

= Get Me a Lawyer =

" Get Me a Lawyer " ( also known as " Pilot " ) is the pilot episode of the legal drama series *Damages* , which first aired on July 24 , 2007 on FX in the United States . It was written by series creators / executive producers Todd A. Kessler , Glenn Kessler , and Daniel Zelman , and was directed by producer Allen Coulter . In the episode , recent law school graduate Ellen Parsons ( Rose Byrne ) is recruited to Hewes and Associates , a law firm headed by Patty Hewes ( Glenn Close ) , where she is assigned to the " Frobisher case " . Billionaire Arthur Frobisher ( Ted Danson ) is being sued by his former employees , whom he advised to invest in his company while unloading his own stock , and while Frobisher 's attorney Ray Fiske ( ?eljko Ivanek ) pleads for a settlement price , Patty insists on taking the case to court .

When the Kesslers and Zelman devised the series , they did not specifically intend for Patty and Ellen to be lawyers , wanting primarily to explore the power structures between two strong women ? Patty and her protégée Ellen ? and choosing a profession afterwards . Close agreed to play Patty so long as the series was filmed in New York , where she resides . To prepare for their roles , Close , Byrne and Tate Donovan met with corporate lawyers , while Danson met with the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies . The pilot was filmed in February and FX placed a 13 @-@ episode order for the series in March . Its American airing brought in 3 @.@ 7 million viewers and it was reviewed positively by most critics . It received two Emmy Award nominations for writing and directing and one win for Close for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series . It was also nominated for an American Cinema Editors Award .

= = Plot = =

A young woman steps out of an elevator , bloody and half @-@ naked . She leaves the building and runs down a busy street . She is taken to a police station , where two detectives , Dan Williams ( Casey Siemaszko ) and Rosario Ortiz ( Maya Days ) , find in her pocket a business card for Hollis M. Nye .

In an extended flashback to six months earlier , the woman is revealed to be Ellen Parsons , a recent law school graduate . She turns down a generous salary from Nye 's firm to meet with Patty Hewes , head of Hewes and Associates . Later at a bar , Ellen meets Nye ( Philip Bosco ) , who cautions that Patty is dangerous and has her sign a card reading " I was warned . " Ellen finds out that her interview with Patty is on the day of her sister 's wedding . She declines the interview but Patty , intrigued to have been turned down , finds Ellen at the wedding and hires her .

Patty is the lead attorney in a high @-@ profile litigation , representing the bankrupted workers of a large company run by Frobisher , who allegedly advised his employees to invest in the company while selling his own stock . Patty insists on taking the case to trial rather than accepting a settlement , but on Ellen 's first day it is revealed that the prosecution cannot yet link Frobisher to his stockbroker ? though both were in Palm Beach , Florida over the same weekend ? and thus cannot disprove that the selling of his stock was not pre @-@ arranged . When Ellen returns home , her boyfriend David Connor ( Noah Bean ) proposes to her and she accepts .

Frobisher 's attorney Ray Fiske visits David 's sister Katie ( Anastasia Griffith ) , who is opening a restaurant in which Frobisher is investing , and asks her to sign a confidentiality agreement . Frobisher meets with his former custodian Larry Popler ( Victor Arnold ) , who names a settlement price of \$ 100 million , which Ray returns to Patty . Patty persuades her clients to decline the offer , but Larry mentions a previous agreement to accept any offer of \$ 100 million . Patty suspects that her advisor Tom ( Tate Donovan ) had known about the agreement and fires him . Katie , meanwhile , thinks that she is being watched , and tells Ellen and David that she had catered a function for Frobisher in Florida and that afterwards he had offered to help her open a restaurant . Ellen realizes that Patty hired her to get to Katie , a potential witness . Though Katie is initially hesitant to testify , she finds her dog Saffron dead in her apartment with a note reading " Quiet " pinned to a wall . Assuming that Frobisher is responsible , she agrees to meet with Patty to help bring Frobisher down . Tom meets with Patty , who had only pretended to fire him , and gives her Saffron 's collar , which

she throws into the ocean .

Returning to the present , the two detectives seek Nye out and he identifies Ellen . They visit Ellen and David 's apartment and find David dead in the bathtub . Ortiz tells Ellen to explain what had happened , and Ellen 's only response is " Get me a lawyer . "

= = Production = =

Brothers Glenn and Todd Kessler decided to work with Daniel Zelman because " we have a third brother , but Daniel is kind of like our fourth brother that we 've known for over 20 years . " When the Kesslers and Zelman devised the series , they did not specifically intend for Patty and Ellen to be lawyers . They wanted to explore the power structures in two strong women ? feeling that the male power dynamics had been seen before ? and considered a number of professions , including entertainment and pharmaceuticals , before deciding on law . Zelman said that the writers ' main motivation to write about the law " was our interest in power dynamics , the dynamics of power in society . We 're very much interested in the ambiguity of it . We 're just interested in seeing how far we can push these characters . " According to Kessler , " One thing that 's crucial is that Patty Hewes is on one end of the spectrum and Ellen Parsons is on the other . " The relationship the writers were most interested in showing was that between a mentor and a mentee , which is represented by Patty and her protégée Ellen . Todd Kessler called the real life Enron case " a big part " of the inspiration for Patty 's main case involving Arthur Frobisher , though Zelman claims that Enron was not used as a basis in particular : " It was more just the culture of all those corporate scandals at the time . There seemed to be one after the other of them , and we became very interested in sort of the characters who were a part of those scandals . "

After co @-@ starring on 2004 's fourth season of The Shield on cable network FX , Close told network president John Landgraf that she would be open to star in another series , suggesting a spin @-@ off for her Shield character , Captain Monica Rawling . Landgraf pitched Damages to Close , who agreed to play Patty so long as the series was shot in New York City , where she resides . To prepare for her role , Close met New York attorney Mary Jo White and her partner Lorna Scofield , as well as litigator Patricia Hines , from whom Close learned " some extraordinary things " . The producers sought after Byrne to play Ellen , but she was unavailable during the first round of auditions as she was filming 28 Weeks Later . She says the opportunity " came up again , so I went in , auditioned , and got the role " . Like Close , Byrne spent time with a female lawyer in New York and read books written by litigators Alan Dershowitz and David DuBois , while Donovan talked to his uncle , a New York corporate lawyer . He visited Manhattan 's Centre Street courts , where he " followed the most intense murder trial " . Ivanek was so eager to work on the series that he auditioned for two different roles , and was cast as Ray . Todd Kessler said that Danson 's 1979 film The Onion Field was " a huge influence on Glenn , Daniel and myself , and that was something that had always stuck in our minds . And when we sought out to cast this role of Arthur Frobisher , Ted kind of came into focus . " In preparation for his role , the producers asked Danson to meet with CEOs of Fortune 500 corporations and watch documentaries such as Enron : The Smartest Guys in the Room , which examines the collapse of Enron . They also suggested that Danson meet with Close 's acting coach Harold Guskin . The producers said that David and Katie were the hardest characters to cast . Noah Bean , who felt that he gave " an awful first audition " for the role of David , was called in for a second reading as he was waiting for an elevator to leave the building , and was ultimately cast . British actress Anastasia Griffith 's agent informed her of the audition for the role of Katie only two hours before it began . When she met the producers , they were initially concerned about a Brit playing an American , especially since Australian Byrne had already signed on . " To put their fears at rest " , Griffith addressed the producers in an American accent from beginning to end of the audition . After being cast , Griffith and Byrne visited New York University dialect coach Deborah Hecht to perfect their accents .

The episode was shot in February and edited in March 2007 . Filming took place on location at various sites around Manhattan ; after the first season had been greenlit , sets were built at New York 's Steiner Studios . Byrne said that filming the opening scene on a winter 's morning in only

underwear and a coat was " very traumatic " and " very hard " . The series remained untitled during casting and filming , and was named *Damages* after FX had greenlit the pilot and placed a 13 @-@ episode order for the first season in March .

= = Reception = =

As the most @-@ watched basic cable show of the night , " *Get Me a Lawyer* " drew 3 @.@ 7 million viewers on its initial commercial @-@ free airing , with a total of 5 @.@ 1 million including the viewers of repeat airings later in the night . 1 @.@ 2 million people fell into the target demographic of adults aged 18 ? 49 , while 1 @.@ 5 million fell into the 25 ? 54 age bracket . FX president John Landgraf deemed the pilot 's ratings " middling " by the network 's standards . The Australian premiere on the Nine Network brought in 999 @,@ 000 viewers , making *Damages* the thirteenth most @-@ watched show of the night . In Britain , BBC One 's airing of the episode was seen by 1 @.@ 9 million people with a share of 11 % .

Most critics reviewed " *Get Me a Lawyer* " positively . The New York Times ' Alessandra Stanley praised FX for choosing another series that " keep [ s ] the light focused on the dark side of its main characters " . Stanley wrote that " *Damages* is yet another show that requires viewers to tune in to every episode to follow the plot , but it is the most grown @-@ up thriller in the pack [ of serialized drama series ] . " Tim Goodman of the San Francisco Chronicle wrote that , in the episode , " All the drama is in the writing and the acting . " He complimented the " strong cast " , stating that " it 's Close who makes *Damages* a series to contend with " . Writing for *The Age* , Robin Oliver called the pilot " terrific @-@ going @-@ on @-@ sensational " . She praised Close and Byrne 's performances , but also highlighted Danson 's role as " a particularly fine piece of casting " . Oliver 's *Age* colleague Melinda Houston called Close " delicious ? and convincing " as Patty and thought that the script was " fabulous " . S. P. Miskowski of the Seattle Post @-@ Intelligencer remarked , " For my money , this is what a ' thriller ' is all about . " TV Squad 's Jonathan Toomey enjoyed the episode 's flashbacks , saying that the style of the show " works and it works well " . Matt Mitovich claimed in a TV Guide recap of the episode , " What a pilot it was ! " He praised the acting from Close , Danson and Byrne , while he felt that " the supporting cast is excellent as well " . Stuart Levine , writing for *Variety* , called the pilot his favorite episode of the first season .

Other critics , however , did not respond well to the episode . Andrew Billen of *The Times* thought that the episode was " not as stylish , intelligent or classy as it hopes " and " about as subtle as Times Square " . He called Close 's performance " not remotely credible but impressive in a Norma Desmond way " and labeled Byrne as " particularly unstriking " . Brian Lowry gave the pilot a lukewarm review for *Variety* . He praised the " solid cast " and " smart dialogue " , but felt that " the template feels a little too familiar ... moreover , it 's fuzzy how long the show 's mystery will persist " . *Entertainment Weekly* 's Gillian Flynn graded the episode as a C ? , criticizing the characters ' lack of logic and the " many ludicrous scenes " . She thought the storylines to be overcomplicated and called Byrne " bland " and " inexpressive " .

" *Get Me a Lawyer* " received two Primetime Emmy Award nominations : Allen Coulter was nominated for Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series , and Glenn Kessler , Todd A. Kessler , and Daniel Zelman were nominated for Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series . The pilot episode was submitted to the Primetime Emmys judging panel for determining the nominees for Outstanding Drama Series ; *Damages* was nominated but did not win the award . Close chose the episode as her Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series submission ; she was nominated and went on to win the award . Editor Malcolm Jamieson was nominated for an American Cinema Editors Award for his work on this episode in the " Best Edited One @-@ Hour TV Series ( Commercial Television ) " category .