

The Cone

Written By

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EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The parking lot is completely empty. A thunderstorm rages: rain pours onto the ground, wind whips the trees, and lighting flashes in the sky, paired with roaring cracks of thunder.

A particularly bright flash of lightning fills the sky.

Jump cut to a close-up of a luminous orange rubber traffic cone.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Clumsily, a girl, MARY, who is slightly below average height, scurries down the stairs. She wears dark jeans, a light blue sweater, and boots.

She rushes into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Without cutting, the camera follows her as she rushes over to the counter, grabs her keys off of it, and makes her way over to the door. Her hand grasps the doorknob when her mother's shrill voice sounds behind her. The camera still does not cut.

MARY'S MOM (O.S.)

Did you shower?

MARY

Yes, Mom.

MARY'S MOM (O.S.)

Did you let the dog out?

MARY

Yes.

Cut to a dog sitting in a cage in the corner of the kitchen.

Cut back to Mary.

MARY'S MOM (O.S.)

Are you wearing clean underwear?

MARY

(Indignant)

Jesus, Mom, I'm almost an adult!

MARY'S MOM (O.S.)
(Matter-of-fact)
Adults have to wear clean underwear
too.

She opens the door.

MARY
Bye, Mom.

The door slams shut behind her.

The dog whimpers in his cage as Mary's mother struts by,
seen only from the knee down.

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Mary jogs down the driveway towards her car. When she gets
to it, she crams her key in the driver's side door and
attempts to unlock it. The lock sticks, and she struggles to
open it. After a momentary battle, she kicks the door, which
creaks open. She climbs into the car, shuts the door, and
speeds off down the street.

EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Mary's car turns onto the street, which is not yet busy due
to the early hour. It stops in front of a small house about
halfway down the street.

A boy—SIMON—emerges from the front door and awkwardly
waddles across the front lawn towards Mary's car, then
climbs into it.

INT. MARY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Simon plops into the passenger seat and buckles his seat
belt.

SIMON
Hey, Friendo.

MARY
Hey.

A beat.

SIMON
Are you going to the science fair
today?

MARY
Yeah, I have to go for marine bio.

Simon laughs.

SIMON

I forgot that you take marine bio.
That class is a joke.

MARY

Hey! I happen to be struggling in
that class!

SIMON

Okay, sorry. I didn't mean to be so
insensitive.

A beat.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Do you think you could help me out
next Tuesday after school with my
Spanish project? Me and a few other
kids have to make a video and we
need one more person to be in it.

MARY

Sure. If you want, I can sign out
some equipment from the TV studio.

SIMON

Nah, that's alright, Matt's super
excited to use his GoPro.

MARY

Of course he is.

They pull into the parking lot, where almost all of the
spots are already filled. Mary is pulling into a spot far
away from the school when she suddenly slams on the brakes.

She and Simon stare straight ahead in silence.

After a beat:

MARY (CONT'D)

What the hell is that?

A bright orange traffic cone sits in the middle of Mary's
space.

Simon stares at it, transfixed and slightly horrified. He
does not appear to have heard Mary.

Mary puts the car in park where it stands and starts to get
out.

MARY (CONT'D)
Goddam administration, always
trying to ruin students' lives with
their bureaucratic B.S....

As Mary climbs out of the car, Simon suddenly lunges after her and grabs her arm tightly.

MARY (CONT'D)
What the hell, Simon? Let go of me!

Simon slowly turns to face her, his eyes wide and empty.

SIMON
(Whispering)
Don't touch it.

MARY
What?

SIMON
Don't touch the cone.

MARY
Don't be ridiculous, it's just a
stupid, useless traffic cone. No
one's gonna notice if I move it.

She shakes herself free of his grasp and exits the car.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

She walks towards the cone.

She picks it up, carries it a few feet, and places it on the grass in front of her spot.

In the background, Simon beats the windshield with his fists and screams inaudibly.

Mary returns to the car. As she is getting in, she notices that the cone has returned to the exact same place that it was in a moment before.

MARY (CONT'D)
What the...

She jogs back to the cone, picks it up, and plops it back on the grass.

Again she returns to the car, and again, as she is climbing in, sees the cone in the middle of the spot.

MARY (CONT'D)

You've gotta be kidding me!

She storms back to the cone, grabs it, and throws it into the street.

A car drives over it, shattering it into tiny pieces.

Satisfied, she returns to the car again. Simon's door is wide open and there is no sign of him.

Cut to a shot of Simon on the other side of the parking lot, sprinting away as fast as he can.

INT. MATH WING HALLWAY - LATER

Mary walks quickly down the empty hallway towards her class. She turns into a room on her right.

INT. MATH CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mary enters the room and walks towards the back of the room, her head down. She moves to sit in her seat but stops when she sees something there.

In her seat sits the cone.

Mary frowns and looks around the class, bewildered.

TEACHER

...then take the cosine of 35 and
add it to the sine of 55...

She grabs the cone, places it on the floor, and sits.

The cone sits next to her on the floor menacingly.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

If we square the first leg and add
it to the second leg, what do we
get? Jen?

Mary takes notes in her notebook but is unfocused. She glances down at the cone apprehensively.

INT. HALLWAY - AFTER CLASS

Slightly disgruntled, Mary walks down the hallway away from the class. She rounds the corner. As she nears the end of the hallway, Simon pops out of a class behind her and runs to catch up to her.

SIMON

Mary!

Mary turns.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Mary, I need to talk to you.

MARY
'Bout what?

Simon stares at her, a mystified look in his eyes.

SIMON
The cone.

MARY
You mean that traffic cone that
someone put in my spot this
morning?

SIMON
Yes.

He appears distant, as if an other-worldly voice is calling
to him.

MARY
Yeah, someone's definitely messing
with me and it's pissing me off. I
found it on my seat in math this
morning.

SIMON
(Softly)
It has begun...

MARY
What the hell are you talking
about?

He speaks in a soft, prophetic voice, like an oracle.

As he talks, everything he says appears on-screen.

EXT. NORWOOD STREET - FLASHBACK

The camera tracks a stout, middle-aged man as he walks down
a busy street.

SIMON (V.O.)
Long ago, there was a man. An
arrogant, flawed man. He roamed the
streets of ancient Norwood
committing misdemeanors, like
punching babies.

The man passes a young mother and heaves his fist into her stroller.

SIMON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 One day, there was a parking space
 in the middle of town blocked off
 with traffic cones. The man was
 late for an appointment, so he just
 said—

The man's mouth moves but Simon's voice is heard.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 —"Get out of my way, you stupid
 cone! You're just a stupid cone!"
 and, in complete disregard for the
 law, moved one of the cones and
 parked his eight-speed mountain
 bike in the spot.

The man chuckles to himself sinisterly.

SIMON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 After he parked, he replaced the
 cone to make it seem like no one
 had moved it. When he returned to
 the space after the appointment,
 the sun had set, and his bike was
 nowhere to be found. The next
 morning, the man was found dead in
 the parking space...

He pauses.

SIMON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...and one of the cones was
 missing.

Jump cut to the hole where the cone should be.

BACK TO SCENE

Mary stares at him.

MARY
 You're kidding, right?

SIMON
 (Barely audible)
 I never kid when it comes to pointy
 orange objects.

MARY

Why am I friends with you?

The question is half directed at Simon, half at herself.

She continues walking down the hall, leaving Simon meandering in a crooked line and muttering to himself.

INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mary enters the room and sits in a seat in the back row. The seat to her left is empty. The bell rings and class begins.

TEACHER 2 (O.S.)

Alright, today we're gonna unpack the symbol of the dove and the connection between its death and Rose's punishment for her crimes.

Mary reaches into her backpack and produces a small paperback novel.

TEACHER 2 (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Now, on page—

She stops talking.

TEACHER 2 (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Mary, stop messing around.

Mary lifts her head, bewildered.

MARY

What?

TEACHER 2 (O.S.)

Put your toys away and focus on the lesson or I'm gonna give you hours!

She returns to the lesson, leaving Mary utterly perplexed. She looks all around her. When she turns to her left, she screams.

Jump cut to the cone sitting on the hitherto empty desk, a haunting aura surrounding it.

TEACHER 2 (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Mary! Shut up! I'm trying to teach here!

MARY

But—

TEACHER 2 (O.S.)

No! I'm sick of your tomfoolery! Go down to the office, you're getting hours!

MARY

(Wincing)

How many?

TEACHER (O.S.)

However many I damn well feel like!
Now go!

Mary puts her books in her bag, slings her bag over her shoulder, and sulks out of the classroom.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Dragging her feet, Mary enters the office. She approaches the counter and speaks to the secretary.

MARY

I'm here for—

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Don't care. Sit down.

She sits and wipes her face with her hands then ruminates over the events of the day:

FLASHBACK

Jump cut to the cone sitting in the middle of her spot.

Jump cut to the cone in her seat in math.

Jump cut to the man lying face down in the parking spot.

Jump cut to the cone sitting on the desk next to her in English.

Jump cut to a closer shot of the cone sitting on the desk next to her in English.

Jump cut to an even closer shot of the cone sitting on the desk next to her in English. The cone quivers under the weight of its immense power.

BACK TO SCENE

Mary grasps her head in her hands and moans in pain.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Hey! No talking!

MARY
I wasn't—

SECRETARY (O.S.)
NO TALKING!

Distressed, she gives up and slouches back in her seat.

A beat. Then:

SECRETARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Says here you're supposed to go
down to guidance.

MARY
Guidance?

SECRETARY (O.S.)
(Mocking)
"Guidance?"
(Normal tone)
Yes, guidance, that's what I said.
Now get out.

Confused, Mary grabs her backpack and leaves the office.

INT. MAIN LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The camera tracks Mary as she exits the office and crosses the lobby, shoulders slumped. She makes her way over to the water fountain and bends down to get a drink of water. As she is doubled over, the lights flicker. She stops drinking and turns around. She looks down the hallway.

The hallway is empty.

She glances towards the bathrooms.

Also empty.

She peeks around the corner into the rest of the lobby.

Empty, yet again.

She frowns and shuffles off down the hall, her head down.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

After a moment, a sound that is a mix between squeaking and thumping becomes faintly audible. Mary looks up and glances around but sees nothing. She continues meandering along. A beat. Then she hears the sound again, a little bit louder this time. She lifts her head and looks all around, including behind her, yet still sees nothing. She quickens

her pace. A beat. The sound fills the hallway; she whips around.

There, about twenty feet away from her, sits the cone.

The lights flicker and the hallway goes dark.

MARY (O.S.)
AAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!!!

CUT TO BLACK

Both the sound of the cone and the heavy thumping of Mary's footsteps are audible.

INT. GUIDANCE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Mary sprints into the dimly lit office from the darkened hallway and slams the door shut behind her. Leaning against the door, she breathes heavily for a moment.

After she catches her breath, she makes her way across the room to the only door with light flooding out of it.

INT. O'TOOLE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mary stands in the doorway and taps her knuckle on the door frame three times.

MR. O'TOOLE—her guidance counselor—sits at his desk, his head bent over a crossword puzzle.

O'TOOLE
(Without looking up)
Enter.

Mary enters hesitantly.

O'TOOLE (CONT'D)
Shut the door. Sit.

Mary shuts the door. Mary sits.

O'TOOLE (CONT'D)
State your business.

He still has not taken his gaze from the puzzle.

MARY
I was sent to the office by my
teacher and the secretary told me
to come down here.

O'TOOLE
Interesting.

A beat of uncomfortable silence.

MARY
So...

More uncomfortable silence ensues as she waits for O'Toole to finish the thought. She finally resolves to finish it herself.

MARY (CONT'D)
Why am I here?

O'Toole scribbles something into the puzzle, still not looking up.

After a moment:

O'TOOLE
Dalen, right?

MARY
Yeah, Mary Dalen.

O'TOOLE
Hmm.

A beat.

O'TOOLE (CONT'D)
Tell me what happened.

MARY
I'd rather just take the hours.

O'Toole disregards the statement.

O'TOOLE
Tell me what happened.

MARY
Alright, well, I was sitting in class, minding my own business and taking notes, as a good noodle does, when all of a sudden my teacher started yelling at me for no reason.

O'TOOLE
And how did that make you feel?

MARY

Uhh... Bad, I guess.

O'TOOLE

I see. Go on.

MARY

So she started yelling at me, and I asked her what was wrong, and she told me I had to stop goofing around.

O'TOOLE

Why did she think you were goofing around?

MARY

Because some jerk put a traffic cone on the desk next to me. Whoever did it's been doing it to me all day.

O'Toole whips his head up and stares intently at Mary.

O'TOOLE

(Hushed, anxious)

What did you say?

MARY

Someone put a traffic cone on the desk next to mine.

Staring off into the distance, he speaks as if an otherworldly voice were talking to him.

O'TOOLE

(Softly)

It has begun...

MARY

Oh, come on.

He contemplates the situation for a moment.

O'TOOLE

Just... Go back to class. Or go to the science fair. Get some extra credit. Maybe it'll go away.

MARY

So I don't have hours?

O'TOOLE
 No. Go back to class. And don't
 come down here again. Ever.

MARY
 I don't plan on it.

Mary stands up, relieved.

She starts to walk out of the room.

When she reaches the door:

O'TOOLE
 Shut the door behind you.

Mary exits the office, shutting the door behind her.

O'Toole works on his crossword intently. He frowns.

O'TOOLE (CONT'D)
 Hmm... Four letter word for
 three-dimensional shape with one
 face...

He ponders. Then his face lights up.

O'TOOLE (CONT'D)
 Ah! Cone!

He scrawls the answer on the page.

O'TOOLE (CONT'D)
 I hate cones. They're so stupid.

He continues working on his puzzle. In the window behind
 him, the cone slowly rises up, having found its next victim.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Students bustle through the hallway, which is now fully lit.
 Mary looks up and down the hallway, but the cone is nowhere
 to be seen. She makes her way down the hall.

SIMON (O.S.)
 Mary!

Mary stops and sighs.

Simon sprints up to her then halts and stands next to her,
 out of breath.

MARY

Make it quick, Simon, I gotta get to the science fair or else I'll fail marine. And I wanna get away from this whole cone thing.

SIMON

You dropped this back there.

He hands her a wadded-up piece of paper.

MARY

This isn't mine.

SIMON

Sure it is. I saw it fall out of your backpack.

Mary glances over her shoulder at her backpack, which is wide open. She frowns.

MARY

Huh. That's weird.

She slips her backpack off, zips it back up, then replaces it.

SIMON

So here's your paper wad.

He extends the paper out to her awkwardly.

MARY

It's not... Alright, thanks, Simon.

SIMON

You're welcome.

He bows and scurries off down the hall.

Mary unfurls the piece of paper and reads it.

INSERT - UNFURLED PAPER WAD

Scrawled across the paper:

"WATCH YOUR BACK - THE CONE"

BACK TO SCENE

Mary looks slightly concerned.

Continuing down the hall, she crumples the piece of paper back up and throws it in the nearest trash can.

INT. SCIENCE LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Mary enters the lobby, where numerous tables are littered with an array of tri-fold poster boards, peculiar gadgets, and more baking soda volcanoes than should ever be contained in a single room together. She pulls out a notebook and pencil.

The camera keeps its gaze on her as she meanders through the strange event, taking notes on the various projects.

She stops at a project, where an ill-informed boy discusses the properties of the color orange. She listens intently for a moment, then something catches her eye.

Cut to the cone poking out from behind a tri-fold poster board mischievously.

Mary scurries away to another project. Intrigued, she listens to the budding scientist discuss the health benefits of ice cream cones. Her mouth drops when she notices something peculiar about the project.

Cut to the project, a massive paper-mâché ice cream cone. Next to it, the cone sits, poorly disguised as an additional ice cream cone.

Frightened, Mary rushes across the lobby to the farthest display, a display on hovercraft. Uneasy, Mary stands amidst a small group of spectators that is mostly off-screen, with the exception of a few stray body parts. She listens absentmindedly. Her glance strays upward and a look of absolute, uncontrolled terror overtakes the youthful innocence that once graced her teenage face.

Cut to the cone, hovering above the display like a demented, satanic angel.

Mary screams and sprints out of the lobby, dropping her notebook and pencil.

INT. TV STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Out of breath, Mary enters the TV studio, where students are milling about with cameras, sitting at computers, and fiddling with assorted other equipment. She sits at a computer alongside a few other kids.

Across the room, MR. O'FARRELL, the TV production teacher, sees Mary sit down; a confused look grows on his face, and he approaches his student.

O'FARRELL
Hey, uh, Mary?

MARY
Yeah?

O'FARRELL
I don't know how to tell you this
but... Well, you got suspended.

MARY
(Incredulous)
What?!

O'FARRELL
Yeah... It says on X2 that you've
been suspended for... Hold on a
sec.

He pulls out his phone and reads from it.

O'FARRELL (CONT'D)
"Acting childish, being a
delinquent, and causing
ruckuses—rucki?—in multiple
classes."

He slides his phone back into his pocket.

O'FARRELL (CONT'D)
It says it comes from the highest
authority. Someone above Lincoln
Lynch.

MARY
Are you kidding me?

O'FARRELL
I'm afraid not. And due to the
nature of the offense, you have to
leave school for three weeks. And
this is all going on your permanent
record.

MARY
That's so dumb! I didn't do
anything wrong! And who the hell is
this person who has more power than
Lincoln Lynch?!

O'FARRELL
Some new guy they call "The Cone".

Mary's mouth drops open in disbelief.

O'FARRELL (CONT'D)

I hate to do this to ya, Mary, but you gotta get your butt outta here or else I'll have no choice but to call security.

MARY

Security?

O'FARRELL

Jeff got promoted.

MARY

(Furious)

Alright, fine, whatever.

Mary grabs her backpack, puts it on her back, and storms out of the room.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

A storm is in full swing, with rain pouring down and lightning—accompanied by ear-splitting thunder—flashing across the sky.

Holding a notebook over her head in an attempt to keep the rain off of her, Mary runs across the parking lot. She gets to her car and shoves her key in the lock. It sticks. She jiggles it ferociously then kicks it. It creaks open, and she climbs inside, slamming the door behind her.

INT. MARY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The windshield wipers scrape across the windshield at full speed. She backs out of her space and starts to pull out of the parking lot. A second later, she slams on the brakes.

In front of her, in the middle of the parking lot, sits a tall, thin, bright orange traffic cone.

Mary puts the car in park and gets out.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

She runs angrily towards the cone, grabs it roughly, and plops it in her spot. Feeling accomplished, she smiles to herself.

Behind her, a car revs its engine. She turns, confused and frightened, and covers her eyes. A look of horror grows on her face as her eyes adjust to a bright light.

Mary's car sits about fifteen feet away, its headlights shining on her. In the driver's seat of the car, the original cone is perched like a bird of prey, ready to strike.

CUT TO BLACK

MARY (O.S.)

AAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!

Tires screeching and the roar of an engine are heard.

THE END