

INDI CHALLENGE "News To Me"

Written By

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EXT. REHAB CLINIC - GROUNDS - DAY

A woman (BRENDA) sits across from a man (TODD). A nice, quiet area. Brenda's laptop is on the bench next to her.

TODD

You look good.

BRENDA

Thanks. You look like absolute crap.

TODD

Now that's my girl. Telling it like it is. You must be feeling better.

BRENDA

The doctors say it's part of my recovery.

TODD

I don't think your problem ever was holding back.

BRENDA

Just exactly what was my problem, Todd? In your expert opinion.

He stares at her, kind of taken aback.

TODD

So part of your therapy is to dump on the one person who reached out to you when you were a wreck? That's a real interesting technique. Maybe we should do a story on that.

BRENDA

Maybe you should. I'm on 'administrative leave.'

TODD

Paid administrative leave. Thanks to me.

She doesn't comment, just fiddles with her laptop.

TODD (CONT'D)

I don't know where all this hostility is coming from. If it's part of your process, then fine. But for the record, your problem was and is, substance abuse. That's my 'expert opinion.' And it doesn't seem like your doctors here disagree.

She looks up from her computer.

BRENDA

I am an addict. And it's true you were the one who sat me down and confronted me about it. And covered for me. And dealt with corporate.

TODD

And held your hand. And helped you pack. And drove you here, for godsakes.

BRENDA

So you came here for some acknowledgement? Yes, you did all that. But...

TODD

Always a 'but' when you're talking to a reporter.

BRENDA

But why'd you really do it? I've had a lot of time to think about that. Maybe because you felt sorry for me after you broke up with me --

TODD

Really, Bren? That was a year ago.

BRENDA

Or maybe because you still needed me as an ally. You don't have a lot of friends in that newsroom these days. Then it hit me.

TODD

Spare me the 'dramatic pause' technique. I taught it to you.

BRENDA

You also taught me the answer is always the most obvious thing. I went back and looked at my notes from the Bregman story. I realized why I got hung out to dry by my source. You knew him. You went to school with him. And when it came time for you to save your bacon, you pulled the string.

TODD

You really do belong in here. You've lost it.

BRENDA

That story was going to expose your ties to him. But it got pulled and I got suspended for not vetting my sources. And you're free to be my crying shoulder and get me 'help.' Which puts me here and tags me as someone not to be believed.

TODD

Good to see the old journalistic instincts are intact. I'll report back to Roland that you're on the comeback trail.

He stands up to leave.

TODD (CONT'D)

Might be a tough sell, though. Because you're right. No one's going to believe an addict. About Bregman, or anything else.

BRENDA

Actually, I'm already back.

She picks up the computer, turns it so he can see the screen.

TODD

You're recording this?

He moves to grab the computer away. She doesn't even try to keep it from him.

BRENDA

Live streaming, actually. Say hi to Roland.

On his shocked reaction --

FADE OUT.