

COUNTDOWN

By Melissa Pilgrim

Melissa Pilgrim
YourWritingMuse.com
mlpilgrim@yourwritingmuse.com

FADE IN:

EXT. OLD TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD, CHICAGO-NIGHT, NEW YEAR'S EVE 2018

Establishing shot of the FANCY, UPSCALE BROWNSTONE HOMES DECORATED exclusively in WHITE LIGHTS for the holidays.

PAN TOWARDS the LARGEST BROWNSTONE at the END of the STREET. WEALTHY PEOPLE CELEBRATE INSIDE.

INT. BROWNSTONE, LIVING ROOM

Tuxedo-clad WAITERS HURRY to OFFER CHAMPAGNE to ALL the GUESTS BEFORE the CLOCK turns TWELVE.

MRS. ROGET, 60s, dressed abundantly in gold, APPROACHES MADISON WILLIAMS, attractive, late 30s, elegantly dressed.

MRS. ROGET

How did you ever get a decorator to finish all this by the holidays? I'm still waiting for half the things mine ordered last summer to be brought back from Italy-- tell me, what's your secret?

Madison looks at ANTHONY WILLIAMS, mid-40s, her charismatic husband, with gratitude.

MADISON

I just told them it was a special request from the D.A.'s office.

He GRIPS her around the WAIST.

ANTHONY

(wryly)
And you say I never do anything for you anymore...

OUTSIDE in the HEATED COURTYARD a STRING QUARTET PLAYS a ROMANTIC HOLIDAY SONG. Anthony LEADS Madison TOWARDS the OPENED FRENCH DOORS.

EXT. COURTYARD

Madison SLOW DANCES with Anthony. A DOZEN OTHER COUPLES DANCE around them, including CARL MULLEN, 60s, and his WIFE, 40s. Madison looks into Anthony's eyes with pure vulnerability.

MADISON
Any last minute resolutions?

ANTHONY
Yes. To make love more often...
(whispers)
Because I really want a son.

Madison's EYES well with TEARS as she WALTZES with him
TOWARDS the EDGE of the COURTYARD. A GROUP of GUESTS INSIDE
COUNT DOWN from TEN.

GUESTS (O.S.)
(shout)
TEN... NINE...

EXT. NEARBY ROOFTOP

TWO DOZEN LATINO GANG MEMBERS PARTY a FEW BUILDINGS AWAY from
the COURTYARD. GANG MEMBER #1 looks at his WATCH.

GANG MEMBER #1
It's almost time, eses!

EVERYBODY SHOUTS in CELEBRATION. SEVERAL MEMBERS DOWN their
BEER while OTHERS GRAB their GIRLFRIENDS and KISS them HARD.

CREAM, 20s, a hard core member, and TWO OTHERS take out GUNS
and GET READY to SHOOT them UP into the AIR in celebration.

EXT. COURTYARD

The GUESTS INSIDE continue to COUNT DOWN... *THREE... TWO...*

Madison looks at Anthony.

MADISON
(whispers)
Happy New Year, dear...

She KISSES him PASSIONATELY.

EVERYONE CHEERS and KISSES EACH OTHER around them as GUNSHOTS
are HEARD in the DISTANCE. People get concerned.

Suddenly Anthony PULLS AWAY from Madison's LIPS, GASPING.

MADISON
(continuing; confused)
Anthony?!

He COLLAPSES on the GROUND. BLOOD OOZES from his BACK.

MADISON
 (continuing; screams)
ANTHONY!

She tries to see what's wrong as Carl and SEVERAL OTHERS do the same. MORE GUESTS RUSH OUT to the COURTYARD, including DR. WAYNE WAGNER, 50s. He checks Anthony's BACK.

DR. WAGNER
 (to Madison, concerned)
 What happened?

INT. UPSTAIRS KITCHEN

CHRISTINA MUNOZ, early 20s, a Latin beauty dressed like the other servants, STOPS WASHING some soiled pans when she HEARS the COMMOTION OUTSIDE. She LOOKS OUT the WINDOW at the COURTYARD BELOW with concern.

A CLOCK on the WALL READS: 12:02.

EXT. COURTYARD

Madison breaks down in TEARS as the GROUP standing around Anthony continues to GROW with CONFUSED CHAOS.

MADISON
 (cries)
 No Anthony... please-- you can't
 leave me!

DR. WAGNER
 Madison-- help me get his coat off!

They PULL OFF Anthony's TUXEDO COAT. MORE BLOOD LEAKS OUT of his BACK, COMING FROM an obvious BULLET WOUND. Dr. Wagner applies PRESSURE to try and STOP IT.

A MALE GUEST CALLS 9-1-1 on his CELL PHONE.

MALE GUEST #1
 (into cell phone)
 Yes-- we need an ambulance at five
 hundred North Park Avenue-- a man's
 been shot-- send the police!

MALE GUEST #2
 (approaches angrily)
 I am a policeman--

DR. WAGNER
(to Male Guest #2)
We need one on duty!

INT. 911 NERVE CENTER

HUNDREDS OF CALLS come in ALL at ONCE as DOZENS of OPERATORS
WORK the BUSY SWITCHBOARDS.

EXT. COURTYARD

Dr. Wagner ADMINISTERS CPR. Madison cries at Anthony's side.

MADISON
Please Anthony... just hold on...
an ambulance is coming...

EXT. CITY STREET - MINUTES LATER

Officers MIKE CARPELLI JR. and VINCE PATTERSON, both late
20s, get in their PARKED SQUAD CAR.

INT. POLICE CAR (PARKED)

A DISPATCHER'S VOICE CALLS over their RADIO repeatedly.

DISPATCHER'S VOICE (V.O.)
Car nine-two-four, come in--

Mike Jr. GRABS the RECEIVER.

MIKE JR.
(into receiver)
Car nine-two-four, responding.

DISPATCHER'S VOICE (V.O.)
Shots have been fired at five
hundred North Park--

Mike Jr. LOOKS at his WATCH. It READS 12:10 AM.

MIKE JR.
(into receiver)
We're on it!

He SPEEDS OFF.

EXT. COURTYARD

GUESTS PACE and PANIC helplessly as Anthony SLIPS FURTHER AWAY, despite all of Dr. Wagner's efforts.

MADISON
 (cries to Anthony)
 Just hold on, please...
 (to Male Guest #2, upset)
 What's taking them so long?

MALE GUEST #2
 (uneasily)
 It's New Year's Eve.

MADISON
 (angrily)
 What does that have to do with it?

He doesn't respond. Dr. Wagner continues to PERFORM the CPR, growing more TIRED with each THRUST.

Mike Jr. and Vince RUSH INTO the COURTYARD. They both suddenly REALIZE who is hurt and look VERY CONCERNED.

MADISON
 (continuing; yells)
 What took you so long?

Mike Jr. ignores her as he TAKES OVER the CPR from Dr. Wagner. Vince tries to talk to a disoriented Madison.

VINCE
 Did you see what happened?

MADISON
 Where are the paramedics?

VINCE
 They're on their way--

He pulls out his walkie-talkie.

VINCE
 (continuing; yells into
 walkie-talkie)
 We have a gunshot victim-- send an
 ambulance immediately!

Mike Jr. THRUSTS on Anthony's CHEST as Dr. Wagner WATCHES Anthony's BODY for a REACTION. There is NONE. Moments later an AMBULANCE'S SIREN is HEARD OUTSIDE.

Dr. Wagner takes Anthony's WRIST and tries to FEEL for a PULSE. By the look on his face everyone can tell there ISN'T ONE. He STOPS Mike Jr. in MID-THRUST.

TWO PARAMEDICS RUSH INTO the COURTYARD JUST AS Madison COLLAPSES OVER Anthony's BODY, CRYING hysterically.

MADISON
(screams)
NOOO!!!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CITY HALL - NEXT MORNING

CITY WORKERS TRY NOT to LOOK UPSET and CONFUSED under the STRESS of what took place the NIGHT BEFORE.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

GOVERNOR CONNELL, 50s, SLAPS the CHICAGO TRIBUNE DOWN on TOP of SEVERAL OTHER NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS IN FRONT of Mike Jr. and Vince.

The HEADLINE READS: D.A. DEAD AT STROKE OF MIDNIGHT

GOVERNOR CONNELL
What the fuck happened?

MIKE JR.
We did all we could--

GOVERNOR CONNELL
No you didn't or else he'd still be alive!

MIKE JR.
By the time we got there he had already lost half his blood--

GOVERNOR CONNELL
So why weren't you or the paramedics there sooner?

MIKE JR.
We were in Lincoln Park.

ERROLD THOMPSON, 40s, the First Assistant D.A., gets PISSED.

ERROLD
Lincoln Park isn't in your jurisdiction!

MIKE JR.

It bordered our jurisdiction and we were the closest ones nearby when we heard the call, so we responded--

GOVERNOR CONNELL

We don't have time for this bullshit! Just go out and find out who fired those shots!

MIKE JR.

They live a block away from the remainder of Carbini Green-- It could have been any gang-banger returning to celebrate on former home turf that night--

ERROLD

Then you'd better start looking for the friggin' needle now because if you don't have something to tell the Mayor before he gets back I can guarantee both of you can kiss any chance of a promotion out of those uniforms good-bye forever--
(to Mike Jr.)
No matter *who* your father is!

Mike Jr. and Vince GET UP and LEAVE reluctantly.

HALLWAY

Vince HUSTLES to KEEP UP with Mike Jr.'s BRISK PACE.

VINCE

Why'd you tell him we were in Lincoln Park? Don't you think we're in enough trouble as it is without having to come up with a cover-up story?

MIKE JR.

(angrily)
It wasn't our fault that bastard died! I did everything I could to try and save his undeserving ass until the paramedics came and everyone at that party saw so they can't pull that fucking police negligence shit on me again!

VINCE

(tries to calm him down)
Okay-- just tell me what we're
gonna do then.

MIKE JR.

I'll get my cousin to log in my
deadbeat aunt's address on Willow--
if they ever ask her about it
she'll tell them whatever the fuck
I need her to.

Mike Jr. PUSHES the DOOR OPEN and GOES OUTSIDE.

EXT. CITY HALL

Mike Jr. HEADS to their PARKED SQUAD CAR.

VINCE

(still unsure)
What if she was out?

MIKE JR.

The only time that bitch gets out
is when a family member takes her,
and no one's done that for years.
In fact, I bet most of them are
gonna use her as an alibi for where
they were when the clock struck
twelve too-- especially if one of
them delivered the hit.

They GET IN the CAR.

INT. POLICE CAR (PARKED)

VINCE

(shocked)
You really think someone hired a
hit?

MIKE JR.

I know my father wanted to after he
beat him for D.A.-- I'm just
surprised he didn't let me smoke
the prick.

Mike Jr. DRIVES AWAY ANGRILY.

EXT. MEIGS FIELD AIRPORT - LATER THAT DAY

Errold and MICHAEL CARPELLI, SR., 50s, GREET MAYOR ANDREW KARNER, 50s, and his wife VIVIAN, 50s, as they EXIT a CHARTER PLANE at the SMALL AIRPORT.

MICHAEL SR.
Welcome back, Mayor.

ERROLD
Sorry you had to return under these circumstances.

MAYOR KARNER
(sarcastically)
I never thought being in Colorado with my mother-in-law would trump being anywhere else--

DOZENS of REPORTERS APPROACH, all SHOUTING OUT QUESTIONS.

REPORTER #1
Mr. Mayor, have you appointed anyone to act as D.A. to investigate what really happened yet?

MAYOR KARNER
I'll address your concerns this afternoon at our scheduled press conference.
(to his wife)
Vivian, your car is over there.

Errold and Michael Sr. EXCUSE themselves from Vivian as she GETS IN a CHAUFFEURED TOWN CAR. They quickly LEAD Mayor Karner AWAY FROM the SHOUTING REPORTERS and INTO a WAITING LIMOUSINE.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Michael Sr. OFFERS Mayor Karner a CIGARETTE.

MAYOR KARNER
(mutters)
Christ, I was gonna quit today...

He takes ONE reluctantly and LIGHTS UP. So does Michael Sr.

MAYOR KARNER (CONT'D)
How's Madison?

END OF SAMPLE PAGES