

BONAVENTURE UNDERGROUND

Pilot

by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. ALPHA ZETA MU FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

All signs point to "wild party happening here" - loud music, bright lights, cars parked on the lawn, etc.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Just as wild as it appears from outside. A SCRAWNY FRESHMAN lurches through the crowd of WASTED FRAT BROS and GIRLS IN SKIMPY CLOTHES. Judging by his lack of motor skills, the beer he's drinking must be his fifteenth.

Scrawny Freshman continues his staggering path through the crowd, towards the stairs. We lose him in the crush of half-naked coeds, until...

A GIRL SCREAMS.

We hear a THUD, followed by more in rapid succession, the crowd turning to seek the source of the noise...

Scrawny Freshman, OUT COLD at the base of the stairs. From our second-floor vantage point, we can't tell if he's dead or alive. Neither can the crowd, slowly giving way to panic as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eerily silent after the clamor of the frat party. A figure emerges from a door, closes and locks it behind them. Heads down the hall to

EXT. JOURNALISM/ENGLISH BUILDING - NIGHT

Under the streetlight, we get a look at our mysterious figure - CHARLOTTE (CHARLIE) YANG, 19, with a messenger bag slung over casually hip jacket and jeans. She pauses to check her smartphone, as a COP CAR SCREAMS PAST, lights blazing. That gets her attention; she takes off running in pursuit.

EXT. ALPHA ZETA MU HOUSE

Charlie races up only moments behind the police. The partygoers have spilled out onto the lawn, watching Scrawny Freshman being carried out on a gurney, whispering drunkenly among themselves. She scans the crowd, searching... does she recognize anyone...?

Yes. JENN CAMERON, 18, cyberpunk party girl, catches sight of Charlie and waves. The second Jenn gets her attention, Charlie shoves through the crowd to her.

JENN

Charlie!

CHARLIE

Jenn, what's going on?

JENN

I don't know! I was in the kitchen getting a beer and somebody screamed and I was stuck til the cops cleared us out.

Charlie's head whips around, surveying the scene -- three police cars, two black-and-white, one blue-and-white with BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY POLICE insignia. Several COPS are talking with PARTYGOERS; one CAMPUS COP (OFFICER BROWNING) hangs back by the Bonaventure U car. Bingo.

CHARLIE

Be right back.

Before Jenn can react, Charlie charges across the lawn, one hand digging in her messenger bag. Jenn rolls her eyes and follows, flapping her hands helplessly. She's clearly been here, done this, more than once.

EXT. STREET - FRAT ROW

Charlie hurries up to Officer Browning, now clutching a small digital recorder. Browning eyes her suspiciously.

CHARLIE

Excuse me... do you know what happened?

BROWNING

Accident.

CHARLIE

What kind of accident? Why are the regular cops here if it's campus property? Is anyone...

Jenn stumbles up, wobbling a little in spike heels.

JENN

I'm sorry...

BROWNING

Jenn, you know this young lady?

Charlie scowls.

CHARLIE

I write for the Bonaventure Weekly,  
our readers are going to want...

JENN

(to Browning)

I'm so sorry.

BROWNING

Jenn, you see anything?

JENN

Wasted Alphas.

BROWNING

(grunts)

Why don't you and your little friend  
run along back to the dorm.

At "little friend", Charlie's eyes blaze. Jenn notices,  
places a hand on her arm.

JENN

Let's go.

CHARLIE

But...

Jenn turns her away.

JENN

Come on, let's just go.

She looks over her shoulder, mouths "I'm sorry" to Browning,  
who nods grimly. As the girls walk off, Charlie shifts from  
furious silence to sputtering.

CHARLIE

Did you... did... "Little friend?!"

JENN

Breathe. It's cool. You'll find  
out later.

CHARLIE

What "later", somebody might be  
seriously hurt!

Charlie, still walking alongside Jenn, turns to look back at  
the crowd, the cops, ruts in the lawn from the ambulance.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Whatever it is, it must be bad if  
the town cops are involved.

Jenn nods silently, tugs Charlie along with her. As they walk on, a LARGE BLACK TOWN CAR glides silently by, in the direction of the frat house. They barely look up.

INT. CAFETERIA - MORNING

Bright and cheerful. STUDENTS shuffling through -- some in pajamas -- to get their breakfast.

The table we're interested in seems more awake than most. Charlie (hoodie, dark circles under eyes, bedhead) and Jenn (geeky t-shirt and jeans) discuss last night's adventures with TASHA RHODES (20, black, preppy-chic), and SARAH DYER (19, nose ring, paint splatters on her clothes).

TASHA

Twitter says the guy died.

CHARLIE

(shakes head)  
They'd have the flags at half mast.

SARAH

(to Tasha)  
She was up til three calling and  
emailing everybody on campus.

TASHA

(shrugs)  
Maybe they haven't notified his next  
of kin.

CHARLIE

Maybe...

We can see her mind starting to work. She arches an eyebrow.

SARAH

(off Charlie's look)  
Oh, God. And she's off.

CHARLIE

(feigning innocence)  
What?

TASHA

You've got your Lois Lane look again.

JENN

Maybe if you'd gone to the party with me when I asked, you'd be an eyewitness.

CHARLIE

I had to finish my story, it was due this morning.

(beat)

Besides, if I'm gonna go to a frat party it's not gonna be with those freaks.

She shoulders her messenger bag and stands.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And I have to be at the paper again in an hour. Catch you guys later.

The others watch her go, leaving behind her unfinished breakfast. Sarah reaches over and grabs one of Charlie's pancakes with her own fork.

SARAH

Either she'll be the youngest Pulitzer winner in history, or she's going to fail out of school.

Charlie's not far enough out of earshot. She tosses over her shoulder:

CHARLIE

I heard that!

SARAH

Good!

CHARLIE

I know where you live, Sarah Dyer.

Sarah sticks her tongue out at Charlie. Jenn throws a wadded-up napkin at her and giggles.

We follow Charlie now, as she pulls out her cell phone and dials. Waits one ring... two...

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Hello? Hi, can I speak to Jake Bennett?

EXT. CAFETERIA - MORNING

Tasha, Jenn and Sarah push their way through a crowd of CREEPY GUYS at the cafeteria entrance. A few random catcalls from the Creeps.

CREEP

Shake it, don't break it.

JENN

Screw you.

A chorus of "Ooooh"s from the other Creeps. Jenn turns back to the girls and they walk on.

JENN (CONT'D)

Somebody ought to do something about that.

TASHA

Let's get lunch in the grill or something, I'm tired of running the gauntlet just to eat.

JENN

If we eat in the grill, the terrorists win.

TASHA

Jenn.

JENN

Tasha. I'm serious!

Sarah puts a hand on Jenn's shoulder.

SARAH

Grill, 1:30. Be there.

Jenn's put out but doesn't protest. The girls head off in different directions. Meanwhile...

INT. CAMPUS POLICE STATION - MORNING

Charlie chats with SGT. HAMPTON, the grumpy but kind officer on duty.

CHARLIE

You can't tell me if the kid's going to be okay?

SGT. HAMPTON

We don't have that information.

CHARLIE

But he wasn't dead.

Sgt. Hampton sighs a long-suffering sigh -- he's been through this routine before.

SGT. HAMPTON

I can confirm that he is alive, but...

Before he can finish, Jenn enters. He looks relieved.

SGT. HAMPTON (CONT'D)

...That's all we're authorized to say.

(to Jenn)

Jenn, could you...?

Jenn slings her backpack onto the top of a filing cabinet and flops into her seat at the front desk, then swivels to face Charlie.

JENN

Causing trouble again?

Sgt. Hampton nods politely to Charlie and heads back to his office.

CHARLIE

He won't give me anything. I couldn't get anybody to talk to me at the frat house, either.

JENN

Call the hospital?

CHARLIE

Nobody's talking, except for the three different conversations I overheard on the way here. Everybody thinks he's dead. All I've got is a name, Brian Daniels.

JENN

So, you're writing a story on Schrodinger's Frat?

Charlie cracks a smile.

CHARLIE

How long have you been waiting to use that one?

JENN

My genius is entirely spontaneous.

Charlie rolls her eyes, and her gaze falls on the wall clock.

CHARLIE

Crap, I'm late!

Jenn opens her mouth to speak, but Charlie's out the door before she can say anything.

Jenn sits there for a beat, thinking, then reaches for her backpack. Inside is her laptop, which she opens -- then glances over her shoulder to make sure no one's looking.

All clear. She tilts her laptop to block the view of the office desktop, where she pulls up the police department's internal website.

A LOGIN SCREEN pops up. Glancing over her shoulder again, Jenn enters the username "Bhampton". For the password, she thinks a second, fingers idly tapping the keys, then types in a password.

She's in! She's just about to click onto the "Reports" tab when she hears footsteps approaching. Click! She activates the screensaver just in time -- Sgt. Hampton walks in.

SGT. HAMPTON

Hey Jenn, can we get some coffee going?

JENN

Sure thing.

She waits to be sure he's gone before turning back to the computer.

EXT. JOURNALISM/ENGLISH BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie's on her way up the steps when her phone BEEPS. She pulls it out. There's a new message: "FROM: JENNIFER CAMERON SUBJECT: BURN AFTER READING". With a grin, Charlie heads up the steps and inside.

FADE OUT.

## ACT ONE

EXT. ALPHA ZETA MU HOUSE - MORNING

Lawn strewn with trash and vomit. Police cruiser parked outside. We PULL BACK to reveal that it's an IMAGE ON A COMPUTER SCREEN. We're in

INT. CAMPUS NEWSPAPER OFFICE

and Charlie's typing up her story with the headline "STUDENT COMATOSE AFTER RUSH WEEK PARTY ACCIDENT". Lost in thought.

Enter MOLLY HOWARD, 20, the Bonaventure Weekly's preppy princess editor in chief.

MOLLY

Just got off the phone with Dr. Kent.

CHARLIE

(not paying attention)

Hmmm.

MOLLY

We're not running your story.

Charlie's head snaps up. She stares at Molly.

CHARLIE

What?!

MOLLY

Out of respect for the family, the school wants to keep us from feeding the rumor mill.

CHARLIE

Half the campus thinks he's dead.  
We're setting the record straight!

MOLLY

This isn't the New York Times,  
Charlie.

CHARLIE

You don't like anything controversial,  
do you.

Molly's eyes narrow, and she looks over Charlie's shoulder at the half-finished story on the screen.

MOLLY

Where did you get this information,  
anyway?

Charlie selects-all and deletes the story before Molly can read any more, then stands.

CHARLIE

Reporters never reveal their sources.  
But I shouldn't have to tell you  
that, right, boss?

Charlie stalks out of the room and...

EXT. JOURNALISM/ENGLISH BUILDING

She's so pissed off she doesn't watch where she's going... and bumps right into BRAD FLYNN (20, slightly nerdy-cute). He laughs and catches her.

BRAD

Whoa... where's the fire?

It takes a beat for her to recognize him, then she relaxes a little.

CHARLIE

You might've had the right idea,  
quitting the paper.

BRAD

They fired me, remember?

He hasn't let go of her. She hasn't noticed. Sparks? Maybe...

CHARLIE

Your replacement's a piece of work.  
Kills more stories than she runs.

BRAD

(knowing)  
How many of yours?

CHARLIE

As of thirty seconds ago, five.

Brad whistles, and lets go of Charlie as he sees something over her shoulder. She turns, and we SEE Molly, chattering away on her cell phone ahead of a crowd of students that bursts through the doors in a wave. Brad looks at his watch.

BRAD

Time for Econ.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I've gotta...

She gestures vaguely.

BRAD

Later?

CHARLIE

Later.

He holds her gaze just half a beat longer than strictly necessary, watches her go for another beat. He's interested. Is she? We can't tell, because she's hurrying off again, this time to...

EXT. FRAT ROW

Charlie slows her pace once she arrives, strolling past the frat houses, stopping for a moment in front of the Alpha Zeta Mu house. There's a FRAT BRO picking up party debris. She can see a SHADOW through the sheer white curtains of

INT. FRAT HOUSE

JAKE BENNETT, frat president, stands near the window, supervising the Frat Bro through a small gap in the curtains while he talks on the phone with...

INT. TOWNCAR

Dean of Students JONATHAN WALLACE. Alumnus of the frat, made obvious by the Alpha Zeta Mu ring he's wearing. Intercut with Jake.

JAKE

(twitchy)

The kid's not gonna talk, is he?

WALLACE

He would have to wake up first.

JAKE

What if he does?

Jake peeks through the gap in the curtains again. We SEE Charlie across the street, walking away.

EXT. FRAT ROW

A wind picks up some debris and blows it into Charlie's path. She picks it up -- it's the front page of the Bonaventure Weekly, with a cover story: BONAVENTURE U NAMED SAFEST SCHOOL IN STATE FOR TWELFTH YEAR.

CHARLIE

Like hell.

Scowling, Charlie crumples it up and tosses it into a nearby recycling bin.

The TOWN CAR from the night of the incident glides by. Charlie looks up and sees it pull up to the curb; watches as Dean Wallace gets out and walks up to the frat house. Odd, that.

INT. CAFETERIA

Charlie sits in a booth with a tray of untouched food and the Bonaventure Weekly with the "Safest School" headline. There's a table on the front listing crimes like rape, murder, assault, robbery. The number listed for each crime is zero.

INT. CAFETERIA LOBBY

Jenn and Tasha fight their way through the CREEP SQUAD CROWD. One GRABS JENN'S ASS, hard -- she whirls around and he throws his arm up to block her.

He's too slow -- the SLAP reverberates through the lobby.

GRABBY CREEP

Hey!

Tasha looks on in horror as Jenn gets in Grabby Creep's face, teeth bared, pure fury.

JENN

Next time I aim for the balls!

Grabby Creep lunges for Jenn. Tasha grabs Jenn's arm and yanks her away, hurrying her towards the dining hall, amid angry PROTESTS from the creeps.

TASHA

Not worth it...

Jenn turns, tries to wrench free, but Tasha's grip is solid. She pulls Jenn along.

INT. CAFETERIA

Tasha and Jenn flop into the booth, Jenn still spitting fire.

CHARLIE

What happened?

TASHA

The usual.

JENN

No, not usual.

Charlie looks from Tasha to Jenn and back again, awaiting answers.

TASHA  
One of the guys grabbed her.

CHARLIE  
(stands)  
Where is he?

Jenn stands, glad someone has her back.

TASHA  
Violence never solves anything.

JENN  
Wanna bet?

TASHA  
Jenn, it's over. You made your point.  
That guy's gonna be sore all day.

JENN  
He didn't grab you.

TASHA  
If you go back, it's assault, not  
self-defense, Miss I-Work-At-The-  
Police-Department.

Well, when she puts it THAT way...

Charlie and Jenn sit (though Jenn takes a beat longer).

INT. CHARLIE AND SARAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

The girls have gathered to watch a cheesy B-movie. Popcorn, soda, contraband wine coolers. Charlie has one eye on the TV and one on her laptop -- she's running searches on hazing at Bonaventure U.

SARAH  
C'mon, Charlie, you're missing the  
best part.

Charlie barely glances up.

JENN  
What are you looking at?

Jenn looks over Charlie's shoulder. On the screen is the text "BONAVENTURE UNDERGROUND" in an old-fashioned newspaper-header font.

CHARLIE  
Check this out. Somebody had an  
underground newspaper here in the  
'90s.

SARAH

Really?

Tasha joins Sarah and Jenn in reading over Charlie's shoulder. She scrolls through what appears to be a farewell editorial.

TASHA

It says it ran for a year. Where's the rest of it?

Charlie shrugs. Jenn reaches over her and commandeers the laptop.

CHARLIE

Hey!

Jenn copies the page's URL from the address bar, types in "WWW.ARCHIVE.ORG", then pastes the Bonaventure Underground URL into its search. Multiple hits come up.

JENN

Behold.

SARAH

Click on one.

She makes as if she's going to click it herself, but Charlie swats her hand away.

CHARLIE

My computer. I'm driving.

She clicks on a link at random. It leads to an edition of the Bonaventure Underground that contains headlines about financial aid, the illness of a beloved music professor, a Halloween costume contest, and an attempt to organize a campus Pride event.

SARAH

Hey! They don't even have Pride now.

TASHA

Oh, I remember Dr. Novak. She was my cousin's favorite professor.

SARAH

How is Curtis these days?

TASHA

On tour with Michael Buble.

JENN

You're kidding.

CHARLIE  
 (one-track mind)  
 Guys, this is kind of awesome. It's  
 like... a real paper. And, hey,  
 look.

She points at a headline: CAMPUS CRIME RISES FOR THIRD  
 STRAIGHT SEMESTER.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
 They're calling out this "safest  
 school in the state" crap too.

SCREAMS from the TV draw the girls' attention back to the  
 movie, where a rubber-suit monster is disappearing into a  
 swamp with a screaming woman over its shoulder.

SARAH  
 Okay. More of that later.

The girls settle back in to watch the movie. Charlie tries  
 to watch too, but she's distracted by the website.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

While DR. PARKER drones on about Watergate in the background,  
 Charlie surfs the Bonaventure Underground archives. Pulls  
 up Instant Messenger, messages Jenn: "U AND SARAH MEET ME @  
 GRIND AFTER CLASS."

EXT. DAILY GRIND - DAY

A funky little coffee shop, sandwiched in between a  
 convenience store and a laundromat in the world's saddest  
 strip mall.

INT. DAILY GRIND

Charlie, Jenn and Sarah confer at a corner table. Tasha, in  
 a Daily Grind apron, brings coffee and pastries, then pulls  
 up a chair.

TASHA  
 I don't have long... got the new guy  
 running the counter. So what's up?

CHARLIE  
 So, I was reading the Bonaventure  
 Underground archives this morning...

SARAH  
 In class?

CHARLIE

(ignores that)

Ten years ago things were just as screwed up around here, and these people tried to do something about it. So... what if we started the Underground back up again?

TASHA

But you already work for the newspaper.

CHARLIE

You're an English major, Jenn knows Web stuff, Sarah takes pictures...

JENN

Tasha has a point, can't you just write about this stuff for the real paper?

CHARLIE

When's the last time the paper ran anything that didn't come from the PR office?

She looks around the table. Silence.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

They killed my story about Brian Daniels, and you guys saw that "Safest school in the state" article, right?

JENN

The one with all the fake crime stats?

SARAH

Fake?

JENN

Zero assaults in the past year? I got a stack of case files that say otherwise.

CHARLIE

I rest my case.

Sarah's troubled by this. Still...

SARAH

I thought you needed the newspaper hours to keep your scholarship.

CHARLIE

Who says I can't do both?

Jenn laughs, and chokes on cappuccino foam.

JENN

Molly would have an aneurysm.

Charlie grins -- she's got it all figured out.

CHARLIE

Only if I use my real name.

There's a CRASH from the counter. The girls look up to see the BARISTA standing in the wreckage of a coffee mug.

TASHA

Duty calls. Keep me posted, though, this sounds cool.

She hurries off to deal with the Barista. Charlie looks at Jenn and Sarah.

CHARLIE

We all went through the same freshman-orientation stuff about, like, self-defense and safety and who to report things to, right?

Eye-rolls all around.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What if this paper was the real safe place to report stuff? All the stories that piss off the PR people and alumni...

SARAH

And Molly.

CHARLIE

And her.

JENN

So, is this a revenge plot for Molly killing your story?

Charlie raises an eyebrow at her.

JENN (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm down with revenge, just tell me what we're doing.

CHARLIE

You guys should read the archives... the original staff even founded the Gay/Straight Alliance on campus. Back in the Nineties.

Jenn and Sarah share a look.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I've been trying for five years to write the kind of stories that might make a real difference. Couldn't do it in high school, can't do it here... but we could do this. Real change. Just us and a computer.

Moved by Charlie's impassioned mission statement, they don't think twice.

SARAH

I'm in.

JENN

Me too. And I already know what I want to write about.

Off Charlie's delight, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

INT. JENN AND TASHA'S ROOM

On one side, neat as a pin with well-organized electronic gadgetry. On the other, cluttered with books and magazines and notebooks.

Charlie and Jenn lounge on Jenn's bed with their laptops. Jenn's in her element; Charlie looks a little glazed.

JENN

...That way nobody can trace it back to us.

CHARLIE

Anything else?

JENN

Yeah. Tether your phone to your computer, don't use the campus wi-fi.

CHARLIE

Domain masking, server relays, tethering... do I need to change majors to Computer Science?

JENN

(laughs)

No. Just post stories.

Tasha enters, carrying a massive stack of books.

TASHA

How's it coming?

Tasha sets her books down, and Jenn turns her laptop around to show her. The site is already up, with a bold "BONAVENTURE UNDERGROUND" header in black and red.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Nice.

They high-five.

CHARLIE

Now all we need are articles. Are you still doing the harassment story?

JENN

What do you think?

Jenn smirks. Charlie looks at Tasha.

CHARLIE

What do you want to write about,  
Tash?

TASHA

I was thinking I could do something  
about successful minority alumni.  
Like a profile or something. Since  
I've never written actual news stories  
before.

JENN

It's not that hard.

CHARLIE

Hey!

(to Tasha)

I like that idea. Not quite up-to-  
the-minute breaking news but not  
something we see in the real paper  
either.

Tasha smiles and reaches for a notebook.

TASHA

I'll have something done tomorrow.

CHARLIE

Great. Jenn, give 'em hell.

(stands)

I need to go work on the introduction  
post.

JENN

What are you going to write about  
Brian Daniels?

CHARLIE

(sighs)

Just an update -- still in a coma,  
no explanation, no changes.

INT. CHARLIE AND SARAH'S ROOM

Charlie enters through the connecting door (via the shared  
bathroom) and flops onto her bed with her laptop.

She sits there staring at a blank document for a moment,  
then turns on some music -- loud alternative rock -- and  
begins to type.

INT. DAILY GRIND

As the song plays over, Jenn and Tasha scribble/type and  
talk over their stories.

In the background, the Barista drops a plate of cookies. Tasha turns to yell at him but turns right back to her story.

INT. CAFETERIA

(Song still playing) Sarah sits across from Charlie, and Charlie passes over her laptop for Sarah read the article she's been writing.

INT. CHARLIE AND SARAH'S ROOM - MUCH LATER

(Song ends) All four girls have assembled around Charlie's laptop -- with her smartphone attached to it, per Jenn's earlier instructions. They all have contraband wine coolers.

CHARLIE

Here goes.

With much ceremony, she hits PUBLISH, and there we have it: the first issue of the Bonaventure Underground is live.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Here's to the fourth estate.

Jenn commandeers the laptop while the others clink bottles and drink.

SARAH

To stirring up trouble.

JENN

Uh... huh...

TASHA

Jenn, what are you doing?

JENN

Advertising.

Surprised, the others watch over her shoulder. She's in the Bonaventure Underground email account. She selects "CAMPUS" from the address book and types a subject line: "GO UNDERGROUND". Pastes the site link into the email.

CHARLIE

Jenn got us every student email on campus.

SARAH

How do you do that, there are like five thousand students.

Jenn just grins and hits SEND.

All the girls' phones chime with new messages. Tasha picks hers up -- yep, it's Jenn's email.

JENN

Now we just sit back and wait. It'll probably take a couple days to get much of a reaction.

€•EXT. DORM - NEXT DAY

We see a HAND posting a brightly-colored sign on the door: "NO LOITERING AROUND CAFETERIA" with the campus police seal and further details below.

A beat later, the door swings open to reveal our four girls. The bright paper catches their attention and they stop to look at the sign.

TASHA

Jenn, did you do this?

JENN

Me? I haven't been at the station since yesterday.

SARAH

Did you report your... incident?

JENN

Wasn't arrestworthy.

TASHA

Did you email anybody there?

JENN

No, just students.

SARAH

How long since the article went up?

All three girls turn to Charlie. She's grinning, about to burst with pride and triumph.

CHARLIE

Less than twelve hours.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

The girls go their separate ways. We follow Sarah down the street to

EXT. ART BUILDING - DAY

She slows as she passes by a cluster of other ART STUDENTS standing around outside, smoking.

STUDENT #1

It's not like the real paper's worth  
a crap.

STUDENT #2

It's the internet, I give it a week.  
Maybe two.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Charlie stands in line in the cafeteria, trying (and failing)  
to be inconspicuous about eavesdropping on the girls behind  
her.

GIRL #1

Everybody was saying he died.

GIRL #2

I know, apparently he still hasn't  
woken up yet. Scary.

EXT. STUDENT UNION - DAY

Tasha sits on the patio with a coffee and her poetry notebook.  
A group of GUYS AND GIRLS nearby are having a heated  
discussion.

GUY

I never grabbed anybody.

GIRL

Nobody said you did.

GUY

I can't hang out at the cafeteria  
because some douche grabbed a girl's  
butt?

GUY #2

Guilt by association, loser.

INT. CAMPUS POLICE STATION - DAY

Jenn walks in and flops into her seat, backpack thudding  
onto the desk. Sgt. Hampton emerges from the back.

SGT. HAMPTON

Jenn.

JENN

Sergeant.

She attempts to sit up straighter.

SGT. HAMPTON  
You seen this underground paper thing?

She avoids his gaze, rummaging in her backpack.

JENN  
Yeah, I heard people talking about  
it this morning.

SGT. HAMPTON  
Molly Howard called, thinks somebody  
stole information from the newspaper  
office.

Jenn looks up, genuinely puzzled.

JENN  
Did they?

SGT. HAMPTON  
No signs of a break-in. But let me  
know if your friend Charlie says  
anything, I know she pretty much  
lives there.

JENN  
Will do.

She salutes. He smiles in spite of himself and turns to go  
back to his office, then stops.

SGT. HAMPTON  
These... perverts at the cafeteria,  
they ever give you any trouble?

JENN  
(smirks)  
They don't bother me.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Dr. Parker's class. Notes about Watergate on the board.  
Charlie's paying attention this time.

DR. PARKER  
I assume you all have heard about  
the Bonaventure Underground?

Murmurs of recognition from the class. Charlie remains still.

DR. PARKER (CONT'D)  
In your journalistic opinions...  
what do you think?

DUDE #1  
I think it's awesome.

PROFESSOR  
Care to elaborate on that?

Before DUDE can respond:

PREPPY GIRL  
Whoever wrote that article about the  
cafeteria is a whiny femi-nazi dyke.

Charlie's head whips around. She glares, about to explode.

Dr. Parker notices Charlie's response.

DR. PARKER  
Ms. Yang, is something wrong?

Busted, Charlie puts on the fakest of smiles.

CHARLIE  
Something other than rampant  
homophobia?

She glares daggers at Preppy Girl.

Behind Preppy Girl, in Charlie's sight line, is Brad. He  
mouths "idiot", jerking his thumb towards Preppy Girl.

Charlie raises an eyebrow at him, tries to stifle a smile.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Sarah and Charlie walk back to the dorm.

SARAH  
Hey, I had nothing to do with the  
cafeteria article.

That makes Charlie smile. Sarah elbows her, grinning.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Still have your sense of humor. You  
might not be too far gone.

CHARLIE  
I wanted to shove my backpack down  
that girl's throat.

SARAH  
It sounds like the guys in your class  
like it, at least.  
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

And that sidebar on the front page about Brian Daniels was a great idea, the rumor mill was getting ugly.

Charlie grunts, noncommittal. Brooding.

INT. CHARLIE AND SARAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie reads through the old Bonaventure Underground archives some more. Sarah sits on the floor, working on a large drawing.

Sighing heavily, Sarah drops her pencil.

SARAH

That's it. I am all drawn out.

CHARLIE

(not looking up)

When's it due?

SARAH

Not til Monday. Come on, let's go somewhere.

CHARLIE

No thanks.

Sarah goes over to Charlie and tugs on her sleeve.

SARAH

Quit staring at that computer and be a person for a change.

Charlie looks up, eyebrow raised.

CHARLIE

I am a person who's working.

Sarah takes her by the arm and practically hauls Charlie to her feet.

SARAH

You can stop for ten minutes. Come on, I'm bored.

She hustles Charlie out the door.

INT. DAILY GRIND - NIGHT

As Charlie and Sarah enter, Tasha hands a cup of coffee to Dean Wallace. He drops a tip in the jar and leaves, walking right past the girls - Charlie watches him leave as they head for the counter.

CHARLIE  
Who was that?

TASHA  
Dean Wallace. Dean of Students.

CHARLIE  
Huh.

SARAH  
What?

CHARLIE  
I saw him the day after that party.  
He was going to the frat house.

Sarah rolls her eyes.

SARAH  
Quit looking for mysteries. If he's  
the Dean of Students, he probably  
went to see if he could help, you  
know, representing the school or  
something.

Charlie remains unconvinced, but there's no use pressing the  
issue.

CHARLIE  
So... caffeine?

INT. CHARLIE AND SARAH'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Sarah's fast asleep. Charlie lies half-awake, lit only by  
her laptop, which is open to the Bonaventure Underground  
archives again. She dozes off with the computer still on.

INT. CHARLIE AND SARAH'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

A new email alert pops up on Charlie's laptop, startling her  
awake.

She rubs her eyes, and looks blearily at the screen. The  
email account that pinged is the paper's. She clicks READ.

The email pops up: FROM: ERIC WINSTON SUBJECT: FRAT PARTY.

Charlie looks at the name for a moment, with no recognition,  
then scrolls down to the message: BE CAREFUL, YOU DON'T KNOW  
WHAT YOU'RE GETTING INTO.

Her eyes widen. She reads it a second time. Looks over at  
Sarah - who's still asleep - and starts to move as if to get  
up and go over to Sarah's bed, then thinks better of it.

CHARLIE

Winston...

Seized by a sudden inspiration, she clicks out of email and over to her browser. Scrolls down through the Bonaventure Underground page she fell asleep reading the night before.

Aha, there it is: Eric Winston's byline.

Unnoticed by Charlie, Sarah stirs, opens one eye.

SARAH

What are you doing up so early?

CHARLIE

Hmmm.

SARAH

Whatever it is, can you do it quieter?

She rolls over, pulling the covers entirely over her head. Ignoring Sarah, Charlie pulls up the email again and hits REPLY.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

American History. Notes on the board about the War of 1812. Charlie's entirely oblivious to the professor, though; she's in the back corner with her laptop, refreshing her email obsessively.

Finally: new message from Eric Winston "RE: FRAT PARTY". She opens it. Above the text she had sent him - "WHAT DO YOU MEAN?" - he has replied "DON'T WANT TO SAY OVER EMAIL."

There's only one answer to that, and Charlie has it. "MEET AT 5TH STREET COFFEE HOUSE 6:30?" Clicks SEND.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Not a college hangout, and not very busy. Charlie sits at a back corner table with ERIC WINSTON - hipster-hot, late 20s.

CHARLIE

They didn't give you a reason for shutting you down?

ERIC

Well, they did, but they said it was something about violating the rules in the student handbook.

Charlie nearly chokes on her coffee.

CHARLIE

Underground papers are in the student handbook?

ERIC

(smirks)

Knowing them, they put it in afterwards.

He takes a sip of his coffee.

ERIC (CONT'D)

They just didn't like that we were asking questions about Joseph Miller.

CHARLIE

The one who disappeared?

ERIC

(nods)

Something wasn't right there. With the administration, I mean. Of course we didn't put that in the article...

CHARLIE

Yeah, I read it.

He looks pleased.

ERIC

The way everybody acted about it was weird. Like they didn't want him found.

And on that note of dread, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

## ACT THREE

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

The cafeteria's almost deserted. Charlie and company have stayed so late the janitorial staff is cleaning up. Despite no other students being around, they huddle around their table, talking as quietly as possible.

CHARLIE

This kid disappears, right, and he's presumed dead since it's been like years, and it's Alpha Zeta Mu covering things up again.

SARAH

Why didn't you tell us about this Eric Winston person?

JENN

(to herself)

I should've checked the site email, I would've seen it.

CHARLIE

Are you hearing me? We're talking about dead students.

SARAH

Who says the kid's dead?

CHARLIE

Right, maybe he's only in a coma.

TASHA

How do you know your, um, informant isn't going to blow our cover?

Charlie throws up her hands in frustration.

CHARLIE

Why would he? He's been out of school for practically ever and it's not like he has any ties here.

TASHA

You never know.

CHARLIE

I went by myself so he wouldn't know who else is working on the paper! I was trying to protect you guys.

SARAH

You could've at least told us about it.

JENN

Sar's right. He could've been a psycho.

CHARLIE

(rolls eyes)

He is not a psycho. Now, these frat guys...

EXT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Nearly deserted... nobody loitering around the entrances. Just a student or two coming or going, and the Bonaventure Underground crew. They survey their surroundings.

SARAH

Kind of weird to not have the Creep Squad hanging out.

TASHA

Kind of awesome, you mean.

CHARLIE

See, this is why we need to investigate the hazing story. Imagine the good we could do. Maybe we could keep the same thing from happening to Brian Daniels.

JENN

He's in the hospital, I don't think anything will happen to him there.

A police car cruises silently by. The girls watch it out of sight.

SARAH

You know, I don't know if it's such a good thing that the cops are watching us.

TASHA

They're not watching us, though, just the paper. We're anonymous. Right?

She directs this at Jenn, who looks thoughtful.

SARAH

I mean, yeah, we're getting stuff done, but this could end up biting us in the ass.

That hangs in the air as the girls head back towards the dorm.

INT. DEAN WALLACE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Dean Wallace drinks his morning coffee, checks email. His phone rings -- CallerID says "JAKE BENNETT". He picks up right away.

WALLACE

Jake.

INT. FRAT HOUSE

Jake's standing in an empty hallway, mostly in shadow. Keeping his voice down. Intercut with Wallace.

JAKE

You saw this... Underground thing, right?

WALLACE

Inconsequential.

JAKE

The guy they talked about grabbing girls in the cafeteria...

Dean Wallace heaves a sigh and takes a long drink of coffee.

WALLACE

One of ours?

JAKE

What the hell are we supposed to do?

WALLACE

You need to keep your people in check. I can't protect your reputation if you don't have one.

JAKE

That doesn't help us right now.

WALLACE

Then it's simple. If he's not one of ours, then it's not our problem.

He ends the call.

## INT. DARKROOM

Sarah struggles - they're supposed to be developing pictures the old-fashioned way, but only three of the enlargers work. She's there with LILY, one of her classmates. Sarah slams her palm into the side of an enlarger that's stuck.

SARAH

Oh, bite me!

LILY

God, this is worse than the nursing school. At least the equipment works there.

SARAH

But you're still buying bandages with your own money?

LILY

Not us, the professors.

SARAH

That's not right.

## INT. PHOTO LAB

Where they pack up their things - no work's getting done today.

LILY

Maybe Mr. Hanson can MacGyver the things into working.

SARAH

Again?

LILY

You'd think "new enlargers" would be in the budget somewhere.

SARAH

You'd think. Football team's new dorm is right on schedule, though.

LILY

Aren't they paying for that with, like... ticket sales or alumni donations or something?

SARAH

If they are, I haven't heard about it.

EXT. ART BUILDING

Sarah and Lily part ways with a wave. We follow Sarah, who's stopped by an ART STUDENT handing out flyers. She accepts one -- it advertises a department party happening off campus. She stuffs it into her bag and walks on, to

EXT. CAMPUS POLICE STATION

just in time to meet Jenn, who's coming off her shift. Jenn falls into step with Sarah and they walk on.

JENN

The entire station is talking about the paper. Especially the cafeteria article.

SARAH

Anything good?

JENN

Somebody from the Dean's office called.

Duly impressed, Sarah pats Jenn on the back.

SARAH

Maybe I was wrong about that "biting us on the ass" thing.

INT. CAFETERIA

All the girls have assembled. Charlie looks thoughtful; Jenn's just given her the news.

CHARLIE

This is awesome. I mean... if they let us run this stuff in the real paper, imagine what this place would be like.

She looks down at her phone, scrolls through the Bonaventure Underground email account. Subject lines include "YOU ROCK" "FINALLY" "THANKS". She waves her phone at the others.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You guys are already stars.

A group of students sit at the nearest table. Sarah notices; the others don't.

SARAH

(a little too loud)  
Did I tell you guys about the art party?

The others are startled, but when they look around, they notice the potential eavesdroppers and settle down.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Charlie enters to find the rest of the STAFF (two guys, JOHN and AMIR, two girls, DEONNE and PAM) assembled for the weekly staff meeting. Molly is mid-hissyfit to DR. JULIA KENT, the paper's faculty advisor.

MOLLY

People only want to read gossip.  
Even the cops are listening!

DR. KENT

I found that distressing, though it seems there may be some basis to that particular tale.

MOLLY

Who cares, they're guys, that's what guys do.

CHARLIE

I don't know what guys you're hanging out with. My brother doesn't do that crap.

MOLLY

Your brother's gay.

Dr. Kent holds up a hand to silence Molly.

DR. KENT

Charlotte. How nice of you to join us. What do you think of this attempt at amateur journalism?

CHARLIE

(stony-faced)

I don't, I'm too busy studying.

•Dr. Kent seems to accept this blatant falsehood. For now.

AMIR

I've seen those guys at the cafeteria. Half the girls I know won't even eat there. Why haven't we written about it?

DEONNE

I pitched it, Molly said no.

MOLLY

Because it's a non-story!

CHARLIE

What, like Brian Daniels was a non-story? The kid's still in a coma, and nobody knows how it happened! Or isn't saying.

Molly bristles.

DR. KENT

Molly, shouldn't we start our meeting now? I do have a class to teach this afternoon.

Charlie slumps into a seat. It's going to be a long, miserable meeting.

INT. CHARLIE AND SARAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

The Bonaventure Underground's version of a staff meeting. Campy sci-fi B-movie on the TV, snacks, and Charlie's laptop.

CHARLIE

Tasha, you're still on track for the next alumni profile?

TASHA

Yep.

SARAH

You writing about Curtis?

TASHA

(shakes head)

They'd guess it was me in about two seconds.

JENN

Charlie, what are you going to write?

SARAH

Yeah, are you writing articles or just like... the boss of us?

CHARLIE

Hey, I'm nobody's boss. I'm just... still working on it.

Blatant lie.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Sar, what have you got?

SARAH

The new dorm.

JENN  
(fake yawn)  
Bored now.

SARAH  
Maybe if you chose a major you'd be  
pissed about your department getting  
the shaft too.

TASHA  
Hey, not all of us knew what we were  
going to major in since we were six.

Jenn smiles her thanks.

SARAH  
Even if it's all aboveboard, there's  
a lot more they could do with that  
money than build a four-star hotel  
for jocks.

CHARLIE  
The budget story's a little dry,  
but...  
(warming to the idea)  
it could start our own Occupy  
movement.

TASHA  
(snorts)  
Occupy Jock Dorm?

JENN  
Why not?

The other girls share a look.

CHARLIE  
What?

TASHA  
You're rubbing off on her.

Charlie looks pleased.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

## ACT FOUR

## INT. LIBRARY STUDY ROOM

A dark, isolated corner. Charlie digs through bound back issues of the campus paper, looking for anything on Alpha Zeta Mu. Of course all she's found is a few puff pieces about charity events and the like, scattered around the table. On her laptop, there are multiple browser tabs of articles from the local paper's archives.

She's so absorbed in her reading and doesn't notice Brad Flynn sitting down across from her.

BRAD

Hey.

Startled, she snaps her laptop shut.

CHARLIE

Hi. What are you doing here?

BRAD

How's it going?

CHARLIE

Molly's being a turbo-bitch, Kent's got a stick up her ass. Same old.

Not the answer he was hoping for. She picks up one of the heavy volumes and goes to reshelve it. Brad picks up the others and follows.

## INT. STACKS

Brad helps Charlie re-shelve the books. He tries to engage on her terms.

BRAD

The paper does seem to be getting more... airheaded.

CHARLIE

That's what you get when your editor isn't even in Journalism.

BRAD

I should've tried to do more puff pieces, maybe they wouldn't have kicked me off the staff.

CHARLIE

Hey, it's not your fault Dr. Kent doesn't like controversy.

BRAD

I still don't know why the Greek System runs campus. It's creepy. I thought that crap only happened in movies.

CHARLIE

The school president used to be in a frat here. Champion dude cheerleader, too. That's probably why. But at least they aren't all douchebags like...

Struck by a sudden inspiration, she returns to...

INT. STUDY ROOM

and pulls up the school's website. Brad follows a few steps behind.

BRAD

What are you doing?

CHARLIE

Mmmm.

A few clicks and she pulls up the president's bio. Scrolls down. Sure enough: he was a member of Alpha Zeta Mu. She looks up with a "Eureka!" look in her eyes, immediately tries to conceal it when she meets Brad's gaze.

BRAD

What?

CHARLIE

Nothing.

BRAD

You've got something.

CHARLIE

No, just... an idea.

She sits down and pulls her laptop closer.

BRAD

You want to get something to eat?

CHARLIE

Too much work to do. Paper due.

BRAD

Another time?

Charlie's absorbed in reading.

CHARLIE

Mmm-hmmm.

Disappointed, Brad heads for the door.

BRAD

Um... bye?

CHARLIE

Mmm, bye.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - NIGHT

A key turns in the lock and Charlie enters. The office is deserted, but light from the streetlight outside illuminates one side of the huge old filing cabinet in the corner.

Charlie makes a beeline for the cabinet and opens a drawer. She digs through files dated a few years earlier -- there are dozens, and they look like they haven't been touched since they were put in.

Finding the dates she wants, Charlie pulls out a giant file folder. She's about to open it when she hears FOOTSTEPS out in the hall.

*Shit.*

She freezes. Yep, they're headed her way. She stuffs the folder into the file cabinet and darts over to the desk, just as Molly enters.

MOLLY

(surprised)

You spend more time in here than I do. Don't you have... I dunno, a life?

CHARLIE

Don't you?

MOLLY

Forgot my phone.

She snatches up a bejeweled iPhone and sweeps out.

Charlie waits until Molly's footsteps fade down the hall, then runs over to the file cabinet and reopens the drawer. Grabs the folder, crams it into her bag.

INT. CHARLIE AND SARAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room's empty when Charlie walks in. She pulls out the folder and flops onto the bed with it. Her laptop's already there -- she opens both it and folder.

She's absorbed in the folder's contents when there's a knock from the bathroom door.

CHARLIE

Come in.

Jenn and Tasha enter, dressed for a party.

JENN

Sarah invited us to the art department party, you wanna go?

Charlie barely looks up.

CHARLIE

Can't.

TASHA

Come on, Charlie, when's the last time you actually went to a party?

She ignores the question and starts typing something.

JENN

Well, we're gonna go drink and flirt. You enjoy... all that.

Charlie doesn't even hear them leave.

INT. PARTY - NIGHT

Sarah stands amidst a crowd of other ART STUDENTS, clearly in her element. Tasha's deep in conversation with another GIRL who looks a little too preppy for this crowd.

Jenn wanders through the party, a little awkwardly, sipping a drink from a large plastic cup. She catches bits of conversations, scanning the crowd for anyone she knows...

ART STUDENT

He got kicked out. I didn't even know that was a rule.

...Or anything good to listen in on. She hovers, trying to stay just within earshot.

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie's still at her laptop, bits and pieces from the folder scattered around her, typing away. We see bits of the article she's writing: "MORE SERIOUS THAN HAZING?" "WHAT DOES THE PRESIDENT OF OUR 'ESTEEMED INSTITUTION' KNOW ABOUT THIS?" "COVERED UP"

INT. PARTY - NIGHT

Now Jenn's trying to get Sarah's attention, waving as unobtrusively as possible (i.e., not very).

Sarah, finally looking up from her conversation, sees Jenn signaling. She raises her eyebrows at Jenn, who mouths "GET OVER HERE".

SARAH  
(to nearest student)  
I'll be right back, 'k?

We follow her across the room to join Jenn, just as Tasha walks up.

TASHA  
(to Jenn)  
There you are! You disappeared on me.

SARAH  
What's up?

Jenn gestures for them to retreat farther towards the wall. They follow, puzzled.

JENN  
(stage whisper)  
The creep from the cafeteria got kicked out of his frat!

SARAH  
I know.

JENN  
How?!

SARAH  
That's what we were talking about over there. That's his girlfriend.

She points at a DEPRESSED-LOOKING GIRL talking to the group she just left.

TASHA  
She doesn't look happy.

SARAH  
He was her ticket to all the good parties.

JENN  
Which frat?

SARAH  
Can we talk about this later? I  
don't want to get busted.

JENN  
Which frat?

SARAH  
Alpha Zeta Mu. Again.

TASHA  
Those dudes are bad news.

SARAH  
Now can we stop talking about this  
in public?!

Jenn looks guilty. She and Tasha nod, and scurry off in another direction.

Sarah rejoins her friends - Lily has joined the group in her absence.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Sorry about that.

ART STUDENT #1  
(to Depressed Girl)  
What did his parents say?

DEPRESSED GIRL  
I don't know, but they must be fit  
to be tied, he was a legacy.

SARAH  
Well, if he screwed up that badly...

DEPRESSED GIRL  
They wouldn't have kicked him out if  
this... paper thing hadn't gotten  
everybody all riled up.

LILY  
Sometimes riled up is good though.  
Sar, did you see they posted about  
the cost of the new dorm? Sounded  
like something you'd write.

Sarah pales.

SARAH  
Um. No, I didn't.

Lily eyes her shrewdly.

LILY  
 (half teasing)  
 Or maybe... that's what you want us  
 to think?

Sarah looks like she's going to barf. How does she respond to that?!

SARAH  
 Um. Heh. Yeah, I lead a double  
 life. I'm actually a spy.

Lily chuckles and turns to say something to the person next to her. Sarah scans the crowd to find Tasha and Jenn again, spots them talking to two HOT GUYS.

She makes a beeline for them. Grabs them by the arms to get their attention.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 Crap. Crap crap crap.

JENN/TASHA  
 What?!

SARAH  
 (whisper)  
 I think I'm busted.

TASHA  
 (to guys)  
 Excuse us.  
 (to Sarah)  
 Busted how?!

JENN  
 I didn't say anything!

Off their reactions (including the Guys, looking confused), we cut to...

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie puts the finishing touches on the latest issue - with the headline "WHAT HAPPENED TO JOSEPH MILLER?"

She sits back for a second and scans over her article... and hits "PUBLISH"€•.

INT. PARTY - NIGHT

Over the noise of the party we hear PHONE ALERTS chiming all over the room. Some people ignore it, others pull out their phones.

Sarah's one of the ones who looks at her phone.

SARAH  
Guys?

TASHA  
What?

SARAH  
We need to talk.

JENN  
Sar, we're...

Sarah gestures vaguely with her phone, on which the words "BONAVENTURE UNDERGROUND" are visible. Makes sure she holds it up long enough for the header to register.

SARAH  
Now.

The "Oh, shit" hits them both at once.

TASHA  
Excuse us.

The guys look even more confused as the three girls hurry off to a corner. Jenn gropes in her purse for her phone.

TASHA (CONT'D)  
What happened?

Jenn pulls out her phone, looks at it, holds the new message up for Tasha to see.

JENN  
Looks like we published tonight.

TASHA  
What?

INT. DEAN WALLACE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Dean packs up his briefcase for the night. As he fits one last file folder into it, his phone chimes with a new message. He picks it up.

FROM: BENNETT, JACOB SUBJECT: WHAT DO WE DO???

Wallace opens the email. It's the forwarded Bonaventure Underground message. He grabs his desk phone. Hits 1 on speed dial. Reads the email while he waits.

*Ring. Ring. Ring.*

JAKE (V.O.)

Hello?

WALLACE

What we do is we handle it.

EXT. QUAD - NIGHT

The girls make tracks for the dorm.

TASHA

I can't believe she didn't tell us!

JENN

It wasn't even supposed to go up today!

SARAH

Screw that... did you guys know that's what she was writing about?

TASHA

No!

INT. CHARLIE AND SARAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah, Tasha and Jenn enter to find Charlie at her desk, looking at the hit counter on the Bonaventure Underground website (which is ticking noticeably upward). She looks up and grins.

CHARLIE

Hey.

It takes all of half a second for her to register that they are not amused.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What?

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

## ACT FIVE

INT. CHARLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The Come-To-Jesus meeting. Charlie's in the hot seat.

TASHA  
You could've at least told us.

CHARLIE  
I know. I know! I just...

She gestures vaguely.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
I thought you might talk me out of it.

SARAH  
Who says?

JENN  
This is the second thing you've done about the paper without asking us first. Are we a team or not?

Charlie looks helplessly from one to the other.

CHARLIE  
Of course we are!

TASHA  
Do you trust us?

CHARLIE  
It's not about trust.

TASHA  
Like hell.

JENN  
Then what is it about?

SARAH  
Yeah, this is a little bit bigger than meeting up with some guy in secret. Why couldn't you tell us you were writing about... this?

Her gesture encompasses the laptop screen with the hit counter still steadily ticking upward.

This is harder for Charlie to explain, but she tries.

CHARLIE

Look, this missing kid, he's probably dead.

TASHA

And... that's why you couldn't tell us?

CHARLIE

No! It's just... Look, if people kept telling you that you couldn't write about things that could make a real difference in the world, would you tell anyone you didn't have to?

JENN

Charlie, if we're going to be in on this together, you do have to.

CHARLIE

If I had told you guys, would you have talked me out of it?

Dead silence. Tasha and Jenn share a look.

SARAH

Kind of a moot point...

CHARLIE

Would you?

Still silent.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

It's our responsibility to do something about this. Especially if the authorities aren't following up or investigating every possibility.

TASHA

We're not cops, Charlie. Jenn hasn't even tried majoring in Criminal Justice yet.

JENN

(mock pout)

Hey!

Tasha puts her fists up and she and Jenn pantomime a fight -- very obviously something they've done before, both amused.

SARAH

(peacemaker)

Of course we should report something that's that important. If my sister went missing or something I'd be pissed if people kept it secret.

JENN

We've got your back, you know that. It's just easier to have your back when we know what's coming.

CHARLIE

First year on the high school paper they wouldn't let us write about the teacher who got fired for being gay. Second year, kid on the football team got framed for dealing drugs, again, nothing. I want to do something. This is what I can do.

TASHA

It's not about the story, Charlie. If we're going to do this together, we have to do it together. No going behind each other's backs.

SARAH

And if we disagree on something, we talk it out. That's all we're saying.

CHARLIE

You're right.

(rubs eyes)

I'm sorry. Five years of being shut down, you kind of expect it.

Jenn goes over and puts a comforting arm around Charlie's shoulders.

JENN

I'll see what I can find out about the case at work. Maybe there's progress they haven't released to the public.

TASHA

Why can't we just leave this to the police?

Jenn shoots Tasha a warning look -- they're being supportive now.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(covering)

I mean, now that we've asked the questions. Maybe they'll listen like they did about the cafeteria perverts.

JENN

I can get whatever info they have.

TASHA

Would that risk your job?

SARAH

If I'm already this close to being busted...

JENN

Lily was teasing.

SARAH

You don't know Lily as well as I do, this is totally the kind of thing she'd figure out.

JENN

I know how to cover my tracks.

CHARLIE

Whatever you do, please be careful.

She turns back to look at the laptop.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We got two hundred hits in the past half hour. People are going to want to know who we are.

The mood in the room shifts from anger to worry.

INT. JOURNALISM CLASS - DAY

Dr. Kent paces back and forth in front of the whiteboard, in high-handed lecturing mode.

DR. KENT

Anonymity is for sources... not for legitimate journalists. Transparency. Accountability. Credibility.

Charlie's hand shoots up, her expression grimly determined. Dr. Kent notices, braces herself.

DR. KENT (CONT'D)

Yes, Ms. Yang?

CHARLIE

What about citizen journalists, or people in war-torn areas? Most of the biggest stories break on Twitter.

DR. KENT

I'm not talking about Twitter, Ms. Yang, I'm talking about legitimate news outlets.

CHARLIE

Legitimate news outlets use the internet all the time.

DR. KENT

And are often tragically misinformed by unverified sources.

CHARLIE

Woodward and Bernstein had an unverified source.

DR. KENT

Ms. Yang, Deep Throat was not anonymous to them. If you can't understand the difference, perhaps this is not the correct major for you.

A few snickers from the class. Charlie fumes silently. Dr. Kent watches her carefully, trying to read her expression -- definitely suspicious.

INT. DAILY GRIND - DAY

Tasha works with the clumsy Barista and serves customers while trying to listen in on a conversation between TWO PROFESSORS:

OLDER PROFESSOR

Muckraking, pure and simple.

YOUNGER PROFESSOR

I'm not saying they didn't make a few logical leaps...

OLDER PROFESSOR

Leaps? Transcontinental flights of fancy.

YOUNGER PROFESSOR

There might be something to it, you know the president likes to hush up anything too controversial.

OLDER PROFESSOR

Hmph.

As Tasha crosses back to the counter, Jake Bennett passes by, talking on the phone. Tasha's too busy to hear.

JAKE

Everything's good? Awesome. Thanks, Molly, I owe you one.

INT. CERAMICS STUDIO - DAY

Sarah tries to focus on the clay on her potter's wheel. Her head is nowhere near being in the game; the bowl she's throwing is lopsided.

The door opens, and two CLASSMATES walk in, whispering.

CLASSMATE #1

It had to be Sarah Dyer. Who else would bitch about the broken crap in the photo lab?

Sarah heard that. Her composure goes SPLAT, and so does her bowl, spattering wet clay everywhere.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Jenn's at her usual post, studying but not really studying. She tries to listen in on the conversation happening in the hallway between Sgt. Hampton and Officer Bennett.

SGT. HAMPTON

I remember that kid like yesterday.

BENNETT

Yeah. It just don't sit right with me, something's hinky about how they took you off the case.

Bennett moves towards the front office, going for the coffee pot. Jenn assumes a very focused "studying" position.

SGT. HAMPTON

Don't let the Chief hear you talk like that, he's still pissed we don't have jurisdiction.

BENNETT

It's students, right?

Jenn attempts to unobtrusively crane her neck hall-ward, but the door swings open and a STUDENT enters, carrying a parking ticket. She sighs - duty calls.

JENN

Can I help you?

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Enter Charlie, with stolen folder. Molly's at the computer; she barely looks up.

Keeping an eye on Molly, Charlie moves towards the file cabinet and replaces the folder as quietly as possible. Still no response from Molly, who's just typing away.

CHARLIE

When do you want my story on the alumni fundraiser?

Molly shrugs and doesn't look up.

MOLLY

Whenever you get to it.

Charlie eyes Molly suspiciously.

CHARLIE

You... sure about that?

Molly sighs and waves Charlie away -- she's dismissed.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

O...kay then.

As Charlie walks out, she glances backward at Molly, puzzled. What's she up to?

INT. CAFETERIA - LUNCH LINE - DAY

The girls whisper amongst themselves in line.

JENN

We're the talk of campus.

TASHA

The talk's not all good.

CHARLIE

As long as people are saying something.

INT. CAFETERIA - TABLE - DAY

At their usual table, Charlie takes a moment to check the paper's email on her phone. Scrolls through their inbox. A few subject lines like "THANK YOU" and "YOU ROCK", and one all-caps "SCREW YOU."

CHARLIE  
Got our first hate mail. Guess that  
means we've arrived.

She keeps scrolling, then stops.

SARAH  
What?

TASHA  
More haters?

Charlie holds out her phone so the others can see. FROM:  
MOLLY HOWARD SUBJECT: YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART.

JENN  
(reading, quietly)  
"I don't know what you think you're  
doing with your little blog, but you  
won't be doing it much longer."

TASHA  
You don't think Molly knows it's  
you, do you?

CHARLIE  
She couldn't.

SARAH  
You wrote basically the same story  
she killed a couple weeks ago.

Sarah has a point, but Charlie doesn't want to admit it.

CHARLIE  
She never read the article.

SARAH  
But she knew what it was about.  
Like how nobody but me would write  
the budget story.

TASHA  
(reassuring)  
It didn't really sound like you,  
your writing style is usually...  
plainer.

CHARLIE  
(to Sarah)  
See?

However, for all her bravado, Charlie's visibly worried.

EXT. CAFETERIA - LATER

The girls leave the cafeteria in a better mood, even Charlie, who's laughing. Jenn throws an arm around Charlie's shoulders.

JENN

See? The sky hasn't fallen. Molly will get over her hissy fit.

As they pass by a rack of newly-delivered campus papers, Sarah picks one up.

SARAH

Let's see what kind of pep squad B.S. she's written this week.

She looks at the front page and stops dead in her tracks. The others take a couple of steps before realizing she's not with them.

TASHA

What?

Sarah holds out the paper, her face blank. Numb.

Tasha takes the paper; Jenn and Charlie crowd around to read over her shoulder.

The very large headline -- over a picture of a computer screen with the Bonaventure Underground in its browser -- screams "REWARD OFFERED FOR INFORMATION".

CHARLIE

"The administration is offering a cash reward for any information about the person or persons responsible for the Bonaventure Underground website."

TASHA

"...Swift and decisive disciplinary action for anyone involved in this cowardly rumormongering."

JENN

Can they even do that?

She looks closer at the paper.

JENN (CONT'D)

No way they can expel anybody for this.

CHARLIE

I don't know, but we must've rattled  
somebody's cage.

TASHA

"We"?

SARAH

Yeah, we.

She puts an arm of solidarity around Charlie, who's still  
staring at the paper. As the girls huddle around the paper,  
processing the shock, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE