

Kim Wexler's Feminist Nightmare in 'Better Call Saul'

Better Call Saul recently completed its fifth season. The show started as a spinoff based on a minor character from megahit *Breaking Bad*. However, *Better Call Saul* quickly became beloved and critically acclaimed in its own right.

Much of the credit for that belongs to actress Rhea Seehorn's stellar portrayal of Kim Wexler. She became the show's [breakout star](#).

Kim Wexler – wife of lead character Jimmy McGill aka Saul Goodman – is an enigmatic character. But viewers got a glimpse into her past during a job interview in season 2. Kim reveals she is originally from a small town in the Midwest. She decided to leave because she looked around at her life and realized that she was going to end up “married to the guy that ran the town gas station. Maybe cashiering down at the Hinky Dinky [a supermarket]...I just wanted something else.”

The interviewer asks Kim, “What did you want?” She answers with one word: “More.”

In a sense, Kim embodies the feminist dream. She rejected the traditional feminine path of marriage and family. Instead, she pursued a career. She graduated law school and landed a job at a major law firm, later leaving to start her own practice.

J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, had a relevant observation about women who are described as “economically independent.” He [wrote](#), “It usually really means economic subservience to male commercial employers instead of to a father or a family.”

That certainly applies to Kim. The show depicts her working endlessly for various male bosses. Even after she starts her own law firm, she is beholden to her biggest client, wealthy bank CEO Kevin Wachtell. In season 3, she becomes so exhausted working over-time for him and his friend that she crashes her car.

Despite her hard work, Kim hasn't become rich. She lives in a small apartment. At the end of season 5, she hatches a plot to frame her old boss so she can get the money she needs to fund her dream of starting a pro bono law firm to help the poor.

Kim's sudden dark turn is surprising. For most of the show, Kim was the stereotypical virtuous woman trying to keep the roguish Jimmy on the straight and narrow.

Kim and Jimmy might have the feminist ideal of an "equal partnership." She never lets their relationship get in the way of her career. In the early seasons of the show, they are married in all but name. They live together and share business expenses, but Jimmy never fully commits to her. Finally in season 5, Kim is the one who proposes marriage. But it's mainly a device to ensure she cannot be compelled to testify against him in court.

Kim has probably lost her chance of having biological children. (Seehorn is 48, so it is reasonable to assume the character she plays is around the same age.) And Jimmy isn't exactly cut out for fatherhood.

Kim said she left her hometown because she wanted "more." Did she get it? She got a better wardrobe. The tailored suits she wears as a lawyer are more elegant than a supermarket cashier's vest. But that seems to be the only benefit.

Her life would probably be happier if she'd married that "guy that ran the town gas station." At least he would be more concerned for her welfare than her various male bosses. But that doesn't fit our cultural narrative.

Kim isn't living the dream. She's living a feminist nightmare.

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