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Episode 02: Fragmented Reality

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EPISODE 2: Fragmented Reality

Standards of Behavior contains mature language, content and themes. Please listen with care.

1. Papers SHUFFLING. Allison is FIDGETING in her seat.

HEARING MODERATOR

Please state your name for the record.

ALLISON

I'm Allison.

HEARING MODERATOR

Please state your full name for the record.

ALLISON

Oh, uh... Jennings. I'm Allison Jennings.

HEARING MODERATOR

Alright, and please tell us your academic year and your major.

ALLISON

I'm a junior and, umm, I recently switched my major to English.

HEARING MODERATOR

What was your previous major?

ALLISON

Women's Studies.

HEARING MODERATOR

Those are pretty different areas of study. What made you make the switch from Women's Studies to English?

ALLISON

I just... wasn't enjoying the work anymore. I wasn't thriving in the classes or the environment.

HEARING MODERATOR

Thank you, Ms. Jennings. I see you brought your therapist with you as well. We would like your name on the record as well.

DR. SEIDEL

I'm Dr. Marie Seidel and I'm Allison's therapist. I've been a social worker here on campus for five years now.

HEARING MODERATOR

Thank you, doctor. Allison, we're going to get started now. Did you know the victim at all?

ALLISON

Well, I didn't know him all that well. Definitely didn't know him personally. I don't know much about him at all, really... Sorry.

HEARING MODERATOR

Ok, thank you. Did you know anything about him? Maybe see him around campus?

2. FLASHBACK - OUTDOOR NOISES.

MAGGIE

Allie! Wait up! Hey, girl.

ALLISON

Hey, Mags. What's up?

MAGGIE

Not much. Glad to finally be out of that classroom. It's so stuffy in there with the professor's awful cologne.

ALLISON

I know, right? Every time I walk in I get a headache. Why does he need to use so much? Someone should tell him it's repelling women instead of enticing them.

Allison and Maggie laugh.

MAGGIE

So, how'd you do on that sociology exam? I think I bombed it. Dr. Bridges can be so mean with those trick questions. Ugh!

ALLISON

I think it was ok. You're right though, and he's a pretty tough grader too. Hopefully I did alright, my GPA can't handle another bad grade.

MAGGIE

Same here.

ALLISON

Yeah, this has definitely not been my best semester.

MAGGIE

Me too, it's been a rough one. But, hey, at least it's nice out, don't you think? We finally got a warm day. Hopefully it stays this way for spring break.

ALLISON

I hope so too. Have you figured out your plans for break yet?

MAGGIE

Nope, not yet, but hopefully I'll be going to visit my sister in Nashville.

JACK

(Yells from the distance)
Hey Maggie, lookin' good today!

MAGGIE

Hey, Jack! Thanks, you too! Are you going out tonight? I've heard of a few addresses. It's supposed to be a good night to go out.

JACK

I dunno, I don't think I can make it.
Sorry to disappoint, ladies, but I have
a prior engagement tonight.

MAGGIE

(Laughs)

Oh yeah, we're definitely
disappointed over here.

JACK

You know you'll miss me, Maggie.
You always do. I'll see you later,
have a beer for me tonight.

MAGGIE

Bye, Jack.

PAUSE.

MAGGIE (CON'D)

Anyways, about spring break, my
plans aren't set in stone because
my sister hasn't gotten back to me
yet if I can visit her. She's so
annoying with things like this. She
takes forever to get back to me.
Whatever. How about you? Any plans?
... Allie? ... Are you ok?

ALLISON

What? Oh yeah, I don't have any
plans yet. I'm not sure if I'm
going home.

MAGGIE

No, are you ok? You look a little
pale, are you feeling alright?

ALLISON

Oh, yeah, I'm fine.

MAGGIE

Are you sure? You're not lookin'
so hot right now, what's up?

ALLISON

I guess I just started thinking about that test again... I'm beginning to think I didn't do so hot. I... I'll be fine.

MAGGIE

Alright... If you say so. I gotta run, but hey, if the test is bothering you that much, you can always go talk to the professor. I'll see you at home later. Let me know if you need anything.

ALLISON

Yeah... I'll see you around.

MAGGIE

Have a good class!

ALLISON

Yeah, you too.

END FLASHBACK.

3. Bell RINGS. Students SHUFFLE in their seats.

PROFESSOR

Hello class, I hope everyone had a good summer break. It's great to see some familiar faces. I'm going to call roll to make sure everyone is in the right place. John Alveri. Jessica Campo. Hugh Denizen. Jack Malvolio. Ian Gail. Mallory Hennessy. Allison Jennings. Allison, are you feeling alright? You look a bit sickly, you didn't a moment ago when we spoke before class.

ALLISON

I'm not feeling great right now actually; would it be alright if I went to the health center?

PROFESSOR

Yes, of course, go right ahead. Would you like an escort in case you get light-headed?

JACK

I can take her to the health center. I wouldn't mind.

ALLISON

No. No... That's ok, really, I feel okay enough to get there on my own. I wouldn't want to drag anyone away from class. Especially not on the first day of the semester. I'll take myself there. I'm ok.

PROFESSOR

Are you sure sweetheart? It's really alright. We're not doing much today except for ice breakers and going over the syllabus. I'm sure someone wouldn't mind walking with you.

ROY

Ice breakers? Everyone here already knows me. I can walk you Allison, no problem!

ALLISON

(Sighs)

Alright, let's go Roy.

PROFESSOR

Thank you for being a... gentleman, Roy. Allison, Feel better, sweetheart. I'll email you two a copy of the syllabus.

ALLISON

Thank you, Professor.

Door CLOSES. FOOTSTEPS.

ALLISON (CON'D)

You really didn't need to walk with me, Roy. I think I'll get there just fine. Thanks though. I guess I'm glad it's you and not anyone else. Thanks for coming with me.

ROY

Hey, no problem. I love ice breakers but sometimes you just run out of fun facts to tell the class after three years of college.

ALLISON

Tell me about it. I find myself telling less and less fun facts every year. (Mockingly) Hi, I'm Allison and I buy the textbooks for class but rarely read them! Blah, blah, blah...

ROY

Haha! Exactly. Everyone's fun facts are hardly ever fun. More like exhausting facts if you ask me. Hey, you really were looking pretty green back there, but you look better now though. Everything alright?

ALLISON

Yeah, I'm alright. I dunno, I just got really anxious out of nowhere. Maybe it's the stress of starting a new semester, being more than halfway through college. Ya know, it's tough.

ROY

Yeah, I feel that, but, hey, we're halfway there and then we can get into full on adulting! And that's pretty cool, right?

ALLISON

Yeah, I guess you're right.

4. Cafeteria background MUSIC.

CASHIER

Just a coffee and a muffin then?
Four dollars and 35 cents please.

ALLISON

Alright, one second, my wallet is
lost in my backpack somewhere. I'm
sorry.

CASHIER

That's alright. Take your time.

JACK

Don't worry. I'll take care of it.

ALLISON

(Digging in her backpack)

Oh, thank you! That's so sweet. Oh,
hi, Jack. Thanks.

JACK

No problem, you know I got you if
you ever need.

ALLISON

(Awkwardly)

Thanks again, but I probably don't
need the coffee actually. You know,
gotta get some sleep tonight. And I
already ate breakfast, so I don't
need the muffin. So, uhh, thanks,
but you don't need to pay for that.

JACK

Oh, uhh, alright then. I'll see you
in class then? Talk to you soon.

ALLISON

Mhmm, sure, bye.

END FLASHBACK.

5. FOOTSTEPS. Hearing Moderator FADES IN.

HEARING MODERATOR

Ms. Jennings? Ms. Jennings?
Allison.

ALLISON

What? Oh, I'm sorry. I've had a few classes with him, saw him at a party every once in a while, saw him around campus here and there, and we had mutual friends, but that was about it. I didn't really know him other than that, sorry.

HEARING MODERATOR

So, you didn't spend any time with him?

ALLISON

No, like I said, I just see him around campus a lot. (Saddened, awkward, shy) Saw... I saw him around campus...

HEARING MODERATOR

Alright. So, would you say that going to parties on campus is typical for you? As it was for the victim? We're trying to get a feel for who the victim regularly would have interacted with.

6. FLASHBACK.

CHARLOTTE

Are you sure you want to go through with this? We don't have to if you're not comfortable. And we can come home any time you want. It's totally up to you.

ALLISON

Yes, I'm sure, I need to. Plus, Will, he said he needs me there. I really need to have a talk with that kid, figure out what's going on with him. Anyway, I think I'll be ok, I just need to get it over with-

SOFI

Hey, Allison! Haven't seen you in a while, are you going out tonight? I know you haven't been out in a long time, but you picked the right night to come out. I heard Will is having a rager! I'm pumped, so many people are going to be there. Will hasn't thrown one of his parties in a while.

ALLISON

Hey, Sofi. Yeah, I was just going to say, I haven't been out in a long time, I needed to get out. Tonight will definitely be interesting. You're having the pregame, right? That's going to be fun.

SOFI

Yeah, you know it, lady! It's gonna be lit. I actually have some things to get ready in a bit if you guys will be around to help out? We can, ya know, pregame the pregame!

CHARLOTTE

Well, if you're ready then I'm ready, Al.

ALLISON

Ready as I'll ever be. What can we do to help?

SOFI

Other than being your regular selves, you two beauties, you all can you grab some of the booze from the back of Roy's car downstairs. Then when you're back up we can make the jungle juice, get the pong tables, and then we'll hang up the few decorations I got because, hello, what's a party without decorations?

ALLISON

That we can do. Thanks for throwing the pregame, Sof.

SOFI

Girl, you know I can't resist a good time. But you should really be thanking Roy. He's the one that volunteered me for the job, and I use the term volunteered very loosely. He's just lucky I'll never turn down a chance to throw an awesome party. Well, pre-party party.

The three girls LAUGH.

CHARLOTTE

Well, we'll be right back then and then we'll help set everything else up. Come on Al, let's go get the liquid courage. You're going to need it anyways.

ALLISON

Right behind you, Charlotte.

END FLASHBACK.

7. Papers SHUFFLING.

ALLISON

I don't really go out. I like to focus on school. The party scene isn't really for me.

HEARING MODERATOR

So, why was this time different? What made you go out the night of the incident?

ALLISON

It was Will's party. He asked me to come, to be there for him. He's my best friend, so I wanted to be with him.

HEARING MODERATOR

Right, thank you Ms. Jennings.
Moving on. Allison, how would you
describe your mental state prior to
the incident?

DR. SIEDEL

I don't see how this is relevant to
the hearing or the incident.

8. FLASHBACK - PARTY MUSIC.

MAGGIE

Ooh, Allison's getting some action
tonight, huh? Finally! Hey! Get
silly for syllabus week, Allie!!

THE FRIEND

Are you sure? She doesn't look so
hot. She may need to go home. I'll
be right back.

FOOTSTEPS.

THE FRIEND

Hey, Allison, Are you alright? Do
you need some help getting home
tonight?

JACK

We're good, thanks. I'll make sure
she gets home.

THE FRIEND

Hey man, just trying to make sure
Allison is cool. You good, Allie?

JACK

(Fiercely)

Dude, I said we're good. I'll get
her home. We're fine, she just
needs to get to bed.

THE FRIEND

Alright... Sorry, man. Just get her
home safely.

9. STUMBLING SOUNDS OF 2 people WALKING. Door opens

ALLISON
(Semi-consciously mumbling)
No... No, I don't wanna. I want to
sleep.

JACK
(Low, gruffly, voice semi-
disguised)
Shut up, just go to sleep.

ALLISON
I don't feel good. I don't...

JACK
Just be quiet, c'mon, Allison.

Door closes. Fades into next scene.

10. FOOTSTEPS.

ALLISON
It's fine, I'm fine, everything is
okay. I just need to relax and calm
down. Dammit, calm down, Allie!

PAUSE.

ALLISON (CON'D)
(Whispers)
Just wanna feel better.

Pill bottle lid POPS.

ALLISON
The doctor wouldn't have given me
these if he didn't want me to use
them.

PAUSE.

ALLISON (CON'D)
Just one more and I'll feel better,
right? They're not kicking in, so...
a few more? Yeah...

Pill bottle SHAKES. Pills POURED.

ALLISON

It's been almost a year. I should
be okay by now. I WILL be okay. I
need to be...

Door OPENS. Pill bottle SHAKES. Pills POURED.

CHARLOTTE

(Whispered)

Allie?

Allison SHOUTS. Pills and pill bottle FALLS ON FLOOR.

CHARLOTTE

(Loudly)

Allison? What's going on? Are you
alright?

SOFT TEARS from Allison.

ALLISON

I, uhh... I don't really want to talk
about it.

CHARLOTTE

You don't have to talk about it,
please just tell me if you're
alright. Is everything okay?

ALLISON

I'm fine. What's up?

SHUFFLING.

CHARLOTTE

We had that meeting for women's
studies earlier. When you didn't
show up I wanted to stop by to see
what was up, if you were alright.

ALLISON

Oh, right, I dropped women's
studies. Could've sworn I told you
that.

CHARLOTTE

Uhh, no, I didn't know that. Why did you drop it? Dr. Keller loves you, you're her favorite student, the best in the class.

ALLISON

Not really. My grades have been crap lately. You knew that.

CHARLOTTE

Al, you're in your room or the library with your nose in the books 24/7. You hardly come out anymore because you're studying so much. Your grades can't possibly be in the tubes bad enough for you to change majors. What did you switch to anyways?

ALLISON

English.

CHARLOTTE

Allison Marie Jennings, you have got to be kidding me. That is so not who you are. I thought you hate writing about books and whatever. Please tell me you're joking?

ALLISON

(Mumbling)

I dunno, maybe I like reading and writing now.

CHARLOTTE

(Quietly to herself) What alternate universe did I just step into? (To Allison) Well, if you dropped the class I guess I'll let the others in the group know you're out and we'll split up your portion of the project. Are you sure you're alright?

ALLISON

Yeah, I guess so. I guess I've just been having a tough time lately.

CHARLOTTE

With What? What's been bothering you?

ALLISON

I dunno, I just haven't really been myself for a while now. I feel like everything's been pressing in on me more and more. (Quietly) I can't handle it anymore.

CHARLOTTE

What do you mean you can't handle it?

ALLISON

I hardly want to do anything anymore. I got these pills, Dr. Seidel had me see a psychiatrist and she gave them to me and they help, but sometimes it's not enough, ya know?

CHARLOTTE

Allison, can I see those?

Pill bottle RATTLES.

CHARLOTTE (CON'D)

Diazepam, Valium... Allie, why did she give you these? Why were you taking so many? (Quietly) Oh my god, Allison, you weren't trying to... (Pause for dramatic effect) Were you?

ALLISON

No, I don't know Charlotte. (Quietly) I don't know much of anything anymore...

END FLASHBACK.

11. Dr. Seidel FADES IN.

DR. SEIDEL

Honestly, I don't see how Ms. Jennings' mental health before the boy was found dead could possibly be relevant to this hearing.

ALLISON

(quietly)

It's alright Dr. Seidel. I can answer him. I was totally fine. Things were great.

THE END.