

Drama HIRING AN ATTORNEY

Male Female drama

35-50

D- M-11-

INT. ATTORNIERS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The guard admits Thinnes, leaving him there alone. ANOTHER GUARD enters with Joyce. She looks as though she is no longer bothering.

THINNES
(extending his hand)
Mrs Lukezic. I'm Tom Thinnes.

The guard exits. Joyce scrutinizes Thinnes.

JOYCE
I've been rating lawyers around the women in here. You scored pretty high. I don't know if that's any kind of a reference, considering they all ended up in here.

THINNES
It's possible you may stay in here with them a very long time.

Joyce reacts with an angry look.

JOYCE
I want a lawyer who'll stand by me, Mr Thinnes - not throw me to the wolves.

THINNES
I'm just giving you my first reaction to your case. One jury has already found you guilty of murder. A second is very likely to.

He is watching her reactions.

JOYCE
The jury was wrong. You're just going to have to look into my deep brown eyes and intuit my innocence.

THINNES
Don't be a smartass, Mrs Lukezic. I will not represent you if I think you're guilty. There are plenty of lawyers willing to represent thieves and murderers. I'm not one of them.

I won't do it again

Unusually

If kept
NO
touch

(from)
30 seconds off

JOYCE

(stiffening)

Mr Thinnes, I've just spent two years in this place because a little worm called Arnie Merrill lies about me. If you don't believe that, I don't want you defending me.

THINNES

(nods, likes that answer)

You understand that, should I decide to defend you, I'll require absolute descretion.

JOYCE

What does that mean?

THINNES

It means I decide everything about your defense. What we do and say. How and when. You're going to have to trust me totally.

JOYCE

(erupting)

Trust you? Mr Thinnes, I know all about trusting people. I trusted my attorney. He told me I wouldn't have to spend a day in prison. I trusted my husband. He told me he would always stand by me. I trusted my brother. I've lost them all. So maybe you can understand why I'm reluctant to take anybody on trust.

THINNES

Mrs Lukezic, your attitude sucks.

Joyce is thunderstruck, then angry. They measure each other. Finally her angry veneer drops, and she looks vulnerable.

JOYCE

I'm sorry. I'm feeling pretty lousy these days. I didn't mean to take it out on you.

THINNES

Yes, you did.

(softening)

It's okay.

JOYCE

I want you to defend me. You'll be in charge, I promise.

THINNES

(after a moment)

There's something else that concerns me. You attempted suicide, didn't you?

JOYCE

I can see you're not impressed with my strength of character. Yes, I did. You have a problem with that?

THINNES

I'm a Catholic, Mrs Lukezic. I think suicide is a waste of life. I've dedicated a good part of my life to the preservation of life. I'm completely opposed to it, and I don't want a client who doesn't have the courage to fight for her life.

JOYCE

(touched)

I won't try it again.

(beat)

So, do I have a lawyer or not?

There is a long silence as Thinnes inspects her...