

THE UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT

By Emma Hendry

Drop in on a court case

Judge: Please state your name, age and occupation.

Mila: Mila Greene, age 27, detective for the 47th precinct.

Judge: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Mila: **takes a deep breath** I do.

Judge: Okay Mila, please recite the events that unfolded in your own words.

Mila: It was December the 9th, 9:00am. I got a call informing me that a dead body had been found in a random hotel off 4th street. My partner, Grace, on the phone told me that at first glance it wasn't anything to be alarmed about, that it looked like an accident. So, I showed up at the place as the official detective.

Judge: The report here claims you were late to the scene, what was the cause of your late arrival?

Mila: Well, the previous night my husband, Joe, had come home late and completely drunk. I'd found him passed out and hungover on the living room floor and got extremely mad at him.

Judge: Do you tend to get mad often?

Mila: Yes, I do. We ended up getting into a rather large argument, spitting insults at each other all morning. I had completely lost track of time in the heat of my own anger, so I was late to work. When I eventually arrived, Grace and the forensics team were already there.

(Now acting out)

Mila: Okay I'm here what's the situation?

Grace: Mila! You're so late what happened?

Mila: Joe came home late again last night, drunk. So, this morning we had a huge argument about it. You know, the usual.

Grace: God Mila, your marriage sounds too tiring.

Mila: Tell me about it, but anyways that's enough about my amazing morning. What have we got?

Grace: So far, basically nothing. We can assume that he is a male, probably around middle aged. Nobody has looked at the body yet, we decided it was best to wait for you to investigate instead.

Mila: **looks down at the body** Oh my god.

Grace: Are you okay?

Mila: **horrified expression on her face**

Grace: This isn't anything too gruesome Mila, we've seen much worse cases in our time together. Why are you so upset?

Mila: **shakes head** I'm sorry I'm okay, he... looks like my younger brother is all.

Grace: Oh alright, as long as you're in the right headspace right now. We can't make any mistakes here.

Mila: Yeah, sure I am. We are going to need an autopsy ordered for him so the forensics team can scan the place properly.

Grace: Okay, you go ahead and find any blatant evidence of foul play here, I will call the pathologists back at the precinct.

Mila: Okay.

Grace exits the scene

(monologue whilst acting out)

Mila: As I knelt to the body, a wave of pure disgust washed over me. Honestly, this was one of the least gruesome cases I'd ever come across by a long shot, but I was completely shaken up. I looked at him, lifeless. Why? He didn't deserve to die, none of the victims I've seen did. Ignoring my thoughts, I began to check the body and the surroundings, looking for any fresh bruising and checking in his coat for any sign of identification. Eventually, I found his wallet. When I looked inside, utter horror sent shivers down my spine. There was a photo, a photo nobody should ever see. I was paralysed, fear surging through my veins and I took it and shoved it in my pocket as fast as I could. **becoming frantic** I took a piece of evidence! It was burning a hole in my pocket and I- /

Grace: / Helloooooo earth to Mila??

Mila: **now to only grace** Yes sorry **stands up** are you okay?

Grace: Never better. What did you find?

Mila: Practically nothing, some blood on his head and a bruise there too. As for ID, his wallet had nothing besides a driver's license. The victim is male Dan Jones, aged 29. No photos to hint at a significant other or any kids, he doesn't even have a mobile phone on him. He's either extremely traditional or extremely lonely, I'm thinking it may be the latter.

Grace: Only a driver's license and no phone huh?
Interesting... I expected a scenario like this, so I called in and I asked for an emergency autopsy.

Mila: Really? I mean there's no immediate sign of struggle or a trauma I don't think it's a high priority/

Grace: / No I have a feeling. A feeling that this case **looks at Mila in the eyes** is much more than what meets the eye.

Mila: **silent**

Grace: **stands up** Anyways! There's going to be a board meeting at 2:00pm. Be there or be square!

Grace exits leaving Mila

Mila takes a deep breath and walks out too. Lights dim

Drop in on an autopsy

Pathologist: **places a report down** Miss /

Grace: / Okay sir I know exactly what you are thinking, I understand that this looks like a simple case or even an accident, but I have an awful gut feeling that this is something... more.

Pathologist: All due respect detective, are you sure there's not more high priority cases we need to think about right now?

Grace: Look, you are our best pathologist and I just... I have to know what happened to this man.

Pathologist: **takes a deep breath** You're the boss.

Grace: Thank you, sir!

Pathologist: Upon initial inspection the bruise and blood certainly date back a few days. The blood has dried, and the bruise has gone black and purple which shows that the blood cells surrounding it have lost oxygen. We can conclude the victim died yesterday, maybe before. However, the report I was

handed failed to mention is the huge gash on the back of his neck. There's no indication of a certain weapon used to cause it, but it definitely raises suspicion I'm sure you agree.

Grace: Of course, I do, but I guess my partner didn't notice on the scene. That's really out of character though, she's usually extremely perceptive...

Pathologist: Either way, there's no trace of any drugs or poison in his system. No nail or teeth marks showing an extreme struggle, and no sign of a direct force being used to cause the gash in the neck. If I'm being honest detective, I think it is safe to assume the poor man fell and hit his head, an extremely unfortunate accident.

Grace: Hmm, you're sure?

Pathologist: There's no evidence to suggest any other cause. Why, what are you thinking miss?

Grace: I've been a detective for over 7 years now, I've seen one too many of these "unfortunate accidents". Write this up in an official report for me to use at the meeting but do a more in detail investigation for me before sending him away. I'm thinking of doing my own investigation on this mysterious Dan Jones.

Pathologist: Okay, keep me in the loop.

Grace: Of course, **exits the stage**

lights dim

lights come back on and drop in on a meeting with 4 people

Grace enters

Grace: Hey guys! Let's get down to business, shall we?

Detective 1: Why have you gathered us, Grace? This is an extremely low-profile victim.

Grace: That's exactly what I thought when I first saw the situation. Obviously, the injuries are all minor but what I found to be suspicious was the gash on his neck. The pathologist thinks he fell but it seemed to me that it was too deep to be caused by a simple trip. Thoughts?

Detective 1: You know what, I see what you mean. To cause that much bleeding at least a small amount of force must have been used.

Detective 2: Hmm, have you checked out any CCTV from the hotel where the body was found?

Grace: Since this has all been rushed up until now, I haven't had the chance to conduct any further investigations. However, since the victim had no trace of a social life on him, I think the best course of action is to release the information to the public. If he was heavy on the local clubbing scene, maybe we can find a friend of his or just someone who has an idea.

Mila: What! I-I mean, do you think that's a good idea? What if/

Detective 1: /Grace I think that's a good plan for this case.

Detective 2: What do you plan on sharing about him?

Grace: Only his name, age and the fact we need any information we can possibly get.

Mila: I-... is that not breaking any privacy laws...?

Grace: Seeing as there's literally no family to go against the idea, no its not. Why are you so opposed anyway? It'll help us close this case much faster.

Mila: I'm not! I'm not... I think it's a smart plan *looks down*.

Grace: Fab! We all agree!

Detective 1: I'll oversee the broadcast and make the arrangements with the news stations.

Grace: Good idea, I think I'm going to take this case on myself.

Mila: You are?

Grace: Yep. I'm going to go back to the hotel and get the CCTV from the night and talk to the staff.

Mila: Oh. Good idea.

Grace: Great! Well, if we don't close this in a week we will meet again. Bye!

everyone but Mila leaves

Mila: **puts head in hands** Shit...

lights dim

time skip to that evening

Mila: I'm home!

Joe: Hi, Mila. How was work?

Mila: Work? Oh... work was stressful **sits down**

Joe **sitting next to her**: *Hmm, why was that?*

Mila: Well... we took on a new case today and it honestly looks like an accident, but you know Grace - she gets so determined and hell bent on 'justice' that she couldn't leave it at that.

Joe: New case huh?

Mila: Yeah, and the guy didn't even have any family or friends or anything! We could have closed it immediately as an accident, but Grace went off to do her own investigations.

Joe: What do you mean he had no family?

Mila: Well, when I inspected the - you know - body all he had on him was his driver's license, he didn't even have a phone. Who doesn't have a phone in 2020?

Joe: I mean, by what you've just said Dan seemed to be a lone wolf kind of guy.

Mila **looking up**: Wha-what did you just say?

Joe: I said, by what you've told me, the victim was probably a loner.

Mila: No, no you didn't. You said Dan! I didn't ever mention his name!

Joe: What are you talking about? I don't know any guys called Dan, let alone any dead guys!

Mila: You're lying. I know what I heard, and you know something. Out with it! What do you know?

Joe: You... you've gone crazy.

Mila. I'm not crazy!

Joe: You are! You're hallucinating and hearing crap that I never said, and then making stupid accusations.

Mila: You gaslighting piece of shit! I can't stand it anymore!

Joe: Let's just calm down okay. I don't know why you're suddenly so paranoid, but I may have an idea...

Mila: What? What idea? What do you mean?

Joe: Hey relax, it's probably just the stress of some murderer on the loose getting to you on top of being unable to solve

this case. But it'll be fine! Just relax for the love of god because you're starting to stress me out too.

Mila: I doubt it's some brutal murderer on the loose, I mean it was barely a gory case.

Joe: Anyone who can take another life and try and get away with it is brutal.

Mila: Well, what if it really was an accident or self-defence? We can't know just yet you know...

Joe: **slightly chuckles** You seem so eager to defend the criminal this time. Why is that?

Mila: No that's not the case it's just all up in the air and god knows the real story is all!

Joe: I thought you were confident it was an accident?

Mila: Well- well of course that the most logical explanation but either I would never defend anyone so... evi/

Joe: Evil. Whether it was an accident or not they left the poor guy to die. They didn't turn themselves in or own up to the mistake. They showed no empathy and no remorse. Whoever did it was evil just like all the other cases you've ever told me about.

Mila **widened eyes** I...

Joe: Well, am I wrong or...

Mila: **frantically grabs her bag and keys** You're completely right. I'm sorry... I need to clear my head I'm going for a walk. I'll call if there's any trouble. **rushes away**

Joe: **sits back down and lightly chuckles** strange...

Mila enters a café... the news broadcast is playing

Mila: **sitting down**: What the hell do I do...

Broadcast **playing as a recording**: And now for a message directly from detective Grace Pember, the body of 29-year-old Dan Jones was recently found at a hotel off 4th street. They are doing all they can to hold a culprit accountable for this violent crime, but the victim has no trace of any close family or friends. If anybody can provide substantial information about the crime or about the victim, you are urged to come forward and help to serve justice. **beginning to fade out** in better news...

Mila: **wide eyed expression** Violent crime? This isn't real... it has to be a horrible dream. It was an accident... the autopsy even said so. Why is she so determined? Where is she going with this? I can't... I can't let her. Not this time, this one's mine/

Waitress: /Hi miss! Are you all finished up here?

Mila: Oh! Um yes, I was just about to leave. There's something I've got to take care of...

Waitress: **puzzled expression** Urm right! Well, I'll clean up here and go and grab you your che/

Mila **stands up**: Put it on my tab.

set changes to the hotel set

Mila approaches the person at the front desk and takes her police badge out

Mila: Hi there, I'm detective Mila Greene and I'm here to inquire about an open case that took place here a couple of days ago.

Woman: Ah, yes, I figured it wouldn't be long before a police officer showed up. However, I was expecting detective Grace seeing as the broadcast said she was the primary detective.

Mila: Oh, Grace and I are actually partnering on this case, so she sent me here to collect the CCTV footage from the 8th of December from 9pm to 3am the next day.

Woman: Not a problem detective, give me a minute to head to the back and load that footage onto a USB stick for you.

Mila: Thank you very much.

woman exits

Grace enters

Grace: Mila?

Mila: **shocked expression** Grace! Um what are you doing here? **laughs nervously**

Grace: I made it clear I would be coming here soon at the meeting. Did you not hear?

Mila: Oh no I was listening! I'm just here to... pick up a jacket for a friend at the lost and found!

Grace: Oh right, that's thoughtful of you. I figured it would be best to come and get the CCTV footage now so I could avoid

any nosy news reporters. You wouldn't believe the attention to news broadcast garnered.

Mila: Really? What do you mean?

Grace: You haven't seen? People from all sides of town have been posting their own theories and thoughts on the case. Since we never usually make unsolved cases public, they are having a field day! **laughs**

Mila: I suppose that's to be expected. Has anyone come forward with actual evidence?

Grace: You're awfully serious this evening love, everything okay?

Mila: Urm you can tell? Well, I guess not really. Urm I think I'm going to have to leave Joe.

Grace: Of course I can tell and god finally, you've realised! I've been telling you for years he doesn't treat you well enough. You could do so much better.

Mila: **deeply sighs** I think after we close this case I'm going to file for a divorce.

Grace: That's great! I'm here if you need a place to stay, you know I'm always in your corner **smiles at her**

Mila: **smiles weakly** Thank you, for everything. I should really be going/

woman re-enters

Woman: Sorry for the wait detective, here's the footage you asked for.

Grace: **smile drops** Footage? What footage did you ask for?

Mila: Well, you see I was... I mean...

Grace: I don't have all night, Mila. I have a case to close here.

Mila: Exactly my thoughts. I was getting it for you, I knew you would get crazy busy with your investigation so I thought I would come and get the footage for you, take a weight off your shoulders.

Grace: I appreciate that, but I must remind you that this is my investigation. I'm calling the shots here, not you.

Mila: I don't need to be reminded; you've made that crystal clear **scoffs**

Grace: Excuse me? You defied my orders as the superior detective on this case, you infiltrated my plans and you lied to me about what you were doing. Are you hiding something or just jealous that I'm leading this one?

Mila: What's gotten into you so suddenly? We were literally talking normally a second ago.

Grace: What's gotten into me? You've been acting strangely ever since we took this case on. Getting nervous about simple tasks, lying when there's no need to, not to mention how quiet you were in the meeting earlier.

Mila: **avoiding eye contact** That's not true.

Grace: **takes a deep breath and smiles brightly** Look, Mila, you know I love you. We're partners! This case seems to be really getting to you and that's okay. Let me take the lead just this once. You don't always have to be the hero, you've solved countless cases, and nobody will be mad if you relax just this once. **Grabs the USB with the footage** Now how about we go grab some foo/

Mila: /Thanks Grace, but I'm going home. Joe will be waiting. **begins to walk away**

Grace: **Grabs the back of her coat** Don't tell me you're ditching me for that miserable bastard **laughs**

Mila shoves her off, a small square of paper falling out of the open pocket

Mila: **not noticing, mumbles** see you tomorrow.

Grace: Wait, Mila you dropped this!

Mila hurries away

Grace: Geez okay I can take a hint... **picks up the paper and stares intently, her eyes widening** Wait... This can't be right. **turns to the woman at the front desk** Hey, can I ask you a few questions?

Woman: Oh - yes of course anything I can do to be of help.

Grace: Were you working here on the 8 - 9th?

Woman: Yes, I was.

Grace: Perfect **shows photo** do you remember these people coming in?

Woman: I'm sorry, I was on the morning shift, so I don't remember seeing them.

Grace: Right...

Woman: I'm so sorry I couldn't be of more help **nervously laughs**

Grace: No, you've helped more than you could imagine. Thank you for the footage, just let me know if you remember anything else.

Woman: Of course, I'll call the department if do.

Grace: Thank you.

woman exits

Grace: **sighs and clutches onto the photo and USB** I really hope I'm wrong about this one...

Lights dim

*When the lights go up Grace walks onto stage, a computer is present**

Grace: **takes a deep breath and plugs in the USB** Okay...

Hesitantly, Grace presses play. Her eyes begin to widen as the video plays

Grace: *No no no, this just can't be true! There must be a mistake of some kind, a reason for this. It has to be mere coincidence.*

As the video ends, Grace slowly shuts the laptop

Grace: What on earth do I do from here? Usually, you're here to guide me but... this is something I have to do alone. I'm... alone for the first time in 7 years.

A long pause

Grace, perking up again: Hold on... what am I even saying? Why have I forgotten all our years together so quickly, after just one video? A video that could simply be a coincidence. I haven't been alone, not for seven years. Not since I met you. This is no different! There will be an explanation, there is always an explanation. **laughs softly** How could I even consider losing my hope in you? I will always have hope in you. All I got to do is find you **looks up** we always end up finding each other.

Grace stands up and takes the USB, but before she can leave another detective burst onto stage

Grace: Hey there, Detective Smith, right? You sure know how to make an entrance!

Smith: There's no time for your jokes, detective!

Grace: **jokingly clutches heart** Ouch, Smith.

Smith: Okay okay I'm sorry but please look what was just sent in! An anonymous tipper phoned in asking for the detective closest to you specifically and what their email was. Since I was one of the only people in the office who wasn't busy, I gave him my work email and soon after - I was sent a video file, the message saying it was evidence relating to the Dan Jones case. I thought it was best to find you straight away.

Grace: Forward me the video now. I'm more than ready to close this case.

Smith: I know this has been a difficult case, Ma'am; you deserve a break. I'll forward you the email now **types on phone**. Done, I wonder what it's going to be!

Grace: Thank you so much Smith, but I have a hunch on who this video might be of and I think it would be best - for my sake - if I watch it alone first.

Smith: **smiles softly** Of course. I trust you'll know what to do from here.

Smith leaves the room

Grace takes a deep breath and opens her phone. The clip plays and Grace's face slowly begins to twist into shock

Grace: **nodding** I guess I should have expected something like this. **Grace shakes her head and begins to tear up** There will still be a reason. I just have to ask. Sure, this much evidence definitely warrants an arrest but that just means we can talk in an interrogation and I can get the truth. I can get her out of this. No, I will get her out of this.

Grace leaves to find Mila

Set change to at Mila's house - Joe is not there

Mila walks on stage

Mila: Joe? Are you home?

silence

Mila: That's weird he's usually home from work at this time...

Mila begins to go through her pockets to find her phone

Mila: There's nothing in my pockets? My phone must be in my bag...

a long pause of silence

Mila: There's nothing in my pockets?! Th-the photo! **roots frantically through her bag** I must have put it in here with my phone!

She tips her bag, and no photo is found

Mila: Shit - where is the damn photo! I kept it on me so nobody would ever find it and now it's gone? I even tucked it in my pocket, so I'd know if someone grabbed it from me! Where on earth could it have gone?

Mila takes a deep breath

Mila: I need to calm down, out of context the photo is harmless! If it slipped out and a passer -by notices it just seems like a random woman and her boyfriend taking a selfie! It would only be detrimental if it ended up in the hands of...

Mila takes a long pause, and her face turns to pure shock

Mila: **Shit.** Grace found the photo... at the hotel. She must have. Oh god I remember now, she even tried to give it back to me, but I was too paranoid to even notice she was telling me I had dropped something! God I am such an idiot, what am I going to do?

another long pause with Mila thinking

Mila: **Leave.** I have to leave, there's no other choice for me. There's nowhere for me to turn here, nowhere safe for me in this town.

Mila sits down

Mila: My only other options would be to tell Joe, tell Grace or tell the police the truth. Joe would have absolutely no sympathy, he's just waiting for an opportunity to watch failure. This isn't even just a man being killed anymore, but I took evidence from a crime scene so going to the police would only land me in even more shit.

Mila looks up and sighs deeply

Mila: **Grace.** Maybe if I told her, she could help me, help me form a plan or even help me leave...

after a moment of thought she shakes her head

Mila: No. I really do trust her. I trust her with my life and more - but she's a detective. Her job is serving justice and putting criminals behind bars. I'm a criminal, and that's not her fault. It'll be easier for her to- to have a life if I

vanish. I'll vanish, disappear, start fresh. Ironic how things always come full circle...

Mila stands up and takes a suitcase and a pile of clothes (from backstage) and starts to pack her things, after a few moments she stands up with her suitcase and heads to leave

she sighs and a knock happens

Mila sets her suitcase down and opens the door

**Grace enters the stage, a pair of handcuffs behind her back (unknown to Mila) **

Mila, shocked: Grace?!

Grace: **smiling slightly** Hey... I'm sorry for dropping by so out of the blue.

Mila: No! No, it's... it's okay I was just about to...

Grace: **sees the suitcase behind Mila** You were... leaving? Where are you going?

Mila: Oh yeah! Joe and I decided to take a trip for the weekend, nowhere special just across the state for some quality time together.

Grace: You're going on a trip with Joe?

Mila: I figured since you gave me the time off whilst you solved the case, I would use it to fix our relationship.

Grace: **stepping forward** Mila, I know that's not true. You told me you were going to divorce him. You're leaving because of this, right? **pulls the photo out, it's revealed to be a photo of her and the deceased Dan**

Mila: **stares in silence** I-

Grace: I received this as well **gets her phone out and plays the video, this is now revealed to be a video of Mila and Dan together**

Mila: How- Who sent that? How did they get it?

Grace: It was an anonymous tip that detective Smith was sent.

Mila: Okay Grace look, just give me a chance and we can talk about this/

Grace: /We will talk about this **smiles** but unfortunately, it's going to have to be in an official police interrogation.

Mila: Official police- what? Grace what do you mean?

Grace pulls out the handcuffs and puts Mila's hands behind her back

Grace: Mila Greene, you are under arrest on suspicion of the murder of Dan Jones. You have the right to remain silent, anything you say can and will be held against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney and if you can't afford one the state will supply one for you. You will be held in interrogation, where you can explain your story.

Mila: What? You can't be serious!

Grace: I'm sorry Mila, but the evidence is damning. I don't have another choice here.

Mila: I swear Grace- I just-

Mila has a moment of realisation. She goes silent and lowers her head

Mila: Okay, I understand. Take me away.

lights dim

lights come back on and it's just Mila and Grace in the room sat opposite each other

Grace: Okay Mila, the evidence against you is strong here. It's going to be quite a bind, but this is my job, I can help. Can you please explain your relationship with the victim?

Mila: **keeps her head down and stays silent**

Grace: Come on Mila, you know how this works. We're going to be here for six hours at this rate, just tell me how you know him.

Mila: **still stays silent**

Grace: I know you knew him; the photo and video clearly prove that. If you don't tell me how you know him assumptions are going to be made.

Mila: Okay **takes a deep breath** I'll tell you.

Grace: Great, I'm all ears.

Mila: Okay, I was seeing him casually. Things were bad with Joe and I made a mistake and I cheated on him. He was supposed to be a one-time thing, but he had access to the most exclusive clubs and drinks, I don't even know how a man who had nothing got us in there, but I never questioned it because it was fun. For the first time in a long time, I was having fun and I didn't want to end it.

Grace: **scribbling notes**...Right so you were with this man?

Mila: I'm ashamed but yes... I cheated on joe with him.

Grace: Okay...so how long were you seeing him?

Mila: I'm not completely sure, maybe three months? Four?

Grace: So, from about the autumn time?

Mila: That's right.

Grace: Regarding the photo found on your person, was that your own personal copy?

Mila: Well...

Grace: **Sighs** It wasn't, was it?

Mila: No, on the first day of the investigation, you tasked me in investigating the body. I told you that all I found on him was a driver's license in a wallet.

Grace: I remember that well.

Mila: That was a lie.

Grace: So, what then?

Mila: Well, when you instructed me to check the body I did just that. I checked and, in his wallet, there was that photo. I knew that it would link me straight to the crime, so I stuffed it in my pocket and that was that. I hoped I was in the clear but... but clearly not.

Grace: Why were you so worried about being linked with him?

Mila: Because Grace... I killed him. I killed Dan.

Grace: Oh.

Mila and Grace are in silence for a few moments

Grace: Why Mila... Why would you do this?

Mila: Because that's who I am. An angry idiot with a short temper, this is me and this is where it's gotten me.

Grace: I know that's wrong; you can tell me why. Tell me the real reason why.

Mila: I've told you what you need to know, you can lock me up already.

Grace: Come on Mila! I know you; I know that you wouldn't do this kind of thing out of malice! All you have to do is tell

me this was self-defence or a complete accident, and this can all be over.

Mila: **mumbling** I can't.

Grace: What?

Mila: I can't do that Grace!

Grace: Mila, what are you saying?

Mila: I'm going out of my mind Grace; it's eating at me. Whenever I close my eyes, I see his frightened look. In my dreams, I see his lifeless body on the floor. And the blood (*looks at hands*), I can still see it on my hands, no matter how many times I scrub at them the blood will always be on my hands! No matter how long I deny it, it will always be my fault!

Grace: Mila please /

Mila: / Stop it Grace, you know it's true. You've known for a while, I can tell. I'm a *monster*.

Grace sits across from her and looks around cautiously, she whispers: We can get you out of this, lower your sentence. There are loopholes we can take.

Mila: I'm a murderer and you're a detective, stop sympathising with me.

Grace, almost crying: No, I want to help you get sentenced fairly. I want to help because I know you! You save lives Mila; you wouldn't take one away on purpose!

Mila: There's no simpler way for it to be said, I'm a killer. His life **beat** his death is on my hands.

Grace: **scrambles for papers** It makes no sense, the pathologist in the report said he fell and hit his head and there were no signs of any direct force used, sure it was obvious there was a slight bit of force used but now you're telling me you murdered him? How could the two be confused? **Stands up** it makes no goddamn sense!

Mila: **laughs slightly** I guess I really was the best on the force.

Grace: Mila come on; I know you like the back of my hand. I know that things were rough between you and Joe. I know you're a hothead with an extremely short temper and I know you defend yourself when you have to/

Mila: /Please Grace, stop it. Stop making me seem like a good person. You saw the CCTV footage, the photo, hell you saw a video of me cheating on my husband and you can still find good in me?

Grace: Yes. Yes, I can, and do you know why? Do you know why I denied this, why I defend you tirelessly?

Mila: Why Grace? Please, indulge me.

Grace: Because it's always been you. *smiles*

Mila: What do you mean?

Grace: Since I joined the force, you've been my guide. When I was completely lost on my first big case, you were the one who pointed me in the right direction. Eventually, I became good enough to be your partner. Even though it was crystal clear you were miles ahead of me in every way, you still smiled at me. You treated me as an equal, a friend. When no one else believed in me, you did. You saw my potential from the very start, and you were the light at the end of the tunnel of my despair. I guess slowly over the years I... I mean...

Mila: *eyes widened* Grace...

Grace: I know, Mila. *stands up* I really wish you the best, you're my number one. I'll always be rooting for you. I know something happened, a reason behind this madness. Even if you refuse to tell me, I hope you defend yourself out there in court. You're not evil, you have a kind heart and a damaged soul. Goodbye, partner. *leaves*

Mila stands up and kicks chair: Shit! What have I done?

enter two policemen

Mila: Please don't do this, you don't know the full story! Please, hear me out! I'm sorry! Grace!

Mila is handcuffed and taken away, and the lights fade

Lights come back on and Mila is alone, behind bars, back against the wall.

Joe enters

Joe: Mila.

Mila: *looks up* Oh great, the one person I didn't want to see.

Joe: Well, I'm not here for some husband-and-wife reunion, Mila. I'm here to talk, seriously.

Mila: Joe, I don't care what you're here for. Say what you need to say and get out of my sight.

Joe: Why so cold Mila, I'm still your husband after all.

Mila: Not a very faithful one.

Joe: I could say the same for you.

Mila and Joe stare at each other for a moment

Joe and Mila: I know what you did.

Joe: What on earth are you talking about?

Mila: I know you've been cheating on me. I figured after you started coming home late. One question though, who's the severely unlucky lady?

Joe: It was the neighbour, not a very good detective, are you?

Mila: I'm only the best in town.

Joe: At least I didn't kill her, like you did Dan.

Mila: **starts to laugh** And to think I'm the infamous detective here! You found the skeletons in my closet before most of this shitty precinct managed to!

Joe, chuckling: Well, don't celebrate me. It's all thanks to the wonderful private investigator I've had trailing you, my darling.

Mila: **immediately sits up** You what?

Joe: Pity really, you're so detail oriented yet didn't recognise the same man mysteriously showing up everywhere. Following your every move, laughable.

Mila: **laughing again** So I've been killing myself with stress over my supposed 'secret', and you knew the whole time! You were just waiting for the chance to put me away, I knew it.

Joe: Well, I had a hunch you were unfaithful, so I hired the guy. My intent was only to catch you having your fun with him just so I could have solid evidence and we could divorce. It's no secret that we haven't been happy, and the neighbour was talking about becoming serious. When he gave me the video of you and him together, I really wasn't shocked, but imagine my surprise when he told me you'd gone into the hotel with him and left on your own. To top it all off, the same guy was found dead the very next day in the very same hotel, all I had to do was put two and two together.

Mila: I can't believe it; you really knew the whole time. I suppose since you've hung me out to dry, I might as well tell you the rest. The truth, Joe, is that on that night Dan asked me to run away. A fresh start in a fresh town, he gave me the chance to get away. But I said no to him, I rejected the offer for freedom.

Joe: Really?

Mila: It's true, I never gave up on my life here. Anyway, after I said no, he began getting extremely aggressive. Shouting at me, trying to force me into saying yes. After a few minutes of that I got annoyed and shoved him away pretty hard. That's when he tripped over the TV wire and fell backwards onto the coffee table. I didn't want to risk ruining my career, and with my years of service as a detective, I knew damn well that it looked like an unfortunate accident, so I left. I ran away and left the hotel with him, dead, upstairs. I didn't think anyone would recognise me, that's where I was clearly mistaken! All this grief, stress and depression - and I'm only in deeper shit than I would have been in if I just came clean! **continues to laugh**

Joe stares at his wife, laughing in her cell.

Mila: Aw don't be a downer, Joe! You've been having fun seeing me distressed for so long, you might as well join in on the fun now!

Joe: You've gone crazy, Mila.

Mila: Maybe so, but it was only a matter of time. Guilt really does a number on you.

Joe: One question, before I leave.

Mila: Sure, what have I got to lose anyways.

Joe: Do you regret killing him?

Mila: **stops laughing and is silent for a few seconds**

Joe: Please, Mila. I need the peace of mind. I need to know you're not some ruthless killer!

Mila: Look at me Joe. **looks him in the eyes** I have lost everything. I've lost my career, my best friend, my sanity. For god's sake Joe, I've lost my freedom! Of course, I regret it! I regret it with every cell in my body and I can never take it back. You really think that low of me? I guess I can't even blame you, can I?

Joe: Thank you, Mila. Good luck in court. I hope you don't hate me when you find out the rest.

Mila: I doubt I could ever hate you more than I do right now.

Joe: **nods and leaves**

Mila sits with her head in her hands, and begins to cry

the lights dim, and the court set up is back

Mila: And then the day after Joe visited me is today where you brought me here and I began recounting the events. So, you're all up to speed on the truth of the case.

Judge: Thank you for telling your truth, Mrs Greene. Now, to be certain you are in the right mindset to be held accountable there's a question I must ask. Miss, do you know what you are on trial for today?

Mila: **sighs and lowers her head slightly** I do. I, Mila Greene, am on trial for manslaughter and the perversion of justice.

Judge: Okay, since we have your recount of events, we will move on to our witness statements, the evidence against you, the detective's statement and eventually you will give your plea and the jury will decide your fate. Is that clear?

Mila: Of course, thank you for listening.

Judge: For our first eyewitness, can Mr Joe Greene please come up?

Mila: Wait, Joe?!

Judge: Please calm down and be silent as the witness gives us his statement.

Mila: **nods** Apologies, sir.

Joe enters the courtroom

Judge: Moving along... Mr Greene. I was prior informed that you hired a PI to follow your wife over suspicion of adultery, but you found something else, correct? What did you find?

Joe: On the night of the victim's death, my wife was out late again. I knew she'd be out and about with her other man, so I figured it was the perfect time to catch her red handed. My PI sent me a video of him and her entering the hotel together... a couple of hours later he found her leaving, alone. The next morning his body was found in that very hotel.

Judge: I see... did you report this?

Joe: I had to take some time to think about what to do. I considered asking her, but I knew all I'd be fed would be obvious lies, but I didn't want the whole of the precinct to know I had turned my own wife in. I decided on sending in an anonymous tip, a video of him and her together. I decided on emailing it to her partner, Grace.

Mila: Oh my god... that was you! I should have known... I knew you wanted me to crumble.

Judge: Miss Mila, the jury are soon to reach their conclusion. Your hysterics aren't swaying anybody to your side.

Mila: I- I'm sorry.

Judge: Our final speaker will be the main detective working this case, Grace. She will present the evidence to the court.

Joe steps down

**Grace walks to the front, her and Mila are making eye contact. **

Grace: Okay... the first thing I investigated were other people of suspicion, but they all had an alibi. By a couple of hours in we had no suspects left, everybody had been cleared one way or another. That was until I checked the hotel and the CCTV footage. It was clear as day, she was there. Walking out of the hotel on the night. I can also present a photo, a photo of the victim and the... suspect. Also, the video that her husband sent in, that's another piece of evidence too. I think that is all we have. As for my statement, I make no comment. I don't feel as though airing my personal feelings will be beneficial here, only unnecessary. I hope that that's okay.

Judge: Of course, keeping professional is needed here. Thank you very much detective, your work is impeccable as always.

Grace: **mumbling, whilst stepping down** I almost wish it wasn't.

Judge: Before the Jury form their conclusions, does the defendant have any words of defence?

Mila: I know some people are counting on me defending myself.. but I am unable to do that at this time.

Grace: What? Why?

Mila: I'm sorry, but there is no defence to be made. I told my story, and the plot was just this. It was all an accident, sure. But does the court really care? He shouted at me and I retaliated, I pushed him, and he died. And again, does the

court care I was shouted at? To make matters worse, I could have owned up to this mistake. I could have explained that it was self-defence, but I lied, and I stole crime scene evidence, and I used my job to cover my tracks. What defence could I possibly make?

Grace: **stunned to silence and wide eyed, quietly says** Oh no...

Judge: That's quite enough.

Mila: Of course, I said my piece. I'm finished now

Judge: The Jury will now decide Miss Mila's charge.

Actors shuffle around representing a time shift

Judge: The jury have decided... if you plead guilty your charge will be manslaughter and the perversion of justice. The sentence would be 10 years in prison, if innocent it will be further discussed. So, what do you plea?

The spotlight narrows and only Mila and Grace are in the light.

Grace: Mila...

narrows again to only Mila

Mila: I've decided... **I plead guilty.**

the stage instantly blacks out