

THE MORNING SHOW

Bradley & Ashley

Season 1, Episode 4

INT. "THE MORNING SHOW" NEWS STUDIO - DAY

BRADLEY JACKSON reviews cue cards when the studio door opens. A PA escorts ASHLEY BROWN onto the stage. Everyone stares.

BRADLEY

Hi Ashley. Bradley Jackson, so nice to meet you.

ASHLEY

I'm so nervous. I hope my mic doesn't -

BRADLEY

Oh, it's okay. We're in this together.

ASHLEY

Okay.

BRADLEY

Alright. Wanna take a seat?

Ashley nods. They sit.

TECH PERSON

And we're back in 5, 4, 3...

The Tech Person cues Bradley.

BRADLEY

I'm sitting down with Ashley Brown, a former *Morning Show* staffer with an emotional story to tell about her experiences with Mitch Kessler. Hi Ashley. So you were working in the audio department?

ASHLEY

Yeah. So I was the person who mic'ed everyone. It's a quick but intimate job so of course I was around Mitch every day, and he liked to tease me when I would slide the mic down his shirt. You know, flirty stuff. And I guess I thought he was fun, and I liked the attention from the star of the show. If I'm honest I flirted back. But I never intended for it to take the turn that it did.

BRADLEY

And when did that happen?

ASHLEY

Umm. Sorry, this is a whole, just...

BRADLEY

Oh it's okay. Take your time, Ashley.

ASHLEY

It was 2009, and there was a big production meeting. Everyone was there. I wound up sitting next to Mitch, which he made sure of. And he sat down next to me. So we're all in this meeting, and I felt a hand on my thigh under the table. And it was him. His hand lingered there. Then I felt him squeeze my thigh in a way that felt... loaded. Sexual.

BRADLEY

And what was going through your head when that happened?

ASHLEY

If I'm honest with myself, it was exciting. Really exciting. But also shocking and overwhelming. Confusing.

BRADLEY

How did you react in the moment?

ASHLEY

I didn't. I should have. But it all happened so fast, and it was so public. I didn't have time to think, and so I did nothing. And that opened a door. And that flirty thing that we had, it increased a lot. And it became consuming.

BRADLEY

Consuming. Describe what you mean.

ASHLEY

I couldn't focus on my job. All I could think about was what sexual innuendo Mitch would throw my way, and... I knew what he wanted. There was a question in my head of, "Should I give it to him?"

BRADLEY

Or what would happen if you didn't?

ASHLEY

Yeah. That crossed my mind. But I never did. But I was still scared. I felt like my entire career was in the hands of this one person. I was very confused. I didn't know how I felt about anything, and eventually it just became too much and so I quit.

BRADLEY

Did you ever open up to anyone? Tell them what you were going through?

ASHLEY

No. I didn't.

BRADLEY

Did you report to HR?

ASHLEY

About Mitch? No.

BRADLEY

Why didn't you?

ASHLEY

I guess I just felt embarrassed. I didn't want Mitch to know that I was complaining.

BRADLEY

So you felt it would somehow get back to Mitch?

ASHLEY

No. I guess that -

Mia in Bradley's ear: *Where you going with this Bradley?*

BRADLEY

It's okay, Ashley. I know it's uncomfortable being back here with all the people you used to work with in this studio, and I guess what I'm asking is, was there something about the culture at this network, at this show, that made it feel impossible to complain?

ASHLEY

No, I - I - I didn't say anything because I didn't want anyone to know.

BRADLEY

Know what? People had to know Mitch was flirting with you. You said he did it publicly.

ASHLEY

I'm not talking about flirting; I'm talking about what happened.

Beat.

BRADLEY

Ashley, I'm here. You're safe, and I don't want you to say anything that you don't feel comfortable saying.

Alex in Bradley's ear: *Bradley...*

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

But the truth matters.

Alex in Bradley's ear: *Pull it back.*

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Sometimes it's the only weapon that we have...

Alex in Bradley's ear: *Bradley...*

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

...against the powerful men who are trying to shut us up.

Alex in Bradley's ear: *Bradley, stop this right now!*

Bradley takes out her earpiece.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

And your truth, Ashley, your truth could help so many other women.

ASHLEY

Mitch and I did cross the line a few times in his dressing room. He would call me in. We would start kissing. I would give him oral sex.

(MORE)

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

He never forced me ever, but I guess I still just didn't really know how not to go through with it. And I never told anybody, but everybody knew. I could feel it. I could feel these people that I've respected looking at me different, losing respect for me.

BRADLEY

That must've been so hard for you.

ASHLEY

It was. I felt like I was watching myself from the outside, and I saw myself the way everyone else saw me — this slut sleeping with Mitch to help her career. And I didn't know who that person was. I didn't recognize myself. And he did that to me. He branded me. He stole my confidence, my self-worth, and then I was drowning, and there was no one to throw me a lifeline. No one. I was alone. So alone. Surrounded by people, but —

BRADLEY

— isolated.

Ashley nods.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Thank you so much, Ashley. Thank you for telling us your truth. You're an incredibly brave woman. (To camera) We'll be right back.

Once they're off the air:

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Thank you. Can I give you a hug?

Ashley nods. They hug.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Can I get you a tissue?

ASHLEY

Why sure.

BRADLEY

I'll be right back.