a bright summer dress, wearing sunglasses, is walking confidently through airport security. She continues on, looking at the duty-free shops, having a coffee, reading a magazine.

SGT. LASCELLES (V.O.)
Hello, Thames Valley Police, Sergeant Lascelles speaking.

SGT. THOMAS (V.O.)
(BAHAMIAN ACCENT - NOT INDICATED LATER)
Hello, this is Sgt. Thomas, Nassau police.

SGT. LASCELELS (V.O.)
Ah, thank you for getting back to me.

Montage continues, it shows Lauren standing up and walking through to departure gates. She reaches a gate and is reaching in her bag for her passport and ticket; above her an electronic sign shows AA738 NEW YORK.

SGT. THOMAS (V.O.)
I have spoken to the manager at the Royal Paradise Hotel, he confirmed Lauren Lebrock had been staying there for a month. She checked out two weeks ago.

SGT. LASCELLES (V.O.)
Was he able to give you any more detail about her ongoing plans?

SGT. THOMAS (V.O.)
She left a forwarding address, which I will email to you. No definite information, although a staff member did say she thought she was going on to Los Angeles and possibly home via New York.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Sgt. Lascelles is sitting in Jill's lounge on a comfortable sofa. He looks round the room in a nineteen thirties house. The paintwork is light and fresh, some attractive artwork on the walls, furnishings look expensive, of a style sold in her shop. Wooden patio doors lead out to the garden.

Jill comes in carrying a tray with a couple of mugs and plate of biscuits on it. She places the plate and a mug on the side table next to Sgt. Lascelles then takes a seat in a cosy chair.

SGT. LASCELLES
Thank you.

He takes a drink.

JILL
I'm not sure if I have anything new,

Sgt. Lascelles finishes his mouthful, wiping the corner of his mouth with the back of his hand.

SGT. LASCELLES
I appreciate you may feel conflicted, given your close friendship with Mrs. Lebrock, but I understand you managed to find out some information that started the ball rolling with the appeal. You may not feel anything is relevant, but we need to consider everything.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK/MONTAGE 2018

Jill enters the dark bedroom and stands by the window. She pulls back the curtains and turns to see Lauren. She is taken aback at what she sees.

JILL (V.O.)
I was shocked when I first saw Lauren. She is always slim, but she was ghost like.
We had a chat then I suggested she might feel better after a shower.

Lauren edges uneasily to the side of the bed. Her movements are slow. Jill helps her stand. Jill wrinkles her nose as Lauren gets close.

LAUREN
Smell that bad do I?

JILL
(CHUCKLES)
You have been more fragrant.

They steadily leave the room.

LATER.

Jill helping Lauren back into bed. When she has settled Lauren, she takes the jug of water from the bedside table and leaves the room.

JILL (V.O.)
I refreshed her water as I felt it
smelt odd, fusty.
(BEAT)
I was quite concerned when I left,
and that feeling wasn't helped when
I called her a few days later.

INT. SHOP - DAY

Jill turns over the 'CLOSED' sign on the shop door and clicks the Yale lock. Returning to the counter she lifts her bag from below, gets her mobile out and dials Lauren.

LAUREN (V.O.)
Hello.

JILL
Lauren?

LAUREN (V.O.)
(CURTLY)
Yes, who is this?

JILL
Jill.
I'm surprised you answered, thought
Lee would be there.

LAUREN (V.O.)
(ABRUPTLY)
He's gone into the office.
(PAUSE)
Why did you think he would be here?

Lauren's tone contrasts with Jill's caring voice. Jill is surprised at Lauren's sharp tone. She continues cautiously.

JILL
He said that you were going into the
surgery this morning. How did it go?

LAUREN (V.O.)
When did he tell you that?

JILL
Last night.

Jill waits for a response, there is none, just moments of silence then she hears Lauren bursts into tears.

LAUREN (V.O.)
What's happening Jill?
(BEAT)
I don't like feeling like this, I'm scared.

JILL
It must be awful; I can't imagine it.
At least now the doctor is on the case.

LAUREN (V.O.)
I hope so, I am beginning to think I
can't take much more of this.

JILL
Do you want me to come over again?

Lauren sighs heavily, she is now more mellow.

LAUREN (V.O.)
Not today. Perhaps tomorrow afternoon.

INT. HALL - DAY

Jill is entering Lauren's house. She pulls the key out of the lock, putting it on a table in the hall as she passes.

JILL
Hello oo

LAUREN (O.S.)
I'm in the lounge.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Jill comes in and smiles.

JILL
Good to see you up.

LAUREN
(CURTLY)
You're early, you startled me.

Jill is taken by surprise at the tone. There is a moment before she answers.

JILL

Sorry, I worked through my lunch to get here a bit earlier.

Jill moves further into the lounge and takes a seat.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY - PRESENT

Sgt. Lascelles is listening and making the odd note. Jill takes a drink.

JILL

I was taken aback by her sudden burst of aggression. It was as though she was annoyed because I interrupted her by being early. She must have realised she had been sharp because the next minute she returned to seeming tired and weak.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY - FLASHBACK/MONTAGE

Lauren and Jill are eating cake and chatting. Later Lauren is on the phone; Jill is straining to hear.

JILL (V.O.)

She had a message from the surgery about more blood tests. She was saying that she couldn't get there...

Jill starts waving at Lauren, mouthing something. Lauren speaks into the phone then Jill gives her the thumbs up.

JILL (V.O. CONT'D)

... so I offered to take her. I thought it odd she didn't think Lee would take her.

Jill and Lauren have finished their cake. Jill is watching Lauren.

JILL (V.O.)

After we'd had our cake, I asked her how were things with Lee. She told me they'd had a row a few weeks before.

(MORE)

JILL (V.O. CONT'D)

She claimed he blamed her for everything.
It was after that she started feeling
unwell.

SGT. LASCELLES (V.O.)

Did you see much of Mr. Lebrock?

Montage continues - The light in the room has changed; it is darker. Jill notices the time and gets up to leave, as she reaches for her coat, they hear a key in the door. Moments later Lee comes in.

JILL (V.O.)

Not really. I did see him just before
I left that day. He seemed put out
that I was still there.

Jill finishes putting on her coat and turns to Lauren, they exchange words then Jill moves away. Lee stands away from the lounge doorway to let Jill pass.

JILL (V.O.)

I had given him a bit of a hard time
over the phone a few days before so perhaps
he was still upset.

SGT. LASCELLES (V.O.)

Why did you give him a hard time?

END OF FLASHBACK/MONTAGE

INT. JILL'S LOUNGE - DAY - PRESENT

Jill moves in her chair, pausing to remind herself of events.

Jill

I challenged him about what seemed to
be an uncaring attitude, but he insisted
he was doing as much as possible; it was
Lauren refusing help or advice.

SGT. LASCELLES

Why did you say at the trial that you
were suspicious of Lee?

JILL

Everything Lauren said just pointed to him not caring. He didn't want her to see a doctor; left her alone a lot, even when she was scared; and he got in a huff over the baby.

LASCELLES

Was it really like that?

JILL

Well,

(BEAT)

It seemed so at the time.

Jill pauses and turns her head, staring out of the patio doors to the garden. She carries on in a quieter tone.

JILL (CONT'D)

In retrospect,

(BEAT)

everything Lauren said created a suspicion by suggesting Lee was uncaring, brusque and nonchalant.

I was surprised because that's not him.

He doted on her.

Lascelles lets her pause, sensing there was more to come. He holds back on further questions, allowing Jill's thoughts to follow their course.

JILL (CONT'D)

Her behaviour was a bit odd. Ok, she was very poorly, but she was very, hmm, meek for Lauren. She kept saying things like "Lee says", "Lee told me". She's usually very confident and would challenge more.

SGT. LASCELLES

Would it surprise you to know that when Lee mentioned they discussed the baby situation, he said he was happy to wait, there was no argument.

Jill takes a few minutes to consider this.

JILL

Actually, I don't think it does. It's more in character for him to just go along with Lauren's decision.

(MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)

One of the reasons I went to see Lee again, was a growing nagging doubt. The more I thought about the way Lauren was behaving, the more I realised it wasn't really her, even given the illness.

SGT. LASCELLES

Thank you, Miss. Squires, that's been helpful. If you think of anything else that may be relevant, please get in touch.

Sgt. Lascelles stands up to leave. Jill remains sitting monotonously.

JILL

I feel a bit of a chump. I was manipulated and played right into her hands, then dropped like a hot potato.

INT. POLICE STATION OFFICE - DAY

Sgt. Lascelles is sitting at his desk, the phone rings.

SGT. LASCELLES

Sergeant Lascelles, Thames Valley Police.

CALLER (V.O.)

Hello, this is Sarah Carmichael, UK Border Control.

(BEAT)

An alert has just come through to notify us that Lauren Lebrock has just boarded Flight AA979 in New York for London Heathrow. ETA 1740 hours.

SGT. LASCELLES

Ah, thank you. I'll make the necessary arrangements and be in touch.

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT - NIGHT

A tired looking Lauren, casually dressed in jeans and jumpers, hair tied back, comes through the arrivals gate with a laden luggage trolley. She scans the crowd; a man in chauffeur's uniform is holding a sign "LAUREN LEBROCK", Lauren moves in his direction. She has gone a few steps when Sgt. Lascelles steps in front of her; PC Evans is behind him.

She pauses before trying to steer the trolley round Sgt. Lascelles, he side steps and shows her his warrant card.

SGT. LASCELLES
Mrs. Lauren Lebrock?

LAUREN
Yes.

SGT. LASCELLES
I'm Sergeant Lascelles, Thames Valley
Police.

Lauren looks confused.

SGT. LASCELELS (CONT'D)
Lauren Lebrock, I'm, arresting you on
the suspicion of Perverting the Course
of Justice. You do not have to say anything,
but it may harm your defence if you don't
mention, when questioned, something you later
rely on in court. Anything you do say may be
given in evidence.

Lauren looks around and notices people beginning to look at her. She is embarrassed.

LAUREN
Is this some guide of joke?
If it is, I can assure you I'm not
amused!

PC Evans escorts Lauren away, Sgt. Lascelles follows.

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Lauren is sitting at the table in the interview room. Her arms are folded, a slight tension in her body shows her irritation about being there.

Sgt. Lascelles and PC Evans enter.

SGT. LASCELLES
Good evening Mrs. Lebrock.
I hope you had a good flight.

Sgt. Lascelles and PC Evans sit. Sgt. Lascelles places a folder on the table. Lauren sits forward, placing her hands on the table.

LAUREN

I can't understand why I've been brought here. No one has had the decency to explain anything.

SGT. LASCELLES

All will become clear.

Sgt. Lascelles leans forward to start recording the interview. There is a beep as the tape starts.

SGT.LASCELLES

Thursday October 17th 2019 19:35 hours.

Sgt. Lascelles interviewing

Mrs. Lauren Lebrock. PC Evans in attendance.

(PAUSE)

Lauren, can I call you Lauren?

Lauren sits back in her seat and folds her arms. She has a look of impatience.

LAUREN

I suppose so.

SGT.LASCELLES

Thank you.

(BEAT)

I understand you do not want a solicitor present.

LAUREN

I'm at a loss to see any reason why I would need one.

SGT. LASCELLES

You have been arrested following information received in connection with Mr. Lee Lebrock's appeal against his sentence; the case has been reopened.

Lauren sits upright in her seat, her expression changes to one of surprise.

SGT. LASCELLES (CONT'D)

Contradictions to the original evidence have come to light that need more investigation. In addition to this, queries have arisen that I hope you will be able to assist us with.

LAUREN

I can't understand why there should be any contradiction. My husband was found guilty of poisoning me. I was the victim!

SGT. LASCELLES

Yes, I'll come to that later.

(PAUSE)

Why did you quit your job and travel extensively abroad?

Lauren is becoming more unsettled, her confusion coming across as anger.

LAUREN

I don't see why any of this is your business. I shouldn't have to justify my reasons.

(BEAT)

If you must know, it was to help me recover from the trauma; separate myself from what happened.

SGT. LASCELLES

Why did you keep your trust fund from your Husband?

LAUREN

Wha -

SGT. LASCELLES

Why did you sell your house without telling your husband, more to the point how did you manage to do that?

LAUREN

This is -

SGT. LASCELLES

You see we have a few anomalies that need clarification.

Lauren becomes more confused and starts to stress. A panic starts to set in.

LAUREN

That's enough! I can't go on. I'm tired and I want to go home.

SGT. LASCELLES

I'm afraid that won't be possible.

Lauren is getting angrier by the minute.

LAUREN

I want to see a solicitor. NOW!

SGT. LASCELLES

That's fine, I'll get that arranged for you.
Interview suspended at 21:07.

Sgt. Lascelles stands up and leaves the room. Lauren sits, angry and bewildered. Her eyes flick side to side nervously, she stares hard at PC Evans then looks away starting to pull at the sleeve of her jumper and bite her lip.

Moments later the detention officer comes in with Sgt. Lascelles.

SGT. LASCELLES

Please go with the officer, the Custody Sergeant will contact your solicitor.

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Sgt. Lascelles and PC Evans are at the table, the red light is lit on the recorder. Opposite is a frazzled Lauren and next to her, a duty solicitor; he is casually dressed.

SGT. LASCELLES

So Lauren, I trust you've had sufficient time with your solicitor. Now you are aware of the disclosure information, I hope you will be able fill in the gaps for me.

Lauren is non-committal. Sgt. Lascelles opens a folder in front of him.

SGT. LASCELLES (CONT'D)

This new information makes the previous evidence of Lee's involvement questionable.

Lauren remains tense and agitated.

LAUREN

So how do you account for the deterioration in my health?

SGT. LASCELLES

It did pose quite a conundrum.

LAUREN

I haven't seen any evidence that challenges Lee's guilt.

SGT. LASCELLES

I have to admit, it's a well thought out, cunning plan of misdirection.

Lauren fidgets, looking down at her hands, starring from one to another, studying her nails.

SGT. LASCELLES (CONT'D)

However, even the most carefully considered plans have their weak spots; generally, it's human error.

LAUREN

Get to the point Sergeant!

Sgt. Lascelles notices Lauren's hard exterior, the matter-of-fact attitude and seemingly over-confident air. He looks at her, assessing her response, trying to gauge her level of irritation.

SGT. LASCELLES

All in good time Lauren.

Lauren bristles at the familiarity and casualness. Sgt. Lascelles pauses as he compares a couple of pieces of paper. He lets one rest on the table and takes the other in his hands.

SGT. LASCELLES (CONT'D)

We re-examined certain pieces of evidence. Among the forensic tests was a review of the packaging for the pills. Whilst Mr Lebrock's fingerprints were undoubtedly on the box and bottle, I'm embarrassed to say that in the original investigation no one noticed that they were the only ones.

SOLICITOR

That doesn't disprove his involvement.

SGT. LASCELLES

Perhaps not in isolation, but in general it is odd. Considering the journey of the pills, forensics concur that it is unlikely that there'd be only one set of prints.

(MORE)

SGT. LASCELLES (CONT'D)

It is more likely that the packaging was wiped clean after it entered the house, then handled only by Mr Lebrock.

LAUREN
(ABRUPTLY)

What are you suggesting?

SGT. LASCELLES

Just exploring other possibilities. Wouldn't you agree that it's unlikely he would wipe the items clean then handle them without gloves?

Lauren starts to fidget again; she leans across to her solicitor and whispers to him.

SOLICITOR

My client is suffering from the effects of jetlag and needs to take a break.

Sgt. Lascelles, dips his head to hide a smirk, pauses, then looks up.

SGT. LASCELLES

We can take a break.
Interview suspended 12:15.

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Lauren and her solicitor are in another room.

SOLICITOR

You are being very open Mrs. Lebrock, I would air on the side of caution.

Lauren is agitated and impatient.

LAUREN

They're just bluffing, I can't see what other evidence they have to prove he didn't do it!

The solicitor is surprised at what Lauren says and takes a moment to go over the details the police have provided on the case.

SOLICITOR

It is quite possible there are other lines of enquiry they are following up, so, I would advise responses of 'no comment' for now. We can break again to discuss this further if necessary.

Lauren looks away, irritated.

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Sgt. Lascelles, PC Evans, Lauren and the solicitor are seated in the interview room. The red light is on signifying the recording.

Sgt, Lascelles, pulls out a plastic pocket with a piece of paper in it; the paper has creases on it where it had been crumpled then flattened out. There is some writing and dates on it.

SGT. LASCELLES

Do you recognise this, Lauren?

LAUREN

No, should I?

SGT. LASCELLES

What do you think it is?

LAUREN

(IRRITATED)

I've already said I don't recognise it.

SGT. LASCELLES

Can you explain why your fingerprints are on it?

Lauren leans forward to look at it, she leans back then shakes her head as she straightens, then looks at Sgt. Lascelles and shrugs.

SGT. LASCELLES

Can you give me an answer please.

LAUREN

No.

SOLICITOR

Consider the advice I gave you Mrs. Lebrock.

Lauren looks at the solicitor briefly.

LAUREN
Perhaps I was tidying up and threw it
away.

SGT. LASCELLES
So you recognise it from home.

Lauren nods.

SGT. LASCELLES (CONT'D)
Please state your response for the
tape.

LAUREN
(QUIETLY)
Yes.

Sgt. Lascelles pushes a photograph toward Lauren.

SGT. LASCELLES
And what about this water bottle?

LAUREN
It's the water bottle I took to work.

SGT. LASCELLES
Was Lee in the habit of filling it for you?

LAUREN
(CASUALLY)
No, I kept it in the bag I took to work.

The solicitor notes Lauren's lazy response and looks at her. Sgt. Lascelles nods as he draws back the photograph and puts it back in the folder.

SGT. LASCELLES
So can you tell me why there are
traces of the pills in it?

The solicitor leans toward Lauren again, she raises her left hand as if to ignore his approach. Lauren keeps her head bowed as she responds, she doesn't pick up on Sgt. Lascelles accusatory tone.

LAUREN
No.

SGT. LASCELES

Hmm.

Moving on, can you explain how you sold the house without Lee's consent?

Lauren tries to hide a look of alarm, she turns to her solicitor, her eyes moving rapidly as she stares at him.

SOLICITOR

I remind you again about our discussion and urge you to consider the advice.

She pauses slightly before replying.

LAUREN

I had his consent. He signed the house over to me.

The solicitor discards his pen on top of his papers, sits further back in his chair and folds his arms.

SGT. LASCELLES

And when was that?

LAUREN

Not long after the trial. When he was in prison.

Sgt. Lascelles sighs heavily. He leans back in his seat.

SGT. LASCELLES

Are you sure? Lee has no recollection of seeing you.

LAUREN

I sent them to him.

Sgt. Lascelles leans forward and makes a show of looking at a piece of paper. He shakes his head.

SGT. LASCELLES

Nope,

(BEAT)

no record of any post, or papers being received at the prison.

Lauren looks away, staring at the floor. She continues, not making eye contact.

LAUREN

Well, perhaps I saw him before he went to prison.

SGT. LASCELLES
There wouldn't have been time.

Lauren is starting to struggle to control hide her evident frustration.

LAUREN
How do you expect me to remember?
It was a traumatic time. I was still
recovering from the effects poisoning.

SGT. LASCELLES
I'm sure you were. Which makes it all
the more surprising you had the presence
of mind to plan the sale of the house.
It seems a bit rushed to me.

There's a silence. Sgt. Lascelles lets Lauren think on her response for a moment.

SGT. LASCELLES
Let's move on again.
You didn't tell Lee about your Trust
Fund.

LAUREN
It didn't seem relevant when we met.
As the relationship progressed it
wasn't a subject that came up.

SOLICITOR
What relevance has the Trust Fund to
all this?

SGT. LASCELLES
Just trying to get a clear picture of
the situation.

Sgt. Lascelles pauses and looks from Lauren to her solicitor.

SGT. LASCELLES (CONT'D)
Lee was aware you were an orphan,
being brought up by your aunt?

LAUREN
Had been. I wasn't living with her
when we met.

SGT. LASCELLES
But he met her.

LAUREN

Yes. A few times before we married.

SGT. LASCELLES

So, he was aware of her simple lifestyle,
her modest home?

SOLICITOR

Again, I ask how is this relevant?

SGT.LASCELLES

Establishing motive. It's the one
thing that seems to be missing from
Lee's actions.

(BEAT)

If he had nothing to gain, why would
he act as he did?

Lauren is affronted by Sgt. Lascelles' questioning. She looks
across at her solicitor before replying.

LAUREN

Really! Why would I immediately lay
bare all my personal background?

She continues in mocking tone.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

"And don't worry Lee dear, I've got
a small fortune coming my way in a
few years' time".

(BEAT)

I wanted him to marry me, not the
idea of my money and me being
indispensable.

Sgt. Lascelles chuckles.

SGT. LASCELLES

Bit ironic then. Even without
knowledge of the Trust Fund, it
appears he still wanted you out
of the way.

(PAUSE)

You never mentioned it at
the trial, yet it would have been
a clear motive for his alleged crime.

The solicitor clears his throat and interjects.

SOLICITOR

Sergeant, as I understand it
Mr Lebrock has been convicted of the
crime so your use of 'alleged'
is inappropriate.

SGT. LASCELLES

Indeed. On the face of it that would
seem right, however, there are several
irrational things that need clarifying.

Sgt. Lascelles looks down at his file and reorganises various
pieces of paper.

SGT. LASCELLES

So, bearing in mind the terrible time
you went through, when you'd expect someone to
seek the support and care
from loved ones, why did you sell up,
quit your job and abandon those closest
to you?

Lauren doesn't respond. She sits up uncomfortably, chews the
inside of her cheek and stares at Sgt. Lascelles. The silence
is a little awkward.

SGT. LASCELLES

Here's my theory.

Sgt. Lascelles explains his theory while a montage runs.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT - FEBRUARY 2018 - FLASHBACK

MONTAGE: Lauren is at home sitting on the sofa. A glass of
wine is on a side table next to her; the television is on, but
she isn't paying attention to it. She has a laptop open and is
scrolling through pharmaceutical information on the internet.
Beside her on the seat is a piece of paper with numbers on it
and a few dates, the one in evidence.

She makes some notes on a pad of paper, "should not be used
for a long period of time, risk of permanent organ damage if
medical treatment not sought immediately, death in some
cases", she marks an asterisk next to the text. She closes
the laptop, picks up the TV remote and changes the channel.
She reaches for her wine and sits back to watch her programme.

SGT.LASCELLES (V.O.)
Having decided on your plan, once you had discovered the password to Lee's laptop, you started using it to surf the internet while Lee was away.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lauren enters her spare room with a small, shallow cardboard box. She wipes it over with what seems to be a cloth then, holding the side of the box in the cloth, slips it under the bed.

SGT. LASCELLES (V.O.)
Once you had found a suitable drug, you ordered it. When it arrived, you removed the address label and delivery note, then hid the box.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

It is early evening, Lauren is in the office, alone. She has a graphics programme open on her computer; on the screen is a delivery slip with a company name in bold letters at the top and the words "DELIVER TO:" then her name and address. She is highlighting her name and changing it to LEE LEBROCK.

SGT. LASCELLES (V.O.)
Later you scanned these at work so you could manipulate the image to make it appear that Lee had received the goods.

She moves the cursor to the print icon then stands. Moments later, with a gloved hand she is picking up a piece of paper from the printer and putting it in an envelope.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Lauren is wearing latex gloves and holding a small protein powder bottle.

SGT. LASCELELS (V.O.)
Having obtained a suitable container, you cleaned it of prints then left it somewhere for Lee to see, knowing he'd put it in the recycling.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A weary Lauren, stands by the sink in her dressing gown. She is putting the breadboard inside a plastic carrier bag, then places it on the draining board; a clear resealable bag with pills in it lies next to the retrieved container.

SGT. LASCELELS (V.O.)

Later, you retrieved the container for your use, being careful not to get your own prints on it.

Wearing latex gloves, Lauren counts out several pills, places the pills on the covered bread board and starts to grind down the pills with the back of a metal spoon. The resulting powder is then put into the small bottle and the lid screwed on.

SGT. LASCELELS (V.O.)

You prepared the pills for ease of mixing so it would appear Lee was drugging the drinks he was giving you.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Lee, dressed in smart work clothes, puts down a jug of water on the bedside table. Lauren is asleep, he turns and kisses her on the forehead before he leaves; Lauren stirs slightly. Later we see her wake, reach into a bottom drawer next to the bed and take out the container, and spoon some powder into the jug, she gives it a good stir.

SGT. LASCELLES (V.O.)

Over a period of time, you continued to take the drug, being careful not to overdo it.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Lauren comes into the kitchen, her movement is slow and she looks unwell. She puts the kettle on; while waiting for it to boil she puts the latex gloves on to grind down more pills and refill the container.

SGT. LASCELLES (V.O.)

I suspect you stopped from time to time when Lee was working away. This gave your body a break from the onslaught.

(MORE)

SGT. LASCELLES (V.O. CONT'D)
It also enforced the idea that Lee
couldn't continue his plan while he was
away.

(PAUSE)

I must admit that took some determination,
and guts.

END OF MONTAGE/FLASHBACK

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY - PRESENT

SGT. LASCELLES
How am I doing?

Lauren looks away and sighs heavily. Her body language is
tense, her expression blank, her tone hard.

LAUREN
Very Imaginative. Thank you for the
entertainment.

(BEAT)

Do you take your policing skills
from the television sergeant?
You are more Colombo than Thames
Valley!

SGT. LASCELLES
Despite your protests, we have a lot
of evidence that supports my theory.

LAUREN
That's pure fabrication, it wouldn't
stand up in court.

SGT. LASCELLES
Perhaps, we'll let the CPS decide.

(PAUSE)

Of course, there are also other charges
to consider.

LAUREN
Such as?

SGT. LASCELLES
That would be another matter for the CPS.

Lauren looks to her solicitor, her face contorted in anger.
The solicitor speaks up to gain Lauren breathing space.

SOLICITOR

This has gone on long enough.
I'd like some time with my client.

Sgt. Lascelles nods.

SGT. LASCELLES

I think that's a good place for us
to stop for now.
Interview suspended at 17:10.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The court room is full; several members of the press and media
are there. Jill is just taking a seat after giving evidence.

Sgt. Lascelles is in the witness box giving evidence. The
prosecuting solicitor is on his feet facing Sgt. Lascelles.

SGT. LASCELLES

Had Mrs Lebrock not acted so quickly
in leaving the country, we may not have been
alerted to any unusual behaviour.

PROSECUTING BARRISTER

Why did you think her behaviour was unusual?

SGT. LASCELLES

Because of the sudden distancing from close
friends and relatives, and her suspected
disappearance. Everything happened within a
year of the trial.

PROSECUTING BARRISTER

Did you not consider that she needed
time to recover from the trauma of what had
happened?

SGT. LASCELLES

I did. But a picture began to build that
led me to believe she had meticulously
planned to set up Mr Lebrock, sell the house
and reinvent herself for a life abroad.

Lauren's defence barrister stands quickly.

DEFENCE BARRISTER

Objection your honour. This is pure
conjecture.

Lauren is in the dock, smartly dressed, with a confident air. She smiles at her barrister's quick response.

JUDGE

I'm willing to allow it. The jury can consider the evidence at the appropriate time.

PROSECUTING BARRISTER

Thank you, your honour.

(PAUSE)

Sergeant, how did you conclude that it was Mrs Lebrock's intention to move abroad?

Jill is now is listening with interest to the information she hasn't been aware of.

SGT. LASCELLES

We retrieved useful information from the forwarding address, here in the UK.

PROSECUTING BARRISTER

How did the address help?

SGT. LASCELLES

The P.O. Box held documents and various correspondence that pointed to Mrs Lebrock's intention to quit the UK.

PROSECUTING BARRISTER

Why were you so sure about this?

SGT. LASCELLES

There were documents showing a newly set up company, new bank accounts and papers providing her with a new identity as Miss Evie Charles.

PROSECUTING BARRISTER

Is that the only evidence that was found?

SGT. LASCELLES

No. There were documents from the United States government, addressed to Evie Charles, requiring completion ahead of the consideration to approve her marriage to an American national.

Defence Lawyer stands again. He labours the objection.

DEFENCE BARRISTER
Objection!
Please your honour. It is not unheard
of for people to change their name.

PROSECUTING BARRISTER
Your honour, the documents retrieved suggest
a complete invention of a false life.

JUDGE
I'll allow it.

The Prosecuting Barrister nods his thanks to the judge.

PROSECUTING BARRISTER
Had this plan come to fruition, Mrs.
Lebrock would now be married and
living abroad.

There are muttering around the court. Lauren holds her head
high, seemingly blasé about the claims.

PROSECUTING BARRISTER (CONT'D)
However, given lapse of time, and lack
of contact by Mrs Lebrock, the engagement,
if it was truly that, is off.
Just as well, otherwise we would also be
considering bigamy.

More muttering around the court, and a few giggles.
Embarrassed, Lauren lowers her head as she senses eyes on her.

LATER:

The judge puts down his papers and finishes his address to the
jury.

JUDGE
So in summary, you must arrive at your decision
based on the evidence before you, and you must
decide if there is sufficient evidence for each
count.

People in the public gallery are looking toward the judge,
listening to his speech; Jill is looking in another direction,
staring at Lauren, a look of anger and disgust on her face.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

When you have finished your deliberations your verdict for each charge must be beyond reasonable doubt, and preferably unanimously. If you have ANY doubt about the defendant's guilt, on any charge, you must find her Not Guilty.

(BEAT)

Jury will now retire to consider their verdict.

The jury all stand and leave the court.

INT. COURT HOUSE WAITING AREA - DAY - MONTAGE

Jill is standing, paper cup in hand staring out of a large plate glass window.

Lauren is sitting in her cell, legs crossed, swinging her leg impatiently.

Jill is sitting at a table. The light has changed and now coming from behind her, it casts a slight shadow on the table. There is an empty sandwich packet in front of her.

Lauren in her cell, is standing, looks at her watch then starts pacing about. She hears a deep mechanical sound somewhere in the building and stops.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

The court is crowded, there is silence, an air of anticipation fills the room. The judge is settling in their seat.

COURT CLERK

Will the defendant please rise.

Lauren defiantly takes her time in standing. She smoothes down her skirt and pulls her jacket strait. Someone coughs.

COURT CLERK

Will the foreperson of the jury please rise.

Jill sits forward anxiously, her body tense.

COURT CLERK

Have you reached a verdict on which you are all agreed?

FOREPERSON

We have.

COURT CLERK

On the count of Perverting the Course of Justice, do you find the defendant guilty, or not guilty?

FOREPERSON

Guilty.

Murmurs ripple through the court. Lauren straightens, her expression changes to one of disbelief.

COURT CLERK

On the count of Perjury, do you find the defendant guilty, or not guilty?

FOREPERSON

Guilty.

Lauren grimaces in anger and shakes her head.

COURT CLERK

On the count of Falsification of documents, do you find the defendant guilty, or not guilty?

FOREPERSON

Guilty.

Lauren lets out a noise and leans forward, resting her hands on the side of the dock. Jill leans back heavily in her seat, a smile and look of jubilation on her face.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Jill is standing beside her car in a prison carpark looking toward the red brick building. It is sunny, a gentle breeze, blows her hair and light weight dress.

Moments later she smiles and takes a few steps forward so she can be seen. Lee has come out of the prison gates; he walks toward Jill. As he reaches the car, they look at each other and smile.

Jill steps forward, they have an awkward brief hug. He steps back, tips his head toward the sun and closes his eyes. They stand in silence.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Lee and Jill are sitting in comfy chairs in a trendy café. Lee looks relaxed and happy; he takes a drink.

LEE
God that latte tastes good.

He places the cup down.

LEE (CONT'D)
Thanks Jill, I really appreciate this. You've been a star through everything.

JILL
That's ok. I felt bad enough with what happened, can't image what it must have been like for you.

LEE
Yeah, it's been pretty tough.

JILL
Why did it take so long to be released?

LEE
I have no idea. I'm just glad it's over.

He takes another drink, and a bite of cake, savouring every mouthful.

LEE (CONT'D)
Have you had a letter from Lauren?

Jill finishes taking a sip and rolls her eyes.

JILL
Yes.
(BEAT)
She's got a bloody nerve.
(PAUSE)
I take it you have too.

Lee just nods and looks a little uncomfortable.

LEE
So will you go and see her?

Jill looks sideways at Lee, with a look of amazement.

JILL
Certainly not!
And I hope you won't either.

There is silence. Lee looks thoughtfully at the floor.

LEE
I was surprised to hear how ill she
was.

JILL
That's what you get when you mess
around with things you shouldn't.
(PAUSE)
As far as I'm concerned it's divine
retribution!

INT. PRISON - DAY

Lauren is waiting in her prison cell. Her previously athletic body now gaunt, almost skeletal; her pallor is grey and her hair looks unhealthy.

There is a clunk and the rattle of keys as her cell door is opened. A prison officer comes in.

Lauren, no longer defiant and overconfident looks at him with an anticipation. She is just about to say something, but he cuts her off.

PRISON OFFICER
No Lauren, there still hasn't been
a request for visitation approval.

Lauren sighs and looks away.

PRISON OFFICER
Come on, your hospital transport is
here.

With a look of resignation and despondency, she picks up her coat from the bed and exits her cell, the officer behind her.

FADE OUT

THE END.