

OMNIVISUM

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who we are

Confess

Written by Phineas Penzo

int. police station – day

A pile of folders filled with documents sits on a desk. A layer of dust covers the top folder. Each folder is dated on its tab. The dates go back a few years.

The office is messy with boxes, and the desk is cluttered. One folder sits separate from the rest. The date is more recent than any of the other folders. DETECTIVE MACKENZIE sits at his desk, typing on his computer. He is in his mid-fifties and looks tired, with his clothes ruffled and his tie loose around his neck.

Mackenzie sighs, stretches, and pulls out his phone to check the time. It is 10 pm.

The phone on the desk rings, and Mackenzie looks up at it lazily, as though he's been expecting the call and knows who it is. Nevertheless, he's quick to pick it up.

MACKENZIE

Captain. I have him in interrogation. I'm gonna go get the confession right now.

Mackenzie pauses a moment to listen to his commanding officer.

MACKENZIE

He went home, sir. It's late. But I've got this.

He looks down at the organized desk across from his. The nameplate reads "Det. Kenan Banks". He rolls his eyes and shakes his head in frustration.

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MACKENZIE

I know he's your rising star, sir, but I've been on the force since before he was born. I'll get the confession. Schedule the press conference for tomorrow. Trust me. I have a lot riding on this too.

He pauses again to listen. He stares dead ahead at his screen. He has test results pulled up for a recent sergeant's exam. Passing, but barely. He shakes his head.

MACKENZIE

I know, sir. But I'll close this one. Have a good night.

He hangs up the phone and glances over at the picture sitting in a frame on his desk.

INSERT - PHOTO

of Mackenzie, a good three decades younger, standing in full formal police attire, cap and all. Above him is a banner that reads "CONGRATS DETECTIVE!" He smiles wide at the camera. He stands next to an older man, also in uniform, who has his arm around his shoulders. A yellowing, brittle newspaper clipping is tucked into the frame, with an article titled "Hero Officer Promoted To Detective".

Mackenzie looks up and to his right. On the other side of a two-way mirror, DUNCAN KING sits alone in an interrogation room. He is young, 18 years old. He looks like a normal kid, but he's restless. His leg bounces up and down, and he picks at his fingers and bites his nails.

Mackenzie stands and fixes his tie. He pulls his suit jacket on, takes a file from his desk, and walks into the interrogation room. The door falls shut behind him. Duncan stops fidgeting immediately and looks up at Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE

Hi. Duncan King, right? I'm Detective Mackenzie. How you doing? Can I get you anything?

Duncan shakes his head.

DUNCAN

I'm okay, thank you. Just a little tired.

Mackenzie nods. He pulls out the chair across the table from Duncan and takes a seat. He puts his file down on the table.

MACKENZIE

You know why you're here.

Duncan nods.

DUNCAN

You guys think I killed her.

MACKENZIE

Duncan, I just want to find the truth. I think you know the truth.

Duncan shakes his head in disbelief.

DUNCAN

I don't, I swear! You've never even met me! How can you think I did it? Ask Detective Banks. I told him everything I know.

Mackenzie points to the mirror behind him.

MACKENZIE

You see that mirror?

Duncan nods.

DUNCAN
It's a two-way mirror.

MACKENZIE
Yes. It is. I watched the interview you had with Detective Banks today. Duncan, I'm gonna be straight with you. We know you did it. Your fingerprints and DNA are all over the crime scene. We just need you to tell us why.

Duncan's chair scratches against the floor as he leans forward. He runs his hands through his hair. His leg starts shaking again.

DUNCAN
NO. No, I swear. I'd never hurt her.

MACKENZIE
I get that, Duncan, I do. But maybe she did something to hurt y-

DUNCAN
No! She didn't I-

MACKENZIE
Maybe she did something to hurt you, and you just snapped. It wasn't planned, you were just so hurt. I don't think you're a psychopath. I don't think you enjoyed it. I just think you didn't really have a choice.

DUNCAN
No! No matter what she did, I could never have hurt her. I love her. I loved her. She was my best friend. I could never hurt her.

Mackenzie shifts in his seat. He nods in understanding.

MACKENZIE
Okay, Duncan, I know. You must have loved her. You'd known her since fifth grade, right?
Duncan sniffs and relaxes a little. He leans back in his seat and crosses his arms. He bites his nail, looks down at the table, and nods.

DUNCAN
Seven years, yeah.

MACKENZIE
Seven years. And in those seven years, Lydia never even thought about you, never looked at you as anything more than a friend, did she?

Duncan's head jerks up, and he looks Mackenzie in the eye.

DUNCAN
What? No! No, it wasn't like that. We were really close, but we were just friends.

Mackenzie smiles a little bit.

MACKENZIE
You never wanted more?

Duncan looks down again. His face goes pink. He taps his foot on the ground.

MACKENZIE
You don't have to be embarrassed, bud. I've been there. I think every man has been there at some point or another. The friendzone? Shit stings, right?

Duncan uncrosses his arms and glances back up at Mackenzie.

DUNCAN
Maybe... I dunno. Maybe if she hadn't been dating Alex, then I might've done something at some point, but... but that just shows that I could never have-

MACKENZIE
No, Duncan. We're past that point.

Duncan's eyes go wide. He sits up more.

DUNCAN
Wh-what? What do you mean? I swear I-

MACKENZIE

I know you killed her. You know you killed her.

DUNCAN

No! I swear-

MACKENZIE

The only question is why. Now, there are serious consequences for lying to the police, and if you tell us the truth, it's going to be a lot easier on everyone. If I have to charge you with obstruction of justice, I will, but I don't want to do that. Now, I'm gonna give you a scenario, and you're gonna tell me if it's true, got it?

Duncan starts to cry. He quickly uses his sleeves to wipe his tears. He sniffs. Both his legs are bouncing with anxiety. Mackenzie stands up and brings his chair over to the other side of the table. He puts it down next to Duncan.

MACKENZIE

Detective Banks thinks you're sick. Thinks you have fantasies about hurting and killing women. He thinks you'd been planning this for a long while now, but I don't think that's true, is it?

Duncan shakes his head. He lets out a sob as he responds.

DUNCAN

No, no. No. It's not.

Mackenzie nods. He pulls a pack of tissues from his pocket and hands them to Duncan. Duncan pulls one out. He wipes his eyes.

MACKENZIE

I think you're a good kid Duncan. You're a good kid, right?

Duncan glances at Mackenzie's face and then back down. He nods. He blows his nose.

MACKENZIE

Maybe Detective Banks is right, and you killed her just because you could. No remorse, completely cold-blooded.

Duncan cries harder. He takes short, panicked breaths.

DUNCAN

No, I swear. No.

MACKENZIE

Alright then, maybe you didn't mean to. Maybe you were in love with her, and she said something hurtful. People can be so cruel to the people that love them. Maybe she said something so awful that you blacked out and threw whatever you had at her. Maybe you didn't even realize you were holding a knife. Maybe you didn't mean to hurt her.

Mackenzie pauses as Duncan's tears fall. Duncan looks up. Mackenzie continues.

If you didn't mean to kill her, if you didn't plan it, this will all be easier on you. I just need to know what happened, Duncan. Was it cold-blooded? Did you enjoy seeing her die?

DUNCAN

No, I could never-

MACKENZIE

So you didn't mean to do it then. Duncan, we know it was you. Just tell me why.

Duncan sobs. Mackenzie rubs his back.

DUNCAN

I...I-

MACKENZIE

It's okay, buddy. Take a deep breath. Take your time.

Duncan inhales deeply. He blows his nose again.

DUNCAN

I loved her.

MACKENZIE

I know, buddy.

DUNCAN

I didn't mean to kill her.

MACKENZIE
I know, bud. I know.

DUNCAN
It's like you said. I didn't even know what happened.

MACKENZIE
Okay. Okay, that's okay, Duncan. Can I ask you some questions about it?

Duncan takes a deep breath.

DUNCAN
I'm so tired. How long have I been here?

MACKENZIE
You started your interview with Detective Banks about seven hours ago. It's ten o'clock.

Duncan takes another deep breath. He blows his nose.

MACKENZIE
Mind if I ask you some questions?

DUNCAN
Okay.

He has stopped crying. His eyes are puffy and red.

Mackenzie gets up and moves back to the other side of the table. He takes a pen and notebook out of his pocket.

MACKENZIE
What time was it when she died?

Duncan's leg starts shaking again. He runs his hand through his hair.

DUNCAN
Um... I'm not sure. In the evening some time.

MACKENZIE
Okay, that's ok, bud

Mackenzie jots something down in the notebook.

What did you use to kill her?

Duncan's breath hitches.
He closes his eyes as he answers.

DUNCAN
A knife.

Mackenzie jots it down.

MACKENZIE
Okay, and what did you do with the knife after you killed her?

Duncan clears his throat.

Mackenzie looks down at his notebook and starts to write.

DUNCAN
I, uh. I threw it out.

Mackenzie stops writing. He looks back up at Duncan.

MACKENZIE
No, you didn't.

DUNCAN
I mean, um. I threw it out in the creek in her backyard.

Mackenzie puts the pen and notebook on the table. He looks annoyed.

MACKENZIE

Duncan, I need you to be honest with me. I can't help you if I don't know all the details or if you're still lying to me.
Both of Duncan's legs start to bounce. He shakes his head.

DUNCAN

Oh. D-Did you search the creek?

MACKENZIE

We didn't have to.

Duncan's legs stop shaking. He looks ready to give up.

DUNCAN

I'm sorry. It was a blur. I don't remember what I did with it.

Mackenzie stands up. His chair screeches as it moves across the floor.

MACKENZIE

You don't REMEMBER?

Duncan looks at Mackenzie, wide-eyed. He shakes his head. His eyes tear up.

MACKENZIE

You don't REMEMBER?! That you cleaned the knife off in Lydia's parents' sink and then buried it with her in a shallow grave in her backyard?

Duncan is crying again. He buries his face in his hands.

Mackenzie looks down at Duncan sobbing at the table. He runs his hand through his combed hair, messing it up.

MACKENZIE

Fuck.

He sits back down. He takes a deep breath in and out. The room stands still for a moment except for Duncan's sniffs and sobs.

MACKENZIE

You forgot that?

Duncan lowers his hands and lifts his head up a little. He nods hesitantly.

MACKENZIE

You forgot.

He looks away from Duncan, like he's looking for someone else to take the reins of the situation. He looks back, and Duncan is staring at him, eyes wide and cheeks wet with tears.

MACKENZIE

But you remember now?

Duncan nods again. Mackenzie looks him up and down. He sighs.

MACKENZIE

Okay.

Duncan wipes his tears with his sleeves. Mackenzie offers him another tissue. Duncan takes it and blows his nose. They sit in silence for a moment. Duncan's breathing levels out a little more. Where a moment ago, he was staring, he now refuses to look Mackenzie in the eye. Mackenzie can no longer look away.

DUNCAN

What happens now?

Mackenzie clears his throat. He picks up his notebook and pen and writes something down.

MACKENZIE

Now I get you some paper to write down your confession and sign.

Mackenzie stands up and walks out of the interrogation room and back into his office. He looks at the boy through the two-way mirror. He is sitting in his chair, holding his legs to his chest. He looks tiny.

Mackenzie approaches his desk and pulls out a notepad from his drawer. The picture and newspaper in the frame catch his eye. He takes the frame and tosses it carelessly into his drawer.

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He walks back into the interrogation room and takes his seat across from Duncan. He passes the notepad and pen over. He sits back in his chair, and Duncan begins to write.

FADE OUT.

