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*This play is dedicated to
Tracy Sue
For all of her support and encouragement.
Thanks, Tracy.*

Cast Of Characters

CONNOR K., sixteen years old. A good student, wants to keep his head down, not be noticed. Put in this position, and begins to buck against injustice.

MS. DELILSE, principal of the high school. She is calm and cool and never raises her voice. She wants the truth.

MR. DEMETRI, assistant to Ms. Delilse. A gorilla of a man, thinks he's tougher than he is.

MR. K., Connor's father. Expresses himself using only one word.

MRS. K., Connor's mother. Very overdramatic in issues concerning her son.

ABIGAIL, sixteen. A good student and peer mediator.

THOMAS, eighteen, a senior. A jock, who for once has seen something more meaningful than himself.

AARON, a brain. He is also a senior. He is eloquent.

LUCY, a go-getter. Student body president. Also a senior.

Setting

It looks to be an interrogation room, with one long table, two chairs, on each side of the table. Nasty, obnoxious light. Stuffy. In actuality, it is a conference room in a school.

Production Notes

This is a play primarily about the actors creating believable characters. The dialogue should be crisp and well-paced. Connor's big speech when he is alone in the conference room can, and should, take its time, with Connor going through a full array of emotions. Ms. Delilse (rhymes with Bell-ilse), should not lose her cool. She has a certain respect for what she considers integrity in Connor. Other actors have various challenges—for example, the actor playing Mr. K has only various versions of "You. You." to express himself. The actor should be very liberal with his face and physical expressions.

The room can be very simple, so long as it feels ominous and somewhat claustrophobic. It is an absurdist play, and feel free to reflect this in the set and lighting (for example, Mrs. K. weeps into an "oversized" handkerchief). Feel free to express certain absurdities physically within the set and props (Think Orson Welles film version of "The Trial").

It is my hope that performing this play will open a discussion with the actors and the crew about works by Kafka and Sartre, and perhaps even absurdist and existentialists like Beckett and Pinter. I wrote this play to make works such as these relatable on a high school level. An understanding of these writers and works like "The Trial" and "No Exit" will only enrich the performance of this piece.

CONFESSION: KAFKA IN HIGH SCHOOL

by Bobby Keniston

(AT RISE: CONNOR, 16, is sleeping on the table. There is a pillow under his head, and he is covered by a blanket. CONNOR is a good student, a bit meek, and not very sure of himself. As he sleeps, MS. DELILSE stands watching him for a moment. She is the Principal. She looks very sweet and caring, but has an underlying severity that becomes more and more apparent. After watching Connor sleep a moment, she shines a table light in his face. CONNOR is in PJ's.)

MS. DELILSE. Wake up, Connor. Much to do, and very little time.

CONNOR. *(Opening his eyes, startled:)* What... *(He sits up.)* Where am I?

MS. DELILSE. You're in the conference room, Connor. *(She retrieves a walkie-talkie from her belt, speaks into it:)* He's awake.

CONNOR. What am I doing here?

MS. DELILSE. We have some questions for you. It's easier this way. Breakfast? *(Into walkie-talkie:)* Bring in some breakfast.

(The one door opens and MR. DEMETRI enters carrying a tray with a bowl of cereal and a glass of orange juice on it.)

MS. DELILSE. Connor, be a good boy and get off the table so Mr. Demetri can set down the tray.

CONNOR. Right. Sorry. *(He climbs off the table. MR. DEMETRI sets down the tray, and takes the blanket and the pillow.)* Excuse me, I don't want to be rude...

MS. DELILSE. One moment, Connor. *(To MR. DEMETRI:)* That's all for now.

MR. DEMETRI. Is he ready to be questioned? I want a crack at him early on.

MS. DELILSE. I said that's all for now.

MR. DEMETRI. But I never get to be the first...

MS. DELILSE. *(Too sweetly:)* Excuse me?

MR. DEMETRI. *(Abashed:)* Sorry. Let me know if you need me. *(He exits in haste.)*

CONNOR. Ms. Delilse?

MS. DELILSE. What is it, Connor?

CONNOR. What am I doing here?

MS. DELILSE. That is a perfectly valid question, Connor. One we should all ask from time to time. What am I doing here? Sadly, no matter how many times I have asked myself that question, I can never seem to come up with a completely satisfactory answer. I of course take comfort in my work. I like to think that as Principal of this school I help to shape the lives of countless students, and, in that small way, shape the world as a whole, but who is to say? What am I doing here? Fine question, Connor. Fine question. (*Beat.*) However, I assume you were not waxing philosophical so early in the morning. In fact, what I believe you to be asking is why did you wake up here in the conference room instead of in your own bed. Is that right?

CONNOR. Yes ma'am.

MS. DELILSE. Have some breakfast. Do you want toast? That would be no problem.

CONNOR. Oh, no, thank you. This is fine. Um, are there any clothes I can change into?

MS. DELILSE. No. Your pajamas look comfortable, and I suppose you will appreciate comfort as the day goes on. Just so you know, we did not whisk you from your bed without permission. Your parents are well aware, but we will talk about that in a moment. (*She sits down across from CONNOR at the table. She opens a file, looks at it a moment.*) Let me first say, Connor, that you are an exemplary student. Straight A's. No absences, not even a tardy. Your standardized test scores are also astronomical.

CONNOR. Thank you.

MS. DELILSE. No—thank you. It's good for the school. Schools are a business you know, like anything else, and the better our students do, the better our business runs. So, hopefully we can clear up this blemish on your record and just move on, what do you say to that, Connor?

CONNOR. Blemish?

MS. DELILSE. Yes. Don't tell me you require a definition, smart boy like yourself.

CONNOR. Uh... well, no, it's not that. I just don't know what you mean. I don't believe there is a blemish on my record.

MS. DELILSE. (*Frowning slightly.*) Come now, Connor. Let's be up-front and forthright, shall we?

CONNOR. Sure. I mean, of course, I... if you could just maybe explain...

MS. DELILSE. Connor. Stop. Please do not make this a difficult situation. I am here to help you. All you need to do is confess, and we can move forward from there.

CONNOR. Confess?

MS. DELILSE. Exactly. And then perhaps we can protect your permanent record and keep the police from getting involved, which is really best for all of us.

CONNOR. Oh, my God, the police!

MS. DELILSE. Of course. What did you expect, Connor? It is a serious offense. So please, just confess.

CONNOR. I have no idea what you're talking about.

MS. DELILSE. Excuse me?

CONNOR. I'm sorry, but I really have no idea what you are talking about.

MS. DELILSE. I see. (*Into walkie-talkie:*) Come remove the boy's tray.

(MR. DEMETRI enters immediately, takes the tray away from CONNOR who hasn't touched a bite. MR. DEMETRI speaks to MS. DELILSE.)

MR. DEMETRI. Is it time?

MS. DELILSE. Not quite yet.

MR. DEMETRI. Has he confessed?

MS. DELILSE. No.

MR. DEMETRI. Give me a few moments alone with him, Ms. Delilse. I can get him to confess. I'm sure of it.

MS. DELILSE. (*Stern:*) Not quite yet, Mr. Demetri. Send in the boy's parents.

MR. DEMETRI. Yes, Ms. Delilse.

(MR. DEMETRI exits.)

CONNOR. Ms. Delilse, I'm getting a little scared.

MS. DELILSE. As well you should be, Connor. I'm scared every time I walk down those halls. The flood of students, all raging hormones and attitude. And me, a great big bulls-eye right on my face. So I empathize, Connor, as all good educators and administrators should. Within this empathy is an urging for you to confess, clear

your conscience, and work with me, before it is too late. I don't want to see another good student lost. It would really ruin my morning. *(Beat.)* Maybe even part of my afternoon.

CONNOR. But I don't even know what I supposedly did...

(The door opens and MR. DEMETRI ushers in MR. and MRS. K, Connor's parents. MR. K is wearing a suit and tie, and is comforting his wife, MRS. K, who is sobbing in an exaggerated manner into an oversized handkerchief. They stand near the door.)

MR. DEMETRI. The boy's parents. Mr. and Mrs. K.

MS. DELILSE. That will be all for the moment, Mr. Demetri, thank you.

(MR. DEMETRI grunts and exits. There is silence, except for MRS. K's exaggerated sobs. MR. K just stares at his son with disgust.)

MR. K. You. *(Beat.)* You.

MS. DELILSE. Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. K for coming in this morning. I know it must be a terrible inconvenience for you, and I do apologize. These matters must be dealt with swiftly, however.

MRS. K. *(Through her sobs:)* Oh, I tried to be a good mother! Don't think ill of us, Ms. Delilse! We did the best we could! Oh, how we tried and tried! *(She cries.)*

MR. K. *(Glaring at his son:)* You! *(Beat.)* YOU!

CONNOR. Don't cry, mom. Please. I don't even know what's going on! Whatever it is, it's not my fault!

MS. DELILSE. As you can see, Mr. and Mrs. K, Connor has yet to come clean and confess. Until he does so, I'm afraid there is very little I can do to help him.

MRS. K. Oh, Connor! Find the goodness in your heart that we did our best to instill in you, and confess! If you ever loved your mother, please, please, please! Confess! *(She weeps and blows her nose.)*

MR. K. *(Looking at his son accusingly:)* You. *(Beat.)* You.

CONNOR. But they won't even tell me what I did wrong! How am I supposed to confess to something and not even know what it is? *(Almost pleading:)* Just tell me what I did wrong, and I will gladly do what I have to do to make it right. I don't want to cause trouble. I mean, I've...uh...I've never gotten in trouble, not ever. So please, just tell me what I did wrong.

MRS. K. Oh, Connor, you are not the same boy I raised! What has happened to you? *(She cries.)*

MR. K. (*Looking at his son with sadness:*) You. (*Beat.*) You.

MS. DELILSE. Mr. and Mrs. K, do not give up hope, and do not blame yourselves. Connor still has time to save himself.

MRS. K. Oh, thank you, Ms. Delilse! I know there is still a part of him that is good, deep down inside!

MS. DELILSE. I've no doubt. I don't want to upset you any further. Why don't you wait in my office until Connor comes to his senses. Try to stay strong, hmmm? (*Into walkie-talkie:*) Mr. Demetri, please escort Mr. and Mrs. K into my office.

(The door opens immediately and MR. DEMETRI steps in.)

MR. DEMETRI. Follow me, Mr. and Mrs. K.

MRS. K. (*Looking back:*) I tried so hard to be a good mother! (*She weeps.*)

MR. K. (*Looking back in anger at his son:*) You. (*Beat.*) You.

(MR. and MRS. K exit, following MR. DEMETRI. Once they are gone, MS. DELILSE stares at CONNOR a moment. She then slams her fist down on the table. CONNOR is startled. MS. DELILSE grins.)

MS. DELILSE. I've always wanted to do that, Connor. For dramatic effect. I never get a chance to be overly dramatic in my line of work. (*She slams the table again.*) It feels nice.

CONNOR. (*After a beat:*) Please. I've never seen my mother cry like that. Please.

MS. DELILSE. Oh? My mother wept constantly. She was an unhappy woman.

(There is a pause. CONNOR and MS. DELILSE look at each other for a good five seconds.)

CONNOR. (*Very soft:*) All right, Ms. Delilse. I confess. I confess to everything. I want to work it out, and I don't want this to affect my permanent record. I confess.

MS. DELILSE. (*Brightening:*) Excellent, Connor. I knew you would come around. Go on.

CONNOR. (*Louder:*) I confess.

MS. DELILSE. Yes, good.

(There is a pause.)

CONNOR. And I'm sorry.

MS. DELILSE. As well you should be. Continue.

CONNOR. Uh...well, what now? I confess, and I'm sorry, so...uh... now what?

MS. DELILSE. You need to admit what you did wrong.

CONNOR. Okay. I admit it. I was wrong.

MS. DELILSE. You admit what?

CONNOR. Uh...it.

MS. DELILSE. (*Losing patience:*) It what?

CONNOR. Whatever "it" is. That I did wrong.

MS. DELILSE. I see, Connor. (*She shakes her head.*) My mother, as unhappy as she was, raised me to never be a fool, because, as she said, "No one wants to ever kiss a fool." Do you think I am a fool, Connor? Do you?

(*CONNOR says nothing.*)

MS. DELILSE. Excuse me?

CONNOR. No, Miss Delilse. I don't think you are a fool.

MS. DELILSE. Are you the fool, Connor? I don't think you are a fool, but someone in this room must be.

CONNOR. Just tell me what you want me to say.

MS. DELILSE. It doesn't work that way, Connor. This is a school. A place of education, as it were. Higher education, in fact, because it is a High School. Get it? Now what kind of an administrator would I be for a place of higher education if I gave you all of the answers? You must confess Connor, and own up to what you did. I cannot hold your hand through this. I was a Kindergarten teacher for two years out of college, and I swore I would never hold another student's hand or wipe their nose. It's up to you.

CONNOR. (*Soft:*) This makes no sense.

MS. DELILSE. Excuse me?

CONNOR. (*Losing patience:*) You heard me.

MS. DELILSE. No one likes a roaring mouse, Connor. Especially a lion. (*She roars like a lion. Pause. She talks into the walkie-talkie:*) Mr. Demetri, bring in the peer mediator.

(*The door opens immediately, and MR. DEMETRI brings in ABIGAIL. She is sixteen and very pretty. She also seems very nice.*)

MR. DEMETRI. Abigail, the peer mediator, Ms. Delilse.

MS. DELILSE. Thank you, Mr. Demetri.

MR. DEMETRI. When do I get a crack at him?

MS. DELILSE. That will be all, Mr. Demetri.

(MR. DEMETRI exits, grumbling.)

MS. DELILSE. Abigail, I believe you know Connor K?

ABIGAIL. Yes, ma'am, I do. We take biology together.

MS. DELILSE. Yes, how nice. And Connor, I believe you have a crush on Abigail, correct?

CONNOR. What...I...I don't...

MS. DELILSE. Don't be embarrassed, Connor. She's a lovely young lady. Abigail, do you mind that Connor has a crush on you?

ABIGAIL. *(Embarrassed:)* It's fine, Ms. Delilse.

MS. DELILSE. Good. Abigail, from what I understand you are the finest peer mediator this school has to offer, and Connor is in some desperate need of mediation. Unless he confesses, he is headed down an ugly road. I ask that you do all in your power to help him. Within the limits of propriety, of course.

ABIGAIL. I'll do my best, Ms. Delilse.

MS. DELILSE. Good. Proceed. Mediate away.

(There is a slight pause. CONNOR won't make eye contact with ABIGAIL.)

ABIGAIL. Ms. Delilse?

MS. DELILSE. Yes?

ABIGAIL. Could I offer a suggestion?

MS. DELILSE. Proceed.

ABIGAIL. It might be easier if I could speak with Connor one-on-one. That's generally how peer mediation works.

MS. DELILSE. Oh?

ABIGAIL. I don't mean to speak out of turn...

MS. DELILSE. Not at all. I understand. I suppose young people are much better suited to open up when speaking privately. I shall be just outside the door if you need me.

ABIGAIL. Okay. Thank you.

MS. DELILSE. No—thank you. School is a business after all, and when students help keep matters running smoothly, it is good for business.

(MS. DELILSE *exits*. ABIGAIL *watches her go*. When the door is closed, she rushes to the table and sits across from CONNOR. Her manner is secretive.)

ABIGAIL. Okay, we haven't got much time, and we'll have to talk softly. How are you holding up?

CONNOR. What?... Oh, fine, I guess. I'm just really confused...

(ABIGAIL *takes CONNOR's hand from across the table.*)

ABIGAIL. I'm sorry that we've never really had a chance to get to know one another. I always thought you were very shy. I had no idea that you would ever make a statement like this.

CONNOR. What do you mean?

ABIGAIL. I'm not here for peer mediation. Mr. Demetri asked all of us to help make you confess, and no one wanted to...we're all so impressed with what you've done. I volunteered just so I could get a minute alone with you to let you know that we're all behind you.

CONNOR. Behind me?

ABIGAIL. The whole school, Connor! I've never seen anything like it! The jocks, the nerds, the burn-outs, the grease-monkeys, the goody-goodies...everybody! And I just wanted to see you and tell you that no matter what, don't confess. They can't make you. Give them nothing, no matter what scare tactics they use. (*She squeezes his hand.*) I am so honored to be sitting here with you right now.

(CONNOR *blushes.*)

CONNOR. Oh, it's no big deal, really.

ABIGAIL. Don't be modest. You're like a hero now. When you get out of here, everyone is going to cheer, Connor. Everyone! What you did has never been done before in the history of this school. Even a good number of the teachers are behind you, they just can't admit it.

CONNOR. So...what did I do?

ABIGAIL. (*Smiling:*) That's right, Connor. Give them nothing. (*Pause.*) Wow, I never knew how brave you were. (*She leans across the table, kisses his cheek.*) When you get out of here, I'll give you one on the lips. I mean, if you want me to.

CONNOR. (*Stunned but happy:*) Well...I mean...wow...

ABIGAIL. (*Almost shy:*) Was Ms. Delilse telling the truth? Do you... you know, have a crush on me?

CONNOR. (*Definitely shy:*) Well...yeah, but I don't know how she knew.

ABIGAIL. Think you'll still like me when you get out of here? I mean, you'll be able to go out with anybody you want...

CONNOR. I'll still want to go out with you.

ABIGAIL. (*Blushing:*) Good. I can't wait to give you that kiss. (*She stands up.*) Remember what I said. Just stay strong, Connor. We're all counting on you.

(*She goes to the door, opens it. MS. DELILSE comes in.*)

MS. DELILSE. Well?

ABIGAIL. Sorry, Ms. Delilse. Connor made it clear to me that he is not going to confess, no matter what. I wish I could help you but I think it's a lost cause.

MS. DELILSE. I'm sure you tried your best, Abigail. Don't you fret, though, dear. We have other methods of persuasion.

ABIGAIL. Good luck, Ms. Delilse. I'm pretty sure Connor isn't going to change his mind. Right, Connor?

CONNOR. Uh...right.

MS. DELILSE. We shall see. In any case, Connor K is giving us some good suspense today, isn't he? Demetri!

(*MR. DEMETRI rushes in through the open door.*)

MR. DEMETRI. Yes, Ms. Delilse?

MS. DELILSE. Give the girl a hall pass. She's finished here.

MR. DEMETRI. Did he confess?

MS. DELILSE. Demetri! Hall pass! Now!

MR. DEMETRI. Right, of course. (*Fishes one out of his pocket:*) Here you are, Abigail.

ABIGAIL. Thank you. Good luck, Ms. Delilse. See you later, Connor.

CONNOR. Bye.

(*ABIGAIL exits. MR. DEMETRI looks at CONNOR a moment, then turns to MS. DELILSE.*)

MR. DEMETRI. Is it my turn now?

MS. DELILSE. (*Rolling her eyes:*) Oh, I suppose.

MR. DEMETRI. (*Slaps his hands together.*) Good! (*He closes the door. Looks over at CONNOR. He adopts a tough guy attitude.*) Well, well, well. I ain't your mommy or daddy, kid, and I ain't no peer mediator. I do things my own way.

(MR. DEMETRI *cracks his knuckles.*)

CONNOR. Tell me what I supposedly did, and we'll talk.

(MR. DEMETRI *rushes over to him, gets right in his face.*)

MR. DEMETRI. You got something to say, punk! Huh! You think you're Mr. Cool-Hand-Puke now, don't you! Well you ain't nothin', do you hear me!

MS. DELILSE. Demetri!

MR. DEMETRI. What?

MS. DELILSE. You work in a school. Try not to say "ain't" so much, all right?

MR. DEMETRI. Oh. Right.

MS. DELILSE. And don't spit in the boy's face. You'll give him some new strain of gorilla flu.

MR. DEMETRI. Sorry.

MS. DELILSE. Proceed.

MR. DEMETRI. (*To CONNOR:*) So, Mr. Tough Guy, what are you gonna do when we kick your sorry butt-issimo out of here? Work at a drive-thru for the rest of your life?

CONNOR. Actually I was thinking of becoming an assistant principal.

(MS. DELILSE *snorts*. MR. DEMETRI *hollers:*)

MR. DEMETRI. You think you're funny, punk!?

CONNOR. No. I'm just getting fed up. You people took me out of my bed, put me in this room, and you won't even tell me what's going on.

MR. DEMETRI. Watch it, pal. I'm one second away from kicking you out of this school.

CONNOR. Do you even have the authority to do that?

MR. DEMETRI. Yes!

MS. DELILSE. No.

MR. DEMETRI. Huh?

MS. DELILSE. Demetri, you know you don't have the authority to kick a student out of this school. You are my yes-man. No more, no less.

MR. DEMETRI. Right. Sorry.

MS. DELILSE. Now, you have had your "crack at him" as you call it, and, as I expected, it didn't help one bit.

MR. DEMETRI. But...

MS. DELILSE. So why don't you do a gorilla dance for us.

MR. DEMETRI. What do you mean?

MS. DELILSE. Do a gorilla dance.

MR. DEMETRI. I don't want to.

MS. DELILSE. Excuse me?

MR. DEMETRI. Sorry.

(He begins to do a version of a gorilla dance. CONNOR looks on in wonder.)

MS. DELILSE. All right. Now make some gorilla noises.

MR. DEMETRI. Oooh-oooh-aaah-aaaah!

MS. DELILSE. That will be all for now, Demetri. You may go.

(MR. DEMETRI exits, grumbling. He closes the door.)

MS. DELILSE. So here we are, Connor. Again. Or should I say still? You've seen your parents, you've been peer mediated, you've had the gorilla in your face. What now?

CONNOR. Tell me why I'm here.

MS. DELILSE. I wish I could, Connor K.

CONNOR. I have a right to know what I'm charged with.

MS. DELILSE. I'm sorry, how old are you?

CONNOR. Sixteen.

MS. DELILSE. Correct. Thus, you have no rights, Connor.

CONNOR. That's not true...

MS. DELILSE. *(Genuinely:)* You think so? Really?

CONNOR. *(Not so sure:)* Well...uh...yeah.

MS. DELILSE. Can I tell you a secret? I hate talking about rights. *(Beat.)* You have a right to an education, that's true. You have a right to be treated with dignity, as we all do, though, in my field, I am not afforded that right. No educator or education administrator is. We are stripped of dignity by students and parents alike. But that is hardly a topic for conversation at this moment. So, you believe you have the right to know what you are charged with. And I say that I have the right to hear you confess honestly and openly to what you did. So it would seem we have reached an impasse, Connor.

CONNOR. I'm in my pajamas in a strange room, you've turned my parents against me...

MS. DELILSE. Parents are funny creatures, Connor. Don't blame me for that.

CONNOR. You want to know what the funny thing is? I just want to go to class, Ms. Delilse. I just want to go back to who I was yesterday...the guy that nobody noticed.

MS. DELILSE. Well I want a good deal of things Connor. One of those memory foam mattresses, a higher paycheck, and someone in this world to realize that I have problems too. Do you understand, Connor K? I had the purest of intentions to help you out, because you seemed like a good kid. But you just won't let me help you. How is that supposed to make me feel?

CONNOR. What if I just stood up right now and walked out that door and went to class? What then?

MS. DELILSE. *(Smiles shyly:)* That is a delightful question, Connor. To be honest, I had not yet considered the answer to that question. So, if that's what you want, why don't you give it a try. And we'll see what happens together, won't we? Hmmmm? *(There is a pause as they look at each other. Then:)* You want to know why I hate talking about rights, Connor? Because people confuse rights with entitlement. And if there's anyone who has not been given what they are entitled to, it's me.

(CONNOR and MS. DELILSE stare at one another. Suddenly, MR. DEMETRI bursts in the door.)

MR. DEMETRI. Ms. Delilse, I'm so sorry to interrupt...

MS. DELILSE. What is it, Demetri?

MR. DEMETRI. It's chaos, Ms. Delilse! Chaos! The entire school has staged a walk-out of their classes! They are lining the hallways chanting "Free Connor K! Free Connor K!" I don't know what to do!

MS. DELILSE. *(To CONNOR:)* Any idea who might be responsible for this?

CONNOR. I'm not saying another word until you tell me what I'm charged with.

MS. DELILSE. *(Rolling her eyes:)* Of course.

MR. DEMETRI. Ms. Delilse?

MS. DELILSE. Yes?

MR. DEMETRI. There are three students here. They said they're

the spokespeople for the “Free Connor K” Alliance. They want to talk to you, and they demand to see Connor K. What should I do?

MS. DELILSE. Perhaps you should do another gorilla dance, Demetri.

MR. DEMETRI. Do you think that will help?

MS. DELILSE. (*Losing patience.*) Send them in Demetri!

MR. DEMETRI. Right away!

(MR. DEMETRI scurries out. After a second, THOMAS, AARON, and LUCY enter. THOMAS is a jock, AARON is a brain, and LUCY is a goody-goody. They are all wearing “FREE CONNOR K” t-shirts, and have name tags. As they enter, they all seem very happy to see CONNOR.)

THOMAS. Connor, my brother!

AARON. Stay strong, Connor!

LUCY. We’re here for you, Connor.

(CONNOR says nothing.)

MS. DELILSE. You’ll have to excuse Connor, he’s taken a vow of silence.

AARON. Good work, Connor!

MS. DELILSE. What an interesting trio, I must say. Thomas, captain of the football team, correct?

THOMAS. That’s right.

MS. DELILSE. And here you are with Aaron, a National Honor Society Scholar, and Lucy, head of student council. My, my, my.

AARON. We have come here as a representation of the entire student body. We have been brought together by the deeds of Connor K, and the injustice that is being handed down to him by this oppressive school district.

THOMAS. Truth that, Aaron...it don’t matter that we’ve never been friends before now. What Connor has done has made a difference on all of our lives.

LUCY. As president of the student body, Ms. Delilse, it is my responsibility to speak for every student in this school. Connor has united all of us in a way that no one ever has. I speak for all of us when I tell you that you must release him right now!

MS. DELILSE. I must, eh, Lucy? And you agree with this sentiment, Thomas.

THOMAS. It’s the right thing to do, Ms. Delilse.

MS. DELILSE. I see. And you agree, Aaron.

AARON. Without hesitation.

LUCY. And furthermore, we believe Connor's actions, though extreme, should open the door for real change in school policy.

MS. DELILSE. Of course you do. So, these are your beliefs then?

AARON. Completely.

MS. DELILSE. And you hold yourselves strictly to these ideals you have created for yourselves?

LUCY. We are all very serious about this issue.

THOMAS. Man, all I ever wanted to do was play ball. But now I see that there are things in this world worth fighting for, and this is one of them. I feel like this is the first time in my whole life that I found someone I could believe in. *(He sniffs.)* And I thank you for that, Connor. *(He sniffs some more, while AARON and LUCY console him.)*

MS. DELILSE. You see this, Connor? Now this is touching. I must say, though your opinions differ from my own, it warms my heart to see three students with such high ideals and the integrity to follow them through. You're a lucky person, Connor, to have inspired such loyalty. *(Beat. MS. DELILSE smiles.)* I do, however, have a hypothetical, if I may?

AARON. What is it?

MS. DELILSE. You're a senior this year Aaron, are you not?

AARON. Yes.

MS. DELILSE. In fact, all three of you are seniors, aren't you?

THOMAS and LUCY. Yes.

MS. DELILSE. I hear you're looking at Yale, Aaron. That school is a tradition in your family if I'm not mistaken.

AARON. Yes. My father went to Yale, and so did my grandfather.

MS. DELILSE. That's impressive. Hypothetically speaking, do you know what happens when a student is suspended and doesn't get to finish all of their classwork for a semester? They get what is called an incomplete on their transcript. I wonder, just hypothetically speaking, how an Ivy League school would feel about an incomplete on your transcript? Hmmmm?

AARON. I'm sure a school as open-minded as Yale would understand that I was standing up for something greater than myself.

MS. DELILSE. Oh? Is this something you know, or just something you think? Because, hypothetically speaking, we are talking about your future.

(AARON looks torn. Finally.)

AARON. I'm sorry, Connor. But it's Yale! (He exits.)

THOMAS. Aaron! You get back here! Coward!

MS. DELILSE. Hard to play for college scouts if you're benched for the rest of the season, isn't it Thomas? But, I'm sure your academics are of the kind that you needn't worry about getting an athletic scholarship, hmmm?

THOMAS. Aw, man! I'm sorry, Connor. Keep fightin' the good fight, though! (He exits, ashamed.)

MS. DELILSE. Lucy?

LUCY. What?

MS. DELILSE. Lucy, Lucy, Lucy.

LUCY. (Nervous:) Ms. Delilse, as student body president...

MS. DELILSE. Funny you should bring that up. Did you know, Lucy, that Student Body President can be removed from their position at any time if the Principal, or any other faculty member, finds their behavior to be lacking the true qualities of leadership? It's in your handbook. Page 117.

(LUCY looks like she is about to cry.)

LUCY. But...

MS. DELILSE. (Smiling:) Yes?

LUCY. Nothing. Sorry Connor. (She rushes out.)

MS. DELILSE. (Closing the door.) You want to know what I like best about your generation, Connor? (CONNOR says nothing.) Ah yes, still silent, eh? Well, I'll tell you nonetheless. It isn't the text messaging, or the constant communication through cell phones and e-mails and Twitter accounts and so forth. It isn't the way your generation makes celebrities out of people who are just rich and go to a lot of parties. It isn't the way you have taken the artistry of film and made it more profitable to make entertainment out of bathroom humor and crude sexual innuendo. No, Connor, my favorite thing about your generation is how easy it is to separate you from your ideals. My generation didn't give up our ideals until the world crushed us down, or we grew tired of sharing apartments with twelve other people who couldn't pay rent because there was no market for their free verse protests. Your gen-

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