

# BODY

DRAMA

SCREENPLAY  
written and created  
by  
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**IME**  
ImaginNation Media Entertainment

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FADE IN:

A beautiful BEARDED IRIS comes into focus. The FINGERS of a child gently wrapped around the flower's crimson pot. Its purple petals fill the screen. Our background: clusters of colorful orbs dancing on the air -- too blurred to be determined but our setting appears to be an amazing garden.

The only sound we hear is that of a child's voice reciting a poem that is wise beyond her years. --

IRIS (O.S.)

Body. Body of a woman or body of her child, whether a baby girl or a baby boy; no two bodies are the same. God's precious design to be prized and never shamed. Whether conceived from sweetness or born from something sour; every body comes to love, cry and empower. Every body has purpose and gifts to shower. Every body is divine like every blossomed and withering flower. ...Body.

The orbs come into focus, revealing that our setting is a mob of protesters in Brooklyn, wailing anti-abortion signs that exhibit horrific images of dead fetuses.

As CAMERA does a slow 180 degree wraparound the FLOWER, we realize we're in a window pane -- inside of an abortion clinic --

INT. ST. FRANCIS PLANNING CENTER - WAITING AREA -- CONTINUOUS

CAMERA's wraparound stops, and our new background comes into focus -- an extreme close up of the child holding the flower. This is IRIS, an adorable African American 5 year-old filled with wonder and joy, standing in her chair, lifting her flower into the sun's rays; oblivious to the protester's purpose.

Iris' environment comes into focus. This greater reveal shows women waiting to be called, all masking themselves with big hats and magazines.

SLAM! Iris is startled -- looks over -- a frantic man kicked open the entrance door -- now BOLTING towards the corridor. We are limited to Iris' POV, only seeing the back of the man. Only knowing he's young, African American, wearing a kufi, white dress shirt, jeans and colorful sneakers.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN

ALICIA! ALICIA! Where's she!  
Alicia?!

A security guard stops him -- his hand on the man's shoulder.

SECURITY GUARD

Sir, you have to calm down--

AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN  
 (pushing the guard)  
 Don't fucking touch me!  
 (punching - knocking  
 him out cold)  
 Don't you fucking touch me!  
 (takes off down the  
 corridor)  
 ALICIA! ...ALICIA!

Iris is afraid while listening to the man call out Alicia's name again and again -- hearing him kick open door after door ...eventually letting out a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM --

AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 ALICIA, NOOO!!!!  
 (uncontrollable weeping)

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. WASHINGTON DC -- DAY

Sunrise. Three weeks ago.

The voices of a political TV show emanates as we get AERIAL VIEWS of the White House -- Capital Hill -- bustling traffic -- wealthy neighborhood -- and lastly, Lauren's multimillion-dollar luxury home --

ORISA (O.S.)  
 Bank of America, Ben & Jerry's,  
 Charles Schwab, Allstate, Converse,  
 Craigslist, Exxon Mobil, Expedia,  
 Nike, Pepsi, General Electric,  
 Verizon, Starbucks, Pfizer, Global  
 Com, JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo --

CHRIS MATTHEWS (O.S.)  
 Excuse me. Did you say Global Com?

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- DAY

TIGHT ON THE T.V.: We learn that we've been listening to an MSNBC program hosted by Chris Matthews where Orisa Hemmingway, a fiery 43 year-old African American attorney, Democrat and pro-choice advocate, may be a little too much for Republican NY SENATOR JOHN SCHNEIDER to handle. The debate continues --

ORISA (ON T.V.)  
 Yes I did, Matt.

CHRIS MATTHEWS (ON T.V.)  
 I wasn't aware that Global Com was a supporter of Planned Parenthood.

ORISA (ON T.V.)

Global Com has been, probably the biggest supporter there is for over 20 years.

SENATOR JOHN SCHNEIDER (ON T.V.)

And like you, Global Com and every other corporation you've mentioned so eloquently, are all pro-choice. These guys are all on your side. So why are you so fired up?

CHRIS MATTHEWS (ON T.V.)

I have to agree with him, Hemmingway.

ORISA (ON T.V.)

Because I support a woman's right to choose. However, Global Com and the aforementioned corporations have a different agenda. ...A secret agenda.

SENATOR JOHN SCHNEIDER (ON T.V.)

(laughing)

Uh-oh, Matt. You may have to rename your show *MSNBC's X-Files*.

CHRIS MATTHEWS (ON T.V.)

I know where you're going with this, Hemmingway. Unfortunately, we don't have the time to give that topic the kind of attention it deserves. But before we go, can you answer the question? Will you or will you not be running for New York State Senate?

ORISA (ON T.V.)

Haven't decided, Matt.

We begin Lauren's story here.

Meet LAUREN HUNTLY. The 48 year-old African American CROSSING camera with a smartphone to her ear, hot coffee to her lips and her attention on the T.V. She's the attractive, hard nose business type. She's dressed and ready for the day.

LAUREN

Calling my phone at sunrise isn't very attractive, Geena. I'm feeling a lack of respect for my personal space.

GEENA (ON THE PHONE)

They want you here at 2pm sharp. A face-to-face. This is serious, Lauren.

LAUREN

And you couldn't call my office during business hours to tell me that?

Lauren's home phone starts RINGING. She ignores it.

GEENA (ON THE PHONE)  
That's them, Lauren. Book a flight  
and get your ass over here.

A young and beautiful African African woman in silk pajamas enters the room. This is CELINE, Lauren's wife, who's wiping the sleep from her eyes while placing a brochure on the table (in vitro fertilization and third party pregnancies).

CELINE  
Did you look at this yet?

LAUREN  
(nodding 'not yet')  
You guys woke my wife up.

GEENA (ON THE PHONE)  
Lauren, please!

Lauren hangs up and pulls Celine close.

LAUREN  
Sorry, sweetheart. Coffee?

CELINE  
Isn't it a little early for that?

LAUREN  
(turning T.V. off)  
That's old stuff. I'm streaming.

CELINE  
How old?

LAUREN  
About 12 hours. Gotta keep my finger  
on the pulse, right?

CELINE  
(refers to phone call)  
What was that about?

LAUREN  
Global Com. They're not happy with  
me, so ...shit is hitting the fan.  
I'll be back before dinner.

CELINE  
You're going to New York? I thought  
you had a big thing on the Hill today?

LAUREN  
Apparently this takes precedence.  
Those guys own the controlling  
interest of seven Fortune 500  
companies. I have to.

Celine's look says *'tell me more'*. Lauren's look back says *'you know I don't like to talk about business'*.

CELINE  
(joking)  
Your life sucks.

LAUREN  
(laughing with a kiss)  
Tell me about it.

INT. ORISA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

We begin Orisa's story here.

That same morning. Brooklyn, NY. (Fort Greene area)

Meet ORISA HEMMINGWAY, the fiery woman from the MSNBC program. We open at a close-up of her sleeping, facing us, wrapped in white lenin with her back to a window -- where the vibrant purple flowers of a JACARANDA TREE can be seen blooming.

Suddenly MICHAEL ASCENDS from behind her -- peaking to see if she's awake. He's her very masculine, fit, 52 year-old African American husband, and he's in the mood.

MICHAEL  
(kissing her shoulder)  
Baby. Baby ...you asleep? Baby?

ORISA  
Not anymore.

MICHAEL  
Me either.

Michael turns her on her back, slides on top of her, talks with his mouth to hers --

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Oh-my-lord. You feel that, Baby?  
It's about to get lit up in here  
this morning.

She smiles, finally opening her eyes -- kissing him.

ORISA  
You think so?

MICHAEL  
Oh I know so. There's nothing like  
breakfast before breakfast.

ORISA  
(opening her legs)  
I know that's right. Bad breath and  
all.

They laugh as Michael starts to penetrate her. But wait!  
He feels something -- pulls back the sheets.

REVEAL: NUTURI, their 4 year-old at the foot of the bed.

MICHAEL

(whispering)

Oh no. NO!

ORISA

She just needs some time to get use  
to things. Rain check?

MICHAEL

Baby do you see this? Uh-uh. Not  
this time.

ORISA

(teasing)

I told you about messing with those  
pills.

MICHAEL

Oh, no. This is all na-tur-ral  
morning glory in desperate need of  
my amazing, intelligent and incredibly  
beautiful wife's skilled attention.

(a beat)

We're just gonna have to be creative.

They wrap themselves in sheets -- careful not to wake Naturi  
while sneaking out. We follow them through the house. --

INT. FAMILY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The piled boxes and clutter they pass make it evident that  
they recently moved into this upper-middle class brownstone  
home. Michael throws the sofa pillows behind the largest  
boxes, where he and Orisa lay with eager anticipation.  
Michael kisses her, about to make love when --

JADEN (O.S.)

Ewww!

REVEAL: JADEN, their 13 year-old son across the room.

JADEN (CONT'D)

You guys are freaking disgusting.

Michael drops his head in laughable disappointment. Orisa  
laughs loudly. She's unembarrassed -- rolls on top of him  
and holds his face -- speaking lovingly --

ORISA

I love you so much. You know that,  
right?

(MORE)

## ORISA (CONT'D)

But, with respect to creativity, you gotta step your game up, dude.

INT. VONYA'S HOUSE - VONYA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

We begin Vonya's story here.

That same morning. Brooklyn, NY (Park Slope area).

The bedroom is cluttered and disorganized -- somewhat of a mess. But the heavy curtains are drawn over every window, putting everything in darkness. It is very somber here.

CAMERA PANS slowly, bringing the silhouette of a woman into frame. She's sitting at the edge of her bed with her head in her lap. Behind her, the ruffled bedding is evidence that she did not sleep alone.

It is difficult as hell to pull herself out of bed, but she has to. Exhausted and enduring pain everywhere, she manages to stand. She exits. We follow --

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

We find darkness and neglect to be consistent throughout the house as we follow her to open each of her children's bedroom doors.

TWO SONS: ages 7 and 9, sleeping in bunk beds.

DAUGHTER: 6 year-old, asleep, hanging halfway off the bed.

INT. VONYA'S BATHROOM -- DAY

She's wet, wrapped in a towel and fixed on her reflection. There's no telling how long she's been standing there. Apparently she likes to shower in the dark too. She hits the light switch. Things go bright, and we see her clearly for the first time.

Meet VONYA JACOBS, a caramel colored African American who's athletically fit and 31 years of age. She has the potential for great beauty but here her face is cloaked with stress, swollen and badly bruised. She wipes her face dry and begins applying makeup.

INSERT TIME CUTS: Various phases of application until makeup is fully applied. The swelling is still there, and the black and blue is slightly visible. She shrugs. It's the best she can do.



INT. ZOE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

We begin Zoe's story here.

That same morning. Brooklyn NY (Bed-Stuy area).

We're under the sheets with a timid pretty girl whose self-esteem suffers because she simply doesn't believe it. Meet ZOE EDWARDS, an African American 13 year-old dark skinned girl with natural hair whose adolescent sexual urges are getting the best of her. She's taking selfies of her vagina. Not happy with what she shot so far, she takes another -- and another. That's the one. She likes that one. She sends it in a text to someone named David.

TIGHT ON SMARTPHONE SCREEN: David replies, *'whoa!'*. Zoe replies, *'you like?'*. David's response, *'fuck yeah! I like very much. Send me another one'*

Zoe positions to take another pic when --

*THUMP-THUMP-THUMP!* It's her mother knocking at the door.

CAROL (O.S.)

Zoe, get up. Time to get ready for school. I done knocked on this door three times already. C'mon.

Zoe tosses her smartphone. It lands on the end table, beside thick glasses and a Bible.

She hurries -- pulling her pajama shorts up -- rushing out of the room --

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

We follow Zoe through the low income 3 bedroom apartment where photos of Jesus Christ and crucifixes cover the walls. She goes into the bathroom -- *SLAMMING* the door in our face.

CAROL (O.S.)

And don't take all day in that damn bathroom.

Meanwhile in her room --

INT. ZOE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

David sends a pic of his penis. His text message reads, *'i wanna do it today at school. I found a room in the building'*.

INT. SUKO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -- DAY

We begin Suko's story here.

That same morning. Brooklyn NY (Fort Greene area). In a small one bedroom apartment.

We are reacquainted with Iris, the little girl from the abortion clinic. Here in this small one bedroom apartment she's in all her precious innocence, illuminated by the professional lighting around the iPhone tripod, pressing the keys of a pricey keyboard player that makes no sound while pretending to be a pop star.

Meet ETSUKO "SUKO" MILLS, a 24 year-old Black girl born in London. She's incredibly beautiful with silky hair, light skin, a striking smile with unusually white teeth and speaks with a British accent. Her subtle tomboy tendencies and unique sense of fashion give her sex appeal and the "it" factor. She was born to be a star. She kisses Iris as she passes, bursting with excitement while on a phone call.

SUKO

Oh my God! I just can't believe it!  
I've lived all my life for this  
moment, mom!  
(plopping on the sofa)  
Atlantic Records! Can you believe  
that?!

INT. MILLS BOOKSTORE -- DAY

We're in London where SUKO'S MOTHER, Black/English of Asian descent in her late 40s, is on the other end of that phone call, while working the cashier at a boutique bookstore.

SUKO'S MOTHER

Your father and I couldn't be happier  
for you, dear.

SUKO'S FATHER, Black/English of African descent in his 50s,  
CROSSES frame --

SUKO'S FATHER

Yes, now maybe we can start seeing a  
return on our bloody investment.

INT. SUKO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

SUKO

Very funny, daddy.

SUKO'S MOTHER (ON THE PHONE)

So what's next?

SUKO

A meeting with the record label this  
afternoon. Apparently the executives  
want to chat about marketing ideas  
and that sort of thing.

SUKO'S MOTHER (ON THE PHONE)

You didn't sign the contract already,  
did you?

SUKO

No. Daddy's lawyer friend is still  
on holiday. But he says it looks  
really good. That it's fair, all  
that good stuff, so I'll be signing  
when he gets back in a few weeks.  
But the record people are really  
excited about things and want to get  
started straight away.

(to Iris)

Iris, don't do that. Come here.

Iris comes -- lays her head on Suko's lap.

Suko's mother becomes concerned when hearing Suko call out  
Iris' name.

SUKO'S MOTHER (ON THE PHONE)

Honey, are you alright?

SUKO

Yes of course.

SUKO'S MOTHER (ON THE PHONE)

It's been 5 years since your incident  
and I worry about you.

SUKO

(stroking Iris' hair)

Mom, I am fine. Can you just be  
happy for me?

(another call--)

That's Cypha. Gotta go.

SUKO'S MOTHER (ON THE PHONE)

Who's Cypha?

SUKO

My manager. Love you much. Bye.

(she clicks over)

Hey!

CYPHA (ON THE PHONE)

Sup? You ready to do this shit, Ma?

SUKO

(turning on her swag)

Of course. Let's get it, man.

CYPHA (ON THE PHONE)

12:00 P.M. sharp.

SUKO

We have to be out of there by 2:00.  
My part-time gig starts at 3:00.  
You know I don't like driving in the  
city, so I'll be depending on the  
train to get me to work on time.

CYPHA (ON THE PHONE)

Cool. Matter of fact, meet me at  
the Promenade at 10. I wanna get  
together a little earlier so we can  
prep. And I'll drive you back to  
Brooklyn afterwards so you won't  
have to worry about the trains.

SUKO

That's what's up. Let me handle  
some personal stuff --  
(referring to Iris  
while pinching her  
cheeks)  
-- get my morning dose of caffeine  
and I'll see you there.

INT. ORISA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- DAY

Orisa's story picks up here. She's at the stove making  
breakfast. Michael and Naturi are seated, waiting to eat.  
Everyone dressed for the day.

ORISA

No suit? You're not going in the  
office today?

MICHAEL

I'd rather get some more work done  
around here.

ORISA

Good. I'll be back at 5:00. Have  
to change for the recording tonight.  
(teasing)  
Maybe we can get back to that project  
you started.

MICHAEL

Wish we could. Jaden has study.  
(Jaden enters)  
There he goes. Dad 2.0 is in the  
building.

JADEN

You're cooking?

ORISA

Is that a problem?

JADEN  
Course not. It's just ... different.

ORISA  
Different is good.

Jaden and Michael whisper behind her back --

JADEN  
What if I don't like it?

MICHAEL  
You'll love it. Mom's got skills,  
son.

JADEN  
Hope so. I like your cooking, Dad.

NATURI  
(loudly)  
I like your cooking too, Daddy.

Orisa turns -- glaring.

MICHAEL  
Hey -- whoa -- yeah, well wait till  
you taste what your Mom's got going  
on over there.  
(to Orisa)  
Tell them what you're making, Babe.

ORISA  
(brings food to table)  
Cinnamon crepes, spinach and mushroom  
omelets and caramelized strawberries.

NATURI  
Strawberries?!

ORISA  
(joking)  
Don't ever question your mother's  
skills again, boy.

JADEN  
Smells dope. It's too heavy though,  
Ma. I'm gonna be dozing off in class.

ORISA  
(sits to eat)  
Oh no you won't.

MICHAEL  
Tonight's the big night for your  
mother, guys.

NATURI  
You're gonna be on T.V. again, Mommy?

ORISA

It'll be recorded, sweetheart. It won't air for a few days.

JADEN

You think I should go into politics when I get older?

ORISA

How about we focus on getting better grades in algebra for now? Things going well with the tutor?

Jaden's oversized smile implies a crush.

ORISA (CONT'D)

Maybe he likes her a little too much.

MICHAEL

What's a young man to do? She's a beautiful young woman.

ORISA

He can refrain from staring at her ass.

MICHAEL

(waving his finger)

Absolutely. That's unexceptionable, son.

Orisa turns away to pour orange juice. Michael seizes the moment to give Jaden a humorous wink.

INT. PRECINCT - LIEUTENANT CARUSO'S OFFICE -- DAY

Vonya's story picks up here.

We learn that she's an NYPD officer as she enters in uniform, reluctantly approaching LIEUTENANT JAMES CARUSO.

VONYA

Morning, Lieutenant Caruso.

LIEUTENANT CARUSO

Jacobs. What can I do for you this morning?

VONYA

Well, sir, I'm following up with you about assigning me a new partner.

LIEUTENANT CARUSO

Haven't moved a muscle.

VONYA

Why not?

LIEUTENANT CARUSO

Why should I?

VONYA

It's what's best for me right now,  
Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT CARUSO

He give you that shiner?

VONYA

No, sir.

LIEUTENANT CARUSO

Well, what's best for you, Jacobs is  
not how things work at New York City's  
Police Department. Good-looking  
fellow. He a distraction?

VONYA

I can assure you, that is not the  
problem, sir.

LIEUTENANT CARUSO

Well, I need a problem before I can  
start moving officers around like  
pieces on a damn board game. A real  
problem. Is he using excessive force?

VONYA

No.

LIEUTENANT CARUSO

Is a he racist prick? Targeting non-  
African Americans?

VONYA

No, not at all.

LIEUTENANT CARUSO

He making unwanted advances?  
Inappropriate remarks? Lewd gestures?  
Things of a sexual nature?

VONYA

No, Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT CARUSO

Religious conflicts?  
(off of her nod 'no')  
See my face, Jacobs? Am I starting  
to look exhausted? You been on the  
force, what 12 years?

VONYA

13.

## LIEUTENANT CARUSO

And he's been with us 7 years. Not much of a cowboy but he's an excellent officer. The two of you have perfect records with the department. I don't fix things that aren't broken, Jacobs. You write me a full report on why having a new partner is such a critical need. If it shows a legitimate issue, I'll process it. But Jacobs, don't waste my time.

EXT. BROOKLYN TRAFFIC -- DAY

We begin Saleem's story here.

That same morning. Brooklyn NY (Bed-Stuy area).

Meet SALEEM AMIR WISE, on his bike, weaving effortlessly through dense traffic while bouncing to the music thumping from his ear buds. He's a poorly groomed 22 year-old African American wearing a backpack, worn clothes and new colorful sneakers -- possessing all the attributes of a low-level dope dealer. We follow several blocks till at a gas station --

EXT. GAS STATION -- CONTINUOUS

Saleem puts air in his tire. A white man approaches.

WHITE MAN

You're little late, Saleem. I have things to do, man.

SALEEM

So do I. Got that dough?

The man hands Saleem a wad of cash. Saleem goes into his backpack -- handing over product that we're unable to see. It's wrapped in plastic and swallowed by his large hand.

WHITE MAN

All good?

SALEEM

Ain't it always?

Saleem rides off -- goes to the hospital across the street --

EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

After locking his bike up and before entering the hospital, Saleem shares a nod with BRODY, the alpha male of his crew (a 30 year-old intimidating African American) waiting in a parked car.



INT. HOSPITAL - NON-INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- DAY

A 21 year-old African American woman is here, fastening her blouse. This is ALICIA. Saleem enters -- taking flowers from his backpack -- handing them to her.

SALEEM

There she goes. The sexy lady of my life.

ALICIA

Please. I'm far from sexy.

SALEEM

(hugging her)  
You are beautiful, adorable, cute and sexy.

ALICIA

Can we please just get out of here?

SALEEM

Where's the doctor? I need to holla at dude.

ALICIA

I just wanna go home.

Weak and fatigued, Alicia follows him to the nurses station.

SALEEM

Excuse me. I need to talk to Alicia Copeland's doctor.

NURSE

Are you family, Sir?

ALICIA

She's asking if we're married. They can't tell you nothing if we're not married.

NURSE

We can with your permission, Ms. Copeland.

ALICIA

Well go ahead and tell him so I can go home.

NURSE

I know its been a difficult 4 days. Glad to see you leaving.

(to Saleem)

Her doctor won't be in the building for another 4 hours but I can tell

(MORE)

NURSE (CONT'D)

you she's doing great. We cleared up the infection. She responded well to the blood transfusion and MRIs show no progression of a stroke.

Alicia walks off -- heading for the elevators.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Experiencing Sickle Cell Pain Crisis while in her condition is tough. I don't know how she's doing it. She's a strong woman, but she's gonna need you if ya'll gonna go through with this. Sure you're up for that?

SALEEM

For sure. Now can you give me some real details on that rundown you gave me? And don't worry about big words. I'm a pretty smart guy.

INT. CAROL'S CAR/IN TRAFFIC -- DAY

Zoe's story picks up here. She half listens, looking away as CAROL (a southern cultured, burly 40 year-old religious enthusiast) goes on and on.

CAROL

Guess you can say I'm working for you, Zoe. I'm using every penny I earn from this job the good lord gave me to pay for that private school of yours. Your health insurance isn't affected because it's off the books, and it isn't too far from home. God is so good. And I thank him everyday for your uncle. If he didn't--

ZOE

(staring off)

Why do you keep calling him my uncle?

CAROL

He's the closest thing you'll ever have to one. If he didn't do so much I wouldn't be able to do what I do for you. Just show your appreciation by doing your best in that fancy school, baby. Okay?

ZOE

Yes, Mama.

Carol looks over, realizing Zoe's attention is on DAVID, an average looking African American student walking towards the

school's entrance: possessing qualities and self esteem challenges similar to Zoe's. Carol turns Zoe's chin.

CAROL

Stop staring at those damn boys.  
You are such a hot mess.

They pull up in front of the school.

CAROL (CONT'D)

You don't think I know that you be sneaking off having relations with those nasty little bastards?

ZOE

I'm still a virgin, Mama.

CAROL

We are a God-fearing family, Zoe. Know what that means? It means if you mess up and get yourself pregnant, it'll be the biggest mistake of your life because abortion is not an option. That baby would be same as you are to me. 18 years of penance. And I won't help you. Uh-uh. I won't interfere with God's will. Now go on. Get, now. Put your glasses on and go. I'm praying for you.

Zoe puts her glasses on -- exits -- hurrying into the school.

EXT./INT. BRODY'S CAR IN HOSPITAL PARKING -- DAY

Saleem's story picks up here. We see him being playful and silly while helping Alicia into the back seat of Brody's car.

ALICIA

Your bike.

SALEEM

I'll get it later.

They drive off. Saleem takes her hand, holding his smile up as best he can, all the while deeply hurting for her.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- DAY

We're in an impoverished section of Brooklyn, inside a neglected apartment building where the rest of Saleem's crew are waiting for him.

Saleem exits the elevator with Alicia and Brody. Alicia is agitated the moment she sees them (African American street

types, 16 - 20 years-old) RAYMOND, ARTIE, TREY and BABY BOY, the youngest, nicknamed because of his baby face.

BABY BOY

Yo, Alicia, welcome home.

TREY

Yeah, good to see you, A?

ALICIA

No ...hell no. I'm not putting up with this shit!

Everyone heedlessly follows Alicia into her apartment.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

They all trail into Alicia's SPARE ROOM as she argues with Saleem and Brody.

ALICIA

Are you serious, Saleem?! I need a couple of days. I can't have this shit around me while I'm trying to recover.

BRODY

Alicia, relax, man. We just try'na eat, that's all.

ALICIA

Shut the fuck up, Brody!

BRODY

You shut the fuck up!

The others come back out -- watching.

SALEEM

We'll be as quiet as possible, Babe. Promise.

ALICIA

I'm tired of this bullshit in my house. Why can't y'all do that at Brody's house?

BRODY

You know why. Stop talking stupid.

Alicia launches -- punching Brody --

ALICIA

Get the fuck out of my apartment, Brody! You too, Saleem! All of you, get the fuck out!

SALEEM  
(pleading)  
Alicia?

BRODY  
Man, fuck that bitch.

Saleem swings impulsively, PUNCHING Brody in his face. Brody's reaction is fast and powerful -- GRABBING Saleem by the throat, PINNING him up against the wall.

BRODY (CONT'D)  
Nigga, you crazy?! What, you forgot?!

SALEEM  
(afraid but won't  
back down)  
She's your little sister, B. A queen.  
She should never hear that.  
Especially from you.

Brody let's Saleem go. Just then Saleem realizes Alicia is dialing the police.

SALEEM (CONT'D)  
I know you ain't calling the cops!

ALICIA  
Y'all getting out one way or the  
other.

SALEEM  
You know I got all that work in my  
bag and you gonna call the police?!

BRODY  
She bluffin'. I ain't going nowhere.

Alicia sighs, hangs up and goes into her bedroom, slamming the door behind her.

INT. VONYA'S PATROL CAR IN TRAFFIC -- DAY

Vonya's story picks up here. BRANDON is a chocolate, handsome African American NYPD officer with the body of a pro athlete. He's at the wheel, going back and forth with her about her request for a new partner.

BRANDON  
I can't believe you did that. I  
thought we were friends.

VONYA  
Got nothing to do with friendship,  
Caldwell.

BRANDON

Oh, I see we're referring to each other by last names now.

VONYA

I'm just being professional.

BRANDON

You're insane!

VONYA

(explodes)

I'm doing what I have to do!

BRANDON

Your husband beats the shit out of you and your kids every weekend and your idea of a solution is a new patrol partner?

VONYA

He thinks we're fucking around, Brandon!

BRANDON

That's not an excuse for beating on you!

VONYA

He deals with so much shit. The job is making him sick.

BRANDON

Detectives don't deal with half the stress that we do. They're not on the front line. They don't engage in conflict, get exploited on Facebook or faced with situations on a daily basis that can flip at any moment. They show up after the fact in their cheap suits to play whodunit in the neighborhoods that we patrol.

VONYA

So?

BRANDON

So what part of being a pencil pushing member of Blue's Clues is so stressful that the man has to physically and verbally abuse his wife and kids? You said you don't love him. You said that chapter passed years ago. Then leave his ass and find a nice guy that'll treat you right.

VONYA  
Shut the hell up and stay out of my  
business, Caldwell.

BRANDON  
Last names again?

Dispatch interrupts --

RADIO / DISPATCH  
I have a 10-52D in progress. 118  
Rockaway Avenue. I need an available  
unit to respond.

VONYA  
Unit 25. In route to the location.

RADIO / DISPATCH  
Copy, unit 25. Female caller says  
her boyfriend and 5 males refuse to  
vacate her premises. Possible  
escalation to physical violence.

VONYA  
Copy that. Requesting a backup unit.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- DAY

Vonya, Brandon and 2 white officers go to Alicia's door,  
hearing yelling and the rumble of what sounds like fighting.

VONYA  
(knocking--)  
NYPD! Open the door!  
(Saleem opens)  
Do you live here, sir?

Alicia comes -- PUSHING Saleem aside -- YELLING --

ALICIA  
No he don't! This is my apartment!

VONYA  
You mind if we come in for a second?

ALICIA  
Yes I do mind! I just want him and  
his damn friends to leave!

Vonya and Brandon look over Alicia's shoulder, seeing the  
rest of Saleem's crew. All but Brody looks nervous.

VONYA  
Sure you don't want us to come inside?

ALICIA  
I don't want ya'll in my house!

BRANDON

Then I need everybody out here.  
Now.

The crew hesitates.

VONYA

Miss, if they don't cooperate we'll  
have probable cause to enter the  
premises.

SALEEM

We coming. Come on ya'll.

Fearing the police finding out what's in his backpack, Saleem  
cooperates, leaving it inside. The others follow.

BRANDON

You're the boyfriend?

SALEEM

Yes.

BRANDON

Come over here with me.

We go with Saleem and Brandon --

BRANDON (CONT'D)

What's your name, sir?

SALEEM

Saleem Amir Wise.

BRANDON

You got some ID, Mr. Wise?

Meanwhile: the white officers are handcuffing the crew.

OFFICER

You guys are not under arrest. This  
is for everyone's safety. Just have  
a seat on the floor and give us a  
minute to sort things out. IDs?

Back to VONYA & ALICIA:

VONYA

So what's going on?

ALICIA

I just want them to leave.

VONYA

Did he hurt you?

ALICIA

No.



VONYA

Are you being forced to do something  
that you don't want to?

ALICIA

(emotional)

I just want them gone! That's all!  
I'm so fucking tired!

Back to BRANDON & SALEEM:

BRANDON

That's a lotta guys to visit one  
girl. Something going on in there I  
should know about?

SALEEM

She's really sick so...

BRANDON

Cancer?

SALEEM

Sickle Cell. I literally just brought  
her home from the hospital. That  
shit be having her acting crazy.  
She'll just start tripping for no  
reason. Look, that's my heart. If  
she want us gone, I don't want no  
problems, we leaving.

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE IN FLIGHT -- DAY

Lauren's story picks up here. She's in First Class, talking  
to Geena on her smartphone.

LAUREN

My assistant isn't traveling with  
me. I have to do it myself. So how  
will I know this guy? -- A yellow  
wristband? I still say five grand  
is a lot of money. -- It's a lot for  
scum like him, Geena.

PILOT (ON THE P.A. SYSTEM)

Morning passengers. It is a beautiful  
83 degrees with blue skies in New  
York City. We'll be landing at  
LaGuardia Airport in approximately  
six minutes. Please put on your  
seat belts and turn off all mobile  
devices. And thank you for flying  
with Delta.

LAUREN

Gotta go.

She hangs up -- puts her phone in airplane mode -- puts it in her breast pocket. After a beat of deep thought, she reluctantly takes it back out -- blocks Celine's calls.

INT. PARKED UBER - BROOKLYN GHETTO -- DAY

Lauren is a fish out of water, sitting in the back, agitated by the downtrodden types that surround her.

UBER DRIVER #1

Are you sure this is the right address?

LAUREN

Yes I am --

SHE GASPS! -- Startled by someone's arm, wearing the YELLOW WRISTBAND, suddenly resting at the top of her closed window. Her nerves make it difficult to let the window down. She clumsily opens the car door instead, knocking her briefcase onto the curb while handing over an envelope filled with cash. The man walks off. We never see above his waist.

Meanwhile a passing vagrant in rags stops -- witnessing the man ignore the briefcase.

VAGRANT

Sup, Miss? Want me to get that for you?

LAUREN

No thank you. I'm fine.

VAGRANT

(walking off/nonchalant)

Yeah whatever, you bougie bitch.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL -- DAY

Zoe's story picks up here. She walks the crowded hall with JESSICA who's not as timid but a similar type. Nearby a group of excited boys, watching Suko's Instagram post of her singing a sensuous Beyonce song, call out to Jaden for him to come and see. Meanwhile --

JESSICA

You going to that party this weekend?

ZOE

I wasn't invited.

Zoe is in Jaden's path, while noticing the pretty girls with him. She takes her glasses off and straightens her posture as they all whiz by -- Jaden accidentally KNOCKING her bag --

JADEN  
(still running)  
My bad.

ZOE  
No problem.

JESSICA  
(continuing --)  
Neither was I. You think I care?  
I'm gonna be up in that bitch, girl.

ZOE  
(laughing)  
Yeah me too. And I know just what  
to wear. Is David going? --

SLAM! Someone rammed Zoe's head into her locker just as she reached to open it.

REVEAL: It was MELISSA, a light skinned attractive African American bully surrounded by similar Latina and white types.

MELISSA  
Oh damn! I'm sorry. You alright?  
Let me know because I can slam your  
ugly face into that locker a lot  
harder if you are.

ZOE  
(afraid but fed up)  
Get outta my face, Melissa!

MELISSA  
A real bitch would make me.

Zoe swings and the two begin fighting. The kids encircle, YELLING, PHONE RECORDING -- rooting for Melissa to win. A security guard rushes over, separating the two. He gives Zoe a sympathetic look, as if to know what she's been going through.

SECURITY GUARD  
You okay?

MELISSA  
Fuck you mean is 'she' okay?!

INT. ALI'S SUPERMARKET - MANAGEMENT OFFICE -- DAY

CARLOS, the Hispanic store manager, is on a call at his desk.

CARLOS  
Carol Edwards hasn't been employed  
with us for a while now. Almost 6  
months. Sorry. Okay, goodbye.

INT. ZOE'S SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

The school's PRINCIPAL hangs up the phone, giving Zoe a look of suspicion. A greater reveal shows Melissa sitting not far away, and the Security Guard posted between them.

PRINCIPAL

According to the gentleman on the phone, your mother no longer works there.

ZOE

Yes she does. She just dropped me off and drove over there like 2 hours ago.

PRINCIPAL

And she has no cell phone?

ZOE

No.

PRINCIPAL

And you do?

ZOE

My uncle pays for my phone.

PRINCIPAL

What you girls did was grounds for suspension. We don't tolerate barbaric behavior in this academy. If that's what you want you can both save your parents a lot of money and register at the public school up the block. Take your butts to class and I better not ever find out that you've put your hands on each other or anyone else in this building again. Have I made myself clear?

EXT. BROOKLYN PROMENADE -- DAY

Suko's story picks up here. She parks and exits her dated Toyota. Within a few steps DJ CYPHA, a 28 year-old Hispanic American with braided hair, pulls up -- parking his expensive car. They high-five and hug -- now strolling alongside the Manhattan landscape and Hudson River, surrounded by Brooklynites and vacationers.

CYPHA

I'm gonna ask you again. You ready?

SUKO

Like you wouldn't believe.

CYPHA

The meeting is gonna be less about business and more about the label getting a sense of what you're made of.

SUKO

A test?

CYPHA

Not really. They wanna feel your vibe so they know how to develop you as an artist.

SUKO

I'm already developed. This is me right here. I won't be a gimmick, Cypha. Nah, man.

Cypha stops. He turns away, looking out at the river.

CYPHA

You see all that bullshit you got going on? They need to see that. They see that and there won't be much more to talk about.

(facing her)

You that next shit, Suko. You a motherfucking star.

Suko moves in close. She kisses him softly on his cheek.

CYPHA (CONT'D)

There was a choice we had to make. Either I'd be your manager or your man, because we agreed that being both is a bad idea.

SUKO

Yeah. And? I still feel that way.

CYPHA

So then don't do that.

SUKO

I was just saying thank you, Cypha.

CYPHA

Use your words, man. You too fucking fine to be dick teasing.

SUKO

That's not what I was doing.

CYPHA

It doesn't matter. As long as I'm all in my feelings, shit like that will be a dick tease. A'ight?

SUKO  
Alright. Or ...a'ight. Whatever.

CYPHA  
So we good? We straight?

SUKO  
We straight.

After a blank stare, the two laugh.

CYPHA  
There's a huge underground party  
happening tonight. A lot of industry  
people gonna be in the building.  
Gonna be lit and you need to be there.

SUKO  
I'm there. Send the info to my DM.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - ZOE'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Zoe's story picks up here. Majority white students occupy  
the classroom. She sits near the back, distracted by Jessica  
texting her from the front.

INSERT: Zoe's smartphone reads, '*look at the door*'. Emojis  
of eggplants and smiley faces.

Zoe sees David in the door's window. He's wearing a hopeful  
smile.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - CAFETERIA -- DAY

Zoe and Jessica enter, seeing David across the way. Zoe  
goes to him.

ZOE  
Hey. You going to that party?

DAVID  
No.

ZOE  
Me neither.

DAVID  
Hey. Crazy pics.

ZOE  
(blushing)  
I see what you working with. Nice.  
So we really gonna do this?

DAVID  
Yeah. Unless you don't want to.

ZOE

I do.

DAVID

Coach Brown is out today. He has that room behind his office. You know, where we see the nurse at?

(off Zoe's nod)

I have the key. Meet me there in 5 minutes.

INT. ZOE'S SCHOOL - HALLWAY -- DAY

Zoe and Jessica walk the empty hall, stopping a few yards from the gym. Jessica pushes Zoe to go the rest of the way. Zoe stops across from the closed doors, seeing David inside, anxiously waiving for her to come in.

Suddenly a teacher stops in front of Zoe, blocking her line of sight with David, who's dashing into hiding.

TEACHER

There's no gym today. You know that.

ZOE

Uh-huh. Yeah.

TEACHER

Then why are you over here?

ZOE

It's my lunch period.

TEACHER

The cafeteria's the other way. You know that too. Let's go.

She begins escorting Zoe back. They turn the corner finding Jessica up ahead pretending to be oblivious.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

You kids are always up to something.

(her phone rings)

Hello. No, Jake. Red not blue.

Christ. I'll be there in a sec.

The Teacher leaves Zoe -- hurrying off the opposite direction. Jessica turns back -- gesturing for Zoe to go while she has the chance. Zoe runs back over -- seeing David inside. They gaze. Frozen. Neither moves a muscle but we know what they will do.

EXT. ALI'S SUPERMARKET / STREET CORNER -- DAY

Saleem's story picks up here.

Carlos hovers as two police officers nearly drag QUE, a Black drug addicted local, from inside the supermarket.

QUE

You really gonna do this to me?!  
For a damn pack of Sudafed?!

CARLOS

That's three strikes, mister.

A swift PAN reveals Saleem, Brody and the rest of his crew posted on that corner. Saleem looks over at the commotion and shakes his head.

A local street guy approaches him.

STREET GUY

Saleem, that product wasn't official,  
man. That's not like you.

SALEEM

Happens sometimes. I got you though.

STREET GUY

Piece me off then.

BRODY

(threatening)

The police are 20 feet away, you  
dumb fuck! Kick rocks!

The guy hurries off, not wanting any problems with Brody.

SALEEM

Baby Boy.

BABY BOY

Scoot-scoot!

SALEEM

Catch dude around the corner and  
give em what he wants.

Baby Boy takes off. Meanwhile we hear the ongoing scuffle off-screen between police and Que.

BRODY

Can't believe Alicia called the cops  
on us.

SALEEM

I don't even wanna talk about it.

BRODY

Ya'll been going through it?

SALEEM

Man, you don't even know.



Saleem gets a text from Alicia 'come up stairs'. He ignores it. The message brings his spirits down even more.

SALEEM (CONT'D)

This trap shit is for the birds, B.  
You don't know how hard I pray every  
morning to escape this place. Gotta  
get that bag. What I'm doing ...it  
gotta work. Shit gotta work, man --

"BANG!" -- SWIFT PAN TO: Que shot by officers -- DYING!

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

Suko's story picks up here.

ONE CONTINUOUS SHOT OF -- Close-up on Suko SINGING into camera. CAMERA PULLS AWAY, revealing that she's playing her keyboard -- CONTINUED CAMERA tells us that we're watching the Instagram post seen at Zoe's school, of Suko singing a Beyonce song -- CONTINUED CAMERA exits a large screen --

INT. ATLANTIC RECORDS - CONFERENCE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

-- THE CONTINUED CAMERA ends at a master shot of Atlanta Records conference room where Suko, Cypha, a marketing team and JIMMY PIVENS (the President) are watching Suko's Instagram post. They are in a lunch meeting.

JIMMY PIVENS

Incredible! The voice of an angel.  
I could listen to you all day.

SUKO

Thank you, Jimmy. That's real big  
coming from you, man.

JIMMY PIVENS

6 million plus views and counting.  
That's crazy! So we got the small  
talk out of the way. Gotten to know  
you a little better. You know us a  
little better. Now let's talk  
marketing. Who would you compare  
yourself to?

SUKO

No one.

JIMMY PIVENS

I mean a type. A vibe.

SUKO

I'm soulful with some funk.  
(MORE)

SUKO (CONT'D)

A bit nasty with sensuality that's expressed cleverly and not vulgar. In a wholesome way, if that makes sense. A fusion of Ella Mai and Jill Scott but more. And my music ...ah man, my music. Shit has to be sweet and hard all at the same time.

(excited)

I'm just ready to go, Jimmy. For real. It's like I get high off my own shit.

The room goes silent -- everyone enamored by her.

JIMMY PIVENS

(suddenly laughing)

I can't even front, Suko. You got me fucked up. I'm turned on right now.

MARKETING TEAM MEMBER #1

We can reinvent Alicia Keys. She has a similar look.

JIMMY PIVENS

Nah, she got some other shit going on.

MARKETING TEAM MEMBER #2

How about a soulful Rihanna?

SUKO

How about a Suko? A one and only Suko?

JIMMY PIVENS

(impressed)

Where'd you get that name from?

SUKO

My parents. It's short for Etsuko. My mom is part Japanese. Means child of joy.

(looks at her watch -  
whispers to Cypha)

I have to get to work.

JIMMY PIVENS

(to Cypha, big laugh)

Yo, Cypha, you got yourself a firecracker over there.

(to Marketing team)

Do whatever she wants. Let's keep it genuine. I'm all about that.

SUKO

Thank you so much.

Cypha and Suko stand, about to leave.

JIMMY PIVENS  
Cypha, where are we with the contract?

CYPHA  
Our attorney will be back in the  
country in 2 weeks.

SUKO  
(whispers)  
3 weeks.

CYPHA  
3 Weeks. We're a go in 3 weeks,  
Jimmy.

EXT. MANHATTAN - UBER IN TRAFFIC -- DAY

Lauren's story picks up here. We follow her as she exits  
the Uber -- cutting through dense pedestrian traffic --  
entering Global Com's huge corporate building.

INT. GLOBAL COM -- DAY

We follow Lauren out of the elevator and through this  
impressive office space as she walks boldly, giving nods to  
passing employees -- meeting a staff member waiting at large  
doors with a martini.

STAFF MEMBER  
Good afternoon, Mrs. Huntly.

LAUREN  
Afternoon.

STAFF MEMBER  
You look wonderful, as always.

LAUREN  
Thank you.

STAFF MEMBER  
(opening the doors)  
Go right in.

Lauren enters, seeing GEENA (white, 30s corporate type)  
standing in the center of a massive space.

LAUREN  
Geena.

GEENA  
You're a little early.

LAUREN  
Aren't I always.

GEENA  
So are they. They're waiting.

Lauren follows toward a second set of doors. She stops her.

LAUREN  
Do I thank you enough?

GEENA  
Not nearly enough.

LAUREN  
Do I get points for saying if I ever  
cheated on my wife, you'd be the  
one?

GEENA  
None at all. And five thousand  
dollars is a goddamn bargain.

They enter --

INT. GLOBAL COM - CONFERENCE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Intimidating middle-aged white male heads of Fortune 500 companies fill the seats of a massive table. Geena sits at the far end as Lauren crosses to the empty seat between BENJAMIN CROMWELL and ALEX FUTTERMAN (very powerful, late 60s). She realizes SENATOR JOHN SCHNEIDER is at the table.

LAUREN  
Afternoon, gentlemen. ...Senator. I  
came right away, as requested. I'm  
here, all bright-eyed and bushy-  
tailed. Let's get right to it.

BENJAMIN  
Who do you see in front of you,  
Huntly?

LAUREN  
I see my entire client roster. It's  
a little shocking but I can handle  
it.

ALEX  
That is a beautiful home you bought  
for the new wife. Very expensive.  
The maintenance alone has to be about,  
what, a hundred grand a year?

LAUREN  
Are you threatening me, Alex?

ALEX

Absolutely.

LAUREN

I retired as the youngest African American member of state legislature in American history for one reason; to represent and protect the interests of the multitude of corporations that keep this great country afloat. And thanks to you guys, I'm doing just that. And I mean I'm doing a good goddamn job. My firm has written laws for you, secured unwavering loyalties from politicians for you and, on average, we've generated an insane 22,000% return on every dollar you people sent my way.

BENJAMIN

Lauren --

LAUREN

So, Alex, please don't threaten my livelihood or the comfort that my hard work provides for my wife. It is completely asinine to bite the fucking hand that feeds you.

BENJAMIN

The problem is --

LAUREN

I'm well aware of what the problem is, Benjamin.

ALEX

You gave your word that you would get rid of that woman!

LAUREN

Orisa Hemmingway cannot be bought. She won't respond to any of my efforts and according to my sources, after announcing her candidacy she'll begin using her Instagram account as a primary source to raise campaign funds.

SENATOR JOHN SCHNEIDER

There's no way to regulate that. We've got to get the FEC involved.

LAUREN

Don't bother. She found a loophole.  
(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Circumventing representatives and engaging directly with the people gives voters an unprecedented sense of involvement and control. It's unheard of and fucking brilliant. And yes, her talk of liberating consumers from corporations is an issue. I get it.

BENJAMIN

She's a PR nightmare.

ALEX

I can give two shits about public relations. Her rhetoric is affecting our stocks and bottom line.

LAUREN

(she sighs briefly)

I pulled the trigger on something that will clip her wings and destroy her campaign before she even gets started. But it's a process. ...A process. You have to be patient and trust me, gentlemen.

BENJAMIN

You lost our trust when you dropped the ball the first time, Lauren. This should have been handled months ago. Now the media has gotten hold of her.

ALEX

If that woman isn't silenced we will fuck you nine ways to Sunday. Bankrupt you. Take your home, your firm and decimate everyone you've ever loved, starting with your pretty little wife. You have 30 days.

LAUREN

Look at me, Alex. Do I look concerned? Not at all. Do you know why? Because I'm confident in what I do. I've got this.

(to all)

Put your dicks back in your pants and watch me work.

INT. ORISA'S HOUSE - ORISA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Orisa's story picks up here. She has changed into her outfit for the studio recording. She looks beautiful, strong and confident, wearing a skirted business suit -- in the mirror putting in an earring.

ORISA

Michael, where'd you put my other earring? The platinum ones. Michael!

We follow as she leaves the room -- heading down the stairs --

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

She stops at the top of the stairs overlooking the living room -- surprised to find Michael standing down there, dangling her earring, surrounded by Naturi, AASHI (Orisa's young assistant of East Indian descent) and many close friends and staff members. Jaden is there letting Suko (the tutor) in the front door.

MICHAEL

We just wanted to say we love you, and go kick ass, baby.

Champagne glasses are raised.

AASHI

You are the best thing that happen to New York and we can't wait to get started.

INT. ORISA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Shortly after. Orisa's unexpected celebratory get together is in full swing. She thanks Suko and goes over to Aashi.

ORISA

It's your job to make sure I'm made aware of these kinds of things, Aashi.

AASHI

Your husband insisted that you be surprised.

ORISA

I'm just messing with you.

AASHI

Orisa, I was wondering ...when the campaign officially starts, will I receive a pay increase?

ORISA

Payroll will be handled by an agency other than the firm. That's the only change. Your role won't be changing so I wouldn't expect your salary to. We spoke about this.

AASHI

We did but ...I have a situation and--

ORISA

Aashi, I love you. You've become a dear friend over the years so, I can be frank with you, right?

AASHI

Yes, of course.

ORISA

Don't you think this an inappropriate time for this discussion?

AASHI

You're right. We have less than an hour to get to set. Oh, and we didn't get any calls from Lauren Huntly's office today. Not one.

ORISA

That's not good. Something's up. The taping is at NYU, correct?

AASHI

Yes. At MetroTech Center. The network setup there for your episode. They want students for the Q&A segment. We should probably start making our way to the door. And remember I'm not staying. The driver's taking me to Manhattan so I can setup your meeting with Mayor Wallace tonight. He'll be back for you long before the taping is over.

ORISA

I remember.

AASHI

I feel bad. You'll be all alone.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Saleem's story picks up here. He and Alicia are in a heated argument. He's standing there with blood on his shirt, feeling hopeless as she stuffs clothes into a luggage bag -- walking out on him.

SALEEM

Alicia, you text me and I'm here!

ALICIA

That was six hours ago and you show up with blood on your clothes?!

SALEEM

I told you the cops shot somebody!  
(MORE)



SALEEM (CONT'D)

I tried to help! After that -- I'm hustling! I'm trying to get us outta here! It cost a lotta money, Alicia!

ALICIA

And that's all I'm good for, right?! My apartment for your damn hustle! Well you can stay here and chase your bullshit dream! I'm out!

She leaves -- SLAMMING the door.

SALEEM

(throws his hands up)  
This is fucking nuts!

INT. ZOE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN -- DAY

Zoe's story picks up here. She sets the table while Carol prepares dinner.

ZOE

Mama, my principal called your job today. She said you don't work there anymore.

CAROL

I'm getting a cellphone next week so that won't be a problem anymore.

ZOE

Yeah but ...you don't work at the supermarket anymore?

CAROL

Of course I do.

ZOE

Then why would my--

CAROL

Stay outta grown folks business, Zoe. I told you about that.

CHARLES comes in from work wearing dirty construction gear (large middle aged African American).

CAROL (CONT'D)

How you doing, Charles? Go on and shower up. Dinner will be on the table in about 15 minutes.

CHARLES

Thanks so much. Well hello to you too, Zoe.

ZOE  
Hi, uncle Charles.

INT. ZOE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN -- DAY

Zoe, Carol and Charles at the table eating dinner.

CAROL  
Pastor told me how you did such an awesome job painting the church basement. He just raved about you.

CHARLES  
It was the least I could do. I'm grateful to him for referring me to you. Renting that room back there saved my butt in many ways. You've been so kind to me the past year. Whatever you and the pastor needs, don't hesitate to ask. That goes for you too, Zoe.

ZOE  
I had a fight today, Mama.

CAROL  
Always something with you.

ZOE  
I had no choice. She slammed my face into my locker.

CHARLES  
That's terrible. I see the bruise.

Charles gets up to get a close look at the bruise.

ZOE  
That girl I told you about. The really pretty one. That's why the principal tried to call you. I had to defend myself?

CHARLES  
Something has to be done about this girl.

CAROL  
I'll pray for her.

CHARLES  
No, Sister Carol. Something has to be done. You need to go up to that school.

CAROL  
You have a lot of homework?

ZOE

Mostly math. It's really hard.

CHARLES

I can be as helpful as I was with your social studies. Just knock a little later on if you need me. My God this food is delicious, sister Carol.

EXT. NYU AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE -- DAY

Orisa's story picks up here. We are behind the curtain. The thunder of a passionate audience grows as a talk show host introduces her.

TV HOST (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please help me welcome civil rights activist and rumored candidate for New York Senate, Orisa Hemmingway!

Meanwhile, Aashi adjusts Orisa's collar and hair.

AASHI

I'm out of here. Break a leg, boss.

As Aashi exits, Orisa walks out onto the stage to the HOST. The student audience goes wild as she waves and sits in a setting likened to an Ellen DeGeneres show.

INT. NYU AUDITORIUM - STAGE -- DAY

A while later. The T.V. show taping continues and the audience loves Orisa.

HOST

And so you're a corporate lawyer with an ivy league education, partner of a thriving real estate law firm and you're a wildly famous civil rights activist.

ORISA

I wouldn't call myself an activist, but one of the issues that's calling me into the political arena is the continuous killing of young Black men in this country by police officers. It has to stop.

HOST

One might say that Black people are killing more Black people than police officers ever could. What would your response be to that?

ORISA

I'd say don't come at me with that Black on Black crime cliché'. It's a fact that White people kill considerably more white people than Black people kill Black people. But this isn't about numbers. It's about value of life. ...Everyone's life.

HOST

And if you were to become the next Senator of New York, what would you do to address it?

ORISA

I ...we, can address it right now. And I'm not talking about marching, writing letters or any of that militant revolutionary rhetoric. You see, the Fortune 500 corporations have the power to control our government and our government has the power to control the actions of the police officers in our communities. But you know who thinks they have no power? Our beloved African Americans citizens. The fact is, they are all powerful. All mighty. But they just don't know it. As consumers, they -- we, spent more than 1.2 trillion dollars on those corporations last year. Hit them where it hurts. Stop spending. I guarantee you, they will hurt. They will hear your demands and they will change their tune on the Hill. The result? A trickle down effect, from the board room to your local precinct, and change will have arrived. The government will implement programs and laws that will hold police officers accountable.

The audience erupts with supportive cheers and applause.

HOST

Damn. Inspiring, but you're a bit of a paradox.

ORISA

How so?

HOST

You're anti-government, yet you're considering running for a seat in one of its bodies.

ORISA

I'm not anti-government. I'm pro-people.

HOST

I see you're pro-choice as well. A sensitive topic on the news and the Internet that, as of late, has been the subject of debate with your name all over it.

ORISA

I've changed my position on abortion. I'm pro-life now.

The audience gasps and the Host is somewhat shocked.

ORISA (CONT'D)

I believe those same corporations fought for that legislation and supported pro-choice for the sole purpose of pushing a hidden agenda.

HOST

Which is?

ORISA

Black Genocide. I can't contribute to that. I must fight against it.

Orisa sees that she lost the audience. Most of them now seeing her as a lunatic conspiracy theorist.

ORISA (CONT'D)

(to audience)

Don't take my word for it. We live in the age of information. Do your research. You'll see that 90% of the abortion clinics in this country are in communities of color, predominantly African American. And 90% of the crisis pregnancy centers, which are nonprofit organizations setup to counsel women against abortions and save babies, are in communities that are predominantly white. Coincidence? If you look a little deeper, you'll learn that pregnancy prevention, morning after pills and abortions are being aggressively marketed to people of color. Now ...look even deeper. Who are the financial backers and supporters of it all? Those same corporations.

The audience, RUMBLING -- MURMURING -- going through their phones -- SHOCK on countless faces.

ORISA (CONT'D)

Cops shooting Black men and Black women aborting babies. They're cutting the African American population by its head and tail, simultaneously. What are we gonna do to stop that? Hit this country where it hurts. ...Those pockets.

HOST

(uncomfortable,  
creating a segue)

I had to see for myself, because it is truly unbelievable. You have 5.8 million Instagram followers. And these are real followers, most of which are New Yorkers. How in the world did you do that?

ORISA

I find that people like to attach themselves to what they believe to be real.

HOST

You have a ton of videos posted of celebrities encouraging you to run. Jay Z, Walhberg, Ellen, Diddy, LeBron and this list goes on.

(looks at tablet)

I have an article here. An interview you did with the New York Times. Quote, *'if I decide to run for a seat in the Senate, I will solicit 100% of my campaign funds directly from Instagram; my followers and the followers of my celebrity friends. I will not take a dime from corporations, nor will I give a moment of my time to the lobbyists who represent them'*, end quote.

ORISA

That's an accurate quote.

HOST

Orisa Hemmingway, will you run for New York State Senate this election?

ORISA

Yes I will.

The audience erupts in full support.

HOST

Senator John Schneider must be shaking in his boots right now.

(MORE)

HOST (CONT'D)

Lady's and gentlemen, when we come back, Q&A with this amazing woman. She promises to keep it one-hundred percent real. Orisa Hemmingway, folks!

INT. VONYA'S PATROL CAR / THROUGH TRAFFIC -- DAY

Vonya's story continues here. Things are a little too quiet as she and Brandon drive through Brooklyn's heavy traffic. The tension between them has not yet diminished.

VONYA

How about we agree to disagree and promise not to bring my personal life inside of this car anymore?

Brandon doesn't respond.

VONYA (CONT'D)

C'mon, partner. I'll buy you a beer after work and we'll lay down some rules on how to start over fresh.

INT. BROOKLYN PUB -- NIGHT

The bar is loud and crowded, filled with blue collar locals. We see Vonya and Brandon at a table in civilian clothes and laughing up a storm. Probably on their fifth drink.

VONYA

And then there was that time when Cunningham convinced us to take that perp in.

BRANDON

Oh yeah, the perp with the spiked hair. Poor bastard was naked, high as the sky and took too much Viagra.

VONYA

There we were heading back to the precinct. You blasting your music and he in the back complaining about his cuffs, when suddenly a stream of piss comes flying over my arm and into your lap?

BRANDON

Why is it that you're always the only one laughing when you tell that story? We gotta get even. Cunningham got us so good. On her day off too. Too much time on her hands. She needs a man.

VONYA

To hell with a man. Gotta speak slow so they can keep up, and fake orgasms so they don't go flaccid. And for what? To keep his PTSD suffering ass from beating on me?

BRANDON

You're breaking the rules already.  
(a beat)  
You gotta get out of that house. What's to stop him from shooting you?

VONYA

What's to stop me from shooting him?

Brandon's laughter fades as he seriously thinks about her situation.

BRANDON

I don't mean to sound sappy and shit, but what you really need is somebody to love you.

VONYA

(laughing)  
Love me. Who the hell could love me with all my shit?

BRANDON

I could.

Everything seems to go still. In this moment Vonya sees genuine love in Brandon's eyes. That look described only in ridiculous romance novels ...and she loves it.

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Vonya and Brandon are hot and heavy, passionately kissing while undressing each other. Vonya stops him.

VONYA

Wait. We do this, everything he's been accusing me of becomes true.

Brandon gently pulls the bra strap from her shoulder -- exposing her breasts.

BRANDON

You want me to put this back?

Vonya lunges and they begin having sex.



EXT. ABANDONED HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Suko's story picks up here. A constant stream of teens and young adults check for police before entering the side door flagged with black helium balloons tied to it. She walks over, dressed for the occasion. Stunning. Looks more like an artist.

Uncertain and nervous, she checks her Instagram DM. It's the right place. She follows people inside.

INT. ABANDONED HOSPITAL -- CONTINUOUS

Suko walks through the dark corridors of this fully furnished, dust infested building. She follows a trail of sticky notes up stairs and around corners -- getting closer and closer to the music, until finally entering a large open space that's setup like a club. Flashing colorful lights, alcohol, drugs and over a thousand people make this indistinguishable from a popular Manhattan hotspot.

SUKO

Now this is a party.

She hears Cypha's voice -- sees him in the DJ section. But before she can move she's bombarded by 3 pretty party girls.

PARTY GIRL#1

Hey you're Suko, right?

SUKO

Yeah that's me.

PARTY GIRL#2

Oh my God. We are your first fans!

SUKO

Really?

PARTY GIRL#3

We follow you on the Gram. Cypha let us hear a track he's working on for you! Fire, girl!

PARTY GIRL#1

C'mon!

They grab her hand and take her to Cypha.

PARTY GIRL#1 (CONT'D)

Look who we found.

Cypha gives Suko a hug and goes back to the microphone.

CYPHA

Everybody, I wanna introduce you to Atlantic Records next superstar! An icon in the making! Homies and boss bitches ...SUKO!

The crowd responds well as Suko waves.

INT. ABANDONED HOSPITAL/UNDERGROUND CLUB -- NIGHT

Shortly after: The music and dancing is still going strong. Cypha is talking to music industry types with Suko not faraway having fun with the Party Girls.

PARTY GIRL#1

So what's your thing? We got E, molly, percocet. ...What?

Suko is an obvious virgin to drugs. She hesitates to answer, unaware that Cypha can hear while watching her closely.

PARTY GIRL#2

(putting drugs in  
Suko's hand)

Trust me, you'll love it.

CYPHA

(reaching for Suko)

Suko, come here. Wanna introduce you to my peeps from Def Jam.

Suko heads for him, but is quickly turned away by the Party Girls. They take her out onto the dance floor where guys are waiting. Suko is having the time of her life and Cypha is worried about her.

An aerial shot shows couples wondering off into the adjacent patient rooms, all of which are dressed and colorfully lit, made part of the club scene.

INT. PARKED UBER CAR -- NIGHT

Lauren's story picks up here.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: on the rear view mirror -- the Uber driver stares back with little patience.

TIGHT ON LAUREN: sitting back there, lost in her thoughts, gazing at the bar just outside. No telling how long she's been sitting there. She gets her phone -- unblocks Celine and dials.

CELINE (ON THE PHONE)

Hey. I see you unblocked me, huh?

LAUREN  
I'm gonna need more time. Gonna  
miss dinner, honey.

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - DEN -- NIGHT

Celine on the other end of the call, sensing Lauren's  
depression.

CELINE  
You take all the time you need. Okay?

Celine hears a click. Lauren hung up without saying goodbye.

INT. ZOE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Zoe's story picks up here. We're under the sheets with her  
again. She's in her pajamas and on the phone with David.

ZOE  
I hope you're not mad at me. -- Okay.  
Okay. -- See you tomorrow? -- I love  
you too, David.  
(quiet giggle)  
Because I have to pee and if my mother  
catches me on this phone she's gonna  
take it from me. -- Really bad. --  
Okay bye.

She hangs up and hurries to her door -- opening it. She  
sees something that changes her mind -- gets back in bed.

INT. ABANDONED HOSPITAL/UNDERGROUND CLUB -- NIGHT

Suko's story picks up here. She is now more aggressive,  
comfortable and uninhibited. She finds Cypha, takes his  
hand and leads past several patient rooms, where drug activity  
and sex can be seen in through the windows of each one.

CYPHA  
What are you doing?

SUKO  
What are you a few sandwiches short  
of a picnic? What do you think I'm  
doing?--

She finds a vacant one -- takes him inside. Closes the door.

INT. PATIENT ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Sits on the examination bed and draws the curtain.

SUKO

I'm on a bit of a bender and I wanna have some fun.

CYPHA

Stop it, Suko. Stop!

SUKO

What's your problem.

CYPHA

You're not in your right head. I saw the girls gave you some molly.

SUKO

I didn't take it. I swear--

(showing him)

I had a few drinks but I'm clear headed and sober. And you know what I was thinking? Why not? Why can't we be together? What's wrong with having the best of both worlds? Nobody has to know but me and you.

Cypha is stuck. He agrees with her but ...Fuck it! He kisses her -- climbs in the bed -- the two pulling clothes off.

INT. MANHATTAN BAR -- NIGHT

Lauren's story picks up here. She's at the bar. Still lost in her thoughts. Her glass nearly empty. Beside her -- a group of white lawyer types are loud and clumsy. CARL, the closest one to her, accidentally knocks her glass just as she goes to drink.

CARL

Sorry about that. I'll buy you another drink.

LAUREN

No you won't. I'll buy you a drink.  
(off Carl's look of surprise)

I could use a little conversation. You seem to be full of that so ...a drink for a minute of your time? What's your poison?

CARL

Another Heineken.

LAUREN

(to bartender)

A Hieneken and two Boilermakers for me and the pretty man over here.

CARL

Whoa, you're a tough girl.

LAUREN

No. I'm a tough woman.

CARL

(reaches to shake her  
hand)

Carl.

LAUREN

I'm Lauren, Carl.

CARL

Let me guess. Attorney? Corporate  
law. Or a broker. You've got that  
boss bitch thing going so... No  
offense.

LAUREN

Oh I'm a lot worse than a bitch so,  
no offense taken. What do you do,  
Carl?

CARL

I'm senior partner at Gunther,  
Bernstein & Associates. Our focus  
is Mergers and Acquisitions but we're  
adding IP Law to our practice. I  
stumbled across a 22 year-old who  
developed a code that's gonna change  
the world as we know it. I'm talking  
about a 7 figure deal. Fucking black  
kid is a goddamn genius. Oh, sorry.

LAUREN

Is the kid black?

CARL

Yes.

LAUREN

Is he a goddamn genius?

CARL

Yes.

LAUREN

Well there's nothing to be sorry  
for, is there, Carl?.

(to bartender)

Hey, Joe -- Joey. Whatever the hell  
your name is. Two more Boilermakers.

CARL

I'm paying this time.

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)

The deal doesn't go down for another three weeks but, these guys over here, my partners ...they were insistent on us getting ahead of ourselves by celebrating tonight.

Carl takes the shot and then looks over at Lauren, posturing like a peacock -- until realizing she's aloof, looking away with glossed over eyes.

CARL (CONT'D)

You never told me what it is that you do.

LAUREN

I buy the government right out from under its own people. I bribe politicians, change legislation and write laws that aren't for the common good. I've made it legal for tax payers to consume cancerous products so pharmaceutical companies can profit from their sicknesses. And that's just the small stuff, Carl. That's just the slow kills. I adversely effect and toxify the lives of hundreds of millions with the stroke of my Dunhill pen. And I do it all for the puppet masters.

CARL

You're a corporate lobbyist?

LAUREN

Spare me the judgmental gaze. The day your black genius is graced with the kind of success that effects the economy, you'll be calling me too. I can do without the guilt. My wife is an angel and I get up every morning to do the work of the devil. I can't even talk to her while I'm working. The sight of her name when she calls sickens me. Reminds me of my self hate.

(to bartender)

Joey!

(to Carl)

You're a little square for my taste, but we're just drinking, right?

CARL

(uncertain and  
intimidated)

Well... I would say we can get out of here if you want, but you're married.

LAUREN  
You see? ...Square. No fucking  
adventure.

INT. MANHATTAN BAR - MEN'S RESTROOM -- NIGHT

Moments later: Lauren is fucking Carl's brains out in the bathroom stall. They are wild and noisy and she can give a shit about the men listening from the sinks.

WE GO THROUGH A SEQUENCE OF SCENES, TELLING HOW THE NIGHT ENDS FOR OUR CHARACTERS --

INT. ALICIA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Saleem is sitting on the edge of Alicia's bed, dialing her number repeatedly.

INT. ZOE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Zoe wakes up -- opens her door to go to the bathroom. She sees Charles bedroom door ajar. She gets back in bed.

INT. ABANDONED HOSPITAL/PARTY - PATIENT ROOM -- NIGHT

Suko and Cypha lay gazing into each other with no regrets for what they've done. They're half dressed and clearly in love.

INT. BRANDON'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Vonya and Brandon lay wrapped in sheets with space between them -- sharing a gaze that begs the question, '*what now?*'

INT. MANHATTAN BAR - MEN'S RESTROOM -- NIGHT

Sequence ends as we return to Lauren. She's alone now, looking deep into her own eyes, questioning her existence.

EXT./INT. ORISA'S PARKED SUV -- NIGHT

Orisa's story picks up here. She is escorted by a production crew to her SUV, parked in a desolate lot behind NYU. Crew immediately heads back as she gets in. Exhausted but pleased with her performance, she sends a thumbs up emoji text to Michael. And then --

DRIVER  
Ma'am ...ma'am? I'm so sorry, Mrs.  
Hemingway.

(MORE)

DRIVER (CONT'D)

I'm embarrassed to ask but -- can I run inside quickly? I have to wizz. I'll be really quick.

ORISA

Don't you guys handle that sort of stuff while you're waiting? You've had hours to yourself out here.

DRIVER

Yes we do and I have but -- I'm really sorry. I've got prostate issues and -- I'm so sorry but, I'm about to burst.

ORISA

Go. Hurry please?

DRIVER

I will. Thank you.

The Driver leaves and the car goes quiet.

INSERT: Orisa's phone as she and Michael exchange positive and loving text messages. She smiles -- feeling great when --

CRASH! Her window is SHATTERED -- an arm comes in UNLOCKING the door -- a man wearing a hoodie jumps in -- EVERYTHING MOVING FAST! -- she tries to scream -- he GAGS her with his gloved hand -- PULLING up her skirt!

EXTREME CLOSE UP of Orisa's eyes -- tears RUNNING as he penetrates -- RAPING HER!

After a few beats she becomes determined to stop him. KICKING and PUNCHING with all her might, SCREAMING into his gloved hand when -- BAM-BAM! The man swings twice, with great strength, slamming his fist into her face and ribs. It's so brutal that it's difficult to watch. The scuffle shifts the man's hoodie, revealing his African American nose and mouth as he speaks through gritting teeth --

RAPIST

Shut the fuck up and let me finish, bitch! Or should I snap your little neck and cum in a dead body instead?

Orisa stops fighting. She goes limp. Her eyes roll back, looking through the window into the night's sky. It's as if she leaves her body as the rapist leans in close -- his sweaty nose touching hers. He begins releasing inside of her. His breath all over her face. He's finished -- DISHEVELED with his hoodie off. And while Orisa purposely continues to look away, we can now see that the rapist is Brody.



EXT. ORISA'S PARKED SUV -- NIGHT

Moments later: while returning, the Driver sees the broken window and runs over. He finds Orisa laying inside with her skirt up, panties torn away and legs still spread apart. She's limp as if dead with a bloody face.

DRIVER

Oh my God! Mrs. Hemmingway!

She moans. ALIVE! He helps her out. She lethargically stops him from fixing her skirt.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Are you hurt?!

In a state of shock, she doesn't respond or even look his way. It's as if she can't hear or even know he's there as she walks painfully to the rear of the SUV, between parked cars -- SQUATTING into the shadows --

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Mrs. Hemmingway?!

She finally makes eye contact with him, just as she begins URINATING -- SPLASHING against her bare feet; as if trying to rid herself of the vile left inside.

The Driver steps in front of her, trying to prevent 2 approaching onlookers from seeing. One has a cameraphone.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Please don't.

INSERT: Driver's hand blocking onlooker's cameraphone. We see the YELLOW WRISTBAND on the Driver's wrist.

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE IN FLIGHT -- NIGHT

Lauren's story picks up here. She's headed back home -- in First Class staring through the window, out into the darkness. She bears no expression at all, yet we see suffering in her.

INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE OF ORISA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Michael and Orisa's doctor talk outside her room. Inside we can see two police officers and Aashi talking to Orisa.

DOCTOR

She has no head injuries, but she does have a hairline fracture in one of her ribs. I can stabilize that and discharge her in the morning but I have to warn you, she's gonna be in a lot of pain.

MICHAEL  
(seeing more in the  
doctor's eyes)  
Something you're not telling me,  
Doc?

DOCTOR  
According to your wife, she was the  
victim of a robbery, but I suspect  
it was more than that. I think she  
was raped.

MICHAEL  
(trying to keep it  
together)  
Why would you say that?

DOCTOR  
I'm pretty sure what I'm observing  
in her behavior is what's called  
Rape Trauma Syndrome. The  
psychological trauma experienced by  
a rape victim. Hysteria, confusion,  
obsession with cleaning herself, a  
host of other signs, and she won't  
let anyone below her waistline.  
When I suggested she take an HIV  
test, she agreed while insisting she  
wasn't raped.

Michael is devastated but keeps his composure.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Give her time to come to you with  
this.

MICHAEL  
This can't be leaked to the media or  
the Internet.

DOCTOR  
Of course not.

INT. PRECINCT - LIEUTENANT CARUSO'S OFFICE -- DAY

Vonya's story picks up here.

Three weeks later. Early morning.

As Vonya heads toward the exit for her patrol car, Lieutenant  
Caruso sticks his head out of his office -- holding her  
report.

LIEUTENANT CARUSO  
Jacobs! Not good enough.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - STAIRCASE -- DAY

Zoe's story picks up here. She and David are kissing. They've been at it for a few minutes now. They finally pull apart.

ZOE

It's been like three weeks. I'm your girl now, or what?

DAVID

Yeah. I thought you were when we first started.

ZOE

(big smile and a kiss)  
Gotta go to class.

She runs off.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN -- DAY

Saleem's story picks up here.

Baby Boy makes a BP&J sandwich. We then follow him into the SPARE BEDROOM -- entering it for the first time. Exposed to a world we knew nothing of --

INT. SPARE BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

We see stickers of a logo design 'MyVerse' throughout this cramped and disorganized space, where a plethora of hard drives, hardware, equipment and computers are everywhere.

Saleem, Trey, Raymond and Artie are at computers working as Baby Boy enters with his sandwich, crossing to a computer of his own.

SALEEM

Baby Boy?

BABY BOY

Scoot-scoot!

SALEEM

How you doing with that code?

BABY BOY

Almost done. Still waiting on that Indian dude to send me the last piece.

TREY

What time is it over there?

ARTIE

He on the other side of the fuckin planet.

(laughing)

It's tomorrow where that mutherfucker at.

BABY BOY

I got some new shit though. Need a flash drive.

Trey comes over while looking over Saleem's shoulder.

TREY

We hacking motherfuckers now?

RAYMOND

Let the genius work.

SALEEM

(tossing Baby Boy a flash drive)

Money talks and we just listening. We not stealing. We learning, bro.

Saleem's smartphone rings. He answers --

SALEEM (CONT'D)

Sup? -- Okay, I'm coming down.

Saleem gets up, clumsily knocking his backpack over, causing countless Fire Sticks to spill out. We now know what he's been selling on the street. Turns out he's not a drug dealer. He hurries out, leaving them spread across the floor.

SALEEM (CONT'D)

Be right back.

EXT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT -- DAY

Brody is sitting on the hood of his car with a hot temper and suspicion in his eyes. Saleem senses something's wrong while exiting the building to meet him.

SALEEM

What's the matter?

BRODY

What's going on with you and my sister? This ain't no regular beef between y'all. She been at my crib for weeks, bro. Meanwhile you and your boys in her crib hustling. I don't like that, Saleem.

SALEEM

It's personal, B.

BRODY  
(intimidating glare)  
Saleem?

SALEEM  
She's 23 weeks pregnant.

BRODY  
(small smile appearing)  
That's cool. I'm good with that.

SALEEM  
It ain't just that. It's the Sickle  
Cell, man. She don't want the baby.

BRODY  
It's a little late to be talking  
like that.

SALEEM  
We argue about it everyday. It's  
making her crazy. That's why she  
spazzed out and called the cops on  
us.

BRODY  
She'll be alright. Come here.

They go to the trunk of the car where Brody gets a new  
business suit, white shirt and a tie.

BRODY (CONT'D)  
Was gonna give it to you Thursday  
for your big meeting but ...congrats.

SALEEM  
This is crazy!  
(touching the fabric)  
Shit is expensive.

BRODY  
I caught a lick a couple weeks ago.  
Ain't too proud about what I did to  
get that bread but, figured I'd throw  
some of it into that mission of yours  
up there. We can pay the last couple  
of dollars on those patents too.

SALEEM  
Real talk?

BRODY  
Yeah, nigga. You bout to make me an  
uncle. We family now. Imma see  
what I can do to get her ass back  
over here.

INT. VONYA'S PATROL CAR -- DAY

Vonya's story picks up here. Her face has healed. She looks good but the tension between her and Brandon has returned. Brandon breaks the awkward silence.

BRANDON

So what are we doing?

VONYA

We're running our patrol routes.

BRANDON

You know what I'm talking about, Vonya. Ever since that night you've been acting strange. I thought we were at the start of something good for you. Good for us.

VONYA

Look, we were drinking. Things just got out of control. You're my friend, Brandon. My closest friend. You'll have a family one day and we'll all barbecue, bullshit and share memories. I'm not getting a new partner. It's just me and you so let's just do the job. I got your back, you have mine. We'll laugh, joke, respect and support each other all the way to a decent pension.

Brandon gives an angry look and they drive off.

INT. LAUREN'S CORPORATE LOBBYING FIRM -- DAY

Lauren's story picks up here.

An establishing shot shows an impressive logo above the reception area that reads, 'Huntly Government Affairs'.

Lauren crosses, heading toward her office -- passing through a bustling environment of lobbyists and support staff, all moving about in all directions, making every effort to acknowledge her presence. She is obviously king of this castle. She enters her office --

INT. LAUREN'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Just as Lauren enters, her assistant follows her in, nearly startling her.

ASSISTANT

I'm sorry, Ms. Huntly. Would you like me to come back a little later?

LAUREN

No. Talk to me.

Just then Lauren realizes a world news channel is airing a story about Orisa. She divides her attention --

ASSISTANT

I was successful at rescheduling the meeting with Congressman Meeks, we met our numbers for Senator Brown and --

(Lauren feels ill)

You okay?

LAUREN

Yes. Keep talking. Let's hear it.

ASSISTANT

Of course, as you know our goal--

Suddenly and without warning Lauren vomits violently, SQUIRTING through her fingers as she covers her mouth. Her assistant moves quickly, grabbing a trash can -- holding Lauren's hair back as she continues in the can.

Meanwhile: the TV comes into focus, and we continue seeing the news report.

NEWS REPORTER (ON T.V.)

It was 3 weeks ago. Community activist and real estate attorney Orisa Hemmingway announced her candidacy for New York Senate during the taping of a BET news show in this building. --

INT. ORISA'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM -- DAY

Orisa's story picks up here.

We are tight on the same news program, now seeing it air from a flat screen mounted high in the living room.

NEWS REPORTER (ON T.V.)

-- Shortly after, she walked down this street, stopped right here and entered her parked vehicle where she was robbed and savagely beaten. An investigation is ongoing. However, sources say the candidate was not robbed. She was brutally raped. But because of her strong views on pro-life she did not report it, for fear of it hurting her campaign. Which makes one wonder, is Orisa Hemmingway pregnant?

Just then the news program shows the camerphone footage of Orisa, in shock, urinating between the parked cars.

Camera pulls back into the Family room, bringing Jaden into frame just as he's about to turn to see -- just then Suko purposely distracts him while putting on her jacket.

SUKO

Let's hear that again. Terms?

JADEN

Terms are the parts of an algebraic expression that are separated by addition.

SUKO

You got it.

Jaden's proud smile dissolves into a frown. He realizes Orisa is in the room. Suko is also surprised, figuring she had been standing there all along, watching the news program from afar.

Suko then finds it strange that Jaden elects not to assist as Orisa struggles to cross the room while enduring the pain of her fractured ribs. Suko packs her things, wanting to escape the awkward moment. Just then, Michael hurries over from the stairs -- taking Orisa's arm to aid her. But his touch infuriates her. She goes into a rage.

ORISA

DON'T TOUCH ME!

MICHAEL

Babe, I'm just trying --

ORISA

I said don't touch me! Michael, I don't want to be touched! Is that difficult to understand?!

(to Jaden)

I DON'T WANT TO BE TOUCHED!

Suko grabs her bag and leaves. Michael goes after her.

EXT. ORISA'S HOUSE - THE STOOP -- CONTINUOUS

Suko exits, stopping at the top of the brownstone's stairs. She's upset but understanding. Cypha is double parked out front waiting for her. He senses something wrong.

CYPHA

You okay?

Before she can answer Michael hurries out after her.



MICHAEL

Suko. I'm sorry. She's going through a lot and--

SUKO

I understand, Mr. Hemmingway. No need to apologize.

MICHAEL

You're not leaving us are you?

SUKO

The session was over. It was just a coincidence.

MICHAEL

I mean quitting on is.

SUKO

Not until --

MICHAEL

-- You sign a big record deal.  
(laughing)  
See you next Tuesday.

Suko gets in Cypha's car. They kiss and pull off.

INT. ORISA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM -- DAY

30 minutes later. Orisa is fully dressed laying across her bed. She is forever changed (clinical depression, paranoia, emotional numbness, lowered self-esteem, impulsive crying, anxiety, hatred and self blame).

Her infant daughter Naturi lays across from her with no knowledge of what she's going through -- looking back as she stares deeply into her eyes. Some time goes by before Orisa says anything at all. But eventually --

ORISA

Baby, I want you to love and protect your body always. Okay, little monster?

NATURI

Okay, Mommy.

ORISA

Don't let anyone touch it, poke it, tickle it or do anything at all, unless you want them to. Know why?  
(pokes her side)  
Because that's your body.

NATURI  
(giggling)  
It's my body.

Orisa realizes Michael is standing in the doorway. He feels hopeless and of no use to her.

INT. CYPHA'S CAR IN TRAFFIC -- DAY

Suko's story picks up here.

CYPHA  
So I spoke with Jimmy Pivens. He said tomorrow is cool.

SUKO  
Great. I wanna get this over with.

CYPHA  
We could've sent him an email.

SUKO  
That's no way to tell him. We want him to be happy for us. Treat him like family.

CYPHA  
What's going on that house? You came out looking kinda crazy.

SUKO  
Too depressing to talk about. I'd rather talk about you and me having this beautiful baby! You excited?

CYPHA  
Like you wouldn't believe.

SUKO  
That's my line. You better stop steeling my swag, man. I'm hungry. I'm always hungry. Let's get something to eat.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT - ALICIA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Saleem's story picks up here. Alicia has returned calm and easy to talk to, but he still finds himself fighting a losing battle. They are fully dressed, sitting on the bed, trying to work things out.

ALICIA  
Saleem, you have no idea what it's like. The pain is unimaginable. I suffered all my life. I wanted to die over and over again.

(MORE)

ALICIA (CONT'D)

I just can't bring a child into this world knowing I'm responsible for its suffering.

SALEEM

I believe our baby will be healthy and strong, with your beautiful face.

ALICIA

You have the trait, Saleem. That's a one in four chance of the baby having the disease.

SALEEM

No, that's a one in four chance of it not having the disease, and a one in two chance of it not having the trait. You gotta have faith.

ALICIA

Faith? Yeah right! I let you cause me to stall this for too long.

(a beat)

It's all set up. I'm gonna do it. My appointment is on the 13th.

SALEEM

That's Thursday. The day of my meeting.

(drops his head,  
holding back tears)

Baby, don't do this. I'm begging you. Nasir Wise. That's his name.

ALICIA

It's my body.

SALEEM

He has a body too. ...Let me do what I do. I'm gonna blow their minds at that meeting. Afterwards, I swear we'll have enough money for the best doctors in the world. If our baby happens to be born with the disease he won't suffer as much.

ALICIA

YES HE WILL! You don't understand! No amount of money can stop that pain!

Saleem can't hold back his tears any longer. He gets on his knees -- she cradles him in her lap --

SALEEM

Please, Alicia? ...Please?  
(MORE)

SALEEM (CONT'D)  
That's our little prince. Our  
princess. Please?

Alicia can't stand to see him cry. Now her tears are falling  
as well. And then--

ALICIA  
Okay.

INT. VONYA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Vonya's story picks up here. It's after 3:00 AM. Her husband  
sleeps beside her with his back to camera. We still do not  
know what he looks like. Meanwhile she is wide awake.  
Restless. Staring at the ceiling. She eventually sends  
Brandon a text message.

INSERT HER PHONE SCREEN: Reads, *'we need to talk'*.

Some time has passed and Brandon has not replied. She pulls  
the covers away -- looks down at herself -- and sends another  
text, *'I'm pregnant'*.

She waits several beats. Still no reply.

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Brandon is awake. He reads Vonya's messages -- does not  
reply.

EXT. PRECINCT - CURB -- DAY

The next morning. Vonya walks toward her patrol car while  
dialing Brandon's number. He answers--

BRANDON (ON THE PHONE)  
Yeah.

VONYA  
You filed a sexual misconduct report  
against me?

BRANDON (ON THE PHONE)  
It wasn't against you, it was against  
myself. You got what you wanted,  
didn't you?

Vonya hangs up on him. She's angry -- gets in the driver's  
seat of her patrol car. SAM, her new partner gets in beside  
her.

EXT. ZOE'S APARTMENT BUILDING STOOP -- DAY

Zoe's story picks up here. Zoe is on the stoop crying. We hear murmured responses as she pleads into her phone.

ZOE

I'm so scared and I don't know what to do! -- Yes I'm sure! -- I'm positive! -- I took the test like 5 times! I'm pregnant! -- I can't do that. -- My mama told me I'd be on my own if I messed up, but I don't care. I'd rather that happen than kill my baby and sin against God.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE -- DAY

It's Charles on the other end of Zoe's phone call. He's furious, and has gotten to the point of threatening her, all the while keeping enough distance from co-workers to not expose himself as a deviant pedophile.

CHARLES

Are you kidding me?! You listen, little girl! I'm gonna text you links to several clinics. You're gonna pick one, and you're gonna make a FUCKING APPOINTMENT! And if you say one word to your mother I'll break your skull! Mess up my life and I promise you God will be the least of your worries!

INT. LAUREN'S CORPORATE LOBBYING FIRM - BATHROOM -- DAY

Lauren's story picks up here. We hear her in the stall.

LAUREN (O.S.)

Dammit!

She opens the door -- goes to the mirror in angry disbelief with a pregnancy test strip in her hand.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Fuck!

INT. JIMMY PIVENS' OFFICE AT ATLANTIC RECORDS -- DAY

Suko's story picks up here.

TIGHT ON JIMMY: tapping his desk with a pen. Clearly pissed off, but keeping it together.

REVEAL: Suko and Cypha sitting opposite Jimmy Pivens.

JIMMY PIVENS

So what you gonna do?

SUKO

I'm gonna keep it. I can manage.

JIMMY PIVENS

That's a problem.

SUKO

I can do it, Jimmy. I have the support of my parents and --

CYPHA

I would help out. I got family in Brooklyn that would chip in so it doesn't get in the way of business.

JIMMY PIVENS

Still a problem.

CYPHA

Artists perform while pregnant all the time.

SUKO

Who could forget Beyonce? And there was Christina Aguilera, Victoria Beckham, Mel B, Cardi B -- If Cardi B can do it, I can do it.

JIMMY PIVENS

Cardi B was branded as a rebel and a shit talker, and she got married. The multimillion-dollar marketing plan we put together for you would brand you as a good girl. The wifey type. I can't do that if you're pregnant.

SUKO

I can dirty it up a bit.

JIMMY PIVENS

What happen to keeping it genuine? Who's the father?

SUKO

A random guy. Nobody anyone would--

JIMMY PIVENS

Word of advice. Next time you get pregnant, do it with an established artist. At least that way there's a story there to help sell records.

(MORE)

JIMMY PIVENS (CONT'D)

(a beat)

I'm not telling you what to do, Suko  
...I'm really not. But there's  
nothing I can do with you if you  
decide to keep your situation. And  
revisiting this next year isn't an  
option.

SUKO

(trying to appear  
unaffected)

I'll do what I have to do, Jimmy.

JIMMY PIVENS

You sure?

SUKO

Yeah, man. All good. I'll take  
care of it.

JIMMY PIVENS

That's good to hear. Wonderful.  
Call your lawyer and tell him you  
need just a little more time. A few  
weeks?

SUKO

2 or 3 days.

JIMMY PIVENS

Once you've taken care of it we can  
sign that paperwork and launch what  
I believe will be an amazing career.

INT. CYPHA'S CAR -- DAY

Suko is staring forward -- conflicted and hurt. Cypha feels  
terrible but doesn't know the right thing to say.

SUKO

I can go through the screening and  
counseling process alone, but I need  
you there for the procedure.

CYPHA

Suko, we can always shop for another  
deal after the baby is born.

Suko cuts her eyes at him.

CYPHA (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll be there.

INT. VONYA'S PATROL CAR -- DAY

Vonya's story picks up here. She and Brandon are parked in a busy shopping area, behind another patrol car. Brandon is on the passenger side. He's upset and won't look her way -- his eyes glaring forward.

BRANDON

But you don't love him.

VONYA

I love my family. I love my home and the life it provides for my kids.

BRANDON

Your kids are terrified of him and even more afraid of what he might do to you one day. They are fucked, Vonya. Scarred for life. You don't do something, it becomes your fault not his.

VONYA

And the fruit of adultery is gonna make it all better? You're out of your mind, Brandon. Don't you ever try to tell me what I should or should not do?

She can see that her words sting but all that matters is that she's strong in her conviction.

BRANDON

Always saw purity in you, Vonya.

VONYA

Ain't no place for purity in survival. All bad will you get killed and all good will kill you faster. You just have to do what you have to do, and I'm getting an abortion.

BRANDON

You knew you were pregnant for weeks. You're full of shit.

(not looking her way)

You call me and I'll get you and your kids out of that house. I'll take care of you, them and our baby. And I promise you, that man will never put his hands on any of you again. But until you make that call, ...leave me the hell alone.

He leaves -- getting in the patrol car up ahead. Sam gets in with her -- puzzled as Brandon drives away.



INT. ORISA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM -- DAY

Orisa's story picks up here. She's standing there, staring at her reflection -- feeling strong. Confident. Not a 100% but well on her way.

Michael enters. Not sure what to do. She gives a submissive nod and he comes close, hugs her from behind -- kissing her on the cheek. The two look into the mirror and smile.

INT. MAYOR WALLACE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Orisa is finally having her meeting with MAYOR SARAH WALLACE. They sit across from each other with hopes of creating a mutually beneficial relationship.

ORISA

Mayor Wallace, my apologies for our meeting having to be pushed back three weeks.

MAYOR WALLACE

That is not a problem, Orisa. I'm deeply sorry for what you've been through. Such a tragedy.

ORISA

Thank you. The good news is, I'm back in the saddle. I'll get right to the point. As you well know, my campaign starts a month from today. There's value in having you in my foxhole. That being said, I'm asking if I can count on your endorsement.

Aashi is seated not far away, where she receives a text message from her husband: *'We received a notice of default today. What's going on? Why aren't you returning my calls?'*

Meanwhile:

MAYOR WALLACE

Hemmingway, you're an idealistic firecracker, and I admire that. You could win this easily if you had the right friends in your corner. My friends. Do that and you'll have my full support.

ORISA

You mean the owners of a flourishing privatised prison system where, ironically, African Americans, who by the way are incarcerated 5 times the rate of whites, represent 33% of  
(MORE)

ORISA (CONT'D)  
its prison population? Those friends?  
Or the ones who finance 50 million  
abortions a year in this country?  
I'll pass.

MAYOR WALLACE  
Good luck. Your biggest challenge  
will be your fantastic notion that  
politics is for the people.

ORISA  
Good day, Mayor Wallace.

A TRACKING SHOT follows as Orisa and Aashi exit the office --

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

They continue through the building to the elevators.

ORISA  
Is the car out front?

AASHI  
You fired the driver after the  
incident, remember?

ORISA  
Of course I fired him. He leaked  
the rape to the press. I know he  
did. He's the only one who knew.

AASHI  
I'm not questioning your decisions.  
You've just been a little forgetful  
lately.

ORISA  
I'll drive myself around. Don't  
want anyone in my car but me.

The elevator arrives and they enter --

INT. ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

Aashi is stunned by what she'd heard. At the risk of getting  
fired, she decides to question Orisa.

AASHI  
You really were raped?

ORISA  
Yes and I'm pregnant.

AASHI  
Oh my God! What are you gonna do?

ORISA

(annoyed/sarcastic)

I'm gonna have my husband father the child of the man who violated his wife.

(a beat)

I need you to make arrangements ASAP. Find a clinic located somewhere under the radar whose managing staff is willing and able to take care of this surreptitiously.

AASHI

Of course. Does Michael know?

ORISA

Michael doesn't know anything.

INT. MANHATTAN RESTAURANT -- DAY

Uncomfortable and suffering from guilt, Aashi hands Geena an envelope under the table.

AASHI

And you swear to me that your people had nothing to do with what happened to her?

GEENA

Politics is a filthy business, but we're not animals, Aashi.

(finished reading  
docs from envelop)

Okay. We're good.

Geena hands over an envelope filled with cash, which is reluctantly taken as Aashi stands -- the waiter placing food.

GEENA (CONT'D)

You're not gonna enjoy this meal with me?

AASHI

I can't. It amazes me that you can.

Aashi walks off and exits the restaurant.

INT. ST. FRANCIS PLANNING CENTER - RECEPTION -- DAY

Suko's story picks up here. She enters, going straight to the reception's desk.

INT. ST. FRANCIS PLANNING CENTER - EXAMINATION ROOM -- DAY

Suko laying there, looking at the ceiling as a nurse does an ultrasound while purposely blocking the monitor, giving her no opportunity to see the fetus.

NURSE

Looks like you're in your second trimester.

Suko turns her head, not wanting to know or hear anything.

INT. ST. FRANCIS PLANNING CENTER - COUNSELOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Suko waits patiently while looking at the faces of the others, surprised to see they are women of all ages. ANNA, one of the clinic's counselors, comes from a closed door.

ANNA

Etsuko Mills?

Suko follows her in.

INT. ST. FRANCIS PLANNING CENTER - COUNSELOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Anna is kind and sympathetic while informing Suko about her options.

ANNA

So we've discussed the three options of your unplanned pregnancy. First, you continuing with the pregnancy, second, adoption and third is the termination. And you are sure you want to go with the third option?

SUKO

(nervous and shameful)  
Yes. I wanna do it.

ANNA

This is your final decision?

SUKO

Yes.

ANNA

Okay so I want to remind you that you can stop this process at anytime, even on the day of the procedure. You are in control at all times.

SUKO

Anna, are we almost done?  
(MORE)

SUKO (CONT'D)

I have a recording session tonight  
and I need to rest.

ANNA

(seeing the conflict  
in Suko)

You're a performer?

SUKO

Yes.

ANNA

You're scheduled for tomorrow  
afternoon at 3:30 pm. I just need  
you to sign this Consent to Treatment  
and you're all set.

INT. LAUREN'S OFFICE/LAUREN'S CORPORATE LOBBYING FIRM-- DAY

Lauren's story picks up here. She's at her desk in the middle  
of a phone call when her smartphone rings. It's Geena.

LAUREN

Congressman Meeks, would you mind  
terribly if we cut our call a little  
short? I have a call coming in from  
a client whose interests are in line  
with a few of your passions. I'd  
like to take advantage of this  
opportunity to possibly put them in  
touch with your staff. -- Much  
appreciated. Thank you kindly,  
Congressman.

(hangs up desk phone  
and answers smartphone)

Yes, Geena?

GEENA (ON THE PHONE)

I have good news but you'll need to  
move fast.

LAUREN

Let's hear it.

GEENA (ON THE PHONE)

Orisa Hemmingway is pregnant by the  
rapist and she's scheduled to  
terminate it tomorrow afternoon.

LAUREN

That's good news.

GEENA (ON THE PHONE)

It'll be at St. Francis Planning  
Center, a somewhat camouflaged clinic  
(MORE)

GEENA (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)  
located in a low income section of  
Brooklyn that's in the beginning  
stages of gentrification. It's  
perfect. The staff will be using  
the backdoor delivery entrances to  
ensure she stays out of public view.

LAUREN  
Yes it is perfect. I want unruly  
protesters and every major news  
channel on the property. I want her  
ambushed.

Just then Lauren sees Celine coming her way, slowed by staff  
members stopping her to say hello. This pisses Lauren off.

LAUREN (CONT'D)  
One second, Geena.  
(picks up desk phone --  
to Assistant)  
Why wasn't I informed that my wife  
was here?

ASSISTANT (ON THE PHONE)  
Oh yeah. She wanted to surprise  
you.

LAUREN  
Do that again and you're fired.

ASSISTANT (ON THE PHONE)  
Understood. I'm deeply sorry, Lauren.

Lauren hangs up just as Celine enters the office. She motions  
for Celine to give her a second to wrap up her call.  
Meanwhile Celine takes those same brochures from her bag (in  
vitro fertilization and third party pregnancies) -- murmuring,  
*"have you looked at these yet?"* Lauren's gestured answer is  
'no' as she continues with Geena.

LAUREN  
Geena, I need you to follow through  
with those details. It's imperative  
that we knock this one out of the  
park. Talk to you later.

GEENA (ON THE PHONE)  
Bye. I'll call you when it's all  
setup.

LAUREN  
And Geena? Tell Alex to never doubt  
me again.

Lauren hangs up and gives her attention to Celine --

LAUREN (CONT'D)

This is a surprise. You know how I feel about you being in this place.

CELINE

I do and I'm sorry.

LAUREN

No you're not, Celine. If you were, you wouldn't be here.

CELINE

It's been impossible to get a moment with you, Lauren. You're either working or sleeping. Desperate measures were needed.

Celine circles around the desk to endure a frigid hug.

CELINE (CONT'D)

I'm leaving as soon as you give me an answer. --

(placing the brochure  
in front of her)

I need to know. Are you're in or are you out? I believe this is the answer to your depression. I believe this will relieve you of whatever it is you're going through. ...Family.

LAUREN

(after several beats)

I'm in.

CELINE

(a big hug)

I love you. Have an amazing day. I love you, I love you, I love you.

(leaving--)

See you on the sofa.

Lauren watches from her desk, until Celine exits the firm's main doors. A tear falls. She wipes it away quickly.

INT. MUSIC RECORDING STUDIO -- NIGHT

Suko's story picks up here. She's sitting in the vocal booth with her eyes closed, listening as a hot track blasts through her headphones. The chorus comes in. It's her voice. Sounds like a hit. The music stops.

CYPHA (O.S.)

Suko, we gonna take five and burn some trees. You go ahead and vibe.

REVEAL: Cypha, producers and an engineer are at the boards.

SUKO

Ok cool.

CYPHA

Call me if you need me.

Cypha turns to exit behind the others. Just as the last one leaves Suko calls him back.

CYPHA (CONT'D)

Sup?

SUKO

Sure it was a good idea to do this on your own dime?

CYPHA

Absolutely. Besides, I want you to know that it don't have to be all about Atlantic Records, ...in case you change your mind about tomorrow. Proud of you, yo. You spittin some real fire in there.

Just as Cypha leaves, camera pans, bringing Iris into frame. She's in the vocal booth with Suko -- on the floor playing.

Meanwhile: Suko starts looking over the lyrics to her song, which are about her pregnancy -- reading them aloud from her phone --

SUKO

Body. Body of a woman or body of her child, whether a baby girl or a baby boy; no two bodies are the same. God's precious design to be prized and never shamed. Whether conceived from sweetness or born from--

IRIS

(cutting Suko off)

Mommy, why do you keep saying that over and over again? Geesh!

SUKO

They're the lyrics to the song we're making. It's a verse.

IRIS

A verse?

SUKO

Yep. You okay?

IRIS

I am amazing!



INT. MICHAEL'S REAL ESTATE OFFICE -- NIGHT

Orisa's story picks up here. Michael is at his desk still working, with the rest of his office empty and in darkness. He notices the time and calls Orisa.

MICHAEL

Hey, baby. Can you have the driver pick the kids up from your mother's?

ORISA (ON THE PHONE)

There is no driver.

MICHAEL

Right. I forgot. I'm stuck at the office for at least 2 more hours.

ORISA (ON THE PHONE)

Michael, it's after 8.

MICHAEL

I know. I'm really sorry.

ORISA (ON THE PHONE)

I'm pretty much done here. I'll get them.

MICHAEL

You sure?

ORISA (ON THE PHONE)

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Love you.

EXT. ORISA'S PARENT'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Queens, NY. We see Orisa putting the kids in the SUV as her parents wave goodbye from the lawn. She drives off.

INT. VONYA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Vonya's story picks up here. She and family are having dinner. The only sound heard is the clanging of silverware. We see her husband for the first time. An African American middle aged man who looks overwhelmingly intimidating -- staring cold at everyone. The children are too afraid to talk. Vonya is overly cautious about everything.

INT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Brandon is in civilian clothes with his feet up, watching the game while eating takeout. His phone rings. It's Vonya.

When he answers all he can hear is chaos and mayhem.

BRANDON  
Vonya, what's wrong?!

INT. VONYA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

TIGHT ON VONYA: in her background we see her husband SWINGING wildly, BEATING their son, their other son and daughter are SCREAMING and the house is turned upside down. Meanwhile Vonya is on the phone with her face BLOODIED and BRUISED -- pleading for help --

VONYA  
Brandon, come get us! I can't do  
this anymore!

EXT. BRANDON'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Brandon jumps in his civilian car and takes off -- SPEEDING.

WE GO BACK TO ORISA --

INT./EXT. ORISA'S SUV / TRAFFIC -- NIGHT

Orisa drives with Jaden and Naturi listening to music. She notices a car driving wildly, trying to get close to her. She can see a man on the passenger side with a professional camera -- trying to get a picture of her.

ORISA  
Jesus Christ.

JADEN  
What's wrong, Ma?

ORISA  
That car.

JADEN  
(joking)  
TMZ?!

ORISA  
You wish. Probably bloggers.  
Reporters don't behave that way.

The car comes dangerously close -- SWERVING.

ORISA (CONT'D)  
Whoa! Are you crazy?!

WE GO BACK TO BRANDON --

He's on the same expressway, coming from the opposite direction, SPEEDING, SWERVING and SCREECHING; trying desperately to get to Vonya before it's too late.

WE GO BACK TO ORISA --

The blogger loses control, sideswiping Orisa, causing her SUV to jump the rail and go into oncoming traffic, where just then -- Brandon changes lanes CRASHING head on into her -- both vehicles TUMBLING and ROLLING down the bank of the road, stopping CAPSIZED about 100 yards apart. --

INT./EXT. ORISA'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

Orisa sees Jaden unconscious and Naturi screaming from her overturned car-seat. Flames suddenly ignite all around them. She acts fast -- freeing Jaden, DRAGGING him out to safety. She goes back in, CLIMBING into the back seat, trying to get Naturi free as she hangs screaming.

NATURI

Mommy help me! Help me!

Orisa can't get her loose and the flames are starting to consume the SUV.

ORISA

It's coming loose, Honey!

Still unable to free her, Orisa cries out in a furious rage. The fire is swallowing everything. There's no time. Suddenly someone pulls Orisa out. It's Brandon, trying to save her life. She KICKS and PUNCHES her way out of Brandon's clutches and goes back inside. Naturi begs, with utter terror in her eyes -- and still Orisa cannot free her.

NATURI

Mommy, please don't let me burn! I want my body! Save my body!

This moment somehow heals Orisa of all the damages done when raped. The value of life becomes redefined. It's almost spiritual. No way in hell will she get an abortion! She reaches, GRABBING the strap that's restraining Naturi -- PULLING with both hands. Suddenly a third hand and then a forth hand GRABS the same strap. It's Brandon, and together they pull and pull -- TEARING Naturi free.

Orisa lays on the ground at a safe distance from the burning SUV, holding her children, crying grateful tears -- Brandon laying beside them, making sure they are all safe.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. VONYA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Shortly after the car accident. Brandon standing there, bruised with bloody hands and covered in soot. He has been ringing the doorbell. Vonya finally opens the door. She wears a look of hopelessness.

Behind her -- the aftermath of domestic abuse and the daunting eyes of her children looking back.

She shakes her head 'no' and gently closes the door in Brandon's face, leaving him standing out there.

INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Today is THURSDAY. The day the stories of all our characters converge.

Here Brody, Baby Boy, Trey, Raymond and Artie stand outside Alicia's bedroom door.

BRODY

What the hell is taking him so long?

BABY BOY

It's midday, man. He's praying.

Saleem suddenly opens the door. He has a fresh haircut and wears the suit jacket and white shirt Brody bought him, along with tattered jeans and bright colored sneakers.

BRODY

What you doin', bro?

SALEEM

Being me, brother.

BRODY

This situation could change your family's life forever, and going like that?

Saleem feels unbeatable now that he and Alicia are on the same page about the baby. She comes from behind -- handing him a kufi. The crew sighs and complains in a laughable way as he puts it on with pride. We realize he's Muslim.

SALEEM

Gotta be me.

He grabs his bike and backpack. Alicia is in severe pain, pretending to be okay -- says nothing as he leaves.

INT. VONYA'S PATROL CAR IN TRAFFIC -- DAY

Vonya has no conversation -- embarrassed about the bruises her makeup fails to mask -- conflict written on her face.

SAM

You're not much of a talker are you?  
Jacobs, it would be nice if you would  
loosen up a little bit. Nobody wants  
to do 8 hour shifts with a mute.

INT. FACEBOOK CORPORATE OFFICE -- DAY

We think we're seeing Suko's Instagram page again, but moments in we realize Saleem is using the video from her post as part of a presentation that demonstrates the functionality of his MyVerse application. A greater reveal let's us know that we're in a conference room with Facebook executives and Saleem's team of attorneys, which includes Carl from the bar scene. And while his inflections are the vocal patterns of a Brooklyn urbanite, Saleem is shockingly articulate and professional --

SALEEM

--For example. This artist could sell songs and concert tickets directly to her followers, pay taxes, give directions and ship branded merchandise, all with the click of a fan. She can target a small town in Cincinnati or the entire globe. No need for record deals. MyVerse proprietary software is Instagram and Quickbooks meets Amazon and Ticketmaster. With MyVerse, subscribers will have the ability to monetize their profiles like never before. Literally build their own Facebook and draw advertisers directly to them. That's not good for you. But it could be, if the MyVerse API could plug into Facebook, which it can. I designed it to. Your bottom line will increase considerably. Why? Because while Facebook would continue capitalizing from ads, it would no longer be responsible for the management and operations of those ads. Secondly, with MyVerse your billion plus subscribers would be willing to pay you. Why is that? Because they would become your partners. We could--

## FACEBOOK EXECUTIVE

Stop. You're embarrassing us. We've been trying to figure that out for years. You're a genius, Mr. Wise, and yes we want to do business. We've been sitting on the simpler prototype that Carl sent us for month ago ...trying to determine what would be an appropriate offer. This is what we've come up with.

He slides a figure over to Carl. Carl and his partners are pleased. Carl slides the figure over to Saleem.

INSERT: \$950,000,000.

Saleem runs to the door.

## CARL

Whoa! What are you doing?!

## SALEEM

Do the deal, Carl! Do the deal!

Saleem takes off as everyone shakes hands -- big smiles.

## INT. ALICIA'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Saleem bursts through the door, pumped with excitement -- running pass everyone -- straight into Alicia's bedroom. She's not there.

## SALEEM

Where's Alicia?

## BRODY

She had one of those pain attacks again. She wouldn't let us help her. She cursed us out and went to the hospital on her own.

## BABY BOY

That's why we sitting here with these long faces.

Saleem knows where she went. He's terrified. Sees her smartphone on the bed -- goes through her history and finds St. Francis Planning Center as her last search and call. It was 2 hours ago. He runs back out of the door.

## EXT. STREET OPPOSITE OF ST. FRANCIS PLANNING CENTER -- DAY

CLOSE UP OF SUKO: as she gets out of her parked car, surprised to see the mob of protesters and reporters in front of the abortion clinic. She calls Cypha.

SUKO

Hey, I'm here and there's like a million protesters and news reporters everywhere.

CYPHA (ON THE PHONE)

That's crazy. Just go inside. I'm almost there.

SUKO

What if someone video records me walking in?

CYPHA (ON THE PHONE)

You're not famous yet, Suko. That's not gonna happen.

Suko hangs up and looks the other way -- seeing a gift shop next door to an exotic flower shop.

SUKO

Baby?

A full shot reveals Iris standing beside her.

IRIS

Yes, Mommy?

SUKO

Cypha's running late and I don't want you bored while Mommy is away talking to the nice man. Let's get you something to play with.

Iris points to the flower shop --

IRIS

I'd rather get something from there. I want a flower.

INT. EXOTIC FLOWER SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

They walk about, looking at various species of flower plants. The purple petals of a BEARDED IRIS catches Iris' eye.

IRIS

I want this one, Mommy.

SUKO

(reads the tag)  
Iris plant. Same name as yours.

WE GO BACK TO SALEEM --

EXT. BROOKLYN TRAFFIC -- DAY

Saleem is riding his bike as fast as he can, cutting off traffic, nearly causing accidents.

WE GO BACK TO SUKO --

INT. ST. FRANCIS PLANNING CENTER -- DAY

Suko enters, headed for the receptionist desk, while sending Iris to the waiting area where she stands in her seat, holding the IRIS FLOWER towards the window -- into the sun's rays.

Several women are working in the reception area, but the face of the one Suko goes to is partially hidden behind a computer monitor.

SUKO

Afternoon. My name is Etsuko Mills.  
I'm scheduled for a procedure today.

The woman looks up, revealing her face to us. It's Carol. She stares a beat. The silence makes Suko uncomfortable.

SUKO (CONT'D)

I was here yesterday. I believe I spoke to that woman over there.

Carol leans close, so others can't hear her --

CAROL

What if I told you there were other options?

SUKO

Excuse me?

CAROL

Programs and resources.

SUKO

I've already gone through that process, Ms. I'm scheduled to go in in 20 minutes.

CAROL

Your baby doesn't have to die today. The good lord gave me this job so I can save lives like the precious one that's inside of you, depending on you --

(touching Suko's hand)

Loving you.



SUKO

(pulls away - upset)  
You're not suppose to do that! You're  
not suppose to say things like that!  
Where's your supervisor?!

CAROL

Wait, wait. I'm sorry. ...I just  
spoke what God put on my heart to  
say. I usually get the girls  
information and call them anonymously  
from home, but my spirit told me to  
say something to you in this moment.  
I know that sounds crazy but, he put  
me here to do His work. ...I can't  
lose this job. Please.

EXT. ST. FRANCIS PLANNING CENTER -- DAY

Just outside, as Suko and Carol talk, Saleem arrives, leaping  
off of his bike -- PUSHING his way through the barricade of  
protesters and news crews -- RAMS through the entrance doors --

INT. WAITING AREA -- CONTINUOUS

TIGHT ON IRIS: She's startled as --

SLAM! Saleem RAMS his way through the door.

We have returned to that moment in our opening scene, only  
this time we experience it from Saleem's point of view,  
realizing that he was that frantic AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN.

TRACKING SHOT: We follow him as we relive this tragedy.

SALEEM

ALICIA! ALICIA! Where's she!  
Alicia?!

A security guard stops him -- his hand on the man's shoulder.

SECURITY GUARD

Sir, you have to calm down--

SALEEM

(pushing the guard)  
Don't fucking touch me!  
(punching - knocking  
him out cold)  
Don't you fucking touch me!  
(takes off down the  
corridor)  
ALICIA! ...ALICIA!

Background: Iris is alone and afraid. Suko and Carol are in  
disbelief at the desk across the room.

Foreground: we follow Saleem down the corridor as he calls Alicia's name -- KICKING in door after door -- He finds her!

INT. CORRIDOR / PROCEDURE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

SALEEM  
ALICIA! ...ALICIA! --

Saleem's eyes DASHING everywhere -- the HAZARD SIGN -- THE BIN FOR HUMAN WASTE -- Alicia SEDATED -- the doctor between her legs -- the surgical tools in his hand, clamped on the upper torso of a bloody fetus -- its other half pooled between Alicia's legs.

Saleem COLLAPSES to his knees -- a bloodcurdling scream BELLOWING out of him --

SALEEM (CONT'D)  
NOOO!!!!  
(uncontrollable weeping)  
Alicia, no!!!

WE GO BACK TO THE WAITING AREA --

INT. THE WAITING AREA -- CONTINUOUS

Mayhem is erupting outside the window. The protesters have been told what happened. Vonya, her third NEW PARTNER, and other officers are rushing in. Reporters and many protesters follow, bringing the chaos inside. We stay with Suko and Carol as Vonya CROSSES CAMERA -- running to arrest Saleem.

Iris comes into focus. Her lips TREMBLING. Her big eyes WELLING UP. Suko runs to her. And in the midst of pandemonium, some give odd looks as Suko consoles Iris --

SUKO  
It's okay. It's okay. Mommy's right here. I'm right here, Iris. Somebody did something bad back there but you're safe here with me.

IRIS  
Are you still gonna go back there, Mommy?

SUKO  
What did you say?

Iris wipes her tears, trying to compose herself --

IRIS  
Are you still gonna do it?  
(touching Suko's stomach)  
...Do to her what you did to me?

Rattled with sudden grief, Suko struggles to keep it together. At the verge of a mental breakdown, something comes over her. She calms -- takes Iris' hand -- now heading for the entranceway, where mobs are still rushing in --

SUKO

No, baby. Let's get out of here. --

EXT. ENTRANCEWAY/CURB -- CONTINUOUS

-- Suko and Iris BRUSH pass Zoe, who has just made eye contact with Carol inside. And as we follow Suko and Iris through the mass of protesters Zoe remains in the entranceway, frozen with fear and confusion, having just learned where her mother works as Carol's intuition tells her, her 13-year old daughter is pregnant.

AT THE CURB: Suko lets go of Iris' hand to circle around to the driver's side of her car -- gets in -- opens the passenger side --

SUKO

C'mon, let's go.

IRIS

(worm smile - she  
won't come)

You're okay now, Mommy. You don't  
need me anymore.

Strangely, Suko closes the door. And as if knowing this is the right thing to do, she begins slowly driving away, down a breathtakingly beautiful path formed by the PURPLE petals of the JACARANDA TREES that line either side; filling the sheltering branches above her and blanketing the brownstone houses beside her. Through her rear window, we can see Iris in the center of the street, waving goodbye as a sequence of events FLASH FORWARD, creating a MONTAGE --

INT. ZOE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

MONTAGE: Charles is being arrested, lead out in handcuffs by NYPD. Carol is being restrained, crying angry tears.

EXT. VONYA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

CONTINUED MONTAGE: Vonya's husband, severely beaten, watches as Brandon puts Vonya and her kids in his car and drive away.

INT. BROOKLYN COURT HOUSE -- DAY

CONTINUED MONTAGE: Vonya is now 7 months pregnant. She has her children with her -- she and Brandon are getting married.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- DAY

NYPD officers are trying to calm Sam down, who's in a panicked state. Camera pans to -- Brody, dead in the driver's seat of his car with bullet holes in his chest and face. He was shot and killed by Sam at a traffic stop. And while this was clearly an accident, it seems karma had a job to do.

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - DEN -- DAY

CONTINUED MONTAGE: Celine enters -- she drops her food and dials 911. The act that caused Lauren's secret pregnancy and the coming wrath that will strip Celine of everything was too much to bear. Lauren has committed suicide -- laying dead on the sofa with her wrist slashed. In front of her, the TV airs Orisa at a public hearing. --

INT. PUBLIC HEARING -- DAY

CONTINUED MONTAGE: We enter in the middle of an uproar. Cameras FLASHING. Reporters at ever corner, and Orisa in the hot seat. It's a madhouse.

A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE

Please! Quiet please?

(to Orisa)

Mrs. Hemmingway, would you mind repeating that, please? I'm not sure if I heard you correctly.

ORISA

I said, yes, as scheduled, I will be launching my campaign for New York State Senate. Yes I was raped on the night in question. Yes I am pregnant as a result. And yes ...I'm having this baby.

Our montage ends as the room erupts even more so. We return --

INT. SUKO'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

-- Our view through the rear window continues. Iris, the spirit of the child Suko aborted 5 years ago, is still there. Becoming ever more distant. Smiling. Waving goodbye while fading, until she disappears.

Suko sighs. The passing shadows of the purple trees, seemingly washing her clean as she cries happy tears -- caressing her stomach, as if to say hello to her baby.

FADE TO BLACK:

Written by Kevin K Greene