

LAST WORDS

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

1 EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT 1

A bell chimes as the door opens. FOOTSTEPS scour the premises. They stop. *

A gun COCKS.

CLERK (V.O.) *

You can take whatever you want. *

CHARLIE (V.O.) *

You know exactly what I want. *

JACKIE (V.O.) *

Charlie, what are you doing?! *

CHARLIE (V.O.) *

(to another entity) *

Where do you think you're going? *

A GUNSHOT.

FADE IN: *

2 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY 2

YOUNG JACKIE, barely double digits, rides around on her brand new bike, a big smile across as she shows off her skills. *

3 INT. BRENNAN HOME HALLWAY - NIGHT 3

Young Jackie creeps through the dark hallway. A beam of light crosses her face as she approaches a bedroom door.

JUDGE (V.O.)

Jacquelyn Brennan, you've been accused of being an accomplice of the brutal murder of Rylan Walker...

She peeks her head through the crack of the door and spots two ADULTS arguing, pointing fingers... They're losing their minds.

4 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY 4

Young Jackie is surround by a crowd of BODIES as she sits on a picnic table bench with a birthday cake, candles lit, sitting atop the table.

JUDGE (V.O.)
...you plead not guilty.

With a single breath, she blows out all of the candles.

5 EXT. COURTYARD - DAY 5

PRE-TEEN JACKIE, still in middle school, other GIRLS her age gather around her.

A girl hands Jackie a cigarette, she pauses but takes it.

JUDGE (V.O.)
After all the testimonies and
evidence that has been presented,
the jury has found you guilty.

The cigarette is lit, and Jackie takes a puff.

6 INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY 6

The girls and Jackie sneak around the aisles.

Jackie watches as the other girls grab small items off the shelves and stuff them into their pockets. They stare at Jackie, waiting for her to do the same.

Jackie extends her hand over a bag of candy and hesitates.

JUDGE (V.O.)
Ms. Brennan. It is the sentence of
the court that your custody be
committed to the department of
corrections for confinement in the
California state prisons for the
remainder of your life, with the
possibility of parole starting
after ten years.

Jackie snatches the bag off the shelf.

7 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 7

JACKIE, now in mid-twenties, beautiful, worn down by a life of trouble and exhaustion, sprints down an empty road.

SIRENS blare behind her.

8 EXT. PORCH - NIGHT 8

Jackie rushes up a set of cement steps, and approaches the front door. She knocks as the sirens grow closer.

She sets a folded piece of paper on the welcome mat and darts off into the darkness. *

9 INT. JAIL HALLWAY - NIGHT 9

Jackie, handcuffed, is escorted by two OFFICERS down a dimly lit hallway.

JUDGE (V.O.)

As you well know, there are programs, such as church gatherings, counseling, or support groups that you may choose to attend. *

They reach the cell and Jackie passes through the opening, into the cell.

Jackie stands, frozen. A GAVEL slams hard as the bars are thrown shut.

She trudges over to her cot and lies down.

10 INT. JAIL HALLWAY - DAY 10

WARDEN FRANK, fifties, stern but with a hint of kindness, struts over to Jackie's cell and stops at the bars.

Jackie looks up from her book as he nears her.

WARDEN

Hey, Jack. Are you not going anymore?

JACKIE

Why should I?

WARDEN

I mean, you've sucked it up for this many years, a couple more shouldn't be too hard.

JACKIE

It's not really getting me anywhere.

WARDEN

Come give it another shot, okay?

Jackie reluctantly gets off her cot.

11 INT. CHAPEL - DAY

11

A colossal stone infrastructure, with beautiful stained glass windows, a ceiling that touches the sky, and a big wooden cross on a wall behind the altar. *

*

*

Various INMATES work on renovation projects while others converse or keep to themselves.

Jackie sits alone, estranged from the inmates and guards keeping watch, in a pew. She stares at her feet, deep in thought.

SAM WALKER, an elderly man, wrinkles and an exhausted face, sits a couple rows behind her.

SAM

What are you praying for?

Jackie keeps her eyes down.

SAM (CONT'D)

You gotta have something to pray for, right?

No reply.

SAM (CONT'D)

No?

Jackie doesn't budge.

SAM (CONT'D)

I used to come here all the time, until I was all out of favors to ask God.

*

Jackie turns around, stares at Sam confused, and then turns back.

SAM (CONT'D)

You'd think you're getting off easy when doctors give you a deadline; "three months," they said. I was ready for it, there was nothing left for me. The months came and went, and it's just been... A waiting game ever since.

*

Jackie's eyes tear up.

Sam gets up from his pew and walks over to Jackie's.

SAM (CONT'D)

Maybe it's nothing something you're praying for, but someone?

JACKIE

There's no one.

SAM

Parents?

JACKIE

I don't have any.

SAM

Everybody has parents.

JACKIE

A drug addicted, abusive mother, and an absent father don't exactly count.

Sam takes a seat next to Jackie.

SAM

I'm Sam.

He extends his hand, but she shifts uncomfortably.

SAM (CONT'D)

We all have our regrets with our parents or our children.

JACKIE

I don't regret anything. I'm sure they feel the same.

SAM

You might not get another chance.

*

JACKIE

I don't even know if they're alive.

SAM

Aside from them, maybe there's people you've wronged, or someone that's wronged you?

JACKIE

Look where I'm at; of course those people exist.

SAM

You don't think they'd like to make amends with you?

JACKIE

There's nothing I can say that will change anything.

SAM

You can only try, right?

Jackie looks beyond Sam at an officer rounding up the other inmates.

The officer spots Jackie and waves her over.

Jackie scoots past Sam and exits the pew.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'll see you soon.

Jackie looks back at Sam and continues toward the group.

12 INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT 12 *

Jackie tosses and turns in her cot as lightning and thunder crack outside her window. She springs up, drenched in sweat, terrified. *

She tries to compose herself as shakes run through her body. *

13 INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT 13 *

Jackie wanders in the back, by an arts and craft table. *

She picks up a picture frame that has a photo of a family. She takes a deep breath. A WOMAN, in an orange jumpsuit, walks up beside Jackie.

WOMAN

I've been wanting to try this section out. Wanna make a poster with me?

Jackie scoffs and leaves the woman to herself.

She continues down the aisle of pews.

SAM (O.S.)

Told you I'd see you again.

Jackie jumps, startled. She turns to see Sam walking toward her from the altar. *

SAM (CONT'D)

Please, have a seat.

Jackie stands still, unsure what to do.

SAM (CONT'D)

I insist.

Jackie takes a spot in the pew. Sam stands beside her.

JACKIE

How'd you know I'd be here?

SAM

This used to be my home away from home. I know about the program for the inmates.

JACKIE

What were you in for?

SAM

Me? No, I just supervised the troubled, for twenty-five years I might add.

A beat.

SAM (CONT'D)

But I found something recently that brought me out of my shell, even if just for a brief moment.

He reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out the folded paper that was left on the doorstep. Jackie gasps.

FLASHBACK

Jackie rushes up a set of cement steps, and approaches the front door. She knocks as the sirens grow closer.

She sets a folded piece of paper on the welcome mat and darts *
off into the darkness.

A hand picks up the paper.

Sam reads the note and his stomach and heart drops.

END FLASHBACK

15 INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS 15

Jackie's jaw remains dropped as Sam hands the paper to her.

SAM

Let's go into the back, so we can
be in private.

Sam escorts her.

16 INT. BACK ROOM - NIGHT 16

A small space with a few desks and chairs, a miniature
classroom.

JACKIE

I never thought you'd wanna see me.

SAM

I couldn't hide from it forever.
Even if it was just one time.

JACKIE

I'm so sorry for what happened that
night.

SAM

You ever think about what you'll do
when you get out of here?

JACKIE

I'm never getting out of here, so
why waste my time wondering about
it? What do you do now that you've
beat the disease?

SAM

I haven't beat it, not yet. So I'm
just trying to close all the holes
I've let get too wide open.

A beat.

SAM (CONT'D)

This one being the biggest hole to try and dig myself out of.

JACKIE

Why do you care so much?

*

SAM

If you could tell anyone anything, as if it were the last time you were ever going to see them, what would you say?

Jackie begins to tear as she looks for the right words.

JACKIE

I've been actually wanting to talk to you. I've never met you, but whoever was on the other side of the door that night, there was no way I could've faced you then. As the years have gone on, that's been something I was worried I'd never get a chance to do.

SAM

Now that you have the chance?

JACKIE

I don't even know where to begin.

SAM

I'd talk to my daughter, one last time. You know, she wasn't even supposed be out that night?

Jackie is unsure if she's supposed to answer.

SAM (CONT'D)

She had yelled at me for not being able to make it to my grandson's fifth grade graduation. We said some horrible things and she walked out. I don't think she really knew where she wanted to go, but as long as she wasn't around me.

JACKIE

Jesus.

SAM

I didn't know how to stop her from going.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

I guess I was never really good at that part of being a father.

JACKIE

At least you wanted to be with your daughter.

SAM

She was exactly like me, in every way, including the bad. There's only one other person I've met that's as close to being like me as she was.

JACKIE

Who's that?

SAM

You.

Jackie's jaw drops.

JACKIE

What?

SAM

You're a hard woman to reach, so guarded. I was always like that and I guess she picked up on it. With her secrets, her keeping to herself... Never asking for help from anyone.

Jackie's ears perk up at the last statement.

SAM (CONT'D)

Yeah, that's definitely you.

He gives a soft chuckle.

SAM (CONT'D)

I can help you.

JACKIE

I'm so scared of this place. I've been in and out of prison since I was a teenager and this is the first time I've wanted to get out. That night went so wrong...

FLASHBACK

17 INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT 17

RYLAN WALKER, early twenties, beautiful, innocent, on her knees staring up at Charlie's gun in her face.

Rylan shuts her eyes and begins to mouth something, maybe a prayer.

Jackie stands behind Charlie, admiring the brave girl.

Rylan continues her thoughts.

Jackie looks on, a gunshot goes off and she cringes.

END FLASHBACK

18 INT. BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS 18

Sam admires Jackie as tears flow from her eyes, not looking up at him.

JACKIE

She was so calm, like she really believed she was going to get out of it. And I just stood there, I didn't know what to do.

SAM

My daughter made plenty of mistakes growing up, but no matter what, I always forgave her, and I knew she had learned her lesson. I want you to know, I forgive you.

JACKIE

How could you?

SAM

That's what a father does.

She looks up and studies him, to ensure he's not bluffing.

19 INT. JAIL CELL - DAY 19

Jackie sits on her cot, reading the note Sam returned to her.

WARDEN (O.S.)

Jack?

Jackie turns her attention to her bars to see the warden.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
There's something I need to tell
you.

She stands and meets him at the bars.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Our friend, Sam, he uh... He did
the right thing, after making a
horrible mistake.

JACKIE
What do you mean?

WARDEN
You remember how the surveillance
tape had gone missing during the
trial? Sam, he was still an officer
at the time, a highly decorated one
mind you, and he pulled some
strings to make the tape disappear.

JACKIE
What's on the tape?

WARDEN
The difference of how the last ten
years of your life would've been.

She gasps, maybe a gasp of hope.

JACKIE
How'd you find it?

WARDEN
He gave it to us. Well, it was
included in his final Will and
Testament.

She understands what the warden is getting at.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
All the years I knew him I never
would've thought he'd go outside
the law like that, the respect he
had gained. But tragic events
change people. Meeting you must've
changed him back to the man we knew
before.

JACKIE
My God.

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

So what now?

WARDEN

It's not going to be easy, nor is it gonna happen over night. But we are going to get you out of here. He saw something in you enough to bring him out from his darkness, he's not an easy man to change. Anyone that has his trust, has mine as well.

JACKIE

Thank you.

Tears of joy form in her eyes.

WARDEN

Take care, Jack. I'll keep you posted.

The warden departs.

Jackie remains at the bars, a small smile forms on her face.

20

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

20

Jackie kneels in a pew, staring at the wooden cross.

*

JACKIE

Give me the strength to survive out in the world, better than I did the last time around. I've paid for my mistakes, there can only be good on the other side, right? That's what second chances are for. I apologize for the last time about that night, and while it will always be with me, I will move past it and do what I can to redeem myself.

WARDEN (O.S.)

Jackie.

Jackie turns to see the warden smiling at her.

Jackie stands, revealing she's in street clothes, no longer the orange jumpsuit.

WARDEN (CONT'D)

You ready?

Jackie smiles and walks to him. He walks her out of the church.

21 EXT. CHAPEL - DAY 21 *

They stop beside a taxi.

WARDEN
Good bye, Jack.

They smile at each other and embrace in a hug.

She turns and gives one last wave back, then steps into the cab.

22 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY 22

Jackie stands at the end of a driveway, staring at a house.

She thinks, then makes her way toward it.

She passes a beautiful bright green lawn. She feels it, so fresh, so full of life.

Jackie walks up the steps and approaches the front door. She takes a deep breath and knocks.

She waits. Moments pass, no answer.

CLERK (V.O.)
Can I help you, ma'am?

Jackie turns around to see the store owner, aged, but healthy, standing behind her. Jackie gives a big smile.

JACKIE
Yes. You can.

*