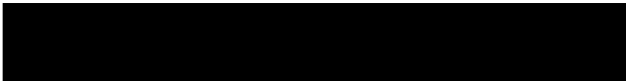


HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER

"He Killed Her"

Written by

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TEASER

UP ON:

INT. ANNALISE'S CONDO - NIGHT

It's dark. Annalise's condo is dimmed with moonlight from the blinds streaking her face. On her cell, she declares vehemently:

ANNALISE
(on phone)
It's time to pay up.

Then, REWINDING and finishing with a WIPE, we are whisked away to the past:

INT. SOLOMON VICK'S OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

It's 1988. A young and eager 20-something Annalise paces with eagerness. After a moment, a young SOLOMON VICK, the biological father of Michaela and mentor of Annalise, enters the office with a serious look on his face.

ANNALISE
Well?

SOLOMON
I must say Annalise, this was an arduous case.

ANNALISE
Yes, I understand.

SOLOMON
You're young and bright and I want to tell you now that not everything will work out in your favor in this legal battlefield.

There's a beat, tension lay in Annalise's eyes, prepping for disappointment.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
But fortunately for you, for us, and Dwight, it worked this time.

Annalise shoots her eyes up at Solomon, still not sure of what he's trying to convey.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Judge Paloma dismissed the charges. Dwight's a free man, we won.

ANNALISE

We did?! We won?

SOLOMON

Yes. Congratulations. Great work, if it hadn't been for your diligent effort, I'm not sure Dwight would've had the same outcome.

Annalise squeals, brimming with elation. This is her first major win, she's born for this and she knows it.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

How about some celebratory drinks? I'll give Dwight a call to meet us so we can tell him the good news in person.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - LATER THAT EVENING

Annalise, Solomon, and DWIGHT (the presumed biological father of Michaela) sit in the dimly lit bar with smiles plastered on their faces as they clink glasses.

SOLOMON

To Dwight for remaining a free man, and to Annalise for making it all happen.

DWIGHT

Thank you, both. I'm speechless and truly grateful.

As they tap glasses, Dwight gets a good look at the shining college football ring on Solomon's finger.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

That's a nice ring you got there. What's that Tennessee?

SOLOMON

Yes, the good old college days. I was a running back and my sophomore year, the year I got injured, we brought home the championship.

ANNALISE

You must be proud, you wear that thing everyday.

SOLOMON

It was bittersweet. It was my last game and we defeated Alabama who had been on a maddening winning streak. Now, it's my good luck charm. I never lose a case without it.

ANNALISE

You believe in that?

SOLOMON

I do. Listen, this ring is the reason your case was thrown out, that along with the help of one brilliant savant with a luminous future, Ms. Annalise Harkness.

Solomon flashes a smile and raises his glass to her in acknowledgement as Annalise relishes in pride.

This fades as we WIPE TO:

INT. DWIGHT'S HOME - NIGHT

BANG! A gunshot rings as a young Annalise conceals herself behind the wall of a doorway looking on in fright. Her eyes enlarged with trepidation as she tries to control her breathing.

TITLE CARD

ACT ONE

INT. PARKING GARAGE, CAPLAN & GOLD - NIGHT

PRESENT DAY - Nate stands with Cora, Tegan's ex-wife, beside her stalled motorcycle. She glares at Nate with apprehensive eyes. With a tug and shift, he gets the motorcycle back running.

NATE

Good to go.

CORA

Thanks.

Cora tries to mount her bike, but Nate still has a hold of it. Cora looks at him, unsure of his motive.

NATE

Before you go, what could you tell me about your ex-wife?

CORA

Excuse me?

NATE

Tegan Price. That is who you were just up there visiting, right?

CORA

Who are you?

NATE

What can you tell me about her and her former or current alliance with the Castillo family?

CORA

I don't know what you're talking about.

NATE

I doubt that, Cora Duncan, Under Secretary of Homeland Security.

CORA

Did you set me up? Ripped that cord from my bike so you can corner me with your questions?

NATE

I know things didn't work out with the two of you, so I'm not so sure where your allegiance lies, but it would be wise if you answered me.

Cora tilts her head and squints her eyes.

CORA

I know you. You're former Detective Nate Lahey, I recognize you from the news regarding your father's murder.

NATE

Now that we know each other, are you going to cooperate?

CORA

Is that a threat?

NATE

Of what?

CORA

Listen, Mr. Lahey, I don't know about any of the dealings going on with Tegan and the Castillos. Your best bet would be to go directly to her and ask. If I were you, I'd let go of my bike and send me on my way because I have nothing to tell you. Otherwise, it is a major offense tampering with the operation of a motor vehicle, and I'd hate to report you for such an infraction.

Cora snatches her bike from Nate's hold and zooms off. Nate watches as she rides away with a frustrated gaze and clinched jaw.

CUT TO:

INT. MICHAELA'S ROOM, KEATING FOUR HOME - MORNING

Michaela lays across her bed staring pensively at the blank check her biological father, Solomon, gifted her.

After a moment, she grabs her cell and calls GABE. It rings until she gets his voicemail.

MICHAELA

(on phone)

Hey, where are you? Could you come over, please?

(beat)

I hate to admit this but... I need your *sage* advice, call me back.

She tosses the phone aside as she sighs.

CUT TO:

INT. CONNOR/OLIVER'S ROOM, KEATING FOUR HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Connor and Oliver lay thrashed in the messy sheets of the bed - clearly there was a romp last night. Oliver is sound asleep as Connor awakens.

Reaching behind him, he grasps a handful of sheets. He looks over and sees nothing or no one there. He squints. Getting up, he puts on an undershirt and walks out to the --

INT. KITCHEN, KEATING FOUR HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Connor tips into the kitchen where facing him is the bare back of RAVI, the sexual boy toy he and Oliver share. Connor can see and hear him fidgeting with the coffee maker.

CONNOR

What are you doing?

Startled, Ravi turns to face Connor and smiles nervously - almost concealing his nerves all too well.

RAVI

Good morning, sleepyhead. Just getting some coffee started before I break some yolk. Oliver loved my biscuits last time so I figured I give you two an encore performance.

Connor squints once more. Something's fishy.

RAVI (CONT'D)

Go wash up and wake that hubby of yours. Breakfast will be ready in 30.

Ravi smiles and continues moving about the kitchen preparing to cook. Connor walks out as we ZOOM to the coffee maker where a RED LIGHT flickers from a small electronic device affixed to the appliance.

INT. KITCHEN, MILLSTONE RESIDENCE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Asher pours a can of soup into a pot on the stove. Chloe, his older sister, emerges from the doorway.

CHLOE

I'm really glad you came home.

ASHER

I'm not here to stay, alright. I'm just here to make sure mom gets better.

CHLOE

She doesn't have the common cold, Asher. Her mental health is at stake.

ASHER

I understand that, Chloe, but-

CHLOE

Do you? I don't know what it is about those misfits you call friends that you go running behind every minute of the day. But mom is on a short circuit. One bad day and she can decide to jump out the window or into oncoming traffic.

ASHER

Why are you trying to make this my problem? Why is this all on me?

CHLOE

We're all we have, Asher. I'm not certain if the picture's coming in clear for you, but we are blood. Those hounds you call friends are self-serving vultures that will rip you to shreds just to make sure they're backs are covered. You may think they're your friends now, but what's going to happen when the choice comes down to them or you? Who do you think they're gonna choose?

Asher tightens his face, but the thought is valid.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S ROOM, BONNIE'S HOME - LATER THAT DAY

Bonnie enters the room with a tray of food, a bottle of pain pills, and some water. Laying bruised and bandaged up in the bed is Frank - he's home from the hospital but in no condition to care for himself just yet. Bonnie sets the food down on the bedside table.

BONNIE
How are you feeling?

FRANK
I've seen better days.

BONNIE
How bad's the pain?

FRANK
Ever been hit by an 18 wheeler?

BONNIE
Can't say I have.

FRANK
Me either, but that sounds like a day at the spa compared to this.

BONNIE
I brought you some soup and crackers to take with your meds.

FRANK
I hate soup.

BONNIE
You gotta have something on your stomach for those pills, Frank.

FRANK
How about a double cheeseburger with some chilly fries.

BONNIE
It's beef stew right out the can, close enough. Here.

She hands him a couple of pills and the glass of water.

FRANK
These pills make me feel like crap. I'm not sure if I'm dead, awake, or dreaming.

BONNIE

I know, but you gotta take them for
a few more days at least.

FRANK

Yeah, yeah...

There's a KNOCK at the door.

BONNIE

Take the pills, I'll be back.

Frank knocks the pills back and washes them down with a swig
of water.

CUT TO:

INT. BONNIE'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Bonnie opens the door and sees Nate. He walks in, she closes
the door behind him.

NATE

Cora Duncan - what do you know?

BONNIE

Homeland Security Cora Duncan?
Tegan's Cora?

NATE

I just had a conversation with her
and didn't get much.

BONNIE

Wait, why are you looking into her?

NATE

If Tegan's involved in the
investigation on Annalise, Cora
might know something or even have a
hand in it herself.

BONNIE

Tegan called her for a get out of
jail free card. She saved Connor's
ass. Why would she be involved?

NATE

I'm still not convinced Tegan is
being 100% honest.

BONNIE

Annalise trusts her.

NATE

Yeah well Annalise doesn't have the best track record when it comes to people she's trusted.

Bonnie raises her eyebrows - Nate's right. She thinks, then-

BONNIE

I can have Oliver look into her, maybe dig something up that'll get her to talk.

Nate heads to the door.

NATE

Let me know what he finds. The sooner the better. I'm sure she sped right over to Tegan and told her about our exchange.

BONNIE

I'm on it.

Nate leaves.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. KEATING FOUR HOME - LATER THAT DAY

Oliver closes the door behind Ravi who just left. Connor stands behind Oliver with concern on his face.

CONNOR
I thought he'd never leave.

OLIVER
Are you kidding, that breakfast was delicious. Almost as good as the sex.

CONNOR
It's not the breakfast.

Connor turns and walks to the --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Oliver trails behind him with a big goofy smile on his face.

OLIVER
Uh oh, am I sensing jealousy emitting from the nearly invisible pores of my husband?

Connor moves to the coffee maker and examines it as he entertains Oliver's campy banter.

CONNOR
There's nothing to be jealous about, trust me.

OLIVER
Oh yeah? Just last week you were all about it, opening up our marital bed, letting in Ravi and all of his tricks and tasty breakfast delights with open arms...and legs...

CONNOR
It has nothing to do with Ravi and his sideshow bedroom antics, but more so this...

As Connor fumbles with the coffee maker, he detaches the small electronic device and holds it in the air for Oliver to see.

OLIVER
What is that?

CONNOR
I caught Ravi messing with the coffee maker this morning while he was preparing your breakfast at Tiffany's spread. He must've put this here.

OLIVER
How do you know that wasn't there before?

CONNOR
Because he was acting all jumpy when I walked in. And who else would've put it there?

OLIVER
Let me see it.

Connor hands the device to Oliver.

CONNOR
What could it be, a camera?

OLIVER
He did strike me as a cam guy. Maybe he wanted a little voyeuristic action.

CONNOR
In the kitchen?

OLIVER
Good point. Well it has a chip, I can go plug it and check it out.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Gabe and his mother Vivian are in mid conversation.

GABE
I know how much you hate Annalise, but I don't think cooperating with the FBI is a smart move, ma.

VIVIAN
I don't hate Annalise. She just cannot be trusted. She's a liar.

GABE

I talked to her about my dad. And with everything she said, she looked me right in my eyes.

VIVIAN

That's what liars do, baby. And they're good at it.

GABE

We've all done things we're not proud of and then lie to cover it up. I can't really blame her for lying about certain things.

VIVIAN

Certain things like what? Do you know something about her that you're not telling me? Did she kill Sam?

GABE

No. I don't know, but I don't think so.

VIVIAN

Then why are you making concessions for her?

GABE

She was young when she met my dad. She admitted that she was stupid and selfish.

VIVIAN

And that doesn't give her a pass. She wrecked my home, took your father from you so she still deserves my rage and anything else that comes her way.

(beat)

But, I need your help.

GABE

With what?

VIVIAN

We need to find out what happened to your father. Who killed him, why? The truth!

GABE

I can't do that.

VIVIAN

Why not?

GABE

I can't just turn on her and talk to the feds. If that's the choice you want to make, fine. But I can't.

VIVIAN

If she's innocent then there will be no harm done. With your help you can get her crossed off their list that much quicker than me trying to piece all this together myself.

GABE

What about Michaela? If they go after Annalise, they're gonna go after all of them.

VIVIAN

There's gonna be no Michaela if you're in deep water because of Annalise's lies. And didn't you say she lied about knowing Michaela's father, time and time again? It wouldn't matter how many meds she takes or rehabilitation centers she checks herself into, a leopard never changes it's spots.

There's a moment. Gabe is hopeless. He knows his mother is right.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Just trust me, baby. Help me get the answers I need, the FBI needs, and you need to move on. You *and* Michaela.

Gabe thinks. Then-

GABE

I'm sorry, I can't.

Gabe leaves. Off Vivian's look of frustration...

CUT TO: