

THE LIGHT OFF-SCREEN

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. BACKSTAGE - EVENING

A dark screen. A beat.

Then the curtains SNAP OPEN.

ON STAGE - a late-night talk show set.

HOST

Ladies and gentlemen - please
welcome our guest tonight, with a
thunderous round of applause... Mr.
Kevin Reynolds! Director of the hit
film *SILENT SCREAM*!

The audience LEAPS to their feet, roaring applause.

KEVIN REYNOLDS (36) climbs the steps, waving to the crowd. He reaches the HOST, shakes his hand with a practiced smile, then drops onto a plush couch.

The applause slowly dies down. Kevin settles in, comfortable.

KEVIN REYNOLDS

(to Host)

Thanks for such a warm welcome.

(to the audience, smiling)

Hi, everyone!

HOST

(grinning)

Kevin, I've got a simple question.
Did you expect *Silent Scream* to
become this big of a hit, or was it
more like... "Well... maybe I'll get
lucky"?

The crowd laughs.

KEVIN REYNOLDS

(shrugs)

Honestly? I figured my parents would
watch it.

(beat)

And maybe... a couple of their
friends.

Laughter. Applause.

HOST

And now - festivals around the
world, awards, interviews. What
changed the most?

KEVIN REYNOLDS

Sleep.
(beat)
It's gone.

The audience laughs even harder.

HOST

But you've got fans now, right?

KEVIN REYNOLDS

Yeah. That's true.

Applause.

HOST

They say you're pretty demanding on set.

KEVIN REYNOLDS

I just like order.
(smiles)
And for everything to be... under control.

He says it lightly – almost like a joke.

Applause.

The CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK as the applause fades. Kevin and the Host keep talking, their voices becoming muffled.

CLOSE ON – A WOMAN IN THE AUDIENCE

A young woman. Calm face. Not smiling.

She isn't clapping.

She stares at Kevin – unwavering.

Focused. Cold. Studying him.

CUT TO:

HOST

(energized)
After the break – we'll talk about what really happened behind the scenes of *Silent Scream*.

The cameras pull back. Applause.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON – THE SAME WOMAN

She leans forward slightly.

Eyes locked on the stage.

Her fingers tighten.

CUT TO BLACK

1. EXT. FESTIVAL RED CARPET - EVENING

1.

Camera flashes. Shouts. Noise.

A red carpet stretches along the festival center.

Kevin Reynolds steps out of a car.

Perfect suit. A smile – polished, almost automatic.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kevin! Over here! Look this way!

Kevin raises a hand, smiles, nods.

The photographers go wild.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kevin! One shot! Just like that!

Kevin stops, turns, poses.

FAN GIRL #1

(holding out her phone)

Kevin, please – a selfie!

He leans in, smiles.

CLICK.

FAN #2

Your movie changed my life!

KEVIN REYNOLDS

(a little thrown, but warm)

Thank you... really.

He moves on, but the crowd presses closer.

Hands. Phones. Voices – clinging to him.

FAN GIRL #3

(too close)

You're a genius.

Kevin smiles, but takes a step back.

KEVIN REYNOLDS

Thanks... thank you, everyone.

Security tries to clear a path.

SECURITY GUARD

Please, give him some space. Let him through.

Kevin starts forward again – but he's stopped.

JOURNALIST

Kevin! One question! Are you already thinking about your next film?

Kevin freezes.

For a second – silence.

KEVIN REYNOLDS

(searching for words)

Right now... I'm just trying not to lose what I already have.

Laughter. Applause.

It lands like a joke.

But on Kevin's face – a flicker of anxiety. He keeps walking.

The noise dulls, like it's falling into the background.

CLOSE ON – KEVIN

The smile stays on. His eyes – tired. He exhales... and keeps moving down the carpet.

2. INT. FESTIVAL CENTER - LOBBY - EVENING

2.

A spacious, bright lobby. Soft lighting. Music low in the background. Laughter.

Kevin enters. The noise of fans stays outside – the doors close.

He exhales.

Relaxes, just a little.

A FESTIVAL ORGANIZER (40) approaches.

FESTIVAL ORGANIZER

Kevin. Good to see you.
Congratulations again.

KEVIN

Thanks.

(looking around)
It's... calm in here.

The Organizer laughs.

FESTIVAL ORGANIZER
It's the only place directors still
get to be human.

They move through the lobby. Guests pass by: producers, actors,
critics.

Some nod at Kevin. Some wave.

CRITIC
(calling out as he walks)
Great work, Kevin.

KEVIN
Appreciate it.

Kevin reaches the bar, takes a glass of champagne.

Sips.

Nearby – a YOUNG DIRECTOR.

YOUNG DIRECTOR
(nervous)
I've seen your film three times.

KEVIN REYNOLDS
(smiling)
Then I should probably apologize.

They both laugh. A light moment.

Kevin smiles for real – not for cameras. He looks around:
people talking, laughing, living.

Music. Light. Warmth.

Kevin leans against a column for a second – just enjoying what
this is. What he has.

He closes his eyes. Lets himself relax.

KEVIN
(quietly, to himself)
This is it.

He takes another sip.

CUT TO:

Festival cameras begin moving toward the theater.

3. INT. HOTEL ROOM - KEVIN'S SUITE - NIGHT

3.

A spacious suite. Warm, dim lighting. White walls.

City lights glow outside the windows. Kevin enters, closes the door.

Silence.

He takes off his jacket, tosses it onto a chair. Loosens his tie. Exhales.

He walks to the window.

Looks down – the city lives its own life. Everyone rushing somewhere. On the table: a festival badge, a program, a phone.

He sits in a soft chair.
Quiet.

The phone VIBRATES. He looks.

Incoming video call: his wife, REBECCA (33).

He answers.

ON SCREEN

REBECCA
So, superstar... you alive?

Kevin smiles.

KEVIN
(into phone)
For now.

4. INTERCUT – INT. HOTEL ROOM / INT. HOME – VIDEO CALL

4.

Rebecca sits on a couch in pajamas, holding a mug of tea.

REBECCA
I saw the photos. You look... happy.

KEVIN
I'm just tired.

A beat.

REBECCA
The good kind of tired?

Kevin considers it.

KEVIN
Yeah.
(smiles)
Very.

Rebecca nods, watching him closely.

REBECCA
I'm proud of you.

Kevin looks slightly embarrassed.

KEVIN
I wouldn't have gotten here without
you.

They fall quiet – comfortable silence.

REBECCA
When do you come back?

KEVIN
Tomorrow evening. Unless they drag
me into ten more interviews.

Rebecca laughs.

REBECCA
Get used to it. This is just the
beginning.

Kevin smiles... but without any swagger. Just a person, right
here.

KEVIN
Okay. I need a little quiet.

REBECCA
Go rest.
(beat)
I love you.

KEVIN
I love you too.

He ends the call.

A small smile stays with him after a heavy day. Kevin sets the
phone on the table.

Sits on the edge of the bed. Takes off his watch. Places it
beside him.

Lies down. Turns off the light.

Darkness.

Silence.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON – KEVIN'S FACE

His eyes close. He's calm.

5. INT. HOTEL ROOM - KEVIN'S SUITE - EARLY MORNING 5.
- Dim light. Cold morning gray leaking through the curtains.
Kevin lies in bed. His eyes open.
- No jolt - he just wakes.
- Silence.
- He sits up slowly.
- Looks at the clock on the nightstand. 06:12.
- He stands.
6. INT. HOTEL KITCHENETTE - CONTINUOUS 6.
- Kevin turns on the coffee machine. The sound of running water
slices through the morning quiet.
- While it brews, he looks out the window.
- The city is still half-asleep. Few cars. Almost no people. Gray
sky.
- Coffee's ready. He takes a cup.
- Adds sugar.
- Takes a sip.
- Winces - strong.
- Sets the cup down.
- Freezes for a second.
As if listening to himself.
7. INT. BATHROOM - MORNING 7.
- The shower turns on. Kevin stands under the water.
- Eyes closed.
- He tilts his head up.
- Water runs down his face, his shoulders.
- He runs a hand through his hair. Breathes deeper.
- A moment of peace.
8. INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER 8.
- Kevin, in a dress shirt, packs methodically.

T-shirt. Shirt. Shoes.

He stops.

Looks at the festival badge. Picks it up.

Slips it into the side pocket of his suitcase.

Zips it shut.

9. INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - MORNING

9.

Kevin walks down a long corridor.

Suitcase rolling behind him. Only the sound of wheels - and silence.

Empty.

Elevator doors open.

10. THEN SLIDE SHUT.

10.

INT. ELEVATOR - MORNING

Kevin alone. Mirrored walls.

He looks at his reflection.

No smile. Just a look.

The elevator stops.

11. DOORS OPEN.

11.

EXT. HOTEL - MORNING

Kevin steps outside.

Breathes in fresh air.

A yellow cab waits out front. The driver leans on it, smoking. He sees Kevin and quickly puts the cigarette out.

TAXI DRIVER

Airport?

KEVIN

Yeah.

Kevin gets in. The door closes. The cab pulls away.

12. INT. TAXI - MORNING

12.

The city wakes up.

Traffic lights. People. Coffee shops. Kevin stares out the window.

Los Angeles rushes past – bright and beautiful.

His phone VIBRATES. He checks it.

A text from an UNSAVED NUMBER.

ON SCREEN:

“We’ll talk soon. It’s important.”

Kevin reads it.

Doesn’t reply. Locks the screen.

13. EXT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (LAX) - MORNING 13.

Planes.

Noise.

People with suitcases. Kevin steps out of the cab.

Looks around.

CUT TO BLACK

14. INT. LAX AIRPORT - MORNING 14.

Lines. A DEPARTURES BOARD flickers.

Kevin moves with quiet confidence – no rush.

15. INT. SECURITY CHECKPOINT - MORNING 15.

He sets his suitcase on the belt, empties his pockets into a tray.

Through the metal detector – silence.

He collects his things, grabs the suitcase, keeps going.

16. INT. DEPARTURE LOUNGE - MORNING 16.

He checks his phone again. News.

A headline blares:

ON SCREEN:

“DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR KEVIN REYNOLDS – CINEMA’S NEW VOICE.”

Kevin closes it. Looks out at the plane.

17. INT. AIRPLANE - DAY 17.
- Kevin in a window seat.
- The plane gains speed.
- TAKEOFF.
- The ground drops away. The city shrinks.
- Kevin watches - unblinking.
18. INT. AIRPLANE - LATER 18.
- Cabin lights dim. Passengers sleep.
- Kevin doesn't.
- He stares into the darkness beyond the window.
- In the glass reflection - his face.
- Calm. Composed.
19. INT. LONDON AIRPORT - MORNING 19.
- The plane touches down.
20. INT. TERMINAL - MORNING 20.
- People spill out of the jet bridge.
- Kevin moves with the flow.
- A different air here - colder. More restrained.
- Passport control.
- OFFICER
Purpose of your visit?
- Kevin hesitates - barely.
- KEVIN
Home.
- The Officer studies his passport. Nods. STAMPS it.
- Kevin moves on.
21. EXT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NOTTING HILL - MORNING 21.
- A quiet street. Pastel facades. Wet steps.
- A cab pulls up.

Kevin gets out, takes his suitcase from the trunk.

The cab drives off.

Silence returns.

Kevin climbs the steps to the front door.

He raises a hand to knock –

–and freezes.

On the doormat: an ENVELOPE.

Thick. White. No stamp.

Neat handwriting:

KEVIN REYNOLDS

Kevin stares at it. His breathing grows slightly louder.

He bends, pinches the envelope between two fingers – like it's dirty.

Flips it over.

On the back – a tiny dot of ink.

Like from a pen...

...or a needle.

Kevin snaps his head up, scans the street.

Empty.

No one.

Birds are unnaturally still. Wind stirs the leaves.

CUT TO:

22. INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - MORNING

22.

Warm light. Cozy. The smell of home. Calm.

The door clicks shut.

Kevin stands still for a beat.

Footsteps upstairs.

REBECCA (O.S.)

Kevin?

Kevin looks up.

Rebecca comes down the stairs in a home sweater, coffee in hand.

Her face – tired, but happy.

She crosses to him and wraps him in a tight hug, all relief and love.

REBECCA
You're finally home...

Kevin hugs back – tighter than necessary.

KEVIN
Yeah.

Rebecca pulls back, studies him.

REBECCA
Are you... okay?

Kevin pauses. For a second – honesty rises to his throat...
He swallows it.

KEVIN
Just tired.

Rebecca nods, but doesn't stop watching him.
She notices the envelope in his hand.

REBECCA
What's that?

Kevin looks at the envelope like it doesn't belong to him.

KEVIN
(shrugs)
I don't know.

Rebecca reaches for it.

Kevin catches her wrist – instantly. Too sharp.

A beat.

They hold each other's gaze.

Kevin releases her.

KEVIN
Sorry.
(softer)
Let's... later.

Rebecca tenses – just slightly – then forces a small smile.

REBECCA

Okay. Later.

She brushes his cheek.

REBECCA

You hungry? I made toast.

Kevin nods.

KEVIN

Yeah.

(beat)

Starving.

Rebecca heads toward the kitchen.

Kevin stays in the entryway, alone.

Silence.

He looks at the envelope...

...and slowly slips it into the inner pocket of his coat.

CUT TO:

23. INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

23.

Rebecca sets down a plate. A kettle hisses.

Kevin sits at the table, scrolling his phone.

A TV murmurs news in the background.

He's home - but he still hasn't landed.

REBECCA

Did the festival go well?

KEVIN

(clear)

Yeah.

REBECCA

And the interviews?

KEVIN

Yeah.

Rebecca waits for more.

Kevin gives nothing.

REBECCA

You're not telling me anything.

Kevin takes a sip of tea.

KEVIN

I just want quiet. At least a couple hours.

Rebecca nods gently.

REBECCA

Okay.

(smiles)

A couple hours of quiet. I can do that.

Kevin looks at her – and for a second, it helps.

Then–

SFX: VIBRATION.

A phone on the table. The screen lights up.

UNSAVED NUMBER.

INCOMING CALL.

Kevin stares at it.

Rebecca stares too.

A beat.

Kevin doesn't move.

The call stops.

Immediately – a TEXT.

Kevin sets his tea aside, picks up the phone, reads.

ON SCREEN:

“Don't make me come there myself.”

Kevin goes rigid.

Rebecca clocks his face.

REBECCA

Kevin... who is that?

Kevin sets the phone face down. His voice is level – too level.

KEVIN

Wrong number.

Rebecca doesn't buy it.

A beat.

Somewhere in the house, an old radiator CLICKS.

A normal sound – but now it feels like a warning.

Kevin looks toward the window.

Across the street, among cars and passersby – for an instant –

A FEMALE SILHOUETTE in a coat.

A calm, steady gaze.

Kevin blinks.

The silhouette is gone.

Kevin keeps staring out the window like he's afraid to turn his head.

Rebecca notices.

REBECCA

Kevin?..

Kevin stands.

KEVIN

(sharp)

I need to... go upstairs. Change.

He leaves the untouched plate behind.

Rebecca watches him go.

Her smile fades.

CUT TO BLACK.

24. EXT. THAMES EMBANKMENT - DAY

24.

The city hums.

Wet asphalt catches reflections of faces.

London breathes evenly – heavy.

Kevin and Rebecca walk side by side.

They aren't holding hands.

Distance between them – but not emptiness.

Kevin wears a coat and hat.

He doesn't look at Rebecca.

He watches people.

Office workers with bags. Tourists with cameras.

A man almost running. A woman talking through earbuds.

Rebecca notices Kevin slowing.

REBECCA

You're not with me again.

Kevin smiles slightly – not at her.

At himself.

KEVIN

I'm here.

They reach a BENCH by the water.

Old. Scratched up. Not touristy.

Kevin sits first.

Rebecca sits a second later, leaving a small gap between them.

A beat.

People keep passing.

KEVIN

(calm)

Do you ever wonder where they're all
rushing to?

Rebecca watches the flow.

REBECCA

The Tube. Home. From someone. To
someone.

KEVIN

(nods)

And if we're honest?

Rebecca turns to him.

REBECCA

Honestly – I don't know. I don't
look inside their heads.

Kevin lets out a small laugh.

KEVIN

I try to.

His gaze lands on a MAN running across a bridge in the
distance.

KEVIN

That guy. Look. Where do you think he's going?

REBECCA

(joking)

Important meeting.

KEVIN

Or...

(beat)

maybe he's running because he really needs a bathroom.

Rebecca can't help it – she laughs quietly.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Or he's running toward something that'll change his life.

REBECCA

Kevin...

KEVIN

I'm serious.

We always give it meaning. "Life, fate, a moment." And sometimes...
...it's just biology.

He shrugs.

KEVIN

If we don't know what drives a person – why are we so sure we understand what they do?

Rebecca stops smiling.

REBECCA

You're not talking about them.

Kevin looks out at the river.

Dark water. Heavy.

KEVIN

Who else would I be talking about?

A beat.

A YOUNG COUPLE passes, holding hands, laughing.

Kevin watches them.

KEVIN

We're always running. Even when we walk slow.

REBECCA
Because we're afraid to stop.

Kevin turns to her – really turns.

KEVIN
And if you stop... what if you
realize there was nowhere to run to?

Rebecca doesn't answer.

REBECCA
You're... different today.

KEVIN
No.
Today I'm honest.

He watches the people again – almost tender.

KEVIN
We look at them and we think:
"He's chasing a dream."
"She's running from pain."
"He's facing a choice."
(beat)
And maybe...
...he's just afraid he'll miss it.
Not life. The bus.

Rebecca smiles, but her eyes stay serious.

REBECCA
You turn the city into absurdity.

KEVIN
The city is absurd.
I'm just taking the glamour off.

An ELDERLY MAN passes – slowly. Very slowly.

Kevin watches him longer than the others.

KEVIN
And him – he's not rushing.

REBECCA
Because he knows he'll get there
anyway.

Kevin shakes his head.

KEVIN
Or because he realized it's
pointless.

Rebecca turns sharply.

REBECCA
Why do you do this?

Kevin exhales.

KEVIN
Because it's true.
We're all going there. Just at
different speeds.

A beat.

The city noise dulls, like it's far away.

Rebecca studies Kevin.

REBECCA
Are you scared?

Kevin doesn't answer right away.

KEVIN
I'm scared...
...that one day I'll run faster than
everyone.
And I'll arrive... alone.

Rebecca shifts closer.

The gap disappears.

REBECCA
And I'm scared you understand all of
this... and you keep running anyway.

Kevin closes his eyes for a second.

KEVIN
(quiet)
If I stop - will you stay?

Rebecca doesn't answer immediately.

People keep walking. Running. Living.

REBECCA
I'm already here.

Kevin opens his eyes. Looks at her.

For the first time - no irony in him.

Only exhaustion.

And gratitude.

They sit in silence.

The Thames moves.
 London doesn't stop.
 Neither does life.

CUT TO:

25. EXT. LONDON - MORNING

25.

The city wakes.
 Buses sigh at kerbs. Cyclists weave through traffic. Coffee shops lift their shutters.
 Grey sky. No rain.
 KEVIN steps out of his house. Coat. Scarf. HEADPHONES.
 He puts them on before shutting the door.
 CLICK.
 Music BLASTS - loud, bright, almost cheerful. Not his usual taste.
 Kevin walks.
 At first - just a stride.
 Then a subtle sway of the shoulders.
 Fingers tap a rhythm against his thigh.
 He smiles - not at anyone. At the sensation.

26. EXT. LONDON STREETS - CONTINUOUS

26.

He picks up pace.
 A faint, awkward dance - loose, unpolished. The movement of someone who doesn't care how he looks.
 He passes:
 - A woman with a pram
 - Teenagers clutching takeaway coffee
 - An office clerk with a permanently irritated expression
 The music drowns everything out.
 Kevin turns a corner - hops over a puddle, spins lightly on his heel, nearly collides with a PASSERBY.

PASSERBY
 (irritated)
 Watch where—

Kevin is already gone.

He doesn't hear.

27. EXT. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING - MORNING

27.

Red light. The crowd waits.

Kevin doesn't stop moving.

Shoulders. Torso. Steps.
 His rhythm is slightly off. Slightly inappropriate. Entirely honest.

The traffic light CLICKS.

Green.

The crowd moves.

Kevin moves with them — but to his own beat.

It isn't happiness.

It's freedom from control.

28. EXT. SMALL SQUARE - LATER

28.

Kevin stops at a coffee kiosk. Removes his headphones.

The music cuts abruptly.

Silence rushes back in.

BARISTA
 What can I get you?

KEVIN
 Quickly — Americano.

The Barista nods.

Kevin turns, looks at the city with a faint smile.

People. Buildings. Buses. Cafés.

BARISTA
 Here you go.

Kevin turns sharply. Takes the cup.

KEVIN

Cheers.

He steps aside.

Headphones back on.

The music RETURNS.

He takes a sip - burns his tongue - laughs at himself.

Keeps walking.

CUT TO:

29. INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

29.

Half-dark.

Warm lamplight reflects off water.

Kevin lies in the bath. Water up to his chest.

Shoulders relaxed. Eyes open. Staring at the ceiling.
Silence.

He slowly slides deeper until the water reaches his ears.

The world dulls.

MUFFLED.

DISTANT.

He submerges fully - only his face remains above water.

Then under.

UNDERWATER

A low, distant thud - like the heartbeat of a house.

Then-

VOICE (O.S.)

Camera...

Kevin freezes.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Quiet on set.

A CLICK.

Like a camera powering on.

Kevin shuts his eyes.

VOICE (O.S.)

Rolling...

The water trembles slightly with his breath.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And... action.

A SHARP CRACK —

A CLAPPERBOARD SNAP.

Kevin bursts up, gasping.

He sits upright in the bath, breathing hard.

Looks around.

Bathroom.

Tiles.

Silence.

Nothing.

He drags a hand down his face. Collects himself.

Slowly lowers again.

Under.

UNDERWATER

The sounds return — louder now.

VOICE (O.S.)

Lights ready?

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

Ready.

CLICK.

A low electrical HUM.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(quietly)

Is he ready?

A pause.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

He's always ready.

Kevin winces. His breathing falters.

Bubbles rise.

VOICE (O.S.)
One more take.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And... cut.

Silence.

Then - APPLAUSE.

Muffled. Distant.

Kevin surges up again, gripping the edge of the bath.

Breathing rapidly.

Eyes scanning - as if expecting to see a camera in the corner.

But there's no one.

Just him. Water. Steam.

He slowly reclines again - not fully submerged.

Water up to his chin.

He stares at his distorted reflection in the ceiling light.

Silence.

He sits up.

The bathroom is empty.

The water still.

Too still.

Kevin rises slowly. Water runs off him.

He reaches for a towel. Dries himself.

Exhales.

Switches off the light.

CUT TO BLACK.

30. INT. UNDERPASS - DAY

30.

A hollow pedestrian tunnel. Footsteps echo.

Drips fall from the ceiling.

People rush through. Bags. Headphones. Faces buried in phones.

Kevin walks through. Headphones on. Music low.

He nearly passes when-

LOUD LAUGHTER.

Forced. Performative.

By the wall – a GROUP OF TEENAGERS (16-18).

A phone mounted on a stabiliser. Camera rolling.

One BOY darts toward a PASSERBY.

BOY
(overly loud)
Excuse me – you dropped your
dignity!

The passerby looks confused.

Laughter.

Camera shoved in his face.

GIRL
(to camera)
This one's going to bang!

Kevin stops.

Steps back.

Removes his headphones.

Watches.

Simply – watches.

The teenagers notice him.

BOY
(smug)
Oi. You're in the shot. Move.

Kevin ignores the tone. Steps closer.

KEVIN
Do you honestly think people will
want to watch that?

The laughter falters.

GIRL
Who do you reckon?

KEVIN
You. Just not now.

A pause.

The camera still records.

BOY

It's just a laugh. Chill out.

Kevin nods calmly.

KEVIN

I understand. At your age,
everything's a laugh.

He looks at the phone.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You're doing this because you think
you've got loads of time.

The teenagers exchange glances.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

And then one day you realise - it
isn't endless.

Silence.

PEOPLE PASS. NO ONE INTERVENES.

BOY

(irritated))

Who even are you?

KEVIN

No one. Just someone who suddenly
has rather a lot of time.

GIRL

Is that a bad thing?

Kevin smiles. Sadly.

KEVIN

When you're old? Not really.
There's so much of it you don't know
what to do with it.

He steps closer.

KEVIN

And then one day you stumble across
an old video.

He gestures at the phone.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

And you think -
"God... why was I like that?"

A beat.

KEVIN
 And you'll have plenty of time to
 feel embarrassed.

The silence thickens.

The BOY slowly lowers the phone.

Still recording. Forgotten.

GIRL
 (quietly)
 We're not hurting anyone...

KEVIN
 (sighs)
 Do whatever you think's brilliant.
 Anything. Just not at someone else's
 expense.

He puts his headphones back on.

KEVIN
 You'll understand.

He steps away.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 Soon.

He walks off.

The teenagers remain.

No one laughs.

BOY
 (after a beat))
 Was he... saying that for the camera?

A short pause.

GIRL
 No.

BOY
 (exhales)
 Good.

He stops recording.

CUT TO:

31. INT. FILM INSTITUTE - LECTURE HALL - DAY

31.

Large lecture theatre. Old wooden seats. Cameras on tripods.

Students – 18 to 23. A mix of confident and nervous.
On stage – a table with microphones and water bottles.

APPLAUSE.

KEVIN REYNOLDS enters. No swagger. Simple clothes.

A little embarrassed by the applause.

KEVIN
(into mic)
Thank you.
(beat)
You're clapping as though I
genuinely know what I'm doing.

LAUGHTER. The ice breaks.

He sits on the edge of the desk – not behind it.

KEVIN
They told me this was an interview.
But I'd rather it was a
conversation.

STUDENT IN FRONT ROW
That's better.

KEVIN
(smiles)
Brilliant. Let's start with you.

She flushes, flustered.

STUDENT
Erm... How did you know film was
yours?

Kevin considers. No rush.

KEVIN
I didn't. I just kept going until I
was thrown out of everything else.

Laughter.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
First I was thrown out of a room.
Then a job.
Then—
(beat)
everything.
Film stayed.

Silence. They're listening.

KEVIN
It's not romantic.

But it's true.

STUDENT WITH CAMERA
When success came – did it get
easier?

Kevin shakes his head.

KEVIN
No. It just got louder. And closer.

A beat.

KEVIN
Before, you doubt yourself in
private. Now you do it in front of
everyone.

Nervous laughter.

STUDENT
Are you afraid of failure?

KEVIN
I'm afraid of repeating myself.
Failure is experience. Repetition is
laziness dressed up as style.

Some students nod. Take notes.

STUDENT
How do you know a story is yours?

KEVIN
It won't leave you alone. You can
ignore it for a week. A month. It
comes back. Not because it wants to
be written – but because you're
afraid to write it.

The silence deepens.

STUDENT
What if the story's unpleasant?

KEVIN
Without hesitation. Then it's
necessary.

He takes a sip of water.

KEVIN
Self-censorship is the first
producer who turns up uninvited.

LAUGHTER. Tense.

STUDENT

Do you believe film can change a person?

Kevin scans the room.

Then looks directly at the student.

KEVIN

No.

A ripple of disappointment.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Film can inspire. Change is the audience's job.

A beat.

STUDENT

Did film change you?

Kevin smiles. Tired.

KEVIN

Yes. I'm more careful with conclusions.

Silence.

STUDENT

What's the hardest part of the job?

Kevin thinks longer.

KEVIN

Living in a way that doesn't require you to justify it with a film later.

Laughter. Uneasy.

STUDENT

What if you're scared to begin?

Kevin looks at her gently.

KEVIN

If you're not scared, you're either lying to yourself... or you're making adverts.

LAUGHTER – warmer this time.

KEVIN

Fear is normal when you're doing something honestly.

He checks his watch.

An assistant gestures – time's up.

KEVIN
Last question.

STUDENT (BACK ROW)
Are you happy?

The room goes very quiet.

Kevin doesn't smile.

KEVIN
I...
(beat)
I'm in progress.

He stands.

KEVIN
And if I'm honest – I hope you'll
have more time for that process than
I do.

APPLAUSE. Not loud. Real.

Kevin gives an awkward, almost boyish nod.

CUT TO:

32. INT. KEVIN'S FLAT - NIGHT

32.

Silence.

Not the comforting kind – the hollow kind.

The flat is big, expensive, and somehow un-lived-in. Streetlight
from outside crawls slowly across the walls.

Kevin stands at the window. Still in his coat. Shoes still on.

In the coat pocket – his PHONE. The screen dies. Lights again.
Dies again.

Kevin doesn't look.

He pours himself a glass of water. His hand trembles – slightly
– but he controls it.

A swallow. Too much at once.

The phone VIBRATES again.

A beat.

Kevin sets the glass down. Slowly pulls out the phone.

ON SCREEN: A NEWS ALERT

"Film director Kevin Reynolds at centre of major scandal."

Kevin stares. Doesn't blink.

His thumb hovers. He doesn't want to tap.

He taps.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

Headline:

"THE TRUTH BEHIND THE SCENES: ALLEGATIONS AGAINST KEVIN REYNOLDS"

Subhead:

"A source claims: 'It wasn't a one-off.'"

A photo of Kevin - old. Smiling. A premiere.

BACK TO SCENE

Kevin sits.

Not because he's weak - because he needs to.

He reads. Slowly. Carefully.

Each word lands like a cold object placed on his chest.

ON SCREEN (AS HE READS)

"An anonymous source close to the crew alleges..."

"According to insiders..."

"Reynolds' behaviour raised concerns..."

Kevin doesn't react.

No anger.

No panic.

Just his eyes.

He reaches a line:

"Editors requested comment, but received no response."

A beat.

Kevin almost smiles - barely there.

KEVIN
(quietly, to himself)
Of course.

He closes the article.

The screen floods with MORE NOTIFICATIONS.

- tweet

- repost

- comment

- another piece

The phone won't let him leave.

Kevin locks it. Places it face down.

He sits.

Silence.

A few seconds pass.

He stands.

33. INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

33.

Kevin stands in the middle of the room.

The phone lights again. He doesn't pick it up.

He looks at the walls.

Shelves.

Awards.

Statuettes.

Frames.

He approaches the shelf.

On each plaque - his name. Large.

Kevin slowly turns one frame to face the wall.

A beat.

No rage.

He simply removes it.

He sits on the sofa.

Stares into nothing.

And then – he smiles.

Real. Almost warm.

And that's what's frightening.

Almost warm.

KEVIN
(softly)
There it is.

He nods, as if confirming a thought.

KEVIN
Not court. Not cameras.
(beat)
The silence afterwards.

He closes his eyes.

And for the first time – his breathing slips.

Not tears. Not hysteria.

Just the body catching up with the mind.

The phone VIBRATES again.

Kevin doesn't open his eyes.

KEVIN
(almost a whisper)
Now I'm running too.

A beat.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
From the truth.

He stays sitting.

Alone.

With the light on.

CUT TO BLACK.

34. INT. KEVIN'S FLAT - MORNING

34.

A grey London morning.

Rain at the window – not heavy, just relentless.

Kevin sits on the edge of the bed.

Dressed.

He hasn't slept.

Phone in hand. Screen lit.

100+ MISSED CALLS

– REBECCA

– REBECCA

– REBECCA

– UNSAVED NUMBER

– UNSAVED NUMBER

– PRODUCER

Kevin scrolls slowly.

As if counting blows.

He stops.

Name: CAITLIN BRIGGS.

He exhales.

Taps CALL.

Rings. Second ring. Third.

She answers almost immediately.

CAITLIN (V.O.)

Kevin. Where have you been?

Controlled voice. Underneath – panic, tightly taped down.

KEVIN

Home.

A beat.

CAITLIN (V.O.)

Have you seen it?

Kevin looks at the window.

KEVIN

Yeah.

Another beat.

Longer.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
Right. Then listen to me very
carefully.

Kevin says nothing.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
This isn't rumours anymore. It's
been picked up.

Kevin nods, though she can't see him.

KEVIN
I noticed.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
(sharper)
Kevin, now is not the time for
jokes.

A beat.

KEVIN
Is there a time?

Caitlin loses control for half a second.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
Christ—
(regains herself)
Okay. We can still stop this. For
now.

The "for now" hangs in the air.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
No comments. No posts. No "I'll
explain."

KEVIN
And if they ask?

CAITLIN (V.O.)
They're already asking.

Kevin drops his gaze to the phone. Notifications pulse again.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
Rebecca rang me.

Kevin tightens — barely.

KEVIN
And?

CAITLIN (V.O.)
She's in bits. And I don't blame
her.

A beat.

KEVIN
Does she think it's true?

A long beat.

Too long.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
She thinks the world's already
decided.

Kevin closes his eyes.

KEVIN
And you?

CAITLIN (V.O.)
I'm thinking strategy.

Kevin almost smiles.

KEVIN
Of course.

35. INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

35.

Kevin pours coffee. His hand is steady.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
The main thing is we can't let this
become a story of "silent guilt."

KEVIN
Meaning?

CAITLIN (V.O.)
We say you're shocked. You're
cooperating. You respect the
process.

Kevin sets the mug down.

Doesn't drink.

KEVIN
And the truth?

Caitlin holds her breath.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
Truth is a luxury we can't afford
right now.

Kevin lets out a sad little laugh.

KEVIN

Funny. I've spent my whole life
making films about truth.

CAITLIN (V.O.)

Right now you need to survive. Not
be the honest artist.

A beat.

KEVIN

You believe this can be... managed?

Silence.

Then - honest.

CAITLIN (V.O.)

No.

Kevin nods. He expected it.

CAITLIN (V.O.)

But I do believe we can buy time.

KEVIN

Time for what?

Caitlin doesn't answer straight away.

CAITLIN (V.O.)

So you don't end up alone before
you're ready.

Kevin stares into the dark surface of his coffee.

KEVIN

I already am.

A beat.

CAITLIN (V.O.)

I'll get there as soon as I can.
Don't go out. Don't ring anyone.
And, Kevin-

He waits.

CAITLIN (V.O.)

Whatever you're feeling - don't show
it.

Kevin looks out. People hurry through rain.

KEVIN

Too late.

He ends the call.

The phone immediately VIBRATES.

Caller ID: REBECCA.

Kevin stares.

Doesn't answer.

He flips the phone face down.

Sits.

And for the first time all morning – he takes a sip of coffee.

Bitter.

CUT TO BLACK.

36. INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

36.

Silence.

Kevin sits on the bed, staring at the floor.

Outside – grey London.

He lifts his gaze. Holds it there for a long time.

Turns the phone on.

100 missed calls from Rebecca.

He opens music. Hits PLAY.

The track starts – LOUD.

Kevin smiles.

Wrong for the moment.

37. INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

37.

Kevin stands at the sink.

Window light falls evenly. No drama.

The world dulls.

He opens the fridge. Takes out eggs. Milk. Bread.

Sets a frying pan. Turns on the hob.

His MOVEMENTS are precise. In time with the music.

Controlled. Almost meditative.

He cracks eggs. Whisks. Salt.

Butter hits the pan.

SIZZLE.

He nods along with the beat.

CUT TO:

38. INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

38.

A WASHING MACHINE.

Kevin loads laundry. Shuts the door. Presses START.

The machine begins.

Its rhythm matches the music.

CUT TO:

39. INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

39.

Kevin vacuums.

Carefully. Methodically.

Corners. Under the sofa. Along skirting boards.

He stops. Glances at the shelf of awards.

Doesn't touch them.

Carries on.

CUT TO:

40. INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

40.

Water pours into a cup. Steam rises.

Kevin plates up.

Scrambled eggs. Toast.

He switches off the hob.

For a second - SILENCE between tracks.

Kevin takes a sip.

Smiles.

The music continues.

Then—

A LOUD BANG at the front door.

Kevin doesn't react. The music muffles everything.

He flips a piece of toast.

Another BANG.

Harder.

Kevin frowns slightly.

Doesn't stop.

A THIRD BANG. Deaf. Furious.

He reaches for the volume — and at that moment—

THE DOOR GIVES.

A CRASH.

WOOD SPLINTERS.

VOICE (O.S.)
POLICE! HANDS UP!

Kevin flinches.

WHIPS ROUND.

In his hand — a KNIFE.

Just a kitchen knife.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (O.S.)
DROP THE KNIFE! NOW!

The music is still playing.

The voices feel underwater.

Kevin looks at the knife.

Then at the officers.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (O.S.)
DROP THE BLOODY KNIFE!

Kevin slowly sets it on the edge of the counter.

It slips—

CLANGS to the floor, loud and sharp.

Kevin watches it fall.

POLICE OFFICER #2
ON YOUR KNEES! HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!

Kevin doesn't argue.

He lowers himself.

Knees to the floor.

CLOSE ON - KEVIN'S FACE

POLICE OFFICER #1 (O.S.)
You're under arrest.

HANDCUFFS snap onto his wrists.

CLICK.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
You do not have to say anything-

VOICE (O.S.)
Turn that bloody music off!

The words blur.

The music is louder.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
-but anything you do say-

Kevin stares at the counter.

Breakfast.

Knife.

Steam rising from coffee.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
-you may be given in evidence-

The phone on the table STARTS TO VIBRATE.

Caller ID:

REBECCA.

Another vibration.

PRODUCER.

Another.

UNSAVED NUMBER.

Kevin lifts his gaze.

He understands.

Not panic.

Not anger.

Acceptance.

The music reaches its crescendo.

Kevin closes his eyes.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Do you understand?

Kevin doesn't answer.

He's already somewhere else.

CUT TO BLACK

41. INT. POLICE STATION - HOURS LATER

41.

CLOSE ON - KEVIN'S FACE

He sits. His gaze is angled slightly off-centre. Not empty - absent.

DESK SERGEANT (O.S.)
...you'll need to wait here...

The words pass straight through him. Sound packed in cotton.

The camera slowly pulls back.

Kevin sits on a plastic chair by the front desk.

Suddenly - the SOUND OF WATER.

Kevin drops back into his body.

He looks to a corner: an officer fills a cup from a water cooler.

It's too loud. The only sound he properly registers.

His handcuffs are off, but the marks remain on his wrists.

Behind the desk - the DESK SERGEANT.

Talking. Typing. Shuffling papers.

KEVIN
(calm)
Could you say that again?

The Sergeant looks up, slightly embarrassed.

DESK SERGEANT
I said... your solicitor's on the
way. You'll have to wait a bit.

Kevin nods as if it doesn't matter.

A beat.

The Sergeant keeps looking at him – longer than necessary.

OFFICER #2
(uncertain)
Sir...
(beat)
Sorry... could I get a photo?

Silence.

A few seconds.

Kevin looks at him. No anger. No surprise.

He nods.

The officer doesn't believe it at first. Then pulls out his
phone.

OFFICER #2
Thank you. Honestly.

He stands beside Kevin, leans in. The screen glows.

CLICK.

The officer checks the photo. Smiles.

OFFICER #2
My wife won't believe you're in
here.

KEVIN
(quiet)
Give her my love.

The officer nods, awkwardly pleased, and slips away.

Kevin remains seated.

People drift past:

- detainees
- officers
- a solicitor with a folder
- a woman crying against a wall

The station carries on without him.

CLOSE ON – KEVIN'S HANDS

He studies the cuff marks. Rubs his thumb over the skin, as if checking they're real.

The Desk Sergeant steps closer.

DESK SERGEANT
They'll ask you a couple of
questions. Routine.

KEVIN
Alright.

DESK SERGEANT
Do you understand what you're being
accused of?

Kevin considers it – honestly.

KEVIN
No.

The Sergeant waits for more.

Nothing comes.

A beat.

DESK SERGEANT
Will you cooperate?

Kevin nods.

KEVIN
I'm not resisting.

The Sergeant makes a note.

Outside – a CAMERA FLASH.

Then another.

Kevin flinches – barely.

KEVIN
(quiet)
They're out there already?

The Sergeant doesn't answer straight away.

DESK SERGEANT
Yeah.

Kevin nods. As if he expected it.

KEVIN

How many?

The Sergeant shrugs.

DESK SERGEANT

Enough.

Kevin looks at the glass doors.

Beyond them – light, movement, shadows.

KEVIN

Funny.

The Sergeant frowns, questioning.

KEVIN

In films, the cameras are outside.
In real life... they're in here.

A beat.

CUT TO BLACK

42. INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

42.

A small room. Table. Two chairs.

A camera in the corner – no blinking light, just watching.

Kevin sits alone. Hands on his knees. Back straight.

He doesn't look broken.

He looks composed too early.

The door opens.

A MAN (45-50) enters.

Neat suit. No uniform. Not a solicitor.

Too calm for a police station.

He closes the door. Takes his time. Sits opposite.

Places a folder on the table.

Doesn't open it yet.

A beat.

He studies Kevin – not like a suspect, like material.

MAN

(calm)

I'm not here to accuse you. I'm here to understand what you're going to do next.

Kevin slowly lifts his eyes.

KEVIN

Is this meant to happen before my solicitor arrives?

The man smiles slightly. Almost friendly.

MAN

Your solicitor is... somewhere waiting.

(beat)

But right now I'm interested in you. Not your version. Your state of mind.

Kevin says nothing.

The man finally opens the folder.

Inside – not forms.

Photographs. From set.

A world where Kevin was God.

Kevin looks, silent.

MAN

You're used to control. The frame. To being able to stop everything with one word – "cut".⁸

He closes the folder.

MAN (CONT'D)

And now you can't.

A beat.

KEVIN

You want me to confess?

The man shakes his head.

MAN

No. I want to know whether you'll fight... or disappear beautifully.

Kevin's face twitches – the smallest reaction – then he kills it.

KEVIN

Is there a third option?

The man stands, walks to the door.

MAN

There is no third option.

He opens the door, leaves.

The door shuts.

Kevin is alone.

CLOSE ON - KEVIN

He exhales.

Not relief.

Acceptance of the game.

CUT TO BLACK

43. INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

43.

Kevin still sits at the table.

The door cracks open.

A DUTY OFFICER peers in.

KEVIN

(calm)

May I make a call?

The officer watches him for a moment.

Assesses: not dangerous, not broken.

He nods.

He places a phone on the table.

Not new. A station handset.

Kevin picks it up. His hands are steady. Almost too steady.

He dials from memory.

Rings.

One. Two.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Kevin?

Kevin closes his eyes – just for a second.

KEVIN

Hi.

A pause.

Too long for a normal “hi”.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Where are you?

Kevin looks down at the tabletop.

Scratches. Smudges. Other people’s hands.

KEVIN

I...

(beat)

I need you to just listen right now.

Silence on the line. He can hear her breathing.

REBECCA (V.O.)

You’re scaring me.

KEVIN

I know.

(gentle)

I’m sorry.

A beat.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Is it true?

Kevin doesn’t answer immediately.

He lifts his gaze – the camera. A red light.

KEVIN

The truth won’t save anything right now.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Then what matters?

Kevin exhales, deep and deliberate.

KEVIN

That you don’t make decisions for me. And you don’t believe people who shout the loudest.

A beat.

REBECCA (V.O.)

I’m coming to you.

Kevin smiles - faint. Sad and grateful at once.

KEVIN

No.
 (quiet, firm)
 Not now.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Kevin-

KEVIN

(interrupts, softly)
 Please.

Silence.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Are you alone?

Kevin watches his reflection in the tabletop. His own eyes.

KEVIN

Yeah.

A beat.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Then...
 (steadying herself)
 I'll be here. As long as you need.

Kevin nods, though she can't see.

KEVIN

That's enough.

He closes his eyes.

REBECCA (V.O.)

I'm not going anywhere.

The line goes dead.

Kevin slowly sets the handset down.

He stays seated.

The camera in the corner keeps watching.

CUT TO BLACK.

44. INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INTERVIEW ROOMS - LATER

44.

Fluorescent light. Cold. Flat.

Kevin is escorted down the corridor by a DUTY OFFICER.

His hands are free, but he's guided like he's already guilty.

At the far end – a woman in a sharp coat, a folder tucked under her arm.

CAITLIN BRIGGS (37). Solicitor. Smart. Controlled. No theatrics.

Kevin sees her and – for the first time in a long while – a muscle jumps in his face.

Not fear.

Recognition.

CAITLIN

(low, quick)

So you finally rang your wife instead of me?

KEVIN

(dry)

She deserved to hear it from me.

Caitlin nods. No judgement. Just fact.

CAITLIN

How long have they kept you?

KEVIN

Long enough to make it real.

Caitlin opens her folder like she's opening a door into another life – the legal one.

CAITLIN

Listen carefully. We'll have a first hearing. It's not the "proper" trial.

It's control.

(beat)

You'll say two things. Clearly. No waffle. Understood?

Kevin looks at her.

Nods.

CAITLIN

(softer, still hard)

No. You think you understand. There'll be cameras. There'll be faces in that room waiting to see a crack. Don't give them one.

KEVIN

(a hint of a smile)

I can hold a frame.

Caitlin holds the beat.

CAITLIN
 This isn't a film.
 (locks eyes)
 But you'll have to hold it anyway.

She flicks through papers.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 For now – standard: allegation,
 risk, position. You do not comment
 on anything. At all. Your line to
 the press is: "No comment." Your
 line to me is: everything. Every
 detail.

Kevin nods.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 Business-like.
 You'll enter: not guilty.
 Second: we apply for bail. With
 conditions.
 No contact. No social media.
 You can live with that?

Kevin is quiet for a second.

KEVIN
 I can live with anything – as long
 as Rebecca survives me.

Caitlin closes the folder.

CAITLIN
 Then let's make sure you both
 survive. And you don't break on the
 first step.

The Duty Officer opens a door further down the corridor.

DUTY OFFICER
 Time.

Caitlin falls into step beside Kevin.

Heel to heel.

CUT TO:

45. INT. COURTROOM - DAY

45.

The room is restrained, almost office-like.
 Journalists sit as if they've come for blood.

Kevin stands in the dock. CAITLIN beside him.

A handful of journalists. A few members of the public.

And REBECCA.

Second row. Back straight. Hands folded.

No tears. No hysteria.

Just her gaze – precise. Heavy. Unblinking.

Kevin sees her and, for a moment, everything he's been calling "holding frame" becomes real.

At the bench, JUDGE RICHARD WHITMORE (63) flips through papers. He doesn't look at Kevin straight away.

The CLERK calls the case.

CLERK

The matter of the Crown versus Kevin Reynolds.

The silence thickens.

JUDGE

Mr Reynolds, you face charges.
(formal, measured)
Do you understand the nature of them?

Kevin looks ahead. His voice is a flat surface.

KEVIN

Yes, Your Honour.

Caitlin leans in, barely visible.

CAITLIN

(under her breath)
Two things. Remember.

JUDGE

How do you plead – guilty or not guilty?

Kevin's eyes flick briefly to the gallery.

Rebecca is still. No nod. No tears. Not a gesture.

Just looking at him as if keeping him above water.

KEVIN

(clear)
Not guilty.

The Judge lifts his eyes for the first time – assessing.

JUDGE

Plea entered.

The PROSECUTOR rises. Calm. Cold. As if reading a weather report.

PROSECUTOR

Your Honour, the Crown opposes unconditional release. There is a risk—

(quickly)

—interference with witnesses, and public concern.

Caitlin stands at once — like a rehearsal she intends to win.

CAITLIN

Your Honour. My client has no previous convictions, a fixed address, work, and a family. We seek bail on strict conditions.

(beat)

And, Your Honour, the publicity of a case is not grounds to replace the presumption of innocence with punishment before trial.

Kevin hears it all through glass.

His eyes return to Rebecca — and she offers neither comfort nor pain.

She is simply there.

And that is enough.

The Judge considers. The silence stretches.

Somewhere, a journalist's pen CLICKS.

JUDGE

(weighing it)

The court will grant bail.

(reading conditions)

On the following terms—

Caitlin listens, noting each one like a metronome.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Strict non-contact... surrender of documents... reporting requirements...

The amount will be set—

The Judge finally looks at Kevin.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Mr Reynolds, do you understand these conditions?

KEVIN
Yes, Your Honour.

JUDGE
Breach them and you'll be remanded.
That concludes the hearing.

A gavel RAP – a short sound.
And everything somehow becomes quieter.
Kevin doesn't move at once.
He looks to the gallery.
Rebecca is still seated. She doesn't stand immediately.
Her face is stone – holding shape so it doesn't crumble.
For a second, their eyes meet.
No words.
No pleading.
Just a frightening agreement: we will get through this.
An officer gestures for Kevin to move.
Caitlin leans in as they turn.

CAITLIN
(quick, low)
That's only the first door. Don't
confuse it – you're not home yet.

Kevin passes the benches.
Rebecca stays seated until he's gone.
Only when the door closes does one finger tremble. Then
another.

CUT TO:

46. EXT. COURT EXIT - DAY

46.

The doors swing open.
Kevin steps out first. Caitlin at his side.
Behind them – security, ushers.
Immediately: FLASHES. Noise.
REPORTERS surge forward. Microphones like spears. Flashes like
blows.

REPORTER #1

Mr Reynolds! Do you deny the allegations?

REPORTER #2

Why did you plead not guilty – is that strategy?

REPORTER #3

Have you contacted the complainant?

REPORTER #4

How do you respond to bail?!

Kevin walks without lifting his head.

No words. No eye contact.

Just footsteps – even, almost mechanical.

Caitlin leans in.

CAITLIN

(under her breath)

Don't answer. Keep moving.

They push closer. Microphones nearly touch his face.

Someone shouts his wife's name.

REPORTER #2

Is Rebecca with you? Is she supporting you?

Kevin keeps walking. His breathing catches. A muscle in his cheek jumps.

Caitlin instinctively speeds up – can't quite get in front of him fast enough.

REPORTER #1

If you're innocent – why won't you explain?

Kevin stops, sharp.

The crowd jolts – cameras lock on.

A split-second hush.

And in that second he looks straight into a lens.

KEVIN

(cracking)

Because you don't want the truth.

A beat. Flashes intensify.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You want a truth.

Caitlin steps in, tries to cut it off.

CAITLIN

Kevin—

But it's already out.

And only now does he realise — too loud.

His chest rises like he's just run out of a fire.

He blinks. Looks around.

Cameras. Faces. Microphones.

He drops his eyes.

Shame? Exhaustion? Both at once.

A long, awkward beat.

Kevin takes a step back, as if trying to pull the words back in.

He can't.

He turns and walks on.

Caitlin stays beside him — silent, fast, shielding him with her body.

The reporters flare again, hungry — now it's "a moment".

Kevin doesn't look back.

CUT TO BLACK

47. INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

47.

Low light.

Slow rain at the windows.

Kevin sits on the sofa. Still in his coat.

His phone lies beside him. Screen dark.

Rebecca stands by the window, back to him.

She holds a mug of tea. Doesn't drink.

The silence lasts too long to be accidental.

REBECCA
 (not turning)
 You spoke loudly today.

Kevin doesn't answer immediately.

KEVIN
 They needed to hear it.

Rebecca gives a small shake of the head – not denial,
 precision.

REBECCA
 They did. And me?

He looks at her.

KEVIN
 I'm not hiding.

A beat.

REBECCA
 That's not what I mean.

Kevin watches her more closely.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
 I'm not asking whether it's true or
 not.

He tightens – almost invisible.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
 I'm asking... are you sure you
 understand how it looked from the
 outside?

Kevin opens his mouth. Closes it.

He searches for words.

Familiar ones. Precise ones.

They don't arrive.

KEVIN
 (carefully)
 From the outside it always looks
 worse.

REBECCA
 Sometimes – yes.
 And sometimes—
 (beat)
 people just see what you didn't want
 to notice.

Not an accusation.

A statement.

Kevin stands. One step. Another.

Stops – not close enough to touch.

KEVIN
Do you believe me?

Rebecca doesn't answer straight away.

That's worse than "no".

REBECCA
I believe you.
(beat)
But I'm not sure I believe the
version of you everyone else is
seeing.

The words stay in the room.

Not a blow.

A residue.

KEVIN
(quiet)
You think I could've–

REBECCA
I think you've been used to being
right for a long time.
And strong for a long time.
Sometimes that's enough for someone
else to become small beside you.

Kevin looks down.

As if for the first time.

KEVIN
I never wanted to hurt anyone.

Rebecca steps towards him.

Slow. Careful.

REBECCA
I know.
(beat)
But "I didn't mean to" isn't an
alibi.

Kevin lifts his eyes to hers.

No anger there.

Only confusion.

KEVIN
Are you with me?

Rebecca holds his gaze for a long time.

Then nods. Once.

REBECCA
I'm here.
But I can't walk blind anymore.

She holds out her hand.

Not for an embrace.

Just to be near.

Kevin doesn't take it at once — but he does.

They stand like that.

Closeness between them.

And for the first time — distance inside it.

Outside, the rain thickens.

CUT TO:

48. INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

48.

Low light. Rain ticking at the glass.

Kevin on the sofa. Coat still on.

Rebecca at the window. Mug in hand — cold now.

Silence.

The phone on the table. Screen dark.

As if dead.

A beat — then:

VIBRATION.

Not loud, but in the quiet it lands like a shot.

Kevin doesn't pick it up.

The screen lights itself.

A notification:

"NEW VIDEO: 'HE THOUGHT THE CAMERA WAS OFF'"

Rebecca turns slowly.

REBECCA
(level)
Again?

Kevin looks at the screen.

KEVIN
Yeah.

More notifications stack, one after another:

"LEAK FROM SET"

"AUDIO RECORDING"

"COMPLAINANT PREPARES STATEMENT"

Rebecca takes a step closer. Stops.

REBECCA
Show me.

Kevin doesn't hand it over.

He opens it himself.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

Poor quality. A set. Noise. Light.

Someone filming from a pocket.

Kevin's voice - he isn't visible.

KEVIN (V.O.)
(muffled)
Another take.

A woman's voice, small.

WOMAN (V.O.)
I don't want to.

A beat. Rustle.

KEVIN (V.O.)
(softer)
Don't start. We're tired.

WOMAN (V.O.)
It hurts.

KEVIN (V.O.)
 (cut off)
 ...Do as I said.
 Another jump cut.

WOMAN (V.O.)
 (almost a whisper)
 Please...

The screen goes black.

BACK TO SCENE

Rebecca isn't looking at Kevin now.

She's looking at the phone.

Her face calm.

Too calm.

REBECCA
 (very quietly)
 That's—

Kevin flips the phone face down. Like a lid.

KEVIN
 It's edited.

REBECCA
 And "it hurts" — is that edited too?

Kevin doesn't find his voice straight away.

KEVIN
 I only know one thing: it's out of
 context.

Rebecca takes a tiny step back.

REBECCA
 You were there.

KEVIN
 Yes.

REBECCA
 That's your voice.

KEVIN
 Yes.

A beat.

Her mug taps lightly against the sill.

REBECCA
 What did she mean when she said "it
 hurts"?

KEVIN
 I don't know.

Rebecca doesn't blink.

And that's worse than tears.

Because it means she's still capable of leaving.

VIBRATION.

Again.

CUT TO:

49. INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

49.

Kevin at the sink. The tap runs louder than it needs to.

He just holds his hands under the water.

Rebecca behind him.

REBECCA
 Who is she?

KEVIN
 (immediate)
 I don't know.

REBECCA
 You always know.

Kevin turns the water off. The silence cuts.

KEVIN
 They cut the context.

REBECCA
 And what's the context?

KEVIN
 A set. Takes. Exhaustion. She
 could've meant the scene.

REBECCA
 "I don't want to" - that's the scene
 too?

KEVIN
 Maybe.

Rebecca watches him.

REBECCA
 Do you hear how that sounds?
 (beat)
 To me.

The phone on the table lights up. Incoming call.

CALLER ID: CAITLIN BRIGGS

Kevin answers.

50. INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT / INTERCUT CALL

50.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
 Have you seen it?

KEVIN
 Yeah.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
 This isn't a case. It's theatre. The studio's stopped post. "Pause" means they're letting you drown. Colleagues are giving "anonymous" quotes.

Kevin says nothing.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
 Don't watch it again. You'll start arguing about fragments, not facts.

Rebecca hears every word.

REBECCA
 (towards the phone)
 Too late.

A beat.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
 And one more thing: tomorrow it becomes specific. A name. A role. A description. Something will leak.

Kevin looks at Rebecca. For the first time - fear.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
 Don't open the door to anyone. And, Kevin... stop playing director in your own life.

The line drops.

51. INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

51.

Silence.

REBECCA
You said, "I'm not hiding anything."
Then say it now.

Kevin sits. Looks at his palms.

KEVIN
(honest)
I don't remember that bit.

Rebecca freezes.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I remember the day. The set. The
scene. But that... I don't recognise
it as a moment.

REBECCA
If it happened - would you remember?

KEVIN
I remember when I choose.

A beat.

REBECCA
And if it wasn't deliberate?

The phone lights again.

A notification:

"THE COMPLAINANT'S NAME WILL BE REVEALED TOMORROW"

REBECCA
(quiet)
Tomorrow.

She heads for the stairs.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
(not turning)
I'll stay. But I won't protect you
from the truth anymore.

Even if the truth kills you.

She goes upstairs.

Kevin is left alone.

He stares at the phone. His finger hovers - play the clip
again.

He doesn't.

Kevin looks at the front door.

As if waiting for it to open on its own.

CUT TO BLACK

52. INT. BEDROOM - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

52.

Rebecca sits silently on a chair.

Stares into nothing.

Silence.

She suddenly stands. Takes her bag. Puts on her coat.

At the mirror she pauses for a second.

Looks - as if checking whether her face is holding.

And leaves.

53. INT. REBECCA'S FRIEND'S FLAT - EVENING

53.

Warm light. Music in the background.

Glasses. Laughter. Someone else's ease.

Rebecca sits at a table with LILY and MARTA.

She smiles - at the wrong time.

LILY

Are you even here?

Rebecca blinks.

REBECCA

(automatic)

I'm here.

MARTA

No. You haven't been here for a week.

A beat.

Rebecca takes a sip of wine.

LILY

Is it Kevin?

Rebecca looks at the glass.

REBECCA
I'm tired of him.

Silence.

MARTA
Did he do something?

REBECCA
I don't know.
(beat)
And that's the worst part.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
He looks at me like everything's
normal. Like it's just noise. And
I'm living inside that noise.

The friends exchange a look.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
He's hiding something from me.
Himself.
(quiet)
Like he has a room I'm not allowed
into.

LILY
Do you believe him?

A long beat.

REBECCA
I believe... that he believes himself.

MARTA
That's not the same thing.

Rebecca nods.

REBECCA
I live with a man who controls
everything.
Even silence.
(beat)
I don't know where he's real.

Silence.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
He fills me.

The friends go still.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
Not irritates.
Fills everything.
(MORE)

REBECCA (CONT'D)

(beat)

Even when he says nothing.

Her phone vibrates on the table.

Screen down.

They all look at it.

MARTA

Him?

Rebecca nods. Doesn't pick up.

The vibration stops.

REBECCA

(Lquiet)

I don't trust him anymore.

The words land heavy. True.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

And I don't know how to live with a
husband you don't trust.

Silence.

Music in another room. Laughter.

A normal life that isn't hers.

Rebecca stares into nothing.

REBECCA

(almost a whisper)

I don't recognise my marriage
anymore.

CUT TO BLACK

54. INT. CAITLIN'S OFFICE - DAY

54.

Even light. A clean, almost sterile office.

A folder on the desk. Water. A pen.

Outside the window there's no rain, but the sky is grey.

Kevin sits upright.

Hands on his knees.

Like an interview - only without cameras.

Rebecca beside him. Slightly behind.

She doesn't lean in. She doesn't pull away.

She watches.

Caitlin Briggs flips through papers.

No drama.

That makes her dangerous.

CAITLIN
(businesslike)
The statement has been filed
officially. The case is registered.

Kevin nods.

Mechanically.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
Police are already gathering
material: messages, metadata, logs.

Kevin stays quiet.

Rebecca looks at the folder.

Like someone else's life.

KEVIN
(level)
And... what next?

Caitlin looks up at him.

CAITLIN
Next is process. This isn't a
scandal anymore.

A beat.

Kevin waits for a different word.

"We'll win."

"It's nothing."

"We'll smash it."

Caitlin doesn't give it.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
We'll be limiting the damage.

The words fall softly.

But the room becomes tighter.

Kevin blinks.

Once.

As if he's come back.

KEVIN
(almost smiling)
Sounds inspiring.

Caitlin doesn't smile.

CAITLIN
It's honest. Inspiration's for
people selling something.
I'm defending.

Rebecca's fingers move slightly. Barely.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
You have two fronts. Legal and
public. The public one is already
moving.

KEVIN
So I just... stay silent?

Caitlin holds a beat.

CAITLIN
Yes. Not because it's elegant.
Because every word you say becomes a
headline.

Rebecca looks at Kevin.

Not accusing.

Checking.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
And one more thing.
No contact with anyone from the set.
No messages.
Not even "how are you". Especially
not "how are you".

KEVIN
(quiet)
And my wife?

Caitlin's eyes flick to Rebecca.

Briefly.

CAITLIN
Your wife is not a witness. Yet.

A beat.

Rebecca's fingers twitch on her knee – then freeze.

Kevin looks at his hands.

As if for the first time they aren't his tools – they're evidence.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)

Today you go home and do one thing:
nothing.

Kevin gives a small, humourless laugh.

KEVIN

That's my weak spot.

Caitlin closes the folder.

CAITLIN

You'll learn.

CUT TO:

55. INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

55.

Dark. Only the glow of a laptop and a phone.

On screen: an OPEN, EMPTY POST WINDOW. A cursor blinks.

Kevin paces. Fast. Like he's trying to find an exit in the walls.

Awards on a shelf. He doesn't look at them.

Rebecca stands in the doorway. She doesn't enter straight away. She listens to his breathing.

KEVIN

(sharp)
I'm going to write.

REBECCA

Where.

Kevin stops. Holds up his phone – like evidence.

KEVIN

There. To everyone. Let them know.
Let them hear.
(faster)
I'm not– I'm not that man.

Rebecca steps inside. Slowly. No panic.

She comes closer, but doesn't touch him.

REBECCA

Do you want to tell the truth—or do
you want to stop suffocating?

Kevin blinks. The words snag on each other.

KEVIN

I want them to stop turning me into
a monster.

REBECCA

They're not turning you into
anything. They're selling you.

A beat. Kevin stares at the blinking cursor — like a heart
monitor.

KEVIN

If I stay quiet, it'll look like a
confession.

REBECCA

If you speak, it'll look like an
excuse.

Kevin strides to the desk, sits, starts typing. Fingers quick.
Nervy. Almost angry.

ON SCREEN: "I AM NOT—"

Rebecca places her palm on the laptop lid.

Not closing it. Just stopping him.

KEVIN

(holding it in)
Don't.

REBECCA

I have to.

Kevin looks up at her — wounded, like someone who isn't being
heard.

KEVIN

So you want me silent too.

REBECCA

No. I want you to survive.

A beat.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Right now any word isn't a word.
It's fuel.

Kevin swallows. His voice drops.

KEVIN

But I have context.
I have truth. I have—

REBECCA

(cutting in, calm)
Context doesn't fit in a headline,
Kevin.

He looks away. Jaw tight.

KEVIN

You don't understand. They're taking
me away from myself.

Rebecca takes another step.

Now close. Breath distance.

REBECCA

I do understand. I just don't want
you to help them do it faster.

Kevin looks at his phone.

Thumb hovering over PUBLISH.

A beat.

Somewhere in the house, a clock ticks quietly.

The silence isn't cosy — it's disciplinary.

KEVIN

(almost a whisper)
If I stay quiet... will you start
believing them too?

Rebecca holds a breath.

She won't lie. She won't break him either.

REBECCA

If you start fighting the crowd
right now, I'll lose you before I
know what I'm holding onto.

Kevin lowers his hand. The phone stays in his palm.

A weapon that didn't fire.

Rebecca finally touches him — not tender, but anchoring.

She takes his wrist. A light pressure.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

You'll tell the truth. Just not to
them.

KEVIN

Then to who?

Rebecca meets his eyes.

REBECCA

The investigator. The court. Your
solicitor. Me.

A beat.

Kevin tries to smile. It doesn't land.

KEVIN

You don't believe me.

Rebecca doesn't look away.

REBECCA

I'm here. That's all we've got right
now.

Kevin closes his eyes. Breathes.

For a second, he looks like he's holding back a scream.

Then, slowly, he clicks DELETE DRAFT.

The screen empties.

Kevin sits, not moving.

Rebecca stands beside him – not moving either.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

(quiet)

If you want to do something right
now – do one thing.

Kevin opens his eyes.

KEVIN

What.

Rebecca leans in.

REBECCA

Don't make it worse.

A beat.

Kevin stares at the blank screen.

And for once – he doesn't argue.

CUT TO BLACK

56. INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

56.

A TV chat show. Smiles, glitter, lightness – like an advert.
Volume low, but the words still cut.

HOST (TV)
...new material...
...a source claims...
...more questions...

SMASH CUT:

Rebecca's phone.

News feed. Headlines.

"SECRET RECORDINGS"

"WHY WON'T HE SPEAK?"

"COLLEAGUE: 'I'M NOT SURPRISED'"

SMASH CUT:

Kevin on the sofa.

Watching the TV like it isn't him.

Like it's a character.

Rebecca stands at the window.

Same as last night – only now it's day.

On TV – an EXPERT. Calm, confident, like a doctor beside
someone else's bed.

EXPERT (TV)
You can hear dominance in the
intonation. It isn't shouting.
It's control.

Kevin lets out a short, bitter laugh.

KEVIN
(quiet)
Expert on my life.

Rebecca doesn't react.

SMASH CUT:

Social media. Videos. Comments.

"HE WAS ALWAYS LIKE THIS"

"GENIUSES ARE ALL LIKE THIS"

"LOCK HIM UP"

"DON'T BELIEVE IT"

Kevin watches and slowly MUTES the sound.

Mouths keep moving. Silent. Like fish.

Rebecca walks over, looks for a second – and switches the TV off.

Silence drops into the room.

Not relief.

A sentence.

Kevin stares at the black screen.

KEVIN

(quiet)

A trial without a judge. And a
verdict in advance.

Rebecca doesn't answer.

She goes to the kitchen.

Leaves without a word.

Kevin stays.

He looks at his reflection in the black screen.

A stranger.

CUT TO:

57. EXT. CAFÉ - LATE AFTERNOON

57.

Grey sky. People with coffee. Ordinary London.

Kevin sits outside with a woman – JULIA (32).

Plain clothes. Tired eyes.

She holds her cup with both hands.

The distance between them is bigger than the table.

KEVIN

(level)

You messaged Rebecca.

Julia nods.

No defence.

JULIA

I did.

A beat.

KEVIN

Why did you drag her into this?

Julia looks past him, as if remembering something she doesn't want to touch.

JULIA

Because she shouldn't have to learn
it from headlines.

Kevin says nothing.

It lands like an accusation without using the word guilty.

KEVIN

(quiet)

Do you think it's true?

Julia doesn't answer straight away.

JULIA

I think...
it looked wrong.

Kevin blinks.

KEVIN

"Wrong" how?

Julia takes a pause.

A brutally honest one.

JULIA

You didn't shout. Sometimes you even
smiled.

(beat)

But when you walked in, the room had
less air.

Kevin listens.

No argument. No defence.

Like he's taking notes.

KEVIN

And her?

Julia shrugs.

JULIA

She joked. Laughed. Like everything was under control.

(beat)

And that proves nothing. That's what scares me.

Kevin looks out at the street.

People walking. Normal.

KEVIN

Why didn't you say anything then?

Julia drops her eyes to her coffee.

JULIA

Because you were too big for anyone to push back.

(beat)

And because I thought, "Maybe that's how it's meant to be. Maybe I'm just weak."

She lifts her eyes.

JULIA (CONT'D)

And then I saw that video.

Kevin tightens.

KEVIN

And?

Julia speaks softly. Almost without emotion.

JULIA

And I realised I can't pretend I didn't see anything anymore.

A beat.

Kevin nods.

Slowly.

KEVIN

You think I-

He can't finish it.

Julia looks at him.

JULIA

I don't know.

(beat)

But I do know it **could** have been true.

That sentence is the worst one.

JULIA (CONT'D)
I know it could have.

Kevin sits very still.

As if someone inside him has turned the sound off.

JULIA (CONT'D)
(gently)
You always used to say: "The camera
sees everything."

Kevin looks at her.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Now the camera isn't on your side.

Julia stands. Leaves cash on the table.

Kevin stands too, but not at once – like his legs have become heavier.

JULIA (CONT'D)
(quiet)
I don't want you harmed.

A beat.

JULIA (CONT'D)
I just don't want to be silent
anymore.

She disappears into the crowd.

Kevin stays alone at the table.

The city carries on.

Kevin watches his reflection in the café glass.

Calm face.

A crack in the eyes.

He pull out his phone.

Fingers hovering.

Caitlin's words return:

"no contact".

Kevin slowly puts the phone away.

Stares into nothing.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is dark.

Not cosy – switched off.

Kevin sits at the kitchen table.

An empty mug. Beside it – an empty paper property bag from the police.

A mark of missing things.

Silence.

The phone in his hand is the only living thing. The screen lights his face.

A chat window.

Name: JULIA.

Kevin's finger hovers over the keyboard.

He types:

"I'm not like that."

Deletes.

"You realise what you've started?"

Deletes.

One word remains:

"Why?"

A beat.

He stares at the word like a shot he can still choose not to fire.

His finger moves on its own.

SEND.

A second of silence.

Kevin freezes.

Like someone's flicked a switch in the house and now the light is pointed at him.

He knows immediately.

He taps: DELETE.

Too late.

The message is already marked: delivered.

He stares at the screen. Doesn't blink.

The phone feels heavier.

In the doorway – Rebecca.

She's not looking at him.

She's looking at the glow.

REBECCA

(quiet)

Did you message someone?

Kevin doesn't answer at once.

KEVIN

(level)

It doesn't change anything.

A beat.

Rebecca steps closer.

Looks at the screen.

Reads the one word: "Why?"

Rebecca lifts her eyes.

REBECCA

It matters.

Kevin exhales.

KEVIN

I just... wanted to understand.

Rebecca nods. Too calm.

REBECCA

And your solicitor said "nothing."

Kevin looks away.

KEVIN

I couldn't hold it.

Rebecca takes a step back.

Small.

Final.

REBECCA

You're speeding this up.

Kevin says nothing.

The phone VIBRATES.

A reply.

Kevin doesn't open it.

Like he's afraid of seeing a second bullet.

CUT TO:

58. INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - DAY

58.

Grey day. Flat light.

On the doormat - an envelope.

Official. Thick.

Not a threat - order.

Kevin bends, picks it up.

Inside: papers. A stamp.

He reads standing.

Even. Like on set before a take.

"A preliminary hearing has been listed."

Date. Time. Address.

The word COURT doesn't shout.

It simply exists.

In ink.

Rebecca stands in the hallway. Doesn't come close.

Kevin holds the paper out in front of him - like something to sign.

Then - like a sentence.

Rebecca steps in and reads over his shoulder.

Doesn't look at him.

A beat.

REBECCA
(quiet)
You can't stop this now.

Kevin doesn't answer.

He crumples the page – then smooths it at once.

As if scared of his own fingers.

Rebecca turns toward the kitchen.

Kevin stays in the entryway.

For a second, he looks at the door.

As if waiting for someone to come in and say: mistake.

No one comes.

CUT TO:

59. INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

59.

One lamp.

Yellow light – flat, without warmth.

The table is overloaded: papers, notifications, a phone, a pen, an empty mug.

Kevin on the sofa. His coat beside him, as if he never actually got home.

Rebecca in an armchair opposite.

A sheet of paper in her hands. She's reading it – but not reading it.

Silence.

You can hear: the city far off, pipes, a clock.

Rebecca places the sheet on the table. Neatly. Too neatly.

Kevin looks at the sheet. Doesn't pick it up.

A beat.

The phone VIBRATES. Once.

They both freeze.

The vibration stops.

Kevin reaches for the phone.

Stops.

Pulls his hand back.

The silence thickens.

Rebecca takes another sheet.

Looks at the date.

Puts it back down.

Kevin looks at the date too.

As if it isn't a number – but a term.

A beat.

Kevin stands.

Goes to the window.

Looks down.

Ordinary life: someone walking, a car passing.

Rebecca looks at the table.

For a long time.

A beat.

REBECCA
(barely audible)
Tomorrow.

Kevin doesn't turn.

KEVIN
(quiet)
Yeah.

Silence.

Kevin returns. Sits.

He looks at Rebecca.

Rebecca doesn't look back.

Kevin pulls the papers closer to him.

Just to keep his hands busy.

Rebecca stands.

Walks to the door.

Stops on the threshold.

REBECCA
 (quiet)
 Sleep.

She leaves.

Kevin is alone.

He looks at the phone.

Then at the date.

And switches the lamp off.

Darkness.

And in the darkness – VIBRATION.

Quiet. Stubborn.

Kevin doesn't answer.

60. INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

60.

Kevin lies on the edge of the bed, fully dressed.

Hands under his head.

On the other edge – Rebecca, in the same position.

Silence.

In the middle: emptiness. Like a wall splitting two worlds.

Between them – a distance measured in thousands of miles.

They lie with eyes open.

Each pretending the other is asleep.

And each has a lamp on their side, lighting their face.

CUT TO BLACK

61. INT. CAR - MORNING - ON THE WAY TO COURT

61.

A grey morning. Windows speckled with fine droplets.

Wipers move evenly.

THUD... THUD... THUD...

The car is warm, yet it feels like a fridge.

Kevin in the back seat. Coat on. Hands clasped. His gaze out the window – not at the street, but through it.

Caitlin drives. One hand on the wheel, the other on a folder resting by her knee.

She doesn't look at him often – but she keeps him held in the mirror.

A beat.

Caitlin flicks the indicator.

CLICK. CLICK. Like a metronome.

CAITLIN
(calm, quick)
Listen. Two questions sound like politeness. They're hooks.

Kevin says nothing.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
First: "Do you understand the charge?" – "Yes, Your Honour." Straight away.
Second: "How do you plead?" – "Not guilty." Full stop.

Kevin gives the faintest nod.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
And when you say "Not guilty", you say it clean. No "because". No explaining. Explanations are what they'll cut later.

A beat.

Kevin watches the wipers.

THUD... THUD...

Caitlin draws in a breath. Too long.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
And the main thing: the press. You say nothing. Even if they call you a monster, even if they say Rebecca's name, even if–

Kevin gives a quiet little laugh. Almost gentle, like at a bad joke.

KEVIN
(softly)
I... don't care.

A beat.

Caitlin tightens on the wheel. Knuckles whitening.

CAITLIN
 (without looking)
 Say that again.

For a second the car is quieter than outside.

Kevin doesn't.

Even the wipers sound louder.

Caitlin brakes sharply at a red light. Not dangerous. Just enough for Kevin to rock slightly.

Caitlin twists in her seat, looking back at him over her shoulder.

For the first time – directly.

CAITLIN
 You're burying yourself.

Kevin looks at her, calm. Not defending. Like someone already tired of himself.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 (serious, blunt)
 Haven't you noticed? The sky's
 fallen.

She says it with a near-smirk – bitter, helpless.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 Every last one of them, the moment
 there's an allegation, they'll clamp
 on like vipers at your throat the
 second you show weakness.

A beat.

The light stays red. Inside the car – a different speed.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 That isn't "I don't care." That's
 "I'm giving up."
 And giving up looks like guilt.

Kevin stays silent.

Caitlin faces the road again. Her voice drops – quieter, more dangerous.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 You think they want the truth?

A beat.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 They want it neat:

the hero becomes the villain.
 the film becomes evidence.
 the silence becomes blame.

Green.

Caitlin moves off.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 This is war.

Kevin tilts his head slightly.

KEVIN
 (calm)
 I'm not a soldier.

Caitlin laughs once – not amused. Dry.

CAITLIN
 No one asked what you wanted to be.

A beat.

Her voice slips for a second – too human.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 I can't make you want to live. But I
 can make sure you don't die on the
 court steps today.

Kevin looks at her now – not the window.

Properly. For a long time.

He sees:

Bags under her eyes.

A coffee in the cup holder, untouched.

Fingers on the wheel with a micro-tremor.

She isn't cold.

She's holding on.

And she slept badly too.

Wipers: THUD... THUD...

CUT TO:

62. INT. ROYAL COURT - CORRIDOR - MORNING

62.

Cold light. White walls.

Stone underfoot – even sound feels regulated here.

Footsteps. Echo.

Somewhere distant: metal detectors, security, whispers.

Kevin walks beside Caitlin.

He's in his coat. Hands clasped like he's holding himself in place.

Caitlin carries her folder under her arm like a shield.

She moves fast, but doesn't run.

Control is her oxygen.

They pass a sign:

"COURTROOM 3."

A half-step pause.

CAITLIN

(not looking, low)

This is the corridor. Everyone has eyes, but no names. Don't hunt for faces. Don't catch on a look.

Kevin says nothing. Stares ahead.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)

And if the judge asks a question – you answer only the question. No preambles. No morality.

Kevin gives the faintest nod.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)

(harder)

And don't make cinema, Kevin. No pauses "for meaning". A pause is what they'll interpret for you.

Kevin exhales. Too quiet to be just breath.

KEVIN

I understand.

Caitlin finally looks at him – quick, like checking a harness before a jump.

CAITLIN

No. You think you understand.

(beat)

In there everything will sound "normal". "Standard". That's the horror.

They'll read your life like paper.

Kevin doesn't answer.

They reach the courtroom doors.

At the door – an USHER. Strict, neutral. Not cruel.

Just someone who has seen thousands of other people's endings.

USHER

(brisk)

Ms Briggs.

Caitlin nods, taps her pass.

The door opens.

Before stepping in, Caitlin holds for a single second.

Not theatrical.

Like someone choosing tone.

CAITLIN

(very quietly)

Look at me if you start to drift.
Not them. Me.

Kevin looks at her – properly. For the first time, not through.
He nods. They enter.

CUT TO:

63. INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

63.

The room isn't "grand". It's functional.

The whispering in the gallery is like rain that never starts –
but the air is already damp.

Kevin walks to the dock. Caitlin is beside him, slightly ahead,
blocking his line like a shield.

Front row – JOURNALISTS. Notebooks. Phones. A light, eager
hunger for "a moment".

A couple of OBSERVERS. Whether they're random or not – hard to
tell.

Kevin sits. Clasp his hands. Holding frame even though there
is no frame.

Caitlin sets down her folder, opens it, but doesn't turn a
page. Her fingers stop on the paper's edge.

Silence.

Inside it you can hear: someone swallowing. A chair shifting a millimetre.

The USHER stands.

USHER
(loud, clear)
All rise.

Everyone stands. A side door opens.

The JUDGE enters – Richard Whitmore. Not showy. Not “cinematic”.

Elderly, tired. Robes. The look of a man who doesn’t believe in big words, but is required to speak them.

He sits.

USHER
(clear)
Be seated.

Everyone sits. Fabric. Benches.

The COURT CLERK stands, eyes on a document.

CLERK
In the Crown Court...
The Crown against Kevin Reynolds.

Kevin hears his own name as if it belongs to someone else.

The Judge looks at papers. Not at Kevin. He pauses – not for drama. For process.

JUDGE
(even)
Mr Reynolds. Today the court moves to the stage of sentence.
(beat)
The court will hear submissions from both parties, after which I will deliver my decision and the penalty.

Caitlin leans towards Kevin – almost invisible.

CAITLIN
(whisper)
Even. Clear.

The Judge lifts his eyes.

RICHARD WHITMORE
(even)
You have been advised that this is sentencing...

in a matter where you face
allegations including sexual assault
and related offences.

(beat)

Do you understand what stage of
proceedings we are at?

Kevin answers at once. No ornament.

KEVIN

(clear)

Yes, Your Honour.

The Judge nods – an internal tick.

The PROSECUTOR – MARCUS STONE – stands. Middle-aged. Suit.
Voice calm like a thermometer.

MARCUS STONE

(calm)

Your Honour, for the prosecution. We
ask the court to consider the nature
and gravity of the findings, and the
public significance of this case.

(beat)

This is not about scandal and not
about headlines – it is about harm,
about abuse of power, and the
consequences for the complainant.

He says “consequences” like a figure in a report.

But in the room people hear another word: life.

MARCUS STONE (CONT'D)

The Crown will submit that sentence
must reflect deterrence and the
public interest, and the need for
deterrence in cases where there is
an imbalance of power and
dependence.

(quick)

We also ask the court to take into
account the risk of pressure on
witnesses and attempts at influence,
even indirectly, given the level of
attention.

Caitlin doesn't move. She listens – not with emotion, with
structure.

MARCUS

(continuing)

At this stage the prosecution is not
concerned with the defendant's
“version”.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(beat)

We are speaking about the measure of
accountability.

He allows a small pause.

And into that pause – the courtroom door opens quietly.

REBECCA appears at the doorway.

She's come in too carefully not to be noticed – which makes it
more noticeable.

Slightly out of breath – not from running.

From forcing herself to come.

Coat on. Hair tied back. Face held together.

No tears. No excuses.

She stands for a second, understanding: everyone has already
heard "findings".

The pause in the prosecutor's speech continues – as if the room
itself has taken a breath.

Eyes turn. One by one. First the nearest. Then further back.
And at last – Kevin.

Kevin turns his head slowly. Not sharp. Too deliberate.

Their eyes meet.

Neither nods.

Neither smiles.

But it is contact all the same.

Caitlin catches it in her peripheral vision. Her jaw tightens
for a beat.

Not jealousy. Not anger.

Fear: any look can now be read.

The Usher steps towards Rebecca.

USHER

(low)

Ma'am. Please take a seat.

Rebecca nods. Walks between rows.

People watch her the entire way. Her footsteps sound louder
than they should.

She sits – middle section, on the aisle.

Back straight. Hands on her knees. No phone.

Her gaze forward.

The prosecutor continues as if there was no pause.

But there was.

And they will remember it.

MARCUS

(even)

Your Honour, in light of what I've set out, the Crown will invite the court to impose an immediate custodial sentence proportionate to the harm caused, and restrictions excluding contact and any influence – direct or indirect.

Caitlin rises.

RICHARD WHITMORE

(even)

Ms Briggs.

She stands instantly; voice steady, but you can hear she isn't "running a case" – she is holding a human being.

CAITLIN

Your Honour.

We are not at the stage of reputation, and we are not at the stage of "media noise".

We are at the stage where the court decides what is truth within law – and what price is paid for it.

(beat)

My client understands the seriousness of this moment. And he understands that today, this is not the public, and not the industry. Today, there is only the court.

(looking straight to the Judge)

The defence asks the court to bear in mind: sentence must not become an extension of a public trial.

Court is the place where emotion ends with evidence – not the other way round.

(MORE)

CAITLIN (CONT'D)

(shorter, harder)

We ask that any sentence be proportionate, lawful, and rooted in the materials before the court – not in the convenient version of a story outside these walls.

(looks to Kevin)

Your Honour, if justice is truly done here – it must be stronger than noise.

The Judge watches her longer. Testing not her argument – her steadiness.

RICHARD

(even)

Mr Reynolds. Before I pass sentence, I must ask: do you maintain that you did not commit the acts alleged against you?

Kevin draws a breath.

Not pretty. Just enough to speak.

KEVIN

(clear)

I do not admit guilt, Your Honour.

Somewhere in the gallery a pen taps paper.

Too loud in this silence.

The Judge nods.

RICHARD

(even)

Position noted.

He makes a mark.

As if placing a full stop in someone else's sentence.

RICHARD

The court will hear a small number of further points from prosecution and defence – and then proceed to sentence.

(beat)

Mr Reynolds, you will remain silent unless addressed. Do you understand?

Kevin answers immediately.

KEVIN

(clear)

Yes, Your Honour.

The Judge drops his eyes to the papers.

JUDGE

(even)

Continue.

The prosecutor prepares to go on.

Kevin doesn't look at Rebecca again.

Not because he doesn't want to.

Because he understands: a second glance becomes a "signal".

Rebecca doesn't look at him either.

But her presence is physical.

Like a wall that holds, even as it cracks.

Caitlin sits.

Leans towards Kevin – almost invisible.

CAITLIN

(whisper)

Good.

(beat)

Now hold on.

Kevin nods.

Proceedings continue. Words moving along the protocol.

But in the room there are already three things the protocol doesn't record:

– The look everyone saw.

– The silence everyone heard.

– And the sense that what comes next won't be "a hearing".

What comes next will be a story written without them.

CUT TO:

The Judge reads. Unhurried. As if time is his instrument.

Marcus stands again. Calm. Assured. Voice like metal.

MARCUS

(even)

Your Honour, the prosecution asks
the court to remember: the
consequences of this matter go
beyond a single career.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(beat)

This is about power. Boundaries.
What happens when a person trusted
by others fails to notice – or
ignores – someone else's "no".

He doesn't look at Rebecca. He addresses the room as a whole.

But the words pass close.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

And of course this affects more than
the complainant.
It affects the defendant's closest
circle. People compelled to live
beside what the court is about to
call by its name.

Careful. No name. No finger pointed.

But the air in the room shifts.

Kevin doesn't lift his head.

He looks down.

At his hands.

CLOSE ON – KEVIN'S HAND

A wedding ring. Plain. No stones.

Kevin runs his thumb along the ring, slowly.

As if checking whether it's real – or already a symbol.

Silence.

And then–

PRIEST

(solemn)

Do you swear, Rebecca–

Kevin freezes.

Like someone's switched him off for a second.

Caitlin sees it from the corner of her eye. Says nothing.

She hears it too: he's gone.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK TO:

64. EXT. CHURCH - DAY

64.

Warm light. Soft. The air is different here.

It doesn't smell like court.

It smells like flowers, wood, and something clean.

Kevin stands facing Rebecca. They hold hands.

Their fingers woven together as if it's the only stable thing in the world.

Rebecca smiles. Not for the guests. For him.

A PRIEST stands between them. Not stern.

PRIEST

(solemn)

Do you swear, Rebecca, to respect,
to protect, and to be present...
in joy and in trial...
until the end of your days?

Rebecca doesn't rush. A small inhale.

She looks at Kevin as if checking his face against the future.

REBECCA

(very quiet)

I do.

In the wedding pews - smiles, small breaths.

Kevin smiles wider. Slightly nervous. Honest.

PRIEST

(turning to Kevin)

Do you swear, Kevin Reynolds-

Kevin looks at Rebecca, barely hearing the rest.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

-to protect, to love, and to respect
Rebecca...
to be there when it's easy...
and when it's hard...
not to leave when it becomes
frightening-

Kevin swallows.

A micro-pause.

KEVIN

(smiling, almost a whisper)

I do.

Rebecca's smile grows.

In that smile – a faith that will last for years.

They lean towards each other.

Slow.

As if time has permitted them.

RICHARD WHITMORE (V.O.)
Mr Reynolds.

Kevin and Rebecca are still moving in to kiss. Eyes nearly closed.

Guests smiling. Light like a promise.

And into that light – a stranger's voice.

RICHARD (V.O.)
(even, like a gavel)
Mr Reynolds.

The kiss stops a millimetre short.

Like a frame frozen in the edit.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Mr Reynolds.

Again – closer.

Rebecca still smiling, not understanding that another room is already watching them.

Kevin smiling too.

And in that smile – a man who still believes he can control everything.

Kevin blinks.

Reality snaps back.

Cold water.

Back to the present.

RICHARD WHITMORE
Are you listening to the court, Mr
Reynolds?

Kevin lifts his eyes.

KEVIN
(clear)
Yes, Your Honour.

Too correct.

A line learned to survive.

Rebecca doesn't move.

Only her fingers press harder into her knees.

Kevin hears the silence behind her.

As if she isn't a person now.

But a witness to another life.

CUT TO:

65. SILENCE HAS ALREADY TAKEN ITS SEAT.

65.

Court is a room where even the air knows the rules.

RICHARD WHITMORE

(even)

Prosecution.

Marcus rises. No hurry. No show.

MARCUS

(calm)

Your Honour, the Crown will clarify
the basic circumstances.

(to Kevin)

Mr Reynolds, you were the director
of the project *Silent Scream*?

KEVIN

Yes.

MARCUS

Length of the shoot?

KEVIN

About five months.

MARCUS

You were on set almost daily?

KEVIN

Yes.

MARCUS

Decisions on takes were yours?

KEVIN

Yes.

MARCUS

Calling a stop – also yours?

KEVIN

Yes.

Marcus makes a note. Like laying a brick.

MARCUS

Did you speak to actors outside the set?

KEVIN

Sometimes.

MARCUS

Work-related conversations?

KEVIN

Yes.

MARCUS

And personal ones?

KEVIN

(a short beat)

Sometimes.

In the gallery someone shifts. The wood creaks – and immediately feels ashamed.

MARCUS

Would you call yourself a demanding director?

KEVIN

Fairly.

MARCUS

Did you raise your voice?

KEVIN

Yes.

MARCUS

Was there a complaints procedure on set?

KEVIN

Through the producers.

MARCUS

Did you personally control it?

KEVIN

No. That was their remit.

MARCUS

Did you receive any formal complaints about your behaviour?

KEVIN

No.

MARCUS

On the day the disputed video was recorded – do you remember the schedule?

KEVIN

Not precisely.

MARCUS

Was it a difficult day?

KEVIN

Every shoot day is difficult.

MARCUS

But that one – do you remember it as unusual?

KEVIN

No.

A beat.

MARCUS

Do you consider yourself someone who notices other people's boundaries?

The question lands softly.

Dangerously softly.

Kevin doesn't answer at once.

Caitlin turns her head a fraction. Says nothing. Just there.

KEVIN

I try.

MARCUS

Are you sure?

KEVIN

(after a beat)

I thought I was.

That's the first "thought". It hangs.

MARCUS

Have you ever intentionally harmed an actor?

KEVIN

No.

MARCUS
Physically?

KEVIN
No.

MARCUS
Psychologically?

KEVIN
No.

A beat. Marcus glances to the Judge.

MARCUS
That's all, Your Honour.

He sits.

Richard lifts his eyes to Kevin.

RICHARD
Does the defence wish to clarify?

Caitlin rises. Calm.

CAITLIN
A couple of questions, Your Honour.
(to Kevin)
Were you ever prohibited from
working with a particular actor?

KEVIN
No.

CAITLIN
Did you conceal complaints from the
producers?

KEVIN
No.

Caitlin nods.

CAITLIN
Have you ever wanted to harm anyone?

KEVIN
No.

CAITLIN
That's all.

She sits.

Richard makes a short note.

A beat.

RICHARD

The court will take a short
adjournment.

He doesn't strike a gavel. He simply sets his pen down.

But everyone hears the sound.

The courtroom begins to move – quietly, humanly.

Kevin remains standing.

Rebecca looks at him. Doesn't approach. Doesn't look away.

Just watches.

Like someone learning to see again.

66. INT. ROYAL COURT - CORRIDOR - DAY

66.

The courtroom door closes.

Outside – a different noise.

Not loud. Just alive: footsteps, murmurs, paper, water from a cooler.

Kevin stands by the wall. Back straight. Hands in his pockets.

Caitlin beside him. Folder in hand – like an anchor.

A beat.

CAITLIN

(low, quick)

Listen to me.

Kevin doesn't respond. His gaze drifts a fraction.

CAITLIN

(harder)

Not inside yourself. At me. Now.

Kevin lifts his eyes.

CAITLIN

You held it together.

(beat)

And you nearly drifted on the
boundaries question. I saw it.

KEVIN

(quiet)

I didn't want–

CAITLIN
 (cutting in)
 "I didn't want" isn't an argument.
 Not here.

A beat.

Down the corridor a CLERK passes. Caitlin waits until he's gone.

CAITLIN
 (lower)
 You answer the question. And that's
 it.
 No add-ons. No explanations. They
 cut explanations.

KEVIN
 I don't care who—

CAITLIN
 (half a tone sharp)
 No.

That "no" isn't an order.

It's as if she's gripping his collar so he doesn't fall.

CAITLIN
 (even)
 You do care. You're just calling it
 fear. And fear in court looks like
 weakness. Weakness looks like guilt.

Kevin says nothing.

CAITLIN
 (hard, but alive)
 I don't carry people. I'm beside
 people who walk.
 If you're walking — you're holding.

A beat.

Caitlin looks at his hands.

CAITLIN
 Hands.

KEVIN
 What?

CAITLIN
 Don't hide them. Don't clench. Don't
 touch your face.
 That's not psychology. It's camera.

Kevin slowly pulls his hands from his pockets.

CAITLIN
 (short)
 Good.

A beat.

CAITLIN
 (quiet)
 And one more thing.
 Don't look at your wife like she's a
 lifebuoy.
 She's drowning too. Understood?

KEVIN
 Yes.

Caitlin nods. No drama. But human.

Kevin shifts his gaze – and sees Rebecca.

She's by a column, slightly apart. Calm. Too calm.

Their eyes meet.

Caitlin doesn't intervene.

CAITLIN
 (quiet)
 I'll be here. Don't make a scene.

Kevin nods and walks.

67. INT. ROYAL COURT - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

67.

Kevin approaches Rebecca. Stops at a distance.

Silence.

REBECCA
 (very quiet)
 You... holding up?

KEVIN
 Just as quiet
 Yes.

A beat.

REBECCA
 I didn't think it would be so... calm
 here.

KEVIN
 It isn't calm.

Rebecca nods. No "why".

A beat.

REBECCA
(barely)
I heard the question about
boundaries.

Kevin nods. Drops his gaze to his ring.

KEVIN
I don't know how to answer so it
doesn't sound...
guilty.

REBECCA
(quiet)
Answer with truth. Not phrasing.

Kevin lifts his eyes.

KEVIN
I'm trying.

A beat.

REBECCA
(barely audible)
I'm afraid.

KEVIN
(same)
Me too.

One second of shared truth – no rescue.

Rebecca looks at his hand.

He looks at her fingers, white with tension.

Kevin places his hand beside hers.

Not on top. Not "I've got you."

Just beside.

There's almost no contact.

But the distance goes.

CLERK (O.S.)
Court will resume.

Rebecca composes herself. Face level again.

REBECCA
(quiet)
Go.

KEVIN

Yes.

He steps back once.

Another look – short, exact.

Kevin returns to Caitlin. Caitlin is waiting, as she said she would.

CAITLIN

(quiet)

Ready?

KEVIN

(even)

No.

CAITLIN

(calm)

Brilliant. Means you're not lying.
Come on.

They head for the courtroom doors.

Rebecca exhales once – and follows.

The doors open.

Silence becomes official.

68. INT. ROYAL COURT – COURTROOM – CONTINUOUS

68.

The doors close.

The corridor noise stays outside.

Inside – an even, official silence.

Kevin and Caitlin sit.

Rebecca – second row.

Not close. Not far.

A point you can't turn towards too sharply.

A beat.

JUDGE

(even)

Mr Reynolds.

Kevin lifts his eyes.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

When you assumed a public position,
did you understand it increases the
weight of your actions?

(beat)

That power is not privilege, but an
obligation to see boundaries.
That one mistake can change not only
your career, but the lives of people
around you?

Silence.

No one moves. Even pens stop.

Kevin looks at the Judge. Then down. At his hands.

The room's sound recedes.

As if a door shuts inside his head.

FLASHBACK TO:

69. EXT. WESTMINSTER BRIDGE - DAY

69.

Kevin runs like a man without a route.

He stumbles. Grabs the rail.

Big Ben tolls, dull.

Once. Again.

Kevin looks into the dark water.

And doesn't jump.

But for one second - he understands that he could.

70. INT. ROYAL COURT - COURTROOM - DAY

70.

Kevin blinks.

Sound returns gradually: a cough, paper moving, someone's
footsteps.

The Judge is still watching him.

The question hangs.

Kevin doesn't speak at once.

KEVIN

(quiet, but clear)

Yes, Your Honour.

A beat.

KEVIN

I understood that attention
amplifies consequences.
But understanding and readiness
aren't the same thing.

A small movement in the gallery. Someone lifts their head.

Kevin isn't excusing himself.

He's choosing words carefully.

KEVIN

I didn't think I was above rules.
I overestimated control.

Silence.

Caitlin leans towards him slightly.

Not interrupting – steering.

CAITLIN

(quiet, for him)
Fact. Not philosophy.

Kevin gives the faintest nod.

KEVIN

(more even)
I knew there was responsibility.
I didn't always see how my decisions
sounded to others.

The Judge doesn't write.

He listens.

JUDGE

And now?

A beat.

Kevin looks ahead.

Not at the gallery. Not at Rebecca.

At a point between people.

KEVIN

Now I understand consequences arrive
faster than a person has time to
recognise the boundary.

Caitlin steps in – soft, precise.

CAITLIN

Your Honour, my client does not deny
the weight of his position.
He speaks to the gap between
intention and perception.
And it is that gap we are dealing
with today.

The Judge shifts his gaze to her. Nods once.

JUDGE

Understanding does not absolve
responsibility, Ms Briggs.

CAITLIN

(calm)

But it helps the court measure it.

A beat.

Rebecca in the second row doesn't move.

But her fingers stop clenching.

Kevin feels it without looking.

Silence fills the room again.

A different silence.

Not empty.

Taut.

The hearing continues.

The silence from the last question hasn't settled yet.

It hangs in the air like dust in a beam of light.

Marcus stands. Unhurried.

He takes a pause as if pause itself is evidence.

Kevin sits beside Caitlin. Back straight. Face calm. Too calm.

MARCUS

(even)

Mr Reynolds, is it correct you had
difficult relationships with your
university cohort?

A beat.

MARCUS

(a touch softer, like "just
clarifying")

Conflicts. Distance.

What people around you took as...
arrogance.

Kevin looks at the table in front of him.

Not at Marcus. Not at the Judge. Not at the gallery.

Caitlin moves her hand almost imperceptibly – near him, not touching.

Like a safety line the cameras must not catch.

Judge Richard doesn't intervene.

He waits.

And that waiting presses harder than words.

Kevin slowly lifts his eyes.

And in that moment... the sound of the room starts to dull.

As if someone is turning the world down.

71. INT. UNIVERSITY – LECTURE HALL – DAY

71.

An old classroom. Wooden desks. A whiteboard stained with marker ghosts.

The projector HUMS. On the screen – shots from a short film. Clean picture. Rhythm. Sound designed better than half the graduate reels.

Students watch. Someone smirks. Someone tenses.

YOUNG KEVIN (20-21) sits by the window, slightly apart. He doesn't smile. He watches the screen as if hunting for mistakes.

PROFESSOR

(pleased)

Good.

(beat)

This is... genuinely good.

Someone CLAPS. Awkwardly. Then a few more claps. Not enthusiastic. More like manners.

The Professor checks his watch – too quickly. Gathers his papers like he's wiping fingerprints. He doesn't say "critique". Doesn't say "questions". As if he's afraid the class will start talking without him.

PROFESSOR

(even)

That's all for today.

He picks up his bag. Heads for the door. On the way out – a short nod to Kevin. Not praise. More a mark: *I see you.*

He exits.

The door closes. Silence remains.

Now – without an adult. Without a frame. Without “official”.

And in that exact moment, ONE STUDENT stands – JAMIE FOLKES (21). He wears a smile that isn't joy. It's a needle, aimed so everyone hears it.

JAMIE
(louder than necessary)
Can I ask a question?

The empty space by the door where the Professor just stood still holds the air. But there will be no answer. The Professor is already gone.

JAMIE
(louder than necessary – so everyone hears)
Can I ask a question?
(beat, smile)
Is that your work... or your *tutor's*?

A light chuckle in the room. Someone drops their eyes. Someone turns to Kevin. Kevin says nothing.

JAMIE
(pretending to clarify)
I mean... you know. Some people can make films. And some people can...
(beat)
talk to lecturers properly.

The silence thickens.

Not friendly anymore.

JAMIE
(keeps going, because no one will stop him)
No offence. Just curious. Because...
(glances around at their classmates)
not everyone's got “special access”.

Kevin lifts his head. Looks at Jamie.

He stands. Quietly. He doesn't rush. That's worse than shouting. That's a man who's already decided.

KEVIN

(even)

You want to ask if I sucked up.

An awkward beat.

Jamie shrugs, like – *only joking*.

JAMIE

I want to ask why everyone keeps...

(beat)

singling you out.

Kevin steps forward. Stops. Not too close. Not far either.

KEVIN

Because I didn't wait. I did.

A whisper runs through the room. Someone snorts – defensive.

JAMIE

(with a touch of aggression)

We worked too.

KEVIN

No.

Silence.

One simple word that lands like a slap.

KEVIN

(clear)

You pretended you were working.

So you'd have something to justify

failure with.

Someone tenses. Someone shifts, like their chair suddenly isn't comfortable.

JAMIE

(harder)

Listen, you–

KEVIN

(cutting in, no shouting)

You want me to name it honestly?

A beat.

Kevin looks at everyone. Not Jamie. The room.

KEVIN

You're not cruel.

You just chose a comfortable role:

"we tried".

Someone breathes out a quiet *woah*. Someone looks at the door – but there's nobody there.

KEVIN

(to Jamie)

It doesn't hurt you that I "sucked up".

It hurts you that I did it better.

And that means...

(beat)

now you have to look at yourself.

Jamie flushes. His fist clenches – but he doesn't raise it. Not a fight. Something else.

JAMIE

(almost hissing)

You think you're special?

Kevin nods once. Like fact.

KEVIN

I think you're used to living in a way where you never have to hear the truth about yourselves.

Because truth doesn't pat your head.

It doesn't say "it's fine, you tried".

It says: "you could have – and you didn't."

The room freezes.

Kevin suddenly snaps – not into hysteria.

Into honesty that sounds louder than shouting.

Kevin scans the lecture hall.

And the silence turns personal.

KEVIN

(sharp)

Well?

They truly say nothing.

KEVIN

(hard, bitter)

Heard the truth? Yeah. That's what it is. It's always bitter.

A beat.

He looks into faces.

Each one.

KEVIN
 (softer – and scarier)
 Never expect anything good from
 truth. Never.

Silence.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 (quiet)
 This is how you live. Quiet – so you
 never have to decide.

He grabs his rucksack. The movement is sharp, controlled. Kevin
 heads for the door.

JAMIE
 (after him, low)
 Psycho.

Kevin stops in the doorway. He doesn't turn fully – only a
 slight tilt of his head.

KEVIN
 (calm)
 No.
 I'm just the first one who's said it
 out loud to you.

He exits. The door closes.

CLICK – a small sound that somehow feels enormous.

Inside, no one moves. The projector keeps humming, as if it
 couldn't care less.

72. INT. ROYAL COURT – COURTROOM – DAY

72.

Sound snaps back. Paper rustles. A cough. Footsteps somewhere
 by the door. Someone's breath.

Marcus still stands. Looking straight ahead.

MARCUS
 (calm)
 Mr Reynolds.
 (beat)
 Can you hear me?

Kevin blinks. Once.

Caitlin leans in slightly.

CAITLIN
 (quiet)
 Just answer.

MARCUS
(even flatter)
Are you going to answer the
question?

Kevin looks at Marcus. Then – the Judge. Then – the table.

And speaks.

KEVIN
(clear)
Yes.

Silence fills the room again.

But now it's different.

Now it's waiting for what comes next.

MARCUS
So you confirm that your
relationships with your university
cohort were not particularly good?

He turns fully to Kevin.

KEVIN
(quiet)
Yes...
(louder)
Yes, I confirm that.

Marcus remains standing.

Kevin remains seated.

Inside him, after the flashback, blood still hisses – but his
face holds the frame.

MARCUS
(even)
Mr Reynolds, have you ever received
any official complaints about your
conduct on set?

Kevin blinks.

KEVIN
(clear)
No.

Marcus nods as if that was expected.

A beat.

And – the turn. No run-up. Like a door opened without knocking.

MARCUS
Your Honour. The Crown calls the
complainant.

The courtroom doesn't react with words.

It reacts with bodies:

someone straightens,

someone pushes their phone deeper into a bag,

someone finally stops fidgeting.

RICHARD
(formal)
Let her enter.

The DOOR at the back opens.

And at once – one sound:

TAP.

TAP.

TAP.

Heel.

Floor.

Heel.

Floor.

No coughing. No whispering.

The complainant enters. A YOUNG WOMAN (28). Not a "victim
image". Not a "heroine image". Ordinary.

Too ordinary for this place.

Dark coat. Hair tied back. Eyes dry, but like she hasn't slept.

She walks to the witness box.

Each step is proof she is even here.

TAP.

TAP.

She sits. A brief RUSTLE of fabric.

And the silence becomes dense again.

CLERK
(procedural)
State your name for the record.

The complainant inhales.

COMPLAINANT
(quiet)
Sophie Miller.

A second.

She swallows fear. Doesn't show it.

CLERK
Do you swear to tell the truth?

SOPHIE
(clear, calm)
I do.

Kevin looks at her for the first time – directly.

And immediately looks away. Like from bright light.

Caitlin is beside him.

She doesn't look at Sophie with aggression.

She looks like at a battlefield where you can't be off by a millimetre.

Marcus steps closer. A folder in his hands – careful, like a medical file.

MARCUS
(gentle, no pressure)
Ms Miller. You worked on the project
Silent Scream?

Sophie nods.

SOPHIE
Yes.

MARCUS
In what capacity?

SOPHIE
Assistant.

MARCUS
(a nod)
How long were you on the project?

SOPHIE
Long enough to remember.

Silence.

MARCUS

(even)

Did you know Mr Reynolds personally?

Sophie looks at the table in front of her.

SOPHIE

I knew him as the director.

A beat.

As if she's choosing: say more – or survive.

MARCUS

(softer)

Ms Miller, I'm going to ask you a few questions.

And if you need to stop, you tell me. All right?

Sophie nods.

SOPHIE

All right.

MARCUS

Do you remember the day we're speaking about?

A beat.

SOPHIE

Yes.

MARCUS

What happened?

Sophie says nothing.

Longer than "normal".

The courtroom waits, but it doesn't push – because the room itself pushes.

SOPHIE

He called me over.

Kevin stops breathing for a moment.

MARCUS

Did you go?

Sophie nods.

SOPHIE

Yes.

MARCUS
What did he say?

Sophie stares at a point.

SOPHIE
That he needed me to stay.

MARCUS
What did you answer?

A beat.

SOPHIE
I said "no".

The words fall simply. Without theatre.

That makes them worse.

Kevin drops his gaze – hard – to his hands. Interlaces his fingers.

MARCUS
(even)
After that, did he stop?

Sophie lifts her eyes. Not to Marcus – somewhere beyond the courtroom.

SOPHIE
No.

Silence.

MARCUS
Did you say you were in pain?

Sophie doesn't answer at once. Swallows.

SOPHIE
Yes.

A pause long enough that you can hear paper somewhere.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
(quiet)
I didn't come here to...
(beat)
make it a story.
I came because it – happened.

She doesn't cry. But in her voice there's no performance. Just fact.

Kevin's leg tremors under the table. Small. Fast. Like an engine you can't shut off.

Rebecca looks at him.

And sees: he's unwell. Not "ashamed" and not "angry".

Unwell – physical.

Rebecca slowly stands.

Her chair doesn't creak – and that's worse, because her leaving is nearly silent.

A few heads turn. Not judgement. Not support. Curiosity.

Rebecca heads for the exit.

HEEL.

FLOOR.

HEEL.

Kevin catches her in his peripheral vision. He doesn't stand. Doesn't call out. He can't.

Their eyes meet for a second.

Rebecca's look is not "betrayal".

And not "forgiveness".

It's only: I can't bear to watch you drown.

The door closes.

CLICK.

And after that click – the emptiness in the room changes shape.

Kevin remains without her presence like without a handrail.

MARCUS

(after a beat, gentle)

Thank you, Ms Miller.

He doesn't press. He knows pressing isn't needed now.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

That will be all for now, Your Honour.

He sits.

Now Caitlin rises. Controlled. No sudden movement. Like someone who knows the price of every word.

RICHARD

Ms Briggs.

CAITLIN

(even)

Thank you, Your Honour.

Caitlin steps closer to Sophie, but doesn't loom.

CAITLIN

Ms Miller. A few clarifications.

Sophie nods.

CAITLIN

Did you tell anyone immediately after that day?

SOPHIE

No.

CAITLIN

Why?

Sophie's fingers tighten slightly.

SOPHIE

Because...

(beat)

I didn't think I'd be heard.

Kevin flicks his eyes up to her – and immediately falters: it isn't accusation, it's the world's fatigue.

CAITLIN

Did you continue working on the project afterwards?

SOPHIE

Yes.

CAITLIN

Was that your decision?

Sophie looks down.

SOPHIE

It was... the only thing I had.

A beat.

CAITLIN

(even)

In that moment... are you certain Mr Reynolds understood you were refusing?

Sophie lifts her eyes.

SOPHIE

I said "no".

CAITLIN
(a nod)
Understood.

The silence in the room becomes almost physical.

Caitlin steps back half a pace. She doesn't argue. Doesn't break. She simply marks it.

Kevin tries to inhale – and can't properly.

He sits. Stares at the table. At his hands. As if gripping them harder could hold reality in place.

Sophie sits upright.

Not a winner. Not a poster victim.

Just a person who said the minimum – and it turned out to be the maximum.

RICHARD
(calm)
Continue, Ms Briggs. Or conclude.

CAITLIN
(even)
That's all for now, Your Honour.

The questioning continues.

And in this procedure there is no music.

No rescue.

Only questions.

The silence after Sophie's testimony doesn't disperse.

It simply changes shape.

Sophie is still in the witness box.

Marcus is seated.

Caitlin is seated.

Kevin stares at the edge of the table. Not at people. At a line. As if, if he doesn't cross it with his eyes, he won't fall.

Richard turns pages. Slowly. Unhurried.

He lifts his eyes.

RICHARD
(even)
The witness may stand down.

Sophie rises. No flourish. She doesn't search the room with her eyes.

Her heel meets the floor.

TAP.

TAP.

She leaves by the same route she entered. The sound of her shoes fades until it disappears entirely.

The door closes.

CLICK.

And after that click the room seems to shrink even further.

RICHARD
(measured)
Prosecution... one final question.

Marcus stands.

MARCUS
(calm)
Mr Reynolds.

Kevin lifts his gaze.

Not at once. Like a man being called by name from another world.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
You have heard Ms Miller's evidence.
(beat)
Tell the court: do you deny that,
that day, she said "no"?

A beat.

This isn't a question "in general". It's a question you can't drown in words.

Kevin draws a breath.

All he knows is control. But his breathing betrays him first.

KEVIN
(even)
I... can't confirm that.

Marcus's expression doesn't change.

MARCUS
(gently)
And you can't refute it?

Kevin stares at a single point.

KEVIN
(clear)
I can't.

Silence.

Marcus nods, as if he heard exactly what he expected. He sits.
Caitlin leans slightly towards Kevin – almost imperceptibly.

CAITLIN
(whisper)
Hold it. Just hold it.

Kevin doesn't answer. But he nods – barely.

Richard looks at Kevin now without papers. Directly.

The beat lasts too long.

RICHARD
(calm)
Mr Reynolds.

Kevin straightens.

KEVIN
Yes, Your Honour.

RICHARD
(without pressure)
When you became someone people
recognise...
(beat)
did you understand that your power
wasn't only creative?

The words sound like philosophy, but inside them is cold legal logic.

Kevin blinks.

KEVIN
(cautious)
Yes, Your Honour.

RICHARD
And did you understand that one
"mistake"...
(beat)
can become someone else's trauma,
not your experience?

Kevin swallows.

He wants to answer neatly. Like on a talk show. Like in a film.

But this is court. Here "neat" sounds like a lie.

KEVIN

(quiet)

I understood that responsibility...
exists.

(beat)

But I... didn't understand how...
irreversible perception can be.

Richard looks longer. As if not at the answer – but at the man trying to hide behind phrasing.

RICHARD

(slowly)

"Perception".

A beat.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

In the Crown Court we do not deal in
"perception". We deal in fact that
left a mark.

Kevin goes still.

Caitlin makes a micro-movement of her hand, as if to rise too early.

RICHARD

(even)

The parties have addressed the
court. The witness has been heard.

(beat)

Members of the jury, you must now
retire to consider your verdict.

Caitlin stands immediately.

CAITLIN

(clear)

Your Honour, I object.

The room stirs – not with noise, but with attention.

Richard lifts his eyes to her. Calm. Heavy.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)

(holding her tone)

The defence asks the court to
clarify its directions to the jury
on the interpretation of the audio
materials.

Caitlin wants to say more, but Richard raises a hand. Stops her softly, finally.

RICHARD

(even)

Ms Briggs. Directions will be given
in the standard manner. Your
objection is noted.

(beat)

And it does not alter that the
proceedings have reached the point
of decision.

Caitlin stands for a second. She understands: argue further and
lose on camera.

CAITLIN

(restrained)

Understood, Your Honour.

She sits. Slowly. Like a person sitting not on a chair – but on
her own powerlessness.

RICHARD

Members of the jury, please.

THE JURY rise. Fabric rustles. Chairs scrape. Footsteps.

They leave through the side door. The door closes.

CLICK.

And the room seems to exhale – not relief, but anticipation.

Kevin remains standing. He doesn't sit at once. As if, if he
sits, he'll collapse.

Caitlin looks up at him from below. Her look is a gesture: not
now.

Kevin sits, slowly.

Silence.

You can hear someone far down the corridor closing a door. You
can hear the judge's pen touch paper.

Kevin looks at the empty place in the room where Rebecca had
been sitting.

She isn't there.

And that absence is louder than any word.

CUT TO:

73. INT. ROYAL COURT - COURTROOM - LATER

73.

Time doesn't show itself. Only in the tiredness in people's
eyes.

Kevin is still here.

Caitlin is still here.

The judge is still stone.

The jury door opens. They return. Footsteps. Many footsteps.

Together, but not in step. They sit.

Silence again.

RICHARD
(formal)
Foreperson.

The foreperson – a man. An ordinary face.

No “villain”. No “hero”.

FOREPERSON
(clear)
Yes, Your Honour.

RICHARD
Have you reached a verdict?

FOREPERSON
Yes, Your Honour.

Kevin clenches his hands. Hard enough that his knuckles whiten.

Caitlin doesn't move. But her shoulders are taut, like a string.

RICHARD
(even)
What is your verdict?

A beat.

A second that stretches like a minute.

FOREPERSON
(clear)
Guilty.

The word drops. Without emotion. Like a stamp.

For a moment the world goes muffled.

Kevin doesn't fall. Doesn't shout. Doesn't do anything.

He simply stops being “the director of his own life” completely.

Caitlin closes her eyes for an instant. Very brief. As if it's the only place she can allow herself weakness.

She opens them. Collects herself.

Richard looks at Kevin. A long time.

Not with triumph. With the weight of a decision that has now become part of the record.

RICHARD
(calm)
Mr Reynolds.

Kevin doesn't answer at once.

KEVIN
(quiet)
Yes, Your Honour.

RICHARD
The court accepts the jury's
verdict.
(beat)
Sentence will be passed tomorrow.

Silence.

Kevin seems not to understand the word "tomorrow".

Because in his head time no longer divides into days.

Only "before" and "after".

Caitlin stands again.

CAITLIN
(quick, but even)
Your Honour, the defence seeks—

Richard lifts his eyes.

RICHARD
(short)
Ms Briggs.

A beat.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
You will have the opportunity to
address the court on mitigation
tomorrow. Today — we close.

Caitlin stands for a second. She understands: this is the limit.

CAITLIN
(restrained)
Yes, Your Honour.

Richard looks at Kevin once more.

RICHARD
Until tomorrow you will remain on
the conditions set by the court.

He pauses.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(a touch quieter)
And I strongly recommend you spend
the night...
(beat)
not speaking to the press.

Kevin gives the faintest nod.

KEVIN
Understood.

RICHARD
Court is adjourned.

THE GAVEL STRIKES.

A short sound – like a full stop at the end of a sentence they
haven't finished.

Only now the room starts to move. Rustles. Footsteps. Breaths.

Kevin remains seated. Stares at the table.

Caitlin leans to him.

CAITLIN
(whisper, very hard)
Look at me.

Kevin lifts his eyes.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
Tomorrow isn't about truth. Tomorrow
is about a number.

A beat.

Kevin tries to smile – it doesn't happen.

KEVIN
(quiet)
I understand.

Caitlin holds his gaze.

CAITLIN
(with human anger)
No. You don't.
(MORE)

CAITLIN (CONT'D)

(beat)

But you will hold. Because there is
no longer a choice.

Kevin says nothing. He finally stands. Slowly.

Like a man carrying the word "guilty" – not as a feeling, but
as weight.

They head for the exit.

Kevin passes Rebecca's empty seat. Stops for a fraction of a
second. Looks.

As if hoping she'll appear out of the air.

She doesn't.

Kevin moves on.

CUT TO BLACK

74. INT. THE STEPS OF THE ROYAL COURT - MORNING

74.

Kevin gets out of the car, Caitlin following with her folder.

He pushes towards the court through a crush of journalists,
microphones thrust at his mouth.

JOURNALIST

Mr Reynolds!

JOURNALIST (CONT'D)

How do you comment—

She doesn't finish, swallowed by the crowd.

Kevin walks. On his face – neither fear nor grief, only
blankness.

He hears nothing inside the noise. Not even himself.

He reaches the steps and snow begins to swirl.

Kevin tilts his head up and the snow settles on his face.

He takes the first step.

Second.

Third.

Each one costs effort, as if he's stripping off the burden of
the past and a new life is beginning.

And now he's at the doors.

Silence.

75. THE DOORS SWING OPEN. HE GOES IN.
INT. ROYAL COURT - CONTINUOUS

75.

The room is already full.

No extra noise – but an ожидание, like the second before a blow.

Kevin and Caitlin enter together. They aren't holding onto each other – they walk alongside each other.

Caitlin carries her folder like a shield that still lets things through.

Kevin sits. Hands on his knees. Fingers laced too correctly.

Front row – Rebecca. This time she's on time.

Sitting straight. Looking forward. Not searching for Kevin with her eyes.
But feeling him.

A beat.

A side door opens.

Richard enters with the CLERK and TWO USHERS.

Black robes. Papers. A calm that doesn't comfort.

CLERK

(loud)
All rise.

Everyone stands.

Richard sits.

CLERK

Be seated.

Everyone sits. The rustle of fabric sounds louder than it should.

RICHARD

(even)
Today the court passes sentence on
Mr Kevin Reynolds in the Crown's
case.

(beat)
This concerns a sexual offence and
the causing of harm.

(short)
The jury's verdict: guilty.

The words land like a seal. Without emotion.

But in the room someone stops breathing.

Kevin doesn't blink.

Caitlin looks at her papers as if holding herself by the edge.

Richard turns his gaze to the prosecution.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Mr Marcus Stone. Confirm the
formulation of the charge and the
Crown's position on sentence.

Marcus stands. Calm.

As if he does this every day – and that's precisely why it's
frightening.

MARCUS

(clear)

Your Honour. The Crown confirms: the
defendant has been convicted of a
sexual offence committed in
circumstances where there was a
dynamic of power and pressure.

(beat)

We also confirm the count of causing
harm – not only physical, but
subsequent psychological.

He steps forward. Not towards the judge – towards the room.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(even)

This case is not about "strictness
misunderstood".

Not about "creative temperament".

And not about "editing" – however
convenient that word may sound.

Kevin tightens his fingers slightly. Barely.

But Caitlin sees it.

A beat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(harder, without raising his
voice)

When someone says "it hurts" and "I
don't want to", and the response is
pressure – that is no longer a
working process.

That is a breach of boundaries.

And that is a crime.

Silence.

Rebecca stares ahead. Her face unmoving.

But her fingers give her away: she grips her bag like it's the only real thing.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

The Crown invites the court to impose an immediate custodial sentence.

(beat)

Because otherwise the court tells society one thing: "If you are famous enough – your responsibility is softer."

He finishes. Sits. Not victorious.

Just – like a man who has placed a full stop.

A beat.

Caitlin stands. She doesn't rush. Doesn't perform.

She rises as if lifting weight.

CAITLIN

(clear)

Your Honour. The defence accepts we are at the sentencing stage and asks the court to hold to law, not the noise around it.

(beat)

We ask the court to consider personal circumstances, the absence of previous convictions, and the fact he did not attempt to flee or interfere.

(short)

The defence asks for proportionality.

Richard throws a brief look at Caitlin.

CAITLIN

The defence accepts the sentencing stage and asks the court to hold to law, not the noise around it.

(beat)

We ask the court to consider: he did not abscond. He did not interfere with the process.

(softer)

And that he has dismantled himself – and it is visible.

Richard looks at her carefully.

Caitlin sits. Even.

As if after that there is less air inside her.

Silence.

Richard folds his hands. Looks at the papers.

As if he expected it.

RICHARD

(slowly)

The court is not tasked with weighing the defendant's talent or public image.

(beat)

The court weighs the fact of what was done and its consequences.

He pauses.

Long.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

This case demonstrates the danger of power that is taken for "normal". And the danger of an environment where a person grows used to his word being final.

Kevin sits motionless. But his breathing becomes slightly louder.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(stricter)

The jury's verdict means: the boundary was crossed. Not "almost". Not "possibly". Crossed.

Silence thickens.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

The court finds a non-custodial sentence does not reflect the gravity of the offence and does not serve the public interest in protection.

(beat)

The sentence will be immediate custody.

Caitlin lifts her eyes. Her face stays composed.

But in her eyes – a flash: there it is.

Richard looks straight at Kevin.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Mr Kevin Reynolds.

A beat.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
The court sentences you to five
years' imprisonment.

The words are calm.

But in the room they strike the walls like metal.

Kevin doesn't fall. Doesn't flinch.

He simply... for a second becomes empty.

Five years isn't a thought.

It's a place.

Rebecca lowers her gaze. Only for an instant.

And it's the only movement that betrays her.

RICHARD
Do you have anything to say, Mr
Reynolds?

A beat.

Silence.

Kevin looks into nothing.

KEVIN
I became bigger than a name.
And less of a person.

He accepts it. He no longer resists.

RICHARD
(dry)
You will be taken into custody
immediately. Your right of appeal
has been explained to your counsel.

Caitlin rises sharply.

CAITLIN
(clear)
Your Honour—

Richard raises a hand. No aggression. Finality.

RICHARD

(even)

Ms Briggs. The court has heard you.
Sentence has been passed.

Caitlin freezes. And sits again. Slowly.

As if she doesn't want anyone to see it hurts.

To the ushers – already a gesture.

An USHER approaches Kevin. Calm. Procedural.

USHER

(quiet)

Mr Reynolds. This way.

Kevin stands.

For a second he looks at Rebecca again.

She lifts her eyes.

Their gazes cross.

Not as "goodbye".

As a fixation: it happened.

Not a single word.

Kevin takes a step. Then another.

US HERS walk beside him, slightly behind – like a shadow that
has become law.

Caitlin stays seated for one more second. Watches him go.

Kevin turns – and their eyes meet for a second.

No pleading. No forgiveness. Nothing.

Her fingers on the folder are white.

RICHARD

Court is concluded.

THE GAVEL STRIKES.

And only after it does the room start to breathe.

CUT TO BLACK