

REPUTATION

First 12 pages

Written by

Kelly Chapman

kellyjchapman@gmail.com
110 Arthur Street, Woody Point, 4019, Australia
Tel 0468 481-510

1

INT. RACHEL'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

1

RACHEL, 43, white, attractive, disgruntled, scrolls through posts by Instagram influencer Melissa Brown.

RACHEL
(reading, sarcastic)
Thankyou SO much for your inspiring posts Melissa, you've really changed how I raise my kids. Ugh. Puke.

She clicks on the commenter's handle and follows her, scrolling through her feed.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Jeezus get a life Amy.

Back on one of Melissa's posts. She clicks on the comments.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Since you've been in my life, my relationship with my children has improved one hundred percent.

She clicks on the commenter's @ handle.

Scrolls through her feed.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Judging by the starting place Cheryl, that wasn't hard. Ugh. I don't know how a mother can love an ugly child.

2

INT. AIDAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

2

AIDAN, 17, biracial, good looking, lies on his bed, laptop on his tummy.

Gangsta rap is pumping through his headphones.

On the wall beside Aidan, polaroid photos of his African American father with platinum chains and platinum teeth, wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with AUSTRALIA.

Aidan messages a friend: all good tmw

A message comes back: ;-)

Aidan closes his laptop.

3 INT. RACHEL'S HOME OFFICE - DAY 3

Rachel fiddles with her vlogging kit and selfie light ring, preparing to record an episode for her online channel.

Aidan pops his head in the door.

AIDAN
See you later Mum, Gram's picking
me up.

She kisses him on the cheek.

RACHEL
Bye darling.

Aidan leaves. Rachel returns to her vlogging set up.

She checks herself in the mirror.

Brushes her hair.

Applies some natural coloured lipstick.

She sits in her office chair and presses record on the phone.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Being a single parent isn't easy in
any way. As your child gets older
they tend to become more and more
expensive. (beat)

CUT TO:

4 INT. AMANDA'S LOUNGE ROOM - DAY 4

AMANDA, 39, is reading from her phone screen.

RACHEL (O.S.)
Balancing being at work to earn the
money and at home to provide
guidance is tricky. (beat)

Amanda nods.

CUT TO:

5 INT. RACHEL'S HOME OFFICE - DAY 5

Rachel to phone camera.

RACHEL

If, like me, you have extended family who want to support you, I would encourage you to seriously weigh up the pros and cons. Really. (beat) What starts out as a generous and very willing cash injection to cover out of the ordinary expenses can become ongoing, *very conditional* support, that relies on your incorporating the views of the subsidiser into how you raise your child.

CUT TO:

6 INT. RHONDA'S BATHROOM - DAY 6

RHONDA, 41, sits on the toilet cleaning her teeth watching her phone that's in her other hand.

She nods.

RHONDA

Amen.

7 EXT. RACHEL AND AIDAN'S HOME - DAY 7

An inner city street that's lined with apartment buildings. Aidan leans against the fence. A Toyota Corolla slows down.

The woman driving it, Aidan's grandmother JULIE (67) double parks and gets out of the car.

Aidan puts magnetic L plates on the front and rear of the car and hops into the driver's seat.

Julie gets into the passenger seat. Aidan leans over and kisses Julie on the cheek.

JULIE

Hello darling. How are you?

AIDAN

Good Gram. You?

JULIE

(smiling)
Still alive.

They fasten their seatbelts.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Adjust your mirrors and seat position.

Aidan does so.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Now check in your mirrors for any traffic. Turn your head to check too.

Aidan does.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Put it into Drive, put your indicator on and when there are no cars, slowly start moving.

The car drives slowly up the street.

8 INT. RACHEL'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

8

Rachel continues to record her podcast episode.

RACHEL

I don't know about you but I promised when I got pregnant that I would not raise my child like my mother raised me. I am my own person and I have my own parenting style. (beat)

CUT TO:

9 INT. AMANDA'S LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

9

Amanda scratches at a half eaten lolly, hardened to the floor, phone in her other hand.

AMANDA

And it's a whole lot better than hers was.

CUT TO:

10 INT. RACHEL'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

10

Rachel, earnest, speaks directly to her phone camera.

RACHEL

When my mother tries to interfere with the way I raise my son I need to take a deep breath, connect with myself and set a boundary.

She closes her eyes, hand on heart and exhales deeply.

11

INT. JULIE'S CAR - DAY

11

Aidan drives along a quiet, straight road.

JULIE

How is your mum doing with her job search?

AIDAN

I don't know. She's all about her video channel at the moment. Apparently she's an expert at being a single mum.

Julie's eyes widen.

JULIE

(almost under her breath)
Who needs *her* single mother to pay the bills.

Aiden chuckles.

AIDAN

She's pretty smart really Gram. She's probably helping someone.

JULIE

But how can a video channel make money?

AIDAN

It's a new thing. You know. Being an influencer.

JULIE

Who is she influencing?

AIDAN

Other single mums I suppose.

JULIE

(incredulous)
They pay to listen to her?

AIDAN

No. If she gets enough people to listen to her, companies pay her to promote their products. Kind of like that.

JULIE

Oh. The new soap opera.
Turn left here darling.

12 INT. RACHEL'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

12

Rachel is listening back to her recording. It finishes.

RACHEL

That's how you do it!

She uploads the video to her channel.

Goes back to Melissa Brown's Insta page and clicks on a post espousing the benefits of raising your child with extended family.

Rachel's video uploading is complete. She copies the link to the episode and pastes it in the comments of Melissa's post.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Stick that in your yummy mummy pants Melissa.

13 EXT. MCDONALDS CARPARK - DAY

13

Julie's car moves slowly into the carpark. Aidan parks the car.

JULIE

Don't forget the handbrake.

Aidan applies it. Unfastens his seatbelt and leans over to give Julie a kiss.

AIDAN

Thanks Gram.

JULIE

Darling... do you have the link to the videos your mum's making?

AIDAN

Sure Gram, I'll text the channel link to you.

JULIE
Thanks darling. See you Thursday.

AIDAN
Bye Gram.

Aidan gets out of the car and walks towards the entrance.
Turns and waves to Julie who waves back then drives off.

14 INT. MCDONALDS - DAY

14

Aidan takes the thickshake he ordered and sits at a two seat table next to a window.

A man in his thirties, DOUG, joins him.

AIDAN
'sup.

DOUG
Hey dude, how you been?

AIDAN
Yeah, good.

They join hands across the table.

DOUG
That's the way.

Doug places a box for a mobile phone on the table between them.

Aidan puts his hand under the table and passes Doug an envelope.

AIDAN
Thanks man.

DOUG
No worries. You should be very happy with it.

15 INT. JULIE'S HOME - EVENING

15

Julie puts her dinner dishes in the sink. She turns the kettle on.

While she's waiting for it to boil, she opens a text message from Aidan.

Clicks on link to Rachel's latest video.

Clicks halfway along the video.

RACHEL (V.O.)

When my mother tries to interfere with the way I raise my son I need to take a deep breath, connect with myself, and set a boundary.

Julie cocks her eyebrow.

16

INT. RACHEL'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

16

Rachel's phone rings. It's Julie. She picks it up.

RACHEL

Hi Mum.

JULIE (O.S.)

Interesting videos you're making.

RACHEL

Oh, you've seen some!

JULIE (O.S.)

I particularly liked the part about boundaries. (beat). I think I might need to set some of my own.

Rachel grimaces.

RACHEL

It's not about you Mum.

Silence.

JULIE (O.S.)

Then who's it about?

Rachel taps the desk nervously.

RACHEL

One of the other mums at school was beside herself the other day. I was inspired by her to record it.

Silence.

JULIE (O.S.)

How is your job hunting going?

RACHEL

There's just nothing out there.

JULIE

Lockdowns are over Rachel,
employers are desperate for staff.
It's a job seeker's market.

RACHEL

Mum, I was born to be an
influencer. I have a distinct point
of difference from other parenting
vloggers because I'm raising a
coloured male child on my own. And
I'm white.

JULIE (O.S.)

I don't think you're the first
white woman in the world to have a
child with a black man Rachel. And
what kind of job is influencing
anyway? Where's the security?
Holiday pay? Super?

RACHEL

It's actually a really practical
kind of job Mum. I can do it from
home so I can be here for Aidan, I
can pick and choose the hours I
work...

JULIE (O.S.)

And when do you think you'll be
ready to pay your own bills?
(beat). You're a grown woman, you
need to provide for yourself. For
your child.

RACHEL

You've never believed in me! You
never encouraged me to do creative
things...

JULIE (O.S.)

You're in your forties Rachel.
Surely you're not still blaming me
for how your life turned out. Life
is about choices. You CHOSE to have
a child knowing the father wasn't
going to be in the picture.

RACHEL

I didn't KNOW he wasn't going to be
involved...

JULIE (O.S.)
 If you'd looked at the evidence
 instead of buying wholeheartedly
 into your fantasy, you couldn't
 possibly have come up with any
 other assumption.

Rachel exhales. Looks down. Upset.

RACHEL
 Just give me a chance to build my
 audience. I'm trying to be really
 strategic.

CUT TO:

17 INT. JULIE'S HOME - DAY 17

Julie stands upright, arms held tight.

JULIE
 I'm not made of money you know.

RACHEL (O.S.)
 I know.

JULIE
 I WORKED for my security. And went
 without so you kids could always go
 on school excursions and the like.

CUT TO:

18 INT. RACHEL'S HOME OFFICE - DAY 18

RACHEL
 I know Mum. I know.

Silence.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 And I appreciate ALL that you did.
 I really do.

Silence.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 I'll look harder for a job.

Silence.

JULIE (O.S.)

It's not for me you know. It's for you. And for Aidan. It's important you are a solid role model for him. You don't want to raise a man who's dependent on a woman do you?

RACHEL

No. I know. I don't.

Rachel's desperate to change the topic.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

How's it going on the dating front?

Rachel holds her own gaze in the mirror. Her face softens.

19 INT. AIDAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING 19

Aidan locks his door and sits at his desk.

He looks at the photos of his dad then opens the mobile phone box he got from Doug.

From under some bundled paper he retrieves a plastic bag full of marijuana.

He takes a bundle of small baggies and a digital scale from a drawer.

20 EXT. HIGHSCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY 20

A bell rings and kids flood the playground.

Aidan nods at a boy JOSH, 17, and heads for the boys toilets.

Josh nods back and also heads that way.

21 INT./EXT. BOYS TOILET - DAY 21

Aidan washes his hands and looks in the mirror.

Josh walks into the toilets.

Aidan dries his hands on his pants and takes a small baggie with marijuana out of his pocket.

Josh gets money out of his wallet.

JOSH

Fifty.

AIDAN
No worries.

A teacher MR DAVIS walks in to the toilets and eyeballs their transaction.

Josh pockets his wallet and heads to a cubicle.

Aidan drops the bag of weed on the ground beside his leg.

MR DAVIS
Wait a minute Humphreys, stop right there.

JOSH
What?

MR DAVIS
Turn out your pockets.

Josh whines.

MR DAVIS (CONT'D)
Now! And Brooke turn out yours.

Two younger boys enter the toilet.

When they see what's happening they turn and run out.

AIDAN
I haven't done anything. Fuck you.

Mr Davis spots the bag of weed on the ground and picks it up.

MR DAVIS
Let's see what the principal thinks.

After a brief stand off Aidan heads out of the toilet.

A group of students has gathered near the toilet to watch the drama.

Jeers and excitement.

LOUD BOY
The poster child isn't perfect after all!

LOUD BOY 2
Mummy's no expert when it comes to dealing drugs!