

“Son of a bitch, man; are you ready to go yet?”

Connor Reynolds was too busy popping the collar on his green striped shirt, fixing his hair and applying generous amounts of cologne to listen to his indignant friend, Zach.

“Dude, the party starts in like five minutes,” added Connor’s other friend, Tim.

“We’ll get there; chill out,” Connor said while running his fingers through his hair in front of the mirror in his bedroom. He was making every attempt to perfect his appearance while his friends sat on his bed impatiently. As a high school senior at age eighteen – his “I’m legal” birthday was one week prior – style often beat substance, and though Connor had plenty of both, he wanted to look extra good tonight. It had to be just right, because after all, what happens to you in high school is pretty damn important. Seriously.

“Really looking forward to this, man,” said Zach.

“You and me both,” Connor added, still delicately applying pomade to his dark brown bangs. Connor had been looking forward to this party at Craig’s house all week; sure, he went to one at Molly’s house last week, and Andrea’s house the week before that, but this one, he felt, was going to be special. Hell, not only special, but potentially even more fun than the last two. What normal, well-adjusted high school kid doesn’t enjoy a party at someone else’s house on a weekend when said person’s parents are away? There would be more at stake, however, than just a good time with friends.

“Dude, just fix your hair already and let’s go,” Tim cried. Connor continued to mess with it, frizzing it up if he didn’t like what he saw and starting over several times. Finally, after a few more moments, Connor was satisfied with his hair and clothes and picked up his car keys, much to the delight of his buddies Zach and Tim. Before he got too far away from his mirror, however, Connor reached into his desk drawer and pulled out a bottle of tequila – one he had acquired with a fake ID and was saving for a special occasion. What was this special occasion, you may ask?

“It’s gonna happen tonight,” Connor said.

“You really think so?” asked Tim.

“Totally,” replied Connor. “We’ve been building to this for, like, a month now.”

“It better happen to you soon, though; you just turned eighteen. It has to happen before you leave high school or you, like, lose your man card or something,” posited Zach.

“Zach, trust me. We’re gonna do it,” Connor responded with complete confidence. “Helene and I have been going out since junior year; it’s time. Tonight, we finally seal the deal, and my buddy here will help me,” he said as he held up the bottle of tequila and shoved it in his backpack.

Tim was still somewhat unconvinced. “What makes you think that? She’s kind of a prude,” he said to Connor.

“Helene is a lot of things,” Connor said with a hint of annoyance, “but she is not a prude. She wants it really bad, trust me. I’m getting laid tonight, gentlemen,” he said with a cocky smile.

“If you say so,” Zach mumbled under his breath. Connor heard this and turned to his friend, giving him the ‘death squint.’

“What did you say?”

“Nothing,” Zach answered.

“Oh good, that’s what I thought,” Connor said. This was a very touchy issue for him. Well, actually, to that point, he hadn’t gotten touchy with anyone in the literal sense, but he had every intention of that changing in Craig’s upstairs bathroom at about 11 p.m. Connor picked up his backpack, checked his wallet to make sure that the condom he stole from his older brother’s room was still there, and started to walk out the door with his friends in tow.

The three young men arrived at Craig’s house on the other side of town about fifteen minutes later. South Heathrow, Michigan is not very big, but its three traffic lights are notoriously long. Of course, when they pulled up on the large two-story abode, there were already many cars parked outside, leaving Connor little choice but to drive half-way down the street and parallel-park about twelve houses away. Connor grabbed his backpack with the tequila, while Zach and Tim each fixed their own hair and popped breath mints. It was Connor’s intention to find a nice little corner of the house and stay the night, so as not to drive drunk (and to sleep naked next to his hot of-age girlfriend after plowing her into the next time zone).

From six houses away, one could easily see the activity coming from the site of the party. The house was practically vibrating as a result of abnormally-high bass on the stereo system, and Connor could see his classmates through some of the windows. The front door was not locked and Connor, Zach and Tim walked right in, immediately greeted by about twenty of their fellow seniors. It was several minutes after nine when Connor and his group arrived; this young man

had one objective and one objective only: score with his girlfriend Helene. Anything less than rounding the bases would be seen as a complete failure from his perspective, though hitting a stand-up triple would probably be somewhat satisfactory. His birthday was a week before and hers was two weeks prior, so he figured that getting some would be a great belated gift for both.

He did not worry about it: Connor exuded confidence as a matter of personality and knew that tonight would be the night. Step one, of course, would be locating her at the party; Connor did not pick her up at her house because he knew that Zach and Tim, horny bastards that they are, would be coming with him, and he did not want them to hit on her on the ride over to Craig's. After all, she is a very attractive young woman. For his part, Connor, a five-foot-nine teenager with blue eyes, a slight tan and average to above-average looks, could also hold his own in a beauty contest, which is why she stayed with him. Well, that, and word got around from the showers in gym class that he was doing quite well in the meathook department.

Shortly thereafter, Connor spotted Helene, wearing a cute, tight blue blouse and even tighter jeans which he could not wait to get off of her. After putting her drink down on the coffee table, she went right over to Connor, wrapped her arms around him, and planted a big kiss on his lips. Yes, Connor got wood, and it was obvious to everyone watching this spectacle, but how could anyone blame him – the kid was about to get laid for the first time that night. The level of excitement was certainly growing on his part, in more ways than one.

As if the party needed any more illicit alcohol, Connor put his bookbag with the tequila on the kitchen counter with all of the other handles while Helene hung off of his shoulder like the naughty wench she was about to be. It doesn't get any better than this, Connor thought to himself. As far as he was concerned, things were great: he had become a reasonably popular guy in a high school where he did well academically, he had a smoking hot girlfriend, and was living the good life. Nothing could ever ruin these moments he was having.

By ten o'clock, Connor and Helene both finished a few drinks of hard liquor and were sitting in Craig's family room with a few of their other friends gathered around. The two in the happy couple were the only ones on the couch, giving them a blank check for groping each other. There was no hand-to-happy-zone contact, but Connor would put his hand on her thigh, Helene would run her hand through his hair and touch the side of his face, so on and so forth. Things were definitely pointing upwards – again, in more ways than one for Connor.

When eleven rolled around, Connor knew that it was time to make his move. He knew that too much drinking could decrease sexual drive, so he stopped an hour earlier. Connor's blood alcohol content declined to about 0.09 by then, if not a little lower, and Helene's was roughly the same. Both consumed far less than most of the other high school students at the party, but it was just enough to give them some level of impairment, and by extension, some loss of inhibition. No matter, though: for Connor, it was go-time.

He took Helene by the hand, entreated her to get off of the sofa, and began leading her upstairs. Connor's friend Zach, who had just finished doing a keg stand on the back porch, noticed out of the corner of his eye and cheered loudly for his friend, telling everyone around him 'dude, Connor's gonna get laid!' The moment was finally arriving, and not a moment too soon as far as he was concerned. The monkey would be lifted from his proverbial back once and for all.

Upstairs, there was very little activity. In Craig's room, the host of the party himself and one of the school cheerleaders were busy making babies behind closed doors, which was completely obvious because said cheerleader moaned like a beached manatee. They went a few doors down to the bathroom and shut the door behind them. Connor was off to the races: he took Helene by the head, brought her closer, and started kissing her on the lips. He had made it to first base, and was hustling for second as quickly as he could. Connor then moved his hands down to her posterior and before you know it, Connor and Helene were rapidly fondling each other like they were two desperate, middle-aged divorcees. The party outside, meanwhile, was getting louder and louder, and had been for the last hour or so.

Helene then unbuttoned Connor's jeans and watched them fall to the floor; all that remained standing in his lower half were his red plaid boxers. Seconds later, he took his shirt off and tossed it aside. With his pants around his ankles and his manhood as hard as an alloy steel flagpole, Connor sat down on the closed toilet seat and was ready, oh so ready, for the big moment. Helene stood right in front of him and put her hands on the bottom of her blouse. Connor knew he was just seconds away from first contact.

Just as she began to lift the blouse up, exposing her midsection, Connor and Helene both heard a different commotion downstairs. Helene was distracted for a moment and looked at the door, but Connor pleaded with her to keep going. She tried to get back in the mood, and a split second before she was topless, the commotion got louder, followed by police sirens. Helene

stopped what she was doing and put her ear up to the door; Connor, itching to remove his boxers, was completely miffed.

“Um, excuse me?” Connor asked. “We were kind of in the middle of something.”

“I think the cops are here,” Helene said, very slightly slurring her words.

“Yeah, but –”

“I really think we should go,” Helene replied, hearing the shouting and people running outside. The neighbors called the cops to bust the party and the flashing lights dimly illuminated the bathroom through the window.

“But we were –”

“Later, Connor; love you,” the half-drunk Helene said, straightening her blouse, opening the door, and running to hide. Connor, still shirtless, with his pants at his ankles, and sporting a massive, call-the-hospital erection, waddled over to the door to look down the hall for Helene, but she was nowhere to be found. He heard the mobile police radios from downstairs getting closer and closer, as now the men in uniform were making their way upstairs, setting Connor into a panic. Going downstairs was officially not an option, as he would get caught by the cops, and there was nowhere to hide in the bathroom since the shower curtain was translucent. Connor, grabbing his shirt, quickly scanned his surroundings and saw his only way out: the window. He rumbled back over to the other end of the room, stuck his head out the window, and looked down – it would be about a twelve-foot fall, but luckily for him, there were bushes along the side of the house. It certainly seemed like a good idea to him at the time. He also continued to see his friends scattering through the backyard and the woods behind Craig’s house, disappearing into the brisk October night.

Hurriedly putting his shirt back on but not even thinking to pull his pants back up, Connor opened the window as widely as he could and slithered his way out feet first. Once outside, he sat on the inside of the window sill for a moment, looked down, closed his eyes, and leapt into the bushes below. Connor ended up sustaining several cuts from the impact, none of which were serious. He picked himself up off the hedges and tried brushing the dirt and leaves off of him. He looked back into the downstairs window and saw two of the police officers scanning around, witnessing all of the devastation and shutting off the stereo system. He decided to run; clearly, his pants were still down, but the young man was drunk, after all. Connor started crawling his way towards the tree line which separated Craig’s house from his next-door neighbor. After

scuttling across the backyard for a few moments to hide behind a tree, Connor looked at the front of the house, and what he saw disturbed him greatly: his friends, Zach and Tim, were apparently not as fortunate as he was. Both of them left Craig's house in handcuffs, as did Craig (who was in his boxers and nothing else) and his sex buddy (who was wearing an oversized t-shirt and nothing else). For the first time in a long while, Connor was legitimately afraid.

Finally, it dawned on him to pull his pants up and make a straight run for his car, which he spotted half-way down the street. Still drunk and dizzy, he started running for the gray sedan, opening the driver's side door and laying across the back seats so as to avoid detection. He kept his eyes closed and waited for the activity outside to stop, and for a moment, Connor believed things were calming down. A few minutes later, however, he heard tapping on the window behind him. Connor slowly turned his head and saw a police officer looking right at him. It didn't take Connor much longer to realize that in his drunken stupor, he jumped into a gray police car, not his own gray vehicle.

The police officer opened the door to his patrol car, and Connor, knowing what thoroughly deep shit he was now in, got out slowly and put his hands behind his back. The cop wasn't so quick to cuff him, but when he detected alcohol on the young man's breath, he was officially arrested for the first time in his life. Connor moved into the back seat once again and made his way to the police station. He sat in silence for the entire car ride, completely blindsided by the hand which fate had dealt him.

While 'downtown' at the station, Connor was searched thoroughly. He knew that the cops would find his trusty fake ID, and they did. As they pulled the card out of his wallet and examined it, Connor tipped his head backwards and gazed at the ceiling. His friends Zach and Tim were in the same room being processed, and they knew that he was in for some more serious trouble. The party's host and his squeeze for the evening were also there, but were in a drooling, drunken narcosis. Connor would later learn that the police also found his bookbag – with his name and address on it – holding that bottle of tequila.

All of the youths present were charged with misdemeanors for violating Michigan's strict underage drinking laws, which could mean fines, probation, or worse for any minors consuming or possessing alcohol. Connor, however, received a second misdemeanor charge for possession of fraudulent identification, and the fact that there was tequila in his bag didn't help matters, either. He and his friends were completely resigned to their fates, feeling an overwhelming

sense of gloom and doom while knowing that there was absolutely nothing they could do about it. The entire group would soon have criminal records, and despite most being minors, this conviction would stay with them permanently unless they should have a clean record during probation.

Connor was in an emotional vacuum from then until the end of November; he felt nothing. He spoke to his parents and friends, but there was nothing there, as if he was still processing what had happened and wondering if it was real. He would see the judge and respond to questions as well, but still, he had no feelings at all. Connor's resignation had completely taken over. It goes without saying that he did no partying at all after his arraignment in October and subsequent release on bail.

Eventually, all of Connor's friends would have court dates as he did, where all pled guilty. Zach, Tim, and Marisa, the cheerleader Craig boinked, were given probation, fined, and sent on their way. Craig was fined, sentenced to probation, and given mandatory alcohol classes. As for Connor, his two misdemeanor counts earned him a sentence of thirty days in jail, followed by a lengthy one-year probation. It was possible that Connor could have been given a sentence similar to that of his friends, but the county judge, who was up for a tough re-election fight the following year, wanted to fight his 'soft' image and make an example of him. The fake ID was the real coup de grace in the case, and the judge pointed out that Connor needed a short jail term to 'scare him straight.' He also noted that some people get much longer sentences as a result, but his first-time offense did not warrant it.

Connor realized that if he had been caught a few months earlier, he might have been shuttled off to a juvenile hall, but no, Connor would stay with the big boys. His parents hung their heads in disbelief at his sentencing just a day after Christmas.

Connor's jail term started immediately. It was partially situated over his high school's two-week winter recess, meaning he'd miss only about two full weeks of classes. He was taken away from the county courthouse in handcuffs and transported to the county jail, where he now had a month to kill and plenty of time to think.