

Excerpt from

"THY WILL BE DONE"

Law & Order spec script

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET -- DAY

A Woman in her early sixties, clutching a Bible under her arm, climbs the stairs to a modest townhouse. She goes to knock, but noticing the door is ajar, pushes it open.

INT. MODEST TOWNHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

WOMAN

Stephen?...Joanne?

Suddenly, a Teenage Girl--about sixteen--comes running and crying through the house toward the Woman.

TEENAGE GIRL

They're dead! They're all dead!

The Girl runs past the Woman, outside and down the steps. The Woman walks slowly into the conservative home, past an occasional crucifix and / or other Christian religious imagery. Peering into the children's bedroom, she freezes in horror.

The bodies of three small children--ages 4 to 8--are sprawled on the floor.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET -- DAY

The mad frenzy of a homicide scene. Detectives Lennie Briscoe and Eddie Green pull up at the curb. The area has been taped off, and squad cars with flashing lights line the street. Onlookers stand at the perimeter.

One of the first officers at the scene, Officer Torrelli, walks up to the detectives.

BRISCOE

Remind me why it is we do this.

TORRELLI

Three kids, the oldest not more than seven or eight.

(MORE)

TORRELLI (CONT'D)

Looks like asphyxiation. They were found in the bedroom by a Mrs. Ellen Kirshner.

The officer and detectives walk into the house as they speak.

INT. MODEST TOWNHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

GREEN

What's her story?

TORRELLI

She was in the neighborhood and says she saw a girl running out of the house. The parents weren't home-- Stephen and Joanne Woodland. The father's been located at work, a unit's picking him up, and there's no sign of the mother. An APB's been issued for her.

BRISCOE

Thirty to one says Mrs. Woodland did more today than just get her nails done.

GREEN

What's the story with the girl?

TORRELLI

No sign of her. Some of our guys are asking around.

The detectives look down at the bodies. They note the religious decor.

GREEN

They look like they're sleeping.

BRISCOE

The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. You think we got another nut job?

Briscoe and Green walk through the house to the front.

GREEN

Is that her?

EXT. NEW YORK STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Kirshner is standing on the sidewalk, speaking to another officer. The detectives walk up to her.

BRISCOE

Mrs. Kirshner, a girl ran out of the house as you came up the steps?

KIRSHNER

It's absolutely terrible--do you think she could have done this?

BRISCOE

We don't know. Can you describe her for us?

KIRSHNER

Mid-teens, lovely young girl. She was so frightened. I was just telling the other officer that Stephen mentioned they had a girl watch the children sometimes.

GREEN

A babysitter?

KIRSHNER

Sure. Both Stephen and Joanne are so involved with the church. That's how I know them--through the church.

BRISCOE

Just out of curiosity...what were you doing here this afternoon, Mrs. Kirshner?

KIRSHNER

I stopped by to see if Joanne could help me with a Sunday school lesson I was preparing.

GREEN

Do you often drop by unannounced?

Torrelli walks up to Briscoe and Green.

TORRELLI

We just picked up the mother.

GREEN

Spreading good will, I suppose?

TORRELLI

Redemption House. Donating children's clothes to charity.

BRISCOE

Looks like mom's not the sentimental
type.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. PRECINCT INTERROGATION ROOM ONE -- NIGHT

Joanne is seated at the table. Briscoe and Green stand opposite her. Joanne is in her early thirties, and neatly-dressed. She is not in tears, nor does she seem terribly emotional.

BRISCOE

So, one more time, Mrs. Woodland, you say you left the children with the babysitter...

JOANNE

Kendra.

BRISCOE

With Kendra. Approximately two hours before the uniformed officer spotted your car at Redemption House?

JOANNE

Yes. About three o'clock. She normally comes by on Tuesdays--so I can catch up on my errands.

GREEN

Why did you decide to give away all those clothes today?

JOANNE

They've outgrown them. When I was a child, I was the youngest. I had to wear all my sisters' hand-me-downs. I want...wanted...to provide more for my children. I wanted to give them the best.

BRISCOE

There's nothing more despicable than a parent who murders their children.

JOANNE

(sternly)

How dare you. I love them more than anything. I did everything I could to care for them--and now they have been taken from me. But they're in the good Lord's hands now, and I have to content myself with that.

Briscoe exits the room, leaving Joanne alone with Green.

GREEN

I've got to apologize for my partner.

(MORE)

GREEN (CONT'D)

Three dead children around here, and tempers start to flare up pretty easy. Would you excuse me for a moment?

INT. PRECINCT INTERROGATION ROOM TWO -- NIGHT

Briscoe is sitting opposite Stephen--tall and in his early to mid-thirties. He is visibly distraught.

BRISCOE

When did you last see your wife?

STEPHEN

This morning, before I left for work. It was the last time I saw my kids, too.

BRISCOE

Anything unusual in the marriage? Problems? Arguments?

STEPHEN

We love each other very much.

BRISCOE

You were at work all day?

STEPHEN

Speak to my assistant, Monica. She was there. I have a small architectural business. I work long hours. Joanne jokes I should put her on the clock, so she can spend time with me.

BRISCOE

How many employees?

STEPHEN

Just Monica.

BRISCOE

What about this babysitter, Kendra Jacobs?

STEPHEN

Joanne has her come by from time to time, after school. She's good with the children--like an older sister, I guess. My God, did she do this?

Anita Van Buren walks into the room, carrying an evidence bag. She motions for Briscoe to join her in the hall.

INT. PRECINCT SQUADROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Van Buren, Green and Briscoe stand in the hall.

VAN BUREN

Preliminary ME report puts the time of death at about one to three hours before the call was made. This was bagged at the scene--found on the coffee table. There's residue of hash.

BRISCOE

I know it's been awhile since I've been to a service, but I thought the Church frowned on this sort of thing.

GREEN

Looks like the babysitter's been doing more than watching television at the Woodland place.

VAN BUREN

Cut the parents loose for now. I want you to focus on Kendra Jacobs.

INT. HOME OF KENDRA JACOBS -- NIGHT

Kendra's father, Alan, a stern man of about fifty, stands in the living room with Briscoe and Green.

BRISCOE

When was the last time you saw her?

ALAN

I came home from work, saw the commotion going on down the street outside the Woodland house. I asked her what happened. She seemed distracted, upset. But she's been that way a lot since her mother passed away.

GREEN

How long has it been since your wife's death?

ALAN

Six months. It's been hard on both of us--but especially on Kendra. She was always closer to Meredith.

BRISCOE

Does your daughter have any history of violence?

ALAN
She's a good kid.

BRISCOE
Mr. Jacobs, how long has your daughter
been using drugs?

ALAN
(reluctantly)
I thought she was done with that.
It started when Meredith was sick.
She really is a good kid.

GREEN
They all are.

BRISCOE
Any idea where she might be?

ALAN
Some kids she runs around with hang
out at this bowling alley about five
blocks from here...Sid, Sidney's,
something like that.

GREEN
Sidney's Lanes?

ALAN
That's the one. I try to keep her
from associating with them--but the
harder I try, the more she resists.
Without her mother here, sometimes I
feel like I've got no leg to stand
on. Hey, I want to be there if you're
going to question my daughter.

INT. SIDNEY'S BOWLING LANES -- NIGHT

A group of teenagers mill about a bowling lane. One of them
is sixteen-year-old Kendra Jacobs, who has just knocked down
the remaining pins. Briscoe and Green, with Alan in tow--
pointing her out--approach her.

BRISCOE
Nice spare. Kendra, we need to ask
you a few questions about today.

KENDRA
(angry look at father)
Ratting me out to the cops now, Dad?

ALAN
This is a serious matter, Kendra.
Tell them what happened.

The four of them walk over to an empty lane and sit down.

GREEN

The woman who phoned it in says she saw you running out of the house. How long had you been there?

KENDRA

A few minutes. Nobody was home, I had a look around, and that's when I found them.

BRISCOE

You let yourself in?

KENDRA

Mrs. Woodland gave me a key. Said I could come by anytime, watch tv. I did it all the time.

BRISCOE

What time was it when you showed up?

KENDRA

I don't know. Around three o'clock, maybe later.

GREEN

Why didn't you call the police, Kendra? Tell someone?

KENDRA

The lady was there. Besides, I try to keep my distance from the cops.

BRISCOE

Were you using drugs in the Woodland home, Kendra?

ALAN

Now just a minute. Maybe she shouldn't answer that.

BRISCOE

How much do you want to bet the pipe we found has your prints on it, Kendra?

GREEN

Mr. Jacobs, at this moment, your daughter is a potential suspect in a multiple homicide. Anything she keeps from us makes us more interested.

Alan is taken aback by this realization. He turns to his daughter.

ALAN

Tell them what they need to know,
honey.

BRISCOE

Was anybody else with you in the
house?

KENDRA

No. I mean, sometimes, some friends
would drop by--just for a little
bit. They loved the kids.

BRISCOE

A regular after-school special.
Nobody was there today?

KENDRA

No. I freaked out when I realized I
forgot the pipe. But I would never
hurt those kids. Never.

GREEN

Is there anything else that happened
at the house before you discovered
the bodies?

KENDRA

Mr. Woodland called.

GREEN

What did he have to say?

KENDRA

He asked if the lady had stopped by.

BRISCOE

Mrs. Kirshner?

KENDRA

I guess, yeah.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SIDNEY'S LANES -- NIGHT

Briscoe and Green walk toward the car.

GREEN

Who's lying--the mother or the
babysitter?

BRISCOE

My money's on the trifecta, the
husband placing third.

INT. HOME OF HANK AND ELLEN KIRSHNER -- DAY

Stephen is seated on a couch talking to Briscoe and Green.

STEPHEN

Joanne is sleeping. She finally took something to calm down.

BRISCOE

It's nice to have close friends to stay with in times like these.

STEPHEN

I called the house yesterday because I thought Ellen might be dropping by to pick up some of the drawings I'd done for the radio station we're planning in Hungary.

GREEN

The missionary group that you founded with your wife?

STEPHEN

Yeah, we met building a station in Estonia ten years ago. When the wall fell, it opened up Eastern Europe as a platform to broadcast the Christian message into Russia.

BRISCOE

Was Kirshner also in Estonia?

STEPHEN

No. Joanne and I met Ellen when we moved here and started attending First Covenant. Ellen's been our children's Sunday school teacher, as well as acting as the secretary for the missionary group.

GREEN

So your wife and Mrs. Kirshner are friends?

STEPHEN

We're all good friends.

BRISCOE

Is your wife normally away from the house on Tuesday afternoons?

STEPHEN

Yes, that's her routine.

BRISCOE

Tell me again why you believed Mrs. Kirshner would be stopping by yesterday afternoon.

STEPHEN

Monica said she had called earlier
that morning.

INT. OFFICE OF STEPHEN WOODLAND -- DAY

Monica Zdenka--late twenties, attractive, with an accent--is
sitting at her desk, opposite Briscoe and Green.

MONICA

I decide to do paperwork while Stephen
is not here. This must be difficult
for him.

GREEN

He was here with you all day
yesterday?

MONICA

Yes, working on plans for rebuild in
Harlem. He usually does not even
take lunch, unless he goes for
meeting.

BRISCOE

What do you know about a woman named
Ellen Kirshner?

MONICA

She sometimes calls Stephen. I don't
think Joanne likes her much. They
know her from church.

BRISCOE

That's interesting. What's Joanne
got against Mrs. Kirshner?

MONICA

I could not say. Is something I see
when I'm around them all. They don't
have much to say to each other.

BRISCOE

Do you attend church, Ms. Zdenka?

MONICA

Yes, same one as Stephen and Joanne.
That's how I got job. Life is
connections, you know?

GREEN

Did Mrs. Kirshner call here for
Stephen yesterday?

MONICA

I think. Hold on...

She rifles through a telephone log from the previous day.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Yes, right here. She called at 1:15 pm.

GREEN

And Stephen was here to take the call?

MONICA

Yes, he was here.

INT. FIRST COVENANT METHODIST CHURCH -- DAY

Kirshner is in her Sunday school classroom. Briscoe and Green are with her.

BRISCOE

Mrs. Kirshner, it seems that you have a close relationship with the Woodlands.

KIRSHNER

They're like family. Such a pity.

GREEN

Do you have a key to their home?

KIRSHNER

(hesitant)

Yes, Stephen gave me one. I've looked after the place before when they've been gone on vacation.

BRISCOE

Where were you early yesterday afternoon, Mrs. Kirshner--before you phoned the police?

KIRSHNER

Am I some sort of suspect, now, gentlemen? I was here until about 2:30 or 3, and then I drove home, stopping by the Woodland's.

BRISCOE

Somebody see you leave?

KIRSHNER

I'm a gregarious sort, Detective. I can't leave the building without several people wishing me good day.

GREEN

Did you phone Stephen yesterday, ma'am?

KIRSHNER

Yes, yes I did. I wanted to look at his ideas for the radio station our missionary program is developing.

BRISCOE

You say that you're close friends with the Woodlands, but there's no love lost between you and Joanne, is there, Mrs. Kirshner?

KIRSHNER

Joanne was upset after Stephen suggested she spend more time at home, and less expanding the development of the radio project. He wanted to include other members of the congregation, including myself. She always thought of it as their own affair.

INT. PRECINCT SQUADROOM -- DAY

Briscoe and Green walk into the squadroom

GREEN

So Joanne was envious of Mrs. Kirshner working on what had been her project? Enough resentment to kill her kids over?

BRISCOE

Lady grows tired of the life she's been handed. Stranger things have happened.

Van Buren approaches them.

VAN BUREN

The ME report came in. Lab work on the children's blood indicates high levels of phenobarbital in their systems. Not enough to kill them, but enough to take any fight out of them.

GREEN

Barbiturates? Does anybody actually prescribe those for sleeping pills anymore?

INT. JOANNE WOODLAND'S BATHROOM -- DAY

Briscoe and Green walk into the bathroom. Briscoe opens the medicine cabinet and quickly finds what he's looking for--a specific bottle of prescription medicine.

BRISCOE

(looking at label)

"Joanne Woodland." Phenobarbital.

"Use as needed for insomnia." A
mother who kills her children? I'd
have trouble sleeping, too.

END OF ACT ONE