

Transfixed

CW: Stabbing

Written by

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Cast of Characters

Camera Operator - Male, any age, any race

He is obsessed with True Crime and entranced by each show. His emotions can be seen through his body language.

Juniper Daniels - Female, any age, any race

She hosts "Sin Sunday with Juniper Daniels," a True Crime segment on the nightly news channel. She's confident and a touch manipulative.

Melanie - Female, any age, any race

She is the survivor of a crime committed by her best friend and roommate, Alex. She is sweet and naïve. The attack has left her quieter than normal, with nervous energy. This energy shifts to sadness, then frustration as the scene progresses.

Alex - Female, any age, any race

She committed the crime of stabbing her best friend and roommate, Melanie. She is smart, confident, and always looking out for herself. If she needs to manipulate her way to success, so be it.

Time

Present day

Place

The main scene is a newsroom with two comfy chairs, a table, and a tissue box, to establish an interview setting. The camera operator is off to the side, filming the interview.

[Lights up on empty interview set downstage center. A standard empty chair is set to stage left for later in the scene - no light on this area. The camera operator is prepping camera equipment downstage right. Warm chatter backstage between Juniper and Melanie as they begin to walk on stage. Juniper and Melanie walk through the entrance as the first line begins.]

Juniper

Thank you for joining us today, I can't tell you how excited we are to have you here. Please take a seat. Can I get you anything? Coffee, tea, water?

[Both sit in interview chairs]

Melanie

No, thank you. Actually, *[nervous cough]* water, please.

Juniper

[Signaling camera operator]

Coffee, water, and let's get ready to go live.

[Camera operator sets coffee on the table with clumsy quickness and returns to camera setup.]

Juniper

[Deep breath]

Okay everyone, live in 5.

[Camera operator signals countdown. Cue sinister show start music. Juniper continues after.]

Welcome to Sin Sunday, where we bring light to darkness in our community. I'm your host, Juniper Daniels, and tonight, we have a special guest. Melanie, thank you for being here and I've got to say, I am truly sorry for what you've been through. Tell us, how are you coping?

Melanie

Not well. My life stopped on October 23rd, and I haven't found my way back. I'm alive and thankful for that but I have difficulty trusting anyone. She was my best friend. How do you recover?

Juniper

[Places hand on heart in sympathy]

Your best friend. I couldn't imagine. ***[Pause]*** She was your roommate for 5 years; do I have that correct?

[Melanie nods. Juniper continues]

How did it get here?

Melanie

It was good for a long time. We met in college, and she was wicked smart. You know those people who don't try and yet ace everything, that was her. Study sessions eventually led to a friendship and an apartment. ***[Pause - bites nails]*** It started small. I forgot to clean the dishes, and she'd yell at me. I'd listen to my music too loud, and she'd slam her door. It was small, but a shift. We used to laugh. We used to have fun. Not the last three months. I tried to talk to her, but she wasn't

interested, which broke my heart, so eventually, I decided I needed to move out. I got a new job and packed my stuff. ***[Longer pause, getting emotional]***

Juniper

And then what happened?

Melanie

She came home when I was moving out. Saw the boxes. Screamed at me. Before I could react, she grabbed a knife and shoved it in ***[touching shoulder where she was stabbed]***. I still don't understand what happened. I don't understand what happened to my friend. ***[Pause, looking to Juniper for support]***

Juniper

[Said sensitively]

What did it feel like being stabbed?

Melanie

I'm sorry?

Juniper

[Creepy almost]

What did it feel like being stabbed?

Melanie

[Taken aback but answers the question]

It was a blur; I never saw it coming. Why would I? All of a sudden, I felt a sharp pain, like my muscles were being severed. Luckily the shock set in quickly, and everything dulled. But I

could still feel the pain of betrayal. I don't know what hurt worse.

Juniper

The blood. Was there blood?

Melanie

[Put off by the direction of the question, she shows resistance in answering. Speaks in a whisper almost as if off camera.]

That's a little far, don't you think?

Juniper

We need to bring the audience into that moment. Give them a chance to understand what happened.

Melanie

[Continues to show hesitation and starts to show frustration]

She took the knife with her. Couldn't even give me a fighting chance. I tried to stop the bleeding with rags, but I must have passed out at some point.

Juniper

That must have been terrifying. Feeling your life drain. What were you thinking in those last moments? Did you say goodbye to anyone?

Melanie

[Body language shows frustration and indicates "Why would I ever answer a question like that?"]

Juniper

Did you think about Alex in that moment? What she must have been going through?

Melanie

[She's lost trust in the direction of the interview and aims to correct Juniper. Internal turmoil should be shown.]

Think about Alex!? I thought of my parents and my sister. I would die and that would be it but ***[pause]*** my death would cause so much pain in the lives of my loved ones. I called out to them at that moment. I said I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Juniper

You could never inflict pain on another, I can see that. You've been through a great deal. In your mind, what consequences do you see for Alex?

Melanie

I just want her to seek help, so this never happens again.

Juniper

What an angel. Your best friend stabs you for little reason and you want her to seek help. That's all?

Melanie

[Frustration increasing]

Yes. I don't want to cause any additional pain in this world.

Juniper

I guess Alex will never learn then.

Melanie

[Audibly frustrated]

What do you want me to say? I hope she rots in jail!? She never will. It was her first offense, and she has connections.

Ridiculous right, I hear anger management and house arrest are on the table. Three Hail Marys, and a donation for the box, and you're good to go! We're all sinners after all, aren't we?

Juniper

What do you want from this?

Melanie

[Searing]

I want her to suffer. I want to take that kitchen knife and plunge it into her chest. I want her to know what it feels like.

Juniper

[Alex enters in the dark and sits in an isolated chair on stage left as Juniper speaks with a slightly satisfied smirk]

Of course. Of course you do. Thank you, Melanie, for your story.

[Pause] As we know, there are always two sides to every story.

Earlier this week we met with Alex and filmed her side. Let's see that now.

[Lights dim on interview set, lights up on Alex in the chair. Melanie is visibly angry over Alex getting time, you can see it in her body language. As Alex talks, Melanie gets angrier and angrier leading to a silent argument with Juniper - think "I can't believe you fucking did this" but in body language. Midway through Alex's monologue, Melanie silently storms out]

Alex

I'm sorry for what I've done. It's not me, or rather, it's not who I want to be. Melanie and I were the same person - same style, same college, same career track, same taste in men. She was doing better than me in life, and it bothered me. Have you ever felt like you're nothing, like you will never be anything? That's how she made me feel every day. It just kept building and I would pick apart her every move, looking for faults to make myself feel better. I'm ashamed. When I came home, and she was packing up to leave I felt immense betrayal. I should have talked it out with her, but she only tried once, and I couldn't find the words at that time. How do you tell someone you're a failure? But here she was, leaving me, telling me yet again that I wasn't enough. I am not enough. But I want to be. I am sorry for what I've done. From here on out I aim to be a better

person, one that believes in myself and works to better those around me.

[Lights down on Alex's chair, Alex exits the stage. Lights up on interview set]

Juniper

Wow. I mean you all felt that right? The guilt, the inspiration, it was palpable, wasn't it? Unfortunately, Melanie had to leave our interview early. But fear not dear sinners, we have another surprise for you. Let's bring out Alex.

[Camera operator audibly gasps, starstruck, as Alex enters - camera veers a little and then he straightens it back up to continue shooting. Alex sits in the interview chair.]

Juniper

It must be hard to be here today and take accountability. Thank you for being brave.

Alex

It's the least I can do. I have caused harm, and I seek to correct that.

Juniper

How did it feel listening to Melanie speak just now?

Alex

She's right. I deserve no grace. I can only hope she finds peace. ***[On the verge of fake tears]***

Juniper

[Nods in agreement. Pushes tissue box towards Alex]

This must be such a hard time for you. Tell me, what's next?

Alex

I'm working on myself. I'm going to therapy and anger management. I have a long road ahead of me but it's necessary.

Juniper

We all have work to do, and your story is inspiring to me and others.

Alex

Thank you and I hope so. It's important to change and I want to help others do that as well. That's why I've written a book about the event and how I'm going to move forward.

Juniper

Brava, Alex. You heard it here folks, the Alex v Melanie story doesn't end here. For only \$31.99 you can get a copy of this journey. On your screens, you should see a link. ***[Pause]*** Alex, it has been my pleasure, and I wish you all the best in life.

[They shake hands. Cue sinister show music. The camera operator counts down from 3. Juniper and Alex relax, and the Juniper continues.]

Anddddd we're out! Wow, Alex, they are going to eat that shit up. Nicely done. ***[Both exit the stage laughing. Blackout]***

END OF PLAY