

An Eye for An Eye

Written
by
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FADE IN ON:

INT. JUDGEMENT CHAMBER - DAY

An antiseptic hexagon. Pristine white.

Cameras hang from the ceiling like icicles, inlaid drawers set securely in each wall.

Video MONITORS loom over them. A CROWD of CURIOUS FACES peek from one display.

A larger display depicts a classic courtroom.

JUDGE DAVID O'CONNOR (50s) fills the screen: Gray hair. Black robes. A solemn, dignified face. A glass console covers his ornate desk.

In the hexagon:

FOUR NAKED MEN shiver along one wall. Two in their twenties: one with greasy hair. Another is middle-aged. And the final one: a teen.

Helmeted GUARDS and handcuffs hold them in place.

COUNSELLORS KATE WATSON and LAWRENCE ROBBINS (30s) stand in opposite corners, face O'Connor's screen. Both sport smart-watches, sensor studded gloves and microphones. Designer business suits complete the corporate look.

O'Connor types at his desk.

One monitor flashes a warning: "Sentencing phase. 13:00:43."

Watson steps forward. Beautiful. Elegantly professional. Business the only thing on her mind.

WATSON

Judge O'Connor? Prosecution requests permission to commence closing arguments.

JUDGE O'CONNOR

You may proceed.

WATSON

With pleasure. I promise not to take up much of your time.

JUDGE O'CONNOR

You'd best not. I've got a meeting at five. You've got three minutes, tops.

WATSON

(smiles)

I doubt I'll need that much. This case speaks for itself.

"Sentencing" disappears from the screen. Replaced with two icons: One thumbs up. One thumbs down. Votes tally beneath each picture.

Watson pivots to her video audience.

WATSON

The jury is already well informed of the facts. But since the victim, Ms. Morris, cannot speak for herself, I'll refresh the details as succinctly as I can.

(beat)

I apologize in advance. Much of it will be... unpleasant.

She waves a gloved hand at two flickering vid-screens.

One reveals PATRICIA MORRIS (20s). Delicate. Vivacious. Full of life.

The other screen displays a rusty, dirty BUS.

WATSON

As we know, the assault occurred here. Perpetrated by these four men.

The "Thumbs down" counter springs to life. Already, the overwhelmingly popular choice.

Robbins COUGHS. Loudly, twice.

ROBBINS

Correction. Two men. One only drove. And another is a juvenile.

A few "Thumbs Up" votes trickle in. The smile creeps back to Watson's face. Unlike her, it's not pretty at all.

WATSON

My mistake. "Participated in" by these four males. One of whom is seventeen.

Another flick of her wrist.

The screen reveals: the filthy bus interior. Torn seats. Protruding springs. Blood splatters. Everywhere.

The video audience GASPS. More "thumbs down" votes.

Robbins starts to look concerned.

ROBBINS

Objection!

He waves at the screen. The picture disappears. Watson waves it back - it's a video tug-of-war. Robbins flicks it off: a minor win.

WATSON

On what grounds?

ROBBINS

The display of inflammatory material.

WATSON

I wouldn't say "inflammatory." Simply evidence. And facts.

The attorneys swivel towards O'Connor to break the tie. The magistrate peck-types his desk.

JUDGE O'CONNOR

Appropriate for sentencing. This court will allow.

The display reappears. Watson uses her glove to scroll across the shot - displaying each gory inch of mayhem.

WATSON

Lured inside, Ms. Morris was sexually assaulted for two hours. Beaten. Bitten. And far worse.

The GREASY HAired PRISONER staggers forward. He's yanked back roughly by a guard.

GREASY HAired PRISONER

She was walkin' around at night. An' got on the bus by herself. The whore was askin' for it!

The MIDDLELED AGED PRISONER chimes in.

MIDDLE AGED PRISONER

I didn't touch her, your Honor!

WATSON

No. But you drove, and ignored her screams.

Watson zooms in on the photo. A close-up of a crowbar. The metal's not visible - hidden under a slick, slimy coat of RED.

WATSON
 (to Robbins)
 I believe the *juvenile* wielded that?

Another GASP from the audience. Robbins turns pale white.

WATSON
 (to the video 'jury')
 After the assault, Ms. Morris was dumped
 like garbage by the side of the road. Her
 intestines outside her body. Despite all
 medical efforts, she died three days
 later. In God knows how much agony.

The TEEN PRISONER struggles against his restraints.

TEEN PRISONER
 She spit on me. I got mad. If she hadn't
 fought back, she'd be okay!

Robbins shoots a look at his client: "Shut the fuck up."
 Watson flicks her wrist, and "kills" the display.

WATSON
 (to O'Connor)
 How am I doing on time?

JUDGE O'CONNOR
 Not bad. Two minutes, thirty seconds.

WATSON
 I'll use remaining to summarize.

She walks past Robbins. A cocky spring in her step.

WATSON
 All we ask for is justice. A simple
 balancing of moral scales. Prosecution
 invokes the Retribution Clause of 2030.
 For all four defendants.

The teen SCREAMS. Robbins jumps in Watson's face.

ROBBINS
 You can't!

WATSON
 Why not?

ROBBINS
 It's inhumane!

WATSON
 As were your defendants, *Counselor*.

ROBBINS

As a society, we have to take the high road. The law must remain civilized!

Watson turns to O'Connor, innocence on her face.

WATSON

Civilization requires a rational populace that obeys rules. When monsters such as these arise, we have a moral obligation to have them, well... removed. Excised, to set a formidable example for others who would dare take their place.

ROBBINS

(hasty)

Defense offers a plea bargain. Incarceration, for life!

WATSON

And have law-abiding citizens foot the bill? That's not fair to the taxpayers, Your Honor.

The two swivel towards Judge O'Connor.

ROBBINS

Judge, I beg you. Show mercy.

JUDGE O'CONNOR

Not my call to make.

He types on his console. The last screen flickers.

Projected on it: a MIDDLE AGED COUPLE. The agony of loss on their faces.

JUDGE O'CONNOR

Mr. and Mrs. Morris, I presume?

Mrs. Morris nods - unable to form words.

JUDGE O'CONNOR

(gently)

The time has arrived for sentencing. We present to you two alternatives for those who murdered your daughter. One: Indentured servitude. Proceeds to be distributed to your family for the extent of their lifetimes - such as they are. Two: The Retribution Clause, to be carried out instantly. The court defers to you: what do you prefer?

Mrs. Morris SOBS on her husband's shoulder. Then whispers in his ear.

MR. MORRIS

Judge, we choose Retribution.

Gasps from the video audience. Judge O'Connor steeple his fingers, looks grim.

JUDGE O'CONNOR

I understand. Would you like to watch?

MR. MORRIS

I would. But may my wife be excused?

Mrs. Morris dashes off screen. Mr. Morris stares at the prisoners. Unblinking.

MR. MORRIS

I want to see everything.

JUDGE O'CONNOR

So shall it be.

O'Connor bangs a gavel. One of the prisoners faints. The teen howls; is restrained.

Watson toggles a panel on one wall. A drawer slides out, revealing the crowbar from before. The metal's spotty - hasn't even been cleaned.

WATSON

(to a guard)

Position the first prisoner, please.

Robbins dives in front of the condemned men.

ROBBINS

Think of the consequences! This'll lead to more murders. They won't dare leave witnesses alive!

One of the guards pins down the unconscious prisoner's shoulders. Another one spreads his legs extra wide.

WATSON

Then we'll have to make sure this lasts the full two hours. Televisе the event - full resolution, HD. If anyone even *thinks* of a copy cat crime, that should disincentivize.

Watson strips off her gloves and puts them aside.

She advances on the prisoner with clinical precision - crowbar poised to spear and strike.

The prisoner screams (OS). Blood SPATTERS. The video audience gasps in horror. And delight.

APPLAUSE from various screens. The "Thumbs Up" vote goes off the charts.

FINAL FADE OUT:

SUPER: In Memory of Jyoti Singh. R.I.P. Never again.