

CONCRETE BEACH

Written by

Toy Styles

Original Screenplay

P.O. Box 486
Owings Mills, MD 21117
202 215-6575

EXT. BALTIMORE - EAST - AFTERNOON - ESTABLISHING

An aerial view of an ABANDONED and DESERTED STREET lined with multi-colored BOARDED UP ROW HOMES.

Slightly to the right, more of the same. Except...one VAST RED BRICK BUILDING - alive with PLAYING CHILDREN.

A FOSSIL COLORED SPRAWLING STOOP sits at the mouth of the building and lowers onto the block like a tongue.

A large red ball flies between TWO YOUNG BOYS.

Closer...THREE LITTLE GIRLS TWERK to RAP MUSIC in the middle of the street, courtesy of a nearby car radio.

Two WHITE VAN'S marked FRANK'S PLUMBING sit some feet away from the steps. THREE PLUMBERS study two BLACK LARGE PIPES that are connected to the building.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
I asked mama one day what sand
looks like...

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BIRDIE'S WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

BIRDIE, 16, CURIOUS, UNKEPT but ATTRACTIVE, peeks from behind a metal screen window, littered with holes.

She shoves a GREY MOVING QUILT hanging overhead away, which acts as a curtain.

TEARS in her eyes. Her hair in two PONYTAILS. IMMATURE for her age.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
...she said to shut up. And that it
ain't good for nothing 'cept people
walking. Most with nowhere to go.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BIRDIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SOME DARKNESS. Light spills inside from the grimy window.

Birdie's back toward the room, her focus outside. A SOILED, HOLEY, MEN'S WHITE T-SHIRT covers her body and two BONY yellow legs hold up her frame.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
But did I tell you that mama lies?

Birdie pushes the quilt further.

MORE LIGHT.

CRUD.

PILES OF CLOTHING. PILES OF TRASH. PILES OF MISERY.

TWO CLUTTERED TWIN BEDS. One holding OLIVE, 14, DESTITUTE, but HOPEFUL. A red PLAID MEN'S SHIRT drowns her physique. Brown legs swing under her body.

OLIVE
Is he out there?

Birdie rotates her head QUICKLY.

BIRDIE
(Extremely excited)
You're...you're up!

OLIVE
Just needed a little sleep that's all.

Birdie props open the quilt with a FULL BLACK TRASH BAG, preventing it from covering the pane.

Running, she flops on the opposite bed. It's littered with yellowing old paperback BOOKS. Including a tattered copy of PIPPI LONGSTOCKING.

The girls are face to face.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
(Playfully)
Fur burger.

BIRDIE
(Contemplating)
Miss Flappy.

OLIVE
Hair pie.

BIRDIE
(Giggling)
Pink canoe.

OLIVE
Juice box.

BIRDIE
No! You can't say the ones we heard already.

Olive scratches her uncombed hair.

OLIVE
But we heard all of 'em. Plus I
made that one up.
(Looks upward)
Wait...I think.

BIRDIE
Nah, when Uncle David came by to
see 'bout mama he said...
(Clears throat)
'Girl, that juice box stay wet'!

OLIVE
I guess but--

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

A WHITE WIND UP ALARM CLOCK sounds off for attention. It's
1:00 PM.

Olive SWIFTLY BURROWS under a filthy white sheet.

Birdie hops up and runs out the room. Bare feet thump against
the hardwood floors.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mostly DARKNESS.

Birdie rushes over to the window. Pulls on the blind's
tassel, flooding the space with light.

Empty liquor bottles. Trash bags. Dirty clothes. Stacks of
OLD NEWSPAPERS line the wall.

A chipped living room wooden table. A DUSTY GOLD COMPACT
MIRROR on top.

A few mismatched chairs and a worn out brown sofa which holds
PAM, 39, PESSIMISTIC and DRUG ADDICTED. Eyes closed. Mouth
open. A RUBBER TOURNIQUET hangs from her bicep.

Birdie takes a quick look at her. Runs to the next room.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

BLACKNESS. Birdie pulls on a TASSEL. Light flows inside.

A tiny kitchen. A yellow refrigerator where colorful MAGNETIC
LETTERS spell KOM TILLBAKA TILL MIG.

A small black table pushed against the wall. A GRUNGY stove and tattered wooden cabinets.

Birdie grabs a loaf of molded bread from atop the fridge and removes two slices.

She opens the broiler section to the stove, tosses them inside and turns on the oven.

Above, she opens a cabinet, grabs a white saucer, a jar of peanut butter and ONE PILL BOTTLE.

She places the items on the table, mopes toward the window and gazes outside. Almost in a trance.

PAM (O.S.)
(Groaning)
Birdie...where...what...

Birdie's body TENSES.

She turns off the stove, grabs the toast from the broiler, and places them on the plate.

Next comes peanut butter, which she smooths haphazardly on the bread, before dropping the slices to the saucer.

PAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Birdie...my medicine! What's taking
you...where are you?

BIRDIE
Coming, mama!

Birdie grabs the pill bottle and hustles out of the kitchen.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pam is HUNGOVER.

A vodka bottle with *just enough* sits in the palm of her hand.

Birdie places the saucer on Pam's lap and hands her the PILL BOTTLE.

Pam twists off the cap, dumps the last tablet into her hand and flings the EMPTY pill bottle across the room.

Tossing the pill into her mouth she downs it with vodka.

PAM
You break anything in my kitchen?

She grabs the toast and chews sloppily.

Birdie shakes her head.

Pam wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

PAM (CONT'D)
Yeah, well, you still late.

BIRDIE
(Nods)
Sorry.

Pam's focus alternates between Birdie and the toast.

PAM
You hate me...I know you do. Be
glad I'm still here. Ain't no
surviving this world without your
mama.

Pam looks down. Breathes deeply.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
Mama almost died five times that I
can count. Squiggling on the living
room floor. All wet and soggy.
(Beat)
But I never worry. Usually a pill
or Uncle David lying on top of her
makes the pain go away.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK!

She points at Birdie and glares.

Pam rises and shuffles toward the door.

CHILDREN'S VOICES grow louder off screen and Birdie is drawn
to the living room window.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
I'm sorry to wake you but--

PAM (O.S.)
What you want, Jackie?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
I think you already know.

PAM (O.S.)
(Irritated)
That's the sewage. They fixing it
right? So wait and relax!

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Ain't no sewage, girl. Take out
your trash. It still smells like a
bag of balls in your--

A DOOR SLAMS.

Pam approaches Birdie from behind. Arms folded across her chest.

PAM
I shoulda never let you start
looking out that window.

Birdie turns around.

PAM (CONT'D)
You don't know how to act.

BIRDIE
Sorry, mama.

PAM
Ain't nothing to see out in the
world but trouble and boys.
(Beat)
And you can't handle neither.

Birdie lowers her head.

PAM (CONT'D)
You know if you get kissed on you
get pregnant right? A gut full of
baby. That's what you want?

Pam walks to the sofa and flops down.

PAM (CONT'D)
(Sullen)
And I ain't...I ain't...taking care
of no...
(Beat)
I can't lose no more...

Pam knocks the saucer to the floor, downs the vodka and weeps.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
Mama gets sad a lot. Most times I
don't know what to do. So I don't
do nothing.

PAM
I'm doing good by keeping you
inside. Baltimore's full of devils.

Pam's eyes close.

PAM (CONT'D)
Leave me be.

Birdie walks away. Slowly.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
Mama says everything's the devil.
Kissing is the devil. Playing is
the devil. Even watching movies is
the devil. So she never lets us do
nothing 'cept read.

Birdie walks toward the back room.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
But my heart be burning inside.
It's like, I gotta see what's out
there for myself.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Pam sits on a sofa. Left leg jumping. Sole slapping
repeatedly against the floor.

A BATTERY OPERATING RADIO sits on the table blasting Minnie
Ripperton's 'Lovin' U'.

A PILL BOTTLE sits on the table. Along with three WIDE
CANDLES, providing the room with just enough light. The outer
limits faded like a vignette.

A LOUD KNOCK.

Pam grabs a candle and rushes to the door.

She opens it wide, revealing two DERELICT-LIKE guests in the
hallway.

DAVID, 43, LOUD and MEAN along with LAVERNE, 33, OVERWEIGHT
and DRUG ADDICTED.

Across the hall, JACKIE, 35, NOSEY and SNEAKY, opens her door
and stumbles behind the visitors.

Regaining her composure, Jackie stands behind them like a prison guard, thin RED COLORED LIPS pressed together like the sides of two cymbals. Arms crossed over her body. A purple MUUMUU covers her LARGE FRAME.

JACKIE

The music, Pam? Really?

The guests shake their heads and walk inside.

Pam smiles at Jackie, nods and slams the door.

The door is banged three times. BANG! BANG! BANG!

Pam stomps away.

Joins her friends who are seated on the sofa.

She places the candle on the table.

PAM

Like that little ass radio can
cause that much trouble.

(Beat)

She just be working my nerves. So I
can be as tired as she is. Ugly in
the face. Fat in the hips.

Laverne frowns.

PAM (CONT'D)

I don't mean you, girl. You carry
your pounds well.

DAVID

(Laughs)

(To Pam)

I think she stopped dealing with
that man at the pharmacy. Heard he
wouldn't leave his wife. Maybe she
long overdue if you know what I
mean.

He pumps his hips.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Come to think of it, I am too.

He rubs Pam's leg.

She slaps his hand away.

PAM

Where it at?

David turns down the radio which plays 'Anyone Who Had A Heart' by Luther Vandross.

DAVID
Pills first.

Pam snatches the pill bottle and tosses it in his lap.

PAM
(Anxiously)
Satisfied?

He eyes her suspiciously while twisting off the cap.

DAVID
The last time you sold me scratched
off Tylenol.
(Points at Pam)
I started to lay hands on you.

LAVERNE
Her ass got me too.

Pam sighs and wipes her hand down her face.

She scoots closer toward the edge of the sofa. Her left leg shakes.

David pulls a candle closer and looks inside the bottle.

DAVID
These look 'bout right.

He twists the cap on and stuffs the bottle into his pocket.

He reaches into his other pocket. Hands her a bag of HEROIN.

Pam removes a cookie tin from under the table with all the tools necessary for cooking - a SPOON, COTTON, SYRINGE, LIGHTER and a RUBBER TOURNIQUET.

LAVERNE
(To Pam)
Don't forget...you promised I could
get tapped off that too.

Pam COOKS.

To the LEFT, two sets of eyes peer from behind Birdie's cracked bedroom door.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BIRDIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THREE CANDLES on the dresser.

Birdie and Olive are on hands and knees peeking into the living room.

OLIVE
(Whispering)
I'm hungry.

BIRDIE
Wait 'til mama's asleep.

OLIVE
But what if Uncle David stays all night again?

LOUD BASS MUSIC sends Birdie and Olive running to the window.

Birdie pulls back the quilt and peers outside.

CARTER, 25, ATTRACTIVE, CONFLICTED and a CAREER DRUG DEALER, leans against a BLACK MERCEDES BENZ talking on a CELL PHONE.

Olive, nudges Birdie with her shoulder and grins.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
(Playfully)
Aw, there go your boyfriend.

He waves at them and smiles.

Birdie waves back.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
I love him. I wonder if he got to know me, if he could love me back.

Carter peels himself off his car and walks into the building.

Birdie releases the quilt and Olive follows her to the bed.

Birdie lies down with Olive. They face each other.

BIRDIE
(Playfully)
Panty Puppet.

OLIVE
(Sad)
Coochie.

BIRDIE
Lasagna Lips.

OLIVE
(Sighs)
I don't wanna play no more.

BIRDIE
Close your eyes. I'll wake you when
they leave and make you a sandwich.

OLIVE
Promise?

BIRDIE
No lies to you. Ever.

OLIVE
(Slyly)
He waved. He's so cute.

Birdie hears VIOLENT, INAUDIBLE ARGUING between Pam and Uncle David.

Birdie touches Olive's face.

BIRDIE
Close your eyes.

Olive does.

Birdie does too.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - STREET [DREAM]

A vacant street. Birdie stands in the middle.

Carter walks up to her and extends his hand.

She reaches for him. Their fingers cannot touch.

SUDDENLY the ground sinks where she's standing.

Pam saunters up, stands next to Carter and grins sinisterly,
as Birdie is submerged into the earth.

PAM
(Evilly)
What you gonna do without your
mama?

Pam raises a weapon and aims down at Birdie. She pulls the trigger. BOOM!

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BIRDIE'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Birdie's eyes fly open and she pops up in bed.

Breathing heavily, she turns and sees Olive in her own bed sleeping.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

The ALARM CLOCK rings. Birdie shuts it off. Accidentally knocking it to the floor.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Birdie runs into the living room.

She stops at the vacant sofa.

Slowly she walks toward the kitchen, looking back at the couch repeatedly.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Birdie grabs a LOAF OF BREAD from atop the fridge, removing two slices.

Opening the broiler section to the oven, she tosses them inside and turns it on.

Above the stove, she opens a cabinet, grabs a WHITE SAUCER and then...

PAM (O.S.)
(Angry)
Birdie!

The SAUCER drops and SHATTERS into many pieces.

Her eyes widen, fingertips press against her lips.

PAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Birdie!

Birdie takes two steps forward but hangs in the doorway. She looks down at the shards before walking out...SLOWLY.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Standing in the living room, Birdie's eyes alternate between Pam's room and the front door.

Slowly she walks to the front door, her steps quicken.

Once at the FRONT DOOR her hand hovers over the DOOR KNOB.
She pulls it open.

Looking into the hallway, she hears DEMONIC SCREAMS and
MOANS. She places one foot over the threshold. The hallway
appears to grow larger, darker and then tilts.

Birdie slams it shut and presses her back against the door.
Heavy breathing.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - PAM'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

DARK and GRIM...

Some light enters from a partially open window.

Birdie walks inside where Pam's lying on the bed, on her left
side. Moaning. Shivering. Sweating.

BIRDIE
(Scared)
Sorry... 'bout the...p...plate.

Birdie observes Pam closer.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
You have the sick?

PAM
I think I'm...
(Moans)
This ain't good.

BIRDIE
Is Uncle David coming?

PAM
There's something I need you to do.

Birdie nods and moves to the foot of the bed for a better
listen.

PAM (CONT'D)
Go get my medicine. Outside.

Birdie's eyes widen. She backs away.

PAM (CONT'D)
(Moaning)
Birdie, please, I...can't do it for
myself.

Pam touches her stomach.

BIRDIE
But you said not to leave. You said
I'm safe and the devils--

PAM
I need--

Birdie covers her ears and runs out SCREAMING.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

A very DIRTY BATHROOM.

FILTHY RAGS and TOWELS hang atop a tilted CURTAIN ROD.

BLACK MOLD specks are littered throughout the tile. Almost
hiding the white surfaces underneath.

Birdie sits in a DRY, BLACK RINGED tub. Knees against her
chest, arms wrapped around her legs.

She's crying.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Birdie wipes her tears away ROUGHLY with a fist.

BIRDIE
Go away.

OLIVE (O.S.)
I gotta pee.

BIRDIE
Leave me alone!

Birdie rests her left cheek on her knees. Eyes on the door.

OLIVE (O.S.)
You gotta help mama, Birdie. Or she
may die.
(Beat)
You gotta help me too.

Birdie covers her eyes with her knees.

BIRDIE
What about the...what about the
devils?

Beat.

OLIVE (O.S.)
But that means there has to be
angels too.
(Beat)
Plus...Mama lies. Said so yourself.

Birdie faces the door.

BIRDIE
(Whisper)
I don't wanna go.

OLIVE (O.S.)
But why?

Birdie rests her right cheek on her knees, eyes in the
opposite direction.

OLIVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Why, Birdie?

BIRDIE
Because I'm...I'm scared.

Birdie weeps quietly.

OLIVE (O.S.)
But don't you see? That's why you
gotta go.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP

Lavender sky. Blazing orange sun on the descent.

Fussy traffic. Horns. Music. Noise.

Carter sits on the third to lowest step of the stoop. A
gliding gaze. Left. Right. And then downward to the CELL
PHONE in his hand which showcases a SHINY BLACK PORSCHE.

MELORA, 22, NINE MONTHS PREGNANT, is clutching the hand of a
THREE YEAR OLD GIRL wearing a PINK JACKET with PINK ROSES
throughout. They approach.

He frowns.

MELORA
You gonna be like Xavier? And not
serve me too?

He stuffs his phone into his pocket and looks at the child.

MELORA (CONT'D)
You want this money or not?

He rises and walks off.

She follows.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Carter looks to his left and right. Melora stands in front of him, the Three Year Old Girl along for the ride.

He extends his hand, palm toward the sky. She slams a crumpled green heap down.

He stretches it open. A fifty dollar bill.

He looks at the Three Year Old and enters his pocket but hesitates on the elevation.

MELORA
She's my problem. Not yours.

He pulls out a BAGGY, slaps it into her hand and bops away.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - LATER

The sky is MIDNIGHT BLUE.

Carter, seated on the third lowest step, raises a cigarette toward his lips. It glows volcanic orange.

SUDDENLY, out the corner of his eye, the Three Year Old Girl appears. Alone. Walking toward the curb.

He rises. Looks in the direction she exited.

The child moves closer to the street. Toward HECTIC TRAFFIC.

He rushes toward her and then...SCREECHING. HORNS. CRASH.

The Three Year Old and a bike meet in a violent way.

The cyclist, a woman, is knocked out after running into the child and lands on the hood of a moving van.

BALTIMORE CITY - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Carter runs toward the mischance. He lifts the child, her body a collage of PINK and CRIMSON RED.

His eyes widen. Searching. Confused. His view falls on Melora, across the way, leaning against the wall. A NEEDLE in her arm.

CARTER
(To anyone)
Help! HELPPPPPPP!

EXT. JOHN HOPKINS HOSPITAL - BENCH - NIGHT - LATER

Passing people. Busy people. Worried people.

Carter sits on a BENCH, hands BLOODIED, eyes glazed over.

A BLACK HONDA pulls across from him in the parking lot. Yellow beaming light shines against his face and then stops.

PORSHA KNIGHT, 25, BEAUTIFUL, LOVING but SICK OF IT ALL, eases out of the car and walks up to him.

Sitting next to him, she scoots closer, looks at him once and then outward.

PORSHA
(Deep breath)
Was here earlier. The little girl's
in I.C.U.

She looks away.

PORSHA (CONT'D)
The woman on the bike...I think she
died.

He stands and walks a few feet away. His back in her direction. Body trembling. His rage *needs* a release.

PORSHA (CONT'D)
Why would you give a pregnant
woman...

There it is... He stomps toward her.

CARTER
(Angrily)
So this my fault now?

He moves closer. Points at himself.

PORSHA
(Shrugs)
Who else?

CARTER
It's not my responsibility
to...I...

She laughs once.

PORSHA
Can't even say the words.

CARTER
I'm about my money!
(Points at the ground)
That's it!

PORSHA
I wonder what would've happened if
you placed your selfishness aside
to help somebody.
(Beat)
That would be something else
wouldn't it?

She shakes her head and looks away from him.

CARTER
(Deep breath)
I want you out my house by morning.

She stands up and approaches him.

PORSHA
Just 'cause I give my opinion? Just
'cause I'm tired of you and
this...this...attitude where you
don't care who you hurt?
(Beat)
Or is it because I begged you to
stop like you promised?

She walks closer, no room between them.

PORSHA (CONT'D)
People in love fight, Carter.
(Beat)
Don't do this.

CARTER
Yeah, well, maybe I don't love you
no more.

Her body folds forward. A palm to the belly.

PORSHA
(Breathless)
But...we getting married in--

CARTER
You heard me right?
(He turns away)
Out by morning.

She takes a deep breath.

PORSHA
I'll leave the car keys on the
table.

She storms off.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BIRDIE'S ROOM - DAY

Light from the open window shines inside.

Birdie lies on her side, facing the door. Olive behind her.

BIRDIE
I don't know what to do, Olive.

OLIVE
If you don't know what to do you
could always be nice. Never know
who's watching.

Pam MOANS. It abruptly stops.

OLIVE (CONT'D)
Time is running out, Birdie. You
gotta go.

BIRDIE
How come you want me to leave so
bad?

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Birdie jumps off the bed.

Flies out the room.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Taking a deep breath Birdie looks behind her at her mother's
room.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Focusing on the door again, she pulls it open.

Sticks her head out. Concealing the inside.

TWO POLICE OFFICERS are present with Jackie standing behind them, wearing a red and gold muumuu.

When Jackie sees Birdie her eyes squint. She's surprised.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Your mother home?

BIRDIE
(Nervously)
She's uh...not feeling...I mean,
she's not feeling well.

JACKIE
(Interrupting)
She always sick.

POLICE OFFICER #1
(To Birdie)
Was there some sort of disturbance
here last night?

BIRDIE
Disturbance?

Jackie wedges herself between the Policemen. They rock a few spaces over. They glare at her.

JACKIE
(Clears throat)
Your mama had a party right? Don't
lie to these police, girl.

Birdie looks at her and back at the officers. She nods yes.

POLICE OFFICER #2
How 'bout you go get your mother.

BIRDIE
(Abruptly)
But she got the sick. She don't
like to be messed with when she
sick.

All three frown.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Tell your mother to keep it down,
or we're going to arrest her for
disorderly conduct.

POLICE OFFICER #2
(To Birdie)
And tell her to take out the trash
too. Smells horrible in there.

BIRDIE
Mama says its the sewage.

JACKIE
I keep telling her ain't no sewage.
That's your nasty mama.

POLICE OFFICER #1
(To Jackie)
The plumbers say it should be fixed
later today.
(Looks at Birdie)
If there's still a problem later
we'll be back.

The Policemen walk away.

Jackie steps closer to the door.

JACKIE
What's your name?

BIRDIE
Birdie.

Jackie crosses her arms.

JACKIE
Like Birger. The one who got away.

Birdie shifts a little.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
I thought you and your sister got
taken...a long time ago.

PAM (O.S.)
Birdie, close my door!

BIRDIE
I gotta go! Sorry.

Birdie slams the door.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - PAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pam lies in bed on her side MOANING.

PAM
You gonna help me or not?

Birdie rubs her temples.

BIRDIE
You need a Tylenol? For the--

PAM
I need something better.

Birdie looks around and spots a PILL BOTTLE and it's TOP sitting on the floor against the wall. Eight or nine TYLENOL surround it.

Birdie picks up the bottle. Reads the label.

PAM (CONT'D)
Time is running out. You have to go now.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - MORNING

Carter is leaned up against the building when a CAB pulls up, next to TWO PLUMBER VANS. He's smoking a cigarette.

TONY, 23, SNEAKY, DANGEROUS and recently released from PRISON, approaches Carter with a smile. He's carrying a WHITE PLASTIC BAG.

Tony raises his hand to shake.

Carter looks away.

TONY
What's that smell?

CARTER
What you want?

TONY
(Frowns)
That's how you greet your brother?

Carter glares.

Tony shrugs and leans against the building, dropping the bag at his feet.

Removing a box of CIGARETTES along with a LIGHTER, he lights one and inhales, placing them both into his pocket.

TONY (CONT'D)
I need a place to stay.

CARTER
Can't help you.

TONY
Why?

CARTER
You a rapist for one.

Tony shakes his head, looks at him and back at the street.

TONY
Can you at least give me a pack?
That way I can make some money
until--

CARTER
(Sarcastically)
I don't deal drugs.
(Beat)
Even if I did I wouldn't want you
nowhere 'round me.

Tony walks in front of him.

TONY
I know you disagree with my--

CARTER
She was fourteen. Save me the part
'bout being in love. I heard it
already.

Beat.

TONY
Okay. How about this...you give me
a few weeks and I'll be gone and
you'll never have to see me again.

Carter stares at him before looking away.

TONY (CONT'D)
Regardless of everything you still
my brother. I mean, you really
wanna make an enemy out of me?

Carter stands up straight. He flicks his cigarette past Tony's ear.

CARTER
(Glares)
What you trying to say?

TONY
Please, man. I just need a little
help. I ain't gonna be no trouble.
I promise.

CARTER
(Deep breath)
You got three days.

Carter walks away.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

Natural light enters.

Birdie stands in front of the mirror.

Olive is behind her, a comb in hand.

Olive takes the comb to Birdie's hair and Birdie screams.

OLIVE
Maybe we should cut it.

BIRDIE
Then I'll look like a boy.

OLIVE
Nah. You'd still be pretty.

Birdie looks down and her head rises.

BIRDIE
I got an idea!

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - PAM'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Pam is asleep on her side on the bed.

Across the room the door opens but no one walks through.
Instead, Birdie is on hands and knees, pushing past mounds of
clothing.

Pausing, she raises her upper body and peeks at Pam.

She crawls to the closet door, pulls it open from the bottom and grabs a few things. Stuffs them into her shirt.

Going deeper into the closet she grabs a GOLD CURLY WIG, shoves it into her shirt and crawls out of the room.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BIRDIE'S ROOM - LATER

Olive is smiling at Birdie who is standing in front of her.

A GOLD, MATTED, CURLY WIG sits on Birdie's head.

She's garbed in a black long sleeve shirt, a HIPPIE FLOWER VEST and black tights.

A LONG HANDLE THIN STRAP TINY RED PURSE hangs from her right shoulder to her left hip.

Olive's eyes fall on Birdie's feet. She frowns.

Birdie's wearing one BLACK CANVAS SNEAKER and one OFF WHITE DR. SCHOLL'S SANDAL.

Olive points at them.

BIRDIE
Couldn't find a matching shoe. But
I found these.

Olive scratches her head, eyes still on Birdie's feet.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
(Excitedly)
Well...?
(Shrugs)
How do I look?

Olive smiles.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
(Hopeful)
Really?

OLIVE
Everybody gonna love you.

Olive runs and hugs her.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Birdie holds the front door open, staring into the hallway. Olive is behind her. Birdie looks back at her.

BIRDIE
(Pleading)
Come with me. Please.

From where she stands, Olive peers into the hallway.

OLIVE
Bring back some milk and cereal!

Olive runs toward her room, disappearing from sight.

Birdie swallows and steps outside.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - BUILDING HALLWAY -
CONTINUOUS

Birdie stands at the top of the stairs. Below is the building's door which seems so far away.

She places one Dr. Scholl foot on the step going down and then...

An apartment door behind her flings open.

A COUPLE, LOUD and ARGUMENTATIVE, exit their premises.

Birdie plasters herself against the wall, wild eyes staring at the duo. In their dysfunction they don't notice her.

FIGHTING MAN
I'm not paying for your mother this
time! She can starve for all I
care!

FIGHTING WOMAN
You the one who invited her not me.
Now you wanna do stupid shit? I
swear I'ma start dealing with
bitches because men...

They walk past her, engrossed in madness.

They push the building's door open and exit, their voices fade away.

Birdie peels herself off the wall.

She places the sneaker on the first step, followed by the Dr. Scholl.

Moving carefully at first, she grabs the rail and rushes down the steps.

Stopping at the door, she takes a deep breath and pushes it open.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - FRONT STOOP - CONTINUOUS

HONKING HORNS. MUSIC. SIRENS. CHATTER.

Also, SUNSHINE...

Birdie steps outside and stands in front of the door. She's accosted by the sounds of the city. Standing in place she looks around, eyes wide, mouth open.

IN AWE...

Her head tilts back. Gaze on the sun. She SMILES and closes her eyes. Her breath is heavy and erratic before falling into a steady flow.

PEACE.

The door opens and a frail elderly woman using a cane pushes past Birdie before proceeding down the stairs and up the block.

Birdie advances a little further and sits on the top step. The view is better.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
I don't know why but for some
reason I'm not scared anymore.
(Beat)
Is this what it means to be free?

Carter exits the building. A CELL PHONE pressed against his ear. The GOLD CHAIN on his neck sparkles.

CARTER
(Into Phone)
Bring my money to the spot tonight.

Birdie smiles. Eyes wide and hopeful.

He doesn't notice her until he makes it to the top step. Pulling the phone from his ear, he offers a half smile.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(To Birdie)
I know you?

Birdie continues to grin. Mouth agape.

He shakes his head, places the phone back against his ear, removes his keys from his pocket and deactivates the alarm to his Benz.

Before getting inside he looks at Birdie once more and disappears into his car, pulling off up the street.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Bet you thought that would go
different didn't you?

Birdie turns her head around.

Tony is standing behind her. He's wearing a white T-shirt, jeans and one small gold chain. A misleading smile on his face.

She stands up and backs away.

His gaze falls on her outfit. He frowns and then nods.

TONY
A little early but I get it.

He points at her.

TONY (CONT'D)
Halloween. It's tomorrow.

He extends his hand for a shake.

TONY (CONT'D)
I'm Tony.

She grabs his fingertips and shakes them.

BIRDIE
Birdie.

He grips his nose.

TONY
You a little strong aren't you?

She nods.

BIRDIE
Not stronger than my mama though.

He frowns.

TONY
Never heard that before.
(Looks around)
(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)
Correct me if I'm wrong, but you
look lost.

Birdie smiles.

BIRDIE
Yes. I...I have to...

She digs into the PURSE and removes a PILL BOTTLE.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
Get some drugs.

Tony's eyes widen. He glares.

TONY
(Frowns)
Yo, put that shit up!

Her smile vanishes. She places the bottle back.

TONY (CONT'D)
Don't want people thinking you
serving me.

BIRDIE
Serving you?

He shakes his head and waves the air. He moves to walk away.

She grabs his hand. AGGRESSIVELY.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
I need...you gotta help me.

He snatches away from her and jogs down the steps.

He looks up at her.

TONY
You coming or not?

EXT. BALTIMORE CITY - BLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Tony's hands are stuffed into his front pockets. He nods at everyone who looks at Birdie strangely as they pass. Embarrassed mostly.

Birdie notices a YOUNG WOMAN scrolling on her phone. She looks back at her.

A few seconds later she notices TWO MEN scrolling on their phones too, neither talking to each other.

TONY
What's wrong?

BIRDIE
What are those things?

He frowns.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
I see them sometimes from my
window. The boxy things in their
hands.

He stops walking and looks at her. Breaks into laughter.

Birdie looks down.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
What's...what's funny?

TONY
You want me to believe you don't
know what...

He stops laughing.

TONY (CONT'D)
(Seriously)
Wait...you don't know do you?

Birdie opens her purse and pulls out the pill bottle. It
shakes in her hand.

BIRDIE
The drugs. I have to--

He places his hand over hers and looks around.

She places the pill bottle back.

TONY
Listen, I'm sorry 'bout that. I
just...never met nobody like you
that's all.

He clears his throat and points ahead.

TONY (CONT'D)
The pharmacy is just up the block.

BIRDIE
The pharmacy?

TONY
You from another country? 'Cause
you got a lot to learn.

She smiles.

BIRDIE
(Innocently)
Maybe I can teach you some stuff
too.

He laughs heartily.

They continue to walk.

EXT. BALTIMORE CITY - STORE PHARMACY - OUTSIDE

Birdie and Tony walk up to the store.

A RING sends him searching through his pocket. He locates his
cell and looks at the screen.

TONY
(To Birdie)
I'ma take this call.

She looks at the cell and smiles.

BIRDIE
(Excitedly)
It's a phone!
(Frowns)
How did they do that? There's no
cord like in my books.

Frowning, he places the phone against his ear.

TONY
(To Birdie)
Get what you need. I'ma be out
front.

Birdie walks into the store.

INT. BALTIMORE CITY - STORE PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

AN ARRAY OF COLORFUL PACKAGING. CHIPS, CANDY, FOOD. JUNK.

Birdie's eyes light up as she looks around from the doorway.

She walks to a chip rack to the left. Picking up and placing
things down as she progresses. She's in heaven.

A bell dings as people enter and exit.

When a woman approaches the counter holding a BLUE BASKET filled with items, Birdie looks to the left and sees a stack of EMPTY BASKETS.

She takes one. Going from aisle to aisle, with a huge smile on her face, she tosses CANDY, SODA, CEREAL and MILK into the basket.

After the shopping spree, she approaches the counter and pulls out the PILL BOTTLE.

She hands it to the STORE CLERK - 55, SERIOUS and MEAN.

He picks up his EYEGLASSES from the counter, slides them on and looks at the bottle.

STORE CLERK
We don't have that here.

He extends the bottle and Birdie takes it back.

He removes his glasses and places them down.

BIRDIE
But my mother. She's...she's sick.

STORE CLERK
Then she has to go to a clinic.

He looks behind her at waiting customers.

STORE CLERK (CONT'D)
(To Birdie)
(Irritated)
Anything else?

Birdie looks down.

BIRDIE
But I...

STORE CLERK
(Angrily)
Anything else?

Birdie jumps and stuffs the bottle back into her purse.

BIRDIE
Yes...uh...uh Tylenol.

He frowns.

STORE CLERK

Aisle C.
(Points behind her)
Now move out the way.

Birdie tromps out of line, allowing the three people waiting to be served.

EXT. BALTIMORE CITY - PHARMACY - MOMENTS LATER

Birdie walks out with the BASKET and up to Tony who is talking on the phone.

He looks at the basket. Glares.

TONY

(In phone)
(Frowning)
Yo, let me call you back.

He stuffs his phone into his pocket.

TONY (CONT'D)

Why your stuff not bagged?

She frowns.

BIRDIE

Bagged?

He places his hands on the sides of his face, before sliding them downward.

TONY

Please tell me you ain't steal that
shit. I just got out of--

The Store Clerk bursts out the door and up to Birdie.

Tony takes off running.

STORE CLERK

So you stealing from me now?

Birdie's eyes widen and her head shakes.

BIRDIE

No...I...I was...

The Store Clerk grabs her by the shoulder and escorts her back into the pharmacy.

INT. BALTIMORE CITY - PHARMACY - LATER

A small cluttered office. A fan sits atop a file cabinet and oscillates.

Birdie is seated in a chair across from an open door exposing a tattered metal screen. A view of an ALLEYWAY is visible.

A desk sits against the wall to her right. Where the Store Clerk vigorously scribbles on a form.

The BASKET she held earlier sits on the desk. Every so often he grabs an item, places it back and writes on the sheet.

He doesn't look at her.

STORE CLERK

Okay.
(Deep breath)
Your address?

Birdie stares. Confused.

His head turns toward her.

STORE CLERK (CONT'D)

Your address...what is it?

Birdie blinks a few times.

Tossing the pen on the desk, he leans back, thick knuckles interlace. Chair squeaking.

STORE CLERK (CONT'D)

They tried this before and it
didn't work.

BIRDIE

What?

He glares.

STORE CLERK

Refusing to give me the address.
Thinking that if they don't, the
cops won't have it either. Might as
well tell you too...it never works.

He sits up, scoots toward the desk and grabs his pen.

STORE CLERK (CONT'D)

Now give me the address.

BIRDIE
What did I do wrong?

He frowns.

STORE CLERK
You walked out the store without
paying! Are you really that dumb?

She frowns.

BIRDIE
I didn't know...I've never been to
a pharm...a pharm.
(Beat)
I've never been anywhere.

He glares.

STORE CLERK
Stealing is stealing no matter
where you're from.

BIRDIE
But there was food.
(Eyes widen)
Lots of it. I only wanted a little
for my sister and--

He laughs.

STORE CLERK
(Sarcastically)
Oh, so now I'm responsible for
feeding people in Baltimore?

BIRDIE
(Sincerely)
Is there somebody else?

He clears his throat, observing her outfit.

STORE CLERK
And what are you wearing?

She looks down at herself.

BIRDIE
Oh, uh, Halloween.

SUDDENLY the door opens behind Birdie. An Overweight Redhead Woman bursts inside, sweat pouring down her face. Leaving streaks in her clumpy makeup.

She glances at the fan and then the Store Clerk.

RED HEAD

How much longer? You know I'm not
good out there.

He sighs and tosses the pen down.

STORE CLERK

What is it now?

RED HEAD

It's a problem with a sale. Don't
know how to ring up the--

He jumps up.

STORE CLERK

I swear if I don't do everything
myself this place...

He walks out and closes the door.

Birdie's eyes move around.

BIRDIE (V.O.)

He said the police would take me
away.

(Beat)

I ain't mind so much but what about
Olive? And what would happen to
mama?

She looks behind her, digs through the basket and grabs the
Tylenol and a CANDY BAR, stuffing them into her purse.

PLAYFUL FEMALE VOICES outside draw her attention to the door.

She walks toward the sound and looks out of the closed
screen.

To the left, THREE STYLISH GIRLS around 17 talk to each other
while rummaging through their purses.

Within seconds Stylish Girl #1 pulls out a GOLD COMPACT
MIRROR.

STYLISH GIRL #1

Found it.

The others stop searching.

Stylish Girl #1 fluffs her hair and runs a pinky finger across the outline of her lips while looking at her reflection. After puckering up she smiles at them.

STYLISH GIRL #1 (CONT'D)
 (To everyone)
 You think he'll like it?

Stylish Girl #2 smiles.

STYLISH GIRL #2
 I think he'll love it.

Stylish Girl #1 drops the compact into her purse and walks closer to her.

STYLISH GIRL #1
 Is that why you trying to steal him
 from me? Because you think he'll
 like it so much?

Stylish Girl #2 tries to get away but they run after her.

She is knocked down directly in front of the screen door by Stylish Girl #1 and Stylish Girl #3.

Stylish Girl #2 pleads with her eyes for Birdie to help.

With Stylish Girl #2 down, they began to stomp her in the face and chest.

Birdie pushes the door open.

EXT. BALTIMORE CITY - PHARMACY - BACK OF STORE - CONTINUOUS

Birdie helps Stylish Girl #2 off the ground. She looks at the other two and smiles.

BIRDIE
 Be nice. You never know who's
 watching.

Stylish Girl #2 takes off running.

Stylish Girl #1 and #3 walk up to Birdie with clenched fists.

STYLISH GIRL #1
 Anybody ever tell you to mind your
 own business?

Stylish Girl #1 looks at her friend and they both jump Birdie.

Stylish Girl #1 lands a fist to Birdie's nose, knocking her down.

Back on her feet, and with wild swinging arms, Birdie manages to get away, heading for the street.

The girls give chase but stop short and gaze in the direction Stylish Girl #2 ran.

They run the opposite way from Birdie.

EXT. BALTIMORE CITY - BLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Birdie walks down the street with a BLOODY nose. One foot is bare and the other has the BLACK CANVAS SNEAKER.

Tony pulls alongside her in a Honda Accord.

Rolling the window down on the passenger side while cruising slowly, he looks over at her.

TONY
Need a ride?

She nods.

TONY (CONT'D)
Get inside.

She walks to the car.

INT. BALTIMORE CITY - TONY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Birdie looks around the car and smiles. Her fingertips peddle over everything. It's all new to her.

TONY
Never been in a car?

Birdie touches the window and grins.

TONY (CONT'D)
And I thought I was locked up.

When she hits a button and rolls up a window, he squeezes his nose and rolls it back down.

BIRDIE
(Excitedly)
It goes up and down by itself!

TONY

Didn't freshen up today huh?

She looks at him, confused.

TONY (CONT'D)

A bath?

She nods.

BIRDIE

Yes...I...wiped my face.

He looks to his left and back on the road.

TONY

Your face huh?

He clears his throat.

TONY (CONT'D)

Anyway, did you, uh, get what you needed?

Birdie sighs.

BIRDIE

He says I gotta go to another place.

He stops at a light.

TONY

Let me see that again.

She dips into her purse and removes the PILL BOTTLE, handing it to him.

TONY (CONT'D)

I know where this is. I'll take you. Just gotta make a stop at my house first.

He hands it back. Winks and pulls off.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - LATER

Birdie and Tony walk up to the building's door.

BIRDIE

You live here too?

TONY

Kinda.

He opens the door.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - BUILDING HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Birdie follows him to an apartment door on the lowest level.

He removes a KEY from his pocket and fiddles with the doorknob.

Birdie looks up the steps.

Tony looks around suspiciously.

BIRDIE

I'ma give my sister something. I'll be back.

TONY

Hurry up though.

Birdie takes off up the steps. Bare foot slapping against the stone staircase.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Birdie walks inside and closes the door.

Olive is waiting, hands clasped together.

OLIVE

(Excitedly)

So what happen?

Birdie digs into the purse and hands her a CANDY BAR.

Olive grins.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BIRDIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Birdie closes the door and looks at Olive who is waiting.

BIRDIE

(Whispering)

Is mama up?

OLIVE
 Made her toast earlier. She's
 taking a nap.
 (Frowning)
 Now what happen to your face?

BIRDIE
 (Excitedly)
 Nothing to worry about.

OLIVE
 Did you see the devils?

BIRDIE
 Not yet. Don't think they exist.

Birdie digs into her purse. Removes the Tylenol and hands it to Olive.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
 Give her this if she wakes up.

OLIVE
 But she got that already. What
 about the other stuff she asked
 for?

BIRDIE
 (Proudly)
 I met a friend and he's gonna take
 me to get it.

OLIVE
 You gotta get mama what she needs.
 Be quick, Birdie. Not a lot of
 time.

Birdie turns around and grabs the doorknob.

BIRDIE
 I'll be back when I can.

Birdie rushes out.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - BUILDING HALLWAY -
 APARTMENT 116 - MOMENTS LATER

Birdie knocks three times lightly. And then harder.

Suddenly Jackie walks out of her apartment from upstairs. She
 stumbles on her muumuu.

Barefoot, Jackie saunters down the steps.

Birdie faces Jackie. Back against the door.

JACKIE
(Suspiciously)
What you doing?

Birdie shrugs.

Jackie looks over her shoulder at the door.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
I asked you a question. What you
doing at this man's apartment? Your
mama know you--

Suddenly the door opens and Tony pulls Birdie inside,
slamming it shut in Jackie's face.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - CONTINUOUS

Birdie freezes and looks around with wide eyes.

The space is the polar opposite of where she lives.

The apartment is filled with LIGHT, courtesy of the curtains
pulled back on the windows and the BRIGHT COLORED FURNITURE.

A WHITE SOFA, WHITE RECLINER and a WHITE OTTOMAN sit in the
middle of the floor, decorated with yellow and grey pillows.

Directly across from the movables sits a 60 inch PLASMA
SCREEN TV which dominates the wall.

Tony continues to look out the peephole on the front door and
shakes his head.

He walks up to Birdie.

TONY
(Under breath)
Nosey, bitch.

BIRDIE
Is this heaven?

He smiles, grabs her hand and walks her further inside.

She stands in the middle of the floor, hands clutched in
front of herself.

He bops toward the kitchen, off to the right, where a YELLOW
TABLE sits with FOUR WHITE CHAIRS as companions.

He opens the refrigerator and removes TWO CANS OF BEER. He raises one.

TONY

Thirsty?

She nods.

He walks over to her, hands her a can and pulls her toward the back.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - BEDROOM -
MOMENTS LATER

Birdie stands in front of a closed door holding the CAN OF BEER.

Tony sits on the bed. He pats the mattress once.

TONY

Come here.

She walks toward him, the beer can pressed against her lips.

TONY (CONT'D)

(Laughs)

Want me to open that?

She extends it to him and he places it on the table next to the bed.

TONY (CONT'D)

(More aggressive)

Come over here. Lay down.

Birdie crawls on the bed and turns face up. Her body rigid and stiff. Eyes on the ceiling. Her wig shifts a little over her right eye.

He crawls on top of her and frowns.

BIRDIE (V.O.)

I thought my kiss would come from
my angel. But he seems nice enough
right?

BIRDIE

Are you gonna give me a baby?

His eyes widen.

TONY
Is that what you...
(Clears throat)
Is that what you want?

She nods yes.

TONY (CONT'D)
Okay, but maybe you should wash up
before we--

The door flies open. Carter storms inside frowning.

Tony jumps up. He looks back at Birdie once.

TONY (CONT'D)
(Sighs)
That nosey ass bitch.

CARTER
(To Tony)
(Angrily)
What's wrong with you, man?

TONY
I was just--

CARTER
About to rape another girl.

Tony glares.

TONY
Nah. I think she wanted to--

CARTER
(Calmly)
Get out.

TONY
I'm telling you the little slut
asked for it! Why you making me out
to be the bad guy?

Carter wipes his hands down his face and drops them at his sides. One fist bangs into the other palm.

CARTER
(Calmly)
Little, bruh, if I ask you again
its gonna be trouble.

TONY
You threatening me?

Carter's gaze remains solid.

Tony glares at Birdie, looks at Carter and storms out, knocking his shoulder on the way out the door.

Birdie sits up in bed and waves. Repositions wig.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - KITCHEN -
LATER

Birdie is seated at the kitchen table eating a small PIZZA. Carter is with her. Another pizza, untouched, awaits her on a small plate.

In between bites, and when he isn't looking, she smiles at him.

He doesn't notice. Instead he texts rapidly.

BIRDIE
I thought...I thought that thing
was a phone.

He frowns. Never really acknowledges her.

CARTER
Texting my girlfriend.

Her jaw hangs.

He looks at her.

CARTER (CONT'D)
You alright?

She closes her mouth.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
I guess he can't save me after all.
He won't belong to me.

BIRDIE
I'm fine.

He sits back and crosses his arms over his chest.

CARTER
Was my brother about to...did he do
anything to you?

She places the pizza down.

CARTER (CONT'D)
In the bed.

Her eyes widen and she nods.

BIRDIE
Oh yes, yes, he was gonna give me a
baby.

He leans on the table.

CARTER
Give you a what?

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Carter leaps up, his hand hovers over the covered gun hump on his hip.

She watches him until he walks out of sight.

When he's gone, she folds the untouched pizza and stuffs it into her purse.

Afterwards she devours what's left of the other, pushing the entire thing into her mouth.

Porsha appears in the kitchen.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(To Birdie)
(Clears throat)
This my girl. I mean...my...

Porsha looks at him and frowns.

Birdie's mouth opens and chewed food topples to the floor.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
She's definitely prettier than me.

Birdie looks down at the gnarled pizza and back at Carter.

BIRDIE
I'm sorry.

Porsha looks at Carter.

PORSHA
(To Carter)
Can I talk to you? In private?

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Porsha stands next to the door with one hand on her hip and the other on top of her head.

Carter stands in front of her, hands stuffed in his front pockets.

CARTER
What took you so long to answer
your phone?

PORSHA
Melora is dead. Was with her
family.

He frowns.

CARTER
So how she...I mean...

Porsha sighs.

PORSHA
(Shrugs)
Why am I here?

CARTER
(Sighs)
Tony was in my crib when I got
home.

PORSHA
And? Didn't you let him move in?

CARTER
Yeah but he was with the girl...

He looks behind him. Birdie isn't visible.

CARTER (CONT'D)
And I wanna make sure he
didn't...you know what I'm saying?
I just need you to talk to her.

Porsha sighs.

PORSHA
She just a kid.

CARTER
Exactly. That's why I'm worried.

Birdie approaches and smiles. Pizza sauce in the corners of her mouth.

BIRDIE
Can I give my sister something?
I'll be right back.

Carter nods, opens the door and closes it when Birdie leaves.

Porsha leans against the door.

PORSHA
You threw me out. If I do this,
whatever it is, what does that mean
for us?

He folds his arms over his chest. Hands under his pits.

CARTER
Can you help or not?

She looks down and peels herself off the door.

PORSHA
(Sarcastically)
Anything for you right?

She shakes her head and walks past him.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - LIVING
ROOM - LATER

Porsha is seated next to Birdie on the sofa.

Birdie's hands are clasped in front of her.

Porsha's eyes roll from Birdie's SOILED BARE FOOT all the way
up to her BLOOD CRUSTED NOSE and PIZZA stained mouth.

BIRDIE
My sister said not to come back
without help for mama.

PORSHA
Help?

Birdie nods.

PORSHA (CONT'D)
What...what happened to your
clothes?

Birdie looks down at herself.

BIRDIE
Halloween.

Porsha nods.

PORSHA
What about your nose?

Birdie touches her nostril.

PORSHA (CONT'D)
Did Tony...did he do anything to
you?

BIRDIE
I wanted a baby but...

Porsha frowns.

PORSHA
Did he give you one?

BIRDIE
I don't think so.
(Looks at belly)
How can I tell?

Porsha examines her again, this time with kinder eyes.

PORSHA
Can I...like..do something for you?

Porsha touches Birdie's knee and rises.

Her hand extends in Birdie's direction.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - BATHROOM

A BRIGHT YELLOW BATHROOM with LEMON CURTAINS. Yellow towels
are hung neatly on racks with matching washcloths.

Water runs inside the tub.

Porsha squeezes BUBBLE BATH into the tub while Birdie, who
stands by the doorway, watches.

Porsha opens the cabinet under the sink and hands Birdie a
WHITE TOWEL SET.

A pair of SCISSORS are visible on top of the sink.

Birdie brings the towel to her nose and inhales. Her eyes
light up.

Porsha removes the wig and dumps it into the trash can.

PORSHA
You don't need that.

Birdie touches her tangled mane.

BIRDIE
You think Carter will like it this way?

PORSHA
You...like Carter?

BIRDIE
I love him.

Porsha clears her throat.

PORSHA
Hair doesn't make the woman.
Remember that.
(Deep breath)
Take as long as you need.

Porsha touches Birdie's shoulder and walks out, closing the door behind herself.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - BEDROOM -
MOMENTS LATER

Porsha grabs a pair of BLACK SWEATPANTS, a GREY SWEATER, WHITE PANTIES and a WHITE TANK TOP from a drawer. Next she grabs a pair of WHITE FLIP FLOPS off the floor.

Carter is seated on the bed texting.

PORSHA
(Jealously)
Got a new bitch already huh?

He chuckles once. Looks at her.

CARTER
It's always 'bout the money.

He focuses back on his phone.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Nothing else. Nothing more.

Porsha walks out.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - BATHROOM -
OUTSIDE THE DOOR - LATER

Porsha stands next to the CLOSED bathroom door. From her view, she can see Carter looking out the bedroom window. Waiting.

BIRDIE (O.S.)
I'm done.

Porsha opens the bathroom door.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - BATHROOM -
CONTINUOUS

Porsha walks inside.

Birdie stands by the sink, a towel wrapped around her body. A pile of neat clothing on the toilet seat. On the floor, scattered clothing. A prominent BLACK RING around the tub.

Porsha looks at the tub and back at Birdie.

PORSHA
Uh, maybe...
(Clears throat)
Maybe we should go again.
(Beat)
Yeah, let's go again.

Porsha walks deeper into the bathroom, falls to her knees and grabs some cleaner from the side of the toilet.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - LIVING
ROOM - LATER

Porsha and Carter are on the couch. He's texting.

PORSHA
That girl in there...I mean, I
think something's wrong.

Carter looks at her.

CARTER
Like what?

PORSHA
I don't know.
(Shrugs)
She said she's sixteen but she acts
more like twelve.
(MORE)

PORSHA (CONT'D)

(Beat)

Like she's never been anywhere. Or
seen anything. How is that
possible?

CARTER

Maybe she's sheltered.

PORSHA

Nah. It feels worse than that.

He sits his phone on the sofa face down. Drags his hands down
his face.

CARTER

Great. That's all I need. For my
brother to rape somebody retarded.

She frowns.

PORSHA

There you go making shit about you
again.

He leaps up and paces in front of her.

CARTER

When that shit happened with Tony,
with that girl, my mother
couldn't...she couldn't take it. It
ruined everything, Porsha.

PORSHA

I know the story, Carter.

CARTER

(Yells)

Do you? I mean...do you *really*?

Beat.

CARTER (CONT'D)

If it comes out that he did it
again, this will kill moms and I
can't let that happen.

Porsha frowns.

PORSHA

So what you saying...you
would...you would hurt the girl?

The bathroom door opens.

Birdie steps out. Wearing BLACK SWEATPANTS, a GREY SWEATER, and a WHITE TANK TOP, her long strapped RED PURSE crosses her left shoulder and falls on her right hip.

Birdie runs her hand over her CHOPPED OFF HAIR. Her beauty shines.

Porsha rises.

BIRDIE
(Smiling)
I couldn't comb it. But hair
doesn't make the woman.

Porsha walks up to her.

PORSHA
I think it's beautiful.

Birdie looks at Carter.

BIRDIE
(To Carter)
Do you like it?

He shuffles in place.

Birdie smiles and rubs her hair again, this time with two hands.

CARTER
Is your moms gonna be cool
with...you know?

He points at her hair.

Birdie's smile disappears. She walks toward him.

Standing in front of Carter, she digs into her purse and hands him the pill bottle.

Carter looks at the label and hands it back. He clears his throat.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Yeah...uh...I know...I know what
that's for.

His arms fold against his body. Palms under his pits.

BIRDIE
My mother needs them.

He nods.

PORSHA
(To Carter)
What is it?

He looks at Porsha.

CARTER
Methadone.

Porsha flops on the sofa.

Birdie sits next to her. Awkwardly close.

BIRDIE
(To both)
I...I can't go home without it.
Promised my sister.

PORSHA
Why is this on you?

BIRDIE
Because Uncle David and mama got
into a fight and she's too sick to
leave. That means it's just me.

CARTER
I'ma be honest, I don't think
they'll give it to you.

Birdie's head lowers and rises quickly. She has an idea.

BIRDIE
(To Carter)
Maybe...maybe Tony can help! He was
gonna take me before we--

CARTER
Nah!

Carter steps closer.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Listen, you gotta stay away from
him.

BIRDIE
Why?

Beat.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
Why, Carter?

CARTER

Cause I'm taking you myself that's
why. The place opens in the A.M,
uh, I guess we'll go then.

She leaps up and hugs him.

He pushes her away with stiff arms.

BIRDIE

(Hopeful)

Does this mean I get to stay 'till
morning?

Porsha looks at Carter and shrugs.

EXT/INT. CARTER'S BENZ - BENGIES DRIVE-IN THEATRE - MIDDLE
RIVER - NIGHT

Very dark.

Except for a MASSIVE LUMINOUS MOVIE SCREEN.

Carter pulls slowly in line between two parked cars. Many are
present in rows. Facing one direction.

The sound of Carter's wheels crushing gravel continues until
he parks.

Porsha is seated in the passenger seat. Birdie in the back,
the pupils of her wide eyes sparkle with smaller versions of
the previews on the screen.

Porsha turns the radio on. They have SOUND.

Carter looks back at Birdie and then Porsha. He takes a deep
breath. He doesn't want to be there.

CARTER

(To Porsha)

(Whisper)

Can't believe I let you talk me
into this...

PORSHA

(Whisper)

She said she's never been.

Porsha looks at the screen and back at Birdie who is in a
trance, at the images on the large display.

Porsha squeezes his hand.

He shakes his head. Extreme agitation.

PORSHA (CONT'D)

(Whisper)

Plus we gotta find out if anything
happened between her and Tony.

(Beat)

Remember?

A Bengie's Employee walks up to the driver's side window but
Carter doesn't notice him.

Tap. Tap. Tap. The Bengie's Employee knocks on the window
with a flashlight.

Carter jumps. Hand hovers over his hip like a cowboy.

BENGIE EMPLOYEE

Headlights out please. This--

Porsha's hand presses his down, preventing it from rising.

She turns the headlights out.

PORSHA

(To Bengie Employee)

Sorry.

He nods and walks away.

BIRDIE

(To both)

Is everything okay?

Carter gets out, slamming the door.

Porsha takes a deep breath.

Birdie scoots in the middle. Plants one hand on the left and
right seat to hold her position.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)

Is he mad at me?

Porsha smiles and looks at the screen.

PORSHA

He's mad at himself.

BIRDIE

But why?

Porsha looks out the window.

PORSHA

Too much.

(Deep breath)

But I feel if I don't say
something, to somebody, I may...I
may explode.

Birdie nods.

PORSHA (CONT'D)

He made some moves that hurt some
people.

(Deep breath)

It's sitting on his soul. Except he
doesn't know it.

BIRDIE

(Hopeful)

Maybe he'll feel better when he
helps me. And mama.

Porsha smiles.

Carter returns with popcorn and two large sodas.

He opens the door, hands the POPCORN and one soda to Birdie,
and the last one to Porsha.

He slides into the driver's seat.

Birdie digs into the box and pops a few kernels into her
mouth. Her eyes light up.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)

(Surprise)

It tastes...it tastes like salty
air.

Porsha eats some. She smiles and nods.

Birdie watches a small crowd assemble on the ground with
blankets, below the movie screen, outside the car.

Birdie points at them.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)

Can we watch the movie from there
too?

She looks at Porsha and then Carter.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)

Please?

EXT. BENGIES DRIVE-IN THEATRE - MIDDLE RIVER - MOMENTS LATER

Birdie, Carter and Porsha sit on the bench looking at the MOVIE.

Birdie on Carter's right, Porsha, his left.

Birdie tosses popcorn into her mouth. Tears roll down her cheeks as she watches the movie.

Carter looks at her and then Porsha, they both smile.

Carter puts his arm behind Porsha and pulls her toward him.

CARTER

At the hospital, you know, I...

PORSHA

I know.

He leans in and kisses Porsha.

When they separate, he jumps when he sees Birdie with her lips poked out and eyes closed in his direction. She wants next.

CARTER

(To Birdie)

(Confused)

What you doing?

Birdie opens her eyes.

CARTER (CONT'D)

What's your fucking problem?

PORSHA

Carter!

CARTER

Nah! Let her answer!

BIRDIE

I was...waiting for...a...a kiss.

He shifts in his seat.

CARTER

Well that ain't how shit works!

Stop playing yourself like a slut!

A few onlookers offer their attention to the trio.

Birdie leaps up, drops the popcorn and runs away.

EXT/INT. CARTER'S BENZ - LATER

Carter is driving. Porsha in the passenger's seat. Birdie in the back, lying down, crying softly.

Porsha looks at Birdie, reaches back and rubs her leg.

Focusing on Carter Porsha smiles.

PORSHA
(Whispers)
She'll be okay.

He shrugs.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - NIGHT - LATER

Birdie, Porsha and Carter walk up the stoop toward the building.

Birdie sits on the top step, legs pulled toward her body, gaze on the street.

Porsha touches Carter's arm.

PORSHA
(Whisper)
I'm going inside.

Carter moves for the door. He yawns.

CARTER
Me too. I'm tired as--

She places a flat palm to the center of his chest.

PORSHA
(Whisper)
Talk to her. Plus we still don't
know what happened, if anything,
with your brother.

Birdie, unaware of their conversation, places her left cheek on top of her knees and continues to look at the road.

Porsha enters the building.

Carter wipes his hands down his face.

Taking a deep breath, he sits next to her on the step.

CARTER
Look, uh, I'm sorry.

Birdie sits up.

BIRDIE
Am I, am I ugly?

He frowns, rubs his hands on his jeans and looks back at the passing cars.

CARTER
What's up with you and all this
fresh shit? Huh?

BIRDIE
(Confused)
Fresh shit?

CARTER
(Deep breath)
Look, you young, Birdie. And out
here you gotta be careful 'bout who
you slinging that thing too. Not
everybody as nice as me.

BIRDIE
But I need a kiss.

He throws his hands up in the air.

CARTER
Why?

BIRDIE
So I can have a baby. And leave.

Carter frowns.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
My mama, she, she uses drugs. She
don't mean to be...but she not real
nice you know? Always sad.
Always...

CARTER
I...I get it.

He looks away.

His CELL PHONE DINGS. He removes it from his pocket and looks at the screen. He smiles and taps her on the leg with the back of his hand.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Walk with me right quick.

EXT. VACANT HOME/TRAP HOUSE - BALTIMORE - MOMENTS LATER

Boarded up windows. Cracked stoop.

Carter walks up the steps with Birdie following.

CARTER
Careful.

They approach a door, he removes a key and pushes inside.

INT. VACANT HOME/TRAP HOUSE - BALTIMORE - CONTINUOUS

Dark, except the moonlight shining through several slats of wood across the way.

Carter and Birdie enter.

Carter walks to the left, grabs a KEROSENE LAMP off the floor along with a match. He lights it. The room GLOWS.

A table sits next to the window and they walk toward it. He places the lamp on top.

Carter gets on hands and knees, pulls a slat off the floor and takes out a stack of money.

CARTER
(Grinning)
Let's go.

He places the slat back.

BIRDIE
What's that?

He stands up and dusts his knees.

CARTER
Something I been waiting on.

He grabs the lamp.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - LATER

Porsha is seated on the stoop when Jackie comes outside.

Porsha looks behind her and shakes her head. She's about to leave.

JACKIE
Ain't no need in you exiting.

Porsha remains seated but rolls her eyes. Gaze in the opposite direction.

Jackie sits way too close and sighs. Muumuu covering most of her bare toes.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
We neighbors. Might as well be neighborly, right?

Porsha looks at her.

PORSHA
What you want?

Jackie laughs.

PORSHA (CONT'D)
If I know you, you always got an angle.

JACKIE
(Smiles)
Did you hear 'bout David and Laverne? Got caught with a gun earlier tonight. Arrested.

PORSHA
Your brother's run ends with the law ain't none of my concern.

Jackie chuckle's once.

JACKIE
Yeah, I forgot. Your interests lies with Pam's daughter instead.

Porsha glares.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
All I wanna know is why?

Porsha shakes her head.

PORSHA
Get to the point.

JACKIE

Okay I will.

(Beat)

Earlier today I saw that little girl going into your apartment with that pedophile.

(Nods)

Little while after that, she's walking up the street with Carter and--

Porsha jumps up and looks down at her.

PORSHA

What you trying to say?

JACKIE

You know me well enough to know I speaks my mind.

PORSHA

Then get to it.

JACKIE

Are ya'll whoring around that child?

PORSHA

One of these days you gonna slip up and do the wrong thing. I just hope I'm 'round here to see it.

Porsha yanks the door and storms inside the building.

EXT. BALTIMORE CITY - BLOCK - LATER

Carter and Birdie are walking up the street. Every so often he observes his surroundings. Very cautious.

They pass a townhouse. A PARTY IS IN FULL EFFECT. LOUD MUSIC. People entering the premises. PARTY LIGHTS shining from the downstairs windows.

BIRDIE

Carter, what is a beach?

He frowns.

CARTER

Let me ask you something, when was the last time you been out the house?

Birdie looks up and then downward.

BIRDIE
I can't remember. Maybe never.

CARTER
Why?

BIRDIE
Don't know that either.

CARTER
So what is life like? At home?

She shrugs.

BIRDIE
I take care of mama and my sister.
And when mama sleeps, me and Olive
play.

He nods.

CARTER
Your mother, uh, you say she's
really sick?

Birdie nods.

BIRDIE
Yep, so if I don't help, she may
die.

CARTER
I don't know your mother but you
gotta take care of yourself first.

BIRDIE
Why I gotta help myself first?

CARTER
Because that's the way of the
world, Birdie. If you don't people
will take advantage of you.

Birdie looks down and back at him.

BIRDIE
But, I don't wanna be like that.
'Cause if everybody dead...who am I
gonna love?

They stop and he takes a deep breath.

CARTER

A beach is a place where people go to escape.

BIRDIE

Like being out here.

CARTER

Nah. This place hell.

BIRDIE

Mama says that too but that's not what I see. I mean, you're nice.

CARTER

You don't know nothing 'bout me. Or the things I've done.

BIRDIE

Okay, would you hurt me?

CARTER

Nah.

BIRDIE

Would you hurt my sister?

He laughs.

CARTER

Don't even know the 'lil shorty.

BIRDIE

Would you hurt my mama?

He clears his throat. They start walking again.

CARTER

Point made.

BIRDIE

Well then I can trust you. You my angel!

She grins.

He shakes his head.

CARTER

Anyway a beach has sand.

BIRDIE

What does sand look like?

CARTER

I can't really explain it, Birdie.
I mean...it's hard to describe. But
I promise these streets ain't
nothing like it.

(Deep breath)

Nah...out here, ain't nothing but
concrete, dope heads and hustlers.

BIRDIE

So it's a concrete beach?

He laughs.

CARTER

Ain't no bringing you down, huh?

(Beat)

Whatever you do, stay that way.

They make it to the front of their building.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - CONTINUOUS

Carter and Birdie walk up the stoop.

CARTER

You want a soda?

Birdie nods.

CARTER (CONT'D)

I be right back.

She takes a seat. He disappears into the building.

Suddenly the door opens again and five twenty something year
old women pile out of the building.

They stand on the STOOP behind Birdie while engaging in
inaudible conversation. Two lit cigarettes pass between them.

When they break into heavy laughter, Birdie looks back and
smiles.

One of the five frowns at her.

Birdie faces the street, brings her legs closely to her body
and lays her cheek on her knees, looking to her left.

When she sees Tony CREEP from out the alley, Birdie waves but
he dips back. He didn't see her.

Seconds later, Carter walks out and hands her a soda.

The girls grin at him as if he's a rock star.

FIVE GIRLS
(Giddily)
Heyyyyyyyyy, Carter.

He nods at them and sits next to Birdie.

The girl who frowned at Birdie earlier, jaw hangs.

CARTER
So I was thinking, if you stop
asking dudes 'round here for kisses
and shit like that, on mothers,
you'll see sand.

Her eyes widen.

BIRDIE
Really?

CARTER
Yeah, but I'ma need you to chill on
the walking off with dudes and shit
like that. You can get hurt out
here. Now promise.

BIRDIE
I promise!

He gives her a scrutinizing gaze.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
No lies to you. Ever.

CARTER
Good, because--

GUNFIRE FROM THE LEFT.

A dark figure wearing a BLACK HOODY and BLACK SWEATPANTS move toward the stoop, with a .45. His face concealed.

Carter knocks Birdie down and unleashes his hammer, sending fire back the Shooter's way.

Bullets crash into the building's glass door, car windows on the street and even the brick wall.

The Five Girls SCAMPER and SCREAM down the stoop and up the block for safety.

Carter fires at the gunman, with bullet after bullet, sending him running in the opposite direction.

Carter lifts Birdie off the step and rushes her into the disintegrated building's door.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APARTMENT 116 - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Birdie stands next to the front door, tears stream down her face.

Carter paces quickly. A gun in hand. Finger on the trigger.

Porsha tries to touch him but she's trembling. A hand to the gut. Afraid.

He's on the verge of exploding.

Birdie walks up to Carter.

BIRDIE
(Whisper)
Carter...

Carter continues to pace, mumbling obscenities under his breath. Gun moving erratically.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
Carter...

NOW he sees her. It isn't good.

CARTER
(To Birdie)
(Angrily)
Out here messing with this bitch
and I could've gotten killed!

Birdie freezes. His words sting.

PORSHA
(To Carter)
(Hysterical)
Please don't--

CARTER
(To Porsha)
Shut up! Just shut up!
(Beat)
I'm stupid for letting you convince
me to let my guards down. I'm a
street nigga! Ain't no peace for
me! Ever!

Porsha sobs uncontrollably.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(To Birdie)
Get out!

LOUD SIRENS monopolize the background.

BIRDIE
But I--

CARTER
Get out my house!

BIRDIE
But you promised to help! You
promised to help my mama!

She wraps her arms around his waist. Her face burrows into his belly.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
(Muffled voice)
And you gotta keep your promise!
You supposed to keep your promise!

He peels her off of him with much effort.

CARTER
Bitch, I don't owe you nothing! Or
your junkie mother!

BIRDIE
But--

CARTER
GET THE FUCK OUT!

Beat.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Now!

Trembling and with glassy eyes, Birdie turns around and bolts for the door.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Birdie walks up to the building's shattered door.

RED & BLUE FLASHING LIGHTS shine against her face.

She pulls the door open and walks outside.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - CONTINUOUS

Birdie stands at the top of the stoop looking down.

A SEA OF POLICE CARS cover the street. Officers flood the block and sidewalk. Investigating witnesses. Taking statements.

Suddenly POLICE OFFICER #1 recognizes Birdie and makes his way up the steps.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Are you okay?

Birdie nods.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
Did you see what happened?

JACKIE (O.S.)
No!

Birdie turns around.

Jackie is planted behind her. Hands to the hips.

POLICE OFFICER #1
How 'bout you let her answer for herself.

JACKIE (O.S.)
She's a minor and I'm watching her since her mama not home.
(Beat)
So the answer is no.

He looks at Birdie.

POLICE OFFICER #1
(To Birdie)
Did you see anything?

Birdie runs into the building crying.

JACKIE
Satisfied now?

Jackie takes off behind her.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Birdie flops on the bottom step and cries.

Jackie walks up to her, moving carefully over glass shards and places both hands on her hips.

JACKIE
First day out and already 'bout to
break the cardinal rule.

Birdie wipes tears away. Blinks a few times.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
No snitching.

BIRDIE
What's that?

Jackie frowns, turns around and knocks on Apartment 116 with authority.

Porsha exits, arms folded over her body. Eyes red.

Porsha looks at the shattered door, the glass and the police officers outside and then back at Jackie.

PORSHA
(To Jackie)
Now ain't a good time. You know?

Jackie smirks.

JACKIE
Tell your man he better make some
time.

Jackie looks at Birdie.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Just stopped this one from speaking
on things that don't need to be
spoke on.
(She points at Porsha)
And that's gonna cost him.

Porsha shakes her head.

PORSHA
Birdie, go home.

Birdie stands up.

BIRDIE
(To Porsha)
It was Tony!

Porsha looks at Birdie intensely.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
I saw him. Why would he do that?
Why would he try to hurt Carter?

Porsha looks at Jackie and back at Birdie.

PORSHA
Go home, Birdie. Please.

EXT. BALTIMORE CITY - BLOCK - LATER

Birdie walks slowly down the block. Her arms cross over her body.

She's weeping softly.

MUSIC THUMPS from afar.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Hey you!

Birdie stops.

She searches from where she stands for the source of the voice.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Over here!

Birdie squints. Sees a MAN wearing a WHITE HOODY holding a BEER CAN. He's standing on the steps of the townhouse across the street.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
You dance?

INT. PARTY TOWNHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The house is PACKED. A PARTY IS UNDERWAY. LOUD, SLOW, R&B MUSIC PLAYS.

Birdie walks closely behind White Hoody. He is holding her hand.

A few partygoers look at her. Some smile. Others stare from her head to her toes.

Birdie and White Hoody stop in the middle of the crowd. He moves his lips close to her ear.

WHITE HOODY
(Loudly)
What you drinking?

She looks around. And then at his can.

BIRDIE
Beer!

He smiles.

WHITE HOODY
(Surprise)
Didn't look like the beer type but
okay!

He disappears into the party.

The music slows even more. A PRETTY GIRL, holding a RED CUP, walks up to her and grabs her hand.

PRETTY GIRL
(Shouting)
You cute!

Birdie smiles. Looks down at herself. Wipes her head with both hands.

BIRDIE
I am?

PRETTY GIRL
You gotta know it rocking a bald
head!

She sips from the cup and then places it against Birdie's lips.

Birdie drinks heavily.

PRETTY GIRL (CONT'D)
Hold up...you gonna be wasted!

She snatches the cup from Birdie's lips.

Birdie smiles. Wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

BIRDIE
(Giggly)
It's sweet!

PRETTY GIRL
It's gonna be sweeter in a minute!

The Pretty Girl places the cup on the floor and grabs both of Birdie hands.

She pulls Birdie against her body. They sway.

Birdie's gait is awkward. Her shoulders move faster than the beat. Her hips hike up to the left more often than the right.

PRETTY GIRL (CONT'D)
Be slow, cutie!
(Beat)
Be slow!

Birdie rests her head on the girl's shoulder.

PRETTY GIRL (CONT'D)
Aw, ain't you sweet!

They continue to dance for a FEW MOMENTS.

Birdie's eyes SUDDENLY FLY OPEN. She looks at the Pretty Girl. FRIGHTENED.

BIRDIE
I don't...I...something isn't
right!

PRETTY GIRL
(Giggles)
Told you not to drink so much!

BIRDIE
Gotta throw...I gotta...

Pretty Girl looks around and then back at Birdie.

PRETTY GIRL
(Angrily)
Don't be doing that stupid shit in
here!
(Beat)
Go to the bathroom 'fore Morris get
mad and stops the party again!

She points across the room at a door.

Birdie holds her mouth as she moves hurriedly through the crowd. She knocks into a few people during her journey. Some SHOVE HER, others step out of her way.

She walks into an open door.

INT. PARTY TOWNHOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Birdie walks into a dark bathroom. CLOSSES THE DOOR.

She flips on the light switch. It glows dim, sizzles and grows slightly brighter.

She drops to her knees. Opens the toilet lid and VOMITS.

She moans a little. Empties her stomach again.

Standing up, she turns the water on in the sink. Wipes her mouth with handfuls of water.

The DOOR OPENS...

A man wearing SILVER DREADS walks inside. His EYES are SINISTER. He carries with him a DARK PRESENCE.

BIRDIE

I'm sorry.

She smiles. Turns off the sink.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)

My tummy hurts.

SILVER DREADS

Oh, it ain't no problem, shawty.

She places her hand on the doorknob.

He covers her fingers with his own. Removes her hold from the door.

SILVER DREADS (CONT'D)

What you wanna leave for?

She smiles. Blinks a few times.

SILVER DREADS (CONT'D)

You got a boyfriend?

He moves in TOO CLOSE.

BIRDIE

(Nervously)

I...he...doesn't...I don't know if--

SILVER DREADS

I can be your boyfriend.

He palms the top of her head.

BIRDIE

O...okay.

SILVER DREADS

With your cute self.

Her smile is tight. Fixed. Afraid.

BIRDIE

Okay...that's...that's nice.

She moves for the door again.

He STOPS HER and MOVES IN FOR A KISS. His entire mouth covers hers.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)

(Muffled)

Be nice. Please...be...be nice.

SILVER DREADS

I'm always nice, baby.

He picks her up and places her on the sink.

SILVER DREADS (CONT'D)

Real nice.

He LOCKS THE DOOR.

He DRAGS DOWN HER PANTS. RIPS HER PANTIES.

She places both palms flat on his chest. In an attempt to push him back. It isn't forceful enough.

BIRDIE

Be nice...I--

He covers her mouth with his again. KISSES HER ROUGHLY, while unfastening his pants.

She cries softly. Not loud enough for anyone else to hear.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)

(Nervously)

Do you...do you like me?

With his pants down, he pulls her closer. Pushes himself inside of her body. RAPES HER.

SILVER DREADS

Aw, fuck, baby girl, you tight.

BIRDIE
(Weeping softly)
That...that hurts. That--

SILVER DREADS
Aw, shit...you a...you a fucking
virgin ain't you?

He spits in his palms. Strokes himself with the saliva.
Enters her again.

BIRDIE
I...I don't like--

He kisses roughly. PUMPS FAST and HARD.

When she cries a little louder, although still softly, he
grabs the back of her head and pushes her face into his
chest.

Her cries are muffled.

HIS PUMPS GO FASTER. He's ANIMALISTIC.

INT. PARTY TOWNHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The party is still underway.

The bathroom door opens.

Silver Dreads walks out, while fastening his pants.

White Hoody, who's holding two beers, spots him. He FROWNS.
CONFUSED.

Birdie is on the sink. Both hands are over her mouth. Staring
into nothing.

White Hoody walks toward the bathroom.

INT. PARTY TOWNHOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

White Hoody walks inside, places the cans on the floor and
closes the bathroom door.

WHITE HOODY
Are you okay?

He tries to pull up her pants. She SCREAMS.

He steps back into the wall.

WHITE HOODY (CONT'D)
Please...don't...don't yell.
(Beat)
Are you okay?

She hops off the sink, opens the door and runs out of the bathroom. Her pants are hanging down.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Mostly dark...

Birdie is looking out the window. TREMBLING.

A few candles glow around her perimeter. She's wearing a LARGE BAGGY FLOWER DRESS that drowns her frame.

Birdie walks toward Pam's room. She can hear her snoring.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Birdie FREEZES in fear.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

CARTER (O.S.)
Open the door, Birdie! It's me,
Carter!

She stays put.

CARTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Birdie, open the door!

Slowly she moves toward the door. Pulls it open.

He takes a step back and squeezes his nose.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Whoa.

He looks inside from the doorway. It's dark.

CARTER (CONT'D)
What...what is that?

Birdie looks behind her and back at him.

BIRDIE
You want me to...to come out?

CARTER
Yeah...come out--

He places a hand on her arm.

She jumps and screams.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(Surprise)
What's wrong?

BIRDIE
Please don't...please...I don't...I
don't want anybody to...to touch
me.

He nods.

CARTER
Okay...I...I get it.

Glancing down he sees a CANDY BAR and the small PIZZA from
his house on the floor.

CARTER (CONT'D)
You not gonna pick that up? Your
place smells like a dump.

Birdie looks down, blinks a few times and steps into the
hallway. The door remains CRACKED OPEN.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Birdie stands in front of her door, hands clutched in front
of her, gaze downward.

CARTER
Are you okay? You acting...kinda
different.

BIRDIE
I'm sorry I...I asked you to take
me to that movie.

CARTER
That wasn't on you.

He crosses his arms over his chest and allows them to fall.
Guilt.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Is it true?

Birdie shuffles a little.

CARTER (CONT'D)
About my brother.

She nods.

BIRDIE
(Apprehensively)
But why would he do that? I
don't...I don't understand.

Carter wipes his hand down his face.

CARTER
Don't tell anybody else what you--

A door opens. Jackie appears from the other side.

Carter frowns.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(To Birdie)
Go wait for me in my apartment.

BIRDIE
I can stay in my house if--

CARTER
(Frowning)
Nah.

He looks at her door.

CARTER (CONT'D)
In my apartment. I wanna talk to
you 'bout some other stuff first.

Birdie nods and walks away.

He turns around and focuses on Jackie.

CARTER (CONT'D)
So you threatening me now?

She smiles and folds her arms over her chest.

JACKIE
I wonder how much trouble you would
get into if the police knew you had
that child in your apartment with
your baby raping brother.

CARTER
I'm not giving you no more money to
keep secrets.
(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)

You messed that up, remember?

(Beat)

When I paid you not to tell nobody
'bout Melora. And the first person
you run your mouth to was my girl?

(Heavy breath)

Stay away from me.

(Points at her)

And stay away from Birdie.

She takes two steps closer. Tight fists on her hips.

JACKIE

And if I don't?

He positions his fingers in a shape of a gun, aimed at her forehead.

CARTER

(Softly)

Boom.

She stumbles backward.

CARTER (CONT'D)

You'll never see it coming.

He bops down the steps.

INT. BALTIMORE CITY - PHARMACY - LATER

The store is virtually empty, with the exception of one customer who pays for his purchase and exits soon after.

Jackie stomps inside with an attitude.

The Store Clerk is behind the counter.

JACKIE

I gotta talk to you.

(Beat)

Now!

He nods toward the back.

INT. BALTIMORE CITY - PHARMACY - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jackie is seated in a chair next to the table. The Store Clerk sits on the side of his desk, his focus her way.

A SODA CAN sits between them.

Both smoking cigarettes.

STORE CLERK

How'd you find out that quick? Just happened this morning.

JACKIE

(Laughs)

Tony thought it was funny enough to tell the neighborhood how she walked out with a basket of your goods.

(Beat)

After that, the news didn't take long to come my way.

She blows smoke into the air.

STORE CLERK

Well, I decided to let it go.

(Sighs)

Not pressing charges.

JACKIE

Heard that too. Although I never knew 'Ole Johnson to let folks have their way in his place of business. You getting soft on me?

He kicks ashes off with a few plucks into the can.

STORE CLERK

Something's off with the girl. Was acting strange in my alley this morning. Saw her on the cameras.

JACKIE

And? She should be allowed to--

STORE CLERK

Why you here?

Jackie moves in her seat.

JACKIE

Hoping to get you to reconsider.

She presses the cigarette out on the can and licks her lips. For a moment they sparkle.

STORE CLERK

You said the *last* time was the *last* time.

She scoots closer and places the palm of her hands on the tops of his knees.

JACKIE

A girl can change can't she? Maybe
you ain't the only one in Bmore who
feels the need to act different.

He chuckles once.

STORE CLERK

First you wanted me to leave my
wife. Even stopped taking my calls
when I refused. And now you in here
for a visit?

(Beat)

Ain't adding up.

JACKIE

(Seductively)

I just wanna serve you up.

She runs her hand over his crotch.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Maybe help you change your mind
back right.

He smiles once and presses his cigarette out on the can.

STORE CLERK

Is that right?

She winks.

He unbuttons his pants.

STORE CLERK (CONT'D)

Okay...I'll play along.

He grabs her hand.

She stands up, raises her muumuu to her hips and sits on his lap.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - LATER

Birdie is seated on the top step. Arms crossed tightly over her body. GUARDED.

A BLACK IMPALA pulls in front of the building. The car parks and a man appears from the backseat, wearing a BLACK HOODY and BLACK SWEATPANTS.

He shakes the driver's hand and the car pulls off.

Birdie stands. Preparing to run into the building.

Carter drops his HOODY back, pauses when he sees Birdie and walks toward her.

She sits down.

CARTER

What's wrong with you? Why you
acting scared of me all of a
sudden?

She shrugs.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Birdie, you can talk to me. What's
up?

She shakes her head.

BIRDIE

Nothing.

CARTER

(Sighs)
Okay, well, I thought I asked you
to stay in my crib.

He sits down.

BIRDIE

Porsha was crying.
(Beat)
I got sad. So I came out here.
(Beat)
Where, where you go?

He nods, looks at her once and focuses on the block. He offers zero eye contact.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)

Did you find your...was he...the
one who...shot at you?

He places a hand on her thigh.

She JUMPS. Scoots away. Trembling.

He looks at her with a more discerning eye. His jaw twitches. He knows something has happened.

A quiet rage washes over him. Left leg jumps. Fists clench.

CARTER
(Seriously)
Where did you go tonight?
(Looks her over)
When I put you out?

Beat.

BIRDIE
Did you find your...your brother?

CARTER
Where did you go?

She looks away.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(Deep breath)
Best to push my brother outta your
mind.

Her left leg shakes. Suppressing the urge to cry.

BIRDIE
But did I...did he...

CARTER
Don't....
(Beat)
Okay?

She nods and takes a deep breath.

BIRDIE
I guess mama was kinda right after
all.

CARTER
'Bout what?

BIRDIE
There are devils out here. Who try
to...hurt people...who try
to...hurt...me.
(Fiddles with fingers)
And I'm afraid. Afraid of it all.

She cries heavily.

He holds her. She fights with him and then relents. Her body
softens in his arms.

CARTER
Something...something happened
tonight. Didn't it? Tell me and I
swear to God I'll take care of it.

BIRDIE
No more pain. No more...

He looks up the block.

CARTER
Birdie...

BIRDIE
Please.

His jaw twitches.

She wipes away tears with her fist. Takes a big breath.

CARTER
Okay...let's talk about your house.
(Beat)
Why is it...why is it like that?

BIRDIE
I don't understand.

CARTER
Dark. And...the smell?

BIRDIE
(Shrugs)
The sewage.

CARTER
They fixed the problem earlier
today.

BIRDIE
We don't got electric. I clean up
sometimes, but mama be too sick to
help and Olive never leaves the
room. I think its too much to do by
myself now.

CARTER
It don't look like much cleaning
going on in there, Birdie. I'ma be
real. Now I ain't trying to hurt
your feelings but if we gonna be
friends I gotta be honest.

Birdie looks down.

CARTER (CONT'D)
How old is your sister?

BIRDIE
Younger than me. It's hard to keep
up with age. Too much be happening
in my mind.

CARTER
(Nods)
I get that.

BIRDIE
Carter, why did you wave at me the
other day? When I was at the window
with my sister?

He frowns.

CARTER
(Confused)
Wave at you?

Porsha opens the building's door. She looks at him, places a
hand over her heart and exhales in relief.

He looks back at her.

Porsha runs back inside of the building crying.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Let me check something out right
quick. I be back.

He winks and goes into the building.

A cop car pulls in front of the building.

Birdie stands up and brushes her bottom.

Police Officer #1 and Police Officer #2 step out and approach
her with a serious demeanor.

BIRDIE
(Nervously)
H...hi.

She waves awkwardly.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Where's your mother?

Birdie looks behind herself at the shattered door.

She faces them again.

Police Officer #1 looks at Police Officer #2.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
(To Police Officer #2)
Go get her.

Police Officer #2 enters the building and stomps up the steps toward Birdie's door. He knocks a few times.

POLICE OFFICER #2
(Yells)
The door open!

He goes inside Birdie's apartment.

BIRDIE
Is something wrong?

POLICE OFFICER #1
Did you shoplift from the pharmacy
earlier?

Birdie looks down.

BIRDIE
Shoplift?

POLICE OFFICER #1
Did you take some things that
weren't yours?

BIRDIE
Oh, uh, yes. It's just that my
sister was hungry and--

POLICE OFFICER #1
It's against the law to steal,
young lady. You know that right?

The building's door opens and Carter walks out. He places his hands in his pockets and takes a deep breath.

CARTER
(Skittish)
(To Police Officer #1)
Something...something wrong?

The Police Officer #1 immediately hovers his hand over his WEAPON. The palm of his free hand in Carter's direction.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Stay right there!

Carter throws his hands up and freezes.

CARTER
(To Police Officer #1)
Not causing problems. Just wanna
know what's going on that's all?

Carter looks at Birdie.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(To Birdie)
You okay?

She nods.

SUDDENLY Police Officer #2 runs down the stairwell inside the building.

He pushes the door open and falls outside, on hands and knees, coughing.

POLICE OFFICER #2
(To Police Officer #1)
You gotta...
(Cough)
...you gotta go up there!

POLICE OFFICER #1
(To Birdie)
Stay right here!

Police Officer #1 enters the building and runs up the steps.

Police Officer #2 rises, hobbles back inside and walks up the stairs.

Carter looks at Birdie.

CARTER
What's going on?

BIRDIE
(Shrugs)
I...I don't know.

Suddenly both officers disappear into Birdie's apartment.

Carter walks into the building.

Birdie follows.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - BUILDING HALLWAY -
CONTINUOUS

Birdie's eyes remain on her closed door from below.

Carter stands next to her.

Porsha comes out of their apartment and stands next to them.

Their focus is on Birdie's apartment.

PORSHA
(To Carter)
(Confused)
What's happening?

He shrugs.

Police Officer #2 comes falling out of Birdie's apartment on hands and knees, coughing.

Police Officer #1 comes out immediately thereafter, hacking into his CB RADIO.

POLICE OFFICER #1
We need...
(Cough)
...back up and...and a coroner.

Police Officer #2 coughs a few more times.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
Now!

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - LATER

Birdie is seated on the top step, sideways. Eyes on the building's door.

Police Cars line the street in front of the building. Officers enter and exit with authority.

Jackie comes out and sits next to her.

JACKIE
I just met you and already you
causing trouble. What you do?

Birdie shifts her body a little. Crosses arms over her chest.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
(Sighs)
(MORE)

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Well since we alone let me say
this, if I were you I'd keep zero
time with Carter.

(Beat)

He got a young girl's mother killed
and now she alone. And he got your
mother sick off them drugs too.

(Beat)

Boy ain't nothing but the devil
himself. If you ain't careful he'll
hurt you too.

Birdie frowns.

BIRDIE

That's...that's not true.

Jackie frowns.

JACKIE

(Angrily)

You too young to be calling me a
liar!

(Beat)

Go on ahead and ask him yourself.

Jackie gets up and enters the building.

Birdie cries and runs away.

INT./EXT BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STREET - LATER

Men in WHITE HAZMAT suits, with WHITE HOODS and FACE MASKS
leave and exit the property.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BIRDIE'S LIVING ROOM -
SIMULTANEOUSLY

A Baltimore Coroner enters the apartment.

A POWERFUL LIGHT sits in the back of the living room,
illuminating it all.

The conditions are worse than can be imagined.

The floor is littered with TRASH, which has PUTREFIED and
turned black.

The walls are covered in MOLD.

An INVESTIGATOR takes several pictures, causing more light to
flash periodically into the space.

He takes a few more photos of the newspapers.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - PAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Another STAND ALONE LIGHT sits in the corner of the bedroom and shines on the bed.

MOUNDS OF CLOTHING ON THE FLOOR. MOLD SPECKS IN THE CORNERS OF THE WALLS. Complete DISARRAY.

Pam's corpse is on it's side, a BULLET HOLE to the chest. Skin greyed out.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A STAND ALONE LIGHT in the corner.

PILES OF DIRTY DISHES in the sink, on the counter and table.

A CORONER is typing the letters KOM TILLBAKA TILL MIG into his phone. CORONER B, waits.

CORONER
(To Coroner B)
It means come back to me.
(Frowns)
In Swedish.

CORONER B opens the refrigerator and COUGHS. Inside everything is black and moldy.

INT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT - BIRDIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

TWO STAND ALONE LIGHTS one in each corner.

This room is worst of all.

SPIDER WEBS hang in the edges of the ceilings. ROACHES run up the walls.

Piles of CLOTHING are almost everywhere, EXCEPT by the WINDOW. There is a tiny space there in which the floor can be seen. As if it's SACRED.

A CORONER pushes clothing off one of the beds. A corpse wearing a PLAID MEN'S SHIRT is revealed.

CORONER
We found another body!

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - LATER

Police Officer #1 comes outside, where Police Officer #2 is questioning Carter, Porsha and Jackie.

CARTER
(To Police Officer #1)
Can you tell me what's going on?

Police Officer #1 takes a deep breath.

POLICE OFFICER #1
I've never seen anything like it.

JACKIE
What that mean?

Police officer looks into the hallway and back at them.

POLICE OFFICER #1
We found two bodies. A woman and a child.

Carter looks at Porsha and takes a few steps backward.

CARTER
But...but...

POLICE OFFICER #1
(To All)
We still have to check but it looks like the woman ain't been dead no more than a day, if that.
(Beat)
The child, maybe a week or so.
(To Jackie)
You told us earlier you were watching her.
(Beat)
When was the last time you seen her mother?

Jackie looks at the ground. Shifts a little.

JACKIE
I...the day when I told you. Uh, I knocked on the door because of the music and...and...

POLICE OFFICER #1
So you lied to the police? You know that's a false statement right?

JACKIE

No...I...

POLICE OFFICER #1

We'll talk to you more down at the station.

PORSHA

(To Police Officer #1)

So one of the people dead is Birdie's mother?

Porsha places her hand over her chest. Heavy breaths.

POLICE OFFICER #1

We don't have a lot of answers but it looks like Birdie may have killed them both.

CARTER

(Angrily)

Definitely not!

Police Officer #1 and #2 frown.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Excuse me?

CARTER

She not capable of nothing like that.

(Points at the building)

I know killers. And she not one of them.

Carter looks away.

POLICE OFFICER #1

(Frowning)

You know killers, huh?

(Beat)

Well maybe you don't know her as well as you think you do. Because that woman was shot and somebody had to do it.

Jackie looks down and back at the officers.

Police Officer #1 looks around. Frowns.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)

Wait...where...where is she? Where is Birdie?

EXT. VACANT HOME/TRAP HOUSE - BALTIMORE - LATER

Carter walks toward Birdie who is seated on the broken step.
Tears rolling down her face.

BIRDIE
Did you...make my mother sick?

CARTER
Who told you that?

BIRDIE
Is it true?

Carter takes a deep breath and sits next to her.
She scoots away. Eyes him suspiciously.
He looks to his left and then at her.

CARTER
I'm a dope boy, Birdie. And she a
customer. What you 'spect me to do?

She looks down. Falls to her knees. Vomits.
He tries to help her up.
She slaps him away.

BIRDIE
(Angrily)
How can you be my angel if you
would hurt my mama?

CARTER
(Deep breath)
Birdie, we'll talk about all that
later. Right now they saying...they
saying your mother and sister are
gone.

She stands up and backs away.

BIRDIE
What you, what you talking about?

He approaches her cautiously.

CARTER
They saying they been dead for a
while, Birdie. You, got--

BIRDIE
That's a lie!

He wipes his hand down his face.

CARTER
I wish that were true but they in
front of your crib right now.

Birdie runs away.

EXT. BIRDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT STOOP - LATER

Birdie runs up to the scene.

Police Officer #1 and Police Officer #2 spot her from the top
of the stoop.

POLICE OFFICER #1
(Points at Birdie)
There she goes!

Two Policemen, including Police Officer #2 charge her,
knocking her to the ground.

Face flat on the concrete she cries out.

BIRDIE
(Hysterical)
Olive!
(Beat)
Mama! Olive!

Carter runs up behind her but is grabbed by Police Officer #1
from behind.

CARTER
You don't have to do her like that!
She just a kid!

Carter is taken down.

CARTER (CONT'D)
You don't have to...get off me!

Birdie is handcuffed.

INT. YOUTH DETENTION CENTER - INVESTIGATOR'S OFFICE -
BALTIMORE CITY - MORNING

A SMALL OFFICE.

A wooden desk. One chair. A colorful flower arrangement alongside a picture of a smiling 7 year old little boy with fire red hair. Across the way, a brown burlap style couch with red pillows.

JOAN TERRY, 45, COMPASSIONATE, A PROFESSIONAL PSYCHIATRIST with a ginger mane, sits behind a desk writing.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

She drops her pen and rises.

JOAN

Come in.

Birdie is escorted into the office by a Correctional Officer. She's wearing brown scrubs, arms folded against her body. Eyes downward and sad.

JOAN (CONT'D)

(To the Correctional
Officer)

You can leave.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

I'll be outside.

Joan nods.

The officer exits.

JOAN

Please.

Joan smiles and extends a hand to the sofa.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Have a seat.

Birdie sits.

JOAN (CONT'D)

How are you settling in?

BIRDIE

I wanna leave. I wanna see my
sister. And mother.

JOAN

(Soft tone)

That's what I want to talk to you
about, Birdie. You can't go home.

BIRDIE
But...but why?

Joan takes a deep breath, walks around her desk and sits next to Birdie.

JOAN
What was the last thing you
remember before your mother got
sick?

BIRDIE
I don't understand.

Joan exhales.

JOAN
You mentioned in prior interviews
that your mother was sick. What
happened on the day of her illness?
Or the day before?

Birdie looks at the floor and then the window. Her right leg
jitters. She wants an escape.

JOAN (CONT'D)
(Smiling)
You can talk to me. I'm here for
you.

Birdie nods.

BIRDIE
I...I was dreaming about being
outside. And the ground was
sinking. And...and Carter was
reaching out for me but mama, she
pulled out a gun and...

Birdie shakes her head.

JOAN
(Softly)
It's okay.

Joan rises, grabs a manila folder off her desk and sits next to Birdie.

JOAN (CONT'D)
On the day your mother was sick,
did she *talk* to you?

BIRDIE
Yes.

JOAN
What about your sister?

BIRDIE
Yes.
(Wipes eyes)
Olive...she wanted me to leave.
Said that if I didn't, mama
wouldn't get help. And may die.

Joan nods.

JOAN
How long have you been in the
apartment?

BIRDIE
I don't know.
(Shrugs)
I...can't remember time. Seems like
all my life.

Birdie cries.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)
I want my mother and sister!
Please...help me! Nobody wants to
help me!

JOAN
(Compassionately)
Birdie, I'm going to say something
that will be hard to understand.
And I want you to know that none of
this is your fault.
(Beat)
It appears that you suffer from
schizophrenia. As a result of being
in that apartment all of your life.
And maybe when your sister died and
your mother too, living alone
caused your condition to worsen.

BIRDIE
What's...schiz...

JOAN
You were seeing people and things
that were only real to you.

Birdie shakes her head no.

Joan flips through her folder and looks at a picture.

JOAN (CONT'D)

When you went into the alley, on the day you took the items from the store, tell me what you told the officers.

Birdie snuffles and wipes her nose with the back of her hand.

BIRDIE

I heard some girls talking and I went to see. One of them was..was looking at herself in a gold compact mirror, I think.

JOAN

Like the one your mother has in the apartment?

Birdie nods. She scratches her head with both hands.

BIRDIE

But then they were fighting and--

JOAN

Birdie, there was no one there.

She hands Birdie a picture of herself in the alley. SHE IS ALONE.

BIRDIE

(Frowns at the photo)
But she hit me in the nose.
She...she...

Birdie drops the photo.

JOAN

You fell on the ground. That's how you hurt yourself.

Birdie shakes her head. Places both hands on her ears. She SCREAMS.

INT. YOUTH DETENTION CENTER - BALTIMORE CITY - HALLWAY -
LATER

Joan walks up to INVESTIGATOR MATT KLIFF, 38, SERIOUS but FAIR.

He's leaning against a wall in a hallway staring down at a file.

When he sees Joan, he stands straight and extends his hand.

She shakes it.

MATT
So what do you think?

JOAN
I believe her.

MATT
(Laughs)
If she didn't do it then who did?

JOAN
Maybe you should let Carter talk to her after all. He's been asking but no one will allow him access since he isn't family.

He laughs once.

JOAN (CONT'D)
What?

MATT
I don't know how much longer he'll be a free man. And if he shows up here, the first thing we're going to do is arrest him.

JOAN
Why?

MATT
He's wanted for the murder of Tony Ryan. Found him a few blocks from their building.

JOAN
Wait, I think I remember Birdie telling me that he had a brother.

Matt nods.

Joan takes a deep breath.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I don't know what we're going to do. There's a missing piece. I feel it in my heart.

INT. DINER - BALTIMORE - MORNING

Carter is seated in a busy diner. A white porcelain cup sits in front of him. He's nervous. Very aware of his surroundings.

When Jackie enters, wearing a black and gold muumuu, he flags her over.

She flops in front of him and grabs the menu.

JACKIE

(Slyly)

The police looking for you.

He glares.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Hope you got my money.

He removes a wad from his pocket.

She places the menu down and reaches for the cash.

He snatches it away.

CARTER

Answers first.

She frowns and sits back in her seat.

JACKIE

Well are you gonna at least feed me?

CARTER

What you know about Pam?

She sighs.

JACKIE

Outside of her being a bad mother?

CARTER

(Angrily)

You want the money or not?

She looks down.

JACKIE

I can't lie. I got zero love for that woman. Its 'cause of her my brother on drugs.

He smirks.

CARTER
Every man takes his journey alone.

JACKIE
Yeah, well, my brother had company.
(Deep breath)
Anyway...he met her after her five
year old son was kidnapped off her
porch about twenty five years back.

Carter frowns.

CARTER
She got a son?

JACKIE
Had two. Twins. Birger and Oliver.

A SASSY WAITRESS comes over with a pen and pad.

WAITRESS
You gonna be like this one and just
ask for coffee? Or are you eating?

JACKIE
Give me your special. I'll let you
pick.

The waitress winks and walks away.

Carter sits back and rolls his eyes.

CARTER
What happened with her son?

JACKIE
I don't know a lot of details. It
was in the papers forever, I'll
tell you that much.
(Sighs)
If I was asked to sum up the story
it would go like this...she never
found him again.
(Beat)
Lost her mind so bad she abandoned
the other one and before long,
social services came for him.
(Beat)
She moved from her house in
Pikesville and into our building
after police marked the case cold.
Been there ever since.
(MORE)

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Never leaving unless the night is out and she's looking for drugs.

(Beat)

Then again, I don't have to tell you that part.

Carter scratches his scalp. Eyes shift away.

CARTER

So who is Birdie and her sister's father?

JACKIE

The streets saying Birdie's my brother's spawn but I don't believe 'em. She ain't got Morgan eyes.

She flaps her lids.

Carter crosses his arms tightly. Irritated.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Anyway, when those girls were born she wouldn't let them out her sight. I guess fearing somebody would get 'em too. She even home schooled them as far as I'm told.

(Beat)

I remember Linda, who lived in our building, called social services some years back. I thought that went through and they got them then. But I minds my own business so I forgot about them after that.

CARTER

Your brother ain't tell you about Birdie and 'em?

JACKIE

That fool stopped talking to me years ago.

(Waves air)

'Cause the only thing I wanna hear is when he getting clean. Guess he wasn't up for that line of questioning.

Carter wipes his hand down his face.

CARTER

(Whisper)

I can't believe this shit.

JACKIE
Now did I earn my money yet?

Carter leans forward and clutches his hands on the table.

CARTER
I got a few more questions. And
then we'll see.

INT. YOUTH DETENTION CENTER - VISITING HALL - MORNING

Birdie is seated behind a cafeteria style table, when Porsha walks inside.

She sits on the opposite side of Birdie.

Birdie's eyes are low. Sad.

PORSHA
(Sad)
I hate seeing you like this.

BIRDIE
I'm...I'm scared. And I get sick
most times. But nobody listens. I
need my mama. I need Olive.

PORSHA
I know. But they're gone.

Porsha takes a deep breath.

BIRDIE
I didn't kill my mother.

PORSHA
(Passionately)
Of course you didn't.

Porsha looks behind her at the Correctional Officers and back at Birdie.

PORSHA (CONT'D)
Now we just gotta wait on them to
do their jobs.

Porsha sighs.

Birdie's fingers twiddle on the table.

BIRDIE

The head doctor lady thinks she
knows the day things got messed up
in my mind.

Porsha smiles and places a hand over hers.

PORSHA

I'm listening.

BIRDIE

(Crying)

Olive had been...she had been
crying for food and the bread was
making her sick. And one day...one
day she wasn't crying no more.

(Beat)

I was so sad. So sad I lost my
sister.

(Beat)

I even told mama I think Olive is
gone, but she wouldn't listen. Kept
telling me to take her sandwiches
and that she'd be okay. After that
she'd go looking for drugs. And a
little after that she stopped
asking about Olive all together.
Wouldn't even come to our room.

Birdie wipes her tears with two fists. Takes a deep breath.

BIRDIE (CONT'D)

(Excitedly)

But after some time, one day Olive
was up again. Said she just needed
a little sleep.

(Beat)

And everything was better.

(Beat)

We even played our game.

PORSHA

A game?

Birdie nods.

BIRDIE

You think I'm crazy?

PORSHA

Never! You hear me? Never!

Birdie wipes her eyes.

PORSHA (CONT'D)

(Deep breath)

That's why I'm here. To thank you.

BIRDIE

What I do?

PORSHA

The day we met you, a lot was happening and, and I started to hate the man Carter was becoming. So I scheduled an abortion.

BIRDIE

An abortion?

PORSHA

It's something I'm glad I didn't do. Because when God blesses you with life, you kinda gotta see it through.

(Deep breath)

So I cancelled my appointment.

Porsha smiles and shakes her head while looking down.

PORSHA (CONT'D)

I didn't even tell him I was pregnant.

(Deep breath)

But seeing how he was with you...it just...it just reminded me of the man I knew was always there.

(Deep Breath)

For that, I say thank you.

Birdie trembles. Her breath quickens. Tears roll down her cheeks.

PORSHA (CONT'D)

(Scared)

What's wrong? Are you...are you...okay?

BIRDIE

So Carter is...real?

Birdie breaks into heavy crying.

PORSHA

Of course he is! Yes!

BIRDIE
(Hyperventilating)
Because I don't...I don't know
what's real anymore. I don't...I
don't know who's real.

Porsha places her hand over Birdie's.

PORSHA
You're real.
(Beat)
And I'm real. And it may not seem
like it now but you will make it
through all of this. I promise!

BIRDIE
I don't believe you.

PORSHA
Carter told me to tell you this if
you were ever in doubt...
(Beat)
No lies to you. Ever.

Birdie cries harder.

EXT. BALTIMORE INNER HARBOR - AFTERNOON

Porsha and Carter sit on a bench. Ferry boats float up and
down the harbor.

He looks at her and holds her hand.

Their focus is on the water.

PORSHA
So David shot Pam over some fake
pills?

CARTER
When they arrested him and Laverne,
dude had the same gun. It matched
the ballistics for Pam and
everything.
(Beat)
Stupid!

PORSHA
Exactly.

She sighs.

Carter shakes his head.

They settle into silence.

PORSHA (CONT'D)
Please don't run.

CARTER
I can't go back to jail.

PORSHA
We having a child.

He takes a deep breath.

CARTER
That's what makes this shit hard. I
don't know what I'm gonna do
but...all I can say is no promises.

She looks at him.

PORSHA
(Hopefully)
But Birdie told the investigators
that Tony brought her into the
apartment. Even though nothing
happened, that still looks good for
you.
(Beat)
Tony came home and was on his same
shit. You did the world a favor.

He looks at her seriously.

CARTER
He still my brother. And I took
his... 'cause of me he's gone.

PORSHA
You're right. I'm sorry.

Carter takes a deep breath.

The Spirit Of Baltimore Boat approaches the dock.

CARTER
How did that much darkness make a
person like Birdie?

Porsha rests her head on his shoulder.

He wraps his arm behind her back. Pulls her closer.

PORSHA
 I don't know.
 (Beat)
 But I believe had it not been for
 you, she would'nt be free.

CARTER
 Is she?

PORSHA
 (Frowns)
 Is she what?

CARTER
 Free?

He sighs and kisses her forehead.

INT. FRANKLIN SQUARE HOSPITAL - PSYCHIATRIC UNIT - BIRDIE'S
 ROOM - NIGHT

The room is small but somewhat cozy.

It has one bed, which Birdie is lying on, facing the window.
 Moonlight shines through.

Her back to the door.

The door opens. A Jamaican FEMALE CNA with a heavy accent
 walks inside.

FEMALE CNA
 Birdie...you have mail.

Birdie doesn't move.

The CNA walks around the side of the bed and places a LARGE
 MANILA ENVELOPE on the mattress in front of her.

FEMALE CNA (CONT'D)
 Birdie, please open your letter.

She touches her leg.

FEMALE CNA (CONT'D)
 Maybe it'll make you smile.

Birdie doesn't move.

The Female CNA takes a deep breath, touches her arm and walks
 out.

Birdie sits on the side of the bed, still facing the window.
She cuts on a lamp.

Her back still toward us.

She digs into the envelope. Removes a SMALL ZIPLOC BAG OF
SAND.

She shakes it and holds it up to the light.

Placing the sand down, she digs into the envelope again,
removing a letter.

She unfolds the letter and SMILES.

CARTER (V.O.)
Birdie, this is sand. Now be
honest, have you ever seen this on
your concrete beach?

Birdie smiles brighter. A light laugh.

CARTER (V.O.)
I'm sorry I can't see you. But I
wanted to keep my promise. Maybe,
if you try to...

Carter's voice drifts off.

Birdie lies on her side, continues to read.

She's NINE MONTHS PREGNANT.

EXT. CANCUN, MEXICO - AFTERNOON

Two feet sink into a blanket of khaki colored sand. All ten
toes wiggling.

They belong to Birdie who faces the beach.

An orange sun sits tucked in the middle of an ice blue sky.

Birdie is smiling. The view is spectacular.

BIRDIE (V.O.)
Is this real? If it ain't I don't
care.
(Beat)
Please, God...can I stay?

Suddenly a two year old runs behind her, grabs her leg.

Birdie runs and is chased by the child, over to three beach chairs, where Carter and Porsha occupy two.

A two year old little boy sits on Porsha's lap.

Birdie sits in the empty chair. Places the little girl on her lap.

Above...further and further away, until their bodies are but specks.

THE END