

ROCK THE BOAT II: "DISCLOSURES"

INT. ADVISING OFFICE - DAY

DANIEL sits inside an ADVISING OFFICE on campus -

He regards a few small posters on the walls (*ALT production option - pamphlets?*) They are blandly affirming "Positive Space" messages and the like. They encourage safety and inclusion at the University.

His phone dings - an EMAIL FROM TERRY PRATT. We see the subject line - "Everything ok?"

He immediately puts it down. Breathes out, trying to focus his mind on something else.

PAUL enters, exuding warmth and ease -

PAUL
Sorry to keep you waiting so long,
Daniel. How's it going today?

DANIEL
It's...going.

Paul settles in, and then -

PAUL
Well...where would you like to
start?

Off Daniel's uncertainty -

CUT TO:

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - DAY

A few days earlier - we hear Daniel talking to Paul in voice-over.

DANIEL (V.O.)
I had already been going through a
bit of a down period mental health-
wise...

We see Daniel pasting a bunch of post-it notes on a board behind him. Mostly, they are reminders - "SUBMIT PRESCRIPTION CLAIM" ; "GET OUTSIDE 1HR EVERY DAY" - and generic, supportive clichés like "WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU MAKES YOU STRONGER".

DANIEL (V.O.)
...when I got the email from Terry.

Daniel's phone dings - "EMAIL FROM TERRY PRATT." Interested,
he picks it up...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ADVISING OFFICE - DAY

Back to Daniel & Paul in the office -

DANIEL
I usually look forward to
connecting with Terry. Honestly,
I'm really lucky. I've heard horror
stories from friends about their
supervisors. Terry and I clicked
right away.

PAUL
So that must have made things
surprising when you read the email.

DANIEL
It made it...confusing.

PAUL
What exactly did the email say?

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - DAY

Daniel reading the email...

DANIEL (V.O.)
At first it seemed normal... but
then he mentioned this other
student who's starting her PhD. He
wanted to arrange a meeting between
the two of us...

INT. ADVISING OFFICE - DAY

Daniel and Paul in the office.

DANIEL
He said we had some overlap in our
research methods. But then in the
last bit of the email is when he
said...well, you already know.

Daniel doesn't really want to say it out loud.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
All the stuff. That I mentioned,
before?

PAUL
It was about...disclosing?

DANIEL
Yeah. Sort of. I just...
(*then*)
I just hate that this stuff makes
me so crazy. You know, I'll think
that everything's good here...that
we're all so open, "it's a safe
space", whatever. But really
it's...
(*then*)
It's meaningless.

A moment - Paul wants to give the moment some space, but
Daniel is triggered -

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I'm wasting your time.
I'm just being weird, I'm such a
baby, it shouldn't have bothered me
so much -

PAUL
(*jumping in*)
Daniel, what you're feeling is real
and valid. I really appreciate you
coming here, and how hard this is
to talk about.
(*then, gently*)
Now, I didn't read the email. Can
you tell me a bit more about what
it said?

DANIEL
Sure...

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - DAY

Daniel reading the email...

DANIEL (V.O.)
It asked if I could meet with this
new student. Then it said... "She
also has PTSD, so you two should
have an interesting conversation."

Daniel, reading the email, can feel that he is triggered and tries to focus on his breathing...

DANIEL (V.O.)
 I got that tunnel vision feeling...
 I had told Terry about my post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis in confidence. It was supposed to be *private*. All these thoughts started running through my head...

Daniel starts writing more cue cards to calm himself, tacking them on the board...

DANIEL (V.O.)
 Does everyone in the department know? Does this student know? What's everyone going to expect from me?

INT. ADVISING OFFICE - DAY

Daniel and Paul -

DANIEL
(continuing)
 All of a sudden I felt pressure to be this great, perfect "ambassador" for neuro-diverse people at the University...

PAUL
 I completely understand why this sent you through a bit of a spiral. It makes sense that it got you upset, really.
(then, delicately)
 At this point, what would make things better for you? A discussion with Terry?

DANIEL
 I don't want him to feel like he's "in trouble" or anything. I know he was just trying to do something nice and connect. But the whole thing has made me wonder how many people he told when I disclosed to him. I just...
(then)
 I just want this sort of thing to stop happening. Not just to me, but to everyone.

A moment. Paul has to choose his words carefully...

PAUL

I think, with your permission, we should talk to Terry. He communicated inappropriately, he should not have referenced your disclosure like that. It was wrong. But it sounds like there's a way we can repair the relationship.

DANIEL

Okay... but how do we actually stop this sort of thing from happening?

INT. DANIEL'S HOME - DAY

Daniel is putting up more cue cards...

DANIEL (V.O.)

Because in these situations, so much of the work is shifted onto the individual who's been impacted. I feel *insane* sometimes because the University's messaging is "these things don't happen anymore" - but then they totally do.

Daniel puts up a post-it note that simply says "RESILIENCY".

INT. ADVISING OFFICE - DAY

Back to the two of them. A moment as Paul regards the posters on the wall about inclusion, access and safety...

PAUL

You're absolutely right, Daniel. A lot of my colleagues are doing the hard work of advocacy and raising awareness, for neuro-diverse folks, for all sorts of marginalized people. But, unfortunately, the institution as a whole has a long way to go. University messaging and materials like these (*re: the posters*) can make it seem like we're further along than we are.

(*then*)

To be totally transparent - just sitting here I sometimes feel helpless.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

You and I can arrange a meeting, I can help make accommodations for you, we can file a formal complaint... but beyond that, my actual ability to affect change is... limited.

DANIEL

Well, it's good just to talk.

PAUL

Try to remember, if all of this continues to trouble you - your experience matters. It is important to me.

(then, self-deprecating)

I hope I don't sound like a pamphlet.

DANIEL

No, you don't. It's a lot different when it's a person saying it to you.

Daniel checks the time.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I stayed longer than I thought - I'm sorry, Paul, I should go -

PAUL

Of course, no worries.

The two of them stand as Daniel is about to leave.

PAUL (CONT'D)

So, with your permission, I'll contact Terry and the three of us can connect?

DANIEL

Yeah, that's probably a good idea. Thanks.

PAUL

Let me know if anything comes up. Take care.

Daniel waves goodbye, and leaves. Paul is alone. He sits, and takes another look at the posters on the wall...

FADE OUT.