

AUNT CHLOE

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THE CONVERSATION

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FADE IN:

INT. JILLIAN'S HOME—DAY

Bright colors, modern decor, expensive Black art on the walls. JILLIAN RAMSEY, 32, enters in a suit, carrying a portfolio briefcase and her purse. Her live-in boyfriend, TROY, 32, sits at the kitchen table eating a sandwich, wearing scrubs.

JILLIAN

She wants to paint the walls white.
White walls are the death of any house.

TROY

I guess you had a good meeting?

JILLIAN

I've been away three days and she
wants white walls.

TROY

She'll come around. You're pretty savvy
at talking people out of white walls.

(looking around)

Obviously.

Jillian sits down at the table next to him and pulls her cell phone out of her purse. Troy glances at it.

TROY

You have some missed calls.

JILLIAN

(looking at her phone)

I just left her twenty minutes ago.

She pushes play on her voicemail and puts the message on speaker phone.

WOMAN (ON PHONE)

Jillian, it's Mrs. Haynesworth. I forgot to mention, I found a few fabric swatches for the curtains. I think you'll be pleased. They complement the walls nicely.

JILLIAN

The WHITE walls!

She deletes that message and plays another one.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

Hey Jilly, It's me.

Jillian's mood immediately shifts. She tenses up.

INT. PHIL'S HOME—DAY

PHIL sits at a desk, his back to us. His room is dark.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

I was just thinking about Ma and Pop's anniversary party last month.

INT. RAMSEY PARENTS' HOME—DAY (FLASHBACK)

Nice, warm home. Conservatively decorated. Jillian and Phil dance for their PARENTS, who laugh. Phil is a natural dancer. Jillian is not.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE THREE LOCATIONS AS INDICATED.

PHIL (ON PHONE)
(laughing)

You kill me, trying to dance.

Jillian leans on the table, listening intently.

PHIL (ON PHONE)
(half-hearted joke)

You need to stick to the canvas, baby!

Phil gets up from his desk. We see his face for the first time. He is pained. He leaves the room.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

Yeah, Ma loves it when we perform for her.
She lives for that. They both do.

In flashback, a happy Phil tap dances for Jillian and their parents. He is full of personality.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

I think it's why they put us in so many
activities, to entertain them.

Jillian gets up and starts pacing around the table, nervous.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

And that night, you and Mom drank me
and Pop under the table.

FLASHBACK—The Ramsey men are drunk; the Ramsey women laugh at them. Phil is a fun,
hysterical drunk.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

A girl shouldn't have that kind of tolerance.
But you took care of me. You always do.

FLASHBACK—Jillian makes Phil drink water. She puts a blanket over him.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

You're the strong one, Jilly. I'm weak.

Phil closes his garage door. Jillian gets a bad feeling.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

I know you hate it when I talk like that,
but it's the truth.

Phil gets a small hose from a Home Depot bag.

Troy feels Jillian's nervousness and squeezes her hand.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

I'm weak and trifling and good for
nothing.

Phil attaches the hose to the exhaust pipe.

Jillian runs across the room to the home phone.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

I'm a disappointment to you, Ma, and
Pop. Mary.

Phil puts the other end of the hose in the trunk, starts the car.

Jillian dials 9-1-1.

PHIL (ON PHONE)

I'm alone and I'm tired.

Phil gets in the trunk.

JILLIAN (INTO PHONE)

Hello, can you send someone to
865 Wonderland Drive?!

PHIL (ON PHONE)

Goodbye, Jillian.

The trunk door SLAMS, just as Jillian shouts...

JILLIAN

NOW!

EXT. CEMETERY—DAY

From a distance, we see a SMALL CROWD gathered, dressed in black, as a casket is lowered into the ground. Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey cry. Jillian is stoic.

INT. RAMSEY PARENTS' HOME—DAY

It's the repast. The GATHERERS from the burial are now at the house. Mrs. Ramsey puts out food.

MRS. RAMSEY

There are more rolls in the back.

JILLIAN

Mom, sit down. I'll do this.

MRS. RAMSEY

And we need more ham. I'll get it.

JILLIAN

No, Mom. Sit. I'll...

MRS. RAMSEY
(screaming)

I said I'll get it, dammit!

Mrs. Ramsey slams a plate on the floor. Everyone looks, sad for her. Frazzled, she hurries out of the room. Troy walks over to help Jillian pick up the pieces.

TROY

What can I do to help?

JILLIAN

I don't know. I don't know what to say to her or Pop.

Mr. Ramsey is in the corner, looking through a photo album. He is barely holding it together.

TROY

How are you holding up?

JILLIAN

I'm fine.

TROY

You didn't cry at the funeral.

JILLIAN

I'm fine.

Two WOMEN walk by.

WOMAN #1

I heard his sister was with him for three days straight. And as soon as she left, he did it.

WOMAN #2

That's terrible. What could've been going on with that young man, to make him do such a thing?

WOMAN #1

Only God knows.

Jillian and Troy overhear. She turns away.

INT. JILLIAN'S HOME/BEDROOM—NIGHT

Troy sleeps. Jillian stares at the ceiling, wide awake.

INT. JILLIAN'S HOME—DAY

It's morning. Jillian has her briefcase in hand. Troy is dressed in scrubs, eating a bowl of cereal.

TROY

You want cereal?

JILLIAN

I'm not hungry.

TROY

Jilly, it's been weeks. You don't eat.
You don't sleep. You don't cry.

JILLIAN

I've got to decorate fucking white walls.

Beat.

TROY

Do you want me to write you a
prescription for something?

JILLIAN

No.

TROY

You want to get away this weekend?
Maybe go to...

JILLIAN

No.

Another beat.

TROY

You remember my friend, Samantha,
from medical school? I called her.
Maybe you should talk to her.

JILLIAN

Your friend, the psychiatrist? I don't need
to talk to a shrink, Troy. I need to talk to
my brother. That's what I need, to talk to
my brother!

Troy JUMPS as the door SLAMS SHUT on her way out.

INT. EMPTY HOUSE—DAY

It's a beautiful, empty room with no furniture and white walls. Jillian talks with the owner, MRS.
HAYNESWORTH, 50's, very well-taken-care-of.

JILLIAN

Mrs. Haynesworth, white walls tend to be
a bit drab. A dynamic color would add
drama, warmth and elegance to this room.

MRS. HAYNESWORTH

Dear, drab has worked for me for years.
Why change now?

Jillian stares at the woman, struck by her words.

INT. JILLIAN'S HOME/BEDROOM—NIGHT

Jillian and Troy are in bed.

JILLIAN

Why am I trying to push color on this
woman if she doesn't want it?

TROY

Because you have good instincts.

JILLIAN

I'm not so sure anymore.

Troy searches his girlfriend's face.

INT. JILLIAN'S HOME/BEDROOM—LATER

Jillian is wide awake. Troy is asleep. Suddenly, the room starts spinning and she abruptly finds herself in...

INT. EMPTY HOUSE—NIGHT

It's an empty room. No furniture. Bare, white walls. Jillian has no idea where she is. She searches for something familiar. Then she sees Phil standing in a corner.

JILLIAN
(to herself)

I'm really losing my mind now.

PHIL

No, I'm here. You said you needed to talk to me. So I came.

JILLIAN

What? How?

PHIL

You called me.

JILLIAN

But you...

PHIL

Killed myself, yes.

Beat. This sinks in. In an instant, Jillian runs over to Phil and starts hitting him with her fists. He allows her to hit him.

JILLIAN

How could you?! How could
you do something like that?!
To ma, pop! Me!

PHIL

I didn't mean to...

JILLIAN

You locked yourself in the trunk
of your car, with a hose running
from the exhaust. What do you
mean you didn't mean to?

PHIL

I didn't mean to hurt you.

JILLIAN

You fucking killed yourself. You didn't
think that would hurt us? No, you just
didn't think about anyone but yourself!
You're a selfish fucking bastard and I
hope you go straight to...

She stops herself. She can't finish that sentence. They are both uncomfortable. Out of nervousness, Phil begins to tap dance. She watches. Starts to soften.

JILLIAN

You're really here. In front of me.

She reaches out and touches him. He continues to tap dance for her.

JILLIAN

I always loved watching you dance.
You're so talented.

PHIL

You're the talented one. I'm amazed
every time I see what comes from a
pencil in your hand. And you managed

to spin it into a successful business.
Dancing is just something I picked up.

JILLIAN

Exactly. You watched Bill Robinson,
Gene Kelly, and that *Taps* movie a
few times, and you just did it. You're
amazing.

He continues dancing.

JILLIAN

God, I wish I could move like you.

He pulls her up and they start dancing together. Jillian is awkward, but she follows Phil. They
laugh, having a fun moment. Then she stops, suddenly angry again.

JILLIAN

Why did you do it?

She begins pushing and hitting him.

JILLIAN

Why? Why? Tell me why? Why the
fuck would you do something like
that? Why? What the fuck is wrong
with you? Why?

PHIL

I didn't want to live anymore!

Jillian starts crying really hard. She lets it all out. Phil comforts her.

JILLIAN

Was it Mary?

PHIL

Mary?

JILLIAN

You mentioned Mary in your message.

PHIL

Mary died, what, seven years ago?

JILLIAN

Yeah, this month, actually.

PHIL

Was it?

JILLIAN

Yes. I looked it up.

PHIL

You know, she wouldn't go out with me at first. She said I was one of those popular guys. She didn't think I could be serious about her.

JILLIAN

But you were.

PHIL

I thought we were going to spend the rest of our lives together, have a family, grow old together like mom and dad. But I moved on.

JILLIAN

Did you?

PHIL
(changing the subject)

How are mom and dad?

JILLIAN

Mom is keeping busy. I don't think she's processed it yet. And dad, he just keeps looking at your pictures. He lost his only son.

Phil starts tap dancing again, uncomfortable.

JILLIAN

You said you were weak and trifling and a disappointment. You had an MBA from Stanford, a great job as a consultant. You traveled the world and...

PHIL

And I hated my job. At least you do something you love.

JILLIAN

But you were good at it.

PHIL

I fucked up all the time. I fucked up that London presentation. I can't do anything right. I couldn't even kill myself right.

JILLIAN

What?

PHIL

Nothing.

JILLIAN

You couldn't even kill yourself right? What does that mean?

PHIL

Nothing, Jilly.

JILLIAN

Why did you try to kick yourself out?

PHIL

What?

JILLIAN

I saw the damage to the inside of the trunk. You changed your mind.

PHIL

Lying in that trunk, you have a few moments to think.

JILLIAN

So you did change your mind.

PHIL

Like I said, I'm weak. So for once in my life, if I made the decision to do something, I was going to do it.

JILLIAN

Do you know how crazy and fucked up that sounds?

Silence.

JILLIAN

How many times did you try before?

Long beat.

PHIL

Twice. The first time, I stepped in front of a speeding car. He swerved. And I tried the exhaust thing two months ago. I chickened out. Ran out the car.

JILLIAN

So you made sure you couldn't run out this time. Why even put me through sitting with you for three days? Calling suicide hotline. It was all bullshit. It was fucking bullshit. You knew what you were going to do the entire time.

PHIL

I'm sorry.

JILLIAN

Sorry? Sorry's not good enough. You killed yourself. I hate you for doing that. I fucking hate you. It's final. No second chances. No tomorrow. What you did, you can't take back. Do you understand that? You can't fucking take it back.

PHIL

I don't want to take it back! Don't you get that? I was trapped inside this glass tube. I could see, hear, feel, but it wasn't real. I had all these people around me, calling me their friend, but I was alone. I felt this constant pain. When I slept, when I woke up, when I tied my shoes, reached for something, all the time. I could feel myself smiling and laughing and trying to act normal, but I was numb. I had no energy. Food lost its taste. Some days, I couldn't even get out of bed. I didn't want to brush my teeth. I was just... in pain.

Jillian takes this all in.

JILLIAN

You were depressed.

PHIL

I was in pain.

JILLIAN

Suicide doesn't end the pain. It just transfers it to other people.

Beat.

PHIL

Stop hating me. I was in pain.

INT. JILLIAN'S HOME/BEDROOM—NIGHT

Jillian wakes up with a start. Troy is watching her. She sits up.

JILLIAN

He was depressed.

TROY

What?

JILLIAN

I need to stop hating my brother. He was depressed. I don't think he was ever right again after his fiancée died in a car accident.

Beat.

TROY

I'm glad you got some sleep.

JILLIAN

I got to cry.

(beat)

Hey, your friend from medical school, you think I can still talk to her?

TROY

Yeah.

Troy hugs Jillian. She closes her eyes to sleep. Finally...

FADE OUT.

THE END