

Discipline of Silence

Written by

Scott Danzig

FADE IN:

EXT. INTERSECTION DOWNTOWN - DAY

PHIL, in his 60's, tries to read from a paper as it flaps in the wind. He desperately searches nearby street signs, growing increasingly agitated. Standing nearby in a lab coat, DEBRA, late 30's, notices and steps forth, but then hesitates, stares, and eventually looks away.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE SHOP - DAY

A disheveled STREET PERFORMER with oily skin is playing the guitar so beautifully, lost in his world. David Wycraft, 40, dressed in a black suit and blue tie, listens, surreptitiously glancing over with admiration. He looks at the open guitar case, then checks his wallet, finding only one twenty. The performer finishes his song with gusto. David remains silent.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

MICHAEL, a formally dressed, slick-haired man lifts his attaché on the table and opens it. Next to him is EILEEN, an older stern-faced woman in a wheel chair. Settling down on the other side of the table is SAMUEL, a stocky man with five o'clock shadow and a suit one size too small, and Debra.

MICHAEL

My client has gone on disability and will be unable to work for at least the next six months to a year. She also asks for compensation for the agonizing, life-altering pain she has suffered as a result of Dr. Debra Green's reckless malpractice.

Debra's head pivots to Samuel, who only takes notes, then to Eileen, and then back to Michael.

DEBRA

I performed the procedure by the book. There is no chance I could have caused this. She was fine after the procedure, and went home the same day.

Debra stares at Samuel in disbelief, and leans in, quiet but firm.

DEBRA (CONT'D)
C'mon, this is fraud. Please don't
let this happen.

SAMUEL
Don't worry. We'll discuss this
later.

Debra finally meets the eyes of Eileen, who looks away as
Michael starts laying evidence on the table.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

FRANK, 60, and RHIANNE, 40's, both dressed formally, sit
across from David Wycraft, who shifts anxiously.

RHIANNE
We've decided we're letting you go.
Immediately.

David goes white.

FRANK
Your...
(clears throat)
Your belongings will be sent home to
your address, and you'll be escorted
to your car by our security.

DAVID
But, why? I thought I was doing such
great work at this firm. You gave me
a raise last month!

Frank exhales over pursed lips, but sees Rhianne stoic and
remains silent as well.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Frank? I'm still fairly new to the
healthcare insurance industry. Can I
at least use you as a reference?

Frank lowers his eyes. David stares in disbelief between him
and Rhianne.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Debra and David sit across from each other, relaxing over a
pair of sandwiches in a café.

DEBRA

What jerks. How could they do that to you?

DAVID

From what you told me, I'm not sure who's day has been worse.

Debra gathers her belongings and tray, then David follows suit.

DEBRA

Okay, let's get through the rest of the day, shall we?

DAVID

Umm, my day's already over, remember?

Debra conspiratorially grins.

DEBRA

Maybe not. Interested in dinner and drinks tonight?

David fixates on the door, hesitating for a long pause.

DAVID

Hey, I'll try to help you how I can with that lawsuit. I'll see you tomorrow, okay?

Debra's face drops as she then follows David's lead out the door.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

Debra, in lab coat and stethoscope, stands next to the bed occupied by her patient AMANDA, early 20's, with a vibrant smile despite a tired face and bald scalp.

AMANDA

I don't know if I can keep doing the chemo. But I still want to go scuba-diving in Belize, and, would you believe I've been studying archaeology for this long and I haven't seen the pyramids in Egypt yet? Have you been there?

Debra grimaces, holding emotion back.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

When I was little, I used to dream
about what it would be like inside
one.

Debra sheds a tear, and looks away to wipe it, then turns
back with her weakly forced smile.

EXT. INTERSECTION DOWNTOWN - DAY

Thoughts linger in David's eyes as he gets distracted by the
appearance of the same flustered man, Phil, with the same
paper in his hands, once again trying to make sense of the
street signs. People flow past, and eventually David leans to
approach, but a groan of anger stops him. Phil crumples up
his paper and tosses it into the trash bin, then sulks.

Phil suddenly loses his balance and catches himself on the
trash bin, his eyes wide. He hears a voice.

KATIE (O.S.)

Why is your nose so hairy?

David's face slackens. Phil looks down. A six year old child,
cute as a button, challenges him.

A woman rushes up and grabs her hand, glancing apologetically
at the man, who begins laughing.

KATIE'S MOTHER

I'm so sorry.

She steals the girl away as a jovial David takes her place.

DAVID

Kids can just say anything.

Phil rubs his leg.

PHIL

That girl's got a football career
ahead of her! All I need is another
knee replacement.

DAVID

You'll be fine, shaggy snout. Hey,
do you need help finding something?

FADE OUT.