

Conner

ACT ONE

1 EXT. MAIN QUAD, MIDDLETON UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

1

FOOTBALL PLAYERS. CHEERLEADERS. A SEA OF SCREAMING, RILED UP COLLEGE STUDENTS...because we've been thrust into the center of a PEP RALLY for the MIDDLETON UNIVERSITY WARRIORS. By day, this quad is filled with the best and brightest minds in the country -- future Rhodes Scholars and Nobel winners -- but right now? They're just drunk. Spooky, foreboding music sets the tone as we MOVE SLOW MOTION over the crowd. Even though it's the middle of winter, the GUYS are SHIRTLESS, showing off their pecs painted in school colors while their GIRLFRIENDS sit on their shoulders, chugging from bottles of whiskey. It's a wild, rowdy, debaucherous ORGY of school pride that only America's wealthiest children could get away with. The only person who could possibly get them to pay attention right now is the FOOTBALL COACH shouting into a mic on the stage, a preacher with his disciples. He holds a TORCH.

FOOTBALL COACH

It's been a rough year, no doubt, but that all ends Saturday! Because that's when this team, my Warriors, are gonna burn those lazy, cocky, pansy-ass Princeton players to the ground! AIN'T THAT RIGHT, MIDDLETON?! LET ME HEAR IT!!

As the crowd ROARS, the coach now brings the torch to a TOWERING WOODEN EFFIGY behind him, the word "Princeton" painted across its make-believe jersey. And as the effigy BURSTS INTO FLAMES and the MARCHING BAND LAUNCHES INTO SONG, the camera suddenly speeds up, pushing through the students and over the bonfire and past the gothic buildings and ivy-covered arches that make up this beautiful campus until we CRASH INTO --

2 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

2

It's dark and eerie as we whip past the trees, deeper and deeper into the woods, the sounds of the pep rally fading behind us. Suddenly the camera SCREECHES TO A HALT. We are now in a small CLEARING. Through the dark we see 3 TWENTY-SOMETHINGS, a diverse motley crew, shivering in the cold and freaking out. About what, we'll soon discover. The first of them, MICHAELA PRATT (27, preppy, type-A) paces and thinks as the two others sit, quiet and trembling. She was born knowing how to "lean in" so that's what she's going to do right now -- take control, CEO this shit.

MICHAELA

It's been too long. ~~We did what we said, we waited, we stuck to our word, but we can't just sit here all night.~~ We have to do something. And I know you're not going to like it, but I'm calling Aiden.

How To Get Away With Murder

Scene 1

1/6

CONNER
ARE YOU HIGH??!

Under normal circumstances, CONNER DONAHUE (25) is sexy, sophisticated, confident, cool, and hyper-articulate. Right now though? He's shitting his pants.

CONNER (CONT'D)
We're not calling your fiancé! We wait. THAT is what we decided so THAT is what we're going to do.

MICHAELA
I was never part of that decision.

CONNER
Because you had a meltdown! You could barely make a sentence! So shut up, sit down, and stop acting like a little bitch baby.

MICHAELA
I am acting like a person does in a situation like this!

CONNER
No. You're hysterical and you need to calm the hell down.

MICHAELA
DO NOT TELL ME HOW TO FEEL RIGHT NOW!

WES (O.S.)
Hey.

They all jump, SCREAMING BLOODY MURDER, just like we do at home, because now a 4th person stands there. Meet WES GIBBINS (27). Wes is boyish, easy-going, instantly likable...and his t-shirt is covered in blood.

WES (CONT'D)
Sorry it took me so long. I went back for this.

Wes removes a backpack, pulls out a TROPHY, also covered in blood.

~~MICHAELA~~
~~Wes! Why'd you bring that here?~~
~~Take it back right now~~

~~LAUREL~~
~~No. It's smart.~~

Finally we hear from LAUREL WILDING (23, bookish, introverted). She's been quiet up till now.

2/6

That's her thing -- she's a thinker, an observer, the type of person easy to underestimate. She has the answer now though, decisive, confident.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

The People vs. Gallivan! ~~Pennsylvania vs. Gottlieb!~~ Cases the prosecution should've won but lost because there was no murder weapon...

CONNER

So what are you saying? *

LAUREL

We clean it and put it back. Hide it in plain sight.

(beat)

After we bury the body.

A long beat as everyone takes that in. Then --

MICHAELA

No, absolutely NOT.

CONNER

I agree with Michaela. *

~~LAUREL~~

~~Conner~~ *

CONNER

The trophy we need, yes. But the body stays where it is. *

LAUREL

The body is what gets us caught.

CONNER

Then why'd we leave it there in the first place? *

LAUREL

Because we panicked. ~~All of us.~~
~~But now that we're finally thinking straight~~

~~MICHAELA~~

~~You are not thinking straight~~

LAUREL

~~Then~~ What do you suggest??!

MICHAELA

Something that doesn't involve carrying a body across campus on the busiest night of the year!

3/6

CONNER
She's right, Laurel. Even if we were able to get it out of the house, unseen, the ground is frozen--

*

LAUREL
We have all night to dig!

CONNER
You don't know what you're talking about!

*

LAUREL
This is murder, none of us know what we're talking about!

End

~~MICHAELA
Please, just yell that a little louder--~~

WES
Hey...

MICHAELA
Honestly, you're all dumber than I thought if you think we should go back there.

CONNER
I'm agreeing with you!

*

Now everyone's yelling, except Wes who keeps trying to interrupt.

MICHAELA/CONNER/LAUREL/WES
You should've agreed with me weeks ago when I begged, BEGGED, to tell the police instead of deluding ourselves that we were on the right side of this!/And I'm sorry Laurel but someone will sniff out the body if we bury it, if they don't catch us before, there are cops everywhere tonight!/You two need to MAN UP and THINK because we're going to jail unless we go back there and destroy the DNA!/Guys...Listen...Hey...SHUT UP!

*

Finally they all stop, look at Wes. He's calm, focused, a quiet and confident leader to this very outspoken group.

WES
It's two against two. We have no other choice. We flip a coin.

Beat.

4/6

CONNER (CONT'D)

(beat)
That was a joke. You do all know
that?

~~But they all just stay silent, too traumatized for jokes right
now. As we HOLD ON Conner, driving them out of the parking lot,
wondering how the hell he ended up here. we FLASHBACK TO:~~

23 INT. UPSCALE BAR - NIGHT - 4 MONTHS EARLIER

23

Four months earlier, where a calmer, cooler, sexier Conner carries
two drinks through a crowd of business-y types. He arrives at a
table occupied by OLIVER (30, glasses, nerdy cute).

CONNER

Makers Manhattan, 2 cherries.

OLIVER

I'm getting the next round, otherwise
I refuse to drink this.

CONNER

Deal. -- So you know, your co-
workers over there seem to want a
show so say the word and we can start
making out.

Oliver turns to see what Conner means -- several of Oliver's
BUSINESS-CASUAL-CLAD co-workers stealing glances at them.

OLIVER

Ignore them. I just don't talk to
guys at bars that often.

CONNER

I can tell.

OLIVER

And now I'm leaving.

CONNER

No you're not.

OLIVER

No I'm not.

They both smile, the chemistry fun and easy.

CONNER

So, let me guess, you all work in
that advertising agency upstairs?

OLIVER

Is it that obvious?

9/6

CONNER

I work in the bank across the street and the only hot guys who come here are from your agency.

OLIVER

Hot, wow, I don't think I've ever actually been called that. But I don't work in the cool part of the company if that's what you're thinking. I'm in I.T.

Ding. Conner's just hit the jackpot.

CONNER

I.T.? No, I think I.T.'s very cool.

OLIVER

No, you think I.T.'s very dorky, as does the rest of the world.

CONNER

Maybe. But dorks are actually my type.

Oliver looks up, Conner now giving him some serious sex-eye. And now Conner goes in for the kill.

CONNER (CONT'D)

Can I ask you something? Did you know that secretary who tried to kill her boss with an aspirin?

OLIVER

Yeah. But I'm not supposed to talk about that actually. The legal department warned us as soon as the media got ahold of the story a few days ago.

CONNER

Oh. Right. Sorry I asked.

And now Conner looks down, checking his phone, no longer interested. Oliver realizes, he's screwed up here, especially when Conner now checks out another guy passing by...

OLIVER

Okay, I'll tell you a little bit. But you have to promise -- you didn't hear this from me.

As Conner smiles, an oblivious Oliver falling into his trap...

End

6/10