

"ARTFUL DECISIONS"

By

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FADE IN:

INT. MORTUARY BASEMENT - DAY

(PRESENT)

Overhead fluorescents fill room with harsh light. Cinder block walls with shelves of embalming equipment. Stainless steel mortician's table in middle of room.

Body lies in profile on table.

PATRICK O'BRIAN, 19, stands next to DANIEL O'BRIAN, 55, his father. Patrick's clothes and hair disheveled. There are dark circles under his eyes. He clinches hands. Daniel wears a white lab coat.

Patrick watches Daniel make incision.

DANIEL

I can't believe it's been a year and a half already.

PATRICK

You were right. College does go by fast.

DANIEL

Decided on a major yet?

Patrick fidgets. Daniel makes another incision.

PATRICK

I'm leaning strongly towards studio art. It'll be a BFA.

DANIEL

Why am I not surprised?

Daniel glances at Patrick. Smiles.

DANIEL (CONT.)

You always were a little weird.

PATRICK

Come on dad, that's not fair-

Daniel puts a hand on Patrick's shoulder.

DANIEL

Don't worry, you get it from me. Art will suit you just fine.

Patrick shuffles feet.

PATRICK

Really? There's not much job security
in it.

DANIEL

That may be true, but if it's what
you've got to do, then do it.

Daniel wipes hands on coat, and then hugs Patrick.

Patrick hugs back.

DANIEL (CONT.)

Besides, you can do something around
here.

PATRICK

Maybe.

They break the hug.

DANIEL

Now hand me that spanner.

PATRICK

Sure thing.

Patrick picks up medical spanner from nearby tray. He
almost drops it.

He hands it to Daniel.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE ART BUILDING - DAY

(TWO YEARS LATER)

Simple four story concrete building. Bike racks clutter the
entrance. Sign out front indicates it is the School of Art.

INT. STUDIO

White walls segment room into smaller cubicle-like areas.
Paintings of various sizes cover the walls of each area.

Large paintings of scalpels and abstracted figures hang on walls of one cubicle.

Patrick sits in chair, sketchbook in hand.

He looks at a painting.

DONALD SINCLAIR, 22, walks up behind Patrick. Studies painting.

Patrick writes.

DONALD

That's looking pretty good.

Patrick jumps and drops sketchbook. He picks up sketchbook and turns to Donald.

PATRICK

Dammit Donald. I wish you wouldn't do that.

DONALD

Just trying to keep you on your toes.

Donald gestures.

DONALD (CONT'D)

This one is really starting to come together.

Patrick turns and squints.

PATRICK

Really? I've been worrying about that.

Patrick turns back to Donald.

Donald gestures to the area behind him.

DONALD

It's better than my stuff. This semester it all looks like shit.

PATRICK

Come on, you know that's not true.

Patrick shuffles over to another cubicle. He gestures at a painting.

PATRICK (CONT.)

Look at this. The colors are fantastic.
And look at that line. Brilliant.

Donald stands next to Patrick.

DONALD

I guess you would know. Patrick O'Brian:
the greatest artist who ever lived.

PATRICK

Ha, ha. I'm just trying to float you
some positivity.

DONALD

I know. Thanks.

Patrick walks back to his area. He draws.

Donald contemplates his painting.

PATRICK

What are you doing after graduation?

DONALD

I've pretty much decided that I'm going
to New York. See how this art thing
works out.

Patrick glances at Donald. Donald studies painting.

PATRICK

New York is perfect for you. I couldn't handle
all those people.

Donald shakes head and looks at Patrick.

DONALD

You should come with me.

PATRICK

What? I don't know-

DONALD

Don't know what? You've got something
great.

Donald grabs Patrick's sketchbook and flips pages.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Installations with mannequins with the
scalpel paintings? Genius.

Patrick snatches the sketchbook back.

DONALD (CONT'D)
You'd be crazy not to at least try.

PATRICK
I guess you're right about that.

DONALD
Yes I am. You in?

PATRICK
Let me think about it.

Donald turns back to paintings.

Patrick writes in sketchbook.

CUT TO:

EXT. O'BRIAN'S MORTUARY - NIGHT

A concrete drive leads up to a brown brick, two story
building atop of a grassy hill. Awning over the entrance
faded black and full of holes.

A small, beat up car rolls up the drive. Brakes SQUEAL.

Patrick steps out. He rubs hands on pants.

Door under awning opens. Daniel steps out.

Patrick shuffles forward.

PATRICK
Hey dad. I need to talk.

Daniel strides forward. He embraces Patrick. Patrick hugs
back.

DANIEL
Sure. I've got some coffee brewed
up.

PATRICK
Sounds great.

They walk inside, Daniel's arm around Patrick's shoulders.
The door SQUEAKs shut.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO

Room is dark. Donald enters and turns on lights.

He walks to Patrick's cubicle and picks up sketchbook.
Flips pages.

Donald pulls sketchbook from pocket.

He writes in sketchbook, glancing back at Patrick's
sketchbook after every few lines.

He puts his sketchbook back in pocket.

Donald turns off studio lights and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN

Overhead light fixture fills room with yellow light. Small
bookshelf against one wall. Pictures of Daniel and Patrick
on walls.

Small table in middle of room. Two coffee mugs with coffee
pot in between on table. Steam rises from mugs.

Daniel and Patrick sit across from each other.

Daniel sips his coffee.

Patrick stares into his.

DANIEL
Donald, asked you to?

PATRICK
Right.

DANIEL

And you're not sure you have what it takes to make it?

Patrick glances up.

PATRICK

I'm just not sure about this art thing anymore.

DANIEL

You're only twenty three. You're not supposed to be sure about anything.

PATRICK

Thanks, dad. Very reassuring.

Patrick drinks from mug.

DANIEL

You won't be sure about anything until you're my age.

Daniel swirls coffee.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

And I'm only half sure. Even less so if you leave.

Patrick slumps in chair.

PATRICK

You're killing me, dad.

Daniel looks at ceiling, and then back at Patrick.

DANIEL

I know, but if you don't go you'll regret it.

Daniel stares at photograph of woman holding baby on wall.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Ever since she died it's just been you and me. I knew you'd leave someday.

Daniel looks down into his mug.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I'll have to start over. Just like you.

PATRICK

I'm sorry. It's an opportunity that I have to take.

DANIEL

Don't be. If it's something you love-

Daniel stares into mug.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

At least you won't be alone.

Patrick raises his mug.

PATRICK

You don't have to be either, dad.

Daniel raises his mug.

DANIEL

I know.

They CLINK mugs.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Car has worn leather seats. Dashboard instruments fill space with soft green glow. Patrick rubs steering wheel.

Patrick pulls out cellphone.

PATRICK

Hey, Donald, it's Patrick... Fine...
Can you meet?

Patrick drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Only light glows from fire place at one end of room and dim lamps above booths line walls. Bar across from fireplace.

Booth in dark corner. Patrick sits across from Donald.

Patrick nurses glass of scotch.

Donald drinks wine.

DONALD

Your dad help you figure it out?

Patrick sips from glass.

PATRICK

He did, as he usually does.

DONALD

And?

PATRICK

He wasn't too happy about the idea.
It's just been us for so long.

Patrick smiles.

PATRICK

I'm going with you. We need to find our
own way.

Donald grins. He slides out of booth.

DONALD

Exactly what I wanted to hear. Celebratory
Old Fashioned?

PATRICK

Sure.

DONALD

Also what I like to hear. Be right back.

Donald walks to bar.

Patrick smiles and studies other patrons. Room is close to empty.

Donald slides back into booth.

They raise glasses.

DONALD

Here's to the two greatest artists ever,
and to their illustrious careers.

PATRICK

And to a fantastic end to college.

DONALD

Cheers.

PATRICK

Cheers.

They CLINK glasses.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

A neon sign flickers and HUMS above doorway. Cars drive by
on the street, HONK at drunken pedestrians.

Donald and Patrick stumble out, arms around each other's
shoulders.

They walk and converse.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - THEIR FINAL SEMESTER

-- Patrick and Donald work in studio.

-- Group critique of Donald's work.

-- Group critique of Patrick's work.

-- Donald copies more from Patrick's sketchbook.

-- Patrick and Donald stand in crowded gallery space and
mingle.

-- Donald walks across stage at graduation, Patrick
follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. O'BRIAN'S MORTUARY - DAY

Old, beat-up car in front of mortuary entrance. Trunk open.

Daniel stands beside car. Donald leans on hood.

DANIEL

New York can be a crazy place. You two ready?

DONALD

We are.

DANIEL

Remember-

Daniel reaches out hand.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

-to look out for him.

DONALD

Of course, Mr. O'Brian.

They shake hands.

Donald smirks.

DONALD (CONT'D)

But mostly he'll be looking out for me.

Patrick carries small box, sets it inside trunk. He SLAMS it shut. Walks to front of car.

Daniel puts hand on Patrick's shoulder.

DANIEL

Everything loaded?

PATRICK

That was the last of it.

DONALD

Guess we're ready to go.

DANIEL

Could you give us a minute, Donald?

DONALD

Of Course.

Donald opens passenger side door.

Daniel places hands on Patrick's shoulders.

DANIEL

You have no idea how proud I am of you.

Patrick embraces Daniel.

PATRICK

You have no idea how much that means to me.

DANIEL

Love you, son.

PATRICK

Love you too, dad.

They break the embrace.

Patrick runs around to the driver's side.

DANIEL

Don't forget, look out for each other.

PATRICK

We won't.

Patrick hops into car.

Car pulls away.

Daniel enters mortuary.

CUT TO:

INT. MORTUARY BASEMENT - DAY

Daniel stands behind table with a body on it. Phone VIBRATES (o.s.). He reaches into pocket.

INSERT - CELLPHONE SCREEN which reads:

"We made it."

Daniel puts away cellphone.

He makes incision on body in profile on table.

FADE OUT.